

Wendy - The Witch

A DC Universe Online Story

A blue orb hung before Wendy tinged with brown and green but mostly blue. In the upper right hemisphere, streaks of white clumped together blocking out some of the almost painfully crystal clear colors that took up most of the window. A small shiver passed down Wendy's spine at that word. *Window*, Wendy thought, *is too open of a word for the six inches of glass that separates me from the hard vacuum of space*. Shaking her head as if to cast off the thought, Wendy turned away from the window and its view of Earth and let her pale blue eyes take in the Watch Tower, home of the Justice League.

Nervous fingers fidgeted with long wavy red hair that reached down her back. Not naturally red of course. The natural color of her hair was a deep chestnut brown. The red fiery hair she longed to be rid of, yet yearned to keep, was a part of her costume, her image, her other self. A self she loathed, despised, and wished she was rid of. Though she hated the alter ego with all her heart, she would never give it up, never hesitate if given the choice to return normal, fight with all her might if someone tried to take it away. She was a.... *meta-human*... just another ordinary woman swept up in the whirlwind of events that had taken the world by surprise. Wendy The Witch, or just The Witch.

Ironic name... Wendy mused to herself, as she turned again to the window, not to look outside no, but to study the transparent reflection of herself on the glass. Of average height, Wendy was garbed in a dark green jacket that left her toned midriff bare. The dark green was accentuated with a lighter green and trimmed in red the same color as her hair. A generic utility belt hung with the various pouches that comprised her gear. Her cargo pants had no need of the utility belt as they fit perfectly on her slim figure, tucked into the black combat boots she wore. Her hands that were busy with her hair were covered in gloves the same shade of green as the jacket with the finger tips cut off. Just peaking over her shoulders behind her was a compound bow and quiver filled with green arrows with red fletching. Adorning her head completing the ensemble was a green beret, a link from her past when her father used to wear it in the army.

Her hazel brown eyes traveled over the hard edges of her face. A dark green mask rested on her high cheekbones covering only her eyes. Her small nose almost presided regally over pursed lips. A quick glance up and down put the pieces of herself together in the way she hoped she appeared, deadly with a sexy overtone. Of course it all wasn't just for show. There were handcuffs in one pouch on her belt and small listening devices in another. The bow wasn't decoration either as she could let an arrow fly almost as true as a master would. Her hand to hand combat also wasn't that bad either. But the idea was to make sure someone didn't want to close in on her, as these were only compliments to her true abilities. This, *disguise* would confuse her enemies, if they knew about her name. Wendy - The Witch.

No, her title was because of remarkable mental abilities. She could claw her way into the minds of others, make them see their worst nightmares and distract them so they would only see what she wanted them to see. To a degree she could also do pyrokinesis, telekinesis, and some other nifty tricks of the mind.

Thinking of her abilities, memories flashed before her eyes taking her back to when she had first discovered her powers. It had been a cool night in Gotham, one of the few in the short

summers that graced the city every year. She had been on her balcony that hung several stories above her apartment watching the stars. Tonight was a rare night for she rarely glanced up, but tonight was different. There was hope in her eyes. She was being interviewed for a second time in the morning for a secretary's position. It was only one of many jobs she had applied for after losing her last position at a construction company. She really didn't mourn the loss. Her old boss was a chauvinistic pig and often hit on her. She recalled the blonde bimbo who had come in to talk to her boss, only to be emptying out her own desk before the blond bimbo had even left the building.

This new job at an advertising agency looked to be good. Her boss would be a woman (hopefully she wouldn't have to worry about getting fired because she wouldn't sleep with anyone), and everyone at the office seemed to like her. It would be a new beginning.

Noticing a smudge on her glasses obscuring the pinpricks of faint light in the night sky, she removed them and started rubbing away the greasy print with her night gown. Replacing her glasses she looked up again to see something strange. Small cracks of lighting on a cloudless night and a weird shimmering of the air like you would see on a hot day when cool air mixed with warm. Blinking several times she looked up again at the strange phenomena wondering what it could be.

Well, whatever it was, it was none of her concern and she had a job to earn in the morning. Turning away from the balcony, she went to bed. Rest did not come easy, and when it did, it was filled with nightmares and heat flashes. Her alarm going off in the morning roused her from the not so restful sleep she had been in, and to her horror had been going on for more than an hour. *She was going to be late for her appointment!!!*

Scrambling around her small one bedroom apartment, Wendy rushed about taking a shower and getting dressed. Her dress shoes were found by the door and struggled to be put on as she rushed down the stairs of her apartment to the bottom floor. On that fateful day she might have stayed home and called to re-schedule the appointment if she had been able to watch the news like she usually did before leaving the house. Standing by the curb she hailed a taxi.

"Can you please take me to the east end of Gotham to 736 Dresser Way?" Wendy said as she slipped into the back of the cab. "I'll give you a bigger tip if you do it in 15 minutes." She cringed as she said the words. Money was tight and spending so much on a taxi let alone giving a big tip would set her back. She also didn't think she would make it in time but she had to try.

"Are you sure you want to head into the city lady? The news is saying weird stuff is happening all over town." The taxi driver replied uneasily.

"I'm positive! I have to get to a job interview!" Wendy replied desperation making its way into her voice. Maybe it was the look on her face, the sound of her voice, or both. Whatever it was the driver nodded his head once and turned back to the front of the cab and started driving.

Five minutes into the drive and much to Wendy's horror, they ran into a gridlock at one of the bridges to cross over into the east end of Gotham from where she lived. Nearly screaming in frustration, she threw a handful of bills at the driver before jogging up the pavement with her high heels in hand. She eventually made it up to the middle of the bridge and encountered a large crowd surrounding a man 20 feet in front of them steaming.

"W-what's going on?!?!" he cried out in horror as his hands burst into flames. The Flames kept growing until they were shooting out at cars. The people who had been held there by curiosity when the event first started happening now fled in terror. Wendy had only moments to take in what she saw before she was knocked over by a man running away from the inferno now taking up one half of the bridge.

Dazed and silently cursing the oaf who knocked her down, Wendy got to her hands and knees and was almost standing when the first explosion rocked the bridge. The gasoline in the tanks of the cars being heated by the flames had reached combustion point. Knocked on her butt, Wendy dizzily got to her feet when the car nearest her exploded. She had thrown up her arms around her in a vain attempt to protect herself. The explosion lifted her up off her feet and over the side of the bridge. The sensation of first being knocked back and then falling over took her.

A scream escaped her mouth as she fell the 6 or so stories to the river below. She imagined the deadly impact of the water as her body hit the water at a speed that would shatter bones and rupture organs. Only... it never came. Opening eyes that had been squeezed from the intensity of the blast, she discovered she wasn't falling anymore. No, she was *floating*. There, several feet below her the grey river and its murky depths lazily passed her by.

Struggling about she tried to find out what was keeping her up to find nothing she could see. She could find nothing. No rope, no Superman, nothing. The feeling wasn't weightlessness. She could feel that she was supported somehow. Crowds above looked over the railing staring in astonishment at her. They had all surely thought she was going to fall to her death. She was just as astonished as them. A mere glimmer of a thought that maybe whatever was holding her up would take her closer to the shore. And just as soon as that tidbit of a thought entered her mind she started moving towards the shore. She was startled by the movement and almost immediately thought about stopping. And it did. Another frightening idea dawned on her and she thought about moving towards the shore again. Again she began moving towards the shore. **She** was controlling her flight, her movement. Total hysteria gripped her then as she had flash backs to her childhood. The shocking coldness of water broke her out of the hysteria long enough for her to flounder her way to shore.

Minutes maybe hours later, Wendy couldn't remember because it all happened in a daze, she was taken to the hospital and treated for shock. But it didn't end there. No, her life had been irrevocably changed. Soon she was being escorted by officers to a squad car and then after a journey through city escorted through the front doors of the districts Police Station. All the while trying to explain to the officers in a babble that she hadn't done anything and what were they doing at the station and *OMG! Is that batman???*

Her babbling stopped as she was escorted into a conference room full of other people. Young, old, business men and what appeared to be street thugs. Officers were arranged in a perimeter around the room eyeing the crowd uneasily as if they were a pack of rabid dogs. At the head of the room standing with Commissioner Gordon was Batman. *The Batman. The Dark Knight* who watched over Gotham and protected her and the inhabitants that filled her streets.

"Is she the last one?" Commissioner Gordon said to the officers dragging Wendy along into the conference room.

"Far from it Commissioner." Batman said with a grimace on his face, as if faced with one of the Riddler's famous puzzles. "There are just too many. Many will have escaped through the cracks I fear." The Commissioner eyed Wendy and the others as if they were a problem he could wish away. Gesturing for Wendy to take a seat on one of the chairs scattered about the room, the Commissioner waited.

"You all no doubt are wondering why you are here. Many other people are wondering that same question. The explanation will take far longer than we have here for there is much work to be done. However in the next few days you will be made to understand what has happened. For now I can only offer this. Something strange has happened to you all. Something extraordinary and scary all in the same breath. One thing I want to make clear is you are not

alone. There are others, in cities around the world just like you. One moment you were carrying on with your daily lives and the next something happened." Commissioner Gordon stated to the crowd in front of him. When he started talking again he looked pointedly at a man that Wendy vaguely recognized from the bridge. "You caught on fire..." His gaze swept to her, "... you flew..." and onto several other people describing extraordinary things.

"You have all been given super powers. The reasons are unclear at this time..." And with a sharp look the Commissioner glanced Batman's way before continuing on. Batman didn't even flinch. "... And may be so for awhile. However Batman here will help guide you as well as some other famous names you may know..."

And at those words Wendy noticed for the first time figures in the back she had only heard of before. Nightwing, Bat Girl, and several others.

"Life as you know it has changed. Possibly forever. I will leave you here with Batman and he will explain what is going to happen to you in the next few hours-" Commissioner Gordon was saying before he was interrupted by some guy in a business suit.

"No! I don't want any part in this! You can't make me stay here!" he yelled out jumping to his feet. Batman was on the man so fast Wendy couldn't follow him from where he had moved.

"You have two choices. Either you come with me and learn how to use your new abilities, or you spend the rest of your life in Arkham Asylum." It was said in a low, non-threatening tone but the meaning was clear. They had no choice in the matter.

"I... I..." The man started several times before finally his shoulders slumped.

"There is a threat that faces the world that not even the Justice League can defeat. And the answer we were given is all of you, and many more," Batman continued when the man had sat down. Mummings of everyone's muttering echoed across the room. *This can't be happening to me!* Wendy remembered thinking.

But her title was much older than the dawning of her powers, and her memories reached back farther into her childhood.

Her Family had just moved to Gotham city because her father had retired from the army, and had been offered a job as a security officer at a local construction plant. He would have turned it down, but times were hard, money scarce, and the job paid unbelievably well. For Wendy it was a fateful decision on her parents part. She was used to moving from city to city, she was an army brat after all, but a new school is always hard. She remembered the day clearly in her head as if it had happened only yesterday.

Her parents had dropped her off at school, giving their warm wishes. She had gone to the Principal's office and waited for him to show her to her classroom. Once there the teacher asked her to introduce herself to the class. This was nothing new either. Wendy swung her gaze across the take a quick look of the students who were soon to be her fellow classmates.

"I'm Wendy Olsen, and I'm from Salem, Massachusetts..." She finished lightly as she heard several gasps around the room, punctuated by someone muttering, "No way!". This response in itself confused her and a frown formed upon her face. She was used to questions about where she was from. Although her family moved about with her dad, her grandparents and much of her relatives on her mom's side of the family lived in Massachusetts, if not in Salem. She had been born there, and had even gone there for several Christmas's. The response she got this time was not what she expected.

Turning her gaze towards the teacher, she was surprised to see a smirk on his face as he exclaimed, "Oh! What a co-incidence! We're currently studying the Salem Witch Trials for this unit. Wendy's look of confusion was slowly replaced by one of horror as the words registered in her mind and put the two and two together. But there was nothing she could do now except take her seat. Her fate had been sealed.

Soon the school was abuzz of gossip about the new transfer student from Salem. The rumor mill wasn't far behind the gossip in generating stories about why she was there and if she was a witch. The cruel talk eventually leaked down from where it had been circulating among the upperclassmen to the lowerclassmen. Some of the younger kids were afraid of her where they usually would just be in awe and envy of an upperclassmen. This became self evident after one time she ran into a lowerclassmen, probably in fourth grade, and accidentally knocked him down. The hard words for her that she had expected quickly evolved into frantic pleas of mercy and asking not to be turned into a frog. She had been mortified by the experience to say the least.

It also did not help that it wasn't just one subject that was going over Salem. No, it was every single subject that the students were taking, from English to mathematics. The school was trying out an "immersive" learning environment to try to raise the overall GPA of the students. One would have hoped to escape from the ever present reminder of her hometown in course like Mathematics and Science, but there were word problems that referenced Salem and experiments and discussion about proving a witch in Science.

The pariah status she had gained wasn't the worst of it though. The title she now bore as her meta-human identity was started by one of the students. *Wendy The Witch*. She didn't know who had started it, and the teachers didn't bother finding out even after angry visits from her parents demanding the teasing stop. What the teachers did do was too little and too late. The name was whispered behind her back at lunch while she ate alone, and said with open hostility to her face on the playground. one particularly cruel girl picked it up and used it constantly on the months she remained at Gotham Academy.

Stephanie Miller was the focus of a clique of girls and arguably the most popular girl in the upper-class. From her thrown on high, Stephanie lashed out at Wendy time and time again adding insult to injury. "*Wendy, have you seen a yellow canary today?*" "*Wendy, Please don't turn me into a toad!!*" There were many times when Wendy wished she could have done the unspeakable things the children imagined she could do, just for some peace. She would have gladly transferred, but not only was it late in the semester it was her last year before high school. The other schools around Gotham weren't taking any transfer students at that time of the year.

So with reluctance she endured the teasing until the graduation ceremony. To the surprise of everyone, or possibly no one at all, she graduated at the top of her class. Despite her depression, she was able to focus on school work as that was the only respite she had from the perpetual teasing she received. She moved onto High School which was better, and the nick name did not follow her.

"*If only Stephanie could see me now.*" Wendy thought with a small grimace. The title was ironic alright, and she felt slightly vindicated using it. She had once heard someone say that if everyone looked upon and acted as if a person was a certain way, that person would change to fit their views. The one difference here being she was 20 years late in changing. The title also fit what she thought of herself, as a monster not fit to walk among the Heroes that passed her by as she stood next to the window in The Watchtower. The feeling of being an imposter had only intensified after an unfortunate event during her training. It had been before the extent of her abilities of the mind had become fully known.

Batman was her mentor, shaping her into the lean muscled visage she saw in the reflection now from the slightly plump version that had entered her early thirties. She had trained in martial arts and practiced with many weapons. It became apparent quickly that she could shoot better with the bow than with a gun. She learned stealth and how to silently take down a man. She was taught how to kill a man, and that killing someone should never be considered. However, all the theory and practice in the world would never amount to the real thing so the time came when her first field exercise was to take place.

Batman had selected a few trainees to come with him on his nightly patrols of the city of Gotham. Wendy was one of them. Looking back she wondered what had given him the impression that she was ready for field work. Maybe if he had only been mentoring her alone he would have known. But there were so many that needed training, that needed to be guided after Luthor released the Exobytes on the world.

For the exercise she was dressed in simple armor designed by Wayne Tech to not only stop bullets but hide the users in the shadows. This had been before she had come up with her identity to show the world. They stealthily moved along the streets, alone except for radio contact. Wendy was nervous to the bone, prowling the night looking for bad guys to mess up. She was wondering if she had the guts, the courage to take on someone who wouldn't blink an eye at slitting her throat and leaving her to die. A woman crying out for help in the distance brought her mind into focus.

"Batman, This is Shadow Stalker 3. I hear a woman crying out for help in the distance, probably a block or two from my position." Wendy whispered hoarsely into the mic fastened around her neck.

"Quietly approach the target Shadow Stalker 3. I'm on my way to assist." Batman replied. Nervously licking her lips, Wendy glided along the rooftops; her ability to fly working to her advantage.

Approaching the edge of the roof she was currently hovering over, Wendy peaked over the side to peer at the woman and her attacker. The man attacking her was dressed in all black, with a black Ski-Mask covering his face. His back was to Wendy as he brandished a long 6 inch dull blade at the woman. The woman in a halter top and jeans had her hands in front of her pleading with the man to let her go.

Something curious was happening with Wendy though. Maybe it was the way the woman was pleading, or the bullying sound of the man's voice. Memories of her childhood crept up on her and put her into a fog of rage. Either way, Wendy remembered drifting towards the man, reaching for him... for his mind. The urge to make him fear her, to end the bullying from the other kids inundated her mind.

The next thing she remembered was waking up in a strange room with no idea where she was.

"Your head probably hurts." Came the quiet voice of Batman from a chair in the corner of her room. With a start Wendy looked in that direction to see his impassive face staring at her. "I'm sorry... you weren't ready yet Wendy."

"Wh-what do you mean? What happened? Where am I?" Wendy asked, confusion coloring her voice.

"You hurt him bad Wendy. Real bad. The doctors don't think he will make a recovery." Batman continued almost oblivious to her questions. Remembering the man and her pure anger at him, Wendy wondered if she had broken his body. Voicing her thoughts on this, Batman only shook his head.

"Physically he is fine, but the damage is still there. Can you walk?" He asked standing up.

"I think so. Where are we going?" Wendy asked, as she shakily got to her feet and followed Batman out of the room and into a hallway. The place had the feel of a hospital about it.

"To show you Matthew Caulson, the man you found robbing that woman." Batman replied, his voice even. "This way." Batman seemed to know where he was going. They passed signs that read, "Patient Isolation Rooms", "Gotham General Hospital Psychiatric Ward" and "Dr. Isabelle Swanson ". They were defiantly in a hospital, and the thought was foreboding.

Batman stopped in front of a door to an isolation room with a woman in her middle age and the white coat of a doctor taking notes on a clip board.

"Dr. Swanson? How is he doing?" Batman asked of the woman. Turning her brunette head to look at him, Dr. Swanson gave him a look that appeared to be judging him. Her gaze shifted to Wendy and the weight of those sleight grey eyes seemed to drill right through her.

"Up and about I see. I cannot say the same for Matthew Caulson though. Come over here so I can take a look at that bump on your head again." The statement wasn't a request, but an order by the tone of her voice. This Dr. Swanson was obviously used to having herself obeyed. However from the gravity of the situation Wendy did not feel like disobeying either. It felt like judgment was going to be passed upon her for a horrid crime she had committed.

"What do you mean you 'cannot say the same for Matthew Caulson'?" Wendy asked as the doctor looked at the back of her head and prodded it causing her to wince.

"You'll be sore for awhile, and your headache should clear up soon. No permanent damage. And what I mean, is that he is now paranoid, has achluophobia and wiccaphobia, and keeps muttering something about Wendy the Witch. In other words, afraid of the dark and witches. More specially, he was driven mad and is afraid of you." Dr. Swanson said giving Wendy an appraising look. There was something else in her eyes, fear? Wariness? Pity? Wendy couldn't place it.

"If I were given to speculation, and from what has been in the news about these... 'exobytes', I would say you have some form of telekinetic or illusionary powers. The effects of which were used to drive this man insane. From the little I have been able to discern from the short time I have had him, I would say that whatever you did was permanent." Dr. Swanson finished, her eyes judging the look of shock and horror written over Wendy's face. Turning to Batman she gave a sigh before continuing.

"I would ask that you please not cause any more cases. My wards are full as it is and I don't need you adding to them." The frown on her face would have set any lesser man to nodding and agreeing with her every word. Batman stood un-phased. Giving a short, "Hrmp!" the doctor squared her shoulders and strode down the hallway, methodically stepping at doors on either side of the corridor to look in at patients.

"I want you to look at this man, Wendy. He had recently lost his job and was only trying to support his family, albiet in a very wrong manner. I want you to see why we don't kill, and why we strive not to harm those we seek to bring to justice." Batman said, guiding Wendy by the elbow to the door. He slid back a plate covering a little window into the room and gusted for her to look in. What she saw brought tears to her eyes. The man was huddled in the corner of the room looking about wildly. When his eyes fell upon the window and locked with hers he cringed away and began screaming.

"I... I did this time him." Wendy said in shock. "I don't remember doing it to him!"

"You had a fantastical grip upon him! The look in your eyes.... The intent to kill was overwhelming!" Batman countered. "I had to knock you unconscious just to get you off of him! If only I had been a little sooner..."