

Wendy sighed and tried again.

Her little brother was... smart, but not exceptional like her. Explaining to him took a little more patience than she was used to. "If we wrap the wire around like this..." she said slowly, coiling the wire around the nail, "and run a current through it like so... it makes an electromagnet. See how it picks up the paper clips?"

Stanley's eyes and mouth were wide as he watched his older sister work. His nose was still a little runny from his crying, but his mood had turned around completely. Wendy felt an upwelling of affection for him. It wasn't something she often felt these days. She was, after all, a very cool tenth grader. Stanley was a sixth grader, and more importantly, a bit of a dweeb. But even Wendy couldn't ignore it when she heard him crying over his uncompleted science fair project.

"Why though?" he asked. "Why does it become a magnet?"

Wendy gave his poorly scribbled posterboard a dubious look and weighed the benefits of giving her brother a more in-depth explanation. Since his project was due tomorrow, he probably needed all the time he had just to finish something basic.

"It just does," she said with a smirk, ruffling his hair. "That's the great thing about Science. Once you figure out the rules, you can do almost anything you want. There's more to it. I'll tell you later if you're still interested."

"Anything I want?" asked Stanley, his eyes glowing as he dragged the simple electromagnet back and forth, collecting paper clips.

"Almost anything," confirmed Wendy. She was actually having a good time with Stanley for once. Maybe they had finally found a common ground in Science. "There are some things that are just science fiction... like teleportation, or moving faster-than-light, or..."

Wendy Sparx opened her eyes with a start, the dream of her long ago memory fading rapidly from her mind. It was, as usual, ten minutes before her alarm was set to go off.

Once, her boyfriend Roger had asked why she set the alarm at all if she never used it. Wendy had just rolled her eyes. Being perfect wasn't about some inborn ability, it was about making the right choice every time, over and over again. If she hadn't set an alarm every day for years, then she would never have formed the habit of waking up right before it.

Wendy swung her legs out of bed, revealing their firm, shapely length. Her body was another testament to her near-obsessive pursuit of excellence. It hadn't come easy; Wendy's gym routine was as rigorous as her sleep schedule. She jumped up and immediately began a light yoga routine to wake herself up a little before she hopped in the shower. Her lithe, petite body curved and stretched in the dim early-morning light of her bedroom, glistening with a light sheen of sweat and covered only by a loose sleep shirt and tiny pajama shorts.

Wendy happened to catch a glance of herself in the mirror and stopped for a moment in a bent over pose to admire the view. She had to say... as odd as it was to get turned on by your own reflection, her image was enticing. The thin pajama shirt plastered to her breasts by the glistening sweat on her body... the way her shirt rode up a little, showing a peek of her firm bouncy ass... There was a lot to like in the mirror. Wendy's hand slipped downward, dipping into the front of her panties for some sneaky indulgence in another morning activity that might wake her up.

Then her alarm went off. Wendy sighed, shook herself, and flicked it to silence, moving on with her morning routine. A cold shower (which took care of any lingering arousal). Rigorous skin care. Light touches of makeup. Comfortable, professional clothes. When she finished, she looked at herself approvingly in the mirror, this time with a little less early-morning horniness. She looked good. Shining auburn hair hanging in a thick braid over her shoulder, intelligent green eyes, and delicate, symmetrical features.

She looked like a winner, which was appropriate; today was the day when her life would go from good to great.

As she hurried down the stairs of her apartment building, Wendy noticed with mild annoyance that Vanessa had texted her. As usual, it was some nonsense about meeting up with "the girls" to grab lunch. Sometimes it could honestly be exhausting. It was important to have a social circle, and Vanessa, Gwen, and Marsha filled that role adequately, but they could be a little... clingy at times. More like lackeys or hangers-on than real friends. She sent back a terse message explaining she would be too busy today.

It wasn't even a lie this time; Wendy's day was set to be packed. The final calibrations and safety checks for Project Butterfly would take her most of the morning and afternoon. Around four, she would get Stanley to fill in for her so she could hit the gym, grab a quick dinner, then be back in time for the historic first test this evening.

As she stepped into the lobby, Wendy saw that Roger was waiting for her. It had become their morning routine, and he was never late. It was a quality Wendy appreciated in a man. Just like a friend-group, Wendy considered it essential to have a romantic partner for optimal mental health. But, unlike her three "besties", Roger filled his role much better than just adequately.

He was tall, with swept back dark hair and icy blue eyes that always looked slightly surprised. His body was even more impressive: broad and strong, but not bulky. Just lean, toned muscle. ...And he knew how to put that strength to good use in the bedroom. Under Wendy's expert guidance, naturally.

As Wendy strode up and favored her boyfriend with a brief kiss, accepting the green smoothie he had brought her for breakfast. She wondered if she and Roger would still be dating after the experiment. She thought so. Even hoped so. He had outperformed her expectations as a

romantic partner after she had spent some time whipping him into shape. But you could never tell. Project Butterfly would change a lot of things, and maybe there was a man out there even better for Wendy than Roger.

"Today's the day, right?" asked Roger with a boyish grin, his voice low and conspiratorial, "when you finally prove that you've been right all along?"

Wendy raised a cool eyebrow at him. He should really know better than to say that sort of thing in public. Roger didn't know what she was working on specifically, of course. No one did, except the other researchers at the theoretical physics lab. And her assistant of course. But Wendy hadn't been able to keep herself from gushing about how close she was to a breakthrough, even if she didn't explain the specifics. Roger was just keying in on that excitement, like the good partner he was.

"Yes," she said quietly, letting a smug smile creep over her face. "By tonight, you'll be dating a famous scientist." *Probably*, she added to herself in her head.

"Well, do you have time in your day to spend a little time with me?" asked Roger with a chuckle, wrapping his arms around her and pulling her close, his blue eyes loving. "You know, one last moment of alone time before you're mobbed by the adoring public?"

Wendy was about to reflexively say "no", but then thought again, sighed, and melted into Roger's embrace, hugging him back. She just told her friends she was too busy, but she had been planning to take a brief break for dinner and a gym run while the final numbers compiled anyway. What would another half-hour matter? Getting a little "alone time" with Roger would probably help to loosen her up and get her in the zone anyway.

"Maybe," she said brusquely, giving him another peck on the lips. "I'll keep you posted. For now, I have to run."

Roger watched her go with a happy smile and a wave.

Wendy really did hope that it turned out he was good enough for her after all of the... alterations that would be happening tonight. But she wasn't deeply concerned. If she wasn't dating him, she would have someone better.

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Stan Sparx woke to the sound of birdsong outside his dorm window. He sighed and shook his head, then peered out of the dusty glass at the robin couple busily feeding a new trio of squirming chicks. A wide, goofy grin broke across his acned face.

"Way to go, you two," he muttered, "you really accomplished something. I knew you could." If only he could find success so easily.

Stan picked up his phone from the bedside table, catching a glimpse of his face reflected in the dark screen. As usual, the sight made him grimace. He was pimply, short sighted, and buck-toothed, with a mop of greasy blonde hair. The best that anyone had ever been able to say about his looks was that he had a great personality. Stan flicked the screen open with a sinking feeling of defeat, checking the time. He already knew what he would see based on the strong morning light outside. Even though he expected them, the glowing numbers 10:05 sent a stab of anxiety through his heart. But they didn't spur him to move any faster. He was already late, and Professor Langstrom was going to humiliate him in front of the class no matter what he did. He might as well not hurry to his public humiliation.

Another day of sleeping through his alarms. He had tried everything. The apps that forced you to solve math problems, placing his phone across the room... even a device that was supposed to shock you awake. Nothing worked. His sleepy subconscious just didn't want to face the world for some reason.

And it had gotten worse ever since Christine had... he shied away from the thought like he had touched a hot surface. After a month of pain, he had finally managed to not think about his ex-girlfriend every minute of every day. He needed to keep that streak up.

Stan noticed that he had received a text from his older sister. It was curt and blunt, as usual for their communication:

[Be at the lab by four to supervise the final system compilation. Remember, no one steps foot in my lab today except me and you.]

Stan made a strangled sound of discomfort in his throat. He had been under the impression that Wendy wouldn't need his help until later tonight. He had sort of already made plans for the afternoon. But Stan had never been good at arguing with his sister. He found it hard to even complain about her poor treatment outside his own head. She had been the favored golden child in their family since before Stan could remember. A genius prodigy who could do no wrong. Meanwhile, Stan was just... Stan. A solid "B+" student who, unlike Wendy, tended to struggle in social situations due to his unfortunate looks.

Well, at least this would give him the perfect excuse to avoid his normal volunteering hours at the shelter tonight. Ever since Christine had... no. No, he wasn't thinking about that. He would need to make sure he got in touch with Jenna though. She would still be expecting to meet up with him for their tutoring session.

Stan dressed in a rumpled t-shirt that he plucked off the floor of his single-occupancy dorm and headed out to the class he was already late for, sour thoughts chasing themselves around his head.

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Food and beverages weren't allowed in the lab, but, like clockwork, Wendy had just finished her green smoothie during her brisk ten-minute walk to work. She expertly tossed the empty cup into the trash can beside the front doors without breaking stride, then punched in this week's security code to enter the cold, clinical world of the University's theoretical physics lab.

As she made her way to her locker and exchanged her jacket for a pristine white lab coat, Wendy noticed that Derrick was hanging around the area as well. Great. Just what she needed on the most important day of her life, an annoying nobody who insisted on bothering his intellectual betters. Derrick was a paunchy forty-something with a comb-over and resting expression of smug self-appreciation. One of the sorts of scientists who was perpetually amused and disgusted to discover that a female had wormed her way into his boys' club.

Most of the time he would just treat Wendy with a silent air of dismissive contempt, but today Wendy wasn't so lucky. Derrick approached with a leering smile. "Well, well, if it isn't *Little Miss Marie Curie*," he said with a sneer. "How is your... *research* going? You know why I gave you that nickname, right Marie? She died from her experiments. Really makes you think, doesn't it?"

Wendy snorted in derision, not even bothering to dignify Derrick with a glance. She reached into her locker to take out her badge and clip it proudly to the front of her crisp lab coat. It had the title "Senior Researcher" printed proudly across it. It was a nearly unheard of honor. Technically speaking, she was still a grad student, so the fact that Dr. Harrison was willing to grant her that title was a testament to her skills. It was also one of the main reasons that Derrick wouldn't leave her alone.

"The name is Sparx, *Junior Researcher* Young," said Wendy cheerfully, heavily emphasizing the worthless little man's job title. He knew that of course. The Marie Curie nickname was a taunt, and a stupid one at that. An attempt to belittle her entire gender as well as Project Butterfly. Well, two could play at that game. "I know it must be hard to keep track of things like that when your head researcher gives you so much to keep you busy."

Derrick's eyes narrowed. That was the other reason he hated Wendy... well, that and the fact she was a woman in his field. Wendy had her own project and allocated research budget, while Derrick was stuck working under someone else. Wendy dealt with jealousy a lot. It was natural when you were as talented as she was. But Derrick was easy to deal with. He was thin-skinned and overly proud. Getting him flustered and furious was child's play to someone like Wendy.

"Listen here you..." hissed Derrick furiously, his face turning red. He gulped back whatever horrible word he was going to say, but the rest of his hatred wouldn't be stopped. "Everyone in this fucking lab except for you and the dumbass old has-been that runs this place knows that the idiotic project you have taking up half the basement is a ludicrous waste of time. We all laugh about it behind your back. And when you finally fail and get exposed as the fraud you are, you'll be begging for an assistant position."

He was huffing and puffing with anger. Wow, Wendy had really touched a nerve today. By now, Derrick had more or less learned that messing with her wasn't worth it, contenting himself to sneer at her from a distance and not-so-sneakily check out her ass. He must have thought she would be easier prey today because the boss was getting impatient over Project Butterfly. But it would take a lot more than a loser like Derrick Young to scare Wendy. She leaned forward toward Derrick with a tight grin on her face. "Is that why they're funding my project and you work as a lab tech?" she asked innocently with a raised eyebrow, "because my ideas are a waste of time? Or maybe... they're just a little too advanced for a Junior Researcher to understand, hmm?" She turned sharply with a flip of her lab coat, leaving the middle-aged man scowling and red-faced with rage behind her.

"It defies the laws of physics, *Curie!*" he called out after her sourly. "Not that I would expect a little girl like you to understand that!"

Wendy strode down the hall, pleased to have crushed Derrick so thoroughly, but even more pleased to be done speaking to him.

But as she turned the corner, she nearly ran into a man she was even less pleased to see than Derrick. Dr. James Harrison was a striking man in his late fifties with an iron grey beard and sharp eyes. Unlike Derrick, Wendy usually got along with him splendidly. He was one of the few people smart enough to recognize how much of a genius she truly was.

No, the issue with running into the head of the physics lab wasn't that she disliked him... It was a question of timing.

"Sparx," he said sharply, giving her a curt nod of greeting. "Headed to the lab? Perfect. I wanted a progress update on Project Butterfly."

Wendy gritted her teeth and painted a smile on her face. "Of course, Doctor," she said with a pleasant, carefree tone, "always happy to get you up to speed." In reality, the last thing she needed was her boss snooping around her laboratory today of all days... but refusing would be even more suspicious than anything he might see down there right now. She gestured for her boss to follow and led him to her basement lab.

Machines hummed and exhaust fans whirled in the dim light of the machinery-strewn basement. Wendy had been running calculations all through the night. Her first order of business this morning had been to check on the progress of the calculations and squash any errors. Until her boss had so rudely imposed on her, that is.

Harrison raised an eyebrow as he glanced down at the numbers filling the terminal screen in the shielded alcove Wendy had constructed by the stairs. "Ah, running some numbers I see," he said, an undercurrent of eagerness in his voice. "A sign of progress, I hope?"

"Just routine checks," lied Wendy smoothly.

Dr. Harrison grunted, turning away from the screen, mercifully not reading the numbers too closely. He gave Wendy a piercing look, his arms held behind his back. "Let me ask you a blunt question, Sparx," he said brusquely. "How close is Project Butterfly to practical trials?"

"Quite close," said Wendy, staring him dead in the eyes, her fingers unconsciously pulling into a fist, hidden in her pocket.

Harrison sighed and put a hand to his forehead, leaning against the wall. "So you've said for the past few months. Wendy, so far I've managed to hide the numbers from the board of trustees for exactly where the grant money is going. But I won't be able to hide something this expensive forever. At some point I'll have to tell them exactly what you're working on down here, and if we don't have solid proof that Project Butterfly is functional... well, let's just say they'll be laughing at us both as we're escorted out of the building."

Wendy understood her boss's predicament. She knew the risk of their bankrollers discovering the nature of Project Butterfly as much as anyone. That's why hiding the successful trials on inanimate objects from Dr. Harrison over the past few months had been so stressful. But she wasn't stressed now. She had made it in time.

Now all she had to do was take care of one little thing for herself... After that, Dr. Harrison could have all the proof he wanted.

"Wendy," said Dr. Harrison, snapping his fingers and calling her attention back to him. "I need a hard timeline here. When will you be able to demonstrate results?"

Wendy sighed and reluctantly said, "Next week."

Dr. Harrison raised his eyebrows. "You're certain?"

"Absolutely," said Wendy firmly. By next week, everything would be going so well for her that it wouldn't matter if she lost access to Project Butterfly.

Because that was the real issue. Once Wendy demonstrated that her theories were correct, there would be university, press, and almost certainly government scrutiny. Tonight was probably her one and only chance to use her invention without the entire world looking over her shoulder.

"Good," said Dr. Harrison with a smile. He stared thoughtfully at the buzzing machinery one last time before turning to head up the stairs. "I'll leave you to it then, Sparx. Make me proud."

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“Aha,” said Professor Langstrom’s snide, cultured voice from the front of the lecture hall, “look who decided to join us. Showing your usual dedication to the subject I see, Stanley.”

Stan winced. He had tried his best to sneak in, but the Analytical Mechanics class wasn’t as full as some of the less advanced lectures, and all the empty seats had made him easy to pick out even after he had eased the door open and closed behind him on the way in.

This class had been a complete fiasco for Stan. He was decently skilled in Physics, but he had never been good at waking up early in the morning, and Professor Langstrom had taken an instant dislike to him. His grades kept slipping further and further.

Professors weren’t supposed to fail students just because they don’t like them, but at this point Stan wouldn’t put it past Professor Langstrom. He was a tall, handsome man with dark, swept-back hair, a shiny smile that would be charming on anyone else, and a mean streak. He had bragged on the first day of class that half of all of his students failed the course and Stan had a feeling that Professor Langstrom planned to make him part of that statistic.

Luckily it seemed like the professor had been in the middle of one of his long-winded lectures. The only thing he tended to enjoy more than bullying students was hearing himself talk, so with a dismissive wave of his hand, he let Stan find a seat.

Stan slumped back and tried to focus on the Professor’s droning voice, but it was difficult. He had so much happening in his life right now. Relationship problems... that he wasn’t going to think about, trouble with his grades, and, of course, the endless, tedious work of acting as his sister’s assistant at the physics lab.

Not an official assistant, unfortunately. He wasn’t drawing a salary. He had actually applied to work as a lab assistant there a few years ago and been rejected. He still remembered the crushing humiliation of the interview. The cool grey eyes of Wendy’s boss as he asked Stan if there were any unique or useful skills he could bring to the lab... his stuttering, dry-mouthed answer... the expression of disappointed dismissal in the older man’s face.

But, despite the fact that Stan hadn’t been hired in the end, Wendy insisted that she needed her little brother’s help in her lab. He was the only one she could trust completely, according to her. And Wendy was hard to say ‘no’ to. Stan had lived his whole life in his older sister’s shadow. She had always been the perfect, smart, precocious genius. And Stan was...also there. Awkward where Wendy was vivacious. Ugly where she was beautiful. Was it any wonder that Wendy had gotten used to demanding his obedience? Was it any wonder why Wendy was the youngest head researcher at the lab and Stan hadn’t even been hired as a lab assistant?

In a way, it was a compliment from her that she expected Stan to understand the advanced theories behind Project Butterfly. And he did... if only barely.

Their trial run tonight would change everything. Stan might get his name in the history books after all, if only as a footnote beneath his sister's name written in big bold letters.

But that reminded him. He had to cancel his tutoring session with Jenna before he forgot.

He stealthily took out his phone and placed it flat on his desk behind his textbook. Professor Langstrom hated cell phones, so he needed to be cautious. The cruel bully of a professor would take any excuse to humiliate Stan in front of the class.

He pulled up his messaging app and sent Jenna a quick text.

[Sorry, Jenna, something came up and I won't be able to make it to our tutoring session this afternoon. Sorry again!]

He didn't have to wait long for a reply.

[Awwwwwww, so I have to go without my usual Stan time? How are you gonna make it up to me? ;P]

Stan gave his phone a bemused look. Jenna was the cute, bubbly little freshman he was tutoring for her Physics 101 class. She was also a flirt, which Stan didn't really know how to deal with. Was this just the way that she interacted with all guys? Stan found it hard to believe that a cutie like Jenna would be interested in a guy like him in particular. But even if she was, there was nothing he could do about it. As her older tutor, he was sort of her teacher. He was kind of in a position of power over her. It would be unethical to try to push things further between them.

Stan was trying to think up a neutral reply when a social media notification popped up on the top of his screen. His heart sank. Christine had just posted something. He knew he should just ignore it... In fact, it would probably be better to unfriend his ex-girlfriend altogether. But his finger moved on its own, clicking on the notification as his stomach roiled with anxiety.

Oof. The picture that filled Stan's screen was a punch in the gut. Christine, his gorgeous ex-girlfriend, smiled brightly at the screen, her shoulder-length dark hair shining and her deep brown eyes warm and happy. Tucker, her tall, handsome new boyfriend hugged her from behind, resting his chin on her shoulder. The caption was a lone heart emoji.

It had felt too good to be true when he met Christine at the homeless shelter where they both volunteered. And, in the end, he supposed that it was. He knew from the beginning that she was a little out of his league, but he fooled himself for a while into believing that his personality was enough for her, despite his subpar looks.

Well, maybe his personality had been enough... until Tucker started volunteering. Suddenly, Christine was thrown together with a man who was just as kind and selfless as Stan, but was

also conventionally attractive. Christine and Tucker had quickly become friends, and over the course of a few months, spent more and more time together during volunteering hours until...

Stan knew it was uncharitable to say that Tucker had “stolen” Christine from him. Love was complicated and messy sometimes, and he had believed Christine when she tearfully explained that she and Tucker never intended for this to happen. But Christine’s apologies didn’t change the final outcome, and, regardless of whether or not she had been stolen, Tucker ended up with Christine and Stan had ended up single.

Maybe nice guys could finish first... but ugly nice guys still tended to finish behind handsome ones.

He stared bitterly at the photo, noting how Tucker rested his hands on Christine’s hips. His touch seemed awfully... casual. Despite being together for months, Stan had never gotten any further than making out with Christine. She had claimed she wanted to take it slow. But looking at the way Tucker touched her... he didn’t want to think about it, but did that mean...?

Stan was so caught up in his misery that he didn’t notice the shadow falling over him until it was already too late. Without warning, Professor Langstrom’s hand flashed down and snatched the phone from in front of him. “Well, well, not just late, but rude as well,” drawled the Professor, holding the phone between his forefinger and thumb as if it was something filthy.

“Wait, Professor, I was just...!” blustered Stan, faltering as he was rudely forced out of his heartbroken sulk. He could hear snickering laughter from the other advanced physics students in the lecture hall as Langstrom showed off his smartphone, waving it above his head. Stan knew that Professor Langstrom wasn’t well-liked (except for by the female students who liked to flirt with him), but for some reason all the other students were willing to pile on the bullying in his case. It had always been that way for him. For reasons Stan didn’t understand, something about him just activated the worst predatory instincts in people.

“No excuses!” snapped Professor Langstrom with a smirk. “I’m confiscating this. Maybe you can have it back tomorrow. If you’re on time, that is.”

Stan flushed red. He had no idea who Langstrom thought he was. This wasn’t high school, and professors had no authority to take and hold students’ phones. Besides, tonight was a crucial time for Project Butterfly. He needed to be able to stay in touch with his sister. “P-Professor, I really think that...” he began with a frown.

Professor Langstrom turned back to him with a sneer on his square-jawed face. “What? What do you think, Sparx? Tell me.”

Stan gulped... hesitated... then slumped back in his seat. The words died on his lips and he hung his head in shame. He could feel the mocking eyes of his fellow students watching him. He had just never had the sort of inner strength that Wendy had. Or Tucker. Or anyone who

sometimes got what they wanted. Just like he had with Christine, Stan sat back once again, letting someone walk all over him.

“That’s what I thought,” said the Professor, turning away.

Stan stewed in shame and anger for the rest of class. Well, it probably wouldn’t be a big deal anyway. The only really important reason he might need to text Wendy was for the access code to the lab, but most days that wasn’t necessary. He could just catch her on her way out. He was sure it wouldn’t be an issue.

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Wendy spun in her rolling chair and cracked her neck. Everything was running smoothly. The final numbers would be crunched with plenty of time to spare. The only task left was dealing with the occasional error messages. The computers were processing a massive number of complex equations using a custom code patched together by Wendy herself. It was simply inevitable that slight errors would crop up. They weren’t usually complex to resolve, and Stan, even with his limited capabilities, was more than up to the task.

Speaking of her little brother... Wendy checked her phone. Three thirty. She had told Stanley to be at the lab by four o’clock... but if she left now and grabbed a light dinner on the way to the gym, she would be able to squeeze in the rendezvous Roger had requested afterward.

Well, it wasn’t a big deal. An error or two might pop up in the half-hour between when she left and Stan came in, but she was confident that he could resolve the backlog without issue. Wendy texted Stan the new access code for the front door, and got up to leave.

Part of perfection was knowing when to take a break. Wendy left the lab with her heart soaring, riding the giddy high of her day of triumph.

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Stan waited nervously outside the lab. He wasn’t sure exactly what time it was right now, but it felt like it was way past four. Was it possible that Wendy had gotten caught up in her work and wasn’t planning to leave after all?

Without his phone, it was impossible to check. The minutes ticked by slowly as he internally cursed Professor Langstrom and his own weakness. Why couldn’t he have just stood up for himself for once? Wendy would never forgive him if he managed to fuck up this all-important evening.

He paced outside the doors to the lab, unsure what to do, but certain that if he made the wrong choice, he would be blamed for it.

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Inside the empty lab, the computer chimed softly, a red error message popping onto the screen.

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“...And finished!” called out Xander at the front of the class. “Good job today, ladies! Especially you, Wendy! Perfect as always!”

Wendy gave the tall, lean zumba instructor a thin-lipped smile, then wiped the sweat from her brow. She felt good, inside and out, the pleasant burn of a cardio workout buzzing through her muscles and the preemptive satisfaction of the evening ahead lifting her spirits. But she still didn’t feel good enough to give Xander the time of day. He had been laying on the compliments pretty thick lately, and she could see his eyes wandering over her body during the workouts. As if he actually had a chance.

He tried to casually catch up with her for a “spontaneous” chat as the class was filing out of the room, but Wendy simply sped up and left him behind. Xander might be good-looking, with his dark skin and defined muscles, but she had discreetly looked into his life outside the gym and found him wanting. Certainly not in competition with Roger.

Wendy considered hitting the gym shower, then thought better of it. She would prefer to keep her body warm and limber with a brisk walk home in her gym clothes. After all, when she arrived she would have some more physical activity to look forward to...

On her way out the door, she texted Roger.

[30 mins. My apartment. Make me feel like a Queen.]

...

Wendy rinsed off her sweat with a quick shower. The hot water felt amazing on her aching muscles. By the time she stepped out of the shower, Roger had already entered the apartment. She could hear him getting ready in the bedroom as she toweled off.

A smile quirked up the corners of her lips. As usual, he was taking the initiative to support her and meet her demanding standards. This was why she and Roger were so compatible. He was an impressive man, but he didn’t let his male ego blind him to the fact that Wendy was still more impressive than him. A lot of guys wouldn’t be able to do that. Most men wanted to wear the pants in a relationship, but Roger could be the obedient partner that Wendy needed, while also thinking for himself when she just couldn’t be bothered to micromanage him.

Wendy dropped her towel to the floor and left her bathroom gloriously naked, flushed with physical exertion, and elated from her impending triumph. She felt a thrill of desire course

through her as she saw her boyfriend was naked as well, prepared for their rendezvous by kneeling on the ground, waiting patiently for his queen.

Wendy didn't think of herself as having a domination kink. But Roger had noticed that it turned his girlfriend on when he was... appreciative. That she enjoyed it when he went along with what she wanted in bed. And so, over time, they had sort of leaned into that dynamic. Most of the time it was really pretty mild. They only engaged in more serious play like this on special occasions. But today certainly qualified as a special occasion.

Wendy walked up confidently to Roger's kneeling form. So strong and assertive to others... yet so meek and humble for her... the thought sent pleasant chills up Wendy's spine, and made heat gather between her thighs. Normally Roger was tall enough to tower over her petite frame, but as he knelt the situation was reversed. Wendy's eyes sparkled as she saw his thick cock throbbing with need between his legs. He would be allowed to use it tonight... but only after he showed his devotion.

She reached down and cupped his stubbly cheek. "Good boy..." she murmured. "Are you ready to do as I say?"

"Yes," breathed Roger, leaning forward to gently kiss her, right where her flat, toned tummy met the top of her neatly groomed pubic hair. Wendy's hand slipped up to gently grip his hair, pushing him further down as she spread her thighs.

"Then please me," purred Wendy as Roger's tongue began to obediently swirl and tease between her lips.

God, he had gotten good at this. Wendy spread her legs a little wider, thrusting her hips gently forward into Roger's writhing lips and tongue. "Yes..." she breathed in ecstasy, "make me feel good. Deeper."

Letting go and losing herself in sexual pleasure like this was a little... unseemly, but Wendy knew that Roger was happy to oblige. His hands raised and cupped her firm backside, pulling his girlfriend tightly into his warm, wet mouth as he feasted, making her moan in delight.

Wendy's hands left Roger's head to pull and twist at her stiff nipples, doubling her pleasure. She let Roger serve her for a long few pleasant minutes, her wet, slick cunt rubbing and thrusting harder and harder against his handsome, square-jawed face. His cock leaked and pulsed between his legs, neglected for the moment as he focused solely on her pleasure. He was putting her sexual needs above his own, and that just made her lust burn brighter.

But Wendy had no intention of letting her loyal boyfriend go unrewarded for his devotion. Besides, with all of Roger's enthusiastic foreplay, her pussy was beginning to ache with needy emptiness. It needed to be filled. Now.

"On the bed," commanded Wendy firmly, pushing his face away from her eager and ready pussy. "On your back tonight. I want to ride."

Cowgirl could be strenuous, and maybe she should have just requested missionary, but Wendy wanted to seize her feeling of power and triumph and relish it. There was nothing better than being on top for feeling strong and in control.

Roger was quick to obey, leaping up and lying back on the bed. His cock was an eager spike of desire, drooling with precum as it stuck straight up between his muscular, hairy thighs.

Wendy smiled down as she straddled him, taking his cock in both delicate hands and stroking him lightly, teasingly. His upturned eyes were wide and loving, in awe of his perfect girlfriend.

Just as he should be.

"What do you want?" she asked in a smoky voice, inviting Roger to a little dirty talk game they often played.

"I... I want to fuck you," said Roger in a deep, sincere voice.

Wendy chuckled, rising onto her knees and teasingly rubbing her boyfriend's cock head back and forth between her wet folds. "I think you can do better than that. Ask me properly."

"Please? Please may I fuck you, Goddess?" asked Roger humbly, his cock throbbing and his face a picture of worshipful lust.

"You maaay," moaned Wendy as she slid Roger's cock home, sinking down fully and impaling herself on his thick shaft.

Fuck. It really would be hard to find someone who was the complete package like Roger. A tall, handsome, smart man who had a perfect cock and knew how to use it. Wendy began pumping slowly up and down, her tight pussy gripping every inch of his shaft on the upstroke, reluctant to let Roger go. Her boyfriend's hands fell to rest on her hips as she began her smooth, rolling up and down motions. His grip wasn't controlling; never that... just appreciative of the feel of her warm, smooth skin.

"What am I?" murmured Wendy, prompting Roger as her hips rocked and bounced.

"A Queen. Strong and beautiful," rumbled Roger beneath her, thrusting upward in perfect harmony with her pumping hips. Wendy purred in contentment. Her man had such a way with words... But he wasn't finished yet.

"A Goddess. Mysterious and superior."

“Yes! Yes! Worship your goddess,” gasped Wendy, her hips bucking and grinding downward madly as her hot pussy gripped her boyfriend’s cock like a silky vice. This sort of overheated dirty talk just felt cheesy if he started it too early, but here in the depths of pleasure, it was music to her ears.

“A genius. A trailblazer. A winner,” grunted Roger beneath her. Wendy could tell by his increasing pace that he was already near the edge, but honestly, she was too. Her muscles buzzed with the pleasant burn of exertion and her pussy sang with pleasure as it stretched around her boyfriend’s thick cock. A little quick, but she didn’t have time for a marathon session anyway...

“Cum for me!” She commanded in a sweet, moaning voice, feeling herself tip over the edge and fall into her own climax. Her hips continued their smooth rhythm as a warm, whole body orgasm washed over her, curling her toes and arching her back.

Roger groaned beneath her, his hands seizing tight on her hips for a moment as his cock twitched and spurted within her.

They sat panting for a moment, sweating lightly and enjoying the pleasant glow of their shared orgasm. Then Roger pulled Wendy down into a kiss.

“Above all, you’re the smartest woman in the world,” he whispered with affectionate, sparkling eyes as she pulled away.

Wendy returned his fond smile, but she was already thinking about how long it would take to clean herself up, get dressed, and make her way to the lab.

“The smartest *person* in the world,” she corrected him, her grin becoming smug.

...

Ok, now it was definitely getting too late for comfort. It had been over two hours since Stan had begun pacing indecisively in front of the lab... or was it more? Wendy might be back at any minute now, ready to begin the experiment.

He had to try something, and fast.

Stan had considered asking someone exiting the lab to let him in, but that was easier said than done. It was getting late and most of the researchers had probably already headed home. More importantly, Stan didn’t know many of the researchers, and they probably had security protocols about letting strangers into the lab, even if they asked politely.

But just as he worried that finding someone to let him in would be impossible, Stan saw someone coming that he knew.

Dr. Harrison. The head of the lab, and the very same man who had rejected Stan's application a few years back. He wasn't ideal, and not just because his rejection still stung a little. Wendy had drilled into Stan that he was supposed to avoid the head of the lab as much as possible. Dr. Harrison still wasn't aware exactly how successful Project Butterfly had been, and Wendy wanted to minimize any chance he might find out. But he was Stan's last chance; he could feel in his gut that his sister would be back soon.

Dr. Harrison frowned as he opened the outer doors and saw Stan standing there. "...Stanley, right?" he asked slowly, his eyebrows wrinkling. "Wendy's little brother. What brings you here?"

Stan took a deep breath. *Here goes nothing.* "I was hoping you might be able to let me in," he said earnestly. "Wendy asked me to check on some calculations she left running, but I don't have the code." Stan found that often honesty was the best policy at times like this. Everything he had just said was totally true. Dr. Harrison has no reason to know the purpose of the calculations he had mentioned.

But the older man's frown only deepened. "Hmph. I'm aware that Wendy has been using you as an unofficial assistant, and I've turned a blind eye... But I'm not sure I can officially support it. It's after working hours and you don't have the credentials to be in here alone. In fact... if I recall, you applied to work here and were officially denied. I really shouldn't allow your sister to use you as an assistant at all."

Stan winced at the blunt restatement of the scientist's rejection. He could feel his last chance slipping out of his grasp. "Please sir!" He said desperately. "Just... the calculations are important. If they get messed up because I'm not watching them, it could be harmful to the project"

Dr. Harrison gave him a wry grimace, his eyes calculating. "Important, huh.... How important?"

"Vital," said Stan desperately, his eyes pleading.

For a second, he was worried that Dr. Harrison would insist on further details, but, mercifully, he held the door open and allowed Stan to slip inside. "Just this once," he said reluctantly.

"Thank you, sir!" gasped Stan, then turned and practically sprinted down the hall. He took the stairs to the basement two at a time on the way down. Luckily, the access code on the lab door didn't change, so he was finally able to race through the lab and plop down in front of the terminal.

He was dismayed to see a dozen error messages overlapping on the screen. Shit. The complex calculations that the computers were running had dozens of inputs and ran off a spliced-together code developed by Wendy. Occasionally, human input was needed to

straighten out errors. It was supposed to be his main responsibility when watching over the calculations.

A dozen issues... and probably just minutes to clear them. Stan set to work immediately, but the process was slower than he liked. Solving the errors required an advanced knowledge of both physics and the specialized program to figure out what had gone wrong and smooth it out.

He worked as fast as he could, sweat pouring down his face and his eyes darting over the screen. He needed to be fast, but also accurate. The slightest mistake on his part could mess up the entire experiment.

He cleared one error. Then another. He checked the system clock. 7:12. Wendy could be back any minute.

He needed to work faster.

...

Wendy swept into the lab in a fine mood, ready to make history.

She found her brother Stan hunched sweatily over the terminal, looking just as awkward and nervous as usual.

"How did it go?" she asked tersely.

"Fine. Just fine," said Stan, continuing to avoid her eyes as he stared at the screen. "Just squashing one last little issue."

Wendy sighed inwardly. Stan was... well, embarrassing wasn't the right word. He had his redeeming qualities. Compared to the average person, he was really quite bright, although obviously he didn't hold a candle to her. And he had always had more patience than her for helping others and being kind and that sort of thing. Wendy recognized the value of empathy and helping others, but usually found she didn't have the time and energy to bother. So she did appreciate her little brother's kind heart.

But in many other areas, Stanley was frustratingly lacking. He was meek and spineless for one. His appearance was terrible as well. He couldn't help his scrawny body or buck teeth, but would it kill him to cut off that mop of hair and use some skin product?

Wendy pushed down that train of thought. She had no time to obsess over her brother's failures tonight. Not when she was so close to changing science forever.

She turned her back on Stan and walked toward the platform that had been placed in the center of the large former storage area. It was surrounded by bright yellow safety railings. A large

glowing pad was held in place about six feet above the metal grating of the platform, and complex machines crowded around it on three sides, bristling with antennae pointed toward its center.

No more sneaking around, and whispers, and euphemisms about “devices” and “projects”. Tonight, the world would discover what she had built down here and call it what it really was.

A time machine.

A reductive term, of course. Plucked from cheesy science fiction. But as oversimplified as the term was, it accurately described the machine’s application. Wendy mounted the short flight of steps and put her hand on the safety railing, beaming with satisfaction at the complex interlocking systems that would make the impossible possible.

It was a marvel of engineering, programming, and theoretical physics. And it all came from her mind. Her name would go down in the history books. That was why tonight was so important. Once it got out that she had created a functioning time machine, shit would really hit the fan.

She had made the decision to keep her success under wraps months ago, after the first successful trials on inanimate objects. Once she told people the truth about her invention, there was no way she would be allowed to travel through time. In fact, the implications of the technology were so staggering that maybe no one would ever be allowed to travel through time.

So, before her project was snatched out of her hands to be poured over by government scientists, Wendy planned to be the first one to experience time travel. As the inventor, she deserved it.

And if she had the opportunity to make a few little tweaks to the timeline that would set her up for life, she deserved that too. Today, she would head back to the summer after her senior year of high school, just before she headed off to college, and drop a few juicy stock and investment tips in her past self’s lap.

A risky maneuver? Possibly. But Wendy knew herself well, and she trusted her younger self implicitly to make the best use of the information provided. Past Wendy would forge an even better life than the one she enjoyed in the present.

Maybe she would be rich enough to build the time machine all on her own, without university funding or obligations... Then she could use it as much as she wanted, with no interference from the government.

She assumed the rippling changes to the timeline from her becoming rich would be minimal. It had only been around seven years since then, after all.

Stan pushed himself back from the terminal, looking oddly relieved. 'Finished,' he said, rubbing a hand across his sweaty forehead. "We're good to go."

Wendy shooed him out of the way and checked the outputs that were now starkly displayed on the screen. Everything did appear to be in order. Transferring mass through time and space required very precise dates and coordinates. A slight error could mean that Wendy was transferred directly into the Earth's core, or maybe into plague-ridden medieval Europe. Accurate figures could mean life and death.

Wendy's heart leapt as she took one final glance at the figures, then turned to take in the humming machinery, poised for use.

"Then what are we waiting for?" she asked with a wide grin and a manic glint in her eyes.

Stan seemed nervous. As usual. "Are you sure, Wendy?" he asked, chewing a thumbnail and frowning at the numbers glowing on the screen. "We don't know if it's safe."

"Sure we do," she said dismissively, rapidly entering a few commands to put the system into standby mode. A deep rumbling hum sounded from the machinery near the platform. The glowing pad above the machine grew brighter. "We sent that rat back a week, remember? He's still doing fine."

"We sent him back into a cage," protested Stan weakly. "He didn't have a chance to change the..."

Wendy waved her hand impatiently, cutting him off. "Stanley, you're here as an extra pair of hands. I'll start listening to your scientific opinions when *you* invent a time machine, how about that? Take your position in the control bay. We're doing this."

Stan grimaced, then sighed and got up from the chair, heading to the small shielded alcove by the stairs. He had never been very good at standing up to her. That was one of the things Wendy liked most about him.

With giddy excitement mounting in her heart, Wendy bounded up the steps to the platform, swung the safety gate open and closed behind her, then stepped out onto the metal grating. How many times had she watched from the control bay as objects disappeared from here, only to blink back into existence a few seconds later? Now it would finally be her making that journey.

"The time limit set for this trip is twenty seven minutes and eighteen second," said Stan's disembodied voice from above her as he spoke into the microphone. "The maximum possible time allowed. After that, you will be returned to the present."

It was frustrating that she hadn't been able to push that time limit further. It would have been nice to get a round number. It didn't matter now. The hum deepened in the machinery around her. Wendy's skin prickled as the machines spun up, her hair sticking straight out from her head.

"Coordinates set. All systems optimal. Performing human trial number 1 in t-minus five seconds."

"5"

"4"

Wendy wondered later if she had any premonition of how badly things would go for her. But when she looked back at this moment, the only things she could remember feeling were blazing pride and smug certainty.

A sense of anticipation grew in the air. Wendy wasn't sure if it was from the energy now surging around her, or was just excitement. She saw a delicate line of electricity arc from one of her fingers to the grounding coil pointed toward the platform.

"3"

"2"

This was it. Time to make history.

"1"

There was a sudden sensation of... shift. Like the feeling of your ears popping from the pressure while on an airplane, except throughout her entire body and mind.

Her consciousness blinked out.

...

Wendy felt extreme cold, then a blooming of heat.

She fell several inches to the dirt, clicking her teeth together sharply and sending a jolt through her body. She stumbled and nearly fell, reaching out and feeling the rough bark of a tree against her hand.

She leaned there for a moment, eyes wild and breathing heavily. Her brain felt like a limb that had gone asleep; all pins and needles. She shook her head, desperately trying to clear it. She was here, in the past, in the place they had planned; a clearing in the little patch of woods near their childhood home. She was alive. Even the short fall was according to plan. Much better to

err on the side of caution rather than to have her feet merge with the forest floor after all. Overall, the trial had already been a stunning success.

There was one tiny problem. The warm summer breeze flowed over Wendy's body.

Her bare-naked, totally unclothed body.

As her disorientation receded, Wendy began to fully appreciate the predicament that she was in. One arm snaked up to cover her breasts, and the other clamped between her legs.

Fuck. She was here in the past, yes, but her inexplicable lack of clothing presented a major handicap. If she was seen streaking around her childhood neighborhood, it would make it difficult or impossible to accomplish her mission. Not to mention the fact that her past self likely wouldn't listen to a strange nude woman who came knocking at the door, or even take a close enough look to see that they were the same person.

How did this even happen? Well... the first inanimate object tests had been done with simple objects like cubes and spheres, and the rat obviously hadn't had any clothes on. Maybe this was just an inevitable part of the process. Wendy felt unpleasantly exposed even while hidden in the little patch of woods. Her hands shifted uncomfortably on her sweaty skin and she unconsciously hunched over a little as she thought. What if some of the neighborhood kids came out here to play and saw her?

It was another complication in an already risky plan. The wisest move would be to abort the mission. Maybe find a rock and try to carve something into a tree to prove that she had changed the past, then hide in the woods until the half-hour was up.

But if she did that, she might never have this chance again. She had more or less run out of time when it came to keeping her project in the dark. The experiment drew huge amounts of power, and tomorrow Dr. Harrison would be asking a lot of questions about that. If she aborted this mission, she likely wouldn't get another one.

Wendy felt a crazy plan form in her mind. She gritted her teeth, took a deep breath... and forced her arms down to her sides, uncovering her bare breasts and pussy. Her hands balled into fists. She could still do this. She had chosen this date, July 23rd, 2019, because she remembered clearly that she was home alone. She spent all of her time in her room at this age. More importantly, she remembered where her parents kept the spare key.

All she had to do was make it to her childhood home while utterly naked, sneak into the house, borrow some clothes from her mom, *then* have the conversation with her past self.

Piece of cake.

...

Luckily, Wendy knew her old neighborhood like the back of her hand. She made her way silently to the edge of the woods and crouched behind a tree, narrowing her eyes as she peered toward the cul-de-sac.

It was a warm, lazy summer afternoon in late July. The air was filled with the buzzing drone of cicadas and the sound and smell of a lawn being mowed somewhere nearby. It was intensely nostalgic being here again. Although... Wendy wrinkled her eyebrows. Wasn't this about where they had put up the tire swing? Her dad had set it up for her 11th birthday, and she and Stan had swung themselves sick on it.

She looked around for a moment or two, then shrugged and put the tire swing out of her mind. She knew that it had come down by the time she graduated college. Maybe it had already been gone by the time she was eighteen. She couldn't remember. In any case, the tire swing didn't matter. What mattered was finding out how to get to her house with her tits and ass on display.

It had felt like such a short distance when she was a kid. Just a five-minute walk across the street, cutting between the Andersons' and Smiths' houses and then hopping the waist-high chain link fence.

The same distance felt perilous now that she was naked. A rapid sprint to the front door would be quickest, but if someone saw her, they might call the cops. If that happened, her chances of speaking to her younger self would be slim to none. No... a stealthier approach was needed, and she couldn't waste any more time planning it. Her time limit was draining away rapidly.

With one more nervous glance around to make sure no one was in the immediate area, Wendy took a deep breath and left the shelter of the woods, moving swiftly to the chainlink fence and vaulting smoothly over it: no challenge at all for an athletic person like her. In seconds, she had scurried to another hiding spot behind the Andersons' shrubs.

From here, she was able to get a good look at the cul-de-sac itself. Luckily, it seemed like a quiet afternoon in the neighborhood, but there was one issue. Mr. Douglas, her elderly former next door neighbor, was out mowing his lawn.

That really *was* bad luck. As far as Wendy remembered, Mr. Douglas was pretty ill by this point. By the time she came home for her first summer back from college, he had passed away. This must have been one of his last remaining "good days". The thought made her a little sad. He had been a sweet, kindly neighbor. She brushed the emotion aside. She wasn't here to talk to Mr. Douglas. Especially not when she was buck naked.

Wendy sawed her lower lip between her teeth. Her skin tingled and rose in goosebumps, even in the warm summer air. Even if he was feeling sprightly today, Mr. Wilson was moving slowly. If she ran quickly and quietly while he was facing the other direction, she could probably make it to the door, find the key, and enter before he noticed. Probably. If not, Mr. Wilson might not

make it another year. Could his heart take the sight of the toned, tight, nude body of a gorgeous twenty-something appearing right in front of him?

Wendy was out of time to hem and haw. Mr. Douglas reached the end of a row and slowly turned. His back was now facing Wendy. It was now or never.

Wendy silenced her fears and broke into a focused sprint toward her front door. Her heart hammered in her chest, and her feet slapped on the hot pavement of the street. She was painfully aware of all the windows pointed toward the circular cul-de-sac she now crossed. All it would take was a little more bad luck and she would be caught. She could imagine the sirens as the police descended to question the crazy streaker who had invaded the quiet neighborhood.

She reached the front door of her old house, her face pouring with sweat. She flipped over the welcome mat with desperate speed.

There was nothing there. Her eyes bugged out of her head and her heart skipped a beat. Impossible. That's where it always was! The sound of the lawn mower thundered in her ears. Mr. Wilson was nearing the end of the row on the other side. Soon, he would turn and get an eyeful of Wendy's nudity. Wendy panicked, trying to calm down and think quickly. She frantically looked again, but there was nothing but bare cement where the key normally lay. Her eyes slid over to the small bed of decorative rocks near the door. She remembered her dad saying they used to hide the key under a rock, but her mom always complained that it made the key all dirty. In desperation, she reached over and flipped over the first large, distinctive rock that she saw...

There was a key gleaming beneath it. A wave of relief washed over her as she snatched up the key. Her Dad must have forgotten and left the spare in its old hiding place this time. She managed to ram the key home, yank open the door, and get inside just in time, pulling the door closed behind her just as Mr. Wilson turned around.

Wendy caught her breath in the entryway to her childhood home, leaning back against the door and feeling her body pulse with adrenaline. This whole adventure would be worth it in the end, she just knew it...

There was a calendar hanging near the door by the entryway, with every day before July 23rd crossed out. A reassuring sign that everything was on track. After a minute of heavy breathing and wiping away sweat with shaking fingers, Wendy pulled herself together. She didn't have time for this. She could rest and look at all the calendars she wanted back in the present with her cushy new lifestyle. She had probably already spent twenty minutes on building up her nerve in the woods, and she was certain that a conversation with her younger self would take a little time. Wendy squared her shoulders, cracked her neck, and headed toward the stairs, rounding the corner into the living room.

She froze.

At the coffee table in the center of the room, a little girl sat drawing pictures. Crayons were scattered all over the table's surface as she enthusiastically scribbled. Wendy's mind scrambled for purchase, unable to accept this impossibility. She had picked this date carefully; it was a day she had happened to be home alone while her parents had taken Stan and some of his friends on a trip to the beach. There was no way that a little girl could have been in the house that day. It didn't make any sense!

The little girl sensed her presence and looked up. She had auburn hair pulled into two cute pigtails. Her green eyes were lively, sparkling with precocious intelligence.

It was like looking in a mirror.

Shit. SHIT! That was why there was no tire swing. Why Mr. Douglas felt well enough to mow his own lawn. Why the key was hidden in the wrong place. The transfer had sent her to exactly the right place... but the wrong time. Based on how young she currently looked, probably about fourteen years wrong.

Wendy watched with horror as her younger self's eyes widened, and, like any normal little girl confronted with a random naked adult in her house, she did the sensible thing.

She screamed.

There was an immediate sound of footsteps upstairs and the deep voice of her father calling "Wendy?"

Adult Wendy had no choice. This entire experiment had been fucked up beyond repair. Remaining here would be pointless. She had to escape and hide in the woods until the transfer took her back, then try again with another experiment at a later date. She turned on her heel and ran toward the front door, noting the date she had missed at the top of the calendar by the door, taunting her.

2005.

Mr. Wilson gaped at Wendy's bouncing ass as she sprinted away, but at this point it hardly mattered. Even if he called the police, she wouldn't be caught in time for it to make a difference now. As she vaulted the fence behind her neighbor's house and retreated into the woods again, Wendy stewed over an infuriating question. How had things gotten fucked up this badly? She wasn't sure, but she had a sneaking suspicion that it was somehow her brother's fault.

...

Charlie Sparx thundered down the stairs, with his wife Marcine following after him. Both of them were hastily wrapped in towels. Little Wendy's scream had caught them in the middle of a little afternoon delight.

Wendy was shocked and sobbing, which was unusual for her. She was normally a pretty reserved child. As soon as she saw them through her tears, Wendy got up and ran to her mom, hugging her around the leg and burying her face in Marcine's towel, her little chest hitching.

Marcine flashed her husband a worried look and hugged her daughter close with one hand, her other holding the towel closed. "What's the matter, honey?" she asked tenderly, an undercurrent of disquiet in her voice.

"There was a lady!" sobbed Wendy.

Now the look that Charlie and his wife exchanged was confused. "What do you mean, sweetie?" prompted Charlie, crouching to rub Wendy's back.

"A lady!" insisted Wendy, turning her tear-stained face to her dad. "She had no clothes!"

"Getting scared by imaginary naked people..." said Marcine with a raised eyebrow at her husband. "I told you it's not a good idea to have S-E-X while she's playing downstairs. She's catching a vibe."

Charlie grimaced. "Aww, come on, Marcy. She's just imagining things. She's fine, aren't you Peanut?"

He reached out to tickle his daughter and she giggled and shyly smiled, her tears fading away.

Marcine sighed and picked up her daughter, heading toward the stairs. "Come on, honey. Mommy and Daddy are going to get dressed, then we're all heading to the park. Daddy will buy us ice cream."

Wendy squealed with delight, her terror forgotten. Charlie sighed heavily. "For real?" he said frustratedly. "I was... sort of on a roll up there, babe. You're the one who said it's important to 'try' every day. Can't we just finish up quick before we go?"

Marcine raised an eyebrow and snorted, but her fond smile softened it. "Don't worry Don Juan. Wendy will be all worn out after an hour at the park. We can keep trying during nap time."

Charlie rolled his eyes, but let it go easily. As much as he was having fun a few minutes ago, it really didn't make that much of a difference if he and his wife tried for another baby right now or in a couple of hours.

"How would you like a little brother, Wendy?" he asked cheerfully as the family mounted the stairs.

"Sister," corrected Marcine confidently.

Little Wendy looked thunderstruck. "But... what about me though?" she asked quietly.

But a few minutes later, she had forgotten all about the question in her excitement for ice cream, and tired herself out at the park so much that she slept long and deep that afternoon.

...

Stan watched his sister and counted down with just the tiniest bit of apprehension.

He was fairly certain that he had fixed all the calculation errors correctly in the short time he had been given. But for a few of them he had been forced to rely on intuition. He just wouldn't have been able to get through them all otherwise.

It was probably fine. None of them had seemed like serious errors after all.

Still, he was a little nervous as the countdown reached zero and a bright light flashed in the room, sending afterimages floating through his vision.

His worry only deepened as he saw his sister's clothes slump to the ground without her. It was an unexpected development; not what you wanted to see when the slightest mistake could mean life or death. But there was nothing to be done now. The program was running and the machines were still screaming with energy. They would keep running for roughly a minute, then snap Wendy back to her point of origin. Or at least they should, if everything was working as planned.

The minute seemed to pass agonizingly slowly. Stan began obsessing over the possibility that everything had gone wrong and he would never see Wendy again. She could be an overbearing bitch at times, but he would never wish her out of existence.

The energy readings on the control panel spiked, and Stan slumped back in relief. The readings were normal. The retrieval process was starting up as usual. The machine was bringing Wendy back.

The machine grew louder and louder, and, in another bright flash, Wendy appeared on the platform in the center of the room, completely naked, and for some reason sweaty and red-faced. She stumbled and fell to her knees, breathing heavily. Stan, ignoring the established safety protocols, left the shielded booth to sprint across the room to her, jumping up the stairs and scrambling under the safety railing to grab her shoulder.

"Wendy!" he called, speaking loudly to be heard over the already-winding-down machines.

"Wendy, are you alright?"

She shook her head as if confused, then narrowed her eyes and glared up at him. "What the fuck did you do?" she snarled.

Stan pulled back as his sister shook off his hand, snatching up her lab coat to cover her naked body. "What do you mean?" he asked nervously, his mind guiltily flashing back to the error messages he had sloppily cleared. "What happened?"

"A total shit show!" snapped Wendy. "I was sent to the completely wrong year! Fourteen years earlier than we planned. Not to mention the fact that I arrived completely naked. I wasn't able to accomplish the mission at all. You checked all the numbers, right?" Her sparkling green eyes were suspicious now.

Stan gulped. "Of course I did! So, umm, you went back to when you were a little kid? Did you change anything?"

"Of course I didn't change..." began Wendy. Then an uncomfortable look of uncertainty crossed her face. "I mean... I don't think I changed anything. I really didn't do that much. But, I mean, we would be able to tell, right? If anything did change, it must be minor. Pull out your phone. Look up the top headlines. Just in case."

Stan nodded and pulled his phone from his pocket, ready to navigate to a news page. Immediately, something bothered him. Some small prickle of disquiet. Stan stared down at the phone in his hand.

His phone.

Why did he have it?

"Wendy..." he said, his voice filled with confusion and an edge of terror. She looked at him, frowning at his obvious discomfort.

But before he could explain the inexplicable appearance of his phone, they both sensed it. A strange sensation... like the feeling right before a lightning storm. The air was greasy and charged with potential energy. The atmosphere felt thick.

"What's going on?" asked Wendy, her eyes suddenly scared as well. As if her younger brother could possibly have the answer.

The air rippled and twisted, like it does over pavement on a hot day, or through gasoline fumes. The bizarre visual effect began in the center of the platform and spread outward rapidly, engulfing the two siblings. Then, Stan felt something else... not in the air, but inside himself.

It was a welling of heat from his core, deep, powerful, and oddly arousing. He groaned as he fell to his knees, overwhelmed by the spreading sensation. His bones themselves burned. They felt like hot, soft plastic inside him, shifting and changing shape, especially around his jaw and hips.

And speaking of hips... Stan could feel his butt and hips... thicken. It was like they were being slowly pumped up, filled with pleasantly hot jelly. Not a ridiculous amount, but enough to change the shape of his lower body significantly. The feeling was... good. Erotic even, in a way that was hard to describe. Stan's whole lower body tingled with the sensation. He moaned as he felt his butt grow softer and fuller, sending fiery sparks of pleasure dancing up his spine.

Wendy stared down in horror as she noticed her brother's appearance begin to change. She also felt something inside her... a warm, pleasant buzz. But whatever it was was clearly far weaker than whatever was affecting Stanley.

His upper body was changing now as well. He felt his muscles dwindling slightly, their mass shifting downward toward his hips. But that was nothing compared to the sensation in his chest. Stan had never really noticed much sensation from his nipples before. But now they burned and itched with a deep, needy heat. His hands rose unconsciously to paw at them, pinching and pulling as new nerve endings sprouted through them, creating new erogenous zones that he had never dreamt of. Beneath the nipples themselves, he felt that same sensation of warm, pleasant swelling, pushing his chest outward, ballooning beneath his new sensitive nipples.

But soon, he was distracted by the sensations coming from between his now-curvier thighs.

It almost felt like... shrinking.

Not even caring that his sister was watching with horror, Stan tugged down his pants, just in time to watch as his balls disappeared, softly sucked up into his body. The sensations coming from his crotch were ten times as intense as the ones from his chest. His cock was on fire; he could almost feel new sensitive nerve endings forming even as it visibly shrank.

Stan, panicking now, reached down to clutch at his cock, instinctively trying to stop the odd feeling of shrinking and retraction. As his fist wrapped around his dick, pulling and tugging it outward to try to preserve its shortening length, he gasped with the intense sensation that flared up from the contact. Pleasure and terror warred in his mind as he felt his penis shrinking in his hand. Desperation flared. His cock, the symbol of his manhood, was disappearing. He tried again to pull it outward, but was rewarded only with another wave of pleasure. He moaned, and was shocked to hear his voice come out much higher and sweeter than he expected. Something kept getting in the way of his peripheral vision, and he realized it was his hair, sprouting from his scalp at an incredible rate.

Stan continued to pull his shrinking cock out of desperation, trying to hold onto it as it disappeared. His whole body felt hot and weak and tingly. His brain felt nearly fried from the

pleasure. His cock was too small to wrap a fist around now, so Stan rubbed at it with his fingertips, trying to somehow will it back into being.

Hissing and moaning with pleasure and despair, Stan's body convulsed, his back arching and his toes curling. His body was rocked by a deep and powerful climax.

No semen came out. His penis didn't even have a hole anymore. He collapsed bonelessly back onto the platform... and then, "his" penis was gone altogether, seemingly swallowed up by two new delicate lips closing up and over its disappearing length. The skin between Stan's thighs swelled gently into a soft mound... then bloomed into a moist, glistening pink flower of flesh. Finally the changes ceased, settling into its final form: a brand new vagina.

Wendy stood above her brother(... sister?), her expression a complex puzzle of horror and scientific curiosity.

"Well Stan," she said in a deadpan voice, "I think I may have changed something."