

# Profoundly POWERLESS

A Novel by Jenny Amara

## Profoundly Powerless

### Chapter 12 - What a Difference a Day Makes

"Damn, Paul, you're a Paula again, huh?" Lee hollered from across the cafe at his friend as he entered the front door.

"Shh, Lee! The customers..." Paul shushed his friend, indicating the line of people standing before the register. Several of whom now looked particularly confused as they overheard that the large-breasted woman taking orders was apparently a man. Paul's face turned red in embarrassment as the look of realization washed over them.

"Yo, it's no problem, bro. I'll keep it on the down low. Oh, and I'll take my usual," Lee brazenly addressed the situation with his usual lack of awareness. Paul's head dropped low in response, his disappointment abundantly clear to everyone except Lee. Almost twenty minutes and five frozen frappe drinks worth of blender noise later, Paul finally walked over with an iced Americano for his college friend.

"So, you going to tell me what happened?" Lee started.

"What do you mean?" Paul replied, wondering why his friend was being so direct but also so ambiguous.

"The girls! When did you decide to get implants, man?! I would have told you that you didn't need them!"

"What?! These aren't implants! I haven't had surgery!"

"Well, good. Au' natural is the way to go. Guys will like you more for it."

"I'm not trying to attract men! I'm only like this because someone keeps delivering me chocolates, and I can't help myself."

"Whoa, chocolate gave you bigger knockers?"

"In a manner of speaking, yeah."

"That's wild! Here I thought you had changed back into a dude, and then I come in to check on my good friend at his job, and I find out he's a chick again and also addicted to chocolates that make her boobs bigger. Have you tried giving the chocolates to other girls? I bet a ton of them would love to have some!"

"They aren't special chocolates. It's just me that has that reaction."

"Seriously?"

"Yeah, it turns out it's... Kind of a known family trait."

"That's so crazy! So, like, are you going to do, like, a chocolate anonymous type program to get over your addiction?"

"That doesn't exist, Lee. Even if it did, I don't think I'd go. I'm already embarrassed enough about this as it is. I've been trying to change back, and I make progress, but then I get the most intense craving, and I cave. A single chocolate seems to be enough to keep me female. I'm getting worried I'll never switch back."

"You just need a detox, man! You can do this!"

"Yeah, easier said than done," Paul said, turning his attention to the cafe door that had just opened. To Paul's surprise, a familiar face walked in.

"Whoa, check out the beefcake. Oh! Never mind, it looks like you already spotted him. You're sure that "Paula" isn't into dudes?"

"Lee! Shut it. I'm on the clock, man."

"All right, all right. My bad. Make the beefcake his latte with oat milk, and we can get back to our conversation!" Lee said as Paul stood up and walked back behind the cafe counter. The muscular man walked up to the opposite side of the counter as well.

"Hi, Blake," Paul said sheepishly.

"Uhh, hi. So, yeah. I thought I'd come by to update you," Blake, aka The Roman, replied.

"Oh, sure. What's new?"

"So, we've got a few leads on Devious Doctor. A couple of them even seem promising. Your mother was actually really helpful.

"Is that a dig at my mother?"

"No, no. I know she doesn't like me, but I don't have any problems with her. It's just that she always seems so obsessed with Devious. He's been behind bars for a while, in any case. I guess I was just surprised that her knowledge of the villain actually turned out to be useful."

"Uh-huh. Well, what does any of this have to do with me? I would assume you can handle following a few leads on your own. Why are you telling me all this?"

"Oh! Umm, yeah. I totally can handle it. I just thought you might like to know and..." Blake trailed off, and his eye-line lowered, coming to rest at Paul's prodigious chest.

"That's why?" Paul huffed his disbelief as he pulled his arm back to slap the ogling man.

"No, sorry," Blake said, catching Paul's hand as it flew toward his face. "I didn't mean to; I mean, Kyrie told me what had happened, and I guess I didn't believe her."

"Well, believe it, Bub. Now, do you actually want anything, or can I get back to chatting with my friend?"

"No, you can... Wait! Yes, I need your help!" Blake had seemed ready to move on before suddenly getting very excited.

"All right. What do you need?"

"I need you to come on a stakeout with me!"

"A stakeout? Like those stupid old sitcoms about cops used to have?"

"Haha! No, nothing like that at all! I promise it will be lots of fun!"

Paul sighed before relenting. He knew he would never hear the end of it from his mother if he denied Blake's request. "All right, when do we get started?"

"As soon as possible! Now, even!"

"I can't go now," Paul replied.

"Nonsense! Official S.U.C.K.S. business takes priority over any civilian situations. We can go straight away, and your boss will just have to deal."

"What about my friend? I don't want to just leave him..."

"Uhh, bring him along! It'll be fine."

"What?" Paul asked, shocked at Blake's answer.

"Yo, count me in. I have always wanted to do a buddy cop hang scenario, and this guy seems pretty dope to me."

"Lee, butt out. Blake, what exactly will we be doing on this stakeout anyway?"

"We're going to surveil the home of one of Devious Doctor's known accomplices, The Sorceress!"

"Oh shit! For real!" Lee exclaimed.

"Yes! It's one of the leads we got from Helena."

"That is so dope; she was such a hotty back in the day! I used to fantasize that she would capture me and—"

"Lee! Chill out. You're not coming with us."

"Aww, why not?"

"Because it's not safe. Blake is a superhero, so he'll be fine, but you could get hurt."

"What about you? You can't get hurt?"

"I won't get hurt because I'm important to some plan they have for me. They've already shown that they can get to me whenever and wherever I go. If they wanted me dead, then I would be dead."

"That's a stretch, don't you think? Blake, you agree with me, right?" Lee asked.

"No, I think she's right. If whoever is doing this wanted to, they could absolutely hurt Paul. That's why we've been working this case so much."

"Still not a 'she,' Blake. Also, it's pretty obvious that there's some sort of plot afoot. A guy doesn't get unwillingly transformed into a woman by chance."

"Are you suggesting that there is a plot to keep you living as a woman?" Lee asked.

"Exac—"

"Of course he isn't! Paul's not that self-centered! Now, let's get going; we have people to surveil. Lee, you coming?"

"But what about my safety?"

"That's easy. I'll keep you safe; just stick by me at all times!"

"Awesome! You hear that, Paul? I've got my very own superhero protector! Pretty cool, right?"

"Yeah... So cool..."

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"How have the tests gone, Concealer?"

"We have a 100% transformation rate, Ms. Awl."

"Wonderful. Every wish has been twisted to turn the wisher female?"

"Yes, the only problem—"

"Problem? How can there be a problem, Dear?"

"Well, you see, the last wish was... overly ambitious."

"How so?"

"We had stuck to the script exactly, but the last subject said the wish improperly."

"How bad could it have been? The wishes were all for inconsequential things like money or houses."

"Yes, and everyone who asked for money was transformed into a trophy wife, and everyone who asked for a home was transformed into a middle-aged homemaker."

"Oh, Ramnaghast, so predictable... So, what is the problem then, Concealer?"

"The last wish was for money, but the subject said 'fame and fortune' instead of just fortune."

"So, they turned into a famous football player's wife instead of a random trophy wife? Please, this is hardly worth my time."

"No, it's worse than that—"

"Where is my espresso!" A familiar but curious voice pierced the conference room.

"Well, it looks like you are right, Concealer. This is worse. Much worse..." Laurie Awl said as she stared down the mysterious interloper.