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"Let me take you out." The words echoed in all the corners of her mind for the millionth

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time. Ameena was loosing her patience, her grip on the tray was becoming tighter and it took all her willpower not to smack his face into next week, she kept her pace while he followed her closely. "Come on Ameena," He pressed on, "why you ain't talking to me?" Ameena dodged another waitress and a table, keeping the plastic

smile on her face while clenching on to her tray. The little shit was still behind her like a shadow.

Ameena gritted her teeth through smiling, and kept changing her mantra internally, 'Good restaurant, Good Pay, Just keep smilingshe repeated the end, singing like Dory, it had been hours but felt like days with his nagging. Her shi ended in five minutes, and she

couldn't wait to get the hell away from him. Her annoyance was at it's

peak. The store, yes, her last stop before becoming a vegetable out on her carpet that she made sure to clean and vacuum before leaving hours earlier. Her fridge was stocked with nothing she found appealing to eat,

mostly Ron's, mostly no. She craved wine... and chips, definitely chips, maybe the salty or

tangy tomato flavors. Buy some frozen salad packaging that she'd never look at as soon as it touches her fridge but will disappear when Ron, the vegetable inhaler, appeared at her house. Chocolate chip flavored ice cream, whipped cream, some strawberries and maybe a

bit more mozzarella cheese and yes, how could she forget the win-Ameena jumped out of her thoughts as soon as a hand touched her shoulder, she was midway into elbowing the owner of said hand in their face when her eyes met his, she scowled.

"Fuck o Todd," she whirled around and pushed through the large swing door hoping it flew back and smashed his face in. "Baby" he stretched, "you haven't even given me a chance."

Ameena felt her eye twitch. This black haired bitch.

this?"

you to fuck o a while ago, I'm sure the supervisor wouldn't be pleased with you trying to pick up girls on work hour." They went though stream, counters and a hoard of chefs that barely spared them a glance. Ameena neatly aligned her tray with the others before walking. He sco ed, "Nah, She'd do anything for another night with me," he

waved his arm dismissively beside her, "like, haven't you seen all of

"First of all, don't call me baby, second, I distinctly remember telling

"Unfortunately," Ameena rolled her eyes, they le the busy area of the kitchen just as soon as another waiter rolled a trolley with a much larger course of meal on its elevated stands. Ameena hated rolling those with a passion, she loved the small handheld tray, she stuck to small orders like a life force when possible. They were in the hallway leading to their lockers where they kept their things with a backdoor there for them to leave and enter without passing through the front.

Ameena was planning to move like her ass was on fire. As soon as she stepped in, she was greeted by the sound of her other coworkers. Some were just coming in, some leaving, this system worked well for such a business. Tasteful delights was a blend of cafe and a classy restaurant, it was only a restaurant at first, that was before the CEO of TD Branches decided that their most influential and many other customers were most likely to be drawn to a casual yet classy restaurant where their kids could order burgers and fries

and chocolate smoothies while they sipped on their nonalcoholic

It was a good marketing strategy, she had to give it to him, plus

parents didn't have to bring outside food for their kids anymore, that

Ameena had sometimes wondered when she was going to properly

use her college degree but who cared, bills were being paid and her

champagne and enjoyed a buttered steak or burger.

caused too many problems in the past.

life was already comfortable.

fuckboy. Pathetic.

got you too..."

Ameena took her card and punched her leaving time in before heading it back to the person behind the glass who smiled. "You seriously gonna keep ignoring me Mi Mi?" He was still there!? Ameena felt her mood turning sour. Just as she was about to answer him someone else joined the conversation. "Come on Mi Mi, give him a chance, its been eons since he had started groveling at your feet."

Bet that groveling would stop as soon as he took a dip into her dark

Jin patted Todd's back without any e ort before pulling him closer as

if he was o ering, Ameena cringed, "Not you too Jin, don't tell me he

Jin grinned in a way that truly emphasized his Asian roots.

o en, it's sad." Jin ru led Todd's perfectly styled hair.

care, but she chose to humor him.

punching in their times get through.

I don't like sports."

know that.

didn't like it.

• • •

like sports? You look like you do, I know a perf-"

passage, Ameena bitterly thought and sco ed internally, Typical

Jin was taller than him anyway. "Okay!" As if struck by a new idea Todd held up his hand. First grade habits die hard. "We'll compromise then, and we can work around that," Todd look

like he just found out the answer to all life itself, Ameena didn't really

"Yes?" She raised a dark eyebrow. Moving out of the way to let others

"Likes," he started, "We can start with your likes and dislikes, Do you

"No." Of course she liked sports but he didn't have to know that, "No,

As if it was a declaration of a new war, Todd looked surprised, "...How

"I just have sympathy for this poor fellow, you've turned him down so

could you not...like sports...?" He sounded as if she kicked his cute little puppy. "Its very simple actually, I don't like athletes, I don't like sports, I renounced my sporting channel," she was just humoring him but the look on his face was epic. a

"How...How can you not like sports?" He was repeating his sentences

"Do you like fashion weak? MTVs? Bold and the Beautiful?" Ameena

purposely never spared these a glance but again, he didn't have to

Just as she thought, he shook his head, perplexed. Of course he

"Exactly," She walked to her locker, him following her closely behind,

"why must I change my interest for anyone? Women are belittled

almost daily for not changing themselves to suit men needs, don't

now, his eyebrows creased. Ameena rolled her eyes.

tell me you're one of those men Todd, it doesn't look good for you." "But Ameena-" "Just end it Todd, its getting on my last nerve, I said no, when you said no to Laura she le you alone didn't she?" Ameena reached into her locker for her jacket and her bag. a

He was silent, Jin too, Ameena shrugged on her jacket over her work

clothes, the signature white button down shirt pants suit, then her

the exit, leaving Jim and Todd's with their wounded pride.

Silence and a so medley playing in the background was what

greeted her as she stepped into the grocery shop.

shoulder bag went on her shoulder. She turned around and went for

Inhaling the peaceful air, Ameena exhaled the last of her anger as her

shoulders loosened up from the heated arguement between her and

Todd. The cold walk to the store helped cool her steam with each step

she took, now feeling relieved and a tad bit happy, Ameena grabbed a

trolley, dumped her bag inside and slowly began walking down the aisles. Humming to the medley playing on the speaker, she took out her phone and began checking the list. Pausing in front of the snack section, Ameena took her time going through each packet of chips, critically choosing between a bag of cheesy Doritos or Lays. "But muuuuummmmm-" the screech was loud enough to cut o her brief internal debate. Briefly turning her head to the side, she spotted a boy, probably ten or nine, tugging at the hem of his mother's skirt, while pointing at a

line full of snacks. "Just one packet, please." If Ameena was the

mother, she would've probably given in the moment she saw the

little boy's pout. He looked so disheveled and cute, stomping his little

feet in circles while picking snacks and placing them into the trolley

His mother, however, was not having it. Putting the snacks back and

pushing the trolley away, she shook her head. "Not today Jackson,

Ameena tuned out the rest of her words and instead focused on the

hands, when she looked up again the mother was still shaking her

when you start eating all the vegetables o your plate instead of

two packet of family sized, or in this case, her sized chips in her

when the mother wasn't looking.

pushing it away then you'll have your..."

head at the boy who was now full on throwing a tantrum. She met Ameena's gaze shaking her head. "Kids." She mouthed, Ameena smiled politely and nodded before steering the cart to a dierent aisle. Ten minutes later and she was done with most of the shopping, all she had le was the hardest part. Choosing the perfect wine. Standing in front of a shelf full of wines with the runners up bottles on the top most shelf out of reach, Ameena glanced from label to label, back and forth unsure of which to take. She could've taken both, but

her budget wouldn't allow it. And so, one must be sacrificed.

Her eyes finally settled on the Red wine. Going on the tips of her toes,

she reached for the wine which was tauntingly inches away from her

fingers, internally cursing the person who placed it that far. She only

managed to brush her fingertips on the label when a shadow formed

above her. Before she could react, a hand easily plucked the glass

Her heart lurched in her chest at his voice, hearing his voice again

made her realize how much she missed him, yet she clenched her

Alex's breath fanned the back of her neck. She didn't even spare him

a glance, Ameena turned around and picked the bottle from his hand

and, without another word she deposited it safely into her trolley and

"Are you ignoring me?" She heard Alex's footsteps close, he walked in

front of the cart and back pedaled so he was staring directly at her.

Ameena let her gaze wander past his head, trying to ignore the fact

that he looked drop dead gorgeous in a pair of washed jeans that

hugged his legs perfectly and a plain grey hoodie, the hood pulled

"I always thought you were a white dry wine sort of person."

teeth and her hand, drawing it away from the shelf.

bottle out of her reach.

pushed it away.

down revealing wet curls.

Had he just showered?

items calmly back onto the shelf.

obvious that he wasn't going to stop.

strawberry scented condoms into her cart.

He blinked at her innocently, "Yes Aimee?"

No, ignore, ignore. Alex smiled lightly, "Fine, be that way." He picked a random item from the shelf and tossed it into her cart. Ameena picked it up and returned it back onto the shelf without looking at him, her face blank. He did it again, and again, and again throwing in a can of tuna, loag of bread, box of oatmeal, box of frosted flakes, a packet of pads, tampons, tissue paper, chocolate, a random packet of goat cheese but Ameena fought o the urge to snap at him and instead put the

As he threw them in, she shoveled them out until it became a war of

who could do it faster. Ameena let her irritation slip when it became

"Alex," She breathed stopping him mid-way from dropping a box of

"Stop it." With finality in her voice, Ameena swerved the cart around

his body before walking towards a cashier's counter. The faster she

Out of nowhere, two arms appeared from behind her gripping the

Alex was much stronger, he swilly redirected it in the opposite

direction and he bent to rest his head on her shoulder, she never

cart caging her in between. Ameena struggled to control the cart but

could get out of here, the better. Netflix and wine was waiting for her.

wore heels to work. "I'm not letting you go until you forgive me," he breathe and Ameena had to focus on controlling her heartbeat. "I forgive you." "You're only saying that so I can let you go." "Isn't that the whole point?" She rolled her eyes. It was becoming a task pushing the cart with him glued to her back, almost like walking on marbles. Tense as fuck. Ameena groaned in frustration when he moved from her shoulder

and rested his chin atop her head while humming tunelessly. Few

people chanced curious glances between them before they looked

Ameena inhaled through her nose and instead focused on the feeling

of his chest vibrating on her back warming her spine. Okay, maybe it

wasn't so badRealizing that her words won't support her reason,

They walked aimlessly down and up aisles, her thoughts eventually

dri ing o to nothing but focusing on the shallow beating on his

heart on her le shoulder blade. Looking down at his large hands

which were placed over hers on the bar of the cart, she chewed her

inner lip contemplating if the brief spike in her pulse was as a result

Ameena kept quiet and instead let Alex do the work.

away just as fast.

of his touch.

held cart.

back to Alex.

"Okay—" Sliding her hands out from underneath him, they stopped as Ameena turned in the small space and met his gaze. "Time's up buddy, I got to go." She made 'shoo' movements with her hands but Alex only arched an amused brow at her. "I'm afraid I can't let you go now Aimee," That cheeky smirk appeared as he leaned in closer until she was pressed into his front, almost sitting on the cart behind her, her mortification was slowly seeping in

as an old woman walked passed them with a scowl and her hand

"Ameena?" She was interrupted by an entirely new and veryfamiliar

voice. Reflexively Ameena blinked and pushed on Alex's chest with

Ameena grit her teeth, "Nikolai step b—"

enough force to make him stumble back a few steps. Her eyes widened as she saw him, holding a hand held cart like the lady before with only a few things inside as if he was in the middle of his shopping, She couldn't stop the grin that broke out on her face, her excitement very clear. Skillfully, Ameena slipped out of Alex's loosened hold on her and went to tackle him in a hug. "Ron!" Wrapping her arms around his slim figure, Ameena couldn't

help rocking back and forth nearly bursting into dramatic sobs of

glee. Finally a Netflix partner to binge watch Riverdale while eating

ice cream guiltlessly. The two weeks he had been gone took a toil on

her. Emotionally. They could catch up over a new season tonight.

"When did you come back?" She asked a er releasing her hold on

him only to find out that he wasn't looking at her. Ron's gaze was

It was like the atmosphere dropped a few degrees as her eyes went

focused on the male figure standing a few feet behind her.

His hands were gripping the trolley tightly, his face blank as he glanced impassively between the both of them. Only one thought crossed her mind as her eyes flickered between the both of them. ' Ah...fuck.'

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