III

Ever since the whole Calahree debacle, the average portion sizes at Freya’s Hearth had almost doubled.

That wasn’t to say that doubling in size wasn’t as big as the average portion size got. For a while, it tripled. Then it *quadrupled* at the height of her influence over the surrounding area. But that was a short peak—slowly, very slowly, as everyone and everything began to shrink back down to normal, the portion sizes followed suit.

Apparently, no one had told either of the super-sized spell slingers stuffing themselves on either side of the most loaded plate this side of the mountain.

“How can a place go downhill so *quickly*?” Griselda groused as she ripped a chunk of chicken off the bone, “The food’s fine *I suppose,* but the portion sizes are abysmal.”

“*That* we can agree on.” Malary huffed, one pillowy blue arm thrown over the back of her chair as she (unwisely) leaned backwards against the cracking spindles, “I’m *still* waiting on that second order of venison to come out.”

“You put in that order half an hour ago.”

“You don’t have to tell *me* twice.”

With stomachs barreling up to the table and ass cheeks pouring over the sides of their seats, Griselda and Malary painted quite the picture. Two huffy heifers looking around for their server, lips smacking and guts grumbling as they made their way through a downright intimidating amount of food. Not only that, but they were loud as could be! Their conversation about the “criticisms” they were lobbying against the best (and admittedly, only) place to eat in Aemple were hardly a private conversation at this point.

And the more plates that they piled up, the fuller and more uncomfortable they became. One might have thought that food would have been the perfect way to pacify these porkers, but if anything it only tempted into further indulgence! They had both been on diets for *so long* that getting the free pass to cheat for the day was irresistible!

“Juss… maybe a little more.” Griselda drummed the swell of her stomach as it domed out and around her, looking off contemplatively as she gnawed on the last of her chicken leg, “Wanna split the venison and then order another bird?”

“Get your own deer meat, you oinker.” Malary sniffed, big blue tits shimmying as she struggled to cross her arms, “You can watch me eat like I had to watch *your* fat ass eat while I waited on my venison—*which still hasn’t arrived, by the way*.”

The poor shellshocked Hermia knew better than to look up across the bar at the accusation of poor service. She’d been dealing with these two since before they ever sat down—with almost no help from Greta, she would have liked to add—and they’d been nothing but demanding to her in return! If she weren’t so withdrawn, she might have been downright upset about it!

“Oh I don’t know what you’re so upset about.” Greta rolled her eyes, “Freya treats us just as bad when she’s hungry.”

“Yeah, but they shouldn’t *be* hungry—have you *seen* how much food I’ve been carrying out?” Hermia whined, “Greta they’re gonna be here all night!”

“That sounds like a *you and Jae* problem.” Greta’s chubby face smirked, “Because *my* shift ends in about twenty minutes.”

*“Gretaaaa!!”*

Back at the table and its graveyard of entrees, Malary and Griselda were still happy to continue their conversation about the various failings of the staff, the entertainment, the food… anything and everything that these disgruntled double-wides could think of. It hadn’t even dawned on the two of them that they were getting along for the first time since the four of them had moved into the new tower. At the expense of almost everyone around them, sure, but it was still a noteworthy achievement.

“You know, you’re not half bad on a full stomach.” Griselda chuckled, tapping the side of her globular green gut as she placed the vanquished thigh down, “Maybe we should keep you off that diet? You’re much more bearable when you’re not hangry all the time.”

“Like you’re one to talk—a whole turkey in and you’re the one throwing out compliments for the first time in six months.”

Under other circumstances, it might have actually been a kind of sweet revelation. That the two of them actually had more in common than they thought (that is, having big mouths and brassy attitudes) and that cohabitation might be far more possible than they’d believed it to be (so long as they could keep themselves within a reasonable amount of “stuffed”).

Admittedly, how much they’d abused the waitresses *did* take some of the sweetness out of the situation.

“I’m… sorry I called you a fat wad of snot.” Malary sheepishly sloshed her beer a bit before taking a long, palate-cleaning slurp, “I know that you’re only in the shape you are because of me in the first place.”

“Well...” Griselda shrugged, double chin squishing outward slightly as she rose her flabby chest, “I’m sorry that I called you a big fat pile of blue blubber.”

“You, uh… you only called me a pile of blue blubber.”

“Oh! Er…” the vast and verdant fleshed barrel of a witch cleared her throat unsurely, “Right. My mistake.”

The two of them shared a good-natured, gut-rippling chuckle as their waitress worked up the courage to come over and continue to wait on them. Malary’s eyes grew big and her smile grew wicked as she saw the pigtailed Hermia slowly working her way up, and Griselda soon found herself feeling up to enduring this establishment for just a little while longer.

“You wanna get the *most* out of this little cheat day we’ve got going on?” Malary grinned, “Call it even?”

“If you’re not telling Gabby, I’m *most definitely* not going to tell her.”

“Good—we’ll use the gold that she stashed in that green chest out back.”

“Sounds like a—*hey wait a second*!”

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And so it was that, over the course of Gabby’s much-needed break from plugging her ears and stomping around the Grimoire Tower, Griselda and Malary would indulge one another in the occasional trip into town—and then, of course, indulge themselves.

Every few days, the two weighty witches would waddle into town and gorge themselves into an absolute stupor, and then they would make their slow and ponderous way back to the tower where Ginny, none the wiser, would welcome them back with open arms—happy to see that they were getting along for the first time in what felt like forever.

Luckily for Griselda and Malary (not to mention their waistlines), Gabby wouldn’t be gone *too* terribly long.

But *un*fortunately, she had been gone for just long enough that they had not yet returned from their secret excursion into town.

It was two weeks later when Gabriella Grimoire’s white-clad visage appeared in the great transportation circle inscribed in the center hall, the click-clack of her adventuring boots coming down the way and into the dining room, alerting Ginny of her older sister’s arrival.

“Gabby~!!” the youngest catapulted herself onto the grouchy green-skinned gal and elicited a smile, “Are you back from adventuring?!”

“For now, yeah.”

Gabby chuckled politely as she pried Ginny off her; as much as living with her sisters (and Malary) could drive her up the stone walls of their tower sometimes, it really was nice to be welcomed back with such open arms. And the smell of something delicious cooking in the kitchen. She’d spent so long up in the mountains with Alma that she’d really missed the smell of a home-cooked meal that *wasn’t* done over a fireplace.

“Smells like I got back just in time—are Griselda and Malary in there?” Gabby nodded towards the dining area, just out of her line of sight from behind the corner, “I hear loud, obnoxious chewing.”

“Oh no, me and Levvy are having a nice night in.” Ginny squeaked, clasping her hands together cutely, “Those two went into town together.”

“…what, like *together* together?”

“Yeah! They’ve been getting along super great since you left!” Ginny clucked, “No fights or nuthin’—every few days, they just go out for a walk and come back happy as can be!”

“And you just… *let* them waddle around without your supervision, huh?” Gabby smirked as she folded her arms, “You never stopped to think that they might be going into town to… oh, I don’t know… cheat on their diet?”

“Whaaaat, no waaaaay.” Ginny was clearly overcome with the possibility in the middle of her denial of it, “That, uh… y’know… those two, uh—”

“I’ll go into town and get them.” Gabby sighed, “You two stay here and, uh…”

The sounds of Leveret stuffing herself hadn’t calmed down; even after Gabby’s entrance intruded on their intimate dinner for two, the sounds of the black-haired bunny gorging herself had played as a backdrop to Gabby getting caught up with whatever she’d missed.

“…k-keep doing what you’re doing.”

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The scene that had been painted was one of incriminating indulgence—both Griselda and Malary spread wide across their tavern chairs, the table in front of them piled high with any evidence to the contrary that they had been able to control themselves while the one person who was most committed to ridding Calahree’s influence from their figures had been away. The long walk from the Badlands into Aemple had done little to improve Gabby’s mood, and seeing both of her chunkiest coven sisters stuffing themselves when they had been almost expressly forbidden to partake in such indulgence set her temper going.

“I *have* to tell you, Mal—with Geneva and her girlfriend busy rocking the tower to its foundations and Gabby getting away from it all, I haven’t had this much fun in *years*.”

“Well, considering that I haven’t had to pay for much of any of it, I’m inclined to agree with you there.” Malary’s chubby blue cheeks were flush and dimpled as she pat her swollen gut, “If it were up to me, we’d be doing this every night.”

“Well the good news is that we can—at least until Gabby comes back.” Griselda chuckled, lowering a glistening slice of ham into her mouth like a queen on a dais, “Then we have to reel it back in.”

“Or at least get better at hiding it.”

The two shared a treacherous titter among themselves, clanking their tankards of beer against one another and throwing their heads back. Boisterous tipsy laughter filled their table as they enjoyed their night out together, the two witches bwa-ha’ing like old friends and not the bitter rivals that they had made themselves out to be in the pursuit of ultimate power.

It wasn’t until Griselda thought that she saw Gabby that her mood began to change. Once she had confirmed that yes, the white-clad Goblin Elf slowly making her way towards their table was indeed her prodigal sister, all of the color drained from her face. Malary, who had her back to the door, was none the wiser that the two of them had been busted.

“It shouldn’t be *too* hard—it’s not like either of your sisters are particularly smart, Griselda.” Malary chortled to herself, picking up a chunk of chicken and popping it into her mouth, “Ginny’s absolutely consumed with her libido, and Gabby’s not much better—running away with that warrior monk girlfriend of hers for the better part of the month and leaving us in Ginny’s care? That dancer girl she’s seeing has had better ideas!”

“Uh… M… Malary, I—”

“Oh I know. They’re your sisters, and that’s sweet. But come on—you and I are *clearly* the brains behind the operation these days.”

As Gabby grew ever closer, the sounds of Freya’s Hearth around them deadened Malary’s ears to her coven sister’s approach. The click clack of her boots becoming a stomp as she drew ever near, and Malary continued to incriminate herself.

“Why, I’m sure we could think up *something—*she’d never know we were here!”

And as a green hand placed itself on Malary’s flabby shoulder, she was almost immediately proven wrong.