HALF SISTERS

Episode 84

Heart to Heart


NICK, COME ON! YOU'VE DODGED EVERY TEXT AND CALL FOR TWO WEEKS! I JUST WANT TO TALK! THIRTY SECONDS, THAT'S ALL I'M ASKING!
I CAN'T TALK TO YOU RIGHT NOW! YOU'RE NAKED--
--I'M IN TOWEL--
--AND WET AND I'M IN MY PAJAMAS AND THIS IS THE WORST MOMENT OF MY LIFE. WELL, OKAY, THAT'S OBVIOUSLY WRONG BUT IT'S PRETTY BAD!

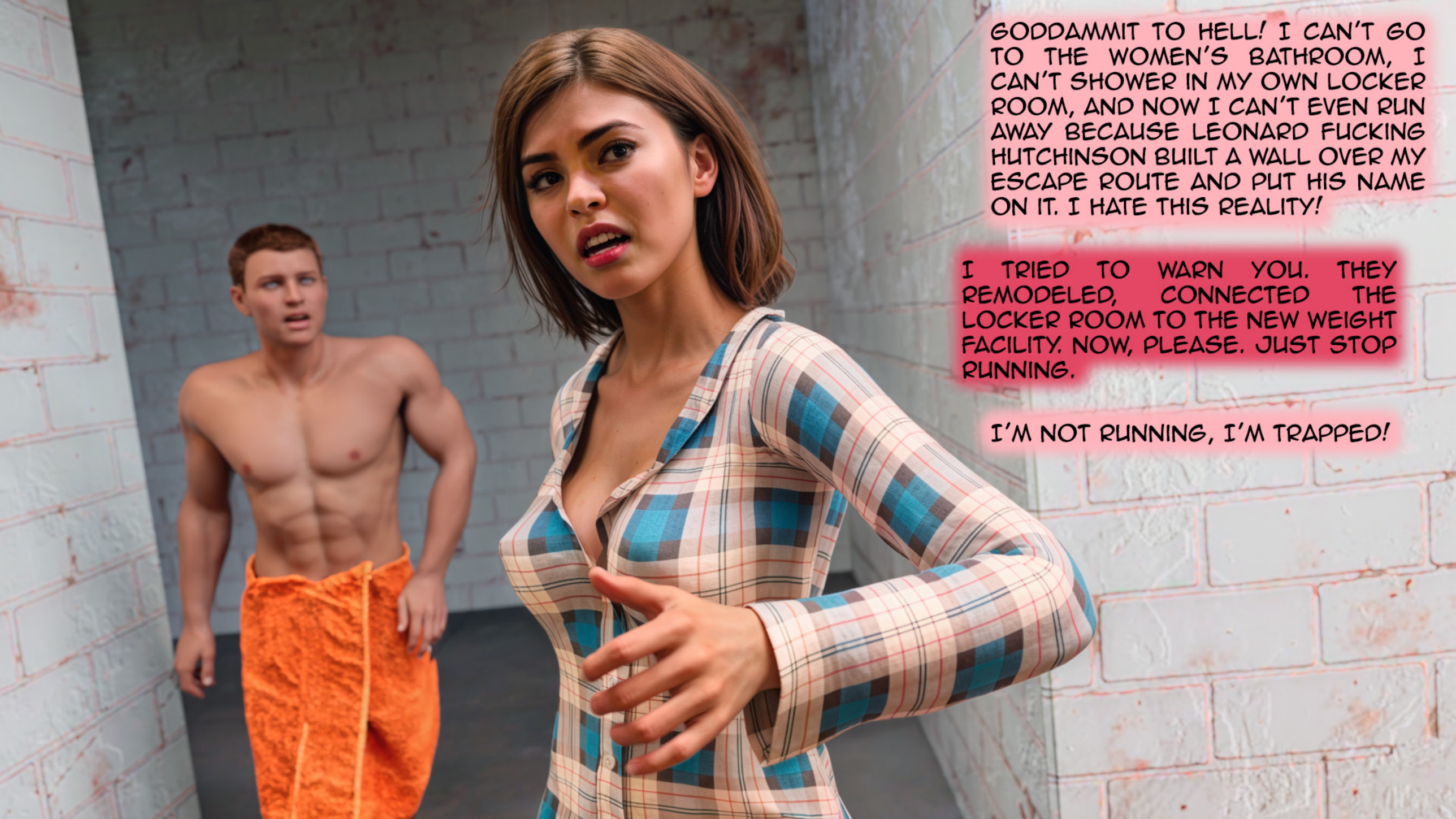

OKAY, WELL, STOP RUNNING AND LET ME PUT PANTS ON.
YOU SHOULD DO THAT ANYWAY! BUT I'LL BE IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY.


NOTICE
NICK, WAIT! THAT'S NOT THE BACK WAY ANYMORE! THEY--

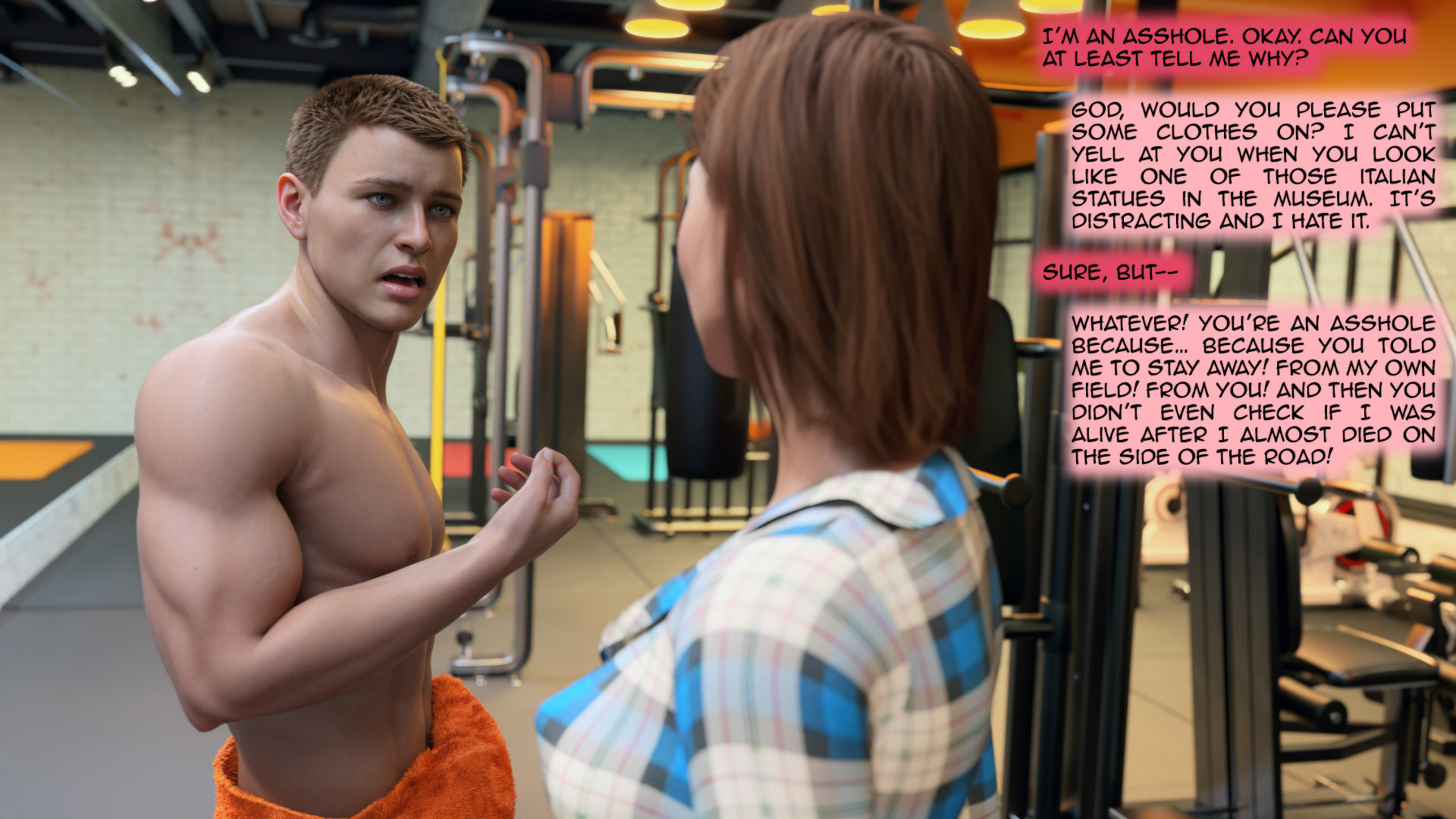

WHAT THE... WHERE'S THE ALLEY?


I USED THIS WAY ALL THE TIME TO SNEAK OUT WHEN COACH WAS BEING AN ASSHOLE AFTER A BAD GAME. JUST SHOULDER THE BAR, CUT THROUGH THE ALLEY, HOP THE FENCE, AND YOU'RE AT THE PARKING LOT IN THIRTY SECONDS. IT WAS MY ESCAPE HATCH!
AND THEY... THEY BUILD A WHOLE FUCKING WEIGHT ROOM HERE WHILE I WAS GONE?

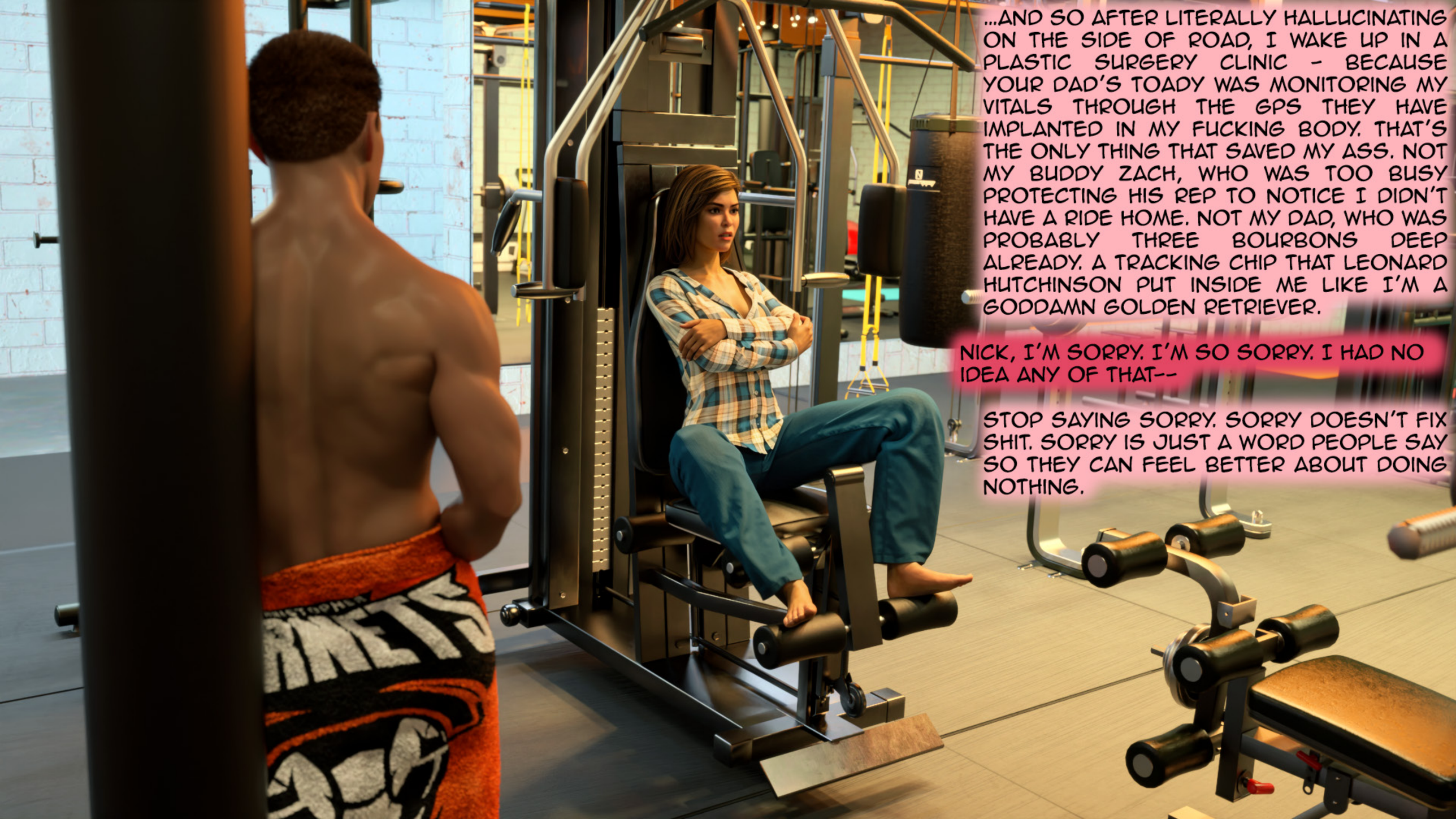

OH, YOU HAVE GOT TO BE FUCKING KIDDING ME.
THE HUTCHINSON FAMILY
STRENGTH & CONDITIONING CENTER
"BUILDING CHAMPIONS, FORGING MEN"
DEDICATED FALL 2019
FORGING MEN!? THIS MOTHERFUCKER KIDNAPPED ME, HAD THEM PUMP ME FULL OF ESTROGEN UNTIL MY TITS CAME IN, SLAPPED A CAGE ON MY DICK, AND THEN TURNED AROUND AND PUT HIS NAME ON A WALL ABOUT FORGING MEN. HELL, HE PROBABLY SIGNED THE DONATION THE SAME DAY DAVIS MEASURED ME FOR MY FIRST BRA.

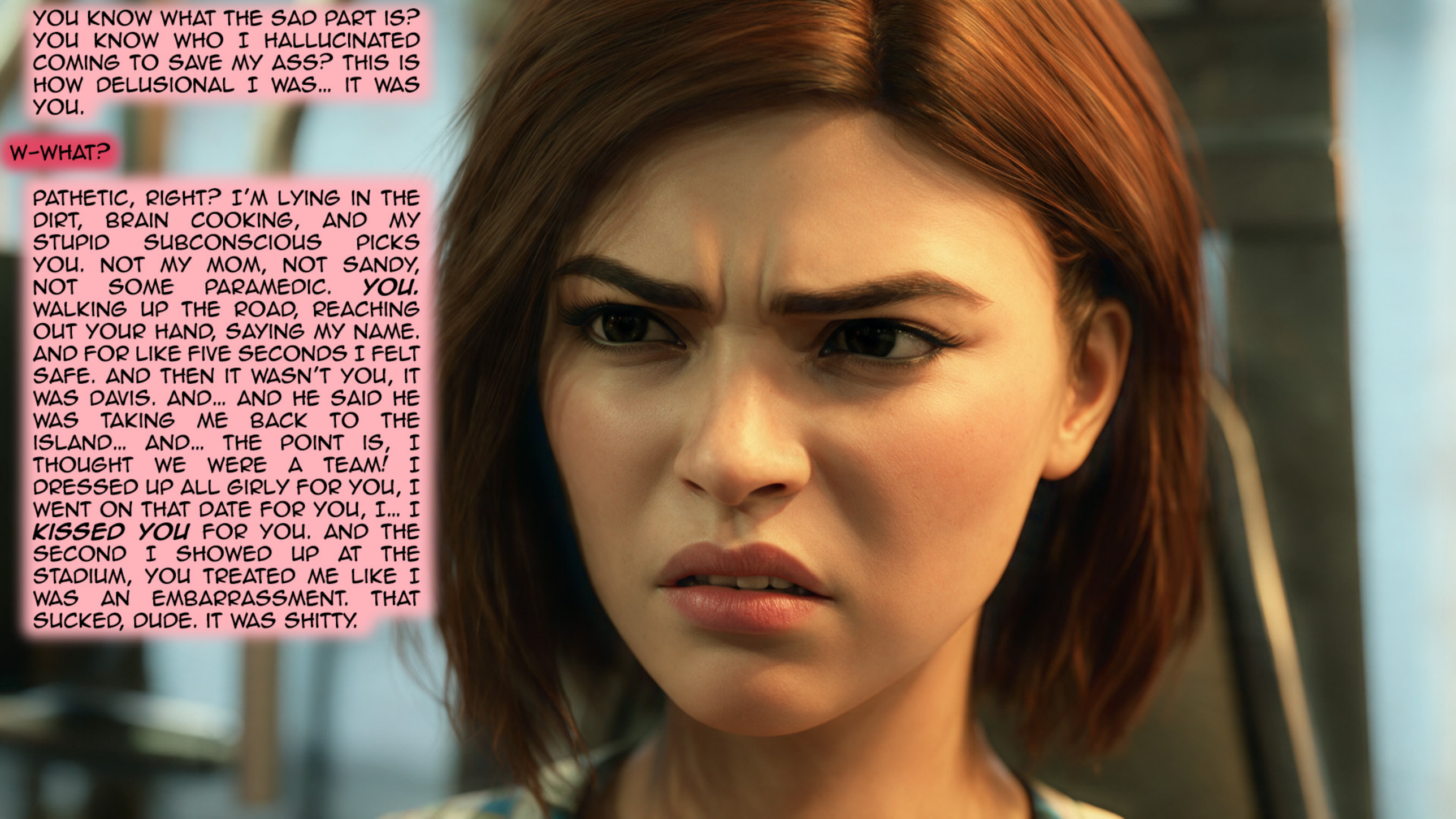

GODDAMMIT TO HELL! I CAN'T GO TO THE WOMEN'S BATHROOM, I CAN'T SHOWER IN MY OWN LOCKER ROOM, AND NOW I CAN'T EVEN RUN AWAY BECAUSE LEONARD FUCKING HUTCHINSON BUILT A WALL OVER MY ESCAPE ROUTE AND PUT HIS NAME ON IT. I HATE THIS REALITY!
I TRIED TO WARN YOU. THEY REMODELED, CONNECTED THE LOCKER ROOM TO THE NEW WEIGHT FACILITY. NOW, PLEASE. JUST STOP RUNNING.
I'M NOT RUNNING, I'M TRAPPED!


C'MON, YOU'RE NOT TRAPPED. YOU REALLY THINK I'D BLOCK YOU IN? YOU CAN LEAVE WHENEVER YOU WANT. BUT, PLEASE, JUST TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON WITH YOU.
WITH ME!? WHAT'S GOING ON WITH *ME!?*
Y... YES?
WELL, WHAT'S GOING ON WITH *ME* IS THAT *YOU* ARE AN *ASSHOLE*.

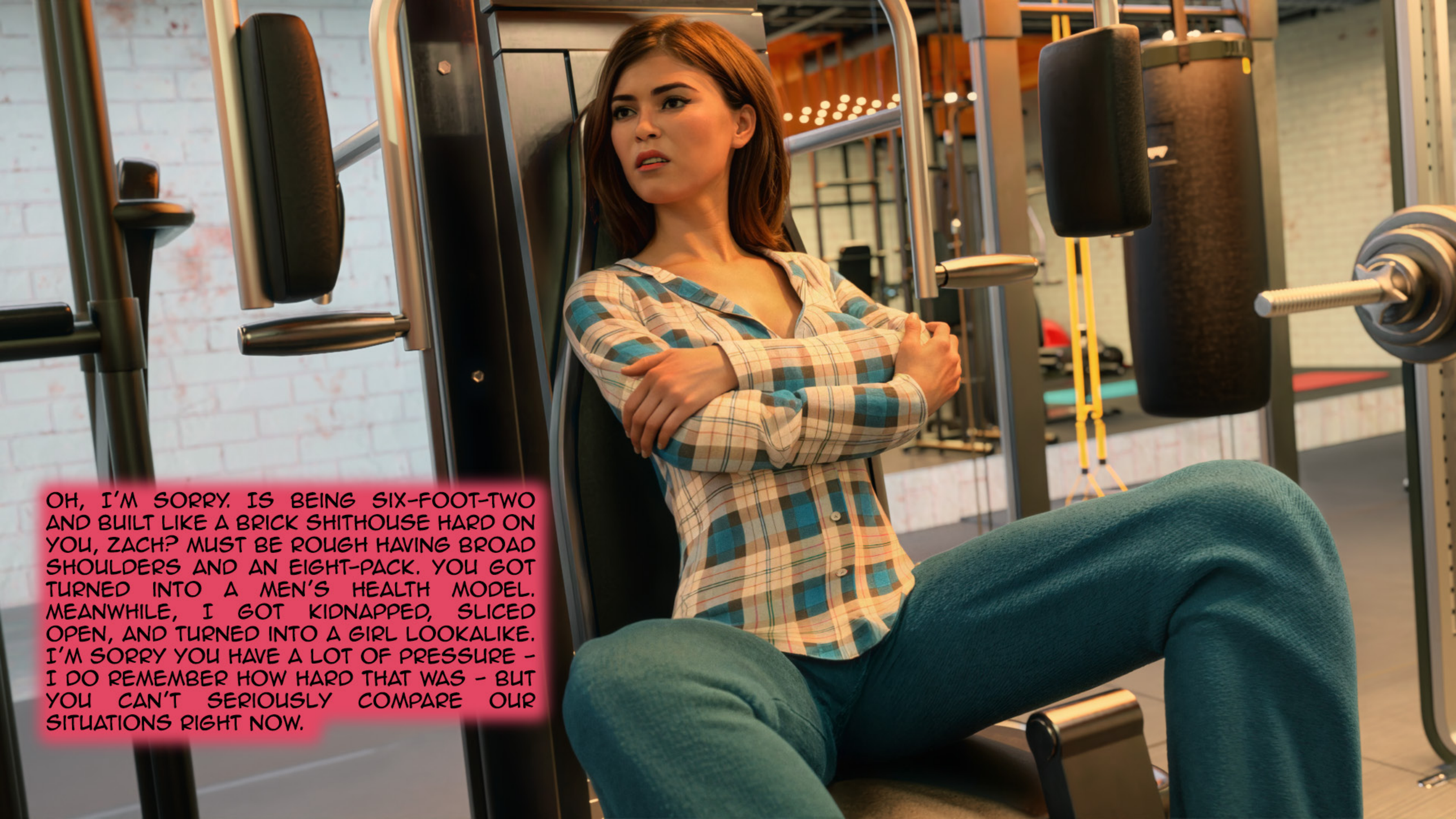

I'M AN ASSHOLE. OKAY. CAN YOU AT LEAST TELL ME WHY?
GOD, WOULD YOU PLEASE PUT SOME CLOTHES ON? I CAN'T YELL AT YOU WHEN YOU LOOK LIKE ONE OF THOSE ITALIAN STATUES IN THE MUSEUM. IT'S DISTRACTING AND I HATE IT.
SURE, BUT--
WHATEVER! YOU'RE AN ASSHOLE BECAUSE... BECAUSE YOU TOLD ME TO STAY AWAY! FROM MY OWN FIELD! FROM YOU! AND THEN YOU DIDN'T EVEN CHECK IF I WAS ALIVE AFTER I ALMOST DIED ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD!


HUH? NICK, WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT ROAD?
GOD, YOU'RE SO OBLIVIOUS!
APPARENTLY.
FINE, WE CAN TALK. JUST... DON'T TOUCH ME!
WHAT? I MEAN, I WASN'T PLANNING ON--
WELL, GOOD! BECAUSE I'LL FUCKING PUNCH YOU, DUDE. I MEAN IT.
OOOKAY...


...AND SO AFTER LITERALLY HALLUCINATING ON THE SIDE OF ROAD, I WAKE UP IN A PLASTIC SURGERY CLINIC - BECAUSE YOUR DAD'S TOADY WAS MONITORING MY VITALS THROUGH THE GPS THEY HAVE IMPLANTED IN MY FUCKING BODY. THAT'S THE ONLY THING THAT SAVED MY ASS. NOT MY BUDDY ZACH, WHO WAS TOO BUSY PROTECTING HIS REP TO NOTICE I DIDN'T HAVE A RIDE HOME. NOT MY DAD, WHO WAS PROBABLY THREE BOURBONS DEEP ALREADY. A TRACKING CHIP THAT LEONARD HUTCHINSON PUT INSIDE ME LIKE I'M A GODDAMN GOLDEN RETRIEVER.
NICK, I'M SORRY. I'M SO SORRY. I HAD NO IDEA ANY OF THAT--
STOP SAYING SORRY. SORRY DOESN'T FIX SHIT. SORRY IS JUST A WORD PEOPLE SAY SO THEY CAN FEEL BETTER ABOUT DOING NOTHING.


YOU KNOW WHAT THE SAD PART IS? YOU KNOW WHO I HALLUCINATED COMING TO SAVE MY ASS? THIS IS HOW DELUSIONAL I WAS... IT WAS YOU.
W-WHAT?
PATHETIC, RIGHT? I'M LYING IN THE DIRT, BRAIN COOKING, AND MY STUPID SUBCONSCIOUS PICKS YOU. NOT MY MOM, NOT SANDY, NOT SOME PARAMEDIC. ***YOU.*** WALKING UP THE ROAD, REACHING OUT YOUR HAND, SAYING MY NAME. AND FOR LIKE FIVE SECONDS I FELT SAFE. AND THEN IT WASN'T YOU, IT WAS DAVIS. AND... AND HE SAID HE WAS TAKING ME BACK TO THE ISLAND... AND... THE POINT IS, I THOUGHT WE WERE A TEAM! I DRESSED UP ALL GIRLY FOR YOU, I WENT ON THAT DATE FOR YOU, I... I ***KISSED YOU*** FOR YOU. AND THE SECOND I SHOWED UP AT THE STADIUM, YOU TREATED ME LIKE I WAS AN EMBARRASSMENT. THAT SUCKED, DUDE. IT WAS SHITTY.

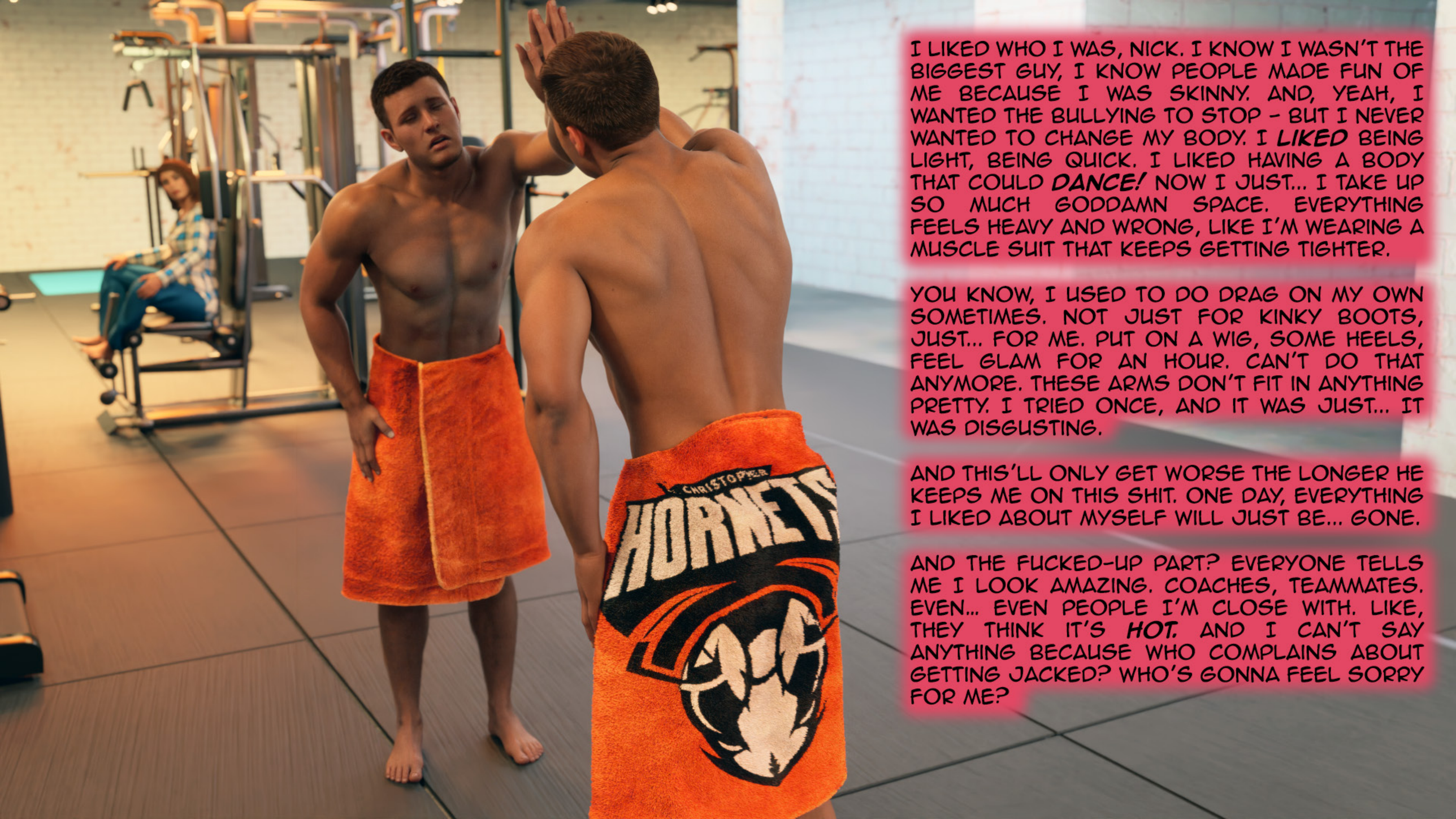

YOU'RE RIGHT. IT WAS SHITTY. BUT, NICK, YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE ON MY SIDE. THE PRESSURE FROM MY DAD - WHO IS A LITERAL PSYCHOPATH - FROM MY... FROM THE TEAM, FROM YOU - EVERYBODY NEEDS SOMETHING FROM ME AND I'M ONE PERSON. CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND THAT? YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY PERSON SUFFERING HERE.


OH, I'M SORRY. IS BEING SIX-FOOT-TWO AND BUILT LIKE A BRICK SHITHOUSE HARD ON YOU, ZACH? MUST BE ROUGH HAVING BROAD SHOULDERS AND AN EIGHT-PACK. YOU GOT TURNED INTO A MEN'S HEALTH MODEL. MEANWHILE, I GOT KIDNAPPED, SLICED OPEN, AND TURNED INTO A GIRL LOOKALIKE. I'M SORRY YOU HAVE A LOT OF PRESSURE - I DO REMEMBER HOW HARD THAT WAS - BUT YOU CAN'T SERIOUSLY COMPARE OUR SITUATIONS RIGHT NOW.


WHY... WHY ARE YOU FLEXING IN FRONT OF ME, DUDE?
YOU THINK I WANT THIS? YOU THINK I'M PROUD OF LOOKING LIKE THIS? HE BUILT THIS WHOLE GODDAMN ROOM FOR ME, NICK! EVERY PLATE, EVERY RACK, EVERY MIRROR - A TEMPLE TO THE "REAL MAN" HE'S TRYING TO MAKE ME INTO, THAT HE'S FORCING DOWN MY THROAT!


WHY DO YOU THINK I SHOWER HERE? BECAUSE I CAN'T STAND BEING AROUND OTHER GUYS. I CAN'T STAND THEM LOOKING AT ME, TELLING ME I LOOK LIKE A BEAST, TELLING ME HOW "HUGE" I'VE GOTTEN. EVERY TIME SOMEBODY COMPLIMENTS MY BODY, THEY'RE COMPLIMENTING WHAT MY FATHER DID TO ME. I FUCKING HATE IT!


YOU REALLY DON'T LIKE IT? ANY OF IT?
NO.
THAT'S... I CAN'T EVEN WRAP MY HEAD AROUND THAT. YOU LOOK INCREDIBLE. LIKE, OBJECTIVELY.
AND *YOU* LOOKED INCREDIBLE ON THE DATE. DID THAT MAKE IT OKAY?
I... I MEAN... THAT'S NOT...

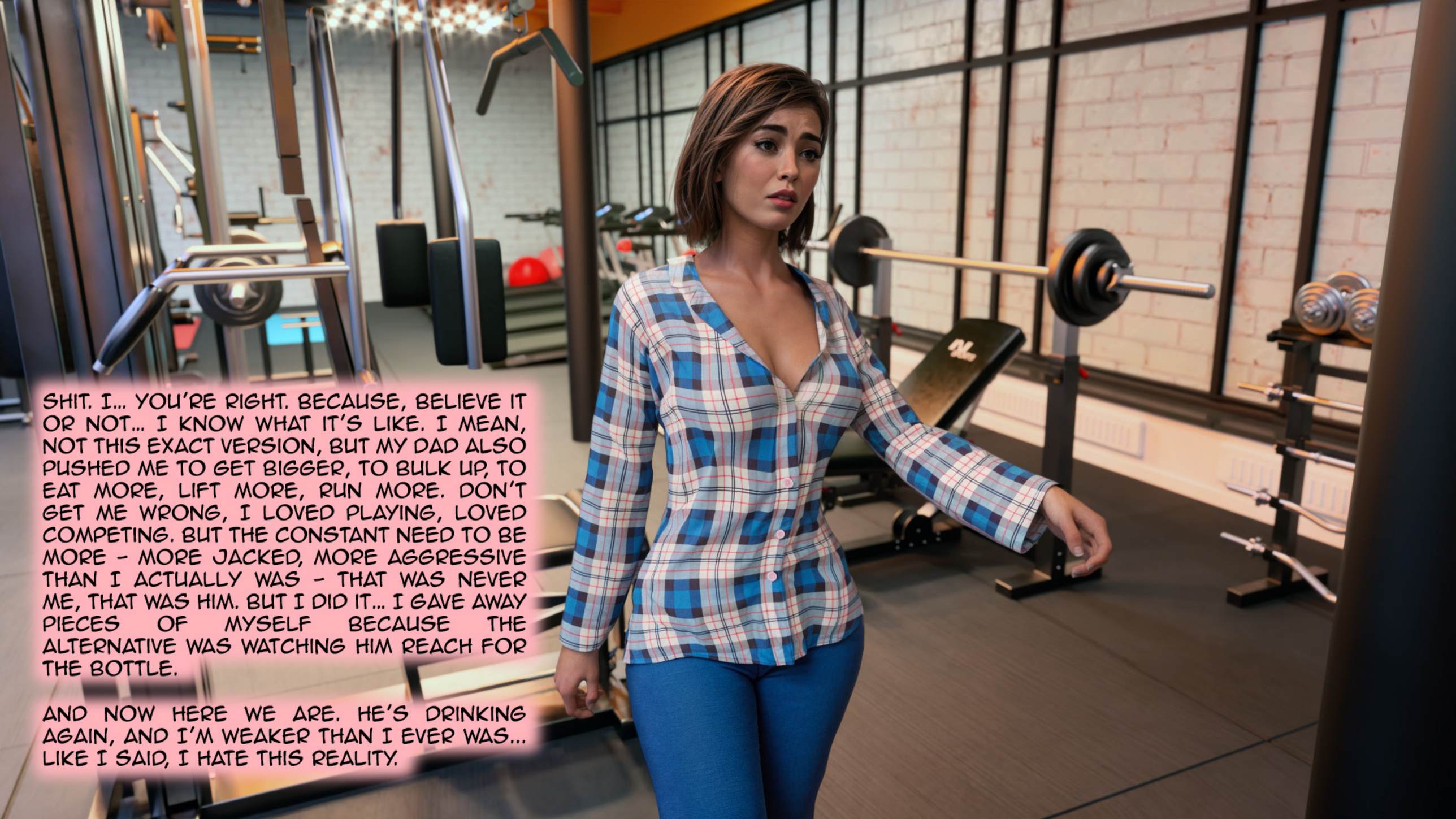


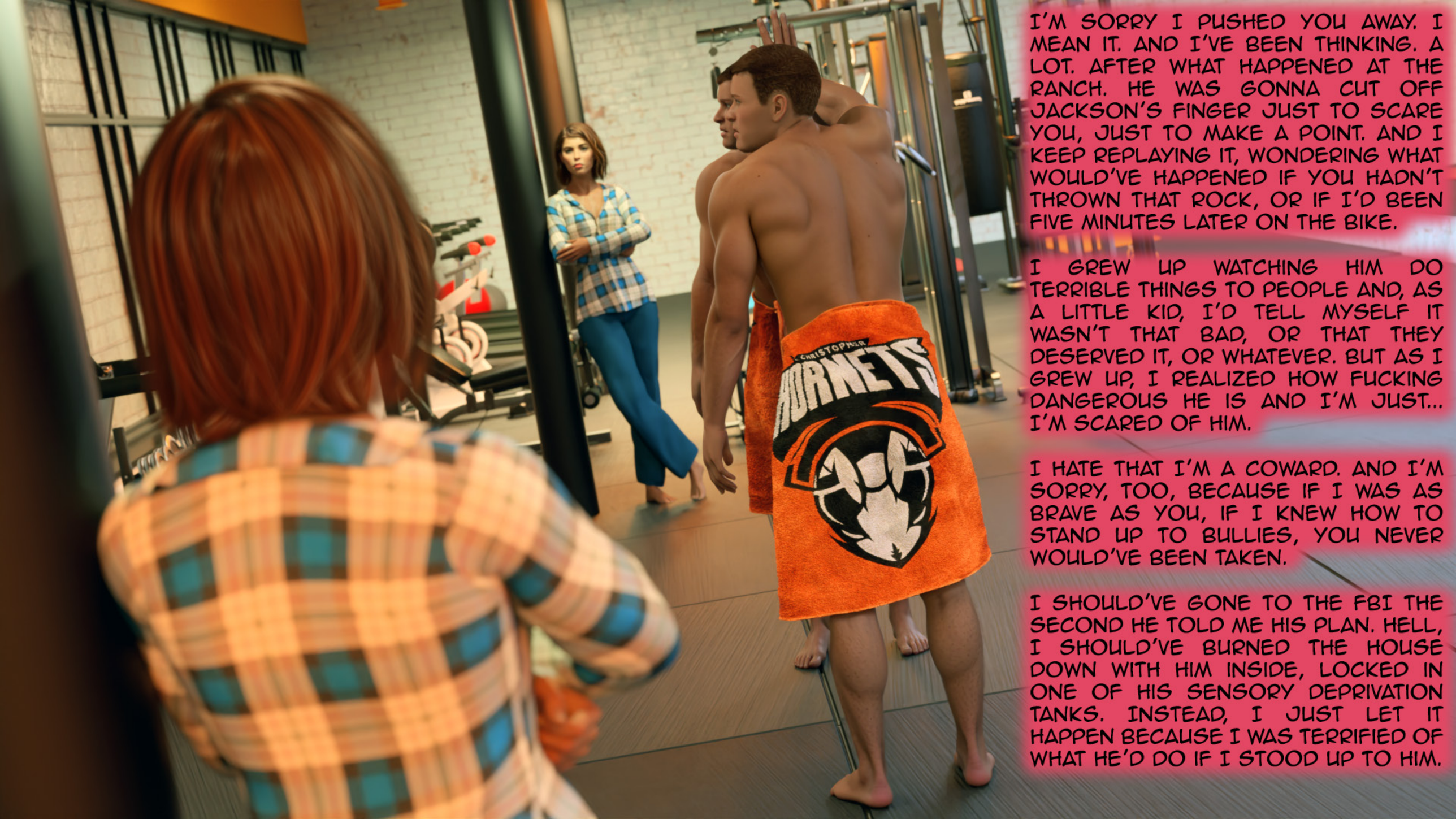
I LIKED WHO I WAS, NICK. I KNOW I WASN'T THE BIGGEST GUY, I KNOW PEOPLE MADE FUN OF ME BECAUSE I WAS SKINNY. AND, YEAH, I WANTED THE BULLYING TO STOP - BUT I NEVER WANTED TO CHANGE MY BODY. I ***LIKED*** BEING LIGHT, BEING QUICK. I LIKED HAVING A BODY THAT COULD ***DANCE!*** NOW I JUST... I TAKE UP SO MUCH GODDAMN SPACE. EVERYTHING FEELS HEAVY AND WRONG, LIKE I'M WEARING A MUSCLE SUIT THAT KEEPS GETTING TIGHTER.

YOU KNOW, I USED TO DO DRAG ON MY OWN SOMETIMES. NOT JUST FOR KINKY BOOTS, JUST... FOR ME. PUT ON A WIG, SOME HEELS, FEEL GLAM FOR AN HOUR. CAN'T DO THAT ANYMORE. THESE ARMS DON'T FIT IN ANYTHING PRETTY. I TRIED ONCE, AND IT WAS JUST... IT WAS DISGUSTING.

AND THIS'LL ONLY GET WORSE THE LONGER HE KEEPS ME ON THIS SHIT. ONE DAY, EVERYTHING I LIKED ABOUT MYSELF WILL JUST BE... GONE.

AND THE FUCKED-UP PART? EVERYONE TELLS ME I LOOK AMAZING. COACHES, TEAMMATES. EVEN... EVEN PEOPLE I'M CLOSE WITH. LIKE, THEY THINK IT'S ***HOT.*** AND I CAN'T SAY ANYTHING BECAUSE WHO COMPLAINS ABOUT GETTING JACKED? WHO'S GONNA FEEL SORRY FOR ME?


SHIT. I... YOU'RE RIGHT. BECAUSE, BELIEVE IT OR NOT... I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE. I MEAN, NOT THIS EXACT VERSION, BUT MY DAD ALSO PUSHED ME TO GET BIGGER, TO BULK UP, TO EAT MORE, LIFT MORE, RUN MORE. DON'T GET ME WRONG, I LOVED PLAYING, LOVED COMPETING. BUT THE CONSTANT NEED TO BE MORE - MORE JACKED, MORE AGGRESSIVE THAN I ACTUALLY WAS - THAT WAS NEVER ME, THAT WAS HIM. BUT I DID IT... I GAVE AWAY PIECES OF MYSELF BECAUSE THE ALTERNATIVE WAS WATCHING HIM REACH FOR THE BOTTLE.
AND NOW HERE WE ARE. HE'S DRINKING AGAIN, AND I'M WEAKER THAN I EVER WAS... LIKE I SAID, I HATE THIS REALITY.

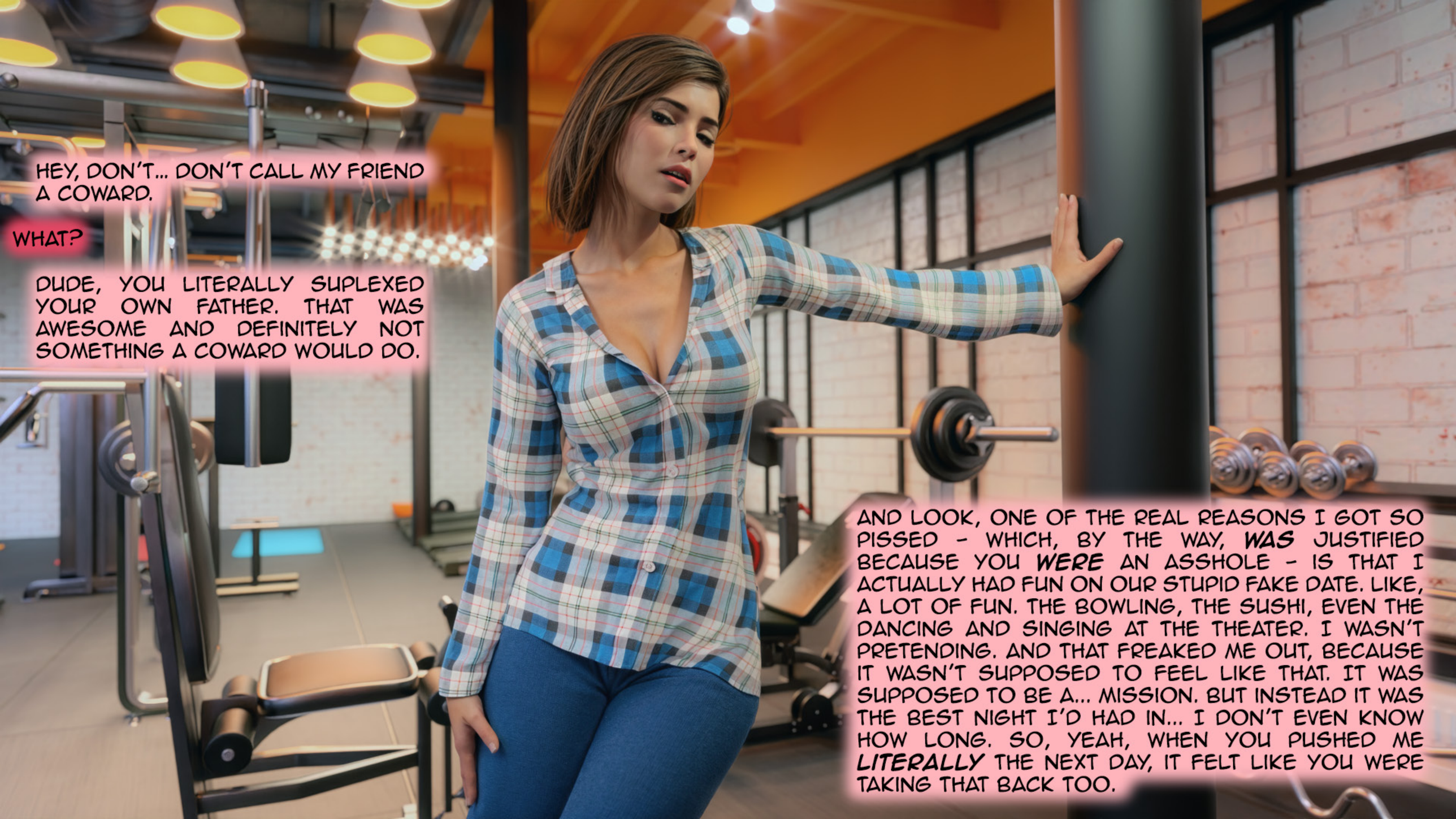


I'M SORRY I PUSHED YOU AWAY. I MEAN IT. AND I'VE BEEN THINKING. A LOT. AFTER WHAT HAPPENED AT THE RANCH. HE WAS GONNA CUT OFF JACKSON'S FINGER JUST TO SCARE YOU, JUST TO MAKE A POINT. AND I KEEP REPLAYING IT, WONDERING WHAT WOULD'VE HAPPENED IF YOU HADN'T THROWN THAT ROCK, OR IF I'D BEEN FIVE MINUTES LATER ON THE BIKE.

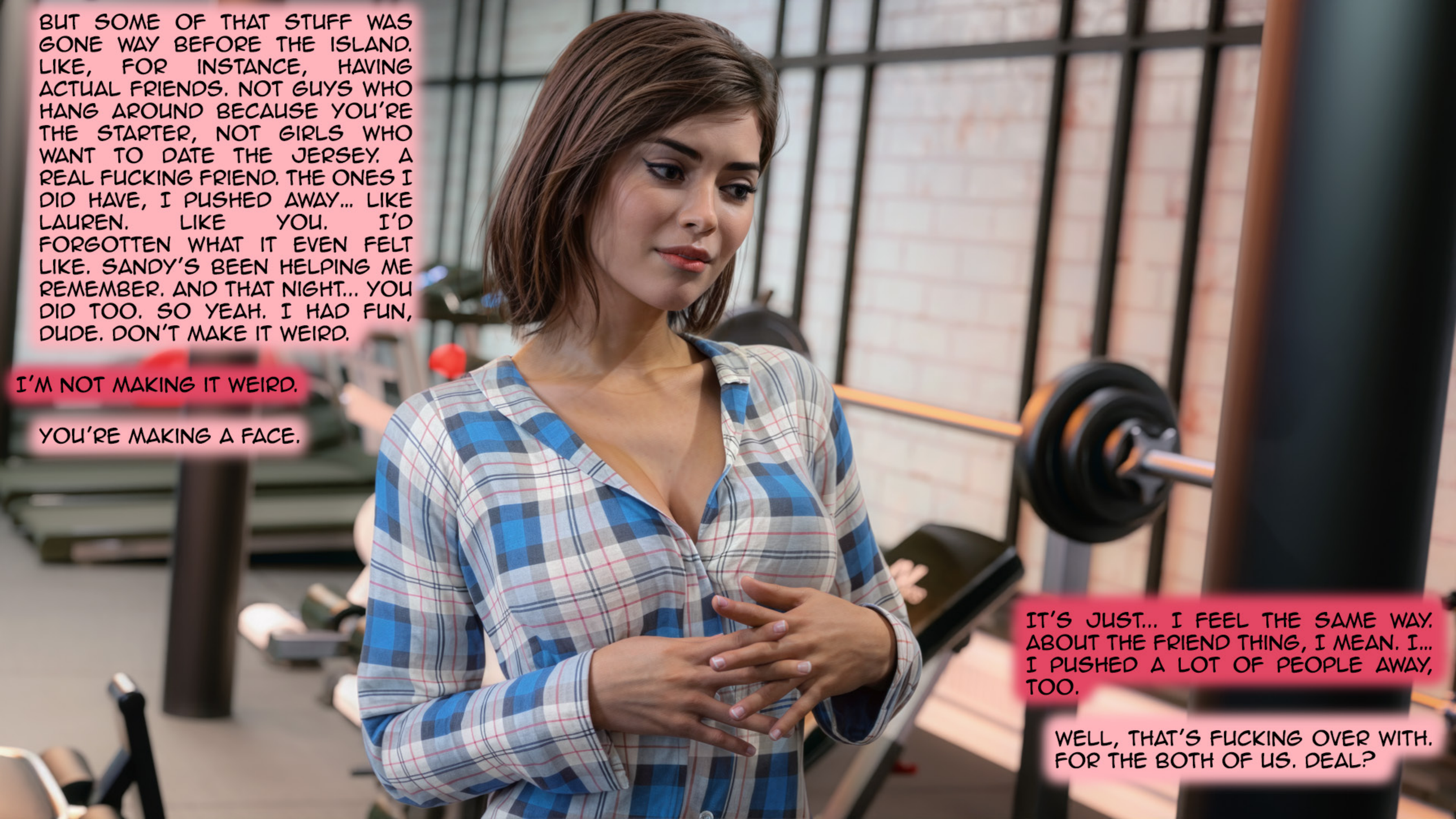
I GREW UP WATCHING HIM DO TERRIBLE THINGS TO PEOPLE AND, AS A LITTLE KID, I'D TELL MYSELF IT WASN'T THAT BAD, OR THAT THEY DESERVED IT, OR WHATEVER. BUT AS I GREW UP, I REALIZED HOW FUCKING DANGEROUS HE IS AND I'M JUST... I'M SCARED OF HIM.

I HATE THAT I'M A COWARD. AND I'M SORRY, TOO, BECAUSE IF I WAS AS BRAVE AS YOU, IF I KNEW HOW TO STAND UP TO BULLIES, YOU NEVER WOULD'VE BEEN TAKEN.

I SHOULD'VE GONE TO THE FBI THE SECOND HE TOLD ME HIS PLAN. HELL, I SHOULD'VE BURNED THE HOUSE DOWN WITH HIM INSIDE, LOCKED IN ONE OF HIS SENSORY DEPRIVATION TANKS. INSTEAD, I JUST LET IT HAPPEN BECAUSE I WAS TERRIFIED OF WHAT HE'D DO IF I STOOD UP TO HIM.

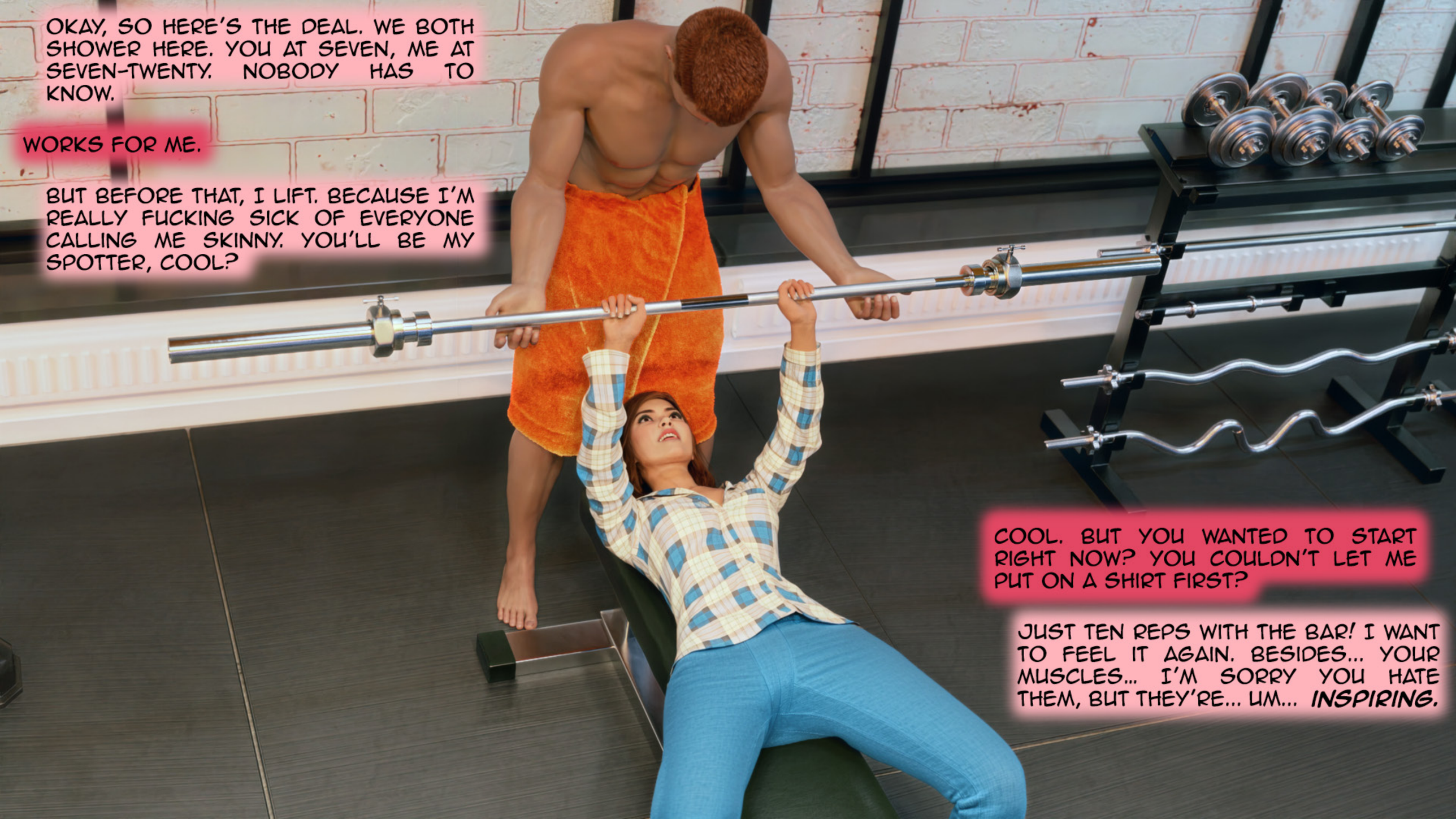

HEY, DON'T... DON'T CALL MY FRIEND A COWARD.
WHAT?
DUDE, YOU LITERALLY SUPLEXED YOUR OWN FATHER. THAT WAS AWESOME AND DEFINITELY NOT SOMETHING A COWARD WOULD DO.
AND LOOK, ONE OF THE REAL REASONS I GOT SO PISSED - WHICH, BY THE WAY, ***WAS*** JUSTIFIED BECAUSE YOU ***WERE*** AN ASSHOLE - IS THAT I ACTUALLY HAD FUN ON OUR STUPID FAKE DATE. LIKE, A LOT OF FUN. THE BOWLING, THE SUSHI, EVEN THE DANCING AND SINGING AT THE THEATER. I WASN'T PRETENDING. AND THAT FREAKED ME OUT, BECAUSE IT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO FEEL LIKE THAT. IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A... MISSION. BUT INSTEAD IT WAS THE BEST NIGHT I'D HAD IN... I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW LONG. SO, YEAH, WHEN YOU PUSHED ME ***LITERALLY*** THE NEXT DAY, IT FELT LIKE YOU WERE TAKING THAT BACK TOO.


WAIT, YOU REALLY HAD FUN?
YEAH. HELL, I TOLD YOU I DID THAT NIGHT!
I KNOW, BUT... I DON'T KNOW, I THOUGHT YOU WERE JUST BEING NICE.
DOES THAT SOUND LIKE ME?
NOT, REALLY. BUT... I JUST ASSUMED THE DATE WOULD BE A HORROR SHO2 FOR YOU. I MEAN, I HAD A GOOD TIME, TOO - BUT I WAS AFRAID IT JUST REMINDED YOU OF... EVERYTHING THAT YOU LOST. EVERYTHING THAT GOT TAKEN.
I MEAN, YEAH, A LITTLE. THAT'S WHY I HAD A PANIC ATTACK.


BUT SOME OF THAT STUFF WAS GONE WAY BEFORE THE ISLAND. LIKE, FOR INSTANCE, HAVING ACTUAL FRIENDS. NOT GUYS WHO HANG AROUND BECAUSE YOU'RE THE STARTER, NOT GIRLS WHO WANT TO DATE THE JERSEY. A REAL FUCKING FRIEND. THE ONES I DID HAVE, I PUSHED AWAY... LIKE LAUREN. LIKE YOU. I'D FORGOTTEN WHAT IT EVEN FELT LIKE. SANDY'S BEEN HELPING ME REMEMBER. AND THAT NIGHT... YOU DID TOO. SO YEAH. I HAD FUN, DUDE. DON'T MAKE IT WEIRD.
I'M NOT MAKING IT WEIRD.
YOU'RE MAKING A FACE.
IT'S JUST... I FEEL THE SAME WAY. ABOUT THE FRIEND THING, I MEAN. I... I PUSHED A LOT OF PEOPLE AWAY, TOO.
WELL, THAT'S FUCKING OVER WITH. FOR THE BOTH OF US. DEAL?


AND, LOOK, I CAN'T SAY MUCH, BUT... BUT I'M NOT DONE WITH YOUR DAD. YOU THOUGHT THROWING A ROCK AT HIS DUMB HEAD WAS SOMETHING? JUST WAIT. I'M GOING TO FIND A WAY TO GET US OUT OF THIS. LIKE, PERMANENTLY. BUT, FOR NOW, IF YOU'RE SCARED, YOU TELL ME. IF I'M LOSING MY MIND, I TELL YOU. GOT IT?
YEAH. SO, WE'RE A TEAM AGAIN?


FOREVER.
NOW, UH, COULD YOU DO ME A FAVOR?


OKAY, SO HERE'S THE DEAL. WE BOTH SHOWER HERE. YOU AT SEVEN, ME AT SEVEN-TWENTY. NOBODY HAS TO KNOW.
WORKS FOR ME.
BUT BEFORE THAT, I LIFT. BECAUSE I'M REALLY FUCKING SICK OF EVERYONE CALLING ME SKINNY. YOU'LL BE MY SPOTTER, COOL?
COOL. BUT YOU WANTED TO START RIGHT NOW? YOU COULDN'T LET ME PUT ON A SHIRT FIRST?
JUST TEN REPS WITH THE BAR! I WANT TO FEEL IT AGAIN. BESIDES... YOUR MUSCLES... I'M SORRY YOU HATE THEM, BUT THEY'RE... UM... INSPIRING.