QUANTUM



by CBlack

BUTTERFLY


QUANTUM
Chapter One
by CBlack
BUTTERFLY


THE UNIVERSE... IT HAS BEEN IN EXISTENCE LONG BEFORE MAN BEGAN RUMINATING ON ITS NATURE. IS IT MERELY AN EXPANSIVE VOID, PEPPERED WITH OCCASIONAL AND RELATIVELY MINISCULE GALACTIC CLUSTERS?

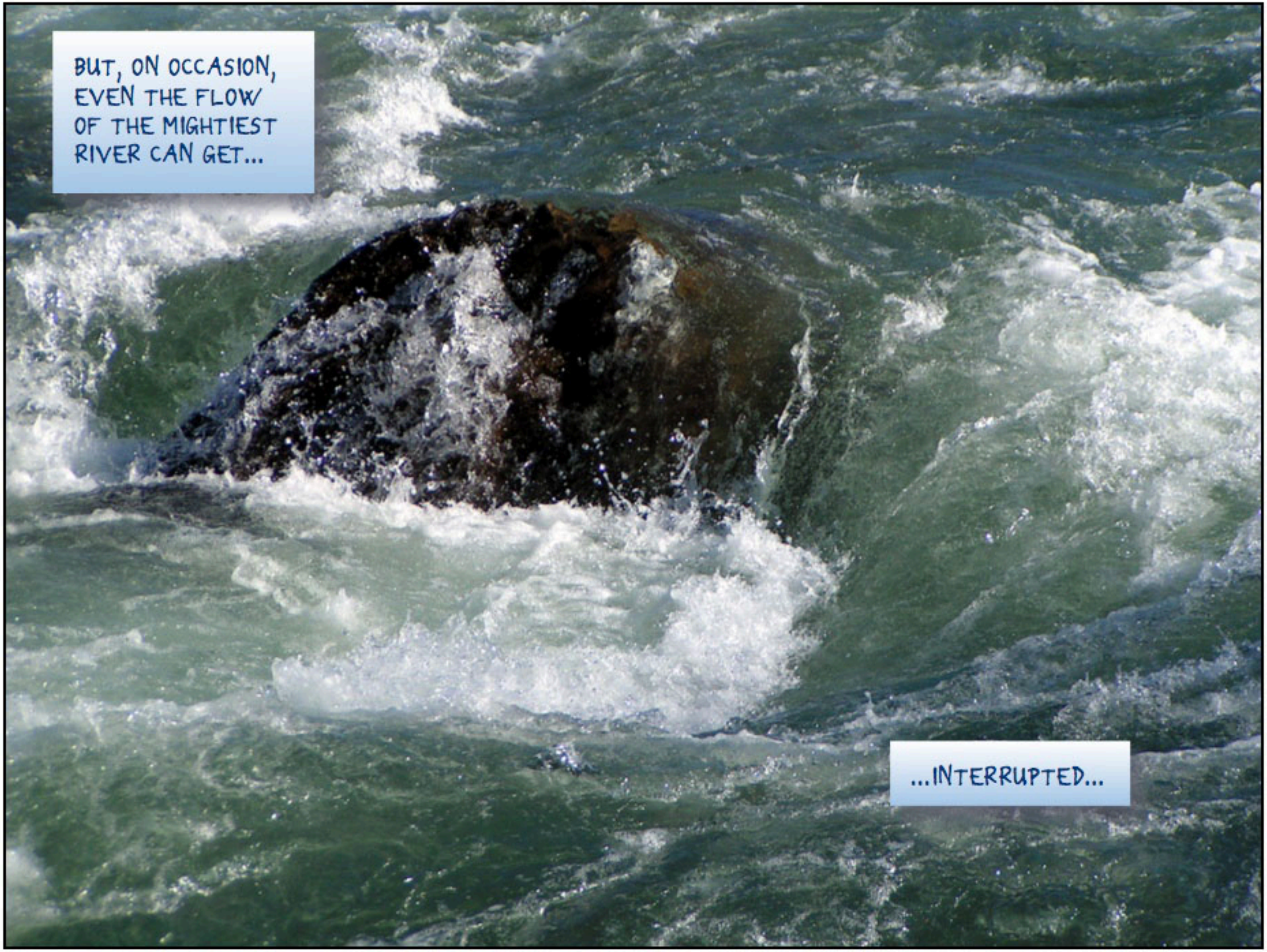

COULD IT BE THE COSMIC SANDBOX OF SOME OMNISCIENT INTELLIGENCE?


OR IS IT POSSIBLY A MATHEMATICAL CONSTRUCT IN 11 DIMENSIONS OF SPACETIME?


IT MAY BE NONE OF THE ABOVE... OR PERHAPS ALL THE ABOVE. WE MAY NEVER KNOW.

BUT FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS STORY, LET'S THINK OF THE UNIVERSE AS A RIVER... AN INFINITELY LONG AND INFINITELY WIDE RIVER WHOSE CURRENT FLOWS OVER ALL OF EXISTENCE.

ALL THAT IS, WAS, OR COULD BE FLOWS THROUGH THE STREAMLINES OF OUR UNIVERSE. IT'S AN EFFICIENT SYSTEM... AND HAS BEEN SINCE THE BEGINNING.


BUT, ON OCCASION, EVEN THE FLOW OF THE MIGHTIEST RIVER CAN GET...
...INTERRUPTED...

THE WINDY CITY...


Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler.
Albert Einstein
Hey, what're you doin' still asleep, Chicago?!
7:15


It's a bee-utiful August morning in the Windy City!
7:15


OOOOO! I STAYED UP WAY TOO LATE WORKING ON THOSE CALCULATIONS!
7:15


THIS IS ONE DAY I *CANNOT* AFFORD TO SCREW UP!


HMMMM... PIZZA FOR BREAKFAST? UGH! NOT AGAIN!
I Grok Spock

LOOKS LIKE I MAY TO DO SOME SERIOUS GROCERY SHOPPING TONIGHT! I'M DOWN TO ONLY **TWO** BOXES OF CEREAL!

REACTOR RUN MONDAY!!

CALL DAD

milk
eggs
cheese

RICE KRISPIES
Multi-Grain
0844-02
COUNTRY STORE

RING!!
RING!!

HELLO?
HEY, DAD! YOU CAUGHT ME JUST IN TIME! I WAS ON MY WAY OUT THE DOOR!

Dr. appt. 30th

REACTOR RUN MONDAY!!

CALL DAD

milk
eggs
cheese

THIS EARLY? I DIDN'T THINK YOUR CLASSES STARTED UNTIL LATER IN THE DAY!

I DON'T HAVE ANY CLASSES PER SE THIS SEMESTER, DAD... ***REMEMBER?*** IT'S ALL RESEARCH UNTIL I FINISH UP MY ***PHD!***

I Grok Spock!

WOW! I CAN'T BELIEVE MY OWN FLESH AND BLOOD IS GETTING A PHD IN THEORETICAL PHYSICS! THAT STILL BLOWS ME AWAY EVERY TIME I HEAR IT!

HEY, I RAN INTO BOBBY LAST NIGHT WHEN I WAS HAVING A BEER AT JOHNNY'S! HE ASKED AFTER YOU! SAID IT'S BEEN OVER A YEAR SINCE HE'S SEEN YOU!

HAS IT REALLY BEEN THAT LONG? I COULD'VE SWORN I RAN INTO HIM AND JAKE ONLY A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO!

SINCE I STARTED GRAD SCHOOL, IT'S BEEN TOUGH KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH ANYONE! I'M SO DAMN BUSY!

THAT'S TOO BAD! YOU WERE ALL SUCH GOOD FRIENDS GROWING UP! AND NOW YOU'RE SPENDING ALL YOUR TIME WITH THAT **HELLMAN** CHARACTER!

HOLTZMAN, DAD! STEFAN HOLTZMAN IS ONE OF THE LEADING PHYSICISTS IN **QUANTUM MECHANICS!** HIS THEORIES JUST MAY SOLVE THE **PLANCK ENERGY REQUIREMENT PROBLEMS** INHERENT IN TESTING **STRING THEORY!**

I Grok Spock!

NO KIDDING.

IN FACT, TODAY WE'RE RUNNING THE FIRST TEST OF HIS PLANCK GENERATOR WHICH COULD OPEN THE DOORWAY TO OBSERVING PHENOMENA POSTULATED BY ***SUPERSTRING THEORY!***

REMEMBER, SON, I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO SQUEEZE THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL PHYSICS WITH A C-... AND THAT WAS A ***LONG*** TIME AGO! YOU'VE BEEN TALKING OVER MY HEAD SINCE THE SCIENCE BUG BIT YOU BACK IN GRADE SCHOOL.

JUST KNOW THAT ALTHOUGH I MAY NOT UNDERSTAND YOU, I'M EXTREMELY ***PROUD*** OF YOU! I KNOW YOU WORKED LONG AND HARD TO GET WHERE YOU ARE NOW!

I Grok Spock!

THANKS, DAD! I APPRECIATE THAT!

THEN HOW ABOUT LETTING YOUR OLD MAN TAKE YOU OUT FOR A ***BIRTHDAY BEER*** THIS EVENING, HMM?

OMIGOD! IT ***IS*** MY BIRTHDAY, ISN'T IT? I ***TOTALLY*** FORGOT!

I Grok Spock!

HEY, OLD CONSTRUCTION GUYS LIKE **ME** ARE SUPPOSED TO FORGET OUR OWN BIRTHDAYS... NOT 22-YEAR-OLD **GENIUSES** LIKE YOU!

I GUESS I JUST GOT CAUGHT UP IN ALL THE RESEARCH AND LET IT GET AWAY FROM ME! I'M NOT SURE WHEN WE'LL BE DONE TODAY, SO HOW ABOUT I GIVE YOU A CALL AFTERWARD AND I CAN MEET YOU SOMEWHERE, OKAY?

Grok
pock!

SOUNDS LIKE A PLAN!

GREAT! WELL, I'VE GOTTA GO! IT'S A LONG TRAIN RIDE OUT TO FERMILAB! TALK TO YOU LATER, DAD!

OKAY! BYE, SON!

I Grok Spock!

THE PLANCK GENERATOR FACILITY AT FERMILAB, IN THE WESTERN SUBURBS OF CHICAGO...

DANGER
RADIATION

DANGER
RADIATION

MOLLY, CONTACT THE TECHS OVER AT ***MINOS*** TO PREPARE FOR THE NEUTRINO DIVERSION TO OUR FACILITY!

DAVID, CHECK THE MAGNETIC CONTAINMENT FIELD ON THE ***PLANCK GENERATOR!*** I DON'T WANT ANY UNWANTED SURPRISES WHEN THAT NEUTRINO FEED STARTS!

I CHECKED IT ALREADY, PROFESSOR! IN FACT, EVERYTHING'S READY TO **GO!** WHAT ARE WE **WAITING** FOR?

PATIENCE, MR. ROSEN... **PATIENCE!**

YOU CAN'T RUSH ***GROUND-BREAKING*** RESEARCH LIKE THIS, DAVID! BESIDES, IN CASE YOU HADN'T NOTICED, WE'RE STILL SHY ONE MEMBER OF OUR TEAM!

OH, I ***NOTICED!*** IT SEEMS WE'RE ***ALWAYS*** WAITING ON THE NEW KID!


I STILL DON'T SEE WHY YOU ADDED HIM TO THE TEAM! WE WERE DOING JUST FINE WITHOUT HIM!
A FRESH PERSPECTIVE FROM ONE SO YOUNG AND BRILLIANT WAS HARDLY SOMETHING I COULD PASS UP, DAVID! I NEED SOMEONE WHO'S WILLING TO TEST ME... CHALLENGE MY THEORIES!

SORRY I'M LATE, PROFESSOR! MY DAD CALLED ON MY WAY OUT THE DOOR SO I MISSED MY REGULAR TRAIN!

NOT A PROBLEM, MR. TERRELL! WE WERE JUST DOUBLE CHECKING EVERYTHING BEFORE WE STARTED! HOW DID THE ***CALCULATIONS*** CHECK OUT?

GOOD! AS LONG AS YOU DON'T MIND A STATISTICAL UNCERTAINTY A *WEE* BIT LARGER THAN WE'D HOPED!

DEFINE *"A WEE BIT"* LARGER.

0.5% LARGER THAN OUR ORIGINAL ESTIMATES. IN MY OPINION, NOT *REALLY* SIGNIFICANT!

I Grok Spock!

I CONCUR! WELL, SHALL WE GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD AND MAKE SOME HISTORY?

MINOS IS STANDING BY, PROFESSOR!

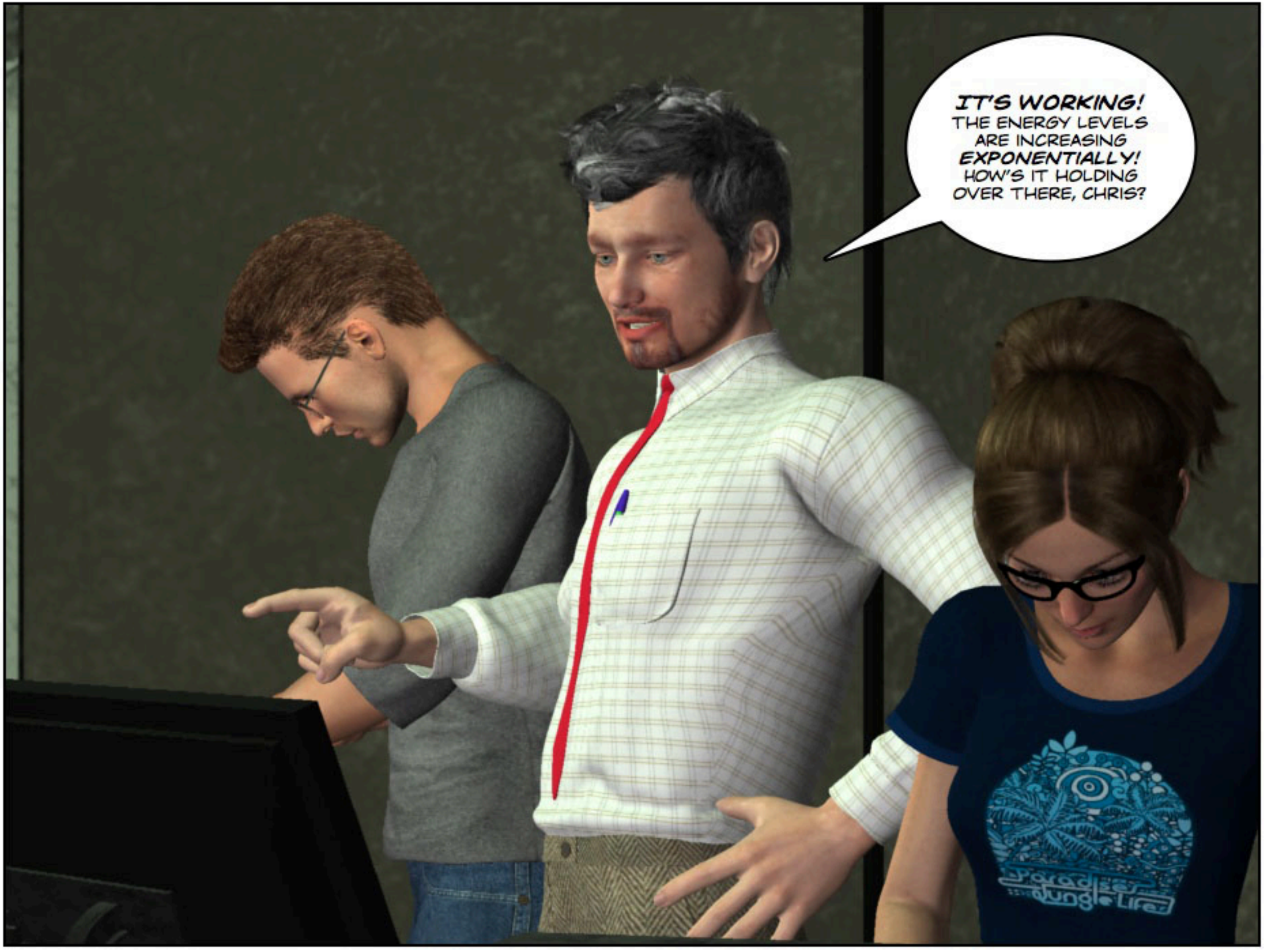
GOOD! DID YOU DOUBLE-CHECK THE CONTAINMENT FIELD, DAVID?

UMMM... YEAH! EVERYTHING'S PERFECT... LIKE I SAID!

FABULOUS! CHRIS, MONITOR THE GENERATOR... MOLLY, TELL THEM TO SEND US THE NEUTRINOS! HERE WE GO!

DANGER
HAZARDOUS VOLTAGE INSIDE

LIFT


IT'S WORKING!
THE ENERGY LEVELS ARE INCREASING EXPONENTIALLY!
HOW'S IT HOLDING OVER THERE, CHRIS?


EVERYTHING'S FINE, PROFESSOR! NO PROBLEMS AT ALL SO FAR!

JUST THINK! WE'RE ON THE THRESHOLD OF ATTAINING THE ***PLANCK ENERGY!*** AND WITH IT, THE ABILITY TO ACTUALLY OBSERVE ***QUANTUM PHENOMENA*** ON THE SCALE OF THE ***PLANCK LENGTH!*** PERHAPS EVEN CONFIRM THE EXISTENCE OF ***OTHER SPATIAL DIMENSIONS!***

UMMM... PROFESSOR?! SOMETHING'S HAPPENING OVER HERE!


CAN YOU BE MORE SPECIFIC, CHRIS?
DANG
RAD

I'M NOT SURE **WHAT** IT IS, BUT IT **DEFINITELY** ISN'T SOMETHING WE EXPECTED!

Grok
ock!


OH MY GOD!


CHRIS!
GET AWAY
FROM THERE!
NOW!!


WHOOOOAAAAAAAAA....

OH MY GOD, PROFESSOR! WHAT IS IT? WHAT HAPPENED TO CHRIS?!

IT... IT LOOKS LIKE A WORMHOLE! I'D HOPED FOR EVIDENCE OF MICROSCOPIC ONES, BUT NOTHING OF THIS MAGNITUDE! THERE MUST BE A FLAW IN THE CONTAINMENT FIELD!

HEY! THIS ISN'T **MY** FAULT!

LET'S WORRY ABOUT CHRIS ***FIRST,*** DAVID!

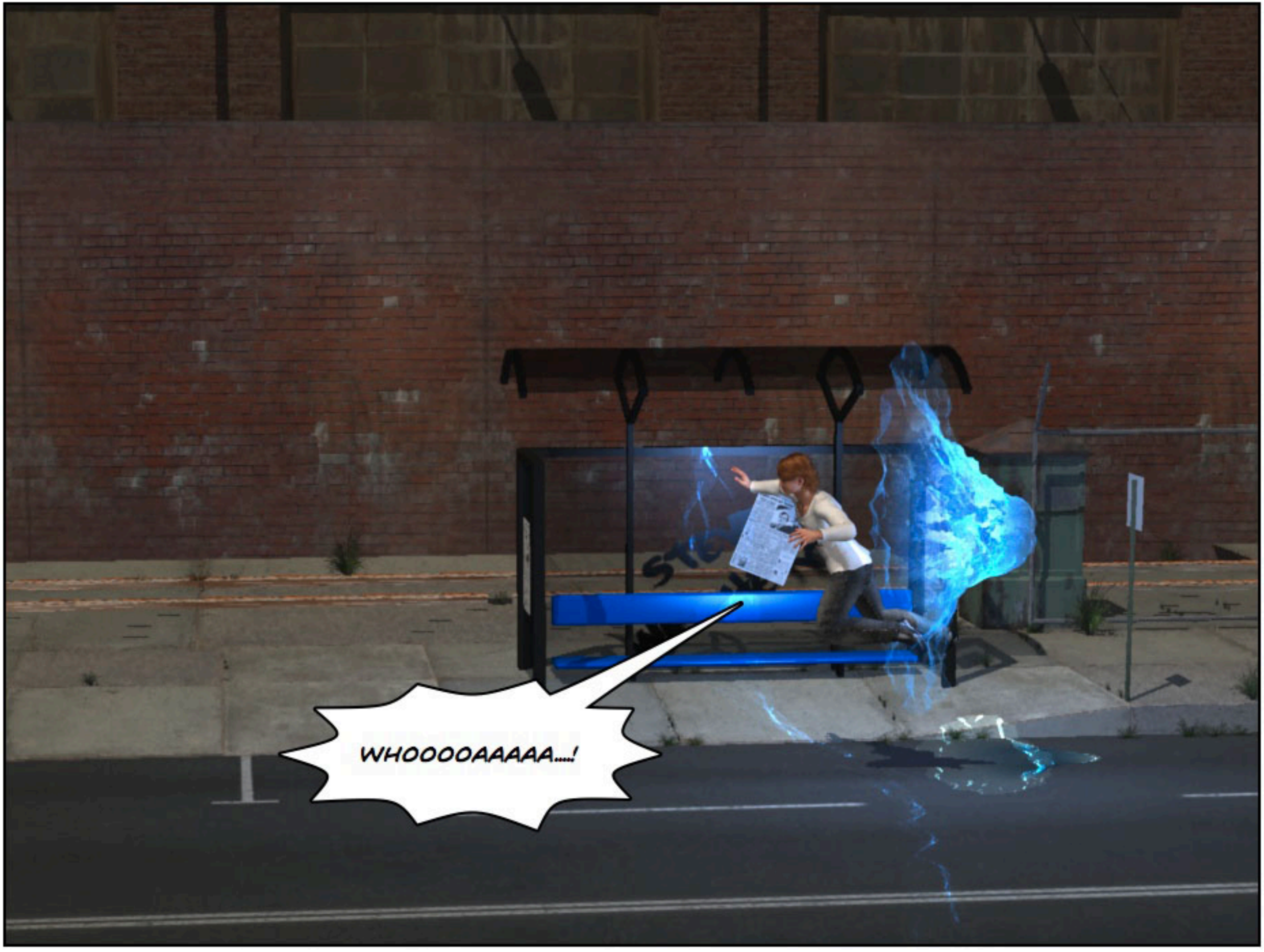
THERE! A SMALL ***DISTORTION*** DEFLECTED THE ENERGY FIELD ENOUGH TO START A LARGE SCALE ROTATION! THE ROTATION COUPLED WITH THE ENERGIES OF THIS MAGNITUDE MUST'VE CREATED THIS ***WORMHOLE!***

IT'S FANTASTIC!

BUT, WHAT ABOUT ***CHRIS?*** CAN WE GET HIM BACK? IS HE STILL ***ALIVE?***

CHANCES ARE, HE WAS ***CRUSHED*** BY THE IMMENSE FORCES THEORIZED IN THESE WORMHOLES!

BUT IF HE'S STILL ALIVE SOMEWHERE, I THINK I HAVE AN ***IDEA*** HOW TO GET HIM BACK!


WHOOOOAAAAA....!

HOLY SHIT! WHAT THE HELL JUST HAPPENED?! I... I WAS IN THE LAB! BUT... NOW I'M DOWNTOWN SOMEWHERE!

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

Grok Spock!

AND IT'S AWFULLY FREAKIN' *FREEZING* FOR AUGUST! *WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON?*

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

Bush sweeps home to victory

CHICAGO SUN-T

Bush sweeps home to

WHAT TH...?! BUSH?! PRESIDENT?! NOVEMBER 1988?!!

NO FUCKING WAY!

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

Presidential campaign favourite heads for the White House

Bush sweeps home to victory

Dukakis well beaten despite late rallies

Relief as weary rivals end trail

I trust George Bush and America can too

HEY! WATCH IT!

THIS CAN'T BE REAL!!

Bump!

DAMN **WASTE-OID** MADE ME MISS MY TRAIN!

CRAP! OH WELL, I GUESS HELEN WON'T MIND IF I'M A FEW MINUTES LATE!

Clu-Clunch!

Clu-Clunch!

Clu-Clunch!

MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE LAB...

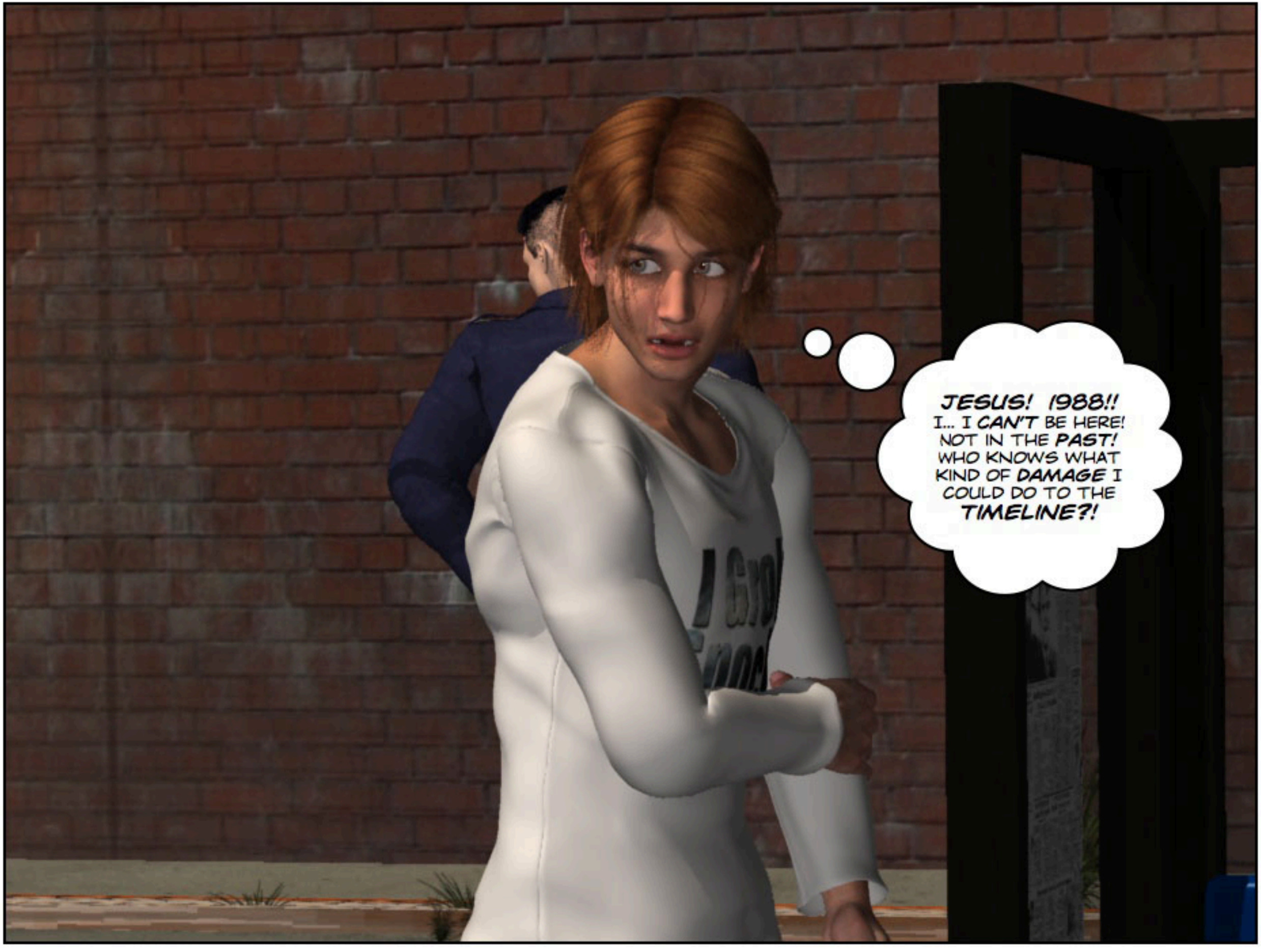
OKAY, *THAT* SHOULD DO IT! I'VE ADJUSTED THE CONTAINMENT FIELD TO *REVERSE* THE ROTATION OF THE ENERGY FIELD!

DANGE
RADIATI

Reactor

IT SHOULD REVERSE THE DIRECTION OF THE WORMHOLE AND ***HOPEFULLY*** ALLOW CHRIS TO RETURN...

IF HE'S STILL ***ALIVE***, THAT IS!


JESUS! 1988!!
I... I CAN'T BE HERE!
NOT IN THE PAST!
WHO KNOWS WHAT
KIND OF DAMAGE I
COULD DO TO THE
TIMELINE?!


WE GOLD
CHICAGO SUN-TIMES
Bank sweeps home to victory
FOR SALE
OH SHIT!
HERE WE GO AGAIN!


OH MY GOD! THAT GUY OVER THERE! IT CAN'T BE!! IT'S... IT'S... !


...DAD!!!!!!
HUH?


PEARL JAM
...DAD!!!!!!
3:13

WHAT THE HELL?! MY APARTMENT?! DID THAT ALL JUST REALLY HAPPEN?

DID I REALLY JUST BUMP INTO DAD... IN 1988?! OR WAS IT ALL SOME BIZARRE HALLUCINATION?

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28

JOHNNY'S

3:13

WAIT A MINUTE... *SOMETHING'S WRONG!* MY BEDROOM! IT... IT'S *CHANGED!*

BLACK CROWES
ROBERT RANDOLPH AND THE FAMILY BAND
DRIVE-BY TRUCKERS
FRIDAY
JULY 28 2006
TOWER CITY AMPHITHEATER
CLEVELAND OHIO
DOORS 5:30 PM
SHOW 7:00 PM!

CONCERT INDIE PUNK
SAMEDI 27 MAI 2006
LES CHIENS FOUS
COPPER BLUE
STETSON
LE CLOS FLEURI


THE WHOLE APARTMENT! IT'S MINE, BUT... DIFFERENT!

AND... MY CLOTHES! I WASN'T WEARING THIS EARLIER!

RING!!

RING!!

HE... HELLO?

HEY SON! HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

SERVING UP TRADITION

JOHNNY'S TAVERN

DAD! YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW GLAD I AM TO HEAR YOUR VOICE!

WELL, I'M ALWAYS GLAD TO TALK TO YOU TOO, SON! BUT YOU SOUND UPSET! IS ANYTHING WRONG?

SERVING UP TRADITION
SINCE 1953
JOHNNY'S TAVERN

I... I DON'T THINK SO! I'M JUST A LITTLE FUZZY, I GUESS! JUST WOKE UP FROM A LONG NAP!

SERVING UP TRADITION
SINCE 1953
JOHNNY'S TAVERN

WELL IT'S NO **WONDER** YOU'RE TIRED WITH ALL THOSE LONG HOURS YOU KEEP PUTTING IN AT THE BAR! I'M SURPRISED YOU FIND ANY TIME TO SLEEP!

THE BAR?
WHAT BAR?!

WOW!
YOU ARE OUT OF IT, CHRIS!
JOHNNY'S!
YOU KNOW... THE PLACE YOU'VE BEEN WORKING FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS?

SERVING UP TRADITION
SINCE 1953
JOHNNY'S TAVERN

BUT... I HAVEN'T WORKED THERE SINCE...

SERVING UP TRADITION
SINCE 1953
JOHNNY'S TAVE

HOLY SHIT!

eye appt. 10th

COVER JAKES SHIFT MON!

CALL DAD

milk
eggs
cheese

SON, ARE YOU **SURE** YOU'RE OKAY? MAYBE I SHOULD COME OVER!

NO... I... I JUST NEED A COLD SHOWER TO WAKE MYSELF UP... THAT'S ALL! I'LL BE OKAY!

SERVING UP TRADITION
SINCE 1953
JOHNNY'S TAVE

WELL, ALL RIGHT! BUT I'LL STILL STOP BY THE BAR THIS EVENING AS USUAL, OKAY?

SURE, DAD... ***SURE!*** I'LL... I'LL SEE YOU THEN! ***BYE!***

SERVING UP TRADITION
SINCE 1953
JOHNNY'S TAVERN

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?

SERVING UP TRADITION
SINCE 1953
OHNNY'S TAVERN

ONCE AGAIN, BACK AT THE LAB...

THAT **DID** IT, DAVID! **IT WORKED!** IT'S CLOSING!

WHAT NEXT, PROFESSOR? DO WE TRY *AGAIN?*

NO! NOT UNTIL WE GO THROUGH THE ENTIRE GENERATOR WITH A ***FINE-TOOTH COMB*** TO SEE WHERE THE PROBLEM LIES!

WE CAN COUNT OUR LUCKY STARS THAT **NO ONE** WAS CLOSE TO THAT THING WHEN IT MATERIALIZED!

WHO **KNOWS** WHAT MIGHT'VE HAPPENED TO THEM?!

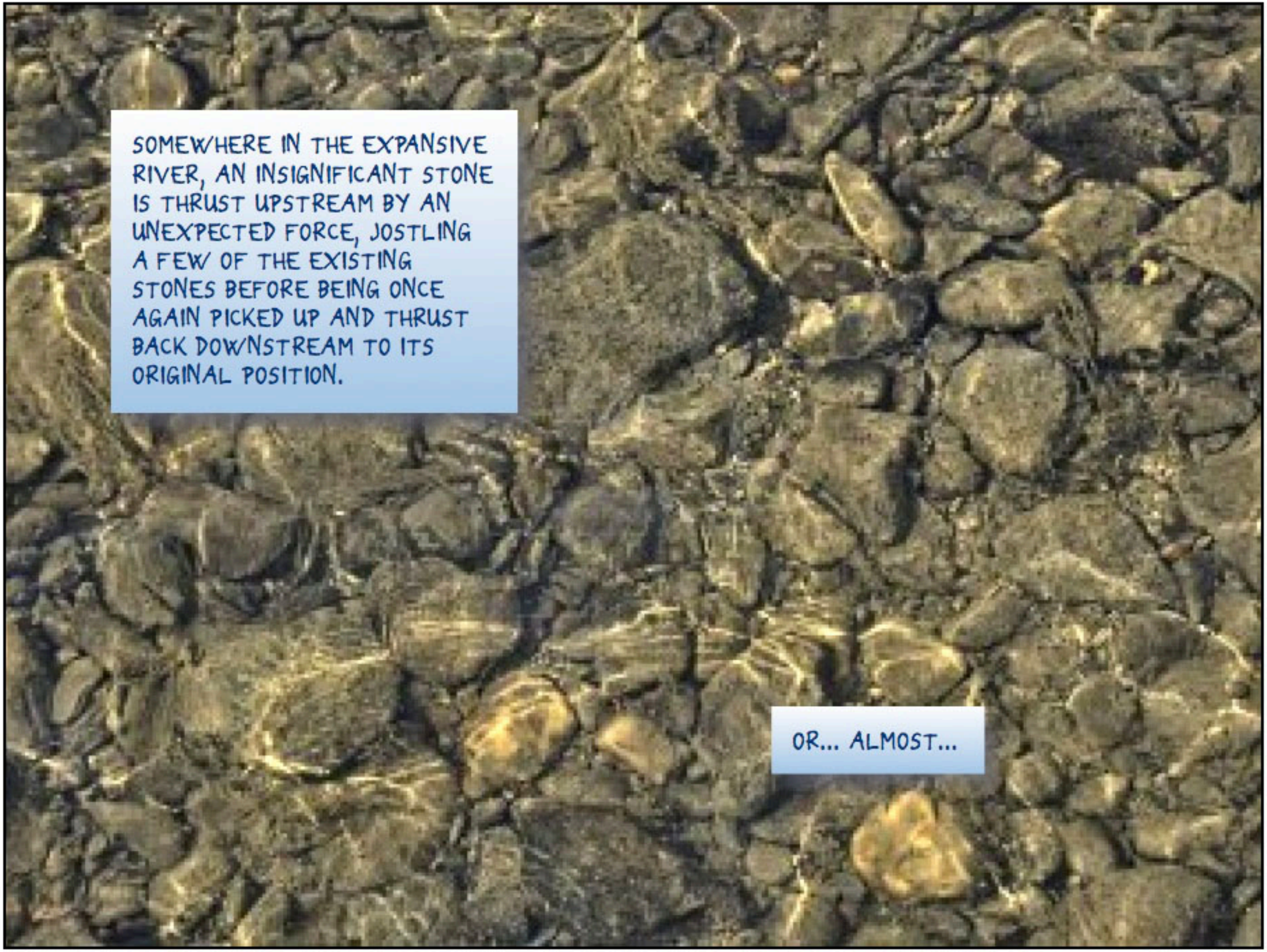
RADIOACTIVE III

QUANTUM

Chapter Two

by CBlack

BUTTERFLY


SOMEWHERE IN THE EXPANSIVE RIVER, AN INSIGNIFICANT STONE IS THRUST UPSTREAM BY AN UNEXPECTED FORCE, JOSTLING A FEW OF THE EXISTING STONES BEFORE BEING ONCE AGAIN PICKED UP AND THRUST BACK DOWNSTREAM TO ITS ORIGINAL POSITION.
OR... ALMOST...

THIS IS CRAZY! WHATEVER'S HAPPENED HAS GOT TO HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH PROFESSOR HOLTZMAN'S EXPERIMENT! HE'LL KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON!

SERVING UP TRADITI
SINCE 1953

WHAT THE...? HIS NUMBER'S GONE FROM MY CELL! AND SO IS MOLLY'S! IN FACT, MY WHOLE CONTACT LIST IS DIFFERENT! BOBBY, JAKE... SALLY?! WHAT ARE THEY DOING IN HERE? JESUS! I HAVEN'T TALKED TO BOBBY SINCE...

...THIS MORNING? NO! THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT!

SERVING UP TRADITION
SINCE 1953
JOHNNY'S TAVERN

I'VE **GOT** TO GET HOLD OF PROFESSOR HOLTZMAN! GOOD THING I HAVE **FERMILAB'S** NUMBER MEMORIZED!

FERMILAB... HOW MAY I DIRECT YOUR CALL?

SERVING UP TRADITIO
SINCE 1953
JOHNNY'S TAV

YES, CAN YOU CONNECT ME WITH **PROFESSOR HOLTZMAN** IN THE PLANCK ENERGY LAB? TELL HIM **CHRIS TERRELL** IS CALLING!

PLEASE LET HIM BE THERE! PLEASE... PLEASE... **PLEASE!**

ONE MOMENT PLEASE...

SERVING UP TRADIT
SINCE 1953
JOHNNY'S TA

I'M SORRY, PROFESSOR HOLTZMAN CANNOT BE DISTURBED RIGHT NOW!

BUT... DID YOU TELL HIM WHO I WAS?

SERVING UP TRADIT
SINCE 1953
JOHNNY'S TA


YES, AND HE SAYS HE KNOWS OF NO ONE BY THAT NAME. I'M SORRY!
CLICK!
SERVING UP TRADIT
JOHNNY'S

OKAY, THIS HAS GONE FROM **CRAZY** TO **INSANE!** NOT ONLY IS MY **APARTMENT** DIFFERENT, BUT MY WHOLE **LIFE** SEEMS TO BE DIFFERENT!

SERVING UP TRADITION
SINCE 1953
JOHNNY'S TAVERN

THAT WORMHOLE! IT DID SEND ME BACK TO 1988! AND I MUST'VE ACCIDENTALLY CHANGED SOMETHING! BUT WHAT?!

HEY! ANYONE HOME?

VING UP TRADITION
SINCE 1953
NNY'S TAVE


BOBBY?!
WH... WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
HEY, IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU TOO, BUDDY! I THOUGHT I'D BE A NICE GUY AND GIVE YOU A RIDE OVER TO THE BAR SINCE WE'RE BOTH WORKING THE SAME SHIFT TODAY!
SERVING UP TRADITION
JOHNNY'S TAV


BUT IF YOU'D RATHER WALK...!
SERVING UP TRADIT
SINCE 1953
JOHNNY'S

WAIT, BOBBY! I... I'M SORRY! YOU JUST CAUGHT ME WAKING UP FROM A NAP! STILL A LITTLE FUZZY AND ALL THAT!

GIVE ME A COUPLE OF MINUTES AND I'LL BE READY TO GO!

SERVING UP TRADITION
SINCE 1953
JOHNNY'S TAVERN

ALL RIGHT, BUT ***MOVE*** IT, HUH? YOU KNOW WHAT AN ***ASSHOLE*** STU CAN BE WHEN WE'RE LATE!

A SHORT TIME LATER, THE TWO FRIENDS ARRIVE AT JOHNNY'S...

WELL, WELL, WELL! THANKS FOR FINALLY DECIDING TO SHOW UP, ***LADIES!*** I WAS JUST ABOUT TO PUT OUT THE ***"SERVE YOURSELF"*** SIGN WHEN YOU DECIDED TO GRACE US WITH YOUR PRESENCE!

YEAH, HEAVEN FORBID *YOU* SPEND A FEW MINUTES BEHIND THE BAR, STU! OR IS THAT TOO *DEMEANING* A JOB FOR YOU?

HEY, THE MANAGER *MANAGES*, NUMB-NUTS! *YOU'RE* THE ONES WHO NEED TO BE BEHIND THE BAR... *ON TIME!*

IT'S **MY** FAULT, UH... STU! I **FORGOT** I WAS WORKING FOR JAKE TODAY, THAT'S ALL! IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN!

SEE THAT IT **DOESN'T,** OR **YOU'RE** LOOKIN' FOR A **NEW JOB!**

DON'T YOU **LOVE** HAVIN' A BOSS WITH SUCH HIGHLY EVOLVED **PEOPLE SKILLS?**


AHH, AND NOW THE PRINCESS *HERSELF* DECIDES TO SHOW UP!
FIVE MINUTES, STU! *BIG DEAL!*

HEY THERE, GUYS! HOW'S IT GOIN'?

SALLY?! OH MY GOD, I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU SINCE... SINCE...!

...YESTERDAY!?
HERE... AT WORK!
SERVING UP TRADITION
SINCE 1953
JOHNNY'S TAVERN


GEE, IF YOU'D ALWAYS BEEN *THIS* ATTENTIVE, WE MIGHT *STILL* BE DATING!
LEMME PUT MY THINGS UP AND I'LL HELP YOU GET READY FOR *HAPPY HOUR!*


YOU KNOW, SHE SAID THE EXACT SAME THING TO ME AFTER WE DATED!

I'M GONNA GO DOWN TO THE WALK-IN AND START BRINGIN' UP SOME CASES BEFORE IT GETS BUSY! YOU OKAY MANNING THE BAR ALONE FOR A BIT?

UH, *YEAH!* NO PROBLEM!

JOHNNY'S TAVERN

SERVING UP TRADITION

THIS IS **ALL WRONG!** I HAVEN'T WORKED HERE FOR **YEARS,** BUT EVERYONE SEEMS TO THINK THAT I NEVER QUIT!

WHAT'S EVEN **WEIRDER** IS I KEEP GETTING FLASHES OF **MEMORIES** OF ME WORKING HERE... **RECENTLY!** AND THE MORE I THINK ABOUT THEM, THE **CLEARER** THEY BECOME!

SERVING UP TRADITION
SINCE 1953
JOHNNY'S TAVERN

WHEN SALLY WALKED IN, I WOULD'VE ***SWORN*** THAT I HADN'T SEEN HER IN ***YEARS,*** BUT I SAW HER IN HERE ***YESTERDAY... AND*** THE DAY BEFORE!

SERVING UP TRADITION
SINCE 1953
OHNNY'S TAVERN

IT'S LIKE I'VE LED ***TWO*** SEPARATE LIVES AND THEY'RE SLOWLY BECOMING ***INTERTWINED!*** COULD THIS BE SOME KIND OF ***PARALLEL TIMELINE*** WHERE I NEVER ENTERED GRAD SCHOOL?

BUT WHAT COULD'VE ***CAUSED*** IT? THAT WORMHOLE SENT ME WAY BACK TO *1988!* AND JUST FOR A ***MINUTE*** BEFORE BRINGING ME BACK!

HOW THE ***HELL*** COULD ME BUMPING INTO MY OWN DAD, BEFORE I WAS EVEN ***BORN,*** HAVE ***THIS*** KIND OF EFFECT ON MY LIFE?! ***IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE!***

SERVING UP TRADITION
SINCE 1953

I REMEMBER, IN ***BOTH*** LIVES, BOBBY AND I GROWING UP AS ***BEST FRIENDS,*** BUT UNTIL JUST A FEW MINUTES AGO, I THOUGHT WE'D DRIFTED APART AFTER I ENROLLED IN GRAD SCHOOL!

BUT... ***THAT'S*** NOT RIGHT! BOBBY AND I ***NEVER*** DRIFTED APART! WE'VE ***ALWAYS*** BEEN TIGHT! WORKING AND PARTYING TOGETHER FOR ***YEARS!*** ***BEST FRIENDS!*** NOTHING COULD EVER CHANGE THAT!

THIS IS **CRAZY!** HOW **MUCH** HAS MY LIFE CHANGED? HAS ANYONE OR ANYTHING **ELSE** BEEN AFFECTED?

BARTENDER, POUR ME A TALL ONE!

SERVING UP TRADITION
SINCE 1953
JOHNNY'S TAVERN


DAD? YOU'RE HERE?!
I TOLD YOU I WAS COMING DOWN... REMEMBER? I THOUGHT I'D COME DOWN EARLY SO WE COULD TALK A BIT BEFORE IT GOT TOO BUSY!

HEY PAT! HOW'S IT GOIN'?

JUST FINE, BOBBY! MIND IF I STEAL MY BOY AWAY FOR A FEW?

NOT A BIT! I CAN HANDLE THE BAR ALONE UNTIL HAPPY HOUR STARTS!

SO, WHAT'S UP, DAD? EVERYTHING OKAY?

OH SURE! EVERYTHING'S ***FINE*** WITH ME! HEALTH IS ***GOOD!*** PLENTY OF CONTRACTS TO KEEP THE BUSINESS BOOMING! I JUST WANTED TO SEE HOW ***YOU*** WERE DOING!


ME? I... I'M OKAY, I GUESS! WHY DO YOU ASK?
WELL SON, IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY! YOU'RE 23 YEARS OLD NOW AND I WORRY ABOUT YOU... AND YOUR FUTURE! I CAN'T HELP WONDERING WHAT YOUR LONG-TERM PLANS ARE!

LONG TERM? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

YOU'RE **DRIFTING** THROUGH LIFE! TAKING THE **EASY** WAY OUT! I KNOW IT'S FUN, HANGING OUT WITH BOBBY AND YOUR PALS FROM HIGH SCHOOL, BUT YOU'RE **BETTER** THAN THIS!

SERVING UP TRADITION

JOHNNY'S TA

ACTUALLY, I WAS THINKING THE ***SAME*** THING...

LET ME FINISH, SON! LIKE I WAS SAYING, THIS MAY BE A GOOD JOB FOR SOMEONE LIKE ***BOBBY,*** BUT YOU'VE GOT SO MUCH MORE ***POTENTIAL!*** YOU DID SO WELL IN SCHOOL!

BUT I... I *LIKE* WORKING HERE... WITH BOBBY AND SALLY! I REALLY *DO!*

DON'T TAKE THE EASY WAY OUT, SON! IT'S TIME TO TAKE SOME *RESPONSIBILITY* FOR YOUR LIFE! IF YOU PUT YOUR MIND TO IT, YOU CAN BE *ANYTHING* YOU WANT!

SERVING UP TRADITION
SINCE 1953

SOMETIMES I THINK YOU ***DELIBERATELY*** HOLD YOURSELF BACK JUST SO YOU'LL ***FIT IN*** WITH BOBBY AND THE OTHER GUYS!

WHAT?!


THAT... THAT'S NOT TRUE!


WHOA! GOT A LITTLE DIZZY THERE FOR A SECOND!
NOW, WHAT WERE YOU SAYING ABOUT BOBBY, DAD?


DAD?!
BOBBY?
SALLY?!
WHERE THE HELL DID EVERYONE GO?

WHO YOU LOOKING FOR, CHRIS?

MY... MY **DAD!** HE WAS **JUST** HERE, BUT... NOW HE'S... **GONE!**

WHAT THE...? WHO'S **THIS?!** WHERE THE **HELL** AM I?!

YOUR DAD?! IN HERE?! HELL, MAN! YOU KNOW YOUR OLD MAN WOULDN'T BE CAUGHT DEAD IN A PLACE LIKE THIS!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? A PLACE LIKE WHAT?





HOLY SHIT!

HEY, WHAT'S **WRONG**, CHRIS? YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD!

I... I'M NOT ***FEELIN'*** SO GOOD ALL OF A SUDDEN! I ***HATE*** TO DO THIS TO YOU, BUT I'VE GOTTA GO HOME!

HEY, ***NO PROBLEM,*** MAN! I'LL COVER FOR YOU! JUST TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, OKAY?

I WILL! AND, **THANKS!** I REALLY APPRECIATE IT, UMMM... **CARLOS!**

AFTER A QUICK SPRINT BACK TO HIS APARTMENT...

I DON'T UNDERSTAND!

MY APARTMENT... MY **LIFE**... CHANGED AGAIN! BUT THERE WAS NO **WORMHOLE** THIS TIME! JUST A... A **WAVE** OF SOME KIND PASSING THROUGH ME!

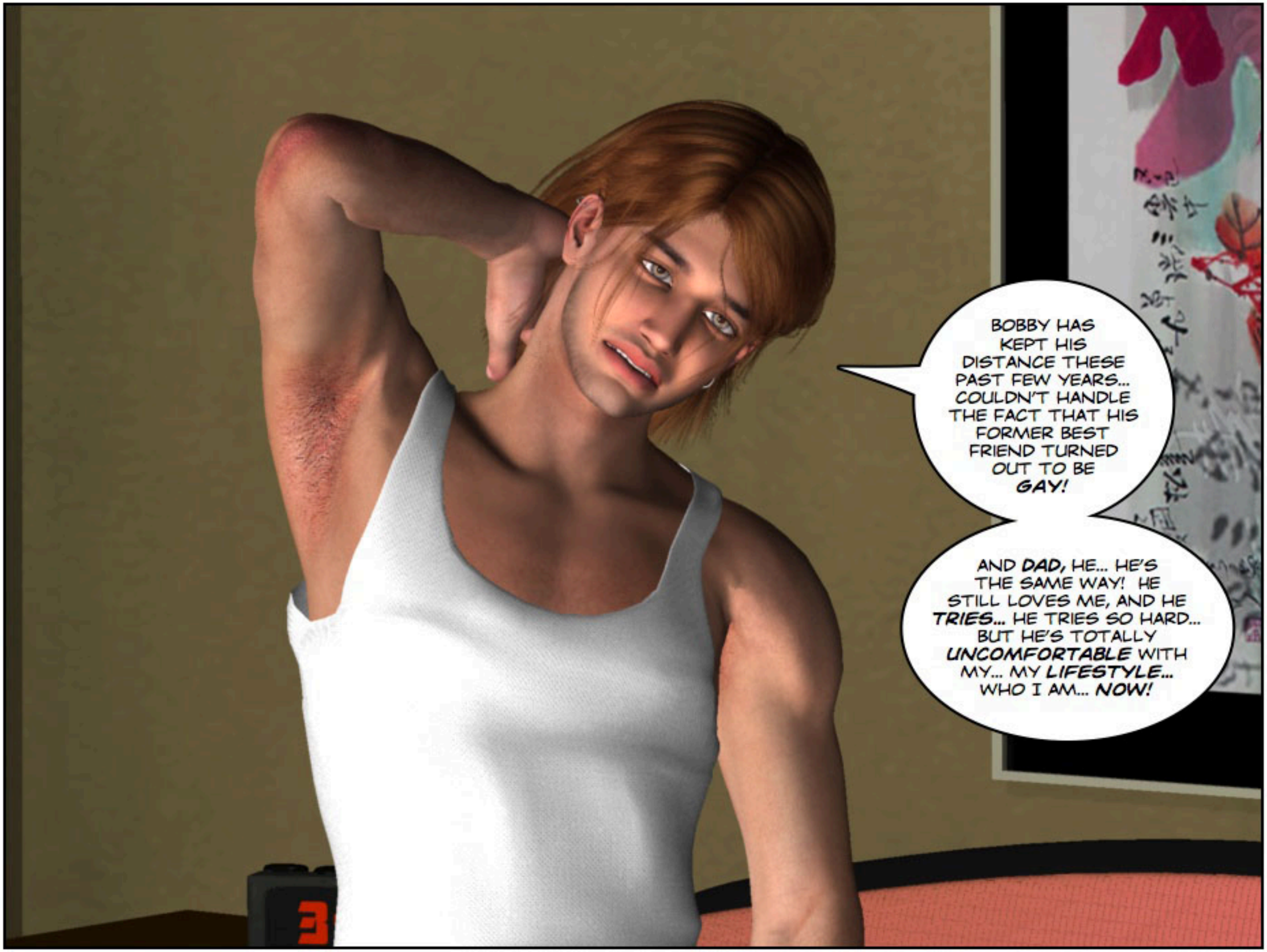
THE *MEMORIES* OF THIS AFTERNOON... MY NEW LIFE... WORKING AT *JOHNNY'S*... WORKING WITH BOBBY AND SALLY... IT'S NOT TRUE! NOT ANYMORE! MY LIFE... MY *NEW* LIFE.. IT ISN'T LIKE THAT... ***NOT AT ALL!***

NOW... NOW I WORK AT THE ***DEMITASSE CAFE...*** WITH ***CARLOS!*** AND I'M...

...I'M GAY?!

BUT... I *CAN'T* BE *GAY!* I... I LIKE *GIRLS!* DON'T I? I MEAN... BOBBY AND I.. WE USED TO...!

NO... WE *DIDN'T!* I TRIED TO PRETEND... BUT BOBBY COULD TELL! HE *KNEW...* ALMOST BEFORE *I* KNEW!


BOBBY HAS KEPT HIS DISTANCE THESE PAST FEW YEARS... COULDN'T HANDLE THE FACT THAT HIS FORMER BEST FRIEND TURNED OUT TO BE GAY!
AND DAD, HE... HE'S THE SAME WAY! HE STILL LOVES ME, AND HE TRIES... HE TRIES SO HARD... BUT HE'S TOTALLY UNCOMFORTABLE WITH MY... MY LIFESTYLE... WHO I AM... NOW!


OH MY GOD! DAD! HE WALKED IN ON ME AND...!


OH SHIT, DAD! I'M SO SORRY YOU HAD TO FIND OUT THAT WAY!


HELLO? DAD? IT'S ME... CHRIS!


CHRIS? YOU SOUND UPSET! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

NO, EVERYTHING'S OKAY! IT'S JUST... JUST... CAN WE MEET TOMORROW FOR LUNCH? I JUST NEED TO ***SEE*** YOU AND ***TALK*** FOR A BIT... IF THAT'S OKAY!


OF COURSE, SON! I'M WORKING A JOB DOWNTOWN NEAR 9TH AND STATE AND THERE'S A LITTLE CAFE ON THE SOUTHEAST CORNER! I'LL SEE YOU THERE AROUND NOON, OKAY?


SOUNDS GREAT, DAD! SEE YOU THEN!

THE NEXT DAY RIGHT AROUND LUNCH TIME NEAR 9TH AND STATE...

I DON'T KNOW IF TALKING WITH DAD WILL ***HELP*** OR ***HURT*** MY SITUATION! ALL I KNOW IS I'VE GOT TO TALK TO ***SOMEONE*** OR I'LL ***LOSE*** MY MIND!


BUT WHERE DO I START?
HOW DO I TELL THIS DAD, WHO KNOWS ME ONLY AS HIS GAY SON WHO WORKS IN A COFFEE SHOP, THAT UNTIL THE OTHER DAY I WAS HIS STRAIGHT SON WHO WAS WORKING ON HIS PHD IN PHYSICS?

IF I COULD EVEN GET HIM TO ***UNDERSTAND*** THE CONCEPT! HOW CAN I SAY THAT I THINK I'M LIVING AN ***ALTERNATIVE TIMELINE,*** THANKS TO A LITTLE TRIP THROUGH A ***WORMHOLE?*** DAD WILL THINK I'M INSANE AND HAVE ME ***COMMITTED!***


BUT IF THAT TRIP TO THE PAST PUT ME ON A DIFFERENT TIMELINE HERE IN THE *PRESENT*, THEN WHAT THE *HELL* CAUSED THIS FURTHER CHANGE?

WHATEVER THAT... **WAVE...** WAS, IT SEEMED TO SHIFT ME INTO **ANOTHER** TIMELINE! BUT **HOW?** AND **WHY?!**

WELL, HERE GOES *NOTHING!*


WHOA!
NOT AGAIN!
PLEASE?!

WELL... NOTHING LOOKS LIKE IT'S **CHANGED!** PROBABLY JUST **NERVES!** CAN'T IMAGINE **WHY...!**

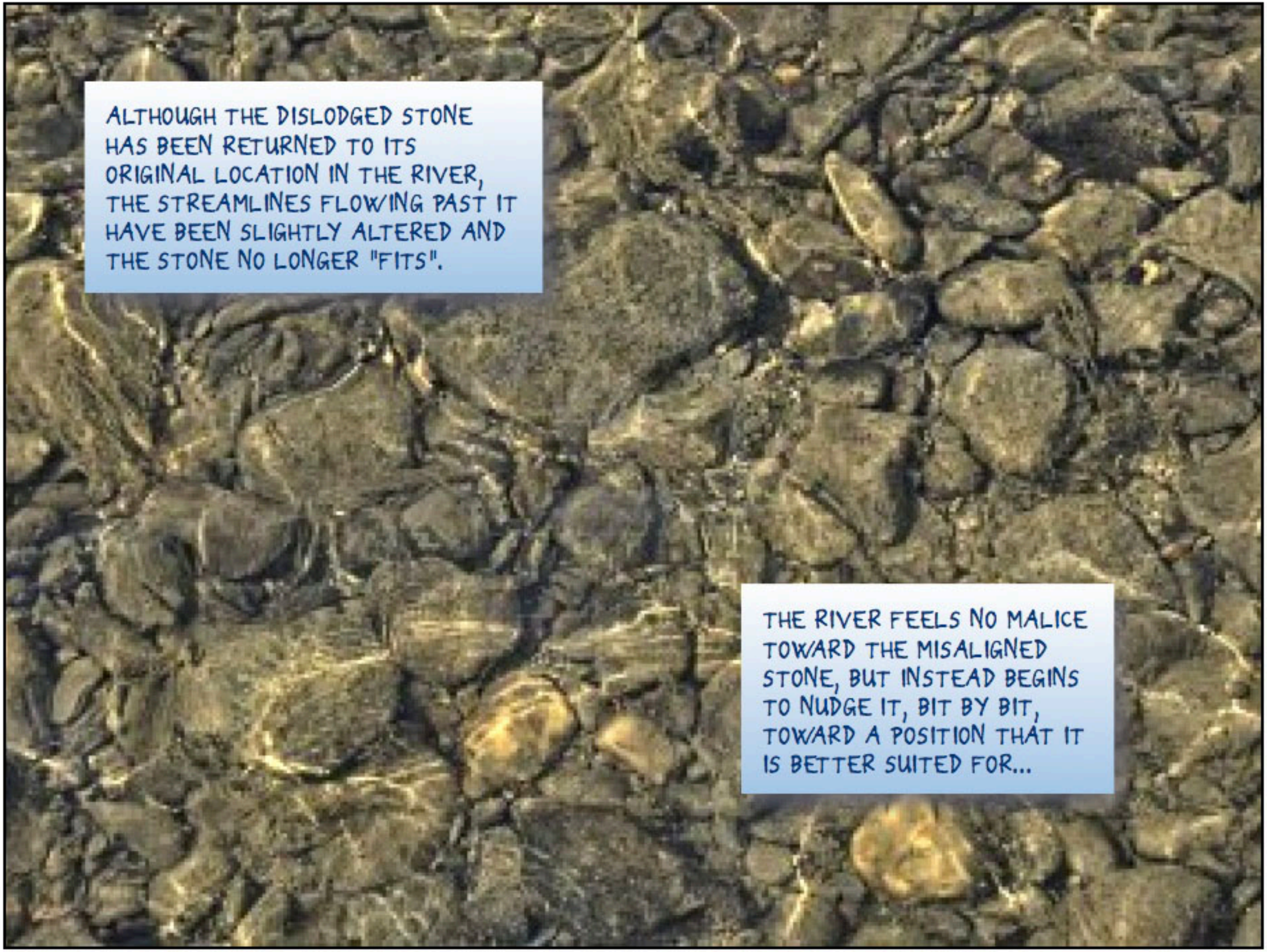
Come On I
We're Ope

HI, DAD! THANKS FOR MEETING ME, AND...

DAD?!


WHAT'S WRONG?


QUANTUM
Chapter Three
by CBlack
BUTTERFLY


ALTHOUGH THE DISLODGED STONE HAS BEEN RETURNED TO ITS ORIGINAL LOCATION IN THE RIVER, THE STREAMLINES FLOWING PAST IT HAVE BEEN SLIGHTLY ALTERED AND THE STONE NO LONGER "FITS".
THE RIVER FEELS NO MALICE TOWARD THE MISALIGNED STONE, BUT INSTEAD BEGINS TO NUDGE IT, BIT BY BIT, TOWARD A POSITION THAT IT IS BETTER SUITED FOR...

DAD? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I... I'M SORRY, SON... UMM, CHRIS! I... I GUESS I JUST DIDN'T EXPECT SO MUCH OF A CHANGE SINCE THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU!


CHANGE?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT...?


OH MY GOD!
GAME ROOM


UMMM... EXCUSE ME A MINUTE, DAD! I REALLY NEED TO USE THE RESTROOM! BE RIGHT BACK!


SHIT!
SHIT! SHIT!!!
THERE WAS A CHANGE AFTER ALL! BUT NOT TO THE SURROUNDINGS THIS TIME... JUST TO ME!


AND I... I LOOK LIKE A... A GIRL! AM I?

IT'S STILL THERE! **THANK GOD!** BUT... **BARELY!**


BUT THOSE... THOSE ARE DEFINITELY TITS! PART OF ME! ON MY CHEST!
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON IN THIS TIMELINE?!


MAYBE SOMETHING IN MY BAG WILL GIVE ME A CLUE!

PREMARIN?! I'M TAKING FEMALE HORMONES? BUT... I'D ONLY NEED THOSE IF I WAS....!

HOMETOWN PHARMACY
Rx 123796 07/11/11
SMITH, MD
CHRIS TERRELL
TAKE ONE CAPSULE BY MOUTH THREE TIMES A DAY
PREMARIN 500MG CAPINBX Qty 100
REFILL BY DRS ORDER


...TRANSITIONING!
JESUS! I WAS JUST GETTING USED TO BEING GAY, AND NOW I'M SUDDENLY A TRANSITIONING TRANSEXUAL?

I...I NEED *TIME!* TIME TO *PROCESS* ALL THIS!

BUT *DAD'S* OUT THERE... LOOKING JUST AS *CONFUSED* AS I AM! I HAVE TO HOLD IT TOGETHER... PUT ON A HAPPY FACE FOR DAD... *THEN* SORT THINGS OUT ON MY OWN!

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

CHRIS, I'M **SORRY** IF MY REACTION UPSET YOU! IT'S JUST THAT...

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, DAD! I UNDERSTAND... ***BELIEVE ME!***


I REALIZE IT'S GOT TO BE TOUGH TO WATCH YOUR SON TRANSITIONING TO BECOME YOUR DAUGHTER!

GAME ROOM

I *KNOW* THAT, BUT I JUST FEEL THAT I HAVEN'T BEEN AS *SUPPORTIVE* AS I PROMISED! THE FACT THAT I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU AT ALL IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS...

WAS **MY** DECISION!

I NEEDED TO GET AWAY FROM YOU... FROM ***EVERYONE***... SO I COULD FIND MYSELF! START TO BECOME THE PERSON I ***WANT*** TO BE! ***THAT'S*** WHY I DISTANCED MYSELF FOR SO LONG!

SO WHAT MADE YOU CHOOSE ***TODAY*** TO FINALLY GET TOGETHER LIKE THIS?

I... I GUESS I JUST NEEDED TO SEE MY **DAD,** THAT'S ALL!

THANK GOD **YOU** HAVEN'T CHANGED IN ALL THIS! I DON'T THINK I COULD **HANDLE** IT WITHOUT YOU TO LEAN ON!


HEY, ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE OKAY?
YEAH, I'M... OKAY! IT'S JUST BEEN A TOUGH COUPLE OF DAYS, THAT'S ALL!


GAME ROOM
ANYTHING YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT?
NO... NOT ANYMORE! JUST HAVING YOU HERE IS ENOUGH!


SO, WHAT'S GOOD FOR LUNCH AROUND HERE?

AFTER A PLEASANT LUNCH...

I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO PICK UP THE CHECK, DAD! I CALLED ***YOU***, REMEMBER?

I KNOW, BUT I FIGURE IT'S THE ***LEAST*** I CAN DO SINCE YOU WON'T LET ME HELP WITH YOUR... ***MEDICAL*** EXPENSES!

ARE YOU DOING OKAY FINANCIALLY? THE COFFEEHOUSE CAN'T BE PAYING ***THAT*** WELL, CAN IT?

IT PAYS THE BILLS! PLUS, I'VE BEEN DOING A LITTLE ***FREELANCE*** BARTENDING FOR CATERERS AND SPECIAL EVENTS! BETWEEN THAT AND WHAT I'VE SAVED UP, I'M DOING OKAY!

Come On In! We're Open!

WELL I'M **GLAD** TO HEAR THAT! BUT JUST REMEMBER THAT MY OFFER STILL STANDS TO HELP OUT IF YOU NEED ME!

THANKS DAD! I **APPRECIATE** THAT!

On In!

re Open!

SO, ANYTHING *ELSE* YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT BEFORE I HEAD BACK TO WORK?

HMMM... LET'S GIVE IT A SHOT!

WELL, THIS IS *COMPLETELY* OFF TOPIC, BUT...


THIS MORNING THERE WAS A COUPLE IN THE COFFEEHOUSE HAVING A HEATED DEBATE ABOUT PRESIDENT BUSH, SENIOR!
I KNOW YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN A STAUNCH REPUBLICAN, BUT HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN HE WAS ELECTED?

THE '88 ELECTION? **WOW,** THAT TAKES ME BACK! YOUR MOTHER ACTUALLY **WORKED** FOR THE BUSH CAMPAIGN, SO YOU CAN IMAGINE HOW HAPPY **SHE** WAS WHEN HE WON!

UNFORTUNATELY, **I** WAS WORKING ON AN OUT-OF-TOWN JOB AND DIDN'T GET BACK UNTIL THE DAY **AFTER** THE ELECTION!

I REMEMBER SHE WAS ***MIFFED*** AT ME FOR BEING LATE BECAUSE I MISSED MY ***USUAL*** TRAIN! BUT SHE... ***FORGAVE*** ME!

SHIT! AND ***I*** WAS THE ONE WHO MADE YOU LATE!

SO, NOTHING ELSE... ***UNUSUAL*** ABOUT THEN THAT YOU REMEMBER?

UMMM... NO! NOT THAT I CAN RECALL! WHY DO YOU ASK?

NO REAL REASON! IT'S JUST THAT LISTENING TO THOSE GUYS TALK GOT ME WONDERING... ***THAT'S*** ALL!

WELL UNFORTUNATELY, I HAVE TO GET BACK TO WORK! ***PLEASE*** DON'T WAIT ANOTHER MONTH BEFORE CALLING ME AGAIN, CHRIS!

I KNOW WE MAY NOT SEE EYE TO EYE ON ***EVERYTHING,*** BUT YOU'RE ***STILL*** MY SON! AT LEAST, ***I MEAN...!***


I KNOW, DAD! AND DON'T WORRY, I'LL CALL SOON! PROMISE!


I'LL HOLD YOU TO THAT!
BYE, DAD! I'LL TALK TO YOU SOON!

OKAY, SO... I MADE HIM MISS HIS ***NORMAL*** TRAIN BACK IN NOVEMBER 1988! WHATEVER HE WAS ***SUPPOSED*** TO DO ON THAT TRAIN DIDN'T ***HAPPEN!*** AND WHATEVER HE DID ON THAT ***LATER*** TRAIN ***WASN'T*** SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN!

WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT DID OR ***DIDN'T*** HAPPEN ON THOSE TRAINS, I HAVE NO IDEA HOW ***SIGNIFICANT*** DAD'S INFLUENCE IS ON MY PRESENT STATE!

AND EVEN IF MY SHORT TRIP TO 1988 **DID** INITIATE SOME KIND OF **BUTTERFLY EFFECT**, WHY AM I THE **ONLY** ONE THAT SEEMS CHANGED BY IT? THE REST OF THE WORLD SEEMS **UNAFFECTED!** ONLY **MY** PLACE IN IT IS DIFFERENT!

AND WHY THE **HELL** DOES IT KEEP **CHANGING?** PERHAPS **OTHERS** HAVE ENTERED THE WORMHOLE AND THEY'RE CAUSING CHANGES IN ADDITION TO MINE! MAYBE THE **PROFESSOR** SENT DAVID OR MOLLY IN TO TRY TO BRING ME BACK!

NO... HE'D **NEVER** DO THAT! IT'S TOO **DANGEROUS!** BESIDES, IF SOMEONE **ELSE** TAMPERING WITH THE PAST WAS DOING THIS, THEN WHY AM **I** THE ONLY ONE WHO NOTICES IT?

AND THOSE TIMELINE SHIFTS ARE PLAYING HELL WITH MY MEMORIES! I HAVEN'T BEEN TO **JOHNNY'S** IN **YEARS...** BUT I ALSO KNOW I WAS WORKING THERE WITH BOBBY UNTIL THE OTHER DAY!

THANK **GOD** I STILL HAVE MEMORIES OF MY **ORIGINAL** LIFE! WITHOUT THEM, I'D HAVE NO HOPE OF **EVER** GETTING BACK THERE... IF IT'S EVEN **POSSIBLE!**

IN THE MEANTIME, I GUESS I DEAL WITH MY GIVEN LIFE THE *BEST* I CAN!

Demitasse Cafe

Poetry Coffee Music

HMMM... MY WORKING ENVIRONMENT DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE ***CHANGED*** A WHOLE HECKUVA LOT SINCE MY LAST SHIFT! ***WHAT A RELIEF!*** I ***ALREADY*** HAVE ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH RIGHT NOW!


SO, CHRIS! HOW'D IT GO WITH YOUR DAD? WAS IT BRUTAL?
NO... NO IT WASN'T! AS A MATTER OF FACT, IT WAS VERY, VERY GOOD!

REALLY? HE DIDN'T FREAK OUT WHEN HE SAW HOW MUCH YOU'VE CHANGED? CHRIST! MY FATHER DISOWNED ME THE INSTANT I TOLD HIM I WAS GAY!

I CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE WHAT HE WOULD HAVE DONE IF I'D TOLD HIM I WAS TRANSSEXUAL AND SHOWN UP, SIX MONTHS INTO MY TRANSITION, LIKE YOU DID!

I GUESS I LUCKED OUT WITH A GREAT DAD! SURE, HE WAS A LITTLE SHOCKED AT FIRST, BUT HE'S STILL SUPPORTIVE OF ME! EVEN OFFERED TO HELP ME OUT FINANCIALLY!

THAT'S **GREAT!** THEN MAYBE YOU CAN CUT BACK ON ALL THOSE **CATERING** JOBS YOU'VE BEEN WORKING LATELY!

HE **OFFERED,** BUT I DIDN'T ACCEPT!

DAD HIDES IT WELL, BUT I **KNOW** THIS IS A **HUGE** STRAIN ON HIM! I DON'T WANT TO COMPOUND IT BY CAUSING HIM **FINANCIAL** STRESS TOO! TRANSITIONING WAS **MY** DECISION! I NEED TO TAKE CARE OF IT **MYSELF!**

YOU'RE MY ***HERO,*** CHICA! I WISH I HAD ***HALF*** THE COURAGE YOU DO!

WELL, IT HELPS TO HAVE FRIENDS LIKE ***YOU...*** AND A ***DAD*** LIKE MINE!


SO, YOU WANT ME AT THE COUNTER OR COVERING THE TABLES?

THE NEXT DAY...

I'M SO GLAD **YOU** STILL KEEP IN TOUCH, SALLY! YOU'RE ABOUT THE ONLY PERSON I SEE FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD ANYMORE AND MY ONLY SOURCE OF GOSSIP!

DON'T TAKE IT ***PERSONALLY,*** CHRIS! IT'S MORE ABOUT ***THEM*** THAN YOU! THE MINDSET OF THE AVERAGE JOE FROM OUR NEIGHBORHOOD JUST CAN'T ***HANDLE*** THE LIFESTYLE YOU'VE CHOSEN!

ACTUALLY, I THINK IT KIND OF CHOSE ***ME!*** BESIDES, I GUESS I SHOULD'VE ***EXPECTED*** THAT KIND OF REACTION FROM THE OLD GANG!

HMPH! A FEW DAYS AGO, IN MY ***ORIGINAL*** TIMELINE, ***I*** PROBABLY WOULD'VE ACTED THE SAME WAY!

SO, UMMM... HOW'S ***BOBBY?*** BESIDES YOU, I THINK ***HE*** WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO MADE ANY KIND OF EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND WHAT I WAS GOING THROUGH! ARE YOU TWO STILL DATING?

OH, WE BROKE UP ***MONTHS*** AGO! HE WAS SPENDING ***WAY*** TOO MUCH TIME WITH HIS ***BUDS*** AND NOT ENOUGH WITH ***ME!*** I GOT TIRED OF WAITING FOR HIM TO GROW UP, SO WE CALLED IT ***QUITS!***

SO... HE'S AVAILABLE! ***INTERESTED?***


WHAT?!
ME... AND BOBBY?!
NO! NO WAY! NEVER IN A MILLION YEARS! HE'D NEVER THINK OF ME THAT WAY! I'M STILL A GUY, AFTER ALL!
ME THINKS THOU DOTH PROTEST TOO MUCH!
GIGGLE
AND YOU WON'T BE A GUY FOREVER, YOU KNOW!


CAN WE JUST DROP THIS, PLEASE?
OKAY... FOR NOW! I HAVE TO HEAD OFF ANYWAY! STU'S GOT ME WAITRESSING SOME BIG BOOSTER RALLY DOWNTOWN! THE GUY'S A SLEAZE, BUT HE DOES FIND ME SOME PRETTY GOOD PAYING JOBS!


REALLY? THEN HE MUST BE SAVING ALL THE LOW-PAYING ONES FOR ME! IN FACT I'VE GOT A WEDDING RECEPTION TO BARTEND FOR HIM LATER ON, TOO!

WELL, AT LEAST STU IS STILL GIVING YOU ***WORK!*** THAT'S MORE THAN ***MOST*** GUYS FROM THE OLD NEIGHBORHOOD WOULD DO!

YEAH, I SUPPOSE I SHOULD BE ***THANKFUL*** FOR SMALL FAVORS... THOUGH STU MAKES IT ***SO HARD!***

JUST HANG IN THERE, HONEY! AND I'LL SEE YOU LATER!

ALIENWARE

SALLY'S ***RIGHT!*** I'D ***NEVER*** BE GETTING BY WITHOUT STU FEEDING ME WORK! WE MIGHT NOT BE ***FRIENDS*** OR ANYTHING, BUT AT LEAST ***HE*** NEVER TURNED HIS BACK ON ME, THE WAY EVERY ***OTHER*** GUY FROM THE OLD NEIGHBORHOOD HAS!

OH WELL... THERE'S NO POINT ***WORRYING*** ABOUT THAT STUFF! I NEED TO FOCUS ON RESEARCHING ***THIS*** TIMELINE... FIGURE OUT WHAT ALL HAS OR ***HASN'T*** CHANGED!

AND FROM WHAT I CAN SEE, PROF. HOLTZMAN IS **STILL** DOING THE **EXACT SAME RESEARCH** HE WAS IN **MY** TIMELINE!

IF **THAT'S** THE CASE, THERE'S **STILL** A CHANCE, ALBEIT A SLIGHT ONE, THAT I CAN STOP ALL THIS **TIMELINE** HOPPING! AND MAYBE EVEN FIND A **WAY BACK** TO MY **ORIGINAL** LIFE!

ALIENWARE

NOT THAT I ***DISLIKE*** THIS PARTICULAR TIMELINE... IT CERTAINLY ISN'T ***EASY,*** LIVING THE LIFE OF A TRANSITIONING ***TRANSSEXUAL,*** BUT, SOMEHOW, I'M MUCH MORE ***COMFORTABLE*** IN THE ROLE THAN I EVER ***IMAGINED*** I COULD BE!

BUT MY COMFORT LEVEL IS ***IRRELEVANT!*** THIS ***ISN'T*** THE LIFE I WAS MEANT TO HAVE! I NEED TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO GET BACK TO MY ***REAL*** EXISTENCE BEFORE I GET TOO USED TO ***THIS*** ONE!

WHOA! THAT'S AN... INTERESTING... SHIRT YOU'VE GOT THERE, CARLOS! IS IT NEW?

ABOUT FIVE MONTHS NEW... WHEN YOU GAVE IT TO ME FOR MY BIRTHDAY! AND YOU'VE ONLY SEEN ME IN IT ABOUT FOUR DOZEN TIMES SINCE! YOU FEELIN' OKAY, CHICA?

JUST A ***BRAIN FART,*** I GUESS, FROM ALL THE LATE NIGHTS! SPEAKING OF, I BETTER BOLT OR I'LL BE LATE! SEE YOU TOMORROW, CARLOS!


RING!!

SIGH!
JESUS!
ALREADY?
HE USUALLY WAITS
A GOOD THREE
MINUTES AFTER MY
SHIFT ENDS BEFORE
HE STARTS
CALLING!


I'M ON MY WAY, STU! I JUST NEED TO RUN BY HOME TO PICK UP MY UNIFORM AND I'LL BE AT THE RECEPTION IN AN HOUR!
CHANGE OF PLAN! INSTEAD OF THE KLEINMAN WEDDING RECEPTION, I NEED YOU AT A DIFFERENT FUNCTION


THANKS FOR THE ADVANCE NOTICE, STU! I HOPE IT'S NOT TOO FAR AWAY, 'CAUSE I STILL HAVE TO GO GET MY UNIFORM!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE UNIFORM! I'VE GOT AN EXTRA ONE HERE YOU CAN WEAR!


OH GREAT! IS IT AT LEAST MY SIZE? AND CLEAN?! THOSE UGLY LINEN SHIRTS HANG ON ME ENOUGH AS IT IS! AND THEY GET SO FUNKY AFTER A FEW HOURS OF BUSSING TABLES!
QUIT GRIPING! YOU WANT THE JOB OR NOT?


SIGH!
YOU KNOW
I DO!
YES...
I DO KNOW!
NOW...
HERE'S THE
ADDRESS...!

A SHORT TIME LATER IN A DOWNTOWN HOTEL...

ON TIME AS USUAL! I *LIKE* THAT!

Porto

WELL, ***INDENTURED SERVITUDE*** HAS A WAY OF FOSTERING ***PUNCTUALITY*** IN A PERSON!

"SERVITUDE?" **PLEASE!** I PAY A LIVABLE WAGE TO **ALL** MY EMPLOYEES!

"LIVABLE" FOR A **THIRD-WORLD COUNTRY** MAYBE! EVEN WITH THE TIPS, IT'S BARELY **MINIMUM WAGE!**

WELL, IF YOU'RE SO **UNHAPPY,** FEEL FREE TO FIND SOME **OTHER** TYPE OF PART-TIME WORK THAT PAYS **BETTER!**

YOU KNOW **DAMN WELL** THAT MOST EMPLOYERS FIND SOME **"EXCUSE"** NOT TO HIRE SOMEONE **LIKE ME!**

WHICH MAKES ME WONDER WHY ***YOU,*** OF ALL PEOPLE, AGREED TO KEEP ME ON EVEN ***AFTER*** I TOLD YOU I WAS ***TRANSITIONING!***

HEY, TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I'M ALL ***FOR*** YOUR LITTLE ***ROOSTER TO HEN SWITCHEROO!*** ONE LESS ***GAY BOY*** WANDERING THE STREETS IS ALWAYS A ***PLUS*** IN MY BOOK!


BUT I'M NOT...! YOU JUST DON'T...!
OHHHHH! NEVER MIND! SO, WHERE IS THIS ALL-IMPORTANT FUNCTION I'M WORKING?

DOWN THE HALL IN THE ***MICHIGAN ROOM!*** IT'S THE ***NORTHWESTERN BOOSTER CLUB*** PRE-SEASON PARTY!

THERE'S A ***LOT*** OF ***HIGH-DOLLAR*** PERSONNEL IN THERE WHO ***LOVE*** TO THROW MONEY AROUND, SO THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO EARN SOME ***SERIOUS TIPPAGE*** FOR A CHANGE!


SO... THIS IS WHAT A NORTHWESTERN BOOSTER FUNDRAISER LOOKS LIKE, HMM? PRETTY LOW-KEY, IF YOU ASK ME!


SO, WHAT WILL I BE DOING?
WELL, SINCE THE CATERER TOOK CARE OF THE FOOD AS WELL AS THE BUS-STAFF, I'M SUPPLYING THE ALCOHOL AND THE WAITRESSES!

HMPH...CONSIDERING THE ***OUTFITS*** THEY'RE WEARING, THAT DOESN'T ***SURPRISE*** ME! SO, WHAT DO YOU HAVE ***BARTENDERS*** LIKE ME WEARING?

OH, THE BARTENDER'S TAKEN CARE OF! LIKE I TOLD YOU, I'M SUPPLYING WAITRESSES... AND ***ONLY*** WAITRESSES!


YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS! YOU WANT ME TO PUT ON ONE OF THOSE SKIMPY OUTFITS AND STRUT AROUND THE PLACE? YOU'RE CRAZY IF YOU THINK I'M GOING TO DO THAT!
WELL, I ADMIT YOU WON'T FILL IT OUT AS WELL AS MOST OF THE GIRLS HERE, BUT I'VE BEEN KEEPING MY EYE ON YOU...


I THINK YOU'VE GOT ENOUGH GOING ON UNDER THERE TO PASS AS ONE OF THE GIRLS!
THINK OF IT AS A TEST RUN TO YOUR NEW LIFE AS A CHICK... WHENEVER THAT HAPPENS!


NO! NO WAY! PLEASE, STU! JUST LET ME GO WORK THE KLEINMAN WEDDING! NOT THIS! I'M NOT READY!


LOOK, CHRIS! I'M IN A BIND HERE! ONE OF THE GIRLS CALLED IN SICK AND I HAVE TO HAVE AT LEAST SIX GIRLS ON THE FLOOR TO KEEP THINGS ROLLING SMOOTHLY!
I'VE BEEN MORE THAN GENEROUS BY KEEPING YOU ON, SO EITHER GET CHANGED AND GET OUT THERE, OR YOU CAN START LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB! GOT IT?

YEAH... I **GOT** IT, STU! IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVE MUCH OF A **CHOICE**, DO I?

'FRAID NOT! OH, AND **REMEMBER**... YOU'RE ONE OF SIX **GIRLS** OUT THERE, SO KEEP WHATEVER YOU'VE GOT LEFT **TUCKED AWAY!** DON'T WANT TO **FREAK OUT** ANY OF THE PATRONS!

HEAVEN FORBID WE *UPSET* ANYONE, *RIGHT?* DON'T WORRY... I'LL DO MY BEST TO BE JUST ONE OF THE *GIRLS!*

A SHORT WHILE LATER...

I TELL YOU, STU... YOU PUT TOGETHER ONE HELLUVA NICE ***SHINDIG*** FOR US! ***TOP QUALITY*** ALL THE WAY AROUND, YES SIR!

WELL, I'M ESPECIALLY GLAD ***YOU'RE*** HAPPY, SLIM! I HOPE YOU'LL KEEP ME IN MIND FOR ANY ***MORE*** OF YOUR FUNCTIONS OR PARTIES!

OH, YOU CAN **COUNT** ON THAT, SON! **ESPECIALLY** IF YOU MAINTAIN THE **QUALITY** OF LADIES YOU'VE SUPPLIED TO OUR LITTLE GET-TOGETHER HERE TODAY! VERY **PROFESSIONAL** AND VERY NICE TO **LOOK** AT, IF YOU DON'T MIND ME SAYING!

I DON'T MIND **AT ALL!** I'M SURE THE LADIES WOULD BE **GLAD** TO KNOW THEY'RE SO **APPRECIATED!**

OH, I'M ***DEFINITELY*** APPRECIATING THE SPECTACULAR ***DERRIERE*** ON THAT LITTLE LADY RIGHT OVER ***THERE!*** NOT MUCH ***UPSTAIRS,*** BUT I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A ***LEG AND ASS*** MAN MYSELF!

REALLY? WELL, LET ME CALL HER OVER AND ***INTRODUCE*** YOU!

OH, CHRIS!

YES, STU?

COULD YOU COME OVER HERE FOR A MOMENT? THERE'S ***SOMEONE*** I WANT YOU TO MEET!

CHRIS, THIS IS **SLIM GIVENS!** HE'S THE **PRESIDENT** OF THE **NORTHWESTERN BOOSTERS CLUB** AND THE HOST AND **ORGANIZER** OF THIS EVENT TODAY!

REALLY? WELL, IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU, MR. GIVENS!

AW, **HELL**... CALL ME **SLIM,** HONEY! **EVERYONE** DOES!

SLIM HERE IS ALSO THE *CEO* OF THE *GIVENS AUTOMOTIVE GROUP!* HE OWNS, I BELIEVE, *TWELVE CAR DEALERSHIPS* IN ILLINOIS AND WISCONSIN!

FIFTEEN... BUT WHO'S COUNTING!

SLIM WAS JUST *COMPLIMENTING* ME ON MY CHOICE OF EMPLOYEES TODAY!

YES SIR! IN FACT, I WAS JUST TELLIN' YOUR BOSS HERE THAT I HAVE SEVERAL *MORE* FUNCTIONS COMING UP IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS THAT COULD *DEFINITELY* BENEFIT FROM THE *BANG-UP* JOB YOU YOUNG LADIES ARE DOING!

WELL, THAT'S VERY ***NICE*** OF YOU TO SAY, MR. GIVENS... I MEAN, ***SLIM!*** I'M JUST NOT SO SURE IF MY WORK SCHEDULE WILL FREE ME UP TO...

OH, I'M ***SURE*** THAT LITTLE COFFEE SHOP YOU ***SLUM AROUND IN*** CAN WORK AROUND YOUR SCHEDULE HERE! ***ESPECIALLY*** IF I HAVE A ***WORD*** WITH YOUR MANAGER!


HELL, OR I COULD JUST BUY THE DAMN PLACE MYSELF! LET YOU SET YOUR OWN HOURS! HOW'S THAT SOUND?
SOUNDS LIKE THE PERFECT SOLUTION TO ME!

REALLY! IT'S NOT NECESSARY! I...!

WELL, YOU THINK ABOUT IT, HONEY! IN THE MEANTIME, HERE'S A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR YOUR OUTSTANDING WORK TONIGHT! THERE'S MORE WHERE THAT CAME FROM... TRUST ME! WE BOOSTERS ARE NOTORIOUS FOR BEING GENEROUS TIPPERS!


NOW, IF YOU ALL WILL EXCUSE ME... I'VE GOT SOME SERIOUS NETWORKING TO DO! REMEMBER WHAT I SAID LITTLE LADY!

HOLY SHIT! HE GAVE ME A $100 TIP! THAT'S MORE THAN I MAKE IN TIPS FOR A WEEK! AT BOTH JOBS!

THAT SURPRISES YOU? SLIM THOUGHT YOU WERE HOT! TOLD ME SO HIMSELF! AND GUYS TIP HOT CHICKS THE BEST!

I... I DON'T KNOW HOW TO *RESPOND* TO THAT!

YOU *RESPOND* TO IT BY TAKING *ADVANTAGE* OF IT! YOU'RE ALWAYS *COMPLAINING* ABOUT THE NEED FOR MORE MONEY... WELL, *HERE'S YOUR CHANCE!*


LOOK, STU! I'M NOT LIKE THAT! I'M NOT SOME... SOME...!
AND YOU THINK THE OTHER GIRLS ARE? WOW! I SURE HOPE THEY DON'T FIND OUT WHAT YOU REALLY THINK ABOUT THEM!

I KNOW THEY'RE NOT, DAMN IT! QUIT PUTTING WORDS IN MY MOUTH! YOU JUST HAVE NO IDEA HOW CONFUSING THIS IS FOR ME!

WHAT'S CONFUSING? HOT CHICK SMILES AND SERVES DRINKS TO THIRSTY GUYS... GUYS GIVE HOT CHICK BIG TIP! SOUNDS LIKE EASY MONEY TO ME!

KEEP IN MIND, HOWEVER, IT WAS YOUR ***WORLD-CLASS ASS*** THAT GOT YOU THAT TIP FROM SLIM! THAT'S HOW ***HE*** ROLLS!

BUT YOU MIGHT WANNA WORK ON THE ***REST*** OF YOUR LOOK IF YOU EXPECT TIPS THAT BIG FROM ***OTHER*** GUYS! JUST ***SAYIN'!***

GIVE IT SOME **GOOD, SOLID THOUGHT,** 'CAUSE THE WAY HE WAS TALKING, IT SOUNDS LIKE SLIM HAS SOME THINGS COMING UP **SOON!**

SIGH! I HATE TO ADMIT IT, BUT STU **DOES** HAVE A POINT! THIS MAY BE THE BIGGEST TIP I'VE **EVER** GOTTEN BEFORE, BUT MOST OF THE OTHER GIRLS HAVE MADE AT LEAST **TWICE** THAT SO FAR TONIGHT!

IF **I** EARNED THE TIPS THEY'RE MAKING, I'D HAVE **ALL** THE MONEY I NEED AND ONLY HAVE TO WORK A **FRACTION** OF THE HOURS!

BUT I DON'T KNOW IF I'VE GOT ENOUGH OF THE *"CHEESECAKE"* FACTOR IN ME TO DO THAT!


CHRIS?!
CHRIS... IS THAT YOU?


OH... UMM, HI SALLY! YEAH... IT'S ME!
I THOUGHT YOU WERE WORKING SOME WEDDING TONIGHT! OH MY GOD! I ALMOST DIDN'T RECOGNIZE YOU! YOU LOOK FANTASTIC!

REALLY? I FELT PRETTY SILLY WHEN STU MADE ME PUT THIS OUTFIT ON!

YOU LOOK GREAT IN IT! I MEAN, I KNEW YOU WERE CHANGING AND ALL FROM THE TREATMENTS, BUT I HAD NO IDEA HOW WELL THEY WERE WORKING!


WELL, I'M PRETTY SURPRISED AT THE RESULTS MYSELF! TRUST ME!
I'M SO GLAD YOU FINALLY GOT THE COURAGE TO GO THAT EXTRA STEP AND FLAUNT YOUR FEMININITY!
I KNEW IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE YOU FINALLY LOOSENED UP!

BUT, I HAVEN'T ***REALLY...!***

YOU'RE OFF TO A ***GREAT*** START AND IF THERE'S ***ANYTHING*** YOU EVER NEED FROM ***ME,*** OR ANY OF THE ***OTHER*** GIRLS, YOU KNOW... HAIR, MAKEUP AND CLOTHING TIPS, STUFF LIKE THAT... YOU JUST LET US KNOW!

THANKS, SALLY! I'LL... I'LL KEEP THAT IN MIND!

SEVERAL DAYS LATER
AT FERMILAB...

SINCE I CAN'T GET THROUGH TO PROFESSOR HOLTZMAN ON THE ***PHONE*** AND HE'S NOT ANSWERING MY ***EMAILS,*** THIS IS THE ***ONLY*** RECOURSE LEFT TO ME!


ASSUMING I CAN EVEN GET TO HIM, I'M GOING TO HAVE ONE HELL OF A TIME TRYING TO CONVINCE HIM WHO I AM AND EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED IN MY ORIGINAL TIMELINE!

HI, I'M HERE TO SEE ***PROFESSOR HOLTZMAN!*** I... I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT!

REALLY? THAT'S ***INTERESTING,*** BECAUSE PROF. HOLTZMAN AND HIS ENTIRE TEAM ARE WORKING ON AN EXTENDED PROJECT IN SWITZERLAND AT ***CERN!*** IT'S EXPECTED TO LAST THREE TO FOUR YEARS!

THREE OR FOUR YEARS?! YOU... YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS! I WAS ON HIS WEBSITE JUST A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO! IT SAID NOTHING ABOUT A TRIP TO CERN!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WERE READING, BUT I KNOW FOR A FACT THAT OUR SITE DESCRIBES HIS PROJECT OVER THERE IN GREAT DETAIL!

I SUPPOSE YOU COULD ALWAYS TRY AND EMAIL HIM. I TAKE IT YOU HAVE HIS EMAIL ADDRESS!

LIKE I HAVEN'T ***TRIED*** THAT ALREADY!

I'LL... I'LL DO THAT! ***THANKS!***

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO ***NOW?*** THE ***ONLY*** PEOPLE WHO COULD POSSIBLY HELP ME ARE ***THOUSANDS*** OF MILES AWAY AND HAVE ***NO IDEA*** WHO I AM!

HOW COULD I HAVE ***MISSED*** THAT INFORMATION ON HIS WEBSITE? WAS IT JUST AN OLD LINK... OR COULD THERE HAVE BEEN ***ANOTHER*** SHIFT?


WITHOUT HOLTZMAN, I HAVE NO CHANCE WHATSOEVER OF EVER RETURNING TO MY ORIGINAL TIMELINE... AND MAYBE NOT EVEN STAYING IN THIS ONE!
FOR ALL I KNOW, I MAY JUST CONTINUE TO HOP RANDOMLY FROM ONE TIMELINE TO THE NEXT... INDEFINITELY!

BUT IF I KEEP ON HOPPING FROM ONE TIMELINE TO THE NEXT, WHO **KNOWS** WHERE I'LL END UP? I MAY GO FROM A TRANSITIONING TRANSSEXUAL TO... TO... **GOD KNOWS WHAT!** I CAN'T **HANDLE** IT... LIVING WITH SO MUCH **UNCERTAINTY** ABOUT MY FUTURE!

THERE'S **GOT** TO BE **SOMETHING** I CAN DO! EVEN IF IT MEANS GOING TO **SWITZERLAND** MYSELF... **SOMEHOW!**


SEVERAL DAYS LATER...
UGH! MORNING ALREADY? IT FEELS LIKE I JUST GOT TO SLEEP!

I'VE EITHER GOT TO CUT BACK ON ALL THESE LATE EVENTS STU HAS ME WORKING OR SWITCH TO A LATER SHIFT AT THE COFFEE SHOP!

BUT I **CAN'T** SWITCH AT THE COFFEE SHOP! THAT'S THE ONLY TIME I GET TO SEE MY FRIENDS! AND CUTTING BACK ON MY OTHER JOBS WILL PUT A **SERIOUS** CRIMP IN MY FINANCES!

WITHOUT THEM, THERE'S **NO WAY** I CAN POSSIBLY SAVE UP ENOUGH TO GET TO **SWITZERLAND!**

WHO AM I ***KIDDING?*** AT THE RATE I'M GOING, IT'LL TAKE ME ***YEARS*** TO AFFORD A TRIP LIKE THAT! AND THERE'S NO ***WAY*** I COULD BORROW THE MONEY FROM ***DAD... OR ANYONE ELSE!***

THEY'D WANT TO KNOW ***WHY*** I WANTED THE MONEY, OF COURSE! AND HOW COULD I POSSIBLY EXPLAIN WHY I ***SO DESPERATELY*** WANT TO GET THERE WITHOUT SOUNDING LIKE A ***LUNATIC?***


MAYBE... MAYBE IF I CUT BACK ON THE HORMONES... SAVE SOME MONEY THAT WAY?

BUT... IF I DID **THAT,** I'D START TO **CHANGE!** CHANGE **BACK** TO THE WAY I **USED** TO BE!

OH MY GOD! UNTIL THIS MOMENT, I DON'T THINK I **TRULY** REALIZED HOW **MUCH** I WANT THIS TRANSITION!


JUST THE THOUGHT OF CHANGING BACK SCARES THE HELL OUT OF ME! I DON'T WANT TO BECOME MORE MASCULINE!
I... I'LL GLADLY GIVE UP A TRIP TO SWITZERLAND, OR ANYTHING ELSE IN MY LIFE, BEFORE I GIVE UP MY DREAM OF BECOMING A WOMAN!

SIGH! WHEN I LOOK AT THAT HIGH SCHOOL PICTURE I **STILL** HALF EXPECT TO SEE **SOMEONE ELSE**... THE PERSON I WAS IN MY **ORIGINAL** TIMELINE!

NOT THIS SKINNY KID WHO ALWAYS GOT ***PUSHED AROUND*** AND ***TEASED*** FOR BEING SO ***EFFEMINATE!***


I'VE COME TOO FAR... CHANGED TOO MUCH TO STOP NOW!


I'VE FINALLY GOTTEN TO A POINT WHERE I CAN SEE THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL! AND I LIKE WHAT I SEE!


THE PERSON... THE WOMAN... I ALWAYS DREAMED OF BEING IS BEGINNING TO SHOW HERSELF IN THE MIRROR! I CAN FINALLY WEAR THE CLOTHES I ALWAYS WANTED TO... AND LOOK GOOD IN THEM!

AND WHO KNOWS? THERE HAVEN'T BEEN ANY TIMELINE SHIFTS IN OVER A ***WEEK!*** MAYBE ***THIS*** IS THE FINAL TIMELINE FOR ME!

IT'S FUNNY HOW THIS FEELS SO... ***RIGHT!*** COULD I HAVE ***SECRETLY WANTED*** THIS IN MY ORIGINAL TIMELINE... BUT NEVER ***ADMITTED*** TO IT?

WHAT... WHAT IF ***THIS*** IS MY TRUE DESTINY NO MATTER ***WHAT*** TIMELINE I OCCUPY?


BUT EVEN IF I DO GET TO LIVE OUT MY LIFE IN THIS TIMELINE, I STILL NEED TO KNOW HOW I GOT HERE! ONLY THEN CAN I HOPE TO INSURE THAT I STAY HERE FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE!
GETTING TO SWITZERLAND IS PROBABLY THE QUICKEST WAY OF GETTING TO PROFESSOR HOLTZMAN, BUT THERE MAY BE ANOTHER WAY!
IN EITHER CASE, IT'S GOING TO TAKE MONEY... A LOT MORE THAN I HAVE NOW!

I **HATE** TO TAKE STU'S ADVICE, BUT MAYBE HE'S RIGHT! WITH **SALLY'S** HELP I JUST MAY BE ABLE TO PLAY THAT GAME WELL ENOUGH TO EARN THE MONEY I NEED!

ABOUT A WEEK LATER AT THE DEMITASSE CAFE...

I'VE NOTICED YOU ONLY WORKED A COUPLE OF EXTRA GIGS THIS WEEK! IS EVERYTHING ***OKAY?*** YOU USUALLY TRY AND WORK EVERY NIGHT! THAT ***SLIMEBALL STU*** ISN'T ***CUTTING*** YOUR HOURS IS HE?

NO, BELIEVE IT OR NOT, HE'S ACTUALLY LETTING ME WORK THE ***BETTER-PAYING*** GIGS!

THEY'RE NOT AS ***FREQUENT*** AS THE REGULAR JOBS, BUT I STILL MAKE ***MORE*** MONEY IN THE LONG RUN!


WELL THE SHORTER SCHEDULE OBVIOUSLY AGREES WITH YOU! YOU LOOK BETTER AND BETTER EVERY DAY! I AM SO JEALOUS!
THANKS, CARLOS! THAT'S SWEET OF YOU TO SAY! I DO HAVE A GIG TONIGHT, HOWEVER, SO CAN I LEAVE A LITTLE BIT EARLY SO I CAN GO HOME AND GET CLEANED UP A LITTLE FIRST?

OF **COURSE** YOU CAN, SWEETIE! IN FACT, GO AHEAD AND TAKE OFF **NOW** IF YOU WANT! THERE'S LESS THAN AN HOUR LEFT IN YOUR SHIFT AND IT'S **DEAD** IN HERE!

THANKS CARLOS! AS USUAL, I **OWE** YOU!

HELLO, **SALLY?** IT'S **CHRIS!** CARLOS LET ME GO EARLY! ARE YOU READY FOR ME TO COME OVER?

A FEW HOURS LATER, AT ANOTHER BOOSTER PARTY IN THE MICHIGAN ROOM...

ANOTHER ***OUTSTANDIN'*** SHINDIG, STU! I DIDN'T THINK IT POSSIBLE, BUT ***THIS*** BOOSTER RALLY'S ON TRACK TO OUTDO THE ***LAST*** ONE!

Go Purple!

WELL, **THANKS** SLIM! YOU KNOW I'LL DO **WHATEVER** IT TAKES TO KEEP MY **FAVORITE** CUSTOMER HAPPY!

I **LIKE** A MAN WHO'S NOT AFRAID TO KISS A LITTLE **ASS** TO GET WHAT HE WANTS!

NOW, **WHERE'S** THAT LITTLE HONEY WITH THE **CUTE ASS!** DON'T **TELL** ME SHE'S NOT WORKING TONIGHT, STU! I'D BE VERY **UPSET!**

NO NEED TO **WORRY,** SLIM! I KNOW SHE'S ONE OF YOUR **FAVORITES,** SO I MADE **SURE** TO BOOK HER!

I HEARD HER COME IN EARLIER WITH THE ***REST*** OF THE GIRLS! I'M ***SURE*** SHE'S AROUND HERE ***SOMEWHERE***...

EXCUSE ME, GENTLEMEN...


BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YOU TWO COULD USE ANOTHER ROUND!


WHOA! THERE'S MY LITTLE SWEETIE! LOOKIN' EVEN MORE ADORABLE THAN THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU!
WHY THANK YOU, SLIM! THAT'S VERY SWEET OF YOU TO SAY!
WOW! I CONCUR ONE HUNDRED PERCENT, CHRIS! YOU LOOK DYNAMITE TONIGHT!


WELL, THE LEAST I CAN DO IS LOOK MY BEST FOR SLIM HERE, CONSIDERING ALL HE'S DONE FOR THE WONDERFUL WILDCATS!
SPOKEN LIKE A TRUE FAN! DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE ONE OF OUR LOVELY COEDS?

SIGH! I'M AFRAID NOT! I'VE WANTED TO ATTEND SINCE I DON'T REMEMBER WHEN, BUT WE NEVER HAD THE FUNDING! I'M HOPING TO SAVE UP ENOUGH TO ENROLL SOMEDAY!

DARLIN', THE PEOPLE IN ***THIS ROOM ALONE*** HAVE ***DONATED*** ENOUGH MONEY IN ***SCHOLARSHIPS*** TO PUT ***HALF OF EVANSTON*** THROUGH COLLEGE!

WITH THAT ***WINNIN' SMILE*** OF YOURS AND A FEW KIND WORDS FROM ME, I'M ***SURE*** WE CAN FIND ***SOMEONE*** TO SPONSOR AN EAGER, ***GO-GETTER*** LIKE YOU!

WOULD YOU ***REALLY*** DO THAT FOR ***ME?***

I'D BE **MORE** THAN HAPPY TO, HONEY! YOU JUST KEEP **WORKING** THE ROOM AND LET ME WORK MY **MAGIC!**


JUST MAKE SURE YOU SPEND MOST OF YOUR TIME ON MY SIDE OF THE ROOM, OKAY?
TRY AND KEEP ME AWAY, SLIM!

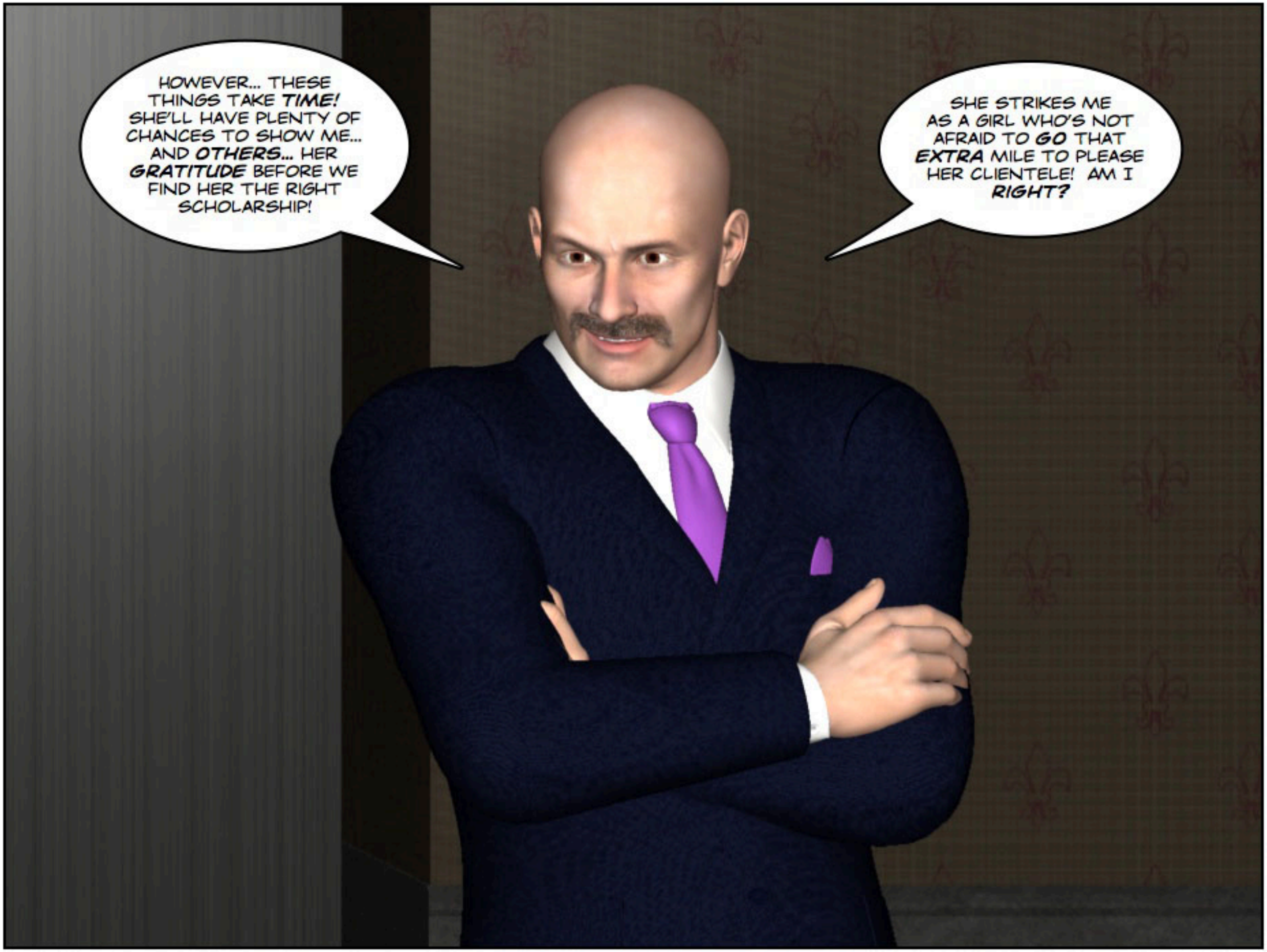

UGH! I DON'T SEE HOW SALLY AND THE OTHER GIRLS CAN KEEP THIS UP DAY AFTER DAY! THE HAIR AND MAKEUP IS EXHAUSTING ENOUGH, BUT THE ACT WE HAVE TO PUT ON... IT'S SO DEGRADING!


BUT AS DISTASTEFUL AS IT IS, THE WAY PEOPLE RESPOND TO ME AS A PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN IS INFINITELY BETTER THAN THE WAY I GET TREATED AS A TRANSSEXUAL!
IT'S A FAR CRY FROM THE PHD I WAS PURSUING, BUT IF I CAN BECOME A STUDENT AGAIN, MAYBE I'LL BE ABLE TO MAKE CONTACT WITH PROFESSOR HOLTZMAN! AND IF THAT DOESN'T WORK OUT, AT LEAST I'LL GET MYSELF AN EDUCATION IN THIS TIMELINE!


IT MAY BE THE LONG WAY BACK... BUT IT'S THE ONLY WAY OPEN TO ME RIGHT NOW! I CERTAINLY DON'T WANT TO WAIT TABLES FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE!
HI SIR! CAN I FRESHEN THAT DRINK FOR YOU?

YOU ***REALLY*** GOING TO GET HER A SCHOLARSHIP, SLIM? TO BE HONEST, THERE'S A FEW THINGS YOU MIGHT WANT TO KNOW ABOUT HER ***BACKGROUND*** BEFORE YOU DO!

DON'T I ***KNOW*** IT! BUT SLIM GIVENS' WORD IS ***GOLD*** AND A PROMISE IS A ***PROMISE!***


HOWEVER... THESE THINGS TAKE TIME! SHE'LL HAVE PLENTY OF CHANCES TO SHOW ME... AND OTHERS... HER GRATITUDE BEFORE WE FIND HER THE RIGHT SCHOLARSHIP!
SHE STRIKES ME AS A GIRL WHO'S NOT AFRAID TO GO THAT EXTRA MILE TO PLEASE HER CLIENTELE! AM I RIGHT?

CHRIS IS LEARNING **FAST**, ALL RIGHT, BUT SHE'S STILL PRETTY **GREEN!** WHAT ABOUT ONE OF THE OTHER GIRLS? **SALLY**, FOR INSTANCE!

NOPE! THE LITTLE REDHEAD'S THE ONE FOR ME! AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT HER BEING **GREEN!** YOU KNOW I LIKE 'EM ON THE **SWEET AND INNOCENT** SIDE... THOUGH SHE'LL BE ANYTHING **BUT** THAT BY THE TIME I'M THROUGH WITH HER!

QUANTUM

Chapter Four

by CBlack

BUTTERFLY

A FEW WEEKS LATER...

THANKS AGAIN FOR LUNCH TODAY, DAD! BUT I WISH YOU'D LET ***ME*** PAY EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE! I CAN AFFORD IT... ***REALLY!***

MAYBE SO, BUT WHY DEPRIVE YOUR OLD MAN OF THE ***PLEASURE*** OF TREATING YOU TO LUNCH ONCE A WEEK... HMM?

FINE! SO, I'LL SEE YOU NEXT WEEK, OKAY?

SAME TIME, SAME PLACE! BYE CHRIS!

SIGH! I GUESS IT'S A GOOD THING THAT DAD IS **STILL** DAD IN EVERY TIMELINE NO MATTER HOW MUCH I CHANGE! BUT I'LL **NEVER** GET USED TO THAT **STUBBORN** STREAK OF HIS!

STUBBORN OR NOT, IT'S SO **GREAT** HAVING HIM BACK IN MY LIFE AFTER ALL THESE MONTHS! I GUESS I NEVER REALLY REALIZED BEFORE NOW, AT LEAST IN THIS TIMELINE, HOW **MUCH** I NEED HIM!

I WISH I COULD PROVE TO HIM THAT I'M DOING ***BETTER*** FINANCIALLY NOW, BUT I'D PROBABLY HAVE TO TELL HIM ***WHERE*** THE MONEY'S COMING FROM!

AS ***SUPPORTIVE*** AS HE'S BEEN, I ***STILL*** DON'T THINK HE'S READY TO HEAR THAT HIS SON IS MOONLIGHTING AS A ***WAITRESS!*** AND ***DEFINITELY*** NOT READY TO SEE HIS SON IN ***HOTPANTS!***

MAYBE IF I TOLD HIM IT'S ALL SO I CAN GET INTO COLLEGE! ***THAT'S*** SOMETHING HE'S ***ALWAYS*** WANTED FOR ME!

HE'S NEVER SAID IT OUT LOUD, BUT I ***KNOW*** IT EATS HIM UP THAT HE COULDN'T AFFORD TO SEND ME TO COLLEGE! MOM'S MEDICAL EXPENSES MADE THAT ***IMPOSSIBLE!***

HE'D BE SO ***HAPPY*** KNOWING I WAS TRYING TO BETTER MYSELF AT COLLEGE! I DON'T HAVE TO TELL HIM THE ***REAL*** REASON, THAT I'M GOING TO GET ACCESS TO HOLTZMAN'S LAB ***ONE WAY OR ANOTHER!***

AND I PROBABLY SHOULDN'T MENTION ANYTHING ABOUT COLLEGE UNTIL I KNOW FOR ***SURE*** I'VE GOT A ***SCHOLARSHIP!***

IT'S BEEN ***WEEKS*** SINCE SLIM OFFERED HIS HELP, BUT HE HASN'T TOLD ME ***ANYTHING*** CONCRETE SINCE! NO MATTER HOW MANY HINTS I DROP, IT'S ALL JUST VAGUE RESPONSES AND ***INNUENDOS!***


MAYBE I'LL JUST HAVE TO BE A LITTLE LESS SUBTLE WHEN I SEE HIM AT THE CAR SHOW TOMORROW!

THE NEXT DAY AT THE ANNUAL GIVENS AUTOMOTIVE CAR SHOW AT THE WEST CITIES MALL...


... AND THIS LITTLE NUMBER IS MY PERSONAL FAVORITE!


SLEEK BODY LINES...


TIGHT, BUT ROOMY REAR END...

AND WHEN YOU HEAR HER ENGINE ***PURR,*** YOU'LL ***NEVER*** WANT ANYTHING ELSE!


OH, AND THE CAR'S NOT HALF BAD EITHER!


YUCK! LIKE NO ONE SAW THAT COMING! THE THINGS I'LL PUT UP WITH FOR A PAYCHECK... AND A SCHOLARSHIP!

A SHORT TIME LATER, AFTER THE CROWD DISPERSES...

EXCUSE ME, SLIM! HAVE YOU GOT A MINUTE?

FOR **YOU**, DARLIN'? I'VE GOT ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD! WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

WELL, I WAS JUST ***WONDERING*** IF YOU'D HAD ANY LUCK FINDING A SCHOLARSHIP THAT WOULD BE RIGHT FOR ME TO APPLY FOR! IT'S BEEN ALMOST A ***MONTH*** SINCE WE FIRST TALKED ABOUT IT, AND... WELL, I WAS JUST ***CURIOUS!***

YOU KNOW, IT RENEWS MY ***FAITH*** IN YOUR GENERATION WHEN A LOVELY, HARD-WORKING YOUNG LADY LIKE YOURSELF IS SO EAGER TO ***BETTER*** HERSELF AND MATRICULATE AT MY ALMA MATER!

NOT MANY PEOPLE YOUR AGE WOULD DO THAT NOWADAYS!

I'VE BEEN LOOKIN' INTO IT, DARLIN', BUT THESE THINGS TAKE ***TIME!*** I WANT TO BE ***SURE*** YOU'LL GET THE SCHOLARSHIP YOU APPLY FOR AFTER ALL! OTHERWISE, OL' SLIM WOULD JUST BE WASTING YOUR PRECIOUS TIME!

I *REALIZE* THAT,BUT I'M HOPING YOU'LL BE ABLE TO HELP ME OUT BEFORE TOO LONG! IF I HAVE TO KEEP DOING *THIS* KIND OF STUFF MUCH LONGER, I'M GOING TO GO *NUTS!*

REALLY? I'M SURPRISED, HONEY! YOU SEEM LIKE A *NATURAL* TO ME!

THAT FACE AND THAT BODY JUST *CRY OUT* FOR A MODELING CAREER! WHY, WITH *MY* CONNECTIONS...!

THANKS, BUT ***NO THANKS!*** I'M JUST HOPING THOSE CONNECTIONS OF YOURS CAN HELP ME ENROLL AT ***NORTHWESTERN!*** ***THAT'S*** MY DREAM... NOW!

OH, I'LL KEEP MY EARS OPEN, CHRISSY... I ***PROMISE!***

TELL YOU WHAT... HOW ABOUT I GIVE YOU A CALL IN A FEW DAYS! WE CAN GO OVER YOUR SITUATION IN ***DETAIL!*** THE MORE I GET TO KNOW YOU, UNDERSTAND WHAT ***ATTRIBUTES*** YOU HAVE TO OFFER... THE EASIER IT'LL BE TO FIND THE RIGHT FIT!

BUT I'VE ***ALREADY*** GIVEN YOU MY TRANSCRIPTS... MY RESUME! WHAT ***MORE*** DO YOU NEED?

SOMETIMES IT'S NOT ABOUT WHAT'S ON ***PAPER,*** DARLIN'! IT'S MORE ABOUT... ***PERSONALITY!*** NORTHWESTERN IS A ***TOP*** SCHOOL! I NEED TO KNOW IF YOU'RE ***WILLING*** TO DO WHAT IT ***TAKES*** TO BE A SUCCESS THERE!

OF **COURSE** I CAN SUCCEED THERE! I ALREADY... I ALREADY **KNOW** I CAN HANDLE IT!

I'M **COUNTIN'** ON IT DARLIN'! I'LL BE IN TOUCH **SOON!** WE'LL MEET UP OVER **DINNER**... MAYBE A FEW **DRINKS!**


WHAT THE HELL JUST HAPPENED HERE?

THAT **SON OF A BITCH!** HE THINKS I DON'T **KNOW** WHAT HE'S AFTER? THERE'S NO **WAY** I'D EVER LET A CREEP LIKE THAT TOUCH ME... AT LEAST NOT UNTIL HE DELIVERS ON THAT **SCHOLARSHIP!**


OH, EXCUSE ME!


BOBBY?!!
CHRIS?!

SO... THAT REALLY **WAS** YOU UP THERE! I WASN'T SURE UNTIL ***NOW!***

YOU... YOU WERE ***WATCHING*** ME UP THERE? HOW DID YOU KNOW WHERE I WORKED?

I ***DIDN'T!*** ME, JAKE AND A COUPLE OF THE GUYS JUST CAME TO SEE THE ***CAR SHOW!*** WE KNEW ***SALLY*** MIGHT BE WORKING IT, BUT NEVER DREAMED ***YOU'D*** BE HERE, TOO!


JAKE? AND THE GUYS?! OH GOD! DID THEY SEE ME UP THERE, TOO?
NAW, THEY'RE OVER LOOKIN' AT THE BIKES! BESIDES, THEY WOULDN'T HAVE RECOGNIZED YOU ANYWAY!


YOU DID!
THAT'S ONLY BECAUSE I RAN INTO YOUR DAD THE OTHER DAY AND ...

MY DAD? HE DOESN'T KNOW I'M WORKING HERE! AND PLEASE DON'T TELL HIM!

HE DIDN'T TELL ME ANYTHING ABOUT THIS JOB! HE JUST FILLED ME IN ON YOUR RECENT, UMMM... CHANGES!

HE... HE TOLD YOU? *REALLY?!*

WELL... I PRETTY MUCH HAD TO **DRAG** IT OUT OF HIM! HE'S *SO* **PROTECTIVE** OF YOU, THOUGHT I MIGHT NOT **UNDERSTAND** WHAT YOU'RE DOING WITH YOUR BODY... AND YOUR **LIFE!**

AND YOU... YOU DON'T HAVE A ***PROBLEM*** WITH ME... MY NEED TO BE A ***WOMAN?*** I THOUGHT... I THOUGHT YOU...!

YEAH, WELL... WHEN YOU FIRST TOLD ME YOU WANTED TO BE A GIRL, I THOUGHT THE IDEA WAS ***RIDICULOUS!*** THAT YOU'D BE A ***FREAK...*** OR A ***CLOWN!*** I NEVER ***DREAMED*** YOU'D TURN OUT LOOKING ANYTHING LIKE... LIKE ***THIS!***

YOU MEAN... YOU *LIKE* THE WAY I LOOK?

UMMM... *YEAH!* I CAN'T BELIEVE IT, BUT YOU LOOK... *GOOD*, CHRIS! *REAL* GOOD!

IT'S KIND OF **WEIRD,** THOUGH... THE **HOT GIRL** I'VE BEEN STARING AT FOR THE LAST HALF HOUR TURNS OUT TO BE MY OLD **BUD** FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD! IT'S KINDA...


WEIRD!
I KNOW! BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW, I DON'T DRESS LIKE THIS ALL THE TIME OR ANYTHING! IT'S JUST FOR THE JOB! IT'S REALLY GOOD MONEY, AND I...!
IT'S FINE, CHRIS! YOU DON'T HAVE TO EXPLAIN!


WELL, I SEE THE GUYS COMIN' AND YOU PROBABLY DON'T WANT TO GO THROUGH ALL THIS WITH THEM, SO I BETTER BOLT!
WELL... OKAY!

BUT SUDDENLY, A SMALL, BUT VERY CLOSE PART OF CHRIS' UNIVERSE "SHIFTS"...


THERE HE IS! I TOLD YOU WE'D FIND HIM HITTING ON SOME MODEL!
HEY, WHAT CAN I SAY? I COULDN'T LET SOMETHIN' THAT TASTY PASS BY WITHOUT GIVIN' HER A CLOSEUP LOOK AT THE BOBSTER! THE CHICK INSISTED!

YOU DA **MAN**, BOBBY! HEY, MAYBE WE SHOULD INVITE HER ALONG! HAVE ONE OF OUR LITTLE **"PARTIES"**!

MAYBE ANOTHER TIME! WHEN SHE'S MORE... **READY!** I'M IN THE MOOD FOR SOMETHIN' A LITTLE... **JUICIER!** C'MON!

OH MY GOD! I THOUGHT THEY WERE OVER! BUT THAT... THAT WAS ANOTHER SHIFT! IT HAD TO BE!

THE BOBBY I KNOW WOULD NEVER SAY ANYTHING LIKE THAT... EVEN TO IMPRESS HIS FRIENDS!

BUT IT DIDN'T SEEM TO EFFECT ME THIS TIME... JUST ***BOBBY!*** IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S CHANGED FROM THE ***SWEET GUY*** I GREW UP WITH INTO SOME SLIMY ***WOMANIZER!***

THE WAY HE LOOKED AT ME JUST NOW ... IT MADE MY SKIN ***CRAWL!***


CAN I BLAME HIM, THOUGH! LOOK AT ME! HEAVY MAKEUP... SLINKY, TIGHT OUTFIT! I LOVE BEING ABLE TO PASS AS A WOMAN, BUT MAYBE THINGS ARE MOVING TOO FAST!

THIS IS ALL SO ***NEW*** FOR ME... DOUBLY SO SINCE I'VE ONLY LIVED IN THIS TIMELINE, AND HAD THESE DESIRES, FOR A FEW SHORT WEEKS! MAYBE I NEED TO ***SLOW DOWN*** A BIT, AND NOT LET MY ***EMOTIONS*** RUN AWAY WITH ME!

EVERYTHING'S GOTTEN SO ***COMPLICATED!*** WHEN I WAS TALKING TO BOBBY... ***BEFORE*** HE CHANGED...I... I THINK I ***LIKED*** THE WAY HE WAS LOOKING AT ME!


BUT WHY SHOULD I BE ASHAMED OF LOOKING GOOD... FEELING DESIRABLE? THIS IS MY LIFE! I LIKE WHO I AM... WHO I'M BECOMING!
I MIGHT AS WELL BE HONEST WITH MYSELF! I ENJOY THE ATTENTION MY NEW LOOKS GARNER! EVEN WHEN THE ATTENTION COMES FROM OLD FARTS LIKE SLIM!


BUT THAT'S THE PROBLEM, ISN'T IT? THE SHIFTS HAVEN'T STOPPED! I CAN'T GO ON, LIVING ON THE HOPE THAT ANY FURTHER CHANGES I GO THROUGH WILL BE FOR THE BETTER! THE NEXT TIME I CHANGE, I COULD TURN INTO A BEEFY GUY... OR MAYBE SOMETHING EVEN MORE HORRIBLE!
IF I WANT TO STAY THE WAY I AM, I CAN'T WAIT FOR A SCHOLARSHIP OR ANYTHING ELSE! I NEED TO GET TO SWITZERLAND... NOW! PROFESSOR HOLTZMAN IS MY ONLY HOPE OF STOPPING THE SHIFTS!

I NEED TO KICK THINGS INTO ***HIGH GEAR*** AND... AND UTILIZE MY ***ASSETS*** TO MAKE SOME ***SERIOUS BANK!*** BUT AM I COMFORTABLE ENOUGH IN MY FEMININE SKIN TO TAKE ***ADVANTAGE*** OF THE SITUATION?

I SEE YOU HAD A LITTLE *VISIT* FROM BOBBY, TOO! HOW'D IT GO?

NOT VERY WELL, SALLY! HE SEEMED TOTALLY ***SHOCKED*** THAT I COULD EVER LOOK SO GOOD AS A WOMAN! AND THEN JAKE AND THE OTHER GUYS SHOWED UP, AND EVERYTHING... ***CHANGED!*** BOBBY ENDED IT WITH A ***DISGUSTING*** REMARK ABOUT MY TRANSITION!

YOU'RE **SURPRISED** AT THIS?

A LITTLE! WHEN HE WAS BY HIMSELF, TALKING TO ME.. IT WAS ACTUALLY KIND OF **SWEET!** I **ALMOST** THOUGHT HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO ACCEPT ME FOR WHO I AM!


DON'T HOLD YOUR BREATH! THE GUY'S A TOTAL NEANDERTHAL! THAT'S WHY WE STOPPED TALKING TO HIM AFTER MIDDLE SCHOOL!
REALLY? BUT I THOUGHT HE WAS... OH, I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT! THOSE MEMORIES I HAVE OF BOBBY BEING A GOOD GUY, THEY'RE JUST A FANTASY NOW! AND IF HE AND "THE BOYS" CAN'T DEAL WITH ME, THEN THAT'S JUST TOO DAMN BAD!

ATTA GIRL! I KNEW YOU HAD IT IN YOU ALL ALONG! WHAT SAY WE GET CHANGED AND GO GET A BEER! MY TREAT!

UMMM... THANKS! BUT I NEED TO TALK TO STU FOR A BIT FIRST! CAN YOU WAIT FOR ME?

SURE, HONEY! I'M GOING TO GET CHANGED! CALL ME WHEN YOU'RE READY!

OKAY, **THANKS** SALLY! SEE YOU IN A FEW MINUTES!


STU... GOT A MINUTE?
WHAT'S UP? ONE OF THE CUSTOMERS TRY AND COP A FEEL? GOES WITH THE TERRITORY! 'COURSE IF HE MAKES A GRAB FOR YOUR CROTCH HE'S IN FOR THE SURPRISE OF HIS LIFE, RIGHT? HEH-HEH!

SIGH! NO... NOTHING LIKE *THAT!* I JUST WANTED TO KNOW IF SLIM HAD ANY MORE *FUNCTIONS* COMING UP... SAY, IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS!

IF HE DOES, HE HASN'T TOLD *ME* ABOUT THEM! WHY DO YOU ASK? YOU'RE NOT GETTING *TIRED* OF THIS, ARE YOU?


ON THE CONTRARY! I WANT TO WORK MORE! AND NOT BACK TO THOSE NICKEL AND DIME WEDDING RECEPTIONS AND BAR MITZVAHS YOU USED TO HAVE ME WORKING! I THINK I'VE PROVED I CAN WORK THE PREMIUM JOBS!


REALLY? SO... YOU THINK YOU'VE FOUND YOUR TRUE CALLING... OR DID THE COST OF YOUR MEDS GO UP?
NEITHER... BOTH! WHAT DOES IT MATTER TO YOU? I'M READY TO WORK! SO, WHAT DO YOU SAY?


WELL... LIKE I SAID, SLIM DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING COMING UP, BUT I'VE GOT A FEW THINGS LINED UP YOU MIGHT BE RIGHT FOR!
WHATEVER! IF ITS A GOOD PAYING GIG, JUST TELL ME WHEN AND WHERE!

ALL RIGHT! WELL, COME TO THINK OF IT, I THINK I DO HAVE A FUNCTION TONIGHT THAT NEEDS ONE MORE "GIRL"! I'LL GIVE YOU A CALL A LITTLE LATER WITH THE TIME AND PLACE! HOW'S THAT SOUND?

SOUNDS FINE! LIKE I SAID, JUST CALL AND I'LL BE THERE!

I LIKE YOUR ***ATTITUDE,*** CHRIS! I ***REALLY*** DO!

I HAVE TO ADMIT, I HAD MY ***DOUBTS*** WHETHER OR NOT YOU WERE EVER GOING TO ***WISE UP*** AND GET IN THE GAME!


I SEE BIG THINGS FOR YOU, CHRIS! IF YOU STICK WITH ME, THAT IS!


WHY DO I SUDDENLY FEEL VERY... DIRTY?

A FEW HOURS LATER AT A DOWNTOWN HOTEL...

ON TIME AS USUAL! AND I ***WHOLEHEARTEDLY*** APPROVE OF YOUR NEW TASTES IN STREET CLOTHES!


BEATS THE HELL OUTTA THOSE BAGGY JEANS AND T-SHIRTS YOU WERE ALWAYS WEARING!
I JUST FIGURED THAT CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN MY OFF-DUTY AND ON-DUTY LIFE WOULD MAKE THINGS A LOT EASIER ON ME!

SMART GIRL! WELL, HERE WE ARE!

I THOUGHT YOU SAID THIS PARTY WAS IN THE PRESIDENTIAL SUITE!

IT IS... RIGHT DOWN THE HALL THERE! BUT WE'RE USING THIS ROOM TO LET YOU "GIRLS" CHANGE INTO YOUR UNIFORMS!

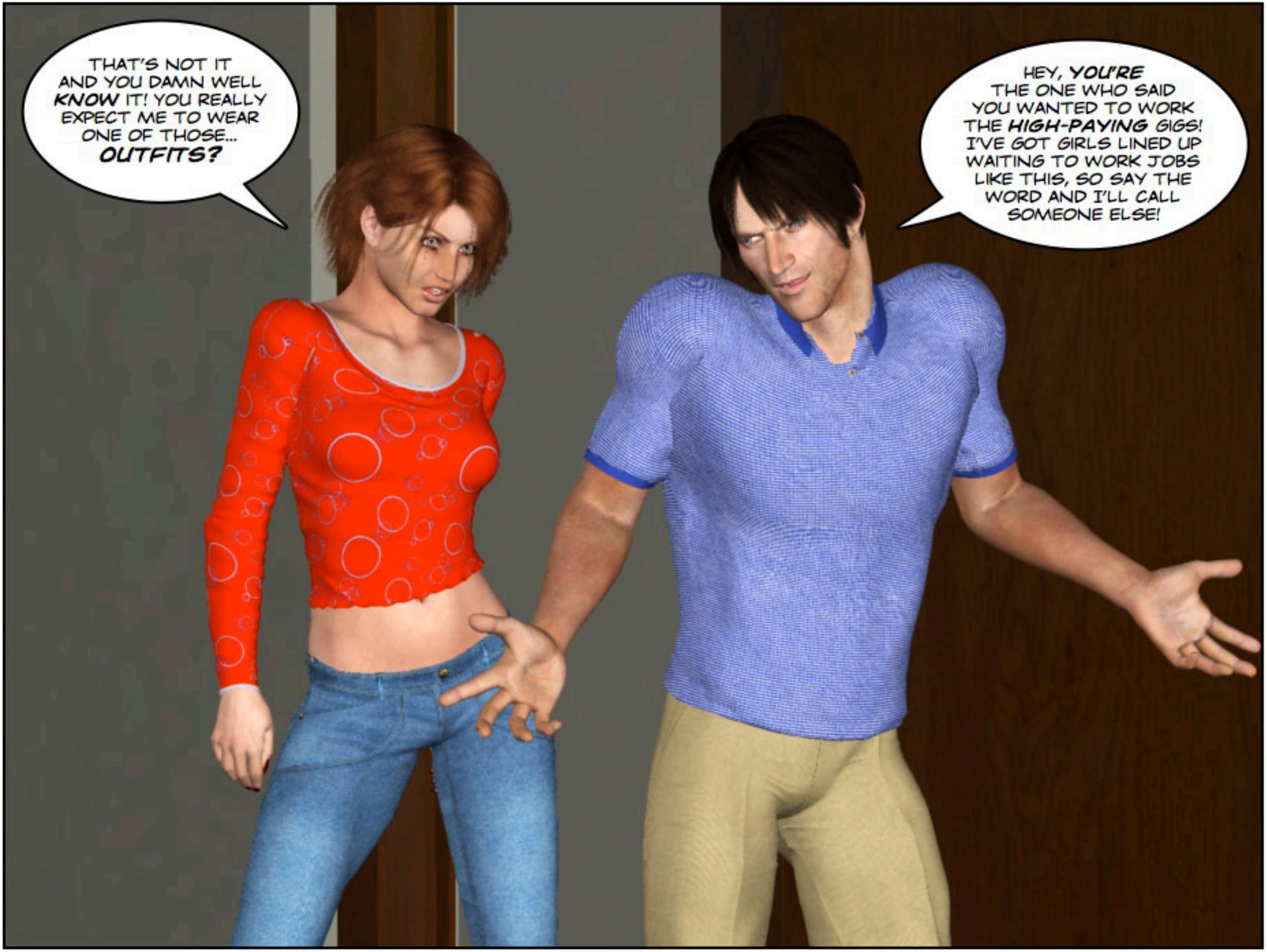

SINCE THESE AREN'T THE SAME GIRLS YOU USUALLY WORK WITH, MAKE SURE YOU DO THE "IMPORTANT" CHANGING OUT OF SIGHT, OKAY!
CAN'T AFFORD TO HAVE MY GIRLS ALL FREAKED OUT AT AN IMPORTANT FUNCTION LIKE THIS!

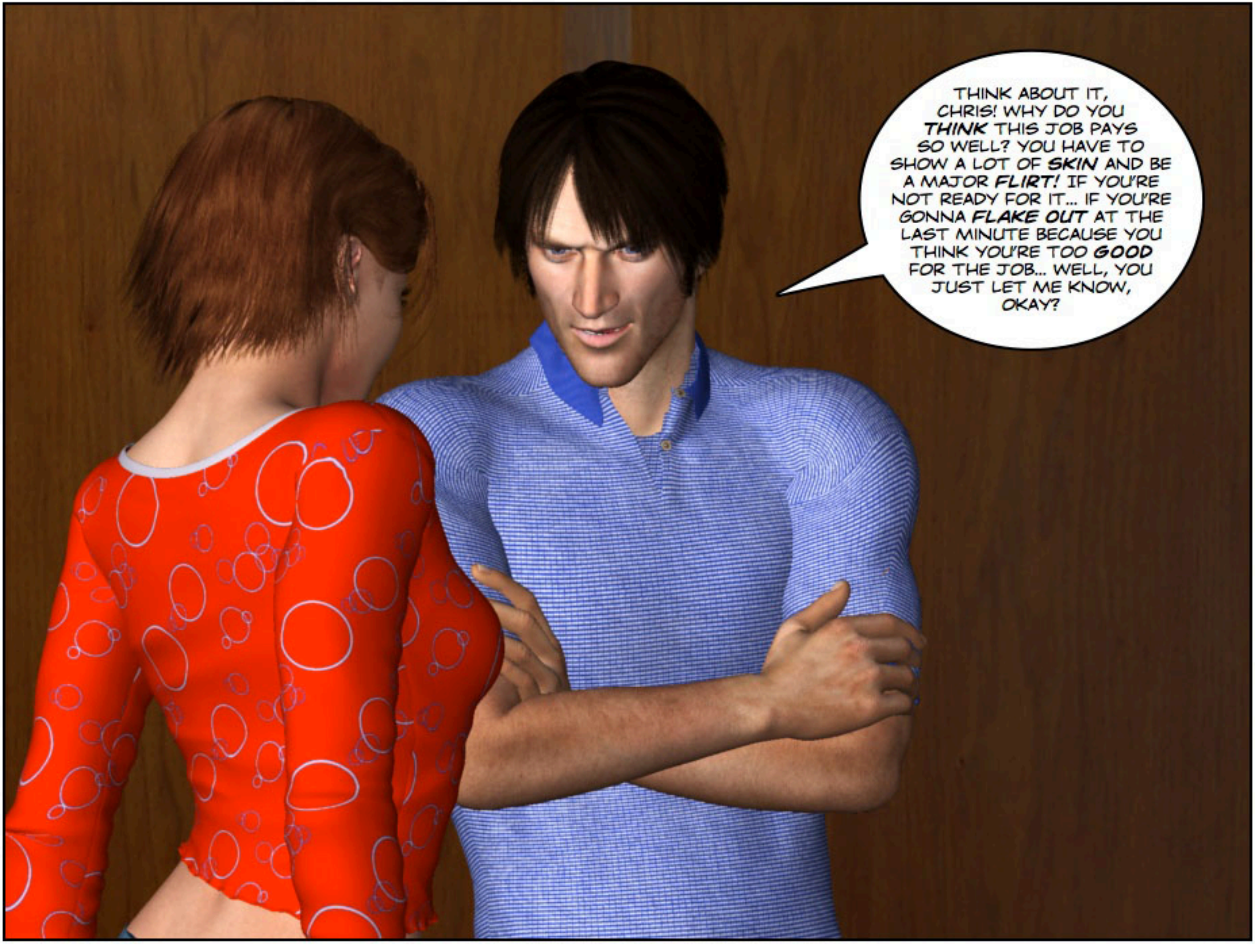

YOUR SENSITIVITY IS OVERWHELMING, STU!

OH, YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING!

WHAT? THE SMELL? YEAH, I'M AFRAID THIS USED TO BE A SMOKING ROOM!

BUT SINCE WE'RE ONLY USING IT FOR CHANGING, I FIGURED YOU ALL COULD STAND IT FOR A LITTLE WHILE!


THAT'S NOT IT AND YOU DAMN WELL KNOW IT! YOU REALLY EXPECT ME TO WEAR ONE OF THOSE... OUTFITS?
HEY, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAID YOU WANTED TO WORK THE HIGH-PAYING GIGS! I'VE GOT GIRLS LINED UP WAITING TO WORK JOBS LIKE THIS, SO SAY THE WORD AND I'LL CALL SOMEONE ELSE!


THINK ABOUT IT, CHRIS! WHY DO YOU THINK THIS JOB PAYS SO WELL? YOU HAVE TO SHOW A LOT OF SKIN AND BE A MAJOR FLIRT! IF YOU'RE NOT READY FOR IT... IF YOU'RE GONNA FLAKE OUT AT THE LAST MINUTE BECAUSE YOU THINK YOU'RE TOO GOOD FOR THE JOB... WELL, YOU JUST LET ME KNOW, OKAY?

ALL ***RIGHT!*** I ***GET*** IT! I'LL DO THE JOB! I JUST THOUGHT THIS WAS GOING TO BE A ***RESPECTABLE,*** HIGH-CLASS GIG, ***THAT'S*** ALL! THOSE OUTFITS ARE SO ***SLEAZY!*** ONE STEP ABOVE A ***PORN*** MOVIE!

AND ***THAT'S*** WHY I PICKED 'EM!

OH, AND YOU'D BETTER CHECK THAT **ATTITUDE** AT THE DOOR!

IF I HEAR **ANYTHING** LESS THAN **HIGH PRAISE** REGARDING YOUR WORK IN THERE, YOU'LL BE BACK TO PULLING DOUBLE SHIFTS AT THAT MISERABLE LITTLE COFFEE SHOP AS YOUR **SOLE** SOURCE OF INCOME!


OH, DON'T WORRY, STU... I'LL DO WHAT'S REQUIRED TO KEEP YOUR MALE CUSTOMERS HAPPY! I DO KNOW HOW THEY THINK, AFTER ALL!


ASSHOLE!!
Slam!!!
NOTHING LIKE A LITTLE DRAMA BEFORE A JOB TO GET THE BLOOD FLOWIN'!


OH... I'M SORRY! HE JUST... HE'S SUCH A...!!
OH, STU'S A JERK, FOR SURE! BUT HE GETS ME THE GOOD PAYING JOBS! DON'T WORRY, HONEY... ONCE YOU WORK FOR HIM LONG ENOUGH, YOU GET PRETTY MUCH IMMUNE TO HIS BRAND OF SLEAZE!


REALLY? I'M NOT SURE IF THAT'S A GOOD THING OR A BAD THING!


SO, I TAKE IT YOU'VE WORKED SOME OF THESE JOBS FOR STU BEFORE! ANY WORDS OF WISDOM BEFORE I THROW MYSELF TO THE DOGS?
JUST SMILE BIG, BE VERY FRIENDLY AND EXPECT A LOT OF "ACCIDENTAL" GROPES!

"ACCIDENTAL" GROPES? YOU'RE NOT KIDDING, ARE YOU?

OH DEFINITELY NOT, HONEY! AND DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY OR GET OFFENDED! THE BIGGEST TIPS COME FROM THE BIGGEST "GROPERS"!


SERIOUSLY?
HELL YES! HOW DO YOU THINK I PAID FOR THESE BEAUTIES? IT'S A KNOWN FACT THAT TIPS INCREASE PROPORTIONALLY WITH CUP SIZE!


AND IT SURE AS HELL BEATS WHAT I HAD TO PUT UP WITH WHEN I WAS YOUR SIZE!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? ISN'T GROPING BAD ENOUGH?

C'MON, LADIES! GET YOUR ASSES IN GEAR!

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

I'M **COMING**, STU, SO KEEP YOUR **PANTS** ON! AND I **MEAN** THAT!

I'LL SEE YOU IN THERE, HONEY! **GOOD LUCK!**

WHEN WILL I LEARN TO EXPECT A TOUCH OF ***SLEAZE*** IN ***EVERYTHING*** STU TOUCHES!

AND I THOUGHT MY OUTFIT AT THE ***AUTO SHOW*** WAS DEMEANING! I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW ***GOOD*** I HAD IT! GROPING FROM CUSTOMERS WASN'T ALLOWED THERE!

JESUS! MY ***PANTIES*** ARE GONNA BE ON DISPLAY ALL NIGHT! GOOD THING I'M COMFORTABLE WEARING A ***GAFFE!***

SLIM'S A **RICH** AND **POWERFUL** GUY, BUT I DON'T THINK HE **EVER** HAD ANY INTENTION OF HELPING ME GET A SCHOLARSHIP! HE JUST WANTED TO STRING ME ALONG SO HE COULD TRY AND GET INTO MY **PANTIES!**

HA! WOULDN'T **HE** BE SURPRISED IF HE'D EVER GOTTEN THAT FAR! HE'D GO RUNNING FOR THE **HILLS,** FOR SURE!

WELL, WHO NEEDS HIM OR HIS STUPID **SCHOLARSHIP!** THERE ARE **PLENTY** OF OTHER RICH GUYS IN THIS TOWN, AND PROBABLY A FEW ARE IN THE PRESIDENTIAL SUITE RIGHT NOW!

I JUST NEED TO GET THEM TO LIKE ME, SO THEY'LL **TIP BIG** AND I CAN BUY THAT TICKET TO **SWITZERLAND!** IS **THAT** TOO MUCH TO ASK?

I MIGHT NOT HAVE AS MANY ***CURVES*** AS SOME OF THE ***OTHER*** GIRLS, BUT I'VE BEEN IN THIS BODY LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW I ***DEFINITELY*** GET ***SOME*** GUYS' MOTORS RACING!

IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVE TO ***SLEEP*** WITH THESE GUYS, EITHER! HECK, THAT'S NOT EVEN A ***POSSIBILITY*** RIGHT NOW, NOT WITH THE ***EQUIPMENT*** I'VE GOT BETWEEN MY LEGS! TOO MUCH OF A THREAT TO THEIR ***PRECIOUS*** MASCULINITY!

I WOULDN'T DO THIS IF I DIDN'T ***HAVE*** TO, BUT MY ***LIFE... THIS*** LIFE... IS ON THE LINE... AND I WANT TO ***KEEP*** IT!

AN HOUR LATER, IN THE PRESIDENTIAL SUITE...

SO, HOW'S IT GOIN' SO FAR, NEWBIE?

WELL, THESE SHOES ARE ***KILLING*** ME, THIS DRESS IS ***SUFFOCATING*** ME AND MY ***BUTT*** IS SORE FROM BEING ***PINCHED*** SO MUCH!

OTHER THAN ***THAT***, NOT TOO BAD!


HEY, AT LEAST THE GUYS DOING THE PINCHING HERE ARE ALL RICH! I'VE WORKED DIVES WHERE THE GUYS DOING THE PAWING DIDN'T THINK THEY HAD TO PAY FOR THE PRIVILEGE!

I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT! IT'S FUNNY, I THINK ***EVERY SINGLE GUY*** I'VE WAITED ON TONIGHT HAS COPPED A FEEL... ***EXCEPT*** ONE!

THAT GUY ON THE ***BALCONY***... HE'S BEEN NOTHING BUT ***SWEET*** TO ME ALL NIGHT! HASN'T PUT AS MUCH AS A ***FINGER*** ON ME!

THAT GUY?! DON'T YOU **KNOW** WHO THAT IS? THAT'S **DANIEL EVERETT...** OF EVERETT AERONAUTICS! **VERY SERIOUS MONEY!**

REALLY? SO HE'S INCREDIBLY **RICH... AND** A **GENTLEMAN?** I DIDN'T THINK THAT POSSIBLE!

YEAH, I'VE SEEN HIM AT PARTIES BEFORE! HE'S BEEN TOTALLY **ALOOF** TO ME AND EVERY OTHER GIRL WHO'S EVER WAITED ON HIM... UNTIL **YOU,** THAT IS! **LUCKY DOG!**

BUT **WHY?** COMPARED TO YOU AND THE OTHER GIRLS, I'M JUST A **SKINNY LITTLE KID!**


DON'T SELL YOURSELF SHORT, HONEY! THERE'S OBVIOUSLY SOMETHING ABOUT YOU HE LIKES! AND I SUGGEST YOU MAKE THE BEST OF IT, 'CAUSE HERE HE COMES!


GOOD LUCK!
AH, CHRISTINE! THERE YOU ARE!


CHRISTINE?!
UMMM... YES SIR! WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
JUST... CHAT FOR A FEW MINUTES, IF THAT'S OKAY!

OF *COURSE* IT IS, SIR! BUT... HOW DO YOU KNOW MY *NAME?*

YOUR BOOKING AGENT... *SID,* I BELIEVE HIS NAME WAS... TOLD ME YOUR NAME WAS CHRIS! BUT *"CHRISTINE"* IS SO MUCH MORE *FEMININE!* I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND!

NOT AT ALL, MR. EVERETT! WHATEVER YOU LIKE!

OH, AND YOU KNOW **MY** NAME AS WELL?

OH... I ASKED AROUND A BIT ***MYSELF!***


GOOD! THEN PLEASE, CALL ME DANIEL!
OKAY THEN... DANIEL! AS MUCH AS I'D LOVE TO STAY AND CHAT, I'M STILL ON DUTY, AND I SEE A LOT OF EMPTY GLASSES OUT THERE!

I **TOTALLY** UNDERSTAND, CHRISTINE! I'M **SURE** WE'LL FIND THE TIME ONCE THE CROWD THINS!

IN THE MEANTIME, IF YOU COULD JUST KEEP MY TONIC AND LIME FILLED, I'D BE **MORE** THAN HAPPY!

I'LL MAKE **SURE** OF IT, DANIEL!

WOW! RICH, INTERESTED, **AND** EASY ON THE EYES TO BOOT! IF I PLAY MY CARDS RIGHT, I'LL BE BOOKING MY TICKET TO **SWITZERLAND** IN **NO** TIME!

AN HOUR OR SO LATER, AS THE PARTY WINDS DOWN...

SO, HOW'S IT GOIN' WITH THE ***PRINCE OF PLANES?*** I NOTICED YOU SPENDING A ***LOT*** OF TIME OVER THERE!

PRETTY WELL, I THINK! HE KEEPS MOTIONING ME OVER ***EVERY FIFTEEN MINUTES*** TO GET HIM ANOTHER DRINK, EVEN TOUGH HE'S BARELY TOUCHED THE ONE HE HAS! I'M HARDLY COMPLAINING, THOUGH, SINCE HE TIPS ME ***FIFTY DOLLARS*** EVERY TIME!


OOOOOO... SOMEONE'S GOT HERSELF A SUGAR DADDY!
HARDLY! HE PROBABLY WRITES ALL THIS OFF AS A BUSINESS EXPENSE!
I'M SURE THAT I'M JUST HIS "DEDUCTION D'JOUR"!


THINK SO, HUH? WELL, I'M NOT BUYIN' IT! AND IF YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO CONVINCE YOURSELF, YOU'D BETTER HURRY UP, 'CAUSE HE'S BAAAACCCKKKK!

I WAS ***HOPING*** I COULD FINALLY MONOPOLIZE YOUR TIME FOR A SPELL, CHRISTINE, SINCE IT SEEMS THE ***CROWD*** HAS DWINDLED!

NOT A PROBLEM! WE'VE GOT THIS TAKEN CARE OF!

YOU CAN THANK ME LATER, HONEY!

BUT...!

EXCELLENT!

WHY DON'T WE GO **UPSTAIRS** WHERE IT'S A LITTLE LESS CROWDED!

OOO... I DON'T KNOW IF THIS IS SUCH A GOOD IDEA!

WELL... **OKAY!**

WAY TO GO WITH THE **IMPULSE CONTROL** THERE, CHRIS!

I KNOW THAT SPENDING THIS TIME AWAY FROM THE PARTY WILL COST YOU TIPS, SO I HOPE **THIS** WILL MAKE UP FOR IT!

OH MY...! THIS **REALLY** ISN'T NECESSARY! YOU'VE **ALREADY** BEEN **INCREDIBLY GENEROUS!**

THE *TIPS?* THEY'RE *NOTHING* COMPARED TO HOW GENEROUS I *CAN* BE!

PLEASE, *TAKE IT!* I *INSIST!*


I... I HAVE TO ADMIT, I REALLY NEED THIS MONEY, BUT I'M NOT USED TO SO MUCH GENEROSITY... FROM ANYONE! IT'S A LITTLE... CONFUSING!
IT SHOULDN'T BE! ANY MAN WITH MEANS WOULD COUNT HIMSELF LUCKY TO BE ABLE TO DOTE ON SUCH AN EXQUISITE EXAMPLE OF FEMININITY!


I FIND THAT HARD TO BELIEVE! ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING THE OTHER WOMEN IN THIS ROOM RIGHT NOW! THEY'RE ALL SO...!
GARISH EXAMPLES OF THE FEMALE SPECIES... AT BEST! NOT APPRECIATING AND EMBRACING THEIR GENDER THE WAY YOU HAVE!

IF HE ONLY KNEW...!

YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW ***MUCH*** IT MEANS TO HEAR SOMEONE SAY THAT ABOUT ***ME!***


OH, I THINK I DO! I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR EYES! THE FLUSH OF YOUR SKIN! THE RISE AND FALL OF YOUR BREAST AS YOU BREATHE!
IT'S QUITE... INTOXICATING!


OOOO! UP TO NOW, I NEVER THOUGHT ANOTHER MAN COULD MAKE ME FEEL LIKE THIS! I... I'M MELTING!
AS MUCH AS I'D LOVE TO HEAR HIM GO ON ALL NIGHT, I'D BETTER PUT THE BRAKES ON BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

I... I'M SORRY, BUT I **REALLY** THINK I SHOULD GO BACK TO THE PARTY...!

YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW **RARE** YOU ARE! YOU, WHO **CHERISH** YOUR FEMININITY SO MUCH **MORE** THAN THOSE WHO WERE **BORN** WITH IT!

OH MY GOD! HE KNOWS?! HOW COULD HE?

WHA... WHAT DO YOU MEAN?! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?


WHY, YOUR BEING A PRE-OP TRANSEXUAL, OF COURSE! I APOLOGIZE IF I SEEM TOO BLUNT ABOUT IT, BUT I WANTED TO PUT THIS LITTLE DETAIL BEHIND US AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

OH MY GOD!! HOW... HOW COULD YOU POSSIBLY **KNOW** THAT? I THOUGHT I WAS... WHAT DID I DO **WRONG?** CAN... CAN YOU STILL TELL?!

OF COURSE I CAN'T, CHRISTINE! **NO ONE** HERE COULD WITHOUT A THOROUGH AND INVASIVE EXAMINATION! AND THAT'S DEFINITELY **NOT** GOING TO HAPPEN!

THEN HOW DID YOU FIND OUT? ***OH GOD!*** THIS IS SO ***EMBARRASSING!*** I... I JUST WANT TO CRAWL AWAY AND ***HIDE!***

WHY ON ***EARTH*** WOULD YOU POSSIBLY WANT TO DO THAT? YOU'RE A LOVELY, ***ENCHANTING*** WOMAN AND ***NOBODY*** WHO LOOKS AT YOU WOULD EVER THINK ***OTHERWISE!*** I KNOW THE TRUTH, BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ***ME!*** I VIEW YOUR UNIQUENESS AS A DEFINITE ***PLUS!***


YOU LIKE THE FACT THAT I'M NOT A REAL WOMAN?
THE FACT THAT YOU'VE WORKED SO HARD, MADE SUCH A COMMITMENT TO ATTAIN SUCH BEAUTY SHOWS ME THAT YOU'RE MUCH MORE OF A "REAL" WOMAN THAN ANY OF THOSE OTHERS WHO JUST HAPPENED TO BE BORN WITH A VAGINA!

THIS IS JUST ***TOO MUCH*** FOR ME TO HANDLE! YOU KNOW ***ALL*** ABOUT ME, YET YOU STILL SAY ALL THESE ***WONDERFUL*** THINGS TO ME!

ARE... ARE YOU ***GAY?***

NOT AT ALL!

I AM ***ONE HUNDRED PERCENT*** COMPLETELY AND TOTALLY ***ENAMORED*** WITH WOMEN AND THE ***FEMALE FORM!*** IT'S JUST THAT I'VE FOUND THAT SOME ***TRANSSEXUALS*** TEND TO PERSONIFY WHAT I ***TRULY*** LOVE ABOUT WOMEN SO MUCH ***MORE!***

THAT'S WHY I ***DISCREETLY*** ASKED A FEW PEOPLE AROUND TOWN, ***INCLUDING*** YOUR EMPLOYER, TO KEEP ME APPRISED OF ANY SUCH ***INDIVIDUALS!***

AND *HERE* YOU ARE!

STU! IT WAS ***STU*** WHO TOLD YOU ABOUT ME?

SOMETHING I AM ETERNALLY ***GRATEFUL*** TO HIM FOR!

I'M **CONFUSED!** YOU **KNOW** I'M NOT A BIOLOGICAL WOMAN, YOU'RE **NOT GAY,** YET YOU **STILL** WANT TO BE WITH ME!

ALL **TRUE!** WHAT CONFUSES YOU THEN?


BECAUSE IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE! YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ME... OTHER THAN THE FACT I'M TRANSITIONING, THAT IS!
BUT I WANT TO KNOW YOU, CHRISTINE! THAT'S ALL I REALLY WANT OR HOPE FOR... YOUR TIME AND COMPANIONSHIP!
YOU'LL BE HANDSOMELY COMPENSATED, OF COURSE!

AND *THERE* IT IS!!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT STU TOLD YOU, BUT I AM *NOT* FOR SALE!

AND I NEVER *IMAGINED* YOU AS TO BE! PLEASE *FORGIVE ME* IF I GAVE THAT IMPRESSION!

WHAT I WANT IS SOMEONE ***SPECIAL*** TO ACCOMPANY ME TO VARIOUS SOCIAL FUNCTIONS... SOMEONE WHO ***EXUDES FEMININITY*** AND CARRIES HERSELF WITH ***PRIDE!***

SOMEONE LIKE ***YOU...*** THE ***ONLY*** WOMAN I'VE MET WHO MEETS MY STRINGENT AND ***UNIQUE*** REQUIREMENTS!

I WON'T PRESSURE YOU INTO DOING ***ANYTHING*** YOU DON'T WANT TO, CHRISTINE! NOT ***EVER!***

THIS ***ISN'T*** ABOUT PAYING FOR SEX! THAT'S ***NOT*** WHAT I'M AFTER!

I DON'T KNOW! I AM ***TRULY*** DESPERATE FOR MONEY AT THE MOMENT, BUT THIS... YOU... EVEN IF I'M ***NOT*** REQUIRED TO SLEEP WITH YOU, THERE'S ***SOMETHING*** ABOUT YOUR PROPOSED ***ARRANGEMENT...***

...SOMETHING THAT STILL BORDERS ON ***"PAID ESCORT"*** OR EVEN ***"CALL GIRL"!***


NONSENSE! YOU'D BE A COMPANY EMPLOYEE! MY "EXECUTIVE SOCIAL ASSISTANT" IF YOU WILL! A SALARIED POSITION ON THE PAYROLL... TAXES, SOCIAL SECURITY, HEALTH INSURANCE... THE WHOLE THING!

I DON'T KNOW! IT ALL **STILL** SEEMS A LITTLE... **SKETCHY!**

DID I MENTION THAT OUR HEALTH PLAN IS **VERY** COMPREHENSIVE AND WOULD COVER **ALL** YOUR **TRANSITION** EXPENSES?

WAIT! ALL THE EXPENSES? THE DOCTOR'S FEES, THE HORMONES...?

EVERYTHING! EVEN THE REASIGNMENT SURGERY, SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO HAVE IT!

EVERYTHING?! OH MY GOD! I'D HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO GO SEE PROFESSOR HOLTZMAN AND BECOME THE WOMAN I WANT TO BE... EVERYTHING I WANT FROM LIFE WITHOUT HAVING TO WAIT!

BUT... IS HE ON THE LEVEL? HE SEEMS SINCERE! BUT WHAT IF...

...WHAT IF ANOTHER SHIFT HAPPENS? I'LL DIE IF I GET TRANSFERRED INTO ANOTHER LIFE WHEN I'VE FOUND MY TICKET TO HAPPINESS IN THIS ONE... TO THE LIFE I WAS ALWAYS MEANT TO HAVE!

SO, CHRISTINE... WHAT DO YOU SAY?

I'LL... I'LL DO IT!

EXCELLENT! I COULDN'T BE HAPPIER!

WHY, YOU'RE SHAKING LIKE A ***LEAF!*** PLEASE, CHRISTINE, THERE'S ***NOTHING*** TO BE SCARED OF! THINK OF THIS AS THE ***BEGINNING*** OF AN EXCITING NEW ***ADVENTURE!***

YOU ***WON'T*** REGRET THIS DECISION, CHRISTINE! I ***PROMISE!***


I HOPE NOT!

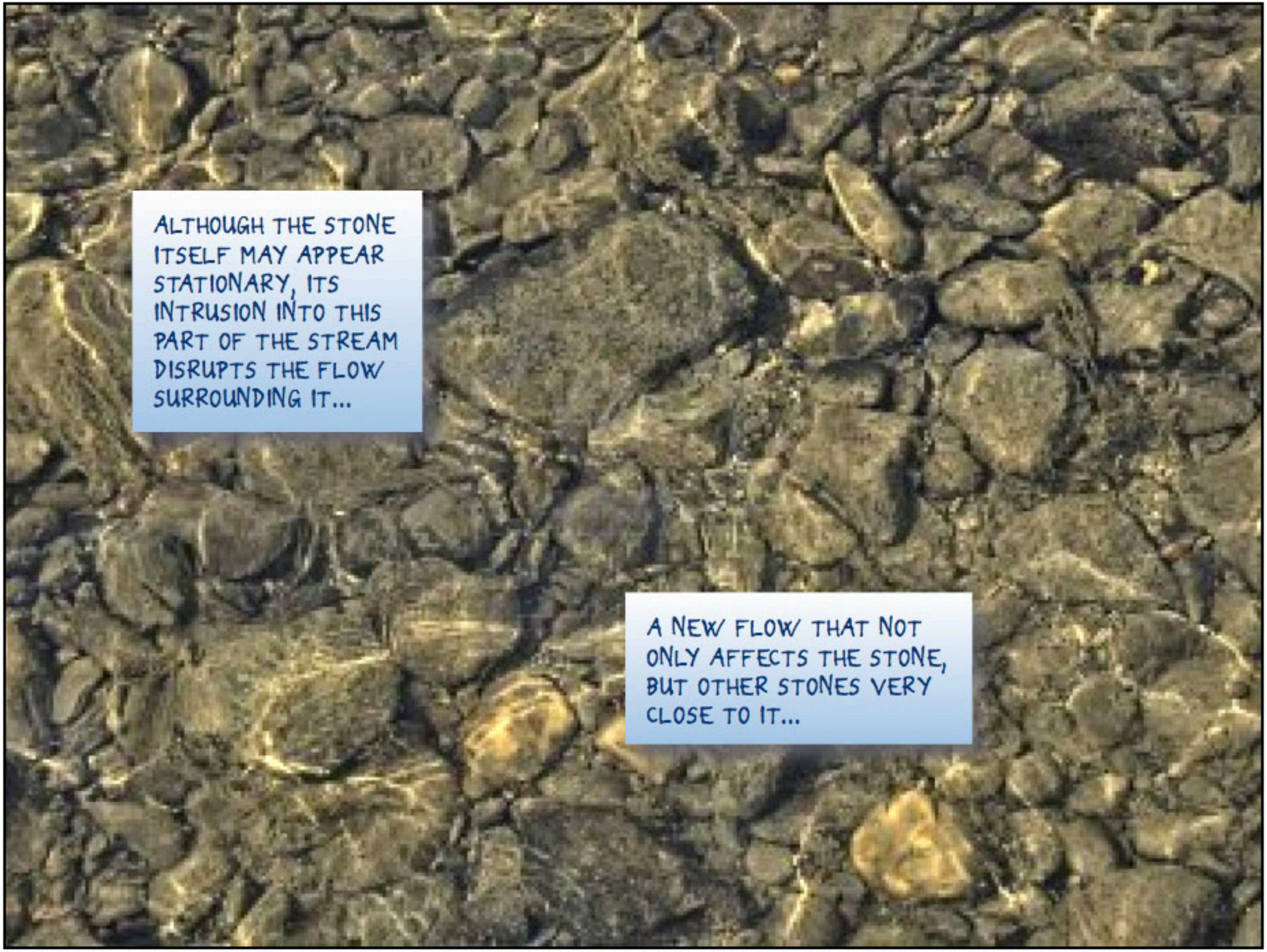
QUANTUM



Chapter Five

by CBlack

BUTTERFLY


ALTHOUGH THE STONE ITSELF MAY APPEAR STATIONARY, ITS INTRUSION INTO THIS PART OF THE STREAM DISRUPTS THE FLOW SURROUNDING IT...
A NEW FLOW THAT NOT ONLY AFFECTS THE STONE, BUT OTHER STONES VERY CLOSE TO IT...

SIX WEEKS LATER, OUTSIDE CHRIS' APARTMENT BUILDING...

IF I HAVEN'T SAID IT ALREADY, ***THANK YOU*** FOR ATTENDING WITH ME TONIGHT! AS ALWAYS, YOUR PRESENCE MADE IT A ***MEMORABLE*** EVENING!

TO BE TRUTHFUL, I WAS A LITTLE ***HESITANT*** WHEN YOU SAID WE'D BE SURROUNDED BY ***ENGINEERS*** ALL NIGHT, BUT I WAS PLEASANTLY ***SURPRISED!***

FROM THE LOOKS ON THEIR FACES, IT WAS ***THEY*** WHO WERE PLEASANTLY SURPRISED WHEN I ENTERED WITH ***YOU*** ON MY ARM! EVERY EYE WAS ON ***YOU,*** CHRISTINE!


WELL, THAT'S SWEET OF YOU TO SAY, BUT I THINK YOU'RE EXAGGERATING A BIT!
WHEN A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN LIKE YOU CAN MAINTAIN MULTIPLE CONVERSATIONS WITH A ROOMFUL OF AEROSPACE ENGINEERS, SHE TENDS TO DRAW A CROWD!
I HAD NO IDEA YOU WERE SO WELL READ!


WELL... I WAS ALWAYS A SCIENCE GEEK IN SCHOOL AND HAVE DONE MY FAIR SHARE OF READING SINCE THEN!
ENOUGH READING TO EARN MYSELF A PHD! BUT THAT WAS SEVERAL TIMELINES AGO!


WELL, THAT 'GEEK' HAS CERTAINLY BLOSSOMED! AS USUAL, YOU WERE THE BELLE OF THE BALL!
DUE IN NO SMALL PART TO YOUR VERY GENEROUS CLOTHING ALLOWANCE! I FEEL LIKE A KID IN A CANDY STORE EVERY TIME I GO SHOPPING FOR A NEW DRESS!

I DO HOPE YOU'LL LET ME KNOW IF I GO OVERBOARD!

NOT POSSIBLE! I WANT YOU TO HAVE A DIFFERENT OUTFIT FOR EACH OUTING AND YOUR TASTES TO DATE HAVE PROVEN TO BE IMPECCABLE!


YOU'RE GOING TO **SPOIL** ME, DANIEL! AND AS A REWARD, I **PROMISE** NOT TO KEEP YOU **WAITING** SO LONG NEXT TIME!


DON'T HURRY ON MY ACCOUNT, CHRISTINE! THE END RESULTS ARE ALWAYS WORTH THE WAIT!
UNTIL NEXT TIME, THEN!


GOOD BYE, DANIEL! AND THANK YOU AGAIN! IT WAS A LOVELY EVENING!

THE NEXT DAY, CHRIS MEETS HER DAD FOR THEIR WEEKLY LUNCH AT THEIR USUAL SPOT...

SO, IT LOOKS LIKE YOUR PROJECT DOWN THE STREET IS ALMOST DONE! ANYTHING IN THE WORKS AFTER THAT?

ACTUALLY THEY'VE ALREADY ASSIGNED ME AS ***CHIEF FOREMAN*** ON A REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT ON THE WATER FRONT! SURPRISED THE ***HECK*** OUT OF ME WHEN THEY TOLD ME! FIGURED THEY'D GO WITH ONE OF THE ***YOUNGER*** GUYS!


WHAT, AND IGNORE YOUR EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE? THEY OBVIOUSLY MADE THE RIGHT DECISION! I'M SO PROUD OF YOU, DAD!

HEY, ***I'M*** THE PRIDEFUL FATHER AROUND HERE! AND I ***AM*** PROUD OF YOU... THE WAY YOU'VE ***STUCK*** TO YOUR CONVICTIONS... THE ***DETERMINATION*** YOU'VE SHOWN TO MAKE THE CHANGES YOU'VE WANTED IN YOUR LIFE!

I KNOW IT HASN'T BEEN VERY ***EASY*** FOR YOU!

WELL, I'VE HAD ***LOTS*** OF SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS AND ***ESPECIALLY*** YOU! THAT'S WHAT MATTERS THE MOST!


NOW, FORGET ABOUT EVEN THINKING ABOUT PAYING FOR THIS, BECAUSE THIS TIME, I'VE GOT IT! NO ARGUMENTS!
WHO AM I TO ARGUE WITH THE DREADED TERRILL STUBBORN STREAK?

I GOT IT FROM **YOU**, YOU KNOW! BACK IN A MINUTE!

I'M SO GLAD THAT DAD HAS FINALLY BECOME SO MUCH MORE ***COMFORTABLE*** WITH MY CHANGES!

I THINK IT DEFINITELY HELPS THAT HIS **JOB** IS SO SECURE... ESPECIALLY IN THIS ECONOMY! DAD'S HAD TO WORRY ABOUT MONEY FOR SO LONG!

AS MUCH AS I'D **LOVE** TO TELL HIM ABOUT **MY** NEW JOB, I DON'T THINK I COULD EXPLAIN IT IN A WAY THAT WOULDN'T SOUND **TAWDRY** TO HIM!

Back Soon!

MAYBE IF I EXPLAINED WHAT A **GODSEND** THE **HEALTH BENEFITS** ARE! I CAN STILL SEE MY OLD DOCTORS AND IT'S **TOTALLY** COVERED! AND MY HORMONES AND OTHER MEDS ARE COVERED TOO! I'M SAVING SO MUCH MONEY, I'LL **FINALLY** BE ABLE TO BUY THAT TICKET TO **SWITZERLAND** WHEN I GET MY **NEXT PAYCHECK!**

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT, THAT DANIEL'S BEEN ***TRUE*** TO HIS WORD! HE'S ONLY TAKEN ME TO BUSINESS FUNCTIONS, AND MY PRESENCE ON HIS ARM HAS BEEN ENOUGH TO DELIGHT NOT ONLY ***HIM,*** BUT HIS ***NEBBISH-Y*** CLIENTS AS WELL! THE WAY HE ***LOOKS*** AT ME SOMETIMES, SO ***ADORINGLY...*** I'VE NEVER FELT SO ***SPECIAL!***

TALK ABOUT THE ***PERFECT*** SITUATION! I'M FINALLY TREATED LIKE THE ***BEAUTIFUL WOMAN*** I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE ***WITHOUT*** ALL THE ***SEXUAL TENSION*** AND ***HARASSMENT*** THAT ACCOMPANIES IT! DANIEL'S ALWAYS BEEN THE ***PERFECT GENTLEMAN!***

IT'S FUNNY, BUT SOMETIMES I ***ALMOST*** WISH HE WERE A LITTLE ***LESS*** BUSINESS-LIKE AND A LITTLE MORE... ***INTIMATE!*** THESE... FANTASIES THAT KEEP RUNNING THROUGH MY MIND! THE ONE WHERE DANIEL ***GRABS*** ME AND... ***FORGET IT,*** CHRIS! BEST TO KEEP THEM JUST THAT... ***FANTASIES!***

AS MUCH AS I LOVE THIS NEW ***LIFE,*** MY NEW ***BODY***... AS MUCH AS I'D LIKE TO EXPLORE SOME OF THE ***DESIRES*** THAT ARE RAGING THROUGH ME, IT'D BE ***TOO MUCH!*** I'M JUST NOT READY... AT LEAST, I DON'T ***THINK*** SO...!




WAIT A MINUTE! SOMETHING'S OFF! DAD'S CLOTHES... THEY'RE NOT THE SAME!

AND *I* FEEL... *DIFFERENT* SOMEHOW! BUT I CAN'T TELL *HOW!*

DAMN! IT MUST'VE BEEN *ANOTHER* SHIFT! IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE THE *LAST* ONE, I THOUGHT I WAS *SAFE!* I THOUGHT THEY WERE *OVER!*

GOD, LET'S HOPE IT WAS A *SMALL* ONE!

YOU KNOW, MAYBE MY TIRED OLD EYES JUST HADN'T ***NOTICED*** BEFORE, BUT YOU REALLY SEEM TO BE... ***DEVELOPING*** FASTER THESE DAYS!

YOU LOOK AND SOUND MORE LIKE YOUR ***MOTHER*** EVERY TIME I SEE YOU!

HE'S **RIGHT!** **THAT'S** WHAT FEELS DIFFERENT ABOUT ME! AND **NOW** I REMEMBER **WHY!** I HAVE A **TEAM** OF DOCTORS I'M SEEING NOW, AND THEY'RE ALL THE **BEST** IN THEIR FIELDS!

WELL, I **CHANGED DOCTORS** RECENTLY AND HE PUT ME ON SOME **DIFFERENT** MEDICATION THAT WORKS A LITTLE BETTER THAN THE OLD STUFF!


WOW! IT'S AMAZING WHAT A GOOD DOCTOR CAN DO! THANK GOODNESS YOU LANDED A JOB WITH SUCH TERRIFIC BENEFITS!
YOU... YOU KNOW ABOUT MY JOB?

WHAT, YOU DON'T THINK I'VE BEEN ***LISTENING*** FOR THE PAST HOUR? YOU'RE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE ***CEO***, AND I COULDN'T BE ***PROUDER!***

Come Back Again Soon!

YOU.. YOU'RE ***PROUD*** OF ME? BUT WHAT ABOUT ALL THE.. THE ***BUSINESS*** FUNCTIONS I'M REQUIRED TO ATTEND?

NOTHING WRONG WITH ***THAT!*** I KNOW THAT MOST ***REAL*** BUSINESS IS ACCOMPLISHED DURING ***COCKTAIL HOUR*** OR ON THE ***GOLF COURSE,*** AND SINCE YOU'RE ***NOT*** A GOLFER, WELL...

OH, **DADDY!** I'M SO **HAPPY!** I WISH YOU WEREN'T SO BUSY, SO WE COULD MEET LIKE THIS **MORE** THAN ONCE A WEEK!

HEY, YOU HAVEN'T CALLED ME **"DADDY"** SINCE YOU WERE A LITTLE... WELL, SINCE YOU WERE LITTLE!

AND, TO BE HONEST, WE MIGHT JUST ***HAVE*** THAT TIME ONCE THIS PROJECT IS OVER! I WAS HOPING TO BE ASSIGNED TO THE NEW WATERFRONT PROJECT, BUT THEY WENT AND HIRED SOME ***YOUNG GO-GETTER*** TO MANAGE THAT JOB!

I'M NOT QUITE SURE ***WHAT*** I'LL BE DOING AFTER THIS! THAT'S WHY I'M ***THRILLED*** TO HEAR YOU'RE GAINFULLY ***EMPLOYED,*** SINCE I'M NOT EXACTLY IN A POSITION TO HELP YOU OUT RIGHT NOW, IN CASE YOU RUN INTO ANY ***TROUBLE!***

DADDY, I'M *FINE!* DON'T WORRY ABOUT *ME!*

AND I'M *SURE* THEY'LL COME AROUND AND PUT YOU ON *SOME* JOB! THEY CAN'T BE *THAT* STUPID!

I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT, CHRIS! WELL, I'VE GOT TO GET GOING! NEXT WEEK... SAME TIME AND PLACE, OKAY?

YOU'VE *GOT* IT! *BYE!*

SIGH! POOR DADDY! HE SEEMED *SO HAPPY* BEFORE THAT LAST SHIFT.. BUT NOW THINGS ARE TOUGH FOR HIM! AT LEAST OUR *RELATIONSHIP* HASN'T CHANGED! HE'S STILL WARM AND *WONDERFUL* TOWARDS ME... THE *NEW* ME!

MY *GOD!* I THINK MY BODY HAS CHANGED *MORE* IN THE PAST SIX WEEKS THAN I EVER DREAMED *POSSIBLE!* THOSE EXPERIMENTAL TREATMENTS I HAVE ACCESS TO NOW ARE WORKING *WONDERS!* BUT THEY'RE SO *EXPENSIVE!* I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE THEY'RE *COVERED* BY MY BENEFITS!

UNTIL DANIEL INTRODUCED ME TO HIS MEDICAL TEAM, I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW SOME OF THESE PROCEDURES WERE ***POSSIBLE!*** AT THIS RATE, I'M GOING TO HAVE A BODY BEYOND MY ***WILDEST FANTASIES!***

I HAVE MORE THAN ENOUGH MONEY TO FLY TO SWITZERLAND AND SEE ***PROFESSOR HOLTZMAN,*** BUT DANIEL HAS ME ON SUCH A TIGHT LEASH, HE ***WON'T*** BE HAPPY IF I GO! HE ***MIGHT*** CUT ME OFF FROM THE DOCTORS... AND ***THEN...***

MAYBE I'M BETTER OFF STAYING ***PUT...*** AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT! THIS LAST SHIFT WASN'T BAD, AFTER ALL! AT LEAST NOT FOR ***ME...***

LATER THAT EVENING, A FAMILIAR LIMO PULLS UP IN FRONT OF AN EXCLUSIVE CLUB...

ALLOW ME, MY DEAR!


WHY, THANK YOU, SIR!
YOU ARE A VISION AS ALWAYS, CHRISTINE!

DO YOU LIKE THE **DRESS** I PICKED OUT FOR YOU THIS EVENING?

WELL, IT'S A LITTLE... **SHORT** FOR THIS TIME OF YEAR...!

BUT IF **YOU** LIKE IT, THEN **I** LOVE IT! **THANK YOU,** DANIEL!

AND I DO **SO** ENJOY SEEING YOU IN IT!

IT MAY NOT BE THE MOST ***APPROPRIATE*** ATTIRE FOR A BUSINESS MEETING LIKE THIS, BUT... I JUST COULDN'T HELP MYSELF!

HMMM... THAT IMPULSIVE NATURE OF YOURS MIGHT GET YOU INTO ***TROUBLE*** ONE OF THESE DAYS!

OH, I'M *COUNTING* ON IT!

I'LL HAVE OUR DRINKS SENT OVER WHILE I WAIT FOR MY *COLLEAGUE* AT THE BAR!! I'LL BE BACK MOMENTARILY!

I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE!


WHY WOULD I LEAVE, WHEN EVERYTHING I WANT IS RIGHT HERE?
I'M IN A SWANKY ESTABLISHMENT, AND EVERY GUY IN THE PLACE IS STARING... AT ME! AND WHY WOULDN'T THEY?
I HAVE FULL BREASTS NOW, AND THEY'RE REAL! NOT IMPLANTS! MY SKIN IS SOFT AND SILKY! MY BODY'S GOT TRUE FEMININE CURVES!
DANIEL'S THE ONE WHO MADE IT ALL POSSIBLE! THIS TRANSFORMATION OF MY BODY... AND MY LIFE!

I NEVER THOUGHT OF MYSELF AS THE KIND OF PERSON WHO COULD BECOME SO... **DEPENDENT** ON SOMEONE ELSE, BUT DANIEL MAKES IT SO **EASY!** THE WAY HE TAKES CARE OF ME.. THE WAY I **FEEL** WHEN I'M NEAR HIM! DADDY THINKS I'M STRONG AND **INDEPENDENT**... BUT I'M **NOT!**

I KNOW IT SHOULD **BOTHER** ME! DANIEL HIRED ME TO BE HIS **"EXECUTIVE SOCIAL ASSISTANT"**, BUT THAT'S BEEN A **JOKE** FROM THE START! I'M MORE LIKE PROFESSIONAL **EYE-CANDY**!

BUT... IT DIDN'T **USED** TO BE THAT WAY, **DID IT?**


OH MY GOD... THE SHIFT THIS AFTERNOON! I KNEW THINGS WERE DIFFERENT, BUT I DIDN'T REALIZE... I DIDN'T FOCUS ON... JUST HOW MUCH EVERYTHING'S CHANGED!
THE OLD DANIEL... HE WOULD NEVER HAVE WANTED ME TO WEAR SUCH A SHORT SKIRT! THIS DANIEL... THE NEW DANIEL... I... I DON'T THINK HE'S SUCH THE PERFECT GENTLEMAN ANYMORE!

LET'S SEE... IN MY ***OLD*** TIMELINE, OUR RELATIONSHIP REMAINED COMPLETELY ***PROFESSIONAL***... BUT NOW? I SEEM TO RECALL A ***KISS*** A FEW WEEKS AGO... AND... AND...

GOODNESS! I ***NOW*** REMEMBER A FEW TIMES WHEN OUR RELATIONSHIP WENT ***BEYOND*** PROFESSIONAL! WELL... MAYBE ***MORE*** THAN JUST A FEW!


BUT... WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT? WITH ALL THE TIME DANIEL AND I SPEND TOGETHER, IT'S NATURAL THAT THE TWO OF US WOULD GROW CLOSER!
AND EVEN THOUGH HE'S NO LONGER A PERFECT GENTLEMEN, DANIEL STILL TREATS ME WITH COMPLETE RESPECT! WE'RE TAKING THINGS NICE AND SLOW!
IN FACT, I CAN'T RECALL US DOING ANYTHING BEYOND NECKING... NOT THAT I HAVEN'T THOUGHT ABOUT GOING FURTHER ONCE OR TWICE!

DANIEL HAS ENABLED ME TO LIVE OUT MY ***FANTASIES***... NOT ONLY DO I HAVE ACCESS TO THE BEST ***DOCTORS*** IN THE WORLD FOR SOMEONE IN MY POSITION, BUT I'VE ALSO GOT A VERY ***GENEROUS*** CLOTHING ALLOWANCE AND ***FREQUENT*** GIFTS OF EXTRAVAGANT ***JEWELRY!***

NOT THAT DANIEL IS ENTIRELY ***ALTRUISTIC!*** HE'S AN IMPORTANT PERSON! HE NEEDS ME TO LOOK MY ***BEST*** WHEN WE'RE TOGETHER! ITS PART OF MY ***JOB!***

I ***KNOW*** I SHOULD GO AHEAD AND BUY MY TICKET, GO TO ***SWITZERLAND,*** BUT ITS ***SO HARD*** TO TEAR MYSELF AWAY FROM DANIEL'S SIDE!

AND WHAT'S THE ***RUSH?*** AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, THE SHIFT TODAY CHANGED THINGS FOR THE ***BETTER!*** IN FACT, ***EVERY*** TIME I CHANGE, I SEEM TO BE GETTING CLOSER AND ***CLOSER*** TO BECOMING THE PERSON I ***WANT*** TO BE! ***AREN'T I?***


MAYBE, IF ANOTHER SHIFT HAPPENS, I'LL END UP TOTALLY GORGEOUS! THEN I'LL HAVE EVERYTHING... EXCEPT FOR THE EDUCATION I'VE LOST!
I WONDER IF DANIEL WOULD BE WILLING TO PAY FOR ME TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL?


I'M PRETTY SURE I COULD CONVINCE HIM! IN FACT, I'D WAGER I CAN GET HIM TO DO JUST ABOUT ANYTHING I WANT HIM TO!


HE'LL BE OVER IN A MOMENT! DO YOU REMEMBER EVERYTHING I TOLD YOU?
OF COURSE!


ROGER KAPLAN, AN OLD FRIEND AND RIVAL FROM YOUR BOARDING SCHOOL DAYS, IS NOW THE CEO OF AIRKAP, ONE OF THE LARGEST AIR FREIGHT COMPANIES IN THE WORLD!
AND YOU'RE HOPING WE CAN PERSUADE HIM INTO REPLACING HIS AGING FLEET WITH YOUR NEW AIRCRAFT THAT JUST CAME INTO PRODUCTION!

IS THAT ABOUT IT?

PERFECT! IS IT ANY WONDER ***WHY*** I BRING ***YOU*** TO THESE MEETINGS?

YOU MEAN IT'S *NOT* FOR MY WITTY BANTER AND SPARKLING REPARTEE?

OH, THAT AND *MORE*, CHRISTINE! THAT AND *SO MUCH MORE!*


DANNY-BOY! HOW THE HELL ARE YOU DOING? IT'S BEEN TOO LONG!
GOOD TO SEE YOU TOO, ROGER! IT HAS BEEN QUITE A WHILE!


I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO MY... COMPANION, CHRISTINE TERRELL!
IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU, MR. KAPLAN! DANIEL HAS TOLD ME SO MUCH ABOUT YOU!
WHOA! I'D SURE LIKE HIM TO TELL ME A LOT MORE ABOUT YOU SOMETIME! AND PLEASE, CALL ME ROGER!

NOW THAT WE HAVE THE ***PLEASANTRIES*** OUT OF THE WAY, SHALL WE HAVE A SEAT AND GET DOWN TO BUSINESS?

... SO YOU CAN SEE, ROGER, THE TWENTY PERCENT INCREASE IN FUEL EFFICIENCY, LARGER PAYLOAD AND REDUCED MAINTENANCE COSTS MAKE OUR **CHIMERA AIRLINER** THE **PERFECT** CHOICE FOR YOUR BUSINESS!

AND IF YOU'D LIKE, I CAN MEET WITH YOUR **ENGINEERS** AND GO OVER THE **TECHNICAL SPECS!**


WOW!
DANNY, WHERE THE HELL DID YOU FIND HER? BEAUTIFUL, SMART... THE WHOLE PACKAGE! SHE MAKES IT DAMN HARD TO SAY NO!


THEN... DON'T SAY "NO"!
SHE IS GOOD, DANNY! I'LL GIVE YOU THAT!


BUT I STILL NEED TO CONFER WITH MY BOARD BEFORE GOING AHEAD WITH ANYTHING THIS BIG!
OF COURSE, I UNDERSTAND COMPLETELY! SHALL WE SET UP ANOTHER MEETING?


TELL YOU WHAT, I'VE GOT ANOTHER APPOINTMENT TO GET TO, BUT LET ME MAKE A QUICK CALL AND I'LL MEET YOU OUTSIDE TO DISCUSS JUST THAT!

A FEW MINUTES LATER, OUTSIDE THE RESTAURANT...

WELL, JUST AS I THOUGHT, MY BOARD WANTS ME TO GET ***MORE*** INFO FROM YOU... ESPECIALLY THE ***TECHNICAL ASPECTS***... BEFORE THEY'LL GET BEHIND THIS PROPOSAL!

UNDERSTANDABLE! HOW ABOUT A FOLLOW-UP MEETING TOMORROW AT MY PLACE, SAY... SEVEN?


PERFECT! AND IF THE LOVELY CHRISTINE DOESN'T OBJECT, I'D LIKE A MOMENT TO... CONFER WITH MY OLD BUD HERE!


I'M SURE CHRISTINE WON'T MIND! WOULD YOU WAIT FOR ME IN THE CAR, PLEASE?
OF COURSE, DANIEL! GOOD NIGHT, ROGER!


NOW, LET'S YOU AND ME TALK SOME REAL BUSINESS... OKAY?


WHAT AN *INCREDIBLE* EVENING! EVERYTHING WENT *JUST* AS DANIEL HAD HOPED! THAT CONTRACT WITH ROGER IS ALL BUT *LOCKED UP* AND IT'S ALL DUE TO *ME!*


ALL THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS DANIEL TOOK ME TO AND ALL HIS COACHING IN PREPARATION FOR TONIGHT REALLY PAID OFF!
I HAD ROGER RIGHT WHERE I WANTED HIM FROM THE GET-GO!


WAITRESSING WAS NEVER LIKE THIS! THAT WAS JUST A JOB... AN ACT FOR TIPS!
WHAT I DID... WHO I WAS TONIGHT...! I'VE NEVER FELT SO... EMPOWERED... AND SO FEMININE! I COULD DEFINITELY GET USED TO IT!

TAKE THE *LONG* WAY HOME, JAMES! AND GIVE US SOME *PRIVACY* ON THE WAY, WOULD YOU?

SO... HOW DID IT GO?

WE ARE *THIS* CLOSE! I'M SURE THAT TOMORROW'S MEETING IS JUST A *FORMALITY* BEFORE HE SIGNS!

THAT'S *WONDERFUL,* DANIEL!

BUT THAT'S JUST THE ***TIP*** OF THE ICEBERG! ONCE THE ***REST*** OF THE INDUSTRY SEES THAT ***AIRKAP*** TRUSTS OUR NEW ***CHIMERA,*** THE ORDERS FOR NEW AIRCRAFT WILL START COMING IN FROM ALL ***OVER*** THE WORLD!

AND IT'S **ALL** THANKS TO **YOU,** MY LOVELY CHRISTINE!

WELL, I'M JUST **GLAD** I COULD HELP!

FALSE MODESTY DOESN'T BECOME YOU, CHRISTINE! YOU KNOW VERY WELL WHAT A VALUABLE PART YOU PLAYED TONIGHT...

AND YOU ENJOYED EVERY MINUTE OF IT! I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR EYES!

OKAY, I DID ENJOY IT! I ADMIT IT! BUT I COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOUR HELP!


I JUST *NUDGED* YOU IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, THAT'S ALL! ALLOWED THAT *FEMME FATALE* INSIDE YOU TO FINALLY COME OUT WHERE SHE BELONGS!


WATCHING YOU WORK ON ROGER TONIGHT... I CAN ONLY *IMAGINE* WHAT HE WAS THINKING!
REALLY? AND WHAT DO YOU THINK *THAT* WAS?

EXACTLY THE ***SAME*** THING I WAS THINKING... HERE'S A CONFIDENT, BEAUTIFUL AND INCREDIBLY ***SEXY WOMAN*** WHO ISN'T AFRAID TO USE HER ***FEMININE WILES*** TO GET ***EXACTLY*** WHAT SHE WANTS!

AND ***I*** WOULDN'T ***HESITATE*** TO GRANT HER ***WHATEVER*** SHE MIGHT ASK OF ME!

YOU ***REALLY*** THINK THAT ABOUT ME?

OF COURSE, CHRISTINE! FROM THE MOMENT I FIRST MET YOU, I'VE BEEN WAITING AND HOPING FOR THE EMERGENCE OF THE WOMAN I ALWAYS KNEW YOU COULD BE!

AND NOW, FINALLY, I CAN CHERISH THE WOMAN I ALWAYS WANTED!

OH, DANIEL!

IS THIS ***REALLY*** HAPPENING? I'M BEING HELD, KISSED, MAYBE EVEN... ***LOVED...*** AS A ***WOMAN*** BY THIS VERY RICH AND POWERFUL MAN! EVERYTHING IS ***PERFECT...*** LIKE A ***DREAM!***

NO... NOT ***QUITE*** PERFECT! I FEEL UTTERLY FEMININE... BUT I'M ***NOT!*** THERE'S ***STILL*** WORK THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE... ***CHANGES*** THAT HAVE TO BE MADE! ONLY THEN CAN I ***TRULY*** BE HAPPY!

YOU'RE SO ***SWEET*** TO ME, DANIEL, BUT I DON'T THINK I'LL FEEL COMFORTABLE BEING WITH YOU, OR ***ANY*** MAN, UNTIL I'M A ***COMPLETE*** WOMAN!

I THINK YOU'RE JUST PERFECT THE WAY YOU ARE, CHRISTINE! BUT I UNDERSTAND IF YOU FEEL THE NEED TO COMPLETE YOUR QUEST!

SAY THE WORD AND I'LL WHISK YOU OFF TO THE BEST SURGEON IN THE WORLD AND COMPLETE YOUR TRANSITION!

YOU CAN TAKE YOUR PICK OF ANY OF THE WORLD RENOWNED CLINICS IN COLORADO, SINGAPORE, GENEVA...!

GENEVA? SWITZERLAND?!

OF COURSE! ONE OF THE ***FINEST*** SRS CLINICS IN THE WORLD IS LOCATED THERE! WE COULD EVEN GET IN A LITTLE ***SKIING*** BEFORE YOUR PROCEDURE, IF YOU WISH!

GENEVA?! ***CERN*** IS JUST OUTSIDE GENEVA!


UNBELIEVABLE! MY LIFE KEEPS GETTING BETTER AND BETTER! I'LL BE ABLE TO SEE PROFESSOR HOLTZMAN AND COMPLETE MY TRANSITION... ALL WITHOUT COSTING ME A DIME!
I'VE TOTALLY HIT THE JACKPOT!


OH YES, DANIEL! PLEASE! THAT SOUNDS WONDERFUL! YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME! I OWE YOU SO MUCH!

IN **MY** EYES, YOU ARE **ALREADY** THE PERFECT WOMAN, CHRISTINE! AND I DON'T SEE ANY REASON TO **WAIT** TO TAKE OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE **NEXT** LEVEL!

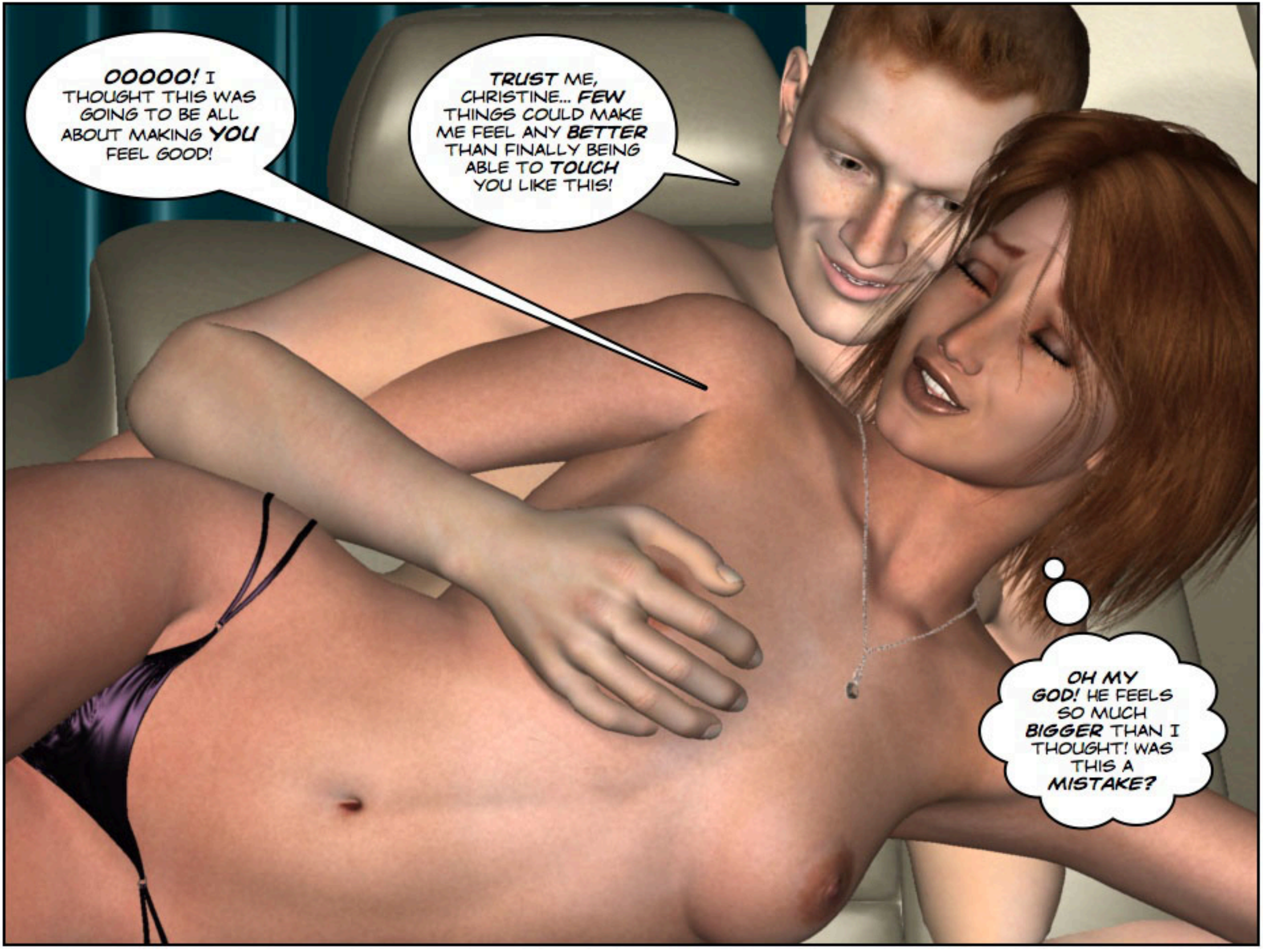
I'VE WANTED YOU FOR SO LONG, CHRISTINE! YOU CAN'T BELIEVE HOW ***FRUSTRATING*** THESE PAST WEEKS HAVE BEEN FOR ME!

HE ***REALLY*** WANTS ME! I... I GUESS I NEVER REALIZED HOW ***MUCH*** I WANTED TO HEAR THAT FROM HIM! HOW MUCH I ***NEEDED*** TO HEAR IT!

I NEVER PLANNED ON *GIVING* MYSELF TO A MAN *THIS* WAY... SO SOON! BUT PERHAPS IT'S TIME! AND DANIEL IS THE *ONE!*


WELL, I MAY NOT BE A FULLY FUNCTIONING WOMAN YET, BUT THERE ARE PLENTY OF THINGS WE CAN DO IN THE MEANTIME!

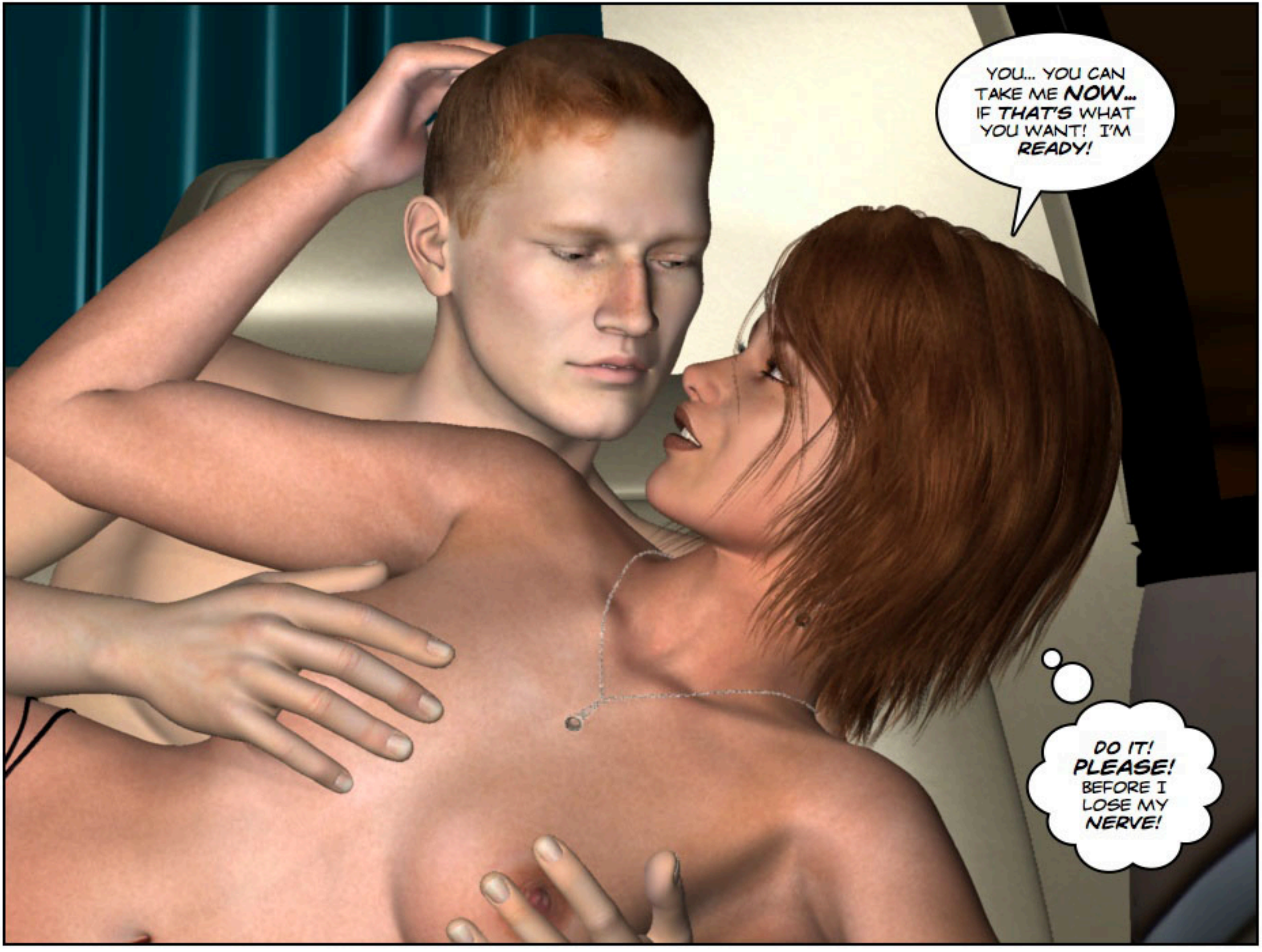

REALLY? I WONDER IF THEY'RE AS INTERESTING AS WHAT I HAVE IN MIND?
HOW ABOUT WE JUST COMPARE NOTES LATER, HMMM?


OOOOO! I THOUGHT THIS WAS GOING TO BE ALL ABOUT MAKING YOU FEEL GOOD!
TRUST ME, CHRISTINE... FEW THINGS COULD MAKE ME FEEL ANY BETTER THAN FINALLY BEING ABLE TO TOUCH YOU LIKE THIS!
OH MY GOD! HE FEELS SO MUCH BIGGER THAN I THOUGHT! WAS THIS A MISTAKE?

CAN YOU **FEEL** ME, CHRISTINE? WHAT ARE YOU THINKING? **TELL ME!**

I FEEL... **EXCITED...** A LITTLE **SCARED!** IT'S ALL SO NEW... BUT SO **WONDERFUL!**

THIS IS IT! I PUT ***MYSELF*** IN THIS POSITION! IT'S TIME TO LET HIM KNOW...!


YOU... YOU CAN TAKE ME NOW... IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT! I'M READY!
DO IT! PLEASE! BEFORE I LOSE MY NERVE!

ARE YOU, CHRISTINE? IS THAT WHAT YOU TRULY WANT? OFFERING YOURSELF LIKE THIS MEANS MORE TO ME THAN YOU KNOW! BUT I SENSE SOME HESITATION...

I DON'T THINK YOU'RE QUITE READY! SO WE'LL SAVE THAT FOR ANOTHER TIME...

HE... HE'S NOT GOING TO DO IT! HE'S ACHING WITH DESIRE, BUT HE'S WILLING TO HOLD BACK BECAUSE HE CAN TELL HOW SCARED I AM!

MY GOD! HE'S LETTING ME OFF THE HOOK BECAUSE HE REALLY DOES CARE ABOUT ME!

OOOOO.... THAT FEELS WONDERFUL!

HMMM! WITHOUT THAT HANGING OVER MY HEAD... COUPLED WITH DANIEL'S AMAZING TONGUE-PLAY... I FEEL SO... LIBERATED! ALMOST GIDDY!


AND NOW I THINK IT'S DEFINITELY TIME WE TURNED OUR ATTENTION TO YOU, DANIEL!
I WAS RIGHT! HE IS HUGE! AND SOMEDAY... SOMEDAY SOON... I WON'T JUST BE PLAYING WITH THAT, I'LL BE RIDING IT!


MMMMMMM! I THINK YOU'VE DEFINITELY FOUND ONE OF MY FAVORITE SPOTS! LET'S SEE WHAT I CAN LEARN ABOUT YOURS!
LISTEN TO ME! SASSY LITTLE TROLLOP! I SOUND LIKE I'VE BEEN DOING THIS FOR YEARS!

WELL, I'VE COME ***THIS*** FAR! I MIGHT AS WELL GO ***ALL THE WAY!***

YOU... ARE ***AMAZING!*** AND HAVE SURPASSED ***ALL*** MY EXPECTATIONS!

REALLY? THEN I GUESS YOU DIDN'T ***EXPECT*** WHAT'S COMING ***NEXT!***

YOU **DON'T** HAVE TO DO THIS, CHRISTINE!

I **KNOW** I DON'T! BUT I **WANT** TO!


PERFECT!
JUST...
PERFECT!

QUANTUM

Chapter Six

BUTTERFLY

by CBlack

A FEW DAYS LATER, AT THE NORTHWESTERN U RESEARCH LIBRARY...

I'M IN *LUCK!* I WANTED TO BE SURE, AFTER ALL THE SHIFTS I'VE EXPERIENCED, THAT PROFESSOR HOLTZMAN IS *STILL* ON THE SAME TRACK AS BEFORE!

ACCORDING TO THE *CERN* WEBSITE, HE'S STILL WORKING ON HIS PLANCK GENERATOR RESEARCH!

IT'S FUNNY HOW ALL THE SHIFTS SEEM TO BE ***LOCALIZED*** AND CENTERED NEAR ME! AS FAR AS I CAN TELL, BESIDES MYSELF AND THE PEOPLE NEAR ME, THE REST OF THE WORLD HAS BEEN ***UNAFFECTED*** BY ALL THESE TIMELINE SHIFTS!

MAYBE ITS A ***GOOD*** THING HE'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD AFTER ALL!

DEFINITELY SOMETHING TO TALK WITH THE PROFESSOR ABOUT IF I EVER GET THE CHANCE!

WITH OUR TRIP TO **SWITZERLAND** COMING UP, I'LL **FINALLY** BE ABLE TO TALK TO THE PROFESSOR! I **HOPE...!**

BUT MY **BIGGEST** CONCERN IS **CONVINCING** HIM OF WHO I AM, OR WAS, AND WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING TO ME THESE LAST FEW MONTHS!

BUT AFTER TRACKING DOWN HIS RESEARCH NOTES, PLUS SOME EXTRA DIGGING HERE AT THE NU LIBRARY, I THINK I **MAY** HAVE JUST FOUND A WAY!

NEQNET: The world of quantum physics

String theory and the diffusion equation

THAT TOOK LONGER THAN I THOUGHT! I'LL HAVE TO **HURRY** IF I'M GOING TO MEET **SALLY** FOR COFFEE!

SEVERAL **NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY ATHLETES** HAVE BEEN **SUSPENDED** FOR NCAA VIOLATIONS REGARDING IMPROPER **GIFTS** FROM BOOSTERS...

OH YEAH, BOBBY! I KNEW IF WE CRUISED THE CAMPUS LONG ENOUGH WE'D **SCORE!** CHECK OUT THE **ASS** ON THAT HONEY UP THERE!

LOCAL AUTOMOTIVE DEALER **JAMES A. "SLIM" GIVENS** IS UNDER INVESTIGATION AS THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF THE ALLEGED GIFTS!

DEFINITELY **GRADE-A USDA PRIME,** JAKE! THAT'S FOR DAMN SURE!

HEY THERE, DOLL! HOW ABOUT OUR OWN PRIVATE ***PANTY RAID?!***

POOL
1st FLOOR

OH GOD! JAKE AND ***BOBBY!*** THEY'RE THE ***LAST*** THING I NEED RIGHT NOW!

ESPECIALLY IF THEY ***RECOGNIZE*** ME!



CHRIS? IS THAT YOU?

SIGH! HERE WE GO!

YES, BOBBY... IT'S ME! AND...

POOL
1st Fl

...WHERE'S JAKE?

JAKE? WHY ASK ME? AS FAR AS I KNOW, HE'S STILL IN JOLIET... WHERE HE'S BEEN FOR THE LAST THREE MONTHS! REMEMBER?

OH... UM, I GUESS I **DO**... NOW! SORRY... I'VE HAD MY HEAD BURIED IN BOOKS FOR THE LAST FEW HOURS AND I'M A LITTLE **SPACEY!** I SAW SOMEONE BEHIND YOU A MINUTE AGO THAT **LOOKED** LIKE HIM AND JUST **FORGOT,** I GUESS!

OH MY GOD! JAKE... HE DIDN'T JUST **TORMENT** ME FOR BEING TRANSGENDER.... HE **BEAT THE CRAP** OUT OF ME! MY FACE WAS BLACK-AND-BLUE FOR **WEEKS! HOW** COULD I HAVE FORGOTTEN ONE OF THE **WORST** NIGHTS OF MY LIFE?

THERE'S BEEN **ANOTHER** SHIFT! **DAMN IT!** I NEED TO **FOCUS,** FIGURE OUT WHAT **ELSE** MIGHT HAVE CHANGED!


1st FLOOR
YOU THINK I'D STILL HANG OUT WITH THAT JERK AFTER WHAT HE DID TO YOU? WHAT KIND OF GUY DO YOU THINK I AM?
SORRY! I... I WASN'T TRYING TO SAY... LET'S JUST FORGET IT, OKAY?


SO, WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP HERE? SCOPING OUT THE PLACE FOR GIRLS?
ACTUALLY, I'M LOOKING FOR YOU!


ME? BUT... WHY?
WELL... I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN QUITE A WHILE, AND WHEN SALLY SAID YOU WERE UP HERE AND I HAPPENED TO BE IN THE AREA...!

I WAS *HOPING* WE COULD...!

I'M SORRY, BOBBY! I *HAVE* TO TAKE THIS!

DANIEL WOULD JUST *FREAK OUT* IF I LET IT GO TO MY VOICEMAIL!

RING!!

RING!!

YES, DANIEL?... OF *COURSE* I REMEMBER! HOW COULD I FORGET?... YOU *CAN'T?* BUT *WHY?*...


NO, I UNDERSTAND! BUT WHAT ABOUT ROGER?... YOU REALLY THINK SO? ARE YOU SURE?...
WELL, OKAY! AS LONG AS HE DOESN'T MIND YOU NOT BEING THERE!...


DON'T WORRY, I'LL TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING!... I'LL MISS YOU, TOO, BABY! BYE!
YOU'RE... SEEING SOMEONE?


UMM... YEAH! DON'T LET IT GET AROUND, THOUGH! DADDY DOESN'T KNOW YET! I DON'T THINK HE'S READY FOR THAT!
I DON'T BLAME HIM!


I'M SORRY... WHAT DID YOU SAY?
OH, UMM... I JUST SAID YOU SEEM TO BE DOING GREAT, CHRIS! AND I'M GLAD YOU'RE HAPPY! YOU DESERVE IT!


THAT'S AWFULLY SWEET OF YOU TO SAY, BOBBY! IT REALLY MEANS A LOT TO ME!
YEAH... WELL...!

I WISH I COULD STAY AND TALK **MORE,** BUT I'M ALREADY **LATE** MEETING WITH **SALLY!** CAN WE GET TOGETHER SOME **OTHER** TIME?

SURE, NO PROBLEM! I KNOW YOU'RE **BUSY!** I SHOULD HAVE TRIED CALLING FIRST!

YOU KNOW WHERE YOU CAN ***ALWAYS*** FIND ME WHEN YOU HAVE THE TIME!

SURE! I'LL STOP IN WHEN I HAVE A CHANCE, BOBBY! IT... IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN!

HE... HE SEEMS ***DIFFERENT*** NOW! MORE LIKE THE SWEET GUY I ***USED*** TO KNOW, INSTEAD OF THE ***THUG*** HE TURNED INTO THE LAST TIME I SHIFTED!

...AND THROUGH HIS PRESS SECRETARY, **CONGRESSMAN GVENS INSISTS** THE CHARGES OF **SEXUAL HARASSMENT** AND **MISCONDUCT** WERE **FABRICATED** BY HIS **OPPONENT** IN THE UPCOMING ELECTION...

GOOD TO SEE YOU TOO, CHRIS! I'VE **MISSED** YOU... MORE THAN KNOW!

A SHORT WHILE LATER AT A FAMILIAR COFFEE SHOP...

THAT WAS A ***DIRTY*** TRICK YOU PLAYED, SENDING ***BOBBY*** UP TO SEE ME WITHOUT ANY WARNING!

I HAD TO DO ***SOMETHING!*** BOBBY'S ***ALWAYS*** ASKING AFTER YOU, AND YOU ***NEVER*** GO BACK TO THE OLD NEIGHBORHOOD!


AND WHY WOULD I WANT TO DO THAT? SO THE ASSHOLES AND HOMOPHOBES CAN SAY EVEN MORE NASTY THINGS TO ME?
BOBBY'S NOT LIKE THAT!

I GUESS! I MEAN, IT WAS ***NICE*** TO SEE HIM AGAIN. I'VE ***MISSED*** HAVING BOBBY IN MY LIFE. BUT IT STILL ***HURTS,*** YOU KNOW?

I THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO BE ***SUPPORTIVE*** WHEN I FIRST TOLD HIM ABOUT MY... MY INTENTIONS, BUT THEN HE TURNED OUT TO BE LIKE ***EVERY OTHER*** GUY I KNEW GROWING UP... ***MEAN AND NASTY!***

BOBBY **TRIED** TO HIDE IT, BUT HE TOTALLY **FREAKED OUT** WHEN HIS OLD BUDDY **CHRIS** ANNOUNCED THAT HE WANTED TO BE A **GIRL!**

AND JAKE WAS **SLIMY** ENOUGH TO TAKE **ADVANTAGE** OF THE SITUATION... FAN THE FLAMES!


BUT BOBBY EVENTUALLY SAW THROUGH JAKE'S BULLSHIT AND CAME TO HIS SENSES! LUCKILY FOR YOU!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

I THOUGHT... I GUESS WE'VE **NEVER** TALKED ABOUT THAT NIGHT! **BOBBY** WAS THE ONE WHO PULLED JAKE OFF OF YOU! I SHUDDER TO THINK ABOUT HOW MUCH **WORSE** IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IF BOBBY HADN'T STEPPED IN!

YOU HONESTLY **DON'T** REMEMBER?

IT... IT WAS **BOBBY** WHO SAVED ME? I... I DIDN'T KNOW!

I DON'T KNOW **WHY** I'M SURPRISED! YOU **WERE** PRETTY OUT OF IT WHEN I SAW YOU AT THE HOSPITAL, SO IT'S NO WONDER **YOU** DON'T REMEMBER!

I'LL TELL YOU **ONE** THING... JAKE WILL **NEVER** FORGET! BOBBY MESSED HIM UP REAL GOOD BEFORE THE COPS PULLED HIM OFF! IT TOOK **THREE** OF THEM TO DO IT, TOO!

OH MY GOD! I HAD NO IDEA!

BOBBY **SAVED** ME... AND I JUST **BLEW HIM OFF** TODAY! IF ONLY I HAD **REMEMBERED**... BUT SALLY'S RIGHT! THAT NIGHT IS A TOTAL **BLUR!** I CAN ONLY RECALL BEING AT THE BOWLING ALLEY, AND THEN WAKING UP IN THE **HOSPITAL** THE NEXT DAY!

SO, DID YOU TWO HAVE A NICE CHAT?


Big Four
WE DIDN'T REALLY GET A CHANCE! I WAS ON MY WAY HERE... AND LATE, AND THEN DANIEL CALLED...!
GEE, THERE'S A SURPRISE! HONESTLY CHRIS, THAT BOSS OF YOURS CREEPS ME OUT A LITTLE! HE SEEMS TO THINK YOU'RE ON CALL TWENTY-FOUR/SEVEN!

YOU KNOW HE'S **MORE** THAN MY BOSS THESE DAYS! SO GO **EASY** ON DANIEL, OKAY? HE'S BEEN **VERY GOOD** TO ME!

SO I'VE **SEEN!** FANCY **CLOTHES...** FANCY **PARTIES!** YOU'VE BECOME QUITE THE **SOCIALITE!**

HEY, THAT'S NOT ALL I DO! I EARN MY PAYCHECK! IN FACT, I'VE BEEN VERY INSTRUMENTAL IN SOME...!

RELAX, HONEY! RELAX! I'M NOT CRITICIZING! I SAY, GO FOR IT! BUT, BE CAREFUL...

THE GUY MAY DO A LOT FOR YOU, AND HE DOES LOOK YUMMY IN A TUX, BUT YOU'VE GOT TO ADMIT... HE'S SOMETHING OF A CONTROL FREAK!

YOU JUST DON'T **KNOW** HIM LIKE I DO! HE'S BEEN **NOTHING** BUT **SUPPORTIVE** AND SWEET TO ME SINCE THE MOMENT WE MET! AS A MATTER OF FACT, HE'S TAKING ME TO **SWITZERLAND** SOON SO I CAN HAVE MY **SURGERY!**

SERIOUSLY?! YOU'RE GOING **THROUGH** WITH IT?! **OH MY GOD,** CHRIS! THAT'S **AMAZING!**

HAVE YOU TOLD ANYONE *ELSE?*

NOT YET! *YOU'RE* THE FIRST! I WANTED TO SEE WHAT *YOU* THOUGHT BEFORE I TELL MY DAD.

I THINK IT'S *FABULOUS!* IF IT'S WHAT *YOU* WANT... NOT *DANIEL!*

OF COURSE IT'S WHAT **I** WANT! IT'S WHAT I'VE **ALWAYS** WANTED! AND NOW DANIEL'S HELPING TO MAKE THAT A **REALITY!**

THAT'S **GREAT,** BUT YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DO IT EVENTUALLY **WITHOUT** HIS HELP! YOU **KNOW** THAT, DON'T YOU?

SURE, BUT WHY **WAIT** WHEN DANIEL'S MADE EVERYTHING SO **EASY** FOR ME?

WELL... AS LONG AS **YOU'RE** HAPPY!

OH, I **AM!** BELIEVE ME!

ALL RIGHT THEN! NOW THAT THE ***TRIVIAL*** STUFF IS OUT OF THE WAY, LET'S GET DOWN TO THE ***IMPORTANT*** TOPICS!

LIKE, ***WHERE*** DID YOU GET THOSE ***FABULOUS*** BOOTS?

AFTER A FEW MORE HOURS OF "GIRL TALK"...

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO SEND THE ***LIMO*** FOR ME, DANIEL! I'M PERFECTLY ***CAPABLE*** OF GETTING MYSELF TO YOUR HOUSE!

I KNOW, BUT CONSIDERING HOW ***IMPORTANT*** THIS MEETING IS, I DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE ***ANYTHING*** TO CHANCE! I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND!

OF COURSE I DO! I JUST WISH ***YOU*** COULD BE HERE, TOO!


UNFORTUNATELY, THIS EMERGENCY STOCKHOLDER'S MEETING TAKES PRECEDENCE, SO IT'S ALL UP TO YOU TO CLOSE THE DEAL THIS EVENING!
SIGH! NO PRESSURE!

YOU'LL DO *FINE*, I'M SURE OF THAT! I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF CHOOSING AN *OUTFIT* FOR YOU TO WEAR THAT I THINK WOULD BE MOST *APPROPRIATE!* YOU'LL FIND IT IN THE GUEST BEDROOM!

REALLY? IS IT AS *"APPROPRIATE"* AS THE ONE YOU CHOSE FOR OUR *LAST* MEETING WITH ROGER?

OF COURSE! CONSIDERING HOW WELL **THAT** MEETING WENT AND THE IMPRESSION YOU MADE, I THOUGHT I'D STICK WITH OUR **"STRENGTHS"**!

I JUST HOPE THOSE **"STRENGTHS"** DON'T DISTRACT ROGER **TOO** MUCH!

ACTUALLY, I'M **COUNTING** ON IT! I'VE KNOWN ROGER FOR **YEARS** AND KNOW FULL WELL THAT HE COULD'VE GIVEN US THE CONTRACT ON THE SPOT THE OTHER NIGHT! HE JUST INSISTED ON THIS SECOND MEETING TO MAKE ME **SQUIRM** A LITTLE!

IF *THAT'S* THE CASE, THEN HOW SHOULD I APPROACH THIS MEETING *TONIGHT?*

JUST BE THE SAME *DELECTABLE* AND *INTELLIGENT* WOMAN YOU WERE THE OTHER NIGHT! HE'LL APPRECIATE *THAT* MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE AND SEAL THE DEAL!

AND AS SOON AS *THAT'S* DONE, I'LL BUY US A PAIR OF TICKETS TO *SWITZERLAND!* HOW DOES *THAT* SOUND?

OH DANIEL, THAT SOUNDS **WONDERFUL!** DON'T YOU WORRY, I'LL **SEE** TO IT THAT ROGER DOESN'T LEAVE TONIGHT WITHOUT **COMMITTING** TO THIS CONTRACT!

OF **COURSE** YOU WILL, CHRISTINE! I HAVE **EVERY** CONFIDENCE IN YOU!

A FEW HOURS LATER, AT DANIEL'S HOUSE...

I HOPE I CAN PULL THIS OFF! WITH THIS ***DRESS*** THAT DANIEL HAS PICKED OUT FOR ME, I DON'T THINK ROGER WILL TAKE ME ***SERIOUSLY*** AS A BUSINESSWOMAN!

ON THE OTHER HAND, I **DO** LOOK FANTASTIC IN IT! AND SINCE ROGER LIKED THE WAY I LOOKED THE OTHER NIGHT, THEN MAYBE HE'LL BE ***PUTTY*** IN MY HANDS!


LISTEN TO ME! I SOUND JUST LIKE ONE OF THOSE FEMME FATALES THAT DANIEL'S BEEN TRYING TO COAX OUT OF ME! A WEEK AGO I NEVER WOULD'VE THOUGHT OF MYSELF THIS WAY!

BUT AFTER THAT EVENING IN THE BACK OF THE LIMO, I FEEL POSITIVELY ***BRAZEN!*** ESPECIALLY WHEN I LOOK AT MY REFLECTION! I AM ***SO DAMN SEXY!***

I JUST WISH IT WAS **DANIEL** I WAS WAITING FOR INSTEAD OF ROGER! I SUDDENLY FIND MYSELF **CRAVING** A REPEAT PERFORMANCE... BUT **WITHOUT** THE CONFINES OF THE LIMO!


OH DANIEL... WHY CAN'T YOU BE HERE RIGHT NOW?
NOW WHY CAN'T ALL MY BUSINESS MEETINGS BE CHAIRED BY SOMEONE WHO LOOKS LIKE YOU?


OH, ROGER! I DIDN'T HEAR YOU COME IN!
NOT A PROBLEM! THE MAID LET ME IN AND POINTED ME IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION! I UNDERSTAND DANIEL WON'T BE JOINING US THIS EVENING!

HE'S **SO** SORRY HE COULDN'T BE HERE, BUT IT WAS A MEETING HE **COULDN'T** GET OUT OF!

I'M **VERY** GLAD **YOU** COULD STILL MAKE IT THOUGH!

SO I **SEE!** WHICH MAKES ME EVEN **MORE** PLEASED THAT **I** DIDN'T CANCEL!

DAMN IT! TALK ABOUT **BAD TIMING!** I NEED TO CALM DOWN, GET MY MIND **OFF** OF DANIEL AND **ONTO** BUSINESS!

UMM... CAN I GET YOU A **DRINK** BEFORE WE BEGIN?

SCOTCH... NEAT, WOULD BE **PERFECT,** CHRISTINE!


SO, HOW MUCH HAS DANIEL TOLD YOU ABOUT ME? BE TRUTHFUL NOW!
TRUTHFULLY? WELL THEN, HE SAYS YOU TWO GO BACK TO YOUR BOARDING SCHOOL DAYS WHERE YOU WERE BOTH GOOD FRIENDS BUT ALSO FIERCE RIVALS IN PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING!


THAT PRETTY MUCH SUMS US UP... IN GENERAL! BUT DID HE FILL YOU IN ON ANY SPECIFICS OF OUR DEALINGS OVER THE YEARS?
NO, HE DIDN'T! MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO FILL IN SOME OF THOSE DETAILS FOR ME!


WELL, ALL THE DETAILS WOULD PROBABLY BORE YOU, BUT LET'S JUST SAY THAT DANIEL AND I HAVE ALWAYS HAD A GIVE AND TAKE POLICY IN REGARD TO OUR MANY ENDEAVORS... BOTH BUSINESS AND PERSONAL!
UMM...HOW DOES THAT WORK EXACTLY?

IN ORDER TO KEEP OUR COMPETITIONS ON A RELATIVELY EVEN KEEL, WHENEVER ONE OF US ***TAKES*** SOMETHING FROM THE OTHER HE'S USUALLY EXPECTED TO ALSO ***GIVE UP*** SOMETHING IN RETURN! OR ***VICE-VERSA!***

UH OH! I DON'T LIKE THE ***SOUND*** OF THIS...

SUCH AS?


WELL, I GUESS IT STARTED IN SCHOOL WHEN HE SCORED A DATE WITH THE GIRL HE KNEW I HAD A HUGE CRUSH ON! HE MADE IT UP BY GIVING ME ACCESS TO HIS FATHER'S SKI CABIN FOR SPRING BREAK!
REALLY...?

IN ***BUSINESS*** DEALINGS, I ONCE BEAT HIM OUT ON A ***MAJOR*** ACQUISITION THAT HAS PROVED ***VERY*** PROFITABLE FOR ME SINCE! TO COMPENSATE, I GIVE HIM OCCASIONAL... ***ADVANCE NOTICES*** ON SOME OF MY COMPANIES SO HE CAN INVEST WISELY!

HMMM! ***EQUITABLE...*** IF NOT EXACTLY ***LEGAL!***


SO... HOW HAVE YOU TWO DECIDED TO INCORPORATE YOUR "POLICY" INTO *THIS* DEAL?
OH, WE *HAVEN'T!* SINCE DANIEL HAS *YOU* HERE IN HIS STEAD, IT'S UP TO *YOU AND ME* TO DECIDE THE... *PARTICULARS!*

HE ISN'T SUGGESTING WHAT I THINK HE IS... ***IS HE? NO!*** I MUST BE MISTAKEN! DANIEL WOULD ***NEVER*** HAVE PUT ME IN SUCH A SITUATION! HE'D ***NEVER*** WANT ME TO... TO...!

RING!!

RING!!


EXCUSE ME, CHRISTINE! I WAS *EXPECTING* THIS CALL! I'LL TAKE IT IN THE NEXT ROOM!

HOLY CRAP! I AM IN WAY OVER MY HEAD! I'M NOT SURE IF ROGER IS SERIOUSLY PUTTING A MOVE ON ME OR JUST FLIRTING!

EITHER WAY, I'M DEFINITELY FLATTERED BY THE ATTENTION! ROGER IS A VERY ATTRACTIVE MAN, AFTER ALL!


IF I WASN'T WITH DANIEL, I'D ALMOST BE TEMPTED TO FIND OUT JUST HOW SERIOUS ROGER IS!
BUT NO! I COULD NEVER... BESIDES, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! THERE'S NO WAY HE'D BE SO ATTENTIVE IF HE KNEW THE TRUTH ABOUT ME!

I THINK I'VE GOTTEN ***CARRIED AWAY!*** DIDN'T DANIEL SAY THIS MEETING IS JUST A ***FORMALITY?*** HE WOULDN'T HAVE PUT ME IN THIS SITUATION, OR THIS ***DRESS,*** IF ANYTHING ***ELSE*** HAD BEEN REQUIRED!

A FEW ***COME-HITHER*** LOOKS PEPPERED WITH A LITTLE ***SUGGESTIVE DIALOG*** ARE ALL THAT'S NEEDED TO GET ROGER TO SIGN ON THE DOTTED LINE!


SORRY FOR THE INTERRUPTION! IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN!
GOOD! NOW, HOW ABOUT WE GET DOWN TO BUSINESS?
MY THOUGHTS EXACTLY!

SO, WHERE WERE WE?

I BELIEVE WE WERE IN THE MIDDLE OF DISCUSSING THE PARTICULAR ***DETAILS*** OF THIS DEAL!

AH, YES! THE SPECIFICS OF ***GIVE AND TAKE***... MY ***FAVORITE*** PART!


WELL, THE WAY I SEE IT, IT'S NOT ALL THAT COMPLICATED! BY GIVING US THIS CONTRACT, YOU'LL BE TAKING AWAY ONE OF THE HOTTEST AND SEXIEST PLANES IN THE INDUSTRY!

HMMM... NOT BAD, BUT I THINK YOU STILL DON'T ***QUITE*** UNDERSTAND OUR LITTLE GAME!

OH, I THINK I UNDERSTAND IT ***VERY*** WELL! THIS IS A ***WIN-WIN*** SCENARIO AND WE'RE THE ***ONLY*** GAME IN TOWN!

BUT IF IT ***HELPS,*** I'LL ALSO THROW IN MY ***UNDYING GRATITUDE!***

AND THERE'S THE RUB...! YOU SEE, YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN! THAT PHONE CALL WAS FROM ANOTHER OLD FRIEND AT WESTERVELT JETS!

HE HAS A COMPARABLE PLANE HE'D LOVE TO SELL ME, TOO... FOR A SUBSTANTIALLY SMALLER COST!

OH SHIT! THERE'S COMPETITION? DANIEL'S GOING TO FREAK OUT!

WESTERVELT? SERIOUSLY? WE... WE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW YOU WERE TALKING TO THEM!

JUST EXERCISING **ALL** MY OPTIONS! GOOD BUSINESS AND ALL THAT!

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO **DO?** DANIEL WILL BE **HEARTBROKEN,** HE MIGHT NOT EVEN WANT TO MAKE THE TRIP TO **SWITZERLAND** IF I LOSE THIS DEAL!

BUT SURELY YOU **REALIZE,** ROGER, THAT THEIR **"COMPARABLE"** PLANE ISN'T EVEN IN THE SAME **CLASS** AS OUR **CHIMERA!** YOU'VE SEEN ALL THE SPECS, SO WHY EVEN **CONSIDER** ANYTHING ELSE?

TRUE! YOURS IS A BETTER PLANE, BUT THE COST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO PRETTY MUCH BALANCES EVERYTHING OUT!

SO **HERE'S** WHERE THE PARTICULARS DEFINITELY GET **INTERESTING!** IF YOU **REALLY** WANT TO TAKE THIS CONTRACT BACK TO DANIEL, THEN YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GIVE ME SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE **MEANINGFUL** THAN YOUR **"UNDYING GRATITUDE"!**

OH MY GOD! **I** THOUGHT THIS WAS ALL ABOUT **FLIRTING** AND PLAYFUL **BANTER,** BUT NOW I SEE IT'S **NOT** JUST A GAME WITH ROGER!

I CERTAINLY DON'T WANT TO FOOL AROUND WITH THIS GUY... BUT HOW CAN I SAY ***NO?*** MAYBE I CAN SOMEHOW ***BLUFF*** MY WAY THROUGH THIS AND ***STILL*** GET THE CONTRACT!


IS THIS REALLY WANT YOU WANT? SKI LODGES AND STOCK TIPS ARE ONE THING, BUT I'M DANIEL'S EXECUTIVE SECRETARY... AND GIRLFRIEND! DO YOU REALLY WANT TO RISK YOUR LONG FRIENDSHIP BY FORCING ME INTO A TAWDRY, ONE-NIGHT STAND?
OH, I DON'T THINK I'LL HAVE TO FORCE ANYTHING, CHRISTINE! I KNOW A HORNY WOMAN WHEN I SEE... OR FEEL ONE!

I THINK YOU'RE MORE **OPEN** TO THIS THEN YOU'RE WILLING TO ADMIT! AND DANIEL **DOESN'T** HAVE TO KNOW ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN US TONIGHT! **I** CERTAINLY DON'T PLAN ON TELLING HIM!

OH GOD, IS HE **RIGHT?** IN ANY **NORMAL** SITUATION I MIGHT BE ABLE TO KEEP IT IN CHECK, BUT MY LIBIDO'S BEEN IN **OVERDRIVE** SINCE BEFORE ROGER GOT HERE!


OOOO... AND WHAT HE'S DOING WITH MY NIPPLES DOESN'T HELP ONE BIT, EITHER!
OOOO... WE REALLY SHOULDN'T...!
SHOULDN'T WE, CHRISTINE? WELL THEN, JUST SAY THE WORD AND I'LL STOP... CONTRARY TO EVERYTHING THIS LUSCIOUS BODY OF YOURS IS TELLING ME! JUST TELL ME TO STOP!


I CAN'T DO THIS! THIS ISN'T WHO I AM, OR WHO I WANT TO BE! I'VE GOT TO TELL HIM... BEFORE I LOSE CONTROL... BEFORE HE FINDS OUT THE TRUTH...!
I... I CAN'T...! PLEASE, ROGER...!
BUT BEFORE YOU SAY ANYTHING ELSE, CHRISTINE, I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW...


I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU, CHRISTINE! AND I MEAN... EVERYTHING!


GASP!
YOU... YOU
KNOW...!

WH...WHERE *ARE* WE? *OH NO... ! ANOTHER* SHIFT! AND THE TIMING COULDN'T BE... *OOOO,* I *LOVE* IT WHEN HE DOES THAT!

OOOOO! YOU *KNOW* HOW MUCH I *LOVE* IT WHEN YOU DO THAT!

THAT'S *WHY* I KEEP DOING IT! I *KNOW* WHAT MAKES THIS GORGEOUS BODY OF YOURS *SING!*

GOD! HE'S SO MUCH **BIGGER** THAN DANIEL! CAN I **HANDLE** ALL OF THAT? I WANT TO **SO** BADLY!

THEN I SUPPOSE YOU KNOW JUST WHAT I WANT **NEXT**, HMM?

HOW ABOUT I **SHOW** YOU, AND THEN YOU **TELL** ME IF I'M WRONG!

YES! I DID IT! BUT... OF COURSE I DID! I HAVE BEFORE... MANY TIMES!

OOOOO! I NEVER BELIEVED I COULD EVER ENJOY THIS SO MUCH! IT JUST GETS BETTER AND BETTER EVERY TIME! WHY IS THAT?

BECAUSE YOU'VE GOT A GUY WHO KNOWS TO TREAT THIS SPECTACULAR ASS OF YOURS WITH CARE! WOULDN'T YOU AGREE?


MMMM... YOU WERE INCREDIBLY GENTLE THAT FIRST TIME! HAVE I TOLD YOU YOU HOW MUCH I APPRECIATED THAT!
EVERY TIME SINCE, CHRISSY! EVERY TIME SINCE!
NOW, HOLD ON, BABY, WHILE I ROCK YOUR WORLD!


OHHHHHHHHH....
GOD!!!!

A WHILE LATER, IN THE "AFTERGLOW"...

WHEW! OF ALL THE SHIFTS I'VE BEEN THROUGH SO FAR, THIS ONE HAS *GOT* TO BE THE MOST... *BREATHTAKING!*

WHAT I JUST EXPERIENCED WITH ROGER MAKES DANIEL AND ME LOOK LIKE *MIDDLE SCHOOL KIDS* PLAYING *SPIN THE BOTTLE!*

AND THE FACT THAT WE'VE BEEN DOING IT **HERE** IN **DANIEL'S** HOUSE... IN **MY ROOM** IN DANIEL'S HOUSE, EVER SINCE WE SEALED THE DEAL WEEKS AGO, MAKES ME FEEL SO... **SHAMELESS!**

BUT *I* **LOVE** *IT!*

MMMM... WILL YOU *STILL* DO THAT TO ME EVEN *AFTER* I GET BACK FROM SWITZERLAND?

BABY, I'LL DO YOU IN *ANY* HOLE YOU WANT! *ESPECIALLY* THE NEW ONE!


GOD! YOU'RE A CRUDE SON OF A BITCH! JUST WHAT IS IT I SEE IN YOU?
ONE SECOND AND I'LL SHOW YOU, BABE!


WHAT YOU SEE IN ME IS A GUY WHO KNOWS HOW TO MAKE YOU SCREAM OUT IN *PLEASURE* EVERY SINGLE TIME!
SIGH! I WISH THOSE TIMES WEREN'T RESTRICTED TO *ONLY* WHEN DANIEL WAS OUT OF TOWN!

EVEN THOUGH I'VE PRACTICALLY ***BEGGED***, HE ***STILL*** WON'T TAKE ME THE WAY ***YOU*** DO!

AS GOOD AS I'VE GOTTEN AT ***MANIPULATING*** HIM... MY ***OWN ROOM*** IN HIS HOUSE, AN ***UNLIMITED*** WARDROBE ACCOUNT... IT'S THE ***ONE*** THING I CAN'T GET HIM TO DO!

AND HE ***NEVER*** WILL! THAT'S JUST THE WAY HE ***IS***... HE'S ALWAYS HAD WEIRD ***HANG-UPS*** ABOUT SEX... AND WOMEN! THAT'S ***ONE*** REASON I THINK HE'S INTO GIRLS LIKE ***YOU!***

ME, ON THE OTHER HAND... I'VE ALWAYS BEEN THE ADVENTUROUS ONE! NOT AFRAID TO PUSH THE ENVELOPE! HELL, I'M NOT EVEN THE LEAST BIT BOTHERED BY THE REMNANTS OF YOUR LITTLE EX-PETER DOWN HERE!

CALL ME CRAZY, BUT I THINK YOUR BRUSQUE HONESTY IS ONE OF YOUR MORE ENDEARING TRAITS!


BUT NOW I THINK I NEED TO SPEND A LITTLE QUALITY TIME ON YOUR *NUMBER ONE* TRAIT!

HOW MUCH *TIME* DO WE HAVE?

AS ALWAYS, THE PILOT HAS INSTRUCTIONS TO CALL ME THE SECOND DANNY-BOY'S JET TOUCHES DOWN! THEY'RE PROBABLY SOMEWHERE OVER *MONTANA* RIGHT NOW!

PLENTY OF TIME FOR ONE MORE ROUND!


OH YEAH! I DEFINITELY GOT THE BETTER END OF THIS DEAL!

A FEW HOURS LATER...

CHRISTINE?
I'M BACK! ARE YOU UP THERE?


NO, I'M RIGHT *HERE!* WELCOME HOME!
MY, MY, *MY!* NOW THAT IS AN *ENTICING* LITTLE NUMBER!


YOU LIKE? I DID A LITTLE SHOPPING FOR OUR TRIP TO SWITZERLAND AND COULDN'T RESIST IT!
OH, I DO LIKE IT! VERY MUCH!


REALLY?
HOW MUCH?
YOU'VE CERTAINLY BEEN VERY FRISKY LATELY, ESPECIALLY WHENEVER I COME BACK FROM A TRIP!


WELL IT'S LONELY HERE WHEN YOU'RE GONE! CAN YOU BLAME ME FOR BEING... EXCITED WHEN YOU RETURN? I JUST WANT TO LOOK GOOD FOR YOU AND MAKE YOU HAPPY!
MMM-HMMM! IS THAT ALL?


TO BE TRUTHFUL, I DO HAVE AN ULTERIOR MOTIVE! AND IT HAS TO DO WITH THE NEW HEADQUARTERS BUILDING DOWNTOWN...!
...AND THE NEW CONSTRUCTION CHIEF I WANT YOU TO HIRE!

THE NEXT DAY AT THEIR WEEKLY LUNCHEON...

BREAKFAST

LUNCH


YOU'RE GOING WHERE?! TO DO WHAT?!
SWITZERLAND, DADDY! FOR MY REASSIGNMENT SURGERY! TO COMPLETE MY SEX CHANGE! BY THIS TIME NEXT WEEK, YOUR SON WILL OFFICIALLY BECOME YOUR NEW DAUGHTER!

HOW... HOW CAN YOU **AFFORD** THIS? I MEAN, I COULD TELL BY YOUR **CLOTHES** THAT THEY MUST BE PAYING YOU WELL, BUT... THIS MUST BE COSTING YOU A **SMALL FORTUNE!**

THE COMPANY IS PAYING FOR ***EVERYTHING,*** DADDY! LIKE I TOLD YOU, THEY HAVE AN ***AMAZING*** MEDICAL PROGRAM!

I ***KNOW*** THIS IS SOMETHING YOU ***WANT*** AND I'VE TRIED TO DO ***EVERYTHING*** I POSSIBLY COULD TO BE ***SUPPORTIVE*** OF YOU THIS WHOLE TIME!

AND YOU ***HAVE,*** DADDY! I COULDN'T HAVE ASKED FOR A MORE ***SUPPORTIVE FATHER*** THROUGH ALL THIS!

BUT WE NEVER ***TALKED*** ABOUT THIS! I NEVER DREAMED YOU WERE ***SO CLOSE*** TO CARRYING OUT THE OPERATION! THIS... THIS IS A LITTLE ***HARDER*** FOR ME THAN I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE! THE ***FINALITY*** OF IT ALL!

I THINK I NEED A MOMENT TO **MYSELF,** HONEY! STAY HERE, HAVE ANOTHER CUP OF COFFEE! I'LL BE BACK IN A COUPLE OF MINUTES!

O... OKAY, DAD!

CAN YOU WARM THIS UP FOR ME?

SURE... WHATEVER...

THANKS!


JUST THINK... THIS TIME TOMORROW I'LL BE SIPPING CHAMPAGNE ON A PRIVATE JET TO SWITZERLAND! LIFE IS GOOD!





WHAT THE ***HELL*** AM I DOING? I'M ***CELEBRATING*** MY GOOD FORTUNE WHILE DADDY'S IN ***TURMOIL!*** WHAT KIND OF PERSON HAVE I BECOME?

ALL THE TIMELINE SHIFTS OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS HAVE DONE MUCH ***MORE*** THAN JUST CHANGE ME PHYSICALLY... THEY'VE CHANGED ME ***PSYCHOLOGICALLY*** AS WELL!

AND ***NOT*** JUST THE CHANGES THAT GO ALONG WITH BEING ***FEMALE,*** IT'S ALL STARTING TO GO ***MUCH*** DEEPER THAN THAT!

I'VE CHANGED WITH ***EVERY*** SHIFT I'VE BEEN THROUGH, SOMETIMES A LITTLE, OTHER TIMES A ***LOT***... BUT EACH TIME I ADAPTED TO MY NEW REALITY, I THOUGHT I HAD BEEN ABLE TO ***MAINTAIN MY CORE VALUES!*** THAT I ESSENTIALLY REMAINED THE ***SAME PERSON!***

BUT NOW... I THINK I WAS ***WRONG!***

I'VE BEEN ***LYING, CHEATING AND MANIPULATING*** THE PEOPLE I CARE ABOUT... AND THE MOST ***FRIGHTENING*** PART IS, UNTIL THIS MOMENT IT ***DIDN'T*** BOTHER ME ONE BIT!

I DIDN'T WORRY THAT DADDY LOST HIS JOB! AND I ENJOYED... NO, I ACTUALLY ***REVELED*** IN THE WAY I COULD ***MANIPULATE*** BOTH DANIEL AND ROGER!

DADDY'S THE ONE PERSON WHO'S KEPT ME ***GROUNDED***... HE REMINDS ME OF ***WHO*** I AM AND ***WHERE*** I CAME FROM! HE'S SHOWN ME HOW TO LIVE A LIFE WITH ***INTEGRITY***, NO MATTER HOW TOUGH THINGS GET!

BUT RECENTLY, I'VE BEEN SO WRAPPED UP WITH THE CHANGES IN ***MY*** LIFE, BECOMING A ***WOMAN***, THAT I'VE ***DISMISSED*** MY ***OWN FATHER'S FEELINGS!*** I HAVEN'T FELT THE SLIGHTEST CONCERN ABOUT DADDY OR ***ANYONE ELSE!*** I... I'VE BECOME A SELFISH ***MONSTER!*** BUT WHY?

I DON'T GET IT! AS I'VE GROWN CLOSER AND CLOSER TO BEING COMPLETELY FEMALE, WHY HAVE I ALSO BECOME MORE AND MORE OF A SELFISH BITCH?

I HAVE TO CHANGE! I CAN'T GO THROUGH LIFE WITHOUT DADDY'S SUPPORT... AND APPROVAL! I WOULDN'T JUST BE LOSING HIM... I'D BE LOSING MYSELF AS WELL!

ARE YOU **SURE** YOU'RE OKAY?

OF **COURSE** I AM, HONEY! I JUST NEEDED A MOMENT TO WRAP MY HEAD AROUND ALL THIS! I HAVE TO ADMIT THAT IT'S **TOUGH** FOR A SINGLE FATHER LIKE ME TO HANDLE NEWS LIKE **THIS!**

I KNOW, DADDY! AND I...!

BUT THROUGH ALL OUR YEARS SINCE SHE PASSED, WHENEVER I GET TO A POINT LIKE ***THIS***, I ALWAYS ASK MYSELF, WHAT WOULD YOUR ***MOTHER*** HAVE DONE?

AND YOU KNOW, AS ***MUCH*** AS YOUR MOTHER LOVED YOU, I KNOW SHE ALWAYS WANTED TO HAVE A ***DAUGHTER*** AS WELL! SO... IT LOOKS LIKE SHE'S ***FINALLY*** GETTING HER WISH!

REALLY? MOM WANTED A DAUGHTER, TOO?

OH **SURE!** IN FACT, FROM THE NIGHT YOU WERE CONCEIVED, SHE WAS **CONVINCED** YOU WERE GOING TO BE A **GIRL!** IT MAY HAVE TAKEN **LONGER** THAN SHE THOUGHT, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE SHE WAS **ULTIMATELY** RIGHT!


WAIT... YOU KNOW THE EXACT NIGHT I WAS CONCEIVED?
IT'S NOT TOO HARD TO FIGURE OUT! WE'D BEEN TRYING FOR MONTHS, BUT I SPENT MOST OF 1988 WORKING ON A LONG-TERM JOB IN WISCONSIN! I WAS ONLY ABLE TO AFFORD TO COME BACK TO CHICAGO AND SEE HER A COUPLE OF TIMES!

OH MY GOD! IT NEVER OCCURRED TO ME! COULD IT BE THAT SIMPLE?

DAD... THIS MAY SOUND WEIRD, BUT... DO YOU KNOW THE NIGHT I WAS CONCEIVED?

IT HAD TO BE THE NIGHT AFTER THE '88 ELECTION! THAT WAS THE ONLY NIGHT I WAS HOME DURING THAT TWO-MONTH PERIOD! YOU WERE BORN ALMOST NINE MONTHS TO THE DAY AFTER THAT NIGHT!

THAT'S THE BUTTERFLY! NO MYSTERIOUS, UNKNOWN EVENT ON THE TRAIN DADDY DIDN'T TAKE OR THE TRAIN HE DID! I JUST DELAYED MY OWN CONCEPTION ENOUGH TO CAUSE A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT GENETIC RESULT!

IT MAY NOT EXPLAIN THE CONTINUAL SHIFTING, BUT IT DOES EXPLAIN WHY EACH SHIFT SEEMS TO MAKE ME MORE AND MORE FEMALE!

HEY, ARE YOU STILL WITH ME? YOU KIND OF ***ZONED OUT*** THERE FOR A MINUTE!

WHAT? OH, I'M SORRY, DADDY! I WAS JUST THINKING... ***HOPING*** AT LEAST... THAT MOM WOULD BE ***HAPPY*** TO KNOW THAT SHE'S ***FINALLY*** GETTING THE DAUGHTER SHE ALWAYS WANTED!

I'M **CONVINCED** SHE WOULD BE, HONEY! AND THAT'S WHY **I'M** LOOKING FORWARD TO MY NEW **DAUGHTER** AS WELL!

YOU **REALLY** MEAN THAT, DADDY?

OF *COURSE* I DO, HONEY!

THANK YOU, DADDY! ***THANK YOU!*** YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW ***MUCH*** THIS MEANS TO ME!

SWITZERLAND, AND PROFESSOR HOLTZMAN, ***HERE I COME!***

QUANTUM

Chapter Seven

by CBlack

BUTTERFLY

CERN, THE EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION FOR NUCLEAR RESEARCH, ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF GENEVA, SWITZERLAND...


AN OFF-HOUR IN THE CERN CAFETERIA...


HONESTLY, DAVID! YOUR WORK ETHIC TROUBLES ME SOMETIMES! HOW MANY TIMES DO I NEED TO STRESS TO YOU THE IMPORTANCE OF DOUBLE-CHECKING YOUR READINGS?
BUT IF WE DON'T SHOW ANY RESULTS BY THE END OF THE MONTH, WE LOSE OUR FUNDING! DOUBLE-CHECKING TAKES TIME AND IT'S FOR PEOPLE WHO MAKE MISTAKES! AND I DON'T MAKE MISTAKES!

REALLY? I SEEM TO RECALL A NEAR CATASTROPHIC INCIDENT A FEW MONTHS AGO THAT COULD EASILY HAVE BEEN AVOIDED IF SOMEONE HAD TAKEN THE TIME TO DOUBLE-CHECK THEIR READINGS!


NO ONE WAS HURT, WE CONTAINED THE PROBLEM AND, MOST OF ALL, IT OPENED THE DOOR TO OUR CURRENT RESEARCH! I CONSIDER THAT MINOR SETBACK WORTH IT, DON'T YOU?

THAT'S WHERE WE DIFFER, DAVID! ***REGARDLESS*** OF WHAT WE MIGHT GAIN, THE ***SAFETY*** OF THE TEAM AND THE ENTIRE FACILITY IS ***PRIMARY!***

WE WERE EXTREMELY ***LUCKY*** THAT DAY AND I DON'T WANT TO COUNT ON ***THAT*** KIND OF LUCK AGAIN!


SO, WHY DON'T YOU GO BACK AND RECHECK EVERYTHING BEFORE OUR NEXT RUN, OKAY? I'LL BE ALONG IN A FEW MINUTES!
FINE!!


PICKY OLD FART!
EGOTISTICAL YOUNG PUP!

EXCUSE ME! AREN'T YOU PROFESSOR HOLTZMAN?

SIGH! AND YET ANOTHER AWKWARD PHYSICS STUDENT STRAYS FROM THE TOUR!

YES, BUT I'M AFRAID I'M...!

...I'M... **DELIGHTED** TO MEET YOU, MISS...?

TERRELL... **CHRIS TERRELL!** YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW **MUCH** I'VE HOPED TO TALK WITH YOU, PROFESSOR HOLTZMAN!

I'VE NEVER KNOWN THE PROFESSOR TO BE MUCH OF A ***LADIES MAN,*** BUT IF I'M GOING TO KEEP HIM LISTENING I'VE GOT TO USE EVERY ***ADVANTAGE*** I HAVE!

REALLY? WELL, I'M ALWAYS ***HAPPY*** TO DISCUSS PHYSICS WITH EAGER YOUNG MINDS!

SO, WHERE DO YOUR **INTERESTS** LIE, MISS TERRELL? LET ME GUESS... **SOLAR POWER, SPACE TRAVEL, EXTRA-TERRESTRIALS...?**

ACTUALLY, I'M CURIOUS IF ANY RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WITH YOUR ***PLANCK GENERATOR*** HAVE SUPPORTED YOUR THEORIES ON ***ALTERNATE UNIVERSES*** OR ***TIMELINES!***



I'M SORRY... **WHAT** DID YOU JUST SAY?

I UNDERSTAND YOU'RE VERY CLOSE TO OVERCOMING THE ***PLANCK ENERGY LIMITATIONS*** WHICH COULD ULTIMATELY ALLOW YOU TO OBSERVE ***SUPERSTRING BEHAVIOR*** IN ADJACENT ***SPATIAL DIMENSIONS!***


WHAT IF I TOLD YOU I BELIEVE YOUR THEORIES CAN MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO NOT ONLY OBSERVE BUT INTERACT WITH OTHER DIMENSIONS IN SPACETIME?
I'D SAY YOU HAVE ME AT A TOTAL LOSS FOR WORDS, YOUNG LADY!


I UNDERSTAND YOUR CONFUSION, PROFESSOR! I OBVIOUSLY DON'T LOOK LIKE YOUR AVERAGE PHYSICS GEEK, BUT I ASSURE YOU, I HAVE A VERY STRONG BACKGROUND IN THE SUBJECT!
IT CERTAINLY SEEMS THAT WAY! MAY I ASK WHERE YOU STUDIED?

ACTUALLY, I STUDIED UNDER **YOU** AT **NORTHWESTERN,** PROFESSOR!

TRUTHFULLY, I THINK I WOULD **REMEMBER** SOMEONE LIKE **YOU** IN ONE OF MY CLASSES...!


SO THE NAME, CHRIS TERRELL, DOESN'T RING ANY BELLS AT ALL?
I'M AFRAID NOT! WHAT CLASS WERE YOU IN?

SIGH! YOU WERE... **ARE**... MY FACULTY ADVISOR FOR MY **PHD** AND I AM... **WAS**... ONE OF YOUR **LAB ASSISTANTS** FOR THE PLANCK GENERATOR PROJECT AT **FERMILAB!**

AT LEAST I WAS UNTIL I GOT SUCKED INTO A **WORMHOLE** DURING THE FIRST RUN OF THE GENERATOR BACK IN AUGUST!

HOW... **HOW** COULD YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT? I DIDN'T **DOCUMENT** IT AT ALL, AND MY TWO ASSISTANTS KNOW THAT THEIR GRADUATE STIPENDS ARE CONDITIONAL ON THEIR **SILENCE!**

GET **COMFORTABLE,** PROFESSOR! BECAUSE I'VE GOT A **LONG** STORY TO TELL YOU ABOUT YOUR **THIRD** ASSISTANT!

SEVERAL CUPS OF COFFEE LATER...

THAT... IS AN **AMAZING** TALE, MISS TERRELL! IT'S **OBVIOUS** YOU'VE STUDIED MY THEORIES AND KNOW MORE ABOUT ME AND MY WORK THAN **ANYONE** OUTSIDE OF MY LITTLE CIRCLE SHOULD KNOW!

UNFORTUNATELY, HOWEVER, IT ALL **STILL** LACKS ONE **SIGNIFICANT** PIECE!


THE PROOF! I UNDERSTAND! BUT IF YOU'LL INDULGE ME A BIT LONGER, I THINK I KNOW A WAY TO GIVE YOU JUST THAT!

A SHORT TIME LATER IN PROFESSOR HOLTZMAN'S NEW LAB...


WOW! IT'S PRACTICALLY THE EXACT SAME DESIGN AS THE ONE AT FERMI, EXCEPT ITS MUCH...
NICER? YES, MY BUDGET HERE IS ALSO MUCH NICER!
NOW, WHAT WERE YOU SAYING ABOUT THE FUNDAMENTAL STRING FREQUENCIES?

CONVENTIONAL STRING THEORY SUGGESTS THAT ALL MATTER IS MADE UP OF STRINGS VIBRATING AT DIFFERENT FREQUENCIES, BUT **YOU** TOOK THE IDEA FURTHER!

YOU SUGGESTED THAT ALL STRINGS IN A PARTICULAR UNIVERSE HAVE ONE **FUNDAMENTAL** FREQUENCY THAT THE **OTHER** FREQUENCIES ARE BASED UPON!


THE FACT THAT YOU KNOW ALL THIS IS PRACTICALLY ENOUGH TO CONVINCE ME THAT YOU'RE TELLING THE TRUTH!
BUT, I'M INTRIGUED... SO PLEASE CONTINUE!

YOU DESIGNED THE ***PLANCK GENERATOR*** TO SEEK OUT AND DETECT ANY ***DISCREPANCIES*** IN THESE FUNDAMENTAL FREQUENCIES, THUS ***PROVING*** THE EXISTENCE OF ALTERNATE UNIVERSES OR ***ALTERNATE TIMELINES!***

GO ON...!

ANALYZE THE FUNDAMENTAL FREQUENCIES OF THE ATOMS FROM **MY** BODY! IF THEY'RE ***DIFFERENT*** FROM YOUR BASELINE FREQUENCIES ***HERE,*** THEN...

...THEN THAT WOULD ***PROVE*** YOUR CLAIM... AND ***VALIDATE*** MY THEORY! ***BRILLIANT!***

I'VE ALREADY SETUP THE GENERATOR! YOU CAN CHECK IT IF YOU WISH, AND THEN ACTIVATE IT WHEN I'M IN PLACE!

AT THIS POINT, I'M PRACTICALLY A ***BELIEVER*** ALREADY, BUT GO AHEAD AND TAKE YOUR POSITION!


ALL RIGHT! HERE WE GO!
Main Core Operation




MY GOD! YOU WERE RIGHT! YOUR FUNDAMENTAL FREQUENCY IS SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN ANY OTHER MATTER I'VE MEASURED!
IN FACT, IT'S THE ONLY TIME I'VE EVER SEEN ANY DIFFERENCE WHATSOEVER!

THEN... YOU *BELIEVE* ME?

UNLESS I WANT TO TOSS OUT *EVERYTHING* I'VE BEEN WORKING ON FOR THE LAST *FIFTEEN YEARS*... *YES, OF COURSE* I BELIEVE YOU!

THANK GOD! FINALLY! YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW SCARED AND ISOLATED I'VE FELT AT TIMES SINCE THIS STARTED!

I CAN'T FATHOM WHAT IT'S BEEN LIKE FOR YOU! YOU'VE ACTUALLY TRAVERSED THE INTER-DIMENSIONAL PLANE... AND SURVIVED! I HAVE SO MANY QUESTIONS!

I UNDERSTAND, PROFESSOR! AND I'LL DO MY BEST TO **ANSWER** THEM ALL FOR YOU, BUT WE NEED TO DO IT **QUICKLY!** THE LONGER I'M NEAR, THE **GREATER** THE CHANCES FOR ANOTHER **SHIFT!**

AND NOW THAT I'VE **FINALLY** GOT YOU IN MY CORNER, I CAN'T AFFORD TO **LOSE** YOU TO **ANOTHER TIMELINE!**

A SHORT WHILE LATER, BACK IN THE CAFETERIA...

REMARKABLE DOESN'T ***BEGIN*** TO DESCRIBE YOUR EXPERIENCE! IT ANSWERS ***SO*** MANY QUESTIONS ABOUT ***TIME-TRAVEL, WORMHOLES*** AND THE ***SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM!***

YET, AT THE SAME TIME ***RAISES*** SO MANY MORE ABOUT THE ***TRUE NATURE*** OF THE ***UNIVERSE!***

IF WHAT YOU SUSPECT IS ***TRUE***, AND I THINK IT ***LIKELY***, THEN ONE WOULD THINK YOU WOULD HAVE RETURNED TO THIS TIME AS A ***COMPLETE WOMAN!*** WHY, INSTEAD, IS IT HAPPENING IN SMALL DISCRETE ***JUMPS?***

AND WHAT'S ***CAUSING*** THOSE JUMPS, OR SHIFTS, AS YOU CALL THEM? IT'S TRULY ***BAFFLING!***

MY MAIN CONCERN IS THE ***SHIFTS...*** AND FINDING A WAY TO ***STOP*** THEM, IF POSSIBLE! DON'T YOU HAVE ***ANY*** THEORIES?

ONE! CHANGE TAKES ***ENERGY,*** AND CHANGING FROM ONE UNIVERSE TO ANOTHER WOULD TAKE AN ***ENORMOUS*** AMOUNT OF ENERGY!

PERHAPS THE WORMHOLE THAT WE ***INADVERTENTLY*** CREATED LACKED SUFFICIENT POWER TO RETURN YOU TO THE TIMELINE YOU ***"CREATED"*** BY INTERFERING IN 1988!

SO I ONLY MADE IT ***PART*** OF THE WAY TO THE TIMELINE I WAS ***DESTINED*** FOR! BUT IT SEEMS LIKE I'VE BEEN SHIFTED IN LITTLE STEPS TOWARD THAT POINT EVER SINCE! ***WHY?*** AND ***HOW?***

THAT'S THE MILLION DOLLAR QUESTION!

MY BEST GUESS IS THAT BEING IN ANY TIMELINE ***OTHER*** THAN THE ONE YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE IN CAUSES A ***RIPPLE,*** OR ***DISTORTION*** IN THE SPACE/TIME CONTINUUM!

AND LIKE ***MOST*** DISTORTIONS, ITS EFFECTS WOULD BE MORE PROMINENT ***NEAR*** YOU, WHICH SEEMS TO BE THE CASE!

THIS "DISTORTION" STORES UP ENERGY, LIKE STRETCHING A RUBBER BAND, UNTIL IT CAN'T HOLD ANY MORE AND THEN ***SNAPS*** YOU INTO THE NEXT CLOSEST TIMELINE!


SO WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS, THEY SHOULD STOP ONCE I FINALLY GET TO THE RIGHT TIMELINE... ONE IN WHICH I'M A COMPLETE WOMAN!
HYPOTHETICALLY! IT FITS WHAT LITTLE INFORMATION WE HAVE!


THEN I'M ALMOST THERE! MY SURGERY IS TOMORROW! AND THEN THE SHIFTS WILL BE OVER... FINALLY!


THANK YOU, PROFESSOR!

I KNOW WHAT I HAVE TO DO NOW!

REALLY? WELL, LET ME IN ON IT, AND I'LL HELP ANY WAY I CAN, HONEY!

WHAT?! WHERE'S PROFESSOR HOLTZMAN?

HOLTZMAN? THAT **HACK** WENT BACK TO THE STATES **WEEKS AGO!** I'M **PROFESSOR** ROSEN, THE RESIDENT **PHYSICS STUD** AROUND HERE! HOW ABOUT I GIVE YOU A **PERSONAL** TOUR, HMM?


UGH! NO THANK YOU, "PROFESSOR" ROSEN! I WAS JUST LEAVING!
YOUR LOSS, HONEY!
WOOF! AND MINE, TOO!


DAMN! I KNEW IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE ANOTHER SHIFT OCCURRED! THANK GOD I GOT TO PROFESSOR HOLTZMAN BEFORE IT HIT!
THANKS TO HIM, I NOW KNOW WHAT I HAVE TO DO TO END ALL THIS MADNESS... BEFORE ITS TOO LATE!

THE NEXT DAY, AT THE CLINIC..

SO, ***HERE*** WE ARE, CHRISTINE! THE ***FINAL STEP*** IN YOUR LONG JOURNEY! WHAT ARE YOU ***FEELING*** RIGHT NOW?

I'M EXCITED, SCARED, HAPPY, ***WORRIED...!*** I THINK I'VE BEEN THROUGH ***EVERY*** EMOTION POSSIBLE IN THE LAST FEW DAYS!


THANK GOD YOU'RE HERE TO SEE ME THROUGH THIS!
I WOULDN'T DREAM OF BEING ANYWHERE ELSE, CHRISTINE! YOU'VE COME A LONG, LONG WAY TO GET HERE AND MY PLACE IS RIGHT HERE WITH YOU!

JUST THINK, IN A FEW HOURS I'LL ***FINALLY*** BE THE WOMAN I ALWAYS ***WANTED*** TO BE! THE WOMAN I WANT TO BE ***FOR YOU!***

AND I'LL FINALLY BE IN THE TIMELINE I WAS ***DESTINED*** FOR! ***NO MORE SHIFTS!***

PATIENCE, CHRISTINE... ***PATIENCE!*** WE NEED TO GIVE YOU TIME TO HEAL... AND ***ADJUST*** TO YOUR NEW, FULL WOMANHOOD! ***THEN...*** WE CAN FINALLY COME TOGETHER AS ***I'VE*** ALWAYS IMAGINED WE WOULD!


GOOD MORNING, MISS TERRELL... MR. EVERETT! HOW ARE WE DOING TODAY?
A FEW *BUTTERFLIES*, BUT OTHER THAN *THAT*, OKAY DOCTOR!

THAT'S TO BE ***EXPECTED,*** OF COURSE! NOW, THE ANESTHESIOLOGIST WILL BE IN SHORTLY, SO GO AHEAD AND SLIP INTO YOUR GOWN! I HAVE A FEW MORE THINGS TO ***FINALIZE*** BEFORE I SEE YOU AGAIN IN THE OPERATING ROOM!


I'LL BE BACK IN A MOMENT, CHRISTINE! I NEED TO HAVE A WORD WITH THE DOCTOR!
OKAY, BUT HURRY BACK... PLEASE!


ONE MOMENT... DOCTOR!
WHAT IS IT NOW, DANIEL? I'M OBVIOUSLY BUSY!

NOW IS **THAT** ANYWAY TO TALK TO THE PERSON WHO'S **BANKROLLED** MOST OF YOUR MEDICAL CAREER... AS WELL AS OTHER MORE **PERSONAL** DALLIANCES?

I'M WELL AWARE OF THE **"ASSISTANCE"** YOU'VE PROVIDED ME OVER THE YEARS, DANIEL! BUT AT **WHAT COST?**

I JUST WANTED TO MAKE SURE YOU GATHERED THE ***BEST OF THE BEST*** FOR CHRISTINE'S PROCEDURES TODAY! I WANT NOTHING ***LESS*** FOR HER!

OF COURSE I DID! MY TEAM IS ***WORLD-RENOWNED!*** I'D HAVE THE BEST TEAM HERE EVEN ***WITHOUT*** YOUR "REQUEST"!

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EXCELLENT! AND WE'RE CLEAR ON HOW BEST TO HANDLE HER RECOVERY, AREN'T WE? I THINK IT BEST TO SPARE HER THE PAIN AND DISCOMFORT OF THOSE WEEKS SPENT IN RECOVERY FROM SUCH AN INTENSIVE OPERATION, DON'T YOU?

LIKE I SAID BEFORE, I DON'T THINK IT'S **ADVISABLE** TO KEEP HER **UNCONSCIOUS** FOR SO LONG, BUT... SINCE YOU **INSIST,** I'LL SEE TO IT!

GOOD! I WANT CHRISTINE TO EMERGE **FULLY FORMED**... AND FULLY **HEALED**... AS IF WAKING FROM A DREAM!

IF I CAN GO BACK AND RUN MY CORPORATION WITH A ***CLEAN CONSCIENCE***, KNOWING CHRISTINE WILL BE HERE, ***BLISSFULLY ASLEEP*** AND IN YOUR ***CAPABLE*** HANDS, I'LL BE ***EVER*** SO GRATEFUL, JONATHAN!

I'M NOT DOING THIS FOR YOUR ***GRATITUDE***, DANIEL! NOW, IF THERE'S NOTHING ***ELSE***... I HAVE A TEAM TO PREPARE!

EVERYTHING'S SQUARED AWAY WITH THE DOCTOR! HOW ARE **YOU** DOING IN HERE?

ALL RIGHT, I **GUESS!** CONSIDERING HOW **MUCH** I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS, I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW **NERVOUS** I AM!

I'D BE SURPRISED IF YOU ***WEREN'T*** NERVOUS, CHRISTINE! BUT DON'T YOU WORRY, I'VE TAKEN CARE OF ***EVERYTHING!*** YOU'LL HAVE THE ***FINEST*** DOCTORS IN THE WORLD WORKING ON YOU! I'M POSITIVE YOU'LL BE ***DELIGHTED*** WITH THE RESULTS! I KNOW ***I*** WILL BE!

YOU'VE DONE ***SO MUCH*** FOR ME, DANIEL! HOW WILL I ***EVER*** BE ABLE TO THANK YOU ENOUGH!


OH, WE'LL WORK ON THAT AFTERWARD, CHRISTINE! TRUST ME!
HMMM, I LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT!

SO, WILL YOU BE *HERE* WHEN I'M DONE?

OF COURSE, CHRISTINE! WHERE ELSE WOULD I GO? I'LL *NEVER* LEAVE YOUR SIDE AND WILL BE *RIGHT HERE* WHEN YOU WAKE UP!

THAT'S MY SOLEMN PROMISE!

QUANTUM



Chapter Eight

by CBlack

BUTTERFLY

A FEW WEEKS OF "BLISSFULLY" UNCONSCIOUS RECUPERATION LATER...

I'M DOING ***FINE***, DADDY! ***REALLY!*** I HAVE A ***WONDERFUL*** VIEW FROM MY ROOM, THE DOCTOR HAS GIVEN ME A CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH AND I SHOULD BE BACK ***HOME*** IN JUST A FEW DAYS!

I ***KNOW!*** AND I'M SO SORRY ABOUT MISSING THE HOLIDAYS! I REALLY, ***TRULY*** BELIEVED THAT I'D BE RECUPERATING AT ***HOME*** BEFORE CHRISTMAS, BUT THERE WERE A FEW ***COMPLICATIONS*** AND THEY NEEDED TO KEEP ME ***HERE!***

I ***SWEAR*** I WOULD'VE CALLED IF I ***COULD*** HAVE, DADDY! BUT TO BE TRUTHFUL, I DON'T REMEMBER ***ANYTHING*** OF THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS! THE DOCTOR TELLS ME I WAS PRETTY OUT OF IT THE WHOLE TIME FROM THE ***MEDICATIONS!***

I KNOW, ***I KNOW!*** THEY ***SHOULD'VE*** CALLED YOU! I'VE ALREADY ADDRESSED THAT WITH DANIEL... I MEAN, ***MR. EVERETT*** AND THE DOCTORS!

THEY ***HONESTLY*** DIDN'T THINK IT NECESSARY SINCE IT WAS JUST A BAD REACTION TO THE INITIAL ANESTHETIC! THEY HAD IT UNDER CONTROL AND I WAS ***NEVER*** IN ANY DANGER!

WELL, I'M STILL A LITTLE **WEAK** FROM BEING **INACTIVE** FOR SO LONG, BUT OTHER THAN THAT I'M **FINE!** **I PROMISE!**


WELL, OF COURSE I FEEL... DIFFERENT! THAT'S THE POINT! I'M NOT THE SAME PERSON I WAS WHEN I GOT HERE! I'M FINALLY COMPLETE... WHOLE!
NO, I AM HAPPY! I SWEAR! IT'S JUST... EVERYTHING'S DIFFERENT THAN I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE! IT'LL TAKE SOME GETTING USED TO, THAT'S ALL!

STOP **WORRYING**, DADDY! I'M TOTALLY FINE... **HEALTHY!** EVERYTHING'S GOOD, OTHER THAN MISSING **YOU**, OF COURSE!

SO TELL ME, HOW ARE **YOU** DOING? HOW'S THE **NEW JOB** GOING?

THAT'S **WONDERFUL**, DADDY! WELL, FOR EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE FOR ME, IT'S THE **LEAST** I COULD DO!

WELL, I KNOW YOU HAVE TO GET TO WORK, BUT I'LL CALL AGAIN AS ***SOON*** AS I KNOW OUR TRAVEL PLANS! ***OKAY?***

I LOVE YOU TOO, DADDY! ***BYE!***








SIGH!
WHAT WAS I
THINKING?

ADMIRING THE DOCTOR'S *HANDIWORK?*

JUST TRYING TO TAKE IT ALL IN! I KNEW I'D BE *DIFFERENT* AFTERWARD, BUT... NOT *THIS* DIFFERENT!

YOU **STILL** DON'T REMEMBER **ASKING** FOR ALL THIS? I CAN'T **BELIEVE** IT! YOU WERE SO **VEHEMENT!**

YOU SAID THAT, SINCE YOU WERE FINALLY GOING TO BE A **COMPLETE** WOMAN, YOU WANTED TO HAVE THE FACE AND BODY YOU'D ALWAYS DREAMED OF HAVING! THAT **DOESN'T** RING A BELL?

I WISH IT **DID!** THEN I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN CAUGHT **SO OFF GUARD** LIKE I WAS! MY BREASTS ARE **SO BIG** NOW! AND MY LIPS LOOK **SO DIFFERENT!** I JUST... I THOUGHT I WAS **HAPPY** WITH MY BODY...!

EXCEPT FOR THOSE **MALE** BITS BETWEEN MY LEGS, OF COURSE!

I'M SORRY, DARLING! IF I HAD THE ***SLIGHTEST*** INKLING YOU HADN'T WANTED THE OTHER PROCEDURES, I WOULD HAVE STOPPED THEM IN A ***HEARTBEAT!*** I WANT YOU TO BE ***HAPPY,*** AND HAVE THE BODY YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED! ***THAT'S*** THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS TO ME!

I ***AM*** HAPPY! ***THRILLED!*** I'M A ***WOMAN*** NOW! THAT'S THE ***IMPORTANT*** THING! I'M SURE I'LL GET USED TO MY BREASTS AND LIPS IN NO TIME!


GLAD TO SEE YOU LOOKING SO MUCH BETTER, MISS TERRELL!
THANK YOU, DOCTOR! I FEEL SO MUCH BETTER, TOO!


I NEED TO STEAL MR. EVERETT FOR A FEW MINUTES, THEN WE'LL SEE IF YOU'RE FINALLY WELL ENOUGH FOR THAT LONG TRIP HOME!


HOME! BACK TO MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY...AS A WOMAN!

NO LONGER WORRYING ABOUT HIDING MY *"LITTLE SECRET"*! IT'S *GONE*... AND MY NEW LIFE CAN *FINALLY* BEGIN! MY LIFE AS A *COMPLETE* WOMAN!

I *STILL* CAN'T BELIEVE I ASKED FOR THESE OTHER PROCEDURES! *WHAT* WAS I THINKING?

MAYBE I *WASN'T* THINKING AT ALL! MAYBE THERE WAS ANOTHER *TIMELINE SHIFT* WHILE I WAS UNDER THE KNIFE! BUT IF *THAT* WERE THE CASE, I SHOULD HAVE THE MEMORIES OF ASKING FOR THIS... *WANTING* THIS! AND I *DON'T!* I GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO ATTRIBUTE IT TO A *BAD IMPULSE* ON MY PART!

THIS ISN'T ***EXACTLY*** HOW I ENVISIONED MYSELF IN MY ***"DESTINED"*** TIMELINE, BUT AS LONG AS THERE ARE NO MORE SHIFTS, HAVING A NEW SET OF ***CURVES*** IS A SMALL PRICE TO PAY!

AND IF IT MAKES ***DANIEL*** HAPPY...

YOU REALLY HAVE NO ***SCRUPLES*** AT ALL, DO YOU, DANIEL!

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM ***NOW***, JONATHAN?

IT'S **ONE** THING TO KEEP HER BASICALLY **UNCONSCIOUS** FOR ALMOST SIX WEEKS WHILE YOU HAVE HER **SCULPTED** TO MEET YOUR NEEDS, BUT TO **TRICK** HER INTO THINKING **SHE'S** THE ONE WHO WANTED IT ALL DONE? THAT'S **REPREHENSIBLE!**

ALMOST AS REPREHENSIBLE AS THE DOCTOR WHO WAS WELL PAID TO PERFORM SAID SURGERIES KNOWING FULL WELL HIS PATIENT NEVER GAVE HER CONSENT!

NOW, ARE WE DONE THROWING STONES AT ONE ANOTHER, JONATHAN? BECAUSE I'D LIKE TO GET THE BALL ROLLING AND GET THE YOUNG LADY HOME WHERE SHE BELONGS!

I'VE BEEN PLANNING CHRISTINE'S ***DEBUT*** FOR WEEKS, AND I'D ***HATE*** FOR HER TO BE LATE FOR IT!

TWO WEEKS LATER, A WHO'S WHO LIST OF VIPS ARRIVES FOR THE PARTY OF THE SEASON AT THE HOUSE OF DANIEL EVERETT...




CONGRESSMAN!
LONG TIME, NO SEE!


HOW'VE YOU BEEN, STUART? IT'S BEEN AWHILE!
CAN'T COMPLAIN! THOUGH MY BUSINESS ALWAYS DROPS OFF BETWEEN ELECTIONS... WHEN YOU'RE NOT FUND-RAISING!

DON'T **WORRY**, STUART! THESE DAYS, WE LIVE IN SOMETHING OF A **PERMANENT** ELECTION CYCLE, SO I'LL BE IN TOUCH SOON!

BUT I'M A BIT **SURPRISED** TO HEAR THINGS AREN'T GOING WELL, CONSIDERING THE AMOUNT OF **BUSINESS** I'VE STEERED YOUR WAY!

TRUE! VERY TRUE! BUSINESS **HAS** STARTED PICKING UP THANKS TO YOUR UNDER-THE-TABLE **ENDORSEMENTS!**

GLAD TO HEAR IT! YOU ALWAYS DID PROVIDE **QUALITY** SERVICE TO OUR FUNCTIONS! GOOD TO KNOW IT'S NOT GOING TO WASTE!

AND HOW ABOUT **YOU?** YOU SURE **DODGED** A BULLET WHEN ALL THOSE **CHARGES** AGAINST YOU WERE JUST SUDDENLY **DROPPED!** HOW'D YOU MANAGE **THAT?**


LET'S JUST SAY OUR HOST IS A MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR TO MY CAMPAIGN... AND HE HAS VERY DEEP POCKETS!

HE **DOES** REMEMBER HIS FRIENDS, DOESN'T HE? IN FACT, THAT'S WHY **I'M** HERE TONIGHT! HE SPECIFICALLY WANTED **ME** TO SUPPLY THE HELP FOR TONIGHT!

EVEN WENT SO FAR AS TO SPECIFY A FEW **PARTICULAR** EMPLOYEES HE WANTED!

I DON'T SUPPOSE THAT CUTE LITTLE REDHEAD WITH THE **SWEET ASS** IS ONE OF THEM, IS SHE? MY, OH MY! SHE **WAS** A DARLIN'!

'FRAID NOT! SHE SLIPPED OFF MY RADAR **MONTHS** AGO! IN FACT, THE **LAST** JOB SHE WORKED FOR ME WAS ONE FOR **MR. EVERETT** HIMSELF! HAVEN'T SEEN OR HEARD FROM HER **SINCE!**


TOO BAD! I COULD ALWAYS USE A FINE YOUNG LADY LIKE THAT... FOR MY CAMPAIGN, OF COURSE!
OF COURSE, CONGRESSMAN! OF COURSE!


WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE OUR HOST HAS FINALLY DECIDED TO JOIN THE PARTY!
YOU KNOW, THIS IS THE FIRST GIG EVERETT'S EVER THROWN IN HIS OWN HOUSE BEFORE! I WONDER WHAT'S THE OCCASION?

I THINK THE ANSWER IS *EVIDENT*, STUART! LOOKS LIKE WE *FINALLY* FOUND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR *FAVORITE* YOUNG LADY!


HOLY SHIT!
IS THAT...?!


I'M NOT SURE IF I'M READY FOR THIS AFTER ALL, DANIEL! I RECOGNIZE A LOT OF THE PEOPLE HERE... MOST FROM YOUR BUSINESS DEALINGS... BUT THERE ARE A FEW HERE WHO KNEW ME... BEFORE!
WON'T THAT BE AWKWARD FOR YOU?

THE WHOLE ***POINT*** OF THIS PARTY, CHRISTINE, IS TO SHOW EVERYONE WHO YOU ARE ***NOW!*** THE PERSON YOU WERE ***BEFORE*** IS ***GONE...*** ***IRRELEVANT!***

WHO YOU ARE AND ***WHAT*** YOU DO FROM THIS POINT ON WILL ***DEFINE*** YOU... ***NOTHING ELSE!***

I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT! **CHRIS** IS GONE! THAT WAS **ANOTHER** LIFETIME!

IT'S TIME FOR **CHRISTINE** TO TAKE **CENTER STAGE!**


CONGRESSMAN GIVENS! I'M SO GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT!
I WOULDN'T HAVE MISSED IT FOR THE WORLD! ESPECIALLY IF I'D KNOWN THIS PRETTY FILLY WOULD BE HERE!


YOU'VE CERTAINLY COME A LONG WAY, DARLIN'!
WHY THANK YOU, CONGRESSMAN! IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, TOO! IT'S NICE THAT THINGS HAVE WORKED OUT SO WELL FOR BOTH OF US!

MY SUCCESS IS DUE ***ENTIRELY*** TO MY LOYAL CONSTITUENTS... AND ***SUPPORTERS!***

ALONG THOSE LINES OF DISCUSSION, I NEED TO STEAL THE CONGRESSMAN AWAY FOR A MOMENT! EXCUSE US!


JESUS H. CHRIST! LOOK AT YOU!

NO **WONDER** YOU NEVER CAME BACK TO ME LOOKING FOR WORK! YOU HOOKED YOURSELF A **SUGAR DADDY** WHO GOT YOU ALL FIXED UP RIGHT, DIDN'T YOU?

LOCAL **BOY** MAKES GOOD, EH CHRIS? **HEH-HEH!!**

I'M NOT SURPRISED ***YOU'D*** INTERPRET IT THAT WAY, STU! SO I WON'T EVEN ***TRY*** TO EXPLAIN IT TO YOU! AND, BY THE WAY, IT'S ***CHRISTINE*** NOW!

OH, **OF COURSE,** MISS **CHRISTINE!** YOU KNOW, AS MUCH AS I'M SURE DANIEL HAS **INVESTED** IN YOU, I WONDER HOW MUCH HE'D BE WILLING TO PAY TO MAKE SURE YOUR PAST ISN'T **SPLASHED** ALL OVER THE **TABLOIDS!**


I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN YOU TO BE SLEAZY, STU, BUT UNTIL NOW, I NEVER REALIZED HOW INCREDIBLY STUPID YOU ARE AS WELL!
OOOOO! LISTEN TO YOU! MAYBE THEY DIDN'T CUT OFF YOUR BALLS AFTER ALL!

SIGH!
YOU **SAD** LITTLE MAN! THERE'S ABSOLUTELY **NOTHING** YOU CAN DO TO HURT ME! I'VE **ALREADY** DECIDED TO TELL MY STORY TO A **REPUTABLE** MAGAZINE IN HOPES OF INSPIRING **OTHER** TRANSGENDERED PEOPLE!

SO, AS YOU CAN SEE, I HAVE **NOTHING** TO HIDE!

BUT IF YOU'RE STILL SO **INTENT** ON SCREWING WITH ME, **BRING IT ON!** ALL IT TAKES IS **ONE WORD** FROM ME TO DANIEL AND YOUR **LIVELIHOOD,** AMONG **OTHER** THINGS, WILL COME TO A QUICK AND **PAINFUL** END!

WELL, I GUESS YOU'RE **NOT** THAT SAME LITTLE **SISSY-BOY** ANYMORE! **FINE!** I WAS JUST PULLING YOUR LEG, ANYWAY!

BUT IF YOU **REALLY** THINK THERE'S ABSOLUTELY **NOTHING** I CAN DO TO HURT YOU, THEN YOU'RE NOWHERE NEAR AS **SMART** AS YOU THINK YOU ARE!


OH, AND BY THE WAY... YOUR NEW TITS ARE SPECTACULAR! ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE ANGRY!
ENJOY YOUR SUGAR DADDY... CHRISTINE!


ASSHOLE!


EVERYTHING OKAY?
IT IS... NOW THAT HE'S GONE AND YOU'RE HERE!


I KNOW THAT STUART CAN BE... ABRASIVE AT TIMES, BUT A MAN LIKE THAT DOES HAVE HIS USES!
REALLY? I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT THAT MIGHT BE, SO I'LL JUST HAVE TO TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT!


GOOD GIRL! I SEE A FEW MORE PEOPLE I NEED TO SPEAK TO, SO MINGLE... WORK THE ROOM! I WANT EVERYONE TO SEE JUST HOW CHARMING YOU ARE! I'LL RETURN SOON!
BUT...!

SIGH! THANKS FOR **STOPPING BY,** DANIEL! HERE I THOUGHT THIS PARTY WAS SUPPOSED TO BE FOR **ME!** INSTEAD, I'M BEGINNING TO FEEL MORE AND MORE LIKE A NEW **PRIZED POSSESSION** ON DISPLAY!

JUST WHEN I THINK I HAVE DANIEL ALL FIGURED OUT, HE DOES AN ***ABOUT-FACE*** ON ME! THE MAN DRIVES ME ***NUTS!***

ONE MINUTE HE'S SWEET AND ***ATTENTIVE,*** THE NEXT, ALOOF AND ***WITHDRAWN!*** SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE I DON'T KNOW HIM AT ALL... AND THAT HE'LL ***ALWAYS*** KEEP A LARGE PART OF HIMSELF ***HIDDEN*** FROM ME!


YOU KNOW, IN MOST STATES IT'S A FELONY TO LEAVE A WOMAN LIKE YOU ALONE LIKE THIS!
MISS ME?


THEN THERE ARE MEN LIKE YOU... WHO ARE UNABASHEDLY OPEN ABOUT EVERYTHING! AND VERY PROUD OF THEMSELVES FOR IT!
GUILTY AS CHARGED! SHOULD I FEEL OFFENDED?

NOT AT ALL! JUST THINKING OUT LOUD SINCE I **OBVIOUSLY** HAVE THE TIME TO MYSELF!

HMMM... IF I HAD **MY** WAY, YOU'D **NEVER** HAVE THIS MUCH TIME TO YOURSELF!

SO, WHEN DO I GET THE CHANCE TO GET MY HANDS, AMONG **OTHER** THINGS, ON AND IN THIS **DYNAMITE** NEW BOD OF YOURS?

I HAD NO IDEA YOU WERE ADDING THE ***DELUXE ACCESSORY PACKAGE*** TO YOUR SURGERY!

IT WAS, UMMM... A ***LAST MINUTE DECISION!*** WHAT DO YOU THINK?


I THINK I WANT TO DRAG YOU INTO SOME DARK SECLUDED SPOT, RIP THAT DRESS OFF YOU AND POUND THAT NEW PUSSY OF YOURS WHILE SUCKING ON THESE BEAUTIFUL NEW SET OF TWINS YOU HAVE!
THAT'S WHAT I THINK!


YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS! THIS PARTY IS IN CELEBRATION OF ME... MY NEW LIFE... AND I PLAN ON STAYING HERE AND ENJOYING MYSELF!
C'MON, BABE! BE REAL! IF YOU REALLY WANT TO CELEBRATE, WE SHOULD DITCH THIS YAWN-FEST, GO BACK TO MY PLACE AND REDEFINE THE WORD NASTY!

TEMPTING! BUT SERIOUSLY, ROGER, I... I WANT TO BE A **BETTER** PERSON THAN THE ONE I'VE BEEN THE PAST FEW MONTHS! AND THAT MEANS **NOT** SNEAKING AROUND BEHIND DANIEL'S BACK ANYMORE!

IF **THAT'S** WHAT YOU REALLY WANT, THEN **GO FOR IT!** **BUT...** IF YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND, I'LL BE OUT FRONT FOR THE NEXT FEW MINUTES WAITING IN MY CAR!

CIAO, BABY!


ROWR!


NOW WHY'D HE HAVE TO GO AND GET ME ALL HOT AND BOTHERED LIKE THAT... WHEN I'M TRYING TO BE A GOOD GIRL?


HONEY, CAN I TALK TO YOU... ALONE... FOR A FEW MINUTES?

I'M **BUSY** RIGHT NOW, CHRISTINE! SLIM AND I ARE DISCUSSING A **CRUCIAL** PIECE OF BUSINESS! HAVEN'T I GIVEN YOU **ENOUGH** REASSURANCE ABOUT YOUR **BREATHTAKING** BEAUTY AND **SUBSTANTIAL** FEMININE CHARMS?

WHATEVER OTHER **LITTLE** THING IS ON YOUR MIND, IT CAN **SURELY** WAIT!


OF... OF COURSE, DANIEL!
I WOULDN'T BE SO DAMN SURE ABOUT THAT!

FAR BE IT FOR ME TO ***MEDDLE***, MY FRIEND, BUT WHY ARE YOU SENDING AWAY THAT VERY ***AROUSED*** AND NOW, VERY ***PISSED***, YOUNG LADY?

IT'S MY WAY OF ALLOWING HER TO EXPLORE HER ***OPTIONS*** BEFORE SHE REALIZES THE ***ERROR*** OF HER WAYS AND ***EAGERLY*** RETURNS TO ME... EVEN MORE ***DEVOTED*** AND ***OBEDIENT*** THAN BEFORE!

BESIDES, THE MORE ***FREEDOM*** I GIVE HER, THE ***FARTHER*** SHE STRAYS FROM HER ***OLD LIFE!*** WHICH IS ***JUST*** WHAT I WANT!

BRING MY CAR AROUND, BOY! IT'S THE MAROON *'VETTE!*

YES SIR!


AND TAKE YOUR TIME, KID! I'M IN NO HURRY!


NO HURRY, HMM? WAITING FOR SOMEONE PERHAPS?
JUST WAITING FOR HER TO COME TO HER SENSES! THAT'S ALL!

OH, SO YOU THINK IT MAKES ***SENSE*** FOR HER TO ***DISAPPEAR*** FROM A PARTY HELD IN HER HONOR... A PARTY THROWN BY HER LOVING ***"BENEFACTOR"***... JUST SO SHE CAN ***SATISFY*** SOME WILD ***CARNAL URGES*** WITH ANOTHER MAN?

MAKES ***PERFECT*** SENSE TO ME!


WHAT KIND OF WOMAN WOULD DO SUCH A SELFISH THING?
A WOMAN WHO KNOWS THAT WHAT SHE REALLY WANTS ISN'T INSIDE THAT HOUSE!


THAT SOUNDS LIKE MY RIDE! LET'S BLOW THIS POP STAND!


WHY DO I ALWAYS HAVE SO MUCH TROUBLE SAYING NO TO YOU?
'CAUSE YOU KNOW I KNOW HOW TO TREAT ALL YOUR FAVORITE SPOTS! IMAGINE WHAT I'LL DO TO YOUR NEW ONES!


YOU'D BETTER GET ME OUT OF HERE BEFORE WE GIVE THIS VALET A SHOW HE'LL NEVER FORGET!


CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH THOSE NEW LIPS!
OH, YOU WON'T HAVE TO WAIT LONG, BABY! I...!


BOBBY!?
CHRIS?! OH MY GOD! IS... IS THAT REALLY YOU?

WH... WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING *HERE?*

STU HIRED ME TO *VALET* THIS SHINDIG! I WASN'T GOING TO, BUT HE *INSISTED* AND OFFERED ME *DOUBLE* THE PAY! HE *NEVER* DOES THAT, SO HOW COULD I SAY *NO?*


BUT... WHAT ABOUT YOU? YOU LOOK SO... I MEAN, SALLY TOLD ME YOU WERE GONNA... BUT...!
WHAT HAPPENED, CHRIS?


WHAT DO YOU MEAN "WHAT HAPPENED"?
IT'S JUST... THE WAY YOU LOOK! THE WAY YOU WERE ACTING! IT'S JUST SO... NOT YOU!

WELL, MAYBE IT **IS!** A **LOT** HAS HAPPENED IN THE LAST YEAR... A LOT OF **CHANGES!** I'M **NOT** THE GEEKY KID YOU KNEW GROWING UP! I HAVE **WANTS...** AND **NEEDS...** YOU'LL **NEVER** UNDERSTAND!

NO KIDDING!

AND IF YOU DON'T *APPROVE* OF WHO I'VE BECOME, WELL... THAT'S SOMETHING *YOU* HAVE TO DEAL WITH... *NOT ME!*

Limo

I GUESS YOU'RE ***RIGHT!*** I TURNED MY BACK ON MY FRIEND WHEN HE NEEDED ME ***MOST!*** I WAS HOPING TO ***RECONNECT*** WITH HIM IF I EVER GOT THE CHANCE, BUT YOU'RE RIGHT! ***HE'S GONE!***

AND THE PERSON IN HIS PLACE JUST ***ISN'T*** SOMEONE I THINK I CAN BE FRIENDS WITH!




LET'S GO, ROGER! PLEASE!
YOU GOT IT, DOLL!



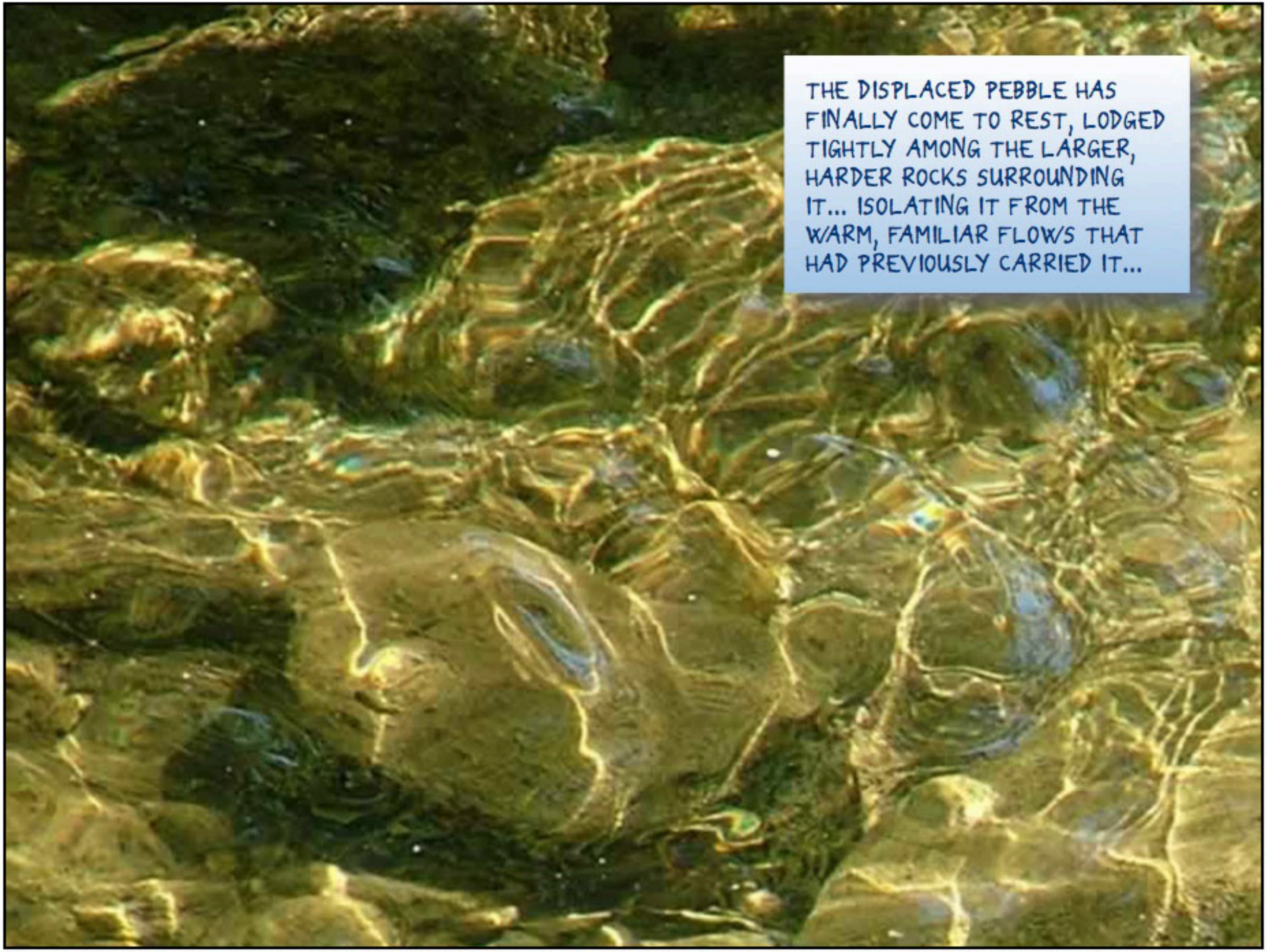


QUANTUM

Chapter Nine

by CBlack

BUTTERFLY


THE DISPLACED PEBBLE HAS FINALLY COME TO REST, LODGED TIGHTLY AMONG THE LARGER, HARDER ROCKS SURROUNDING IT... ISOLATING IT FROM THE WARM, FAMILIAR FLOWS THAT HAD PREVIOUSLY CARRIED IT...








OH GOD!
CAN YOU KEEP DOING THIS TO ME ALL NIGHT LONG?


I HAVE, BABY!
I HAVE!


THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE HAVE TO STOP, THOUGH!


EVEN THE MOST DEDICATED LOVER NEEDS A BREATHER NOW AND THEN!


OH, I THINK I CAN BREATHE A LITTLE MORE LIFE INTO YOU, HONEY!


DAMN, WOMAN! I KNOW YOU'VE GOT YEARS OF CATCHING UP TO DO, BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO IT ALL IN ONE NIGHT!


OH, TONIGHT'S JUST THE START, HONEY! BELIEVE ME!


AND NOW THAT I'VE GOT YOU BACK IN SHAPE, HOW ABOUT TREATING A GIRL TO ANOTHER ROUND, HMM?


IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, I'D THINK YOU WERE OVER-COMPENSATING AFTER RUNNING INTO YOUR OLD BOYFRIEND THIS EVENING!


BOBBY'S NOT AN OLD BOYFRIEND! HE'S JUST SOMEONE I GREW UP WITH! SEEING HIM TONIGHT HAS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DO WITH WHAT I WANT AND WHAT I NEED FROM YOU RIGHT NOW!


SO, SHUT UP AND FUCK ME INTO OBLIVION, OKAY!
YES, MA'AM! ANYTHING YOU SAY!

YES... ANYTHING THAT MAKES ME ***FORGET*** THE DISAPPOINTED LOOK ON BOBBY'S FACE TONIGHT!


OOOOOOOOO! THAT'S THE SPOT!


A FEW HOURS LATER,
AT DAY BREAK...




IF YOU'RE TRYING TO SNEAK IN I SUGGEST NOT WEARING HIGH HEELS ON THESE TILE FLOORS! AND DON'T HAVE ROGER DROP YOU OFF! HIS CORVETTE IS QUITE NOTICEABLE!

I THINK YOU KNOW ME WELL ENOUGH TO REALIZE I ***WOULD*** HAVE DONE THOSE THINGS IF I REALLY WANTED TO BE ***STEALTHY!***

OF COURSE, CHRISTINE! AND FROM YOUR ***DEMEANOR*** I ASSUME YOU WANT TO ***TALK*** ABOUT LAST NIGHT!

I'M NOT **PROUD** OF WHAT I DID, DANIEL! LEAVING HERE WITH **ROGER** THE WAY I DID! I WAS **ANGRY, HORMONAL** AND I ACTED WITHOUT THINKING! IT'S **NOT** AN EXCUSE, JUST... AN **EXPLANATION!**

IS THAT **ALL?**

NO! YOU'VE DONE SO **MUCH** FOR ME! AND WHAT I DID LAST NIGHT WAS **INEXCUSABLE!** I WOULDN'T BLAME YOU FOR **TOSSING ME OUT** ONTO THE STREETS!

IS THAT WHAT YOU **WANT?** FOR ME TO **THROW YOU OUT?**


NO! OF COURSE NOT!
THEN, WHAT DO YOU WANT, CHRISTINE? TELL ME, PLEASE!

I WANT TO **STAY** HERE... WITH **YOU!** BECOME THE WOMAN **YOU** WANT ME TO BE! I'M **LOST** WITHOUT YOU, DANIEL! I'LL DO **WHATEVER** I HAVE TO TO RESTORE YOUR **CONFIDENCE** IN ME!

THAT'S A **BIG** COMMITMENT! ARE YOU TRULY **SERIOUS** ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?

YES, I *AM!* LET ME PROVE IT TO YOU! WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT WON'T *EVER* HAPPEN AGAIN! I'LL BE A GOOD GIRL FROM NOW ON! I *PROMISE!*

I'M NOT *SO SURE* ABOUT THAT, CHRISTINE! YOU'VE BECOME A VERY *SEXUAL* WOMAN, WITH VERY *REAL* NEEDS... AND I'M A *BUSY* MAN! THERE *WILL* BE OTHER TIMES, LIKE LAST NIGHT, WHEN I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO PROPERLY *TEND* TO YOU! WHAT HAPPENS *THEN?*

BUT DANIEL, IF YOU'LL JUST BE **OPEN** WITH ME... TELL ME WHAT YOU'RE **FEELING**, EXPRESS YOUR DEEPEST **DESIRES**, THEN I'LL BE ABLE TO TRULY **CONNECT** WITH YOU... AND **SATISFY** YOU!

AND IF **THAT** HAPPENS, I'LL BE **HAPPY!** I **SWEAR!**

VERY WELL... I'LL TELL YOU!

I WANT YOU TO PROVE YOUR **UTTER** DEVOTION... I WANT YOU TO BE AT MY BECK AND CALL FOR **ALL** OF MY NEEDS... BOTH PERSONAL **AND** BUSINESS! DO YOU THINK YOU CAN **HANDLE** THAT?

YES, DANIEL! I DON'T NEED ANYTHING... OR ANYONE ELSE BUT YOU! I SWEAR!

I'M OVERJOYED TO HEAR IT, DARLING! YOU'VE ONLY BEEN A WOMAN A SHORT TIME, BUT YOU'LL SOON LEARN YOUR TRUE POTENTIAL!

POTENTIAL?

YOU'RE JUST **BEGINNING** TO BLOOM, DARLING! IF YOU **TRUST** ME, I CAN HELP YOU BECOME THE BEAUTIFUL, FEMININE **FLOWER** YOU WERE ALWAYS **DESTINED** TO BE!

I **DO** TRUST YOU, DANIEL! AND I WANT TO LIVE UP TO POTENTIAL... MAKE YOU **PROUD** OF ME!

YOU HELPED GIVE ME THIS BODY, AND NOW I NEED TO GIVE THE **REST** OF MYSELF TO YOU IF I'M TO BECOME THE WOMAN I WAS ALWAYS **MEANT** TO BE!

AS IT **SHOULD** BE, CHRISTINE! AND WE'LL GET YOU THERE... SOON ENOUGH!

A FEW DAYS LATER, A WEEKLY RITUAL RESUMES...

LOOK DAVE, I KNOW THE DEADLINES ARE ***UNREALISTIC!*** I KEEP POINTING IT OUT TO THE ***EXECUTIVES***, BUT ***THEY DON'T GET IT!*** I DON'T THINK A SINGLE ONE OF THEM HAS EVER LIFTED A BRICK ***OR*** DRIVEN A NAIL IN THEIR ***LIFE!***


I KNOW, DAVE! I *KNOW!* YOU JUST KEEP DOING WHAT *YOU* CAN OUT THERE AND I'LL DO WHAT *I* CAN AT MY END! KEEP ME UPDATED!

SIGH! I DON'T NEED THIS SHIT!

DADDY?

HI, DADDY!

CHRIS?! OH MY...! I... I HARDLY RECOGNIZED YOU!


IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU, DADDY! I MISSED YOU SO MUCH!
YOU TOO, SWEETHEART!

I CAN'T GET OVER HOW MUCH YOU'VE ***CHANGED*** SINCE I SAW YOU LAST! ARE MY EYES AND MEMORY JUST GETTING ***THAT BAD?***

UMM... NO! YOUR EYES ARE JUST ***FINE!***

I WAS AFRAID I STILL LOOKED TOO **MASCULINE,** SO I HAD A COUPLE OF **OTHER** PROCEDURES DONE IN ADDITION TO MY SURGERY!

Back Soon!


YOU HAVE A FUNNY LOOK ON YOUR FACE! YOU'RE NOT DISAPPOINTED IN ME, ARE YOU?
NO... OF COURSE NOT! NOT... DISAPPOINTED! JUST... CONFUSED! I THOUGHT I UNDERSTOOD WHY YOU DID THIS, BUT NOW I'M NOT SO SURE!


NOTHING HAS REALLY CHANGED, DADDY! EVERYTHING I HAD DONE WAS TO HELP MAKE ME THE WOMAN I ALWAYS WANTED TO BE! I MAY LOOK A LITTLE DIFFERENT NOW, BUT I'M STILL THE SAME PERSON INSIDE!

I KNOW YOU ARE, CHRIS! I'M SORRY IF I UPSET YOU! I'M JUST A LITTLE ON EDGE! THIS NEW JOB IS A LOT MORE STRESSFUL THAN I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE!

YOU DO LOOK TIRED! ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE DOING OKAY?

OH, I'M ***FINE!*** I'M JUST NOT USED TO BEING A PROJECT MANAGER ON A JOB LIKE ***THIS!*** TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I'D ***MUCH*** RATHER BE DOWN IN THE TRENCHES WITH THE GUYS INSTEAD OF PUSHING PAPERS AND FLINGING EXECUTIVE ***POLICY*** BACK AND FORTH!

RING!!

RING!!

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL!

I **REALLY** HATE TO DO THIS, CHRIS, BUT I HAVE TO MISS OUR LUNCH TODAY AND GET BACK TO THE OFFICE! ***SIGH!*** I DO SO MISS THE **SIMPLER** DAYS OF BEING A **WORKING STIFF!**


I UNDERSTAND, DADDY! WE'LL DO IT AGAIN NEXT WEEK!

I THOUGHT THAT JOB WOULD MAKE DADDY **HAPPY**, BUT HE SEEMS MORE **STRESSED** OUT THAN EVER! I SHOULD **NEVER** HAVE ASKED DANIEL TO GIVE IT TO HIM!

IT'S PRETTY **SAD** WHEN I HAVE TO HEAR THROUGH THE **GRAPEVINE** THAT MY **BFF** IS BACK IN TOWN AFTER BEING GONE SO **DAMN** LONG!


SALLY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? HOW DID YOU FIND ME?
LUNCH
YOUR DAD TOLD ME HE WAS MEETING YOU HERE FOR LUNCH TODAY! I WAS SO ANXIOUS TO SEE YOU, I DECIDED TO INVITE MYSELF!

I'M SO GLAD YOU **DID!** DADDY GOT CALLED BACK TO WORK AND I CAN'T THINK OF **ANYONE** ELSE I'D RATHER SPEND THE AFTERNOON WITH!

WELL, I **GUESS** I CAN LIVE WITH BEING SECOND FIDDLE TO YOUR **DAD!**

NOW, LET'S TAKE A **LOOK** AT THIS **NEW BOD** I'VE HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT!

YOU'VE **WHAT?** WHO TOLD YOU ABOUT **THAT?**

BOBBY, OF COURSE! I RAN INTO HIM THIS MORNING!

WH... WHAT DID HE **TELL** YOU?

UH-UH! **SHOW AND TELL**, GIRL! **SHOW** ME THE GOODS FIRST, **THEN** I'LL TELL YOU WHAT HE SAID!


WELL... ALL RIGHT! THERE! WHAT DO YOU THINK? BE HONEST, PLEASE!
HMMM! OBVIOUSLY "DONE", BUT NOT TO THE EXTREME! THE LIP JOB IS A SURPRISE... JUST SHY OF WHAT I'D CALL "COCK-SUCKER LIPS"!

HEY!

IF IT WAS ANYBODY BUT **YOU**, I'D TELL 'EM TO STAY THE **HELL** OUT OF MY NEIGHBORHOOD, 'CAUSE I DON'T NEED THE **COMPETITION!**

IN OTHER WORDS, I THINK YOU LOOK **FABULOUS,** HONEY! UTTERLY, **PERFECTLY** FABULOUS!

REALLY? YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW **MUCH** IT MEANS TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT! YOU'RE THE **FIRST** PERSON FROM MY OLD LIFE THAT'S SAID THEY LIKE IT! **THANK YOU** SO MUCH, SALLY!

I **MEAN** IT, CHRIS! I REALLY **DO!** BUT, I'M A LITTLE **CONFUSED!** THE WAY **BOBBY** WAS DESCRIBING YOU, I WAS EXPECTING SOMEONE A LITTLE... **FLASHIER!**

I DOUBT *"FLASHY"* WAS THE WORD HE USED!

BUT, TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I FIND THAT I ***REALLY*** LIKE THE *"FLASHY"* LOOK! THE HAIR-STYLES, THE MAKEUP, THE ***SEXY OUTFITS...*** I JUST ***LOVE*** THE WAY I FEEL IN THEM!

SO WHY THE *"GIRL NEXT DOOR"* LOOK TODAY?

I WAS MEETING MY **DAD**, REMEMBER? THE **LAST** THING HE NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT HIS NEW LITTLE GIRL IS THAT SHE'S **NOT** SUCH A **"LITTLE GIRL"** AFTER ALL!

HIDING OUR **SEXUALITY** FROM OUR FATHERS IS PART OF BEING A **GIRL**, HONEY! GET **USED** TO IT!

NOW, WHAT SAY WE GO **SHOPPING** FOR SOME OF THOSE **SEXY OUTFITS** YOU LIKE SO MUCH!

SOUNDS GREAT! DANIEL ISN'T EXPECTING ME BACK FOR A COUPLE OF HOURS!

COULD YOU DO ME A FAVOR AND **NOT** MENTION YOUR BOYFRIEND FOR THE REST OF THE DAY? YOU **KNOW** HOW I FEEL ABOUT HIM!

BUT, YOU JUST DON'T **KNOW** HIM LIKE I DO AND...

NOT MENTIONING HIM!

OKAY... FINE! SORRY!

A FEW DAYS LATER AT THE OFFICES OF EVERETT INDUSTRIES...


HI, WANDA! I BELIEVE HE'S *EXPECTING* ME!
GO RIGHT ON IN, CHRISTINE!


THANKS, WANDA!

WHY I HAVE TO COME ALL THE WAY DOWN HERE TO ***REHASH*** THE CONCERNS I'VE EXPRESSED TO MR. EVERETT OVER THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS, I DON'T KNOW!

JUST ***ANOTHER*** EXAMPLE OF ***CORPORATE WASTE***, I GUESS!


HMPH! NO WONDER THEY DON'T GET ANYTHING DONE AROUND HERE... WITH WOMEN DRESSED LIKE THAT WALKING AROUND!

I UNDERSTAND YOU NEEDED TO ***SEE*** ME, ***MR. EVERETT?***

MOST ***DEFINITELY,*** CHRISTINE! I HAVE AN EXTREMELY... ***URGENT*** MATTER FOR YOU TO ATTEND TO!


URGENT, HMMM? THEN I'D BETTER GET ON IT RIGHT AWAY!

PATRICK TERRELL TO SEE MR. EVERETT! I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT, BUT I'M A FEW MINUTES EARLY!

YES, SIR! I'LL LET HIM KNOW YOU'RE HERE!

HOLD **ALL** MY CALLS FOR THE NEXT... **TWENTY MINUTES** OR SO, WOULD YOU WANDA?

OF **COURSE,** MR. EVERETT!

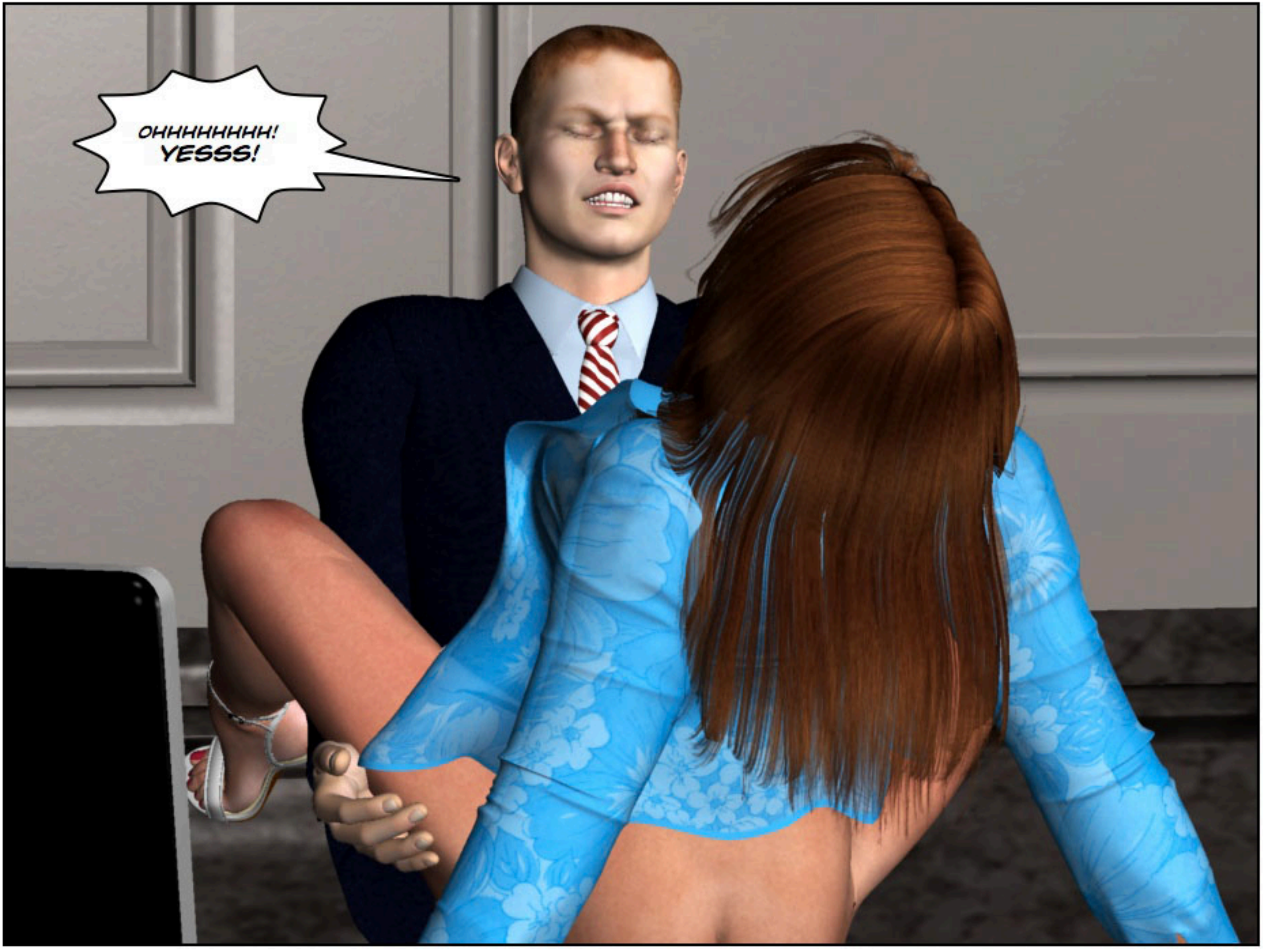
UM, IT SEEMS HE'S RUNNING A LITTLE BIT ***LATE*** TODAY, SO IF YOU'LL HAVE A SEAT HE'LL BE WITH YOU JUST AS ***SOON*** AS POSSIBLE!

OF COURSE!

AND I'LL JUST WASTE ***MORE*** TIME OUT HERE WHILE HE CARRIES ON WITH SOME ***SEXPOT*** FROM THE SECRETARIAL POOL!


OH GOD! THIS GIVES A WHOLE NEW MEANING TO THE PHRASE "DESK JOB"!
I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO ACTUALLY COMPLAIN ABOUT THEM!


THOSE WOULD BE THE PEOPLE WHO DON'T HAVE SOMEONE LIKE YOU TENDING TO THEM, LOVE!


OHHHHHHHH!
YESSS!


OH... WE'RE DONE?
FOR THE TIME BEING! BUT I DO HAVE ANOTHER SURPRISE FOR YOU!

A SURPRISE? OOOOO! DO TELL!

I'M PLANNING A CORPORATE **MASQUERADE** PARTY IN A FEW WEEKS TO COINCIDE WITH **MARDI GRAS!** I'M ALSO GOING TO USE THE EVENT TO CHRISTEN OUR NEW **HEADQUARTERS** BUILDING!

OOOOO! A MASQUERADE PARTY SOUNDS LIKE A **FABULOUS** IDEA! ANY IDEAS ON HOW WE SHOULD DRESS?

AS A MATTER OF FACT, THAT'S THE **OTHER** REASON I CALLED YOU HERE! I PURCHASED SEVERAL COSTUMES FOR YOU TO HELP... **INSPIRE** ME! THEY'RE ALL IN THE NEXT ROOM JUST **WAITING** FOR YOU TO TRY THEM ON!

RIGHT NOW?

OF COURSE! WHAT ***BETTER*** TIME? AND WHO KNOWS, YOU JUST ***MIGHT*** INSPIRE ME TO A ***REPEAT PERFORMANCE!***

THAT SOUNDS LIKE A ***CHALLENGE,*** MISTER! JUST LET ME FIND MY PANTIES, AND...!

OH, ***I'LL*** TAKE CARE OF THOSE! YOU WON'T NEED THEM ANYWAY, I'M ***SURE!***


IF YOU SAY SO! I'LL BE BACK IN A FEW MINUTES... MAYBE WEARING PANTIES... MAYBE NOT!

MR. EVERETT WILL SEE YOU NOW!

THANK YOU!

SO, HE'S *FINALLY* FINISHED WITH HER!

THANK YOU FOR BEING SO ***PATIENT***, MR. TERRELL! I'M ***SO*** GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT!

WELL, I'M GLAD YOU'RE TAKING THE TIME TO MEET WITH ME, BUT I'M NOT SURE ***WHY*** I HAD TO COME ALL THE WAY DOWN HERE! I'VE VOICED MY ***CONCERNS*** ON THE DEADLINES ***NUMEROUS*** TIMES ALREADY!

I UNDERSTAND THAT, BUT I ***STILL*** WANTED TO TALK WITH YOU ***FACE TO FACE!*** HOPEFULLY ***ALLEVIATE*** SOME OF THOSE CONCERNS... COME TO SOME KIND OF ***COMPROMISE!***

I'M REALLY NOT A ***NEGOTIATING*** KIND OF GUY, MR. EVERETT! I'M JUST AN ***OLD CONSTRUCTION GRUNT*** WHO SOMEHOW GOT PUT IN THIS MANAGEMENT POSITION!

YES, CHRISTINE SAID YOU WERE A VERY ***HUMBLE*** SORT OF FELLOW! THAT'S ***ONE*** OF THE REASONS I HIRED YOU! SHE SPEAKS ***VERY*** HIGHLY OF YOU!

WELL, I'M VERY PROUD OF ***HER*** TOO! SHE'S BEEN THROUGH A ***LOT*** LATELY, AND COME THROUGH WITH ***FLYING COLORS!*** THANKS, IN LARGE PART, TO ***YOUR*** COMPANY SO I'M TOLD!


YES, WE'RE VERY PROTECTIVE OF OUR EMPLOYEES! ESPECIALLY ONE AS... SPECIAL AS CHRISTINE!

IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I NEED TO GET SOME DOCUMENTS FROM MY SECRETARY BEFORE WE BEGIN! I WON'T BE A MOMENT! HELP YOURSELF TO A DRINK IF YOU LIKE!

THANK YOU! A GLASS OF ***WATER*** WILL BE JUST FINE!

TALES

TALES

OH, **NICE!** HE DIDN'T EVEN LET HER FINISH GETTING **DRESSED** BEFORE **HUSTLING** HER OUT THE BACK DOOR!

AND **WHAT** KIND OF GIRL WOULD **ALLOW** HERSELF TO RUN AROUND WITHOUT ANY **UNDERWEAR?**


WHAT THE DEVIL? IS... IS THAT A PICTURE OF CHRIS? ON HIS DESK?

I...I'VE *NEVER* SEEN HER LOOK LIKE *THAT* BEFORE! IN FACT, SHE LOOKS A *LOT* LIKE...!


I THINK I'VE FOUND A WINNER!

ALL I NEED NOW IS MY *RIDING CROP*, AND THEN WE'LL SEE ABOUT LETTING *YOU* SERVICE *MY* NEEDS FOR AWHILE!

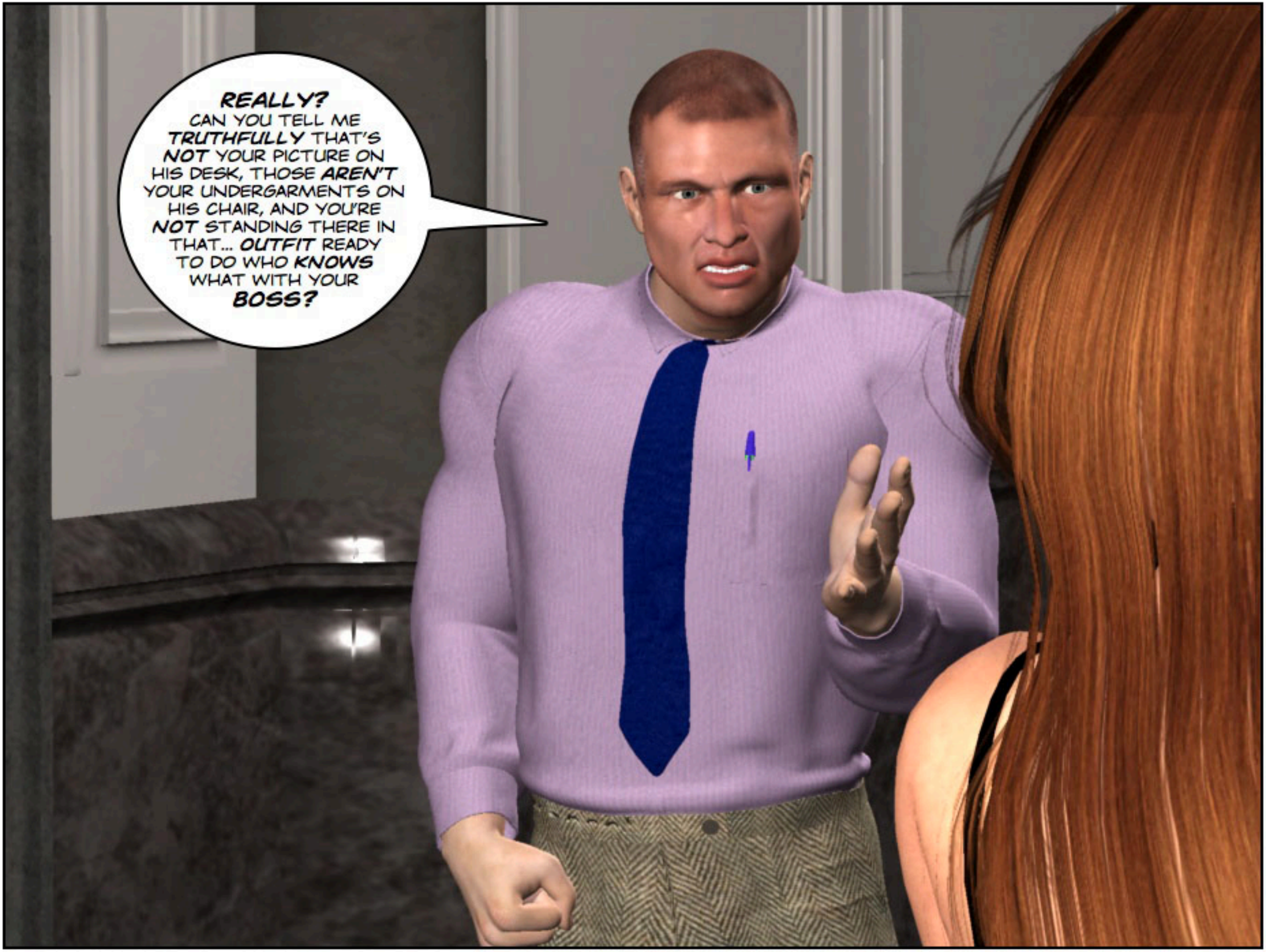

Crash!!




DA... DADDY?!
WH... WHAT ARE
YOU DOING
HERE?

L...LEAVING!
I...I'M
LEAVING!

DADDY, **WAIT!** IT'S **NOT** WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE!


REALLY?
CAN YOU TELL ME TRUTHFULLY THAT'S NOT YOUR PICTURE ON HIS DESK, THOSE AREN'T YOUR UNDERGARMENTS ON HIS CHAIR, AND YOU'RE NOT STANDING THERE IN THAT... OUTFIT READY TO DO WHO KNOWS WHAT WITH YOUR BOSS?


CAN YOU REALLY TELL ME THAT'S NOT WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
DADDY, I...I...!

I... I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, CHRIS!

DADDY, **PLEASE** DON'T GO! NOT LIKE **THIS!**


I'M SORRY YOU HAD TO FIND OUT THIS WAY, MR. TERRELL! BUT, IT'S REALLY FOR THE BEST AND...!


Smack!!
THAT'S FOR TURNING MY CHILD INTO... THAT!

AND I
QUIT!






ARGHHH!!

A FEW MOMENTS LATER
BACK IN DAINIEL'S OFFICE..


WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
AFTER MY FATHER! I'VE GOT TO FIND HIM! TALK TO HIM!


HE'S LONG GONE, CHRISTINE! GIVE HIM SOME TIME TO COOL OFF! HE WAS BOUND TO FIND OUT SOONER OR LATER, SO WHY NOT NOW?
BUT NOT LIKE THIS! WHAT THE HELL WAS HE DOING HERE ANYWAY?


WE... HAD A MEETING, AND I JUST FORGOT ABOUT IT!
YOU'RE NAILING ME ON YOUR DESK TEN MINUTES BEFORE A MEETING WITH MY FATHER, AND YOU JUST FORGOT ABOUT IT? WHY DO I FIND THAT SO HARD TO BELIEVE?


JUST WHAT ARE YOU INSINUATING, CHRISTINE!
FIRST IT'S BOBBY AT THE PARTY LAST WEEK AND NOW IT'S MY FATHER HERE AT THE OFFICE! CAN YOU HONESTLY TELL ME ITS JUST A COINCIDENCE?


EXCUSE ME, MR. EVERETT! BUT WE HAVE A... SITUATION!
NOT NOW, WANDA! I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF SOMETHING!

I'M SORRY, MR. EVERETT! BUT THERE'S A ***PROBLEM*** DOWNSTAIRS THAT YOU ***REALLY*** NEED TO TEND TO! SOMEONE HAD A ***SEIZURE*** IN THE ELEVATOR!

WE HAVE ***MEDICAL*** PERSONNEL ON HAND FOR SITUATIONS LIKE THIS, AND A ***LEGAL*** DEPARTMENT IF NECESSARY! ***WHY*** ARE YOU BOTHERING ***ME*** WITH IT?


BECAUSE IT'S CHRISTINE'S FATHER, SIR! THEY THINK IT WAS EITHER A HEART ATTACK OR A STROKE!

WHAT?! THAT... THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT! THERE HAS TO BE SOME MISTAKE! HE... HE WAS JUST HERE!

HE'S ALL RIGHT, THOUGH! RIGHT?

I'M SO... SO SORRY, CHRISTINE!


NO! IT'S NOT POSSIBLE! HE CAN'T BE GONE! HE JUST CAN'T BE!

I DON'T ***BELIEVE*** IT! I HAVE TO ***SEE*** HIM! HE'S ALL RIGHT! I ***KNOW*** HE IS!

CHRISTINE, ***STOP!*** THERE'S ***NOTHING*** YOU CAN DO! HE'S ***GONE*** AND YOU HAVE TO ***FACE*** THAT! STAY ***HERE*** WITH ME... CALM DOWN... THEN WE'LL GO TO THE HOSPITAL TOGETHER!

I DID THIS TO HIM! I SCREWED IT ALL UP... AND HE PAID FOR IT! I CAN'T IMAGINE MY LIFE WITHOUT HIM IN IT!

YOU'LL ADJUST, CHRISTINE! WE ALWAYS DO! ALL YOU NEED IS SOMEONE ELSE TO TURN TO... LIKE ME!


YOU?! YOU'RE ALMOST AS MUCH TO BLAME AS I AM! YOU MANIPULATED ME... CHANGED ME... AND WHEN DADDY SAW THE KIND OF PERSON I'VE BECOME, IT KILLED HIM!
IF I HADN'T BEEN THERE... THAT DAY... NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE HAPPENED! HE'D STILL BE ALIVE!

I CAN'T *DEAL* WITH THIS... *NOT WITH YOU!* I NEED TO FIND SOMEONE I CAN *TRUST!*

QUANTUM



Chapter Ten

by CBlack

BUTTERFLY

LATER THAT DAY, A DISTRAUGHT AND SHATTERED CHRISTINE FINDS REFUGE IN AN OLD HAUNT...

LUCKY FOR ME I KEPT UP THE LEASE ON THIS APARTMENT! ITS THE ***ONLY*** PLACE LEFT FOR ME NOW!

I CAN'T GO TO ***DADDY'S***... NOT YET! AND ***SALLY'S*** NOT ANSWERING HER PHONE!


GOD! HOW COULD I HAVE MADE SUCH A MESS OF MY LIFE? AND HOW CAN I GO ON WITHOUT MY DAD?
Knock
Knock!!


SALLY!
THANK GOD YOU GOT MY MESSAGES, AND...!


BOBBY!?
WH... WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
SALLY CALLED ME... TOLD ME WHAT HAPPENED! SHE'D HAVE COME HERSELF BUT STU WOULDN'T LET HER LEAVE THE JOB!
ARE... ARE YOU OKAY?


AM I OKAY? MY FATHER IS DEAD AND I'M RESPONSIBLE! DOES IT SOUND LIKE I'M OKAY?!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? HOW COULD YOU POSSIBLY BE RESPONSIBLE?

YOU SAW ME! YOU'VE SEEN MY BEHAVIOR LATELY... THE PERSON I'VE BECOME! I KNOW HOW DISAPPOINTED AND REPULSED YOU ARE BY ME!

I'M HARDLY REPULSED...!

NOW IMAGINE HOW MY **FATHER** FELT WHEN HE FOUND OUT... WHEN HE CAME **FACE TO FACE** WITH THE **UGLY TRUTH** I'VE BEEN **HIDING** FROM HIM!

I'LL **TELL** YOU HOW HE FELT... IT **KILLED** HIM! **THAT'S** HOW IT FELT!

CHRIS, YOU'RE ***EXAGGERATING!*** YOUR FATHER ***LOVED*** YOU... NO MATTER ***WHAT!*** IT WAS ***OBVIOUSLY*** SOMETHING ELSE THAT CAUSED HIS SEIZURE! HIS ***HEALTH,*** THE ***STRESS*** OF HIS NEW JOB...!

WHICH *I* GOT FOR HIM! YOU SEE? ***IT WAS ME!*** HE WAS ***ALREADY*** STRESSED OUT FROM THAT JOB HE ***HATED,*** AND THEN *I* PUSHED HIM OVER THE EDGE! ***I KILLED HIM!***

STOP IT, CHRIS! YOU'RE GETTING ***HYSTERICAL!*** YOUR ***IMAGINATION*** IS GETTING THE ***BEST*** OF YOU!


REALLY? I DIDN'T IMAGINE THE LOOK ON MY FATHER'S FACE TODAY! IT WAS ALMOST IDENTICAL TO THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE THE OTHER NIGHT! THE LOOK OF CONTEMPT AND COMPLETE DISAPPOINTMENT!

THE ONLY ***CONTEMPT*** I WAS FEELING THE OTHER NIGHT WAS FOR THAT RICH ***SLIMEBALL*** WHO HAD HIS HANDS ALL OVER YOU!

AND THE **DISAPPOINTMENT** WAS IN **MYSELF**... FOR WAITING **TOO DAMN LONG** TO **TELL** YOU HOW I **REALLY** FELT...

AND PROBABLY LOSING THE **ONE** PERSON I... I...!














40












IT'S FUNNY! GROWING UP TOGETHER WE WERE ALWAYS BEST FRIENDS, BUT I NEVER REALIZED THAT I HAD ANY STRONGER FEELINGS TOWARD YOU UNTIL YOU STARTED YOUR TRANSITION!

IT TOOK ME AWHILE TO FIGURE IT OUT, BUT NOW I THINK I ***FINALLY*** UNDERSTAND! I THINK WE WERE ***ALWAYS*** MEANT TO BE ***MORE*** THAN JUST FRIENDS, AND YOUR TRANSITION ***FINALLY*** MAKES THAT ALL POSSIBLE!

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, BOBBY?

I... I *LOVE* YOU, CHRIS!

OHHH, AND *I* LOVE *YOU* TOO, BOBBY! I THINK I *ALWAYS* HAVE!

ESPECIALLY NOW THAT I'VE HAD YOU INSIDE ME!

UMMM, YEAH! SO... WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

MMMM... ANYTHING THAT HAS TO DO WITH THAT WONDERFULLY MASSIVE COCK OF YOURS!

THAT'S NOT EXACTLY....!

PLEASE, BOBBY! FUCK ME AGAIN! LAST TIME WAS WONDERFUL, BUT I WANT YOU TO MAKE ME SCREAM LIKE A BANSHEE THIS TIME! C'MON, BABY! FUCK ME LIKE THE STUD I KNOW YOU ARE!

CHRIS! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND...!

OH... BUT I **DO**, BABY! YOU JUST LET ME TAKE CARE OF **THAT!** YOU'LL FIND THAT I'M **VERY** GOOD AT BRINGING YOU BACK TO **WORKING SPEED!** JUST YOU **WATCH!**

COME ON, CHRIS! **WHAT'S GOING ON?** THIS **ISN'T** WHAT **I** WANT!

THEN, JUST **TELL** ME WHAT YOU WANT, BABY! A TITTY FUCK? **DOGGY STYLE?** YOU CAN EVEN **TIE ME UP** IF YOU WANT! I'VE DONE IT **ALL...** AND I **LOVE** IT!

I'D LIKE TO THINK YOU'RE ACTING THIS WAY OUT OF SOME SORT OF TWISTED **GRIEF** FOR YOUR FATHER, BUT I **DON'T KNOW!** I... I CAME HERE BECAUSE I WANTED TO **COMFORT** YOU... BECAUSE **I LOVE YOU...** BUT NOW...

YOU'RE NOT **YOURSELF** RIGHT NOW, CHRIS! THAT'S ALL! I THINK I'D BETTER GO!

ARE YOU **SERIOUS?** YOU'VE GOT A **HOT GIRL** IN BED, JUST **BEGGING** FOR IT, AND YOU'RE GOING TO **LEAVE?**


JEEZ, TALK ABOUT A TOTAL PUSSY! IN CASE YOU'VE FORGOTTEN, I'M THE ONE WITH THE PUSSY NOW! AND I NEED TO FEEL YOUR BIG COCK INSIDE ME, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, MISTER!
C'MON, BOBBY! TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT AND I'LL DO IT... I'LL DO IT ALL NIGHT LONG! PLEASE!? SPANK ME! FUCK ME! WHATEVER! I'M YOURS... DON'T YOU SEE?
I'LL MAKE SURE SALLY LOOKS IN ON YOU WHEN SHE GETS OFF WORK, OKAY? GOODBYE, CHRIS!


BOBBY?!
BOBBY!!


WHO THE HELL DOES HE THINK HE IS? WHAT A BASTARD! I WAS READY TO GIVE MYSELF TO HIM, BODY AND SOUL, AND HE RUNS OFF AS IF I WERE SOME SKANKY WHORE!
BUT MAYBE... MAYBE WHAT HE SAW IS ME AS I TRULY AM!

I DID ESSENTIALLY **SELL** MYSELF TO DANIEL... **AND** ROGER TO GET WHAT I WANTED!

I THOUGHT IT WAS FREEING, **LIBERATING,** TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE **SEXUAL** NATURE OF MY FEMININE SIDE... BUT SOMEHOW, ALONG THE WAY, I BECAME THE **SLUT** THEY WANTED ME TO BE AND I **FORGOT** WHO I WAS...

THE KIND OF PERSON SOMEONE LIKE **BOBBY** COULD FALL IN **LOVE** WITH!


I'VE GOT TO FIX IT! I'VE GOT TO FIX IT ALL!
AND THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO DO THAT!

THE NEXT DAY...


IN THE MAIN LOBBY AT FERMILAB...



OH, I'M SO SORRY, PROFESSOR! I JUST WASN'T WATCHING WHERE I WAS GOING!

THAT'S QUITE ALL RIGHT, YOUNG LADY! NO HARM DONE! WE ALL GET DISTRACTED SOMETIMES!



AND SOON, IN THE PLANCK GENERATOR...

ACCORDING TO THE PROFESSOR, IT WAS THE ***IMBALANCE*** IN THE MAGNETIC CONTAINMENT FIELD THAT CREATED THE ***ORIGINAL*** WORMHOLE!

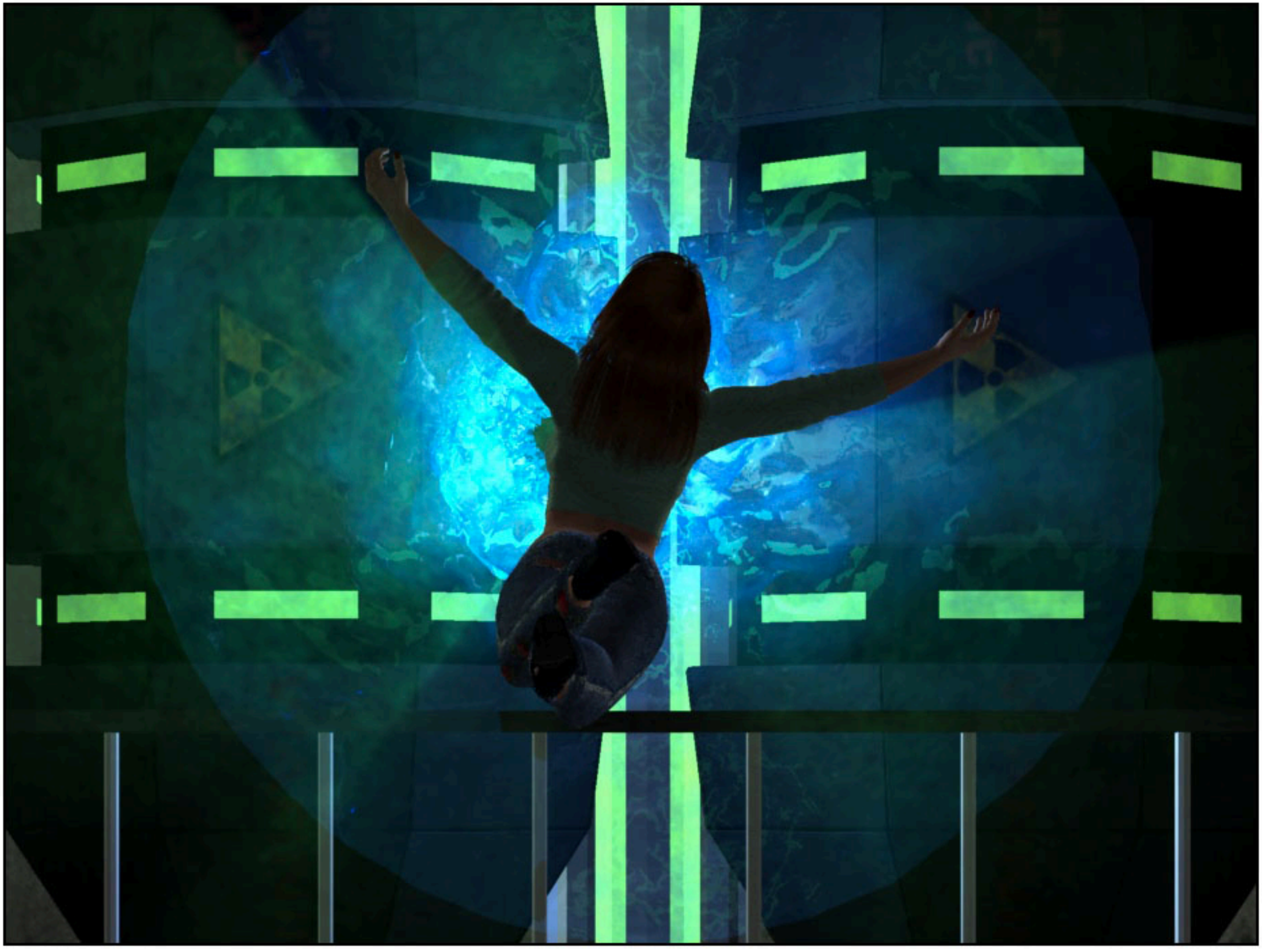
NOW THAT I'VE ***DUPLICATED*** THAT IMBALANCE, AND ACCORDING TO MY CALCULATIONS, THESE ***FURTHER*** ADJUSTMENTS SHOULD GET ME THE RESULTS I NEED! ***THEORETICALLY,*** AT LEAST!

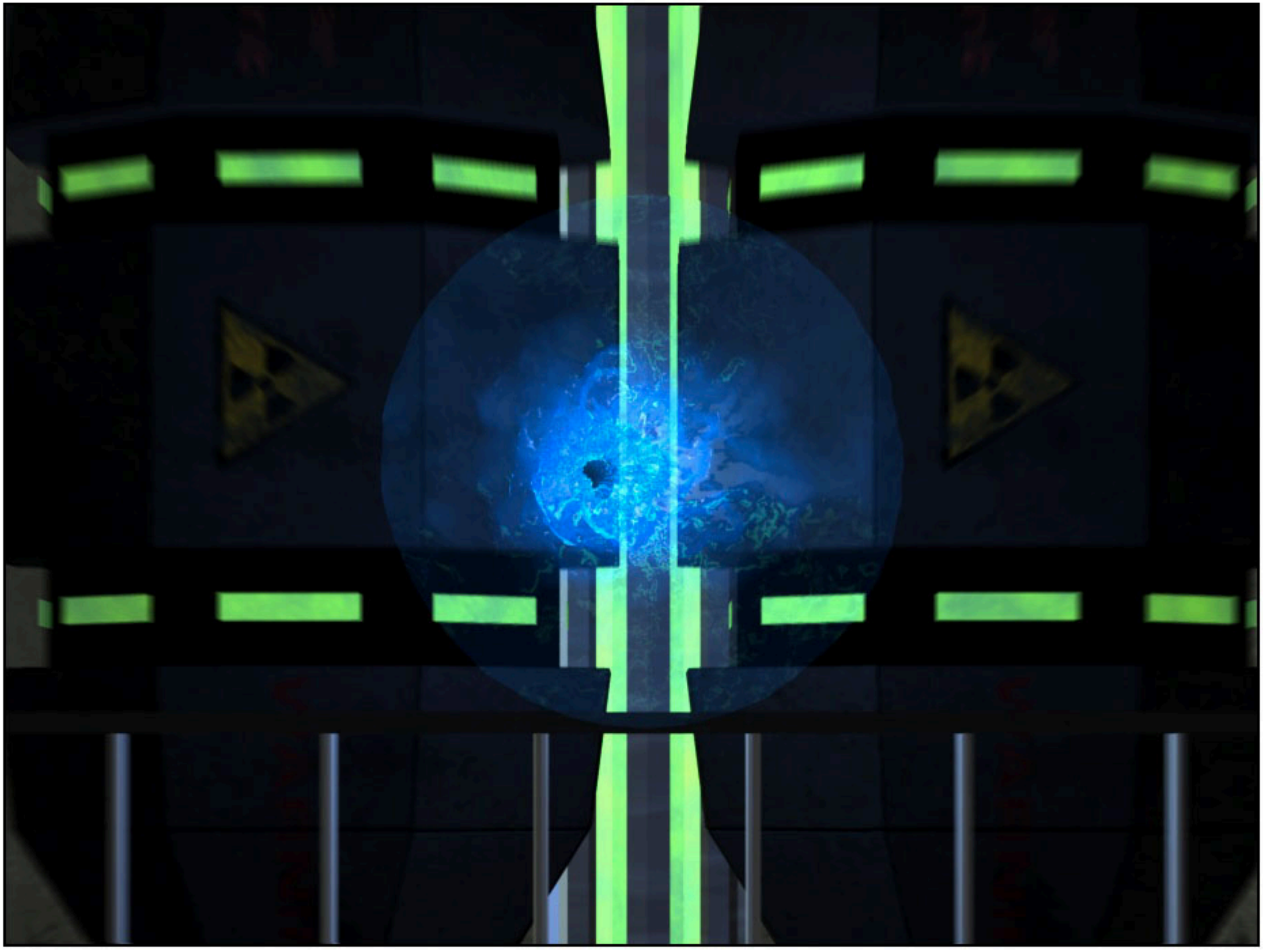
I THOUGHT ***THIS*** WAS THE LIFE I WAS MEANT TO HAVE! BECOMING A WOMAN FELT ***SO RIGHT... SO NATURAL!*** BUT THE ***PERSON*** I'VE BECOME... THE PRICE ***OTHERS*** HAVE PAID...!

THIS WHOLE TIMELINE WAS A ***MISTAKE!*** A HORRIBLE, HORRIBLE ***ACCIDENT!*** AND IT'S UP TO ***ME*** TO KEEP IT FROM HAPPENING!

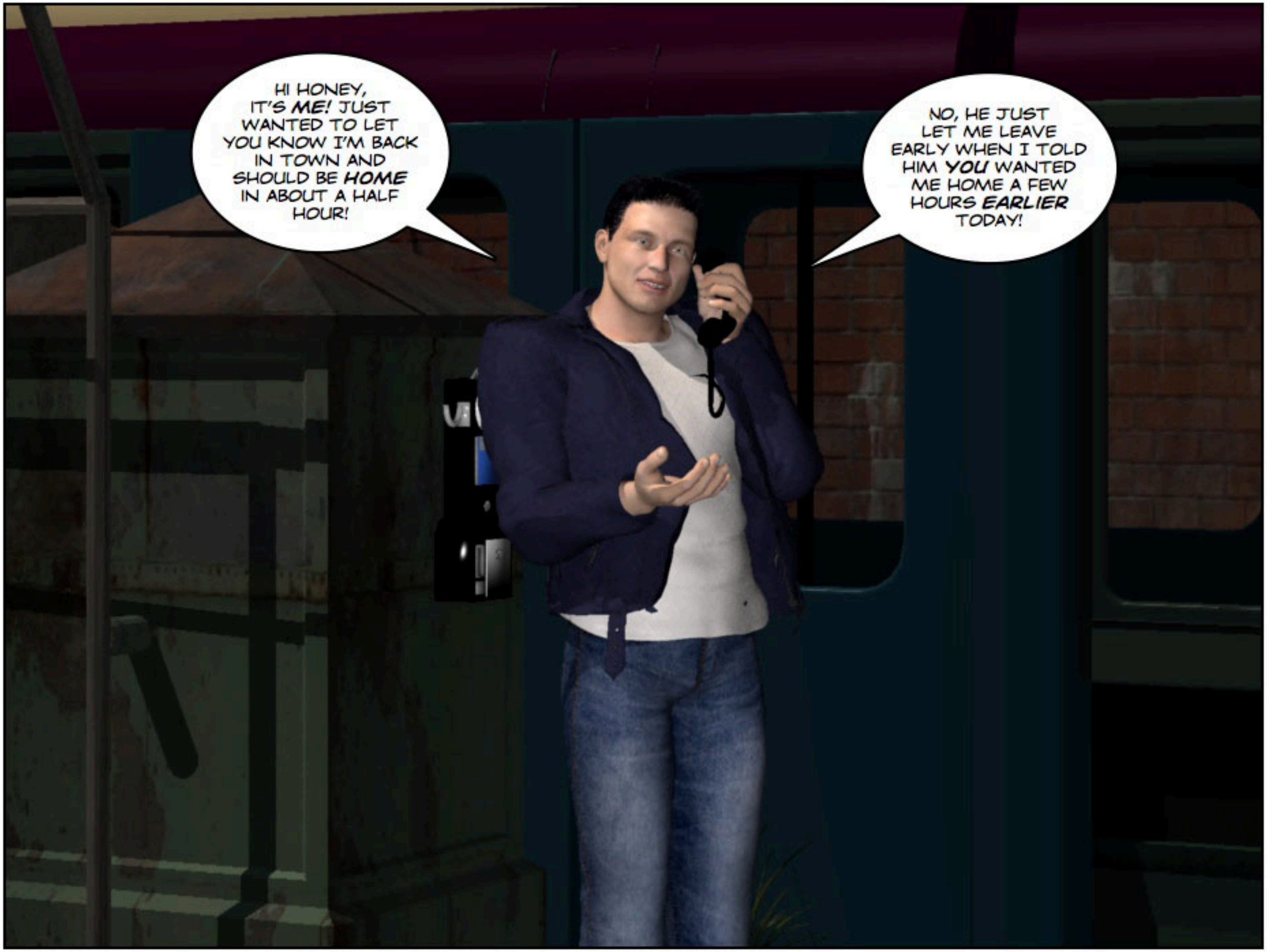
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RADIA

Reactor
Block
Secto





MID-AFTERNOON AT AN L-STATION ON A COOL NOVEMBER DAY IN 1988...


HI HONEY, IT'S ME! JUST WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW I'M BACK IN TOWN AND SHOULD BE HOME IN ABOUT A HALF HOUR!
NO, HE JUST LET ME LEAVE EARLY WHEN I TOLD HIM YOU WANTED ME HOME A FEW HOURS EARLIER TODAY!

BECAUSE **THAT'S** WHAT YOU TOLD ME WHEN **YOU** CALLED YESTERDAY, **REMEMBER?**

WELL THEN, IT WAS A WRONG NUMBER WHO **SOUNDED** A HELL OF A LOT LIKE **YOU!** WHATEVER THE CASE, I'M ALMOST HOME, SO I'LL SEE YOU **SOON!**


SOMEONE OBVIOUSLY ***PARTIED*** A BIT TOO MUCH AFTER THE ELECTION LAST NIGHT! OH WELL, WHATEVER GETS ME MORE TIME WITH THAT CRAZY, ***WONDERFUL*** WOMAN!


Clu-Clunch!
Clu-Clunch!
Clu-Clunch!

WELL, DADDY... YOU **DID** SAY I WAS LOOKING AND **SOUNDING** MORE LIKE MOM EVERY DAY!

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

Bush sweeps home to victory

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

I'D **HOPED** I COULD PULL IT OFF AND GET YOU HERE **EARLIER**... AND IT LOOKS LIKE IT **WORKED!**

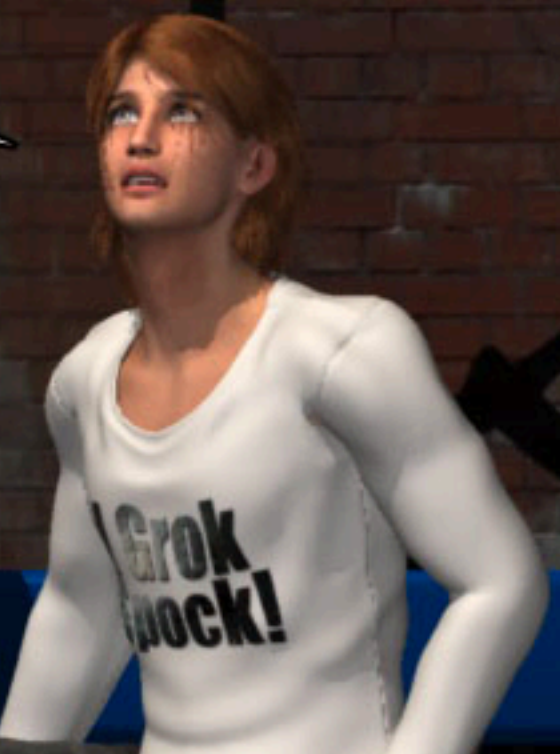
NOW... LET'S SEE IF **ALL** MY CALCULATIONS WERE CORRECT!

SHORTLY THEREAFTER...

WHOOOOAAAAA....!

HOLY SHIT! WHAT THE HELL JUST HAPPENED?! I... I WAS IN THE LAB! BUT... NOW I'M DOWNTOWN SOMEWHERE!





AND IT'S AWFULLY FREAKIN' *FREEZING* FOR AUGUST! *WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON?*

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

Bush sweeps home to victory

CHICAGO SUN-T

Bush sweeps home to

WHAT TH...?!
BUSH?!
PRESIDENT?!
NOVEMBER
1988?!!

NO
FUCKING
WAY!

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

Presidential campaign favourite heads for the White House

Bush sweeps home to victory

Dukakis well beaten despite late rallies

Relief as weary rivals end trail

I trust George Bush and America can too

YES
FUCKING
WAY, I'M
AFRAID!

WHO ARE **YOU** AND WHAT THE **HELL** IS GOING ON?

TWO INCREDIBLY **TOUGH QUESTIONS** WITH EQUALLY **TOUGH ANSWERS!** YOU'D **NEVER** BELIEVE THE FIRST, SO I'LL TRY TO ANSWER THE SECOND ONE IN THE SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME WE HAVE!

YES, YOU **ARE** BACK IN 1988, COURTESY OF A **WORMHOLE** CREATED BY AN IMBALANCE IN PROF. HOLTZMAN'S **PLANCK GENERATOR!** BUT DON'T WORRY, IT'LL BE BACK IN ABOUT A MINUTE AND SHOULD TAKE YOU BACK TO THE LAB IN **GOOD OLD 2012!**

HOW... HOW COULD YOU **POSSIBLY** KNOW THAT?

IT WOULD TAKE **WAY** TOO LONG TO EXPLAIN AND, LIKE I SAID, YOU **DON'T** HAVE THE TIME! I WANTED TO BE HERE WHEN YOU ARRIVED TO TELL YOU **ONE THING** AND **ONE THING ONLY!**

WHA... WHAT'S THAT?


BOBBY! DON'T LET HIM SLIP OUT OF YOUR LIFE! YOU GREW UP TOGETHER... DON'T GROW APART! WHEREVER YOUR FUTURE TAKES YOU, KEEP BOBBY CLOSE... FOR BOTH YOUR SAKES!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? JUST WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

SOMEONE WHO SHOULD'VE KNOWN BETTER!


I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS!
I WISH I HAD TIME TO EXPLAIN, CHRIS... BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YOUR RIDE IS HERE!
Grok
Spock!


NANDY'S DINER
ICE COLD
Coca-Cola
CHICAGO SUN-TIMES
Bank swaps home to victory
FOR SALE
OH SHIT! HERE WE GO AGAIN!

WHOOOOAAAAA....!

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

GOOD LUCK, CHRIS...

HMMM... IT SUDDENLY OCCURS TO ME THAT HAVING SENT DAD HOME TO MOM EARLIER THAN BEFORE, I'VE EFFECTIVELY **ROLLED THE GENETIC DICE** ON THE CHRIS THAT'LL BE BORN IN **THIS** TIMELINE!

I WONDER HOW HE... OR **SHE** WILL TURN OUT!

WELL, SINCE THERE'S NO WORMHOLE BEING SENT TO TAKE **ME** BACK TO **MY** TIMELINE, I GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE GOOD IN **THIS** ONE!

DISAPPEAR INTO THE CROWD AND STAY AS **ANONYMOUS** AS POSSIBLE!

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

Presidential campaign favourite heads for the White House

Bush sweeps home to victory

Dukakis well beaten despite late rallies

Relief as weary rivals end trail

● I trust George Bush and America can too ●

Tourists advised to quit Sri Lanka

Tory whips secure victory

Storm warns of television 'near anarchy'

CHICAGO SUN-TI

Bush sweeps home to

NOW, HOW WOULD A GIRL WITH A POCKETFUL OF ***JEWELRY*** AND AN ***INTIMATE*** KNOWLEDGE OF SPORTING RESULTS FOR THE NEXT ***TWENTY YEARS*** GO ABOUT MAKING A ***DECENT*** LIVING?

CHICAGO
Presidential campaign favourite
sweeps ho
Praise for Princess
st George Bush
merica can too


TWENTY-FOUR YEARS (AND NINE MONTHS) LATER...


"SIGH!" NOT AGAIN!
JOHNNY'S TAVERN
Crash!!

ANOTHER GLASS, STU? REALLY?

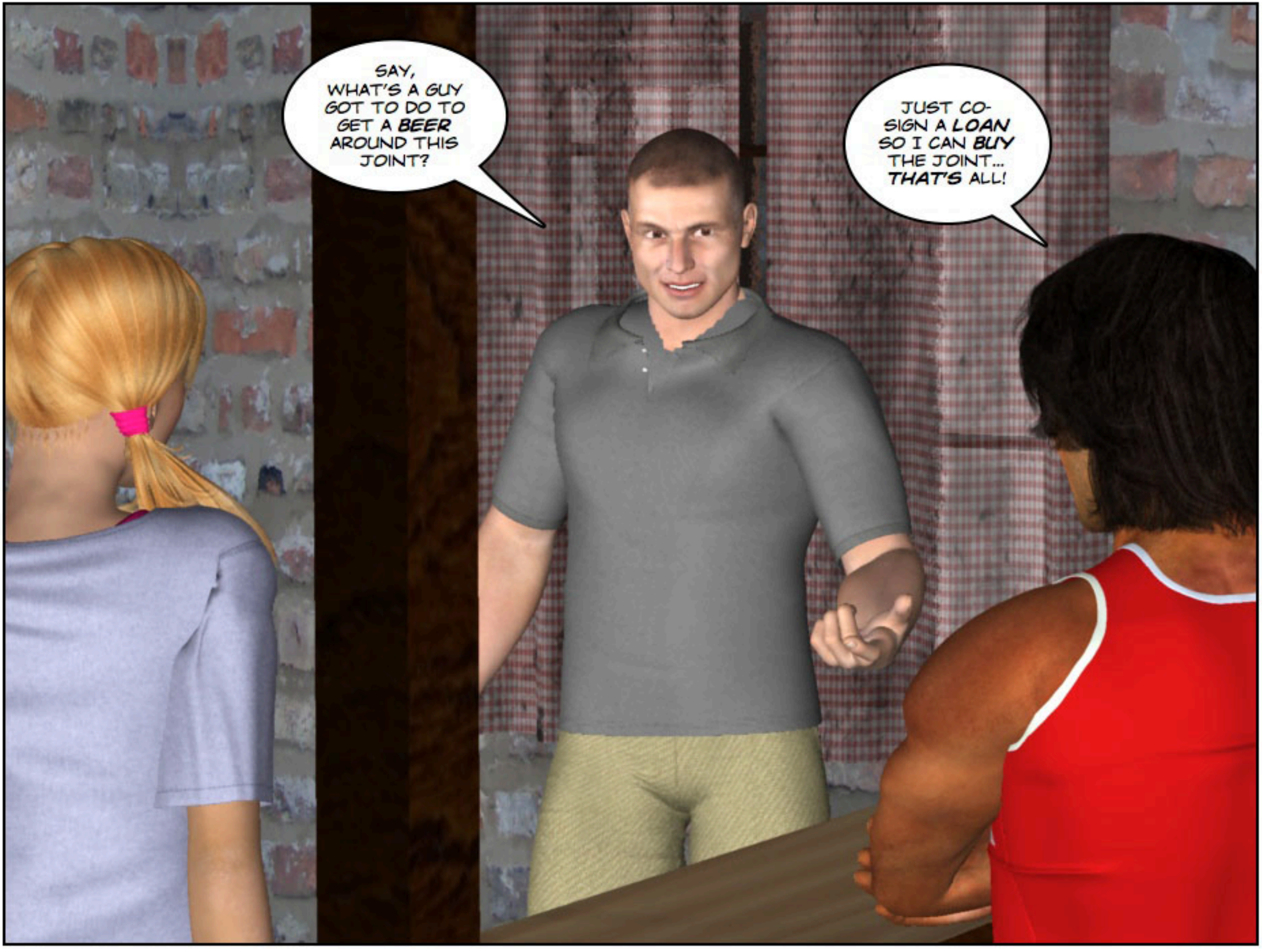
I'M SORRY, BOBBY! IT JUST SLIPPED! IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN!


YOU SAID THAT LAST TIME... AND THE TIME BEFORE THAT... AND THE TIME BEFORE THAT...!
WHY DO YOU KEEP HIM AROUND HERE ANYWAY? HE GIVES ME THE CREEPS!

I KEEP HIM AROUND 'CAUSE I FEEL KIND OF **BAD** ABOUT **BUYING** THIS PLACE OUT FROM UNDER HIM THE WAY I DID! THE PREVIOUS OWNERS WERE **ADAMANT** ABOUT STU **NOT** OWNING JOHNNY'S SO THEY GAVE ME A **GREAT** DEAL WHEN I SHOWED INTEREST!

LUCKY FOR **ALL** OF US, IF YOU ASK ME! BUT I'M **STILL** KEEPING MY DISTANCE FROM HIM!

JOHNNY'S TAVERN


SAY, WHAT'S A GUY GOT TO DO TO GET A BEER AROUND THIS JOINT?
JUST CO-SIGN A LOAN SO I CAN BUY THE JOINT... THAT'S ALL!

OH, **WAIT!** YOU **ALREADY** DID THAT! WELL, HELL! THAT DESERVES AT LEAST **ONE** BEER ON THE HOUSE! HOW YOU DOIN', PAT?

PRETTY GOOD, BOBBY! MY COMPANY SEEMS TO BE WINNING A **LOT** OF THESE GOVERNMENT BIDS LATELY, SO BUSINESS IS **BOOMING!** AND HOW YOU DOING, SALLY?

DOIN' PRETTY **GOOD** MYSELF, MR. T! WHAT BRINGS **YOU** DOWN HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE AFTERNOON?


THOUGHT I'D TRY AND STEAL CHRIS AWAY FOR A LATE LUNCH, IF THAT'S OKAY WITH YOU, BOBBY!
DON'T I GET A SAY IN THESE KIDNAPPING PLANS OF YOURS?

NONE WHATSOEVER! BETWEEN YOUR STUDIES AND THIS JOB I HARDLY GET A CHANCE TO SEE YOU ANYMORE!

WELL, WHEN YOU PUT IT LIKE THAT, HOW CAN I REFUSE?

THINK **YOU** CAN GET ALONG WITHOUT ME FOR AWHILE?

NOT AS A **RULE**, BUT IN THIS CASE I'LL **TRY** AND GET BY FOR AN HOUR OR SO! IT'S THE **LEAST** I CAN DO FOR THE **BIRTHDAY GIRL!**

Premium White - $5.00

Domestic Bottled Beer - $4.75

Imported Bottled Beer - $5.50

Non Alchoic Beer $3.25

Shots $4.25

Non Alchoic Drinks - $3.00

HOT RODs

OH MY GOD! IT IS MY BIRTHDAY, ISN'T IT?

I KNEW YOU'D FORGOTTEN! THAT JUST GOES TO SHOW THAT YOU'VE BEEN WORKING WAY TOO HARD!

OHNNY'S TAVERN


THE WHOLE POINT OF GETTING THAT SCHOLARSHIP WAS SO YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO WORK WHILE GOING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL!
YET HERE YOU ARE, STILL PUTTING IN THIRTY HOURS A WEEK AT JOHNNY'S!

WHY DON'T YOU ASK YOUR **BOSS** TO CUT BACK ON YOUR HOURS?

HEY, I'VE **TRIED** BUT SHE WON'T LET ME! AND I THINK YOU KNOW HOW **STUBBORN** YOUR DAUGHTER CAN BE!


LOOK YOU TWO... REGARDLESS OF HOW GENEROUS THE GIVENS SCHOLARSHIP IS, I LIKE WORKING HERE TOO MUCH TO GIVE IT UP!
IF ALL I DID WAS LIVE AND BREATHE QUANTUM PHYSICS, I'D GO NUTS!

A GIRL NEEDS *OTHER* THINGS IN HER LIFE, TOO, YOU KNOW!

SO I'VE *HEARD!* I'LL KEEP THAT IN MIND!

JOHNNY'S TAVERN


OKAY, FINE! TOPIC CLOSED... FOR NOW! SHALL WE GO?
YOU BET, DAD! SEE YOU ALL LATER!


YOU DIDN'T REALLY FORGET YOUR BIRTHDAY, DID YOU!
I'M NOT THAT SCATTER-BRAINED, DAD! BUT SALLY TOLD ME SHE HAD TO REMIND BOBBY, SO THIS LUNCH OF OURS WILL GIVE HIM SOME TIME TO PLAN SOMETHING FOR LATER ON!
We are
open

SO... WHERE ARE WE OFF TO?

A LITTLE **CAFE** DOWN NEAR **9TH AND STATE** I USED TO TAKE YOU TO WHEN YOU WERE A LITTLE GIRL! I THINK YOU'LL LIKE IT! YOU **USED** TO AT LEAST!

JOHNNY'S TAVERN


I LIKE ANY PLACE AS LONG AS I'M WITH YOU, DADDY!
ME TOO, KITTEN! ME TOO!



LATER THAT EVENING...

ICE COLD
Coca-Cola

ARE YOU IN?


HAVE I TOLD YOU WHAT A NICE TIME I HAD TONIGHT?
A COUPLE OF TIMES, BUT I'M ALWAYS GAME FOR HEARING IT AGAIN!


THEN, I HAD A WONDERFUL TIME TONIGHT! YOU'RE VERY GOOD AT BIRTHDAYS!
WELL, I HOPE TO HELP YOU CELEBRATE MANY, MANY MORE OF THEM... TOGETHER!


I WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY!






SIGH!
JUST AS IT
SHOULD
BE!

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, CHRISTINE? YOU SEEM A LITTLE... **SAD!**

OH... I'M ALL RIGHT! JUST GETTING A LITTLE ***TEARY-EYED*** WATCHING THESE TWO YOUNG PEOPLE!

SAY, ISN'T THAT THE YOUNG LADY WE AWARDED THE ***SCHOLARSHIP*** TO? I COULD ***SWEAR*** WE ALSO SAW HER ***EARLIER*** TODAY! PERHAPS WE SHOULD SAY ***HELLO!***

OH, LET THEM ***BE,*** JIM! THEY'RE ***YOUNG*** AND IN ***LOVE!*** WHY INTERRUPT THAT?

YOU'RE RIGHT, AS ***USUAL!*** WHERE WOULD I BE WITHOUT ***YOU*** TO KEEP THIS ***IMPULSIVE*** NATURE OF MINE IN ***CHECK*** ALL THESE YEARS?

SERVING FIVE TO TEN FOR ***SEXUAL HARASSMENT*** AND ***INSIDER TRADING*** MOST LIKELY!

FORTUNATELY, WE'LL ***NEVER*** HAVE TO FIND OUT, WILL WE!


FINALLY, A TIMELINE THE WAY MY LIFE WAS MEANT TO BE! MY FATHER IS HAPPY AND HEALTHY, CHRIS AND BOBBY ARE TOGETHER, AND I'VE EVEN MANAGED TO EKE OUT A HAPPY LIFE HERE!
LIFE IS GOOD!

TAKE ME HOME, LOVE!

WHATEVER YOU DESIRE, MY DEAR!


HOME, JAMES!
YES, CONGRESSMAN GIVENS! RIGHT AWAY!


ARE
YOU
IN?


TAKE ME HOME, LOVE?
WHATEVER THE LADY WISHES!




TWO TERMS
ONE MORE TERM
2012
Clu-Clunch!
Clu-Clunch!
Clu-Clunch!


ARE YOU IN?
2012


TWO TERMS
ONE MORE TERM
2012
ARE YOU IN?


TWO TERMS
ONE MORE TERM
2012
ARE YOU IN?


WHOOOOAAAAA....!
TWO TERMS
ONE MORE TERM
2012
ARE YOU IN?


ONE MORE TERM
2012
ARE YOU IN?
owww!!

WELL, I'M **DEFINITELY** BACK IN **2012**... BUT THIS **ISN'T** THE LAB! SHE SAID I'D BE GOING BACK TO THE **LAB!**

ARE YOU IN?

ONE MORE TERM

2012

VOTE FOR HOPE AGAIN - OBAMA/BIDEN


NE
ORE
ERM
12
AGAIN - OBAMA/BIDEN
ARE
YOU
IN
Grok
pock!
SO...
WHAT NOW?
THE PROFESSOR
SENDS
ANOTHER
ONE?
PROFESSOR?!

HELLO?!!

TWO TERMS

ONE MORE TERM

2012

I Grok Spock


WELL...
CRAP!
2012
The End