Childhood Friend 2

An Illustrated Novella

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The Childhood Friend

a Vore Romance

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Book Two

Reuniting with your childhood crush should be a dream come true...except when she's a predator capable of swallowing people whole.

Book One:

The Childhood Friend

The Childhood Friend 2

Bathed in the dim warmth of Julia's throat, I braced myself as she opened her mouth wide, letting in a flood of light. From my spot just behind her uvula, I could see her reflection in the bathroom mirror, her face framed by strands of dark hair and that thoughtful, morning-ready look she wore when checking herself over.

A fleshy pulse pressed around me, soft yet firm, as her throat muscles shifted with each idle move she made. I felt the rhythm of her heartbeat as a steady thrum, and each subtle breath drew cool air over me, carrying her perfume and the faintest hint of morning coffee.

"Everything alright in there, Ollie?" she asked, the sound of her voice rolling through me like a wave, deep and resonant in her throat.

I chuckled, shifting as best as I could within the snug walls of her esophagus. "Feels cozy…maybe a little humid. Reminds me of our last trip to the beach."

Her laugh was a low, velvet hum that rippled around me, gentle but playful. "Always with the critiques," she teased. "Just don't complain if I get a craving later."

Through the open stretch of her mouth, I could see her lift a comb and draw it slowly through her hair, each stroke measured and practiced. With her other hand, she adjusted the collar of her blouse, the faint outline of my form shifting slightly as she leaned closer to inspect her reflection. I could see myself there as a rounded bulge just under her ribs.

"You're pretty proud of that, aren't you?" I said, watching her trace a finger along the shape I made in her stomach.

"Maybe a little," she replied, lips curling in a smirk that widened her mouth just enough to let me glimpse her teeth. She tilted her head slightly, putting her lipstick on with an effortless swipe, then pressed her lips together, leaving a faint, glossy sheen.



“Well,” I added, feeling my voice echo softly around us both, “I’m glad to be part of your…look, I suppose.”

“Oh, you’re part of more than that.” She pressed her lips together once more and gave herself a satisfied nod. “Besides, it’s not every day I get to *accessorize*.”

“Mmm, don’t get used to it.”

Her giggle resonated through the muscles in her throat. My knees shifted in her stomach as she straightened her blouse, drawing it tight over my frame. She looked beautiful in the light pouring in from the window. I found myself feeling lucky all over again—lucky to be dating my childhood friend.

“Ready to come out?” Julia asked.

The possessive way that she squeezed her stomach let me know that she’d rather swallow me, but there wasn’t enough time for a full session. Even this much was a compromise. We were meeting her friends in half an hour and it wouldn’t do to meet them from the inside of her stomach no matter how many times she insisted that they’d be fine with it. I rolled my shoulders, fighting the ebb of her throat. A few more minutes? No, I had to be the mature one here.

“Ready,” I said.

It was amazing what one could get used to in only a few months' time. At first, I had been frightened of Julia’s predatory capabilities. Then I had been enamored with them. Now I almost took them for granted, though Julia never passed up an opportunity to remind me that if she wanted, she could make me a part of her forever.

“Keep teasing me and I’ll add you to my hips,” she’d say, or, “Do the dishes before I turn you into tit fat!”

And while it had been a joy to experience every intimate detail of Julia’s life these past few months, there was one last hurdle to overcome:

I’d never met her friends.

I knew that they were predators as well. One was named Honey and was currently unemployed and the other was Celestia, a fitness

coach. Ever since I had moved to Julia's city, I had been begging to meet them, but she always said that it wasn't the time.

"They can be…possessive," she'd say, kissing me gently. "Some other time, sweet thing, once they settle down."

That had been fine for the first few months. High on the fumes of a new relationship, Julia alone was enough for me. We ate good food and watched bad movies. We had terrific sex in and out of her belly. We wandered through the city, hand in hand, keeping an eye out for ne'er-do-wells for Julia to devour and for me to pound into pudge.

But eventually I felt like I needed to meet her friends and Julia agreed.

"Honey just started dating a girl, so she should be safe," Julia said, "and Celestia's been going steady with some emo dude with a hundred piercings."

Which brought us to the present: an unobtrusive coffee date at the place where Julia and I had rekindled our relationship after fourteen years.

I brushed off my pants and inspected myself in the mirror. There was still a bit of Julia's lipstick on my neck. When I went to wipe it off, she hugged me from behind, kissing my throat so that a clear imprint of her lips could be seen beneath my lapel.

"Stop that," I said, raising my kerchief again.

"Just reminding you who you belong to," Julia said with a wink. She looked spectacular in her blouse and cardigan, complimented by a pair of form-fitting jeans. No matter how much she ate, she never seemed to gain weight. At least, not for very long. "I figure that eating you in front of them is a last resort."

I blushed.

"Maybe I'll get a collar," Julia continued, leaning her chin on my shoulder. Our height difference made it look like I was stooping even though I was standing up straight. "And a leash."

“You’ve been reading too many of Honey’s romance novels,” I said, straightening my hair. I pushed her face away, making her giggle. “Besides, I know who I belong to.”

Julia smiled and my fingers itched to take out the square-shaped box I kept tucked in my left pocket. I had been carrying it for two weeks, waiting for the perfect time, but I figured that it would be prudent to ingratiate myself with her peers. Our parents would be thrilled, at least. When I told my mom who I was dating, she freaked, and that’s how I found out our mothers had been calling each other ever since the move.

Julia hugged me tight, pushing her boobs into my back. Her lips brushed my ear. “I know,” she said. “I just love when you prove it.”

A shiver went down my spine. Julia brushed my crotch to check that the message hit home and, confirming her suspicions, walked away whistling, leaving me to readjust myself, cursing under my breath.

What an infuriating girl.

I love her so much.

***

The Midnight Pumpkin was tucked into the corner of a busy mall. Waiters and waitresses scurried around us as we entered, Julia’s arm looped through mine. The hostess nodded when she saw us and picked up two menus.

“Six today, actually,” Julia said brightly.

“You know we come here too often when they don’t even ask for our party size,” I said as the hostess led us to a booth. We sat down on opposite sides of the table, more out of habit than anything.

“I also stop in for coffee and bagels on the way to work,” Julia said.

“Which is why our budget is so hard to manage. All the snacking.”

My girlfriend flashed me a feral grin and leaned forward over the table. Her latest acquisition hadn't quite made his way out of her body, so a bit of her belly folded over the edge in a mound of tantalizing fluff.

"You'd rather I eat at home?" she asked.

I raised both my hands.

"Just teasing, love."

"Love," Julia said happily, sitting back in her chair. "Alright, you've got your brownie points back, buster, but watch out. A few more comments like that and you're in the dog house tonight."

She patted her belly, making the threat painfully obvious. I rolled my eyes and raised the menu to keep her from commenting on my red cheeks.

"Julia!"

CRASH!

My head snapped up at the sound of shattering plates. A plump girl had collided with a waitress and an entire tray of dishes had been flung into the air. The customer's friend, a short girl with windsor glasses, apologized profusely as the plump girl ran up to our booth, grinning from ear to ear.

"Julia, Julia," she cried, grabbing my hand. Her palms were sweaty, but her grip was as strong as iron. "Is this the new beau? He's adorable! I could just eat him right up! Ow, ow, ow, ow!"

The short girl had caught up with her companion and was dragging her backwards by the collar of her black sundress.

"When you crash into someone," the short girl said through gritted teeth, "you apologize and offer to help, Honey!"

"I was excited! Ow, ow, Angel, please!"

Julia winked at me as the short girl plunked Honey in front of the waitress and returned, wiping her hands on her pants. She was wearing high-waisted black slacks with a white shirt and a blue jean jacket. The tips of her wavy, brown bangs brushed the tops of her

round metal glasses, giving her a very fashionable, if slightly academic appearance.

"Sorry about her," the girl said, sticking out her hand to me. "I'm Evangeline. The klutz is Honey. I presume you're Ollie and Julia?"

"Er, yes," I said, taking her slender hand. She shook mine, then Julia's, slipping into the booth beside me. The waitress finished shooing off Honey who seemed to be making a bigger mess the more she helped. Honey slid into the booth beside Julia and lay her head on her shoulder. Julia stroked her long, straw-colored hair.

"Hello, hello," Honey cooed. "It's nice to meet you!"

If Evangeline's appearance was classroom casual, Honey would look right at home in an artsy cafe. Her winged eyeliner gave her baby blues eyes a unique shine to them. Her rounded face was effortlessly handsome and her pink lipgloss made her smile all the brighter. She wore a choker around her neck with a little, silver bell. It rang whenever she moved her head which she seemed to do a lot.

"Hello, hello," she repeated dreamily. "Hello!"

Evangeline clicked her tongue and wiped a smudge of maple syrup off of Honey's arm. When she saw me watching, she shook her head, not without affection.

"I don't know what she would do without me," she said. "Most days I come home to find her sitting in a pile of notebooks, singing to herself or scribbling madly. She's a poet, you know, and a good one, but they're a dottie bunch. I have to remind her to eat and sleep. Other times, she's simply…full of energy."

Evangeline put her thumb to her lips. Honey gave her a lucid smile. A hungry smile. Julia caught my gaze and raised an eyebrow.

"*See why I waited to let you meet them?"* she seemed to be saying.

At that point, another commotion from the front of the cafe caught our attention. A giant had pushed through the doors, dragging a man behind her. They seemed to be in the middle of a heated

argument, pushing past the hostess without even looking in her direction.

"I told you to put the damn game down before we got here," the giant snarled.

A mountain of curly, red hair poured down the back of her black leather jacket. She was wearing a white tank top, blue jeans, and combat boots. The man hung limply from her left hand, letting himself be dragged across the cafe.

"And I told you to let me finish the level," the man said. "We had time on the walk, but you had to hulk out and start running."

In complete contrast to the giant's riot of red hair, the man was clad in head-to-toe black, his clothes all flowing silk that hung around him like curtains. His hair was a jagged, asymmetrical cut, one side nearly brushing his collarbone, the other swept back to show off the piercings lining his ear. Dark eyeshadow framed his eyes, and his makeup was smooth, almost flawless, with his lips painted a soft pink that stood out against everything else. His neck was crowded with necklaces and collars, a mix of chains and pendants that jangled softly as he was dragged.

The giant dumped him in the booth beside Evangeline. The table shook as she sat down, her broad, muscular belly barely fitting.

Probably because there was still someone inside of it.

"Pardon me," the giant said, blocking a belch with her fist. Her hamlike hand slapped against her stomach. "Stopped for a snack on the way here."

"Glutton," the goth muttered.

"Shut up or you're joining him."

A thin smile on the goth's lips told me that this was a regular exchange. He shot me a smokey-eyed wink and slipped his DS into his pocket.

"I'm Ollie," I said, reaching across the table.

"Critter," he said. "Enchanté."





“It’s pronounced ‘enchant-ay’,” Evangeline said, sticking her long nose up. “Not ‘enchant-ee’.”

“Mi scusi, Miss Evangeline.”

“That’s not even the same language!”

I laughed. Meanwhile, across the table, Honey and Julia were chiding the giant, prodding her stomach as she flexed and squeezed.

“We said no guests,” Honey whined. “Julia, why does she get to eat someone before brunch? I wanted to, but Angel wouldn’t let me!”

“Because you’re still working off the last one,” Julia said, nudging Honey’s belly. It wobbled as Honey giggled. “And Celestia, honestly, we’re meeting at a brunch place. Are you not going to eat now?”

“I’ll damn well eat more than the rest of you combined,” Celestia growled, slamming the butt of her fork against the table. “This poor sap was an appetizer.”

I stopped myself from asking what the ‘poor sap’ had done to deserve to be devoured. As Julia put it, Honey and Celestia’s criteria for eating people was ‘lax at best’, unlike her totally strict and totally ethical vigilante justice. Evangeline was fussing with Honey; Julia and Celestia were arguing. Critter motioned for me to hop the seat to the booth behind us and I did, more to get away from the noise than anything.

“Jeeze, they’re loud,” Critter said, slumping in the new booth. “I thought Celestia was just embarrassed of me, but now I know why she didn’t introduce me to her friends right away. She probably thought I’d be scared off.”

“You?” I asked before I could help myself. “Scared? Dating that giant?”

Critter smiled. “She’s a total softie once you know where to press,” he said. “A couple of chin scratches, a belly rub, and she’s putty in your hand.”

“Er, I, uh, don’t think those are an option for me.”

“Then just compliment her muscles. Meathead that she is, she’s proud of those.”

Critter put his cheek in his hand, letting his pendant earrings dangle through his fingers. I was honestly envious of his style. I doubted that I’d look that good in makeup.

“Are we having a dating-a-predator support club?” Evangeline asked, propping herself up against the back of the booth.

“Something like that,” I said. “What are the topics?”

“How about ‘The Bathroom is Never Free’ and ‘How to Tell Your Partner That Sitting On You With 200 Pounds of Meat In Her Belly Will Crush Your Bones’?” Critter suggested.

Evangeline looked horrified. I chuckled.

“Surprisingly relatable,” I said.

“Relatable?” Evangeline said. “You don’t have separate bathrooms?”

“That’s the part that you found offensive?” Critter asked.

Evangeline’s neck turned red.

“The other one is quite relatable,” she muttered. “Though she’s usually so cushioned that it doesn’t–”

She stopped herself and pressed a hand to her lips. Critter slapped her on the shoulder.

“I’m envious of that,” he said. “Celestia’s butt is like a brick.”

“Are you talking about our butts?”

Our girlfriends had stopped squabbling and were watching us with great interest. Julia looked sly, Honey looked amused. Celestia looked like she was going to crack Critter’s head open.

“Yes,” Critter said. When Evangeline and I glared at him, he shrugged. “Honesty is always the best policy or whatever.”

“What were you saying about my butt?” Julia whispered, slinking under the table to put her lips to my ear. “Is it sufficient?”

“Have I ever complained?” I whispered back, earning a kiss for my good behavior.

“We’ve decided to go on a walk,” Honey announced. “Celestia kind of ruined the brunch by eating someone beforehand, so we figured we’d find food on the go! Is that okay with you, sugarpea?”

Evangeline’s blush deepened as Honey grasped her own, fat stomach, making a pouty face. Critter rolled his eyes at me again.

“Of course,” Evangeline said.

“Hold on,” Critter said. “This favors the preds, yeah? What are us little people supposed to eat?”

“Our leftovers,” Celestia snarled, leaning over his shoulder. The difference in their heights was alarming. Critter only came up to her belly button. “You’ll eat whatever I swallow after packing you into my stomach.”

Critter kissed her cheek. Celestia’s mouth went slack and she unbent, scratching her neck.

“We can, uh, grab something from the street trucks I guess.”

“That’s a good girl,” Critter said.

“You okay with street food?” Julia asked, packing up her bag.

“Fine by me,” I said, which was partly true.

The other part of me was nervous. We were about to go roaming about with a pack of predators. Who knew what trouble they could get into? The box in my pocket dug into my hip as I pushed out of the booth.

If this was what it took to date a predator, I was determined to make a good impression.

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“So, how did y’all meet?” I asked.

Honey and Evangeline were walking with their hands behind their heads, talking in low voices. Celestia and Critter were bickering behind us. Julia and I were walking in the middle, her arm in mine. Every once in a while she’d bump me with her hip. It was a warm day,

mid-60's, and the snow was melting in piles around us. Spring was on its way.

"That's a fun story," Evangeline said, looking over her shoulder. "Honey actually got me out of a bad date."

"I did nothing of the sort," Honey said. "How come I don't remember this?"

"You don't remember anything."

"Hmm."

"So anyway," Evangeline continued, "I had connected with a guy on Hinge. It was my first date in a while and we met in a park for some coffee and conversation, but the man ended up being a total jackass. He kept trying to get me to go back to his apartment with him and I kept refusing, but he was getting pushy. Then Honey walked by like an avenging angel and just…swallowed him whole."

"Oh yeah," Honey said, putting a finger to her lips. "I did do that."

"And that was your first date?!" Critter asked incredulously. He and Celestia had stopped arguing and joined them at the crosswalk. Evangeline pointed at the park across the street.

"It happened right there," she said. "And no, that was our first meeting. I, um, kind of chased after her. She was having trouble lugging the guy home and I felt bad, so I offered to let her digest at my apartment which is only a block from here. She accepted, we talked through the night, and then I asked her on an official date the next day."

"The sex was incredible," Honey reminisced.

Evangeline hit her arm, mortified.

"You don't have to talk about that," she said.

"Why not? The things you do with your tongue–"

As Evangeline laid into Honey, I looked up at Celestia. She grinned down at me. She was missing one of her teeth on the left side.

"What's up, little man?" she asked.



Remembering what Critter had said, I nodded at her muscular arm.

"I was thinking about getting a gym membership in the city," I said. "You, um, look like you'd know a thing or two and I was wondering–"

"Gym membership?"

Celestia's nostrils flared. Julia groaned.

"Now you've done it," she whispered as Celestia grabbed my arm. Her grip was like iron.

"There's only one gym in the city worth going to," Celestia said. She scanned my body and I got the feeling she was analyzing every ounce of fat on my frame. "It's Bronzene on Lauterdon Street. Training gym, 24-hours. Basically every bodybuilder in the city trains there. The coaches are top notch. If you're thinking of joining, I'd totally give you a free session just to get you started!"

"You, uh, work there?" I asked.

"Damn right! That's actually where I met the small fry."

"Absolutely not true," Critter said, waving his hand. We crossed the street toward the park. I couldn't help but notice Julia and Honey's heads beginning to swivel. *Looking for prey,* I thought to myself. "You're just embarrassed about how we *actually* met when I beat your ass at Friday Magic."

"That red deck was bullshit!" Celestia roared. "Fucking Heartfire Hero, prowess mouse fuckery."

"Yeah yeah. Anyway, She-Hulk over here couldn't handle losing, so she totally swallowed me."

"What?" I asked.

Celestia rubbed the back of her neck.

"Yeah, okay, I was a sore loser," she said. "But I let him out the next day. He said I owed him breakfast and I figured he was right. We ordered some food, played some games, and then he went home. He found me at the gym the next day and asked me on a date."

"To an arcade?" I guessed.


I AM A NERD
I AM A NERD
I AM A NERD
GAME STORE

“To a bodybuilding convention,” Critter said, nudging my arm. “I’m not totally one-dimensional, man.”

“So you both knew your partner was a predator?” I asked. “Like, before you even started dating?”

“You didn’t?” Evangeline asked.

I shook my head. Julia and Honey had walked ahead, so it was just me, Evangeline, and CC (as I had privately started considering Critter and Celestia).

“Man, that must have been a surprise,” Critter scoffed. He jumped up on the curb with his arms outstretched, nearly losing his balance. Celestia caught him before he could fall. “Just like, ‘oops, darling, I also eat people!’.”

“Something like that,” I said.

“What’s the big deal?” Celestia asked. “Most people suck.”

“Of course you’d say that, glutton,” Critter said, kicking in her arms. She lifted him without difficulty, popping him up on her shoulders. “The rest of us have morals and shit. But I agree. Most people suck.”

“Agreed,” Evangeline sighed. “Not that Honey cares. She just eats when she’s hungry. Being a pred is a genetic thing. Apparently they just have this overwhelming urge to fill themselves. Haven’t you noticed?”

I had, in fact. Many times, when Julia hadn’t eaten in a while, she’d get antsy and distracted until we went out to hunt. Regular food could curb it for a few hours, but nothing satisfied her like a person did. Eventually, it became hard to apply morality to it at all and I stopped caring.

Or so I had convinced myself.

“It certainly keeps things interesting,” I said. “Living with a predator. How did you and Honey meet Julia?”

Celestia let Critter down off of her shoulders with a grunt. For once, she looked somewhat bashful.

“It was a…support group,” Celestia said. “For new preds. My boyfriend at the time forced me to go, not because I was new, but because I knew nobody. I’ve always kind of been able to do what I do and I didn’t question it, so I’d never sought out company. Julia was there, total freshy. She’d just eaten someone and was having a hard time dealing with it.”

A stab of guilt and envy shot through my chest. The fourteen years that I had spent away from Julia had been a period of immense growth for both of us, but it also meant that we had missed many of each other’s pivotal moments. When we first started dating, I had been so freaked out by her predatory nature that I hadn’t even considered that it might have been hard for her to come to terms with it. By that point, she was already comfortable, and yet…

“That must have been scary,” I said.

“It was,” Julia agreed, returning to the group. A gleam of sweat shone on her brow. Honey was nowhere to be seen. “I was 22, it was my first big girl job at a marketing firm, and I was terrified that I would fuck it up somehow. Those days, my cravings were so bad that I’d pack three lunches and scarf them down in the bathroom, but nothing helped. I started to think I was going crazy. I saw a doctor, a psychiatrist. Hell, I saw a psychic. But one day, I was visiting a client and I couldn’t concentrate. I was so hungry at that point that it felt like my stomach would implode, but then the client snapped her fingers under my nose and rapped me on the forehead with a folder. ‘Are you listening?’ she asked, and at that moment I just broke. I shoved her down my throat before I even knew what I was doing.”

“Which is traumatic,” Celestia nodded, using a word I was surprised to hear from her mouth. “You have no clue you can eat someone, you’ve been craving for months, and then you do and you have to come to terms with the fact that you’re going to digest them. Luckily, this was around the time that preds were getting some online recognition. The group had just started and there was an ad out for a meeting in our area.”

“And that’s where I met Celestia and Honey,” Julia finished. “Celestia especially helped me normalize the experience and Honey…honestly, Honey’s kind of an inspiration.”

“She’s way too good at this,” Celestia agreed. “Speaking of…”

Honey was bouncing her way back to us, her stomach double its original size. Given her excess padding, the white edges of her belly strained the fabric of her dress, turning it slightly see-through. Her cheeks were red from exertion and her smile was as wide as could be. Evangeline ran to her.

“Oh, poor darling,” she said, grabbing hold of Honey’s belly. “Let me help you with that.”

“Thank you,” Honey said happily, tracing the lumps left behind by her occupant’s furious pounding. “He’s really heavy, you know!”

Here it was: the make it or break it part of this encounter. Critter was keeping his cool, chuckling at Evangeline’s obvious fetish, and Celestia could obviously care less. Julia glanced at me. What was my reaction?

Honestly, the surprise of it didn’t phase me. I had seen Julia full enough times that the sheer shock factor wasn’t a problem. I did wonder who she had picked up and why, but considering nobody was chasing after her asking for their boyfriend back–

“Give me my boyfriend back!”

A tiny woman in her early twenties was running toward us from the other end of the park. She had dark hair that hung in ringlets around her shoulders and there was a bright red handprint on her cheek.

“I didn’t think you’d want him,” Honey said, “considering what he did to you.”

She proceeded to let out an enormous belch, her stomach noticeably deflating. The man inside of her shrieked in horror and Evangeline swooned, resting her chin on Honey’s breast. Honey stroked her hair absently.

“He was…he didn’t…give him back!”



The woman threw herself at Honey, but before she could get to her, Celestia scooped her up by the back of the collar. I was terrified that she would swallow her, but she gave the woman a shake, startling her into silence.



“Your boyfriend was a cunt,” Celestia said. “And you deserve better. I don’t know what kind of arrangement you had, but if you need help, a job, a place to sleep—we can arrange all of that. If you need help getting your shit out of his apartment, we can arrange all of that. If you wanna watch Honey dump his ass for you–”

“She gets it,” Critter said, putting a hand on Celestia’s arm. “Put her down.”

The woman gulped, her face white with shock. She stared at Honey’s stomach for a moment and then slowly, scarily, she began to laugh.

“Ha. Haha. Hahaha. Hehehehe.”

“Is this normal?” I whispered to Julia as the girl bent double.

“Er…”

Honey held out her belly and the woman pressed her face against it, punching at the bulges like she was playing whack-a-mole. Evangeline went to stop her, but Honey shrugged her off.

“She needs this,” Honey said.

“Fuck you, Teddy!” the woman screamed.



After about ten minutes of crying and punching, the woman tuckered herself out and Celestia carried her over to a bench and called a cab. She also gave the girl her number. I was endeared to her at that moment—she had shown so much tenderness to the woman—but then, as she was walking back to us, a male jogger ran past and she scooped him up and shoved his head in her mouth before he could even begin to scream.

ULP! ULP! ULLLLP!



“There she goes,” Critter sighed, rubbing his eyes.

“What the hell?” I asked.

“Celestia almost exclusively eats men,” Julia whispered to me. “Don’t, um, ask her why. It’s not a pretty story.”

“Ah, that hit the spot,” Celestia said as she got to us. Her stomach had gained a significant bulge—her last meal hadn’t quite finished digesting. “Julia, you’re up.”

I looked at Julia and she gave me a soft smile. Her eyes held a question, for which I was grateful. I knew that if I told her no, we would go home and this whole ordeal would be over, but to do so would be to sacrifice my relationship with her friends. Honey was humming to herself, stroking her stomach, and Celestia was flexing, hitting poses as Critter clapped for her.

What a strange world we lived in.

“Go ahead,” I said to Julia.

Her face brightened.

“Are you sure?” she asked, grabbing my arm. “I mean, I’ve been so hungry lately, but I can wait until we find a–”

“It’s fine.”

She kissed me on the cheek and I luxuriated in the warmth spreading through my chest. It was amazing that even after all this time, she could still give me butterflies. Julia looked around and nodded at a woman sitting on a bench reading a newspaper. The woman was in her mid-thirties, fit, wearing a tank top that showed off her tattooed biceps.

“How about her?” she asked.

The woman was glancing at us. Had she noticed Honey and Celestia eating the other park-goers? I knew from Julia that predation was uncommon—eating someone in public could result in the police being called or worse—but the woman didn’t seem scared. She was looking at Honey’s stomach and biting her lip, a little like…Evangeline.

“I think she’s perfect,” I said, going off a hunch. “In fact, I think I’ll introduce the two of you.”

“Do you know her?” Julia asked, alarmed as I grabbed her wrist.

“Nope!”

The woman averted her gaze as I walked up to her with Julia. My heart was beating fast. If I was wrong…

“Excuse me, Miss,” I said. “Would you like to be eaten by my girlfriend?”

Julia and the woman both gaped at me like I’d lost my mind. A second passed. Ten seconds. I was beginning to think that I had made a horrible mistake when a bright red blush crept up the woman’s neck and shoulders. If we were living in a cartoon, steam would be wafting off of her head.

“Oh!” she said, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear. “Oh, um…okay.”

“Really?” Julia asked.

Her stomach followed the question with an immense rumble, drawing a small moan from the woman’s lips. Her knees were shaking as she stared at Julia’s blouse, tracing the imaginary bulge that she would make in my girlfriend’s stomach. I took the woman’s hand and lifted her to her feet. Julia tilted her head at me.

“Oh, go on,” I said.

I leaned against a tree, my hands shoved deep in my pockets, watching Julia with a mix of fascination and unease. She circled her latest…volunteer, practically vibrating with excitement. There was something about the way Julia moved, something fluid, practiced—part predator, part performer—and it held everyone’s attention, especially mine.

“You’re sure you’re ready for this?” Julia’s smile was sweet, almost teasing as she tilted her head, her voice low but carrying.

The woman flushed and nodded, sneaking a quick, bashful glance my way, as if seeking reassurance. I managed a nod back, though my chest felt tight. How many times had I seen this now? The

whole thing was bizarre, but I'd been with Julia long enough that it almost—almost—felt normal.

Julia stretched, licking her lips in a way that made my skin prickle, and I caught the hint of something wicked in her smirk. "You know," she said, her voice light but with an edge that made me swallow, "I don't think you'll be coming back up." She let it linger, and the woman's shiver was unmistakable, though there was no hesitation in her eyes—just that strange, eager thrill.

I shifted against the tree, a little uncomfortable and unsure if it was because of what Julia was implying, or because a part of me, deep down, found it almost…ordinary. Watching her slip so easily into this role was like watching a show that I'd memorized, the same dangerous, mesmerizing routine. But what startled me most was realizing I didn't just feel like an onlooker; somehow, this world of hers had become mine too.

Julia placed a hand on the woman's shoulder, her fingers curling ever so slightly, a gentle but firm reminder of the power she held. The woman looked up at her, eyes wide with excitement, her breath coming in shallow little bursts. Julia leaned down to murmur something I couldn't quite hear, but whatever she said, it had the woman biting her lip, nodding eagerly.

My stomach twisted, a strange cocktail of feelings I couldn't quite parse. I'd been here before, watched Julia do this, but every time it was a little different, and every time it was just as surreal. Part of me wanted to step in, to remind her not to take it too far, even if she'd laugh it off like she always did. But another part of me—the part that had gotten comfortable in Julia's strange world—just watched, entranced.

Julia caught my eye for a split second, a glint of mischief flashing in her gaze, as if she knew exactly what I was feeling. She turned back to the woman and ran a finger along her jawline, tilting her chin up so they were eye to eye. "Last chance," she said, soft but clear. "Once you're inside, there's no turning back."

The woman shivered, but the exhilaration in her face said everything. “I’m ready,” she whispered, her voice barely audible but carrying an unmistakable certainty.

I felt a pang in my chest as Julia gave a soft hum of approval, one that sounded almost affectionate. She leaned down, her mouth parting, and I watched as she took the woman’s shoulders in her hands and began the slow, practiced process of…well, of swallowing her whole.

It was a graceful, almost hypnotic movement, the kind you wouldn’t expect for something so unbelievable. The woman’s face disappeared between Julia’s lips first, then her shoulders, her arms hanging at her sides as if she’d surrendered herself completely. Julia’s throat expanded to accommodate her, and I could see the faint, rhythmic motions as the woman was gradually pulled deeper.

I didn’t look away. I couldn’t. By now I’d learned that there was something strangely intimate about watching Julia do this. Every so often, Julia would pause, almost tenderly, letting her prey acclimate to the darkness she was slipping into. There was a hush around us, the usual background noise of the park seeming to fade, like we were caught in our own private little world. I began to get hard.

Julia winked.

Eventually, the woman’s legs were all that remained, her feet pointed down as Julia took the last of her, with a soft, satisfied hum. She swallowed one last time, and I saw the faint bulge settle in her midsection, the curve of her stomach now visibly rounded and full. Julia ran a hand over it, sighing contentedly, and I couldn’t tell if it was a performance just for me, or if she genuinely enjoyed the feeling.

I waited for the woman to say something, to react, and when I heard a faint groan from inside Julia, I felt a flash of guilt—sympathy, maybe.

Julia caught me staring and raised an eyebrow, the ghost of a smirk on her lips.

“Surprised?”



“Not…surprised,” I managed, though my voice felt thick. “It’s just…still hard to believe, I guess.”

Julia chuckled softly, and the sound was rich and warm—affectionate. “That’s okay, Ollie,” she teased, patting her stomach. “I don’t expect you to get used to everything about me.”

Then she gave me a look that I had only ever seen in the bedroom and my knees almost buckled. A few buttons on her shirt had popped. The front of her stomach protruded against her stretchy jeans, ebbing with every breath, a tantalizing line of sweat trickling over her navel. My eyes narrowed. I heard myself gulp. A hunger enveloped me, similar to Julia’s, but different in one crucial sense.

I wanted to be inside of her.

“Oh my god, are they gonna fuck?”

I blinked. Right, I was standing in a park with all of Julia’s friends. I looked down to see that I had taken a step toward Julia and she toward me. She was shaking her head in a similar way, working off the daze of shared lust.

“Er,” I said.

Critter came to my side and hooked his arm in mine. Evangeline had her fingers pressed to her lips, her eyes flicking between Julia’s stomach and Honey’s. Honey and Celestia were looking at me with interest.

Critter shook my arm. He grinned.

“Hot, ain’t it?” he whispered, pointing at Julia’s gut. “Don’t worry, I think so too, and Evangeline is absolutely nutty about it. I think it’s a prerequisite to dating a predator.”

“You think?” I murmured.

“Now that we’re all full,” Celestia said, towering over us, “why don’t we get some food for the little ones?”

“I’m not hungry,” Evangeline said. Honey was bouncing her stomach on her side. I thought Evangeline might pass out. “Not hungry at all.”

“Well, I could eat,” Critter complained, tugging me toward a food cart. “Come on, lover boy—we’ll give you some privacy in a half hour.”

As Critter ordered us both a chili dog, I mulled over the events of the afternoon. So apparently there were other…volunteers. Even ones who were willing to be digested. I wasn’t sure if that made them better than Julia’s regular victims and I had to admit that part of me was jealous.

Totally green with envy.

I didn’t want to be digested, or, well, I didn’t want to *die*. Aside from the few times that Julia had teased me with the idea, I had never considered the actual act of melting inside of her. What would a time-lapse video look like from the outside? Her stomach, shrinking. Her boobs, her ass, her thighs—growing. I looked behind me to see Julia talking to Honey and Celestia and I felt a tug of the magnetism that had drawn me to her when she had swallowed the woman.

Critter snapped his fingers under my nose. He had chili on his chin.

“Damn, dude,” he said, taking another bite. “You have it bad!”

“I guess,” I said.

“Makes me wish we could respawn. You know, like in a video game. Sometimes Celestia and I roleplay the possibility.”

Roleplay?

I snuck another glance at Julia and saw that her ears had perked up. Critter’s earrings jangled as he shoved the rest of the hotdog in his mouth. I handed him a napkin.

“Thanks, dude,” he said.

“No problem,” I said, and then, before I could regret it: “How do you roleplay that…exactly?”

***

Julia and I stood on the front porch of Critter's building, staring up at the gray turrets that towered above the third-story window. An enormous black door yawned before us, smooth and fragrant, made of some kind of exotic wood and framed on both sides by stained glass.

"So, Critter's rich," I said.

It was less of a question and more of an observation. Julia nodded her head, messing with the pleats in her hair.

"Celestia told me that his family was wealthy, but I think she failed to emphasize just *how* wealthy. It's not all his parent's, though. He's apparently a bit of a savant at…tech things? It's beyond my scope, sweetheart."

"Algorithmic trading," came Critter's voice from our left. Our heads swiveled, but it was only one of those doorbells with a camera and a speaker. "Algorithmic trading and a bit of cryptocurrency. Actually, a lot of cryptocurrency. I'll bore you with it sometime—god knows Celestia's tired of the lecture—but more to the point: I love your costumes!"

"Thanks," I said dubiously.

Apparently, aside from being a millionaire, Critter was also an avid roleplayer. When I had asked him about roleplaying, I had *thought* that we were talking about roleplay in the bedroom and we were to a degree, but Critter had also devised an entire game that he called Goblins and Gullets, which we were promptly invited to play.

It was a whole affair, though. Costumes, character sheets, invitations that came by mail despite the fact that he had our phone numbers.

I was wearing a pair of flowing, brown pants tucked into an oiled pair of boots and a tabard belted around the middle with a massive green buckle. The cloak that came with the outfit weighed heavily on my shoulders. A sword was strapped to my belt.

Julia was wearing…I really don't know enough about renaissance fashion to give the true names, but she was wearing a billowy, white shirt with a deep neckline and extra fabric that ended at

the elbows. It was belted in the center with a…girdle? A harness? A tight, maroon corset thing that I had spent thirty minutes pulling the straps of to get it to fit over Julia's post-digestion belly. The outfit was completed with a forest green skirt and a pair of brown leather boots.

Julia bowed for the camera.

"May we come in, my liege?" she asked.

"Not the proper title, but sure thing," Critter said happily.

The lock clicked in the door and it flung open to reveal Critter in all of his pirate glory. He had on black, flowy pants, black boots, black shirt, and black bracers.

"I'm actually a swashbuckler," he said.

"Aren't you cute," Julia said, pinching his cheek and walking past him. "Where's Celestia?"

"In the basement," Critter said. "Honey and Evangeline are going to be a few minutes late. Something about Honey's outfit tearing." He turned to me and bowed low. For lack of anything better to do, I bowed back. "Do you want the full tour?" he asked.

"Do I!"

As Critter showed me around the house, he outlined the details of the roleplaying game.

"So, just in case you didn't read the email," he said, "we're split up into teams. It's you, me, and Evangeline vs. Julia, Honey, and Celestia. If we lose, we get eaten. If we win, I don't know about you, but I'm going to make Celestia go to a crossfit gym for a week. She *hates* crossfit, won't shut up about it."

"Hold up," I said. We were passing a row of bedrooms bigger than Julia's entire apartment. The four-poster bed looked like something right out of a movie—all dark wood and heavy, burgundy curtains. "When you say 'eat us', you mean in game, right?"

"Haha, no."

I whipped around. Critter put his hands up, bending backwards as I jammed a finger into his chest.

"What do you mean, no?"

“It’s the girls’ fault,” Critter squeaked. “Something about a potential partner swap.”

Partner swap? Julia hadn’t come to me about a partner swap. Did she expect me to have sex with Honey and Celestia? No offense to Evangeline and Critter, but neither of their partners were my type. Being eaten by them, though…

It was like Critter had a sixth sense for the cogs turning in my brain. He slipped under my finger and put an arm around my shoulder. It was quickly becoming his signature move.

“Curious?” he asked.

“You smell good,” I said. “Why do you smell good?”

“Marshmallow perfume. Celestia likes–”

“Okay, that’s enough.”

I rubbed my face and mulled over the possibility that I might be swallowed by Honey or Celestia. I trusted Julia with my life. She’d swallowed me multiple times and while I had broached the subject of roleplaying digestion, she had been hesitant on the grounds that I was delicious and that she already had trouble letting me go. It had been…flattering. And hot. But we had been slowly working our way up to new, intimate heights, and adding Honey and Celestia to the mix might make it awkward. Besides, I knew Julia was the jealous type.

“Celestia is going to be so jealous,” Critter said.

“Are you a mind reader?” I asked.

Critter shrugged his shoulders and turned in a slow circle, making arcane gestures with his fingers. “Jealousy is the point,” he said. “Our preds are territorial. This is a dominance game for them—something to sharpen their teeth. We’re just helping them hone their instincts and besides, imagine what it’s going to be like going home with Julia if you end up getting swallowed by Honey. She’s going to go mad trying to one-up her.”

“You’re a sinister person, Critter.”

“Mmm, thanks.”

The doorbell rang and Celestia answered. We heard murmuring voices down the stairs. A second later, Evangeline came up the steps in a sparkly, maroon dress. A flower crown adorned her brown curls.

"Hello, boys," she said, hefting a folder. "Are you ready to play Goblins and Gullets?"

"You only needed to bring your character sheet," Critter said, nodding at the folder. "What is all that?"

"Background info," Evangeline said, not un-self-consciously. "Why? Where are your sheets?"

I pulled a crumpled piece of paper out of my sleeve. Critter tapped his forehead.

"Here," I said.

"In here," Critter said.

Evangeline looked mortified, so Critter and I swept her off for the partial tour, ghosting the halls while discussing the game.

"Teams," Evangeline said. "I don't mind teams, but the entire outcome of the game is determined by dice, right? We're basically rolling to see who gets swallowed by who."

"Wrong," Critter trilled. "There's more to G&G than luck. We also play mini games. Hide and seek, capture the flag, ghost in the graveyard."

"Children's games," Evangeline clarified.

"Bah! Adults just pretend not to like children's games. You should see the attendance at those adult summer camps. They go crazy for a good game of ghost in the graveyard, I tell you. My LARP group goes once a year."

"Nerd," I coughed.

Critter punched me in the arm, but the blow was weak and besides, I was grinning like a bandit. I'd had my fair share of nerd experiences, after all, but Critter was on a whole other level and he didn't seem ashamed by it. Meanwhile, Evangeline pressed her fingers to her lips, tapping her foot.

“I’m not sure,” she said. “About being eaten by Julia or Celestia.”

“Julia’s gentle,” I said, trying to sound bright even though my stomach was twisting. Was this game normal, or was I about to do something deviant? “How about Celestia?”

“Not gentle,” Critter said, and then, when Evangeline and I looked at him, he snickered. “Unless you ask, which I never do.”

“G-ross,” Evangeline said.

“Ollie, Evangeline, Critter,” Julia sang from the bottom of the stairs. “We’re ready for you!”

“Alright, lads,” Critter said, clapping his hands together, “let’s get to it!”

We trundled down the stairs, Critter ahead, Evangeline and I trailing behind. The foyer was built from the same dark wood as the door, drinking in the light from the chandelier. Critter led us to a door built in the side of the staircase which led to another, descending staircase. The fragrance of incense wafted up to us from below and as we took the steps, mist began to swirl around our ankles. Beneath the incense I could smell the distinct, carnival-sweet scent of fog machine.

“Behold,” Critter said as the staircase ended at a door. He pushed against it, swinging it wide. “My play room.”

Critter flipped on the lights, and I nearly staggered back from the sheer magnitude of it. Calling this his “play room” had to be the understatement of the year. The room was practically the size of a gymnasium, with thick, plush carpet that muffled our footsteps and added an unexpected warmth to what should have been a cavernous basement. In the middle sat a sprawling, handcrafted game table, its polished wood gleaming, embedded with custom cup holders, a velvet-lined dice rolling area, and even adjustable lamps for the perfect lighting. This was a table that could host anything from an epic Dungeons & Dragons campaign to an intricate board game marathon, and it had clearly seen both.

I tore my gaze away from the table and scanned the walls, nearly tripping over myself as I took in the treasures lining the shelves. Every inch was packed with collectibles and games—rows of rare board games, shelves upon shelves of manuals and lore books, meticulously painted miniatures encased in glass, and enough dice to supply an entire army of dungeon masters. There were helmets, shields, and medieval weapons arranged like art, each one meticulously placed and polished. Near the far wall, suits of armor stood like silent guardians, their gleaming plates shining under soft spotlights, and I caught sight of an entire closet brimming with costumes fit for a cosplay convention. There were velvet cloaks, handmade tunics, ornate masks, even a battle-worn leather cuirass that looked like it had been snatched from a movie set.

And then, to top it all off, there was an actual stage in the corner, complete with a set of theater lights hanging above it. A curtained movie screen hung behind the stage, and an array of plush, reclining seats filled a small section facing it. This place wasn't just for games—it was for full-scale productions. Critter just grinned, watching me drink it all in, his eyes twinkling like he knew exactly what kind of wonderland he'd created.

"I knew you were a geek," he said, nudging me in the ribs. "Come on, the girls are waiting!"

Julia, Honey, and Celestia were sitting at the bar (because of course there was a bar). Celestia was dressed like a barbarian, all furs and leather, and Honey was wearing a flowing, black witch's dress with slits cut out for her thighs. They both looked surprisingly comfortable in their costumes. Julia raised a glass toward us.

"Want some homemade mead?" she asked.

I would never tire of the way my heart skipped a beat whenever she smiled at me. My hand went automatically to my pocket where, even in costume, I kept that little box.

"Sure," I said, needing my courage.

Evangeline sat in Honey's lap, snacking on the chips Critter had laid out in ornate, glass bowls. Julia gave me a sip of her mead and it was full and flavorful. She kissed me and her lips tasted of honey. Celestia grumbled and put back beer after beer and Critter…where was Critter?

WHACK!

A treasure chest overflowing with fake gold coins was dropped onto the bar. The lights dimmed and a slow, adventurous song began to play on hidden speakers. Critter rose from behind the bar wearing a comical blue hat. He bowed with a flourish.

"Guardians and Seekers, welcome," he said. "This adventure starts, as many do, in a tavern where three brave explorers count their loot. However, just as you think to spend your money on drink and comfort women–"

"Huh?" Evangeline said.

"–you find a scroll."

I reached into the treasure chest and pulled out a tattered, papyrus scroll. A message had been written on it in rich, emerald ink. Critter nodded for me to read.

"Deep within the cavern of the Midnight Dragon lies a hoard, more gold and enchanted items than any adventurer could dream of," I said*. "But legends say that the Midnight Dragon is willing to grant half of its hoard to those clever or brave enough to claim it. The challenge? The dragon's defenders—its own loyal minions—must keep the hoard safe until dawn. If any thieves make it out with treasure, they get a share of the Midnight Dragon's wealth."*

I looked up to see that Julia, Honey, and Celestia had disappeared from the basement which was slowly filling with fog. An involuntary shiver ran up my spine. This was actually really cool!

"So we just have to find the 'treasure'?" I asked.

Critter tossed aside his wizard hat and put his feet up on the bar. Evangeline was swaying from side to side.

“And get past the guardians,” he said with a wink. “Neither of you have been to my house before—I hope you like it, actually, because I’d love to do more game nights!—so you wouldn’t know about my basement. This place used to be zoned for warehouses. The whole neighborhood, actually, and when I bought the house, it came with the land beneath. Most of it was boarded up, but with some, er, *subtle* excavation, I’ve managed to repurpose a lot of it. Here, let me show you.”

He pulled out something that looked like a remote and clicked a button. I heard deadbolts sliding back in several doors. One of the tapestries on the wall swayed.

“Abandoned warehouse? Excavation? Are you sure all of this is safe?” Evangeline asked, thumbing her dress. “I mean, this is kind of a silly premise, right?”

“Silence, knave!” Critter said, drawing his dagger from his side. Both Evangeline and I leapt back until he pushed it against his palm, revealing it to be a stage prop. “There’s adventure afoot! We shall slip past the guardians and abscond from the Midnight Dragon’s lair with its fabulous treasure! And, to that end–”

He passed us each a thin bracelet. It looked like a Fitbit or one of those health-sensor gadgets, but then he held a button on the side and static crackled from both of ours.

“Testing, one, two.”

“A radio,” Evangeline said. “Are you sure this won’t, erm, harm our partners if we’re in their stomachs?”

“Radio waves pass through us every second,” Critter said, waving her off. He was practically bouncing with excitement. “Each of the girls had a specific role, by the way. Julia’s a trapper, Celestia’s a champion, and Honey’s a witch. We’re going to have to be careful if we’re going to escape them.”

“A trapper?” I asked.

“A witch?” Evangeline said, raising an eyebrow.

“They’ve got like, props and shit. Come on, let’s explore!”

Evangeline shook her head and walked over to the stage. A trapdoor had opened in the middle of it, leading down to…what, I couldn't tell. Critter pulled out something from beneath the bar and tossed it to her. It was a fake torch. When Evangeline pushed a button on the side, it lit up.

"Are these cobwebs fake?" Evangeline asked, dubiously.

"Sure are," Critter said. "I spared no expense, so explore to your heart's content. If we don't end up seeing the full lair, I'll give y'all a tour later. I mean, er, tally ho!"

Evangeline rolled her eyes at both of us and walked through the trapdoor. She must have been braver than I, because when Critter turned to the tapestry, I followed him.

"Ready to face the guardians?" he asked.

"As ready as I'll ever be," I sighed, though my excitement was building with every second.

Critter pushed open the door to a dark, musty hallway. The walls had been padded with some kind of paper mache to make them look like the walls of a cave—or a vast, yawning maw. Critter and I held our torches aloft as the passage branched in two directions. A distinct, dripping sound could be heard from the left.

"You say this was a warehouse?" I asked, incredulous.

"Sure was," Critter said. "But don't be too impressed. We've been modifying these halls for years—my LARP group, that is. Seriously, if you wanna join us, we do all kinds of roleplaying. Nothing this exciting, though. This is for us."

Us. I smiled at the thought. Critter had done a great job of making Evangeline and I feel included. He had all but invited us back for another game night. I was making a mental note to invite him and Celestia over for coffee when a thud to our left caused us to jump. Critter grabbed my arm, squeezing it tight.

"Shit," he said.

"Scared of the dark?" I asked. "Don't you know where you placed the treasure?"

“I had a third party hide it,” Critter said. “I told them not to tell me.”

“Ah. Well, if there’s noise in this direction, then perhaps one of the ‘guardians’ has found the hoard.”

“P-probably!”

“Do you want me to go first?”

Critter braced himself, drawing himself up to his full, diminutive height.

“I’ll do it,” he said.

I crept along behind Critter, trying not to make too much noise on the crunchy, paper floor. His figure moved swiftly down the narrow hallway, appearing unbothered, but I couldn’t shake the prickling sense of danger in the air. The maze Critter had designed for the game was a bit too convincing, with dim, ambient lighting casting long, unsettling shadows. I had to remind myself that it was just a game, just for fun, but the earlier scenes of Julia and the others had set my nerves on edge.

Suddenly, Critter stopped, and I nearly crashed into him. He squinted at something up ahead.

“See anything?” I whispered, trying to look around him.

“Nah,” he whispered back, though his eyes scanned the walls as though he expected them to close in on us. For all his projected confidence, there was a slight hesitation in his voice. He took a step forward.

That’s when I heard it. The faint, metallic snap.

A net sprang out of nowhere, lifting Critter off the ground in a mess of ropes and tangled limbs. He let out a very un-Critter-like yelp, kicking his legs as he struggled against the net. I had to clap a hand over my mouth to stifle a laugh.

“Oh, crap, crap, hey! Ollie, a little help here?” he muttered, fumbling for the mechanism.

But before I could do anything, I heard soft footsteps in the darkness. I froze, watching as a shadow emerged from the far end of the corridor. Julia.

She stepped into the light with that sly, catlike smile, looking every bit the devious trapper she was supposed to be. Her eyes glinted as she took in Critter, dangling in the net, and her lips curled into a grin that sent a chill down my spine.

"Well, well," she purred, circling Critter with leisurely strides. "Looks like I've caught myself a prize. Midnight Dragon's got some competition tonight."

She caught my eye for a split second, and I felt a thrill of something—like she was inviting me to step in, to challenge her. But there was no way I was going to risk getting caught next. I watched, fascinated, as she sized up her "catch."

Critter, still trying to act casual despite his tangled predicament, chuckled nervously. "All right, all right, you got me. Game over, right?"

Julia tilted her head, feigning thoughtfulness. "Mmm, not quite," she said, a mischievous sparkle in her eye. "You know, thieves like you are best kept out of sight. Lucky for me, I have just the place."

Before Critter could make sense of it, she leaned in, tilting his head just so, and to my astonishment, opened her mouth wide—wider than I thought possible.

"Wait, wait, Julia!" he spluttered, half-laughing, half-panicked. But there was no stopping her; she was in full character mode. She lifted him with ease, her gaze fixed on him with a mixture of amusement and maybe just a touch of menace.

Critter wriggled, shooting me a helpless look. I was rooted to the spot, watching, feeling an odd sense of envy and awe as she tipped him toward her open mouth. His feet vanished first, then his knees, then his waist, all disappearing into her as if she'd done it a thousand times. I could hear his muffled protests and laughs, but he was in no position to argue now.



I found myself transfixed as Julia's throat bulged, taking him in, inch by black-clothed inch. Her eyes closed, savoring the moment, and with a final swallow, he was gone. She let out a small, contented sigh and patted her stomach, casting a playful glance in my direction.

"Care to be next?" she asked, arching a brow.

I swallowed hard, forcing a grin. "Uh, I think I'll pass," I said, trying to ignore the mix of fascination and nervous energy fluttering in my stomach.

Julia chuckled softly before slipping back into the shadows, leaving me alone in the empty corridor.

What the fuck, what the fuck, what the fuck?

My heart was racing so fast that I had to sit down. I couldn't get the image out of my head—Julia's narrow-eyed gaze as she held her bloated stomach, Critter's body pressed up against the fabric of her blouse. It was so hot that it was driving me insane and I…I wanted it to be me. My bracelet beeped and a low gurgle filled the hallway. Critter's breathless voice surfaced from the biological interference.

"They got me, guys," he said.

"Hush in there, food," I heard Julia tease. "You're not escaping the Midnight Dragon's number one trapper."

"Fuck."

Was this really supposed to be part of the game? When Critter had suggested it, I had kind of imagined that we'd each be with our own partners, but Julia had swallowed him like it was nothing. Would I be okay if…if Honey or Celestia swallowed me?

My blush deepened. This was basically permission, right? A naughty game to get us used to each other? Eating people didn't have to be sexual. It was all part of the game.

I took a steadying breath. Critter's disappearance into Julia's belly was all for show—though admittedly, she'd committed to it a little more than I'd expected. That sly grin on her face after she'd swallowed him down...I shook off the thought. This was no time to get distracted.

Steeling myself, I pressed on. The hallway opened into a larger chamber, dimly lit by electric wall sconces. I scanned the room cautiously, wondering if another trap lay in wait, when I heard footsteps approaching from the opposite end of the chamber.

Evangeline. She was tiptoeing her way around a corner, eyes sharp, clearly in full thief mode. Relief washed over me, and I moved to call her name, but froze when I saw who was behind her.

Celestia.

Even from a distance, Celestia looked towering—massive red hair tumbling around her shoulders, arms crossed over her chest, and a wolfish grin that could make anyone feel like prey.

Evangeline took another step forward, unaware of the giant looming just behind her. I wanted to yell out, to warn her, but before I could say anything, Celestia grabbed her by the shoulder with one powerful hand and pulled her close.

“Well, well, well,” Celestia said, her voice a rich, taunting rumble. “What do we have here? A little mouse sneaking around my treasure?”

Evangeline tried to wriggle out of her grasp, clearly torn between amusement and genuine shock. “Hey! Celestia, a little warning next time, maybe?”

Celestia smirked.

“What fun would that be?”

Almost in slow motion, Celestia tilted Evangeline’s head to the side, inspecting her with a hungry glint in her eye. “You know what we barbarians do to pesky thieves, don’t you?”

Evangeline gulped, playing along with a nervous chuckle. “Oh, I’m sure it’s something...merciful?”

“Merciful?” Celestia laughed. “Not a chance, darling.” And with that, she opened her mouth wide, her jaw extending in a way that was both impressive and unnerving, and began to ease Evangeline in.

From where I stood, I could see the expression on Evangeline’s face shift from surprise to something like excitement, though she shot



me a quick look as Celestia worked her in. Her arms disappeared, then her shoulders, and finally, with a powerful gulp, Celestia swallowed her down to her waist. Her throat bulged as she took her time, drawing out each swallow, clearly relishing the little show.

I found myself frozen once more as Evangeline's hips disappeared, then her legs, and at last, her boots. Celestia finished with a satisfied hum, patting her full belly. I could hear Evangeline's muffled giggle from within as she gave an explorative squirm.

Celestia noticed me then, her eyes flashing with a wicked grin. "What are you staring at, thief?" she yelled, patting her full stomach. "Do you want to be next?"

I took a step back. I hadn't expected her to roleplay as hard as she did, but considering she was dating Critter, it made sense. "Uh, I think I'll pass. Besides, I'm, uh...I've still got treasure to find."

"Suit yourself."

She flashed me a smile and sauntered off, looking perfectly content with her "catch" squirming away in her belly.

Once she'd disappeared, I let out a breath I hadn't realized I'd been holding. This game was getting a little too real—but if I knew anything about these types of games, the final challenge would be waiting for me around the next corner.

And judging by my luck so far, that "challenge" was probably going to be Honey.

I took another deep breath as I crept down the next corridor, feeling the weight of the game settling on my shoulders. Julia had claimed Critter. Celestia had devoured Evangeline. Which meant…I was the last thief standing.

I kept my steps light, edging around corners and peering into the next room before stepping in. Critter's basement was a maze, and I had to hand it to him—he'd put serious thought into the layout. It wasn't easy keeping my sense of direction, and every new turn had me on edge.

Finally, I stepped into a larger room, this one brighter and filled with what looked like mismatched furniture; an armchair in one corner, a big chest in another, some blankets piled in a haphazard heap. I scanned the room, looking for any hint of movement, any sign of a trap.

That's when I spotted her.

Honey was sitting right in the middle of the room, comfortably reclined against a pile of blankets. She looked completely relaxed, eyes half-lidded with a gentle, dreamy expression. Her plump form was draped in a deep, velvety black cloak, embroidered with golden stars that shimmered in the light. With her rounded face and bright, slightly dazed smile, she looked more like someone at a tea party than a guardian of treasure.

I cleared my throat, trying to summon my confidence.

"Uh, Honey?"

Her gaze slowly drifted to me, and her smile broadened as though seeing an old friend. "Oh, hi, Ollie!" she said brightly. "Are you here to steal my treasure?"

The casual tone threw me off, but I went with it, raising my hands in mock surrender. "Well, yeah, that's kind of the idea." I half-expected her to laugh it off, maybe make a gentle attempt to "catch" me.

Instead, she tilted her head thoughtfully, her smile never fading. "Oh, I see," she murmured, almost to herself. "Well…I can't let you do that, can I?"

Before I could react, she straightened up, her eyes shining with a surprising intensity. "I guess I'll just have to swallow you!"

I blinked, taken aback by her sudden enthusiasm. "Wait, what?"

But she was already moving, standing and stepping toward me with a soft, unhurried grace. There was something almost mesmerizing in the way she moved, each step purposeful, as if she had all the time in the world. I took a step back, fumbling for words, but

she just smiled, that warm, absent-minded smile that seemed perfectly at odds with the situation.

"Oh, don't be shy, Ollie," she said, mirroring something that Julia had said when I first met her. "I promise, it won't hurt."

"Wait, really?" I stammered, suddenly unsure if she was kidding. Honey didn't seem the type to go through with it; she was just so…soft.

But before I could back away, she reached out and gently, almost gingerly, placed her hands on my shoulders. "Just relax," she murmured.

In one smooth motion, she leaned in and opened her mouth wide.

I gasped, eyes widening as I watched her jaws part, stretching impossibly, to reveal a warm, dark space beyond. The last thing I saw before she swallowed me was her kind, smiling eyes, still gazing at me with that sweet, dreamy look. And then I was being pulled inside.

It was pleasant, somehow—a soft but insistent tug that eased me down, bit by bit. Her throat was surprisingly spacious, warm and soft as it guided me downward, like being wrapped in a thick, cozy blanket. I could feel her muscles ripple as she took her time, as if savoring each swallow. Her grip was unyielding but gentle, and I could do nothing but follow her lead, inch by inch.

I was halfway down before it really hit me—Honey was swallowing me. Honey, with her airy smile and gentle nature, was devouring me whole, and she was doing it as effortlessly as breathing.

Finally, I slid all the way down, settling into her stomach with a soft, muted plop. The space was snug and warm, surrounded on all sides by heavily padded walls. I could hear Honey patting her belly, humming softly, and her voice floated down to me, still carrying that sweet, soothing tone.

"There we go," she murmured, patting her full stomach with what sounded like genuine affection. "All safe and sound."



I shifted a little, caught between fascination and shock, and her gentle giggle echoed around me. “Didn’t expect that, did you?” she said, sounding almost as if she were talking to herself.

No, I definitely hadn’t.

“Neither does Evangeline,” Honey sighed, spinning in a slow circle. The inertia pressed me into the wall, shaking her full belly as the bottom quivered against her hips. “Every time, it’s a surprise to her. She likes it, though.”

The last sentence was reassurance; like Honey was worried that she was treating Evangeline poorly. I laughed.

“I know she does, Honey,” I said, leaning against her and closing my eyes. “So, uh, what now?”

“Mmm, digestion, I suppose.”

My eyes snapped open and my breath got short, but Honey was already giggling, ending with a cute little snort.

“Kidding, kidding! Celestia said Critter would let us know when the game was advancing. He didn’t have much faith that you wouldn’t be caught. You’re a good prey, by the way! Very agreeable. Very tasty.”

“Uh…thanks?”

I’m embarrassed to admit that the complement made me blush. Honey had such an easy way of talking that she had lulled me into a false sense of security. She could, if she wanted to, melt me right here and now. Did I trust her like I trusted Julia? I would have to if I was going to get out of this alive. Speaking of Julia…

“So this doesn’t, uh, freak you out?” I asked. “Eating each other’s partners? You trust each other?”

“Oh yes!” Honey said emphatically. She leaned her stomach against a wall and I grunted, squashed by her body. “I trust Julia and Celestia with my life! They’ve been so good to me, Ollie, and you’re so good for Julia. She talks about you a lot. It made me kind of jealous. I had a childhood friend, too, but when I showed him what I could do, he ran away from me.”

“Oh. That’s sad.”

“It was. He cried when I ate him.”

“That’s…sad?”

Okay, so Honey was a bit more unhinged than I expected. She hummed and did a twirl again, throwing me against the far wall. I wondered if she moved around this much when Evangeline was inside of her.

“So I was curious,” Honey said. “About what you tasted like; what the appeal was. And like I said, you’re very good prey! You rub my stomach just right. It makes me tingle.”

This was all getting to be a bit much.

“That’s very honest, Honey,” I said. “Celestia got Evangeline.”

Honey stopped.

“Oh,” she said. “I thought Julia would.”

Ah, so there was some tension there after all. I got the impression that Honey wasn’t worried about Evangeline and Julia; probably because, though Honey was fatter, she and Julia were similar in build. Celestia was a wildcard. Maybe Evangeline had a thing for big barbarians, though I couldn’t see Celestia being interested in anyone aside from Critter. Honey confirmed my suspicions with a clench of her stomach.

“I hope she’s being gentle,” she muttered. “She can be so rough! But she’s nice to girls…usually. Ho, hum, hmm.”

Liquid gurgled between my legs. Honey’s stomach wasn’t exactly empty when I landed in it. A tiny light flickered on my wrist, revealing the throbbing pink walls. Critter’s communicator crackled.

“Alright, gang, looks like we all got caught,” Critter said. “Guardians win this round. Now for the bonus game.”

Bonus game? I raised my communicator to my ear and then, to be considerate, pressed it into the space between Honey’s breasts so that she’d have a better chance of hearing what Critter said. Her boobs were heavier than Julia’s, indenting the stomach. Honey murmured to herself as Critter came over the speaker once more.



“Uh, Julia wants to say something.”

A wet, muffled sound preceded Julia’s voice. Critter was probably pressing his speaker into her the same way I was with Honey. Another flash of jealousy hit me all at once—along with a slight, begrudging respect for Critter. He had, after all, predicted that the predators would be envious of each other. Why not the prey?

“Who has Ollie?” Julia asked.

Honey leaned forward, holding her stomach up to her mouth. I sloshed inside of her, blushing.

“I do,” she said. “Evangeline?”

“Me,” came Celestia’s voice, clearer than Julia’s. Either Evangeline was out of her stomach or Celestia had spit up her communicator. By the dull thumping coming over the mic, I was going to guess the latter. “And if you want her back, you’re going to have to challenge me for her. The Midnight Dragon has revised their game. Now the first couple to escape the castle together wins the fabulous prize.”

So that was part two of the game:

The predators now had to rescue their prey and escape from the basement without being eaten. It was like a…fucked up version of “kill the carrier”, but the footballs were people and this metaphor was deeply flawed. Honey was on the move. I swayed along with her as she wandered down a hall, alone in the darkness of her gurgling gut.

Badump. Badump.

Even her heartbeat was soft. I couldn’t get over how similar, yet different her stomach was in comparison to Julia’s. Honey was heavier, rounder, and it showed in the way her stomach cradled me. The walls were thicker, almost plush, but they held me in place with a yielding weight. There was no squeezing or tightening, just a natural press from every side that reminded me of sinking into a thick, downy mattress.

And it was warm in here—no, more than warm. Honey’s body heat radiated through me in waves. I found myself drifting into a

strange sort of relaxation, the layers of soft tissue around me absorbing each shift and motion I made, creating a cushion so complete I could barely move.

Julia's stomach had a certain intensity to it, a charged awareness, like she could feel every heartbeat of mine while I was inside. But Honey's felt...absent-minded, almost, as if my presence barely registered.

"Celestia," Honey called. "Celestia, come out, come out!"

"Oh, Honey~!"

I perked up. That was Julia's voice! The communicator crackled:

"Hey, roomie! How's Honey's stomach? Better than Julia's? Oomf! She squeezed me for that. Really, Ollie, I don't know how you deal with such a troublesome partner. She isn't letting me move at all!"

"She probably just wants you to shut up," I said.

"Is Honey okay?" came another, worried voice. "How is she? You better not be doing anything indecent inside of her!"

"Was kind of just taking a nap," I said.

"Oh, good," Evangeline sighed. "Yeah, she's great for that! Sometimes I'll sleep inside of her, but then her tummy gets over excited. She's so powerful, she doesn't even realize it when she starts to digest me."

She sounded like she was drooling. I shifted uncomfortably, wondering if Honey would notice if she started to digest *me*.

"So, how do you wanna do this?" Julia asked.

It was hard to hear her through Honey. I pushed my face into the wall and was bounced backwards as another, huge, jiggling object was pushed into it from the outside.

"Sup," came Critter's twice muffled laugh.

"Hi," I gasped, drowning under the weight.

"Oh, oh, don't press into me like that," Honey said, rubbing her thighs together. She shook as Julia rubbed against her. "I'm ticklish! I, hehe, okay no Julia that wasn't a, hehehe. Please don't, *ohohoho!*"



BOING! BOING!

Everything around me was being jostled. Her stomach squeezed; her breasts bounced against the back of my head. I threw my arms up, curling into a defensive ball as Honey bent double, laughing her ass off.

"Ohoho, hehehe, I give, I give, I'll let him out!"

"You'd better," Julia snarled with mock sincerity. "That's my treasure you're keeping in there."

With all of the pressure of a bursting bubble, Honey's stomach clenched around me and I shot back up through her throat, landing, or rather oozing, into Julia's outstretched arms.

"Hey, cutie," she said, kissing my soggy cheek. "You look good!"

"Yuh huh."

My clothes were a mess. Every inch of my body was sodden, making every movement feel awkward and gooey. I shook myself off, squeezing the slime out of my shirt, and as I did so, something fell out of my pocket. My wallet? Honey bent to pick it up.

"Ollie," she hummed in her sleepy cadence, "you dropped your b–"

Our eyes met at the very second the recognition dawned on her face and I lunged, slapping a hand over her mouth before she could squeal. The box was open in her palm, the engagement ring sparkling in the fake torchlight.

"Ermhergerd, ermhergerd, ermhergerd!" Honey hummed, bouncing up and down.

I bounced with her. She was only shorter than my by an inch or so and I had to curve my body over hers to silence her. I looked over my shoulder and saw that Julia was turned around, squinting down an adjacent passage. I snatched the box from Honey. She pulled me into an enveloping hug.

"Quiet, quiet," I hissed. "It's a surprise."

Honey spun me in a circle, keeping her voice low.

“I’m so happy for you! I’m so happy for Julia! I’m just so happy!”

“Alright, alright,” I laughed. This was more animated than I had ever seen her, though I’ll admit that wasn’t much to go on. Honey set me down and mimed zipping her lips. Even as she did so, though, she looked between Julia and me, giggling, her cheeks red from excitement. “I’m waiting for the right time.”

“Oh, anytime is the right time, Ollie,” Honey said, folding her hands over her chest. “You’re all she talks about. She loves you, really, truly. Can I be there when you ask her?”

I was about to waffle through an answer when a sharp crack sounded through the hallway. Celestia was marching toward us, her leather boots crunching through the paper mache props. Her eyes were locked on Julia’s stomach. Her nostrils flared.

“Let him out,” Celestia growled.

Emerging from the shadows with her head brushing the ceiling, she looked like some kind of monster. Her stomach hung over her hips, not touching, her muscles locked around a small, wriggling bulge. Honey’s eyes went wide. She frowned.

“Gentle,” she said. “Celestia, please, you’re going to hurt her.”

All of the venom went out of Celestia immediately. She unclenched her stomach.

“Honey, it’s just roleplay,” Celestia said, kneeling so that Honey could inspect her. “I wouldn’t hurt Evangeline. Besides, she was the one who asked me to clench harder. She said it was better than bouncing with every step.”

Evangeline gave a muted, perverted giggle. Honey pursed her lips.

“Harlot,” she said under her breath. “I’m going to punish you as soon as I rescue you.”

Maybe it was just my imagination, but Evangeline’s giggles seemed to redouble, as did her futile squirms.

“Are we doing this or what?” Julia asked. “Critter’s starting to get soft on me.”

Celestia shot upright, raising her fists.

“Release him,” she said.

Julia and Celestia squared off in the center of the maze, their eyes locked in a battle of wills. Celestia was grinning from ear to ear, her wild red hair spilling over her fur-lined shoulders, looking very much at home with a hulking sword strapped to her back. Julia, in contrast, stood poised and calculating, her fingers drumming lightly on her hips.

"Think you’re getting Honey’s prize back without a fight?" Celestia taunted, planting her feet as she leaned in. "You’ll have to pry her out of our team’s victory pile."

Julia raised an eyebrow.

"And you think you’re keeping Evangeline all to yourself? Might be a little too much for you to handle," she replied with a smirk.

The communicator beeped. Critter’s voice came over the comms.

“Let’s do this by the books,” he said. “High roll wins.”

Julia pulled a 20-sided die out of the pouch on her waist. Celestia made no move to do so herself. Instead, she cracked her knuckles.

“Yeah, I think I’m going to get him back the old fashioned way,” she said.

With that, she pushed off of her back foot, rocketing toward us. Honey and I jumped left while Julia rolled to the right, squashing Critter and earning a muffled cry of displeasure. Celestia spun on her heel, far too agile for her size, and swept in again, low this time, aiming to take Julia around the waist. Julia waited until the last second, the moment when Celestia’s arms were closing around her, then twisted with all of her might, bringing her enormous stomach up into Celestia’s chin. The giant flipped over her, crashing in a pile of paper mache boulders.

“Wow,” I said.

Julia grinned at me, sweat gleaming on her brow.

“Didn’t know I could do that, did you?” she asked. “You okay in there, Critter?”

“Ow.”

“Yeah, he’s fine.”

Celestia was getting up again. She shook her head and blinked her eyes, locking in on Julia once more. This time she approached slowly, menacingly, keeping her arms wide to prevent escape. Her smile was devilish. I wasn’t sure it was even roleplay anymore.

“Clever,” she said. “Very clever. Let Critter out and you’ll avoid a lot of pain, Julia. The only one who’s allowed to digest him is me.”

Julia held her ground. I could see the muscles in her thighs working, feet planted, readying herself for a leap. *Badass*, I thought, biting my knuckles, *these girls are badass.*

As Celestia closed in on Julia, Julia threw herself forward, feinting another belly blow before sliding low, aiming for the space between Celestia’s legs. The barbarian was expecting that, though, and with grace unbefitting of her size, Celestia grabbed Julia’s shoulders and pinned her against the ground, flopping on top of her so that all of her weight drove against Julia’s stomach. Julia retched.

“Yield,” Celestia said, pushing her stomach into Julia’s.

Julia closed her eyes and opened her mouth. The bulge in her stomach traveled up her throat, ejecting itself onto the floor beside me.

“You good?” I asked, kneeling beside Critter.

He thrust his arm forward in a soggy thumbs up. Aside from his clothes being crumpled, he looked alright.

Wait, where was Honey?

“Let Evangeline go!”

Celestia let out an unearthly roar as Honey leapt from the top of one of the paper mache boulders, belly flopping on both her and Julia. There was another wet squelch and another soggy bundle launched toward us. I caught Evangeline before she crashed into Critter.

“Are *you* alright?” I asked.

She looked up at me, knees shaking, biting her lip.



“That was amazing,” she said.

I dropped her onto Critter, getting a dull groan from him as I went to check on the girls. Julia looked winded at the bottom of the pile, Celestia was pushing Honey off of her, and Honey seemed to have winded herself as well, gasping and groaning, holding her ribs.

“Why is your body so hard?” she complained.

“Why are you so soft?” Celestia shot back, prodding Honey’s ample tummy. “I felt like I was being crushed beneath the fucking Stay Puft man. An industrial-sized sack of fuckin’ pudding.”

“Evangeline says that’s good because there’s more cushion for the push–”

“Forget that!” Evangeline said, throwing herself into Honey’s arms. “Are you alright, my sweet pumpkin? Are you–”

ULP!

Evangeline slid down Honey’s throat in one clean motion. It was as if they’d practiced it—which I’m sure they had. Honey smiled as her stomach doubled in size, Evangeline curling up into a comfortable wedge.

“There,” she said. “That’s for being naughty! We can escape together like this, right Critter?”

“Right,” Critter said.

He sat up, his clothes plastered to his skin. Grimacing, he slipped his shirt over his head, letting it flop onto the floor. His chest was smooth and as pale as silk, but more surprising were the two, horizontal scars bisecting his ribs. He raised an eyebrow at me. I shrugged.

“Hot,” I said.

“Fucking sticky is what it is,” Critter said. His relaxed posture let me know that I had passed some invisible test. He slung his shirt off into a dark corner and looked at his pants. “That would be too much, right?”

“Correct.”

“Fine. Let’s get this show on the road, then!”



Julia sidled up with a look I knew well—a mischievous gleam that sent a warm thrill through me. She crossed her arms, smiling, but there was an edge to it. “So…sounds like you and Honey got pretty cozy,” she said lightly, but her tone had an unmistakable hint of jealousy.

“Not exactly my choice,” I replied, sheepish, rubbing the back of my neck. She tilted her head, eyes narrowing.

“Oh, I’m sure.” She took my hand, pulling me closer, her grip surprisingly strong. “Well, just so there’s no confusion about who you belong to…”

Before I could respond, her arms slid around me, and I felt myself pulled off my feet in one swift movement. I barely had time to process before her mouth was already at my shoulders, and with one steady swallow, she took me in. The warmth of her throat surrounded me, and I could feel the strong, pulsing rhythm of her heartbeat echoing as she worked me further down. Even though we’d done this before, my stomach fluttered—it was intimate in a way words didn’t quite capture, this feeling of being enclosed, protected, and, yes, claimed.

Her throat muscles tugged me down, drawing me deeper as her familiar scent and warmth settled over me, until, with a final pull, I slid into her stomach. It was cozy and warm, the world outside muted, but I could still hear her voice above, muffled yet smug.

“There. Now no one else can get any ideas.”

I felt my cheeks burn a bit. I wasn’t used to the possessiveness, and yet…it felt right. Somehow, it wasn’t just a game anymore—it was Julia showing me in the clearest way possible that I was hers, the way she’d been my best friend and first crush, and now, something so much more.

Outside, Critter laughed. “You two are really something else,” he called, clearly entertained.

“Just making sure he doesn’t wander off,” Julia replied. I felt her hand press warmly against her stomach, a touch that sent a shiver

through me. I couldn't help but smile in the dark. "Are you ready to win this thing?"

"Ready, Julia."

On a whim, I pressed my lips into the side of her stomach. Julia's knees nearly buckled as she pulled herself back upright. I heard her breath catch in her throat. Celestia was busy swallowing Critter—it seemed only fair for the race to end with all three preds encumbered—and Honey was busy chastising Evangeline to her girlfriend's obvious delight. Julia's hands smoothed over her stomach, lower, lower, until they brushed against my crotch. Despite the situation, despite the company, I grew hard against her palm.

"Do that again," she whispered, pulling my pants down.

I knelt inside of her, my cock buried in the wall, and kissed her stomach. The shudder that ran through her ran through me as well, causing us both to gasp as I warmed inside of her, pressing my forehead into the soggy folds of her esophagus. Was this too much? What about the others?

"You're mine," Julia said.

I nodded.

"Say it."

"I'm yours," I said, but it seemed she didn't want my words—her thumb glided over my shaft through the layer of fat that separated us. When she moved, she jiggled, and when she jiggled, I was enveloped in flesh. The sensation was that of a full body squeeze, more possessive than ever, and my breath hitched beneath the rumble of her stomach, claimed by its embrace.

"Say it."

Julia began to jog and as she did, her stomach twisted around me, hugging me, lathering me in her love. This space had been occupied by many who had been melted down by these walls. I thrust myself into them, giving myself to her completely.

Julia smiled when I came. I know she did because even blind, I could read the lines of her body and I knew that she had accepted my



tribute. This was something that I would give her and only her and in return, she sanctified me in her flesh, purifying me through purpose. I was Julia's. I belonged to Julia. If she were to digest me now, I would be fulfilled, but the thought caused me no anxiety—just comfort.

And so she was comforted in return.

Later, when we were alone, she would tell me that in that moment she had never felt so loved. The sounds of the other contestants faded behind us as blindly we swerved and the years fell away from both of us. We were kids again, running through the fields, bound together by the threads of fate and reunited, never to part again.

I didn't even know that we had passed the finish line. It was lucky that I was decent at all when she spat me out, the other preds surrounding us, panting and swearing.

All I saw was Julia's flushed face as she bent over me.

"There we go," she said. "Now you're mine forever."

I reached into my pocket and brought out the box. Honey shrieked so loud that Celestia had to cover her ears, but Julia, her face framed by her golden hair, bit her lip as I presented it to her, tears welling in her eyes.

"I'm not sure if this is the right time," I said, "nor if it will ever be the right time, but I know that I love you with everything that I am, Julia, and that I belong to you and nobody else. Will you marry me?"

Julia wiped her eyes and grinned.

"Yes," she gasped. "Oh god, Ollie, yes!"

A second later we were buried under Celestia and Honey calling out congratulations as their partners did their best to cheer from their respective stomachs. I laughed at the absurdity of the situation and Julia laughed too, hugging me, crying, holding me tighter than she ever had before.

What a ridiculous life we would have together.

I would cherish every moment of it.



Epilogue



Dense muscles contracted around my head and shoulders, lengthening and shortening, pulling me deeper, packing me tight. I blinked in the darkness, drawing in a quick breath of hot, bowel air, then exhaled, wriggling. Celestia's body claimed me like a prize. Her aroused moan shook her from head to toe.

"This is something else," she said. The massage table beneath us was soft, but not soft enough as I was squeezed against it, prevented from stretching her any further than the table would allow. Honey's lustful howl reverberated in my ears, as did Julia's muffled cry.

How did it come to this?

A vacation with our friends, a gift from Critter. A mysterious health resort that catered to predators. *Find yourselves at the Swallow Spa and Sanctuary*, the advertising said, and over the course of the last three hours, under the watchful eye of a yogi, we had.

"Are you relaxed yet?" Honey asked. The damp sound of Evangeline lathering her belly with fragrant oils was undercut with Julia's moans of pleasure. Celestia was slurping down Critter in drawn-out, greedy gulps and her stomach was filling fast, pushing me deeper into the cramped, twisting corridors of her intestines.

You know what's the crazy part?

Our vacation was just beginning.

To Be Continued in Book Three



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