

The Super Grow Machine

Section 4: 325 words

Author: Pamela Maynard

“No, absolutely not,” Miranda argued. “I’ll probably mess it all up and you’ll end up a gerbil! If you really think it’s safe, you can put me in it. I always wanted to be taller,” Miranda said quietly. “But only if you’re sure.”

“Really, you’d let me test out my grow machine on you? You’re a great friend to trust me that much,” Steve said excitedly. “But I don’t think it’s such a good idea. What if something happened to you? I couldn’t live with myself. Let’s just forget it for now,” Steve said dejectedly.

“No!” Miranda said sharply. “I know you’re smart and you’d never try to hurt me on purpose. I’m tired of those bullies hurting you all the time. Let’s do it tonight.”

Steve’s eye met Miranda’s, searching for any doubt. There was only determination in her green eyes. She swept her brown curls off her forehead and walked towards the machine.

“What do I do?” Miranda asked. “Should I take my watch off or anything?”

Steve followed Miranda with renewed enthusiasm. “Yes, take off anything metal. That’s a good idea. That should be safer.”

Miranda sat on an upside down red milk crate and unlaced her shoes. She took off her Hello Kitty watch and necklace and laid them on the workbench. “I guess I’m ready now. What do I need to do?”

Steve’s excitement was overwhelming. He practically floated closer to Miranda. “Just put your hand on the try and try to hold really still.” Steve helped position Miranda’s hand in the precise position he needed it. He looked at Miranda and asked sincerely: “Are you sure you want to do this?”

Miranda nodded. “I’m only doing it to help you, you know. I’m tired of those boys being so mean to you.”

Steve hugged his friend then repositioned her hand on the machine. He glanced at her and smiled. “Here goes...”he said as he depressed the red button.

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At first nothing happened. A few seconds of dead silence filled the room. Then a loud zap traveled through the machine and into Miranda's hand. She gasped and was thrown to the cement floor by a large shock. She landed on her side and didn't move.

Steve rushed to Miranda, repeated her name over and over. Close to tears, he rolled her over. Her eyes were closed and she was limp and unresponsive. "Miranda, wake up," Steve shouted frantically. He shook her shoulders lightly. "Miranda, I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to hurt you." Steve kept apologizing to Miranda as he tried to wake her up. After a few minutes, Miranda opened her eyes and tried to sit up.

"What happened?" she asked confused by her position on the garage floor.

"I'm so sorry, Miranda. I guess my grow machine didn't work. You got a shock that knocked you out. I think I wired it wrong. I'm so sorry." Steve hung his head. The last thing he wanted to do was hurt his best friend.

"I'm Ok Steve. Don't get so upset," Miranda replied, trying to reassure Steve.

"I'm taking this thing apart right now," Steve cried as he started pulling parts off the machine. "What's going to happen next? First we almost burned the garage down. Then I almost killed you. What next?"

Steve sat down on the upside-down crate and looked at Miranda sitting on the floor. "Maybe there's another way I can deal with those guys. Maybe I don't need to get bigger. Maybe I just need to get smarted."

"Steve, I don't think you need to change at all. You're a great guy and friend just the way you are," Miranda replied.

"Maybe I can make a 'Super Smart' machine instead." Steve said with a happy grin.

Miranda frowned and started to protest.

"Just kidding," Steve winked at Miranda as he helped her up off the floor.