

“I thought I should make myself useful, darling,” said Hilda. “I’ve contracted a man to teach me black magic. He’s an awful bore, but needs must. Anyway, he says I’m a natural; I’ll have Ultima down by next week, I don’t doubt.”

“Brilliant,” said Cid, stifling a yawn, although the thought of his wife as a black mage was concerning: she was formidable enough already. Had he not been on the verge of sleep, he might have wondered why she had suddenly felt the need to learn such powers during peacetime; instead, he merely let himself drift off without question.