

# The Triplets' Tale

The RA Volume IV, Part Six

ISAAC BYRNE



# **The Triplets' Tale**

**The RA Volume IV, Part One**

**By Isaac Byrne**

Copyright © 2023 by Isaac Byrne

All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publisher except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

First Edition, 2023

The sisters planted their feet, hip to hip to hip.

“I don’t want to go! You can’t make us go.”

“I want to go home!”

“Yeah, let’s go home, Daddy.”

Dad knelt down and put his hands on the shoulders of Allison and Maddison, little – exactly equally little – Addison cushioned in between. “It’s going to be fun, girls. I promise. Remember when you were afraid to go on that roller coaster, Addy? You cried and cried the whole way through the line, but once you got on it... What happened?”

Addison frowned. “But they were there. We were together!”

Dad pulled the girls in for a hug. People were staring. There were other campers struggling with the impending separation, too, but none of them doing it in triplicate. The sisters were used to that. People always stared at twins. Triplets, however, were exceedingly rare, and they stared exceedingly harder. “I promise. OK? I know you’re scared, but you’ll only be apart for a few weeks, and really you’ll all still be here at the same camp, so when you’re together again you can compare stories. When was the last time you got to tell each other stories about something you saw that they didn’t, huh?”

“I don’t want stories!”

“I’m *scared*, Daddy!”

“I want to stay together!”

But Dad didn’t back down. He hadn’t when they’d pressed the issue earlier in the week, nor on the drive to the camp. It felt like Mom had been more sympathetic, but that was probably why she’d said her goodbyes in the car. *No gaps, Lydia*, their father always said whenever he and Mom disagreed. A unified front, they called it.

“Come on now, no tears, girls. You’re braver than that, right? My girls can do anything.”

“Yeah, *together!*”

He released the hug. The girls were shedding identical tears. “It’s *camp*, girls. You’ll have fun. You’ll ride horses and tell campfire stories and go swimming and make tons of friends. You’re always bugging your mom and I to take you to the beach, right? Well here you’ll be on the beach every single day.”

“We want to go to the *ocean*, not some scummy lake!”

“And we want to go together, not by ourselves!”

“We won’t know anybody!”

“You’ll make friends,” Dad said. He sounded sure of it. They were popular at school, but only because of what they were. The other kids thought they were an interesting novelty, and besides that they were pretty, which even at 9 years old they understood was an advantage. Pretty enough that they’d been in a commercial and modeled outfits for clothes on the internet, both of which made them unbelievably

cooler. Here at camp, though, they would be three pretty individuals, all on their own, in separate stupid tribes in separate stupid cabins in separate stupid bunks.

They agreed about most things, but one thing that they never disagreed about was that they wanted to agree or disagree *together*. Like Mom and Dad taught them – a united front.

Their dad delivered them to a stranger, a perky barely-20-something woman who smiled that slowly blooming enchanted stare people always smiled on first contact. Dad had taken them to the county fair earlier that summer, and they'd stolen a line from one of the carnies at the Hall of Wonders and made it their own. *It costs six tickets if you wanna stand there and stare*. They'd taken to saying it to people who got a little too excited over the sight of them. They were afraid now, though, and the jibe was forgotten.

Dad waved goodbye as they were ushered to their separate camp counselors. They screamed and desperately tried to cling to each other. They had to pry them apart. It was clear to them the counselors didn't like being the wedge separating them, but their paying customer was still watching from his car, and so they made the sobbing, sniveling girls split up.

Twenty-two days later, the girls reunited. They held each other and held each other and wept with relief as their fractured soul rejoined. Mom and Dad tried to get in on it, too, which they permitted, but only because they didn't have arms to spare to push them away. On the long drive back home Dad grilled them about the fun he'd presumed they'd had. Had they made any fun art projects, learned any fun skills, met any fun kids? If they wanted to visit one of their new camp friends, he said, he'd be happy to arrange a play date so they could introduce their sisters.

Allison told them about how on her first day this huge fat beast of a girl had stolen her favorite scrunchy. She'd told a counselor, but the girl had lied and said it was hers, and so it had been confiscated. Then the girl had made fun of her about it all week, rallying a bunch of other girls who found great sport in tormenting the visibly, miserably lonely young blonde. Her counselor had tried to sit the two down that morning right before departure to relitigate the alleged theft, but Allison had let the other girl keep it. Arguing would have only delayed the reunion.

Addison explained about how she'd told everybody at the sharing circle around the campfire the second night that she had two identical sisters. Nobody had believed her, not even her counselor, who had not been present at their traumatic separation. She'd been gently rebuked for making up stories, and from then on it became a running joke. *Here's an apple, Addison – oh and here's two more imaginary ones for your imaginary sisters!* Some girls had tried to be nice to her, but her guard was up. She'd tried to run away on the fifth night to try to get to where Allison or Maddison were being held, but their cabins were more than a mile away and she had gotten lost. Addison

spent most of a night alone in the woods before the sun came up and she was able to find her way back. Oh, and she'd gotten a rash.

Maddison? Maddison had had fun. The other kids had been nice to her and she'd made friends. She'd met a boy from one of the boy's cabins and she'd had her first kiss. On one another's cheeks, but they agreed it counted and they should save lip kissing for their future spouses. He'd tried to make her a necklace out of wildflowers and for a couple weeks she'd thought she'd been in love and wondered what that would mean. If she got married, could her sisters still live with them? They talked about it and laughed about it and shared more mostly-innocent smooches about it. (Future spouses be darned!) But now that she was with her sisters again and saw their misery and heartache, she resented it all because she hadn't been able to share it with them and it made her different from the two people she'd always been completely the same as, and now she was just as sad as they were.

The odds of their existence were a million to one. Less than that. Far less. They were a miracle. Their parents were atheists, but the girls considered themselves agnostic. They couldn't be what they were without some kind of divine intervention, could they?

So Maddison told her parents that it had been fine, and said no more.

"I'm sorry you had some hard times at camp, girls," said their Dad from the front seat. "But sometimes that's how you grow. Someday, you'll be all grown up and you'll go your separate ways. You'll always have each other, but it'll be phone calls and holiday visits. I wanted to make sure you girls knew you were each strong enough and brave enough to make it on your own, and you did. You all learned something about yourselves. I'm very proud of you."

When he put it that way, they did feel proud. They'd endured it, and they *had* learned something. Namely, they'd learned that they never wanted to endure it again.

No gaps.

\*\*\*\*\*

It didn't happen overnight. They were people, after all, and people were different. Most people were, anyway. The sisters, however, were 100% genetically identical. Dad joked that she was 90% sure they'd made it through the baby years without mixing up the girls' identities. The girls hadn't liked that joke. It was existentially terrifying, the idea that Allison could be Maddison could be Addison and literally nothing could prove otherwise. Dad apologized and told them he promised their next triplets would benefit from all the learning he'd done from his mistakes with the first batch, little Hoozy and Idano and Wutsername. They hadn't laughed at that one either. Not much.

By the time they were old enough to understand anything – and after extracting an ironclad oath on grandma’s soul that he was a thousand percent certain there had been no mixups – they understood Sameness. It would take a retinal scan to distinguish them. Their birth had been front page news. A clipping of the birth announcement hung in their nursery, and never left their bedroom as they grew up and redecorated.

Maddison hit puberty early, though, the winter after that wretched camp. It made the hard years of middle school even harder, her sisters left to browse clothes in the juniors section while she was in the dressing room trying on bras under Mom’s supervision. They’d done some modeling as children – had basically been begged to. They’d loved it. It was attention and affirmation and getting to try on cool clothes and having one more thing for the kids at school to revere them for. Maddison’s changes put that on hold. Suddenly they were... different. Regular people could tell them apart.

Addison and Allison both caught up by high school, and while they were once more the Same, by then they were no longer utterly indistinguishable. Identical servings of identical nutrition had always served to keep them the same. (They’d insisted on it, having been encouraged quietly by their modeling agent, who was fired the moment Dad found out about the encouragement.) Suddenly though, one of them had 10 pounds and 4 inches of height on the others, fat going to strange new places, new hair follicles springing up in weird places that siphoned resources from other projects. Identical calories were split in distinct proportions, and traits in one had more or less time to develop than in others.

When the pubescent dust settled, despite their best efforts, there were distinctions. A quarter inch of height here, eyebrows that wanted to come in slightly thicker there, a tiny round scar on a heel from a bad step on a hike. Their periods didn’t sync up like they’d been told they would. They did their best to restore balance, to mortar over those gaps, but some things couldn’t be lased or exercised or starved into submission. It fooled the world, but never each other, and never Mom and Dad. Dad, anyway. Mom respected their desire for homogeneity by acceding to it.

Of course, life experiences tried to drag them apart as well. Allison struggled in math for reasons they couldn’t explain. They had the same teachers through elementary school, after all, and identical brains. Between Dad and his resolution to “help” them distinguish themselves and a principal who cared not a fig for their pleading not to be separated, they found themselves in different classrooms for most of the day, so the math problem festered. Her sisters offered to simply swap places on quiz and test days, but Allison was offended. The problem was not her grade, it was that they knew something she didn’t. It was an existential threat. So they tutored her and tutored her, getting even better at the subject matter through the tutoring, which only made her work harder.

She went from a C- to an A-. The next semester, an A. Dad offered to take her out to celebrate, just the two of them, to show some focused appreciation for all her studying. He was an engineer himself, after all, and couldn't be prouder. She refused unless her sisters were also permitted to attend.

By their sweet sixteen, they were honor roll students, two-sport varsity athletes, and, as Dad put it, "a couple of heartbreakers plus one." If they were arrogant, it was unavoidable. What had started as a jokey insistence on expressing themselves identically, a game really, evolved into a platform of self- and mutual respect. They didn't permit one another self-criticism, because self-criticism was sister criticism, and they loved their sisters as they loved themselves.

When they succeeded, they could admire each other as one; if they failed, they were their own reinforcements. If there was a problem, they solved it together or avoided it together or destroyed it together. If one of them was having a moment and wanted some space, the other two smothered her until she remembered that they were together, always. When one of them wondered aloud in the middle of the night what would happen someday if one of them wanted to move somewhere far away, the others were there to swear they would follow them anywhere. They'd be the first triplets to colonize Mars, if that's what it took.

"What if one of us wants to get married someday?"

"I don't."

"I don't."

"Yeah, I know. I don't either. We're six-freaking-teen. But I'm saying what if, and someday?"

"Maybe we'll find three brothers and marry them together."

They laughed. Together. But they also worried as individuals.

The solution, they decided when those worries didn't subside, was to go back to modeling, like when they were little. But bigger. It was exciting. It was glamorous. If it wasn't a lot of money – yet – it was enough to have something to throw in Dad's face when he was trying to be funny grumbling about the cost of having three more daughters than he'd hoped for.

They were a novelty, and novelty meant opportunities. Plus, while it wasn't the greatest statement on civilized life on earth, they were 16, which gave the world about 20 months to salivate over their Watsonesque dreams of adult content. The sisters had no such intentions. At least, that was the decision after they had a series of lengthy discussions. It took some firm insistence that two of them were not comfortable doing sexual content with their sisters, and that was that. Instead, the occasional "lol you never know! ;)" reply on their socials would keep the fish on the line. Followers and subscribers hadn't meant anything to them except as a little extra clout in the social battlefield of high school, but it was something agencies looked for. Girls people wanted



to look at, who looked good and had a proven track record of waving no red flags. They didn't smoke, didn't drink, didn't do drugs, didn't have opinions of any kind about anything except for how excited they were to partner with Dolce and Gabbana for their gorgeous new fall teen lineup!

Dad said no. Actually, he said "absolutely not," which in Dad-speak meant he not only rejected their request but wouldn't even let them triple-pitch a persuasive argument at him. They'd gotten good at that, and secretly delighted in it. It was harder to resist a request if your points were lobbed in a barrage.

It worked just fine on Mom, though.

They signed a contract with a new agency, one that represented some of the hottest and most successful young names out there. Mom co-signed the paperwork as their legal guardian while Dad was taking a weekend hunting trip with Uncle Steve and two 24-cases of beer. When he got back and found out, he was furious and threatened to tear the whole thing up. The only way to placate him had been to make him the conservator of their financials – that way, he said, it would go towards their educations and not purses and makeovers. They gritted their teeth and grunted their thanks.

Their new agent, Lorna, was incredible. She promised them the world same as the other prospective agents had, but she promised it in front of people, which meant a little more. She made no bones about being a hired gun, but made a convincing argument that there was no better money to be had than representing an authentic genetic miracle. "There's only two Hadids, after all. You're going to have the most eyes on you per sister than any modeling family since the Kardashians." At sixteen, they were still a bit naïve and deeply aspirational, and Lorna's pitch landed.

The sisters were introduced to photographers they'd actually heard of, other modest- and mid-tier models they'd been waiting to follow until they got a follow back. Which they now got. They spent the summer before their senior year being flown to cities across Europe, to Australia, to West Africa, racking up stamps on their passports and giggling to each other about what would happen if the transit authorities found out they'd been posing as each other. Mom came with as chaperone, though they didn't see much of her. Dad stayed home and took care of the cats and worked.

"Somebody has to pay the mortgage," he grumbled time and again.

The sisters didn't hear it. They were too busy maintaining their diet and exercise routines, managing correspondences with their followers and designers and Lorna, posting daily, micromanaging their hair and skincare routines, making straight A's, and taking self-defense classes so if anybody ever tried anything on one of their sisters, they wouldn't have to stop at merely hurting the sonofabitch.

Dad put a moratorium on such travels during the school year – even after they were accepted at Lakeview University, where they were eager to attend its well-respected business school. They looked forward to college immensely. A clean start.

Independence. Somewhere nobody knew them but each other, where not a single soul ever had or ever would see them as Allison, and Addison, and Maddison. There, they would be Allison, or Addison, or Maddison, or Allison and Addison and Maddison.

They rehearsed it, trained their minds to stop seeing distinctions where none should exist. They were distinct by virtue of their minutes on the earth, the eldest having an extra seven, the middle three, and the youngest forming the baseline at which point they became what they were. Triplets. Three. Whole. There was no connotation to the age distinction, and thus it became their private term of address, even in thought. Mom and Dad had given them names that made them similar, but they were different.

No gaps.

Well, there was still one. But not after tonight.

\*\*\*\*\*

They were poised in front of their bedroom mirror, getting themselves ready. It was mounted on a dresser covered in glittery stickers and doodles scribbled in Crayola marker. A child's dresser, which could fit only a child-sized mirror. It was ideal for one child, young. It was impractical to do all their hair and makeup in front of it. Hence, like any other night out, the eldest used this station in their shared bedroom. The second used the minimally larger space in their shared bathroom. The youngest, as always, used the one in the master bedroom. They then returned to their lair and, by twos, stood side by side, scrutinizing along the axes of symmetry for any sign of betrayal.

Centered, the mirror reflected the self. Well and good for the eldest in the foreground, but they would be watched from all angles and therefore needed to be inspected from all angles. The process – ritual, by then – was for them to oversee the others, not the self.

The middle took her place behind her. The youngest, at her side, digested every inch of the eldest, reporting her shortcomings for correction. Too much curl at the bottom of the left side of her part. The wrong pair of red silk panties, an easy fix. A tiny blemish on the center left of her chin that needed another dab of concealer. Horrifyingly, a solitary black hair almost two millimeters long beneath her belly button.

(Not a pube. They'd been waxing those since signing with Lorna, another of those suggestions they made sure their parents never learned about. It was a must for swimsuit shoots. Besides, when it came to being identical, it was far easier to match nothingness to somethingness.)

Their inspections were uncomfortable, no flaw spared the magnifying glass. The sisters took the urgency to get things perfect on the first time out as a sacred duty. The youngest had joked once about how much time they would save shaving their heads, too,

a joke for which she had been thoroughly chastised for even jesting about. Still, pube or no, it was an ugly stray hair. If the middle could develop such a thing, they might as well.

The youngest next, the eldest falling in behind and taking her erstwhile inspector's place. Better – no more repulsive non-pubes – but nonetheless, in the dresses they were wearing, their exposed hips meant she had to cover up that little pink-brown mole on her left side. Her sisters didn't have moles there; they simply used prosthetic moles of their own if it would be revealed in a shoot. The asymmetry was reassuring when one regarded it in the context of that hair, but still. Someday, they'd have the money to have it removed, but for now, back to the concealer. Addison dotted, smeared and smoothed until Allison assented that it was adequate.

The middle's turn, the youngest taking the inspection stand and squinting for any signs of Otherness. She'd done herself up outstandingly, a perfect template for the others. She said as much, permitting her sister a moment to preen before they each compared themselves to her at length.

Purple, blue, and navy fabric. To the casual observer – even the leering-at-length observer – there was no further difference between the three. To the colorblind observer, there wasn't even that. They seldom had trouble telling one another apart, and when they did, they at least knew their own identity, reducing it to a coin toss rather than one in three. While it was gauche to point it out, the tragic fact of the matter was that one of them needed shoes a full size bigger than the others. The signs were all there, if you knew where to look. It was only that no one but them did.

“Time to shine.”

“We look amazing. Seriously.”

“Once more into the breach, dear sisters.”

They departed. One last trite high school party, a farewell before Lorna dispatched them to their summer tour. Their flight left the following afternoon for the Czech Republic. Their suitcases had been packed and reviewed and ready for over a week, final exams be damned.

“All right, girls. You look very pretty, but you know darn well I can't send you out into the world like that.” Their father was waiting by the door, arms folded stalwartly. Uncle Steve was in the living room, trying to look like he wasn't trying not to look. They liked Uncle Steve. He was a proper uncle, doting and blandly supportive, any opinions directed to the relevant authority figures.

As for their father, he was learning, too. His post at the door was a clear indicator that he'd upped his game from last month. Then he'd been on the living room couch, where he could see them go but not stop them from announcing their ride was there and see you soon Daddy we love you we'll be careful we promise.

“What's wrong with our outfits, Daddy?”

“Yeah, I think they look really nice.”

“And hardly any cleavage, too, see? We listen.”

“We know you’re only trying to take care of us, Daddy.”

“We picked these out just to make you happy.”

Their father wasn’t having it, though. “Oh, I bet they’re going to make somebody happy,” he observed dryly. That they would. There were practically no sides to them, just a few strings trying fronts to backs, and the knitted style showed lots of skin between the stitches. Their father had no way of knowing it yet, but it was even shorter in the back than the front, six identical ass cheeks peeking out to draw the eye. The dresses were slutty, a description that had less than no impact on the sisters’ feelings about them. Slutty knit dresses were in this summer. It was their job to make sure everyone knew. “But I have to draw the line somewhere, and it’s way before *those*.”

“That’s not fair!”

“If we have to re-coordinate, we’re going to be late!”

“It’s the last party before we leave.”

“Hi, Uncle Steve!”

“Yeah, we won’t be able to say goodbye to our friends.”

“Oliver’s already there.”

“Mom said they were fine, Daddy.”

This was only barely true, but it was a defensible hill. Their mother, weary of melting the plastic in her wallet on fresh clothing for her child and her two unintended siblings, had told them months and months ago that if they wanted to set or otherwise keep up with the fashions of the day, they could pay for it themselves. They’d talked to Lorna about it, who’d talked to the designers, who’d been happy to pay the girls in clothes. It neatly evaded the conservatorship blockade around their income, too. Mom had already been goaded into conceding (with borderline sarcasm) that anything she and Dad didn’t have to pay for, they could wear to their hearts’ content. They tried not to abuse it where their parents could see, but tonight was a special night.

Going on two years into their agent/client relationship, they all agreed that Lorna knew her shit. She tracked their metadata carefully. As the market decided that perfectly identical beautiful blonde triplets were a sound investment for something as paltry as a few outfits, soon the clothes were coming with checks. Nowadays they were getting payments for nothing more than posting photos of them having fun wearing the clothes, so even if the checks for the shoots were lower, their instagram was a printing press for money. That swimsuit shoot over winter break had been horrible, low 40’s and posing against a monstrous ocean wind, but that only meant their identical nipples jutted out authentic and alluring. They’d looked sexy as hell, with likes and comments and DMs with new offers dripping from what they’d been permitted to post. It would have paid for their spring break, if they’d had the free time to take one.

Tonight's dresses had come with a check, though. The triplets were wearing for \$833.33 apiece, the penny remainder deposited in their shared rainy day expense account. (They'd opened it when they'd gotten their first bank accounts when they were thirteen; the middle hadn't liked that their account balances would be distinct on account of fractions, every check split neatly into exact thirds. Its balance was over two hundred dollars now, gaining a penny every time an individual balance varied.)

The outfits that so scandalized Dad's sensibilities were better suited to a nightclub, or perhaps a garden party with young women and men of all ages, but the designer wanted the pics at an informal occasion. That seemed to be where things were headed this season, excess and flash to shame those who aspired only to be drab. The fabric colors were bold, the laces determined, and the skin underneath lotioned until it shined.

Still, they were high fashion, and savvy eyes would recognize them as such. "You look like call girls trying to drum up business," Dad snarked. He didn't hold back with his opinions about the trio. He was the only man they knew who didn't.

"We look attractive."

"Yeah, we look like models, Daddy."

"Which we are."

"Are you worried we're going to give up modeling...?"

"To start turning tricks...?"

"You know Oliver wouldn't let anybody get handsy with us."

"Not that I'd let them either."

"Yeah, me either."

"It's a party, Daddy! We're just going to have fun, dance, and come home."

"You're so sweet to worry about us, though."

"We'll be careful."

"Like always."

"Wanna back me up here, Steve?" Dad pleaded.

"Leave me out of it, bro." Uncle Steve leaned around the lamp he'd been using to hide his face. "You look great, girls."

The middle brushed her knuckles against each sister, finding the youngest's hand and the eldest's hip. "Thanks, Uncle Steve!" The touch made sure they crowed it together, the initial echo coming a fraction of a second behind at first, but quickly closing to true unison as the phrase became obvious. They'd gotten that skill down way back in third grade, and it had paid dividends. They were fucking cute in unison.

As far as they were concerned, Uncle Steve's endorsement put the vote 5-1, and they squeezed past Dad with kisses on alternating cheeks. (As far as they were concerned out loud, anyway; privately, they'd never intended to let him stop them regardless. They knew he meant well, but that didn't give him the right.)

They attended the party, fashionably late. Fashionably everything. Allison found Oliver, who greeted his girlfriend with a delighted kiss. Then he handed each of them a cup of shitty high school beer they barely sipped, and then helped them get the shoot done. The party was a great backdrop, full of people having fun but clearly all meaningless white noise to their presence in the foreground. A fine metaphor for closing out high school, the youngest pointed out. Oliver knew his job and snapped away, helping them finish the pics early. Lorna texted back her approval in under 60 takes, which meant they could spend the rest of the night enjoying themselves.

“You want to get out of here?” Oliver shouted into Allison’s ear. It was 11:18.

“Sure! I just need to go to the bathroom, but then, yeah, we should go somewhere.”

Her eyes met with her sisters’ across the dance floor. The boyfriend. It was time.

They rendezvoused in the upstairs bathroom, cutting in line in front of a quartet of indignantly squawking but ultimately impotent former classmates. These girls needed to pee; the sisters needed to start their new lives in a new world.

The new world had no room for +1’s.

“Are you ready?”

“We can do this. We know you’re ready.”

Allison frowned. “He’s going to be crushed.”

“We’ve been nothing but fair to him. You told him, you’re leaving the day after graduation for the whole summer.”

“Yeah, he probably would have cheated on us anyway, being gone all summer.”

“Cheated on *me*, you mean.”

“Cheated on you.”

“But your pain is our pain.”

“So also us.”

The girls paused for a hug. They were right. Allison’s last boyfriend hadn’t been able to handle her closeness with them, and it had sewn discord. They’d been so much happier single. Oliver was very pretty, perhaps not the hottest guy in school but the hottest who wasn’t also a total dick. He’d never *tried* to come between them. He was an excellent kisser, if not the most discerning when it came to whose lips he was kissing.

They hadn’t liked that Allison wanted to date, like they were individual girls who kept some parts of their lives separate, but they supported it. That was the rule. Whatever their sisters did, support one hundred percent. It came with the acute pressure to not make decisions that would hurt their sisters.

Oliver, so far, had slipped through the cracks. Until tonight.

“Are you sure you’re up for it?”

“If it’s too painful, you know we’ll do it for you.”

“Anything. You don’t have to do this alone.”

Allison squeezed her sisters tighter, tears trickling out. "I love you."

"We love you too."

Oliver perked up as he saw his gorgeous girlfriend descending the stairs. He'd been nervous when she'd darted off with her sisters. Those two thought they had a right to butt into every single damn thing Allison said and did. It was frankly obnoxious. Still, he loved her, he thought. She was brilliant and witty and fucking gorgeous. Tall leggy natural blonde? She was a freaking *model*, for crying out loud, and it sure sounded like their career was trending upward. His big brother told him everybody broke up with their high school sweethearts in college, unless they went together. He'd transferred to Lakeview for her. No clue what he wanted to study there, but she was worth it. He'd be the only freshman in Rowland Hall whose girlfriend was a model, that was for damn sure.

"Hey, Ally. Ready to blow this joint?"

She nodded and placed a hand on his forearm, letting him escort her out the front door. "Have a good time? Get to say some goodbyes?" he asked. He'd given her some space tonight. They were leaving the next day and might well not be back home until August. He was trying to be respectful of her need for closure.

"Actually..."

She stopped. So did his heart. *Fuck*.

He listened patiently as she dumped him. It was all in that cold, reasonable tone she had – all three of them had – explaining how it made sense this way, how her career was taking off and how it didn't leave enough room for a boyfriend she could treat the way he deserved to be treated. It wasn't unkind, apart from the heartbreak.

"I fucking transferred to Lakeview for you!"

"I didn't tell you to do that."

"You sure as shit didn't tell me not to!"

"It's a good school, Oliver. You could do worse."

"I could do better. With you. Come on, Ally, don't do this. We were good together. Weren't we? Haven't I been supportive? What the actual fuck, you know?" Oliver didn't curse at women, but he was a little drunk, and a lot in pain.

She leaned in close. So close. Too close. "How sure are you of who you're talking to right now?"

His stomach lurched. "What...? Ally, you're... What?" But he looked her over and shook her head. "No. I know my girl. You don't think I know how to tell you three apart? I pay attention. You came here in the blue. That's your dress."

"And you don't think we could have exchanged dresses in the bathroom?" His jaw dropped. She shook her head. "It's not your fault, Oliver. For what it's worth."

He gaped after her as she made her way to their car, where her sisters were waiting. Allison cried, and they cried with her. By the time they returned home, there

was no more Allison. Allison was a legal entity only, a name on paper, something one of them would sign. They'd practiced. Their signatures of one another's names were as indistinguishable as they were.

They arrived home single, single, and single. By chance, Lorna texted them as they were walking onto the porch. *Hey, hope you're not having too much fun. Great pics – I flagged the best few, take your pic pick. Though remember, there's three of you, so try to make sure you show off every angle. Get some sleep, see you at the airport tomorrow.*

They read in unison, but it delayed them just enough that they caught the sound of voices penetrating the living room window.

"... don't know what to do with them any more, Steve. They're like eels – little blonde identical eels. Every time I think I've got a hand on things, they slip free again."

The girls froze on the porch, shoulder to shoulder to shoulder in the darkness, listening to Dad and his brother in the living room inside. "I'm not jealous, man. Still, can't be all bad, right? Your girls are as close as sisters can be. Kristy and Zoe, I can barely get them to keep civil through dinner some nights."

The attempted redirection failed. Their father was six years, two months and a day older than Uncle Steve. That was a big gap, the difference between experiencing 9/11 and having it be a weird day of middle school with extra-long recess. Gaps meant differentiated experiences. Gaps invited disharmony.

They listened, hands and breath held, no chance of a stray sound betraying their presence.

"You don't understand. They're... weird. It gets worse every year, and their modeling whatever only makes it worse. Sometimes it's less like they're sisters and more like they're a very exclusive cult."

"Well they seem to be doing a good job recruiting," joked Uncle Steve. "They've permitted only the best members."

"You only ask that because you're not following them online. Do you know what it's like, seeing my babies posing half naked, seeing hundreds – thousands! – of random assholes saying creepy shit in a dozen languages? I guarantee you most of these pervs are our age or more. And they just giggle it off like the cost of doing business."

Uncle Steve's reply was soft, hard to make out. "You know, um, I'm as human as the next guy. I fall for the occasional, what do they call it, 'thirst trap.' I didn't tell you, but I had to actually cancel my instagram. You don't know what it's like sitting on the john, scrolling through girlies, and suddenly out of nowhere there's my nieces. Hell of a cure for a quality boner."

"Fuck, man, don't tell me that shit!"

"At least you didn't have to live it." There was a pause; probably taking a drink. "But you always say you're proud of them."



“Sure, I *say* that. What else do I say? ‘Girls, would you mind covering up a little so there’s not a million lonely jerks beating off to your every post?’ They don’t even realize. They’re just having fun playing dress-up. Like all that money just *poofs* out of thin air because they’re so stinking cute or something.”

The sisters shared a dry smile, just visible to one another in the faint light. Their father was simultaneously too innocent and too cynical. Of course they knew. The money didn’t come from the men beating off to them, though. The money came from the companies sponsoring their apparel, who in turn made their money selling less attractive girls (and more attractive girls cursed with a lack of replicas) the notion that if they bought these clothes, guys would beat off to them, too.

Besides, not like guys wouldn’t beat off to them if they didn’t have social media. It would just be the dudes who saw them day to day, as had been the case for hot girls since the invention of the cum rag. Dad was either uneasy because of the quantity or because they got something in return.

“You’re only looking at the downsides. They’re raking in the cash, you said, right? Let Lydia retire in her forties. Think about that, paying their tuition just by batting their eyelashes. That’s not nothing.”

“‘Batting their eyelashes’ is one way to put it,” their father grumbled. They could sense, though not see or hear, him grinding out his cigarette in his ashtray. They’d begged him to quit time and time again over the years, but to no avail. A rare miss. “And they’re not just paying their tuition. And Lydia ‘retired’ because otherwise we’d be sending our sixteen-year-old kids across the damn planet with nobody but that bloodsucking bitch Lorna. You know they’re on track to out-earn where Lydia left off this year? Each, I mean. I know she wasn’t exactly raking it in, but still, they’re *kids*. If they don’t, it’ll be close, and they’ll get there next year for sure. Shit, they might out-earn *me*. I’ve been on the forums, read the stories. If they decide to, you know, ‘cash in’ or whatever you want to call it, they could graduate as millionaires. And I don’t mean the three of them would have a million dollars. I mean they would each, individually, be a millionaire.”

The eldest shared a perplexed look at her sisters. Dad was saying “millionaire” like it was a bad thing.

“That sounds like good news,” said Uncle Steve guardedly. Duh. “And what do you mean, ‘cash in?’ Like, sign a contract with GapKids or something?”

The middle almost let a giggle slip out. Thankfully, each sister felt it coming and silenced it with an elbow and a withering glare respectively. She mouthed her apology.

“GapKids...? Fuck, Stevie, I’m scared they’re gonna sign with goddamn Pornhub. I ran the numbers. If 1% of their little ‘followers’ sprung for ten bucks a month, they’d be making more than yours and my salary combined by the end of goddamn February.”

If Lorna were to be believed, they'd outpace him by late January, actually. Sooner, if they didn't just pose but actually touched each other. Lorna presented the option without passion or prejudice, yet another communication they made sure to keep off the books. They didn't have any particular disdain for women who made money taking clothes off instead of putting them on, but it was a shared body. They agreed none of them had the right to bare her sister's form to the world.

"Oh come on, don't be gross. They wouldn't do that. They're good girls. You raised them right. Every daughter's dad begins to panic when they're about to leave the nest. You just have three times the panic."

"Yeah, well, every dad's daughters don't have a goddamn agent spending night and day, fucking... *monetizing* them. This lady, she doesn't even have the grace to come in and talk with me and Lydia face to face. No, she 'Zooms' us – while she's at, I don't know, some outdoor cafe or something, goddamn palm trees – to tell us how excited she is to be 'promoting' our girls. Like they were a fucking sale at Walmart, not... *people!* Before you know it, they're dressing different, acting different, talking different. For three little girls who are so fucking same, they got awful different awful fast when that woman got her claws sunk into them."

The girls shared a look. These were ideas they had been confronted by previously, but never so bluntly. Of course Lorna was promoting them. Her agency made 12%, and most of that went to her. Why would they want an agent who had no stake in their success?

"I feel you," said Uncle Steve after a pause. Taking a smoke of his own, the girls' nostrils confirmed as they took in the scent of his cigarette wafted out the cracked window. Their mother disapproved of this, but she'd had no more luck with her brother-in-law than the girls had with their father. "But look at it this way. They'll be secure, you know?"

"Secure? They'll be professional sluts is what they'll be."

"I mean... Maybe? Not how I'd phrase it, but nothing wrong with getting rich being pretty. People get rich doing a lot worse shit, man. But don't let them hear you talking like that if you want 'em to use those riches to take care of your ass when you're old and broke."

"I'm supposed to take care of *them*," their father snapped.

The eldest opened the door. "We're home, Daddy!"

Their arrival heralded the usual commotion of cigarettes being extinguished, smoke being fanned out the window through which they'd just been eavesdropping.

"Good party?" he asked.

"It was OK."

Dad frowned. "That's not a yes."

"We broke up with Oliver."

His frown intensified. Dad had liked Oliver. One of his daughters had actually been doing something normal, on her own. Going on dates and asking for curfew extensions and trying to conceal hickeys with makeup. Not sitting in their room rehearsing weird triplet mind games. Inwardly, he hoped they'd each find a nice somebody at college. His girls would need some strong boys to straighten them out.

For now though, he addressed the problem in front of him. "I'm sorry to hear it. Are you OK, sweetheart?" He looked right at Allison. The colors of their dresses were irrelevant to him. Dad always knew.

"I'll be OK. Thanks, Dad." He offered, and she accepted, a hug. It felt a little wrong after what she'd just overheard, but it still felt pretty good.

Upstairs, they changed into their pajamas, popped an Ambien apiece, and closed their eyes, side by side by side.

"He can still tell."

"Even Mom can't always tell."

"It could have been a lucky guess."

"You know it wasn't."

"How can he tell?"

Nobody could answer that.

"Part of me is glad he can. But I guess we'll see how we feel when we get back home, huh."

"I don't think Dad is on the team any more."

"He's still our dad."

"You heard what we heard."

"But he's still our dad."

"He can be our dad and still not be on the team."

Mom and Dad dropped them off at the airport the next day. Lorna was already waiting; she nodded curtly to her clients' parents and kept her distance. Mom hugged the three of them, tearfully wishing them a magical summer. Dad hugged them one by one and told them by name, accurately, that he loved them.

"Don't go getting too rich and famous too fast, eh girls?"

They giggled, waved, and joined their agent, strutting through the airport in designer heels. Lorna distributed their boarding passes. "So. Who's ready to get rich and famous?" They giggled at that, too.

\*\*\*\*\*

"It's them," said Elena, nodding sincerely to Kenna. "You can go in. Leave your clothes. Enter with your heart, mind and body in perfect openness."

They nodded and complied, trying not to look too hard at the many small rooms off the corridor. It was dark, but the mattresses were bright enough to be seen.

Naked and holding nothing but their candles, the two present sisters entered the Hall of Roses, a grandiose name for a shitty concrete bunker. It had been built by paranoid sisters – not true sisters, merely the sorority kind – back during the Cold War era, in case the Soviets aimed a missile at Lakeview University or some such idiocy. It was deep down, though. The sisters had been in the Sigma Chi Epsilon house basement before during their pledgship. They'd known of, though had never been to, the sub-basement. To find there was all this buried way down here had been surprising, especially this room. The "Hall of Roses," Elena had called it. Its round walls were cloaked in waves of black velvet, ΣXE stitched into it by hundreds of hands in hundreds of styles. All of them in conspicuously dark red thread that only barely didn't match the sheer black of the cloth. The room was lit only by candles, the letters only noticeable because of how very many there were. It was a room that suggested something sacred. And secret.

It was nice to finally be surprised.

She squinted at that thread. Was it blood, tinting white thread? Probably. It seemed like the kind of creepy culty bullshit these sorority chicks got off to.

Pledging a sorority had mostly been exactly what they'd expected: pushy alpha bitches getting their rocks off bullying and controlling freshman girls, with just enough of a veneer of hashtag grrl power to keep their fellow pledges coming back for more. Having triplets, successful models, girls so unusual and unique and alluring that their mere existence had merited an article in *The Lakeview Legend*, that was fuel on the fire. They were a commodity. The sororities weren't supposed to recruit, just host meet-and-greets and let the freshmen decide where they wanted to pledge. Nevertheless the sisters had been recruited relentlessly, offered cherry-picked accommodations, discounted lodging, clothes. Someone from Delta Alpha Theta had slipped them an honest-to-god envelope of cash with a note to buy themselves something cute to wear to their first pledge party.

Laughable, of course. (Seriously, "DAT House?" Delta Alpha Theta was DATH House.)

The sisters were the last two pledges to enter this budget sanctum. There was space in the circle for them still, and they took their places facing the ΣXE sisters in their ring just inside the chamber's perimeter. Each clutched their candle in two hands at their stomach, as they had been instructed. It was the only thing obstructing the view of their nakedness.

"Sistren," intoned sister Jocelyn in a voice almost comically deep. Jocelyn was bulimic, and positively gorgeous for it. Sad, but they had enough stress managing their own diet and fitness without reserving pity for others. Better to focus on the positive.

“We are gathered in the sight of sisterhood to hear the petitions of those who would petition us to deem them worthy of membership.

“We have gathered you here in the Hall of Roses, at the base of our chapter house, in the sight of God but away from the eyes of man. First let each petitioner among you declare your pledge to Sigma Chi Epsilon, from this day until your last, or cast herself from this place the same.”

The ritual of the thing really sold it. The pledges had been taught what to say, drilled and lectured on the significance, but they had not been told what would be said to them. The anxiety over trying to straight-face shall's and lo's dwindled rapidly in the presence of the religiosity of it all. It sounded old, churchy (synagoguey for their pledge sister Dina), and somber. Roleplay so committed that it was easy to reciprocate, even as they filtered the swollen prose for the underlying meaning. (e.g. The book might say they'd gathered “in the sight of God,” but as far as everyone in this room was concerned, there was no god who was to be more feared and loved than Michelle, the president of the Lakeview chapter of ΣXE.)

It was painstaking, as it was meant to be. Recitations of oaths, self-deprecating supplications, confessions, saccharine praises, and of course the ΣXE anthem. To the two genuine sisters participating, it seemed as if they were attempting a parody of sisterhood. The triplets never needed to say stuff like this to each other. They were barely even consciously felt. They were one another and each other was themselves. No amount of what essentially amounted to vows of eternal hotness – lest, yea, our sistren whom we trust and love as, lo, sisters of the flesh, not get invited to the good frat parties, Amen – was required.

To love oneself was to love one's sister. No gaps.

Six months now they'd been living on their own terms, and it had brought them closer than ever, found micro-gaps they hadn't known existed. It demanded discipline, and constant communication, and sacrifice, and choking down wants and desires that went against the greater good. But yeah, worth it. It was such a relief most of the time, living outside of parental support and intervention – what Lorna politely called “well-intentioned bungling.”

(Their agent hated the conservatorship almost as much as they did, and for about the same reason. Girls earning and spending a lot of money wanted to earn more money. Girls amassing a lot of money they couldn't touch? She distrusted it. It meant providing a lot of extra attention and oversight to appeal to their egos since their purses were out of their reach. It drained her time and energy and patience. But it also paid for her BMW, so.)

Really though, the sisters did an excellent job taking care of one another. When the middle had gotten drunk and started making out with another model in Melbourne,

it was on her sisters to hastily research whether or not he was a big enough deal to fear upsetting before dragging her away. (He wasn't.)

When the eldest got the flu two days before their shoot in Rio de Janeiro, her sisters purged and starved alongside her. Identical sunken ribcages, identical haunted complexions, identical misery.

When Lorna told them she'd lined up a secondary shoot that only needed one of them, their pick, they declined. \$1800 was a small sacrifice to prevent anyone having a distinction in their portfolio, making contacts denied their siblings. When Lorna testily informed them that their contract didn't permit them to decline, they went together and swapped in and out of the merchandise until the photos contained all three.

When the youngest got crippling homesick during their second week of college, her sisters canceled everything and took her home for a weekend of hot dogs Dad burned on the grill and some truly intense games of euchre at the kitchen table. Then back to Lakeview, where she choked down her loneliness and plastered a smile on her face as she accompanied her sisters to the college party scene. It was loud and close and the frat guys were all sorts of handsy, but her sisters wanted popularity, so she wanted it for them.

This was something the sisters of ΣXE had failed to understand about sisterhood when they tried to pit them against one another. The house had a reputation as the sort of viper nest that one usually only saw in fictional sororities, right down to their letters.

For the first couple weeks of rushing, the sisters had generously interpreted the torrent of competitive winner-takes-all games and challenges and flat-out hazings as par for the course. If the sisters could win together, they did. In the dance-off before the feasting eyes of their sibling fraternity Omega Beta, each sister's "audition" incorporated both of her sisters; the brothers voted them first place unanimously, Michelle's insistence only one could win be damned. If they couldn't win, then they lost together. The three-legged bikini race in the ΣXE front yard was a fine example. It turned out a six-legged configuration was indeed substantially more challenging, and turned them into a full-on spectacle. As the last place finishers, they had to work the OB party in those bikinis, flitting around serving drinks and taking all dance requests. Michelle glowered as the dance floor became the stage for the line of inebriated OB boys waiting their turn to be triplet-teamed.

The breaking point, presumably, had been when Michelle instructed them to arrange themselves from most to least attractive. Naked. The ΣXE sisters roamed around, measuring body fat with calipers, generally pointing out any flaw they could find. Pledge Gemma had 26% body fat, "a lardass." Pledge Minnie had the gait and the tits of a penguin, "fucking mutant." Pledge Nadia dressed like she was poor. "Poor."

They took particular malicious glee on the sisters, though they failed to find any failings that weren't common to all three.

Then it was up to the pledges to take that feedback and sort themselves into the proper order, hottest to nottest. Every time the pledges got it wrong, meaning their ranking was different from the sisters', the whole group had to get down on the dirty floor, still naked, and do crunches through a singing of the ΣXE anthem. Over and over, until they got it right.

The triplets had refused to differentiate. Even with their pledge sisters demanding it – gently, at first, but ΣXE President Michelle's wolfish grin up in her roost spurred their enmity on. Three girls, including the youngest, threw up before they were finally physically forced into a lineup. The sunrise had just been kissing the horizon.

That had been two days ago. It had been the final straw. *You won't get in line? Fine. Two can stay*, Michelle had told them. *You choose*. A test to see if they really meant the oaths, if they could choose ΣXE sisterhood over each other. Really, she just wanted all three of them to quit, but she'd settle for permanently fracturing something beautiful.

They chose. Here they were. Two of them. Of course, Michelle didn't realize exactly what they'd chosen just yet.

Oaths now out of the way, it was finally time for the real test. If there had ever been an age where one's honor was sufficient validation for entry into privileged society, it had clearly lost out long ago to the conventions of those who had none. Everyone having dirt on everyone, that was the real intimacy.

The door to the Hall of Roses opened, and in walked a line of men in togas, their faces hidden behind golden masks. Even so the women all knew who they were, broadly. Brothers from Omega Beta, their brother fraternity.

Jocelyn intoned solemnly, "Now, my new sisters-to-be, we call on you to join your ΣXE—" [always "sexy" when an adjective] "–sisters in a display of hospitality and fellowship. As you have sworn to represent ΣXE—" [always Sigma Chi Epsilon when a noun] "–with perfect grace and perfect love, we invite you to demonstrate your grace and love to these, our honored guests."

What atrocious word salad. What repulsive contempt for civility and decency. What a complete moron Michelle was to think they'd ever select this base depravity over one another.

The ΣXE pledges each smiled graciously. They'd each been warned privately by one of the sisters about this moment. The pledges had each been led to believe their warning was unique, pure favoritism from an upperclassman who'd been backing them, and were forbidden to share. As the youngest had once put it, though, their only gaps were thigh gaps. They warned everyone, because the girl had to be ready to blow when they were "invited" to blow. (But not to fuck them. Both of them were very explicitly told they weren't required to actually let the brothers fuck them, which meant that they'd definitely try, and probably on a couple of the more impressionable pledges, succeed).

It was no big deal, the ΣXE sisters said, just a little gluck gluck. ΣXE drank for free at any party they attended, and that good will had a price. In exchange they got to be hot and popular and go to parties for the rest of their college years, and then they'd have access to the house's network of alumni connections to vault them to success after graduation.

ΣXE House had connections? Yeah? Did they?

Well, the sisters reminded each other, being a one in a billion genetic anomaly, they could make their own fucking connections.

Michelle approached each pledge one at a time, masterfully interweaving a tapestry of euphemisms to demand them to go suck some dicks to cement her hedonistic alliance. One at a time, the pledge selected one of the OB brothers and led him down the hall to one of the small rooms they'd seen open to them on their way in.

Gluck gluck, presumably; no big deal, supposedly.

She'd saved her most hated for last. Soon, it was down to Michelle and the ΣXE officers, two masked and toga-clad Omega Betas, and the two of the three.

"And then we have you two." Suddenly, there was no ceremony to her tone. No euphemism. "Our sisters before you were sisters."

"I choose him."

"And I choose him."

Michelle smirked. "Hold that thought, ya little dick divas. Did you really think you could get away with this?"

The two froze. Shit. Everything had been going to plan all night so far. They'd really thought they would. Until this moment, they had. But they had one another to cover for. Neither had the right to concede on behalf of the others. They would lie and dissemble until the bitter end for each other.

"With what?"

"Get away with...?"

Michelle rolled her eyes. "You idiots thought your test was which bitch to ditch. Nope. It wasn't picking a weakest link – though by the way, you sure folded easy on that one. Honestly thought you triple twats would throw in the towel together. Would've at least been some dignity in that. I guess. No, cuntards, the test was to see if you'd understand you need to wipe those smug, cunt looks off your smug, cunt faces and recognize that you're not doing *us* favors pledging ΣXE. *We're* the ones doing *you* a favor letting you."

She didn't know. Suppressing smug, cunt grins, they feigned indignation, like Michelle would expect. Give her another excuse to try out one of those stupid over-wrought insults she liked to workshop.

"I don't–"

"That's not–"



Michelle snapped her fingers, right between the narrow space between their faces. “So fine. You wanna be blood sisters first, ΣXE sisters second? Then tuck your tails up your cunts and follow after the third member of your litter. Have fun spending the rest of your college years blacklisted to every party, every tailgate, every everything.”

Michelle crouched down, her smirk reaching both ears. “Or stay, and prove you meant your pledge. You follow her, with him. Together.” She stuck the index finger of both hands in her mouth and bobbed her neck crudely. “And then you go with her, with him.”

The sisters ventured affronted looks. “Wait, we have to suck them both off at the same time? Together? Both of them?” They spoke up. It was important to make their question explicit.

Michelle booped their upturned noses one by one, and shrugged. “You don’t *have* to do anything. But if you want to be one of us, then you gotta be one of us all the way. Choose, but choose fast because I am about as bored as I can fucking get with you and your bullshit triplet drama.”

Michelle stood and returned to her place between the masked OB boys. While her back was turned, the sisters shared a look. They were definitely getting away with this.

“We do want to join you. And we will.” With that, the sisters flanked one of the two remaining brothers, the one with the muscles. Backs stiffened by pride, they led him through the black curtains, down the corridor, past the moans and promised *glucks* of their pledge sisters and their partners, and finally entered one of the tiny sex closet. The chamber was plainly stocked for this ritual and not much else. It was barely big enough to fit a shitty twin bed while permitting the door to open and close.

The boy plopped down on the bed, thick thighs spread wide enough to accommodate the two of them. “Fuck, I can’t believe this is happening. This is insane. You two are so... I mean, just... Wow. Like one of you is wow, but two, like, I don’t even, you know?”

The sisters knelt at his feet. They could see right up the bottom of his brief toga where his cock was trying to burst through his boxers.

“We know.”

“Now just imagine there was a third.”

His eyes widened by half. “You don’t, like, have to, you know. But if you don’t I gotta tell ‘em, so. Fuck. Goddamn, are you two like actual twins?” Evidently he’d been too distracted by four perfect, identical breasts to understand what all Michelle had said right in front of him in the ritual chamber, or even their appearances at OB parties over their months of pledgship. Dimwit.

“No,” they answered in perfect unison.

The boy lifted his ass just enough to jerk his toga over his head, dumping it on the bare, lumpy mattress beside him. Masked though he was, he had a hell of a body on him,

hot enough that either his face or his personality must be unfathomably damaged that he had to stoop to this kind of thing to get his dick wet.

The sisters' eyes met, and they spoke in whispers – hastily, so this beautiful turd couldn't interrupt. The absence of a third voice made it challenging. Usually they had a buffer between responses to help them keep pace.

“We could do it.”

“We don't have to.”

“But we could.”

“We already got what we came for.”

“But I'm *horny*.”

“I know.”

“And you know he'd let us, if we offered.”

“I know.”

“We haven't been with anyone since Oliver, and Baptiste in Melbourne, and those were forever ago.”

“I know.”

“Maybe it would sweeten the story? If we just...”

“I don't think *she* would think it was sweet. Her sisters doubling up on some random guy's cock?”

“Please? Just... come on, *please*. For one night, we can just be two insanely hot perfectly identical unbelievably horny college girls. Just for one night.”

The boy licked his lips. He probably wouldn't be able to follow all this if he were sober, but “horny college girls” was more than enough to keep him interested.

“He would never know she wasn't with us.”

“So?”

“So, would you want some guy out there looking at you, thinking you'd put out for him when it was actually us?”

“We don't have to tell her.”

That halted their discussion. She heard what she'd said instantly, and shook with self-loathing. “I'm sorry. I didn't mean it. I would never.”

Her sister's smile bloomed immediately. She kissed her – their – forehead sweetly. “I know. And I love you.”

They looked up at the OB boy. He grinned down at them. “So, we doing this thing? 'Cause it sounds like somebody wants more than a little oral, and let me just say I am so—”

“We don't intend to suck your cock.”

“I know you were expecting it, but we're not.”

“Sorry.”

“Kind of.”

“Kind of sorry.”

The boy blinked. “Wait, what? But you have to. I mean, not like *have to*, but—”

“So we’re going to make you an offer.”

“One time only.”

“Now or never.”

“You can apologize for trying to do what you tried to do.”

“For being part of this disgusting, slimy so-called ritual.”

“For trying to mouth-rape some freshman girl.”

His head shook apoplectically at the r-word. “What?! No fucking way! I wasn’t going to force anybody to—”

“Stop interrupting before we change our minds.”

“And apologize.”

“Or... not.”

“But trust us when we tell you, you’ll feel a *lot* better if you do.”

The boy looked between them, hands still grasping the hem of his boxers. “But... you were supposed to...?”

“Apologize.”

“Please.”

In unison, “Please apologize.”

The boy looked down at them, their stern expressions carrying the weight of three sisters’ worth of dignity, never mind that they were naked on their knees in that fucking bitch Michelle’s little fuck dungeon. He didn’t understand the full measure of the clemency they were offering, but he suddenly remembered himself, and shook his head repentantly.

“OK. Um, yeah. I’m really sorry.” And like that, he really was. Tears welled up, and he blubbered through an explanation of his choices and knowingly embraced misperceptions of the nature of manhood, and the girls listened, mildly consoled, and occasionally bipped his chin to keep him looking them in the eyes. It was harder now that they were standing over him, but he responded to it well.

“We need you to tell Michelle we actually blew you. As a show of good faith...” The speaking sister paused for the silent sister to give her palm a thorough lick, followed by a plunge into the boxers for a few lavish strokes. It wouldn’t mollify her appetites, but it was the best she could do for her under the circumstances. “Now if anyone looks, it’s nice and wet. You’re welcome. And we’ll make sure everyone understands you were a gentleman.”

“Thanks, you guys. You guys are... I’m so sorry, you guys. ΣXE is gonna be lucky to have you.”

They escorted him back to the chamber where Michelle and most of their pledge sisters, all but the least skilled or motivated cocksuckers, were waiting. Their second OB brother was still waiting.

This one was less of a gentleman about it. Nevertheless, he relented haranging them for being cockteasing cunts when they explained that they'd be going to the press with the details of this whole repulsive hazing incident. When they did, they could either explain that he'd tried to bully and extort them into performing sex acts against their will in a soundproofed underground bunker, or they could tell a different story. In either case, they'd be sticking to the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

"But like... you don't even know my name?" he ventured hopefully.

In unison, "Krunchy Kyle."

He had a fucking six-inch tattoo of a some stupid skull with a dagger buried in it on his forearm, for crying out loud. They'd been over at OB a lot lately. Not exactly incognito.

"Fuck. Fine. Fuck. Michelle's gonna... fuck! Fine. Fine. Fuckin' bitches. You're not even that hot, you know? You're a fuckin' gimmick." But he kept his word.

The ritual concluded. The new ΣXE sisters were each given pure white thread and a needle. Sure enough, in one another's blood, they stitched their ΣXE's into the fabric ensconcing the supposedly sacred chamber. ("Join us in humble and adoring consanguinity, as you weave yourselves into the tapestry of our legacy," Jocelyn somehow managed straight-faced.)

When it was done, they were invited ("invited") to stay the night at ΣXE, which they of course accepted. Which they of course rescinded at the first opportunity to flee unseen.

The sun wasn't quite up yet, but even so the sisters sprinted down the path between Beta Theta and Delta Alpha Tau, sprinted until they met the rest of themselves on the footbridge over Grizzly Creek. She'd been waiting there, alone, all night. They held each other, sobbing with relief – two to have escaped, and one to have seen them escape unscathed.

"So could you hear everything OK?"

"Not as well as in the tests."

"We were pretty far down, probably trash reception."

"And that fabric muffled sound, I bet. No joke, that was the creepiest fucking room I've ever seen."

"Not as creepy as the fuck dungeons."

"I wish I'd been with you."

"I wish we'd been with you."

Another round of relieved hugs, then returned to the question of whether or not their ruse had succeeded.

“The sound is good enough. I checked the recording while you were getting your pajamas on. If you up the volume you can hear just about everything. More than enough, certainly.”

One by one, the ousted sister plumbed up into her sisters’ hair until she recovered the bugs, gently removing the tape and the device. That overconfident fool Michelle and the rest hadn’t even frisked them. “Now who’s a cuntard.” They could have gone with their initial plan and used a couple burner phones instead of the creepy spy tech shit they’d ultimately gone with. Lorna had a whole stockpile of the stuff, recovered from hotels where unscrupulous staff had thought to eavesdrop on her clients.

“I hated that you two had to go through that. You promise you’re all right?”

“I promise.”

“I promise.”

“Do you *swear*?”

“We swear!”

“We *swear*.”

“I wish I could see Michelle’s ΣXE fucking face when someone forwards her the article.”

“She’ll know before it comes out. They’ll have to contact the house for comment.”

“I still think it’s not crazy to get a hotel for a while. Those bitches are fucking crazy. I know mass shooters are always boys, but do you seriously think there’s zero chance Kelly won’t go full clocktower psycho when we tell the world she’s a pimp for Omega Beta just to save money on booze?”

“She’d kill Michelle first.”

“Or herself.”

“Or better yet both.”

She spat. Her sisters spat. They *never* spat.

“You’re being dramatic. Relax. This isn’t about them, remember?”

“Sorry.”

“Sorry. You’re right.”

“Photogenic Blonde Coed Triplets at Lakeview U Expose ΣXE Sisters of Coercing Pledges to Give Blowjob for Party Invites,” she said, drawing the perimeter of the headline as it expanded. Lorna’s headline. A headline that, without even reading the article, would encapsulate their tale of hotness, fetish embodiment, and victimization by the sort of mean hot girl people are allowed to hate unreservedly.

They would be heroes. Beautiful, tragic, brave (and incredibly tantalizing) heroes.

“We’re going to be so fucking famous.”

“So famous.”

“We’re gonna own Ibiza by twenty.”

\*\*\*\*\*

Their father made a little show of ducking under the door frame like he was spelunking through ancient ruins. “Hard to believe my millionaire babies are roughing it in a place like this.”

“Daddy, we told you, we’re not millionaires.”

“Not yet.”

“We just hit a million *followers*, which isn’t even all that hard.”

It had been incredibly hard, in fact. The punishing lifestyle necessary to achieve these bodies and maintain their perfect symmetry; the endless hours of courting followers, enduring countless lewd comments and suggestions; paid promotions to trick the algorithm into showing dudes jerking it in their bathrooms *their* bodies; weekends with 40 hours of travel time for 3 hours of photographs. All that while not only maintaining straight A’s but also actually learning a lot. But they had done it.

Their mother shook her head. “It’s a million followers, dear. You should be proud.” Once upon a time, they had had time to scrutinize their followers. It had been creepy, seeing neighbors, teachers, relatives and strangers old enough to be their grandfather. Now, the floodgates were open. Their numbers changed by thousands, sometimes tens of thousands, every day. If their fifth grade teacher Mr. Mulkey was now heart-reacting their bikini photos, well, the creeps were a trivial fraction of the mob.

“Yeah, aren’t you proud of us?”

“Do you want a beer, Daddy?”

“We got your favorite.”

“The mini-fridge actually does a good job.”

“Yeah, it gets stuff *really* cold.”

He looked at them askance, shoulder still slumped like the ceiling of their dorm room might close in on him. The campus had very few triple rooms, one in Higgins and theirs here in Wendell (not counting the one on a guy’s floor in Penderdast). It was admittedly small and a bit dingy, but Lakeview freshmen were required to live on campus. Supposedly the building was getting new furniture and a fresh paint job next year, fat lot of good that did them.

“I’m sorry, but at my old age my ears must be failing me. Did you just offer me a beer? Pretty sure none of you are twenty-one. Not even you.”

He nodded, correctly as ever, at the eldest. The sisters might be growing up, becoming more independent, but there was still some comfort that at least one man out there could usually tell them apart.

“Nobody cards us, Daddy.”

“Yeah, it’s *us*.”

“Ever since that article went viral, we can pretty much go wherever we want.”

They could go pretty much wherever they wanted before that, but it hadn't hurt.  
"The lawsuit helped."

"That too."

The lawsuit had also helped. Lorna's idea had been counterintuitive, but once again she'd proven their doubts wrong. Going ahead and branding themselves as the ΣXE Triplets was a bit on the nose, and had almost immediately culminated in a lawsuit by the sorority. They fully expected to lose, but in the meantime it capitalized handsomely on the notoriety of the lawsuit, clicks driven in by folks fed a link in their browsers for the first go-round and wanting to see if the spicy story had any updates. Or more likely to simply ogle the identical girls in their near-identical bikinis again while simultaneously developing a protective inclination toward them. Poor dears.

Every time there was an update in the suit, the internet did what it did so very well and churned out a new article, new link, new pics, new clicks. Lorna made sure, somehow, that their best and latest posts graced those banners. The way that their patronage was assessed under state law meant that the fines from the suit would only be able to target their comparably laughable payments issued directly from their socials but miss the more lucrative modeling gigs, endorsements, and collab appearance fees.

Not two weeks earlier, a wave of articles about the judge denying a request for yet another delaying tactic – accompanied by a shot of the girls splashing about in the surf at Bora Bora in a set of metallic string bikinis – drove in almost twenty thousand reactions.

Lorna's masterful editing mostly extended to checking their filters, but she'd begun making a few micro-alterations on every fifth post or so. Conspiracy-minded followers grew certain that an odd smudge or replicated mole was proof they were twins pretending to be triplets, which lit the comments on fire with debate. Sometimes the girls even riffed off it, rotating in and out of frame one by one, laughing coyly at the idea that anyone could think there were only two of them.

It was fun, so long as they took care not to have too much of it. Several of their friends in the industry had endured the hassle of having accounts frozen or banned. None of them could stomach the prospect of hampering their sisters' dreams with an off-brand post or slip of the tongue.

No gaps.

For now, though, their parents were visiting. They hadn't seen them since Thanksgiving, months ago. They'd apologized, but Lorna had got them set up on an epic collab over Christmas. Their lessons from Professor Divekar's networking seminar had come in handy. Still, none of Uncle Steve's deviled eggs or Mom's eggnog, or Dad's dorky Christmas sweaters. Success, as ever, came with a price tag.

Dad graciously accepted a beer, their mother one of those flavorless lime seltzers she always complained she couldn't afford to splurge on. The sisters told them all about

their classes and how much they were learning. About some volunteer work they'd done cleaning up around Bear Lake (omitting that that Lorna had turned into a super hot winter bikini shoot with a local photographer). About the friends they were making. (They didn't mention that these friends were other models scattered around the globe, but it should have been obvious. Their future was not on a trajectory to go palling around with Samantha from Intro to Comp.) About whatever things they could dredge up that filled in gaps in their parents' expectations of their normal college experience. Parties and dorm stuff and tailgating and blah, and blah, and blah. Lakeview was nice and all, but it had a hard time competing against playing with baby elephants on the beach in Thailand.

"You three think at all about getting jobs?" their father asked, finally.

It was the segue they'd been waiting for.

"Daddy, we already have jobs!"

"Daddy...!"

"Daddy, we work *hard*."

"Yeah, just being a student is a hard job already."

"Most of the girls around here don't have jobs."

"And modeling is hard, too."

"Do you know what it does to your body to fly to Barcelona,"

"Do two days of shoots,"

"Try to expose ourselves to a little culture and nightlife,"

"And then fly back"

"On a four-day weekend?"

"We were worried she was going to faint."

"*Faint*, Daddy."

"She couldn't even go to class the next day."

"It's true. I couldn't."

The sisters paused, shared a look. For the first time, they each felt how tired this routine was becoming. The perky, bubbly, chatty blonde teenage triplets speaking in swarm. It was... childish. Yes, they finished one another's thoughts and sentences naturally, but that was habit. The cutesy way they did it around their parents was something else. It was hard enough threading the needle between jailbait and clickbait, sexy sweet and lasciviously lighthearted. It was not automatic, the ability to project beauty and innocence and joy, but also to sell clothes and promote a brand, all with enough skankery in their orbit that the ones who just wanted to jack it had something to work with.

Learning to switch on and off one's identity as a sex object, in tandem with one's sisters? It grew one up in a hurry.

One last time, though.



“It’s hard work, but we’re actually doing really well.”

“*Really* well.”

“Kind of... shockingly well, actually?”

“Speak for yourself – I’m not shocked at all!”

Giggle giggle. Pillow throw. Suppressed eye roll at their own bullshit display.

“But seriously, it’s going great.”

“We’ve been very blessed.”

“And we’ve been making sure we keep an eye on the bottom line, too.”

“Yeah, we’re not just spending our allowance as it comes in.”

They didn’t point out that the money was coming in faster and faster, while that allowance had stayed the same for over two years now. Approaching this as a grievance was a no-win strategy.

“We want to be careful, you know?”

“It’s like you always say, Daddy, we won’t be cute forever.”

“Speak for yourself!”

Giggle giggle. No pillow this time.

“We just want to make sure we’re thinking long-term.”

“Managing our portfolio carefully.”

“And we’re getting pretty good at it.”

“Plus the agency has people to help.”

“And it’s *help*.”

“Assistance and advice, not oversight.”

“Yeah, Lorna’s not just controlling our investments.”

“I know you worry about her sometimes, Daddy.”

“But really, we’re getting triple A’s in all of our business classes.”

“I seem to remember *somebody* telling us we needed to make sure we’re not only exercising our bodies.”

“Hmm, who could *that* be?”

Lone giggle. It was getting close. They could feel the tension.

“So we were thinking—”

“Only thinking, but we wanted to hear what you thought.”

“—that maybe—”

“If you thought it was time, Daddy.”

“We could be put in charge of our own assets.”

His face immediately soured around a long swig of beer. This had been anticipated. They rushed on.

“Only some of them.”

“Obviously!”

“So we can learn from *doing*, like you always say is the best way.”

“Remember when you taught us how to change a tire?”

“Well when our jeep broke down between Silver Beach and Chaweng when we were shooting in Koh Samui back in October?”

“Who do you think changed that tire? All these guys standing around watching the little blonde chicks tighten lug nuts without even getting any grease on their hands.”

“We just thought we might be ready for more responsibility is all.”

“If you agree.”

“Lorna thinks we’re as ready as any clients she manages.”

“Even ones who are as old as the three of us combined.”

“And we’d be really care—”

“ENOUGH.” Their father’s voice rumbled around the tight confines of their dorm room. So many arguments yet to make, insinuations and softening tactics, all cut short. The girls stood by patiently, smiling beatifically. Dad had always said no man could withstand that. They hoped he was no exception.

He let out a slow breath, glancing at his wife, but only glancing. This was his call, his name on the paperwork. “No,” he said finally.

He paused, expecting a torrent of pleading and pushback from his daughters. They said nothing, listened patiently.

“You’re young still, girls. You don’t see what I see. The warning signs. Just look around you at this room. Even on your allowance, you’ve already let the temptations get to you. This fancy little fridge, clothes that cost more than my truck I bet, and I’ll wager you couldn’t even fit all your makeup and sprays and creams and whatnot in the closet.”

He’d seen the boxes shoved under the middle’s bed. They didn’t dare try to argue. The only thing that stiffened him up faster than being pushy was dishonesty about what he was being pushed toward.

“If we hand those accounts over to you, how long will it really last? What’s going to happen when the swindlers get wind of it, a trio of teenagers with all that scratch? You’ll be getting fake phone calls and emails coming at you in ways you couldn’t even guess a person would try. Nigerian princes and car warranties won’t be the end of it, not by a long shot.”

“Our car warranty expires June of next year,” stated the eldest firmly. Her smile was gone. “We know how to spot a scammer. We’re not stupid, Dad.”

Her sisters shared a fleeting look. What the fuck was she doing?! They’d agreed, no arguing back. This was to soften their father up, let him know it was on their mind. None of them had expected a win today, but they’d plant the seed, show them a nice time, then send them home and let Mom go to work on him. “*Come on, honey, they’re not your baby girls any more.*” Then they’d try again when the time seemed right. Suddenly, without warning, she was *arguing?*

It was less offensive because it was doomed to fail. No, it cut deep because it was *one*. Not *three*.

“Oh you do, do you? That’s what I’m trying to tell you, girls, is that you don’t even know what you don’t know. You should see some of the stuff on *Dateline*. Or, hell, if I believe half of what I’ve read online about the ways these sickos prey on young girls like you, you’d never sleep again.”

The middle and youngest shared another look, and this time, their sister caught it. “You’re right. I’m sorry, Daddy. I didn’t mean to be difficult. We know you’re only looking out for us.”

“I’m not saying I don’t trust you girls,” he said in a way that they each found independently mistrusting. “But you’re young still. You know, maybe when you graduate – if you graduate, because it’s no guarantee if you start taking shortcuts – we can talk about what’s appropriate for you then.”

“Oh, Daddy,” said the middle. “You’re always so overprotective.” Giggle giggle. The youngest pounded the eldest with a pillow. Hammered her.

“Hey, did you want to see some pictures from spring break? Honolulu is gorgeous this time of year.” Their trip had been to Bora Bora, which their father had expressly forbidden, but he didn’t know the difference in film. He’d only ever been to seven states, most of which were this one and the ones neighboring it, and had never left the continental US.

“I’m sorry.” The eldest’s voice penetrated the icy silence in their room that night, drifting down from her loft. It had been hours since their parents had left, but her sisters were still angry. As angry as they could remember being at her.

Ten minutes of muffled yet still audible crying later, she tried again. “I’m sorry. Look, yell at me if you want, but say something. I didn’t mean to. I was just mad.”

The middle shoulder checked her while they were getting ready the next morning. The youngest refused to so much as look at her. They had no choice but to go meet their parents for breakfast before they headed back home. Once the dorm room door opened, they were out in the world and the gaps had to close. In the meantime, they could let their anger show.

“We could sue him.”

The younger sisters spun on her, eyes glaring malice, and unloaded. The absence of the eldest threw off their cadence, however slightly.

“He’s our father.”

“And he might be wrong, but he’s doing it out of love.”

“Which tantrums and jibes will only turn into spite.”

“Like we fucking talked about.”

The eldest listened, chin ever-so-slightly lowered to convey her remorse. She’d broken rank, and deserved excoriation.

“But no. Let’s not work this out talking to our parents. Let’s *sue*.”

“Sue!”

“Wouldn’t those make for good headlines? ‘Entitled Influencer Brats Sue Own Parents.’”

“Maybe our followers would respond to a little greed and petty backstabbing.”

“Teenage millionaires are such a sympathetic demo.”

The eldest folded her arms. She had been wrong to step out of line without consulting them, but she wasn’t convinced she was wrong about her larger point. “We’re never going to be millionaires if we can only get at *our* money with *his* say-so.”

“Do you realize how long it took for public sympathy to reach Britney?”

“Years.”

“Lots of years.”

“We had a plan.”

“You agreed to it.”

“And when you change it without asking, it hurts us.”

“You hurt us yesterday. You *hurt* us.”

The eldest winced as if struck. “I’m sorry. I know we– I–” Her arms slumped to her sides, her face crestfallen. “I’m sorry.”

“He’s our *father*.”

“And he’s our father.”

But the Daddy’s were sparing at breakfast, and there was no more giggling.

\*\*\*\*\*

“No!”

“NO.”

“No fucking way.”

“We *cannot* do another year in the fucking dorms. No. No!”

“This is unacceptable.”

Their father laughed at his daughter’s concerns. “Don’t be so dramatic. The dorms are a good place for you. Structure. Oversight. Discipline. No huge raging parties every night of the week.”

“One tiny room for the three of us.”

“Group showers.”

“Tiny closets. No storage space.”

“It’s always noisy,”

“And usually dirty,”

“And bugs, Dad!”

“There were *bugs* last year.”

“We were living with *bugs!*”

Their father, however, merely rolled his eyes. “Right, because nobody gave the bugs a map to the apartments. They’d never find you there. Besides, even your handler, that Lorna woman... You know I don’t like it when I agree with her, but she went out of her way to set this up for you. Even got you upgraded from Wendell to Higgins, she said, right? Plus, I can’t help but notice that Allison’s been awfully quiet. Maybe a rare moment of dissension in the ranks?”

“No, I haven’t been,” Allison retorted.

Allison, who had indeed been silent, frowned. It felt like this had been happening more lately, her sisters taking her name, putting words in her mouth. It was fun sometimes, slipping in and out of one another’s identities, but not here. This was Mom and Dad. Family. She wasn’t going to keep silent this time. “The dorms aren’t *that* bad. Higgins is closer to most of our classes, great upload speeds, and they made the floor coed. We could actually *meet* people.”

Her sisters pushed back immediately, and hard.

“Bugs, Allison!”

“Lorna doesn’t decide things for us, Dad. She advises, and we decide.”

“BUGS.”

“We meet people all the time.”

“And how many people do we meet that we wish we didn’t?”

Their mother injected her voice softly. “I think she meant meeting *boys*, you two. Go on, sweetheart. Speak up.”

Allison gave a little shrug. “I mean, it wouldn’t be so bad, right? To actually go on dates, have boyfriends, like normal girls? There’s more to life than just work, you know?”

They’d been over this, however, as Allison well knew. It was why she’d broached the topic here in front of their parents. Their father was forever salivating over the notion of having normal daughters who did normal daughter things. Maddison and Addison, however, had met this Vince fellow, and were not impressed.

“Who needs a boyfriend?”

“Do you really think you’re going to find some Delta Delta Dude-brah who’s ever going to know you like we do?”

“Who’s going to love you more than we do?”

“You know he won’t even be able to tell us apart.”

“Or if he does he won’t care.”

“Like Oliver.”

“And when are you going to see him anyway?”

“Maybe a quick brunch before we’re rushing to the airport. Maybe enough time to kiss him goodbye.”

“Remember that party?”

She did. A boy (not Vince) had been trying to hook up with Allison, and had smacked Addison’s butt by mistake even though she was wearing a totally different skirt. Even though he hadn’t even asked Allison’s sisters for their blessing. Neither had Allison.

“We can date when we graduate.”

“We can *talk* about dating when we graduate.”

Addison and Maddison were seething. Did Allison not think they had sexual needs, too? Was she so head over heels for some boy that she’d try to recruit their parents to overrule their desire to get out of these gross squalid dormitories? That apartment they’d checked out had been *amazing*. What in the hell was wrong with her?!

Dad shook his head. “I don’t know, maybe it’s time you girls put yourselves out there. No, no, I know, me telling you to let the boys chase after you, who is this impostor dad and what did he do with your old man. But seriously, you’re getting older. Might do you some good to meet some real, normal boys. College boys, not these cabana boys at all these Asian resorts.”

“Dad...!”

“I’m pretty sure cabana boys are Latino, not Asian.”

“And we do *not* hook up with cabana boys.”

“No-ho-ho, we don’t.” Shudder. A second shudder. A shiver, visually indistinguishable but entirely distinct in causality.

“Also why is it we can’t date college boys at an apartment...?”

“And why are the people we meet at work not ‘real’ or ‘normal?’ Are you saying *we’re* not real and normal?”

Mom was there to cover for him in a flash. “Of course he’s not saying that, darlings. You’re perfect exactly the way you are.”

“Well, I am and I’m not,” corrected their dad. “You’re *not* normal. You’re better than normal. You’re special. Just ask good ol’ Lorna, since you worry so much about what she thinks. That’s why your mom and I worry so much. We don’t want you winding up with some pretty boy – boys – who think you’re ‘good for their brand,’ or however you girls like to put it.”

“So you’re punishing us for wanting to date people like us.”

“That’s not fair.”

“Just because *she* wants Higgins doesn’t mean *we* do.”

“Should we vote?”

Everyone rounded on Allison.

“Vote...?” repeated Addison, aghast.

“Like, raise our hands and just... vote...?” re-repeated Maddison.

The triplets had never voted. Once they were old enough to be able to make their own decisions, they had always decided together. If they didn't agree, they talked it over in private until they were in agreement. Sometimes one of them grew presumptuous and decided for them on the spot, which was only an opportunity to reinforce their united front. If it turned out to be an unpopular decision, the sister who'd made it was expected to stay her tongue for a while and make sure their heart was in the right place.

Voting, though...? Voting had winners, and losers. Voting didn't eliminate gaps and strengthen sisterly bonds. Voting hurt people, and made them bitter, and drove them apart.

Her sisters capitulated after only a momentary delay. Bitterly, but immediately.

"We can live in the dorms, if that's what you want, Allison."

"If that's what you want."

\*\*\*\*\*

"Relax."

"Yeah, it's just sex."

"Exactly. It's just sex."

"It's going to be really good."

"That's what everybody says, what you said with Oliver, that it's really good. But when you've never..."

"Yeah. That's fair. And remember, it can hurt a little the first time."

"But not a lot. And not always."

"Not always."

"Did it hurt for you?"

"Not really. Like for a few seconds."

"Yeah, same. Then it felt... *really* good."

"Relax. It's going to be good."

"So good."

The middle checked the peephole to their hotel room. Nobody in the hallway that she could see. "It's clear."

With that, the youngest opened the door and led them hurriedly to the room across the hall. The card Lorna had provided worked, and they slipped in unseen – including by the room's occupant, a young man around their age. (He was legal, they'd been assured.) His head cocked this way and that at the sound of someone entering the room, but with his wrists bound to the bedposts and his eyes blocked by a black cloth blindfold, that was as much as he could know.

"Hi," he said, his accent showing even in that monosyllable. A local. "Are you...?"

“Yes,” said the youngest. The sisters eyed one another. No talking over one another. No triple speak. “Are you comfortable?”

He stretched, the joints in his arm testing the restraints, but gently. He was positively gorgeous, lean muscle, hairless apart from the pile of black curls atop his head. His penis was soft, but they’d only just arrived. He’d been made to wait for some time.

“Oh yes, don’t you worry, Miss. Very comfortable.”

“Good. Did... did they tell you to call us Miss, or...?”

“They did not tell me very much, Miss. Only to be good to you, to not ask you any questions, and to do as you like. Would you like for me to call you something else, then?”

The eldest waved her hand in front of his face. He didn’t move. She made to punch him, or at least her best approximation of a punch, but still no flinch. It was as good a test of the blindfold as any. “Miss will be fine.”

The sisters took positions around the bed. No shoes. Paranoid, probably, but he was absolutely not to know who they were. He’d been told, Lorna said, to expect two, not three, along with some veiled suggestions to give the impression that they were friends vacationing on the islands. The presence of the triplets, models, was conspicuous. They attracted attention like Turks and Caicos attracted tourists. The last thing they wanted was for word to get out that the sisters were paying for sex. The local population was hardly bigger than Lakeview’s, after all. Nevertheless, Lorna assured them it had all been arranged just so, that this young man had been well compensated for his company and his discretion, and they should be able to enjoy themselves in peace.

They did not feel peaceful. Sneaking around in the middle of the night to take turns fucking a total stranger in front of their sisters did not engender feelings of peace. This wasn’t the fantasy – not a handsome boyfriend eagerly awaiting their return from another gig in an exotic locale he couldn’t afford to follow them to but supported them wholeheartedly; not another set of triplets, equally committed to their brothers, appreciative of the unique and delicate relationship between them. A male prostitute in some random hotel room. (To be fair, his real job was in guest services at another resort a couple miles down the beach, but as of tonight, he had accepted money for sex and so the term applied.)

The man said nothing while they studied him. Was he nervous? As nervous as they were? He didn’t seem nervous, though the blindfold made it hard to assess. Lorna had probably told him to speak when spoken to. She understood them as well as anyone apart from the sisters themselves.

“Should we undress...?” suggested the middle.

The question had been addressed to her sisters, but the man on the bed answered. “I think that would be very nice, Miss.”



The girls gathered on one side of the bed and helped each other out of their clothes. This was almost routine, something they did at shoots all the time. It wasn't a sexual thing then, like it was tonight; it was simply better to have someone else watching to make sure everything was in its proper place, everything matched. Tonight, nobody would see them but each other.

"Oh my god, your nipples are so fucking hard."

"It's cold in here."

"You're horny. It's OK to admit that you're horny."

"Yours are hard, too."

"Because I'm horny."

The middle snapped her fingers. No triple speak, right. Their voices were identical. If they didn't make it so obvious, he'd likely not notice. To him, they aimed to sound simply like two more tourists with foreign accents that sounded fairly similar, nothing more.

This was it. Tonight, it finally happened. No more virgins in the sisterhood. "Closing the thigh gap," the eldest had jokingly called it. Sex. The big stupid rite of passage could finally be done and over with for everyone. They'd get to come, together and equally. No more private whining about loneliness and horniness. They'd see if it was weird, seeing one another intimate like this, or hot, or mortifying, or what.

They could touch each other, they'd agreed. Not make out, not kiss or suck on or finger. But touch. A little. She'd alternately begged and demanded to know what it would feel like to feel their identical flesh in her identical fingers. Incestuous, yes, but heavily limited, a toe in the water to test the temperature. Nothing more. At last they could bury all the veiled suggestions and inappropriate (or were they?) flirtations.

No more gaps. They'd fuck the cabana boy, and watch each other do it, and that would be that.

"May we touch you?" asked the youngest.

"Of course, Miss." It was a customer service voice, indulgent but apathetic. For all he knew, they were a pair of lumpy middle-aged spinsters. If he could see what was about to fuck him, he'd be whistling a giddy little tune.

She hopped onto the bed beside him, the middle and eldest settling onto the bed simultaneously at her side to give the impression of precisely two bodies. Their hands roamed over his bare skin, careful not to use too many at once.

"You have very soft hands, Misses."

It earned him a smile, though it didn't earn him three. He was a prop, after all, not a lover. The middle dragged impeccably manicured fingernails across his sixpack abs as gradually his erection grew. As impressive as the rest of him. Lorna was earning her annual bonus this year.

Somehow, though, their attention drifted back to one another rather than their intriguing new toy. Sensing it wasn't quite time, they withdrew from the bed. His lips twisted, puzzled, but he said nothing. Good lad.

"So, um, what am I supposed to...?"

Her sisters moved to flank her, those very soft hands coming to rest on her shoulders. They spoke carefully, their replies indistinguishable, one voice.

"Whatever you want."

"Whatever feels natural."

"Ease into it."

"Relax and take your time. Enjoy yourself."

"You don't have to go all the way right away."

"Unless you want to."

"Whatever you want."

Anxiously, she settled onto the bed beside their plaything. She was less experienced than her sisters, and they were inexperienced. It had been more than a year since Oliver, and Oliver had managed to achieve sexual intimacy only a handful of times. Being in bed with a man in her underwear was further than she'd ever gone. He was gorgeous, no doubt about it, but gorgeousness was something she had only ever admired, not actually interacted with. Not reacting to beautiful bodies was part and parcel of modeling. They'd dealt with amateurs who flirted and drooled over them, but most were professionals like themselves. Being around sexy people looking their sexiest all the time, though, took a toll, and tonight the toll would be paid.

Heart thundering in her chest, she slid her fingers between his, the cold metal cuffs sending a shiver down her spine. Or maybe it was the heat of his fingers. His grip seized her hand gently. Anxious lips followed anxious fingers, sucking one of his digits into her mouth and sliding up and down its length.

Was this what a woman did with a man? Was this foreplay? Or was this only an awkward girl stalling in the hopes her nerves caught up with her ambition? She was too caught up in her trepidation to see the effect her touch had on him, though her sisters didn't miss it. Even blinded to their mirrored beauty, he was susceptible to her charms.

She couldn't wait to finally come.

She couldn't wait to see her sister split in half, her identical body trembling atop him while she jilled herself to completion.

She couldn't wait to get this perversion over with so they could move past it, together.

Incrementally, the youngest probed this strange male specimen. He felt *good*. Feverishly warm. The way his breath quickened when she explored some new patch of him emboldened her. It needed to. As fewer and fewer patches remained, her anxiousness was keeping pace.

“You can take your underwear off, if you want.”

“Only if you want.” She shot a firm look at her co-instigator. They couldn’t press.

If they pressed, then—

“I can’t. I’m sorry, but I... I can’t!”

“What’s wrong?”

“Sure you can.”

“Hey, shh, come here. It’s all right.”

The two caught the sobbing one. That only made things worse, as they knew it would, yet there was no avoiding it. They were used to seeing one another nearly and completely naked, used to touching one another with a free hand. Tonight was different, though. This was sexual, and they did *not* touch one another sexually, no matter what certain members of the triad might have propositioned now and again. Tonight they’d been on the precipice of following through on that suggestion, possibly, and that soothing hand on her back was, for the first time, nearly indistinguishable from a pawing stranger.

The stranger, whose paws were still well and truly bound, frowned. He was confident that he hadn’t done anything wrong, but the conversation these girls were having did not reinforce that confidence.

“I’m sorry. I wanted to, but... it just doesn’t feel right.”

“We don’t want you to do anything you don’t want to do.”

“What doesn’t feel right?”

“I feel... I don’t know. It feels wrong. I feel like a creep.”

“Oh Miss, you’re not—”

They spoke right over him.

“You’re not.”

“You’re *not*.”

“He would be lucky to have you.”

“You’re beautiful.”

“You’re perfect.”

“There’s no such thing as perfect.”

“You’re perfect to *me*.”

“It’s all right. Shhh, we’re right here.”

Desperate, she brought the huddle to the foot of the bed. One hand released the clasp on her sister’s matching bra. It slid down smooth shoulders with ease, bare breasts emerging into the open air. The other went between slender thighs, caressing her sex.

“You *feel* ready. You feel so good.”

One sister watched her proceed in silence, curious – curious about what it would feel like to be touched by a woman, by a woman who was herself; curious about whether or not this gambit might work, might finally, finally grease their frigid sister’s wheels so

that they could finally, *finally* dismiss those quaint inhibitions about sexual propriety. She'd wanted this for so long, needed it, that she permitted herself to sit by and watch the pass unfold.

Her sisters' lips met. They looked unbelievable, identical chests pressed together, two hands exploring and one body explored, the only distinction between this and masturbation the angle of their wrists as they kneaded flesh. Neither flinched, not yet. Could this really work? She twined her fingers in a handful of each sister's hair, massaging their scalps as they experimented with matching lips. God, she was wet. All three of them were. Did her slit look as pretty as theirs?

Of course it did. It *was* theirs.

It was working. Once she accepted it, let it happen, there would be no going back. What would come of this? Would *she* be expected to let her touch her while she watched them fuck one another? No matter. If she didn't like it, she'd say as much when her turn came. For now, they were finally about to—

“Stop.”

Or not.

“But—”

“I said *stop*.”

“I'm sorry! Oh god, I'm such a fucking freak. I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!”

“No no, you're not. It's not you. It's me.”

“No! You were being so good, so lovely, but I'm just... I can't... I'm just fucked up, all right?”

“HEY.” She rose to her feet, commanding their attention. They looked up, blinking at their tears. “It's not either of you. It's just... it didn't work out. We all wanted it to, but it didn't, and that's fine. We still have each other, and we still love each other, and that can't change. Hear me?”

The man craned his neck, trying to peer through his blindfold. “Um, I am sorry, Misses, but... how many of you are there? It almost sounds like—”

They left him there and returned to their room, sleeping in a tangled mesh of limbs – but fully clothed full-length nightgowns. Lorna would be along eventually to release him. For now, they had their own problems. The same ones they'd hoped to resolve tonight, which were suddenly laid bare like wounds. The next morning, they detached themselves to go shower up for the day's shoot, one at a time, as alone as they had ever been.

\*\*\*\*\*

“So this is Higgins, huh? And you thought it was going to be run-down and bug-infested. Looks pretty good to me.”

The girls didn't have a reply. They owned a lot of stuff for a dorm room, and while Dad had provided a lot of muscle, they'd still done most of the work. Plus, they were only here because of him. Well, because he'd agreed with Lorna and her stupid push for another year of dorm life.

Mom and Dad didn't chit chat for long. They had a drive home yet, and Dad had work in the morning. Sitting on his throne atop their mountain of money, and the guy still worked 60 hours a week. It confounded all reason.

Dad held out his arms. "My girls. You three look so beautiful. Come here and give your mother and I a hug? Busy as that Lorna woman is keeping you three, who knows when we'll get to see you again."

The girls acquiesced, and the family joined in a group hug. It wasn't easy. They'd had another fight only the day before over increasing their allowance. *Allowance*. Every passing week the conservatorship chaffed a little more. It was *their* money, yet they were *allowed* a pittance of it. Worse, their father once again hadn't even realized it was a fight. Screaming at him about their rights would only confirm that they were whiny brats, not ready for the burden of such an obscene sum of money. They could only suggest, reason, and choke down their frustration and resentment.

Worse, each was left with the sense that the other blamed them for their role in the dispute. Too aggressive, not aggressive enough, too supportive of the wrong level of aggression. Things had been uneasy ever since that night in Turks and Caicos last month. That stupid cabana boy stunt had pretty much tanked any hope of enjoying their summer together. They were still a unit, but there was daylight showing between them. Allison abandoning them for a night out drinking and dancing. Maddison sulking in the guest room with her nose behind a book. Addison and her long, long workouts, and her long, long showers.

One July day they'd gone out with no effort to coordinate outfits at all, and once that happened, it may as well keep happening. Literally anyone could tell them apart. A barista took their order, and it wasn't until the third sister before he grinned between them. "Whoa, so you're, like, triplets?" He'd been *surprised*.

Their father's decree looming over them, the girls had each packed for the sophomore return to Lakeview individually. No one even knew if they'd be able to match outfits more than a few days a week. They'd been in a bad mood about it in the first place after Lorna sprung the surprise change of dorm on them in the eleventh hour. She'd sworn their room in Higgins would be bigger than their one in Wendell, but it wasn't. It was farther from their classes, more stairs, and it was goddamn motherfucking coed. They'd been pissed, but she'd sworn it was a big upgrade and that they'd thank her someday. Mutual anger hadn't been the catalyst to bring them back together. A long night of fitful rest and a long morning's drive later, here they were, back at Lakeview, back in the goddamn dorms.

“Now I know yesterday you were disappointed,” Dad said once they were released, after a nod from his wife. “I wanted you to know, I do see that you three are trying. You know I like to tease, but we do recognize that you work hard, maybe too hard, and I wouldn’t feel right leaving you here without telling you how proud I am – how proud we both are.”

“I couldn’t be prouder of you if I tried,” Mom echoed.

“Darn straight, honey. And with all your traveling around and living the college life, we thought you could use a little extra. We’ll get you the official paperwork, but I wanted you to know before we skedaddled that you’ll be receiving an extra two *hundred* smackeroos a month.”

The girls stared blankly.

“*Each*,” he added, magnanimously.

Their eyes turned toward one another. They saw it coming, but the two were powerless to stop it. The eldest hammered the gap.

“Lorna’s Q2 commission payment was just over *eight thousand*. Do you know what her cut is?”

Their dad whistled appreciatively, but played it off with a chuckle. “Sounds like you’re paying her too much. Your mom and I are coasting by on our zero percent just fine.”

Fists clenched. This time, there was no gentle hand to forestall what followed.

Mom was crying, Dad growling under his breath about the greed and ingratitude of kids nowadays, when they marched down the stairwell from Higgins 3. The stairwell door was right next to their triple room. It was convenient. *And don’t bother texting*, she texted, promptly thereafter pressing the block button to make sure they couldn’t. Her sisters wouldn’t take it that far. Because there were gaps now, gaps everywhere, gaps turning into big fat canyons with the walls crumbling down into oblivion.

“What on earth were you thinking?!”

“They might be wrong, but they’re still our fucking parents!”

“They’re stealing from us!”

“They are not.”

“They’re–”

“*He’s*.”

“–keeping us from our money.”

“Good job talking him down.”

“What’s the point of being rich if we can’t spend it?! We can’t even take charge of investing it!”

“I think when you told him to go fuck himself, it really put him in a mindset to end the conservatorship. I bet it’s the first thing he does when they get home. Master goddamn stroke.”

“I’m going to have to call Mom and apologize.”

“We are not talking to them. Not until they do what’s right.”

“You don’t get to tell me who I can and cannot talk to.”

“We agreed that the conservatorship is unfair. *We*. But now it’s I?”

“You guys...”

“You guys what? Like this is her and me? Like if you don’t ever take a stand, what, it’ll all just work itself out?”

“She does have a point, though. I’m not saying you’re wrong, but—”

“She? Listen to yourselves. She and I and you guys? What happened to we?”

“It’s all right to argue sometimes. We can still talk. We can always talk. *We*.”

“Easy to say when you’re standing by silently, giving up the life we deserve, that we *earned*, just to satisfy our patriarchal suburbanite dickface father!”

“Why is it always about the money with you? I’d give it all up just to go back to how things were before.”

“Does that mean I can have your share?”

“It means you can suck my dick!”

“So suddenly you’re not squeamish about what I put my mouth on?”

“Pervert!”

“Prude!”

“*You guys!*”

There was a knock at the door. After a tense moment, they composed themselves, and Maddison opened the door to reveal... a boy. A cute boy. A little older, but good-looking, with a smile too kind to be taken seriously.

“Hi.”

“Hi, and hi, and hi.” He waved at each triplet in turn. “I hope I’m not interrupting. My name’s Spencer. I’m your RA.”

“Hi Spencer.”

“Nice to meet you.”

“Sorry if we were making too much noise.”

“Yeah, moving is stressful. You probably know how it is, huh.”

He laughed. “Do I ever. And can I just say – and I hope this isn’t awkward – I’m really glad to meet you. Honored, I guess, if that’s not even more awkward. I followed that whole story last year in the *Legend* about the hazing at Sig Eps. That took real guts, what you did, bringing that to light. Ending that saved some folks some real pain, I bet.”

They shared a brief look. What was this guy? People approached them all the time to gush over this or that, but never to praise their courage or humanitarianism. Usually they just wanted an autograph, to ask one of them out if they were ballsy, to ask all three of them out if they were *very* ballsy, or to simply say something crude if they

were altogether *too* ballsy. They didn't have a canned response for "thank you for your service."

"Thank you, Spencer."

"That's nice of you to say."

"I'm Maddison, by the way," said Allison. "This is Allison and Addison," she said, gesturing to Addison and Allison in turn.

"I'm gonna have to take your word for it. I was friends with some identical twins in high school, but there's identical, and there's *identical*."

The sisters inspected one another. They hadn't even parted their hair on the same side. Completely different outfits. Was he blind?

Allison laughed in spite of everything. "If it takes you a while to tell us apart, we understand."

"Happens to everybody."

"If you have to write one of us up, just go with Maddison. She's always the troublemaker."

"Says you, troublemaker."

"Name calling? Troublemakers."

He laughed with them. "Well I promise not to conduct any hazing, if you promise not to expose my tyrannical regime to the press. Although on that note, since you only just moved in and missed some of the drama..."

Spencer briefed them on the situation. A coed floor with no boys, only girls with boys' names. A male RA on a female floor. There had been what he called "an altercation" but context dubbed "a brawl" in the short window between freshman orientation and the sisters' arrival today, the Sunday before classes.

"Oh, and before I get out of your hair, I'm scheduling times to do RCRs – room condition reports? You probably did them with your RA last year. And then also roommate agreements, just to iron out... yeah."

He'd caught the absurdity of the suggestion, but they didn't let him off the hook. "Addison will fill it out for the three of us," said Addison, gesturing to Allison. He didn't even notice the change from their initial introduction. It was almost a shame. Obviously the university wasn't going to let him stay, and he was awfully cute, albeit in a himbo kind of way.

"You got it. Anyway, if you need anything, I'm just down in 310. Again, really great to meet you. Welcome home."

Their RA excused himself.

"I can't believe Lorna dragged us out of Wendell for this crap. Girls already pulling each other's hair out over some B tier college boy."

"I think he's cute."

"Slut."



“Freak.”

And the third said nothing, because they’d already said it.

\*\*\*\*\*

“I’m going out.”

“Where?”

“What do you care?”

“We have a right to know.”

“The fuck you do. I’m going to a party. By myself.”

“You finished your homework?”

“Sorry, Grandma. Guess you’ll have to turn yours in for me.”

“I can’t. Remember, you changed your login and didn’t give us the password.”

“Then I guess I’ll do it when I get back.”

“You know I’m a light sleeper.”

“Don’t wait up.”

The door practically slammed behind her.

“We could go after her.”

“So go.”

“I hate this. I can’t live like this. My appetite’s shit, I can barely sleep, I can’t concentrate—”

“Me either, with you throwing that big loud pity party.”

“You know? Fuck you. I’m calling Dad.”

“What, to tattle? ‘Daaaaddy, they’re being mean to meeee.’”

“Because I need to talk to somebody who actually likes me.”

“That parasite likes you like a flea likes a dog.”

“You two are the suckiest roommates ever, I swear!”

The door slammed behind her before either of them realized her term of address. *Roommates*. They both, individually, thought back, trying to think if they’d ever referred to one another as anything but what they were. Sisters. Triplets. Joint souls.

Meanwhile, their sister walked to the Lakeview chapel in her sexy party dress, lit three candles, and cried. Alone.

\*\*\*\*\*

“You can’t masturbate while we’re in the room!”

“The hell I can’t!”

“Tell her she’s being horrible.”

“She is.”

“Thank you!”

“But so are you.”

“Me? How am I—”

“Little Miss You-Can’t-Date-If-I-Can’t-Date? Unlike you, we’re not dead from the neck down.”

“That is so not the same.”

“It’s not, but if you’re going to be a living cockblock, then you have to accept that there might be consequences.”

“See?!”

“So you’re saying you don’t mind if she – your *sister!* – *masturbates* in the same room with you?!”

“I mind a lot of things, but unlike some people in this room I don’t make it a point to blame you two for all of them.”

“Really? Because it sure sounds like you’re blaming me.”

Another night, another fight. It was barely even fighting. At least there were stakes in a fight, winners and losers. This was more like bickering. Bickering, the way their friends and classmates did with their siblings. No call or cause for compassion, so why not just say something mean. Casual meanness was liberating. It trickled right down those gaps like lava flows, burning them wider but happily down below the surface where they could pretend they didn’t feel it.

They all felt it.

A few short weeks into the semester, and they were each entertaining private notions of rebellion. Maybe it would be better if they didn’t make themselves cohabitate any more. Just split up, and go to work together, and give up on their childish dream of becoming supermodel entrepreneur fashion designer millionaire industry powerbrokers – together. Other people were alone all the time. Maybe they were onto something.

The only reason they hadn’t yet, was Higgins 3.

The middle was tired of bickering for the moment, and pivoted. “I’m only saying I don’t blame her. This floor is... weird.”

That was the smart pivot. Room dynamics were familiar, and if the addition of scarcely concealed masturbating was something new to argue about, it wasn’t like they hadn’t walked in on one another now and again over the years. Plus, it was their body. Nothing to be embarrassed of on their own body.

Higgins 3, on the other hand... they’d been acting like they were above it all for weeks now, but the truth was, it *was* strange. The other girls here, they were... hot. All of them. Not those three losers who never belonged here in the first place, of course. Everyone else though, including (especially) the diversity hire in 310, was pure fire. Not all in the same way. Girls with decent faces hiding dynamite bodies, girls with curves packed onto their curves, girls who stood out even in that company. Not a one of them

was below a 7, maybe an 8. (The eldest contended that Leigh's roommate had only secured her spot amongst the so-called Higgins Hotties by virtue of two of the biggest tits they'd ever seen on someone not also morbidly obese, but the middle insisted she was pretty enough without.)

"Weird is one way of putting it."

"We're all so *sexy*, you know?"

"How is it even possible ours isn't even the room with the highest average hotness?"

"311. No, 302."

"313."

"310."

"Singles don't count."

"But you feel it, right? Our RA can *get it*."

"And 'it' is heaped on a big damn platter around here."

"Good to be the king."

"Ugh, don't quote Mel Brooks."

"It's seriously nuts, though. And I don't just mean 'man, that's nuts,' I mean the odds of this happening has to be a million to one. Less."

"I actually tried to get at some probabilities the other day. You know, extrapolating the size of the student body, stipulate that all of these girls are in the top 2-3% of sexual desirability—"

"Except the Three."

"But they left, so we're looking at the odds of now, not move-in day."

"—and ignore the so-called accident of the failed coed attempt, and so on. It's astronomical. Walking out your door and having an eagle swoop down and drop the winning Powerball ticket at your feet."

"Mathematically indistinct from the odds of just buying it at a gas station."

"Some of the girls have theories. There was a huge thread on discord."

"Ugh, quite slumming. You couldn't name three girls on our floor in Wendell last year."

"Theories. What theories do they have?"

"Lots, and most pretty dumb. That Spencer's family is loaded and they bought him a pussy playground."

"But he's not playing in it."

"Yeah, these sluts are literally begging him to, but he's got 'sorry girls, can't date residents' tattooed on his chest."

"That he stole someone's identity, that he's not the real Spencer Lawrence, that the real Spencer Lawrence is a woman, but he stole her spot."

“Which would only mean there was a girl RA who was supposed to but didn’t get a coed floor.”

“Which barely changes the odds.”

“That he has dirt on his boss, or his boss’s boss, set himself up with some scenery.”

“*That* guy? A blackmailer? He’s a young Paul Rudd with a horse cock.”

“Suspiciously identical to current Paul Rudd with a horse cock.”

“Last weekend I saw him break down in tears in the lounge watching a youtube video about a bunch of villagers rescuing snakes from some third world hole in the ground.”

“I caught him picking up other people’s left-behind trays in the food court.”

“I didn’t say I believed them all. I don’t think anybody does. It sort of wound down as people just said they liked it here and so whatever the reason for it, they don’t really care.”

“I care.”

“I care.”

“I care, too.”

It was quiet for a moment. The sisters each found themselves hiding a matching grin. How long had it been since they’d spoken like this? The “hive mind,” they used to call it, a term one of their elementary teachers had used for it that they’d adopted it until it got to feel too dorky.

“We should look into it.”

The eldest and youngest looked at one another around the middle. At the most basic level, they agreed with the others. Higgins 3 was, by dorm standards, amazing. The people were beautiful, the room was freshly renovated and tucked in a quiet nook by the stairwell, and, well, there was Spencer. Whether or not he was the godsend some of these basic bitches thought he was, he *was* attractive. Very attractive. The male equivalent of that Scottish “500 Miles” song, he got in your head the moment you were exposed to him and wouldn’t leave. Even aside from that, he was their kind of RA. He gave them their space and didn’t try to force them to join the Higgins Harem, as the eldest had called it at the floor meeting their first night here.

If they had to live in the stupid dorms, this was actually pretty OK. And if it came with a free mystery to solve – together! – then better yet.

They dove into their luggage and searched out their RF detectors, scanning every nook and cranny, every screw and joint and seam that might hold a camera or microphone. The rooms in Higgins 3 were roughly 140 square feet. Theirs, the triple room, was most of a foot skinnier to accommodate the plumbing running to the kitchenette in the adjacent lounge, but also several feet wider, thus granting room for a third bed. All told, they were still shy of 200 square feet.

They scanned the room for equipment for over an hour. They usually found any stray recording devices in under five minutes when they traveled. Lorna couldn't always be there to check for them, but she'd supplied one of her scanners, but it was mostly junk, barely picking up the activity of their own phones from three inches away. Their dad had agreed that they should spare no expense when it came to their privacy and security, so their new detectors – one for each daughter – was the best on the market. By the time they agreed no one was watching, they were exhausted, collapsing onto their respective bunks with those grins no longer hidden.

“We’re going to figure this out.”

“Yeah we are.”

“I love you two.”

“I love you.”

“I love you.”

“And, um, if you gotta... you know...”

“Thanks. And, you know, back at you.”

“Perv.”

“Muah.”

\*\*\*\*\*

“There she is.”

“Finally.”

“Go go go!”

The car backed up all of two feet before the driver saw them standing behind it. She regarded them in the rear view mirror a moment, then eased back into her parking space. The window lowered, but the engine stayed on.

“Did I forget something in the lounge?” the woman asked.

“Hi.”

“Yeah, hi.”

“Can we talk to you?”

She frowned. “If I tell you girls any more embarrassing sex anecdotes, Spencer’s going to kick my ass. Sorry, chicas.”

“That’s not what we wanted to talk about.”

“Are you really a sex expert?”

“Not that you don’t sound like one.”

“But that’s what you do, right? Study sex?”

Marisa nodded. “That is what I do, yeah. And on behalf of the entire sexually aware world, allow me to thank the three of you for your contribution.”

The sisters shared a laugh. They'd had a good feeling about this woman. "We just wanted to talk with you."

"We could buy you coffee, if you're up for it."

"Not about Spencer."

"It's a tad late for coffee, don't ya think?" Spencer's ex-girlfriend/sexpert guest presenter pointed upwards at the night sky. "You twenty-one? If you're set on buying me something to drink."

They laughed. "We're nineteen, but nobody cares. It's *us*."

Marisa grinned back. "No, I suppose they wouldn't object, would they. All right, climb on in. Call me intrigued." When the sisters made to pile into the back seat, she interjected. "Whoa, hey now. I'm nobody's chauffeur. One of you get up here in the front seat so I don't feel like I'm dropping off my three identical sexy nieces at daycare."

After a conversation in their eyes, the youngest accepted the charge and climbed over the center console up into the front seat. The middle patted her ass as it waved in front of them. They'd been doing things like that more lately. Celebrating their sex appeal, they said. Trying to patch up the bond, find ways to support one another, show kindness and self-love. Or, to put the motivation behind the touch another way...

"Is it normal to feel turned on all the time?"

Marisa once again backed out of her space, double checking her mirrors in case another Hottie meant to ambush her. "Well, not wasting any time, are we?"

"That's not exaggeration. *All* the time. First thing in the morning, all day, and into the night."

She rounded the corner, contemplating as she made her way down the street dividing Higgins from Penderdast Quad. "Hmm. Well then. I suppose my knee-jerk reaction to the question is a qualified yes. Sex drives vary tremendously between individuals, and while the data says women's sex drives are most likely to peak in their 30's—"

"Not until their 30's?"

"No way."

"That sounds made up."

Marisa shrugged. "I hear ya. As someone with a very healthy libido myself, it's wild to imagine that in ten years it'll be stronger. Though again, like all statistics, individual results are a whole 'nother thing. Still, I want to take you at your word here since you were very explicit. *All* the time?"

The middle nodded. "Not like every single second, but... a lot."

"A lot."

"A *lot*."

"All three of you?"

"All three of us," answered all three of them.

Marisa drummed her fingers on the steering wheel. “Hmm. And when you say ‘turned on,’ how do you mean?”

“Turned on. How many ways are there to mean it?”

“It’s a broad term, like a lot of emotional vocabulary. There’s *grumble grumble* angry, and there’s punching a hole through the wall angry. Likewise, there’s ‘hmm, I wouldn’t mind a little kiss and tickle’ turned on, and there’s ‘I’d fuck anything that so much as looks at my vagina’ turned on.”

“Seven out of ten?”

“Eight.”

“I was going to say nine, so yeah, eight. So... Is that normal?”

“Hmm. I guess it’s worth pointing out that the word ‘normal’ has no place in a discussion of sex. Sort of embarrassed I didn’t say so right away. I guess being peppered with questions by your friends back there threw me off my game.”

“They’re not our friends.”

“They’re just a bunch of hot girls we happen to live with.”

“Thirty conspicuously hot girls, on the same floor as us, professional models who made *Vogue’s* list of thirty under thirty to watch—

“In modeling. Not like, out of everyone on the whole planet.”

“Obviously.”

Not the classiest brag, but they were proud of it. Lorna had even managed to persuade them to give each triplet their own spot on the list. A good gimmick for one, the kind of clickbait bullshit the triplets’ brand was made for, and if it only worked because a lazy staff writer was stoked to skip a couple blurbs in their listicle, what of it.

Marisa looked them over for a moment at a red light. “And so humble, too.”

“Humility is a fine virtue for the unremarkable and unachieved.”

“It’s certainly done wonders for womankind over the centuries.”

“Look at you. You’re gorgeous. If you had two more of you, would you be humble?”

Marisa snorted. “All right, all right. Fucking cage match in here with you three, Jesus.”

“I’d think someone who managed to snare a man as sought after as Spencer wouldn’t be so concerned with keeping it humble,” said the youngest. It was too greedy, though, too conspicuous. Marisa saw it, saw they saw it. She did not, however, know that she was meant to think she saw them seeing her seeing it as part of a larger investigatory strategy.

With an amused shake of her head, Marisa switched on the radio and cranked it way too loud to be talked over. She left it there until she arrived at Mother Bear’s, a Lakeview-loving sports bar just off campus. Lakeview’s mascot was painted fierce and proud on a sign above the entrance, his fur white except where it was red around the

jaws from his latest feast. It was a weeknight, so business was slow and parking easy. Considering how casually the doorman waved the trio in, Marisa muttered aloud a contemplation of whether these humblebraggarts could have gotten her valet parking, too.

“Spencer and I used to come here a lot, when we were dating,” she said as the group settled into a booth. The sisters tried whenever possible to take one side of the table, but it would be awkward here, so the youngest sat on Marisa’s side.

It wasn’t an interesting piece of information, and unlike the shameless sluts back on Higgins 3, the sisters didn’t live and breathe gossip about their RA’s depressingly boring life. They fantasized about fucking him – separately or together – not hanging out with him at Steak & Shake and listening to stories about how he’d played varsity sportball as a junior at Hugivesafuk High.

(As the youngest had put it when the middle pressed them to go to one of his floor programs, “Wake me up if he’s throwing everybody to their knees at the door for his seminar on how to balance a treat on your nose while giving a world class blowjob.”)

None pressed for more info, so Marisa had to supply the engagement on her own. “He likes all the... yeah.” She gestured to the wildly excessive TV screens hanging everywhere around the bar. “It’s funny. He’s such a goddamn sports nut, but he doesn’t have any favorites. Not favorite teams, not even favorite sports. In fact, the more obscure the competition, the more he’s sucked in.”

“Yeah, we’re not big on sports.”

“We did ballet for a while.”

“Then gymnastics, but our tits were growing in small enough as it was.”

“But yeah, we basically don’t really follow anything.”

Their disinterest in the topic was becoming painfully acute, but Marisa soldiered on to her point. “Yeah, I only do a little. Like me a little contact. But anyway, Spencer, I remember this time we were in here – that table, I think, we usually sat at that table – and they had this women’s flyweight MMA thing on, and I swear, I could have poured my long island down his pants and he wouldn’t have noticed.

“So I asked him, what gives? Just two chicks the size of your leg scissoring each other with spandex on. He finally glances my way, and he says something like – and I’ll do my best Spencer without trying to over-do it too bad – ‘Look at them. Sure, yeah, two chicks the size of my legs, and they’re kicking ass at the top of their game. It’s nuts, right? Think about that. The world’s not a kind place to 92-pound girls who want to pick fights, you know? But here they are, living their dream.’”

“That’s... really sappy.”

“It does sound like him, though.”

“From what we’ve seen.”

“He doesn’t talk to us much.”



Marisa finally flagged down a waitress, holding up a finger to bookmark the conversation. She ordered a sangria; the triplets each ordered a cosmopolitan, issuing the request in eerie unison.

“Here I thought you’d need to be thirty years older and have gone through a divorce apiece to kick off your Thursday night with a round 1 cosmo,” Marisa jibed.

“It’s made with triple sec.”

She arched an eyebrow. “You’re kidding, right.”

“Do we look like we’re kidding?”

They effortlessly shifted to a matching face that was impossible to tell if they were kidding or not. That one never got old. It drove people nuts.

“Anyway, you wanted to talk about Spencer, and your all-day-hornies for him,” Marisa went on. “I open with this charming anecdote because I want to do you a favor. Stop wasting your time, which I’m sure is valuable.”

“Wasting our time?”

“Horny for Spencer?”

“We don’t want to talk about Spencer.”

“Unless you’re saying there’s something you think we should know.”

Marisa sighed. “What you should know is, don’t. That’s it. I get that he’s a big cutie bear and all, or maybe you’re Kind of a Big Deals who just want to flex on the peasantry on your floor for style points. Whatever. But Spencer isn’t a guy looking for the walking embodiment of a fetish like you three.”

The three shared a rare sheepish grin. It was uncommon for someone to get them so easily.

Marisa continued, “For one, he means it when he says residents are off limits. That RA gig is his religion, not his job. For two, he’s looking for fuzzy wuzzies. Connection. True love. He likes sex as much as the next guy, but only if he’s vibing with you. And no offense to either you or your legions of adoring fans, but a six-lip incestuous blowjob isn’t the kind of vibe he’s after.”

Their waitress returned, distributed drinks, and left. It gave Marisa just enough time that her muttered, “As for me, I wouldn’t necessarily spurn an invite...” gained sufficient delay to not merit a reply. Besides, the sisters seldom had women flirt with them. Fellow models, sure, but mostly just playfully, a segue to future collaborative shoots.

“OK, so you’re saying, don’t bother with Spencer. Fair enough,” said the middle as her sisters took identical measured sips of their cosmos.

“It’s not a reflection on you. I mean obviously. No hate on Rihanna to say that she’s not got a future in courting clansmen. Though now that I think about it, bad example, she’s fucking Rihanna. Anyway, suffice to say, he’s already feeling pretty overwhelmed by your co-humble not-friends on that floor. If he’s saying he’s in over his

head with the regular girls, then you three... Whew. He already chewed me out on my way out the door for supposedly encouraging them.”

They were less interested in Spencer’s approach to courtship, however, than they were in his position as the sole male on a floor full of babes. The other RAs, too, for that matter. Even his boss was a catch, though their surveillance confirmed she was at least married, and therefore not on the menu. But there was alcohol now, and Marisa was talking. They just needed her to keep talking.

“He’s been an RA for a while now, right?”

“I think he said this was his... third year? Fourth?”

Marisa drank deep from her sangria. “Yeah, something like that. Fifth, I think actually, but I wouldn’t swear to it. He was at it before he and I were at it.”

“Have you two done a program like this before? The sex Q&A thing?”

“Sure. I think almost every year since we first hooked up. When he was at Rowland, he’d bring in a girls floor to do it with. Between that and all this, it was an easy draw, crowd pleaser, and a public service. Win/win/win.”

“Is that something Hancock does with a lot of RAs?”

The triplets took a sip in perfect unison. As it was intended, the eeriness of it distracted from this, their pivot to their real interest.

The Hancock Institute.

The three of them had done a lot of contemplation in the past couple weeks since they’d first decided to make a hobby out of exploring this mystery. Hancock had made the chart early as a contender. Not officially a part of Lakeview but literally across the street from it, a sex research institute privately funded and publicly opaque. Their website was a circular where it wasn’t dead-ended, from their mission statement to their research to their assets to their staff to their mission. The middle and eldest thought it was simply a poorly conceived site, but the youngest felt like it meant something.

They agreed, however, that it was worthy of pursuit. Other investigations had already concluded. The Lawrence aristocracy angle had gone nowhere. Spencer’s great aunt had died when he was eighteen, and had owned a modest estate. Zillow listed the property at \$615,000, and that was after years of inflation following the woman’s death. Even if every last nickel had gone to her super-favoritest great nephew (which they doubted he could be, not even mentioned in her obit), it was nowhere near enough to fund sinister conspiracies. Core to any theory was the reality that someone in the housing office was complicit. They’d made a formal complaint to the hall manager, Ms. Tinsley, who apologized and said the person responsible had been fired, which was such bullshit that it only made them wonder where the buck really stopped. Regardless, Spencer wasn’t bribing anybody to craft his Higgins 3 setup on his 1/18<sup>th</sup> share of his great aunt’s holdings, which meant the pressure to put all that tantalizing flesh in his orbit came from somewhere else.

Other angles had been trickier to disprove. There was an eccentric psych professor who'd published a study in 1996 about rethinking residence hall arrangements. Very iffy. A creep working in the Lakeview housing office with a crush on long-time student employee Spencer Lawrence who expressed it as a gift of ambient hotness, which was dumber still. In the absence of any detectable concealed recording equipment, the voyeur porn angle was DOA, too.

Out of what they had left, Hancock remained the favorite. And here in this woman they had an inside source, and one intimately connected to Spencer. If this went nowhere, it might be time to get back to the middle's tongue-in-cheek suggestion that Spencer was possessed by some kind of sex demon. (She was still an agnostic, while her sisters were both converts to atheism. It was a source of some small friction on occasion.)

To their question, Marisa nodded. "Sure, sometimes. It's not, like, a premier service, but we work with the res life department now and then. Free PR, and frankly, so many of these kids show up with no sex education at all. Or worse than none. I still remember the time Spencer and I were doing the program, same basic deal we did tonight, and a girl put in a question, 'is it true you can't get pregnant as long as he always pulls out and comes on your face?' Like, what do you even do with that kind of ignorance?"

"Come on its face, I suppose."

Marisa almost did a spit take, barely managing to keep the spray aimed into her glass. "Nice. Triplets got jokes, huh?"

"She's very funny."

"Hey, you're funny, too."

"Looking." An old joke, heavy on the sarcasm, but it always got at least a chuckle.

As the drinks flowed, the twins carefully rotated their glasses so that the middle remained clear-headed while the other two took the brunt of the inebriation. For the next few hours, alcohol did what alcohol does and loosened their quarry up. Some time later, once Marisa was good and soused – along with the youngest and eldest – they made their move.

"So Marisa. What's it like working for Hancock?"

"Yeah, do you just, heh, sit around watching porn all day?"

"I mean, some days, pretty much yeah." Marisa fished her phone out of her purse and held it up to them. Evidently she'd been checking out their socials while she'd been peeing. On the screen was a reel from their shared instagram account showing the three of them posing dramatically in matching swimsuits as the sun set on a beach somewhere far, far away. It offered a dynamite view of their ass right at the end, to promote rewatches. Suck it, algorithm. "You three just sit around posing for porn all day?"

"It's not porn."

“That was such a fun shoot you guys!”

“No way. Remember that butt glue? Our buttocks kept showing around the thong any time we weren’t, like, clenching.” She grunted, squeezing her butt cheeks.

“Oh god, the gut blue, yes! Err, the butt glut. Blue– AUGH. Butt. *Glue*. God. But yeah, damn, never mind, proclamation of funness rescinded.” She frowned accusingly at her drink.

The sober sister brought them back to their topic. “I bet Hancock never makes you use butt glue, huh.”

“Not so much. It’s actually a pretty cool gig. Internship pays shit, but when you love what you do, ya know?”

“So you just... research sex?”

“Yeah, what does that even mean, you know?”

“Hypothesis: men like blowjobs. Test: suck a cock, ask...” She broke down into hysterical laughter, but her equally drunken sister finished. “Ask him if he’s gonna reciprocate, record what percent of douchebag boys make excuses.”

Marisa chuckled. “Spoken from experience? But no, yeah, it’s... something like that. Porn’s bad for research, unless you’re researching porn, ‘cause yeah, nobody actually fucks like that. Mostly it’s interviewing people, surveying people, collating interviews and surveys and blah blah blah.”

“What are you researching right now?”

“You should interview Spencer!”

“Oh my gosh yeah, you should interview the shit out of Spencer! You know?!”

The sober sister narrowed her eyes, pinching her sisters’ legs under the table. “I’m sure it’s not ethical to conduct research on your ex-boyfriend. Too bad, though, really. I bet there’s something to be learned from our floor. Sex-wise, I mean. Thirty hot girls, one hot guy...? A rule against hooking up? I bet that’d be an interesting study.”

It was much too on the nose, far too close to their actual theory, but Marisa didn’t seem sharp enough by then to be suspicious. Like her sisters, the woman was drunk and having a good time. “Oh my god, yes! Or at least some diddle-worthy erotica, for sure. I should pitch that to the muckety mucks. They’d have a field day with you guys!”

“Oh? I was only joking, but... you sound serious. What’s so interesting about it?”

Marisa took her hand, then the youngest’s, then giddily thumped their conjoined hands atop the eldest’s. “No no no! I’m serious! That’s one of the hardest things to fabricate in a sex study is the baseline attraction. It’s practically and – bleh – ethically problematic to pay people to fuck, ruins the results. But you guys, girls, that whole floor, you’re all so hot! Like, kind of annoyingly hot, honestly. Shit, yeah, so it creates an environment where everybody’s dtf. Even the LBQ chicks have the other chicks to drool over.”

“Definitely have a handful of those around,” added the youngest encouragingly.

“But what’s to study? Young hot people doesn’t sound like much.”

“Yeah, what’s to study?”

“Off the top of my head? Oh man, where to start... Efficacy of workplace rules prohibiting fornication; the role of power dynamics in sexual attraction; successful and unsuccessful techniques for attracting a partner against heavy competition; psychosexual impact on community engagement in a scenario where attraction is preemptively guaranteed by selection of study participants who check every damn box for conventional hotness? Shit, so much!” Marisa stamped right through the mildly perplexed gazes of the triplets. They were smart, but two of them were drunk and that had been a lot of rapid fire jargon. “Cause that’s the thing, see? Everybody’s sexy. Everybody’s primed to say yes to the sex, you know? It’s a contained environment full of people who all *want* to fuck each other. And they don’t, because rules and because we’re not stray cats, but the baseline, before any interaction beyond just looking at each other, is ‘yes, I want to fuck you.’”

Marisa downed the shot they’d ordered for her while she was peeing (and, apparently, subscribing to their insta). “Man, if only you could get rid of that rule. If you guys could just go for it, balls to the wall... shit. I’d give my right tit to get in on that.”

“How could *we* get rid of the rule against RAs sleeping with residents?” She sounded a little too interested.

“She meant if *someone* could, not us specifically.”

“No I know. I mean, yeah.”

Marisa wiped her whiskey face off on her forearm. “No shit, but you guys would be a highlight of the case. Too bad twin studies got such a shit rep after the whole, you know. Thanks, Adolf. But seriously, if that was my little research playground, I’d fucking *beg* you guys to get in on it. Three identical people with huge overlap in lived experience. Put you in a room with Spencer, see which one he goes for. Or does he try for all three? If it was just bodies and libidos, maybe even he’d cede that doofusy-hot moralistic high ground of his and just go nuts. Or not! Either way, I’d love to be a fly on that wall.”

“Are you saying you want to watch your ex-boyfriend have a foursome with us?”

Marisa laughed. “Oh come on, a chick who opens with ‘we’re all of us horny all the time’ and prances around the beach in *that*,” she said, trying and failing to thrust that beach video in their faces, “is suddenly squeamish about talking about a foursome?”

“We could definitely get him, if we wanted.”

“Yeah we could.”

“Not that we have any intention of doing so,” reminded the middle.

“No sure, I hear you. And I didn’t mean anything by it, chicas. Guess you probably get your share of pervy shit said at you. I’m sorry. Seriously, you’re actually pretty cool. Forgive a bitch?”

“We forgive you.”

“You’re not a bitch.”

Then they were hugging awkwardly and gigglishly across the table, and the middle let the conversation flow on. They’d learned what they set out to learn and then some.

It was after midnight when Marisa straggled back from the bathroom, continuing where she left off like she hadn’t been gone for ten minutes. “I mean, sure, yeah, I like, I mean I like love the guy. You don’t, you know, fuck that shit was strong, you don’t stop loving Spencer. I can’t even say, ‘a guy *like* Spencer,’ because what guy is like Spencer?”

“He’s unusual.”

“He’s remarkable.”

“He’s *delectable*.”

“You two are drunk.”

“You one are... hot.” The inebriated sisters burst into giggles, at which their sober sibling rolled her eyes. “What? It’s not incest to say we’re hot.”

“We’re so hot.”

“You’re hot, too, you know. Like, you could be a Hottie.”

Marisa grinned. “You know it, triple team! Ow *ow!*”

Unprompted, the group sensed it was becoming time. The triplets had to be at the airport by 9 AM, after all, and Marisa assuredly had her own life to live. Her GPS navigating, the sober twin chauffeured Marisa and her sisters in the backseat.

“What was the hottest sex you ever had with him?”

“With who? Spencer?”

“Ya.”

“And be specific.”

“I don’t think he’d like me kissing and telling his residents...”

“Aw, come on!”

“Yeah, how are we gonna know how to knock him off his moral high ground if you don’t give us any advice?”

Marisa laughed, almost threw up, wiped her mouth on her arm and tried again. “You three know damn well you don’t need my advice. But sure, you want a story, I’ll give you a story.”

“Yay!”

“*Specific.*”

“So this was a few years ago, not too long after we got together. He’d brought me home with him to meet his folks. I’d already made him do mine – like, why date a Spencer if you’re not going to show him off to your mom, right? – so it was my turn. So his sister–”

“He has a sister?”

“Um, yeah.”

“Innnteresting.”

“Yeah, flesh and blood sister, but can ya believe it? She doesn’t even look exactly like him, weirdest fucking thing.” Marisa poked the driver in the rib, nearly causing an accident. “Anyway, his sister’s on the school dance team at his old high school. There’s a home football game that weekend, and he’s all ‘I gotta support my sister’ even though it was obvious he wanted to show me off to his old crew. But whatever, I don’t hate football, and it’s a nice night, and she seems cool enough.

“So we head out, and of course we’re bumping into people, making the rounds. And like, not to toot my own horn, but boyfriend parents? They *hate* me. Nobody wants their kid hooking up with the sexologist, especially not a lil’ snack like me. But the trade is that it’s hella braggable to everyone else. So I’m meeting half the damn town just so his old buddies can take turns doing that ‘nice brah’ nod thing guys do. You know the nod I mean?”

“We know.”

“We know.”

“So yeah, among the rabble is one of his ex-girlfriends. Three of them, actually, and why the hell three twenty-something chicks are all hanging out at their old high school’s football game on a Friday night I have no idea. But yeah, one of them, I can see there was something there. The way he looks at her, tenses up when she touches his arm. I’m not saying he was carrying a torch, but there’s some unresolved shit, plain as plain can plain. Err, can... be. Yeah.”

“You are *so* drunk.”

“Keep going. Get to the sex.”

“Bah, kids these days, no sense of dramatic tension. OK, so I note it, we move on. I give it until our next date night, and when he shows up at my apartment, there I am in her old uniform.”

“Uniform?”

“What uniform?”

“Fuck, right. See, this is why you shouldn’t rush a *TURN HERE TURN HERE TURN HERE!*”

The middle whipped the wheel to the right so abruptly it felt like the car almost flipped. Her sisters screamed in alarm. Marisa covered her mouth and held her stomach, nearly averting a lesser catastrophe.

“Ugh, sorry, there’s road construction on 9<sup>th</sup> and... oof. Oh fuck. Ooooh fuck. Gonna hurl.”

“Road construction?! You almost killed us!”

“We’re fine. Go on, the uniform?”

“Yeah, what uniform?”

“Like ROTC? Cheerleader? Cincinnati Bengals? Fucking what uniform!”

“Was it hot?”

“I bet it was so hot.”

“You two are incorrigible!”

“Shh. Go on, Marisa.”

Marisa took a few more deep breaths, then reached past the youngest to roll down the window before at last continuing. “OK. Um, so yeah. So she was a cheerleader. And really weirdly proud of it, for someone who wasn’t still leading cheers, you know? Brought it up really conspicuously, like ‘oh, Spencer and I used to date back in school, when I was a cheerleader’ or something, like it’s a power move to brag on your high school resume to the guy your ex-guy is currently fucking.

“So anyway... yeah. I waited until half-time and snuck into the locker room and stole one.”

“Stole one?”

“Weren’t the cheerleaders wearing their uniforms?”

“Yeah, why was one just lying around waiting to be stolen?”

“One your size, for that matter.”

“Yeah, good question. Hmm.” She contemplated a moment. Or maybe was readying herself to puke again. “Oh yeah! Yeah, that’s it. There was some kind of routine they were doing at the half-time show, that’s why I did it then. It was some Constitution Day garbage, they had to put on these flag outfits or whatever. Nationalistic fucking bullshit.”

“Ugh, yeah, our school did stuff like that, too.”

“Not that we were cheerleaders.”

“Ew.”

“Ewww.”

“So yeah, I swiped it. I don’t know if I honestly knew what I was doing, but I had this feeling, like... Whatever. I have really good sex instincts is all. So yeah, he comes in, there I am. And he’s like ‘wtf are you wearing,’ and I said ‘I thought you were into cheerleaders.’ And he’s like ‘what’s that supposed to mean?’ So I told him how I saw he couldn’t take his eyes off... fuck, what was her name? And yeah, you can park here.”

The middle pulled over next to a three-story house, three mailboxes sharing a post outside. “Let’s take her inside, just in case.”

“And to hear the story.”

“Yeah, the good part.”

“Yeah, get to the good part.”

Sensitive to her downstairs neighbors, Marisa kept quiet on their way up to her residence on the third floor. That is, apart from stumbling back and forth into the walls, jostling the triplets around with her. Finally they arrived at her apartment, where she



collapsed onto her sofa. The drunken sisters flanked her, the middle taking a seat in her recliner.

“So. The uniform.”

“Which we definitely believe you stole.”

Marisa snorted indignantly. “You saying you don’t believe me?”

“Just get on with the story!”

“This was supposed to be a Spencer sex story.”

“Yeah, and you’re taking forever to get to the sex part.”

“Oh no. No no no. No, n-no no *no*.” Marisa stood up. “Come into my house and call me a liar? I got sex stories way weirder than getting hate-fucked in a cheerleader uniform.”

The sisters had no response to this. Their delay provided Marisa an opening to storm out of the living room, throwing her bedroom door shut behind her.

“Did she say ‘hate-fucked?’”

“Spencer?”

“That does *not* sound like something he’d do.”

“Is she coming back?”

“Yeah, should we go, or...?”

“Thanks for being DD by the way.”

“Yeah, thanks. You’re the best.”

“You’d have done the same for me.”

“We should go out like this more often.”

“Yeah! This was fun.”

“I missed hanging out with us.”

“I fucking *love* us. Do you know that?”

“Not as much as I love us.”

“It’s not a contest, you two. Because if it was, I would be winning, because I love us.”

They were still debating who loved themselves the most when Marisa’s bedroom door opened, revealing the sight of the trim, sexy grad student stuffed into a black and gold cheerleading uniform that was plainly a few sizes too small. It was a hot uniform on its own, baring the midriff completely and featuring a skirt that wanted to start twirling up over her underwear with the slightest pivot. On Marisa’s well-shaped body, the bottom of her breasts were visible, squeezed down beneath the hem of the top. The skirt flashed her panties when she turned to shut the door, and it flashed them almost to the waist. They weren’t matching panties, either, probably just the same pale blue pair she’d been wearing to the program and the bar. She’d done her hair up in a high ponytail, though it was poorly done. It suited her inebriated aesthetic.

“You really have it!”

“You look so hot!”

“Kind of small on you, isn’t it?”

Marisa sniffled. “It was three years and ten-ish pounds ago, OK? And it didn’t fit great then. Thieves can’t be shooters – err, *choosers* – either. But yeah, still cute, right?”

“But Spencer didn’t like it, you said.”

Their hostess flounced into the living room, thrilling in the attention of women who were much more commonly on the other end of the attention-paying v. attention-paid-to continuum. “Oh he liked the uniform fine. What he didn’t like was the game. He didn’t give me much time to tease him. Before I knew it, he was up and ranting at me. Like, zero to pissed off in no time.”

“Pissed off why?”

Marisa tugged on the top, but it only made it snap back higher than before. Her nipples were still hidden, for now. “Because he’d never had a disloyal thought, and I was trying to make him jealous. I was acting like... fuck, I wish I could remember her name. Like a word name I feel like, like Faith or Hope or Harmony or something. Fuck. Anyway, that I was acting like he was still into her. Like he even *could* be into her. And then he was ranting about her. About the games she played, about what a bitch she was, and a bully. And how she’d brought out the worst in him, how they’d both dragged each other down, and how he wasn’t that guy any more.”

The triplets frowned. Spencer? A bully? It was hard to imagine.

“So I could see I’d struck a nerve. I’d only wanted to figure out what his deal was with this chick, but all of the sudden he’s yelling and he’s calling me names and stuff. Calling *her* names, really. But it felt like something he needed, shit he wanted to say but couldn’t just belch out at a football game. So... I figured I’d help him process.”

“Process... how?”

Marisa stood in front of the couch, looming to the extent her tiny frame could loom. Her hips swished side to side, but not drunkenly. Mostly. “So what, baby? Don’t front. You know you still want this. And I want you to have it. Don’t act like you’re all the sudden better than, too good for me. You’re a horny little piece of shit same as me, baby. So just shut up, and let’s—”

She shook her head, her roleplay suddenly shifting characters, assuming a deep voice, deeper than Spencer’s own. “No. No, I’m not. It’s not better than, I’m just done wallowing in your toxicity. Our tokshitissy.’ Err, fuck, you know what I meant. And this is all way TMI, I know, but yeah, he was like shaking. So I pushed, you know? Never gonna get that last drip of toothpaste if you don’t squeeze.”

Marisa sunk down to her knees, the transfixed triplets watching her, rapt, as she reverted to the bratty nasally cheerleader character. “Fuck toxic. Let’s remind these puds who runs this school, right? You and me, baby. Put it in my mouth, baby. I miss you. Put it in my mouth like these dorkwads fucking dream they could.”

“Did he...?”

“Put it in your mouth...?”

“And did you...?”

“It took some back and forth. ‘I’m not your king douchebag any more.’ ‘You’re still hung like my king.’ ‘Was there ever anything between us besides sex? Sex, and feeding off each other’s assholery?’ ‘Are you saying you want to eat my ass? Because...’ And so on. I got his pants off. Or he took them off. I forget. But I remember when he told me to shut the fuck up and shoved his cock down my throat.”

Marisa took one hand of each of the girls on the sofa, extending one digit and sucking them into her mouth. They stared, mesmerized.

“That sounds violent,” said the middle from behind them. “It doesn’t sound all that hot.”

Marisa rested the fingertips on her lower lip. “It was hot for that time and place,” she said. “It was what he needed, to unload on someone he couldn’t unload on without going back to being the guy who unloads when he’s angry. It was therapeutic, and I could see in those soft pretty eyes that he knew it for what it was. He took me up on it. I didn’t know then if I was ending our relationship or if he was falling in love or what. I honestly didn’t care. He... wow, yeah, just like that actually,” she said as the eldest grabbed her ponytail with her dry hand. The youngest seized it too, and soon the two pressed their fingers back into Marisa’s mouth.

It wasn’t gay, they told themselves. Or incest. Both of them were imagining they were in Marisa’s place, dressed slutty, on their knees, his dick fucking their thirsty mouths raw. They should be so lucky. Their sister watched from behind, eyes narrowed, unsure what this could mean, and why it made her so fucking hot.

Hotter than usual, that is. Like she’d said, these days, she was horny pretty much all the time. Eight might have been a low estimate after all.

“He came on my face,” she said between licks up and down the sisters’ fingers. “Spencer never comes on a girl’s face. Honestly he tends to be pretty erratic about the when and where, but he tries to be ‘respectful,’ as he sees it. But that night, right in the eye. He called me a bitch, a slut, a slutty fucking bitch, and came in my face.”

“Oh wow.”

“Oh *wow*.”

“Were you mad?”

Marisa turned, frowning. She was well beyond the point of being able to remember any of this; soon, she’d be passed out on the floor. “Mad?”

“Yeah. You weren’t the one he was actually angry with, but he took it out on you.”

She shook her head, nearly losing her balance in the process. “No no no, sweetie. I was only getting warmed up. I went through my slut-bitch phase, same as this chick. This was me plugging that monster of a dick into my past and letting it fuck away my

demons. No no, I wiped my eye clear, looked up at him, and I go, ‘Is that all you got, you fucking pussy?’”

“He had more, didn’t he.”

“So much more.”

Marisa nodded, absent-mindedly bestowing tiny little handjob on the finger-cocks before her. “He was past the anger of it by then, mostly. We were both just sort of doing, not thinking. So when he grabbed me by the hair and tossed me over the armrest, ass up, I took this super sarcastic cunt tone, like ‘Aw, baby wants to fuck without eye contact and cuddles?’”

While she relived the memory, she went through the motions of it. The girls didn’t pull her hair – much – but neither did they let go. Her neck was held backwards as far as it would go, the top flipped up and over her tits. One of the sisters had lifted her skirt over her underwear, too, though none of them were sure which. The look on Marisa’s face said she didn’t want them to stop, so they didn’t.

“And I swear to god, I will *never* forget it. Sonofabitch tore my panties off. Literally grabbed the waistband and tore them off. They had some strong elastic, too. Fucking hurt. I yelped or something I guess, because I remember he said something lava hot like, ‘You wanna act like a bitch? Then you get fucked like a bitch.’”

Marisa was too far gone not to reach under her body and slip a hand into her underwear, sliding two fingers as far as they would go into her pussy. “Oh god... Oh god, yes... Like a fucking *bitch*, Spencer, like your fucking bitch...”

Someone squeezed a hand full of her ass, and when she moaned, followed it with a percussive *slap* that filled the apartment. Someone else – or the same someone, so many hands, impossible to be sure – jerked that pony tail handle until her ear was right against their lips. “You like this, you little bitch? You like this?” Another slap, this time across her exposed tits.

“Harder,” Marisa whimpered. “Unless that’s all you got.”

Two more slaps, tits and ass in perfect unison, from two hands belonging to two girls who were drowning in the fantasy of being bent double, asses and tits exposed to their RA’s hungry eyes as he pounded their holes and their flesh like he owned them. Like he was doing them a favor. And he would be, they realized as someone spit into Marisa’s open, panting mouth. If he lined them up and painted his cock blood red with what scant virginity remained between them, they would thank him.

This was what she needed. Not some pathetic cabana boy who let himself be trussed up like a ham for a fistful of pesos. Not some high school boy who’d nudded in his underwear just from being allowed to say the word “foursome” during a makeout. A man who could turn this sexpert into sex jelly by throwing her down and fucking *taking* her. One sister would be beside herself to be fucked at all, and the other would lose her mind about the chance to touch these stunningly sexy self-replicas she’d been gifted at

birth. But she would come from how firmly she would tell him no, we have bigger ambitions than you, you're beneath us, I won't stoop to blowing some random college guy – and how firmly he would shove his dick down her throat and tell her to shut up. He would free her to live in the moment and think of her momentary needs – and her sisters would wait their turns to taste his cum on her lips before trying to coax some out for themselves.

She blinked. That had gotten really vivid, hadn't it.

Meanwhile her sister was thinking of the girl in front of her. They'd never been with a girl, not even to the extent of their sporadic makeouts and few instances of vanilla missionary sex. They'd talked about being with each other, agreed they'd never do it but permitted that so long as she owned that she was kind of a perv, they could concede it wasn't crazy to fantasize about it. Suddenly, seeing those perfectly white teeth sink into those pale blue panties, she wondered if she'd been wrong to give up so easily.

“You guys, this is...”

“Hot.”

“So hot.”

“Touch her. It's OK. She likes it.”

“I.. we shouldn't. She's drunk.”

“And straight,” added Marisa clumsily, fellating a triplet's fingers. “And you definitely should.”

“You should.”

“It's fun.”

“She's so fun.”

What were they doing? This hadn't been the plan. They'd only set out to learn about the inner workings of Hancock, not to get it on with one of their interns. They hadn't discussed this. And they were both so *into* it! There was no denying it. This woman was turning *her* sisters into some kind of... into...

Oh, fuck it.

“Stop turning us gay, you fucking slut!” Her hand hit that ass so hard that it was hard to imagine she'd hurt Marisa as much as herself.

“Try and stop me, bitch.”

Gritting her teeth, she seized those panties and *pulled*, pulled until there was a satisfying snap as the waistband gave way. There were Marisa's fingers, probing her glistening wet snatch, someone else's probing experimentally at her clit. She wished she'd had more to drink. Or less. Whatever the amount would be that she'd black this out as surely as Marisa, or flee the scene before it was too late.

She tried to stop her. She really, really tried.

\*\*\*\*\*

“How did he sound?”

“Pissed.”

“Pissed, or just annoyed?”

“More annoyed, I guess. But he seemed pretty stressed.”

“OK. Let’s go.”

Spencer accepted their invitation, as expected. They were identical again. No man could refuse them identical. Their father, maybe, as one of the only men on the planet who didn’t want to fuck their identical pussies. Pussies which, they had conceded, were wet and ready to fuck all the goddamn time. For this man, and this man only.

That had been what put them in their position to weigh matters objectively. These other girls were roommates. Friends, in many cases, but new friends, maybe just friends until their strange freshman year together ended. Even the lesbians in 313 weren’t a truly united front. They acted like it, but really they just liked fucking one another. They argued at least as much as the typical roommates on Higgins 3, even if they were good at (loudly) fucking it out afterward.

The sisters were, thanks to the man grudgingly plodding along in their wake, a united front once again.

Not to him alone, not really. He was the beginning of their investigation, not its conclusion. They had long since satisfied themselves that he simply couldn’t be the mastermind behind it all. If he was, then far too many other things didn’t make sense. His reticency to fuck the Hotties. His embarrassment that he’d let his guard down and put it in that redneck girl from 304. That whole beach day fiasco a couple weeks ago, when the girls had been throwing themselves at him, stalking him into the shower, masturbating audibly in the adjacent stalls, staking out his dorm room and listening to him make out with that boringly mega-hot RA, the one with the repulsive and disqualifying scar, while they played with themselves. He could have whipped it out and let them take turns sucking him off. The eldest had observed, and she was sure of it. Instead, he’d dragged them all down to the lounge and yelled at them for disrupting his evening.

They remembered Marisa’s story, the allusion to some erstwhile Spencer who tore off clothes and hate-fucked, even if Marisa didn’t remember telling it. She’d awakened the next afternoon with a throbbing headache and some big questions about her bruised ass and the cheerleader skirt draped over it. The triplets responded to her text with a made-up lie, denying any involvement; whether or not she believed them, they’d continued to enjoy each other’s company in the ensuing weeks. Marisa was actually pretty cool, they decided. Plus, they all privately hoped they’d get her drunk enough for another story.

The eldest had gotten to hear Spencer yelling live, to see the vein throb in his forehead as he ordered them about, telling them how they were to behave on his floor from now on. Lucky. The middle and youngest had lain in their bunks with their ears pressed to the wall adjacent to the lounge, playing with themselves as they imagined him thundering away at the slut-bitches of Higgins 3. There was no more taboo against masturbating in the room. Having to go down to do it in the shower was degrading, and they did not degrade each other. Not any more.

They led Spencer into their bedroom, standing shoulder to shoulder to shoulder, regarding him with eyes downcast. He looked annoyed. He couldn't possibly be as annoyed as the sisters. Drawing straws first to see which two could attend massage night, and again to see who would be privy to those licks he was giving away after his stunt at the end of the program. It had created resentment, inequity, bitterness. But they loved each other enough to endure it.

Plus, it had led them here.

Spencer stood by imperiously, waiting to see what they wanted this time. He had no way of knowing who had done what with him, nor who hadn't. He knew as much as they chose to tell him, as much a pawn in Hancock's game as the Hotties.

"We're sorry."

"We agreed that since we were all at fault, we'd take the blame together, as sisters."

"We shouldn't have lied to you just for a little fun."

"We want to make it up to you."

"All three of us."

"If you'll let us."

Time to see if Marisa was right about him and his chivalric ideals. First that.

Spencer looked between them, and after a moment, sighed in resignation.

"Forgiven. Look, I'm not mad. It's just been a weird week, and this was one more thing. I was in the middle of finishing up a bunch of classwork, but it's done now and I'm me again and... blah blah blah, whatever. Don't worry about it."

Classic Spencer. Kind Spencer. But not the Spencer they wanted right then.

"But we want to apologize."

He shook his head. "Really, it's fine. I was glad to see the two of you that came to the program hanging out. The girls are always excited whenever you make an appearance. A little starstruck."

He took a step like he meant to leave.

"We wanted to offer you a massage!" blurted the middle hastily.

"Triple team."

"One of us missed the program, but, um, was grateful you, you know, let her get that sneak peek yesterday."

Pheromones. It had to be – or something like it. She'd come back from his room the day before, her tongue still tasting of his sweat, and for the rest of the night, she'd been beside herself. They gave up telling her not to apologize for how loud she was being. Then they gave up not joining in, though they couldn't keep up with her enthusiasm.

That had been the control of the experiment. No lick, no horny whiny helpless coming their brains out. Pheromones. It had to be. Nobody was actually as hot as they all thought he was.

Today, just to triple check, they would all get their taste.

Spencer wasn't ready for it yet, though. "Oh. That's really thoughtful of you, really. I'm so flattered. But I have some errands I've been putting off. I'm sorry. But thank you."

The girls adopted their sulk. They weren't prone to sulking. They were privileged, and they knew it, and they seldom wanted something they couldn't have – access to their own fortune aside. Sulking seldom entered the picture. When they did sulk, however, they were a true and total triplication of entitlement.

"Please?"

"Yeah, please?"

"Please?"

They poured that entitlement into their pleading. It wouldn't be begging to his ears. It was the petulant demand of three liars who'd invaded his privacy, pushed him across his boundaries, and now had the audacity to act aggrieved that they hadn't gotten more.

It wasn't his ex-ex-girlfriend's cheerleader uniform, but they hoped it would suffice.

"Please, let you give me a massage?"

"Or even just, you know. Our lick. One of us really didn't get to."

"It's not fair!"

"Please?"

"Please, Spencer?"

They may as well be telling him he was being an asshole for not having already given them what they wanted. It was implied in their haughty tones, their condescending looks. His nostrils flared, his jaw set. It was working.

"You know, I've been lied to enough by the women in this room that I have a hard time seeing why I should cut you any slack. I think this is how you learn your lesson about treating your floormates respectfully."

He turned again, his hand on the doorknob.

Shit. Time to up the stakes.

"We'll do it in our underwear!"



“Like the other night. Like everybody else did.”

“Just don’t go. Please.” *Let us do you a favor, you selfish prick*, the tone implied.

He hesitated. They moved on him. Six hands met on his back, sides, arms and shoulders. Six hands, caressing him commandingly.

“You really want it?”

“We *deserve* it.”

“It’s only fair.”

“Yeah, come on already. Give us our licks.”

There was that look again. Not quite a glare. Glaring wasn’t this self-righteous.

“Fine. One lick. But *I* get to say—”

The sisters sank to their knees, pawing at the man in the center of the triplet triangle. As one, they took off their tops, folding them and setting them down as kneeling pads. They had no bras, just six perfectly matching tits. Together, they shimmied out of their shorts, revealing three pairs of identical panties.

“Where should we lick?”

“Yeah, you were saying... You wanted to say, right?”

“And make it somewhere good.”

The final prod did the trick. Spencer lowered his shorts to his knees, revealing a thick red cock that shamed the one they’d imagined when listening to Marisa’s story. The fight video from discord didn’t do it justice. “You two each get a cheek. And you... pretty sure that was you yesterday.” He was wrong. “These are all yours.”

Per their rehearsal, they each affected a pout, holding back as long as they could make themselves until finally one leaned forward, extended her tongue, and awaited her sisters before bathing his ass and his balls with their saliva.

“And give Terri a follow, would you? It’d mean a lot to her.”

They agreed without realizing what they were agreeing to. For the rest of the day, they were electrified. They never did manage to get their clothes back on.

Pheromones. No doubt about it. That night at Mother Bear’s, Marisa swore to them there was no such thing, but they were united in their insistence.

\*\*\*\*\*

“Ready?”

“Ready.”

“Ready.”

She set her phone in the middle of the table and pressed the green button. The ring sounded loudly on the speaker. It rang twice. Once more than they’d been promised it would ever ring when they’d signed their contracts.

“Allison, hey! Didn’t think I’d be hearing from you for a bit. How’s Maui? You and your sisters enjoying fall break?”

“Maui’s Maui.”

“It’s Maui.”

“We didn’t call to talk about Maui.”

There was lots of background noise. She wasn’t at home. Driving somewhere, or maybe walking around. “Oh. Then hey to Maddison, and hey to Addison. What’s up? Parents grating on you again? You know I love a good venting session as much as the next agent, but this isn’t a great time.”

“Our parents are doing fine.”

“More than fine.”

“Oh. Then, um, something with the accommodations? I can call the desk, make sure they... shit. Sorry, shit’s pretty crazy over here. Every driver in the goddamn city is... Can I call you back in a few? Then I can make you three my three top priorities.”

“It’s our accommodations.”

“Yeah. Our accommodations.”

There was a long pause. Was it conspicuous, or just traffic? “Pull over so you can talk to us.”

Lorna growled, maybe at traffic, but maybe at the bossiness of her clients. “This really isn’t a good—”

“She said, *pull over.*”

“She said it nicely.”

“If that doesn’t work, try *pull the fuck over right the fuck now.*”

Lorna grunted. She was used to them being grateful for every dribble of attention she paid them. “I’m in the middle of... what the fuck do you... Hang on.” It was as aggravated as she’d ever sounded with them. They waited, arms folded.

“OK, wish granted, I’m pulled over. Very, very illegally, I might add.” Indeed, she was tricky to hear over the sound of someone honking. “Tell me what’s wrong. Did they not have a third bed in your suite? Or, how shall I say, do you need another male prostitute?”

It was sass, and her 10% most definitely did not relegate them to accepting her sass. No matter.

“Not our accommodations in Maui.”

“At Lakeview.”

“Lakeview.”

“Higgins.”

“Higgins 3.”

“Our dorm accommodations.”

Lorna sighed. “You’ll get better results just putting in a work order. Hang on, I think I have the number for the desk—”

The youngest cut her off imperiously. “Funny you should mention prostitutes, though.

“Pimping people out.”

“Not so funny.”

“Not haha funny.”

“Do you want to tell us why you fought to put us in Higgins 3 instead of back in Wendell?”

Lorna’s voice was strained. “Why I... what? What on earth are you even talking about? You... you don’t like your room?”

“We don’t like that you pushed your seven-figure clients into the middle of a collegiate harem, Lorna.”

“We don’t like it at all.”

“We are, one and all, displeased.”

The honking finally died. Whoever it was must have given up on her. The triplets were not yet done with Lorna, though. “I have no earthly idea what you’re talking about,” she said with the gall to sound annoyed. “Harem? Is this about those third rate streamer skanks you were complaining about, or...?”

“Send us the emails.”

“Right now.”

“Forward them on over.”

“What the hell emails? Have you three lost your—”

One held up her own phone and read. “August 3<sup>rd</sup> of this year, you texted us, and I quote, ‘been emailing Lakeview back and forth all day. Got you the biggest triple room on campus.’ ‘Way bigger than Wendell?’ Allison replied. ‘Way bigger,’ you answered. ‘Had to bark all the way up the chain, but I got you in on Higgins 3! You’re welcome.’”

“You... want me to show you the emails about moving your dorm room? Are you fucking kidding me? Mind telling me what for? Going on two years you’ve been my client, and I never got a complaint about my results from you before this.”

“I understand if it takes a minute.”

“That’s how long you have.”

“Timer’s running.”

“Forward the emails. August 3<sup>rd</sup>.”

“Fifty-six. Fifty-five.”

“Fifty-four.”

Lorna’s voice was sharp. “Your little countdown isn’t necessary or productive. I don’t keep pointless crap like that, and even if I did, I resent being interrogated over it.”

“We happen to know that you’re required by your firm’s legal team to maintain copies of all communications pertaining to the service of your clientele, Lorna.”

“Fifty.”

“Especially when those emails feature you agreeing to feed your clients to the whims of mind-fucking pheromones!”

“We agreed no yelling.”

“Sorry. I just thought about what she tried to do to you and I got...”

“Forty-four. Forty-three.”

“Pheromones? Harem? I have no idea what you think I—”

“What did they offer you? Money?”

“Must have been quite the sum.”

“I guess the Hancock Institute knows a thing or two about making sleazy deals though, considering the nature of their research.”

“Thirty-three.”

“Would you stop counting at me, you spoiled little bitch? I told you—”

“Don’t raise your voice to her.”

“Don’t you *ever* raise your voice to her.”

“Twenty-seven.”

“That kind of cash is hard to hide, though.”

“And risky.”

“We all know how you like to let us be the ones taking all the risk.”

“Turning us against each other, turning us against our own family.”

“Our blood. Our genes.”

“Fifteen.”

“Personally, I think they just offered you what you really wanted.”

“Your three pretty little cash cows, hooked on whatever they’re pumping through the vents in that building.”

“Too horny, too dizzy to resist.”

“You were going to turn us into sluts.”

“Porn stars.”

“Whores.”

“Did you think we wouldn’t notice?”

“Did you think we’re stupid?”

“Did you really think we’d let you hurt either of them?”

“I would fucking *kill* you before I let you hurt them.”

“Same.”

“Same. With a smile on our face.”

They stopped, watching the timer count down to zero.

Lorna spoke in a measured voice. “I didn’t do anything wrong, and if you think you can throw a tantrum and get me to admit to something on whatever you bimbos are using to record this, you’re even dumber than I thought.”

“We’re not recording.”

“We don’t consent to being recorded.”

“Which, as a pre-law major with a 4.0 GPA, I should inform you means that in both of our states of residence, this conversation is inadmissible.”

“Say, what was your GPA, Lorna?”

Pre-law was a recent development. After deciding to never ever ever *ever* let anything or anyone come between them again, they agreed that one thing that might help was permitting them a little space. They had three identical brains, so why squander them with identical information? Pre-law, business, marketing, communications... They would run their own modeling agency someday. Their fashion empire.

But first, they needed to deal with their present agency.

They could hear her breathing, hot and angry. “Yeah, well, think what you want. Your contract with the firm is ironclad, so unless you have some kind of proof, which we both know you don’t, you can all get bent – but not too hard, OK? I have money riding on those asses of yours. Oh, and because I wouldn’t want you to think I’m not earning my cut, some advice: Don’t bother trying to get a room change. I just have this feeling you’re going to run into some unexpected red tape at the Housing office. But hey, enjoy your break, have fun on your shoot tomorrow. Thanks in advance for my ten percent. Fucking brats.”

“Oh, you’ll be canceling our contract.”

“Today.”

“When we hang up.”

A laugh sounded through the phone. “Oh? What makes my little cash cows think I’m opening their pen?”

“Because it will keep us quiet.”

“Unless you think we couldn’t get an article published about what you tried to do.”

“‘Teenage triplet sex slaves’ does seem like the kind of headline that people would click on, doesn’t it?”

“It does. Thanks for helping to teach us about how to craft a good headline, by the way.”

Lorna sneered audibly. “And why do you think I—”

“They must have shown you what they can do.”

“Why else would you have signed on?”

“It’s basic logic. If they tried to force the change on you, you would’ve fought back and kept us in Wendell. After the ΣXE incident, no way this campus is going to risk pissing us off again.”

“Which means they had to find a way to get you onboard. You weren’t about to give up your most promising clients, so they had to give you a way to make bank off of it.”

“Off of *us*.”

“And if there’s one thing you’ve always been, Lorna, it’s a mercenary. Suddenly you got a hire bid, and you changed banners. You just didn’t think we’d ever figure it out.”

“Or if we did, that we’d pin it on you.”

Their agent grumbled something with the phone away from her mouth. It sounded like a curse. Then she was back. “Yeah, well, that’s a fun little theory. Unfortunately there’s a thing called ‘libel,’ so good luck finding a publisher.”

“We figure it’s probably easier to just go to the source, threaten to expose them.”

“I’d bet they’re very motivated to keep their little project quiet.”

“Yeah, the kinds of people who turn teenagers into some guy’s cum-starved sex slaves probably wouldn’t like that kind of publicity.”

“You know, I bet they could do it to a regular old woman like you, though. Maybe we could tell them we’ll keep it quiet if they just gas you with some of this shit, make you so fucking horny you’ll beg them to let you join that cabana boy in the oldest profession.”

“It would certainly keep you quiet, wouldn’t it?”

“And believe us when we say that once they get to you, you’ll be happy to keep quiet so long as your gag is someone’s dick.”

“Believe us.”

“It will come on your fat peasant face, and you’ll be thankful for it.”

“Believe us.”

Lorna harrumphed. “Doesn’t sound like it’s kept you three from wagging your tongues.”

“Because we’re rich.”

“Influencers.”

“Media darlings.”

“Sisters,” they said in perfect unison.

“We can do whatever the fuck we want.”

“You have an hour to get that contract canceled.”

“Starting now.”

“Fifty-nine minutes fifty-seven seconds. Fifty-six.”

“Goodbye, Lorna.”

They hung up the phone before waiting to hear another bullshit excuse.

“You were right.”

“I know. Your theory was good, too.”

“Plus it was your plan. It was so smart.”

“That evil bitch didn’t know what hit her.”

“I meant it when I said I would kill for you.”

“Same.”

“Same. Though... not my plan A.”

“I love you.”

“I love you.”

“I love you.”

The sisters embraced, laughing, crying. It was only somewhat a bluff. Long talks and lots of idle handsiness had convinced all three of them that they liked living with Spencer and his Hottie harem just fine. Sexy and horny and impulsive was fun – surprise, surprise – and now that they knew what it was, they could opt out at their leisure. It turned out that whatever this was, it had been just what they needed to restore perspective. They could still be ambitious, hard-working, successful, while also trying to have a little fun and enjoy themselves. With Marisa’s help, maybe enjoy Spencer’s fine-ass self a little, too.

The doofus had landed himself a free harem after all. Surely he owed his subjects a little affection.

“Come on. Let’s go find Dad before he tries to citizens arrest the bartender on suspicion of being a nefarious cabana boy.”

The sisters made their way outside. It was blue and green and gorgeous, hot in the way that beaches are hot, in that way that even winter types couldn’t complain about it. The resort had a bar by the pool and, around the back of the same small building, a second one facing the beachfront. Their parents were seated at the latter, Mom gaping at one of the models they’d be photographed with tomorrow strutting along in her thong bikini. Dad was sipping at an almost completely full strawberry daiquiri, looking around like he was worried one of the other guests was about to pickpocket him.

But he’d crossed an ocean to be with them, and he’d failed to hide his delight at being asked to.

“Hi, Dad.”

“Hi, Mom.”

“Girls!” Their mother hugged each girl in turn. “I was starting to worry you might come out here dressed like some of these girls...”

“Yeah, well, we will for the shoot, but right now, we’re hanging out with you two.”

“We don’t want to embarrass you.”

“We’re just glad you could make it.”

“I know how Mr. Curtis doesn’t give you much time off.”

Their dad smiled. “I told him my girls wanted to drag me off to meet their bikini buddies in Hawaii. Old goat said it was too close to his lifelong dream to deny me.”

“Gross.”

“Daddy!”

“Super gross.”

“We’re glad you’re here, though.”

The bartender saw them and approached automatically. Here, these gorgeous threefold teenagers were the real money and he deduced it easily. Incorrectly, though it was a good guess. The girls each ordered a cosmo and took seats by their parents.

“Uh, excuse me? Last I checked, you three weren’t twenty-one.”

“Yeah, for like six months.”

“We’re growing up, Dad.”

“And if you don’t trust us with a little…”

“How will you ever be able to trust us with a lot?”

He gave his wife a long-suffering look. “See, I told you. Dragged us out here with promises of sun and fun, but it’s really to butter us up for another go at the conservatorship. Couldn’t even sit by us on the plane so we could at least get it out of the way before we hit paradise.”

“That’s not it, Dad.”

“We booked you first class so you could be comfortable on the flight.”

“And they didn’t have five side by side seats in first class.”

“And we figured we had all week to talk, if we want to talk about it.”

“So why rush?”

“Well let’s make it a short talk, then. The answer is still—”

The youngest interjected. “We don’t want you to end the conservatorship.”

“—in, um, effect. What now?”

“We talked, and we decided we’re happy where we are.”

“Very happy.”

“Happier than we’ve ever been.”

Their parents exchanged incredulous looks. “Even with the dorm room?” their mom asked fretfully. “I know you were so cross with us over that. Oh god, you’re not dropping out of school, are you?!”

They laughed. “Mom!”

“Yeah, Mom!”

“We’re not dropping out.”

“We actually really like our dorm.”

“Yeah. It’s actually really cool.”



Four days away from Higgins and the worst of Spencer's pheromones seemed to have subsided. They felt normal again. Annoyingly so. Being constantly pumped full of their RA's love particles had been... electric. Passionate. Exhilarating. They'd bonded over their fantasies of swarm-fucking their RA like almost nothing else in their lives. They'd keep talking it out as they grew more confident that they were back in their normal minds, but they each knew what conclusion they hoped to arrive at. Fall break was simply a bad date. You didn't break up with the guy over it. You just hoped he'd come along and sweep you off your feet next time. Or better yet, throw you on his bed between your sisters and take turns making you come.

Not that they knew much about dating, but they hoped to know a lot about being thrown on Spencer's bed.

For now, though, there were more important things to consider. Things long overdue.

"Actually, that's not quite true."

"We did want to talk about the conservatorship."

"See, honey? I knew—"

"Not like you think, though."

"We don't want to use it on us."

"You... you don't? Uh oh, I think our girls might have been kidnapped and replaced by pod people, Lydia. Just tell me it's not some scam to—"

"We want to pay off your house."

"Or buy you your dream house, if you'd rather."

"We want you to be able to retire, Dad."

"Not in twenty years."

"Right now."

"Today."

"We've run the numbers—"

"We'll show you. There's spreadsheets and all."

"—and we think there's enough in there to get you the house and take care of you both for good."

"In style. You can travel, Mom."

"See the world."

"Come along with us on shoots."

"Sometimes."

"Yeah, sometimes. But really. Sometimes."

"It would set us back a lot, we realize."

"But we're getting a good education."

"And we're still us."

“Cute blonde triplets don’t seem to be trending downward, according to the metadata.”

“So we’ll be able to make it back. Might be a few years, depending on what neighborhood you’re looking at.”

“But you’ve always worried about us.”

“And taken care of us.”

“A little too much sometimes.”

“We’re always worried about taking care of each other,”

“Like you taught us when we were little,”

“And we want to show you we love you, too.”

Their parents stared almost uncomprehending. Without warning, their mother’s eyes brimmed over with tears and she threw her arms wide enough for all three daughters. Dad joined in the hug, too.

“I, um, I’m sorry I don’t always listen, girls. This is... Are you serious? Don’t answer that. I know you are. But I’m... I’m blown away.”

“Three cosmopolitans,” said the bartender behind them. “If, ah, it’s all right with Mom and Dad.”

Their dad laughed, tears running down his red, sweaty face. Dad hardly ever cried, especially not out in the open like this. “Oh, go ahead. I’ll have to learn to loosen up a little bit if I’m going to be hanging out with my supermodel daughters and their supermodel friends, huh?”

“Dad!”

“Oh, Daddy.”

“I love you, Dad.”

“That’s the booze talking, honey, don’t believe a word they say.”

“Daaaad!” they groaned in unison, but it was with the same smile they’d go on to use at their shoot the following day to generate a million clicks. To their credit, a shot of their parents gaping in disapproval at three matching dental floss bikinis scored almost as many. Dad’s blush was authentic, even on the fifteenth take.

Somewhere on the other side of a big blue ocean and a whole lot of hills and prairies, Spencer received their follow and took it as an invitation to follow back, as it had been meant to be. He smashed the like button on every single one of their posts. They could hardly wait to get back home and frig themselves blind over it once those delightful pheromones of his got them back in the proper mood. But for now, there was the beach, and the ocean, and family.

\*\*\*\*\*

“Yeah, hey, Happy Halloween or whatever,” she said as the sisters entered the party, fashionably late.

The other Hotties didn’t look up at all from where Peyton of all people was busily giving their RA the hottest lap dance they had ever seen. Which was fine. They weren’t looking to stay long. It was Halloween, for heaven’s sake. Terri – who had actually turned out to be surprisingly cool, they’d discovered during that collab Spencer had mandated in exchange for licks – gave them a friendly wave. She was dressed up like Curious George’s friend, except without the yellow hat. They had no idea what to make of this. Either way, their lust and gratitude for Spencer notwithstanding, dorm parties were weak sauce, and they had no intention of dawdling. Make an appearance, score a nice moment with Spencer to jill off to when they got home from the real parties, and goodbye.

Half-watching the proceedings, they walked over to the refreshments table, then sidled up to Katrina at the DJ station. There behind the speakers, they could actually hear themselves think.

“What’d we miss?”

“Yeah, isn’t she gay?”

“I’d have sworn someone on discord said she and that other one are girlfriends.”

Katrina nodded. “As of last night, I’m not sure any of us are completely straight. Were you there?”

“No, what happened?”

“Oh wow. Wow, you three must be under a rock or something. I mean, you live right next door, and... Anyway, so yeah, he and Tori, and Casey, and, um, me? We... yeah. We patched things up.”

“Oh cool.”

“That drama was so fucking stupid.”

“Totally. Fuck Tori.”

Katrina frowned. “She was trying to do what she thought was best, you guys. Besides, it’s all in the rear view mirror now. No sense holding a grudge. Trust me, she and Spencer are same team going forward. Um, big-time.”

“She just changed her mind, overnight...?”

“There’s no classy way to say it, so... yeah. She and Tori and I, um, blew him? In the lounge? In front of everybody...?”

“You *what*?!”

“How did we not hear this?!”

“Are you freaking kidding me?!”

Katrina shrugged, but there was the tiniest bit of smugness to it. The triplets got it. These other girls might not understand *why* they lived and breathed Spencer, but the social cache from sucking the man’s dick was undeniable. It was a shame they couldn’t

tell him what was going on. He was a sensitive soul. It would crush him to find out his good fortune was unearned, and perhaps to some, unwelcome.

They looked at Tori in her wind-up fucktoy costume. Maybe not so unwelcome. Maybe she'd just needed to marinate a while before getting back with the program. She was indeed back with it, though; someone pulled her string, and instantly she belted out an exuberant, "There's a *snake* in my puss!"

As for the triplets, they had his ex to thank for teaching them the beauty of sexual coupling enhanced by a chemical or two. Now that they'd found he was willing to domineer the outwardly haughty Hotties, they couldn't wait to get him alone. Just the four of them.

The dance concluded. There was an odd moment where Peyton demanded a solid fucking, only to institute some especially cruel take-backsies and swagger out with her girlfriend. Loyalty test or something, it looked like. The rest of the floor seemed to find it charming, though the triplets could only roll their eyes at love so feeble that it needed to be tested to be believed.

They took the opportunity to corner him when he was fleeing an entirely too guileless offer to follow Kyu-Ri back to her room and tag-team her with her roommate. ("That would be so spooky!" the international student said, leaving all to wonder who the hell had defined that little vocab word for her.)

"Hey, you three made it! That's awesome. You look... Yeah. You look nice."

His stutter was on account of what he perceived as their lack of costume, which they'd anticipated. "I'm dressed as Allison," said Maddison.

"I'm dressed as Maddison," said Allison.

"I'm dressed as Addison," said Addison.

"Ha! Now I get it. Yeah, that's a good one."

They frowned as if they didn't understand what joke he was making.

"Anywhoozle," he went on, "Are you three sticking around, or...?"

"We have places to be."

"Dorm parties are a little... yeah."

"Residence hall," he corrected. "But that's cool. I'm still glad you stopped in."

"We heard last night's party got pretty unhinged."

"Is that true?"

"Did you really let Tori and Casey and Katrina go down on you?"

"At the same time?"

"In the lounge?"

"In front of half the floor?"

"While they played with themselves?"

Spencer grimaced, tugging at his collar. "Um, yeah. I guess you could say it was... political? Not that it wasn't fun," he added quickly, seeing Tori frowning. She'd been

lurking in his shadow since they'd arrived. Bitch. "But you know how it's been around here lately. I guess we all wanted to, you know, move on."

"Sorry we missed it."

"So sorry."

"Maybe sometime soon you'll let some girls who didn't stage a bitter insurrection show them how it's done."

"She means us."

"In case that wasn't obvious."

They grinned in unison. "Kidding, obviously."

"Man, the look on your face."

"What kind of woman makes her apologies like that, anyway?"

They'd made sure their voices carried. Indeed, the brief exchange had drawn eyes. It wasn't the needle scratching the record in the jukebox quiet, but it was quieter.

"You have something you want to say to me?" snapped Tori, hands on hips.

"Let's see. Do you have something you want to say to us?" The sisters fanned out, one of them maneuvering behind Spencer as a screen and deftly giving Tori's string a sharp tug.

Tori frowned, mortified, but her eyes were suddenly riveted on Spencer. "You've got a fuck buddy in me!" Tori said, then clapped a hand over her mouth.

"I can't believe he settled for this slag."

"Embarrassing."

"I feel bad for him."

An oh-no-you-di-int vibe was spreading through the lounge in a susurrus. Spencer, triggered by his RA instincts, quickly spoke up, interposing himself between the triplets and Tori.

"That was rude. Tori and I made up, and if we can, so can you. How about everybody apologizes for the way they've been acting, and we go back to having a fun party, yeah?"

The triplets focused their eyes on Tori, who was giving a pleading look at Spencer. When he didn't bend, she turned her gaze on them with obvious resentment. "I'm sorry." That was it.

"We're sorry."

"Yeah, we're sorry you can only win your friends back after you stab them in the back by sucking their dick."

"Badly, from what I heard."

Spencer's eyes flared. "OK, that's enough, you three, with me, in the hall, *right now!*"

Tori stuck her tongue out at them of all the childish responses, but then she followed Spencer's ass as it herded the triplets out of the lounge in a decidedly un-childlike way.

"OK, I know you're upset with her, but I won't stand for bullying. Tori... She's going through a lot of stuff right now. She doesn't need the three of you trying to belittle her when she's already apologized and then some."

"We said we're sorry."

He snorted. "And then you said some other, less contrite, words."

"Fine. We didn't want to go to some dumb dorm party anyway."

"This guy, acting like *he'd* be the one doing *us* a favor *letting* us suck his cock."

"Come on, let's get going."

"Sorry I dragged you in there."

"Same. And this time I mean it."

They were ten steps down the hallway before they heard their RA's throat clear. Turning around, they saw him standing there in the hallway, his cock out and massively erect.

"Uh, what are you doing?"

"Yeah, are we supposed to swoon or something?"

"It's not even as big as I remembered it."

His expression soured by the utterance. "This is how Tori and Katrina showed they were ready to rejoin the community. Maybe it's how you need to prove you're part of this group, too."

"So, what, you want us to blow you...?" she said skeptically, fighting down her instinct to drop to her knees and crawl to him.

"So that, what, we can get invites to dorm programs...?" she said derisively, trying not to address that part of her brain that had been scoured clean and branded with the taste of the man's scrotum. She swallowed, lest he see her drool.

"You realize this is sexual harassment, right...?" she said, imagining him pounding that beast down her and her sisters' throats until they couldn't talk for a week.

Spencer didn't budge. "Your call, ladies. But what you just did in there was not acceptable. If you want to be a part of this community – not just live here, but to really be a part of things – then I won't have you looking down on your neighbors like that."

"Pff."

"Sure, OK."

"Yeah, whatever. Have fun with your slut army. Come on, we're out of here."

They strutted away – stopping the moment they rounded the corner to blitzkrieg rock paper scissors. On the fourth round, paper finally covered two rocks, and the owner of that flat hand hastily doubled back. Spencer was still zipping up his pants.

"Forget something...?"

She stopped in front of him and squatted. “What? You said you wanted it. So whip it out or don’t. It costs six tickets if you wanna stand there and stare.”

Spencer fidgeted, his bluster of moments ago already fading as she undid his doings. “Uh, what about your sisters?”

“They went on to the party. So what?” Her fingers worked quickly. God, there it was. His cock. The cock that had made a thief out of his ex-girlfriend, a pauper out of a modeling agent, and simultaneously made wanton sluts out of a governor, a diplomat and a rebel. The three sisters, however, were still that. His cock had only given them one more thing to bond over.

Spencer let her inhale his musk. It *had* to be pheromones. A cock didn’t just... smell good. Not on its own. She was almost panting. God, this floor was amazing. Staying had been their best decision ever.

“I don’t know, um...”

“Maddison,” she lied, maybe.

“Maddison. It’s just... I know you all... You know. Like me. In your own way.”

She took a lick. Perfection. “So?”

“I don’t know. I just... I don’t like the idea of coming between you. I don’t pretend to get your whole triplet bond thing, but I have a sister, too. Maybe we should just...”

The others, eavesdropping around the corner, were already on their way back. Crawling.

“Maybe we should just... what, Spencer?”

“Maybe we should put you between us.”

“See how it feels.”

“You can tell us how bad we’ve been.”

“*Show* us how bad we’ve been.”

“Punish us.”

“If you feel like we deserve it.”

“For telling that traitor she doesn’t know how to suck your dick right.”

“We know how.”

“We know.”

“We accept your punishment.”

One of them had opened the door to their room, and the other two were dragging him in behind them. Katrina’s selection of “Psycho Killer” was audible through the wall, as were the sounds of the rest of his harem singing along. Spencer looked around the room sheepishly, not quite ready to accept the hunger he’d awakened in them.

“Oh hey, is that the, ah, what do you call it, newspaper thingy from when you were born? Birth announcement, duh, yeah. I never noticed that. That’s cool.”

A pair of lips descended softly over the engorged dome of Spencer’s cock, and his distraction ended. A second pair met a third around the base of the shaft, and together

glided along the length of him until they came to rest against the first. Their tongues slid out, dancing together against the cock of the only man in the world they would never ever mind sharing. He moaned.

“You... you planned this, didn't you. Somehow, you... oh god.”

None of them said a word. Their lips and tongues held together, swirling him into pleasure neither they nor he had ever known. Their tongues met over a dribble of precum, and there were no gaps between them at all.