

Better Half

By PsychoAnon

The Beginning

One awfully awful evening, a sad young man sits his sorry ass down in a mysterious shop. He is our hero, Thiu, and out of Thiu's mouth comes this asinine plea: "Can you take away my pain, Ms. Mage?"

Welcome to Better Half, a story about learning to love yourself (a little too much). Here in "nondescript modern city", "nondescript modern country" this poor sap Thiu is gonna get roped in with a shady mage in an attempt to cure his depression (after being refused help by an actually legal mage). Instead, the mage will split him into two people: his "happy half" and his "depressed half". He'll have to learn to live with himself and figure out just how to proceed with this situation.

The shady mage guy, Lua, is also working on making a potion of eternal life, but that's a lot less important than this random loser's mental health and sex life. Not to say Lua doesn't have his own melodrama too, what with having to put up with his ADHD sister Tal and his former friend, the aforementioned non-shady mage lady, Vivian. Thiu and Thiu will end up getting to intimately know these wacky characters in the next few days, and you probably will too.

+1000 GP (Gay Points)

Origin

Perks/items are 50% for matching origin. The first matching perk/item is free.
All origins can be taken as a "Drop-In" (for whatever that's worth)

Loser

Your life has not been very productive thus far. You've been living alone in a crappy apartment with no job or real prospects for the future. You could do something about that... ooooorrr, you could just keep playing video games and piling up trash. A tough decision, I know.

Ethical Mage

You have a (decent) talent for magic, at least enough to run a magical shop and keep it afloat (barely). But hey, you do things the right way! By the book and not at all illegal (anymore)! You'll likely get lots of lost souls coming to you for help.

Cool Mage

You have an outstanding talent for magic that's unbarred by petty constraints like "morality" or "The federal government". Instead, you do magic however you'd like and ruin countless people's lives in the process! Also you operate out of your house. You'll likely get lots of lost souls coming to you for help, so be sure to have a jar ready to catch them before they fly away!

Perks

Loser

100 - Pity Party

You're pathetic. Exceptionally pathetic. Like, wow, I can't believe anyone on Earth could be this pathetic and simultaneously sustain a pulse. But hey, that actually works out for you, because your embarrassing patheticness inspires people to wanna help you out due to pity. Even if they don't owe you anything, they're pretty likely to lend a helping hand regardless.

200 - Character Development

I know it might not seem like it now, but you can be so much more than you are. Even in your deepest depths of misery and self loathing, you have the ability to pick yourself up, dust yourself off and make something of yourself. In other words, no matter how depressed you get, you'll still be able to recover. Plus you'll be able to pick up basic human things like "working for a living" or "doing the laundry" or "talking" quite quickly once you start.

400 - Go Fuck Yourself

You are an absurd gem, a hidden treasure trove of resplendent glory... to yourself, at least. it's not even that you're that attractive to yourself, but they like you due to the deep connection you share. If you encounter another version of you, be they the other half of your soul, a clone, a parallel universe you, yourself through time etc., that version of you will automatically like you and seek to form a deeper connection. And want to have sex with you, but hey, it's not like you have to reciprocate. This works even if they should otherwise be hostile to you, like a parallel universe version of you that wanted to kill all other versions of you or some dumb crap like that.

600 - Deal's Off

Making a deal with a shady wizard without discussing any of the details may not have been the best of ideas. Luckily, you don't have to face consequences for your actions because you can weasel your way out of any arrangement. Be it paying a wizard, a deal with the devil himself or even rent, if it's some kind of formerly agreed upon "deal" or "payment" you can use clever trickery to get the other party to let you off the hook scot-free, even if it shouldn't really work on them.

Ethical Mage

100 - Listener

You've got a natural talent for listening. That is to say, you're very patient while people mouth off to you about their problems that you don't really care about. This is quite necessary in your line of work. After all, you'd have to be pretty broken and desperate to be going to a mage for help instead of a doctor or a priest or a therapist.

200 - By the Books

You do things the right way. Partially because you have a conscience, and partially because you'll be sent to prison if you don't. As a result, you always know the relevant laws and minutiae pertaining to the mystic arts anywhere you go in terms of what's legal, illegal, in some sort of weird gray area where it's legal but you'll get kicked out of the Mages Guild if you do it, etc.

400 - Ethical Magic

You're a mage, and probably a semi-decent one at that. What can you actually do? Uh... Some stuff, I'm sure. You can magically enchant tea to help with anxiety and also curse people to create effects like making someone always lose one of their shoes. There's plenty of fun stuff illegal magic can do, but you'd never dabble in such a thing, right? On the bright side, you can always tell just what someone needs to fix their current predicament, whether that be some sort of potion or spell, or just to go to a therapist instead.

600 - Building Bridges

If anime has taught us anything, it's that the only thing greater than the power of magic is the power of friendship! Unfortunately, you've become alienated from all your friends, but that can be fixed. No matter how bad things get between you and those close to you, you'll always be able to ultimately make amends and forget your squabbles. Plus, when people are your friends, you can always count on them to help you. Whether you need them to fix a spell you messed up or dispose of a corpse, they'll be right there at your side. Isn't that what friends are for, after all?

Cool Mage

100 - Jerkface

You're a bastard. A psychopath. Some might even go so far as to describe you as a jerkface. You're a smug jerk and you don't particularly care about other people. It's not like you can't, it's just that you can emotionally disassociate from anyone who's not close to you. So what if you scammed some idiot into testing your incredibly deadly experimental potion? He was gonna die soon, anyways. You also constantly exude a smug aura, but this can be turned off and on.

200 - Breakin' the Law

What you're doing isn't strictly "legal". It is, however, strictly illegal, which is why you know how to operate outside the law. You're an expert in running an illegitimate business without getting caught, as well as hiding any other crimes you may have committed (like murder). You always seem to be able to avoid having your business ratted out, even if it's basically common knowledge that you operate in town.

400 - Bad Deals

While your talents are most certainly real, that's not to say you aren't a con artist. You can trick and manipulate people into absurdly bad deals. You could get someone to test your extremely deadly potion or make them agree to pay you but never specify what they're supposed to pay, so they just have to do whatever you're feeling like that day. It's hard to tell if you're very smart or if the people who keep coming to your shop are just that dumb (you'd prefer to believe it's the former).

600 - Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap

See, now this is what it's all about! Unlike some hack you may know, you are an outstanding practitioner of the mystical arts and you also know quite a bit of illegal magic. Making everyone forget a specific person ever existed, splitting someone's soul into two to make two of them, creating a potion of eternal life - you can do it all! Well, that last part is a work in progress, but you can also accelerate the progress of your research by testing unethically. Get a few saps to kill themselves testing it and you could have that immortality potion ready in a year, no sweat!

Items

Free - Bouncy Ball
Exceptionally bouncy little rubber ball. Annoys everyone and breaks everything. Try it today!

Loser

100 - Real Food and Junk Food
A limitless supply of both tasty snacks and that awful garbage people eat that smells weird and is supposedly filled with things called "nutrients". Just focus on the snacks, who cares if you get fatty liver disease?

200 - Entertainment
Various devices such as a smartphone, laptop, tv and several game systems. Useful for burning your life away instead of doing literally anything productive. Seems pretty par for the course for you, ya sack of crap.

400 - Shitty Apartment
Your terrible apartment. The neighbors are loud and annoying, the paint is chipping off the walls and you're crammed in like a rat in a trap, but hey, at least the rent's cheap. Well, non-existent in your case.

600 - Magic Gacha Machine
When you're lost in life, who do you turn to? Your friends? Your family? Well, you don't have either of those so instead you rely on this thing. It's a magical toy dispenser that will randomly dispense a toy whenever you ask it a question. The toy dispensed will serve as a hint on what the best course of action may be, such as a little car popping out if you're wondering if you should skip town. This is pretty vague and open to interpretation, but at least you don't have to make your own decisions.

Ethical Mage

100 - Magic Tea
Your own specially enchanted tea that helps with anxiety. Comes in various flavors, and unlike the coffee of someone you may know, none of those flavors are "human waste".

200 - Magic Advertising
These are fancy advertisement cards meant to bring people to your shop. They're elegantly designed and even holographic! They also may or may not subtly magically compel people to want to go to your store when they look at them. *No, this wasn't in the VN. What are you gonna do, call the cops on me?*

400 - Magic Stuff
Various magic baubles and crap you can sell or use for whatever you want. Lucky charms, dreamcatchers, potions, maybe even a spellbook or two. The charms are made out of glass, so watch out for anybody bouncing a stupid rubber ball around.

600 - Magic Shop
Your very own store for the sale of mystical wares and services (or whatever else you want, I'm not the boss of you). It's a pretty decent place; it has lots of the basic necessities of a magic shop like potion vials and a big cauldron, and it's even big enough to have a kitchen/break room.

Cool Mage

100 - Skull

A human skull. You can place it on display publicly in your business and nobody will question it. In fact, they'll actually become a bit scared of you and therefore more easy to manipulate. I guess having a human skull on your shelf has that effect on people.

200 - Spellbook

A book filled with all sorts of ~~Highly-illegal~~ fun spells, as well as infinite room to add more as you learn. After all, magic is a continuous pursuit of ~~Crack~~ knowledge!

400 - House

An actual house. It has multiple rooms and everything! Compared to where that sad-sack Thiu is living, this might as well be a mansion. There's also a wardrobe in it filled with sets of shoes that are each missing a shoe, for some reason.

600 - Cure to Aging

This is your current project, a potion that can stop aging and make someone effectively immortal (if they don't get sick, or hit by a bus, or shot, or lit on fire or...). Well, it will do that when it's finished. Right now you've just got the notes, an alchemy set with ingredients, and some incomplete potions that are poisonous and kill people. You're sure you could get the real potion ready in about a year with some help from someone desperate and stupid enough to test these prototypes.

Companions

100 - Companion Import/Creation

You can import/create two companions per 100 points spent here, granting them 600 points each and an origin. Alternatively, you can import one companion and grant them 1000 points and an origin.

Free - Canon Companions

If you wanted to take someone from this story with you, it's probably Thiu. This story only has five people in it and two of them are him.

Free - Other Half

Jumper, meet jumper! Looks like the spell that got used on Thiu got used on you, making you into two. You can decide which aspects of yourself got put into the other you, such as things like your negative/positive emotions, or if anything is even different between the two of you at all. They are you in basically every way, possessing all your abilities, memories, even esoteric crap like perks, etc. They're also really down to have sex with you.

Drawbacks

+100 - Social Anxiety
You're not so adept when it comes to social situations. It might take you a week just to work up the courage to talk to someone for the first time, and you'll constantly be feeling as if everyone is judging every little thing you say and do (we are).

+100 - Annoying
You're very obnoxious. Your hobbies include smashing people's valuables with a bouncy ball, drawing on walls with a sharpie and purposefully agitating people who don't wanna talk to you. People are gonna get sick of your presence very fast.

+100 - Trash Compactor
Well, you are what you eat, and you eat nothing but junk. You avoid eating anything healthy like you're allergic, instead gorging on snacks and soda all the time. Your body told me to tell you it hates you.

+200 - Lonely
All the people in your life like friends and family are completely distant to you (you also might just not have any, loser). This includes your companions, and it has left you all alone in this big, scary world with royalty free music playing in the background. While you can still make new friends and rekindle your relationship with old ones, both will be exceptionally difficult tasks for you.

+200 - Sword of Damocles
Someone you know has a ton of blackmail on you. While they aren't proactively using it against you (yet) they're someone you really don't like and this info allows them to annoy you however much they want without retaliation. They'll be a constant pest in your life, always causing you problems both major and minor.

+200 - Spineless
A word that will forever be etched in your memory. Your lack of will means that anyone can tell you to do anything short of commit suicide or to fuck them and you'll feel obligated to do it. Even something like testing out highly poisonous potions is too hard to deny for you.

+300 - In Lua Choice

The wizard Lua has gotten you to agree to test his experimental, and not even close to working right,immortality potions. He has forced you into this via a magical pact you cannot break and if you continue drinking the potions for a couple months you will die. The only way out of this is to trick him into voiding the contract himself, though he seems like a pretty smart guy so that may be hard.

+300 - Cutter

You are, quite literally, clinically depressed due to a traumatic childhood. You don't feel like doing anything, you hate yourself more than you've ever hated anything else, cut yourself regularly, and if something doesn't drastically change in a week then you'll kill yourself and fail your chain. There's nothing any sort of powers you may have can do, so you'll have to seek outside assistance, and I don't mean a therapist.

+300 - Bitter Half

You've been split in two and your other half wants to kill you. They are effectively you in every way so they have all your perks and any other abilities, skills and knowledge you may possess. If you took the "Other Half" companion it is possible to convince them not to kill you, though it would be very difficult. Other than that exception, they will stop at nothing to ensure your demise. Really brings "hating yourself" to a whole new level.

The End

Select your fate

Halved - Go Home
Couple - Stay Here
Merge - Move on

Notes

- *Game can be found in this bundle along with most of the author's other works https://archive.org/details/nemlei_games*

- *Thanks for using the jump. Hope you had fun!*