

Mindwipe Island

Chapter 3: The first Trial

Janis and Sally dressed in almost dead silence. Janis only had the clothes she wore the night before... but Sally had a fresh wardrobe available to her. She felt jealous for a moment that Sally had access to a full selection of clean clothing... Before realizing that if anything she should be jealous that Sally wasn't the victim.

How had this happened? If anything, Sally was right. She really should have been the victim. She pressed forward every step of the way breaking the shy woman's barriers and making her submit just the way she'd done with more than a few trouble students in the past...

Though of course... Janis was not the villain either. Had she really fallen into Sally's trap? Was the whole shy girl thing just a facade to get her to do all that yesterday? Though still... Sally never took control. Not once...

Once dressed, the two of them slowly emerged from Sally's room, walking the path towards the meeting room. Janis could feel the others staring at her. Undoubtedly they were wondering the same kinds of questions she was. They probably suspected Sally even more than she did. Was she putting Sally in danger? What happens if she is found guilty but they're wrong?

They filed into the meeting room one by one, where they found a semi-circle of podiums situated around a large screen in the center of the room. Each podium had a picture of the girl who should be standing at it... Though Janis's podium was... Different.

Her picture looked to be a dumb spaced out expression. One which she had no memory of taking. Had they taken this picture while they were all unconscious for the trip here? She seemed awake... Just... Entranced?

As the last of them reached their podium the screen flickered to life, revealing the strange figure once more. "Welcome everyone. Today we will be discussing the fate of-"

Janis couldn't take it anymore. "I'M NOT ENSLAVED!" she shouted. "I don't know what's going on but you can SEE I'm completely fine!"

The figure let out a short chuckle... Or was it a giggle? They spoke again. "Your mind is currently yours, yes." The voice spoke, "However, last night the villain claimed you."

"Then why don't I remember it?" Janis shouted, frustration bubbling in her voice.

"The mystery would be too easy if you could remember it." The figure replied "The villain is able to erase their victim's memories, or obscure their identity at a whim. They may even implant false memories."

"So..." Sally said slowly "We can't trust the victims?"

“Not exactly...” The figure replied. “The victims will have their right minds during the trial. But they will act upon any instructions they were given by the villain while they were under the villain’s control the day before.”

“What do you mean by... During the trial...?” Janis said, dreading what she somehow already knew the answer would be...

“When the trial concludes...” The figure said slowly “If the villain is not unmasked you will become a slave once more, and will be removed from the game until the conclusion.”

“Removed from the game?” Susan asked, “Is there a reason she won’t remain among us?”

“That would make it too easy for the villain.” The figure explained. “If slaves remained in the game, they could be used as proxies to activate triggers, and be instructed to vote with the villain’s interests. This keeps things... More interesting.”

So that was it. She had to find out who enslaved her today or... She might never have another free thought again...

Amber scoffed, “Too easy for the villain? You made it too easy for us! OBVIOUSLY Sally is the villain.”

“I-I am not!” Sally squeaked “I was just as surprised as the rest of you!”

“She doesn’t seem the villainous sort...” Susan said, a pondering tone in her voice. “Then again, she may be compelled to play her role regardless of how she feels about it.”

“B-But I didn’t...” Sally stammered, unable to defend herself.

“Hold on a minute!” Janis shouted over the others. “I was with her all day, and she never tried anything on me!”

Amber slammed her hand down on the podium in response, determined to be louder. “EXACTLY! You barely interacted with any of the rest of us! She’s the only one who had the chance to do it!”

“I interacted enough. Any one of you could have used a trigger word on me!” Janis replied with an accusatory tone in her voice.

Jill spoke up next, a concerned tone in her voice. “You’re defending Sally rather fervently. Isn’t that suspicious though?”

“I’m defending her because MY brain is on the line!” Janis snapped back. “If you all guess wrong, you’ll just mark Sally off as confirmed innocent and move on, but I’ll become a SLAVE! We can’t just go with the easy answer and not think this through!”

“Fine...” Susan said, exasperated. “We can at least consider the other options.”

“Obviously I’m not one of those.” Amber said sharply. “The only thing I said to you all day was tell you to fuck off.”

“I mean... Technically that is exactly what she did...” Kathryn said meekly. “And Jill kind of said that thing about putting lips around sausage that was... Kind of lewd...”

“Janis did kind of... Um... Suck on that sausage for a while before she started eating...” Sally said, almost matching Kathryn’s timid tone.

Janis scoffed. “I was just joking.” She said, folding her arms “Everyone else was talking about the sausage suggestively too. Besides, SUSAN lied about not having bacon!”

“What does that have to do with ANYTHING?” Susan snapped, “I didn’t even make your sausage in the first place! All I made was the grilled fruit platter!”

“This is all a waste of time.” Amber growled. “We each said, what, one or two things to you? But Sally spent all day fucking you! Its obvious who the most likely suspect is!”

“But isn’t it too obvious?” Janis objected “If she was the villain, why would she take me when she knew every one of you saw me going with her?”

“Maybe she felt compelled to do it.” Kathryn suggested “Maybe its part of the villain’s programming.”

“Hey! Shadowy figure person!” Janis yelled at the blank screen “Can you answer a question about the rules??”

The screen flicked back on, the figure looming over them all as it spoke. “I heard the question. While the programming does make the villain have to play their role. It does not force the villain to make poor decisions.”

The screen went blank again. That was the best they were going to get on that question... Still... It left the possibility open that Sally had acted out of impulse.

“So here’s how I see it.” Amber said finally. “Any one of us could have given Janis a trigger, but there is no way to know who. But we do know that she spent all day with Sally and no one else would have had a chance to get at her with Sally right there.”

Jill nodded “That makes sense to me. If we vote for anyone else, we are taking a blind shot, and leaving our most likely candidate free to potentially strike again.”

“B-But it’s... Not her. I know it’s not her...” Janis stammered. She looked around the room, but no one seemed to be taking her plea seriously.

“I’ve made up my mind.” Amber said firmly.

Soon, the rest were all nodding along, aside from Sally who was looking worriedly over to Janis.

Amber looked up to the screen. “We’re ready to announce our decision.”

Once more the screen flicked on. The figure loomed over them, seeming more imposing now than ever before.

“Good.” The figure said calmly. “Now look at your podiums. There will be a button for every one of you. Press the button for who you think it is, and the majority vote will be formally accused.

Janis looked down at the buttons. It didn’t matter who she picked. The rest of them were going to choose Sally regardless. Still... She had to choose someone. She didn’t have any hard feelings towards Jill or Kathryn. But Amber and Susan... They both pissed her off. Amber for being so rude... Susan for running her breakfast late...

Ultimately... She decided Susan pissed her off slightly more, so she pressed that button. A few moments later the voice from the television screen spoke.

“With four votes, you have accused Sally of being the villain. She is...”

Janis’s heart dropped as she listened. It was the moment of truth... and... Very likely... The last moment she would ever have...

“Innocent!”

Janis’s legs felt weak. Her head spun. She was right... Sally wasn’t the villain... And yet... That means... She slowly slid down to her knees. She could feel everyone looking at her but... She simply didn’t have the strength to stand anymore...

Her thoughts were so conflicted. She was happy... In a way. Happy that she was right about it not being Sally... There was a level of vindication in what she felt... But at the same time... If Sally wasn’t the villain that meant... She was now... A slave...

Janis bowed her head and let out a slow sigh. She could feel all the conflicting thoughts in her mind roiling up and then... Draining... Draining away into nothing... Until... Not a single thought remained in her head.

The other girls slowly shuffled out of the room. An air of defeatism hanging over them as they did. Not that Janis could appreciate such a sentiment anymore. Sally stopped next to her on her way out, looking down at the empty headed slave that had only the night before thoroughly dominated her...

“I-I’m sorry...” She said softly “M-Maybe if I was... Braver... I could have convinced them...”

She reached a hand out slowly, wanting to comfort Janis somehow, but couldn’t bring herself to make contact. A few moments later she turned away, walking towards the exit where the other girls had gathered.

One of them was the villain... One of them did this to Janis... And now that she had been proven innocent... She was the prime candidate to be the villain’s next victim...