“I didn’t think that it was possible.”

Sarah and I had been bickering at each other for months now. It had always been friendly, yes, but over time it had sort’ve escalated until it was a genuinely hot-button issue. Whenever we were out with friends and her little contest would come up in conversation, things would always get tense. Everyone had picked up on the growing hostility between us, but no one quite knew the reason why. Do you think that if they knew that the reason we were at each other’s throats more and more was because of that stupid Gut Buster challenge, everyone would think that we were being immature? Because I think, with context, it makes a lot more sense.

Okay, maybe it doesn’t—It was so stupid, okay!

But the point was that I was trying to make conversation. She had *just* broken up with her boyfriend and she mentioned it when we were sitting at the bar and I was like “there’s no way you could do something like that!” and I laughed, and then she didn’t and then things got quiet… and she took it as some sort of insult!

Like, honestly, I didn’t *mean* that in any way shape or form to be taken negatively. No one should be able to eat five courses of greasy fast food in enormous proportions in under an hour, {i}or{/i} the ice cream that comes on top of it. Think about it, if I had told anybody else who had just broken up with her boyfriend, who was already having a pretty shitty time about everything, “oh hey, I’ll bet you could stuff all that down your craw, no sweat!” I’d have been, like, the shittiest roommate ever! Okay? Like, am I the only one with my head on straight here? It’s not an insult for me to think that maybe you’d have some issues with cramming enough food to feed a family of five down your mouth!

But, you know, I’m still the bad guy. For not believing in her or for always putting her down… I don’t know. But things got pretty awkward every time something like that came up because, for the next few months, all Sarah seemed to do was eat.

Like, stuffing herself with all that heavy food couldn’t have been healthy for her, right? I totally got that she had just broken up with her boyfriend, but she was taking it a little far past comfort food. She would eat and eat and eat all week until Saturday, when she would wake me up, drag me to the bar, and try to complete the Gut Buster challenge at the Doornail. And then she’d fail, I’d have to drag her increasingly wide ass home, and she’d recuperate all Sunday. Come Monday, it was back on. Wash, rinse, repeat. I wasn’t exactly made of money, you know? This thing was expensive to do!

So come August (She’d started in March), she dragged me back to the Doornail to witness her last hurrah. We hadn’t really talked in a while. I’ll be honest when I say that I was looking for new roommates after a few months of Sarah becoming increasingly frustrated towards her seeming inability to bust a gut. She was taking it out on me almost as hard as she was taking it out on her waistline, and I was about done with it. I made her promise me that, if she couldn’t do it now, she’d finally stop this stupid contest so that *maybe* we could save our friendship.

And, I’m shitting you not this could have been an 80’s sports movie moment of triumph—she finally did it.

Sarah out-fatassed herself and beat the Gut Buster challenge with a full ten seconds left on the clock. I had never been so enthralled before in my life, watching a woman eat. Considering that’s all I’d seen her *do* for the past six months, I was honestly surprised that I cared! But watching her go, taking huge bites with herculean swings of her jaw, just *downing* everything in her path. She was unstoppable. She was a monster. She was a *champion eater*—a Gut Buster if there ever had been one!

I looked at the picture that they’d hung up on the column near the bathroom, denoted the Pillar of Champions. About ten photos hung up there, with Sarah’s included, all around the sides.

For the first time since she and her boyfriend broke up, my roommate looked happy. Her chunky cheeks bunched up with her big greasy smile, tight t-shirt stretched along her meaty chest. One thick arm held up in front of her, giving a thumb’s up to the camera man and a silent encouragement to any and all challengers who were too scared (and skinny) like she had been that they, too, could do it.

“Hey.”

I walked up to her after the binge of a lifetime. She’d been wedged in by her gut, pressed tight against the booth table. The elastic in her sweats had busted underneath the berth of her globular gut, and they’d even ripped a little in the crotch. Distorted blue polka dots bulged out into the dim dive bar lighting as she gasped like a fish on shore, her belly rising and falling with ragged shallow breaths.

“Hey.” She wheezed, still smiling stupidly as she cradled either side of her stomach with both hands, “Won.”

“Yeah, I can see that.” I smiled, patting her on the crest of her gut. It made poor Sarah wince in pain as the tight drum of stomach jiggled and wobbled at the intrusion of my hand, “Did you have fun?”

“Yeah.” She panted pitifully, “So much.”

“I, um… I think I get it now.” I smiled apologetically, “Why you… cared so much about this stupid contest. You were pretty cool back there.”

“Yeah?” she repeated, smile widening by a fraction, “Thanks.”

“I didn’t want to tell you, but… there’s an ice cream contest started at the Creamery last month.” I offered with a smile, “You…wanna go earn another belt?”

“Maybe later…” Sarah’s hands fell to the booth cushion, “M’still a little full…”