HALF SISTERS

by Emory Ahlberg

Episode #8

Breaking and Entering for Old Times' Sake


NEAR BOSTON,
6 DAYS AGO
ZZZZZZZZ ZZZZZ
SNIFF, SNIFF


BACON!?


OH, JOSH, YOU'RE FINALLY UP! GOOD MORNING! SLEEP WELL?
GOOD MORNING. YEAH, LIKE A LOG.
GREAT. I'M JUST FRYING UP BACON FOR OUR BREAKFAST. IT'LL BE READY IN A FEW.
YOU'RE COOKING BACON? SINCE WHEN DO YOU COOK BACON? HELL, SINCE WHEN DO YOU COOK ANYTHING?


TIME
THE JOY OF SOX!
WELL, MORTIMER COULDN'T COOK TO SAVE HIS LIFE, AND MRS. FERRIS WAS NEVER AROUND TO DO IT. SO I LEARNED. TURNS OUT, I'M NOT HALF-- OH!
IS THAT FOR ME, OR ARE YOU JUST REALLY HAPPY FOR BREAKFAST?
UH, MORNING SITUATIONS, YOU KNOW. CAN'T CONTROL EVERYTHING.
YEAH, I SORT OF REMEMBER. BUT I HAVEN'T HAD MORNING WOOD IN A LONG, TIME. I HAVE TO ADMIT, I MISS IT. THERE WAS SOMETHING REASSURING ABOUT IT. LIKE A 'HELLO' FROM YOUR BODY, LETTING YOU KNOW EVERYTHING'S WORKING RIGHT. ANYWAY, TAKE A SEAT. BREAKFAST WILL BE READY SOON.
HEY, T-THANK YOU. I'LL JUST PUT SOME CLOTHES ON.
OH, SURE. I MEAN, IF YOU REALLY WANT TO.


BON APPÉTIT.
WOW, YOU SAID IT WITH THE ACCENT AND EVERYTHING.
JUST BECAUSE I'M NOT IN MY FRENCH MAID OUTFIT DOESN'T MEAN I CAN'T PLAY THE PART.
DAMN, YOU WEREN'T KIDDING. YOU REALLY CAN COOK. THIS LOOKS AMAZING.
THANKS. I FIGURED WE COULD USE A NICE GREASY MEAL AFTER LAST NIGHT'S... FESTIVITIES. I, UH, HAD A LOT OF FUN, BY THE WAY.
ME TOO. IT WAS LIKE OLD TIMES.
WAS IT, THOUGH?
OF SOX!


SOX!
SO, WHAT'S THE PLAN FOR TODAY? GOT ANYTHING ON THE DOCKET?
ACTUALLY, YEAH. WOULD YOU MIND DRIVING ME TO MY HAIR SALON APPOINTMENT? I'M SO DONE WITH BEING A JOAN JETT LOOKALIKE.
SURE, NO PROBLEM. WHEN DO WE NEED TO HEAD OUT?
APPOINTMENT'S AT ELEVEN. GIVES US PLENTY OF TIME TO ENJOY BREAKFAST AND... WELL, YOU'LL SEE.
I'LL SEE? WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
IT'S A SURPRISE! CAN'T SPOIL IT NOW, CAN I?
YOU AND YOUR SURPRISES. ALRIGHT, I'M IN. HEY, HOW MUCH IS THIS GOING TO COST? I'M STILL RECOVERING FROM OUR LAST SHOPPING SPREE.


OH, ABOUT THAT... MRS. FERRIS GAVE ME THIS CREDIT CARD WITH A $25,000 LIMIT AND CHALLENGED ME TO MAX IT OUT. IT'S PART OF MY 'TRAINING' TO BEING AN HEIRESS.


SOX!
HOLY SHIT, REALLY? THAT'S INSANE!
YEAH, I KNOW. BUT HEY, I'M NOT COMPLAINING. IT'S KIND OF FUN, ACTUALLY.
MAN, I WISH SOMEONE WOULD GIVE ME A CREDIT CARD WITH A LIMIT LIKE THAT. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH IT?


WELL, FIRST I'LL PAY YOU BACK.
SCOTT - ER - SANDY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO --
THEN, A NEW HAIR COLOR. AND AFTER THAT... WHO KNOWS? THE SKY'S THE LIMIT. BUT THE POINT IS, THESE NEXT COUPLE OF WEEKS, THEY'RE ALL ON ME. I WANT YOU TO ENJOY IT TOO. YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT BECAUSE OF ME. IT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO.
I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF, SANDY.
HEY! DON'T LET STUPID MASCULINE PRIDE GET IN THE WAY OF A GOOD TIME. YOU TOOK CARE OF ME WHEN I WAS IN A TIGHT SPOT. NOW IT'S MY TURN. BESIDES, I CAN'T SPEND ALL THIS MONEY BY MYSELF! WHAT WOULD BE THE FUN IN THAT? COME ON, LIVE A LITTLE WITH ME. IT'LL BE OUR LITTLE ADVENTURE.
ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT. I CAN'T ARGUE WITH THAT LOGIC.


WONDERFUL! I'M GOING TO PUT ON SOME MAKEUP AND GET READY.
UH, YOU KNOW YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO ALL THAT FOR ME, RIGHT? I MEAN, YOU LOOK FINE AS IS.
THANKS, BUT I WANT TO. BESIDES, IT'S NOT JUST FOR YOU. IT'S FOR ME TOO. GETTING READY... IT MAKES ME FEEL MORE PUT TOGETHER. MORE IN CONTROL.
Y-YOU COULD EVEN WEAR SOME OF MY CLOTHES IF YOU WANT.
NAH. THEY'RE TOO BIG ANYWAY. ALSO, NO OFFENCE, BUT ALL YOU HAVE IS JEANS AND T-SHIRTS. AND THE FABRIC IS SO ROUGH!
TIME
THE JOY OF SEX!

JESUS, HOW LONG DOES HAIR TAKE? I COULD'VE WATCHED THE DIRECTOR'S CUT OF SOMETHING BY NOW. I MEAN, I GUESS SCOTT PROBABLY LOOKED IN THE BIG MIRROR, CAME TO HIS SENSES, AND DECIDED TO CUT IT ALL OFF.

THAT'S THE END GAME, RIGHT? GO BACK TO BEING A GUY?

YEAH. YEAH, SCOTT IS JUST ***REALLY*** TRAUMATIZED RIGHT NOW - HE'S NOT THINKING STRAIGHT. "SANDY" WAS NEVER REAL. IT'S JUST A COPING MECHANISM, A WAY TO HANDLE ALL THE SHIT THAT'S HAPPENED. I CAN'T LET MYSELF INTERFERE WITH HIS HEALING.

HONESTLY, IT'S A DAMN GOOD THING HE FELL ASLEEP LAST NIGHT BEFORE HE HEARD MY HALF-DRUNK CONFESSION!

I'VE GOT TO KEEP IT TOGETHER, FOR HIS SAKE. I CAN'T DECLARE MY FEELINGS FOR A GIRL WHO DOESN'T EVEN ***REALLY*** EXIST. I'VE GOT TO REMEMBER THAT. SANDY IS SCOTT, AND SCOTT NEEDS A ***FRIEND*** RIGHT NOW, NOT ANOTHER COMPLICATION.

AND THAT'S REALLY WHAT I AM IN THIS WHOLE MESS, ISN'T IT? A COMPLICATION.

BUT ***DAMN*** IF I DON'T WANT TO BE MORE.

HEEYYY! OH MY GOD, I'M SORRY I TOOK SO LONG!


THE GIRL WHO HELPED ME WAS SO NICE.
WE TALKED ABOUT WHAT COLOR WOULD SUIT ME BEST. SHE HAD ME HALF-CONVINCED TO GO WITH THIS RAINBOW OMBRE THING -- AND IT WAS SO TEMPTING. I'LL DEFINITELY DO THAT IN THE FUTURE - MAYBE FOR A SPECIAL EVENT! BUT I DECIDED TO GO WITH BLONDE AGAIN. WELL, A LITTLE DARKER BLONDE THAN BEFORE.
OH, AND LOOK, I GOT EXTENSIONS! AREN'T THEY FABULOUS?

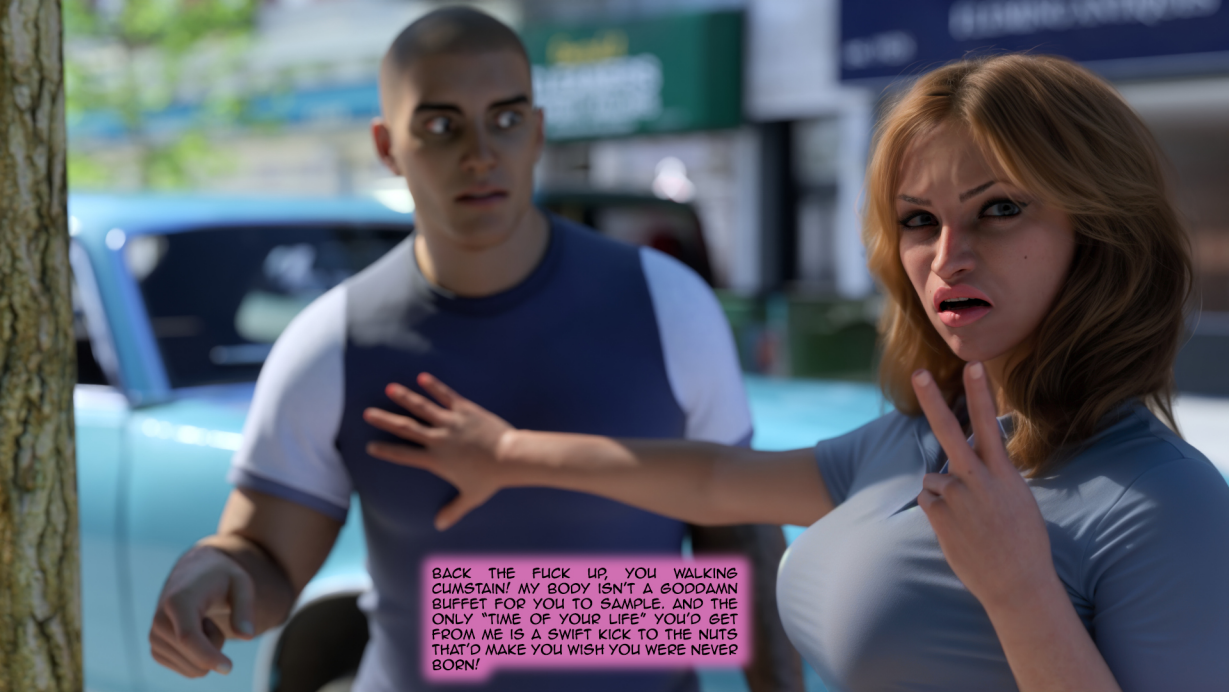

SANDY -- ER, SCOTT? I MEAN, YOU LOOK... I...
Emerald
CLEANERS
EXPERT TAILORS
est. 1928
FLEMING ANTIQUES
1250
1252


H-HEY, JOSH. DON'T BLUESCREEN ON ME. SAY SOMETHING. YOU'RE MAKING ME NERVOUS. I LOOK OKAY...
DON'T I?

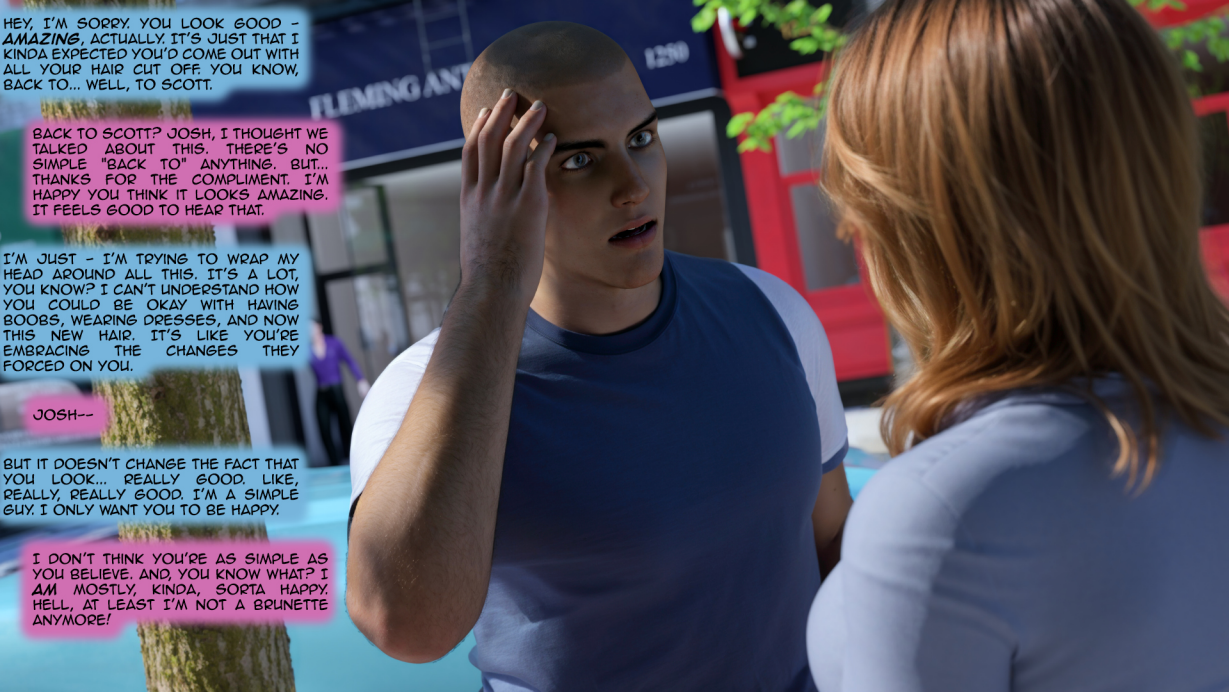

I MEAN, YOU CAN TELL ME IF I LOOK LIKE A TOTAL TRAINWRECK. IT'S JUST HAIR. BUT I WANTED TO TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT. SOMETHING THAT FELT LIKE ME. OR, UM, MORE LIKE ME? I KNOW, I KNOW. THE "ME" YOU KNEW BEFORE DIDN'T GIVE TWO SHITS ABOUT HAIR OR CLOTHES. BUT THAT ME ALSO DIDN'T CARE IF YOU LIKED THE WAY THEY LOOKED. BUT, UH, NOW I DO.
SO FOR FUCK'S SAKE, JUST SAY SOMETHING. EVEN IF IT'S THAT I LOOK LIKE A DAMN CLOWN.


DAMN, IF YOUR MAN AIN'T GONNA SAY IT, I WILL. THAT'S ONE FINE ASS, AND THOSE TITS ARE TOP SHELF, SWEETHEART! LET ME GIVE 'EM A SQUEEZE AND I'LL GIVE YOU THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE, BABY!


HEY! LISTEN, YOU PIECE OF--

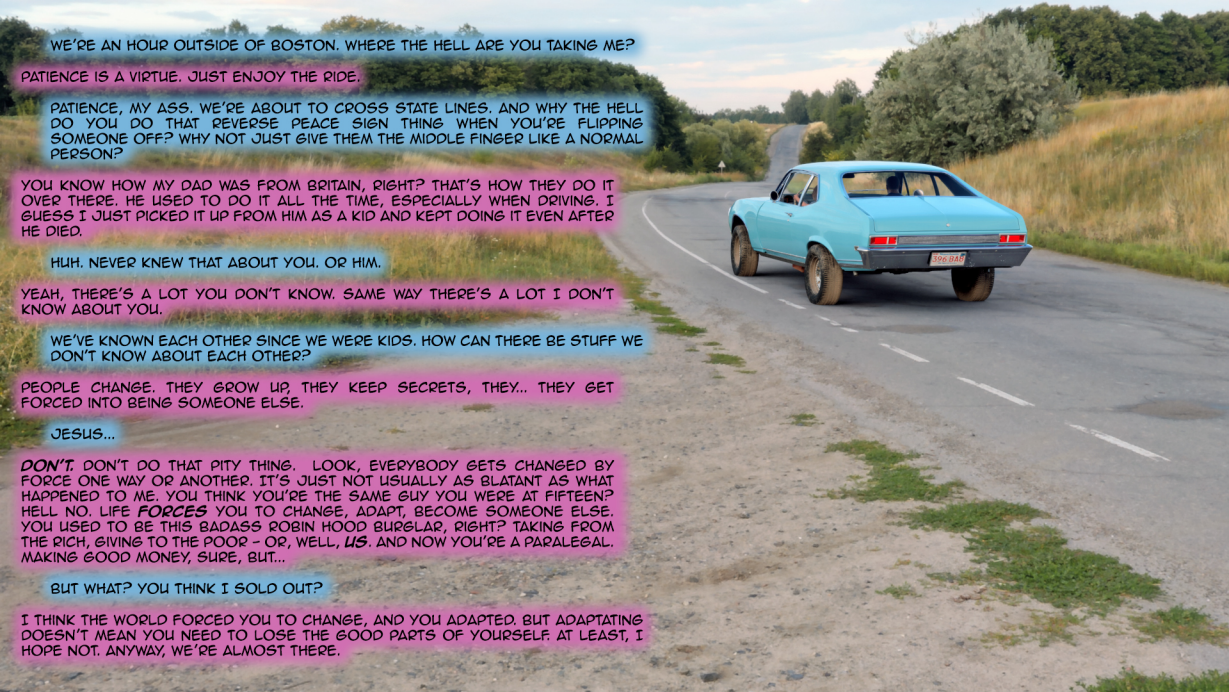

BACK THE FUCK UP, YOU WALKING CUMSTAIN! MY BODY ISN'T A GODDAMN BUFFET FOR YOU TO SAMPLE. AND THE ONLY "TIME OF YOUR LIFE" YOU'D GET FROM ME IS A SWIFT KICK TO THE NUTS THAT'D MAKE YOU WISH YOU WERE NEVER BORN!


OH, LOOK AT THAT! THE LITTLE LADY'S GOT MORE BALLS THAN HER BOYFRIEND. WHAT'S WRONG, BUDDY? SHE ALREADY NEUTER YOU?
BUT WATCH OUT. BOSTON GIRLS ARE LIKE THE FUCKING RED SOX - THEY ALWAYS CHOKE WHEN IT COUNTS!
YOU HEARD HER, ASSHOLE. NOW FUCK OFF WHILE YOU STILL CAN.


HEY, I'M SORRY. YOU LOOK GOOD – *AMAZING*, ACTUALLY. IT'S JUST THAT I KINDA EXPECTED YOU'D COME OUT WITH ALL YOUR HAIR CUT OFF. YOU KNOW, BACK TO... WELL, TO SCOTT.
BACK TO SCOTT? JOSH, I THOUGHT WE TALKED ABOUT THIS. THERE'S NO SIMPLE "BACK TO" ANYTHING. BUT... THANKS FOR THE COMPLIMENT. I'M HAPPY YOU THINK IT LOOKS AMAZING. IT FEELS GOOD TO HEAR THAT.
I'M JUST – I'M TRYING TO WRAP MY HEAD AROUND ALL THIS. IT'S A LOT, YOU KNOW? I CAN'T UNDERSTAND HOW YOU COULD BE OKAY WITH HAVING BOOBS, WEARING DRESSES, AND NOW THIS NEW HAIR. IT'S LIKE YOU'RE EMBRACING THE CHANGES THEY FORCED ON YOU.
JOSH--
BUT IT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT YOU LOOK... REALLY GOOD. LIKE, REALLY, REALLY GOOD. I'M A SIMPLE GUY. I ONLY WANT YOU TO BE HAPPY.
I DON'T THINK YOU'RE AS SIMPLE AS YOU BELIEVE. AND, YOU KNOW WHAT? I *AM* MOSTLY, KINDA, SORTA HAPPY. HELL, AT LEAST I'M NOT A BRUNETTE ANYMORE!


NOW – KEYS, PLEASE.
MY KEYS? WHY? WHAT'S GOING ON?
I'M DRIVING. AND IT'S A SURPRISE. TRUST ME?
ALL RIGHT, HERE. BUT IF YOU CRASH MY BABY, YOU'RE GONNA BE THE ONE TALKING TO MRS. FERRIS ABOUT UPPING THAT CREDIT CARD LIMIT.
DEAL. NOW, NO MORE QUESTIONS. GET IN THE CAR.


HEY, LEARN TO DRIVE, BITCH!
EAT A DICK!
JESUS! DO YOU ACTUALLY KNOW HOW TO DRIVE STICK?
THEORETICALLY? YES. PRACTICALLY? UM, I FIGURE IT'S LIKE SEX - MESSY THE FIRST TIME, BUT IT GETS BETTER WITH PRACTICE.
396 BAB


WE'RE AN HOUR OUTSIDE OF BOSTON. WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU TAKING ME?
PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE. JUST ENJOY THE RIDE.
PATIENCE, MY ASS. WE'RE ABOUT TO CROSS STATE LINES. AND WHY THE HELL DO YOU DO THAT REVERSE PEACE SIGN THING WHEN YOU'RE FLIPPING SOMEONE OFF? WHY NOT JUST GIVE THEM THE MIDDLE FINGER LIKE A NORMAL PERSON?
YOU KNOW HOW MY DAD WAS FROM BRITAIN, RIGHT? THAT'S HOW THEY DO IT OVER THERE. HE USED TO DO IT ALL THE TIME, ESPECIALLY WHEN DRIVING. I GUESS I JUST PICKED IT UP FROM HIM AS A KID AND KEPT DOING IT EVEN AFTER HE DIED.
HUH. NEVER KNEW THAT ABOUT YOU. OR HIM.
YEAH, THERE'S A LOT YOU DON'T KNOW. SAME WAY THERE'S A LOT I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU.
WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER SINCE WE WERE KIDS. HOW CAN THERE BE STUFF WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT EACH OTHER?
PEOPLE CHANGE. THEY GROW UP, THEY KEEP SECRETS, THEY... THEY GET FORCED INTO BEING SOMEONE ELSE.
JESUS...
DON'T. DON'T DO THAT PITY THING. LOOK, EVERYBODY GETS CHANGED BY FORCE ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. IT'S JUST NOT USUALLY AS BLATANT AS WHAT HAPPENED TO ME. YOU THINK YOU'RE THE SAME GUY YOU WERE AT FIFTEEN? HELL NO. LIFE FORCES YOU TO CHANGE, ADAPT, BECOME SOMEONE ELSE. YOU USED TO BE THIS BADASS ROBIN HOOD BURGLAR, RIGHT? TAKING FROM THE RICH, GIVING TO THE POOR - OR, WELL, US. AND NOW YOU'RE A PARALEGAL. MAKING GOOD MONEY, SURE, BUT...
BUT WHAT? YOU THINK I SOLD OUT?
I THINK THE WORLD FORCED YOU TO CHANGE, AND YOU ADAPTED. BUT ADAPTATING DOESN'T MEAN YOU NEED TO LOSE THE GOOD PARTS OF YOURSELF. AT LEAST, I HOPE NOT. ANYWAY, WE'RE ALMOST THERE.


HOLY SHIT... IS THAT THE OLD BRINLEY PLACE? THE FIRST SCORE WE EVER PULLED TOGETHER?
ONE AND THE SAME. FIGURED IT'D BE FUN TO TAKE A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE.
396 BAR


YOU SURE ABOUT THIS? LAST TIME, OLD MAN BRINLEY NEARLY BLEW A HOLE IN US WITH THAT ANCIENT MUSKET OF HIS.
RELAX. I DID MY RESEARCH. BRINLEY KICKED THE BUCKET TWO YEARS AGO. HIS KIDS HAVE BEEN TOO BUSY FIGHTING OVER THE WILL TO BOTHER WITH THIS PLACE. IT'S EMPTY.


THINK OF IT AS... UNAUTHORIZED URBAN EXPLORATION.
WE'RE IN THE COUNTRY NOT -- WAIT, YOU WANT TO GO INSIDE!?
WHY NOT? WE'RE HERE TO APPRECIATE THE HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURE AND... LIBERATE ANY NEGLECTED ARTIFACTS. FOR PRESERVATION PURPOSES, OF COURSE.


HOLD UP, THERE'S A LIGHT ON IN THE ATTIC. YOU SURE IT'S EMPTY?
PROBABLY JUST A SECURITY LIGHT ON A TIMER OR SOMETHING. DON'T BE SUCH A SCAREDY-CAT.


SCAREDY-CAT? ARE WE TWELVE? I'M BEING PRACTICAL. YOU WANT TO BLOW ALL THAT CREDIT CARD MONEY ON BAIL?
WE WON'T NEED BAIL BECAUSE WE'RE NOT GETTING CAUGHT. PLUS, IF THINGS GO SOUTH, I'LL JUST BAT MY EYELASHES AT THE COPS. WORKS EVERY TIME. PROBABLY. HAVEN'T ACTUALLY TRIED IT YET.

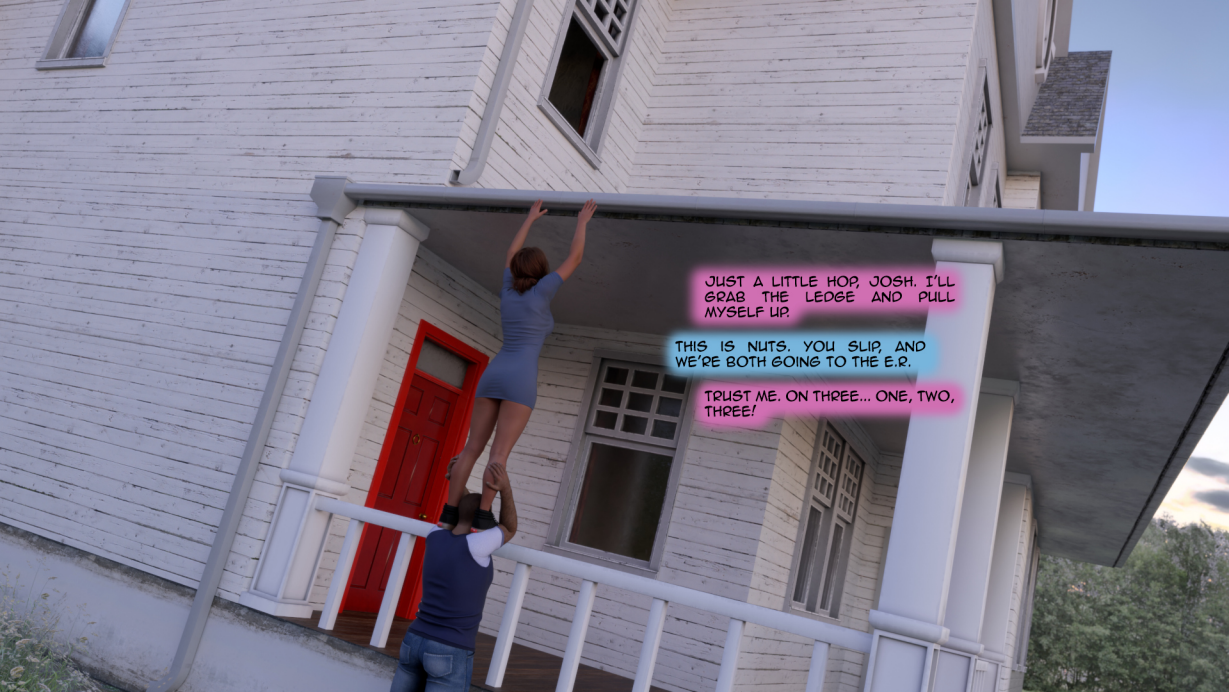

OH, GREAT PLAN. WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG?
HEY, WHAT HAPPENED TO THE JOSH WHO'D JUMP AT THE CHANCE FOR A LITTLE EXCITEMENT? THE ONE WHO'D RATHER BREAK INTO SOME RICH BASTARD'S HOUSE THAN WATCH THE RED SOX LOSE... AGAIN?
THAT JOSH GOT A JOB, RESPONSIBILITIES. HE WORRIES ABOUT THINGS LIKE CRIMINAL RECORDS AND FUTURE EMPLOYMENT.


BUT THAT SAME JOSH HAS A BIG HEART. HE WAS WILLING TO RISK HIS NECK BREAKING INTO MRS. FERRIS' PLACE FOR ME. THAT MEANS A LOT.
YEAH, WELL, I GUESS SOME THINGS... SOME *PEOPLE*... ARE WORTH THE RISK.
SPEAKING OF RISKS, GIVE ME A BOOST UP ONTO THE ROOF, WILL YOU? THERE'S A SECOND-FLOOR WINDOW THAT LOOKS LIKE IT'S OPEN.


BEFORE I TURN INTO YOUR PERSONAL LADDER, TELL ME WHAT THIS IS REALLY ABOUT. YOU'RE NOT HERE JUST FOR KICKS. THERE'S SOMETHING YOU'RE NOT SAYING.
THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING SOMEBODY ISN'T SAYING. LOOK, I HAVEN'T HAD FUN IN WHAT FEELS LIKE FOREVER. MY LIFE'S BEEN ONE GIANT SHITSHOW AFTER ANOTHER. AND I... I JUST WANT ONE NIGHT WHERE I CAN LAUGH AND NOT THINK ABOUT ALL THE CRAP THAT'S HAPPENED TO ME.
OKAY BUT BREAKING INTO AN OLD HOUSE? THAT'S YOUR IDEA OF FUN?
IT'S NOT ABOUT THE BREAK-IN. IT'S ABOUT FEELING ALIVE, DOING SOMETHING RECKLESS AND STUPID BECAUSE WE CAN. IT'S ABOUT RECLAIMING A PIECE OF MYSELF THAT I THOUGHT WAS GONE. THE PART THAT USED TO FIND JOY IN THE THRILL.
YEAH, I GET IT. I DO. IT'S JUST... LOOK AT US. WE'RE NOT KIDS ANYMORE. OUR ACTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES.


SO WHAT? WE GIVE UP ON EVER HAVING FUN AGAIN BECAUSE WE'RE SEMI-ADULTS? SCREW THAT! I WANT TO FEEL MY HEART RACING, NOT FROM FEAR OR PAIN, BUT FROM EXCITEMENT. JUST FOR TODAY, LET'S PRETEND WE'RE THOSE STUPID FEARLESS TEENAGERS AGAIN.
FEARLESS? YOU WERE TERRIFIED OF GETTING CAUGHT EVERY SINGLE TIME.
BUT WE DID IT ANYWAY! BECAUSE IT WAS A RUSH!
ALRIGHT, FINE. BUT IF WE END UP IN HANDCUFFS, YOU'RE GETTING MRS. FERRIS TO PAY MY LEGAL BILLS.
DEAL! NOW COME ON, BOOST ME UP.


ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE ONLY WAY UP?
ALMOST GOT IT... JUST NEED ANOTHER INCH OR TWO. STAND UP STRAIGHT, WILL YA?
EASY FOR YOU TO SAY. YOU'RE NOT THE ONE WITH A FULL-GROWN... PERSON... ON YOUR SHOULDERS.
OH, COME ON, I'M NOT THAT HEAVY. HOLD ON, STAY STILL...


JUST A LITTLE HOP, JOSH. I'LL GRAB THE LEDGE AND PULL MYSELF UP.
THIS IS NUTS. YOU SLIP, AND WE'RE BOTH GOING TO THE E.R.
TRUST ME. ON THREE... ONE, TWO, THREE!


SHIT! THESE DAMN BOOBS ARE IN THE WAY! AND MY UPPER BODY STRENGTH IS REALLY NOT WHAT IT USED TO BE.


IF YOU FALL, I'VE GOT YOU. BUT PLEASE DON'T FALL.
DON'T WORRY, I WON'T. I'VE GOT THIS! JUST NEED TO... SWING A LITTLE.


HA! SEE? TOLD YOU I COULD DO IT. NOW TO FIND A WAY DOWNSTAIRS AND LET YOU IN. STAY PUT, I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.


BE CAREFUL IN THERE! WHO KNOWS WHAT KIND OF *THINGS* HAVE MADE THAT PLACE THEIR HOME.
AWW, IS SOMEONE AFRAID OF A FEW LITTLE SPIDERS? DON'T WORRY, I'LL PROTECT YOU FROM THE BIG BAD BUGS.
HEY, I'M NOT AFRAID! I'M JUST... CAUTIOUS. SPIDERS ARE SNEAKY LITTLE BASTARDS.
SURE, SURE. THE GREAT JOSH, MASTER THIEF, UNDONE BY A FEW ARACHNIDS. YOUR SECRET'S SAFE WITH ME.
JUST HURRY UP AND FIND THE FRONT DOOR, WILL YA? I DON'T WANT TO BE OUT HERE ALL NIGHT.
YOUR WISH IS MY COMMAND, OH BRAVE ONE. BE DOWN IN A SEC!


WHAT'S TAKING HER SO LONG? IT'S BEEN, WHAT, FIFTEEN MINUTES? MAYBE MORE?
THIS WAS A BAD IDEA. A REALLY, REALLY BAD IDEA. WHAT IF SHE'S HURT? WHAT IF THERE'S SOMEONE IN THERE? SHIT, WHAT IF THE COPS SHOW UP?
OKAY, OKAY. CALM DOWN. SHE'S FINE. SHE'S PROBABLY JUST... EXPLORING OR SOMETHING. YOU KNOW HOW SHE GETS.
BUT WHAT IF SHE'S NOT FINE? WHAT IF SHE NEEDS HELP? FUCK, I SHOULD'VE GONE IN WITH HER.


SANDY? HEY, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
COME ON, THIS ISN'T FUNNY ANYMORE! JUST OPEN THE DAMN DOOR!
SANDY! IF YOU DON'T ANSWER ME IN THE NEXT THIRTY SECONDS, I'M COMING IN AFTER YOU!
PLEASE BE OKAY. PLEASE BE OKAY. I CAN'T LOSE YOU AGAIN. NOT LIKE THIS.


THAT'S IT. TIME'S UP. HOLD ON, SANDY. I'M COMING!


WELL, HELLO THERE, HANDSOME. FANCY MEETING YOU HERE.
SANDY? WHAT THE... WHERE DID YOU... HOW...?


LIKE MY DRESS?
Y-YEAH. YOU LOOK... WOW. I MEAN, YOU ALWAYS LOOK GREAT, BUT THIS... YOU'RE GORGEOUS.
FLATTERER. NOW, ARE YOU GOING TO STAND THERE GAWKING ALL NIGHT, OR ARE YOU GOING TO COME INSIDE?
INSIDE? BUT I THOUGHT... AREN'T WE TRESPASSING?
I HAVE A LITTLE CONFESSION TO MAKE. I MAY HAVE RENTED THIS PLACE FOR THE WEEKEND. JUST FOR US.
RENTED? BUT I THOUGHT... WAIT, WHAT?
SURPRISE! I WANTED TO DO SOMETHING SPECIAL, JUST THE TWO OF US. AND WHAT BETTER PLACE THAN WHERE IT ALL BEGAN?


HOLY... DID YOU COOK ALL THIS?
GOD, NO. CAN YOU IMAGINE? I HIRED AN EXECUTIVE CHEF. HE FINISHED RIGHT BEFORE WE ARRIVED. ALL I HAD TO DO WAS TAKE THE FOIL OFF AND SET THE TABLE. THAT'S WHY IT TOOK ME SO LONG.

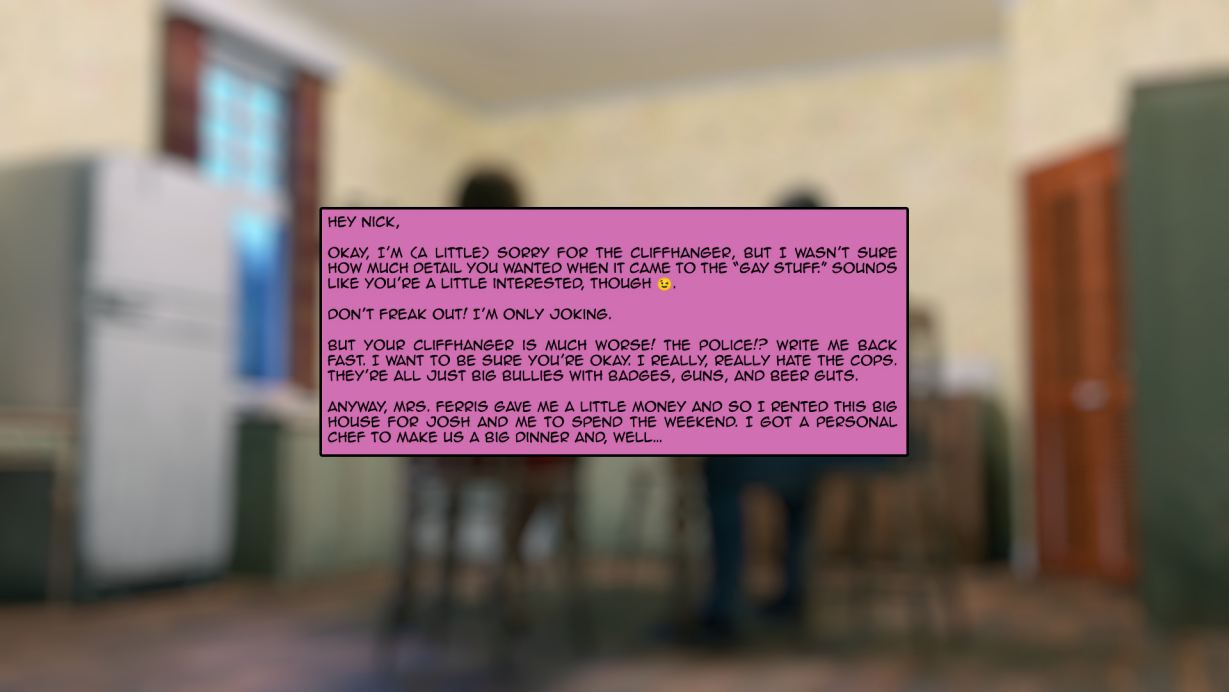

I WANTED TO DO THIS FOR YOU BECAUSE... WELL, BECAUSE YOU'VE DONE SO MUCH FOR ME. WHEN I WAS AT MY LOWEST, WHEN I DIDN'T KNOW WHO I WAS OR WHAT I WAS GOING TO DO, YOU WERE THERE FOR ME. YOU GAVE ME A PLACE TO STAY, A SHOULDER TO LEAN ON. YOU NEVER JUDGED ME, EVEN WHEN I WAS A COMPLETE MESS.
HEY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO--

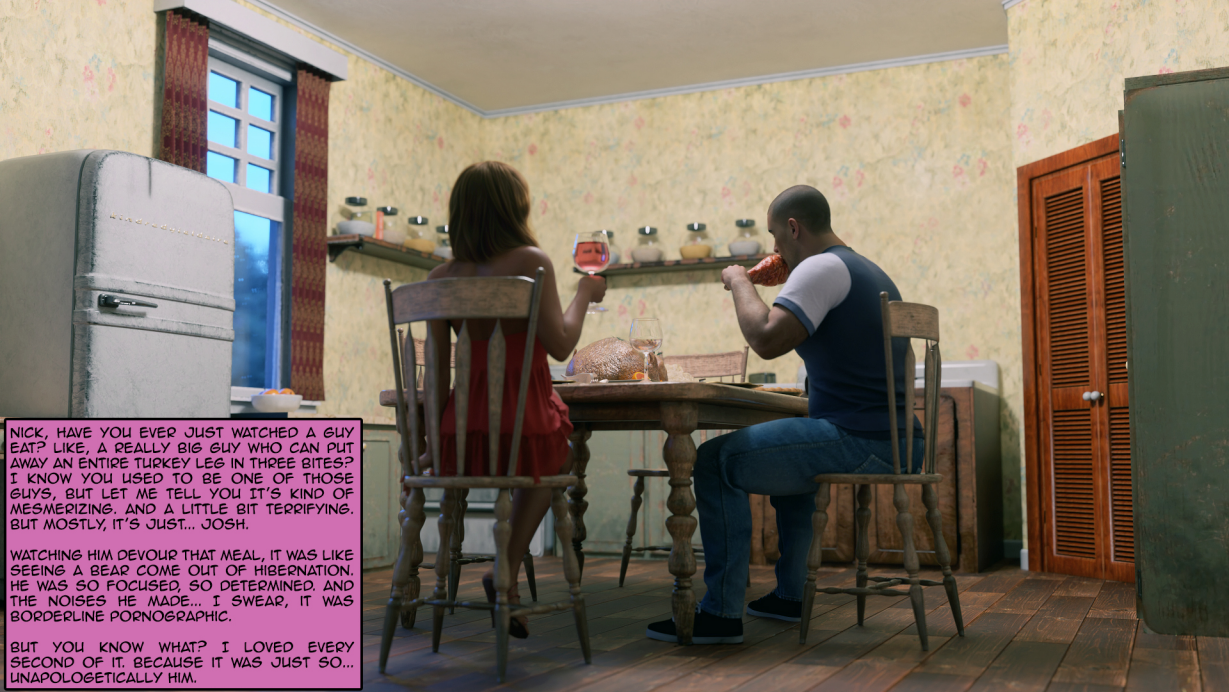

NO, PLEASE, LET ME SAY THIS. I KNOW I CAN NEVER FULLY REPAY YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE, BUT THIS IS A START. THIS WEEKEND, IT'S MY TURN TO TAKE CARE OF YOU. TO SHOW YOU HOW MUCH YOU MEAN TO ME.
I... I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY ANYTHING. JUST ENJOY IT. ENJOY *US*. WE'VE BEEN THROUGH SO MUCH. WE DESERVE A LITTLE HAPPINESS, DON'T YOU THINK?


YEAH, WE DO. THIS IS... THIS IS INCREDIBLE. THANK YOU. BUT, WAIT, WHY'D YOU CLIMB ONTO THE DAMN ROOF THEN!?
WELL, I COULDN'T RESIST. IT WAS TOO MUCH FUN WATCHING YOU GET ALL FLUSTERED.
OH, SO YOU WERE JUST MESSING WITH ME? I SEE HOW IT IS.
COME ON, ADMIT IT. IT WAS A LITTLE BIT THRILLING, WASN'T IT? JUST LIKE OLD TIMES.
YEAH, I GUESS IT WAS. BUT NEXT TIME, GIVE ME A HEADS UP BEFORE YOU DECIDE TO SCALE A BUILDING, OKAY?
WHERE'S THE FUN IN THAT? BESIDES, I NEEDED AN EXCUSE TO CLIMB ON THOSE BIG, STRONG SHOULDERS OF YOURS.


YOU KNOW, IF YOU ACTUALLY DO INHERIT ALL THOSE MILLIONS FROM MRS. FERRIS, YOU'RE GOING TO BE AN ABSOLUTE NIGHTMARE.
OH, COMPLETELY. I'LL BE THE MOST INSUFFERABLE RICH BITCH YOU'VE EVER MET. DESIGNER CLOTHES, FANCY CARS, PRIVATE JETS... I'LL HAVE IT ALL.
GOD HELP US.
HEY, LET'S DIG INTO THIS FEAST BEFORE IT GETS COLD. I DIDN'T HIRE A FIVE-STAR CHEF FOR NOTHING!


YOU KNOW, IT DOESN'T SEEM TO MATTER HOW FAR WE'VE STRAYED FROM EACH OTHER OVER THE YEARS, SOMEHOW WE ALWAYS FIND OUR WAY BACK. IT'S LIKE WE'RE CONNECTED BY A BUNGEE CORD, ALWAYS PULLING US TOGETHER.
I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, NO MATTER HOW MUCH CHANGES, THIS - US - IT'S THE ONE CONSTANT. THE ONE THING I CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON.
I'LL ALWAYS BE HERE FOR YOU. NO MATTER WHO YOU CHOOSE TO BE. THAT'S A PROMISE.


HEY NICK,
OKAY, I'M (A LITTLE) SORRY FOR THE CLIFFHANGER, BUT I WASN'T SURE HOW MUCH DETAIL YOU WANTED WHEN IT CAME TO THE "GAY STUFF." SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE A LITTLE INTERESTED, THOUGH 😉.
DON'T FREAK OUT! I'M ONLY JOKING.
BUT YOUR CLIFFHANGER IS MUCH WORSE! THE POLICE!? WRITE ME BACK FAST. I WANT TO BE SURE YOU'RE OKAY. I REALLY, REALLY HATE THE COPS. THEY'RE ALL JUST BIG BULLIES WITH BADGES, GUNS, AND BEER GUTS.
ANYWAY, MRS. FERRIS GAVE ME A LITTLE MONEY AND SO I RENTED THIS BIG HOUSE FOR JOSH AND ME TO SPEND THE WEEKEND. I GOT A PERSONAL CHEF TO MAKE US A BIG DINNER AND, WELL...


NICK, HAVE YOU EVER JUST WATCHED A GUY EAT? LIKE, A REALLY BIG GUY WHO CAN PUT AWAY AN ENTIRE TURKEY LEG IN THREE BITES? I KNOW YOU USED TO BE ONE OF THOSE GUYS, BUT LET ME TELL YOU IT'S KIND OF MESMERIZING. AND A LITTLE BIT TERRIFYING. BUT MOSTLY, IT'S JUST... JOSH.
WATCHING HIM DEVOUR THAT MEAL, IT WAS LIKE SEEING A BEAR COME OUT OF HIBERNATION. HE WAS SO FOCUSED, SO DETERMINED. AND THE NOISES HE MADE... I SWEAR, IT WAS BORDERLINE PORNOGRAPHIC.
BUT YOU KNOW WHAT? I LOVED EVERY SECOND OF IT. BECAUSE IT WAS JUST SO... UNAPOLOGETICALLY HIM.


MAYBE IT'S THE WINE TALKING (WE'D GONE THROUGH A COUPLE OF BOTTLES ALREADY), BUT I SWEAR, IN THAT MOMENT, HE WAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING I'D EVER SEEN. GRAVY STAINS AND ALL.
IS THAT CRAZY? PROBABLY. BUT THEN AGAIN, WHEN HAS ANYTHING ABOUT US EVER BEEN SANE OR NORMAL?
ESPECIALLY NOW.
OKAY, I SURRENDER. I'M STUFFED! THAT WAS INCREDIBLE. I CAN'T REMEMBER THE LAST TIME I ATE THAT WELL.
I'M GLAD YOU ENJOYED IT. YOU DESERVE TO BE SPOILED. HONESTLY, I WOULDN'T BE HERE IF IT WASN'T FOR YOU. AND I'M NOT JUST TALKING ABOUT WHEN I STUMBLED INTO THE MAGIC POUR PARLOR IN A JEAN SKIRT.
EVEN BEFORE THAT, YOU WERE ALWAYS THERE FOR ME.


THAT'S NOT ENTIRELY TRUE, THOUGH. WE WERE BEST FRIENDS, SURE, BUT... WE STARTED TO DRIFT APART. BECAUSE OF THE CREW, BECAUSE OF THE JOBS WE WERE PULLING.
Y-YEAH, THAT SUCKED. WHEN THE CREW STARTED GETTING BIGGER, THINGS CHANGED. THE NEW GUYS, THEY WERE ROUGHER, MEANER. THEY DIDN'T GET US, GET OUR BOND.
AND I... I DIDN'T ALWAYS STAND UP FOR YOU THE WAY I SHOULD HAVE.
JOSH...
NO, LET ME SAY THIS. IT'S EATING AT ME. I GOT CAUGHT UP IN THE THRILL OF IT ALL, THE BIGGER SCORES, THE REPUTATION. AND I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW MUCH IT WAS HURTING YOU, HOW MUCH THEY WERE HURTING YOU, UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE.
WE WERE KIDS. WE WERE BOTH TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHO WE WERE, WHERE WE FIT IN.
BUT I SHOULD'VE BEEN THERE FOR YOU. I SHOULD'VE HAD YOUR BACK, NO MATTER WHAT. I'M SORRY, MAN. IF I'D BEEN LOOKING OUT FOR YOU, YOU WOULD'VE NEVER STARTED DOING SOLO JOBS. YOU NEVER WOULD'VE GONE TO THE FERRIS HOUSE. SO, THEN, YOU WOULDN'T--
H-HEY, LET'S NOT DWELL ON THE PAST. REMEMBER WHEN WE USED TO DREAM ABOUT LIVING LIKE THIS? BACK WHEN WE WERE PULLING OFF THOSE STUPID HEISTS?


YEAH, I REMEMBER. WE'D TALK ABOUT ALL THE FANCY STUFF WE'D BUY ONCE WE HIT IT BIG. SPORTS CARS, MANSIONS, PRIVATE ISLANDS...
AND DON'T FORGET THE SOLID GOLD TOILET SEATS. THAT WAS YOUR IDEA, IF I RECALL.
HEY, IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE RICH, YOU MIGHT AS WELL BE RIDICULOUS ABOUT IT.


BUT HONESTLY, I'D TRADE ALL THAT IMAGINARY MONEY FOR JUST ONE MORE DAY LIKE THIS. SIMPLE, BUT PERFECT.
WELL, LUCKY FOR US, WE GET *TWO* MORE DAYS BEFORE WE HAVE TO GO BACK TO REALITY.
THANK GOD. BUT AREN'T YOU GOING TO EAT MORE? YOU ONLY HAND A FEW PIECES OF TURKEY AND A TINY BITE OF PIE.
OH, WAIT, I KNOW THIS ONE! THE HANDBOOK THAT CAME WITH THESE BOOBS TOLD ME I SHOULD SAY, *"A GIRL'S GOTTA WATCH HER FIGURE!"*
OH, YOU'RE RIOT.


BUT HONESTLY, I WAS JUST SAVING ROOM FOR THE **REAL** DESSERT.
OH, UM, WELL, I GUESS I COULD HAVE A LITTLE MORE.


I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT FOOD, JOSH.
OH... OH!
YOU KNOW, IT'S A MIRACLE YOU EVER GOT LAID IN HIGH SCHOOL. YOU'RE ABOUT AS DENSE AS A TITANIUM WALL SOMETIMES.


HEY! I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW I WAS QUITE THE LADIES' MAN BACK IN THE DAY.
OH REALLY? YOU'RE FORGETTING I WAS THERE. I KNOW HOW MANY OF THOSE "LADIES" WERE ACTUALLY YOUR RIGHT HAND.
I'M OFFENDED. I'M LEFT-HANDED!


BUT SERIOUSLY, HOW'D YOU NOT PICK UP ON MY INCREDIBLY SUBTLE HINT ABOUT "DESSERT?" I WAS TRYING TO BE COY, BUT... WHOOSH!
I THOUGHT YOU MEANT LIKE, CAKE OR SOMETHING.
MEN ARE SO DISGUSTING -- ALWAYS THINKING WITH THEIR STOMACHS.
HAR HAR HAR.
BUT DON'T WORRY. I DO HAVE CAKE FOR YOU.
UM.
COME ON!


LET'S GO UPSTAIRS. I'VE GOT A SURPRISE.
ANOTHER ONE? I DON'T KNOW IF MY HEART CAN TAKE ANY MORE SURPRISES TODAY.


I KNOW, I KNOW. I SHOULD'VE TOLD JOSH ABOUT MY TRYST (LOOK IT UP) WITH JESSICA BEFORE I BASICALLY TRIED TO SEDUCE HIM. BUT HE WAS ALREADY STRUGGLING SO MUCH WITH THE IDEA THAT I'D BEEN "COERCED" INTO BEING A GIRL. I DIDN'T WANT TO MAKE MATTERS EVEN MORE CONFUSING.
IT'S NOT THAT I'M ASHAMED OR ANYTHING. FAR FROM IT. WHAT HAPPENED WITH JESSICA... IT FELT RIGHT. NATURAL, EVEN. BUT IT ALSO FELT... TEMPORARY. I DOUBT SHE FEELS MUCH ABOUT ME. SHE JUST MISSES SOPHIA.
AND JOSH... HE'S NOT READY FOR THAT CONVERSATION. NOT YET. HE'S STILL SEEING ME AS TWO SEPARATE PEOPLE – SCOTT, HIS BUDDY, AND SANDY, THE GIRL HE HELPED. I NEED TO LET HIM COME TO TERMS WITH THAT FIRST BEFORE I THROW ANOTHER WRENCH INTO THE MIX.
I'LL TELL HIM EVENTUALLY, OF COURSE. HE DESERVES TO KNOW. THEY BOTH DO. BUT FOR NOW, I JUST WANT TO FOCUS ON US. IS THAT SELFISH?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME. I ALREADY KNOW THE ANSWER. BUT, HEY, IF I'M GOING TO BE A RICH BITCH, I MIGHT AS WELL EMBRACE A LITTLE SELFISHNESS, RIGHT? GOD KNOWS I'VE EARNED IT AFTER EVERYTHING I'VE BEEN THROUGH.
YOU TOO, BY THE WAY.


OH MY GOD, LOOK AT THAT ANCIENT TV! I THINK MY GRANDPARENTS HAD ONE LIKE THAT.
YEAH, I'M PRETTY SURE THAT THING IS OLDER THAN BOTH OF US COMBINED.
HEY, MAYBE IT STILL WORKS. WE COULD WATCH SOME CLASSIC TV LATER - LIKE FROM THE AIR-WAVES.
I THINK I'LL PASS. I'VE HAD ENOUGH NOSTALGIA FOR ONE DAY.


OH, BUT THE NOSTALGIA TRAIN HASN'T REACHED ITS FINAL STOP YET. CHECK OUT WHAT'S MOUNTED ABOVE THE BED.
IS THAT... IS THAT THE MUSKET THAT ALMOST TOOK MY HEAD OFF LAST TIME WE WERE HERE?
THE VERY SAME. APPARENTLY, IT CAME WITH THE RENTAL. TALK ABOUT A BLAST FROM THE PAST, HUH?
WOW, THAT'S... THAT'S SOMETHING. YOU SURE IT'S NOT LOADED?
YES, JOSH, I MADE SURE TO CHECK FOR STRAY BULLETS BEFORE I DECIDED TO SEDUCE YOU IN THIS ROOM.
SEDUCE? IS THAT WHAT WE'RE CALLING THIS?
YEAH. BECAUSE IF YOU PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT, A *DIFFERENT* HEAD MIGHT GET, UM, BLOWN TONIGHT.


SORRY, THAT SOUNDED A LOT SEXIER IN MY HEAD. I'M NOT TOO GOOD AT THIS "HOT GIRL" SCHTICK YET.
YOU... YOU ARE HOT. STUNNING, REALLY. BUT I NEED TO KNOW THAT THIS IS WHAT YOU *REALLY* WANT. NOT JUST BECAUSE YOU THINK IT'S WHAT I WANT, OR BECAUSE YOU FEEL LIKE YOU OWE ME.
JOSH...
I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH HELL. YOU'VE HAD SO MUCH TAKEN AWAY FROM YOU, SO MUCH FORCED UPON YOU. I CAN'T EVEN BEGIN TO IMAGINE HOW THAT FEELS. BUT I DON'T WANT TO BE ANOTHER PERSON WHO TAKES ADVANTAGE OF YOU, WHO PUSHES YOU INTO SOMETHING YOU'RE NOT READY FOR.
YOU COULD NEVER TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ME. NOT YOU. JOSH, THIS ISN'T ABOUT OBLIGATION OR GRATITUDE. IT'S ABOUT HOW I FEEL WHEN I'M WITH YOU.
BUT HOW CAN YOU BE SURE? HOW DO YOU KNOW IT'S NOT JUST A REACTION TO THE TRAUMA, A WAY TO COPE WITH EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED?
HEY, CAN YOU CROUCH DOWN A LITTLE, PLEASE?
UM. SURE, BUT WHY?
BECAUSE YOU'RE TOO DAMN TALL!


LISTEN TO ME. EVEN IF I DIDN'T CHOOSE THIS BEFORE... I'M CHOOSING IT NOW. AND THAT DECISION STARTED WITH YOU. WHEN YOU INSTANTLY ACCEPTED ME, WHEN YOU GAVE ME MY NEW NAME, WHEN YOU KISSED ME ON THAT ROOFTOP.
WHAT MRS. FERRIS AND MORTIMER DID TO ME WAS FUCKED UP AND ALL KINDS OF ILLEGAL. BUT... I WOULDN'T GO BACK TO BEING A GUY, EVEN IF I COULD.
YOU... YOU WOULDN'T?
NO. I WOULDN'T. BECAUSE BEING WITH YOU, LIKE THIS... IT FEELS RIGHT. IT FEELS LIKE HOME. AND I KNOW IT'S NOT JUST BECAUSE OF THE HORMONES OR THE SURGERIES OR ANY OF THAT.
SANDY...


SEE? THAT NAME... IT FITS ME NOW. IT'S NOT JUST A COVER OR A DISGUISE. IT'S ME. THE REAL ME. AND I WANT TO SHARE THAT WITH YOU, IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE.
I... I'M SCARED. I'M FALLING FOR YOU, HARD. BUT WHAT IF ONE DAY YOU WAKE UP AND REALIZE THAT THIS ISN'T WHAT YOU WANT? THAT BEING FORCED INTO THIS LIFE WAS A TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE THING? I DON'T THINK I COULD HANDLE LOSING YOU, NOT AGAIN. IT WOULD KILL ME.
JOSH...
I MEAN, HOW COULD ANYONE BE *OKAY* WITH WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? IT'S UNTHINKABLE! AND YET, HERE YOU ARE, SAYING YOU WOULDN'T GO BACK EVEN IF YOU COULD. BUT WHAT IF THAT CHANGES? WHAT IF YOU RESENT ME FOR NOT TRYING HARDER TO HELP YOU GO BACK TO BEING SCOTT?
STOP. LISTEN TO ME. I KNOW MY OWN MIND. I KNOW MY OWN HEART. AND BOTH ARE TELLING ME THAT THIS, RIGHT HERE, WITH YOU... IT'S EXACTLY WHERE I'M MEANT TO BE.
BUT--


I SHUT HIM UP THE ONLY WAY I KNEW HOW – WITH A KISS.
I FELT HIM START TO RELAX. HIS BIG ARMS WRAPPED AROUND ME, PULLING ME CLOSER. AND THEN HE WAS KISSING ME JUST LIKE HE DID ON THAT ROOFTOP.
OH, NIKKI, I WISH I COULD DESCRIBE WHAT IT'S LIKE. IT'S THE FEELING OF MELTING INTO THEM UNTIL YOU CAN'T TELL WHERE YOU END AND THEY BEGIN. IT'S TERRIFYING AND EXHILARATING ALL AT ONCE. LIKE JUMPING OUT OF A PLANE WITHOUT A PARACHUTE, BUT KNOWING SOMEONE'S THERE TO CATCH YOU.
I HOPE YOU GET TO FEEL SOMETHING LIKE THAT ONE DAY. MAYBE SOON.


WELL, I'M GLAD WE GOT THAT CLEARED UP. AND, UH, THANK YOU. FOR CHOOSING ME, FOR TRUSTING ME.
YOU'RE WELCOME. AND YOU KNOW, THERE IS ONE THING I REALLY MISS ABOUT THE OLD DAYS...
YEAH? WHAT'S THAT?
I ALWAYS LIKED IT WHEN YOU TOOK CHARGE. WHEN YOU WERE RUNNING THE CREW, AND ALSO... WHEN WE WERE TOGETHER...
IS THAT SO? WELL THEN, WHY DON'T YOU START BY PLEASE TAKING OFF THOSE CLOTHES?
YES, SIR. RIGHT AWAY, SIR.


BETTER LOCK THIS. DON'T WANT MORTIMER BARGING IN ON US AGAIN.
THIS TIME, I'D LET YOU KILL HIM.


SO... YOU SAID YOU WANTED CAKE, RIGHT? WELL, HERE I AM. YOUR OWN PERSONAL DESSERT. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO WITH ME?
GOD, YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL. I WANT TO TASTE EVERY INCH OF YOU.
DEFINITELY FEWER INCHES THAN BEFORE, BUT THEY'RE SENSITIVE ONES!
WHY DON'T YOU GET ON THE BED? LET ME WORSHIP YOU THE WAY YOU DESERVE.
YES, SIR.


IS THIS WHAT YOU HAD IN MIND?
OH, IT'S EVEN BETTER. LAY BACK, SANDY.


I BELIEVE WE HAVE SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM THE LAST TIME WE WERE TOGETHER. SOMETHING ABOUT ME PUTTING MY MOUTH ON YOU...
Y-YES, I SEEM TO REMEMBER THAT. BEFORE WE WERE SO RUDELY INTERRUPTED.
WELL, THERE'S NO ONE TO INTERRUPT US NOW. I'M GOING TO TAKE MY TIME WITH YOU, TASTE YOU UNTIL YOU'RE BEGGING FOR MORE.

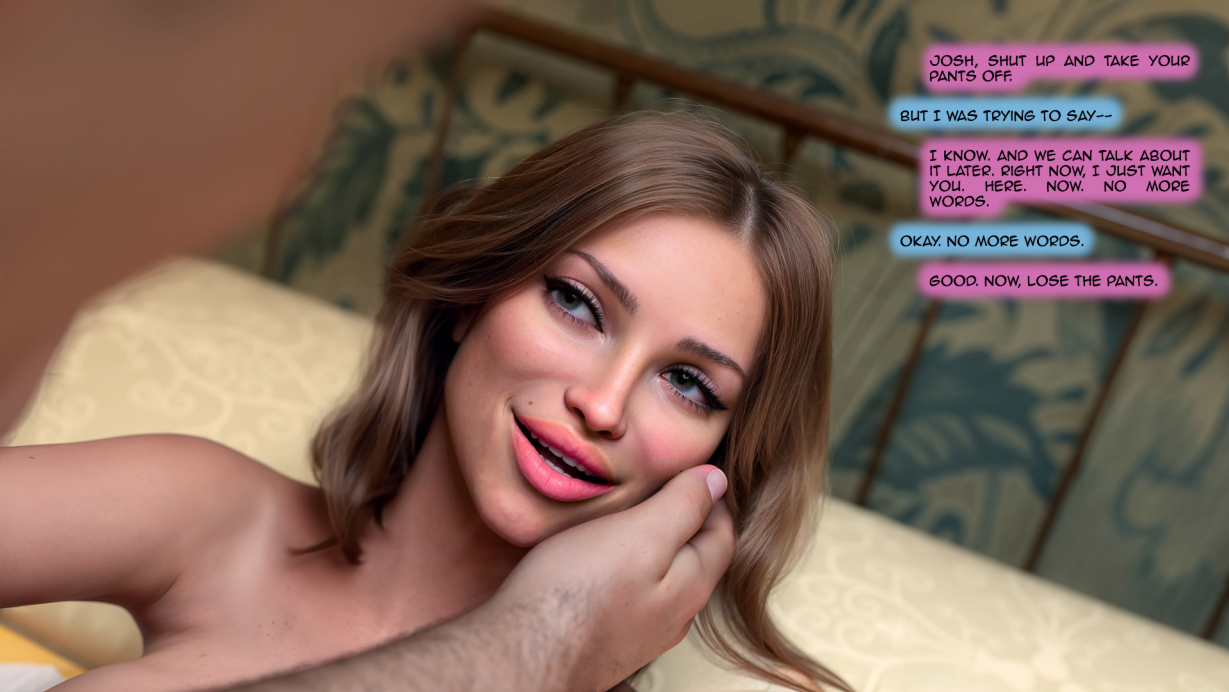

JOSH... PLEASE...
PLEASE WHAT, BABE? TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT.
I WANT YOUR MOUTH ON ME. PLEASE... I NEED IT. I NEED *YOU*.
FUCK, YOUR CUTE LITTLE MOANS ARE SEXY.
OH, FUCK! MMM. YES! THAT FEELS... *GASP* AMAZING.


So, Nick, where was I? Oh, right – the "gay stuff." Don't worry, I won't get into all the (amazing) details. But let's just say that Josh has a... particular set of skills. And he uses them very well.
I can almost see you getting ready to puke. Listen, don't knock it until you try it. Or maybe don't try it. I don't know. Just... be happy for me, okay?
Anyway, after dinner, things got a little... heated. In a good way. We talked a lot about the past, who we used to be, and who we are now. And then we decided to explore some... new dynamics in our relationship. Or, I guess, *interrupted* dynamics.


OH, JOSH... THAT'S... OH GOD...


I LOVE THE WAY YOU TASTE, SANDY. YOU'RE INCREDIBLE...
AND I... I LOVE THE WAY YOU TASTE ME. OH, FUCK!


GOD, YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL. LIKE, SERIOUSLY THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL I'VE EVER SEEN. WE'VE BEEN THROUGH SO MUCH TOGETHER, AND, WELL...
DAMMIT, I'M SO BAD AT THIS STUFF. I GUESS WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS THAT I... I THINK THAT I--


JOSH, SHUT UP AND TAKE YOUR PANTS OFF.
BUT I WAS TRYING TO SAY--
I KNOW. AND WE CAN TALK ABOUT IT LATER. RIGHT NOW, I JUST WANT YOU. HERE. NOW. NO MORE WORDS.
OKAY. NO MORE WORDS.
GOOD. NOW, LOSE THE PANTS.


YOU KNOW, I'M STARTING TO SEE THE APPEAL OF BEING TOLD WHAT TO DO IN THE BEDROOM.
A LITTLE ROLE REVERSAL CAN BE FUN, DON'T YOU THINK?
YES, MA'AM.
UGH. DO NOT MA'AM ME EVER AGAIN!
YES, UM... LADY?
REMEMBER HOW I SAID TO STOP TALKING?


WOW... I MEAN, I'VE SEEN YOU NAKED BEFORE, BUT... DAMN.
LIKE WHAT YOU SEE?
FIRST OF ALL, THAT IS A LAME LINE. SECOND OF ALL... HELL YES, I DO.
YOU KNOW, I USED TO THINK I WAS JUST JEALOUS OF YOUR MUSCLES, BUT MAYBE IT WAS ALWAYS MORE THAN THAT.
MORE?
MAYBE... MAYBE I WAS DRAWN TO YOU IN A WAY I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND BACK THEN. BUT SEEING YOU LIKE THIS NOW... IT'S MAKING ME REALIZE SOME THINGS.
LIKE?
THAT MAYBE MY FEELINGS FOR YOU WERE NEVER JUST ABOUT FRIENDSHIP. THAT MAYBE... I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ATTRACTED TO YOU, EVEN BEFORE EVERYTHING CHANGED.
AND YOU'RE SURE THIS ISN'T JUST THE ESTROGEN TALKING?

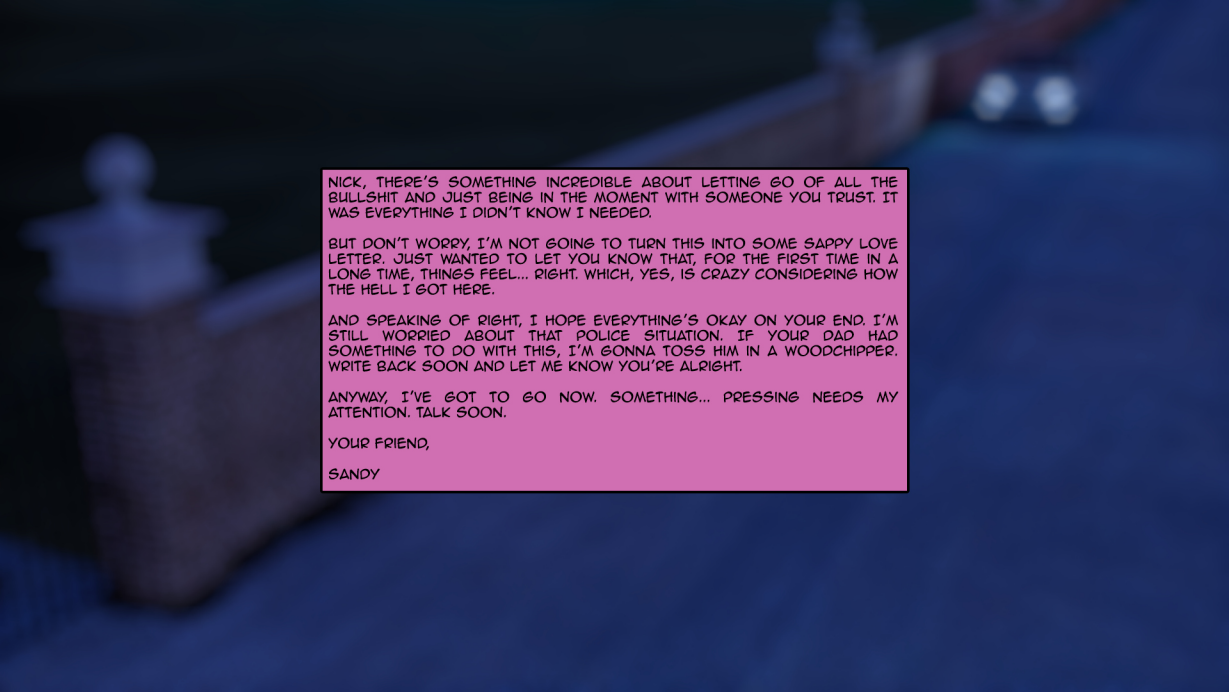

DON'T GO BACK TO THAT NOW, OKAY? IT'S **NOT** THE HORMONES. AT LEAST, NOT ENTIRELY. I GUESS I WAS ALWAYS BISEXUAL, AND I JUST DIDN'T REALIZE IT UNTIL NOW.
BISEXUAL? SO YOU'RE STILL INTO GIRLS, TOO?
Y-YEAH, I AM. THE WAY I FEEL ABOUT PEOPLE HASN'T CHANGED. LOOKING BACK, I'VE HAD FEELINGS FOR BOTH GUYS AND GIRLS. THE ESTROGEN DIDN'T MAKE ME GAY OR STRAIGHT, BUT IT'S DEFINITELY AN AMPLIFIER. IT MAKES EVERYTHING FEEL SHARPER. SOMETIMES THAT'S OVERWHELMING AND I HATE IT, BUT IT'S ALSO... CLARIFYING.
ANYWAY, **THE POINT** IS I LIKE YOUR DICK -- ESPECIALLY THE WAY YOU'RE HOLDING IT RIGHT NOW.
WHY ARE WE STILL TALKING!?
IF YOU DON'T WANT ME TO TALK, GIVE MY MOUTH SOMETHING BETTER TO DO.


YOU WANT SOMETHING BETTER TO DO WITH THAT MOUTH? HOW ABOUT YOU START BY USING IT ON MY NIPPLES? THEY'RE FINALLY GETTING SENSITIVITY BACK AFTER THE SURGERY, AND I'D LOVE FOR YOU TO HELP ME TEST THEM OUT.
I WAS HOPING YOU'D SAY THAT.


TELL ME IF IT'S TOO MUCH, OKAY?
OKAY, BUT DON'T BE TOO GENTLE. I WANT TO FEEL IT.
MMM, LIKE THIS?
OH, GOD... THAT'S PERFECT.


HEY, WHY DO YOU GET TO HAVE ALL THE FUN? I WANT TO MAKE YOU FEEL AS GOOD AS YOU MAKE ME FEEL.
I WON'T ARGUE WITH THAT. WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?
WELL, FIRST, I'M GOING TO START BY GETTING A GOOD GRIP ON THINGS. AND THEN...


AND THEN... I'LL MIMIC BEING YOUR EX-GIRLFRIEND, "LUCY LEFT HAND."
OH, FUCK... SANDY...
SOMEONE'S ENJOYING THIS ALREADY. THANK GOD WE HAVE THE WHOLE WEEKEND FOR SOME MORE... ADVANCED TECHNIQUES I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO TRYING OUT.


NICK, THERE'S SOMETHING INCREDIBLE ABOUT LETTING GO OF ALL THE BULLSHIT AND JUST BEING IN THE MOMENT WITH SOMEONE YOU TRUST. IT WAS EVERYTHING I DIDN'T KNOW I NEEDED.
BUT DON'T WORRY, I'M NOT GOING TO TURN THIS INTO SOME SAPPY LOVE LETTER. JUST WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW THAT, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME, THINGS FEEL... RIGHT. WHICH, YES, IS CRAZY CONSIDERING HOW THE HELL I GOT HERE.
AND SPEAKING OF RIGHT, I HOPE EVERYTHING'S OKAY ON YOUR END. I'M STILL WORRIED ABOUT THAT POLICE SITUATION. IF YOUR DAD HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THIS, I'M GONNA TOSS HIM IN A WOODCHIPPER. WRITE BACK SOON AND LET ME KNOW YOU'RE ALRIGHT.
ANYWAY, I'VE GOT TO GO NOW. SOMETHING... PRESSING NEEDS MY ATTENTION. TALK SOON.
YOUR FRIEND,
SANDY


THAT FEELS INCREDIBLE. YOUR MOUTH... GOD, I NEVER KNEW MY NIPPLES COULD BE SO SENSITIVE.
THEY'RE PERFECT, JUST LIKE THE REST OF YOU. I COULD SPEND HOURS WORSHIPING YOUR BODY.
GOOD, BECAUSE WE HAVE ALL WEEKEND. BUT RIGHT NOW, I WANT TO FOCUS ON YOU. HOW DOES THIS FEEL?


FUCK, SANDY... YOUR HAND... IT'S LIKE MAGIC. WHERE'D YOU LEARN TO DO THAT?
PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT. I DIDN'T HAVE A GIRLFRIEND FOR EVEN LONGER THAN YOU, REMEMBER?
WHY HAVE A GIRLFRIEND WHEN YOU CAN BECOME THE GIRLFRIEND?
IS THAT AN OFFER?
HA! IF I WAS A GIRL, I WOULDN'T EVEN BE ONE PERCENT AS PRETTY AS YOU. I'D LOOK LIKE A LINEBACKER IN A DRESS.
HEY, I'VE SEEN A QUARTERBACK IN A DRESS AND SHE WAS PRETTY AS HELL. NAH, YOU'D MAKE A CUTE GIRL. MAYBE NOT AS CUTE AS ME, BUT STILL...
YEAH, I'LL STICK TO BEING A GUY. BESIDES, SOMEONE'S GOTTA BE THE HANDSOME PRINCE TO YOUR BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS.


OH, GOD. I'M CLOSE!
DON'T HOLD BACK ON MY ACCOUNT.


SANDY... OH, FFFFUCK!
THAT'S IT. JUST LIKE THAT. GOOD BOY.


WOW... THAT WAS... AMAZING. YOU'RE AMAZING.
KEEP SAYING SHIT LIKE THAT AND MY EGO WILL GET AS BIG AS MY NEW BOOBS.


YOU HAVE A WAY OF MAKING EVERYTHING FEEL... PERFECT.
WELL, I TRY. DAMN, THESE MUSCLES FEEL NICE TO TOUCH. GOD, YOU'VE REALLY KEPT IN SHAPE. IT'S ALMOST UNFAIR.


GOTTA STAY FIT. NEVER KNOW WHEN I MIGHT NEED TO CARRY A BEAUTIFUL GIRL TO BED WHEN SHE GETS DRUNK ON WINE AND PIZZA.
THAT WAS ONE TIME!


HOW ABOUT WE MAKE IT A HABIT? YOU'RE CUTE WHEN YOU'RE DRUNK AND SLEEPY.
HEY, UM, I KNOW YOU'RE NOT A MACHINE BUT MAYBE LATER WE COULD TRY SOME MORE... ADVANCED TECHNIQUES.
YOU MEAN LIKE... YOGA? BECAUSE I GOTTA TELL YOU, MY FLEXIBILITY ISN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE.
THINK A LITTLE MORE INTIMATE. AND IT MIGHT INVOLVE A DIFFERENT... UM... ENTRY POINT.
OH... ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE READY FOR THAT?
I'M SURE I'M READY TO TRY. WITH YOU, I MEAN.


ACTUALLY, I'VE NEVER DONE ANYTHING LIKE THAT EITHER.
REALLY? I FIGURED YOU'D BE MR. EXPERIENCE WITH EVERYTHING.
NOPE. JUST A REGULAR GUY WITH REGULAR EXPERIENCES.
WELL, IT'S... IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S *IRREGULAR*.
SORRY, I DIDN'T MEAN - ANYWAY, YEAH, I'M UP TO TRY ANYTHING WITH YOU.
DAMN, THAT MASSAGE FEELS GOOD. YOU REALLY DO HAVE MAGIC HANDS.
JOSH... THERE'S SOMETHING IMPORTANT I NEED TO TELL YOU.


SURE, WHAT'S UP?
I'VE MADE A DECISION. I'M GOING TO TELL MRS. FERRIS THAT IF SHE WANTS ME TO BE HER DAUGHTER, IT'LL BE AS... WELL, AS A TRANS GIRL. I KNOW THAT'S NOT TECHNICALLY RIGHT, AND I FEEL WEIRD EVEN SAYING THAT -- LIKE I'M STEALING SOMEONE'S IDENTITY. BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW TO CATEGORIZE MYSELF, AND THAT'S CLOSEST.
WAIT, WHAT? ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS? I MEAN, YOU'RE IN TEXAS. THEY MAKE TRANSPHOBIA A DAMN NEAR OLYMPIC SPORT DOWN THERE.
I KNOW. IT WON'T BE EASY. BUT IT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN MAKE PEACE WITH ALL OF THIS. I'M SICK OF HIDING! I WANT TO KEEP MY PAST AS SCOTT. I DON'T WANT TO PRETEND THAT PART OF MY LIFE NEVER HAPPENED. IT SHAPED WHO I AM, AND IT LED ME TO YOU. THAT'S...IMPORTANT.
ARE YOU SURE FERRIS WILL BE ON BOARD? SHE SEEMS DEAD SET ON YOU BEING HER PERFECT LITTLE DAUGHTER.
FIRST OF ALL, I'M NOT THAT LITTLE! SECOND, IT'S NOT UP FOR NEGOTIATION. IF SHE WANTS ME IN HER LIFE, SHE HAS TO ACCEPT ALL OF ME. THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE IN-BETWEEN.
AND THERE'S, UM, SOMETHING MORE. I NEED A FAVOR.
ANYTHING.


ORGANIZE A REUNION OF OUR CREW FOR CHRISTMAS BREAK. THE ORIGINALS, NOT THE ASSHOLES WHO CAME LATER. I NEED TO SEE THEM AGAIN, TO... TO RE-INTRODUCE MYSELF.
UM, ARE YOU SURE THAT'S A GOOD IDEA? I MEAN, SOME OF THOSE GUYS... THEY'RE NOT THE MOST OPEN-MINDED BUNCH. THEY MIGHT NOT UNDERSTAND.
I HAVE TO TRY. THEY WERE OUR CHOSEN FAMILY FOR YEARS. I CAN'T PRETEND LIKE THEY DON'T EXIST. AND WHO KNOWS? MAYBE THEY'LL SURPRISE ME, JUST LIKE YOU DID.
I... I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU GET HURT. YOU REMEMBER HOW THEY USED TO TALK ABOUT, UH, 'ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLES.'
YEAH, AND I LAUGHED ALONG WITH THEM JUST TO FIT IN. MAYBE MOST OF THEM WERE, TOO. BUT I'M NOT THE SAME PERSON I WAS BACK THEN. OBVIOUSLY. I CAN STAND UP FOR MYSELF NOW, AND I'LL HAVE YOU BY MY SIDE. I... I GUESS WANT TO GIVE THEM A CHANCE. THEY WERE MY FRIENDS, AND I DON'T HAVE MANY OF THOSE.
OKAY. IF THIS IS WHAT YOU WANT, I'LL MAKE IT HAPPEN. BUT IF ANY OF THOSE GUYS SO MUCH AS LOOKS AT YOU SIDEWAYS...


MY HERO. BUT WE BOTH KNOW THAT WITH THIS BODY THEY'LL BE LOOKING AT ME ***ALL KINDS*** OF WAYS. BUT I CAN HANDLE MYSELF. I'VE BEEN THROUGH WORSE THAN A FEW NARROW-MINDED GUYS.
AND THANK YOU, AGAIN, FOR EVERYTHING. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'D DO WITHOUT YOU.
YOU'LL NEVER HAVE TO FIND OUT. I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.
GOOD. BECAUSE I HAVE PLANS FOR YOU, MISTER. BIG PLANS.
WHY DO I GET THE FEELING THESE PLANS INVOLVE MORE THAN JUST CUDDLING?
BECAUSE YOU'RE A SMART MAN. AND BECAUSE I'VE BEEN DREAMING ABOUT RIDING YOU LIKE A STOLEN FERRARI.
OH, FUCK...
THAT'S THE IDEA. BUT, FIRST, A SHOWER. JOIN ME!


SURE. I'LL... I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.