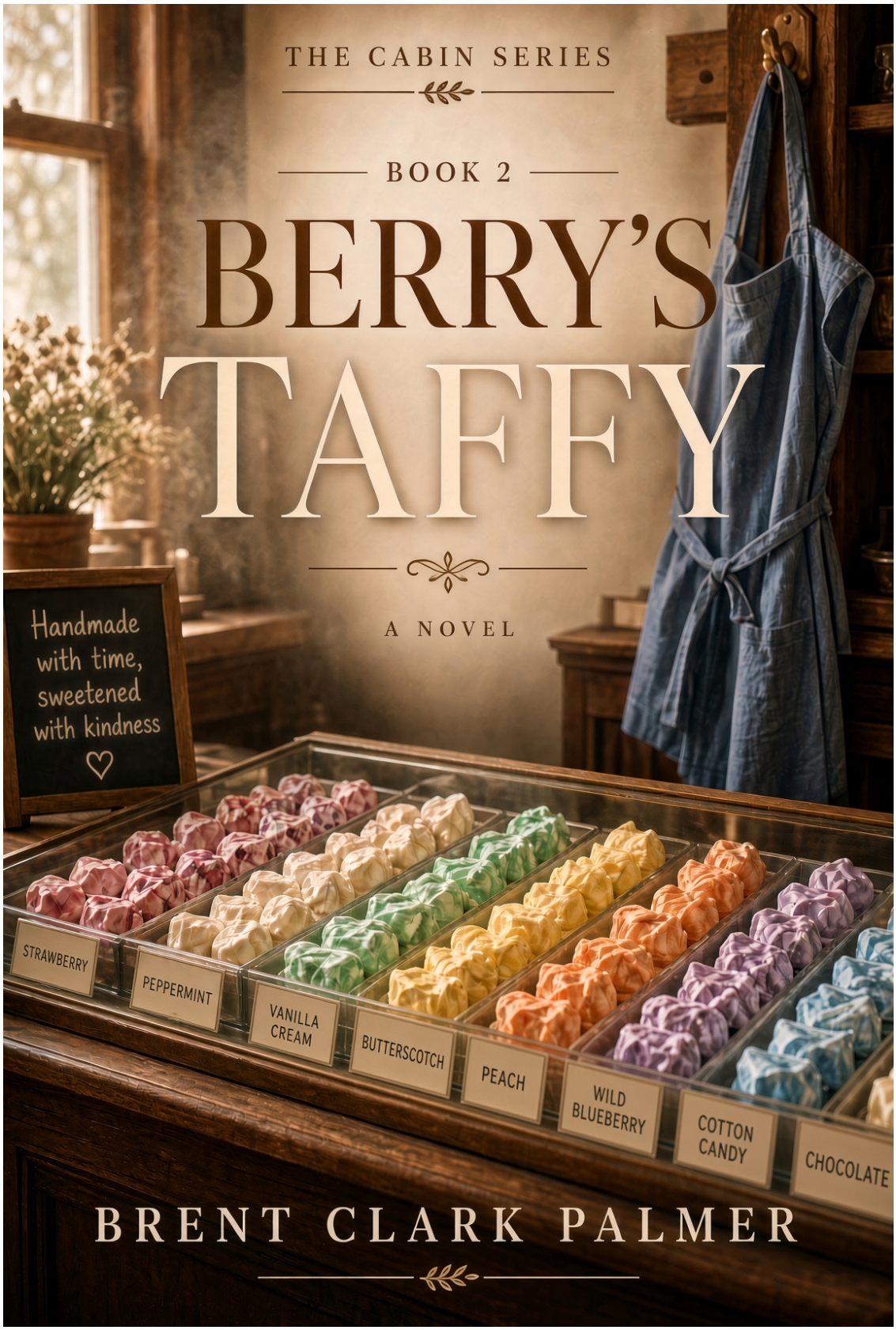

THE CABIN SERIES
BOOK 2
BERRY'S TAFFY
A NOVEL
Handmade with time, sweetened with kindness
STRAWBERRY
PEPPERMINT
VANILLA CREAM
BUTTERSCOTCH
PEACH
WILD BLUEBERRY
COTTON CANDY
CHOCOLATE
BRENT CLARK PALMER

Berry’s Taffy

by Brent Clark Palmer

The Cabin, Book 2

Lisa sat with her hands folded in her lap and watched the door at the back of the shop. The air smelled of sugar and warm butter. A low fan turned somewhere behind the counter, moving the scent across the small front room without cooling it. She had worn the blue blouse that buttoned to the throat and the dark skirt that ended just above her knees. The fabric clung lightly between her shoulder blades.

Samantha Berry came through the door with a clipboard and a pen. She was taller than Lisa remembered, or perhaps Lisa had simply been shorter then. Her hair was pulled back, the line of her jaw clear, the collar of her shirt open one button. She set the clipboard on the narrow table between them and sat. The chair creaked. Her knee brushed the table leg and stayed there.

“Lisa Chen,” Samantha said. She looked at the application, then at Lisa. “You put down weekend and evening availability.”

“Yes.” Lisa’s voice came out thinner than she intended. She cleared her throat. “I can do mornings too, if you need them.”

Samantha nodded once. Her eyes moved over Lisa’s face, then lower, to the open collar of the blouse, the place where the fabric shifted when Lisa breathed. She made a short note. The pen scratched. Lisa felt the sound in the center of her palms.

“Any experience with a register?”

“Two years at the campus bookstore. I closed most nights.”

“Cash handling, card, the usual.” Samantha’s mouth stayed level. She turned the page. “And you’re fine standing for a full shift.”

“Yes.”

The fan clicked as it rotated. Warm air crossed Lisa’s collarbones and slipped under the edge of her blouse. She kept her shoulders still. Samantha’s forearm rested on the table; the sleeve was rolled once, the skin smooth, a faint sheen of heat along the muscle. Lisa looked at the application instead. The paper had a small crease where Samantha’s thumb had pressed it.

“We’re a small shop,” Samantha said. “Counter work is most of it. Helping customers, keeping the cases full, answering questions about the flavors. Some light stocking. Nothing complicated.”

Lisa nodded. Her pulse had settled high in her throat. She could smell the clean cotton of Samantha’s shirt under the sugar. When Samantha shifted, the table moved a fraction and the edge touched Lisa’s wrist. Neither of them moved it away.

“Hours can run long on weekends,” Samantha continued. “We stay open until the candy is gone or until eight, whichever comes first. You’d be expected to finish the close with me if the line is still there.”

“That’s fine.”

Samantha studied her for a moment. The look was steady, unhurried. Lisa felt it on her mouth, then on the hollow at the base of her throat. She swallowed. The sound was small. Samantha’s pen tapped once against the clipboard.

“Any reason you applied here specifically?”

Lisa’s fingers tightened in her lap. The skirt had ridden a little when she sat; the hem pressed against the tops of her thighs. She kept her knees together. “I like the shop. I’ve walked past it. And I need the work.”

Samantha made another note. Her handwriting was small and even. When she finished she set the pen down and leaned back. The front of her shirt pulled slightly across her chest. Lisa watched the fabric resettle.

“I can start you on the register tomorrow if the schedule works,” Samantha said. “Ten to six. We’ll see how the first week goes.”

“Tomorrow is good.”

Samantha stood. The chair slid back. She held the clipboard against her hip. Lisa rose as well. The space between them was narrow; the table still sat between their bodies. Samantha’s hand rested on the back of her own chair. Lisa could see the fine lines at the corner of her eye, the place where the skin moved when she almost smiled and did not.

“Wear something you can move in,” Samantha said. “Closed shoes. Hair back if it’s long.”

“All right.”

Samantha walked her to the front door. The bell above it was silent. Outside the light was brighter. Lisa stepped onto the sidewalk and turned. Samantha was already locking the door from inside, her profile clear through the glass, one hand raised to the bolt. Lisa stood with the sun on the back of her neck and the warmth of the shop still caught under her blouse. She touched the place at her throat where the top button sat. Her fingers were steady. She walked toward the bus stop without looking back again.

Lisa arrived ten minutes early. The front door was already unlocked. Warm air met her at the threshold, thick with sugar and the faint mineral smell of the cooling trays in the back. She tied her apron over the same blue blouse, the strings crossing at the small of her back, and smoothed the skirt once with both hands.

Samantha stood behind the counter with the cash drawer open. She looked up, closed the drawer, and came around the end of the case. Her sleeves were rolled to the elbow. She stopped in front of Lisa and opened her arms without speaking.

The hug was long. Samantha’s arms settled across Lisa’s shoulders and stayed. The front of her shirt pressed warm against Lisa’s chest; the apron bib between them did nothing to dull the contact. Lisa’s hands hovered, then rested lightly at Samantha’s waist. She could feel the slow rise of Samantha’s breath and the steady heat along her own sternum. Samantha’s chin rested near Lisa’s temple. Neither of them stepped back. The fan turned. A strand of Lisa’s hair caught against Samantha’s collar and stayed there until Samantha finally eased her arms down and let her go.

“First rule,” Samantha said. Her voice was even. “When a customer asks which flavor is best, you don’t pick for them. You ask what they already like and you watch their mouth while they answer. People buy what they want to taste twice.”

Lisa nodded. The place where Samantha’s arms had been still felt warm.

“Second rule. You stand with your weight on both feet. Shoulders back. If you lean on the counter, you lean with your hips, not your elbows. Customers notice the line of you before they notice the candy.”

Heat moved up Lisa’s neck. She straightened without meaning to. The apron ties pulled slightly across her lower back.

“Third. If I correct your hands or your stance, you don’t apologize out loud. You adjust and you keep working. Apologies slow the line and they make the correction bigger than it is.”

Lisa’s ears were hot. She looked at the neat rows of taffy in the case instead of at Samantha’s face. The cellophane caught the light.

Samantha moved past her to the register and spoke over her shoulder. “We make guilty pleasures here. That’s the whole job. People come in already wanting something they pretend they shouldn’t have. You don’t argue with that. You just hand it to them warm.”

She opened the drawer again and began counting the morning cash. Lisa took her place at the end of the counter. The hug’s pressure lingered across her chest and along the insides of her arms. When the first customer reached the register, Lisa kept her weight even and her shoulders back, exactly as she had been told.

The first customers came in pairs. Lisa kept her weight on both feet and asked what they already liked. When a woman hesitated between vanilla and cinnamon, Lisa watched the small movement of her mouth and said nothing until the woman chose. Samantha stayed at the far end of the counter, restocking the lower shelf. Each time she straightened, the hem of her shirt lifted and settled again against

the waistband of her trousers.

Between sales Lisa wiped the glass. The cloth left faint streaks that she went back over until they disappeared. Her blouse had begun to stick between her shoulder blades. When she reached for a high stack of bags, Samantha’s hand closed lightly around her wrist and guided it two inches left.

“Lower shelf first,” Samantha said. “You don’t stretch across the case.”

The correction was brief. Samantha’s fingers stayed an extra second on the inside of Lisa’s wrist, then let go. Lisa adjusted the bags without speaking. Heat sat under her collar. She could still feel the exact shape of the grip.

At noon Samantha locked the front door for twenty minutes and set two paper plates on the narrow table in the back room. The taffy pull stood silent against the far wall. Lisa ate standing up because there was only one chair. Samantha sat, knees apart, and watched her finish the sandwich.

“You’re quick with the change,” Samantha said. “Keep that. People decide they want a second piece while you’re still counting.”

Lisa nodded. A crumb clung to the corner of her mouth. She lifted her hand to brush it away. Samantha reached first, thumb steady, and wiped it clean. The touch was dry and precise. Lisa’s lips parted on the next breath and stayed parted until Samantha’s hand dropped back to her own plate.

They reopened at twelve-thirty. The afternoon line was longer. Lisa’s feet ached inside her shoes by three. She shifted her weight the way she had been told and felt the skirt move against the backs of her thighs. Samantha passed behind her twice to reach the register tape. Each time the front of Samantha’s hip brushed the curve of Lisa’s apron. Neither of them commented. Lisa kept her shoulders back and handed over the next warm bag of taffy without looking down.

They closed at eight. Lisa counted the drawer while Samantha wiped the cases. When the totals matched, Samantha locked the register and leaned one hip against the counter.

“You live alone?” she asked.

“Yes. One-bedroom on Cedar. Second floor.”

“Street parking?”

“Usually fine after six.”

Samantha folded the rag. “Kitchen big enough to actually cook, or mostly takeout?”

“Mostly takeout. Stove works. There’s a table.” Lisa kept her hands on the receipt stack. The metal of her keys was warm through the pocket of her skirt.

“Keys stay on you?”

“Yes.”

Samantha nodded once, switched off the front lights, and that was the end of it.

Over the next mornings the hug at the door lengthened. Samantha’s arms settled lower across Lisa’s back. Her cheek rested nearer Lisa’s temple. On the fifth morning her mouth touched the corner of Lisa’s jaw, brief and dry, before she stepped away to open the register. Lisa tied her apron with the heat of it still on her skin and worked the counter. The days continued. She kept her weight even. She watched mouths. She handed over bags. The ritual stayed the same: arrival, the long hold, the small press of mouth to skin that never quite reached her lips, then the register and the line.

On the morning after that partial kiss, Samantha kept her hands on Lisa’s upper arms when the hug ended.

“I need the noon batch pulled today,” she said. “It’s more steps than the counter. Temperature, timing, the fold counts. Can you take it?”

Lisa felt the request land. Her pulse moved high in her throat. “Yes.”

Samantha kissed her on the mouth. The pressure was direct and even. Lisa’s lips parted under it. When Samantha drew back she was already turning toward the back room.

“Thank you. Come here.”

The pull stood against the far wall, already warm. Samantha explained the sequence once: candy temperature before the first stretch, the exact number of folds before it seized, the way the mass had to be turned so the heat stayed even. She spoke clearly. Lisa repeated the counts back. Then Samantha looked at Lisa’s blouse and skirt.

“It runs hot back here and it sticks to anything with a weave. Apron and underwear is enough. No one comes through that door while the batch is on.”

She waited. Lisa nodded. Samantha stepped behind her, untied the apron, and set it on the chair. Her hands moved to the buttons of the blouse. She undid them from the top, steady, and eased the fabric off Lisa’s shoulders. The air of the back room touched the skin that had been covered. Samantha folded the blouse and laid it aside, then unzipped the skirt and let it drop. Lisa stepped out of it. Samantha picked it up, shook it once, and placed it with the blouse. She held the apron open. Lisa slipped her arms through. Samantha tied the strings at the small of her back, snug, the bib settling over Lisa’s bra and the bare strip of stomach above her underwear.

“Hands here,” Samantha said, and guided Lisa’s palms onto the warm mass. The taffy yielded and resisted. Heat rose into Lisa’s forearms. Through the doorway the bell sounded and Samantha’s voice answered a customer, light and unhurried, while Lisa began the first counted fold.

The next morning Samantha tied the apron and then, as if finishing the same motion, reached under the bib and unhooked Lisa’s bra. Her fingers were unhurried. The straps slid down Lisa’s arms. Samantha drew the bra free, folded it once, and set it with the blouse and skirt. The apron settled against bare skin. Lisa felt the cotton drag lightly across her nipples when she breathed. She did not speak. Samantha guided her hands back to the warm mass and left her there.

The habit stayed. Each production morning Samantha removed the bra with the rest of the clothes. Lisa stood in the apron and her panties while the taffy heated her forearms and the small of her back. The bib covered her breasts; the sides left the outer curves and the line of her ribs bare. Through the doorway she heard the register and Samantha’s even voice with the customers. When a batch ran long she stayed until it was finished. The hours stretched past the posted close. She counted folds, turned the mass, and kept the heat even while her shoulders ached and sweat traced the line of her spine under the apron ties.

Samantha began locking the front door only after the last tray had cooled. Lisa wiped the pull, washed her arms, and redressed in the back room while Samantha counted the drawer. On the walk to the bus her skin still held the warmth of the work and the memory of Samantha’s hands setting the bra aside. She arrived earlier the following mornings. She waited inside the door for the hug that now ended with Samantha’s mouth on hers, brief and sure, before the clothes came off and the pull began again. Her answers stayed short and ready. When Samantha asked if she could stay through the evening batch as well, Lisa said yes before the question had fully settled between them.

The evening batch ran past nine. Lisa’s arms trembled on the final folds. The taffy had cooled just enough to hold shape; she turned it, counted, and set the last tray on the rack while sweat slid from the hollow of her throat into the apron bib. Through the doorway the shop was dark except for the single light over the register. Samantha’s voice was low, finishing a phone call. When she hung up she came to the back room and stood in the doorway.

“Morning delivery is at five,” she said. “I need the cases filled and the register open before they arrive. Can you stay through and open with me?”

Lisa’s hands were still on the edge of the cooling tray. The apron ties pressed into the small of her back. Her panties clung where sweat had gathered. She looked at Samantha’s face, at the even line of her mouth, and felt the yes already in her chest.

“Yes.”

Samantha crossed the room. She untied the apron, lifted it over Lisa’s head, and set it aside. For a moment Lisa stood in only her panties under the work light. Samantha’s eyes moved once across her breasts, the flushed skin, the sheen along her ribs, then she reached for the folded blouse.

“Sleep on the cot,” she said. “It’s cleaner than driving home and back. I’ll wake you at four-thirty.”

She helped Lisa into the blouse but left it unbuttoned. The cot was narrow, pushed against the far wall beneath a shelf of empty boxes. Lisa lay down on her side. The canvas smelled of sugar and detergent. Samantha switched off the overhead and left the small lamp by the register burning. Lisa heard the lock turn, then the soft sound of Samantha moving through the front of the shop. Her own breath slowed. The ache in her shoulders settled into the thin mattress. She closed her eyes with the unbuttoned blouse open across her chest and the knowledge that Samantha would be the one to wake her.

Samantha woke her at four-thirty with a hand on her shoulder. The back room was still dark except for the lamp she had left burning. Lisa sat up. The unbuttoned blouse fell open. Samantha’s gaze moved across her chest, the soft weight of her breasts, the faint stickiness the night had left on her skin, then she held out the apron.

“Delivery’s early,” she said. “Pull first, then we stock.”

Lisa stood. Samantha took the blouse from her shoulders and set it aside. She tied the apron snug, the bib settling over bare breasts, the strings cinched at the small of Lisa’s back above the panties. Her hands lingered at the knot, thumbs pressing once into the muscle on either side of Lisa’s spine before she stepped away.

The mass was already warm on the hook. Samantha stood behind Lisa and covered her hands with her own. Together they stretched the first length. The taffy yielded, glossy and heavy, heat rising into their joined palms. Samantha’s chest rested against Lisa’s back. Each pull drew their bodies closer; the apron ties shifted, and the bare skin above Lisa’s panties brushed the front of Samantha’s trousers. Sugar scent thickened. A strand of candy clung to Lisa’s wrist. Samantha lifted that wrist, turned it, and used her thumb to wipe the strand away, slow, the pad of her thumb dragging across the pulse point before she guided the hand back to the mass.

They worked through the counted folds. Samantha’s hips stayed aligned with Lisa’s. When the taffy seized and needed turning, she reached around, forearm crossing beneath Lisa’s breasts, and rotated the whole weight while Lisa held the ends. The motion pressed Lisa forward against the hook. Her nipples tightened

against the apron cotton. She felt the exact shape of Samantha’s breath on the nape of her neck and kept the rhythm without being told.

By five-fifteen the trays were racked and cooling. Lisa’s arms shook. Samantha untied the apron, lifted it off, and used a clean cloth to wipe the sheen of sugar and sweat from Lisa’s collarbones, the undersides of her breasts, the line of her stomach. The cloth was warm. Lisa stood still under it, panties clinging, skin flushing where the fabric passed. Samantha folded the cloth, set it down, and handed Lisa her blouse.

“Cases next,” she said. “Then you can sleep another hour on the cot if the line is light.”

Lisa buttoned the blouse with unsteady fingers. Through the front window the delivery truck’s headlights swept the empty street. She followed Samantha to the counter, the memory of the guided pulls still warm in her hands and along her back, already listening for the next instruction.

The noon batch needed turning. Samantha stood behind Lisa again, forearm crossed beneath her breasts, and rotated the heavy mass while Lisa held the ends. The motion finished. The taffy settled on the hook, glossy and stable. Samantha’s arm did not drop.

It stayed. Her forearm rested against the undersides of Lisa’s breasts through the apron. Her hand remained on the warm candy beside Lisa’s, fingers overlapping. Heat from the pull rose between them. Lisa’s nipples had already tightened; now they pressed more distinctly into the cotton each time she breathed. She kept her grip on the ends and did not step forward or back.

Samantha’s other hand settled at Lisa’s hip, thumb just above the apron tie, palm curved over the bare skin the panties left exposed. She did not correct a stance or wipe anything away. She simply held. Lisa felt the full length of the contact—the weight of the arm under her breasts, the steady pressure at her hip, the alignment of Samantha’s body behind her own—and her breath shortened. A small sound left her throat. She leaned back a fraction into the hold.

They stood that way while the batch cooled enough for the next counted fold. The shop beyond the doorway stayed quiet. Samantha’s thumb moved once, slow, along the line of Lisa’s hip, then stilled again. When she finally spoke it was only to say the number of folds still required. Lisa answered with the count, voice low, and waited for Samantha’s hands to guide her into the next stretch.

The overnights settled into the schedule. Lisa slept on the cot three nights running. Each dawn Samantha woke her, removed the blouse, tied the apron over bare skin, and stood behind her at the pull until the first batch was racked. The contact that had outlasted the turn now arrived earlier: Samantha’s hands covering Lisa’s before the candy was fully warm, her forearm already resting

beneath Lisa’s breasts while they waited for the temperature to climb. Lisa leaned into it. Her breath shortened. She answered the fold counts in a low voice and kept her weight where Samantha placed it.

On the fourth morning, after the delivery truck had left and the cases were full, Samantha locked the front door again and came back to the cooling trays. Lisa was wiping sugar from her wrists. The apron was still on; her panties were damp at the center from heat and the long holds.

“The cot isn’t enough if I’m going to keep the early opens and still have a place to sleep when you’re on the evening batch,” Samantha said. She watched Lisa’s hands. “You described the apartment. Second floor, street parking, table, stove that works. I need a key.”

Lisa’s fingers stilled on the cloth. The request was practical. She felt the shape of it the same way she had felt the request to stay through the night—already answered in her body before she spoke.

“Yes.”

She reached into the pocket of the skirt she had not yet put back on and took out her keys. The apartment key was the newest, still bright. She worked it off the ring and held it out. Samantha took it. Her fingers closed over Lisa’s for a moment, warm, then she slipped the key into her own pocket.

“I’ll be there tonight after close,” she said. “You stay on the evening pull. I’ll text when the cases need checking.”

Lisa nodded. The apron ties pressed into her back. She watched Samantha turn toward the front of the shop, the key already out of sight, and felt the same steady eagerness that had met every prior step. She picked up the cloth again and finished wiping her wrists, already listening for the temperature on the next batch.

Samantha let herself in with the key she had taken the day before. The apartment was quiet, the bed still made on one side. She slept on the other. In the morning she showered, used Lisa’s towel, and locked the door behind her when she left.

She reached the shop at four-forty. The back-room light was already on. Lisa stood just inside the doorway in the blouse she had slept in, unbuttoned, apron strings loose in her hands. She had heard the lock. Her weight was even. Her eyes tracked Samantha from the moment the door opened.

Samantha set her bag down and opened her arms. Lisa stepped into them at once. The hug was longer than the ones before it. Samantha’s hands settled low on Lisa’s back, palms against bare skin where the blouse had fallen open. She felt Lisa’s breath shorten and the small forward press of her body. When she finally eased back she kept one hand at Lisa’s waist.

“I slept well,” she said.

Lisa’s mouth parted. Color sat high on her chest. She nodded, the motion small, and lifted the apron. Samantha took it, tied it over the bare breasts and the panties, and guided Lisa to the pull. The mass was already warm. She covered Lisa’s hands with her own and began the first stretch, the line of her body settled comfortably behind Lisa’s, the night in the apartment already behind them and the day’s work in front.

The evening batch ran long. The pull stood in the narrow gap between the cooling racks and the wall. Lisa worked the mass in the apron and panties, arms shaking, heat flushing her chest. Samantha stepped in from the register.

“Temperature’s high,” she said. “We have to turn it now or it seizes.”

She moved into the tight space until their bodies met. One hand covered Lisa’s on the candy; the other settled at Lisa’s hip and drew her forward. Samantha shifted her stance, guiding Lisa’s thigh between her own until the swollen center of Lisa’s panties pressed directly against the firm ridge of her clit through the trousers.

“There,” Samantha said. “Stay on me. Feel that?”

Lisa’s breath broke. “Yes.”

“Good. Rock with the fold. Don’t lose the contact.”

They turned the heavy mass together. Each pull dragged Lisa’s clit along Samantha’s in a slow, grinding press. The apron crushed between their breasts. Lisa’s panties were soaked; the fabric slipped and caught, then slipped again until bare, slick skin met the trouser seam and the hard ache beneath it. A low sound left Lisa’s throat. Her hips pushed forward on their own.

“Samantha—”

“I know. Keep your hands on the taffy.” Samantha’s voice stayed even. She rolled her hips once, deliberate, seating their clits tighter. “Right there. That’s the count. Hold it.”

“I can’t—it’s—”

“You can. Breathe and move with me. Do not come.”

Lisa nodded against her shoulder, the motion frantic. “Okay. Okay.” Her knees softened. She surrendered her weight into the press, grinding down, chasing every stroke while her sticky fingers stayed locked on the cooling candy. Wetness spread between them. Samantha kept the rhythm steady, clit to clit, through fabric and then against it, naming the next fold, the next temperature, while Lisa answered in broken yeses and held exactly where she was placed, open and eager, the pleasure bright and denied and entirely Samantha’s to continue.

Samantha kept their clits pressed tight, rolling her hips in short, firm strokes that dragged Lisa along the full length of her. The taffy cooled under their joined hands. Lisa's panties had twisted aside; each pass slid bare, swollen flesh against Samantha's through the thin trouser fabric, then directly against the hard ridge of her clit when the seam shifted.

"Samantha—I'm—"

"Not yet." Samantha's voice stayed low and even. She tightened her grip on Lisa's hip and ground up harder. "Finish the turn with me. Then you can."

Lisa whimpered, hips jerking, chasing every stroke. "I'm trying—please—"

"Good girl, hold it. Right there." Samantha's own breath shortened. She pressed their clits together and circled once, slow, then again. "The cot is your bed now. You don't go back to the apartment to sleep. You stay here. Say yes."

"Yes—yes—" Lisa's answer broke into a cry. Her body seized. She came hard, grinding down, clit pulsing against Samantha's as the orgasm rolled through her in sharp waves. Her hands slipped on the taffy; she clutched Samantha's shoulders instead and kept moving, helpless and eager.

Samantha groaned against her ear and followed, hips stuttering, clit throbbing in tight pulses against Lisa's while she rode the same rhythm through her own release. They stayed locked together, rocking through the aftershocks, sugar and sweat and slick heat between them, until Samantha's voice steadied again.

"Cot. Every night you're on the schedule. Understood?"

Lisa nodded, forehead pressed to Samantha's shoulder, still trembling, still gently grinding. "Understood. I'll stay."

Samantha eased the pressure only enough to let them breathe. She guided Lisa's sticky hands back to the mass. "Last fold. Then we rack it and you lie down."

Samantha came in from the apartment at four-thirty and locked the door behind her. Lisa was already in the back room, apron tied over bare breasts and panties, standing at the warm pull with her hands resting on the hook. She turned when she heard the lock. Her weight settled evenly. Color sat high on her chest.

"Morning batch is up," Samantha said. She set her bag down, stepped in close, and kissed Lisa once on the mouth before guiding her stance wider. One thigh slid between Lisa's. She drew their hips together until Lisa's clit pressed firmly to hers through the panties and trousers. "You know how this works now. We pull, you stay on me, you don't come until the trays are racked."

Lisa's breath shortened. She nodded and pushed forward into the contact, already slick. "Yes."

“Good.” Samantha covered Lisa’s hands and started the first stretch. The motion rocked them together in a steady grind. “Count with me. And keep that pressure. If you slip off, we start the edge over.”

“I won’t slip.” Lisa’s voice was low. Her hips rolled with every fold, clit swollen and caught against Samantha’s, the ache building sharp and bright while the taffy stretched and gleamed between their joined fingers. She stayed exactly where she was placed, eager, open, the denial and the work already the same thing.

The evening pull started at four. Lisa was already at the hook in the apron, panties damp from the walk across the back room. Samantha came in from the apartment, locked the door, and set her bag down without speaking. She stepped behind Lisa, untied the apron, and lifted it off. Then her hands went to her own waist.

She unbuttoned her trousers, pushed them down with her panties, and stepped out of both. The air touched her. She reached around Lisa and hooked her thumbs in the sides of Lisa’s panties, drawing them down her thighs and off. Lisa lifted each foot. The panties landed with Samantha’s clothes. Nothing remained between them.

Samantha moved in front of her this time. She guided Lisa’s stance wider, set one of Lisa’s thighs high against her hip, and drew their bare bodies together until their clits met, slick and direct. No fabric. The contact was immediate and hotter than before.

“Hands on the mass,” Samantha said. Her voice was quiet. “We still have the count. You stay right here on me.”

Lisa’s breath left her in a rush. She nodded, palms finding the warm taffy, and pushed forward. The bare slide of clit against clit made her hips jerk. “Like this?”

“Yes. Exactly like this.” Samantha rolled once, slow, seating them tighter. Wetness spread between them at once. “If you slip off, I put you back. You don’t come until the trays are up.”

“I understand.” Lisa’s voice shook. She kept her hands on the candy and let Samantha set the rhythm, grinding in short, helpless presses, fully open, the new skin-to-skin ache already deciding every answer she gave. They worked the first fold that way, bodies locked, nothing between the heat of them and the cooling taffy under Lisa’s fingers.

They finished the noon batch skin to skin, clits pressed and sliding until both of them came. Samantha eased back, reached for her trousers, and stepped into them. Lisa stayed where she was, bare from the waist down, hands still resting on the cooling hook, breath slowing.

“Samantha,” she said. The name came out quiet. “Are we… is this you and me? Like girlfriends?”

Samantha buttoned her trousers. She looked at Lisa’s face, then at the sheen still on her thighs. “You’re a good worker. Best I’ve had on the pull. That’s what matters here.”

Lisa’s mouth parted. She nodded once, small. The ache between her legs was still bright. “Okay.”

“Evening batch is yours tonight.” Samantha picked up her bag. “Friends are coming by the apartment. I’ll be there. You close and run the overnight. Text me if the temperature spikes.”

“I’ll handle it.”

Samantha kissed her once, brief, and left through the front. The lock turned. Lisa wiped herself clean, tied the apron again, and started the next set of trays. Hours later, while she was mid-fold, her phone lit on the shelf. The text was a photo: Samantha on the apartment couch, arm around a younger woman Lisa didn’t know, both of them smiling at the camera. The living room behind them showed Lisa’s old table pushed to the wall and new glasses on it. Samantha’s free hand held a drink. The caption read only “All good here.”

Lisa set the phone face-down. She kept her hands on the warm mass, counted the next fold, and stayed on the schedule.

Samantha returned after midnight. The front of the shop was dark. In the back room Lisa stood at the pull in nothing but the apron ties loose around her waist, the batch half-finished, skin flushed from the heat and the hours alone. She looked up when the door opened. Her hands stayed on the mass.

Samantha set her bag down, stepped out of her trousers and panties, and moved in close. She guided Lisa’s hips forward until their bare clits met, slick and direct, and held her there while she checked the temperature with her free hand.

“Batch is late,” she said. “We’ll finish it like this.”

Lisa’s breath caught. She rolled her hips once, seating them tighter, and nodded. “I’m ready.”

They worked the next folds skin to skin. Samantha kept the pressure steady, clit sliding against clit, while she spoke.

“Your paycheck stays with me from now on. The apartment rent, the utilities, the groceries I buy when I’m there—those come out of it. What’s left covers anything the shop needs for you. You don’t need a separate account while you’re on the cot and on the schedule. I’ll handle the deposits.”

Lisa’s hips jerked. The words landed low and hot. She ground forward, chasing the slide, voice breaking. “So I just… work. No check.”

“You work. I keep the money where it’s used. You’re more efficient this way. No split focus.” Samantha circled slowly, deliberate. “Does that make sense?”

“Yes.” Lisa’s answer came out ragged. Her clit throbbed against Samantha’s. The idea of it—no paycheck, no separate errands, nothing but the pull and the cot and Samantha’s hands deciding the rest—tightened everything. She pushed harder, slick and open. “It’s better. I don’t have to think about it. I can just stay and do the batches. That’s all I want.”

“Good.” Samantha’s grip on her hip firmed. She increased the rhythm, bare and relentless. “Then come while you say it. Tell me you’re the shop’s now.”

Lisa cried out, grinding down, the orgasm hitting sharp as she gasped, “I’m the shop’s—I don’t need the money—just this—” Her body seized and pulsed against Samantha’s clit. Samantha held her through it, then followed with a low groan, their slick heat sliding together until the aftershocks eased.

They stayed locked together while the last of the tremors passed. The taffy had cooled to a dull sheen on the hook. Samantha’s hand rested at the small of Lisa’s back, thumb moving once along the sweat-damp skin above the apron ties. Neither of them spoke for a long moment. The only sound was the low tick of the fan and their slowing breath.

Lisa’s cheek rested against Samantha’s shoulder. The words she had just said—I’m the shop’s, I don’t need the money—still sat warm in her mouth. She could feel the precise place where their clits had slid and pulsed, the lingering slickness, the way her body had answered before she finished the sentence. Somewhere under that she registered the rest: the key already in Samantha’s pocket, the cot that was her bed, the apartment whose table had been moved for other people, the paycheck that would never reach her again. None of it asked her to step back. Her hips remained tilted forward, keeping the faint contact, as if the decision had already been made by the heat itself.

Samantha eased them apart only far enough to reach the cloth. She wiped Lisa clean with the same unhurried care she used on the trays, then folded the apron and set it aside. Lisa stood bare under the work light, legs still unsteady, and watched Samantha dress. When Samantha turned to her again she held out the blouse Lisa had not worn since morning.

“Cot,” she said. “I’ll lock up. Early pull is at five.”

Lisa took the blouse. She did not put it on. She walked to the narrow cot, lay down on her side, and drew the thin sheet over her hip. From there she could see Samantha’s hands at the register, the familiar motion of the count, the moment

the front lights went out. The back-room lamp stayed on. Lisa closed her eyes with the ache still low and sweet between her legs and the certainty, quiet as the cooling candy, that she would be exactly here when it was time to begin again.