I

For all of her life, Lucy had heard tale of the so-called “Tamberland Tonnage”—a stupid, bullshit, made up excuse that the women in her family used whenever their metabolisms kicked the bucket and they started to blow up like ticks in summer.

Her family was full of well-to-do southern women that came from a long line of church potlucks and old family recipe books that used more lard than could have possibly been called for, even back when they were originally written. Her Granny Tamberland and Great Aunt Grace were both nearing seventy and could hardly sit on a couch together, let alone try and instill the later generations with better eating habits than “cornbread for every occasion”. The fact that the women in the Tamberland family all wound up eventually turning into total hogs was much less of a mystery in the modern era than it had been back in the fifties or whatever.

Once someone who’d heard that stupid, bullshit, made up story about the women in their family getting fat after forty, every one of them now had a built-in ripcord that they could pull whenever they subconsciously felt like they were at a point that things like willpower and moderation were getting in the way of their… depleted sex lives, or whatever. Lucy didn’t know what it was like to be married, and she sure as hell didn’t know what it was like to be over forty.

The point is, for pretty much *all* of her life, Lucy had been very much against the idea that there was this magical trigger that got flipped in someone’s brain that made them start to get fat. It was diet, it was exercise, and it was the fact that every time anyone in their family got together with anyone *else* in their family they brought enough food to feed an army.

To Lucy, the Tamberland Tonnage was just bunk. An excuse to overeat and overindulge guilt-free while pointing a fat finger at “muh metabolism” with one hand and stuffing your face with the other.

But unless she wanted to come clean about the hand that she had played in the reason that her mother had gained eighty pounds over the course of the year that she turned 42, Lucy was going to have to smile and nod her head for a little while longer until her mom was *completely* hopeless.

Which, with the excuse already wearing well into the forefront of Linda Tamberland’s mind, shouldn’t have been that much longer, if Lucy kept her head down.

“Honey, do you think that you could give me a hand in here?”

“Coming mama!”

She’d already done a lot of the hard work. She’d spent the last half of her Sophomore year and pretty much *all* of her Junior year thus far essentially breaking her mom’s self-sufficient streak. She’d been doing stuff for her all year round, cooking dinners, going grocery shopping… it hadn’t been easy being the keeper of this house, but it had very much been worth it.

“Woof… I could have sworn these used to fit…”

Linda Tamberland had always been a little heavyset, even before all this started. But she’d never been *fat* a day in her life—and *certainly* not the “have to jump into her jeans” kind of fat that Lucy had walked into.

Watching her mom’s thick hefty rolls slosh up and down as she tried and failed to wriggle her way into her biggest pair of pants yet had been gratifying in a way that Lucy wasn’t entirely sure she wanted to deal with at the moment. Her matronly mass of soft tum dimpled around the flanks as she began to develop a more pronounced stomach, the burgeoning bigness jutting out further in the front all the while as her ass began to take up more real estate along the back. Lucy’s mom had gone and gotten good and pink-faced in the effort that she had expended herself with, rosacea crowning the summit of apple cheeks and blotching all the way down to what was becoming a very pronounced double chin.

“Well… *puff*… I guess they *did* once ‘pon a time…” she drawled out breathlessly, waddling stiff-legged towards the bed before plopping down in a meteoric show of size, “Can you… *huff*… please help me get outta these—”

“Sure thing mom, you know I’m always happy to help.”

Lucy had basically Pavlov’d herself into helping her mother out with anything that she needed to over the course of her little project. Whatever and whenever the call to action arose, Lucy did her best to meet it, so long as it kept her mother at the very least calorie neutral. And while it wasn’t exactly *weird* for a daughter to help her poor old mom out of a pair of pants that had grown too tight for her tastes, Lucy still very adamantly pushed her active thoughts into The Vault.

Linda laid down spread-eagle on her bed, chubby legs propped over to one side so that her stomach rose high into the air. Angry red marks where the pants had been fastened struck like pink lightning across the fleshy undercarriage of Lucy’s mom’s gelatinous form, her breathing labored as she collapsed into a pre-sweaty pile while her dutiful daughter sought to getting her sausage legs out of their casing.

And boy, she wasn’t kidding—these pants were *waaay* too tight.

“Didn’t you just get these?” Lucy asked in a voice that was as far and away from ‘teasing’ as possible, “Did I shrink them in the wash?”

“Oh it ain’t your fault…” Linda sniffed, trying desperately to catch her breath, “It’sat *damn* family curse, blowin’ me up into a balloon just ‘cause I had the gall to turn forty.”

If Lucy had been able to take her eyes off of the wobbling tum sloshing about in front of her as she wriggled her mom’s legs out of her pantlegs, she might have rolled them at yet another reference to that stupid, made up bullshit “curse” she kept whining about…

“I knew I should’a stopped at *one* piece’a pie after dinner…”

But then, where was the harm in letting her mom take a little bit of responsibility off her shoulders?

The life of a doting daughter was one that came relatively easy to her, though not without its struggles.

In doing everything that she could to subtly teach her mom that, she could kick her feet up and that *yes*, the house would get clean and the clothes would get washed and et cetera, Lucy had been forced to take a lot of the household responsibilities on herself. All while her mom laid out on the couch vegging out with a movie and her phone, or holed up in her crafts room idling on the old family desktop idling through social media and piddling around with family scrapbooks. Taking the lion’s share of things like grocery shopping, sweeping and mopping had been fine, but cooking was honestly where Lucy felt like she had the hardest time adjusting. For someone who had been coached into sitting back and relaxing, her mama could get surprisingly testy about whenever an old family recipe didn’t taste *juuust* right.

Even still, Lucy doubted that her mama was really *tasting* much of anything with how quickly she seemed to gobble everything up—she probably just wanted to feel like she was still a little in charge, is all.

And Lucy was happy to indulge her mother in every sense of the phrase.

“Are you sure that you used the right recipe?”

The big woman’s cute little nose curled to one side in skepticism as she eyed her third cookie up and down, as if she was going to find evidence to the contrary literally right in front of her face. She’d downright inhaled the first one, taught by months of indulgence to chew first and ask questions later. The second one had lingered a bit longer on her tongue, though not long enough for it to matter. Out of a batch of thirteen, nine more laid in wait for her on a serving dish as Lucy tried her best to talk herself out of a corner.

“…I used extra butter?” she offered unsurely, lowering the platter ever so slightly in a subtle offering of trying another one to be sure, “Does that matter?”

“It matters, but it’s not… the *worst* change in the world.” The elder Tamberland, satisfied in knowing that she had been able to sniff out the minute change, settled happily back into her office chair as she reached for a fourth of her little treats, “You know, your Great Aunt Grace used to make them with lard.”

“Great Aunt Grace used to make *everything* with lard.” Lucy scoffed, placing the plate down within arm’s reach of her mother, “Why else do you think *she’s* mostly lard by this point?”

“Lucy, be nice.” Her mother tittered, gnoshing on her fourth cookie and reaching for a fifth, “You know, it’ll happen to *you* one day too—the more you talk about someone’s weight, the bigger you’ll wind up getting.”

If that were the case, then Lucy’s mama must have talked an awful lot of shit when she was her age.

As Lucy’s mama horked down her fourth cookie and primed herself with a sixth in her free hand, Lucy took it upon herself to drink in the sight of her mother’s growing waistline as best her subconscious would allow her. The soft grunts that followed her leaning forward, the greedy glimmer in her mother’s eyes as she reached for more and more of whatever was put in front of her, the way that she contentedly snacked her way through (seemingly) whatever her daughter waggled in front of her nose… it was enough to make her feel secure in the fact that her mom was easily going to outweigh Aunt Bea come Christmastime; what she wouldn’t have given to wipe that smug smirk off of her cousin Myra’s face after *last* year’s debacle.

“*Mmm*… y’know these’re…” her voice was heavy with want as her jowls jiggled ever so slightly with her careful bites, “These’re pretty good, honey…”

Linda’s nostrils flared as her breathing became slow and sensual, her full lips dusted with cookie crumbs as she settled into a routine. She swallowed her fifth cookie, reaching for a sixth and smacking her lips. She took a quick swig from the Dr. Pepper that she’d gotten for herself from the mini-fridge “donated” to her by her loving daughter—washing down another chunk of chocolate chip cookie and preparing herself to cross the threshold into the latter half of the plate provided. After months and months of being waited on hand and foot, of being pumped full of sweets and treats by merit of her loving and doting daughter, Lucy’s mama had grown especially capable of going through an entire tray of whatever had been brought to her without realizing until it was too late that she just *might* have overindulged.

Must have been that damn Tamberland Tonnage, Lucy could almost hear her mother’s thoughts on the matter as she surveyed the amount of desserts already gone from the plate.

“You didn’t happen to make any *more* did you?”

Lucy clenched her thighs together, suppressing any *unnatural* urges that might have come from that tone her mother used.

“No, but I definitely *can*.” Lucy lied, doing her best not to think about the term paper that was due this side of next midnight, “I’ve got some peanut butter cups, do you want me to—”

“Yeah, try that.” Her mother interjected, lips wet and wanting as her blue eyes glimmered with a learned sort of greed, “And don’t be afraid to use them old recipes, honey—you can probably find some lard at the farmer’s market next time you’re out…”

As Lucy shuffled away, her mother drummed sausage fingers along the swell of a turgid stomach—her mind already dancing around the idea of what her next meal might be…