

MOONBODIES
By Halley Platz

SETTING: a wild NYC in the near future, foggy and full of nightlife.
Also full of color, sound, and smell. Sensory overload. Vibrant. Haunted. Creepy. Fun.

CHARACTERS:

SHELLEY (femme presenting, any pronouns): bold and bright, curvy and always been, full of energy, has a mean side, goth but warm and extroverted, sexually dominant

RUMI (masc presenting, any pronouns): sweet and generous, heavier than he used to be, full of passion, has an aggressive side, introverted, has money but doesn't act like it, sexually submissive

PUPPETS:

PETER/CAKE MONSTER: masc presenting, any pronouns, sharp and vivacious, used to being hot stuff and in control, has money and acts like it

LOVER/TAYLOR/WAITER: femme presenting, any pronouns, goth but warm and open, used to being fluid and enticing

NOTE ON STAGING: Throughout the script, puppets of all kinds will embody environment, body parts, fantasmas, sensory experiences, and more. They should be grotesque and scary, they can have humor, but they should not be a joke. Enjoy playing with sensory elements such as texture and smell, and try to make the audience be able to experience it all on a visceral level. Maybe there's edible elements! I also encourage neurodiversity/disabled actors in the actors of this piece to emphasize the body dysmorphia that can come with neurodivergence and disability. You must utilize actors of size, AKA mid-size to plus size.

NOTE:

- lines beginning and ending with "--" indicates that they should be said with immediacy, on top of each other's' lines
- a "/" indicates when the following line should begin

"I have love in me the likes of which you can scarcely imagine and rage the likes of which you would not believe. If I cannot satisfy the one, I will indulge the other." -Mary Shelley

**"Unable to perceive the shape of you,
I find you all around me...
It humbles my heart,
For You are everywhere."
-Hakim Sanai**

**"So everything is circular
And nothing is alone
And the man who loves you loves you
As the water loves the stone."
-Adam Guettel, *Days of Wine and Roses***

SCENE 1:

A high-end restaurant, the week of opening.

RUMI, the head chef of the restaurant, wipes down tables and resets them with all of the plates, glasses, utensils, napkins. He sets red roses on each table as a centerpiece. He has taken off his chef jacket, and his undershirt is drenched in sweat and food.

The front door opens.

RUMI

We're closed!

SHELLEY enters, stumbling in, dressed in a cocktail dress and covered in sweat and drink and glitter, hair wild. She carries her shoes and a Hex Girls tote bag.

RUMI

Hey.

SHELLEY

You didn't lock the door.

RUMI

I know that *now*.

SHELLEY

I'm drunk.

RUMI

I can tell.

SHELLEY

I know we've both been running around all night. But you did it!! Happy official official opening! I'm covered in sweat, obviously, and that means I can safely say we threw a SICK-ass partayyy.

RUMI

Thank you. Me too. I'm covered too. It was amazing. A real dream come true.

SHELLEY

Why didn't you come out with everybody? You have such a fun staff!

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RUMI

I needed to make sure everything was perfect for tomorrow.

SHELLEY

Okay... sour puss...

RUMI kind of laughs at her, SHELLEY does a little dance.

SHELLEY

You haven't changed. You're easy to make giggle. All I said was, "sour puss," and THAT got you?

RUMI

Sure. Ok.

SHELLEY

Why am I dancing?

RUMI

I couldn't tell you.

SHELLEY

I wanted to come back to tell you tonight was amazing. And everybody that talked to *me* told me it was the best meal they'd had in a minute.

RUMI

Just a minute?

SHELLEY

They really loved the lamb burger, the tart, and your special lemon salad. What's that called again?

RUMI

Are you trying to say Tabbouleh?

SHELLEY

Ta-boo-lay.

RUMI
Tabbouleh.

SHELLEY
Your mom's better at teaching me words.

RUMI
Did you see her tonight?

SHELLEY
I did! She said hi to me!

RUMI
Good.

SHELLEY
She looks great.

RUMI
She does. She's doing really well. I try to take care of her.

SHELLEY
I think she enjoyed karaoke more than anyone!

RUMI
She's never done it!

SHELLEY
I hope I didn't go too crazy with the ABBA needle drops, I wanted everybody to sing along.

RUMI
No, it was really great. We wanted tonight to be fun and bright and... / it was perfect.

SHELLEY
Fun and bright? Taylor and me?

RUMI
Yeah. I think so.

SHELLEY

We make our living being creatures of the night. And we're goths.

RUMI

Goths can be fun. Right? / Right?

SHELLEY

Sure. Whatever. Yes. Right.

Seriously, doing this opening is gonna get clubs up here to *notice*.

RUMI

Well, I made you a promise. I'm glad I finally made it big enough to keep it.

SHELLEY

Hell yeah you did! Ok but— You just gotta put it in writing, tell them I'm your favorite Emcee, that I'm the best, that I'm funny, you get the gist. But in writing. Write it down. Send it to me. I send it to important people. Everybody's happy. I make it big with you.

RUMI

Did my staff know who you are?

SHELLEY

Eh. I'm sort of known, but I don't keep track, people just say hi sometimes—

RUMI

—No, like, I already knew a few of them are fans, but like, did they know who you are *to me*?

SHELLEY

Why would they ask? / I'm sure I didn't ruin your game with the waitresses.

RUMI

Nevermind. *Nevermind*.

SHELLEY

I'm sure everyone picked up that I was your "it didn't work out, but boy is she a great friend"— /

I mean?

I'm just teasing you. Why do you even care?

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Just tell me if I sounded ok tonight, did I give you what you needed?

RUMI

OK, look, you're—

That's not fair. Of course you...

I care. Of course you did.

You and Tay both really made tonight the most special it could've been.

SHELLEY

—OK, look, I really do know you're meaning what you're saying, but why are you saying it like there's one tiny teeny note you want to give me with it?

RUMI

There's not! There's really not.

SHELLEY

I'm anticipating a critique, Chef.

RUMI

I'm not Chef right now. Stop that.

SHELLEY

Yes..... Chef.

RUMI

You know I hate that.

SHELLEY

I know, it makes you SO red.

Pause.

RUMI

There were really no notes. Except you didn't bring a plus one, these seats are expensive. I'm gonna take a plate out of your paycheck.

SHELLEY

I dare you.

I know what you want to tell me.

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RUMI

Really, what is that?

SHELLEY

You wish I would've worn a longer dress. You're all about that white-glove service.

RUMI

That's...

SHELLEY

But I wanted to be able to get up and dance with people. I needed my legs out a little bit for that. Sue me.

RUMI

And that's why I didn't say anything.

SHELLEY

I wish you could've enjoyed your big night a bit more, but I know it'd be stressful no matter what. So I brought you a little something from the bar.

SHELLEY pulls out champagne, and a pint of Ben and Jerry's ice cream from a bodega.

SHELLEY

It's still freezing, I promise.

RUMI

You stole that?

SHELLEY

Borrowed with permission without intent to give it back.

RUMI

And is that—?

SHELLEY

Half Baked. Your favorite and mine. I remember things.

RUMI

Thank you. I'm not really that hungry.

SHELLEY

Well cool, I need to eat. I forgot to.

RUMI

Again? Are you serious?

SHELLEY

Shhhhhhhhhhhhhhh. I'm eating now.

RUMI

After all that dancing and jumping around, and you didn't have anything? Did you just drink ten iced coffees today?

SHELLEY

Diet cokes, sir.

RUMI

BAD. That's BAD.

SHELLEY

I'm bad, I know. We're bad people together, though.

Wait, isn't that what your mom used to say, *(in a Middle Eastern mom voice)* "oh habibi, I love her, but you're two bad people together",?--

RUMI

--I don't know, probably / stop doing my mom's voice it freaks me out--

SHELLEY

--fineeeee, can you get me two spoons pretty please and then you do the cham-popping?

RUMI gets two spoons from a table, and takes the champagne from her.

RUMI

Here goes--

It pops off prematurely.

RUMI

... nothing...

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SHELLEY cheers.

SHELLEY
WOO HOO!!!

RUMI
We always had that problem, didn't we?

SHELLEY gasps, laughing. RUMI blushes and laughs.

RUMI
I had to say it.

SHELLEY
Did you? You really didn't! Nobody made you!

RUMI
I didn't. You're right. I could've played that cooler.

SHELLEY
Here, I got you.

SHELLEY takes the bottle from RUMI, gives RUMI the ice cream and the spoons.
SHELLEY pours the champagne for both of them.

SHELLEY
To you. And your success. And to me. And you inviting me here.

They clink glasses and sip.

RUMI
EAT. You are going to get dizzy, and I know you've had some shots already.

SHELLEY
I have not had not shots.

RUMI opens the ice cream and scoops a bite out with a spoon. He tries to give her the spoon, but SHELLEY instead leads RUMI to feed her the spoonful directly. But she eats too much ice cream—

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SHELLEY
(mid-bite)
COLD. BRAIN FREEZE.

RUMI
Why'd you do that?!

SHELLEY
I WAS BEING HOT!!!

SHELLEY dances around in a bit of a brain freeze panic, and he laughs at her again. He sits down, probably for the first time all night and sighs, takes a napkin and wipes his face.

SHELLEY
I'm sorry I'm here being manic pixie dreamgirly and you're exhausted.

RUMI
I'm relieved more than anything. I also gotta find a way to come down off the high, you know? It's gonna take a few hours.

SHELLEY
Heard. That makes sense.
I feel that way kind of all the time, after work or in general.

RUMI
Do you still do Thursdays at–

SHELLEYhi
The Mouse House, yes, that's what it's called.

RUMI
Right. I love that name.

SHELLEY
It's *such* a good name. They've got all little stuffed mice mousies everywhere, it's so cute.

RUMI

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And you do every Thursday?

SHELLEY

Yep. I know you've been busy.

RUMI

This year's been all about getting to this week.

SHELLEY

And you probably didn't want to see me, too?

RUMI

I... no.

SHELLEY

You're a bad liar. I also... I'm sorry about Peter.

RUMI

How'd you know about—?

SHELLEY

Your mom. She's thrilled.

RUMI

Great. Love that.

SHELLEY

Yeah I really didn't know, I kind of wish you'd told me, but it's also none of my business.

RUMI

Yeah. I'm just trying not to think about it.

SHELLEY

Of course, but that's toxic.

RUMI

Yeah probably.

I'm just in therapy, taking it day by day.

SHELLEY

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You're not in therapy.

RUMI

I'm not in therapy. I don't know why I said I was.

SHELLEY

Gays don't do *therapy*.

RUMI

Gays should.

SHELLEY

Nah we don't have to do anything we don't want to.

RUMI

But... yeah he's the same. He just, if you want to know, what he technically said was he just needs some space. He said our relationship needed to feel more balanced.

SHELLEY

Balanced? What, your togetherness for three years was getting too *intense*?

RUMI

I know, right?

SHELLEY

Cuz try our togetherness for five, *that shit was wild*.

RUMI

You've got nothing on him. But... Yeah, we're gonna meet up in a couple of weeks to talk about it, him and me. So. I'll let you know when I know. If you want to know.

SHELLEY

Hell yeah I wanna know. The boys are fighting, I wanna hear about it. Love that tea.

Well at least he said he'd meet up, that's good.

I always had a... I don't know. He always laughed *at me*, not *with me*.

RUMI

I know. I'm sorry.

SHELLEY

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Like that one time we tried to play pictionary or whatever, and I drew a lifeguard and he kept making the joke that the lifeguard was Christian because I couldn't draw a lifeguard chair well enough and it sort of looked like a cross but also didn't and he just kept saying it was a Christian lifeguard when it was just a lifeguard and got your whole group to laugh about it?

RUMI

Wow you remember *that in detail*.

SHELLEY

But, like, point out how bad I am at drawing chairs *once*. He kept hammering it home to your group of mean gays thinking it made him look skilled. What, at *drawing "atheist" chairs*?

RUMI

I shouldn't have let him do that.

SHELLEY

You shouldn't have let a lot of stuff happen, but... it is what it is and wow, I *am* drunk.

RUMI

Do you want to go home?

SHELLEY

No. I... I did come here with champagne and ice cream with a purpose. But you're letting it melt!

RUMI

Oh, sorry.

He nervously starts to eat the ice cream. It's so good. He keeps eating while she talks.

SHELLEY

OK. So you obviously know me well enough at least, and I'm not trying to emotionally dump on you on your big night, but I didn't know if you'd wanna see me again, so here goes long story short I'm sick of being scared to eat like I used to be when we were together, it hasn't gotten better, and so I'm going to go on the stupid fucking werewolf drug.

I bet you have questions. I have answers.

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Yes: I know it makes me bigger, I want that. Yes: I know it might make me sick and hairy, whatever. No: I'm not scared to be a wolf half of my life, sounds sick! Yes: I'd like to spend my wolfy part of my life as a therapy dog in Children's hospitals. No: I don't know exactly what I'll look like, but I know that I don't care and that nobody who takes this has cared in any of the trials I've looked at. So, there you go, I have a plan. I'm not scared. I'm ready to do it. I can't keep doing what I'm doing. I'm doing it. I need a friend who knows me enough to help me eat because I have to eat on it or bad stuff will happen and... I don't know... I don't want anyone to get hurt that I don't want to hurt.

Pause.

SHELLEY

Any questions?

I also miss you.

Pause.

SHELLEY

Say something. Or keep eating. I like watching you eat. It makes me want to eat. Is that weird to say? Who cares.

RUMI holds out the spoon for her. She goes closer to him and eats from it.

RUMI

I miss you too.

SHELLEY

Why'd you do that? Are you just sad and lonely and post-breakup?

RUMI

/ Yeah probably. But...

SHELLEY

Okay. Fine.

RUMI

So that's it? Do you need help eating?

SHELLEY is finally quiet.

RUMI

I can help you.

I'm always here to help you.

And I'm good at getting people to eat.

It's kind of what I do... obviously... but wait:

Did you say the werewolf drug?

SHELLEY

Yeah. You've definitely heard of it, I'm sure a bunch of your famous friends love it and get shat on for doing it—

RUMI

They do. You're seriously going on it?

SHELLEY

Yep. Found a free trial. Go ahead, shit on me for doing it.

RUMI

You seriously can't find a way to eat food every single day, breakfast and lunch and dinner and snacks?

It's like... usually the greatest thing you can do in your day.

SHELLEY

You know I can't, *actually*.

RUMI

What I'm actually trying to say is: You look great. You look like you work out and eat healthy. You don't need to... Why aren't you...?

SHELLEY

I know I do.

And I don't know why I don't.

RUMI

Is it your... sorry to ask, is it your blood sugar or?

SHELLEY

Oh my god, are you saying diabetes runs in my family? I'm SO grateful you're telling me NOW.

RUMI

Just go to the doctor.

SHELLEY

Just stop eating carbs. Don't drink beer.

RUMI

—OK—

SHELLEY

— Cuz clearly you've been doing lots of both of those things, and hate to break it to you— nobody's gonna go to you for fitness advice like they used to, / don't make me aware of myself, I can make you *real* aware of you.

RUMI

OK... I get it, shut up—

Shellz, *shut up*—

Wow. Thanks.

—if you're *so healthy*, what scares you so bad?

Like... dude, I remember our diner dates, / you took three bites of your BLT every time, and you used to say it was cuz I was watching.

So I don't know how I'm gonna help now.

SHELLEY

—*dude*, I still took bites when you told me to. That was something.

Why do you even remember that?

RUMI

Cuz you had to *make sure* I worried about you.

SHELLEY

... OK.

I'd finish my BLT at 2am after you were snoring long enough. And the fries, of course.

I'm not a loser. And then I'd throw it up.

Why do you think I always sprayed that coconut shit in our bathroom? Cuz I'm a girl?

No, it was to block your super nose. Not that you would've called me out anyway.

RUMI

When did you start doing that again?

SHELLEY

Going home for Thanksgiving. And Christmas. And my mom's birthday. That's three huge family meals in a month, what was I supposed to do?

RUMI

Your family didn't notice? They notice everything.

SHELLEY

Yeah, well. I've been hiding it really well.
And I can't figure a better way out of it this time.
Even with things going really well for me.

RUMI

No, you're not a good liar either, Shellz.
Don't undercut everything. Please. Did they tell you to go on it? / Did they get you in your head again?

SHELLEY

What's your deal, are you, like, mad at me or something? / How's this different from you calling me late to talk through bullshit after a long shift?

RUMI

Of course not.
It's not.
I'm sorry I keep calling you.

SHELLEY

I'm not. I knew you would eventually, I just didn't know if I'd wanna pick up.

RUMI

You always pick up.

SHELLEY

So you owe me. I'm a great friend.

RUMI

Apparently I am too, or... are you trying to make me piss you off? Or, I'm just maybe not in the right headspace for this conversation—

SHELLEY

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Look, I really need your help.
Showing up like this to you isn't fun for me.
I just know, for whatever reason, you're *still* the easiest person to be embarrassed with, for me. I don't know if that means anything to you anymore.

RUMI
Of course it does.

The tables, silverware, roses, and glasses around them have been warping, melting like Dali but without rotting, and we now notice it surrounding the two. The strong smells of silver and roses overtake the space.
SHELLEY kneels in front of RUMI.

SHELLEY
Please. Please. I'm starving.

She takes his hand, smells his fingers, licks them.

SHELLEY
You taste the same.

RUMI
Wait. Just... Wait.
No. I'm sorry. /
No... actually, I'm not...

SHELLEY
Don't be.
Do you want something out of helping me? In the vein of... this?
I'm just saying, you owe me, but should get something out of this that *I'm* good at too.
Please.
Please.
I don't have a gag reflex anymore. That's how bad it's gotten.
See how numb I am?

He takes her face in his hands, and then she puts his fingers in her mouth, traces along the gums, then he puts his fingers deeper, testing her gag reflex. Finally, she chokes.
Was she lying, or did he work?
He rushes away to the kitchen.

She's left on her knees. Suddenly, she drools far too much, a pile of spit leaking from her mouth.

SCENE 2:

Two weeks later. In his beautiful apartment, we watch RUMI create a decadent B.L.T., with egg and avocado and pineapple. The ingredients pulse and convulse until he destroys them by cutting them or toasting them or breaking them apart.

His buzzer rings.

RUMI goes to the buzzer, juice dripping excessively off of his hands.

RUMI
Come on up!

RUMI goes back to his work.

A knock on the door.

RUMI goes to the door, suddenly his hands dripping goo.
SHELLEY is at the door with flowers that are also dripping goo.

SHELLEY
Heyyy.

RUMI
You're early.

SHELLEY
I was excited. Smells good in here. And here—

SHELLEY hands him the flowers. They don't notice the goo.

RUMI
Thank you so much.

RUMI smells them.

RUMI
This is really thoughtful.

SHELLEY

Do you like the color?

I know you love yellow, but your restaurant is full of red, so... I got orange.

RUMI

You're... That's funny. And they're great.

That's smart.

SHELLEY

I know.

So. Bacon.

RUMI

I took some liberties.

SHELLEY

Did you cook your favorite food that I also love for a reason?

RUMI

No yes.

SHELLEY

Cute.

Anyway.

RUMI

Here. Sit down.

SHELLEY

Do you need any help with plating?

RUMI

Never.

SHELLEY

Fine, I thought I'd ask.

How was work?

RUMI

Even better than opening week. We're on the rise. Got a few critics coming in, but I'm ignoring it. Or by ignoring it I guess I mean I'm drinking a little more than I should but I always do anyway to chill out. Whatever.

Here:

RUMI puts a sublime BLT (with egg and pineapple on it too) with fries and a pickle in front of SHELLEY. She smells it. We all do.

SHELLEY

Egg AND pineapple?

RUMI

You love both. It's kind of Hawaiian too, which... kind of fun, I don't know, I might serve it next week at brunch.

SHELLEY

it's... I can't stop breathing so I can keep smelling it.

SHELLEY is frozen in the smell.

SHELLEY

So, yeah, how do we even do this?

Do I set the rules or do you?

RUMI

What rules?

SHELLEY

You know what rules. I...

RUMI is quiet.

SHELLEY

Fine, don't make me sick. If I say Pickle then I mean Stop. When I'm full I don't know... there's sometimes side effects—

RUMI

I did some research today, I know about all the side effects.

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SHELLEY

okay... embarrassing but that's nice of you...

I, um, I would appreciate if you let me handle the side effects by myself.

RUMI

Shells. I've been thinking about the rules, too.

SHELLEY

Great....

RUMI

If this... if this is going to happen, you just need to trust me.

SHELLEY

I wouldn't be here if I didn't.

RUMI

But, you don't.

SHELLEY

This sandwich is getting cold.

RUMI puts his hand on her shoulder, stands over her. She looks up at him.

RUMI

One bite at a time. I have to see you swallow.

SHELLEY

—Why? You know I can—

RUMI

—And I need you to finish the whole thing.—

SHELLEY

—Then do a good job—

RUMI

Shut up.

Understood?

SHELLEY nods. RUMI cuts the sandwich into strange bits that all continue to ooze and pulse. SHELLEY notices his hands. He picks up one bit, feeds it to her, she closes her eyes:

RUMI
Open your eyes.

She can't.

RUMI
Open your eyes right now.

SHELLEY does, chewing slowly.

RUMI
Chew faster.

She does and swallows.

RUMI
Open.

She does, it's gone. She shakes.

RUMI
Again. Don't talk. Bite.

They repeat this action until the sandwich portion is gone. He feels her throat as she swallows. He touches her lips when she opens up. On her last bite, she closes her eyes, shaking, overstimulated. She swallows.

SHELLEY
Pickle.

RUMI leans close to her.

RUMI
Are you lying to me?

SHELLEY

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No.

RUMI

Do you want fries?

SHELLEY

No.

RUMI starts to kiss her throat, but she shivers before he does.

SHELLEY

What are you doing, dude?

RUMI

Ok. Ok. I don't have to—

SHELLEY

WHAT are the rules? I need rules. / What are we?

RUMI

Here.

RUMI feeds her a French fry.

SHELLEY

I said Pickle—

RUMI

I can tell when you're lying.

SHELLEY

Stop. This... no, I'm full.

RUMI

Don't lie or I'll stop.

SHELLEY

Pause.

RUMI

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Eat or get out, those are your options.

SHELLEY

You're not listening to me

RUMI

I'm listening perfectly, I know you're not full.

SHELLEY

How?

RUMI

I measured everything out, every cut and ounce and the portions, I know exactly what makes you full, I've watched you eat for years and you need all of this to be okay.

SHELLEY

...

RUMI

Ok. Pickle. I hear you.

Are you sure you want me, like, doing this? Are we really... are we really doing this or are you just scared and do you need actual help, cuz I can't... Shellz, Im trying here, I haven't done this in a while—

SHELLEY

No. No. You're right. You're right I'm not full. I'm scared ok? I'm scared. its weird to be back with you like this and I want to just...

SHELLEY, frustrated at herself, opens her mouth and closes her eyes.

RUMI chuckles.

RUMI

No, no... I know.

SHELLEY

WHAT?

RUMI

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It's okay. It's okay. Open your eyes.

SHELLEY does, still frustrated. RUMI gets up, goes into his bedroom.

SHELLEY

Where are you going?!

RUMI

Relax! I have a better idea!

Yeah.

We're gonna do this my way.

Then if that doesn't work, we'll do yours—

He comes back out with one of his hoodies and sweatpants, hands it to her.

SHELLEY

I don't like you being cryptic.

RUMI

Here. Put these on. Please.

SHELLEY

What? Why?

RUMI

Because you look beautiful in anything, especially my clothes.

And so you're comfortable and you don't feel, you know, you can not suck in as much—

SHELLEY

—I don't know what you're trying to do here, plus I took forever picking out this look—

RUMI

—Shellz just do it. There's more than one way to do this. Trust me.

SHELLEY looks at the hoodie, smirks.

SHELLEY

Can I keep it? You know this one's my favorite.

RUMI

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If you must.

SHELLEY

I must. It's Moschino. And it's still got your cologne on it—

RUMI

—I promise I washed it!

SHELLEY (sniffing)

—mmmmmmmm, it's all mine now!!

SHELLEY tears her dress off in front of him, immediately putting on the hoodie. She doesn't realize what she's done until she's done it, and there are bruises swelling on her—

RUMI

—what the fuck happened / to you—

SHELLEY

—those are just side effects, promise, they don't hurt, and I kinda like them, they're like tattoos—

RUMI

—you... you wear them well.

SHELLEY twirls in her hoodie/sweatpants set.

SHELLEY

Do you cut the tags off so you don't have to look at the size?

RUMI

Yep.

SHELLEY

Me too. Also cuz they're itchy as fuck.

I was never good with tags.

So what now, genius?

RUMI goes and gets a blanket and extra pillows. He goes to the couch, sets up a cuddle area on it, lights candles.

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RUMI

Here you go. And this extra pillow here, that's for you to put on your stomach, it'll make you forget how full you are. I do it all the time.

SHELLEY hesitantly walks over to the couch and tries her best to get comfortable in the blankets and with the pillows.

RUMI

Now you wait here. I'm going to light candles in the bathroom so that if you do need to use it for whatever side effects, it's gonna smell like lavender. No matter what.

SHELLEY

Not coconut?

RUMI

They don't make coconut candles where I shop.

SHELLEY

Oh yeah you've got Nancy Meyers budget now.

RUMI

Guilty.

And look, if none of this works, if you want to do the other stuff, we'll do it next time. But I'm too tired to dom anyway.

SHELLEY

That's more my thing anyway.

RUMI

Plus it's been too long since we just...

He doesn't know what to say so he goes on to the bathroom. SHELLEY gets comfortable. Then she's starving. She goes and gets the sandwich and starts to eat it on the couch when RUMI comes out.

RUMI

You started without me?

SHELLEY

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You took too long.

RUMI

My master plan sort of worked.

I was about to eat my own sandwich so you'd get jealous.

SHELLEY

Using jealousy against me... real original of you.

I'm sorry that was uncalled for. I'm chilling out.

I overshot my shot.

She starts to freeze in her eating of the sandwich. She's embarrassed, overstimulated.
He goes to sit beside her. His presence calms her.

RUMI

You're adorable. OK. Now for my *Pièce de résistance*:

SHELLEY

French fry sword fight?

RUMI picks up a french fry, starts to feed it to her, then challenges her to a french fry sword fight, which SHELLEY immediately jumps into, making laser noises like a lightsaber. RUMI stabs her in the boob, and SHELLEY grabs it.

SHELLEY

Not my boob!!

RUMI

Mwahahahaha—

SHELLEY

You fiend!!!

RUMI feeds her the french fry, and she feeds him a french fry.

SHELLEY

Oh hell yeah, i love fries—

RUMI

—I made sure they were well done.

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They're the you of food, the best.

SHELLEY

...

You don't have to flirt with me just cuz I flirt with you, you're your own person, do what you want, or, whatever... no really what's the last touch you're thinking, Chef?

RUMI glares at her. Of course he wants to flirt with her.

RUMI

A movie, of course.

SHELLEY

Not Food Network? / Triggering?

RUMI

Don't even joke about that... No, but, you know you need a cozy movie for your cozy food. Especially one that will make you eat faster.

SHELLEY

What movie's gonna get me to eat faster?

RUMI

Ratatouille, of course.

He takes the remote and sets up the movie.

SHELLEY

WHORE. You're right.

You're not sick of it yet?

RUMI

Never.

SHELLEY

I can quote the whole thing still, "This is dot dot dot me. I think it's apparent I need to rethink my life a little bit." My catchphrase, I fear—

RUMI

–OK OK so how about this: the goal here is you have to take a bite whenever there's food onscreen, whenever they're cooking onscreen, and whenever I give you a fun fact about the accuracy of the kitchen dynamic, which I know you know will be quite often.

He feeds her another French fry, then twirls her hair.

SHELLEY

Sure thing, I guess.

RUMI

Shhhhhhhhh.

He feeds her another French fry, then twirls her hair.

Then again. Then again.

SHELLEY catches on, humored–

SHELLEY

Are you literally doing the “tug my hair, I do what you say” move right now?

RUMI

Yep.

SHELLEY

You're EVIL. This is so manipulative.

RUMI

It works, doesn't it?

He keeps twirling her hair, she keeps eating french fries, they both laugh at how weird and fun this is. And it's actually working somehow.

They watch the movie, they squirm.

RUMI puts the pillow on SHELLEY's stomach.

He feeds her another french fry.

SHELLEY suddenly yanks his hair and feeds him a french fry.

They repeat the yanking of the hair and the feeding of the fries, back and forth. She scoots closer to him. He lets her. She waits for him to put his arm around her. He doesn't.

Instead, he touches her hair, twirling it in his fingers for a longer second, then her round face, and her round chin, and she quivers. The whole while, eating fries.

They both finish the plate.

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RUMI

There you go. You did it.

SHELLEY

We did it.

RUMI

You tricked me into helping.

SHELLEY

I needed help. I'll get better the more we... do it.

RUMI goes to clean up. SHELLEY takes deep breaths.

SHELLEY

Don't go.

RUMI

I just need to wash dishes, the smell bothers me—

SHELLEY

Can you sit with me? I'll help you clean up.

RUMI sits back down next to her. She's shaking slightly. He pulls the pillow into her stomach even more. To his surprise and pleasure, she takes his hand, puts it underneath her sweatshirt, onto her breasts. This is the permission he's been fervently waiting for.

SHELLEY

Did you miss telling me what to do? I mean, Or... me? Did you miss... me? Like, me me. You said you did the other night, and I can't stop thinking about it or if you mean it. Cuz you left me on my knees. You know how painful that is? I have bony knees. I'm sensitive.

RUMI smiles.

RUMI

Your cheeks are red again.

SHELLEY

What were they before?

RUMI

Cold. Too cold. How are you always running cold? You're a human freezer.

SHELLEY

This hurts too much. I'm gonna go.

SHELLEY gets up, as if about to storm away.

RUMI stands up and gently pulls her into his chest. She quivers.

SHELLEY

Are you still hungry?

Can I feed you back?

Your stomach's growling.

RUMI

Shhh. I'm fine.

SHELLEY

I can feel it growling on me.

RUMI

In a good way?

SHELLEY

Seriously. Let me... I want to do something.

I don't feel like I've done enough—

RUMI whispers something in her ear. She closes her eyes.

SHELLEY

Really?

RUMI

Let me. Please.

SHELLEY nods in agreement to what he whispered.

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SHELLEY
OK.

RUMI turns her away from him and begins to touch her stomach, gently rubbing and squeezing every curve.
She breathes more shallow.
He continues to shush her comfortingly.

RUMI
You did so good. You did so good.

He almost stops—

SHELLEY
Keep going. I need this.

RUMI continues, and revels in it.
He has missed her. SO much.
He kisses her neck and cups her breasts underneath the sweatshirt again.

SHELLEY
I knew it. / I knew it.

RUMI
Of course I missed you.
Show me. How bad it's gotten. Show me.

She aggressively tears off her sweatshirt and pushes him onto the couch, leaping on top of him, and on her back we see her badly swelling bruises. They are gross and veiny, but full of power.

SCENE 3:

Two months later. The Hotel Chantelle, around 1am. The dimmed lights turn into club lighting.

SHELLEY and LOVER– portrayed by a puppet made of disco ball and lipstick and resembles a femme with a metal ribcage that exposes a Magic 8 Ball heart– find each other and dance in the club to a very loud song, probably something by St. Vincent. Strobe lights expose similar puppets dancing around them, each one with a different kind of heart.

LOVER wraps their arms around SHELLEY, who is dressed to expose her body in a way we haven't seen her before. Her hair and nails are longer.

They go into a bathroom stall and LOVER gets lipstick all over SHELLEY.

LOVER
You're my first girl.

SHELLEY
Honored.

LOVER
Please tell me whatever you want. I'll do it.

SHELLEY
Just keep whatever-ing.
How about this?

SHELLEY touches LOVER's breasts and moves her hand down.

LOVER
Oh wow!
Okay!

SHELLEY
Too fast?

LOVER
Go ahead. Go ahead. I might shake a bit.

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SHELLEY
It's okay, I like it.

LOVER
Don't suck in.

SHELLEY
What?

LOVER
I can tell you're sucking in. Don't.
You're perfect.

SHELLEY
Um... okay...

LOVER is clearly eyeing SHELLEY's breasts and curves, a little too much.

SHELLEY
Okay, my mouth is up here.

LOVER
Sorry you're just such a thicc queen I can't–

SHELLEY
I appreciate that.

LOVER
Your thighs are gorgeous.
My mind is kind of blown!

LOVER starts kiss SHELLEY's mouth, then moves down her curves. SHELLEY tries to enjoy this but it's too much. She squirms away–

SHELLEY
I have to pee.

LOVER

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Oh.

SHELLEY

Can you please excuse me?

LOVER

Sure. Find me back out there!

LOVER leaves SHELLEY to just sit and veg on the toilet for a minute, and she lets out a frustrated angry loud sigh— her hair and nails growing even more— before all of the other ribcage puppets start banging on her door.

SHELLEY exits the bathroom back onto the dance floor and goes to the bar, getting three shots for just her.

RUMI is also at the bar, drunk, with a puppet embodying a shiny, muscular torso with needles for hair, pool ball eyes, and two floating hands— are at the bar, hands all over RUMI.

SHELLEY and RUMI look at each other, and SHELLEY does shots hurriedly.

The puppets surround her and pour shots onto her and put more hands on RUMI.

RUMI tries to tear off the hands and goes to SHELLEY, but she hurries away.

In the dark, we hear their voices on a phone call:

RUMI

Why didn't you call me back?

SHELLEY

Cuz. I was embarrassed.

I didn't know you'd be out tonight—

RUMI

I go out every night after work. I can't chill out to go to sleep if I don't.

SHELLEY

Cuz the reviews are coming in?

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RUMI

They're in. They're fantastic.

SHELLEY

I'm so proud of you.

RUMI

Did you eat today?

SHELLEY

Yes.

RUMI

I could tell. You looked different tonight.

SHELLEY

Good different?

RUMI

Great different.

SHELLEY

My nails are really long now, you'd love them.

RUMI

I saw them.

I can't... sorry, nevermind—

SHELLEY

What?

RUMI

I can't stop thinking about your mouth. From the other night.

SHELLEY

Well. My bulimia says you're welcome.

RUMI

Jeezus...

SHELLEY

I'm teasing you. Suck it up. Or off. Whatever floats your boat. Are you teasing me cuz you were all hot shit tonight?

RUMI

No. Maybe. Only if you think it's funny.

SHELLEY

Why is that funny? It's true. I saw you.

RUMI

You're the only one who's ever thought that. About me.
Are you going home?

SHELLEY

Yeah, I'm in a cab.
Are you already home?

RUMI

Just walked in.

SHELLEY

Are you seriously calling me inbetween taking someone home?

RUMI

No. I went home alone.
I just needed to be touched tonight, just for a second. So I could sleep.

SHELLEY

Are you sleepy now?

RUMI

No. I need more touch

SHELLEY

Lay down.

RUMI

What?

SHELLEY

Lay down.

RUMI

...Ok.

SHELLEY

Touch your stomach for me.

RUMI

I don't want to—

SHELLEY

Doesn't matter. I want you to touch your stomach for me. Breathe in. Breathe out.

RUMI does.

SHELLEY

So I can hear you.

RUMI does, louder. He sighs.

SHELLEY

That's it.

Now.....

Do you want me to tell you how I'd touch you before our whiskey wears off? I don't care if you picture me or not.

RUMI

Shellz, we don't have to do this if you don't really want—

SHELLEY

You know tonight made me jealous. So I'm gonna make you pay for it.

RUMI

I didn't mean to—

SHELLEY

—And I owe you. For not calling back.

I asked for your help, then I didn't take it.

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RUMI

I know something about that.

SHELLEY

So? Would you like some help going to sleep?

I have ideas. Let me make it up to you.

RUMI

... Ok.

SHELLEY

Where's your hand now?

A puppet hand makes motions, and a puppet mouth breathes heavily.

SCENE 4:

A few days later. SHELLEY's apartment, a small cramped kitchen area with a tiny dining room.

SHELLEY sets out every kind of takeout dish of every kind of food on her very small table, on dishes she tries to make look polished and professional.
She lights candles. She blows out the candles, thinking they're stupid.
The buzzer rings. She re-lights the candles. She buzzes RUMI up.

A knock on the door.

SHELLEY answers it, and it's RUMI, still in his chef's attire.

SHELLEY

I can't cook—

RUMI immediately kisses her, and they start making out.

SHELLEY

Wait wait wait— you haven't eaten right?

RUMI

I've always got room for more.

SHELLEY

Don't be cute.

They keep making out, then SHELLEY breaks away.

SHELLEY

You're starving. I can hear you.

SHELLEY puts her hand on his stomach.

RUMI

What?

SHELLEY

New symptom. Advanced hearing.

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Are you nervous? I can hear your heart, too.
Come here. Sit down.

SHELLEY pulls out the chair for RUMI, who goofily reciprocates her gentlemanly gesture by taking a seat. RUMI looks at everything, amazed at the details.

RUMI
Did you Uber eats all of this?

SHELLEY
No. I don't have Michelin star money, I had to go and pick everything up. And yes it's all still hot.
But I think I remembered all your orders, extra ranch and celery for the wings, splenda for strawberries, I even got dill pickles cuz they only had bread and butter, for your burger, no onions, and I went to Sprinkles and got red velvet—

RUMI
Everything smells amazing.
I can't believe you remembered my orders.

SHELLEY
Did I fuck anything up? You can tell me.
Be yourself. Don't hold back.

RUMI
It's all perfect. I would tell you if it wasn't, and it is.
I don't know where to start.
Did you eat?

SHELLEY
I figured we'd take turns this time.

SHELLEY yanks his hair. RUMI chuckles.

RUMI
Sure...

SHELLEY
What?!

RUMI

You can't trick me.

SHELLEY

Who's tricking here?!

RUMI puts his hand on her stomach, a gesture that surprises SHELLEY.

RUMI

You already ate.

That's good, but... I knew this was gonna happen.

You ask for my help cuz you want to help *me*.

SHELLEY

Not this time. No, this time it was... probably a bit of both.

But this time I ate... yeah, all of them... I ate at all the places I ordered from.

RUMI

All of them? How?

SHELLEY

I yanked my hair. No...

Little tastes here and there, like I *was* cooking the food, but I'm bad at it so I *didn't*.

But I'm also always hungry now.

The symptoms just keep coming.

I got the hunger first, then the hair, then the nails, now the hearing, and apparently there's a bunch more spidey senses, "wolfy" senses, coming.

RUMI

Are you gonna go to get manicures now or would that still bother you?

SHELLEY

I'm gonna try it tomorrow. You can come with me.

RUMI

Deal.

They kind of laugh.

SHELLEY

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Your food's gonna get cold.

RUMI stares at all of the food, blankly.
SHELLEY puts her hands on his shoulders.

SHELLEY
Fine.

SHELLEY picks up one of the dishes, steamed dumplings. She dips it into soy sauce.

SHELLEY
Here.

SHELLEY tries to feed it to him, but RUMI pulls away.

RUMI
This isn't what I came over for.

SHELLEY
Yeah it is. It's ok.

RUMI opens his mouth and SHELLEY feeds him the dumpling. He eats it ravenously and quickly. SHELLEY continues feeding him the dumplings until they are gone, and he eats them quickly.

SHELLEY
That was fast.

RUMI
Sorry, I didn't—

SHELLEY
Shush. I love it.
Keep going.

SHELLEY feeds him other dishes— BBQ wings with ranch, steak frites, shrimp wrapped in bacon with butter, sides of broccoli, tempura green beans, fried calamari, and bread with butter. And that is only some of the food she has laid out. She chooses one, then the other, making sure to utilize the dipping sauces he loves, drenching some and only

light on the others, knowing the amount and the portion he would eat himself. He eats all of it.

SHELLEY
Slow down.

SHELLEY then sits on his lap.

RUMI groans.

SHELLEY
Stop sucking in.

RUMI exhales, no longer sucking in.

SHELLEY
There you are.
Here.

SHELLEY picks up chocolate strawberries.

SHELLEY
Slower this time.

RUMI eats the chocolate strawberries from her hands, and she wipes the chocolate that sticks to his lips. He can't look at her in the eye, and closes his eyes.

SHELLEY
You don't have to look at me.

RUMI
I'm not trying not to—

SHELLEY
I know.
You're doing great.

SHELLEY finishes feeding him the strawberries, not wiping the final chocolate off his face. She puts her hands on his stomach and sighs.

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SHELLEY

Now you're full. I can hear it.

SHELLEY kisses him, kissing the chocolate off his mouth. RUMI kisses her back more ferociously, surprising SHELLEY. He starts to pick her up.

SHELLEY

I'm heavier now—

RUMI picks her up with almost no struggle. He is larger than we have seen him, because he is allowing himself to take up space. They continue making out as he carries her to the bedroom.

When they're on the bed, the lights begin dim on them to black as:

SHELLEY

If you're not gonna look at me, turn me around already.

RUMI

Can you scratch me? Your nails. Please.

SHELLEY

Make me.

The food and dinner setup is lifted into the air by puppet strings and they clean themselves up, almost like ghosts or the cursed objects from *Beauty and the Beast*.

Later in the super early morning, SHELLEY and RUMI lay together tangled in sheets. SHELLEY's clothes are mostly off, and RUMI's clothes remain mostly on.

SHELLEY

Want to go again?

RUMI

You seriously gotta give me a break.

SHELLEY

I'm a new were-woman. I am who I am, which is crazy.

RUMI

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Good god. That's amazing. I'm jealous.

SHELLEY

Ew. Don't be. Or do be.

It's exhausting sometimes, I gotta do stuff, like, seven times sometimes just to go to sleep.

RUMI

That's... a lot of times of stuff.

SHELLEY

I knew you'd like that TMI.

SHELLEY squirms around the bed, invading RUMI's personal space then flailing then repeat.

RUMI

Can you please not, what are you even—?

SHELLEY

IT CAN'T, IT'S LIKE ZOOMIES BUT MOON BASED ITS MOONIES!!!! CHASE ME!!!

RUMI tries to catch her like a human catches a fly, she's all over.

RUMI

Stop it! You're insane!!! You're wayyyy too much for me right now!!!

SHELLEY (snapping out of it, uncanny valley)

I know. Cuz you're so chill. Such a chill cool guy. So mild mannered. Everyone should be just like you—

Oh my god your shirt...

RUMI's shirt is basically shreds from her nails.

RUMI

It's a Hanes, I've got a million.

SHELLEY

Take it off, take it off, take it off—

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She tries to help him take it off, he resists.

RUMI

—No, no, don't. Not yet. Maybe tomorrow or whatever.

SHELLEY

It's dark. And it's shreds. It's dead to us.

She tries to take it off again, he pins her hands. It's hot.

RUMI

Do your wolf spider senses include night vision?

SHELLEY

...Yeah.

RUMI

I know. You're also not the only one who's heavier.

I'll take it off another time, I promise.

SHELLEY

But I want it! And you know I love it!

RUMI

I know. I don't.

SHELLEY

Oh, come on. Seriously we're not gonna do this at 3am right?

RUMI

I'll get over it tomorrow.

SHELLEY

It is tomorrow.

RUMI gives her a glare with a smile, probably something he used to give her many times when they were together.

SHELLEY

Are you getting grumpy old man-ish cuz you're post-cum or cuz I won't shut up or both
or cuz I love your tummy or cuz of something I'm not naming?
..... Wow. You are being silent, not silenced, right now.
Ok, ok. Pickle.
Start saying Pickle.

RUMI

—I can't. It's so weird. I make them every day at work—

SHELLEY

You pickle pickles professionally?

RUMI

YES. I do, god damn, youre loopy.

SHELLEY

I told you, I need at least two more times. It's not my fault you need to fuck me like an
animal, Nine Inch Nails said so—

RUMI

Here. HERE. Just do this—

He pulls SHELLEY in and helps her lay her head on his stomach.

RUMI

This always does the trick. /

Or did the trick.

Yes. I'm gonna let you.

SHELLEY

Oh my god really?! You're gonna let me?!

RUMI

So you go to sleep. Here.

Give it seven minutes. You'll be out.

SHELLEY

Do you want me out?

RUMI

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I want you regardless.

Pause. Things just got real-er.

SHELLEY

Hey... if it makes you feel any better, the abs were so uncomfortable.

RUMI

Oh god, really? Sorry.

SHELLEY

Don't apologize, just listen. It was like my head was on those tiny rocks on beaches in Italy towns. I went to one of those once, it sucked.

RUMI

Wow. Ok. sure.

SHELLEY

But this is like sand.

And Inside it is like the ocean.

I feel and hear it all at the same time.

It's everywhere. And it keeps going.

I think you were always meant to be like this.

If you think about it, all being fat or big or whatever anyone calls you that you call yourself, too whatever it all just means being everywhere.

And when I'm on a beach I don't want to see where the earth actually is, like sticks or rocks or grass.

Or the sidewalk I had to take to get there. I don't want something that hurts my skin.

Or the loud city I probably came from.

I don't want noise.

I want the sand and the sea to be everything.

I want it to swallow the world loudly. I want it to swallow me.

All I keep turning into reminds me of how I got here, wanting to change how I look or am or...

Everywhere.

I just want to be everywhere.

Like you.

RUMI

I've always just been referred to as a bear so... the sand and sea is a new one for me...

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SHELLEY

... You're everywhere...

I should go... that was probably a lot—

RUMI

Stay. I want to know if you still snore.

SHELLEY's cheek sinks deeper into him. She drifts off to sleep.

RUMI strokes her hair, incredibly moved but also exposed. He's back in love with her. She starts to snore loudly. He chuckles. She cuddles further into his stomach. He holds her closer.

Lights down.

SCENE 5:

A month later. RUMI is at a fancy restaurant with his ex, PETER, a shiny and sharp puppet emulating intense, fit musculature. His face is metal, cold in material and expression. His eyes are beautiful, glistening, his most human feature.

They both drink bourbon and chuckle.

RUMI

I don't want to do fire island with those guys again.

PETER

I know, they were disgusting. I did love the house.

RUMI

If you know me, you know I love a hot tub that looks like a fountain.

PETER

All fountains are basically pools, if you don't think and just jump.

Oh man...

RUMI

I did way too much K. I almost passed out.

PETER

You just didn't drink enough water. Are you still pounding coffee and beer?

RUMI

I replaced beer with cocaine. I'm kidding. I don't know why I said that.

PETER

Cuz I do drugs?

RUMI

I still don't do drugs.

PETER

Babes, you did do K. You can't go back on it. You're not a drug virgin anymore.

RUMI

Whatever. My poison is still beer.
Do you still smoke?

PETER

Yeah. Do you?

RUMI

Yeah. It's bad for you, you know.

PETER

I've heard. I should quit.

(Teasing)

You're blushing. Stop it.

RUMI

I'm not trying to blush.

PETER

You never try.

RUMI

I'm just talking here.

PETER

Uh-huh.

Beat

RUMI

You're being so weirdly sassy with me.

PETER

You're killing the game, it's easier to tease you when you're not being hard on yourself cuz you're successful.

RUMI

Yeah, that's fair.

PETER

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Let me have some fun.

Beat

RUMI

I'll get the bill. Would you wanna come by for a night cap? I have the... sorbet you love, it's from the restaurant, it's extra.

PETER

Um... I'm pretty tired actually.

RUMI

It's 9.

PETER

Long day answering calls, you know?

RUMI

On a Friday?

PETER

I'm surprised you could take off tonight, shouldn't you go back to the staff, check on the evening crowd?

RUMI

My sous's got it handled.

PETER

Does he tho?

RUMI

I fired that one, I've got a new sous, she's great, her name is actually Sue...

PETER

Nice. Well. I'm so proud of you. Bout fucking time.

RUMI

Yeah, thanks.

But anyway, Sue the sous is fine, I told her, uh, we'd probably go late—

PETER

Babes.

I can't do this. This back and forth pretending like we're cool when we're just, we're not really...

RUMI

Not what?

PETER

I need to move on. I wanted to try to keep, you know, a friendship going, but honestly, I really don't want this dynamic.

RUMI

What dynamic?

Cordialness? honesty? Having a good time?

PETER

Ok. I haven't been honest. I've felt like I've been your caretaker for a long time, and it's pretty exhausting.

RUMI

You said you loved me, that kind of implies you want to take care of me.

PETER

You just always need reassurance. I need more emotional self responsibility than that. Just, like, you gotta know when you're great. And you are great. I can't be the one you go to to tell you.

RUMI

What about when you got fired and I brought you home leftovers from service every day for six months? Was that too much for you? Or when I worked double shifts and still made it to your awards dinner *for retail tech*, because you hated going alone, but then we had to pretend we were childhood bros so you could be globally appealing.

PETER

All of that with context is valid. I had a ton of external pressure. All you need is all inside you, and I can only do so much. You gotta grow up at some point. We all do. That's why I need... not this.

RUMI

I got a Michelin star.

PETER

That's so cool. That's a big deal.

RUMI

You don't know what it is, or means. You don't have it in you to know, cuz all your "external pressure" that you actually are just making up on your own, is gonna stop you from getting anywhere or anything close to it. I loved cheering you on at your plays—

PETER

Can we not?

RUMI

You're a coward.

PETER

Look at yourself, man. You're... it's honestly scary, what you're doing to yourself. If you want, I'll pay for a gym membership for you—

RUMI

Fuck off.

PETER

Like, if I can do it, I know you can. You can literally lift anything, I've seen you, you do it all day anyway so I don't know why you... let it get like this, or... Look. I know you and you aren't at your best when you're like this.

And if you don't like something about yourself, you're the only one who can change it.

RUMI

I'm not eating a lot, actually, if that's what you mean.

PETER

I don't believe you. Also, I know you, it's beer, it's always— I don't even drink beer anymore cuz I loved it so much, I get it.

RUMI

Can you not? Can we just... this conversation needs to be over.

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PETER

You're the one who *needed* to have it. Open communication.

Look, it's not cuz you did anything, I just think you miss who you used to be with me more than me.

And maybe me too.

Honestly. That's it.

RUMI

I've seen who you're fucking now. He looks exactly like me. Like, me now.

I'm still on your close friends story.

You haven't posted any photos together? After, what, 6 months?

PETER

We're taking it slow.

RUMI

Does he know that?

You're lying to yourself about your type.

PETER

That's crossing—

I'm sorry. I gotta go. I'm out, yeah—

PETER stands up.

PETER

I'll pay—

RUMI

Nope. They know me.

And they won't let me pay, so.

Enjoy the free sashimi.

Also, thanks for last week, I won't tell anyone—

PETER

Yeah, you too, asshole.

PETER leaves hurriedly.

The waiter, a lovely candle wax puppet with lipstick on, comes over to RUMI.

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WAITER

Can I get you anything else, chef?

RUMI

I want to try tonight's menu. Tell the kitchen it's no pressure. I just am feeling inspired.

WAITER

Right away, thank you so much, chef.

RUMI

Thank *you*.

WAITER

I'm a huge fan, anything I can do to make you more comfortable?

RUMI looks at the waiter, trying to hold himself together.

RUMI

Just the food, please.

WAITER

On the house.

The restaurant becomes full of eyes, watching, all shapes and sizes and colors, all menacing.

Lights down.

Suddenly we are at RUMI's apartment, where SHELLEY pounds on RUMI's door.

SHELLEY

You have to let me in, babes!!

There's groaning and rumbling.

SHELLEY realized the door's unlocked and walks in. RUMI is on the ground, back to a wall, beer cans and takeout containers by him.

RUMI

I got started without you.

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SHELLEY
It went that bad?

RUMI
Worse.

SHELLEY
Ok. That's ok. I'm here now.

SHELLEY unloads three rotisserie chickens from a tote bag, and RUMI hands her a beer. She chugs it.

RUMI
I couldn't stop and I want you to punish me.

SHELLEY
I still gotta eat.

RUMI
I CANT move.

SHELLEY
No shit how am I gonna eat?
I'm not serious. Ok a little.
This is more intense than I thought it was gonna be.

RUMI
Can't help it.

SHELLEY
I hear ya. It's ok, I'm just... yeah, anyway—

RUMI
I'll tell you what to do. I know what I want to watch you do.

SHELLEY
Ok. That works.

RUMI
Eat one whole on all fours. However fast you want. I need to watch you.

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Go.

Show me the meds are working.

He chuckles and winces in pain, grabbing his belly. This turns SHELLEY on, and he looks at her, knowing it.

SHELLEY

But you're in pain.

RUMI

You know I like it like this.

SHELLEY

Don't be a sad asshole right now.

RUMI

DO IT.

SHELLEY becomes a she-wolf, a tentative one, but so much of one that RUMI is surprised. She eats the full rotisserie chicken in a feral state.

RUMI

Come here.

SHELLEY crawls to RUMI, in an animalistic state. His stomach grumbles, and she pats it with her hand like it is a paw.

RUMI

Open your mouth.

She does, exposing fangs and a new wider jaw.

RUMI

Holy shit.

That's new.

You're beautiful.

Her jaw snaps out of place with a loud *crack* and RUMI jumps, making his stomach wince again. SHELLEY pops her jaw back into place, and her humanness comes back to her.

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SHELLEY

I'm so sorry are you ok?

Oh my god don't be freaked out—

RUMI

My turn. Tell me what to do.

RUMI slowly assumes an all fours position. SHELLEY smiles and puts a chicken in front of him like feeding a pet.

SHELLEY

I want to see you do it—

Before she can finish, RUMI is devouring the chicken.

SHELLEY

Good boy.

RUMI finishes and can barely move. He leans back against the wall, his stomach protruding out of his clothes. He breathes heavily and laughs, bellowing like we've never heard.

SHELLEY

What?

RUMI

I need you to make me feel worse.

Much worse.

SHELLEY

Are you sure?

RUMI

I'm a pig.

I can't move.

Look at what I did to me.

SHELLEY

You're pathetic, and I want you.

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I want you to explode.

You're disgusting.

You're a fucking chef stereotype. Trying to tell me what to do, I can't believe you haven't failed and closed for good yet, you suck at dominating anything.

You're literally the most bottoming bottom I've ever seen, and people seriously "yes chef" you?

You sit there pretending you're out of control like your body just happened to you.

Like the beer, the binging, the fucking starving didn't count because no one saw it.

You think just being huge is enough? That just existing big makes you in charge cuz you could crush me and snap me in half?

It doesn't. It's pathetic.

And I'd want you to crush me, so you still lose.

You wear hoodies to hide, you can't fit into any of your suits anymore, and you act like you're everybody's fucking gentle giant—

But I know you come hardest when you're Mr. Love Me. "Oh love me, please think I'm hot, please please love me"— shut the fuck up.

You're a joke.

Quit pretending you don't want this.

You think you're so fat you can just be this way, it's not good enough.

You don't eat anything and you're still fat—

RUMI

Pickle on that.

SHELLEY

Heard. No

You're such a good boy for eating, but your belly can't handle it. I hear it.

RUMI clutches his belly.

SHELLEY

It can't fit your clothes anymore can it?

RUMI

It keeps popping out.

SHELLEY

Gross.

RUMI

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Nothing fits. I hate it.

SHELLEY

You don't deserve to hide. You've failed at hiding.

RUMI

I'm hungry all the time.

SHELLEY

Then feed it. Let it win.

RUMI winces as his stomach rumbles violently.

RUMI

It's a monster.

SHELLEY

It's mine.

It's a god.

It's scary and sacred.

It swallows planets.

SHELLEY brings him the final chicken, crawling on her hands and knees. She gently straddles him, positioning herself on his belly. She offers him chicken—

SHELLEY

I'm in awe of you.

—RUMI surprises her by immediately stuffing the chicken into her mouth, which she eats with her larger jaw far easier than human.

RUMI

Now me.

SHELLEY bites off chicken and kisses him, feeding it to him.

They continue to stuff each other's face, and when RUMI's belly hurts, SHELLEY pets it or kisses it or scratches it with her nails, drawing blood, and he loves it.

They finish the chicken, breathing heavily.

SHELLEY

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All full?

RUMI

Not quite.

RUMI lays SHELLEY down, pulls up her top, exposing her stomach.

SHELLEY

(A little unnerved)

What are you doing?

RUMI

Squeezing.

(He squeezes her belly, kissing it, biting it, she shakes)

You're so soft.

RUMI, suddenly strong and recharged, lays SHELLEY down and goes down on her.

SHELLEY exhales something like an orgasmic howl, not too obviously so but inhuman enough.

Lights dim.

SCENE 6:

Later that night, RUMI is laying his head on SHELLEY's chest in bed. She combs his hair with her nails.

SHELLEY

Tonight was not on my bingo card for the year. Then again none of this was.
Reconnecting with you wasn't.
Were-wolfing wasn't.

RUMI

How about getting a belly kink?

SHELLEY

That's not new, leave me alone.

RUMI

I meant for me. That's new for me.

SHELLEY

Oh. Weird.

RUMI

Don't kink shame me—

SHELLEY

You're kink shaming me!

RUMI

Are you kidding your kinks work in my favor thank God.

SHELLEY

Same I guess. I just feel exposed. And... Sorry for the sheets.

RUMI

Don't be. I'd have it no other way.

SHELLEY

Apparently the medicine doesn't help with people prone to wetness. Sweat, tears,
happy body explosions.....

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RUMI

I'm just glad I can still do it for you...

SHELLEY

Hell yeah you can.

RUMI

Peter used to ask me if he was better than you. Or, if I liked, you know—

SHELLEY

Boys or girls?

RUMI

Don't say it like *that*.

SHELLEY

Dicks or chicks. Vagines or peens?

RUMI

And I used to say—

SHELLEY

—way to ignore my genius jokes—

RUMI

— I... loved Italian food and Mexican food.

SHELLEY

Wow.

For your FYI, my pussy is pizza.

RUMI

You...

SHELLEY

Extra sauce. Extra cheese.

RUMI

I CANT do that comparison.

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SHELLEY

You *started* the comparison, I literally was making a final definitive call on what genre of food my pussy identifies as. And my titties?

RUMI

Don't say / pepperonis.

SHELLEY

PEPPERONIS you bitch you are a nasty bitch too I knew it!!!

RUMI

It's too late for this...

SHELLEY

It's never not time for this. Plus I was gay first. I'm in charge. Safe word: pepperonis.

SHELLEY goes to touch RUMI's large chest, and he blocks her hands from tickling.

SHELLEY

...

I could eat Peter's heart in the marketplace. For what he said. That's Shakespeare. I'm cultured.

RUMI

I don't care anymore.

SHELLEY

Of course you do. I'd care. Who wouldn't care?

I would've binged a five star restaurant, I would've gotten shwasted, I would've booty called *your ass*.

We are the exact same, in this way.

RUMI

Can I ask you something? Why'd you go on the medicine?

You're not fat.

SHELLEY

People who look like me call themselves and are called fat. You don't have a belly kink with me for no reason—

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RUMI

—because you're not thin.

SHELLEY

—Sure.

But, that's actually not it, like...

It's gonna always seem like it is but it's not.

RUMI

is that cuz it is?

SHELLEY

I'm gonna leave.

RUMI

Just say it.

SHELLEY

I'm not gonna tell you I don't love how I look when I do. That's your thing.

RUMI

Then why do you shake so much when I touch you?

SHELLEY

I don't know but even if I did that's not why I shake when you touch me, dumbass.

RUMI

Well I'm not gonna stop till you get used to it again.

SHELLEY

God, get over yourself. If I knew, I wouldn't need to go on... look.

The only way I can explain it is I was trying on clothes at a store, some super cute dresses for work, at my favorite store I know things will fit me at, and I still couldn't stop... sweating and breathing hard and the zippers would get on my skin and the fabric felt thick and itchy even when it was soft and stretchy and at first I couldn't look at myself in the mirror, I just couldn't look at any of it or I didn't feel real or safe or... here.

RUMI

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Here? Where's here?

SHELLEY

Exacrly. And it turned from I can't feel here into I couldn't see myself into I actually couldn't see anything.

It all became fuzz. Black and white fuzz.

And like, it was a very obvious panic attack, I chilled out and found awesome dresses that I'll wear for you soon. Great boob moments in all of them.

RUMI

I can't wait.

SHELLEY

You're too easy.

And then... so, I went to the Y for a swim, I've really gotten back into swimming, and I realized that I was only able to breathe, like full deep in and out, when I couldn't feel my body at all.

When I had no weight. No ground.

No heat. No cold. No fuzz. No here. No anywhere. Just me.

And I realized unless I became a jellyfish, or a mermaid, or a spaceship, or... unalive, OR a wolf, a she-wolf, a big scary puppy, something bigger than me... then I'd never be able to feel like me.

Because I am bigger than not feeling my body. I have to be. I have to be able to feel myself.

RUMI

That's a lot to put on a drug.

SHELLEY

I just have to feel better. There had to be something where I'd get to feel just a tiny teeny weensy baby bit better.

A wolf, a jellyfish... anything will do.

I just can't get to the point where I hate myself cuz I exist.

Is that how you feel too? Or are you even gonna tell me?

RUMI

....I don't get it.

I don't get hating you.

RUMI holds SHELLEY tighter. She is moved.

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SHELLEY

You really could crush me into pieces if you wanted.
I'd feel so real to you. I'd feel so myself to me.

RUMI

Speak in human words.

SHELLEY

Weird wolf words are so much fun. I hate poetry and now I speak in so many moon-body words.

RUMI

What do you mean?

SHELLEY

Apparently we're learning a new language the more doses we take. So that when we can't speak as wolves, we can still communicate. And then as humans we just become more evolved in our speech cuz the moon and body are becoming interconnected and complete, it's really weird, but yeah, the facebook groups say it's called moon-body words.

RUMI

They're confusing for the rest of us, whatever you call them.

SHELLEY

So should I just not say things? You really want me to be just like you...
You know when I asked for help I didn't mean advice.
Is there anything you want to tell me? I'm here. I might be a bitch but I'm not gonna go anywhere. You can't scare me.

RUMI

Sure I can.
Peter and I had sex last week.

SHELLEY

Hm. Ok.
Cool...? Or toxic...? What should my reaction be here?

RUMI

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He had to top cuz of how big I've gotten.

SHELLEY

I mean... ok, "had to?" Lame. Let's try "got to"!

RUMI

I just mean, like, that was new for us.

He came on my stomach. He wanted to.

That was really new for us.

SHELLEY

Huh.

RUMI

Are you getting turned on by this?

SHELLEY

I told you. My wolf drive is crazy.

RUMI

Whatever...

SHELLEY

Oh well. You're just a late bloomer on getting fetishized. You'll get used to it.

RUMI

I don't fetishize you.

SHELLEY

Yeah I know. You're the only one who doesn't.

RUMI

I totally can if you want me to.

SHELLEY

God, you're pathetic.

RUMI

I still don't understand how you want me to talk to you.

SHELLEY

Just *talk*. Or don't. I can take either way.
As long as you touch me. With your hands.

RUMI

What else would I touch you with? My mouth?

SHELLEY

I only really care about how and how often you touch me, if I'm being honest. Whatever you want to say, I already know, by how you touch me. And the rest that I need you to say, I can pull out of you.

RUMI

Really?

SHELLEY

Yep. Does that surprise you? You're an enigma but not a mystery.

RUMI

I didn't know you knew me that well.

SHELLEY

Oh poor baby. You gonna shut down on me now? / Or is it still "Rumi's feel bad for me" time?—

RUMI

NO, that's not what I was saying, wait, what I mean is, I didn't know you cared to remember me. After all we, or I—

SHELLEY

I told you, I remember things. You're memorable.

You talk with touch. And I *do* listen.

Like right now you're not touching me at all, that means you want to rant about Pete some more. So.

Go, keep talking. It's not exhausting at all. / At all. I'm not the jealous type. Might as well put on some lo-fi. I've fallen asleep to worse from you.

RUMI

Are you kidding? Fuck.

No.

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You don't have any reason to be...
cuz tonight he just... He did what I do to you.
He shelled himself. To me.

I don't know the person I had dinner with. And he so clearly wanted to erase me out of whatever he's looking to become. I've never hated someone before, but I hate him and wanted to just... I wanted him gone. Wiped off the face of the earth. I wanted to reach over the table and crush him. Maybe just to touch him. I don't know.

SHELLEY
I do know.

RUMI
Nice.

SHELLEY
I'm just relating. I mean, like... Why are you telling *me* all this?

RUMI
Because all I do is feel my body, too.
And all anyone wants to do is remind me to.
My mom used to give me all the leftovers. It's just what we do, but still, she'd remind me to be full.
I played football, and everyone would be like, "look at that boy he can eat,"--
and I had to taste all during culinary school obviously, everything was taste--

SHELLEY
--and look at how great you're doing now--

RUMI
--*then* I had to be strong so I made myself get strong, I got the abs, I got the arms--

SHELLEY
--I mean, you always had the arms--

RUMI
--whatever, all that did was put more weight on weight and it's all just heavy at the end of the day, so I just decided I'd be the heavy so nobody would... make me? But nobody made me, I guess. It's all just me, I guess.
It doesn't matter. I don't know what's better, being reminded you are something or you're not. It all feels... terrible.

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And yet I also, and this is gonna sound so stupid—

SHELLEY

—say it—

RUMI

— I feel... hot...

SHELLEY

GOOD. For. You. BITCH.

They chuckle. RUMI squirms a little away from SHELLEY, but she pulls him back to her.

RUMI

Am I crushing you—?

SHELLEY

Listen... wait, no really, listen.

It'll go away. The terrible.

Or it won't. And... Pete will probably come back to you. And when he does, you can always kill him. Or get me to. We can make it look like an accident together.

I don't know what I'm saying.

Or if it's what you need.

But I do know when he shelled himself to you, it's because he is in fact a shell.

And shells get crushed by seas.

And swallowed.

Until they're nothing but the sea itself.

Beat. RUMI kisses SHELLEY, and they kiss back and forth—

RUMI

Are you saying you can't bring a shell to a sea fight?

SHELLEY

Technically a hurricane? A flood? Tsunami? What is a sea fight, in fact? Ursula vs Tritan? Poseidon vs Aquaman?

RUMI

There's your goofy, I was hoping your moonbody words didn't totally take it away.

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SHELLEY

Never. I am inevitably gooftacular.
Do you feel better?

RUMI

I always feel better with you.

SHELLEY pauses, alarmed.

RUMI

What?

SHELLEY

Sorry... I don't feel so... Thank you for tonight...

SHELLEY hurriedly gets up and grabs her clothes.

RUMI

What's wrong?

SHELLEY

I'll see you soon, I promise—

RUMI

Wait—

SHELLEY

I can't—

RUMI

Are you ok? / I got you a key. For next time.

SHELLEY

—fine, I'm fine. give it to me next time, we'll synch up—

She runs out. RUMI lays back, trying to not have a panic attack. Then, he touches the inside of his mouth on his tongue and gums. Blood. Lots of it.

RUMI

... what the fuck?

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SCENE 7:

Halloween, about two or three weeks from the previous scene.

SHELLEY gets ready in her apartment with her best friend, TAYLOR, who is a drag performer puppet made of silk and beads and wig and feathers and a mannequin, helping her put on wolf-woman drag makeup. TAYLOR is dressed as Bride of Frankenstein drag costume.

TAYLOR

Oh no, he got blood in his mouth, girl that faggot has been around, don't be so missionary about this.

SHELLEY

And THEN I got home and couldn't stop shitting blood. I let my pants just soak it up.

TAYLOR

Well. Sounds Hot. Maybe he's into that?

SHELLEY

I wasn't gonna end his nightmare night with period wolf disgustion!!!

TAYLOR

is disgustion a word?

SHELLEY

'Tis. I checked. I know so many new words.

TAYLOR

So Wait— you ghosted his ass again till inviting him to tonight?

SHELLEY

I HAD TO. Wolf periods are twice as strong and I couldn't call him with dignity this... month. I know... But it doesn't make sense that you bleed in your teeth too. I didn't want to go into it, I already soaked his sheets I didn't want to stain them too....

TAYLOR

What are you thirteen? Stained sheets are for grownups.

SHELLEY

Listen. He's used to getting dick anytime. I couldn't disappoint him with my feminine wilds.

TAYLOR

The word is wiles, not wilds.

SHELLEY

But I'm feminine and I'm wild.

TAYLOR

Right cuz sucking at open communication is wayyyy more mature than periods, heard, you fucking annoying bitch. Stop sabotaging yourself!!

SHELLEY

YOU are right.

TAYLOR

Also don't yall just eat together? Isn't that the main thing with you two? Eating then fucking then talking then not talking until one of yall talks to each other to eat and repeat?

SHELLEY

I mean yeah.

TAYLOR

Jeezus, like, there's nothing else? isn't he a cuddler? / Movies also exist! Long walks in the park! Pillow fights!

SHELLEY

Just like me. Can we stop talking about me?

TAYLOR

Girl I'm on meds now I'm doing great. You did invite him to tonight right?

SHELLEY

And therapy? Yes.

TAYLOR

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yesssss... god you're boring. Not everything is meds and trauma.
Ok if he shows up tonight I'm gonna be so gagged. I'm calling it now. You two will be endgame if tonight happens.

SHELLEY
STAHP.

TAYLOR
Girl. Halloween Night love stories are my speciality.
Where would you two like to double date when you finally settle this situation?

SHELLEY
If that miraculously happens, that Brazilian steak place, unlimited steak, steak and salad, mostly steak.

TAYLOR
Thank God I got a rich wifey now who can afford my lifestyle and y'all's appetites.

SHELLEY
Oh, happy anniversary. Has it really been four years?!
I want a Halloween wedding too if you don't mind. That was a genius move on y'all's part.

TAYLOR
GIRL, go for it, it's the gift that keeps on giving all year long. All the ghosts attend. All the freaks let themselves party. And the sex is somehow induced with a strange kind of scary, which means it's the best. Especially if you got the wolf freak going on like those Reddit threads talk about. Child...
I can't believe it's been four years of death do us part.

SHELLEY
What does it feel like? To you? Like, is there a lesson to learn?

TAYLOR
Just... I love her so crazy it keeps making me forget what I'm doing every day. And the more I can forget myself the happier I am. That's why she's mine. And I'm hers. Plus she's stunning and she thinks I'm worthy of her. That doesn't hurt a bit.

SHELLEY

I have a weird question. I know I'm not your type, but do you think *she'd* like how I'm turning out?

TAYLOR

Are you kidding, girl? Those eyes and teeth combination, and your hair keeps getting shinier, I'm surprised she hasn't left my crusty ass for you.

SHELLEY

OH, STAHF.

TAYLOR

Ok. Look at what you made me do.

SHELLEY looks at her costume in the mirror. It's glorious, as if a combination of Frankenfurter from Rocky Horror and Loona from Helluva Boss, complete with punky boots, lingerie, a harness, wolf ears as a headband, and blood dripping from her mouth. We see SHELLEY has brighter eyes and longer nails and fangs, and she's dyed her longer hair bright purple. She blushes.

TAYLOR

Why miss shelley look at you you're beautiful—

SHELLEY

I'm relieved.

TAYLOR

What's it like? Being like this?

SHELLEY

I never think about it. It's perfect.
I'm ready for more.

TAYLOR

Then— Let's go "more".

We're suddenly at the Mouse House's Halloween night, a club full of costumed puppets, all kinds of puppets because everyone is masquerading and disguised for Halloween. Some are scary, some are silly, all are performative.

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SHELLEY

HAPPY HALLOWEEN SCUM!!!!!!!!!! If you didn't wear a costume you're basically naked.
Tip your bartender and drink something gross.

TAYLOR DJ's and SHELLEY sings karaoke in drag, involving the crowd, something punny with tons of drag horror effects, how much of it is real and how much of it is her new wolf self? Is she really biting into a handful of real bugs? Is she really tearing off her fur and skin? Is her tongue really longer? Is she really drinking blood?

All to "Reanimation" by Bad Static.

RUMI enters, wearing a ridiculously overdressed suit with a rubber wolf mask covering his face.

SHELLEY busts out laughing during singing, knowing it's him.

SHELLEY

—NICE—

He waves to her in the mask, gets a beer and drinks it through his mask.

SHELLEY finishes singing and goes over to him.

SHELLEY

You made it!

RUMI

You invited!

SHELLEY

YOU LOOK WILD.

RUMI

How much of this is real?

RUMI puts his fingers through her hair.

SHELLEY

More and less than you'd think!

RUMI

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We closed early tonight but kept the bar open, so we can go by afterwards if you want something quieter.

SHELLEY

Interesting proposition! So you're not hungry?

RUMI

I ate.

SHELLEY

Me too promise.

TAYLOR

(On a mic)

Left no crumbs girl!!

SHELLEY glares at TAYLOR.

TAYLOR

Ok whores perfect time for your favorite final girl over there to take a drink break, this next request is quite timely–

SHELLEY

(embarrassed)

Thanks bitch!

TAYLOR

–Yes, Chef–

SHELLEY

(to RUMI)

I told her not to say that–

RUMI

Hey Tay!! Nice to see you again!

TAYLOR

Who even are you!! You're scum!! Redeemable scum!!

Taylor salutes Rumi, starts the track and it's something super on the nose, probably "Nasty" by Tinashe.

SHELLEY and RUMI look at each other like, "are you fucking kidding me?"

SHELLEY cheers on Taylor. When the lights go dimmer or blink, RUMI pulls SHELLEY closer. This moment turns into a mirror of the club scene, the puppets everywhere, an intense soundscape banging against everyone's ears, lights blinking and flashing, smoke emerging, and suddenly the puppets are decomposing except for their hands, which are all over both of RUMI and SHELLEY. But this time, they cling closer together.

Finally, SHELLEY takes the mask off of RUMI, and she sees his eyes have turned out like hers and his veins are showing all over his face, but immediately as she does, he vomits blood onto SHELLEY.

Every hand, everything, retreats, grossed out vocally.

SHELLEY screams, grossed out, and RUMI runs away. She runs after him.

Outside the club, in an alleyway, the full moon shining.

RUMI continues to get violently sick, suddenly his bones are cracking. He unbuttons his shirt as he gets sick, revealing more veins. He finally takes off his shirt. His muscles and veins are emerging and pulsing.

SHELLEY starts to have intense cramping, her visible veins starting to pulse.

A few puppets pass by, like, "Whoa, had a little too much fun there," or "It's only 11, Jesus!" or "Are you okay there big guy?" or "What the fuck is that?!"

SHELLEY

(sharply, to them)

GET OUT!!!!!! GO!!!!!! WE'LL KILL YOU!!!!!!

(turns to RUMI)

Oh baby...

You could've fucking *told* me.

You really thought I wouldn't figure it out?

RUMI

...It's not working...

SHELLEY

How long have you been on it?

RUMI

...Two years...

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SHELLEY

Are you *kidding* me?!

You're such an asshole. I tell you *everything*.

I've been feeling so fucking *alone*, and you—

RUMI

—because I'm scared, Shellz!! I'm just *scared*!

SHELLEY

I'm here.

You *don't* get to be scared. That's not how this works. You *don't* get to—

RUMI

I love you.

(*sharper*)

I *fucking* love you, okay?

Beat. SHELLEY freezes, breathing hard.

RUMI begins to spiral, his voice rapid and breaking.

RUMI

I adore you. I didn't want you to worry.

I don't *look* like I'm on it.

I didn't want you to *not* go on it.

It's working for you. You're so brave.

That's probably why it's working.

And why it's not working for me.

I feel *everything* all the time.

It's too much. It's *always* too much. I hate it. I hate this. (*His size*)

I don't know how to do this. (*take up space*) I don't know how to be this.

I need help.

I need you.

Please —

Don't be afraid of me.

Please don't leave.

RUMI vomits again. His hands begin to shift.

SHELLEY kneels beside him. She rubs his back. Her jaw stretches with a sickening pop.

She exhales a howl, and giggles at herself.

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SHELLEY

Fuck. What was *that?!*

RUMI looks at her, amazed, then amused.

SHELLEY

Let's fucking do this. Like... let's goooo. Like... whatever this is... it's so hot on us...
like,
I. LOVE. THIS.

The moon begins to bleed.

<if there's an END OF ACT 1, it's here>

SCENE 8:

A few months later. RUMI's restaurant, after a philanthropy event for individuals who have undergone failed drug experiments called the "Mutation Celebration Foundation Gala". RUMI is larger and his botched evolution from the drug is more visible on him in the form of protruding veins and muscles, grotesque yet powerful. He works on cleaning up while a friend of his: a puppet of a humanoid made out of what appears to be chocolate birthday cake, the CAKE MONSTER. The CAKE MONSTER sips a bourbon while RUMI works.

CAKE MONSTER

Thanks so much for letting me hang around. You got any more leftovers to nibble on?

RUMI

Believe it or not, everything is gone.

CAKE MONSTER

Figures. You were on fire tonight, did you make that menu for just tonight or do you have it other nights, too?

RUMI

From scratch, for this.

I figured comfort food was the move tonight.

CAKE MONSTER

The mini mac and cheese exploded in my mouth, I wasn't ready.

RUMI

That's what she said.

CAKE MONSTER

I knew you were gonna do that. You had to do that.

RUMI

I had to do that.

CAKE MONSTER

I support it.

RUMI

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But anyway... glad the comfort food comforted.

CAKE MONSTER

I remember I watched one of those weird rich wedding shows where they served “comfort food” hors d'oeuvres, it was mini cheeseburger sliders with pickle and ketchup, mini chicken tacos, deviled eggs, and mini mac and cheese—

RUMI

—sounds about right, I bet it was in New England—

CAKE MONSTER

IT WAS, and that was how I learned what “comfort food” was.
Life changing stuff.

RUMI

Comfort food usually means what most families can afford and cook, done in a way fancy people can feel classy about.
But in this case, it actually *was* to make everyone here more *comfortable*.

CAKE MONSTER

I see what you did there. Yeah, it's not the most dignified night of the year for all of us. Then again, what else do we do? Halloween, pranks the friends we still have pull on people, kids who are destined to grow up to be goth's birthday parties... and tonight.

RUMI

Don't you go to a bunch of university events?

CAKE MONSTER

I mean... labs?

RUMI

Got it. I thought you were a professor for some reason.

CAKE MONSTER

....

RUMI

No, you're right, that's—

CAKE MONSTER

We're not there yet as a society.

I don't like going out on the street cuz, don't laugh—

RUMI

—do people try to eat you?

CAKE MONSTER

—EVERY time.

You pass for normal, though, I bet you go everywhere.

RUMI

Not really. I mean, my girlfriend—

CAKE MONSTER

— yeah! Where was she tonight?! I was hoping to meet her!

RUMI

—sick. But she likes to go out a bunch, but we both work so late, so we pull all-nighters after work and then I usually just sleep all day till dinner service.

CAKE MONSTER

That sounds so... New York 2018.

RUMI

What a time to be alive.

CAKE MONSTER

And we're still here. Still fucking here.

I think I'm gonna get brave enough to try going out at night like you.

RUMI

It's not really brave when you can't do it alone, tho, is it?

CAKE MONSTER

You're here alone now.

RUMI

This is my space.

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CAKE MONSTER

Exactly.

That's how I feel about all of this.

It's just mine. Nobody else gets it.

That's how I got into this situation in the first place—

RUMI

What did your drug do? I don't think you've ever told me.

CAKE MONSTER

"Regrew limbs." Bullshit.

More like made my other limbs turn into frosting.

I am literally frosting.

RUMI

I wasn't sure—

CAKE MONSTER

—Sometimes I do get asked to do birthday parties as the cake itself. To play with sweet little kids, then have them eat me. I'm not kidding. It's so punk. I sometimes want to take them up on that just to see what kind of maniacal kids party I'd be going to.

RUMI

That's actually crazy.

CAKE MONSTER

I mean, what else is anyone gonna do with me? Buy me dinner? Cakes don't eat.

RUMI

You aren't cake.

CAKE MONSTER

What am I then?

RUMI

You're... evolving.

CAKE MONSTER

Honey. None of us are.

They wanted us to think we would, and then we didn't. It didn't work on us.

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RUMI

I'm still trying it, you know.

CAKE MONSTER

Seriously? Why?

RUMI

Because I want to. I just got moved up to the highest dose, I think there might be something to it. I did see some progress, not as much as what I'd hoped for, but I'm—

CAKE MONSTER

Still hoping?

RUMI

I want to keep trying. And Shelley loves me no matter what happens, so. I got nothing to lose.

CAKE MONSTER

I want to lose.

I'm tired of waiting to improve.

Maybe making a little kid happy wouldn't be so bad.

Maybe I could be someone's 100th birthday party.

Maybe I'm an anniversary. Maybe I'm someone's favorite flavor. Maybe I'm an act of rebellion, like that kid in Matilda or Marie Antoinette, "Let me be eaten," changes the world...

Maybe I am, celebration, embodied.

Maybe I'm someone's midnight snack after a long day.

You know what all those options are better than? A body part I wasn't even born with.

I don't need to be accepted or tolerated. I'm so past that.

I could be smelled and tasted. You know what that's easier than? Everything else.

Although I guess there's room to hate me, too. If I'm not someone's taste. If I ever rot.

I just don't want to be wasted.

Here:

CAKE MONSTER holds out their arm to RUMI.

CAKE MONSTER

Try me. I'm good.

RUMI

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Are you saying you've tried yourself?

CAKE MONSTER

Haven't you ever bitten your fingernails before?

RUMI

I can't. That's too fucked up for me—

CAKE MONSTER

I'm cool with it!

RUMI

I'm not!

CAKE MONSTER

Just pretend you just made me.

Or that you're, like, one of the freaks that are into this kind of thing.

RUMI takes his finger and swipes some frosting off of the arm. He hesitates, puts it back.

RUMI

i can't. Wolves can't eat chocolate.

CAKE MONSTER

Of course... like dogs. Will you die?

RUMI

No. But it's not... good for me. Also, It's late.

CAKE MONSTER

Yeah. Sure is.

CAKE MONSTER checks a "watch" on his arm that isn't there.

CAKE MONSTER

Look at the time! Just past a dollop!

Bad joke. I hate myself, too.

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RUMI

You need to go to bed.

CAKE MONSTER

Did I ever tell you in the summers, I sleep in my fridge?

RUMI

You can crash in my walk-in anytime.

CAKE MONSTER

Promise?

RUMI

See you at the next meeting.

CAKE MONSTER

Be ready with all your “happies and crappies”!

CAKE MONSTER saunters out of the restaurant, leaving RUMI kind of freaked out but also laughing.

SCENE 9:

Later that night. RUMI returns to his apartment. He turns on his lights.

RUMI

Sweetheart?

Are you feeling better?

Nothing.

RUMI

Come here. I got you something.

There is the sound of whimpering.

RUMI

Come on. Come here. You can't hide from me.

Nothing.

RUMI gets out a to-go box with a key lime pie in it.

SHELLEY creeps out from behind the kitchen counter in her full wolf form. She wimpers. She is a big husky puppy—adorable and powerful.

RUMI

There you are. Come on. It's okay.

I told you I'd get you a sweet treat.

SHELLEY goes over and eats the key lime pie ravenously on all fours. RUMI smiles.

RUMI

There you go.

I'm sorry it can't be chocolate anymore. I miss it too. Good girl.

SHELLEY looks up to him, glaring.

RUMI

Sorry. I thought you liked that.

SHELLEY growls, as if to say, “Sike!”

RUMI

Wow. You got me.

RUMI gets comfortable on his couch, exhausted from the day. Once SHELLEY finishes eating, she licks her lips, then goes to RUMI and puts her paws on him. He laughs.

RUMI

I know, I know.

RUMI scratches her ears and her shoulders. She pants.

RUMI

How’s that? That’s good? You like that?

This is still so weird.

SHELLEY snickers.

RUMI exhales.

RUMI

I love you no matter what, but I’m missing you extra tonight. Just a few more hours.

SHELLEY wimpers, starts to go away–

RUMI

No no, come back, you know what I mean.

Maybe I just need to cuddle.

SHELLEY immediately turns back around and jumps on top of the couch, putting her head on his lap. RUMI pets her.

RUMI

You’re just the sweetest.

I hope it doesn't sound like I’m talking down to you.

Tonight was amazing, you would’ve loved the entertainment, they had a poet who was a kind of mermaid-type girl, she works in real estate, but she has gills and yellow eyes and she has to wear a water tank mask thing, but she was able to recite a really nice

poem type thing that she wrote for the group, about flowing into togetherness or something. It reminded me of how you talk about water.

The menu was a hit. They especially loved the etouffee, the ribs, and the strawberry cake. You were right.

I'm so lucky you're my taste tester. Now I don't have to eat it all by myself.

I don't have to do anything by myself anymore.

SHELLEY moves her head to his stomach.

He puts his hand on her head.

Then, she smells his finger.

She growls.

RUMI

What?

SHELLEY smells his finger again, then suddenly in an act of surprise ferocity, growls and barks. RUMI gets up, spooked, and then SHELLEY pounces and pins him onto the ground. He is terrified.

RUMI

What's wrong with you? What's wrong?

SHELLEY growls and huffs on him.

Then, she licks him— a warning, followed by love.

She gets off of him.

RUMI

What'd you smell?

SHELLEY growls again at him.

RUMI

My cake friend... they asked me to try them... and I didn't. I promise.

SHELLEY growls again at him.

RUMI

I know. I didn't. I promise. He's chocolate cake, I'd be dead. Here, you can smell my tongue—

SHELLEY looks at him, like, “Ew. That’s stupid.” She walks away.

RUMI sits back on the couch, starts to take off his shirt. He has claw marks all over himself, along with scars, burns, tattoos, and other markings. But the claw marks are gnarly.

SHELLEY looks back to him when he isn’t looking, and then turns from him when he looks to her. He chuckles.

RUMI

Nothing? Wow.

RUMI winces while he takes off his shirt. SHELLEY gets up and goes to him, jumps on the couch, and licks the wounds on his back. He sighs.

RUMI

You’re amazing. That’s the exact spot.

How’d you know from one little— *(makes wince noise)*?

SHELLEY puts her chin on his shoulder.

RUMI

Come here.

RUMI kisses SHELLEY on the head, holds her like a puppy.

RUMI

I love you. I love you. I love you.

Forever. Forever. Forever. I’m sorry I’ve been so jealous.

...

I know, I’m gross. You made me gross.

You always knew how to take up space. Even back then, when you said you didn’t—you did. Literally in your sleep, you are a starfish. You just are.

And now. Look at you. You take up my whole lap. The whole night.

You’re...God, you’re scary.

But it’s the kind of scary you know I like, it feels like a warm hand around my throat.

Like coming home to something ancient.

You make it look like being this much was the plan all along. Or should have been.

I think maybe I used to love you because you reminded me of everything I wasn’t.

Now I think I love you because you never asked me to be anything else.

SHELLEY lays on her back into his lap, head on stomach. He scratches her stomach like a puppy.

RUMI

You're right. You're right. No more moon-body words. They're not enough. They don't do you justice. Let's go to sleep.

RUMI lays back and they doze off together.

As the sun comes up, SHELLEY transforms back into her human self. It is grotesque, but it is not painful. It is almost like rebirth, as RUMI holds her. She exhales, free.

SCENE 10:

Night, a month and a half later.

SHELLEY takes a walk in the park, hiding herself in a hoodie, something she could never do before as a full human. She wanders through rats with garbage mutations, trees that contain organs, sewer steam creatures, robot lamp posts, and bioluminescent moths. Everything gravitates towards her, even though she wants it all to leave her alone. Finally, they pull her hoodie off of her head and shine a light on her newly-scarred face– terrifying, but stunning, more her than before. And much more cohesive than RUMI’s physical transformation.

She shoo-es everything away. But she doesn’t put back on her hood.

When she gets back to RUMI’s apartment, she tries to be quiet. But when she unlocks and opens the door, RUMI is awake, having fixed her an exquisite dinner of meat, fruit, and wine, served in what used to be PETER’s body– it is, in fact, PETER’s corpse.

SHELLEY gasps, and the delicious smell makes her mouth water excessively. She tries to wipe it away.

SHELLEY
What did you do?

RUMI
Hey, I thought you’d be home even later. I was just... finishing the plating.

SHELLEY
Rumi... *what*–?

RUMI
–I remembered. Happy breakup-aversary.
I’m trying to make a joke, I obviously don’t mean “Happy”.

SHELLEY
–no, I get it– what did you do?

RUMI
... I’m glad your mouth’s watering, that means it smells good–

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SHELLEY

—don't divert attention away from... whatever the fuck you're doing with... *him*... oh my god, how'd you do this—?

RUMI

—It was easy. Way too easy.

SHELLEY is silent.

SHELLEY

Is this a part of your therapy group?

RUMI

No, what? No.

SHELLEY

Well *I don't know* what you all *decide your coping mechanisms are!!!*

RUMI

Not this.

SHELLEY

Ok... I'm still glad you're going, but... I thought we agreed we weren't "into this."

RUMI

I wanted to give you something that said more than just, "I'm sorry," or, "look, we made it a second time," or "I'm not going anywhere..."

You deserve more than all of that.

You deserve the past. You deserve the time that I wasted not being yours. So—

SHELLEY

—so you fucking killed Peter *for me*? Yeah the fuck right. Real generous, real "about me," also why *now*?—

RUMI

—because you have every right to be suspicious that I'll repeat myself. And this is proof that I won't. Because I can't.

SHELLEY

—Because he's dead?... I don't know what to say.

I'm trying to move on. I know there wasn't an overlap with him, I... I *know* there wasn't—

RUMI

Of course there wasn't—

SHELLEY

—mmmm, *not of course*, it's never “of course,”--

RUMI

—I would never do that to you—

SHELLEY

I know how much you loved him. Even without an overlap, you... he had a hold on you before we ended it, and it's okay—

RUMI

— it's not, cuz I loved you more, I just wasn't ready for you—

SHELLEY

—okay... why? Cuz that's an overplayed statement. You gotta do better. What was it? Too much good all at once?

RUMI

I'm about to overplay a lot of statements... but it's all I can do because I've overplayed so much between you and me. I didn't know how to be needed. I made you feel bad for it. I resented you because I wasn't ready to hold all of it, I hated myself, I wanted every day to go away as soon as it started—

SHELLEY

I get it. We all have that. Shit happens.

RUMI

Yeah, but—

SHELLEY

No, but, like, let's not pretend you wouldn't go days without touching me when I was mean to you.

RUMI

You were—

SHELLEY

—and the things I called you at my meanest to piss you off in the first place, I can't take them back. Maybe some stuff I said, I don't even want to take back. Cuz maybe I'm mean, but you're cold. You wanna talk about a human freezer, you hold things from me, dangling them in front of me to hold cuz they're heavy for you, then carrying them anyway, like you don't think I could. But I can. And you knew it. So I called you everything you knew you were, and hated. And maybe that stuff I called you I don't want to take back is the stuff that hurt you the most— and maybe I remember every detail about how it hurt you and liked it. Cuz it got you into bed with me. Cuz it made you shut down. Then it made you turn me over, and make it hurt just enough to make your point, and show how cruel you were being to me to yourself.

And I didn't just like that, I loved it.

RUMI

That wasn't / fair—

SHELLEY

—and I remember every single thing I called you. The stuff you told me never to call you. I could do it again, right now.

RUMI

Yeah, me too.

SHELLEY

Cuz it felt amazing. It lives in my chest, in my hands. I flinch when I'm happy because I know how quickly it flips. And I'd do it again, and again, cuz we were so hot at the end, why not just skip to the end now.

If I'm not careful now, now that we're trying this "us" thing again, I'll know we're going to fail because we're going to do them again. And then I get excited that we get to do them again because... / And I don't know why I know that's so broken, and I want it anyway.

RUMI

I love you the exact same way.

I love you. The exact same way.

SHELLEY

But all of that is crazy. And it's beyond so tired. It's so much smaller than us. It's the worst out of both of us combining to making a worse worst.

And I... I love you enough to turn off that side of me forever, and I'm scared you don't love me enough to do the same—

RUMI

—what if you don't have to be generous like that cuz I promise it won't hurt again—

SHELLEY

—what if you don't have to want punishment like this cuz you'll probably find a way to hurt me again—

RUMI

—seriously? why would you say that?--

SHELLEY

—because, I don't know if you need me to be happy or to hurt, neither one seems to give you what you need, but I don't care, I'm so sick of you punishing yourself, I'm so sick of not needing you, I'll never need you but I'll always *always* want you, you're *mine*, go ahead, try to turn off sides of yourself, I'll always turn them back on, they're not for you to hide from me anymore, give them all to me, just give them to me, I want them, I'll hold them, I'll hold your heavy—

RUMI

—Stop. I'm talking now:

The only way you could punish me is if you turned off any side of yourself ever again. All I want is for you to be assured, 1000%, with everything I am and everything I'm turning into, that I will never ask you to do that. I want your mean. I love your mean.

And you're right. I loved hurting you. I loved giving you my hurt, and my mean. I loved knowing you'd carry it in your body and have to see me every day with it still there. I loved that you let me. And I loved watching you pretend you were fine. Loved knowing you'd look at me and remember exactly where it hurt, that I put it there, and that I could throw you back into the world and you'd let me.

And I hated myself for letting you, but I couldn't stop. I wanted to see how much you could carry. And the more you carried, the more I realized how much I needed carried, and instead of letting myself love you for it, it made me hate myself for it, and all I could do is give that hate to you to carry, too.

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And then... when you still came back to me, when you we're still my best fucking friend, when you still wanted to be close to me, I didn't know how to begin to deserve it, but / Shellz, it doesn't matter what I deserve, it matters what you deserve.

SHELLEY

—you don't have to deserve anything... Well. I deserve everything you could ever give me. So give it to me.

RUMI

—No, Shellz, you deserve *more*. You deserve *me*.

This time, I'm gonna let myself be close to you. No matter what.

And that means I'm giving you a version of me that *can't* hurt you again.

I'll give you my hurt, when you let me.

But I'll never ever let you carry it by yourself again. It won't be heavy. Because it *can't* hurt.

Not won't — *can't*.

I don't want any part of me that could hurt you to survive.

So I made sure it didn't.

SHELLEY

... I would've never asked this of you.

And... I would have absolutely killed him for you, just as pure revenge, like, honestly the night you told me what he said to you, I almost did it myself, but—

But that's who *I am*, I've never known you to be like... is this you?

Is this really *you* you?

Because here's the thing: if this is a new version of you, never-before-seen, that did this because he *finally loves himself* and the him that finally loves himself *came back to love me*, then this is the greatest gift that I've ever been given in my entire life and oh my god my heart is pounding I've never been so... I can't... I...—

But only if this really is you, not a better version that you want to be, just the version of you that you already are... then I promise you that I am totally and completely yours, and I'm not going anywhere, and I will destroy for you, and I will only get closer to you, and I will always come back to you, and forever.

... just tell me this is *you*...

RUMI

It's me. It's *your* version of me.

SHELLEY

You still don't get it. Every version of you is *mine*, (*through her fangs*) *MINE*—

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RUMI grabs SHELLEY's chin, what she perceives as her "double chin." Her most vulnerable insecurity. She shakes at his tender hold. Then he kisses it. It's a check mate.

RUMI

I'm the version who stays, the version who feeds you.

The version that kisses the ground you walk on.

The version that can become everywhere, as long as you are there.

The version that can't lose you.

And you can't comprehend how much it's all I've ever wanted.

RUMI lifts a piece of meat—

RUMI

Let me show you. I can hear your stomach. I want it in my hands. I know you need this.

Please. Let me.

They turn to the table. To the body.

RUMI lifts a piece of meat and places it gently in her mouth.

She chews. Moans. Laughs.

SHELLEY

Oh my god. He's delicious—

It doesn't take long before they are stuffing each other's faces, wolf-like, wedding cake-like.

SCENE 11:

A month later, SHELLEY enters TAYLOR's home, and TAYLOR is sitting on the floor.

SHELLEY

Taylor! You are never gonna believe this, House of Yes called me up and wants us to come in for a meeting for us to partner up with them, we're talking contracts for a year—Okay?

TAYLOR

Hey girl. Tell me more.

SHELLEY

OK! Did you hear what I just said?

TAYLOR

House of Yes. Says yes.

SHELLEY

So they want us to come down to Bushwick with a couple of pitches for some holiday raves and some usual Saturday EDM nights, they want my hosting and your beats, we'll figure out how to combo it all, so we should work on that after we're done—

SHELLEY sits in front of TAYLOR, who helps her brush out her hair. SHELLEY's werewolf hair now has tons of matting, and only TAYLOR has the finesse to help her untangle it all.

TAYLOR

Sounds like a plan. I love how you're hair's growing. It's so strong, just like you.

SHELLEY

I also want to go shopping for some new boots, my feet keep growing out of mine and I think I might have to go to the proper drag queen store.

TAYLOR

Called it.

SHELLEY

Yeah I know.

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TAYLOR

You can have some of mine—

SHELLEY

No, I can't, you need them.

TAYLOR

I don't know.

OK, spill the spicy tea. Tell me how's it going with you two.

Pause. TAYLOR continues to brush SHELLEY's hair, and it seems painful but SHELLEY doesn't flinch.

SHELLEY

It's like he hunts me down. I'll be in the kitchen, brushing my teeth, walking home—and suddenly he's just *there*. And lately he's... different. Softer with himself. He'll start cooking in the middle of the night— garlic, butter, all that —and he actually lets me watch him now. Like he's finally comfortable being seen. Then he feeds me, right there, and laughs like the whole thing's a secret. It's stupid. It's perfect.

TAYLOR

You realize you just described a real life monster smut, right?

SHELLEY

....

I also think we should just go to the movies. Hang out. I've been missing us.

TAYLOR

Why?

SHELLEY

Why?

TAYLOR

I mean... why have you missed *us*?

SHELLEY

Because.

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Pause.

SHELLEY

What's up dude? What the hell?

TAYLOR

I'm sorry—

SHELLEY

Did I do something or say something?

TAYLOR

No. No. I'm dizzy.

TAYLOR tries to sit down and ends up falling into their couch, pulling out some of SHELLEY's hair in the process. She doesn't feel it.

TAYLOR

Shit.

SHELLEY

Tay? Tay, what the hell? What's going on?

TAYLOR

I didn't mean... for this... to do...

SHELLEY

What? Are you falling asleep on me? Hey. HEY.

SHELLEY pats TAYLOR's face.

SHELLEY

What the fuck's going on? Did you take your medicine?

TAYLOR

I took all of it.

SHELLEY

You what?

TAYLOR

I don't want to be here anymore.

SHELLEY takes out her phone, TAYLOR grabs it and throws it.

SHELLEY

THE FUCK?

TAYLOR

DON'T. Shelley... I wanted to finish your hair first... but it's all kicking in...

SHELLEY

TAY.

TAYLOR

I don't want to be here anymore.

I've tried everything.

I can't feel better. I've tried.

SHELLEY

Taylor, what are you saying right now—

TAYLOR

I'm gonna be asleep soon—

SHELLEY

—I'm gonna get 911—

TAYLOR

—you're not listening to me—

SHELLEY

—you're fucking freaking me out—

TAYLOR

—Listen to me. I'm okay. Look at me. I'm okay.

SHELLEY

—where'd you throw my fucking phone—

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TAYLOR trips SHELLEY when she tries to run after her phone. This cracks SHELLEY's jaw on a coffee table. TAYLOR gasps. SHELLEY cracks her jaw back together.

TAYLOR

Oh wow. You're a super hero.

SHELLEY

I'm going to get help—

TAYLOR

—I want you to eat me.

Please. That's how you can help.

I can't do this anymore. I can't sleep. I'm in a lot of pain.

Everything hurts all of the time—

SHELLEY

—Why does it hurt?--

TAYLOR

—because I keep trying—

SHELLEY

—That's not a real answer—

TAYLOR

—because it just is what it is—

SHELLEY

—what is *it*?--

TAYLOR

—nobody can tell me. Nobody can tell me.

It might be me. It might be everything around me. It might be both. It might be something in outer space that we don't know is fucking with the electricity in our brains.

It could be anything. It could be you. It's not you. But it could be. Because it won't go away, and I can't let you leave me, and... Here. Sell this. (*Tay hands Shelley her wedding ring*) ...she's gone, she left, because i couldn't be her peace, i'm nobody's peace, i'm not my peace, i need peace, i need peace—

SHELLEY

–shhhhhhhh, i’m here, i’m right here, i need to get my phone, so you can get the help you deserve–

TAYLOR

–i’m going to sleep, and i need you to eat me–

SHELLEY

–NO–

TAYLOR

–i’m delicious, i promise–

SHELLEY

–Tay, I don’t eat people, I don’t–

TAYLOR

–but you can... I know you can, I know you want to, I’ve read the symptoms, so many people do it, there’s some people who eat people just for fun, and I want you to, so it’s okay–

SHELLEY

–this is happening too fast, we can stop it–

TAYLOR

–it hasn’t been fast... for me... it’s been a long time coming, and I don’t want to be left in this house by myself, i don’t want to be alone here, I’m not pathetic--

SHELLEY

–you’re not... I just, I don’t want to–

TAYLOR

–I want my body to be useful, I want it to satisfy...–

SHELLEY

–Tay, I love you–

TAYLOR

–but only you, you’re not allowed to take me to go for him, you’re not allowed to share me... I love you. I’m ready. Please. Please. Please. Be my peace.

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TAYLOR keeps saying *please* until she goes to sleep. SHELLEY tucks TAYLOR in, knowing they are not going to wake up. SHELLEY waits for many moments, waiting for TAYLOR's breathing to slow down. SHELLEY sobs. SHELLEY cleans the apartment. SHELLEY brushes her own hair. SHELLEY does a few more activities to feel normal. And finally SHELLEY sniffs TAYLOR. Sniffs, then bites. Then eats. As much as she possibly can. Maybe she vomits some of them. Maybe she eats the vomit. Until TAYLOR is fully consumed.

Simultaneously, RUMI says goodbye to his fellow support group mutations after a meeting– the siren he had mentioned who is waterlogged with seashells for eyes, an arachnid-like puppet with trembling limbs, a charred body puppet emitting gentle smoke, and a puppet with vines and produce and mold growing out of its skin– and the CAKE MONSTER remains. RUMI tries to keep a distance, but the CAKE MONSTER insists on RUMI eating him. RUMI eventually gives in, transforming into a wolf for the CAKE MONSTER, and then eating him ravenously to the CAKE MONSTER's delight.

SHELLEY rises up and howls, furiously. She sprints home.

SCENE 12:

Later that night, SHELLEY bursts into RUMI's apartment, which has become their apartment. She is still in human form, but her psyche has become wolf.

She sniffs for him. She growls, knowing he is hiding from her in a cabinet. She bursts open the cabinet, finding him. He is in pain.

She growls at him until he comes out. He drags his huge wolf body against the ground. His limbs and abdomen are twitching. His mouth is stained with chocolate-coated vomit.

SHELLEY circles him. He is pitiful. She is ferocious. He tries to snarl at her, she mounts him and bites the back of his neck.

He submits immediately to her, rolling onto his back, belly-up.

He starts to clean himself but gags. SHELLEY snaps at him — stop.

She lies down beside him.

She licks the bile off his muzzle, cleaning.

He shifts his bloated body to curl toward her, it takes effort, and it's pathetic.

SHELLEY lets him rest his head on her paws. She puts her head on his. They breathe in sync.

The apartment is silent, except the sounds of digestion, shallow breath, flies buzzing.

Then, RUMI licks her face nonstop.

Suddenly, SHELLEY's human psyche takes over, and she screams, and she throws items around the room at RUMI, who can't dodge because he can't move.

She then smacks his snout again and again and again and again. He takes it, whimpering. He growls. When she won't stop, he bites her flesh off.

She looks at him, horrified, and shrieks. He immediately licks her wound. She breaks his leg. He yelps in pain.

Her body finally transforms into a wolf, and she leaps out of the window. He follows her.

They are wolves, and they chase each other throughout a disgusting, decomposing body-city.

The streetlamps are veins. The buildings are bones. The windows leak goo. The lights are pulsing. Smoke emerges from sewers.

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Sounds of thick water grow louder and louder. As if a giant wave is coming.

And then, in the dark, the wave breaks, and greenery emerges as if blood, coating the ground, trees pulsing, flowers blooming, melting, and blooming, and melting.

RUMI in wolf form catches up to SHELLEY in wolf form, who has collapsed into the melting flowers.

They collapse together.

SCENE 13:

Who knows how long has gone by. But they are back to being human in their bed, but their bed has been engrossed with greenery and flowers. The moon is in their bedroom.

They hold each other. They both shake. They are both dirty, bleeding, scarred, bruised, and bits of their flesh have been bitten off– by each other.

They face each other. RUMI can't look at her, but she forces him to.

RUMI kisses her, and all of her wounds. Then, he starts to lick them.

SHELLEY guides him across her body, and he licks every scratch, bruise, wound, everything.

SHELLEY

Now show me.

RUMI

I can't–

SHELLEY

Now.

RUMI guides her across all of his wounds, and she kisses and licks them.

SHELLEY

I knew you'd hurt me again. I think I always knew. But now I understand why you never stop— You make me the cure for a wound you won't close. You turn my survival into your shame, like if I keep bleeding and stay, that makes you worthy. You need me to be the proof that you're still worth being touched. And the more I heal, the more you reopen me. We've become a loop, a mouth feeding itself. Nothing about us knows how to be alone.

RUMI

I can't stop needing. There's too much of me. I look in the mirror and see something else...and it wants you too. And I think it's winning.

SHELLEY

And yet I'm here. And yet I am more Here than I've ever been.

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And I'll prove it. If you let me.

To me, I am death. I am blood. I am bite. I am rot. I am a killer. I could eat you whole for what you've done. And yet I'd still ask for more.

She continues to lick.

SHELLEY

Who are you to you? Tell me.

RUMI

You are my puzzle piece—

SHELLEY

No. Stop. Not me.

Name who *you* are to you.

RUMI

I am dirt. I am need. I am ache.

I am the echo of something no one stayed long enough to hear.

I am appetite without end.

I'm in everyone's way.

And yet... I'm still here. With what I did to me.

And I don't know why.

RUMI begins to suck her wounds. SHELLEY trembles, tears falling, not from pain, but from knowing it is the only language he has left.

SHELLEY

—I am hurt—

RUMI

—I am the teeth that did it—

SHELLEY

—I am the blood that stayed—

RUMI

—I am the mouth that made you bleed—

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SHELLEY

–I am the scream that’s back for more–

RUMI

–I don’t deserve you coming back–

SHELLEY

–Then evolve. Crawl toward it. Tear it off of you if you have to, give it to me–

RUMI

–I want to, but it’ll keep hurting you–

SHELLEY

–I’ll just keep wanting more–

RUMI

–Please don’t tell me I lost you, I loved you wrong. I wanted to be needed so badly I made you bleed just to prove I could stop it. I can’t stop it. I can’t stop it.

(the most guttural shame he has)

I don’t want to stop it.

SHELLEY

–Then let it stay. Let me. I deserve it. Let me show you your shape.
Because I know the sound of your ribs when you breathe.
I know the twitch of your hunger when it’s lonely.
And I am not afraid to be devoured by what you are.
If you let me drag you into the dark, we’ll learn to see there.
We don’t have to get better.
We just have to become.

SHELLEY sucks RUMI’s wounds. Her stomach growls. She is ashamed, but it only makes RUMI pull her closer.

SHELLEY

And whatever you become, I’ll find you.
I found you once. I found you again.
I can find you no matter what we become.

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You will always be easy to find for me.
Because I won't stop looking for you. Because I love looking at you.
We are what nobody wants to look at.
We are what people shove down into the pits of their bodies so they never have to feel
ashamed to have teeth.
We are what people need to see when it's dark outside because we are the mirrors of
their worst selves being allowed to be wanted.
We are full.

RUMI
Please keep finding me.

SHELLEY
I promise.

RUMI
Please don't let me go.

SHELLEY
I promise.

RUMI
Please.
Please.
Please.

RUMI sticks his fingers into one of his wounds, and peels away his skin.
SHELLEY drools excessively, almost wiping it away, but then not.

RUMI
Please.
Please.
Don't let one piece of me go unloved.
If I'm going to be everywhere, it has to be everywhere you are.

SHELLEY begins to lovingly eat him.

SHELLEY
You already are.
Crushed. And. Swallowed.

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You loved me into this body.
Now love you into me, until—

RUMI
—Until we are each other—

SHELLEY
—Until we belong.

She pulls her wounds apart and shoves them into his mouth. He is surprised, but she is delicious. He spits her out, ashamed, but she puts her flesh back into his mouth.

She touches his throat to make sure he swallows, just as he did for her on their first feeding.

They continue to eat each other.
The green around them grows onto them.
The moon glows on their bodies, loving them.
Everything swells.
Everything is full.

END OF PLAY