

Heart and Soul

She stared at herself. Her neighbor was banging out “Heart and Soul” on the piano again, over and over. It made Lucy want to stick a fork into the socket by her bed. And meanwhile, she couldn’t quite fit the cream-colored dress over her voluptuous body.

“Damn girl, you’ve got curves in all the right places,” construction workers would cat-call. It didn’t feel that way. In fact, she felt just the opposite. Being able to fit this dress over her hips would be a blessing. A gift from God.

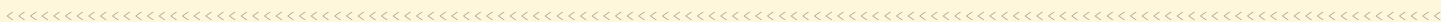
It was rare for her mother to spend money on nice clothing. Let alone a dress. Lucy’s family wasn’t wealthy like many in town, meaning that they had to be extremely frugal. Despite this, when her mother received an invitation to the event of the year,

*The Spring Yacht Club: Invite Only Social Event
An evening of fine dining and fine conversation*

she became a different person. She became obsessed with finding Lucy the “perfect dress” for the spring socialite party and claimed this was it. Although it wasn’t striking, she knew her mother had pooled her paychecks from both her jobs, saving as much as she could to afford this dress. Lucy didn’t mind it like she did many of the other clothes her mother chose for her. The cream color didn’t look horrible on her—like the neon orange tank top that was currently stuffed in the back of her closet—and the cupcake style would accentuate her body. But as she was pushing the dress over her shoulders, the tag tickled her nose and she noticed it boasted the number eight.

**Son-of- a-Mother-
Trucker!**

That isn’t right, she realized, I’m a size 10. Son-of-a—. She pushed again. “Mother-Trucker!”



But this time she screamed it.

Lucy jumped at the sound of her mother's footsteps bounding up the two flights of stairs. She could feel the vibration of her mother's rage through the floor. Her mother barged into the room.

"What's wrong?" she exclaimed, gasping from her run up the stairs, "Why were you screaming?"

"Mom . . ." Lucy started; "This dress, I love it, but . . ." she trailed off.

Before she had even heard the news, Lucy's mother looked as if she were about to explode.

"This dress mom, it's the wrong size, it won't fit."

Her mom stared at her like a juror, analyzing the situation, looking at Lucy like her body was guilty of something. Lucy's mother took a deep breath, composed herself, and with a crisp coolness, walked out of the room with her head held high. She stopped in the doorway abruptly, turned her head to Lucy, and said with serial killer calm,

"Meet me downstairs at 7:00. We'll leave then."

Lucy began forcing the cream-colored dress, sweat stains and all, over her underwear clad body. As if she were in labor, she pushed in increments, and every minute or so she emitted a frustrated grunt until she fell on her bed in exhaustion and defeat.

The sounds of "Heart and Soul" continued in the background as she stared at herself in the mirror, her body only half covered, and prayed she could remove some of the skin from her thighs.

