

Well, the next week turned out to be pretty awkward. Tabby didn't feel confident at all in trying to hunt up any new work. She didn't really feel right doing it either considering what she'd gone and done with Gerry. But with Tabby looking forward to another few years of college she knew she needed the extra money. Every extra dollar she could earn was one less her parents would have to put on a credit card.

Her relationship with Gerry was also on the rocks. They were giving each other some space without really discussing it. She figured he might be afraid to talk to her. Tabby probably gave him a bit of a scare with how she'd reacted. She'd have been skittish, too, she thought.

That was kind of bothering her. She wanted his attention, and honestly every time she let her mind wander over to him, she felt happy and excited. He was handsome, a gentleman, kind, and then some other things she wasn't supposed to be thinking about. Her dorm room was shared with three other girls, and they ALL wanted to know what had happened to their 'goody two shoes' roomie, Tabitha.

She gave them a series of white lies. She didn't feel good about doing it, but it'd be better if they didn't know everything. They didn't know her to be a girl that would lie or do anything inappropriate so when she fed them the falsehood that she stayed out too late and Gerry had let her crash in his bed while he took the living room couch they bought it without giving her trouble. Well, they seemed to buy her story. If they hadn't, they were just being nice and letting Tabby live by the fiction she'd crafted for them, and for herself.

Tabby forced a meeting with Gerry by text and had lunch with him, and the entire time she kept herself upbeat with all her attention aimed at him. She tried not to make it weird, and somehow it worked out! By the time they were done he looked visibly relieved, and that in turn made her feel so much better. Their relationship was edging away from the rocks and back to something smoother.

"Have you found any new work?" He asked her while they spoke over the phone a few days later. She'd been avoiding it a bit as a topic for no particular reason. Mostly they had been talking about each other and their classes. In the background she'd begun to poke around a bit for work, but she wasn't putting anything in high gear.

"Not yet, no. I sort of slacked off a bit on it, really. I should try harder." She said, and he agreed with her that she should and gave her word of encouragement.

"I modeled for some swimsuits the other day. Easiest money I think I've ever made." He laughed.

"Oh! Was it the same company that had you do the tuxedo photos?" She asked and brought up one of the shoots she knew he'd done more recently.

"No, it was more like a, uh, calendar deal, I think. Just stand there and be pretty. I wasn't the only guy there." He explained and she made a drawn out 'ooh' in reply. She'd done a similar photoshoot, and she was

lightly blushing under her fur at the same time because she had a sneaking suspicion that she'd already seen photos from that shoot before on his iPad.

A dirty part of her mind wanted to ask if she could have a copy of that calendar, but she just couldn't ever justify such a request! So much temptation!

"What do you think I should pursue?" She asked to change the subject.

"Pursue as in? What do you mean?" He replied. She exhaled sharply.

"Should I try to find more of those artsy type people? Or maybe double down on the catalogue shoots or calendar junk? What do you think I'd be best focusing on?" She explained herself a bit better. Tabby just wanted to hear him tell her what he thought regardless of what she'd already decided. The work that paid the most was the more scandalous stuff, or modeling for professional artists. The clothing catalogue shoots were only good if you could get a bunch of them, and that wasn't really happening.

"Well, everyone loves a good pinup. If you focused on that kind of thing you would probably be ok. And the artist demo is probably good, too, if you're quick on the draw when those want ads pop up." He told her, and she sighed. Yeah, the scandalous pinups. She hated to admit to herself that that was the best choice even if it was the one she found herself regretting the most. It was a love-hate arrangement. She'd enjoyed doing them since there was a dangerous thrill to it, but she wasn't supposed to enjoy it though! Tabby sighed again a bit harder.

"What's the matter?" He asked.

"I'm just making life difficult for myself." She said aloud, and he asked her what she meant by that.

"Good Christian girls aren't supposed to be posing in sexy outfits for a camera." She admitted.

"Girl, just use an alias and be done with it." One of her roommates spoke up from a different bunk, which reminded the vixen that she wasn't the only person in the room. Tabby rolled her eyes, and it didn't appear that Gerry had heard the second voice. Tabby was trying to keep her voice soft and quiet so she wouldn't disturb anyone, but apparently that wasn't enough to stop people from being nosy.

"Well, I don't know what to tell you to solve your moral problem, but personally I think you should do whatever you need to do to get your degree. That's the most important thing right now, right?" He told her. And she opened her mouth to say something but bit her lip instead. It didn't sound like he was finished talking.

"Like, to be honest with you I wasn't really ok with doing all the modeling either. I did it because I needed to. It's helping pay the bills, and I want this degree. It makes it easier, and when I graduate,

I'm out of here. I'll get a real job somewhere and the photographers can find some other broke dude to snap photos of." He continued.

"I thought you liked modeling?" She asked him.

"It's not that I hate it. It's easy and the pay can be good. I'd rather do this than end up working on some road crew. The modeling thing is just a good gig for now, you know?" Gerry told her, and Tabby could almost feel the shrug of his shoulders through the phone.

She could relate so much to that. It was such easy work, and it could pay good if you found steady work. It was better than other jobs, too. She'd never find herself on a road crew, but she understood that was a real possibility for a guy. Someone like Tabby would end up working as a fry cook or some underappreciated secretary answering phones or doing telemarketer work. None of that would be gratifying work.

Tabitha Carlisle wanted to be a schoolteacher. That was her goal, and that is where she'd be the happiest. She sighed quietly and shut her eyes. It was a good gig she had especially since she had her part time work on the side, too. If she worked harder at getting work, then she'd be better set with money and could focus on nailing that degree just like Gerry. Once it was done, she could be 'out of here' just like him. She found herself chewing on the inside of her cheek. Hopefully when they were both out of here... maybe they would go to the same place.

"Would you be ok with helping me find more work? I'll help you, too, best as I can." She asked him, and he told her that he would with what sounded like a smile. If smiles could have a sound, at least. It made her feel better knowing that he was doing it for the same reason she was, and that it was just a means to an end. A good end. Something you actually wanted to spend your life doing. Maybe that would be worth all the Sunday prayers she'd be doing for the scandal of posing in front of a camera.

And with all that in mind she steeled herself and started being more proactive about finding new gigs. This led to her gathering some courage and calling the artist gentleman she'd modeled for previously to ask him if he knew anyone else that needed a model, since she was looking for work. He'd told her that he didn't need anyone to model for him at the moment, but that he could give her the contact information for someone else he knew, a fellow artist and photographer.

Tabby had thanked him and took notes on their name and number before making another phone call to this new person. She was forced to leave a message, which she kept short and sweet by simply saying that she was a college-aged female model looking for work and that'd the previous gentleman had recommended that she try calling. The next day she received a call back.

The answer was no, which crushed her spirits, but the gentleman she was speaking to gave her someone else she could call since Tabby had come recommended from the first gentleman. Now Tabby had the name and number of a third artist, who was now a woman working exclusively as a painter.

Tabby tried calling her the same day. She'd never before had to play a game of phone tag to find a job, but it was good experience to have. Not only that, but the lady answered!

"Yes! Hello, my name is Tabitha and I was told that I could call you about some possible modeling work." She said after the lady answered with her name.

"And from whom did that recommendation come from?" She asked in turn.

"Um, well, two people. I worked previously with a mister Jacob Anderson, and her directed me to a Walter Bates, and then he recommended me to you, ma'am." Tabby explained and was grateful for being able to recall their names on the spot like that.

"Ah, those two. Talented men, both. I do take on models when I need them, but at the moment I'm not in any dire need of one. If you want you can email me a portfolio of yours so I can get a look at you, and if I ever need a girl to come in, I might give you a ring. How's that sound?" She replied, and Tabby was a mix of disappointment and relief. Disappointed she wasn't immediately offered work, but relieved that she at least could get her foot in the door.

"Of course, ma'am! Thank you so much for the chance. What email address should I use?" Tabby asked and the lady on the other end made a grunting sound.

"It's a long rambling one, honey. Just Google up Cassandra Theresa Higgins and browse my website. My contact info has its own page. You can email me from there." She replied a bit bluntly, but Tabby was already jotting down her name, which now included a middle name. She wrote 'Google' underneath it and drew a big circle around it.

"Oh ok, thank you again, ma'am." She replied sincerely.

"Of course, of course, gonna let you go now, tata." She said, then hung up abruptly.

"Wow. The other two were so much more polite." Tabby said to herself but shrugged it off and started searching for the lady's website.

It was on the first page of results and when Tabby began to browse it, she was somewhat taken aback. Apparently, she was a Ms. and not a Mrs., and was a professional painter of quite a bit of repute. Her webpage had a list of all the art shows she'd done, and some of them were in other countries. She'd been to Paris, Rome, London, Sydney. It wasn't enough for her to just visit a foreign country, no, she had to go to the capital!

And her artwork as good! But, like, so scandalous!

All of it was naked people, but each painting was so dramatic and moody. Tabby had no idea what the second artist went for in art, but the first guy had wild trippy artwork that wasn't really to her taste, but Ms.

Higgins had all this classical flair. It was more modern than Rembrandt or Da Vinci, but it was all painted in oils and each piece had a definitive mood.

She scrolled through everything and saw imagery of sorrow, pain, joy, rage. It was so compelling! And the scandal! There was a painting of a stallion and mare, husband and wife, dancing a nude tango in a reflecting pool. Water splashing about their feet and both were the personification of lust for one another. She even drew the stallion with a rather pronounced endowment, that left her flushed and scrolling away from the image to keep looking at other examples of the artist's work.

Cassandra Higgins wasn't shy about painting the nude figure. She finally clicked on the contact page and saw Ms. Higgins in the flesh for the first time, but in painting form. It was a dramatic and dark self portrait of a middle-aged Siamese that left Tabby wondering if the real person was anything like the painting.

She clicked on the email address and a new window popped open. She wasn't sure what she should send. Ms. Higgins had only told her to send a portfolio, which she was keeping on Instagram. Tabby shrugged and copied a link to her Instagram and pasted it into the email. She included a polite message letting the lady know who she was and that she was sending her portfolio like she'd suggested. Kept it nice and formal, but not overly long.

The vixen clicked send, and then let out a held breath. Well, that was done.

A couple days later she got a reply, and at first, she was excited, but then Ms. Higgins made sure to dash it with her first sentence.

"Pinup vixens are a dime a dozen in this city. You're pretty, for sure, but I'm not just looking for pretty faces. You came recommended so if you're serious about doing professional modeling for real artistry, then send me a nude portrait, and make it something evocative. I want to feel something more than boredom." And that was all she wrote.

A dime a dozen! She wasn't sure to be offended or not!

"Am I a dime a dozen pretty vixen?" Tabby asked out loud from her bunk. It was in the evening on a weekday and two of her roommates were in the room with her. Caitlin was in her own bunk reading one of her nursing books, and Robin was at her desk working on some math homework. They both looked at her.

"What asshole wants to know?" Robin asked. She was a black cat majoring in STEM while Caitlin was a cocker spaniel studying for a nursing degree.

"I sent this lady my portfolio for modeling, and she said I'm pretty, but that 'pinup vixens are a dime a dozen'." She quoted the last part.

"She doesn't sound very nice." Caitlin replied.

"Delete her." Robin replied.

"She wants me to send an evocative nude self portrait if I'm serious about modeling for professional artistry." Tabby added.

"Delete her." Both her roommates replied, then returned to their respective class assignments. The vixen sighed and pushed her laptop further down her lap and picked her phone up. She'd just been given two nays and now she was fishing for an opinion from Gerry. She explained to him the email, and they had a back and forth.

"Evocative- bringing strong images, memories, or feelings to mind." He sent her a quote from Google before continuing. "Do you have anything that would even fit that if you actually wanted to reply to her?"

She shrugged. Tabby didn't keep *any* of her nude photos. She'd have to take a new one herself, and she didn't think her girlfriends here would be up to it if they had already told her to ditch the snooty artist lady. But Tabitha wanted the work, and Ms. Higgins was a really talented artist. It didn't really surprise Tabby at all that this woman had traveled the world showing her art.

"I don't have anything of me that's nude. I never keep those or ask for them from the photographers." She replied.

"Do you care enough about this to take some new ones?" He asked her back, and now she was forced to think again about if she was really serious.

On one hand, yes, she absolutely was. On the other hand, this lady was kind of mean. She shrugged and let herself sink in her bunk. She stared at her messages with Gerry and finally moved her thumbs to tap a reply. The lady was mean, but it sort of fit the bill for those snooty types, which she probably was.

"Yes, I think so. My roomies have already told me to ignore the lady. I don't know if they'll help take a photo for me, and I doubt this artist will accept a selfie." She replied.

"Would you be against me taking one?" He answered back and she flushed and pulled her phone close and let the screen drop over her bust to hide it. Gerry had never seen her naked before... But they had kissed and touched... He'd touched her down... there. Should she let him take a nude photo of her? She glanced to her right and saw Caitlin minding her own business reading her textbook, and then Tabby panned over to Robin who was also glued to her own work.

If she asked either of them, they would say no and tell her not to even bother with the artist lady. She wanted the work though! Her phone screen must have turned off, because she was getting a buzz notification for a text message. It was probably from Gerry.

She thought about it a bit more. Gerry knew modeling. They'd both done so much of it. He'd be better at taking one than either of the girls would be. The only thing they knew how to do was pucker their lips at their

cellphones. Tabby flipped her phone back upright and turned it on. It wasn't a text from Gerry. It was her other roommate Joan. It was a group text letting all the girls know she was going to be getting back to the dorm late because of traffic. She had a class that was in a different campus that you had to drive to.

"Joan is gonna be late again tonight." She announced to the other two girls, then switched back to her messages with Gerry. She'd done plenty of nude and almost nude modeling before for artists and photographers. She could pose for her boyfriend, too.

"Would you like to?" She asked him in reply.

"Well, duh." She read his reply and giggled, which got Caitlin's attention.

"What?" the spaniel asked.

"Gerry is being silly." She lied by omission. Tabby wasn't about to admit that her boyfriend was soon to be snapping nude photos of 'Tame Tabitha'. Caitlin rolled her eyes and returned to her book. Tabby then started asking Gerry when he thought it'd be a good time for them to get together to do a photoshoot, and where they might could do it to get some privacy.

The following weekend they met up at the visual arts center. Gerry had the idea that they could borrow one of the classrooms since they would be empty for most of the weekend. He'd called ahead and got permission for them to use one of the rooms so they could do some photography work for a modeling portfolio.

Since she was going to be nude in the photos, she didn't bother dressing herself up. Rather than do that she showed up at the VAC in her usual plain attire. A long-sleeved green dress with some comfortable loafers. Her hair was neatly braided. All she'd brought with her today was her purse.

She was nervous the entire time she was walking. The VAC wasn't that far away from her dormitory, so she didn't need to drive. Gerry was driving, but there was a parking lot right next to the VAC. Tabby wasn't sure if he'd be there when she arrived. The butterflies and anxiety were mounting within her since she was going to be naked in front of him!

This was so different than when she modeled for students or professionals. This was Gerry! Her boyfriend, and that made it so many shades of complicated. If he'd been a stranger it'd been easier. A photographer she'd probably never see again. But no, he was going to see her naked, and then they'd go get lunch with her knowing her nudity was no doubt replaying in loop in her boyfriend's imagination.

It made her blush.

"Good morning!" Gerry told her when he arrived. She'd gotten there first and waited on a bench just outside the front door of the VAC. The building had a long decorative staircase that led up to the front door so

she awkwardly sat wondering if she should stand and meet him halfway as he rose up the more than forty odd steps.

"Good morning, Gerry!" She replied to him cheerfully. She embraced him with a side hug, and he turned it into a full hug with both his arms wrapped around her. She flushed and when he freed her he slung a camera strap off his shoulder.

"I was able to borrow a good camera from a guy I share a class with." He said and held up a nice-looking camera. They wouldn't have to use their cell phones! That was good thinking on his part.

"Did you bring your own card for it?" She asked, since she didn't feel comfortable with the idea of her nudes leaking out because of a borrowed camera.

"Yep, it didn't have one plugged in when he gave it to me so I'm using one of mine." He told her and stepped in close to slide his arm in with hers. He gave her a gentle tug. "Nervous?"

She blushed and looked away with a nod. Lips pressed against her cheek, and she turned her head to find him leaning down to look her in the eyes.

"Behave yourself, Mister Gerry." She smiled sheepishly and poked him right in the chest. He smiled in return and tugged her arm again and together they walked into the VAC. The building was mostly empty, and they hardly saw a soul as they made their way to the room they'd been given permission to use.

It was a room she'd been in before a few times when she'd model for the art students. Student drawings were pinned to all the walls and in the center of the room was the remnants of the last class' drawing assignment. A short wooden table sat centered in the middle of the room with a white sheet draped over it, and an old and worn out wicker loveseat was sitting atop it.

The loveseat had at one point been a glossy white item, but after years of wear and tear it had flaked off half its paint with the woven warms and seat were polished from use to a smooth brown hue.

"Want to use the bench?" He asked and pointed with the camera to the loveseat. That would probably look good for a photo, she thought. She stepped around the table and wondered if it'd be comfortable to sit or lay on if she was naked. She reached out and touched the loveseat and felt the seat give under the pressure of her hand. It might not be that bad.

"I think we can." She replied before turning to look for the partition. It was where she remembered last seeing it. The professors that used this room probably never bothered moving the partition. "Well, let me go change."

Gerry smiled and started messing with the camera to get it ready while she escaped to the partition to silently inhale and exhale. The butterflies were going to explode out of her at this rate.

Her hands were nervous and jittery as she reached up to undo the button behind her neck. Below that was the zipper, but the tab was too small, and she struggled like always to work it down, since it liked to catch between her shoulder blades. Normally she'd have her roommates around to help her zip or unzip it. After a few seconds of fighting it on her own she huffed and stepped out from behind the partition.

"What's wrong?" Gerry asked her, and she stepped over to him before turning around.

"I can't get the zipper to go down." She replied.

"Oops." She heard him say, and then felt his hand at her back. There was a tug, then a stronger tug. He let go and started shuffling the camera strap over his shoulder so he could use both hands.

"It's hard to get off." She gave an embarrassed laugh.

"Can't be harder than a bra." He laughed back, which made her flush, but with his next tug she felt and heard the zipper descend. "There you go!"

"Thank you, Gerry." She turned back around and lifted a hand up to her bust. She could feel the dress sagging at her shoulders without the button and zipper holding it tight. She quickly retreated back behind the partition to finish unzipping herself the rest of the way. It stopped right above the opening for her tail, and then she slide the dress down her arms and carefully stepped out of it. The floor was filthy with the dusty black charcoal the students used to draw with.

Since she knew she wasn't modeling in underwear she'd worn some of her nicer undies. Whenever she'd model for the art students she always wore something very modest and plain. Nice underwear was something she could wear without anyone knowing any better. It was one way she could be like other girls without feeling guilty for it.

Tabby unhooked the clasp of her red bra and felt the cups release their grip on her breasts. This was one of the only bras she had that gave her any lift. The green dress was so plain that it didn't give much away about her figure even if she wore a nice bra like this one. Her other bras were sports bras or minimizers. She wasn't ashamed of her bust, but it made it hard to be modest.

She had her dress folded neatly on a stool behind the partition, and her bra joined it, and soon after the matching panties. She'd already removed her loafers and wondered if she could leave her socks on. The floor was dirty, but this was going to be actual photographs she'd be taking. If it was a bunch of college artists, she'd have kept her socks on for her comfort.

Come to think of it, Tabby couldn't remember anyone bothering to draw her with her socks on!

Tabby decided to take them off, and now she stood naked with Gerry several feet away patiently waiting for her to emerge. He was going to see her naked. She tried to stay quiet and she took in a deep reassuring breath before letting it out. Cupping her face in her hands the vixen tried to settle the butterflies she was feeling. You wouldn't think a fox could be any redder than Tabitha Carlisle right now!

The best she could do was cover her breasts with her arms. He was going to see everything, but at least covering herself up in this way allowed her to cling to the lie that she was still being modest. She stepped out, and caught Gerry playing with the camera. He looked up and she flushed as soon as she saw his face.

He opened his mouth but stopped before he could say anything. Tabby could tell he was trying to suppress the urge to look her up and down. He turned his eyes back to the camera and faked a cough. He was trying to act professional as he fidgeted with the camera. Tabby walked over to the table and stepped up to sit on the loveseat. At least she had fur to soften the loveseat a little more.

The loveseat creaked as she made herself comfortable, but with her arms crossed over her chest she knew that wouldn't make a good photo. She didn't know what to do.

She tried a few poses while Gerry awkwardly waited for her to get ready. He was trying not to stare at her and mostly focused his attention on the camera like it was a puzzle to solve. After several uncomfortable tries at finding something she thought might be good she decided to give up. Her anxiety and shyness were keeping her from even uncrossing her arms.

"I don't know what to do." She said. Gerry looked up at her and she watched as his eyes remained glue to her own or darted off in any direction but below her chin.

"What's the matter?" he asked her. She tightened her arms and felt her mouth go dry. She lifted her shoulder before dropping them in a shrug.

"I don't know what she wants to see." She admitted, but it was also a dodge. Tabby couldn't will herself to even open her arms to pose herself.

"The art lady?" He asked, and she nodded in reply.

He reached up to scratch around one of his horns and it looked to her like he was trying to think. He slung the camera strap off his shoulder and lifted it up and over his horns so the camera could hang off his neck.

"Well, she wanted some 'evocative'. Do you think you'd be ok with me posing you?" he asked. She blushed and looked away. Tabby squirmed with indecision at the idea of him being that close to her when she was naked. This felt so different than when she was being photographed by artist

gentleman. She didn't know him at all, and she certainly wasn't in a relationship with him! She'd already gone too far with Gerry already.

"Just trying to help." He told her, and she knew he was just trying. It was so clear that he was aware how distressed she was. She took in a big breath and let it out.

"You can try." She said, and quickly bit her lip to stop herself from gasping as Gerry started walking toward her. Her heart was racing hard in her chest. She watched as he let the camera hang free from his neck as he reached toward her with both hands.

It felt like her heart stopped at his first touch. First on her knees to turn her in the loveseat, and then another gentle touch on her shoulder to lean her backwards until the armrest was under her.

"Let me find something to put over the arm." He told her and retreated. Gerry found another white sheet and started folding it over and over until it was a messy square. He lifted her back off the armrest and put the sheet over it to give her cushion.

"Thank you." She whispered, and he smiled. His hand hesitated over her arm for a moment.

"Can I move your arm? Just this one." He asked her, and she nodded and lifted it for him. Fortunately, it was the topmost arm so she could still keep the other arm covering herself. He wrapped his hand around her wrist and lower it down her body until he placed her hand over her stomach. Tabby let her hand rest awkwardly over her navel.

Gerry stepped away and she watched him chew at his lip again. He looked nervous, too. She was letting her own anxiety stress him out. He was obviously trying to make this go easier for her. She wished she didn't feel this way!

She froze when he stepped back to her and put his hand over the one, she had over her belly. He pushed her palm flat to her stomach.

"Try to like, you know, pretend there's a baby. Like those naked photos pregnant couples do." He told her, and she tried to suppress the urge to shiver. She was flushing hot as his hand slowly left her own and she left her palm tight to her belly. She was looking down her chest and not at him and she watched his hand move to her other wrist.

"You look up tight." He said before taking her wrist. Her heart was thudding in her chest harder and harder as his fingers brushed against her breast as he gently loosened the grip on her chest she had with her arm. He pulled her hand out from her armpit and to her breast, which she instinctively clutched to hide it, but her other breast was left exposed as her elbow dropped further down her side. Tabby looked away and tried to hide her face as embarrassment overtook her.

Gerry stepped away and she saw in the corner of her eye that he was lifting the camera. She felt cold as she heard the shutter snap shut.

There was a pause, and then another snap. She was frozen stiff. He stopped and lowered the camera before stepping back close to her again.

She was silent until she noticed him kneeling next to her on the table.

"You ok, Tabby?" He asked her quietly. She was forced to turn her head back to look at him. Why was she so messed up over this? She'd done this before! Tabby had modeled dozens of times, but now all of a sudden, she was caught frozen in the headlights of a camera, and she was probably scaring her boyfriend! She couldn't imagine how awful she must have looked right now frozen stiff like some department store mannequin.

"I'm sorry." She whispered.

"It's ok, Tabby." He leaned close and she stiffened as his lips found her cheek. Before she could relax, he slipped an arm under her back and let the other wrap around her front. She gasped as he hugged her. She felt him kiss her cheek again before letting his snout fall to her neck where he squeezed her tight before letting himself relax and go still against her.

He was slowly nuzzling her, and she inhaled big before letting it all out.

Tabby lifted the hand on her belly and touched his arm to hold onto him. After a few moments she felt the warmth of his body bleeding into hers, and she realized how cold it was in the room. A turn of her head left her cheek pressed to his face.

"I've never been this nervous modeling before." She admitted. "I don't know why."

"Do you want to stop?" He asked, and she didn't know. She hated this. Not hate toward what she was trying to do, but that she couldn't suppress what she was feeling right now. Gerry gently pulled himself away from her, and she leaned in to follow him before he pressed her back to the loveseat.

"I think we should go hang out instead." He told her, and then stood up with a smile. "You'll feel better!"

She looked up at him and recovered her breasts. Tabby lifted herself up to sit and let her legs pinch shut.

"Where the photos ok?" She asked him. He'd only taken two, and she doubted they were any good. Even the professionals took a bunch to make sure they had good ones to use.

"It doesn't matter. Let's just go hang out, ok?" He insisted and reached out his hand to help her off the loveseat. Was he trying to protect her? He must have felt like she was forcing herself into doing something she was comfortable with. She wasn't comfortable with it. It wasn't anything to do with him, she thought. It was something internal she was grappling with.

"What about the photos? We borrowed this room?" She asked. Tabby was still stuck in the mind that she had to get something to send to the art lady. But Gerry was still gently insisting that they should leave. She hesitated for a moment, then freed one hand from her chest and reached out to take his.

He helped her step down off the low table and eased her toward the partition. He planted a kiss on her cheek and told her they could go grab some coffee and just hang out. She sighed and stepped behind the partition and began to dress herself again.

With each piece of clothing added back to her body the less cold and clammy she felt, but there was a part of her that was still very upset with herself. She was here in a private place with her boyfriend. This was not a place she should have felt so awful. Was she really all out of sorts because of what they'd done together before? Tabby pulled her hair out from the neck of her dress and shook her head to let the braids fall back down her back.

She stood and took in deep breath for a minute or two before she emerged back out from the partition. Gerry was waiting for her and ready to take her by the arm to lead her back out of the VAC.

Gerry drove them to a Starbucks where he bought her a coffee. He didn't bring up their failed photo shoot any, and she thankful for that. With a hot cup in her hands she let herself inhale the scent of a fresh café latte and tried to relax. With something so warm in her she was feeling the chill from earlier lessen as they passed away the time together.

"We've got all day, Tabby. I didn't have anything else planned." He told her in an effort to pull date ideas from her. She shrugged. Tabby was pretty sure he'd told he had something to do later today, and she was worried he was purposely pushing it aside for her sake.

"Are you sure? I don't need to keep you if you had anything else you needed doing." She replied. She watched him sip at his coffee while he verbally shrugged off anything he might have had. Tabby could only smile in reply. He was being really kind to her.

"Can you drive me to the store so I can buy some new shoes?" She asked him, and he agreed with a smile.

The truth was that she didn't need shoes, but she did want an excuse to cling to him for as long as she could. It felt better being with him than sitting at the dorm with the girls. They'd be asking her about her photoshoot and that would make her uncomfortable. She still felt embarrassed by her performance anxiety.

He took her to PayLess and wandered around behind her while she tried on several different loafers. The ones she had weren't falling apart but were a bit plain. She'd like to have at least one nice pair she could wear on job interviews and to church. She doubted they'd get much use

with her photography since those usually had her in heels or simply barefoot.

She found a nice pair that was just under 25\$ and decided to buy those. Gerry hooked his arm with hers and walked her back to his truck with her bag in his hand.

It didn't take nearly as long to find herself a pair of shoes as she'd hoped, and now her date idea was over with. What else could she think of for them to do? It'd be nice if they could sit and talk somewhere again like at Starbucks, but where could she suggest they go?

"Well, I took you shoe shopping." Gerry spoke up as he steered the truck through the city to an unknown destination. He hadn't told her where they were headed when he cranked up.

"Yeah?" She asked. The way he said it had her hoping he'd offer up an idea of his own for what they could do.

"Yeah, so I'm thinking about swinging us by the mall if you wanna go? Seeing you look at shoes made me think I should probably pick up some new pants." He told her, and she smiled at the idea. She could help! That'd be nice, and if they were in a men's department then it might be quiet. Men's sections never looked busy whenever she'd go to the store.

"I'd like that!" She replied and leaned against him in her seat.

The mall closet to the University was huge. It had so many stores, but she'd only ever been here a few times. Tabby had never had the chance to explore the whole thing, but now that she was with Gerry they strolled through Macy's and into the west wing of the mall.

She lost count of the number of stores there were, but eventually he took her to the one he wanted to shop at and asked her to help him find him a good pair of dress slacks. He wanted something that would compliment him and look good in photos. This was something she could enjoy! It would also take her mind off of everything from before.

She'd never walked into an Express before, but it was split into two halves with a wall in the middle. One half was for women's and the other for men's. The price tags she saw on the men's items made her go pale at the mere thought of what she'd have to pay to get an outfit from here! This place was expensive!

"This store is expensive, Gerry. Dillard's has cheaper slacks." She scolded him as she caught him pulling a pair of pants off a rack. He shrugged.

"You get the second pair half off." He replied, which didn't change the fact it was expensive! It was his money though, and if it was something to wear for work then maybe it could help him make more money to replace what he'd spent on clothing.

A lazy looking attendant asked if they needed any help, but she told him they'd be fine. Gerry had her around to sniff out a decent pair of slacks to wear. The pair he picked out first didn't appeal to her. It was a shade of grey she didn't think would suit him. It wasn't pairing well with his own coat of fur.

Tabby thought he'd look good in black and pulled a pair off a rack that matched the size he was currently holding. As he milled around the racks looking, she was busy herself trying to imagine what he'd look like in this color or that, this style or that.

The vixen sighed and put back the black slacks she'd taken first and pulled off a replacement black pair. Something in her intuition told her this second pair was better. Then she asked him if he wanted darker colors or lighter, and he told her he didn't have a preference. Everything he owned now was either jeans or old slacks his mother had bought him. He needed something new, and that told her she basically had free reign to pick and choose items.

She did just that and found herself holding three pairs of pants, the black one and two shades of beige. The first shade was sort of a sandy color that would match his fur, and the other one was a bit darker with a hint of red that turned the beige nearly to a russet brown. It would match his fur still but come off as slightly more formal looking than the light sandy pair. If Gerry was ok buying two pants to get the discount, then he could walk away with a little more variety in his wardrobe.

Tabby approached him with her items and saw that he had only two pairs selected himself. It was the grey pair she didn't like and then a black and grey plaid pattern. She frowned at his choices, and she noticed her expression.

"You don't like them?" He laughed. She sighed and let herself shrug.

"We'll see!" She told him with a smile and reminded herself that it was his money and he'd be the one to wear them in the end. Gerry was still her boyfriend and she had the tickling whisper in her spirit telling her to help him find something nice! For both of their sakes.

The men's fitting room was empty much like the rest of this whole half of the store. As they'd walked through the mall it felt like a normal business day, but this store was looking pretty slow. Tabby didn't know if there was much activity on the women's side.

The fitting room was actually nice and quiet and well maintained. It wasn't messy or in disrepair and Gerry took the slacks from her and found himself a stall in the back next to the wall mounted mirror. Well, she had wished for a place for them to sit and talk!

"Try the light-colored ones first." She told him through the door. There was a small bench in the hallway that she sat herself on as her boyfriend could be heard rustling fabric in the stall. She could turn her head and see out into the store and it was just as quiet and empty as before. The noise of people outside remained as a dull white noise. It was strange to

hear so much evidence of people, and yet still be so quiet and still here in the fitting room.

The little sliding lock caught her attention and she watched Gerry step out from the stall with his hand holding up the front of his shirt so he could see himself clearly in the mirror. He was wearing the lightest of the two beige pairs. She looked from up and down from his waist to feet and asked him to turn toward her. He did and she lightly chewed on her cheek in thought.

"You like them?" She asked, and he shrugged.

"Pants are pants. I think they look ok." He told her, and she asked him if they fit well. He told her they felt fine. He wasn't being any good help at all. Men.

"Ok, go try to other pair." She urged him and he returned to the stall and again she was left listening to him change out of one pair and into another.

He stepped back out a moment later wearing the darker pair, and they looked like they fit him a bit too snug. Tabby took in a slow breath and looked him up and down while he checked himself out in the mirror. Those pants were really hugging him tight around the front.

"I don't know, these feel tight." He complained and tried to slide his thumbs under the waistband. She smiled, agreed with him, but shamefully did not mind the view. She shooed him back into the stall to try the next pair.

He asked her through the door if she was going to make him try on every pair, and she told him that yes, she was. He came out with the black pair. Gerry was trying all the ones she'd picked out first. This pair looked good on him! It wasn't so tight on his front, and they looked really good on his legs.

"I like these." He said and checked himself out. She looked at him in the mirror and agreed with him. She leaned down and adjusted his pant leg so the hem wasn't bunched up.

"I'm partial to this pair and the first pair so far." She told him. He went back into the stall and started trying on the others. After a few moments of rustling fabric, she heard him laugh and comment that he's terrible at picking out pants. She asked him why that was, and he stepped back out of the stall.

She covered her mouth to hide her smile, but she couldn't hide the red hue no doubt darkening her fur.

"Told you." He said and stepped back into the stall. He'd picked out the wrong size and could hardly fit himself into the slacks. They might as well have been skinny jeans with how tight they were.

"Do you wear skinny jeans?" She suddenly asked for no reason she could divine. The slacks he'd just worn didn't look good on him, but she was curious how good he'd look in a pair of jeans that were actually tailored to him... and tight. She sighed.

"I could if I didn't mind people staring." He laughed from within the stall. That was true, she thought. She'd only seen the brief glimpse of him in the swim trunks. Honestly, she'd been pretty good about not allowing herself to think too deeply on him like that. It was made easier since she'd never actually seen it. The temptation to imagine him was at its strongest when it was at night and everyone was trying to sleep. She couldn't distract herself with her classes or homework. She sighed again.

He stepped back out of the stall in the last pair and she didn't like it either. He wasn't a good judge of color. This pair actually fit him well though.

"I think I still like the black pair and the light tan." She smiled up at him. He looked at himself in the mirror and looked thoughtful.

"Alright, I'll get those." He said.

"Both pairs?" She asked, and he said 'yeah'. Buy one get the second half off. That was still expensive!

"A lot of money for pants, Mister Gerry." She scolded him and lightly kicked his ankle with her foot.

"It's for a good cause!" He laughed and naturally started unbuttoning himself as he returned to the stall. She flushed at his brazenness, but he likely wasn't even thinking that much about it. She sure was though!

When he emerged, he was back in his original outfit with the pairs he was planning on buying. She fussed at him for leaving the other three and picked them up herself to return to their racks. It was the attendant's job to pick up left behind items, but she felt bad about making people do that. While she put the items back where she thought they were supposed to go Gerry checked himself out.

He asked her if there was a store she wanted to go to, and she couldn't think of anything. All she could afford to do was window shop if Gerry's bill was any indication of how expensive the mall could be. She'd already spent almost 25 dollars! She had money tucked aside, sure, but that was all for her college expenses. Her parents had taught her how to be good with her money.

"You don't have to buy anything. We can just window shop. Maybe you'll see something you can save up for. When's your birthday?" He suddenly asked.

"Oh, you're not buying me anything expensive!" She swatted him on the arm lightly. Tabby appreciated the thought, but she would NOT let him blow a bunch of money on her!

"I'm not, but I can't even buy you a card if I don't know when it is." He told her and moved his bag from his right to his left so he could offer her his arm. She slipped hers in with his and she followed his lead out of Express and into the throngs of people.

"August 23rd." She said and leaned into him. "Yours?"

"September 4th." He replied. So close together! They could pick a date in the middle and have a double birthday! That'd be so cute and sweet, and the thought made her smile.

"So, we both have time to plan presents." She admitted, and he chuckled and leaned himself over. She saw he was trying to kiss her, and she tilted her head and offered her cheek. After his kiss she instinctively licked her lips and remembered the kissing they'd done in his bedroom. She sighed, and he asked her what was wrong.

"Nothing. I wouldn't mind another kiss." She admitted and hoped that it didn't sound too crude of her. Her imagination sure was crude all of a sudden. Poor Gerry hadn't done anything lewd or salacious all day, and here she was trying to tiptoe her way around the gutter.

"We could sneak into a photo booth." He suggested, and she quickly reached over to pinch him.

"No! Gerry!" She scolded him even as she giggled. That was such a teen romcom idea!

"Ok, so where you want to go?" He asked.

They were still walking along, and she sighed and chewed on her lip. Maybe she could plan a future purchase. Something that would help her with modeling. Sort of like what Gerry just did, but she didn't feel comfortable buying anything today. Maybe if she got more work soon and made something extra then she could justify the expense.

"Let's go to JCPenny's." She suggested, and so they started off in the direction of one of the main anchor stores. They had to walk past the food court which also made her hungry since she could smell all the food, and there was that strong aroma of the pretzel place in the air.

All the anchor stores were the same to her. They each mostly had the same sections, but the brands differed sometimes. However, when you dressed as plainly as Tabitha did you didn't have to worry too much about where you shopped so long as it wasn't a specialty store like Victoria's Secret.

It was cute watching Gerry get bashful as they approached the women's section, but he still followed her in through the countless racks of women's apparel as she tried to find something pretty, but not too pretty. She probably should be doing this with one of her roommates. They had a better eye for this kind of fashion.

"What you think of this?" She asked him as she held a white blouse up to her chest. It had short ruffled sleeves with a cute lace collar. Simple,

but still pretty. He did this little shrug with his shoulders and told her she was better off window shopping with a girl.

"Boys." She sighed.

She folded the blouse over her arm and stepped over to a rack full of camisoles. These were very pretty, but very revealing. Tabby had thought she was looking for something that would help her model but looking at some of these tops left her feet feeling cold.

Gerry stepped up behind her and wrapped his arms around her middle. She turned to look at him as he put his chin over her shoulder.

"I like that black one." He said. She was feeling her cheek flush as she looked to the rack and spotted the only black item there. The vixen sighed and reached out to flip through the items until she found one that was her size and pulled it off the rack. This one had a very low-cut collar.

"Boys." She said again, and he laughed.

"Just my two cents." He replied.

She knew she didn't have any business buying anything, especially since she'd already bought some shoes. It would be best to stop searching for more things. Her eyes would get the better of her wallet if she wasn't careful. She had found two tops she could try on, and that would be that! Even if she walked out of the store empty handed, she would at least know if she'd found anything to her liking, and that'd make the next trip to the store that much easier.

"I think I'll just try these two on." She told him, and then he let her go so she could make her way to the fitting room.

Since these were the lady's changing rooms he stayed out by the doorway while she went in to find herself a stall. Only after she'd locked herself in the stall did she realize that she'd made a mistake. She was wearing a dress!

Tabitha couldn't leave the stall to show Gerry what she'd bought...

"Well, fudge." She muttered as she stood in the stall. Well, she could still try them on. With dress off she discovered the white blouse looked cute on her. It wasn't something she was accustomed to wearing, but she felt it would be a good compromise for when she went to do a shoot or interview. Not too racy, but not too modest.

She tried on the camisole next and found she'd picked out a top that was one size too small. It was a bit snug. Gerry probably knew that when he saw it, too. Boys. With her hefty bust the camisole hardly contained any of her cleavage. The wall mirror in the stall made that plenty clear.

Tabby knew Gerry would love this. It didn't even hide her bra! The top of her lace cups were peeking out from the top and sides. It almost fit her, but the longer she wore it the more she felt it was a bit too tight around her chest. Just her breasts. This top was meant for women with smaller boobs, or for women like her that really wanted to show them off.

This was so racy! She took it off and donned her dress again. The camisole taunted her as she walked back to where Gerry was waiting. The price on the skimpy camisole was half the price of the white blouse! Well, it did have less fabric, she agreed.

"They fit?" He asked.

"Yeah, they did!" She replied too quickly for her to catch herself. The camisole didn't technically fit...

"Gonna put them back?" He asked her and she sighed and said that she should. She didn't need to spend another 50 dollars.

"Yeah, I think so. I already bought shoes today." She told him and started walking toward the racks where she found the items.

"Can I buy you the black one?" He asked her, and she stopped to turn to him. Bold of him!

"Mister Gerry!" She laughed at his forwardness. "Is that why you picked it out?"

He shrugged with a smile.

"I thought it'd look cute on you." He told her. She couldn't possibly let him buy her anything! He'd already spent so much at that other store! And this top was so racy! Tabby had so many reasons to tell him no, but the smile on his face made her blush and the vixen could feel the weakness welling up within her.

"Gerry." She scolded him quietly.

"How much is it?" He asked and she hid the tag with her hand. "Please?"

"You're being too generous." She reminded him, then turned to hang the white blouse on a rack where it didn't belong. It gave her something to do so she could turn away from her boyfriend and hide her blush.

"Pretty please?" He asked again and he was suddenly behind her with his hands on her shoulders. "With cherries on top?"

"Oh my gosh, Gerry! You little boy!" She giggled and clutched the camisole to her chest. Was she seriously going to let him buy her this silly top?

Yes.

"Ok, fine, you!" She told him and turned herself around to face him. As soon as she did, he was already moving in to plant a kiss on her cheek. She was flushed pink and to surprise even herself she rose up on her tip toes and pecked him on the lips with a kiss of her own. "You're a bad influence."