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Contains: *Breast Expansion*

## V

With the end of her first semester at Lake Valley Community College drawing near, Candace had to shop for classes to fill her second semester. After meeting with her advisor, she decided to fill her schedule with entry-level business classes.

The social media accounts Skylar had helped her set up had gone off faster than she would have thought possible. Within two months of her posting a few photos and videos every day, Candace started getting DMs with brand collaboration offers. Cosmetics companies; prosthetics brands with wigs, acrylics, and false eyelashes; costume shops that carried outfits for every anime character she'd ever heard of and many she hadn't; and even normal clothes and lingerie brands. She ignored most of the clothing brands—they were the cheap, fast-fashion kind of stuff Mandy always wore—but she signed up with several of the others.

Soon, Candace was finding packages on Les's front stoop every few days. She didn't make any real money off of any of it, but between her lower rent and more free cosplay gear than she could use, her meager checking account balance was rising for the first time since she started school. The lingerie shops in particular took a lot of the pain off her poor debit card.

"Business classes, huh?" Skylar asked as they had lunch at the chain Tex-Mex place across the parking lot from Headlights.

"I'm not going to, like, become a CEO or anything," Candace said as she loaded a tortilla chip with queso. "I probably won't even get all the way to a BBA." She popped the chip in her mouth, eyes going wide when a drop of runny cheese slid free from the chip on its journey from the queso bowl to her mouth.

Candace used her napkin to wipe up the small mess, which had mercifully landed on the table without hitting her shirt, which was taking up more space in front of her all the time. "But with all these brand deals, I want to make sure I'm not getting taken advantage of, you know?"

"Oh yeah, valid for sure. Soon you're going to be all hashtag girlboss and leave the rest of us behind."

Candace laughed. "Don't be insane. I mean, I guess I don't want to wait tables forever, but Headlights is kind of growing on me, you know?"

Skylar's gaze darted to the Pokémon printed on Candace's shirt, warped by her recently acquired assets. "For real..." Her eyes shot back to her plate, and she forked a bite of overcooked pasta. "Anyway, do you know what cosplay you're going to do for the next con?"

Candace's grin was so mischievous it was almost wicked. "I'm still bouncing between a few ideas, but I think I'm going to go with something a little more daring this time."

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Standing to the side of the main concourse, Candace's pulse raced like a club remix, and she couldn't make her lungs fill all the way. But instead of panic, dread, or terror at the masses of people observing her, Candace felt a rush, a delight, a thrill. The crowd jostled at an invisible perimeter around Candace and a few other cosplayers, holding up phones, cameras, and even a tablet. She basked in their attention, shifting from pose to pose as if she were in Les's backyard with Skylar, not surrounded by adoring, all-but-drooling fans.

When the iconic green and white striped bikini top arrived in the mail, Candace tossed it immediately onto her thrift store donation pile. Skylar had, of course, spotted it immediately and insisted she at least try it on. Candace found the red-orange wig in a half-off sale and bought it to someday cosplay one of the *Quintessential Quintuplets*, though she hadn't decided which one. With those two items, one of Candace's normal pairs of jeans nearly completed the fit. The gold buckle on her belt wasn't quite right, but close enough for a costume she'd thrown together reluctantly. Skylar had even roped Les into helping her paint the blue tattoo on Candace's arm. She had a suspiciously timed bout of tingling in her bed later that night.

The posts of Candace dressed as Nami had blown up on her socials. By the time the con came around, her custom-ordered cosplay almost wouldn't fit.

"Why don't you just wear the outfit we did for that shoot last month?" Skylar asked, watching Candace pluck at the white blouse clinging to her chest like paint.

"I'm not going out in public in a bikini top."

Skylar looked between Candace and the artwork on her phone. The dark sandals were a perfect match, the bright red barmaid dress showed off most of her friend's thighs, and cinched her waist almost as narrow as her anime counterpart. And the white blouse was filled so full that no one would mistake Candace for anything other than Nami at the start of the Whole Cake Island arc of *One Piece*.

"Beaches are public..." Skylar mused.

"Yeah, well, a convention center isn't a beach. And this is about sharing a love for the stories, not parading myself around like a piece of meat."

One of Skylar's blonde eyebrows rose, and Candace's body stiffened. She braced herself for some remark on the amount of skin she was showing, or for her friend to point out that the distinction was ridiculous—in many ways, the red-white outfit was every bit as provocative as the bikini top with jeans, if not more so.

But Skylar said none of those things. "I think it looks great. Let's get the wig figured out and get some pics."

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Les swiped through pics and reels on his second Instagram account. The posts from the most recent anime convention were some of the best he'd seen in a long time. He'd already added several *Haikyuu* boys and curvy Ferns to his stockpile of saved posts. His feed was annoyingly filled with ads and old memes, but every few posts, he found something worth giving a second look.

Candace hadn't shown off her second Nami cosplay for him before she left for the con. Her fits were getting more and more character-accurate since she started doing those brand deals. His mind replayed the memory of painting the blue tattoo on her arm in full HD. He couldn't stop thinking about how his housemate's boobs just kept getting bigger and bigger.

Les hated labels. The last thing the world needed was more ways to stereotype people. As a kid, he thought he was just weird. Once he got to high school, it didn't take too long for him to figure out he was attracted to men. It had taken a few years and several late-night heart-to-hearts with past partners to accept that he was

attracted to beautiful humans regardless of gender or sexual identity. Long legs, muscled chests, firm asses, six packs, love handles, and amazing boobs. And god damn, did Candace have amazing boobs.

“Bro, are you even watching?” George scowled at him from across the couch.

“I can multitask,” Les said.

“What’s going on, then?”

Les locked his phone and set it screen-down on his leg. “Anya is stressing out about earning a star, and Yor is sneaking around the school trying not to let Anya see her.”

George huffed.

“I’ve seen this before, dude. Besides, we’re watching the dub—get off my nuts.”

“Fine, fine.”

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Her double set of Nami cosplays sent Candace’s engagement numbers skyrocketing. She mixed the pics Skylar had taken into her daily posts after the con, alternating with casual shots and a few reposts from the bikini shoot. All over the world, and on the other side of her bedroom wall, Candace’s fans pleased themselves to her photos. When the weather started to warm up again, she had Skylar take a fresh batch of pics in her original Nami cosplay. There was very little leftover string after she got the bikini top tied. The white blouse for her con outfit didn’t fit at all.

“You know,” Skylar said, watching Candace’s breasts jut outward from her ribs, nearly as gravity-defying as a real-life anime girl. “You could make real bank with a members-only site.”

Candace shifted her pose, pointing excitedly into the distance and following her finger with her gaze. “What do you mean, members-only?”

“You know, like OnlyFans or something.”

Candace faced her friend with an angry scowl, planting both fists on her hips. It was an accidentally iconic Nami pose, and Skylar snapped several pics.

“Absolutely not. Remember what I said about not whoring myself out for money?”

Skylar held up a defensive hand. “I’m not saying you should start making corn. You could do most of the same stuff you’re doing now, you’d just have a place to post those pics and vids that get taken down on the mainstream apps.”

“My pictures don’t get taken down!” Candace stomped one foot, sending her torpedo-like boobs gainaxing and making her bikini top slip.

Skylar eyed the hints of areola peeking out of Candace’s blue and white bikini. “I promise you, babe, some of *these* pics aren’t going to pass ‘community guidelines.’”

Candace pouted, adjusting herself in the bikini while Skylar resisted the urge to snap more pics. “Well, if they don’t, then they don’t. I’m still not becoming an OnlyFans girl.”

“Fair enough...”

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Les lay in the afterglow with George’s head resting in the crook of his shoulder, arms folded under the pillow beneath his head. George rarely stayed over, and even less so since Candace had moved in. They hadn’t talked about it, but Les figured George had picked up on his discomfort showing too much PDA around his housemate.

As much as he hated squandering the little time they got together, Les couldn’t stop thinking about Candace. She was funny and sweet, and even though he’d worried that having a second person in the house would cramp his vibe, her bubbly presence made him look forward to being home. The number of products in his bathroom had more than doubled, but the mélange of vanilla, lilac, and shea butter always made him smile. He even found her ever-present bobby pins littering the sink endearing.

Then there was the time she'd left one of her bras hanging in the bathroom with a tag facing out that read 30J. Les knew basically nothing about bra sizes, but he'd never heard of a size larger than F.

"Hey..." George's breath tickled against his bare chest.

"Hmm?"

"So... I don't want to be 'that guy...'"

"Okay..."

"And, don't get me wrong—You were great. Better than usual, if anything..."

Les pulled his hands out from under his head, and George shifted away. The cool air along his side at the loss of contact wasn't entirely unwelcome. He met his boyfriend's eyes. "Spill it, G."

George looked away, then back at him. His lips parted, then closed. He stared off into the distance. Les was about to prompt him again when he finally spoke.

"Alright, so... there's not really a polite way to say this."

Les waited.

"You seemed sort of—distracted?"

"Distracted."

George's eyes closed. He rolled onto his back and stared up at the ceiling. "Ugh, it sounds so needy when I say it out loud. And when we get so few nights together because of our schedules."

Les bit back a retort. His schedule was every bit as busy as George's, and he always made time for them. "What are you trying to say?"

"It's like... you're here, but you're not *here*." George put a hand over his eyes. "God, what a fucking cliché..."

Now that he'd finally gotten to it, the accusation cut Les like a careless paring knife. "Well... If I'm honest... There's probably a little bit of truth to that."

George sighed, as if he'd been a vacuum-sealed bag of frozen meat, and Les's admission let air back in. "It's her, isn't it?"

"Her who?"

George flicked his arm. "Don't try to play dumb now. You're obviously down bad for Miss Anime Tits staying in your spare bedroom."

"Jesus, keep your voice down," Les hissed.

"Fuck's sake, Les. She's not even here."

"Still..."

"Whatever. I think you should go for it."

"What!?"

"What, what? It's not like we're exclusive. If you like her that much, you should just tell her."

"I can't do that."

"Why the hell not?"

"She's my roommate... It would make things weird. 'Don't shit where you eat' and all that."

George covered his face with his hand again. "I can't believe I'm dating the only prudish pan in the city..."

Les bumped an elbow into George's ribs. "Fuck you, dude." He couldn't stop the chuckle that followed. "It's just... complicated."

"Well, maybe you should find a way to un-complicate it."

"You're just full of clichés tonight. Did you have a Nora Ephron marathon recently or something?"

George paused. "They're showing a bunch of Julia Roberts classics at the restaurant..."

"Ha!"

“Doesn’t make me wrong, though! You can’t sit here thirsting after your roommate forever. Figure your shit out, dude.”

Les lay back and stared at the ceiling, wishing he knew how.