Written by Rebecca Thompson, Ph.D.

Illustrated by Kerry G. Johnson
Everything has calmed down at Nikola Tesla Middle School for Lucy “Spectra” Hene and her friends since their adventure with Tiffany Maxwell and her Demon in Issue #4. Over the last few months, Lucy has managed to focus on her training with the swim team. We start this tale with Lucy and her swimmates training at the Rose Bowl Aquatic Center in Pasadena, California.

C’MON CHARGERS! GET BACK IN THE WATER! YOU’VE GOT ONE MORE SET. AFTER THAT, YOU ALL GET TO COOL DOWN. YOU’VE ALL WORKED HARD, BUT THIS ONE IS GOING TO BE ROUGH. ARE YOU READY?

AWHH COACH! WE’RE TIRED! CAN WE TAKE A BREAK?

I THOUGHT I WAS TRAINING WINNERS, NOT WHINERS! REMEMBER, EVERY TIME YOU WHINE, THAT’S ANOTHER 100 METERS ADDED TO YOUR “WHINING” SET. NOW GET READY. 3... 2... 1...

A-C! A-C! POWER LINES! TESLA BEATS YOU EVERY TIME! GO CHARGERS!

SPLOSH!!
IT’s EASIER for water to flow around a triangle than a square, so FORM yourself INTO a triangle.

GO AGAIN.
3 ... 2 ... 1 ...

THAT WASN’T GOOD ENOUGH! EVERYBODY, MAKE SURE WHEN YOU’RE UNDERWATER, YOU LOOK MORE LIKE AN AIRPLANE WING THAN A BARGE.

BACK AT SCHOOL I KNOW GENERAL RELATIVITY* DID AN EXPERIMENT IN PHYSICS CLASS ON THIS TOPIC.

Lucy’s already exhausted, but she and the rest of the team manage to push themselves off the wall.

THAT SET HURT! I SURE FELT LIKE A BARGE, CERTAINLY NOT LIKE AN AIRPLANE WING.

THAT JUST DIDN’T FEEL RIGHT AND MY SHOULDERS ARE KILLING ME.

MINE TOO, IT’S LIKE THE WATER WAS BEING PUSHED BACK AGAINST US.

This year’s team is great. I think we can win it all!

Back at the team’s hotel, I just need to push them a little harder.

As the swim team manager you know I have to keep up with everyone’s times. What was up with that last set? Why did you guys slow down on those last laps?

Maybe we can talk through this stuff after you stop chomping down all that junk food.
Alright CRYBABIES, I’m going to the boardwalk to have SOME fun. You CAN join me if you WISH, but don’t act like YOU know me, I DO HAVE AN IMAGE TO UPHOLD.

Well, I don’t know about you, “Hobbit”, but “I” was going plenty fast.

I’m NOT A CRYBABY! BUT THE BOARDWALK SOUNDS better than sitting AROUND here. something isn’t right and maybe SOME FRESH AIR wiLL help us FIGURE IT OUT.

Tiffany, wait for us.

Lucy, don’t worry too much, everyone was slow.

Alright CRYBABIES, I’m going to the boardwalk to have SOME fun. You CAN join me if you WISH, but don’t act like YOU know me, I DO HAVE AN IMAGE TO UPHOLD.

Ruby, I worked really hard to swim. But after looking at those times, it looks like I was going pretty slow.

I don’t know how to describe what happened, but it seemed like I was swimming upstream AGAINST THE CURRENT.

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Alright CRYBABIES, I’m going to the boardwalk to have SOME fun. You CAN join me if you WISH, but don’t act like YOU know me, I DO HAVE AN IMAGE TO UPHOLD.

A few minutes later, the adventurous girls explore the city’s popular beaches and Boardwalk District.
STOP POINTING THAT CAMERA PHONE THIS WAY! I’m NOT IN THE MOOD TO SEE MY FACE UPLOADED TO INSTAGRAM.

OH, C’MON! STOP BEING SILLY! I’LL MAKE SURE YOU LOOK GOOD. DON’T YOU TRUST MY SKILLS?

THE SUNSET IS BEAUTIFUL. I LOVE BEING OUT HERE AND SEEING THESE WAVES, THE LIGHTING IS PERFECT. NOW, JUST SMILE.

HEY LUCY, LOOK OVER THERE. IS THAT WHO I THINK IT IS AND WHAT’S GOING ON WITH THOSE WAVES? THAT’S JUST NOT RIGHT.

OH, C’MON! STOP BEING SILLY! I’LL MAKE SURE YOU LOOK GOOD. DON’T YOU TRUST MY SKILLS?

THE SUNSET IS BEAUTIFUL. I LOVE BEING OUT HERE AND SEEING THESE WAVES, THE LIGHTING IS PERFECT. NOW, JUST SMILE.

Lucy and Ruby can’t believe their eyes. It’s their swim coach and it looks like he’s controlling the water’s movement. Ruby’s “investigative blogger” instincts take over as she continues snapping photos with her camera phone.
They head down to the beach, and try not to be seen by coach Henri Toueaux.

WHOA! THAT’S DEFINITELY NOT NORMAL. THE WAVES ARE CRASHING AWAY FROM THE BEACH NOT ON TO IT. BUT HOW CAN COACH BE DOING THAT.

IT’S AGAINST THE LAWS OF PHYSICS?

UNLESS THERE ARE REALLY HYPER DOLPHINS OUT THERE! IT REALLY LOOKS LIKE COACH IS MAKING THE WATER DANCE.

LOOK AT THE WAY IT FLOWS, TWISTS AND CATCHES THE MOONLIGHT. IT’S BEAUTIFUL!

WE HAVE TO WIN! THEY CAN'T WIN AGAIN, I WILL BE THE LAUGHING STOCK OF SEQUOIA UNIVERSITY QUICKIE COACHING SCHOOL.

I ALWAYS COME IN SECOND, BUT NOT THIS YEAR. NOT WITH THIS POWER! THE CHAMPIONSHIP WILL BE MINE! MINE I SAY!

LUCY, YOU TURN INTO A LASER. I DON’T THINK YOU'RE THE ONE TO SAY SUPERPOWERS AREN’T POSSIBLE.

POINT TAKEN! JUST KEEP TAKING THE PHOTOS.

GET BACK! HE’S LOOKING THIS WAY. I DON’T WANT HIM TO SEE US. LET’S GET OUT OF HERE.

I HAVE NO IDEA HOW I’M MAKING THIS HAPPEN, BUT WOW, THIS IS AMAZING! WATER CAN DO WHATEVER I TELL IT TO DO. NOT ONLY IS THIS FUN, IT’S A GREAT WAY TO TRAIN THE SWIM TEAM. WE’RE DEFINITELY GOING TO BEAT THAT THOMAS A. EDISON MIDDLE SCHOOL AT THE MEET THIS YEAR!

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In the morning, the swim team flies back home. Still confused at what they saw last night, Lucy nor Ruby mention it to the coach or the other swimmers.

Kas, it was brutal! I’ve never swum so hard in my life. It felt like the water was fighting against me with each lap.

Let’s meet up after school; bring Gordy. Ruby and I will fill you in.

Later that day, the friends meet up at the Pizza Joint. They tell the guys about the coach’s alleged powers.

Ruby, please focus! We’re trying to see if you got a picture of Coach moving water and hopefully we can figure out how he does it.

If we have a picture, we can prove it if we need to.

It’s blurry, but look at this one, I don’t know if that’s water going the wrong way or just a smudge.

Well, it’s not convincing at all. Maybe it was nothing. And even if it was something, maybe it doesn’t matter, it’s not like he was hurting anyone.
Lucy, you aren’t being very helpful. It’s not like we know he’s going to do anything. So far there have been surprisingly few threats to take over the world or kill us all. He just splashes water around. What exactly do you want us to do?

I don’t know! I just know that a coach who has superpowers and an unswerving desire to win is never a good combination.

He’s losing his mind and I’m worried we will all be in the way. Just promise me you will be at the swim meet this Friday and keep an eye out for anything odd.

Super powers are never nothing. Maybe that’s why we had to work twice as hard at swim practice.

If I were a coach and I wanted my team to be fit and work harder, I’d use anything necessary with the water to make them work harder!

His “power” was hurting people. The whole team is on the verge of being injured or worse!

I don’t know! I just know that a coach who has superpowers and an unswerving desire to win is never a good combination.

Ok, ok, calm down. We had planned to be there anyway. Now we’ll be on the lookout for anything strange.

Thanks guys!

Friday’s State Championship Swim Meet features the Nikola Tesla Junior High School Chargers vs. the Thomas A. Edison Middle School Wizards. The schools have a long running and competitive rivalry.

*To find out why Nikola Tesla believes Thomas Edison owes him $50,000; see PhysicsQuest 2008 Nikola Tesla and the Electric Fair*
STOP MAKING EXCUSES, LUCY. GET READY FOR THE NEXT RACE! AND JUST TO MAKE CERTAIN OF VICTORY, I WILL BE TO USING MY “SPECIAL” GIFT ...

A crazed coach H20 uses his power of water manipulation to attack the other team. He doesn’t stop at the Edison Middle School swimmers. He also goes after the Edison and Tesla Middle School fans. No one is excluded from the chaos.
I just felt like I should be ready. We are saving the school, aren’t we? How is a laser supposed to help you move stuff? Dump it now!

He ha! De ha! Ha da! You can’t trap me! Foolish children, while the coach is distracted by Spectra, Gordy, Ruby and Kas take the tops off the corn starch and ketchup. The coach focuses his attention on Spectra and he loses control of the pool’s water. He stumbles and falls back into the pool. Spectra yells, “Gordy, your plan is working.”

The group takes all the ketchup and corn starch they can carry to the pool. Coach attempts to continue his outburst at the aquatic center. He tries to create a vortex and only succeeds in mixing the corn starch, ketchup and water even more. The more he tries to move the water, the thicker the mixture becomes. A laser can’t, but you can! Aren’t you a swimmer with big arms? Forget the laser stuff and help! BTW, why are you in your Spectra outfit?

Everyone dumps the corn starch and ketchup in the water. They make a mess! Hey coach, over here! If you want to attack someone, attack me! I’m the one that lost the big relay. It’s my fault. We lost!

Lucy?!!

But guys, isn’t there water in ketchup? I have an idea! C’mon let’s head to the cafeteria.

OK! But I think it’s time for Spectra to make an appearance!

The quartet of young heroes burst into the school’s kitchen. The quartet of young heroes burst into the school’s kitchen.

You’re right Ruby, remember what we learned in physics class. We’re just going to make it easier for him, not trap him. When you move ketchup, it becomes easier to move. Lucy, help me with this corn starch!
I just felt like I should be ready. We are saving the school, aren’t we?

A laser can’t, but you can! Aren’t you a swimmer with big arms? Forget the laser stuff and help! BTW, why are you in your Spectra outfit?

The group takes all the corn starch they can carry to the pool.

While the coach is distracted by Spectra, Gordy, Ruby and Kas take the tops off the corn starch.

The coach focuses his attention on Spectra and he loses control of the pool’s water. He stumbles and falls back into the pool.

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How is a laser supposed to help you move stuff?

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Dump it now!

FOOLISH CHILDREN, YOU CAN’T TRAP ME!

HE HA! DE HA! HA DA!

WOWOSH!
Apparently, this one does.
HA HA HA! Sorry!

I’m glad we stopped him, though I’ll miss those vibrant water patterns.

Spectra, weren’t you supposed to use your laser powers in this adventure? I mean, the gang has sort of come to expect it. And you do have fans out there that want to see you in action.

Well, since I’m still suited up! How about I bounce around a bit in different colors for my closing act. Kas, get on the loudspeakers and play some music. Let’s end with a dance party while we wait for the police to take away Coach H2O!

The end?
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SPECTRA

TURBULENT TIMES

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