

Brooke sighed as she stumbled into her small apartment. What a crappy day. First, she was asked to stay late at work today, with no overtime pay. Then, it started raining while she stayed late. She didn't bring an umbrella, because she figured she would be home before it was supposed to start. To top it all off, while walking home, she was splashed by a muddy puddle as a car drove by her on her walk home. Cold, wet, and dirty, the fox dumped her mail onto the kitchen table of her tiny apartment, and quickly showered to clean up. Once she was mud-free and in a fresh set of clothes, she took a look at the small pile of bills. She was never overdue on any of them, but they never left her with much money to spend on herself.

However, when she looked at her bills, she had to do a double take. The internet bill was paid for already. Or was it an error? She opens another bill. Also paid for. Brooke's face went from confusion, to shock, to a giddy smile. She wasn't gonna question it.

"Fuck yes! I can buy the expensive chips this month!" She shouted out loud, as she accidentally knocks one more letter onto the floor. She picks it up, and inspects it. It was unlabelled, and in the plainest white envelope she'd ever seen. She opens it up, and pulls out a letter.

'Greetings!

This letter is to inform you that you have been randomly selected for the opportunity of a lifetime! Deis Labs prides itself on making advancements for the future in every field imaginable. From simple household products, to the most complex of molecular research, we strive to make the future brighter in every aspect. Part of our process is rigorous product testing to ensure that we only provide the best of the best to the public. We would like to offer you a position on our team testing a selection of products. As a gesture of our good will, we have also paid your bills this month! If you are interested in this opportunity, please see the second page. We hope to hear from you in the near future.'

Brooke stared at the letter for a moment. Was this for real? This was by far one of the most suspicious offers she'd ever heard. She flipped the papers to look at the second page. They seemed to want to meet at a coffee shop. Most of the details seemed pretty normal. Her eyes widened when she saw the remuneration. Not only were they providing housing, but the pay on top of that dwarfed her current job. It was almost too good to be true! It *was* too good to be true. There had to be a catch somewhere. She didn't see any fine print on the papers, though. After some careful consideration, she decided there wasn't any harm in at least hearing what they had to say. She looks at the meeting place again. It was in a public coffee shop a few days from now, so it's not like they could kidnap her or something either. In fact, they probably could have done that already, given they were able to pay her bills. She left the letter on the kitchen counter, and pulled out a bag of chips, and some soda from the fridge.

The weekend arrives, and Brooke made sure she looked her best. At least as far as meeting someone at a coffee shop was concerned. A clean button up shirt, and some pants. More or less

the same kind of thing she'd wear to her desk job. She took a look at herself in the mirror. Once she approved of her own attire, she grabbed the letter, and took a bus to the meeting place. She was a bit nervous on the way there. It felt like she was going to an interview for a job all over again. She arrived at the shop, and looked around. She had no idea who she was even supposed to meet. Fortunately for her, she didn't have to look. A tall, slender fox approached her with a smile. He was much scruffier than her, and had odd looking blue-grey fur. He was dressed very casually, in a hoodie and some track pants.

"Hello, Brooke! My name is Varen. I'm the one you're supposed to be meeting! Here, I got you a coffee already. Come and sit down over here!" He cheerfully greeted as he put a frilly looking drink in her hands immediately after shaking them. He beckoned her to follow him to a booth, where he had a bag and several papers on the table already. Brooke was taken aback slightly by his demeanor and how quick he was to get to business. She followed him regardless, and sat down across from him. He started to organize the papers, and was writing out a few bits of paperwork. One article that caught Brooke's eye however, was an already signed check for ten thousand. Her eyes periodically glanced over to it, trying to make sure it was legitimate. She tried to speak, to ask about this whole deal, but Varen immediately began talking at such a pace there was barely a chance to interject.

"Right! So, the reason you're here is because you've been selected for a live-in testing environment, or a LITE. What that means is that you'll be living in a house with a test environment coordinator and correspondent, also known as a TECC. More than likely, that'll be me. Don't worry, we won't be sharing a bed! Heh heh, no, but in all seriousness, you'll move into one of these LITEs, and we'll do some initial medical tests, blood pressure, resting heart rate, maybe some blood tests and the like. You aren't afraid of needles, are you? Oh well, don't you worry. We have ways to make that kind of stuff quick and painless! Technology is great, isn't it? Now, once all that is done, each month or so you'll get a selection of products that you'll be expected to use. Your TECC will make recommendations for you most of the time, but you do get a say, of course. If there's a product you liked testing, we'll be happy to focus your products towards that specific field. Then all you have to do is say what you did or didn't like and why or why not. Simplicity itself, no?" He pulled one of the papers out, and with a pen marked a few spots. He also nudged the check closer to her. "Now here is the contract, it's short and simple. You'll be with us for at least a year, more than likely longer than that if you like us and we like you. There's no commute, or anything, no mandatory work hours. The only thing you need to do is once a month submit a form with your opinions on each of the products you test, and if you approve or not. Just sign on the dotted line, and I'll give you a check to help with the moving process. Then you'll get paid after every set of forms you submit. If not, then I'll get into contact with the next candidate. I'd love to give you more time to think about this, but I am given some very strict deadlines, unfortunately. So? What'll it be?"

Brooke sipped on her sweet coffee drink as she tried to keep up with the quick talking fox. When he presented the ultimatum, she looked at the check, then the contract, and then to Varen. He had

a slight smile on, patiently waiting for a response despite his prior statement of urgency. She started to sweat a bit as she deliberated to herself. That was a lot of money. She won't be living in that tiny apartment anymore, she won't have to work at her job anymore, the only thing she had to do was fill out a few forms a month. He kept mentioning that LITE thing, which sounded weird, but she was pretty sure it was just the technical term for the house she was going to be living in. It seemed so suspicious, yet so tempting. Brooke finally gave in, taking a deep breath, accepting Varen's pen, and signing the contract. She laid back in her seat, seemingly exhausted from a physical task, despite only signing a paper.

Varen quickly collected the paper, and extended a hand to shake hers with. "Alright! Let me be the first one to welcome you to the Deis Labs Team!" He slid the check to her and packed up his things. "Go ahead and take this. Use it to get ready, and I'll get back to you as soon as I can with details on where you'll be moving to, and what to expect. See you soon!"

"Uh ... yeah! See you whenever!" She called out. She sat in her seat for several minutes before she picked up her phone and took pictures of the check for her bank account. After a moment of waiting, a message came back: 'Your check has been successfully deposited.' Brooke couldn't stop a smile from forming, ear to ear. She giggled to herself. This was legit.

Brooke barely spent any of the money on getting ready. She bought some boxes for packing her stuff, and hired some movers for the day Varen later provided. After all that, she still had most of the money leftover. He did say use it to get ready, and what was comfort food but helping her get ready? She did as she exclaimed that fateful morning. She got ruffled chips, and premium brand soda to snack on at home. The day she handed in her letter of resignation at work, she went to the nearby coffee shop, and got an expensive and over the top drink which cost way too much. It was sickeningly sweet, and honestly not that good, but she drank it anyway. Not because she liked it, but because she could.

Soon enough, move-in day was upon her. The movers came in the morning and loaded all her belongings into a truck. She got a ride with them to the address. Varen had offered to give her a tour of the house beforehand, but she had told him she was busy at the time. Which she was, if you consider a night of binge watching internet videos important. She figured she'd get the tour today. The moving truck drove out to the edge of town, where both farmland and city shops were within walking distance, and onto a longer than average driveway. Most of the property was obscured by trees, like a small forest. But towards the end of the driveway there was a large clearing where a fairly sizeable house stood.

Varen came out of the front door, and greeted Brooke with open arms. Despite only meeting once, and a couple of weeks ago, he embraced her like they were friends reuniting after years. Brooke now realised just how scrawny the other fox was when she sank into him. It was like he was nothing but fluff and bones.

"Hey! Glad you made it! Welcome to your new home! I hope you don't mind the location! Don't worry, there's a bus stop just down the road, and plenty of places that'll do delivery to here." He beamed as he let her go.

"That's uh, good to hear. And here is a lot nicer looking than the view from my apartment." She replied.

Varen nodded as he directed the movers on where to put Brooke's things. "Oh yes, one of the things we try to do is make every test environment pleasing to the participant. Now, since they're moving all your stuff to your new room, how about we get your examination over with? We can have that tour afterwards." Brooke nodded, and followed Varen into the house. Stepping inside was a bit of a shock to her. One of the first rooms she saw was a living room. It was quite cozy looking, with a few couches centered around a table, and oriented to face a fireplace. There was even a nice carpet to tie the room together. She was so used to her tiny apartment, that the idea of a spacious and nice living room such as this was beyond her.

She continued down the hall, and was escorted down a set of stairs. The basement appeared to have a home movie system set up, as well as a small bar area for snacks and drinks. Brooke's eyes lit up as she saw the room. "Wait! I can use all this stuff?" She asked excitedly.

"Sure can! Like I said, we want to make you as comfortable as possible. I bet this beats binge watching a TV show on your laptop, right?" Varen confirmed with a smile.

"Hell yeah it does! I could just grab a big bag of chips and soda, and just chill all night down here!" She exclaimed. Varen chuckled softly as they walked into one of the padlocked rooms on the far end.

"That sounds like a fun Friday night. Maybe I'll join you if I have the time!" He opened the door, and revealed an examination room. It had all the standard equipment one expected, and even a few odd machines she didn't recognize. "Alright, if you would be so kind as to step on the scale, we can get started."

So began Brooke's examination. After 20 minutes Varen had finished with all the tests and measurements. "So, to summarize, you're more or less healthy. 63 inches, 120 pounds, blood pressure is average, your sodium and sugar levels are a tad above average, but nothing to be concerned over. Do you have any questions? Concerns?"

Brooke shrugged as she slid off the table. "Not really. That information is for you more than me, isn't it?"

"Well, yes. Anyway, how about we see your room now?" Varen opened the door to the rest of the basement, and the two went on their way. The upstairs floor was one straight hallway, with

several closed doors. Varen showed Brooke a few of them. One was an office, another was a neat and well-organized bedroom, another was a library. Then, Varen showed her a room at the end of the hallway. Her room. Inside, there was a large bed on a solid frame, a closet, a couple of tables, a bathroom, and a cabinet with a large TV facing the bed. Against one wall, all her stuff was stacked up in boxes. She looked at the room, stunned for a moment, and then back to the scrawny fox next to her. He gave her a curious look.

“Is everything alright? Is there something wrong with your room?” He asked. She immediately shook her head and stepped further in, looking around.

“N-No! It’s great! This room is bigger than my entire apartment, and it’s a lot to take in.” She elaborated. Varen nodded and smiled, as he pulled a tablet out.

“I understand, this is all gonna take a lot of getting used to. I have one last thing to get out of the way, and then I’ll leave you to it to settle in.” He presented the tablet to her, which displayed a list of a wide variety of products. “All you have to do is pick a few products, and at the end of the month, give your opinion on it. What you liked, what you didn’t, and so on. If you want, I can go through it with you this time, and pick you some products.”

“Yeah, that’d be nice.” She peeked at the tablet, looking at all the things she could test. Things ranged from the mundane, like toothpastes and soda, to more obscure things, like a portable shower or a telescopic foot massager. Varen tended to keep things simple, picking mostly snacks and common household products.

“... and let’s finish it off with a soft bristle hair brush. I think that’s enough for you to test in a month. Now, I’ll get this stuff processed, and it should be here by tomorrow. In the meantime, how about you unpack, and then kick back and relax? We have Netflix, and you can help yourself to anything that’s in the kitchen.” He smiled as he took the tablet, tapping on the screen as he walked out.

“A-alright. Uh, thanks.” Brooke sat on the edge of the bed. She was surprised slightly at how soft it was, bouncing up and down on the spot with intrigue. She kept bouncing there for a few moments as she tried to process everything that had happened so far today. It wasn’t even time for lunch, either. She took a deep breath, and looked at the stacks of boxes with all her stuff in it. She began unpacking, and organizing her room. She didn’t have as much to unpack, as the boxes indicated, since most of them were half full at most. There wasn’t a lot she had to bring anyway, living paycheck to paycheck in a tiny apartment.

Before long, she had everything she brought with her in some degree of organization. As she admired her work, her stomach reminded her that it was past lunch. Looking at a clock, she’d spent more time organizing than she realised. She headed downstairs to get a look at what the kitchen fridge had to offer. Opening it up, Brooke discovered it was quite well stocked. There

were packs of sodas and juice, and a variety of meats and cheeses that were perfect for a sandwich. Her eyes lit up with the notion of not having to eat the same thing for lunch everyday. Or ration it. She pulled open the freezer, finding ice cream and frozen TV dinners. She flung open a cupboard to find chips, marshmallows, chocolates and more. Almost giddy with excitement, she started to take far more food than she should have. She makes a couple of trips to the basement, making herself multiple sandwiches, heating up a few frozen dinners, and getting herself some dessert in the form of multiple bags of snacks. Once everything is set up, she hops onto the couch between all the food she made herself, and flicks on the massive television, preparing to binge watch a new show.

Hours passed, and Varen began to wonder what Brooke was up to. After checking the upper floors, he made his way down to the basement, and saw the TV was still on. “Brooke? You down here?” He called out to the basement, seeing only an empty couch from the back. The only response he got was a groan of discomfort. He approaches the couch, and looks down to see the fox splayed across the seats, hands on her swollen middle, and a few smears of food on her face. Most of the food she had brought had been consumed. Only a handful of things remained, and none of it was untouched. Varen chuckles as he leans on the back of the couch. “Looks like someone had a good time, huh?”

Brooke weakly nodded her head, her face looking like she was ready to be sick.

“You want help back to your room? Or are you gonna stay here for the night?” He asked. She nodded her head after hearing the second option. “Alright, Brooke. Let me at least get this garbage out of here.” He stepped around the couch, and gathered all the packages around her. He snickered to himself again, as he threw it all out. He then brought a large blanket, and gently covered the fox as she laid there. By this time, she had already passed out from her binge.

From then on, her testing went smoothly. She really liked the brush, none of the snacks were terrible, either. When she made her product choices for the start of the next month, she tended to stick to similar products. Mostly food and drinks, along with some scented candles and incense sticks. She wasn't fond of those kinds of things, but they were easy to test. Brooke avoided making the same mistake as her first day, making sure she stopped well before verging on comatose. She enjoyed spending most of her day binge watching shows she heard her friends and old coworkers talk about, snacking all the while. She spent much more time at home, only really going out when friends occasionally invited her to do so. Her recent lack of activity was starting to have an effect on her waistline.

After a few months of testing, it finally became apparent to her. One morning, near the end of the month, while Brooke was getting dressed, she found it was awfully difficult to get into her pants. She knew they were getting tight lately, but this was ridiculous. Did they shrink in the wash? With a few minutes of struggle, she eventually got them buttoned up, letting out a sigh of relief.

She stood up from the bed. It wasn't more than a few steps before the button gave out, popping off her waist. She let out a quiet startled gasp as it flew off, and plinked onto the floor.

"Fuck, those were my nice pants, too!" She huffed to herself as she slips them off angrily, and inspects herself in a mirror. She was still slim as she remembered. Sure, maybe she was a little bit softer here and there, but there was no way she put on that much weight, she thought to herself. In reality, she had gained about 20 pounds since she started living with Varen, putting her at 140 pounds. With an exasperated sigh, she slips her pajamas back on. At least they fit, if only due to an elastic waistband. She came down the stairs, and entered the kitchen. Varen was already seated at the table, eating some cereal.

"Good Morning!" He looked up at her with some concern. "Are you alright? Did you not sleep well?"

Brooke grumbled as she pulls out a box of frozen pastries, and sticks a few of them into the toaster. "I ruined my favorite pair of pants this morning. I've had them forever."

"Oh. I see. Sorry to hear that." He said between mouthfuls. "I can't say these will be a perfect replacement, but if you haven't picked next month's products yet, you can test some clothing products. We're always trying out different weaving techniques and materials, so you can probably get some form of replacement, even if it is lacking the sentimental value."

"Huh. I'll have to check that out." She pulls the cooked pastries out of the toaster, and slathers icing from the box over them. Varen gives a curious look at the amount of icing Brooke was applying to them, but said nothing. Varen finished his breakfast, and disappeared, returning with the tablet for her to make a selection. He opens up the clothing category, and starts to scroll through it, the screen directed at her.

"Personally, I'd recommend some of the fleece-lined stuff. Winter is only a couple months away, after all." He suggested. Brooke took the tablet, and scrolled through it, selecting a small wardrobe's worth of clothes. All of her stuff had been shrinking lately, so she might as well get extra clothing. In a size larger. Just to be safe. She also picked her usual food-based and mundane test products as well. Varen took the tablet back and reviewed it. "This is an awful lot of clothes..."

Brooke shot him a confused look, and spoke with a mouthful of food. "Ish tha' an ishue?"

Varen shook his head. "O-Oh no! Not at all! I'm not complaining! It means we'll be getting a lot of reviews is all. On top of all the food product reviews you've been doing. Anyway, I'll go process these. I have some other paperwork I need to fill out as well, so I'll be busy most of the day. Have a nice day doing whatever you usually do, alright?" With a smile, he takes the tablet and heads back upstairs.

Brooke thought that Varen's comments were a bit weird, but shrugged it off as she scarfed down her breakfast. She ended up going back for seconds, which emptied the box. As she went to throw out the box, she noted there was an identical box already in the garbage, from a few days ago. Maybe she should ease up on them? But they were good. She figured that if a problem really does start to arise, she can cut back then.

The next day, her new clothes arrived. She took out a pair of long pants and a shirt. Both were fleece lined on the inside. She slipped them on, and looked at herself in the mirror. They looked pretty cute, all things considered. They were warm and cozy, too. They just made her want to curl up on the couch and read a book or watch something on TV or online. Best of all, they fit. They weren't tight at all, and sat comfortably around her waist. She smiled to herself. She had nothing to worry about.

The months went by, fall chilled into a cold and snowy winter. Naturally, it meant Brooke stayed indoors the whole time. Drinking some nice hot chocolate and some other holiday themed treats. Which meant her waistline only grew. Winter thawed into spring, and eventually warmed into summer once more. The one year mark for working as a tester was coming up. Varen had to do an evaluation, and then they would decide if she'd be with him for longer. In truth, Brooke loved her job, if you could really call it that. She basically did whatever she wanted all day, every day, and got paid for it. Even the small stack of forms she filled out every month were no more difficult than a yes or no question with a short explanation.

It was a few days before the evaluation when Brooke went out for lunch with one of her best friends, Amanda. The kangaroo was shy and quiet, but she was certainly surprised to see Brooke when she arrived. At first, she said nothing about her appearance. Brooke was much larger than she was a year ago, now sporting an obvious belly, broader hips, thicker thighs, and even the start of a second chin. She was wearing a long-sleeved top, which just barely covered her middle, and a snug looking pair of yoga pants. The two exchanged the usual pleasantries, and sat down for their meal.

It wasn't until they got into eating that Amanda finally turned their discussion towards Brooke's shape.

"So uh, Brooke? Have you been getting out much?" She asked quietly. Brooke was in the middle of a mouthful of a greasy cheeseburger. She swallowed before responding to be polite, since Amanda was a good friend.

"Well, I'm out now with you, right? I've been going out with you whenever you invite me. I like going out with my friends." She said before taking another bite of her burger.

"Well, that's great, and I'm glad you like doing things with me, but um, I meant on your own. Like, uh, going to the grocery store, or for a walk in the park." Amanda quickly put a forkful of salad in her mouth to stop herself from saying anything else.

“I don’t really need to do grocery shopping, Amanda. That Varen guy I told you about does it all for us. He’s a total dork, but he is so sweet. He baked me cookies for Christmas, and even made me a cake for my birthday! And he’s actually a really good cook! Honestly, I kinda wish he spent less time in that office of his.” She smiled a bit as she took some bread, and mopped up the grease from her plate with it.

“Maybe you should um, a-ask him out on a date? Maybe go to the beach or um, jogging?” As they finished their meals, a server came and took the empty plates. Amanda passed on dessert, but Brooke was happy to take a look at the menu. When she processed Amanda’s comment, she huffed a bit as she looked back at the kangaroo.

“Wha-? I-! Amanda, I don’t like him that much! Besides, why jogging of all things?” She hands her menu back to the server. “I’ll have the triple chocolate cheesecake with a latte, please.” The server nods and writes her order down, before taking the menu and leaving.

“W-Well, I only suggested it because um, well, you’ve been working from home and um, I’m worried you aren’t as um, active ... as you used to be.” Amanda almost winced saying those words. Brooke picked up on what she was implying, and looked down at herself briefly. She refused to admit it.

“I mean, sure, I might have put on a little bit, but I was always on the skinny side! I just filled in a bit is all. It’s not like a few extra pounds makes me look bad, does it?” She reasoned to herself and her friend, as the server put her order down in front of her. Brooke wasted no time digging into it.

“N-No, I d-”

“Exactly! Amanda, I appreciate the concern, but you worry too much. It’s not that much weight, and I’ve probably levelled out by now. I’ve been living like this for a year. Just relax! You make it sound like I’m one of those 600-pound people on TV who need to bathe in a kiddie pool in their backyard.” She said between bites of her cake and sips of her drink.

Amanda figured there was no point in continuing to try to convince her to lose weight. “A- Alright, if you’re sure. I just got a little worried, after seeing how much your appetite has grown. You um, you had an appetizer before the burger, and then dessert on top. Even when you had the money for it, you never used to have this much when we ate out.”

Brooke reached across the table after polishing off her dessert, putting her hand on Amanda’s. “I know, I know. You care about me a lot, and I appreciate that. My appetite just comes from all the taste testing I do. It’s not a big deal. Trust me, I’m fine. You’re worrying over nothing.”

“If you’re sure ...”

Several days had passed and it was time for Brooke's evaluation. She found herself sitting in Varen's office. Despite living here for the last year, she never really found herself in here at all. His office was almost like stepping back in time. Most of the room was dark stained wood furniture. Bookshelves lined the walls, all covering a variety of topics. Varen's desk was neat and orderly. It had a small flowering plant on one corner, and a mechanical clock on the other. In the middle was Varen, typing away on a laptop. After a few tense minutes, he finally looked up, and gave Brooke a smile.

"Sorry about that, I just had to send a quick email. How are you feeling?" He asked.

"Honestly, pretty nervous. You've uh, never really given any kind of indication of whether or not I'm doing enough." She answered, her hands fidgeting as she looked around the room.

Varen chuckled. "Well, in my case, no news is good news. If you weren't testing enough, I'd let you know. But you did quite the contrary. You met every quota, and we are pleased with the amount you're testing. You've already been approved to stay here. If you want to, of course. The only difference is your contract will be for longer, and the products you can test are more specific." He pulled out another set of papers and a pen. "So? Will you stay with us?"

Brooke immediately let out a sigh of relief, as a smile covered her face. "Of course! I love being here! I'd be happy to be here for longer!" Once again, she took the pen and signed off. Varen also once again snatched up the papers with startling speed.

"Excellent! The only other order of business we have left is another physical. How about we do that now, and you can go back to doing what you do best?" Varen offered as he stowed the signed papers away.

A few flights downstairs later, the two were in the examination room again. Like last time, they started with simple things. Brooke stepped on the scale, and the overhead display lit up, circular arrows spinning in place as it determined her weight. Then, it displayed 181 lbs.

"Oh my..." Varen quietly marveled.

Brooke's face went pink. "There's no way! Your scale is broken or something! I'm not that heavy!"

"Brooke, this stuff is cutting edge technology. I'm doubtful it's wrong, but let me get the spare out to show you." Varen walked over to a closet, and pulled out a second, identical scale. After a quick swap of the plugs, he invited Brooke to step on the new one. The exact same number showed up. She bit her lip in annoyance.

Varen put a hand on her shoulder as he consoled her. "Don't worry about it too much. You're still adjusting to a drastic lifestyle change. You aren't the first person that this has happened to. If you'd like, I can recommend some dietary products."

"That won't be necessary! I-I'll just cut back on snacking. Just order me some of the new stuff to test, and I'll worry about me." She objected.

Despite what she said, the moment Brooke was finished with the physical examination, she headed up to the kitchen, grabbed several cans of soda, some bags of snacks, and then headed up to her room, muttering insults at the scales under her breath. If she wasn't irritated at her recent realization, she would have noticed that her breathing was somewhat heavier than normal when she reached the top of the stairs. Instead, she piled her food onto the bed, plopped down next to it, and started binging and watching.

However, the nail in the coffin for any form of diet came a few days later. She spent most of that time doing little else other than eating, sleeping and watching the latest hit show. As a result, she grew somewhat unkempt and sweaty. While she was sleeping in one morning, Varen accepted a package at the door, and came up to Brooke's room with it, and a small briefcase.

"Hey, Brooke, I've got something for- Are you still in bed? Are you sick?" He asked with some concern.

She slowly sat up, stretching and grumbling. "No ... just feeling lazy." She yawned.

"That's what you said yesterday, and the day before. I don't even think you've changed clothes in that time span, either. You should probably fix that today. Anyway, one of your specialty products came today. This stuff is in an earlier stage of development than the stuff you usually test, so I'll have to supervise you." He sat the package next to Brooke, and the briefcase on a nightstand. "Go ahead and open up that package." He directed as he opened up the briefcase and assembled a mechanical syringe, loading it with a sickly yellow liquid.

Brooke couldn't help but gawk at the liquid. "Uhh ... what is that for?"

"This? It's only in case of an emergency. It's a fast acting emetic that will make you throw up. I'm highly doubtful this product will make this necessary, but it's protocol. I won't use it without good reason. Now, go on and open that package." He finished putting it together, and set it back down in the open briefcase.

Brooke tore off the wrapping to reveal a bottle filled with a bubbly and bright pink liquid. She looked at Varen with a confused face. "It's ... a soda. Why do we need that stuff for testing a soda?"

"Like I said, it's protocol. That, and this is a special kind of soda. It uses a different carbonation method, and it makes it extra bubbly. It's a specialty product, which is why we don't let our general testers try this stuff." He gets a clipboard out, and starts writing down furiously. "Now, when you're ready, go ahead and take a few sips. Not too much though."

Brooke nodded, and unscrewed the lid. It opened with a typical hiss. The liquid bubbled a bit, the sweet scent of cream soda teasing her nose. She took a few sniffs, before taking a cautious sip. Her eyes lit up from the taste. She let out a slight squeak of delight as she takes a few more sips. Varen smirks as he keeps writing on his clipboard. “Heh, I take it you like it?”

“Like it? This is some of the best I’ve ever had! Can you like, get this for us to have as regular soda in the fridge?” She continues to sip the soda, each one growing larger, as she eventually goes into full on chug.

“Well, I’ll have to make a few requests, but I don’t think it should be an issue to add some.” Varen then looks up from his clipboard, to see Brooke wiping her muzzle with her arm, an empty bottle next to her. “W-Wait, did you just drink the whole thing? That stuff isn’t meant to be guzzled!”

“Oh relax! I drink whole bottles of soda all the time! What’s so special about this stuff?” Before Varen could respond, Brooke’s stomach let out a noisy gurgling noise. She felt a pressure start to build up inside her. Her stomach began to bloat outwards.

“Oh, gosh, here we go. Here, lay on your back.” Before she can really respond, Varen puts his notes down and helps her lay back on her bed, using a few pillows to prop her up in a reclined position.

“Woah, woah, isn’t this a bit of an overreaction?” She asked with clear worry. Her stomach gurgled more, and continued swelling. Her stomach started peeking out from her top, and her shirt grew strained around her sides as it tightened. She looked to the briefcase with the syringe in it. “Y-you aren’t gonna use that, a-are you?” Her stomach bloated more, becoming a noisy cacophony of gurgle. Her top slowly began to split at the seams along the sides. “Ooogh ... actually, this feels pretty good ...” She put her hands on her bloated belly and began rubbing slowly, as a sleepy smile crept across her face.

Meanwhile, Varen watched with fascination as Brooke went from mild panic to a drowsy pleasure. He grabbed his notes and began writing furiously. “Are you uncomfortable at all? Does it hurt?”

Brooke took a deep breath, and let out a sigh of satisfaction. “I feel really ... Urrp! I feel really full. Like I just ate a big meal. Only, I could still eat.” She patted her belly a bit, and looked at Varen. “Speaking of, could you get me something to eat?”

Varen kept writing notes, and nodded. “Well ... alright. I’ll get you something, but if you’re sick to your stomach, you’re cleaning up the mess.”

Brooke snickered in amusement. “Hey, I’ve been okay so far, haven’t I? Trust me, I’ll be fine!”

“I suppose so. Just pace yourself for me, alright?” Varen asked as he brought her a few chocolate bars and other smaller snacks. She unwrapped the first chocolate bar and bit into it. As she swallowed, she could feel her stomach fizzing, before a considerable belch forced its way out. Varen burst into laughter, as her face went pink.

“Pfahahaha! You’re really enjoying this, aren’t you?” He managed to ask between chortles.

“M-Maybe. Yes.”

Brooke continued this newfound habit of hers fairly regularly. She had started to do much more of the specialized product tests, too. Almost all of them were food products which Brooke took a liking to. At first, she spent even more of her spare time on her bed, laying back and enjoying the fullness after guzzling a bottle of the extra fizzy soda. As she got used to it, she started walking around the house with a belly full of the soda. It didn’t take much for Varen to know she’d guzzled some, as her belches were audible from his office, regardless of where Brooke was in the house. In truth, he found it somewhat entertaining.

The months rolled on by, and Brooke continued to grow heavier. Her short stature only made it worse on her. She developed a full on double chin. Her cheeks grew soft and round. Her chest was starting to sit atop her now rather flabby belly, which sported folds that formed love handles around her sides. It spilled down onto her thighs, which were padded to the point she had a slight waddle to her step, else they chafed against one another.

One morning, Brooke woke up much earlier than normal, grumbling to herself. She had been waking up unusually early lately. She reached over to the nightstand for her phone. However, she ended up knocking it off. It clattered noisily on the floor. She let out a sigh of exasperation, and sat up with a grunt. Her pajamas were uncomfortably tight again. There were gaps showing her belly between the buttons on her top. With a huff, she slid off the bed and stood up. As she bent over to pick her phone up, a loud tearing noise broke the early morning silence.

**SHRRRIP!**

Brook let out a gasp as she reactively put a hand on her behind, now feeling her underwear through her pants, as a massive tear ran up the middle of her pajamas. She let out a sigh. To think she used to be able to wear extra small clothes. Now she wore ... well, she actually didn’t know. The clothes Varen supplied her with never had any labels. But whatever size she was, she just went up another one. She knew she’d been letting herself go, but she never really did anything about it. Working out sucked, and the food here was better than anything she used to have. She walked up to the mirror and looked at herself, her body spilling out of her pajamas. For the first time in a while, she wondered just how heavy she was. In a spur of the moment decision, she removed her now torn pajamas, and cast them aside. She left her room in nothing but her underwear, and rushed downstairs, all the way to the basement. With each step she took heading

downstairs, she jiggled visibly. She opened the door to the examination room, and stepped up onto the scale, panting a bit to catch her breath.

278 pounds. That was what the screen showed. Brooke stared at it, seemingly stunned at the number. She had more than doubled her weight since she took this job. She should have immediately set out to try and lose weight, or at the very least, stop herself from gaining more. She was definitely irritated from seeing how heavy she had grown, but she also found herself staring down at her belly, and playing with it some. She squished her belly, and lifted it up and let it flop back down, an amused smile growing on her face. While she did briefly consider a diet, her thoughts were quickly taken over as her stomach grumbled, now thinking about what to have for breakfast instead.

Varen made his way downstairs from his room, and stepped into the kitchen. He made a sudden stop when he saw Brooke sitting at the kitchen table in her underwear with a large mixing bowl in front of her, filled with an entire box's worth of cereal, and copious amounts of milk.

"Uh ... good morning. Are you alright?" He asked with a very confused stare.

"Yeah! I'm doing great! How about you? Did you sleep well?" She said with a new perkiness as she put a large spoonful of food into her mouth.

Varen managed to overcome his shock, and walk past her. He started to make his own breakfast of eggs and bacon. "I did. Though I should be asking you that. You've been snoring at night, and this morning you came running down here like a kid waking up on Christmas."

Brooke made a brief look of intrigue. "I do? Huh. News to me."

"Yes, and quite loudly, might I add. I can hear you from my room. You know I can-"

"Yeah, yeah, you can find me some sort of product to deal with that. Your lab seems to make literally everything, so I figured as much." She stopped Varen, before shovelling another mouthful of cereal.

"Oh. Right. I suppose that would be reasonable to assume. It'll be nothing special, likely a pillow to improve your posture while sleeping." Varen finished up his cooking, and sat down across from her. The room went quiet for a few moments, as they both enjoyed their meals.

Eventually, Varen raised his head and addressed Brooke. "So uh, are you up to much this weekend?"

She shrugged and kept eating.

"Well, I decided to take a few days off. I was going to go out to relax, and wondered if you wanted to come with? You might as well come with and get out of the house for a few days. A

change in scenery might do you some good once in a while. Maybe we can test some stuff out there if you're up to it?"

Brooke stopped chewing for a moment as Varen extended the proposition to her. "Uhh ... sure? Where uh ... where did you want to go?" In all honesty she preferred staying at home, but if she needed something, Varen wasn't going to be around to help.

"Great! I have a trailer out back I can hook up to my car, and we can go and enjoy the weekend by the lake. It's a two hour drive, but it's worth it. A quiet little spot in the woods, perfect place for fishing, campfires, or even just a pleasant walk. Don't worry, I'll make sure we're well stocked with plenty to eat." Varen seemed as if he was ready to go right this minute, save for him being in his pajamas as well.

Brooke finished her massive bowl of cereal with a belch, and a blush. "That's good, but uh ... I kinda tore through my pajamas this morning when I bent over to pick up my phone."

"Oh, that's quite alright! No offense, but I had a feeling that was going to happen. Your clothes have been getting rather snug on you as of late so I took the liberty of ordering you some bigger stuff. They're elastic too, so these should last you longer. I meant to give them to you yesterday, but paperwork got the best of me." Varen shyly admitted. "A-Anyway, if you're finished up here, how about you start packing? I'll clean up breakfast."

Brooke nodded, and headed up to her room to get ready.

By lunchtime, the two were ready to go. Varen went and got some take out for them both to eat. It was primarily to pacify Brooke for the car ride, despite her having her own lunch, again with rather staggering proportions. It did do the trick, as she happily ate it along the way. It didn't last for much of the two hour trip, but she didn't ask to stop for more.

The two arrived at the end of a narrow dirt road. There was a small clearing amid the trees, and in the distance they could see a small lake. Varen parked his car, and helped Brooke out of the car.

"Here we are! Isn't it lovely out here?" He marveled.

Brooke checked her phone. No signal. She put it away and looked around. "Yeah, this is nice." She walked around the clearing a bit, and turned to Varen. "Hey uh, can I get into the trailer? I gotta ... y'know. Go."

Varen nodded and hustled over to the door. "Of course! Let me get that for you." He pulled out a key and unlocked the door, holding it open for her. She stepped inside and immediately noticed her sides brush up against the edges of the door. She knew she was wider than before, but didn't think it was quite that bad.

The inside of the trailer reminded her of the old apartment. There was a place to eat, a place to sleep, and a bathroom, with little else. She did feel more cramped though, likely due to how narrow the trailer was. Or how much wider she was. She went into the bathroom and did her business. By the time she came out, Varen had managed to unpack everything from the truck, and put it into the trailer's cupboards. She marvelled briefly at just how much stuff Varen packed into the compartments, and how quickly. She stepped outside, and saw him setting up a firepit. She called out to him as she approached. "Hey, uh, do you need me to help with anything?"

Varen finished setting some kindling down and then turned to her. "Hm? Well, sure! I was going to get a bit more firewood in a bit, we can have some hot dogs and smores for dinner. Would you mind getting everything we need for that? I have a special device you can test while you're at it!"

Brooke looked at him with intrigue. "What kind of device is it?"

Varen smiled, and headed into the trailer, beckoning her to follow. Inside, he opened up his bags, and pulled out a small metal case. He patted one of the beds, and showed a small metal ring, and a strange bottle of metallic liquid. "Here, lay down on the bed. This device is a storage vessel that sits in your navel. This is some really cutting-edge stuff. You just stick whatever you want to store in it, and pull it out when you need it. There have been a few snags with development, but I finally got the green light to test it recently. You wanna try it out?"

Hearing the explanation, Brooke's face went faintly pink. She looked down at her middle, and put a hand on her belly button. She turned her gaze back to the device, and then nodded. "Yeah. Let's do it." She sat on the bed, and laid back, rolling her shirt up to expose her middle.

Varen put on a pair of gloves, and removed the ring from the case. "This is gonna feel a little weird, but try to stay still, okay?" Brooke nodded, as Varen placed his fingers on her middle, and stretched the skin around her navel. He placed the metal ring inside. Brooke made a squeak of surprise as she felt the cold metal slide into place, but stayed still. Varen then grabbed the strange bottle, and poured the silvery liquid in. It was a strange sensation for Brooke, as the liquid briefly filled her navel. Cool tingles spread across her gut, as she let out a few groans of discomfort.

Varen gave her a couple pats and took his gloves off. "There we go. All done. You want some candies for being so brave?" He chuckled as he pulled a couple of hard candies out of his pocket. Brooke sat up, gave him an unimpressed glare, and accepted the candies. She immediately unwrapped one and stuck it in her mouth.

"So uh ... how does this thing work?" She asked as she started to crunch the candy, too impatient to let it melt.

Varen nodded and quickly went to one of the cupboards on the far end, and pulled out a bar of chocolate. He came back and gestured for her to lift her shirt again. She did so, and he placed the bar up against the metal ring. "All you have to do is just gently press whatever you want to store

against the ring, and ...” As he explained, the chocolate bar slowly slid in. Brooke half stifled a giggle as she felt a tingly sensation. Soon enough the bar was completely in her belly button. She looked down at it in fascination. She squished her belly, but couldn’t feel the shape of the bar inside her. “Voila. It’s temperature controlled, too! So, don’t worry about your body heat melting the chocolate.”

“Huh ... so uh, how do I get it out? And uh ... how much does this thing hold?” She asked while still experimentally squishing her paunch.

“You just reach in, and pull it out. As for space limitations, they haven’t been able to establish a concrete limit. It seems to differ from person to person. But there are a few fail safes implemented just in case you overstuff it. Now, don’t worry too much about it. Now, how about you put it to the test? I’m going to fetch some more firewood, can you bring out the hot dogs, buns, and everything for smores?”

Brooke nodded, and Varen left the trailer to do as he said. She stood up and went back over to the cupboards, and pulled everything she needed out onto the counter. She was astonished at just how much Varen brought. Brooke never realized just how much food she really ate on a daily basis. She grabbed a bag of marshmallows, and pressed it into her navel. She felt a cool tingling again, and let out a comfortable moan. She grabbed another package, and repeated the process. She packed in more and more. Her stomach started to groan as it swelled, growing rounder with each article she stuffed herself with. Before long, she let out a satisfied huff, with the last package sliding into her gut. It made a few gurgles. She felt ridiculously bloated, like she just finished a Thanksgiving dinner. She didn’t bother checking herself in the mirror since it was in the bathroom, and she was more concerned with bumping into the counters in the kitchen. There was a lot less space in here when she was full of food. She then slowly navigated herself to the door, and squeezed herself through it. Varen was back, with an armful of logs. He set them down among a larger stack, and looked at her with a snicker.

“Oh good! You didn’t explode! Just kidding. Come have a seat and we’ll get some food ready.” He gestured to a log that was partially sunken into the ground, as he worked on igniting the kindling in his bonfire.

Brooke flinched as she heard Varen mention exploding but then let out an annoyed grunt as she carefully walked over to her seat, and eased herself down with another huff. She then reached into her navel, and pulled out everything she put in. It was cool when she reached into the ring, and pulled out everything she could, one by one. Her gut shrunk back as the space was emptied. She looked at all the things she pulled out. She could have sworn she put more in there than she pulled out. She reached inside again to check, but felt nothing else. Meanwhile, Varen had a pleasant and cheery fire burning in minutes. He sharpened a few sticks to use as spits, and handed one to Brooke. Varen cooked his slowly, one at a time. Brooke, on the other hand, skewered several at a time. She put multiple hot dogs into each bun. She excused it as solving the

problem of the hot dog packages having more hot dogs than the bun packages had buns. Varen didn't seem to mind, watching her cook with one hand, and shove food down her gullet with the other, grinning the whole time.

As the sun went down behind the trees, and their sole light source became the fire before them, Brooke finished up the last of the packages. She leaned back and let out a huff, rubbing her belly. Meanwhile, Varen broke open the graham crackers, chocolate, and marshmallows. Hearing the crinkling of the packages, she snapped back from her relaxation, looking to get in on the good stuff. Varen passed her everything she needed to make her own. Like the hot dogs, she put as many marshmallows as she could fit on her spit. The marshmallows being squishy only let her pack on even more at once. She roasted her marshmallows with anticipation, the tiny white confections slowly amalgamating into a large and sticky glob. She carefully brought the molten sweet treat back to her, a few small drops falling onto her legs. She stuck a whole chocolate bar on the top, and then slapped a set of crackers on the top and bottom. The graham crackers were dwarfed by the sheer amount of marshmallow. It looked like she was only holding the marshmallow.

Varen laughed as he watched Brooke attempt to eat it. She crammed as much of it into her mouth as she could. Her face quickly grew messy with chocolate and marshmallows, as she took several bites in succession.

After consuming a few of the marshmallow monstrosities, Brook had slid off the log, and leaned against it. Her hands and face were completely coated with chocolate, marshmallows, and cracker crumbs. She groaned in discomfort as her stomach was taut from yet another immense meal. She looked ready to pass out at any second. She turned her head to Varen. "I don't- URRP! -feel so good ..."

Varen stood up and came closer to her. "Oh gee, you've gone and ate yourself sick. You want me to help you to bed? I'm sure you'll feel better after sleeping this off." Brooke nodded weakly. Varen helped her to her feet, consciously avoiding grabbing her sticky hands directly. With an arm around her shoulder, he guided her back to the trailer, helped her back inside, and sat her down on her bed. He provided her with some wipes to clean up, rather than shower in her current state. After making sure she was no longer coated in sticky sugar, He helped her lay back, and pulled the covers over her.

"Sleep well, Brooke." He gently whispered. His only response was a snore, as she fell asleep before her head hit the pillow.

The rest of the weekend was more of the same. It was raining for most of it, too, so they didn't get out much beyond a brief fishing trip on the lake. All that meant was that Brook spent that time eating, sleeping, and watching the occasional movie. After they came home from the trip, Brooke kept the navel storage device, which only made her weight issues even worse. Unbeknownst to Brooke, the strange liquid Varen poured inside was absorbing some of the food

she stored, and moving the broken down food into Brooke's body directly. It was like eating without a need for a mouth. She spent plenty of time grabbing snacks and stowing them for, which supplied her body with even more calories. On occasion she went to pull something out of it, only to not find it there. She eventually figured out that she felt full just by leaving food in her belly button, and spent several meals feeding herself solely through her navel.

Months went by, and she kept growing heavier. She was even bigger than most standard depictions of morbid obesity at this point. She hated her size being pointed out by others, whether it was someone advising her to go on a diet, or her clothes reminding her of her size through popped buttons and ripped seams. Yet, something about constantly growing bigger intrigued her. She liked it. She enjoyed waddling down to the basement, and stepping on Varen's scale, and seeing the number go up with every visit. Of course, as the weight kept piling on, the journey to the basement was getting more and more exhausting. It was not uncommon for her to be panting and breaking a sweat after a trip down and back. On top of that, Brooke found herself quite enthralled her navel storage. She loved the feeling of slowly stuffing things in, and pushing the limits of her capacity. It seemed that the larger her belly grew, the more she could stuff into her navel. She indulged her curiosity some nights by lumbering downstairs to the kitchen, and seeing just how much she could fit before it became too much. There were some mornings Varen came down to the kitchen to find Brooke passed out in front of an open and empty fridge. Brooke was also growing lazier, as well. She started asking Varen to bring meals to her while lazing in bed, and he'd reluctantly agree to do so, while telling her she should try to get out more. She usually told him she would try, which usually pacified Varen, but she never made any actual effort to get out of the house. As she asked for bedside deliveries with increasing frequency, Varen caved, and ended up getting a minifridge for her instead, which sat within arm's reach on a nightstand. She had to refill it herself, but it was better than going up and down the stairs constantly.

One hot summer day, Brooke woke up with an uncomfortable grumble. The air conditioning had stopped working the day before, and Varen was waiting on someone to come and service it. She had been keeping cool by chugging chilled soda and ice cream, and wearing wicking gym clothes instead of pajamas. She slowly sat up, grunting with effort as she moved her heavy body. The bed creaked beneath her as well, though she didn't care in this heat. She reached into her navel and tried to find something to cool off with, but found it was empty. She let out a huff of disappointment, and then turned to the fridge. She swung the door open, only to find it empty as well. She loudly sighed with exasperation, and slammed it shut.

Now having to get out of bed, she grumbled to herself as she scooted herself towards the edge, her gut sloshing in tandem with each motion forward she made. She briefly recollected on her slimmer days where she could literally leap out of bed, but her thoughts quickly returned to finding relief from the hot air. She waddled with heavy steps out of the bedroom, and towards the stairs. Each step she took on the way jostled her whole body, as a resounding thump echoed across the house. Rather than heading to the kitchen, she went straight to the basement, to a large

chest freezer. She pried the door open, and let the cold air cover her. She basked in it for a few moments, before she grabbed a couple of tubs of ice cream. She pressed one tub against her navel, and left it sitting halfway in. The cold seeped across her middle, bringing great relief. She tore off the top from the other tub, and without hesitating, scooped ice cream up with her free hand and shovelled it into her mouth. She let out happy murmurs as she indulged.

As she finished the last few spoonfuls, the light came on. Brooke froze for a moment. From behind she heard some chuckling. Varen came down, his own long fur glistening from perspiration. "Morning, Brooke! Heh, I figured I might find you down here. Then again, it's not hard to tell where you are. I'll spare you the thunder thigh comments."

Brooke's face went pink, and she puffed up her cheeks. "Th-Thunder thighs? Come on, I'm not that big! You make it sound like I'm making the ground shake!"

"Well ... how about you take another trip to the examination room?" Varen suggested. Brooke sighed, and shoved the tub of ice cream in her navel all the way. She closed the freezer and made her way back to the room. When she stepped inside, some of the bottles in the cabinets rattled whenever she took a step. The sound made Brooke flustered as her face stayed pink. Varen had a smug look of knowing as she went over to the scale.

"Sh-shut up, you probably just put the shelves in badly, a-and they're loose." She stuttered. She stepped on the scale, and the screen lit up once more. It made a little beep, and then displayed 426 pounds. Brooke let out a gasp, and looked down at herself. "When did I get so big?"

"Since you've been snacking at almost every waking moment. Have you looked at yourself recently?" Varen rolled a mirror out of a closet for Brooke to see herself. Her jaw dropped slightly as she stared. She was so wide she couldn't fit all of herself in the mirror at once. She had a full on double chin that was starting to merge with her neck, and plush cheeks that made her look like a chipmunk with its mouth full. Both were sagging slightly from their weight, and wobbled when she experimentally opened and closed her mouth in rapid succession. Her padded chest would have made any girl envious, were it not for what they sat atop. Her gut billowed out past her waist and over her enormous thighs, with considerably deep folds on either side of her. Her rump was big enough she might as well have had two big pillows tucked into her pants. Her thighs were so thick she struggled to bring her knees close together. She marvelled at herself in the mirror, curiously playing with various parts of her body. A grin returned to her face.

"Well if nothing else, at least you're enjoying yourself." Varen mused as he stood behind her. "Still, you should at least make an effort to get out more. At least you won't be a sweaty mess every time you go up the stairs if you build some stamina. Since it's so hot, how about we go on an outing to the beach?"

Brooke broke her fixation with herself and turned to look at Varen with an annoyed face. "Do we have to?"

"I mean, it'll probably beat sitting here in the heat all day. The stuff in the freezer will be ruined if you keep it open for hours on end, which includes things I need for my work. C'mon, we can bring all the ice cream with us." Varen reasoned.

Brooke sighed in defeat and muttered. "Alright, fine." She headed back to the stairs and looked up to the ground level. She agreed to herself that some better stamina wasn't a bad thing, though she'd never admit that to Varen's face.

Brooke made it back to her room, once again panting and sweating. As she made her way up, she realized she didn't have a swimsuit that fit. She probably didn't have one that would have fit her even a year ago, either. She then realised, like every time her clothes were getting too small, Varen had left a package on her bed. She began to wonder if he just had a stockpile of very large clothing in his office for a variety of occasions. She shrugged the thought away as the heat started to affect her again.

She opened the package to find a broad sunhat, sandals, and a deep blue one-piece. At least his fashion sense wasn't atrocious. She picked up the swimsuit and unfolded it to its full size. She couldn't help but widen her eyes slightly. It looked more like something she'd use to make a tent out of, rather than wear it for swimming. Regardless, she changed into it, and straightened it out, so it wasn't too uncomfortable. She lumbered back downstairs, where Varen was wearing swimming trunks, and had a large metal box on a shoulder strap. The material was reminiscent of the storage space in her belly button. Varen turned to Brooke as soon as he heard her coming down the stairs, and nodded with approval.

"Looking good! You ready to go?" He cheerily asked. "We're going to take the bus, since there's no parking down there.

Brooke nodded, and the two left the house. After a short walk in the heat to the nearest bus stop, Brooke was already sweating again, and breathing heavy. She let out a deep sigh of relief when they finally boarded a bus, which had the air conditioning on full blast. As she sat down, her backside spread out over two seats. She didn't seem to mind at first, but as the bus grew more populated, she felt a bit awkward taking up a second seat. Worst of all, about halfway along the trip, a child and their mother came on. While the adults on the bus paid Brooke no more attention than anyone else, the kid stared at her nearly the entire time. They tugged at their mother for attention, and poorly whispered and pointed.

"Momma, look! She's huuuuuge! She has a big butt, and she's using two seats!" A few other people heard the kid, and briefly glanced at the kid, and then Brooke.

"Yes, I know, dear. Don't stare, it's not nice." The mother responded with a tepid and disinterested voice. Brooke tried her best to conceal her feelings about it being pointed out, biting her lip to not say anything or show a more noticeable reaction. Each glare seemed to burn into her. Then, she felt a hand on her shoulder, and turned to see Varen give her a bright smile.

“Hey. Don’t worry about them, alright?” He reassured her. “Kids are always mean and stupid. C’mon, we’re almost there.” Brooke nodded, and the two got up from their seats as the bus pulled up along the beach. They left the cool air of the bus, and stepped onto the beach. There was a gentle and steady breeze blowing onto the beach, which made it quite enjoyable to stand where they were.

Surprisingly, the beach was not as crowded as they expected, given how hot it was. Then again, most people’s air conditioning was functioning. Varen led Brooke to a spot that wasn’t too far from the shore, and reached into his box. He pulled out a large umbrella, and several towels, setting them up to establish their spot. He set the box down, and turned to Brooke.

“Well, this definitely beats the house without air conditioning, don’t you think? How about we go for a dip in the water? I’m not gonna force you to, though. If you want you can help yourself to whatever’s in the ice chest. More than enough ice cream from everyone on this beach, I’d wager. It’s impressive how much that thing can store and still not weigh much.” Varen rambled on as Brooke looked to the water. She wasn’t feeling like a full on swim, and being honest, she was doubtful she could even swim at all at her weight, but figured a casual soak wouldn’t be bad. She looked to the chest.

“Is this thing waterproof? We could just bring it with us into the shallow water.” She suggested.

“Hey, that’s not a bad idea. I’ll bring it over. How about you get a head start?” He responded, gesturing for her to walk over to the water. As he picks up the metal chest, Brooke strode over to the water, and sat down where it was knee-deep. The water was much cooler than the air. Brooke took a deep breath of relaxation as she soaked in the seawater. It wasn’t a moment later that Varen carefully placed the chest beside her, and then sat on the other side of it. Brooke was quick to open it up. When she looked inside, it looked almost like the freezers she normally saw at convenience stores that sold all manner of ice cream based treats. She pulled out a cookie sandwich, and then passed a second one to Varen. He thanked her for it, and they both began to enjoy their treats.

After a moment of quietly enjoying a cold snack on a hot day, Brooke broke the silence. “So uh, do you ever take a day off?” Brooke asked. Even trying to restrain herself, she still managed to devour her ice cream far faster than Varen. She reached in and grabbed another one.

“Isn’t this a day off? I’m certainly not doing any of the paperwork in my office in this heat.” He posited.

“No, I mean like, a real day off. No testing, no sciency stuff, nothing. Like, even when we went camping, you still brought that stuff up with you, and gave me the navel ring I’m wearing.” She elaborated. By the time Varen finished one of the ice cream treats, Brooke had already wolfed down four. She offered Varen another one, and to her surprise, he accepted it.

“Oh. Hm. Honestly, I don’t think I have. Maybe it’s because I enjoy what I do? I’ve never really been one of those people who hated going to work, so I guess I never needed to take a day off to get away from it. Plus, the company shareholders like all the testing data I’ve been gathering as of late. It feels good to be told you’re doing a good job, you know? Speaking of, you’ve been a big help, allowing us to market a lot of products.” Varen sounded proud when he pointed that out.

Brooke did feel a warm feeling wash over her as she was praised. “Uh, glad I could help. But still, you should take some time to yourself. Just relax and enjoy yourself for a day. Y’know, get yourself a fancy drink, binge watch a tv show, play some video games, or don’t even bother getting out of bed!”

Varen made a pensive look, and then firmly nodded with a grin. “You know what? Sure! I’ll take a day or two off! I’ll just relax and snack alongside you! You don’t mind, right?”

Brooke giggled, shook her head, and offered Varen another ice cream sandwich. “Just sit back and relax. Think about, like, not work stuff. Daydream about something fun.” She grabbed two ice cream bars, and took the top off each one, making a double sized sandwich.

Varen started to reach into the chest on his own, and pulled out a couple of bars, copying Brooke. “And mindlessly snack on stuff like this?”

“Well, yeah. It feels good to just like, lay back and be lazy.” She leaned back and rubbed her belly, before grabbing another frozen treat, reaching under her swimsuit and slowly sliding it into her navel, letting out a squeak as the cold spread across her stomach, and a sigh as it disappeared into her belly button.

The two continued slowly but steadily emptied the chest Varen brought. While Brooke naturally consumed the lion’s share of its contents, Varen tried to keep pace, and performed admirably for his size. His normally lithe frame now sported a painfully stretched and swollen gut. The sun was setting beneath the watery horizon by the time they had cleared out the entire thing. Most people had already packed up and headed home. Varen and Brook were still sitting at the shore. Brooke was comfortably full, trace amounts of ice cream on her face and hands. Varen was fully laid back, the beach surf soaking that back of his head. His hands were carefully nursing his tight belly, which made noisy gurgling and groaning. “Ooogh ... how do you eat so much? I feel like I’m going to be- URRRP! -sick ...”

Brooke laughed at Varen’s state, and with a few grunts, she rose to her feet, her heavy form imposing above him. “You do realise I’m like, three times as heavy as you, right? Plus, I’ve uh ... been doing this for a couple years.” She blushed a bit as she admitted her diet and her resulting size. Brooke offered a hand to help him up. “Can we get going? I’m kinda cold.”

Varen nodded, and took her hand, slowly getting up. “Yeah. That’s ... ugh ... not a bad idea.” Varen took the chest with a single hand, and kept the other on his middle. They made their way back to their towels, and dried off, taking a moment to enjoy the red sky and golden sun as it finally disappeared behind the distant waters.

On the way back, the two both ended up falling asleep on the bus, waking only as they approached their stop. They slowly wandered inside, dumping their stuff just in the door, and making it to their beds, falling asleep before their heads hit their pillows.

Many more months passed. Brooke’s eating habits remained unfettered, her waistline perpetually getting bigger. This growth even spread to Varen. She convinced Varen to take days off more and more frequently, where they spent it lazing and eating. The effects were obvious on Varen, as the slender framed fox bore a pot belly, his thin body now much fuller.

Brooke fared no better, though. She continued expanding, pound by pound. The only clothes that fit her were these excessively large shirts Varen brought her. She learned not to question how he managed to find shirts that were so big, not only did they fit her, they draped onto the floor. They were quite comfy, and there was even a gap tailored for her belly button, so she didn’t have to reach under it. Trips to the basement grew very exhausting for her, even with Varen’s help. Varen ended up installing a chair lift for the stairs. Brooke felt insulted that Varen was so insistent on having them, and put up a fuss initially, but once they were in place, she used them without complaint. Her trips to the basement exam room to use the scale came to an abrupt stop when she passed the 500 pound mark. Instead of the usual always bigger number, the scale instead displayed an error. When she first made this revelation, she made a commotion that brought Varen running, only to have him burst out in laughter.

Despite being a quarter of a ton, Brooke did not stop gaining weight. Her face had become majority plump cheeks and chins. The bottom of her vision was obstructed by the tops of her cheeks. Her chin flowed seamlessly into her neck, which was a thick ring of fat. Her chest looked more like a pair of large cushions tucked under her shirt. Her belly stretched down over her knees. Her shirt stuck to the flabby slab that was her middle, revealing each and every fold. It swayed back and forth like a pendulum when she waddled the short distances she did around the house. It grew and shrank with each labored breath Brooke took. Her plush rump was so wide, she filled most of a loveseat on her own. Her legs were so enlarged by her size, traditional walking was completely out of the question. She had to waddle anywhere she wanted to go. Though, she never left the house anymore. Even getting around the house was tiring to the massive fox.

One spring morning, Brooke woke up in an uncomfortable position. She shifted in bed, grumbling as the bed creaked beneath her. When she finally established a comfortable spot for herself, she was already breathing heavily. She let out a few more huffs, and laid there to catch

her breath. She barely exerted herself, and was already tired. She sighed, and laid there for a moment, before calling for Varen.

“Varen! Can you come and help me?”

It didn't take long for Varen to stride into the room, wearing a sweater which poorly hid his recent gains. “What's up, Brooke? Not feeling well?”

Brooke reached her arms out. “I'm kinda tired, can you help me out of bed?”

Varen chuckled, and came over to her, grabbing her hands. “Tired, huh? No worries! How about I order us a couple catering platters from the local sandwich place? I'll make sure they put extra cheese this time.” He pulled with considerable effort, and helped Brooke out of bed and onto her feet. “How about you get a head start down to the basement and we'll marathon that new season of that mystery series that came out last week?”

Brooke nodded, her cheeks and neck wobbling in tandem. “Yeah, that sounds good! Can you make sure they give us more of the roast beef ones this time?”

“Sure thing. Head on down, and I'll probably go and pick them up in person, just so it's faster. See you down there!” Varen went ahead of Brooke, leaving down the stairs to make the order, and pick it up.

Brooke began her journey down to the basement. She straightened out her massive shirt, and started waddling out of her bedroom. She had to exit the room sideways, the standard door frame now too narrow for her to waddle through normally. She cleared it with relative ease. She reached the top of the stairs. Going up or down them was a legitimate struggle for her, and nearly impossible without Varen's assistance. Now, though, she had the lift. She took a seat on the chair on the rail, which creaked under her weight. She flicked the switch, and the lift began to hum loudly as it slowly descended the stairs. Once she was on the main floor, she waddled over to the steps to the basement, and went on another noisy ride down to the basement. She lumbered over to the couch, and sank into it, catching her breath from her trip. She reached for the remote, and flipped through the channels while she waited. Her stomach grumbled

It didn't take Varen too long to return, the sound of his footsteps exciting Brooke. He came down carrying a stack of large containers, each holding a couple dozen subs and sandwiches. He brought them over to her, and sat about half of them next to Brooke. She gave him a strange look.

“You're going to eat all those?” She asked with a strange look.

“Some of it. The rest is for you.” He sat down with the rest of them, tapping her exposed navel. “You don't mind if I help you out, do you?”

She already had a sandwich in her mouth, and one more in each hand. She shrugged and started the first episode. “Sure. Four hands is better than two.”

Varen laid back on the couch, and ate a few of his own sandwiches as the first episode played. He only had a few, though it was still more than any normal person would. Once he had his fill, he picked up a couple sandwiches, and reached out towards Brooke. She let out a squeak of surprise when the first few were pressed in, not paying attention nor expecting them. Once Brooke got used to someone else putting them in there, she relaxed, letting out happy murmurs as each one slid in. Her belly gently rumbled and gurgled, swelling slightly with each addition.

After several episodes, Brooke was well into the sandwiches, with only a few left on each tray. As the end credits for the midseason cliffhanger began to roll, the phone rang. Varen sighed, and got up from his seat.

“Sorry, I’ve gotta get that. Don’t start the next one without me!” Varen said as he rushed to the stairs.

“Just don’t take too long, then! And bring more snacks!” Brooke shot back, munching on more food as she paused the next episode. Varen rushed up to his office, and looked at his phone. His boss was calling. He cleared his throat, and picked up the phone.

“Hello? Yes, hello, sir, how are you? I’m doing well myself. Yes? Thank you, sir. Well, yes Brooke, my current tester, she’s doing very well with testing. Yes, her weight is rather substantial, I’m aware. Her mobility is becoming an issue, yes. Yes, she’s been testing the stair lift as well, it’s been holding her well so far. I’ve been meaning to submit an application for her to take part in more of the assisted mobility programs. You’re approving her? Thank you, sir. Yes, I’ll make sure there’s room for those products by next Monday. Of course. Yes, sir. Thank you.”

Varen hung up with a smile on his face. He rushed down the stairs, stopping by the kitchen to grab as many bags of chips as he could hold, and then headed back to the basement. He dumped all the bags next to Brooke, and looked at her with a bright smile.

“I just got some great news! You’re not gonna believe it…”