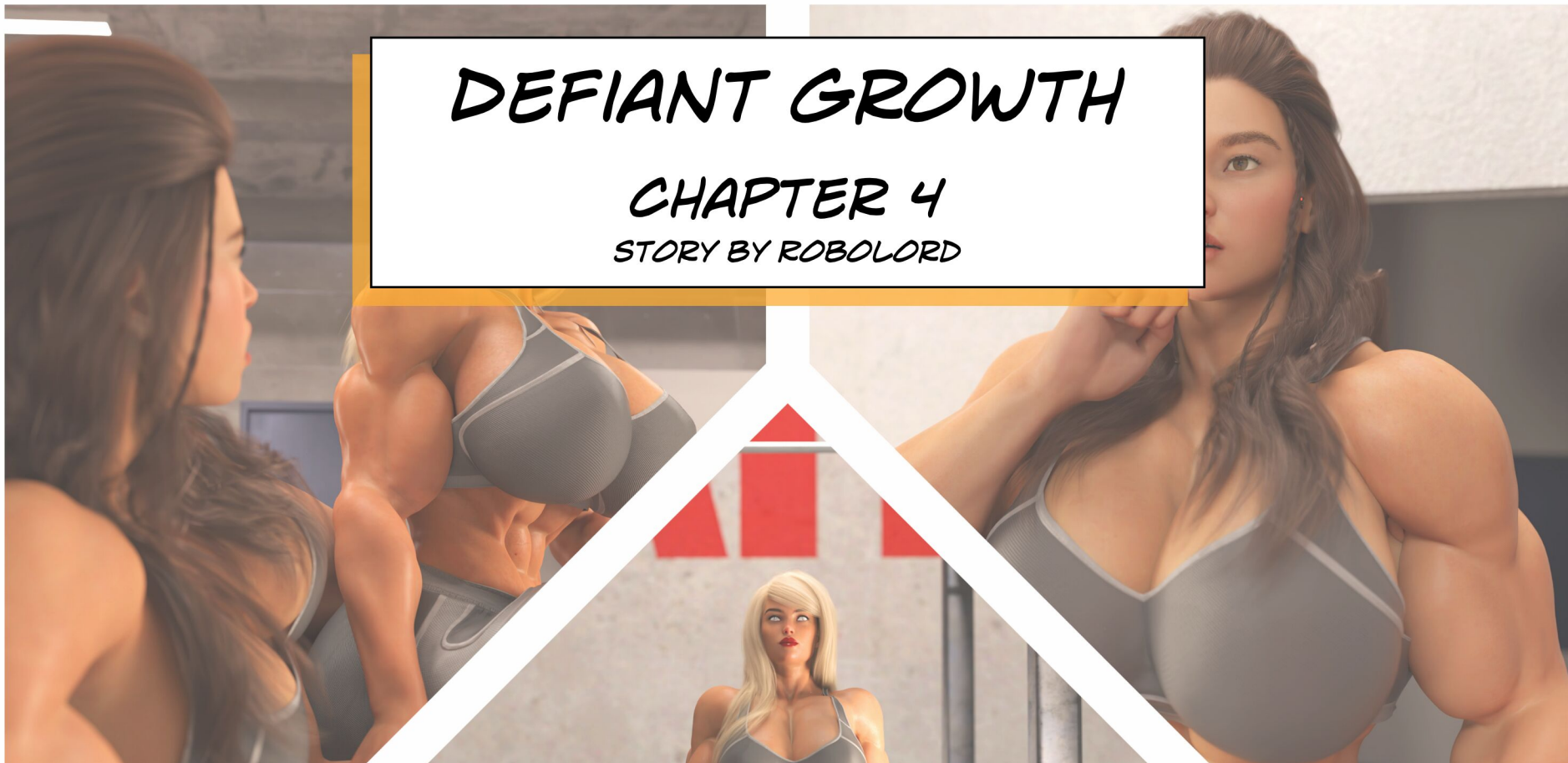


DEFIANT GROWTH

CHAPTER 4

STORY BY ROBOLORD



AFTER THE ACTIVATION OF THEIR CHIPS THE
GIRLS STARTED THEIR WORKOUT UNDER
FRANCIS' SUPERVISION.



GET STARTED
GIRLS.

WITH THE COMMAND GIVEN THE
GIRLS MOVED IN TANDEM.



STARTING A RATHER
HARSH WORKOUT.



THEY MOVED WITH
MECHANICAL PRECISION.



WITHOUT ANY WORDS
OR SOUNDS.



OR EVEN
EXPRESSIONS.



WE SHOULD'VE
DONE THIS FROM THE
BEGINNING. IMAGINE HOW
MUCH MORE EFFICIENT THEY'LL
WORK OUT WITHOUT THE
CONSTANT NEED TO TALK OR
SOCIALIZE. IT'S UTTERLY
FRUSTRATING HOW MUCH
TIME THEY WASTED ON
NONSENSE.




THE GIRLS CONTINUED THEIR WORKOUT FOR A WHILE IN A SIMILAR FASHION.

ALRIGHT,
ENOUGH OF THAT,
GET DOWN AND
CLEAN UP.



I'M AMAZED AT
HOW OBEDIENT THEY
ARE. I HAD EXPECTED
MORE ISSUES.





I WONDER HOW MUCH
THEY ACTUALLY EXPERIENCE,
WOULD BE INTERESTING TO
TEST.

PERHAPS, BUT WE
DON'T HAVE THE TIME.
THE BOSS EXPECTS
RESULTS.

AND I DON'T WANT TO RISK
TURNING OFF THE CHIPS NOW. GOOD
CHANCE THERE WILL BE SOME..
AGRESSION. AND THERE'S NO USE
RISKING DAMAGE TO THE GOODS
WHEN WE'RE THIS FAR ALONG.





LIBERTY, PICK UP THAT
CONCRETE BLOCK FOR
ME WOULD YOU?

AND SO LIBERTY WENT.



THOUGH IT SEEMED SOME SERIOUS EFFORT,
SHE DIDN'T MAKE A SOUND.



GREAT,
BRING IT OVER
HERE.





IMPRESSIVE.
NOW LIFT IT
OVERHEAD.

LIBERTY'S EXPRESSION REMAINED NEUTRAL,
NOT A SOUND WAS MADE, BUT SHE STOPPED
LIFTING THE CONCRETE BLOCK HIGHER. HER
ARMS TREMBLING SLIGHTLY.



HMM? HOW CURIOUS,
SHOW ME HOW MUCH
EFFORT THIS IS COSTING
YOU LIBERTY.



GGHAAAA--

HMM--



WELL, MAYBE
PUT ON A SMILE
INSTEAD.

THIS IS
PERHAPS A BIT
TOO HEAVY FOR
NOW.

BUT TRUST ME,
THERE ARE SOME
INTENSE DAYS COMING!
AND SOON YOU WILL BE
CURLING THOSE!



AND SO..



FOR DAYS ON END..



THE GIRLS WORKED OUT.



AND GREW BIGGER.



THEIR PROGRESS CERTAINLY QUICKENED.



AND MORE AND MORE CREATIVE WAYS HAD TO BE FOUND..



TO CHALLENGE THEIR EVER INCREASING STRENGTH.



WHICH WAS REACHING FAR BEYOND REGULAR HUMANS.



BUT ALL THE WHILE.



THEY WERE UNDER INFLUENCE OF THE CHIP.



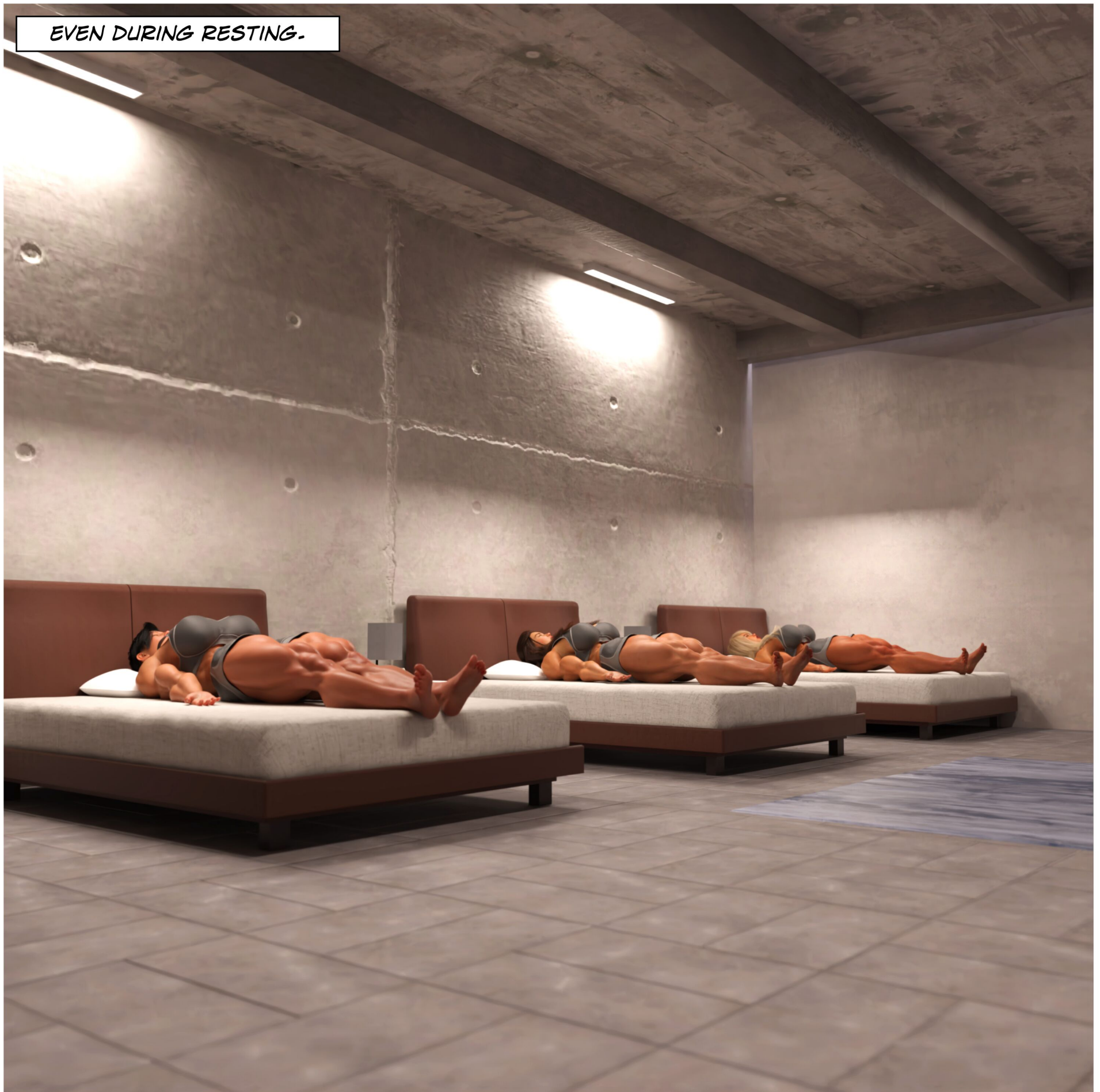
THEIR MOVEMENTS PERFECTLY SYNCHRONIZED AND REPEATED



ALMOST LIKE MACHINES.



EVEN DURING RESTING.



THEY WERE OBEDIENT TO THE CHIP.



RESTING IN THE SAME FASHION.



NO DEVIATIONS.



EXCEPT FOR ONE.

SSSGGHH..





SSTTRRRRAA

STRAAAWWW

SSSTRAWBERRY
P-PANCCCAKE.

BLEEP

FUUUCK!




A FEW DAYS EARLIER, JUST BEFORE
MACY WAS CAUGHT BY FRANCIS.

HUH?
EMERGENCY OVERRIDE
COMMANDS?

THERE'S NOTHING IN
THERE.



A woman with short dark hair, wearing a white tank top, is looking down at a laptop. The background is a futuristic, dimly lit room with blue glowing screens and panels. Two thought bubbles are present: one on the left and one on the right.

LET'S FILL
SOMETHING IN?
"STRAWBERRY
PANCAKES".

MIGHT BE
OF USE LATER
ON..



IT ACTUALLY
WORKED, THANK
GOD!

OOH NO..



I TOLD
THEM THE
CHIPS WERE
SAFE. I DID
THIS..



THAT WAS SO
FUCKING WEAK!

IF I GET MY
HANDS ON THAT
FRANCIS, I'M SHOVING
THOSE GLASSES OF HIS
SO FAR UP HIS ASS HE
CAN TASTE THEM!

OOH
NORAH--

I'M SO
SORRY.



A woman with long dark hair is lying on a white table, looking up. She is wearing a dark, ribbed, long-sleeved garment. A speech bubble is positioned above her head. In the background, another woman in a grey sports bra is standing and looking towards the foreground. The scene is set in a brightly lit room with white walls and ceiling lights.

STRAWBERRY
PANCAKES.

UHH.. HUH?




AND POOR
LIBERTY AS
WELL.

SHE MAY BE A
LITTLE ANNOYING AT
TIMES, BUT SHE
DOESN'T DESERVE THIS
AT ALL.

STRAWBERRY
PANCAKES.

EEH..?



WHA- MACY?!
HOW DID YOU
JUST..

I FILLED IN AN
OVERRIDE
COMMAND BACK
WHEN I FIRST
FOUND IT.



THIS IS SO FUCKED UP.. WHY DID YOU TELL US TO GET THE CHIPS?!

I WAS ALREADY UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHIP 1.. I'M SORRY LIBERTY..



I CAN'T BELIEVE MY DAD
SIGNED ME UP FOR THIS! I
KNOW I DISSAPOINTED HIM,
BUT THIS IS CRAZY!

I DON'T THINK HE
KNEW, LIBERTY. I
DON'T THINK THE
MILITARY HAS ANY
PART IN THIS
ANYMORE.




SNIFF

NORAH!



HEY, NORAH, DON'T
CRY. IT'S OKAY, YOU'RE
OKAY.

NOTHING
ABOUT THIS IS
OKAY!



I REALLY HATE THIS,
LIBERTY, YOU'RE
EXPERIENCING EVERYTHING
THROUGH THIS FOG WHILE YOU
HAVE NO SAY IN IT! YOU FEEL LIKE
YOU'RE HALF ASLEEP AND CAN'T
EVEN FORM A COHERENT
THOUGHT! IT'S TERRIFYING!
IT'S A WAKING
NIGHTMARE!

I KNOW,
NORAH..



AND
EVERYTHING
HURTS! THOSE
WORKOUTS ARE
DRACONIC!

WE'LL
GET OUT
OF HERE
NORAH, I
PROMISE.



BUT HOW?

LET'S FIGURE
OUT WHAT WE
KNOW.

I THINK THE
MILITARY WANTED TO
SHUT THIS PLACE DOWN,
BUT SOMEONE ELSE
TOOK OVER.



AND OUR NEW
GUARDS ARE PART
OF THIS.


NOW I FEEL
STRONGER THAN EVER,
BUT THOSE GUYS CARRY
GUNS.

BREAKING OUT WOULD BE
HARD, STRENGTH DOESN'T
COUNT FOR A LOT COMPARED
TO A BULLET.



SO HOW DO WE GET OUT?

AND, PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHAT DO WE DO IF WE MANAGE TO GET OUT? CAN WE GO TO THE MILITARY? THEY'RE APPARENTLY NOT ENTIRELY TRUSTWORTHY.



AND IF WE LOOK AT THE SCALE OF THIS OPERATION, I DOUBT THEY'RE GOING TO LEAVE IT AT THAT AFTER WE ESCAPE.

SO WHO IS BEHIND THIS IN THE FIRST PLACE?

AND ARE WE GOING TO BE SAFE IF WE ESCAPE?

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

I'M GOING TO CHECK IF THERE'S A GUARD OUTSIDE OUR DOOR. I HAVE A SUSPICION THEY FEEL VERY LITTLE NEED TO GUARD US RIGHT NOW WITH OUR CHIPS.

AS I
THOUGHT.



IT'S CLEAR
GIRLS.

I KNOW ONE THING, IF YOU'RE
DOING SOMETHING NEFARIOUS
LIKE THIS YOU WANT AS FEW
PEOPLE TO KNOW ABOUT IT AS
POSSIBLE. SO I DOUBT IT'LL BE
REALLY BUSY HERE.

OUCH!

THUNK!






JEEZ, YOU OKAY
NORAH?

YEAH, JUST WOOZY.
AND TALLER THAN I
REMEMBER.


BE QUIET, WE
REALLY DON'T
WANT TO BE
SPOTTED RIGHT
NOW.



WE NEED
INFORMATION,
WHO'S BEHIND THIS
AND HOW TO GET
OUT.



WELL WHERE ARE WE GOING TO LOOK? DID YOU EVEN THINK THIS THROUGH?!



FILING ROOM?
SERVER ROOM? I
DON'T KNOW, LIBERTY.
I'M IN THE DARK HERE
AS WELL.

I.. YEAH, I'M
JUST NERVOUS.
SORRY.

THE GIRLS CAREFULLY CHECKED OUT
SOME ROOMS, UNTIL EVENTUALLY..

I SWEAR THESE
DOORS ARE
GETTING TOO
SMALL!

THIS LOOKS
PROMISING
THOUGH!





LOCKED
THOUGH..



WELL ARE WE
REALLY GOING TO LET
A LITTLE DOOR STOP
US?

NO, BUT IF WE JUST
SMASH THROUGH IT WE
MIGHT BE HEARD AND
THEY'LL DEFINITELY FIND
OUT ABOUT IT LATER
REGARDLESS.



BUT MAYBE,
WITH SOME
CONTROLLED
FORCE..

PERSONNEL ONLY

PERSONNEL ONLY




I CAN PUSH OUT
THE ENTIRE
DOORFRAME.

BE CAREFUL
MACY!





CRAP, CRAP, CRAP!
I'VE GOT IT!



THAT WAS
LOUDER THAN I
EXPECTED.

I'LL GO KEEP
AN EYE ON THE
HALLWAY.

AND WE'LL SEARCH
HERE. CAN YOU CHECK
OUT THE COMPUTER
LIBERTY? SEE IF IT HAS
INTERNET?

SURE!





HMM--



MACY!

NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO BE TOUCHING MY BUTT LIBERTY!

NO! LOOK! THERE'S NO INTERNET BUT THERE'S A NEWS VIDEO HERE FROM YESTERDAY! IT'S ABOUT US!

NEXT UP A RATHER UNCOMMON SITUATION! THE US ARMY HAS PROMISED A REWARD OF \$100,000 FOR ANY INFORMATION THAT LEADS TO THE LOCATION OF THESE THREE GIRLS.

NO FURTHER DETAILS WERE GIVEN BY THE SPOKESPERSON, THOUGH IT DEFINITELY RAISES THE QUESTION OF POSSIBLE CONNECTION TO THE DISSAPPEARANCES AND SUSPICIOUS DEATHS OF SEVERAL HIGH RANKING ARMY OFFICIALS OVER THE PAST WEEK. WE WILL KEEP YOU UPDATED ON ANY DEVELOPMENTS!





FUCK, THIS IS BAD.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? THEY'RE LOOKING FOR US!

YEAH, BUT THAT MEANS THEY DON'T KNOW WHERE WE ARE!

DID YOUR FATHER TELL YOU EXACTLY WHERE YOU WERE GOING FOR THIS PROJECT?!



YEAH TO THIS
BLACKSITE.

I MEAN, DID HE
GIVE DETAILS AND
DIRECTIONS BEYOND
THAT?


I DON'T THINK
SO, WHY?



THEY DON'T KNOW
WHERE THEIR OWN
BLACKSITE IS..

WHAT DO YOU
MEAN? HOW CAN
THEY NOT KNOW
THAT?!

'CAUSE IT'S THE
BLEEDING MILITARY
LIBERTY!



YOU'VE BEEN AROUND THE MILITARY LONG ENOUGH, HAVEN'T YOU? THE LOCATION OF A SITE LIKE THIS IS KNOWN TO A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE AT BEST! AND THEY PROBABLY ALL GOT EITHER KIDNAPPED OR ASSASSINATED!

SO, THEY HAVE NO CLUE WHERE WE ARE?!

NO, WHICH MEANS THEY AREN'T COMING FOR US EITHER!




FUCK..

BUT IT'S EVEN WORSE THAN THAT. YOU DON'T KIDNAP OR ASSASSINATE A BUNCH OF HIGH RANKING MILITARY OFFICIALS WITHOUT SOME SERIOUS REACH AND INSIDE HELP! THAT MEANS WE'RE DEALING WITH SOMEONE REALLY DANGEROUS!

SO WHAT DO WE DO?!

WELL, LET'S QUICKLY
SCAN THROUGH THESE
FIRST, SEE IF WE CAN FIND
OUT ANYTHING ELSE.



A muscular woman with short black hair, wearing a grey sports bra and grey shorts, is reading a red folder in a locker room. She is looking down at the folder with a focused expression. The background shows black lockers on the left and a shelf with blue and red binders on the right. Two speech bubbles are present, one on the left and one on the right.

HMM,
THIS IS NOT THE
FIRST TIME THEY'VE
TRIED A PROJECT TO
CREATE SUPER SOLDIERS.
THOUGH IT SEEMS THE
OTHER PROJECTS WERE
OF AN ENTIRELY
DIFFERENT KIND.

IT LISTS TWO NAMES OF
OTHER GIRLS WHO WERE
INVOLVED IN IT. EVELYN AND
ELISABETH.

WELL WHAT
HAPPENED TO
THEM?!

DOESN'T SAY, JUST
SAYS THE PROJECTS
FAILED AND WERE
CANCELLED.

GIRLS,
SSSH.



FOR A FEW MOMENTS THERE WAS A TENSE
SILENCE. THEN NORAH SOFTLY SPOKE.


THERE ARE GUARDS
PATROLLING THE
HALLWAY. THEY LOOKED
QUITE RELAXED, I DON'T
THINK THEY KNOW WE'RE
HERE.





HONESTLY, WITH WHAT
THEY'RE PAYING, I COULDN'T
GIVE LESS OF A FUCK ABOUT
WHAT THEY DO TO THOSE
GIRLS.

FAIR ENOUGH.

A woman with dark hair and blue eyes is peeking from behind a white, textured wall in a hallway. She is wearing a grey tank top. The hallway has blue walls and a white ceiling with recessed lighting. A red fire alarm pull station is visible on the wall to the right. A speech bubble is positioned above her head.


THEY'VE LEFT, THIS IS
GETTING DANGEROUS
THOUGH. WE SHOULD
HEAD BACK.

SOON THE GIRLS HAD CREPT BACK TO THEIR QUARTERS AND INFORMED NORAH ABOUT ALL THEY HAD FOUND.

SO, WHAT DO WE DO NOW?!

WE ESCAPE OF COURSE!





LIBERTY HAVE YOU HEARD
NOTHING I'VE BEEN SAYING?! WE
CAN'T JUST TRY TO ESCAPE WITHOUT A
PLAN! IF WE'RE CAUGHT WE'RE
DONE!

OOH
FUCK YOU
MACY!

BE FREAKING
MIND SLAVES TO
FRANCIS AND HIS
"BOSS"?

BEING ANGRY
IS NOT GOING
TO..

OOH FUCK YOU,
MISS FUCKING
RATIONALITY!

I'M ANGRY CAUSE
WE'RE STUCK HERE! AND
I'M ANGRY CAUSE YOU'RE
RIGHT!






THEN WHAT DO WE DO MACY?!

THE ONLY ADVANTAGE WE HAVE RIGHT NOW IS THAT WE CAN BREAK FREE FROM THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHIP AND THEY ARE NOT AWARE OF IT. THEY'RE NOT PUTTING US THROUGH THIS FOR FUN, THERE'S A GOAL AT THE END WHICH MEANS WE WON'T STAY HERE FOREVER. WE NEED TO WAIT TILL THE RIGHT CHANCE TO LEVERAGE OUR ONLY ADVANTAGE.



W-WAIT FOR
THE RIGHT
CHANCE?

YOU MEAN
ACTIVATING THE CHIP
AGAIN AND PLAYING
ALONG?! I.. I REALLY
DON'T WANT THAT
MACY! I HATE IT!




NORAH, I DISLIKE IT AS MUCH AS YOU DO. BUT WE ONLY HAVE ONLY ONE SHOT AT THIS. IF WE TRY AND FAIL THEY'LL HAVE FOUND OUT WE CAN BREAK FREE FROM THE CHIP AND THEY'LL MAKE SURE WE CAN NEVER DO THAT AGAIN!

IT FEELS SO WRONG..

I KNOW NORAH.

I DON'T LIKE IT ANY MORE
THAN YOU DO NORAH. BUT I
THINK SHE'S RIGHT. THE CARDS ARE
STACKED AGAINST US, BUT SOON
WE MIGHT HAVE A BETTER
CHANCE.





CAN YOU
PROMISE ME WE'LL
GET OUT OF HERE
MACY?

I WON'T MAKE A
PROMISE THAT I DON'T
KNOW IF I CAN KEEP
NORAH, I'M SORRY.

BUT I'LL PROMISE
YOU I'LL TRY MY VERY
BEST.

THE END