

Two months later...

Arrivals
Baggage claim
← Gate A-B

Baggage Gate

UGH! I NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE SO HAPPY TO SEE THIS AIRPORT AGAIN!

FOR A WHILE THERE, I THOUGHT WE'D NEVER GET OUT OF BOSTON!

IF I NEVER HAVE TO STAY IN A HOTEL EVER AGAIN, IT'D STILL BE TOO SOON!



Arrivals
Baggage claim
← Gate A-B

OH, I DON'T KNOW... WE DID FIND A FEW *CREATIVE* WAYS TO PASS THE TIME WHEN WE WEREN'T IN COURT! *GIGGLE!*

WHY *SHOULD* IT? WE'RE COLLEAGUES... *FRIENDS!* WHAT WE DID IN BOSTON WAS JUST ABOUT THE *SEX*, NOTHING ELSE!

TELL ME ABOUT IT!

SO... IS *THIS* GOING TO MAKE WORKING TOGETHER *WEIRD?*






I MEAN,
MAMA HAS
NEEDS... ESPECIALLY
WHEN SHE'S AWAY
FOR SO LONG!

YOU WERE CLOSE-BY,
AVAILABLE AND VERY, VERY
YUMMY! BUT I'M NOT LOOKING
FOR ANY LONG-TERM
RELATIONSHIPS! MY CAREER IS
FAR TOO IMPORTANT TO ME
FOR THAT!

HOWEVER, IF THAT
TEENY-BOPPER ROOMMATE OF
YOURS EVER "ACCIDENTALLY"
GETS YOUR MOTOR RUNNING AND
YOU NEED SOME RELIEVE THAT
DOESN'T RISK JAIL TIME, GIVE
ME A CALL! *GIGGLE!*

CHUCKLE! I'LL
KEEP THAT IN
MIND!

A man with brown hair, wearing a dark grey suit jacket over a purple button-down shirt, is speaking to a woman with long red hair wearing a grey, textured, low-cut dress. They are in a modern office with blue and grey walls and a tiled floor. Three speech bubbles are positioned to the right of the man, containing text about a legal case strategy.

HIS ADVICE TO **SLOW DOWN AND DRAG** THE CASE OUT AS LONG AS POSSIBLE WAS THE KEY TO OUR WIN!

HE **KNEW** OUR FIRM HAD THE **MONEY** AND THE **RESOURCES** TO **OUTLAST** THE PROSECUTION!

IT MAY HAVE STRETCHED THE CASE OUT A LOT **LONGER** THAN WE ORIGINALLY THOUGHT, BUT THE **OUTCOME** WAS **WELL WORTH** IT!

YOU'RE *RIGHT*, OF COURSE!
I GUESS I HAVE TO *CONCEDE*
THAT I DON'T HAVE *ALL* THE
BRAINS ON THIS TEAM! *GIGGLE!*

I'M JUST *GLAD* I
COULD BE HELPFUL TO
SOME *SMALL DEGREE*
AT LEAST! *CHUCKLE!*

THIS LOOKS LIKE
OUR CAR!



A man and a woman are standing in a modern, brightly lit lobby. The woman, on the left, has long red hair and is wearing a grey, form-fitting, long-sleeved dress with a black panel on the side. She has her hand on her hip. The man, on the right, has short brown hair and is wearing a dark grey blazer over a purple shirt and light blue trousers. He is holding a red rolling suitcase. The background features large glass windows and doors, with bicycles visible outside. The floor is made of light-colored, patterned tiles.

GOD, I HOPE
THIS DOESN'T TAKE
TOO LONG! I'M
EXHAUSTED!

ME TOO!

A while later, at the Burns' estate...



A man with grey hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and striped tie, stands on a balcony. Next to him is a woman with long brown hair, wearing a shiny, silver, off-the-shoulder, form-fitting dress and high-heeled sandals. They are standing behind a black metal railing. The background shows a white wall and a brown tiled roof.

WONDERFUL
TURNOUT FOR THE
WELCOME HOME
PARTY, MY DEAR!

ADVICE I
SHOULDVE PASSED ON
TO THEM BEFORE THEY
LEFT FOR BOSTON!
FORTUNATELY I HAVE YOU
TO KEEP ME ON MY
TOES!

THANK YOU, LOVE!
BUT IT WASN'T VERY
DIFFICULT CONSIDERING
WHAT WE HAVE TO
CELEBRATE!


THOSE TWO
NEVER WOULD'VE WON
THE CASE IF NOT FOR
YOUR EXPERIENCED
LEADERSHIP AND
ADVICE!

IT WAS JUST A
SIMPLE REMINDER OF
HOW YOU BROUGHT THIS
FIRM TO GREATNESS IN
THE FIRST PLACE!




AND KEEPING THIS
IMPROMPTU PARTY A **SECRET**
FROM REX AND SERENA WAS A STROKE
OF **GENIUS** ON YOUR PART!

OH, YOU
KNOW ME, DEAR...
I'M ALL ABOUT THE
SECRETS! *GIGGLE!*

A woman with long, wavy brown hair is looking down at a black smartphone in her hands. She is wearing a silver, off-the-shoulder, ribbed dress with gold and blue ruffled details on the sleeves. She has red lipstick and red nail polish. The background shows a white wall with a decorative ledge and a brown tiled roof. A speech bubble is positioned to the right of her head.

AND, ACCORDING TO THIS
TEXT FROM OUR DRIVER, THE
GUESTS OF HONOR WILL BE
HERE ANY MINUTE!




THE DRIVER SAID MR. BURNS WAS OUT BY THE POOL! YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS, DON'T YOU?

EXACTLY! SO I'M COUNTING ON YOU TO FIND A TACTFUL WAY OF GETTING US OUT OF HERE BEFORE I FALL ASLEEP INTO THE POOL!

THAT WE'RE PROBABLY GOING TO HAVE TO SIT, HAVE A DRINK AND LISTEN TO ENDLESS STORIES ABOUT ALL THE CASES HE WON WHEN HE WAS YOUNGER!


THANKS!
NO PRESSURE!



OH, COME ON! YOU
KNOW YOU'RE JUST AS
ANXIOUS TO GET HOME AS
I AM, IF NOT MORE
SO!

WONDERING JUST
HOW MUCH YOUR
LITTLE BOARDER HAS
TRASHED YOUR HOUSE
OVER THE LAST TWO
MONTHS! *GIGGLE!*

ON THE *CONTRARY!*
CONSIDERING SHE WAS ONLY HOME
ABOUT *HALF* THE TIMES I CALLED,
I'LL BET *GLORIA* KEPT HER WAY TOO
BUSY TO EVEN *THINK* ABOUT
PARTYING!




BESIDES, SHE
REALLY HASN'T HAD THE
CHANCE TO MAKE ANY
FRIENDS YET HERE IN
MIAMI!!

A SEXY LITTLE
THING LIKE THAT? OH, I'M
SURE IT WON'T TAKE HER
LONG... NOT LONG AT
ALL!



SURPRISE!!



OH MY GOD! I
CAN'T BELIEVE YOU
DID THIS, MR. BURNS!

BLAME THE
MISSES! SHE PLANNED
AND ORGANIZED THE WHOLE
SHINDIG! I JUST GAVE THE
OFFICIAL OKEY-DOKEY!

DON'T GIVE ME ALL
THE CREDIT, DEAR! NONE OF
THIS WOULD'VE BEEN POSSIBLE
WITHOUT THE HELP OF MY
FABULOUS PERSONAL
ASSISTANT!

OF COURSE! THAT
GIRL'S SOCIAL AND
ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS
ARE OFF THE CHART!

KIM HELPED
YOU DO ALL
THIS?



WOW! I...I
DIDN'T KNOW
THAT! SO IS SHE
HERE?

OH, SHE'S AROUND
SOMEWHERE! PROBABLY
WORKING THE CROWD MAKING
SURE EVERYONE'S HAVING A
GOOD TIME!

REALLY? THAT
DOESN'T SOUND
LIKE KIM!

THAT YOUNG LADY
HAS MANY UNTAPPED
TALENTS... AS I'M SURE
YOU'LL FIND OUT!

SO JUST KEEP
LOOKING, DEAR! I'M
SURE YOU'LL FIND HER!
AND ENJOY THE
PARTY!

I WILL! AND
THANK YOU AGAIN
FOR ALL THIS, GLORIA!





SEE,
SERENA? I WAS
RIGHT! KIM WAS
WAY TOO BUSY
TO...



OH! OKAY...
I CAN TAKE A
HINT!

GUESS I'LL JUST
MINGLE FOR A WHILE
MYSELF! I'M SURE I'LL
RUN INTO KIM AT SOME
POINT!

A while later...



OKAY, THIS IS WEIRD!
I'VE BEEN MINGLING FOR OVER
AN HOUR AND STILL HAVEN'T
SPOTTED KIM ANYWHERE!

GLORIA SAID SHE WAS
HERE SOMEWHERE, BUT
FOR THE LIFE OF ME I CAN'T
FIGURE OUT WHERE SHE'D
BE!

GLORIA'S MANY
THINGS, BUT SHE'S NOT A
LIAR! AT LEAST, NOT ABOUT
SOMETHING LIKE THIS!

BUT SHE DOES HAVE
THAT UNUSUALLY PLEASED
WITH HERSELF LOOK ON HER
FACE! WHICH PROBABLY MEANS
SHE'S UP TO SOMETHING!

OH, GREAT! IS
THAT SMARMY
LITTLE NEPHEW OF
HERS BACK IN TOWN?

CONSIDERING THE WAY
KIM WAS ACTING BEFORE
I LEFT FOR BOSTON, I
WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF
THOSE TWO ARE LOCKING
LIPS SOMEWHERE IN
THIS HOUSE!


I WOULD HOPE
THAT KIM WAS
SMART ENOUGH TO NOT
LET THAT GET OUT OF
HAND, BUT...WHO
KNOWS?

I HATE TO DO IT,
BUT ONE OF US HAS TO
BE THE ADULT! SO I'D
BETTER DO A THOROUGH
SEARCH OF THE HOUSE AND
THROW SOME COLD WATER
ON THOSE TWO!

A man in a dark suit and purple shirt is shown in profile on the left, looking thoughtful with his hand to his chin. In the background, a social event is taking place on a stone-paved terrace. A man in a blue blazer and tan pants is talking to a man in a black blazer and white shirt. Another man in a black sweater is in the foreground on the right, holding a drink. The scene is set against a building with classical columns.

BUT I SHOULD *PROBABLY* SAY A *QUICK* HELLO TO STEVE AND DAN OVER THERE SINCE THEY'RE THE *ONLY TWO* COWORKERS I *HAVEN'T* TALKED TO YET!

THEY SEEM PRETTY *ENGROSSED* IN A CONVERSATION SO I *SHOULD* BE ABLE TO GET AWAY WITH A BRIEF "*HOW-YOU-DOING?*" BEFORE I TRY AND TRACK DOWN *KIM!*



HEY! *THERE'S*
THE MAN OF THE
HOUR!

C'MON OVER,
REX! I WANT YOU
TO MEET
SOMEONE!

YOU TWO
CORNERING
SOME POOR
LEGAL AID
AGAIN?


WHO? *US?* NEVER!
NOW WHAT DID YOU SAY
YOUR NAME WAS AGAIN,
DARLIN'?



KIM?!

IT'S KIM... KIM DANIELS! BUT REX ALREADY KNOWS THAT!

UH-HUH! WELCOME HOME, REX!



UH-OH! I THINK
THIS WOULD BE A *GOOD*
TIME TO GET A DRINK!
C'MON, STEVE!

RIGHT BEHIND
YOU, DAN!

SEE YOU AT WORK
TOMORROW, REX!

WHAT'S *WRONG*, REX?
YOU LOOK A LITTLE...
CONFUSED!


A woman with long black hair, wearing a red, form-fitting dress with a high slit and gold trim, is leaning against a white pillar. She is looking back over her shoulder at a man in a dark suit who has his back to the camera. They are standing on a tiled patio next to a swimming pool at night. In the background, there are some bushes and a body of water under a dark sky. A speech bubble originates from the woman, containing four lines of text.

WHAT... HAVE YOU *DONE* TO YOURSELF, KIM?

WELL *I* DIDN'T REALLY DO ANYTHING *MYSELF!* THE *DOCTOR* DID PRETTY MUCH ALL OF IT! *GIGGLE!*

YOU *KNOW* WHAT I MEAN! DID *GLORIA* PUT YOU UP TO THIS?

GLORIA MAY HAVE PAID FOR IT, BUT IT WAS ALL *MY IDEA!*



WELL, *OKAY!*
BUT I THINK *GLORIA*
EXPECTS ME TO BE
MINGLING WITH
THE GUESTS!

YEAH... YOU'RE
PROBABLY RIGHT!
GIGGLE!

WE NEED TO
TALK ABOUT THIS,
BUT NOT *OUT*
HERE!

I'M *SURE* SHE'LL
UNDERSTAND!



NOW **PLEASE** EXPLAIN
TO ME **WHAT** YOU WERE
THINKING WHEN YOU
DECIDED TO DO ALL THIS!

YOU KNOW, **I**
EXPECTED YOU TO BE
SURPRISED, BUT NOT
ANGRY!

I'M **NOT**... **ANGRY!**
I'M JUST **VERY, VERY**
SURPRISED... AND
CONFUSED!

WHEN DID YOU DECIDE
TO DO THIS AND **WHY** DO IT
WHILE **I** WAS OUT OF
TOWN?



I **DO** REMEMBER! AND YOU **ALSO** SAID YOU WEREN'T **SURE** WHAT YOUR **NEXT STEPS** WOULD BE!

WELL, IF YOU **REMEMBER**, EVEN **BEFORE** YOU LEFT FOR BOSTON, I TOLD YOU I'D MADE SOME **MAJOR DECISIONS** REGARDING MY FUTURE!

THAT'S RIGHT! AND AT THE TIME, ALTHOUGH EVERYONE **DID** SEE ME AS A WOMAN, I COULD **STILL** SEE TOO MUCH OF "**DANIEL**" WHEN I LOOKED IN THE MIRROR!

SO, AFTER GIVING IT A **LOT** OF THOUGHT, I DECIDED IT WAS TIME TO SAY **GOODBYE** TO THE **GIRL** I WAS TRYING TO BE AND **HELLO** TO THE **WOMAN** I WANT TO BE!

SO, UMMM...
JUST WHAT **ALL**
DID YOU HAVE
DONE?

AND I **REASON** I DID THIS
WHILE **YOU** WERE **GONE** WAS
BECAUSE I WANTED IT TO BE MY
DECISION **ALONE** TO MAKE!

I **KNEW** THAT IF YOU
WERE INVOLVED AT ALL AND
SOMETHING WENT WRONG, YOU
WOULD BLAME **YOURSELF!** I
DIDN'T WANT THAT TO
HAPPEN!


AND, AS YOU CAN **SEE**,
EVERYTHING TURNED OUT
PERFECTLY!



WELL, THE MOST **OBVIOUS** IS THE PART OF ME YOU'RE SO **DESPERATELY** TRYING **NOT** TO LOOK AT... AND FAILING **MISERABLY!** *GIGGLE!*

I'M SORRY! I'M JUST NOT **USED** TO SEEING YOU SO... **WELL-DEVELOPED!**

BE **THANKFUL** I DIDN'T TAKE **GLORIA'S** ADVICE AND GO A COUPLE OF SIZES **BIGGER!** I KNOW **I** AM!



SO, YOU GOT THE *EASY* ONE!
BUT ARE YOU *OBSERVANT* ENOUGH
TO NOTICE WHAT *ELSE* I HAD DOCTOR
SHAPIRO "FIX"?

THAT'S *ONE!* HE SHAVED
MY *ADAM'S APPLE* AND
TIGHTENED MY *VOCAL CHORDS*
SO I WOULDN'T HAVE TO *FAKE* A
FEMALE VOICE ANYMORE!

I *REALLY* LIKE THE WAY
IT TURNED OUT, TOO! HIGHER
PITCHED BUT WITH *JUST* ENOUGH
HUSKINESS TO AVOID
SOUNDING *TOO GIRLY!*

YOUR *VOICE!* I
NOTICED IT THE
INSTANT YOU SAID
"*WELCOME HOME!*"


YEAH, IT'S, UMMM...
VERY NICE!



SO... NOTICE
ANYTHING ELSE?

IMPLANTS! MY
LITTLE TEMPORARY
EXPERIMENT A WHILE
BACK GOT ENOUGH
POSITIVE RESPONSES
THAT I DECIDED TO MAKE
IT **PERMANENT!**

I DON'T KNOW IF
IT'S THE MAKEUP,
BUT YOUR **LIPS**
LOOK... **FULLER!**

A woman with long, straight black hair and bangs is looking towards a man. She is wearing a dark red, short-sleeved top with a gold zipper and a floral pattern. The man is seen from the back of his head and shoulder, wearing a purple shirt. The background is dark and indistinct.

AND I THINK THEY GO A
LONG WAY IN MAKING MY FACE
LOOK MUCH MORE FEMININE!
WHAT DO YOU THINK, REX?

I, UHHH... I'D HAVE
TO AGREE!

A man with brown hair, wearing a grey blazer over a purple button-down shirt and light blue jeans, stands on the left. He has his right hand on his neck. A woman with long black hair, wearing a red dress with gold trim, stands on the right. They are in a room with a tiled floor and a potted plant in the background.

SO, UMMM... IS THAT **EVERYTHING** YOUR DOCTOR SHAPIRO DID?

SO NOTHING MORE... **PERMANENT?**

YEAH... OKAY! I GUESS THAT **WOULD** BE A **HUGE** STEP TO DEAL WITH ALL BY YOURSELF!

UH-HUH! EVERYTHING **ELSE** YOU SEE, LIKE THE NEW **MAKEUP** AND **HAIR EXTESNSIONS**, IS A RESULT OF GLORIA'S FAVORITE SALON AND **MILES** AND **MILES** OF LAPS IN THE POOL!

IF YOU MEAN **SRS**, DOCTOR SHAPIRO **ISN'T** CERTIFIED FOR IT!

YES... YES IT **WOULD!**

LOOK, KIM... I'M
SORRY ABOUT THE
WAY I'VE REACTED TO
ALL THIS!

IT'S JUST THE TRIAL,
BEING GONE FOR SIX
WEEKS, WALKING INTO THIS
SURPRISE PARTY... LET'S
JUST SAY I'M DEFINITELY
NOT AT MY BEST!

CAN WE JUST GO
HOME AND CONTINUE
THIS CONVERSATION
TOMORROW?

OF COURSE WE
CAN, REX!



THANKS,
KIM!

MY CAR? HOW
DID IT GET
HERE?

I'LL GO AND TELL
GLORIA WE'RE BOTH
LEAVING! I'M SURE SHE'LL
UNDERSTAND!

THEN I'LL MEET
YOU OUT FRONT
AFTER I HAVE THE
VALET BRING YOUR
CAR AROUND!

I DROVE IT, OF
COURSE! I DO HAVE A
DRIVERS LICENSE, AFTER
ALL! REMEMBER?



YOU ARE FULL OF SURPRISES TONIGHT, AREN'T YOU?
CHUCKLE!

I JUST FIGURED YOU'D PREFER TO LEAVE WHEN YOU WANTED TO, AND NOT HAVE TO WAIT FOR SERENA TO FINISH SCHMOOZING WITH THE BOSS!

YOU'RE JUST MEETING THE NEW ME, THAT'S ALL! *GIGGLE!*

AND THE
"NEW ME" IS
READY TO TAKE
THIS GAME TO THE
NEXT LEVEL!



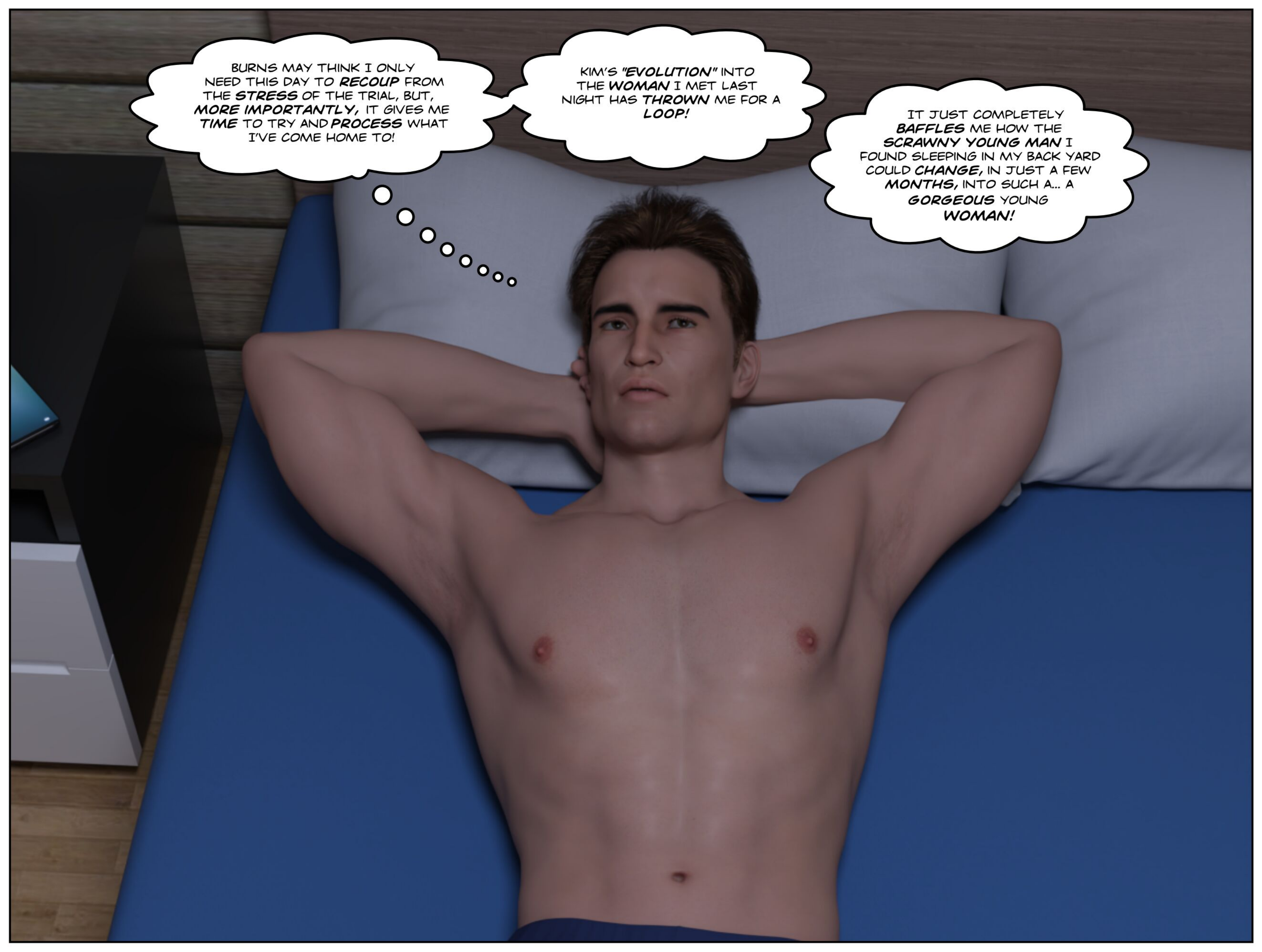
The next day...

*UGH! WHAT TIME
IS IT? I FEEL LIKE I'VE
BEEN SLEEPING FOR
DAYS!*



TEN
THIRTY?!
JESUS! I HAVEN'T
SLEPT THIS LATE
IN YEARS!

THANK GOD
BURNS GAVE ME
THE DAY OFF
TODAY!



BURNS MAY THINK I ONLY NEED THIS DAY TO **RECOUP** FROM THE **STRESS** OF THE TRIAL, BUT, **MORE IMPORTANTLY**, IT GIVES ME **TIME** TO TRY AND **PROCESS** WHAT I'VE COME HOME TO!

KIM'S "**EVOLUTION**" INTO THE **WOMAN** I MET LAST NIGHT HAS **THROWN** ME FOR A **LOOP!**


IT JUST COMPLETELY **BAFFLES** ME HOW THE **SCRAWNY YOUNG MAN** I FOUND SLEEPING IN MY BACK YARD COULD **CHANGE**, IN JUST A FEW **MONTHS**, INTO SUCH A... A **GORGEOUS YOUNG WOMAN!**



THERE...
I'VE FINALLY
SAID IT!

I'VE BEEN *SKIRTING* THE
ISSUE FOR MONTHS! USING
NEUTRAL PRONOUNS WHEN
REFERRING TO HER AND GOING OUT OF
MY WAY *NOT* TO NOTICE HOW
GOOD SHE STARTED LOOKING!

BUT PROBABLY *MOST*
CONFUSING FOR ME WAS
WHEN SHE STARTED DATING *MATT*!
WAS IT JUST A "*BIG BROTHER*"
INSTINCT THAT MADE ME *FEEL* THE
WAY I DID WHEN I SAW THEM
TOGETHER... OR WAS IT
SOMETHING ELSE?



THESE ARE **ALL**
QUESTIONS I'VE GOT TO **WORK**
OUT WITH MYSELF **BEFORE** I EVEN
ATTEMPT TO TALK WITH **KIM**
ABOUT THEM!

FORTUNATELY, KIM
TOLD ME LAST NIGHT THAT GLORIA
HAD A **FULL DAY** FOR HER TODAY,
SO I'VE GOT THE HOUSE TO
MYSELF!

WHICH IS **JUST**
WHAT I **NEED!**

AHHH! IT *STILL* SMELLS LIKE *BREAKFAST* IN HERE! KIM MUST NOT LEAVE HERE AS EARLY AS I THOUGHT SHE DID!

REGARDLESS, THE DAY IS *MINE* TO DO WITH AS I *PLEASE!*

AND THAT INVOLVES ME *KICKING BACK* WITH A *HOT CUP OF COFFEE* AND *FOCUSING* ON THE NEW *DYNAMIC* AROUND HERE WITHOUT ANY *DISTRACTIONS* FROM...

Sniff



A man with short dark hair, shirtless, is shown from the back and side, looking towards a woman in a kitchen. The woman has long dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a pink tank top and grey shorts. She is standing at a kitchen counter with a sink and stove. The kitchen has modern decor with dark cabinets, white walls, and geometric pendant lights. A window in the background shows a dark night sky. A hot tub is visible through a glass door on the right.

KIM?!

HAVE A SEAT,
SLEEPY-HEAD!
THERE'S **ALREADY** A
CUP OF COFFEE FOR
YOU!

I'LL HAVE SOME
EGGS FOR YOU IN
JUST A MINUTE!

A woman with long dark hair tied back, wearing a brown ribbed crop top and grey shorts, stands in a modern kitchen. She is looking back over her shoulder towards the viewer. The kitchen features white cabinetry and a stainless steel refrigerator. Three speech bubbles are positioned to her right, containing text.

I... **I** THOUGHT
YOU HAD TO WORK
TODAY!

GLORIA CALLED ME
LAST NIGHT **AFTER** YOU'D
ALREADY GONE TO BED AND TOLD
ME TO TAKE THE DAY OFF,
TOO!

SHE SAID IT WAS A
REWARD FOR DOING SUCH A
GOOD JOB ON YOUR SURPRISE
PARTY!

AND WHO AM **I** TO
ARGUE WITH THE **BOSS?**
GIGGLE!



BESIDES, **THIS** GIVES US
A CHANCE TO **FINISH** THE
CONVERSATION WE STARTED
LAST NIGHT!

HERE YOU GO!
SUNNY SIDE UP,
RIGHT?

UHH, YEAH!
PERFECT!

LOOK, WE DON'T
HAVE TO GET INTO
ALL THAT AGAIN
RIGHT NOW!

I'M **STILL** A BIT,
UMMM... **FOGGY** AND
NEED A LITTLE
DOWN-TIME FIRST!



WORKS FOR ME!
DOWN TIME IS MY
FAVORITE TIME OF
THE DAY! *GIGGLE!*

WOULDN'T YOU
AGREE, REX?

REX?




EARTH TO
REX!

ARE YOU OKAY? IS
SOMETHING WRONG
WITH THE EGGS?

YOU'RE NOT HAVING A
STROKE, ARE YOU? IF
YOU ARE, I DON'T KNOW
HOW TO...



OH SHIT! I
FORGOT!


A woman with long black hair in a ponytail, wearing a pinkish-brown tank top and grey shorts, stands in a kitchen. She has a nervous expression, with her hand near her chin. Three speech bubbles are directed at her. In the foreground, the back of a shirtless man's head and shoulders is visible. A fourth speech bubble is directed at him. The kitchen background includes a sink, a stove with a blue pan, and white cabinetry.

I'M SO SORRY, REX!
I SHOULD HAVE
REALIZED...

IT'S JUST THAT, I'VE
HAD THESE FOR OVER A
MONTH AND I'VE ALSO HAD
THE ENTIRE HOUSE TO
MYSELF, SO I JUST GOT
USED TO...

I MEAN, I DIDN'T HAVE
TO WORRY ABOUT HOW I
DRESSED AROUND HERE
SINCE I WAS ALONE! BUT NOW
THAT YOU'RE HERE, I
SHOULD'VE KNOWN
BETTER, AND...

RELAX, KIM! IT'S
MORE MY FAULT THAN
IT IS YOURS!



IT SHOULDN'T BE *YOUR* RESPONSIBILITY TO COMPENSATE FOR *GUYS* WHO CAN'T KEEP THEIR *LIBIDOS* IN CHECK!

I'VE ALWAYS PRIDED MYSELF ON BEING ABLE TO MAINTAIN *EYE CONTACT* WITH WOMEN *REGARDLESS* OF THEIR... WELL, THEIR *CUP SIZE*!

BUT I *FAILED* THAT TODAY! I *FAILED MYSELF* AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, I *FAILED YOU*... AND FOR THAT, I'M VERY, *VERY SORRY*!

DON'T **LUMP**
YOURSELF IN WITH THE
UNWASHED **MASSES**, REX!
YOU'RE SO MUCH **BETTER**
THAN THAT!

I THOUGHT IT'D BE
CUTE TO SURPRISE YOU LIKE
I DID, BUT I **DIDN'T** TAKE INTO
ACCOUNT WHAT A **SHOCK**
IT'D BE TO YOU!

AND I THINK **THAT'S**
THE **ROOT** OF MY...
DISCOMFORT!

YOU MAY HAVE FULLY
ACCEPTED BECOMING THIS
NEW PERSON, BUT **I** STILL, AT
LEAST **PARTIALLY** HAVE
VISIONS OF YOU AS
DANIEL!

AND I GUESS I'M JUST
HAVING **TROUBLE** COMING
TO **TERMS** WITH THE
DICHOTOMY GOING ON IN
MY HEAD WHEN I SEE YOU
NOW!

I JUST NEED SOME **TIME**
TO WRAP MY HEAD AROUND IT
AND **ACCEPT** YOU FOR WHO
YOU **ARE** NOW!

A woman with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a pink crop top and grey shorts, stands on a tiled patio. She is gesturing with her hands while talking to a man. The man is shirtless, muscular, and wearing blue shorts. He is seen from the back, looking towards the woman. The background features a stone wall and a window with plants.

I **TOTALLY** UNDERSTAND THAT, REX! **THAT'S** WHY I'M GOING TO CALL **GLORIA** AND TELL HER I'M **COMING IN** TO WORK ANYWAY!

YOU SHOULD HAVE THE HOUSE TO **YOURSELF** ON YOUR DAY OFF WITHOUT **ANY** DISTRACTIONS FROM **ME!**

BUT...

HOLD ON, KIM! YOU **DON'T** HAVE TO DO THAT!

YOU EARNED A DAY OFF **JUST** AS MUCH AS I DID AND I'M **NOT** GOING TO LET YOU **GIVE IT UP** FOR ME!



YOU'RE NOT GOING TO USE THE POOL AT ALL?

NO ARGUMENTS FROM YOU... YOUNG LADY!

I'D ALREADY PLANNED ON RUNNING A FEW ERRANDS THIS MORNING AND THEN SPENDING THE REST OF THE DAY EITHER WATCHING TV OR CATCHING UP ON MY READING IN MY OFFICE!

NOPE! I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU LOVE IT OUT THERE, SO YOU GET IT ALL TO YOURSELF TODAY!



WELL... WHO AM
I TO ARGUE?
GIGGLE!

SO, UHHH...
YEAH! IF I DON'T
SEE YOU UNTIL THIS
EVENING, HAVE A
NICE DAY OFF!

YOU TOO,
REX!






OH, BUT YOU *WILL*
SEE ME BEFORE THEN,
REX HONEY! I
GUARANTEE IT!

A couple of hours later...

GOOD THING THOSE ERRANDS DIDN'T TAKE VERY LONG! IT GAVE ME **EXTRA TIME** TO DRIVE UP THE COAST A BIT AND HELP **CLEAR MY HEAD!**



A man with short brown hair, wearing a grey t-shirt and dark blue jeans, stands in a doorway. The door is made of light-colored wood and has several glass panes with a brick pattern. He has a thoughtful expression. Two thought bubbles are positioned to his left, connected by a series of small circles.

I'M ASSUMING KIM'S
OUT BY THE POOL WHICH
GIVES ME THE CHANCE TO GO
UPSTAIRS WITHOUT
DISTURBING HER!

SHE DESERVES A
STRESS-FREE DAY OFF AND
I STILL HAVE A LOT OF
THINKING TO DO!

OH! UHH... HEY
THERE, KIM! DIDN'T
KNOW YOU WERE IN
THE KITCHEN!

KIM?

♪♪
♪♪



♪ ♪ ♪
♪ ♪

OKAY... SHE
OBVIOUSLY HAS HER
EARBUDS IN AND
DIDN'T EVEN KNOW I
WAS HERE!



JUST AS WELL! DON'T WANT HER FEELING **SELF-CONSCIOUS** KNOWING I **SAW** HER IN THAT NEW **BIKINI** OF HERS! **WHEW!**

♪ ♪ ♪
♪

GIGGLE!





CHICKEN!

OKAY, FAIR ENOUGH!

NO, I'M NOT WEARING MY SMALLEST BIKINI! NOT YET, AT LEAST!

LOOK, I JUST WANT TO TURN HIM ON, NOT GIVE HIM A HEART ATTACK!
GIGGLE!

I ASSUME YOU'RE TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE OF IT, DEAR? MAKING SURE YOU'RE NOT FAR FROM REX'S LINE OF SIGHT?

THAT'S MY GIRL!

BUT THE DAY OFF TO COINCIDE WITH HIS WAS A STROKE OF GENIUS!

AS MUCH AS I CAN! HE LEFT THE HOUSE FOR A FEW HOURS TO "RUN SOME ERRANDS", BUT AS SOON AS I HEARD HIS CAR PULL UP I MADE SURE I WAS THE FIRST THING HE SAW!





I'M **SURE** THE FACT THAT THERE'S A **SEXY**, BIKINI-CLAD GIRL **LOUNGING** BY THE POOL HAS ABSOLUTELY **NOTHING** TO DO WITH IT!
GIGGLE!



AND EVEN THOUGH HE **SAID** HE WAS GOING TO SPEND THE DAY IN HIS **OFFICE**, IT'S **INTERESTING** HOW I'VE SPOTTED HIM **PUTTERING** AROUND THE HOUSE IN ROOMS THAT JUST SO **HAPPEN** TO LOOK OUT ONTO THE **POOL!**



OH, **UNDOUBTABLY!**
GIGGLE!

WELL, *GOOD LUCK,*
DEAR! YOU CAN TELL ME
ALL ABOUT YOUR DAY IN
GLORIOUS DETAIL
TOMORROW!



OH, I WILL!
BYE, GLORIA!




Meanwhile...

...
THIS IS **RIDICULOUS!**
I **SHOULDN'T** HAVE TO
WALK AROUND ON
EGGSHELLS IN MY OWN
DAMN HOUSE!


KIM MAY **STILL** BE
TRANSITIONING, BUT SHE
SURE AS **HELL** DOESN'T **LOOK**
LIKE IT! AS A RESULT, I'VE
ESSENTIALLY GOT A **WOMAN...** A
VERY **BEAUTIFUL** WOMAN,
LIVING IN **MY HOUSE!**

AND **THAT'S**
SOMETHING I **HAVE** TO
ACCEPT AND GET **USED** TO...
OR I'M GOING TO GO
CRAZY!



KEEPING MY *DISTANCE*
LIKE THIS AND *SNEAKING* THE
OCCASIONAL *PEEK* AT HER ISN'T
JUST *CREEPY*... IT'S DOWNRIGHT
PATHETIC! AND THAT'S NOT
WHO I AM!

I'VE GOT TO *GET OVER*
THIS *HANG-UP* OF MINE AND
ACCEPT KIM FOR WHO SHE IS AND
WHO SHE'S *BECOMING!*

A man with brown hair, wearing a grey t-shirt, is shown from the waist up. He has a thoughtful expression, with his right hand resting on his chin and his left arm crossed over his chest. He is standing in a room with a grey wall and a door with a brass handle to his right. A thought bubble is positioned above his head, containing text.

AND THE **BEST** WAY
TO DO **THAT** IS TO **STOP**
TUGGING AT THE PROBLEM
SLOWLY AND JUST **RIP** THE
DAMN BAND-AID **OFF!**

A few minutes later...

HMMM! I'VE EXHAUSTED ALL MY PLAYLISTS AND MY DRINK IS EMPTY, SO I MIGHT AS WELL PACK IT UP AND GO BACK IN!

JUST AS WELL... I THINK IT'S TIME TO MOVE MY LITTLE GAME INSIDE ANYWAY!
GIGGLE!



Splash!

WHAT THE...?!



A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white bikini with a black lip print pattern, is sitting on a white lounge chair on a wooden deck. She is looking towards a man in a swimming pool. The man is shirtless and muscular, with his hands behind his head, looking back at her. The scene is set at night in a modern building with large glass windows.

REX?!

WOW! I CAN SEE
WHY YOU SPEND SO
MUCH TIME OUT HERE! THE
WATER FEELS GREAT!

A woman with dark hair, wearing sunglasses and a white bikini with a patterned top, is sitting on a white tufted lounge chair. She is looking towards a man who is in a swimming pool, seen from the back. The man's back is wet and glistening. The background is a wall of light-colored stone tiles. A small table with a drink is next to the lounge chair.

I DON'T THINK
I'VE **EVER** SEEN
YOU USE THE
POOL BEFORE!

I **HAVEN'T!**
SO I FIGURED IT
WAS ABOUT **TIME**
I **DID!**



SO DOES *THIS* MEAN
YOU'VE COME TO *TERMS*
WITH THE *NEW* ME?

IT MEANS I
REALIZED I'LL *NEVER*
GET USED TO THE "*NEW*
YOU" BY KEEPING MY
DISTANCE!

TAKING *THAT*
APPROACH WAS KIND OF
CONTRADICTIONARY WHEN
YOU THINK ABOUT IT!

I THOUGHT SO,
BUT I *WASN'T* GOING
TO *SAY* ANYTHING!

A woman with long black hair, wearing sunglasses and a white bikini with a lip print pattern, is lying on her side on a white tufted lounge chair. She is looking towards a man whose back is to the camera. The man is shirtless and has wet hair. They are in a room with a stone wall background. A small table with a drink and a phone is next to the lounge chair. Her high-heeled sandals are on the floor.

SO, WANT TO DO
SOME **LAPS** WITH
ME?

SORRY, BUT I
ALREADY GOT IN
MY **LAPS** **EARLIER**
TODAY!

THAT'S WHY
I'M WEARING MY
"LOUNGING"
SWIMSUIT NOW INSTEAD
OF MY **"LAPS"**
SWIMSUIT! *GIGGLE!*

YEAH... **THAT** ONE
DOESN'T SEEM VERY
PRACTICAL FOR
RAPID MOTIONS!
CHUCKLE!



JUST AS WELL! MORE ROOM FOR ME AND NO RISK OF ANY HEAD ON COLLISIONS! *CHUCKLE!*

ENJOY!



WELL, THIS IS
DEFINITELY
UNEXPECTED!

HERE I WAS ALL READY TO GO SO FAR AS TO **FAKE A KITCHEN ACCIDENT** IN ORDER TO **DRAG** HIM OUT OF HIS OFFICE, AND **HE** COMES OUT ALL ON HIS OWN ACTING LIKE WE WERE **OLD BUDDIES!**

IF HE IS STILL HAVING TROUBLE **DEALING** WITH MY NEW "**ENHANCEMENTS**", HE'S **HIDING** IT PRETTY DAMN WELL!

BUT THEN AGAIN, MAYBE **THAT'S** WHY HE'S **STAYING** IN THE **POOL!**



I KNOW FROM EXPERIENCE
WHAT THAT COLD WATER IS DOING TO
HIS JUNK RIGHT NOW! BUT I ALSO KNOW,
AS HE DOES AS WELL, THAT IT HAS PRETTY
MUCH THE OPPOSITE EFFECT ON MY
NEW GIRLS!

HMMMMMM! I FEEL AN
EXPERIMENT COMING
ON! *GIGGLE!*



I'M *GLAD* I DID THIS! THE *WATER* AND THE *EXERCISE* ARE JUST WHAT I NEEDED TO RELIEVE ALL THE *STRESS* I WAS FEELING EARLIER!

JUST A *FEW* MORE LAPS TO GO AND I'LL...

Splash!



A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white bikini top with a black lip print pattern, stands in a swimming pool. She is looking upwards with her hands behind her head. The background is a wall of light-colored stone tiles. In the foreground, the back of another person's head and shoulder is visible, partially cut off by the frame.

SORRY! I DIDN'T MEAN TO INTERRUPT YOUR LAPS! JUST WANTED TO **COOL OFF** A LITTLE BEFORE HEADING INSIDE!

YOU'RE **NOT** INTERRUPTING ANYTHING! I WAS **JUST** FINISHING UP MYSELF!

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a grey bikini with a black lip print pattern, is sitting in a hot tub. She is looking towards a man whose back is to the camera. The man is shirtless and has wet hair. The hot tub is set against a wall of light-colored stone tiles. A metal handrail is visible on the left side of the tub. The scene is lit with soft, warm light, suggesting an evening or indoor setting.

ANY THOUGHTS ON WHAT YOU WANT FOR **DINNER**? WE'RE KIND OF **LOW** ON GROCERIES, SO I THOUGHT I'D MAKE A STORE RUN!

I'VE GOT A **BETTER** IDEA!



HOW ABOUT WE
GET **DRESSED UP**
AND GO OUT
SOMEWHERE **NICE**
FOR DINNER?

REALLY?

YEAH! I'VE BEEN
LIVING ON **ROOM**
SERVICE THESE LAST
FEW WEEKS AND NEED A
CIVILIZED MEAL FOR A
CHANGE!

GOOD FOOD, GOOD
WINE, **GOOD COMPANY**
AND **GOOD CONVERSATION**
THAT HAS ABSOLUTELY
NOTHING TO DO WITH THE
LAW! HOW'S THAT
SOUND TO YOU?

A man and a woman are standing on a wooden pool deck. The man is on the left, shirtless and wearing white briefs with orange and black stripes. The woman is on the right, wearing a grey bikini with a lip print pattern. They are both looking towards the right. The background is a light-colored stone wall and a large potted plant. A swimming pool is visible in the bottom right corner. Three speech bubbles are overlaid on the scene, containing dialogue.

*GREAT! I'LL
MAKE THE
RESERVATIONS!*

*WANT TO GO
ANYPLACE IN
PARTICULAR?*


*YOU HAD ME AT
"GO OUT!"!
*GIGGLE!**

SURPRISE ME!



...
OKAY, I DON'T KNOW
WHAT HE'S UP TO, BUT IF IT
INVOLVES A **FANCY**
RESTAURANT I'M NOT
COMPLAINING!

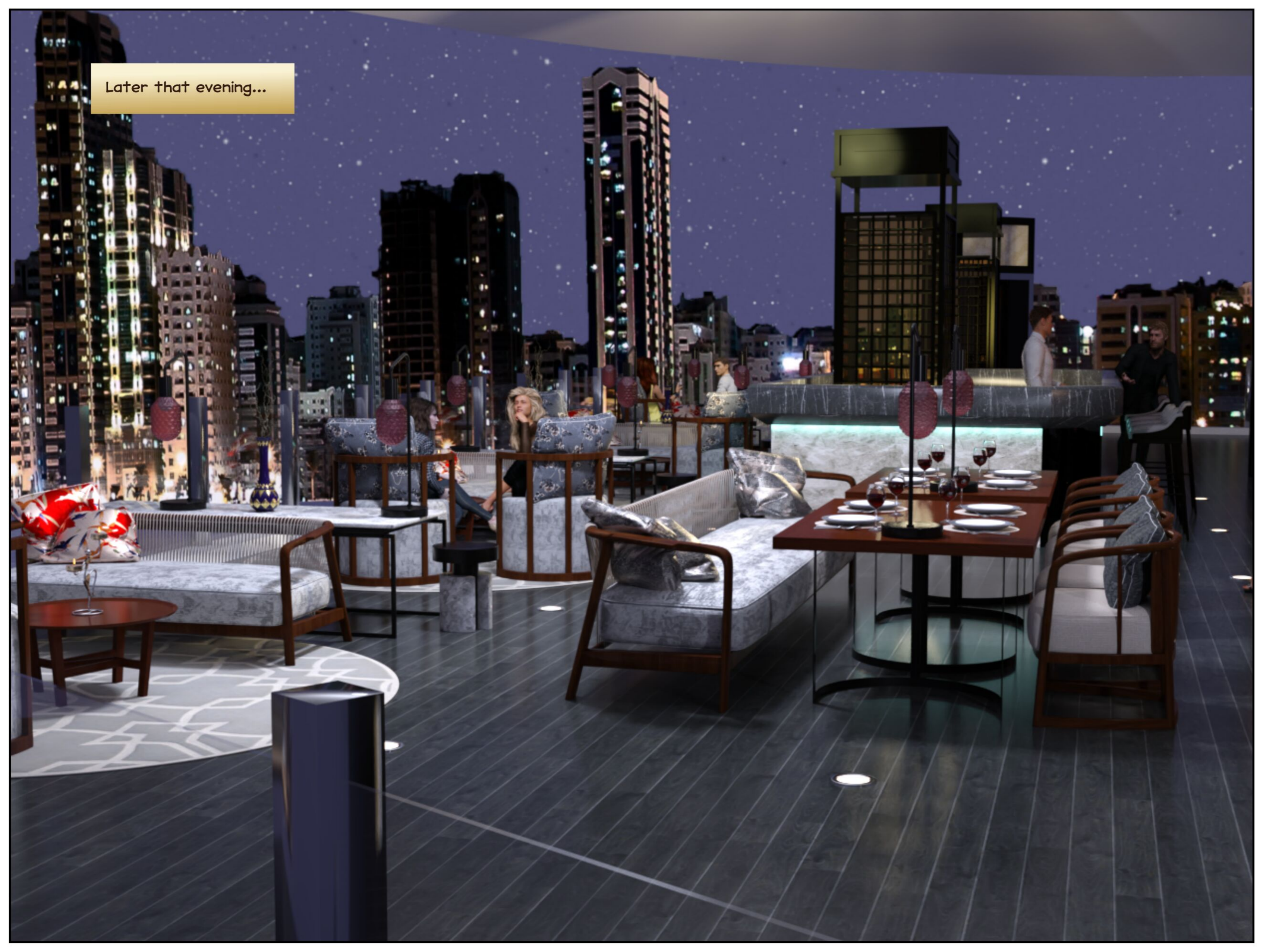
BESIDES, KNOWING **REX**,
I'LL **PROBABLY** FIND OUT
AT DINNER!

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white bikini with a black lip print pattern, stands by a swimming pool. She is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background features a grey stone wall and a wooden deck with lounge chairs. Two comic-style thought bubbles are present: one above her head and one to her right. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an outdoor pool setting.

OH, AND **DON'T**
THINK I DIDN'T **NOTICE**
YOUR TELL-TALE **BULGE**
THERE, REX!

EXPERIMENT RESULTS...
PERKY GIRLS, **ONE**, AND
COLD WATER, **ZILCH!**
GIGGLE!

Later that evening...





YEAH, I KNOW IT **LOOKS** THAT WAY! BUT THE RESTAURANT WAS TOO **BUSY** AND **NOISY** FOR ANY KIND OF **SERIOUS** CONVERSATION!

AND I KNEW **THIS** PLACE WOULD BE A LOT MORE **LOW-KEY**!

NOT AT ALL!
LET'S FIND A TABLE!

A FANCY DINNER AND A NIGHTCAP? **CAREFUL**, REX, OR SOMEONE MIGHT **MISTAKE THIS** FOR AN ACTUAL DATE! *GIGGLE!*

"**SERIOUS CONVERSATION**", HUH? SHOULD I BE WORRIED ABOUT ANYTHING?


A man in a dark suit and a woman in a grey dress are on a rooftop at night. The man is leaning over a chair, and the woman is standing next to it. They are both looking at each other. The background shows a city skyline with lit-up buildings under a starry night sky. There are two chairs with floral cushions and a small table with a candle holder in the foreground.

YOUR SEAT,
M'LADY!

THAT DEPENDS
ON YOUR
DEFINITION OF A
DATE!

HOW
CHIVALROUS! YOU
SURE THIS ISN'T A
DATE?

OOOOO, NOW
I'M INTRIGUED!



I HAVE A FEELING THIS IS A
CONTINUATION OF THE
CONVERSATION WE STARTED LAST
NIGHT BUT NEVER FINISHED!

ACTUALLY IT'S MORE OF A
CONVERSATION WE SHOULD'VE
HAD WEEKS AGO, BUT I WAS TOO
CHICKEN TO HAVE IT!

DON'T BLAME
YOURSELF, REX! I'M THE
ONE WHO TOOK THIS
"ARRANGEMENT" OF OURS IN
A WHOLE NEW DIRECTION!

YOU'VE JUST BEEN
TRYING TO CATCH UP!

THAT'S EXACTLY
WHAT I WANTED TO TELL
YOU! I THINK I'M FINALLY
"CATCHING UP" WITH YOU... OR
AT LEAST GAINING ON YOU!
CHUCKLE!

I HAVEN'T BEEN *NEARLY* AS SUPPORTIVE OF YOU AS I *SHOULD* HAVE BEEN AND I'M *SORRY* FOR THAT!


YET DESPITE *MY DISCOMFORT* AND *CONFUSION* WITH YOUR CHANGES, *YOU'VE FORGED AHEAD*, ON YOUR OWN, AND *BLOSSOMED* INTO AN *AMAZING* AND *BEAUTIFUL* YOUNG WOMAN!

I *KNOW* THAT! BUT *I SHOULD'VE* BEEN THERE WITH YOU INSTEAD OF *AVOIDING* WHAT WAS GOING ON RIGHT UNDER MY NOSE!

I'M NOT! AND *THAT'S* WHAT THIS CONVERSATION IS ABOUT!

WELL, THANK YOU, REX, BUT I DID HAVE A LOT OF HELP FROM *GLORIA!*

YOU DON'T *SEEM* TO BE AVOIDING IT *NOW!*




I DON'T THINK I *EVER* ACTUALLY SAID IT TO YOU, BUT "DANIEL" WAS MY FRIEND! BUT FOR THE LAST COUPLE OF MONTHS, I'VE BEEN TREATING YOU MORE LIKE A ROOMMATE THAN ANYTHING ELSE!

AND IT'S TIME FOR THAT TO CHANGE!

IT'S TIME FOR ME TO ACCEPT "KIM" AS MY FRIEND AS WELL! THE KIND OF FRIEND I CAN GO OUT AND HAVE DINNER AND DRINKS WITH, GO TO CONCERTS WITH OR JUST HANG OUT BY THE POOL AND DO NOTHING WITH!

REALLY?
HOW SO?

I'D... I'D LIKE THAT, TOO!




AND SINCE YOU'VE **OBVIOUSLY** BECOME **VERY** COMFORTABLE WITH THE WAY YOU **LOOK** NOW, I HAVE TO DO MORE THAN JUST "DEAL WITH IT"... I HAVE TO **ACCEPT** IT AS WELL!

HENCE OUR LITTLE "DATE" TONIGHT! I WANTED TO TAKE MY **NEW FRIEND** OUT, **SHOW HER OFF**, AND LET HER **KNOW** I'M **ON BOARD** WITH HER... **100%**!

LET ME JUST SAY
THAT YOU'VE MADE YOUR
"NEW" FRIEND VERY,
VERY HAPPY!



A man and a woman are standing in a modern apartment at night. The woman, on the left, has long black hair and is wearing a grey, form-fitting, long-sleeved dress. She is looking towards the man. The man, on the right, has short brown hair and is wearing a dark grey suit jacket over a maroon V-neck sweater and dark trousers. He is looking back at the woman. They are standing in front of a large window that offers a view of a city skyline at night, with many buildings lit up. In the foreground, there are two chairs with patterned cushions and a small table with two lit candles. The overall atmosphere is intimate and romantic.

NOW, WOULD YOU
BEGRUDGE HER GIVING YOU A
FRIENDLY HUG?


I THINK I
CAN HANDLE
THAT!



A man with brown hair, wearing a dark suit, stands in a restaurant. He is looking at a woman with dark hair, wearing a grey, form-fitting dress. The woman is looking at the man and has her hand near her face. The restaurant has large windows showing a city at night. There are tables with wine glasses and plates in the background. A wicker chair is in the foreground.

I'LL, UMMM...
GO GET US A
COUPLE OF
DRINKS!

THAT SOUNDS
WONDERFUL!



SO THAT'S WHAT HE'S UP TO!
HE THINKS BY "EMBRACING" MY
NEW LOOK, HE CAN DEVELOP A KIND OF
IMMUNITY TO ME!


REALLY? WELL, THAT
SURE AS FUCK WASN'T
"IMMUNITY" I FELT IN HIS
PANTS WHEN I HUGGED HIM
A MOMENT AGO! *GIGGLE!*

IT'S NOT A
BAD IDEA ON HIS
PART, THOUGH!

MY ENTIRE **STRATEGY** IN STAYING IN HIS HOUSE HAS BEEN BASED ON KEEPING REX **OFF-BALANCE** AND **UNCOMFORTABLE** WITH MY EVER-INCREASING **FEMININITY!**

THIS NEW **ATTITUDE** OF HIS, IF HE CAN **SUSTAIN** IT, JUST **MIGHT** THROW A **KINK** INTO THOSE PLANS!



A woman with dark hair and bangs is sitting on a wooden chair with a floral patterned backrest. She is wearing a grey, shiny, form-fitting latex dress with a deep V-neckline and long sleeves. Her hands are resting on her lap, and she has a serious expression. The background shows a city skyline at night with illuminated buildings. A thought bubble is positioned above her head.

WHICH MEANS
I NEED TO COME
UP WITH A **NEW**
STRATEGY!