

Thick As A Thief

by TrebleCleffy

I'm in the most dangerous place on earth: a goddamn *shop*. Fuck me, I wish Lorenzo was here.

I mostly shop online. Shampoo, gadgets, makeup, underwear; I order all of it. My clothes, I get in the mail and send back what doesn't fit. Just keep me away from the shops. Well, I can handle some shops, actually. Grocery stores, for instance. The urges don't hit me the same when the merch is food and drink.

I steal shit. I've done it for years. Since I was ten. Oh, you say, she's a *kleptomaniac*. Well, fuck you. The only thing I'm a *maniac* for is jalapeño poppers. And I'm no Danny Ocean. I got no brilliant, career-capping heist in me. There's no fucking ambition in my life of crime. A string of pilfers and pinches; that's my criminal resume. Not a bandit, not a burglar, and not a klepto—fuck you. A lifter. Just a lifter. I only steal from the shops and I do it on business hours.

This dinky corner shop is stuffed to the smoke detectors with tie dye shirts, natural lotions, scented candles, crystals, oil jars, bonsais, statuettes of Buddha and Vishnu and who the fuck knows who else. The place is like my last apartment: Filled with cheap, worthless crap no one needs. And, that's bad news for me cuz that's *exactly* the shit I love to steal.

And oh baby lemme tell you, I *could* do it. I am feeling the fuckin' urge today. Oooh, nice little spiral bound mindfulness calendar you got here! That white sage incense over there smells like the halls at the chapel from my Sunday school. And, oh hey! An amethyst pendant necklace with a sweet wire design wrapped around it in the shape of a tree. Mine, mine, mine, mine, *mine*. It's all garbage and I WANT IT.

Okay...okay, I need a lifeline.

I whip out my phone and send Lorenzo a message:

Laverna: *Im in the magic shop*

Laverna: Coping alright

Laverna: Miss you, babe ;)

Okay, that second text was a big, fat, lie. But, Lorenzo hates it when I get whiny. Gotta be strong. Lorenzo needs to know, I'm a goddamn adult.

"Seriously, are you just going to stand there and look at your phone all day?"

...The fuck? Who said that?

The store clerk is looking at me with the nastiest, most bitter face, like I set her dog on fire.

Oh, and did I mention this lady has the hugest fucking tits I ever saw? Any bigger and they'd be the size of her goddamn head. She's in a black slouch top tee with some spiritual mumbo jumbo design on the front. I guess the shirt's supposed to be baggy but it ain't on her. If I had a scalpel and stuck a *tiny* hole in the chest of that shirt, I swear, the whole thing would split open like an eyelid and everyone would have to duck and flee the booby avalanche. There's a bra strap, thick as a gauze roll, that goes up her one bared shoulder. Somewhere in the world this bitch found a bra to carry those fatass puppies. Seriously, what does titty princess got to be bitter about? In high school, the only A I ever got was at the lingerie store. Dammit. Lady, my own *boyfriend* wishes I had big tits. Count your blessings.

But...I don't say any of that out loud. No—I say, "I'm sorry?"

She straightens up and looks down at me like she's my fucking kindergarden teacher and puts her fists on her hips. And, yowza. Those are some hips. This crazy bitch has got more curve than a fucking protractor. "You're dawdling. Hurry it up."

"I'm browsing."

"Browse *faster*."

"Uh. Oh kaaaay..."

"It's noon. I want to eat lunch."

And I can't help but furrow a fuckin' eyebrow at *that*. "So...eat your lunch. I ain't stopping you," I say.

"If I go into that back room, you're going to rob me. So, I need to be out in the shop where you are to make sure you don't."

If this woman smashed me in the gut with one of those massive boobies, I wouldn't be more stunned. *Steal*. She just used one of my goddamn *words*. Does...does she know me? But...I've never been caught stealing—'cept for that one time...but she wasn't there! If she was, I'd *fucking* know it because those huge fucking monster tits really are something to write home about. "W-why do you think I'd *steal*?"

Curves for days looks at me like I'm just the stupidest little shit she ever laid eyes on. "Listen, I'm not going to get into it. I've seen enough brats like you loiter around in my store to know. Are you here to buy something?"

"Uh, yes actually."

"Then, bring it up here and *buy* it. I don't have all day."

"I haven't picked something out yet."

"Well, use that tiny, little brain and *pick something*."

What the fuck. What the *fuck*. She...she didn't need to talk to me like that. I-I wasn't doing anything. I didn't steal—

"And, stop staring at me!"

I slink over to the corner where all the little marbled stones are and hide my face.

Oh god. It's on. It's fucking *on*. This crazy bitch has me ass backwards. I'm here to buy a birthday gift for my friend, Gabby. You think I'd step foot in this dinky, woo-woo corner store out of personal interest? For that matter, you think I'd steal a *birthday gift*? I got a rule: lift or gift, and neither the twain shall meet. I don't make friends and family complicit in my thefts.

But, there is a mean bone in my body that could just teach this raging bitch a lesson. Hey, lady? Princess? Tittiest white girl? It don't fucking matter if you watch me like a hawk all goddamn day, I can steal something right out under your nose and you won't have a whiff of it even as I walk out that door. Don't think I didn't notice, lady, your one security cam is *off* and aimed at the window like you meant to surveil the fucking birds. Who's got the tiny brain now, huh? Not that a camera would stop me. I've dodged a dozen rolling cameras under one roof. I've done it a bazillion times. No one was the wiser.

I can see exactly how a theft would go here. It's all laid out like little red lines on the floor: turn here, pretend to look at that thing, grab the prize on your right, dawdle over in this corner, yawn, pretend to get a phone call, walk—don't run—out with the booty, wish your fake friend on the phone a nice day. Mission accomplished.

Yep. I could walk out of here with half these shitty rocks in my pockets if I wanted to. *If* I wanted to.

But, god fucking miserable dammit, I can't. This woman just ruined my day, but I can't. I haven't stolen a thing for four months. That's an honest-to-god record since I was fourteen. Fourteen! Yep. All you doubters and haters got me wrong. The lifting is getting better and I'm not gonna fuck it up today. Nope. I'm *not* a thief, you fucking bitch. Not anymore. I'm better than this.

Why, you ask, did I walk away from my very successful life of petty crime? Love. Yeah, that's right. I'm a hopeless romantic. I love Lorenzo with all my fucking heart and it ain't gonna do our relationship any good if I'm still pilfering jibjabs and shinies like I'm fourteen. I *promised* him I wouldn't do it anymore. The last time I stole something, he was so mad, he didn't talk to me for a whole day. It ain't happening this time. Not now; not ever.

And yeah, I wanna run out of this shitty place. But, am I gonna make a scene in front of the biggest cunt in the world? Noooo. I'm going to grab some overpriced piece of junk, take it up to that counter and pay her with this twenty in my pocket because the only thing I can do is show her: she's got me wrong.

Okay okay, what's the lucky item going to be? The amethyst pendant! Yeah, Gabby likes purple, doesn't she? Well, if she doesn't care for it, she can come here and tell the thickened wiccan her shit is lame and can she please have that twenty in store credit. Gabby'll probably have better

luck with her anyway, cuz Gabby ain't Puerto Rican. No prissy white girl like her gets flak for crimes she hasn't even committed yet.

So, I sidle on over to where the dangly stones on chains are all hung on little pegs, grab the amethyst tree wire pendant thingie and hold it above my head so snooty boobie bitch definitely sees I'm NOT STEALING and march around the display case to the register.

And, God help me, that's when I see it.

It's four inches high and incredibly female. And boy, did a statuette ever look like its owner because just like Queen Bitchface behind the counter, this naked stone femme has gigantic fucking titties and mountains for hips. Her arms are curled around her flat tummy and if she had fingers instead of slopes for hands, they would be intertwined.

And it's sitting right there, on the *other* side of the register. A display item and the shop owner wouldn't even be able to see me snatch it.

Oh god. Oh GOD. It's such an easy fucking lift and this bitch just chewed me out for being a thief. I could show her what a fucking thief is. All her BS vigilance and she just gave me a golden opportunity to teach her the ultimate lesson.

Don't do it, Laverna. Don't you fucking do it. Breathe. Just breathe, that's it. Think of Lorenzo. You make your fucking purchase and LEAVE. No more stores today. You're not a bad person. This bitch just has issues of her own. Okay? Okay.

I'm biting the life out of my nails to stop my dirty little fingers from grabbing the voluptuous stone lady off the counter while titty bitch store owner takes triple the speed it should take anyone to ring up one simple item. I really think she's *trying* to drive me crazy here. That's the only explanation that makes sense. But why? If she thinks I'm a rotten thief, wouldn't she be glad to get rid of me ASAP?

She gives me a face that looks like pure death. "Well?" She spits the words like acid in my face. "Where's your payment?"

Fuck me. She was waiting for me when I thought I was waiting on her. I dig through my pockets and find my wallet. My hands are so sweaty as I try to get my cash out, my fingers pull back nothing but clean air, over and over. Finally, I get the bill into my hand and hand it over. And, she gives me such a squinty eyed, you're-such-a-stupid-bitch face as she opens her ancient ass register, I feel like a slimy, disgusting worm under a rock.

Yeah. I'm not doing so great now. I've been crushed down so small that if this bitch pounds me any harder, there ain't gonna be nothing left to slither out the door of this shop. I should have left. Should've walked out that door the minute this lady gave me the stink eye. Now, my money is in her fucking hand. This is going to sit with me all damn day. Forget that—it's gonna set me back.

And, all the while, that boobalicious statuette stares at me. Okay, *stares* is a funny word here. The thing is carved with sheer surfaces. There's no sign of eyes, or even eye sockets, on that blank, stone, angular face, but still—I feel like she's looking at me, waiting on me...

Don't make me do it, bitch. Don't you fucking make me do it.

Evil Ass 'n' Booby Bitch McMeanie now moves in slo-mo as she so *delicately* tears a fucking receipt out from her decrepit 80's hand-me-down of a register. Then she turns with all the urgency of a library globe to get something and I get a front row seat to the fullest ass I ever saw fit in a dress. It's crazy, because this woman's waist is thin as a flagpole. I go cross eyed just trying to make sense of it. She spins back around, now with a paper back in her hand and she sticks the necklace along with the receipt inside it and shoves the bag at me like she left a turd in there to keep Gabby's gift company.

"There you go. Now get out of my shop, *please*."

And that's it. That's when my left hand *reaches* out and grabs the curvy stone lady off the counter. Lady McBitchface can't see me do it either, genius that she is. The statuette is behind the register, *exactly* where she can't see it. My quick little hand snatches it without a sound. My lungs are still. I don't take in any breath. Not now. In my jacket pocket the stone lady goes.

"Thanks," I mutter and clutch the bag in my right hand with my left clutching Miss Stonehooters inside my jacket. The store owner lady shows no indication she saw me do it at all. All she wants is for my miserable ass to be out of here.

Well, we agree on that at least. I turn and walk, walk, walk—don't run!—to freedom.

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I step outside. I'm dizzy, close to throwing up. I can barely breathe. I take a right and power up the block. A city bus hulks and clatters up the road next to me and thankfully doesn't eat me as it passes by. I walk to the end of the block, wait a year for a walk signal and then get to the other side.

Well, Laverna, four months of clean living and you just did the lift of your goddamn life. Congratu-fucking-lations. How much is this dumb statuette anyway? Fuck it, I can't look at it here. I don't even wanna see the fucking thing. I didn't *want* it, it was just there.

I sink back against the brick front of a Mongolian barbecue place and do my best to be sure it's only breath that comes out of my mouth and not stomach acid. The city is loud with honks and shouts and clatters and the whiff of hoisin sauce coming from the window next to me ain't helping my queasiness.

Well, I'm not sure I can tell Lorenzo about this lift. For one thing, this hot little item in my pocket could be worth a fucking fortune. If that's true, this ain't a community service-worthy violation. This could be real fucking time in the slammer. Lorenzo told me four months back, he said *I'd better not see any cops at my door cuz you did some dumb shit in a shop*. If Lorenzo finds out

about this, we're through. He'll leave me. Honestly, I don't think he even wants to know about this. I wouldn't if I were him. I'd only be putting him in danger if I did.

Oh god, I can't stand this. This wasn't supposed to happen. That fucking bitch has no idea how bad she ruined me. Okay...okay, get a grip, Laverna. You didn't get caught. The store clerk *probably* doesn't know your name. You paid with cash so there's no credit card transaction to trace back to you. She didn't see you do it. She probably thinks her little, stone Mini Me is still there behind that eyesore of a register. You'll never go to that place again. Fuck it—cordon yourself out of this whole fucking neighborhood while you're at it.

First thing's first, you need to get rid of this little stone lady, throw her in the trash somewhere. But, not here. Gotta get further away. Another corner of this city where the chances of someone finding this hot little item and tracing it back to you are *zero*. So, here's what you're gonna do: get on a bus, ride out to Hillsboro, send this little lady off in the nearest dumpster and then go have a cup of coffee. Put yourself back together. You see Gabby at 3:00. That's less than four hours away. Gotta look halfway human or you'll embarrass yourself.

I take a short walk so I can pick up the bus somewhere that's further from the store than where I got off. The stop is next to a dingy gas station and with the clouds getting thick and murky above me, there ain't much beauty to cheer me up, but at least I'm alone here.

Something about that lift was wrong. Not just the statue itself, or the bitchy store clerk who ruined my day or the fact I promised Lorenzo—promised myself—I'd never steal again. When I pull off a lift, there's a buzz, a tingle in the back of my neck. It's that rush, that knowing I was *this* close to danger, and I pulled through. The universe gave some people more things; some people less—and I said *no*. *This thing is also mine*. It's petty, but the joy is real.

But, this time, there's no buzz, no rush—not even the teeniest shred of a tingle in the back of my neck. All's I've got is that same broken feeling I had the moment that lady told me to skedaddle.

Maybe I'm getting too old for this. Fuck that, I know I am. Been lifting since I was eleven. Should've put an end to it years ago. It's a nasty habit, like when I got addicted to cigarettes at eighteen. But, the cigarettes were easier to break, cuz cigarettes are damn expensive. Lifting, when you get away with it, is free.

I'm so shaky and wound up in this fifty-something degree weather, I probably look like a junkie. But hey! There's the bus. I'm outta here.

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The bus bangs and rumbles up the boulevard and I'm glad to be one of only three passengers because I can feel alone here. I get off next to a hospital and cross at the walk light. On the other side, next to an overpriced hair salon is a coffee shop I happen to like because it's stuffed like a pillow with indoor plants. But the place is always a bit busy and today is no exception. Well anyway, I need to lose this statue. I wind around the building and find an alleyway, with dumpsters. I lift the lid of the first one I see, and drop the statue in. It lands in there with a bang.

A door down the alley flies open. A lady from the hair salon steps out. She's complaining on her phone. Her eyes wander around the alley and catch me standing there next to the dumpster. I step away and dawdle a bit. Let this well-coiffed blonde take me for a dumpster diver. Long as she doesn't take me for a thief.

I scurry off like a rat and slip into the coffee shop. The bell that dings as I open the door scares me so bad I almost join a jade plant inside a goddamn pot. Of course, the place is bustling. Nurses on their breaks. Ah well, it looks like the hall in the back still has some tables free. So, I wait in line and order a black americano because nothing sounds more disgusting right now than sugar and cream. Hot and bitter, that's what I need.

I get my hot and bitter and scuffle up the corridor at the back, stepping over plant creepers and backpacks and park my ass on the last vacant table there is. It's a tiny, two-chair under a piece of local art: a print of a hand clutching a wild west pistol. I immediately think of Lorenzo. He's on duty at the museum right now, none the wiser about me breaking four months of progress so I could lift a statue.

I slurp my hot coffee and I know I'm making an annoying sound but it's hot and I want it. Aw, fuck me. What's this lift gonna do to my relationship? I *can't* make it without Lorenzo. If I lose him, I got nothing. It'll set me back to fucking zero. But how're we gonna make it if I can't tell him the truth? But, he gets so goddamn angry...

No two ways about it, I'm fucked. Does it have to be like this? Can't I ever just fucking win?

And that's when I feel it again. The urge to go and nab something else. One curvy statuette just wasn't enough. I still feel like shit so I need another goody. Goddamn it, Laverna. You're just so fucking predictable...

Ah! What the fuck? My cargo pants are snug on my hips. A fold presses into the top of my thighs. That ain't supposed to happen. I could drown in these clothes. Been wearing 'em baggy since I was a teenybopper. When you lift as a pastime, you need clothes you can disappear in. Most any day of the year, I'm the girl in the oversize, puke green jacket. If I hold my arms down at my sides, my finger and thumb nails juuuust poke out the cuffs. And the pockets! I have like, twelve pockets on me at all times, *minimum*. Side pockets, hip pockets, inner pockets, chest pockets. I got 'em all. Meet my magic suit of armor; she makes things disappear. Even quitting it with the lifting never stopped me from going around town prepared.

Point is, my clothes aren't supposed to 'fit' me. I'm a shorty whose figure you'll only guess at unless your name is Lorenzo. If your name is Lorenzo, I'll get bare ass naked for you and bounce on your dick all afternoon. Just gimme a nice cuddle once we're done—'kay?

God, I wish I could fuck him right now. There's nothing like the rush of a good lift, but sex is a decent second. Takes me out of my head for a bit and I could use that right now.

Anyway, I yank my cargo pants up and down my thighs. Why do my legs feel extra fat today? And why does it feel like my ass is trying to eat my underwear? It's rubbing between my cheeks. Don't recall that ever happening.

Have I been getting fat lately and didn't know it? I mean, it's not like I eat the best. What did I have yesterday? That's right, chinese. But I don't eat much at any time cuz I get full too fast. But, boy...I don't remember my clothes feeling this tight in years.

I check and make sure no one's looking my way—don't need to give anyone another reason to think I'm a weirdo—and pat myself up and down. Tummy feels normal...face feels normal...tits...?

Damn...this bra is pinching into me. There's actually some swell-out around the cups, like an ice cream scoop around an undersized cone. It's like...

Holy shit, are my *boobies* growing? What happened to my perky little Bs? Nothing's ever changed them. Not period weight, not pizza binges, nothing. My tits've been the same since I was seventeen.

As I swoop around on this mental rollercoaster, the two nurses in scrubs sitting at the table ahead of me get up off their seats. One has a plushy body, the other is a rail. "Alright," says the rail, "back to work."

"Hmm. Yeah," says the plush, distracted. She's staring down at her body,

The rail squints at her friend. "What's up?" she says.

"My scrubs feel loose," says the plush with a nervous giggle.

"Maybe those spinning classes are working faster than you thought," says the rail, encouragingly.

The plush giggles again. "I don't remember noticing a difference this morning. Now, I...I really feel like I need a smaller set."

"You should ask Peggy for one. C'mon, let's get back to the clinic so you have time."

The nurses throw on their jackets and backpacks and march out, the plush holding the waistband of her scrub pants like they wanna fall off.

Well plushy, lemme tell you, if you're missing some pounds I got a few extra I wouldn't mind giving away for free. But the plush and the rail are already outta here and I'm still blowing the steam off my coffee and trying to figure out where all this extra fat on my ass, legs and chest came from. My thighs plump out to the sides and when I press them in they plump up my lap like I'm fluffing a pillow. My bra band sinks into my shoulder blades and I think the band needs to be adjusted a step or two back. How long've I been a secret fattie? And, why didn't Lorenzo say anything about it? He always notices that stuff. And, how is it I was sitting within three feet of someone who had the *opposite* thing going on?

Okay, Laverna, you just broke your promise never to lift again, *and* you've been packing some pounds. Time to turn this ship around. So, here's your *New Hour's Resolution*:

- Don't walk into a store ever again

- Maybe talk to Georgie about a trip to the gym tomorrow

Actually, fuck tomorrow—what about today? I still have hours to spare before I see Gabby. Might as well send Georgie a message.

Laverna: *Hey!*

Laverna: *Sorry I been out of touch lately!!! 😊*

Laverna: *How you been?*

Laverna: *Still going to the gym?*

A few sips of Americano later, the ellipses dance in the chat. Dammit, Georgie is so fucking quick to respond to texts. I wish Lorenzo was the same.

Georgie: *Hey!*

Georgie: *tbh, I'm really out of practice*

Georgie: *And out of shape!!! 😞*

Georgie: *But, I haven't canceled my membership yet...*

Georgie: *Guess I've been hoping I'd pick up the habit again*

Georgie: *Why? Ya wanna go soon? 😊*

Georgie: *I still have a couple more guest passes*

Laverna: *Do I WANNA?*

Laverna: *No.*

Laverna: *But, my ass is getting fat 🍑*

Laverna: *I need to do something about it 😞*

Laverna: *Please take me. My ass needs it.*

Lorenzo would probably not appreciate me talking about my ass to another guy, but...well, he doesn't exactly know about Georgie. I just...call him *my friend* when I talk about him and Lorenzo assumes *my friend* who takes me to the gym is female. My boyfriend ain't the curious type unless something gets him worked up.

Georgie: *Hmmmm...*

Georgie: *Ya know, I get off in like, an hour*

Georgie: *I could go today*

Georgie: *If you can make it*

Georgie: *I could pick you up*

I freeze. Am I ready for this? I'd have to haul this tubby ass back to the bus stop so I can grab my gym clothes from the apartment, but...

In one hour. I see Gabby at 3:00. Plenty of time...

Laverna: *Alright*

Laverna: *Let's fuckin do it*

Laverna: *See you at noon, my place?*

Georgie: *Make it noon-15 but yeah*

My americano is cool enough not to singe my throat now so I sip it and check the bus schedule. Seems I have six minutes to get back to the stop. Well, I asked for this. I give myself another minute, then I get up.

The fuck? My pants are clinging to my hips. Where's the dangle? Where's the bagginess? Goddamn it. It's like I'm getting fatter every second.

I snatch a lid for my coffee cup and force myself not to look at the shelf of fifteen dollar thermoses that I will definitely want to steal from if I'm not careful. Then, I shuffle out of the shop, harassed by the iron grip of my goddamn pants. It's not that they don't fit, but still—I never got the hang of skinny jeans. The insides of my thighs are getting to know cotton like never before. Just get me on that goddamn stationary bike. I'll burn it off. I'll burn it all off, I swear.

So, I throw open the door of the coffee shop full of piss and vinegar—and what I see next just knocks me fucking dead.

What. The. Actual. Living. Fuck.

On the sidewalk in front of me is the statue. The curvy stone lady stands there on her blunt little base and it's like she's staring at me, like...

Like she was waiting for me?

Fuck. Fuck! Someone saw me. Someone saw me throw the statue in the dumpster. Someone knows. Fuck. Who is it? Was it that hair stylist lady on her phone? Did she see me? No...she couldn't have. But...maybe she guessed I was up to something? But, that doesn't make any sense. That lady was busy on her call.

Fuck...I-I gotta go. Bus comes by in like, three minutes.

Okay, okay...listen up, Laverna. You ain't gonna solve this mystery right now. And, if you try, you're just going to look more suspicious. Just go. Run.

But...do I leave the statue or take it?

Oh, c'mon Laverna. That statue is *evidence*. You don't just leave it there. Grab it and trash it somewhere else—some place no one's gonna find it.

I snatch the pesky lady up, drop her in my jacket and hightail it for the bus.

* * *

I got chills. I'm sweating. My breath is going a million miles an hour. My stomach feels like a bubble trying to squeeze its way up my throat.

I still don't know what's going on, but I've seen enough to know I seriously fucked up today. I knew that lift was dirty. And now, someone *knows*. Maybe they don't know much. Maybe they don't know who I am, or where this little statue came from. But, they know *something*. And that's too fucking much. Time to stop fucking around. I need to be smart. Don't dump your spoils in some random business's dumpster where someone else can just find it. Cover your fucking tracks and don't be seen.

This Laverna chick. Real criminal mastermind right here, I'm tellin' ya.

The bus takes me back to my neighborhood where everything in sight is a flat, plain, three story complex from the 80s. The sky is grayer and nastier than ever now and I don't need a weather report to tell you it's gonna rain. Only a question of how soon.

I get off the bus and look around for a shady spot to dig a hole for this statue—but I shake that bad idea off quick. Yeah right: bury your treasure in the ground like a fucking pirate where three dozen windows are watching over you. Genius, Laverna. Total genius.

Fuck the statue. Get your gymmies on and wait for Georgie. Figure out your cover-up later.

So, I let myself into the building and climb the stairs to the third floor where Lorenzo keeps his apartment, not to mention his unemployed girlfriend—me. The lights are out and the space is dim and gray and if I didn't have a gym date and a birthday to celebrate, I'd love to crawl into one of these shadowy corners and disappear, never to be heard from again but this just isn't my goddamn day.

I hang my jacket in the hall and shuffle into the bedroom where the bed covers are strewn, Lorenzo's laundry is all over the place and the mattress is so rank with the smell of sex—sweat, cum, drool...—I have to open a goddamn window. God, it's like a sweaty hunk of rotten cheese in here. Have I really been sleeping in *this*? How did it get this nasty? Lorenzo and I go at it like...every third day at this point. Didn't I do the bedding two weeks ago? It shouldn't be this bad.

Guess I spend so much time cooped up here, I didn't notice the smells. I only get out like, once a day at most. Lorenzo's been telling me to get out more. Maybe he was onto something.

Anyway, messes I can deal with—I'm no little miss neat 'n' proper. But that smell is a public emergency. Fuck it. I have ten extra minutes so I strip the bed and stuff the blanket in the washer in the hallway.

Now that that smell is hopefully on its way out of here, I take off my shirt and pants and check the damage in the mirror.

Wowza. Okay, okay...that's...different.

My bra is a flimsy little thing, no wire, no foam. I never needed much support cuz my puppies were never big enough. But *these*...the fuck, man. I'm dribbling tennis balls now. And, I always had larger nips, but now they're big and fat like pacifier nubs.

So, what bra is gonna hold these puppies down so I don't bonk myself in the goddamn nose?

And then there's the ass. The ASS.

What bacon cheeseburger 'n' fries topped with caramelized onions and Thousand Island gave me a donk like *this?! My ass cheeks have more juice than a fucking smoothie. I can't even get my wholehand around one! And it doesn't stop there. My thighs are sausage thick. My hips stick out like I hit second puberty.*

But...nothing else on me grew. Stomach's still pretty flat, face is narrow, arms are toned. It's just ass, legs and titties. And then some. My whole shape is different now. Little in the middle, round above and below.

This isn't right. I'm not a fatass. I've always been the weird, bitty lady who disappears inside layers of clothes and looks around at the world like it wants to eat whatever's left on her desiccated body. I'm not supposed to be this...out and *full*. That's for other women who got the confidence to match.

No...I can't do it. Can't have a butt this big. The fuck you even do with this meaty trunk? Wave it at a camera in a fucking music video? That ain't me! I'm little Laverna. I swear and steal and do the laundry. Not much else happening here.

On the other hand, maybe Lorenzo won't complain about me getting fat if he sees I got D cups for boobs now...

Ah! Running out of time. Get the damn gym clothes on, girl.

Easier said than done though. My stretchy short shorts don't come even halfway up my ass before a mountain of cheek stops 'em dead. That means I have to reach deep into the bowels of my dresser drawer and fish out these old, ugly ass basketball shorts. But...they still fit me. Meanwhile, forget about sports bras. These sad stretch rags are more like torture devices than clothes now. At least I have an unsporty black bra that always ran a bit big. That...sorta fits. Okay, fine. It doesn't *fit*, but the quadboob is bearable. If I wear a baggy enough t-shirt, I shouldn't get too many weird looks.

I slide a sweatband over my head and check myself in the mirror for the last time. God, I look like a loser in these ratty old clothes. But, whatever. At least Georgie won't judge me. I hope.

I pack a duffel with a change of clothes, a water bottle and Gabby's gift. Just before I leave the room, my head whips back to my reflection to catch the side view. Geez, does my chest stick out. If I weren't in such a baggy tee, I'd really have something to showcase. Well, it seems I can't get the tits without the ass and this ass is too fat to live. To the gym I go.

The thought crosses my mind to wear a different jacket—one without my nemesis, the lady statue in the pocket. But then I think, do I really want to take even the slightest chance of Lorenzo finding her when he inevitably gets home before I do? *Fuck* no. I still don't know whether I'm gonna confess this naughty act to Lorenzo, but if he finds out, it's gotta be because I said so. Nothing I can stand less than the thought of stupiding my way to ruin. No, I ain't gonna go down like that. Stone lady comes with me. Maybe I'll find a good way to get rid of her while I'm out.

So, I stand out in the drizzle on the front stoop of the building and rock my weight from one heel to the other, contemplating the angle of this duffel as it rests against my fat hip for fuck knows how long before Georgie pulls up to the curb in his old beater of a Lexus. And, goddamn it, I can see those bright, friendly eyes and that smile clear through the window even though it's dim and gray out. I guess Georgie just shines through everything. If I'm not careful, he'll shine his light right into my fucking pocket. Can't have that. He doesn't know I lift from stores and I intend to keep it that way.

I throw the back door open and toss my duffel in, then join Georgie in the front. He's let himself go a bit. His hair is grown out and his face and neck are rounder, his torso thicker. But, his eyes are still lively and alert and his smile still looks fucking real. Not the bullshit glazed over look some dudes get after a while. And anyway, how is my fatass gonna judge him for putting on some pounds when I don't even fit into my gym shorties?

I don't know what kind of Asian Georgie is—Chinese or Korean or maybe Vietnamese? I dunno. He once told me his real name, his non-Anglo name—but I was drunk at the time and forgot.

"Hey," I say.

"Hola! Cómo estás hoy?" he says.

I look at him funny. "What?"

"Cómo ha...estado?" And Georgie can't help giggling as he says it.

"Aw Georgie boy, will ya quit it with the fucking Spanish? I only speak it with my abuela and I haven't talked to her in four months. I'm having a goddamn day, man. Gimme a break. How're you still on this Spanish kick?"

"I'm serious about it, L. Once I get my Associates next spring, Spanish is gonna get me my first hire. It's the one thing that'll make me stand out in the crowd. So, I have all the *Lingua* this,

Lingua that, apps, Rosetta stone—I'm streaming Mexican television in my spare time. I'll take whatever I can get."

"There's that many vet techs in this town, that you need *Spanish* to get a foot in the door?"

"Like you wouldn't believe."

"No shit."

"Would ya gimme something, L? Just a little?"

"Seriously. You want me to drop a little Spanish on you because it's gonna get you a job in six months?"

Georgie nods eagerly.

"Eres un *burro*."

"I'm...I'm a what?"

I laugh.

"What?! What'd you call me?"

"I called you a donkey," I say through my laughter.

"Hey!"

I laugh harder.

"I haven't seen you for what—two months?—and this is the greeting I get. *You're a donkey*."

"Nice to see you too," I say, still laughing.

Georgie puts the car in drive, pulls out and starts the wipers. The drizzle is picking up. "Oh, by the way I forgot to ask," I say, "after this gym trip, think you could drop me off at a friend's?"

"Where?" says Georgie.

"She's out in Myerstown."

"Myerstown. That's a bit of a drive."

"Pretty please?"

"When did you get bougie friends that live in Myerstown?"

"Gabby's not bougie," I say. Then I giggle. "Okay, maybe she's a little bougie. But she didn't used to be."

"Trash to treasure?"

"Once trash, always trash. Take it from someone who knows. 'Sides, Gabby isn't exactly the..." I raise my head so my neck is long and straight, toss my hair in a mannerly way and pat my imaginary coifs at the sides.

Georgie laughs.

"She ain't HOA bougie, y'know?"

"What kind of bougie is she?"

I look at Georgie and drop open my jaw and gaze at him wide-eyed. "Oh my god, Georgie! Your aura is so...pink!"

"You're shitting me."

"No, I mean it! I never saw a pinker fucking aura in my goddamn life!"

"She doesn't say that."

We're both laughing now. "I'm not exaggerating much though."

"Did I hear you say you haven't talked to your grandmother in four months?"

"Ugh. Don't ask."

Georgie gives me a look that says, *I'm asking*.

"Okay, okay," I say. "Look, let's just say, my folks don't exactly *love* Lorenzo. Starting with my abuela."

"Really?"

"It's a whole thing. Look, you know this part. I lost my job this year and my car got totaled. Lorenzo let me move into his place. It's hard to be on the up and up with my folks and be *living* with a guy they don't care for at the same time. It's easier to just curl up on the couch and watch garbage television and eat like a pig than try to navigate all that. And that's been me these last few months."

"That's rough."

"Yeah well, how much I got to complain about, really? I'm living rent free."

"How's the job search going, by the way?"

I hide my face in my hands. "It's not, okay?," I groan. "I haven't even tried for a month. It'd be easier if Lorenzo wanted me to get a job. Half the time he's all," and here, I drop my voice as low as I can get it. "'Don't worry 'bout it, baby. I make enough for both of us.'"

"So, you're not looking anymore?"

"Well...the other half the time, he's like, 'what you do in this fuckin' place, makin' me clothe and feed us'. So, I probably need to figure something out sooner or later so I can stop hearing that."

"Mixed messages."

"Eh. It is what it is. Like I said, rent free."

Georgie shakes his head a little. "If you say so."

"Hey...uh..."

"What?"

"Thanks for taking me to the gym today."

"Yeah well, when you messaged, I was like, all I'm gonna do when I get home from work is crash. Why am I not at the gym?"

"Hey, at least you got an excuse to gain weight. You're taking classes. I'm getting fat cuz—who knows why."

"Are you getting fat?"

"You didn't notice?"

"All I see is that big, old jacket and some baggy gym clothes."

"Good. Let's keep it that way."

* * *

We pull into the lot. The drizzle has picked up but it's not quite *rain*. The asphalt isn't even shiny with wet yet. As Georgie swings us into a parking spot, I catch a trash bin a few paces from the doors of the building. It's one of those covered bins with a swingy rooftop lid. Will I find a more discreet way to get rid of this fucking statue today? I don't think so. When we're out of the car, I tell Georgie I'll meet him inside in just a sec. I have to check my phone.

"Everything all right?"

"Yeah, I'm just—I'm antsy about Lorenzo and wanna text him."

Georgie gets the message and enters the gym. And, because I can't stand the idea of lying to Georgie, I actually do send Lorenzo a message, one I know he's not gonna answer. He never gets back to me after his lunch break.

Laverna: Hey babe! Hope you're having a good day 🤔

Then I look around. A car passes me in the lot but I'm already out of the driver's view. I check the glass doors of the gym. No one coming.

My hand takes the statue out of my pocket and sticks it in the trash bin. Been nice knowing ya stone lady, but this is where you get off.

I meet Georgie in the lobby under an assload of gross fluorescent lights and he checks me in as a guest under his membership. Someday, maybe I'll show my thanks to Georgie for letting me work out here for free.

I drop my bag and my jacket off in the locker room and head over to the fitness room. The place has a top notch view of the parking lot and some shrubs and the place smells like an armpit. Right. This is why I don't go to the gym very much. Good reminder.

I have no bigger goal here than to bust this ass on a stationary bike for an hour.

Things are slow. There's Georgie jogging it out on the treadmill by the windows. Some bald guy is busy with the weights over at the far wall. A skinny bitch is in the middle area, pumping that elliptical hard. And then there's a chubby soccer mom with a red bob, coasting on a bike. Well soccer mommy, you're my floor. Long as I'm pedaling harder than you, I will count myself good. I choose my cycle—two to soccer mommy's left—take a squirt from my water bottle and climb aboard. I notch my phone in the phone mount and plug in my ear buds.

Good thing I'm not with Georgie on the treads. In this flimsy not-sports bra, any run from me would turn into a titty bounce-a-thon. At least here on the bike, my ass is in one spot, tits are as still as I can keep my shoulders. Only the legs move. So, let's fucking go.

I run a playlist with some revved up shit with a hard beat and start pedaling. Then, I boost the intensity. It's smooth for five minutes but then I get out of breath and don't want to take it back down. My mind drifts. Drifts to escape the heat in my skin, the fast air in my lungs, the ache building in my thighs...

In all these years, I've never been caught lifting. There were close calls. Sometimes, the clerk was onto me and I aborted the mission. And yeah, there was also that one time at 7-Eleven — No, I don't wanna think about that. Goddamn it. Look, if you're a lifter yourself, take it from me: *don't do it at a 7-Eleven, okay? 7-Eleven is a fucking fortress. Stay the fuck away from 7-Eleven.* All I'll tell you is, I was spotted. I dropped the goods and ran. It wasn't a crime yet because the merch never left the doors. But if it had, that time...ugh. Who knows where I'd be now.

Would've been better if I was caught at age 15 actually. Sure, my mom would've thrown a fit, but at least then, *maybe*, I wouldn't have gotten *good* at lifting. Nothing's worse than being good at something *bad*. Why couldn't I be good at—I dunno—ice skating or tight-rope walking or reading those stupid fucking poems in English class? Why is my secret talent nabbing bits and bobs from store shelves and sneaking 'em past the alarms? There's no credential for sleight of hand, except in fucking video games. No future, nothing to build on. You get the goods and you get away, until one day you get caught. Happens to everyone who does what I do. It's out there: my last hurrah. The lift that locks hell's door behind me. No more running and hiding. My shame, there for all to see. My grandmother, my mom, dad, brother, sis, Georgie, Gabby, Lorenzo...

Fucking hell, Laverna. It's gotta end. But how, how do you get ahead of it? How do you stop doing the one thing that makes you feel...

And that's when I close my eyes and imagine myself in a Target. These earbuds of mine are getting old and Target is an easy...target. I got two words for you: Self-checkout machines. You buy a pack of breath mints and slip a bulb of \$20 buds out of your sleeve and in your bag just as the *REMOVE CARD* message pops. Just gotta be smooth and on point; don't let the lady on duty see. She doesn't wanna see. It's been a long, fucking day on her feet. Do you think she wants to give you trouble, give herself trouble? Do yourself and her a favor and perform that magic trick she'll never know to be impressed by. It's such an easy lift, it's fucking boring. There's almost no fun in it. But I get earbuds so it's all good. Yeah, for my final lift, that—*that* would be a decent way to go out...

And just when I get to the part where I picture a brand new existence of honesty and clean-living, I realize something's up. My hips are *swinging* to my pedal pumps. I can feel the weight of each one drop as my leg on that side comes up on the cycle and then—*boing!*—it springs back up again. And, I keep noticing it, like there's a teeny bit more of it each time. I look down my side. The fuck? Not much slack left in these baggy shorts. They're getting filled with leg meat. Fuck me, I thought this pair fit!

Ngyaa—why's my bra band so tight? My tits are all bunched up inside the cups. My booby fat is creasing near the armpits. More bobbly titty swells out over the cups and my nips are getting crushed in there.

Okay...breathe, Laverna. This ain't shit. You're imagining. You're getting psyched out cuz you're sweaty and breathing hard and you haven't exercised in days. That's all. Just power through it. Don't forget, you're burning this ass off.

I raise the intensity. My pedaling slows. At this speed, my hips don't bobble around. My heart races. Sweat beads on the sides of my face. I grit my teeth and try to think about anything besides the feel of my clothes getting smaller.

I'm panting now. My eyes open and close as I pump the pedals. My hands are moist against the handlebars. My body's so warm it feels like I'm exhaling steam.

That's when I look down. My baggy tee ain't baggy anymore. It's all taut around my chest. And my chest don't exactly look like...*my chest*. There's too much of it. I can see the lines through my shirt where I'm boobing out of my bra cups. There's about as much boob out of my bra as in it now. My top has muffin tops and there's enough of it now that it's starting to jiggle to my quick breath. *Exhale—boi-yoi-yoi-yooooiing—exhale—boi-yoi-yoi-yooooiing...*

I close my eyes. My tits are heavier and heavier. My bra is stretched taut. I can feel these crazy jiggles on me...but it can't be real. It just fucking can't be.

And then, I feel the seams of my shorts bite into me.

I crank down the intensity and check my hip. Holy—! When I get so fucking *wide?! My shorts are all blown up like a balloon around my thighs. There's no more bag in these shorties—I'm filling every crevice of it! I peek over my shoulder and catch the curve of my ass outta the corner of my eye. That's...that's too much ass. Where'd all that ass come from? Who the fuck put it there??*

My pedaling slows. To check in with myself, I squeeze my hips. A pillow of flesh that goes from my hip to my tail tightens. My panties sink between my cheeks and my cheeks feel deep. *Way too deep. I could make a fucking quarter disappear between these cheeks. Fuck—five quarters even.*

The fuck! I'm supposed to be losing this ass, not—

Oh god—is someone seeing this?! I look over at the soccer mom. Nope. Her eyes look straight ahead. But...

Hot 'n' sweaty as I am, I feel a chill as I realize something. Soccer mom's looking kinda trim. Still got some arm flab, still some tummy roll...but her dainty double chin is more of a one-and-a-half chin now, her legs are not as puffy, her shoulders look more toned. She reaches up and grabs her shirt—no, not her shirt, her bra! She wobbles it around like there's slack in it and she doesn't know why.

Oh, fuck me. I hope I don't know the answer. I hope I don't. But...

Soccer mom sends a nervous look in my direction. I look away.

Meanwhile, my ass is eating this goddamn bike seat. More shorts-compressed flesh is swelling around the sides of it. If you looked at me from behind, I don't know how much of this seat you'd even be able to see—just a fat ass mounted on a metal shaft, I suspect.

I should probably do something. Stop biking, maybe? But, I'm frozen here with only my legs in motion. I'm still hot and sweaty but this eerie chill keeps shaking me. What is this, am I...am I *scared?*

The hum of soccer mom's bike dies down. She gets off and looks at herself. She could easily be ten pounds lighter now. Maybe more. She rubs her gym pants at the hips and it's obvious she's struck by how loose they are now.

Soccer mom picks up her water bottle and walks out of the fitness center. I guess I should be relieved? If what I think is going on is going on then soccer mom and I should probably not be in close proximity. Anyway, I don't want anyone to see how much I've filled out these gym clothes.

Okay...she's gone. Can I stop growing now? I slow my pedaling to a crawl and check in with myself. Oh Jesus fuck, my leg's so fucking fat!

Alright...let me tell you about my big, fat leg. It starts with a perfectly normal looking ankle. Then you go up and there's this thick, juicy calf, shaped like a mango. Then, you get to the roundest fucking knee you ever saw in your goddamn life. Like, what the fuck? I always had bony knees. Now, you could trace an almost perfect ninety degree curve from my knee joint to my shin. And

then—then!—things get ridiculous. Because this thigh right here is a goddamn pillar. I'd expect to be fifty pounds heavier to have a thigh like this. And then, because all that wasn't enough, the leg swells out into this cantaloupe of hip 'n' ass. My shorts are skin tight around it and ready to burst. What, oh what, will happen next?!

Did I miss the memo when news got around that exercise makes your butt fatter?! I'd be demanding my goddamn money back, if I'd paid for this. Fuck it. Someone should be paying *me* to have a butt this big. I dunno who, but I distinctly feel like I'm *owed* something for this. At least, recompense for these gym clothes that ain't gonna fit anymore.

And as if it feels it hasn't gotten enough attention in the last page or so, my bra makes this creaking sound. It's around me so tight, I'm not sure I could even unhook it now. It's hard to breathe because this band compresses my chest. But...oho, check it out: my cups can't take anymore. They're starting to collapse. As booby flesh swells over them, they start to crumple. My nipples pop out from under them. Tit avalanches all around them. I'm basically braless now and my t-shirt is stretched around the meatiest, densest pair of tits you could imagine. My nipples are fucking huge. You can even see where my areolas swell out like little pancakes through the material.

Alright...time to get outta here. I climb off the bike and as I bend my leg to get it over the machine, there's a *snap*. The seam in the side of my shorts just fucking popped open and now a wad of hip swells through the hole.

I grab my water bottle and take one more look at Georgie before I go. He's still over there, none the wiser on the treadmill. Then, I leave. I'd run, but my shorts feel like they'd bust if I did, so I walk quickly. Then, I notice my thighs are starting to rub, so I walk slower...

In the locker room, I get out of this sad, crumpled bra. My tits fill my hands now—actually, they spill over them! The fuck cup size is this? G? H? I got a feeling Victoria's Secret does *not* have me covered on this. And what am I even supposed to do with these goddamn stripper tits? Ain't gonna be any stripping, that's for sure. Not intentionally, anyway. I'm too much of a shortstack and fuck if I know how to work a crowd.

When I plop my ass down on the bench it feels like twice as much surface area lands on it than before I got on that bike. My hip swells out of the broken seam on the side. My panties are buried under mountains of thigh and ass cheek.

Alright...so, what do I do now? What can I do when the adrenaline is pumping through my veins and my heart is about to explode through my chest just like I exploded my own fucking clothes?

Okay, think this through Laverna. Bigger tits. Bigger ass. New shape. It's fucked, but you're not dead. But, why? *Why?* Is this like a punishment for your misdeed today? Did you have some fucked up allergic reaction to a sanitizing chemical they sprayed in the gym?

I poke myself in the boob. Doesn't feel like fluid. It's just fat. Lady tissue. Oh, what are you even saying? You know what happened back there. You made the soccer mom skinnier and got a fat ass and fat tits in the exchange. You didn't ask for it and neither did she. But, it happened. You

know it happened. Don't know why or how, but it happened. Somehow, you're going to have to fit this little mindfuck of a fact into your brain and make it stick.

Alright...well, you gotta get outta here. No...no, maybe you should stay right where you are until Georgie's done in the fitness center. Well, whatever you do, at least get a change of clothes on.

I open my locker, take out my duffel and yank out the baggy sweats I stashed inside back at the apartment. I have to *peel* off my shorts. When I'm out of them, I look down my back and the wedgie I behold is so crazy I wanna cry. That was never supposed to be me. I've always been a shrimp. Never was supposed to have an ass so fat, underwear could get lost in 'em. Then, I drag my sweats over my fleshy new legs. Not baggy anymore. I can see every little curve of my hips and calves in these. But, they fit. Sorta. The ankles only come part way down my ankles. I guess these pants were never designed with an ass like this in mind. Aw, goddammit, are my sweats—yes! They're sinking into my cheeks to join my panties. What the fuck. My ass crack is showing right through. It comes about halfway up my ass.

Alright, so I'm braless and sporting a pair of sweats that are more like tights and my shape is all fucked up. While I was on the bike, I was thinking my ass was stealing the show, but now that I'm outta that bra, I'm seeing more tit under my nose than I'd guessed.

I go to the sink and check my reflection. I see a shortstack lady with tawny skin, wired eyes, huge tits, chunky thighs, popped out sharpie nipples, and...symmetry. Seriously, my tits and ass look like a cartoony ass matching set. If I put a measuring tape around each of them, they'd probably give you the same number. What that number is...you got me. Fifty-one? Dunno. As fucked as the situation is, I guess I'm at least balanced on one level.

After a lotta restless pacing in the locker room, I go out into the lobby. Through the glass window into the fitness room, I see Georgie. He's off the treadmill now, toweling sweat off his neck. He'll be out soon. Good.

So, what next? Do I treat my brand new tits and ass like an emergency and ask Georgie to take me home? Then what? What comes next? Surprise, Lorenzo! Your girlfriend spent a day on the town and got a boob job *and* an ass job for zero dollars. Yay?!

Honestly, I dunno how Lorenzo's gonna take this. He likes big titties but at the same time, he never cared much for fat girls. I still have my waist, but there's a lot about me that isn't skinny now. God, how fucked am I...?

Georgie shuffles out into the hall, sends me a tired wave and proceeds to the men's locker room. He's beat. I'm too far away for him to notice anything different about me. My trusty jacket keeps these hills covered. But, I probably look more boxy now. But...is-is he looking kinda trim all of a sudden? It's slight, but I could swear he's a few pounds thinner.

Was it not just soccer mom's meat I was stealing?

So, what else, Laverna? Where the fuck do you go for this problem? I'm still too freaked to sit down, so I pace.

I turn to face the glass doors of the entrance and I see something that gives me a goddamn heart attack.

The stone lady. She's on the ground outside, looking in through the glass pane next to the door. Looking at *me* with that solid, eyeless face. Just like in the coffee shop, she waits outside. For *me*.

A truth bomb blows up. I suddenly know a bunch of things without having to think them through. Until now, my dumb brain didn't put two and two together. I'm changing so I'll become more like *her*. Tits and ass for days. And...and...god this is fucking, but I don't think someone fished her out of that dumpster back at the coffee shop so she could stand by the front door and wait for me. It's looney tunes to say it, but...I think she got out of that trash bin all on her own.

She's alive.

So, Laverna, you have one friend, just one, who, if you told her a statuette *cursed* you, really is out to lunch enough to believe it. And, you have plans to see her in an hour. Funny how things work out like that.

* * *

I'm back in Georgie's car, huddled in the shotgun seat, doing my best to keep my jacket closed around these fatass titties so Georgie doesn't see me nipping out. I'd zip it up, but I think that would make my rack more obvious. The rain has picked up. It dots Georgie's windshield and I watch the red feathers of tail lights from other cars as the wipers streak it into arcs.

"You alright?" says Georgie.

Well now, how the fuck do I answer that? "As alright as I'm gonna be," I reply. By the way Georgie looks at me, it's clear that was not a satisfying answer. I could've said, *oh I'm fine*, but goddammit, why can't I bring myself to be even a *little* dishonest with him? He's a friend, sure, but I don't owe someone like that total transparency. But...it's Georgie.

Okay, story time. Eight months ago, Georgie and I were doing this as a regular thing. Gym in the afternoons, Mondays and Wednesdays. That was before I met Lorenzo. Georgie was fresh off a bad relationship and I was trying to keep his spirits up as much as I was trying to tone my ass. And...yeah, there was something between us. *Is* something, I guess. We never talked about it much, but I...I said some things that probably crossed the *just-a-friend-who-cares-about-you* line. And, maybe he said some stuff too. But it was a bad time for him. As for me...I-I couldn't deal with it. And then, I met Lorenzo. To be honest, I was relieved. Lorenzo is a guy I know how to make things work with. With Georgie...I mean, how the fuck do you make it with someone you can't help but tell the truth to? Seriously. God forbid Georgie ever finds out about my lifting. Lorenzo sure wasn't happy to hear it when I spilled the beans to him, but at least he can put me in my place. I can't picture Georgie knowing what the fuck to do with a goddamn degenerate like me. Let him find someone with a halo over her head, someone who doesn't make trouble. Me, I got nothing but.

It's 2:20 on the clock. Lorenzo's off work and whatever it's gonna take for Gabby and I to talk this over, I'm gonna need a lot of runway. So I excuse myself to Georgie to make a call.

"Hey," says Lorenzo's gruff voice on the other end.

"Hey, babe. Just letting you know, I have no idea when I'll be back from Gabby's. It'll probably be a while. We're supposed to get dinner together, remember? So, you're on your own for tonight."

"Alright. Thass cool," says Lorenzo. Well, that's funny. Last night, he was complaining about how I never spend time with him these days. Don't know what he was talking about cuz I'm home most of the time. I don't have enough money to be out and about all day. But now, it's all sympatico with him. Guess he just needed to blow off some steam the other day.

"I miss you babe. Hope you're doing well," I say.

"Doing fine. Love you."

"Love you, babe."

We say goodbye and hang up. I'm numb now. Numb from all the things I'm not telling Lorenzo. *I stole today. It might've been something expensive. Also, it's cursed. And I have huge tits and a bubble butt now. Love me still, babe?*

Georgie keeps stealing glances at me. Not the naughty kind but the *fuck-is-wrong-with-this-bitch* kind. "Hey, y'know, L..." he says.

Aw man, here we go.

"If there's anything wrong ever...like, anything at all," says Georgie. And here he gives me one of those wholesome, puppy dog faces and when I see it I just wanna cry. "You know you can talk to me. Right?"

I can't do it. I can't tell him some bullshit to appease him. God dammit, Georgie, why you gotta be like that? "I..." I begin. Then my throat seizes up and I have to take a breath. I can't tell him the whole truth, but I gotta tell him something.

"Look," I say. I throw open my jacket. Georgie now has a front row seat to my nipped out, braless jugs. "I'm getting so fucking fat. One trip to the gym ain't enough. Who knows how big I'm gonna be before Lorenzo dumps me on my ass. And then..." My throat cuts me off here. I can feel the tears start in my eyes but I don't let them come. "I-I just don't know what I'm gonna do if I lose that relationship. I'm fucked, man. I'd have to move back in with my folks and sleep on a fucking couch. I just..." And I try to give Georgie a smile at this point. "I just don't see a way forward right now. You...you know what I mean?"

Georgie's wide-eyed. His head swivels between the road and me and that chunk of melodrama I just threw his way. "Uh...y-you're not fat," he says.

A rueful chuckle shoots from my lips. "You think titty is made of styrofoam, Georgie boy? Well, get this: it's fucking fat. Most of it."

"It doesn't look bad," he tries.

"You ain't seen this ass. I could eclipse the fucking sun with this thing." He giggles. I hit him on the shoulder. "Don't you fuckin' laugh at me."

"I'm not!" He raises his arm to stop my next blow. "You're just...you're making me laugh intentionally, okay?"

"Hmph. Nothing intentionally funny about having a big, fat ass."

"I mean..."

"What?"

"Nothing."

"Georgie, spit it the fuck out."

He chortles, then mutters, "it's not always a bad thing."

"Aw, you *like* a lady with a tubby ass, Georgie boy?"

"Well ya know...some guys do."

"*Some* guys? *Some* guys?" I give him another whack on the shoulder.

"I'm just saying!"

"Sayin' what? What else you got to say, perv?"

"No, I mean!" Once again we're both laughing.

There's a part of me that never wants to get out of this car.

We catch our breath. "But, seriously. If Lorenzo throws you out because of a few pounds...I don't know what to tell you, L. He's garbage."

"He isn't garbage."

"I'm just saying, *if*."

"Garbage is me, okay? *I'm* the garbage. Sooner or later, Lorenzo's gonna take me out and I do *not* mean for tacos."

Georgie looks hurt now. "You shouldn't say things like that."

"Ask the universe. It fucking knows."

* * *

The rain is coming down and it's starting to get dark and chilly. Goddamn November. Georgie gets us out of the rush hour bustle and into the still-smooth roads and fresh lawns of Myerstown. Suburban paradise, I guess. We take a road that skirts the cookie cutter family homes and reach a line of one-stories, shaded all the way down the block by trees. I guide Georgie to the curb in front of Gabby's house and thank him. He watches as I carry my duffle through the rain up Gabby's driveway to reach the overhang at her door where it's dry. The thought dawns on me that if Georgie's watching me to check out my ass, I wouldn't mind. But, knowing Georgie, he's probably just making sure Gabby lets me into her house before he drives off. Fucking chump. Why's he gotta care? I ring the bell and the door opens.

Alright, lemme tell you about Gabby.

Gabby didn't *make* me a lifter. I did that on my own. But, she did make me *good*. I met her in a mall. I was trying to wind a brass, heart necklace around my hand so I could make it disappear up my sleeve. Gabby caught me. I froze, thinking I was dead. Caught for the first time. But, she was tailing me for a different reason than to get me in trouble. She smiled at me, took the necklace out of my hand, opened her mouth and stuck the whole thing inside like it was a gummy bear. She marched right outta the store. I followed her. She took me halfway around the mall until we got to the womens' bathroom. She stuck her finger and thumb in her mouth and out came the necklace like she was eating spaghetti in reverse. And then, she took my hand and dropped this slobbery piece of jewelry in it. I was fourteen. She was fifteen. We were inseparable.

As many lifts as I've pulled off over my short time on this earth, I've never quite matched Gabby's death-defying brilliance. This woman has an eye. She walks into a shop, takes a quick look around, sees the perfect lift and just does it. Like breathing. She barely thinks about it. I saw her finish one day with a brand name handbag, an electric toothbrush, a snakeskin belt and a glass animal sculpture. We got on the bus and she looked inside her bag and said, *hmmm...what did I steal today?* These were high stakes lifts, dollar value in the triple digits and this crazy bitch couldn't distinctly remember a single, goddamn one of them. I *never* had the balls to steal like that. Never could trust my eye like she did. Never could match her precision. But Gabby set a high bar to measure myself against. She made me realize I was fucking around with my lifts. She made me understand I could be *dangerous*, if I wanted.

Anyway, Gabby hit eighteen and moved out of her mom's house and all of a sudden, her urge to lift was just fucking gone. Gone like my sex drive when I get depressed. She just didn't wanna, not anymore. That light in her eyes when she walked in a store and looked around at all the shelves and displays and saw a flawless maneuver—it was out. To this day, when I think about how that happened to Gabby, it hurts. It's not just that I lost my lifting partner back then, it's also that the same thing never fucking happened to me. *My* urge to lift did *not* go away when I moved outta my parents' plex. And here I am after all these years, still nabbing knickknacks from shops like I'm fucking fifteen. God...fuck me.

Still, Gabby and I stayed friends because it didn't take long for me to figure out her journey wasn't over. We still had things to connect over. Actually, Gabby went through more phases than I can count. Died her hair black, fucked a bunch of guys, drank like a sailor, had a scary meltdown one night...

But hey, look at her now, all grown up, married and sharing a life with a mechanical engineer guy in a house she only coulda dreamed of when she was fifteen. Now she's clean and sober, taking classes in massage therapy and talking about kids one of these days. It's such a photo fucking finish, I could just about swallow my envy and be happy for Gabby, who's been my friend longer than pretty much anyone.

Almost. Almost. But, then I remember something: Gabby's a fucking kook.

Look, I'm not into horoscopes, tea leaves, tarot, crystal healing or whatever the fuck else these weirdos use to spice up their goddamn day, but if you dabble, who am I to judge? Thing is, Gabby's no dabbler. I could fill a book with the bizarre shit that's come out of this woman's mouth. Such as: she hugged the ghost of a murdered five year old when she was staying in a cabin three years ago. Such as: the raffle card she got at a work event was an omen because it had the number 31 and her uncle died two nights later at 3:31AM. Such as: she saved her cousin from getting into a car with a bad person one night because Gabby was sleeping and astral-projected a bad feeling into the cousin seconds before she was gonna hop in. Such as: she stopped doing laundry at her old apartment because a 'shadow man' visited her in the laundry room at 2am and disappeared soon as she turned on the lights. And does Gabby have a shred of evidence to back any of this up? No. And yeah, I know everyone's got a story like this, but Gabby goes *looking* for 'em. This woman believes the supernatural appears all the time and we all just...*train* ourselves not to see it, or something. She's made it her life's mission to 'deprogram' her perceptions from *materialistic hegemony* or some crap.

But, where the rubber actually hits the road for me is the part where Gabby thinks she has extrasensory abilities—*which*, she says, was the reason she was so good at stealing shit as a teenager. I shit you not. According to Gabby, she could 'sense the clerks' blindspots'. She supposedly spent her youth using her powers for selfish reasons, but now she only uses them for good. Bitch, *please*. I was there, I *saw* you. You used your fucking EYES. Your brain did the rest. I saw your mind at work. I know it ain't ESP because I do what you do. Ain't no mental powers involved. Give me a goddamn break.

All of which is to say, happy as I wanna be for Gabby escaping that shitty childhood, quitting it with the lifts, building a decent life, etc....there's no question in my mind that in the end, all this woman did was trade one kind of crazy for another.

And now, I face the humiliation of my goddamn life. After years of grinding my teeth at all her woo-woo BS, I'm probably going to admit to Gabby that a goddamn statue is making my ass and tits fat. Someone up there must really hate my guts.

The door swings open and there she is. Crystal eyes, oatmeal-dyed pixie cut, three handmade bead 'n' weave necklaces dangling from her neck, angelic smile, almost a head taller than me.

Gabby ain't fat by a long shot, but every time I see her, I figure she's at least a couple pounds heavier than the last. Her arms and legs have gotten kinda thick and she has a tummy. She's a ways from that slinky little, bright-eyed teen that used to saunter into shops at the mall.

Gabby hugs me. It's been a month since I last saw her. "Happy birthday, princess," I say. And I'm uneasy because, with my brand new, huge ass tits, there's a lot of squish between us. But, I guess Gabby doesn't notice just yet.

"I'm not older yet," she says. "Two more days."

I get up on my tippy toes and yell, "shut up. You're old!"

Gabby smiles.

I set my duffle on the floor, grab the zipper and yank open. "Sorry, I didn't get a chance to wrap this, but..." I dig into an inner pocket, snatch the amethyst pendant necklace. I keep it hidden in my fist and turn to Gabby. "Make a wish," I say.

Gabby sniggers. "Out loud?"

"Well, yeah! Where's the fun if you only say it to yourself?"

"What if it doesn't come true because I said it?"

"Are you fucking serious, Gabs?"

Gabby raises an eyebrow like I said some nonsense. "Well, yeah!"

"C'mon! Gimme *some*thin'. Please?"

Gabby clicks her tongue thoughtfully. "Alright," she finally says. "I wish my dear friend Laverna would tell me what's going on in her life today."

"What?! No!" I say. As usual, Gabby knows at a goddamn glance I have something to spill. No, I don't believe Gabby has a sixth sense. But goddammit, her intuition is fucking *primed*. Still, I'm not giving any info up. Not without a fight.

"Hey, what's wrong?" she giggles.

"I'm not tellin' you shit!" I pull away from Gabby and turn my back to her. The present stays hidden in my fist.

"Hey, get back here with that," she says.

I turn my nose in the air. "Hmph! No present for you," I say in the most prissy voice I can do.

And then, Gabby's on top of me. Her long arms snatch at my fist where the present is hidden. I squeal. I try to break free, but Gabby has a lock on my wrist. I plow ahead.

Our scuffle takes us, a mass of two bodies, into the middle of the living room where we crash into the big, cushy sofa, both of us screaming and laughing.

I'm sprawled on the couch, cornered by Gabby. She jams a thumb into my clenched fist and tries to pry it open. I slap her hand repeatedly with my free hand.

"Give it to me!" Gabby says.

I toss my head side to side. "No! No! Never! No!"

Then suddenly, Gabby gets up. "Okay, fine." She retreats.

I squint my eyes open as Gabby disappears down the hall. I hear a fridge door open.

Did my fun 'n' games rub Gabby the wrong way? Is she finally getting tired of my shit?

Gabby returns. Her face is calm and serene and she comes around and sits on the couch next to my head. "It's okay, you don't have to share." And, as she says it, she puts a reassuring hand to my clenched fist.

And—*JESUS FUCK it's cold.*

I scream. My hand stiffens as a chill runs up my arms. The pendant drops on the couch. Something hard hits the floor.

Gabby, witch that she is, cackles maniacally. Then she lifts the pendant necklace in the air. "Ooh, pretty!"

"The fuck did you—" but then I see it on the couch under my nose. Ice cubes. She got me with fucking ice cubes. Genius. "Happy birthday, bitch," I say, huffing.

"Here," she says, snatching up the other ice cube that landed on the couch cushion. "I got a present for you too." And that fucking bitch yanks up the collar of my t-shirt and sticks it in. I scream again. Gabby laughs like she rules the world.

This is why, even after a gazillion BS stories about ghosts, demons, clairvoyance and auras, Gabby is a bro. In all these years, girl hasn't lost her moxie. She's still a piece of shit, just like me. Hey, can't blame me for testing her from time to time. In this world, you gotta know who your friends are.

But, let's get back to me freezing my tits off. The ice cube slides down my chest and my hand is down my collar trying to get it, but it's out of reach. I can't get off the couch cuz Gabby's perched on it and she's blocking my way. So, I squirm and buck my hips. My boobies jiggle like it's goddamn party time. The ice chunk slides down my belly and I grab it from under the hem of my shirt, almost flashing Gabby while I'm at it. And then, when the ice is in my hand, I realize I might as well have flashed Gabby. Why? Because my teats are nipping out from the cold like there's no goddamn tomorrow.

Gabby was giving me a smug face before. Now, she's perplexed. Somethin' ain't right about this picture.

"Did you...did you get a boob job?"

I make the pouty face I always make when I'm teased. Then, I hoist my shirt over my nipping, braless boobs. I shake 'em to show how fleshy and gelatinous they are. "Gabs, does it *look* like I got a boob job?! You think I can afford something like that? I'm not even employed!"

Gabby snickers. "I thought you were small-chested."

I belt out a growing breath. "I was! I..." Oh boy, here we go. Confession time. The moment I have *not* been waiting for. I pull in one end of my thrown-open jacket and reach into the pocket where the statue is.

Gabby gets the whole story out of me. The horrible shopkeeper, the lift, the boobs & tush, the soccer mom who lost twelve pounds at the gym. I blabber it all up. Gabby takes the story with...I can't call it surprise. Confusion, maybe? She believes every word—if anyone could swallow a story like this, Gabby could. But, I guess there's no chapter in any of her stupid occult books for growing tits 'n' ass from a statue. I tell ya, there's no fuckin' experts in this field.

We talk maybe thirty minutes, both of us on the couch. Me, now shoeless, curled up in a ball, resting by head against the arm pillow, Gabs propped up on her cushion like an English lady. The world outside her window is murky gray now and it's only 4:40. Eat my big, fat ass, November.

Gabby gets up, switches on a standing lamp. "I'm going to make you some tea," she says.

"What? Gabs, no."

Gabby puts her hands on her hips. "What?"

"I know what you wanna do. I'm not up for it."

"This is a perfect occasion! You have a question. Let's see if we can find an answer."

"What question?"

Gabby squints at me. "Um...*how do I get rid of this body curse*, maybe?"

"I'm not gonna find the answer to that at the bottom of a teacup."

"Probably not, but the tea might point us in the right direction."

I bury my face in my hands. "Gab-beeeeeee!"

"Lavvy, I'm trying to help."

"Y'know, I'm actually here to celebrate your birthday. Let's figure out dinner. I'll worry about some dumbass curse later."

Gabby laughs. "Oh, c'mon. There's nothing I'd rather do on my birthday than help you with what's so obviously a spiritual problem."

"Spiritual?" I yell. Again, I yank up my shirt and grab my huge, naked boobs in my hands. "What the fuck is spiritual about *these*, Gabs? These feel pretty fucking solid to me!"

"Out of eight billion people on this planet, this curse landed on your shoulders. Why? Aren't you curious?"

"No!"

Grabby grins. "Are you afraid of the answer, Lavvy?"

"No. I'm afraid of my ass getting so fat, I can't walk out your fucking front door."

Gabby twists her mouth to the side and squints at me. What a day I must be having for *her* to be skeptical of *me*. "And that's *all* you're afraid of?"

I look away. "Yes."

"Uh-huh," is all Gabby says.

She knows when I'm bullshitting her. Time to change the goddamn subject. "Okay, look," I say. "I'll drink the tea. Okay? I'll fucking do it. But only, *ONLY* because it's your birthday. Then, dinner. And, I'm paying."

"Ha. You're not *paying* for my dinner, Laverna! You don't even have a job."

"Fuck you, I'm paying."

"No. I'm paying for *you*."

"Bitch, I'm paying!"

"Okay, you know what? We'll work out who's paying later. I will get your tea going."

"No...first, I wanna try something."

"Hm? Try a different tea, you mean?"

"Science. Science before tea."

The *science* is on the statue. I was wondering what the stone lady actually does when I leave her alone somewhere. First, I leave her in Gabby's hands and go back through her kitchen to the mudroom that opens out on the side of the house. Nothing happens. The stone lady stays in Gabby's hands. Then, I try leaving the stone lady with Gabby and I go *outside* to the backyard with Gabby's umbrella and wait in the rain. I get a scare that time, because I suddenly notice the stone lady a couple paces away in the lawn with me, her face turned in my direction. Gabby says she doesn't know what happened. The stone lady is tucked under her arm one second, the next it's gone. But she didn't notice it *leave*. It just...wasn't there. So then, Gabby and I both go

outside and I throw the stone lady in Gabby's trash bin. I go back in through the side door, then check outside. The stone lady is there at my feet, dotted with raindrops and not a speck of trash on her. We do one more experiment because I wanna know what it looks like when the stone lady teleports. Gabby video records the side door with my phone while I throw the stone lady in the trash and go back inside. On video, she does appear in the driveway, only a few seconds after I re-enter the house, but just before she does, the video janks out in static. Soon as the static clears: there she is on the pavement.

"This...this is fucking creepy," I say. "The status is...*messing* with the video."

"The problem is," says Gabby, "you're trying to grasp this curse logically. But, you're dealing with supernatural energy. It's going to defy all your attempts to understand it. All that matters is, the statue *follows* you."

"But, how far away do I need to be for her to start following? And, how does she know whether I'm outside or inside?"

"Asking *how* isn't going to help. Don't you see? Even if you knew, you wouldn't be closer to an answer."

"So you're saying, I should sit down and drink some tea?"

"That's right!" she says with a smile and gets to her feet. I don't know whether Gabby didn't catch my sarcasm there or just ignored it. She makes a tea and serves it to me in a fancy saucer with a handle and plate with all the leaves and herbs and other junk sitting inside with no filter. I sip this funky tea up and spit out bits of apple and lemongrass that get stuck on my teeth along the way. God—how did she talk me into this? When I'm done, Gabby flips the cup over on the plate. Then, she flips it back. The damp leaves are caked along the inside of the cup.

"Alright," she says, "Give me a minute to read this." Gabby takes more than a minute. She turns the cup again and again, squinting at it like she's looking through a microscope.

"It's going to take you a while to solve this problem," says Gabby, finally.

"Oh, really? How long?"

"At least a year."

"Well, I don't have a goddamn year. At that rate, my ass gets so big, I bust Lorenzo's whole apartment building. Could I get another reading, please?"

"How do you feel about cleaning?"

"What?"

"Cleaning. With a broom, a mop, some rags, sanitizer wipes..."

"Yeah, yeah. I know what cleaning is."

"How do you feel about it?"

I must be giving Gabs the meanest look I've ever given anyone in my life, because I can see on that twitching face, she's about to bust out laughing.

"I'm not a fan, okay? It puts me in a shit mood. So, I only do it when I'm in a shit mood already."

"Why do you think that is?"

"Why I don't like cleaning?"

"Uh huh."

"Dammit, Gabs. You want me to talk about my fucking childhood?"

"Why not?"

"You already know this shit."

"Maybe I don't though."

My hands are balled up into fists and shaking. Jesus H. Fucking Christ do I hate it when Gabby tries to read my fortune. I swear, if it wasn't her fucking birthday, I'd have shut this shit down yesterday. But...but...she thinks she's helping and I don't wanna ruin it for her. So, I spit out the annoying nonsense she wants to hear: "Fine: sometimes my parents' relationship was on the rocks and my dad would leave. No idea where he went to, he'd just fucking *leave*. For days. I know he was fucking other women, but I never knew where that fit into things. Not sure if he cheated first, got into a fight with mom over it and left or if he got into a fight with mom, left and then cheated to get revenge on her. I just know he cheated. So, when dad left mom alone with us, what did she do? She cleaned. She would sweep, mop, scrub the fucking toilet, throw a whole bunch of shit in the trash. The trash bin would be packed solid. She'd be busy with that all goddamn day and then when she saw me or my sis, she'd scream at us for being filthy pigs and make us clean just as hard. So, all three of us would be working our asses off past midnight on a school night just to make the whole place spotless so not a speck of goddamn dirt would set her off again. So, I hate cleaning because whenever I do it I hear my mom's voice—that specific voice she used when she was *that* kind of angry—because our shit was on the floor, or because the soapdish was gunky, or whatever."

"What was it like—having your mom scream at you for such...minor issues?"

"Is this fucking therapy session now? What d'you think it was like, Gabs? It sucked. I felt like I was the dirt my mom was making me clean up. And I always got it worse than sis because I was the oldest girl. My brother never got the heat. He got to hole up in his room while us girls all cleaned."

"What about when your dad came back home? What was that like?"

"What was it *like*? It was like fucking Christmas. Dad would show up, mom would cry and my sis and I hugged each other because we knew it was over. Two days later, my mom would be in the happiest fucking mood we'd ever seen and she'd take us shopping. But, whenever the fights

came back, whenever there was a hint of resentment between those two, my sis and I, we'd brace ourselves. Because we were already on step B and we both knew it was just a short ways away to step D—the one where there's another huge fight, dad walks out and we're back in the shit again—and who knows if it ends this time. *That's* what it was like. Can I please shut up about my dumb childhood now?"

"Do you think you're in a better place now that you're all moved out of there?"

"Uh—hey, Gabs? Aren't we trying to, like, *fix my fucking curse?*"

"Of course. But, this could matter."

"How?"

"Everything happens for a reason, Lavvy."

And here, I laugh. "No it doesn't, Gabs. Shit happens, period. Ain't no deeper than that." I get off the couch. "Look, this has been fun but I'm starved and I'm buying you dinner. You pick the place. You mind driving?"

Gabby gets to her feet. There's a serene look on her face that I really hate. It's *Spiritual Epiphany Gabby* and that's the worst Gabby there is. "Alright," she says. "But, I got more from that teacup and we're going to talk about it. And, I'm paying."

"Don't you dare fucking pay. I'll kick your ass."

"I've seen you *try* kicking my ass many times. It never goes well for you."

* * *

We pile into Gabby's Impala and she takes us out onto the expressway. It's pitch dark now and the rain pelts her windshield. It's getting cold. The temp was in the high forties today. Feels like mid-thirties now. Gabby blasts the heat and I keep my hands toasty by the vents.

Of course, Gabby wants us to go to Rocco Giordani's. Didn't need clairvoyance to see that coming. But I'm not complaining. I'm starved and as ready as the next cursed shoplifter to stuff my gut with wine and pasta. Only problem is, at some point, I'm going to have nowhere to go but home. And, there's gonna be some sort of consequences waiting for me there. Whether they involve me confessing the lift of this statue to my boyfriend remains to be seen. I message Lorenzo that Gabby and I are just now getting to dinner and I'll be out a while yet.

Gabby pulls us into the strip mall's parking lot and parks us on the corner of the L, right outside Rocco's. In the windows, dangling, yellow Christmas lights, red upholstery and diners clinking their glasses together give you that instant feeling like you've been missing out all day. We dash through the rain, get inside and immediately we're led to our table by a probably-still-in-high-school hostess with caked makeup.

The first ten minutes or so are fine. We order wine, get a basket of bread and olive oil on a plate. I've been fucking famished and I gotta stop myself from gnawing through all the bread so Gabby gets her share.

"So, how ya been?" I say.

"Oh, I've been great. Classes are over in a couple weeks and I'll be free for Winter break. Then, Jake and I take a flight down to South Carolina. We're spending Christmas with his mom."

My mission right now is to get Gabby talking about herself so she forgets to talk about the goddamn tea leaves. So far, so good.

"So how've *you* been, Lavvy?"

"Eh. Y'know. No job, family issues, cursed by a statue. The usual."

"Tell me something."

"Mmm?"

"What's your biggest fear?"

Fuck. Gabby's not letting me fast forward through my shit. "H-hey, let's talk about you! It's your birthday."

Gabby just cocks her head and gives me that knowing look.

"What?" I say.

"I wanna have a real conversation with you."

"I'm sorry, are we having a fake conversation here and I didn't notice?"

"Laverna."

"Gabiella."

"C'mon. Be real with me."

I take my sweet ass time chewing my bread before I say, "roller coasters."

"What?"

"I'm afraid of roller coasters. There ya go."

"That's not even true. You *love* roller coasters. Whenever we went to Six Flags, you were the first person in line for Kingda Ka."

"Doesn't mean I'm not afraid of it."

"Why're you being so defensive?"

"I'm not."

"Hey, Lavvy?"

"What?"

"Did I ever tell you how cute those big, fat nipples of yours are?"

"Ah! Don't talk about my nips!" I cross my arms over my chest to hide them.

"I remember, they used to be *little* pen points, but now they're like...udders."

I'm trying to get words out through my laughter. "Sh-shut up!"

"What's it like when you squeeze 'em?"

"I don't know! Haven't had a chance to try."

"What's it like, having big boobs?"

"I dunno. It's like having small boobs, only bigger, okay? Why you messin' with me like this?"

"Answer the question and I'll stop."

Goddammit. She's not giving an inch. I have to cough *something* up.

"Okay...okay, fine. I'm afraid of what Lorenzo will do when he sees this weird, new shape I've got."

"It's...it's not a *bad* shape."

"My ass is fucking fat, Gabs. I don't know if that'll sit right with him. Pun intended."

"You really think having a bigger butt would harm your relationship?"

"It's...it's not just that. I can't *explain* this to him."

"You explained it pretty well to me. I believed you."

"But...but then, he finds out what I did today."

"Oh. Does he have an issue with you...y'know?"

"He wants to go into law enforcement training and he thinks me being a lifter could jeopardize his chances. And, uh..."

"Yes?"

"I...*might* have promised him I'd never steal again."

"Ohh, Lavvy."

"I was doing really well until today."

"Okay...well, you broke a promise. But, it was a really weird situation. Don't you think he'll offer you some compassion if you're genuinely sorry?"

"I..."

"*Don't* you?"

We're cut short by the voice of the waitress. "So sorry for the wait! Do you girls know what you want yet?"

We don't, so we order caprese to keep ourselves busy while we read the menu. But, I'm not really reading the menu. I'm just staring at the words, wondering how this fucking day is going to wrap up.

"So?" says Gabby.

"Look...whatever happens, Lorenzo's gonna take it kinda rough. He's like that. Got no sympathy for evildoers, or whatever."

"I mean...stealing isn't *good*, but does he really think it's *evil*? It was one object. And, it's not like you stole someone's medication or something."

"I dunno if that makes a difference to Lorenzo. The law's the law."

"Doesn't he *care* about you though?"

A chill shakes me. This. This is where I did *not* want the conversation to go. "Of course he does. I mean, I'm *living* with him. Eating and sleeping off his paychecks."

"Yeah, but..."

"He cares, Gabs."

"Are you happy?"

"What are you talking about now? I'm in *love*."

"Yeah, but—"

"I'm happy, okay? I don't want it to end."

"Why did you promise him you'd never steal?"

"Because...it seemed like the right thing to do, to make this relationship work out?"

"Lavvy..."

"What?"

"I know you pretty well. Maybe you're not always truthful, but you don't tend to make promises you can't keep."

"I thought I could keep this one."

"Did you voluntarily *make* that promise?"

"Huh?"

"Did you just tell him, 'I promise I'll never do it again'?"

"Yeah..."

"Or, did he *make* you make that promise?"

"He...he might've asked me to promise first. But, I *meant* it."

"Why did he *ask* you to promise something when it isn't even about *him*? It's about you, isn't it?"

"Gabs...I-I don't wanna keep talking about this...a-alright? I'm already pretty fucked as it is, and—"

"Alright, look. I just have two more things to say, and then we can drop it."

I groan. "Alright. Hit me."

"I saw three symbols in your teacup. There was a broom, a shield and a broken heart. So, that's why I asked you the questions I did."

"Gabs, you know I don't believe in that stuff. It's just plant shit in a goddamn teacup."

"I know. I'm just saying."

"What's the other thing?"

"Well, you know...Jake knows I'm a shoplifter. I haven't done it in ages, but the fact is, I'm a person who is capable of that. Even if I never do it again, it's still something about me I have to accept. And, he does too, by the way."

"Okay."

"So, I'm going to leave it with this: if you want things to work out with Lorenzo, he's going to have to accept that part of you. You can promise not to do it, but that doesn't mean you *couldn't* do it. And, honestly, the fact that you've got this scary curse...Lavvy, that's a much bigger deal than the fact that you stole something. Why is *Lorenzo* the thing you're most afraid of today?"

My skin is crawling. I'm sweating and the chill is worse. I think about taking a sip of wine but I feel like I'm gonna hurl into the glass if I do.

The waitress comes. I say I don't want anything. Gabby asks for more time. The caprese comes. I'm not hungry. All food is poison. I'm wrecked. I feel like an open fucking wound.

"Lavvy, are you okay? You look ill."

I nod. "Just n-need water. That's all." I chug my water glass. Maybe I was dehydrated.

But, it's like I'm in an elevator, and the elevator just passed the bottom basement floor, but it keeps going down, and down. No sign of a bottom at all. I just keep sinking. What I would do to reverse it...even stopping it temporarily so I can think for a second would be nice.

This fucking helplessness...this feeling is one that, when I get it, I always hope it's the last time forever. Because, whenever I do, there's only one thing that makes me feel better.

"Seriously, Lavvy. You look like you're going to..."

Gabby's trying to talk to me. I'm not listening. I close my eyes and picture a lift. A perfect, flawless lift where I make a clean break and no one is any the wiser.

It starts. My shirt stretches. My nipples jut through. The ankles of my sweats drag up my legs and squish my calves.

I can't stop it. It's like, my brain and body are locked in and doing their thing together and the machine is oiled too well to jam it up. My tits wanna be bigger. My ass wants to be fatter. My legs wanna be thick as fuck. My sweatpants fill. The pant legs are packed solid. My undies sink deeper into my ass cheeks and pull into my hips. They're so tight, it almost burns. The layers of flesh pile on.

I look up. Gabby is scowling at me because I went silent. She's poking at a bit of caprese on her plate with a fork. And then, I see her upper arm. It's been thick and fleshy for the last four or five years. But, now...the change is very slight, but it looks like that arm is tightening up...

Oh fuck me, Gabby...I'm stealing *her*. I don't want to, but I am. And, I can't stop it.

"Uh..." I try.

"What?" says Gabby. She's pissed.

"I'm sorry."

"What are you sorry about, Lavvy?"

I open my mouth and try to tell Gabby, but my mouth just moves and I can't get words out. But, as she looks at me, she sees it. Her mouth drops open. Her fork falls on her plate.

For a second, we're frozen there. My tits are huge and full and getting heavier by the second. They're like the size of fucking grapefruits. My shirt is like a second skin over them. All either of us can do is watch.

Then, Gabby looks at her arm. She gasps. "Oh my...L-Lavvy!"

I notice, Gabby's face is pulling in. Her cheeks are shrinking over her cheekbones. Her jaw is looking sharper. Her face shape is narrowing.

That's when I get scared out of my frozen state. "I-I gotta get outta here!"

I start scooching out. Gabby's digging in her purse. Her hand thrusts out.

"Here! Take the key. Let yourself into my car, and wait for me. Alright? I'll get us paid up."

I take Gabby's keys. When I stand, I wobble. The end of my shirt rides up to my stomach and my calves have popped out of the ends of my pants. My underwear is like a really tight string. I try to zip up my jacket and it doesn't wanna close. Since I'm a couple inches wider on either side, walking is really strange. My legs sway and rub together with every step. My boobs fight against my slackless shirt for space to jiggle. My nipples are pressed so hard against the fabric, they feel sore. I wanna walk fast, but there's too much tight fabric clinging to me. So I just walk—in a teetery, *god-I-hop-my-panties-don't-snap* kind of way. Faces at tables turn in my direction. I don't know if it's because I look slutty or because I look weird.

I shove open the door. Freezing rain blasts me in the face, pelts my shirt-tight bosoms. I run. No, I don't. I stagger up the walk and squint to keep the drops out of my eyes. The rain is like needles, poking at my skin. As I get close to Gabby's car, I'm counting the seconds.

I'm inside the car, shivering and soaked. My shirt is translucent. My big, fat, brown areolas show right through it.

Fuck. That's the only word going through my head right now. *Fuck...fuck...fuck.*

I wait.

Gabby shows up. She throws the doors open, drops a container on the back seat, closes her umbrella and gets in.

"I'm taking you home," she says.

"I'll-I'll pay you back for the—" I try to say.

"Shut up."

* * *

All in all, I'd say I took over fifteen pounds off Gabby at dinner tonight. Her tank top bags in the tummy and her pants look loose.

At first we don't talk, but then Gabby needs directions to Lorenzo's place, so I navigate. Her wipers pump hard at the pinpricks of rain that attack the windshield. Gabby says as little as

possible. When she has a question about her next turn, she talks in short, sentences that fall like dead weight.

"I'm sorry about what happened back there," I say finally. "I screwed—"

"I don't care about that," says Gabby.

She pulls up to the curb in front of Lorenzo's building. She stops the car and we sit there for a minute. Nothing to hear but needles of rain hitting the roof.

I finally speak up. "What do I say to make this any better?"

Gabby's eyes peer into the dark, lit only by streetlamps. "Lavvy, you're doing this. Do you realize that?"

"Huh?"

"The effects of the curse aren't random. You're *making* them happen."

"Why would I *make* something like that happen?"

"I don't know. You tell *me*."

I look around the car like someone left an answer lying around somewhere. "Look," I say, "I'll tell him. Okay? I'll tell Lorenzo. I'll get it out. And...whatever happens happens. You're right. I shouldn't be hiding something like this. I probably *can't*, anyway."

"That's for the best, I imagine."

"For what it's worth, happy birthday."

"Thanks. And, uh—thanks for the necklace."

"And—sorry for the...sudden weight loss."

Gabby snickers. "That's something I can probably live with. It just feels weird."

"Well, um. See ya, Gabs."

"Hey, c'mo—" Gabby's reaching out to give me a hug, but I can't take love from her now. So, I pretend not to see it. I open the door, get out, take my duffle from the back and wave Gabby goodbye. Then, I run up the path, shielding my face from the rain, fumble in my pocket for the right key, and let myself in.

A nearly dead fluorescent flickers above me. I climb the stairs to the third floor. The most real thing right now is my pounding heart.

I slip the key into Lorenzo's door one notch at a fucking time. I don't want him to hear me enter. I want to see him before he sees me. I can't say why, exactly. If I'm going to do what I just told

Gabby I would do, I need every teeny tiny shred of control I can possibly get before I start talking.

I push the door open. The light in the living room is on.

It's hard to make it out over the sound of my heartbeat, which for some reason is roaring in my ears, but there's a sound. Someone's here.

My heart stops dead in my chest. It stops because I realize someone's screaming in here.

And by the way, I don't mean the horror movie kind of screaming.

When dad was AWOL and mom was on a freakout cleaning bender, she'd usually exhaust herself by like, 2AM and collapse into bed. In the middle of the night, I sometimes needed a glass of water or a book I left downstairs. My parents' bedroom was on the ground floor. So, I'd creep through the house one inch at a time, gliding my footsteps across the floor, my ears ready to catch every little floorboard creak that might wake up mom and bring holy hell down on me.

Just like that, I move through Lorenzo's apartment. I set my duffle down, light as a fucking feather. I get my shoes off so I can hide my footsteps, and I slide up the hall and into the living room/kitchen area. I shuffle in slow mo past the kitchen counter and get to the wall. Rule number one about sneaking around is, you stay close to the walls. The floor creaks where it sags—in the middle. So, I keep my back to the wall. There are clothes all over the floor. Some I recognize, like Lorenzo's black security guard button up. But, some I don't. There's a big, blue pleated maxi skirt and a white button up by the couch.

I sidestep over to the hall.

At the end of the hall is the washer/dryer and the door to the bathroom on the left. Closer, on the right, is the bedroom. Where the screams are coming from. The light of Lorenzo's nightstand lamp pours from the open doorway. Light...and, voices:

"Unnnh."

"Oh! Ohhh! Mmmmm..."

"Hmmmnnnnmmmm..."

I shouldn't do this. I could spare my motherfucking eyes. But, I need to see.

The hallway floor is carpeted so I drop to my belly. With my elbows rubbing against the bumper of my fat tits, I snake crawl up the hallway. I get closer and closer to that semicircle of light coming from the door. If I get too far into it, someone will see me. So, I press against the wall like it's my best friend and get my face as close to that corner of the doorway where I can peek in.

There's a moving shadow on the floor. I move closer and catch the corner of the bed. No sheets, just like I left it. An inch closer, and there's a man's foot. Closer. There it is. The ass curve of a woman. Closer.

She's going up and down. Her thighs slap against his. Her head tosses around as she goes. A hand reaches up and squeezes her tit. And it's a big tit. Ds? Nah. A size or two bigger. This woman has meat on her bones, but she's tall—taller than I am probably by a head—and wears it like a champ. Her ass jiggles as she crashes down...

On Lorenzo's junk.

I go further because I need to see her face. I need to see who's doing this.

And, there it is. Her face isn't bad. She has thick features. Big cheekbones, slightly thick jowls, unblemished skin...

"Oh fuck..." groans Lorenzo.

"Gettin' close?" She has a deep, husky voice. There's this...richness to it. Call me an ass, but I have to remind myself it's gonna be my job to hate this woman.

"Mmm."

She pumps harder.

"Y'know, we gotta finish quick. Isn't your roommate supposed to be back soon?"

"Mmmm. Soon. Still got time."

I feel spotlighted, so I pull back into the shadows.

It's only at this point that I feel something other than desperation to know and just fucking numb. It's this dizzy, somersault feeling in my stomach, like I'm a shoe tumbling free in a dryer. The world cycles around me and I can't grab anything to hold myself. Again, I wanna hurl, but they'd probably hear me do it. So I don't.

Maybe a better woman than me would bust through the doorway of that bedroom and tell them both what fucking garbage they both are. Ruin their goddamn evening. But, I can't do it. I can't stand up to this. Not *while* it's happening. Not when I'd have to look them both in the eyes. This ain't my home and the only thing I got to defend is my goddamn dignity—if I have any still. I'm not gonna find it here.

...Or, could I?

Lorenzo's groans are louder now. The booby lady is belting out these husky, growling breaths and I can't tell if it's cuz Lorenzo's dick feels good in her or cuz she's getting tired trying to make him cum.

I crawl back into the living room and take a break with my back against the wall. That's when the worst of it hits me. Every bad feeling you could name. I can't tell them apart. They all blast me as a unit, like a beach wave. I'm holding my hand to my mouth so I don't peep. Hot tears spill down my fingers.

This is bad. This is bad. Was it ever worse? Not sure.

I need to feel better. Just...just a goddamn bit. I'll take anything. The taste of ice cream, the smell of daisies, a stupid hug. Anything so there's something other than *this*.

That's when I do it. That's when I fucking *do it*. And this time, I'm not sorry. My mind races and I think about myself sneaking around, about the trouble I could get myself into...

My tits eat the rest of the slack out of my shirt. My sweats are about to tear. Whatever. Just keep going. The leg holes of my panties are like sharks' jaws trying to bite my legs off. Fuck that. Keep going.

I watch my boobs swell like water balloons, mooshing against my bent legs. I watch my nips fatten. The hem of my shirt creeps up my belly. I don't care how big they get, I'll take more.

I grow faster. The waistband of my pants sinks down, the ends of the legs creep up. Every inch of space inside these sweats is necessary to contain my ass. I feel it surging into the space beneath me where the wall meets the floor. My hips are so wide, I'm reminded of my aunt Karina, and she's a real fatty. My thighs look like they hold two gallons plus, per. I clench my teeth and take more.

My tits are fucking huge now and my shirt is basically just a booby hammock. I used to wonder what I'd look like with huge tits. Got my answer now. I could sink my face into one of these. It's like if you had enough dough that if you made a perfect ball out of it, it'd be the size of a cantaloupe.

Rrrrp.

There goes my sweats. They split at the right side. A mountain of hip swells out of them.

Tkkt.

Aaaand, there goes my panties. They break at the crotch, exposing my pussy to the insides of my sweats. What's left of them hangs from the waistband like a shitty loincloth.

I hear Lorenzo's voice "Woah, hey! What happened to your tits, girl?"

There's a couple seconds' pause. Then, screaming.

And I *do* mean horror movie screaming this time.

"Why are you—why are you so fucking skinny?!" she shrieks.

I got your tits right here, girl. I'm not crying anymore. Actually, I wanna laugh. But, I can't. I need to get outta here. Once-titty girl is still screaming and Lorenzo's starting to shout. That means I can move faster. They won't hear my footsteps over their own racket.

But I can't go empty-handed. I *need* something from this scene, something to make it mine forever.

Something from both of them.

I grab the maxi skirt. I grab Lorenzo's button up. I shuffle through the groaning material of my sweats to the hall. Their cries are getting louder. Once-titty girl is panicking. So sad. I yank my jacket off the wall, open the door, out goes my duffle, my jacket, their clothes... I ease the door shut behind me and lock it. Then, I slip my jacket on, take the duffle and down the stairs I go.

At the bottom is a corridor with a locked closet. I risk a trip back there and climb into this maxi skirt. The waistband almost doesn't wanna fit over my hips, but it gets there. This skirt is way too long for me. Or, it *would* be, if my ass and legs weren't taking up so much of it. It comes to my ankles. You can't even see my poor, tearing sweats beneath it. Then, I take my biggest risk. I slip off my booby hammock shirt. For a second, I'm topless and if anyone enters through that door at the front, I'm fucked. But, my luck holds and I slip into Lorenzo's button up. Lorenzo's a big guy. However, my boobs fill the middle of this shirt like rice and spinach in a burrito. The buttons gap a bit at the widest point, but it still looks like clothes.

I throw my booby hammock in the duffle, get my jacket back on and I am out of there.

Out on the sidewalk now. It's darker than ever and the rain has let up a lot. The concrete is slick and shiny under the streetlamps. And, it's *cold*. The temp has dropped like a fucking stone. My bare ankles are chilly. Just gotta make it two blocks. There's a shelter where the bus stop is. My sweats are more like knee length tights now. My ass jiggles as I hustle up the sidewalk. It wants to jiggle more, but my tights are doing some work to keep it tame. Lorenzo's shirt grips my back where my boobies pull it out.

I round the corner, get to the other side of the block and cross the road. I can already hear the cars rolling on slick asphalt on Langdon street. Just a bit further and the lights fill my vision. I come out, wait for the crosswalk, get to the other side and plop my fat ass down on the bench under the shelter. I check the schedule. I'll be stuck here for twenty goddamn minutes before the bus gets to me. If I'm even planning to take it.

That's when I start to cry. The sweetness of my victory don't stack up against my losses tonight. No home, no plan, shitty boyfriend...fuck me.

There ain't gonna be a confession to Lorenzo. Not tonight, not ever. But, I still got a problem. This statue and I need to part ways. I can't imagine a life where I'm stuck with it.

And then, I feel terror because I know what I'm gonna do next. God, I've never done anything like this before. But, the more I think about it, the more obvious it is that it's gotta be done. I'm trash and I'll do anything right now to feel just a tiny bit clean. But, I need to do it fast while I'm still feeling brave.

The bus arrives. I get on board, run my pass through the machine and shuffle to the back where I take a bench seat and set my duffle next to me. Only a few people here and they all look like zombies. Most everyone's heading away from town this time of day, not towards it.

I watch the streetlamps shoot by my head for a while. When the bus stops to drop two people off, I make a call.

"Hello?"

"Hey Georgie."

"L?"

"Uh...remember when you said if anything's wrong, I can talk to you?"

"Yeah, I probably said that."

"What do you think...don't need to gimme and answer now, but what do you *think* of letting me stay a couple nights?"

"At my place?"

"Well, if you have a goddamn yacht, I guess I'd take that instead."

"What's going on?"

"I'll tell you what's *not* going on. Me and Lorenzo."

"What happened?"

"I came home early and caught him fucking some bitch. Didn't even have the decency to put sheets down. Did it right on the bare mattress. Fucking gross."

"Shit."

"So, I'm homeless now."

"Yeah...I get it. Well, you can definitely stay at my place."

"I don't know if I'm gonna. But I'm asking."

"What's going on?"

I laugh evilly. "There's a chance I'm gonna spend tonight in jail."

"What?!"

"Don't sweat it, Georgie boy. This ain't your problem. You'll read about it in the papers."

"You-you can't just say things like that!"

"Sorry. I'm not in a nice mood."

"What did you do?!"

Here I torture Georgie by going silent and thinking about my next words. "I didn't kill anyone, if that's what you're worried about," I say at last.

"Then, what'd you *do*?"

"...I took something that wasn't mine."

"What? What'd you take?"

"You wouldn't believe it if I told you over the phone."

"Try me."

"Sorry, Georgie. I'm feeling cryptic."

"Goddammit, L."

"Listen, I still got business to attend to, alright? Don't worry about me."

"Can't you at least tell me *something*? When am I going to hear from you next?"

"I don't fucking know, Georgie. I'm making this day up as I go."

"L, *what's going on? What happened?*"

"Shit went down tonight, alright? Look, I gotta go. Thanks for being a bro."

"C'mon, L..."

"Sorry, gotta go. Bye."

"...Bye."

I kill the call.

* * *

The bus drags through town like an exhausted runner. Finally, we reach my stop.

I get off and check the time. It's 7:40. I haul my duffle up several blocks of businesses. People are still here and the lights are still on in every place that has shit to sell to early Christmas shoppers. It's 7:56 when I see the cramped little corner shop. Lights still on. Sure enough, they close at eight. This was meant to be.

The door dings as I enter. There she is, straight ahead. Queen Bitchface the IV, behind the counter.

But then, I see something about her, something maybe I could've seen coming ahead of time, but didn't.

She ain't a titty girl any more. In fact, she's lean as a fucking pole. Maybe a B cup. She wears a white blouse with frilly arm sleeves and her jewelry, her necklaces, her dangly earrings, her heavily ringed fingers—it all stands out now. Earlier today, all I could notice about her were those curves.

She sees me. This time, she doesn't look at me with that nasty face. No scowl, no squinting, prissy eyes.. She looks uneasy, like me.

"I know why you're here," she says.

"Yeah?" I say.

She comes out from around the counter and approaches. She's wearing a pair of leggings that could *not* have fit her ass twelve hours ago. She passes me, locks the front door, turns the sign, hanging from a suction to the *Sorry, We're Closed* side.

My heart hammers at my chest. All the strength in my body drains. I don't have any words. I thought I did, but they're fucking gone. I realize now, I've never been so scared.

She turns and looks at me. Takes a good look, up and down, follows the heavy curves that once belonged to her. I don't like it. I got this horrible pit in my stomach. I'm not gonna go to jail. But, I'm not gonna step foot outside this place being any kind of winner.

She passes me again. Like I said fifty times before, this place is cramped—she brushes my hip as she goes by. I don't like it. I don't like it at all. She walks in front of the counter and leans against it, her hands clutching the surface. She looks at the floor, then looks up at me.

There's nothing I can say. She holds all the cards.

"You're here to confess you stole the idol of Patameilla."

I reach into my pocket and hold out the stone lady. "I don't want her any more," I admit.

"I'm sure you don't," she says, crossing her arms beneath her tiny boobs. "Unfortunately, I have some bad news. You're stuck with her. At least, for now."

"Dammit. Tell me what the fuck's going on."

She looks at the floor. Opens her mouth to speak a few times and says nothing. My fingernails dig so hard into my palms, I could bleed.

Finally, she speaks. "That idol is the one thing on this planet that isn't owned by money or force or gifts. It belongs to whoever steals it. I mean, whoever stole it *last*."

"What?"

"You stole it. So, it's yours."

"I got that part. But why?"

She crosses one leg over the other. "Patameilla is a goddess of theft. She loves best whoever proved themselves by *taking* her idol. Now, you have her blessing."

"*Blessing?*"

"The one story that remains of her is this. Patameilla once disguised herself as a human woman. Why? No one knows. Possibly just to amuse herself. But she was wandering in the jungles where two city states were at war. An encampment of soldiers of one of the city states spotted Patameilla and took her for a girl belonging to the enemy side. They captured her, threw her in a cage and taunted her that night while they ate a great feast. But something strange happened. All the food and drink the soldiers consumed offered their bellies no sustenance. In fact, their bodies shriveled. At the same time, Patameilla grew. As she got bigger, her beauty increased many times over. Soon, she was so large and gorgeous. her cage could no longer contain her. The wooden bars snapped. Everyone at the campsite had died of hunger. Patameilla walked free among the emaciated corpses, and laughed.

As she tells her story, there's a feeling that comes over me. It's like nothing I've ever felt before. It's like, rage and disgust and horror all rolled into one monster feeling. Blessed by a goddess of *theft*. So, I'm fucking *marked*. I realize I've just lost something, something I've had and needed for years. Every lift I ever did, I did it knowing I had an *option* to be a thief or not be one. I could stop today—*today!*—and never be a thief again. If I'm marked, if a statue is following me because I'm a fucking thief and change my goddamn body so it's right there on the surface so anyone can see...

I can't walk away from this anymore. I'm fucked. I'm fucked because *someone* fucking used me!

"You bitch." I almost whisper it. "You knew I would take that fucking statue. You gift wrapped that whole lift for me."

"I was...*tired* of the blessing."

"You knew. You fucking knew I was trying not to steal."

She tries to stare me down through narrowed eyes. "I know shoplifters," she said.

"Because, you're one too," I say. I just know it. Only another lifter could figure me out like that. Like a fucking coward, she looks out the window instead of at me. That's all the answer I need to know I'm right.

"You said all the right things to make *me* feel like shit, so the only way I'd feel better is if I stole some garbage from you. And, you put this *fucking statue*—" I throw the stone lady on the floor and it hits with a loud *thunk*. It doesn't break, but it startles the shopkeeper. "You put this fucking thing out in front of your register because you *knew*, you *fucking* knew, I'd see it and know it was too easy."

She's scared now. She recoils, gripping the edges of the counter for dear life. "It-it wasn't—" she tries, but I ain't gonna let her.

"I was clean for FOUR MONTHS. Not a single fucking lift. I was supposed to be *fucking* done with this."

"It was your choice to—"

"BITCH, YOU THINK I FUCKING CARE. YOU CURSED ME."

We stare at each other for a bit. Our eyes are locked like two pissed off cats.

"If it matters to you," she says, "saying those things to you...making you feel that way. It...it didn't make me feel good."

I'm the one who turns her head this time. I stare at a display shelf, or pretend I'm staring. But, I'm thinking.

"I hope you get rid of the idol somehow," she says. And her voice has that fucking little sob in it, the sound women make when they're fake concerned. Like she has feelings for me—after what she did. I hate that voice more than anything in the world right now.

The statue lays on the floor next to the counter. There's a big scrape on the tile where it hit after I threw it. I point to it. "Take it back," I say.

She just looks at me. Her face looks harder now. Yeah I thought so, bitch. I thought that mopey voice was just an act.

"Take it back."

"I'm sorry," she says. "But, it's not my problem anymore."

"Take it back or I'll make it your fucking problem."

"It doesn't work like that," she snaps. "You can't *give* it away. If you give the idol to someone, it's not theirs. Someone has to *take* it. Otherwise, it stays with you. There's no possible way for me to take it back—because I don't *want* it."

We're both breathing hard now as we stare each other down. I wanna ring her fucking neck, but she's taller than me and I don't have the strength.

So, that's it. That shitty feeling I got at the start of this conversation had the right idea. I'm going to walk out of this store not a bit better than when I walked in. Don't even get to fess up to the cops, which at least had a certain *come to Jesus* appeal to it. She'd just tell 'em the statue is mine.

I turn. Look at the door. An ambulance siren is going off somewhere in the distance.

Am I really about to do this?

I close my eyes and fucking do it. My mind races with images of lifts I've done, lifts I could do—*will* do. It pours through my mind like it's been all compressed in a barrel and someone popped it open.

Every dirty, depraved act of lifting erupts in my mind.

The linen of this skirt slides up my hips, one bit at a time. The pleats open around my ass. The gap between the buttons of Lorenzo's shirt get wider. Another gap opens to join it. My fat, fleshy thighs have never been better friends. They bulge into each other like wads of dough, placed too close together in the oven. My big, fat titties squish out into the slack of Lorenzo's shirt. It pulls at the back of the shoulders and makes breathing a chore. With a mighty *rrrrrrrrrp*, my sweats split down my right leg.

"Oh my god, what are you doing?" says bitchface.

I look over my shoulder at her. Her statuesque figure is looking a bit frail. The bones on her wrists stick out. Her chin is sharper. Her cheeks are sinking in.

I go faster. My boobs blow up like balloons. My hips shoot out. The left pant leg of my sweats breaks apart. I'm near about as wide from hip to hip as my arm is long. My ass fills like a giant tank at a filling station. The skirt rises over my ankles and exposes my juicy calves. All this, courtesy of the stick lady panicking behind me.

"Stop it! That's enough."

There's a *ping* and then another, as her rings slip off her fingers and fall to the floor. Her upper lip sinks into her face and I start to see the ridges of her gums through them. Her skin pulls around her eye sockets. Her eyes are scary big. Her fingers look like fucking tinker toys with knobby joints. Her blouse dangles from her shoulders and there's a hint of her protruding ribs through the arm holes.

Her leggings slide off. She gasps, drops to the floor on stick legs. There's this look of such fucking horror on her skull face that I feel scared myself. But that don't mean I'm stopping.

She crawls toward me on flimsy, pipe cleaner arms. Through her collar I can see what used to be her boobs, but is now mostly just ribs and skin. "*P-please...*" she croaks through a weak throat. "*I-I didn't do this to you. I wouldn't. I...*"

"You gave *me* the blessing, bitch."

She crawls closer but for every inch of progress, she's a bit slower. She's about to pass out. Or die, maybe.

The boniest fucking hand I've ever seen in my life reaches out and brushes my ankle.

"*Please.*" Her voice is frail and so quiet I can barely hear it.

I stop. That bony torso of hers still rises and falls with her breath. I didn't kill her, but it's not because I value her life. It's just that I want her to remember what I just did. I want her to remember it for the rest of her miserable goddamn life.

I pull my leg away from her skeleton hand, open the door and step outside.

* * *

I've lived in this city all my life. Didn't realize until today how much it fucking *hates* me. But, I see it now. Every Christmas shopper, every store owner, every bartender, Lyft driver, janitor, and bellhop. Every last one of 'em is my goddamn enemy. They don't know it yet, because they don't know me. But if they did, there'd be hell to pay.

But, there's something this city never understood about me: I'm dangerous. And tonight, it's gonna find out just how much.

People crawl through this shopping district like ants in an ant farm. I see them in the lit windows up and down both cross streets. They fiddle with merch, drag around huge shopping bags, chat on their phones and stand shifty in line for checkout. I see 'em. I see all the things in their lives that make that sort of thing possible. You got people you love to buy gifts for, money to buy 'em, a job to get money and people who loved you, who supported you so someday, you'd get that job to make the money to buy the gifts to give back to those people.

I ain't part of that cycle. Not anyway. It's the season of giving, but I feel like taking.

The stone lady meets me on the other side of the crosswalk. I scoop her up and drop her in my pocket.

The rain is gone, but it ain't any warmer. I'd probably be wound up in a blanket on the couch indoors, but there ain't no indoors that wants me. So, I shiver. My puke green jacket isn't exactly primed to handle this. Note to self: get some warm things.

I don't have a plan, but I know I need better clothes. I also know I have no fucking intention of paying for *anything* tonight. This city is gonna cover me all the way down the line.

As I walk up a random block, looking at businesses, I concoct lifts in my head. I don't know what the *range* of this *idol* is—how close I need to be to someone to soak up their fat. I try to keep my distance for now so I can think without my tits blowing this shirt open.

I'm probably fifty fucking pounds heavier now than I was when I woke up this morning. This tubby ass feels like a couch cushion. There are gaps between five buttons on this shirt. But even though I feel the extra weight in every step, I'm still carrying it okay. Maybe I'm soaking up muscle along with fat? Anyway, that freaky skeletal store owner makes me think so.

I pass shops that sell herbs, indoor plants, smartphone coverage, shoes, used records, ice cream, snooty office clothes for women, stuffed animals. None of it fits into my plans and I'm

getting fucking frustrated. Then, I see something that matters. A costume shop. Business must be slow now that it's after Halloween, not that I'm gonna help that problem.

The smells of cheap fabric and noxious rubber masks hit me in the face. I look around. At the far wall, mounted on pegboard, are rows of cheap plastic masks with elastic bands. Huzzah. I pass the clowns, the witch doctors, the ex-presidents, the cats and bunnies and stop below one special mask. No eye holes, no features. Just a silvery, blank, reflective surface. Android private eye from the future? Mirrorface sorcerer from a land far, far away? Ya got me. But, it's perfect.

I need to get it down cuz it's high and I'm short. I could ask someone for help—if I was an idiot and wanted to attract attention. So, I find a plastic devil fork and notch it off the wall. I catch it before it hits the ground. That's when a clerk in a cheap polo comes and tells me I need to leave the duffle at the desk. Fine. I surrender it. Definitely saw that coming. I don't need a bag to pull off a lift.

Then I grab a random princess costume and hide away inside a changing room—and by room, I mean a narrow pretend closet with curtains for walls, a cheap mirror and a dangling lightbulb. This business ain't exactly well endowed. Unlike a certain garbage person whose name starts with an L, and who can barely fit in here without jostling the curtains.

I undo the buttons of Lorenzo's shirt and examine the boobage. Jesus effing christ on a stick, I'm trucking bowling balls around this neighborhood. They're all fat and heavy with nipples thick as my pinkies. I play with 'em a sec to see how they move. Even my jiggles have jiggles. Alright, enough playtime. I try on the mask. The fit isn't terrible and even though the view is tinted, I can see through just fine. I give two thumbs up to topless Mirrorface sorcerer with huge tits, then I place the mask under my right boob. It *kinda* fills it out, but honestly, it wouldn't hurt if I was a tad bigger. So, I close my eyes and think of all the depraved lifting I'd love to do. Like fucking clockwork, I feel my boob fill the mold of the mask. I cut the flow of body theft by thinking about boogers instead and button up. The mask holds inside the shirt. The fit is wonky but you'd have to take a good look at me to notice. I go back to the desk like this, get my duffle and walk out the store. When no one's looking, I take the mask out of the shirt and strap it to my arm.

I need to get rid of this goddamn duffle. It's only going to slow me down. Fortunately, I'm full of good ideas tonight. I check my phone for directions to the nearest bunch of hotels. That's when I notice how many messages and missed calls I've got. Missed call from Georgie, five from Lorenzo. As for messages: three from Georgie, one from Gabby, one from my mom, and *holy shit*—sixteen from Lorenzo. Lorenzo never sent me more than maybe four messages at a time. Now that I'm missing, texting is that fucker's favorite hobby.

Alright, let's see what he has to say.

Lorenzo: *Where u at?*

Lorenzo: *Did u come home?*

Lorenzo: *Some crazy shit happened*

Lorenzo: *The fuck are you?*

Lorenzo: *Were u here?*

Lorenzo: *Can we talk?*

Lorenzo: *I cant find my shirt*

Lorenzo: *It's 8!!!*

Lorenzo: *Do I need to call the cops?*

Lorenzo: *Laverna please*

Lorenzo: *WHAT THE FUCKS GOIN ON*

Lorenzo: *U BETTER CALL ME NOW*

Lorenzo: *Dont u fucking do this to me*

Lorenzo: *I dont here from you in 1 hour and were ducking done*

Lorenzo: *Dont do me like this*

Lorenzo: *Hello?????*

I'd love to keep this piece of shit busy on his phone all fucking night, but he did say he'd call the cops. I don't think they'd count me a missing person this soon, but the last thing I need is someone looking for me. Lorenzo doesn't know or care about many people in my life, but I could still see him reaching my mom or a close friend on social media and stirring shit up. At some point tonight, I'm gonna need to talk to him. For the last time.

But, I'm not ready for that. I take a side street to a tourist's oasis. Convenience stores, restaurants and hotels. I try one hotel but the lobby has a party of like, nine. Too much activity. I try another, but the bored ass caked makeup bitch with false eyelashes at the front desk don't look like an easy mark. Third hotel's the charm though. The wirey, pimply dude at the desk is alone and I get the feeling his dick works just fine. Easy prey.

"Hey," I say.

The funny look he gives me before he starts talking tells me I'm getting warm. "Last name?"

"I don't have a reservation."

"How many nights?"

"Zero. Listen to me. I gotta lose this bag for a while. I want to drop it off here."

"Uh—I'm sorry, we can't just—"

"I'll make it worth your while."

"You're not a visitor."

I drop my voice to a whisper. "I'll let you see my boobs."

He squints at me. "What?" he says, his voice dropped to meet mine.

"Fuck that, actually. I'll let you *touch* 'em. I promise, you'll never touch huger boobs in your life. You'll have bragging rights with your friends forever. Just lemme drop my goddamn bag off here. Gimme one of those tickets so I can reclaim it."

His face turns red. He looks around. "Alright," he mumbles. "Take a seat on the couch and I'll give you the signal."

I give him a big, bright happy smile and rise on my tippy toes. "You're a nice guy. Thanks!" I say in a voice smooth as butter.

And, as I head over to those comfy couches to sit my ass down by a gas fireplace, I realize the huge boobs compromising Mr. Pimples's work conduct are getting just a bit huger. The remains of my sweats are sliding across my thighs. Aw, fuck me. Is this is happening because I'm doing a *lift*? Getting something for free I'm supposed to pay for. Yep. Didn't even occur to me all this time: a lift doesn't need to involve pilfered items to be a lift—and to give me that little buzz I love so much. But, I need to be careful. Mr. Pimples is the only one around and I need his dick working to pull this off. If he's a goddamn skeleton, we're both shit outta luck. So, I take a seat and immediately distract myself by reading the rest of the messages on my phone. The en-huge-ening stops accordingly.

My mom is letting me know my brother's gonna be in town and can we get together. I don't have an answer for that tonight cuz I don't wanna explain to my whole fucking family how I got tits the size of my own head.

Gabby asks me how it went fessing up to Lorenzo. I just tell her, Lorenzo and I are through and I'll talk about some night. That should satisfy Gabby for now.

And then, Georgie:

Georgie: *How are things?*

Georgie: *Are you safe?*

Georgie: *Any chance I could pick you up somewhere?*

Goddammit, the last time I talked to Georgie I fucked with him by talking about spending the night in jail. Why the fuck did I do that? I don't need people worrying about me. I message Georgie back:

Laverna: *Jail isn't happening so thats cool*

Laverna: *But I'm doing things on my own time tonight*

Laverna: *I don't need a ride*

Laverna: *So honestly, don't worry about me*

Laverna: *Just do your thing*

And goddammit, Georgie messages me back IMMEDIATELY. Why he gotta care so much?

Georgie: Are you alright though?????

Aw, fuck me. *Fuck me.* Why is it I can never just fucking lie to him?

Laverna: *I'm not in danger if that's what ur wondering*

Georgie: *L, I want to help. Can I?*

Laverna: *I don't want help*

Laverna: *I shouldn't of messaged you about staying over earlier. Sorry for that.*

Georgie: *Can I at least talk to ya tonight?*

Laverna: *You don't wanna talk to me right now*

Laverna: *I'm not good company*

Georgie: *What if I am?*

This can't go on. I gotta shut this down.

Laverna: *Look, if I'm up for it, I'll give you a call later tonight. No promises.*

Laverna: *I need to be alone.*

Georgie: *Okay. I'm just thinking, maybe you could use a friend*

That's where you're wrong, bro. A friend is the last thing I need right now. What I need is to prove something.

Lucky for me, Mr. Pimples gives me a wave and saves me from stewing on Georgie's messages. Another clerk has arrived at the desk and Mr. Pimples has his excuse to get lost for a bit. But first, he gives me a ticket and takes my bag into a backroom. Then, he comes back, goes over by the elevators and unlocks a door with his badge. He goes through and before the door can latch, it stops. He's holding it for me. I pull it open. We're in a big, echoey fire escape stairwell. He goes down. I follow. We come out into a hallway of painted concrete. The clattering of a kitchen echoes some distance away. I follow Mr. Pimples into a room. It's full of shelves stacked with linens. He closes the door behind me.

"Okay," he says.

"Ah ah ah," I say. I point to the bulb in the ceiling. Camera. Poor guy doesn't even know how much of his job is recorded. Take it from someone who looks out for cameras on the regular, your life in this city ain't private. I lead him to the wall, directly under the camera's blind spot.

He watches while I look him straight in the eyes and unbutton Lorenzo's work shirt. Can't lie, defiling Lorenzo's clothes like this gives me some cold-hearted humor. I start at the middle button, the one with the worst strain. I pop it open and cleavagey boob mooshes out. His eyes go wide. I undo the button one up from the middle and I boob out some more and it looks like my rack has its own rack. I undo the button one down from the middle and I'm surging through. Then, I race through the rest to get to the main show. I pull back the sides of the shirt and show off my bubbly, brown nipples. Then, I prop the boobies up in my hands and shake 'em. They wobble and quiver like a house of Jell-o. Mr. Pimples tents hard in his black, uniform pants. His face is redder than ever.

"Do it," I tell him and stick my head-size boobies out in his direction. He feels. His thumbs run down my nipples and it feels alright. "You can get squeezey there, y'know," I tell him. He gets as much boob as he can get his fingers and thumb around and gives me a squish. Mmmmm. Not bad. But... "Harder," I say. He tries to clamp down on me but with his poor, little hands on my huge, fucking titties he can't do much better than give me a good pinch. A for effort though. Before I wrap this up, I decide he deserves a reward. I put my arm under these jugs and lift 'em and with my free hand I take his head and sink his face in my cleavage. Don't ask me where this random act of sluttiness came from. I'm not usually this forward, but I'm feeling aggressive tonight. He's down to his ears. I hold him there for a bit, stroking the back of his head. His breath is warm. That's it, buddy. Let's just have a nice moment together...that's it.

Aw fuck, they're getting bigger.

"Okay, that's enough," I say, and let him go. He doesn't know it, but his skinny ass just lost a few pounds.

* * *

I'm back on the street with my mask, now free of my duffel. With my little disguise still strapped to my arm, I go back to the shopping district and head further up the block. A candy shop, a jewelry store, sporting goods place...

I look down a cross street. There it is: apparel shops. This is where I dress for success.

Though I'm trying not to think about it, I definitely just crossed a line back there. Lorenzo and I are as good as done, but the fact that I fooled around with a random hotel clerk kinda seals it in a way I wasn't ready for. And, I don't wanna be, but it makes me sad. C'mon, Laverna. *He* broke this thing between us. Not you. Get over yourself.

Other hand though, that...contact with Mr. Pimples was kind of good time. Sure, it's always a good time when I feel like I'm getting away with something, but being ogled and *touched* like

that...it was *yummy*. Maybe I need to go somewhere where people are horny. After the shitshow I saw at Lorenzo's, this chonky ass and tits could use some affection.

But first—*first!*—clothes. The only reason I'm still wearing these torn up sweats is cuz it's cold out. Gotta find something warm. And, sustainable.

It takes a bit of a search, but I find my rightful place. *Contour*. A trendy looking retail for plus sizes, glammed up in reds, blacks and B&W photos of hot thickies looking proud of their girths. I guess that's me as of today.

Before I enter, before I've even crossed the street to be there, I put on the mask. A lot of these places have outside cameras and I don't need *any* footage of my face. And if anyone tries to tell me to take this mask off, they'll be sorry.

The store is small, squished between a women's athletic shop and *The Gap* and I wonder if they'll have enough merch to cover my bases but when I'm inside I see sweaters, leggings, bras, the whole works.

Let's start with the long shot objective: is there a boulder holder that has even a tiny goddamn chance of supporting these puppies? I feel like I already know the answer is *no fucking way*, but I can try. So, I spend a few minutes playing around in the lingerie section and laughing to myself. These tits have already outgrown all of these. But, then whaddayaknow, I find tucked in one of the drawers a piece that makes me think twice. A 48H bra of shiny lavender. These cups...they're close at least. But, the band is fucking enormous, so it's no go. That's what I think for another minute until I see something pegged to a display rack. It's a bra clip—a little metal clamp with a strip of eyeholes attached. Maybe just maybe I can use this to shorten the band and have a bra with real support.

On to the sweaters. At first, I get pissed off because the bigger the sweaters are, the bigger and longer the sleeves, and I don't have long arms. But I find a stretchy, ribbed, wine-colored high collar. The leggings are the easiest thing. Fat as my ass is, I haven't *quite* outgrown the selection. I find a houndstooth pair that fits seventy-two to seventy-six inch hips. I *think* that'll work.

I also grab a bikini bottom so I don't have to spend this evening going commando.

With my booty in tow, I go to the clerk and ask for a key. She's got a spikey, blue-dyed pixie cut, thick arms and bosoms that would've impressed me twelve hours ago. She doesn't like my mask but she doesn't tell me to get rid of it. I follow her to the changing room and she unlocks it.

For the first time since I destroyed them, I get out of these ruined sweatpants and the dangly thing that used to be a pair of panties. I must be on my A game tonight because it all fits. Okay, *sort of*. The bikini bottoms and leggings are winners. I'm actually feeling a little proud of my gigantic ass in these things. The sweater fits around me and there's still enough hem for my tummy so it's not just a booby hammock, but the sleeves are too long. But they're clingy enough so I can bunch 'em at the elbows so I'll live. The bra with the clip is...interesting. I'm sad to say,

even with bra cups I could stick my whole face inside of, my boobies are still too fat. But with the clip keeping me tight in back, I only moosh half an inch out of the cups, which seems like a win.

It won't last, but like I said, I'm not paying.

I tear off all the tags on all these clothes and leave 'em on the bench. Then I ball up my garbage sweats and panties and step foot out into the store. My plan is to walk straight out of here looking like a million bucks, but two things stop me. First, there's a white, leather waist belt that makes me think I only look like nine hundred thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine bucks. Second, the clerk sees me and cuts around to block my path. "Can I ring you up for those?" she says.

"Uh huh," I lie. I point to the belt. "But, I wanna try that on first."

She goes and gets it for me. "I'm going to need those clothes off you at the register so I can scan them," she says.

"Nah, I already removed the tags."

"*What?*"

"Relax, lady. I'll bring 'em to you when I'm ready."

Back into the changing room I go. That clerk is onto me. She's gonna stop my exit, which means we're gonna do this the hard way.

As I suspected, the belt is the missing ingredient. I have to buckle it almost to the lowest notch because my waist is fucking *tiny*, but it completes the picture. I actually look fucking hot with these huge tits and this fat ass and my waist still skinny as it ever was.

Now to deal with that pain in the ass clerk. I gather up all the tags and leave the changing room. The clerk is right there to intercept me. She follows me to the counter. I hand her the tags. With the testiest fucking frown I ever saw, she scans the tags, one by one. I could cap this errand off right here, but I wanna see how much money I'm getting away with. The grand total appears on the register: \$378.64. What a goddamn joke. Like I could afford that.

This is more value than I've ever stolen at a single time. And some part of me fucking loves it. Loves the danger. Already, I can feel my tits and ass soaking in her flesh. My heart is thumping. The danger is so big right now, it's like I'm about to cum.

"You can scan your card here," she says and taps the card reader with a glittery, purple nail.

"I'm not gonna do that."

And she gives me the most offended face, I want to take a photo and frame it. "I'm sorry?" she says.

"I'm not gonna pay anything."

"Then, I'm going to have to ask you to take those clothes off and leave."

"Okay but lemme ask you a question first. How big do you need to be to work in a place like this?"

Her outraged face contorts even harder and I start laughing inside my mask. My brain stops resisting the stone lady's blessing.

She shrinks. I grow. My boobs press out these monster cups and bubble over them. My ass tests the leggings and bikini.

"Okay," she says, "it's time for you to stop screwing around, and—" but then she sees it. She sees it in her loosening top. Her neck fat pulls in. Her jaw shrinks. Her tummy sinks. Something's wrong but she can't understand it. She looks down at herself and sees her body shrivel. She looks at me and sees my boobs bubble out of my cups.

I thrust my mirrored face towards her. "How skinny do I have to make you before you fucking *run*?"

All the anger is gone from her face. Her mouth pops open in horror. She backs into a shelf and her arms spasm.

Then, she runs. She dashes into the back room and shuts the door.

I walk out of *Contour*, my new clothes fitting quite a bit tighter than they did a minute ago.

* * *

I'm back outside and feeling halfway human again after that change of clothes. Still got these gym sneakers on but I ain't complaining. Not in this cold. Once I'm far enough away, I take off the mask, strap it to my arm like before.

The first public trash bin I see, I drop my mask in. Stupid maybe, but I just don't feel like carrying that plastic piece of junk around with me any more.

So, where to now? After all this, what kind of shenanigans am I trying to stir up? Well, I've had my fun with the stores, but after three lifts today—am I counting right?—retail is getting old and if I'm set on going out in a blaze of glory it'd be kinda lame to do it in a goddamn shop. I've stolen almost four hundred dollars in goods. Let's not go back. Let's find something bigger.

I look around and notice the neighborhood is emptying out. People are going home. I decide the place to be is back at the hotels. There's restaurants there, bars...gotta be some kind of party over there I can crash. Gotta be some lift for the history books waiting for me, somehow. Something for them to remember me by.

So, off I go, my huge ass wobbling like a car trailer behind me. The rain is gone but it's still cold and there's a wind that keeps my huge fucking nipples hard right through this fuzzy sweater. Too

bad I can't zip this jacket up with these boobies. Fuck it all. If my boobs were *half* this size I'd still be shit outta luck.

That's when I bother to check my phone. It's been buzzing all night and I just haven't cared. But it's buzzing now and I could use a distraction from this cold. But...it's Lorenzo. This is probably the fiftieth time he's tried me. Alright...time to get this over with. I hit the *Accept Call* button. "You don't get the message, do you?"

"Hey, what the *fuck* is going on?"

I laugh. For a second, I don't even know what to say. "Lorenzo...we're done."

"Hey, calm down a minute, babe. Let's talk—"

"I'm very, very calm, Lorenzo. This is my calm voice. Hear it? Like I said—"

"Will you just listen to me? I've been trying to reach you all night."

"There's nothing to fucking say. We're going our separate ways now."

"No, wait! What happened tonight?"

"I know what you did—if that's what you're asking, Lorenzo. Not a bad choice, by the way. She had nice tits."

Lorenzo goes silent for a bit. "Babe, will you just listen to me?"

And this is the first time I shout at him. *No*, I can't listen to him. I know how this fucking story goes. He'll beg, he'll promise never to do it again, he'll make excuses. He'll go all soft and call me *baby* and tell me he made a terrible mistake and wants to hold me in his arms again, *just one more time*. We had some good times, right? And, I'm my mother's daughter and I'll fucking *believe* him. I'll swallow every goddamn word. No, I can't listen to him. Not anymore. So, I shout instead: "*You piece of shit. I don't even wanna know if that was the first time or the eightieth. You can keep that to yourself. All I want is to make a clean fucking break.*"

"Babe, just lis—"

"And, don't call me *babe* ever again."

"*What happened tonight? What the fuck happened?*" Now he's the one shouting. *Roaring* is more like it. And for some reason, it's only then I remember the shit I pulled back at the apartment. Lorenzo lost maybe twelve pounds this evening. He's probably wondering where that went. Where his lady's tits went.

I pause here. What to say, what to say... Well, I don't have anything quippy for this. "You're never gonna know," I say and end the call. He calls right back. I block him.

Then, I cry. I cry for five fucking blocks. Fuck crying, I bawl. I'm saying goodbye to so much and for what? For *what?* Freedom? There's no getting around it, I definitely feel some kind of *free*

when I can lift stuff. After all this, there's a part me that's just fucking relieved I can lift shit without breaking any more promises. Never shoulda made one in the first place.

But then again, I'm cursed. And whatever cursed is, it ain't free. If I did hear Lorenzo out, if I did decide to put the breaks on tonight's lift bender, if Lorenzo was somehow okay with me being damn near twice the size I was this morning—all tits and ass, if we somehow made up and decided to keep going on together, that doesn't change the fact that I'm a fucking disease now. Living Ozempic. Whatever trouble I get myself into from here on, the thing to do is keep it as far away from people I love as possible. I can control lifting, at least for a while. I can't control this. Not enough, anyway.

Was I even really in love? Or, did I just like the safety of living with him? Honestly Laverna, what were the good things? Let's see...quiet times in his apartment? No, those don't count. Those were *my* time. Cooking meals for him and watching him eat 'em? Yeah, that scratched an itch. He didn't compliment my cooking much but he seemed to eat his food up all the same. Banter was nice, when he wasn't making me feel small and crummy. Aw, fuck me. Was the sex *really* the best thing? It was the one thing we both agreed on, and liked doing the same amount. Can't lie, it made me feel good, being his fuck bunny. Guess that's why I had to end things tonight. Cuz I learned today, I wasn't the only one. If I can't even be the one person he sticks his dick into, how do I feel good about myself with *that* guy? Ain't happening.

And now, I'm bigger and heavier than he is! With this body, that big/small dynamic we had—it couldn't be the same. I was the little one, the sock puppet for his boner. He'd hardly recognize me now. And far as I can tell, there's nothing to stop me from getting bigger and bigger and bigger.

As I get closer to the hotels, I think less about Lorenzo and more about sex. Goddammit, I already miss sex. I miss cuddles. I miss being cute and saucy. I miss doing the dirty things he'd punish me for. Didn't like it when he called me a slut though. That never worked for me.

Honestly, I'd much rather be punished for being a thief than being a slut. Well, I probably will be punished for being a thief sooner or later. Don't know how exactly, but it's coming. Probably tonight. Lifters either stop lifting or they get caught. And, I ain't stopping. No goddamn way. Lifting shit is the best. Better than cigarettes, alcohol, gambling, coke, you fucking name it.

And, even though I don't *like* her, right now I'm pretty sure this little stone lady is the only one that understands.

The hotels are all around me now. Still a lot of people at the restaurants even though the rush is over. The bars are just getting started. Wouldn't mind a cocktail but I made a rule that I'm not paying for anything tonight and that's a promise I *will* keep. I'm not doing things the right way—I'm doing them *my* way.

Now that I'm in a place where people are, I catch a lot of stares out the window. When I pass people on the sidewalk and look over my shoulder, they're looking at me. Ah—what do I expect? With this much T&A getting trucked around, I'd probably be staring too. A dude whistles behind my back. I flip him off. Look if you wanna, but keep your dirty mouth to yourself.

I cross the blocks and look around. To be honest, I'm not inspired. Maybe I'm chasing my own ass out here. But then, something soft and wet hits my nose and I look up and notice, it's starting to snow! Here I am outside, single, homeless, body-morphed and cursed and I'm witnessing the first snowfall of the season. Something about that feels nice, like maybe Gabby isn't completely wrong when she says everything happens for a reason.

That's when I look out across the avenue and see it. Two blocks away is a place I've never stepped foot in—because it ain't a place for people like me. *The Hotel Olympus*. Huge building. Takes up its own massive block. It's shaped kinda like an armchair, if the arms stayed at the same level as the back. I used to joke about the *Olympus* with my friends. We'd say stuff like, *turn off the damn water. If you flood my fucking apartment, you're putting me in the Olympus while YOU clean it out.* That kinda thing. Ritzier than a fucking cracker.

Everything clicks. I feel it again. The buzz. Yeah. Tonight, maybe I really do have it in me to steal from a rich ass hotel. I've been too scared to do anything like it all my life. But now—fuck is there to be afraid of?

Course, they might kick me out before I get a chance to do anything. But let's find out...

Snowflakes dust up my jacket as I cross those two blocks and go in through those big sliding doors. Aw, these doors are so fucking grand, I already feel like royalty. And, hot damn! This place is *nice*. The carpets are this gorgeous blue color. I feel like I'm under the sea. Then, there's this giant, yellow floral pattern that winds across it, and—oh shit! Those vases are fucking huge! Look at all those yellow roses! Oh my god, I can *smell* 'em. They're fucking *real*. How much does it cost 'em to keep this many *live roses* in the goddamn lobby?!

"Can I help you?" says a voice across this giant, gorgeous room. And I'm stunned because of how *nice* the voice sounds. Brunette with bangs at the desk and she's cute as a goddamn button with that smile.

"I'm...I'm waiting for someone," I say. "Can I, uh..."

"Oh, well you can go ahead and have a seat!" she chirps.

I...get to have a seat. Here. In this place. Me. Crazy.

So, I go over to one of these beautiful, yellow, upholstered things, throw my jacket over the back and sit my huge ass down. My hips fill it from arm to arm which makes me sheepish but whatever! Because, I'm a perfect fit in this thing! Goddammit, if I could only lift a *chair* I'd walk out of this place a fucking queen.

So, with my ass comfy in this chair, I rub my hands to make 'em warm after the cold tried to freeze them off. I keep my eyes open for an opportunity. To be honest, I don't know what I'm looking for. I really am out of my element here. It's in the retail stores where I know what I'm doing. But, hey—first time for everything! If I'm on my A game tonight, maybe I'll see something I can make something out of.

But, sitting has a downside: I start thinking. I think about how all I'm doing right now is trying to move. Move to the next lift, the next risk, the next thing that keeps my buzz going. And now, all I can do is wait, wait and *hope* the night ain't tapped out yet. Cuz when it is, I might have to think a little more. And, considering the general facts of my life right now that's not something I wanna do. Honestly, if a not unattractive man offered to scoop me up and marry me in Vegas *right now*, I'd fucking go for it. Seriously, take me away from this shitshow life. It's boring. The problem with always having to be on the move is, sooner or later you run out of road. And as I sit here in this gorgeous, floral-smelling lobby, I wonder if that's where I am now. At a dead end where there's nothing to do but think about how much life sucks.

And then something happens, something I maybe shoulda seen coming in the lobby of the *Olympus*, but I guess I been living under a rock most of my life. Two ladies walk in in heels. One's a black girl in a red leather jacket and her hair is a huge mop of curls, some of 'em dyed blonde. One's a white girl, redhead in faux fur. They wear fishnet stockings, mascara, heavy eye shadow, lipstick. They're not dressed for this cold ass weather but they don't shiver so I'm guessing a car just dropped them off. They look around the lobby, then park their asses on a yellow couch a few furniture pieces away, their backs turned to me. The black girl looks at her phone. The white one whispers in her friend's ear.

That's right. This is a rich people place. Rich people fuck, just like everyone else. In fact, they get the best fucks money can buy.

I look down at my huge, fucking tits. I look at the hookers. I check my ass in this seat. Having a huge ass and tits don't make me a hooker and I'm not exactly dressed for the role anyway. But, I'm here in this lobby, waiting for an opportunity...

I'm tempted to go up to the hookers and ask 'em if we're the same (like they'd have an answer). Then I ask myself, if someone propositioned me for money right here, would I take it? I mean, *would* I? Honestly, I have to think about it. Even though I feel like a fucking mutant, I guess a body with humongous tits and ass like this oughta scratch *somebody's* itch. And, it's weird, cuz I wouldn't mind a decent dicking—like I said, I'd take *anything* to get and stay outta my own head. Problem is, I don't want anyone's money. Not if they're just gonna *give* it to me. I mean, where's the fun in that? But...if I believed someone would show me a good time—and all I had to do was make 'em feel good? Eh...there's probably a universe where Laverna would try it. I guess we'll see if this is it.

An older guy with receding hairline and curls where he still has hair walks in with his buddy. They're both wearing suits. There's some kind of exchange between this guy and the hooker with the phone that I don't see. I just know they're looking at each other, and as the men pass, the hookers get up and straggle behind them and they all pass me and take a left into the hall where the elevators are.

Then, a bunch of fancy people come through the doors. Dresses, suits, ties, long coats and mink scarves. There's like ten of them. Four women, six men. Half of 'em are drunk at least. Some are cheery, others tired. I'm getting a wedding reception vibe. A few of them do hugs and head for the elevators but six of them stay.

And then, one of them turns and looks at me. Then she looks away. Then she looks at me again. She's with a man—a tall, blond guy holding a bagged wine bottle. Everyone else looks fried or inebriated, ready to crash, but I can tell by their body language, the party's not over for these two. The lady looks at me again. Not a single person who entered this building tonight hasn't stared at me, trying to figure out my crazy shape, but there's more to this lady. She's not just curious, she *wants* something.

Well, I ain't gonna be shy. I stare back. She approaches.

She wears a killer maroon long coat with big lapels. Dark dyed auburn bob, lipstick the color of a gorgeous, dark bruise. As she gets closer, she unties the coat and sticks her hands in the pockets. She's in a black, huggy slip. Once upon a time twelve hours ago, I'd have probably told you she had big boobs.

But the thing that's got my eye right now, the thing I can't take my fucking eyes off for a second is the necklace she's got on. It's this pendant thing with a gorgeous blue eye. A big, fat sapphire I guess. And, the chain is split into these jewel-encrusted segments that I think might be real diamonds.

She gets within a few paces and looks at me. Like, really *looks*. I'm honestly impressed by how not afraid she is to look a stranger up and down while the stranger's looking back. Women don't usually do this sort of thing. So she looks me up and down, checks my tits, my hips, my face. And, I'm still looking at her fucking neck because this bitch has thousands of dollars hanging from it.

You could call it love. I'm getting the buzz again. My heart beats faster and faster. My night isn't fucking over.

I feel my tits, my legs, my ass, all soaking in weight. In a room with six or seven people where I'm taking sips, not gulps of flesh, I guess it's too little per person for them to notice. But, I need to be calm. Need to keep the hose off. At least for now. Think of something gross, Laverna, think of something gross. Lorenzo cheating on you with that *bitch*. There we go.

Meanwhile, The Necklace speaks in a voice so velvety and froofy, I swear she got it for no less than five hundred million dollars: "Are you waiting for someone?"

Play your cards, Laverna. Play your best fucking cards. "Maybe," I say. I say it like it's a question.

Necklace lady smiles with one side of her mouth. She likes my answer. With mischievous steps, she gets next to me and drops to a squat on her flats. "For real," she says, and her voice is low and throaty, "what're you looking for?"

I give her a sly look. "A good time," I say.

She glances at my sneakers and I know what she's thinking. Not many hookers you see going around in gym clothes. "Are you...looking for business?" she says, her voice is unsure.

How the fuck do I answer this question? Bite the goddamn bullet, Lavena: are you a hooker or ain't you?

"I don't want your money," I say. "But I am looking for a good time."

She squints at me. "What're you doing here?"

"Would you believe it if I said I got nowhere better to be?"

Her sly face returns. "What kind of good time are you looking for?"

"Drinks, kisses, cuddles, nothing too complicated. And how 'bout a souvenir to remember the time by?" I think about what I just said for a second. "Oh yeah, and sex."

She grins, giggles. "For no money, huh?"

"I know, it's weird. But, I'm not that kind of girl. I'm just looking for fun and stuff."

"If that's true, you could get yourself into trouble in a place like this."

"Yeah, I got a case of the dumbs tonight. But you don't look like *too much* trouble."

"I might be. You never know. What kind of trouble *aren't* you looking for?"

"Nothing goes in my ass. Nothing goes on my face. Be nice to me. Don't give me cuts or bruises. Don't call me a slut or anything like that. We use protection. And I expect to be alive tomorrow."

"So, you're okay with the touch of another woman?"

This is an interesting one for me. In high school once, I kissed my then-best friend because she wanted to know if she was a good kisser. It was really eating her up. And, that was the last time I ever messed with my own gender like that. It's hard to think about that option when you spent a decent chunk of your childhood hearing your dad, mom, aunties, uncles and cousins all crap on girls who like girls and boys who like boys. At least, it's hard when you find boys cute and hot anyway and you think getting plowed by dick is awesome. Why *not* stick with boys? It's easy! But, did I ever have a problem with it myself? Not since I was ten, anyway. And, well...I never admitted it to anyone except Gabby once while drunk, but the kiss was...well, it was...y'know, nice. My then-bestie, she had nothing to worry about is all I'm sayin'!

So, while there's a part of me that's hell-frozen-over shocked to hear me say it because I never had the balls before, I tell the Necklace with a haughty ass cock of my head, "show me what you got."

She sidles in closer and says, "is your body for real?"

"Hard to believe, maybe. But I can prove it."

She tilts her head in the blond man's direction. "What if he's part of it?"

"Well, what if he is, sister? Would that make you jealous?"

She cackles. "Maybe you'd like to pair up with me and make *him* jealous."

"Ohhhh. I see how it is. And, do I touch him?"

"No. He's not that type."

"Fine."

She looks over at her not-touchy feely beau who's still talking to his friends. Then she looks at me with a scowl. "He gets chatty when it's late like this." She gets up, goes over to him, squeezes his ass. His friends can't see her do it but I sure can. She talks to him. He nods. Then, she takes the wine out of his hand and comes back to me. "Let's go on ahead. He'll catch up."

I get up off the chair, sling my jacket over my shoulder and follow the Necklace to the elevators.

My body's size is at rest for now because all I can think of is how fucking scared I am about getting frisky with another woman. Do I have the slightest clue what buttons to push? But hey, the night has given me this chance for adventure and I ain't gonna turn it down. I'll do my best to be what I need to be.

The elevator dings as soon as the Necklace presses the button. I step in, turn and there's a *thunk* as my jacket hits the wall.

"Wait!" says the Necklace as the doors start to close. "What was that?"

I take the stone lady out of the pocket and show it to her.

"Oh," she says, and there's relief in her voice. She lets go of the door, scans a card and hits a button. It's to the top floor.

She points at the stone lady. "What is that?"

"She's my little friend. I guess you could say one of us was modeled after the other."

"You have a statue of *yourself*?"

"Don't even ask," I say and laugh uncomfortably. A rich person, amazed at *my* ego. Just hilarious.

She sighs pleasantly. "We were at a wedding today."

"Wedding? Never woulda guessed."

"It's been *such* a long day and I've been so bored," she says in a whiny voice. "Didn't look like there was much to do in this town." She looks at me with slitted eyes. "But, then I saw *you*."

"Like what you see?"

She full on checks me out now. "Amazed, actually. Excuse me for asking, but how do you *walk*?"

"One foot in front of the other seems to work."

She laughs. "You're fun."

"Oh, I'm *loads* of fun. Can't you tell?" I balance all my T&A on my tippy toes and bounce up and down on my heels. Jiggles ensue. I give the Necklace a big, friendly smile. "Jiggle all the way, baby. 'Tis the season."

She laughs. Her eyes are huge and gleeful like she's a five year old opening the biggest Christmas present she's ever seen. "Who *are* you? No, actually. That's probably rude. What should I *call* you?"

The elevator slows, stops and dings. "Call me Patty," I say. We step out into the hall. "What do I call you?"

"Hmmm. How about Marybeth?"

We step out of the elevator hall. I expected it to lead to a hotel corridor with rooms. It doesn't. There's a huge room with cushy chairs, glass tables, a bar, a dozen or so rich fuckers sipping martinis and a couple hookers keeping some of 'em company. We're standing on a carpeted walkway that borders the lounge area on three sides. On the forth side is a view of the city up close to the skyscrapers.

I can't hide the amazement on my face. "Oh, have you never been to a VIP lounge before?" says Marybeth.

I look at her, still with this dumbass expression on my face. I'm giving a lot away but I can't help it. "Uh...can I check the view for a sec?"

"Uh...sure."

I walk down a couple steps into the lounge and across some shiny ass black tile up to the windows. I try to get close so I can cup my hands over my eyes and block out the reflection but when I do, my booby bumper says hi to the glass. I'm not having it. I moosh my humongous titties into the window so I can get my eyes up close and see all the lights, the roads, the buildings. From here, the city looks sweet and peaceful. Not the city I know.

Marybeth laughs at my mooshed boobies. "Those seem inconvenient."

"Yeah, this glass is fucking cold and my nipples are like popsicles. But I ain't missin' this."

She edges in a bit closer to me. "Would you like me to make them warm?"

"Didn't your mama ever tell you, don't bite off more than you can chew?"

She laughs. "Oh my gosh, you're so funny! I didn't know there were people like you in this town."

After I'm done ogling the view while Marybeth ogles me, she leads me by the hand back up to the walkway and over to one of maybe ten numbered doors that open out onto this big lounge room. Hot damn, to see all this when you go out in the morning. She scans her keycard and lets me in.

I got no clue if what's inside counts as a hotel room. Seems more like I'm in someone's *house*. We take off our shoes in a hall and go into this massive room that's like, two living rooms with a gigantic dining table sandwiched between 'em. There's another big room off to the side and I spot a bed in it and I don't think it's the only one, but that's not where we're heading. Marybeth takes me down a hall. We pass a small bathroom, then we pass a fucking *huge* bathroom with a tub and a shower. We turn a corner in the hallway and go out into the biggest, nicest bedroom I've ever seen. There's a fucking jacuzzi on a raised tile floor!

All this for *two* people. My whole family could spend a week in this place and there actually might be enough room between us so no one gets stabbed in their sleep.

So, I'm working through all this while Marybeth goes and gets some plastic cups from her palace of a fucking bathroom, digs around in her hubby's suitcase for a corkscrew and then grunts like a bitchy cat while she tries to uncork this bottle. "Could you help, please?" she says. I grab the bottle, she pulls the corkscrew and then there's a *pop* and she goes tumbling to the floor and I get a splash of wine on my nice, new sweater. "It'll wash off," she says as I'm rubbing at it.

"Ooh...it's dribbling down my tits," I say with a shiver.

"Let me help you with that," Marybeth says, and comes up real close 'til her grinning face is inches from mine and unbuckles my waist belt. She gets it off, drops it to the floor, then kisses me right next to my mouth. She smells like lemongrass and citrus and...okay, okay—fine! I want her to do it again, alright? Leave me alone.

Marybeth grabs the hem of my sweater. I raise my hands and she pulls it up.

"Wow," she says, almost whispering. My jumbo fucking tits are like a pair of beach balls and they're sproinging two inches out of my shitty, clipped bra. This bra ain't supposed to be cleavage but it's too small on my honkers not to be.

And Marybeth's greedy fingers touch my double decker tits over my bra and test me with a little squeeze. She tests me harder and when she lets go, the braless top floor goes *boi-yoing*. I'm a little embarrassed, but then this thirsty lady sinks her face into my cleavage and starts to find that invisible wine stain that fell down there with her tongue. I start petting the back of her head and neck with my free hand cuz I'm liking this. But then, Marybeth motorboats me and ruins it all.

"Ey! 'Ey! I ain't drunk enough for this shit."

She giggles. "My apologies." And she takes the bottle from me and fills a cup, then she serves herself. We cheers. "To your absolutely real, humongous tits," she says. "I admit, I had my doubts."

"Aw, is that the only reason you brought me up here?" I try to look sad.

"Well, I had to know," she says.

I take a gulp of wine. "I like this," I say.

"It's okay," she says. "It was the best thing they had at the reception. I figured, at least I don't have to spend tonight sober. Oh, hey, by the way?"

"Mmm?"

"I'm not expecting to know you or anything, but..."

"What?"

"Why do you have a statue of yourself in your pocket?"

"Lady, the only way to get the answer to that is to know me very, very well. Sorry. It's gonna stay a mystery."

"Oooh, how mysterious! Are you saying I'm going to go the rest of my life not knowing about that statue?"

"Yep."

She makes a pouty face. "Not even a hint?"

"Someone who knows me too well got me to take it off her hands, alright?"

"Hmm. Fine."

We sip our wines and I wonder when Marybeth is gonna lose some of her own clothes when a man's voice calls. "Hello?"

"In here, Drew," says Marybeth.

The tall, blond guy steps into the room.

"Drew, this is Patty," says Marybeth.

"Hi," I say to Drew.

"Pleasure," says Drew. And he shakes my hand with such steel ass grip, I swear he could break my arm like this. I'm not exactly thrilled this guy just walked in while I wasn't wearing a shirt, but he seems uninterested. For some reason, that makes it feel a little more okay—like these two have been through this rigmarole so many times, it's like I'm just the soup of the day. I can't say

it doesn't sting to not be special, but on the other hand I'm not looking to be special in the eyes of these two fuckers. I'm looking for that *necklace*. All the same, I wish Marybeth would lose some clothes already.

Drew takes a seat on a lounge chair and takes off his shoes. Marybeth scolds him for wearing them inside the room then hands him a cup of wine. I'm already at the bottom of mine so Marybeth pours me another.

"Now, where were we?" says Marybeth. She reaches out and pets my boob. Then, she reaches behind her back and starts unzipping her dress.

"I got a request," I say.

"What's that, honey?" says Marybeth.

"That necklace...maybe keep it on?"

"Uh...this thing? The whole time?"

"I like shiny things." By *shiny things* I mean shit I'd love to steal. See, I want those rocks nearby to remind myself why I'm here. If I get swept up in the magic too much, I might just forget my priorities.

Marybeth gives me a strange look. "You mean, I have to keep this on?"

Here Drew speaks up. "I like that idea," he says.

"Of course *you* like it," says Marybeth. "You wanted me to wear it today."

"It looks good on you," he says.

"Eh..." she rolls her eyes, then turns to me. "He likes it when I wear gaudy things."

"Looks classy to me," I say.

"Maybe you want to wear it then," she says. "It's just trash far as I'm concerned."

"C'mon, we're not throwing jewelry away," says Drew. "It's wasteful."

I'm speechless. This bitch is wearing thousands of dollars on her goddamn neck, and it's *just trash*? Throwing it away is bad because it's *wasteful*? She'd *give it to me if she could*?! What fucking world have I stepped into?

And that's when I realize something about rich people I never understood. A few thousand dollars in rocks is fucking *nothing* in this world. Whatever I lift from these people, it's going to be a minor annoyance at best. Maybe you think this should be good news—because I don't have to feel bad for snatching away some family heirloom or some shit. But it's the opposite. When I rob a store, I'm taking value away from that store. If I didn't have anything to feel guilty about, the fun is gone. Whatever these people are worth, there's so much fucking value, I'd never make a

dent. It'd be like like they stubbed a toe. My lifting problem has just discovered its fucking methadone. There's a part of me that wants to walk away, because I don't know how to live in a world where a thousand dollars is something you wipe your ass with. But...I'm too deep into this to turn back. Whatever that necklace is worth to these people, I still want it. Maybe it won't be as fun, but it's gotta be mine. So I say, "I want *you* to wear it. I agree with Drew. It looks good on you."

Marybeth looks from Drew to me to Drew again. She shrugs. "Alright, fine."

And then I realize, I just made things more complicated for myself. If that necklace is dangling in front of me while I'm getting a piece of this rich bitch, I might think too hard about how I'm gonna nab it. Then, the stone lady is gonna start sending me pounds from Marybeth and Drew. I ain't ready for that. I guess I could skeletonize them now and get the whole thing over with, but...I don't wanna rush this either. Don't ask me if the fucking is an excuse to lift or if the lifting is an excuse to fuck. Maybe I have a crisis on two fronts today. Get me?

She unzips her dress, rolls down her stockings. Her pussy is waxed and I'm not a fan of that. Besides that though, her body is nifty. Small, perky curves, clear skin, cute moles on her shoulder and groin, pretty pussy. Overall, nice package. Look, gimme a break. I'm not used to putting these kinds of thoughts into words, okay? I'm new to girls.

So, I try to think: if I was Marybeth, how would I wanna be touched? How do I like to be touched? I put my hands on her waist and give her a thirsty kiss. She sinks right into it. Her lips and tongue are soft and they don't use force to get their point across. Been a while since I had a kiss like this.

While we're taking it nice and slow, Drew sips wine on the chair and watches. His face is still locked in that scowl he seems to have fifty-nine seconds out of every minute. It's like he's watching a horse race or something. And yeah, it makes me uncomfortable. I'm surprised to say it but, it's not the being watched part that makes me feel that way. The being watched part is...kinda hot, actually. No, it's that he's got all his fucking clothes on while he watches. C'mon, bro. Give somethin' up. Lose the blazer, at least! But I'm on their turf and I already won one victory over the necklace. I feel like there's a delicate balance in this room that's gonna be toppled if I start making demands of Drew.

But, Drew hears me, I guess, because he starts undoing his tie anyway. Now, we're getting somewhere.

While Marybeth and I are mouth to mouth, she puts her arms around me and tries to find a way through my bra. I arch my back to try and help her. It's barely enough. With a grunt like she's trying to carry a couch, she gets the clip hooks off of the clasp.

And, the puppies are unleashed. Once upon a time twelve hours ago, these were B cups. Now, they're like fucking jumbo watermelons that just won one of those dumb prizes. "Wow," Marybeth giggles. It takes her both hands to lift just one. She holds it up in front of our faces like it's a Thanksgiving turkey on a platter. Then she jolts up her hands and a tidal wave of titty rolls in the direction of my face. "Ahh!" The surprise of it almost knocks me over.

I guess at this time, I'd normally say something snippy but it's too funny. We laugh. Over in the corner, fancy boy takes off his blazer.

Marybeth plays with me for a bit, then drops below my booby horizon and starts scooching down my leggings. I step out of 'em, pull my socks off with my toes. She comes around behind me and says, "woah! That's in pretty deep." She's talking about the monster wedgie these panties are giving me. She pulls 'em off, pats my butt, then spansks me like she's bopping a drum. My ass ripples. "How're you so smooth?!" says Marybeth. "There's like...no cellulite or anything."

"I'm blessed," I say.

"I'll say you are. Look at her, Drew!" Drew gulps down some wine and says, "never seen anything like it."

"I don't see how this is possible!" says Marybeth.

She licks and kisses my ass cheek. Then she gets to her feet and hugs me from behind, sinking into my ass like I'm a big, huge teddy bear. I'm blushing cuz this is very embarrassing, but it feels good.

Drew unbuckles his belt, undoes his pants and drops them to the floor. He's got a hard-on that wants to tear a hole in his undies. Yeah. now we're all getting somewhere.

All this body worship is nice, but I'm feeling a little on the spot here. So, I break out of Marybeth's hug and undo her bra, then I drag down her lacy, black panties. Not an article of clothing between us now, unless you count the necklace.

We get on the bed and start playing. I'm the first to lay on her back. She cuddles with me and sinks her head into my tit like it's a pillow. Fuck that—it *is* a pillow. The only difference between these tits and a couch throw pillow is, one is made of flesh and is attached to me. The size, the softness...you'd have to ask Marybeth's opinion, but it seems to be pretty much the same experience.

Fancy boy starts unbuttoning his shirt. Yeah, that's it, sir. Join us in Nakedland, the water's fine.

I'm surprised by how much I don't hate this. But...if that stone necklace weren't there—*would I?* Actually, let's face it. If I didn't have this stone lady, I'd be too chicken to even be here. But, since I can literally starve another person's body by thinking really hard, I don't have so much to be afraid of. I guess people would try a lot of things if they didn't have to be afraid.

We cuddle and Marybeth touches herself until she loses her chill and starts panting. She gets on top of me and dives into my boobs. I play along by trying to smother her. Then, she plays with my nipples super hard. My nips are hard to see past all this booby in the way, but I think they're big as bottleheads now. And hot damn, they're sensitive. She's got me gasping and writhing while she licks, bites and sucks me.

Jesus fucking christ. Why am I enjoying this so much? Is it that Marybeth is a lady and I just figured out I like a lady's company? Is it that I don't really know these people and they don't know me and I get to have fun in my birthday suit without worrying about what comes next? Is it that Drew is watching every move we make and I dig being on display? Or, is it really just that *fucking* necklace—that flashy thing on Marybeth's neck that could probably pay my way for four fucking months—which I still have every intention of stealing? I guess I'll sort it all out later.

We switch places. I get on top and fucking drown Marybeth in boobs. Several times over, I drop my tits on her face. Her whole head disappears and her arms writhe like she's a turtle stuck on its back. And yeah, I'm embarrassed to be so *big* I could smother a person, but I still do it because it's funny. Drew, who's been touching himself quiet as a mouse, makes a noise when I do it too: "mmmm." I really don't know this guy, but judging by his sturdy junk, I get the feeling *mmmm* is the sound of his ecstasy.

"I want your pussy," she says. I get up on my hands and knees and Marybeth turns. At first, I don't know what we're doing, but she gets her head between my thighs and it's obvious enough. She reaches around me, squeezes my ass and pulls me down on her face. I scoot my monster titties back with my elbows so I can hold her legs and perform the same trick on top.

Welp, here we go. For the first time in my life, I'm eating vag.

She's salty and dank and smells a bit funny and I'm unsure of myself, but then Marybeth starts working my clit and I decide I'll do whatever she's doing. It starts out weird. Then, it kinda feels good. We're both moaning and I like the way her hands squeeze my ass. My tongue aches and I just power through it. Maybe I'm starting to have a taste for this pussy.

"Ohhhh."

"Mmmnnnn..."

"Oh yeah...yeah."

"Ohh! Mmm...d-don't stop..."

Then, Marybeth's legs start to twitch. I notice, she's got those quick, yelping moans now—she's close.

I'm close too, but I can't get there. Something's missing. I'm plenty wet, but I'm not cooking any hotter. Stuck at a motherfucking simmer. What I gotta do for this?

"Nnnng," says Drew. Aw, c'mon. Even fancy boy is getting close. Where the fuck is mine?

My tongue slows down. I look up. Nothing but headboard. I look down. Nothing but a wet pussy and my tits and hair. I look right. There's Drew, bare ass naked on that chair with his clothes dead on the floor like vanquished enemies. Where the fuck is my orgasm? I don't wanna leave without it.

I give Marybeth some friendly licks to keep her close but I'm still on the hunt. Her lips and tongue are nice down there, but it's like a low pressure massage. Ain't quite makin' me squirm. Then, I lift my body up from her a bit. I got so much titty right here that each boob is pillowed out on either side of Marybeth's hips. She's the hotdog and I'm the bun, okay? Jokes aside, what I'm trying to get at is, when I'm propped up on my arms like this and looking down, there's a triangular tunnel between my boobs and Marybeth's tummy. So I look. I see past her shaved crotch, her belly button, her little boobs... 'til I get to that fucking necklace. There it is. My prize.

That's when I start getting closer. I focus on that necklace. On what an annoying, little shit I must be to make off with it. On all the fucking nonsense I put myself through just for one shiny object. I focus on all that, and realize, there's three pervs in this hotel room, not two. And Drew and Marybeth don't know who they're messing with. They don't know and by the time they realize, I'll be gone.

It's stupid, but every lift I did, I had this feeling in my bones that a new life was waiting for me on the other side of it. It never does come, but hey! The dream lives on. That necklace takes it to the next level. I suddenly see myself snatching hundreds of pricey items from rich peoples' bedroom. I picture piles of necklaces, rings, bracelets and brooches. A whole new world of lifting dazzles my fucking mind.

A chill hits me. I gasp, shiver. I can feel it coming. I drill hard on Marybeth so she keeps up.

"Mmmmmnnnnnnngggg!" That's me, approaching climax with my tongue sticking out. And, would you know it? I think my tits are growing again.

"Hahhh!" goes Drew.

"Mmmmmmmmm!" whines Marybeth.

And I cum too, in slow motion. I can't stay on Marybeth's clit anymore because a wave is moving in. My tits are bubbling up next to my elbows. And, just when I think I'm about to hit my peak, I go higher.

I'm not a screamer, but I scream. My ass jiggles like a bowl of pudding. My arms get weak and I use the last of my strength to roll off Marybeth. Convulsions hit. Waves run up my boobs so fast, they slap my shoulders. I look down and see my thighs getting fatter and fatter.

"Ahhh! Mmmm—nngg, hey! What's happening?" Marybeth is sitting up. I can see her cheekbones sticking out in her face. Her shoulders are sinking down in real time. Across the room, Drew's squinting on his. All his manly muscle is getting sucked right out of him. Like he's a goddamn fruit box. They're losing pounds in seconds. They look tired, dizzy. I look over at Marybeth's poor pussy. This pretty little flower... I see it wither.

They pass out, both skinny as hell. They've stopped shrinking, but I'm still growing. Fuck. Am I borrowing pounds outside this room? I don't know how far the stone lady's fucking reach is. I wanna stop this, but I can't. My orgasm is riding this wave like a surfer. I just can't stop it. This feeling is too good.

This is the first time all day I've actually felt something like freedom and I just can't fucking let it go. I want it to go on and on and on.

My ass swells out and I try to scooch away from Marybeth so I don't smother her. It's hard though because these tits are big as fucking microwaves and I can't move 'em very fast. And, on my right, I'm running out of bed to lay on. The mattress creaks under my weight. I'm getting fucking huge and feels good and I wanna stop it but it's too good.

I try to sit up. My boobs don't cover my lap, they fucking swallow it. My thighs are a foot and a half thick...more, even. And, I just keep getting bigger. It's like I'm a sea of ass and titties. My arms can't even go anywhere without touching 'em. Every little move I make sends jiggles down me somewhere. Even when I spread my legs, my thighs still meet in the middle. I can barely get my hand around my boob to touch my nipple—my nipple which feels as fat as a half size soda can.

Another orgasm comes and rocks me so hard, I slide off the bed and land in a puddle of hip. Every jiggle in my body has this response call of shockwave jiggles.

Fuck me—do I even want this to stop? This is it! The feeling I've been chasing all goddamn night.

I'm too weak to walk so I crawl. Boobs the size of couch pillows crowd my elbows. Every time I put weight on one knee, I feel my ass sway a foot in the other direction.

I might be ninety percent ass, tits and legs at this point. Even a shorty like me could overflow a fucking couch like this.

This has gotta stop. I'm way too big. I look around the room. Skinny little Drew is collapsed on the floor. He certainly doesn't have a boner now. I look out to the doorway into the hall. There she is. The stone lady, watching me. Patameilla!

By the time I get over to her, I can't crawl anymore. All I can do is scoot my tits across the carpet, and I have to do it slow so I don't get burned.

I throttle the stone lady and yell at her. "How do I fucking stop it?! How?!!"

That's when I look over my shoulder and see it again. The necklace. Fuck me. I know what's happening. When I do a lift, there's that point, that magical moment when you're so close to your prize, time slows down and you wish you could stay there point forever. That's where I am right now.

My ass crowds my heels and my tits crowd my arms and I'm getting close to the point where I could compete with this king bed for size. I mean, I'm at least a twin, more like a queen. Each of my tits is like a small, upholstered chair. My ass is a loveseat. I'm becoming fucking furniture. All the same, I know what I need to do. So I inch forward. My knees are colliding with my tits. My ass wants to topple me so I have to keep it balanced, reduce the swaying.

That's it! Just a little closer...a little closer. I roll on top of my furniture tits and clutch the foot of the bed. Then, I put my legs to work and lift my ass like a champion. I can still do it when I'm bracing my arms against the bed for support.

I reach out to Marybeth's skeletal body and start fiddling with the clasp on the necklace.

It takes forever. But, when it comes off and the necklace, my beautiful prize, is in my hands, I'm not growing anymore.

With this gorgeous piece of jewelry, I drop to the floor. I look up at the ceiling between library globe tits. My ass spans a fucking yard in either direction.

Mission accomplished—or it would've been. Problem is, I'm fucked. There's no getting out of this room. I can't fit down that fucking hallway. I can barely move. And, I'm out of options now. Stupidity has gotten me this far and I'm so out of options, thinking isn't gonna do me any good.

I lie on the floor and think about my life for a while. One fucking day. One day and everything gets fucked. Don't ask me what I was thinking tonight when I went on a rampage and turned myself into ass 'n' titty furniture in someone's hotel room. Sometimes, when shit gets bad, you just...you stop thinking about consequences cuz that just feels better.

I turn my head, stare across the cliffside of my left tit and spot my puke green jacket.

It takes five minutes of wriggling around but I get close enough to grab it and take out my phone. I check it. Only one new message now. It's from Georgie.

Georgie: *Please talk to me when you can. I'm really worried.*

So, I write him something.

Laverna: *Hey*

Laverna: *I really fucked myself tonight.*

Laverna: *I'm sorry. I should've stayed in touch. I regret it now.*

Seconds later, I get a call. "Hey," says Georgie.

"Hey," I choke out in a very small voice. My tears won't stop coming.

"What happened?"

"I...did some bad things."

"Like what?"

"Uhh...well, I stole some stuff."

"Um. I don't get it, what are you stealing?"

"Georgie, I'm a shoplifter. I been stealing since I was very young. This isn't new for me. I just...never mentioned it before."

"Why not?"

"Because...I-I didn't wanna burden you with that shit. It didn't seem fair."

"Are you in trouble with the cops?"

"Not yet. Maybe I will be."

"Has anyone...*caught* you stealing?"

"Not exactly. But, the problem is, I can't leave the place I'm at."

"Where are you?"

I laugh through my sobs. "You wouldn't fucking believe it, Georgie boy."

"Where?"

"*The Olympus.*"

"*What?!*"

"Yep."

"Why can't you leave?"

"Because...I'm-I'm cursed."

"Huh?"

"You don't have to believe me now. But if you ever see me again, you will."

"I don't get it."

"I don't wanna fuck with your head tonight, Georgie. I did enough damage already."

"I wish you would explain."

"It would take me fucking *hours*, Georgie."

"Well, I'm still awake. I could hear a long story."

"Can we talk about something else? For a bit?"

"Alright...alright. Why'd you go off the radar like that, L? I thought I was going to pick you up and take you home."

"When you say it like that, it almost sounds like you wanted to."

"I fucking did, L."

There's a pause between us here. "Why?"

"Because..."

He goes silent. "Georgie? What is it? C'mon."

"I care about you."

"Well, I fucking know that, Georgie. What else is new?"

"Fine. I *love* you."

I can't answer for a while. I'm too busy bawling up a storm. "Georgie," I whimper.

"Yeah?"

"Why didn't you ever say so before?"

"I...I never had the chance, L. I didn't know it was for real until..."

"...Until Lorenzo happened?"

"Uh huh."

"Aw, fuck me, Georgie. I'm-I'm so fucking sorry..."

"So, what happened tonight?"

"Emotionally...some shit went down today and I went on a lift bender."

"A lift bender?"

"A stealing marathon, okay? I just have to keep stealing shit. I have to keep doing more dangerous things just to...to *feel* better."

"*Why?*"

"Because, it's...it's the one thing I've got going on, okay? You look outside my life of petty crime and there ain't much else."

"L...are you fucking serious?"

"Yeah. Why wouldn't I be?"

"Y'know...there's a lot of people in your life who care about you. I never knew you *stole stuff*. I didn't need to know it to feel the way I feel about you." It's when Georgie says this specific thing that a change happens. My mountain tits are suddenly getting smaller. My ass is starting to shrink. It starts out slow, but it gets faster.

"Y-you there, L?"

"Uh...y-yeah...um..."

"What's up?"

"Tell me more. Please?"

"Tell you...what, exactly?"

"Tell me how you feel about me—please!"

And, I know what you're about to say. *Aw, for fuck's sake—is the power of love really going to save her?* Well, fuck you. Hear me out: for the first time all fucking day, I *don't want to lift*. Do you understand? I just don't wanna do it anymore. I can finally picture a life for myself again. And...I think for the first time, I'm starting to win against the stone lady.

"You're the most fun person I know, L. I can talk to you about anything. You don't judge. And, you're tough and funny and...and, being around you is just the best. I mean it. I really was pretty torn up when Lorenzo showed up..."

I still got massive pumpkins for tits, but I can sit up now. My ass has lost about a foot on either side.

"And, you're never boring, L. Every time you open your mouth you've got something great to say..."

I can mow my body across this floor again. I start gathering my clothes in a pile. I tell Georgie to go on—don't stop talking. I check Marybeth and Drew. They're still breathing. I didn't starve them to death. But they're seriously passed out. I guess you shouldn't lose this much body weight when you've been drinking wine. I make sure their heads are turned so they don't choke on their own vomit, if it comes up. I did a lot of bad things tonight, but I'm not that kind of bad.

"And, I like that...that ratty old jacket you wear, L. I don't think I've ever seen you without that thing, and I'm not sure I ever want to..."

With one arm, I hold all my clothes against my tit, with the other, I hold the phone to my face and listen to Georgie. It kills my back, but I can lift my tits now. I rise on shaky knees. Oh, fuck me. Balancing tits the size of couch stools is just a fucking nightmare.

I drop the necklace next to Marybeth's head. I don't know if I could get out of this place with it. Maybe? I just straight up don't want it. Not anymore.

I waddle across the room, almost fall over a couple times. When I get to the hallway, my tits squish together, my hips cram the door.

Before I leave, I take one more look at the room. Drew and Marybeth look a bit healthier now. Their stomachs are still caved in and I can see every bone in their bodies, but they don't look like corpses now. Just very underfed adults.

"Hey, is everything all right over there, L?"

"Mmph...y-yeah. Just...just moving."

"You okay?"

"Y-yeah...actually. I'm good. Hey—y'know something?"

"What?"

"Uh...come pick me up?"

"For real?"

"Uh huh."

"From *the Olympus*?"

"Yeah. But, uh...stay on the phone with me?"

"Alright. I'm on my way."

I squeeze, squeeze, squeeze my massive T&A down the hall. My titties are gelatinous enough that I can squish 'em through, but my hips are sturdier and they really like this wall. It isn't until I flip to my side that I can really make progress. I still take up the hall from the front of my thighs to the back of my ass, but I'm squishy enough back there to take steps. For a VIP suite, this hall is fucking tiny.

I pop out into the living room, still talking to Georgie, still shrinking down. I can balance better now. I take a break on the couch—my ass fills up most of it, but my sit bones land on it and I can perch. I get my socks on and my jacket. I can't exactly say the jacket *fits* when my sideboob is swallowing up both sides of my torso but at least I have a pair of sleeves, and...sort of a cape?

The shrinking has slowed. It's still going on, but I'm losing centimeters, not inches. Whatever. I don't care what size I am when I walk out of this place as long as I *walk out*.

I get off the couch and head for the hallway that leads to the door. "Hey, Georgie?"

"Yeah?"

"I gotta ask you a question. Y'know how we talked this afternoon about...fat asses and titties?"

He laughs. "Yeah."

"Well...would you feel any differently about me if my ass and titties were fatter?"

"What? Like...if you gained weight?"

"Just there. Just the ass and titties."

"You sound like you're describing a fantasy girl who gains weight in all the best places."

"What if I am? Is that your fantasy?"

Georgie goes quiet.

"Georgie, you better fucking tell me this. I need to know."

"Sounds like a dream to me."

"What if the ass and titties were *really* big?"

"Like, how big?"

"Name a size, mister."

"Like...like basketballs?"

"Sure. What if they were bigger than basketballs."

"He laughs."

"This ain't funny, Georgie. Talk."

"Bigger than basketballs, huh?"

"Potentially."

"Can I play with them?"

"You can fucking go to town on 'em, Georgie. I just need to know if you *like it*."

"Look L, my dick is already hard as a rock talking about this with you. Is that enough information?"

"No such thing as too big?"

"Try me."

"Maybe I will. Maybe I fucking will, Georgie boy. You'd better be on your way."

"Trying to get to you as fast as I can."

"Go faster. I'm sick of this place."

I go into the spare bedroom where there are two queen beds, side by side. The shrinking has slowed to a crawl now. I get the feeling I'm just not going to get down to my original size. Definitely not tonight. I wait five minutes and pray Drew and Marybeth don't wake up and go looking for me.

Then, I commit my last lift of the day. I steal a blanket. I don't wanna walk out of this place a nudist.

And, sure enough, the buzz kicks in. No more shrinking. I'm starting to grow again. "Hey, Georgie!"

"What's up?"

"Guess what?"

"I really like you too. I always have. I just...I got this problem with you."

"Um, what problem?"

"I can't lie to you. I just can't fucking do it. I guess I was afraid to be with someone I can't lie to. I know how dumb it sounds. But...that's literally a thought I had in my head about you."

"So, you've *never* lied to me?"

"Kept secrets, yes. Lied, never."

"Wow."

My self-distraction works—the buzz dies. The growing stops. And, whaddaya know—my tits still ain't down to that jumbo watermelon size I was at when I started here at the *Olympus* so I don't bother trying to squeeze into my clothes.

In the entrance hall, I plant my huge, naked ass on a bench and tie my shoes. I'm still talking to Georgie. I could talk to him all fucking night. I could talk forever. I don't want to do anything else.

Out in the VIP lounge, there's a lot of rich people and hookers looking sickly and weak on the chairs. They're all drinking big glasses of water. No one looks *too* skinny... God, I hope I didn't kill anyone tonight.

I get a lot of eyes on me for tearing across the room in a blanket, carrying a bundle of clothes. No one stops me as I head out for the elevator though. Honestly, I don't think anyone here has the strength to follow me right now.

I take the elevator down to the second floor. And, yes, a couple folks join me in here and try not to stare at this short stack woman, super wide woman in a blanket. When I get off, I hurry through the halls in search of the stairs. It takes a lot of wandering around and I'm starting to get out of breath, but I find them. I drop my belt trying to get that heavy ass door open.

"Are you close?" I say as I climb down the stairs.

"Still about five minutes away according to the GPS," says Georgie. "Why?"

"I'll meet you at the side door."

"Which side?"

"I don't know yet."

I reach the ground floor and throw open the door. On the sidewalk, my shoes sink into snow. There's snow everywhere. Up the hill, where the front entrance is, I see the lights of emergency vehicles. I know why they're here. And yeah, it makes me feel bad.

And, even so, when I finally see Georgie's old beater of a Lexus come up this hill to pick me up, it really feels like fucking Christmas.

Epilogue

It's been six months since all that bullshit.

And, guess what? I'm here. Still here in Georgie's apartment. He got that Associate's degree and landed a full-time gig at an animal shelter. And, yeah, I helped him with his Spanish so he could get it. The money's good. Not fantastic, not enough to move into a bigger place, but we're holding the fort down.

Since he brings home the bacon for now, I make most of the meals and do our laundry. We try our best to go to the gym twice a week, take turns playing video games and rot our brains with shit television shows. Sometimes, Georgie wants to watch something that's actually good and we get sucked into a program for a while. I sleep in his bed with him. I like his bed. I like his smell. He doesn't snore near as bad as Lorenzo. Also, I try to keep his dick hard as often as possible cuz I don't want us to get bored of each other. That moment when I saw Lorenzo with that lady still fucks with my head and even though I trust Georgie, I still *worry*.

Yeah, I know we jumped into things fast. Maybe I could've had time to process the death of my last relationship. For the first week, I was worried I wasn't ready. But, things just felt right with Georgie. With Lorenzo, it was like a burning fire that sometimes got really hot and sometimes went out. With Georgie, it's like a really comfy comfy chair I can just sink my ass into and stay in. So all you sanctimonious killjoys who wanna piss on my happy ending because we *rushed things*—you can all eat my ass. So what? Relationships don't always come together the best way. That doesn't always mean they're doomed.

But, I get ahead of myself I guess, so I'll go back to the first few days after *the day*. The papers said some people did get taken to the ER and were treated for dehydration and the effects of malnutrition. Cause unknown. No one died, thank fucking god. When I found that out, I knew whatever happened, I'd be able to move on instead of going the rest of my life with that day hanging from my neck like a goddamn noose.

Over the next couple days, while Georgie was working his part-time shifts and going to classes, I cleaned a fucking storm in his apartment. Wiped his counters, swept his floors, vacuumed his carpet, made his toilet fucking *sparkle*. Georgie told me I didn't have to do it all and I told him I wasn't doing it for him. Look, I felt like fucking trash after that day and I had to do *something*. Besides, I was facing an indeterminate time living primarily off Georgie's paychecks and I needed to prove—maybe to him, maybe just to me—that I had something to offer. I haven't cleaned *hard* like that since, but I keep the place pretty sparkly even though I hate cleaning, have hated it for years. Someday, when we move out, Georgie's *going* to get every cent of his security deposit back. I will *make* it happen.

Besides cleaning, I do other things to keep myself busy. I bought a used book of sleight of hand magic tricks and I'm trying to learn every single one. I gotta keep these naughty hands occupied and there's only so many handjob jobs I can give Georgie before his dick gets tired. Using these fast fingers to surprise and amaze my friends and family seemed like a decent call.

I've been seeing a lot more of Gabby since this all went down. Since she's one of the two people I can talk to about everything that happened that day, I've needed more of her in my life. And, guess what? She successfully managed to get herself pregnant. She's been preggers for three months. So, I need to see her as often as I can cuz when she pops that kid out she's gonna be busy. One thing I don't need from her though, is more tea leaf reading. Since that day happened, she's more confident in her metaphysical mumbo jumbo than ever. Gabs, you kill me. No! I don't believe she saw anything real in my tea that day. And no! I still don't believe she has psychic powers. It's just her fucking intuition. Idols that curse people with T&A are real. ESP and fortune telling are bullshit. The end.

I guess you're wondering what happened to this curse of mine. Fucking nothing. I still have it. The stone lady still follows me around everywhere I go, so I keep her in my pocket or my purse so she doesn't turn up in strange places and weird people out.

The result is about what you'd expect. I have this useless superpower where my tits and ass are almost never the same size from day to day. This makes life fucking complicated. I go thrift store shopping at least twice a week so I have something to wear at any size. Poor Georgie has to deal with the fact that I've turned his bedroom closet into a storehouse of pants, shirts, skirts, panties, bras and bra clips. I've started to arrange them by size because I need matching sets. Some days, I have to wear some ugly bullshit I wouldn't be caught dead in otherwise but I got no choice. It's the only thing that fits that day.

See, when I'm calm, collected and satisfied, the ass and titty weight melts off me. On a typical day like that, I can lose eight pounds. When I'm stressed and hard on myself and feeling *lifty*, I start soaking the pounds up. It's fucking inconvenient because I can't ever be a hundred percent sure about my plans. When I have a bad day, it's dangerous for me to be alone with only one other person because I'll start lifting weight off of them and if I'm not careful, they turn into a skeleton. Georgie has had a couple close calls with me. We have a system though. If I'm feeling *lifty*, we go find a crowded place—somewhere I can soak a bit of weight off a whole bunch of people without anyone's pants falling off. I have it mostly under control, but some days, the *lifty*

feelings creep up and I'm soaking in weight without realizing it. If Georgie and I stay together, he's probably never gonna be overweight another day in his life.

Still, since that day happened, not once have I gone back to my original size. Maybe I could do it if I was like, a zen master or something and had total control over my thoughts. I tried meditating one day, but all the lifty thoughts bubbled up and I gained twenty pounds in twenty fucking minutes. God, the people in Georgie's apartment probably wonder about their sporadic weight loss. I'm sorry people—okay? Anyway, maybe I need to try it in a secluded park where there's nowhere to steal weight from, cuz I'd really fucking appreciate the mental control I'd need to stay within five or ten pounds, longer term. If I could do that, it'd be amazing.

The smallest my tits have ever gotten since that day is a G—and it didn't last long before I sprang back up to a fucking I cup. I've ordered a bazillion used bras off the internet cuz I can't afford new ones that I'm only going to wear maybe once in a month. A lot of days, I'm sporting fucking volleyballs or worse. As for the ass, I wear skirts a lot more often now, cuz they're more forgiving than jeans, but there was that one time when I was out and I grew so much, you could see my ass cheeks under my skit. God—what an embarrassing day that was.

Georgie puts up with so much from me. The packages of used bras, the leftover boxes, the fact that I'm filling his house with clothes, the times when he eats a nice meal and then loses five pounds and gets hungry again. I try to keep him well fed so he doesn't waste away cuz of my bullshit. But, he also likes it. He really likes having a partner whose body is a fucking adventure every day. Some days, we just say fuck it and go out in public and I wear the baggiest clothes so I can think about lifting and safely soak in a ridiculous amount of weight from like, fifty people. Then we go home so I can give Georgie a nice lapdance and squeeze his dick between two airbags. It's worth it because Georgie's a nice, generous partner in bed and his tongue is getting better too and when he's game for me, he'll do anything to give me satisfaction. It makes the inconvenience of the extra weight worth it.

Of course, I had to get used to being the bigger partner cuz Georgie is skinny on a regular basis, again thanks to me. For years, I dated bigger guys, usually with modest pot bellies cuz I found it reassuring to be small. Georgie has a few inches on me in height but I typically have like, thirty pounds on him, minimum. And that's not to mention the times when I'm *fucking huge* and when we cuddle it's like I'm Georgie's loveseat.

I still don't know how the weight fluctuations work. The faster I soak it in, the faster I seem to lose it and the faster the people I took it from get it back. But, if every pound I stole from Georgie went right back to him, he'd probably be big as a house, right? I think there's a point where the weight just kinda...disappears? Maybe Patameilla gets it? I dunno.

Anyway, going back to the days following *that* day, I had some issues getting my stuff out of Lorenzo's apartment. See, he was so worked up that night when I told him we were through, he destroyed my clothes and left 'em on his floor for me to find. I saw this disaster two days later when Georgie and I let ourselves in with the key I still had. I picked a time when Lorenzo was at work cuz I don't wanna see that piece of shit ever again in my life. When I saw my stuff on the floor, torn up and violated—I bawled like a starved fucking infant. I mean, most of those clothes

probably wouldn't ever fit me again, but it still hurt! Yeah...that was a bad day. It got a little better when I found some boxes of my stuff intact. Those boxes had flash drives of photos, little treasures from when I was a kid, favorite books. There's also a cache of things I lifted from when I was a teenybopper that I still have—to remember good times. If Lorenzo *really* wanted to destroy me, he could've gone after that stuff. But, I guess he never knew me all that well.

I did finally reconnect with my folks. They were surprised to see me thirty pounds heavier, but my abuela told me she was relieved. For years, she'd wondered why I never gained the family weight and was afraid I was doing something to myself. I stay in contact with them a lot now, but I need to choose the times I see them very, very carefully because I don't know what I'd tell them if they see me with tits bigger than my own head. This is why I need Gabby and Georgie in my life—people I can be any size around. By the way, they love Georgie. I think they're all secretly happy things fell apart with Lorenzo. My abuela told me in confidence Lorenzo reminded her too much of my dad.

Oh, guess what else? I've discovered I like porn. I mean...I like porn when it's two or more ladies fondling each other and licking clits. So...I guess I'm bi. I don't think my attraction to women is very deep, but it is very horny, and sometimes Georgie's had a long day and his dick is out of commission. So, I have this ace up my sleeve. It hit me recently that cumming has been one of my favorite pastimes since I was a teen and I tend to feel better when I get at least one orgasm, six days a week. So, I keep it up. Don't get me wrong, I haven't told anyone besides Georgie about my recently discovered bi-ness. Honestly, I might actually prefer my folks learn I'm a lifter than learn I'm bi. They're never gonna hear about this. Unless...unless...well, if I hear my auntie badmouth girls who like girls one more fucking time, she's gonna get a piece of my mind and who knows what'll come out of my mouth if that happens.

If you're wondering if I'd ever do anything to lose this curse...well...

The thought does cross my mind sometimes. Like, I don't *have* to be stuck with this thing. If I'm clever, I could find a way to make some lifter steal it just like I did. Sometimes, when I'm at the thrift store, I see a lady acting weird and I just know she's a lifter because I can see thoughts in her head as she scopes out the cameras and marks the points of her exit. If you know how they work, lifters can be very fucking predictable. But...I-I can't see myself doing it. I can't see myself punishing another lifter just for being what they are. I can't doom them the way I got doomed. If you wanna teach a lifter a lesson, you catch them and make 'em ashamed. You don't fucking *curse* them.

So...I guess this curse of mine is here to stay. I am hoping to get a job one of these days so I can pull my weight in this relationship, but I need to get the curse a little more under control. That's why, when Georgie's benefits kick in and I can get on his plan, I'm going to see a therapist about my lifting problem. And no, I am NOT looking forward to it. But the urge to lift doesn't go away. I used to think I could walk away from this naughty habit, but it ain't so. Some of my most death-defying lifts, I still remember fondly. It's too much a part of me. I need some way to live with this thing I've got that doesn't involve me having to actually nab stuff from stores. And, if I'm being honest, it does kinda, sorta help to have a curse that *reminds* me what my dumb brain is thinking of. It's like, I get a reminder that I'm stressed or hating myself in the

form of bigger tits. It does make it easier to intervene so I don't have to actually go out there and do a lift.

Georgie has said he hopes I don't steal again for my own sake, but he's not gonna do what Lorenzo did and make me promise. That's good, because I need that. There's never gonna be a day in my life when me lifting isn't at least a *slight* possibility. For some people, like Gabby, lifting is a phase. It's not for me. I'm all grown up already. I don't always want to do it—I don't even *usually* want to do it, but like sex, a twenty-four hour period doesn't go by without me thinking of it at least once. It's not all suppressed and crazy like it was when I was trying to keep Lorenzo happy with me, but it's still there.

And, guess what? In all of these six months, I haven't lifted anything. Except...except...

Yeah, there was that day last week.

Alright, lemme tell you about the last lift I did. I was having a rough day and my tits and ass were drinking weight like it was lemonade. So, I put on my baggy clothes and skipped a bra and Georgie took me to this burger and fries joint that sits in the middle of a huge row of department stores and furniture shops and the ugly ass parking lots that love them, all next to the interstate. The restaurant is *always* crowded in the afternoon—both the diner and the fucking drivethru. If I didn't need a crowd to mitigate this curse, I'd hate to be here.

So, I'm at a two person booth with Georgie, munching on fries and who do I see up at the counter waiting for her number to be called?

It's her. That woo-woo store owner who made me steal this fucking statue. Even after six months, she still looks underweight and frail after I skeletonized her that day. That *fucking bitch*.

"What's wrong?" says Georgie.

I try to laugh it off, but I can't. I just keep watching Bitchface McThiefCurser as she clings to that plastic number in her hand. It's obvious she ordered to-go inside the place because the drivethru is a stalled-up fucking nightmare and you'll get your meal faster if you order up front.

While I watch her, I soak in maybe another ten pounds and I'm already topping volleyball tits and my ass is making excellent friends with the steel bar that holds the back of this chair up. Finally, they call her number.

"I-I gotta go do something," I tell Georgie. I go up front and watch her. She gets her to-go bag, then goes around to the condiments section. I follow her and brush half a dozen people with my hips and tits and get a lot of stares and I don't give a fuck. Bitchlady has her meal bag temporarily on the counter while she fills a cup of ketchup.

In a sequence of fast moves I have down to a science, I move in, snatch her meal bag and burst out the doors. The lifty feelings are never stronger than when I'm doing a *fucking lift*. And, next to this burger joint, in this parking lot, with dozens of cars whooshing by on the interstate, there's just countless fucking people whose pounds I can peel off.

A car honks at me as I tear across the parking lot. Fuck you, I don't care. I climb the grassy hill that leads up to the sidewalk and I just fucking break for it alongside the interstate. My tits are basketballs...fucking beachballs, maybe. I don't care. My ass is so jiggy it feels like I'm trucking an aquarium tank of water behind me. I don't care. I keep running. My steps get tired and slow but I don't stop. This meal is my fucking prize and I'm gonna eat every bite because, fuck that fucking piece of trash lady who screwed my life. I don't care if things worked out in the end, I don't feel bad for her and I'm not sorry because she SUCKS.

My panties snap on the side and my baggy shorts are filled to bursting and start to tear up my hip. Once again, I have a booby hammock for a shirt and if I don't find a place to hide away quick, I'm gonna be the tittiest, fat ass-ist naked lady this interstate has ever seen.

Poor Georgie, stuck waiting for me while I literally run away from him. Who knows how we get out of this. Who knows how big I get or if I even fit inside his car when he inevitably comes to pick me up from wherever I am. But, on the bright side, if he looks out the window *right now* and sees me tearing up this sidewalk, he'll get a damn nice view of my ass.