

Max glared at his science project for probably the 20th time that evening, sub-consciously grumbling “stupid plant,” over and over again under his breath. It didn’t make any sense. Plants just didn’t grow 4 feet in 2 weeks.

Certainly his research had revealed that the plant he sang to should do better than the plant he did not sing to, but how could a little extra carbon dioxide act as a plant steroid? He stared at his empty piece of paper, trying to will an explanation onto it. Ms. Abbot was going to fail him. That was all there was to it.

“Stupid plant,” he muttered again. “Not only did I waste a lot of time taking care of you, but now I’m not even going to be rewarded for it.”

In an attempt to distract himself, Max turned his attentions to the plant he had not sung to, the control plant. Now there was a plant that knew how to behave. Maybe if he trimmed the other plant down...but no, Ms. Abbot would notice, and that would look even more suspicious.

Max just couldn’t believe it. Two weeks ago he had gone to the local garden store, owned by his best friend Penelope’s parents, and carefully selected two plants of as close to identical size and shape as possible. Penelope’s mother, Mrs. Fringe, told Max how to properly care for the plants and helped him take a picture to record the starting conditions.

Max had placed Plant A, the control, in the windowsill in his father’s study. His father was the only one who spent any time in there, and he was always quiet when he was actually at home. No risk of any unaccounted for singing around Plant A. Plant B had been placed in Max’s room and he sang to it twice a day for 5 minutes each time. At first, everything had seemed normal. Plant B was slightly greener, maybe a bit more happy than Plant A, assuming plants could feel happy, but otherwise, things were right on track.

Last week Plant B was slightly larger than Plant A, but Max had passed it off as a normal growth spurt. After all, people went through growth spurts, so why not plants? By Friday, Plant B had increased 2 feet in height, and now, Sunday night, the night before the project was due, the stupid plant had grown 4 whole feet, bringing it to a total height of 4 feet and 5 inches.