

Glutton's Grimoire

By DarkeyeV2



The air in the archives is a still, cool soup of dust and old paper. Jennifer's chair scrapes against the concrete floor with a sound like a dying animal, the only noise in the oppressive silence. She's been staring at the same paragraph for twenty minutes, her highlighter uncapped and drying out in her hand. The text swims before her eyes - dry, academic prose on the economic impact of pre-industrial textile trade.

With a sigh that's more of a groan, she pushes back from the carrel, the wheels complaining. She stretches her arms over her head, her spine cracking in a series of pops. Her stomach lets out a low, empty gurgle. She glances at the clock on the wall: 10:47 PM.

Slumping forward, she rests her elbows on the cool laminate of the desk and buries her face in her hands. Her fingers are smudged with ink. "This is pointless," she mutters to the empty aisle, her voice swallowed by the towering shelves of forgotten books.

She picks up her phone. The screen is blindingly bright in the dim archival light. No new messages. Just a low-battery warning and the empty grid of app icons. She drops the phone back onto the desk with a dull thud.

Her gaze drifts away from the useless text, skimming over the shelf labels. "Economic History... Agricultural Reform... Local Folklore & Obscura." That sounds more interesting.

Pushing herself up, she wanders into the narrow aisle, her fingers trailing along the dusty spines. Most of the books are thick, bound in faded green or brown leather. Then she sees it, tucked away on a bottom shelf, shoved behind a bulky volume on weather patterns. It's smaller, bound in cracked, black leather, with no title on the spine. She kneels, her knees protesting against the cold floor, and pulls it free. It's heavier than it looks.

Her fingers, slick with a nervous sweat, fail to get a proper grip. The book slips from her grasp, hitting the concrete floor with a solid, jarring thump. A small cloud of ancient dust puffs up from the impact.

She freezes, glances furtively down the empty aisle. No one comes. The only sound is the faint hum of the climate control system. Slowly, she kneels again. The book has fallen open to a random page.

Instead of typeset text, the page is filled with hand-drawn diagrams - complex, interlocking circles filled with angular symbols. In the margin, in a spidery, faded ink, someone has scribbled: *For the weary student. A small convenience.* Her empty stomach chooses that moment to gurgle again. Her eyes drift from the cryptic symbols to a simpler one near the bottom of the page - a series of three looping lines.

Her smirk falters, replaced by a frown. She flips the book over. The back cover is blank. Turning it to the front, her breath catches. The title is stamped deep into the cover in a stark, gothic font: INFERNALIS COMPENDIUM. Below it, in a smaller script: *Revision 13: Memoirs from the Tome of Glutton.*

"Glutton, ay?" she whispers, the word feeling strange on her tongue. Her thumb traces the raised lettering. It feels warm. Her gaze flicks back to the open page, to the simple three-loop symbol.

She shrugs, then gets back up. While making her way back to the table her laptop is resting on, she flips over some of the nearby pages, half-amused. She carries the heavy book back to her carrel, setting it down with a soft thud next to her dormant laptop. She drops into her chair and, with a bored sigh, flips past the first page she'd seen. The vellum feels strangely supple. The pages are filled with more intricate diagrams and annotations in a dozen different hands.

One page near the front shows a crude sketch of a broom sweeping a floor on its own. Another depicts a steaming mug of coffee materializing out of a simple sigil. Her empty stomach gives another loud, plaintive rumble. Her eyes land on a page titled 'Sustenance: Immediate Gratification.' It features the same three-loop symbol from before. The instructions are simple: 'Trace. Focus. Desire.'

She scoffs softly. "A children's book," she mutters, but her hand is already lifting. Her index finger, smudged with highlighter ink, traces the three loops in the air. She focuses on the hollow ache in her gut, the specific, desperate desire for something warm, salty, and greasy.

Her scoff dies in her throat as a searing sputter erupts from her fingertips. A stream of translucent, shimmering-hot oil arcs through the air, splattering across the keyboard of her open laptop with a sickening sizzle. The screen flickers and dies, a web of cracks spreading from the point of impact. The smell of burning plastic and superheated fat fills the air.

She jumps out of her chair with a yelp, her hand jerking back as if burned, staring in wide-eyed horror at the ruined machine and the greasy, smoking residue on her fingers. For a full ten seconds, she doesn't move.

Slowly, her shocked gaze drifts from the destroyed laptop to the open page of the grimoire, then to her own trembling, greasy hand. Her gaze goes back and forth between the two. Eventually, she tries the motion again.

Her eyes are locked on the symbol. Her left hand, the one not coated in hot grease, rises slowly, trembling. Her entire world narrows to the diagram on the page. She traces the three loops again, her movements more deliberate this time. Her focus isn't on a vague desire for food anymore. It's a pinpoint craving for a specific, perfect french fry: long, golden-brown, crispy on the outside, fluffy on the inside, showered in salt.

She holds the image in her mind. The air around her fingertips hums. There's no sputter, no violent eruption. Instead, a single, perfect french fry materializes in the air with a soft *pop* and drops into her waiting, greasy palm.

It is exactly as she imagined. Steam curls from it. The smell of salt and fried potato is unmistakable.

She stares at the fry lying in her palm, her breathing shallow. A drop of hot oil from it mingles with the strange, summoned grease already on her skin. Her stomach, forgotten in the shock, gives a loud, demanding growl. Slowly, as if in a trance, she brings the fry to her lips and takes a hesitant bite.

The crispness, the salt, the fluffy interior - it's a fry. Not the best she's ever had, but she devours the rest of it in one quick, ravenous bite, licking the salt and grease from her fingers.

Her wide, shocked eyes dart from her empty hand to the open book, then to her ruined laptop. A slow, dawning, incredulous smile spreads across her face. She forgot all about the term paper.



Rob pushes the apartment door open, the sound of the TV a low drone from the living room. "Jen?" he calls out, setting his keys on the counter. The bathroom door is ajar, a slice of bright fluorescent light cutting into the dim hallway. He hears a soft grunt of frustration, then the creak of the plastic scale on the tile. He walks to the doorway and pauses, leaning against the frame.

She's there, wearing an old band t-shirt that's pulled tight across her hips and the soft curve of her stomach, a pair of panties struggling over her ass. She's trying to lean over to read the number on the scale, but her own body is in the way.

Her face is a mask of flushed, sweating concentration, her brow furrowed deeply. Her fingers dig into the soft flesh of her lower belly, a futile attempt to press and squeeze the stubborn swell out of the way so she can see the digital readout between her feet. The effort makes her breath hitch, a strained grunt escaping her lips as she pushes down, the movement causing a deep, liquid gurgle to echo through the bathroom. The old scale creaks in protest under her shifting weight.

She lets out a frustrated groan, straightening up with a wince and letting her hands fall away. The released flesh immediately springs back to its full, rounded prominence, obscuring the numbers once more. She catches sight of him in the mirror, her eyes wide for a split second before narrowing in a familiar, defensive glare.

"What?" she snaps, her voice tight. "Don't just stand there. This thing is broken. It's giving me a... a glitchy number." Her hands go to her hips, a posture of pure indignation that only serves to emphasize the way her shirt strains across her midsection.

He looks over the scale, a hint of amusement in his expression.

"How would you even be able to tell? Your... well, your belly is in the way. What? Don't look at me like that!"

Her glare intensifies, a flash of genuine hurt in her eyes before it's smothered by anger. She crosses her arms over her chest, a gesture that pushes her soft upper belly forward against the tight fabric of her shirt.

"It's not in the way," she insists, her voice pitched high. "I just had a big lunch, that's all. And maybe... maybe dinner." She uncrosses her arms and gestures angrily at the scale. "The point is, the number it flashed was wrong. It has to be. It's a cheap piece of junk."

She turns her back to him, presenting the broad, soft expanse of her back and the panties digging into the generous curve of her hips. She bends over again with a grunt, this time bracing one hand on the sink for support as she squints at the scale,

her other hand patting the side of her full stomach. "There," she mutters, more to herself than to him. "One-seventy... well, I can't tell if it's an eight or a zero. But see? That can't be right. I was one-sixty-two last week."

His face flushes as she tells him this, his eyes tracing the curve of her belly as she pats it. He remembered that weigh-in. She'd summoned a pint of ice cream to celebrate breaking one-sixty, insisting the magic burned off most of the calories anyway. It was a flimsy excuse they had both found it convenient to believe - by now, it's clear that it doesn't work like that.

"Well, uh, yeah... yeah, it's probably broken. I mean, you walk to your classes all the time, right? No way you'd just gain ten pounds in one week while doing that."

Her eyes travel over him, from his practical, slightly scuffed shoes, past the simple jeans and the t-shirt that does little to hide his own lean frame, up to his face.

"Exactly," she says, her voice losing its edge, becoming almost plaintive. "All that walking. Up the hill to the lecture hall. It's basically cardio." She absentmindedly rubs her stomach again, gently, a thoughtful frown on her face. "I think it's reasonable for me not to have gone to class in a while, right? Again, so, so much walking."

But she hasn't done a lot of that in a while now, and Rob knows it well. He isn't blind to the situation at hand, though he much preferred not to think about it too hard. First, it was one missed lecture, then a whole day. Her archival science major, once a source of nerdy pride - admittedly a very, very slight one - became a footnote. The grimoire became her only textbook. She'd claimed it was more efficient to "review primary source material" from home, a line that had sounded... plausible? For about a week.

"Ah. Are your lessons over already?" He thinks it best to act ignorant. "Mine go for... well, at least another month."

She freezes for a fraction of a second, her hand stilling on her stomach. A faint blush creeps up her neck. She turns away from the scale, busying herself with adjusting the hem of her t-shirt, which does nothing to hide the soft roll of her midsection.

"Lessons?" she echoes, her voice deliberately casual. "Oh, you know. They're... flexible. The professors post the slides online. It's more efficient this way." She gestures vaguely toward her laptop, visible through the bedroom doorway, closed and likely covered in a fine layer of dust. "Saves my energy for the... the important stuff. The practical applications."

She gives her stomach one final, dismissive pat and shuffles past him out of the bathroom, her hips brushing against the doorframe. The scent of her shampoo

mingles with the faint, ever-present aroma of summoned snacks that seems to cling to her clothes. "Besides," she adds over her shoulder, her tone regaining a flicker of its usual smugness, "I'm doing my own independent study, right?"

He follows her along.

"Right, right. The important stuff. How has it been going, so far?"

At that, she stops in the hallway. She opens her palms in front of her, spinning her left hand's fingers into a simple pattern. A large pizza appears out of nowhere - without a box, it droops over her hands.

He remembered the first time he'd seen it. Not the pizza. Obviously.

The magic. Disbelief, then a wild, giddy excitement that felt like a secret between them. She'd summoned a six-pack of craft beer during a late-night study session, her thin face lit with triumph, and he had been instantly captivated. It was their novelty, a thrilling little game that made movie nights better and saved them trips to the corner store. And who knows what else could be done! Jennifer insisted that the book mostly contained things about food, but couldn't help herself from slipping on the lie when convenient. Apparently you could both kill a man and summon gold, if you tried hard enough.

"Oh! Oh wow, that's something alright."

She stumbles back a step under the sudden, greasy weight of the pizza, her arms straining. The cheese is molten and sliding, pepperoni threatening to tumble onto the hallway carpet. A triumphant, breathless laugh escapes her. "See?" she gasps, her biceps trembling with the effort of holding the doughy circle aloft.

She shuffles quickly toward the living room, a precarious waddle. She doesn't make it to the coffee table. Halfway there, her arms give out, and she drops onto the couch with a soft *whump*, the pizza landing on her lap like a warm, cheesy blanket. "Aw, shit... I just showered." She turns back to him. "Still working on getting a box with it, too."

She plucks a pepperoni from the surface and pops it into her mouth, chewing with her eyes closed in satisfaction. "The summoning itself... mmmmmhh... well, it's easy now," she mumbles around the mouthful. "It's the fine-tuning that's a headache. Getting the cheese-to-sauce ratio perfect. Making sure the crust isn't soggy. It takes... concentration." She opens one eye to look at him, a smug smile on her grease-shiny lips. "But yeah. It's going."

"Yeah, going over the couch... ah well, we needed to clean that anyways."

She lets out a snort, already pulling a gooey stretch of cheese from the pizza and guiding it into her mouth. "Your problem now," she mumbles, her words thick with dough. She shifts her weight, the couch groaning as she settles deeper into the cushions, the pizza conforming to the soft dome of her stomach. "You don't know how much it took me to get the symbols right." She gestures vaguely at the pizza with a greasy finger. "I've had to go through so many of these things today. And yesterday, too. Pretty sure the day before I was working with... pasta, I think?" A drop of grease escapes her lips and traces a path down her chin. She doesn't seem to notice. "I'll have to go back to that, I really did not like the results. Way, way too much butter..."

"Oh. Well no wonder then that you're getting - um, getting, uhhhh.... full! Yes, a little more bloated than usual. Have you, um... considered throwing some of the bad attempts out? I'd say it could help."

She blinks slowly, her gaze distant as she chews a mouthful of crust. She swallows thickly, then lets out a soft, breathy sigh that's more of a belch. Her hand comes to rest on the prominent curve of her stomach, pressing down gently. "Mmmph... throw it out?" she slurs, her voice heavy with fullness. "Why would I do that? It's still food."

Her fingers curl into the soft fabric of her shirt, right over the warm, dough-filled swell. A lazy, contented smile touches her greasy lips. "'S not so bad," she murmurs, her eyes drifting closed. "Feels... solid. Like I actually... *huff*... accomplished something." She gives her belly a pat, a dull, doughy thump echoing in the quiet room. "Besides... the cleanup spell is... next chapter. I think."

"Ah, well, that's great babe. You keep doing you then."

He pats her head, before cleaning up some of the mess she made near the couch throughout the day.

Her eyes flutter open at the touch, a soft, incoherent murmur escaping her. She watches him through heavy-lidded eyes as he tidies the wrappers and empty containers scattered around. Her hand continues its slow, circular massage over her full stomach, a low, liquid gurgle answering the motion. Without much thought, she removes her thoroughly stained shirt, letting it fall onto the couch.

"Mmhmm," she agrees drowsily, her head lolling back against the cushion. "I will." A faint, self-satisfied smirk plays on her lips as her eyes drift shut again. "The chapter on... temperature regulation is... *urp*... really useful. No more sweaty summers." She shifts, trying to find a more comfortable position. "The cleaning one... can't be that hard. Probably just... a flick of the wrist." Her own wrist remains limp and greasy on the armrest.

"I'd probably ease up on the pizzas, though."

He looks at her now-exposed breasts, noticing the way they rest on her bloat. He can almost see a double chin forming.

"Well, I mean... ok, let me rephrase that. You should have..."

He makes eye contact with her as she belches, taking in the way her whole body shudders with the movement. He follows a drop of sweat making its way from her neck to her shoulders, all the way onto the rounder shelf of her ass.

"...as much as you want. Yeah. Yeah, why not, actually. You deserve it."

Her eyes, glazed and half-lidded, focus on him for a moment. A slow, syrupy smile spreads across her face, her head nodding in a heavy, lazy rhythm. "Exactly," she slurs, her voice thick with contentment. "I do deserve it."

Her free hand lifts from the couch cushion. Her fingers move in a quick, practiced flick - a symbol so ingrained it's almost a twitch. The air beside her head *pops* softly, and a cold, condensation-beaded can of energy drink materializes, dropping onto the cushion next to her cheek with a soft thud.

She doesn't look at it. Her eyes are already closing again. Her fingers fumble blindly for the can, find the tab, and pull. The hiss of carbonation is loud in the quiet room. She brings it to her lips without opening her eyes, taking a long, gulping drink. A trickle of bright orange liquid escapes the corner of her mouth and drips onto her bare chest, tracing a path through the pizza grease toward the soft swell of her stomach. She lets out a sigh of pure satisfaction, the empty can slipping from her fingers to roll onto the floor.

"God, Jen, you could just give that to me instead of dropping it onto the carpet, you know."

Her giggle is a low, breathy sound that shakes her entire body, making her full stomach quiver. She cracks one eye open, a sliver of green peering at him from beneath heavy lids. "Too... *hic*... full," she slurs, her words blending together. Her hand makes a weak, dismissive gesture toward the fallen can. "You're already up. 'S what you're for."

She straightens back up, letting some of the remaining pizza bits fall onto the floor. Her head lolls to the side, inspecting herself. "Well... time for another shower, I guess. I'd ask you to carry me to the bathroom, but... yeah, ok. Fine. I'll say it." She gets back up with a soft *oof*. "I might be getting chubby." She looks over in his direction, not spotting a reaction on his face. "Yeah, well, I thought it was obvious at this point. You

could stand to be a little more observant. And like, can you blame a girl for letting herself a little off the hook, from time to time?" She walks forward, pushing him out of the way. "God, Rob..."



The lock clicks, and the heavy front door swings inward, trading the scent of rain-slicked asphalt for the apartment's stale, climate-controlled air. From the living room, a television drones on, its shifting blue light the only real illumination.

Jennifer is exactly where he left her eight hours ago, sunk deep into the worn cushions of the couch. Her phone glows in one hand. With the other, she traces a lazy, shimmering symbol in the air. A family-sized bag of chips materializes above her, tips, and spills its contents across the soft, rounded expanse of her stomach and onto the stained sweatpants that ride low on her hips.

"Took you long enough," she says. The words are thick, punctuated by the sharp crunch of a chip.

Rob sets his briefcase down, the sound a dull thud on the hardwood. He watches her scoop a handful of chips, her fingers leaving faint, greasy streaks on her phone screen. A deep, liquid gurgle rolls through her midsection, a sound he has come to know as well as his own heartbeat.

"Go *Uuurp*... ugh, go grab me a Coke from the fridge. Wait, actually..." She snaps her fingers. The air above Rob's head warps for a second, and a dripping, ice-cold can drops neatly into his waiting hand. The sudden cold is a shock against his palm. "Magic's a lot quicker."

He looks from the can to her. She is already eating again, her attention back on the television. He tosses the can. It lands with a soft weight in her lap, startling her.

"I'm not that thirsty."

Her eyes narrow as the can lands in her palm. She glares at it, then at him, lips pursed. With an exaggerated sigh, she lifts the can, pops the tab open one-handed without looking, and tilts it back for a long swallow. The gulping sound echoes in the quiet room.

"Fine," she mutters, wiping her mouth with the back of her hand. "Have it your way." She sets the half-empty can down on the cluttered coffee table, nudging aside a pile of chip bags to make space. Her other hand continues tracing idle patterns in the air - this time, a shimmering slice of chocolate cake materializes beside her, complete with fork.

"You know," she adds, picking up the fork and sawing off a bite, "if you're going to stand there being useless, at least do something productive. Like... uh..." She chews slowly, swallowing before pointing the fork toward the overflowing trash bin. "Take that out. It's starting to reek." Her stomach lets out another low rumble. She ignores it, focusing on the cake. "And while you're up, maybe order pizza. Extra cheese." She shoves another piece into her mouth, crumbs tumbling onto her shirt. "No mushrooms. God, I hate those."

He looks at the trash bin, a tower of takeout containers and snack wrappers spilling onto the floor. "You know, you don't have to wait for me to come home to get rid of that. You've... got plenty of time. I know this for a fact. Also, no, summon it yourself. You clearly know full well how to do that."

She stops chewing mid-bite, fork hovering halfway to her lips. Her jaw works slowly as she processes his words, then she lowers the fork with deliberate slowness, setting it down on the plate with a soft clink. She leans back, stretching her legs out further,

causing her sweatpants to slide even lower, exposing more of her pale, rounded stomach.

"Oh, please," she scoffs, rolling her eyes. "Like I'd waste perfectly good energy on taking out the trash. That's what you're for." She picks up the remote, mutes the TV, and gestures vaguely toward the kitchen. "Summoning is for important things. Snacks, drinks, keeping the AC running... not chores." She pats her belly again, then wiggles her toes against the couch cushion. "Besides, if I did everything myself, what would be the point of having you around?"

She reaches lazily for the cake again, then pauses, a thoughtful frown creasing her forehead. "Wait, hold that thought." A sudden shimmer in the air, and a second slice of cake poofs into existence directly in front of her face. She grabs it, bites off a chunk, and chews loudly. "Mmmph. There we go. Now, seriously, trash. And then pizza. My treat. Get moving."

He turns to her as he hefts the straining plastic bag. "You know, you're really getting to become a pig. Also, I pay the bills for the electricity, so you're not doing shit to keep the AC running, babe."

She freezes, fork midway to her mouth. A slow, deliberate blink follows, then her expression tightens. She lowers the fork, tapping it against the plate with a sharp click-click. Her cheeks flush slightly under the freckles dusting her nose.

"Excuse me? Who pays for this place, huh? Last I checked, my name's on the lease, not yours." Her fingers twitch near the edge of the couch cushion, and suddenly the TV volume blares louder - a burst of reality show noise fills the room. She winces, flinching at the sound, then waves a hand sloppily at the air. The volume instantly mutes again.

"And anyway," she adds, grabbing the fork again and stabbing at the remaining cake, "the AC's not for my comfort, it's for both of us. Unless you'd rather swelter in here while I lounge around cool?" She stuffs the cake into her mouth, chews aggressively, then points the fork at the overflowing bin. "Now, trash. Then we talk about your attitude. Chop-chop."

"Yeah, I know it's there, but you... like... this is so stupid. You don't work! And last time I checked, you can't summon cash out of thin air."

He goes out before she can answer, the slam of the dumpster lid echoing in the alley. He returns a few minutes later, the air in the apartment feeling thick and heavy.

"There, trash's done."

He walks toward the couch, aiming for the small patch of cushion not occupied by her sprawling form.

She hasn't moved an inch except to shovel another forkful of cake into her mouth. She watches him enter, chewing slowly, deliberately loud, as her eyes track his path. When he mentions the trash, she swallows hard, then licks a crumb off her thumb.

"Finally," she mutters, shifting her weight. "Took you long enough. Next time, maybe don't dawdle." She pats the cushion beside her, less an invitation and more a command. Her stomach rumbles again, deeper this time. She ignores it, focusing instead on peeling the label off a beer bottle with her teeth.

"Don't just stand there," she adds, voice muffled by the bottle neck. "Sit. Or don't. Whatever. But if you're staying, make yourself useful. Rub my feet." She kicks off her slipper, revealing a sock-clad foot propped on the edge of the coffee table. The toe seam looks strained. She flexes her ankle, waiting. "What? Too busy being self-righteous to help out your girlfriend?"

"Yep, I am."

He sits down next to her, not bothering with her feet.

Her eyes snap to him as he settles beside her. She huffs, turning her head away sharply, but keeps her leg extended, toes pointed stubbornly at him. After a beat, she lets out a long-suffering sigh, deflating slightly as she sinks deeper into the couch cushions. She pulls the beer bottle back to her lips, guzzling deeply, then wipes her mouth with the back of her hand.

"Suit yourself," she says flatly, lowering the bottle onto her stomach, where it rests. "But you could at least pretend to care. I mean, look at this mess." She gestures vaguely at the piles of wrappers, the half-eaten cake, the scattered belongings. "It's disgusting. And you're just sitting there. Useless." She shifts her weight, her belly jiggling slightly under her oversized shirt. Her stomach growls again, and she winces, rubbing it absently. "God, I'm starving."

"I do not believe it, that cannot be your body telling you you need more food. Also, no, I am the one being useless? *You* are the one who made all of this mess in the first place."

His finger prods her belly as he speaks. The flesh is soft but surprisingly dense beneath the thin cotton.

She jerks back, her eyes widening in surprise before narrowing into a glare. She bats his hand away with surprising speed. A deep, rumbling sound escapes her stomach again, and she presses a hand against it, grimacing.

"Hey!" she snaps. "Don't touch that. And yes, it's my body, and it's hungry. Unlike some people, I don't pretend to understand my limits." She shuffles her legs closed, pulling her knees up defensively. The fabric of her sweatpants groans softly at the stress. She reaches for the last slice of cake, then pauses, eyeing him sideways.

"And for the record," she adds, sawing off a corner of the cake and popping it into her mouth, "you're the one who let the trash pile up. If you'd been more helpful, it wouldn't be an issue." She chews slowly, deliberately loud, then points the sticky fork at him. "Since you're so keen on pointing out problems, why don't you start with yourself?"

"Sure. Ok. I am a moron for staying with such a spoiled little brat. That's my problem."

She stops chewing entirely, the fork frozen in mid-air. Slowly, she lowers it, placing it down on the plate with a clatter. She turns her head to stare at him, her expression unreadable, then abruptly bursts into laughter - a harsh, barking sound that shakes her whole frame. Her belly jiggles with the movement. She wipes tears from her eyes, still chuckling.

"Oh, wow," she gasps, catching her breath. She pats her stomach again, harder this time, almost like a drum. "So that's your grand solution? Calling me names? Real mature." She shakes her head, leaning forward to grab the remote. She flicks the TV back on, volume blasting again, then immediately lowers it. She glances at him, her lip curling. "If I'm such a brat, why don't you leave? No one's stopping you. Door's right there." She gestures vaguely toward the exit, then sinks back, crossing her arms. Her stomach lets out a low, continuous gurgle. She ignores it, focusing on him with a challenging lift of her eyebrow. "Well?" she prompts. "Gonna run away, or just talk big?"

He considers it for a second. The thought of walking out, of silence, of not having to navigate this strange, cluttered life, is a cool relief. But then he looks at her, defiant and soft, and the thought evaporates.

"...nah. I don't know. I'm good."

She snorts, shaking her head as she settles back into the couch, her body sinking heavily into the worn cushions. She picks up the remote again, flipping channels aimlessly. Suddenly, she pauses on a cooking show. A new plate of nachos

materializes in her lap, cheese drizzling over the top. She scoops up a handful, cramming it into her mouth, then gestures with the cheesy fingers at him.

"There," she says, talking with her mouth full. "See? Magic. Way better than walking to the kitchen. You should try it sometime." She pats her belly, which lets out a deep, resonant gurgle in response. "Anyway, since you're not leaving, make yourself useful. Grab me another soda. This time, make it root beer. And bring the remote back. I lost it." She scans the cushions beside her, then peers under the coffee table, one hand firmly pressed against her stomach, kneading it gently. She looks up at him expectantly.

"You know damn well I can't do magic, stop taunting me with that. The remote? Well, why did you throw it under there in the first... ah, whatever." He leans down, his fingers brushing against dust bunnies and a forgotten sock before closing around the plastic. "There. I'll grab the soda for you, but... do we even have it? I haven't done any groceries. I mean, why would I, that's the one thing you're on top of."

She watches him, a slow, lazy smirk spreading across her face. She takes the remote from him, her fingers brushing his, sticky from the nacho cheese.

"That's the point," she says. She clicks the TV off entirely, plunging the room into a sudden, heavy silence. "We don't have it. That's why *you're* getting it. From the store." She pats her stomach again, a slow, circular motion.

She leans her head back against the cushion and closes her eyes. "And grab some of those frozen pizzas too. The ones with the stuffed crust. And maybe... *urp*... ice cream. The chocolate kind with the fudge swirls." She cracks one eye open, a challenge in her gaze. "Unless you'd rather I just summon more junk. But that takes energy, you know. Makes me tired. And then you'd have to deal with me being grumpy *and* hungry."

"You already... are? No, I'm not going to the store. You can make food out of thin air, I'm not going to pay a cent for it."

Her eyes snap open. She pushes herself upright with a grunt, the couch groaning. Her stomach gives a loud, wet gurgle, and she presses her palm flat against it, her expression shifting from smug to genuinely pained before hardening again.

"Fine," she says, her voice clipped. She holds out a hand. A faint shimmer distorts the air above her palm. A single, solitary can of root beer appears with a soft pop. It's warm. "See?" she hisses, her energy seeming to drain from her. She drops the can onto the cushion beside her. "Takes... effort. A lot of it. For *this*." She gestures weakly at the pathetic can. Her breathing is a little heavier. She slumps back, looking paler.

"I'm not a vending machine. I get tired. I get... hungry." Another low rumble. She wraps an arm around her middle. "But sure. Be that way. See if I care."

"Oh shut up." He throws a pillow at her. "I've seen you summon whole banquets on a whim, I'm not going to believe a single root beer is going to send you into a coma."

The pillow hits her squarely in the side of the head. She doesn't flinch, just lets it land in her lap. She stares at it for a long moment, then picks it up and hugs it to her chest.

"That was different," she mumbles into the pillowcase. "I was showing off. And I felt like it. Right now, I don't feel like it." She shifts, trying to get more comfortable, but her full stomach protests with a low, unhappy groan. She winces.

"Besides," she adds, her tone gaining a petulant edge, "you're the one who called me a pig. Pigs get fed. It's basic... pig...onomics." She lets out a short, frustrated huff. "So either go get the damn root beer and pizza, or stop complaining and let me summon something properly. Your choice. But pick one. I'm bored of this."

He shuffles closer to her on the couch. "Hey, look. I'm sorry I called you a pig. I do. Still not going to the damn store after having just gotten home - not going to happen."

She lets out a long, theatrical sigh, the sound vibrating through the pillow. She peeks at him over the top of it, her eyes narrowed.

"Fine," she relents, her voice a mumble. "But you owe me." She closes her eyes, her brow furrowing. The air in front of her shimmers. A large, greasy pizza box materializes on the coffee table with a soft thud, followed by a six-pack of ice-cold root beer. The effort seems to cost her; she slumps back, her breathing a little shallow. A single, stray cheese puff falls from the ether and lands on her forehead.

"See?" she breathes out, sounding winded. "Tired. Now open the box. Get me a root beer. And... *urp*... the sweatpants. They itch." She keeps her eyes closed, one hand idly rubbing circles on her swollen belly.

"Oh wow, that actually took the wind out of you." He opens the box, the scent of pepperoni and baked dough filling the room. He lifts a slice, hovering it near her mouth, and passes her the root beer. "How... how much did you summon today?"

Her eyes flutter open. She takes a slow, deliberate bite, washing it down with a long gulp of root beer. "Dunno," she mumbles around the mouthful, her free hand still massaging her taut middle. "Lost count after the third bag of chips. And the cake. And the nachos." She gestures vaguely at the wrappers. "The pizza's... what, fourth? Fifth meal today?" She takes another bite. "Why? Keeping track for my dietitian?" A

short, breathy laugh ends in a soft belch. "It's fine. Just... need a minute. And maybe those sweatpants. The button on these is digging in *something fierce*." She shifts uncomfortably, a low, liquid gurgle answering from deep within her.

"There, see..." He leans over, his knuckles brushing the warm, soft skin of her stomach as he fumbles with the button. "...why do you keep doing this to yourself? You're obviously full to the brim."

She lifts her hips slightly, a soft grunt of effort escaping her. The button finally gives way with a faint pop, and she lets out a sigh of pure relief, her entire body relaxing.

"Because it's *good*," she says simply, her voice a little dreamy as she takes another bite. "And because I can. It's the one thing my stupid magic is actually good for." She finishes the slice and reaches for another, her movements slower now. She belches softly again. "Okay, yeah. Maybe a little full." Her head lolls back. She closes her eyes, the empty root beer can tilting precariously on her belly with each breath. "Just... gimme a minute. Don't go anywhere."

"I thought you were trying to find some more spells. What happened to that project?" He starts rubbing her belly, a slow, clockwise motion.

Her eyes remain closed, but a faint, tired smile touches her lips. She lets out a soft, contented hum. "That?" she murmurs, her voice thick and drowsy. "That was... a lot of reading. And thinking. My head hurt." Her hand comes to rest on top of his. "Found a spell for... making flowers bloom faster. Who cares? Not like we have a garden." Her stomach rises and falls beneath his palm. She cracks one eye open. "This is better. Easier." Her eye closes again. "Keep doing that. 'S nice."

"Yeah, yeah, on it... well, yes. Obviously easier. A bit too easy, perhaps. Like, surely there's a lot of useless spells, but like... one of them has to make you be able to, I don't know, summon gold." He presses his palm gently into her gut. "I could settle for silver."

Her eyes flutter open. "Gold?" she repeats. "Tried that. Weeks ago. Got... a single, stupid flake." She holds up her thumb and forefinger, squinting. "Took so much out of me I slept for fourteen hours. Woke up starving." She lets her hand drop heavily. "Not worth it." She guides his hand in a slow circle. "Silver... I haven't found anything for that. This is better. Practical. Now shhh. Rubbing. Less talking."

"Alright then, how about... a spell to... uh... mind control. Others. That'd be useful, I guess. But you clearly need to practice to get anything done with the cooler spells."

Her nose wrinkles. "Mind control?" she slurs, her head lolling. "Sounds like... work. A lot of it. Probably have to concentrate. Can't concentrate when I'm... like this." She

gestures vaguely at her own full form. "Besides," she mumbles, "why would I need to control anyone else's mind... when I can already control yours? You're still here. You're still rubbing my belly." A sleepy, triumphant little smirk plays on her lips before fading. Her breathing deepens.

"Well, yeah, you'd have to do it while not filled to the brim- oh, why do I bother. She's already gone."

Her breathing hitches. One eye cracks open, a sliver of bleary defiance. "M'not gone," she slurs. "'S a... tactical food coma." Her hand makes a weak, flapping motion toward the remaining pizza. "Save that for me. For... later." Her eye closes. The empty root beer can finally tips over onto the cushion with a soft thud. She doesn't stir. A low, continuous, digestive rumble emanates from her core.



The morning light of the day after is a pale grey filter through the bedroom blinds. The bed dips and groans beside him as she shifts. One of her arms is flung over her

head, the other resting on the vast, soft swell of her belly, which rises and falls in a slow, heavy rhythm beneath the stretched-thin cotton of her sleep shirt.

Her nose twitches. Her eyes flutter open, bleary and unfocused. "Mmph," she grunts, her voice thick with sleep. She attempts to roll onto her side, but the movement is sluggish, hampered by her own weight. She gives up halfway, settling onto her back again with a frustrated sigh. "What time's it?"

Without waiting, she lifts a hand, tracing a clumsy symbol in the air. A glazed donut drops onto her chest, leaving a sugary smear on her shirt.

"Jeez, wasting no time are we? About, uhhh... 10 o'clock, give or take. Why? Any important business to attend to? Emails? Work calls? Oh, right, forgot that all you do is gorge yourself all day. Silly me."

She ignores his jab, focusing instead on picking up the donut. She takes a large, unceremonious bite, chewing slowly as she finally turns her head to look at him. "Ten?" she repeats, swallowing with a soft gulp. "Ugh. Too early." She finishes the donut in two more messy bites, then licks each finger clean. Her stomach lets out a low, hungry gurgle. She pats it absently.

"Business," she scoffs. "Yeah. Important business. Like... figuring out what's for breakfast." She traces another symbol. A full plate of bacon, eggs, and toast materializes on the nightstand, steaming gently. "See?" she says, reaching for a slice of bacon. "Productive. Now, are you going to just lie there judging me, or are you gonna *urp*... make the coffee? Your way tastes better than the summoned stuff."

"Damn right it does." He gets out of bed, grabbing the plate from the nightstand as he goes. "Nuh uh, we talked about this. No eating on the bed. Get walking." He leaves the bedroom.

Her hand freezes mid-reach. Her eyes widen in genuine, affronted shock. She pushes herself up on her elbows, a monumental effort that makes the bed frame protest. "Hey!" she barks. "That's mine! I summoned it!"

"Fine," she mutters, throwing the covers off. She swings her legs over the side of the bed, her feet hitting the floor with a soft thud. Standing is a process; she pushes herself up, one hand braced on the nightstand, her other arm wrapped around her midsection as if to steady the weight. She takes a few shuffling steps toward the bedroom door, her gait a slow, heavy waddle. The floorboards creak under her.

"This is stupid," she complains, pausing in the doorway to lean against the frame, slightly winded. "It's my bed. My house. My food. I should be able to eat where I

want." She eyes the plate in his hand from across the living room, her stomach emitting another plaintive rumble.

He waits for her in the kitchen, then heads back. She is still leaning against the frame, catching her breath. "I don't want crumbs on the bedsheets, and I'm sure it's the same for you." He places a hand on her belly, his fingers sinking into the soft flesh around her navel. "Jeez, you've gotten big. Sorry, I know, I keep repeating myself, but like... you've really let yourself go, uh?" He kisses her on the forehead, then moves to the bathroom.

Her breath hitches as his hand settles on her belly. She looks down at his fingers splayed across the vast, soft curve of her stomach, her own hands coming to rest defensively on top of hers. "Let myself go?" she echoes, her voice quieter now. "More like... settled in." She gives her belly a pat, the flesh jiggling gently. She shuffles the rest of the way into the living room, beelining for the kitchen counter where the plate waits. She doesn't bother with a fork, picking up bacon with her fingers. "And the sheets are my problem," she calls out, her mouth full. "I'm the one who has to sleep in them. And I can just... *urp*... summon clean ones if they get gross."

He returns to the kitchen as she starts in on the eggs and begins to prepare coffee. "Uh, haven't seen you do that. Like, ever. Have you even tried learning any new spells? Hey, don't look at me like that! It's an honest question. I've seen you reading that grimoire of yours."

She freezes with a forkful of eggs halfway to her mouth, her eyes narrowing. She slowly lowers the fork. "Reading isn't the same as *doing*," she mutters, stabbing at a piece of toast. "It's... complicated. The symbols get all jumbled if I'm not focused." She gestures vaguely at her own full form with the butter knife. "And it's hard to focus when you're... you know. Dealing with this." Her stomach gurgles. She shoves the toast into her mouth. "I tried a levitation spell last week. For more than just snacks." She swallows hard. "Managed to float the remote for a whole three seconds before I got a headache." She sighs, leaning her hip against the counter, her free hand coming to rest on the shelf of her belly.

"That's not nothing. I mean... I would have tried with something more useful, but like... it's practice, right?" He gives her a cup of coffee.

She accepts the mug with both hands, inhaling the rich aroma. "Practice is boring. And it gives me a headache." She picks up a strip of bacon, snapping it in half. "The useful stuff... the real magic... it's all circles and angles and... thinking. A lot of thinking." She gestures with the bacon toward the living room, where her grimoire lies forgotten, half-buried under a crumpled chip bag. "It's easier to just... do what

works. The snacks. The AC. The clean sheets I could summon if I wanted to." She gives him a sidelong glance. "Come on. We talked about this."

"Yeah, well, ok... yes, we did. But like... I don't know, ok? It doesn't seem fair. Like, you get to stuff your face all day long, sitting on your ass. Which is great for you! Good. Cool." He sits down at the counter. "But I still have to go to work. I don't know, I just thought... you know. When you became a witch, I thought you were going to also get my life to be easier. Just a little bit." He turns to the side, looking out the window. "Sorry, I'm... I'm being unreasonable."

She stops chewing, the half-eaten piece of bacon hovering near her lips. She lowers it slowly. "You're not being unreasonable," she says, her voice softer. "Well... actually, yeah, kind of. I found the thing I'm good at." She takes a slow sip of coffee, her eyes drifting toward the grimoire. She lets out a long, slow breath. "The gold thing just... didn't work. And it's so much easier to just not try again, you know? So, so much easier..." She turns back to the plate, picking up the pace. "Mmmmmph- What's not to get?"

She shovels the last of the eggs into her mouth, chewing with a renewed, almost frantic energy. She washes it all down with the last of her coffee. "There," she announces, her voice forced. "Breakfast. Done. Isn't that better? Your girlfriend is happy now." She pats her stomach, which responds with a deep, sloshing gurgle. "And honestly? You should feel happy for her, too." As she speaks, she traces a quick, sloppy symbol. A fresh donut, chocolate frosted, plops onto the counter. She goes for it immediately, moaning as she eats it in two bites. Another takes its place.

"Well... I guess I am."

She finishes the second donut with a wet smack of her lips. "Good," she mumbles, her voice drowsy again. "Now... since you're up and being all... reasonable..." She stifles a small belch into her fist. "Could you grab my phone? It's over by the couch. My... *urp*... my feet hurt." Her hand traces a new, lazy pattern in the air. A single, powdered-sugar-dusted beignet poofs into existence. She catches it, takes a bite, her gaze fixed on some distant point.

"Yeah, sure." He heads to the couch and picks up her phone.

She accepts it without looking, her fingers brushing his, sticky with sugar. She immediately unlocks it, then shifts her weight off the counter with a grunt. She begins the slow, heavy waddle back toward the bedroom, phone held close to her face. "Don't let the coffee get cold," she calls over her shoulder. "And if you're gonna be useful... maybe start a load of laundry. My good sweatpants are dirty." She

disappears into the doorway. The sound of the bedsprings groaning under her weight echoes into the quiet.

"Wha- I thought you could do the laundry, now? You know, with a spell, or something?"

A muffled groan answers from the bedroom. "Ugh, no," her voice floats out. "Do you know how many separate symbols that is? For sorting, and water temperature, and... *urp*... detergent? My head hurts just thinking about it." She appears in the doorway a moment later, leaning heavily against the frame, phone still in hand. She gestures with it toward the hamper overflowing with her stretched-out clothes. "It's easier if you just do it. Your way. The... normal way." She gives a dismissive wave. "Besides, I'm busy. This game isn't gonna play itself." She turns and shuffles back toward the bed. The soft thud of her body hitting the mattress is his only answer.



He comes home from work. Before he even enters the living room, he hears the sounds from the bedroom. Low, breathy moans, the rhythmic creak of the bedsprings, and a wet, slapping noise. The air is thick with the sweet scent of powdered sugar and maple syrup.

The door is slightly ajar. Through the crack, he sees her on her back, propped against a mountain of pillows, her immense belly rising like a pale moon above her. Her sleep shirt is rucked up under her breasts, and her hands grip the bedsheets. Her face is flushed, eyes squeezed shut in concentration, her body thrusting against an invisible force. An empty box of donuts and a large, half-finished bottle of syrup lie on the rumpled sheets beside her.

She lets out a particularly loud, shuddering gasp, her whole body tensing. Her hips buck off the mattress once, twice, before she collapses back with a long, guttural groan. Her stomach gives a violent, sloshing lurch. For a moment, there is only the sound of her ragged breathing. Her eyes flutter open. They land directly on him in the doorway. She doesn't startle.

"...hey. Came earlier from work and, uh... well, you're not cheating on me, that's a relief. But, like... what was that?"

Her chest heaves as she catches her breath, a sheen of sweat making her skin glisten. A lazy, utterly unashamed smirk spreads across her face. "Cheating?" she breathes out, her voice husky. "Please. Like I'd have the energy for a real person." She gestures vaguely at the empty space above her with a syrup-sticky hand. "It's a spell. From the book. 'Conjure... Gratification...something something' or some stupid name like that." She shifts slightly, wincing as her full stomach sloshes. "Took forever to get the incantation right. Head's pounding." She reaches for the bottle of syrup, takes a long, direct swig, and swallows with a grimace. "But... *urp*... worth it. Zero effort required on my part. Just... lay here." She pats her heaving belly. "See? I'm practicing. Like you wanted. Sort of." She gives him a bleary, triumphant look. "Now, are you just gonna stand there, or are you gonna get me a wet cloth? I'm all... sticky."

He walks to her, snatching the syrup bottle from her hands. "What?? Ok, so, you can't be bothered to do the laundry or clean up after yourself, or like... learn a spell to do it, but you've got no problem learning the spell to fuck yourself with?"

Her hand closes on empty air, her smirk vanishing into a scowl. She pushes herself up on her elbows and glares at him. "Hey! I was drinking that!" she snaps. "And it's not the same thing at all! Laundry is boring. This is... it's a... a stress reliever. You're always nagging me about being stressed." She flops back down with a huff. "And it took a lot of work, you know! My head is killing me. I had to concentrate so hard to get the specter to... you know... do it right." She rubs her temples, her expression genuinely

pained. "It's not like summoning a donut. This is advanced. Complicated. You should be impressed." Her stomach lets out a long, low gurgle, and she winces.

"First of all: I literally never complained about you being stressed. And yeah, I bet getting a ghost to fuck you is advanced! But that's the point: why the hell couldn't you put that effort to work on something better?" He throws his hands in the air, turning his back to her. "Like... you literally only think of yourself, don't you?"

She scoffs, the sound wet and dismissive. "Something better?" she echoes, her voice dripping with sarcasm. "What's better than this? Huh? Free food. A perfect climate. And now... this." She gestures vaguely at the rumpled bed. "It's all for me. That's the whole point. Why would I waste a killer headache on something for you?" She reaches out for the last donut in the box, takes a large, defiant bite, and chews loudly, staring at his back. "You're the one who stays," she mumbles around the mouthful. "If I started doing things for you, what would you even be here for?" The invisible specter gives a faint, ethereal pulse in the air above her, and she shivers, a slight moan escaping her before she catches herself.

He turns around, mouth agape. "...I... you... I've got no words for you. That's so mean." He looks down, then reaches for a nearby cloth, tossing it to her. "Look, fine, you don't have to do it for me I guess. I mean, it would be nice, for a change."

The damp cloth hits her squarely in the chest. She flinches, then looks down at it with a bewildered expression. "What?" she says, her voice losing its defensive edge. "It's true. You do all the... the real stuff. The work stuff. The chore stuff." She gestures vaguely toward the door. "I do this." She indicates herself, the bed, the empty donut box. "It works. I don't get what the problem is here." She tosses the sticky cloth onto the floor and sinks back into the pillows, looking suddenly very tired. The specter shimmers and fades away completely. She rubs her temples again. "My head really hurts," she murmurs, her eyes closing. "Can you... get me some aspirin? And maybe a glass of water?"

".....sure, ok. Give me a second."

The kitchen is mostly clean, but the trash can is overflowing again, a tower of new wrappers threatening to topple over. A sticky, dark puddle of cola has congealed on the linoleum. The path to the bathroom is a minefield: a half-eaten bowl of cereal, a discarded pair of sweatpants. The bathroom itself is hazy with steam.

When he returns, she hasn't moved. Her eyes are still closed, one hand pressed to her forehead, the other resting on the vast, still-heaving plane of her belly.

"Here you go, you lazybones. No need to be so dramatic." He opens the window.

Her eyes slit open at the sound. She accepts the glass and pills, swallowing them down. "Not being dramatic," she mumbles. "It's a real headache. A pounder. The big symbols... they wiggle if you don't focus just right." She shifts, and her stomach sloshes audibly. She winces. "It was for you, you know," she says quietly. "In a way. You're always... on me. About practicing. So I did." A smirk touches her lips. "Turns out I'm really good at that one."

"Am I... am I supposed to be impressed? You're also getting good at gorging yourself all day long, what of it? You can practice all you want, all I saw was you getting pounded by a ghost today." He smirks. "Ok, well, I guess that was impressive. The ghost, I mean. It was really going to town with you."

A faint, real blush creeps up her neck. She pulls the sheet up higher, though it does little to conceal her bare stomach. A genuine, tired laugh bubbles out of her. "It wasn't a ghost," she corrects. "It was a... a conjured manifestation of kinetic energy. Tuned to very specific... frequencies." She lets out a soft, contented sigh. "And he was thorough," she murmurs, a lazy smile on her lips.

"Hey, but... not as good as the real thing. Right? Wait, no, I'm right. Don't answer that."

Her eyes remain closed, but the smile widens. "Different," she slurs, her voice thick with impending sleep. "No talking. No... expectations. Just... the good parts. No complaining about the mess afterward, either." She cracks one eye open. "Why? You offering to... *urp*... step up your game?" The challenge is weak, undercut by a massive, jaw-cracking yawn. Her body goes limp. "Maybe later. My head's still... mmmph..." Her breathing evens out.

"Fine. Whatever." He sits up, then, after a pause, pulls the bedsheet over her.

The sudden weight makes her stir, a soft, incoherent mumble escaping her lips. Her hand moves to clutch the fabric, pulling it to her chin. Her breathing deepens again almost immediately, the steady rise and fall of her belly the only movement in the quiet room.



Rob leaves the kitchen, holding a large tray with both hands. "And for dessert... some tiramisu! Here you go, babe. I know, I know, you're full, but... I just couldn't resist spoiling you today."

She's wedged deep into her usual spot on the couch, a fortress of pillows supporting her back and the monumental swell of her belly, which rests heavily on her thighs, stretching her tank top to its limit. Her eyes - half-lidded and glazed - drift from her phone to the tiramisu. She lets out a soft, pained whimper. "Rob... no," she breathes, her voice strained. "I can't. I literally can't. I think if I eat another bite, I'll... *huuurk*... actually pop. The pizza... the wings... the cheesecake... it's all still right there. I can feel it." But her eyes remain locked on the tiramisu. She bites her lip. "...is it the good kind?"

"I... I don't know! All I know is that I just couldn't resist... preparing it. I... just couldn't. Mm." He places the tray on the coffee table in front of her.

Her phone clatters onto the cushion, forgotten. She leans forward as much as her bulk will allow, her nose twitching. A low, conflicted gurgle rumbles from her stomach. "God, it smells..." she trails off. "Fine," she relents, her voice a whisper. "Just... a taste. A tiny one. You'll have to... *urp*... feed it to me. I can't bend that far." She opens

her mouth slightly, her stomach giving another violent, liquid lurch. "Hurry. Before I come to my senses."

He sits down immediately, tray in his hands. But he stops. "Come... to your senses? What... Mm. Something's strange here."

Her mouth snaps shut with an impatient click. "What are you talking about?" she whines, her eyes glazed. "The tiramisu, Rob. It's right there. You made it for me. Just... give me a bite." She leans forward another inch, a soft groan escaping her. "I want it," she breathes out. "I can make space for it... wouldn't you agree?" To the other side of her, her left hand moves, fingers tracing a faint, shimmering symbol against the cushion.

"Oh, of course! I can't risk starving you out..." He prepares a forkful, but as he goes to feed it to her, he pulls back. "No, wait... what are you doing with that? With... with your hand?"

Her outstretched hand freezes. The shimmering symbol glows faintly. Her eyes snap to his. "Nothing!" she says, her voice an octave too high. "It was... an itch. I had an itch." She snatches her hand back, clenching it into a fist. The magical glow snuffs out. A frantic blush floods her cheeks. "The tiramisu, Rob. You were going to feed it to me. Remember? You wanted to spoil me." Her voice takes on a strange, coaxing quality.

"Yeah, yeah... of course! Of course..." He feeds her a spoonful. "But... when did I learn to prepare a tiramisu? I mean, I clearly can... I did it, but...?" He keeps feeding her.

She takes the first bite eagerly, a desperate moan vibrating against the fork. "What?" she slurs around the second mouthful. "You just... did. It's... *mmmh*... so good. More." Her left hand creeps back toward the cushion, fingers twitching, tracing the beginning of the symbol. "Don't think about it," she murmurs, her voice a hypnotic drone. "Just feed me. You love feeding me."

"Oh, I love it. I can't help myself! I need to... need to..." He keeps feeding her, but more slowly. "But like... you're full...?"

A thin line of drool escapes her mouth. Her brow furrows as she notices him slowing down. Her left hand is fully engaged now, fingers flying through the intricate motions, the air around them beginning to shimmer. "Not full," she pants, her voice strained. "Never full for you. For this. You made it for me. You want this." Each word is punctuated by another push of will. Her right hand claws at her tank top, trying to make more room. A deep, wet gurgle sounds from within, a protest that is utterly ignored. "More."

He stops, his eyes glazing over for an instant. "...More? Yes... yes of course. You're starving, poor thing. You need more." He throws the fork away, bringing the whole tray to her face.

Her eyes widen, pupils dilating. A choked, ecstatic sound rips from her throat. Her left hand falls away, the shimmering symbol dissipating. She lunges, sinking her face directly into the tiramisu. A guttural, animalistic moan vibrates through the dessert as she devours it. She collapses backward against the cushions, the empty tray clattering to the floor. Her chest heaves, her entire upper half slick with sweat and dessert. A long, low belch forces its way out.

"There, there... good girl... good... wait, what?" He looks around the room, at the remnants of other meals on the counter. "...oh wow, I've cooked a lot today. Like... a lot. Why did I do that?"

Her breathing is ragged. Her eyes flicker toward him, a flash of panic on her smeared features. Her left hand makes a feeble, aborted movement. "Because... *hurk*... you love me..." she slurs, a weak attempt to recast the spell.

"I'm not a cook, though. How did I do this in the first place? Since when... oh jeez, and what happened to you? Wait, no, I did this... but no, how would I have... have you done something?"

She flinches, a full-body tremor making the couch springs groan. A low moan escapes her as she slumps back, one hand flying to her mouth as a thick, creamy belch forces its way out. "No," she gasps, the lie pathetic. "I didn't... I just... ate it. You offered." Her eyes are wide, pleading, her fingers twitching against the cushion, a ghost of the symbol, but no magic comes. She is too full, too spent. "You wanted to... to take care of me..."

He stands, looking down at her, then almost falls over. "Jeez, my arms, my legs... I feel awful. Wait... did you do this?" He grabs her arm. "What did you do to me?"

Her arm is pliant and soft. She lets out a sharp, pained yelp. Fear flashes in her eyes. "Let go!" she whines, trying to pull her arm back weakly. "I didn't do anything! You... you're the one who cooked all day. You kept bringing me plates..." Her voice pitches higher. "You said you loved spoiling me. Your words, not mine." She squirms, pinned by her own weight. "Look, it was your idea, ok?"

"I feel like I'm going mad. I literally don't know the first thing about cooking! What idea? What are you talking about?"

Her eyes dart around the room. Her bottom lip trembles. "Fine! Okay! Fine!" she blurts out. "It was a... a suggestion. A little nudge. From the book. To make you... more

helpful." She gestures weakly toward the grimoire on the floor. "It was just supposed to make you want to... to get me snacks! Not... not this!" She gestures wildly at her own ruined body, at the empty tray. "It got... fuzzy. I got hungry, and it just... kept going." She yanks her arm back, cradling it against her chest. She looks down at her distended stomach, her expression something like pride. "And you were so good at it," she murmurs. "The pancakes... the pasta... the tiramisu..."

"Wha... what the hell? Was I not helpful enough before, miss princess? You just wanted a slave. My god... what day is it?"

Her head snaps up. "Don't be dramatic," she slurs, but it's undercut by a thick, creamy belch. "It's Saturday. You... you've been cooking since you got home from work yesterday." She shifts, a sizeable effort. "And you weren't not helpful," she amends, her voice a mumble. "But you complained. All the time. About the mess. About my... my methods." Her hand makes a weak, fluttering gesture. "This was just... more efficient. For both of us. You seemed... happy. While you were doing it." She looks at him, a strange mix of defiance and shame. "It's a really advanced spell."

"Oh, ok, just one day. Ok, that's not so bad. Wait, no, what am I talking about? You literally mind controlled me! That's... that's way out of line. What's the matter with you? And like... why did I have to cook in the first place? Why with, oh, I don't know, you being able to summon food??"

She flinches at his volume, her hands coming up to cover her ears. "Keep your voice down," she whines. "My head... it's splitting." She lowers her hands, staring at the empty tray. "Summoning takes energy," she mutters. "A lot. This... this was easier. You have the energy. I just... redirected it. A little." She finally risks a glance at him, her expression a messy combination of guilt and stubborn justification. "And it's not mind control. It's... influence. Persuasion. It's a very subtle art. You barely even noticed."

"Ok, ok, sorry." He sits back down on the couch. "...wouldn't the other spell also take energy?"

She blinks, caught off guard. Her mouth opens, then closes. She looks from him to her own immense, groaning stomach, then back, her brow furrowed in sluggish confusion. Her hand rises to her temple. "It... it does," she admits, her voice losing its defensive edge. "It really does. My head is... pounding. It took all day. I had to keep recasting it, making it stronger every time you started to... to question things." She lets out a weary, shuddering sigh. The fight drains out of her. "I guess... I guess I just wanted to see if I could," she mumbles, her eyes closing. "You were so... compliant. And the food was... *urp*... really good." Her hand rests on the crest of her belly. "Maybe... maybe not my best idea."

"Well, you can. Now please, don't do it again. I'm serious. I don't want to become... what's the word for it? A thrall? Yeah. Don't care for it."

Her eyes remain closed, but a faint, imperceptible nod shifts the pillows. "Wouldn't work again anyway," she slurs, her voice thick with exhaustion. "Tapped out. Empty. You could probably suggest a salad right now and I wouldn't have the energy to stop you." Her nose wrinkles slightly. She cracks one eye open. "A thrall is so... dramatic. It was just a... a really strong suggestion." Her eye closes. "But fine. No more... influencing. Cross my heart." Her finger makes a weak, sticky 'X' over her left breast. "Now, for the love of god, can you help me to the bed? My ass hurts... I'm... I'm a disaster."

He looks at her, sprawled and smeared with dessert, a monument to her own selfish magic. "Jeez... you really should've stopped me, look at where you've gotten yourself. Also your ass hurts? Did you also summon the ghost to fuck you through the couch while you were at it?"

A weak, choked laugh escapes her, followed immediately by a pained grimace. "Don't make me laugh," she whines. "I'm too full for that." She shakes her head. "No ghost. Just... hours. So many hours on this stupid couch." She makes a feeble attempt to sit up, her arms trembling. The vast, taut curve of her belly barely moves. She gives up, collapsing back with a defeated groan. "I can't," she breathes out. "I'm stuck. You're gonna have to... I don't know... roll me."

He stands in front of her. He sighs. "...fine." He grabs her hands, and slowly, gently, pulls.

The process is a gargantuan effort. Her body is a dead weight, an anchor of soft, unresisting flesh. A series of pained grunts and whimpers escape her as she's dragged to the edge of the couch. The movement creates a tidal slosh within her. Her feet finally hit the floor with a soft thud, but she doesn't stand so much as slump forward, her forehead pressing into his stomach. "Okay," she gasps, her voice muffled. "Okay, just... give me a second. The room is... spinning."

She straightens up slowly, her face flushed and beaded with sweat. She takes a single, shuffling step, her gait a wide, unsteady waddle, one hand braced against the small of her back, the other splayed across the enormous, aching swell of her stomach. "This was a mistake," she moans as she walks toward the hallway.

He keeps helping her. "No shit, babe."

Her shuffling is painfully slow. "Not... *huff*... what I meant," she grunts, pausing to brace herself against the wall. "I meant... *urp*... walking. This is the mistake. I should've

just slept on the couch." She pushes off, her determination fueled by the promise of the bed. The bedroom doorframe is a tight squeeze; she turns sideways, sucking in a breath that does nothing, and shuffles through. She collapses onto the edge of the mattress with a groan that shakes the frame.

He looks at her. "I... I should probably head back and clean up all of that mess. Couldn't you have mind controlled me to clean things as I... well, I guess the word for it would be catered to you. That would have saved me some time, you know? What with you never cleaning around here."

Her head snaps up. "It's not mind control," she insists, her voice a strained rasp. "And it's not that simple. The spell... it has to be specific. 'Make me food' is easy. 'Clean as you go' is... *urp*... complicated. It's a whole series of actions. It would've given me a migraine for... ah, who cares." She shifts her weight, a monumental effort that makes the springs shriek. "I just didn't care, ok? I could've probably done it, I guess. I don't mind the house not being in perfect tidy order, you freak." Her hand comes up to massage her temple. "And besides," she adds, a touch of petulance returning, "you're already here. You're already up. Just... go do it. The normal way. Like always."

"Well, yeah, I will have to... later, though. I just remembered I feel awful."

Her eyes, heavy-lidded and glazed, track his movement as he sits. A faint smirk touches her sticky lips. Her hand moves in a slow circle over her belly. "Awful?" she echoes, her voice a drowsy drawl. "Feel proud instead. Look at this." Her palm pats the vast, groaning swell of her stomach, the sound a dull, wet thud. "A day's work. Your work. That's... *uuurp*... an accomplishment." Her head falls back against the pillows, eyes fluttering closed. "But yes, you should rest. Pretty sure I haven't made you stop once, for 12 hours straight..." Her breathing begins to even out.

"Yeah... yeah, it does feel like that..." He faceplants into the mattress, falling asleep.

The bed dips and shudders. The movement sends a fresh wave of discomfort through her bloated form. She lets out a soft, pained grunt, her eyes cracking open. She watches him for a moment. Her hand, slow and clumsy with fatigue, finds his back. She doesn't pat it, just lets her palm rest there, a heavy, warm weight. "Told you," she slurs, her voice barely a whisper. "I've been practicing." Her fingers twitch once against his shirt before going limp. Within seconds, her own breathing syncs with his, a deep, sonorous duet underscored by the digestive symphony of her spell-wrought feast. The room, still smelling of sweat, syrup, and tiramisu, falls into a profound, satiated silence.

Rob wakes up with a dull ache behind his eyes and the phantom exhaustion of a day spent on his feet. He remembers the cooking. He remembers the overwhelming, unquestioning desire to see her eat, to see her full. He remembers feeling happy, compliant.

He find her still asleep. She is looking bigger. An undeniable, tangible fact.

He looks at the kitchen, at the tower of sticky pots and pans. Could he leave? To where? He could demand she fix this, but it's not clear... what has to be fixed.

It's easier to start cleaning. It's easier to let her sleep. It's easier to accept that this was what she wanted, and by extension, what he would provide.

He's not sure if the persuasion spell is gone, but surprisingly, he finds himself... unable to care. What were the chances of her not using it again, after all?



Zero. The chances of her not using it again were zero.

Five months later, he enters the bedroom on a Monday morning.

The sounds are immediate: wet gulping, soft groans, low moans. Jennifer has already woken up. The mattress groans and dips under her immense weight as she shifts. One arm is curled around the vast, pale dome of her stomach, her fingers absently tracing the deep, web-like stretch marks that map its taut surface. He can see the displeasure on her face, the way she winces as her full stomach shifts. His hands move on their own, coming to rest on her belly, beginning a slow, practiced massage. Her brain, though addled, registers this.

A full-body shudder runs through her. A low, relieved moan vibrates against the pillowcase. Her chewing slows, then stops. She swallows the mouthful with a thick, audible gulp.

"Took y' long enough," she slurs, her voice muffled and thick with sleep and the first meal of the day. Her own hand moves to cover his, pressing his palm more firmly into the aching, gurgling swell. "It's... *huuurk*... so full... W'ke up like this. Must've been dreaming about... *urp*... panc'kes." A soft, pained whimper escapes her as his fingers

find a particularly tight knot of pressure, the movement sending a fresh, liquid slosh through her core. "I want to get up..."

"Of course."

The effort to rise is monumental. Her body is a dead weight - a soft, uncooperative mass. Her breath comes in ragged, wet pulls as he levers her up, her hands scrambling for purchase on the headboard. The vast curve of her stomach seems to anchor her to the mattress. With a final, grunting heave, she manages to prop herself up on her elbows, her face flushed and beaded with sweat.

She sits there for a long moment, breathing heavily, one hand splayed across her heaving middle. Her eyes are squeezed shut. Then, with a weary, practiced flick of her wrist, she traces a small, shimmering symbol in the air. A single, perfect, syrup-drenched pancake plops onto the pillow beside her head. She doesn't even look at it.

"See?" she pants, her voice strained. "Still... getting better. Didn't even have to think about it." Her fingers twitch again, almost spasmodically. A tall glass of orange juice appears on the nightstand. She reaches for it with a trembling hand and takes a long, greedy gulp. "God, I'm parched."

"Of course. You've gotten really, really good, mistress." He pats her belly. A soft release of gas escapes her.

A sharp, guttural belch rips from her throat, shaking her entire frame. She doesn't seem to notice the fart. A lazy, self-satisfied smile spreads across her syrup-sticky lips. "I have, haven't I?" she slurs. "It's all just... so fucking easy..."

Her free hand makes another absent-minded flick. A single, crispy strip of bacon materializes on the pillow next to the pancake. She picks it up and takes a crunching bite. Her eyes drift closed as she chews, a low hum of pleasure vibrating in her chest. She swallows, then lets her head fall back against the headboard. "You can stop now," she murmurs, her words slightly distorted by bacon. "The rubbing. It's... *urp*... settled. For now." She pats the crest of her stomach, a dull, wet sound. Another, longer fart escapes her. She giggles. "God, sorry about that... I'm so gassy today. Becoming a fuckin' pig. Help me get on my feet."

"Oh, of course. My apologies, mistress."

The process is a slow, grunting ordeal. Her hands clamp onto his shoulders. Her bare feet scramble for purchase on the rug as he heaves. Her immense weight shifts, a tidal movement of soft flesh. A low, continuous groan escapes her as she is finally levered upright. She stands before him, swaying slightly, her breathing heavy and

labored. The vast, pendulous swell of her stomach dominates her silhouette, the skin stretched taut and shiny. She takes a single, shuffling step, her gait a wide, unsteady waddle, one hand instinctively bracing the small of her back, the other splayed across the aching swell of her middle.

"Ugh," she moans, her voice a strained rasp. "Every fucking morning. Like I'm hauling a damn medicine ball around." She takes another careful step, her focus entirely on moving her immense bulk forward. The hem of her too-small nightshirt has ridden up, barely covering the upper curve of her backside.

"I'm sorry to hear that, mistress. Do you need me to share the load, like yesterday?" His hands are compelled to reach for her cheeks, holding them up.

A sharp, startled gasp escapes her, morphing into a low, appreciative hum. She stops, leaning back into his grasp. "Mmm, that's the stuff..." she slurs. But after a moment, she gives an impatient little wiggle. "Alright, alright, let go," she sighs. "As much as I appreciate the... enthusiasm... it's not exactly helping me waddle to the kitchen. If anything it's making me less balanced than before."

"Ah, of course. I'm sorry, mistress."

She lets out a soft, dismissive snort, already turning her bulk back toward the hallway. "I don't care," she murmurs, her voice dripping with a condescending sweetness. Her right hand makes a lazy, almost subconscious flicker. A single, fresh, glazed donut materializes directly in front of her face. She doesn't break her stride, merely leaning forward to take a huge, uncompromising bite out of it as it hangs in the air. The donut vanishes in three messy bites before she's even reached the bedroom doorway. A smug smile appears on her face. "God, did you see that? I swear, I'm such a... nnnmmghh... I'm such a fucking pig now." She looks back at him. "Aren't you proud of your mistress?" Her left hand moves. "Say it."

His head aches. He recognizes the feeling, not of a spell taking hold, but of a path well-trod. The resistance he might have put up months ago has been worn down to a smooth, frictionless channel. The words were there before he even thought them.

"Yes, of course. I'm very proud of her."

A low, throaty chuckle escapes her. She pats the immense swell of her stomach. "I know you are," she purrs. "You have such good taste." She shuffles into the living room, her wide hips nearly brushing both sides of the doorframe. "Now come on. I need my coffee. And I think... yes, I think a whole plate of bacon. The thick-cut kind. And maybe some hash browns. And toast. Lots of butter." Each item is listed with a

dreamy cadence. "And you're going to watch me eat every single bite. You're going to tell me how good I look." She falls ass-first onto the couch.

After a whole day gone by, he still stands in front of her, his body pressed against her belly and between her thighs, a fork in one hand and a plate in the other. He struggles to reach closer. A belch escapes her as he presses further onto her.

"You're looking great, mistress. More?"

Her head lolls against the back of the couch, her chin slick with a mixture of grease and syrup. Her eyes are glazed slits, her breathing a wet, ragged sound. The vast plain of her stomach is a warzone of crumbs and stains, rising and falling in shallow, labored jerks. At the pressure of his body, a deep, seismic belch forces its way out. Her right hand, lying limp on the cushion, twitches. The fingers flutter through a feeble, half-formed summoning glyph. Nothing happens. She tries again, but the magic sputters and dies. She is utterly, completely drained.

A soft, confused whimper escapes her. Her left hand, however, moves of its own accord, sliding over her belly to pat his arm. Her touch is weak, clammy. "Mmmh... what...? More?" she slurs. "Nnnghh... fuck..." Her thighs involuntarily close around him. "S'pose so... 's what you're for... isn't it? But... I'm actually so fucking full..."

He nears a forkful of apple pie to her mouth.

She had quit her program, of course. There was no formal withdrawal; she simply stopped logging into the university portal. Her student ID expired. No one called. Her glazed eyes struggle to focus on the fork. A fresh string of drool escapes the corner of her mouth. Her stomach gives another low, painful groan, but her gluttony wins out.

He was her only link to the outside world now, the one who paid the bills with the income from his full-time position at the engineering firm he'd started at after his own graduation. His life was a neat, orderly loop: work, commute, and then home, to her. Turns out the spell gives a lot of leeway in matters of thinking, doing, basically being a functioning adult - it just needs to cater to his mistress.

She leans forward the minuscule amount she can manage, her mouth opening in a slack 'O'. She sucks the bite off the fork with a soft, wet sound, then collapses back against the cushions with a heavy sigh. A dribble of filling escapes down her chin.

She swallows. Her hand, still on his arm, gives a feeble, pushing motion. "Nnnn... no more," she gasps, her voice hoarse. "Can't... I literally can't."

Her life was a loop, too. Waking, summoning, eating, using her gratification spell, and sleeping. The grimoire lay permanently open on her nightstand now, its pages stained with grease and sugar, a silent third partner in their relationship.

He follows her orders. He places the pie to the side, and instead leans over a little more, patting the side of her belly.

"You're looking great."

Her hand, still resting on his arm, gives a feeble, appreciative squeeze. Her breathing is a labored, wet rasp. After a long moment, her other hand flops onto the crest of her belly.

"Yeah," She lets out a long sigh, her smirk faltering. "But you're getting a bit repetitive." she slurs.



EPILOGUE

One year before the Grimoire

Her fork clatters against the thick ceramic plate, the sound sharp in the humid, greasy air of the diner. She pushes the plate away an inch, her nose wrinkled.

"It's soggy," she declares, her voice carrying over the low hum of conversations and the sizzle from the kitchen grill. "The bottom bun is completely saturated. It's like eating a sponge."

She leans back in the red vinyl booth, crossing her arms over her chest. She is all sharp angles, restless energy - thin wrists, a collarbone prominent above the neckline of her faded band t-shirt, a narrow waist that the table doesn't come close to touching. Her auburn hair is pulled into a messy, impatient ponytail, a few strands stuck to her temples in the late summer heat. Her foot hasn't stopped its rapid, percussive tap against the seat since they sat down.

Her eyes, a bright, critical green, scan the room before landing back on him, unimpressed. "And this place is so loud. Could you even hear the waitress? I had to repeat my order twice. She kept smiling like that fixed it." She picks up a single, greasy fry, examines it, and drops it back into the basket as if it's personally offended her. "They're cold. Are yours cold?"

"I, uh, I haven't even had the chance to try them. I don't think so. Do you want them?"

His sentence is cut short. Her hand darts across the table, snatching a handful of fries from his basket. She doesn't thank him, simply popping them into her mouth one after another, chewing with a thoughtful, critical frown.

"They're *okay*," she concedes around the mouthful, though her hand is already moving back for more. "Better than mine, at least. They must have given you the good batch from the bottom of the fryer." She leans her elbow on the table, her posture slouching into a practiced, casual negligence. "You should have sent yours back. You can't just accept subpar food, Rob. It teaches them they can get away with it."

She finishes the stolen fries and licks the salt from her fingers, her gaze already wandering toward the dessert case by the cash register. Her foot resumes its tapping, a frantic rhythm against the vinyl. "Do you think their pie is any good? It

looks like it's been sitting there for a week. The whipped cream on top is all sad and deflated."

"What? It's actually fine, you should give yours a chance. Also, I don't know, but I'm pretty sure you want it anyways. Have you eaten today...?"

As he speaks, she simply grabs his burger, taking a huge bite out of it. She doesn't put it back.

"Hey, come on!"

She freezes mid-chew, her eyes widening in a perfect pantomime of surprise, as if she hadn't just brazenly stolen the food from his hands. She holds the burger, now missing a significant, teeth-marked crescent, aloft between them. A dollop of special sauce clings to the corner of her mouth.

"What?" she says, her voice muffled by the mouthful. She swallows with an audible gulp, then gestures at the stolen prize with her free hand. "You weren't eating it. It was just getting cold. And your fries are better, so clearly you got the last good order of the night." She takes another, smaller bite, a defiant glint in her eye.

She sets the burger down on his plate - not where it was, but off to the side, a clear declaration that it's hers now. She wipes her mouth with the back of her hand, leaving a greasy smear. "And no, I haven't eaten. I was busy. You know. With things." Her gaze flicks past him, searching for the waitress. "I'm gonna need another one of these. And pie."

"Alright, fine then..."

He goes to grab hers, but his hand is swatted away.

"What? Ok, dude, what's your problem? I'll get you another, you can't just hoard all the food for yourself. Don't smile! It's not funny."

Her hand darts out, slapping his fingers away from her discarded plate with a sharp, stinging crack. A smug, unrepentant grin spreads across her face, all sharp angles and teasing malice. "Too slow," she taunts, her voice a low, singsong tease. She pulls the plate with the soggy-bottomed burger closer to her, planting a possessive elbow next to it.

"It's my problem burger now," she declares, picking it up and taking a deliberate, exaggerated bite, her eyes locked on his as she chews. "You had your chance. You hesitated. You get the consequences." She swallows, the grin never fading. "And it is a little funny. You should see your face. All pouty."

She pushes the basket of her cold fries toward him with a condescending nudge. "Here. You can have these. Since you're so concerned about fairness." Her attention is already elsewhere, one hand raised to flag down the weary-looking waitress, her other hand still guarding her newly acquired bounty. "Miss! Another one of these, please! And a slice of the apple pie!" Then, she whispers. "And maybe don't let it sit under the shitty heat lamp this time..."

"Oh, didn't know we had an expert over here. Since you know all about how to manage a kitchen, why don't you say that to the waiter's face?"

Her hand slowly lowers to the table. Her smug grin tightens into something more brittle, a flash of genuine irritation in her green eyes. She leans forward, her voice dropping to a sharp, condescending whisper. "Oh, I'm sorry, is that *my* job now too? Should I also go back and flip the patty myself?" She lets out a short, humorless laugh. "You're the one sitting there looking all... capable. And tall. Why do I have to do everything myself? You should do it in my stead."

She picks up a cold fry from her own basket and flicks it dismissively in his direction. It lands in his water glass with a soft plink. "Go on. Be a man. Tell her about the heat lamp. I'll be right here," she says, leaning back and crossing her arms.

"Good try. Not going to happen."

Her eyes narrow, the challenge evaporating into pure, petulant frustration. She lets out a huff of air that flutters the loose strands of hair around her face. "That's what I thought. Whatever. Be boring like that." She turns her attention back to her stolen burger, picking at it with a renewed, aggressive focus, tearing off a piece of the bun with more force than necessary.

She chews in silence for a moment. Her gaze is fixed on her phone, right until the waitress arrives with the new burger and a slice of pie, setting them down with a tired smile that Jennifer doesn't acknowledge.

As soon as the waitress is gone, she pulls the new burger toward her, abandoning the old one completely. She takes a large, defiant bite, her eyes finally flicking up to meet his. They hold a glint of victorious spite. "See?" she mumbles around the mouthful. "I got what I wanted. I always do." She takes a swig of her milkshake, the ice clinking loudly in the glass. "Now are you going to eat those cold fries or not? It's depressing just watching them sit there."

He pulls them away from her.

"Don't even think about it! You've got plenty of food right about now. Also-"

He grabs the old burger again. Jennifer doesn't care to stop him.

"-I'm taking this back."

Her jaw goes slack for a second, a half-chewed mouthful of the new burger visible as she watches him reclaim the remnants of his meal. A flicker of genuine surprise crosses her face, quickly masked by a roll of her eyes and a little, smug smile. She swallows thickly, washing it down with another loud slurp of her milkshake.

"Suit yourself," she says, her voice dripping with feigned indifference. She pulls the new plate closer, a clear boundary drawn. "Enjoy your sloppy seconds." She picks up her fork and stabs it into the slice of apple pie, the prongs screeching against the ceramic plate. She shovels a large piece into her mouth, feigning a moan of appreciation. "It's really good, you know? Shame I took the last one."

Eventually, the check comes along.

The arrival of the bill on its little plastic tray is met with a dismissive flick of her wrist. She doesn't glance at it, her attention fully captured by the last few crumbs of pie crust she's chasing around her plate. "You got it, right?" she says, not a question so much as a statement of fact. She finally looks up, fixing him with a bright, challenging stare.

She pushes her empty plates toward the center of the table. Leaning back, she pats her flat stomach with a satisfied sigh, the gesture seeming more habitual than necessary. "Besides, you owe me for being late in the first place." A smirk plays on her lips as she gathers her phone and jacket, already mentally checked out of the diner. "Don't take too long, ok sweetie?" He watches as she turns around. Though skinny otherwise, her ass wiggles inside of her jeans as she walks out.

"There was traffic! Ah, whatever..."

He stays there and pays, his gaze lingering on his girlfriend.

She pauses just outside the diner's glass door, the evening light catching the impatient set of her jaw. She doesn't look back, but a tiny, self-satisfied smirk tugs at the corner of her mouth. She places her hands in her back pockets, pulling her jeans up as she shifts her weight. A deliberate, subtle roll of her hips makes the worn denim stretch taut for a moment before she pushes the door open and steps out into the humid air, leaving him with the bill.

He sighs again, rolling his eyes. At least he's got that going for him.

