

THE CASSIOPEIAN COMPLEX

A SIZE STORY

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*Content Warning: The following story contains explicit violence and cruelty.
Discretion is advised.*

“What do you mean you’re not going to be home?” Roma asked, sitting heavily on one side of the couch.

“Um, sorry.” Troy said, who was already on the opposite side, “But I have plans this weekend. Why, is something happening?”

“Cassiopeia is coming to visit, I just got off the phone with her.” Roma said.

“Cousin Cass? Oh wow, I haven’t seen her in years.” Troy said, “I’m leaving Friday night. When is she coming?”

“Friday afternoon.” Roma said, “What kind of plans does a dork like you even have?”

“I’m going camping.” Troy said.

“Camping?” Roma scoffed, “Why would you want to do that?”

“Uh, I dunno, it’s just nice to be out in nature, you know? To be surrounded by something bigger and more important than you...” Troy said, before quickly correcting, “Something that’s bigger and not trying to step on you, I mean”

“I see...” Roma narrowed her eyes, “And why shouldn’t I just force you to stay home?”

“Come on, Roma, I just...” Troy sighed heavily, “I just want a little time to myself, without having to worry about you or Penny. You guys can be, well...kind of a lot, you know?”

Roma lifted her finger and opened her mouth as if to retort, but shrugged instead, “Alright, I’ll give you a break just this once...but only if you have dinner with us and Cass before you go.”

“Y-yeah, I’d like that. It’ll be nice to catch up.” Troy said, “And um, thanks Roma, for understanding.”

“Mmhhh, whatever.” Roma turned and stretched her legs out, kicking her warm feet against Troy’s thigh, “Now go make dinner, I’m gonna grab a nap until then.”

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Later that week, on a cool Friday afternoon, a knock came at the door. Penelope opened it and was greeted with the demure figure of Cassiopeia: as tall as Troy, hair messily tied up, large, round glasses, a plain sweater, long skirt, black socks, and scuffed loafers.

“Casio!” Penelope grinned, pulling her into a tight hug, “It’s been so long! How have you been? How was it getting here?”

“Ah! Penny...” Cassiopeia wasn’t sure how to react at first, but settled on returning the hug, “I’ve been good, it was a bit of a long trip though. You?”

“Oh, it’s been lovely. Come in, come in, please.” Penelope broke the hug and indicated through the threshold.

“What’s up, Cass!” Roma called from the couch, lazily lifting an arm.

“Hello, Roma.” Cassiopeia waved back, “Nice to see you.”

“Um, hey Cass.” Troy said, popping out from the kitchen momentarily.

“Is that Troy?” Cassiopeia asked, “Wow, you got taller. I guess everyone did.”

“Well...” Roma smirked, “He only looks that way because we haven’t shrunk him yet.”

“Oh, Troy isn’t immune?” Cassiopeia asked.

“He sure isn’t.” Penelope said, playfully nudging Cassiopeia, “He’s our *very* little brother.”

“What about you, Cass? You luck out like us?” Roma asked.

“Ah, y-yeah.” Cassiopeia tried to hide a wince, “I got the immunity gene too.”

“God, if only *someone* didn’t have plans this weekend.” Roma huffed, “We could have all had a good time shrinking Troy.”

“H-hey, you promised...” Troy peeped.

“I know, I know.” Roma rolled her eyes, “Just hurry up with the potatoes.”

“Troy’s leaving?” Cassiopeia asked.

“Yeah, he’s going to go camping.” Penny said, “But we can still have plenty of fun without him.”

“Hm...” Cassiopeia hummed to herself.

“Penny, is this chicken done?” Troy called from the kitchen.

“I’ll come check, hang on.” Penelope shrugged and winked at Cassiopeia, “He’s a total doofus sometimes.”

“Bluh...” Troy sighed.

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Soon enough dinner was served and summarily eaten. The three siblings and their cousin traded stories about school, work, and living their ostensibly strange lives in the shrinking nation. They reminisced about childhood, the summers they would spend together, and the paths their lives had taken them on.

“So, what’s the, um...” Cassiopeia gingerly tapped her fingers together, “What’s the craziest thing you’ve done to Troy after shrinking him?”

“Oh jeez, can you be more specific?” Roma laughed, “What haven’t we done?”

“I’ve definitely squished him under every pair of shoes I own.” Penelope said with a grin.

“I can attest to that.” Troy sighed, “The inside of the revival room is feeling more and more like my bedroom.”

“Gosh, that must have been scary...” Cassiopeia bit her lip.

“Yeah, it’s, uh, not great.” Troy said.

“What about the time you got baked into a pie?” Roma asked.

“Or the time you got lost in the laundry? Penelope added.

“The bubblegum bet?” Roma asked.

“Oh, when you got sick!” Penelope laughed.

“And the one time with the toilet.” Roma said.

“Okay, okay, I think she gets it.” Troy said, looking over at the now blushing Cassiopeia.

“Wow, that’s...” Cassiopeia wiped her lip, “That’s a lot. Did you ever, um, accidentally do something? Like you didn’t even know he was there?”

“What? Oh, I mean, probably.” Roma furrowed her brow, “But if I didn’t know, it’s not like I’d remember.”

“I remember.” Troy said, “And you definitely have.”

“Dang, wish I’d known,” Roma smirked, “If I’m gonna crunch you underfoot, I’d prefer to enjoy it.”

“Ah, jeez.” Troy sighed.

“Okay, okay, let’s not get carried away. How do we feel about dessert? I would love some cake or some ice cream.” Penelope said.

“I could definitely still eat.” Roma said, proudly patting her stomach, “Want to walk down to our usual place?”

“I think I should get going soon.” Troy said, “And the bus is in the opposite direction.”

“I’d love to but...” Cassiopeia shifted in her seat, “I’m still pretty tired from the trip, and I kind of want to just sit for a little while longer.”

“Well, why don’t me and Roma go, and we’ll bring you something back, how’s that?” Penelope offered.

“That would be so nice of you!” Cassiopeia said.

“It’s no problem.” Penelope smiled warmly, “What kind of dessert do you like?”

“Um, anything chocolate is usually good.” Cassiopeia said.

“Chocolate, got it.” Penelope said.

“Let’s do it!” Roma popped up from her chair.

“I might be gone by the time you guy leave, so...” Troy trailed off.

“Yeah, yeah, have fun in the woods, nerd.” Roma said.

“Be careful, Troy.” Penelope said, “If you do something stupid like get lost or hurt, I’ll have to punish you.”

“Er, you got it.” Troy said, and with that, Roma and Penelope gathered up their shoes and jackets, and sauntered out the door.

“So, um...” Cassiopeia said, “Do you need help clearing the table?”

“Yeah, that would be great, actually.” Troy said, gathering up some plates, “Thank you.”

“No problem.” Cassiopeia said, grabbing the glasses, “So, it, um, must be kind of tough being the only one without immunity, huh?”

“Yeah, it can be a real pain,” Troy said with a tired laugh.

“Any crazy stories to share?” Cassiopeia asked.

“Er, not really. I try not to think about it too much.” Troy replied, loading dishes into the dishwasher.

“Ah, no, I get that, sorry.” Cassiopeia said, doing the same with the glasses.

“Oh, it’s okay, um...” Troy struggled momentarily to set the appliance, “Alright, let me throw my last few things into my pack and I’ll be good to go.”

“Could I see your room?” Cassiopeia asked.

“Sure? It’s not interesting, but come on.” Troy waved her to follow along, and they quickly stepped down the hallway.

“Oh, it’s really clean.” Cassiopeia said, trailing Troy into his bedroom.

“I try to keep it neat, one less thing to worry about.” Troy chuckled.

“Is that...” Cassiopeia stepped over to a strange looking closet.

“Hm?” Troy hummed, stuffing a thermal into his camping bag.

“Is this the revival room?” Cassiopeia asked.

“Oh, yeah. I guess that’s probably weird to see if you’re not a shrinker, huh?” Troy said.

“I’ve seen them in magazines and online and stuff. It really is just like the pictures.” Cassiopeia said wistfully.

“Um...” Troy fumbled with the zippers on his pack, “Okay, I think I’m...”

“Sorry.” Cassiopeia’s voice very suddenly came from right behind Troy. He whirled around, but was already going through the horrifying, literally belittling process of being shrunken. Cassiopeia stretched out like a telephone pole, then a radio tower, then a redwood, looming in increased intensity over the quickly diminishing Troy. By the time it was over, he was barely shorter than the sole of her loafer, a veritable insect in the carpet fibers

of his own room. Cassiopeia peered down at him strangely, her face blushing and inscrutable.

“Oh, come on!” Troy flapped his arms, “Just once! Just once I thought I could take a break. What the heck, Cass? What are you going to do, step on me? Could you just make it quick?”

“You are so lucky...” Cassiopeia said slowly, kneeling down so that she could look closer at the tiny person.

“I’m...I’m what?” The anger driving Troy’s momentum seized up and floated away.

“You’re lucky. I...” Cassiopeia bit her lip, “I would give anything to trade places with you.”

“Are...are you kidding?” Troy asked, wondering if this was some sort of weird power play, if she was going to suddenly go full super villain and talk about how great of an honor it would be to be crushed by her, or something.

“Getting shrunk, getting teased and bullied or even better, being ignored, getting stepped on by beautiful women like Roma and Penny...” Cassiopeia’s blush grew deeper, “I’d trade with you in a heartbeat.”

“You’re...you’re serious, aren’t you?” Troy said, “But, you’re immune, so...”

“I know!” Cassiopeia winced, “I know, I know, I know. It’s unfair.”

“Hey, hey, listen, it’s okay.” Troy said, “It really sucks that’s what you got saddled with...but even if you can’t actually be shrunk, you can find people who will pretend with you, right? If you really want to be stepped on, I’m sure we could convince Roma to walk on your back or—”

“No!” Cassiopeia’s eyes flashed and she reached out with both hands, snagging Troy by his tiny arms and holding him up roughly, shoulders strained, and elbows straightened, “You can’t tell anyone about this! Anyone! If you do, I’ll...I’ll...I’ll throw you in my shoes and shrink you so small nobody will ever find you for the rest of your life!”

“Ack, th-that hurts!” Troy cried, “I promise, I won’t tell anyone!”

“Good, please, I couldn’t...” Cassiopeia slowly set Troy back on the ground, but didn’t let him go, “It’s so embarrassing. People who are immune aren’t supposed to...supposed to think about stuff like this. We’re supposed to be the ones on top.”

“Er, yeah, I guess I can understand that...” Troy said, “But, um, if you don’t want to be that sort of person, why did you shrink me? Nobody is forcing you to act like other immies.”

“I can’t shrink, but I can shrink others...” Cassiopeia said, “So the only way I can live out these...these fantasies is to make it happen to others...and since you’re supposed to be away this weekend, it was too perfect of an opportunity. If I can’t get shrunk and crushed by Roma and Penny, then you can do it in my place.”

“B-but my sisters gave me the weekend off. They’re not just going to go back on that.” Troy said, having no idea if that was actually true.

“It doesn’t matter, they’re not going to know...” Cassiopeia shivered, “Getting crushed like a bug by somebody so beautiful, so powerful, so completely above you that they don’t even know that you’re there? Oh my god...”

“Uh, okay...” Troy said, “And what if they find me?”

“They won’t.” Cassiopeia suddenly narrowed her eyes towards him, “Because if they do, you know what will happen: lost in my shoes forever, remember?”

“R-right!” Troy straightened up, “So, you’re just going to...”

“I don’t know exactly what yet.” Cassiopeia said, “But I know it’ll be something, and I know I couldn’t let you leave. Speaking of...”

Cassiopeia let go of Troy with one hand and used it to messily stuff his bag under the bed, along with his shoes and other gear he planned to take with him.

“A-and, um, there’s no way I can talk you out of this, right?” Troy asked pitifully.

“I...” Cassiopeia’s voice cracked a little, “I’m sorry, Troy. You seem like a really nice person, but I can’t give up an opportunity like this.”

With that, she snapped Troy up with her tree trunk fingers and transferred him into her sweaty palm. Troy could feel the g-forces of her rise and the sway and bounce of her steps as she wandered back towards the living room. She sat down on the couch, felt her posture too rigid, too obviously tense, and tried laying on her back, bringing her hands over her sternum. Troy sighed, surrounded by the warm, plush flesh of his cousin’s hand, heard her rapid heartbeat through her breastbone, and cursed his rotten luck.

Soon enough, Roma and Penelope returned, bursting through the front door, and carrying brown, paper bags of sweet treats.

“Hey! Hope we didn’t keep you waiting too long.” Roma said.

“No, you’re fine.” Cassiopeia sat up and smiled, trying her hardest to look natural.

“Did Troy leave?” Penelope asked, glancing around.

“Yeah, you just missed him.” Cassiopeia lied.

“Ah well, we can have fun without him.” Roma winked, handing a bag over to Cassiopeia, “Here, got you the best chocolate cake in town.”

“Yes! I’m so ready!” Penelope flopped down hard next to Cassiopeia on the couch, pulling a cup of very pink ice cream from her bag.

“Same!” Roma said, falling into the armchair, and revealing an oversized black and white cookie.

“There should be a plastic fork in there for you.” Penelope advised.

“A-ah, thank you.” Cassiopeia reached into the paper bag and fished out a small plastic container and the paired fork, trying all the time to do it with just the one hand not holding Troy. She popped open the disposable container, scooped up a healthy chunk of cake, placed it in her mouth, and chewed slowly, ‘Oh...my god...’

“I know, right?” Penelope beamed, “I know all the best bakeries in town.”

“It’s so good...” Cassiopeia said between chews. She was so taken by the taste that she dropped her fork. It bounced once, landed next to the sandaled foot of Penelope, and it was at that moment that Cassiopeia was struck with inspiration. She leaned down to pick up the implement, this time with the hand that had carefully palmed Troy, and as she snatched up the fork, she discretely deposited the tiny boy just under the uncurled toes of his relatively enormous sister.

For Troy the change was catastrophic, from the relatively calm environment of Cassiopeia’s hand, to the wiggling, mashing, boulder sized toes of Penelope. He was immediately surrounded by her warm flesh, bombarded with her sweaty, gripping digits. At any other time he might have tried to slip between them, or back away, but he remembered Cassiopeia’s threat, not one he thought was made in jest, and instead decided to stay, taking the battering from his sister’s monstrous toes again, and again, and again.

Meanwhile, up above, Cassiopeia tried not to look conspicuous while stealing glances down to Penelope's feet. She could see the occasional flailing limb of Troy, but was mostly taken with her own imagination, picturing herself down below, struggling against the unknowing assault of this beautiful girl's toes, imagining how easily Penelope could scrunch those digits and wipe her out of existence.

"Want to watch a movie?" Roma asked, finishing the last bite of her giant cookie.

"Wh-what?" Cassiopeia tore her eyes away.

"Uh, a movie..." Roma quirked her eyebrows, "You okay?"

"S-sorry, just distracted..." Cassiopeia forced a laugh.

"I get it, that cake is completely beyond belief." Penelope said.

"How is your ice cream?" Cassiopeia asked.

"So, so, so good." Penelope grinned, "Hey, what are we going to watch?"

"I think I recorded something from that horror channel the other night." Roma said, fiddling with the remote.

"Ugh, you know I hate slasher flicks." Penelope pouted.

"Fine, we can watch a cartoon then." Roma rolled her eyes.

"That's not what I meant!" Penelope said animatedly, kicking out her leg so that Cassiopeia caught a quick image of Troy hanging on to the moist rubber of the flipflop for dear life.

"Well jeez, Penny, just pick a movie then, what do you want to watch?" Roma sighed.

"Um...I don't know." Penelope said.

"Oh my god, you're the worst. If I could shrink you, I'd stomp you into dust." Roma said.

"Well, if I could shrink you, I'd put you in a cake and eat you!" Penelope shot back.

"I'd wrap you up in my gym socks!" Roma said.

"I'd throw you in the laundry!" Penny said.

"C-can we maybe just chill out and watch that new show everyone is talking about?" Cassiopeia said suddenly, her face flushed and heart pounding from having imagined every scenario the twins had just threatened each other with.

“Sorry, sorry.” Roma laughed, “You don’t have any siblings, right? This isn’t fighting, this is just how we talk.”

“Yeah. If you had a brother like Troy or a sister like Roma, you’d definitely throw those kinds of threats around.” Penelope said.

“Y-yeah, probably...” Cassiopeia snuck another glance at Penelope’s shoes, where she could just barely make out an errant limb of Troy.

“Let me see if I can find that show.” Roma clicked around the television menus.

“That was a good suggestion, Casio.” Penelope said, pulling herself higher up on the couch so that her long legs stretched out towards Cassiopeia, feet just barely hanging off the cushion, sandals dangling and gently patting against Penelope’s soft heels with each and every scrunch of her toes. Troy was fully visible now, plastered to the neatly dented toeprint of his sister’s shoe, barely able to breath in between ruthless and unknowing presses.

“This is it, right?” Roma asked.

“Sure, yeah.” Cassiopeia said, not even looking at the screen.

“Just about done. I’m sad to see this ice cream go but...” Penelope scooped the last bit of ice cream into her mouth, “But, I still have the cherry. I always save it for last.”

“R-really?” Cassiopeia watched the shiny red fruit pass Penelope’s lips.

“Really. She’s so weird about food.” Roma said.

“Mmmm, yesssss.” Penelope moaned, biting into the sugar preserved cherry. She scrunched the toes on both feet, hard, in equal measure with her pleasure. Cassiopeia watched as the tiny body of Troy disappeared under Penelope’s toe, and imagined the hot air, the struggle to breath, to even move, before, with a nearly inaudible pop, a small spray of blood shot from underneath and decorated the edge of the flipflop.

Cassiopeia nearly fainted on the spot.

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Sometime later, with a soft glow, the revival chamber activated. Troy found himself sitting there, exhausted from his recent misadventure, mind racing to figure out the next move. He figured he’d end up crushed at some point, which means he’d end up back in the reviver, and considered the



Cassiopeia nearly fainted on the spot.

possibility that he'd be able to sneak away once he was whole again. He could grab his bag, go out the window, and nobody would be the wiser. With shaking hands, Troy slid open the door, and was immediately greeted by Cassiopeia, dressed in her pajamas, sitting on the edge of his bed.

"Wh-wha—" He nearly shouted, before being cut off.

"Shh! Not so loud!" Cassiopeia hissed, hopping off the bed, striding directly up to Troy, and pressing her finger to his lips.

"S-sorry..." Troy whispered, "Wh-what are you doing in here?"

"Your sisters told me I could sleep in your room." Cassiopeia said quietly.

"Ah...so..." Troy trailed off.

"I'm going to shrink you again." Cassiopeia said, and in a flash she was looming over a miniaturized Troy.

"Ugh..." Troy sighed.

"I should keep you somewhere safe, where you won't get lost...or escape." Cassiopeia said, reaching down and plucking Troy up by the back of his shirt.

"Escape?" Troy peeped, "C'mon, I wouldn't..."

"I guess I could just stick you in your dresser or something." Cassiopeia pinched her fingers tighter, straining Troy's shirt and pulling the collar tight around his neck: a sure sign she'd recognized his attempted escape and subsequent lie, "But...well...there is something I've always wanted to see..."

"Oh, um, what's that?" Troy asked.

Without a word, Cassiopeia reached her hand behind her, a movement which sent Troy into a visual whirlwind, one which only calmed when his cousin's round butt came into focus. She maneuvered him to her waistband and pulled it open slightly with her other hand, before gingerly lowering Troy halfway past the elastic vestibule. The harsh elastic snapped shut over his chest, and he hung there, arms and shoulders above the clothing, torso and legs caught by the cheeks of Cassiopeia's comparatively enormous backside.

"Hmm..." Cassiopeia hummed, turning her back to the mirror and craning her neck to see the toylike Troy trapped by her rear, "It feels nice I guess, but...I sorta just wish it was happening to me instead."

"S-sorry?" Troy said.

“Whatever, at least you can’t move from there.” Cassiopeia sighed, and she was right. She turned off the light, flopped into bed, snuggled up under the blanket and, in time, began snoring softly, Troy tried his hardest to escape, but found the pajama pants Cassiopeia had borrowed were just a little too tight for his tiny hands to push away and for his tiny body to snake free from. Finally, without recourse, he laid still and fell asleep.

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Early the next morning, Cassiopeia fished Troy from her butt and tossed him onto the bed.

“Wh-what the-” Troy gasped, having been roughly awoken.

“I need to get changed.” Cassiopeia yawned, before casually tossing a pillow on top of Troy. He waited in the soft darkness, listening to his cousin rummage around, wondering if he fell back to sleep if she’d be angry.

“Okay, done.” She said finally, pulling the pillow away. New sweater, new skirt, same glasses, same shoes, Troy noted. She looked down on Troy and smiled slightly, “I wonder where you’ll end up today.”

“Jeez, Cass...” Troy said softly.

“First place is my pocket, at the very least.” Cassiopeia said.

“Oh, skirts can have pockets?” Troy asked.

“Yeah, take a look.” Cassiopeia said, grabbing Troy and tossing him into the wide, nearly hidden pocket of her modest skirt.

“Oh, it’s roomy.” Troy said, though his voice was too muffled by the fabric to hear.

Cassiopeia stepped into the hallway, only to be immediately greeted by two simultaneous sensory assaults: a loud shout and a powerfully sweet smell.

“Good morning, sleepyhead!” Roma said, slapping the considerably smaller girl on the back.

“Yow!” Cassiopeia nearly jumped, “Roma, you scared me!”

“Whoops!” Roma laughed, “C’mon, we’ve been waiting for you to get up, Penny’s making something nice for us.”

“Did- did I sleep too long?” Cassiopeia stuttered.

“It’s already ten o’clock.” Roma said, tugging Cassiopeia towards the kitchen.

“That’s...that’s late?” Cassiopeia gawked.

“We’re early birds around here.” Roma smiled, “I like to work out in the morning, Penny likes to do some gardening, and Troy...well, he doesn’t count. He sleeps forever, and could sleep through an earthquake, honestly.”

“Y-yeah, I bet.” Cassiopeia forced a laugh, “Living with you guys, he probably gets a real workout.”

“You’d think that, but he’s still scrawny.” Roma said, before calling into the kitchen, “Hey, Pen! How’s it coming?”

“Almost done! Come give me a hand!” Penelope called back.

Stepping into the kitchen, Cassiopeia saw that Penelope was hard at work. Fruit had been sliced, cream had been whipped, and even a small cake seemed to have been baked, frosted, and cut to pieces.

“Wooooow...Penny what are you...” Cassiopeia trailed off.

“Making parfaits!” Penelope grinned, “Roma, use those muscles and scoop some ice cream, would you?”

“About time I got to help in the kitchen.” Roma said, swinging open the freezer.

“I’d let you do it more, but you can *sherbet* you’d just get in the way.” Penelope said with a laugh, “We’ve got strawberries, kiwis, and bananas, Casio, which do you want?”

“Come on Penny, we have a guest.” Roma said, disgusted.

“Oh, um, strawberry and kiwi please.” Cassiopeia said.

“Same as me! Very nice.” Penelope said.

“Banana for me.” Roma said.

“Chocolate too?” Penelope asked.

“Aw, you remembered my favorite.” Roma said, “Wait, do we have any?”

“Yeah, I have some stashed away.” Penelope said.

“You’ve been hiding chocolate?” Roma asked.

“Well, you’d eat it all in one night!” Penelope playfully shouted.

“Augh, you are such a brat.” Roma spooned a scoop of ice cream into each cup.

“And you’re a total glutton.” Penelope said, “And I just can’t *conedone* that sort of behavior.”

“Oh, just layer the fruit.” Roma sighed, exasperated.

“Wanna help put in the whipped cream, Cass?” Penelope said, winking at Cassiopeia.

“Um, sure...” Cassiopeia said slowly, adding a dollop to each cup, “Like this?”

“Yeah, that’s perfect.” Penelope said, adding sliced bananas to one cup and strawberries to the other two, “Another layer of cream, please?”

“You got it, um...” Cassiopeia was struck with a thought, “Do you have a smaller spoon? This is a little, uh, unwieldy.”

“Oh, sure, let me just squeeze by and...” Penelope slid in front of Cassiopeia and opened a wide drawer with a brief metallic cacophony. Cassiopeia quickly glanced at Roma, who was now sniffing around in the cabinets, no doubt on the hunt for chocolate, and stuffed her hand into her pocket, before pulling out Troy. Her eyes met his for only a fraction of a second before she dumped him into one of the strawberry cups.

“Here you go.” Penelope handed over a spoon.

“Perfect, th-thanks!” Cassiopeia said, probably a little too excitedly, before rapidly slapping a blob of whipped cream directly over Troy’s prone body.

For Troy, the entire experience was a rollercoaster of barely comprehensible action. He was just lounging in the surprisingly soft pockets of Cassiopeia, listening to his sisters playfully bicker like usual, and then suddenly he was in a centrifuge, hurtling in an arc, during which he caught a glimpse of the equally apologetic and hungry eyes of his cousin, before he crash landed onto a cold, sticky surface. He didn’t even have time to turn over before he was buried in a fluffy cloud of cream.

“Time for the cake bits.” Penny sang, carefully arranging the soft pastry squares into the cups, unknowingly placing more pressure on Troy in one, “One more layer of cream.”

“G-got it.” Cassiopeia said, a bit flustered, but doing the deed, nonetheless.

“And then more bananas for Roma, Kiwis for us, aaaaaand...” Penny produced a handful of chocolate chips as though by conjuring, before sprinkling them into Roma’s cup, “The finishing touch.”

“Where did those come from?” Roma asked, flabbergasted.

“It’s a secret.” Penelope said with a coy smile.

“Augh, fine, keep your secrets.” Roma rolled her eyes and grabbed her cup.

“Th-this one, I’ll take this one.” Cassiopeia stammered, quickly snagging the cup that didn’t include Troy.

“Then this one must be mine.” Penelope said, “Why don’t we go enjoy these in the yard? It’s a beautiful day outside.”

Moments later, the three girls were sitting comfortably in deck chairs on the warm grass. Roma quickly scarfed down her parfait, barely even attempting to savor it, it seemed. Penelope, on the other hand, ate hers with nearly surgical precision. Cassiopeia watched each spoonful as surreptitiously as she could, waiting for the moment when she might see the struggling form of Troy appear, and then disappear into the snapping maw of his unaware sister.

“Ugh, I gotta get out of these.” Roma said, popping each sneaker off with the toe of the other, before sliding her feet out and peeling off each sock. She lifted her legs and placed her heels on the arm of Penny’s chair.

“Ew, get your stinky feet away from me.” Penelope stuck her tongue out.

“They’re sore from working out, though. Don’t you want to rub them for me?” Roma laughed, wiggling her toes.

“Absolutely not, that’s what Troy is for.” Penelope flicked her spoon at Roma’s feet, sending a ball of whipped cream into one sole. Cassiopeia nearly choked on a piece of strawberry, but did not see any tiny figure in the quickly melting cream.

“What about you, Cass? Wanna give your host a massage?” Roma smirked.

“W-well, um, I mean, if you, uh...” Cassiopeia nearly panicked on the spot.

“Kidding! I’m kidding, jeez, you gotta relax.” Roma said.

“Ah, ahah, of course...” Cassiopeia blushed, glancing back over to Penelope. She had just gotten to the middle layer of the parfait, meaning she was now dangerously close to Troy.

Underneath the next layer of cream, Troy was barely conscious. Between the total darkness, the freezing cold of the ice cream underneath, and the nauseatingly saccharine smell of the fruit, he was nearly paralyzed. Regardless of his state, though, an unimaginably large, steel spoon suddenly broke through to him, allowing a glimpse of light and the muted sounds of a spring morning, and his family’s conversation. He had no intention of listening, however, as he was more interested in escaping from the sudden

intrusion. He rallied his strength and tried to run, but the soft, wet surface did not permit such actions. He slid and yawed, whirling and flopping facedown into another strawberry. The spoon seemed to chase him, though it and its owner were certainly unaware of his presence. It scooped him and his strawberry up, through the cream, and into the air.

Cassiopeia froze. She thought she saw a kicking leg but couldn't be entirely sure. Like a hawk, she locked her eyes onto the strawberry atop Penelope's spoon and, just as it reached the zenith of its arc, she recognized the writhing form of Troy, covered in whipped cream, probably blind and deaf to everything around him, completely powerless in the face of the casual actions of his sister. Penelope's eyes weren't even open at that point, she was in a state of clear bliss, as she spooned the next bite into her mouth. Cassiopeia watched Troy disappear into that cavern before it closed around him.

He slapped onto the tongue, before an avalanche of fruit and cream landed over him. Penny effortlessly moved the entire hill of sweets over to her molars, which began powerfully and efficiently mashing the food into paste. Troy tried to swim away, as swimming was really the only thing he could try while buried in the cloying sludge, but it was too late. The machinelike chomping of Penelope overtook him, and he was mashed to paste between her teeth.

Cassiopeia could only imagine the carnage that just took place, but she did see a thin stream of pink and red escape from the corner of Penelope's mouth, though whether it was blood or puree, she couldn't know.

"Oopsie." Penelope giggled, wiping it away with her thumb, "Extra juicy strawberry, I guess."

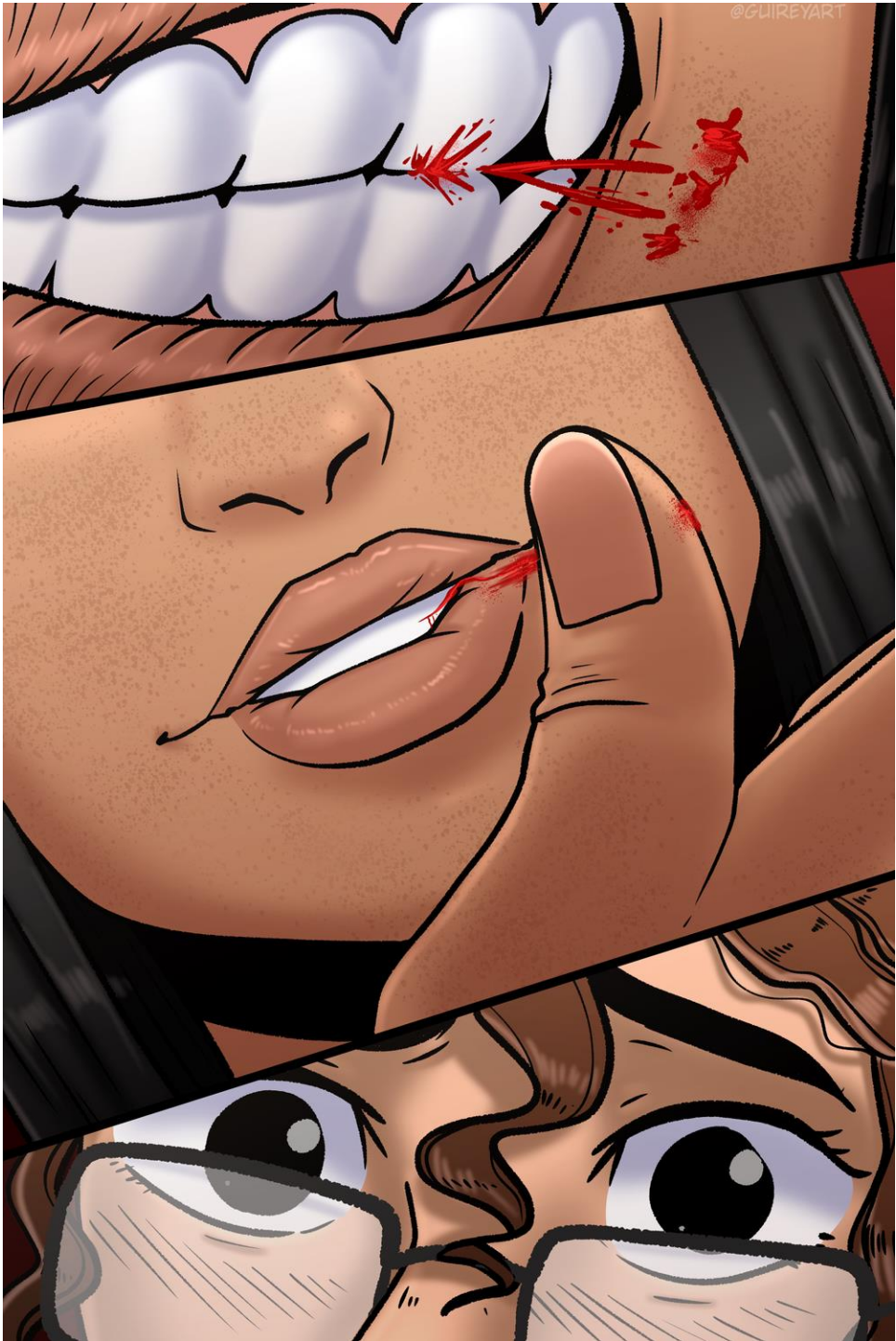
"Yeah, and I'm the glutton." Roma shrugged and rolled her eyes.

"I have to go to the bathroom!" Cassiopeia nearly screamed, face blushing beet red. She clumsily jumped from her seat and scampered into the house.

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When Troy next opened the door to the revival chamber, he was again greeted with the sight of Cassiopeia, but this time it was wildly different. She was half dressed, a sweating, huffing mess, sprawled halfway on the bed and halfway on the floor.



"Extra juicy strawberry, I guess."

“I...um...” He barely intoned.

“That...was...quick...” She said between heavy breaths.

“Yeah, the timing is always a little different...um...are you okay?” Troy asked, stepping over to Cassiopeia.

“Yeah, just, uh, a little tired.” She said as she slid off the bed completely, picked herself up, and weakly tried to flatten out the wrinkles in her skirt.

“I see...” Troy said, “So, um, do you-”

“Hey, Cass? Are you feeling alright?” Penelope’s voice came from right outside the door.

“Y-yep!” Cassiopeia yelped, slapping a sticky and surprisingly strong hand over Troy’s mouth, “I, uh, just needed a second to freshen up.”

“Okay. Hey, listen, if you’re lactose intolerant or something, that’s no big deal, we have some medicine for that.” Penelope said.

“N-no, no! I’m fine, really!” Cassiopeia said.

“Alright, if you say so.” Penelope said, “By the way, Roma wants to work out and then go to the sauna. You’re more than welcome to join us if you’re feeling up to it.”

“Sounds great, I’ll be out in just a few!” Cassiopeia said, and then waited for the soft footsteps of Penelope to disappear before turning down to Troy, “Okay, let’s do it again.”

“Wait, come on now, can I at least have a break?” Troy pleaded.

“Um...” Cassiopeia struggled for a moment, “N-no, I have to.”

Yet again, Troy shot down to the floor like lightning, Cassiopeia becoming a buckling bridge, bending over to snatch him up. He was again tossed into her soft skirt pocket, though this time the atmosphere was notably humid. The shuffling sound of her pleats surrounded him for a few moments and only stopped once she had reached her destination.

“Wow...you guys have a home gym?” Cassiopeia asked.

“Yup!” Roma beamed, standing tall aside a hanging heavy bag. “Pretty nice, right? I worked for months to afford most of this stuff.”

“You really don’t want to know how much it cost.” Penelope said, clad in tight yoga gear and already beginning to stretch.

“Penny’s gonna do some yoga, and I’m gonna work on my muay thai kicks.” Roma said, sitting down on a wooden bench and pulling some rolled

strips of fabric from a pale box underneath, “Anything you'd like to do? We basically have everything.”

“Y-yeah, you really do.” Cassiopeia said, “Um, maybe just some light stretching. I'm not really, uh, in shape.”

“That's okay!” Penelope said, “It's good to start anytime. We have another yoga mat too; I'll grab it for you.”

“Thanks.” Cassiopeia said, turning her attention back to Roma, “What are you doing with those?”

“I'm wrapping my feet and legs.” Roma said, stepping down onto a stretch of fabric and beginning to methodically turn it around her arch and up her ankle, “It's like a compression sleeve; it gives support, improves circulation, reduces swelling...”

“I see, I see.” Cassiopeia said, nearly immediately sidling up next to Roma, having already found her next moment.

“I should probably switch to something more modern, but these wraps make me feel like a video game character. Pow! Super flying knee!” Roma laughed, finishing the tie on her right leg.

“Let me see how you do it.” Cassiopeia slid off of the bench and knelt, so that she could nominally get a better view.

“Oh, uh, sure, it just has to wrap in specific places, you know?” Roma said, laying out the matching cloth and hovering her foot over it, “You want to make sure there's good contact with the arch.”

“W-wait!” Cassiopeia said, trying to sneakily snag Troy from her pocket, “It's, um, there's a thing on there.”

“Wha-?” Roma quirked her brow.

“Yeah, I got it...” Cassiopeia slid her hand beneath Roma's sole and mimed picking up some piece of dust while actually depositing Troy, in all his confusion, right in the center of the gauze, “Just some dust. I thought it was thorn or something.”

“Oh, good eye.” Roma said, not even wondering why there would be a thorn in her disposable fight tape. She leaned further over and continued to explain the finer anatomic details of martial physiology while wrapping the tape tightly.

Troy was unable to hear the specifics of Roma's uncharacteristic lecture, however. The whirling, nauseating ride from Cassiopeia's pocket had left him prone on the tacky surface of the fight tape, and as he roughly turned himself over, he was greeted with the familiar sight of his sister's immense

sole. It seemed to fall in slow motion, slowly settling its arch onto Troy's vulnerable body, covering him in warm flesh and the faint scent of stale sweat from the morning's workout. He wished, even knowing the probable outcome, that Roma would feel his tiny form pressed up against her foot, but it was seemingly not to be. The gauze quickly became tighter and tighter on his back, pressing him into the firm underside of his athletic sister's foot, eliminating light and sound, while adding metric tons of crushing pressure.

“Here you go!” Penelope chirped, rolling a furred yoga mat towards Cassiopeia.

“Oh, thank you, Penny.” Cassiopeia said, finding it difficult to look away from the tomb she'd created for Troy.

“Do you want to get changed?” Roma asked, “Might be hard to do much in your skirt. I probably have some old hakama around somewhere.

“Er, no, that's okay.” Cassiopeia said, picking up the mat and flapping it out to lay flat, so that she might be able to observe Roma while stretching.

“Alright, whatever you say.” Roma said, “Back up a little, I don't want to accidentally hit you.”

“Yeah, getting kicked by Roma is probably like being hit by a freight train.” Penelope said.

“That's the idea.” Roma grinned, proudly flexing a muscle.

“Hmm...” Penelope hummed, pulling the mat back a few inches while imagining Roma's foot smashing her nose in, “Well...”

“What's that, Cass?” Penelope asked.

“Oh, nothing, nothing!” Cassiopeia forced a laugh, “Just mumbling to myself, don't mind me.”

“Alright, here we go!” Roma said, taking a square stance and then whipping her leg out with such ferocity that the sound of her shin striking the heavy bag was like a bullet hitting kevlar.

Cassiopeia watched in awe as the powerful, crotaline leg of Roma struck again and again and again, each time snapping like a coiled snake, and each time hooking back to give her a perfect view of the foot upon which Troy was affixed. She imagined being there, where he was, pressed up against the strong, unknowing body of her brawny cousin, and blushed deeply while continuing to try and keep of the façade of stretching.

While it may have been a dream for Cassiopeia, it was a nightmare for Troy. He could barely breath as it was, pressed up in to the huffy sole of Roma, but the sudden and rapid shifts in momentum, g-forces rivaling that of

an astronaut, but never in exactly the same direction, quite literally pulled his blood into different parts of his body. As Roma kicked forward it would shoot down to his feet, nearly causing him to pass out, and as she retracted it would flow up to his head, making him feel his eyes would pop out. Ten, twenty, thirty kicks, before he gave up counting and tried to just let himself lose consciousness, but the deafening thunder of each collision jolted him enough to make the warm embrace of the void impossible to catch. All this occurred simultaneously with the building sweat of Roma's feet, which soaked into her wraps, and practically waterboarded poor Troy.

“Fifty!” Roma proclaimed, “Next leg!”

Cassiopeia watched carefully. She'd seen no sign of Troy or his demise, though she had certainly imagined a thousand variations of it. Roma's foot settled on the thick training mat, and Cassiopeia pictured how it must be, caught in the arch between two barely forgiving surfaces, coated in sweat, barely able to breath, lost underneath a colossus unaware of your existence. She unconsciously tightened her thighs together to hide her shame.

She was mostly right in her assessments, but there was one crucial thing which she did not surmise, one thing which Troy immediately figured out. The inertia of those snapping kicks had shifted his position in a ventral manner, moving him closer to the toes of his sister, placing his head and torso squarely on the ball of his sister's foot. As Roma readjusted her stance to place her weight solely on her non-kicking foot, it settled almost entirely on that part of her sole, and therefore, on the fragile body of her brother. Each strike, moved her mass back and forth in a great rocking motion, rolling back and forth over Troy's tiny body, a massive, incalculable exponent of the breaking wheel, until finally, a particular minor loss of balance of Roma's part leading to just that much more weight placed on her back leg acted as the *coup de grâce* and Troy splattered without so much as a sound.

Cassiopeia could not see this at first, Roma's movements not displaying her sole just yet. After another fifty kicks, however, Roma switched to a punch drill. She struck with the torque of her entire body, each blow causing her to lift and twist her arched foot. Once she switched sides, her opposite foot now exhibiting its underbelly, Cassiopeia could see it clearly: a tiny red blotch bleeding through the gauze where Troy had once been. She stared for a while, picturing those final, gruesome moments.

“Oh jeez...” Cassiopeia nearly moaned, a little louder than she'd have preferred.

“You okay? Penelope asked.

“Oh yeah, yeah! Fine, just, uh, maybe stretched a little too far. I think I might, uh, be done.” Cassiopeia said.

“That's alright, I'm just about done here too.” Roma said, sitting heavily on the wooden bench, “Can't push yourself too far. Resting is as important as anything else.”

“And we don't want to get to the sauna too late.” Penelope said, giving one final stretch.

“True!” Roma said, pulling off her wraps and dropping them in a trash bin without ever noticing the remains of her brother on the bottom, “Ever been to a sauna, Casio?”

“No, I haven't...are they, um, are they good?” Cassiopeia said mindlessly as she stared at the rough depositing of what used to be Troy into the garbage, the thought of being treated as actual garbage exciting her more than she would probably ever be willing to express.

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“Come on, come on!” Cassiopeia impatiently tapped on the door of the revival chamber, “We're going to leave soon, come on!”

As if spurred on by her hurrying, a faint blue glow appeared behind the steel door. She quickly opened it, barely slowed by the vacuum pressure, and stepped forward to loom over Troy, who was still folded in the corner, barely yet conscious.

“Wh-what- Cass, I...” He mumbled.

“No time, we're just about to go to the sauna and you're coming with.” Cassiopeia said and, just as she finished that last word, reached out to grab her already shrinking cousin.

“P-please, I need a break...” Troy's quickly diminishing voice squeaked.

“Sorry, but, it's too good of a chance, you can rest later.” Cassiopeia said, snapping up Troy in her tree-trunk fingers. He was quickly stuffed into her skirt pocket as she hurriedly made her way to the living room.

“Ready to go?” Penelope asked.

“Yes, I'm very excited.” Cassiopeia said.

“You should be, nothing feels better than the sauna after a workout.” Roma said.



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"Fifty! Next Leg!"

“Okay, I'll drive.” Penelope said, grabbing a colorful tote bag and spinning her keys around one finger.

“Works for me.” Roma said, opening the door and ushering the other two out. In just another minute the car's engine roared to life and they were on the road.

“Oh, thanks for letting me use your shampoo, by the way. And for loaning me towels and sandals and stuff. I would have brought them if I'd known we were going to do this.” Cassiopeia said from the back seat.

“Don't even mention it!” Penelope smiled, “Really, it's nothing.”

“Are you sure? You guys have been really great hosts.” Cassiopeia said.

“Tell you what, you can thank me with a massage.” Roma turned and smirked.

“Roma, cut it out.” Penelope rolled her eyes.

“Kidding, kidding.” Roma shrugged.

“Can I at least maybe pick up the dessert tab tonight?” Cassiopeia asked.

“I think that's a very nice gesture.” Penelope said.

“Mighty kind of you, Cass.” Roma said.

“Mighty kind? What are you, a cowboy now?” Penelope said with a snort.

“Maybe I am.” Roma playfully huffed, “Maybe I'll just squish you under my boots.”

“You wish. Pretty sure if we were cowboys you'd get crushed *inside* my boots.” Penelope said sarcastically, “And if she were there, Cass would get to ride on my hat.”

“I...I would?” Cassiopeia asked, flattered by Penelope's gentle gesture, but simultaneously a little upset she wasn't getting imaginary stepped on in this scenario.

“Sure!” Penelope said.

“What about Troy?” Cassiopeia asked.

“Stomped.” Penelope and Roma said simultaneously.

Cassiopeia stifled a laugh as she felt Troy momentarily thrash in her pocket.

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“Okay, looks like our room is heated up. You ready?” Roma asked.

“Y-yeah, I'm ready.” Cassiopeia said unsteadily. She stood in the empty hallway along with Roma and Penelope, one towel wrapped around her body, another rolled up under her arm, deep within which laid Troy. She had somehow managed to squirrel him away in there during the frantic process of undressing and stuffing her clothes into the private lockers.

“Let's go!” Penelope cheerfully said, opening the door, “Here, hang on to me so you don't trip.”

“Um, yeah, thanks.” Cassiopeia gently put her hand on Penelope's elbow.

“Sorry you couldn't bring your glasses in, but they'd get way too hot in here.” Roma said, stepping through the threshold, “No contacts either, they'll dry up and stick to your eyes.”

“Jeez, that sounds terrible.” Cassiopeia said, following Penelope's lead into the chamber, “I wonder, uh, what it would be like to be tiny in one of these.”

“Gosh, you'd probably just cook or something.” Penelope laughed.

“Yeah.” Cassiopeia winced, suddenly being struck by a blast of oppressively hot air. The ambient temperature of the room was beyond anything she had ever experienced, and her body immediately began to produce beads of moisture from head to toe, though whether this was sweat, dew, or a combination, she did not know.

“Okay, so you'll probably want to stay on the lower level.” Roma said, indicating the tiered seating, “It's cooler on the bottom, hotter on top. If you're new to this, it's better to start slow.”

“I love the top.” Penelope smiled.

“She really does. It could never be hot enough for Penny.” Roma rolled her eyes, “I prefer the middle level, honestly, but I run hot naturally.”

“Alright, so I just....” Cassiopeia made as if to sit on the bench.

“Spread your towel out first.” Roma directed while stepping up to the middle seats.

“Ah, right.” Cassiopeia said. She took her rolled towel and carefully unfurled it onto the hot wooden bench, being careful while smoothing it out

to brush a very discombobulated Troy to the side so that she wouldn't sit on him, "And then I just, uh...sit?"

"Yeah, take a seat and enjoy that beautiful heat. Though I prefer to lay down." Roma said, "And don't worry about being naked, it's just us in here, but whatever you're comfortable with."

With that Roma spread out her own towel and then removed the one that was covering her torso and hips, revealing an incredibly toned, powerful body underneath, dotted with shiny drops. Cassiopeia could barely manage to keep her eyes off of it, both jealous and amazed.

"Yeah, it's fine." Penelope said, already on the top level, folding both towels into a sort of cushion, pale butt bared to the room, "It's also fine if you want to stay wrapped, everyone has some self *esteem* issues."

"Penny, please, this is a place of relaxation. You're going to piss off the *saunantuu*." Roma sighed.

"Fine, fine." Penelope shrugged sarcastically, sitting down.

Cassiopeia took a deep breath, or at least tried to in the heavy atmosphere of the room. She considered removing her towel, but couldn't help but make immediate comparisons between the incredible bodies of her cousins and her own; a body that was smaller in almost every conceivable way. She looked again at Penelope and Roma, each seated higher than her, Penelope at the top, sitting like some sort of queen, and Roma on the next row down, stretched out like a lounging gladiator, legs bent at the knee so that Cassiopeia could look directly at the underside of that perfect thigh. Her hand quietly slipped over to Troy and gingerly snapped him up. She passed him to her other hand, and without thought dropped him onto Roma's towel, just below a thigh that was hanging like the sword of Damocles.

"Gosh, this is so nice. I can just feel my tension melting away." Penelope said.

"Y-yeah, right, no tension here." Cassiopeia said, eyes nervously darting between her knees, the wall, and Troy.

"If you start to feel too hot or get dizzy, let us know. Beginners often only do five minutes at first." Roma said.

"No, no, I'm okay." Cassiopeia lied, "It feels really good. Like I want to, uh, just stretch way out."

"God, same." Roma said, sliding her heels along the bench until her legs rested flat. Cassiopeia watched at the tiny, struggling form of Troy disappeared underneath that thick thigh. Roma's long feet were now at one

side of her head, her thick thighs at the other, and Cassiopeia had no idea where to look.

Meanwhile, for Troy, the entire experience had been nightmarish from start to finish. The heat of the room had immediately hit him like a hammer, his exiguous body too fragile to keep up with the rapid jump in temperature, which gave the strange sensation of dehydrating and drowning simultaneously. The thick air was hard to pull into his miniature lungs, leaving him lightheaded and internally spinning in place.

When he was deposited on Roma's towel, he could barely even begin to understand the cyclopean tower hanging over him. He heard the vague mumbling of conversation, deep and distorted like it was coming through water, and then the massive pillar began to fall. He twisted in place, knowing deep inside no amount of struggle would stop the inevitable but strung along by a survival instinct all the same. Still, in another moment, he was completely enveloped. His hands pushed up into the wet skin, the soft layer of fat, and the heavy, relaxing muscle but they made no difference. His chest was compressed, air forced from his lungs, and the sweaty flesh of Roma quickly created a seal with the soaked towel. Already deprived of oxygen and despite his frantic final thrashes, Troy passed out, falling into a void that was deeper and darker than the cramped space between his sister's massive leg.

Minutes later, when Roma finally deigned to move, bending her legs again, Cassiopeia caught sight of the limp, lifeless form of Troy plastered to his sister's thigh. His body quickly fell to the towel where it was almost immediately overtaken by the heel of Roma's foot, quickly and quietly ground beneath it into just another wet spot.

“Uh, Cass? You okay? You're kind of breathing weird...” Roma said.

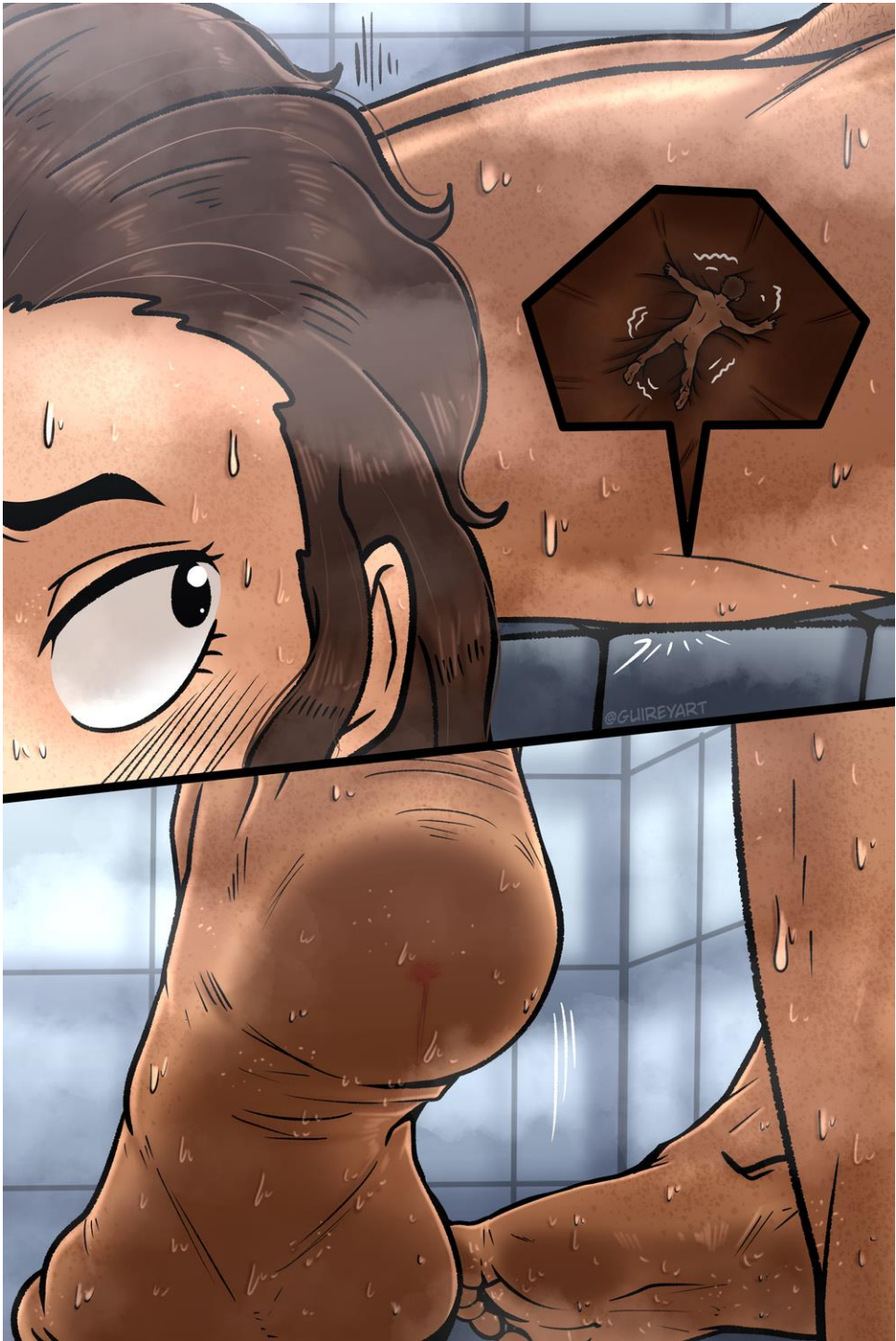
“Ye...yeah, I'm okay.” Cassiopeia said, snapping back to attention, “I, um, maybe I'm overheating. I think I'll go shower off.”

“I'm just about done here too, let me come with you. Don't want you passing out on the way to the changing rooms.” Penelope said, picking herself up and gathering her towels.

“Yeah, I'll come too. Don't want to overdo it.” Roma said, sitting up and swinging her legs around, giving Cassiopeia one last look at what remained of Troy: a barely perceivable splotch of red.

“You sure? You can stay longer if you want, I'll be fine, promise.” Cassiopeia said.

“It's no problem. Nobody wants to shower off in that creepy little room alone anyway.” Penelope said.



...quickly and quietly ground beneath it into just another wet spot.

“Ah, yeah, of course.” Cassiopeia said, having absolutely wanted to be alone for her shower.

“So, how was your first time?” Roma asked, opening the door.

“Even better than I imagined.” Cassiopeia said with a laugh that barely disguised her hidden emotions.

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“H-hello?” Troy whispered into the dark room, though he was only greeted with the soft snores of his cousin in the distant corner. This was finally his opportunity. It must have been at least midnight, and he figured he could sneak out and have at least one day alone, even if was just relaxing around town without giant feet, thighs, and teeth relentlessly ending him multiple times a day.

He tiptoed to the bed, wanting to at least grab his jacket from under it, but was interrupted by the unmistakable snort of someone suddenly waking.

“Mm, fuck, what time...” Cassiopeia mumbled, reaching out and pulling aside the thick window shade, letting in the bright light of a clear summer morning. The sudden invasion of light caused Troy to wince, drawing Cassiopeia's attention, “Wh-Who's there?”

“Ah...um, hey.” Troy said softly, glancing at his bedside alarm clock and seeing that it was actually close to six o'clock, not midnight at all.

“Oh, hey. You were taking a while to regenerate so I just went to bed. What time is it?” Cassiopeia asked.

“Just about six...um, listen, what if...” Troy stammered.

“When do Penny and Roma usually get up?” Cassiopeia asked.

“Uh, I guess like six-thirty on weekends?” Troy said.

“Okay, okay, perfect. Come here, let me shrink you again.” Cassiopeia said.

“Cass...please...this weekend was supposed to be a break for me, and it's been awful...” Troy said pitifully.

“I...ah, jeez, I'm sorry, Troy. Maybe I got carried away.” Cassiopeia said, sucking air through her teeth and staring up at the ceiling.

“Yeah, but, it's okay. It happens.” Troy breathed a sigh of relief.

“So, let's do one more thing and then I'll let you go, promise.” Cassiopeia lifted herself up.

“W-wait, no, I...” Troy started, but it was too late. Cassiopeia was already growing larger and more distant as he dropped like a stone to the carpet fibers which now stretched out like a garden of weeds. Her legs swung over the side of the bed and her feet crashed to earth like twin starships, sending reverberations through Troy's body.

“Come here, we can relax a bit before your sisters are around.” Cassiopeia said, stepping closer and bending over to grab Troy around the waist with her finger and thumb. She deposited him next to her pillow and flopped heavily onto her stomach, pulling her phone from the nightstand, and began to scroll through the news of the day, “Looks like it's going to be a hot one...”

“Yeah, summers here can be pretty brutal.” Troy said, still feeling defeated, “Hopefully it cools down by the time you have to go.”

“I'm leaving in the afternoon, so probably not. The train should be fine though, so long as the air conditioning works.” Cassiopeia said.

“Penny would probably give you a ride to the station, so you don't have to worry about walking in the heat.” Troy said.

“Yeah, she'll probably offer too.” Cassiopeia smiled, “Your sisters can be really sweet.”

“Uh...I'll take your word for it.” Troy said slowly.

They continued to lazily chat for another half hour, until the distant rustling sounds of Penelope and Roma waking up and beginning their day could be heard through the door. Cassiopeia immediately turned away from her phone and looked at Troy.

“Hey, do you have any tape?” She whispered.

“Y-yeah, in the desk, it's just regular clear tape though...why?” Troy responded.

“You'll see.” Cassiopeia smiled, silently sliding out of bed. She slinked over to the door and listened carefully, before retracing her steps back to the bed.

“How long are your sisters usually out in the morning? They said they go to the gym and stuff, right?” Cassiopeia quietly asked.

“Uh, like, an hour, I guess?” Troy bit his lip.

“Okay, perfect.” Cassiopeia said, “Hang on, let me get dressed.”

With that she tossed the blanket over Troy and quickly put on her clothes. He could hear her fiddling around with his desk drawers as well, and when she finally pulled the covers back, she stood towering in her same, plain outfit, a ring of tape hooked in her fingers. She lowered her enormous hand over Troy, and for a moment, for some reason, perhaps something in her demeanor that reminded him of a starved animal, he wanted to run.

He knew, however, there was no point in that, and allowed her fingers to envelop him into the warm darkness of her hand. She, again, quietly slipped over to the door and waited, crouched with bated breath, listening for her opportunity.

It wasn't long after that Roma and Penelope had apparently left the house, and Cassiopeia was free to put her plan into action. She carefully opened the door and, looking both ways, stepped into the hall and out into the living room.

"Looks like they're gone." She said, "Though Penny's probably just in the yard."

"Yeah, probably." Troy said, although his voice was too muffled by his cousin's hand to be heard.

"Okay, here goes." Cassiopeia said, stepping further in and scanning the room. The house was mostly carpeted, one in the living room, one in the dining room, and one that stretched along the hallway, but it wasn't floor-to-floor, and thus there was plenty of hardwood to work with. She crouched at the gap between the living room and the hallway, making sure that there would be a vantage from the couch to see, and decided that this would be the optimal position. Carefully, keeping one eye on the back door in the kitchen, she placed Troy supine on the ground and held him in place with one gigantic finger.

"Wh-what are..." Troy started.

"Shh, wait." Cassiopeia interrupted, using her teeth to pull a strip of clear tape from the roll. She gingerly placed one side next to Troy, stretched it tight, and then slid it over her cousin's tiny body while removing her finger, affixing it to the other side with a firm press, "There, perfect."

"Wh-what?! You're gonna leave me here?!" Troy gasped.

"Shhhh!" Cassiopeia hissed, "Yes, I'm going to watch from the couch. Picture it, a tiny stuck on the ground, completely helpless, crushed under an unknowing giant's foot...it's perfect. It's the perfect finale for the weekend."

"I don't have to picture it! Cass, please, anything else but—" Troy began.

“Shut up, you're going to ruin it!” Cassiopeia said sharply, pulling another strip of tape from the roll and applying it over Troy again, this time just a millimeter higher so that his mouth was covered, “Just stay right there.”

With that Cassiopeia stood and made her way over to the couch, a grand spectacle of a clock tower rising from the ground and noisily trundling away, from Troy's perspective. She grabbed a book from the shelf and nestled in, sure to pick a spot and position that would allow her to easily glance over her reading material and see Troy's untimely fate. It wouldn't take long for a danger to appear. Minutes later, Penelope emerged from the yard, speckled with dirt from a morning of gardening.

“Good morning, Cass!” She cheerfully said.

“Morning, Penny. How's the garden?” Cassiopeia tried to sound as natural as possible.

“Looking lovely. In a few days I'll probably be able to pick the peppers.” Penelope said, “What'cha reading there?”

“Oh, um...” Cassiopeia looked at the book title for the first time, “Luther Burbank's...Methods and Discoveries?”

“That's one of my favorites!” Penelope beamed, “I'm glad you're interested. Botany is cool, right?”

“Yeah, so cool...” Cassiopeia said.

“There's actually a really good documentary I saw on cacti the other night, I think I still have it on the DVR. Let me get washed up and we can watch a little together.” Penelope said.

“Sounds nice.” Cassiopeia faked a smile. She honestly couldn't care less about plants. What she did care about, however, was what was about to happen in the hallway. Penelope took long, graceful strides out of the living room, flipflops slapping against her heels with each step. She approached the intersection and turned on her toe, gargantuan, dirty shoe soaring directly towards the bound, tiny man that lay in her path. Just another moment and...nothing. Penelope's footfall missed Troy, though from his position it was a tragedy in slow motion. Her muddy sole held over him for a veritable eternity, clumps of soil raining down like hail, the rubber quite literally brushing against him in its path, and then landing just above the crown of his head, his vulnerable body no worse for wear.

Cassiopeia's disappointment was evident, but she figured this would function as a teaser for the main event. Minutes later Penelope reemerged from the hallway, but was way off to the side, so that her bare feet plopped harmlessly to the ground a virtual mile away from her brother's position.

“Alright, documentary time!” Penelope said, dropping into the armchair and clicking on the television. Cassiopeia did her best to seem interested, but her attention only visibly piqued once the front door groaned open to reveal Roma returning from the gym.

“Good morning, girls!” Roma shouted, “I beat my dead lift record today and I am pumped!”

“Morning, Roma, congratulations on the weight thingy.” Penelope said, “Go get changed, the best part of the doc is coming up.”

“Ugh, more of this stuff? You are such a plant nerd.” Roma scoffed.

“Better than a gym rat.” Penelope said.

“If we were tiny, you'd be a bee and I'd be a rat.” Roma laughed, “And Cass would be a...I dunno, what would you be?”

“An ant.” Cassiopeia said without thinking.

“No way. Glasses, late sleeper, you'd be a bat probably.” Penelope said.

“Yeah, bat makes sense.” Roma said, “Luckily we'll never have to find out.”

“Right, lucky...” Cassiopeia surreptitiously passed a glance over Troy.

“Troy would be an ant though.” Penelope said.

“Troy *is* an ant.” Roma laughed, “Alright, let me get dressed, I'll be right back.”

Cassiopeia watched breathlessly as the powerful legs of Roma heaved towards Troy's defenseless body, the thighs that had smothered him to death just a night previous barely shaking with each step, dirty running shoes stomping closer with each relatively massive stride. She imagined being smashed flat by the unforgiving rubber of those sneakers, turned into just another spot of dirt beneath Roma, and nearly coiled herself into a ball with anticipation.

One more step and it would be over. Troy watched in abject horror as his sister's uncaring shoes crashed towards him. He'd been stomped to paste before, of course, but something about the helplessness, the not being able to try running even though he knew it wouldn't matter, struck him with a deeper sense of terror than ever before. Roma was quickly over him, a machine of crushing death looming like bad weather. She lifted her foot, eyes ahead, never even thinking to look down, and then...nothing. Her old sneaker

crashed next to Troy's body with the force of a mineshaft being blasted with dynamite, but it did not land on him.

Cassiopeia sucked air through her teeth. It certainly wouldn't take much longer, it couldn't. The way she felt now, she was practically going to explode. Roma's momentary return, however, provided no catharsis. Her bare, reddened soles soared over Troy as though they were meaningfully trying to avoid him.

"Can we please watch the game instead?" Roma said, plopping on the couch next to Cassiopeia.

"Ugh, could you be more of a jock?" Penelope rolled her eyes, "What do you think, Cass? Think we could pause the documentary?"

"Yeah, sure, no problem." Cassiopeia said, trying not to show her disappointment in Troy's miraculous survival.

"Alright, you win, Rom'." Penelope said.

"You're such a sweetie, Pen-Pen." Roma said with coy sarcasm.

"Oh, can it." Penelope lobbed her sister the remote control.

"Yo Casio, is it okay if I stick my legs out?" Roma asked.

"Wh-yeah, that's okay." Cassiopeia suddenly looked like she had a case of whiplash.

"Thanks, my hamstrings need to stretch out after this morning's workout." Roma said, extending her legs so that the bottoms of her feet just barely pressed up against Cassiopeia's leg. She could feel their warmth and their moisture, and bit her lip, wondering how much unknowing teasing she could possibly take in one day.

"No problem." Cassiopeia said, stealing the occasional glance at Roma's toes, her wide, strong feet flexing at irregular intervals. Cassiopeia looked down at her own feet, small, narrow, and covered in old black socks, taking the juxtaposition as some physical sign which proved the difference in interpersonal value that she'd for so long simply assumed to be true.

The remainder of the morning passed in very much the same way. Roma and Penelope loafed around in the living room, occasionally making trips to the kitchen for snacks or drinks, or to the bathroom, but never stepping on their brother, despite some close calls, which left Cassiopeia a flustered mess on the couch. Minute by minute, hour by hour, Troy survived beyond reason and sense, until finally it was time to leave.

"Hey, your train departure isn't too long off, right?" Penelope asked, "Why don't I give you a ride over there?"

“Ah, that'd be, that'd be great.” Cassiopeia said.

“Alright, go grab your stuff, I'll start the car.” Penelope said, standing up and snagging the car keys from the coffee table and slipping on an errant pair of flipflops.

“Shotgun!” Roma shouted, rolling off the couch and slipping her feet into a pair of slide sandals.

“Really, Roma? Let our guest have the front seat.” Penelope scolded.

“It's okay, I don't mind.” Cassiopeia said.

“See? She's cool with it. Besides, I want to DJ on the ride.” Roma said.

“Only if you keep the EDM to a minimum, there's only so much I can take.” Penelope said as the two began to step outside.

“Lame.” Roma retorted as the door closed behind her.

Cassiopeia looked longingly after them, and then over to Troy. She stood and took small steps over to him, breathing raggedly, as though something had come undone in her chest.

“Troy...” She said softly, “I'm...I'm sorry.”

Troy would have told her it was okay, that she just got carried away, that it happens to the best of us, but his mouth was still sealed shut from the tape.

“But...I need to see it happen...” Cassiopeia said, “I can't...I can't take it anymore.”

Troy was too shocked to even groan through his sticky, plastic gag.

“Just, sorry, I'm...I'm going to do it.” Cassiopeia said, lifting her foot over Troy's prone, bound body, while her hand began to crush up the front of her long skirt. Troy watched helplessly as the monolithic sock floated over him, fibers thin, pounded flat against Cassiopeia's sole, stiff with dried sweat. It dawned on the tiny boy that she had not changed her socks for the entire weekend, and the crisp surface would have no give to it, just a thin, hard layer of cotton, and then the immeasurable mass of her foot crushing him into dust.

The dingy sock lowered slowly, aching, as Troy lost sight of Cassiopeia's towering form behind its outline. The grimy underside came closer and closer, each dirt speck and sweat stain coming into focus before abruptly falling away into complete darkness as the hot, noisome fabric made contact with Troy's defenseless face. It felt as though it wrapped around him, enveloped him in its mephitic essence. Cassiopeia's weight settled further, pressing Troy's head to the side, squeezing and squishing his entire body at



"Just, sorry, I'm...I'm going to do it."

once, the moaning of her voice and the cracking of his own bones the only things he could hear until his body finally collapsed completely, leaving him no more than a sticky stain between Cassiopeia's foot and the hardwood floor.

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Troy stepped out of the revival chamber having no idea what time it was. He peeked through his curtains and saw that the car was no longer there, meaning Roma and Penelope were still on the road from earlier. With a deep sigh he glanced under the bed and saw everything for his camping trip, still unused. Nothing to do now but have a snack and wait for his sisters to come home.

On the way out of his room, however, Troy spotted a note placed on his desk. It read:

Dear Troy,

I'm really sorry for ruining your weekend, I just totally lost control of myself. I'm sorry I stepped on you, also. I'd like to make it up to you. Would you like to visit me at college? Penny and Roma should come too. I promise I won't shrink you this time, even if it was fun, and even if it did actually feel better to squish you than I would have imagined. Seriously though, I promise, no shrinking.

Thanks again for a really wonderful weekend. And sorry for threatening you, too.

Best,

Cassiopeia

Troy read it twice, and then tucked it into his desk drawer, feeling pretty ambivalent about his cousin and her invitation. On the one hand, he was glad she was apologetic, even though she was clearly not sorry enough not to have enjoyed his demise almost half a dozen times. On the other hand, the invitation was a nice gesture, but he knew that going with his sisters meant he was going to get shrunk no matter what. He shook his head, sighed, and walked into the living room, flopping heavily on the couch. Not five minutes later his sisters popped through the door, chatting and laughing to themselves.

“Well, look who it is!” Roma said.

“The prodigal brother returns.” Penelope added.

“H-hey guys.” Troy gave a small wave.

“How was camping?” Penelope asked.

“Oh, it was, um, it was pretty difficult actually.” Troy said.

“I’ll bet.” Roma laughed, “I missed you though.”

“You- you did?” Troy raised his eyebrows.

“Missed having you under my feet, that is.” Roma laughed, “I’m gonna make up for a whole weekend, right now.”

“Aw jeez...” Troy moaned.

“Wait, wait!” Penelope chimed in.

“Hm?” Roma turned.

“Just so you know, Cass said she was really sad she missed you and invited us to come see her next month.” Penelope said.

“Yeah, that’s right. And you’re coming whether you like it or not.” Roma said.

“Okay, continue.” Penelope smiled, “I’ll start dinner, and then I’ll come give you some payback too.”

“Now, wait, I-” Troy stammered.

“Get ready to shrink, nerd!” Roma shouted.

“H-help!” Troy yelled, but he knew it was much too late for that.