Life Is Bad

by lifeofgesture

Summary

When Taylor Hebert meets Lisa Wilbourn, she gains powers to control time.

A storm rose on the horizon dusk. A tanker on the shoreline of the Docks lifts up from the massive tornado and smashes into the Protectorate headquarters' shield, disrupting it. It spun back for another hit-

Taylor stared at the notebooks in front of her. She needed two but from the measly change in her hand, only had change for one. Math or English?

She could decide at home. Dejectedly, she left the shop with one notebook and walked around the corner to pass an alleyway. Taylor’s eyes widened when she spotted the two men stalking towards a young blonde girl with guns raised. Her eyes met the girl’s in one instant before she tried to run for it around the back of the building.

Tried.

One of the men fired at the girl and Taylor screamed, before time stopped.
She stared at the scene before her, before shaking her head clear and knowing, somehow, she didn’t have much time left. She ran passed the bullet and picked up the girl, groaning with the weight, but relieved she wasn’t that heavy, which was something she was going to think about later. It was slightly awkward due to the fact she was stuck in the pose she was in, but Taylor tried to think of it as moving a mannequin.

She managed to bring her two blocks away, with breaks, before time resumed. Taylor gasped and fell to her knees from sudden exertion that she guessed was from her power. The girl stumbled, eyes wide as she took in her new surroundings.

“Hi, you saved my life.” She said as she pulled Taylor up with a hand and they started running together. “I’m flattered.” There was a genuine note of gratitude.

“Hi flattered, I’m Taylor.” She said, before wanting to hit herself on the head. It was such a dad joke.

But she laughed anyways.

“I’m Lisa.”

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Lisa explained that those guys were after her for her power, that she explained was being like, totally psychic. Taylor nodded along as she made macaroni for the both of them. It was just as believable as being able to stop time whenever she liked. She tried experimenting with it when she was cooking and found herself listening to a previous segment of Lisa’s babble.

“And so she was totally messing with that kid so I found out her credit card pin-,” She broke off and gave Taylor a stare. “You did something right now.”

“I … went back in time.” Taylor said slowly as the implications wrapped around her.

“Holy shit that’s so broken.” Lisa hissed as she stood up.

“It’s not.” Taylor protested weakly.
“Yes it is, holy crap.” Lisa said, going next to her and sticking a fork in the macaroni. “Damn this is good.”

“Really?” Taylor brightened up. “I made the cheese sauce and added some old bread crumbs to the top. I could put some bacon in it too.”

Lisa made a tortured noise. “That’d be awesome, haven’t had meat in a while. Still I’ll just eat some of this before you put it in if that’d be okay?”

“Sure, just let me get a bowl for you.” Taylor handed her a bowl and then opened the fridge with a foot to get the wrapped bacon. She ripped it open and started frying the bacon, sizzling the fat satisfyingly soon enough. Lisa popped right by her side suddenly.

“I think it’s done.” She opinoned. Taylor looked down at the lightly fried bacon and shrugged.

“If you want.” She said, before cutting it up with some scissors and scraping it into Lisa’s bowl.

Lisa ate hungrily and quickly, making Taylor frown in wonder at how long she’d been without food. She then leaned on the counter and spun her spoon in her bowl.

“So what are you going to do with your powers huh?” Lisa asked. After a moment of silence, she said, “Wow, you really have no idea huh? Can’t say I blame you.”

Taylor grimaced. “I just got them afterall.”

“Most kids would be scrambling for the Protectorate. To be honest, your power would have them bending over backwards for you.” Lisa said, grinning.

“Really?” Taylor said, surprised.

“Think about it. You can go back in time and freeze time while moving around. It’s crazy strong even if you’re baseline human.” Lisa said, pointing at her with the spoon.
“I’m very baseline.” Taylor said wryly.

“And you still got me away from those two thugs. That’s super awesome in my book.” Lisa said, causing Taylor to smile.

“Well. Okay. Suppose I join the wards. Then there are waves of teenage angst and drama.” Taylor explained, gesturing widely. Lisa rolled her eyes.

“Okay, do you have a computer?” Lisa asked. Taylor opened her mouth. “Oh you do, good. Let’s boot it up.”

Taylor closed it, annoyed at her smug grin.

Taylor and Lisa walked up to her room, in which Lisa swiftly booted up her computer and got past her password. She internet searched for pictures of the Brockton Bay Wards and spent a couple of seconds looking at them.

“Okay so it looks like Vista has a crush on Gallant, Gallant’s dating Glory Girl, and Shadow Stalker is kind of a bitch. Otherwise, they get along.” Lisa analysed, off handedly. Taylor blinked after a moment as she sat down on her bed.

“Are you serious? That’s it?” Taylor asked. It was not the mess of teenage drama she expected.

“Yeah, and you can just get Shadow Stalker booted if you find her irritating.” Lisa said, grinning.

“That’s a little mean to do.” Taylor protested.

“Oh trust me, she apparently has the the personality of a boot with nails.” Lisa explained, waving her protests away. Taylor bit her lip and shrugged helplessly.

“Then why don’t you join the Wards if it’s not so bad?” Taylor asked.
“Other than they’ll insist I’ll have to be under the custody of my parents who are the worst by the way? The guy who hired those thugs has people in PRT. Might even be part of it.” She said darkly.

“Oh. Then why are you saying I should join?!” She exclaimed, folding her arms.

“Because this guy’s after Thinkers, not high profile timey wimey Breakers like you.” She shot back. “The Protectorate would root him out if he snatched someone like you under his nose.”

“Bleh.” Taylor said intelligently.

Further conversation was ended by the front door opening downstairs and a call from her dad.

Taylor looked at a grinning Lisa suspiciously.

“What are-,”

“Don’t worry about it.” Lisa said, patting Taylor on the back as she strutted down the stairs. Taylor stared at her for a moment before rushing down the stairs herself.

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“Oh that’s terrible. You can stay as long as you want.” Her dad said, firmly. Taylor looking at Lisa in amazement before Lisa discreetly stomped on her foot. Taylor grimaced lightly before putting on a smile that was still half genuine.

“Yeah he wanted me to go to a conversion camp before I left …” Lisa shuddered and Taylor wondered if Lisa had been into theatre when she was in school.

“No worries, you’re safe here.” He said reassuringly before standing up. “Do you want some tea or coffee?”

“Tea please.” Lisa said, with a butter wouldn’t melt in her mouth tone.
“No problem.” He said, turning towards the kitchen. Once he was gone, Taylor elbowed Lisa back.

“Ow!” Lisa snapped. “What’s that for?”

“For stomping on my foot earlier.” Taylor whispered, angrily.

“Well you were going to blow my cover.” Lisa said, frowning. Taylor chuffed.

“You’re awfully good at lying.” Taylor said, raising her eyebrows. Lisa rolled her eyes.

“The best lies are laden with truth.” She said primly.

“… are you really gay?” Taylor asked, blinking. Lisa wiggled her fingers.

“Used to be for everyone before my power made me have a headache every time I get too much feedback.” She said, with a grimace. “But it’s not a big deal.”

Taylor nodded as her dad came back with some tea. He handed one to Lisa and Taylor before sitting down.

Lisa sipped at her tea and Taylor just spun the spoon inside, not feeling like drinking hers until it was cooler.

“So we have a spare futon in the closet that I can dust off with a bat and you can sleep in Taylor’s room. No hanky panky please.” He said, wryly.

“Dad!” Taylor exclaimed indignantly as Lisa said, “Of course not.”

Her dad smiled as he went to the stairs and Taylor buried her hands in her burning face.
“I promise I will leave your innocence unblemished.” Lisa said, slyly. Then she squawked as Taylor threw a pillow at her face.

The next morning, Taylor carefully poured the pancake batter in a single motion, letting the greased pan sizzle and pop as it cooked the batter. In another pan, she had bacon frying up a storm. On the counter, she had packaged the leftover macaroni for her dad so he could take it to work.

“A girl could get used to this.” Lisa said wryly as she walked down from the stairs and into the kitchen. Taylor flushed as she flipped the pancake with the spatula.

“You’re incorrigible.” Taylor muttered, adding much to Lisa’s grin.

Lisa started rummaging for a plate as Taylor patted the pancake with a dab of butter on top.

“Syrup’s in the cabinet on the far right.” Taylor called out, as she plated the finished bacon. If she saved the drippings, she could make cabonara, she mused.

“That’d taste really good.” Lisa voiced, plating the pancake onto her plate. Taylor gave her a look and Lisa smiled back as she grabbed the bacon plate as well to put on the table. Taylor poured another pancake into the hot pan.

“Don’t worry, I’ll help support you guys too.” Lisa said, as she dug in. Taylor thought back to yesterday’s conversation and frowned.

“No stealing.” She said firmly as she flipped the pancake.

“Aw …” Lisa said, chewing on some bacon. “What if they’re like a total scumbag like Kaiser?”

Taylor bit her lip before glaring at her in realization. “Stop trying to lower my moral standards.”

“But they’re so highhh.” Lisa complained, pouting. “Anyways, have you considered telling your
Taylor stared at the butter melting on the pancake in rivlets. “I don’t know.”

“He’ll take it well, I think.” Lisa said, kindly. “Hell, you could tell him and if you don’t like the outcome, you can just go back in time beforehand.”

“That’s kind of off.” Taylor said, twisting her lips. “It feels like not taking responsibility for your actions.”

“It’s also a second chance.” Lisa pointed out quietly. “People would love a redo on their mistakes.”

“I guess that makes sense too.” Taylor said, sighing. Then there were the steps of her Dad down the steps.

“Hey Mr. Hebert!” Lisa greeted, as she ate another mouthful of pancake. Dad blinked the sleep from his eyes as he took the pan from Taylor to plate his pancake.

“Thanks Taylor.” He said, absently as he sat down with the plate. Taylor poured another pancake for herself.

“Lisa, do you want seconds?” She asked, after a moment.

“Yeah, after yours. Your bacon is so good with them.” She said cheerily. Taylor flushed again.

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She watched as the storm raged and dragged her feet through the water. It was as if Leviathan was here, she thought. The Rig laid shattered and there were only the sound of wind screaming in her ears as she leaned forward into it.

‘What the Tempest was about’ was the only five words she had written since starting the essay an hour ago. This shouldn’t be so hard, she was the daughter of an English professor after all. Taylor
looked at Lisa in equal parts envy and irritation as the aforementioned girl browsed the internet. She said she was looking for an internet job and from the self satisfied grin on her face, she had just done it.

“What’d you find?” Taylor asked, knowingly.

“Oh a job as a blog reporter. The editor stole some information from a dead, but beloved professor at harvard for an article so unless she wants that getting out, she’ll want me to have a nice cushy job.” Lisa said, swinging around on the chair.

“Lisa!”

“Hey you said no stealing, not no blackmail!” Lisa protested. Taylor facepalmed and shook her head.

“You know what I meant.” She groaned out. Lisa frowned.

“Look, how else am I going to help out as a paperless underage runaway?” Lisa said.

“You’re not. We’re helping you regardless of how much you can financially contribute.” Taylor corrected. Lisa was quiet for a moment.

“I did the math and your dad can’t really support three people on his paychecks.” Lisa muttered, looking away.

“How do you- You looked at our bills.” Taylor said, in realization. “Did you go through our stuff?!”

Lisa raised her hands defensively. “Only your dad’s stuff. Also I kinda saw the state of the house and the fact everything is brand generic.”

“That is so not okay Lisa. You still went through our stuff.” Taylor said, angrily.

“Well I don’t want to cause debt or loans for you guys. I’ll just be paying for groceries and other small things. It’s not a big deal.” Lisa said, shrugging. Taylor tossed her notebook to the side and
stood up.

“We’re not that poor and we don’t need charity!” She snapped, before walking out the door.

There was a part of her that didn’t want to scare away Lisa, that wanted to go back into the room and apologize. But her anger and her pride said no, Lisa was being invasive and rude and outrageous. Taylor was also realizing that Lisa was a little frightening in her lack of personal boundaries. How much she liked her only after a few days. Was it loneliness or was it Lisa’s power to know her?

Taylor found herself throwing the dirty laundry into the washing machine, tossing everything one by one until it was full. She turned on the machine and let it fill to the top before measuring out the detergent and putting it inside. Turning to the side to check if it was leaking again, she ended up facing Lisa who was standing at the bottom of the stairs looking uncomfortable.

“Taylor … I should go, it’s not really fair to you guys to endanger you all like this.” She said, quietly.

Taylor sighed as she looked down at the ground. “Don’t be stupid.”

“What?”

“Be honest, you’re leaving because you’re too proud to say sorry, rather than out of an obligation to keep us safe.” She said, folding her arms.

“I am not!” Lisa snapped, before wincing. “Okay maybe. Look, this is just … too complicated for me. I’m a simple girl, I like simple things, this-,”

“Is too hard for you?” Taylor asked wryly.

“No.” Lisa narrowed her eyes. “I am perfectly capable of handling you.”

Taylor snorted. “Then why is your first reaction to a little fight running away?”
Lisa stalked closer to Taylor and pointedly did not tip toe to get into her personal space. “Does this look like I’m running away?”

She raised her eyebrows. “It looks like you’re trying to make me uncomfortable and you’re way too short for that.”

Lisa leaned back and chuffed in exasperation. “Damnit, I’m vertically challenged.”

“Sureee.” Taylor said, teasingly, before freezing. Was this one of Lisa’s manipulations? They just fought and now she was teasing her. Was this normal or was this a parahuman thing? They got along well, but what was real ... Lisa blinked and grimaced at the look on her face.

“I’m not manipulating you. I’m not a Master. I’m a Thinker.” She said, before climbing on top of the washing machine to sit on it. “Look … I’m not really psychic. I just have a super intuition. I can figure you out from clues and little things.”

“That’s not really reassuring.” Taylor muttered, but it did make her feel a bit better. Lisa shrugged helplessly.

“I mean, the offer’s there on the table for me to leave if I make you uncomfortable.” She offered.

“No.” Taylor said instantly. “You have no safe place to go. You’ll get kidnapped by that creep.”

Lisa sighed. “He’s going to come after me sooner or later. You can’t stop it.”

“Really, I can’t? Don’t I have timey-wimey Shaker bullshit?” She said, cocking her head and smiling.

“A sniper round to the head would stop that.” Lisa said quietly. Taylor winced at the thought before shaking her head.

“This guy would have a hard time getting away with the assassination of a school girl. Anyways, I’m not leaving you to that fate. That’s not what a hero does.” Taylor said.
When Lisa smiled, it was slow and shy this time.

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It was kind of funny how easy it was now.

She walked through the hallway and rewinded time so Sophia didn’t trip her down the stairs. She could avoid the malicious people that lurked in the crowds with ease now.

When she got to math class, Taylor observed the glue on her chair and the smug look on Madison’s face in frozen time. It was an ugly look. She simply rewinded time so she didn’t look like she teleported in place and walked back in. She took some newspaper out of her backpack, one of the trashy ones that was distributed for free and put it on her seat. Madison made a face, but the math teacher finally walked in so that was the end of that.

Lunch time was even easier. She just got into a bathroom stall and froze time so she could walk somewhere that those girls wouldn’t be able to find her easily. Taylor toyed with the idea of going to a Mcdonalds, but freezing time for a long while took a lot out of her. Five minutes was her limit right now though she could rewind time from much farther back if she wanted. She wasn’t sure if there was a good limit on her rewind or not. She didn’t exactly like repeating her lessons.

As it was, she was exhausted by the end of the day, but Emma’s frustrated face as she strolled out the door was well worth it.

“Long day?” Lisa asked, when she came home.

“Ugh, the longest.” Taylor muttered, flopping onto her bed. “What’dy a do?”

“Earned my pay and trolled some people on PHO.” Lisa said, flipping her hair.

“Of course.” Taylor mumbled as she fell asleep. When she woke up, she smelled cooking eggs and walked down to see Lisa grumbling at some overcooked eggs much to her amusement.
“Damn oil keeps burning me.” She complained, as she plated the eggs.

“You put too much oil in the pan that’s why.” Taylor said, shaking her head. “Lemme guess, you don’t cook much.”

“Eh, I was spoiled, guilty as charged.” Lisa said airily. “Still I can follow internet recipes.”

Taylor poked the egg with a fork and found it edible. “Well at least I don’t see any eggshells.”

Lisa made a face. “Ugh, those were so hard to get out.”

Taylor snorted as she got some bread out for the eggs. “Well they’ll make decent egg sandwiches. Here.” She handed the bread over to Lisa and they started eating. Lisa could make an okay egg at least, just don’t ask her to make an hollandaise sauce, Taylor thought amused.

They ate for a while companionably, before Lisa spoke up.

“It’s strange he hasn’t struck again yet.”

Taylor looked at her to the side. “What do you mean?”

“I thought thugs would have shown up at your house while you’re gone or something by now.” Lisa mused. “He should have pulled video camera feed from around the blocks and matched your face to your name. I … don’t get it.”

“Maybe he thought it was too much trouble?” Taylor said hopefully.

“Too much trouble …” Lisa strummed her fingers on the table. “Maybe your power interferes with his somehow. That’s the only new factor I can think of.”

Taylor shrugged. “I haven’t noticed anything at school.”
“This guy was cunning as hell when he chased after me. Felt like he was reading my mind.” Lisa said with a scowl.

“The great Lisa, outsmarted?” Taylor said wryly.

“Oh quiet you.” Lisa said, flicking a bread crumb at Taylor. “It’s probably just power bullshit. Just like your bullshit Shaker powers.”

Taylor snorted as she took a bite out of her egg sandwich and chewed.

“So … what are you thinking about in regards to the Wards?” Lisa asked.

“You know … I don’t know if I want to join the Wards.” Taylor admitted. “Aside from probably clashing with Shadow Stalker, I want to make a name for myself.”

“You can do it in the Wards.” Lisa pointed out neutrally.

“Yeah, but I just …”

“Don’t trust authorities? You’re worried about everything. I get that.” Lisa said, meaningfully. Taylor laughed, a small sad sound.

“I’d like to be independent for a while. Just get my feet underneath me with my power.” Taylor said. “You’re right about it, it’s really strong.”

“Alright, I guess I’m being your sidekick then.” Lisa said dryly. Taylor blinked.

“No you don’t have to-,”

“Without me, you’ll get way in over your head.” Lisa said, shaking her head. “I can assess a situation way better than you can and you know it.”
“Well, you don’t have to be there in person.” Taylor argued.

“Power works best on first hand details. Second hand from a walkie talkie isn’t as good. Besides aren’t you my knight in shining armor?” Lisa fluttered her eyes and Taylor whacked her with a piece of bread.

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Coil activated the second timeline and sent his mercenaries to the Hebert house while working at his desk job at the PRT. He idly typed away at reports as they busted into the household and took the Thinker. At the end of his shift, he stood up from work and she was inside the facility-

Coil activated the second timeline and winced. There was a sudden light sensitivity and an ache behind his eyes. Within the hour of ordering his team to converge on the Hebert household, there was a PRT squad coming in for his mercenaries. He blinked and scowled. The Thinker must have deduced she was coming for him that day. He didn’t want them to tackle with to cause his profile to raise, so he close that timeline and opened a new one, in which he waited for the PRT squad to dismiss their concerns and leave before sending the squad in again-

Coil activated the second timeline and gasped. A huge migraine sprouted between his eyes that had him scrambling for his Advil. He ordered his team to converge on the Hebert household, but as soon as they got close, his mercenary team fell over with their bootlaces tied and christmas ribbons tying them up all around them. Within minutes, he got the report that the Protectorate was heading right for their location. Scowling, he ordered them to cut their idiotic bindings free and converge on the household anyway. Information on how they knew and could do that would-

Coil activated the second timeline and blacked out. He woke up inside an EMT van and groaned softly as his head throbbed. The EMT said something, but he tuned them out in favor of internal musings. Either the Sarah girl somehow second triggered and was interfering with his powers which was unlikely or it was the Hebert girl whose power was not teleportation as he thought.

But that could wait in favor or more painkillers.

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It had been another long day at school. The girls had kept trying to steal her backpack and pour water in it to ruin her books and work, but the rewinding power was just too strong for their efforts.
Taylor had turned elusive as a mosquito in the dark. And just as annoying, for Sophia looked like she was about to pull out her braids when Taylor caught sight of her after school.

“I need a name.” Taylor groaned on the bed after she finished her math homework. With her powers, she could actually turn in her work now so there was a point in finishing it. Lisa was carefully working on an article on the effects of sensationalism in online culture.

“How does Time Witch sound?” Taylor asked, rolling onto her stomach.

“I don’t know, kind of obvious on what you do. It’s not like Armsgmaster sounds direct.” Lisa pointed out. “Plus it sounds a little generic.”

“But what about Miss Militia? That’s kinda direct.” She argued.

“It’s snappy, rolls off the tongue.” Lisa said.


“Lemme look up some time gods.” Lisa said, minimizing her article and typing away at the search engine.

“That’s so pretentious though!” She protested.

“Your power is strong enough for it. Didn’t you say you wanted to make a name for yourself? Well it starts with picking a name. Oohh, Lachesis. Or maybe Manat.”

“I’m going to end up offending a group of people, aren’t I?” Taylor muttered. She stood up from the bed and walked over to the computer. She bumped Lisa over and shared part of the seat with her.

“Kronos sounds pretty good.” Taylor said, scanning the page.

“It’s a male associated name, so it’s not very typical. I really like Lachesis, c’mon, she controls
destiny and Greeks get name stolen all the time.” Lisa said, leaning on the table.

“I’ll think about it.” Taylor said reluctantly. Lisa groaned.

“Fine be like that. How about costume?”

“As long as it’s not spandex with clocks patterned on it.” Taylor said, shuddering.

Lisa giggled. “You could totally pull it off though. Just saying.”

“No.”

“Alright, alright. Look, here are some sites that will fit our budget.” Lisa said, clicking on some tabs that Taylor suspected she was holding for just this moment.

“Skirts?!?” Taylor exclaimed at the first page. Lisa made an amused noise.

“You’re trying to hide your identity from plain Taylor Hebert who wears sweaters and jeans, remember? Skirts will help with that. And I’m not saying don’t wear shorts underneath either!”

“I guess …” Taylor said.

“And look, bullet proof vests! Gloves! Sleeves!” Lisa offered, on the next page.

“I can’t afford this.” Taylor said automatically.

“Which is why I’m offering to buy it.” Lisa held up her arms to halt protest. “This is an investment for you and me. It’ll take all of my ‘legitimate’ savings, but it seems well worth to stop a bullet.”

“… Okay.” Taylor said quietly.
“You totally owe me though.” Lisa said cheekily, earning herself a one stop train to the floor as Taylor butt bumped her off the chair. “Aagh!”

“I swear revereenge!” Lisa shouted dramatically as she died from multiple fake wounds.

Taylor rolled her eyes and clicked on the next tab.

“… helmets?” She said aloud, confused. Lisa popped up in the cross legged position.

“Hear me out. A lot of injuries are from concussions. I’ve done the research and if you’re going to get tossed, you’re going to want to protect yourself from brain damage.” Lisa said, sharply.

“I’m okay with that, it just looks a little like I’m going to look like a biker with this look.” Taylor said, scrolling down the helmets.

“Hey if you joined the Protectorate, they’d hook you up with a sweet outfit. You’re just going to have to settle for looking like an amateur you know.” Lisa said.

“True.” Taylor sighed. “Armor like Armsmaster would look so cool.”

Lisa laughed. “In your dreams Taylor. Anyways, colors?”

“Uhm.”

“Oh my god you have no idea.” Lisa said, facepalming. “Doesn’t every kid have their own superhero OC?”

“It’s kind of embarrassing to talk about!” Taylor exclaimed, looking away.

“Oh my god it was pink Alexandria wasn’t it?” Lisa got a face full of pillow for that truth.
“Ugh I hate your power!” Taylor shrieked, before Lisa retaliated with the pillow with a hard smack. Taylor picked up her second pillow and began the most ancient and sacred of rites.

Pillow fights.

They swung for the soft parts and Taylor kept cheating with her power and Lisa kept shouting embarrassing things to make her cringe, like the thing about her ArmSMaster underwear oh my god.

Eventually they became exhausted and laid down on the bed side by side.

“Your power is so bullshit.” Lisa mumbled.

“Your power is so annoying.” Taylor retorted.

“That … is true.” Lisa accepted.

They napped a little in silence before Lisa spoke up.

“You should try on makeup.”

“I’ll be wearing a helmet, Lisa. It’ll cover most of my face.” Taylor said flatly.

“If your helmet’s visor goes up by accident, make up will disguise your face.”

“I’d have to look a clown for that to work.” Taylor said, again flatly.

“Look, I’m just saying, a little glitter eyeliner goes a long way.” Lisa said, wiggling her fingers.

“Yeah, no.” Taylor said, rolling her eyes. A question popped in her mind. “What’s your costume
going to be like?”

“Eh, I’m going with the name Oracle, probably theatre mask with a blue cloak, hood, and black pants with the vest of course.”

“Eh, what about that lecture about concussions?” Taylor asked, sitting up.

“I’m not going to be in the fights. Get a pair of binoculars and I’m good. And if anything happens, I’m sure you can just pick me up and move me somewhere safe.” Lisa said airily. Taylor frowned.

“You’re still just as heavy when I’m freezing time.” She pointed out, with a huff.

“Then it’s strength training time! Time to do push ups!” Lisa pushed a protesting Taylor out of the bed.

“Then do it with me!” Taylor said, annoyed.

“Absolutely, if you can do more than me, I’ll do the dishes.” Lisa offered. Taylor made a face.

“I’ve see you do the dishes, no thanks. Do the laundry for a month.” Taylor retorted.

“Fine! Ready, set, go!” They started their push ups and found that, yes, they were wimps. Taylor finished her fifteen push up and looked to the side to find that Lisa was dying of breath at ten push ups.

“Are you kidding me?” Taylor panted.

“I was a runway … Push ups weren’t exactly on my mind. What’s your excuse?” Lisa snapped back.

“Gym Teacher watches porn in the office while we do whatever we want …” Taylor said as she finished her sixteenth push up and fell down to the ground. “I prefer cardio …”
“You can’t just run from your battles … we should probably get you a knife …” Lisa said, equally wiped.

“Ooh, shiny …” Taylor mumbled.

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Danny announced himself as always and stepped into a quiet house. He walked upstairs and opened the door to find two sleeping teenage girls splayed out over the floor. He shook his head in amused exasperation and walked back down to cook dinner. Lisa had been good for Taylor, bringing her back out of her shell in a way that he couldn’t and he couldn’t just let her father do something that horrible to her.

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