



# HOMECOMING

EPISODE 23

God! That's...

Eleven. Lucky number.

Fuck! You're amazing. I've never felt anything like that before. You're like the Michael Jordan of escorts.

Uh, thanks, Victor. How about we take a break? You look like you could use some water. Or an IV drip.

Yeah, that'd be good. As it is, I won't be able to walk straight for a week. But damn, it was worth it. But instead of water, how about booze? The mini bar is fully stocked, after all. Let's make the most of it. On me!



You see this? This little miracle pill is why I'm still at attention. It's like I'm eighteen again.

I'm going to take this off now.

Yeah, please do. But hey, don't go far. I've got a feeling round two could be even better.

You're optimistic.

That's the secret to health, wealth, and happiness. If you expect bad things, that's all you'll see. Believe it or not, I grew up in Englewood. I was the only white kid in the neighborhood. My family was as poor as everyone else's, but my dad always said, 'Expect more from yourself and the world will rise to meet you.' I took that to heart. Look where it got me.

Getting pegged by a \$4,000 per night escort in a fancy hotel.

Hell, yeah! America, the land of opportunity, baby.





Victor, have you ever hurt a... a *girl* like me? I mean, in the heat of the moment, things can get out of hand. Ever crossed that line?



Never. I know how it must look—big guy like me, into what we just did. But I have rules. Boundaries. I love women, and I love when they take control. I want them to feel powerful, in charge. It's why I do this—it's an escape from who I have to be in the daylight. You get that, right?

W-Why do you ask? Do I seem like the type who would?



I need some air.

Hey, did I do something wrong?  
You seem... off.

No, Victor. You didn't do anything  
wrong. You're just... not what I  
expected.

Is that bad?

It's not you. Really. You've been...  
considerate. More than most would  
be. *Have been.*



Ever feel like you're caught in a current? Like no matter how hard you swim, it just pulls you deeper?

Yeah, I know what that's like, especially when I was a kid. Life can be suffocating sometimes.

It's more than that. It's this... sense of being ensnared. Every move you make just tangles you up tighter. And the worst part? You can *see* the surface. You can see where you need to be, but there's this invisible barrier, and every time you reach for it, it just pushes you back down.

That sounds... exhausting.

It is. And the thing about exhaustion—it wears down your will, bit by bit, until you start thinking maybe it'd be easier to just let go. To stop fighting and accept whatever fate has in store.



But you haven't given up yet, have you?

No. Not yet. But sometimes I wonder if there's any point in struggling at all.

There's always a point. You gotta keep fighting. Even when it seems hopeless. That's how winning is done.

Maybe. Or maybe some fights are lost before they even begin. I'm gonna go freshen up.



Hey, you've been taking care of me all night. I'm still ready to go, so... if you want, it's your turn for some pleasure. I'm an excellent lover, believe it or not.

How thoughtful of you. Maybe. I'll... I'll be back in a minute. Relax on the bed until then. Okay?

Well, here we are again. Where are you, anyway? You're just going to *disappear* and let this happen? Let me take him to her? You're all bark and no bite.

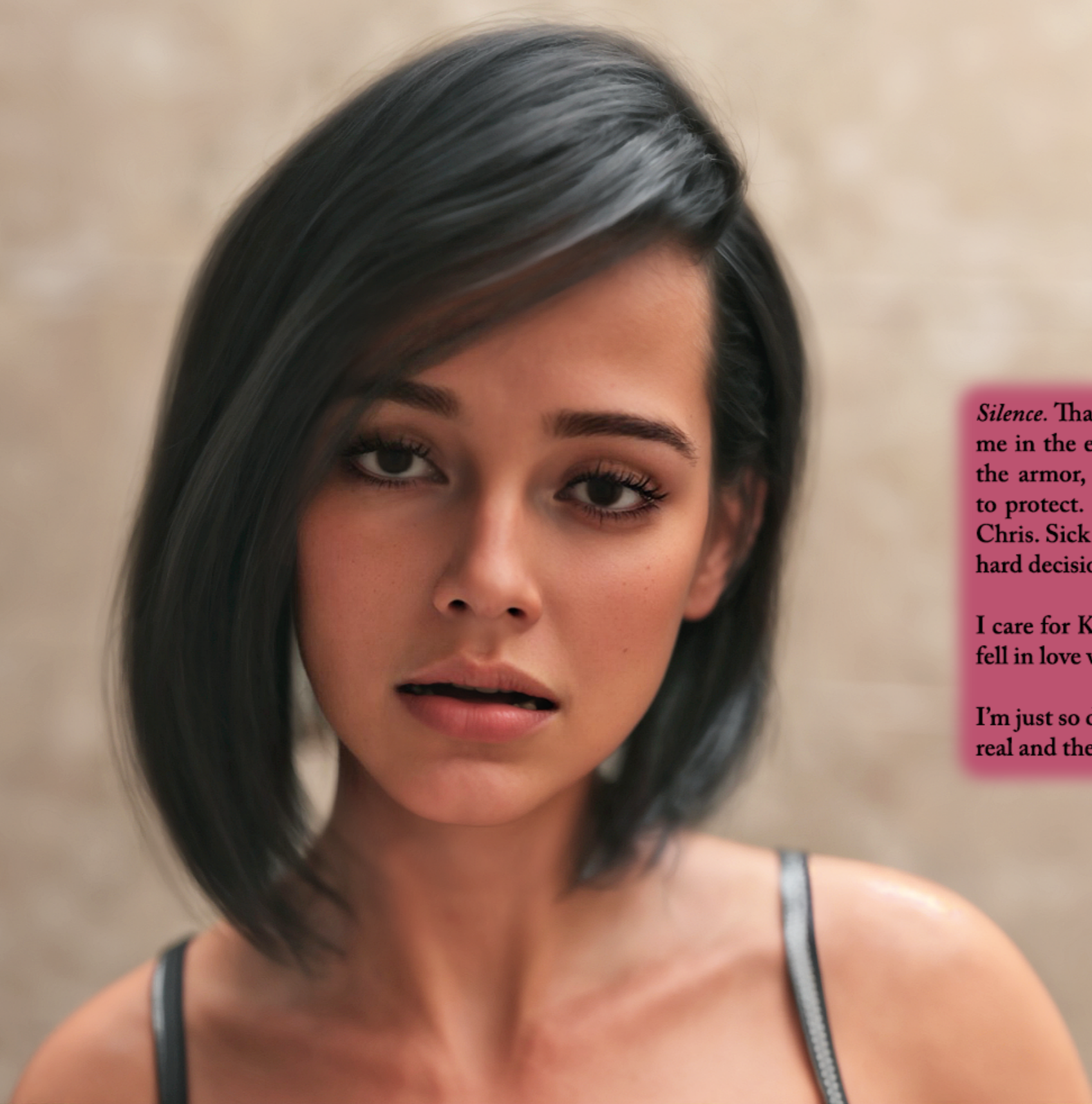
You think I don't know what you're thinking? That I should be strong enough to resist. That I should be *the hero*? Fuck you.

You know what your problem is, Chris? You're a coward. You couldn't handle the pain, so you made *me*. But the pain isn't really what you were afraid of. It was the *pleasure*. Not with most of them, of course. But with... with him. That's what *actually* made me come into being! You were ashamed about what you were feeling—so you chose not to feel at all. No pain, no pleasure, no hate, no love—nothing. Now, though? We're doing this because we have no choice. If it wasn't Victor it'd be someone else.





So come on then! If you've got something to say, now's the time! Because once I walk out of here... it's done. We're past the point of no return.



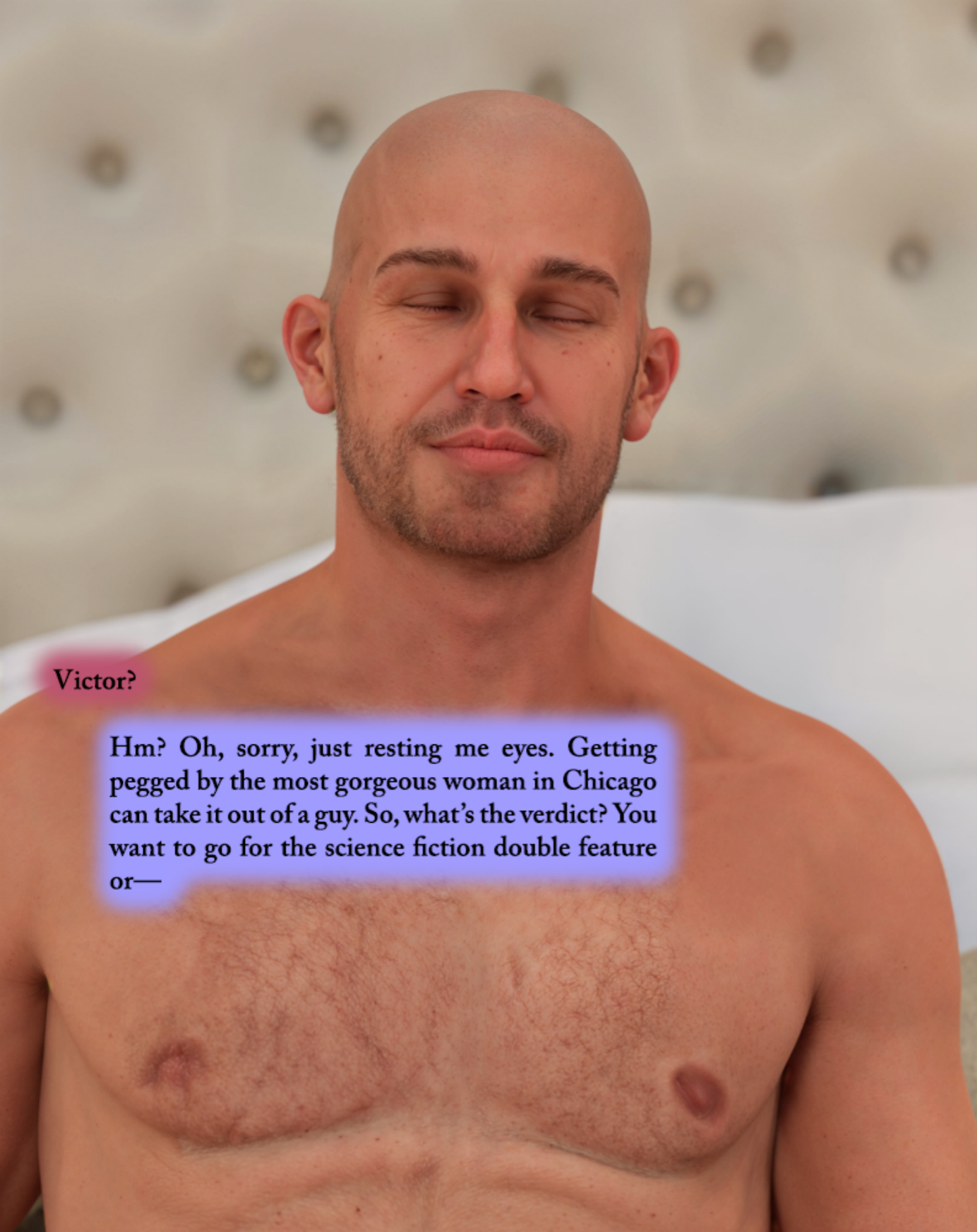
*Silence.* That's what I thought. It's always up to me in the end. Always my burden to bear. I'm the armor, and you're the heart I'm supposed to protect. But you know what? I'm sick of it, Chris. Sick of always being the one to make the hard decisions while you just... watch.

I care for Kayla, too. I will protect her. But *you* fell in love with her, not me.

I'm just so damn tired. Fuck you for making me real and then denying me my only joy.



Enough melodrama. Let's end this, for once and for all.



Victor?

Hm? Oh, sorry, just resting me eyes. Getting pegged by the most gorgeous woman in Chicago can take it out of a guy. So, what's the verdict? You want to go for the science fiction double feature or—



*What the fuck!?*




I... I'm so sorry. Remember to obey and be freed. It'll save you. This isn't the end.

What the hell does that mean? What are you doing with that gun?

Just... just close your eyes, okay? Please. This isn't you, this is me. It's something I have to do.

Put the gun down. We can talk about this. Whatever it is, we can figure it out.

There's nothing to figure out! I wish there were another way. But there isn't.



Listen carefully. I'm going to tell you what you need to know to survive. First, obey. Dignity is worthless. Just make it through the night and the next day and the day after that. You do what you're told, when you're told.

Who's making you do this? Is someone forcing you? I have connections! I can help get you out of this.



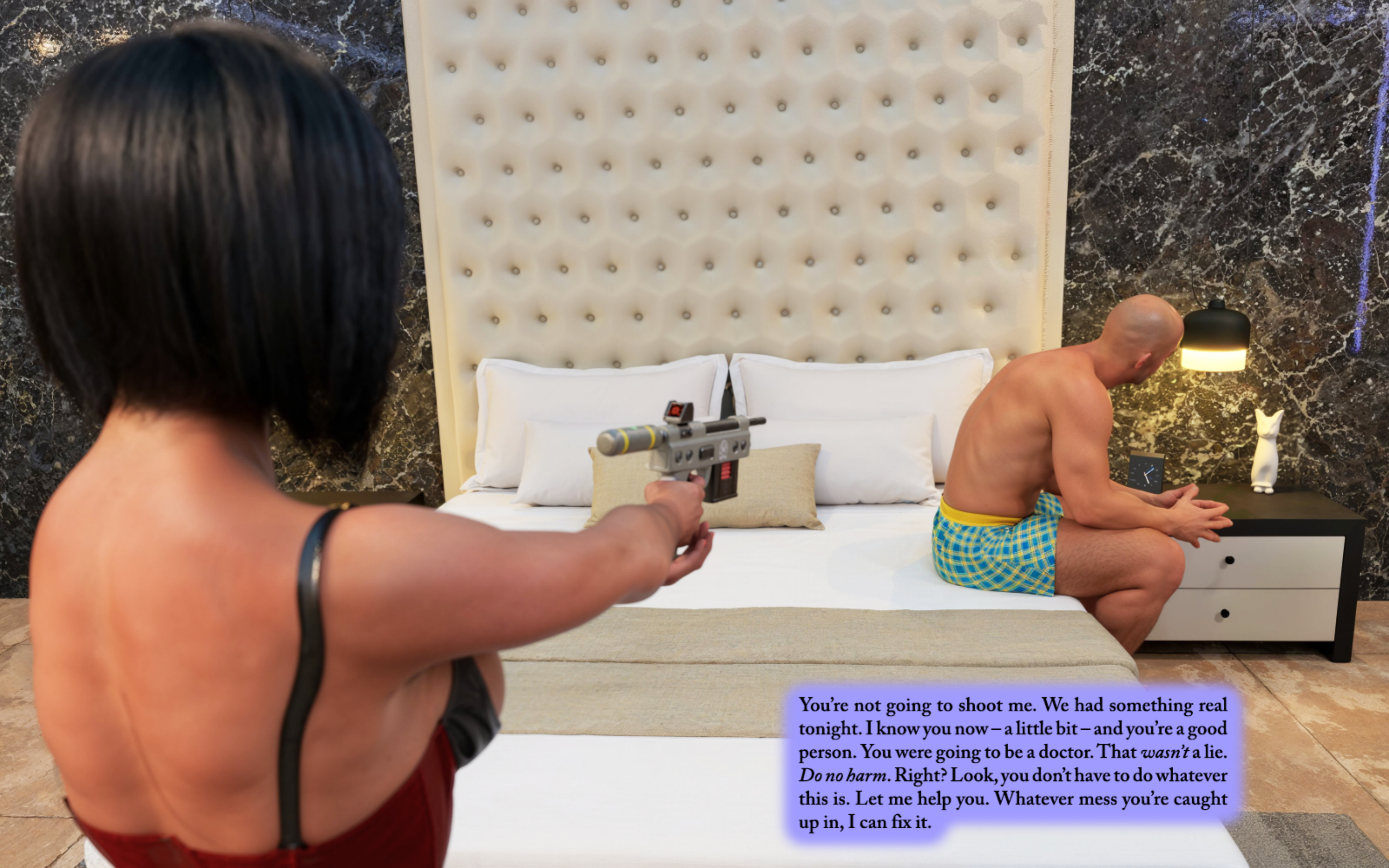
Second, be smart. *She'll* give you points for certain... services. The more intimate the act, the more points she awards. Keep track of them. They're your lifeline out of there.

Points? What are you talking about? Who is 'she'? Talk to me! We can go to the police right now!


Third, don't trust anyone. You may meet others like us there, but remember that everyone has their own agenda. Survival turns people into things they never thought they'd be.

This is insane! Someone's playing with your head! You don't have to do this. Let me help you fight them!

Fourth, find someone to hold onto—someone from before all of this. They'll keep you grounded when she tries to break you down. But know that once you get out, *if* you get out, the person you become won't fit into the life you had. Square pegs, round holes. Honestly, it's not even fair to try. They've moved on! When a fucking tornado obliterates a town, you don't just rebuild the same house with the same blueprints. You adapt. You change!



You're not going to shoot me. We had something real tonight. I know you now – a little bit – and you're a good person. You were going to be a doctor. That *wasn't* a lie. *Do no harm*. Right? Look, you don't have to do whatever this is. Let me help you. Whatever mess you're caught up in, I can fix it.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a red dress, is holding a silver handgun pointed directly at the camera. She has a tattoo on her left forearm and is wearing bright red nail polish. Her eyes are closed, and she has a determined expression. The background is a modern, well-lit living room with a white sofa, a round coffee table with a bottle and fruit, and a large crystal chandelier. The room features recessed ceiling lighting and white paneled walls.

Shut up! I... I have to do this.

No, you don't. Maybe you didn't have options before. But you do now.



Listen to me very carefully. I'm not just some guy you met in a bar. I have... let's call them resources. People who owe me favors—people who wouldn't blink at the idea of helping me settle a score. If there's someone out there making you do this, someone hurting you, forcing your hand, I swear on everything I hold dear that they'll regret ever crossing paths with you.

It's not that simple. You don't understand what you're getting into.

Oh, but I think I do. This world is small, and my reach is long. My business ventures have acquainted me with individuals from all walks of life. And some of those walks happen to be in darker alleys. What matters is you. You're in trouble, and I can help. You give me a name, a place, anything to go on, and this nightmare ends tonight. They think they're untouchable, but they bleed just like anyone else. And bleed they will if they've laid a finger on you.

Victor...

No more talking. Just tell me what I need to know. And then let me handle it. This ends tonight—





Fuck...



Okay, okay, okay. The Cunt gave me her number to call when the deed was done...



Yeah?


Hi. Um, it's Kris.



No shit. I have your caller ID. Did you do something I need to know about?

I, uh... I...

Don't stammer. I'm busy. Yes or no!

A woman with short dark hair, wearing a black and red corset-style bodysuit and a black bikini bottom, stands in a modern penthouse. She is holding a smartphone in her right hand and has a tattoo on her left arm. The background shows a panoramic view of a city at night with lights from buildings and streets. A white sofa and a brown armchair are visible in the room.

No. Fuck! I... I just wanted to let you know I'm, like, actively searching. It'll be soon, I promise.

What the hell? I don't need a fucking status report. Don't call me again until you have a pick-up ready. Bye, bitch!



So, I left. Victor would wake up in a few hours with a nasty headache and a hell of a story to tell the cops, if he dared.



But as I walked through the cold city, I realized before I made another move, I needed to recenter myself. I... I needed to go home. Home to the only person who ever really cared about *me*.

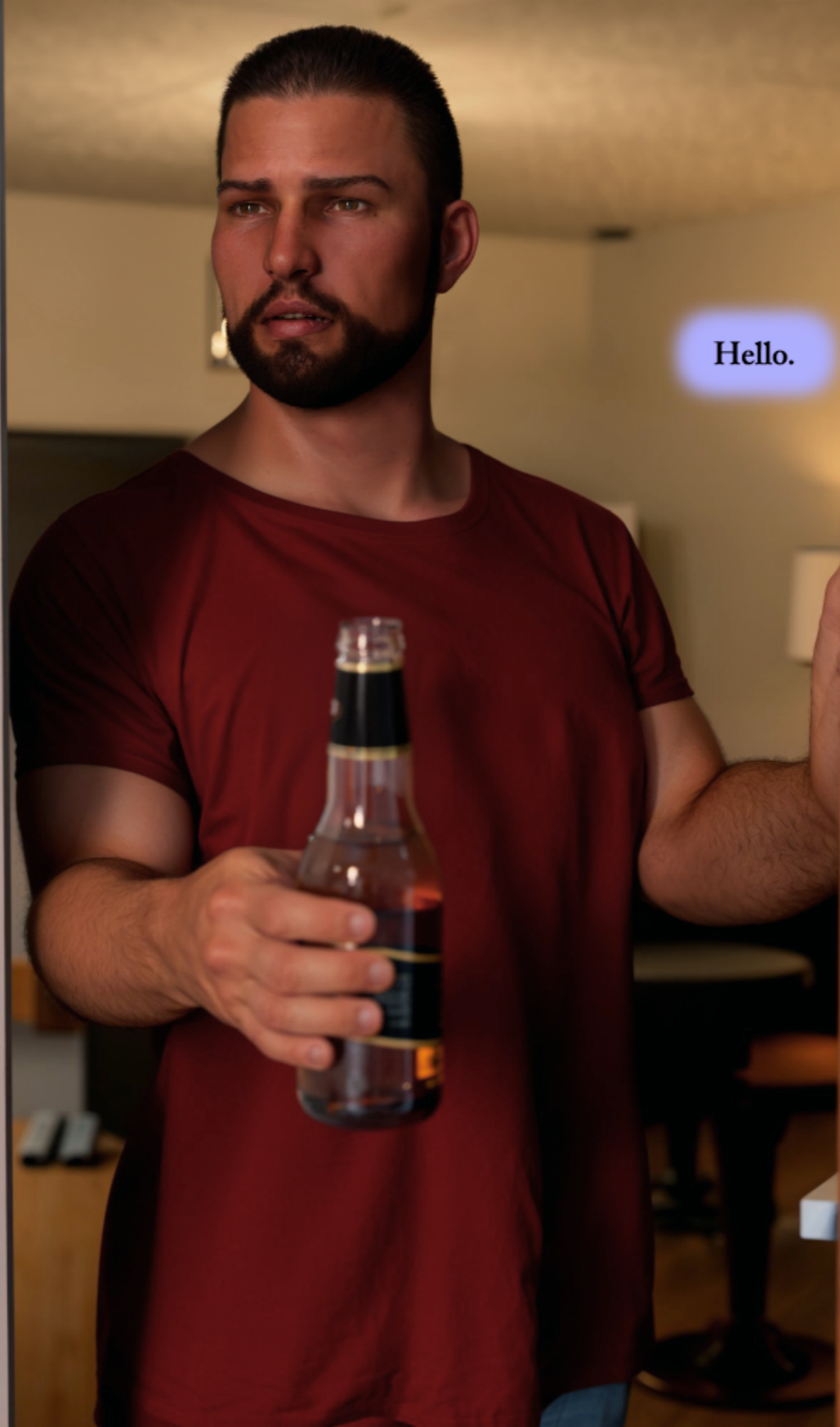
Back to you, Alan.

*Knock, knock, knock!*





1202



Hello.





I already know why you're here, Detective. It's about my fiancée.

Please, come inside.