

# WONDER CITY STORIES

VOLUME 4:

WHOSE DREAMS COME  
TRUE

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Got a Vision That No One Else Sees

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# Got a Vision That No One Else Sees

Angelica was resolutely writing up her latest experimental results in her lab notebook over her lunch hour when her advisor, Professor Lydia Necessitas, came looking for her.

Lydia had gotten her PhD young, as one might expect from a scion of Mother Necessity's family, so she was only about ten years older than Angelica. Despite that, she already had deep crow's feet around her icy blue eyes and grey in her short black hair. When she sat down next to Angelica at the lab bench, she looked more tired and pale than usual.

Angelica looked up from pasting the printout of results into the notebook and said, "What's wrong?"

Lydia raised heavy eyebrows at her. "What makes you think something's wrong?"

"You're my primary investigator, you're supposed to ignore my existence until I do something wrong, at which time you announce it to the entire lab," Angelica said, scribbling a note next to the results. "Isn't that the code of the university-based life scientist?" *And I'm the only grad student here who would dare say that to you, because I know the department loves my money.*

"You're extra-cynical today," Lydia said, checking the lab bench for spills before leaning her elbow on it and propping her head on her hand.

"I'm cynical *every* day," Angelica said, shutting the notebook. Her advisor was settling in for a chat, and they were alone in the lab. "But I've got to jump through all the hoops to get the letters after my name and do what I want to do, right?"

"So you've said before," Lydia said. "Is that how you get through the day?"

"Isn't that how you're getting through the tenure process?" Angelica said, looking at her over the top edge of the filter glasses Professor Canis made her and regretting it. *I really don't want to see my advisor's internal workings, even if I'm only seeing my brain's visual metaphors for them.*

"Touché," Lydia said, then added, "I read through your proposal."

Angelica smoothed the white lab coat down over her skirt. "And?"

"I'm concerned that it will distract you from your main project," Lydia said. "In theory, I think it's fabulous that you want to use your para power to not only help onco docs tune their chemo treatments for their patients by telling them sooner whether the chemo is working or not. But you have to finish your coursework and your comprehensive exams this year, and I want you to write a paper on the gene expression profiles you're characterizing right now."

"Look," Angelica said, stamping down her irritation, "all this requires is initial physician and nurse education in a chemotherapy center where I already know a fair number of the staff, plus patient consent." *I didn't want to know any of these people, but taking Suzanne to chemo has its side effects.* "I would spend a couple of hours once a week on a rotating schedule observing the patients, and then spend a couple of hours a week sending reports to the staff and docs. The IRB can't object to an observational study. At the end of a semester of this, I write a final report for you and we run some stats and write a paper together. This could save *lives*, Lydia, or at the very least, provide better quality of life for what lives they have left. How is this a loss for you in any way, shape, or form?"

"We don't know the reliability of your power, for one thing," Lydia said, massaging her forehead with her fingertips. "It's difficult to test and validate."

"So I spend a period of time observing and validating my observations against actual chemo results," Angelica said. "Which I've already done anecdotally." *With Suzanne. Which helped her talk to the oncologist about switching regimens. And the onco doc had to listen to me since I was the first one to spot the cancer.*

Lydia sighed and looked exasperated. "It comes down to whether you *actually* want a PhD, or whether you want to be a touring sideshow attraction."

Angelica felt like Lydia had just slapped her. "What do you *mean* by that?"

"If you do this project and publish," Lydia said in her most reasonable tone, "you're going to get requests to come to other chemo clinics across the country, possibly the world, just to do your trick over and over. We let you into this program to do science, not to give you a platform to use to grandstand with a poorly-understood, unvalidated para power. You can be an actual scientist or a show-woman, the choice is yours." Lydia stood up. "Where do you think the bang for your buck is, Angelica? Doing the hard work and figuring out this protein cascade that could help treat several types of cancer? Or getting your own network show, like your boyfriend?"

While Angelica was still struck speechless, Lydia walked out of the lab.

It took Angelica a while to swallow the bricks of rage she'd just been fed. She stared at the black cover of her lab notebook and wondered how much glassware she could break by throwing it across the room. *I chose Lydia as an advisor because I thought she would understand wanting to use a para power for science. Apparently... not.*

She took her lab notebook to her desk, fished her phone out of her purse, and texted Simon with, first, *I HATE MY ADVISOR*, and then, *Remind me why I want a PhD again?*

Simon texted back, *Because you need it to do the research you want. At least, that's what you keep telling me.*

She texted, *Fuck the rest of today. Are you free? I need a hug.*

He responded, *Meet you at your place in an hour.*

Angelica didn't bother leaving a note for Geri, the lab supervisor. She threw on her jacket, grabbed her purse, and bolted before anyone could get back from lunch. *The entire fucking university can bite me today.*