

# Capable

by Tanaqui

Heather looked despairingly at the radio. "You want me to make it work?" It didn't look very old, so most likely the problem was that it had simply gotten fried by the EMP. Heather didn't think there'd be much she could do in that case.

Emily shrugged. "You can fix anything, right?"

"Please." Skylar gave Heather a winning smile. "It's the only way to find out if Goetz is telling the truth about the generic vaccines being unsafe."

"Much good it'll do, since Goetz is gonna to take them anyway," Dale muttered, jerking his head back out toward the store, where two Ravenwood guys were guarding the pile of boxes Goetz had declared contraband.

Heather was already unwrapping her tool roll and figuring out how to get the cover off the radio. "But it was working when you bought it?"

"Yeah." Dale scrubbed a hand through his hair. "Well, picking stuff up, and it still does that, but seems like nobody can hear us."

As if to prove his point, the radio popped and pinged with static. Nudging the tuning dial, Heather slid past half a dozen different voices in quick succession.

"Hmm." She flicked Dale a wry look as she unplugged the radio and extracted a small screwdriver from its pocket in the roll. "You did make sure you had the settings right?"

Dale gave her a slightly hurt glare, but it was Emily who answered. "Yes. I double checked. Jake had a rig a bit like it back when... uh, back when he was driving trucks for my father. So I'm pretty sure if it was working, we'd have been transmitting."

"Okay." Heather shot them both an apologetic grin as she began to unscrew the handset cover. "Sorry. Had to ask. Troubleshooting rule number one: check the thing's properly plugged in and switched—." Her voice trailed off as she pulled the handset apart. "And there's your problem."

She held the handset out, and Emily, Skylar and Dale craned forward as she pointed to a resistor that dangled from the circuit board, one end loose. God knows how it had become detached; probably never properly soldered in the first place, Heather guessed.

Diving back into the tool roll, she extracted her small soldering iron. *Dad really thought of everything when he put all this together for me, didn't he?* she reflected, as she set the iron to heat. The memory of her father giving her the kit on her sixteenth birthday made her smile, even if her expression was tinged with sadness. She still missed her parents badly, though she was glad they hadn't lived to see the September attacks and what had come after.

A few minutes later, the radio was back in working order and they'd managed to find a frequency rich with chatter about the virus.

"See, I knew you could fix anything!" Emily gave her a triumphant look as she headed off to fetch Jake. Watching her go, Heather thought to herself that fixing the radio was the easy part. Dealing with Goetz? Getting the vaccine back? Those were well beyond her capabilities.

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