

# Profoundly POWERLESS

A Novel by Jenny Amara

## Profoundly Powerless

### Chapter 11 - A Profound Truth

Paul sat down in the car's front passenger seat, having lost the impromptu best-of-three game of hero-villain-bystander with Annie for who would be the one to break the ice with their mother, Helena —A woman they had both only known to be a loving wife and mother. Based on the events of the last hour, this clearly was not the whole picture. On Paul's mind was figuring out how his mother knew Doctor Daybreak. He had personally been stunned to encounter the hero on his previous trip to S.U.C.K.S. Facilities. Doctor Daybreak had amongst the highest power levels of all super-powered individuals on the planet. So his very presence commanded a seriousness that ordinary interactions could not.

"Say something," Annie whispered an order at Paul, who was sitting in the seat uncomfortably adjusting the seatbelt to fit between his breasts, which seemed to be larger than they were on the car ride over. Paul chided himself for indulging in those extra chocolates, now understanding their direct connection to his feminine curves. Annie persisted, "Stop playing with your seatbelt and ask her!"

"Fine!" Paul responded by turning his body to face Annie in the back seat to acknowledge that he had heard his sister.

"Go on!" Annie pushed him on, unwilling to wait any longer.

"Go on with what, Annie?" Helena asked from the driver's seat.

"Paul has something he wants to ask you. Go on, Paul. Ask."

Helena sighed, knowing very well what her children were hoping to hear. She had kept this secret from them for their whole lives. Seeing Paul go through this transformation, though, caused something to

change for her. The sight was simply too much to handle, and she knew she had to jump into action to protect her child from harm—protect him from a fate that she knew only too well.

"Paul, Annie, I know you have a lot of questions. How did I know who I knew? Why did they call me Director? What haven't I told you? Well, frankly, a lot."

Both children looked at each other with a look that said, "Obviously," before their mother continued.

"A lot happened in the past that I had to deal with. Some of this will be a shock. Especially for you, Paul. I know how much being a superhero has meant to you. And know that I was as devastated as you were when your assessment came back. But your power, I know why you have the power you have. It's because of who I am. Or who I was."

"That's even more mysterious, Mom. What are you going on about?" Paul asked.

"I'll get there, Paul. It's hard to share this story even today. I was drugged, you see, and it resulted in dramatic damage to my memory."

"What?!" Both kids exclaimed in unison.

"It's true. Devious Doctor did it—But I barely remember it. It's more that I have been told what happened, and I've worked to try to fill in the details. Suffice it to say, Doctor Daybreak has helped me a lot since my \*transformation.\*"

"What kind of transformation?" Annie asked hesitantly. Paul looked shaken to hear his mother saying these things. The possibility that she had been transformed was alarming to hear under any circumstances. Having now been transformed into a woman two times by a mysterious old woman himself, this news was monumentally shocking. "Into a woman..." Paul said before his mother could.

"Huh?" Annie hadn't connected the dots that Paul had yet.

"Yes, that's right, Paul. I wasn't born Helena."

"Whoa! That's big news. I didn't know I had a trans parent. That's cool, though, Mom," Annie responded, still unsure what was being conveyed between Helena and Paul.

"Mom wasn't born a woman, and I'm getting the sense she didn't want to be one at any point either," Paul commented.

"What do you mean? She's our mother. Of course, this is who she wants to be. Right, Mom?" Annie asked in defiance of Paul's reasoning.

"Of course, Annie. There's no role I've been happier to have than that of mother to each of you. But Paul is right, too. I didn't ask to become a woman."

"So you want to change back into a man? Is that why you're so obsessed with Paul all of a sudden? You want his power to help you?" Annie's confusion continued, whereas Paul's recognition only increased.

"My power is because of what happened to Mom. And if it's because of what happened to Mom, then I think I know who Mom really is. Or was."

"Paul, wait, don't—" Helena tried to interject.

"Mom used to be Absorption Lad. Isn't that right?"

"What? Absorption Lad? No, he's still—he's retired up in Montana. I used to be Captain Kimper."

The look of shock on Paul's face multiplied, and his jaw dropped. "But, Captain Kimper disappeared almost thirty—"

"Thirty years ago, about two years before Annie was born. Yes, that's right."

"You were the Bully Proof Hero? Defender of the Little Guy? The Righter of Wrongs? The Champion of Populous City?" Paul asked in astonishment while Annie looked on in shock.

"I usually just went by CK, but yes. I know people called me those things, too," Helena responded.

"Hang on; you're saying that you, Helena Mansson, are the first super-powered person, also known as Captain Kimper?" Annie asked.

"Yes, that's what I've been told. I don't remember my life as Captain Kimper, but I've accepted it as true. The evidence all points to it being true."

"What evidence?" Paul asked.

"Doctor Daybreak is the one who found me. Well, I kind of found him. Apparently, Devious Doctor gave me some concoction that has made me forget my life from before. Still, I somehow escaped and managed to get back to our city's superhero secret headquarters, which later became S.U.C.K.S."

"The location of S.U.C.K.S. was a secret?" Paul asked.

"Yes, initially. Our little group of superheroes thought it was best to protect our identities. Turns out it wasn't enough."

"So what happened after you escaped? How did they know it was really you?" Annie asked.

"They didn't know who I was. It was a big mystery for everyone for a while, including me. By the time I woke up, I had no memory of my life. Fortunately, Daybreak recognized some atomic properties of my unique physique, finally leading them to the conclusion of who I was."

"So, that's how they finally learned you were Captain Kimper. Did you take on the role of Director straight away, then? Did you lead the society from the command center instead?" Paul asked, excited to learn this new truth about his mother and his idol, Captain Kimper.

"What? No. They helped me set up a new identity, and I went on and lived my life as a civilian. I met your father; the rest is pretty much history, you all know."

"So, you just went off and led a normal life? No superhero crime-fighting hijinks?" Annie asked.

"Pretty much," Helena responded.

"Hang on, 'Pretty much?'" Paul responded.

"Yeah, that's all I can tell you," Helena answered.

"She's lying," Paul and Annie said to each other.

"What? I'm not lying!"

"You might not be saying something incorrect, but you're not telling us everything, and I guess that's alright. I'm sure you have your reasons," Paul reasoned aloud.

"Thanks, Paul," Helena responded.

"So, what does all this have to do with Paul then? Why did you keep this all a secret until just now?" Annie asked.

"Devious Doctor. I suspect he's targeting Paul for some reason. I just don't know why."

"Why him? Isn't he behind bars?" Paul asked.

"He's supposed to be."

"So, it has to be someone else then," Paul asserted.

"But he's the only person we know who can do to others what's being done to you, Paul."

"Because it's what was done to you?" Paul asked.

"Yeah...," Helena responded.

"But I've been transformed twice now. Once by chocolate and once by a strange syringe. Only one of those is like what happened to you."

"That's true, but Devious Doctor has a way of finding out how to get what he wants. I'm guessing he would have even more modes of transformation at his disposal now. It has been thirty years, after all."

"But why would he target me? I can just use my power to change back," Paul asked.

"From what I've been told, he was obsessed with Captain Kimper. Kept going on and on about becoming the perfect symbol of masculinity. He thought that Captain Kimper was the key. Maybe he found out I had a child, and now you are part of the plan? I don't know exactly. Doctor Daybreak is on the case, though. And The Roman is as well..."

"You don't seem to like The Roman very much. Why is that?" Annie asked.

"He's a stuck-up brat. Had everything handed to him, and I don't like his attitude."

"Well, that was to the point," Paul laughed. "Mom doesn't like The Roman, okay?" Paul chuckled even more as he teased his sister.

"What do you think the little old lady that injected Paul has to do with this situation, Mom?" Annie tried to change the subject.

"I'm guessing she works for Devious Doctor. Money talks, and she only had to do this one task. That's why we haven't found her. She probably isn't even in the city anymore."

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A group of men work feverishly, shuffling through debris in the heat. The only thing less tolerable than the heat and humidity is the lack of quality help. "Careful with that, you bumbling idiots!" Laurie Awi screamed at her grunts. Just as this group was being scolded, a glimmer of hope rang out.

"I... I think I found something!" A random grunt shouted.

"Over here! Bring it here!" Ms. Awl commanded. "Yes! This is it! The legends are true!"

"It's just an old vase? Are you sure this is what you're looking for? It looks like it's been discarded. It's quite ugly; I think it's here in the trash because no one wants it."

"You're right. No one wants the vase of Ramnaghast. He's a curse on whoever finds his magical home."

The man holding the vase began to drop it, but Laurie Awl's #1 in command, Foundation, foresaw the scenario perfectly and had already reached out to secure it. Slightly confused, the grunt holding the vase fully handed it over to Foundation before asking, "If it's cursed, then why do you want it? This village was destroyed months ago. It's costly to get this many men working here with all the roads having been closed."

"Oh, I don't want the vase. Rather, I want to give it to someone else. Namely, our friend Paula Mansson, of course!"

"Who?" The grunt asked, looking completely confused. A bead of sweat dripped down his face.

"You know what? It really doesn't matter. Get this idiot out of my sight, Foundation. We've got to get this back home to Populous City to give as a gift to my dear friend," Laurie Awl said, ending with a wicked cacophony of laughter.