

New Pittsburgh

 Buddleia has brought her experiment into Pitts, on the basis that there will be fewer witnesses if it all goes horribly wrong, and that lurching, shuffling and falling over is fairly standard for Zombietown anyway. Hopefully the locals won't mind, and embarrass

 Buddleia by trying to help her if it doesn't work out. The last thing she wants is help, for this. She needs to be self-sufficient. With that in mind, she has brought a long bundle along with her, well-wrapped to deter questions along the way.

 Buddleia finds a reasonably clear area between a shack and the wall, with hard ground for decent footing. It'll hurt more to fall, but with any luck there will be less of it, and certainly less sticking and squelching than she'd get in Squathole.

 Buddleia would also get a good deal of laughter and jeering in Squathole, for she is betraying all good Midgets ... with a quick glance around, she checks there is nobody interested in watching her before unwrapping the stilts.

Stilts.

 Buddleia is trying to be *taller*.

 Buddleia bought them under a pseudonym and cover of night ... well, that's not true actually. But she's not keen on having it get about. No self-respecting Mijit would use a *tallness aid* or *height enhancer*. They're a step down from snake oil.

 Buddleia puzzles out the mechanism, sliding her legs through the straps and slotting her feet into the steps. This is more confusing than the Power Armor that Sheila sells. Having buckled up and (with any luck) prepared herself, Buddleia makes her first attempt to stand up. It is entirely unsuccessful.

 Major General Harris tried putting snake oil on his legs once. Had this overwhelming urge to sell apples for a week.

 Buddleia scrabbles around in the sand like a confused insect, muttering. She can't reach anything, now, and her reflexes are all wrong. Maybe ... ? Yes, that might work. She shuffles over to the building to try and climb up it to get herself upright.

 Buddleia Stands Up, Take Two. Another failure; her arms are easily strong enough to lift herself up, but her balance isn't good enough to hold her when a delapidated plank snaps off and klonks her on the head, sending her sprawling.

 Buddleia hastily looks around for indignant shack-owners or giggling bystanders; finding none, she returns to grumping and grumbling and trying to stand up. Maybe this shiny new (read: dusty old) piece of wood could be used as a lever?

 Buddleia has obviously not learned from the way it snapped off in the first place. Extended legs sticking out in front, she digs it in behind and heaves, pushing herself up into a tripod-like pose, hanging on for dear life.

 Buddleia hasn't even got half way to vertical before the plank gives up and snaps in two, leaving her unsupported in a Bullet Time pose; lurching forwards to compensate doesn't help - she lands smack down on her behind again, stilts akimbo and arms windmilling.

 Buddleia knew this would take a while to learn. And that it would involve falling over and being annoyed and humiliated and clumsy - but at least, unlike school PE lessons, there are no smug overachievers or Corporal Punishments shouting at everyone.

 Buddleia picks a splinter out of her hand and, more carefully this time, hauls herself upright by climbing up the edge of the house. Third attempt, and she's made it upright! Hooray! She sways uncertainly, still hanging on, trying to get used to the feel of it.

 Buddleia hesitantly tries moving. The extra length is strange, her ankle is useless, and now her knee feels in the wrong place. There is a little extra strain on the shin and thigh muscles, too. But, still hanging on to the wall, she has taken her first step!

 Buddleia slides her hands along the wall, adjusting her grip for a second step. Once she's ready, top half moved along over the stilts, she takes a second step, a quick scuff along the ground, barely lifted and hastily replaced.

 Buddleia shuffles and wobbles around the shack, hanging on like a hesitant swimmer in a raging current, moving slowly, step by careful step. She's not as tall as she was as a human, but now her "legs" make up more than three quarters of her height - it's weird.

 Buddleia decides to be brave, once she's made a circuit of the house, and graduated to just one hand reaching out for reassurance rather than both hanging on for support. Arms waving, body swaying, she takes a bobbling few steps away, into an open space.

 Buddleia keeps practicing, gradually gaining confidence and experience;

stumbling around from place to place and only faceplanting occasionally. The term *dogged determination* comes to mind, if not *bloody-mindedness*. She'll get there eventually;

👹 Buddleia is only aiming for competence, not elegance. Grace, speed, and agility are not required; for these stilts are not for travel, or for jungle fighting, or even just walking around in town. No.

👹 Buddleia wants to be able to cook again.

👹 Buddleia wants to be able to reach the kitchen counters, dammit.

