

It was just after seven in the morning when Katie let herself into the house. Brian had texted her an hour ago saying he was on the road, then again thirty minutes later informing her that Jewels eats every morning exactly at seven. It was sweet how much he cared for the dog. It was also borderline insane.

She let out a nervous breath as she pushed the front door open and was immediately met with the jingle of Jewels's collar as the dog rushed into the living room to see who was there. The lingering smell of coffee hit her nose as she stepped deeper into the house. Brian must have made himself a fresh pot before he left.

"Hey baby," Katie said with a grin, scooping Jewels up from the floor as she brushed against Katie's ankle. Jewels went straight for her chin, licking with desperation, causing Katie to laugh. "I know, I know. He left you all alone. Poor baby."

She carried her into the kitchen, set her on the counter, then pulled the instruction sheet from her back pocket. Meds with every meal. She found the pill bottle next to the dog food, shook one out, and crushed it between two spoons the way the instruction sheet described. The powder got everywhere, but she was able to scoop most of it up and place it inside the dish. Jewels watched with enormous eyes, trembling, tail going.

"You act like you haven't eaten in days." She mixed the powder into the wet food and set the bowl down. Jewels nearly nipped Katie's finger, she attacked it so fiercely.

As the dog ate, Katie leaned against the counter, taking in the house. Brian's kitchen was slightly bigger than hers, the countertops darker with flecks of silver in them. The backsplash looked real, not just the peel-and-stick stuff that was in their house. She kicked off her flip-flops and wandered around the space, opening drawers with mild curiosity as she mentally compared the house to hers, stopping as she reached the sliding glass door that led to the backyard.

"Whoa," she said to herself, as she opened the patio door and stepped out onto the deck. In the center of the yard was a large pool with stone around the edges. Two lounge chairs sat under a shade structure with string lights wound through the posts. A privacy fence ran the perimeter, tall enough that you could do whatever you wanted back there and nobody would know. The whole setup looked like something she'd save on Pinterest.

She pulled out her phone, planning to shoot a quick video of the setup, when Jewels appeared at her feet. "You live like a queen here, don't you?" Katie picked her up, put her phone into her back pocket and walked back inside the house to explore some more.

The hallway off the living room was like a gallery. Dozens of pictures covered the wall and Katie took her time examining each one. A jazz club shot in a neon light, smoke frozen mid curl. A

woman out with her friends, her head tossed back mid laugh as wine sloshed in her glass. A close-up of hands on piano keys that was so sharp she could see the calluses on the fingertips. She marveled at the detail of each picture, unable to imagine the amount of time and effort it must have taken to be able to get a shot like that.

She found herself opening the first door she came across. It was a small bathroom, well maintained, a single towel on the rack. The walls were mostly bare, and she closed the door wandering deeper into the house. The next door she opened looked to be a guest bedroom. The mattress was bare, a desk sat in the corner completely empty. She wondered if Brian had people who visited or if the guest bed was just something you kept because that's what the room was supposed to be.

She kept walking. The next door was open and she knew it was his bedroom before she stepped inside. The bed was big, navy comforter, pillows stacked against a wooden headboard that looked heavy and old. A pair of reading glasses sat on the nightstand next to a glass of water that still had condensation on it. There was a book, face down and open, something she didn't recognize. The room smelled more like him than the rest of the house. She stood in the doorway for a moment, Jewels tucked under her arm. "Is this where you sleep, girl?" The dog licked her cheek and she moved on.

There was one more door at the end of the hall and as she turned the handle she was surprised to find it locked. She tried it again, not hard, just enough to confirm, finding it odd that every other room was open. She looked down at Jewels, who was staring at the door with her like they were in this together.

"What's in there, huh?"

Jewels sneezed.

Katie looked at the door for another second, then turned around and walked back to the living room. It was probably a darkroom or an office or something. Jewels jumped into her lap and curled up immediately, sighing like she'd been waiting for this all morning. Katie pulled out her phone. She opened TikTok and checked her numbers. Forty-seven thousand, four hundred. The lip sync video from move in had a few thousand views, but only a handful of new followers. She'd tried to talk Josh into doing a dance with her last night, but he fell asleep on the sofa before she found something he'd actually agree to.

Deflated, she pulled up Instagram, hoping the pictures she'd posted gained some traction. She'd gained maybe three hundred followers since they moved in. The house content was dead on arrival. The kitchen reveal she'd spent an afternoon editing sat at nine thousand views. Her unpacking montage barely cleared six.

She looked down at Jewels, already half asleep, one ear flopped sideways.

"Alright. Let's see what you can do."

She opened the camera and held Jewels up next to her face. "Alright, don't embarrass me." She hit record and started lip-syncing to "I Got the Magic in Me," bobbing her head to the beat. Jewels stared at the screen for exactly two seconds before lunging at Katie's face, tongue first, nearly knocking the phone out of her hand. Katie broke, laughing hard enough that she almost stopped recording, but she kept going, panning between herself and Jewels who was now jumping on the couch cushion barking as Katie danced to the rap.

She watched the playback twice. The moment Jewels lunged at her was genuinely funny, and the light from Brian's kitchen made both of them look good. She almost never posted a first take of anything, but this one had something her other videos didn't. "Alright, let's see if you really do have the magic," she said to the dog, before posting it.

She tossed her phone onto the cushion and flopped back on the couch, Jewels readjusting on her lap. She lay there for a minute, staring at the ceiling, scratching behind the dog's ears. Her phone would buzz when the views started coming in. For now it was just quiet. She could hear Brian's refrigerator from here, a low steady hum. She liked it. It made the house feel less empty.

She reached for the remote on the side table. Pointed it at the TV. Nothing. Pressed the power button again, harder. Dead.

She flipped the remote over and popped the battery cover. Two double-A batteries were in it covered in dust.

"Come on." She sat up, pulling Jewels from her lap. "Let's see if we can find some fresh batteries." She opened the drawer on the side table. Paid bills, old instruction manuals, and a checkbook sat on top. She moved them around, rummaging through to see if she spotted anything that even vaguely resembled a battery box.

Just as she was about to close the drawer and give up hope something caught her eye. A stack of old polaroids, stuffed into the back of the drawer face down.

She picked them up, her eyebrows pinching together. The first was a woman sitting on the edge of a bed in an unbuttoned white shirt. Katie recognized the bed immediately, it was Brian's. The shirt was hanging open just enough that Katie could tell she wasn't wearing a bra. The swell of her chest showed just enough to be inviting. The woman looked to be about Katie's age. She was smiling seductively at the camera a look of admiration in her eyes.

Katie flipped to the next one. Different woman, same bedroom. This woman was taller, thinner, standing in front of the window in a slip that the backlight made nearly see-through. She had her arms crossed over her stomach, relaxed, like she'd been standing there for a while and forgotten what she was wearing. Or not wearing.

She kept going. A redhead on the couch, one knee pulled up, a sheet covering her lap and nothing else. A brunette in the kitchen, leaning on her elbows against the black countertop. Her legs were kicked up, her ankles crossed. Katie could see the swell of her ass as she faced the camera, her lips barely parted. "I hope he scrubbed down that countertop after," she said to no one, as she continued to thumb through them.

They were all different women. Different ages, different bodies, different rooms. But they all had the same quality. Every single one of them was breathtakingly beautiful, and they all looked pleased to be there.

She paused on one near the bottom. A woman with short blonde hair, younger than the others, sitting in a kitchen. But this kitchen was different. The countertop was white, not black and the walls were more of a cream color. She was wearing a man's button-down shirt that stopped mid-thigh. Only the bottom two buttons were fastened, the others hung free displaying her nakedness in a way that looked more elegant than scandalous. She was holding a coffee mug and looking at the camera with this expression Katie couldn't stop staring at. It didn't just look seductive, it looked challenging. Like she was daring the person looking at it to not want her.

Katie wondered what a picture like that would get in views. Not the nakedness, there was no way she would ever post something like that, but the confidence, the defiance. She only looked at the picture for a few seconds and she already wanted to know more about the person in it. There was true art in the way the photo was taken.

She put the photos back in the drawer and closed it. Jewels was watching her from the couch cushion, head tilted.

"Don't look at me like that. I was just looking for batteries and got distracted."

She pulled the dog back into her lap and sat there for a minute. Her heart was beating faster than it should have been, which was stupid. It wasn't like she'd found anything crazy. Boudoir photography was everywhere. Half the photographers on her Instagram explore page shot stuff like this. But scrolling past it on a screen was different from holding it in your hands in the living room of the man who took them.

Her phone buzzed and she flinched hard enough that Jewels jumped.

*Has she let you leave yet? She likes to give you the big sad eyes when she thinks you're about to go. Don't fall for it or you'll never get out.*

Katie smiled at the screen before she could think about it. Jewels had climbed back onto the cushion beside her, ear flopped, half asleep already. Katie shifted the phone, angled it down, and took the picture. The dog didn't even open her eyes.

She typed back. *We made a dance video for the channel. It must have worn her out.* She pressed send on the picture. Once it sent, she pulled up the thread with Josh and sent the same picture.

Josh's reply was almost instant. She was shocked he was able to answer so quickly, expecting him to be busy at the new office. *She barely even looks like the same vicious creature that attacked me.*

Katie giggled and fired back a text. *Don't be dramatic. She's perfect and you love her.*

Brian's reply came next. *Glad to see she's not giving you any trouble. I knew you'd be the right pick.*

Katie smiled at her phone and pulled up her TikTok. The video with Jewels already had almost a hundred likes and five new followers. Maybe this would be the momentum she needed.

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By Thursday she had the routine memorized. The first half of the day was spent inside giving Jewels her meds and posting videos of the two of them on TikTok. She had gained almost a thousand new followers on both TikTok and Instagram. She still wasn't at the fifty-thousand mark she'd hoped for, but she couldn't deny Jewels was a hit. The afternoon routine was only slightly different. Instead of staying inside, they would go for a walk, exactly at three as instructed.

She hadn't gone back to the drawer, but she would be lying if she said she hadn't thought about them.

Brian texted every day. The first couple were simple. *How's my girl?* Katie would send a photo and he'd reply with a line or two. By mid-week they got more specific. *Did she eat the edges of the wet food or leave them? She does that when her stomach is off.*

The dog content was working. The lip sync from Brian's couch had cleared sixty thousand views by Wednesday morning. A clip of Jewels nosing a piece of cereal across the kitchen floor did even better.

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Thursday night they were on their own couch, the TV running something neither of them was really watching. Katie had her phone tilted away from him, scrolling her analytics for the third time in an hour.

"I'm stuck."

He looked up. "Stuck how?"

"My numbers." She held her screen toward him. "I thought I'd be at fifty thousand last week. I'm still off by almost seven hundred. The house content totally flopped."

Josh glanced at the screen, then back at his pizza. "What about the dog stuff? You said that was doing well."

"That's the problem. The only thing working is Jewels, and she's not my dog. Brian comes home tomorrow and then what?"

Josh chewed, thinking. "Didn't the Galveston photo pull like two thousand in a day? You just need another one of those."

Katie tucked her legs under her. "So your solution is I post another bikini pic."

"I'm just saying. The numbers don't lie. People liked that one."

"You just want to see me in a new bikini."

"I mean. Yeah." He grinned at her, unrepentant. "But also you said it yourself. It was your single biggest post."

"There's no beach here, Josh. It's not the same thing." She picked the phone back up, flipped it face down on her stomach. "It was the water. The light. It was the whole... it was a whole vibe. I can't recreate that in our backyard."

"So find a vibe."

"Mhm."

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A heat advisory had gone into effect on Friday. Temperatures climbed into triple digits, causing the pavement to shimmer. Katie stood in front of her bedroom mirror, checking her reflection. She was wearing a white micro skirt that left almost nothing to the imagination. She turned slightly, checking the profile view. If she bent forward even a little, she could clearly make out her right butt cheek. She'd paired it with a fitted blue crop top and platform boots.

The idea was to go into the backyard and take a few photos. She'd given what Josh said a lot of thought. He was right, her bikini photos always got the most engagement, but looking at the outfit now it felt too revealing. She thought the skirt would sit lower. She chewed on her lip trying to decide what to do, before kicking off her boots and deciding to put a pair of black biker shorts underneath to avoid the inevitable wardrobe malfunction.

When she returned to the mirror she smiled. The biker shorts helped. She did a little spin in the mirror, ensuring her ass was completely covered when her phone buzzed next to her.

*Meeting got pushed up. Want to meet up for lunch? There's a new taco place in the plaza right by my office.*

Katie smiled. One of her favorite things about Josh was that he always seemed to find ways to make time for her. He was always inviting her to lunches, moving around his schedule to accommodate her. It was refreshing to know she had a partner who enjoyed her company.

She snapped a quick mirror selfie.

*Fit check*, she responded. A lot of the plazas and outdoor malls she'd seen around town had great spots for photos. She could have lunch with Josh and find a good background for her picture. It was a perfect compromise.

*Damn. Wish I wasn't stuck at the office.*

*Something tells me we wouldn't make it to lunch if that were the case.*

*Guilty as charged. May want to lose the biker shorts though. They peek out of the bottom.*

Katie rolled her eyes, a smile tugging at her lips.

*Nice try, perv. Then my entire ass would be hanging out.*

She did another slow spin in the mirror. He was right, she'd missed it before, but the shorts were visible if you looked close enough. She had to zoom in to really see it. Which meant Josh had zoomed in to get a closer view. A warmth crept over her as she imagined him sitting in his new office zooming in on her picture and needing to hide his arousal.

*If I noticed then your followers will too. Just looking out for you ;)*

*Shorts are staying on. Sorry to disappoint. The only way you could tell was by zooming all the way in. Not everyone has a one track mind like you.*

She grabbed her keys and headed for the door. She'd already been next door and taken care of Jewels. She'd head back over before Josh got home from work to do their afternoon routine. Brian would be back in the morning which meant tonight was going to be her last chance at new content with Jewels.

*Didn't you say like half your followers are male? Trust me, I'm not the only one zooming in. This is your Galveston moment.*

*Sorry, I'm already in the car.*

Katie rolled her eyes and opened the door. The second she did she was hit with a blast of heat like she'd opened the oven door. She quickly locked up and made the walk to her car, blasting the AC the second she turned it on. Despite it being less than twenty steps from the driveway to

her house she already had a thin layer of sweat on her forehead. Texas heat was certainly going to take some getting used to.

She pulled into the restaurant parking lot fifteen minutes later. The sun glared through the windshield, but she didn't make a move to get out. Instead, she looked down at the white pleats resting high on her thighs. She sat there for a second with the AC blasting, her skirt bunched against her legs. She could already feel the biker shorts clinging to her in the heat, the elastic band digging into her waist beneath the skirt.

Josh was always saying stuff like this. He would tell her to dress sexier, or wear something revealing just to get a rise out of her. If he actually saw how exposed she was without the shorts he would freak out. She thought about his reaction when she first posted the swimsuit photos. The way he got possessive, how excited he was at the prospect of "all those guys" seeing what was his. There was something sexy about the toxic masculinity of it all.

She looked out over the parking lot. The restaurant was only about fifty yards from her. If she really wanted to, she could probably get there and get seated before anyone really noticed. She chewed on her bottom lip. Was she really considering this? She thought about the women in Brian's polaroids. The confidence they showed. They had looked directly into the camera, completely bare, daring the viewer to look away. That was the energy she needed for her own photos. The thought of walking into a crowded restaurant knowing all she had on underneath was a thong sent a sharp spike of adrenaline through her chest.

She told herself she was just doing it to mess with Josh. She wanted to see his face when he realized what she had done, to watch him squirm across the booth while they ate.

Before she could talk herself out of it, Katie lifted her hips off the driver's seat. She reached under the pleats, hooked her fingers into the tight spandex waistband, and shimmied the shorts down her thighs. She had to take her boots off to get them the rest of the way down. Her bare skin suddenly stuck to the hot leather seat, making her breath a little heavier.

She turned off the car and grabbed the door handle, her pulse racing as she stepped out into the bright parking lot.

The walk to the restaurant felt longer than she'd originally thought. Each step, she found her hands going to her skirt, ensuring it wasn't flying up in the back. She considered turning around and putting her shorts back on, but Josh had already spotted her as he leaned against the restaurant entrance. His eyes immediately dropped to her legs the moment she was in view.

His grin widened. He wrapped an arm around her waist, his fingers dipping just below the hemline. "You actually took them off," he murmured, pulling her against his chest. "Are you even wearing panties?"

"Stop," Katie hissed, swatting his hand away. She tugged the skirt down an extra millimeter. "Someone's going to see."

"They already are." Josh leaned in, opening the heavy glass door. The restaurant's icy air conditioning hit her bare thighs, raising an immediate rush of goosebumps. "The guy on the bench you passed probably gave himself whiplash he did such a hard double-take."

Katie's face went red. As the hostess led them through the crowded dining room, Katie kept her hand firmly pressed against her thigh to keep the skirt in place. But Josh wasn't looking at her. He was scanning the tables they passed, tracking the eyes of the men looking at her legs. Katie's gaze went between his legs. Was he hard? She could see the thick outline of his erection, as his slacks grew tight. She rubbed her thighs together, picking up her pace.

Once they reached a corner booth, Katie slid carefully onto the cold vinyl. "Seems like you're enjoying the attention more than I am," she noted, arching an eyebrow.

Josh's gaze darkened. He reached under the table, his warm hand resting heavily on her bare knee. "I am," he admitted, his fingers sliding up her thigh. "Every guy in here right now is trying not to stare at you. And you're sitting with me."

Katie's breath hitched as Josh's hand moved, her fingers catching his wrist. "Order a girl a drink," she said as she held his hand in place, afraid if he moved it much higher he'd see how much this display of possessiveness was really getting to her.

The waiter didn't look like he was much older than twenty-one. He stumbled over their lunch specials, his gaze flicking to Katie on more than one occasion. She ordered a spicy margarita and chips with queso. Josh stuck to water, not wanting to return to work smelling like alcohol.

The moment the waiter walked away Josh leaned back against the booth, smiling proudly. "He was staring at your legs."

Katie rolled her eyes. "You think everyone is staring at my legs."

"They usually are."

Katie slid closer to him, allowing his hand to slide to the inside of her thigh, without going any higher. "Can I ask you something?" She turned her body so she could face him.

"Sure."

"Why do you get so..." she chewed on her lip, trying to find the right word, her gaze shifting between his legs. "wound up, when thinking about guys looking at me?" She placed her hand on his thigh and he shifted his weight. "Aren't you supposed to be jealous or something?"

The smile on Josh's face faded, his lips becoming a straight line as he considered her question.

"It's not... it's not that simple." He looked at her, then at the table, then back at her. "It's like. Okay. You know when you post something and the comments go crazy? And you get that rush because all these people want you but none of them can have you?"

"Yeah."

"It's like that. But in person." He shifted. "It's knowing what they're thinking. And knowing they can't do anything about it."

Katie studied him. "So it's a power thing."

"I guess. Yeah." He took a drink of water. "I just know you'd never let things get too far. You're not that kind of person. So it's... it's safe, I guess. It's fun because there's no real risk."

"So what if there was a risk?" Katie lifted her eyebrow. "Would that make it more or less exciting?"

She knew he didn't mean for what he said to sound like a challenge, but she couldn't help it. The idea that he liked seeing her flirt and tease people because he trusted her should have flattered her, but it felt more like he was drawing a line and daring her to cross it.

"I..." Josh's cheeks flushed pink and he turned away, but Katie saw it. She'd struck something he didn't want to dive into. She was just about to push further when the waiter turned the corner carrying her drink and queso on a tray. As Katie shifted to make room on the table, her elbow caught her silverware. The fork clattered off the table and onto the hardwood floor, landing right at the edge of the aisle.

Katie locked eyes with Josh, a flare of heat rushing through her body as she smirked at him.

She slid her hips to the edge of the booth. Slowly, she began to lean forward from the waist, her eyes never leaving Josh's. Without the biker shorts, the back of the micro-skirt immediately began to lift. She felt the restaurant's frigid AC brush against the bare skin of her upper thighs, then the swell of her ass. She kept her eyes glued to Josh, waiting for his hand to shoot out and grab her arm.

But Josh didn't move. His jaw clenched, his gaze fixed hungrily on her, a thick vein pulsing at his temple. A heavy, slick heat stirred between her legs as she pushed it another inch, neither of them wanting to back down. But at the very last second, her nerve finally broke.

Katie quickly dropped her hips, bending her knees into more of a squat. Her skirt fell flat against the backs of her thighs as she snatched the fork and slid back into the booth, her modesty miraculously intact. The waiter, none the wiser, set their drinks down on the table. He said something to them, but Katie couldn't make it out. All she could hear was the racing of her heart. The waiter had nearly seen her entire ass, and Josh did nothing to stop it. In fact, if anything, he seemed even more aroused.

"I can't believe you didn't stop me," she whispered, her chest heaving.

"I can't believe you almost went through with it." He fidgeted uncomfortably in his seat. "That's what made it hot." He leaned forward, reaching for her hand. "Let's get out of here. I'll call in sick for the afternoon."

"It's still your first week." She pulled her hand back, smiling. "And I still have to go take care of Jewels. Brian's back tomorrow and I want to get one more video with her."

Josh groaned, leaning back against the booth.

"But." She took another sip of her margarita, letting him sit in it. "Take some pictures of me by that fountain on the way out." Her hand crept up his thigh. "Something that will make my followers go insane."

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The fountain sat near the back of the plaza, a low stone basin with water spilling over the edge into a shallow pool. The afternoon sun hit it from behind, throwing light across the wet stone. The heat hit immediately, and Katie worried her makeup would start to run before they even made the short walk. By the time they reached the stone, a thin layer of sweat ran along Katie's collarbone. She sighed in appreciation as a cool mist from the falling water hit her.

"Here." She handed Josh her phone and walked toward the fountain, her boots clicking on the tile. She turned to face him, the water catching the light behind her. "Okay. Tell me when."

Josh held the phone up. "You look incredible."

"You always say that." She cocked her hip, one hand resting on her thigh. "But I need you to give me actual direction." The skirt shifted. She felt it move and didn't fix it. When it was clear he wasn't going to offer any real guidance she smiled. "Take the picture, Josh."

He took three in quick succession. Katie checked them over his shoulder. Good, not great. She looked stiff. The skirt was making her uncomfortable.

"Let's try a different angle." She walked back to the fountain. This time she turned slightly, leaning her hip against the stone ledge, crossing one ankle over the other. The warm stone pressed against the back of her bare thigh. A drop of sweat traced down her spine as she arched her back slightly, letting the crop top ride up. "Lower angle. Get the water behind me."

Josh crouched, having to adjust his stance as his slacks pulled dangerously tight against his erection. She watched him behind the lens. He was snapping pictures, but his eyes were on her body more than the screen. She stopped thinking about the skirt. Her chin tilted up, her lips parted just enough, and she looked directly into the lens the way the blonde in the Polaroid had looked into Brian's camera.

"Jesus, Katie. You look..." Josh's voice came out rough.

"Did you get it?"

He stood up and turned the phone around. The shot was better than anything on her page. The light from the fountain caught the white of her skirt, her stomach was flat and golden above the crop top, and her expression showed a confidence she wasn't sure she felt. But her eyes went to the bottom of the frame. Because of her angled hip, the skirt had ridden up on one side. The curve of her ass was clearly visible, the bare skin smooth against the wet stone.

"Josh." She zoomed in, her stomach tightening. "You can see everything."

She watched his throat work as he swallowed, his pulse racing in his neck. "It's... I mean it still covers more than a normal bikini. And you posted that."

Katie stared at the photo. He wasn't wrong. The bikini had shown more skin. But this didn't feel like the bikini. This felt like something else entirely.

She hit post before she could change her mind.

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It was almost four by the time she got back to Brian's house with Jewels. The walk had been brutal, the pavement so hot she could feel it through her boots. Jewels had done her business quickly and spent the rest of the walk trying to get back inside. Brian had been pretty specific about the route they should take, how long the walk should last, and every other detail, but Katie made an exception today because of the extreme heat.

She filled Jewels' water bowl and collapsed onto the couch, her skin still damp from the heat. She pulled up her texts with Brian.

*Josh found some organic dog treats at the store today! He thought Jewels might like them 🐾*

She smiled at the message before sending it. Josh and Brian had gotten off on the wrong foot and Katie was trying to extend an olive branch. It felt good to include Josh in the routine. Like they were all part of the same thing.

Brian's reply came two minutes later.

*Yeah, don't do that.*

Katie stared at the screen. She waited for a follow-up. An explanation. A thank you. Something. Nothing came. She wasn't sure why he was being so short. Maybe it was a busy day, or he was driving. She typed and deleted three different responses before giving up and setting the phone down.

She opened TikTok instead. The fountain photo was doing even better than she expected. Four hundred likes in under two hours. The comments were already piling up. She scrolled through the first dozen. Most were harmless. Fire emojis, heart eyes, the usual. But further down they got bolder. Comments about her legs, her stomach. Then there were others. The ones that were far more... descriptive about how she made them feel. One guy had written something so graphic she blocked him, then locked her phone and set it face down on the cushion.

She picked it back up less than a minute later, once she didn't feel like she was blushing. Her DMs had thirty-six unread messages. She bit the corner of her cheek, but didn't open them. Instead, she thought about Josh seeing the comments. About reading the DMs to him in bed tonight, watching his face change the way it had in the restaurant. A warmth pooled low in her stomach and she closed the app.

She still had work to do. Brian was coming home tomorrow and this was her last chance at content with Jewels. She set up on the living room floor, propping her phone against a stack of books. Jewels was half asleep on the cushion but perked up when Katie started making kissing noises.

Her phone buzzed before she could get the first shot off. Josh.

*Still thinking about lunch. I should have taken the rest of the day off.*

*Down boy. You'll be home soon. I'm sure I can think of some ways to thank you for being such a good photographer.*

*Send me something to hold me over then.*

She rolled her eyes and took a quick selfie on the couch. Jewels had crawled into her lap, one ear flopped. Katie pouted her lips and hit send.

*That's adorable. But I'm pretty sure you know that's not what I meant.*

*You're insatiable.*

*After that little fork incident can you really blame me?*

Her face flushed. She glanced down at the skirt, still riding high on her thighs. Before she could respond, Brian's name popped up at the top of her screen.

*How's she doing? She seem like she's been sleeping through the night okay?*

Katie switched threads. *She's been great. Sleeps like a rock. She's always so full of energy when I get here.*

*Good. I'll be back early tomorrow morning. Has she had her evening meds yet?*

*Not yet. About to do it now.*

She switched back to Josh. He'd sent another message.

*Come on. One picture. I'm dying over here.*

Katie bit her lip. Maybe one picture would be okay. Seeing just how excited he'd gotten actually made her feel bad for leaving him when she did. Standing up, she walked into Brian's kitchen. With her back to the sliding glass door, she reached behind herself and gathered the back of her skirt, hiking the fabric high up on her hips. Catching a glimpse of herself in the glass, she had to smile. All those endless squats at the gym were definitely paying off. Her butt looked perfect. She let the curve of it hold the gathered material in place, making sure the little white thong she was wearing was completely exposed for Josh to admire. Holding the phone over her shoulder, she snapped the photo.

She looked at it. Her pulse ticked up. Her gaze went to the clock on screen. There was at least another hour before he got home. She wasn't sure she could wait.

*If you're a good boy maybe you'll find me exactly like this when you get home.* she pressed send.

*Fuck. That's not fair.*

*What? You asked for it.*

Josh's response came in the form of a picture.

Katie chewed on her lip as she zoomed in on the screen. Josh was sitting at his desk, thankfully. Her eyes focused on his lap. The screen was filled with the straining outline of his cock, the dark material of his dress pants pulled incredibly tight over the bulge. It looked like the zipper was fighting for its life. She traced her thumb over the screen, suddenly wishing he was already home.

*Looks like you liked it,* she teased, glancing up from her phone to make sure Jewels was still passed out on the sofa.

*Bet you won't send it again without the shirt*

She laughed out loud, causing Jewels to lift her head from the couch. *You're out of your mind.*

Brian's name appeared at the top of her screen again before she could press send.

*If she gets her meds too late she won't sleep.*

Katie groaned. She grabbed Jewels' pill bottle from the counter, crushed it up, and mixed it into the wet food. She took a picture of the food bowl and went to send it to Brian. Then she switched back to Josh's thread.

She stared at his last message. Without the shirt. Her heart was hammering. She set the phone against the backsplash and pulled the crop top over her head. The kitchen air hit her bare skin and she sucked in a breath.

Her phone buzzed on the counter. Brian.

*Also make sure the back door is locked before you leave. It sticks sometimes.*

Katie typed back one-handed, her other arm crossed over her bra. *Already locked it.*

She held her phone up and looked at herself through the camera. She looked hot, but she could do better. She smirked at herself through the lens as she reached back and unsnapped her bra. Josh would lose his shit if he saw this.

She let the thin fabric dangle on her arms, giving herself one last out before making the decision. Then, with her skin burning, she tossed the bra onto the floor with her shirt. She held the camera in her right hand, her left arm crossing over her chest, fingers spread just enough that the edge of her nipple peeked between them. She snapped it before she could think.

She looked at the photo and her stomach flipped. It was the most daring thing she'd ever taken. She could see the outline of her body in the glass door behind her, the kitchen light warm against her skin. Her expression was flushed. She could almost see the fear and desire coming off of her.

Brian's name lit up her screen again.

*It looks like that was only wet food. She needs the dry food mixed in or she's going to get fat..*

"Oh my God," Katie muttered. She grabbed the dry food from the cabinet, spooned it into the bowl, and snapped another picture.

*Come on, babe. Don't leave me hanging.*

She shook her head, tapped Brian's thread and went to attach the food bowl picture. Josh sent another text, a crying emoji followed by an eggplant. Katie giggled looking at the notification bar on top of her screen as she attached the picture and pressed send.

"He's such a goofball," she said, to no one as she swiped back to Josh's conversation to attach the photo he was impatiently waiting for.

Brian's response came first, and it made her stomach drop.

*The composition is good but the lighting is all wrong. You've got a warm source behind you and overhead fluorescent washing everything out.*

"Oh fuck. No no no no." Her hands shook as she pulled back up Brian's messages. Her eyes welled with tears and she could feel her heartbeat in her throat as she realized she'd sent him the photo intended for Josh. Another text from Brian appeared as she stared at the screen in horror.

*I'll show you some techniques when I'm back.*

She stared at the message unable to make sense of it. Her embarrassment knotted in her gut as she tried to piece together why he didn't say anything else about the near naked photo she'd sent him. She called Josh, needing to tell someone what happened.

"Please tell me you sent—" She could hear the grin in his voice and it made her want to be sick.

"I accidentally sent the picture to Brian" The words burst out, unable to hold them a second longer.

"You... what?" The excitement in his voice was gone.

"How?"

"I was texting both of you at the same time and I sent it to the wrong thread. And I... Fuck, Josh what do I do? Tell me what to do." She could feel herself getting hysterical. She tried to slow down her breathing.

She expected anger. She expected his voice to go cold and flat the way it did when he was really upset. Instead she heard him exhale slowly.

"Send me the picture."

"What?"

"The one you sent him. Send it to me. I want to see exactly what he saw."

Her hands were still trembling as she pulled up the photo and sent it. She heard his breathing change on the other end.

"Fuck, babe."

Something in his voice made her stomach drop and tighten at the same time. She pressed her forehead against the cool countertop.

"Josh, I'm freaking out. What do I do?"

"I... um...What did he say?" Excitement had crept back into his voice, or maybe it was dread.

She read him Brian's messages. Word for word.

Josh was quiet for a long time. She could hear him breathing.

"I mean, it sounds like..." he paused and Katie heard him shuffle in his seat. "Katie, this picture... I can... he can see your nipple." He sounded out of breath.

"I know that, Josh. I didn't mean to. God, I can't believe I was so stupid."

Josh cleared his throat. "It's fine, seriously. It sounds like he realizes it was an accident. He probably just wants to forget it happened. Same as you."

Katie closed her eyes. "You think?"

"Yeah." His voice had shifted again. Softer now. "Listen. The day's basically over here anyway. I'm going to come home early."

"Okay."

"I'll see you soon. I love you."

"I love you too."

He hung up. She stood there for a minute, her phone pressed against her bare chest. Brian's kitchen hummed around her. The refrigerator. The tick of a clock she hadn't noticed before. Jewels was eating from her bowl on the floor, oblivious.

Her phone buzzed against her chest and she glanced at it through blurry eyes.

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