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Strawberry Belly Punch

by

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There is something seriously wrong with Cecilia. That's the only conclusion I can arrive at. She's been nagging me to come with her to one of her boyfriend's frat parties so many times. Practically every week! And now I'm here, and it's just a bunch of drunk college guys somehow making an even worse mess of the place. Cecilia is chatting to her boyfriend and his friends, who are kinda hanging in one lump on the other side of the room. The wall is cold against my arm and I find it grounding. I might need that just about now. I kept telling her: She may be 14 and mature and has a boyfriend but I'm twelve. I shouldn't be here. Maybe I should get to her and see about going home. I see Cecilia shoot me a nervous glance before one of the guys shakes another's hand and heads to the kitchen. He returns holding two glasses of what appears to be some sort of fruit juice cocktail. I look down at my phone, flipping it open to start typing a message to Cecilia. Instead, I'm interrupted by a sudden waft of some intense body spray. Startled, I turn and look up at the face of the guy who had just fetched a drink. He looks a bit nervous. It's... kinda cute?

"Hey, you're Alice, right?" he asks, and his voice is a little shaky. But it's got plenty of that deep, rolling sound to it that I really like, kinda like my biggest sister's. He hands me one of the glasses he's brought from the kitchen. "It's nice to meet you." He holds out his

hand and I give him mine to shake. His hand is so big that mine almost drowns in it. Just like my biggest sister's.

"Nice to meet you too. Yeah, I'm Alice." He takes a sip of his drink, and I do too. I make a positively surprised hum as I find it to taste mostly of strawberry. He gestures towards my glass and his own, seemingly with an identical drink in it.

"Cecilia said you like strawberry stuff, and Max is in the kitchen doing his mixonomy or whatever. He called it a "'Strawberry Belly Punch'." I guess that this is because it's punch, made with strawberry, and it's alcoholic enough to feel like a punch to the belly? It doesn't taste much of alcohol, though it's definitely there. I almost feel a little light-headed already. This isn't my first drink ever, but I don't binge. Unlike my bigger sister, Mallow.

"It's pretty good. As far as these things go." I try to sound like I know what I'm talking about, like I'm comfortable and confident. Something about the situation feels like it calls for that, even though I feel anything but confident and comfortable. He chuckles.

"Cecilia said you're twelve?" I nod. "So you're in, what, seventh grade?" This time, I shake my head.

"Sixth. I kinda had to repeat a grade." I can tell on his face that he slowly remembers why I might have had to do that, and I do my best not to think about the year our parents-

"You probably have, like, Mr. Lopez in math, then?" I welcome the distraction and we chit-chat for a minute about him and his stupid Special Markers™ that he's so particular about using, regardless of which hall he's in. The song changes to something louder and more upbeat, and he bends down close to my ear and mumbles, the rolling of his voice sending shivers down my spine and blood rushing to my face: "Do you wanna get out of here? It's kinda loud." I nod, and he takes my hand as we hug the wall to get to a hallway leading further into the house.

He opens a door and leads me inside. It's less messy than the rest of the house. It's just a bedroom that is... lived in. Is it his? He takes another sip, I do too. And another. I feel a little nervous, sitting on a bed with a guy like this. He says something about school, and I respond. The words are kinda just coming out of me whenever he's done speaking. Whatever he's saying doesn't make enough sense or matter enough for me to retain any of it.

"You know, you're really good to talk to, Alice." he says, and he smiles kindly. I smile back, and I can almost feel how stupid I look right now, barely able to focus. "I'm not surprised to hear that school is so easy for you. You're really smart for a sixth grader, you'd be smart for a seventh grader, even. They should move you up next semester. Hell, twice. Age is just a number anyway. You could be in junior high." I take the final sip of my glass as he finishes that sentence, and I kinda just giggle. Out of words. No more! I visibly shudder as I suddenly feel his warm, massive hand on my thigh. "Can I kiss you, Alice?" he asks, and I nod.

He's such a gentle kisser. With relaxed lips, he just feels mine out at first, and that makes me feel completely up in space, and I'm pretty sure there are actual fireworks inside me. The artificial strawberry aftertaste in my mouth is like doubled. We get deeper into it, moving closer to each other. One of my legs is on his lap. I feel him try to enter my mouth with his tongue and recoil slightly. He calms the kiss down to signal that he won't do that, and I relax. It almost feels like I'm spinning. I think I heard something about fruity drinks and not tasting the alcohol, but it's just one glass-

The dizziness is really getting to me. I lie back, smiling up at the ceiling. Soon, he's on top of me, and we're making out again. His hands wander my body, gently squeezing and taking in every shape and texture. The smell of his body spray is enveloping us like a veil, and it's intoxicating. Well, there is the drink intoxicating me, but that's not the point.

Suddenly, it's not overwhelming, but arousing. It's like his body itself is wrapped around me.

He's grabbing at my blouse and I do my best to help him get it off, but I think I mostly just squirm around a bit. He's chuckling and smiling at me. He starts working at my leggings, and before I know it I'm wearing nothing but my socks and my skirt and he's greedily soaking me in with eyes and hands. His right — dominant — hand sort of trembles its way to my pussy, and he strokes the slit clumsily. My breathing is so light and shallow... He's not exactly doing it right, and I can't help myself, so I reach down and help him figure out the placement, angle, rhythm. Although I'm not sure it's the same as usual. It's sorta hard to keep up with that sort of thing right now. He smiles, gentler now, and I relax, letting my eyes close finally.

"You're so beautiful, Alice..." he moans into my ear. He keeps complimenting me, talking about how smart I am, how much he likes me, as he kisses at my neck and gropes at my breasts, going back and forth between them as if he can't make up his mind. He pauses and gets on all four over me. I meet his gaze, and all three of his dancing faces look excited. "Can I make love to you, Alice?" he asks, and it sounds so silly and formal. I nod, and the world spins a little faster.

He sits back and starts throwing his own clothes off and onto the floor. Then he's back against me, hands on my hips, trying to figure out where our legs go. I let him figure that out, I can barely think enough to understand what's happening, much less help. I feel the pressure of his cock against my slit slip away several times before he finds the right angle and... it doesn't hurt as bad as it could've, because I've been playing on my own. Also, he's not that big, But to me, it feels like he's filling me perfectly. He doesn't necessarily feel cold inside me, but I'm definitely warmer. I seek his gaze but he's too busy fishing out his phone.

"Wh-what are you doing?" I mumble, and I'm pretty sure it's coherent enough.

"Nothing, babe, just taking a picture of us together, for remembering". I can picture it in my head. I must look so pretty right now. I give him double peace signs like in my favorite hentai pics and the phone camera clicks. He smiles gratefully and starts fucking into me. He doesn't bother with some pornographic pulling in and pushing out. He just fucks me. His eyes keep wandering my body as he does. I feel like every time they pass over my face, with its little expressions of pleasure, he grunts and his fingers on my hips grip harder.

I'm enjoying myself, letting my eyes roll back and close, when my stomach goes ice cold: *He's not wearing a condom, is he?* echoes through my mind. I grab at his hands. "w-wait, we have to stop..." I manage, and I can barely hear my own voice. He slows down.

"What's wrong? I put the condom on before. Here's the wrapper". He hands it to me, and reassured, I relax. My whimpers, whines, and moans soon fill the room along with his soft grunts and sweet words. "Good girl" doesn't even sound like a real phrase anymore after how many times he says it.

He sort of lifts me into a hug as he ruts into me a few last times. I cling to him, and have decided that men's body spray is actually the best smell in the world. He pants into my hair, clutching my head to his chest. I almost think i feel a warmth bloom in me but I have to be making it up because he did use a condom, after all.

He lays me down and pulls out of me at the same time, then lies down next to me, sighing contentedly. I reach for my clit, eager to finish, and I hear him watching me do so, mumbling more sweet words into my ear. It doesn't take me too long to cum, and he makes a very content hum at the little mess I make. I open my eyes properly for the first time since closing them earlier and see him put away his phone. i assume he must have

gotten a message or something. His phone beeps as he taps the screen a single time and smiles at me. I don't see a condom on him so he must've taken it off while I was finishing myself off.

"That was fun." he says, poking my cheek. I almost manage to giggle. "Thank you, Alice, for making love with me, okay?" I nod, and he slips off the bed to get dressed. I somehow manage to find everything but my panties and put it on. since I'm wearing leggings it should be fine, after all. We make our way for the door. He's a fair bit faster than me. I put a hand on the wall in the hallway and use it to support myself as I stumble down it. I see him walk up to a group of guys and say something. They all give him a high five, then one of them asks something. He points at me with his thumb and the other guys raise their eyebrows. A few of them laugh. I feel like I'm going to be sick, and everything's spinning something fierce. I reach for my flip phone, and can barely get the contacts up. My sister. Taylor. She'll fix this. Just like she fixes everything. The group of guys, minus the one who's just fucked me and is staying behind, looking guilty, hands in his hair, approach me.

I'm struggling to understand what the one of them who is talking to me is saying, and I squint, as if that will help. They laugh at me. One of them grabs my upper arm roughly, likely bruising it, the pain cutting through the fuzz filling my head. They start pushing me back to the room I just came from and I try to protest, but at best I whimper.

#

As I wake up, it's hard to tell exactly what hurts. I think it's everything. My head feels like it's exploding, my face is somehow numb and dotted in piercing pains at the same time: my nose, lips, left eye, my throat. My crotch feels like it's on fire, my stomach and guts are a whirl of hunger and what feels like 100 kicks. My leggings are still somewhat wrapped around my legs, which are dotted in bruises, though far from in one piece, but I can't seem

to see any of my other clothes anywhere. My phone, however, has somehow made it onto the night stand, next to a condom. Luckily, the opening was facing away from the phone and it seems clean. I flip it open. The light from the screen burns and I yelp. It takes me a moment of breathing and slowly trying to look at the screen and closing my eyes over and over before I can really look at it. It's still open to the contacts, with her number highlighted. My big sister. She'll fix this. When she picks up, she sounds like she's been running. I think that's odd, because she doesn't usually exercise unless i drag her with me.

"Oh my God, Alice! Where are you?!" Her voice is frantic and very loud. I move the top of the phone away from my ear a little.

"Help" is all I can muster to whimper, and I hear her car door close through the phone and the background noise gets quieter.

"I'm coming, babe, where are you?" her favorite term of endearment suddenly sounds a little bittersweet. I'm trying to grasp at my memories of last night, but they're so fuzzy, and so far away. "It's literally two in the afternoon, Alice. You've been gone all night and all morning. We went to Clare's house and you were never there, you little cunt!" I know she's only angry because she's worried, but that still hurts. She sounds like she's about to go into another tirade when I manage to whisper:

"Cecilia..." I hear her hit the steering wheel and she growls.

"That little bitch convinced you to go to a frat party with her?! I'm going to kill her!" I hear her start the car and quickly reverse, then drive off.

#

"Alice, babe, it's okay, I've got you". She's wrapping a blanket around me, and it can't help but hurt as there appear to be bruises a little everywhere on my body. She sobs. As she scoops me into her arms I lean against her chest. Her heart is beating like crazy. I didn't know a heart could beat that fast. As we get into the living room my eyes are accustomed

to actually seeing. On the armchair nearest the front door, the guy who talked to me when the group approached me is crying into someone's t-shirt, which is slowly becoming stained with copious amounts of nose bleed. Cecilia is sitting on the couch nearest me, looking very nervous. Taylor shoots daggers her way with her eyes as we pass by, and Cecilia looks back with a peculiarly accusatory look. She can't help that this happened. She's a bit older than me, and her boyfriend lives here, so of course she wanted me to come with her. I spot the guy who made love with me in the kitchen doorway. He looks concerned, and afraid, and like he hasn't slept all night. He takes a step towards us but my sister's furious gaze gives him other ideas. I can't remember his name. Or his number. I try to ask Taylor to wait but we're practically out the door already. I find myself thrown in the front seat, the seatbelt hastily drawn across my body and clicked into place.

As Taylor gets into the driver's seat, starting to sob, a hand on my shoulder startles me. It's Mallow. my bigger sister who's not as big as Taylor.

"Sis, what happened? You look really bad." I try to tell her that I don't know, but I just can't get any words out. Taylor is muttering under her breath as she drives off. I think she's taking us home until she makes a wrong turn. Trying to figure out where we're going gives me a headache so I close my eyes.

I shiver. It's windy and cold. My eyes open to a view of the back seat window. My seat is leaned back a lot. I can see a burger chain sign high above us. I'm cold because Taylor has peeled the blanket off of me and is currently wrangling a uniform shirt from the nearby restaurant onto me. I remember that one of her friends works there, and must have provided these to borrow. The uniform pants are gently pulled up my legs. Taylor helps me lift my butt to get them on all the way. With clothes on, I feel a little less disgusting, and just a tad more here, even though everything hurts so much I can barely think. She raises the seat carefully, then walks around and gets in next to me. Mallow hands me a bag from the

restaurant. Only now do I notice that she's eating out of a bag of her own. She hands Taylor one too. I open mine to find plenty of cheeseburgers and fries. And it seems Taylor's friend has managed to sneak some tiny soft toys from the latest marketing stunt into my bag. A strawberry milkshake follows next. I eat, and drink, and despite my split lip and sore throat and aching, swollen nose I get through the whole bag of food and pick out one of the little soft toys. It's an animal. A panda? I stare into its sparkling eyes.

"Alice. what the fuck did they do to you? Who the fuck did this to you?!" Taylor is getting agitated again, and Mallow whimpers. I stare into the creature's eyes, trying to remember anything at all. After the shove down the hallway, there's... nothing.

"I don't know..." I mumble, and it doesn't even come out. I try again. It's barely a whisper. Taylor has somehow produced a wet wipe and is trying to clean my face of grease and... oh God. That's coming away with a lot of dried blood on it.

"Of course you know. Who hurt you? Who do I need to kill?" She's so genuinely angry, like she rarely is these days, and I start crying. She's doing her best to calm down and Mallow is petting her shoulder from the back seat, trying to soothe her. My panda's face distorts into swirls and patterns as I keep staring at it, shape and color losing meaning.

#

At home, Taylor helps me out of the car. Mallow runs ahead to unlock the door as Taylor's big, gentle hands carefully hold mine. I'm wobbly, but once on my feet I feel pretty sure I can stay on them. I still let Taylor have me lean on her as she helps me up the stairs and into the house.

We can hear Mallow already running the bath. Taylor is handing me a glass of strawberry milk, which I down after wincing at the cold glass touching my lip. Without the hunger, all I can feel in my belly is pain. Taylor leads me into the bath and as she gets

some soap stirred into the water Mallow starts unbuttoning my shirt. She looks increasingly concerned as she keeps revealing scratches and bruises. She gestures to Taylor to come over and look, and she does. I look down too.

The very center of my belly is a giant bruise, with lighter bruising all around it. Mallow looks shocked, while Taylor looks on in reignited anger. I look empty. Mallow pulls down my pants, and Taylor has to turn away and breathe, leaning against the bathtub. There is so much dried, crusted cum in my thin bush that it's somehow made it all the way home. The very top of the inside of my thighs is stained by blood, mostly.

With my borrowed clothes removed, Taylor and Mallow help me into the bath. Strawberry scented steam fills my nose and I relax, just a little. As the water finally wraps around my shoulder, nothing but my head above water, I physically feel something click in my head, and I wet myself as I start wailing, head leaned against the edge of the bathtub. Tears absolutely flow from my eyes, mixing with the increasingly dirty water. Taylor wets a washcloth and starts scrubbing away gently at the blood and cum and sweat and spilled drinks all over me. She washes me in stoic silence as Mallow pets my hair and offers me toilet paper to wipe my nose with. Once the worst is off of me, Taylor throws the washcloth on the floor, empties the tub, and pours me a fresh one. Then, Mallow washes my hair gently while Taylor scrubs down my body with a new washcloth and plenty of soap. I wince, squirm, and writhe as I cry, the scrubbing putting pressure on every sore spot on my body. Once they're happy with me being clean they drain the tub once more and help me climb out. A big towel is wrapped around my body and they both help dry me off. Taylor growls something to Mallow I can't hear and she disappears from the bathroom for a minute, returning with my comfiest pajamas.

Tucked into Taylor's bed (because it's biggest), the two of them hold me, petting what parts of me they can without hurting me. My tears are finally drying up, and my sobs

and snivels die out. I start telling them what I remember. Every little bit. They both watch me intently as retell my night, and Mallow looks worried, and a little turned on, and Taylor looks furious, and very turned on. Once I'm done, staring once again into the eyes of my panda, Taylor disappears from the room and I soon hear the front door slam, then the sound of her car's engine starting. She roars away. Mallow starts talking about something, maybe one of her friends, or something about physics? I can't really tell.

When Taylor appears in the doorframe of her room several hours later, she's splattered in blood. It doesn't look like any is her own. She nods towards Mallow, and avoids looking at me. She disappears into the bathroom, and I soon hear the shower head. My phone dings, and there's a message from a non-contact.

"im sry 4 drugging u. they sed it wud make it more fun 4 u. pls tell ur sister im sry & ull nvr c me again." I suspect that when she threatened him into apologizing to me, this isn't what she had in mind. It doesn't matter. I dread to think what she did to the rest of those guys. Either way, I pity them.

#

That's definitely a plus. That's two now. Two of them with pluses. Taylor is going to be so angry. She's going to kill him.

Seth, that is. My boyfriend. I didn't even really know what I was doing as I started responding to that initial text. But I did. I forgave him, and we wrote a lot. I ran out of money on my SIM card and had to beg Taylor for a refill. She looked suspicious, but did it anyway. She looked even less happy the second time. We ended up meeting up a few weeks after everything. Actually, Taylor and Mallow insisted I stay home until then. And we met, during my lunch break at school. He was skipping a class to be there. That made me feel special. He apologized again and I said I forgave him and we ended up making out.

We didn't go any further, because my chest still kinda hurts, and... Well. I guess that didn't really matter.

"seth we need 2 talk meet @ swings?"

"k cya @ lunch"

"no b4 skool"

"k cya soon"

I sigh and put my phone away. I'd need to head out early, but that should be okay. I fell asleep in these clothes and they should do another day, and I don't really feel like breakfast. I've been feeling sick every morning for almost two weeks now. That marks two months since... since I met Seth. I sweep a glass of strawberry milk and grab my backpack before heading out the door.

Seth is already by the swings when I get there. He looks stressed. "What took you so long? My first class starts in like 20 minutes." I shrug apologetically. I take my seat on the swing next to his and let my feet make it sway slightly. "Come on, what do you wanna talk about, babe?" I really wish he'd stop calling me that, but telling him hasn't helped.

"Seth, close your eyes." I ask, and he complies. "Hold out your hands". He sighs.

"Aren't you being a little childish, Alice?" He's trying to sound playful, I think. Mostly he just sounds mean. I put the positive pregnancy tests in his reluctantly outstretched hand. And sit back down on my swing.

"Okay, you can open your eyes now..." I mumble, and he looks down at his hands. He stares in disbelief. He blinks at them several times, and I can see on the muscles of his jaw and neck that he's going through about 1000 thoughts and emotions per second right now. For a moment he looks angry but it fades away. Finally, he turns to me.

"Okay. Babe, like five guys were in there with you. How do you even know it's mine?" I swallow and stare at my shoes instead of his face. They don't really provide any

better comfort, but they're less scary than telling my adult boyfriend that he knocked me up at 12. Or that I know it's his because my sister got them all to confess to using condoms or pulling out by pulling a knife on them and beating them up.

"I know. Please, trust me. And there are tests we can do, if you really wanna know..." I get up and stand in front of him. He leans forward until his head rests on my belly. I put my hands on it and pick at his hair.

"So... what? You can't have it obviously." I don't like how he says that like it's a done deal. I remove my hands from his head and he sits up. I avoid meeting his eyes.

"Alice, babe? You're having an abortion, right?" I squirm uncomfortably.

"I don't know that I want that, Seth." I say, and it comes out way less confident than I had in mind. He takes a very deep breath, and I see him strain to remain calm. "We could be happy. We're having fun. Please?"

"Alice, we absolutely cannot have this child." he returns. "You are *twelve*. Do you understand how much trouble I'd get in just for that?"

"I won't press charges, I promise. Please, I don't... I can't tell Taylor. We have to run away. She'll kill you." I squeeze his hands with genuine concern.

"Your sister? What the fuck does she matter? Okay, she's scary, but Alice. I'm married. To my high school sweetheart." He takes his hands back and his head sinks into them, hiding his face. "I'm cheating on my wife with a fucking child. And now you're pregnant? I thought you were too little! I didn't think that could happen!" Him calling me a child stings. He's the one who's always telling me how mature I am, how I'm practically an adult.

"I told you I'm 12. When do you think periods start?" He shrugs. "So what? You're just not going to support me?" I'm getting angry now. My gaze must be intense, because he shies away a little bit.

“Listen, I have to get to class. We can’t talk about this right now. I need... I need to think.” He gets up behind the swing and disappears off of the school grounds, muttering to himself. Left on the swing is a chewing gum still in its wrapper. He gives me one every time I see him after I told him they’re my favorite. The familiar sweetness of strawberry fills my mouth and I slowly drag myself to class. My legs feel like chewing gum too. I have a difficult conversation to have with my sister this afternoon. Maybe learning will distract me. By the time school is over, I haven’t retained a single thing.

#

The vibes at the dinner table are off. It’s like Mallow and Taylor can both tell that something is up. They keep shooting each other glances. I’m picking around at my gas station sushi, which is usually a popular dinner staple at our house, trying to decide what the best way to remove raw fish from a roll that’s a quarter raw fish, when Taylor speaks up.

“Alice, what’s up?” Her voice is overly gentle and casual. She gets like that when she’s trying really hard to make sure I’m taken care of. It’s a little annoying and endearing. She gestures towards my food. I bite my lip and try to make up my mind on how to say what I need to. I take a deep breath.

“I’m going to have a baby.” I say, and my voice comes out smaller than intended. Both Mallow and Taylor stop chewing and stare at me, impossible to read. Mallow is the first to move, glancing at Taylor with a concerned expression. Taylor swallows hard.

“What exactly does that mean, Alice?” she says, and now that casual voice is very, very strained. I stammer, unable to find the right words. “What the fuck does that mean, Alice?” she repeats, and she sounds angry now. I can’t get any words out. Mallow looks very concerned.

“Taylor, you heard her.” Mallow tries to help. She looks between me and Taylor, placing a hand on Taylor’s arm. She appears to be collecting herself.

“Please don’t be mad, sis...” I stare at my plastic tray of half-disassembled sushi.

“We’re getting a paternity test on that. Now.” she demands. I reach for my calendar in the bag next to my chair but Taylor is already standing up and she’s grabbing my hand, pulling me out of the chair. “No, I mean now. We’re going.” The strawberry Jello Mallow had kindly turned onto my plate wobbles as I bump against the table on the way out, and I give it a longing glance.

#

I never dare ask how Taylor does things like convince doctors to perform a paternity test on me immediately, or how she convinces them not to put any of this in my medical records. But that’s what she does. She fixes everything. She ends up somehow scrounging up DNA from every single person who attended the party that night, including Seth. Luckily, she didn’t kill him. Just showed up, demanded DNA, and left. I guess Seth didn’t wanna argue. It’s been almost a week since then.

He’s been avoiding me. Not answering texts, dodging me when I show up at his school... I guess I understand. I asked my sisters, and they knew both him and his wife. They showed me pictures. She’s really pretty — strawberry blonde hair cascading down her shoulders. She looks so grown up. I don’t know what Seth ever saw in me, but he saw enough in me to give me a child, right? And now he wants me to get rid of it.

We find ourselves having breakfast together alone for once, Taylor and I. Mallow had “something to do” before school, which probably means making out with someone somewhere. She’s unusually quiet and distracted, barely picking at her bowl of strawberry yogurt and cereal. “Taylor? Is something wrong?” I ask, and she slowly comes back to reality, sighing deeply.

“We got the paternity test results back.” she says. I can’t help but get a little excited. If I have *proof* that Seth is the father, maybe he’ll still have me. Maybe they’ll both have

me. I mean, she really is pretty- Taylor interrupts my fantasy. "It's not Seth's." She slowly makes her way through another bite of breakfast. I put my spoon down.

"What do you mean..?" I feel the panic start to rise in my body. I need to get away, but I need answers more. "Taylor, who is it?!" That came out louder than it needed to be. I blush and retreat a bit into myself. Taylor is squirming uncomfortably in her seat.

"Does that matter? It's not that stupid guy. Get rid of it." She's trying to sound casual, but she sounds anything but, voice quivering. I stand up.

"It's my baby! You don't get to choose what I don't know!" I know my sister. I run towards her room, sliding around corners, and make it to the desk before she can scramble out of her chair. That's the upside to being small, and her being big and bulky. An open letter is spread out on the desk. I skip through the lines. The father is sample 3. Sample 3 is... Taylor Carlson. I stumble back, luckily into her desk chair. She rounds the doorframe, panting, and as she sees me sitting there, she knows it's too late. She comes up behind me. I swallow. *When would that even..?*

"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I couldn't help myself. I finally found you, after what felt like forever. And you were so beautiful like that. So broken. And I couldn't help myself. I couldn't stop myself. I'm sorry. I'm fucking disgusting." She breaks down and nearly throws herself in her bed, curling up and sobbing loudly into the pillow. I slowly turn towards her.

"Taylor?" my voice barely holds, and tears are blurring my vision. "What do you mean..?" Every second her words dance around my head I get more scared, confused, and at the same time it's slowly, slowly processing with me. "You're the-" My hands cover my mouth and I just stare off into space.

"I'm so sorry, I'm so, so sorry!" she cries, wiping at her face with a corner of her pillow. She cries, and I stare, for a good few minutes.

“That means I don’t have to get rid of it.” My hand instinctively rests on my belly, thumb stroking it. “You won’t run away like Seth. We can be a family. Uhm, more family.” My oldest sister’s desperate sobs slowly peter out. She stirs and sits up in bed. The room is eerily quiet.

“Alice. Come here.” I step a little closer. She’s hard to read right now, and that’s making me very uncomfortable. These big mood swings aren’t necessarily unlike her either but I feel like they’re worse. She’s really scaring me. I stand in front of the edge of the bed and her. She holds out an arm for a hug and I lean in to give one to her, wrapping my arms around her neck. I feel her tense up and squeeze her a little tighter, assuming she’s about to start crying. Instead, a sudden and powerful impact to my lower guts send me tumbling backwards, landing on my butt on the carpet her bed stands on.

I groan, into a whimper, and curl up, holding my belly. “Taylor,” I get out between pants, “why?” She slides off the bed and bends down. With her hands in my armpits she pulls me to me feet. I wince and sob as the movement makes my belly hurt, in ways all too reminiscent of the day after the frat party. She backs me up against the wall opposite her bed before grabbing my wrists with one hand and holding them above my head. She snivels, and I look up. She’s crying again, lip quivering from the sobs she’s holding back.

“I’m sorry, Alice. I have to do this.” She pulls her arm back and I start kicking, struggling to get my hands free. Whichever kicks land she just ignores. I see her elbow jerk slightly and brace myself, eyes squeezed shut, every muscle tensed to the max. The blow lands and I lose my footing, slowly falling to the floor as she lowers my wrists down gently to the point where I can sit on my knees, but my hands are still above my head. I cry, deep and guttural sobs, heaving for air it feels like I’m not getting.

“Please don’t kill us.” I beg. She sighs.

“I won’t kill *you*.” She lifts my hands again until I’m on my feet. Sorta. If it wasn’t for her holding me up I would’ve fallen again. “I’m sorry...” she cries, and she quickly punches me again, three times. The second punch hurts in a new way. I yelp, and I feel like something has just gone very wrong. Taylor lets me sag down to the floor again, letting go completely this time, and I curl up. She turns and walks away towards her bed, leaning on it for support as she tries to catch her shaky, shallow breath. I can barely think. I feel a lingering warmth in my pants and realize I must’ve wet myself. That’s okay, I don’t care. I don’t have time to, because Taylor is approaching me again. She gets down on the floor in front of me, on her knees, and starts pulling at my sweatpants.

“Please, no!” I squeeze through my teeth. As they slip off my feet, together with my panties, Taylor tosses them across the room and yanks my legs apart. I just wail where I lie, not able to or wanting to resist anymore. It’s easier to give in when she’s angry, everyone knows that. She’s never hurt me like this, but I’ve watched it happen over and over again to bullies, gropers, exes, our parents... She puts a finger between my legs. I feel what I assume has to be the piss smear around. She brings her hand to my face. My stomach freezes over and so do I as I see it, covered in blood. A strange color, a slightly weird texture. She wipes it on my sweater.

“See? Just a little more now, just to be sure. Then everything will be okay again. I’ll have fixed this too.” She moves my body, and I am as if a rag doll. She moves me onto my back, my arms splayed to the sides, my legs over her thighs. She raises her fist and punches me again. The angle pushes both in and up at my only somewhat showing belly at the same time and the pain is so overwhelming that, for a second, everything goes black. As the world fades back into view, it does so with Taylor’s face above mine and a sensation I almost can’t make out, any sensory input feeling like nothing compared to what I just went through, and by Taylor’s movements and animalistic sounds, I understand she’s

inside of me. My uterus, no, my entire abdomen cramps worse than any cramp I've ever had before, and it knocks the air out of me. Taylor thrusts harder, and I can feel it fading into view, so to speak.

"I'm sorry," she whines, "I can't help myself." She's proper sobbing again. "You're just so beautiful right now, Alice." The way my head is turned, I can see us in the mirror. I look tiny under her, and sickly pale. There's considerable blood between Taylor and I, and her hips slamming into it and pulling away over and over makes a noise even more sickly than the hue of my skin. I don't see any beauty at all. What I see is a scene out of the worst films Taylor wouldn't let me watch, and that I could only catch a peek of over her shoulder when she watched them on the computer. I throw up, and it tastes like strawberries and death. This only excites Taylor and she picks up the pace.

Soon, she pulls out of me, panting, sobbing, curling up into a ball of self-pity. The pain somehow simultaneously keeps me awake, although I wish I could sleep, and makes me disappear.

#

Taylor had the decency to let me hold a funeral for *it*. I go over it in my head again, making sure to preserve every detail, as I do the night's dishes. My thoughts end in a head shake as I recall the appalling strawberry sorbet she served after the "service". It's been half a year since then. I turned 13 two weeks ago, and Taylor and Mallow say I'm gonna have to wait a bit for my real present. Apparently it's not a good combination with January and freezing weather. You'd think they'd think of the fact that my birthday is in winter before choosing a present, but whatever. Either way, I'd obviously stayed home that day. I barely remember anything after Taylor pulled away from me. I remember being lifted into her bed, screaming, over and over again. I remember feeling empty, both physically and

metaphorically, as Taylor lowered me into the bath and washed me. I remember lying in her arms in my own bed when Mallow walked in after school and joined us.

It's taken a lot longer to recover after this than the party. I don't go to school anymore. At first, the school was really mad and kept sending people over, but Mallow would talk them into leaving after getting to see me study at my desk, which for the first few weeks I only did for the brief moment they were in the house. Now I study a lot. I have to catch up, and Taylor and Mallow aren't super great teachers. As I bend down to put a pot in its proper cabinet spot, a sharp pain in my lower abdomen has me squeak. I quickly pull myself to my feet using the sink. I take a step to the side, and step in a warm puddle.

"God fucking damn it!" I shout, throwing the kitchen towel down to mop up the piss. A bunch of things don't work right after that morning. For one, the constant peeing myself. It's been happening less and less, but I can't even tell I need to go until I just do, and by then it's usually too late. And then there are times like now, where I move wrong... I pour myself a glass of water and down it, more because it's somehow somewhat soothing than because I'm thirsty. Then there are the periods. Or rather, lack thereof. I get cramps, often. But after the first week or so, I never bleed. And I don't feel like I've ovulated since I got pregnant. Whenever I express concern about this to Taylor, she just looks at me with this mix of relief and guilt. Mallow has begged her to take me to a doctor. But she knows this is too far. She's gotten away with a lot, but this would be reported. All of it. And we'd lose each other.

Taylor walks in, carrying some dishes. They're likely from Mallow's room. She's been slacking off lately and eating alone more. I think she finds the situation at the dinner table difficult. She's been avoiding Taylor since the funeral. "What's going on in here?" Her tone is somewhat concerned. I bend at the hip to pick up the towel and hold it away from me.

“I fucking pissed myself again...” I look away from her, embarrassed, and... angry? The slap is such a surprise that I tumble into the counter, nose first. Blood immediately starts gushing out and I grab at my nose to try to keep it from going everywhere. It's been like this since the party, any little thing and it's- Taylor growls, and suddenly her hands on my hips and hers pushed against mine force me further up the counter before her hands start shakily but forcefully tugging at my panties, under my skirt.

“Don't fucking swear!” she grunts as she slips into me. I hold back a yelp appropriate to the searing pain I'm feeling right now as my entire lower body cramps up in protest. She smears my nosebleed over the half of my face that isn't already swimming in it and she starts thrusting more eagerly. “You're so beautiful, Alice. I'm sorry...” She doesn't sound so sorry. I just focus on breathing, despite the bubbles that's causing in the pool of my own blood I'm soaking in.

This has been going on since about two months after the funeral. I do something, Taylor gets mad, she hits me, or yells at me, or throws things, and I bleed, or bruise, or flinch, or cry, and she gets so turned on she has to have me right away. There's no point trying to push her off. No matter how much I've pleaded and appealed to her love for me and how much it hurts me, she has to finish. So also this time. She finishes, pulls out, and pulls my panties back up for me before stumbling backwards a little, tucking herself back into her pants. She slips away, probably to her room by the sound of her footsteps, and I slowly push myself off of the counter. Tucking some paper towel into my nose stops the bleeding eventually, and I get to cleaning off the counter top. Luckily it's plastic or this would have stained really bad. The strawberry stench coming off of the cleaner makes me gag. Mallow wanders in, and upon spotting the paper in my nose and the blood I'm rinsing out of the rag, she hugs me gently from behind, but I wave her away. It's nice of her to comfort me, but I tell her it's okay.

“I was acting inappropriate, and Taylor fixed it. Just like she fixes everything.” Mallow frowns, but doesn’t say anything as she sneaks out of the room.

The End