

(Chapter 4)

Trial 59

Glitch withdrew immediately after the “horsey ride” incident. The ex-sidekick had seemed genuinely puzzled at Circe’s declaration of loathing. It was the happiest that Circe had been since her capture. She’d done it! She’d gotten underneath the idiot’s artificial skin! Success! Total success!

It had been so deceptively easy using those three words. Normally, hero-villain reparte was more complex than all that. Long monologues and barbed insults. Had Circe been trying too hard all these years? Was it really that easy? Perhaps this next generation was just too soft; bunch of special snowflakes.

That made her feel old...odd considering everything else about her prison.

Regardless, the declaration of hate still hadn’t had the desired effect; not completely. Instead of saying “I hate you, too” Glitch frowned and asked “Why?”. And when Circe couldn’t vocalize an answer, she’d just up and left.

What did that idiot cyborg mean in asking that question? Wasn’t it obvious why Circe hated her? Wasn’t it self-evident? Putting such complex and self-evident truths into spoken word was harder than it looked, however. That and the question had been posed right after Circe climaxed harder than she ever had in her life.

Who did that?! Seriously!!! Asking those sort of things right after orgasm was right up there with interrupting your rival when they were making their bold declarations about how good triumph or evil. It just wasn’t done!

Instead of waiting until she’d recovered, and showing ink blots, Glitch had exited with an awkward amount of urgency and haste, and hadn’t come back since. Then Circe was maneuvered over to the robot changing table, stripped, wiped, powdered, and re-diapered, and then left on the nursery floor to change and entertain herself with less than breakable toys.

Circe had no way to keep track of the time in this box. There were no clocks and her sense of time wasn't the best as it was. Both her human mind and Siren soul tended to keep track of things based on victims and crimes or other natural biological urges.

Now all she had was feedings, nap times, and bed. Oh, and diaper changes. Those too. She hated all the mechanized events, but hated diaper changes the most. Not the diapers, specifically; they were dreadfully comfortable all things considered. But the process of being changed, like some prop on an assembly line: That was the worst. Having to lie there at her most helpless but needing to struggle and not being given the proper opportunity to. It wasn't sporting! All she couldn't do was scream in pink.

Speaking of pink, that annoying light always flashed in her eyes when she got changed. It was so bright and annoying that even slamming her eyes shut did nothing, she could see the strobing pulses through her lids. It recharged the voice modulator she suspected.

At least with feeding and toy time and the crib she felt she had the option to spit something out or try an escape. The table didn't give her even that much, just calming powder and cooing pre-recorded words along with fresh underwear (that never actually stayed UNDER anything).

How long had it been? Where was Glitch? Circe hadn't seen anyone in what felt like a week. Possibly more. Had there been an apocalypse that the world's heroes needed to gather to stop? That Circe hadn't caused?! That she'd missed out on?! Or what if it had been successful and the Siren was now just trapped here, forever until some nigh magical super-science power source ran out?

She didn't and couldn't know, and it was driving her crazy. She didn't even know if the security cameras were on or if the nerds in lab coats were watching her still. She might just be alone instead of under careful observation of invisible scientist.

More than once she'd screamed at the windows and got nothing. She would have pounded on the windows but she was unable to stand without getting tased. She could break toys, but that would just lose her the toys. Everything came out pink, of course, even swear words.

Not that she was swearing much anymore. The paddling machine got well past a hundred

before she lost the count.

Presently, Circe crawled around in circles on the floor. Her thoughts were zig-zagging quicker than she could process. The need to be her Siren self gave her the need to transgress and destroy. Her need for self-preservation struggled to reign her in.

“Stupid Glitch,” Circe muttered to herself. “Follow the rules, Circe. Be a good girl Circe. “Her voice gained a whining nasally quality, as they often do when children. “Eat your mush, Circe. Don’t break your toys, Circe. **Don’t run away, Circe! Do what you’re fu....**” she stopped. **“Do what you’re effing told to, Circe.”** Her entire face fell when she realized she’d stopped herself from swearing because she knew that she feared the spanking machine.

Torture was pointless without someone to defy. There were no other tormentors for her to put a brave face on. No other inmates to impress with how awful or resilient she could be. No victims to intimidate or terrify.

Just her. Alone. In a room. And the only means of entertainment were bits of rainbow colored plastic that were too sturdy to break. She’d done everything else.

Circe shifted so that she was sitting on her bottom. Disturbingly, she noticed the squish of her wet diaper. When had that happened? The Siren hadn’t even noticed or remembered peeing herself. Had she gone and just forgotten out of boredom, or was she well and truly on her way to losing her potty training? “The fudge?”

She poked at her padded crotch. Even through the inflexible mittens she was incredibly squishy. “What is happening to me?”

As if on cue, the pommel horse shot up from the ground. Circe felt panic rise up in her. What had she said? Was ‘fudge’ now a curse word?

“GOOD BABY! YOU GET A REWARD!” Glitch’s recorded voice boomed. “LET’S GO FOR A HORSEY RIDE!”

“NO!” Circe screamed. **“NOT AGAIN!”** But the mechanical nursery paid her no mind. On

soaking, sopping wet padding, the supervillain was lowered, straddling the 'Mama's Knee' and held in place with metallic tendrils

"Bounce me Bounce me on your knee
Bounce me bounce me pretty please
Bounce me bounce me here and there
Bounce me bounce me EVERYWHERE!!!"

The songs did not help, only adding to the woman's humiliation. The fact that they would do nothing to halt the eventual orgasm made it worse. The machine seemed to learn what motions and intensity stimulated her most.

It was short work before Circe was collapsed on a heap on the floor, too flustered to move.

If she rebelled, she was severely punished. If she did nothing, she was given a mind blowing orgasm. And she was running out of the will and ways to rebel.

"Why me...?" she softly cried. "Wh me? Ffffff...." But she couldn't finish it...

Meanwhile...

Glitch was capable of performing over a million calculations at once in her cybernetic brain. Something still wasn't making sense to her.

"Why isn't it working?" she asked herself. She was doing everything right. She was precisely controlling the environment, and giving Circe as much freedom as she could safely handle. Granted, it wasn't a lot, but one had to start somewhere.

Circe should be thriving, not crying in a puddle on the floor. "There's a variable I'm missing," she wondered aloud. "But what?"

“Ma’am?”

Glitch blinked. The camera feed for Circe’s rehabilitation nursery was taking up space in her right eye. She’d been so engrossed in this conundrum that she wasn’t paying attention to what was going on in the left.

“What are you talking about?” The technician in front of her was waiting for her to sign off on the latest experiment- a way to use time’s relationship with gravity to speed up the lifecycle of certain endangered species of plants using bits of dwarf star in the hydroponics bay. The real trick would be doing it so that they didn’t affect the evolution of said plants making reintroduction into the wild impossible.

“Sorry, Mitch,” Glitch said. She quickly reviewed the proposed calculations, power sources and equipment needed to execute them. Out of politeness she waited a whole three seconds to finish her reply. “Everything appears in order.” She handed the data tablet back.

“Thank you ma’am.”

Glitch said “You’re welcome,” but she was already observing the images in the nursery. What was she doing wrong?

She was giving regular predictable rewards and positive reinforcement, and removing anything and everything that gave Circe a chance to act out, while still providing consequences if she made bad decisions.

Combine that with the strobes from the changing table, and Circe should be ready to reintroduce to society by now. Based on even the most conservative simulations, Circe should have been at least back in middle school by now, re-learning adult feeling communication and conflict resolution.

There were at least a dozen different rooms she’d constructed that weren’t being utilized at the moment.

Circe just kept regressing further and further, and not in a good way. This was supposed to be a

Groundhog Day scenario wherein if someone was given enough time they would eventually make the right decision. But Circe had forced the programming to remove almost every decision she could possibly make. Everytime it presented her with a positive option, she destroyed it, leaving her only with the most childsafe and infantile scenarios on file left.

Note-to-self: Create virtual reality time lapse to simulate Groundhog Day.

Her Asimov protocols were the only thing preventing the room from swaddling the woman up and leaving her paralyzed. The young hero shuddered to think that it could come to that.

Glitch had honestly predicted that by removing herself and the staff as a source of perceived antagonists Circe might start to recover. Without someone to rebel against, though, the villain was practically trying to destroy herself, it seemed. How deep did her psychological scars run? “At least she’s not cursing as much...”

The cameras zoomed in on the crying woman. Her wails were strengthening to the point where three staff members had resigned in protest because of “what you’re doing to that poor baby”. Naturally, they’d been given their positions back when the effects of Circe’s voice wore off.

“What am I doing wrong?”

Trial 61.

Circe was not awake. Not at all. It was the only reason she was able to smile behind her pacifier. The pacifier had been inserted before the lights went out and Circe kept falling asleep with it because she kept trying to chew through the bulb and swallow it out of spite.

Lying in her crib and fast asleep, the silver haired woman wasn’t consciously aware that the pleasant wet warmth between her legs was her own urine leaking out of her. She’d be mortified enough once she woke up and realized that she’d wet the bed.

Too bad for her that it didn’t stop there.

The Siren stirred slightly beneath the covers of her nice warm blankie, an unconscious moan rumbling out past her binkie. Microphones installed in the crib would record the churning gurgling sounds coming from her abdomen just a millisecond later.

Her eyes would not open but they didn't need to for her legs to raise up off the mattress and take pressure off her tailbone. Slowly but surely, Circe grunted and pushed out a healthy mess into the seat of her diaper. To her it was no more physically uncomfortable than for a normal sleeper needing to roll over in her sleep.

She smiled in her slumber as her legs lowered back down and the lumpy mess spread back down. The fetid odor wouldn't reach her nostrils beneath the cozy blankets, and even if it did, Circe was mostly smellblind to her own excrement by this point. Her body only knew that it had become extremely used to the feeling of a bulk between her legs.

The extra swelling and wet, warm, squishiness from urine just made it more comfortable, like a warm sponge against her sex. Her subconsciousness associated the warm, clay-like texture coming out the back of her as a positive reinforcer tied into the relief of the mild pain that had been gurgling up inside her gut.

Beyond the initial doses used to "break her in and clean her out", laxatives were not a part of Circe's diet. Laxatives weren't needed however. The specialized nutrients in her 'baby food' were incredibly easy for her body to digest and process.

Her innards were well and primed to expel any and all unneeded waste. That and Circe had all but purposefully sabotaged her own potty training. Like a two year old who understands the basic mechanics of the toilet, but refuses to partake out of stubbornness and an irrational fear of upsetting their own status quo, the Siren had doubled down to the point where her body outright refused to relieve itself anywhere that wasn't a pair of her thick crinkling baby panties. Whether it was psychological or physiological- at this point it might be both-Circe had very little desire or ability to regulate herself.

Bladder swelled up and uncomfortable? Relax and let loose. No more discomfort and things got nice and warm. Discomfort in the bowels? Push it out immediately. No more pain and things got nice and warm. Her brain didn't want to think about it, so her body certainly didn't.

Somewhere off in her dream scape, Circe was likely sitting on a warm, if muddy, beach, with

ocean water gently lapping up, singing songs that would lure Odysseus to his doom once and for all.

This was the first time in forever that this had happened in her sleep, however. Until tonight, her unconscious battle against her own toileting had only 'progressed' so that wetting and messing herself was habit forming bordering on second nature. It had never been something wholly unconscious...until tonight.

She'd be disturbed in the morning, no doubt.

More disturbing, something she wouldn't have evidence of was what she did with her hands. The nursery protocols meant to encourage her to 'behave' had left another miscalculated scar on her psyche.

Almost every time she was 'encouraged' to be good by the nursery protocols, her diaper had been in dire need of changing. One can't orgasm that many times in a wet and messy diaper without making a connection. Circe certainly couldn't.

In her dreams, Circe may have been making love to a foolish sea captain who thought he could ride her the way he rode the waves. Throughout her lifetimes, many would be conquerors and lovers became her victims and thralls. As far as fate was concerned, it was no coincidence that the Siren's human namesake was another Greek woman known for twisted men to her will.

In reality, Circe's hands were doing all the work. She was too insensate to plunge them properly past the waistband of her adult baby diaper, but they made do gripping and massaging the front. The crinkling of her diaper was just the crackling of a fire and the crashing of the waves to her subconscious. Her pacifier kept her own lustful moaning from waking her. Her thrusting hips and the ever shifting mass cooling in her seat only increased her body's excitement.

It wasn't easy. Her imaginary lover wasn't very good. A virgin without proper technique. Still...eventually she got there, fumbling and sighing contentedly as the orgasm tripped and staggered to completion.

She would get better at it.

Glitch frowned in bed. She never slept, not as normal people understood it. Ever since she'd 'upgraded' herself she was never truly unconscious. She was always thinking, always calculating something. Boredom was largely a result of a lack of imagination and physical fatigue.

The young cyborg always had something to think about. Never boring. Always something to do. Always some problem to fix. She was still organic enough that her body required rest at roughly the same intervals as a normal human being.

That was no reason to sleep, though. In lieu of dreams, Circe spent six to eight hours a night, resting her body in bed and recharging her physical hardware while her consciousness connected with the closed system wireless software of A.S.T.R.A.L. Labs.

She was flitting about working on at least three different equations to try and bring about world peace, end scarcity, and reverse global warming to pre-industrial levels respectively. Problem was, things never quite worked out in the math. Doing all of these things, really, anything of significance required people cooperating with her calculations: Rich and powerful people agreeing to be slightly less rich and slightly less powerful in return for long term gains; relatively powerless people motivated out of a cycle of apathy due to learned helplessness; politicians willing to pass laws that restrained and discouraged bad impulses and protected and encouraged good ones.

None of her perfectly logical calculations worked in systems controlled by irrational, fearful, greedy, meat computers piloting skin robots from their bone cockpits. Humanity, as a whole, had advanced to amazing degrees of technology to ensure global prosperity and balance, but never completely dropped the evolutionary survival baggage of "different means bad" and "everything for me and mine first".

Being an advanced cybernetic being for over half her life at this point, Glitch just didn't "get" people anymore. People were the hardest part of any system to fix. It would be so much simpler if she could just find a workaround for that terribly pesky "free will" that everyone had. But no. That wasn't going to happen. Her Asimov protocols wouldn't allow it.

That's why she was so invested with Circe. If she could figure out a way to re-mold Circe, break her of these bad impulses, and build her back up without violating her free will, she would be a step closer from finding a way to ethically generalize the process. At the very least, she could find a way to truthfully rehabilitate people that actively used their free will to directly harm others. Getting rid of super-crime through positive intervention would be a huge step in the right direction.

That step wasn't coming. Circe just kept regressing, and not in a good way! She just kept getting worse and worse. The pink light should be having more of an effect than it was, subtly taking away bad habits and impulses as she literally saw herself in a different light. None of that was happening!

Why???

Viewing her sleeping charge from the security feed, Glitch absorbed and pondered new data. Masturbation? Direct sexual stimulation? For some reason she had never considered that. Was this unique to Circe? Had a child's lack of autonomy further eroded her inhibitions? Had the nursery programming caused her to have a faulty cause and effect association?

Without candor from Circe or the ability to read minds, Glitch couldn't know.

Should she punish that? She didn't really have any tangible rewards to offer Circe and encourage her to modify her own behavior. What would B.F. Skinner say? Perhaps she should activate the artificial intelligence based on that brain scan of his and ask...

A lightbulb flicked on above the tech-hero's head. Literally. "Oh!" A security guard said, startled. "Sorry about that, Miss Glitch. Didn't know you were in here."

Glitch opened her eyes and stepped out of the cylindrical container that was her charging station. "You're fine, Mr. Harlowe," she said. She hadn't known the man's name, but cybernetic eyes could quickly read name tags from across the room. "I was just about to get up as it was." She waited a moment to say, "And please. No Miss. Just Glitch."

That put the watchman at ease. "Okie dokie then, there errr...Glitch. You can call me Harry."

Glitch stared at him in bemused disbelief. “Harry? Harry Harlow?” She was actually fighting a thin smirk.

“Yeah?” the man said. “Why? What’s so funny?”

“You share a name with something of a pioneer in the field of psychology?”

“Yeah?” Harry said. “Whose that?” He frowned, realizing the redundancy of his question. “I mean, I know his name but...?”

Glitch was happy to share. “He did experiments with rhesus monkeys,” she explained. “Took them away from their biological mothers and provided them with surrogates.” The security guard nibbled his lips. Glitch was losing him. She pulled up his personnel file. Good background check. Not the best grades. “He gave the baby monkeys replacement mothers. Nothing fancy. Think scarecrows.”

Harry the security guard’s eyes went to the right, imagining it. “Something that’d fool a baby monkey but nobody else?”

At least he was invested. “Yes. Exactly. Each baby got two fake mothers. One was covered in warm cloth but had nothing else. The other was made of basically chicken wire, but had a bottle of milk where the mother’s nipples would normally be.”

The guard nodded his head like he understood, but everything about him signaled that he didn’t. Thankfully, he was honest about it. “Why?”

“He wanted to see what was more important to a child’s development: Comfort and affection, or simple sustenance?” She was about to tell him how the baby monkeys would cling to the cloth mother until they were overcome with hunger, then climb to the wire mother to feed, and then travel back immediately to cling to the cloth mother’s arms.

She didn’t get the chance. “Both.” Harry Harlowe the second said. “Babies need both.”

Glitch stared dead ahead so that she wouldn't roll her eyes. "Obviously, but the experiment was an attempt to isolate the two factors. What happened was-

"How did the scarecrow monkey things raise the babies?" Harry cut her off. "They just sat there and did nothing. That ain't no way to raise a kid."

"Well, no but..." Come to think of it, those monkeys were psychologically damaged and unable to reintegrate with others of their kind.

Then Harry hit the nail on the head. "Is that what you're doing with that supervillain? Doing the monkey thing to recreate it or somethin'?"

"No," Glitched scoffed. "I'm...I'm...I'm..." If Glitch's brain had been fully cybernetic she might have accidentally shut herself down at the realization. The problem with her entire method had been undone by a single random employee with a highschool G.P.A. of 1.9. "Harry, you're right."

"Oh..." The man didn't hear those words in that order very often. "Yeah. Thanks. For what?"

She'd been coming at this from precisely the wrong angle. Her entire premise was flawed. But like any good scientist, she took the new data in stride and adapted accordingly. "For preventing me from wasting any more time."

Trial 62

Circe's eyes opened. She felt unusually well rested considering she'd been sleeping in a crib. The dreams, memories, and fantasies of a life she may or may not have lived slowly faded into the back of her mind, her Siren soul feeling unusually well rested.

The super villain softly smiled to herself. "What a wonderful dream," she whispered. Perhaps she was so well rested, she pondered, because her bladder hadn't woken her up. She sat up in her baby bed and felt her own room temperature feces sticking to her bottom.

This had happened before. It didn't lessen the shock. "Oh fucking gross!" she whined in pink. Her skin prickled up and she slammed her hand over her mouth. "Sorry!" she called out to the air. "Sorry Mama!" She drew her body into a ball, bracing herself for the coils to pick her up and carry her over to the spanking knee. She hadn't even gotten her diaper changed, yet.

And nothing happened.

Nothing? Nothing? Why nothing? Had something happened? A power outage? A malfunction? One of her peers making an attack on A.S.T.R.A.L. Labs? Oh gods! What would happen if another supervillain saw her like this?! Circe peered through the bars of the crib and wondered if maybe...just maybe...this was her chance to escape.

The door to the nursery slid open and Circe caught herself jumping. Glitch was back. At least, Circe thought it was Glitch. She had the rubber apron she'd taken to wearing, but beside that, the woman was wearing civilian clothing. "Good morning, Circe," Glitch said, sounding positively...positive.

Where was the smug know-it-all? "Here to gloat?" Circe asked. "Here to talk about how you broke the great Siren?" She hoped so. It would be so nice to have a little bit of witty repartee again. To snipe. To shout. To sneer.

"No," Glitch told her. "Not at all, Circe. I respect you too much." It was a trap. It was a trap... It was a trap...! It was a trap! But Circe didn't want it to be.

"Oh?" Circe said, trying to sound blase. "Then what are you here for?"

The younger woman walked up to the side of Circe's crib, and lowered the railing herself. "To change your diaper."

The supervillain felt numb from shock. Change her diaper? She'd had many, many, many, many diaper changes. Too many to count. She went through four to five diapers a day; had even picked up on a pattern to the decorations: Blue dog, giraffe, dragon, racoon. Her routine had become that painfully, kafkaesque and predictable.

She'd gone through many diaper changes, true, but no one had changed her. It had been all machine operated at this point.

"Change? My? Diaper?"

"Mhm," Glitch said. She leaned into the crib, and lifted Circe out of it. As far as superheroes went, Glitch wasn't particularly strong; her cybernetically enhanced body able to tip over a small car but still walloped by a runaway eighteen wheeler. That strength was still more than enough to carry Circe as if she were an infant.

The warmth of another body pressed up against her made her body tingle all over. Touch starved as she was, the simple skin to skin contact was better than champagne. Better than sex. Circe groaned to herself, clinging to her warden with both arms around her shoulders.

A wave of loss welled up inside her when the changing table approached. **"NO!"** She didn't even know how she said it. Defiantly? Terrified? Lustful? Desperately? She felt a mystery to herself.

"It's okay," Glitch said. "You'll be fine."

Circe was powerless to stop herself from being peeled off Glitch's body like wet paper. **"FUCK YOU!"** she shouted. **"NO-NO-NO-NO!"**

"Let me clean you up, honey," Glitch said, not unkindly. "I want you to smell as pretty as you look."

The Siren's muscles unclenched and she relaxed on the changing table. She was pretty! Someone else saw that she was pretty! Tempted by her! She knew Glitch swung that way! Who wouldn't for Circe? Even in middle age, she still had it! "Oh...okay."

She laid still and allowed herself to be strapped down to the table. Allowed. Not forced. All part of playing the long game. "Good girl," Glitch cooed. "Very good girl. Thank you, honey. This helps a lot."

Gratitude! Adulation! That was the stuff! Ooooooh, that was the stuff!

The tapes came off and the wipes came out. “Oh wow,” Glitch remarked. “You really hammered this diaper into submission! Nice going!”

A blush almost as pink as her words came over the supervillain’s whole body. **“Nice job? I thought you wanted to potty train me.”**

“I did,” Glitch admitted as she began cleaning between the Siren’s legs. “But it doesn’t matter what I want. As long as you’re happy, Circe.”

Circe didn’t know how to feel about that. Circe was still being dominated, forced to soil herself and allow herself to be cleaned and taken care of. But coming from Glitch it felt more like a kind of submission. “Okay...”

The change went slower than Glitch had become used to. The table automatically changing her had gotten it down to a sweet science. Quick. Efficient. Sterile. The giant baby version of a NASCAR pit crew.

Glitch lacked much of that. She was clumsier. Less efficient. Used more wipes than perhaps was necessary. Not as polished.

“What’s the matter?” Circe taunted. “Couldn’t find a diaper changing tutorial or algorithm to beam into your computer brain?”

The young hero balled the giraffe diaper up and tossed it away.. She grabbed a fresh one off the stack and unfolded it. “Didn’t look for one,” Glitch replied. “When I use those programs, my body goes into autopilot. Good for fighting. Bad for people-ing. You deserve the extra attention.”

Flattery was starting to get her somewhere. Circe tried to resist on principle. “Admit it, Glitch. Your machines broke down and you had to rush back to pitch in. Your network or whatever science magic you use is malfunctioning. You’re only doing this because you have to. That’s why you’re here out of uniform.”

Glitch put a little too much powder on Circe's bottom. It was a human touch. A nice touch. She waited until she'd finished diapering the supervillain to reply. "No," she said simply.

Circe bent her head and looked down at her diaper. Blue dog? That was out of rotation. "Then why?"

Glitch released the restraint and helped Circe up to a sitting position. "My uniform is for work, Circe. I wear it for my co-workers, and my enemies. You're neither. You're not work." Circe braced herself for a cutting remark. Some quip about her being a 'project' or 'hobby' or 'experiment'. None came.

"I am too an enemy," the Siren pouted.

"Okay, Circe," Glitch said. "I'm sorry. You're definitely my enemy."

She was being condescended to, but just hearing another person's voice, someone to fight and seduce and manipulate...it felt like water to a thirsty mind. She still mattered enough to be condescended to. She wasn't being ignored.

Glitch stuck her arm out to the side, and her tattoos lit up bright white once again. On cue, the day's big baby dress lowered from the ceiling and was draped over Glitch's outstretched arm. Today's order was white with red polka dots.

So much for the broken nursery theory.

A little bit of Circe luxuriated at being dressed in baby clothes. When the nursery did it, she felt like a piece on an assembly line. Some dressmaker's dummy being wrapped up and vacuum sealed. When her new nemesis did it, it felt sensual. The touch of her fingers. The little clumsy tugs to adjust things, here and there.

Circe had had lovers undress her before. This felt very similar, only in reverse. Rather than helpless, it felt kind of powerful in a way. Circe could lash out and headbutt the woman. Force

her to get a titanium nose.

But she didn't.

But she could.

"I'm very impressed by you, Circe," Glitch said to her. "You're showing remarkable patience and restraint. Good girl."

How did she know?! Was mind reading something the cyborg had achieved?

Another thought crept its way into Circe's gray matter. Every time she'd had someone dote on her, Circe had been called by a different name. She was always someone else to the world. A long lost love. Someone who got a way. An imaginary affair. A highschool sweetheart. Her greatest power manifested as the world's strongest case of mistaken identity. She had long gotten what she wanted through her powers, but not through her merits.

The woman presently dressing her was immune to Circe's charms. The only person she ever saw when she looked at the Siren was Circe. That was a weird feeling. To Circe's complete and utter surprise, the mittens and booties came off, giving her back the use of her fingers and feet. She stared at her fingers and toes as if they had miraculously regenerated.

"All done," Glitch said when she'd placed the matching polka dotted headband on Circe's head. Back into the hero's arms she went. "Good girl."

Warmth and touch. Fresh clean clothes, right down to the underwear. Underwear that she could soil and be praised for, evidently. How transgressive...

Instead of the highchair, Circe found herself being carried dangerously close to the exit.

"Where are we going?" she asked, feeling for the first time in forever that she didn't know what would happen next. "Aren't you going to plop me in a highchair and feed me mush?"

"I'm going to get you breakfast," Glitch replied, nonchalantly. "Just not here."

“Where?” Circe asked.

“Out.”

Out?!

Circe was shivering, and it had nothing to do with the cold. The weather was temperate if anything. Likewise, the adult stroller she was in was surprisingly comfortable. It had likely been a modified wheelchair at some point. Correction, knowing Glitch she'd made it from scratch with far too much attention to detail and unnecessary engineering.

Leaving A.S.T.R.A.L. labs and out into the open city air, nothing else was comfortable. The strap that kept her buckled in pressed up between her legs and caused the hem of her already short dress to ride up, exposing her diaper. “Glitch, what are you doing?” Circe asked. “Why are we going outside? Am I finally going to jail?”

“Nope,” Glitch said. “Just getting you some breakfast.”

Circe looked above her. They'd left through the back way. Technically the way she'd broken in from. This thing didn't even have a roof or a hood. Nothing to obscure her face. “Can't I get a car ride, or a police escort?” The stroller just rolled along through the alleyway. “Glitch?”

“You'll be fine,” Glitch promised. “You'll see. Though you may want to stop calling me by my hero name. Might draw attention.”

“What am I supposed to...?” Circe began to ask, but knew the answer. “No. No way I'm calling you that!”

Glitch just shrugged lightly and kept pushing the stroller. They were approaching the end of the alleyway. They were about to turn the corner. A steady stream of humanity walked by obliviously in front of her.

“Glitch?” Circe said. “Please stop.” What would people say? How was she going to gain the fear back of the pathetic masses? “Glitch?” As soon as someone saw her, they’d take out their phones. She’d go viral in minutes. “Glitch? This isn’t funny anymore. Take me back to the underground nursery.”

Glitch kept going.

She’d be the laughing stock everywhere. “Glliiiiithc?” All she had was this stupid pink voice to use. Her other voices wouldn’t have helped her out of this anyways. She was doomed.

“Glitch?”

Ten steps away....nine...eight...seven...six...five...four...three...two...one...!

The stroller turned right out into busy sidewalk.

“MOMMY!”

Everyone within a three block radius stopped in their tracks for exactly two seconds. They blinked. Then kept walking. Some regarded her briefly, but then they quickly went about their business.

“Huh?” Circe wondered. “Why aren’t they staring? Why is nobody talking to me? Or running? Or pulling out their phones?”

A deceptively strong hand came down and booped Circe on the nose. “Because you’re a baby, Circe. A baby in a stroller. Who would try to talk to a baby they didn’t know? Or run away from one? And taking pictures of a random baby? That’d be creepy, no matter how cute she was.”

Yet another strange feeling. Circe had almost always gone unnoticed by not using her powers. To be safe in crowds she had to not sing her songs and deny that part of herself. This was a

real having cake and eating it too kind of moment.

A few passerby walking in the opposite direction made eye contact with Circe and gave her big bright smiles, and friendly waves, but otherwise did not engage. “Why aren’t they trying to take me away?”

Glitch had an answer for that too. “Remember Dr. Zhao? The heartless psychopath who hated kids?”

Circe warmed to that memory. “The one I had in tears? What about her?”

“With her feedback, I was able to tinker with your collar just enough so that people see you as just a baby, not *their* baby. That and you’re with me, so they trust that you’re *my* baby.”

A variation on the red voice phenomenon that made people lust after her, but held them at bay if she appeared spoken for. Circe frowned. The warmth she felt was more than emotional. Her diaper hadn’t remained dry very long.

“**Fuck!**” Wetting in public added on an extra layer of surprise to the scenario. At least it was still fairly comfortable. Circe knew from experience that her diaper would hold far more than this one little wetting.

“Circe...” Glitch warned from behind her. “Dont’...”

An opportunity! No spanking machines here, and surely Glitch wouldn’t blow her cover or make herself look bad by taking an innocent little girl over her knee in public. Not in front of these sheeple.

“FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCKITY FUCK FUCK GODDAMN MOTHER FUCKER CUNT BITCH ASS TITTY FUCK CUNT DICK CHEESE WAFFLE TROTS SHIT MOTHER FUCKING ASSHOLE COCK!”

The stroller ground to a halt. Civilians gasped and followed their ears to the Siren’s lips. They scowled and twisted up their faces in horror and revulsion.

Yet none of their anger was directed at her. “Ma’am,” one woman said, “Your child...”

“Is hotter than you B-Cup!”

“I’m...really sorry about that.” Glitch said, sounding embarrassed. “She’s going through a phase.” She glared down at a positively beaming Circe. “A forty year phase, it seems.”

“Where did she learn to talk like that?!” Another one of the sheeple asked Glitch, as if they expected a reasonable answer that would make them less upset.

“I learned it from your Mom when she was eating me out last night!” Circe crowed.

A man bent over and did his best to intimidate her. “If you were my little girl, I’d teach you some manners with a belt.” Amateur.

The Siren returned the glare. **“Do it, bitch. Do it. Hit me. Right now. In front of everyone. My Mommy will let you. Go for it. Hit. Me.”** He broke off eye contact and kept walking. **“Thought so.”**

People gasped and sneered and shook their heads in tremendous disapproval. Then kept walking on. That was so unusually satisfying. And it was causing this hero so much consternation.

Except...

“Well done, Circe.” Glitch complimented her. There wasn’t a trace of irony or sarcasm. Not a drop “You’ve *definitely* still got it, girl.”

“What are you talking about?” the Siren asked from her stroller. “You’re not mad?”

Glitch snorted. “I’m plenty mad. I’m just better at hiding and regulating my emotions than you.”

“Then why are you smirking?”

“Because I finally figured out how to help you. I’ve been trying to help you start over, but you never really began, did you?”

The words sounded insulting, but the way she said it sounded warm. Circe folded her arms over her chest and drew Glitch out with silence while strangers flowed past them like a river.

“You literally just want attention, don’t you? It’s a core part of your being, and you don’t care how you get it as long as it’s your idea.”

Circe tried to refute the accusation but she had a point.

Glitch walked around and took a knee so that she could look her nemesis in the eye. “You’re not a supervillain, Circe. You’re a brat. You’re a toddler with hypnosis powers and are stuck in your terrible twos. You’ve got an adult body, but that’s not really your fault. That’s why my pink light didn’t work.”

Circe coked an eyebrow. “What pink light? The one on that stupid mobile above the changing table?”

Glitch showed that cocky, condescending smile. “Oh. Yeah. I neglected to mention. I knew you were immune to sound based perception alteration, so I converted your sound frequencies into colored strobes. It was supposed to alter your perception of yourself. Bring you back to a more innocent time.” Her smile seemed less nasty all of a sudden. “But you never exactly left that mindset, did you?”

“No,” Circe huffed. **“I’m just immune to hypnosis.”**

“Are you?” Glitch asked. “Look to your right?”

The Siren turned her head. The stroller had stopped by a skyscraper with windows that reflected back at mirrors. Sitting in the stroller in the reflection wasn’t Circe, a past her prime middle aged supervillainess. In her place was a silver haired, slightly chubby cheeked cherub who couldn’t

have been more than two years old. Neither the stroller, nor the cute polka dot dress and matching bow, or even the big puffy diaper peeking out beneath looked an ounce out of place.

It felt right.

“Hypothesis confirmed,” Glitch said. Then tenderly, softly, she took Circe’s hands in her own, the way a mother would a child, Circe thought. “I don’t think you really wanted to take over the world or anything like that. I think you just wanted to be free of responsibility and get to act out so people would notice you on your own terms.” No comment from Circe. “Let me make you an offer, baby girl. Stay with me and let me keep working on my research with you. No more robots. No more spankings. No rules that you wouldn’t get if you were really the age you act like.” The Siren was about to say something. “And yes, I expect you’ll break those rules too. But do you really want to live the rest of your life looking over your shoulder or planning some big grand scheme that you’re not really interested in so you can get a dopamine fix? Or do you, Circe, want to subvert expectations and go a way that no one would ever see coming?”

When she put it like that...

Four Months Later...

Jack B. Nimble, the city’s king of arson and highrise robbery, woke up with a pounding headache. He wasn’t all that surprised to be waking up behind bars. Sometimes in his line of work, a costume vigilante caught one unawares. That didn’t bother him. Prison was just a government funded vacation at this point.

He’d escape via fire or leaping. He could practically build his combustion leaping boots out of pencil shavings and rubber bands by this point. That’s how many times he’d managed to improvise his escape.

Why were bars wooden though? He had weird dreams, too. He remembered falling down a slide naked...and a bath...and pink strobe lights. Maybe he’d gotten another concussion?

The last element of his fever dream came into play when he sat up and felt his own bodily waste

squish up against him. He looked down at himself. Was that a diaper he was wearing? **“What the hell?”** Why did his voice sound...not different but...pink? He tugged at his throat and felt something. A choker?

Before he had time to think, a door opened up, and in walked a lady wearing pink scrubs. They had pictures of rattles and storks and safety pins on them. “Good afternoon, Jack,” the strange lady. “Are you ready to get up?”

He was about to tell her something awful about what he was ready to ‘get up’, when the little Asian woman hoisted him out of the crib, dirty diaper and all. **“WAAAH?!”**

“Don’t be scared,” she said. “I’ve got muscle enhancing exo-armor underneath.”

That part didn’t scare Jack. Jack didn’t scare easily. Disturbed though? This was very disturbing, and it only got more so when he was carried into a nursery filled with little brats running and playing everywhere

His pleas for decency and modesty were ignored as the lady changed his diaper. In front of kids no less! Funny thought that other men and women in the same kind of scrubs were attending to the children. Why would they need fancy tech for lifting up toddlers?

He’d get his answer soon enough when he was put in a onesie, and stood him up on the carpet. “I’ll give you a bit to get acclimated.” The millisecond that the Asian woman left him alone to absorb the weirdness around him, a silver haired toddler marched up and stared him down.

“Listen up, loser. I don’t care how big and bad you thought were on the outside. You’re just another pants shitter now and you’re on my turf. Got it?”

A moment of cognitive dissonance rocked Jack’s brain. If she was a baby, why was she able to look him in the eye? What did that say about him?

“Circe,” one of the daycare attendants called over. “Are you being nice to your new friend?”

The little terror whirled around, her dress flaring off and revealing her diaper- identical to his

save for it being very very wet. “No! And he’s not my friend!”

“Do you need a time out?” they warned.

“I don’t know,” the mealy mouthed baby taunted back. “Do you want to have this fight? Over me not being all smiles? To Jack B. Nimble?”

The daycare worker huffed and growled in frustration. “I’m...I’m not doing this right now. I don’t get paid enough. I don’t. I just don’t. Just...use your words, okay?”

“I. Promise. Nothing.”

Eyes rolled and heads shook.

“Circe?” Jack repeated. That was an uncommon enough name. “Siren?”

The little girl whipped her head back towards him. **“Yeah? What? You gotta problem?”**

Jack gulped. “No. No ma’am.”

“Good.”

(The End)