

## What She Desires Preview

By ALR

Alex walks into her living room and sits on her old dingy couch. What was she just doing? For some reason she can't recall. The couch cover pops off the back of it, draping her shoulder. She pushes it off, not caring as half of it falls lopsidedly on the top of the couch while the other half crumples behind her. She leans back and stares at the ceiling of her small one-room apartment before hearing her friend call her from the kitchen.

"You do eat right? Like actual food?" He jokingly yells into the living room.

"Yes!" She yells back.

"Cause like...there's nothing in here. You have a water bottle, three slices of bologna and some cheese. That's nothing. Wait, do you even have bread?"

"Of course I do!" She starts to think to herself. *I do have some right?*

"Where?" She can hear him rummaging through her drawers. "You didn't lie to me just to make it seem like you have food?"

"I have food!" She sits up. "Wait, you didn't see any in the cabinet above the sink?"

She hears him shuffle in the kitchen before opening the cabinet. "Nope!"

"Damn...I don't think I have any food."

"Alex, don't tell me that was your plan for tonight. You didn't get any food since I've been here last time?"

"Pshh, what? Of course." She flusters. She then sees Devon poke his head out from behind the kitchen wall wearing a stern 'tell the truth' expression. She looks away. "Ok, maybe I forgot."

"I was here almost 2 weeks ago!" The disembodied head barks.

"I was gonna do it tomorrow. Promise." She clasps her hands together and puts on her best 'believe me' face she could muster. Devon rolls his eyes and disappears behind the wall again. "Just order some pizza. I'll send you the money."

"Why? So you can add to your collection of pizza boxes?"

Alex rests her head on the arm of her chair and stares up at the ceiling. "It's a good collection. Don't judge."

"I'm disappointedly impressed." He says in between laughs. "When are you trashing it?"

She hesitates. "...Eventually." She hears a few drawers opening and closing before hearing trash bags being opened. "What are you doing in there?"

"'Eventually' means either never or whenever it gets to the point where it needs to be dealt with. So I'm dealing with it now."

"Ugh, who told you to know me?" She rolls over to face the kitchen.

"So I guess I'm grabbing 2 pies then." A bag filled with pizza boxes flies into the wall from the kitchen. Shortly after a second bag comes flying out, with Devon following shortly afterwards.

"Ok," Alex sits up again and pulls her phone out of her pocket. "What do I owe you?" She says, eyes glued to her phone while she looks for the right app.

"On the house. They're pity pies." Devon heads to her dining room table and sits down.

She smiles, not paying any attention to him. "Half sausage, half pepperoni?"

"Why do you even ask?" he chuckles while he starts to rummage through his bag that sits atop the table. Pulling out a couple beer cans, he tosses one to Alex. "Heads up."

She looks up while it's in midair and catches it effortlessly while grabbing the playstation controller stuck between the cushions.

They've been through this same routine countless times, since they were younger. He'd come over and talk shit. Which would lead to them ordering food. Which would lead to them listening to music and smoking. It was so common for them that at times it would feel like they were in each other's heads. Alex cuts on the game and aimlessly moves through the options before going to YouTube. Devon pulls out his phone and after a few minutes, he finds the pizza place he wants to order from. Their favorite spot. He lets out a grunt to get Alex's attention. When she looks over to him, he tosses her his phone. She tosses her controller to him at the same time and they catch their respective targets with relative ease.

"Some LoFi tonight?" He asks, typing in a song name in the search bar.

"Yeah." She responds without looking up from the phone. "It feels like a LoFi night tonight." They always listen to LoFi. but that didn't need to be stated. She orders the pizza and places his phone on the arm of the couch, then gets up and goes through his bag to find her leaf wrap and weed. She examines the table, looking at all the game cases and celebrity gossip magazines that she

never reads. “I think I’m gonna have Beyonce bless our weed today,” She says as she grabs the magazine with Beyonce on the cover.

Devon nods. “I should find a LoFi remix of one of her songs.”

“There’s time for that. You don’t have to leave for like another 2 or 3 hours right?” She plops on the couch and sits the magazine on her legs.

“No. Unfortunately, I have to be out of here by 8.” Devon sighs. “I could’ve stayed longer if Joey didn’t call out for like the 8th time.”

“Why is he still there?” She says as she does her best to break apart the large clumps of weed with her fingertips.

“Because he’s one of the few people we have for the night shift, and if they fire him, that would throw everyone’s schedule off.”

“Fuck.” She puts the tiny weed bits into the wrap. “Hey what’s the pay like?”

“Not bad, but not great either.” He finds a playlist he likes and places the controller down. “14 an hour. You can do overtime but they limit you at 10 extra hours. Which is basically just an extra shift and change. There’s PTO though.”

“Sweet. But in an underwhelming sort of way” She says, stopping to get some more saliva so that she can continue to lick the ends of the wrap. “The night shift is the only available one?”

“Yea, my manager told me that if he could find someone to replace him, he would.” He watches his friend carefully roll the blunt to perfection.

Alex lifts her finger. “I got a guy. I’ll hit him up later.”

“Good looking. Cause Joey needs to go. I bet you he’s out getting drunk or some shit.”

“That’s a pretty bold accusation.” She finishes rolling and admires her handiwork. “Blunt’s done. Want me to roll up another?”

“It’s crazy watching you pearl a blunt like that. Let’s smoke this one first. I’ll let you know if we need another.” He leans back in the chair, getting comfortable. “And I have my reasons you know. I’m not just trying to talk shit about him. One time I heard he called out, and the manager tried to get me to come in. It was my day off, and I wasn’t feeling it, so I said no. I went downtown and decided I wanted a couple drinks. So I went to the bar. Guess who I see sitting all the way at the end?”

“No...” She says as she lights the blunt. She takes a deep puff.

“Yup. Sitting there, trying to pick up some poor girl. This guy is in his 40s by the way, and the girl didn’t even look older than 21.” He shrugs. “Maybe. Not sure with how women look nowadays. That’s not the point though.”

She takes her second puff and passes it. “Damn, unreliable, and a creep...Well potential creep. Hey, did I leave my phone over there?”

Devon looks on the table and finds it. “Yeah, here.” He tosses it onto the couch and takes a puff. “We didn’t get to the best part though. He sees me walking in and freezes. Mid sentence.” He takes a second puff and passes it back. “The chick was staring at him like he was a weirdo. The shit was hilarious.”

Alex chuckles. “So what he thought using T-Rex logic would work on you or something?” She says while grabbing her phone.

Devon laughs. “I don’t know, but I just stood there staring at him, trying to figure out what he was going to do. After a couple minutes, I just walked out. And get this, the dude chased after me.”

She passes the blunt to him while mid text message. “Did he think you were gonna tell or something?”

“Yeah. Came out begging saying the job was stressing him out and he just needed a day off.” He takes a big puff. “He was like ‘I’ll cover any shift for you. Just say the word and I got you.’ I didn’t even care but having a potential cover for any day did seem kind of nice.” He sighs, takes a second puff and passes it back. “I should have known it wouldn’t be that simple.”

She grabs the blunt. “Wait how’d he know you knew he had taken off?” She leans in, getting more invested in the story.....