

Humiliation of a Dirt Eater

It was a few minutes past seven and Ben patiently sat at his dining room table staring at his untouched plate of food. The middle aged man was hungry from his long week of work but was well aware of the issues that would arise if he dared to eat before a certain guest arrived. It was this constant state of stress that had caused a fair share of grey hairs to appear on his head of black hair and through the bushy beard around his chin.

Turning away from the meatloaf and potatoes in front of him to avoid further temptation, he looked up to see his wife, Lydia, staring intently at the front door. She acted as cool and unfeeling as ever, not letting a single one of her strands of blonde, chin-length hair move. While Ben had changed into a shirt and jeans to make himself comfortable for the weekend, she had chosen to remain in her grey business wear. He knew her well enough to realize this was all part of her plan. Upon hearing the front door begin to open, Lydia stood up to see what her little trap had brought in.

Entering the house was a college aged woman dressed from head to toe in black clothing. The ripped pants matched the anarchic style of her punk t-shirt and red painted nails. Looking past the bags under her eyes from long, sleepless nights, Ben spotted the black color of her waist length long hair. Recalling back to when his daughter was able to smile as a carefree, blonde haired child, Ben braced himself for the moment when Lydia walked over to greet her.

“Nancy.”

“Lydia,” the young woman said back.

“You’re late.”

“Since when has that mattered to you?” she replied, walking past her mother to sit down at the table.

“Hello baby girl,” Ben said, putting on a smile in an attempt to give his daughter a semblance of a warm welcome home. “How have you been?” Her response was a glare before taking a seat opposite her mother’s position at the table.

“Is that really how you want to treat your parents after they made you such a lovely meal?” Lydia asked.

“You mean the one you asked the chef at your office to make?” Nancy replied.

“It’s still something that I made with my money,” Lydia pointed out. “I would have hoped that you would follow a similar path of success. But no, you still insist on wasting your time at that school for card tricks and sawing people in half.”

Nancy stabbed her fork into her meatloaf. “It’s a magic school and you should know better than to piss off a witch.”

“Oh please, like you can actually do anything.”

“What did you say you bitch of a-“

“Hold on now,” Ben said, standing up to once more attempt to be the mediator between his dysfunctional family members, “there’s no reason to get so heated when Nancy just got here. Let’s sit down and have a nice dinner like the good old days.”

“What the hell are you talking about?” Nancy asked, turning her ire towards her father. “There never was a good old day while I was under this wicked woman’s thumb.”

“That’s rich coming from a self-proclaimed witch,” Lydia piped up. “Or at least, a deranged young lady who insists on calling herself such a ridiculous title.”

“It’s not just a title,” Nancy insisted. “I may still be in training, but I have plenty of spells that could send you back to the fiery pit you came from with just a snap of my fingers.”

“Then go ahead,” Lydia said, spreading out her arms to goad her daughter. “I want to see that you haven’t wasted all of MY money on that farce of a school.”

Nancy put on a wicked grin. “Fine. We’ll see how you feel after I burn you into a pile of ash.”

“Is violence really your only way of expressing yourself? No wonder you had to go to a school with other psychopaths. Easier to keep people like you in line when you’re all in the same place.”

For just a moment, Ben saw the spark of a flame appear in Nancy’s hand only to be snuffed out with a flick of the wrist. Able to see the restraint his daughter was trying to put on herself, he once more tried to be the voice of reason. “If I may make a suggestion,” he spoke up, “what if we use a spell that doesn’t cause irreparable damage?”

“I see you’ve had one of your few brilliant moments,” Lydia said, turning back towards Nancy while her backhanded compliment sunk into Ben’s soul. “So, what have they been teaching you to do? Boiling newts?”

“No.”

“Dancing naked in the forest with demons?”

“NO!”

“Changing people into frogs?”

Nancy paused for a moment. “I’ve actually just learned transformation magic,” she said with a smug smile.

“Alright then,” Lydia said, walking up to her daughter. “Change me into an animal. Something simple enough that even you can do it. Like an earthworm.”

“It takes time to prepare the spell,” Nancy replied, stepping away from her mother.

“Very well then,” Lydia said, taking her spot at the table again. “We will reconvene in the morning to test your so called magic powers.”

“Tomorrow it is then,” Nancy replied, taking her own seat to tear into the meal.

Remaining silent as his family dove into their uncomfortable dinner, Ben began to nibble on his food. The scenario had played out just like his wife had said. He had played his part, and because of it he was certain he would be responsible for what was going to happen. Fearing what the next day would bring, he helped himself to a glass of wine to try and ease his nerves.

Dread continued to hang over Ben’s shoulders as he made his way out into the backyard. Waiting for him there were Nancy and Lydia, each of them busy with their own preparations for the spell. For Nancy, that meant going over her books a few more times to make sure she had the right incantations in mind and that she had all the supplies she needed beneath a sheet on a nearby table. Lydia did her own perusal of the materials, but it was all a farce to give her an excuse to add further fuel to her daughter’s raging fire of resentment.

“This is what you’ve spent hundreds of dollars on?” Lydia asked, holding a thick, ancient-looking book between her fingers.

“Yes,” Nancy hissed, snatching the tome back. “If you shut up and stop touching my things, I’ll show you. Dad!”

“Yes, sweetie,” Ben said, no longer able to hide himself from view.

“Is the camera ready?”

“Everything seems good to go,” Ben replied, checking on the device that he had once used to record the few fleeting moments of peace in the household.

“Good, start rolling,” Nancy commanded. “Don’t stop, no matter what.”

“A little premature, don’t you think?” Lydia asked as Ben turned on the camera and began to film.

“I want to make sure everything is ready to go when I cast the spell,” Nancy replied. “Especially since you won’t be able to witness it yourself.”

Though Nancy didn’t see the shudder going down her mother’s body, Ben certainly did. He still had a chance to stop this. Lydia’s plan had been explained to him over and over again to make sure it stuck in his head. Too busy weighing the pros and cons of interrupting the act, he failed to stop his family from further bickering.

“Say that this worm spell works,” Lydia began, “what is the actual process supposed to be?”

Nancy was about to start another fight but realized it would be better to ignore her mother for a moment. “It’s simple. I say the magic words and let the energy reshape your body into that of a worm. Once the lingering magic has worn off over the course of a week, I can change you back.”

“Would this process... hurt in anyway?” Lydia asked.

A small smile appeared on Nancy’s face at the question. “No, but it will take a few minutes. Plus it will be disorienting being in a new body. Why, are you scared?”

“Of course not,” Lydia denied. “I’m merely concerned that you’ll use this opportunity to humiliate me.”

“And what if I do?” Nancy challenged. “Not like you’re going to be able to stop me. Hell, you won’t even be able to hear, see, or speak to me. Your life will be in my hands.”

Rather than show fear, Lydia put on her usual, smug smirk. “Confident for someone who’s delaying their inevitable failure,” she shot back.

“We’ll see about that,” Nancy replied, returning to her materials to make sure that everything was in place.

The few moments that Nancy was distracted gave Lydia a chance to let her true feelings show. While her daughter wasn’t looking, the business woman was free to let her body indulge itself in some nervous shaking. On the surface this appeared to be genuine fear for what was about to happen to her. However, Ben knew the true reason. It was a dark secret that he dared not to speak aloud, even as the time of the spell’s casting came close at hand.

“Alright, I’m all set,” Nancy announced, loudly closing her book. “Take off your clothes and we can begin.”

“Why on Earth would I do that?” Lydia asked back.

“Would you prefer for me to dig around that gaudy dress of yours to find your wriggling body?”

“You have a lot of nerve to say that considering what you’re wearing,” Lydia said, tugging at the skirt of her pink sundress to compare it to her daughter’s gothic style.

“Stop being such a prude and strip.”

With the camera still rolling, Ben watched his prideful wife begrudgingly pull off her dress. As she took her time to remove her undergarments, he could see the mental struggle of her trying to suppress any sign of emotion on her face. A glimpse over at Nancy made it appear as if she had seen the nervous twitching once or twice. Ben just had to hope that the charade could continue as he watched his wife neatly fold her panties and place them alongside her bra to leave herself completely nude.

Approaching her mother, Nancy walked around Lydia's body. "I have to admit, you look good for a woman your age. The plastic surgery must have cost a fortune. Shame that it will all go to waste when you shrivel up into a disgusting worm."

Lydia let out a huff. "Say what you will, but this is all natural. You would know what I was talking about if you didn't degrade your body with hair dyes and tattoos."

"So much for keeping that one secret," Nancy commented. "Last time I let one of my friends take a picture of my ass when I'm drunk." Taking her spot a few feet away, she held up her hands. "I'm doing this more for the sake of the magic code of conduct rather than genuine concern, but I have to ask before we start: are you prepared to experience the process of transformation?"

"Yes," Lydia stated.

"Are you ready to cast aside your human form to become an earthworm?"

Lydia licked her lips. "Yes," she said, with a sense of conviction behind her words.

"Will you be willing to live in the form of a humiliating creature that eats dirt and wriggles around for the entirety of a week?"

"Y-yes," Lydia answered, unable to hide the shakiness of her voice.

"Do you trust me to ensure that your helpless, lowly form will be kept safe and out of harm's way?"

Lydia paused for a moment. Judging by the look in his daughter's eyes, Ben was also uncertain if she was telling the truth. Even still, Lydia spoke again.

"Yes," Lydia said.

Nancy smiled with a wicked grin that harkened back to the witches she was trying to model herself after. “Then let us begin,” she said, saying an indecipherable chant before flinging a ball of green energy from her finger tips to hit her mother square in the chest.

As the magic dispersed across Lydia’s form, the initial emerald glow dissipated. While there was no visible sign of what the spell had done, by the expression of excitement on Lydia’s face she could certainly feel something inside of her. Even as her entire body began to shake from the influence of the spell, she grinned as she began to change.

The first thing to go were Lydia’s arms as they shriveled up into her torso. Even as her fingers dissolved away, she looked on with fascinated awe at the progress of her transformation. Rather than completely disappearing, her legs pressed into one another to merge into a single lump of flesh. Unable to remain standing as her fused feet and stretched out into an elongated, fleshy tip, she flopped onto the blanket below her.

“Yes, this is it,” Lydia exclaimed as her flesh began to take on a pinkish brown color to go with its squishy texture. “This is everything I’ve been waiting for.”

The malicious look on Nancy’s face faltered to make way for absolute confusion. “The hell are you going on about?”

“After so long, I finally get to experience it first hand,” Lydia continued, seemingly ignorant of both her daughter’s question and the way her shrinking body became slenderer. “All this time I’ve had to settle for audio, art, and poorly written stories, but now I can truly feel what it’s like to be a-“

Lydia was interrupted by a sudden change of tone in her voice. Feeling a strange sensation along her face, she tried in vain to use her non-existent arms to touch her nose. Though she had a poor view of it, Ben had the perfect vantage point to witness her nostrils get

completely absorbed into her face. The eagerness in her eyes faded away as the hair on her head fell out to make way for a bald, pointy protrusion emerging from her scalp. Fear completely took over her body as her entire face began to merge into her mass to erase any sign of her human features.

“Hold on,” Lydia said, her voice taking on a squeakier tone as she continued to shrink. “I don’t want to do this anymore. Stop the spell!”

“It’s a little too late for that,” Nancy said, looking at her mother and unable to stifle a giggle as they were only forced to stop gazing at each other once Lydia’s eyes went away.

“I-I can’t see anything,” Lydia said, her entire body trembling with fear. “Nancy, please change me back! I beg you!”

“Are you really that stupid or do you just have something stuffed into your ears?” Nancy asked back. “I told you once the spell is cast, it has to fully work through your system. You’ll just have to deal with it until... oh what’s the point in saying anything else.”

Nancy’s comment referred to the loss of her mother’s ears as she continued to shrink down to a meager, few inches in length. “Nancy? Where are you? I can’t hear or see anything. I don’t want to be a worm anymore. No, pleeeaaa-.”

Lydia’s regretful wail petered off as her vocal cords were fully morphed to better match her current form. Left blind, mute, and deaf, all she could do to work through her overwhelming fear was to frantically flop her body around on the cloth. Slowly making his way over to the blanket, Ben unconsciously kept the camera rolling on the horrifying scene. In the back of his head, he tried to reason that he continued filming for the sake of proving that he had actually seen his wife get transformed into the earthworm wiggling at his feet.

“What the hell was that all about?” Nancy asked as she nudged her mother with her toe.

“Don’t hurt her!” Ben shouted out, dropping the camera to grasp the worm between his fingers. Careful not to squeeze too hard, he lifted Lydia up to his face. Taking a finger he located the worm’s head to give it two, soft taps to its head. Letting his hand linger for a moment, he waited until the worm poked back twice in quick succession to confirm that Lydia was aware that he was with her.

“Oh thank goodness, her mind is still intact,” Ben commented, hazarding to let out a sigh of relief.

“You still haven’t told me what’s going on,” Nancy said. “What exactly was that?”

“It was a sign your mother and I worked out to confirm if she could still think after her transformation,” Ben explained.

Nancy raised an eyebrow. “She seemed pretty convinced that this wouldn’t work. When did you two have time to talk about that?”

Ben hesitated for a moment, already regretting his words. “It’s been a part of her plan for the longest time now. Ever since she heard that you were enrolling in magic school.”

“Bullshit,” Nancy replied. “Since when did that bitch of a mother say she actually believed in my abilities?”

“All the time... at least, when you weren’t around,” Ben begrudgingly added. “It was all a part of her fantasy.”

“Fantasy?”

“Of being changed into a worm.” Looking back down at the creature in the palm of his hands, Ben was momentarily thankful that Lydia couldn’t hear him. “Your mother has a specific... preference for humiliation. She finds... pleasure in the idea of being turned into a worm or similarly lower creatures. I’ve never truly understood it, but I’ve played along with her

to try and fulfill her desires. However, she knew nothing could come close to getting to experience the real thing first hand.”

Too far in to stop now, Ben turned his gaze back towards Nancy. “She purposefully manipulated you to experience the transformation first hand. But it’s obvious that she’s changed her mind. I’m so sorry that she put you through all of this. So please, change her back.”

Nancy took a few moments to process what she had just heard. Looking between the pleading look on her father’s face and her mother squirming in his hands, she tried to make up her mind. Ben knew that she had made her decision as she stepped forward with a smug grin on her face.

“Like I said, we’ll have to wait a week before I can change her back,” Nancy said, swiftly grasping Lydia out of Ben’s hands. “Until then, I intend to make the most of my chance to pay her back for being such an awful mother to me.”

“Hold on now,” Ben said, following his daughter over the table of supplies. “What exactly are you planning to do to her?”

“First off, I want to test your consciousness theory,” she replied. “For all we know that could have been a reflex of her animal mind.”

“But you said yourself that she can’t hear or see anything. How else are we going to communicate with her?”

Keeping her mother gripped between her fingertips, Nancy pulled off a cover to reveal a blue tooth speaker. Placing Lydia on the surface of the speaker, she synched the device up to her phone. “Though she doesn’t have ears, she can sense vibrations in her current form,” Nancy explained. “Should be able to get through by using this.” Finishing connecting her phone to the speaker, Nancy spoke, “Lydia, can you hear me? If yes, nod your head.”

Nancy and Ben trained their vision on the speaker, waiting for a response. As the vibrations went through the squirming creature's body, it slowly calmed down. Straightening herself out for a moment, Lydia raised her head to nod.

"What is two plus three?" Nancy asked, finding delight in the way her mother bumped its head against the speaker five times. "A worm that can do basic math. Looks like you're really going place in the world, mother. Perhaps you should look into a career change. Like say the main attraction of a traveling freak show."

"Nancy, that's enough," Ben said, hazarding to put a bit of sternness to his voice. "Ask her how she's doing."

Nancy gave a sigh and lifted her phone to her mouth again. "Does it feel natural to move around in that form?" she asked, receiving a nod in reply. "Good, you must have gained some innate instincts in the transformation process. Let's put that body of yours to the test to make sure you have complete control. I want you to push yourself in a straight line."

Following her daughter's orders, Lydia wriggled around until she was able to move in a single direction long enough to satisfy Nancy. The next order came out to go around in a circle, an intimidating task, but one that allowed the business woman to become more used to her body. Back and forth Lydia crawled along the speaker, meeting every one of her daughter's commands.

"Seems your mobility is up to par," Nancy commented. "However, I think we should test your abilities in a more direct manner. We can start by seeing if you have the ability to do what earthworms are most well known for."

Going back to her table of supplies, Nancy grabbed a small flower pot. Filling the container with a shallow layer of dirt, she held the phone up to her mouth again. "I want you to bury yourself in the soil. Don't take too long. We have a lot of tests to run still." Waiting just

long enough for the vibrations to go through Lydia's body, Nancy picked the worm up and placed it in the pot.

Shuffling his way over to the scene, Ben watched as his wife tried to figure out how to accomplish the task. Poking her head against the surface layer of the dirt, Lydia attempted to dig it out with her non-existent hands. Left without any other option, she pushed her head into the soil and began to eat.

Nancy began to giggle like a child as she watched her once proud mother chow down on dirt to begin making a hole. As disgusting as the process was, it proved to be effective in letting Lydia dig deeper into the soil. Minutes passed after the worm completely submerged herself in the mud. During that time, Ben worried that his wife had either gotten lost or worse. His worries were lessened as the worm woman eventually came back up to repeat the process in another area. Just before she completed another loop, her progress was halted by Nancy reaching in to grab her by the tail.

Hoisting her mother into the air, Nancy placed her on the speaker once more. "So, tell me. Did you really just eat dirt?"

There was a moment of hesitation. Eventually, Lydia gave a series of small nods.

"Hahaha, this is perfect," Nancy proclaimed. "In a matter of minutes you go from eating gourmet food to chowing down on mud. You really are nothing more than a lowly worm now. Tell me, did you like the taste? Are you becoming addicted to the flavor of dirt and-"

"That's enough!" Ben said, swiping away Nancy's phone. Holding the device up to this mouth, he took his turn to speak. "Lydia, it's me, Ben. Is this really what you wanted?"

A shudder went through Lydia's body before the worm shook its head wildly for a definitive no.

“Is it scary?” he asked.

She nodded.

“Are you feeling any of the pleasure you thought you would?”

She furiously shook her head.

“Do you... regret doing this?”

Lydia paused for a few seconds before enthusiastically nodding her head as if to beg for forgiveness from both Ben and her daughter.

“Don’t worry, we’ll figure out a way to change you back. Just let me-“

“I’ll take that,” Nancy said, grabbing the phone back out of her father’s hands. “Your head must be filled with as much dirt as hers if you still think there’s a quick fix to this. How many times do I have to tell you that she’ll be like this for at least a week?” Turning away from her father, she brought her attention back towards her mother. “And I intend to enjoy every second of it.”

What started out as a giggle devolved into a session of maniacal cackling that fit well with Nancy’s witchy nature. Sensing her daughter laughing fit, Lydia lowered her head, as if in acceptance of her horrible fate. Ben copied the motion, unsure how he would ever be able to fix his family at this rate.

Picking Lydia off of the speaker again, Nancy dangled her mother in front of her phone’s camera and began to record. “Look at this everyone. The once high and mighty businesswoman has been reduced to little more than a lowly worm. All she can do now is squirm and dine on dirt while trying to avoid being eaten by birds. The best part is this was all part of her perverted plan to get some kind of pleasure from this. I’d say how sad it is to see the great woman fall, but as her daughter, I know she wasn’t that great to begin with.”

“Nancy please, this is going too far,” Ben spoke up. “She can’t even hear you.”

“You know what,” Nancy began, walking over to place her mother on the speaker again, “you’re right. If I’m going to do this, I want to make sure she understands every word.” Picking up her phone again, she spoke, “So tell me, do you think you’re still Lydia, a horrible mother and wife to a cowardly man?”

Lydia replied with an enthusiastic nod.

“WRONG!” Nancy shouted out, making her prisoner shudder. “The truth is that you’re one of the lowliest creatures on the planet. Fit only to spend your days crawling through the dirt. If you don’t believe me, let me get an opinion from your husband.”

Nancy held out her phone as if to hand it over to her father. Just as his fingers were about to grasp it, she pulled it away. Storing the phone in her pocket, she pulled out a small notepad and began to write down something. Finished hand writing a script, she handed it back over to her father.

“Read exactly what’s on there,” Nancy commanded. “It’s the least you can do to make up for letting this woman torment me over the years.”

“Why would I do this?” he asked, reading over the notes.

“Because I’m the only one who can change her back, so you better keep me happy. Unless you prefer to be married to a creature as spineless as yourself.” Pulling her phone back out, she held it up to his face. “So tell us Ben, what do you think of your wife now?”

Ben took a deep breath and mouthed a silent apology towards Lydia. “That... isn’t my wife,” he forced out of his mouth. “That’s only a disgusting worm. I would hardly call that creature a her anymore. More of an... it. An “it” only suited for providing food to birds.”

As the words reverberated through the speaker, Ben watched Lydia's body droop slightly. The cruel words did the trick in getting Nancy to lose herself to another fit of maniacal laughter. Still reeling from his actions, he was in no condition to prevent Nancy from resuming Lydia's torture.

"See, even someone as simple as Dad can understand what you've become," Nancy said. "Wouldn't it be easier to just accept your place as nothing more than a worm?"

Though Lydia shook her head in defiance, it was the exact reaction that Nancy had been looking for.

"Fine, then let me give you a proper demonstration to make sure it sinks into that microscopic brain of yours."

Putting away her phone, Nancy picked up her mother again and started walking towards the vegetable garden. Following close behind, Ben watched as his daughter carelessly dropped Lydia on top of the soil. Though the worm woman seemed comfortable to be out of the witch's grasp, it soon realized the danger it was in. Tapping her head against the side of a tomato and figuring out that she was no longer within the safety of a pot, her instincts took over.

Wriggling in a panic, Lydia began to dig again. Deeper and deeper she burrowed down to avoid the dangers of the surface. While Ben wanted to believe it was to get away from Nancy, he recalled the hurtful words he had spoken beforehand to figure out that she was trying to hide from birds. It was upon realizing this that right on cue he watched as Nancy produced a pair of wooden tweezers from her pocket.

Just before Lydia could completely sink her body into the soil, Nancy reached out to pinch her tail with the tool. Hoisting the worm into the air, she purposefully bobbed her hand up and down to act like a bird. The performance did the job of getting Lydia to flail about for fear of

becoming a meal for a family of birds. With a flick of her wrist, Nancy let her mother fall back down to the ground below. Taking sick glee in watching the worm frantically bury herself again, the witch took a moment to enjoy the moment before she dug Lydia back out with her bare hands to bring her over to the speaker.

“You were lucky you know,” Nancy spoke into her phone. “You almost became a bird’s lunch. Thank goodness I got there when I did. Perhaps you should be more accepting of my assistance now? Like say, admitting that you’re rotten outside matches your rotten insides now? If not, I can always give you another demonstration.”

Lydia furiously shook her head.

“Then let’s try this again,” Nancy began. “Are you a person?”

The worm shook her head.

“Are you a fit mother?”

Again, the worm disagreed.

“Do you deserve having a human name anymore?”

Another shake of the worm’s head.

“Are you nothing more than a disgusting worm?”

Lydia furiously nodded up and down.

Nancy tilted her head. “Hmm, I’m not sure you truly understand yet. Ben!”

Called forward once more, Ben reached for the phone only to once more be presented with another script. Looking over what he was supposed to say, he whispered a plea to Nancy. Replying with only a glare, the witch pressed the paper into his hands and gestured for him to speak.

Ben took a deep breath and spoke. “I’m going to go over a few names. Let me know if any of them fits your current form. First, should I refer to you as dear?”

Having grown to understand the premise of Nancy’s game, Lydia rejected the title.

“Alright, then what about Lydia?”

The worm shook her head again.

Ben went through a few more options, ranging from heartfelt expressions such as honey to more plain things like wife. Each one Lydia rejected, not even able to agree with being called a person. Reaching the bottom of the list, Ben spoke the last option.

“Do you prefer being just called... a worm?”

Lydia nodded her head.

Powering through the sound of his daughter laughing, Ben turned to the next page in his “script”. “Let’s confirm where you think you belong in nature now,” he began. “On a scale of one to ten, with one being worth less than garbage and ten being a human, where do you think you belong?”

Lydia tapped her head against the speaker a single time. As painful as it was, Ben was grateful that he had finished his task. However, he could tell by the look in his daughter’s eyes as she took back her phone that the ordeal was far from over.

“Very good,” Nancy commented, clapping her hands near her device to make sure her mother heard it clear as day. “Now that you’ve accepted the new you, let’s try to have a little fun. I’ve set up a little obstacle course for you to stretch out your non-existent legs. Would you like to see, I mean, experience it for yourself? After all, that’s what you wanted right? To experience the life of a lowly worm?”

A small nod from the worm was all Nancy needed to grasp her between her fingers once more. Carrying her prisoner over to her table of supplies, the witch flung off one of the sheets to reveal the makeshift obstacle course. The structures were made up of things Nancy had taken from her mother's room, including things like her designer sunglasses and priceless jewelry. While these things carried with them a hefty price tag, they were little more than a means to further the worm's torment as Nancy placed her on a set of pearls that acted as the starting line. Giving her mother a slight bump to the tail, Nancy eagerly watched as her prisoner started to wriggle forward.

Getting past the necklace, Lydia's next obstacle came in the form of various boulders made up of her own, precious gemstones and other glittering accessories. Easily squeezing her squishy form through the loop of her wedding ring, she proceeded to climb over a set of designer shoes to find momentary respite inside of them. Pushed onward by Nancy shaking the high heels, Lydia made her way back down to ruffle the edges of a skirt on her way forward. Freeing herself from the cave of soft fabric, she continued onto a large, rectangular bump. Though the worm couldn't see what she was crawling over, Nancy was delighted by the show of her mother squirming across a framed photograph of herself accepting a prize from her company.

"Well, looks like we finally found a use for all of this overpriced junk," Nancy commented as her mother left a slimy residue across the image of her own face.

"Nancy, this is going way too far," Ben piped up. "I'm putting my foot down here. It's clear that your mother doesn't feel right about this."

Turning her gaze towards Ben's poor attempt to be proactive, Nancy couldn't help letting out a giggle. "Are you sure about that?" she asked. "You said it yourself that this was all a part of her twisted fantasy. Whose to say that worm isn't actually overwhelmed by whatever sick

pleasure that could come from this situation? Would you really want to deprive it of that satisfaction?"

For just a moment, Ben believed Nancy's words. After all, he had heard multiple times from Lydia herself how much she wanted to know what it was like to be a worm. However, there was only so much he could be convinced after watching Lydia's form be magnified by a pair of fashion glasses that had been placed in the obstacle course.

"Even if that is true," Ben said, gently picking up Lydia between his fingers, "I'd rather not leave things to chance. Hand me your phone. I want to talk to her myself."

Nancy let out a sigh. "Fine," she said, handing over the device. "But after everything that spineless creature put us through, you really shouldn't be so eager to let it off with a slap on its non-existent wrist."

Repressing his reaction to his daughter's words, Ben placed Lydia on the speaker once more. "Lydia it's me, Ben," he said. "Earlier I was just doing what Nancy told me to do. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to say all those hurtful things. You can be honest with me. I can only imagine how scary this all is. Feeling so powerless and vulnerable in this state." Reaching down, he gently slid his finger along her body. In turn, Lydia wrapped herself around his digit in an attempt to cuddle up to him.

"Well that's sickeningly sweet," Nancy commented.

"Let's make this clear," Ben continued, choosing to ignore Nancy's jabs. "Do you want to keep going through his humiliation routine?"

Lydia shook her head against Ben's finger.

"Would you prefer to just wait out the week in peace?"

Again Lydia responded, this time with a gentle nod across his skin.

“Then it’s settled. I’ll get you a nice, big flower pot and put it in the living room. That should keep you safe and sound.”

“And unbelievably bored if you ask me,” Nancy spoke up loud enough to be heard through the phone. “Like any animal you need some form of enrichment in an enclosure to keep that miniscule brain active.”

“What are you suggesting?” Ben asked.

“That we do more than just a dainty pot of soil in the living room,” Nancy replied. “How about instead, I get you a waste basket. At the bottom will be your favorite meal of soil, but on top I’ll put more than enough rotten fruit and vegetables to keep you satisfied. That sound good?”

Ben was left shocked as he felt Lydia nod against his finger once more.

“She... said yes,” he begrudgingly admitted.

Nancy was beside herself with laughter as she saw the way her father’s expression was overtaken with the sheer hopelessness of the situation.

“I still don’t feel right about this,” Ben said. “Leaving you by yourself in a bin of trash for an entire week. I just wish I could somehow be with you to...”

Ben trailed off as an idea appeared in his head. It was an awful thought, one that filled him with dread. Even still, it was something he had to do to make up for his part in his wife’s torment. “Nancy, can you cast that spell again?”

Nancy let out a groan. “Are you seriously that dense? I can only reverse the spell after a week has passed. No matter how much you bitch and moan, there’s no way to speed up the process.”

“I’m not talking about that,” Ben replied. Holding the phone up to his face again, he asked Lydia, “Would you feel more comfortable if I was a worm too?”

Though it took some time for Lydia to respond, the worm eventually slowly nodded her head against him.

“Nancy,” Ben said, turning towards his daughter, “she wants me to do it. Can you change me into a worm?”

A wicked smile appeared on Nancy’s face. “So that’s the reason you two got hooked up in the first place. You’re just as messed up as her.”

“Can you do it or not?” Ben asked, clenching his fingers around his daughter’s phone.

“Can I? Yes. Will I? Well, that depends on if you agree to letting me give you the same kind of treatment I just gave to my other pet.”

Ben took a deep breath. “Do whatever you want to me. Like you said, I’m just as much at fault.”

“Look at you, acting all brave,” Nancy teased. “Alright then, let’s get started. Strip down and stand on the blanket. You should probably know from before, but this isn’t going to be pleasant.”

Ben did as he was told and took off his clothes. Leaving Lydia with a gentle tap on her head, he made his way towards the space his daughter indicated. Hearing her begin to chant out the words to the spell, he closed his eyes and told himself that this was the right thing to do. He hung onto this feeling just before he felt the same surge of energy blast into his chest.

From the impact point came a chilling feeling that spread through Ben’s figure. Though he tried to clutch his chest to retain heat, he was thwarted by his arms merging into his torso. Any signs of courage were dismissed as he let out a scream of terror from the metamorphosis of

his legs merging together to form a tail. Wriggling around as his skin became squishy and pink like Lydia's, he tilted his head up to see Nancy loom over him.

"Don't think about trying to back out now," Nancy said. "It's too late. The spell has already been cast. You'll just have to deal with it like that bitch of a mother until a week passes."

Any attempts for Ben to give a rebuttal were halted by another scream leaving his lips as his eyes and ears dissipated into his form. Left blind and deaf, his continued cries of terror were inevitably silenced by his facial features disappearing to leave only a tiny mouth incapable of human words. Only able to sense the world through whatever vibrated through his tiny, worm body, he elected to try to relieve some of his fear by wildly flailing around his tail and pointed head.

Ben's wriggling came to a stop the moment he felt a pair of comparatively massive fingers squeeze around his body to hoist him into the air. By the way his captor swung him around like a toy, he was able to figure out that he was being carried by Nancy. Knowing it would be futile to try and resist, he let his body go limp as he accepted whatever punishment his daughter was about to give to him. His obedience was rewarded by him being gently placed along the surface of the speaker.

"Seems like this is going to be a lot easier than the other worm's training," Nancy said, her words vibrating through Ben's body. "Guess being a worm just comes naturally to you. No surprise there. However, let's make sure." Nancy paused for a few seconds, letting dread sink into Ben's very being.

"Are you a respectable father?" she asked.

Ben shook his head.

"Are you even a human being?"

Again, he disagreed.

“Is it true that you’ve become what you’ve always meant to be, a lowly worm not even worth the dirt it eats for nourishment?”

Ben vigorously nodded, to both appease his daughter and confirm what he had been telling himself for so many years. His reaction let him feel the unsettling vibration of Nancy’s laughs go through the speaker.

“Very good. You’re in the right mindset. Now let’s see if your body is up to the task, you dirt munching creature.”

As Nancy went silent once more, Ben braced himself as he felt her fingers grip his body once more. Remaining still to avoid angering her, she only moved once he was placed on a surface once more. A few cautious wriggles let him feel the soft soil beneath him. As much as he was repulsed by what he had to do, it paled in comparison to the wrath he feared from Nancy.

Diving head first into the mud, Ben attempted to burrow through it. Each mouthful of soil brought with it a conflict of emotions. His logical side was repulsed by the earthy flavor that he experienced with each bite. However, his worm body reveled in both the rich meal and the opportunity to further surround itself in mud as he burrowed. In the end, he let the instincts take over to help him through the task, rewarding him with a moment of peace amongst the dirt. His makeshift sanctuary lasted until Nancy scooped him up.

Dropped off onto a much harder surface, Ben was nudged by his daughter to start moving forward. Squirming as fast as he could, he wriggled his way around the same pieces of jewelry that his wife had gone through earlier. As he continued through the obstacle course, crawling over shoes and pushing himself through rings, he was eventually pushed towards a surface that was slightly raised above the table. Crawling his body along the strange object, he tried to recall

what the familiar sensation pressing up against his body was. It was upon recognizing the material as laminated plastic one would find on a license, that he was able to figure out what he was crawling over thanks to Nancy's earlier display of malice towards Lydia.

Finishing besmirching his own face with leftover dirt and slime, Ben was once more picked up into the air. Being placed back on the speaker, he patiently waited for Nancy's next command. The lack of sight or sound left him trembling as he felt something moving closer to him. In his panicked state he didn't know what to do. As he pondered if it would be better to run or beg Nancy for assistance, he stopped as he felt something squishy press up against him. Feeling a similarly long body wrap around him, he breathed a sigh of relief as he realized that it was his wife trying to offer him a modicum of comfort.

"Aww, isn't that touching," Nancy teased. "Guess it's about time to get you two love birds to your nest."

A shudder went through Lydia and Ben's bodies.

"Whoops, guess those creatures aren't your favorite right now. In any case, I'm going to place you in the bin. You'll have five minutes to bury into the soil before I start tossing trash on top of you. Don't take too long. I have a lot of things to clean up after our little playtime today."

Not giving her pet worms a chance to respond, Nancy picked up Ben and Lydia. Once more carried through the air, Ben was able to stay calm thanks to his wife's embrace. Even as they were placed into their makeshift enclosure, the two worms remained intertwined with one another. Though they couldn't say anything the touch was enough to convey their feelings of regret for getting each other into this mess. However, the warmth they felt from their squishy forms also made it clear how relieved they were to be together to weather through the ordeal.

Ben and Lydia were only separated from one another by Nancy physically pushing them apart. A few more nudges to their bodies got them to start digging into the mud. As they buried themselves as deep as possible, they shuddered as they felt the heaps of rotten food being placed above them. Though they were still unsure of what they would be like once they returned to normal, for the moment they were just happy to meet again in their home of dirt. They were ready to come out of the experience as more fitting parents for their extraordinarily talented daughter.