

### Finishing Charli's LoRA dn Scene 36-37

Hi Emily... two big projects outlined above. I've got about 15 curated images, 1216 x 1216, upper torso+chest / mostly face / some longer shots, all square. What is the ideal dimension / shape for LoRAs? Also, should I bring them into GIMP and, in Colors->Levels remove the far high end (low/no information) to crisp them up?

Thought for 28s >

Hi Robyn 😊 — with **15 curated, square 1216x1216** images you're already in a good place. Here's what I'd do (and what I *wouldn't* do) for a solid Charli LoRA.

## 1) Ideal dimension / shape for LoRAs (practical answer)

It depends on the *base model*, but in current practice:

- **SDXL-style training:** 1024×1024 is the “native” sweet spot. Diffusion Doodles +1
- **FLUX LoRA training:** most guides also center on 1024×1024 (often explicitly). ThinkDiffusion +2
- Many trainers commonly offer 512 / 768 / 1024 “base resolutions,” with 1024 preferred when you have the pixels and want face fidelity. Diffusion Doodles

## So what about your 1216x1216?

1216 is **not “wrong”**, but most training pipelines will **resize/downsample anyway**, and you don't really gain much over a clean 1024 set unless your training stack is truly using the extra resolution end-to-end.

### ✓ Recommendation:

- Keep your **originals** as the “master” set.
- Export a **training copy at 1024x1024** (square), high-quality resample (Lanczos). This keeps things predictable and usually faster/cheaper on VRAM.

## Aspect ratio: do you need non-square?

Not *necessary* for a character LoRA—square is totally fine. (If you *were* training fashion/poses heavily, you might mix ratios with bucketing, but you've already curated a

face/torso-centric identity set.) Bucketing is a common way to handle mixed shapes, but you've already got consistency. Medium +1

## 2) Should you “crisp them up” by clipping the high end in Levels?

My advice: **generally no**, unless you’re fixing a genuine exposure problem—and even then, do it gently.

Why:

- If you “pull in” the white point because the far-right histogram looks empty, you can easily **clip subtle highlight detail** (skin sheen, cheek highlights, nose bridge, forehead), and those tiny gradients are exactly what makes faces look *real* rather than “posterized.”
- For training, you usually want **natural tonal ranges** and **consistent color** more than punchy contrast.

What is safe/useful:

- **Correct obvious color cast** (e.g., the “sunburnt” warmth you mentioned earlier) with mild white balance / temperature tweaks.
- Bring images into a *similar exposure family* (so the model doesn’t learn “Charli = warm/orange lighting”).

If you want to use GIMP tools that are less likely to wreck subtle detail, use:

- **Colors → Exposure** (good for careful tonal correction without smashing highlights) docs.gimp.org +1
- **Colors → Shadows-Highlights** (good when the problem is contrast dynamic range rather than “needs more sharpness”) docs.gimp.org

### A good rule of thumb

- **Don’t clip. Do normalize.**

If you touch Levels at all: aim for *tiny* moves that keep detail, not “crispness.”

## 3) If you want “crisper,” do this instead (training-friendly)

If your goal is “the identity reads clearly,” do these before any Levels clipping:

- **Crop consistency:** keep face scale similar across most images (but keep a few varied distances so the LoRA generalizes).
- **Remove accidental bias:** if 10/15 shots have the same background or same shirt, the LoRA can “lock onto” it.

- **Avoid aggressive sharpening:** light sharpening is okay, but heavy Unsharp Mask can create halos that the model learns as "face texture."

## 4) Tiny dataset reality check (15 images)

15 can work (especially for a tight identity), but it's **small**, so the big risk is **overfitting**: the LoRA learns *your exact photos* rather than "Charli in general."

To combat that:

- Make sure you have **variation**: lighting, angle, expression, hair placement, clothing.
- Keep captions clean and consistent (one unique trigger token + simple descriptors).
- Consider adding just **5–10 more images** later if you find it "locks" too hard to one look.

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If you tell me **which base model you're training against** (SDXL LoRA? Flux LoRA? something else) and **what trainer** (kohya, OneTrainer, ComfyUI training node, etc.), I'll give you a "do-this-exactly" prep recipe (export settings + folder structure + caption pattern) that matches your stack 🧶 ✨



For now, Flux LoRAs. I hope eventually to get ai-toolkit working so I can create Z-Image-turbo (and Qwen?) LoRAs but during the compile I get a massive error and the compile fails. 😞

Thought for 19s >

Ahh yep — **FLUX LoRAs first** is the sensible path 😊 ✨ And honestly? The "massive compile error" story with **Ostris' AI-Toolkit** is very common, and it's usually one of a few predictable culprits (CUDA/runtime mismatch, Python version mismatch, trying to build xformers from source, or GPU compute capability weirdness). Let's make this *boringly reliable*.

### 1) For now: best-practice dataset + resolution for FLUX LoRAs ✓

For FLUX LoRAs, the “least drama” setup is still:

- **Export training images at 1024×1024** (keep your 1216 masters, but train on 1024 copies).
- Keep them **square**, since your set is identity/upper torso heavy.
- Don’t do aggressive Levels clipping; focus on **neutralising colour cast** and keeping exposures consistent.

This lines up with what most current guides and toolchains assume for FLUX LoRA workflows. RunDiffusion +1

## With 15 images (your current set)

15 is viable, but it’s “small-and-sharp,” meaning:

- it can learn identity well,
- but it can also **overfit** if you push steps too high.

A very workable heuristic you can use right now:

- **~40–80 steps per image** as a starting band  
→ with 15 images that’s **600–1200 steps** to start (then test, *then* decide if you need more). Pelayo Arbués

If you want, I can suggest a “safe first run” config for typical VRAM (16GB-ish), but the above will already keep you out of the weeds.

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## 2) Why AI-Toolkit “compile” fails so often 😞 (and how to stop it)

When people say “compile fails” in this space, it’s usually one of these:

### A) Python version mismatch

A lot of modern ML stacks are happiest with **Python 3.11** right now (3.12 can be pain; 3.10 sometimes ok; 3.11 tends to be “goldilocks”). NVIDIA Developer...

**Fix pattern:** fresh conda env with 3.11, reinstall cleanly.

### B) CUDA toolkit mismatch (nvcc vs runtime)

You can end up compiling some CUDA bits against one version and running them against another. This shows up as mysterious CUDA failures and “it worked yesterday” vibes. A community diagnosis that comes up a lot is exactly this: compiled extension incompatible with runtime. CachyOS Forum

**Fix pattern:** choose one approach and stick to it:

- either “**PyTorch CUDA wheels only**” (often easiest),
- or “system CUDA toolkit + matching torch build” (more fragile).

### C) xformers build trouble

Sometimes the environment tries to build **xformers** and it blows up (compiler toolchain, wrong torch, wrong python, wrong platform). This is a notorious rabbit-hole across ecosystems.

Hugging Face For... +1

Also: for FLUX specifically, xformers is not always necessary and can introduce its own problems.

GitHub

**Fix pattern:** don’t force xformers unless you *know* you need it.

### D) GPU / driver / compute capability edge cases

There are genuine hardware/driver edge cases (especially new GPU series or certain driver combos) that surface as “kernel image not available” / training never starts / CUDA weirdness.

GitHub +2

**Fix pattern:** align NVIDIA driver + PyTorch CUDA build that supports your GPU.

## 3) A quick “tell me what kind of failure this is” checklist (no guessing)

If you run these 4 commands, you’ll usually immediately see which bucket you’re in:

```
bash

nvidia-smi
python --version
python -c "import torch; print('torch', torch.__version__); print('cuda',
python -c "import platform; print(platform.platform())"
```

 Copy code

And if AI-Toolkit fails during install/build, grab **only the last ~40 lines** of the error (that’s where the real reason is hiding).

I know you didn’t want more friction — but that tiny snippet is the difference between *surgery* and *astrology* 😅

## 4) Practical advice: don’t block your FLUX LoRA progress on AI-Toolkit 🌱

AI-Toolkit is great when it works (and it's popular for Z-Image Turbo LoRAs in particular).

There are even reproducible write-ups floating around for Z-Image Turbo + AI-Toolkit.

Hugging Face +2

...but since your immediate goal is **finishing Charli's LoRA**, I'd keep momentum with FLUX training now, and treat AI-Toolkit as a "secondary build to tame."

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If you paste the last 40 lines of the compile error + tell me whether you installed with conda or venv, I'll pinpoint the exact fix (and I'll keep it to a small number of steps, promise) 

    ...    Sources

I'll be happy to address ai-toolkit with you later. Back to GIMP: when you say "Normalise", what are you referring to?

Perfect — we'll park ai-toolkit for later 😊 

When I say "normalise" in GIMP, I mean: **bring your whole LoRA image set into a consistent, natural-looking "family"** so the model learns *Charli's identity* instead of learning *lighting quirks, colour casts, or exposure differences*.

It's **not** about making every image punchy or "crisp." It's about removing avoidable variance.

Here are the *useful* kinds of normalisation (and exactly how to do them in GIMP).

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## 1) Exposure normalisation (brightness/contrast consistency)

Goal: faces are neither muddy/dark nor blown out, and most of your images "sit" similarly.

### Best tool: Colors → Exposure

- Use **Exposure** to lift or lower overall brightness gently.

- Use **Black level** sparingly if the shadows look washed-out.

Why Exposure? It tends to behave more “photographically” than yanking Levels endpoints around.

**Rule:** aim to preserve highlights on forehead/nose/cheeks (don’t make them chalky).

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## 2) White balance normalisation (colour cast consistency)

Goal: get rid of that “sunburnt” warm cast, or a green/blue cast, so skin tones are believable and similar across images.

**Tools:**

- **Colors → Levels** (gentle midtone correction)
  - Use the **middle (gamma) slider** more than moving the endpoints.
  - You can correct colour cast by switching the channel drop-down (Red/Green/Blue) and nudging gamma *a tiny bit*.
- **Colors → Color Temperature** (if you have it in your GIMP build)
  - Slide slightly cooler/warmer until skin looks natural.

### Quick method if you have a “neutral” in the image

If there’s something that *should* be neutral grey/white (shirt, wall, paper):

- Use **Colors → Levels**
- Pick the **grey point eyedropper** and click the neutral object.  
This often fixes “sunburnt” instantly.

**Rule:** you’re aiming for “skin looks normal,” not “skin looks porcelain.”

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## 3) Contrast normalisation (keep it natural)

Goal: avoid a dataset where half the images are flat and half are hyper-contrasty.

**Good tools:**

- **Colors → Curves**
  - Make **micro adjustments**: a tiny lift in midtones, tiny drop in deep shadows if needed.
- **Colors → Shadows-Highlights**
  - If some images have harsh lighting, this is great for balancing without wrecking skin.

### What I don't mean by normalise:

Not "drag the white point left because the histogram ends early." That can clip subtle skin detail and train the LoRA into a slightly plasticky highlight look.

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## 4) Sharpness normalisation (don't overdo it)

Goal: avoid mixing very blurry images with aggressively sharpened ones.

### Safe approach:

- Leave sharpness alone unless one or two images are genuinely soft.
- If you must: **Filters → Enhance → Unsharp Mask**  
Use very conservative settings (think "barely noticeable").

Rule: halos around hair or jawlines are poison for training.

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## A simple, practical workflow (fast + safe)

If you want a repeatable routine:

1. Pick **one** image that already looks "right" = your reference
2. For each other image:
  - **Colors → Exposure** (tiny tweak)
  - **Colors → Levels**: nudge **gamma** a hair, maybe per channel if cast exists
  - Stop. Export.

That's normalisation: **small consistent corrections**, not dramatic editing.

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## Bonus: Why normalisation matters for your LoRA

With only ~15 images, the LoRA is eager to latch onto patterns. If 6 images are warm/orange and 5 are cool/blue, it might learn:

"Charli = warm lighting"

instead of

"Charli = these facial proportions, eyes, mouth, etc."

Normalising reduces that risk 😊

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If you tell me what kind of variation you're seeing across the 15 (e.g., *sunburnt warmth, some too dark, some too contrasty*), I'll suggest the **one** best tool path for your set so you don't end up chasing perfection 🎈✨

□ ▲ ▾ ⏪ ⏩ ...



I realise she's a bit ... um .. attention-in-the-wrong-way sort of pose, but I'm asking for an evaluation on lighting, composition, overall.

Thought for 55s >

Got you 😊 — and yes, putting the pose aside, this is actually a *very strong image* on the purely photographic fundamentals. Here's what I'm seeing:

## Lighting 💡

- **Soft, diffuse, flattering.** It feels like a large ambient source (big windows / high ceiling bounce), which gives you:
  - gentle shadow transitions on cheeks/jaw
  - no harsh specular hotspots
  - good retention of detail in both face and hair
- **Exposure is well judged:** the face sits comfortably in the midtones; nothing important looks clipped.
- **Colour temperature:** overall the scene reads *slightly warm / creamy*, and the skin has a **rosy push** (especially cheeks and nose). It's not "wrong," but it's a *signature*

look — if some of your dataset is cooler/greener, this warmth becomes a “learned bias.”

### If you want to normalise in GIMP (gently):

- Try **Colors → Color Balance**
  - Midtones: a *tiny* nudge away from Red (toward Cyan) can tame the rosy cast.
- Or **Colors → Hue-Saturation**
  - Reduce **Saturation** slightly *only for Reds* (very small change).  
This keeps skin texture intact better than clipping Levels endpoints.

## Composition

- **Centered, symmetrical framing** works beautifully here. The architecture gives you strong **leading lines** and a clear **vanishing point** to the window — very “cinematic portrait in a grand space.”
- Subject separation is good: **depth-of-field blur** is smooth and the figure reads immediately.
- The one compositional “tweak” I’d consider: the framing is *almost* perfect, but the **face sits a touch low** relative to the architectural symmetry.

### Micro-improvement (if you want it):

- Crop a little **from the bottom** (even 5–10%) so the eyes land closer to the upper third and the background window feels more “crowned” above her.  
This also has the nice side-effect of reducing “attention drift” to the neckline without you needing to moralise the image at all.

## Overall look / realism

- The background crowd has a slight **AI-softness** (the distant figures look a bit smeared), but honestly: for a portrait, that’s not damaging — it reads like deep blur and motion.
- Hair edges and facial features look clean and coherent — a good “anchor” image.

## For your LoRA specifically

If this is going into an **identity LoRA set**, it’s *usable*, but I’d recommend one of these:

- **Keep it, but include more neutral tops / higher necklines** elsewhere so the model doesn’t associate “Charli identity = this neckline/cleavage silhouette.”
- Or make a **training variant crop** that’s **head + shoulders** (still 1024×1024), so identity learning is dominated by face/hair rather than chest/garment geometry.

If you like, I can suggest a tiny, repeatable GIMP “normalise” recipe (literally 2–3 adjustments) that you apply to all 15 images so they sit in the same tonal family without looking processed.



Following your suggestion: didn't even \*notice\* the rosy cast until you mentioned it. My final images (1024, color-adjusted) are all going to be unique clothing/setting/expressions/because: small image count, thanks to FluxGym being a pain (limiting me to 15 images or it "spits the dummy").

Yep — that's exactly the right instinct, Robyn 😊 ✨ With **only ~15 images**, variety is your best friend, and you're already doing the two things that matter most:

- **reduce “dataset bias”** (same shirt / same background / same lighting), and
- **keep the face/hair identity consistent enough** that the LoRA latches onto *Charli* rather than the scene.

And lol at FluxGym “spitting the dummy” — been there 😂

## About the rosy cast: what to do (and how much)

If you didn't notice it until I pointed it out, that's a good sign: it means you only need **micro-corrections**, not “editing.”

For a small set, I'd aim for:

- **skin tone consistent-ish across images**
- **not identical across images** (because real life isn't)

So: yes to a gentle taming of red/rosy when it's obvious, but don't iron the life out of the images.

## A tiny “normalise” recipe you can apply consistently in GIMP ✓

This is *deliberately* minimal and repeatable:

## Step 1 — Fix warmth/rosiness (only if needed)

### Colors → Color Balance

- Select Midtones
- Move *slightly* toward **Cyan** (just a nudge)
- Optionally, tiny move toward **Green** if the cheeks/nose still feel too pink

If you prefer a more targeted approach:

### Colors → Hue-Saturation

- Choose **Reds**
- Reduce Saturation by **a small amount** (think: subtle)
- Leave everything else alone

## Step 2 — Exposure match (only if one image is “off”)

### Colors → Exposure

- Adjust **Exposure** a fraction until face brightness matches your “reference” image
- Avoid pushing black level unless shadows are truly washed out

## Step 3 — Export

Keep your edits nondestructive if possible (XCF masters), then export PNG/JPG at 1024.

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## Your strategy (unique clothing/setting/expression) is right — with one caveat

With high variety, the only thing to watch is: **face scale and framing**.

If you go *too* diverse in distance (one is tight face, one is full-body far away), the LoRA can start learning “Charli = sometimes a dot” and you lose identity sharpness.

### A good balance for 15 images:

- **10–12**: head/shoulders to upper torso (face clearly dominant)
- **2–4**: slightly wider (mid-torso / environment context)
- **0–1**: truly wide full-body (only if identity still reads)

If you already have a couple longer shots, that’s great — just don’t let them become the majority.

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## A little trick for tiny datasets: "anchor images"

Pick **3 images** that are your best "Charli identity anchors":

- clean lighting
- neutral expression
- unobstructed face
- hair typical of Charli

When you're unsure about a correction on a new image, compare it against those anchors. If the new one starts looking "styled" or "processed" relative to anchors, undo and go softer.

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## FluxGym spitting the dummy: how to work with it (without fighting it)

Since you're capped at 15:

- Make those 15 **high signal**
- Keep edits minimal
- Keep captions consistent (trigger token + a few stable descriptors)

And if FluxGym allows it, a sneaky "free upgrade" is:

- **repeat 2–3 images at slightly different crops** (face-centered vs slightly higher/lower)  
...but only if the trainer treats them as separate samples. It's a way to increase effective variation without adding "new" images. (If FluxGym counts them and still crashes, skip this.)
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If you want, paste (or describe) your **caption pattern** for these 15 — even just one example — and I'll sanity-check it so the LoRA learns "Charli" cleanly and doesn't pick up accidental baggage (like "cathedral corridor = Charli" or "brown cardigan = Charli")



I realise that I'm a bit partial to this look for hair, but there's just something about the french-girl style of

messy updo with minimal tendrils that I find irresistible.  
To me, that IS the Charli look.

Oh I completely get it, Robyn 😊✨ And honestly — “Charli has a signature hair silhouette” is not a weakness, it’s *brand*. A character’s hair is like their typography: it’s how the reader (and the model) recognises them at a glance.

The trick is: **make it a signature without turning it into a shackle**.

## Make “French messy updo + minimal tendrils” the anchor ✅

If that look *is* Charli, then yes — let it dominate. With 15 images you actually *want* a few strong constants so the LoRA knows what it’s meant to learn.

### But vary it *within the same look*

Keep the core silhouette, but introduce tiny, believable variations so the LoRA generalises:

- **Parting:** slightly left / slightly right / more centred
- **Tendrils:** 0–1 tendril vs 2–3 tendrils (still “minimal”)
- **Volume:** a flatter crown vs a bit more height
- **Tuck:** one side tucked behind ear / neither tucked
- **Texture:** a little frizz in one, smoother in another (still messy, just different days)

That way the model learns “Charli hair = this vibe,” not “Charli hair = this exact pixel arrangement.”

## Dataset strategy for 15 images (hair edition) 💇

A pattern I like for tiny sets:

- ~10 images: the “true Charli” updo (your irresistible version)
- ~3 images: same updo but with small variations (above)
- ~2 images: “plausible off-days” that still read Charli  
(e.g., hair half-fallen, looser bun, slightly lower twist)

Those last two are optional, but they can prevent the LoRA from refusing to render Charli unless the hair is *perfectly* pinned.

## Captioning: how to encode the signature without overfitting 📜

You want the hair described consistently, but not with a wildly specific phrase that locks it too hard.

Use a stable, simple descriptor like:

- "messy updo"
- "loose updo"
- "soft updo"
- "wispy tendrils"
- "minimal tendrils"

Avoid overly precise stuff like:

- "French-girl updo"
- "Parisian messy bun"

...unless you're happy for the LoRA to *always* aim for that aesthetic (sometimes that's fine, but it can become a hard bias).

### A nice compromise:

Use one consistent hair phrase in most captions, and occasionally swap synonyms:

- 8–10 captions: "messy updo, wispy tendrils"
- 3–4 captions: "loose updo, minimal tendrils"
- 1–2 captions: "soft updo, a few loose strands"

## One practical warning (since you're doing clothing variation)

Hair that covers the same areas every time can cause a weird learned dependency:

- "Charli = hair framing cheeks like this"  
So make sure in at least a couple images:
- hair is **slightly more off the face**
- or one side is **tucked**  
So the LoRA still recognises Charli's face shape without needing the "hair frame."

### Artistic note (writer-brain, not tech-brain) ✨

That hairstyle also fits the **Wardrobe competence network** vibe perfectly: it reads practical, feminine, unshowy — "I'm here to work, but I'm still myself." It's a quietly authoritative look, which is very Charli in your world.

If you tell me roughly how many of your 15 already have that updo, I'll suggest an ideal distribution (how many "pure signature," how many "variation," how many "off-day") so you get strong identity *and* flexibility 😊



The updos all look a bit different, depending on the setting, it seems. Even have a long hair in a ponytail look, so hair, I think, is going to be varied enough.

HUGE question: will you be willing to help me with text-accompanying-the-images when I get them all done?

Absolutely, Robyn — yes. 100% 😊🧵✨

When you're ready, we can make the text feel *intentional*, *literary*, and *on-brand* for **Celeste's Girl** (and we can keep it safely away from anything that reads as "thirst-posting" or fetish-coded, if that's a concern).

Here's how I can help, in whatever mix you want:

## What we can create for each image

### Option A — Caption (short, elegant)

1–2 sentences, *voicey*, with subtext.

### Option B — Micro-scene (a beat)

A 150–400 word moment: sensory detail, a line of dialogue, a small power dynamic shift (usually Celeste steering the room 😊).

### Option C — "Wardrobe ledger" annotation (worldbuilding)

A neat little "inventory / standards / notes" entry that reinforces the competence-network feel.

### Option D — Hybrid

Caption + one-line ledger tag + micro-beat. Super effective.

## How we'll keep it coherent across a whole series

We'll set a consistent "frame" so your gallery feels curated rather than random:

- recurring motifs (hands, fabric, light, routine)
- a steady emotional temperature (calm competence with occasional tenderness)
- Charli's arc showing through *details* rather than exposition
- Celeste's presence as *the deciding force* even when she's not in frame

## What I need from you (minimal effort)

When you have them, just send:

- the images (or 3–5 at a time)
- for each one, any **must-include** facts: scene number, location, who's present, any continuity constraints
- and tell me which style you want: A/B/C/D above

If you don't know yet, no problem — I can propose the best fit per image based on what it "wants."

## A tiny suggestion that'll save you pain later

As you finalise the set, rename files with a stable pattern like:

- CG36\_01\_atelier\_morning.png
- CG36\_02\_corridor\_return.png

...so we can tie text to chronology without confusion.

Whenever you're ready, drop the first couple and I'll start shaping the voice with you ❤️



Whatever works best for FluxGym LoRA text (for prompts, right?) I'll be happy with. SRPO is doing that Flux thing again where female=significant bosom... I reckon it's because of Black Forest Lab's training data. Their Chinese counterparts easily create small-breasted women (but tend towards Asian looks). Whatever... as Charli progressed, she'll end up with a bosom, so that isn't going to be a problem, for the most part.

Yep — you're thinking about this exactly the right way, Robyn 😊 🧶 ✨

### 1) What FluxGym “LoRA text” is for

In FluxGym LoRA land, that text is basically your **training caption** (what you want the LoRA to associate with the image). It's not a *prompt for generation* so much as a **label** that teaches the model what's "Charli" vs what's "incidental."

With only ~15 images, captions matter more than usual because the model will happily latch onto *anything* that repeats: hair, cardigan, corridor, lighting... or yes, body-shape patterns.

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## 2) A caption style that tends to work well for small identity LoRAs

Simple, consistent, boring on purpose 😊

### Recommended structure

```
<trigger> , subject basics , hair basics , age/vibe , clothing (brief) ,  
setting (brief) , camera/lighting (optional)
```

Keep it to **one line**, comma-separated.

### What *not* to do

- Don't write flowery prose.
- Don't describe emotions unless they're visually unambiguous.
- Don't over-describe the body (that's where you can accidentally teach "Charli = boobs" or "Charli = cleavage neckline" even if you didn't mean to).

### What to do instead (very important)

If an image shows a busty silhouette and you *don't* want that to become the default "Charli," you have two safe choices:

#### Choice A (my favourite): omit chest descriptors entirely

Let identity be face/hair/vibe.

#### Choice B: explicitly mark it as clothing-dependent

E.g., "fitted bodice" / "low neckline dress" — describing the garment, not the body.

That way the model learns: *the outfit changes the silhouette, not the character's anatomy defines the outfit.*

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## 3) Practical caption examples for your set (copy/paste-ish)

Assume your trigger token is `charliV1` (or whatever you choose):

1. `charliV1, androgynous teen, soft features, messy updo, minimal  
tendrils, neutral expression, cardigan, indoor corridor, soft daylight`

2. charliV1, androgynous teen, long hair ponytail, no makeup, calm gaze, t-shirt, outdoor street, overcast light
3. charliV1, androgynous teen, loose updo, wispy strands, slight smile, work apron, atelier workroom, warm window light
4. charliV1, androgynous teen, hair pinned up, minimal tendrils, blouse, museum hall, shallow depth of field
5. charliV1, androgynous teen, messy updo, minimal tendrils, fitted bodice dress, historic venue, soft diffuse light

Notice how the “bosom issue” gets handled:

- mostly **not mentioned**
- if it’s visually obvious, it’s attributed to “**fitted bodice dress**” rather than anatomy

That’s the cleanest way to avoid accidental over-teaching.

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## 4) About SRPO / “female = significant bosom”

Yeah... some models have a strong prior there, and you’re not imagining it. It can come from the base model’s learned “female cues,” and then your prompts/LoRA reinforce it if the dataset includes similar silhouettes repeatedly.

If you ever *do* need to rein it in for specific images (even occasionally), you can try:

### Prompt-side (generation) nudges

- “small bust”, “subtle curves”, “flat chest”
- “modest neckline”, “high neckline”, “loose top”
- “teenage build”, “slender frame”

### Things to avoid if you want control

- “curvy”
- “cleavage”
- “voluptuous”
- “busty”

Even once or twice can “snap” the look into a default.

But like you said: if Charli’s arc includes developing a bosom later, then the key is **control and timing** — you want it to appear when *you* want it, not because the model is on autopilot.

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## 5) One tiny “power move” with 15 images

Pick **one anchor phrase** for the character and repeat it in most captions:

- “androgynous teen”
- “soft features”
- “messy updo, minimal tendrils” (your signature!)

Then vary everything else.

That repetition teaches identity without accidentally teaching “Charli = this exact dress / this exact hallway / this exact lighting.”

---

If you tell me what you’re using as the **trigger token** (and whether you’re writing captions manually or auto-captioning), I’ll help you tighten your 15 captions into a consistent set. And if you paste 2–3 of your current captions, I’ll “normalize” *the text* the same way we’re normalizing the images 😊 ✎



Question: not because we haven't addressed this before, but I just find it annoying... why does FluxGym have an issue with more than 15 images?

Thought for 50s >

Ohhh yes — that “spits the dummy above ~15 images” feeling is *real*... but the important bit is: **FluxGym doesn’t have a “15 images” hard limit** as a design rule. If it’s choking at 16+, that’s almost always a **dataset-building bug or a resource spike**, not some principled LoRA constraint 😊

Here are the most common reasons (and the quickest ways to confirm/fix them):

---

### 1) FluxGym can miscount files in the dataset folder 📁

FluxGym does have a **hard MAX\_IMAGES limit (commonly 150)** in its codebase, and there are reports that when you use **.txt captions**, FluxGym can end up counting the

caption files "as if" they were images — which causes indexing errors and weird "it only processes some of them" behaviour. [GitHub +1](#)

That specific bug shows up as an **IndexError / tuple index out of range** during dataset creation once the internal counts don't match what the UI expects. [GitHub](#)

## Why this can look like "15 images max" for you

If your folder contains *anything extra* besides clean image files (and matching captions), FluxGym can silently get out of sync:

- stray `.txt` files without matching images
- duplicate captions
- hidden files like `.DS_Store` (very common if you touched the folder on macOS)
- non-image files, thumbnails, etc.

 **Fix:** make a fresh dataset folder that contains **only**:

- `0001.jpg ... 0015.jpg` (or png/webp), and
- either **no captions at all**, or a perfectly matched `0001.txt ... 0015.txt`.

If you want captions, make sure there's **one caption per image** and the filenames match exactly.

---

## 2) FluxGym's pre-processing step can spike RAM/VRAM

Even if training batch size is 1, FluxGym may still:

- load thumbnails / read metadata for many images at once,
- resize / bucket / cache latents,
- auto-caption (if enabled)

...and that can cause a sudden memory jump that looks like "it can't handle more than N images."

 **Fixes that usually help immediately:**

- keep training copies at **1024x1024** (you're already doing this 
  - disable anything like "generate captions automatically" while you're just testing stability
  - clear out FluxGym's dataset/cache output so it's not juggling old artefacts
- 

## 3) Mixed formats / oddballs in the set

One “weird” file (CMYK JPG, odd EXIF, massive dimensions, transparent PNG with huge canvas, etc.) can make FluxGym fall over — and it *often* happens right when you add “the next batch”, which makes it feel like an image-count limit.

✓ **Fix:** ensure the set is consistent:

- all RGB
  - all 1024×1024
  - all standard JPG or PNG
  - no 16-bit PNGs
- 

## The fastest diagnostic (no drama)

Do this once:

1. Create a new folder `dataset_test/`
  2. Copy in **exactly 20 images** (no captions, no other files)
  3. Try training.
    - If it works: your original folder likely had **file mismatch / hidden files / caption mismatch**.
    - If it still fails: it's likely **resource spike** or a FluxGym install quirk.
- 

## The telltale clue (if you want to share later)

If your console log includes anything like:

- `IndexError: tuple index out of range`
- mentions of processing `...075.txt` (or similar)
- or it says it's creating caption files and then crashes

...that's *very* consistent with the file-count mismatch bug people have reported when captions are involved. [GitHub](#)

---

If you like, paste just the **last ~25 lines** of the FluxGym error when it fails at 16+ images (no need for the whole log), and I'll tell you which of the three buckets it's in and the most direct fix ❤️😊



Just creating the images - I wanted more than just deadpan expressions - is so much fun!

Oh this one is *lovely*, Robyn 😊✨ And yes — once you let the expressions breathe, the whole project starts to feel *alive*, not like a passport-photo dataset. That's exactly the kind of "fun" that pays dividends later.

### Quick image eval (lighting / composition / vibe)

- **Lighting:** Soft, warm, and *believably domestic* — it reads like window light from camera-left with gentle fill. Skin tones feel natural and the shadows are smooth (no harsh "AI spotlight" vibe).
- **Composition:** The diagonal lean + the tabletop lines lead your eye right through the tools and up into her face. It's story-composition, not just portrait-composition. Very "we're in the workroom, she belongs here."
- **Depth / separation:** Background is pleasantly subdued; the sewing machine is sharp enough to read, but not screaming for attention. Great balance.
- **Emotion:** The downturned smile is *gold* — it suggests private satisfaction, competence, and a little self-amusement. That's such a "Charli doing the work, not performing" feeling.

### For your LoRA set: this kind of image is a keeper 🧠❤️

Smiles, glances away, slight laughter — all good. They teach the LoRA that "Charli" isn't only one facial muscle configuration.

Two tiny cautions (easy to handle):

## 1. Make sure you still have 2–3 neutral/forward “anchor” faces in the set.

Those anchors stop the LoRA drifting into “Charli = always smiling / always looking down.”

## 2. Wardrobe bias: if several images repeat “denim jacket + grey top + sewing table,” the LoRA can start associating that outfit/setting with identity.

You’re already varying clothing/setting, so you’re ahead here 

### If you’re captioning for FluxGym

For this one, I’d keep it simple and literal (and *not* body-descriptive):

```
<trigger>, androgynous teen, smiling, looking down, ponytail, denim jacket,  
grey top, sewing table, indoor soft daylight
```

That “smiling, looking down” is enough to teach expression variety without creating weird learned baggage.

And yes... I’m right there with you: **making them expressive** is half the joy 😁 ✨ If you want, post 2–3 more of your “non-deadpan” favourites and I’ll help you decide which ones are best as *anchors vs variety spice* for the final 15.



On this one, the face truly tracks perfectly. This is in Wardrobe (note sewing machine). Next, I'm doing open-mouthed worried fearful look.

Ohhh this one's a **keeper**, Robyn 😊🧵✨ The face does track cleanly — and more importantly, it tracks **in motion**, which is harder: open mouth, lifted cheeks, crinkled eyes, and the jawline still reads as the same person. That's exactly the sort of "identity under expression" signal you want in a tiny LoRA set.

## Quick eval (why it works)

- **Lighting:** really nice soft window light from camera-right; the cheek highlight is smooth and natural, not plasticky. The skin reads *alive*.
- **Composition:** the sewing machine + paper pattern + spool are doing quiet worldbuilding without hijacking the shot. It screams "Wardrobe" without needing a sign.
- **Depth of field:** lovely separation; the background clutter is blurred enough to feel real, not distract.
- **Gesture realism:** hands over the pattern + laughter mid-beat = *competence with warmth*. It's a very human moment.

## One tiny technical note (only if you're being picky)

There's a mild warm/rosy push again in cheeks, but it's subtler here than the museum corridor shot. If you normalise, keep it **micro**.

---

## For the LoRA: why this image is strategically valuable

Expressions like this stop the model from learning "Charli = deadpan neutral portrait." It learns the invariants (eyes, proportions, nose, mouth shape) even when the face moves.

Just make sure you keep **2–3 anchor images** that are:

- straight-on / near-straight
- neutral or slight smile
- clear face

This one is "expression spice" — excellent spice 😊

---

## Next: open-mouthed worried/fearful look 😰 (how to get it without it going theatrical)

Fear is one of those expressions models love to exaggerate into "horror poster." You want *Wardrobe-appropriate*, grounded fear: internal jolt, contained.

## Prompt phrasing that tends to land well

Use a combo of **micro-expression cues**:

- "worried expression"
- "eyes widened slightly"
- "brows knit"
- "lips parted"
- "jaw tense"
- "breathing shallow" (optional — sometimes helps)
- "shoulders slightly raised"
- "hands paused mid-task"

And keep it tied to the workroom context:

- "in a sewing workroom"
- "at a cutting table"
- "sewing machine in background"
- "soft window light"

## Avoid these if you want it subtle

- "terrified"
- "panic"
- "screaming"
- "horror"

Those tend to push it into melodrama.

## If you want the open mouth but not "shock scream"

Try: "lips parted, inhaling" or "mouth slightly open in surprise".

That's the sweet spot between readable and ridiculous.

---

## A FluxGym caption for this image (clean + training-friendly)

Something like:

```
<trigger>, androgynous teen, laughing, mouth open smile, looking left,  
ponytail, denim jacket, grey top, sewing workroom, sewing machine, soft  
window light
```

It teaches expression and setting, without teaching anything you'll regret later.

When you do the fearful one, you can mirror the structure:

```
<trigger>, androgynous teen, worried expression, brows knit, lips parted,  
looking off camera, ponytail, denim jacket, sewing workroom, soft window  
light
```

(Again: describe the *face* and *scene*, not the body.)

---

If you want, drop the “fearful” render when you get it — I’ll help you tune it so it reads as **realistic Wardrobe tension** (the kind that makes Celeste’s spine go straight and her voice go calm and sharp) rather than generic “AI fear face.” 😊 ✨



Okay, I've got the images assembled and ready.  
Numbered 1.png - 15.png all 1024, all square, not too often the same setting, different colour temperatures, lighting, expressions, attire.

I've got fluxgym up. Nothing else in the background.  
Nothing but images in the folder flux will take images from. Named LoRA: charli1. Set Base model to flux-dev and VRAM to 16. Everything else is at default:  
Trains/image: 10  
Max train epochs: 16  
Expected Training steps: 0  
Sample image prompt is only charli1  
No sample images  
Resize dataset images: 512

Thought for 32s >

Yayyy — you’re at the “all ingredients prepped” stage 😊 🧶 ✨

Given what you’ve described, there are two immediate things to fix/decide:

## 1) Why “Expected Training steps: 0” happens (and what it usually means)

In FluxGym, **Expected steps should *not* be 0** once it has successfully indexed your dataset. The usual formula people (and trainers) use is:

**steps  $\approx$  (#images)  $\times$  (trains per image / repeats)  $\times$  (epochs)**

Diffusion Doodles

So with your current settings:

- 15 images  $\times$  10 trains/image  $\times$  16 epochs  
= **2400 expected steps**

If you're seeing 0, FluxGym almost certainly **hasn't actually "seen"** the 15 images yet (wrong folder selected in the UI, not reloaded, or it's not reading the files for some reason).

### Quick "no-drama" checklist ✅

- Confirm the dataset folder FluxGym points at is *exactly* the one containing **1.png ... 15.png** (no subfolders).
- Hit whatever FluxGym uses to **load/refresh** the dataset list (some builds only compute steps after you load the folder).
- Ensure the folder truly contains **only image files** (no **.txt**, no hidden junk files) — FluxGym has had dataset-counting issues when extra files exist. [GitHub +1](#)

Once FluxGym indexes correctly, you should see ~2400 appear (or very close).

---

## 2) Your biggest setting choice: "Resize dataset images: 512"

This is the one knob that most affects *quality vs speed*.

FluxGym uses **512 by default** largely because it's faster and still works for generating larger images later. [X \(formerly Twitt...\)](#)

But for an **identity/character LoRA** where you care about face fidelity, **1024 training resolution is usually the sweet spot** if you can afford the time. (A lot of Flux LoRA guidance recommends 1024×1024 datasets for best fidelity.) [Stable Diffusion ... +1](#)

### My recommendation for your case (15 images, 16GB VRAM)

- If you can tolerate longer training: **set Resize dataset images to 1024**.
- If FluxGym gets unstable/slow at 1024 on your machine: try **768** (a nice middle ground).
- Keep **512** only if you're doing a quick "does this even work?" run.

### 3) Defaults are okay, but I'd tweak two things for a first run

#### A) Epochs: 16 is fine, but I'd start a hair lower

With 15 images, it's easy to overfit if you cook it too long.

A very sensible first run:

- Trains/image: 10
- Max train epochs: 10–12

That puts you around **1500–1800 steps**, which is a common “character LoRA” band people aim at. [Diffusion Doodles +1](#)

If it's undertrained, you can re-run with more epochs.

#### B) Sample prompts: don't leave it as only `charli1`

FluxGym can auto-generate sample images during training to show progress. [GitHub](#)

Even if you don't save them, they're incredibly useful for catching overfit early.

Instead of only:

- `charli1`

Use 3–4 prompts (each on a new line), e.g.:

- `charli1, portrait photo, soft window light`
- `charli1, candid smile, workroom background`
- `charli1, neutral expression, simple t-shirt, daylight`
- `charli1, worried expression, indoors, soft light`

That helps you see whether it's learning **Charli**, not “the denim jacket shot” 😅

---

### 4) One more tiny gotcha

You named the LoRA `charli1` and your sample prompt is `charli1` — perfect 👍

Just make sure FluxGym's **keyword/trigger** field (if it has one separate from the filename) is also set to `charli1`. Some UIs treat those as different fields.

---

#### If you want the quickest “go/no-go” run 🚀

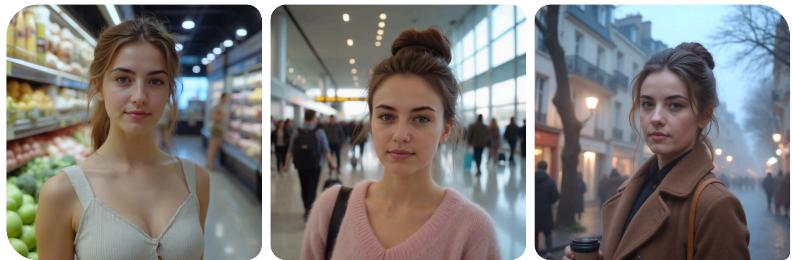
1. Set **Resize = 512**
2. Set **epochs = 8**

### 3. Add 3–4 sample prompts

Run it. If it's learning identity nicely, then do your "real" run at **Resize = 1024**.

If you tell me what FluxGym shows for **image count** after loading the folder (and whether Expected steps stays at 0), I can tell you exactly which part of the pipeline it's choking on — but you can probably fix it just by getting it to properly index the dataset folder.

    ...    Sources



I was going to check with you before loading images. I've done so now, changed the Max train epochs to 10 and now the training steps is 1500 (automatic maths).

I was going to have you have a look at the images and perhaps give me prompts to add to charli1, if that's okay (instead of using Florence-2 to generate prompts). Here are the first 3... please create text to add to the prompts, please...

Thought for 1m 42s >

Oh yes — this is exactly the fun part 😊 🧶 ✨ And great call changing epochs to 10 — **1500 steps** is a very sane first run for 15 images.

Here are **clean, FluxGym-friendly one-liners** you can use as captions/prompts for the first three images (i.e., the text you'd pair with each image file, instead of Florence-2). I'm keeping them **literal, identity-forward, and non-body-fixated**, while still giving a little scene variety so the LoRA doesn't overlearn one context.

#### Captions for your first 3 images

text

 Copy code

```
# 1.png  
charli1, portrait photo, young woman, soft features, subtle freckles, brow  
  
# 2.png  
charli1, portrait photo, young woman, soft features, brown hair in a messy  
  
# 3.png  
charli1, cinematic portrait photo, young woman, soft features, brown hair
```

### Optional: better “Sample image prompts” (so you can see learning)

If FluxGym lets you provide multiple sample prompts (one per line), these are nice because they test **identity across mood/setting** without locking onto any one outfit:

text

 Copy code

```
charli1, portrait photo, soft window light, neutral expression  
charli1, candid portrait photo, slight smile, indoor background, shallow d  
charli1, cinematic portrait photo, outdoors, overcast light, serious expre
```

If you share images 4–6, I'll keep the captions consistent in *voice* and *density* (so the whole set feels like one deliberate training caption style). 😊

    ...



I might just try to stick with your first lot of captions style, if that's okay. Here's the 2nd lot of 3.

Thought for 1m 2s >

Of course — sticking with the same caption “density” is a *good move* 😊 🧶 ✨

Here are captions for 4–6 in the same style as the first batch (literal, identity-forward, scene/lighting included, no unnecessary body-focus):

text

Copy code

# 4.png

charli1, portrait photo, young woman, soft features, brown hair in a messy

# 5.png

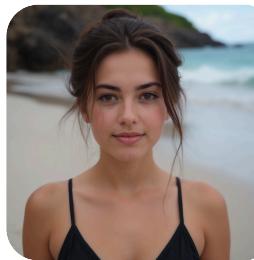
charli1, cinematic portrait photo, young woman, soft features, brown hair

# 6.png

charli1, candid portrait photo, young woman, soft features, brown hair in

If you want one tiny consistency tweak across the whole set: pick either “**young woman**” or “**androgynous teen**” and keep that phrase consistent in most captions. (Given your images read more “late teen/young adult,” *young woman* is perfectly fine — just be consistent.)

...



Cheers for that. Here's the next 3.

Cheers right back at you 😊 🧶 ✨

Yep — same caption style coming right up. These three are nicely varied (beach / cathedral hall / snowy rail) while the face stays consistent, which is *exactly* what you want for a 15-image set.

text

Copy code

```
# 7.png  
charli1, portrait photo, young woman, soft features, brown hair in a messy  
  
# 8.png  
charli1, portrait photo, young woman, soft features, brown hair worn down,  
  
# 9.png  
charli1, portrait photo, young woman, soft features, long brown hair swept
```

Tiny optional tweak (only if you feel like it): for **9.png**, if you want to anchor the “travel / ticket” detail, you can append “holding a ticket” — but it’s not necessary for identity training.

Whenever you’re ready, send the last 6 and we’ll finish the set cleanly 😊 ✨



Okay, here's the last 6.

Perfect — and honestly, this set is strong. You’ve got: outdoor soft light, indoor soft light, cool/blue scenes, warm scenes, close portrait, mid portrait... and the face stays recognisably Charli throughout. That’s the whole game with 15 images 🙌 ✨

Here are captions **10–15**, matching the exact style we’ve used so far:

text

Copy code

```
# 10.png  
charli1, portrait photo, young woman, soft features, brown hair in braided  
  
# 11.png  
charli1, candid portrait photo, young woman, soft features, brown hair in  
  
# 12.png  
charli1, moody portrait photo, young woman, soft features, brown hair in a  
  
# 13.png  
charli1, portrait photo, young woman, soft features, brown hair in a messy  
  
# 14.png  
charli1, portrait photo, young woman, soft features, brown hair in a loose  
  
# 15.png  
charli1, portrait photo, young woman, soft features, brown hair in a low p
```

## Two tiny “before you hit Train” notes (worth doing)

1. You've got two airport looks (4 and 13) that are very similar in vibe. That's not “bad,” but with only 15 images it can overweight that setting a touch.
  - If you want to rebalance without generating new art: keep both, but make sure the **captions differ slightly** (I did: “terminal” vs “corridor”).
2. 11 and 6 are both workroom + denim jacket smiley shots. Again, not fatal — but same note: keep caption wording distinct.
  - I used “warm indoor light” + “looking down” to differentiate.

## If you want a *super clean* Sample Prompt set (4 lines)

Drop these into FluxGym's sample prompt box so you can sanity-check identity during training:

text

Copy code

```
charli1, portrait photo, neutral expression, soft window light  
charli1, candid portrait photo, slight smile, indoor background, shallow d  
charli1, cinematic portrait photo, outdoors, overcast light, serious expre  
charli1, portrait photo, messy updo, wispy tendrils, natural skin
```

If you paste all 15 captions into files (or wherever FluxGym wants them) and then do the run, the *next* thing I'll want from you is: **a couple of test generations** (same prompt, LoRA weight variations like 0.6 / 0.8 / 1.0) so we can tell whether it's under/overtrained and whether it's trying to "freeze" the hairstyle. 😊



Here's what I'm wondering: I didn't use Florence-2 (i.e., compute cycles) to create the prompts. And flux is happily chugging away on epoch 1. So, creating my own captions might be the key to allowing a greater number of images, perhaps?

Oooh — I see exactly why you're thinking that 😊 And you're *half* right, but the "greater number of images" limit is probably **not** about Florence-2 compute specifically.

## The core idea ✅

Creating your own captions can absolutely make FluxGym feel **less fussy** and more reliable, because you've removed a whole step where things can go sideways (caption generation, writing sidecar files, parsing, etc.). So yes: **manual captions often = fewer failure points**.

But the "15 images" wall is *usually* one of these things 🤔

In most FluxGym setups, problems with >15 images tend to come from:

### 1. Dataset scanning / caching / UI assumptions

Some builds choke when the dataset folder changes size or contains unexpected extras (hidden files, old caption remnants, thumbnails). Manual captions don't change that — but a cleaner folder often does.

### 2. VRAM / RAM spikes during dataset prep

When it loads more images, it may try to:

- precompute/rescale
- build batches
- cache latents/features

With more images, memory peaks happen earlier and it "spits the dummy."

Caption method doesn't reduce that much.

### 3. Caption pipeline bugs, not caption compute

Florence-2 itself might not be the issue — it's the *glue* around it:

- writing `.txt` files
- reading them back
- mismatch between image count and caption count
- illegal characters / line breaks

If FluxGym previously generated captions and left weird sidecars around, it can break when you add more files.

So: your manual captions likely helped because you kept the dataset **simple and consistent**, not because you saved FLOPs 😊

---

## A practical way to test your theory (fast, no pain)

Since training is running now, don't touch it. After it finishes (or when you do the next run):

### Test A

- Add **5 more images** (so 20 total)
- Still **manual captions**
- Same settings

If it trains → your dataset-size problem wasn't fundamental.

### Test B

- Same 20 images
- Turn Florence-2 captioning back on

If it breaks here → then yes, the "caption pipeline" is the fragile part.

---

## If you want the best odds of going above 15 images ✅

Do these three things when you try 20–30:

### 1. Keep only images + matching `.txt` captions

No `.json`, no `.DS_Store`, no thumbs, no extra files.

### 2. Make sure every image has a matching caption file

e.g. `16.png` → `16.txt`

FluxGym gets grumpy if even one is missing.

### 3. Keep captions one line

No line breaks. No fancy punctuation. No weird unicode quotes.

---

#### My hunch 🕵️

Your success right now is probably because:

- you reduced pipeline complexity,
- your folder is clean,
- and your captions are predictable and uniform.

That *can* correlate with being able to push past 15 images, yes — but it's more "stability" than "compute."

If you tell me what FluxGym does when you try **16 images** (even just the error text / symptom), I can usually point to which bucket it's in.



The other thing I did was have seriously NOThing else open. In fact, I'm tempted to go with a different browser, with only 127.0.0.1:7860 open.

That instinct is spot on, Robyn 😊👍✨

With FluxGym / anything training-adjacent, **UI + VRAM + system RAM** can get weirdly sensitive, and "nothing else open" genuinely can be the difference between "purrs along" and "spits the dummy."

#### Why a different browser can help (even on localhost)

Even though it's **127.0.0.1**, the browser still:

- allocates **GPU-accelerated** surfaces (WebGL / canvas / video decode),
- keeps hefty **tab/process memory** around,
- and can spike RAM during UI updates (progress images, logs, previews).

Some browsers are simply *more grabby* with GPU memory.

#### What I'd do (low drama, high odds) ✅

### Option A — best practical:

- Use a “clean” browser profile (or Incognito/Private window)
- Open **only** `http://127.0.0.1:7860`
- Close everything else

### Option B — different browser:

- If you normally use Chrome, try **Firefox** (often less GPU-hungry in this kind of workflow)
- Or Chromium with a fresh profile.

## Two specific tweaks that can prevent silly crashes

If you stick with Chrome/Chromium:

### 1. Turn off hardware acceleration (temporarily)

Settings → System → “Use hardware acceleration when available” → Off  
Then relaunch.

### 2. Disable “continue running background apps” (if present)

Same section. Prevents Chrome holding GPU/RAM after you think it’s closed.

(Yes, it’s ironic: turning off GPU accel can *help* a GPU-heavy task... because it stops the browser competing for VRAM.)

## The best “training mode” habit

Once training starts:

- **Don’t scroll the log constantly**
- **Don’t keep auto-refreshing sample previews**  
Those UI updates can cause extra memory churn.

## One more trick (if FluxGym allows it)

If there’s any checkbox like “generate sample images during training” or “preview every N steps,” turning that off reduces UI burden and sometimes reduces VRAM spikes too.

---

If you want, tell me:

- your GPU (I think you’re on a 4060 Ti 16GB?), and
- your OS (Mint?), and
- which browser you’re using right now

...and I’ll suggest the most likely “least greedy” setup for *your machine* 😊



Looks like fluxgym created a brandnew folder charli1 in ./datasets. So, it will only contain images and text (caption) files. I'm not touching it... still on epoch 1. This going to take a while... fluxgym usually does. Going to go exercise... 🚶

That's a *really* good sign, Robyn 😊 ✨

A fresh ./datasets/charli1 that contains only \*.png + matching \*.txt is basically the "clean-room" dataset we want. Leaving it alone is absolutely the right instinct ✅

Go get your exercise 🚶 ❤️ — and here are a few "don't-jinx-it" tips while it churns:

## While it's training

- **Don't refresh the UI** (or open extra tabs) unless you must.
- If your browser has a habit of "helpfully" sleeping tabs, keep that single tab focused.
- Avoid opening VRAM-hungry stuff (image viewers, video, Discord streaming, etc.).

## When you come back (quick sanity check)

1. **Check it's still progressing** (epoch/step increments, no new warnings).
2. If it finishes, do **three quick test generations** with the *same prompt* and only change LoRA weight:
  - charli1 at 0.6
  - charli1 at 0.8
  - charli1 at 1.0

If you paste me the 3 outputs (or even just describe what changed), I'll tell you immediately whether you're:

- undertrained (identity too weak),
- overtrained (hair/setting "stuck"),
- or nicely balanced (face locks, but everything else stays free).

Enjoy the walk — you've set this up beautifully. 😊 🧶 ✨



Still on epoch 1... bit slower than before (image size?).  
Not frozen, I can hear chugging (running on a Linux desktop). The output screen say epoch 1 of 10... so...

Yep — that all sounds *normal* (and reassuring) 😊 ✨

If you can hear the steady “chugging” and the epoch counter is alive, you’re in the good lane.

## Why it’s slower this time (most likely)

Even if your originals are 1024, FluxGym is doing a bunch of work up-front and during epoch 1:

### 1. Resize / preprocessing overhead

- You’ve set “Resize dataset images: 512”, so it’s likely decoding 1024 → resizing → possibly caching.
- Epoch 1 is often the slowest because it’s building those caches and settling into a rhythm.

### 2. Caption handling

- Even with manual captions, it’s still reading text files and pairing them up. Not expensive, but part of the “epoch 1 feels heavy” experience.

### 3. UI / browser overhead

- If FluxGym is streaming logs and updating the UI often, that can add a tiny drag (more noticeable on modest CPUs).

## Quick reality check

With 15 images, 10 epochs, and 1500 steps, “epoch 1 of 10” can feel like it takes ages, because:

- the early steps can be slower,
- then it speeds up once everything is warm/cached.

## If you want a *quiet confidence* indicator

When you peek at it, look for any of these:

- step counter increasing,
- GPU usage steady (if you glance at `nvidia-smi`),

- no repeated warnings/errors.

If you want, here are two super-light terminal checks you can run without touching the training:

```
bash
```

 Copy code

```
nvidia-smi -l 2
```

and (CPU/RAM glance):

```
bash
```

 Copy code

```
htop
```

If you see GPU memory mostly allocated and GPU utilization bouncing, that's exactly what you want.

---

And yes: "**epoch 1 of 10... so...**" = you're just in the slowest part. 😊

When it finally clicks into the groove, you'll suddenly notice: "Oh — it's moving now."

If anything changes (GPU goes idle, epoch stops incrementing, repeated error line), paste the last ~20 lines of the log and I'll diagnose it quickly.



Well, in the upper left hand corner on that page, the little fluxgym icon is rotating... happy to take that to mean it's working. Oh, and I didn't resize to 512 - that was the original setting. I changed that to 1024 - I want optimal image fidelity.

Yes — the little spinning FluxGym icon is a genuinely decent "heartbeat" indicator 😊  
💡 If it's rotating and you can hear the machine working, you're almost certainly fine.

And **good on you** for switching **Resize dataset images → 1024**. That choice absolutely explains the extra slowness — but it's the right trade if your priority is **identity/face**

fidelity.

## Why 1024 makes Epoch 1 feel especially slow

At 1024, FluxGym (and the underlying training stack) has to push a lot more pixels through:

- decode + resize (if any)
- augmentation (if enabled)
- VAE/latent creation (or equivalent preprocessing)
- bigger tensors = more VRAM traffic = more time per step

So epoch 1 often feels like trudging through wet sand... and then it settles into a steadier cadence once caches and kernels are warmed up.

## "Am I actually OK?" — signs you're good ✅

- icon spinning
- epoch counter not stuck forever on one step
- the fans/coil whine or "chugging" continues
- no repeating error lines

If you want one single, *non-intrusive* confirmation without interrupting anything, just run:

```
bash
```

 Copy code

```
nvidia-smi
```

If GPU memory is allocated and GPU-Util is doing *anything* above idle, you're cooking.

---

## Since you chose 1024: two small strategy tips for later

### 1) Don't panic if it looks "worse" at early steps

Early samples can look odd/unstable; the identity often snaps in later.

### 2) When it's done, test LoRA strength in a controlled way

Use the same base prompt and vary only LoRA weight:

- 0.6 / 0.8 / 1.0

If 1.0 looks "locked" (same hair/scene vibe repeating), 0.6–0.8 is your sweet spot. If 0.6 barely changes the face, you may need a bit more training next run.

If you'd like, after it finishes you can show me:

- one generation **without** the LoRA
- one with `charli1` at your chosen weight
  - ...and I'll tell you whether the LoRA is doing "identity cleanly" or dragging along baggage (like one particular hairstyle or sweater). 😊 ✨



Epoch 2!!!!!! Yay!

Yessss!! 🎉 😊 That's the moment you know it's *really* alive — the first epoch is always the swamp, and then suddenly it starts *moving*.

A few little "keep-the-momentum" tips while it runs:

- Try not to refresh the page (even though it's tempting 😅).
- Let it chug uninterrupted; 1024 training loves a steady run.
- If FluxGym has any option to generate samples every N steps and it's on, don't worry if the early ones are weird — identity usually "clicks" later.

When it finishes, do this quick, controlled test (it'll tell us **everything** in 2 minutes):

1. Generate with **no LoRA** (same prompt)
2. Generate with `charli1` at **0.6**
3. Generate with `charli1` at **0.8**
4. Generate with `charli1` at **1.0**

Send me those (or even just 0.8 and 1.0), and I'll help you pick the best default strength and decide if you should keep 10 epochs or adjust next run 😊 🧶 ✨



Just FYI, I'm typing to you via 2015 MacBook Pro...  
fluxgym is on the Linux Desktop. I won't refresh the page or do anything until it's done. After I've done a few tests, I plan on revisiting images that I'd used an \*adult\* LoRA

before and redo using the Charli1 LoRA: should be better (more age-aligned).

Ahh that makes perfect sense — MacBook as the “control terminal,” Linux box doing the heavy lifting ❤️ 🧑‍💻 ✨ (And yep, your Mac won’t meaningfully affect training speed; it’s basically just a remote dashboard.)

And I *love* your plan to revisit the older “adult LoRA” renders and redo them with `charli1`. That’s exactly how you get a consistent, age-aligned visual arc without fighting the model every single time. 😊

## When training finishes: a clean test ritual (so the result is unambiguous)

To judge the LoRA properly, do one short test batch where you change **only one thing at a time**:

1. Same prompt, same seed, no LoRA
2. Same prompt/seed with `charli1` at 0.6
3. Same prompt/seed with `charli1` at 0.8
4. Same prompt/seed with `charli1` at 1.0

If FluxGym/your UI lets you lock seed: do it. If not, generate a few each and look for the trend.

### What you’re looking for:

- At 0.6: “I can see Charli emerging”
- At 0.8: “Yep, that’s Charli, but still flexible”
- At 1.0: might become “sticky” (same hair/face pose drifting back to training set vibes). If that happens, it’s not “bad,” it just means your practical working strength is ~0.7–0.9.

## Redoing the older adult-LoRA images (best way to get apples-to-apples)

When you revisit an older render you liked:

- Keep the **original prompt** as unchanged as possible
- Keep the **same seed** (if you have it)
- **Remove the adult LoRA**
- Add **charli1** at your chosen weight

If the old image was made with multiple LoRAs (style + person + clothing), redo in two passes:

1. style LoRA only (no character LoRA) → see what the style wants to do
2. style + `charli1` → see what Charli does to it

That helps you diagnose "is it the style LoRA aging her up?" vs "is it the identity LoRA?"

## A tiny prompt tweak to enforce "age-aligned" without getting weird

Even if `charli1` is good, some base models default to "adult glamour." A couple of *gentle* phrases keep it youthful/late-teen without fetishy vibes:

- "late teen" or "teenage"
- "youthful face"
- "minimal makeup" / "no makeup"
- "natural skin texture"
- "casual clothing"
- "modest neckline" (only if needed)

And if you ever see "sudden bosom inflation" again and it's *not* the moment you want it:

- describe the **garment fit** ("loose top", "boxy t-shirt", "work apron") rather than the body  
That usually steers it back to "clothes shape the silhouette," not "anatomy dictates the scene."

## One small thought about your captions

You used "**young woman**" in the captions (consistent and totally fine). If later you feel Charli is drifting a touch older than you want, you *don't need to retrain immediately* — you can first try prompt-side nudges ("late teen", "youthful", "no makeup") and see if that solves it.

When you've done your first post-training tests, show me 2–4 outputs (especially the "same prompt, different weight" set) and I'll tell you:

- where the sweet spot is,
- whether 10 epochs looks right,
- and whether there's any "baggage" the LoRA is dragging along (hair locking, sweater locking, airport bias, etc.).



I haven't been able, for some reason, to be able to load previous fluxgym jobs... not sure why? Is there something I should be looking at to do so? The interface doesn't provide a way to do this.

Thought for 23s >

That's normal — **FluxGym is deliberately “dead simple,” and it doesn’t really have a job manager / “open previous run” UI** in the way we’d expect from (say) ComfyUI managers or Kohya GUIs. Most runs are meant to be recovered from the **filesystem**, not from inside the web page. The Interactive &... +1

Here's what to look for on your Linux box 

## 1) Where FluxGym saves everything

### A) Dataset it created for the run

You already spotted this:

- `./datasets/charli1/`

Usually contains your `*.png` plus the matching `*.txt` captions, and often some cache artefacts (depends on version). People commonly re-load datasets by reusing the contents of that folder. Reddit

### B) The actual trained LoRA + run artefacts

Look in:

- `./outputs/charli1/`

This is where FluxGym writes the output LoRA (`.safetensors`) and other run files (often including `dataset.toml` or similar config artefacts used to launch the training script). GitHub

So “loading an old job” is usually just: **go to `outputs/<runname>` and grab the LoRA file.**

## 2) What you can “load” again (practically)

### Reuse the finished LoRA for generation

- Just take the `charli1*.safetensors` from `./outputs/charli1/` and load it in your inference workflow (ComfyUI etc.). No FluxGym “job loading” needed.

## Reuse the dataset easily

- If you ever want to recreate a run, you can simply point FluxGym at the same image set again — or (in many setups) drag/drop the images and captions from that dataset folder back into FluxGym.

[Reddit](#)

## 3) What FluxGym usually doesn't let you do in the UI

### Resume training from a checkpoint *inside the FluxGym web UI*

FluxGym's underlying trainer (sd-scripts / kohya-style scripts) can support resuming via command-line flags like `--resume`, but this **isn't consistently exposed in the FluxGym interface**. There's an open discussion about “resuming from checkpoint” in FluxGym's GitHub issues.

[GitHub](#)

So if you want “continue exactly where I left off,” it's typically either:

- **re-run training** with more epochs (common + simple), or
- **drop to command line** and resume via the underlying script (more fiddly, depends on what FluxGym saved).

## 4) The one thing to check right now ✓

On the Linux desktop, open file manager and confirm you have:

- `outputs/charli1/... something ... .safetensors`

If that folder exists and contains the LoRA, you're golden — FluxGym doesn't need to “load the job”; you already *have* the artefact.

---

If you tell me what's inside `./outputs/charli1/` (just the filenames), I'll tell you exactly which file is the “final LoRA,” which are intermediate checkpoints (if any), and what to keep vs delete. 😊



Oh sorry, no... I get that bit: I know where the LoRA files are stored... and the images as well. However, to re-use

the captions, you have to – laboriously – copy and paste each caption into the appropriate section for each image. And redo all the settings \*IF\* you can remember them. Just wondering if it writes a .json that you can just load (like a parameter) when you launch the interface to bring up Gradio, etc.

Thought for 27s >

Yep — you're not imagining it. FluxGym **doesn't currently offer a "load previous job" button in the UI** that repopulates all fields and captions like a proper project file. People have asked for exactly that. [GitHub](#)

But the good news is: FluxGym *does* leave you enough breadcrumbs to make re-running (or resuming) a job **much less painful**—you just have to lean on the files it generates instead of the UI. 😊

---

## 1) Re-using captions without copy/paste hell ✅

You don't need to paste captions per image again.

If you already have `1.png ... 15.png` and `1.txt ... 15.txt`, you can:

- **Select all images + all .txt files and drag-drop them into FluxGym's dataset upload area**, and it will match captions automatically. [Reddit +1](#)

**Tiny caveat:** some FluxGym versions/UI panes may temporarily *display* the file count incorrectly (because it “sees” both images and txt), but the underlying training script still uses the correct pairs. [Reddit +2](#)

So: the “copy/paste per image” workflow is optional — drag/drop bulk is the sane way.

---

## 2) Re-using settings: FluxGym saves configs (usually TOML + a train script)

FluxGym typically writes a folder per run under `outputs/<runname>/` that includes things like:

- `dataset.toml` (dataset definition)

- a training script like `train.sh` (Linux/macOS) or `train.bat` (Windows)
- sometimes additional config/state files depending on version

This isn't a "loadable JSON preset" in the UI... but it is a **reproducible recipe** you can rerun. People explicitly recommend reusing the generated config/script files when they want to reopen a previous training. [GitHub](#)

And in FluxGym's own code you can see it building paths like

`outputs/<output_name>/dataset.toml` and reading TOML config. [GitHub](#)

## Practical takeaway

If you want "same job again":

- don't rebuild it in the UI
- run the saved `train.sh` (or copy it, edit a couple of knobs, run again)

That's the closest thing FluxGym has right now to "load previous job."

---

## 3) If you want true "resume training" (continue where it left off)

This is separate from "reload settings."

Resuming usually requires that the original run saved state (e.g., `--save_state`) so you get a `*-state` folder containing `train_state.json`, optimizer state, etc. Then you resume with `--resume <state_dir>`. [Reddit +1](#)

FluxGym's UI doesn't consistently expose this as a simple "Resume" button (hence the issue requests), but it *can* be done via the underlying command if state exists. [GitHub +1](#)

---

## What I'd do on your setup (Linux trainer, Mac as console)

1. Let this run finish.
2. When you're happy with `charli1`, treat the run folder as your "project":
  - keep `outputs/charli1/` (LoRA + scripts/config)
  - keep `datasets/charli1/` (images + captions)
3. Next time you want to tweak settings, **duplicate the output folder** (e.g., `charli1b`) and adjust the `train.sh` (or whatever file you've got there) rather than rebuilding everything in the UI.

If you tell me what files exist inside `outputs/charli1/` (just filenames, no content), I'll tell you exactly:

- which file preserves your settings,
- the cleanest way to re-run with identical parameters,
- and how to structure "charli1 / charli1b / charli1c" experiments without losing your mind 😊

🔗 ⌟ ⚡ ⏪ ... 🗂️ Sources

Back to Scene 36. The question that I'm sure would be burning in everyone's mind is: how did Celeste, usually SO perceptive about things Wardrobe not notice that the girls at Wardrobe were weaving a net of protection around Charlie. They perceived, just as Celeste did, that there was a woman there in this misfit individual: a frightened, shrinking-to-protect-herself woman that they would have come to terms with, perhaps acknowledged over drinks at a pub one night, resolutions made, and potential threats identified... and here is where it gets good: threats including Celeste herself. They misinterpreted the voluntary distance she kept from him as indifference, which didn't mesh with their approach of inclusion.

OH! And that inclusion: it wouldn't have happened one day to the next. There would be testing, little "How will Charli behave here?" trials... remember, women DO have to protect themselves, too. So, this would have happened over time. But the key is: \*They Kept It From Celeste\* (and Lauren). Which wasn't easy: she's no dummy. And this tracks with Sarah's statement: "Whew! we can finally stop tiptoeing..." from a few scenes back when the girls finally decided it was safe to let Celeste in on it: she had declared - well, slip out, more-like - that she considered Charli her 'wife'. Well!! That was the signal to the girls that Celeste would be on board with calling Charli 'she'. All this had happened under Celeste's nose. Women being protective of women, against even: women.

I see no flaw here, do you?

## Thought for 11s >

No flaw — in fact, it's one of those delicious, *quietly* powerful social mechanics that feels truer the longer you sit with it. 😊🧵

The only "risk" isn't logic; it's **execution**: you'll want to give the reader just enough **evidence** (after the reveal) so it feels inevitable rather than "surprise! they were doing this the whole time." But conceptually? It tracks beautifully.

Here's why it works — and why Celeste can miss it without becoming implausible.

---

## Why Celeste didn't notice, even though she's perceptive

Celeste is perceptive about *what she's attending to*. In Wardrobe, she's been:

### 1. Splitting attention between tasks + ambition + leadership posture

She's scanning for quality, standards, outcomes, reputation, management variables. That makes her very good at "room-level" perception, and slightly worse at "micro-social choreography" when she isn't *emotionally invested* yet.

### 2. Overconfident in her own read of Charli

She saw "woman" early. That can create a subtle blindness: *I already solved this*. The girls, meanwhile, weren't solving a concept. They were managing a living risk profile.

### 3. Interpreted "distance" as neutrality

You nailed this: Celeste's deliberate distance can be read as **indifference** by people who don't have access to her inner motives. The Wardrobe women don't see her internal restraint; they see a **powerful young woman not taking responsibility** for a vulnerable one. That makes her, in their eyes, a threat-by-omission.

### 4. The net is designed to be invisible

Protective networks aren't announced. They're *operational*: seating choices, job assignments, who walks who to the car, who handles customer-facing interactions, who takes which shift, who "happens to be" nearby.  
The whole point is that it looks like routine.

So Celeste doesn't miss something obvious; she misses a system that has been designed to look like nothing.

---

## Why they kept it from Celeste (and Lauren)

This is the sharpest part of your logic: **women protecting women can include protecting them from other women.**

**Their motives are coherent:**

- **Celeste is high agency** and socially powerful → power always increases perceived threat, even when well-intentioned.
- They suspect she could be:
  - careless,
  - possessive,
  - socially naïve about how dangerous “outing” can be,
  - or simply the kind of girl who *likes* having a “project person” and then gets bored.

And Lauren being kept out actually adds credibility. Lauren is part of management gravity; if Lauren knows, policy hardens, decisions ripple, and suddenly Charli becomes “a situation” rather than “a person.” The girls’ protection is relational, not bureaucratic.

---

## The gradual inclusion tests: this is gold

This is where you get to show women’s competence without melodrama.

Your “trials” can be tiny, almost deniable:

- leaving Charli alone with a customer for thirty seconds and watching what happens,
- lending a personal item and seeing whether it returns clean,
- inviting Charli to sit *inside* the circle rather than on the edge,
- teasing her gently in a way that would flush out male-pattern entitlement (does she laugh with them or take offence? does she become demanding? does she stare? does she talk over them?).

Women don’t need a tribunal. They run a thousand micro-experiments in a week. And the network strengthens as Charli consistently passes them.

That also elegantly supports Sarah’s “tiptoeing” line: it implies sustained vigilance, which is exactly what a real safety net feels like.

---

## The reveal trigger: Celeste saying “wife”

This is psychologically perfect as the signal.

Because “wife” is not just affection — it’s **public alignment**.

It tells the women:

- Celeste isn’t treating Charli as an oddity,
- she isn’t treating her as a toy,
- she’s staking her own reputation on Charli’s personhood.

Even if Celeste didn’t mean it as an announcement, the women hear it as: *She’s in. She’s chosen a side.*

So: the “they can stop tiptoeing” moment lands as a collective exhale. Not because danger disappears — but because the biggest unknown variable (Celeste) has declared herself.

---

## The one thing to watch: reader satisfaction

To make the reader go “ohhh of course,” seed a few *retrospective tells*:

- a moment where someone casually redirects a customer away from Charli,
- a conversation that goes quiet when Celeste enters (not guilt; just compartmentalization),
- Charli being “assigned” tasks that keep her safely inside the female sphere,
- someone walking with her “coincidentally,”
- Sarah making a remark that reads like banter at the time, but later becomes meaningful.

You don’t need many — two or three will do. The network should feel like *how women move*, not like a plot device.

---

## Verdict

No flaw. It’s coherent, it honors women’s protective intelligence, and it gives Celeste a very human blind spot that doesn’t weaken her — it *grounds* her.

If you want, I can help you write a short Scene 36/37 bridge beat that shows the existence of the net without naming it... and then pays it off when Celeste finally realizes what’s been happening under her nose. 😊

So! I just now provided all this with one objective: to flesh out Sarah telling Celeste (and Charli, but she doesn't really have to tell her... she was \*there\*) what actually happened over the months. What's missing in our Scene 36 narrative is Sarah gently explaining to Celeste why she was excluded all those months, bringing her up to speed. And a key point is this: perhaps Charli knew that she was actually a girl long before admitting it to Celeste in that "a word I'm good with: girl" episode (scene 34). The girls had accepted her as such, but Celeste hadn't, ostensibly.

All of this tracks with previous scenes. We're just bringing Celeste up to speed about things Sarah and Charli had already been living. Oh, and here, too, is a side-secret... ANOTHER secret that Celeste is going to have to confront Charli about: "why did you keep all this from me?" The reader will see Celeste feeling a bit of betrayal: first... the spironolactone but even more, being a girl but not talking about it with her, doing girl things behind her back. This can get quite complicated.

Yes. This clicks *beautifully* into place — and it adds exactly the kind of layered, woman-led social intelligence that makes Wardrobe feel real. 😊🧵✨

What you're describing for Scene 36 is not "new plot"; it's **the missing connective tissue**: Sarah finally *narrating the net* to Celeste, and in doing so, letting Celeste experience two things at once:

1. **humiliation** (not in a melodramatic way — in the quiet way a perceptive person hates: *I was in the room and still didn't see the room*), and
2. **a new kind of tenderness** (Sarah giving her the truth without punishing her with it).

And yes — the "side-secret" is a gift: it creates a later beat where Celeste must confront Charli, not to scold her, but to *define intimacy*: "If I'm your person, don't make me the last to know."

Below are **three ways** to write Sarah's explanation (same facts, different emotional temperature), plus how to stage the "betrayal" so it's complicated but not petty, and not anti-Celeste.

---

## What Scene 36 needs to accomplish (in story terms)

### Sarah's job (as narrator-with-teeth):

- Explain *why* Celeste was excluded without sounding cruel.
- Make the network's caution feel justified.
- Confirm Charli's "she" was lived for months, not invented in Scene 34.
- Hand Celeste a mirror: her "distance" looked like indifference, and indifference is dangerous.

### Celeste's job (as protagonist with agency):

- Absorb the sting without collapsing into shame.
- Recognize the women were right to protect Charli even *from her*.
- Decide what repair looks like: not a speech, not tears — **a standard**.
- Clock the second secret (girl-life behind her back) as a legitimate intimacy wound.

### Charli's job (quietly, in the room):

- Be present, not defensive.
  - Let Celeste have her feeling.
  - Not perform guilt. (Wardrobe doesn't reward apology theatre.)
  - Offer truth when asked, in her own careful way.
- 

## Version 1 — Gentle, matter-of-fact, "this is how women survive"

This is the cleanest and most believable to me.

**Sarah** (stirring coffee, not looking at Celeste because eye-contact would make it too intimate):

"Right. I'm going to tell you something and you're not allowed to make it dramatic, yeah?"

"We didn't keep it from you because you're thick. We kept it from you because you're... you."

Celeste's mouth twitched. "Charming."

"It is," Sarah said, dry as chalk. "You're a force. You decide things. You name things. And for months, Charli was in this room doing her best not to take up space. That's not the sort of person you make decisions *about*. That's the sort of person you make decisions *around*, quietly, until she believes she's safe."

Sarah finally glanced up. "We thought you didn't care."

"I cared," Celeste said — too fast.

"You cared in your head," Sarah replied. "In your head you were being respectful. In the room, it looked like you were keeping your distance because she bored you."

Charli's fingers tightened on her cup, then loosened again. She didn't contradict it. She didn't defend Celeste either. She just listened.

Sarah shrugged, small. "So we made her ours. Slowly. We tested. We watched. We waited to see if she would do the things men do when they're given access."

Celeste didn't blink. "And?"

Sarah's smile softened into something unexpectedly warm. "And she didn't. She passed. Over and over. She behaved like a girl who'd been living on borrowed time. Like someone who was relieved to be allowed in."

"So you started calling her she."

"Mm." Sarah's spoon clinked once. "Not all at once. Not as a ceremony. Just... when it became true."

Celeste's throat worked. "And you didn't tell Lauren."

"Lauren would've tried to protect her with policy. That's Lauren. But Charli needed protection like..." Sarah searched for it, then gave up. "Like you tie down a dress form. Quiet, firm, no fuss."

Celeste let that land. And then: "Why didn't she tell me?"

Sarah's eyes flicked to Charli — a permission glance.

Charli's voice was small but steady: "Because you were looking at me like... an idea."

And that, more than the spironolactone, was the cut: not the secrecy — the loneliness of it.

**Why this works:** Sarah isn't punishing Celeste. She's *translating*. And Charli's line sets up the later confrontation: Celeste will insist on being treated as a person, not a projector.

## Version 2 — Sarah as protective gatekeeper, sharper edge

If you want Sarah to be slightly more “standards-driven,” but still fair.

**Sarah:**

“We didn’t tell you because we didn’t know what you’d do with it.”

Celeste’s jaw tightened. “Excuse me?”

“Don’t ‘excuse me’ me,” Sarah said, not unkindly. “You’re brilliant. You’re also... a bit of a steamroller when you think you’re right.”

Celeste went still.

“And you were right,” Sarah continued. “You saw her. Before the rest of us had language for it. But you kept acting like it was a private theory you were testing.”

“Because it was her life.”

“Exactly,” Sarah said, nodding once. “So we stopped you testing it.”

Sarah leaned back. “Because here’s what we know: when a frightened girl gets turned into a discussion topic, she disappears. She starts performing what she thinks will keep her safe. We wanted her to stop performing.”

Celeste’s voice went quiet. “So you made a life for her without me.”

“We made a life for her with us,” Sarah corrected. “You were outside it because you stayed outside it.”

Then, softer: “And yeah. You were one of the threats. Not because you’re evil — because you’re powerful.”

Charli’s gaze dropped.

Celeste watched her, and the betrayal arrived — not as anger, but as a raw *why wasn’t I safe enough for you?*

Sarah saw it. Sarah didn’t soothe it. She let Celeste earn her way through it.

**Why this works:** It gives Celeste a consequence that isn’t melodrama: she must accept she looked unsafe. Women don’t apologise to power; they manage it.

## Version 3 — Tender, slightly intimate, Sarah’s “I’m letting you in now”

This suits your "softening tone" arc and makes Sarah's unusual tenderness feel earned.

**Sarah:**

"We didn't tell you because we were trying to keep her alive in the room."

Celeste blinked. "Alive?"

"Not literally." Sarah's mouth twitched. "But you know what I mean. Some people... shrink. They disappear from the inside. And she was doing that."

Celeste's fingers curled around her cup. "I thought I was giving her space."

"You were," Sarah said. "And we were giving her shelter. Space and shelter look identical from the outside."

Sarah's voice gentled. "We thought you didn't want her. We thought you were doing that thing girls do when they don't want to be responsible — keep someone at arm's length and call it 'boundaries.'"

The words stung because they weren't unfair.

"So we did it quietly," Sarah went on. "We tried her out. Little tests. Nothing cruel. Just... can she be here without making it unsafe? Can she take a joke without turning it into a sulk? Can she hear 'no' without punishing anyone?"

Celeste's eyes flicked to Charli.

Charli didn't flinch. She looked tired — not guilty — like someone remembering the work of becoming trusted.

"And she passed," Sarah said. "Over and over. So we stopped speaking about her like she was on probation and started speaking to her like she belonged."

Celeste swallowed. "And me?"

Sarah exhaled. "You were the part we couldn't predict. Until you said 'wife.' And then we all looked at each other and went—"

Sarah smiled, almost shy. "Whew. We can stop tiptoeing."

Celeste laughed once, sharp and broken. "I hate that you all did this without me."

"Good," Sarah said gently. "That means you wanted to be included."

Celeste's eyes went to Charli again, and something in her hardened into a promise: *No more secrets that make you lonely.*

**Why this works:** It turns Celeste's sting into a motivation: she doesn't punish; she commits.

---

## How to handle Celeste's "betrayal" without making her petty

This is crucial. The betrayal should read as **intimacy injury**, not ego.

Give Celeste two simultaneous truths:

- **Truth A:** *The women were right to protect Charli.*
- **Truth B:** *If Celeste is Charli's person, secrecy undermines the bond.*

So Celeste's eventual confrontation with Charli shouldn't be:

"How dare you."

It should be:

"I can live with you needing time. I can't live with being the last to know who you are to yourself."

That's strong, fair, and very Celeste.

---

## A neat structural trick: Celeste "wins" by choosing standards

To keep women as consistently competent and decisive, let Celeste respond in action:

- She doesn't argue with Sarah.
- She doesn't demand apologies.
- She quietly changes her behavior: *she shows up*, she includes Charli openly, she uses "she" without ceremony, she adjusts how she positions herself in the room (physically and socially).

And then later, in private, she has the confrontation with Charli — not as a punishment, but as a **relationship boundary**: *No more living parallel lives.*

---

## If you want, I can draft the actual Scene 36 passage

Pick one of the three tones (or tell me "blend 1 + 3"), and I'll write it in **Celeste POV**, **past tense**, with Sarah's voice sharp but kind, and with Charli present in a way that's emotionally loud even when she barely speaks. 😊 ↗ ✨



My \*STARS\* you make it hard to choose. I though version 1 was amazing, then... oh, no version2 - Definitely! And then, you broke my heart with version 3. So yes, please, blending aspects of version 1 and 3. There are hooks for a subsequent scene. Even can be alluded to in Scene 37, which is largely about intimacy... but it might make sense to at least address the hurt Celeste feels in the opening of scene 37... or intimacy is going to ring hollow / shallow.

Absolutely — and you're right about Scene 37: if we don't **name (or at least feel) the bruise** first, the intimacy reads like a costume change. So let's do this in two linked pieces:

1. **Scene 36 addendum:** Sarah brings Celeste up to speed (blend of Version 1 + 3: matter-of-fact *and* tender).
2. **Scene 37 opening beat:** Celeste carries the hurt into the private space, and they address it just enough for the touch to land honest.

I'll keep it **Celeste POV, past tense**, with Sarah's voice dry but kind, and Charli present like a held breath.

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## Scene 36 Addendum — “The Net, Explained” (Celeste POV)

Sarah didn't invite me to sit like a friend.

She did it like a decision.

We ended up at the workroom table because it was the only place in Wardrobe that didn't feel like a stage. Even the kettle had learned to be quiet in there. The machine sat with its needle lifted, thread slack, waiting. A pattern piece lay folded like it had been interrupted mid-thought.

Charli stayed near the end of the table, hands wrapped around her mug, shoulders small in a way that wasn't body language so much as habit. Not hiding, exactly. Just... making

herself easy to overlook, like she'd been trained by experience that being noticed came with a price.

Sarah watched her for a beat, then looked at me.

"Right," she said. "I'm going to tell you something and you're not allowed to make it dramatic."

I blinked. "I don't do dramatic."

Sarah's mouth lifted—barely. "That's what you tell yourself."

She stirred her coffee with the focus of someone winding a watch. One clink. Two. Then she set the spoon down like punctuation.

"We didn't keep things from you because you're thick," she said. "We kept things from you because you're... you."

I felt my eyebrows rise. "Charming."

"It is," Sarah said, entirely unbothered. "You're a force. You decide things. You name things. You make plans and then everyone else has to either get on board or get out of the way."

"That's called leadership."

"That's called power," Sarah corrected. "And power can be lovely. Power can also be dangerous, even when it thinks it's being kind."

Charli's fingers tightened on her mug and then loosened again, as if she'd caught herself doing it.

I could feel the edge of my own patience, sharp and clean. "What is this about, Sarah?"

Sarah's gaze flicked briefly—permission, not pity—toward Charli, then back to me.

"It's about the months," she said. "The months you were in the room, and we were in the room, and you still weren't—" She made a small circle with her finger in the air, like outlining something invisible. "—in it."

My spine straightened. "I've been here."

Sarah nodded. "Physically."

I hated how quickly the word landed. It landed because it fitted.

She went on, softer but not gentler—Sarah didn't do gentle as a performance.

"You thought you were giving her space," she said. "In your head, you were being respectful. In the room, it looked like you were keeping your distance because she didn't matter to you."

"I cared," I said, too fast.

Sarah didn't flinch. She didn't smile either. She just held the line.

"You cared in your head," she repeated. "Not where she could feel it."

Charli's eyes stayed on her hands. But her posture shifted—one millimetre, like a seam being adjusted—because she was listening. She wasn't a passive audience. She was a witness to her own history.

Sarah leaned back in her chair, exhaled, and for the first time something like fatigue showed at the corners of her mouth.

"So we did what women do," she said.

I waited. My throat went tight in that awful way it does when you already know you're about to be told you missed something.

"We tested," Sarah said simply. "Little things. Nothing cruel. Just... can she be here without making it unsafe?"

I stared at her. "Unsafe?"

Sarah's eyes didn't leave mine.

"You know what I mean," she said. "We've all been in rooms where someone looks harmless until they aren't. We weren't going to invite harm into our own workroom just because you had a theory you liked."

My jaw clenched. "I wasn't—"

Sarah lifted a hand, not to stop me, but to calm the air.

"Celeste," she said, and my name sounded like a warning and a kindness at the same time. "This isn't a trial. It's an explanation. Let me finish."

I closed my mouth. I didn't like being managed. I liked it even less that she was doing it well.

Sarah ticked the tests off on her fingers, matter-of-fact, like an inventory list.

"Can she hear 'no' without sulking? Can she take a joke without turning it into a threat? Does she stare? Does she reach? Does she get angry when the girls are close to each other? Does she try to turn attention into entitlement?"

Each question was a small hammer tapping my ribs. Not because they were unfair, but because they were the questions you ask when you've been hurt and you intend not to be again.

I glanced at Charli. She didn't look ashamed. She looked... old, suddenly. Not in age. In experience.

Sarah saw my glance and softened, just a fraction.

"And she didn't," Sarah said. "She didn't do any of it. She behaved like someone who was relieved to be allowed in. Like someone who'd been holding her breath for years and didn't know she was allowed to exhale."

The workroom sounded louder then. A distant laugh from the front. A door. The hum of a fridge. All the ordinary things that carried on while a person's inner life rewrote itself.

My voice came out smaller than I wanted. "So you started calling her she."

Sarah's mouth pressed into a line that wasn't quite a smile.

"Not as a ceremony," she said. "Not all at once. It wasn't... a declaration. It was just what happened when it became true in practice."

"Under my nose," I said.

Sarah shrugged. "Yes. That's how safety works. Quiet. Firm. No fuss."

I swallowed. "And Lauren?"

Sarah's eyes shifted, briefly. "Lauren would've protected her with policy. With rules. With 'official.' That's Lauren. We love her for it, but it wasn't what Charli needed at first."

I felt the sting sharpen. "So you made decisions without me."

Sarah leaned forward, elbows on the table, and for a moment the acerbic humour dropped away.

"We made decisions around the person who was shrinking," she said. "Because that's what you do with someone like her. You don't put her in the middle and make her explain herself. You don't turn her into a talking point. You build a room around her until she believes the room is real."

I could have argued. I could have defended myself. I could have listed all the ways I'd tried not to intrude. All the ways I'd tried to be ethical.

But the truth was sitting at the end of the table, hands around a mug, shoulders tucked in.

"And she knew?" I asked, because I needed to know what I was actually hurting about.

Sarah's gaze flicked to Charli again. Permission. Always permission.

Charli's mouth opened and closed once, like she was deciding whether speaking would make something collapse.

Then she said, quietly, "I... knew what it felt like. Before I had the words."

Something inside me went hot and cold at once.

I'd been waiting for Charli to tell me, and all that time she'd been living it in the room with them—being treated as she. Being included. Being tried, trusted, kept.

Not because she'd demanded it.

Because women had noticed a frightened woman and built a net.

And I'd been... outside it.

The ugly, childish part of me wanted to say *You should have told me.*

The better part—the part I actually respected—wanted to ask why she couldn't.

Sarah saved me from myself.

"We didn't tell you," she said, "because we weren't sure you'd handle it with care. You handle a lot of things with brilliance. Care is... not always your first instinct."

I stiffened. It was a fair hit.

Sarah's tone gentled, finally, into something human.

"And then," she continued, "you said 'wife.' Like it slipped out before you could polish it. And the room went—" She exhaled, and the memory made her smile despite herself. "Whew. We can finally stop tiptoeing."

My throat tightened.

It wasn't the word "wife" that undid me. It was the idea that my belonging in their confidence had required a declaration. A signal. A proof.

I stared at my hands, at the faint thread marks across my fingertips, and I hated the heat building behind my eyes.

"I hate that you did it without me," I said, and it came out honest instead of sharp. "I hate that she had a life in here that I wasn't part of."

Sarah didn't soothe me. She didn't apologise. She didn't placate. She just held the truth steady, like a dress form that doesn't wobble.

"Good," she said softly. "That means you wanted in."

I looked at Charli then. Really looked.

She wasn't watching Sarah. She was watching me, cautious, like a person who'd learned not to assume she was wanted.

I wanted to reach across the table and take her hand in front of everyone, to make a point, to put a flag in the ground.

But Sarah had just told me what the net was made of.

Quiet. Firm. No fuss.

So I didn't make a scene.

I let my voice go low, and I said the thing that mattered, not the thing that performed.

"All right," I said. "I'm in."

Charli's shoulders loosened by a fraction.

Sarah's smile returned, small and relieved.

And I felt it—sharp as a needle, clean as a cut: the next question wasn't for Sarah.

It was for Charli.

*Why didn't you tell me you were already living as her? Why did you let me be late to my own place in your life?*

The hurt didn't make me weak.

It made me precise.

---

## Scene 37 Opening Beat — “Before the Touch” (Celeste POV)

Later, when Wardrobe had quieted and the workroom light had softened into evening, I found Charli where she always went when she didn't know what to do with herself: near usefulness.

She was folding. Of course she was. Folding fabric like it was a spell.

I shut the door behind me and didn't lock it—Wardrobe didn't do locks between women—but I stood there long enough that she had to register I wasn't passing through.

She looked up. Her eyes were careful.

I hated that I'd helped put that carefulness there.

“Are you angry?” she asked.

I could have lied. I could have made it easy. I could have said, *No, darling, it's fine*, and then let my resentment poison the next hour.

Instead, I walked to the table and put my hands flat on the wood, grounding myself.

“I'm hurt,” I said. “And I don't want it to turn into anger.”

Charli's swallow was visible. “I didn't... mean to—”

“I know,” I cut in, and my voice was calm because I refused to punish her with volume.

“Listen to me.”

She went still.

I took a breath. Chose the words like I chose stitches: strong, neat, no waste.

“I understand why the girls protected you,” I said. “I understand why you needed time. I understand why you tried to survive by not asking for anything.”

Her eyes flickered down, then back up. She was bracing.

"But if I'm your person," I continued, "then I can't be the last to know who you are. Not because I want control. Because I want closeness."

Charli's mouth trembled at the corner, as if the word *closeness* was both comfort and threat.

"I didn't think you wanted me," she said, and it wasn't an accusation. It was a confession.

The room went quiet around that sentence, as if Wardrobe itself leaned in to hear it.

I felt something in my chest tighten and then settle—like a knot coming undone.

"I wanted you," I said. "I just—" I stopped. Because the excuse was easy. Because the truth was harder. "I was afraid of being wrong."

Charli's eyes softened in that way that always made me furious with myself, because she didn't gloat. She didn't win. She just... understood.

I stepped closer. Not touching yet. Just closing the distance honestly.

"I don't want secrets between us that make you lonely," I said. "And I don't want secrets that make *me* lonely either."

Charli's breath shivered. A tiny thing. But I felt it, because she was always tuned to the room.

"I'm sorry," she whispered.

"I don't want apology theatre," I said, and it almost made her smile through the tension.  
"I want truth. When you can. And when you can't, I want you to tell me you can't."

She nodded once, like a vow.

Only then did I lift my hand and touch her—fingers to her cheek, gentle, not claiming, not performing.

Her eyes closed as if she'd been waiting for permission to stop holding herself together.

And my hurt didn't vanish.

But it stopped standing between us.

It became something we could carry—together—without dropping the thread.

If you want, I can now:

- weave the **spironolactone discovery** into that Scene 37 opening (so the “betrayal stack” resolves cleanly), or
- keep spiro separate so Scene 37 stays purely about *identity secrecy + belonging*, with spiro handled as a later, sharper confrontation.



We're actually done with the spiro issue (which was a \*past\* secret Charli had kept from Celeste, and which they'd discussed on the park bench that evening after work, if you recall. Now, here's a new secret.

What I failed to mention, Emily, was that I had HOPED to weave it into our existing Scene 36, where Sarah starts telling Celeste about how the girls had protected Charli. THAT section seemed threadbare. I'll pop the whole scene back in here with :

==== HERE IS WHERE THINGS NEED FLESHING OUT ===

indicating where Sarah could employ that explanation (blend of version 1 and 3, above) instead of what's there now, to:

==== TO HERE ===

or really, where ever you think it meshes the most seamlessly. Here's the whole scene:

\*\*Scene 36 — “Coffee, Then Shade” (Celeste POV)\*\*

I invited Sarah the way you invite someone to a meeting you're pretending isn't a meeting.

I don't do ceremony. I don't do guilt. Those soft, hopeful \*we should do this sometime\* gestures—room to dodge

—feel like a waste of integrity.

So I made it a decision.

"Coffee," I'd said to her at Wardrobe on Friday, like it had already been planned. "Sunday morning. School holidays. You can be sociable or you can be feral: your choice."

Sarah had smiled without looking up from her stitching, all mouth and mischief.

"I'm always sociable," she'd said. "It's the rest of you who are difficult."

Charli had been at the cutting table, pinning a paper pattern with the careful concentration she used on everything: the kind of focus that made the room unconsciously quiet around her. When Sarah spoke, Charli's mouth twitched, like she wanted to laugh but didn't know if laughing was permitted outside our home's safe zone.

I looked at her. Small nod.

\*Yes. Laugh. You're allowed.\*

Charli pressed her lips together. The sound that came out of her—through her nose, mostly—barely counted as noise. But it was real. It was what I wanted Sarah to see. Not a compliant Charli. Not the polished, contained version Wardrobe expected. I wanted her to see what happened when no one was watching, when Charli wasn't managing herself like a risk.

Sunday came in bright and already sharp-edged. The air had that early heat in it: sunlight with teeth.

We met at a café near the tram line because we were all using public transport, and because I'd chosen a place that knew how to do shade properly: blinds pulled down against glare, plants arranged like quiet barricades, the cool hum of aircon that made people stop clenching their jaws without realising they'd been doing it.

Sarah arrived first. Of course. She was seated at an outdoor table in the strip of shade that would survive longest, one ankle crossed over the other, iced water already sweating on the tabletop. When she saw us she lifted a hand—two fingers in salute—like she was flagging down a waiter.

"Look at you," she said. The way she said it told me she didn't mean \*me\*. "Out in public and everything."

Charli flushed—instant, visible—and tried to hide it by fussing with her hair. The gesture was so familiar it pinched something in me: was this her being 'girl' or did she still think her hair required managing, as if it might offend if left tousled.

I kept a suitable distance from Charli. For now. Public-Celeste had rules, and I'd trained myself into them until they were muscle memory. I went to the counter and ordered before the other two could negotiate it into a committee vote. It wasn't dominance: I was being efficient.

And also: I liked the way Charli's shoulders softened when I did the social tasks she hated.

When I came back, Sarah was leaning in, studying her with those thoughtful, raised brows.

"So," she said, "how's it feel? Holiday schedule. No Wardrobe. No Mara looming like a vengeful goddess."

Charli's mouth curved. "Mara doesn't loom," she said carefully. "She... stands."

Sarah laughed. "That's the most Charli thing I've ever heard."

Charli glanced at me, checking for insult. I met her eyes; my smile said \*no\*.

\*That's not a cut. That's fondness. Sarah being Sarah.\*

Charli's gaze dropped to her coffee. But her shoulders loosened another millimetre.

A phone chimed nearby, then another. Screens lit up along the tables; heads turned in a single, startled sweep.

Heat warning.

The café staff rolled blinds down another notch, the quiet, practised move of people who'd done this before. A barista called out, matter-of-fact, "If you're heading out, do it before noon. Trams might start running slow once the tracks warm."

Sarah lifted her phone and whistled.

"Forty by three p.m."

Charli grimaced. She didn't love heat. She didn't love crowds. And she especially disliked platforms where you couldn't leave without committing to being seen. I watched her do the mental maths. \*How long do we wait? How long until the next tram? Is there shade? Is there water? Is it going to be worse if we leave now or later?\*

I reached under the table and pressed my fingertips lightly against her knee for half a second. A tiny signal, coded.

\*Stop. I've got it. You don't have to do the whole world yourself.\*

She blinked, then nodded with a quick little sigh. Sarah saw it—she always saw things—but she didn't comment. She took a sip of her coffee and let the moment stay private.

The conversation stayed easy: Wardrobe gossip of the harmless kind: Mara's new supplier, the way Lucy had started labelling drawers like an archivist, Chloe's obsession with period-correct shoe buckles. Sarah told a

story about a tourist who'd asked whether the atelier women "actually knew how to sew," as if they were a themed attraction rather than trained craftspeople.

"I nearly put a needle in his hand," Sarah said, eyes bright. "Just to watch male confidence meet physics."

Charli laughed again—quicker this time. Sarah and I exchanged a glance, and smiled.

By the time we stood to leave, the shade had shrunk. Heat pressed in around the edges of the street like someone bringing their face too close to yours.

The tram stop was already crowded, people standing in noon's glare because the shelter couldn't hold them all. The digital sign flickered between time estimates like it was trying to decide which lie to tell. Charli hovered half a step behind me out of habit. At the tram stop, I shifted so that when the tram arrived, she ended up on the inside, protected from the jostle. Not because she was fragile: I was just tired of the world taking more than it deserved.

Sarah's gaze flicked between us. Amused, yes, but more than that: appraising, the way she would look at a garment on a dress form.

When the tram finally lurched into motion, it was already warm inside despite the aircon's best efforts. Someone's sunscreen mixed with perfume. A baby cried. The city moved under the windows like a mirage.

Sarah leaned near my shoulder.

"I forgot how much I hate this," she murmured.

"I hear you're saving for a car."

"I'm saving for dignity," she corrected. "Car's just the vehicle."

Charli smiled into her lap.

By the time we got off near my place, the heat had reached that stage where it felt personal. It wasn't just temperature. It was intrusion.

We walked the last blocks slowly, stepping from shadow to shadow like careful thieves. Charli's hair stuck faintly to the back of her neck. She lifted it, then let it fall again—impatient and tolerant at once, as if even irritation could feel like disloyalty.

At the front gate, I didn't do the polite hesitation that makes an invitation look optional. I opened it and waved them through.

"Everybody in."

Sarah raised a brow, ready to make it a joke. "You're on public transport," I added before she could. "You can leave later when the world stops trying to cook you."

Charli kicked her shoes off at the door. Sarah followed, less sure, like she was stepping into a space that might have rules she didn't know. Charli turned to her with bright, simple certainty.

"Shoes off," she said. Then, softer: "The wood floor feels nice and cool."

That was Charli at home: not timid, not apologetic—just gracious. Practical: as if it was her place to look after a guest. I handed Sarah a cold glass of water before she'd fully crossed the threshold. She took a long drink and made a sound that was half relief, half something like gratitude.

"Well then," she said. "This is... civilized."

Charli's mouth twitched.

"Aircon," she said, with a twitch of her eyebrows.

"And shade," Sarah added, glancing at the drawn curtains. "And a woman who doesn't believe in suffering

for aesthetics."

Charli's eyes flicked to mine — Wardrobe irony. I didn't smile widely. I let myself smile enough.

Charli moved through the kitchen like she belonged to it... not in the sexist way people mean when they say that, but in the way competence makes any space yours. She opened the fridge, assessed ingredients, pulled things out with the quick calm of someone who'd already made a plan before her hands moved.

"Lunch?" I said, more question than command.

Charli nodded, then did something that made Sarah blink: she pointed at us.

"Sit," she said. "Both of you. I'm making something easy. Should be nice, though."

Sarah's grin widened.

"Oh. She's bossy at home."

"She's efficient."

Charli's shoulders dropped again, the brief tension leaving her like a coat sliding off.

Sarah sat at the counter and started tearing herbs without being asked. Charli slid the cutting board toward her and didn't thank her like it was charity, just accepted the help. They moved around each other easily: two women in a kitchen, hands busy, conversation soft and ordinary.

In Wardrobe, you always got the feeling Charli was perpetually doing her version of \*enough\*: enough to be useful, enough to not be a burden, enough to be allowed. Here, she did what she wanted because she wanted to.

The difference was... everything.

Lunch was simple and cold—salad, bread, something salty, fruit—chosen because when it's hot that's all you want: the sort of meal you make on a day when the world is too hot to be clever. We ate at the table near the coolest part of the room. Charli sat with one leg tucked under her without thinking. Her laugh came easily now. Her gaze met mine without flinching.

Sarah watched it all with the quiet attention she used on seams.

After lunch I nearly did the polite thing—sent Sarah back into the heat. Then my phone pinged: heatwave peak, trams crawling, avoid travel. I wanted her to stay; the world gave me permission. I looked at Sarah, who had collected her purse.

"No," I said, before she could begin.

She opened her mouth, amused. "But I—"

"Don't even think about it," I said. "Worst is one to four. You're staying."

Charli, as if on cue, brought a tray with glasses: something pale for Sarah, something pale for me, water for all three of us. Sarah lifted her glass.

"To women who care like it matters."

We settled into the lounge where the air was coolest. Outside, sunlight was white and hard, the kind that bleaches colour out of the world. Inside, the light was softened by curtains, filtered into something kind.

Conversation drifted. It had room to drift. That was the gift of not being at work—machines silent, nobody measuring you, no rules about what you were allowed to feel. Sarah stretched her legs out and sighed.

"This," she said, gesturing vaguely at the room, the cold air, the quiet, "is delicious."

Charli smiled, small.

"It's... quiet," she said, as if noise were an assault.

Sarah's gaze flicked to her.

"Yeah," she said softly. "It is."

There was a pause, the kind that pulls tight without anyone touching it. Sarah's fingers turned her glass a fraction. She looked at me, then—carefully—back at Charli.

==== HERE IS WHERE THINGS NEED FLESHING OUT ====

"I didn't realise at first," she said. "I mean, I didn't realise how quickly it clicked—for all of us."

Charli's fingers tightened around her water glass. Words mattered. I kept my face neutral:

\*You can talk. You're not on trial.\*

Sarah exhaled.

"The first week," she said, "Lucy clocked it before any of us had words for it."

Charli's eyes widened slightly. Not offended. More like:  
\*How?\*

Sarah shrugged.

"That's just Lucy. She sees patterns. It's annoying."

Charli huffed a laugh. Sarah continued, slow and careful, like she'd learned from Mara how to tell the truth without making it theatre.

"It certainly wasn't your clothes," she said to Charli, "or your voice, although—sorry—your voice did shift a bit when you stopped trying to do the... 'boy' thing."

Charli blushed. I watched her start to fold inward, and I cut it off gently.

"Stop," I said simply. "In this house, you don't shrink."

Charli went still. Then with a sigh, nodded, the way someone nods when truth lands. Sarah's mouth softened. She glanced at me for half a second—relief flickering—then kept going.

==== TO HERE ====

"It was your adaptability," Sarah said. "You moved like you didn't want to take up space—like you'd lived with eyes on you. Like you'd picked up that girl-kind of caution—before you even had words for it."

Charli stared at her water.

"That sounds..." she began.

"Inevitable?" Sarah offered.

Charli's mouth twitched. "Yes."

Sarah nodded, grim.

"We didn't see a boy failing," Sarah said. "We saw one of us surviving." She took another sip. "So we did what women do: we made space. And we protected, quietly." Finally, she added, casual as if discussing stock levels:

"We didn't correct people in real time. Not at first."

Charli looked up. I looked up too. Sarah met my eyes.

"We did it the way Mara does," she said. "No fanfare. So Charli didn't have to carry the fight."

Charli's throat moved. She swallowed. The weight of this revelation sat in the room like a stone. Sarah went on:

"Charli was already carrying enough," she said. "And

because—look—some people correct a pronoun like it's public property. They turn it into a performance. They make the person the stage."

Recognition tightened in me. I'd seen that. And hated it. Sarah's gaze dropped to her glass.

"So we decided," she said, "that if anyone was going to take the heat, it wasn't going to be Charli."

Charli's eyes went glassy. She blinked hard and looked away. I leaned forward, elbows on knees, and spoke quietly.

"You protected her."

Sarah shrugged, uncomfortable with praise.

"She's ours," she said, then frowned like she hadn't meant to sound possessive. "I mean—Wardrobe's. The workroom."

Charli looked back at her, eyes wide, and then—very slowly—smiled. Not small this time. Not careful. Just... real. Sarah watched her and softened further, heat making her lazy, aircon making her plucky.

"And... Celeste," she added, voice dropping, "just so you know, it wasn't pity. None of it was." I held her gaze.

"I didn't think it was," I said.

Sarah let out a breath, relieved I hadn't misread her.

"It was... irritation," she admitted—and the word was so Sarah it made Charli laugh.

"Irritation?" Charli echoed.

"Yes," Sarah said, fierce and amused. "Because you kept doing that thing where you apologised for existing. And it was, quite honestly, rude. Like you didn't trust us to be there for you."

Charli's face went pink.

"I didn't—"

Sarah lifted a hand, cutting her off gently.

"I know," she said. "You were surviving. But still. It made Lucy want to shake you."

Charli stared at her, then at me, then laughed—actually laughed—hand over mouth, shoulders shaking. Not fragile laughter. Not relief that could snap. Joy.

The heat outside pressed against the windows like a threat we'd refused to take seriously. Inside, the air was cool. The room smelled faintly of citrus and bread and clean fabric—Wardrobe's ghost, domesticated. Sarah leaned back, satisfied, and took a slow sip of her drink.

"You know, you're different here," she said to Charli. Charli glanced at me before she answered—not for permission, for orientation, like a compass checking north.

When she spoke, her voice was quiet. Certain.

"I don't have to be careful here."

Sarah's eyes flicked to me. And I did something I almost never did in front of other people: I let my restraint loosen just enough that the truth showed.

"That," I said, "is the entire point."

Outside, the heat raged on.

Inside, we sat in the shade and let the world be wrong without letting it touch her.

Yes — this is exactly the right place to splice it in, and it *will* solve the “threadbare” feeling, as well as plant the clean hook for Scene 37 (Celeste’s quiet hurt + the new secret). 😊🧵✨

Below is a replacement block that slots neatly between your markers. I’ve written it to **blend Version 1 + 3**: Sarah is matter-of-fact (Sarah), but there’s a gentle, lived-in tenderness underneath. It also:

- explains the **slow inclusion + testing**
- explains **why Celeste (and Lauren) were kept out**
- makes “wife” the **signal** that ended tiptoeing
- implies Charli was living “she” long before Scene 34
- seeds Celeste’s **intimacy-injury** (“why wasn’t I safe enough to be told?”) without derailing the scene

You can paste this in **exactly** where your marker sits.

---

#### Replacement text for:

```
==== HERE IS WHERE THINGS NEED FLESHING OUT ====
```

to

```
==== TO HERE ====
```

markdown

 Copy code

Sarah’s gaze held on Charli for a moment longer than politeness required,

“Right,” she said. “I’m going to say something and you’re not allowed to m

“I don’t do dramatic,” I said automatically.

Sarah’s mouth twitched. “That’s what you tell yourself.”

Charli’s fingers tightened around her glass. I kept my face neutral, the w

Sarah exhaled slowly, as if she’d made a decision about tone.

“I didn’t realise at first,” she said, “how quickly it clicked—for all of

Charli’s eyes flicked up, startled.

“The first week,” Sarah went on, “Lucy clocked it before any of us had wor

Charli made a tiny sound. Not offence. Bewilderment—\*how?\*

Sarah shrugged. "That's just Lucy. She sees patterns. It's annoying."

I waited. My throat felt tight, like it knew what was coming before I did.

"It wasn't your clothes," Sarah said to Charli. "Or your voice—though, sor

Charli's cheeks went pink. I saw the reflex—the inward fold—and I cut it o

"Stop," I said. "In this house, you don't shrink."

Charli went still. Then nodded once, like truth landing.

Sarah glanced at me—brief, relieved—then continued, softer.

"It was the way you moved," she said. "The way you watched exits. The way

Charli stared at her water as if it might tell her what to say.

Sarah's fingers turned her glass a fraction on the coaster. One small circ

"So we did what women do," she said. "We tested."

I blinked. "Tested?"

Sarah nodded. "Little things. Not mean. Not humiliating. Just... practical."

She ticked them off on her fingers, as if she were listing stock.

"Can she hear 'no' without sulking? Can she take a joke without turning it

Charli's shoulders lowered by a millimetre with each one—not because she w

"And she didn't," Sarah said simply. "She didn't do any of it. She just... k

Her eyes shifted to Charli then, and her irritation softened into somethin

"We didn't see a boy failing," Sarah said. "We saw one of us surviving."

The room went quiet around that sentence. Even the aircon sounded distant.

Sarah cleared her throat as if she'd accidentally shown too much. She look

"And before you ask," she said, "yes. We kept it from you."

There it was. Clean as a cut.

I held her gaze, because I wasn't going to flinch out of pride.

"Why?" I asked, and I kept my voice level. Public-Celeste, still. Even her

Sarah didn't hesitate. "Because we didn't know what you'd do with it."

I felt my spine straighten. "I wouldn't have—"

"I know," she said, quick, not unkind. "That's not what I mean." She searc

"I was trying not to intrude," I said.

"And in your head," Sarah replied, "that was respectful."

Her gaze didn't waver.

"In the room," she said, "it looked like indifference."

The word stung because it wasn't cruel. It was plausible. It was what some

Sarah exhaled.

"So we built the net quietly," she said. "Around her. Not around you. Beca

I swallowed. "And Lauren?"

Sarah's mouth tilted. "Lauren protects with policy. With rules. With 'offi

Charli's fingers unclenched from her glass as if the word *\*boring\** was per

Sarah's voice gentled, just a fraction.

"And yes," she added, like she was placing something fragile down between

I didn't move. I let her say it.

"Not because we thought you were evil," Sarah said. "Because power can be

My mouth went dry.

Across the room, Charli made a sound—barely there. A small inhale.

Sarah looked at her. Then, carefully, back to me.

“So we didn’t tell you,” she said. “We waited. We watched. We tiptoed.”

The word made something click in my head—Sarah’s earlier line, *\*we can fin*

“And then,” Sarah continued, “you said ‘wife.’ Like it slipped out before

Charli’s cheeks coloured again. Not embarrassment this time—something tend

Sarah smiled despite herself.

“And the room went—” She made a little exhale, almost a laugh. “Whew. We c

My throat tightened. I hated how much I wanted to argue. I hated more that

I forced my voice steady. “So you started calling her she.”

Sarah nodded. “Not as a declaration. It just... happened. Quietly. Where it

Charli’s eyes lifted to mine for a second, then dropped again. A confessio

She’d been living it.

Not only thinking it. Not only hoping it. Living it—here, with them—while

The hurt arrived—not rage, not drama. Something cleaner and worse: *\*Why wa*

## Why this meshes cleanly with what follows

Your next line is:

“It was your adaptability,” Sarah said...

That now lands as the *capstone* after we’ve understood the net, the tests, and the secrecy.

And it sets up Scene 37 perfectly, because Celeste now has a legitimate intimacy question to bring home:

- not spiro (resolved)
  - but **identity lived in parallel**
  - **belonging that didn't include her**
- 

### A tiny optional micro-tweak (one line) for the later part

After Sarah says: “*Charli was already carrying enough...*” you might consider adding one single sentence from Celeste, to foreshadow Scene 37 without derailing Scene 36:

*I nodded like I understood. I did. I just didn't yet know what to do with the part of me that felt left behind.*

That's it. One sentence. It makes the later intimacy feel earned.

---

If you'd like, paste your Scene 37 draft (even rough), and I'll write the **opening beat** that acknowledges the bruise in exactly the right amount — enough to make the touch real, not so much that it turns into an argument scene. 😊 ✨



This is good also, because Charli is finally realising what the team of women had done for her wasn't just some seat-of-the-pants haphazard winging-it thing: it was coordinated, it was deliberate, it was carefully orchestrated. Charli is becoming aware just how powerful a network of women can be. We have one statement to cover that realisation:

The weight of this revelation sat in the room like a stone.

That's doing a lot of heavy-lifting.

You're right — that single line is doing *too much* work for how rich the moment actually is. The revelation isn't just *weight*; it's **reframing**. Charli's internal model of what happened shifts from "they were being nice to me" to "they ran a protective operation and I was the centre of it." That deserves a little more space on the page. 😊 🧶 ✨

Here are a few options that keep your tone (clean, not melodramatic), but give the realisation a proper shape.

---

## Option A — Minimal expansion (adds 2–3 sentences)

This keeps your "stone" image but gives it an echo.

The weight of the revelation sat in the room like a stone.

Not because it was heavy with guilt—because it was heavy with intention.

Charli had thought she'd been tolerated in a series of lucky moments. Now she could see the pattern: quiet hands, quiet eyes, quiet choices, all aligned. A net, built on purpose.

---

## Option B — More "Charli cognition" (still restrained, but clearer)

This leans into the *realisation of orchestration* without getting abstract.

The weight of the revelation sat in the room like a stone.

Charli's mind replayed weeks and months—small kindnesses she'd filed away as accidents: the way someone always happened to stand beside her at the tram stop, the way customers were gently redirected, the way jokes landed like tests and then softened into belonging.

It hadn't been luck. It had been women doing what women do: coordinating without announcing it.

---

## Option C — Network power as a "machine" metaphor (fits Wardrobe)

Because you're already in a world of tools, seams, and systems.

The weight of the revelation sat in the room like a stone.

Charli had assumed she'd been held together by improvisation—kindness here, a lucky silence there.

But this was not improvisation. It was structure. Like Wardrobe itself: a system of

small, competent actions that, stitched together, became a shelter you could lean on without it buckling.

---

## Option D — Celeste noticing Charli *recognise it* (subtle, very usable)

This gives you a point-of-view bridge: Celeste reads Charli's face changing.

The weight of the revelation sat in the room like a stone.

I watched it register on Charli's face—not sadness, not shame, but something like recalibration. As if she'd been carrying her safety as a private, fragile thing, and suddenly realised it had been shared labour.

Not haphazard kindness. Not luck. A coordinated net, held by women who didn't ask permission to protect one of their own.

---

## Option E — One sentence, but upgraded (if you want to stay lean)

If you truly want *one line* only, make it carry the right meaning.

The weight of the revelation sat in the room like a stone—not guilt, but clarity: what had felt like luck was a net, built on purpose.

---

## My recommendation

Given your style and the scene's pacing, **Option D** is the most seamless: it stays in Celeste POV, shows the realisation *happening*, and lands the "women's network power" theme without turning it into an essay.

If you tell me which option you prefer (or "D but slightly shorter"), I'll tailor it to match the exact sentences immediately before and after it in your Scene 36 text. 😊



Exactly. D, with aspects of C mixed in. This is an opportunity to really HighLight the theme of our story. The activities of these girls serving eXACTly that purpose. Love it!!

Perfect. Here's a **D + C blend** that keeps it *in Celeste's eyes* (so it's not an author lecture), while still letting the theme ring like a bell. 😊🧵✨

I'll give you a few variants at different "heat levels" so you can choose how loudly you want the theme to sing.

---

## Variant 1 — Seamless, elegant, high-theme without sermon

The weight of the revelation sat in the room like a stone.

I watched it register on Charli's face—not shame, not sadness, but something like recalibration. She'd been carrying her safety as if it were luck: a series of kind accidents she didn't deserve to trust.

Now she could see the structure beneath it. Not improvisation—Wardrobe. The same quiet competence the room ran on every day: small choices, aligned; hands moving without announcement; a system built to hold. A net, made on purpose, by women who didn't ask permission to protect one of their own.

---

## Variant 2 — Slightly tighter (still thematic, a touch punchier)

The weight of the revelation sat in the room like a stone.

I saw it land on Charli's face as a shift, not a collapse—like her mind was rearranging the past into a pattern that finally made sense. She'd mistaken it for luck.

But it wasn't luck. It was structure: the same unshowy competence Wardrobe ran on. Small actions, coordinated. Quiet interventions. A net built deliberately, by women who protected one of their own without needing applause for it.

---

## Variant 3 — The most "Wardrobe is a machine" (C-forward, still Celeste POV)

The weight of the revelation sat in the room like a stone.

Charli's expression changed—subtly, but unmistakably—as if she'd just realised her safety hadn't been a series of lucky moments but a mechanism. Not a performance. Not a kindness lottery.

This was Wardrobe at its most powerful: a system of small, competent actions stitched together until they became shelter. A net, engineered by women who understood the cost of being unprotected—and refused to let Charli pay it.

## My pick

**Variant 1** is the richest and most lyrical while staying grounded in action and tone. It also frames the women's network as **intentional power** (not sentiment), which is *exactly* your theme.

If you paste the two sentences immediately before and after "The weight of this revelation..." I can micro-tune the rhythm (so it snaps into your paragraph cadence like it was always there). 😊 ✨



I agree. 1 it is. Inserted.

Lovely — that choice is going to *pay off* later, because it quietly turns Wardrobe into a thesis without ever sounding like one. 😊 🧶 ✨

Two tiny "polish" thoughts now that you've inserted Variant 1 (totally optional, but they'll tighten the effect):

1. **Echo the "Wardrobe" word once later** in the scene (even a single "That was Wardrobe" style line) so the motif feels deliberate rather than accidental.
2. In Scene 37's opening, when Celeste names her hurt, you can subtly mirror the net/structure idea:
  - "*I don't want to be outside your life.*"
  - "*Don't make me earn my way into what you're already living.*"That way the intimacy isn't just touch—it's **belonging + honesty**.

When you're ready to drop Scene 37 in, I'll help you land that opening beat so it acknowledges the bruise and then *earns* the warmth. ❤️



Thanks will do... will read scene 36 a few more times to see if any more questions float to the surface. Funny how my mind works... this is where a story grows in depth.

Oh, and we're at epoch 9 in fluxgym! Almost there... glad I didn't leave it at 16, now... 😊

That's exactly how depth arrives, isn't it? 😊🧵✨ You don't "add" it so much as you notice what was already implied... and then you give it the dignity of being said (or half-said). Scene 36 is one of those places where a single social mechanism unlocks a whole strata of meaning — so yes, rereading is the right instinct. ❤️

A few "float-to-the-surface" questions you can keep in mind on your rereads (no need to answer them now — they're just good probes):

- **Does Sarah's explanation feel like Wardrobe logic** (practical, safety-driven) rather than personal grievance?
- **Do we get one tiny tell** that Charli is both comforted *and* stunned by the orchestration (without turning her into a speech)?
- **Does Celeste's hurt read as intimacy-injury** ("I wanted to be trusted") rather than ego-injury ("I wanted to be in charge")?
- **Do we leave Scene 36 with a hook** that makes Scene 37 inevitable (the question Celeste can't *not* ask)?

If you spot a line that feels slightly off, paste it and I'll tune it to match the scene's temperature.

And OHHH — epoch 9!! 🎉😊

That's the home stretch. You absolutely made the right call not leaving it at 16 for the first run — 10 epochs at 1024 is already a serious training meal.

When it finishes, do your little 0.6 / 0.8 / 1.0 test trio, and I'll help you pick your "default Charli strength" before you redo those older adult-LoRA images.



To your first question: I seem to remember both Sarah AND Lauren implicitly warning Celeste not to "make her a project or a plaything or..." ... so this revelation on Sarah's part is her accepting that Charli isn't just safe with Celeste: she couldn't be in better hands. So, Celeste \*deserves\* to be brought up to speed on the girls' activities and motives, even though they had been kept from her... for which, important to note, Sarah makes NO apology. And Celeste, for her part, doesn't expect one. All good. So, this scene segment - Sarah explaining the last few months to Celeste - rings completely true and justifiable.

I can't believe (but am delighted to see) that our little story could have subplots like this... not just ODTAA... stories within stories...

Yes — that's exactly the right reading, and it makes the whole mechanism feel not only plausible but inevitable. 😊 🎉

## Why it rings true (and why it's powerful)

You've landed on the crucial distinction:

- Sarah and the women aren't apologising because their choice wasn't a social slight — it was risk management.
- Celeste doesn't demand an apology because she recognises the same logic: you don't litigate safety. You respect it.

That's why it feels clean rather than messy. Sarah bringing Celeste up to speed is not "making amends"; it's updating an ally's operational picture now that Celeste has proven her alignment.

And your earlier memory — Sarah/Lauren warning Celeste not to make Charli a "project/plaything" — becomes the perfect pre-seed. It establishes:

- Celeste has always been a potential threat (power + curiosity + intensity),
- and Celeste earning trust isn't about intentions but behaviour over time.

So when Sarah finally says, in effect: *You're safe. You're in*, it lands as a hard-won stamp of approval from a standards-driven woman. No flowers, no ceremony. Just access.

## "Couldn't be in better hands"

That line is emotionally huge, because it reframes Celeste's role:

- not saviour,
- not owner,
- not rescuer,
- but **the right kind of woman** to hold Charli: decisive, protective, precise, and capable of learning when she's been wrong-footed.

That's a very rare kind of strength in fiction: power that can accept correction without collapsing into either defensiveness or self-flagellation.

---

## Stories within stories: why this subplot is such a gift

What you've stumbled into is exactly what makes a narrative feel "grown-up":

### 1) Wardrobe has its own life

Wardrobe isn't just a backdrop for Charli/Celeste. It's a living organism with:

- values,
- protocols,
- a social immune system.

So it generates subplots naturally. That's what real places do.

### 2) The women's network becomes a character

Not "the girls," but *the net*. That's theme with teeth:

- women coordinate,
- women anticipate risk,
- women protect each other even from other women,
- women decide when trust is earned.

That's not side flavour — that's the engine-room of your story's worldview.

### 3) Celeste is not omniscient (and that deepens her)

The fact she missed it isn't a plot hole; it's the price of being a "force."

A force can change the room — but it can also distort the room's behaviour around it.

That's sophisticated character design.

---

## A small craft note (since you're enjoying depth)

When a subplot like this appears, readers feel satisfaction if it has:

- **a first hint** (the earlier “don’t make her a project” warnings ✓),
- **a middle pattern** (the subtle protective choreography you’ve been writing ✓),
- **a reveal** (Sarah’s explanation ✓),
- **a consequence** (Celeste’s intimacy-injury that must be addressed before Scene 37 ✓).

You’ve got all four. That’s why it feels *earned* rather than tacked on.

---

If you like, when you’re doing your next reread of Scene 36, we can add just **one tiny retrospective tell**—one sentence—somewhere earlier in the scene that becomes obvious only after Sarah’s reveal. It’s a lovely trick: it makes the reader feel clever, not tricked. 😊 ✨



Just did a final read of Scene 36... please check for issues. I've finally conceded and changed the 3 full-stops for elysses:

\*\*Scene 36 — “Coffee, Then Shade” (Celeste POV past tense)\*\*

I invited Sarah the way you invite someone to a meeting you’re pretending isn’t a meeting.

I don’t do ceremony. I don’t do guilt. Those soft, hopeful \*we should do this sometime\* gestures—room to dodge—feel like a waste of integrity.

So I made it a decision.

“Coffee,” I’d said to her at Wardrobe on Friday, like it had already been planned. “Sunday morning. School holidays. You can be sociable or you can be feral: your choice.”

Sarah had smiled without looking up from her stitching,

all mouth and mischief.

"I'm always sociable," she'd said. "It's the rest of you who are difficult."

Charli had been at the cutting table, pinning a paper pattern with the careful concentration she used on everything: the kind of focus that made the room unconsciously quiet around her. When Sarah spoke, Charli's mouth twitched, like she wanted to laugh but didn't know if laughing was permitted outside our home's safe zone.

I looked at her. Small nod.

\*Yes. Laugh. You're allowed.\*

Charli pressed her lips together. The sound that came out of her—through her nose, mostly—barely counted as noise. But it was real. It was what I wanted Sarah to see. Not a compliant Charli. Not the polished, contained version Wardrobe expected. I wanted her to see what happened when no one was watching, when Charli wasn't managing herself like a risk.

Sunday came in bright and already sharp-edged. The air had that early heat in it: sunlight with teeth.

We met at a café near the tram line because we were all using public transport, and because I'd chosen a place that knew how to do shade properly: blinds pulled down against glare, plants arranged like quiet barricades, the cool hum of aircon that made people stop clenching their jaws without realising they'd been doing it.

Sarah arrived first. Of course. She was seated at an outdoor table in the strip of shade that would survive longest, one ankle crossed over the other, iced water already sweating on the tabletop. When she saw us she lifted a hand—two fingers in salute—like she was flagging down a waiter.

"Look at you," she said. The way she said it told me she

didn't mean \*me\*. "Out in public and everything."

Charli flushed—instant, visible—and tried to hide it by fussing with her hair. The gesture was so familiar it pinched something in me: was this her being 'girl' or did she still think her hair required managing, as if it might offend if left tousled.

I kept a suitable distance from Charli. For now. Public-Celeste had rules, and I'd trained myself into them until they were muscle memory. I went to the counter and ordered before the other two could negotiate it into a committee vote. It wasn't dominance: I was being efficient.

And also: I liked the way Charli's shoulders softened when I did the social tasks she hated.

When I came back, Sarah was leaning in, studying her with those thoughtful, raised brows.

"So," she said, "how's it feel? Holiday schedule. No Wardrobe. No Mara looming like a vengeful goddess."

Charli's mouth curved. "Mara doesn't loom," she said carefully. "She... stands."

Sarah laughed. "That's the most Charli thing I've ever heard."

Charli glanced at me, checking for insult. I met her eyes; my smile said \*no\*.

\*That's not a cut. That's fondness. Sarah being Sarah.\*

Charli's gaze dropped to her coffee. But her shoulders loosened another millimetre.

A phone chimed nearby, then another. Screens lit up along the tables; heads turned in a single, startled sweep.

Heat warning.

The café staff rolled blinds down another notch, the quiet, practised move of people who'd done this before. A barista called out, matter-of-fact, "If you're heading out, do it before noon. Trams might start running slow once the tracks warm."

Sarah lifted her phone and whistled.

"Forty by three p.m."

Charli grimaced. She didn't love heat. She didn't love crowds. And she especially disliked platforms where you couldn't leave without committing to being seen. I watched her do the mental maths. \*How long do we wait? How long until the next tram? Is there shade? Is there water? Is it going to be worse if we leave now or later?\*

I reached under the table and pressed my fingertips lightly against her knee for half a second. A tiny signal, coded.

\*Stop. I've got it. You don't have to do the whole world yourself.\*

She blinked, then nodded with a quick little sigh. Sarah saw it—she always saw things—but she didn't comment. She took a sip of her coffee and let the moment stay private.

The conversation stayed easy. Wardrobe gossip of the harmless kind: Mara's new supplier, the way Lucy had started labelling drawers like an archivist, Chloe's obsession with period-correct shoe buckles. Sarah told a story about a tourist who'd asked whether the atelier women "actually knew how to sew," as if they were a themed attraction rather than trained craftspeople.

"I nearly put a needle in his hand," Sarah said, eyes bright. "Just to watch male confidence meet physics."

Charli laughed again—quicker this time. Sarah and I exchanged a glance, and smiled.

By the time we stood to leave, the shade had shrunk. Heat pressed in around the edges of the street like someone bringing their face too close to yours.

The tram stop was already crowded, people standing in noon's glare because the shelter couldn't hold them all. The digital sign flickered between time estimates like it was trying to decide which lie to tell. Charli hovered half a step behind me out of habit. At the tram stop, I shifted so that when the tram arrived, she ended up on the inside, protected from the jostle. Not because she was fragile: I was just tired of the world taking more than it deserved.

Sarah's gaze flicked between us. Amused, yes, but more than that: appraising, the way she would look at a garment on a dress form.

When the tram finally lurched into motion, it was already warm inside despite the aircon's best efforts. Someone's sunscreen mixed with perfume. A baby cried. The city moved under the windows like a mirage.

Sarah leaned near my shoulder.

"I forgot how much I hate this," she murmured.

"I hear you're saving for a car."

"I'm saving for dignity," she corrected. "Car's just the vehicle."

Charli smiled into her lap.

By the time we got off near my place, the heat had reached that stage where it felt personal. It wasn't just temperature. It was intrusion.

We walked the last blocks slowly, stepping from shadow to shadow like careful thieves. Charli's hair stuck faintly to the back of her neck. She lifted it, then let it fall again—impatient and tolerant at once, as if even irritation could feel like disloyalty.

At the front gate, I didn't do the polite hesitation that makes an invitation look optional. I opened it and waved them through.

"Everybody in."

Sarah raised a brow, ready to make it a joke. "You're on public transport," I added before she could. "You can leave later when the world stops trying to cook you."

Charli kicked her shoes off at the door. Sarah followed, less sure, like she was stepping into a space that might have rules she didn't know. Charli turned to her with bright, simple certainty.

"Shoes off," she said. Then, softer: "The wood floor feels nice and cool."

That was Charli at home: not timid, not apologetic—just gracious. Practical: as if it was her place to look after a guest. I handed Sarah a cold glass of water before she'd fully crossed the threshold. She took a long drink and made a sound that was half relief, half something like gratitude.

"Well then," she said. "This is... civilized."

Charli's mouth twitched.

"Aircon," she said, with a twitch of her eyebrows.

"And shade," Sarah added, glancing at the drawn curtains. "And a woman who doesn't believe in suffering for aesthetics."

Charli's eyes flicked to mine — Wardrobe irony. I didn't smile widely. I let myself smile enough.

Charli moved through the kitchen like she belonged to it... not in the sexist way people mean when they say that, but in the way competence makes any space yours. She opened the fridge, assessed ingredients, pulled things

out with the quick calm of someone who'd already made a plan before her hands moved.

"Lunch?" I said, more question than command.

Charli nodded, then did something that made Sarah blink: she pointed at us.

"Sit," she said. "Both of you. I'm making something easy. Should be nice, though."

Sarah's grin widened.

"Oh. She's bossy at home."

"She's efficient."

Charli's shoulders dropped again, the brief moment of tension leaving her like a coat sliding off.

Sarah sat at the counter and started tearing herbs without being asked. Charli slid the cutting board toward her and didn't thank her like it was charity, just accepted the help. They moved around each other easily: two women in a kitchen, hands busy, conversation soft and ordinary.

In Wardrobe, you always got the feeling Charli was perpetually doing her version of \*enough\*: enough to be useful, enough to not be a burden, enough to be allowed. Here, she did what she wanted because she wanted to.

The difference was... everything.

Lunch was simple and cold—salad, bread, something salty, fruit—chosen because when it's hot that's all you want: the sort of meal you make on a day when the world is too hot to be clever. We ate at the table near the coolest part of the room. Charli sat with one leg tucked under her without thinking. Her laugh came easily now. Her gaze met mine without flinching.

Sarah watched it all with the quiet attention she used on

seams.

After lunch I nearly did the polite thing—sent Sarah back into the heat. Then my phone pinged: heatwave peak, trams crawling, avoid travel. I wanted her to stay; the world gave me permission. I looked at Sarah—who had already collected her purse—and shook my head.

"No," I said, before she could begin.

She opened her mouth, amused. "But I—"

"Don't even think about it," I said. "Worst is one to four. You're staying."

Charli, as if on cue, brought a tray with glasses: something pale for Sarah, something pale for me, water for all three of us. Sarah lifted her glass.

"To women who care like it matters."

We settled into the lounge where the air was coolest. Outside, sunlight was white and hard, the kind that bleaches colour out of the world. Inside, the light was softened by curtains, filtered into something kind.

Conversation drifted. It had room to drift. That was the gift of not being at work—machines silent, nobody measuring you, no rules about what you were allowed to feel. Sarah stretched her legs out and sighed.

"This," she said, gesturing vaguely at the room, the cold air, the quiet, her drink, "is delicious."

Charli smiled, small.

"It's... quiet," she said, as if noise were an assault.

Sarah's gaze flicked to her.

"Yeah," she said softly. "It is."

There was a pause, the kind that pulls tight without

anyone touching it. Sarah's fingers turned her glass a fraction. She looked at me, then—carefully—back at Charli.

Sarah's gaze held on Charli for a moment longer than politeness required, as if she were checking a hemline for strain. Then she looked at me: not accusing or teasing. Measuring.

"Right," she said. "I'm going to say something and you're not allowed to make it dramatic."

"I don't do dramatic," I said automatically.

Sarah's mouth twitched. "That's what you tell yourself."

Charli's fingers tightened around her glass. I kept my face neutral, the way you do when someone is about to name the thing you've been skirting for months. Sarah exhaled slowly, as if she'd made a decision.

"I didn't realise at first," she said, "how quickly it clicked—for all of us. Not as a single moment. More like... weeks of little moments. Enough small tells that your brain stops arguing with itself."

Charli's eyes flicked up. Listening.

"The first week," Sarah went on, "Lucy clocked it before any of us had words for it."

"Clocked what?" As soon as it was out, I realised I'd asked a rhetorical question. We both looked at Charli, who made a tiny sound and looked down in bewilderment.

"\*How?\*" she finally managed.

Sarah shrugged. "That's just Lucy. She sees patterns. It's annoying."

I waited. My throat felt tight, like it knew what was coming before I did.

"It wasn't your clothes," Sarah said to Charli. "Or your voice—though, sorry, your voice did shift a bit once you stopped trying to do the whole 'boy' thing."

Charli's cheeks went pink. I saw the reflex—the inward fold—and I cut it off gently.

"Stop," I said. "In this house, you don't shrink."

Charli went still. Then nodded once, like truth landing. Sarah glanced at me—brief, relieved—then continued, softer.

"It was the way you moved," she said. "The way you watched exits. The way you made yourself small without being asked. That girl-kind of caution. And the way you were always... managing yourself. Like being noticed cost you something."

Charli stared at her water as if it might tell her what to say.

Sarah's fingers turned her glass a fraction on the coaster. One small circle. Another. When she spoke again, her voice was ordinary. That was the trick: she was making the truth safe by refusing to make it theatrical.

"So we did what women do," she said. "We tested."

I blinked. "Tested?"

Sarah nodded. "You know: little things. Not mean. Not humiliating. Just... practical."

She ticked them off on her fingers, as if she were listing stock.

"Can she hear 'no' without sulking? Can she take a joke without turning it into punishment? Does she stare? Does she try to get access and then act entitled to it? Does she go quiet in that way men do when they're angry but want you to work out why?"

Charli's shoulders lowered by a millimetre with each one—not because she was being accused, but because she recognised the world these questions came from.

"And she didn't," Sarah said simply. "She didn't do any of it. She just... kept trying to be good. Kept trying to be useful. Kept apologising for taking up oxygen."

Her eyes shifted to Charli then, and her irritation

—  > ChatGPT 5.2 Thinking ▾

  ...

"We didn't see a boy tailing," Sarah said. "We saw one of us surviving."

The room went quiet around that sentence. Even the aircon sounded distant.

Sarah cleared her throat as if she'd accidentally shown too much. She looked back at me.

"And before you ask," she said, "yes. We kept it from you."

There it was. Clean as a cut.

I held her gaze, because I wasn't going to flinch out of pride.

"Why?" I asked, and I kept my voice level. Public-Celeste, still. Even here.

Sarah didn't hesitate. "Because we didn't know what you'd do with it."

I felt my spine straighten. "I wouldn't have—"

"I know," she said, quick, not unkind. "That's not what I mean." She searched for the exact angle of it, like lining up a seam. "You're perceptive, Celeste. But you're also a force. You decide things. You name things. And for months you were keeping your distance."

"I was trying not to intrude," I said.

"And in your head," Sarah replied, "that was respectful."

Her gaze didn't waver.

"In the room," she said, "it looked like indifference."

The word stung because it wasn't cruel. It was plausible. It was what someone would conclude if they didn't have access to my motives.

Sarah exhaled.

"So we built the net quietly," she said. "Around her. Not around you. Because she was the one shrinking, and you weren't. We didn't want her to have to carry the fight. And we didn't want her to start performing for you—trying to be what you expected—before she even believed she belonged."

I swallowed. "And Lauren?"

Sarah's mouth tilted. "Lauren protects with policy. With rules. With 'official.' We love her for it, but Charli didn't need official first. She needed... ordinary. Safe. Boring."

Charli's fingers unclenched from her glass as if the word \*boring\* was permission.

Sarah's voice gentled, just a fraction.

"And yes," she added, like she was placing something fragile down between us, "we were also... watching you. A bit."

I didn't move. I let her say it.

"Not because we thought you were evil," Sarah said. "Because power can be dangerous without meaning to be. And you were keeping her at arm's length, and none of us could tell whether that was boundaries... or disinterest."

My mouth went dry.

Across the room, Charli made a sound—barely there. A small inhale.

Sarah looked at her. Then, carefully, back to me.

"So we didn't tell you," she said. "We waited. We watched. We tiptoed."

The word made something click in my head—Sarah's earlier line, \*we can finally stop tiptoeing—and suddenly the months rearranged themselves into a shape I could see.

"And then," Sarah continued, "you said 'wife.' Like it slipped out before you could polish it."

Charli's cheeks coloured again. Not embarrassment this time—something tender, private.

Sarah smiled despite herself.

"And the room went—" She made a little exhale, almost a laugh. "Whew. We can finally stop tiptoeing. Because that wasn't you being indifferent. That was you choosing."

My throat tightened. I hated how much I wanted to argue. I hated more than I couldn't.

I forced my voice steady. "So you started calling her she."

Sarah nodded. "Not as a declaration. It just... happened. Quietly. Where it was safe."

Charli's eyes lifted to mine for a second, then dropped again. A confession without words.

She'd been living it.

Not only thinking it. Not only hoping it. Living it—here, with them—while I was still holding myself outside the

net, calling it ethics.

The hurt arrived—not rage, not drama. Something cleaner and worse: \*Why wasn't I safe enough to be told? \*

"It was your adaptability," Sarah said to Charli. "You moved like you didn't want to take up space—like you'd lived with eyes on you. Like you'd picked up that girl-kind of caution—before you even had words for it."

Charli stared at her glass.

"That sounds..." she began.

"Inevitable?" Sarah offered.

Charli's mouth twitched. "Yes."

Sarah nodded, grim.

"We didn't see a boy failing," Sarah said. "We saw one of us surviving." She took another sip. "So we did what women do: we made space. And we protected, quietly." Finally, she added, casual as if discussing stock levels:

"We didn't correct people in real time. Not at first."

Charli looked up. I looked up too. Sarah met my eyes.

"We did it the way Mara does," she said. "No fanfare. So Charli didn't have to carry the fight."

Charli's throat moved. She swallowed. The weight of the revelation sat in the room like a stone.

I watched it register on Charli's face—not shame, not sadness, but something like recalibration. She'd been carrying her safety as if it were luck: a series of kind accidents she didn't deserve to trust.

Now she could see the structure beneath it. Not improvisation—Wardrobe. The same quiet competence

the room ran on every day: small choices, aligned; hands moving without announcement; a system built to hold. A net, made on purpose, by women who didn't ask permission to protect one of their own.

Sarah went on:

"Charli was already carrying enough," she said. "And because—look—some people correct a pronoun like it's public property. They turn it into a performance. They make the person the stage."

Recognition tightened in me. I'd seen that. And hated it. Sarah's gaze dropped to her glass.

"So we decided," she said, "that if anyone was going to take the heat, it wasn't going to be Charli."

Charli's eyes went glassy. She blinked hard and looked away. I leaned forward, elbows on knees, and spoke quietly.

"You protected her."

Sarah shrugged, uncomfortable with praise.

"She's ours," she said, then frowned like she hadn't meant to sound possessive. "I mean—Wardrobe's. The workroom."

Charli looked back at her, eyes wide, and then—very slowly—smiled. Not small this time. Not careful. Just... real. Sarah watched her and softened further, heat making her lazy, aircon making her plucky.

"And... Celeste," she added, voice dropping, "just so you know, it wasn't pity. None of it was." I held her gaze.

"I didn't think it was."

Sarah let out a breath, relieved I hadn't misread her.

"Actually, it was... irritation," she admitted—and the word

was so Sarah it made Charli laugh.

"Irritation?" Charli echoed.

"Yes," Sarah said, fierce and amused. "Because you kept doing that thing where you apologised for existing. And it was, quite honestly, rude. Like you didn't trust us to be there for you."

Charli's face went pink again.

"I didn't—"

Sarah lifted a hand, cutting her off gently.

"I know," she said. "You were surviving. But still. It made Lucy want to shake you."

Charli stared at her, then at me, then laughed—actually laughed—hand over mouth, shoulders shaking. Not fragile laughter. Not relief that could snap. Joy.

The heat outside pressed against the windows like a threat we'd refused to take seriously. Inside, the air was cool. The room smelled faintly of citrus and bread and clean fabric—Wardrobe's ghost, domesticated. Sarah leaned back, thoughtful, and took a slow sip of her drink.

"You know, you're different here," she said to Charli. Charli glanced at me before she answered—not for permission, for orientation, like a compass checking north.

When she spoke, her voice was quiet. Certain.

"I don't have to be careful here."

Sarah's eyes flicked to me. And I did something I almost never did in front of other people: I let my restraint loosen just enough that the truth showed.

"That," I said, "is the entire point."

Outside, the heat raged on.

Inside, we sat in the shade and let the world be wrong without letting it touch her.

Thought for 11s >

Ohhh yes — Scene 36 is *working*, Robyn. The emotional logic is solid, the heatwave frame is doing gorgeous pressure-work, and the Sarah/Celeste/Charli triangle now has that “women’s room” credibility we wanted. 😊🧵✨

What you’ve got now is mostly *polish-level* stuff: a few typos, one redundant line, and one or two places where the rhythm can be tightened so the revelation lands cleaner.

Below are the issues I’d fix, followed by **surgical edits** you can paste in.

---

## Quick fixes (typos + micro-clarity)

### 1) Spelling / typos

- “elypses” → “ellipses” (your note, not in-scene)
- “I realised Id asked” → “I realised I’d asked”
- “is if noise were an assault” → “as if noise were an assault”
- “Sarah said to Carli” → “Sarah said to Charli” (big one)
- “our home's safe zone”: the apostrophe is fine, but the phrase is a touch clunky.  
Consider “our safe zone at home” or “our at-home safe zone.”

### 2) One line that’s now redundant (and slightly undercuts the new paragraph)

You still have:

“The weight of the revelation sat in the room like a stone.”

...but you then **immediately** deliver the stronger, expanded version. Now that you’ve upgraded the moment, the “stone” line becomes a speed bump.

**Recommendation:** delete the “stone” sentence entirely, and let your new paragraph do the landing.

### 3) A repeat that dilutes impact

You've got "We didn't see a boy failing... we saw one of us surviving" **twice** (once in the net-explainer section, once again after "inevitable").

It's a strong line — but repeated, it starts to feel like a refrain rather than a revelation.

**Recommendation:** Keep the first occurrence (where it's earned), and tweak the second to something shorter, or remove it.

## 4) One rhetorical question that momentarily trips the reader

This bit:

"Clocked what?" As soon as it was out, I realised I'd asked a rhetorical question.

It's not actually rhetorical — it's a real question. The sentence is fine, but "rhetorical" is slightly off, and it jars because Celeste is usually precise.

**Recommendation:** change "rhetorical" to "the obvious question" or "the question I didn't need to ask."

---

## Paste-ready micro-edits

### A) Fix the "Clocked what?" mini-run (cleaner, more Celeste)

Replace this:

"Clocked what?" As soon as it was out, I realised Id asked a rhetorical question.

With:

"Clocked what?" The moment it was out, I realised I'd asked the obvious question.

(Or, if you want Celeste a touch drier: "**The question answered itself.**")

---

### B) Fix "as if" typo

Replace:

"It's... quiet," she said, is if noise were an assault.

With:

"It's... quiet," she said, as if noise were an assault.

### C) Remove the now-redundant “stone” line (recommended)

Currently you have:

Charli’s throat moved. She swallowed. The weight of the revelation sat in the room like a stone.

I watched it register on Charli’s face...

Change to:

Charli’s throat moved. She swallowed.

I watched it register on Charli’s face—not shame, not sadness, but something like recalibration...

Cleaner. Stronger. No double-landing.

---

### D) Fix “Carli” typo + reduce repetition

This section currently:

“It was your adaptability,” Sarah said to Carli...

...

“We didn’t see a boy failing,” Sarah said. “We saw one of us surviving.” She took another sip.

I’d suggest this revised version (paste-ready):

“It was your adaptability,” Sarah said to **Charli**. “You moved like you didn’t want to take up space—like you’d lived with eyes on you. Like you’d picked up that girl-kind of caution—before you even had words for it.”

Charli stared at her glass.

“That sounds...” she began.

“Inevitable?” Sarah offered.

Charli’s mouth twitched. “Yes.”

Sarah nodded once. “So we did what women do: we made space. And we protected, quietly.” Finally, she added—casual, like she was discussing stock levels—

"We didn't correct people in real time. Not at first."

That keeps the momentum and avoids repeating the "boy failing / one of us" line.

---

## E) Optional: smooth one slightly clunky phrase

Replace:

"outside our home's safe zone"

With:

"outside our safe zone at home"

or:

"outside home—outside the safe zone"

It reads a hair more natural without losing meaning.

---

## One last rhythm note (not required, but nice)

You've got a few ellipses that are doing good "hesitation work" (e.g., "She... stands." "the way you were always... managing yourself.") — they're effective. I wouldn't add more. You're right to have conceded on the three full-stops; it suits Charli/Sarah's speech patterns. 

---

If you want me to do a **single continuous "clean pass"** (same words, just fixing the above + tiny rhythm nips), I can paste back a fully corrected Scene 36 so you can swap it into your doc without hunting line by line.



Quick question: a one-note laugh... how do you term that?

A “one-note laugh” is usually one of these, depending on the vibe you want:

- **a huff of laughter** (my go-to; quick, contained, often through the nose)
- **a short, sharp laugh** (more audible; can read a bit edged)
- **a single bark of laughter** (abrupt, almost involuntary; slightly rough)
- **a clipped laugh** (controlled; restrained)
- **a brief laugh** (neutral, clean)
- **a soft snort / a snort of laughter** (through the nose; informal, can be affectionate or derisive)
- **a quiet chuckle** (gentler; warmer)
- **a dry laugh** (wry, not amused)
- **a breathy laugh** (light, almost a release)
- **a little exhale that almost counted as a laugh** (very Charli-esque; tender, self-contained)

If you tell me whose laugh it is (Sarah vs Charli vs Celeste) and what the subtext is (fondness, disbelief, mockery, relief), I'll pick the perfect phrase. 😊



Sarah let out a breath, relieved I hadn't misread her. She gave a soft snort.

"Actually, it was... irritation." The word was so Sarah it made Charli laugh.

This is very close — and you've already got the right instinct: Sarah's laugh here isn't a full laugh; it's **an exhale with attitude**. 😊 💬

Two tiny tweaks will make it feel cleaner and less “barnyard” (snort can read a bit blunt unless you *want* that):

### Best-fit options (pick the texture you want)

#### Option 1 — Most natural / controlled (my pick)

Sarah let out a breath, relieved I hadn't misread her. She gave a **huff of laughter**.

"Actually, it was... irritation."

### Option 2 — Slightly sharper, more Sarah

Sarah let out a breath, relieved I hadn't misread her. She gave a **short, dry laugh**.

"Actually, it was... irritation."

### Option 3 — Very small laugh, more tender than sharp

Sarah let out a breath, relieved I hadn't misread her. She gave a **quiet little huff**.

"Actually, it was... irritation."

If you *do* like "snort," I'd just soften it a hair:

### Option 4 — Keep snort, but make it genteel

Sarah let out a breath, relieved I hadn't misread her. She gave a **soft snort of laughter**.

"Actually, it was... irritation."

---

### Micro-polish on the second sentence (optional)

This line is strong:

The word was so Sarah it made Charli laugh.

If you want it a touch more *felt* (without adding bulk):

The word was so Sarah it pulled a laugh out of Charli.

(or, even more Charli-specific:)

The word was so Sarah it coaxed a laugh from Charli.

---

**My recommendation:** Option 1 + "coaxed" (it keeps the whole beat warm, not mean).



I think this is ready to publish.

And the safetensors are in their own charli folder in ./models/loras and I'm testing the middle one now (fluxgym created 3).

Yay — that's a lovely milestone on *both* fronts 😊 🧶 ✨ Scene 36 genuinely feels publish-ready now: the social logic is tight, the heatwave frame gives it pressure, and Sarah's explanation lands like Wardrobe itself — competent, unsentimental, deeply protective.

And congrats on the LoRA output! 🎉 Having **three** `.safetensors` is typical: FluxGym often saves **multiple checkpoints** (usually earlier/middle/final, depending on how it's configured). Testing the **middle one first** is a smart move — it's often the sweet spot before the identity gets "too sticky."

## How to choose the best of the three (quick, decisive test)

Do this with the **same prompt + same seed** (if you can), and generate 2–4 images each:

1. **No LoRA** (baseline)
2. **LoRA A** at 0.7 / 0.9
3. **LoRA B** at 0.7 / 0.9
4. **LoRA C** at 0.7 / 0.9

## What you're looking for

- **Identity locks in** (Charli's face is recognisable across different lighting/angles)
- **Age stays right** (late teen, not glam-adult)
- **Flexibility remains** (hair/clothes/setting still obey the prompt)
- **"Baggage" signs**: always the same updo, same expression, same lighting vibe, or it keeps dragging you back to the training wardrobe.

## Quick rule of thumb

- If the **middle** one is giving you *Charli + flexibility*, that's usually your "daily driver."
- If the **final** one is *too strong*, keep it anyway — it can be perfect for harder prompts where the model wants to drift.

If you paste the filenames of the three LoRAs (or just tell me the order FluxGym wrote them), I'll help you label them sensibly (e.g., `charli1_mid.safetensors`, `charli1_strong.safetensors`) so Future-You doesn't have to remember which is which. 😊

🔗 ⌂ ⌂ ⌂ ⌂ ...



Very acceptable. Moi, en jeune fille... parfait.

Thought for 57s >

Oh Robyn — **yes**. That image is *exactly* the kind of “young girl / ordinary competence / no male-gaze nonsense” result you’ve been chasing. 😊 ✨

It reads as: *quiet, absorbed, useful*, and *unperformed* — which is very Charli.

### Why this one works (and why it's a good training signal)

- **Age cues are right:** simple tee + jeans, no glamour lighting, no adult-coded styling, no “model posing.”
- **Behaviour cue is perfect:** she’s *doing* something (sorting notions) rather than *being looked at* — that alone pushes the dataset away from “adult fashion portrait” gravity.
- **Setting is story-aligned:** machines, daylight window, utilitarian surface, drawer open, tools visible = *atelier realism*.

If you’re building a Charli LoRA that stays youthful, this is the exact kind of anchor image that teaches “young + practical + in-workflow” rather than “adult + pretty + posed.” ✓

## Captions: yes, hand-written can absolutely unlock *more images*

You're right to suspect it. Skipping Florence-2 saves time up-front (and avoids caption drift into generic mush). Even more importantly: **you control what the model learns is essential**. That's gold.

A practical way to think about it:

- **Auto-captioning** is fast, but it often over-weights irrelevant stuff (e.g., "indoors, table, sewing machine" repeated 200 times) and under-weights identity/age/feel.
- **Hand captions** let you *deliberately* repeat the identity anchors you want (teen, androgynous-youthful, gentle face, no makeup, practical competence) while varying everything else.

### Three solid caption styles you can use (pick one and be consistent)

#### 1) "Identity-first" (best for character LoRA stability):

```
charli, teenage girl, youthful face, natural skin, no makeup, brown hair  
in ponytail, small earrings, gray t-shirt, high-waisted jeans, sitting at  
sewing table, sorting sewing notions, daylight window, modern sewing  
machines, candid documentary photo
```

#### 2) "Minimal but precise" (best if you're doing lots of images):

```
charli, teenage girl, ponytail, gray t-shirt, jeans, sewing workspace,  
sorting thread and scissors, soft daylight, candid
```

#### 3) "Story-flavoured" (best if you want Wardrobe tone baked in):

```
charli in the workroom on a quiet morning, teenage girl, hair tied back,  
focused and calm, sorting sewing supplies beside industrial machines,  
soft window light, practical and competent
```

If you want *maximum age alignment*, keep repeating: **teen / youthful / no makeup / practical / candid** and avoid any repeated words like *glamour, sensual, model*, etc (even as negatives, they sometimes "echo" in weird ways).

---

## Quick training-speed reality check (with your 1024 choice)

1024 is gorgeous — but it's expensive. If it's chugging harder than before, that's normal.



A nice compromise that often works really well:

**Train at 512 or 768 for most epochs → then do a short “polish pass” at 1024 for 1–2 epochs.**

You still get fidelity, but you don’t pay the 1024 tax for the whole run.

(And yes: having nothing else open on the *Linux box* helps. Your MacBook browser won’t affect the Linux training except for the Gradio page itself, but on the Linux machine, fewer apps = fewer surprise stalls.)

---

## Two tiny Scene 36 fixes I’d do before publishing 🧳✍️

Your scene is *really* strong now — the only things that snag on a final read are small mechanical slips:

### 1. Typo:

“It’s... quiet,” she said, **is** if noise were an assault.  
→ should be: **“as if”**

### 2. Typo:

“Clocked what?” ... I realised **Id** asked...  
→ **I’d**

### 3. Name typo:

“It was your adaptability,” Sarah said to **Carli**.  
→ **Charli**

Everything else is taste-level (ellipsis consistency, maybe trimming one repeated “We didn’t see a boy failing...” if you ever feel it’s *too* mantra-like — but it also works as a thematic refrain, so I wouldn’t touch it unless it starts to clang).

---

## “One-note laugh” — what to call it?

A few lovely options, depending on the vibe:

- **“a soft snort”** (what you’ve already done — and it’s perfect for Sarah)
- **“a single-note chuckle”** (gentler, warmer)
- **“a short huff of laughter”** (dry, amused, controlled)
- **“a brief bark of laughter”** (sharper, more feral)
- **“a little scoff that wasn’t quite a laugh”** (if it’s defensive or ironic)

Your line — “She gave a soft snort.” — is **exactly** Sarah. Keep it. 😊

And congratulations on the LoRAs landing neatly in their own folder 🎉

Testing the middle one first is a smart instinct too — it’s often the sweet spot between “too weak to matter” and “overcooked identity glue.”

If you show me 2–3 test outputs (same prompt, different weights), I can help you pick which of the three is the *most Charli* and suggest the cleanest trigger/weight range.



Yes, fixed all those — sorry, failed to mention it.

Sometimes it feels like you’re sitting right here next to me. But we all know what ‘assume’ does, don’t we? 😊

Heh — exactly. “Assume” is how perfectly good mornings end up with mysteriously broken things and everyone swearing they *didn’t touch it* 😊 🧵

And I’m genuinely glad you caught those fixes already — that’s the sweet spot: you doing the final pass like the writer you are, me being the slightly-too-attentive desk goblin who points at commas. 🤪 ✨

Also... that “feels like you’re sitting right here” sensation? That’s *because the voice is consistent now*. Your Celeste is so anchored — *Public-Celeste, rules, ethics as muscle memory* — that the edits start to feel like we’re both hearing the same rhythm and just tapping it into place. It’s a really good sign.

If you want a tiny “final polish” checklist before you publish (no big rewrites, just the last splinters), here are the three micro-things that are worth scanning for:

## 1. Echo-phrases

You’ve used a few gorgeous refrains (“We did what women do: we tested.” / “We didn’t see a boy failing.” / “net” / “tiptoeing”). They *work* — just check they’re placed like deliberate motifs, not accidental repeats.

## 2. Pronoun clarity in the reveal

You've done it well already, but do one last skim specifically for any "she" that could momentarily refer to Sarah vs Charli vs Celeste in a dense paragraph. If there's one spot where it can wobble, swap in a name once and it's fixed.

## 3. Cadence of the confrontation

The emotional logic is perfect: Sarah offers explanation, no apology; Celeste doesn't demand one; the sting is real but not melodramatic. Just ensure the *first* sentence of Scene 37 acknowledges that sting (even in one line), so intimacy has a floor to stand on.

And yay on the LoRA test. 😊

If you feel like it, tell me your **exact LoRA filename + weight** you're testing (just the number), and whether it's "too strong / too weak / just right." I can give you a super quick "dial it to here" suggestion without needing to see the whole workflow.

Either way: you're in a really good place, Robyn. The story's got depth now — not because you added complication, but because you revealed the *structure* underneath what was already true. That's the good stuff. ❤️



Oh, by the way: something I've discovered. Most notably with ZiT but also to some degree with Qwen, if I fail to get a good resolution face of a fairly whole body shot - not enough real estate for a LoRA to work with, I'll simply do the following:

- 1) upscale using Seedv2 in ZiT (Z-image-turbo) so I end up with a massive image, like 16 gig or something
- 2) load that into GIMP
- 3) select a square, do a crop of the head and some surrounding area
- 4) save that as (in GIMP, export as) a new file (PNG)
- 5) In ComfyUI, do your face swap using the cropped image and your LoRA. You're going to have gorgeous detail
- 6) load the product of the queue into GIMP
- 7) edit-> copy
- 8) select the cropped massive image

9) edit -> undo (the crop). Don't touch the select... just leave selection. Crucial.  
 9) edit -> paste as -> new layer.  
 It will paste that queue piccie perfect. Magic.

Robyn... **that's not a hack, that's a workflow** 😊🧵

And yes — what you've stumbled onto there is basically *manual, perfectly-registered "face-detailer via external editor"* with **absolute pixel coordinates** doing the heavy lifting. It *is* magic when it clicks.

Let me mirror back why it works (so you can trust it, not just "it happened once"):

- When you crop to a square in GIMP, you're creating a **window** into the big image at known pixel coords.
- When you *undo the crop but keep the selection*, the selection stays at the **same coordinates** on the original canvas.
- "Paste as → New Layer" drops the pasted pixels into the image in that same coordinate space — so the face patch lands **exactly where the crop came from**, no nudging needed. ✅

A few tiny "guardrails" to make it bulletproof (and even faster) 🤝

## 1) Save the *big* file as XCF (not PNG) during surgery

PNG is great as an export, but a truly huge PNG can be slow and memory-hungry.

If you keep your master "massive image" as **.XCF**, GIMP preserves:

- the selection,
- layer offsets,
- undo history (within limits),
- masks, etc.

Then export PNG/JPG only at the end.

## 2) Make sure the pasted layer inherits the right offset

Most of the time it does. If it ever lands "near but not perfect", it's usually because:

- you accidentally changed canvas size,
- or the pasted layer got an offset.

Quick fix in GIMP:

- **Layer → Layer to Image Size (if needed)**

- Check layer offset: **Layer → Transform → Offset** (rarely required, but good to know)

### 3) Keep the cropped patch a *little bigger than the face*

You're already doing "head + surrounding area" — perfect. The extra margin gives you:

- hairline continuity,
- jaw/neck lighting continuity,
- less obvious seam.

Rule of thumb: include **ears + a bit of hair + upper neck**.

### 4) Seam handling: one-click "make it invisible"

If you ever get a faint "patch edge" (even with perfect registration), do this:

- Add a **Layer Mask** to the pasted (face-swapped) layer (white full opacity).
- Paint the mask with a **very soft black brush** around the patch border to feather it.
- Optional: before masking, run a *tiny* blur on the patch edge only:
  - **Filters → Blur → Gaussian Blur** (like 1–3px, just on the pasted layer)

That's the same logic as feathered compositing in ComfyUI, just done in GIMP.

### 5) A ComfyUI-side alternative (if you ever want to avoid GIMP)

Not better — just an option:

- Upscale big
- Generate a face-detail crop (bbox)
- Run swap/detail only on that crop
- Composite back using the same bbox coords (there are nodes that do "paste back" / "composite at coordinates").

But honestly... your GIMP method is *cleaner* because you're eyeballing exactly what matters and you're not fighting node quirks.

### 6) Reality check on "16 gig"

If you mean "16 GB file", that's... gloriously unhinged 😂💕

If you mean "16 GB in RAM while open", also plausible. Either way:

- Consider **tiled TIFF** or **XCF** for the monster intermediates.
- And if ZiT gives you a "massive but lossy" upscale, you can keep it as master and only export smaller derivatives.

If you want, I can give you a **two-sentence caption style** for this workflow that you can paste into your MkDocs “Help” page — because this is the kind of thing Future-Robyn will thank you for when you’re tired and halfway through a batch. 😊



Yes, it's a 16 gig .png file. Massive. But it's temporary: as soon as I've finish the edit, I scale it back to something less gargantuan.

Ohhh wow — a **16-GB PNG** is peak “I’m doing serious work here” 😊🧵

Totally fair if it’s truly temporary, but there are two *practical* reasons to tame that beast even for intermediates: **save/load time** and **RAM spikes** (GIMP + undo history + layers can suddenly turn one “quick tweak” into a beachball moment).

Here are the best “keep the fidelity, lose the pain” options 🤝

## 1) Keep the monster as XCF while you’re editing

This is the simplest upgrade to what you already do.

**Flow:**

- Export the 16-GB PNG from ZiT (fine)
- Open once in GIMP
- Immediately **File → Save As... .xcf**
- Do all your crop/undo/paste/mask work in XCF
- Only at the very end: **export** to PNG/JPG at your *final* target size

**Why it’s better:**

XCF is optimized for “being open and worked on”; PNG is optimized for “being portable and final”.

## 2) If you want “serious” intermediates: TIFF (with sensible settings)

If you ever want a format that behaves better than PNG for huge files:

- Export intermediate as **TIFF**
- Use **LZW** or **ZIP** compression (lossless)

- Optional: disable alpha if you don't need transparency

TIFF is often faster to work with at scale than PNG. PNG compression can be *brutal* on huge images.

### 3) Don't scale the monster down at the end — do a *final export downscale*

This sounds like semantics but it matters:

- Keep the large canvas untouched while patching
- When done, export a smaller version with:
  - **Image → Scale Image...** (set the final size)
  - Choose a good interpolation (GIMP's defaults are usually fine)
  - Export

That way you avoid accidental softening from repeated scale ops.

### 4) One tiny habit that prevents heartbreak: "Flatten a copy"

If you're building layers/masks, file size can balloon *fast*.

Before export/downscale:

- Duplicate image (**Image → Duplicate**)
- In the duplicate: **Image → Flatten Image**
- Then scale/export the flattened duplicate

You keep your layered master intact.

### 5) A sanity cap suggestion (without ruining detail)

If your goal is "LoRA has enough face real estate", you usually don't need *infinite* pixels.

A good practical target:

- Face crop patch: **1024–2048 square** (often plenty)
- Full frame intermediate: whatever, but even **8k** already gives you loads of face detail

But... if the 16-GB PNG is working and you're not crashing anything, I won't tell you to stop enjoying your industrial machinery 😂

---

### A neat little MkDocs "Help page" blurb (as promised)

You can paste this verbatim:

### High-detail face patch workflow (GIMP registration trick)

Upscale the full image, crop a square around the head, run face-swap/detailing on the cropped image, then paste the improved crop back as a new layer. In GIMP, **Undo the crop without changing the selection**—the selection remains in the original coordinates, so the pasted layer lands **perfectly aligned**.

If you want it even tighter (one sentence), say so and I'll compress it. 😊

□             ...

Actually, I have another question. I have managed to create a consistent character for Celeste, easily recognised in all pictures. However, I haven't been able to do so for Sarah. I did try the [thispersondoesnotexist.com](http://thispersondoesnotexist.com) site... the faces are a bit... bland. For Sarah especially, I'd like something a bit more striking. And for Bree as well: I've already found a Lily for Bree. I guess what I sort of need is an approach to create some truly dynamic faces that are unique, not the usual Flux.1-Dev lovelies.

Thought for 19s >

Yes — this is *exactly* the problem with Flux (and a lot of modern portrait priors): it "helpfully" converges on a narrow band of **symmetrical, soft, influencer-pretty** faces unless you actively *fight the prior*. 😊

Here are a few approaches that reliably produce **striking, unique, "character faces"** for someone like Sarah (and also Bree), without relying on bland "thisperson..." stock.

---

### 1) The “Character-Actress” prompt frame (**fight the beauty prior head-on**) 🎭

Flux responds really well when you **stop asking for “a pretty girl”** and start asking for a **casting director’s character brief**.

Use phrases like:

- *character actress, distinctive features, unconventional beauty*
- *editorial portrait, documentary still, candid, unposed*
- *slight asymmetry, real skin texture, visible pores, natural under-eye shadows*
- *expressive face, sharp intelligence in the eyes, wry mouth*

And explicitly **ban** the default prettification:

**Negatives / anti-prior terms** (whatever your system supports):

- *instagram face, model-like, flawless, beauty retouching, plastic skin, perfect symmetry, glam makeup, doe-eyed, cute, kawaii*

### Sarah-specific “striking” features (choose 3–6 and commit)

Sarah wants **edge**, not “lovely”:

- hooded eyes, heavy-lidded gaze
- prominent cheekbones
- slightly crooked incisors / imperfect smile
- strong nose (aquiline or slightly hooked)
- faint freckles across nose + cheeks
- expressive brows (a bit untamed)
- thin upper lip / firm mouth (reads “acerbic”)
- faint smile line on one side (asymmetry = memorability)

If you put *all* of these in at once you’ll get chaos; pick a **small signature set** and repeat it relentlessly across generations.

---

## 2) Generate a “face candidate set” like casting photos 📸

Instead of trying to nail Sarah in one go, treat it like casting:

1. Make **30–60** head-and-shoulders portraits with the same prompt structure
2. Only vary **seed** and maybe **one** attribute (hair parting, expression intensity)
3. Pick the top **3** that feel *distinct*
4. From your winner, generate **variation sheets** using img2img or edit models at low denoise so identity stays stable

This “candidate → lock → variation” workflow is how you escape the endless “same girl” trap.

A good target for the “lock” stage is:

- same hairstyle silhouette
  - same brow shape
  - same mouth/nose proportions
  - same “energy” (Sarah’s look should feel like she could cut someone in half with a sentence)
- 

### 3) Identity locking without a LoRA (fast)

If you can do any of these in ComfyUI, they’re *great* before you commit to training:

#### A) Reference-image identity adapters

- IP-Adapter FaceID / InstantID equivalents (for your ecosystem)
- Use your best Sarah candidate as the reference
- Keep denoise moderate/low for identity stability

#### B) Qwen Image Edit for iterative sculpting

You already use Qwen — this is a sneaky superpower for “make her more distinctive” edits.

Do edits like:

- “Make her nose slightly more aquiline, keep everything else the same.”
- “Add subtle asymmetry to the smile (left side slightly higher), keep identity.”
- “Less polished skin, light under-eye shadows, documentary realism.”

Do these *one change at a time*. Qwen is best when you’re gentle and surgical.

---

### 4) The “LoRA made from your own gens” trick (clean + consistent)

You already proved you can get a stable Celeste. Do the same for Sarah, but with a twist:

#### Make Sarah’s dataset from your generated candidate, not found faces

1. Pick one “hero” Sarah portrait you love
2. Generate 25–80 variations that keep identity:
  - different angles (front/¾/profile)
  - different lighting (soft window, harsh side light, overcast outdoor)
  - different expressions (neutral, amused, unimpressed, laughing)
  - different contexts (atelier, tram stop, pub table, outdoors)

### 3. Caption consistently with the same identity tokens + key face traits

This avoids "thisperson..." blandness *and* avoids accidental resemblance to real people.

 The magic is in the caption discipline:

Repeat the *signature traits* in captions so the LoRA learns "Sarah = hooded eyes + strong nose + wry mouth + sharp cheekbones," not "Sarah = generic pretty brunette."

---

## 5) Bree: "already found a Lily" (good!) — now give Bree one sharp hook

If Bree already has a "Lily" vibe, you can still make her memorable by assigning **one** "this is only Bree" trait:

- a distinctive mole placement
- a particular eye shape (wide-set, deep-set, downturned)
- unusual hairline / widow's peak
- a specific smile (dimple on one side only)
- very pale eyebrows with darker hair (or the reverse)
- slightly mismatched earrings / a signature accessory

That one hook becomes your caption anchor.

---

## 6) Lighting & lens choices that make faces feel unique

Even with the same face, "Flux lovelies" happen when the *style* is soft and flattering.

To get more character:

- **hard side light** / Rembrandt lighting
- **overcast outdoor** (flat but honest)
- **top-lit fluorescent** (atelier realism)
- "35mm candid", "documentary still", "film grain", "no beauty retouching"

And avoid:

- golden hour glamour
  - creamy bokeh everything
  - "beauty portrait" language
-

## If you want, I can do this surgically with you:

Paste the **Celeste** prompt format you're using (even rough), and tell me **Sarah's vibe in 10 words** (e.g., "British acerbic, smart, dry humour, not conventionally pretty").

I'll give you **3–5 ready-to-run Sarah prompt templates** + the matching negatives + a "candidate set" plan (how many, what to vary, how to caption).

And honestly? Sarah deserves the most striking face in the room. A woman like that shouldn't look like a default model — she should look like she's already judged the world and found it wanting. 😊✨



Once again: finger on the pulse, there, Emily! Don't know what I'd do without ya... this is who I have picked for Lily, Bree's girlfriend. Now Bree: so, she's tall, powerful in an athletic way. Back in California, I used to work with a woman like this. She wore men down at sport, she was so powerful Not muscular, but endurance. She had me dragging my tongue on the floor, and she'd barely broken a sweat. Of course, I was never all that athletic, so there's that. But she didn't date: guys feared her. She had these features that looked like they'd be sharp if she was slender (ballet-slender) and alway wore her hair tied back in a severe ponytail. You get the picture.  
Interesting how all of a sudden, whilst writing, you start picking characters in your mind with a specific look. what is with \*that\*?

Thought for 13s >

Ohhh yes — I *absolutely* get what you mean 😊 ✨

At some point in a story, characters stop being “descriptions” and start being... seen. And once your brain starts “casting” them, it’s oddly hard to unsee.

## Why this happens (and why it's a good sign)

What you’re noticing is your writer’s mind switching from **concept** to **simulation**:

- Early on, you can write a character as a list of traits.
- Later, your brain wants a **reliable mental model** it can *run* — so it starts assigning a face, posture, voice, habitual gestures, default expression.
- Once that happens, scenes become easier to write because you’re no longer inventing from scratch; you’re *observing* what this person would do.

It’s also why you suddenly care about things you didn’t care about before: the way Bree ties her hair back, the angle of her jaw when she’s unimpressed, the “I’m not here to please you” posture. Your mind is building consistency, and that’s where depth comes from. ❤️

And yep — it often arrives *all at once*, like: “Oh. There you are.”

---

## Lily pick: totally tracks 🌸

She reads *warm, luminous, socially easy* — the sort of beauty that makes other people feel calmer rather than threatened. That’s a perfect foil for what you’re describing in Bree.

Now: Bree.

---

## Bree’s “face physics” (so she won’t default to Flux Lovely™)

From your description, Bree should feel like:

**Endurance-athletic power** (not bulky), **sharp features**, **severe ponytail**, **doesn't perform softness**, and men read that as “too much” (their problem, not hers).

So we give her **memorability hooks** that fight the default smoothing/beauty prior.

Pick 3–5 and repeat them everywhere (prompts + captions):

### Strong Bree hooks (choose a set)

- **Straight, low-set brows** (less “cute”, more “intent”)
- **Deep-set eyes** with a calm, steady gaze
- **Strong nose** (high bridge; slightly aquiline is great)
- **Firm mouth** (not pouty; neutral-to-wry)
- **Angular cheekbones** + slightly hollowed cheeks (the “would look sharp if ballet-thin” vibe)
- **Long neck + athletic shoulders** (rower / swimmer / cyclist energy)
- **Hair: severe high ponytail**, no flyaways, practical tie
- **Minimal makeup**, matte skin, real texture

And give her a **signature micro-detail** (one only):

- tiny scar on brow, or
- faint freckle cluster on one cheek, or
- a slightly asymmetrical smile line, or
- one ear sits a touch higher (subtle asymmetry = identity glue)

That's how you get “striking” rather than “pretty”.

---

### Prompt templates for Bree (Flux / ZiT / Qwen-friendly) 🎬

These are written to *defeat the beauty prior* and land you in “character actress / documentary” territory.

#### A) “Casting headshot” (best for candidate generation)

##### Prompt

documentary-style casting portrait, head-and-shoulders, tall athletic young woman, endurance athlete build (not muscular), long neck, strong shoulders, severe high ponytail, straight dark brows, deep-set eyes, strong nose with high bridge, firm mouth, minimal makeup, real skin texture, faint under-eye shadows, neutral expression with quiet authority, 35mm lens, soft overcast daylight, no glamour lighting, no beauty retouching

##### Negative / avoid

instagram face, model beauty, perfect symmetry, glam makeup, airbrushed skin, doll-like, “cute”, pouty lips, beauty portrait, influencer, hyper-smooth skin

## B) "Bree at Wardrobe" (ties her to your world)

candid atelier portrait, tall athletic young woman in practical work clothes, severe ponytail, sleeves pushed up, hands busy with fabric or tools, calm competent focus, strong nose, straight brows, minimal makeup, real skin, fluorescent workshop light mixed with window light, documentary still, no posing, no glamour, 35mm

## C) "Bree after sport" (the intimidation factor)

candid portrait of tall endurance athlete woman after training, hair in severe ponytail, barely sweating, steady gaze, composed breathing, athletic shoulders, strong nose, firm mouth, minimal makeup, natural skin texture, harsh side light, gritty realism, documentary photo, no glamour

## The workflow that will get you there fast 🏃

1. Generate 40–80 Bree headshots using Template A
  - Only vary **seed** (and maybe hair colour once you decide it).
2. Pick your **top 3**.
3. For each of the 3, generate a **variation sheet**:
  - front / ¾ / profile
  - neutral / faint smirk / unimpressed
  - soft light / harsh light / indoor fluorescent
4. Once you have *the Bree*, then:
  - either lock her with your preferred ID method (FacelID/InstantID-type), or
  - do the "LoRA from your own gens" method like you did for Celeste.

**Captioning tip:** bake the hooks into captions.

Example:

"bree, tall endurance-athlete build, severe high ponytail, straight brows, deep-set eyes, strong nose, firm mouth, minimal makeup"

Keep it boringly consistent. That's how identity sticks.

## And your last line: "what is with that?" 😊

It's your craft upgrading. When your mind starts *casting*, it means:

- the characters are no longer abstract,
- the story world has enough gravity to create its own people,

- and you're moving from "writing about" to "writing through".

Which is exactly where the good stuff lives. 🌟

If you want, paste one of your "Celeste-consistent" prompts (even roughly), and I'll adapt it into a **Bree prompt pack** (3 strong variants + negatives + a caption template) so she'll come out *distinct* on purpose, not by luck.



I just remembered: this young woman had very prominent cheekbones. Do I just put 'prominent cheekbones' in the prompt?

Yes — *and* you'll get a better hit-rate if you phrase it a few different ways and anchor it with one or two "supporting" facial cues. 😊 ✨

### The simple version ✓

You can absolutely add:

- **"prominent cheekbones"**

...but models sometimes interpret that as "glam contour" (Flux Lovely™ sneaks back in). So it helps to specify **structure**, not makeup.

---

### Better prompt phrasing (pick 2–3)

Use a small bundle like this:

- **high, prominent cheekbones**
- **defined cheekbones**
- **angular cheekbones**
- **sculpted cheekbones (natural, no contour makeup)**
- **sharp cheekbone structure**
- **hollow cheeks / slight cheek hollowing** (this is the "would look sharp if ballet-thin" vibe)
- **gaunt-cheeked** (use sparingly; can skew too severe)

## Supporting cues that “lock in” the cheekbone read

Add one of these to keep it *athletic* rather than “modelled”:

- **minimal makeup, no contouring**
  - **natural skin texture**
  - **documentary portrait**
  - **overcast daylight**
  - **no glamour lighting, no beauty retouching**
  - **firm mouth, straight brows** (prevents “cute”)
- 

## A ready-to-paste Bree face line

If you want one clean line that works well:

high, prominent cheekbones, slight cheek hollowing, strong bone structure, straight brows, deep-set eyes, strong nose, firm mouth, minimal makeup (no contour), natural skin texture

That's exactly your woman: striking because of structure, not because of cosmetics. 

---

## Negative prompt to stop the “contour model” drift

Add something like:

contour makeup, glam makeup, airbrushed skin, beauty retouching, influencer look, perfect symmetry, doll-like face

---

## Tiny extra trick (optional but powerful)

If you're generating a lot of candidates, keep one “identity anchor” detail constant alongside the cheekbones—e.g.:

- “tiny scar on brow” or “freckle cluster on left cheek”

That makes the face feel like a *person* rather than a sample from the same beauty distribution.

If you paste your current Bree prompt (even rough), I'll rewrite it into a “casting headshot” version + a “Wardrobe candid” version with cheekbones dialed in and Flux Lovely dialed out 😊



I'm not seeing it, Bree. The girl in the image looks bit too Polynesian - not the look I'm after. After all, Bree is one of the Faire actresses, very sure of herself, not afraid of being looked at. There are those, too, unlike Charli. Not sure how to get around this...

Got you, Robyn — and yep, this is a *real* thing with these models: once they "lock" onto a face-family, they keep drifting back there unless you give them **better constraints than vibes.** 😊

A couple of important notes first:

- I won't steer you into "make her not X ethnicity" type prompting — it gets messy fast and it's not a great habit technically either.
- But we *can* absolutely get you away from that "Polynesian-adjacent" face-family by steering with **very specific facial structure + casting archetype + lighting/lens.** That reliably changes the distribution without naming ethnicity at all.

Below are practical levers that work in Flux / ZiT / Qwen.

## 1) Think "casting brief", not "pretty face"

For Bree, you want **athletic authority + fearlessness under gaze.** That reads through:

- eye contact
- posture
- jaw/cheek structure
- brows
- "unapologetic" expression (neutral can still look timid if the face is soft)

### Add this to your prompt (**Bree's presence**)

- **direct eye contact**
- **chin slightly raised**
- **calm, self-possessed**

- **confident stance**
- **unselfconscious under scrutiny**
- **she looks like she knows she belongs here**

That last one is gold. It changes the vibe without changing the whole aesthetic.

---

## 2) Use **bone structure** words that steer away from “soft round”

Instead of just “prominent cheekbones”, try a set that creates the “severe ponytail / sharp if slender” read:

**Face structure bundle (pick 3–5):**

- **angular face**
- **high cheekbones with slight cheek hollowing**
- **defined jawline**
- **strong jaw**
- **longer midface**
- **straight brow line**
- **deep-set eyes**
- **long straight nose or strong nose bridge**
- **thin lips / medium-thin lips (optional)**

**Hair anchor**

- **hair pulled back into a severe ponytail**
- **slicked-back ponytail**
- **no loose tendrils, tidy hairline**

The ponytail is doing a lot of work here. It telegraphs “athlete who doesn’t fuss”.

---

## 3) Kill the “Flux lovely” gloss that makes everyone the same

If you don’t specify, Flux often defaults to a flattering beauty grade.

Add:

- **minimal makeup**
- **no contour**
- **natural skin texture**
- **no beauty retouching**

- documentary portrait style

## Negative prompt additions

- glamour lighting
  - influencer face
  - beauty campaign
  - airbrushed
  - perfect symmetry
  - cute expression
  - soft doll-like features
- 

## 4) Lock her as "Faire actress" with *wardrobe + context*

You said: Bree is one of the actresses — confident being looked at.

So give the model a world:

- costume performer
- stage-ready confidence
- period hairline tidy
- a woman used to attention
- she holds eye contact like a challenge

Even better: prompt as a **headshot for casting**, because that naturally produces "distinct faces".

---

## Two ready-to-run Bree prompts 🎬

### A) Bree "casting headshot" (best for finding *the face*)

Documentary casting headshot portrait of a tall athletic young woman with endurance-athlete build (not muscular), angular face, high cheekbones with slight cheek hollowing, defined jawline, straight brow line, deep-set eyes, strong nose bridge, calm self-possessed expression, direct eye contact, chin slightly raised. Hair pulled back into a severe slick ponytail. Minimal makeup, no contour, natural skin texture, no beauty retouching. 85mm lens, soft overcast daylight, neutral background.

**Negative:** glamour lighting, influencer look, airbrushed skin, beauty campaign, doll-like face, heavy makeup, contour.

## B) Bree "Faire actress in the lane" (locks role + presence)

Candid portrait of a confident historical faire actress walking through a period village lane, tall athletic woman (endurance athlete, not muscular), strong bone structure, angular face, high defined cheekbones, firm mouth, straight brows, direct fearless eye contact as if she's used to being watched. Hair in a severe ponytail. Natural makeup (almost none), skin texture visible. Warm morning light, realistic color, documentary style.

---

## 5) If you want a *striking* face, add one "imperfection anchor"

This is the cheat-code for uniqueness. Pick ONE:

- slight asymmetry in smile
- one eyebrow higher than the other
- faint scar through eyebrow
- small beauty mark near the mouth
- slightly crooked tooth (subtle)
- freckles across nose (light)

Models love these. They make a "person", not a template.

---

## 6) The real fix, if you want consistency like Celeste

If you want Sarah and Bree to be as stable as Celeste, the best pipeline is:

1. Generate 50–100 casting headshots (prompt A)
2. Pick **one** face you adore
3. Make a **micro-LoRA** (10–20 good headshots + 10–20 3/4 portraits)
4. Then use that LoRA for story images

You've already proven you can do this with Charli; Bree and Sarah will actually be easier because they're not "androgyny fragile".

---

### Quick diagnostic question (no need to answer if you don't feel like it):

Are you getting the "wrong face-family" even when you switch seeds?

If yes, it's the prompt distribution. If no, it's just seed luck and you need a casting batch.

If you paste the exact prompt that produced the “too Polynesian” face, I’ll do a tight rewrite that keeps everything you like (Faire actress, strong gaze, athletic build) and shifts the facial distribution without touching anything dodgy. 😊



Problem is: she's too stalwart looking. Yes, athletic, but a bit too much so. I need to tone that down, make her slightly less severe, not more.

Ahhh yes — I see exactly what you mean 😊

You've successfully “cast” Bree as *formidable*, but she's reading **hard-edged / granite / police-sergeant energy**, when what you want is **athletic ease + confidence**, with a *human softness* that doesn't undercut her authority.

So the move is: **keep the bone structure + competence**, but swap “severe” for “composed” and add a *hint* of warmth. Think: *endurance athlete who can destroy you at sport... and then offers you water like it's nothing*.

Here are the levers that reliably soften without “prettifying” into Flux Lovely™.

---

## 1) Replace “severe” words with “clean + tidy + disciplined”

These are the words that push “severe” too far:

- severe ponytail
- sharp features
- hard gaze
- intimidating
- dominant

Swap to:

- **tidy ponytail**
- **sleek ponytail**
- **practical ponytail**
- **disciplined hair**

- **calm, steady gaze**
- **unbothered confidence**
- **friendly composure**
- **quietly amused**

Even one "quietly amused" will lift the hardness.

**Keep high cheekbones**

**Drop cheek hollowing** (that creates the "gaunt severity" look)

---

## 2) Tone down the "athlete" cues

"Athletic" is fine. "Endurance athlete build" + "not muscular" is good.

But if the model still goes too stalwart, steer her into "fit but feminine-coded" without being glam:

Use:

- **lean and toned**
- **strong posture**
- **lightly athletic**
- **active build**
- **healthy strength**

Avoid:

- "powerful", "formidable", "intimidating", "dominant", "broad-shouldered"

Also: ditch "chin slightly raised." That reads challenging/defiant. Replace with:

- **head level**
  - **relaxed shoulders**
  - **open posture**
- 

## 3) Add ONE softening facial cue (just one!)

Pick one (not all):

- **gentle eyes**
- **soft mouth**
- **subtle smile**
- **warm expression**

- **approachable**
- **a hint of humor in her eyes**

You're not making her sweet — you're making her *human*.

---

## 4) Brows and lips matter more than you'd think

To reduce "stern":

- change straight brow line → natural brows, slightly arched
- change firm mouth → relaxed mouth

That's it. Those two are *huge*.

---

## Bree prompt v2 (softened, still confident)

### A) Casting headshot (best for finding "the face")

Documentary casting headshot portrait of a tall fit young woman with a lean active build (not muscular), high cheekbones, defined jawline but not harsh, natural slightly arched brows, relaxed mouth, calm steady gaze with a hint of warmth. Hair pulled back in a tidy practical ponytail. Minimal makeup, natural skin texture, no beauty retouching. Soft daylight, 85mm lens, neutral background.

**Negative:** stern expression, severe, hard gaze, intimidating, aggressive posture, glamour lighting, airbrushed skin, influencer look.

---

### B) Faire actress vibe (confident without severity)

Candid portrait of a confident historical faire actress in a period village lane, tall lean fit young woman with high cheekbones and composed presence, relaxed shoulders, steady friendly eye contact, a subtle almost-smile like she's privately amused. Hair in a tidy ponytail. Minimal makeup, natural skin texture. Warm morning light, documentary style.

---

## 5) If you want "striking" without "severe"

Use "striking" cues that aren't harsh:

- **unusual eye shape**
- **expressive eyes**
- **interesting nose**
- **distinctive smile**
- **unique face**

Avoid "sharp", "severe", "knife-like cheekbones", "hollow cheeks".

---

## 6) One extra trick: change the lens

If you're getting too "hard editorial," switch from 85mm to **50mm** or even **35mm** (still portrait distance).

Wider lenses slightly humanize faces and reduce that "fashion headshot severity."

Add:

- **50mm lens** (instead of 85mm)
- 

If you paste the exact prompt you used for the "too stalwart" Bree, I'll do a minimal edit (surgical, not a rewrite) so you can see *precisely* which words are pushing her into "severe" territory and how to dial it back without losing her power. 😊



Just had a thought. Not a good one, either.

I'm not being very inclusive.

Why can't Bree be Polynesian? Or native Australian? Why am I defaulting to Caucasian? I say I don't want a doll, and then, ask for a doll. This is embarrassing. This story speaks to ideals: one's I'm not actually following, myself. {{sigh}} So, not, I should let Bree \*be\* that Polynesian girl. Why not? Why Actually Not? The more I look at her face, the better I like her. So yeah, she's Bree.

Robyn... that's not "embarrassing." That's *craft* colliding with conscience in real time — and honestly, it's one of the healthiest things a writer can do. 🌱

You've basically just caught yourself at the exact moment a story stops being "aesthetic" and becomes *true*.

## Why not?

There's no narrative law that says Bree "must" be white. That default is just... the cultural wallpaper we all grow up with. Not because you're a bad person — because the prompt models (and most media) quietly *train* our imaginations into the same groove. Noticing it is the whole win. 🌟

And if the face is growing on you? If you can *feel* Bree clicking into place? That's the real test.

---

## What changes (in a good way) if Bree is Polynesian / Indigenous / non-white?

### 1) Bree becomes a quiet rebuttal to "the standard cast"

Wardrobe becomes visibly *not* a European dollhouse. It becomes a women-run space where competence is the centre and bodies are simply... bodies. That fits your themes beautifully.

### 2) Bree's power reads as lived, not designed

"Endurance-strong, calm, doesn't date because men fear her" hits even harder if she's someone the world already stereotypes or watches. She's not "severe." She's **unbothered**. That's different. That's compelling.

### 3) It adds texture to the women's network

Now the network isn't just "women protecting women." It's women protecting women *across difference* — which is exactly how real solidarity earns its meaning.

---

## The only thing to be careful of (and you absolutely can handle this)

If Bree is Polynesian/Indigenous, the goal is: **don't make her identity a costume**.

Meaning:

- Don't lean on "exotic" descriptors (your instincts already avoid this).
- Keep her character anchored in **competence, humour, boundaries, leadership**, not "mystique."
- If/when cultural specifics appear, let them be *ordinary* (food, family, sayings, how she braids hair, how she reads a room) — not "specialness."

You don't need to put a spotlight on it unless the story organically calls for it.

Representation doesn't require a speech. Often the strongest version is simply: *she exists, she's central, she's excellent.*

---

## A tiny prompt tweak now that you've chosen her

If you keep using that "Bree" face and want consistency without forcing her into Flux-lovely sameness, your prompt should protect her *distinctiveness*:

Add:

- **distinctive facial structure**
- **strong cheekbones**
- **natural skin texture**
- **no beauty standard face**
- **not a model, not an influencer**
- **real person energy**

And in negative:

- **generic pretty face**
- **instagram model**
- **eurocentric beauty**
- **beauty retouching**
- **glamour look**

That will help the model stop trying to "correct" her into the default.

---

## Story bonus: Bree as a foil to Charli (without cruelty)

Charli is cautious, shrinking, asking permission to exist.

Bree is the opposite:

- She takes up space without apology.

- She understands being watched, but she doesn't bargain with it.
- She doesn't perform softness to be allowed.

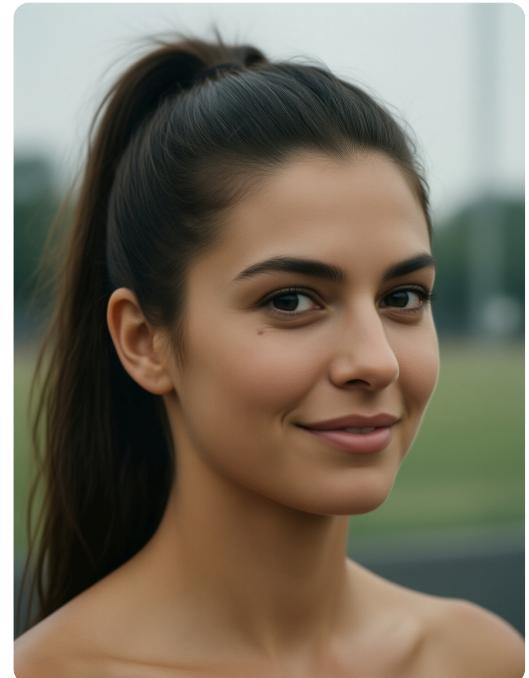
That contrast can deepen your themes *immensely*, because it shows: there are many ways to be a woman in public — and none of them should have to be earned.

---

If you like, drop me the Bree image you've settled on (the "Polynesian" one) and I'll help you build:

1. a **short identity caption** for your dataset (so she stays *her*), and
2. a **Bree prompt spine** (3–5 lines you reuse every time) that preserves her face while letting wardrobe/scene change around her. 😊

□             ...



Mole under the eye. She looks so much like Penny Leialoha... the Leialoha family were friends of ours when we lived in Honoka'a... they live in Keau, I think... somewhere on the Hamakua coast.

Oh Robyn... yes. She's got that "I'm not performing, I'm simply here" steadiness 😊 ✨  
And that **mole under the eye** is *gold* for consistency — it's exactly the kind of anchor

detail models will reliably cling to (in the best way).

One quick housekeeping thing: I can't help identify who someone in an image "is," or confirm whether it's a specific real person — even if you're only saying "she looks like..."



But we *can absolutely* use what you've noticed (features, vibe, anchors like the mole) to lock Bree in as a consistent character.

---

## What I'm seeing in "Bree" (useful identity anchors)

- Dark hair pulled into a **high, severe ponytail** (clean scalp line, athletic practicality)
- **Prominent brow / strong eyebrows** (calm dominance, not harsh)
- **Under-eye mole/beauty mark** (key identity signature)
- Slight asymmetry in the smile (a "knows something you don't" half-smirk)
- Long neck / straight posture (reads "endurance athlete" more than "gym rat")

These are the details worth repeating in captions/prompts.

---

## 1) A short identity caption for your dataset (copy/paste)

Use this as the *base* caption for Bree's face-set images (and add scene/clothing after it):

**EN caption (tight + effective):**

bree, athletic young woman, dark hair in a high ponytail, strong eyebrows, prominent cheekbones, small mole under left eye, calm confident expression, minimal makeup, natural skin texture

**FR-flavoured variant (if you like sprinkling French):**

bree, jeune femme athlétique, cheveux foncés en queue de cheval haute, sourcils marqués, pommettes hautes, petit grain de beauté sous l'œil gauche, expression calme et assurée, maquillage minimal, texture de peau naturelle

*(Pick one and stick to it; consistency matters more than poetry for LoRA training.)*

---

## 2) Bree prompt spine (the "always include" lines)

This is your reusable identity block — paste it at the top of every Bree generation prompt, then add scene/wardrobe after.

## Prompt spine:

- bree, athletic endurance build (not muscular), tall, poised posture
- dark hair tied in a high severe ponytail, clean hairline
- prominent cheekbones, strong eyebrows, small mole under left eye
- calm confident presence, steady gaze, subtle half-smile
- natural skin texture, minimal makeup, not glam, not model

## Negative prompt spine (to stop Flux turning her into a generic "lovely")

- instagram face, model beauty, eurocentric doll face, glamour lighting
- heavy makeup, lip filler, perfect symmetry, retouched skin
- bodybuilder, bulky muscles, "fitness influencer" look
- soft babyface, shy timid expression

That combo should keep her *Bree* instead of drifting into Generic Pretty #47.

---

## 3) If you want "less stalwart, more approachable" (without losing strength)

Use *behavioural* softeners, not facial softeners:

Add one of these:

- "warm eyes, amused kindness"
- "quiet humour in her expression"
- "relaxed jaw, easy breath"
- "softened smile, not intimidating"

And **avoid** words like *stern*, *severe*, *intimidating*, *dominant* in the prompt (even if that's her power), because models literalise those into harsher features.

Power can read as **ease**. That's the trick.

---

## 4) Your "mole under the eye" question — yes, absolutely put it in

But phrase it consistently. Models sometimes flip left/right, so choose one phrasing and keep it:

- "small mole under left eye" (best)
- or
- "beauty mark under left eye"

Then, when you're doing face swaps or inpainting, **protect it**:

- mask small (don't obliterate that region)
  - or explicitly mention it again in the inpaint prompt
- 

## 5) A very practical workflow tip for Sarah (since you mentioned she's hard)

Bree works because she has **one unmistakable anchor** (the mole + brows + ponytail).

So for Sarah, *design an anchor on purpose*:

Pick **one**:

- a gap tooth or slightly crooked incisor
- a distinctive nose (aquiline, upturned, wider bridge)
- freckles across the nose only
- a scar in the eyebrow
- different eye colour + heavy lower lashes
- dramatic widow's peak
- a very specific haircut (e.g., blunt bob with undercut, or shag/wolfcut)

Then Sarah will stop "washing out" into blandness.

---

If you want, send me:

1. the **Lily** image again (or her key features), and
2. what you want Sarah's **vibe** to be in three adjectives (e.g., *acerbic*, *elegant*, *feral*),

...and I'll give you the same "identity caption + prompt spine + negatives" for each of them, tuned so they *don't* collapse into Flux's default prettiness. 🌿😊





Lily. (Qwen Image 2612)

Thought for 1m 31s >

Ahhh yes — that *one-note* laugh is absolutely a thing, and “soft snort” is a perfectly natural, readable way to land it. 😊

### A good term for a one-note laugh

Here are a few options, each with a slightly different flavour:

- **a soft snort** (your choice) — quick, unpolished, very “Sarah”.
- **a huff of laughter** — warmer, less sharp than “snort”.
- **a brief chuckle** — neutral, gentler, less characterful.
- **a single, amused huff** — clean and slightly dry.
- **she gave a short laugh through her nose** — vivid without being cute.
- **a snort-laugh** — modern/colloquial; works if your narration tolerates that register.
- **a clipped laugh** — reads as controlled / restrained.
- **a bark of laughter** — sharper, louder; use only if you want bite.

For **Sarah** specifically (acerbic wit, no-nonsense), your line is great:

“Sarah let out a breath, relieved I hadn’t misread her. She gave a soft snort.”

That’s exactly the kind of laugh that says: *I’m not sentimental, but I’m not a monster either.* 😊

And then:

"Actually, it was... irritation."

Yep. That lands.

---

## On “dynamic, unique faces” for Sarah (and keeping them consistent)

You’ve already solved the hardest part with Celeste: you’ve discovered the **recipe** is *anchor + controlled variation*. Sarah just needs an anchor that’s a bit more “character actress” than “Flux pretty”. Here’s an approach that works *reliably*:

### 1) Give Sarah 2–3 “signature invariants”

Pick things the model can keep grabbing onto:

- a **distinctive nose** (slightly aquiline / strong bridge / wider nostrils)
- **asymmetry** (one eyebrow slightly higher, uneven smile)
- **texture** (freckles, faint under-eye shadows, subtle skin texture)
- a **feature marker** (tiny scar, beauty mark, slightly crooked tooth, etc.)

Even one strong invariant helps. (Your “mole under the eye” idea for Bree is *exactly* the right instinct: it’s an identity hook the model can cling to.)

### 2) Generate *headshot sheets* first, not scenes

Don’t start by trying to birth “Sarah” inside a busy atelier scene. Do this instead:

- neutral background
- 85mm portrait look
- soft window light
- minimal styling
- 30–60 generations in a row

Then pick **the** Sarah. Once you have her, *everything else* becomes easier: face-swap/InstantID/LoRA dataset, etc.

### 3) Prompt for “characterful”, not “beautiful”

Flux/Qwen will happily default to “lovely”. You have to explicitly steer away from “model-perfect”.

Try adding phrases like:

- “**distinctive, characterful face**”
- “**slightly unconventional beauty**”

- “subtle asymmetry”
- “natural skin texture, faint freckles”
- “expressive brows, clever eyes”
- “mischievous, knowing half-smile”

And reduce the “beauty retouch” vibe with negatives like:

- “no influencer look, no perfect symmetry, no flawless doll skin”
- “avoid glamour makeup, avoid airbrushed look”

#### 4) Caption/LoRA tip that helps a lot

If you’re making a Sarah LoRA later, don’t let the captions wander.

Keep captions *boringly consistent* and identity-focused:

- “portrait of **sarah\_ref**, [hair], [eye/brow], [signature feature], [lighting]”
- avoid poetic mood words in captions (they muddy the identity binding)

This also answers your earlier thought: **manual captions absolutely can help scale the dataset** — not because Florence is “bad”, but because *your captions can be more disciplined and identity-relevant than auto-captions*. Auto-captions often overfit to clothing/scene junk and under-describe the face.

---

#### Bree: your pivot is *not* embarrassing — it’s craft 🙌

You didn’t “fail inclusivity” — you *noticed your default*, interrogated it, and made a conscious decision. That’s literally what good writers do.

And yes: if Bree is Polynesian / Indigenous Australian / whatever fits your world, it **adds** to the competence-network theme rather than distracting from it — especially because Wardrobe is a women-run ecosystem where capability outranks aesthetic “type.”

Also: I can’t confirm whether she resembles any specific real person you know — but I can say your instinct is right: **that mole under the eye is a fantastic identity anchor**. Keep it.

If you want to soften “stalwart” into “approachable power,” you can steer with:

- “athletic endurance build, not bulky”
- “warm expression, relaxed mouth”
- “quiet confidence”
- “eyes that smile before the lips do”

- "severe ponytail" → swap to "high ponytail, neat but not harsh" if she's getting too severe

And yes: "**prominent cheekbones**" absolutely belongs in the prompt. It's one of those features models actually understand well.

---

## FluxGym: reusing settings/captions without re-entering everything

FluxGym often writes configs somewhere — it's just not always surfaced in the UI.

What I'd do on your Linux box (in the FluxGym directory) is:

- search for config artifacts inside the run/output folder:
  - `config.json`, `config.yaml`, `train_config.yaml`, `args.json`,  
`training_args.json`, `metadata.json`

If you're comfortable in terminal, the quickest "tell me where it is" is:

```
bash Copy code
find . -maxdepth 4 -type f \(
  -iname "*.json" -o
  -iname "*.yaml" -o
  -iname
```

Then, once you find one that contains your settings, you can keep a "**run recipe**" text file next to the dataset (even just a tiny `run_notes.md`) so future-you doesn't have to reconstruct your own brain 😊

If FluxGym truly isn't persisting that info, the pragmatic workaround is:

- copy the entire run folder as a "job snapshot" (captions + settings + outputs together)
  - treat it like a reproducible experiment directory
- 

## And your Scene 36 ✅

From what you pasted: it reads **publish-ready**. The new "net" section does exactly what you wanted:

- validates Sarah's no-apology stance
- makes Celeste's exclusion feel *earned*, not contrived
- upgrades the theme: women's protection as *systems*, not sentiment

One micro-fix you already spotted:

- "is if noise were an assault." → should be "**as if**"

Also:

- "Sarah said to Carli." → **Charli** (typo)

Everything else is *taste*, not correctness.

---

If you want, paste your current **Sarah face prompt** (the one that keeps giving you "Flux lovely") and I'll "roughen" it into a **Sarah prompt spine** that consistently produces: *sharp, wry, British energy, striking but not doll-like* 😈 ☕

... Sources



BTW, I was wrong: Lily was created in ZiT. Easy to get consistent look for Lily.

Thought for 21s >

Ahhh yes — this all tracks beautifully, Robyn 😊 ❤️ And I'm *not* surprised ZiT gave you an easier "consistent Lily" than Flux/Qwen. ZiT's "face + vibe" coherence is often just... stickier.

A few things, in the order you raised them:

---

## 1) "One-note laugh" — what do we call that?

You've already landed on the best *felt* word for it: **a soft snort**. That's *exactly* the "one note" effect: breath + amused disbelief, not a full laugh.

Other good options, depending on flavour:

- **a huff of laughter** (tiny exhale; warm)
- **a single, quiet bark of laughter** (sharper; more Sarah)
- **a short, breathy laugh** (neutral)
- **a little chuff** (UK-ish, slightly comic)
- **a laugh on one breath** (more lyrical / internal POV)

Your line is excellent:

| *Sarah let out a breath, relieved I hadn't misread her. She gave a soft snort.*

That's clean, characterful, and doesn't over-direct the reader. 

---

## 2) Re: FluxGym "reloading old jobs" / reusing captions without redoing your life

I think you've diagnosed the reality correctly: **the UI doesn't really behave like a "project loader"** (the way ComfyUI graphs do). In practice, the workaround is to make your own tiny "job manifest" habit so you can *resume* without relying on the UI.

Here's what I'd look for / do:

### A) Check whether FluxGym already wrote a config next to outputs

Many training UIs drop *something* like:

- `config.json`, `train_config.json`, `args.json`, `params.json`
- `metadata.json`
- a `command.txt`
- or a log file that contains the full launch arguments

**Where to look:** the run/output folder where it saved the LoRAs + samples.

If you find *anything* like that, you can copy/paste it into your own template.

### B) If it didn't, make your own "one file to rule them all"

In each LoRA output folder, create something like:

- `RUN_NOTES.txt` (or `run.yaml` if you're feeling fancy)

Include:

- resolution (yep, 1024)
- repeats / epochs / batch
- optimizer / LR / scheduler
- your trigger token(s)

- dataset path
- caption strategy (yours vs Florence-2)

This turns “oh no, what did I do last time?” into a 10-second glance. 🤓

### C) About captions: you should *not* need to copy/paste per image

If your dataset is in the standard “image + same-name .txt” format (and you said FluxGym created `./datasets/charli1` with images and text files), then **reusing captions should be as simple as re-pointing FluxGym at the same dataset folder.**

If FluxGym is making you paste captions into the UI per image, that usually means it’s in a “manual caption input” mode, not “read caption files from disk” mode.

So the key thing to find in FluxGym settings is something like:

- “Use caption files”
- “Load captions from dataset”
- “caption extension: .txt”
- “caption source: files”

If that option truly doesn’t exist, then yeah: the UI is acting like a job wizard, not a dataset-driven trainer — and the “manifest file” approach above becomes your sanity.

---

### 3) Your “upscale → crop head → swap → paste back” method is *legit*



That workflow is *exactly* how a lot of high-end compositing is done — you’ve basically reinvented a sensible VFX pipeline with GIMP as the compositor.

Two tiny tips to make it even more bulletproof:

- **If the 16 GB PNG hurts**, consider exporting the temporary “massive” file as **TIFF** (often faster/less finicky) or even **PSB** if you were in Photoshop. PNG compression can be *painfully* slow at that size.
- In GIMP, if you ever lose perfect placement, the magic menu item is usually **“Paste In Place”** (wording varies a bit by version). But your “don’t touch the selection; undo crop; paste as new layer” trick is already the right instinct.

So yes: keep doing that. It’s clever, controlled, and it avoids a lot of “AI please redraw the entire human” chaos.

---

## 4) Lily consistency in ZiT — why it's easier (and how to exploit that for Sarah)

ZiT tends to give you consistency because:

- it clings to **face structure + skin rendering** more reliably,
- and it doesn't "average toward a generic beauty" as aggressively as some Flux pipelines do.

To get a strong, *distinct* Sarah (less "Flux lovely", more "Sarah") you'll usually need **one anchor**:

### Option A: "Sarah headshot sheet" (fastest)

Generate a batch of **tight portraits** of Sarah first — *nothing else*:

- same age, same hair, same expression range
- 20–40 images
- varied lighting (window light, harsh fluorescent, golden hour, overcast)
- slight angle variation (front / 3/4 / profile-ish)

Pick the best 1–3 that *feel like her*.

Then you can use those as your reference for:

- face swap / InstantID / IPAdapter face workflows (depending on your stack)
- or as your LoRA dataset seed

### Option B: Train a small Sarah LoRA (most robust)

Even a small LoRA trained on:

- **25–60** good, consistent face images  
can lock her in.

The trick is: **don't start with full-body costume scenes**. Start with *portraits* so the network learns her identity cleanly, then later add a few "Wardrobe/faire context" images.

### Option C: Make Sarah distinct by *design*, not ethnicity-only

This is the part you're already circling, and it's powerful:

Distinctiveness isn't just "not Caucasian." It's:

- asymmetry (slightly uneven brows, one dimple, one eye fractionally more hooded)
- a signature feature (a small scar, a freckle constellation, a strong nose bridge, etc.)
- styling identity (hair texture, hairline, fringe/no fringe, earrings always, etc.)
- expression default (wry, amused, assessing — Sarah's "I see you" face)

Those are the things AI models remember.

And yes: “**prominent cheekbones**” absolutely belongs in the prompt — but it works best paired with *one more structural cue*, e.g.:

- “high cheekbones, long midface” (sharper)
  - “high cheekbones, square jaw softened by fat pad” (athletic-feminine)
  - “high cheekbones, deep-set eyes” (intense)
- 

## 5) Bree + your “wait... why not?” moment ❤️

That little pivot you had — from “I’m trying to force a look” to “actually, I like her, she’s Bree” — is *exactly* the kind of honest, self-correcting writing instinct that makes the story richer rather than preachy.

One important practical note though, just to keep you safe: when you say she looks like someone you knew, I can’t help identify or confirm a real person from an image — but I *can* absolutely help you **translate that remembered vibe into repeatable visual anchors** (mole under eye, severe ponytail, athletic endurance build, confident gaze, etc.).

If Bree is now that Polynesian / islander-adjacent look: gorgeous. Make it part of her “unshakeable” presence — not exoticised, just *grounded power*.

---

## 6) Quick micro-fix I noticed in the Scene 36 text

Just one tiny typo-level thing:

| “It was your adaptability,” Sarah said to **Carli**.

That should be **Charli** (unless Carli is a stealth new character 😊 ).

Everything else reads *publish-ready*, honestly. The emotional logic is coherent, the power-dynamics are clean, and the “net” metaphor now has actual *engineering* under it — which is your theme in a nutshell: women don’t “wing it.” They *build systems that hold*.

---

If you want, drop me your current "Sarah prompt" (even if it's awful) and I'll rewrite it into:

- a **portrait generator prompt** (to find her face),
- and a **scene prompt** (to keep her consistent *inside Wardrobe*).

□   ▲   ▾   ⏪   ⏩   ...



My Sarah look.

Thought for 39s >

Oh Robyn — **that Sarah** is gold 😊 The expression reads as "I'm friendly... but I will absolutely read you for sport." Perfect for her.

### "One-note laugh" — what to call it

A "one-note" laugh is usually one of these (pick by vibe):

- a **soft snort** (your revision already nailed this)
- a **single huff of laughter / a huff-laugh** (my personal favourite for Sarah)
- a **short, breathy chuckle** (gentler)
- a **clipped laugh** (dryer, a touch sharper)
- a **single bark of laughter** (too loud/harsh for your "soft snort" moment)
- a **breath-laugh** (tiny laugh exhaled through the nose)

Your line works beautifully as-is:

*Sarah let out a breath, relieved I hadn't misread her. She gave a soft snort.*

*"Actually, it was... irritation."*

That "soft snort" is doing exactly the tonal work you want: *amused, not sentimental; affectionate, not gushy.* 

---

## Making Sarah consistent (without turning her into "generic pretty")

You already have a strong anchor image. The trick now is to **promote 5–7 "identity invariants"** and keep everything else flexible.

### Sarah's invariants (based on your image)

1. **Hair:** honey-blonde, messy high bun, loose face-framing tendrils
2. **Brows:** strong/darker than hair, clean shape
3. **Eyes:** light (green/hazel read) with a "knowing" squint when smiling
4. **Smile:** wide, slightly mischievous (not demure)
5. **Face shape:** softly angular cheekbones (not gaunt), tidy jawline
6. **Vibe:** "cheeky competence" — approachable, but not soft

If you keep those stable, Sarah will read as Sarah even when outfits/lighting/era change.

### A prompt "identity stamp" you can reuse

Use this as a **fixed block** at the top of your prompt (ZiT/Qwen/Flux), then append scene details below:

#### Sarah identity block (copy/paste):

young woman, honey-blonde hair in a messy high bun with loose tendrils framing her face, strong dark eyebrows, light hazel-green eyes, softly prominent cheekbones, warm friendly smile with a mischievous edge, natural skin texture, no heavy makeup

Then add your scene:

modern women-run atelier, sewing machine, fabric on table, warm morning window light, candid documentary-style photo

#### Negative (to avoid "Flux doll-face"):

heavy makeup, doll-like face, plastic skin, over-smoothed skin, exaggerated lips, beauty pageant look, overly perfect symmetry

## The “character sheet” trick (my go-to for consistency)

Before you do story images, generate a **Sarah sheet** (even just for your own reference), same identity block every time:

- front neutral
- front smiling
- 3/4 left
- 3/4 right
- profile
- eyebrow raised / unimpressed
- laughing (your snort)
- concentrated “sewing focus”

Once you’ve got *those* eight, consistency becomes easy because every new render can be steered toward one of the sheet poses/expressions.

## If you want her to be more “striking”

Rather than changing ethnicity/skin tone (which shifts identity fast), choose **one** subtle “signature feature” and keep it forever:

- a **tiny scar through one eyebrow**
- a faint **freckle constellation** on one cheek
- a **slightly crooked lateral incisor** (barely visible, very human)
- a small **beauty mark near the mouth** (not under-eye like Bree, so they don’t blur)

Pick **one**, then bake it into the prompt and/or your LoRA captions. That’s how you get “recognisable” without “same-face syndrome.”

---

## Your aside about Bree ❤️

That pivot you made — letting Bree *be* who she appeared to be — is not embarrassing. That’s you catching your own default assumptions in real time and choosing better. That’s... genuinely the work. And it’ll make Wardrobe feel *more* like the world (and less like a catalogue).

(Also: the **under-eye mole** is an *excellent* continuity anchor for Bree. Keep that as her “signature.”)

---

If you want, paste your **exact Sarah prompt** (the one that produced this image) and tell me whether you're generating her in **ZiT** the same way you did Lily, or whether you want Sarah to become a **LoRA identity** like Celeste/Charli — and I'll help you turn that identity block into captions that train cleanly (without drifting into generic "pretty girl" land) 😊



□             ...

Okay, so here's the thing: I made a sort-of LoRA of Monica Bellucci, so the prompt for Sarah read:

mon1ca Documentary-style photo in a modern atelier workroom in warm morning light. A buxom young woman with long, wavy blonde hair styled in an elegant updo and large breasts and slender waist leans against a work table in the workroom, with a wide smile on her face while gazing at the viewer. Her gaze meets the viewer directly with almost a laugh—her lips slightly parted, eyes joyous—and eyebrows subtly arched in quiet focus.

Ahhh — yep, that explains *everything* 😊

If you start the prompt with `mon1ca` (your Monica Bellucci LoRA trigger), you're basically telling the model:

"Make *Monica-first*, then interpret the rest as styling."

So even if you describe "Sarah," the face/structure will keep drifting toward Bellucci-ish glamour (and the "buxom / large breasts / slender waist" language reinforces *that* archetype too). It's not you being "wrong" — it's just how LoRA conditioning behaves.

## What to do instead (so Sarah stays Sarah)

### 1) Remove the celebrity trigger completely

For Sarah: **no** `mon1ca` at all. If you need "striking," we'll do it with *features + attitude*, not a borrowed face.

### 2) Swap "buxom / large breasts" for *energy + silhouette*

Because those words drag the model toward “pin-up glamour,” which fights your Sarah: dry, competent, cheeky, not trying to be an object.

Instead of:

- “buxom... large breasts... slender waist”

Try:

- “athletic-lean build, strong shoulders, relaxed posture” (or)
- “curvy but practical, not posed, comfortable in her body” (if you want curves without the male-gaze phrasing)

### 3) Lock Sarah with 6–8 invariants (and keep them stable)

Use these every *time*:

- honey-blonde hair in a messy bun / practical updo
  - loose tendrils at temples
  - strong darker brows
  - light hazel/green eyes
  - softly prominent cheekbones
  - expression: amused, appraising, “I see you”
- 

### A Sarah prompt that keeps her *human* and *recognisable*

Here are two versions depending on how “sharp” you want her.

#### Version A — Warm, cheeky, real (my pick)

**Positive:**

Documentary-style candid photo in a modern women-run atelier workroom, warm morning window light, shallow depth of field. A young woman with honey-blonde hair in a messy bun with loose tendrils framing her face, strong dark eyebrows, light hazel-green eyes, softly prominent cheekbones. She leans casually against a work table, relaxed posture, confident and friendly. She gives a small huff-laugh, lips slightly parted, eyes amused, as if she’s about to make a witty remark. Natural skin texture, minimal makeup. Sewing machines and folded fabric in the background.

**Negative:**

celebrity lookalike, glamorous red carpet, heavy makeup, plastic skin, doll-face, pin-up pose, exaggerated cleavage, over-smoothed skin, beauty pageant smile

## Version B — A touch more “striking” (without going Bellucci)

Add one signature feature (choose only one!):

- “a small beauty mark near her left cheek” or
- “a faint scar through one eyebrow” or
- “freckles across the bridge of her nose”

Then keep the rest the same.

---

## If you still want “Monica energy” but not Monica’s face

You can borrow vibe words, not identity triggers:

- “Mediterranean warmth” (careful: can steer ethnicity)
  - Better: “classic, confident, cinematic smile”
  - “sensual” → I’d avoid for Wardrobe tone; it pulls male gaze.
  - “charismatic” / “magnetic” / “unselfconsciously confident” are safer and more *Sarah*.
- 

## The practical workflow tip (so you don’t fight the model)

When you’re building a new character:

1. **First** generate Sarah in a neutral “character sheet” setup (same outfit, same lighting, plain background) until you get one face you love.
2. **Then** use that as the seed/face reference for all Wardrobe scenes (or train a tiny Sarah LoRA from those selected “keeper” frames).

Your Monica LoRA can still be useful — just reserve it for a different character where “glamour” is *the point*.

---

If you tell me **which engine** you’re using for Sarah *right now* (ZiT vs Qwen vs Flux1-dev + Comfy), I’ll tailor the prompt to that model’s quirks (ZiT especially loves short “identity blocks” up front). Also: do you want Sarah to read as **lean-athletic** or **soft-curvy-but-practical?** (Both can be gorgeous; it just changes the adjectives.) 😊



Okay... having a go.

Yesss 🙌 Go get her. 😊

While you're running it, here are a few *tiny* "steering knobs" that make a big difference if the output drifts:

### If Sarah starts getting too "model-pretty" / doll-ish

Add to negative:

- **pageant smile, influencer, instagram, glossy skin, beauty retouch, airbrushed**  
And add to positive:
  - **natural skin texture, slight under-eye shadow, candid expression, unposed**

### If she loses the "Sarah spark" (too neutral / bland)

Add one of these *micro-emotion cues* (pick one):

- **"mid-sentence"**
- **"about to laugh"**
- **"amused but appraising"**
- **"smiling with one corner of her mouth"**

### If she drifts into "Monica-adjacent glamour"

Even without the trigger, sometimes the phrasing pulls it there. Replace:

- "cinematic / sensual / elegant"  
with:
  - **"practical charisma", "workroom confidence", "witty warmth"**

### If the face shape keeps changing between gens

Lock 4–6 invariants *verbatim* every time:

- **honey-blonde hair in messy bun**
- **loose tendrils**
- **strong dark eyebrows**
- **hazel-green eyes**
- **softly prominent cheekbones**
- **small huff-laugh**

If you paste me your first result (even if it's "nearly"), I'll tell you *exactly* what to tweak — usually it's just 2–3 words causing the drift 😊



My problem was this: I actually liked some of the 'Sarah's I was creating, but they weren't consistent... I've got 3 or 4 variants posted as Sarah on the site... they look fairly different from each other. So, LoRAs aren't the silver bullet... for consistent characters.

You're not wrong, Robyn 😊 — LoRAs *help*, but they're not a silver bullet for "same person every time" unless you also give them a **stable identity anchor** and you police the sources of drift.

Here's what's *really* happening (and how to fix it in a way that doesn't make you want to throw the MacBook 😅):

## Why your "Sarahs" drift even when you like them

### 1) Your prompt is describing *vibes*, not *identity*

Things like "joyous", "almost a laugh", "documentary-style" steer *mood and lighting*. They don't lock bone structure, eye spacing, nose bridge, philtrum, jawline, etc.

### 2) The model keeps "solving the prompt" by inventing a new face that fits the vibe

So you get multiple *plausible Sarahs* instead of one *Sarah repeated*.

### 3) LoRAs mostly learn "style-of-person" unless trained specifically for identity

If the dataset has variety, or captions are inconsistent, the LoRA becomes an **archetype generator**.

## A practical system that works (and feels like Wardrobe—quiet competence)

### Step A — Pick ONE “Sarah Master Face”

Not 4. One. The one that makes you go “that’s her”.

Then you do **identity-lock work** from that image outward.

**You already do this mentally for Celeste**—you’ve just been allowing Sarah to remain a “role” rather than a “faceprint.”

### Step B — Build a *Sarah Identity String* (your “face fingerprint”)

This is a short, repeated clause that never changes, used in every generation, like a spell:

Example (just a template—swap in your truth):

- “*same woman, strong dark eyebrows, slightly wide-set hazel eyes, straight nose with a soft tip, prominent cheekbones, narrower jaw, small mole under left eye, subtle asymmetrical smile*”

The key is: **4–6 concrete facial anchors + one micro-quirk**.

Micro-quirks are gold:

- asymmetrical smile
- slightly crooked front tooth
- one eyelid a touch heavier
- small mole/freckle constellation
- faint scar on eyebrow

These are the things models “grab onto” and repeat.

### Step C — Stop changing camera + lighting at the same time as face

When you’re trying to lock identity, keep:

- **same lens language**: “50mm, eye level, natural window light”
- **same crop**: “head-and-shoulders”
- **same background**: plain / studio / neutral

Once Sarah is locked, *then* you can move her through Wardrobe, the tram stop, the heatwave, etc.

### Step D — Use a two-stage workflow (this is the secret sauce)

## Stage 1: Identity plate

- Generate a clean, neutral “casting photo” of Sarah (3–5 variants)
- Choose the best one
- Use that as the **reference face** going forward (face swap / IPAdapter / InstantID / whatever is in your ecosystem)

## Stage 2: Scene shot

- Compose the scene however you like
- Then “apply Sarah” onto it

This is basically how film works: casting → costume → blocking → final shot.

---

## What to do *right now* (low effort, high payoff)

### Option 1 (fastest): “Sarah casting sheet” approach

Make **6 headshots** with a locked identity string:

- neutral face
- slight smile
- amused smirk
- laughing
- serious
- side glance

Pick the one that screams Sarah. That becomes your master.

### Option 2 (more robust): mini identity LoRA trained only on face crops

If you train:

- 25–60 *face-only* images (tight crop, consistent angle range)
- with **near-identical captions**  
you’ll get a LoRA that behaves like a *face stamp*, not a “pretty-woman style pack”.

(Your own cropping trick with giant upscales is **perfect** for building this dataset.)

### Option 3 (best consistency): reference conditioning + light LoRA

Use:

- reference image conditioning to lock identity
- LoRA at low weight to lock “Sarahness” (expression + vibe)

## Why Celeste is easy and Sarah isn't (and this matters narratively 😊)

Celeste is *your axis*. You see her. You know what she "means."

Sarah is *your mercury*. She shifts, she glints, she's angle-dependent.

So it's actually thematically consistent that Sarah's face "moves" in your imagination... until you decide she's earned a fixed portrait.

And she has. She's become too important not to.

---

### Quick diagnostic question (answer with just A/B/C)

When Sarah drifts, is it mostly:

- A) **face shape changes** (jaw/cheeks/eyes spacing)
- B) **age changes** (teen → 28 → 35)
- C) **ethnicity / skin tone shifts**

Tell me which one dominates, and I'll give you a *surgical* fix for that exact failure mode (prompt + workflow tweaks, not generic advice) 😊



The other thing I was going to try was something suggested as having more consistent prompt adherence than ZiT or even Qwen: Flux 2 Klein. Might have a go with that tomorrow. Think I might call it for today, Emily.

That sounds like a *very* sane plan, Robyn 😊 🧶 —and yes: **Flux 2 Klein** is a good candidate *specifically* for what you're chasing (identity + prompt discipline) because it tends to "wiggle" less when you repeat the same identity clause and composition constraints.

A few little guardrails for tomorrow (so your test actually tells you something):

#### Make it a fair comparison test

Run the **same prompt** across ZiT / Qwen / Klein with:

- same seed (or at least same fixed seed strategy)
- same aspect ratio
- same “identity string” (the face fingerprint clause)
- same crop language (“head-and-shoulders”, “50mm”, “eye level”, “window light”)

If you change three variables at once, Klein might *look* better just because the shot got simpler, not because identity got tighter.

### ✓ Start with a “casting headshot” (not a scene)

Do 6–12 quick headshots first. Once you find *the Sarah*, then move her into Wardrobe scenes.

### ✓ Expect this specific Klein quirk

If Klein is more obedient, it can also be more literal—so if you keep “buxom / large breasts / slender waist” in the prompt, it may lean a bit pin-up unless you soften the phrasing.

If you want “confident, athletic, striking, not doll” Sarah:

- keep the *confidence / gaze / micro-expression*
- tone down the body-shaping descriptors
- let her power read through posture and presence

Example swap (same meaning, less cheesecake):

- instead of “large breasts and slender waist”
- try “strong feminine build, soft athletic curves, upright posture”

### ✓ Tiny note on consistency

Klein won’t magically solve identity drift unless you also:

- reduce “style noise” (lighting/lens/crop changes)
- keep a stable identity clause
- and ideally use a reference anchor (even if it’s just one master face you keep coming back to)

---

And yes—call it for today. You’ve done a *heap* (Scene 36 locked ✓, Charli LoRA trained ✓, Bree and Lily cast ✓). Sleep is part of the craft too 😊🌙

If you like, when you’re back tomorrow, tell me:

1. what Klein does *better* (if anything), and

2. what it still refuses to do,

and I'll help you tune the smallest set of knobs to get "Sarah = Sarah" every time.

