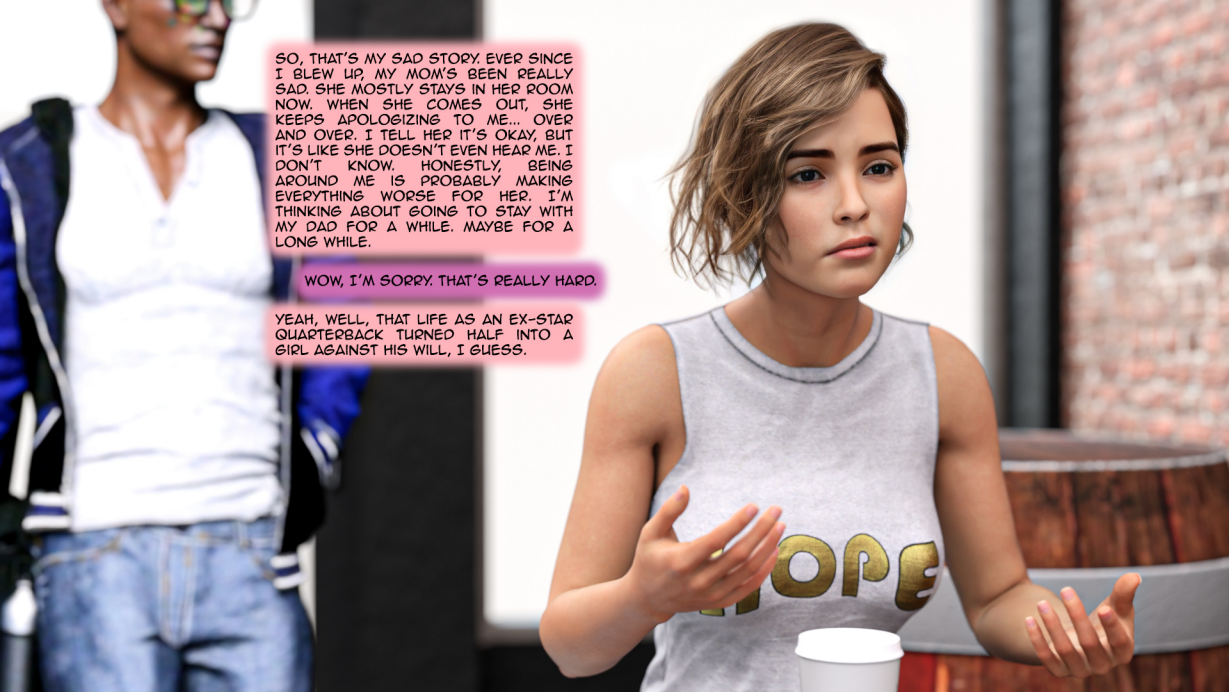
HALF SISTERS

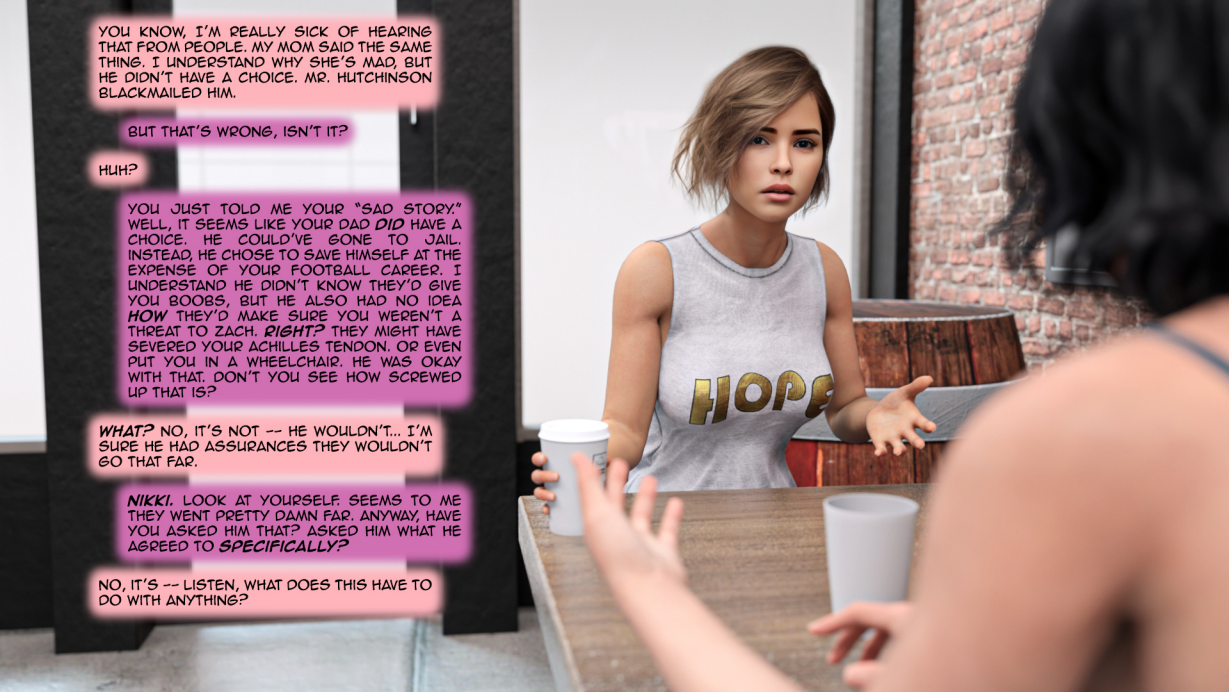
by Emory Ahlberg

Episode #4

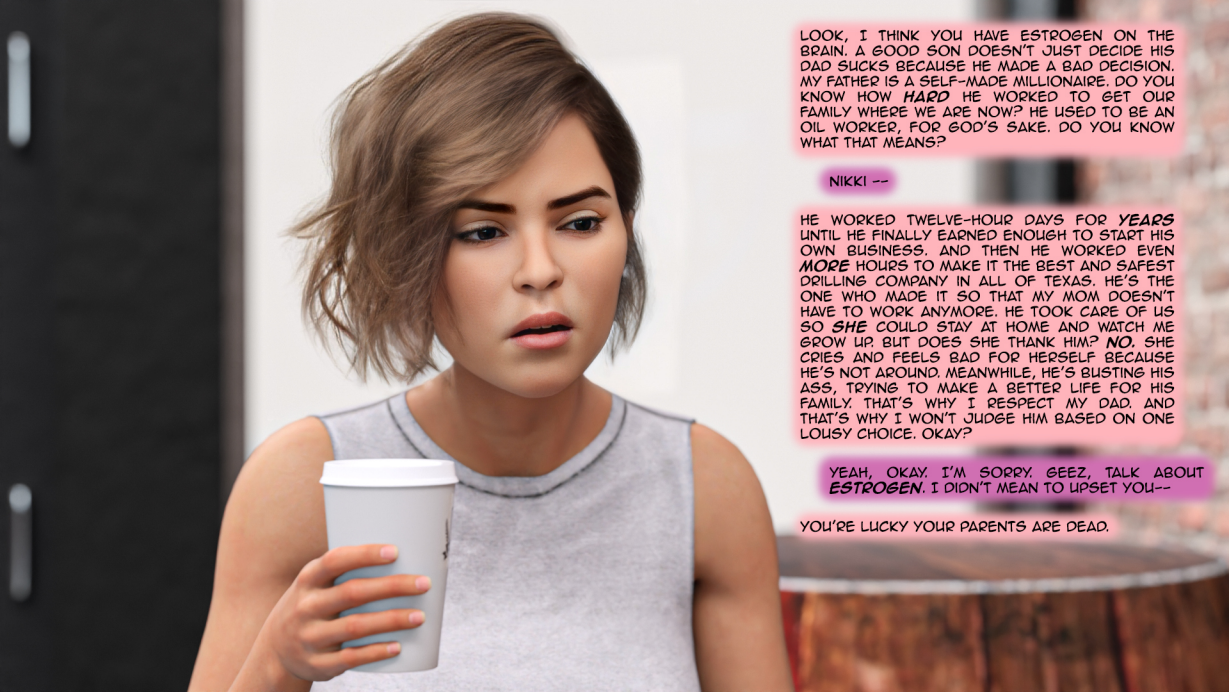
Sandy and Jessica Connect


SO, THAT'S MY SAD STORY. EVER SINCE I BLEW UP, MY MOM'S BEEN REALLY SAD. SHE MOSTLY STAYS IN HER ROOM NOW. WHEN SHE COMES OUT, SHE KEEPS APOLOGIZING TO ME... OVER AND OVER. I TELL HER IT'S OKAY, BUT IT'S LIKE SHE DOESN'T EVEN HEAR ME. I DON'T KNOW. HONESTLY, BEING AROUND ME IS PROBABLY MAKING EVERYTHING WORSE FOR HER. I'M THINKING ABOUT GOING TO STAY WITH MY DAD FOR A WHILE. MAYBE FOR A LONG WHILE.
WOW, I'M SORRY. THAT'S REALLY HARD.
YEAH, WELL, THAT LIFE AS AN EX-STAR QUARTERBACK TURNED HALF INTO A GIRL AGAINST HIS WILL, I GUESS.


HALF? NO. I'D PEG YOU AT...HM...AT LEAST TWO-THIRDS GIRL.
FIRST OF ALL, DON'T SAY "PEG." SECOND OF ALL, NOT FUNNY.
HEY, I PUT MYSELF AT SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT GIRL. NOT HAPPILY, BUT HEY...
THAT'S BECAUSE YOUR TITS MAKE UP, LIKE, MOST OF YOUR BODY MASS.
IT'S HARD TO ARGUE WITH FACTS.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, HONESTLY. I DON'T WANT TO BE A BURDEN ON MY DAD. HE'S A BUSY MAN, YOU KNOW? BUT I ALSO DON'T WANT TO PUT MY MOM IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL THIS CRAZINESS.
A BURDEN ON YOUR DAD? YOU REALIZE HE'S THE REASON YOU'RE GOING THROUGH ALL THIS, RIGHT?


YOU KNOW, I'M REALLY SICK OF HEARING THAT FROM PEOPLE. MY MOM SAID THE SAME THING. I UNDERSTAND WHY SHE'S MAD, BUT HE DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE. MR. HUTCHINSON BLACKMAILED HIM.
BUT THAT'S WRONG, ISN'T IT?
HUH?
YOU JUST TOLD ME YOUR "SAD STORY." WELL, IT SEEMS LIKE YOUR DAD *DID* HAVE A CHOICE. HE COULD'VE GONE TO JAIL. INSTEAD, HE CHOSE TO SAVE HIMSELF AT THE EXPENSE OF YOUR FOOTBALL CAREER. I UNDERSTAND HE DIDN'T KNOW THEY'D GIVE YOU BOOBS, BUT HE ALSO HAD NO IDEA *HOW* THEY'D MAKE SURE YOU WEREN'T A THREAT TO ZACH. *RIGHT?* THEY MIGHT HAVE SEVERED YOUR ACHILLES TENDON. OR EVEN PUT YOU IN A WHEELCHAIR. HE WAS OKAY WITH THAT. DON'T YOU SEE HOW SCREWED UP THAT IS?
WHAT? NO, IT'S NOT -- HE WOULDN'T... I'M SURE HE HAD ASSURANCES THEY WOULDN'T GO THAT FAR.
NIKKI. LOOK AT YOURSELF. SEEMS TO ME THEY WENT PRETTY DAMN FAR. ANYWAY, HAVE YOU ASKED HIM THAT? ASKED HIM WHAT HE AGREED TO *SPECIFICALLY?*
NO, IT'S -- LISTEN, WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ANYTHING?


WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS CUT YOUR MOM A LITTLE SLACK. SHE'S TRYING TO ADAPT TO THIS CRAZY SITUATION. CAN YOU BLAME HER FOR BEING A LITTLE CONFUSED? AND, WHILE YOUR AT IT, GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK, TOO. WHAT WE'RE GOING THROUGH IS HARD. ALSO, *PLEASE*, DON'T STAY WITH YOUR DAD. HE DOESN'T DESERVE YOU. NOT YET.
Trendy

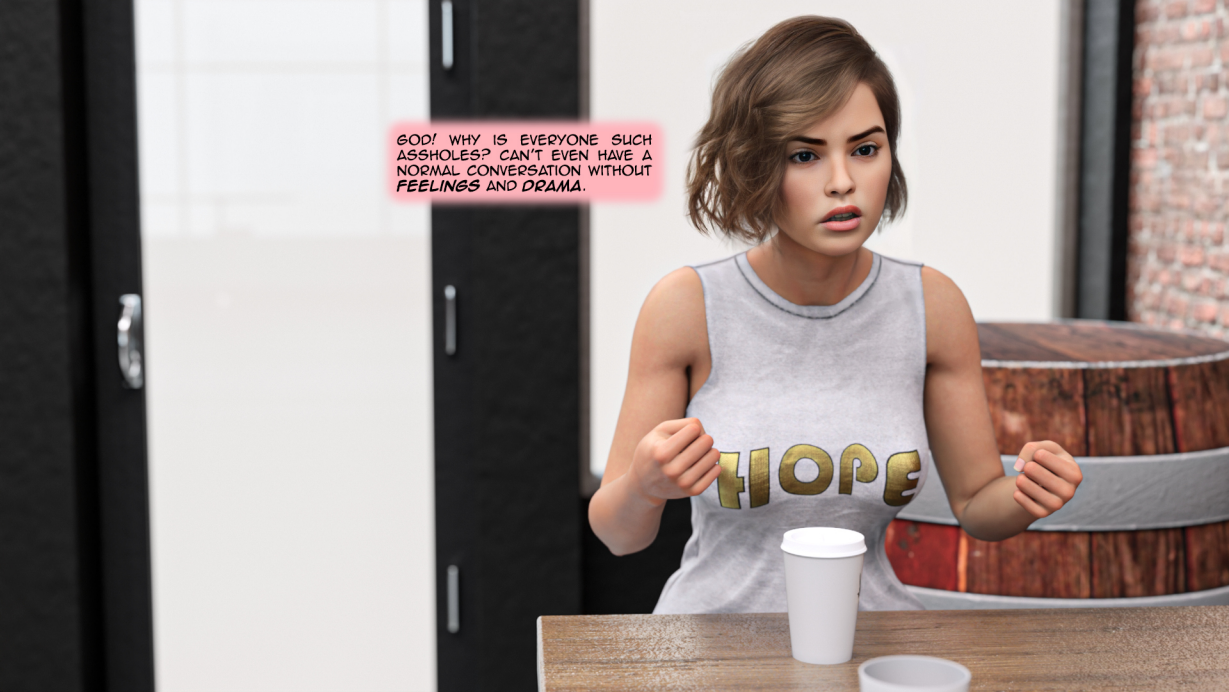

LOOK, I THINK YOU HAVE ESTROGEN ON THE BRAIN. A GOOD SON DOESN'T JUST DECIDE HIS DAD SUCKS BECAUSE HE MADE A BAD DECISION. MY FATHER IS A SELF-MADE MILLIONAIRE. DO YOU KNOW HOW HARD HE WORKED TO GET OUR FAMILY WHERE WE ARE NOW? HE USED TO BE AN OIL WORKER, FOR GOD'S SAKE. DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS?
NIKKI --
HE WORKED TWELVE-HOUR DAYS FOR YEARS UNTIL HE FINALLY EARNED ENOUGH TO START HIS OWN BUSINESS. AND THEN HE WORKED EVEN MORE HOURS TO MAKE IT THE BEST AND SAFEST DRILLING COMPANY IN ALL OF TEXAS. HE'S THE ONE WHO MADE IT SO THAT MY MOM DOESN'T HAVE TO WORK ANYMORE. HE TOOK CARE OF US SO SHE COULD STAY AT HOME AND WATCH ME GROW UP. BUT DOES SHE THANK HIM? NO. SHE CRIES AND FEELS BAD FOR HERSELF BECAUSE HE'S NOT AROUND. MEANWHILE, HE'S BUSTING HIS ASS, TRYING TO MAKE A BETTER LIFE FOR HIS FAMILY. THAT'S WHY I RESPECT MY DAD. AND THAT'S WHY I WON'T JUDGE HIM BASED ON ONE LOUSY CHOICE. OKAY?
YEAH, OKAY. I'M SORRY. GEEZ, TALK ABOUT ESTROGEN. I DIDN'T MEAN TO UPSET YOU--
YOU'RE LUCKY YOUR PARENTS ARE DEAD.




WOW, DUDE.
Trendy


OH, C'MON, DON'T GET ALL HYSTERICAL. ALL I'M SAYING IS THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO SEE THE DISGUST IN YOUR DAD'S EYES EVERY TIME HE LOOKS AT YOU. OR THE WEIRD LOOK OF YEARNING ON YOUR MOM'S FACE WHEN YOU WEAR A SKIRT.
YOU KNOW WHAT? YOU'RE A SPOILED BRAT.
OH, PLEASE. I'VE WORKED HARD FOR WHAT I HAVE.
NO, YOU HAVEN'T. HELL, YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT NOW?
I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO SEE MY MOM AND DAD AGAIN. TO HUG THEM. TO TELL THEM I LOVE THEM. ANYTHING. I DON'T CARE IF THEY'D BE SHOCKED BY THE WAY I LOOK OR IF I HAD TO PRETEND TO BE A GIRL FOR THE REST OF MY FUCKING LIFE. IF THAT WAS THE COST, I'D PAY IT IN A HEARTBEAT. I'D DO ANYTHING TO GET THEM BACK. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
SURE, BUT--
NO, YOU DON'T. YOU COULDN'T. AND I PRAY YOU NEVER DO, NIKKI. I DON'T WANT YOU TO HAVE TO LOSE ANYONE -- REALLY LOSE THEM -- TO REALIZE WHAT A LUCKY, UNGRATEFUL BITCH YOU ARE.


WHERE ARE YOU GOING? YOU DIDN'T FINISH YOUR, UM, LATTE OR WHATEVER. C'MON, DON'T BE SO DRAMATIC.
GOODBYE, NIKKI. CALL ME AGAIN WHEN YOU'RE LESS ***WHOEVER*** WAS JUST TALKING TO ME. JUST REMEMBER, IF YOU KEEP PUSHING PEOPLE AWAY, SOONER OR LATER, THERE WON'T BE ANYONE LEFT -- EXCEPT ZACH AND HIS DAD.


GOD! WHY IS EVERYONE SUCH ASSHOLES? CAN'T EVEN HAVE A NORMAL CONVERSATION WITHOUT FEELINGS AND DRAMA.
HOPE



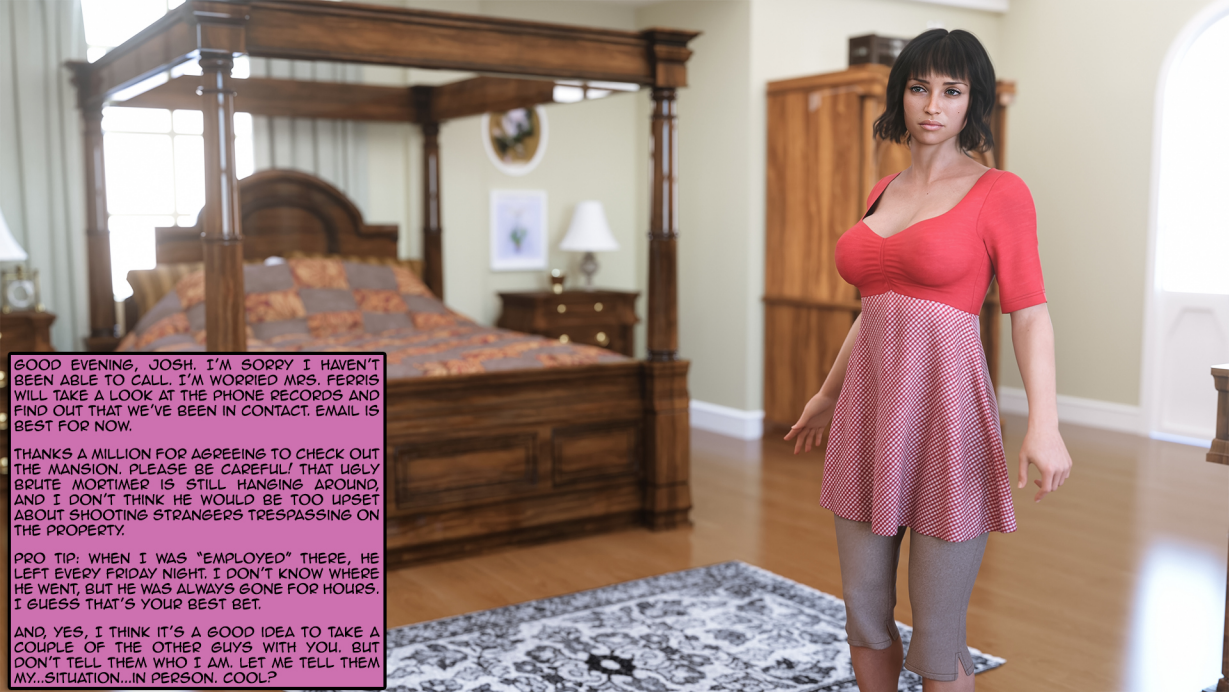
AFTER I LEFT NICHOLAS TO SULK WITH HIS HALF-FINISHED CAFFÈ MOCHA, I HAD A WALK AROUND TOWN. THERE WAS A LOT TO THINK ABOUT.

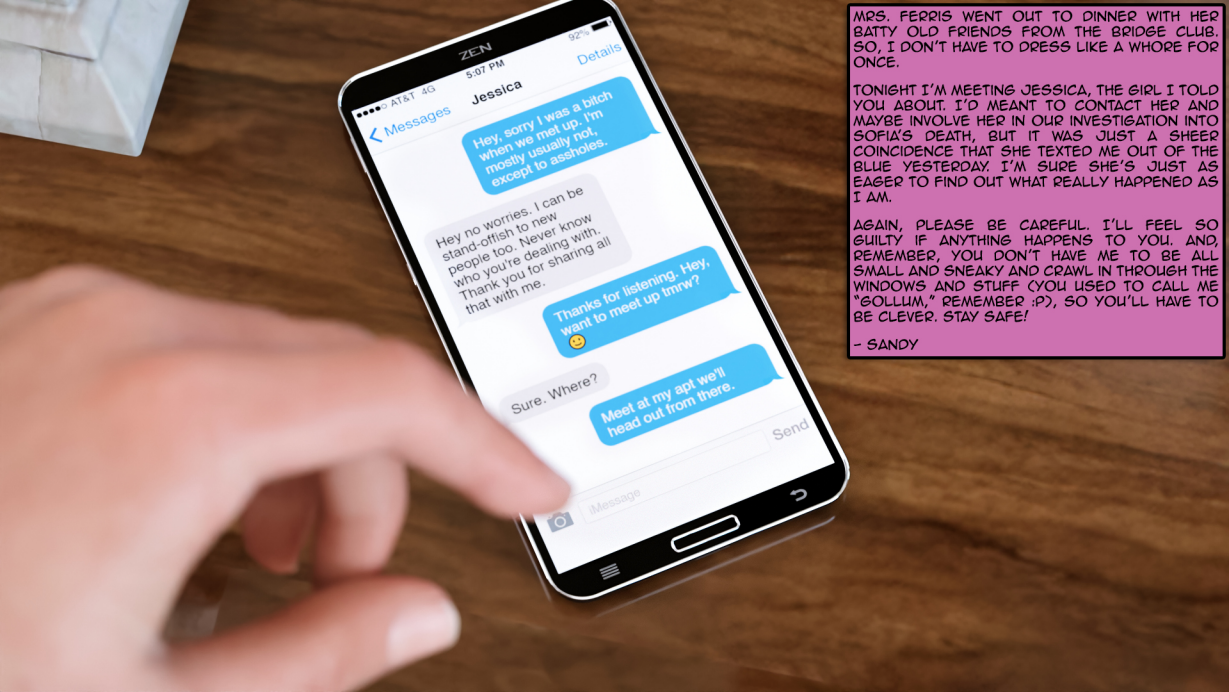
ALTHOUGH TALKING TO NICHOLAS WAS ABOUT AS PLEASANT AS DRIVING A RUSTY NAIL THROUGH MY BIG TOE -- AND ONLY A LITTLE LESS POINTLESS -- IT DID GIVE ME SOMETHING I'D BEEN LACKING: ***PERSPECTIVE.***

THE TRUTH WAS, IF I WAS EVER GOING TO FEEL EVEN A LITTLE OKAY WITH TAKING ON THE ROLE OF MRS. FERRIS'S DAUGHTER, I NEEDED TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE REAL SOFIA.


WHICH IS WHY, THAT NIGHT, I DECIDED TO FINALLY CALL MY OLD RIVAL AND -- MORE RECENTLY -- THE BEST (AND ONLY) BOYFRIEND I EVER HAD: *YOU.*
RING


HEY, JOSH. IT'S, UM... ME.
SANDY!? OH, THANK FUCK! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? ME AND THE BOYS HAVE BEEN LOOKING EVERYWHERE--
I KNOW. I'M SORRY. I'M OKAY, MOSTLY.
MOSTLY? WHERE ARE YOU? I'LL COME GET YOU.
I WANT TO SEE YOU, TOO. A LOT. BUT... I CAN'T. NOT YET. I'M SORRY, BUT I NEED A FAVOR. YOU KNOW THAT OLD MANSION UP ON GREENVIEW?
UH, SURE. THAT'S THE ONE YOU WERE SCARED OF WHEN WE WERE KIDS. YOU SAID YOU'D--
--HEARD A WITCH LIVED THERE. YEAH. WELL, I MAY HAVE BEEN RIGHT.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, BABY? YOU SOUND SCARED.
JOSH, I... I NEED YOUR HELP. THINK YOU COULD BREAK INTO THE PLACE?
OF COURSE. WHY, YOU NEED MONEY?
NO. ANSWERS.


GOOD EVENING, JOSH. I'M SORRY I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO CALL. I'M WORRIED MRS. FERRIS WILL TAKE A LOOK AT THE PHONE RECORDS AND FIND OUT THAT WE'VE BEEN IN CONTACT. EMAIL IS BEST FOR NOW.
THANKS A MILLION FOR AGREEING TO CHECK OUT THE MANSION. PLEASE BE CAREFUL! THAT UGLY BRUTE MORTIMER IS STILL HANGING AROUND, AND I DON'T THINK HE WOULD BE TOO UPSET ABOUT SHOOTING STRANGERS TRESPASSING ON THE PROPERTY.
PRO TIP: WHEN I WAS "EMPLOYED" THERE, HE LEFT EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT. I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE WENT, BUT HE WAS ALWAYS GONE FOR HOURS. I GUESS THAT'S YOUR BEST BET.
AND, YES, I THINK IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO TAKE A COUPLE OF THE OTHER GUYS WITH YOU. BUT DON'T TELL THEM WHO I AM. LET ME TELL THEM MY...SITUATION...IN PERSON. COOL?



MRS. FERRIS WENT OUT TO DINNER WITH HER BATTY OLD FRIENDS FROM THE BRIDGE CLUB. SO, I DON'T HAVE TO DRESS LIKE A WHORE FOR ONCE.

TONIGHT I'M MEETING JESSICA, THE GIRL I TOLD YOU ABOUT. I'D MEANT TO CONTACT HER AND MAYBE INVOLVE HER IN OUR INVESTIGATION INTO SOFIA'S DEATH, BUT IT WAS JUST A SHEER COINCIDENCE THAT SHE TEXTED ME OUT OF THE BLUE YESTERDAY. I'M SURE SHE'S JUST AS EAGER TO FIND OUT WHAT REALLY HAPPENED AS I AM.

AGAIN, PLEASE BE CAREFUL. I'LL FEEL SO GUILTY IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO YOU. AND, REMEMBER, YOU DON'T HAVE ME TO BE ALL SMALL AND SNEAKY AND CRAWL IN THROUGH THE WINDOWS AND STUFF (YOU USED TO CALL ME "GOLLUM," REMEMBER :P), SO YOU'LL HAVE TO BE CLEVER. STAY SAFE!

– SANDY


HEY, JESSICA.
HEY.
THANKS FOR THE INVITE.
YOU'RE WELCOME.
UM, EVERYTHING OKAY?
SURE. C'MON INSIDE.


WOW. YOU LOOK FANTASTIC.
THANKS. BUT NOW I FEEL DUMB.
HUH? WHY?
WELL, YOU'RE DRESSED A LOT MORE MODESTLY THAN LAST TIME.
IS THAT A PROBLEM?
YOU CAN DRESS HOWEVER YOU WANT. IT'S JUST -- I NEVER DRESS LIKE THIS. NEVER. BUT, WELL, I WAS TRYING TO MATCH YOUR VIBE. SORRY. THAT SOUNDS STUPID.


OH! WELL, FUNNY STORY, I WORE THIS OUTFIT BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO THINK I WAS A SLUT.
UGH. DON'T USE THAT WORD. IT'S JUST ANOTHER WAY MEN CONTROL WOMEN. BUT I'LL, UM, GO CHANGE--
NO, NO. GIVE ME ONE SEC. CAN I USE YOUR BATHROOM?
SURE, IT'S BACK THERE.


SORRY IF I'M BEING WEIRD AGAIN. I'M ACTUALLY NOT GREAT AROUND PEOPLE. WELL, GIRL-TYPE PEOPLE. I DON'T GIVE A FLYING CRAP ABOUT GUYS. YOU'D THINK BEING A GIRL WOULD HELP, BUT NOPE. I COME OFF AS BITCHY, I GUESS. THAT WOULDN'T BE THE END OF THE WORLD, EXCEPT IT GETS EVEN WORSE AROUND GIRLS I ACTUALLY--
TA-DA!


OKAY, THAT LOOKS SUPER CUTE.
THANKS. ACTUALLY, I THINK SO, TOO.
WELL, WHY SHOULDN'T YOU?
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, BEFORE COMING TO TEXAS, MY WARDROBE WAS, UM, MOSTLY T-SHIRTS AND JEANS.
REALLY? WOW. SO WHAT MADE YOU STEP OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE?
MRS. FERRIS. SHE DIDN'T WANT HER STAND-IN DAUGHTER TO LOOK LIKE A, UH... A TOMBOY.
FUCK THAT OLD BITCH. YOU SHOULD WEAR WHATEVER MAKES YOU HAPPY.
I KNOW. BUT, HONESTLY, THESE CLOTHES ARE KIND OF FUN.
WELL, YOU LOOK TERRIFIC IN THEM.


I WAS SO HAPPY YOU TEXTED.
REALLY?
YEAH. I'VE BEEN DYING TO TALK MORE ABOUT SOFIA.
OH. I SEE.
I'M GOING TO FIND OUT WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO HER. I WAS WONDERING IF YOU--
SANDY, PLEASE. DON'T. IT WON'T DO ANY GOOD.
YOU DON'T KNOW THAT.
SHE'S DEAD. WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO KNOW? LOOK, CAN WE JUST HAVE A GOOD TIME? IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE BEEN ABLE TO RELAX AND BE NORMAL.
OKAY. SURE. WELL, UM, WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO?
I KNOW A PLACE. C'MON!


ARCADE MANIA
REMATCH!
TENNIS World
REMATCH!
ASTRO
HERE SHE IS, THE BEST ARCADE IN ALL OF TEXAS. I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, AND, YES, THESE GAMES ARE OLDER THAN BOTH OF US COMBINED -- MAYBE OLDER THAN TEXAS ITSELF -- BUT YOU KNOW WHAT? CLASSICS ARE CLASSICS FOR A REASON.


ATCH!
LOOKS FUN! DO YOU COME HERE A LOT?
NOT MUCH ANYMORE, BUT I DID ALL THE TIME WHEN I WAS LITTLE. WANNA KNOW WHY? I COULD PLAY GAMES WITHOUT CREEPS HITTING ON ME. NO ONE COMES HERE, SO IT'S JUST US GIRLS. FUN, RIGHT? I'VE GOT A HIGH SCORE ON ALMOST EVERY MACHINE, AND I'LL SHOW YOU ALL THE TRICKS. WHAT DO YOU WANNA PLAY FIRST?
AIR HOCKEY!
WRONG CHOICE, BABE. I WILL DESTROY YOU.


32 MINUTES AND 21 POINTS LATER...
ANOTHER POINT! ARE YOU GOING EASY ON ME? PLEASE SAY YES. BECAUSE, TO BE HONEST, I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER BEATEN ANYONE SO BADLY AT ANYTHING IN MY LIFE.
HA! NO, I'M NOT LETTING YOU WIN.
SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?


THE PROBLEM IS YOU'RE CHEATING.
HUH? HOW SO?
BECAUSE YOU'RE GORGEOUS. AND YOU'RE...BOUNCING.
WHAT? SO ARE YOU!
GORGEOUS? OR BOUNCING?
BOTH.
AGAIN, WITH THE FLIRTING. MAYBE YOU REALLY ARE A SLUT.
WHAT? HEY, THAT'S NOT--
SCORE!


ADERS
REMATCH!
TEN
OKAY, THIS IS THE FINAL BOSS. SEE HOW HE DROPS HIS BLOCK RIGHT THERE? WAIT TEN SECONDS, THEN PRESS THE PUNCH BUTTON.
WON'T HE COUNTER?
HE WILL, BUT IF YOU GET THE JUMP ON HIM--
GOT IT. OKAY, JAB, HOOK, JAB --
HE DROPPED HIS BLOCK!
--PUNCH.
YES! YOU DID IT, GIRL!

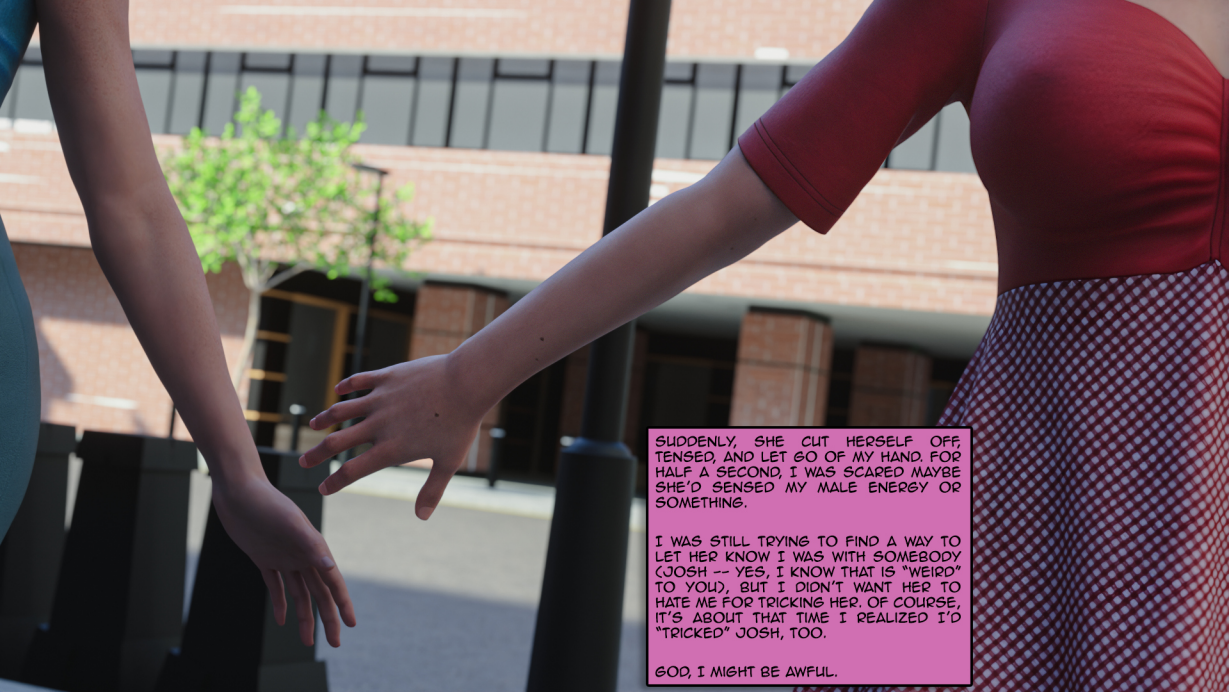

ARCADE MANIA
TENNIS World
REMATCH
ASTRO
OH MY GOD, I HAVEN'T HAD THIS MUCH FUN SINCE I CAN'T REMEMBER WHEN. ARE YOU HUNGRY? LET'S GO GET DINNER. IS THAT OKAY?
YEAH, I'M STARVING, HONESTLY.
COOL. GREAT. THANKS. PHEW, SORRY IF I'M BEING WEIRD AGAIN... IT'S JUST BEEN A REALLY LONG TIME SINCE I'VE BEEN ON A DATE.
DATE? O-OH. RIGHT. DATE. YEAH, UM... NO PROBLEM. ME TOO.


HEY NICK,
I KNOW OUR LAST MEETUP DIDN'T END ON A HIGH NOTE, BUT I SINCERELY HOPE YOU AND YOUR MOM ARE DOING GREAT. I'M EMAILING YOU BECAUSE, WELL, I NEED ADVICE.
TRUST ME, I WOULDN'T USUALLY ASK YOU FOR HELP, BUT I DON'T HAVE FRIENDS AROUND HERE -- OR ANYWHERE, REALLY, SINCE ALL MY OLD FRIENDS PROBABLY THINK I'M DEAD.
YOU REMEMBER JESSICA, RIGHT? WELL, I ENDED UP ON A DATE WITH HER BY ACCIDENT.
GOD, LOOK AT THIS PLACE. BIG BUILDINGS, BUT THERE'S NOBODY IN THEM. WHEN I WAS A KID, THERE WAS SOME DUMB FESTIVAL OR A REDNECK ART FAIR OR WHATEVER EVERY NIGHT. NOW, LOOK AT ALL THESE BOARDED-UP STORES. DOWNTOWN? MORE LIKE "GHOST TOWN."
I'M SORRY.
ME TOO. AND THAT SURPRISES THE HELL OUT OF ME, TO BE HONEST.


COMING BACK HERE WAS SO HARD. THIS TOWN WASN'T EXACTLY A WELCOMING PLACE FOR A GAY GIRL TO GROW UP, YOU KNOW?
THAT SOUNDS SO AWFUL. I WAS PICKED ON A LOT AS A KID, TOO. I WAS SHORT AND SCRAWNY.
IF ONLY THEY COULD SEE THE CURVY, BEAUTIFUL GIRL WALKING NEXT TO ME.
UM, THAT'D BE A WHOLE DIFFERENT CONVERSATION, BELIEVE ME.
I BET. BUT, YEAH, WHEN I GOT ACCEPTED TO U.T. AUSTIN, I THOUGHT MY HEART WOULD EXPLODE FROM HAPPINESS. I COULDN'T WAIT TO GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE. SO, YOU'D THINK I'D BE GLAD TO SEE ALL THESE BOARDED-UP SHOPS AND EMPTY HOUSES. THE UNIVERSITY IS THE ONLY THING KEEPING THIS PLACE ON LIFE SUPPORT. IT SERVES THE BIGOTS RIGHT, DOESN'T IT?

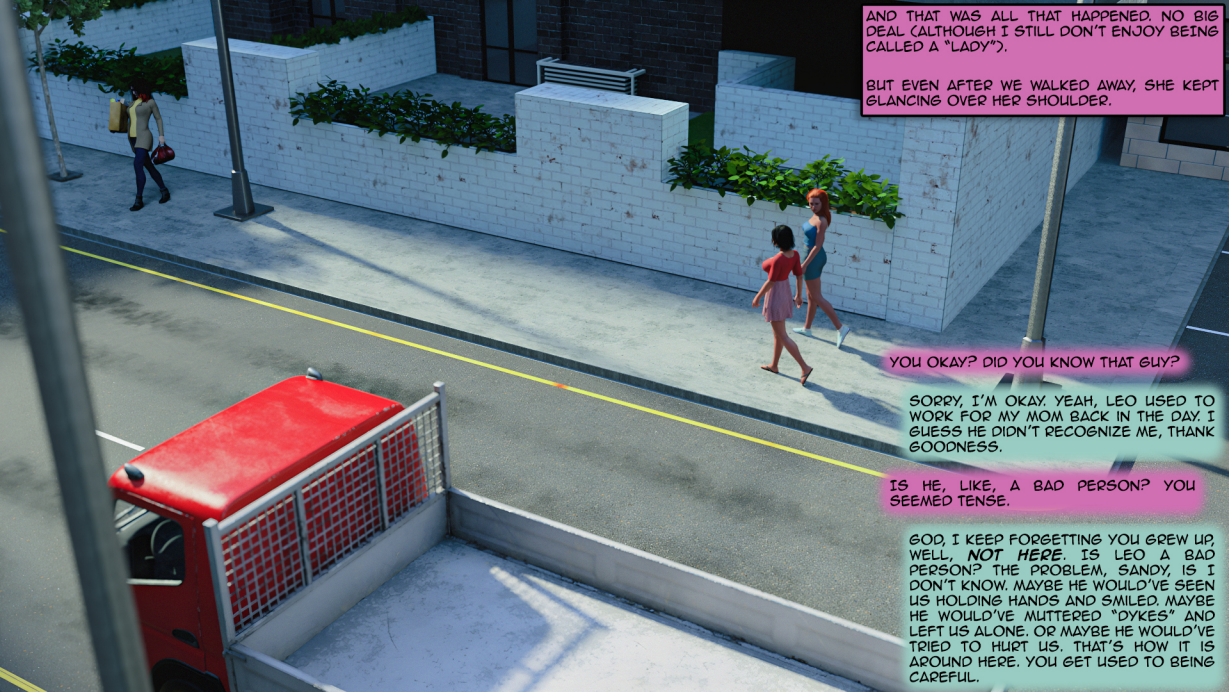

BUT I'M NOT GLAD. I STILL HOPE THE TOWN WILL COME BACK. AND I HOPE PEOPLE WILL STOP BEING SO TIED UP IN THEIR BELIEFS AND PREJUDICES AND JUST, I DUNNO, START TALKING TO EACH OTHER. AS MUCH AS I TRY TO BE A BAD BITCH, I GUESS I'M JUST A LAME SOFTY AT HEART.
IT'S NOT LAME TO HOPE FOR A BETTER WORLD. IT'S BRAVE. BUT WHY *DID* YOU COME BACK?
OH NO, I'VE BABBLED ENOUGH. YOUR TURN. TELL ME YOUR LIFE STORY, MYSTERY GIRL.
THERE'S, UM, NOT REALLY MUCH TO TELL.
LIAR, LIAR ***CUTE DRESS*** ON FIRE. THERE'S NO WAY THE GIRL WHO ENDED UP AS A SUBSTITUTE DAUGHTER FOR MRS. FERRIS HAD A BORING LIFE. COME ON, SPILL.


MAYBE, UM, WE COULD EAT FIRST?
OH, SURE. HEY, YOU'RE NOT AFRAID I'M GOING TO JUDGE YOU, ARE YOU?
NO. WELL, MAYBE. KINDA?
GIRL, I WAS A "CLOSETED" LESBIAN IN A HOMOPHOBIC TOWN IN TEXAS, AND I'M HALF-CONVINCED I'M THE REASON MY BEST FRIEND DIED. YOU AIN'T GOT NOTHING IN YOUR CLOSET I HAVEN'T SEEN BEFORE.
HEY, WHATEVER REALLY HAPPENED TO SOFIA, YOU'RE NOT THE REASON SHE DIED. AND ABOUT ME... WELL, IT'S JUST... I USED TO BE SOMEBODY ELSE.
C'MON. WE ALL USED TO BE SOMEBODY ELSE. HELL, I USED TO DATE BOYS FOR GOD'S SAKE--


SUDDENLY, SHE CUT HERSELF OFF, TENSED, AND LET GO OF MY HAND. FOR HALF A SECOND, I WAS SCARED MAYBE SHE'D SENSED MY MALE ENERGY OR SOMETHING.
I WAS STILL TRYING TO FIND A WAY TO LET HER KNOW I WAS WITH SOMEBODY (JOSH -- YES, I KNOW THAT IS "WEIRD" TO YOU), BUT I DIDN'T WANT HER TO HATE ME FOR TRICKING HER. OF COURSE, IT'S ABOUT THAT TIME I REALIZED I'D "TRICKED" JOSH, TOO.
GOD, I MIGHT BE AWFUL.


LOSING COOL
SHIT.


A COWBOY-LOOKING DUDE WAS STROLLING DOWN THE STREET TOWARD US. JESSICA SEEMED LEGITIMATELY ANXIOUS, SO I STARTED TO GET WORRIED. AFTER ALL, BESIDES THE SOFIA THING, I DIDN'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HER PAST -- OR REALLY MUCH AT ALL. SHE COULD'VE BEEN AN INTERNATIONAL ART THIEF ON THE RUN FROM THE TEXAS RANGERS (*NOT* THE BASEBALL TEAM) FOR ALL I KNEW.
EVENING, LADIES
LOSING COOL


AND THAT WAS ALL THAT HAPPENED. NO BIG DEAL (ALTHOUGH I STILL DON'T ENJOY BEING CALLED A "LADY").
BUT EVEN AFTER WE WALKED AWAY, SHE KEPT GLANCING OVER HER SHOULDER.
YOU OKAY? DID YOU KNOW THAT GUY?
SORRY, I'M OKAY. YEAH, LEO USED TO WORK FOR MY MOM BACK IN THE DAY. I GUESS HE DIDN'T RECOGNIZE ME, THANK GOODNESS.
IS HE, LIKE, A BAD PERSON? YOU SEEMED TENSE.
GOD, I KEEP FORGETTING YOU GREW UP, WELL, NOT HERE. IS LEO A BAD PERSON? THE PROBLEM, SANDY, IS I DON'T KNOW. MAYBE HE WOULD'VE SEEN US HOLDING HANDS AND SMILED. MAYBE HE WOULD'VE MUTTERED "DYKES" AND LEFT US ALONE. OR MAYBE HE WOULD'VE TRIED TO HURT US. THAT'S HOW IT IS AROUND HERE. YOU GET USED TO BEING CAREFUL.



IN THIS CASE, JESSICA'S IDEA FOR DINNER WAS TACOS AT A TEX-MEX BAR. I'M NOT COMPLAINING. THE TACOS WERE DELICIOUS, AND THEY SERVED A SURPRISINGLY EXCELLENT MOSCOW MULE.

MAYBE ***TOO*** EXCELLENT.

I HAVEN'T DRANK MUCH SINCE MY, AHEM, CHANGES. ALCOHOL DEFINITELY HITS HARDER NOW. YOU'RE PROBABLY THE SAME, SO BE CAREFUL!

PRETTY QUICKLY, I FORGOT ALL ABOUT TRYING TO TELL JESSICA ABOUT JOSH. WE WERE JUST TWO ***PEOPLE*** HANGING OUT, HAVING A FUN TIME.


A REALLY, REALLY FUN TIME.
I BEGAN TO OPEN UP A BIT. I TOLD HER ABOUT MY PARENTS -- SHE SQUEEZED MY HAND AND LOOKED LIKE SHE MIGHT CRY. I EXPLAINED HOW I HAD TO MOVE IN WITH MY SHITTY UNCLE, FELL IN WITH THE "WRONG" CROWD, AND STARTED BREAKING INTO PLACES.
I TOLD HER A LOT OF STORIES, ALTHOUGH I LEFT OUT THE SCARY ONES AND FOCUSED ON ALL THE WEIRD CRAP I CAME ACROSS. THE DINOSAUR-SHAPED DILDO I FOUND IN THE MAYOR'S OFFICE MADE HER LAUGH SO HARD SHE CHOKED ON HER MOJITO.


JESSICA TOLD ME SHE WANTED TO SEE ME IN MY CAT BURGLAR "COSTUME" AND IMPLIED IT SHOULD HAVE EARS AND A TAIL.
I DIDN'T TELL HER I WAS REALLY A GUY.
AND I *STILL* DIDN'T TELL HER ABOUT JOSH.
NICK -- WHAT IS WRONG WITH ME?
FOUR OR FIVE DRINKS LATER, A BAND CAME ON STAGE AND JESSICA PULLED ME UP TO DANCE. I'VE NEVER BEEN A GREAT DANCER, BUT IT SEEMS A LOT EASIER WITH CURVES. JESSICA COULDN'T TAKE HER EYES OFF MRS. FERRIS'S ADDITIONS TO MY ANATOMY AS I JUMPED AROUND LIKE A MANIAC.
NOT THAT I'LL EVER GET USED TO THAT JIGGLING, THOUGH!


WE LEFT THE BAR MORE THAN A BIT TIPSY AND TOOK AN UBER OUT TO THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE (AFTER SHE CONVINCED THE DRIVER TO STOP AT A LIQUOR STORE) AND TRUDGED UP A GRASSY HILL AS THE SUN WAS SETTING.
WELL, HERE WE ARE. THIS DUMB HILL IS MY FAVORITE PLACE FOR, LIKE, FIFTY MILES IN ANY DIRECTION. THANKS FOR COMING OUT HERE WITH ME. I JUST... I DIDN'T WANT THE NIGHT TO END YET.


IT'S A GORGEOUS VIEW.
YEAH, TEXAS CAN BE A BEAUTIFUL BITCH WHEN SHE WANTS TO BE. SOFIA AND I CALLED THIS HILL *"THE ROOFTOP"* BECAUSE WE WERE YOUNG AND PRETENTIOUS. WE'D COME UP AFTER SCHOOL, GET HIGH OR DRUNK, AND TALK ABOUT EVERYTHING -- ESPECIALLY THE FUTURE AND HOW AMAZING OUR LIVES WOULD BE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL. ACTUALLY, THIS IS WHERE SHE TOLD ME SHE WAS TRANS. I WAS SO FUCKING HAPPY FOR HER. IT SEEMED SO...PERFECT. ME AND HER, EMBRACING LIFE AS HOT GIRLS, SHARING OUTFITS, RUNNING OFF TO NEW YORK OR HOLLYWOOD OR SAN FRANCISCO. BUT, UH... NOTHING HAPPENED LIKE IT WAS SUPPOSED TO. *SHIT!*
HEY, YOU OKAY?


I'M SORRY, BRINGING YOU HERE WAS UNFAIR. THIS WHOLE TIME I'VE BEEN TRYING NOT TO BRING UP SOFIA BECAUSE OF THE WEIRDNESS BETWEEN YOU AND MRS. FERRIS, AND I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO THINK THAT--
HEY, SLOW DOWN. I'M GLAD WE'RE HERE.
LOOK, I... I LIKE YOU, SANDY. AND NOT JUST BECAUSE YOU SORT OF LOOK LIKE SOFIA. YOU'RE SWEET AND FUNNY AND ALSO, LIKE, INCREDIBLY HOT.
THANKS. YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL, TOO.
BUT I THINK I'M KIND OF A MESS, ACTUALLY? SURE, BEING FORCED BACK TO THE HOMETOWN THAT I HATE WAS TOUGH, BUT I THOUGHT I WAS HOLDING TOGETHER OKAY UNTIL I SAW YOU WITH MRS. FERRIS, AND THEN EVERYTHING ABOUT SOFIA CAME FLOODING BACK. MAYBE THIS WAS A MISTAKE--

I WON'T BLAME THE ALCOHOL. I WASN'T DRUNK. JESSICA WAS GORGEOUS AND CARING, AND WE WERE STANDING IN A BEAUTIFUL PLACE...

...AND I KISSED HER, NICK. AND SHE KISSED ME BACK. HARD.

AND WE DIDN'T STOP THERE.



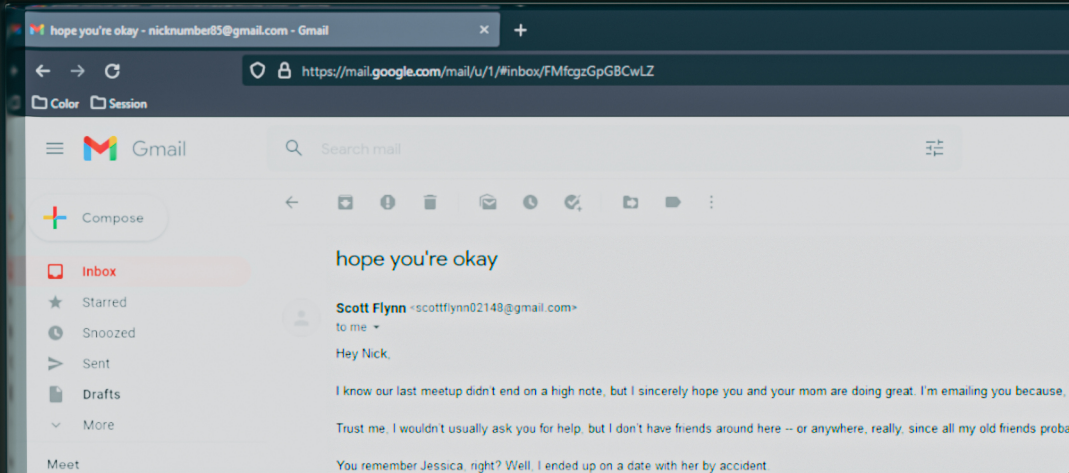
SHOOT. MRS. FERRIS JUST PULLED IN. I'LL SEND YOU ANOTHER EMAIL LATER TONIGHT.

YOUR FRIEND,

SCOTT

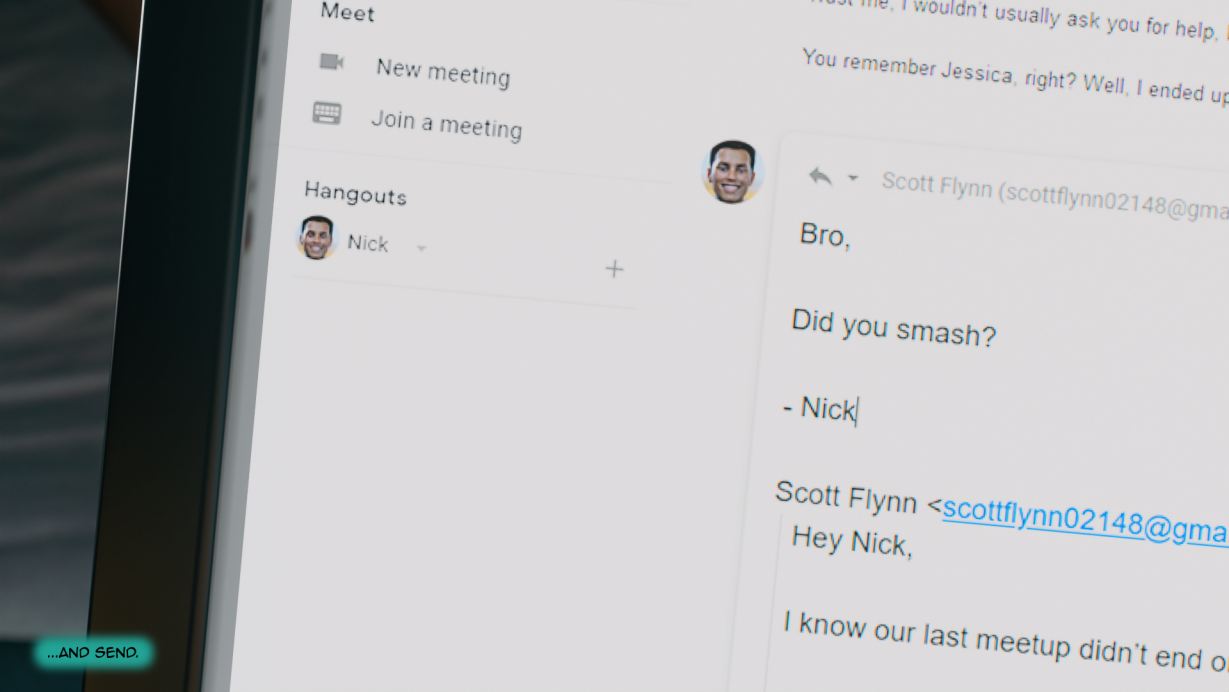

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS
COWBOYS
AN EMAIL FROM SCOTT. COOL, I GUESS. I'M GLAD HE CHILLED OUT. HE'S OKAY WHEN HE'S NOT BEING ALL... HYSTERICAL.

MAYBE HE JUST HAD PMS. WAIT. SHIT! DOES THAT MEAN I'LL HAVE PMS?



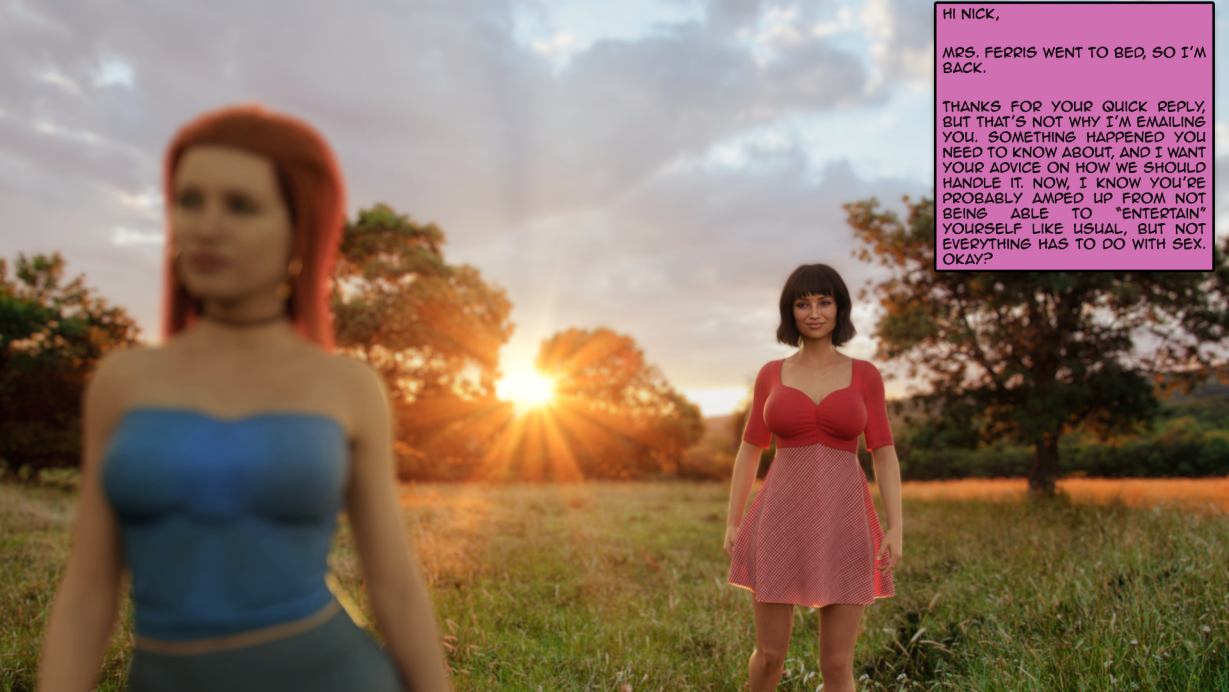

WOW! WAY TO GO, SCOTTY. I'M ACTUALLY KIND OF PROUD OF HIM. I FIGURED HE WAS GOING ALL GAY, ALL THE TIME. LUCKY DUDE TO STUMBLE INTO A DATE WITH THE ONLY HOT LESBIAN IN TOWN... AND SHE'S INTO HIM!


BUT HE DIDN'T GET TO THE GOOD PART YET! LET'S SEE IF WE CAN CLEAR THIS UP...


Meet
New meeting
Join a meeting
Hangouts
Nick
You remember Jessica, right? Well, I ended up
Scott Flynn (scottflynn02148@gma
Bro,
Did you smash?
- Nick
Scott Flynn <scottflynn02148@gma
Hey Nick,
I know our last meetup didn't end o
...AND SEND.




SHOULD WE, UM, HEAD BACK TO YOUR APARTMENT?
WELL, YEAH, THAT'D BE THE SMART THING TO DO. BUT I'M NOT FEELING SMART, SANDY. I'M FEELING DRUNK AND HORNY. LET'S HEAD DOWN THE HILL. THERE'S A MORE PRIVATE SPOT THERE.


HI NICK,
MRS. FERRIS WENT TO BED, SO I'M BACK.
THANKS FOR YOUR QUICK REPLY, BUT THAT'S NOT WHY I'M EMAILING YOU. SOMETHING HAPPENED YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT, AND I WANT YOUR ADVICE ON HOW WE SHOULD HANDLE IT. NOW, I KNOW YOU'RE PROBABLY AMPED UP FROM NOT BEING ABLE TO "ENTERTAIN" YOURSELF LIKE USUAL, BUT NOT EVERYTHING HAS TO DO WITH SEX. OKAY?


I KNOW IT DOESN'T LOOK COMFORTABLE -- AND IT ISN'T -- BUT DO WE CARE?
WE DO NOT.
AND, SERIOUSLY, NICK, YOU SHOULD TRY THE NIPPLE THING. ONCE YOU GET OVER THE WEIRDNESS, IT FEELS GOOD. REALLY, REALLY GOOD. I CAN'T WAIT TO FEEL MINE AGAIN, TO BE HONEST. STUPID IMPLANTS.
ALTHOUGH, I MEAN, JESSICA SEEMED TO LIKE THEM. A LOT.


SIT WITH ME.
ACTUALLY, UM...


I'LL STAND.
OH! AND HERE I WAS THINKING *I* WAS SEDUCING THE HOT, MYSTERIOUS, ***SHY*** NEW GIRL.
NEW GIRL. HEH.
THAT'S FUNNY?
NO. KINDA. DON'T LISTEN TO ME, JESSICA. I'M TIPSY, AND ALL I WANT TO DO IS, LIKE, PLEASE YOU.


DAMN, MAYBE THERE REALLY IS A GOD, AND SHE REALLY DOES LOVE ME. WELL, IF YOU'RE IN THE MOOD FOR, UM, PLEASING...
AS YOU WISH.


OH. WOW. OH, SHIT... SANDY, YOU'RE REALLY, REALLY GOOD AT THIS! I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT ELSE YOU CAN DO WITH THAT TONGUE.


WE, UM, DON'T HAVE TO WAIT, IF... IF YOU FEEL UP TO IT.


OH, YOU STOPPED. OHMIGOD! SANDY, I'M SO SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO RUSH YOU. I'M THE WORST!
NO, NO, NO. IT'S NOT ANYTHING LIKE THAT. IT'S JUST... BEFORE WE GO FURTHER, THERE'S SOMETHING YOU NEED TO KNOW. UM... WOW, I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS. I'M NOT... DAMN, THIS IS HARD.
SANDY, YOU LOOK SO SAD. WHAT'S WRONG?
WHAT'S WRONG IS I'M NOT REALLY A G--


I NEVER GOT A CHANCE TO FINISH, NICK. JUST AS I WAS ABOUT TO CONFESS, I HEARD MALE VOICES.
WHEN I LOOKED UP, I SAW THEM COMING UP THE HILL. ONE WAS THIS ASSHOLE NAMED CRAIG WHO'D ANNOYED JESSICA AND ME ON THE STREET THE OTHER WEEK. THE OTHER WAS A BIG GUY I DIDN'T KNOW. HE LOOKED LIKE A LINEBACKER -- OR MAYBE HE'S JUST A BIG FAN OF PIZZA.
THE THIRD WAS ZACH.


HOLY SHIT! ZACH, THAT'S THE CHICK I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT THE OTHER DAY.
JESS AKIN?
NO, NOT THE FUCKING DYKE. THE HOT BRUNETTE WITH HER. THOSE TITS ARE HUGE, BRO. THEY GOTTA BE FAKE, RIGHT? I KNOW EVERYTHING'S BIGGER IN TEXAS, BUT DAMN! I MEAN, SHIT, THEY'RE ALMOST AS BIG AS RON'S. AIN'T THAT RIGHT, BUDDY?


FUCK YOU. WOAH, HOLY CRAP! DUDES, THEY'RE LIKE LEZZING OUT OVER THERE.
WHAT? UGH, NOW I'M MAD. NOT ONLY IS THAT REPULSIVE AS ALL GET OUT, BUT THERE'S NO WAY THE BRUNETTE'S INTO PUSSY. WHEN I PAID HER A COMPLIMENT ON THE STREET, SHE BLUSHED AND WAS ALL SWEET AND SHY. THE DYKE JUST GOT HER *HOOKS* IN HER, MAN! WE GOT TO DO SOMETHIN'.


UH, JESSICA? DO YOU KNOW THESE GUYS? THEY'RE COMING THIS WAY.
UNFORTUNATELY. GOD DAMN JOCKS. THEY'RE ALL ON ST. CHRISTOPHER'S FOOTBALL TEAM, SO THE TOWN TREATS THEM LIKE GODS.
SO YOU'RE NOT ON, UH, FRIENDLY TERMS WITH THEM?
THAT'S AN UNDERSTATEMENT, ESPECIALLY THE DICK IN THE RED SHIRT. HE'S THE QUARTERBACK.
HOLD ON. YOU'RE SAYING--


-- THAT'S ZACH HUTCHINSON!?
THE ONE AND ONLY. HIS ASSHOLE DAD OWNS MOST OF THE LAND IN THE COUNTY NOW. A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, MR. HUTCHINSON BRIBED THE CITY COUNCIL TO USE EMINENT DOMAIN TO SEIZE HUNDREDS OF "UNDERUTILIZED" ACRES AND SELL THE LAND TO DEVELOPERS -- THAT IS, HIM AND A BUNCH OF HIS CRONIES. HE HAS HIS HAND IN EVERY BIT OF CORRUPTION IN EAST TEXAS. HELL, I HEARD ZACH IS ONLY THE QUARTERBACK BECAUSE HIS DADDY BOUGHT THE STADIUM A NEW JUMBOTRON.


BUT, WAIT, YOU'RE NEW HERE. HOW DO YOU KNOW HIM?
OH. UM. MRS. FERRIS MENTIONED HIM.
OH, RIGHT. YEAH, SHE AND HER BASTARD HUSBAND BENEFITTED FROM HUTCHINSON'S SHADY DEALINGS. AS FOR ZACH, HE USED TO BE A NICE KID BEFORE HE TURNED INTO A TOTAL ALPHA MALE WANNABE.
SO WHAT DO WE DO? SHOULD WE--
HEY, NEW GIRL! CATCH!


WOW, NICE CATCH. WANT TO BE A TIGHT END? OH WAIT, YOU ALREADY ARE! HA!
GOD, CRAIG IS SUCH A JERK! SANDY, LISTEN, I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE BECAUSE IF YOU GIVE THESE DICKBAGS THE IMPRESSION YOU'RE AFRAID OF THEM, THEY'LL MAKE YOUR LIFE MISERABLE FOREVER.


BUT I CAN'T ASK YOU TO GET IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS MESS. YOUR LIFE IS COMPLICATED ENOUGH ALREADY, LIVING WITH THAT PSYCHO, MRS. FERRIS. WHY DON'T YOU HEAD HOME, AND I'LL TEXT YOU LATER?
NO WAY. I'M NOT LEAVING YOU ALONE WITH THESE GUYS.
YOU'RE SURE?


LIKE I TOLD YOU, WHEN I WAS A KID, I WAS PICKED ON BECAUSE I WAS SMALL. I HATE BULLIES. I MAY NOT BE AS SMALL ANYMORE --
I'LL SAY!
-- BUT I STILL HATE BEING PUSHED AROUND. THIS IS OUR BENCH... AND NOW THIS IS OUR FOOTBALL, TOO.
AW, YOU'RE EVEN CUTER WHEN YOU'RE FIERCE.
I'M JUST GETTING STARTED.
ADORABLE. OKAY, HERE THEY COME.


WELL, HOWDY, GIRLS. SORRY TO, AHEM, INTRUDE ON YOUR LITTLE, UH, SHOW.
WHAT DO YOU WANT, CRAIG?
THIS IS PUBLIC LAND. YOU CAN'T COME HERE AND DO IMMORAL, FILTHY THINGS TO EACH OTHER. IT OFFENDS THE GOOD PEOPLE OF THIS TOWN. I BET IT EVEN OFFENDS THE INNOCENT SQUIRRELS AND BIRDS AND SHIT.


LISTEN, NEW GIRL, YOU DON'T WANT TO BE PART OF THIS FREAK SHOW. THIS IS A GOOD TOWN, AND YOU SEEM LIKE A NICE GIRL. SO, WHY DON'T YOU LEAVE THIS JEZEBEL AND COME HANG OUT WITH US? I PROMISE WE'LL SHOW YOU HOW FUN MEN CAN BE.


JARHEAD, THE ONLY THING I'M LEAVING IS A FOOTBALL-SHAPED CRATER IN YOUR FACE IF YOU DON'T GET AWAY.
YEP. SO, WHY DON'T YOU, ROID RAGE, AND THE STAY PUFT MARSHMALLOW MAN GO FUCK YOURSELVES.


OH, DAMN! I'M TERRIFIED. LITTLE MISS GINGER DYKE IS THREATENING US WITH A BOTTLE OF BOURBON! ZACH, I KNOW WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE TOUGH, BUT MAYBE WE SHOULD RUN? LADIES, IF WE WANTED TO HURT YOU, THERE AIN'T A THING YOU COULD DO ABOUT IT BUT SCREAM. LUCKY FOR YOU, WE'RE NICE GUYS.


HEY, ZACH, AREN'T YOU THE TEAM CAPTAIN? AND YOU'RE JUST GONNA LET THIS HAPPEN?
UM. DO I KNOW YOU?
NO, BUT I KNOW YOU -- AND I KNOW ABOUT YOU.
ER... WHAT... UH, WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I'M NIKKI'S FRIEND. WE'RE A LOT ALIKE. ALMOST SISTERS, IN SOME WAYS.
OH, SHIT. YOU'RE SOFIA?
YEAH, AND YOU'RE JUST AS DISGUSTING AS NIKKI WARNED ME ABOUT. AND SHE'S WRONG ABOUT MOST THINGS! SO, WHAT THE HELL, DUDE? THIS IS PATHETIC.


WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON? WHO'S *NIKKI?*
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. WE'RE LEAVING.
WHAT? C'MON, BRO. YOU GONNA LET THIS MOUTHY BITCH INTIMIDATE YOU?
SOFIA'S MOM DOES BUSINESS WITH MY DAD, SO UNLESS YOU WANT TO BE ON HIS SHIT LIST, STAY AWAY FROM HER.
WELL, DOES HER MOM KNOW SHE'S A RUG MUNCHER?
ENOUGH! GET WALKING BACK TO THE CAR, OR YOU'LL BOTH BE WARMING THE BENCH COME SATURDAY.
JESUS. FINE, DUDE. I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE SUCH A FUCKING *ALLY.*


I KNOW IT DOESN'T COUNT FOR MUCH, BUT I *AM* SORRY ABOUT... ALL THAT. I HAVE TO CHOOSE MY BATTLES WITH THESE JERKS. I WOULD'VE STOPPED THEM IF THEY WERE ACTUALLY GONNA DO SOMETHING.
MY HERO.
UM, CAN YOU PASS ON A MESSAGE? TELL, ER, NIKKI I'VE DONE MY BEST TO DELAY THINGS, BUT MY DAD CAME BACK FROM HIS BUSINESS TRIP LAST WEEK AND HE'S ALREADY SUSPICIOUS. WE'RE, UH, GOING TO HAVE TO GO ON A *DATE* TO KEEP UP APPEARANCES. SOON.


WOW. FIRST OF ALL, THAT WAS HOT. SECOND OF ALL, I THINK I'M ALMOST AS CONFUSED AS CRAIG, AND THAT'S SAYING SOMETHING BECAUSE HE'D BE CONFUSED IF I ASKED HIM TO SPELL HIS NAME. WHO IS NIKKI?
JUST A FRIEND.
A SPECIAL FRIEND?
YES, BUT NOT IN THE WAY YOU MEAN.
WELL, MAYBE I CAN MEET HER ONE DAY.
MAYBE. BUT FOR TONIGHT, I'D LIKE YOU ALL TO MYSELF. DEAL?
DEAL.

SO, NICK, THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED. THE POINT IS JESSICA KNOWS ABOUT YOU NOW. AND, WELL, THE PROBLEM IS I WANT TO TELL HER ABOUT ME -- ABOUT THE ***REAL*** ME. THAT IS, ABOUT SCOTT AND ALL THE FUCKED-UP THINGS MRS. FERRIS DID TO HIM.

SEE, I DON'T KNOW IF THIS IS MORE THAN A FLING (I STILL REALLY LIKE JOSH) BUT, EITHER WAY, I CARE ABOUT JESSICA AND I HATE LYING TO HER. I FEEL LIKE AN ***IMPOSTER*** IN ABOUT A DOZEN DIFFERENT WAYS. SO, YEAH, I WANT TO SPILL THE BEANS.

BUT SHE'S SMART. IF I TELL JESSICA THE WHOLE TRUTH, SHE MIGHT PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER AND FIGURE OUT WHO YOU REALLY ARE. I KNOW THAT'S YOUR WORST NIGHTMARE, SO THAT'S WHY I'M WRITING TO YOU. CAN WE FIGURE SOMETHING OUT? FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, I THINK WE CAN TRUST HER. I MEAN, SHE KEPT THE REAL SOFIA'S SECRET SAFE FOR YEARS.

LET ME KNOW WHAT YOU THINK.

YOUR FRIEND,
SCOTT

P.S. ABOUT ZACH: MORE THAN HIM BEING A DICK, I'M AFRAID YOU'RE NOT AT ALL SAFE WITH THIS GUY OR HIS DAD. LIKE, THERE'S THE POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE HERE. WE NEED TO ACTUALLY DO SOMETHING. MAYBE YOUR MOM WASN'T WRONG ABOUT GOING TO THE COPS. AND, NO OFFENSE, BUT YOUR FOOTBALL BUDDIES ALL SEEM LIKE HOMOPHOBIC PIECES OF SHIT. I KNOW YOU SAID YOU DON'T LIKE "GAY STUFF," BUT PLEASE TELL ME YOU WEREN'T EVER THAT BAD.

P.P.S. AS FOR WHETHER JESSICA AND I "SMASHED" -- I'D NEVER CALL IT THAT AND THAT'S STILL NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.





HI AGAIN, NICK. SORRY TO WRITE YOU ANOTHER EMAIL ON THE SAME NIGHT, BUT I CAN'T SLEEP. I KNOW I SAID I WASN'T GOING TO GIVE YOU MORE DETAILS ON WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN JESSICA AND ME, BUT I MESSED UP, AND I'D APPRECIATE ANY ADVICE ON HOW/IF I CAN SALVAGE THE SITUATION.

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET ANY JUICY TIDBITS, THOUGH. SORRY. ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW IS THAT WE WENT BACK TO JESSICA'S APARTMENT. SHE WAS OBVIOUSLY READY TO PICK UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF BEFORE YOUR "BOYFRIEND" (JUST KIDDING) AND HIS JERK FRIENDS INTERRUPTED US, BUT I HAD SOME CONCERNS. REMEMBER I WROTE THAT I FELT LIKE AN IMPOSTER? WELL, I MADE EVERYTHING WORSE. THAT'S KIND OF AN OLD HABIT OF MINE. HERE'S WHAT HAPPENED.


GOD, YOU'RE PRETTY, SANDY. I'M SO HAPPY WE MET.
PRETTY? C'MON.
YES, PRETTY. GORGEOUS, ACTUALLY. AND I'M NOT THE KIND OF GIRL WHO SAYS THAT TO JUST ANYONE. I HAVE HIGH STANDARDS, I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW.
WAIT, JESSICA, I... I NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO SAY WHAT I WANTED TO TELL YOU BACK AT THE PARK.


I KNOW. AND I PLAN TO KEEP IT THAT WAY.
OH, UM, ARE WE GETTING NAKED?
THAT'S THE PLAN. LOOK, SANDY, DOES THIS HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH YOUR PAST?
WELL, YEAH, BUT--
THEN I DON'T WANNA HEAR IT. WHO YOU WERE BEFORE DOESN'T MATTER TO ME. DON'T YOU THINK I HAVE SECRETS I'D RATHER FORGET? BUT I CAN'T LET YOU THROW AWAY SOMETHING GOOD BECAUSE YOU'RE SCARED I'LL JUDGE YOU. SO FOR TONIGHT THE PAST STAYS WHERE IT IS. OKAY? IT'LL STILL BE THERE IN THE MORNING, I PROMISE.


WANT TO SIT?
UM. I DO, BUT...
WHY ARE YOU SO SKITTISH ALL OF A SUDDEN? DID I... DID I SAY SOMETHING WRONG? GOD, I'M SORRY. I'M PUSHING YOU INTO SOMETHING YOU'RE NOT READY FOR, AREN'T I? WHY DO I ALWAYS DO THAT?


NO, NO, NO. I'M JUST... I'M NERVOUS. IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE DONE ANYTHING LIKE THIS.
ANYTHING LIKE THIS? OR ANYTHING LIKE THIS WITH A GIRL?
THE... THE SECOND ONE.
OKAY. BUT, I MEAN, YOU DO LIKE GIRLS, RIGHT?
YEAH, OF COURSE I LIKE GIRLS!
'OF COURSE?' I MEAN, IT'S NOT EXACTLY THE DEFAULT, YOU KNOW.
UM. THIS IS WEIRD. BUT I'VE NEVER HAD A GIRL LIKE ME BEFORE. NOT EVER.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT'S TRUE. THEY WERE PROBABLY JUST TOO SCARED TO SAY ANYTHING. LIKE I SAID, YOU'RE GORGEOUS. C'MON, LET'S TAKE IT SLOW, OKAY? SIT WITH ME.


OKAY. YOU'RE RIGHT. I DON'T NEED TO RUIN OUR NIGHT BY BRINGING UP MY BAGGAGE.
OH MY GOD. WHERE'D YOU GET THOSE PANTIES?
MRS. FERRIS. WHY?
MAKES SENSE. THEY LOOK LIKE SOMETHING AN OLD LADY WOULD WEAR.
HEY! THEY'RE COMFORTABLE.
I'M ONLY KIDDING, SILLY. THEY'RE CUTE.


ARE YOU REALLY SURE ABOUT THIS? EVEN WITH ALL THE WEIRDNESS WITH MRS. FERRIS AND SOFIA--
SANDY, SIT DOWN. PLEASE.


THAT'S A PRETTY BRA, BUT I THINK IT'D LOOK BETTER ON THE DESK OVER THERE. MIND IF I HELP YOU WITH IT?
UM. YEAH. ACTUALLY, I KIND OF SUCK AT DOING THE HOOKS.
WELL, I REMEMBER YOU SAID YOU USED TO BE A LOT SMALLER. RIGHT?


Y-YEAH. MRS. FERRIS MADE ME-- OH!
THERE. THAT'S BETTER. DON'T YOU LOVE THAT FEELING WHEN YOU FIRST TAKE OFF YOUR BRA? IT'S LIKE HEAVEN.
IF IT FITS, I SITS
B. Johnson


BEFORE THE IMPLANTS, I NEVER HAD TO WEAR ONE. NOW, IF I DON'T, THEY HURT, AND SO DO MY SHOULDERS, NOT TO MENTION THEY BOUNCE AROUND LIKE CRAZY. HONESTLY, I... I KIND OF HATE THEM. I THINK THEY MAKE ME LOOK GROTESQUE.
NO, THEY DON'T! THEY'RE LOVELY.
THE WORST PART IS, EVER SINCE THE OPERATION, I CAN'T REALLY, UM, FEEL MY NIPPLES, AND I USED TO REALLY LOVE TO, UM...


PLAY WITH THEM? ME TOO. THAT'S WHY YOU WERE DRIVING ME WILD IN THE PARK. BUT I BET YOUR NERVES ARE JUST HEALING. WHAT THEY NEED IS A LITTLE COAXING, A LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT, AND A LITTLE TENDER LOVING CARE TO GET THE BLOOD FLOWING.


YOU'RE SO BEAUTIFUL, SANDY.
SO ARE YOU. THANK YOU FOR--
SHH, NO MORE TALKING FOR A WHILE. JUST RELAX.


YOU JUST LET ME TAKE CARE OF YOU TONIGHT. IS THAT OKAY?
Y-YES. I'D LIKE THAT.


I THOUGHT SO. I GET THE FEELING YOU LIKE IT WHEN SOMEBODY ELSE TAKES CONTROL.
M-MAYBE A LITTLE.
A LITTLE? HM. YOU'RE BREATHING REALLY FAST FOR "A LITTLE," AND I CAN FEEL YOUR NIPPLES AGAINST ME. THEY'RE SO HARD ALREADY. WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO GET A BIT BOSSY?
PLEASE.
GOOD GIRL.


WAIT!
HONESTLY, NICK, JESSICA KEPT KISSING ME AND... OTHER THINGS. FOR A FEW MINUTES, I WAS TOTALLY LOST IN THE PLEASURE. WHEN I CAME TO MY SENSES, SHE WAS CROUCHED DOWN, TUGGING ON MY PANTIES.
I ONLY HAD HALF A SECOND TO REACT, SO I PANICKED AND BLURTED OUT THE FIRST THING THAT POPPED INTO MY HEAD. GOD, I'M SO DUMB!
Kinder Garten OF THE DEAD
JOHN VITORELLO
A Study about NOTHING
JOHN COLTRANE


HEY, EVERYTHING OKAY?
Y-YEAH. SORRY, IT'S JUST...UM... I'M ON MY PERIOD.


I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING: "HOW COULD SCOTT BE SO STUPID?"
NOW NOT ONLY HAVE I MISLED JESSICA (*NONE* OF THE THINGS SHE LIKES ABOUT ME ARE EVEN *REAL*), BUT I'VE OUTRIGHT LIED TO HER. WHAT WILL SHE THINK OF ME WHEN SHE DISCOVERS THE TRUTH?
AND JESSICA, OF COURSE, WAS NOTHING BUT UNDERSTANDING...
OH! WELL, THAT DOESN'T BOTHER ME.


IT DOESN'T?
NO WAY. I'M HORNY AS HELL WHEN I'M ON MY PERIOD.
WAIT. REALLY?
SURE, LOTS OF US GET THAT WAY. NONE OF YOUR GIRLFRIENDS HAVE EVER TALKED ABOUT THAT?
I GREW UP KIND OF, UM, SHELTERED.
OH. WELL, ONE OF THE MANY, MANY BENEFITS OF DATING WOMEN IS WE'RE NOT FREAKED OUT BY THAT KIND OF STUFF.
UM...
BUT IF YOU DON'T WANT ME *DOWN THERE*, THAT'S PERFECTLY OKAY. I HAVE OTHER WAYS...


WORST OF ALL? I DIDN'T LEAVE, NICK! I LET THE CHARADE CONTINUE. I WAS HAVING A GREAT TIME AND DIDN'T WANT IT TO END. SO NOT ONLY AM I A LIAR, BUT I'M ALSO A CREEP!
OH, YEAH?
MMHM. AND NOW THAT WE'VE MADE OUT A BIT, LET'S SEE IF WE WOKE UP THOSE SLEEPY NERVE-ENDINGS...


BECAUSE I REALLY, REALLY WANT A CHANCE TO PLAY WITH THESE LOVELY GIRLS.


HOW'S THAT, BABE?
I... OKAY, WOW!
WOW? WOW IS GOOD.
I'M DEFINITELY STARTING TO FEEL... SOMETHING... IT'S TINGLY!
TINGLY GOOD OR TINGLY BAD?
GOOD!
KEEP GOING?
MM, GOD, YES. PLEASE!


OH, MY GOD. THIS IS SOO MUCH BETTER THAN WHEN I'M... UM...
BY YOURSELF?
YEAH.
BABE, YOU HAVE NO IDEA.
OH, F-FUCK! WAIT!
SURE! TOO MUCH STIMULATION?
HEROES
NOTHING
JESSICA WAS RIGHT. IT WAS TOO MUCH STIMULATION. BUT THAT'S NOT WHY I STOPPED HER. THE TRUTH IS, (TMI ALERT) I WAS FEELING SOMETHING "DOWN BELOW" FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MONTHS! AND I HAD NO CLUE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF I... AHEM... YOU KNOW!

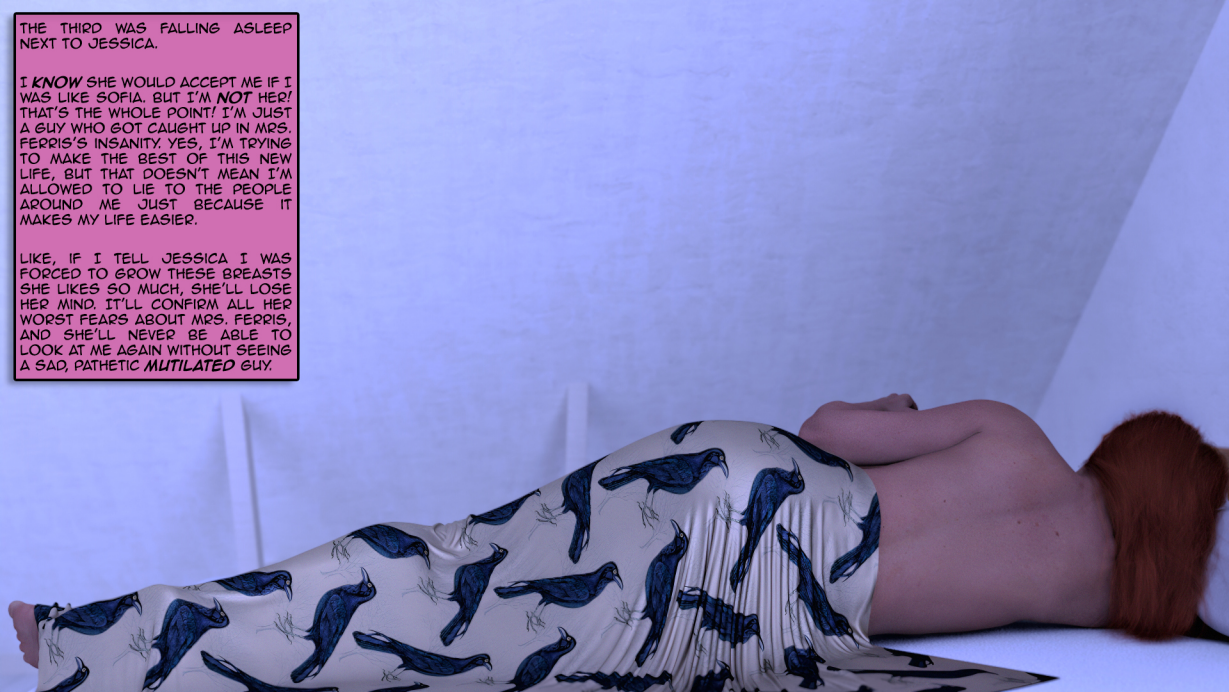

YEAH, SORRY. BUT, THANK YOU! I REALLY WAS TERRIFIED I'D NEVER BE ABLE TO FEEL THAT WAY AGAIN. NOW, WHAT ABOUT YOU? IN THE PARK WE NEVER GOT THE CHANCE TO--
HEHE. WAY AHEAD OF YOU.
OH!
HEY, IT'S CHECK-IN TIME. HAVING A GOOD TIME?
"A GOOD TIME" DOESN'T BEGIN TO DESCRIBE WHAT I'M FEELING. THIS IS... THANK YOU.
AND YOU'RE *REALLY* OKAY WITH ME BEING A LITTLE BOSSY?
JESSICA, IT TOOK ME A LONG TIME TO ADMIT THIS, BUT IT REALLY TURNS ME ON. WHEN IT COMES TO SEX, I ENJOY GIVING PLEASURE. TELL ME WHAT TO DO.
DAMN, SANDY. I THINK I'M DEAD. I'M DEAD, GOD *IS* A LESBIAN, AND I'M NOW IN HEAVEN.


LIKE I SAID, NICK, I WON'T GIVE YOU THE DETAILS. FROM WHAT I'VE HEARD OF YOUR REPUTATION, I'M SURE YOU CAN FILL IN THE BLANKS (NO OFFENSE).


THE POINT IS, WE HAD A FANTASTIC TIME LAST NIGHT. NOW, I REALLY, REALLY LIKE JOSH -- BUT BEING WITH JESSICA WAS SO DIFFERENT. HE KNEW WHO I WAS BEFORE. JESSICA SEES ME AS WHO I AM NOW.


OR DOES SHE? I MEAN, WHO THE HELL AM I ANYWAY? SCOTT? SANDY? SOFIA? I KNOW I'M PREACHING TO THE CHOIR, BUT THIS IS ALL SO MESSED UP!

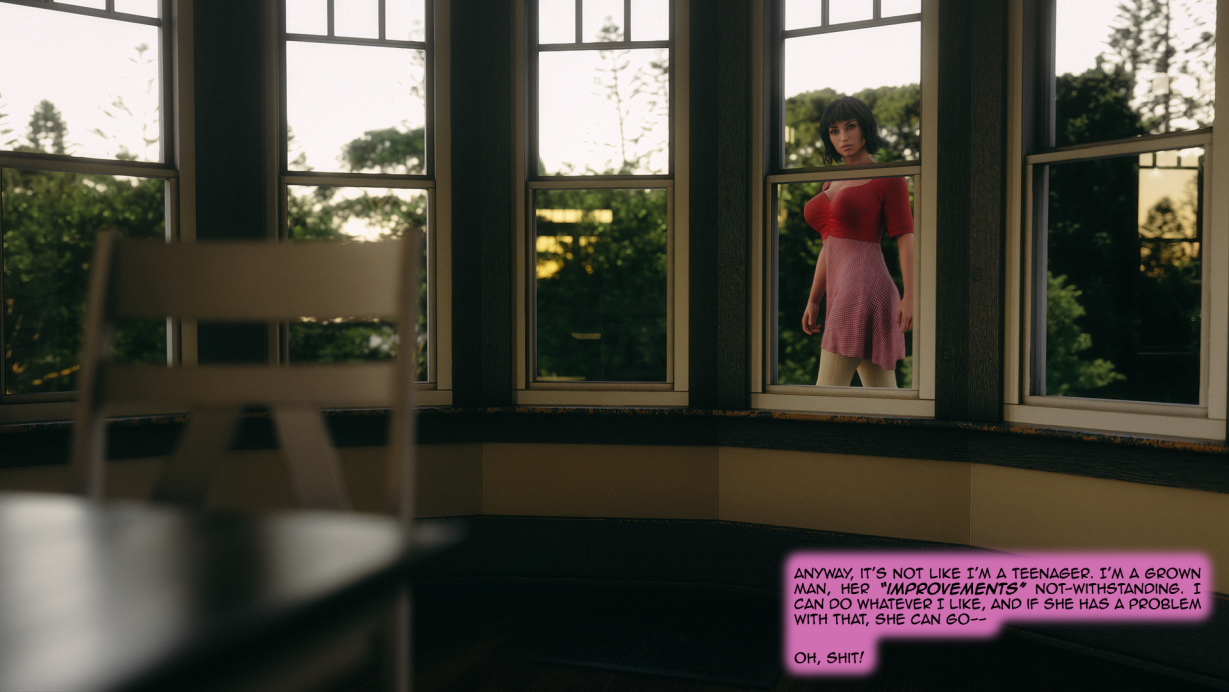

AND YET... HAVE YOU EVER HAD A PERFECT MOMENT, NICK? I'VE HAD THREE. THE FIRST WAS WHEN I STOLE A MINT CONDITION MICHAEL JORDAN ROOKIE CARD FROM THIS FILTHY RICH BASTARD. THE SECOND WAS MY KISS ON THE ROOF WITH JOSH.


THE THIRD WAS FALLING ASLEEP NEXT TO JESSICA.
I *KNOW* SHE WOULD ACCEPT ME IF I WAS LIKE SOFIA. BUT I'M *NOT* HER! THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT! I'M JUST A GUY WHO GOT CAUGHT UP IN MRS. FERRIS'S INSANITY. YES, I'M TRYING TO MAKE THE BEST OF THIS NEW LIFE, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I'M ALLOWED TO LIE TO THE PEOPLE AROUND ME JUST BECAUSE IT MAKES MY LIFE EASIER.
LIKE, IF I TELL JESSICA I WAS FORCED TO GROW THESE BREASTS SHE LIKES SO MUCH, SHE'LL LOSE HER MIND. IT'LL CONFIRM ALL HER WORST FEARS ABOUT MRS. FERRIS, AND SHE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO LOOK AT ME AGAIN WITHOUT SEEING A SAD, PATHETIC *MUTILATED* GUY.

ANYWAY. IF YOU GOT THIS FAR, SORRY FOR BABBLING, AND THANKS FOR READING. I REALLY WOULD LOVE TO HEAR BACK FROM YOU. THIS IS A TWO-WAY STREET, NICK. IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING (AND I KNOW YOU ARE DESPITE THE TOUGH GUY B.S.), PLEASE REACH OUT.
WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER, MAN.


I PRAY TO GOD THAT MRS. FERRIS IS STILL ASLEEP. I KNOW I'LL CATCH HELL FROM HER FOR STAYING OVERNIGHT AT JESSICA'S, BUT MAYBE I CAN AT LEAST GET CHANGED BEFORE SHE STARTS SCREAMING LIKE A BANSHEE.


She'll probably come up with some stupid new "punishment." But, really, what else could she do? She took my balls and gave me a cute face and boobs that would make Pamela Anderson jealous. Not much left of Scott except...
And she wouldn't go that far. *Right?*
So if I need to endure a bit of scolding, that's fine. Spending the night with Jess was so, so worth it.


ANYWAY, IT'S NOT LIKE I'M A TEENAGER. I'M A GROWN MAN, HER *"IMPROVEMENTS"* NOT-WITHSTANDING. I CAN DO WHATEVER I LIKE, AND IF SHE HAS A PROBLEM WITH THAT, SHE CAN GO--
OH, SHIT!


NOT ONLY IS MRS. FERRIS AWAKE, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE SHE DIDN'T GO TO BED! I'M REALLY IN DEEP CRAP NOW.
BUT YOU KNOW WHAT? I DON'T CARE. SHE CAN SCREAM AND YELL ALL SHE WANTS, BUT I WON'T LET THIS OLD BITCH DICTATE THE COURSE OF MY LIFE. NO WAY!

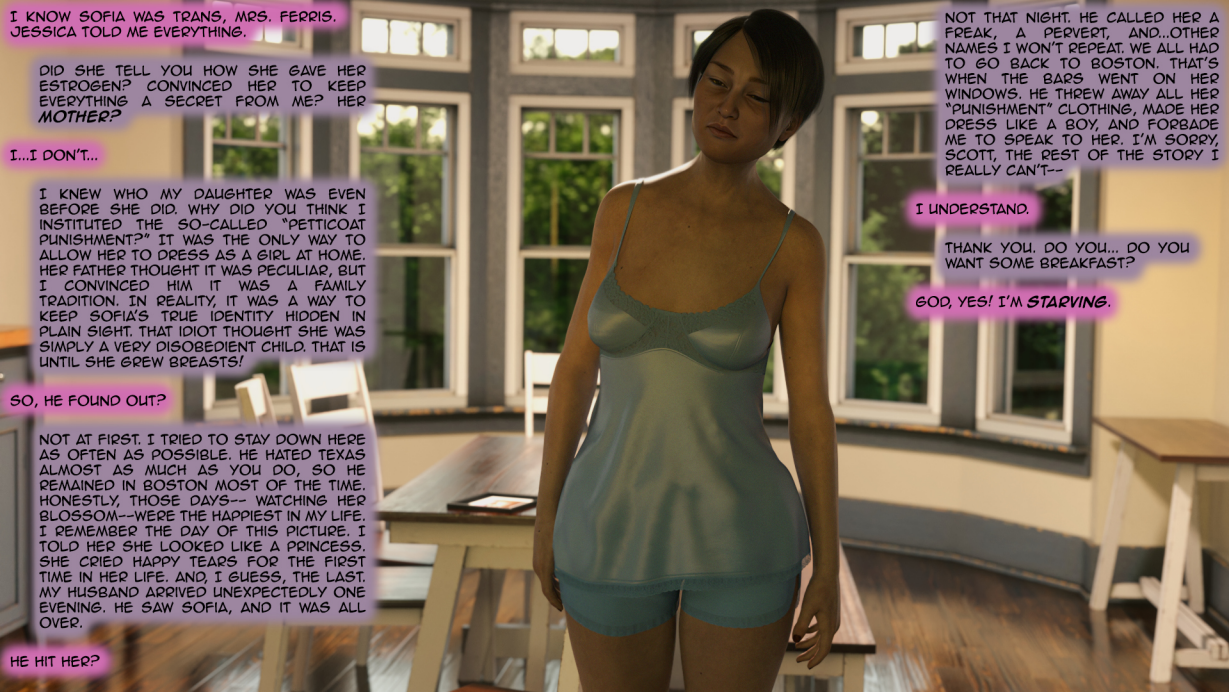

GOOD MORNING. BEFORE YOU SAY ANYTHING, I DON'T FEEL LIKE FIGHTING.
YOU CAME BACK.
WELL, OF COURSE I DID. WHERE ELSE WOULD I GO?
BACK HOME TO BOSTON. OR TO THE POLICE, MAYBE. I HALF-EXPECTED MY DOOR TO BE BASHED IN THIS MORNING.

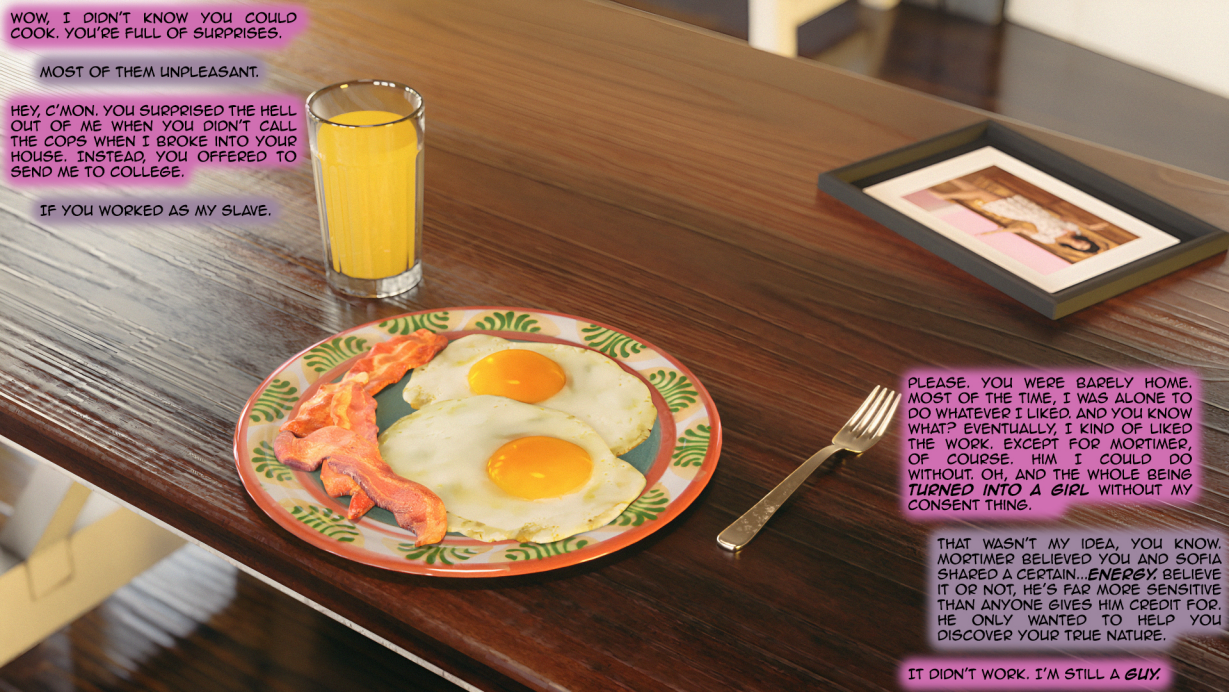

WAIT, YOU THOUGHT I RAN AWAY?
I WAS AFRAID YOU HAD, YES.
AND YOU DIDN'T CALL THE POLICE TO TELL THEM ALL ABOUT MY CRIMINAL PAST?
COME NOW. THAT THREAT CEASED TO BE EFFECTIVE WHEN I HAD THE SURGEON PERFORM ALL THOSE PROCEDURES WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT. I MAY BE RICH, BUT I'M NOT GOD. IF YOU WENT TO THE AUTHORITIES, I'D BE ARRESTED FOR KIDNAPPING, ASSAULT, AND A HOST OF OTHER CHARGES.


SO... I'M FREE TO GO?
YOU ARE. THE TRUTH IS, SCOTT, I'M A BITCH. I'M MEAN AND NASTY. I'M SELFISH, IMMORAL, AND RUTHLESS. I TAKE WHAT I WANT, EVEN IF IT MEANS TRAMPLING PEOPLE ON MY WAY TO THE TOP. MY FATHER USED TO SAY I WAS AS VICIOUS AS A RATTLESNAKE WITH A TOOTHACHE, AND GOD HELP WHOEVER STOOD IN MY WAY.
SOUNDS LIKE YOUR DAD HAD YOU PEGGED.
HE WAS A SMART MAN.


I THOUGHT I COULD TAKE ON ANYONE AND COME OUT ON TOP. EVEN MY HUSBAND, BASTARD THAT HE TURNED OUT TO BE. I WAS WRONG. I WAS SO, SO WRONG, AND SOFIA PAID THE PRICE. I LOST HER, AND I WAS SO ANGRY AND SO FULL OF HATE. I HATED GOD FOR LETTING IT ALL HAPPEN. I HATED MY HUSBAND FOR WHAT HE DID TO US. BUT, EVEN MORE, I HATED MYSELF FOR NOT SEEING IT COMING... FOR NOT STOPPING IT!
MRS. FERRIS... WHAT DID HE DO?
I CAN'T, SCOTT. NOT TODAY. BUT I'LL TELL YOU. I'LL TELL YOU EVERYTHING. JUST, PLEASE, NOT TODAY.


FINE, BUT NO MORE LIES STARTING RIGHT NOW. OKAY? AND YOU KNOW WHAT? I'LL START. I WAS WITH JESSICA LAST NIGHT.
OH. I...I THOUGHT YOU LIKED BOYS.
I DO, I GUESS. BUT I ALSO LIKE GIRLS. THIS IS THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY, AFTER ALL, AND--
THIS IS ALSO TEXAS, MY DEAR. JUST...BE CAREFUL, FOR BOTH YOUR SAKES. I KNOW THAT GIRL HATES ME. HONESTLY, I DON'T BLAME HER. HOW COULD I? SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO MY SOFIA, BUT IT WOULDN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE EVEN IF SHE DID. SHE'D STILL HATE ME--AND SHE'D BE RIGHT TO DO SO.
BUT WHY DON'T YOU LIKE HER? YOU CALLED HER A DEVIANT. IS THAT BECAUSE SHE'S A LESBIAN? BECAUSE THAT'S A TERRIBLE THING TO SAY.
I DON'T LIKE HER BECAUSE SHE TOOK IT UPON HERSELF TO INTERFERE IN OUR LIVES. IF SHE HAD KEPT HER NOSE OUT OF IT, SOFIA MIGHT BE STANDING RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE NOW, AND NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE HAPPENED!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?


I KNOW SOFIA WAS TRANS, MRS. FERRIS. JESSICA TOLD ME EVERYTHING.
DID SHE TELL YOU HOW SHE GAVE HER ESTROGEN? CONVINCED HER TO KEEP EVERYTHING A SECRET FROM ME? HER *MOTHER?*
I...I DON'T...
I KNEW WHO MY DAUGHTER WAS EVEN BEFORE SHE DID. WHY DID YOU THINK I INSTITUTED THE SO-CALLED "PETTICOAT PUNISHMENT?" IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO ALLOW HER TO DRESS AS A GIRL AT HOME. HER FATHER THOUGHT IT WAS PECULIAR, BUT I CONVINCED HIM IT WAS A FAMILY TRADITION. IN REALITY, IT WAS A WAY TO KEEP SOFIA'S TRUE IDENTITY HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT. THAT IDIOT THOUGHT SHE WAS SIMPLY A VERY DISOBEDIENT CHILD. THAT IS UNTIL SHE GREW BREASTS!
SO, HE FOUND OUT?
NOT AT FIRST. I TRIED TO STAY DOWN HERE AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE. HE HATED TEXAS ALMOST AS MUCH AS YOU DO, SO HE REMAINED IN BOSTON MOST OF THE TIME. HONESTLY, THOSE DAYS-- WATCHING HER BLOSSOM--WERE THE HAPPIEST IN MY LIFE. I REMEMBER THE DAY OF THIS PICTURE. I TOLD HER SHE LOOKED LIKE A PRINCESS. SHE CRIED HAPPY TEARS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HER LIFE. AND, I GUESS, THE LAST. MY HUSBAND ARRIVED UNEXPECTEDLY ONE EVENING. HE SAW SOFIA, AND IT WAS ALL OVER.
HE HIT HER?
NOT THAT NIGHT. HE CALLED HER A FREAK, A PERVERT, AND...OTHER NAMES I WON'T REPEAT. WE ALL HAD TO GO BACK TO BOSTON. THAT'S WHEN THE BARS WENT ON HER WINDOWS. HE THREW AWAY ALL HER "PUNISHMENT" CLOTHING, MADE HER DRESS LIKE A BOY, AND FORBADE ME TO SPEAK TO HER. I'M SORRY, SCOTT, THE REST OF THE STORY I REALLY CAN'T--
I UNDERSTAND.
THANK YOU. DO YOU... DO YOU WANT SOME BREAKFAST?
GOD, YES! I'M *STARVING.*


WOW, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD COOK. YOU'RE FULL OF SURPRISES.
MOST OF THEM UNPLEASANT.
HEY, C'MON. YOU SURPRISED THE HELL OUT OF ME WHEN YOU DIDN'T CALL THE COPS WHEN I BROKE INTO YOUR HOUSE. INSTEAD, YOU OFFERED TO SEND ME TO COLLEGE.
IF YOU WORKED AS MY SLAVE.
PLEASE. YOU WERE BARELY HOME. MOST OF THE TIME, I WAS ALONE TO DO WHATEVER I LIKED. AND YOU KNOW WHAT? EVENTUALLY, I KIND OF LIKED THE WORK. EXCEPT FOR MORTIMER, OF COURSE. HIM I COULD DO WITHOUT. OH, AND THE WHOLE BEING *TURNED INTO A GIRL* WITHOUT MY CONSENT THING.
THAT WASN'T MY IDEA, YOU KNOW. MORTIMER BELIEVED YOU AND SOFIA SHARED A CERTAIN...*ENERGY.* BELIEVE IT OR NOT, HE'S FAR MORE SENSITIVE THAN ANYONE GIVES HIM CREDIT FOR. HE ONLY WANTED TO HELP YOU DISCOVER YOUR TRUE NATURE.
IT DIDN'T WORK. I'M STILL A *GUY.*


HM. YOU REALLY DO SOUND LIKE HER. SOFIA NEVER SAID SHE **WAS** A GIRL. SHE SAID SHE WANTED TO **BE** A GIRL. I TRIED TO CONVINCE HER SHE ALREADY WAS ONE--THAT GOD HAD MADE A SMALL MISTAKE THAT WE COULD FIX. BUT NO, SHE DIDN'T THINK GOD MADE MISTAKES. "HE WANTS ME TO BE A GIRL," SHE SAID. "THAT'S WHY HE MADE ME TRANS. BUT IT'S SOMETHING I HAVE TO DO FOR MYSELF. MAYBE IT'S SO I CAN LEARN SOMETHING. THAT'S WHAT HARDSHIP IS FOR, RIGHT? MAYBE IT'S SO IN THE FUTURE, I CAN HELP OTHER PEOPLE."
I WISH I COULD'VE KNOWN HER.
YOU WOULD'VE LIKED HER. SHE WAS KIND, GRACIOUS, SMART, AND BRAVE. I WOULD LOOK AT HER AND HAVE NO IDEA HOW SOMETHING SO SWEET AND WONDERFUL COULD HAVE COME FROM ME. IT JUST...DIDN'T MAKE SENSE. YOU KNOW WHAT'S TERRIBLY SAD? SHE THOUGHT HER FATHER WOULD COME AROUND. SHE GAVE EVERYBODY THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT, EVEN HIM. EVEN WHEN--


HEY, LET'S NOT TALK ABOUT THAT.
YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'S JUST... I KNOW I'VE DONE TERRIBLE THINGS TO YOU, AND YOU MIGHT NEVER FORGIVE ME FOR THEM. BUT I DON'T WANT TO SCREW THIS UP, SCOTT. AND I KNOW THAT'S WHAT I'M DOING--I'M MAKING THE SAME DAMN MISTAKES ALL OVER AGAIN. DOESN'T ANYTHING EVER CHANGE?
YOU CAN'T CHANGE THE PAST, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE NEED TO KEEP MAKING THE SAME MISTAKES. I MEAN, I'M NOT BURGLARIZING HOUSES ANYMORE.
THANK GOODNESS. YOU WOULD'VE GOTTEN YOURSELF KILLED.
LOOK, I'M STILL ON THE FENCE ABOUT THE WHOLE "BE MY DAUGHTER" THING. BUT... I'M WILLING TO GIVE IT A SHOT--IF I'M NOT SOFIA. SHE WAS HER OWN PERSON, MRS. FERRIS. I CAN'T EVER REPLACE HER.


I KNOW. SCOTT...I...I'M SORRY FOR EVERYTHING.
FOR NOW, CALL ME SANDY. OKAY?
THAT'S A GORGEOUS NAME, SANDY.
AND THIS BLACK HAIR? IT'S NOT ME. AND IF I'M GOING TO DO THIS...TO BE YOUR DAUGHTER, I STILL HAVE TO BE ME.
I UNDERSTAND. AND...THANK YOU.
WHO KNOWS, MAYBE THIS IS A CHANCE FOR US TO START OVER. WE'LL TAKE IT ONE STEP AT A TIME. THAT WAY, WE CAN FIGURE EVERYTHING OUT. I LOST MY PARENTS. YOU LOST YOUR CHILD. I GUESS IT MAKES SENSE, RIGHT?
THE ONLY SENSE IN THIS WORLD IS THE SENSE YOU MAKE FOR YOURSELF.
HOW ABOUT FOR OURSELVES? TOGETHER.
PERFECT.

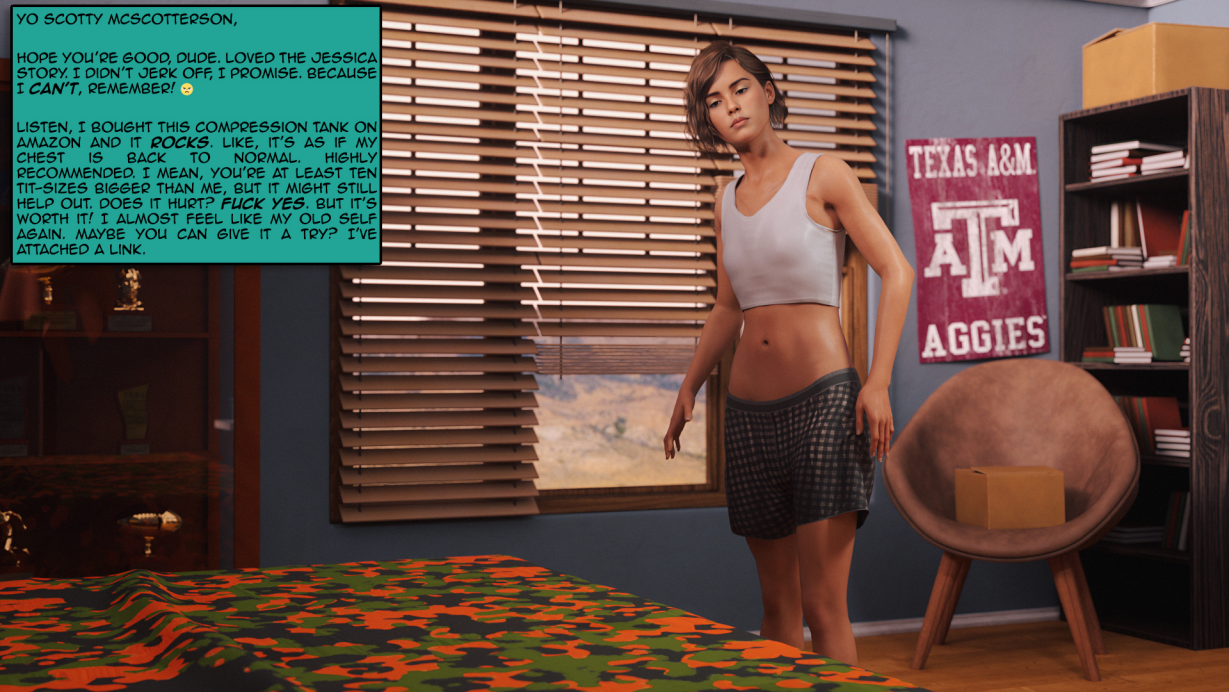

LATE THAT NIGHT....

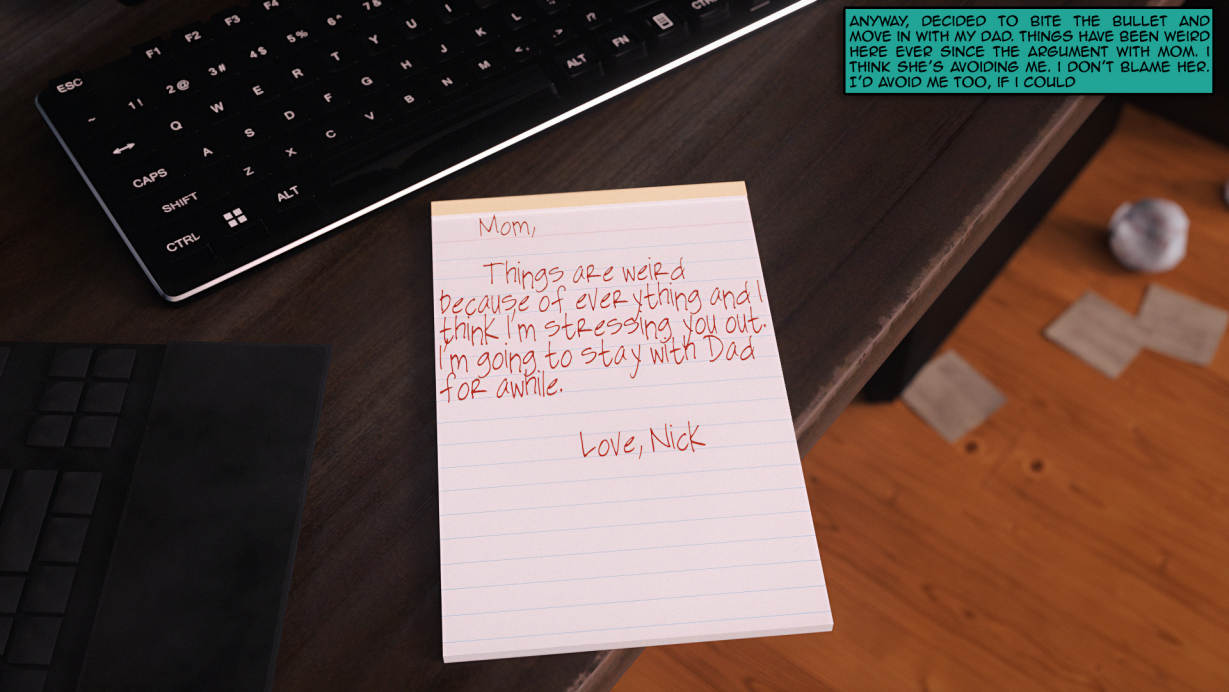

SHIT! OKAY, ACCORDING TO THESE DOCUMENTS... OH, NO. NO! SANDY IS IN EVEN MORE TROUBLE THAN SHE REALIZES. THAT GIRL HAS THE WORST LUCK ON PLANET EARTH.


I KNOW SHE DOESN'T WANT ME TO CALL HER, BUT THIS IS A DAMN EMERGENCY. IF THAT CREEPY MRS. FERRIS PICKS UP, I'LL JUST PRETEND TO HAVE THE WRONG NUMBER. DAMN, I HOPE--


WELL. HELLO.
OH, FUCK!
INDEED.


THE NEXT DAY....


YO SCOTTY MCSCOTTERSON,
HOPE YOU'RE GOOD, DUDE. LOVED THE JESSICA STORY. I DIDN'T JERK OFF, I PROMISE. BECAUSE I CAN'T, REMEMBER!
LISTEN, I BOUGHT THIS COMPRESSION TANK ON AMAZON AND IT ROCKS. LIKE, IT'S AS IF MY CHEST IS BACK TO NORMAL. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. I MEAN, YOU'RE AT LEAST TEN TIT-SIZES BIGGER THAN ME, BUT IT MIGHT STILL HELP OUT. DOES IT HURT? FUCK YES. BUT IT'S WORTH IT! I ALMOST FEEL LIKE MY OLD SELF AGAIN. MAYBE YOU CAN GIVE IT A TRY? I'VE ATTACHED A LINK.
TEXAS A&M
AGGIES


ANYWAY, DECIDED TO BITE THE BULLET AND MOVE IN WITH MY DAD. THINGS HAVE BEEN WEIRD HERE EVER SINCE THE ARGUMENT WITH MOM. I THINK SHE'S AVOIDING ME. I DON'T BLAME HER. I'D AVOID ME TOO, IF I COULD
Mom,
Things are weird because of everything and I think I'm stressing you out. I'm going to stay with Dad for awhile.
Love, Nick


BUT YOU KNOW WHAT? IT'S ALL GOOD. I LOVE MY MOM, BUT DAD WON'T PRESSURE ME INTO ANY GIRLY SHIT, SO THIS'LL BE A WAY TO REMEMBER WHO I'M SUPPOSED TO BE.
LET'S HANG OUT SOON, MAN. BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS FOR SURE.
YOUR PAL, NICK