

Cardamom

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INT. NONDESCRIPT CONTROL ROOM. DAY.

Three Scientists in lab coats, JEFF, SARAH and TROY, are gathered around a console. There are many displays and dials scattered about, including a heart monitor and blood pressure monitor. Beyond the console is a glass panel, the camera angle obscures what is on the other side.

SARAH
Vitals are normal.

Troy makes a note on his clipboard.

SARAH
Heart rate is slightly fast, but
it's a normal react... Jeff, did
you start the recording?

JEFF
Yup. Keep going.

SARAH
Okay, uh. Heart rate is slightly
accelerated, as an expected
reaction to the subject's
situation.

TROY
Shall we begin, then?

Jeff pauses for a beat. He looks over the console and through the glass at something outside the camera's field of vision.

JEFF
Just a second.

He pushes a button on the console and leans into a microphone.

JEFF
(Into Microphone)
Ms. Harper? We're about to begin
the test. As you were briefed
before, the experiment will be
sexual in nature, and it is
designed to push the limits of what
you're accustomed to. You can abort
the experiment at any time.
Remember, the safeword is Cardamom,
I repeat, the safeword is
Car-da-mom. If you are ready to
continue, please raise your right
hand.

(CONTINUED)

A beat passes. Jeff releases the button and leans back in his chair.

JEFF
Let's proceed.

INT. NONDESCRIPT RECEPTION AREA. DAY.

The Brothers Four's cover of Blue Water Line is playing indistinctly over the PA system. LILY HARPER is seated in a corner alone; the rest of the room is empty. She is wearing a simple long sleeved blouse and snug black slacks, topped off with a thin brown belt. She is tapping her knee nervously.

A RECEPTIONIST is playing solitaire on her workstation, her bored-looking face resting in the palm of her free hand. The phone beside her rings and she answers it inaudibly.

RECEPTIONIST
Ms. Harper?

Lily looks up, startled.

RECEPTIONIST
You can go in now, they're ready.

LILY
Uh, thanks.

Lily gathers her belongings and gets up, heading vaguely toward the receptionist. She stops, a confused look on her face.

LILY
It's uh... It's this way right?

She randomly points down one of four corridors.

RECEPTIONIST
Sigh. No.

The receptionist makes a big show of twisting around in her seat and points down a different hallway.

RECEPTIONIST
Go down this way. It's the 3rd or 4th door on the right. Just look for the paper sign they put up.

(CONTINUED)

LILY
...right. Thanks.

The receptionist ignores her, turning back to her game of solitaire. Lily makes her way down the corridor.

CUT TO

INT. PRE-OP ROOM. DAY.

We see a sparse, clinical room. There is a screen drawn across a corner of the room, and a few lockers lining the wall next to it. On the other side of the room is a metal table, with various metallic objects scattered about.

The door opens, and Lily Harper walks in. We catch a glimpse of a paper note attached to the outside of the door reading "PROJECT: PARAMOUR". She closes the door behind her and looks around.

LILY
H-hello?

A door, hidden behind some unfamiliar scientific apparatus, opens, and Jeff steps out.

JEFF
Hi. You must be Ms. Harper?

LILY
Um, yeah.

A beat.

LILY
Oh, uh. Lily Harper.

Lily awkwardly extends a hand to Jeff, who shakes it.

JEFF
Dr. Jeff Hart. I'll be conducting today's experiment.

A beat.

JEFF
Thank you so much for volunteering, I was worried we wouldn't get many applicants, given the nature of the project.

Lily looks troubled.

(CONTINUED)

LILY
Volunteer... I'm sorry, I thought
this was a-

JEFF
(Interrupting)
Yes. Don't worry, you will be
compensated for your time. Once the
experiment has concluded you may
collect the \$1,500 from the
Britney.

LILY
Britney...?

JEFF
Oh, sorry, she's the receptionist.

LILY
Oh, right. Thanks.

JEFF
Okay. Unfortunately, for the
purposes of the experiment, I
cannot tell you much more than you
already know, but allow me to brief
you again anyway.

Lily nods.

JEFF
As you know, we will be observing
your physical and emotional
reactions when placed in a unique
situation of sexual nature. The
purpose of the experiment is
multi-tiered - we will be testing
the effects and viability of
various classified equipment.

A beat.

JEFF
The nature of the experiment may be
stressful, and you will be able to
abort the experiment at any time.
I'll need you to pick a safeword,
and once you say it we will
immediately abort the experiment.

Lily nods, as Jeff waits awkwardly. A beat passes.

(CONTINUED)

LILY
Oh, you mean right now?

JEFF
Yes, Ms. Harper. Or would you rather uh, decide on one later?

LILY
Uh, that's okay. Let's use uh...

A beat.

LILY
Let's use "Cardamom".

JEFF
Right. Cardamom.

He scribbles something down on a clipboard.

JEFF
Alright. Well, shall we begin?

LILY
Sure.

JEFF
Behind the screen is a locker. I'll need you to change into the provided garment inside. You can leave your belongings in the lockers outside. My colleague, Sarah, will be come in to assist you.

LILY
Okay.

JEFF
Once again, thank you for volunteering. I'll see you again once everything has concluded.

Jeff turns to leave. Lily pauses for a beat before turning toward the screen in the corner.

INT. CHANGING ROOM. DAY.

We are now on the other side of the screen. It slides open to reveal Lily, entering the area. She closes the screen behind her and places her belongings on a metal table nearby.

(CONTINUED)

She opens the locker before her, revealing a neatly folded black garment. She lifts it up, allowing it to fall unfolded before her. It is a black, full-bodied suit. It shimmers slightly, as if it were wet.

Lily tests the material, squeezing a bundle of the fabric in her hand. She releases her grip and inspects her dry hand, confused.

She places the garment on the table and begins to remove her clothing.

CUT TO

INT. PRE-OP ROOM. DAY.

Sarah enters the room.

SARAH
Hi, Ms. Harper? My name is Dr.
Sarah Yoshida. Is everything okay?

LILY
(Off-Camera)
Uh, yeah.

A beat.

LILY
Actually, this suit is really
tight. It keeps snagging my
underwear.

SARAH
Oh, we'll need you to remove your
undergarments for this test. We are
testing the suit as well.

LILY
Oh, uh. Okay.

CUT TO

INT. CHANGING ROOM. DAY.

Lily is bent forward, naked and with her back turned to us. The shot ends just above her hip.

She is straining against something off camera, we hear the fabric stretching and sliding against her skin.

(CONTINUED)

With a slight grunt, Lily pulls the fabric up around her hips, the shiny black fabric coming into view for the first time.

She tugs the suit around her waist, adjusting it slightly. She gathers the fabric dangling in front of her and finds its sleeve. She puts her hand in and pulls the suit up, filling out the glove at the end.

She raises her hand high to pull the suit up but is unable to slip her shoulder in. She bends forward awkwardly and forces her shoulder into the suit's opening.

She straightens herself out tentatively and winces slightly as the suit pulls tightly around her crotch.

LILY
(Quietly)
Wow... this is tight...

Lily repeats the action with her other arm and adjusts the suit. It seems to cling to her skin slightly as she moves it around.

She stands up straight and flexes her shoulders. The suit has no zipper, and the slit at the back allowing entry is opened wide, stretched tightly around Lily's torso. She turns around to face the camera and we see that the suit is pulled extremely tightly across her body. There is a hood dangling in front of her neck.

She reaches for the hood and uses her thumbs to hold the slit open. She ducks her head down and pulls at the fabric, but she can't get far enough to put her head in.

She lets the hood dangle and places her belongings back into the locker.

CUT TO

INT. PRE-OP ROOM. DAY.

Sarah is waiting patiently. The screen begins to slide and she looks up to see Lily's head sticking out from behind the screen.

LILY
I couldn't get the uh... hood thing
on.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH
It's okay, come out and I'll help
you with it.

Lily's body is obscured by the screen. She looks down at her body and back out into the room, scanning it tentatively.

SARAH
Don't worry about it. This is
strictly for scientific purposes.

Lily steps out from behind the screen. It is obvious that she is very slim and of attractive proportions, but she moves tentatively and insecurely.

SARAH
Come over here by the table and we
can fit you into the suit properly.

Lily makes her way over to the table, where Sarah has begun making adjustments to a strange looking metal device.

SARAH
Okay, turn around.

Lily turns, back facing Sarah, who mutters indistinct procedural notes to herself as she works. Satisfied with the off-camera set up of apparatus on the table, she turns to face Lily, pulling on a pair of neoprene gloves.

SARAH
Alright, I'm going to adjust the
suit to fit it on you a bit better.

Lily nods. Sarah kneels down behind her.

SARAH
Lift up your right foot,

Lily lifts her foot and Sarah pulls the fabric tight around her foot. Assisted by the grip of her gloves, she guides the fabric across Lily's skin, so that it is wrapped as snugly as possible.

SARAH
Alright, your left.

Lily lifts her foot and Sarah repeats the action. She guides the suit's fabric up Lily's legs and pulls it tight across her hips. She grabs the fabric at her waist and pulls it upwards.

(CONTINUED)

LILY
(Shocked)
Oh!

Lily's gloved hand darts to her mouth, her cheeks turning red.

SARAH
Sorry, I should have warned you,
first.

LILY
I-it's uh... it's alright.

Sarah continues to smooth the fabric methodically and professionally, as Lily tries to distract herself, looking around the room for something to focus on.

A beat.

SARAH
Okay. I think this should be snug
enough. Let's see if we can get
that hood on.

Lily nods. Sarah reaches around Lily's shoulders and grabs the hood.

SARAH
Alright. Look down, and thrust your
hip out and upwards.

Lily does as instructed.

SARAH
Push your shoulders downward. Try
to make yourself as small as you
can.

Sarah pulls at the hood. The camera cuts to a CU of Lily's face. She is looking down. Sarah pulls the opening of the suit upward, but appears to have difficulty pulling it past Lily's eyes.

SARAH
(Straining)
Alright... Push your chin into the
hood.

Lily tilts her head backward and lowers her chin as best as she can. The position is awkward but she does as she is told.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

Good. Just... a little... more.

Sarah pulls the hood of the suit up and over Sarah's forehead and it almost instantly slides the rest of the way down, the opening now resting at the top of Lily's neck. Lily's breathing appears to have gotten heavier.

SARAH

Okay, now just move around a little and try to smooth out the suit while I prepare this next part.

LILY

This... is really tight. I thought I sent you guys my measurements?

Sarah doesn't look up.

SARAH

Yup. This is custom made for you, Ms. Harper. It's meant to be like this.

Lily attempts to straighten the suit's fabric by grabbing at it, but her gloved hands slide frictionlessly across her second skin.

LILY

What's next?

SARAH

We close the suit.

A beat.

LILY

There's no zipper though.

SARAH

Yup.

Sarah raises a long metallic spine that was resting on the table. Attached to the spine are metallic ribs that hang limply on its sides. They start out long at the top but grow shorter farther down, ending the row about 3/4 of the way down. The top of the spine ends in a small control panel with a few small buttons but no display.

SARAH

This is the... 'zipper'.

Lily's hand darts to where her mouth would be.

(CONTINUED)

LILY
What- What is that?!

SARAH
This...

A beat, as Sarah makes some adjustments to the spine.

SARAH
This is Project Paramour. Alright.
Now turn around and we'll get your
suit closed.

Lily reaches behind her to feel the suit's widely stretched opening.

LILY
I'm not sure it'll fit, I think
it's stretched out as far as it'll
go.

SARAH
Don't worry. Let the spine work its
magic.

Sarah lines up the top of the spine with the top of the suit's opening and holds it down. She presses a few buttons on the control panel and we hear the sound of a machine whirring to life.

LILY
It's... cold.

The spine's ribs flex mechanically of its own accord, as Sarah holds the top against the suit. The ribs then close around Lily's torso.

LILY
Oh my god!

Lily startles and begins to panic visibly. Sarah grabs her shoulder with her free hand.

SARAH
Don't panic. Everything is working
as intended. Trust me, there's
nothing to be afraid of.

Lily begins to calm down slightly. The ribs wrap around her torso and pull the spine tightly against her bare skin. As soon as the spine is in place, Sarah releases it and it remains in position.

Lily reaches behind her, but is stopped by Sarah.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH
Please don't touch it yet, Ms.
Harper. I just need to make sure
everything is in order.

Sarah grips the spine and tugs at it slightly, but it holds fast against Lily's back. At the longest, the metal ribs end just before Lily's breasts.

SARAH
Okay. Everything looks good. I'm
going to close the suit.

LILY
O-okay... okay. Let's go.

Lily presses a few buttons on the control panel and the spine whirrs into life yet again. This time it doesn't move, but the fabric of the suit begins to draw tight around Lily's torso. It is being pulled in by some unseen motor on the inside of the spine's ribs.

Lily's breathing grows shorter and quicker as the spine pulls the ends of the suit closer and closer together.

LILY
This... this... oh my... this is
really, really tight.

Lily grabs at the table for support. The ribs continue to close the suit, until the ends of the fabric disappear underneath the spine. Lily's hands suddenly shoot behind her back before Sarah can stop her.

LILY
It disappeared!

SARAH
(Calmly)
Don't worry-

LILY
It's gone! I could feel the cold
metal before, now it's gone! The
fabric definitely got in between!

SARAH
Don't worry. Everything is working
as intended. The suit and the spine
are intended to be used together.
Don't panic.

Lily's breathing is quick and shallow, but she begins to calm down.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

Ms. Harper, remember, this is an experiment under carefully controlled conditions. You are in safe hands. Just remember your safeword and everything will be fine.

Lily is visibly calmer now.

SARAH

Alright, the suit is capable of monitoring your vitals, and there's a wireless link to our control room, so we'll have an eye on your safety at all times.

Lily nods.

SARAH

If everything is okay, we can proceed to the test chamber.

Sarah extends a hand to Lily, who grabs it. Sarah leads her to another door in the room.

CUT TO

INT. TESTING CHAMBER. DAY

Lily is seated on the floor of a medium-sized padded room. It is empty and featureless except for a large-ish mirror on one wall. She is still wearing the suit, and is hugging her legs in front of her.

JEFF

(Over PA System)

...push the limits of what you're accustomed to. You can abort the experiment at any time. Remember, the safeword is Cardamom, I repeat, the safeword is Car-da-mom. If you are ready to continue, please raise your right hand.

Lily raises her right hand.