

The Quantum Mechanist

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The quantum mechanist is underpaid and overworked—overlooked but she will not complain. The quantum mechanist sails on un-lauded coattails, and never forgets a figure. Sees the pattern she is laying but still won't get the grant money—still rides sidesaddle in the parking lot, claws her way to tenure by a fingernail. This is what the quantum mechanist does. Even as if you won't see it—

She spins the story. Charms her way up and down, dances in the dark. Spooky action under a distant office lab in the hours before daybreak.

The quantum mechanist swans into campus bar ten minutes till last call, and orders straight tequila from a Klein bottle. Sits the way women aren't supposed to sit. Then gets up at 5:30 the next morning to apply concealer over the circles under her eyes, drags a brush of sealant through tear tracks and sweat beads, puts her face on with a neutral-tone smile. Not red—not for work.

She has a reputation to uphold on those slight shoulders. She don't shrug off a single question—puts her time in deep gravity wells, punches that clock Doppler style all the way down to deadline.

All the while the Administration considers her... unconventional, too emotional, her dress too something, her hair too big, her weight up for grabs, reaction for every progressive action, mass equal to energy divided by the speed of light squared—

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Einstein's woman. She doesn't need a name or Nobel to know this bell curve is skewed by omitted data, by all the witches burned, all the points overruled, all the shades erased with a one-sided one-dimensional white board theory of everything.

The quantum mechanist knows how to classify Schrödinger's cat-shit when she sees it. And she sees it. But she steps over, rises above the valence shell of every atom, she's ionized. Ready to react.

Still, she won't explode, won't let that Markov Chain get ahead of her. The quantum mechanist keeps her feet underneath; she's on her toes all times looking both ways to cross the classroom. She sees in all four dimensions and more—builds a multi-matrix of directions to hand down to her students, plots her pathway to brilliance on Cartesian coordinates. Won't let any budgetary committee tell her what's possible, she knows that nothing for her is impossible. She's high frequency and ultraviolet, shattering glass event horizons. She stays up late and gets up early; she writes her dissertation while asleep and yes! Sometimes, she even takes the trash out.

Because that's the Quantum Mechanist; strange from top to bottom, and she makes it work.