HALF SISTERS

Episode 86

Score


FINE. FRIDAY AT EIGHT. BUT IF YOU SHOW UP IN SOME TINY ELECTRIC CAR WHERE MY KNEES ARE IN MY FACE THE WHOLE RIDE, I'M BAILING AND TAKING THE HORSE.
DEAL. I DRIVE A JEEP, ACTUALLY. PLENTY OF LEGROOM. EVEN FOR A BEANPOLE.
OH, GREAT. NOW THERE'S TWO OF YOU CALLING ME THAT.
HORNETS


TWO OF US? WHO ELSE IS CALLING YOU BEANPOLE? THAT'S MY THING. I INVENTED THAT.
OH, UH... MACK. FROM THE DODGEBALL CLUB. SHE'S THE ONE WHO--
MACKENZIE TORRES? TALL, ABS, THROWS THINGS AT PEOPLE FOR FUN? YEAH, I KNOW MACK. AND NO, ***ABSOLUTELY NOT***. I HAD DIBS ON YOU BEFORE SHE EVEN KNEW YOU EXISTED! I SAW YOU FIRST AT THE MALL. I HAVE RECEIPTS. LAUREN IS MY WITNESS.
LAUREN'S YOUR WITNESS FOR A LOT OF THINGS. YOU GOT HER ON RETAINER OR SOMETHING?
SHE'S MY RIDE-OR-DIE, MY BEST FRIEND, MY ALIBI, AND MY EMERGENCY CONTACT.


BUT DON'T WORRY, BABE - WHEN IT COMES TO FRIDAY NIGHT, I WON'T BE NEEDING A WITNESS. UNLESS YOU'RE INTO THAT.
I... OKAY. IS IT HOT IN HERE? IT'S TEXAS, SO ***OBVIOUSLY*** IT'S HOT, BUT IT FEELS SPECIFICALLY HOT RIGHT NOW IN THIS EXACT SPOT WHERE I'M STANDING.
ADORABLE. YOU'RE BLUSHING, BY THE WAY. IT GOES ALL THE WAY DOWN YOUR NECK. I'D LOVE TO SEE HOW FAR IT GOES, BUT I'LL SAVE THAT FOR FRIDAY. SEE YOU AT EIGHT, GORGEOUS. DON'T WEAR ANYTHING YOU'D BE SAD TO LOSE.

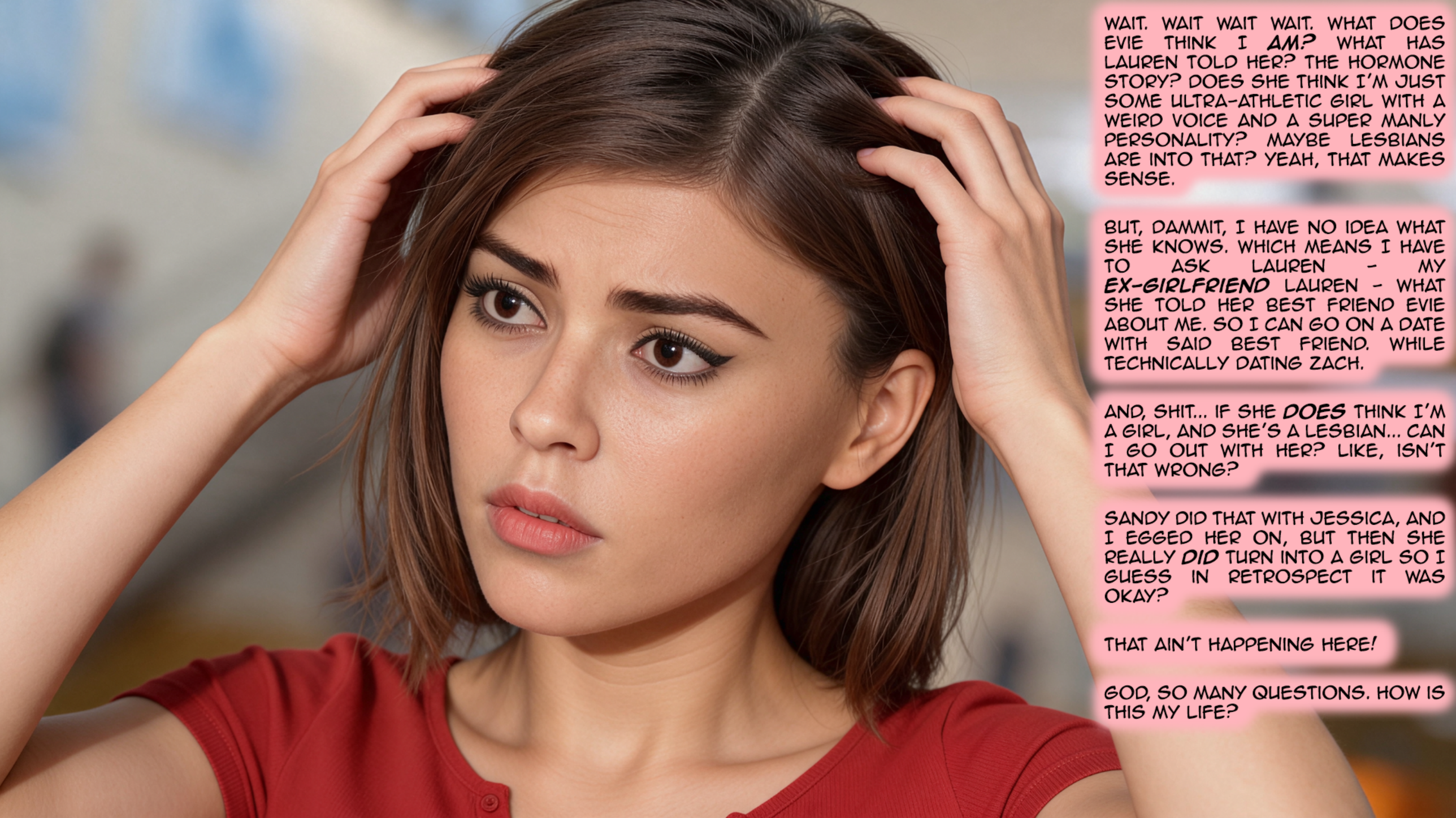


OKAY. COOL. VERY COOL. YOU'RE WALKING, YOU'RE CASUAL, YOU'RE A GIRL WHO DOES THIS ALL THE TIME. YOU FLIRT WITH INCREDIBLY HOT BRUNETTES AND THEN LEAVE LIKE IT'S NOTHING. ***DO NOT*** LOOK BACK. IF YOU LOOK BACK SHE'LL KNOW. SHE'LL KNOW YOU'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT HER EVERY SINGLE DAY SINCE THE MALL FITTING ROOM AND THAT YOU OBSESSIVELY LOOKED FOR HER INSTAGRAM EVEN THOUGH LAUREN SAID SHE DOESN'T HAVE ONE ANYMORE AND THAT YOU ALMOST REAR-ENDED A SUBARU LAST WEEK BECAUSE YOU THOUGHT YOU SAW HER AT A GAS STATION.

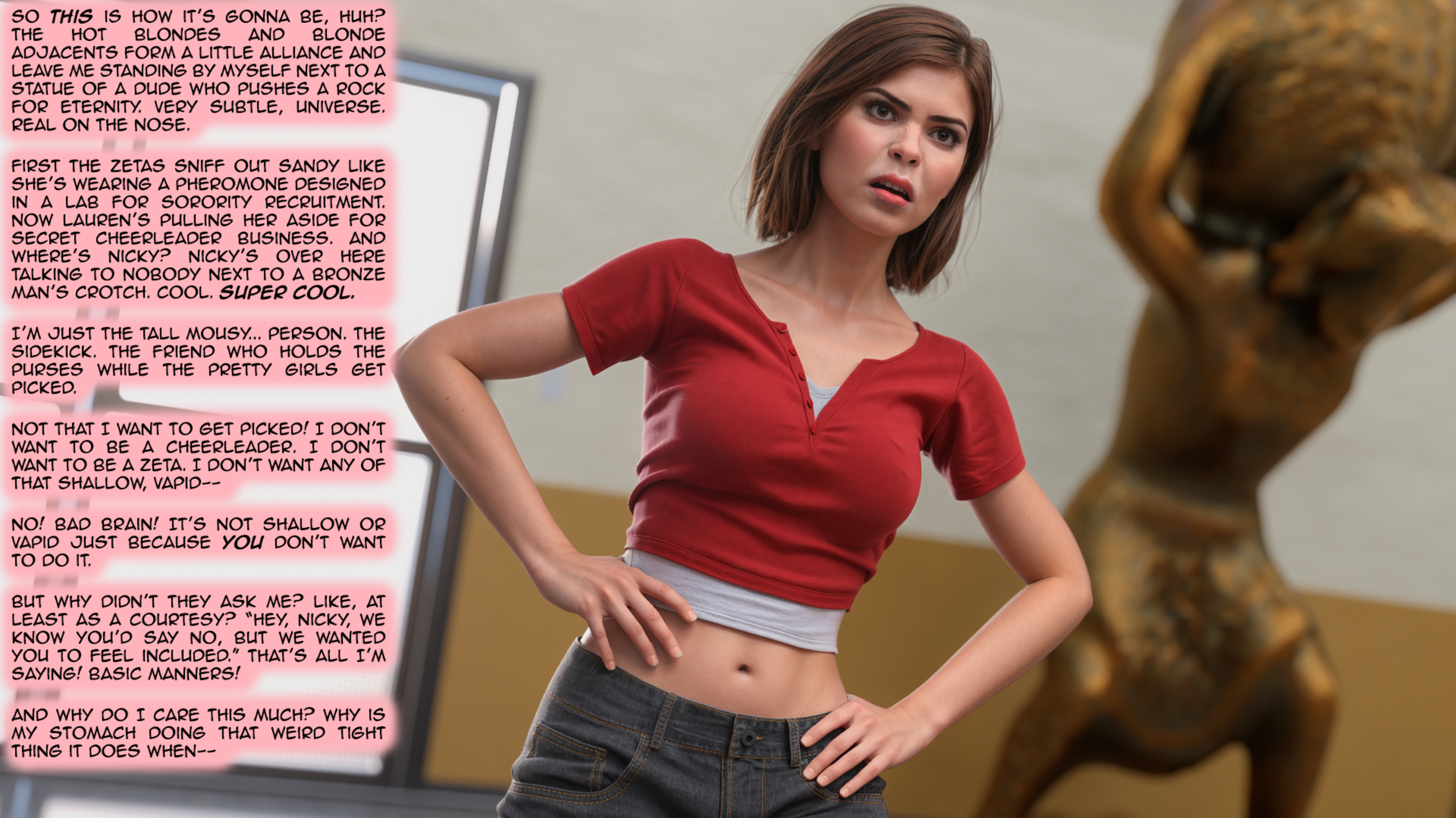
LEFT FOOT. RIGHT FOOT. PUSH THE DOOR. THERE'S THE SUNLIGHT. ALMOST FREE, AND....


...WE'RE CLEAR...
OH MY GOD! OH MY GOD, OH MY GOD! SHE SAID YES! SHE ACTUALLY SAID YES! AND I DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TO BEG THAT MUCH AND HER NECK TURNED PINK AND I MADE HER NERVOUS AND I DIDN'T THINK ANYBODY MADE HER NERVOUS SHE YELLS AT FOOTBALL COACHES FOR FUN AND I MADE HER BLUSH DOWN HER WHOLE ENTIRE BODY!
SCORE ONE FOR THE GAY GIRLS!


OKAY, SO, THAT HAPPENED. AND I'M... SMILING? WHY AM I SMILING? STOP SMILING. YOU LOOK INSANE.
BUT FRIDAY. FRIDAY COULD BE REALLY FUN. LIKE, ACTUALLY FUN. SHE'S FUNNY AND WEIRD AND SHE DOESN'T TAKE ANY SHIT AND SHE SMELLS NICE AND--
WAIT A SECOND. AM I... EXCITED? HOLY SHIT, I'M ACTUALLY EXCITED. I HAVE A DATE WITH A HOT GIRL ON FRIDAY!
FIRST DAY, TOO! WAY TO GO, PALMER!


WAIT. WAIT WAIT WAIT. WHAT DOES EVIE THINK I *AM?* WHAT HAS LAUREN TOLD HER? THE HORMONE STORY? DOES SHE THINK I'M JUST SOME ULTRA-ATHLETIC GIRL WITH A WEIRD VOICE AND A SUPER MANLY PERSONALITY? MAYBE LESBIANS ARE INTO THAT? YEAH, THAT MAKES SENSE.
BUT, DAMMIT, I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT SHE KNOWS. WHICH MEANS I HAVE TO ASK LAUREN - MY *EX-GIRLFRIEND* LAUREN - WHAT SHE TOLD HER BEST FRIEND EVIE ABOUT ME. SO I CAN GO ON A DATE WITH SAID BEST FRIEND. WHILE TECHNICALLY DATING ZACH.
AND, SHIT... IF SHE *DOES* THINK I'M A GIRL, AND SHE'S A LESBIAN... CAN I GO OUT WITH HER? LIKE, ISN'T THAT WRONG?
SANDY DID THAT WITH JESSICA, AND I EGGED HER ON, BUT THEN SHE REALLY *DID* TURN INTO A GIRL SO I GUESS IN RETROSPECT IT WAS OKAY?
THAT AIN'T HAPPENING HERE!
GOD, SO MANY QUESTIONS. HOW IS THIS MY LIFE?


HEY, LAUREN, QUICK QUESTION--
WAIT. WHERE THE HELL DID THEY GO?!
ARE YOU KIDDING ME? I GET FLIRTED AT FOR NINETY SECONDS AND MY ENTIRE SUPPORT SYSTEM EVAPORATES? SANDY! SANDY!
EXIT


SO *THIS* IS HOW IT'S GONNA BE, HUH? THE HOT BLONDES AND BLONDE ADJACENTS FORM A LITTLE ALLIANCE AND LEAVE ME STANDING BY MYSELF NEXT TO A STATUE OF A DUDE WHO PUSHES A ROCK FOR ETERNITY. VERY SUBTLE, UNIVERSE. REAL ON THE NOSE.
FIRST THE ZETAS SNIFF OUT SANDY LIKE SHE'S WEARING A PHEROMONE DESIGNED IN A LAB FOR SORORITY RECRUITMENT. NOW LAUREN'S PULLING HER ASIDE FOR SECRET CHEERLEADER BUSINESS. AND WHERE'S NICKY? NICKY'S OVER HERE TALKING TO NOBODY NEXT TO A BRONZE MAN'S CROTCH. COOL. *SUPER COOL.*
I'M JUST THE TALL MOUSY... PERSON. THE SIDEKICK. THE FRIEND WHO HOLDS THE PURSES WHILE THE PRETTY GIRLS GET PICKED.
NOT THAT I WANT TO GET PICKED! I DON'T WANT TO BE A CHEERLEADER. I DON'T WANT TO BE A ZETA. I DON'T WANT ANY OF THAT SHALLOW, VAPID--
NO! BAD BRAIN! IT'S NOT SHALLOW OR VAPID JUST BECAUSE *YOU* DON'T WANT TO DO IT.
BUT WHY DIDN'T THEY ASK ME? LIKE, AT LEAST AS A COURTESY? "HEY, NICKY, WE KNOW YOU'D SAY NO, BUT WE WANTED YOU TO FEEL INCLUDED." THAT'S ALL I'M SAYING! BASIC MANNERS!
AND WHY DO I CARE THIS MUCH? WHY IS MY STOMACH DOING THAT WEIRD TIGHT THING IT DOES WHEN--


OH NO.
NO NO NO NO NO.
AM I *JEALOUS?* AM I ACTUALLY JEALOUS THAT SANDY'S GETTING RECRUITED FOR GIRL STUFF AND I'M NOT?
THAT'S NOT - I DON'T WANT - THIS IS THE GIRL MIND-VIRUS! *IT'S MUTATING!* IT'S FOUND A NEW HOST PATHWAY THROUGH COMPETITIVE JEALOUSY AND IT'S HEADING STRAIGHT FOR MY BRAIN!


SANDY! LAUREN! WHERE ARE YOU GUYS!? WE NEED TO TALK! IMMEDIATELY!
EXIT
EXIT
TWENTY BUCKS AN HOUR. TWENTY. BUCKS. AN HOUR.


THAT'S WHAT I'M BEING PAID TO PRETEND I'M A TWENTY-ONE-YEAR-OLD COMMS MAJOR NAMED "TYLER" WHILE FOLLOWING A COLLEGE GIRL AROUND TAKING PICTURES LIKE SOME BARGAIN-BIN PAPARAZZO. OR A DAMN PERVERT, I GUESS. FUCK MY LIFE.
AND NOW SHE'S FLIRTING WITH A GOTH CHEERLEADER? THIS GIRL IS DATING ZACH HUTCHINSON. ZACH HUTCHINSON! THE KID'S GONNA INHERIT HALF OF EAST TEXAS. SHE COULD BE SET FOR LIFE. INSTEAD SHE'S MAKING HEART-EYES AT A GIRL WITH PURPLE HAIR AND A ROSE TATTOO.

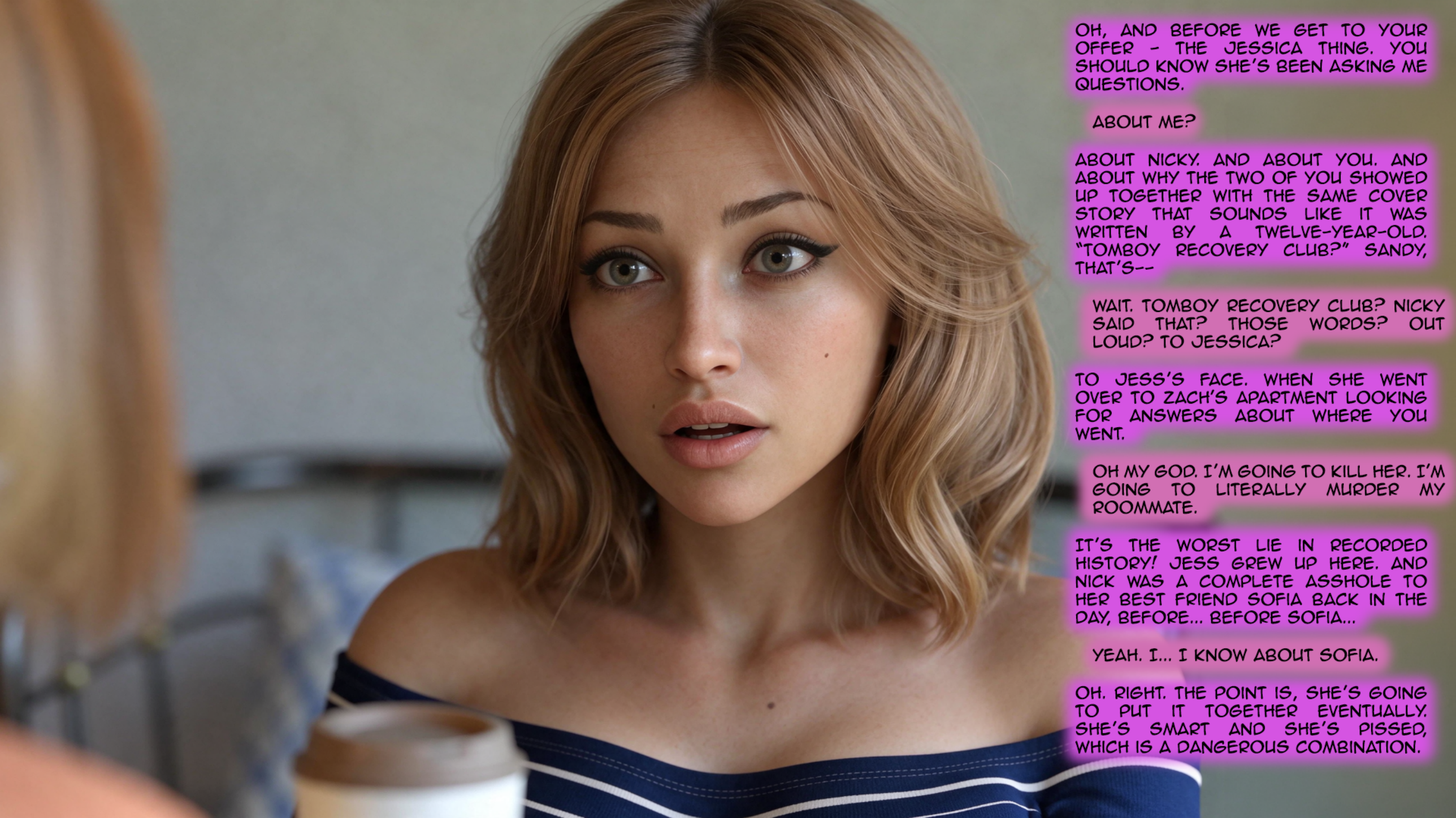

IF I REPORT THIS, HUTCHINSON LOSES HIS MIND. AND HE DOESN'T LOSE HIS MIND LIKE A NORMAL MAN, HE LOSES IT WITH THAT MEDIEVAL CRAP HE'S GOT IN THAT MANSION.


SAMSUNG
IT'S FINE. NOTHING HAPPENED. THE CHEERLEADER TALKED TO HER. THAT'S IT. IT'S COLLEGE, PEOPLE TALK. I'LL REPORT WHEN THERE'S SOMETHING WORTH REPORTING.
TWENTY GODDAMN DOLLARS AN HOUR.
THIS DUMB GIRL HAD BETTER GET HER SHIT TOGETHER.


HEY, BEFORE WE START, I JUST WANT TO SAY – IT'S REALLY NICE TO FINALLY MEET YOU. LIKE, PROPERLY. NICKY'S TALKED ABOUT YOU SO MUCH I FEEL LIKE I ALREADY KNOW YOU. AND THE CHEERLEADING THING... HONESTLY, IT MEANS A LOT.
AW, WELL, EVIE DESERVES THE CREDIT. SHE SAW YOU WITH NICK WHILE SHE WAS SECRETLY PERVING ON... THEM... DURING ORIENTATION. ALSO, I, UH, KINDA KNEW ABOUT YOU ALREADY. NICK TEXTED ME OVER THE SUMMER AFTER I WOULDN'T STOP BOTHERING HIM THAT HIS ROOMMATE WAS NAMED SANDY. MEANWHILE, JESSICA'S BEEN VENTING TO ME FOR WEEKS ABOUT A GIRL NAMED SANDY WHO GHOSTED HER WHO ALSO KNEW A MYSTERIOUS GIRL NAMED NIKKI.


SO YOU CAME LOOKING FOR ME.
I CAME CURIOUS. I WANTED TO SEE WHAT KIND OF PERSON COULD MAKE JESS THAT ANGRY AND NICK THAT... WHATEVER NICK IS RIGHT NOW.
AND?
YOU DEFINITELY HAVE A... PRESENCE. I THINK YOU MIGHT MAKE A GREAT CHEERLEADER. ALSO YOUR BOOBS ARE, LIKE, INSANE.
OH. THANKS. I, UH, CAN ONLY TAKE ABOUT FIFTY PERCENT OF THE CREDIT FOR THEM.


LOOK, I DON'T KNOW YOUR WHOLE STORY. BUT I KNOW YOU MATTER TO BOTH OF THEM – EVEN IF JESS IS ROYALLY PISSED AT YOU RIGHT NOW – WHICH MEANS YOU MATTER TO ME BY DEFAULT. NOW, WHAT'S THIS 'OFFER' ABOUT NICK? AND PLEASE TELL ME WHAT TO CALL HIM. I'VE BEEN SWITCHING BACK AND FORTH FOR MONTHS AND I'M LOSING MY MIND.
HER, FOR NOW, WHEN WE'RE IN MIXED COMPANY. AND NICKY, WITH A 'Y.'
AW, THAT'S WHAT WE USED TO CALL HIM WHEN WE WERE ALL KIDS.


OH, AND BEFORE WE GET TO YOUR OFFER - THE JESSICA THING. YOU SHOULD KNOW SHE'S BEEN ASKING ME QUESTIONS.
ABOUT ME?
ABOUT NICKY. AND ABOUT YOU. AND ABOUT WHY THE TWO OF YOU SHOWED UP TOGETHER WITH THE SAME COVER STORY THAT SOUNDS LIKE IT WAS WRITTEN BY A TWELVE-YEAR-OLD. "TOMBOY RECOVERY CLUB?" SANDY, THAT'S--
WAIT. TOMBOY RECOVERY CLUB? NICKY SAID THAT? THOSE WORDS? OUT LOUD? TO JESSICA?
TO JESS'S FACE. WHEN SHE WENT OVER TO ZACH'S APARTMENT LOOKING FOR ANSWERS ABOUT WHERE YOU WENT.
OH MY GOD. I'M GOING TO KILL HER. I'M GOING TO LITERALLY MURDER MY ROOMMATE.
IT'S THE WORST LIE IN RECORDED HISTORY! JESS GREW UP HERE. AND NICK WAS A COMPLETE ASSHOLE TO HER BEST FRIEND SOFIA BACK IN THE DAY, BEFORE... BEFORE SOFIA...
YEAH. I... I KNOW ABOUT SOFIA.
OH. RIGHT. THE POINT IS, SHE'S GOING TO PUT IT TOGETHER EVENTUALLY. SHE'S SMART AND SHE'S PISSED, WHICH IS A DANGEROUS COMBINATION.


NICKY COULDN'T LIE HER WAY OUT OF A PAPER BAG. IT'D BE ENDEARING EXCEPT THAT SHE WON'T STOP TRYING! I'LL... WORK WITH HER ON ANOTHER COVER STORY.
ALRIGHT. GOOD. I MEAN, IT STILL WON'T HOLD UP TO JESSICA'S SCRUTINY, BUT TO ANYONE ELSE... MAYBE IT'LL HELP. BUT I DON'T WANT ANOTHER COVER STORY, SANDY. WHATEVER OFFER YOU WANT TO MAKE, FIRST I NEED TO KNOW THE TRUTH. BECAUSE WHEN NICK FIRST CAME TO ME, HE SAID IT WAS A HORMONE IMBALANCE. TEMPORARY. AND I TEASED HIM. I FITTED HIM FOR A BRA AND MADE JOKES LIKE IT WAS A MAKEOVER MONTAGE, BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT IT WAS. EVEN HIS MOM SAID SO!
BUT NOW EVIE'S CONVINCED NICKY IS TRANS. AND I'M WATCHING... HER... WALK AROUND CAMPUS LOOKING TERRIFIED EVERY SECOND, AND I THINK - WHAT IF I SPENT MONTHS TEASING SOMEONE ABOUT THE MOST PAINFUL THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO THEM?
SO I NEED YOU TO TELL ME THE TRUTH. HOW'D YOU TWO REALLY MEET?


WAIT. NICKY NEVER TOLD YOU ABOUT ME?
TOLD ME WHAT? THAT YOU'RE MRS. FERRIS'S... DAUGHTER? ADOPTED DAUGHTER? I KNOW THAT PART. EVERYBODY KNOWS THE FERRIS FAMILY.
NO, I MEAN ABOUT ME. ABOUT WHO I WAS BEFORE.
BEFORE WHAT?

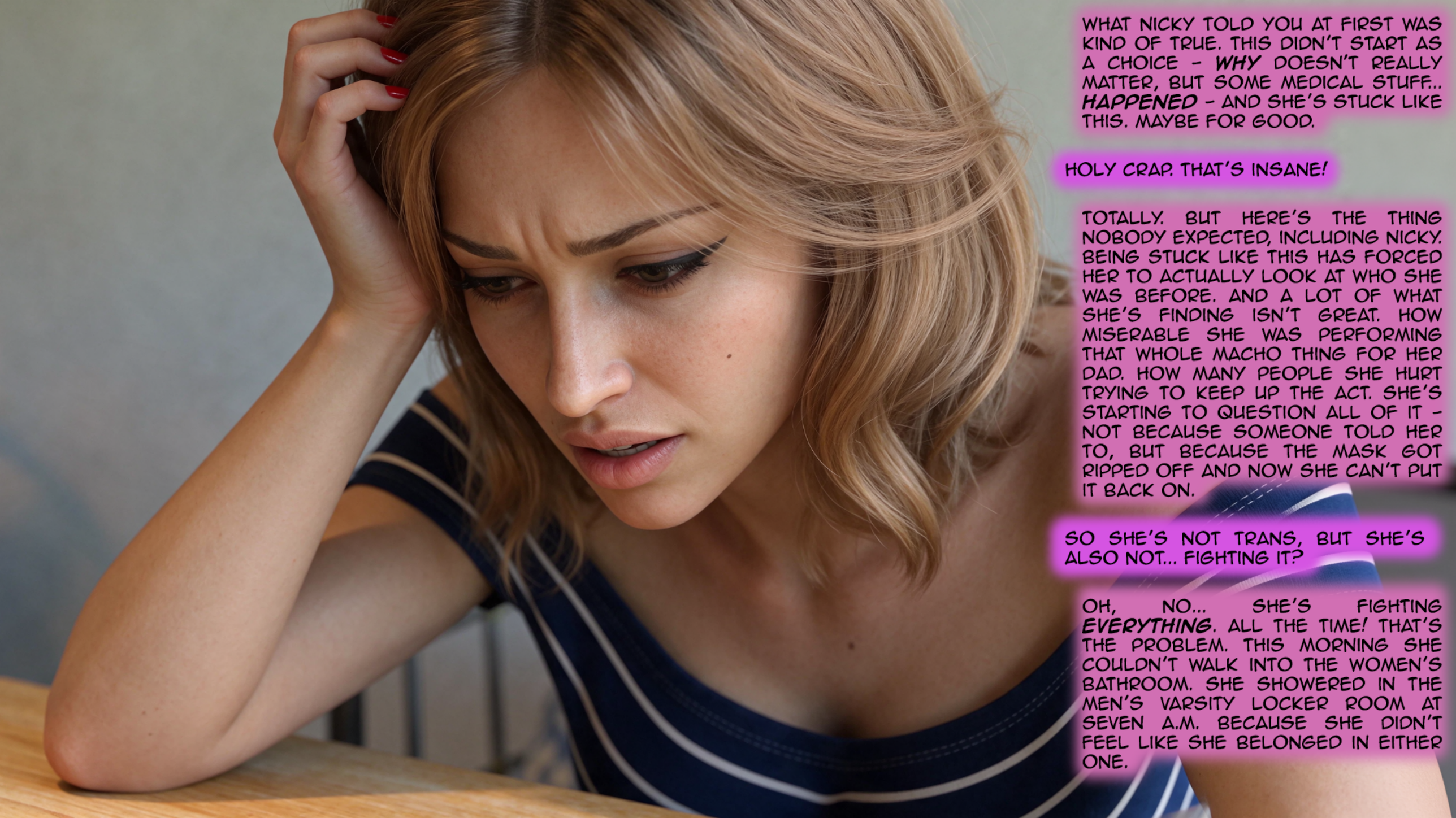

I... GOD. OKAY. I THOUGHT NICKY WOULD'VE TOLD YOU ALREADY. SHE TELLS EVERYONE EVERYTHING. THE GIRL CAN'T KEEP A SECRET FOR FIVE MINUTES. BUT SHE KEPT MINE AND THAT'S...

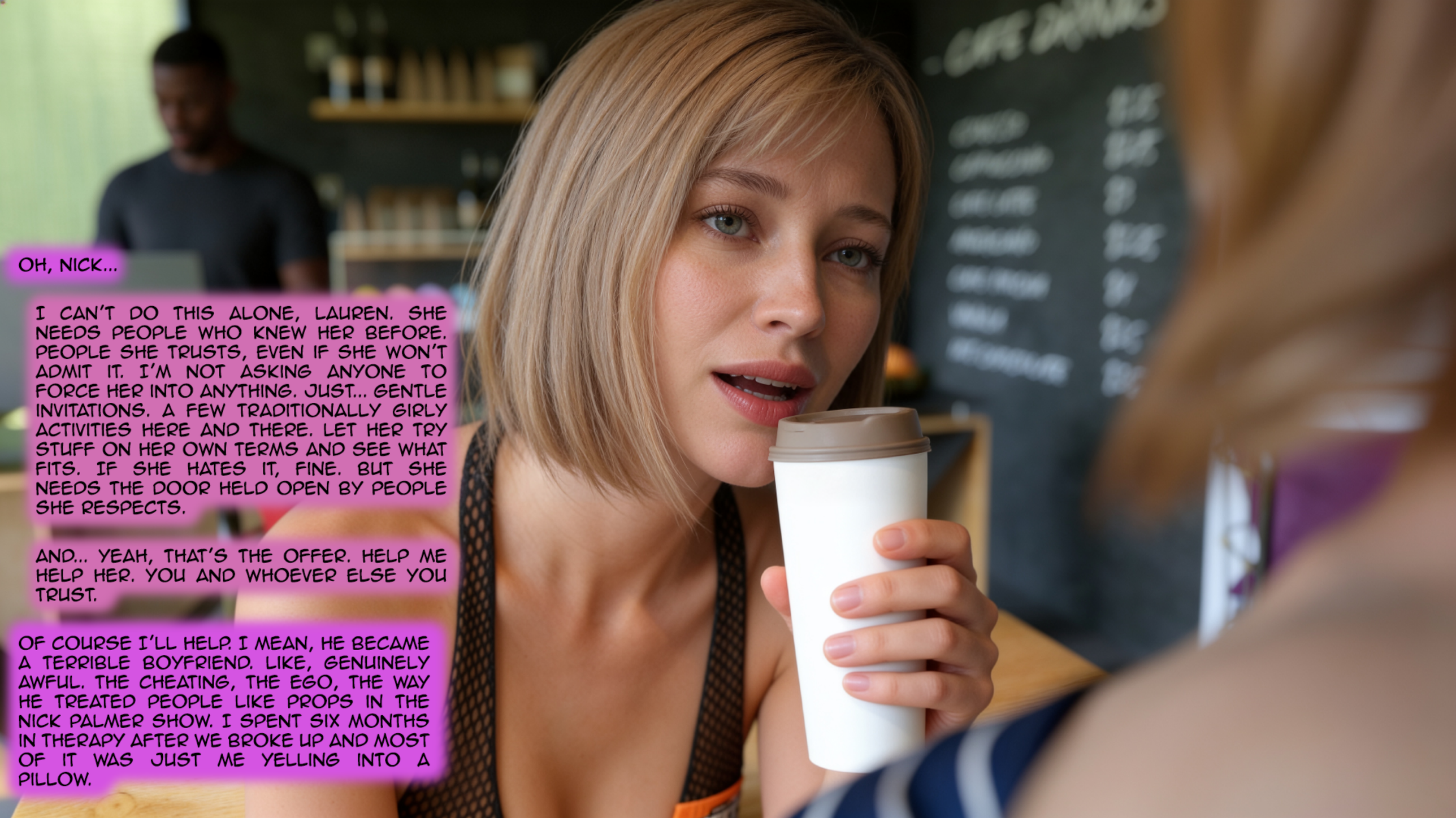

SORRY. I PRACTICED THIS. I HAD A WHOLE SPEECH. IT WAS VERY ELOQUENT.
SANDY, YOU'RE SCARING ME. WHAT'S GOING ON?
I WASN'T ALWAYS SANDY. I WASN'T ALWAYS... THIS. AND THAT'S HOW NICKY AND I MET. KIND OF A... SUPPORT GROUP OF TWO. WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER IN A WAY THAT MOST PEOPLE CAN'T, BECAUSE WE'VE BOTH BEEN THROUGH SOMETHING THAT CHANGED US. FOR ME, THIS IS PERMANENT. FOR NICKY... WE'LL SEE.
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?

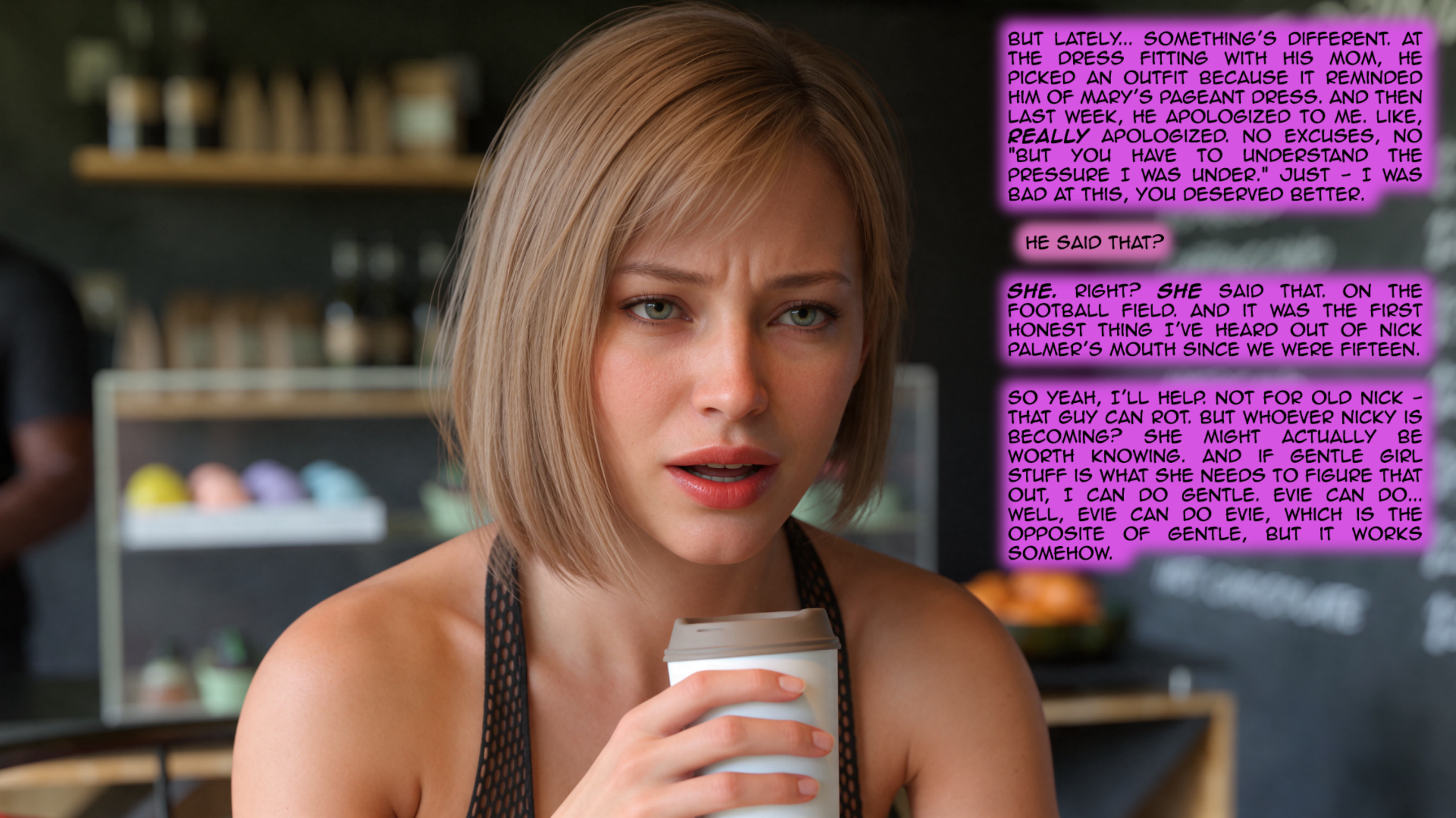

NICKY IS... WHAT NICKY IS, IS COMPLICATED. BUT I AM TRANS, LAUREN.
SHIT. I THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE EASIER. I'VE BEEN TELLING MYSELF FOR WEEKS THAT I'M READY TO BE OUT, THAT I'M PROUD OF WHO I AM, THAT I'D JUST SAY IT AND IT'D BE FINE. BUT ACTUALLY SITTING HERE, WAITING TO FIND OUT IF YOU'RE GOING TO LOOK AT ME DIFFERENTLY...
FUCK, IT'S TERRIFYING.
HEY... SANDY?
YEAH?
YOU CAN LOOK NOW.


IT'S COOL. LIKE, GENUINELY. I KNOW THIS IS TEXAS, AND IT WON'T BE ACCEPTED BY EVERYONE AT ST. CHRIS. WE HAVE PLENTY OF BIGOTS AND ASSHOLES AROUND CAMPUS. BUT I'M HAPPY FOR YOU.
REALLY?
YEAH, REALLY. IF ANYTHING, I'M A LITTLE JEALOUS. I'VE FITTED A LOT OF BODIES AND YOURS IS... YEAH. WOW.
THANK YOU. AND LOOK, IF THAT MEANS I CAN'T BE ON THE SQUAD, I TOTALLY UNDERSTAND--
FUCK THAT.
BUT I'M GOING TO BE OUT, LAUREN. OPENLY. EVERYONE'S GOING TO KNOW.
GOOD. I'M THE CAPTAIN. IF ANYBODY ON MY SQUAD HAS A PROBLEM WITH IT, THEY CAN BRING IT TO ME AND I WILL HANDLE IT.


I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.
SAY YOU'LL SHOW UP TO PRACTICE ON TIME. THAT'S ALL I CARE ABOUT. NOW - I'VE BEEN VERY PATIENT. WHAT IS GOING ON WITH NICKY, AND WHAT IS THIS OFFER?
OKAY. THANK YOU. FOR REAL. NOW, NICKY.


WHAT NICKY TOLD YOU AT FIRST WAS KIND OF TRUE. THIS DIDN'T START AS A CHOICE - ***WHY*** DOESN'T REALLY MATTER, BUT SOME MEDICAL STUFF... ***HAPPENED*** - AND SHE'S STUCK LIKE THIS. MAYBE FOR GOOD.
HOLY CRAP. THAT'S INSANE!
TOTALLY. BUT HERE'S THE THING NOBODY EXPECTED, INCLUDING NICKY. BEING STUCK LIKE THIS HAS FORCED HER TO ACTUALLY LOOK AT WHO SHE WAS BEFORE. AND A LOT OF WHAT SHE'S FINDING ISN'T GREAT. HOW MISERABLE SHE WAS PERFORMING THAT WHOLE MACHO THING FOR HER DAD. HOW MANY PEOPLE SHE HURT TRYING TO KEEP UP THE ACT. SHE'S STARTING TO QUESTION ALL OF IT - NOT BECAUSE SOMEONE TOLD HER TO, BUT BECAUSE THE MASK GOT RIPPED OFF AND NOW SHE CAN'T PUT IT BACK ON.
SO SHE'S NOT TRANS, BUT SHE'S ALSO NOT... FIGHTING IT?
OH, NO... SHE'S FIGHTING ***EVERYTHING***. ALL THE TIME! THAT'S THE PROBLEM. THIS MORNING SHE COULDN'T WALK INTO THE WOMEN'S BATHROOM. SHE SHOWERED IN THE MEN'S VARSITY LOCKER ROOM AT SEVEN A.M. BECAUSE SHE DIDN'T FEEL LIKE SHE BELONGED IN EITHER ONE.


OH, NICK...
I CAN'T DO THIS ALONE, LAUREN. SHE NEEDS PEOPLE WHO KNEW HER BEFORE. PEOPLE SHE TRUSTS, EVEN IF SHE WON'T ADMIT IT. I'M NOT ASKING ANYONE TO FORCE HER INTO ANYTHING. JUST... GENTLE INVITATIONS. A FEW TRADITIONALLY GIRLY ACTIVITIES HERE AND THERE. LET HER TRY STUFF ON HER OWN TERMS AND SEE WHAT FITS. IF SHE HATES IT, FINE. BUT SHE NEEDS THE DOOR HELD OPEN BY PEOPLE SHE RESPECTS.
AND... YEAH, THAT'S THE OFFER. HELP ME HELP HER. YOU AND WHOEVER ELSE YOU TRUST.
OF COURSE I'LL HELP. I MEAN, HE BECAME A TERRIBLE BOYFRIEND. LIKE, GENUINELY AWFUL. THE CHEATING, THE EGO, THE WAY HE TREATED PEOPLE LIKE PROPS IN THE NICK PALMER SHOW. I SPENT SIX MONTHS IN THERAPY AFTER WE BROKE UP AND MOST OF IT WAS JUST ME YELLING INTO A PILLOW.


BUT LATELY... SOMETHING'S DIFFERENT. AT THE DRESS FITTING WITH HIS MOM, HE PICKED AN OUTFIT BECAUSE IT REMINDED HIM OF MARY'S PAGEANT DRESS. AND THEN LAST WEEK, HE APOLOGIZED TO ME. LIKE, ***REALLY*** APOLOGIZED. NO EXCUSES, NO "BUT YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THE PRESSURE I WAS UNDER." JUST - I WAS BAD AT THIS, YOU DESERVED BETTER.
HE SAID THAT?
SHE. RIGHT? ***SHE*** SAID THAT. ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD. AND IT WAS THE FIRST HONEST THING I'VE HEARD OUT OF NICK PALMER'S MOUTH SINCE WE WERE FIFTEEN.
SO YEAH, I'LL HELP. NOT FOR OLD NICK - THAT GUY CAN ROT. BUT WHOEVER NICKY IS BECOMING? SHE MIGHT ACTUALLY BE WORTH KNOWING. AND IF GENTLE GIRL STUFF IS WHAT SHE NEEDS TO FIGURE THAT OUT, I CAN DO GENTLE. EVIE CAN DO... WELL, EVIE CAN DO EVIE, WHICH IS THE OPPOSITE OF GENTLE, BUT IT WORKS SOMEHOW.


THANK YOU, LAUREN. SERIOUSLY.
DON'T THANK ME YET. NICKY'S THE MOST STUBBORN PERSON I'VE EVER MET, AND I ONCE ARGUED WITH A HORSE. THIS IS GOING TO BE A NIGHTMARE.
PROBABLY. BUT SHE'S WORTH IT.
YEAH. I'M STARTING TO THINK MAYBE SHE IS.
THERE YOU TWO ARE!


I'VE BEEN LOOKING EVERYWHERE! SORRY TO INTERRUPT CHEER-TALK, BUT I HAVE A BIG ANNOUNCEMENT! THE NICKY PALMER COMEBACK TOUR HAS ***OFFICIALLY*** BEGUN. I HAVE A DATE! FRIDAY NIGHT. WITH A HOT GIRL. A GIRL. EMPHASIS ON THE ***GIRL*** PART. WE'RE BACK, BABY!
UM... WHY ARE YOU BOTH LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT? OH NO. DID I MESS UP AGAIN? IS EVIE A... WHAT'S THE WORD... NON-GENDERED? PAN-NEUTRAL? ONE OF THOSE THINGS I DON'T KNOW THE NAME OF? OH, YEAH, AND IT'S EVIE.
SHE'S A GIRL, NICKY. YOU'RE FINE.
OH, THANK GOD. OKAY SO WHY THE FACES?
LAUREN?
YES, SANDY?
NO TAKE-BACKS.