

Emily unlocked the door to her dorm and walked briskly inside to see Grendel tippity tappity'ing at her laptop as usual. The other girl's face radiated an energy of intense focus, so Emily refrained from saying anything (for fear of being a nuisance). She dropped her backpack and hopped into her bed, then stretched her arms and back. By taking a quick look at the clock on the wall and doing some mental math, she figured out that she had roughly two hours and forty five minutes between her and the beginning of cheer practice. She ate lunch already, having stopped after her last class, so food was accounted for at least until dinner. She flopped on her back and debated whether to watch cute animal videos on *pewtube* or to do her homework. The thought of

rushing out work before her classes early the next morning set her straight on that pretty quickly.

"Later," she mumbled to herself as she snapped open her laptop. The log in screen confronted her and she quickly defeated it by typing in her password, "*FuckoffandletmeopenthecomputerMOM*" which she'd been using for longer than she'd ever admit out loud. She clicked about and opened a web browser, which she used to navigate the school's website and find her assignments. This took a second, as it often did- her professors didn't all excel at organizing things, and there was no universal standard- but proved no significant problem for her. Her classes the next day required she do some light assigned reading, and be ready for a psych quiz. She giggled readily, wondering

how well Tammy must be doing in that class. The hypnotist had to be like, blowing everyone else out of the water, right? She seemed smart too. That made sense- nerds were smart as a rule.

That said, she did now have to go to the library. The constant clicks coming from Grendel's keyboard made it easier to stay focused on work- as if Grendel might somehow know the moment she began goofing off- but they also made it harder to read. Or at least, the noise made it harder to read while retaining anything. She sighed and let her body slump a little as she closed her laptop back up, then sat still for a moment longer. She had time, after all, perhaps she could take a nap? No, no. Better to get stuff done with, really.

Emily hopped to her feet, grabbed a

granola bar (brain food!!), and then dug through her stuff for the appropriate textbook. The girl on the cover hadn't magically started doing anything for her (thank God). She walked towards the exit with her book in tow and snatched her keys as she walked past them.

"Good luck with whatever you're doing," she called to Grendel behind her. The girl seemed to type slower for a few seconds, as if lost in thought. Emily wondered if she'd caused offense. She would soon chide herself for making such a rookie mistake.

"Visiting your pet nerd again, already?" Grendel teased. Emily faced away from her- towards the door- but could still see Grendel's shit eating grin in her mind, bright as day and clear as crystal. She

rolled her eyes which she assumed Grendel could also see without seeing it. The blonde cheerleader took the doorknob in her hand and turned it, but she didn't open the door quite yet. She had to return fire first.

"No, as a matter of fact. I'm *reading*." She made sure to hold her head up all prim and proper like a prissy princess, to emphasize her point. This did not have the intended effect.

"Damn girl, she's got you bragging about reading instead of getting laid?" Emily knew she'd hear the faint jingle of a keyring twirling around a finger if she listened for it, and chose not to. The lack of keyboard clicking noises told her enough as it was. "She's got you trained like a *dog*. Maybe she'll get you a stuffed doggy named Emily

and then adopt a real one and name her after you~"

"Oh fuck youuuuu," Emily retorted while struggling her hardest not to laugh. "I have grades to keep up, okay? Hmph!" She strode out of the dorm and shut the door dramatically, but with care taken not to actually slam it too hard. She saw Michael walking past and decided to tag along with him for a bit. She had time! "Hey Michael, wait up! Hiii!" She darted after him, adding herself to his presence without waiting for a response. He never seemed to mind. Today proved itself to be no exception.

"Oh, hey Emily," he said as she approached, a small smile forming on his face, "good to see you. Got homework you need to do? I'm heading to the library, so..." he trailed off, but Emily spoke up and answered fast

enough that an observer might not have noticed.

"I do, actually!" She chimed in with an easygoing, radiant smile plastered across her face. "That works out perfectly."

Michael smiled back, although his was much less intense, and the two began to walk down the stairs together.

Three fifteen rolled around agonizingly slowly, marking the end of Tammy's last class for the day. She cursed in her head twice- once at herself for signing up for classes so late, and once at her father for being such an obstacle in the way of doing otherwise. She sighed and pulled herself out of her chair with a patent feeling of exhaustion weighing at her bones. Her

backpack felt heavier than usual as she slung it over her shoulders. She still had to write that damn paper. She skulked past the door and over to a water fountain.

The water that spurted out of it proved cold and refreshing as usual. She gulped down a few mouthfuls hoping that would help, but couldn't find disappointment to feel when it didn't. Nevertheless, she still had work she needed to do. She trudged off towards the library. Irritation gnawed distantly at her from somewhere deep in the buried pits of her brain.

She exited the building where her mathematics class was held and made her way slowly across the pathways of her school's campus. The campus itself was beautiful- big trees and scenic benches

and the odd picnicing table stood all about. This provided her with little comfort at the moment, though, because her eyes did not actually absorb any of the information funneling through them into her brain. Instead, she did nothing as she walked but contemplate the paper and feel a smidge doomed. Her legs needed no instruction to carry her around towards the library and that's all the instruction they received.

She paused just outside the building and read a flyer taped to the door. A saint had just been canonized on her birthday? She sighed a sad little half laugh out under her breath before she opened the door and put the mildly amusing thought aside. She stepped past the door, taking her inside the library, and took some pains to steel herself. No panic attacks in public- at least,

not today. She didn't have time for that.

Emily giggled quietly to herself as she picked her book back up. Michael and Arella sat at chairs on opposite sides of one of those long desks they use in office meetings and stuff. This room had three of them arranged into a sort of blocky "U" shape, the one on the right being the one her two cheer squad buddies currently sat at. Emily herself sat on a chair off half a foot or so away gainst the wall.

"Not that funny, you dorks," Arella said with an annoyed rolling of her eyes. "Anyway, practice starta in an hour and a half. I haven't eaten lunch yet, so I'm gonna go do that. Bye." She slung her purse across her torso diagonally and pushed in the chair

she'd been using. "Oh, and Emm?" She added as she shot a look over her shoulder at Emily. "Try to keep your head on straight, okay? If you keep fucking daydreaming like that you'll make us look bad."

Oh please, Emily thought to herself, were all popular cheerleaders and we're surrounded by catholics and ex-catholics. I couldn't make you look bad if I literally smeared mud across your faces. The blonde, of course, did NOT say that part out loud, instead choosing the polite option. In this case, the polite option happened to be a dismissive snort. Arella narrowed her eyes, having obviously noticed, but herself chose her own polite option- namely, pretending that she didn't. She turned and left.

"Who pissed in *her* Mice Crispies?" Michael

asked awkwardly. Emily just shrugged. Figuring out Arella took more brainpower than she could bother to spend for it on a good day. The task never gave any worthwhile returns anyway, even when one did it successfully.

"I'll go too," Emily said as she stood. "I wanna make sure I don't leave this textbook somewhere random and forget it."

"Good plan," said Michael as he procured his laptop from a case under the desk.

"See you in an hour and a half, then. For practice." He plugged it in, flipped it open, and began tapping the desk with his fingers as he waited for it to boot. Emily stepped past him, but slowed for a moment to reach down and pat him on the shoulder as she did. "Thanks," he mumbled in a mildly embarrassed tone. She smiled

and continued on her way.

Tammy grumbled silently to herself as she put the finishing touches on the second page of her paper. She'd finally grabbed a third source but she had yet to cite any but one of them. As she tried to think of how to start the next paragraph, a shape pulled up next to her and took a seat. She stayed put and stared blankly at the screen. Her right hand gripped uncomfortably tightly at the mouse, and her left sat atop her thigh where it clenched and writhed with barely constrained anger. Anger...she couldn't tell if that accurately described her current cocktail of emotions, actually? But what other name would she use?

"H-hey," a voice she recognized spoke from

behind her. Tammy whipped around startled, practically jumped, to see a gentle face with long blonde hair hanging from it. Emily stood behind her, carrying a single textbook. "Is everything okay?"

"She's having a rough patch," spoke another voice from her side, and Tammy jumped again, her legs tangling with the seat as she half-stood. Her chair began to tip, sending her hurtling to the ground, but Emily exploded into action and caught her. The other girl righted Tammy's chair again and Tammy realized, as she clung to the desk and heaved once, that the second speaker was Rika. "Do you want her to stay, Princess?"

"N-no," Tammy mumbled, "no thank you. I'll be fine."

"Oh...kaay, if you insist," Emily complied, sharing an exchange of looks with Rika as she did. Rika smiled, perhaps proud of herself for having so quickly introduced the new girl into the group's dynamic and everyone's places in it. Emily leaned over and kissed Tammy's hair before she turned and walked away (which made Tammy blush and wiggle a little).

"You really like her, don't you," teased Rika as she meshed her fingers together and leaned over the table, her head tilted slightly. "Basic."

"Yeah, yeah, I have basic taste in women," Tammy admitted and rolled her eyes. The smile on her face suggested she didn't actually feel all that bothered by the comment. "Blonde hair, sunny smile, big

tits, bouncy vibes, you know the deal."

"Nerd," sniped Rika. "Weeb. Dork."

"Yes, yes, I'm all those things," sighed Tammy with a dismissive hand wave. "I need to finish this paper. It was due noon on Sunday- so yesterday, I guess- and I asked for an extension but I still don't know if I got it."

"Ah, I see, yeah. That's...stressful," contributed Rika. She turned her gaze to the computer. "Hey, let's go to the bathroom. I'll help you focus."

Now, most girls in her position might interpret this as an offer to suck their dick. Tammy, however, had no fuckin CLUE what to expect. Naturally, this meant that she complied instantly.

"Thank god for single occupant bathrooms," Rika whispered to herself as she closed the door and locked it. If they got caught she could just say she was helping Tammy with her makeup or something. Still, she resolved to be as quick and as quiet as possible. The last thing she needed was some nosey jackass starting rumors. She faced Tammy and smiled as warmly as she could.

"Now, dear, I want you to close your eyes and picture a meadow." Tammy rolled her eyes but played along soon after. The lack of her usual objections both made things easier and gave cause for worry. Rika tried not to dwell much on that. Instead she snuck up behind Tammy and took to

rubbing her shoulders. Very tense ones, them- especially at the moment. *Damn girl,* she thought to herself with a worried frown, *you have THAT many bitches and you STILL walk around wound so tight your skeleton is about to pop?* She muscled past those thoughts, pressing and rubbing and kneading as her aunt had taught her. Those skills hadn't gotten her a man like her mom had always said they would, but she had a sneaking suspicion that both her mom and her aunt would approve of this use too. "Thaaat's it, dear. A nice bright meadow with lots of cute little animals and pretty flowers and sunshine, right?"

"I...guess," Tammy whimpered, audibly stressed. That could be worked with. Rika silently doubled her efforts and slowly, bit by bit, seemed to find results. Tammy's body loosened a little at a time, which fed

Rika's confidence.

"That's okay, don't worry whether it's working," Rika purred right into Tammy's ear. She nuzzled the other girl's head, further weakening her. Tammy sighed. Jackpot. "Good girl. Just focus on that meadow and my voice okay?" Tammy nodded.

Good.

Rika's hands danced across Tammy's body, finding all of her knots and tense spots and working them as needed. She could only do so much- Tammy had to remain standing and fully clothed after all- but she could still tell she was getting results. She continued to purr, low and easy and maternal, as she worked. "Such a pretty place. No stress, just bunnies and

squirrels and little friendly songbirds. Plenty of sun, a nice little pond to drink from..." she smiled wider as Tammy sighed. She made a mental note to text her aunt a thank you sometime that day. "Just try and let gooo. Let my voice in, let it wassssh over you, take you to that idyllic little meadow..."

"Okayyyy..." Tammy replied, fully smiling now and limp like a marionette with its strings cut.

"Good girl," purred Rika. She smiled wide. "Let's get all of those bad vibes out. Take a deeeep breath in." Sure enough, Tammy did just that with no hesitation. Good, good. "Gooood girl. Now, hold for jussst a second. Let all those baaad feelings circle round to your lungs-" she traced from each of Tammy's previously sorest spots to her

lungs for emphasis, giggling as she could literally *feel* Tammy's body growing limper behind the finger as it worked its magic, "- and then, as you exhale, let them ouuuuuut." Tammy breathed out, slowly, steadily. Her body grew comfier, limper. "Good girl. Veeery good girl. Now...when I kiss you, you're gonna wake up ready to kick that paper's ass with my help, kay?"

"Kay," Tammy responded.

"One, two....three."

Rika kissed Tammy on the mouth. Tammy wiggled slightly and woke up feeling much better.

