Last Halloween, Haley West had been suddenly taken from all of those who knew her in the Upstate of South Carolina.

No one was quite sure what exactly had happened, but with her weight and eating habits, most were quick to ascribe the cause of death to her weight. And to their credit, Haley got really, *really* big after a while. Regardless, she went quietly and in her sleep. There had been a funeral service held, her sister flew back in from out of town… it was kind of a whole thing.

And while she and Dani had never really gotten along in the past, it wasn’t like their lives never intersected again after high school. They lived in a small town where news traveled fast and gossip even faster. She and Haley had run into each other once or twice while Dani was a waitress at Big Daddy’s and Haley was in college. They were friendly enough for a while that Dani had gotten a front-row seat to her old high school rival gaining the first forty pounds that would eventually balloon into another three hundred, at least.

And once she got her job at Cutie Pie’s, Dani was seeing Haley’s *mother* every few days except for Haley, so in hindsight it was like Haley was always kind of *there*. Away from Dani. Where Dani had preferred her to be, if she were being honest.

Just because the bitch was dead didn’t mean that she had to pretend that Haley was anything more than she really was—a lazy, spoiled piece of shit who mooched off of her mom and all but refused to get a job. And while Dani wasn’t exactly going to say that to poor April or gawd, even Courtney, it was sometimes frustrating to her that once Haley died she became, like, a *saint*.

“You don’t have to keep literally you two ever did together, Cor.” Dani had told her in December.

“What do I care what Haley’s favorite dish here was? Jesus, just order what *you* want for once.” Dani had plead with her come February.

“I know you’re sad and shit Courtney, but you’ve got to like… pay your rent and shit.” Dani had warned in May.

And by June, when Mrs. West welcomed Courtney into her home after months of trauma-bonding, Dani had fingered that as the worst goddamn idea that either one of them had ever had in their *lives.* Someone who was already so far up Haley’s butt that they never went anywhere without one another and a grieving mama whose love language was extra helpings? That was just *asking* for trouble.

But did anyone listen to the big spooky bitch? *Nooooo.*

And so now, unless she wanted to look like an asshole to one of her only friends *and* her favorite person to work with at the bakery, Dani had been forced to suck up whatever the *fuck* was going on with all of this.

“Courtney, I made your favorites—mashed potatoes, meatloaf, and ribeye!”

“M’comin’, m’comin’…”

And that meant coming over every once in a while.

At least, whenever she was invited. Dani had made her feelings on the matter known to some small extent for sure, and that had put some distance between her and the narrowing gyres that were Courtney and April. But not so much that they didn’t invite her over at least once a month. But as the times between visits got longer and longer apart, the shock of seeing the two of them together was getting bigger and bigger…

Among other things that were getting bigger and bigger.

“Woof… hey Dani… sorry to… huff… keep you waiting…”

Courtney had always been kind of top-heavy. She’d always been this chesty blonde girl who got asked out because of how big her chest was over any outstanding looks or sense of personality. But until she’d started hanging out with Haley, she’d never been *fat*. A little thicc maybe, but you didn’t get tits like hers from eating salads. Courtney had always been just a bit bigger than other girls upstairs, but since last Halloween, Courtney was just…

***BOOM! BOOM!* *BOOM!***

“I took a nap after lunch and forgot to set my alarm.”

Courtney was just getting *bigger*.

When Haley had passed, Courtney had already been suitably corrupted into the total calorie sponge that had soaked up enough of Haley’s runoffs until she couldn’t even touch her toes. She could no sooner press her nose against a wall than she could do twenty jumping jacks without keeling over! Haley’s lazy ways and habits had rubbed off on her something fierce, and it was only since Haley’s passing that Dani could have ever considered Courtney “small”.

Because by three days before Halloween a year later, Courtney had gained almost a hundred pounds.

“Woof… smells great, April!” Courtney panted out, still winded from the short jaunt that spanned the kitchen from her downstairs bedroom, “M’*starving!*”

“Well you came to the *right* place, honey.” Mrs. West’s wide, ponderous backside sloshed back and forth beneath her capri pants, “You girls go ahead and dig in, I’ve just got a few finishing touches to make.”

After she placed the big bowl of home-made potatoes in front of her ostensive tenant and dinner guest for the evening, April wiped a chubby white finger across the top of the mountain of mashed spuds and suckled it clean with a satisfied *smack*.

“Gotta make sure everything tastes *juuuuuust* right.”

April’s expansion, Dani had been more privy to. She worked with the woman a few days out of the week. She’d seen her ass get fatter much the same way as she’d seen Haley’s expand back when she only had one chin. And with the amount of time that woman spent in the kitchen anyway, getting used to cooking such big portions, it wasn’t like Dani couldn’t forgive her for dipping into her own supply a little. She was under a lot, and doing her best to keep a brave face up.

But even still, April was beginning to look more and more like her dearly departed (and double wide) daughter every day, it felt like.

As opposed to Courtney, who just… only in the right light.

It felt really weird for Dani to even think about this, but in a weird way…

Courtney had really fell into the hole that Haley left when she died awfully quickly.

Like, that wasn’t *normal*, right? Grief is grief, but ever since Courtney had moved into the guest bedroom she’d been acting strangely. And things had been *weird* over at April’s house ever since Haley died. Pictures were falling off the walls and mirrors were getting cracked. And despite all the black she wore and the fact that she had more than a few pentagram earrings, Dani sure as shit didn’t fuck with the supernatural.

It didn’t help that it had suddenly stopped once Courtney moved in.

Once Courtney took up the Haley-sized vacancy left in her coworker’s life, Dani couldn’t help but notice that all of April’s stories stopped being about spooky things happened around the house and almost exclusively about Courtney.

“What’s wrong, hun?” Ms. West’s cheek meat rolled into another dimple as she turned her head, “I said you could go ahead. I’ll be at the table in a minute.”

“What?” Dani blinked dumbly, “Sorry, uh… th-thanks April.”

There was this *mirror* that hung in the living room. Just behind the couch. It had been there since that time Dani had come over for Christmas back when Haley had invited her over on her first Christmas back. Before she had more chins than she had eyebrows and could walk more than a few feet without getting winded. Dani had remembered it when she, Courtney, Haley and Tara accidentally broke their old couch trying to sit down on it.

And Dani had always felt like it was in a weird position. Because all it did was reflect the TV and anyone walking to the couch. But from the head of the table, the one where nobody sat, Dani was at enough of an angle that she could see into it from the kitchen.

And she could have *sworn* that she saw—

“Hey April?” Courtney extended a fleshy arm forward to get her landlord’s attention, “Think I could get some more gravy over here?”

“See? I told you that you’d like it if you tried it!” Ms. West’s voice jumped an octave in pride as she hurried over at chafing speeds to serve Courtney a ladleful, “You would be the *second* girl to come around to it after saying she didn’t like it.”

“Awww. You’re so sweet.” Courtney smiled cheekily, “It’s real good, I can see why we both liked it so much.”

Dani didn’t really know what *exactly* was going on around here, but something wasn’t right. And it was getting to the point where she couldn’t ignore it anymore. April and Courtney were acting *weird* and she was getting so *fat* and almost none of it was going to her tits anymore as she just sort of *ballooned outwards* until she…

Well, until she looked like Haley in the mirror—from behind, anyway.

From behind *only,* Dani reiterated quietly to herself. But when she hunkered down it was hard to see how chesty she was, and the lighting in this kitchen really made Courtney’s hair look more brown than it used to be. But *something* about seeing Courtney’s big ass reflected back at her was just… jarring somehow.

It really, *really* didn’t look like Courtney’s face peering behind her meaty shoulder.

It didn’t feel like Courtney when they occasionally made eye-contact through the mirror.

And it really, *really* didn’t feel like Courtney when she smiled.

She’d watched Courtney waddle over, seen the shape that crossed through with her own two eyes. Not just Courtney’s rapidly fattening physique, but the blur that lingered just in the corner of Dani’s eyes. The one that she only ever saw in this creepy house.

Occasionally, April would talk about seeing it too. But she’d never given it as much thought as Dani had. Fuck, April kept herself so busy *not* dealing with the feelings involved with losing her daughter that she probably wouldn’t have noticed it if she tried to. And Courtney…

Courtney didn’t talk to her as much these days.

And when she did, they just seemed to fight all the time. She was sleeping late and staying home a lot. She didn’t really want to *do* anything but sleep late and stay home a lot. And Mrs. West was just as happy as can be to keep on chugging like nothing had changed, without questioning the *sudden* shift in personality that Courtney had undergone.

“Hey Dani, you gonna finish that or what?” Courtney chuckled from the other head of the table, “Hey, if you’re not gonna eat it, I will.”

Watching her struggle to lean forward, even with those massive honkers of hers, it was obvious that Courtney was just going to keep getting bigger the longer that she lived here. She ate with a crazed look in her eyes that seemed to come with the territory—Dani could have sworn that she’d seen that look before…

“Nah, you have it.” Dani cleared her throat, “I’m… not feeling very hungry.”

“Suit yerself.” Courtney’s voice grew thick and husky as she threw one huge arm forward to grab at Dani’s plate, “Mmm… come to Courtney~”

Dani hadn’t been *afraid* when she accepted this invitation. She hadn’t been *afraid* when she decided that she was going to say something at dinner to the both of them. But she’d been a little wary about the fact that it felt like it was twenty degrees cooler inside the house than it was when she walked in. And she hadn’t liked it when Ms. West talked about Courtney spending so much time in Haley’s room.

But she started having second thoughts when “Courtney” was making eye contact with her from the head of the table and the mirror that hung over the couch.