

HALF SISTERS

by
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Interlude #1

Nikki's Nightmare




zzzzzz...



zzzz...



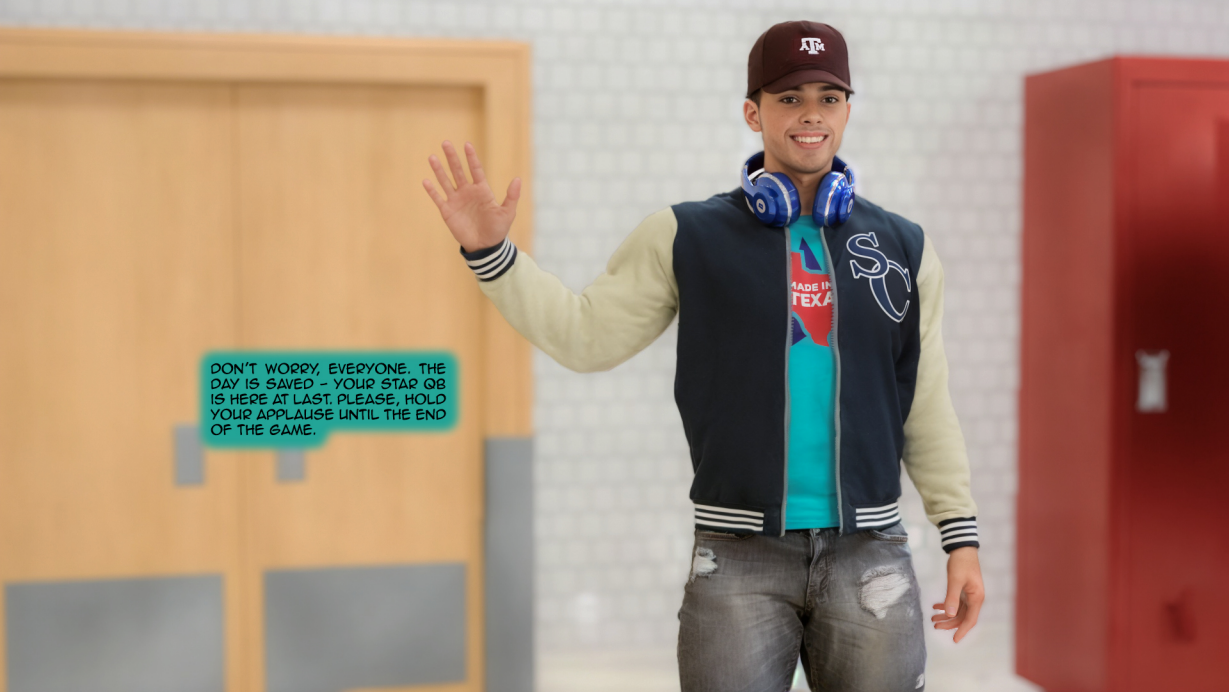
ZZZZ...

A young man with short, spiky brown hair and a light beard is shirtless, sitting on a blue couch. He is flexing his right bicep. The background is a light-colored wall with a shadow of a person. A teal speech bubble is in the upper right corner.


THE MORNING OF THE CHAMPIONSHIP.
YES! I'M SO PUMPED. TIME TO DOMINATE.



GORGEOUS DAY FOR FOOTBALL - AND AN EVEN MORE GORGEOUS DAY FOR A TRUCK UPGRADE, AIN'T IT? NOTHIN' PERSONAL, OLD GIRL, BUT A MAN'S GOTTA GROW UP, YOU KNOW? DAD PROMISED THAT IF WE WIN TONIGHT, I'LL BE CRUISIN' IN A BRAND-SPANKIN' NEW TRUCK. I'M GONNA GET ME ONE OF THOSE BAD BOYS WITH THE LIFTED SUSPENSION, OVERSIZED TIRES, THE WHOLE SHEBANG.



DON'T WORRY, EVERYONE. THE DAY IS SAVED - YOUR STAR QB IS HERE AT LAST. PLEASE, HOLD YOUR APPLAUSE UNTIL THE END OF THE GAME.

A scene in a locker room. Two men are standing in the center, both wearing briefs. The man on the left is wearing red briefs and has a hairy chest. The man on the right is wearing white briefs and is clean-shaven. A third man, seen from the back, is wearing a dark blue and white jacket, a maroon cap, and a blue neckerchief. He is looking towards the two men in briefs. The floor is tiled with a red and white diamond pattern. Red lockers are visible on the left, and a wooden door is on the right.

NICK, FINALLY YOU'RE HERE.
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE
WHAT COACH JUST TOLD US.
ZACH HUTCHINSON IS STARTING!
HE'S GOING TO BE TONIGHT'S
KICKER. AIN'T THAT FUCKED?

WHAT!? HAS COACH
LOST HIS MIND? WE'LL
SEE ABOUT THIS. ZACH!



HEY, NICK. WHAT'S UP?

IS IT TRUE YOU'RE OUR
KICKER FOR TONIGHT?

YEAH, I'M STARTING. I'M REALLY
PRETTY NERVOUS, BUT-

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE NERVOUS. AT LEAST, NOT ABOUT STARTING TONIGHT. YOU KNOW WHY? BECAUSE I'M GONNA MAKE DAMN SURE YOU DON'T. GOT THAT?

WHAT? WAIT, WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

THIS IS FOOTBALL, NOT A *BLOWJOB COMPETITION*. YOU BELONG ON THE BENCH. JUST BECAUSE YOUR DAD RICH DOESN'T MEAN YOU'VE GOT A SPOT ON THAT FIELD, I DON'T CARE HOW MUCH SHIT HE BUYS FOR THE TEAM. AS LONG AS I'M TEAM CAPTAIN, YOU'RE NOT OUR KICKER.





IT ISN'T LIKE THAT, NICK. I'VE BEEN PRACTICING HARD, YOU'VE SEEN ME -

YEAH, I'VE SEEN YOU PRANCING AROUND THE GRID IRON. BUT DO I LOOK LIKE I CARE? YOU'RE *NOT* GOOD ENOUGH. TONIGHT'S THE CHAMPIONSHIP. I WON'T LET YOU RUIN OUR CHANCES. I'M GONNA TALK TO COACH AS SOON AS I'M SUITED UP.



ALL RIGHT, WITH THAT BULLSHIT SETTLED, I NEED YOU ALL TO CLEAR OUT SO I CAN GET CHANGED AND START WARMING UP. SO... STOP GAWKING AT THE QUEER AND GET THE FUCK OUT. I NEED MY PRE-GAME PRIVACY!



HEY, WHO TURNED OUT THE LIGHTS? THIS AIN'T THE TIME FOR PRANKS, FELLAS.

A muscular man with pointed ears and fangs, wearing a black vest, is shown in a menacing pose. He is holding a syringe in his right hand. The background is a red brick wall.

THE ONLY *PRANK* IS YOU MASQUERADING AS A BOY, NIKKI! WE'RE HERE TO TAKE YOU BACK. IT'S TIME TO FINISH WHAT WAS STARTED.

DAVIS? OH, GOD. N-NO! THAT WAS ALL JUST A DREAM.

SILLY GIRL, THAT WASN'T A DREAM! **THIS** WAS THE DREAM. YOU PRETENDING TO BE ALL MACHO AND MANLY. WE ALL KNOW WHY YOU REALLY MADE FUN OF ZACH. HE REMINDED YOU OF THE KIND OF BOY YOU WERE AFRAID TO BE - OPEN, VULNERABLE, UNAFRAID OF HIS EMOTIONS.

YOU SAW IN HIM THE FREEDOM YOU NEVER GAVE YOURSELF. EVERY TEASE, EVERY TAUNT, WAS A MIRROR OF YOUR OWN INSECURITIES. YOU DIDN'T HATE HIM, YOU HATED THE REFLECTION OF YOURSELF YOU SAW IN HIM.



A woman is shown from the waist down, wearing a black bodysuit and black thigh-high boots with high heels. She is standing in a red locker room with a white and red checkered floor. A wooden bench is visible in the foreground. The scene is lit with dramatic, low-key lighting, casting shadows on the floor.

BUT DON'T WORRY! I'LL STILL TEACH
YOU HOW TO WALK IN HEELS, GIRL!



NO! I DON'T WANT THIS. I
CAN'T BE A GIRL. STOP. NO!
AARGH!




GET AWAY FROM ME,
ASSHOLES! I'M A GUY,
DAMN YOU!



SHIT! MY *MUSCLES!* THEY'RE ALL
FLABBY. AND MY VOICE! I SOUND
LIKE A... A...

NICHOLAS...



A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a black bikini, stands in the center of an operating room. She is facing away from the camera, looking towards the surgical table. The room is brightly lit with several overhead surgical lamps. Medical equipment, including a monitor and a stand, is visible in the background. The floor is white with a pattern of dark brown hexagons.

OH MY GOD. J-JILL?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING
HERE?

I WANT TO HELP YOU,
NICHOLAS.

IT'S YOUR TURN NOW.






NO, JILL! I... I CAN'T DO THIS. I CAN'T LOSE MY **BALLS**. I... I'M A MAN, DAMN IT! IT'S... IT'S WHO I AM... IT'S ALL I'VE EVER KNOWN.

THAT'S NOT TRUE. IT'S NOT ALL YOU'VE KNOWN. BEFORE YOU WERE A MAN, YOU WERE A BOY. A BOY WHO WAS SENSITIVE, GENTLE, AND KIND. JUST LIKE THE BOY YOU **USED** TO PROTECT.


ZACH.

BUT YOUR FATHER DIDN'T WANT A BOY LIKE THAT, DID HE? HE WANTED A TOUGH, MASCULINE, FOOTBALL-PLAYING SON. SO, HE PUSHED YOU, FORCED YOU INTO A MOLD THAT NEVER FIT PROPERLY. HE MADE YOU HIDE YOUR TRUE SELF. BUT YOU CAN'T HIDE FOREVER, NICHOLAS.




YOU'RE WRONG. I'M A MAN. I LOVE COMPETING, I LOVE THE ADRENALINE RUSH... THE THRILL OF VICTORY, THE STING OF DEFEAT... AND THE GIRLS... MY GOD, I LOVE THE GIRLS. HOW THEY SMELL, HOW THEY FEEL, THE WAY THEY LOOK AT ME... I LOVED EVERY DAMN MINUTE OF IT. I LOVED BEING RUGGED, BEING IN CHARGE, BEING THE MAN I WAS -- **AM!**

LOOK, I'M SORRY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, BUT THIS... THIS ISN'T ME. I WANT TO BE **STRONG.**

A blonde woman with blue eyes, wearing a pink bra and matching underwear, stands in a brightly lit hospital operating room. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The room features several large, hexagonal surgical lights on the ceiling, a black operating table to her left, and a blue and white medical cart to her right. In the background, there are medical monitors and a clock on the wall.

STRONG? NICHOLAS, I ASKED TO HAVE MY BALLS CUT OFF *FOR YOU*. THAT TOOK MORE STRENGTH THAN ANYTHING YOU'VE DONE ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD. YOUR MOTHER... A FORMER MISS TEXAS, RIGHT? SHE'S ONE OF THE STRONGEST WOMEN YOU KNOW. RAISING YOU, PROTECTING YOU FROM YOUR OLD MAN. SHE'S SHOWN MORE STRENGTH IN HER LITTLE FINGER THAN MOST MEN DO IN THEIR ENTIRE BODIES. AND YOUR FATHER... A MAN WHO HIDES HIS FEARS AND INSECURITIES IN A BOTTLE, BARELY ABLE TO HOLD HIS LIFE TOGETHER UNLESS HIS SON IS WINNING AT A GAME. IS THAT WHAT YOU CALL STRENGTH? IS THAT WHO YOU WANT TO EMULATE?

DON'T TALK ABOUT MY DAD LIKE THAT. HE--



HE'S SCARED. **TERRIFIED**. NOW, THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH FEAR, BY ITSELF. BUT WHEN FEAR TURNS INTO ANGER, INTO HATE, INTO DESTRUCTION... THAT'S WHEN IT BECOMES A PROBLEM.

YOUR FATHER IS DESTROYING HIMSELF -- AND YOU -- WITH HIS FEAR. WHAT KIND OF STRENGTH IS THAT? BEING A STRONG PERSON ISN'T ABOUT HAVING BALLS. IT'S ABOUT HAVING COURAGE. IT'S ABOUT STANDING UP AND BEING TRUE TO YOURSELF, NO MATTER WHAT.

BUT WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO AS THIS FLABBY... **THING?** I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE TO START.



WHEN I TRADED MY BALLS SO YOU WOULDN'T BE PUNISHED, THAT WASN'T A SACRIFICE. THAT WAS ME TAKING CONTROL OF MY DESTINY. I CHOSE TO PRESERVE THE PART OF ME THAT I SAW IN YOU. NOW IT'S YOUR TURN. TAKE CONTROL. DECIDE WHO *YOU* WANT TO BE, NOT WHO YOU THINK YOUR FATHER WANTS IN A SON. THE GOOD NEWS IS YOU'VE ALREADY STARTED.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

YOUR BODY IS WHAT I MEAN, OBVIOUSLY.



THIS BODY YOU'RE IN NOW, IT'S JUST THE HALF WAY POINT. IT'S WHAT YOU SAW AFTER THE ESTROGEN DEVASTATED YOUR MUSCLES, LEAVING THIS SOFTNESS BEHIND. BUT THEN, YOU GOT TO WORK, DIDN'T YOU? IN CLINIC 12'S GYM, YOU WORKED HARDER THAN ANYONE. FAR MORE THAN WAS NECESSARY, OR EVEN ASKED FOR. DAVIS HAD TO DRAG YOU OUT OF THERE MOST NIGHTS.

I... I REMEMBER. I FELT SO WEAK. I HATED IT. SO, I WORKED OUT. **A LOT.** I WORKED UNTIL I COULDN'T STAND, UNTIL MY MUSCLES WERE SCREAMING. EVERY TIME I LIFTED A WEIGHT, I FELT LIKE I WAS HOLDING ON TO SOME PART OF... ME.

AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT YOU WERE DOING. BUT NOT IN THE WAY YOU THINK. YOU WERE PRESERVING THE PART OF YOU THAT ALWAYS FIGHTS, THAT NEVER GIVES UP. **THAT'S** YOUR STRENGTH, NICHOLAS. IT'S ALWAYS BEEN THERE, AND IT ALWAYS WILL BE, NO MATTER WHAT YOUR BODY LOOKS LIKE. ALTHOUGH, THAT FIGHTING SPIRIT IS ALSO HOW YOU WENT FROM THIS...





...TO THIS!



BUT THEN AGAIN, NOT EVERYTHING
WAS MEANT TO GET LEAN AND TIGHT.



I THINK YOU GOT A LITTLE HELP FROM YOUR MOTHER'S GENES WITH THIS. I CAN SEE WHY SHE WAS MISS TEXAS! AND CLEARLY, THE APPLE DOESN'T FALL FAR FROM THE TREE!

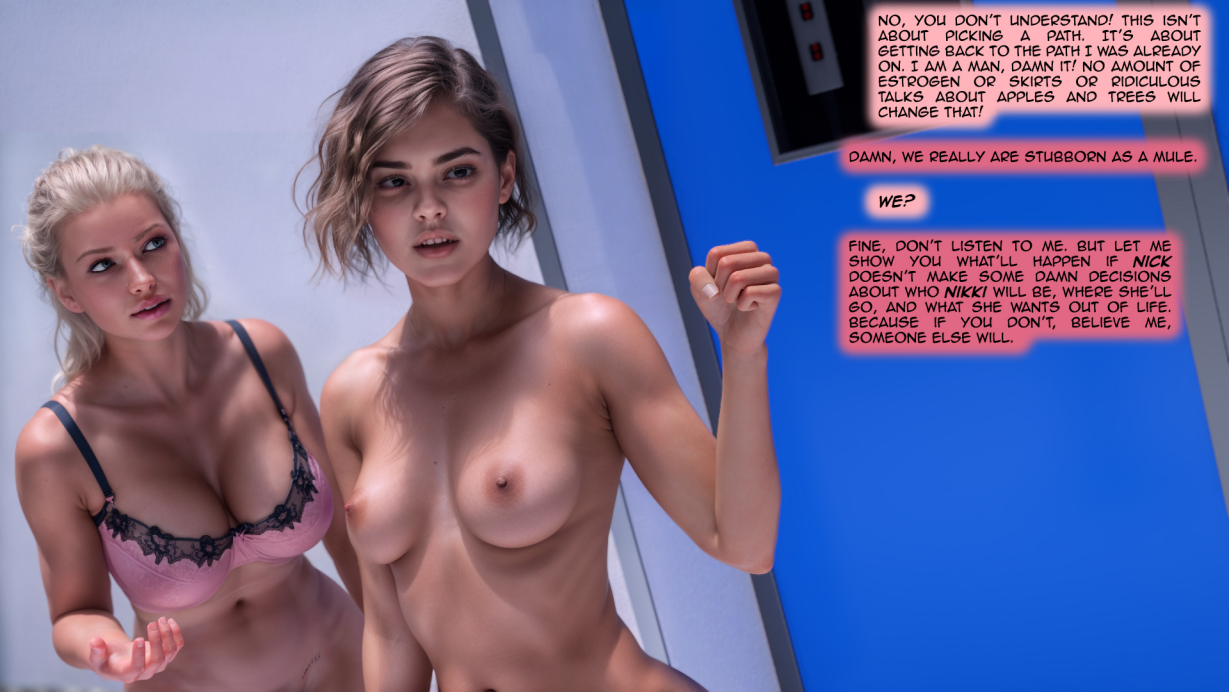


THE POINT I'M TRYING TO MAKE IS YOU NEED TO REALIZE THAT THIS BODY OF YOURS IS **FEMININE**, BUT IT'S STILL THE BODY OF AN ATHLETE. IT'S LEAN, STRONG, FIT... AND SURE, YOU'RE NOT THE SAME MAN YOU USED TO BE. BUT WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO BE? INSTEAD OF TRYING TO GO BACK TO AN IDENTITY YOUR FATHER FORCED ON YOU, WHY NOT EMBRACE WHO YOU COULD BECOME?

BUT I DON'T KNOW WHO I AM! HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO BE THIS... PERSON?

IT'LL BE LIKE FOOTBALL TRAINING. YOU DIDN'T BECOME A STAR QUARTERBACK OVERNIGHT, DID YOU? YOU HAD TO LEARN, PRACTICE, AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, BELIEVE IN YOURSELF. THAT'S WHAT YOU NEED TO DO NOW.

IN THIS ROOM, I TOOK CONTROL OF MY DESTINY. WAS BEING **CASTRATED** WHAT I HAD PLANNED WHEN I WAS A BANKER IN PORTLAND? NO! BUT CHOOSING MY PATH INSTEAD OF LETTING OTHERS DECIDE FOR ME MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE. YOU NEED TO START DOING THE SAME. EMBRACE WHO YOU COULD BECOME! MAKE NIKKI THE PERSON YOU WANT TO BE INSTEAD OF TRYING TO REVERT TO THE MAN YOU NEVER TRULY WERE. TAKE CONTROL. BECAUSE IF YOU DON'T START STEERING YOUR OWN SHIP, **OTHERS** WILL... JUST LIKE THEY DID BEFORE. PLEASE, DON'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKES.



NO, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! THIS ISN'T ABOUT PICKING A PATH. IT'S ABOUT GETTING BACK TO THE PATH I WAS ALREADY ON. I AM A MAN, DAMN IT! NO AMOUNT OF ESTROGEN OR SKIRTS OR RIDICULOUS TALKS ABOUT APPLES AND TREES WILL CHANGE THAT!

DAMN, WE REALLY ARE STUBBORN AS A MULE.

WE?

FINE, DON'T LISTEN TO ME. BUT LET ME SHOW YOU WHAT'LL HAPPEN IF **NICK** DOESN'T MAKE SOME DAMN DECISIONS ABOUT WHO **NIKKI** WILL BE, WHERE SHE'LL GO, AND WHAT SHE WANTS OUT OF LIFE. BECAUSE IF YOU DON'T, BELIEVE ME, SOMEONE ELSE WILL.

HUH? WHAT HAPPENED?





WHERE AM I? WHY DO I
FEEL SO...BREEZY?


HEY, GIRL!

L-LAUREN!?



WELCOME TO THE TEAM, NIKKI! OH, I'M SO, SO HAPPY YOU DECIDED TO JOIN US! I KNOW YOU WERE HESITANT, BUT ONCE YOU TRY IT OUT, I THINK YOU'RE REALLY GONNA LOVE IT!

AND YOU LOOK *SO CUTE* IN THAT OUTFIT!

A photograph of two cheerleaders in orange and black uniforms performing on a soccer field. They are holding large orange and black pom-poms. The cheerleader on the right is in a dynamic pose, with one leg raised and arms high. The cheerleader on the left is seen from the back, also with arms high. The background shows a large stadium with blue seats.

WHAT THE HELL?! THIS... THIS ISN'T WHAT I WANT!

OH, DON'T BE SILLY, NIKKI! WE ALL KNOW YOU LOVE THE GAME, THE CROWD, AND THE EXCITEMENT. YOU WERE ALWAYS DRAWN TO THE CHEERLEADERS. YOU JUST HAD THE ROLES MIXED UP. NOW, COME ON, WE NEED TO PRACTICE. THIS MAY BE THE SOCCER TEAM, BUT WE STILL WANT TO MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION! FOOTBALL SEASON IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER AND YOUR **BOYFRIEND** ZACH CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU ON THE SIDELINES SHAKING THAT T AND A!



W-WHAT!? ZACH'S NOT MY BOYFRIEND. I'M NOT GAY, LAUREN!

WELL, OF COURSE NOT, SWEETIE. GIRLS CAN'T BE GAY FOR BOYS. THAT'S WHAT THE WORD 'STRAIGHT' IS FOR. NOW GIVE ME A **S**, GIVE ME AN **I**, GIVE ME AN **P**, GIVE ME AN **L**! WHAT DOES THAT SPELL? **GIRL!** AND THAT'S WHAT YOU ARE, NIKKI! A GIRL! NOW, LET'S GET THIS ROUTINE DOWN PAT. WE HAVE A BIG GAME TONIGHT!

WHY IS MY BODY MOVING ON ITS OWN!?

G-I-R-L!

AHHH! FUCK!

WHAT... WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT? JILL?
ZACH? ME... AS THE CHEERLEADING GIRLFRIEND
OF THE STAR QB? GOD DAMN, WHAT A
NIGHTMARE.



HEYA SCOTT, HOPE YOUR BIG MOMMY MILKERS HAVEN'T CAUSED ANY TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS LATELY.

MAN, THESE DREAMS I'VE BEEN HAVING... THEY'RE GETTING WORSE, BRO. YOU REMEMBER THAT SHIT I TOLD YOU ABOUT THE ISLAND? CLINIC 12? IT'S COMING BACK IN MY DREAMS AND TRUST ME, IT AIN'T NO STROLL DOWN MEMORY LANE.

IT'S LIKE MY BRAIN IS STUCK ON REPLAY, SHOWING THE WORST HITS OF MY LIFE. JILL WAS IN IT TOO. SHE WAS THE ONE WHO GAVE UP HER BALLS FOR ME. *HIS* BALLS? WHATEVER. IN THE DREAM, SHE'S TRYING TO CONVINCE ME I'M SUPPOSED TO BE A CHICK, OR EMBRACE MY FEMME SIDE, OR SOMETHING.

LISTEN, I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'RE GOING THROUGH THE SAME STUFF. BUT I FEEL LIKE I'M LOSING MY GODDAMN MIND, YOU KNOW? I WISH I COULD TALK TO SOMEONE WHO ACTUALLY UNDERSTANDS THIS FUCKED UP SITUATION.

ANYWAY, DUDE, *WHERE ARE YOU?*

I HOPE YOU'RE HOLDING UP BETTER THAN ME. WRITE BACK WHEN YOU CAN, ALRIGHT?

P.S. REMEMBER TO WATCH OUT FOR LOW HANGING BRANCHES, WOULDN'T WANT YOU TO POP YOUR AIRBAGS!

ALL THE BEST,

- N

8 DAYS A60, ABOVE BOSTON...



A close-up shot of a woman with dark hair and bangs, sitting in an airplane cabin. She is looking out the window with a serious expression. The lighting is warm and golden, suggesting sunset or sunrise. The window frame is visible on the right side of the frame.

WE'LL BE LANDING AT LOGAN
SHORTLY, MRS. FERRIS.

GOOD. AND OUR CAR IS WAITING?

OF COURSE, MA'AM. NOW, IF YOU
AND YOUR *DAUGHTER* COULD
PLEASE FASTEN YOUR SEATBELTS,
I'LL FETCH YOU EACH ANOTHER
CHAMPAGNE.

THANK YOU. BUT, ACTUALLY, I'LL
TAKE A BOURBON. MAKE IT A
DOUBLE. SANDY?

HM? OH, YES, MAKE THAT
TWO, PLEASE.