Once Nancy stopped cheating on Dale with John Redcorn, a lot of things changed on and around Rainey Street.

Sure, things were a lot less *awkward*, but they sure as heck were a lot more *fun*. Sneaking around on her husband (no matter *how* flagrant they’d gotten before it all fell apart) had been such a big thrill for Nancy that after all these years it was kind of hard to give it up. With all this monogamy, there wasn’t much to do in a sleepy little town like Arlen on her nights off except eat.

“Pass the butter, Sug.”

Her job at Channel 5 meant lots of sitting and snacking behind the desk. Plus sponsorships from places like Sugarfoot’s and the Arlen Barn meant she usually had an easy way to kill an afternoon. That and having not one, but *three* neighbors who were obsessed with grilling and barbecue and cookouts, and it wasn’t inconceivable that Nancy might have filled whatever gap John Redcorn’s presence in her life left with food.

“I know I shouldn’t, but it ain’t every day we get to have a girl’s breakfast!”

Minh and Peggy watched with mutual satisfaction as their quickly plumping third began to drizzle maple syrup over her waffles. The Waffle Café hadn’t been an uncommon indulgence for any of them lately, as tight belts over skirts could attest. Giving Nancy an outlet to her aggression was healthy for all three of them in the long run—now that she had put on a little weight, they didn’t feel so self-conscious around her. Minh’s ferociously competitive nature had been able to take a seat back while Nancy placated herself with extra helpings of biscuits and gravy, and Peggy’s monumental ego hadn’t had to stretch nearly as hard to argue that Nancy was only *slightly* less attractive than her.

“No reason to apologize—here, try the blueberry.”

“Yes, stuff your face Gribble! It’s our cheat day!”

With as far down this rabbit hole as Nancy had gone, she hadn’t needed telling twice. Peggy and Minh were more than willing to help keep Nancy happy in the short-term if it meant that, long-term, her gain would continue. Now that she wasn’t seeing that bronze adonis John Redcorn anymore and had to settle for monogamy like the both of *them*, Nancy could afford to let herself go a little. Especially if it made her two closest friends look better by comparison.

“It is not *enabling her bad behavior*, Hank.”

Peggy had, and would continue, to justify her quiet council with Minh as they both worked to absolutely destroy Nancy’s diet. She’d come home with a belt full of barbecue after a night out with her friends, and her husband hadn’t started to worry about it until she started unbuckling that belt to “make room for more”. The longer that Nancy’s problem went unabated, the more and more culottes Hank’s wife went through.

“No matter how much I’m sure she regrets it, Nancy is married to Dale—and if she is eatin’ with us, then she’s not sleepin’ with John Redcorn.” She hastily corrected her husband with a Texas-sized tsk-tsk, “Shame on you, Hank. We are *rewarding her monogamy.*”

There was a pause long enough for Hank to realize that the sound he was hearing was the bedsprings against the frame. He coughed unsurely as he thought how best to handle this situation delicately, ultimately deciding that it would simply be too awkward to press the matter any further.

“Okay then.”

As the resident problem solver of Rainey Street, even Hank Hill found himself at a loss as to how best handle this before it went too far.

“Look at her go, Peggy Hill—it like watching Dauterive plow through hot dogs.” The Laotian housewife purred in satisfaction, covetously stroking her own stomach as it billowed beneath her standard yellow sweater, “It almost *inspiring*.”

“Well you can consider *me* inspired. Nancy and I went to the Food Court at the mall, and she looked like a total slob.” Peggy squawked, missing Minh’s mood entirely as she happily munched her way through a co-conspirators’ brunch, “She was dressed in her blue sweatpants and that *shirt*? *Everyone* was staring at the two of us!”

“Uh-huh.” Minh smacked her lips as she stole a finger of sausage off Peggy’s plate, “You don’t say.”

“I *do* say!” Peggy announced triumphantly, “The sight of me and someone like Nancy being friends was *unthinkable*! I must look like one hot tamale next to her, huh Minh?”

“Not a high bar these days, but I’ll give it to you.” Minh shrugged, her belt having been subtly unbuckled and allowing her soft belly to pour outward towards the table, “What do you say we turn brunch into lunch? I’m *starving*.”

“Well, I do think we’ve earned a little treat.” Peggy chuckled warmly at the idea of a job well done, “I think we can manage a cheat day without turning into a couple of *Nancys* about it.”

Content to share with Peggy as long as it kept her at least a little quiet, Minh was happy enough to oblige her in making Nancy fat as long as it meant she could continue to eat like this. Guilt-free, with Peggy’s delusions of grandeur. Sure, she might not be the skinniest friend if she kept lapping Peggy in portion sizes, but at least she’d be the least *deluded*.

“Okay” Minh laughed, patting her stomach as it pressed out from under her top, “If you insist, Peggy Hill.”

“I don’t know what I’d do without you, Sug.”

“Of course, Missus Gribble, I’m always happy to help.” Luanne bleated out, already half a handful back into the bag of chips that was sandwiched between her arm wing and spare tire, “Um, is this the *only* bag of popcorn chips that you have? Because this one is… mostly eaten.”

If there was anyone that Nancy could count on for having something *around* her size, it was Peggy’s niece Luanne. A few years ago that would have just been her flattering herself, but given that Luanne didn’t have much to do around the house except get absorbed into the various outings and barbecues and cookouts that were steadily inflating Channel 5’s News Anchor, Rainey Street’s resident stylist had wound up catching a *lot* of those runaway calories. Luanne was young enough to be her daughter, but she and Nancy were roughly around the same size.

In certain departments.

“I’m doing my new segment—Eats ‘Round Arlen?—and if I don’t have somethin’ that don’t chafe I ain’t never gonna be able to squeeze into one’a their booths…”

And fully sheathing all of Nancy’s Texas-Sized tonnage was something that she’d given up on entirely, but keeping herself at least somewhat decent had to be doable. Her wide and weighty arm wings quivered and jiggled as she struggled to raise them over her head, already out of breath as the heft of her own appendages fought against her every move. Nancy’s thick double chin rolled out over the collar as she she struggled against the first button.

“Course I do look skinnier in pink…”

Luanne hadn’t heard literally any of that. She’d been too busy stuffing her face on the bribe that her neighbor had brought over. Her huge chest rested in their lime-green hammock as they straddled a great fleshy apron of stomach. Sitting down, Luanne took up more room now than when she was pregnant with Gracie. And she probably ate twice as much, considering how much there seemed to be just *laying around* lately.

“I don’t have any pink shirts.” Luanne said in her distinct disinterested tone, “I just… all I have is what’s in my closet.”

“I know, sug. It ain’t your fault.” Nancy harrumphed, red and blotchy from the effort of staying steady on her own two feet for this long, “Us big girls can’t be too choosy…”

“Um… did you hear my earlier question about chips?” Luanne ventured, “No reason.”

“Well it is safe to say that *I—*by of course I mean *we*—am officially hotter than Nancy.”

“I don’t know Peggy Hill. She lookin’ pretty hot over there.”

Nancy’s big blonde ‘do was easily the least amount of insulation that she had on her entire body. Dressed in the biggest swimsuit that either of them had ever seen, Nancy had beached herself on the steps of the Souphanousinphone pool steps. She was fanning herself with one hand while gripping an iced lemonade with the other, panting like she’d just swam forty laps.

“Like a walrus on melting ice cap.”

Wooden benches had replaced flimsy plastic lawn chairs as both humongous housewives kept to themselves (as much as they could) at a table unto themselves. The men at the grill and the kids splashing away, that left Peggy and Minh plenty of alone time with the plate of hot dogs that had been grilled up to keep them full until the burgers were done.

Peggy’s conservative swimsuit was at odds with just how much of her there was to cover—each of her ten gallon glutes spread far out enough to obscure *most* of the bench beneath her. Belly fat poured onto and against the table on both sides, with Peggy’s pear-shaped physique contrasting to Minh’s apple-barrel body. Minh’s massive middle had become so big around that she couldn’t let her arms rest at her sides anymore, everywhere the large Lao mama went, her arms billowed out to the side and swayed with her every uncomfortable step.

But if you asked either of them, they weren’t *nearly* as big as Channel 5’s Weather Blimp. They would have been incorrect, of course, but it really depended on how thin you could stretch “nearly”.

And to say that the weighty wives of Rainey Street could stretch just about anything thin these days would have been an understatement.

“Aunt Peggy, can I have some—”

“*Haaank*? Luanne wants a top-off!”

“…okay then.”

The other big blonde sat steaming in her swimsuit on the *other* table that had come with the patio set. In hindsight, seating her so close to where everything was being served hadn’t been the best idea. But there was hardly any *room* at these outings anymore, and they *had* to sit her somewhere! Just a poor mother of one, out here making sure that Lucky and Gracie didn’t get sucked into the filtration system of the Souphanousinphone pool, distracting herself from errant (and erroneous) concerns with enough burgers to fill an abattoir.

“Make sure to hold onto her *right*!” Luanne managed through a mouthful of medium-rare burger, “*Lucky*!”

It probably said something that Nancy was the only house-sized housewife that *wasn’t* drawing attention in some way, shape or form. She was just wading in the water, trying to beat the heat. Meanwhile Peggy and Minh were stuffing their faces, and Luanne was doing just the same while shouting over the splashing in the pool.

“Dale, honey? Pass me a beer?”

*“Anything for you, my Rubenesque Queen.”*

“I’m gon’ pretend I didn’t hear that.”

The menfolk, sans Lucky, surrounded the grill. Their almost weekly array of problems had seemed so piddly lately as the women around them continued to grow. Both in size and in denial. The longer that this went on, the more improbable it seemed that things would ever go back to “normal”.

“Dang ol’ maybe Dautrieve got the right idea.” Boomhauer cleared his throat, “Talkin’ bachelor for life, ‘bout dang ol’ no fat chicks, man.”

“Personally, I agree with Boomhauer.”

“YOUR LOSS.” Dale said as he struck a mighty pose, “There’s never been *more of my wife to love*! And I’m *just* the trained professional to handle her.”

There was another long awkward silence as Hank’s nostrils flared with the depth of his sigh.

“Shut up, Dale.”