Nellielle

A New Lease of Lives 3



Nellielle

The song hit a crescendo as Andi clutched the earbud tightly to her chest, ready for the final verse.

'I hope you're haunted by all your regrets
I hope they fuck you up inside your head
You know I don't forgive, I don't forget
I hope you're miserable until you're dead'

She nodded along to the lyrics, just as she had done countless times before, the raw edge of Nessa Barrett's voice echoing the feelings Andi had buried deep.

She had woken up almost midday to her enclosure open, with both Reese and Lorelai having left the room, presumably to cook some breakfast. As she usually did when left alone, she hopped over to the bed, grabbed the earbuds Lorelai always left nearby, and queued up the playlist the two of them had put together.

Music was one of the few comforts that gave Andi real peace; every chord felt like a gentle hand reaching into her chest, stirring emotions she rarely allowed to surface.

Loving the unpredictability of it, she always kept her playlist on shuffle, just to see what would come up next.

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The soft piano intro of the next song floated into Andi's ears, each note carrying a fragile beauty that seemed to suspend the surrounding air. She let her eyes fall shut, breathing in slowly, as if afraid to disturb the moment. This one held a special meaning for her.

'Dear daughter, hold your head up high
There's a world outside that's passin' by
Dear daughter, never lose yourself
Remember that you're like nobody else

Life throws you into the unknown
And you feel like you're out there all alone'

Lzzy Hale's voice carried a weight that always struck a chord deep in Andi's chest. She adjusted the earbud in her hands and gently joined in.

"Well, these are words that every girl should have a chance to hear
There will be love, there will be pain
There will be hope, there will be fear
And through it all, year after year
Stand or fall, I will be right here for you"

In her element, Andi sang freely, pouring herself into the moment, completely unaware of the soft footsteps quietly approaching behind her.

Lorelai quietly stood in front of her little ward, enjoying the small performance without interrupting.

Andi, still in her element, soulfully concluded the final verse.

“These are words that every girl should have a chance to hear
There will be love, there will be pain
There will be hope, there will be fear
And through it all, year after year
Stand or fall, I will be right here
And after all, I will be right here for you”

As she quieted down, basking in the words, she put a hand on her chest and smiled.

“I love it when you sing,” Lorelai cut through the melancholic silence.

“Oh, Miss!” Andi gasped. “I didn’t notice you there.”

“It’s okay, sweetheart. I just came in.”

“S-Sorry for not calling out for you,” Andi said, looking down. “And for using your phone to listen to music. I just sometimes enjoy being by myself.”

“Andi,” Lorelai said softly. “I know you well enough by now. That’s why I left it there for you.”

“Sure…” Andi laughed weakly. “Sorry again.”

“Why are you being so apologetic?” Lorelai cooed. “Is it the nightmares again?”

Andi looked away, weakly shrugged, then nodded.

“You know you can talk to me about it, right? I’m here for you.”

Andi played with her fingers, and almost in a whisper, she said, “I know.”

“Okay,” Lorelai smiled sadly. “Are you ready to come with me? I'm about to... hnng... start making breakfast.”

Andi tilted her head and looked around.

“Where’s Reese?”

Deep within the lacy fibers of Lorelai’s underwear, Reese continued listening to the conversation while giving sloppy kisses to Lorelai’s engorged honey spot.

“He’s… compromised…” Lorelei laughed sheepishly.

“Oh, that insatiable, horny leprechaun,” Andi chuckled. “And here I thought I exhausted him last night.”

As Andi lifted her gaze to meet Lorelai's, she immediately caught the subtle twitch in the big woman's eye, the way her breath hitched, her lashes fluttering, as if fighting to stay grounded at the moment.

"Oh boy," Andi said with a knowing grin. "He's really going to town on you, huh?"

Lorelai exhaled a shaky breath, her voice barely above a whisper. "Wh-Why do you say that?"

Andi tilted her head, smirking. "Just a hunch."

Reese moved with fervent purpose. His entire body pressed flush against Lorelai's slick, pulsing center, hips grinding with practiced rhythm as he licked and kissed the swollen peak with near-desperate devotion.

Her body betrayed her with every shiver, her breath coming in shallow, uneven waves. Her legs tensed, and her eyes fluttered closed for just a second too long.

Reese's own high came moments later, his tiny frame shuddering as he pressed himself harder into her, hips jerking with instinctive release.

Andi arched her brow. "Are you good now?"

Lorelai let out a breath as she carefully lowered her underwear, revealing Reese nestled in her slick warmth.

"Ye-yeah…" Seeing Reese coated in the mess she made, she couldn't help but giggle. "Let's go take a shower first."



“Exciting morning for you, huh?” Andi teased, rinsing her face under the running water.

Reese chuckled sheepishly.

“I… umm… guess?”

“Come on now,” Andi shot him a look. “Are you seriously acting shy all of a sudden? After being completely swallowed up by a vagina that’s literally bigger than both of us?”

Overhead, Lorelai happily hummed to herself in the shower, steam drifting around her like a halo, while Reese blushed furiously and turned his gaze away.

Andi shook her head in disbelief. “No way. You cannot possibly be this shy right now. She’s glowing up there! I can still see some of her juices on your shoulder, Romeo. What sort of devilry did you do to convince Miss that you ended up there?”

“I…” Reese hesitated, then sighed and turned to face her. “Well, I woke up early in the morning, and you were still sleeping. I stepped out for some water, and Lorelai was already up. She asked if I wanted to join her in making breakfast.”

“Well, she hasn’t started, clearly…” Andi cocked her hips dismissively.

Reese grinned. “Wait… are you jealous?”

Andi scoffed. “Finish your damn story.”

"Lorelai set me on the counter while she started grabbing stuff for breakfast," Reese said, his cheeks flushing again. "She was worried she might accidentally squish me under a loaf of bread or something, so… I suggested, as a joke, to stuff me in her underwear. A hands-free solution, and she'd know exactly where I was."

"And you couldn't sit still…" Andi pouted, though the teasing glint in her eye betrayed any real annoyance.

"To be fair, I was almost swallowed down there," Reese defended himself. "I needed something to hold onto… it just happened to be her clit. One thing led to another, and, well… here we are."

Andi locked eyes with Reese and burst into laughter, her giggles quickly growing louder.

"You really are an insatiable man," she snorted. "Four rounds with me last night weren't enough? You woke up ready to conquer Mt. Lorelai?"

"It's not my fault, my girlfriends are so beautiful," Reese slowly grinned. "And insatiable themselves."

Andi let out another laugh, bending and nudging his side with a finger.

"Careful, loverboy, she's mine. I just let you borrow her."

Reese's laughter faded, replaced by a thoughtful quiet.

"Do you ever wonder if she really knows? That she's part of this… whatever we are?"

Andi's smile faded into something more uncertain. "We did tell her… but I'm not sure that it sank in."

Reese gave a small, dry laugh, eyes drifting upward to the towering silhouette above them both.

"Hard to blame her, I guess. A six-inch songbird and a two-inch party favor? Doesn't exactly scream romantic equal footing."

Andi looked down, gently squeezing the soap out of her hair. "Yeah. Still… it'd be nice to know what we are to her."

Neither of them said anything for a moment. The sound of the shower continued overhead as Lorelai still hummed cheerfully, unaware of the questions hanging below until she broke the silence.

"I think we're clean enough. Let's get out of here and eat."

Andi and Reese both looked up and nodded in agreement.

After a mesmerizing cooking dance, Lorelai finally set her plate down and sat with her wards.

“Alright, well, choose whatever you want between you two. Dig in.”

Reese eagerly stepped forward and stood atop the rim of the plate, thinking about what to eat from it. Either some egg or a piece of bacon, the options were very enticing. Andi, on the other hand, looked at Lorelai with a gleaming, devious look.

“Go on, Andi,” Lorelai gestured to the plate. “Dig in.”

Andi playfully put her hands on her back and took some thoughtful steps forward. First eyeing the plate and thinking what to eat, then directing her gaze towards Lorelai.

“There are just so many options to pick from. And I am indeed hungry, but not for food, necessarily.”

Lorelai scoffed. “Then what exactly?”

“Let me show you.”

Andi's pace suddenly quickened as she made a beeline for Lorelai.

"W-Wait, Andi, what—"

Before Lorelai could finish, Andi leapt, aiming straight for the neckline of her oversized t-shirt, right between her breasts.

"Andi! Be careful!" Lorelai's first instinct was to worry, but seeing Andi having difficulty pulling herself up made her chuckle a bit. "Sweetheart, what on earth are you doing?"

"Reese…" Andi huffed, fighting for leverage. "He had… all the fun… this morning, and I… feel… left out."

Lorelai's expression softened with amusement. "So you are jealous?"

"Not… jealous…" Andi puffed, pausing to catch her breath. "Left out."

"Do you want some help?"

"That… would be… humiliating, Miss. I almost…" Andi groaned, making one final effort to hoist herself higher and inside. "Told ya!" she yelled from inside Lorelai's shirt.

While Lorelai continued her breakfast with Reese, Andi carefully began her descent down the folds of the oversized shirt. Moving like a miniature rock climber, she maneuvered between the fabric and Lorelai's stomach, settling into the warm space with practiced ease.

Each gentle nudge to her skin felt soft and firm at the same time. It had a give but with a sturdy end beneath, like a memory foam mattress. Lorelai couldn't help but giggle at the tiny limbs shifting and pressing along her torso.

"What's so funny?" Reese asked, with toast crumbs at the corners of his mouth.

"Your girlfriend is tickling me!" Lorelai laughed, squirming a little.

Reese chuckled as he bent down to take a sip from a drop of orange juice.

"She'll be doing more than tickling," Reese muttered as he grinned mischievously.

Just as Andi neared the bottom hem, her foot reached for a surface that wasn't there and missed. She slipped and landed on the plush seat of the chair with a soft thud, blinking in surprise at how warm everything felt around her. Then she realized why she fell. There wasn't any underwear to brace against.

"Miss?" Andi asked, raising her voice to reach Lorelai's ears. "I thought you were wearing some panties."

"Thought I'd make it easier for you," Lorelai said with a sultry trill in her voice.

Andi stared ahead, directly into the soft heat now unmistakably revealed to her. "Look at her," she murmured, mostly to herself. "She was already expecting me."

This was the best but most difficult breakfast Lorelai ever had to deal with. With what little focus she could muster, she managed to spear the last bite from her plate and set her fork down with a shaky breath, pushing the plate aside.

“Y-You are… ah… done, right?” she asked Reese, her voice quivering between gasps.

Reese gave her a sly grin and nodded. “All done.”

“O-O… kay… mmmmph!”

Whatever Andi was doing to her under the table, it was an experience Lorelai’d never had before with her. Her nerves lit, her vision threatening to blur at the edges. Through the haze of her orgasmic shivers, she caught sight of Reese sitting calmly in the center of the table, watching her with amused interest.

“D-Do you want to… hnngh… j-join in?” she managed to ask.

Reese shook his head.

“I gotta respect pool rules. No diving after a meal,” he chuckled. “The view here is enough for me, and besides, I already conquered Mt. Lorelai today. It’s her turn now.”

Lorelai heard his reply, but didn’t get a chance to acknowledge what he said as another orgasmic wave hit her. Her legs rose instinctively, resting on the edge of the table as her left hand slid beneath to help guide Andi deeper into her.

Lorelai's breath caught again, her hips rolled instinctively, chasing every flick, kiss, and stroke Andi gave her. Her fingers spread gently between her thighs, parting the warmth to give her tiny lover better access. Then she heard it.

A tiny moan.

Andi had buried herself completely.

Lorelai let out a choked gasp, head falling back as she gripped the edge of the table with her free hand. The chair creaked beneath her, legs drawn up, posture trembling from the sheer intensity building inside her.

Above it all, Reese sat cross-legged on the table, watching the show with a calm satisfaction.

"Lorelai," he said casually, hand stroking his chin. "I don't think I've ever seen you fall apart this fast. Not even when I was down there."

Lorelai tried to glare at him, but all she managed was a dazed, half-lidded glance and a whimper as her legs flexed again.

"You're just… mad," she moaned, "because she's more… hnnng… patient than you."

Reese laughed. "That we can both agree on."

A moment passed as wet, obscene sounds beneath the table mixed with Lorelai's stuttering breaths. Then her eyes widened.

"Andi… ah! R-Right there…"

She gripped the edge of the table, her stomach tightening as her body tensed. This time, her moan was louder, unrestrained. Her legs locked in place, thighs clenching, and her hand flattened against her stomach, trying to ground herself as another climax hit, raw and rippling.

Andi didn't stop. If anything, the little minx slowed down just enough to keep Lorelai right at the edge.

"Hnnng, she's so… cruel," Lorelai gasped, laughing between breaths. "Sh-She's learning from you."

Reese gave a mock bow. "I'm a terrible influence."

Lorelai ran a hand through her hair, sweat clinging to her skin now, her body glowing and spent, but not done.

She glanced down at her lap with a lopsided grin.

"Andi, if you don't come up for air soon," she warned playfully, "I might have to pin you there for the rest of the morning."

From somewhere beneath the table came the faintest giggle, and then a final, deliberate movement that made Lorelai cry out once more, her body arching off the chair.

Reese raised his arm like a mock toast. "Huzzah!"

Time slowed after the last wave passed.

Lorelai slumped back into her chair, breath shallow, chest rising and falling as she basked in the afterglow. A soft hum escaped her lips, half sigh, half contented moan, as she ran a hand down her belly, feeling the faint twitch of sensitivity just beneath the surface.

With gentle care, she reached under the table and scooped up Andi, cradling her like a delicate treasure.

“You absolute menace,” she whispered with a smile, pressing a kiss to Andi’s damp forehead. “Remind me to thank you properly later.”

Andi lazily stretched, grinning in triumph. “Anytime, Miss. Just returning the favor.”

Lorelai placed her down carefully on a clean hand towel, dabbing her dry with practiced ease. Reese jumped up from his sitting position and helped her, grabbing a piece of napkin and dabbing Andi’s shin before pressing a soft kiss on it.

“You two really are going to be the death of me,” Lorelai muttered as she stood up, knees wobbling slightly. “C’mon. Let’s go relax before one of you horny goblins decides to climb back in.”

Some time later, the three of them were sprawled on the sofa in the living room. Lorelai lay on her stomach, wearing a fresh pair of soft cotton panties. The TV flickered in front of her with some forgettable romantic comedy playing in the background, but she wasn't paying much attention.

What she was paying attention to, however, was the tiny kisses being exchanged just behind her.

Perched comfortably atop the curve of her panty-covered backside, Reese and Andi were tangled up together, limbs draped lazily over each other, lips brushing, then deepening into slow, languid kisses. Their bodies rose and fell gently with every one of Lorelai's breaths, like they were on some warm, living landscape.

Lorelai let out a happy little sigh, grabbing a nearby throw pillow and pressing her cheek against it as she watched the screen through half-lidded eyes.

"You two good back there?" she murmured sleepily.

"Very," Reese replied between kisses.

"Don't mind us," Andi added. "Just making use of the very generous real estate you've provided."

Lorelai laughed, the soft vibration carrying through her body and up into them.

"Well, behave yourselves," she warned teasingly, "or I'll roll over and crush you both with my cheeks."

"You say that like it's a threat," Reese whispered, nipping at Andi's lip as she giggled.

Lorelai smiled into the pillow, heart full, body relaxed, and soul deeply content. Whatever strange shape their relationship had taken, it fit.

And she wouldn't change a thing.

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The glow from the television had long since faded, replaced by the warm hush of the evening.

Seeing her little ones dozing off on the sofa, she picked them up and moved them to the bedroom, where she put them to bed with her. It was quiet, bathed in soft shadows, and the cool blue tint of moonlight spilling in through the curtains. The rise and fall of slow, steady breathing filled the space, three bodies at peace in their small personal orbit.

Lorelai lay on her side, propped by her arm, her long hair loose and draped across her shoulder. Her eyes weren't closed.

She was watching them.

Just beside her, nestled under the warmth of her blanket, Reese and Andi slept curled together. Andi was spooning him, her tiny arm slung protectively on his back. Reese's hand gently clutched her fingers, even in sleep.

They looked small. Vulnerable. Safe.

Lorelai smiled.



There was a warmth in her chest she didn't have words for, something quieter than passion, but deeper than comfort. She reached down with the softest of touches, brushing a fingertip over Andi's hair without waking her, then let her hand rest beside them like a protective wall.

Andi stirred slightly at the contact, but didn't wake. Instead, she leaned back and allowed Reese to lie on her left arm, facing her closer, sharing each other's space with a faint, contented sigh.

Lorelai's smile grew faintly sad around the edges.

'*Do they know?*' she wondered. '*How much do they mean to me?*'

She let out a quiet exhale and whispered to herself, "I think I'm the one who's lucky…"

Then she lay on her side, draping the corner of the blanket a little higher to keep them warm, and finally closed her eyes.

Sleep found her slowly, but when it did, it was the kind that only came when you knew you were exactly where you belonged.

"Please don't get into dangerous places, and definitely don't try to leave this room," Lorelai said gently, a thread of concern lacing her voice. "I just want the peace of knowing exactly where you two are."

"You'll find us here in your room, just like you always do," Reese said with a reassuring smile.

Lorelai gave him a look. "You know what I mean, Reese."

"Miss," Andi chimed in, "you don't have to worry. Honestly, I don't think we could open the door, even if we wanted to. We're staying put."

Lorelai was getting ready to head out for work, but this morning she'd chosen to do something special for them. Instead of leaving them confined in their enclosure, she'd given them free rein over the bedroom.

Toy ladders and ropes had been carefully arranged around the bed, allowing them access to the TV, snacks, or a comfy blanket if they wanted to nap. In one corner, she'd even set up a mini workout space just for Reese so he could keep up his morning routine.

An unspoken gesture of love and trust.

Lorelai knelt, bringing herself closer to their level on the floor. With gentle fingers, she caressed both their chins, offering them a reassuring smile.

“We’ll be okay, Lorelai,” Reese said, his voice calm and confident. “We promise.”

“Yes, Miss,” Andi added. “I’ll get a workout in with Reese, then probably just watch some movies or something. You need to focus on yourself. That big interview’s coming up.”

“Next week, actually…”

“Exactly,” Andi grinned. “So start being a little selfish and prep for it properly. We’ll be okay, I swear.”

Lorelai gave her a fond look and ruffled her hair.

“I’ll try.”

Lorelai stood to her full height and waved goodbye from the doorway.

“See you later. I’ll bring something tasty home for us to share.”

“Have a great shift!” Reese shouted. “And if you hear any rumors about corporate embezzlement, just look the other way!”

“Got it!” Lorelai laughed, shutting the door behind her with a smile still on her face.

"Alright, you, follow me," Andi said with a playful glint in her eye, beckoning Reese with a finger.

He obediently trailed after her, already suspecting what she was up to.

They made their way to the little workout corner that she and Lorelai had set up with care together. It was complete with soft mats, makeshift weights, and a ball of yarn that Lorelai had thoughtfully resized to work as Reese's miniature exercise ball.

"On your back," Andi said with a smirk, crossing her arms like a strict but flirty coach. "Time for crunches."

Reese groaned as he settled onto the ball, his back sinking slightly into the plush surface. "Crunches get painful after a while," he muttered, knowing full well there was no sympathy coming his way.

"Pain is the first step to progress, sweetheart," Andi said sweetly, standing over him. "Besides, you're doing this for your health. Your pretty little chest getting buff is a good side effect that you'll want me drooling over later, right?"

Reese chuckled. "You do have high standards."

"I do," she agreed, placing her hand gently on his stomach. "Now start."

Slow and steadily, he began his crunches, his core tightening with each motion. Andi watched with a predatory sort of amusement, her fingers lightly tracing over his abdomen as he worked.

“Look at that,” she purred, her fingertips brushing the light sheen of sweat forming on his skin. “Hard work looks good on you.”

Reese grinned between breaths. “Oh yeah?”

“Mmhm. Keep going,” she said, leaning in just a little closer. “The better you do… the more generous I get.”

Her hand drifted lower, not quite teasing anything indecent, but just enough to keep his pulse racing.

He groaned, this time not from the crunches. “You’re evil.”

“And you love it,” she whispered near his ear, and smirking as she stood above him. “Ten more, and maybe I’ll sit on your face as a reward.”

“Now that’s motivation,” Reese said, powering through the next rep with renewed vigor.



By the time Reese finished his final crunch, his abs were burning, his chest rising and falling with effort, but his grin was wide, satisfied, and expectant.

Andi straddled his waist, leaning over him with a look that was equal parts proud and wicked.

“See?” she murmured, brushing a few damp strands of hair off his forehead. “You made it.”

“I had help,” Reese breathed, his hands finding her hips.

“You’ve earned your reward,” she whispered, shifting herself up, slowly, deliberately, until she was kneeling above his face, her legs folded neatly on either side of his head. The space between her legs was warm from her body, slightly damp, and pressing gently into his skin.

Reese sighed into her, the vibration making Andi shiver.

“Good boy,” she purred, rolling her hips subtly against him as he began to kiss her inner thighs.

She tilted her head back slightly, closing her eyes, and letting out a quiet moan. Her fingers found his hair, guiding him, stroking him, and reveling in the pleasure and closeness that came with trusting someone this much at this size.

Neither of them noticed the quiet click of the bedroom door opening.

Lorelai stepped in silently, having forgotten her ID badge on the nightstand. She paused mid-step when she saw them, tiny silhouettes bathed in the soft morning light, lost in each other.

Her fingers stopped just short of the lanyard, her eyes softening.

Reese's hands rested lightly on Andi's thighs as she straddled his face, her hips moving in a slow, steady rhythm to the warmth of his attention. Her expression was soft and radiant, lips parted in a quiet, breathless bliss.

Lorelai smiled.

Not because of the act itself, but because of the love radiating from such a tiny scene.

"My horny little goblins," she mused to herself.

She retrieved her badge without a sound and paused in the doorway, watching just a moment longer with a mixture of amusement and something… tender.

Then, quietly, she stepped out again and closed the door with a gentle click behind her.



Nellielle

It was mid-afternoon on a slow day as Lorelai sat on one of the break room tables, fluorescent lights humming over her. She had stepped away from the buzz of printers and the soft tapping of keyboards, taking a break for some '*Lori time*'. Stirring sugar into her tea, the air filled with a mingling scent of herbal mint… and lingering print toner.

The peaceful quiet was broken as the door nearby her pushed open with a soft hiss. A man stepped in, carrying a stack of folders, with his face walking the line between exhaustion and sarcastic composure.

"I just saw a copy of a document with an unmistakable stain of ketchup on it." He sighed as he set the pile of folders near Lorelai. "I've lost all faith in humanity."

Lorelai glanced towards him with a smirk as she took a sip of her drink.

"That means there's ketchup on the copier, so that's technically our problem now."

Jack let out a dry laugh. "Well, congratulations. You're now in charge of the ketchup logistics department."

He opened the fridge, looking for his tumbler, rubbing the back of his neck.

"Shit… empty."

Lorelai smiled faintly, eyeing the slightly more disheveled than usual clothes he was wearing. “Rough week?”

He collapsed into the chair across from her, dramatically sighing like a theater major auditioning for a burnout.

“Define *‘rough’*. I dreamed about running away from giant documents last night,” he groaned as he lay his head on the table. “I autofilled my own name when I signed a birthday card this morning.”

Lorelai giggled and gestured to the pot. “Tea?”

“Please,” he chuckled. “Unless you sneaked in something stronger to drink.”

Lorelai chuckled back as she stood up to prepare a cup for him. “Next time I bring wine or whiskey to work, I’ll make sure to share it with you.”

“You know what I envy about you?” he asked, eyeing Lorelai as she made her way to grab his drinking cup for tea.

“Everything?” Lorelai chuckled.

“You make this look easy. You show up with your color-coded folders and your laser eyes and that lucky blazer you wear when you mean business.”

Lorelai tilted her head and half turned around. “Jealous of my blazers now?”

“I grew up with three sisters, and not one of them taught me how to accessorize like you.”

“That’s because you don’t listen to suggestions. You’re like the annoying little brother of this floor, Jack.”

Jack chuckled. “Bah! You love me.”

Lorelai rubbed his shoulder and left the cup of tea in front of him.

“Just drink this. Close your eyes. Pretend this is a meaningful job.”

Jack raised his cup like a mock toast. “To purposeful obscurity.”

They sipped their drinks in silence for a moment. The fluorescent lights gently buzzing overhead.

"Are you ready for your interview?" Jack asked, breaking the silence.

Lorelai groaned.

"I am trying not to think about it too much." She took another sip. "What about yours?"

Jack nodded to Lorelai's answer. "About the same. At least yours is next week, mine's in two days."

"You don't have to worry about it too much," Lorelai smiled amusedly. "You're a charming and competent, yet only slightly annoying fella. You'll pass that interview with flying colors."

Jack took a sip of his tea, wanting to gain some composure.

"I heard from the grapevine that these interviews aren't just about questions anymore. They test what you're willing to do."

Lorelai quietly closed her eyes and exhaled loudly from her nose.

"Thanks, Jack," Lorelai said, with full sarcasm. "Not like I was already nervous enough about it."

Jack winked.

"I gotchu!"

Jack looked around with caution, making sure they were both alone, then slightly leaned in to whisper. “Hey, random question. Have you ever seen anything weird in the Deltora files?”

Lorelai paused, having already heard this name said by Jack before. “Haven’t been keeping track of it since the last time you mentioned it. Why?”

“Well…” he began like a conspiracy theorist, ready to convince someone of the truth out there. “The number of people who can get access to that partner’s account keeps getting smaller and smaller. I dug in a little deeper, and there’s no point of contact. Lots of redacted documents. Weird case numbers that don’t match any of our formats.”

Lorelai frowned, the words from Reese echoing in her head. She tried to distract Jack from it. “Sounds like a black-budget client. Defense, maybe.”

Jack had a thoughtful look, considering Lorelai’s suggestion. “Maybe. It just feels off. I found one batch where every person’s name field was blank. Like it had been stripped out.”

“Could just be auto-scrubbed,” Lorelai replied sharply, hinting at him to drop the topic.

He stared at his cup and took a sip. “Sure. Could be.”

“Or it’s just paper we’re moving, and you’re just being paranoid,” Lorelai said as a final nail in the topic’s coffin.



Jack was defeated, as if the fun had been fully sucked out of him. Lorelai blinked slowly and tried to break the awkward pause with some humor.

“You’re not gonna start quoting conspiracy podcasts at me, are you?”

“Only the ones with jazz intros and three hosts named Joe,” Jack chuckled.

She grinned, and he returned the smile, but there was something behind his eyes, a seriousness he doesn’t usually show. He then stood, gathering his folders again.

“Well, if I vanish mysteriously, you’re allowed to break into my desk and claim the good pens.”

Lorelai hated the joke, knowing that the possibility of what he said was true, but wanted to help him with his mood. “If I were you, I would check your drawer now. I grabbed the pretty blue one this morning.”

Jack grinned.

“That’s the spirit.”

He made his way to the exit before he paused and looked back.

“Hey,” he gave a slight knock to the door to catch Lorelai’s attention. “In case I forget later… good luck with your interview. I mean it.”

Lorelai softly smiled, hiding the nerves she had about it coming back. “…thanks. You, too.”

“No, seriously. You’re smart, clear-headed, and terrifying when you need to be. They’d be lucky to have you.”

Lorelai chuckled. “You’re laying it on pretty thick.”

“Meh,” he turned to leave the room. “Just practicing for when I’m a reference on your next promotion. Also, don’t forget to wash my teacup before you leave!”

And then he was gone.

Lorelai stared at the break room door for a moment and smiled.

“Brats surround my life.”

She then gathered his and her cup, cleaned them, and went back to work.

“And did you know,” Andi said, eyes bright, “that the men’s world record for the 400 meters hasn’t been broken since 2016? Wayde van Niekerk ran it in 43.03 seconds. That’s… insane. It’s almost a full lap of the track in less time than it takes to tie your shoes.”

Lorelai hummed, amused. “That’s impressive. But you say that about like… every record.”

“Because it is!” Andi insisted, grinning. “Have you ever tried running 400 meters all out? It’s like sprinting straight into a wall and then dragging your soul across the finish line.”

Lorelai chuckled softly, rubbing Reese’s back as he lay sleeping on her hand. “Sounds awful.”

“Oh, it is. We called it the *‘death lap’*. People throw up after it. But it’s beautiful too. Like…” Andi held her breath for a moment in excitement, then let all that air out. “It’s one of those distances where your heart really has to want it.”

Lorelai turned her head lazily toward Andi. “Did your heart really want it?”

Andi shrugged, her smile softening. “Sometimes. Other times, I think my legs just didn’t know when to quit.”

The room became quiet, except for the distant hum of traffic outside and the soft breathing of the trio.

"I once beat a girl who had a full scholarship riding on the race," Andi said suddenly. "I didn't even know. She was crying afterward, and I didn't understand why. I just thought she was mad she lost."

Lorelai tilted her head slightly. "Did you talk to her?"

"Eventually, I did. She told me her whole life depended on that win. And I felt awful, because I was just… there to qualify. I wasn't even running for money or a future. Just pride."

"That's a heavy weight to have on you," Lorelai softly caressed Andi's hair.

"Yeah. Track teaches you weird things about yourself. Who you are when it's just you, your breath, and your limit. When the crowd fades and your body starts screaming at you to stop, but you have to decide whether to listen or keep going."

Lorelai watched her in silence for a moment, her expression unreadable.

"…I like it when you ramble," she said finally.

Andi blinked. "You do?"

"Mmhm. It's like… a tiny veteran telling me war stories. I like knowing more about you."

Andi grinned and blushed. "You joke, but there was this one girl who sabotaged our baton handoff during a 4x1…"

Lorelai's eyes lit up. "Ooooh, team gossip. Now we're talking."

But her thoughts were interrupted by the vibration coming from her phone.

Lorelai took one look at her phone and sighed dismissively, throwing it back on the sofa.

“Who was it?” Andi asked.

“You know…”

“Harmonie?”

Lorelai nodded.

“Was it a text?”

“She left another voicemail.” Lorelai clarified.

“Listen to it,” Andi said, a tone of comfort and concern in her voice. “Might be important.”

Without saying anything, Lorelai picked up her phone again and accessed her voicemails.

“One new message,” the robotic voice announced, followed by the familiar harsh beep.

The recording crackled with ambient noise, sounding more like a pocket dial than anything intentional. Beneath the static, however, faint breathing could just be made out. Then, just before the message abruptly ended, Harmonie’s voice cut in sharply with a startled ‘Shit!’.

"See?" Lorelai muttered, her expression darkening with a frown. "It's nothing."

Andi looked down and fidgeted with her fingers. She looked like she wanted to speak, but kept it to herself. Lorelai caught the tension in her face.

"What's wrong, Andi?"

"Miss… you don't have to listen to what I have to say, but I think you should reach out to her."

"Andi…" Lorelai sighed, gently setting Reese down on the sofa and tucking a small blanket over him. "What's going on between Harmonie and me… It's not simple."

"I understand," Andi replied softly. "I'm not asking you to explain it. But from what I heard… she sounded genuinely upset. Like she really wants to fix things and cares about you more than she knows how to say."

Lorelai looked away, her head filling with thoughts as Andi continued.

"You have Reese and me here to keep you company, but… Harmonie is someone your size. A real friend. That kind of bond matters too."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Lorelai asked, her tone suddenly sharp.

"M-Miss?" Andi's lips trembled.

"What exactly are you trying to say?"

"I-I just meant… Harmonie's your friend and…" Andi stammered, her nerves spiking under Lorelai's sudden shift in tone.

Lorelai shifted on the sofa to a more upright position, unknowingly towering over Andi.

“I just don’t understand how you could say something like that,” she said, her voice edged with disbelief.

Andi froze, at a loss for words. She wasn’t sure what she’d said wrong.

“Miss, if I stepped out of line…” was all she could say before the nerves overtook her, looking away.

“Andi,” Lorelai said, more softly, but still with a sharp tone.

She leaned in, but the sudden motion made Andi flinch. It was only then that Lorelai realized how intimidating she must have seemed.

“Andi… hey, look at me, sweetie.”

Andi hesitated until she felt Lorelai’s warm fingertip gently lift her chin, guiding her eyes back up to meet hers.

A single tear slid down Andi’s cheek.

“I… I was just trying to say that losing someone you trust… a friend…” Andi’s voice trembled. “I wouldn’t wish that on anyone.”

In one swift motion, Lorelai gently scooped Andi and moved her closer to her face.

“Andi, I’m sorry… I didn’t mean to scare you,” Lorelai said in a motherly tone. “I just don’t like it when you put yourself down like that. Yes, Harmonie may be someone my size and someone I care about, but that doesn’t mean she matters more. You’re just as real to me. Just as important. You’re not a pet. You’re not a burden. Not only that, but you’re my friend, Andi, no matter how small you are.”

Andi lowered her gaze, tears slipping down her cheeks, a quiet shame flickering across her face.

With her free hand, Lorelai grabbed one of Andi’s arms and gently brought it to her lips, giving it a gentle kiss of comfort.

“You never have to be afraid of me, Andi. I would never hurt you.”

She then guided Andi’s tiny hand to her cheek, letting it rest there in a gentle caress, letting the warmth of her palm rest against her skin.

“You matter to me. Not because you’re small. Not despite it. You just… do.”

A bit later, Lorelai brought her two wards to rest more comfortably in her bed. She set Reese gently with his blanket and Andi beside him, giving her control of the TV remote.

“Must be nice, getting to take afternoon naps,” Lorelai teased with a soft smile.

“Nothing is stopping you, Miss. You can go rest as well,” Andi giggled. “I’ll guard the fort.”

“I believe you would,” Lorelai smiled warmly, slowly transitioning into a pensive look. “But you got me thinking.”

Andi tilted her head. “‘Bout what?”

Instead of answering right away, Lorelai gently ruffled Andi’s hair. “I was thinking… I should see Harmonie. Maybe have a real chat with her.”

“Okay, Miss!” Andi stood up, determined. “I’ll keep watch until you’re back.”

“Thank you, sweetie,” Lorelai said warmly before getting ready to go.

Nellielle

It was the fourth unanswered call Lorelai had made to Harmonie that day, each one left to ring into nothingness. By the time she reached the towering facade of the building housing Harmonie's luxury penthouse, the silence on the other end of the line had started to feel intentional. She knocked on the door a couple of times, receiving no response. Lorelai let out a frustrated sigh.

"She calls and calls, and the moment I reach back, she doesn't answer… of course," she muttered.

She knew Harmonie was home, seeing her car on the way to her penthouse. Lorelai's brow furrowed.

"Just this once…" she sighed.

From her pocket, she retrieved the slender spare key Harmonie had once pressed into her palm, saying it was '*only for emergencies*'. The door clicked as she made her way inside.

"Hello?" Lorelai called softly, her voice sounding smaller than she intended. No answer.



Her sneakers made quiet squeaks against the marble floor as she stepped inside, the sound swallowed quickly by the hush of the apartment. The smell of Harmonie's expensive perfume lingered in the air, as if she had walked by it recently.

"Harmonie?" Lorelai called again, raising her voice slightly.

Something about the silence made the space feel bigger and emptier.

"She must be upstairs," she murmured to herself.

Climbing the staircase, her eyes wandered over the carefully curated displays, ornate vases, abstract sculptures, and other beautiful yet soulless objects scattered about like staged magazine décor. It brought back a thought that crept into her mind from time to time.

"What the hell does she work in?"

She'd asked before. Harmonie's answer was always the same: a dismissive little wave, and '*Psht, please*'.

At the top of the stairs, Lorelai noticed the door to one of Harmonie's bedrooms standing slightly ajar. She stepped closer, lifted a hand, and knocked gently.

Stepping inside, the same unnerving quietness that followed her through the living room was here as well. The usual tidiness that decorated the room was not found here, however. The bedsheets were spread about, clothes on the floor, and a cell phone playing a video on the countertop. On a closer look, she noticed that she was not alone in the room.

Banjo, Dino, and Gadget were on the countertop, watching a video, huddling together. Knowing how intimidating Lorelai can appear to other tinies besides Andi and Reese, she inched closer with careful steps.

Banjo was the first to notice her and waved hello, and notified the other two.

“Hi, guys,” Lorelai cooed softly.

“Hello, Lorelai,” Gadget replied. “It is a pleasure to have you on our humble… crap, what was the word?”

“Abode. Also, she is ‘*in*’ our humble abode, not ‘*on*’,” Dino assisted.

“Yes! Our humble abode.”

Lorelai let out a gentle chuckle. “You don’t have to be so formal. It’s just me.”

Gadget straightened her posture, as if making a proclamation.

“It has been proven that polite interactions with individuals of elevated social standing… uhh… exude?”

“Confer favorable,” Dino interjected.

“…confer favorable outcomes upon persons in my position,” Gadget concluded with a nod.

Lorelai didn't like this type of respect she was receiving, but kept it to herself, as it wasn't her job to monitor their behavior.

"Are you guys okay?"

Gadget beamed. "We have been properly fed and tended to this morning."

Lorelai smiled awkwardly.

"Heh, that's good," Lorelai said before noticing something. "Where's Gigi?"

Gadget closed herself, as if attempting to keep a secret. Dino instead stepped in to take over the conversation.

"Gigi is currently with Harmonie," he cleared his throat. "They're in the other room."

"Oh, thank God!" Lorelai exhaled. "She was avoiding my calls, and I was getting worried. I need to talk to her."

Lorelai stood up to make her way there.

"Wait!" Gadget and Dino shouted, startling her.

"What?"

"It is recommended that you remain in these quarters for the time being," Gadget answered. "Harmonie is handling… a personal activity with Gigi."

Lorelai furrowed her brow.

“What do you mean by ‘personal activity’? Gadget, what are you implying?”

Gadget recognized that tone. She’d heard it from bigs before, and it rarely ended well.

“It’s just that… that… umm… You cannot… Harmonie requested privacy.”

“Please, Lorelai,” Dino pleaded nervously with Banjo nodding beside him. “For all our sake, stay here until… they’re done.”

But Lorelai’s mind had already connected the pieces. She remembered Harmonie’s offhand remark when she first brought Andi and Reese over:

‘And Gigi is… in timeout, being punished for talking back.’

Her conclusion came instantly.

“She’s hurting her…”

Without another word, Lorelai rose to her full height and strode toward the other room, where Harmonie and Gigi were. The tinies’ urgent pleas followed her, but she didn’t look back.

Some things were far more important than keeping the peace.



Nellielle

Lorelai made a beeline towards where Harmonie and Gigi were presumably located with a firm and determined stride. She tried to cool her thoughts and calm herself. This reaction was based on assumptions, but with all the previous evidence, her conclusion was not out of the question.

She stood in front of the door to the room for a moment to gather her thoughts, but that was soon interrupted. A muffled, rhythmic thump… thump… thump seeped through the wood, slightly vibrating her hand over it. What alarmed her more was what accompanied it.

“Ah! Ah! Ah!” a small, strained voice cried out, the sounds in time with the thudding.

“Doing things without my permission again?” the second voice rang sharp and cutting.

“I’m sorry, my Goddess… I—”

“You think you can just run off when it is prohibited?”

“I wasn’t… I didn’t… mean to…” the tiny voice faltered, trembling.

“Quiet! I’ll decide what you meant.”



Nellielle

Lorelai's hands trembled, her pulse drumming in her ears. She couldn't believe what she was hearing Harmonie say. Without thinking, she reached for the handle. It turned easily. Unlocked.

She slipped inside, her movements quiet, but her breath tight in her chest. The voices were clearer now.

"You're mine," Harmonie's tone cracked like a whip. "You don't run. You don't hide. You do as I say."

"Yes, Goddess," Gigi choked out, her words hitching with a sob. "I… am yours."

"What are you doing?!" Lorelai's voice cut through the air, sharp enough to make both of them flinch.

Harmonie spun around, wide-eyed, a taut rubber band dangling from her fingers. Behind her, Gigi was bound to a lamp stand, faint bruises blooming on her skin.

"Lorelai!" Harmonie's voice pitched high, halfway between outrage and panic. "What the hell are you—"

"You called me. I called back. You ignored me. Now I'm *here*."

Lorelai advanced, each step a steady, deliberate strike against the polished floor.

Harmonie took a half-step back, her usual smirk nowhere to be seen. “You’re overreacting—”

“Overreacting?” Lorelai’s voice stayed low but cold, the kind that made the air feel heavier. Her eyes didn’t leave Harmonie, but she could see Gigi trembling in the corner of her vision. “She’s tied up. She’s bruised. You think I’m going to stand here and listen to you explain this away?”

“Sh-She needed to learn her place,” Harmonie stammered, her tone losing its usual calculated edge. “You don’t understand our dynamic—”

“I understand enough.” Lorelai kept moving, forcing Harmonie to step aside as she reached the lamp, until Harmonie shoved her back.

“No!”

Lorelai froze in place, outrage, and disbelief flaring in her eyes.

“You barge into my home, acting all high and mighty, making demands like you own the place!” Harmonie’s voice rose, anger pushing through her shaken composure. “I don’t recall wronging you, Lorelai. But you? You ghosted me for weeks without explanation. Ignored my calls. Avoided me at the reunion. And I still don’t know why.”

Lorelai gave a short, humorless laugh.

“You really don’t remember our last real conversation, do you? Your confession?”

Harmonie frowned, then shrugged. “Yeah? What does that have to do with this?”

“You, Harmonie! You killed a man who didn’t deserve it.”

Harmonie’s eyes narrowed. “So if he had deserved it, you’d be fine with it?”

Lorelai froze, caught off guard. “N-No… I’m saying—”

“Did you forget me telling you I had nightmares about it for a month?” Harmonie cut in sharply. “Or did that bounce right off your gargantuan skull?”

“You relished it,” Lorelai shot back. “You enjoyed it at first.”

“I was high on lust! What do you want from me?!” Harmonie snapped.

“…Gigi.”

Lorelai tried to step past her, but Harmonie moved to block her again.

“I’d rather not call the cops on you…” Lorelai warned.

Harmonie tilted her head, a slow, humorless smile returning to her lips. “Oh, please. You think the police would take your word over mine? In my home? With my property?” She flicked a glance toward Gigi without breaking eye contact with Lorelai. “All they’ll see is a woman with a savior complex, trespassing.”

Lorelai’s jaw tightened.

“You’ve forgotten who you’re dealing with,” Harmonie continued, her voice lowering into something almost intimate, yet laced with steel. “I can ruin you before you take your next breath. Your job. Your reputation. Even those two little pets of yours, imagine how quickly they’d be taken from you if someone… questioned your fitness to care for them.”

Lorelai’s hands curled into fists. “You won’t touch them.”

“That,” Harmonie said softly, stepping in closer, “is entirely up to you.”

For a moment, neither moved. The silence was taut as wire.

“Lorelai…” Gigi’s voice cut through the silence, drawing the attention of both fighting giantesses. In the most gentle voice she could muster, she reassured Lorelai.

“It’s okay. I'm okay.”

“Gigi, I—” Lorelai began, but was cut short by Harmonie stepping between them.

“No more out of you,” Harmonie told Gigi. “Stay there. If you move, I’ll make you regret it.”

“…yes, Goddess,” Gigi replied, bowing her head. “I promise.”

“And you…” Harmonie turned to Lorelai, her voice snapping like a whip. “Out. Now. I mean it.”

Lorelai bit back her retort, and stepped into the hall, Harmonie following close behind. The door clicked shut with a finality that felt intentional. Harmonie lingered for a beat, taking a deep breath to cool down, then reached for Lorelai’s arm with calculated softness.

“Do you honestly think I’m that cold-blooded?”

For a moment, Lorelai almost faltered, but she brushed Harmonie’s hand away.

“From what I’ve seen, how you treat your wards. I turned a blind eye for years because I convinced myself that’s just how things were done…”

Harmonie’s lips curled into something halfway between a smirk and a scoff. “But now you’ve got your own…”

“…and I see now that what I thought was normal… wasn’t,” Lorelai finished.

“Can you at least give me a chance to explain?” Harmonie’s voice hovered between plea and challenge. “You might understand what I’m doing if you let me—”

“No.” Lorelai’s answer was flat, final. “I’m taking the others home.”

She turned toward Harmonie’s guest room, intent on collecting Banjo, Dino, and Gadget.

“Lorelai, stop!” The word cracked like a command. “They’re my property. If you go through with this, I’ll involve the police. Who knows what will happen to your little ones after that?”

Lorelai halted mid-step. For a heartbeat, the silence between them was thick enough to choke on. Then she pivoted, not toward the room, but down the stairs and toward the exit.

“Lorelai, please,” Harmonie tried again, the plea losing its warmth. “Let’s talk.”

Lorelai kept walking.

Harmonie’s voice dropped into steel. “Walk out that door, and we’re done.”

Lorelai met her eyes without flinching. “We were done the moment I opened *THAT* door.”

Without another word, she turned and strode out, every step echoing in the marble-quiet apartment, door slamming, then silence.



Nellielle

Andi sat cross-legged on the bed, happily absorbed in an action flick Reese had insisted she watch. The story followed a man on a relentless vendetta against those who had killed his dog. By the time she reached the second film, she was stunned by the sheer number of people he had taken down, and there were still two more movies to go.

Without meaning to, her thoughts wandered. '*It must be nice to have someone care for you this much.*'

Her focus was so pulled on the movie that she didn't hear Lorelai entering the apartment, then the room.

"Oh, Miss!" Andi perked up instantly. "Welcome back! Have you seen these movies?"

Lorelai's gaze flicked to the TV. She recognized the film and gave a small nod before quietly settling onto the floor beside the bed. Her eyes drifted to Reese, still curled under the blanket.

"Reese? Eat?" she asked softly.

"Yes, Miss. He woke up a bit earlier, ate some of the snacks you left us, and went back to sleep."

Lorelai gave a quiet nod.

"You talk with Harmonie?" Andi asked, her tone light and curious.

Another silent nod.

"How did it go?"

This time, Lorelai's eyes lifted to meet Andi's. The moment their gazes locked, the fragile wall she'd been holding up crumbled, and the emotions she'd been burying spilled over.

"M-Miss… I'm sorry…" Andi whispered.

Andi shifted closer on the bed as Lorelai's eyes welled up. She simply waited.

"It was worse than I thought," Lorelai said finally, her voice low, almost breaking. "I… saw something I can't stop getting out of my mind."

Andi's face fell. "With Harmonie?"

Lorelai nodded, staring at the floor. "She… had Gigi tied up. Bruised. I don't even know how long she's been…" she stopped herself, jaw tightening. "Then she acted like it was nothing. Like I was the one overreacting."

Andi's mouth opened, then closed, unsure what words could fit here.

"I threatened to call the cops on her, but she had the upper hand. She technically wasn't doing anything illegal. Gigi is hers." Lorelai paused to catch a mental break before proceeding. "Then I thought… if she hadn't given you both to me, that could've been…"

Lorelai swallowed her words, allowing more tears to fall down her face.

"What did you do then, Miss?"

"I walked out," Lorelai said, more to herself than to Andi. "I walked out, and I'm not going back."

The faint rustle of blankets drew their eyes toward Reese, who was sitting up, rubbing his eyes. “Lori?” he mumbled, voice still thick with sleep.

“Ah, Reese. I-It’s nothing,” Lorelai said quickly, but Andi gave him a look that said otherwise.

Reese sat upright, still shaking off his sleep, gaze moving between the two. “Something happened?”

Lorelai hesitated, but the weight in her chest refused to stay there. “I saw Harmonie hurt someone. Not just hurt, but breaking them. And when I tried to stop her…” She shook her head. “She made it clear I was the problem.”

Reese frowned, the kind of deep frown that didn’t fade quickly. “Then she’s not your friend.”

Andi nodded firmly. “That is true, Miss. If your morals don’t align, she doesn’t deserve you in her life.”

Lorelai almost smiled, but the ache behind her ribs kept it from reaching her lips. She only reached out, drawing them both into her lap with one arm each, holding them close.

The movie still played in the background, gunshots and chaos, but in the quiet space between them, all that mattered was the warmth of their closeness.

Lorelai stood at the stove, stirring the pot without really tasting the smell of the food. The gentle hiss of simmering broth filled the kitchen, but her mind was still elsewhere, in Harmonie's apartment, replaying words she wished she'd never heard.

The overhead light cast a gentle glow, catching the faint steam curling upward. She could catch glimpses of Andi and Reese chatting quietly to each other on the kitchen island, perhaps reminiscing about a fond memory of all the time they had spent together.

"Are you okay, Miss?" Andi's voice was careful.

Lorelai kept her eyes on the pot. "I'm fine."

She wasn't.

Her grip on the wooden spoon tightened just enough to turn her knuckles pale.

Once finished, she ladled broth into her bowl and a small one for her wards to share, setting them on the counter with slow, deliberate motions, as if each action might help her put her thoughts in order.

It didn't.

She placed Andi and Reese's bowl first, then finally sat down with her own, though her appetite felt like it had been left somewhere miles away.

Andi's gaze lingered on her a moment longer, reading more in her silence than Lorelai wanted to admit.

They ate mostly in silence, the clink of her spoon against ceramic filling the spaces where words wouldn't come.

Halfway through her meal, Lorelai leaned back, her eyes unfocused on the wall. The tension in her shoulders hadn't eased, so she cleared her bowl, did the dishes in silence, then carried her wards back to the bedroom.

They were halfway through the third movie of the film series they were watching. One quick look at her wards, and she became almost grateful Reese had already drifted back to sleep. That's one less person to keep an eye on.

The weight in Lorelai's chest felt heavier than anything she'd carried all week. Andi sat beside her, eyes searching her face, reading the cracks in her composure like an open book.

"You are… hurting," Andi said softly.

Lorelai gave a small, humorless laugh. "Observant as always."

Andi's hand brushed against her cheek, hesitant at first, then more deliberate. "I… I could make you feel better. Take your mind off it." Her tone carried no teasing, no seduction. Just an earnest, almost pleading sincerity.

Lorelai looked down into those earnest eyes, torn between instinctive refusal and the aching part of her that wanted to forget, just for a moment.

She didn't answer right away. When Andi leaned closer, her fingertips grazing Lorelai's bra, and then slowly moving further down her body, Lorelai didn't pull back. For a brief, guilty moment, she let herself lean into that warmth, into the temptation of forgetting.

Andi's movements were deliberate, reverent almost, her small frame moving lower with purpose. When she reached Lorelai's hips, she paused only a second before leaping to her thigh, her body pressing lightly against the firm muscle as she climbed upward. The contrast of scale made every step feel intimate, bold, and undeniable.

She took a quick look at Lorelai's face, awaiting a sign of confirmation or denial. Lorelai quietly exhaled, and ungrudgingly but certainly, she parted her legs in answer. Andi slipped closer, pushing aside the thin barrier of underwear with practiced care. Her hands grasped the slowly engorging clitoris, stroking in slow, coaxing motions. Lorelai's body twitched at the first touch, a sharp gasp breaking the stillness, before melting into a low moan.

Lorelai tilted her head back, her body yielding, the tension in her chest unwinding as she let Andi guide her deeper into the warmth of forgetting.

But halfway through, Lorelai placed her hand gently over Andi's, stilling her movements.

"Andi…" Lorelai's voice was quiet but firm. "Not tonight."

Andi blinked, unsure if she'd done something wrong.

Lorelai shook her head. "I don't need a distraction. I just… come here."



Nellielle

She lay back on the bed, pulling Andi with her and gently grabbing Reese until they were all under the blanket, between her cleavage. As Andi draped her arm around Reese, cradling him closer to her, Lorelai's restless thoughts continued battling within her.

They stayed like that in silence, the only sound being the muted hum of the TV. Andi's breathing slowed first, but Lorelai kept her eyes open a little longer, holding onto the feeling of safety before letting sleep take her.

"Eighteen... nineteen... twenty! You can drop it, Reese!" Lorelai encouraged.

"Grah!" Reese grunted, letting the AA battery clatter onto the table.

"How do you feel now?" asked the familiar, gentle voice of the medical practitioner. "Any dizziness? About to pass out?"

"No," Reese said between breaths. "I'm feeling pretty good."

"That's wonderful, little cutie!" Gemma beamed before turning her attention to Lorelai. "He's not at full strength yet, but his progress is remarkable. You're doing great, full-pint."

Lorelai chuckled, rubbing the back of her neck.

"I didn't do it alone. Andi's been keeping an eye on his exercises, too."

Gemma leaned closer to Andi, her smile full of pride.

"Good work, hen."

This was Andi and Reese's first follow-up health check since their last visit with Gemma. Reese's dedication to his exercises had paid off, as he was no longer classified as malnourished. Andi, meanwhile, had put on a little weight, though all of it was muscle from eating more to encourage Reese and joining him in workouts.

"You two are making excellent progress, so keep it up," Gemma said as she jotted notes into their files.

"Okay!" Andi chirped, sneaking a hand behind her back. Reese hopped up to slap it with a triumphant high five.

"Anything new I should add to their routines?" Lorelai asked, smiling warmly at her wards.

"Just some supplements for Reese, otherwise you're all set," Gemma replied, signing a note. "You're still covered under Harmonie's plan, so don't worry about the bill."

"Oh… that's… good. Thanks," Lorelai murmured, pacing a little across the room.

Gemma glanced at her, then leaned toward the pair. "Is she okay?"

Andi and Reese exchanged a look before turning back to Gemma, both nodding in a way that wasn't entirely convincing.

"How'd it go?" Willow asked, watching Lorelai and the tinies descend the stairs.

"It went well," Lorelai replied. "Reese still has a bit left to go, but he's improving."

At the counter, Lorelai set Andi and Reese down so they could stretch their legs.

"And I'm fat," Andi flexed her arms with a playful smirk. "But stronger."

"Fat?" Willow poked her gently in the stomach, making her giggle. "With a body like that, I'd love to be fat too."

Lorelai pulled out Gemma's note. "Here's the list of things Reese needs."

"Got it," Willow said, her tone neutral. She liked Lorelai's visits, but her instinctive indifference toward normal-sized people was a habit that took effort to unlearn.

“Here you go. Your insurance covers it,” Willow said, handing over the supplements.

“Hmm… So I heard…” Lorelai murmured, slowly pacing away through the shop.

Willow glanced at her curiously, then looked at the tinies. With a quick gesture toward Lorelai, she silently mouthed, ‘What’s wrong?’

Andi’s smile faltered, and she looked away, leaving Reese to pick up the slack.

“She’s fine. There’s just… some stuff going on. But it’ll be okay.”

“You sure?” Willow whispered, hands on her hips. “Gimme the signal and I’ll take you two away from her.”

Reese chuckled. “Do we even have a signal?”

“Well, no, but…” Willow crouched closer. “You both do look healthier than last time, sure. But are you really okay?”

“Yeah,” Andi answered earnestly. “She’s sweet, she treats us kindly, and she loves us. There’s nothing more we could ask for.”

"Willow," Reese spoke up. "Actually... I wanted to tell you something."

"Oh yeah?" Willow leaned closer, lowering herself so he didn't have to crane his neck. "What's up?"

"I was talking with Lori the other day, and it made me realize... I never properly thanked you for saving my life. So... thank you."

Willow froze, caught off guard. Warmth rushed to her cheeks as she tried to contain her emotions.

"Uh... yeah, sure. Whatever." She cleared her throat. "Anytime, bud."

"Sorry, I spaced out," Lorelai returned to the counter. "You guys catching up?"

"Yeah," Willow said with a faint smile. "Just glad to know they're safe."

Lorelai's face softened. "Well, we should be going." She lowered her hand so Andi and Reese could climb on. "Say goodbye, you two."

"Bye!" they chirped in unison.

"We'll keep in touch," Lorelai promised as she turned to leave.

Willow watched them go, a quiet pang tugging at her heart. She loved working at the shop, but sometimes she longed for something more.

"I really want one..." she whispered to herself.

"Don't you think this is a bit much?" Lorelai asked, studying herself in the mirror after nearly an hour of trying on dresses. "It's just a dinner interview."

"I'm getting déjà vu here…" Reese muttered, mostly to himself.

"Maybe you are," Andi teased with a grin. "But honestly, Miss, that dress is so you. The blue looks gorgeous, and your hair? Perfect."

"What about the girls?" Lorelai leaned forward, her expression suddenly playful as she gestured at her chest."Aren't they too big a distraction?"

Andi and Reese just stared speechless. Lorelai pouted and straightened back up.

"I'll take that as a yes…"

"There's nothing wrong with that, Miss," Andi said. "I did my fair share with mine to get what I wanted, too."

"Lord knows I would've done the same if I had boobs myself," Reese added with a smirk.

"Ok, ok," Lorelai said with a small nod to her reflection. "This one it is. Hey, has my phone buzzed at all?"

"Nope," Reese said bluntly.

"Are you expecting a call?" Andi asked.

"More of a reply, actually…"

Lorelai sat down on the bed beside them, picking up her phone.

"I texted Jack after his interview the other day, and told him about mine tonight, too. He still hasn't replied." She glanced down at her wards, worry flickering across her face.

"Lori," Reese said gently. "I'm sure he has his reasons."

"Yes, Miss," Andi chimed in. "He'd probably want you to focus on yourself first. You can worry about him after."

Lorelai studied the screen again. Her last few messages to Jack did not have the '*seen*' mark, but Reese was probably right. He must have his reasons.

"…okay," she said softly.

“You’ve got your snacks, your entertainment, and that stupid bottle cap toilet idea. Anything else?” Lorelai asked with a teasing grin.

“Hey!” Reese said, mockingly offended. “That idea is genius, thank you very much!”

“It’s really not…” Andi muttered with a shrug. “Miss, all we need is to wish you good luck.”

Lorelai’s smile softened as she looked at them.

“Thank you. I’ll be heading out now, then.”

“Lori!” Reese suddenly blurted, his tone almost panicked.

Lorelai’s head whipped around, alarm flashing in her eyes.

“What?”

“Uh… can you maybe bring us something from the restaurant? Like, whatever you eat?”

Andi, who had flinched at his outburst, groaned and smacked the back of his head.

“Idiot, you scared me.”

Lorelai laughed, tensions melting away.

“Thanks, Reese. For that, I’ll make sure to bring dessert.”

The dim white glow of the lamps fell on the tablecloths and polished wood of the restaurant. Lorelai paused at the entrance, tugging once more at the hem of her blue dress, as if it might magically settle her nerves. A hostess gave her a professional smile before leading her through the maze of quiet conversations and clinking glasses.

On the side, in the corner of a booth, three figures were already waiting. Two women and a man, all dressed sharply, postures relaxed but deliberate, the way people who were used to being in control carried themselves.

“Ms. Silverburgh?” one of them said as she approached. The man in the center stood, offering his hand. “I’m Voss Barlow. This is Elaine Morgan, our department head, and Donna Kessler, head of operations.”

Lorelai shook each hand carefully, trying not to let them see how clammy her palm felt. They smiled in that measured, polite way of executives, welcoming, but with an undercurrent of evaluation.

“Thank you for meeting us here,” Elaine said, gesturing for Lorelai to sit with them. “We thought a less formal setting might be… refreshing.”

Lorelai slid into the seat, the leather squeaking softly under her. She could feel their eyes on her, even as menus were handed around, and the thought struck her: the test had already begun.

She straightened her back, forcing a calm smile. “I appreciate the opportunity,” she said evenly, though inside her heart was pacing faster than the runner Andi told her about the other day.

The table got filled with the kind of silence that demanded Lorelai to speak first. She smoothed her napkin across her lap, buying herself a second before lifting her eyes.

“So,” Voss began, leaning back in the booth with practiced ease, “you’ve had quite the trajectory. Not many make the transition from field operations to administrative coordinator as quickly as you have.”

This was a toss-up statement to see how Lorelai would respond.

She steadied her voice. “I’ve been fortunate to work with great teams. That’s really what allowed me to move forward.”

Elaine Morgan chuckled lightly, swirling the ice in her glass. “A diplomat already. Careful, Voss, she might outpace you before dessert.”

Donna Kessler’s eyes flicked to Lorelai, as if she’d already decided whether Lorelai would sink or swim and was simply waiting for the proof.

The menus arrived, a grateful cover Lorelai used as a reprieve, pretending to study the entrées.

She could feel her reflection staring back at her from the polished silverware. The blue of her dress. The blonde of her hair. Briefly, she thought of Reese’s teasing and Andi’s encouragement. ‘*Just a dinner interview,*’ she’d said. Lorelai knew, however, that this was going to be anything but.

Elaine set her menu down first, with a sufficiently convincing smile to soften the sharpness in her eyes. “Don’t worry too much about the food. Order whatever you’d like. This is more about us getting to know you.”

“That’s right,” Voss added, folding his hands on his lap. His tone shifted to a gentle and conversational one. “Interviews in a boardroom can feel like a firing squad. We’d rather talk to you as a person.”

The waitress returned to take their orders, and Lorelai followed their lead, settling on something simple. Her voice came out steadier this time, less stuck in her throat.

Once they were alone again, Donna leaned in, her elbows on the table. “Tell us, Lorelai… What made you say yes? With your background, you could’ve stayed as a coordinator and made a comfortable career. Why take the risk of reaching higher?”

It was phrased like curiosity, but it was really a challenge wrapped in false kindness.

Lorelai smiled lightly, folding her hands in her lap. “Because comfort isn’t the same as fulfilling. I’ve seen what the regional workflow supervisor can accomplish, the influence it has not just on the company, but on the people beneath it. I want to be a part of that.”

Elaine nodded approvingly, sipping her water. “Ambition with perspective. That’s rare.”

Voss chuckled under his breath. “And tell us,” he said, lowering his voice just slightly, “outside of work… who is Lorelai Silverburgh? What makes you tick?”

The question felt casual, but it was the most disarming of all.

Lorelai hesitated, polishing her answer in her head. Their faces were patient, expectant, waiting to see what she would say.

She drew a breath. “Honestly? What makes me tick is… not wanting to be overlooked.” Her own admission surprised her, but once the words came, they didn’t stop. “I’ve worked hard in places where effort disappeared into the background. Where it was easier for people to assume I’d just… stay where I was. And maybe that’s part of why I push myself now. Because I know and see how it feels to be invisible, and I don’t want to live there anymore.”

Donna’s expression softened, her grin fading into something closer to respect. Elaine tilted her head, nodding slightly.

Voss smiled slowly, folding his napkin. “That,” he said, “sounds less like ambition and more like drive. And drive,” he gestured toward her with the edge of his chopsticks, “isn’t something you can teach.”

The air at the table shifted, feeling less like an interview, more like a conversation between equals, though Lorelai knew better than that. Still, for the first time since she’d walked in, her shoulders eased.

The waitress arrived with wine and empty glasses, breaking the spell for a moment. He set the empty glasses down first for each of the executives and delicately placed the final glass in front of Lorelai. She touched the stem of it, waiting for it to get filled, her thoughts still buzzing from her own candor.

“Thank you for sharing that,” Elaine said quietly, almost as if the others weren’t there. “It tells me more about you than any bullet point on your CV ever could.”



Nellielle

The waitress gently poured a deep red concoction into each glass. A definitely calculated pour was delivered to hers. Lorelai answered with a polite and gentle ‘thank you’, and lifted the glass, intending just a polite sip.

But from the edge of her peripheral vision, she noticed it, a pale thing breaking the surface tension. A faint shape bobbing near the rim. At first, she thought it was a trick of the light, maybe a bit of cork, dust, or even perhaps a bug. But as she tilted the glass, the shape shifted, limbs moving sluggishly in the wine.

Her heart lurched. It wasn’t debris. She noticed arms, legs, and hair at the top of its head. It was a person.

Tiny. No larger than the nail on her thumb.

She blinked, breath catching in her throat, and the world narrowed to the fragile figure swirling in the crimson liquid. Hair plastered to his head. Face barely visible through the frantic ripples.

The surrounding table kept moving as if nothing were wrong, Donna cracking a joke about a client, Elaine politely laughing, Voss swirling his own glass. They hadn’t noticed. Or… they didn’t care.

Perhaps this was a mistake. A stray tiny who had taken shelter inside an empty glass of wine and somehow ended up here.

She leaned in to take a closer look and noticed the figure backing away from her. But it wasn't out of fear, but out of recognition.

She squinted, trying to notice more features in the tiny. Noticing a tuft of blonde on the top of his head, which reminded her of someone she knew.

And then, her blood froze, and realization struck her like an ice bath. This was the person she knew.

Jack.

Her heart hammered in her ears. She looked closer, so close the rim brushed her lip. Yes. It was him. His tiny form struggled weakly, fighting the weight of the wine that clung to him.

Lorelai's hand trembled, the stem of the glass slick in her grip. Every instinct screamed to act, to do something, but her mind tripped over the impossible. How was he here? Why was he like this? And why were the executives watching her so closely, smiles polite, as if her reaction was part of the test?

Her fingers grasped the edge of the table to steady the tremor. The executives were all watching now, though none of them looked surprised. Elaine's smile had sharpened, just enough to make Lorelai's stomach knot tighter.

"You've noticed," Voss said softly, swirling his own wine as if mirroring her. "We had a bet going on the side to see if you'd take a sip without seeing him."

"Wh-What is this?" Lorelai's voice was wavering on the edge of tears.

Donna leaned in, her voice low, almost conspiratorial. "It's a simple thing, really. Prove that you're willing to do what others won't. Commitment, not just ambition."

Lorelai's mouth had gone dry. She didn't trust herself to speak, so she only nodded slightly, eyes flicking back to the tiny figure thrashing weakly in the glass. Jack. His arms pressed feebly against the walls of liquid, as if he could claw his way to freedom.

Elaine's gaze never wavered. "Drink. That's all we ask. If you want to sit at our table, you need to show us you belong here."

The words dripped with a casual cruelty, delivered in the same tone one might use to suggest ordering dessert.

Lorelai's grip tightened until her knuckles whitened. Every instinct screamed to tip it, to free him, to do anything but what they were asking. But their eyes were on her, three sharp, unblinking stares that weighed heavier than the glass in her hand.

'They test what you're willing to do.'

His voice echoed in her head, now understanding the weight of those words. If she set him free, who knows what would happen to her?

"C-Can I ask what he did to end up here?"

Voss leaned forward. "He interviewed earlier this week. He was doing well until we found out he'd been asking about Deltora. Not just to us, but to our competitors."

"Unfortunate, really," Elaine chimed in. "Smart kid. Just a bit too curious."

Donna's grin was fading. "Drink up. We need to know where your loyalties lie, Lorelai."

She stared into the glass and locked eyes with the pale figure. Jack's were tiny, panicked, pleading.

She forced a steady breath and lifted the wine to her lips. "Of course," she murmured, keeping her voice even, hiding the storm building in her chest.

Nellielle

It had been days after his failed interview, where he was trapped in a cylindrical tube, under the watchful eyes of giants, fed morsels, unheard and ignored by the outside world. Today, he was finally moved, eclipsed in darkness. When his senses returned, he woke up in the middle of a glass prison, the gods speaking above him, above his existence. His vision hadn't even cleared before a flood of crimson liquid came crashing down onto him.

It stung his eyes, cold, acidic, bitter, burning in a way he couldn't process. His arms flailed, trying to stay afloat, his legs kicking the way they should for survival. He thrashed and flailed to the surface, barely holding on. Every breath he took was invaded by the scent surrounding him, wrapping his throat.

He's had wonderful memories drinking this very same wine. During dates, birthdays, or just a simple night of self-love. Now, the smoky oak smell he very much enjoyed was going to be the vessel of his death sentence.

He was ready to plead to the god right above him, and that was when he saw her.

Lorelai.

Her face. Her eyes. Her mouth, lips slightly parted, while she looked down into the glass as if it were holding something disgusting. Her look struck fear in his soul. She had never looked at him that way. Like he was less than nothing.

"No," Jack said, agony in his voice. "No. Not you."

He pounded at the glass walls surrounding him, not that it mattered. Panic shrank to silence at his scale. The godly voices of exec gods boomed around him, and her. Laughing. Talking about 'loyalty'. He tried to scream her name, but it came out as a croak. A bubble. A sound too small for her to hear.

And then, her eyes widened.

Recognition.

"She sees me…"

For a split second, hope flared. Maybe she'll pull back. Maybe she'll throw the glass. Maybe she'll say something.

But her expression changed. Not anger. Not cruelty. Fear. Regret.

"Don't. Please don't. Not you."

He saw her lips move. He couldn't hear the words, but he knew them.

'I'm sorry.'

The glass tilted. The tide of liquid surged, sweeping him past her teeth toward the cavern beyond her parted lips.

His world turned dark.

The executives exchanged small, approving glances.

Voss leaned back, satisfied. “That’s what I like to see. Someone who understands the value of sacrifice.”

Inside, Lorelai’s heart hammered so violently she thought it might crack her ribs. Jack’s tiny form bobbed back in the glass. She didn’t commit. The little swirl of wine she drank was politely spat back. She doesn’t have the heart for it. To be like Harmonie. To consume a living being. Someone with goals and dreams.

Someone like Jack.

The executives believed she had followed through, settling comfortably in their seats. Lorelai was feeling light-headed, seeing him like this. Last time she did, he was like her, almost as tall. Now, he looked like a hamster could be a threat to his life.

She managed to divert the execs’ eyes away from her, giving her enough time to think of a plan. Something to save him. She forced herself to keep her expression composed, subtly angling the glass away, buying precious seconds. A plan. She needed a plan. Something to save him without revealing the truth.

Her gaze swept the table. Voss and Elaine were distracted in a quiet conversation. But Donna’s eyes were fixed on her, watching.

“Don’t worry,” Donna said. “It’s not easy drinking them on the first sip. People rarely do. Morals and all that usually get in the way of ambition.”

Lorelai looked at the glass, at the pale figure that currently depended on her. Her mouth opened slightly, but no words came out.

Donna leaned back, her tone almost conversational. “I remember my promotion interview. I was so nervous. They put in the nice guy who worked at the front counter, who always left candy for everyone. He missed one too many important calls for the boss and ended up in my glass. Took me four sips until I finally did it.”

Her fingertip glided along the rim of her drink, circling slowly, savoring the memory. For a moment, it was as if she could see him there again, waiting for her.

“Funny thing is, I didn’t hate it,” she said with a soft chuckle. “There’s… a rush, feeling them struggle while you swallow. You might surprise yourself. Take your time, just don’t keep us waiting too long.”

With that, Donna turned back to join Voss and Elaine’s discussion, leaving Lorelai alone with the weight of her words.

Lorelai's heart roared in her ears. The glass trembled faintly in her hands, and the pale figure within continued to drift against the crimson surface. Her stomach turned, but her face betrayed nothing. If she hesitated too long, they would notice. Donna's words echoed in her head. '*Don't keep us waiting too long.*'

She lifted the glass slowly, deliberately, rehearsing the act in her mind. One sip. Just one. They didn't need to know what happened once the wine passed her lips. She tried to buy herself seconds, somehow, before she had to take another sip.

She got an idea.

She knew it was going to be risky, but she trusted herself enough that this could… no, would work. She lifted the glass and moved it closer to her. The glass was tilted just enough for her lips to overshadow everything inside it, buying herself seconds, only seconds, as she whispered to her drink, to Jack, "Trust me."

'*I can do this,*' she told herself. '*I'll keep him hidden. Just hold him in my cheek. I'll excuse myself… The bathroom! I can take him out there. He'll be safe then.*'



The rim brushed her lower lip, cool and heavy. She angled the glass just enough, careful not to choke, careful not to let him slip the wrong way. The wine burned faintly down her throat while Jack's tiny form slid against her tongue. Lorelai fought every instinct to cough, to flinch, to give herself away.

Her jaw ached from the effort of keeping him pinned discreetly in her cheek while swallowing the wine to avoid drowning him inside her mouth. She lowered the glass and faked an exaggerated '*ahh*', a convincing enough charade for the execs to believe she'd done it.

They were still wrapped in their own little world of conversation, likely aware that it usually takes time until the deed is done.

She forced a faint smile, mostly to herself, nodding as if the act had been completed. Inside, her heart raced. Jack was still there. Still alive. All she had to do now was hold her composure until she could get away.

Everything tilted. One moment, he floated in the crimson wine, thinking he had a sliver of hope. The next, the world began to tilt, past Lorelai's lips and into the cavern of her mouth once again.

"No, please no!"

He thrashed, tiny fists punching against her tongue, trying to push back, to scream, but it was useless. Her mouth was a world unto itself, warm, dark, suffocating. Every gulp of wine dragged him closer, and the bitter, acrid, and burning taste clung to his skin.

The world spun, drowning in warmth and the sharp bite of wine. Jack's tiny arms flailed as the wine lowered slowly. Once it got low enough, he was met with the unyielding press of Lorelai's undulating tongue against him.

He twisted, wriggled, and kicked, but the tongue held him firmly, pinning him against the soft wall of her cheek. The rest of the crimson liquid slid past him, rushing down her throat, sickening gulping noises reverberating all over him, leaving him exposed, trapped, utterly helpless.

His fists pounded against the wet, elastic wall, trying to push free. He could feel every swallow, every tightening flex of her throat, each one driving him closer to the edge of despair.

He tried to scream, but the sound dissolved in the warmth, swallowed instantly by her mouth. The liquid that had once buoyed him now vanished, leaving him pressed against the soft, unyielding prison of her cheek.



The conversation at the table shifted, the executives easing back into business as if nothing remarkable had just taken place. Lorelai sat perfectly still, glass in hand, her jaw tight against the fragile weight hidden in her cheek.

She could feel every twitch of movement from Jack, but her expression never wavered. She nodded faintly at something Voss said, her smile practiced, serene. Inside, her heart was clawing to escape her ribs.

When a lull came, she leaned forward slightly, setting her glass down with a soft clink. She let go of Jack momentarily so she could speak clearly. “If you’ll excuse me for just a moment,” she said, her tone light, even, tinged with a polite laugh. “Nerves, I suppose. I should freshen up.”

No one questioned her. Voss only gave a distracted wave, already turning back to Elaine’s comment. Donna’s eyes lingered on her for a beat, but then slipped away.

Lorelai rose smoothly from her chair, every step measured as she walked toward the bathroom door. Pinning him back in her cheek, she could still feel Jack pressed inside, alive, waiting.

‘*Just a few more seconds,*’ she told herself. A few more steps. Then she could finally get him out.

She didn't know how clearly he could hear her inside her mouth, but she decided to unpin him from her cheek again and try to give him a few words of encouragement.

"Gimme a couple of seconds and I can get you out," she whispered through her teeth.

Lorelai kept her stride steady, each step feeling like it echoed across the room. The bathroom door was only a few paces away when…

"This nightmare will be ove—AH!"

A waitress rounded the corner too quickly, balancing a tray stacked high with half-empty glasses. Lorelai collided with her, the jolt sending a sharp shock through her body. The tray clattered, the glass toppled, and wine splashed across her sleeve.

Her hand flew instinctively, not to the stain, but towards her mouth.

'*Don't cough. Don't open your lips.*'

"Oh! My apologies, Miss," the waitress stammered, bowing frantically, grabbing for the spilled glass before it shattered.

Lorelai inhaled slowly through her nose, steadying her expression, making a wordless '*no harm done*' gesture, forcing a polite chuckle as if it were nothing. She didn't dare open her mouth until it was safe to do so.

The waitress straightened, still flustered, and hurried off with the tray.

Her heart rattled like a drum. But no one at the table had noticed.

She adjusted her sleeve, gave the faintest smile to no one in particular, and continued on her way. Each step now felt heavier than the last. The bathroom was close, so close.

The heavy door swung shut behind her, muffling the chatter from the dining room. Lorelai shut the lock and exhaled sharply.

“We’re finally alone, Jack.”

One hand braced against the sink, the other rising to her mouth. She leaned over the mirror, lips parting, tongue pressing against her teeth as she tried to feel for him.

Nothing.

Her heart stopped. Panic clawed at her throat. She pressed her fingers inside her mouth, desperate, frantic. She opened her mouth wide, searching inside her lips, between her teeth, under the tongue, everywhere.

“No. No, no, no…” she whispered.

She slapped the faucet on, cupping water in her hands, spitting, once, twice, three times, but it was just saliva and nerves. Her stomach turned violently. Jack was gone. Not lost, or misplaced. Inside her.

The worst possibility she’d feared had come true, not through cruelty, not through choice, but through accident. Her attempt to save him cost him everything.

Lorelai braced herself against the counter, fighting to steady her breathing. Out there, the executives thought she had passed their test. They would be satisfied.

But here, alone, Lorelai’s heart broke with the knowledge of what she had done.

She gagged, coughed, and gagged again repeatedly. He's still alive; he must still have oxygen. Stomach acid doesn't work that quickly. She can still save him. She gagged one more time.

Still… nothing.

Her eyes began to fill with tears as she leaned her forehead against the mirror. It wasn't herself that she saw in the reflection, but a hypocrite, a monster.

"I was trying to save you…" her voice soft, a whisper.

The collision. The waitress. The jolt had done it. The sudden shift inside her mouth. She clamped down too hard when she braced herself. She lost focus and didn't realize when reflexes took over. And in that blink of instinct, her throat did what it was trained to do.

She swallowed.

Swallowed him.

She sank to the floor, knees hitting tile, and sob-choked, palm pressed over her mouth.

"I… I didn't mean to… I didn't mean to…"

She continued trying to convince someone, but no one was around to hear.

"Jack… I'm sorry. I'm so sorry…"

Her voice broke. She pressed her hand over her stomach, tears slipping down her cheek. There was no way he survived. Not through that. She swallowed dryly, a reflex this time. She winced.

If he's not dead yet, then he's currently…

No.

She couldn't think of that now. It hurt too much. She leaned back against the wall, breathing through her nose, trying to hold in another sob. She thought of all the happy memories she had with him. He was her office brother. One of her closest friends.

Now all she could think about was that in his final moments, he was terrified of her. Her mouth became his nightmare. Her stomach, his doom. In the lonely but noisy fate of her guts, he probably thought why did Lolerai betray him.

BURP

All his life and memories reduced to a small, wet burp that escaped her throat. She was about to return to sob when suddenly, something tickled her throat.



Nellielle

A flutter. Tiny movement.

She jolted upright, heart slamming in her chest. She couldn't let her throat muscles win again. Her hand shot to her mouth. She coughed, hard, once, twice, then leaned over her lap as something landed in her palm.

Wet, warm, and very, very small.

Jack.

Curled up. Shivering. Soaked in spit and bile. Pale and unconscious. But breathing.

"…Jack?" Lorelai whispered, her voice barely more than a breath.

Her pinky brushed along his tiny arm, and he twitched at the touch. She leaned closer, eyes fixed on his chest, rising and falling, slow and fragile.

Carefully, she lifted him, cradling him against her heart. His warmth pressed against her chest, a tiny heartbeat hammering in rhythm with her own. Every movement was deliberate, careful, as if she feared even the gentlest motion could harm him.

"Oh… thank God. You're here. You're still here," she sobbed, tears spilling down her cheeks.

She cupped her hands around him like he was made of glass. She was not going to make the same mistake again.

"I've got you. I've got you. I've got you…"

Her body trembled with quiet sobs, not from fear, but from the ache of relief. Every inhale brought a rush of warmth and a lingering taste and scent of wine, a bitter reminder of the terror they'd just survived. Lorelai held him closer, careful, protective, unwilling to let go even for a second.

After a couple more minutes of washing her face and freshening up, Lorelai exhaled slowly, forcing herself to steady her trembling hands. She adjusted her posture as she settled on an idea she had to smuggle Jack once again. She had no purse, and her pockets were full of dangerous items that could harm him.

Pressing Jack gently against her chest, she felt his tiny heartbeat calm under her careful touch. Every movement was calculated; she couldn't risk a single misstep.

With her free hand, she brushed back her hair, straightened the front of her dress, and eased him down into the soft cup of her bra in the open space by the nipple. He fit snugly, warm against her skin, completely hidden from view. She could feel him squirm slightly, but the snug, secure space kept him safe.

"Sorry about this…" she whispered.

She smoothed the fabric over him with a practiced hand, making sure nothing looked amiss. Then, she lifted her chin, took a quiet breath, and walked back to the table. Every step was deliberate, controlled, as if nothing had happened.

Her hands rested lightly on the table, palms down, fingers splayed in casual elegance. Beneath the fabric, tucked carefully into the soft cup of her bra, Jack clung to the warm, enclosed space, hidden perfectly from prying eyes.

She took a steadying breath, forcing her heart to slow, even though it hammered in her ears. Every step back to the table had been measured, controlled; now, she needed only to appear calm.

“Sorry about that,” she said softly, slipping into the conversation as though she’d merely excused herself to freshen up. The executives barely glanced her way. Donna had returned her attention to Voss and Elaine, casting only a cursory look toward Lorelai before settling back into discussion.

Jack squirmed faintly against her chest, the soft, warm walls of her bra keeping him in place. She could feel his tiny heartbeat, rapid and frantic, but she pressed herself subtly against the seat back, locking him in position without any outside movement.

Outwardly, she smiled politely, nodded at a point Voss had made, and, with disgust, sipped from her glass once again. Inwardly, she held her breath, counting every second until this nightmare of an interview ended.

No one suspected a thing.

At least Jack was alive and safe.

They were both slowly drifting back to sleep after a day of watching movies, until the sharp noise of the apartment door unlocking grabbed both of their attention.

“Oh, she’s back!” Reese said, alerting Andi.

“Hopefully everything went well,” Andi replied, rising to her feet to greet Lorelai as she entered.

But both of them noticed something different. Lorelai’s footsteps weren’t the usual careful, deliberate ones meant to avoid startling her tiny roommates. These were rushed, heavy, frantic, and filled with a sense of urgency.

“Something feels off…” Reese muttered.

Despite the urgency in her steps, Lorelai opened the door to her room with careful hands, not wanting to startle her little ones.

“Welcome back, Miss,” Andi greeted her.

She stepped inside and sat on the edge of her bed, avoiding eye contact with either of them.

“Smells like you had fun,” Reese chuckled lightly. "You reek of alcohol.”

“Miss?” Andi called out gently. “Is everything alright?”

Lorelai took a couple of deep breaths. Without answering, she slowly extended her trembling hand and opened it. Andi and Reese both gasped. In her palm lay a man, smaller than Reese, unconscious.

"Can one of you pick him up?" Lorelai's voice quivered. "Please. I want to make sure he's still breathing."

Andi stood frozen in place, leaving Reese to take action and step closer, checking his pulse.

"He's breathing," he confirmed as he gently lifted the man.

"What happened with the interview? Wh-Where did you find him?" Andi asked, leaning over Reese's shoulder, her voice shaking.

Lorelai shuddered as she took a deep breath and finally looked at them. Her eyes were red, her face hollow with exhaustion and guilt.

"M-Miss?" Andi pressed.

"I… I pulled him out of my mouth," Lorelai said, her voice flat and dazed. "Reese, can you check for burns? He was… in my stomach for a while."

"What?!" Andi and Reese both yelled in unison.

“I’m sorry…” Lorelai mumbled. “I didn’t mean to… They forced me, or I would’ve… I just… I swallowed him. For just a little...”

Andi’s voice trembled. “M-M-Miss… I don’t… what do you mean?”

Lorelai had checked out. The shock she underwent was too much for her fragile innocence.

“During the interview… They wanted me to prove I was loyal. So they shrunk my friend… and told me to swallow him.”

Tears streamed down her face.

“I… I put myself first, and I did it. I didn’t mean to. It wasn’t on purpose. If I hadn’t, I probably would’ve been shrunken as well. I tried to keep him safe in my mouth, I swear I did… but he slipped, and I… I swallowed him. It just happened.”

Her breath came in shaky gasps.

“Guys… I am a bad person… I keep ruining everything… first Harmonie, now Jack. Sooner or later, I’ll fail you too. I can’t keep you safe. I can’t protect you.” Tears streamed down her face without pause. “You deserve someone better than me.”

Andi clutched her chest and slightly stumbled backwards.

“No… no, no, no… No, no, NO! You don’t get to decide that for us!”

"Andi… I-I-I can't do this," Lorelai said quietly. "Look at him… I don't even know if he'll wake up."

She forced down a hard swallow.

"I'll take you both to Willow in the morning. She'll be better for you both," she said, her tone heavy with finality.

Lorelai began to push herself up from her seat, ready to walk away.

"NO! LORELAI, LOOK AT ME!" Andi screamed.

The silence that followed was suffocating. Andi had never raised her voice like that before or called her by name.

"You can't say that!"

Lorelai looked up from the bed. Reese shifted uncomfortably beside Andi, instinctively trying to reach for her, but she stepped back.

"You don't get to say that," her voice began to rise. "Not after everything. Not after I finally let myself believe, believe that this wasn't just another stop before I'm passed off again!"

Lorelai opened her mouth to respond, but Andi pushed on.

"I won't let my life be taken out of my hands again…" Andi's voice cracked, and tears streamed down her cheeks. "You don't get to make that choice without hearing what we want."

"Andi… I… I'm not fit for this," Lorelai stammered, her voice fragile. "I got angry at Harmonie for swallowing someone once… and today I almost did the same. I'm no better. I'm a hypocrite."

"I SAID NO, OLIVIA!" Andi suddenly screamed.

The room fell into stunned silence.

With his free hand, Reese gently touched Andi's shin, offering what little comfort he could. The outburst seemed to pull Lorelai out of her daze.

She blinked, mind reeling. '*What have I done?*' The weight of her words and the pain behind Andi's hit her all at once. Shame crept up her spine, cold and paralyzing. She hadn't meant to hurt her, not like this.

Not her.

Lorelai's eyes fell on Andi, and the depth of her pain cracked something open inside her. She reached out, but Andi turned aside, weakly pushing her hand away. Lorelai tried again, and this time, Andi let herself be lifted, collapsing into her arms, sobbing uncontrollably. Lorelai held her tightly, voice soft and trembling.

"Sweetheart… who's Olivia?"

Lorelai waited patiently as Andi gathered herself again, gently running her fingers through her hair in quiet comfort. She glanced over at Reese, silently mouthing, ‘You okay?’ Reese responded with a small thumbs-up.

Lorelai then looked at the man resting on Reese’s arms. “How is he?”

“He is breathing steadily,” Reese spoke gently but firmly. “I didn’t see any burn marks on his skin. He’s just taking a long nap.”

As one weight pressing on Lorelai lightened, another one took its place. “And you? How are you holding up?”

Andi steadied herself on the palm she was sitting on and lifted her gaze to meet Lorelai’s.

“Olivia… is the reason I ended up like this.”

“She shrank you?!” Lorelai asked, a flash of anger lacing her tone.

“Yes… and no…” Andi lowered her gaze. “She was my first and best friend when I arrived in this country for college.”

Lorelai gave a soft smile, not out of realization, but confirmation.

“You’re Latina, right?”

Andi looked up and nodded.

“Sí. Andrea Valentina Hale, de Puerto Rico.”

"It's beautiful over there, isn't it?" Lorelai asked, almost in a whisper, to keep a secret between them.

"The best," Andi replied with a soft smile, her mind drifting to sunlit beaches and vibrant landmarks.

"How long has it been since you left?"

"Eight years, I think? I was nineteen…" Andi's expression shifted momentarily to anger and sadness.

Lorelai gently brushed a tear from Andi's cheek, offering silent comfort.

"It was just me and Mami," Andi continued. "El cabrón, who was supposed to be my father, left before I was even born."

"I'm sorry," Lorelai whispered.

"I fought, despite it all," Andi said, her voice gaining strength. "Got a sports scholarship. Made it into one of the best colleges here." Her eyes welled up again. "But I had to leave Mami behind to chase that dream. I miss her every single day."

Lorelai wrapped her fingers gently around Andi, mimicking a warm hug. Andi leaned into the gesture as she held on.

"And this… Olivia," Lorelai said, venom curling beneath her words, "where does she fit into all of this?"

A familiar emptiness settled in Andi's chest. The same ache that had taken root the day everything shifted between her and Olivia. It felt almost unreal now, thinking they were once so close… before it all fell apart.

Four years ago…

“Drea, you home?” a voice called from the hallway.

“In my room!” Andi shouted back.

The door creaked open slightly as the woman leaned in, her lips just peeking through the gap.

“Are you deeshent?”

“Just in my lingerie, ass out for the whole world to admire,” Andi joked teasingly.

“Ooh, lucky world,” the woman quipped, stepping inside and giving Andi a playful slap on the rear.

“Ow! Tender,” Andi laughed. “How was work?”

“Same crap, different day,” the woman sighed, her green eyes glinting with mischief. “One of these days, I’ll swap my boss’s creamer with something that’ll make him regret being born.”

“Olivia!” Andi gasped loudly. “Don’t be mean.”

“I’m kidding… mostly,” Olivia muttered with a smirk. She cleared her throat. “So, what’re you up to?”

“Filling out this sponsorship paperwork. If I pass my Olympic tryout, I'll get a fat check of cash in return.”

“Ooooh, now that’s what I like to hear!”

Nellielle

Olivia plopped down on the edge of Andi's bed, eyes fixed on the paperwork spread across the sheets.

"So, what's the catch? There's always a catch with these things."

Andi sighed, biting her lip. "They want me to sign some exclusivity clause, so I can't work with any other sponsors for at least two years."

"Sounds suffocating." Olivia's voice softened. "But if it gets you closer to the Olympics…"

"And figure out a way to bring Mami here," Andi added quietly, her gaze drifting to the window.

Olivia reached out and squeezed her hand. "You're gonna make it, Drea. I believe that."

A faint smile tugged at Andi's lips. "Thanks, Liv."

Olivia broke the brief moment of silence with a grin. "Alright, superstar, once you're rich and famous, don't forget who slapped your ass first."

Andi laughed, warmth flooding her chest, despite the uncertainty ahead. "Never."

"And if they try to hurt you, I'll kill them!"



Later…

“Debt consolidation: bankruptcy, appeal, or voluntary shrinkage… ugh, this site has sparkles on the header. How reassuring,” Olivia muttered, scrolling through her phone.

“It’s not meant to be reassuring,” Andi sighed. “It’s a warning.”

“You really think they’ll go through with it?”

Andi rubbed her temples. “I’m already sinking. That endorsement deal blew up in my face, and the recruiter vanished. This is the only option left, and if I voluntarily sell my debt, I would hopefully end up in a decent size and still be basically human.”

Olivia eyed Andi from top to bottom, having difficulty picturing her towering friend smaller than her. “What are you going for?”

“I don’t think I have a choice in the matter,” Andi frowned. “I can select a fixed-term contract to settle my debt and at the end, I can be restored to normal. In the primary evaluation, they said I'm pretty… athletic… Hopefully they’ll want me bigger…”

Olivia chuckled. “Big enough to still be able to brush your hair.” She then knocked gently on the table, grabbing Andi’s attention. “Did you tell Wanda?”

“Mom’s still in Puerto Rico, working doubles,” Andi murmured. “I’m not dragging her into this. I just need to figure out who I can stay with in the meantime.”

Olivia sat up, her expression shifting. She got off her seat and crossed the table.

“Well, you’re not doing this alone.”

Andi looked up, caught off guard.



Olivia knelt in front of her and took her hands.

“I won’t let you get purchased by some random freak. If you choose to go through with it, I’ll be there. I’ll hold your hand the whole way. And after… I’ll… I’ll take care of you. For real.”

“You mean it?”

“I don’t just throw my name on training contracts for fun,” Olivia said with a crooked smile.

Andi laughed softly and leaned forward, resting her forehead against Olivia’s.

“I never thought I’d trust someone enough to go through with this. But you…”

“I make it easy, huh?” Olivia grinned. “That’s because I’m the best. You’re lucky I’ve got a thing for gym nerds with emotional baggage.”

Andi smirked. “One of those is genetic.”

“And the other got you those abs,” Olivia teased, sticking out her tongue.

They both laughed, and Olivia reached up, gently cupping Andi’s cheek, her thumb grazing her skin.

“No matter how small you get, I’ll never make you feel that way.”

A warm smile lingered on Andi’s face. She believed Olivia’s promise.

The last time she believed a promise like that…



Nellielle

"Where the hell is she…" Andi muttered, sitting in the waiting room with nothing but a robe on.

She scrolled aimlessly through her phone, the screen glowing in her palm like a lifeline she couldn't bring herself to let go of. The gallery of contacts passed by in a blur, friends she hadn't talked to in months, trainers from her athletic days, classmates, coworkers. None of them could help her now.

Then her thumb stopped.

Her mother's photo.

It was an older picture. Wanda, in her uniform, standing in front of the small family home back in Puerto Rico, smiling like she carried the world and didn't mind the weight. Andi stared at it, thumb hovering just above the call button. Her heart ached.

'Mami deserves to know…' she thought. *'She'll be angry if I don't tell her. She'll worry.'*

But then came the guilt.

'She's already working doubles. What am I supposed to say? "Hey, just thought I'd let you know I'm shrinking myself down to a few inches to pay off a debt I shouldn't have had in the first place?"'

Her thumb moved away and locked the screen.

She couldn't tell her. Not yet.

"Ms. Hale?" a Shrink Agency staff member called out.

"Yes?"

"It's now or never," the woman said, not as a suggestion, but a final line in the sand. "We have Ms. Andrade's number on file. We'll keep trying to reach her, but this has to happen now."

She forced herself up, legs shaky as she stood. She gave a weak nod, clutching her robe tighter around her.

"Y-Yeah… okay… I'm coming…"

She stood in front of the machine that was about to change her life. The surrounding room was eerily quiet, the kind of quiet that pressed on her ears and made her heartbeat feel intrusive.

This was happening.

'It's just temporary,' thoughts raced through Andi's head. *'You'll sort this out, get back to normal. Visit Mami, laugh about it someday… It's temporary. Just temporary.'*

She laughed under her breath, but it cracked halfway.

"Ms. Hale?" a voice broke through, shattering her focus.

"Huh? What?"

"Please disrobe and step forward," the woman said, a touch of impatience in her tone.

"Oh… yeah," Andi mumbled, her voice small. "Yeah…"

She turned her back and slowly untied the robe. Naked, she stepped carefully onto the platform of the capsule.

“O-Oof… floor is cold…” The sterile metal floor bit cold against her skin.

A sudden whoosh sealed her inside, the sound like a vault closing.

Andi looked around. The inside of the capsule was bright, pristine, and sterile. She felt like an animal about to be studied. Her fingers trembled at her sides as the silence inside deepened. There was no escaping now.

“Just… temporary…” she repeated, over and over.

“Ms. Hale,” the staff member’s voice came from the speakers above her. “You will experience mild discomfort and a loud ringing in your ears during the reduction process. But it’ll be just temporary. You’ll be fine.”

“J-Just… temporary…” Andi echoed, but it wasn’t a mantra anymore.

Then the panic hit. Her heart spiked, hands flailing out as she slammed them against the glass.

“I DON’T WANT TO DO TH—”

But her words were drowned in an instant as a deafening hum filled the capsule.

Andi’s final thought before the world bent and warped around her was not of freedom, or debt, or even Olivia.

It was Mami.

The compressed sensation running through Andi's body finally eased, and the world stopped shifting around her. The capsule let out a sharp whoosh as it opened, startling her. Her vision slowly adjusted, only to be overwhelmed by her new surroundings.

Towering above her, a colossal human figure approached. Andi screamed and stumbled backward, falling onto the cold surface.

The figure bent down and a massive, five-limbed monster reached out for her, grabbing her by the waist with barely a regard for her well-being. "Everything will be alright." The words were cold and dismissive.

Without pause, Andi was lifted effortlessly into the air, quickly realizing that she was now less than a person.

Too afraid to scream, Andi began to hyperventilate. Brought face-to-face with the enormous woman, her voice shook when she finally managed to speak.

"I-Is Olivia here?"

The staff member didn't even give Andi a look, or any semblance that she was anyone or anything worth hearing.

Andi rubbed her arms, trying to chase away the chill. There was a heater inside the enclosure, but it wasn't cutting it. The space she'd been placed in was essentially a holding room for the reduced, without entertainment, just a window looking out, a toilet, and the occasional snack.

It was her second day now, and the weight of it all was finally sinking in. Seeing people at impossibly massive sizes walking past still left her stunned and scared.

Throughout the day, couples arrived. More often than not, only one would walk back out. But Andi knew the truth: their partners weren't gone; they were either gently carried in their hand or discreetly tucked away somewhere on their body.

"What size was she? The one with the curly hair… six inches?" asked a male voice nearby.

"Yes, but she's not for sale yet," an employee replied. "She's on hold for her trainer. If they don't claim her within the next twenty-four hours, she'll be available, so make sure you come back if you're interested."

Andi's stomach twisted. This wasn't how it was supposed to go.

"Olivia… where the fuck are you?" she whispered, curling up and closing her eyes, trying to disappear.

Three heavy thuds vibrated through Andi's enclosure, jolting her awake. She sat up groggily, eyes still shut, as muffled voices filtered in from outside.

"Yes, that's her. I'm here to pick her up," said a familiar voice.

"Very well," a woman responded. "I'll finalize the paperwork, and she'll be yours to take home."

Andi blinked her eyes open fully and saw Olivia standing there, giving her a weak wave, eyes filled with guilt.

The last steps of the transfer process moved quickly, and soon Andi was officially in Olivia's custody.

The ride home was silent and tense. Andi sat curled inside a custom transport case, staring at nothing.

"Heh, look at you, ended up like a doll. H-Hey… um, are you hungry?" Olivia asked softly, but the question fell flat.

She knew why. She just didn't want to face it.

"I could get you some cheese corn fritters… your favorite."

"Three days."

Olivia froze.

"You said you'd be there," Andi said, her voice trembling. "You promised, Olivia. You said you'd hold my hand through it. But you weren't there."

Olivia pulled the car over to a quiet spot and shut off the engine. She exhaled slowly, trying to steady herself.

“I know. I fucked up. I’m sorry.”

“You weren’t there when I got shrunk when you said you would. You weren’t there the second day when I was shoved in a room the size of a mailbox with nothing but a toilet and a dirty cloth to use as a makeshift bed. No one could get a hold of you,” Andi’s voice cracked. “I thought… I thought maybe you changed your mind.”

The words hit hard. Olivia lowered her head, shame plain on her face. When she looked back up, her voice was gentler.

“I didn’t change my mind. I just…” she paused for a second. “Got the timing wrong. They told me I had 72 hours to file the paperwork. I thought you’d still be in prep, not locked away.”

“Allegedly, they locked me for my safety, for security,” Andi muttered, fists clenched. “But I was actually on display for purchase, like a product in a vending machine. Any longer and I would’ve been listed for sale.”

“Drea, I didn’t know. I swear. If I had even guessed that…” Olivia’s voice cracked, and her jaw tightened. “I hate that I left you there. I’ll always hate that.”

Andi watched her, trying to read her face. The apology sounded sincere. Olivia looked like she meant it. But still… something inside her didn’t sit right. She was too exhausted to dig into it.

Olivia offered her palm. Andi hesitated, then slowly stepped onto it.

“I thought I didn’t matter to you anymore,” Andi whispered, the words trembling out of her like a wound reopening.

Olivia’s face softened, lips parting just slightly as she studied the tiny woman in her palm. Guilt flickered in her eyes. Then she slowly brought Andi closer, her voice gentler than it had been in days. “I’m here now, aren’t I?”

Andi wanted to say something sharp. Wanted to scream, *‘You should’ve been there then, not now’*. But instead, a shaky breath escaped her lips, softening the anger just enough to keep it from spilling over again. “Do you have my stuff?”

“I got your clothes and your phone. That’s all they gave me,” Olivia replied, her voice low, almost ashamed.

Andi nodded faintly. Without a word, Olivia lifted her closer, pressing her gently against the curve of her collarbone.

“I’m sorry,” Olivia whispered, and this time it didn’t sound rehearsed.

Andi curled into her warmth, the familiar scent of vanilla and coffee filling her, anchoring her to reality. Her breathing was uneven. Stuttered. Like she was afraid that if she opened her mouth again, she might break.

She wanted to believe her.

Wanted to believe that Olivia really didn’t mean to leave her. That she still mattered. That she wasn’t just another burden too small to bother with.

And at that moment… She did.

Andi and Olivia quickly fell into a rhythm. Adapted. Made things work.

Mornings started with shared breakfasts. Olivia prepared something quick, usually eggs or toast, and carefully set aside a miniature portion for Andi, plated delicately on a custom dish. They'd talk, sometimes about dreams, about nothing, but often, it was quiet. Comfortable. Familiar.

Then Olivia would head off to work, always in a rush, keys jingling, coffee in one hand, bag in the other. She'd pause at the door and look back, offering a promise she always meant, but sometimes forgot to keep: "I won't be late tonight."

Andi would nod, waving from her perch on the bedroom counter. "Have a good one."

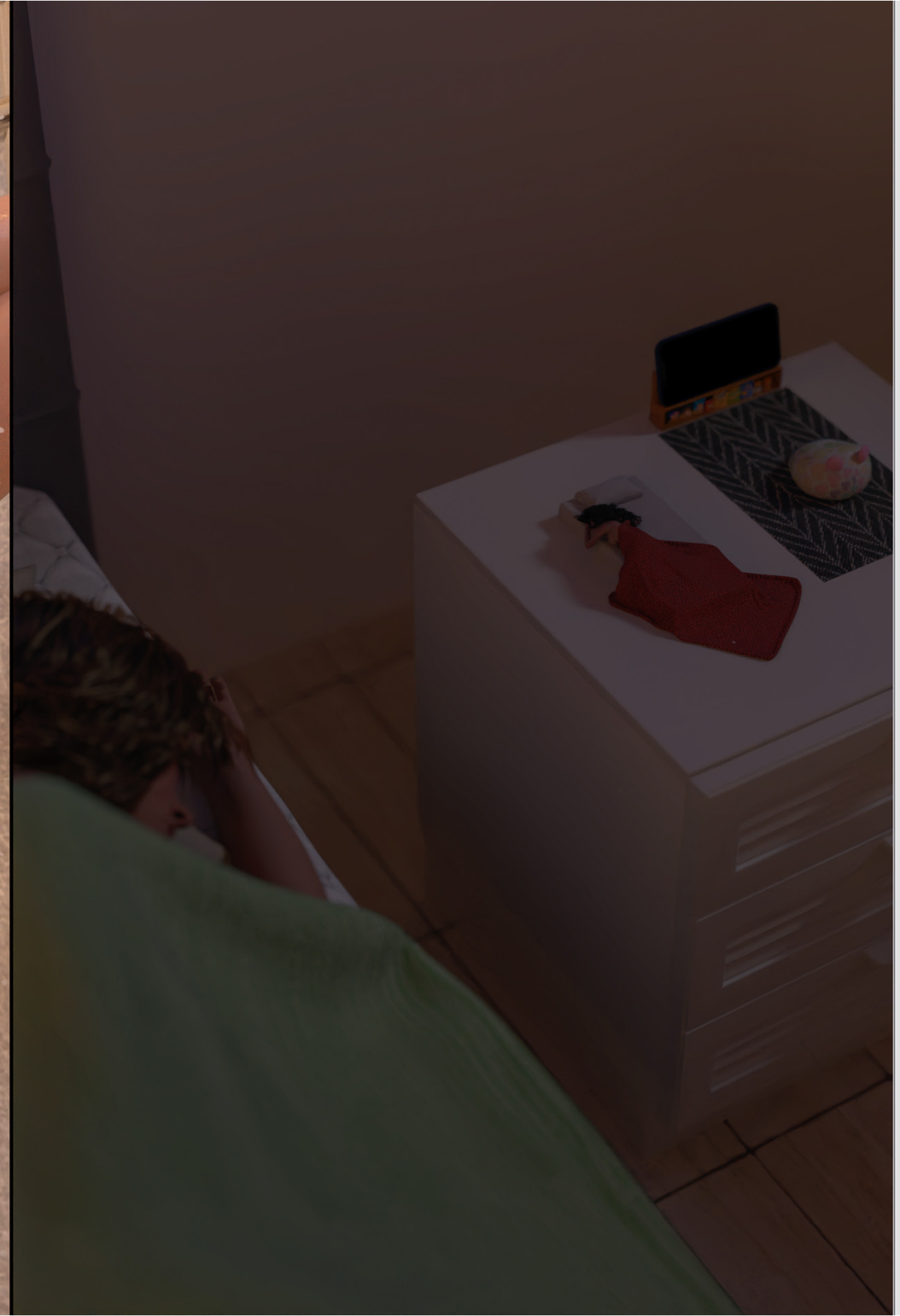
Then silence.

Hours passed slowly after that. She had everything she needed, more than she'd expected, actually. A small screen with streaming apps, books printed at her scale, scaled-down snacks in a labeled shelf, and even a functioning bathroom no bigger than a shoebox. Olivia had spared no expense in outfitting the space, as if trying to erase the three days she'd left Andi behind.

Still… it was quiet. Too quiet.

Sometimes, the loneliness crept in when the screen turned dark or when she caught her reflection looking smaller than she felt. It was easy to pretend, during the day, that she'd chosen this. That she was in control. But occasionally, a stray thought of reality would settle like a rock in her stomach.





Nellielle

Evenings brought light back into the apartment. Olivia returned, exhausted but present. They'd talk more, laugh, and even cry.

Showers were a shared ritual. Olivia would lower her gently onto a ledge she'd built specifically for her, away from the direct stream. The warmth, the steam, the scent of shampoo, all of it wrapped Andi in something soft. Sometimes Olivia would hum. Sometimes they didn't speak at all. But there was comfort in proximity and the silence.

Nights were quiet. Olivia set a doll bed beside her nightstand, complete with a tiny blanket and memory foam mattress. It was more than Andi could've hoped for. At night, she could hear Olivia breathing. Sometimes she talked in her sleep.

And for a while, things felt… normal. Almost.

But in Andi's chest, a tension remained. She never fully unpacked her bag, so to speak. She kept the idea of normal at arm's length. Because deep down, she knew a balance in this delicate, careful dance couldn't last forever.

Nothing this fragile ever does.

“Hey, superstar, I’ve been doing research…” Olivia began, not pulling away from her phone. “People are saying it’s not safe to let you sleep on open surfaces long-term. What if you roll off while I’m out? Y’know? So, I found this really cute setup that has padding, a little shelf, and even a water system. See? Look.”

Olivia showed Andi what she was looking at, which was welcomed with a nervous laugh in return.

“You mean, like… a hamster enclosure?”

“Don’t think of it like that. It’s not a cage, it’s like…” Olivia did a dramatic flourish with her hands. “A studio apartment for small queens. Think of it as your own space. I’ll even let you decorate it. You need something that’s really yours, right?”

“Hmm… I don’t know, Liv…” Andi said, unsure. “Isn’t it better to be out in the open on the nightstand?”

“What about deadly creepy crawlies?” Olivia used her doe eyes and pouted. “I don’t want you to get hurt.”

“That does make sense…”

“Great!”

Olivia stepped into her closet and pulled out the same cage she had just shown Andi.

“You… you already have it?” Andi asked nervously.

“It was on sale!” Olivia said, a hint of relief in her voice.

“So you went ahead and got this before I had even agreed?” Andi clutched her chest. “You’ve been thinking about this for a while, then?”

Olivia’s excitement came to a halt. She gently put the new enclosure on her bed and moved closer to Andi.

“Thinking about your safety? Yes.” She brushed Andi’s hair with her fingers. “You’re my responsibility, and I want you to be safe.”

Andi thought about it for a minute. *‘She is only doing this for my best intentions, nothing more,’* then gave in.

“I-I guess you’re right, Liv…”

“Think about it, you’ll have total control of the decor.”



Nellielle

Coming home from work, Olivia poured herself a glass of wine and stepped into her room. Andi perked up the moment she saw her. She had been cooped up in the enclosure all day, and with Olivia home meant she could finally be taken out and stretch her legs.

“Carissa doesn’t know what she’s missing,” Olivia said, laughing lightly into her phone. “If she’s not interested in him, I’ll gladly take him off her hands.”

“Hey! Hey, Liv!” Andi shouted, waving her arms to get Olivia’s attention. “Take me out! Let’s hang out tonight!”

Olivia glanced her way briefly and gave a half-hearted wave, pulling the phone away from her mouth just long enough to say, “Later, superstar. I’m on a call.”

Olivia headed to her bed and dropped onto it like it’d been a long day, as Andi stared, her smile slowly fading. She got closer to the glass and gave it a couple of knocks.

“Olivia…”

“I said later,” Olivia replied, not even turning her head.

Andi let out a quiet sigh and sat back, nervously toying with a loose strand of her hair.

“We… haven’t hung out in a while,” she said, voice softer. “I thought maybe today…”

Olivia let out a weary sigh and stood, draining her wineglass, and looked over with a neutral expression. Not angry. Not affectionate. Just… tired. “I’ve been busy,” she said simply, then walked off back to the living room, phone to her ear.

Andi remained by the glass, slowly sinking onto her miniature bed for the rest of the night…



Nellielle

Olivia lounged across her bed, eyes fixed on her phone, thumbs tapping away. Inside her enclosure, Andi watched quietly before leaning forward and knocking on the glass twice, their usual signal.

“Hm?” Olivia mumbled, barely glancing up.

“I dunno…” Andi said softly. “How’ve you been? We haven’t talked in a while. How’s work?”

“Same crap, different day,” Olivia replied, more focused on her texting than the conversation.

Silence settled between them, broken only by the rhythmic clicks of Olivia’s texting.

“That’s… that’s it?” Andi’s voice cracked slightly. “Nothing else to say?”

“Nope,” Olivia stood up and went to look at the wardrobe in her closet. “Tonight I have something, so don’t wait up too much for me, okay?”

“Oh…” Andi looked down, swallowing the lump in her throat. “Could you maybe charge my screen before you go? So I have something to do…”

“No time. I’m leaving in five,” Olivia said, already flipping through outfits.

Andi quietly walked back to her bed and sat on the edge of it, staring at Olivia while she tried on some outfits. Once she was fully dressed, she got close to Andi’s enclosure.

“You’ve got water and snacks?” she asked, her voice distant, almost mechanical.

Andi nodded, not looking at her.

“Cool,” Olivia said cheerfully. “See ya!” She turned and left, closing the door behind her.

“…yeah,” Andi whispered to the empty room. “Have fun.”

Tears silently streamed down her cheeks as she stared at the glass wall between them.



The moment Andi heard unfamiliar footsteps join Olivia's, her stomach dropped, knowing what was coming.

She scurried quickly to the opposite far end of the enclosure and used her blanket as a shield. She leaned against the glass, and her eyes were tightly closed.

The footsteps arrived in the room. Clothes rustled, and the soft moans started.

Andi clamped her hands tighter on her ears, but the glass amplified everything: the creak of the mattress, the breathy gasps, and the slaps of skin. Olivia's voice laughed, then gasped louder.

"Oh, fuck! Right there. God, yes…"

Andi's hands pressed harder, her whole body trembling. She began to hum a warm-up chant from her track days, a desperate attempt to drown it out.

"One-two-three-four… One-two-three-four…"

But it didn't work. The sounds still bled through. Every moan from Olivia landed like a punch in the gut, not because of the sex, but because of the indifference.

She drew her knees tightly to her chest, her lip quivering until a sudden thud on the nightstand shook the enclosure slightly, making her flinch.

"Don't worry about her," Olivia said breathlessly. "She's asleep or whatever."

"I thought I saw her move," her date chuckled.

"If she's awake, she's used to it, don't worry."

Another slap of skin, another moan.

Andi bit down on the blanket, curling up completely. She screamed into the fabric, muffled and unheard, while the sounds of passion carried on just outside her glass prison.

“So that’s the Reduced you were talking about, huh?” the man said, eyeing Andi through the enclosure.

Olivia took a slow sip of her wine, basking in the afterglow, offering no response.

“Cute setup,” he chuckled. “Does she do tricks, or just sit there looking pretty?”

Andi stiffened and glared through the glass, trying to appear invisible while standing tall at the same time.

“Hey, squirt. You want to join us later?” he tapped the glass, leaning closer. “I got something you can ride.”

Andi stepped back, fists clenched, eyes locked on him.

“Don’t touch the glass.”

“Oh shit! She talks?” the man laughed. “What’s the matter, sweetheart? All bark, no bite?” He turned to Olivia with a grin. “You have got to let me take her for a spin sometime. You can even watch—”

THUD

Olivia slammed the wine glass, cutting him off. She stood up. Her voice was not loud, but dead calm, which somehow was worse.

“She’s not a toy.”

"...what?" the man blinked.

"She's not for playing. She's not for sharing. And if you talk about her like that again, you can get out and never come back."

He chuckled nervously. "D-Didn't mean anything by it. I was just teasing."

"I wasn't."

The man scoffed, grabbed his jacket, and left without saying a word.

Silence settled in his wake.

Olivia exhaled and sat back, not even looking at Andi. Not apologizing or asking about her well-being. She just poured herself another drink.

"You're fine," Olivia said, her voice low. "The guy was an asshole."

Andi stared at her from behind the glass, one hand pressed to her chest.

She didn't know what was worse, being degraded by a stranger or being defended by someone who wouldn't even look at her when she was terrified.



Nellielle

Another long night loomed. The kind Andi had come to dread. Trapped in her enclosure, left alone with her thoughts, only to be jolted awake past midnight by the sounds of Olivia and some stranger going at it. Time passed for weeks at a time.

Finally, she caught her. Olivia, nearby and alone. She'd been waiting for a moment like this.

She gave the glass wall two firm taps, sharper than usual. Olivia froze mid-stroke at her vanity, nail file in hand, startled by the sudden noise.

"You're gonna break it," Olivia said coldly.

"I wish it did…" Andi muttered before clearing her throat to raise her voice. "Can we talk?"

Olivia didn't look up. Just sat more comfortably to face Andi while continuing to file her nails.

"Seriously. Look at me," Andi said louder.

Olivia finally raised her look, her expression of mild inconvenience. She got closer towards Andi, as if indulging a child's tantrum.

"What's the matter, superstar?" Olivia asked, tilting her head.

Andi's jaw tightened. She loathed that nickname now. Her fists clenched until her knuckles turned white.

"You leave me alone for days. You bring people over constantly, which I've grown to not care about, but now you act like I'm not here," Andi's voice began wavering. "I trusted you. I… chose you."

“Right,” Olivia replied dryly. “You sold yourself to the Shrink Agency and picked me out like a friend in a trainer’s catalogue. We’re way past that now.”

Andi stepped forward, voice shaking but firm.

“No, we’re not! You left me alone to shrink. You said you’d be there with me, but you weren’t. For three days, I was put in a cage, Olivia. Three fucking days! You regretted agreeing to take care of me then, didn’t you?”

Olivia didn’t blink. She leaned down, closer to the enclosure, her face now looming like a moon through the glass. Her voice lowered, laced with condescension.

“But I still came, didn’t I? I said I was sorry. And you said you forgave me. Or have you forgotten that part?”

Andi’s lip quivered. “I forgave you because I thought you cared. I didn’t know you’d just… stop.”

Olivia straightened up, sharply exhaling through her nose. “Jesus, Andi, what do you want from me? I feed you. I bathe you. You’re safe. You’re alive. Isn’t that enough?”

Andi’s throat tightened, but she forced the words out. “I want to be seen as a person,” she said, her voice cracking. “Not some pet in a glass box!”

“You don’t get to talk to me like that!” Olivia’s voice rose just enough to make the glass container vibrate.

A reminder of how small Andi really was.



“You’re not the one making rent!” Olivia’s words came fast and hard now, each syllable laced with scorn. “You’re not the one cleaning up after your little accidents. You think I don’t get to have a life? I deserve to have fun. My world doesn’t have to grind to a halt just because you decided to play a micro-sized martyr.”

Andi’s heart pounded in her chest as Olivia’s breath fogged the glass and hung heavy inside the enclosure.

“Go back to your little bed, superstar. Or I’ll forget to charge your heating pad again.”

Andi turned her back, not in defeat, but to salvage the last shred of dignity she had.

Her defiance only made Olivia’s tone sharper. “Oh, and one more thing, I’m not *‘Olivia’* to you anymore. You’ll call me *‘Miss’*. It’s the least you can do for someone stuck with such a thankless job.”

The silence that followed was suffocating. Then came the heavy sound of footsteps retreating, each one pulling Olivia’s presence farther from the room.

Andi didn’t move until the last echo faded.

Once alone, the oppressive silence closed in on Andi. The enclosure's glass walls felt like pressing down on her like a coffin. For months, she had swallowed the words, choked them back, forced herself to survive one condescending command after another. But now… the dam cracked.

Andi's knees buckled beneath her. She pressed her palms to the cold floor, Olivia's voice refusing to fade in her head. A trembling whimper escaped her lips, then another, until the sound swelled into something deeper, rawer.

Her chest heaved, and at last, she let it out, a scream, long and ragged, clawing its way from the pit of her stomach. It was a sound that seemed far too big for her doll-sized body, reverberating off the glass, full of months of hurt, fear, betrayal, and loneliness. The scream tore her throat raw, rising and breaking, until it collapsed into sobs that wrecked her tiny frame.

She pressed her forehead against the floor, tears soaking into the fabric of her toy bedspread, her body shaking uncontrollably.

"I can't… I can't…" she whispered into the silence, voice hoarse.

Eventually, exhaustion won. Her body, wrung dry from the storm inside her, went limp. She curled into herself on the tiny bed, clutching the blanket like it was the only thing anchoring her.

Merciful sleep crept in. Her tears dried against the pillow as her breathing steadied, leaving only silence behind.



Nellielle

Morning light filtered through the window, casting a warm glow over Andi's enclosure as she yawned and stirred awake. Something felt off. The room was spotless, unnaturally so. That's when she noticed Olivia, standing nearby, nervously biting her nails.

Andi was about to call out when a sharp knock on the front door caught her attention.

That was strange. Olivia didn't receive guests. She brought them home.

There were footsteps and a hushed exchange. Then, Olivia entered the room with an unknown figure.

"She's over there," Olivia said, pointing toward Andi without even glancing her way.

"Name, size, and tag?" the stranger asked.

"Andrea Hale. Six inches. Registry code SA24601."

Andi froze, a chill crawling through her veins. As soon as Olivia signed a form, the stranger turned and approached. Panic surged.

"Olivia?! What are you doing?" Andi's voice cracked. "Is this about our fight the other day?"

Olivia didn't answer. Didn't even look at her.





"No, please! Don't do this! You were right, I was wrong. Just let me stay!"

Finally, Olivia glanced back. Her face was unreadable.

"What did I do? I can change. I'll be better. You want me to join you and your partners? Fine! I will! I'll be your pet, I'll behave, just… don't do this to me! I can be who you want me to be!"

Right then, Andi saw it, just a flicker. Olivia's eyes were wet. But she didn't speak. Didn't wipe the tears. She turned away, heading to another corner of the room.

The stranger opened the enclosure and reached in.

"Miss, please!" Andi sobbed. "Call my mami! Tell her I'm okay! Please, Miss Olivia! Don't let her think I disappeared!"

At the edge of her bed, Olivia's hand trembled, slightly tugging the hem of her pants.

She was dropped inside the transportation carrier, quickly stood and leaned against the wall, "Olivia, por favor!"

But she didn't turn around. Didn't answer.

"Thank you," the stranger said, receiving only a nod in return as Andi's cries echoed from the carrier.

Then the front door opened and clicked shut.

Andi was gone.

Nellielle

The ride to wherever she was heading was filled with breathless and agonizing sobs. She was given away like a forgotten item in a garage sale, without even a parting glance.

Andi tore herself up inside, replaying every moment, wondering what she'd done wrong. What could she have changed? What pushed Olivia away? She was willing to change if told how to. She could've—

"Here," the stranger said, depositing something next to Andi in her container.

A massive chunk of burger.

Andi blinked, then looked up at the person more clearly. They didn't seem like an Agency official, more like some employee or store clerk from another job entirely.

"Eat up," the stranger said. "Willow'll kill me if she thinks I didn't feed you on the way to the store."

'Willow? Store?' Andi echoed in her head.

But the scent of the burger hit her hard, and she hadn't eaten since the night before. She dug in, hunger overriding confusion.

A small, unexpected kindness in the middle of a heartbreak she didn't yet have words for.

“As you may have figured out,” Andi sniffled, reliving those moments once again, “the person was an employee from the pet shop.”

Lorelai held her close, listening with quiet intensity as Andi finished recounting everything.

“I met the staff working that day. I met Willow, who honestly scared the hell out of me at first,” Andi said with a faint chuckle. “And on my third day there, I met that redheaded brat over there.” She pointed toward Reese, who answered with a half-hearted chuckle and a small wave.

Lorelai wanted to smile, but her eyes betrayed her, the sadness lingering in them.

“I wish… I wish someone had stood out for you back then.”

“It’s okay, Miss,” Andi smiled, feeling better about things. “I have come to terms with it now. Without it, I wouldn't be here with you. Such is life.”

Lorelai flinched, now understanding the reason for the nickname, but only quietly nodded.

“Okay, you’re all sleeping with me tonight,” Lorelai said, putting her hand towards Reese as he stepped on it, holding Jack. “I’ll leave you here while I take a shower and change.”

As Lorelai walked away, Reese approached Andi and gently laid a hand on her.

“Feeling better?”

Andi nodded emphatically, a smile breaking through as she wiped the last of her tears.

“Gemma was right. Telling Miss the truth was the right choice.”



While Andi and Reese settled into sleep with Jack in tow, Lorelai stood in the bathroom, scrubbing herself clean and left alone with her thoughts.

She wanted to be strong for her wards. To be the steady pillar they could lean on. But she was reaching her breaking point.

Her confrontation with Harmonie still burned like an open wound. The night's events replayed in fragments: the interview, the sick cost of '*success*', what they had done to Jack, and what she herself had almost done to him. And layered on top of that came Andi's story. The weight of it and the cruelty she'd endured before ending up in Lorelai's hands.

It was too much, too fast.

And Lorelai was only human.

So she broke.

Every fear, every frustration, every ache she had buried burst out in a quiet, shuddering release, hidden beneath the steady rush of the shower.

Her voice cracked into the steam.

"What am I going to do now…"



Andi stirred as the morning sunlight spilled across her. She rubbed her eyes, slowly waking, and glanced around. Lorelai and Reese weren't where they would usually be until their voices drifted in from nearby.

"Is that okay then?" Lorelai asked.

"He says he's nervous, but he trusts you," Reese replied.

Andi sat up abruptly, her focus shifting to them. Lorelai was already dressed with keys in hand, while Reese knelt nearby the tiny man from the night before, Jack, she'd learned, who offered a shy little wave.

She stepped closer, her brow furrowing.

"Wh-What's going on?"

"Morning," Reese greeted gently.

"We're heading to Willow's," Lorelai said, extending her hand for Andi to climb onto.

Andi froze, her chest tightening. "Why? I thought you…" her voice caught. "You changed your mind."

"I did," Lorelai said, her tone unreadable. "But I'm giving someone away."



Nellielle

The ride to Willow's was quiet, laced with a subtle tension. Andi sat inside the protective container, her expression clouded with confusion, brows knit tight.

Beside her, Reese sat close, offering silent comfort while Jack stood near them. The familiarity of it struck Andi with the mirrored positions from the day they first met at the shop years ago. She reached out, brushing her fingers through Reese's hair in a gentle, bittersweet gesture drawn from memory.

Jack's voice broke the silence as he shared his story: how he'd come to this state, how he had worked alongside Lorelai and quickly seen her kindness and dedication. He recounted waking in the wine glass, the terror of seeing her towering above him, the helplessness of being inside her mouth, and the horror of being swallowed. Yet, when he awoke again, safe, and saw the depth of her remorse, her genuine concern, it became clear to him, she had never meant harm. Her intentions had always been good.

While Jack spoke, Andi occasionally stole glances at Lorelai. Her expression was hard to read. Was she sad? Focused? Hopeful? Andi couldn't quite tell.

"We're here. Hold on." Lorelai muttered to the little ones as she reached for them inside the container they were held in.

"Miss?" Andi tried to reach out.

"Andi," Reese answered instead, putting a hand on her. "Everything will be okay."

Lorelai knocked at the door, and a kind, warm presence greeted her.

"W-Willow?" Lorelai asked.

"Oh!" she answered, surprised. "You came here so early. I thought I'd have more time to prepare."

"I… got all the green lights. Traffic was surprisingly easy," Lorelai said as she, Andi, and Reese stared at Willow.

This did not go unnoticed by her.

"Uhh… come on in, then."

"I can feel your stares, guys," Willow said, amusedly. "I know my look is shocking. I just haven't gotten ready yet."

"Not shocking," Reese said. "Beautiful."

Lorelai and Andi squinted at Reese, while Willow chuckled.

"Thanks. Can I offer you something to drink?" she asked, gesturing toward the sofa for Lorelai to sit. Her eyes flicked to the tiny figures in Lorelai's hands. "And perhaps for either of you as well?"

All of them shook their heads.

"No, thank you," Lorelai answered. "We need to talk. I need a favor from you."

Willow raised a brow and sat in the seat opposite Lorelai.

"Okay? What's up?"

"Reese? Could you be a dear and show her?" Lorelai gently lowered Reese on the table.

He nodded and stepped forward, presenting Jack in his arms.

"I'm not Simba, you know…" Jack muttered, exasperated.

"Hey, cut me some slack. I don't know any other way to hold you!" Reese shot back.

"Th-There's a third… with you…" Willow blinked, clearly confused.

"Yeah," Lorelai said gently. "He's my friend from work. His name is Jack."

Willow leaned closer to Jack in Reese's arms, to which he leaned back in retreat by the sudden invasion of space.

"Jack…" she whispered.

Reese gently set Jack down and stepped back. "Your turn, buddy," he said with a grin.

Willow's gaze didn't leave Jack. "What… happened to him?"

"Well…" Lorelai began. "Life threw us some unfair curveballs, and I ended up hurting him. Something I never meant to happen. Now he's… so small, so fragile." Her eyes softened as they met Jack's. "I don't feel like I'm capable of caring for him properly, of keeping him safe. I was hoping… maybe you could do me the favor of looking after him?"

"What?" Andi and Willow said in unison.

"You work with people smaller than him all the time," Lorelai pressed, her voice steady but urgent. "I've seen you. You already have the tools, the training. You could protect him in ways I can't."

Willow's eyes flicked from Lorelai to Jack. "Does he have a record? I'd need his files if I were to register him."

"There… isn't one," Lorelai said, looking away. "He's not even supposed to be with us right now."

Willow frowned. "What do you mean?"

"I was tasked to… dispose of him…" Lorelai's hand brushed against her stomach in a subtle gesture, sparing the words. "If you need to register him, you can start fresh. A blank slate."

Willow's heart thundered so loud that Jack could almost hear it at his size. Her dream of taking care of her own Reduced was finally coming true.

"I'll check in regularly and help you with anything you need for him," Lorelai added, her tone softening, almost pleading. "You're the only one I can trust with this."

Jack swallowed hard. Nervous as he was, he stepped forward, a silent gesture of willingness. Willow gasped as she leaned her face closer to the table.

"I'll… I'll do it," Willow whispered.

Willow reached out instinctively, then stopped herself, pulling her hand back before making contact. She didn't want to overwhelm him. "Sorry," she murmured, her cheeks flushing. "I just… I want to do this right."

"Hey," she whispered gently, her voice almost trembling with awe. "I'm Willow. I don't expect you to trust me fully today, but you're safe here, and you'll never be asked to prove anything to me. You don't have to be scared. I'll take care of you, I promise."

Jack took a look towards Lorelai, as if asking permission for her to let go.

"Go on," Lorelai said reassuringly. "If you don't trust her, trust in my trust in her."

Willow's hands trembled slightly as she finally extended her palm, flat and open, giving Jack the choice. "Only if you want to," she whispered.

Jack hesitated, his heart pounding so hard it ached at his scale. Then, with a deep breath, he stepped forward and climbed onto the waiting hand.

His tiny weight in her palm startled Willow as her lips parted, a mixture of disbelief and joy lighting her face. For so long she had dreamed of this moment, protecting someone, proving she could care for a Reduced of her own, and now, finally, it came true.

"Thank you," she breathed, though it wasn't clear if she was speaking to Jack, Lorelai, or herself.

Lorelai let out a shaky sigh and leaned back, almost collapsing into the sofa. For the first time that day, her shoulders lowered, lighter, though still heavy with everything left unsaid.

Willow's fingers curled slightly, instinctively creating a shield around him. She didn't dare move too quickly, afraid a careless gesture might betray the fragile trust he'd just given her. She could hear her own heartbeat, thundering in her ears, and wondered if he could hear it too.

Jack glanced up, his expression of hesitant acceptance made Willow's throat tighten.

"I've got you," she whispered, barely audible.

Willow's gaze shifted from Lorelai's collapsed form on the sofa to Andi and Reese on her hand, who were still caught up in awe at Jack's christening.

"And what about them?" she asked, nodding toward the little ones.

"These two?" Lorelai's eyes softened as she looked down at Andi and Reese. A faint smile curved her lips.

"They're not going anywhere but with me," she said, her voice quiet but resolute. "And that's how it's going to be… for a long, long time."

Finally back home, Lorelai emptied her pockets and settled her wards on the sofa while she sat down nearby.

Reese stepped forward, looking at Lorelai's slightly weary face, and asked, "How are you feeling?"

She let out a long sigh. "I'm not concerned about Jack, if that's what you're wondering. I trust Willow to take good care of him," she then looked at her wards. "The same way she did her best with you two, despite the limitations."

Reese smiled faintly. Lorelai sensed something was off between them. She looked at Andi, who sat curled on the sofa, knees drawn to her chest. After leaving Willow's, she hadn't said much, and Lorelai felt the weight of it in the silence between them.

"Andi? What's—"

"My nightmares," her small voice broke through in a whisper, staring at the floor, "they're always about you and Reese leaving me behind. Just… walking away. Like Olivia did. Like my dad did."

Lorelai's chest tightened. She leaned forward, elbows on her knees, trying to catch Andi's gaze.

"And what you said last night… about giving us to Willow…" Andi's voice cracked, her words tumbling out too fast. "It felt like one of those dreams was becoming true. Like it was happening all over again."

The air hung heavy for a moment. Lorelai reached out, eyes softening and gently cupping Andi's tiny form in her hands. In the same swipe, she picked up Reese as well.

"I shouldn't have said that," she admitted. Her voice carried the heaviness of someone replaying their own mistakes in their head. "It wasn't fair to you. I was… scared."

Andi blinked, caught off guard. "Scared?"

"After what happened with Harmonie… and nearly losing Jack inside me…" her throat tightened, and she had to steady her breath before continuing. "I've lost two friends in a very short period of time. I panicked. I thought of the possibility that maybe I wasn't capable of keeping you both safe."

Andi and Reese both looked up, eyes shining with both hurt and relief at what they were hearing.

“Yes, the thought of Willow crossed my mind, but that was me being a coward, trying to run from everything. I was trying to convince myself that there was another option, but the truth is, I could never give you away. I don’t even remember what life felt like without you two in it.”

“So…” Andi’s gentle whisper cut in. “You don’t want to give us away?”

Lorelai pulled her hand closer to her, reducing the short space between them.

“No. That was never in the cards. Not really. You and Reese are with me. And that’s not changing. Not today. Not ever. You’re mine.”

Andi let out a trembling breath, her shoulders loosening for the first time all evening. Reese reached over, steady as ever, resting his hand over hers, as if to anchor her.

Lorelai looked at them both and bent closer, her voice low and raw.

“You two are my heart. Don’t you see that? If I lost you, I’d lose myself.”

Tears welled in Andi’s eyes, and without thinking, she leaned into Lorelai’s face and pressed a tiny kiss to her lips.

Lorelai’s breath caught, and she returned the affection. A soft, lingering kiss, protective, tender, more than words could hold.

Reese, standing just beside them, felt the warmth pulse through the room. He stepped closer, his hand brushing along Lorelai’s cheek, and when she turned, his eyes met hers. Without hesitation, he leaned in and kissed her lips. Gentle, brief, but full of meaning.

When Lorelai drew back, the three of them lingered in a breathless silence, faces close, warmth pooling between them. Reese leaned forward again, this time brushing his lips first against Andi’s cheek, which in turn found his mouth and reciprocated the kiss. Lorelai then reached out and pulled them towards her as best she could, and suddenly their kisses began tangling together.

What began as comfort blurred into something inevitable.

The storm that had haunted them eased, replaced by a quiet, fragile passion that drew them closer until there was no space left between them.

"M-Miss…" Andi whispered, breathless in the heat of their embrace.

Lorelai stilled, her gaze softening as it fell on them both, radiating warmth.

"Andi," she murmured, voice low and deliberate, "I have one condition if you're going to stay with me. Just one."

Andi's heart skipped, eyes wide and searching, anxious for what Lorelai might demand.

"I don't want to hear you call me 'Miss' again. Got that, little one?" Lorelai purred, her lips brushing against Andi's cheek before claiming her mouth in another fervent kiss.

Without a word, she drew them against her, dropping their bodies into the deep, warm valley of her cleavage. Her skin was flushed, heat radiating off her as she held them there, trapped yet safe, between the soft press of her breasts.

They shifted slightly, the brush of their movements sending tingles racing through her body. Lorelai's lips parted on a quiet sigh, the weight of the moment becoming something hungrier.

As she began to undress, each motion —lifting her shirt, peeling fabric from her shoulders —only heightened the charge. The small bodies against her chest seemed to pulse with her heartbeat, each thrum echoing in them as much as in her. Vulnerability bled into desire, and though she moved slowly, every gesture was packed with unspoken need.

Nellielle

Lorelai lay on her back against the sofa, releasing her two little lovers from their fleshy prison.

“I love you two so much!” Lorelai whispered affectionately. “You can do as you please at this moment.”

Reese, filled with lust, began climbing Lorelai’s chest, heading to the now familiar pink mound at the peak of the living, breathing mountain.

Andi remained sitting in the middle of Lorelai’s chest, eyes fixated on her, looking pensive and edged.

“What's wrong, sweetheart?” Lorelai said faintly.

Andi hesitated for a second, before she dared to whisper it.

“…Lai?”

Lorelai froze, not out of offense, but surprise. Then slowly, a smile unfurled across her face, soft and radiant.

“Oh,” she breathed, as though the nickname itself was a kiss. She leaned in, one finger brushing gently against Andi’s hair. “Say it again.”

Andi’s cheeks flushed, but she obeyed, a little steadier this time. “Lai.”

Lorelai’s chest rumbled with a quiet laugh, equal parts tender and hungry.

“That’s it, my little love. That’s mine now.”

Reese rubbed his crotch against the steadily engorging nipple, breathless gasps escaping after each thrust.

Andi finally shook herself from the trance of Lorelai's smile, her tiny body moving across the rise and fall of the giantess' chest, crawling toward Reese, who was already lost in his frenzy against the stiffening peak.

"Reese…" she whispered, her voice trembling with want.

He glanced over his shoulder at her, sweat and lust glistening across his little form, and without a word reached for her. Andi let herself be pulled in, their lips colliding in a hungry and desperate kiss.

Lorelai's breath hitched as she felt the faint brush of their bodies sliding together from her nipple down and between her breasts. The sensation of the way their tiny forms pressed into her skin and into each other was so impossibly delicate that it sent shivers through her. Andi pinned herself against Reese's chest, their kiss deepening, her hands roaming across his miniature frame as his fingers tangled in her hair.

"Oh, gods…" Lorelai groaned softly, cupping her breasts to close them around her lovers, holding them gently in place. The pressure made Andi gasp into Reese's mouth as their bodies were pinned between two warm walls of flesh that moved with Lorelai's every breath.

"Don't stop," Lorelai begged, her voice breaking with need. "Let me feel you together… right there…"

Andi broke the kiss with a soft gasp, lips swollen, eyes glinting with mischief as she glanced down the endless slope of Lorelai's body. The sight of her landscape, the slow rise of her stomach, and the shadowed cavern between her thighs made her shiver with both awe and hunger.

She pressed her forehead to Reese's and whispered, "Come with me."

Reese blinked, breathless, but the command in her tone left no room for argument. Andi tugged him along by the wrist, down the living landscape, and slid down the curve of Lorelai's hip bone. Their descent traced over the giant woman's thighs, each thrum of her heartbeat shaking the ground beneath them.

Lorelai propped herself slightly, watching them crawl lower with wide, feverish eyes. Her chest heaved, the voice a low murmur that rolled through them. "What are you two doing?"

"Exactly what you asked, Lai," Andi called back, her tone dripping with affection. She glanced at Reese, then toward the dark, slick heat waiting between Lorelai's legs. "We're going to make you feel us together."

Reese swallowed hard, a mix of nerves and lust in his expression, but Andi's hand stayed firm on his, as the two of them approached the valley of heat and lust.

Together, Andi and Reese reached the crossroads between the giant woman's thighs, the air heavy with her scent, heat radiating from the slick folds waiting below. Lorelai's muscles quivered in anticipation, her massive hand hovering near them as if she wanted to guide them, but couldn't bring herself to intrude.

Andi released Reese's hand and climbed forward, bracing herself against the supple flesh. Her eyes flicked up once to meet Lorelai's gaze, a smile tugging at her lips.

"This is mine," she whispered, before drawing herself closer and pressing a slow, reverent kiss to the swollen nub at the crown of her lover's sex.

Lorelai gasped, hips twitching at the first contact. The sound vibrated through Andi's body, making her tremble, but she pressed firmer, lips parting as she began to worship the tender spot with careful, wet kisses.

Behind her, Reese lingered for only a moment before sinking between Andi's thighs. He hooked his tiny arms around her waist, his mouth burying into her warmth with greedy eagerness. The first lap of his tongue made Andi shiver and moan into Lorelai's clit, her voice muffled but full of need.

The three of them became a chain of desire: Lorelai's body feeding Andi's lips, Andi's pleasure flowing down into Reese's hungry mouth, and Reese's every eager motion rippling back into Lorelai through Andi's trembling kisses.

Andi's moans deepened as Reese licked her crotch, his tiny body trembling with effort as he tried to keep up with her movements. She glanced up at Lorelai, whose flushed face and parted lips told her she was already teetering on the edge.

Pulling back slightly, Andi caught Reese's gaze, both of them panting, slick and trembling. A mischievous spark lit her eyes as she leaned down, whispering just loud enough for both of them to hear. "Let's give her more…"

Before Reese could ask, Andi lifted Reese and pressed her palms to his back, sliding him closer to Lorelai's glistening entrance.

Lorelai's breath hitched as she realized what Andi was doing, her thighs flexing, her voice trembling between a plea and a warning.

"Andi… are you—"

"Yes," Andi cut in softly, her own face burning but determined. "You need this."

Reese looked back one last time, nervous but trusting, and then Andi pushed, gentle but firm, easing him past the velvet folds. Lorelai cried out, the sound shaking the room, her entire body arching off the sofa as the sensation consumed her.

Andi leaned forward again, kissing Lorelai's nub, steadying her, whispering into the trembling flesh.

"Take him… he's yours too."

Lorelai's cry still echoed through the room when Andi pulled back from her nub, flushed and trembling with both nerves and desire. She looked down at Reese's tiny feet already buried inside, Lorelai's walls hungrily pulsing around him.

A wild thought sparked in Andi's head, and she couldn't resist.

Her hands slid down her own body, legs shaky, until she crouched just above Lorelai's entrance. She looked up, meeting the giantess' desperate but bright eyes.

"Lai…" she whispered, voice quaking but certain. "I want to be with him. Inside you. Together."

Lorelai's pupils blew wide. "Andi—"

But before hesitation could win, Andi pressed herself forward, the slick heat swallowing her inch by inch as Lorelai's body opened to her. Lorelai quivered at the intrusion, arching higher, her walls stretching, clutching both tiny forms at once.

Andi gasped at the intense pressure and warmth, colliding with Reese in the tight velvet dark. His hands found her instinctively, pulling her into him, their mouths meeting in frantic, clumsy kisses even as Lorelai's body trembled and convulsed around them.

Inside her, the two tinies clung to each other, moving together in desperate rhythm, their thrusts and touches amplified by the giant, living world surrounding them. Lorelai could feel every motion, every kiss, every tremble magnified tenfold as her lovers fucked each other inside her.

She clutched the sofa cushions, shaking, crying out with abandon. "Oh God! Andi! Reese!"

Their muffled moans vibrated through her walls, and Lorelai's body answered, drawing them in deeper, making them hers in a way that neither of them could have imagined before.



Lorelai could hardly breathe. Every nerve lit with fire as her body pulsed around the two tiny lives inside her. She could feel them, not just the friction of their desperate rhythm, but the love in their movements, the way they clung to each other even as they clung to her.

Her back arched high off the sofa, hands clawing into the cushions, her throat torn raw from the cries she couldn't hold back.

"Oh God! Both! Inside!" she sobbed, voice breaking. "You're mine! All mine!"

Her walls spasmed around them, dragging them deeper, clutching tight as if her body refused to let them go. Their muffled moans echoed from within, sending vibrations straight through her core, building into something unbearable.

Nellielle

Tears streamed down her cheeks as she let go, surrendering to the tidal wave that crashed through her. Her orgasm ripped out of her like a storm, thighs trembling violently, her body clenching in desperate waves around Andi and Reese.

Every pulse, every contraction, was filled with the undeniable confirmation; they were hers in the most primal way.

Her cries softened into shuddering sobs as the peak broke, and she slumped back against the sofa, chest heaving, skin damp with sweat. Her hands instinctively went near her sex, as if cradling them through her own flesh, whispering hoarse, reverent words between gasps.

“My… my loves… mine…”



Lorelai lay sprawled against the sofa, skin glowing with sweat, chest rising and falling in uneven breaths. The storm inside her had finally passed, leaving her floating in its warmth. One trembling hand rested over her lower belly, where faint movements still pulsed within.

She closed her eyes, smiling through tears that streaked her cheeks. The world had narrowed down to that single, breathtaking truth; her two little lovers nestled safely inside her, clinging to each other…

Clinging to her.

Her palm pressed softly against the curve of her womb, as if she could hold them even closer through her own flesh. “My darlings,” she whispered, voice breaking on the edge of a sob. “My everything.”

Inside, she could feel their subtle shifting, the tiniest embrace, a pair of tiny heartbeats fluttering against the thunder of her own. And at that moment, Lorelai knew they weren’t just her wards, not anymore. They were part of her, as inseparable as her breath, her blood, her soul.

The tension in her body ebbed away, replaced with a heavy, blissful calm. She let her head sink back against the cushion, hand never leaving her belly, and drifted into the quiet, trembling peace of the afterglow, wrapped in the knowledge that for the first time in years, she wasn’t alone.

By the time Lorelai stirred again, the haze of sleep had replaced the fire of their passion. She blinked slowly, the dim lamplight painting everything in warm gold.

Andi and Reese were no longer inside her, but curled up against her body, tucked into the cradle of her arm like tiny treasures. Andi's cheek pressed lightly against her collarbone, one arm draped over Reese, who in turn had buried himself against her skin as if it were the softest bed in the world.

Lorelai shifted only enough to gather them closer, her large hand resting protectively over both of them, shielding them like a blanket. She felt their tiny chests rise and fall in unison with her own, three heartbeats finding the same rhythm.

For once, her mind was free of doubt. There was no Harmonie, no shadows of loss, no lingering fear of failure. Just the quiet, steady truth of being wanted, needed, and loved in return.

She closed her eyes again, lips brushing the crown of Andi's hair in a kiss so light it could have been mistaken for a sigh. Within moments, her breathing evened, joining theirs.

The three of them slept, tangled together, as if they had always been one.

-CHAPTER 03 END-

To Be Continued...

Special Thanks to Open High Hat for allowing me to play in his universe, his constant inspiration & support.
You can find more of his work at: openhighhat.deviantart.com

Special Thanks to FontSize, MicroMD, ABG and EldritchGTS for their emotional support during this process
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Thank You to Nesh for final proofreading.
You can check out his stories here: n-e-s-h.deviantart.com