

Sam hurried outside and flagged down a cab requesting to be taken to campus. Sitting down on the seat they had a much smoother and calmer ride to campus than the day before much to their stomach's relief. Sam headed to their first class hoping to get there before anyone else. They hurriedly walked across campus and felt the food in their gut shifting as they walked. The added weight caused them to tire quickly and they were thoroughly out of breath by the time they reached the classroom. They had attracted several looks as they sped across campus by the few people that were around. Whether it was because of their bloated stomach or the rate they were moving Sam didn't know. Finding their seat and taking a few minutes to catch their breath Sam scoots up to their desk and lean into it pushing their belly downwards. They murmur as the food shifts and stretches their belly as they try to hide it below their desk. Sam let out a sigh and put their tablet on the desk and hunched over it to read. Their stamina wasn't coming back as quickly as they would have liked as they sit there reading. The run from the cab had taken a fair amount out of them. As Sam continued to read and dwell on that fact their tablet let out a ping. A message popped up saying that Sam's class later in the day was cancelled due to the professor being unexpectedly unavailable. Sam dismissed the message as this was not the first time for this to occur. Sam put their elbows on the desk and rested their head in their hands as they thought about how to adjust their schedule as other students started to trickle in.

Avery and Riley came in a few minutes before the start of class and sat down near Sam. the two of them greeted Sam and Sam turned their head, still resting it in their hands and gave a small smile and hello in return. Avery then said "Your skin is looking better today. A lot less redness and your skin is looking very soft." Avery gives Sam's cheek a playful poke as they compliment them. Sam smiles and shakes their head and says "Thank you." in a sincere tone. Riley adds "Yeah, I am glad you are healing up quickly. Me and Avery had a little discussion last night worrying about your safety." Avery gives Riley's ribs a subtle

jab with their elbow as they mention the more private conversation before turning to Sam and giving a shrugging grimace. “We know you did not want us to worry but to be fair the first we found out about your partner was the visible injuries inflicted.” Avery explains. Sam feels their heart warmed by this and simply nods along before asking “Do you want to come over this evening and meet Jackie then? I spoke with them about it and they would love to have you over to meet them tonight if that works for you two.” Avery accepts quickly and with a glance over to Riley Sam can see them nodding as well. The professor then walks in and Avery and Riley turn their attention to quickly taking out their note taking supplies and Sam switches apps on their tablet as class begins.

Class started out slow and seemed to drag on for the entire period. Sam felt increasingly tired as the time ticked by at a lethargic rate. Sam’s head slowly drooped down towards the desk. By the end of class Sam’s head was inches from laying on the desk’s surface. The professor looked over the hall and sighed when they saw Sam thinking they had been almost bored to sleep. The professor left with an unhappy look on their face as Avery and Riley started talking with Sam again. “Did it really bore you that much? I mean they don’t have much in the way of visuals but they weren’t that bad.” Riley questions bluntly. With a shake of their head before resting it on the surface in front of them, Sam replies “No, I am just really tired today for some reason.” Avery smiled and teased “What? Had too much fun with Jackie last night?” Sam groaned and mumbled “...in a way.” Causing Avery to laugh and Riley to look a bit jealous for a moment before returning to a neutral expression. Sam turned their head to face them as they rested on the table. “I guess I am going to head home and nap. My other class today was cancelled luckily.” Sam says as they flick their tablet to show off the earlier message. Avery looks down and lets out a hum before turning to Riley. “We had them last semester didn’t we?” Riley nodded and added “And they left for a couple weeks the last time they left

unannounced.” Avery lets out a groan and glances at Sam “Yeah I remember now, last semester they had us cram all the work we missed by their absence into a single week in addition to what was scheduled.” Sam suddenly felt significantly agitated by this new information and held their head as they moaned unhappily. Avery gave an empathetic expression and patted Sam on the back. Riley said “Don’t worry, we can help you study.” Avery gave Riley a puppy dog eyed expression and with a sigh Riley corrected “I can help you study and Avery can act as emotional support.” Avery smiled happily doing a fist pump in the air. Sam thanked them with an improved mood and soon they all said their goodbyes as Avery and Riley departed to their next class. Sam rested a few minutes before getting up to leave.

Sam’s stomach does not seem to have shrunk at all over the course of the lecture. Sam can still feel the chunks of eggs sitting in their gut as they rub their belly. They head to the door to the lecture hall and peak out seeing that most of the pedestrian traffic between classes has calmed. Stepping out, Sam walks back to across the campus to grab another cab home. The city passes quickly by the window as Sam watches the gleaming skyline in the midday light. Finally reaching home Sam opens and locks the door behind them and sits down heavily on the couch feeling exhausted. Sam calls out to Jackie but they are met with silence. Sam shakes their head and lets out a sigh as they realize Jackie is out. They kick off their shoes and toss their things to the side of the couch. Sam lays back and rubs their stomach letting the food churn as they massage it. Sam’s eyes slowly drift shut as they fall asleep, but they manage to shift to laying down before completely falling unconscious.

Earlier in the day as Sam was leaving Jackie watched Sam be driven away in the cab and simply shook their head softly while smiling. “Sam is such a cutie.” Jackie whispered to themselves as they headed back inside the apartment. Jackie peaked into the kitchen and saw the remains from Sam’s egg cooking adventure. Jackie checks the pots and

pans and looks a bit annoyed realizing that Sam hadn't left any for them. Even though they had been buried in the eggs earlier they hadn't even gotten an accidental taste as they struggled. The omelets that were broken into pieces as Jackie struggled had smelled delicious. Jackie entered the kitchen and started cleaning regardless as they didn't want the apartment to start smelling of rotten eggs. They dumped out the bowl of egg shells and threw away their now empty boxes. A quick glance in the fridge showed that they had eaten most of the eggs they had. With a few taps on a tablet though Jackie ordered for the fridge to be restocked when they left for breakfast. Jackie then scrubbed the remaining cookware and put it up to dry. Looking around Jackie feels satisfied with their work and thinks about where to head for breakfast. Jackie paces thinking about it for a few minutes before snapping their fingers as recalled one of their favorite breakfast joints. Jackie hadn't been there since they had started dating Sam since they loved eating Sam's cooking. Jackie happily moved into the bedroom with almost a skip in their step as they thought about the rough greasy meals and the friends that hung around the place. Jackie takes some sweatbands out of the dresser and puts them on before heading out at a jogging pace.

Jackie watched the city change as they jogged from a clean and pristine residential, to commercial and industrial areas, and finally to a run down area nearing the old sea docks. Jackie glanced to the side and watched some animals scurry out of an abandoned car rusting in an empty lot. Abandoned buildings and vehicles were plentiful. Windows were broken, vines climbed over vehicles and up the sides of buildings. Jackie saw a few more buildings had burned out since they were last in the area. Bricks scorched and scraps of metal or glass in scattered partially melted chunks. Jackie bent down and picked up a piece of cooled metal before tossing it back and checking on their phone how far they had jogged. They had gone about 20 kilometers in the past couple hours of jogging. A very good pace but Jackie was

disappointed that they had let themselves drop from peak performance. Flipping around through a few apps Jackie noticed that cab service no longer covered the old sea docks due to increased road hazards. Jackie looked around at the plants poking through the asphalt and tree roots tearing up the sidewalks and decided to walk the rest of the shop.

Jackie opens the door with their foot as they walk in as the door had lost its handle a while ago. A small bell rings as the door opens and Jackie looks around at the worn wooden tables and chairs. Jackie then hears a voice call out “Be there in a minute!” from the back of the shop where the pantry was. Jackie walked over to the bar and took a stool near a griddle built into the counter. As they waited Jackie looked over the liquor shelf as it sat behind a locked pair of doors with patterned metal faces with gaps to see through. The packlocks looked sturdy but Jackie knew the key was just on a hook hidden under the counter. A large person walked out from the back. They were wearing a large stained apron and a white tshirt with faded black slacks. The individual had a large belly from tasting all their own meals over the years and had short brown hair. “So what can I get for... Jackie! How have you been! No one has seen you around in ages!” Max has been a friend of Jackie for a few years. Jackie stood up with a smile and held their arms open for a hug as Max walked around the counter and picked them up in a hug. “I have been around but I have been...” Max quickly held up a finger after setting Jackie down. “Hey now, you have been gone long enough that everyone has started a betting pool. At least let me take a few guesses before you tell me.” Jackie holds up their hands in defeat and replies “Okay. You got it Maxxie. But I could really use a pile of bacon and eggs to start off.” Max rolls their eyes as they are called Maxxie but goes into the pantry and returns with a pound of bacon and a carton of eggs. They turn on the grille and think of their first question as it heats up. “Hm, since you are here you definitely weren’t killed in a firefight with law enforcement.” Jackie raises an eyebrow and asks “Was that the most popular option?” Max nods with a shrug. “I

personally thought you were laying low after a shootout but you wouldn't be back here after only a few months. So that is a few dollars lost on my end." Jackie laughs asking "You didn't play the bookie in case everyone was wrong?" Max shook their head saying "We figured since so many people were betting against you that might be a bit pissed if you didn't get a cut of the winnings." Jackie crossed their arms and called Max out "You know me better than that. You know I would end up buying everyone a round of drinks if that happened." Max simply responded with a shrug and put the bacon on the grille instantly causing it to hiss.

Jackie quieted down and watched as Max started cooking. Jackie's mouth watered as the familiar scents filled the air. The meat's color darkened till it turned slightly crunchy before being pulled off and put onto a plate. Max then cracked the eggs in a bowl before pouring them all into the fat left on the griddle and mixing it all quickly turning it all into greasy scrambled eggs. Max put it all on a large serving platter with the bacon and set it down in front of Jackie. Max restarted the questioning as Jackie waited for it to cool. "I am just going to go guess that you didn't get in any trouble with law enforcement to save time." Jackie simply responds with a nod as Max thinks through the guesses they heard. "Well some folks guessed that your ship got pushed up a few years in the repair queue or some other bureaucratic workaround and were focused on getting your ship fixed up. Though I discounted that as I figured you would be asking some of us to join up to replace your old crew. A couple of the guys even rented a shuttle yesterday to go ask around at the station." Jackie put on a bitter smile thinking about that whole debacle shaking their head and responding "You called correctly there. Repair work still seems to be a few years out." Max gives them a sympathetic look and puts a hand on their shoulder for a moment before putting it back down. "Sorry for bringing that up. Let me go through some of the ridiculous guesses I heard." Max started counting them off their fingers. "You decided to get a sailing ship and

were sailing around the world. You ate some rich guy and were living it up in their house and on their dime. Somebody managed to eat you and digest you. The last one was definitely suggested in jest though.” Jackie started laughing at the first two guesses. “Firstly, who in their right mind would go sailing on a small ship.” Jackie gestures to the rusted out vehicles visible through the windows. “Everyone knows how back the ocean acidity has gotten, even the ocean spray can eat away at paint. Secondly, you know I couldn’t be discrete enough to pull off pretending the guy was still alive.” Max holds up their hands “Hey, they weren't my guesses.” Jackie shakes their head and starts to eat their food. They have to blow on each bite to not burn their mouth but they can at least start working through the pile. Max went back to thinking of guesses that were made but drew a sudden realization. “Why didn’t you discredit the guess about you being digested? No one I know could have the slimmest chance to hold you down in their stomach.” Jackie glanced up from their food replying “Well, it almost happened last night.” Max looked at Jackie in shock as they continued munching away.

“Wait! Hold up! Who or rather what happened?!” Max shouts. “Well I would tell you but that would give away the answer.” Jackie teased lightly. Max bites their lip and starts to pace. “Well I wasn’t someone overpowering you and eating you. You can go on quite a rampage. So either they caught you by surprise or you let them eat you. I find the...” Jackie interrupts “Hey when have I gone on a rampage.” They say accusingly while holding out their fork. Max puts their hand to their head “Last year, you were black out drunk and you thought someone ordering a beer was insulting you.” Jackie immediately replies “I don’t recall that.” “BLACK OUT DRUNK. Of course you would not. I had to shoot you with two beanbags before you stopped.” Max replied grumpily pulling the shotgun from under the counter and putting it down on top to try and jog Jackie’s memory. Jackie stared at the gun squinting for a moment and asked “That was why I was limited on how much I could drink wasn’t it.” Max rubs their head in exasperation before

putting the gun back. “Yes, but anyway, I am guessing that you were caught by surprise. I cannot however think of who could hold you long enough for you to consider yourself in danger and still be healthy here today. I also cannot guess what kept you away for so long. Besides some wild guesses like an organization running experiments on predators or something.” Max sat down next to Jackie signalling defeat. Jackie ate a bit more of their bacon and eggs. It had cooled so they didn’t have to blow as much on each bite but something felt missing from the food. I tasted good but it still didn’t feel quite right. Jackie put down their fork with a sigh and spun on their stool to face Max. “I was caught by surprise but you are wrong on both the other points. I was completely at their mercy as I simply couldn’t escape. They had to let me out.” This caused Max’s eyes to open wide in shock but they kept quiet. “And it wasn’t some big organization, I have just been dating someone super cute and sweet and I have been obsessing over them to be perfectly honest.” Max watches as Jackie’s expression melts as they think about Sam and takes a moment to overcome their shock as their mental image of Jackie shatters. “You are serious?” Is the first thing Max is able to say. Jackie answers with a simple nod as they blush and smile a bit. Then with a sigh Max mutters “I am too sober for this.” And unlocks the liquor cabinet taking out a bottle of beer.

Jackie stretches out their arms in an offended stance as Max immediately goes for booze. “What? I can’t get a date?” “I never said that.” Max quickly defends “All I am saying is that you can be a bit... rough at times.” Jackie crosses their arms with a mildly annoyed look and asks “Rough?” Max shakes their head “Look, I just mean that I thought you might end up butting heads with anyone you dated. How often do you actually meet anyway? Like a date night once a week or something?” Max takes a swig of their beer as they look at Jackie. Jackie meanwhile lowers their arms back down to the counter feeling a bit less offended and responds “No, I find them really easy to get along with to be honest. They are adorable and they think highly of me. I end



up wanting to avoid disappointing them. And in terms of how often we meet I have been living with them for a couple months...” Max nods along initially and starts taking a swig thinking that Jackie’s date just doesn’t know them very well until they hear the word months. Jackie closed their eyes as Max ended up doing a spit take right in their face. Jackie’s eye twitches as Max grimaces in embarrassment and hands Jackie a towel. It is cleaned but stained and Jackie clams their breathing as they wipe off their head. Jackie sighs heavily and states in a tone of barely controlled anger “I am going to take a beer for that.” Walking behind the counter Jackie takes a beer and pops the cap off before sitting down and eating some of their food slowly and methodically for a few minutes. Max apologizes “Sorry about that. I guess that your relationship is working out well at least? Living together is a pretty big deal.” Jackie eventually calms and nods as they continue to eat. They stay quiet for a few minutes as Jackie finishes the platter and Max makes themselves busy by wiping the counter.

Jackie puts down their fork after finishing the platter and rubs their stomach. It tasted good but it still felt lacking. “Did you change your ingredients supplier?” Jackie asks and Max gives a quizzical look and asks “No, was something wrong with it?” Jackie shrugs and says “It tasted good but it felt like it was lacking something.” Max gives a confused look “It was just bacon and eggs. You have seen me make it a hundred times.” Jackie shakes their head and shrugs while Max thinks for a moment. “What have you been eating for breakfast since you were last here?” Jackie leans back a bit and taps the counter as they think. “I think I have just been eating Sam’s cooking?” Max asks “Is Sam your date?” Jackie facepalms a bit as they realize they forgot to say their name. “Yeah, I am dating a person named Sam.” “Then why are you eating here today? Are you having a fight over the fact they swallowed you?” Jackie shakes their head after hearing the second question. “No, we aren’t fighting. I might just be feeling upset since they forgot to leave any breakfast for me. And they swallowed me by accident while they

were asleep. To be honest we didn't even know that Sam could swallow me whole." Max holds up their hand for Jackie to stop. "You were eaten by an extreme newbie predator? And they overpowered you? Are you sure you just didn't subconsciously hold back?" Jackie felt a bit insulted by the insulation that their emotions could override their desire to survive but Jackie let it slide. "I am sure. They took anti-acids since they could not get me out immediately after they awoke. As a result I slept inside and was very violent when I woke up confused. They are simply just amazing in that aspect. A real natural born predator. With some proper strength and endurance training I am sure they would be pretty unstoppable." Max shakes their head in disbelief. "If you say so. Do they know that you are a predator by the way?" "Yeah, we would not have had enough anti-acids otherwise." Max nods in understanding "Are you going to let them take a little swim in your stomach as a bit of payback for last night?" Jackie laughs "No, they would definitely enjoy that and besides I am not upset about that. They were so adorable as I teased them about eating me verbally and physically." Jackie blushes as they think about how cute Sam was acting and Max shakes their head. "They would enjoy being eaten?" "Yeah, it was apparently a big fantasy for them to sit in the belly of a friendly predator. One fantasy that they apparently share with some friends they were going to invite over later today I think." Max shakes their head "I would imagine that they would not live long with that fantasy. So are you going to eat them up and let them gurgle a bit to sate their curiosity before letting them out? I am guessing Sam wants their friends to stay alive after all." Jackie shakes their head "No, Sam made me promise that they would be my only prey."

Max chuckles and asks, "They want to be the only one exploring your insides?" With a headshake Max adds "But seriously that is almost asking you to give up being a pred." Jackie smiles and leans on the counter with a hand holding up their chin "True in the sense that the variety of my meals is shrunken but..." MMMM!~ Jackie murmurs "What

I do devour is the most wonderful treat. They even come with their own tasty side dishes from their cooking and squirm just right.” Max leans back and crosses their arms “And if you need to churn someone to mush to make a point you are just going to let them go?” Max asks knowing how Jackie intimidates their enemies. Putting their other hand to their chin and smirking Jackie says “I might become known as the partner of the devouring monster named Sam if they can be persuaded. They certainly have the gut and the natural talent for it. All they need is training and they will be a force to be reckoned with more terrifying than me.~” Max pales at the thought of another Jackie who has not decided whether Max is worth making a meal. Jackie laughs and pats Max’s shoulder. “Don’t worry I will put in a good word for you Maxxie.” Jackie hops out of their seat and starts walking out. “Just put my cut of the betting pool against my tab!” Jackie calls out as they reach the door and wave goodbye. Jackie starts jogging back home while Max stands for a moment staring at the door. With a deep breath and a sigh Max mutters “At least their tab is well in the positive now.”

Jackie jogs along with a slight bulge in their gut from their food but it rapidly fades as they move. Jackie makes a few stops along their way and picks up some more anti acid bottles, a heavy padded collar, and a lock. Jackie plans to use the collar to help Sam with the issue of sleep eating and as a tool to tease. Jackie walks the rest of the way thinking of different ways to present the collar to Sam in the hopes of making them blush like a beet. Should they say it is a reward for discovering their voracious talent? Or should they ask Sam to close their eyes and then lock it on and pull them close to give a whispering tease “A little punishment for the naughty treat.~ I will tell you more about it once I get some enjoyment in return.” before giving Sam a slow lick along their neck? Jackie shivers in anticipation thinking of different scenarios with their thoughts becoming increasingly teasing and flirtatious with each iteration. As this continues Jackie’s walk slows as they become wrapped in their own thoughts. Eventually though they find themselves

a city block past their apartment and turn around with an embarrassed chuckle as they return home.

Jackie opens the apartment door and heads inside. They drop their purchased goods on the kitchen counter and head into the next room to find Sam sleeping on the couch. Jackie melts a bit as they see Sam curled up with a smile on their face mumbling Jackie's name. Jackie walks over quietly and starts to pet Sam's sleeping head. Sam rubs their face against Jackie's palm and mumbles "I... love you... Ja...ckie." Jackie blushes deeply as they hear the words coming from Sam's mouth and they can't help but give Sam a kiss on the forehead and whisper "I love you too Sam." Sam mumbles in their sleep "Yay... wait don't eat the spatula..." Jackie covers their mouth and nose as they let out a small snort and fetch a blanket for Sam. Draping it over them Jackie smiles at how comfortable Sam looks and heads to the bedroom to take a nap.