

JENNY EVERYWHERE

A World of Pure Unimagination



By Xavier Llewellyn

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REALMS OF INK

PUBLISHED BY REALMS OF INK
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE CHESHIRE HOUSE

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First published 2024.

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With thanks to Ryan Fogarty and Gerard Power for their assistance with the development of the Pinguis.

Jenny was in the mood for chocolate.

She had spent her day in the Third Universe — if one followed the Council of Frogs' nomenclature — and the prospect of entering that particular reality in the first place had filled her with considerable trepidation. The Third Universe was infamous among multiversal hitchhikers for temporal mutability; in other words, it was being constantly rewritten by careless time-travellers, resulting in unfathomably baffling paradoxes. Yet she had come, all the same, just so she could lend a hand with the efforts to mitigate the damage of a certain recent fiasco to which a shifter was uniquely qualified to respond.

The breadth of this catastrophe, whose name was commonly agreed to be the Unravel, was by no means exclusive to this universe — nay, its impact had been felt by many — but its aftershocks in this one reality appeared unusually troublesome. Even in the short time she'd been here, Jenny herself had seen that for herself. It was on a devastatingly snowy planet that she had met two cute little creatures known as Pinguis — *Pinguicorpus homo*, she had come to understand; a species wholly unsuited to such an environment, whatever flightless birds the name might evoke to the uneducated — alone and afraid, their entire lives unwritten. Even their names, Bibendum and Puff Tremayne, were meta-historical revisions; she had felt it in her bones when they'd announced themselves, though she hadn't had the heart to tell them.

There was another thing she had elected not to mention in their presence: tragic as the encounter was, it had sparked a craving for chocolate within her. The reason for this would have been obvious to any observer: the Pinguis looked like marshmallows. Just great big sugar-bag-sized, fluffy marshmallows. Took all sorts to make an omniverse, Jenny supposed. Throughout the considerable while she had spent locating, adjusting, and finally gifting to them a device which they could use to escape the planet, all she could think about was smores. At the time, pangs of guilt had resulted, as if to add variety from the pangs of sweet-toothed anger; these thoughts, after all, rather undermined the situation's severity.

But now, with the pair safely on their way to finding a new and better home, it seemed quite innocent to indulge after a job well done. One thing

led to another and, the first chance she got, she shifted out of that universe's Jenny — their body that of a male aviator pilot from the 1930s, though part of Jenny suspected the Unravel had had something to do with *that*, too — and into a new Jenny in a universe where she could sate her desire. A world of pure imagination.

She had chosen a world that resembled that of a certain film she watched as a child, about a sweet little boy who went to a magical chocolate factory with four other horrid children, all spoilt and greedy.

And white, as her grandmother had pointed out. “Five random children chosen from all around the world, and five white kids are the ones invited in.” Good old Granny.

The children, of course, hadn't been invited at all; they'd earned, bought, or simply chanced their respective ways into the factory. The younger Jenny had known that, and part of her had wanted to correct the old woman. But she had felt, even then, that the point was moot, and felt a slight twang of resentment and disappointment at the realisation that nobody like her, a Native American, had gotten to experience the magic. Still, it hadn't been enough to mar the experience overmuch; in fact, by the time the movie was done, she had developed a crush on the young protagonist. She was always doing that, even back then — forming strong emotional opinions on the people behind the TV screen — as though some part of her felt that she really could go and meet them someday, if only she knew how. The boy hadn't been a literary theorist's idea of an *interesting character*, but he'd seemed... nice.

To cut a long story short, the crush had persisted up until high school. That was the trouble with nice boys who didn't exist; you grew up, and they didn't. Besides, growing up was no bed of roses, and the newly teenaged Jenny had felt that she had to separate her childhood from herself, if only so it would make the bullying stop. It had, somewhat predictably, failed to help — but Jenny had learnt many lessons about people during those days. It had shaped her into who she was today.

That, and the discovery of her multiversal powers; but *that* was another story.

* * *

There was a moment of disorientation which always came with shifting into another Jenny — a spell of dizziness as she got used to a whole new body. That her immediately previous host had been a Johnny Everywhere — well, an Achron, technically — added a whole other layer of adjustment, and it meant that it was a few moments before she noticed she wasn't in the expected, ambiguously Germanic town. This place looked more... Victorian.

And wet.

Seeking shelter from the drizzling rain, she ran along the street, one hand cupped over her eyes to shield her view while the other pulled her leather jacket taut.

Weather be damned, this local Jenny had *style*, she noticed. All metal-studded leather, with splashes of colour to liven up the black, and marvellously spiky boots that might make a villain think twice about challenging her. And as for the skin, it was close enough to her own; bit paler, maybe, but she wasn't white or anything — *that* always felt ever-so-slightly off. Yes, she could have done a lot worse.

Except the woman whose body she was borrowing was clearly the kind of toughie who didn't mind walking around in the cold rain, and showed it; now literally in her shoes, the chocolate-craving Jenny wasted no time in deciding her ego could take the hit. She trotted like a kid, looking for shelter, as the cold drops of water kept up their onslaught. Finally she took refuge inside the nearest newsagent's. She approached the newspaper stand and scanned the covers, hoping to find something by which to discern her location: she soon spotted a local paper, discovering that she was in Glasgow, on the 24th of February, 2024.

That was the trouble with shifting half-blind, even if it made travelling that much more thrilling. She'd had a loose idea of the sort of place she wanted to go, the sort of Jenny whose mind she wanted to hijack, but it had all been quite deliberately fuzzy. You never knew what you were going to get. At least her predilection for mind-shifting over physical transportation meant she didn't have to deal with the side-effects of suddenly materialising in hostile environments; if *she* appeared miles underwater, it would be as a mermaid or

a squid, thank you very much. Not that the weather was quite so bad that it became a concern on that scale. Not just now, anyway.

Scotland, then. A magical chocolate factory in Scotland. Alright.

In truth, accepting the Scottish town as the location of the factory was easy enough — every universe had its quirks, no matter how big or small, and geographical precision had never been a core part of the story she so loved. She dried her fingers on the inside of her jacket and picked up the periodical. Reading down the front page, she spotted a fortuitous article:

WILLY MCDUFF'S CHOCOLATE FACTORY OPENS ITS DOORS

She took a moment to read through the article in its entirety, memorising the factory's location and noticing that no photograph of the factory was attached. Strange, she thought to herself. She saw that the newsagent's did sell chocolate, but paid it no mind. Having gone to the effort of shifting into another universe just for chocolate, she wanted it *freshly-made*, thank you.

After a few minutes, the rain subsided and set off down the high street towards the River Clyde, before following South Street which ran parallel to its length. All the while, her brisk trot displayed all the qualities of someone who did not want to waste the merest ounce of their time. Wonder awaited.

Within ten minutes, she reached her destination —
— and her heart sank.

She had passed several warehouses already, but she hadn't expected her destination to *be* one. Where was the magical factory? But, unless the plastic sign screwed onto the building was lying to her, this was the place. And actively deceitful plastic signs screwed onto buildings was something that she had only encountered once before; something which she hoped would never happen to her again. Besides, she was not wholly unfamiliar with magic men whose dwellings were rather more impressive on the inside than the outside betrayed. Maybe this Willy was one of those types? That *had* to be it. Clinging to that rapidly melting chunk of hope, she entered the grim construction.

* * *

The drab-looking building which, on the outside, looked so much like a warehouse, wasted no time in revealing itself to be a drab-looking warehouse on the inside, too.

Jenny had found herself at one end of the unimpressive industrial space, which had been haphazardly furnished with rows of hard wooden benches occupied with local families, their children all smiling. This less-than-enchanted area had been separated from the rest with a set of plastic gates. Bold letters were emblazoned at the top, proclaiming ‘Factory’ with a kind of desperate stab at colourful confidence. Jenny made her way over to a strikingly short fellow with green hair, and skin which was not so much orange as ruddy, sitting behind a plastic folding table. He didn’t immediately notice Jenny, but, after she gave a polite cough, he slowly looked up from his smartphone.

“Hello,” the man addressed Jenny in a weary, monotone drawl. “I’m Simon, a Wonkidoodle. It’s thirty-five pounds. Per person”

“What is?”

“Admission.”

“What am I admitting to?” Jenny asked blankly.

“Nothing. You’re *being* admitted,” Simon replied, with just a hint of sarcasm. “To, y’know, the ‘experience you’ve never experienced before’ and whatnot.”

Jenny dug around in her inside pockets, retrieving a slim metal wallet and extracting a few plastic notes with the King’s face. She looked at them for just a moment — quickly confirming the current King of England in this world seemed to be the same man as in her native dimension — before handing them to Simon, who accepted them with mechanical rotteness and then promptly placed them in a metal tin. His expression still blank, he nodded in the direction of a vacant bench, passed a paper bracelet over to her.

It felt slightly tight around her wrist, and the benches really were uncomfortable.

Fortunately, she had only a short while to wait before ‘it’ began, whatever ‘it’ was supposed to be. The gates opened once more, admitting what Jenny

initially took to be another Wonkidoodle, this one dressed in the attire of a ringmaster. The little man took stock of the situation, then turned to face the crowd, doffing his slightly tacky-looking topper.

“Welcome esteemed guests, of all ages,” he announced, his delivery so stilted that Jenny could *hear* the badly-placed punctuation, “to my chocolate factory! I am Willy McDuff, your number one guide to the Garden of Enchantment.”

Jenny choked back a laugh. She wasn’t sure what, exactly, she’d been expecting to discover with this shift, but she certainly hadn’t counted on encountering a cheap knock-off. She cast her gaze to the floor, hiding her amusement, when she caught McDuff’s eye.

She was fairly sure he’d spotted her anyway, but McDuff simply continued on. His strangely-rambling patter did not falter for one moment as he explained that the garden itself was alive, which struck Jenny as odd for two principal reasons: firstly, the garden was clearly... not alive, it was mostly just old Christmas decorations strewn around — and secondly, this entire spiel didn’t actually have anything to do with chocolate, or, for that matter, sweets of any kind.

As the crowd arose and passed through the gates, McDuff carried on.

“So, adventurers, have you come prepared? Have you brought your sense of wonder? An extra pair of socks, in case the pair you’re wearing is blown right off, perchance?”

Some of the children gave confirmatory shouts, others nodded. The adults all looked unimpressed. Jenny looked at the children, and noticed that they weren’t paying attention to the cold, echoey warehouse or the few haphazard decorations inside, but were clinging to every word spoken by McDuff. He was surprisingly good with kids, it seemed.

“Are you ready children? Ready to leave your boring world behind and to enter a new one where the only limit is your imagination?”

Oh, they’d need a good imagination alright, Jenny flippantly thought to herself, if they were going to have a good time in this dump.

McDuff's arms flew through the air, gesturing towards the gates, which were pushed open by a Wonkidoodle. The group walked through the garden, the chocolatier continuing to describe their surroundings as if they were more fantastical than they really were. The Wonkidoodle pretended to trip over a patch of flowers, sending glass marbles flying, which McDuff claimed was their attempt to steal sweets from him. McDuff told the children to compliment the tulips, and the Wonkidoodle spoke thank-yous out of the corner of his mouth in a high-pitched voice, as a ventriloquist would with their dummy.

Jenny was content to watch in bemused disbelief as the tour went on, with McDuff walking them through one shoddy set piece after another. Was this a paid actor acting out some kind of unauthorised tie-in, she lightly wondered — or had she wandered into one of the wonderfully unlikely worlds where reality matched the slap-dash fiction of such tie-ins? Infinity held all sorts, after all — she'd once blundered into a dimension where an insane Hyperspace Tyrant ran his own idea of a whimsical factory tour, for God's sake. So did Willy McDuff, against all probability, actually know anything about the process of making chocolate?

If he did, there was certainly no evidence of such to be found in the way he marvelled and gasped at every underlit area, pretending with admirable but fundamentally doomed enthusiasm that they were actually magical faerielands. If these purported miracles had any relevance to the manufacturing process of taking beans, grinding them up and roasting them, sweetening them, and moulding them into brightly-wrapped blocks, he had yet to explain it.

She didn't know how long this was all supposed to go on for, but Jenny couldn't help but think that she might bounce before long. This was all passingly amusing, but the joke was beginning to wear out, especially as she couldn't tell if anyone else in the building was truly in on it.

Finally, something interesting happened.

From behind a mirror, a woman dressed in a dark, hooded robe emerged and advanced towards the crowd, its every step filled with eerie menace. A shock of dark brown hair escaped from behind her iron, angular mask, the sight of which made most of the children shriek in fear, cry, or both.

McDuff, true to form, gasped like a silent film actor.

“The Unknown!” he exclaimed, clutching the rim of his top hat — then turned towards the crowd. “We don’t know her name, so me and the Wonkidoodles have named her the Unknown,” he informed his audience as if the antagonist of the next breakout Japanese horror picture wasn’t looming five feet from him. “She is an evil chocolate-maker who lives in the walls.”

Jenny blinked.

She looked away from the pair, then back at them.

The scene had not changed.

Ah.

She took it back — this place clearly had more to baffle her with, if not entertain in the conventional sense. McDuff and the Wonkidoodles being pale imitations didn’t remotely compare to *this*. What the *hell* was the Unknown? She had certainly never heard of such a character in the original film or the novel it was adapted from. Even the literary sequel, which, goodness knew, had a lot of weird things in it, could not be blamed for such an abomination.

She stared, transfixed, eyes locked on the figure.

Having politely waited until the chocolatier was done with the introductions, the entity waved her gloved hand, freezing McDuff in position, then turned towards the children.

“*You there! Yes, you!*” the Unknown addressed them. Their parents were unfazed, believing all this to be part of McDuff’s show. “*You will assist me in stealing all of McDuff’s recipes! Together, we can run this company together — you can have all the sweets you desire, forever!*”

“No!”

A chorus of high-pitched shouts rose from the audience. After a split-second, Jenny realised she had been among those who’d cried out. Somehow, something in her gut had decided that the Unknown was no underpaid actress in a cheap Halloween mask; decided that, against all logic, she would do best to treat this scenario as genuine.

Jenny Everywhere hadn't come this far by mistrusting those instincts when it counted. She rushed towards the Unknown, fully intent on tackling the phantom to the ground — but before she could reach her, the villain waved her hand again to unfreeze McDuff, and, in the same instant, disappeared in a shower of sparks. Jenny steadied herself just before she crashed into the brick wall.

McDuff, disoriented, shook his head. He seemed to momentarily show an expression of dire concern, before his demeanour shifted entirely; he straightened, and any indication that he had been frozen washed away. Jenny presumed that he was simply controlling his emotions to reassure the children, but the little voice at the back of her head wasn't so sure.

“You all look like you've seen a ghost!” McDuff smiled smoothly.

Jenny wasn't having it. She led McDuff to the side and grilled him.

“What was that?” she loudly whispered.

“Nothing,” McDuff dismissed her. “There is not any issue.”

“There evidently *is!*” she protested. “Did you forget that a weirdo literally just froze you? Or are you plain stupid?! What would you have done if she had taken the children with her to — uhm —” Jenny paused, unsure of where the Unknown had actually *gone*; ‘into the walls’ sounded just a bit too nonsensical, even now that she had accepted the tangible reality of the creature itself. “Well, taken them wherever she went?”

The man in the top hat was silent for a moment. At last, he shrugged.

“Well, she didn't,” he said, his tone not huffy or self-congratulatory so much as it sounded — helpless.

And that, as far as McDuff was concerned, was that; he spun on his heel and rejoined the head of the party, as if Jenny herself had vanished from his sight.

Flustered, she split off to investigate. There were many words one could have used to describe plastic signposts with locations written on them in sharpie, but at least they provided some moderate help in navigating the surprisingly spacious warehouse.

Travelling through the garden, she saw a pair of miserable-looking Wonkidoodles at a table, with a set of lab equipment; they looked more like Walter and Jesse, partners in crime, working in their crystal meth lab than jolly confectioners. Though it began as par for the course for customer service everywhere, the full substance of the conversation Jenny proceeded to overhear did nothing to dispel the comparison.

“I can’t keep doing this, Janine,” one Wonkidoodle confessed to her partner.

“Courtesy —” the other began, their tone weary and placating, but Courtesy wasn’t having it.

“I *need*,” she stressed, “to get out of here, before I end up dead.”

“I... I understand,” Janine gulped. “I’ll distract McDuff when he comes around here next, and you can — get *outta* here.”

“Wha — no! Not on my *own*! I can’t leave you here, Janine, let’s just go now before —”

Well, Jenny decided, however sympathetic their predicament surely was, she couldn’t let them slip away before she got some answers.

She stepped closer to the foreboding black table, discovering its indifferent clutter to consist of various vials and flasks filled with sugar beans. Polystyrene cups containing a mere splash of a fizzy fluid had been placed around its surface in a futile effort to imply that their contents were the results of the wacky chemistry, but the plastic Gevity bottle that had rolled out from behind the table said otherwise.

By the time Jenny was done taking stock of all this, the two Wonkidoodles had turned to look at her.

“Hiya!” Jenny greeted them with an enthusiastic wave, before becoming more grave as she continued. “Can any of you tell me what the hell is up with McDuff and the Unknown?”

The pair exchanged concerned glances before Courtesy addressed Jenny. “I think you better come with us.”

“Yeah, no, not gonna fall for that,” she retorted.

She'd heard that particular sentence from enough supervillain goons and assorted unsavoury characters to warrant a healthy scepticism — but something about the earnest tone of Janine's reply made the twinge of worry in her gut recede.

“No, no!” the Wonkidoodle said, obviously wholly understanding and forgiving her wariness. “Don't worry, we ain't bad 'uns, we're just gonna talk to ya outside. Hey, strong lass like you, wrung-out wretches like Courtesy and me — even two against one, I don't think ye'd have much to fear. ‘Specially in broad daylight.’”

‘Broad daylight’ was, she felt, a somewhat generous description of the wet greyness outside, but then, she didn't get the sense that the Wonkidoodles had seen much of the outside world recently, so she decided against correcting the green-haired woman. Still, another concern raised itself.

“Didn't you say you might get — hurt — if you didn't do your job?” she asked. “I'm a curious gal, but I don't want to put you in danger —”

“Ah, thanks, but that's alright too,” Courtesy piped up. “We can't *quit*, but but we do have some break-time saved up.”

Jenny smiled and bowed her head slightly in acceptance, then let them lead the way to the street outside.

They passed Simon. He didn't care.

* * *

“Now...” Courtesy began to speak, then faltered, suddenly full of uncertainty. She glanced at Janine. “She won't believe us, will she?”

“What's the worst that can happen? She'll just take us for fruit loops.”

“Alright then,” Courtesy turned back to Jenny. “No easy way to say it. This whole... *thing*, this event, the open day for kids to come and visit their hero, it's a... it's the !£*&%#! *Illuminati*...”

For the third time that day, Jenny found herself mentally taking back her assertion that the madness had reached its peak. The *Illuminati*! It wasn't that their existence seemed so outlandish. There were many worlds with truly menacing Illuminati and genuinely faked moon landings; it proved nothing

save the theory of statistical inevitability. But the Illuminati running a knock-off chocolate factory invaded by a wall-dwelling spectre? Now that — that would blow the Unknown and the cheap theatrics alike *completely* and *utterly* out of the water on the weirdness scale.

There were very few things she could reasonably say to that.

She blurted the first, and shortest, that came to mind.

“What the %£!#?!”

Of course, even now, she was graceful enough a shifter to say it in the properly censored fashion which seemed to be natural on this particular layer of reality. She wasn't sure that Janine and Courtesy would have perceived the difference, but the readers, buzzers, and assorted cross-dimensional gawkers *would*, and Jenny preferred to only frustrate *their* sensibilities when she had good cause to be angry with them. Or because it was funny.

“I *told* you she wouldn't believe us,” Courtesy snapped to Janine. She huffed.

“No no no, I do believe you!” Jenny now doing the reassuring, holding her hands in the air in mock surrender. “I've seen things before, I can believe the Illuminati are involved, it just took me by surprise a little bit. But why on *Earth* are the Illuminati, of all people, orchestrating Willy McLame's Spectacularly Rubbish Tour of Old Christmas Ornaments?”

“We don't really know, to be honest,” Courtesy replied. “I mean, Janine and me, we suspect that they might be trying to, I don't know, mindwash children with cheap distractions? But, I mean, *why*? And why do it like *this*? Your guess is as good as mine. They seemed to have brainwashed McDuff — I guess we weren't worth the effort, wage slaves are obedient enough as it is. And, as for the Unknown...”

Jenny braced herself for the revelation.

“...I think she's just a kid,” Courtesy finished.

Well, *that* explained nothing.

“Right, that's it,” Jenny steeled herself. “We have to get those kids out of there. Now.”

Jenny, Courtesy and Janine flung open the front doors. They stepped forwards like action heroes — Jenny’s unbuttoned jacket billowing behind her, the Wonkidoodles following. The knowledge that they currently looked like the love-children of Donald Trump and a Hobbit somehow failed to curtail their rekindled confidence. Simon, still sitting at the front table, didn’t bother to look up at the commotion; he wasn’t paid enough to care.

Striding forwards into the Factory, Jenny wasted no time in making herself known.

“Oi, McDuff Beer!” she shouted, her voice echoing across the poorly-soundproofed space.

Jenny’s fingers were many things. Nimble, generally. In this particular body, painted in rainbow colours — which was a look she might have to steal in her native form, if only for next June; she didn’t know if she could pull it off full-time.

But right now, her index was the very picture of divine wrath — outstretched, accusatory, and pointed at the hypnotised man with the top hat and the cheap suit.

“Step the *hell away from those children!*” she elaborated.

Each word was punctuated with a heavy slam of her steel-toed platform boots on the concrete floor, crossing the distance between them. Before he could react, she clenched her left fist, raising it in the air before landing it square on McDuff’s solar plexus. Winded, the poor blighter keeled over, clutching himself, gasping for air. The parents instinctively grasped their children, and, in the process, a few knocked against the sugar-bean table, sending the contents flying.

Jenny didn’t revel in that victory. Willy was just another victim; knocking him out was practicality, not vengeance or even punishment. She turned to Janine.

“Get him outta here,” she commanded, her tone clipped.

“How?”

“I dunno, drag him out?”

Janine complied. As Jenny turned back to the appalled crowd, she saw that Courtesy had grabbed a flask of sugar beans and was handing out small handfuls to the children.

“Now I’m only supposed to give you one each, but that’s hardly fair, is it? Given your bravery today, you deserve more than that. Absolutely.”

Jenny kneeled down beside her and whispered. “A single jelly bean?”

“It’s a joke, innit? McDuff told me to give them just one... and wanna guess what the worst part is?”

Jenny was on her wavelength. “It’s not even chocolate.”

“It’s not even chocolate,” she confirmed with a smile.

“Can you help me get this crowd outside?”

“Of course.”

* * *

In no time, they reached the front of the warehouse, where Simon continued to sit, doom-scrolling. He seemed so oddly contented by his state of listless misery that they strongly considered leaving him to it — but his left arm *was* lying lazily atop the money-box, and a hero’s job in this mess of an Experience wouldn’t be done until the families were refunded. Fortunately, fighting the listless Wonkidoodle for the loot amounted to little more than an exchange of passive-aggressive unpleasantries, and he made no move to chase her when she finally wrestled it from him and ran towards the gawping guests.

Just as she was finishing up the redistribution, Janine burst through the door.

“You will *never guess who is outside!*”

Jenny looked at her, her right eyebrow raised. She really had no idea.

“Who?”

“Karen. *Gillan.*”

The Shifter had no time to process this statement before the actor pushed open the door and poked her head through, locks of long hair cascading down like a waterfall of heavenly fire, asking if she could help.

Well, it didn't do to look a gift horse in the mouth, particularly when it looked like a world-famous actress who was, it had to be admitted, rather the adult Jenny's type. Business-like, she accepted the offered help, and instructed her to call the police — or whatever was this world's relevant authority was, but police seemed like a safe bet. Whatever the Unknown really was, this world seemed pretty darn mundane outside of the Illuminati's involvement. It had seemed rude to ask, but it now seemed fairly obvious that the Wonkidoodles' green heads of hair were wigs, and not even good ones.

Only once the call had gone through did Jenny turn to Janine and ask precisely how and why the up-and-coming movie star had turned up at a baffling Illuminati psy-op advertised to local families.

“Oh, she told me that she heard about the event on Twitter and just... really wanted to attend,” Janine said, slightly light-headed from this final, camel-breaking straw of surrealism. “I think she just genuinely — wanted to help us out.”

Everyone filed out of the building, including Simon, to Jenny's surprise. She assumed he had been accidentally super-glued to his chair. Gillan finished her call and she told them the police were going to arrive any minute.

“Now, I don't think the police are going to be much help in dismantling the Illuminati, even if they'll be able to help clean this place up, *so...*” Jenny routed around in her jacket pockets. If the Jenny she had shifted into was a responsible one, she'd hopefully have something to transmit an multiversal SOS. After a few seconds she extracted a smartphone, which she then spent a minute furiously typing away at.

“Right, so, I've quickly hacked into NASA and begun broadcasting a SOS, which should be transmitted in broad sweeps, hopefully hitting a multiversal nexus. That should spread to other universes, and if I'm *incredibly* lucky, the Infinite too.” Jenny explained all of this as if it made sense to anyone but her. “These guys might be the home-grown, garden variety for all I know, but you

can't be too careful — I can't take on the *Interdimensional* Illuminati by myself. Probably.”

“What?” Courtesy hadn't understood half of what Jenny said. Jenny looked at everyone else — the families, Janine, Simon, even Gillan — none of them the wiser. Jenny slouched with disappointment. “I'll explain later.”

Jenny looked at McDuff, who had blacked out. She bit her lip. That was the trouble with unfamiliar bodies: it was hard to judge your strength. She really *hadn't* meant to knock him out completely, just take him out of commission until he could be safely tied up and then, hopefully, de-conditioned.

Then a more pressing thought crossed her mind.

“Where did the other Wonkidoodle go? The one who was with McDuff?”

Courtesy and Janine shrugged; they had been with her. The families had been only paying attention to McDuff's antics. Nobody knew.

“And I saw what the Unknown could do,” she informed them, voice grim and resolute. “That was no hypnotised kid. Well, not just that, anyway. Unanswered questions... This isn't over, is it?”

She paused for a moment, in contemplation. Her stomach growled, her train of thought derailed.

“...Okay. Time-out. Before anything else — does anyone have any *fucking chocolate?*”