

Chapter 3 - Physical Activity

One cloudy morning, Jennifer and Jaiden are warming up just outside their front door, in preparation for their early morning jog. The night before, Jaiden told Jennifer about testing the latter's physical abilities to see if they have been affected by the sex-changing tea.

"What? Are you serious? I've never even went for a run in the past years! How am I supposed to survive this?" complained Jennifer.

Jaiden reassured her, saying, "Relax Jamie, all we're gonna do is a light jog just to see if the drug has affected your cardio and endurance. Nothing heavy, considering your lack of physical activity in the past three years, so don't worry about it!"

"Okay... but what am I supposed to wear? I think I threw out my tracksuit a while ago..."

"Don't worry, I got a spare one just for that. And oh, you'll also need some other things, like running shoes and such..."

Back in the present, Jennifer was still nervous when she finished her stretching. "I just hope I don't pass out on the middle of the road," she thought to herself. "Besides, it's just a light jog, right? What could possibly go wrong? There's no way I'm gonna mess this one up!"

Jaiden also finished her warm-up, and when her watch read 6 a.m., she hollered to Jennifer, "Come on! We gotta get those running muscles going!" She started the jog with a light pace, with Jennifer following right behind her.

Jennifer's neighborhood was a fairly small one, located just outside of a nearby city. It had houses moderately spaced between each other. The neighborhood had a nice, tranquil atmosphere, especially in an early January morning when the cool wind is blowing at a moderate speed. Jennifer's body begged to differ, however, as a strong gust gave her a sharp shiver throughout her body.

“Jaiden, are you sure this was a good idea?” Jennifer protested, wrapping her arms around her body, the tracksuit apparently not providing sufficient insulation. “This wind is killing me!”

“Come on now, Jamie, it’s not even that cold out today!” Jaiden answered back as she merrily continued on with a bounce in her step.

Jennifer decided to tough it out for now, as they reached an open path beside a river bank. From there, one could see the neighboring towns, and a bridge that connected Jennifer’s neighborhood to the next. The clouds in the morning sky slowly gave way to project the first beams of sunlight over the town.

Along the path they were jogging on were vast, grassy patches of land, where one could see the first trains of the day pass by. One mile away, there was the bay area, where the morning sun made the water shimmer a faint bluish-yellow. The two sisters passed by the bay, with sunlight beaming on them from the right. Just below and right of their current path was a sandy beach, spanning a whole mile or two.

By this point, Jennifer had begun gasping for air as she struggled to keep pace with her sister. The cool, persistent wind, and the fact that it had been years since she last went for a jog, took their toll on her body, and she began to feel light-headed and nauseous.

Jennifer, in an attempt to keep her mind on track, tried to focus on Jaiden, and began to muse about her relationship with her sister.

“Huh... it’s been a while since I’ve seen Jaiden this lively,” Jennifer thought. “She’s quite plucky as ever, huh...”

Jennifer then reminisced about her and her sister’s childhood years, getting a glimpse of what kind of person Jaiden was.

“Jaiden always was the top of her class. In particular, she had a great talent in biology, even topping the professors in our school. Meanwhile, while I was the older sibling, I never stood out much, even though I also did well in class. Maybe

it's because of how prodigious she was," Jennifer thought, with a bit of bitterness in her heart.

"I can't blame her though," she continued, "because even when she was advanced several grades for her age, she remained a humble girl, never bragging about her achievements in school performance, or science fair contests. In fact, I'm so proud of her. She really has become a mature woman..."

As these thoughts ran into her mind, Jennifer felt her body becoming lighter, her breathing relaxed, and her pace steadying as she caught up to Jaiden in the last leg of their journey around the neighborhood.

"Oh! Looks like you still got it!" exclaimed Jaiden. "That tea didn't hamper your physical abilities at all, huh?"

A few minutes later, the two sisters reached the park near the town square. The time on Jaiden's watch was now 6:45 a.m. Finally, they reached the giant fountain and decided to stop right there.

"Phew! What a jog it was! And just in time too! It seems that the drug doesn't have an effect on your- Jamie?"

Jennifer, with her positive thinking-boost wearing off, finally fainted from exhaustion, with Jaiden catching her before she hit the ground. "Jamie? Are you alright?" Jennifer could barely hear those words as she drifted out of consciousness.

When she came to about 10 minutes later, Jennifer found herself lying on a park bench, with a folded towel under her head. "Jaiden? Where am I...?" she asked, disoriented.

"Whoa there Jamie, you need to lie down just a little bit. Here, have a sip of water," Jaiden said as she opened a fresh bottle of water and gently put it into Jennifer's lips.

Feeling the fog from her head clear, Jennifer sat up, and asked, "How did I do? What happened just now?"

“You passed out just after we finished jogging,” Jaiden explained. “Turns out you’re not that resistant to the cold after you drank that tea I gave you.”

“Oh, COME ON!” an indignant Jennifer thought. “How did I even jinx it?!”

Jaiden continued, checking the notes on her phone, “Fortunately, while the drug did cut down your stamina by thirty percent, you still have the average endurance of a pre-teen to teenage girl. A bit more exercise should solve that, though!”

“What if I faint again out of nowhere? It can’t be a side effect of drug, can it?” asked Jennifer.

“No worries, Jamie. It’s just a one-off thing, since I kinda overestimated how much you can jog.”

Jennifer just nervously giggled at Jaiden. “Even though Jaiden is a genius, she can be kind of a ditz sometimes,” she thought.

“Anyway, here’s breakfast,” said Jaiden while handing her a bagel with bacon and scrambled eggs, a cheese roll, and a carton of milk. “I got these from the nearby bakery. Apparently they’re open even this early!”

“Thanks, Jaiden,” Jennifer answered as she took a bite into her bagel.

The bagel, Jennifer thought, was the best one she ever had since college, and she took her time savoring each bite, all while reminiscing about other things.