

Bleached Blonde

Chapter 1 – Iterative Process

To be a titan in a mediocre world. That is the curse of genius.

It's not that others are too stupid to understand. It is that they believe themselves clever enough to know better.

That was how I'd ended up here, working for some silly cosmetics company. It was why my inferiors had won out over me when I'd applied to much grander postings. It was why the world was as vile as despicable as it was.

Fools leading fools, banishing would-be gods to obscurity.

But I'd show them. I'd prove my unique genius.

I'd fix the world.

One scalp at a time.

My eyes skimmed over the latest batch of results. A limited trial of a hundred women. All but five given a new and improved shampoo formula, 'guaranteed to reduce dandruff and ease discomfort for sensitive heads'. Marketing bullshit, for the most part. These tests and trials were company formality – as, indeed, were most. A slightly adjusted formula to give a slightly different scent, and a whole hosts of trials – all so a government official could stamp 'approved' and send the shampoo to market.

I could've ignored the data, not read a single word of the results, and nothing would have changed.

Except for the fact that five of those women *hadn't* been given the company's 'newest' shampoo and conditioner.

No. I'd given those five test subjects something else entirely.

I searched through the documentation, brought up subject numbers eleven, thirty, forty-two, sixty-nine, and ninety-six. It was always those same five numbers. And I looked over my newest batch of results.

First the close-up photos.

The hair roots were lighter, softer. Given enough time with my formula – applied every day – that effect would be far more noticeable. As it was, it'd been overlooked by everyone but me.

It was an interesting chemical process, that. One of my first grand discoveries. A chemical that absorbed into hair follicles and suppressed the creation of eumelanin and pheomelanin, the compounds that dictated hair colour. Robbed of both, a person's hair would grow pale blonde regardless of their natural pigment.

Far more effective than rudimentary hair dyes, for sure.

But, incredible as it was, the hair-altering component of my formula was the *least* of its properties.

I played the video recording of the first test subject.

The interviewer, an underpaid intern, read off questions and jotted down answers. The interviewee – subject number eleven – answered with gusto. A wide smile on her face, eyes shining with the ditsy stupidity of a ripe fruit.

Now *that* had been a challenge.

Finding a chemical that'd seep into the brain and dumb the subject down had been simple enough. There were any number of options for chemically stupefying an individual. But, doing it while also stimulating dopamine and serotonin production – making sure all the hormone balances were proper and safe – had been an agonising process. So many iterations, so many failures, until I'd finally gotten it *right*.

The result? A bimbo in the making.

After just two weeks of exposure to my formula, all five test subjects were displaying a clear reduction in intelligence, and a noticeable increase in cheerful dimwittedness.

A shame I couldn't test for obedience.

Nor could I track the effects over a longer period of time.

Or see if the *other* mental and hormonal changes were working as intended.

My personal experiments were... shall we say, 'unknown', to my coworkers and superiors.

Though they'd all benefit from my discoveries – my formula – one day, they'd condemn me for it also. Like white knights polishing their armour, they'd feign disgust at my motivations in the hopes of winning approval from the lesser sex. And, like true historical knights, they'd embrace the advantage I'd give them and use it to claim maidens and damsels for themselves.

Until the formula was perfected, I couldn't risk anyone discovering what I was doing. Which left me in quite the pickle.

How would I find myself a long-term test subject without anyone else finding out?

Genius that I am, the answer came to me immediately.

Rebecca.

I came home to find her at the dinner table.

That might've been a good thing, if circumstances were different. If she were a diligent housewife, sitting down and waiting for me, dinner laid out on the table around her. If she'd been anything but the disappointment I saw before me now.

"I would like to cast fireball," a bulky, meat-brained guy said before throwing dice. "Seventeen."

A spindly, red-headed girl – barricaded behind a wall of books and notes – threw her own dice.

My wife, and a handful of other losers, watched the ensuing numerical nonsense. Each pretending to be characters in their silly fantasy game. Battling some evil monster that the red-head acted out the parts for – even going so far as to put on an embarrassing, cringe-worthy fake voice for each.

I ignored the lot. Eyes lingering on my wife only long enough to feed my disdain and disgust.

Lounging in her chair, wearing a faded t-shirt and sweatpants, not a hint of make-up in sight. Dark brown hair cut so short, you'd think she was in the military if not for her general pudginess. Not fat, but definitely not as lean and fit as she'd been when we'd tied the knot. Flat-chested, despite the pudge, and slothful as only an 'artist' could be. Surrounded by empty soda cans and candy wrappers and – no doubt – a halo of body odour.

The character she was playing was a goblin, as if she wanted to rub in just how unwomanly she was.

I left the losers to their game, went to the kitchen to fetch a beer – only to find a mountain of unwashed dishes and untidiness everywhere I looked. My sloven wife, it seemed, hadn't had time to clean today. Again.

My wife, the artist who'd rather make pennies on the dollar than accept her place was in the kitchen.

My wife, who was so bad at cooking, she could burn water.

My wife, who'd rather pretend to be a goblin than keep clean the house I so graciously paid the mortgage and bills for.

My wife, Rebecca. The greatest mistake I'd ever made.

"No, Bek," an exasperated voice sounded from the living room. "You can't *seduce* the stone golem."

"Why not?" My wife cackled. "Isn't he hard enough?!"

The deep sigh that followed from the dining room was nothing compared to the revulsion and fury boiling inside me. The desire to roar, kick Rebecca and her friends out

of my house.

Bek. Why did she have to encourage that nickname?

Becky would have been fine. That, at least, was feminine.

But *Bek*?

It was yet another jibe. Another insult on me.

Why oh why had I married that creature?

Because she was pretty. Because I'd thought it was just a 'phase'. That she'd grow out of it, accept her role as my wife and be a happy, dolled-up homemaker.

I sighed, pushed down my anger, opened the fridge to find a total lack of beers inside.

Again the anger flared. Again, I smothered it.

Tomorrow. I'd start her on the formula tomorrow morning.

And everything would change for the better.

"I don't know, Neil," Rebecca said, pulling off her t-shirt and tossing it haphazardly into the floor. "It's not that I don't want to..."

She didn't finish the sentence, leaving me to ponder.

Was it a lie? Or was she simply accepting how lazy and unreliable she was? Did she just know she couldn't trust herself to do one simple, ordinary task every day without forgetting?

It didn't matter. The sight of her tiny breasts and the disgustingly ordinary body they were attached to was all the motivation I needed to push on.

"It's shampoo and conditioner," I stated, crossing my arms. "All you have to do is use it once a day, every morning when you wake up. That's it."

"But then I'll have to shower every day and-"

"You say that like it's a *bad* thing."

"-And it'll throw off my routine. Besides, aren't there better ways to test your thingy out? Proper ways. I'm not a guinea pig, you know. Why don't you ask your boss if-"

"I *can't*," I interrupted. "This is a *personal* project. I don't want anyone I work with finding out. Not until I'm ready to quit and start my own company."

"Wait," Rebecca's eyes went wide. "What?!"

Ah. Of course *that* was what got her attention. Me quitting my job, losing that source of income she took for granted so much.

"You want to quit? Why?" My wife demanded. "Didn't you just get a promotion?! Why in the world would-"

"My talents," I snapped, having to interrupt her again, "are being wasted there. This has been a long time in the planning, Rebecca. This new product I've been working on is all I need. Now, you can act like a *good* wife for once and help me test the shampoo, or you can start paying *your* half of the mortgage and bills and I'll find someone *else* to help me."

I could see it in her eyes right then. Her desire to refuse, to tell me to go fuck myself, and the annoyance that she *couldn't*. Her silly little art 'career' barely covered her personal costs. No way would it be enough to pay even a fraction of the house's bills.

And then the shift. The defeat. The not wanting to get into yet another argument about income, jobs, her wifely duties. Knowing she'd lose another argument, and yet would still refuse to change herself for the better.

"Why don't you do it yourself?" She huffed, averting her scowl.

"It's woman's product," I answered. Though it did bring some questions to mind. What effect *would* the formula have on a male subject? A question for another time...

"So?" Rebecca grunted, refusing to accept defeat even still.

"Contrary to what you and your idiot friends might whine and complain about, men and women are *not* equal. Biologically, there are many *significant* differences when it

comes to-”

“Yeah, yeah,” the disappointment barked. “Blah, blah, blah. Whatever. I get it! Does it *have* to be me?”

“Yes.”

She huffed impotently.

I waited. Refused to let her sulking prevail.

“Fine,” she relented at last.

So much effort, just to avoid helping her own damned husband. And all I was asking her to do was put on some shampoo every morning! As far as she knew, that was it.

“Excellent,” I sighed, exhausted. “We’ll start tomorrow.”

I could tell from her stiffened shoulders, her visible annoyance, that she wanted to argue more.

Even after years together, she *still* hadn’t realised that one simple truth of our marriage. I *always* won our arguments. Even if she refused to accept it when I won, I always did. And I would *always* persist, confident in the knowledge I was right, until Rebecca inevitably relented to my superior wisdom.

Thankfully, this time she didn’t push it.

“Whatever,” she muttered, pulling off her yoga pants and climbing into bed.

No panties. Just like there’d been no bra.

Such was the sloppiness of my miserable wife.

But that would change soon.

Everything would.

Rebecca’s friends might pretend to cast spells and slay monsters. But I knew *real* magic.

For what was chemistry, if not the magic of science?

That which binds together, breaks apart. Alters. Refines. Destroys. Remakes. Reshapes. Everything and nothing – it all came down to chemicals and their processes.

All that exists will *always* exist – in one form or another.

And what doesn’t exist, can be created.

That is truest most when applied to the human mind and body.

Biochemistry. Pharmaceutical chemistry. What are these schools if not man’s attempt to reprogram its own body and mind?

Water, proteins, minerals, fats, sugars. All totalled, there are less than a dozen chemical elements that make up over ninety-nine percent of a human body. Hydrogen, oxygen, carbon, nitrogen, calcium, sodium, and so forth. All bound together in a myriad of ways.

And all of it *influenceable*.

That’s all drugs are. Chemicals interacting with chemicals. Starting reactions and stopping reactions. Chemicals to numb a person’s ability to feel physical pain, chemicals to influence a person’s emotions, chemicals that’d render a woman temporarily infertile, chemicals to keep a person awake. All consumed in massive quantities every day by millions of people.

What about chemical compounds to stop aging? Allow a person to regrow lost limbs? A cure for all illness?

All possible in theory. Drug and chemical formulas just waiting to be discovered and capitalised on. And what was that if not *magic*? Healing. Harming. Growing. Shrinking. Transforming. And, if chemistry is magic, and magic is power, what did that make *me*? A genius without equal. A chemist who’d surpassed all others.

A god.

The next morning, I handed my annoyed, undesirable wife the shampoo. My magnum opus. And I told her I couldn’t wait to see how it smelled – a little trick to keep her from washing it down the drain and lying about actually using it.

Half an hour later, she stepped out of the bathroom with that first dose seeping into her scalp.

For the rest of the day, she'd be a little less moody than usual.

Tomorrow, that moodiness would retreat further.

In a week, she'd be smiling a lot more. Would be much more passive and open to suggestion.

Two weeks, and the first specs of blonde roots would be visible. She'd be ditsy and dumb and happy, the old 'Bek' quickly fading into memory.

After a month; she'll have gone up by a cup size or two – if the formula worked as intended.

And, in half a year, Rebecca's head would be as empty as a beachball – with a pair of them for tits. Long blonde hair flowing down her shoulders; only the lowest half-inch, the tips of each hair strand, remaining her natural dark brown – until the day came and I cut those last reminders of 'Bek' away forever.

I'd have my perfect, obedient, beautiful wife.

And my proof of concept.

But that was just the beginning.

What kind of a sick, twisted god would I be if I didn't use my power for the betterment of mankind?

First Rebecca.

Then her friends.

Then *all* of them.

Every woman in the world.