

## Abigail's Roommate

Abby tipped her chair back slowly, stretching, and threw an empty can of Mountain Dew into the trash. It landed on the others with a clunk. Turning her attention back to the lit screen of her computer where barely half of her Psychology paper was typed, she heard Gail clear her throat.

"Yes?" Abby sighed.

"Oh, nothing really, I just think we should probably recycle all those Mountain Dew cans you go through," said Gail, indicating a wire trash can in the corner of their dorm room about half full of pop cans. "There are just so many!"

"Oh, that's a good idea, but not now. It is going to take me all night to finish this paper, and it's due tomorrow—well, actually today." Abby glanced at her watch which glowed 1:12 am. Gail didn't answer. Outside their room girls ran by giggling and throwing shoes down the hall. Every few minutes a dorm neighbor stuck her head in and said,

"Come out and have some fun, girl! You can't sit and do homework forever!" Abby just smiled. More girls ran by making more noise, but Abby left her fingers on the keys. She turned her head to look at Gail, just sitting on the futon in her pajamas, legs crossed Indian style and arms folded across her chest. Sometimes her roommate really bothered her. Abby didn't know why, but she definitely was starting to get annoyed with Gail, though they had only been at the university for a month. It was like Gail was always there—no privacy—she couldn't escape her.

"Hey, are there any more pop tarts in that box? I can't keep working on an empty stomach," Abby tried smiling at Gail who was just sitting and staring at her.

"Yes, but you shouldn't have anymore. You've already eaten two today."

“Uh, thanks, Mother,” Abby tried to laugh it off, though a little hurt. Another pack of giggling girls ran by, and a stray shoe found its way into the room. Abby chucked it back into the hall.

“No, seriously. You are definitely going to gain the freshman fifteen.” Gail said the words slowly and dropped the phrase “freshman fifteen” like it was a dirty rag she didn’t want to touch. Abby just stared in disbelief.

“I don’t even know how to answer that,” she thought.

Gail just continued.

“You see, I noticed that you changed out of your jeans the minute you got back in the room. They’re too tight for you. I could tell when you put them on this morning.”

“I don’t think that is any of your business.”

They weren’t even that tight. Abby figured the last load she put in the dryer may have come out a little small anyway. She decided to hang dry everything from now on.

“Plus you ate so much at lunch today.”

“Did I?” Abby retorted, her voice tinged with disgust and anger.

“French fries, two burritos, and that rice crispy treat. That is way too many carbs.”

“Oh, so are you keeping track or something?” Abby said, turning in her chair to look at Gail. A girl from the hall poked her head in the doorway.

“Are you okay in here?” she asked.

“Oh, we’re fine,” Abby answered, still facing Gail.

The girl gave her a funny look and left.

“So you think I’m fat, do you?” Abby wasn’t going to let Gail go on this one. “You think I’m a pig—don’t you? Don’t you?” Abby was almost yelling now.

The hall got quiet and the giggling girls peeked into the room and looked at each other with puzzled expressions. Abby took no notice of the girls and continued her rant.

“You want to know something?” she yelled. “You want to know something? I’m sick of you! I’m sick of you making me feel bad every minute of the day. Let me eat a pop tart for once. Just one time without you hovering over my shoulder.”

Abby grabbed the box off the futon and stared straight at Gail.

“I don’t want you here anymore, okay? Get out of my room. I don’t ever want to see you again. Don’t ever talk to me again.”

Abby ripped open the pack of pop tarts and took a bite. She let the crumbs roll down her front and chewed forcefully, crazily. One of the girls at the door, the Resident Assistant, spoke up.

“Uh, Abigail. Are you okay?”

Abby looked at the futon. Gail was no longer sitting there. Abby took another bite of her pop tart.

“Yeah, I’m fine now.”

The R.A. raised her eyebrows.

“Are you sure?”

“Actually there is just one thing. Call me Abby, okay, not Abigail. Just Abby.”