

“Two cherry bombs and a rum and coke,” said Charlotte smoothly, setting the two shot glasses next to the highball. She leaned slightly across the bar, offering just the tiniest peek at her cleavage as she added, “That’ll be 12 bucks, hotshot.”

The kid on the other side of the bar gave her a dopey grin, his eyes flicking up and down between her eyes and her tits. He couldn’t have been a month past his 21st. The sort of kid that it paid to triple-check his ID. The little pipsqueak finally offered her a crumpled twenty, saying “Keep the change.”

Charlotte gave the poor star-struck kid a wink as she ran the transaction with swift, confident movements and added the eight dollars to her small mountain of tips for the evening. Sometimes squeezing money out of customers was too easy. Especially male customers.

But Charlotte didn’t have any more time to bother with the kid, three other people were vying for her attention further down the bar. Just another night at The Hangnail. Most other places, even on this busy street in the entertainment district, could expect to be quiet on a Monday night, but The Hangnail was always humming. It was the sort of ratty dive that consistently made the “best bars” lists in crappy self-published magazines.

A shithole to be sure, but that was part of the charm.

And Charlotte was a good enough bartender to keep up with the crowds. Not just physically, although she had been in the game long enough to be quick and efficient at mixing and serving, but personality-wise as well. It took a tough woman to keep up with all the disrespect and the bad attitude of The Hangnail’s usual crowd, and a charming one to wring good tips from them. Charlotte was both. Her and this job were a match made in heaven.

If only everyone could see it that way.

Charlotte barely noticed as the bulky shape of her boss emerged blinking from his office and joined her behind the bar. She was a little too busy mixing a row of Long Island iced teas for a raucous group of twenty-something women to greet him.

“What a fuckin’ crowd,” said Rob in a bemused voice, leaning back against the bar and crossing his thick, hairy arms over his gut. He was a fifty-three-year-old man with bristly grey hair and a perpetual scowl. An old-fashioned guy. In the worst of ways.

Charlotte raised an eyebrow at him as she poured rum down the line into the plastic cups. “Are you complaining boss?” she asked dryly. “I can ask some of the paying customers to leave if you want.” Her phone buzzed audibly in her pocket. She ignored it.

“You gonna get that, honey?” asked Rob with a smirk. She ignored him too.

Just as she was accepting payment from the tipsy gaggle of ladies, Charlotte heard a sharp, obnoxious whistle, and looked up with annoyance to see Connor. “Hey beautiful,” he said with a smug grin. “Long time no see.”

Charlotte had to try hard not to give him the finger immediately. “I see you every fucking night at the bar, asshole,” she said acidly. “I think you mean long time no fuck. That’s by design.”

“Get me a beer. San Pedro Especial. Come on, babe. We both know we’ll end up together again eventually. We always do.” Connor’s smile was as slimy as his eyes. And his stupid fade made him look like a teenager. He was frustratingly correct about the number of times they had gotten back together in the past, but it had never been easier to resist him than right now.

Charlotte grabbed his beer from the cooler and swung it down against the bar with a sharp motion, expertly popping off the cap. “Five bucks,” she said stonily.

Connor just chuckled as he dropped a crumpled five on the counter. No tip. Naturally. “Be... seeing you soon, babe,” he said with a wink, grabbing his drink and heading down the bar to talk with some of his idiot friends.

This time Charlotte did flip him off.

“Huh, there goes trouble,” said Rob behind her with a low chuckle. “Just don’t slack off of work this time to make out with your little lover boy.”

“How about you tell me what to do when it comes to your business and let me figure out my own personal life, ok boss?” said Charlotte with a snort, shaking her head. She took another order from a tall man in front of her, now pointedly ignoring her ex-boyfriend further down the bar. “And don’t fucking call me ‘honey’, asshole. Anyway, you know that Connor and I are fucking done. ”

“How many times have I heard that?” asked Rob with a smirk, finally shifting from his lazy lean to help out with customers. “I know how women can be. All it takes is a handsome face, a few whispered words, and a couple drinks, and “fucking done” loses the “done” part, sweetheart.”

Alright, now Rob was actually starting to piss her off a little. The old fuck had a real with boundaries, not to mention his rampant sexism. God, one time Charlotte had been forced to bite his head off after a “playful’ spank. When he got like this, it was best not to engage.

It was true that Charlotte had been on-again-off-again with Connor for a long period. But they had been firmly “off again” for a year since the shit Connor had pulled on her the last time they were dating. Besides, she was with someone new now. And it was serious.

Charlotte’s phone buzzed again.

She ignored it, leaning over with sparkling eyes to take the the tall man's ID, saying, "Run a tab, or close it out, handsome?" The tall man grinned widely, and started to answer, but Charlotte didn't hear him. Her phone was buzzing over and over now. God damn it, hadn't she made it clear that he wasn't supposed to call her at work?

Luckily, Charlotte managed to catch the word "tab" through her distraction, and even maintained her flirty smile as she tucked the man's credit card away behind the bar.

The phone stopped buzzing for a second... then began again. She sighed. Well, as much as she would like to ignore the call and teach him a lesson, Charlotte knew that her boyfriend was the kind of guy who would keep calling all night if she didn't answer. She opened the phone and strode into the storage room behind the bar, waving absently to Rob as she went.

"Yeah?" she said sharply into the receiver, leaning against the wall in the dim storage room. "What is it? I'm busy."

"You kind of just ran out of the apartment, babe," came the mournful voice of Steve over the phone. "I think we should finish our conversations instead of just walking away mad."

Charlotte took a deep breath and closed her eyes. It was a bad habit of Steve's as far as she was concerned: during arguments he would get all calm and sad rather than yelling or getting mad like a normal person. It could make disagreements infuriating sometimes. "I don't think I have anything else to say to you right now, Steve," she said stiffly, deliberately using his name rather than a pet name. "Why would I want to talk to a guy who thinks I'm a dirty slut?"

"That's not fair, baby," said Steve, a twinge of annoyance finally seeping into his voice. "You're putting words in my mouth."

Well, it was true that Charlotte was exaggerating a little. But how else was she supposed to interpret his words? It had all started on Saturday, when Steve had "jokingly" asked if she would send him some dirty pictures from the bathroom while she was at work. She had obviously refused. It was insulting he had even asked!

"Oh, I'm sorry," said Charlotte her voice growing dangerously sweet, "did I hurt your feelings? Maybe I should send you a picture of my tits to make you feel better. Because I apparently just do that for every guy."

"I... ugh... I don't know why this is suddenly such a big deal," groaned Steve with obvious frustration. "I know for a fact that you've sexted with other boyfriends before me!"

It was true, but if Steve thought that bringing it up would score him points in this argument, he didn't understand women very well. Charlotte knew before she even picked up that this call would be a waste of her time. They were basically just rehashing their arguments from earlier tonight. And besides, she really did have to get back to work.

“Is there anything else, Steven?” she asked with a sigh. “Like I said, I’m busy.”

“Wait...” said Charlotte’s boyfriend in a pained tone. Charlotte hesitated. Was he about to apologise? She wasn’t sure she was willing to forgive him yet, but it would be a good first step at least.

“Is Connor there tonight?” asked Steve, as if he dreaded the answer.

“Oh my God,” Charlotte sighed, rolling her eyes. She hung up on her boyfriend and slipped her phone back into her pocket. She got back behind the bar and got to work, a sassy smile plastered on her face, papering over her smoldering annoyance within.

As much as she was annoyed with him right now, Charlotte knew that she would forgive Steve at some point. He was the one. Unlike the pushy, mean bad boys Charlotte had gone for in the past, Steve made her feel safe and loved.

If he could only do something about his insecurity... Because that was the real problem, not the specific issue of whether Charlotte would send him naked pictures or not. Steve only wanted them because he knew that she had sent them to past boyfriends.

In fact, their argument had only started with that issue. In the end, it had segued into the same old argument they always had: Steve was uncomfortable about Charlotte flirting with customers. No matter how many times Charlotte explained to him that it was just part of the job, and was necessary to get more tips, Steve still for some reason felt like it was a personal insult.

Charlotte was happy to settle down with a nice, solid, reliable guy like Steve. He loved her and made her feel special. But she wouldn’t be tamed. Being a bartender at The Hangnail was part of who she was. And one major perk of the job was being wild and free, no matter how it made Steve feel.

Besides... although she would obviously never say it out loud, Charlotte was out of her boyfriend’s league. They both knew it. Charlotte had been receiving intense, positive male attention for years, and her boyfriend’s affection just wasn’t enough to fill that need. A little harmless flirting at her job was a perfect way to let off some steam without actually doing anything that hurt her valued relationship. Flirting with random guys in the controlled relationship of bartender and customer gave her a wicked little charge, and she simply tossed out the phone numbers she collected at the end of the night, no harm done.

“You good on your own?” grunted Rob, suddenly beside her. “I’m going to be busy for a bit.”

Charlotte shrugged. It looked like the rush was dying down a bit, so she would likely be fine. “Yeah, no problem. What do you mean busy? Did you suddenly decide to start actually doing work around here?” she asked jokingly. Then her eyes followed Rob’s stare across the bar.

She grimaced.

Grace leaned against the bar, right in front of Charlotte, giving her a nasty grin. Charlotte had been so lost in her own little world that she hadn't even noticed Grace's approach. "Hi Charlotte," said Grace in her low, musical voice, her eyes flicked down over Charlotte's work clothes with a mild sneer of disgust. "Looking... cute I suppose?" The pale, dark-haired beauty had the sort of lithe grace that Charlotte would have killed for. Charlotte knew she was hot, but her short, curvy frame did make her worry about her weight sometimes. That would never be a problem for Grace. Her tall willowy form didn't have an ounce of fat on it, yet still somehow managed to look temptingly feminine. Her body was currently accentuated by a stomach-baring tee advertising a band that Charlotte wasn't cool enough to know and skin-tight jeans that seemed to be more rip than denim.

"Hi, bitch," said Charlotte with an answering smile and a raised eyebrow. "I didn't know you liked geriatric dick! Seems appropriate for a slut as desperate as you." Grace's grin turned into an angry snarl, hate flashing in her cold blue eyes.

It would be fair to say that Grace and Charlotte didn't get along. It had been that way practically since Charlotte got the bartending job. Grace used to be the center of male attention at the Hangnail when the head bartender had been a guy, and disliked sharing the spotlight with Charlotte.

Things had really come to a head a couple years ago. Grace had tried to mess with Charlotte, and Charlotte had been forced to teach the skinny bitch why that was a bad idea. Nowadays they normally avoided each other, which suited Charlotte just fine. Maybe Charlotte should just let sleeping dogs lie and pretend to be nice to the bitchy goth. But then again, why should she? She had thoroughly beaten Grace in their last runin. It was her privilege to rub her victory in a little when Grace tried to act all high and mighty.

"Come on Rob," said Grace coldly, "let's go to your office. I can't stand the company here."

She got up and swept away regally toward the hallway leading to Rob's office.

"Watch out for that bitch," said Charlotte to her boss, low enough that the other customers couldn't hear. "If she's flirting with you, it's because she's planning something. She can't be trusted."

Rob chuckled, but his eyes never left the sultry goth's retreating ass. "You know, Charlotte, they say 'don't stick your dick in crazy', but I disagree. I say stick your dick wherever you fucking can."

With that, Rob shifted his bulk hustling to catch up with Grace. When he reached her, the raven-haired woman slipped an arm through his and they walked together toward Rob's office.

As they went, Grace glanced briefly back over her shoulder at Charlotte, her eyes glinting with ice-cold steel for just a second before turning away.

Charlotte didn't like the fact that Grace was cozying up to her boss... But there was nothing she could do about it right now.

There was no time to worry about it further. More customers were coming in. And Charlotte recognised them too. It was three of the waiters who worked at the restaurant that Steve managed, Tim, Clive, and Harry. In fact, the only reason she had met Steve in the first place was because these three had dragged him in after a shift one day.

Tim, a tall blonde with laughing blue eyes and a cleft chin, waved with a smile, and his two friends perked up as they saw her as well. Charlotte had a soft spot for these three, and not just because they had introduced her to her future husband. They were fun, good tippers, and, maybe most importantly, they were handsome flirts.

"So, what'll it be, boys?" said Charlotte, wiping her hands on a towel as she made her way down the bar, giving them her best thousand-watt smile.

"We were thinking about getting some shots," said Clive, a shorter guy with warm brown eyes and wavy, dark hair. "But only if the best looking bartender in town wants to do one with us."

Charlotte raised an eyebrow at him with a laugh. Maybe she shouldn't encourage such forward flirting from her boyfriend's coworkers, but fuck it. She was annoyed at Steve anyway.

"I think I could be tempted," she said with a wicked wink.

Tonight, she was going to prove that she hadn't been domesticated.

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The disgusting old bar owner's chin slipped off his hand and his head landed on the surface of his paper-strewn desk with a heavy \*Thunk\*. Grace watched him critically, just in case he pulled himself together enough to rise, but after a few seconds he started letting out a series of rough, gurgling snores.

Fucking finally. Grace set down her seven and seven, which she had only taken a few sips of since she entered the office, and immediately began opening drawers.

Grace wasn't even completely positive what she was looking for. Anything with that bitch Charlotte's name on it more or less. Grace's lip twisted with mild disgust as she edged around the snoring old man. She couldn't believe that someone like Rob could be delusional enough to think he had a chance with her. Pretending to be interested in him had been one of her more embarrassing schemes. And, even more embarrassing, it seemed like it might be hitting a dead

end. Subtle questioning of Rob had yielded no useful results, and now Grace had been forced to move on to a desperate plan “B”; a quick check to see if she could find any more info on Charlotte in Rob’s office.

It would all be worth it if she could find something that would ruin Charlotte’s fucking life. Charlotte thought she was so much better than Grace. She had come into the social scene of the Hangnail with her nose in the air from day one, flaunting her tiny tits and chunky ass in front of all the boys and stealing their attention with her slutty flirting.

So Grace, naturally, planned a little show of force. Just a demonstration that Grace was the alpha female in the bar and that Charlotte should know her place. Grace knew that Charlotte and Connor had a thing, so she pulled the hunk aside and manipulated him into a makeout session where she knew Charlotte could see them. It wasn’t difficult. Connor was a man, and Grace was skilled at getting what she wanted. Just as she had planned, Charlotte was forced to watch as Grace thoroughly kissed her boyfriend.

And what had the fucking bitch done? Completely overreacted. Brought a gun to a knife fight. Charlotte had whipped out her phone, snapped a picture, and sent it to Grace’s sugar daddy. As if she was the fucking morality police. The hypocritical bitch! As if she didn’t giggle, bat her eyelashes, and show off her cleavage to the male customers every night, whether she had a boyfriend or not.

So Grace had waited. She had gone quiet. Bided her time. If Charlotte wanted to escalate things that far, then Grace would show her how bad escalation could be. She was the queen of this social scene, and when she was through, Charlotte would never fucking forget it. If Charlotte wanted to bring a gun to the knife fight, Grace would bring a nuclear fucking bomb.

But she wasn’t going to find it in Rob’s office. Grace ran her fingers distractedly through her glossy raven hair. Another dead end. Rob didn’t seem to keep very good files at all, let alone anything that might be useful in taking down the slutty little cow he employed. It was time to cut Rob loose. If she tried to string him along any further, he would no doubt try to make a move on her, disgustingly enough. Grace had hoped to discover that Charlotte had been sleeping with the old misogynist or giving him some sort of sexual favors, but it seemed like even a slut like Charlotte had higher standards than that.

Grace huffed irritably and took out her phone. Almost two. The bar would be closing soon. It was time to head home and rethink her plans for ruining her rival’s life.

Grace left the office, with the drunk passed-out man drooling on the desk behind her. As she reached the end of the short back hallway, she heard Charlotte calling out closing time, and the grumble of the patrons. Sitting at the bar were the three young waiters from the nearby restaurant. Grace was familiar with them, just like she was with all the regulars of the bar. She had even hooked up with Tim once or twice; he was good-looking and tall enough to meet her standards. Grace’s eyes narrowed with interest as she noticed that the three guys weren’t

moving toward the door, instead staying to chat with Charlotte as the rest of the patrons filed out.

She moved back into the hallway a little, staying in the shadows.

Some instinct told her that waiting and watching might finally show her something interesting.

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“Ummm, are you alright here with these three?” asked Nelson in his nasally voice, peering with obvious annoyance at the three waiters still sitting in their stools at the bar.

Charlotte gritted her teeth and tried to be patient. Of course it would be fucking Nelson who made a big deal about closing time.

Nelson gave her the creeps. There was no other way around it. Part of being a bartender (which some people really fucking struggled to understand) was maintaining a light flirtation with the customer base. But some people took that the wrong way. For some people, that little bit of female attention was enough to inspire an unhealthy fixation.

Charlotte didn't know all that much about Nelson. By design. But he seemed like the kind of person who got female attention so infrequently that Charlotte's smiles and politeness had felt like a lot more to him than they were. By now he was practically here every night. If she had a normal boss, she would get him to bar Nelson from the premises. But again, Rob was sometimes disgustingly “old-fashioned”, and said he didn't see anything wrong with a “harmless crush”.

“We're closed now, Nelson,” she said firmly. “You need to leave.” She actually shuddered to think what Nelson might work up the courage to do if he managed to stay in the bar alone with her after close. Luckily she also thought she could take the little pipsqueak in a fight.

“B-but...!” whined Nelson, angrily gesturing toward the three men still sitting at the bar, watching his outburst with amusement.

Finally, Tim stood up and cracked his knuckles. “The lady said they're closed! Get the fuck out of here!”

Nelson's face turned bright red. He opened and closed his mouth silently a few times... then scurried out the door, the laughter of Charlotte and the three guys chasing him out.

“My hero,” purred Charlotte, teasingly batting her eyelashes at Tim. “But actually he kind of had a point. You three need to leave as well. I've gotta lock up.”

“One more shot,” insisted Clive, his dark eyes shining as he leaned forward with a sloppy drunken grin. “C’mon. You owe it to us.”

“Oh do I?” said Charlotte with a giggle, tucking a loose blonde lock behind her ear. “And why is that?”

“Because you got us all drunk,” said Harry accusatorily, pointing a finger at her with a crooked smile, “and you never even got tipsy! It’s not fair!”

Charlotte shook her head, but the wide smile never left her face. Harry was wrong. She had been matching the boys shot for shot, and even if she was good at hiding it, she certainly felt buzzed. “Sorry boys. Bars close at two. The law is the law.”

“Oh fuck that,” scoffed Tim, giving her a challenging gaze from his commanding height. “You’re not serving us. We’re just sharing a drink as friends. Rob isn’t even around, and we swear not to tell the cops. Isn’t that right, boys?”

“Never,” said Harry solemnly, hand held mockingly to his heart.

“Snitches get \*urp\*... stitches,” said Clive, his eyes fuzzy with alcohol.

Charlotte cocked an eyebrow at the three waiters. It had been a really fun night. Despite the fact that she flirted frequently with customers to pad out her tips, it had been a while since she had laid on the charm this thick, and the three handsome younger guys had given as good as they got.

Charlotte bit her lip, hesitating. Wavering on the edge. She had begun flirting with these boys as a sort of petty revenge for Steve’s controlling behavior, but by this point, she felt like she had achieved that goal. Staying after hours with them might be taking things a little too far...

But the warm, pleasant feeling in her veins made Charlotte’s reservations seem distant. She was having a good time with Steve’s coworkers. She knew where the line was and how to toe it. Fuck it.

“One shot,” she said warningly, setting four shot glasses on the bar along with a bottle of midrange tequila, “and then you need to take your drunk asses home.”

The boys let out a ragged cheer. All four of them downed the tequila together, but afterward the guys showed no signs of getting up to leave. Charlotte found that she didn’t really mind. She liked being the center of attention, no matter how Steve felt about it, and right now the warm lustful eyes of his younger coworkers felt like they were lighting her up from within.

Charlotte grabbed her tips from behind the bar as the three younger men joked and laughed with each other. A pretty good haul tonight, especially for a Monday. Almost three hundred bucks!

“Holy shit!” said Harry, his tipsiness making him a little louder than strictly necessary, “is that all just tips or are you counting the till?”

Tim let out a low whistle as Clive said, “Damn! I wish I could make tips like that!”

“What can I say?” said Charlotte, preening a little as she straightened the crumpled bills, “I guess I just have what it takes to be a big earner.”

“Mmmhmm,” said Tim, his hazy blue eyes flicking down to Charlotte’s chest for one heart-pounding moment, “You definitely have what it takes.” The other two men laughed, partially in shock that Tim had gone that far and partially in gleeful agreement with his point.

Charlotte felt a flush cross her face. It was partially from annoyance at Tim’s crass comment... but that wasn’t all. It was just the tiniest bit intriguing that these three guys all thought her tits were impressive enough to earn her pile of tips. They weren’t the biggest boobs around, and sometimes Charlotte felt a little self-conscious about that. So getting a little positive male attention directed toward her chest was... nice.

But she was a taken woman, so she obviously had to embrace her annoyance more than her interest. “And what exactly do you mean by that?” she asked in a sharp voice, hands planted on her hips. “That I’m hard working and talented? That I give good service?”

But the boys were too drunk to be scared off so easily, not when they could detect the pink flush in Charlotte’s cheeks and the gleam in her eyes. “C’mon, Charlotte,” slurred Clive, leaning forward with a dreamy look, his hand cupped in his chin. “You’re a good bartender, but we all know that if you started a Simpspace, you would make more than all four of us combined.”

Charlotte and the other boys froze. Charlotte’s mouth fell open as she processed the brazen statement from Clive. Tim and Harry looked at her, nervously gauging how she would react to the overtly sexual claim. Charlotte was aware of Simpspace obviously, although she had never used the service herself. It was a place where women sold naked pictures of themselves and flirted with subscribers. A sort of low-level sex work.

Just by bringing it up, Clive had crossed an unspoken boundary, much more so than Tim’s subtle joke about her body. Charlotte struggled for a moment for how she should react... But then a giggle bubbled up from her throat, and she was suddenly doubled over in laughter. The other guys laughed too, relieved that Clive hadn’t managed to kill the mood.

“So that’s what you think of me, huh, Clive?” she asked in a fond voice, wiping a tear from her eye. “A smoking hot sexpot that men would line up to pay for dirty pics? Get fucking real. You’re drunk; nobody’s going to pay to see some average girl like me without clothes.”

But to her surprise, the three men squinted at her with humorously similar expressions of disbelief. “Are you fucking kidding me?” asked Clive in confusion.

“You’re one of the hottest people I know,” said Tim fervently.

“If you started a Simpspace,” insisted Harry, “I would be your first subscriber.”

Charlotte looked at all of their faces, but none of them were joking. She felt a warm feeling of lust stretch and unfurl lazily in her belly. The way they looked at her... these weren’t just guys flirting out of boredom. There was pent up hunger in their eyes. Charlotte had a sudden primal instinct to draw that hunger out. To see how deep it went.

“How much would you pay?” she asked softly, fighting to keep her voice casual. “If I’m going to start up a Simpspace, I need to know how much to charge, right?”

To her embarrassment and secret pleasure, the three horny waiters scrambled for their wallets, pooling money between them until they had fifty bucks, held out in Tim’s hand. The hunger was blazing in their eyes now. They were practically drooling for her. Charlotte could feel an answering heat blaze up inside her...

And run right up against her logical brain, which, even a little drunk, knew better than to take things further.

“A whole fifty bucks!” she exclaimed with an arch of her eyebrows and a teasing grin. “What a steal! But too bad, boys. Despite your generous offer, this hot little body is for Steve’s eyes only. No deal.”

The three guys let out a simultaneous disappointed groan, which made Charlotte giggle again. They couldn’t be serious. They really thought that she was drunk and horny enough to flash her tits? For fifty bucks? There was flirting and then there was betraying Steve, and Charlotte knew the line. No matter how warm and fuzzy and tipsy she was.

“He wouldn’t even care,” mumbled Harry sulkily.

“Excuse me?” laughed Charlotte, “That’s bullshit. You think my man would just be cool with his friends seeing my tits? I wasn’t born yesterday, boys.”

“Aw c’mon,” slurred Clive, clasping his hands together pleadingly, “I mean, everybody knows you flirt with guys at the bar! How is this different? Steve is cool! He wouldn’t care if you cut loose a little.”

Charlotte shook her head with her arms crossed across her chest, unconsciously pushing her boobs up a little bit, emphasizing them for the gaze of the drunk, horny men. They had no idea exactly how wrong they were. Steve wasn't even comfortable with her usual mild flirting, let alone flashing his friends. But she had no intention of embarrassing her boyfriend by letting the guys know about his insecurity.

It was time to wrap this up. Charlotte had extracted her secret revenge with a night of flirting with three hot younger guys, and she should get home. Maybe Steve would still be up, and they could make up before she hit the hay. She was about to speak up and tell the boys to leave, when Tim, the clear ringleader, spoke up.

"How much does Steve really care?" he mused, his blue eyes sharp and dangerous as he looked down at the petite blonde bartender from his impressive height. "I mean, he lets you go off and flirt with guys all night while he sits at home alone. Sounds like a man letting his girl slip through his fingers."

Now Charlotte felt a stab of anger, mixed with a deeper, more primal reaction... Tim was a young, strong, virile male, and he wanted to challenge her boyfriend. He wanted to steal her. The idea was hot, at least in an abstract way. She obviously didn't want him to actually do it, but the idea of attractive young men fighting to claim her was oddly fascinating. Once again, Charlotte pushed down the inappropriate arousal and let the appropriate anger take over.

"No," she said coldly, her eyes flashing dangerously. "Now you've gone too far. I've been really patient with you horny little punks, but I'm not going to stand here and listen to you insult Steve. We love each other. And he doesn't hang around stalking me because he trusts me, you dumb fuck."

Tim didn't look swayed or apologetic despite Charlotte's outburst. Instead, he looked thoughtful. He rubbed his chin with a smirk and said, "You seem pretty certain that Steve cares a lot about where you are and what you're doing."

"Obviously," said Charlotte simply, feeling a little pang of guilt about hanging out with other guys, openly flirting with them.

"Then let's prove it," said Tim challengingly. "A little bet. Why don't you call Steve up right now? If he cares as much as you say, he should pick up right away. If he does, you take every cent that we three made in tips tonight to add to your pile."

Charlotte bit her lip, feeling her heartbeat pulse against her skin. "And if he doesn't?" she asked softly, looking up into Tim's eyes.

"Then I guess you still get fifty bucks," said Tim with a smirk.

Charlotte thought carefully. Really, it was a bet that was massively tilted in her favor. Even if he had fallen asleep, Steve always woke up if she called. The other two men seemed to agree that it was a sucker's bet, clearly unhappy with Tim for offering their nightly tips. Really it probably wasn't a good idea to entertain a bet at all when one potential result was flashing her tits... But by this point Tim's cocky attitude had pissed her off... and made her a little horny. That, combined with the alcohol in her veins and a desire to publicly prove the strength of her relationship with Steve after their earlier fight, convinced Charlotte to make a rash decision.

"Looks like my pile of tips is about to get a lot bigger," she said confidently, whipping out her phone and dialing her boyfriend.

"Wait wait wait," said Clive, waving his hands, "I didn't agree to this!"

But it was too late. The call was already ringing. Charlotte held the phone to her ear, ready to hear her boyfriend's voice and tell him she was on her way home with a nice little bonus. Her confident smile and relaxed posture remained in place through the first three rings.

The fourth one sent a pang of doubt through her. What the fuck was he waiting for? Tim's smile widened and Charlotte's shrank as the rings continued. In every silence, Charlotte thought maybe she sensed her boyfriend pick up. But then the next ring followed. Clive and Harry stopped their whining, a look of delirious joy spreading across their faces.

Charlotte couldn't even meet Tim's eyes when Steve's voicemail message played. She was worried that if she did, the twisted, roaring arousal in her belly would get even worse. Or she would punch him. Or both.

"Fuck," she said under her breath, tossing her phone onto the bar in frustration and covering her eyes. Suddenly her head felt hotter and fuzzier than ever, the haze of alcohol blending powerfully with her growing arousal. Why did Steve have to pick this one fucking time to ignore his phone?

"Surely you don't expect me to..." began Charlotte, looking up. The words died on her tongue as she looked into the eyes of the three attractive, horny men in front of her. That hunger that had so intrigued her before was back in full force. And once again her arousal answered it, powerful and inescapable.

A nasty voice inside her whispered that maybe they were right... Maybe if Steve wanted to keep his friends from seeing her tits, he should've answered his fucking phone.

Charlotte had always been impulsive, and having a few drinks too many only intensified that. She took a deep breath, and bunched the bottom of her work shirt in her hands, pulling it up and digging her fingers beneath the bottom of her bra's cups.

The boys only had time for a gasp of pleased shock as Charlotte yanked upward, freeing her firm C-cup tits into the dim light and warm air of the after-hours bar.

The shocked silence felt louder than the bar had been all evening. Charlotte felt her breath catch hot and wet in her throat as the eyes of the three younger men focused with burning intensity on her naked, revealed tits.

“Pierced. Fucking nice,” said Clive in a dazed, wondering voice, catching a vicious elbow from Tim for his trouble.

Charlotte’s big pink nipples were pierced, in fact, sporting small silver barbells which drew attention to their perfect size and shape. She had always considered her nipples to be one of her best features, even if her breasts themselves weren’t large enough for her liking. Showing them off to her boyfriend’s friends sent a growing feeling of hot, moist excitement spreading between Charlotte’s thighs. As the men watched closely, seeing every detail of what only her boyfriend should see, Charlotte’s nipples rose and swelled, responding to her growing exhibitionist lust.

This was spiralling too far. Charlotte was suddenly worried she might lose control and do something she would really regret. Tim’s piercing eyes were making that hot needy feeling between her legs throb alarmingly with dirty heat.

The cocky younger man had got what he wanted... and from now on whenever Tim talked to Steve, his manager, he would have the secret, smug memory of the sight of Charlotte’s tits in the back of his mind. Being a part of that secret humiliation of Steve was kinky and taboo in a way that felt intoxicatingly dangerous.

With her anxiety and arousal growing every second, Charlotte moved to cover herself again.

“Wait,” said Tim in a sharp, commanding voice. Charlotte froze by instinct.

“Give them a little shake,” said Tim with a broad, leering smirk. “Really give us our fifty dollars worth.”

Charlotte didn’t know why she obeyed. She would have been more than justified in telling Tim to fuck off. Maybe it was the alcohol. Maybe it was the growing heat between her thighs. Maybe the kinky betrayal of the situation went to her head. Maybe it was just the fact that doing what a pushy, attractive man ordered her to do felt hot as fuck.

Regardless, with hot blush spreading across her face, Charlotte gave her shoulders a little shimmy, sending her tits wobbling and bouncing, their stiff, slutty nipples tracing shining circles in the air as the light glinted off their piercings.

Charlotte gulped as the hunger grew in the eyes of the three men. She could see it in Tim's cocky gaze; in the lean of his posture. He was about to demand something else. A new bet maybe... Or just an open proposition. And in that moment of horny weakness, right after submitting to a different obscene request, Charlotte honestly didn't know if she would be strong enough to refuse.

So she acted decisively, yanking her shirt and bra back down over her breasts.

It was as if a lightswitch had been flicked off. All of the complex, powerful sexual tension between Charlotte and the three men was sucked away in an instant, leaving an awkward silence between them.

"So... um," said Tim, his moment of dominance utterly gone, "We said you could have..." He held out the crumpled pile of bills for Charlotte to take.

"No, just keep it," said Charlotte flatly. Suddenly the small pile of bills seemed like the vilest thing in the world to her. She felt dirty and guilty. She got the feeling that the three guys were on the same wavelength, considering the fact that they were all now struggling to meet her eyes.

"We all had a little too much to drink," said Charlotte firmly, clapping her hands together to forcibly call the men's attention to her. "And things got a little out of hand. Right?"

"Yeah," said Tim, looking relieved. "We need to learn a little self-control. But nothing that bad happened."

"Nothing that Steve needs to worry about," agreed Charlotte, looking into each of their eyes pointedly.

"Right," said Harry, nodding.

"Just a little drunk silliness. Won't happen again," said Clive sheepishly.

"No. It won't," said Charlotte flatly. "Now, the bar is closed. Goodnight, boys."

...

Grace lowered her phone, a broad smile plastered over her face, watching as the three men turned and slunk out of the bar with their tails between their legs.

So many months of planning and scheming, trying to find some way of ruining Charlotte's life with nothing to show for it. And suddenly the stupid slut drops the perfect thing right into her worst enemy's lap.

Grace's mind was already whirring with ideas for how to use her freshly-filmed amateur porn video. She had gotten the perfect angle of Charlotte's slutty little show, including the saucy little shimmy at the end.

This was going to be so fucking fun.

...

Steve woke to the soft sounds of the city filtering in through his open bedroom window along with strong, bright sunlight.

Even before he turned over and saw her tousled blonde hair poking up above the sheets, he knew that Charlotte was there. She was the one who liked to sleep with the windows open. Personally, Steve thought it just made the room more hot and humid, but he never had been able to get his way when it came to Charlotte. A soft, private smile crept onto his face as he looked at Charlotte's huddled shape beneath the sheets, softly rising and falling with her sleeping breath.

She was back. She hadn't left him because of their fight. Steve knew his feeling of relief was silly. Of course their relationship was strong enough to withstand a stupid lover's quarrel. But he couldn't help the happiness swelling in his heart. Sometimes, Steve felt like he had won a lottery ticket with Charlotte. She was sharp, funny, outgoing, driven, and above all, smoking hot. Everything Steve wasn't. At times, Steve wondered fearfully what Charlotte saw in him at all. After all, as far as he knew all of her previous boyfriends had been handsome, dangerous bad boys. But he was afraid that if he asked her about it, somehow the spell would be broken, and Charlotte would realize that their relationship had been beneath her all along.

So Steve did his best not to question his luck and enjoy his relationship for what it was. Most of the time. Charlotte's attitude about some things did get under his skin a little. Steve scooped up his phone from the bedside table and tried to unlock it before remembering he had turned it off in a huff last night. He got up from bed and wandered toward the kitchen while he turned it back on, still deep in thought about his argument with Charlotte last night.

Ok, so maybe pushing Charlotte to send nudes was a little annoying of him. But she had to see where he was coming from. Charlotte had dated, hooked up with, and been "friends with benefits" with lots of guys before Steve, some of whom were friends of his. And it was public knowledge that Charlotte wasn't shy when it came to sending lovers spicy texts and photos.

Or she hadn't been, until she started dating Steve. He tried to take it as a compliment. One way to look at it was that Charlotte saw their relationship as much more special than any of her previous flings, and wanted Steve, her serious boyfriend, to treat her like a lady. So Steve was willing to grudgingly accept that he would never receive nudes from his girlfriend.

But how she acted at her job was harder to swallow.

Steve opened the fridge and pulled out the carton of eggs, some green peppers, a bag of shredded cheese, and some leftover ham. Steve knew his way around a kitchen, and a nice loaded omelet would be a good peace offering when Charlotte rolled out of bed hungover.

But as he beat the egg, a wrinkle formed between Steve's eyebrows, and stayed there stubbornly. It really ate him up that Charlotte spent night after night at work, smiling and giggling and flirting with strange men. Especially Connor.

Charlotte swore up and down that things were over between her and her ex, but Steve had heard stories. Everyone who knew Charlotte before Steve and she started dating had all sort of wild stories about Charlotte and Connor's relationship. How they often broke up while screaming their hatred at each other, only to sloppily make out in front of everyone the very next day. People said that no matter how messily or how long Charlotte and Connor broke up, they always got back together in the end, drawn back to each other like magnets.

Sometimes a horrible hypothetical scenario seized Steve: what if he was just one more speedbump in Charlotte's relationship with Connor? What if she felt that magnetic pull one more time, got back together with her ex like she always did, and boring, average Steve became just a funny story that she and Connor told their friends?

It was the sort of thing that made it hard to sleep when Charlotte stayed late at work.

"It smells good," said a raspy voice from the doorway. Steve looked up to see Charlotte standing there, eyes half-open, wincing from the brightness of the late morning sun.

Even in her ratty pajamas, clearly hung-over and without makeup, she was beautiful to Steve. Feathery blonde shoulder-length hair, cute elven facial features, porcelain-pale skin, a curvy little body, and eyes that normally sparkled with hidden mischief. When she wasn't hung-over of course.

She was the perfect woman. And she belonged to Steve... almost completely.

"Good," said Steve with a soft smile, turning back to the skillet, "because I'm making it for you."

To his surprise, Steve felt his girlfriend's arms wrap around him from behind. The feeling of her soft, braless tits pressing into him nearly took his breath away. Even this simple, tender gesture made his cock wake up, rapidly springing to half-erect.

"I forgive you," murmured Charlotte, her voice muffled from being pressed against his back. This was strange, although not unwelcome. Normally making up after their fights involved a lot of apologies and olive branches from Steve before Charlotte thawed, no matter who started the fight. Steve couldn't even remember a time Charlotte had been the one to reach out and end a spat.

"I forgive you too," said Steve with a grin. He meant it wholeheartedly, but also intended it as a bit of a joke. Normally when he said that, Charlotte would laugh and say that there was nothing for Steve to forgive since she was always right.

This time she just made a mild "Mm". A noncommittal noise of agreement or acceptance. She was in a weird mood today for sure. Maybe she was feeling really bad from her hangover.

Steve turned to see Charlotte staring up at him through her eyelashes, her expression oddly serious. He kissed her on the forehead and said, "Sit down, honey. You look rough. Drink some water. I'll bring you some breakfast in a second."

Finally a sunny smile broke over Charlotte's face and she pulled Steve down into a significantly less innocent kiss before heading over to the table with a full bottle of water.

"I was thinking about taking you out this week," said Steve spontaneously, feeling that something was needed to break the ice between them a little even after their mutual forgiveness.

"Oh really?" said Charlotte with a grin, looking like death as she took a big pull from her water bottle. "Well I wouldn't say no. And where are you taking your high-class woman? Fine French cuisine? The opera?"

Steve laughed, sliding the omelet onto a plate and bringing it over to the table. "How about cheap seats at a baseball game? Hot dogs are on me."

"Shit," said Charlotte with a chuckle, "My guy is a high roller. Those dogs aren't cheap."

She snuggled up to Steve as he sat beside her, putting her head on his shoulder. "And he also knows my tastes perfectly," she said fondly, giving him a wet smack on the cheek. "That sounds perfect, babe."

Boyfriend and girlfriend chatted pleasantly for a few minutes, making small talk and joking with each other, synching back up after their heated argument. After she drank down her huge bottle of water and ate the large omelet, Charlotte looked rejuvenated. Wrapping a slim arm around her boyfriend, she said, "Listen Steve, I want you to come out to the bar tonight. It's always more fun when you're there."

Steve didn't quite believe that. He couldn't imagine that having him there sitting on a barstool and having a quiet drink made his girlfriend's hectic job responsibilities more interesting. But he knew a peace offering when he saw one, and he took it gratefully, even if he didn't love going out drinking.

"That sounds fun, baby," he said warmly, leaning into Charlotte's embrace. "I'll be there."

Boyfriend and girlfriend leaned on each other in a warm glow of love, happy that their relationship was stronger than ever.

...

Charlotte leaned forward on the bar, listening intently as her man talked about some minor annoyance at work. She knew that going out to bars wasn't his favorite thing to do, but he had showed up anyway, and she appreciated it.

It worked out well anyway. Unlike the previous evening, Tuesday night had turned out to be pretty dead, which gave Charlotte plenty of opportunities to slack off and shoot the shit with Steve.

She still felt a little guilty about the previous night. Things had definitely gotten out of hand between her and Steve's three coworkers. She tried to tell herself that it wasn't a big deal: after all there was no touching, just a quick little peek at the girls. But she wasn't fooling herself. She had gotten horny and drunk and crossed a line. Tonight was about making that up to her boyfriend, even though he would never know what happened. After the bar closed, she planned to drag him home and give him the time of his life in the sack.

And maybe tomorrow she would send him a tasteful nude. Maybe. She would think about it.

Charlotte saw Grace out of the corner of her eye, but didn't even bother to turn. For one last moment, Charlotte classified Grace as a defeated enemy, beneath her notice. By the time the tall, dark, graceful slipped up to the bar on Steve's left, it was too late for Charlotte to say anything. Her life was about to be changed forever without warning.

"Hey, girl!" said Grace in an unusually bright and cheerful voice. "Slow night, huh?"

Charlotte gave her a flat bemused look. Was this some new psyche-out tactic? Trying to pretend they were friends? Speaking like some sort of valley girl? She couldn't wrap her head around it. Before she could even think of how she could respond, Grace had turned to Steve, saying, "And you must be Charlotte's boyfriend! So great to finally meet you! I'm Grace." She threw her arms around Steve and drew Charlotte's confused boyfriend into a hug.

Charlotte frowned.

She didn't give a shit if Grace wanted to mess around with her by pretending they had always been friends, but Charlotte had had quite enough of Grace touching her men. "I don't know what you think you're doing," she said coldly, "but I think you had better..."

Grace held up a finger, a sharp smile on her face as she said "One second, bestie. Before you say anything else, I want you to take a look at this hilarious video I saw last night!" Charlotte

stared at her gorgeous enemy like she was insane, but that gave Grace the time she needed to pull out her phone and start playing a video.

With a fake smile plastered across her face, and eyes glittering with malice, Grace held the phone close enough to Charlotte and at just such an angle that Steve couldn't see the video. Charlotte's heart went cold and her words dried up in her mouth as it dawned on her what Grace was showing her.

It was a clear video of the bar taken from the perspective of someone standing in the back hallway. It showed Charlotte talking with the three men from last night. Charlotte watched with horror as the video showed her reaching down to rapidly bunch up the bottom of her shirt.

Charlotte reached out compulsively, trying to grab the phone, but Grace was too quick. She smoothly pulled it back and locked the screen. The two women stared at each other, Grace's grin wide and sharp, Charlotte doing her best to control her rapidly spiralling panic.

The nature of the threat was clear without any explanation. Grace had a crystal clear video of Charlotte's mistake last night. Steve was already insecure about how Charlotte interacted with men at her job; if he saw that video, their relationship was over. Steve was right there next to them. Charlotte's relationship now survived only through Grace's mercy. And Charlotte had broken Grace up with a boyfriend before using much less incriminating evidence.

Right now, Charlotte was walking a thin tight-rope with no safety net.

"Yeah," said Charlotte, using every ounce of acting skill she had to attempt to be casual, "so funny."

Grace's shark-like smile widened. She looked immensely pleased that Charlotte had realized and accepted the fact that she had no choice but to play along. "I know, right?" she said with a smirk, "it was everything I could do not to immediately send it to everyone I know!"

"So you two know each other from the bar?" asked Steve, looking back and forth between the two beautiful ladies, "I've been here a few times... I've never seen you." It seemed like Steve was picking up some kind of tension between Grace and Charlotte, but luckily didn't understand what was going on. Charlotte had to take this conversation somewhere else before he was able to pick up any more clues.

"Grace, would you mind joining me for a second?" asked Charlotte smoothly, her heart pounding a mile a minute in her chest, "I had something I wanted to ask you."

The tall pale goth's face sat frozen in a false, pleasant smile for a long couple of seconds, and Charlotte began to worry that she would refuse. But finally Grace shrugged, saying, "Anything for my bestie! Lead the way."

Charlotte looked at Steve, who seemed to be struggling to keep up with what was going on. He wasn't the only one. 'Stay right there, babe,' said Charlotte with a smile she tried hard to keep from wobbling. She reached into the cooler behind her and pulled out a bottle, popping off the cap and setting it in front of her boyfriend. "Have a drink. This won't take long."

Grace let out a low evil laugh at that, as if she very much doubted it. Charlotte jerked her head to the side, indicating the storeroom behind the bar.

It was time to find out this bitch's terms.

...

As soon as Charlotte got the door of the storeroom closed behind her she whirled on Grace, sticking a finger in her face and furiously hissing, "What the fuck do you want, you psycho bitch?"

Grace stood her ground, not flinching one millimeter. Her icy blue eyes flicked downward to Charlotte's finger contemptuously, then back up to piece Charlotte with her gaze.

"I understand that emotions are running high," she said in a low, dangerous voice, "so I've decided to cut you a little slack on this one. But if I were you, I wouldn't make the mistake of running your mouth to me ever again."

Charlotte found her will failing her. Grace was so confident, her voice so forceful and commanding, that all of her bluster and anger wilted, along with her pointing finger. At that moment, Grace, a girl she had written off as a defeated rival, actually began to intimidate her. Charlotte cleared her throat awkwardly, pushing down her sudden feeling of inferiority as she looked away from the fierce icy eyes staring down at her from Grace's commanding height.

"What do you want?" she asked, in a voice that sounded sulky rather than defiant in the stuffy air of the dim supply room.

"Simple," said Grace with a chilly smirk. "I noticed you having a lot of fun last night. Flirting with strange men... showing off a little. I want to help you explore that side of yourself. I want you to start a Simpspace account."

Charlotte let out a short, scoffing laugh, but Grace's expression was anything but joking, and the laugh died before it really got started. As she realized that Grace really wanted her to start a Simpspace account, something strange happened inside Charlotte. A tiny, insidious sprout of arousal grew and squirmed in her belly. Something about the disturbing, obscene idea of her naked body on the internet for hundreds of anonymous men to see was darkly fascinating. It was like a super concentrated dose of the charge she got from flirting with men at the bar. Worse, there was also a strange tingle that went through her when she looked up into Grace's steely eyes. Charlotte had always enjoyed it when ex-boyfriends got a little bossy and

take-charge in bed (not Steve of course, he just wasn't that sort of guy). Something about Grace's cocky attitude and her current position of power were somehow flipping those same switches inside of Charlotte right now, as much as she wished they didn't.

Despite the sudden and unwelcome flush of arousal that pulsed through her, Charlotte wasn't about to cave in that easily on something like this. She had to push back somehow. "You can't be fucking serious," she said dully. "I'm not going to sell naked pictures of myself on the internet. That site is for sluts desperate for male attention and whores looking for quick cash."

"Kind of like a girl with a boyfriend shaking her naked tits to random guys for fifty bucks?" asked Grace with a sly grin.

"Fuck you!" snarled Charlotte, suddenly wild with defensive anger. What pissed her off even more was that Grace seemed utterly unphased, staring at her with the faint smirk of someone who felt completely in control. Charlotte felt another throb of that strange arousal. Fuck! Why was Grace staring at her like she was some sort of slutty plaything? "I don't have to take this from you," continued Charlotte heatedly, turning to leave the storeroom, "If you think I'm just going to roll over and do whatever the fuck you want, you're insane!"

Grace still didn't look bothered. The superior smirk never left her face. She simply leaned her long, lithe body against the storage shelf behind her and said mildly "Well that a shame. I thought you and Steve were cute together, in a "white picket fence" kind of way. But I think we both know how he will feel when he sees a video of his girlfriend flashing three guys in a bar."

Charlotte wanted nothing more than to tell this evil bitch to do her worst. Maybe it was even the smart decision. Blackmail tended to be a slippery slope after all, and with a crazy bitch like Grace, who knew where the demands would end?

But Charlotte's hand paused on the doorknob, unable to turn it. Steve... he was her end game. Leaving the dingy storage room right now would be accepting that her half-formed, rosy plans for the future were dead. No white lace dress. No kids. No happily ever after. Charlotte was certain Grace wasn't bluffing. After the way Charlotte had ended Grace's relationship, she was sure the evil bitch wouldn't hesitate to show the video to Steve.

The weird arousal was back again. Somehow this feeling of being trapped and helpless was a turn on for her. Charlotte closed her eyes. Would it really be that bad to have a Simpspace account? If it saved her future with Steve?

"Just make the account, right?" she said in a clipped, awkward tone, refusing to turn and look at Grace's victorious expression.

"I want the login information too," said Grace, rising gracefully from her lean and patting Charlotte condescendingly on the shoulder. "Do it now, before you leave the room. No time like

the present, right? I'm excited! This is going to be a fun little journey of self-discovery for you! We'll get to find out exactly how much of a fucking whore you can be!"

With that, Grace breezed past Charlotte, her silky raven hair flipping behind her. She left a faint whiff of her clean-smelling perfume as she closed the door, leaving Charlotte stewing alone in the store room.

Fuck. Fuck! There was nothing she could do. It was either start a Simpspace like Grace ordered, or break up with Steve. She was trapped, forced by her victorious rival to become an internet slut. The sneaking feeling of helpless arousal took deeper root inside her.

Well... it didn't have to be the end of the world. Some women mainly just posted slightly risqué selfies on Simpspace, right? How was that really different from the flirting she did at the bar? She could also make sure to hide her face so no one would know it was her. She was sure that Grace would lose interest eventually anyway. It was important to be realistic and not panic. Freaking out from shame was exactly what Grace wanted.

Still feeling defeated, but not as upset as she had been a moment ago, Charlotte opened her phone and navigated to Simpspace. She had heard of it before, although she had never visited it herself. It was a bit of a punchline, as evidenced by the crude jokes from the guys last night. The interface was neutral and clean, and setting up an account looked easy. All she had to do was take a picture of her driver's license to prove her identity, then set up a username and password.

Charlotte almost put the same username she used for all of her accounts before catching herself. Was she some kind of idiot? She had to put aside the nagging arousal and annoyance that were distracting her and really think this through. This would be the name that any potential subscribers (which Charlotte hoped wouldn't be many) would see right next to any photos she posted. It had to be something that couldn't be connected to her.

Charlotte stared into the distance for a second, feeling blank. A fake name...

Her eyes settled on a massive jar of maraschino cherries on a shelf, then quickly typed CherrySweetsXO in the username field. Good enough. It didn't matter anyway: she had no intention of actually using this account seriously.

She typed in a password from the top of her head and the process was done. A message appeared saying that they would notify her as soon as they had verified her identity and the account was active.

It was done. Now she just had to hand the keys to the account over to her worst enemy

...

Steven sat awkwardly for a few minutes after Charlotte left with Grace, sipping his drink and scrolling through his phone.

There had definitely been something weird going on during the conversation between the two ladies. He had seen Grace around during his infrequent visits to the bar. She would catch any man's eye. Grace had a tall, lean body composed of feminine flowing lines, raven hair, and startling icy-blue eyes. Her constant look of superiority and daring goth-style clothing gave her an air of mystery and danger, and made her feel even more out of Steve's league than someone like Charlotte. Which, though he would never admit it to Charlotte in a million years, was probably why Steve didn't even try to approach Grace on the night he first got Charlotte's number, despite finding her incredibly attractive.

But even though the knock-out goth had definitely caught his eye in the past from a distance, this was the first time Steve had even heard her name. So it was surprising to learn that she was friends with Charlotte.

Then there was that whole thing with the video... The two girls were perfectly pleasant with each other, but Steve had just gotten a weird vibe from the whole exchange.

Steve was relieved at first to see Grace exiting the storeroom, hoping that Charlotte wouldn't be far behind, but was confused and disappointed to find that that wasn't the case. Instead, Grace came around the bar alone, her glittering blue eyes fixed directly on Steve.

He had only a moment to feel an odd sense of disquiet before Grace was right next to him, pulling up a stool to sit at his side, uncomfortably close. "Hi again Steve," she said companionably, leaning over to prop her elbows on the bar and staring at him with her piercing blue eyes, "It's so great to see you finally come out! We never see you around here."

Steve shrugged, powerfully aware of how close the beautiful, intimidating woman was to him. "Oh, well. You know," he said awkwardly, "Charlotte is so much more of a night owl than I am. I don't want to always be hanging around tired and crabby. So... you and Charlotte are friends?"

"Best friends," said Grace, a confident grin breaking over her face, "I'm shocked that she hasn't mentioned me more! Wow... I mean, it's sort of like your girlfriend lives a whole different secret life at night, doesn't she? What else happens at the bar that you don't know about?"

Steve felt that old familiar prickle of anxiety and inferiority. Somehow Grace had just put her finger on his precise anxieties. "I'm not sure..." he said, adding a short fake laugh, "I mean, by definition I wouldn't know, right?"

Suddenly, Grace reached out and placed a gentle palm on his arm. It was an innocent enough gesture, but it was so unexpected that the physical contact made Steve's heart race. Grace leaned closer and said quietly, "You know she flirts with customers, right?" The tone was nearly sympathetic, but there was an odd mismatch with her expression... Grace's lips were quirked up

in a faint smirk and her eyes sparkled slightly. If Steve was judging from her expression alone, he would have said that Grace was amused.

"I... I mean... I guess that..." sputtered Steve in confusion, feeling offblance from Grace's close proximity and her unexpectedly piercing question. Her stunning blue eyes seemed to fill his vision, and he could smell her clean, cutting perfume.

"Oh my!" exclaimed Grace, an expression of exaggerated dismay wiping away the faint amusement on her face, "you do know, don't you? And you aren't happy either. You're all upset!"

Shit. He had given himself away. Why hadn't he just been able to keep his cool! Now Charlotte's hot friend would tell her that he was complaining about her in public! Maybe it was best if he tried to smooth this over. "Well," said Steve with a pained smile, "I understand that Charlotte has to interact with her customers a certain way. It's part of the job. I mean... I can't say I'm thrilled about it. I'm her boyfriend after all, I don't like thinking about her flirting with other guys. But I know it isn't anything serious or something I need to worry about."

Grace's delicate hand moved up to his shoulder, gently rubbing. In the context she clearly intended it to be comforting, but the touch almost felt... teasing. Part of Steve wanted to squirm out from under her hand to avoid the touch, but another part of him wanted to lean into it further. Grace's expression looked almost hungry. The entire encounter was throwing him off balance. And things didn't get any less confusing when Grace spoke again.

"I think you're looking thinking about this all wrong," said Grace conspiratorially, her voice growing low as if she was telling him a secret. Her hand continued to move, rubbing in small, teasing patterns on his shoulder. "Isn't it actually a little bit... hot? Hear me out. Your cute little girlfriend spends every night flirting with hot guys. And the whole time, they are lusting after her. All the guys in the bar would do anything to trick pretty Miss Charlotte into bed and do unspeakable things to her."

Steve's eyes were focused on Grace's. His nose felt full of her perfume, and her sweet, poisonous words seeped into his ears. He did feel an odd crackle of strange lust inside himself, blended with the sour feeling of jealousy and inferiority that haunted him. Maybe it was just the sultry voice this beautiful woman was using to weave the scenario, but all of a sudden the idea of other guys hitting on Charlotte was just as distressing as ever, but now also weirdly sexy.

"And after all these attractive men spend hours wearing down your sweet, loving girlfriend," whispered Grace, her hand creeping upward to trace lightly over the bare skin of Steve's neck, "do you know what happens next?"

"What?" asked Steve in a tone of dread, completely enthralled.

Grace suddenly leaned back, the contrast making it clear how close she had grown to Steve over the past few minutes. She laughed lightly, and her hand that had been touching his neck in

an oddly intimate way now slapped him playfully on the back. “She goes right home to you, dummy! That’s why I’m saying it’s hot! Everyone wants Charlotte, but you’re the only one who gets her!”

“Oh,” said Steve, totally lost for a moment from the jarring change in tone and still feeling an odd stiffness in his pants. He shook himself. “Sure! Right! I’ve never thought about it like that, but you’re right.”

“I know I am,” said Grace with a catlike smile. Her eyes shifted downward, and Steve was suddenly terrified that she would notice his erection from the strange intense talk about Charlotte flirting with other men. But instead she said, “Get out your phone. I think it’s a real shame it took us this long to meet, considering I’m such good friends with Charlotte. I want to get to know you better. Let’s exchange numbers.”

“Oh,” said Steve uncomfortably. He wasn’t sure about that actually. It wasn’t that weird to have the number of his girlfriend’s friends, he supposed... But there had been a weird tension between Grace and Charlotte earlier, not to mention the odd intensity of the conversation they had just been having. Some instinct warned him that accepting Grace’s number was more dangerous than it seemed.

“Steve,” said Grace, her voice and eyes growing distant and cold for a moment as she saw his hesitation. “Put my number in your phone.”

Suddenly, refusing felt impossible. Steve didn’t even want to think about what it would be like to make the gorgeous dominant woman next to him even more angry than she already was. Putting aside his instinctive reluctance, Steve took out his phone, inputted Grace’s number, and sent her a text.

Before they could talk further, Charlotte finally reappeared, hurrying back behind the bar from the storeroom with a blushing face and a distracted expression. Steve felt a wave of relief that she was back to rescue him from the strange, oddly tense conversation with her friend.

“Here,” said Charlotte in a clipped tone, scribbling something on the back of a receipt and handing it to Grace. “All taken care of.”

“Perfect,” said Grace smugly, accepting the receipt and tucking it into her back pocket. “That wasn’t so hard, now was it?”

Steve looked back and forth between the two women curiously. “What’s going on?” he asked mildly.

Grace giggled, simply saying “Girl stuff, hotshot. Nothing you need to worry about.”

Uncharacteristically, Charlotte wasn’t able to meet his eyes.

