

The first light of dawn hadn't even cracked the horizon yet, but Harper was already awake.

Not by choice this time, mind you. The basketball game happening inside her womb had seen to that.

"Y'all are doin' this on purpose," she mumbled into her pillow, her voice thick with sleep and Southern drawl. A sharp kick landed right under her ribs, and she winced, one hand sliding down to rest on the taut, mountainous curve of her belly. "I reckon that was you, troublemaker."

Harper had been a morning person her whole life. Growing up on the farm, she'd learned early that the animals didn't wait for you to feel ready. But this—this was something else entirely. She was overdue. Not a little overdue, not "oh, a few days late" overdue. She was *massively* overdue, carrying what the last ultrasound had loosely described as "a large brood" before the technician had gone quiet and just written a number on the chart that Harper still couldn't bring herself to look at again.

She lay on her side in the big brass bed, her belly a vast, pale landscape stretching out in front of her, the sheet barely draped over the curve of it. Her white maternity tank top had ridden up sometime during the night, bunching uselessly under her chest, which had also swelled considerably. The fabric was stretched thin even with its extra girth for the pregnant figure, straining over breasts that had gone from practical and athletic to heavy and round, pulling the cotton. Her jean shorts, unbuttoned and unzipped out of absolute necessity, sat low on her widened hips.

She stared at the ceiling.

"Alright. Up we go."

Harper planted one hand on the mattress and pushed. Her core, once toned and flat from years of hauling hay bales and mending fences, was buried somewhere deep beneath the enormous swell of her womb. She grunted, shifted her weight, and felt the whole mass of her belly shift with her, heavy and sloshing, the skin pulled drum-taut. Her belly button had popped weeks ago, sticking out like a little pink knob on the vast surface.

"Lord have mercy," she breathed, finally getting enough momentum to swing her legs over the side of the bed. She sat up, and the sheer weight of her stomach pulled her forward, her lower back arching to compensate. She looked

down. She couldn't see her thighs. She couldn't see her knees. She couldn't see anything below the upper curve of her belly, which rested heavy and warm in her lap, spreading past her hips on either side.

She sat there for a moment, catching her breath, hands cradling the sides of her belly. Beneath her palms, she could feel them. Moving. Rolling. The strange, fluttering pressure of tiny limbs sliding across the inside of her womb. A bulge pressed outward against her skin near her right side, a foot, maybe, or an elbow, and she gently pushed it back.

"Quit it," she said softly, but she was smiling. Her blue eyes crinkled at the corners, freckles dancing across her nose as her face warmed.

She stood. Or rather, she *heaved* herself upright, her back protesting loudly. The belly swung forward, a massive, pendulous weight that threw off her center of gravity entirely. Harper braced one hand on the nightstand and just stood there for a second, breathing, feeling the weight settle. Her tank top was now stretched obscenely across her middle, the hem nowhere near reaching the top of her shorts. The bare, taut underside of her belly was exposed, pale and round, streaked with faint lines where her skin had stretched faster than it wanted to.

She padded barefoot across the wooden floor, her steps careful and slightly wide-legged, the way you walk when you're carrying something fragile and enormous and precious in front of you (which she was). Her work boots sat by the bedroom door kicked off, one tilted against the wall, the other flat on its side. She nudged the tilted one with her bare toes and kept walking.

The farmhouse kitchen was small and warm, with yellow morning light just beginning to filter through the window over the sink. Harper's bare feet stuck slightly to the old linoleum. She loved this kitchen. It was simple, practical, just like her. A cast iron skillet on the stove, a percolator on the counter, a bowl of fresh eggs she'd gathered yesterday sitting (through MUCH effort) by the window.

She reached for the percolator first.

Her hand closed around the handle, and she pulled it toward her. Easy enough. She turned to the sink to fill it.

Her belly hit the counter's edge.

"Oof—" She looked down. The vast dome of her stomach was wedged against the counter, keeping her a good eight inches from the sink basin. She stretched her arm, trying to reach the faucet, but her belly was a physical barrier, an immovable wall of flesh and life between her and the tap.

"You've gotta be kiddin' me," she muttered.

She tried turning sideways. This worked..... sort of. Her belly still pressed into the counter's edge, but at an angle, and she could just barely reach the faucet if she leaned and stretched. The percolator filled. She set it on the stove and turned the burner on, then leaned back, exhaling.

Her belly was practically resting on the stovetop. The lower curve of it hovered just an inch above the burner grate, warm from the pilot light. She could feel the heat radiating against her taut skin.

"Okay. That's... that's a problem," she said aloud, tilting her head down to assess the situation. Her tank top had ridden up even further, and her belly was now almost entirely bare, the skin smooth and gleaming faintly with a sheen of warmth-sweat. She could see the faint blue roadmap of veins beneath the surface, and the angry red lines where the skin had stretched to accommodate its impossible cargo. It was enormous. It was *beautiful*, in a raw, primal way, the sheer visceral reality of it, the way her body had reshaped and morphed itself into something round and full and *ripe*.....

She shook her head, trying to focus. The coffee was on. Now the eggs.

Harper reached for the cast iron skillet and set it on the front burner. She retrieved the bowl of eggs from the windowsill—another challenge, since reaching forward meant pressing her belly into the stove, and she had to angle herself sideways again, her hip cocked out, one hand bracing her lower back, the other stretching past the vast curve of her womb to grab the bowl.

"Heck," she whispered, feeling the strain in her side. A muscle in her abdomen fluttered tight and uncomfortable, and she paused, breathing through it. Her belly visibly tightened under her tank top, the surface going hard and rigid for a few seconds before softening again. The babies shifted in response, a wave of motion rolling across her belly, visible ripples and bulges pressing outward.

She stood there, one hand on the bowl of eggs, the other cradling the tight underside of her belly, waiting for the contraction to pass. Her lips were parted,

her breathing slow and deliberate. Her cheeks were flushed pink beneath the freckles.

"...Alright. Alright, we're fine, I got this." she said to herself.

She cracked an egg into the skillet. It sizzled. The smell of butter and cooking egg filled the small kitchen, and Harper's mouth watered immediately. She was *starving*. She was always starving these days.

She cracked a second egg. A third. She reached for a fourth, and as she leaned forward to drop it in at the edge of the pan, her belly pressed firmly against the tip of the skillet's handle.

The skillet slid six inches across the burner.

"Oh, for crying out loud—"

She grabbed the handle and pulled it back, but now she couldn't see the eggs cooking. Her belly completely blocked her view of the pan. She was staring at a vast expanse of pale, taut stomach, the fabric of her tank top stretched to its absolute limit, a thin strip of bare skin visible between the hem and the waistband of her unbuttoned shorts. She couldn't see the stove at all this way.

She tried leaning back, arching her spine, tilting her pelvis. The belly lifted slightly, but it was so heavy and so full that the effort made her groan, her thighs trembling. She could just barely peer over the upper curve, catching a glimpse of the eggs sizzling in the butter.

"Gosh darn it," she breathed.

She turned sideways again, her hip against the counter, her belly jutting out to the side like the prow of a ship. From this angle, she could see the pan. She could also see herself in the reflection of the window over the sink, and it made her stop dead in her tracks.

She looked *massive*. Her belly was a perfect, towering sphere, round and smooth, thrusting out in front of her so far that it looked like it should belong to someone three times her size. Her lean, athletic frame made the belly look even more extreme by contrast, as if someone had inflated a weather balloon beneath the skin of the fit young farmhand. Her breasts, still heavy and full, sat atop the upper curve, straining her tank top. Her back was arched deeply to support the weight, the muscles in her lower back standing out visibly.

She blushed. The pink spread across her freckled cheeks and down her neck.

She looked *good*. She looked like something out of a renaissance painting, something primal and fertile and raw. The morning light caught the curve of her belly, the sheen of sweat on her skin, the way her body had transformed from lean and practical to ripe and breathtakingly full.

She cleared her throat and focused on the eggs.

The coffee was done. She poured a cup—again, sideways, her belly pressing against the counter's edge—and took a long sip. She sighed with contentment, leaning her hip against the counter, one hand wrapped around the mug, the other resting on the top of her belly, her fingers idly tracing slow circles on the taut skin.

A kick landed right under her palm. She felt the distinct shape of a foot press outward against her skin, stretching it visibly for a moment before retreating.

"Mornin' to you too," she murmured, smiling down at her belly.

She ate standing up, because sitting at the table had become an impossibility at this point. The eggs were good at least, simple, buttery, salty, and she ate them straight from the skillet with a fork, savoring each bite. Her belly gurgled and shifted as she ate, the babies inside apparently just as interested in breakfast as she was.

When she was done, she set the skillet in the sink and stood there for a moment, both hands on her lower back, arching slightly, her belly thrust out before her like a ship's bow. Morning sun poured through the window, catching her from behind, outlining her silhouette in warm gold.

She was enormous. She was exhausted. She was sore in places she didn't know could be sore.

And she hadn't even gotten to the **chores** yet.

"Alright, you little heathens," she said, patting her belly with both hands, her drawl thick and warm. "Let's go feed the chickens. Reckon y'all can wait a bit longer before coming out."

She waddled toward the door, paused, and looked down at her work boots by the mat. One was tilted against the wall, as always.

She stared at them.

Bending over was not an option. She hadn't seen her own feet in weeks, perhaps even months at this point.

She nudged the upright one with her toes, trying to hook it upright, and nearly lost her balance, her belly swinging forward and pulling her with it. She caught herself on the doorframe, breathing hard.

"...Shoot."

She left the boots by the door and stepped out barefoot onto the dewy morning grass, the cool wetness between her toes grounding her, the weight of her impossible pregnancy preceding her like the rising sun over the fields.

It was going to be a *long* day, but she was ready to face it head on, even with this burgeoning mobility limiter in her way!