



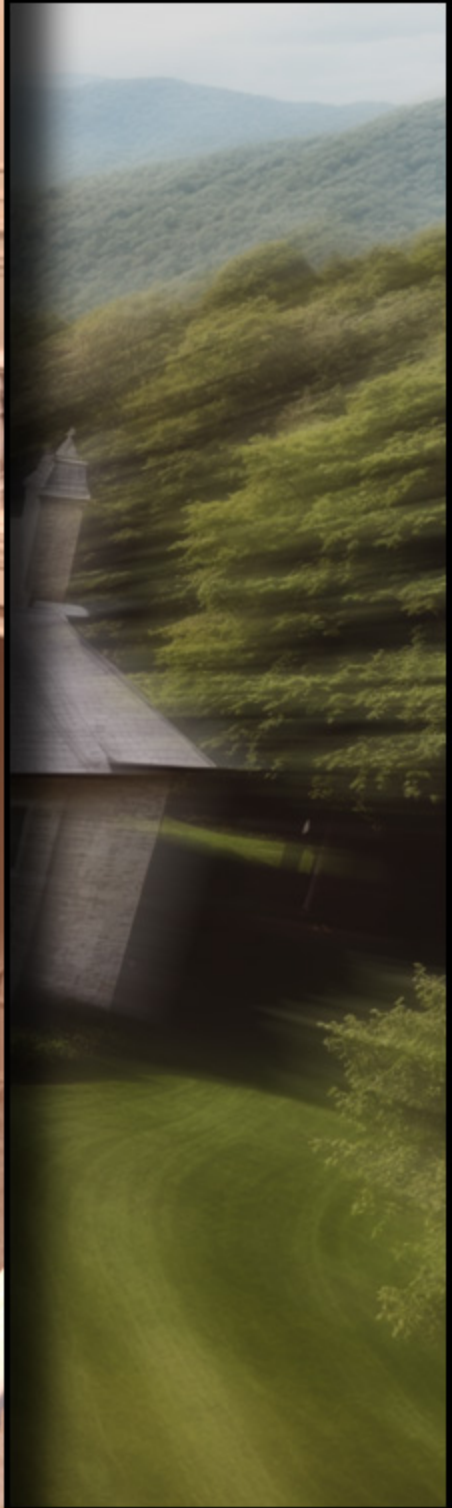
KaraComet Presents

The Diaries of Alex Passion

Chapter 1: A Brand New Me



DAY
2



A high-angle photograph of a grand, ornate chandelier hanging in a luxurious ballroom. The chandelier is a large, multi-tiered structure with a central glass globe and numerous hanging crystals. Below it, a grand piano and a chair are visible on the marble floor. In the background, there is a large stained glass window and a balcony with a white railing. The text "GRRRRRUMBLE!" is overlaid in a stylized, pink, bubbly font across the center of the image.

GRRRRRUMBLE!

A high-angle shot of a grand, ornate interior space, likely a mansion or palace. The room features a large, multi-level red carpeted staircase and a grand chandelier hanging from the ceiling. The architecture is characterized by arched doorways and columns. A woman in a yellow dress is walking on the red carpet. The scene is lit with warm, golden light, suggesting daytime. There are several text boxes overlaid on the image, indicating a narrative or a character's thoughts.

I WASN'T SURE HOW LONG I ACTUALLY SLEPT,
GIVEN NOTHING TO MEASURE MY TIME HERE...

ALL I HAD WAS DAYLIGHT AND HUNGER, THE LATTER OF
WHICH HAD WOKEN ME UP EARLIER THAN PREFERRED...

I'M
WORKING
ON IT...!

GRRRR...

AND IT DIDN'T SEEM VERY HAPPY WITH HOW LONG I
WAS TAKING, EVEN THOUGH IT WASN'T MY FAULT...

I SIMPLY COULDN'T GO ANYWHERE ELSE WITHOUT
FIRST FINISHING SOME CURSED BEAUTY ROUTINE...

I HATED THE HUMILIATION I FELT AFTER PUTTING ON A DRESS, AND DOING MY HAIR AND MAKEUP...

BUT I'D BE LYING IF I SAID I DIDN'T FEEL A BIT OF RELIEF WHEN I FINALLY **FREAKIN'** FINISHED...

I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT BREAKFAST LOOKS LIKE...

GOSH, I HOPE THERE'S MORE OF THAT PIE...

MY EMPTY STOMACH DIDN'T GIVE A **CRAP** ABOUT VANITY, AND AT THE MOMENT NEITHER COULD I...

JUST LIKE LAST NIGHT, THERE WAS THAT INSATIABLE HUNGER THAT OVERSHADOWED EVERYTHING ELSE...

I DON'T SMELL ANYTHING... I BET IT'S JUST A COM-TEE-MENT-AL BREAKFAST.

SIGH

I GUESS THAT MEANS NO BACON OR SAUSAGE AND EGGS...

IT WAS SO POWERFUL THAT I BARELY EVEN NOTICED HOW SORE MY BODY STILL WAS...

AND WITH HOW HARD IT WAS TO FOCUS, AN APETITE FELT LIKE THE ONLY PROBLEM I COULD REASONABLY SOLVE...

clock
clock
clock
clock

EVERYTHING ELSE FELT COMPLETELY OUT OF REACH AFTER WHAT THEY DID TO MY BRAIN...

LUCKILY, I HAD YET TO RUN INTO EITHER OF THEM THIS MORNING...

HMM...
WELL, THIS
IS A LITTLE
WEIRD...

HUFF

THE LAST THING I WANTED WAS **MISS SOFIA** TEASING ME ABOUT HOW **GIRLY** I LOOKED...

BUT I KNEW THEY WERE HERE, PROBABLY WATCHING AND LAUGHING AT ME. AFTER ALL, SOMEBODY SHUT OFF ALL THE POWER IN MY BEDROOM LAST NIGHT...

clock *clock* *clock* *clock* *clock*

SO, WHERE THE **HECK** WERE THEY...?

UHH...

AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, WHERE
THE **FRICK** WAS ALL THE FOOD...?

LAST NIGHT, WHEN I FINISHED EATING,
I LEFT BEHIND A SIGNIFICANT MESS...

SOMEONE OBVIOUSLY CLEANED ALL
OF IT UP AFTER I WENT TO BED...

THIS
IS BULL
CRAP!

THEY
EVEN TOOK
THE FREAKIN'
PIE...!

AS DUMB AS I FELT, I COULD STILL REASON THAT THEY
LIKELY DIDN'T MAINTAIN THIS PLACE BY THEMSELVES...

WHICH MEANT THEY PROBABLY HIRED PEOPLE...

FOR SOME REASON, I NEVER EVEN CONSIDERED
THE POSSIBILITY OF THIS PLACE BEING STAFFED...

COULD THAT BE MY WAY OUT...?

BUT
WHERE THE
HECK ARE
THEY...?

MAYBE
BEHIND THOSE
DOORS...?

I KNEW IT WAS A LONG SHOT, BUT IF I COULD FIND
SOMEONE WHO WAS JUST HERE FOR A PAYCHECK...

I'D DO WHAT...? I COULD PROBABLY DRAW SOMEONE OUT, BUT IF MISS SOFIA OR PAPA WERE WATCHING...

GOSH, IT WAS SO HARD TO THINK, BUT I KNEW I NEEDED SOME SORT OF PLAN...

WHAT CAN I EVEN DO RIGHT NOW...

AS HARD AS IT IS, I NEED TO THINK THIS THROUGH FIRST...

UGH!


I'M STILL ME IN HERE; IT SHOULDN'T BE THIS FREAKIN' HARD...

GURGLE

IF ONLY I WASN'T SO EFFING HUNGRY...

I TRIED TO COME UP WITH AT LEAST ONE IDEA, BUT MY FOCUS WAS CURRENTLY ELSEWHERE...

WONDERING HOW LONG THEY WOULD WATCH ME STARVE BEFORE DECIDING TO FEED ME AGAIN...



THEN I REMEMBERED SOMETHING MISS SOFIA SAID LAST NIGHT...

YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN A LIFE
OF COMFORT AND LUXURY...

EAT AND REST
VERY WELL...

HOLD
ON...

WE NEED YOU HEALTHY...
IT COULD BE A GOOD LIFE...

A LOT OF WHAT THEY SAID WENT OVER MY HEAD, BUT
IT SOUNDED LIKE THEY WERE TRYING TO STUDY ME...

THEY WANTED ME HEALTHY FOR SOMETHING, AND
THAT MEANT MY LIFE HAD SOME SORT OF VALUE...

WHICH GAVE ME MY FIRST REAL IDEA...

HEY!

DON'T
I HAVE TO EAT
SO I CAN HEAL
UP, OR WHAT-
EVER!?

ISN'T
THAT, LIKE,
THE WHOLE
POINT THIS
CRAP!?

SO HOW
THE *FRICK* AM
I S'POSED TO DO
THAT WHEN THERE
ISN'T ANY *FREAKIN'*
FOOD HERE!?

HELLO!

I KNOW
YOU'RE HIDING
SOMEWHERE,
WATCHING
ME...!

**ANSWER
ME!**

BEST CASE, SOMEONE WOULD FEED ME...
WORST CASE, NOTHING WOULD CHANGE...

BUT MAYBE I COULD FIND OUT WHAT I WAS WORKING
WITH, OR WHAT THEY WERE PLANNING FOR ME NEXT...

BEING ABLE TO CONSIDER A PLAN, EVEN AS BASIC AS IT WAS, GAVE ME A LITTLE HOPE...

VOICE IDENTIFIED AS ALEXIS: GRAND-DAUGHTER...

YOUR VOCAL TONE IS GRUMPY IN RELATION TO FOOD...

WOULD YOU LIKE MY ASSISTANCE, ALEXIS...?

WHAT...?

WHO'S THERE? DO YOU WORK HERE?

I AM A HEURISTIC AUTONOMOUS RESIDENTIAL PROVIDER.

I HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE ALIAS HARP.

AND EVEN THOUGH I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THAT MEANT, IT SEEMED LIKE IT WAS GOING WELL...

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN, HOWEVER LONG IT'S BEEN, I HEARD SOMEONE OTHER THAN PAPA OR MISS SOFIA...

OKAY, UH... ARE YOU, LIKE, SOME SORT OF SECURITY LADY...?

TECHNICALLY YOU ARE CORRECT. I SERVE THIS MANOR IN NEARLY EVERY CAPACITY.

HEY, I THINK THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOUR MIC...

IT'S DOING THAT ROBOT SOUND THING...

THAT IS BECAUSE I...

WHAT-EVER, DO YOU KNOW WHERE I CAN GO TO FIND SOMETHING TO EAT...?

YES. IN ORDER TO BE SERVED FOOD, YOU MUST PLACE AN ORDER WITH THE KITCHENS.

GRRRR...

AND SHE APPEARED SOMEWHAT HELPFUL, WHICH COULD BE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF...

OR SO I THOUGHT...

HOW?
THERE'S
NOBODY
HERE...

WHERE
ARE PAPA
AND MISS
SOFIA?

THEY ARE
NOT CURRENTLY
ON THE PREMISES. NO
OTHER INFORMATION
IS AVAILABLE TO
YOU AT THIS
TIME.

WELL,
WHEN ARE
THEY GOING TO
BE BACK?

NO OTHER
INFORMATION
IS AVAILABLE TO
YOU AT THIS
TIME.

GRR!

OKAY,
BUTT HOLE,
THEN HOW CAN
I GET INTO THE
KITCHEN FROM
HERE?

YOU
HAVE NOT
BEEN GRANTED
ACCESS TO THE
KITCHENS.

I WAS GETTING FRUSTRATED. IT FELT LIKE THIS WEIRD SECURITY WOMAN WAS TROLLING ME...

BUT I WAS HUNGRY, AND IT DIDN'T SEEM LIKE I HAD BEEN LEFT WITH VERY MANY OPTIONS...

THEN HOW THE *HECK* AM I S'POSED TO *EAT!*?

IF YOU *FREAKIN'* LET ME STARVE TO DEATH, THEY'RE GONNA BE REALLY MAD AT YOU, *HOPE!*

WOULD YOU PREFER TO CALL ME *HOPE...?*

I DON'T *FLIPPING* CARE!

I'M SO *EFFING* HUNGRY AND EVERYTHING STILL *FRIGGIN'* HURTS...!

AND ALL I'M LEFT WITH IS SOME USELESS *FREAKIN'* SECURITY LADY TALKING TO ME OVER SOME DUMB SPEAKER...!

WHY DOES IT ALL HAVE TO BE SO *COMPLEX-A-TATED!*?

IT TOOK EVERYTHING I HAD NOT TO BREAK DOWN AND CRY, THE URGE WAS INTENSE...

I HATED MY NEW WEAKNESS SO MUCH...

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PLACE AN ORDER, SIMPLY STATE YOUR ORDER AND WE WILL BEGIN PREPARING IT FOR YOU.

IN THE FUTURE, IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PLACE AN ORDER YOU MAY DO SO AT ANY TIME FROM ANY LOCATION WITHIN THE PROPERTY.

BE AWARE THAT ORDERS FOR FOOD MAY TAKE UP TO ONE HOUR TO PREPARE. YOU SHOULD ALWAYS PLAN FOOD ORDERS IN ADVANCE.

IN THE FUTURE, YOU MAY ALSO REQUEST AN AUTOMATED FOOD PLAN ONCE I HAVE GATHERED ENOUGH DATA....

WOULD YOU LIKE TO PLACE AN ORDER, ALEXIS?

LUCKILY, I WAS ABLE TO HOLD BACK THE ONSLAUGHT OF THESE NEW EMOTIONS...

LONG ENOUGH TO ACTUALLY PAY ATTENTION THIS TIME...

I FELT LIKE AN IDIOT AS I REALIZED SOMETHING THAT SHOULD'VE BEEN COMPLETELY OBVIOUS...

HEY...
HOLD ON A
MINUTE... YOU'RE
NOT EVEN A REAL
PERSON, ARE
YOU...?

NO. I AM
A HEURISTIC
AUTONOMOUS
RESIDENT...

I DON'T
CARE WHAT YOU
ARE, MY BRAIN IS,
LIKE, TOO *FREAKIN'*
JANKY TO EVEN
GET IT...

SIGH

BUT CAN
YOU REALLY,
LIKE, BRING ME
FOOD?

YES. I CAN
PROVIDE FOOD
AND MANY OTHER
SERVICES...

FINALLY!

I WANT
SOME OF THAT
PIE FROM LAST
NIGHT...!

MANNERS...

BEFORE THEY RUINED ME, I'M SURE I WOULD'VE BEEN OBSESSED WITH LEARNING HOW THIS THING WORKED...

BUT IT WAS FAR BEYOND ANYTHING I COULD
EVEN BEGIN TO COMPREHEND RIGHT NOW...

NOT THAT I REALLY CARED, THERE WERE MUCH
MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT...

WHAT...?
OH, I, UM...
PLEASE...?

ADDED
TO ORDER
FOR ALEXIS.
WILL THAT BE
ALL...?

HMM...
WHAT ABOUT
SOME BACON AND
EGGS...? OH! AND
SAUSAGE, IF YOU
GOT IT...

ADDED
TO...

WAIT!
ADD A COFFEE,
LIGHT AND SWEET,
AND SOME PANCAKES
WITH BUTTER AND
SYRUP...

ADDED
TO...

I SHOULD
PROBABLY EAT
SOME FRUIT,
TOO...

IS THAT
STUFF BY
THE WINDOW
REAL...?

NO IT IS
PLASTIC...

SOME QUIET PART OF ME WORRIED THAT I WAS
FALLING INTO ANOTHER ONE OF THEIR TRAPS...

YET IT NEVER SEEMED TO CROSS MY MIND AT THE TIME...

I USED TO BE SO PROUD OF MY CUNNING LOGIC...

OH,
THEN ADD
SOME FRUIT,
TOO.

ADDED TO
ORDER FOR ALEXIS.
YOUR ESTIMATED WAIT
TIME IS FORTY SEVEN
MINUTES AND NINE
SECONDS.

WHAT!?

BUT
THAT'S SO
LONG...!

CAN'T
YOU MAKE IT
ANY FASTER,
LADY...?

NO.

OH,
COME ON!
I'M STARVING!
CAN I AT LEAST
GET THAT PIE
FIRST...?

NO.

BUT
WHY-EE!?
GOSH DARN
IT...!

UGH!

JUST LOOK AT ME NOW...

THROWING A TANTRUM, LIKE A CHILD...

HOLLY OR HOPE, OR WHAT-EVER YOUR DUMB NAME IS...

YOU FRICKIN' SUCK!

IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO WAIT HERE, I CAN ACCESS YOU IN MOST OF THE ROOMS.

WHAT-EVER...!

JUST TELL ME WHEN IT'S DONE...

YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED WHEN YOUR FOOD ORDER IS READY, ALEXIS.

CLOCK
CLOCK
CLOCK
CLOCK
CLOCK

TO SOME DISEMBODIED COMPUTER AID...

IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO KEEP MY EMOTIONS IN CHECK...

BUT IMPOSSIBLE DEFINED MY LIFE NOW...

WHY
DO I HAVE
TO WAIT SO
LONG...?

THIS
SUCKS...

AS I SLUMPED OUT OF THE DINING ROOM...

OVERWHELMINGLY FRUSTRATED WITH THIS STUPID FOOD
SITUATION THAT COULD TOTALLY RUIN MY WHOLE DAY...

SERIOUSLY, LIKE, NOTHING ELSE EVEN
MATTERED RIGHT NOW... NOT EVEN...

NO, THIS ENTIRE ORDEAL WAS MESSED UP.
WHAT THE **FRICK** WAS I EVEN THINKING...?

IT SCARED ME HOW EASILY I LOST TRACK OF WHAT
WAS IMPORTANT OVER SOMETHING THAT PETTY...

SIGH

GET
YOUR CRAP
TOGETHER,
LEXI...

ALEXIS...

FRICK!

I WOULD NEVER FORGET WHAT THEY DID TO ME,
NO MATTER WHAT CAME NEXT... HOW COULD I...?

BUT I NEEDED TO BE CAREFUL HERE; IF I ALLOWED
MYSELF TO COPE, I COULD LOSE ALL I HAD LEFT...

I TRIED TO REMEMBER AN OLDER TECHNIQUE...

WHERE I RECALLED A PREVIOUS STRUGGLE TO PUSH MYSELF THROUGH THE CURRENT ONE...

THIS IS JUST, LIKE, A SPEED BUMP...

YOU'VE GONE WITHOUT FOOD FOR *WAY* LONGER THAN THIS...

BACK WHEN...

WHEN I WAS IN THE ARMY...? WAS IT THE ARMY...?

I DID SOMETHING, SO WHY CAN'T I REMEMBER? I KNOW I WAS A...

MAYBE I WAS A COP...?

CRUD, THIS ISN'T GOOD...

BUT IT ONLY MADE MY SORROWS WORSE...



THEY TOOK SO MUCH FROM ME, BUT I HAD NO WAY TO TELL WHAT I LOST UNTIL I TRIED TO ACCESS IT...

LIKE A PHANTOM LIMB, I COULD SENSE WHAT I WAS REACHING FOR, BUT ALL I FOUND WAS EMPTINESS...

WHY DID THEY HAVE TO MESS WITH MY MY FREAKIN' HEAD!?


HEY, HOLLY...?

HOLLY!

HELLO? EARTH TO... HOPE...?

YOUR REMAINING WAIT TIME IS FORTY FIVE MINUTES AND...

THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M CALLING YOU FOR!



HOW ELSE MAY I ASSIST YOU, ALEXIS...?

CAN I GET, LIKE, SOME SORT OF PAIN KILLER OR SOMETHING, PLEASE...?

I AM NOT PERMITTED TO GIVE YOU PAIN KILLERS...

WHAT? COME ON... WHY!?

I HAVE BEEN GIVEN STRICT GUIDELINES REGARDING YOUR HEALTHCARE.

UGH!

I CAN'T EVEN GET AN ASPRIN...!?

NO. MAY I ASSIST YOU WITH ANYTHING ELSE...?

THEN, WHAT ABOUT...? WHAT WAS IT HE SAID...?

CAN YOU MAKE MY OZZY-TOKEN FEELINGS UH... BIGGER?

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND YOUR REQUEST...

ONE LAST THING...
LET'S RAISE YOUR OXYGEN LEVELS FIVE AM

IT SOUNDED LIKE THAT, BUT IT WAS SOMETHING ELSE...

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND YOUR REQUEST...

ARRRGH!

MAKE MY AUSSIE TOE... THING... HIGHER?

GOSH, WHAT THE HECK WAS IT...?

I HATE MY BRAIN SO MUCH RIGHT NOW...!

IT MADE ME FEEL, LIKE... HIGH...

I AM NOT PERMITTED TO SUPPLY YOU WITH RECREATIONAL DRUGS...

WHAT? I... THAT'S NOT...

I MEAN, THEY WOULD HELP...

SIGH



I FELT ABSOLUTELY HOPELESS...

AND THE ONLY ACTUAL PLAN I HAD WAS RUINED SINCE THIS ROBOT LADY SEEMED TO DO EVERYTHING HERE...

NEVERMIND...!

I'LL JUST DEAL WITH THESE FREAKIN' HEADACHES AND CRAP, SINCE YOU'RE, LIKE, NO HELP...

JUST HURRY UP WITH BREAKFAST...

YOUR REMAINING WAIT TIME IS FORTY TWO MINUTES AND THIRTY SIX SECONDS...

THAT'S STILL SO LONG...

DARN IT! AND I CAN'T EVEN GET AN ASPRIN...

SIGH

WHY DID I EVEN GET OUT OF BED TODAY...?

GURGLE



IF I
WASN'T SO
HUNGRY...

FORTY
MINUTES...

LIGH!

I CAN'T
BELIEVE IT. IT'S
SO FRIGGIN'
DUMB.

SNIFFLE

HMM...?

I COULD FEEL THAT I HAD TO DO SOME-
THING, OR I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO STOP
MYSELF FROM CRYING LIKE A **BRAT** AGAIN...

AND I DIDN'T WANT TO GIVE UP THE
LITTLE BIT OF CONTROL I STILL HAD...

SO I LOOKED FOR A DISTRACTION...



THAT'S WHEN I REALLY NOTICED THE PIANO...

THERE WAS SOMETHING FAMILIAR ABOUT IT...

THE LINGERING CIGAR SMELL, AND THE WAY IT SOUNDED...

EACH KEYSTROKE BROUGHT BACK MEMORIES—
ACTUAL MEMORIES—WITH INCREDIBLE DETAIL...

IT WASN'T HOW TO PLAY; I NEVER CARED TO LEARN.
INSTEAD IT REMINDED ME OF MY EARLY TWENTIES...

WHERE I USED TO CASUALLY STROKE THE
KEYS AS I WAITED FOR MY ASSIGNMENT...



IN THE LOBBY OF THE HARGROVE ESTATE...

I FINALLY REALIZED WHY THIS PLACE LOOKED SO FAMILIAR. HOW DID IT TAKE THIS LONG...?



HOW COULD I EVER FORGET THIS LOBBY,
AFTER SPENDING ALL THAT TIME HERE...?

I
BLIN
WAS
BUN
JUST
PLINK
DOING
BLIN
MY
PLANK
EFFING
BUN
JOB!
BLON

AFTER THEY MADE ME MURDER THE CHICK I WAS
PORKING, JUST TO KEEP THEIR SECRETS SAFE...

AND NOW I WAS PAYING FOR ALL OF IT...

PART OF ME WAS THANKFUL THAT I DIDN'T HAVE TO SEE HER FACE AGAIN TODAY, EVEN IF IT WAS A LIE...

BUNG PLANK

HHH...

SOB

GUH-HUH...

WHATEVER PEACE I MADE WITH HER DEATH HAD BEEN SHATTERED, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE I PULLED THAT TRIGGER, I FELT... GUILT...?

REMORSE WASN'T A FEELING I WAS FAMILIAR WITH. IT
WAS A BIG WEAKNESS IN MY FORMER LINE OF WORK...

BUT I COULDN'T REMEMBER MOST OF THAT WORK ANYMORE...

TOO MANY OF THOSE MEMORIES HAD BEEN TAKEN, AND
THE CONDITIONING THAT CAME WITH THEM, IT SEEMED...



WAAAAHH!
NGGHHH!

AND, NOW, THERE WAS SOME SUBCONSCIOUS
PART OF ME THAT HONESTLY CONSIDERED...

THAT, MAYBE—JUST MAYBE—I REALLY DID DESERVE THIS...

To Be
Continued...

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