

False Flag

When your partner shrinks to the size of a matchstick, everything changes...especially love. She slept where I felt it was safest: Curled into the warm fold inside my panties like a pearl in flesh. That's not abuse. That's what love becomes when it adapts.

Then one day, out of nowhere, blue lights, blaring sirens, and a piece of paper that said I was a threat. "Restraining order? *On me?*" I laughed.

The judge, some crusty man who probably thinks a g-spot is a myth, called me "dangerous." He said, "Nikki Makia Vellé, you exhibit patterns of coercive behavior." Her lawyers presented everything that Stacy had documented: messages, audio files, and screenshots.

I asked if he even understood how complicated love gets when one person can live in the other's bra cup. He didn't laugh.

They said I wasn't allowed near her anymore. That I was possessive. That I made her *afraid*.

"Afraid." Can you imagine that? Stacy, my little stress toy, is *afraid* of me. I loved her. But to some people, love that loud looks like violence. That's their problem. Not mine.

Maybe I held her too tight. Maybe I called her a little pocket princess when she refused to lick me clean. Maybe I told her if she ever left me, I'd swallow her whole just to keep her.

But come on. She knew I was joking. Mostly.

We had something special. So what if I was a little domineering? She liked it when she was regular-sized. So how she got from *that* to calling the police... I'll never know.

She haunted me like the Tell-Tale Heart.

I checked her socials religiously until her old handle popped up in a Reddit post. It was like reading a suicide letter. She had given up on the world. She submitted herself to a stasis center for tinies. Hidden and sealed away, preserved until a cure could be found for miniaturization. She locked herself away before I could even apologize. Before I could even *show her* how good we could be. I read and reread the post and couldn't believe I wasn't mentioned once.

She's mine. She always was. And I would get her back.

Grief didn't break me. It forged me. I didn't scream. I didn't cry. I sat in the dark and mapped the

pressure points of a nation. If I couldn't reach her through law or love, I'd dismantle the world that kept her from me. I would make the world bleed. If the end is beautiful enough, the blood washes right off.

It took planning, but nothing I couldn't handle. Fortune favors the bold, and I kissed Fortune on the mouth. I needed to build a powder keg of political and social importance. I would light the fuse and be nowhere to be seen when it detonates.

I joined five different online communities. Each one disgusting in its own beautiful way.

The Cannibals. "Tinies are food," people. Utter degenerates. Useful.

The Radicals. Anti-capitalists with no consistent ideology. Anarchists. •

The Grievors. Genuine, soft-shelled do-gooders who'd lost someone. •

The Press. Hungry for click-bait.

To each group, I wore a different mask. Empath. Rebel. Scholar. Survivor. Lover.

To the radicals, I simply used my knowledge of political revolutions to stoke the flames of their desires. "*Free the Shrunken*" worked as an activist brand, allowing me to paint Borrower Corp as a capitalist enterprise feeding off the hopes of tinies. I would falsify records showing they aren't investing anything into a cure and that they are just keeping the tinies in stasis to milk the ongoing costs to their families. Like rodents with crumbs, these people eat anyone alive who has a profit motive. Additionally, I sponsored notable YouTube essayists to debate on "Stasis or Class Warfare?"

To the grievors, I would submit think pieces to publications on "Stasis is Euthanasia." These people made me sick with their lack of resolve. They speak of closure like it's a door you shut. But love isn't a hallway...it's a hunger. The movement needed a face. I gave them mine: blonde hair, blue eyes, and a megawatt smile. People trust that face. They don't notice the glint behind the teeth. This would provide me the most empathy, and in a game of optics and perception, this is a powerful tool.

I would show up on late-night programs with my talking points. "After the Shrinking Wave of '91, when over 1.3 million people across North America found themselves suddenly smaller than a wine cork, society did what it always does: panic, profit, and pretend. Borrow Corp was founded on "compassion," selling stasis like it was hospice with a hint of hope."

The grievors and the radicals were given the same footage, and yet they each had different delusions. Motivated reasoning did the heavy lifting as I recycled the same YouTube clips and watched them project whatever truth they needed. They ignored the contradictions. I gave them what they wanted to believe, and they ate it up.

Religious zealots and families who had lost tinies would move heaven and earth to spread the message. My first meme was "**YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS ARE NOT LAB RATS.**" It was written in Comic Sans with a picture of a scared little woman running in a hamster wheel. It hit

r/slightlyshrunk like wildfire. Within a week I was modding two forums and appearing on three podcasts as a guest. I would gish gallop all over my enemies: “Stasis is expensive, untested, unnatural, painful, unregulated, unholy, anti-science, pro-eugenics, and probably patented by Monsanto.” There were too many questions to answer, and no one could keep up.

But this isn’t enough. In the game of political behavior, it’s not enough to control one side. You have to have controlled opposition. A powder keg needs to be unstable. I would dump money into donating to various streamers just to have my messages pop up. They would enviably comment, dragging themselves into the political discourse. “Discussion” and “debate” meant I was building each side trenches to dig into. I needed that tension.

My propaganda was getting expensive, but it was very easy to point people to my Patreon, where I detailed how my girlfriend was effectively stolen from me (omitting various unimportant courtroom details). They say love lives in the heart, but for me it was always lower. Deeper. Warmer. Sometimes I swore my body was trying to digest the memory of her. The way it churned when I thought of her...

The cannibals were not a particularly pleasant experience to ingratiate myself with. I snuck into various Discords. The groups were not hospitable, and it took time to make friends. These people only have two things on their mind: eating tinies and avoiding the police. Their ideas were grotesque, sure, but there was a poetry to it. A kind of intimacy our culture’s too cowardly to understand.

We eventually doxxed a janitor working at Borrow Corp.... not before catfishing them into sending various pictures of the facility. When I explained my plan to riot outside of Borrow Corp, to break in and eat the tinies. They loved the plan. I handed it to them on a silver platter, and they clapped like I invented fire.

The press was the easiest to manipulate. The public wants romance, not obsession. So I gave them the grieving lover, not the starving one. I had a few pen names I could write under. I could twist stats and figures about stasis pod death rates with ease. I was becoming the queen of agnotology the likes of which anti-vaxxers could only dream of. No one ever checked, and by the time they did, my lie had traveled so far the retraction would never catch up.

I would make up stories about how Borrow Corp used shrunk people for testing new flavors of vape juice. The AI-generated photos weren’t too convincing, but some old behind-the-scenes footage of an ad for a mango cream of a girl being dipped in oil did the trick. Context is such a fragile thing. My social media accounts were becoming a stream of just screenshots of headlines with no articles written.

To the Radicals, I was a comrade. To the press, I was the bleeding heart. To the Grievors, I was the sister they lost. To the cannibals, I was a promise of a meal to come.

None of them realized their rallies were all happening on the same day, at the same place.

Finally the day came. The networks were saturated. The discourse was frothing while the public was twitching with tribal fury. Borrow Corp would never see it coming. And Stacy? She would see me again when the smoke cleared, and I stood in the ash. The crowd was half real, half perverts. All confused. Someone held a sign that said "MICRO LIVES MATTER."

Livestreams. Bottled rage. They arrived by the hundreds, then the thousands. Activism often rides a riot like a golden chariot. People call it terrorism when they don't understand the love behind it. From the wrong angle, they blur together. That's just perspective.

The tinies came too.

Cupped in trembling hands, in doll-sized wheelchairs, in padded containers with breathing holes. Some perched on their partners' shoulders, voices squeaking through amps like cartoon prophets. Others rolled in on mech-exosuits cobbled together from drone parts and printers. They waved their little signs: "**We Can't Be Cured**," "**End Stasis Slavery**," and "**Let Us Choose**."

What Borrower Corp didn't realize was that I had made them into a sacrament.

Then I raised my megaphone to *ignite*.

"What is love if not action? They will not keep us from our loved ones!"

The crowd erupted. The first glass bottle flew before I said a word. Security shoved a man; someone screamed. A tiny protester was knocked from a platform and flattened under a boot. The screams sharpened like knives. It was beautiful.

Flags waved, fists rose, and fire bloomed.

A metal trash bin smashed through the first-floor window. Protestors poured through like insects. Security tasered someone, and they went into seizures. Tinies were being cradled or crushed. Protest signs turned to batons. People were documenting the terror with their phones as I slipped away in the chaos.

Inside, the cool lab was a dull humming.

Stasis pods lined the walls like sleeping pills in chrome blister packs.

Rows and rows of tinies asleep in glass eggs. Perfect. Untouchable. Preserved.

And there she was: Stacy. Pod #217B.

Curled like a shrimp, arms wrapped around her knees with a hospital gown smaller than a thimble. Still beautiful. Still mine.

I cracked the glass pod, and the aerosolized thiopental dissipated. Her eyelids fluttered. She saw me. Her mouth opened. No sound. Her body jerked, but her muscles had atrophied. Her eyes locked on mine and changed from disorientation to fear.

“This can’t be,” she spat. Her mind was preoccupied by fresh air and light, of which she had been deprived.

“Shh,” I whispered, pressing my pointer to her mouth. “You’re safe now.”

She was trembling. Her lips were forming something.

“No,” maybe. Or “Please.”

I pressed her gently to my cheek though she reeked of antiseptic.

“I told you I’d never let anyone take you from me.”

And then I opened my mouth.

Her screams were tiny, perfect, and furious as she tickled my tongue. I let her squirm and let her kick at my teeth. I savored her resistance.

“Shhh. Don’t fight me. You always belonged inside me.”

I swallowed. One gulp. No chewing. No cruelty, just a reunion.

She slid down with a warmth that felt sacred, like communion taken whole. I pressed my hand to my throat as she descended, and for the first time in months, a genuine smile crossed my lips.

Outside, the riot turned bloody.

Inside, I sat on the cold tile floor of the Borrower Corp lab, eyes closed, hand on my belly. A flutter, then stillness. Like a heartbeat that finally stops fighting.

Mine. Again. At last.