

Tea walked down the last row of potted plants in the long greenhouse building. She felt a little guilty for letting a family member get her this job, but she loved it too much to feel too bad about it. Being around plants all day was the most “at home” she’d felt since leaving Faewyld. She hummed a bright melody like the pattering of spring showers through a forest canopy, barely aware of the trickle of magic flowing out of her. She touched leaves and stems as she went, adding a bit of water here, pruning a dead leave there. All along the row behind her, the plants were a little greener, their leaves a little firmer.

Finishing her last rounds of the day, Tea walked to the computer to clock out. On the way, she felt the device in her pocket buzzing. Still not used to human technology, Tea pulled the phone from her pocket, rotating it several times until it was upright, and scanned her face properly. She had a message from her sister.

[I’m taking an extra shift at the library because someone called in sick. You’ll be on your own for dinner tonight.]

Tea tapped out a reply.

[Dear Rosé, thank you for letting me know. I’ll see you at home after your shift. Regards, Tea]

Three dots flashed on the screen, and then Rosé’s reply appeared.

[I know it’s you. You don’t have to sign your texts like it’s a letter.]

[Dear Rosé, sorry. Regards, Tea]

As she pressed send, Tea realized she’d done it again. She could almost feel her sister rolling her eyes from across the university campus.

Slipping on the new coat that Hope convinced her to buy, Tea left the botany lab and started walking back across town to their apartment. She tried to remember what food they had in their refrigerator and wondered what she should make. She felt a twinge of hunger in her stomach—her body was fatigued from using magic all day, but she assumed it was just normal tiredness from being on her feet for the past few hours. Without her uptight sister around to scold her for wasting money, she decided to go out to eat instead of cooking at home. And she knew just the place.

“Hello, one?” The middle-aged Asian woman greeted Tea as she walked into the buffet.

"Just one," Tea said.

The woman led her to a table and asked for her drink order. When she'd come here with Hope and her sister, she'd gotten water like Rosé, but after their human friend let her try a sip of her drink, she knew what she wanted. "Cherry coke, please."

Tea grabbed a warm plate from the stack and worked her way slowly down the buffet tables. When she'd been here before, Rosé had hovered over her while picking food and shot warning looks every time she went back for more. Hope had said buffets were "all you can eat," so why was it so wrong for her to go back for a third plate just because Rosé and Hope were done eating?

Today it would be different. Tea was determined to get all her favorites from the time before and try as many new things as she could. She scooped a mound of fried rice onto her plate. She'd eaten rice many times back in Faewyld, but whatever these humans put in it was completely different. Shiny and yellow, dotted with little squares of orange and green peas, it was almost good enough to eat by itself. Not that Tea had any intention of doing so. She piled one side of the plate with broccoli beef and another with orange chicken.

She'd been hesitant to eat flesh—meat, she had to remember to call it meat—when she and her sister came to the human world, but she'd had no idea it could be prepared this way. The meat Rosé put in tacos was hearty, and if she stopped her twin from dousing it in that red sauce, it wasn't too spicy. The circles and chunks of meat in the pizza Hope shared with them were also good, hearty, and just spicy enough without making Tea's mouth burn. But the meat at this buffet was covered with some kind of crunchy coating or smothered in sweet sauce, usually both. Balancing two sugar-dusted buns on her plate, Tea considered grabbing a second one. But then, some of the food might get cold before she could eat it all, so she carried her overloaded plate back to her table.

Each bite was like a symphony for her taste buds. One kind of chicken was too spicy, so she slid it to the side of her plate and dug into the rest. Warm and sticky like honey but sweeter than any fruit she had back home, every chunk of meat and forkful of rice was like curling up under a warm quilt on a chill fall evening.

Tea finished her first plate—except for that spicy chicken—and went up for another. This time she got more vegetables—she couldn't have a whole meal of so much meat—and brown noodles instead of rice. They were called "lo mein," and they were even

more greasy and delicious than fried rice. The vegetables, too, were fried, some coated in a sweet sauce and others cooked in something called “tempura” that gave a delightful crunch to soft things like carrots and courgette. Tea lost herself in a world of flavors as she bit and chewed and swallowed bite after bite.

The third time she went back to the buffet tables, Tea felt like her body was moving extra slow, almost like she was wading through water to cross the restaurant. She forgot all about it when she got to the section labeled “seafood.” Something called “shrimp” that looked like little bugs, of which she only got a few to try. Then chunks of whitefish with the crunchy batter and a golden-brown sauce. She switched back to fried rice with these and returned to her table.

The shrimp was even better than the chicken. One piece was peppered, giving it just enough heat; the other was crunchy and sticky with a sauce that tasted faintly of coconut. After working her way through the plate, Tea went straight back to the seafood section for more. She got a big pile of coconut shrimp and something called “happy family” that was just a bunch of different seafood all mixed together.

As Tea ate, her clothes started to get snug. She was wearing some new clothes she’d bought with Hope and Rosé: a long flowing skirt with a stretchy waistband and a shirt that left her shoulders and arms bare that Hope had called a “tank top.” By the time Tea went back up to fill a fifth plate, her skirt was pulled snug around her hips and bottom, and the hem of her skirt was sliding up to reveal a sliver of pale skin.

Tea’s fifth plate was a “greatest hits” of her favorites from earlier. Sweet and sour pork, broccoli beef, coconut shrimp, and three more sugar buns. With each bite, her belly pressed into her skirt, her thighs crept toward the edges of her chair, her arms grew soft and plump, and her tank top slid closer to her sternum as the breasts above and belly beneath grew steadily larger.

Oblivious to the changes in her body, Tea went up to the tables a sixth time. She could feel her thighs rubbing together as she walked but assumed it was just the strange human clothes she was wearing. Anyway, she had more important things to think about. Namely, dessert.

Bananas in strawberry sauce, jello, pudding, soft serve ice cream. Tea filled a plate in one hand and carried a bowl in the other. These cold, sweet things were a refreshing change from all the hot food she’d eaten, and she went back for dessert two more times.

All the while, Tea's body continued to grow. The hem of her skirt rose higher and high from the floor as her hips and ass took up more and more space inside. Soft dimples formed around her elbows as her arms thickened. Her breasts were nearly as large as her sister's, stretching the material of her shirt and drawing the thin straps taut as they strained in a straight diagonal line from her shoulders to the tops of her bosom. A soft ring of pudg spilled over the waistband of her skirt as the chub in her belly spread fully around her torso. Even her cheeks grew a little more round, and the hints of a double chin appeared and disappeared as she chewed.

Tea had made one last dessert trip, proud of herself for thinking of using a pair of the bigger soup bowls for ice cream instead of the little ones by the soft serve machine when she saw another person sitting at her table. She plopped back down in her chair, smiling at her sister.

Rosé was not smiling. "Where have you been?"

"Um, eating dinner, obviously," Tea said, scooping up a bite of ice cream.

"Do you know what time it is?"

Tea slid another spoonful of ice cream between her lips and reached for her phone. For some reason, she had a hard time fitting her hand into the pocket of her skirt. She'd been at the buffet for over three hours. "Oh wow, it got really late."

"Have you been eating this entire time?" Rosé whisper-yelled.

Tea shrugged. "I guess so. The food is really good here."

"Have you even noticed what all this food is doing to you?"

"Huh?" Tea took another bite and looked down at her body. "Oh, weird. I guess this explains why there are so many plump humans."

Rosé put a hand to her forehead. "How did you even get so big so fast?"

Tea shrugged, "Must be my half-fae metabolism."

"Keep your voice down," Rosé hissed.

Tea scooped more ice cream into her mouth.

"And stop eating! Do you even see the way the staff are looking at you?"

Tea looked around the restaurant, where several employees were suspiciously focused on their tasks. "They're probably watching because you're making a scene. Why don't you get yourself a plate?"

"I already ate. Now come on, we need to get out of here before someone asks how you gained twenty kilos in a single meal!"

Tea pouted but stuck her nose in the air defiantly. "At least let me finish my ice cream first."

Tea didn't finish her ice cream deliberately slowly. Well, not entirely. She didn't rush, and she definitely wasn't taking her time just to tease her twin sister.

Rosé sat and stewed, watching her bloated sister shovel in bite after bite of cold vanilla and chocolate swirl. Rule number one of them coming to the human world was to not draw too much attention to themselves. Yes, humans were aware of the existence of magic now, but most were far too small-minded to face that reality without going into a panic. Of all the things she'd been worried about with this little experiment, having her sister eat herself into obesity in the course of a few hours wasn't one she'd ever considered. As Tea slid another spoonful between her lips, closing her eyes and letting out a small whimper at the taste, Rosé thought she could almost *see* her sister's clothes getting tighter.

Rosé bit her tongue the entire walk home, ignoring her sister's grunts and heavy breathing as she waddled her plumped-up body back to their apartment. When they were safely behind the closed and locked door, she laid into her.

"What were you thinking?"

"Um... that I was hungry?"

"You must have eaten enough for five people! How is that even possible?"

"I don't know, Rosé. I was just enjoying the flavors. Isn't that why we came here, to experience the human world?"

Rosé poked a finger into her sister's belly, the digit disappearing into Tea's soft fluff. "I'd say you *experienced* more than enough tonight."

"I think It's called 'all you can eat' for a reason..."

Rosé let out a harsh sigh. “Well, from now on, how about ‘all a normal human can eat’ instead of ‘all a greedy faerie can eat?’”

One look at Tea’s face was enough for Rosé to know she’d gone too far. Her eyes were soft, and the corners of her mouth drooped as if Rosé had just kicked her favorite hellhound—or whatever fae kept as pets.

“I’m sorry,” Rosé said, “That was mean. I’m just worried about you, you know? If anything happens to you, I’ll have to go home. Or... or stay here by myself. Honestly, I can’t decide which would be worse.”

Tea stepped closer to her sister, putting an arm on her shoulder. Standing so near, Rosé couldn’t help noticing how close Tea’s round belly came to touching her, how her sister’s plump breasts straining that shirt were even larger than her own.

“I know you’re worried,” Tea said, “But I’m fine! So I got a little chubby; I’ll go easy on the human food and be back to normal before you know it.”

“I’m sorry,” Rosé said again.

“You really need to relax, Rosé. The human world isn’t as scary as you think, and if you spend your whole time here stressed out, you’re just going to be miserable.”

“I guess you’re right.”

Tea grinned. “Of course I’m right.”

knock knock

Tea’s eyes went wide as saucers.

“It’s probably Hope,” Rosé said.

“Shit, she’s definitely going to notice something’s up. What are we gonna tell her?”

“I have an idea,” Rosé said, “Hold still.”

Rosé put both hands on Tea’s face, furrowing her brow in concentration.

“What are you—”

A pink glow suffused Tea’s body, and her green-skinned form diminished until she was back to her normal size. Rosé released her, and she looked herself over, extending her arms and running her hands down her merely ‘thick’ frame.

As Tea put on her human form, Rosé examined her handiwork. Her sister looked like she usually did, but better. Her facial features were more graceful, her hair more shiny. Her waist was a little more trim than usual, and her breasts a bit more full.

She'd overdone it a bit, but they couldn't stall any longer. With luck, Hope wouldn't notice.

Rosé walked to the door and pulled it open.

"Finally," Hope said, "I was starting to think you guys weren't home. Did you do something different with your hair, Tea? It looks amazing."

"Uh, thanks," Tea said.

Hope asked, "Wanna watch a movie or something?"

"Sure," Tea grinned.

"I was about to order some Chinese. Did you guys have dinner already?"

"I'm good," Rosé said, "Maybe just an egg roll or something."

Rosé was certain her sister would decline. How could she have room for more food after devouring half a buffet by herself?

Tea put a hand on the stomach Rosé had glamourised flat and said, "Sure, I could eat."