



CHARLIE AND THE BABY FACTORY

Chapter III



BecomingBabyAgain

“Shall we move along?”

Almost unnoticed, a boat had appeared slightly bobbing up and down in the milky river. Charlie saw that it had a little canopy and a motor on the back but there was still something strange about this boat. As he stepped aboard at the invitation of Mr Wonka, he realised what it was. There were only 6 seats, and they weren't just normal chairs. They were cushioned, but the cushion extended out from the chair a little bit, and there were two straps that would hold the person in place. It almost looked like the kind of baby seats that you'd see in cars but scales up so that an adult would fit comfortable in it.

Charlie didn't really fancy sitting in the baby seat, but there was nowhere else to sit, and he wasn't going to be left behind. Reluctantly he sat down and just as he did, Mr Wonka appeared in front of him and pulled the straps round him with a loud click as they pulled together.

“Now now” he said, “make sure you don't fiddle with them!”. He then danced off to tighten the straps of all the others.

Wriggling in his seat, Charlie found that there was enough room to sit and relax but there was no way he was going to get out. A dainty little bell rang, and the boat vibrated gently as it began to drift forward in the river. It rocked gently from side to side as the scenes of that soft padded room lilted by.

“I feel seasick!” yelled one of the girls. Charlie tried to turn his head a little to see exactly which it was, but the cushion of his seat blocked his view.

“Here try this?” replied Wonka

“What is it?”

Wonka pushed a pacifier into her mouth. “It releases a lovely flavouring which will help you relax a little more!”.

He offered the pacifiers round to everyone on the boat, but Charlie was determined not to accept one. Sitting in a baby seat was strange enough, he wasn't going to be seen sucking a pacifier too.

The boat began to steer towards a tunnel which had appeared in the soft padding of the wall. Charlie saw the tunnel was pitch black with no sign of light twinkling at its end. It made him nervous, and he couldn't see but it made everyone else nervous too. With no sign of anxiety, Wonka stood on the prow of the boat as it dived into the darkness of the tunnel. Total black. Then lights! Little sparking lights in bright colours that appeared just for a second all over, in pink, green, purples and yellows, dancing around like fireflies. They were almost hypnotic. Then swirls that appeared on every wall, flashing brighter and brighter. Charlie swore that he saw words flashing up from the swirls that now played on the inside of his mind, but his eyes couldn't focus long enough to see them. The boat was getting quicker, the milky liquid began to slosh around the sides and splash inside the boat. Lights and swirls were blurring into flashes of lights and Charlies head began to spin, he became dizzy and

lightheaded as his eyes were filled with bursts of lights almost like fireworks. He hadn't noticed, but his mouth was wide open with a stream of drool dribbling down his front.

Suddenly, the boat stopped with a jerk. Charlie felt himself flung forward in his seat slightly, only held back by those straps of his seat, which he now was slightly thankful for. He came to, and wiped the little pool of drool up with his sleeve as he waited for Wonka to unstrap him so he could step off onto the little pier that the boat had docked at. Duly, Wonka unstrapped all his guests and they all stepped off the boat onto the pier. Here he led them down another little corridor before pulling open the door to another fantastical room.

A laboratory of the most amazing kind. There were machines of all sorts of shapes and lights flashing. Nozzles squirting out little mounds of (surprising appetisingly looking) baby food mush, and Conveyor belts carrying toys across the room. There were little music boxes with faint little twinkling that were almost as hypnotic as the lights in the tunnel.

"Help yourselves!"

Once again, the crowd of guests rushed around desperate to get a good look, taste, and play with everything on offer. Charlie was contented to watch the machine that churned out toys of all sorts, but he could see Violet in the corner of his eye desperate to have a taste of some of that baby food.

She grasped one of the little bottles as it whizzed past her and pulled off the lid with her fingers before throwing it away behind her. She paused for a moment as she realised that there was no spoon or anything to eat with, then she shrugged as she dipped her fingers into the jar, pulled out her mush covered fingers, and lifted them up to her mouth.

"No, wait!" called Wonka from across the room. The first time all day that his voice had sounded even slightly urgent. "I wouldn't try that if I were you, it's not been tested fully yet!"

But Violet's natural instincts had taken over. She plunged her fingers into her mouth and wrapped her lips around them, sucking off every last bit of food before she pulled her fingers out clean. Everyone watched as she began to chew a little, and her jaw wriggled as her tongue worked around.

"It's amazing!" she sparkled, "Like I know it's just baby food but it tastes gorgeous! I'm getting all different flavours from..mmmmm! Smoked salmon! And ohhhh.. Pizza?..... Now hot dogs? Wait wait, now I'm getting Vanilla ice cream... trifle!..."

It was obvious to everyone but Violet, that she had begun to shrink. Her clothes remained full sized but at first, they wrinkled slightly, and then her arms began to disappear up the sleeves. Violet began to notice as the shrinking got faster, and her head was beginning to be pulled under her clothes.

"What's happened to me?!" she cried, in a slightly higher pitched voice.

"Well I did warn you not to eat the *baby* food" muttered Wonka under his breath

Her head vanished under her top, and in a matter of seconds, there was just a pile of clothes lay in a mound on the floor.

“Wha..what happened to her?” stuttered Mike,

“Is she...?” said Veruca, fearing the worst.

Then to everyone's surprise from beneath the pile of clothes, the heard a loud wailing cry. Wonka dived his hands down and carefully unwrapped the now shrunken Violet from her own clothes. Not only had she shrunk physically, but her whole body had changed! Her body had become slightly fatter, she had lost her hair and everyone soon realised she had lost her voice completely. She had not just shrunk in size, but totally physically regressed to a real baby.

“C’mon” said Wonka as he lifted her into her arms and carried her out of the room. He returned emptyhanded.

“Don’t worry, she’ll be looked after and will be back to her normal self in no time!...

well, 10 to 15 years anyway!”