

Forever Summer

Chapter 43

By Moonlly



AFTER THE SESSION ENDED...

CONGRATS ON TODAY'S
SESSION, GUYS. YOUR
PERFORMANCE WERE
OUTSTANDING!

T- THANK YOU,
AKIO-SAN... BUT
REALLY, I JUST DID
WHAT I-

YOU GOTTA HAND
IT TO THIS GIRL,
AKIO-KUN. SHE'S
REALLY SOMETHING
ELSE!

H- HUH?



SOOO~ AKIO-KUN.
DON'T YOU THINK
YOU FORGET
SOMETHING?

THIS GIRL NEEDS A
RAISE, MAN! THAT'S
YOUR JOB AS HER
MANAGER, RIGHT?

COME ON, DON'T BE
SHY, RIKA-CHAN. YOU
DESERVES THIS!

HUH? WHAT IS IT...?

E- EH? B- BUT...

I- IT'S NOT THAT BIG
OF A DEAL, YOU KNO-



H- HUH?

HAHA... M- MAYBE...

AH~ I GOT AN IDEA.
REMEMBER THAT FANCY
SHOPPING MALL
NEARBY?

YOU KNOW WHAT I'M
TALKING ABOUT. THE
ONE THAT HAS ALL OF
THE BRAND NAME STUFF.
YOU GIRLS LOVE THAT,
RIGHT?

IF HE DOESN'T GIVE YOU
A RAISE, HOW ABOUT I
TAKE YOU TO THAT FANCY
SHOPPING MALL INSTEAD?



W- WHAT?

LIGHH... T- THANKS
FOR YOUR GENEROSITY,
HAKUTO-SAN, B- BUT-

W- WELL, HAKU, YOU
SEE, I'M LIKE SUPER
BUSY THE WHOLE WEEK,
SO...

MAYBE I COULD GET YOU
A NICE BAG AS A GIFT,
YOU KNOW~ HAHA.

HAH, DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO
DROP THAT FORMAL CRAP
WHEN YOU SPEAK WITH ME?
AND REMEMBER, CALL ME
HAKU, ALRIGHT?

I SEE...





W- WELL, LIKE I TOLD YOU,
I'M PRETTY BUSY... S- SO
I DON'T THINK I NEED IT,
HAHA...

O- OH! GOSH, I FORGOT,
MY MOM IS WAITING FOR
ME. I- I HAVE TO GO NOW.

UHM, Y- YOU CAN HAVE
IT BACK, HAKU...KUN.
W- WELL, I'M GOING
NOW, B- BYE!

HMM...?

O- OH.

...



...

SIGH THERE SHE GOES...

AHEM SORRY TO BREAK IT TO YOU, BUT I THINK THIS IS FOR THE BEST, HAKUTO-KUN.



WELL. I THOUGHT I
WARNED YOU ABOUT HER
FAMILY AND WHO SHE IS.
IT'D BE THE BEST IF YOU
STOP MAKING CONTACT
WITH HER.

THEN IT'S ALL UP TO YOU,
I DON'T WANT TO GET IN-
VOLVE DEEPER THAN THIS.

HUH? WHAT DO YOU
KNOW? I WAS PUSHING
MY LUCK A BIT TOO
MUCH, THAT'S ALL.

THEN WHAT? DON'T TRY
TO SOUND SMART WITH
ME, AKIO. YOU DON'T EVEN
KNOW HOW TO MAKE A
GIRL TURNS.

HEH~ FINE! IF YOU
DON'T WANT TO HELP
ME LIKE OTHER TIMES,
I'LL DO IT MYSELF!

A man with dark hair, wearing a dark suit, stands with his back to the viewer, looking at a woman. The woman has short blonde hair, wears sunglasses, a dark red button-down shirt, and white pants. They are in a photography studio with large softboxes and equipment visible in the background.

AND DON'T GET
JEALOUS WHEN I
HAVE RIKA BY MY
SIDE, SMART BOY.

UGH...

AND LET ME
TELL YOU...

The woman from the previous panel is shown from the waist up, standing in the same photography studio. She is looking slightly to her right. A large softbox on a stand is visible to her left.

I WAS THIS CLOSE
TO MAKE THAT...
HAPPENS...

...

A man with short blonde hair, wearing a dark red button-down shirt, stands in a room with bookshelves. He has a thoughtful expression. Several speech bubbles are connected to him, containing his internal monologue. The background shows a room with bookshelves filled with books and a desk with a lamp.

GOD DAMN IT! AFTER ALL
THAT TRICKS I PULLED,
HOW DID SHE NOT EVEN
FALL FOR ME YET?!

I MEAN SHE KINDA DID,
BUT FOR SOME REASON I
DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY
THAT STUPID GIRL TURNED
ME DOWN LIKE THAT.

AND NOW AKIO IS
MAKING FUN OF ME
BECAUSE OF THAT!

THIS... THIS CAN'T BE
HAPPENING!
I... I JUST CAN'T LET
IT END LIKE THIS!

...

OH!

DIDN'T THAT OLD
LADY GAVE ME HER
NUMBER AWHILE AGO?
UGH, CAN'T BELIEVE I'M
DOING THIS...

LATER THAT NIGHT...





GOSH... I CAN'T
SLEEP AT ALL...

I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW
THESE THINGS JUST
KEEP HAPPENING...

UGH, I DON'T EVEN
KNOW WHERE TO
START...

BUT NOTHING CAME CLOSE
TO WHAT HAPPENED AT THE
STUDIO TODAY...

I KNOW MOM TOLD ME
IT WAS A PART OF MY
JOB...

BUT I CAN'T HELP THINKING
THAT HAKUTO-SAN DID IT
ON PURPOSE!



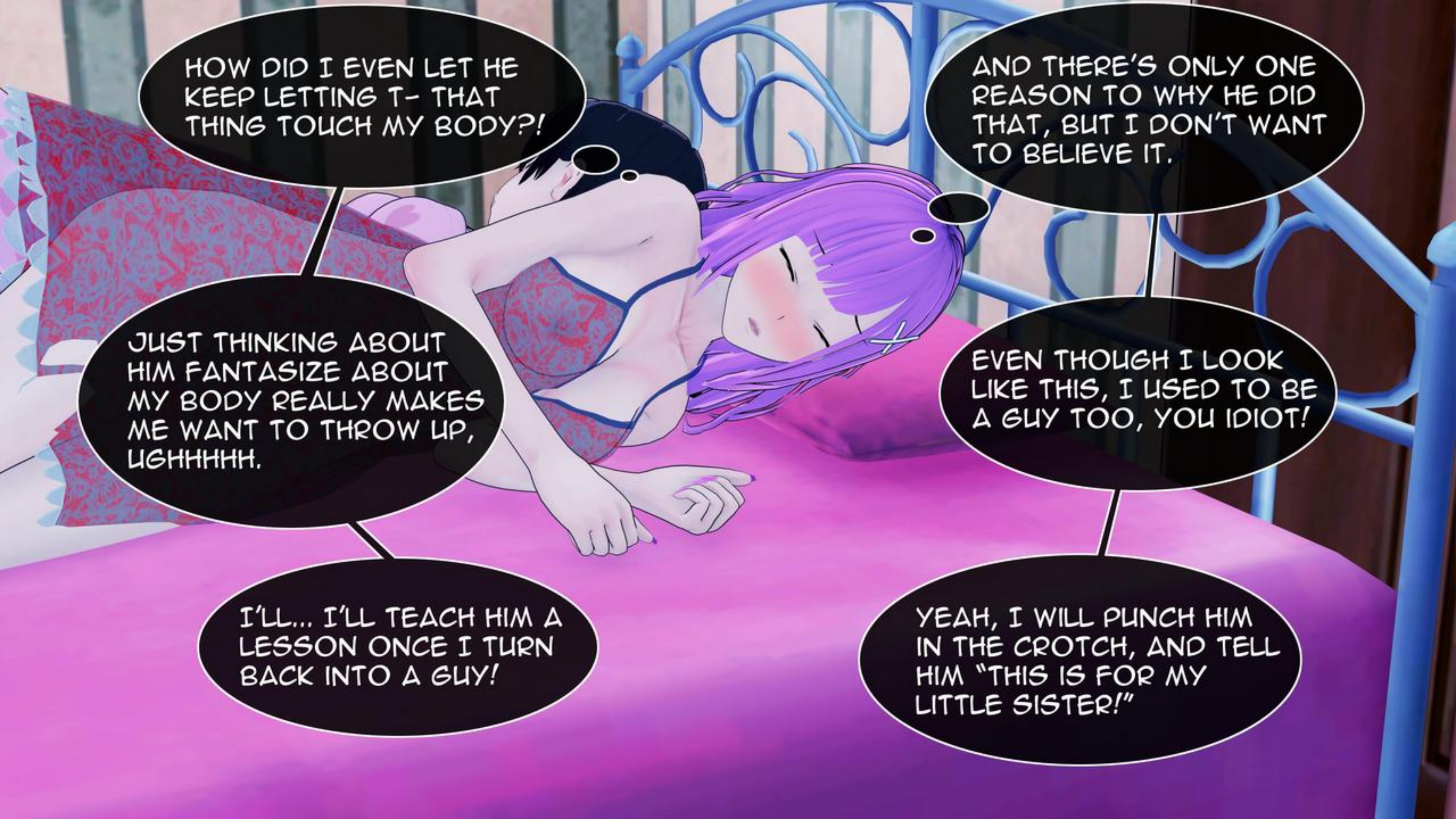
GOSH... THE WAY HE
MOVED HIS HANDS
ONTO MY BODY...

LIGHHH, I- IT JUST FELT
SO WEIRD TO BE TOUCHED
BY A GUY LIKE THAT!

I DON'T KNOW HOW
BUT WHEN HE DID THAT
I FELT SO WEAK...
I JUST COULDN'T DO
ANYTHING!

NOW I THINK ABOUT IT,
WHY COULDN'T I JUST
PUNCH HIM IN THE
FACE?!

BUT WORST OF ALL...



HOW DID I EVEN LET HE
KEEP LETTING T- THAT
THING TOUCH MY BODY?!

AND THERE'S ONLY ONE
REASON TO WHY HE DID
THAT, BUT I DON'T WANT
TO BELIEVE IT.

JUST THINKING ABOUT
HIM FANTASIZE ABOUT
MY BODY REALLY MAKES
ME WANT TO THROW UP,
UGHHHHH.

EVEN THOUGH I LOOK
LIKE THIS, I USED TO BE
A GUY TOO, YOU IDIOT!

I'LL... I'LL TEACH HIM A
LESSON ONCE I TURN
BACK INTO A GUY!

YEAH, I WILL PUNCH HIM
IN THE CROTCH, AND TELL
HIM "THIS IS FOR MY
LITTLE SISTER!"



SIGH AT LEAST
THAT'S WHAT I CAN
THINK OF...

YAWN I WONDER...
IF ALL GUYS ARE
REALLY LIKE THIS...

THEY'RE LIKE...

....

SOOO STUPID
SOMETIMES...

zzzz...

zzzzzz

AND THE WEEK WENT
ON LIKE NORMAL...

R- R- RIKA-CHAN! I
GOT TWO MOVIE
TICKETS ON SATURDAY!

THANKS! <3 BUT AWW, I
HAVE TO WORK ON THAT
DAY~ SO DO YOUR BEST
TO ASK SOMEONE ELSE,
'KAY?

O- OKAY...

GOSH, IT'S SCARY
HOW FAST YOU'RE
GETTING GOOD AT
THIS~

R- REALLY? BUT I
MEAN THIS IS NORMAL
FOR ME, RIGHT?

ON THE OTHER HAND...

COME ON, AKIO-KUN,
JUST GIVE ME ONE
MORE CHANCE!

I JUST WANT
RIKA-CHAN'S PHONE
NUMBER, I REALLY
WANT TO TALK-

I TOLD YOU, HAKUTO-KUN.
I WON'T GET INVOLVE WITH
THIS GAME ANYMORE.

AND DON'T CALL ME
AGAIN, OKAY? I'M
WORKING HERE.

DISCONNECTED

SIGH SO THIS IS WHAT I
GET WHEN I HELP A GUY
LIKE HIM...

IT'S ALL MY FAULT, BUT
HOLY... I CAN'T BELIEVE
HE IS STILL TRYING TO
GET INVOLVE WITH
RIKA-CHAN...

IS THIS AIKO-SAN'S
DOING? I DON'T REALLY
KNOW.

SIGH I GUESS THIS IS WHY PEOPLE SAYING KARMA IS REA-

BUT WHAT I KNOW IS I SHOULD BE ON VACATION, BUT HERE I AM!



RING

RING

SERIOUSLY,
HAKUTO?!

GOD, I'M SO TIRED
OF DOING THIS. IT'S
TIME END IT.

HAKUTO, I HATE
TO SAY THIS, BUT
IF YOU WON'T
STOP CALLING ME,
THEN-

HELLO

30 MINUTES LATER...

AND THAT'S ALL, MA'AM.

YES... OH, AND ONE MORE THING, THIS GUY'S NAMED KAZUMA.

ALRIGHT, I'M GOING NOW, GOOD BYE.

AH... SO YOU GOT A CALL FROM UNKNOWN NUMBER ASKING FOR A PINK-HAIRED GIRL?

AH, I SEE~ THANKS A LOT, AKIO-KUN.

BYE BYE~

DISCONNECTED



KAZUMA... I WONDER
WHERE I HEARD THAT
NAME BEFORE...

AH...RIGHT... RIKA-CHAN
MENTIONED HIM ONCE.

HE MUST BE HER
FATHER'S RIGHT
HAND MAN.

WELL, LOOKS LIKE THEY FOUND
OUT ABOUT AKIO-KUN NOW,
WHICH MEANS THERE'S NOT
MUCH TIME LEFT UNTIL THEY
FIND OUT ABOUT RIKA-CHAN.

HUHU, I COULDN'T ASK
THEM FOR A BETTER
TIMING THAN THIS.

LOOKS LIKE IT'S TIME FOR
US TO MAKE SOME MOVES,
RIKA-CHAN.



ALRIGHT, EVERYTHING
SHOULD BE READY
BEFORE SUNDAY.

LET'S START WITH
HIM THEN...

SEEMS LIKE HE'S SO
DESPERATE TO GET A
HOLD OF RIKA, HUHU.

THIS WILL BE A PIECE
OF CAKE~

GIRLS, I'LL LEAVE MY CUP
HERE, OKAY? I HAVE TO
GO NOW.

DON'T WORRY,
AIKO-SAN. WE'LL TAKE
CARE OF IT FOR YOU!

THAT NIGHT...

DOOR CLOSED

EVEN THOUGH I'VE BEEN TO EVERY BAR IN THIS TOWN, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE HEARD ABOUT THIS BAR... WEIRD.

HMM... SO IT'S REALLY TRUE. THERE'S A BAR AROUND HERE.

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M THIS DESPERATE TO SEEK FOR A HELP LIKE THIS. THIS GOTTA BE WORTH IT.





BUT DAMN... I CAN'T BELIEVE
THAT OLD LADY KNOWS
ABOUT THIS PLACE.

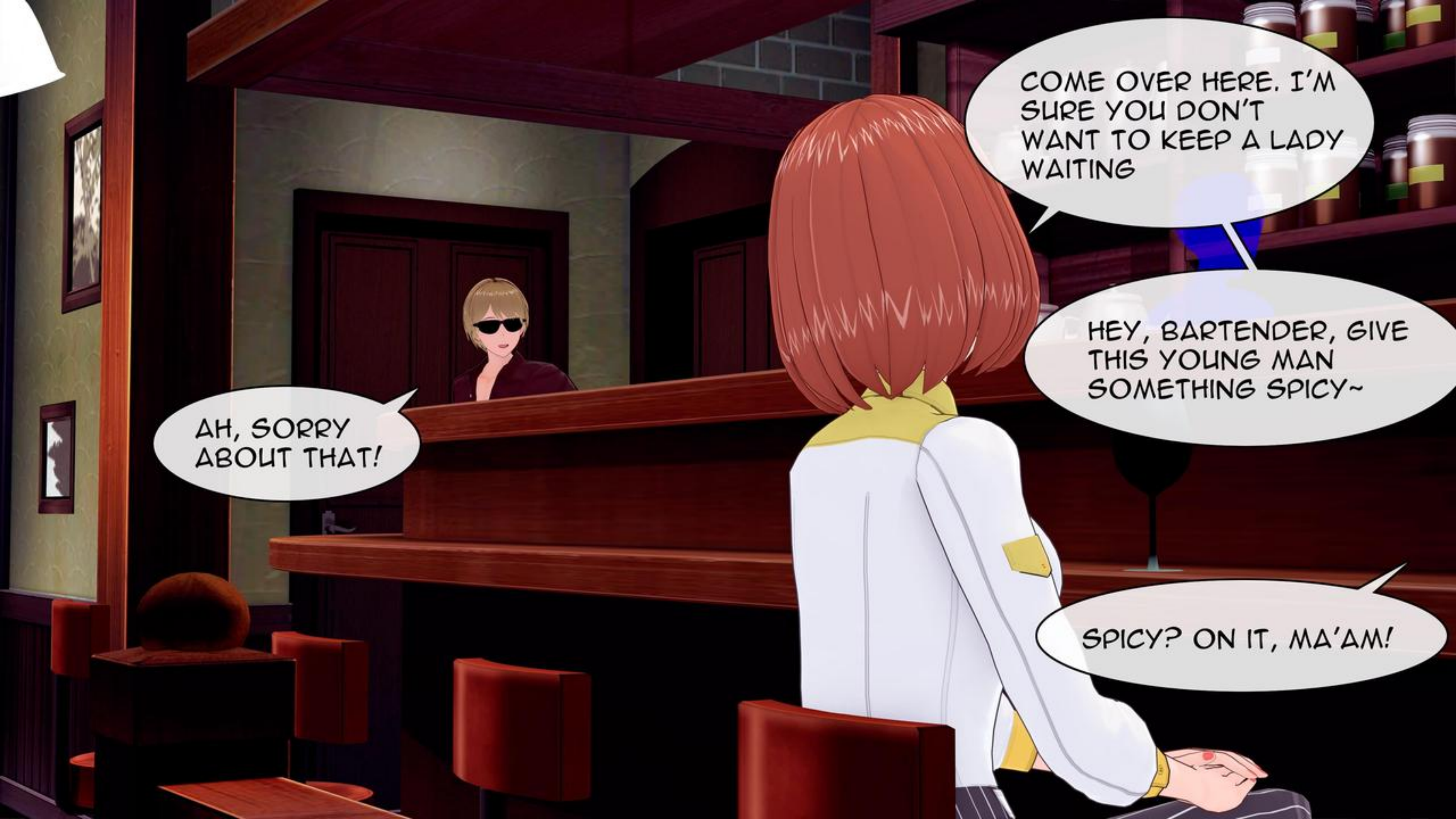
BUT WELL, HERE WE
ARE I GUESS.

HAKUTO-SAN, OVER HERE.

SHE DOESN'T SEEM LIKE THE
ONE WHO FREQUENTS A
PLACE LIKE THIS.

NOW WHERE'S SHE-

HMM?



COME OVER HERE. I'M
SURE YOU DON'T
WANT TO KEEP A LADY
WAITING

HEY, BARTENDER, GIVE
THIS YOUNG MAN
SOMETHING SPICY~

AH, SORRY
ABOUT THAT!

SPICY? ON IT, MA'AM!

THEN IT'S ANOTHER SATURDAY...

ANNNND,
THIS WILL DO~

FLASH

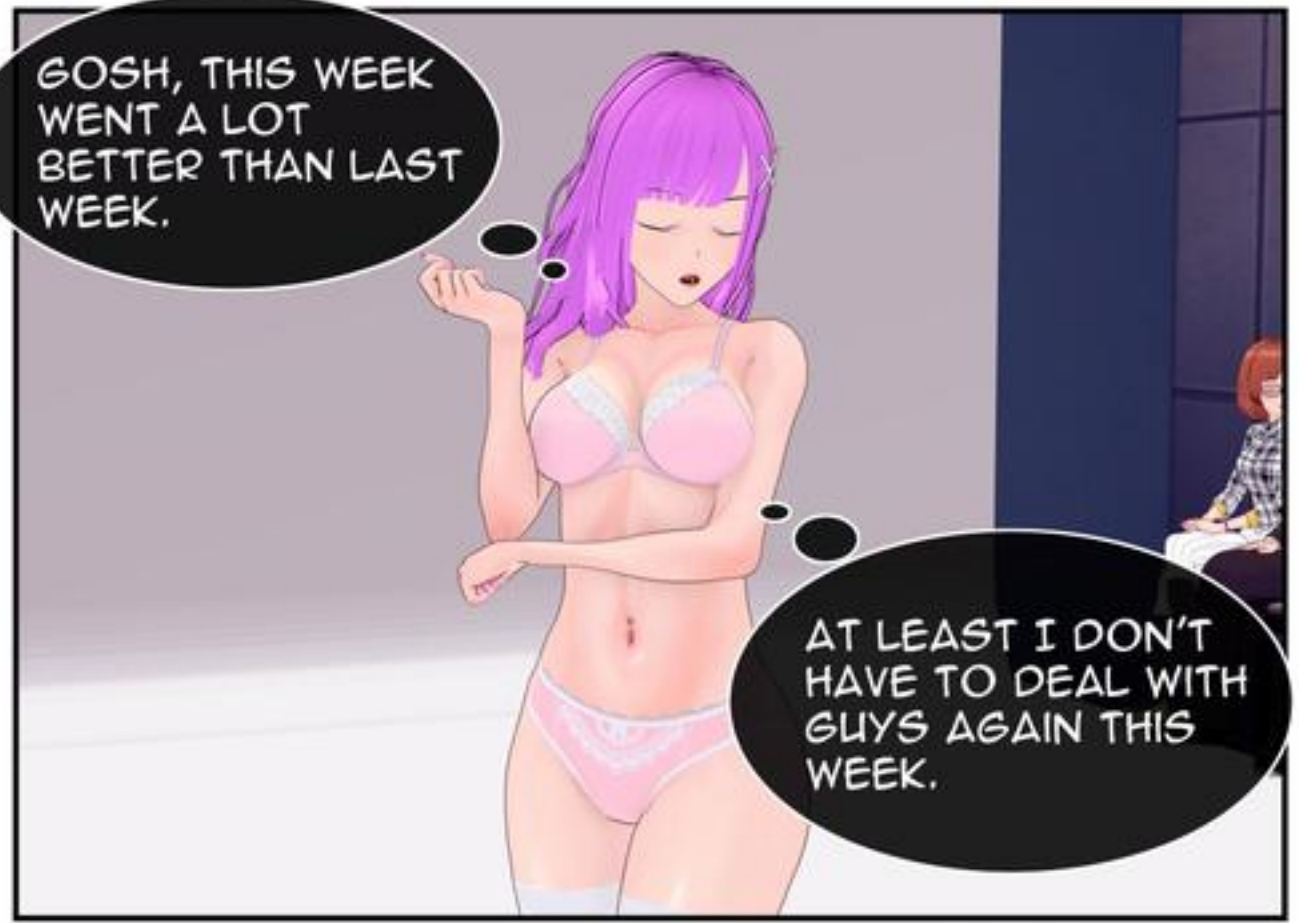
HEH, A PIECE OF
CAKE~

GREAT WORK TODAY
RIKA-CHAN!

ALRIGHT, WE WILL TAKE A
BREAK FOR 10 MINUTES.
SEE YOU THEN.

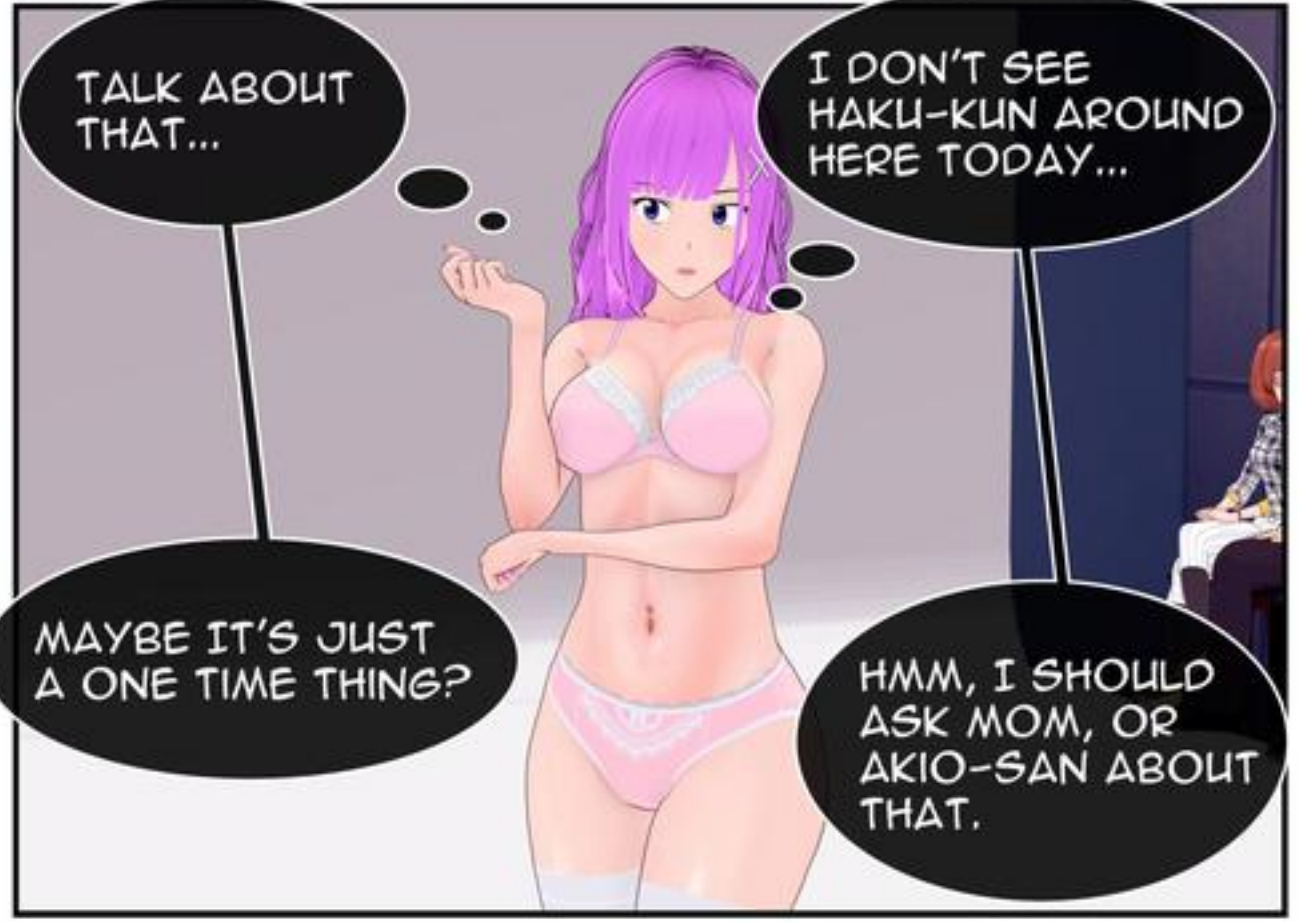
Illusion-TV

Illusion-TV

A woman with long, wavy purple hair and bangs is shown from the waist up, wearing a pink two-piece bikini. She has her eyes closed and a slightly pensive expression, with her right hand raised near her face. The background is a simple grey wall. In the upper right corner, a small portion of another person with red hair is visible, sitting at a table.

GOSH, THIS WEEK
WENT A LOT
BETTER THAN LAST
WEEK.

AT LEAST I DON'T
HAVE TO DEAL WITH
GUYS AGAIN THIS
WEEK.

The same woman with purple hair is shown in the same pose, but now with her eyes open and a more thoughtful expression. Her right hand is still raised near her face. The background and the small red-haired person in the corner remain the same.

TALK ABOUT
THAT...

I DON'T SEE
HAKU-KUN AROUND
HERE TODAY...

MAYBE IT'S JUST
A ONE TIME THING?

HMM, I SHOULD
ASK MOM, OR
AKIO-SAN ABOUT
THAT.

A MOMENT LATER...

DOOR CLOSED

SO~ HOW WAS MY GIRL
HOLDING UP TODAY?

UHM, NOT BAD I GUESS.
THE CAMERA GUY SEEMED
TO LOVE IT.

I SEE~ AS EXPECTED OF
RIKA-CHAN, HUHU.

HAHA... UHM, MOM, D- DID
YOU SEE HAKUTO-KUN
AROUND HERE TODAY?





OH MY~ HOW BOLD OF YOU. NOW YOU ASK YOUR MOTHER ABOUT ANOTHER BOY?

BLUSH

W- WHAT?? C- COME ON, YOU KNOW I DIDN'T MEAN IT THAT WAY!

HUHU, WHATEVER YOU MEANT, HE'S NOT HERE TODAY.

O- OH... SO, WHAT I DID LAST TIME WAS ACTUALLY A ONE TIME THING?

AS FAR AS I CONCERNED, YES.



O- OKAY... WELL, I
HOPE THAT'S THE CASE.

YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW
EMBARRASSING IT WAS
FOR ME, MOM.

HMM? REALLY? BUT I
SAW YOU HAPPILY
SMILED WHILE LETTING
HIM TOUCH YOUR-

T- THAT'S BECAUSE I
WAS WORKING! THERE'S
NO WAY IN HELL, I'LL LET
A GUY DO SOMETHING
LIKE THAT EVER AGAIN!!

BUT AT LEAST NOW
YOU KNOW HOW
GUYS REACT WHEN
THEY ARE WITH YOU,
RIGHT?

UGHHHHH, T-
THAT'S...



THERE'S NO DENYING IT NOW, RIKA-CHAN. I MEAN JUST LOOK AT HAKUT-

HEHE, ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT. I'M JUST HELPING YOU OUT, THAT'S ALL~

HUHU, I THINK SHE'S MORE THAN READY. WELL, I GUESS IT'S TIME THEN.

GOSH! C- CAN YOU JUST STOP TALKING ABOUT THIS, MOM?! P- PLEASE!!

L- LOOK! THE SESSION WILL RESUME SOON, AND I STILL HAVEN'T FINISHED FIXING MY MAKEUP. I- I GOTTA HURRY!

LATER THAT DAY...

ΔΗΗΗΗΗΗΗΗΗΗΗΗ~

FINALLY, THE WEEK IS OVER~

AND, OF COURSE, TOMORROW WILL BE MY FAVOURITE DAY OF THE WEEK, LIKE USUAL.

I REALLY CAN'T WAIT TO GET MASSAGED BY AYANO-SAN AGAIN...

GOSH, ONCE A WEEK AT THE BEAUTY SALON IS JUST NOT ENOUGH FOR ME!





MAYBE IF I ASK MOM
NICELY... HEHE~

ALRIGHT, I SHOULD
TAKE A BATH AND
GET READY FOR AIRI-

RIKA-CHAN, YOU
ARE FREE AFTER
THIS, RIGHT?



YES? I'M FREE
UNTIL AIRI-CHAN
ARRIVES.

OH, AIRI-CHAN WON'T
BE COMING TODAY.



R- REALLY? WHY
DIDN'T SHE TELL ME
ANYTHING?

A- AH... I SEE.

SOMETHING... REALLY
IMPORTANT?

OH, I TOLD HER TO
STAY THERE LONGER
AND HELP OUT NEW
GIRLS.

NEVERMIND THAT, I
HAVE SOMETHING
REALLY IMPORTANT
TO TALK WITH YOU.

YEP, LET'S HAVE A SEAT
FIRST, THIS IS GONNA
TAKE A WHILE.

A MOMENT LATER...

W- WHAT?! W- WHY
DIDN'T YOU TELL ME
SOONER?!

UGH... I SEE... SO,
KAZUMA-SAN ALREADY
FOUND OUT ABOUT ME...

EVERYTHING?!
Y- YOU MEAN...

I'M SORRY, RIKA-CHAN. I
WAS WAITING UNTIL THE
RIGHT MOMENT. YOU SEE, I
DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU
ALL SAD AND WORRIED,
OKAY?

NOT YET, BUT SOON
HE'LL FIND OUT ABOUT
EVERYTHING IF WE DON'T
DO SOMETHING.



T- THERE'S NO WAY! IF THAT HAPPENS, I'M DONE FOR! I CAN'T LET HIM OR DAD KNOWS ABOUT THIS, MOM!

P- PLEASE TELL ME IT'S READY!

YEP, I'M AFRAID HE MIGHT FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR TRUE IDENTITY TOO.

I KNOW, I KNOW. THAT'S WHY I TOOK MY TIME TO PREPARE A PLAN, REMEMBER?

WELL, THERE'S GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS, WHICH ONE DO YOU WANT TO HEAR FIRST?



UGH, O- OF COURSE, I
WANT TO HEAR THE
GOOD NEWS FIRST!

OH, THANKS GOD!!!
AND WHAT ABOUT
THE BAD NEWS??

E- EH...?
W- WHAT...
WHAT ARE YOU
SAYING, MOM?!

ALRIGHT, THE GOOD
NEWS IS MY PLAN IS
READY.

WELL, THE BAD NEWS IS
WE CAN'T STOP THIS
FROM HAPPENING.

SEEMS LIKE YOUR FATHER
IS REALLY SERIOUS ABOUT
GETTING YOU WITH RAKU.



HE ALREADY HAD HIS
PEOPLE EVERYWHERE,
LOOKING FOR YOU.
INCLUDING YOUR
"KAZUMA-SAN"

DISAPPEAR? HOW? YOUR
DAD IS NOT STUPID.
HE'LL FIND OUT ABOUT IT
SOONER OR LATER.

HMM? WHEN DID I
SAY THIS IS THE END
FOR YOU?

UGH, T- THEN CAN'T
WE JUST LIKE, MAKE
RIKA DISAPPEAR??

UGH, I CAN'T BELIEVE
IT! IS THIS HOW THIS
ENDS? EVERYTHING I
WORKED FOR...IS FOR
NOTHING...

H- HUH?



IN FACT, THIS IS JUST
THE BEGINNING OF
HOW YOU WILL GET
OUT OF THIS!

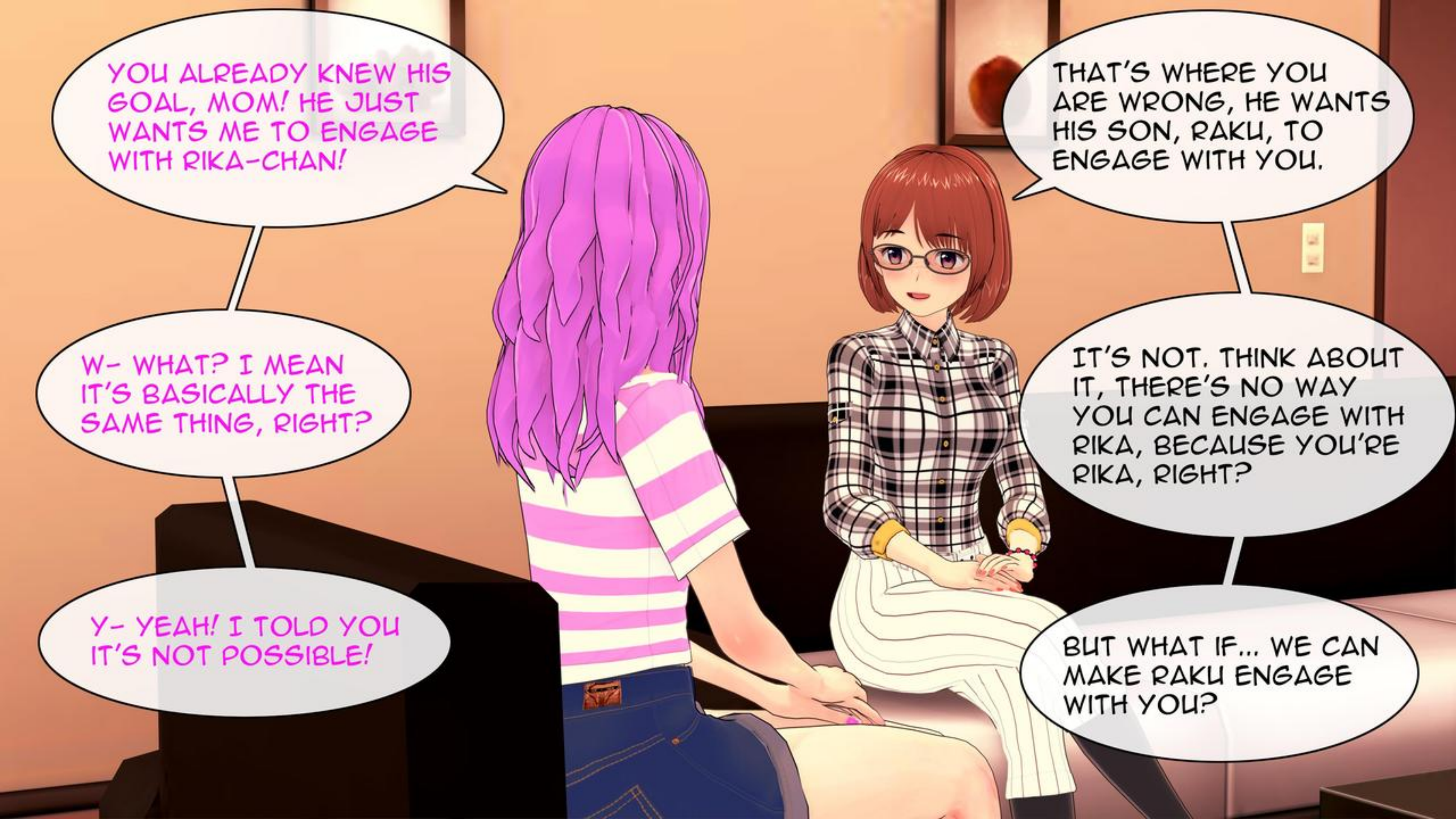
WE CAN'T PREVENT IT
FROM HAPPENING?
OH, THAT'S TRUE. WHAT
ABOUT IT?

IT'S ACTUALLY QUITE
EASY. WE JUST HAVE TO
GIVE HIM WHAT HE'S
LOOKING FOR, RIGHT?

W- WHAT?? BUT
JUST A SECOND
AGO YOU SAID...

H- HUH?
I'M CONFUSED.

WHAT'S HE LOOKING
FOR...? B- BUT
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!



YOU ALREADY KNEW HIS
GOAL, MOM! HE JUST
WANTS ME TO ENGAGE
WITH RIKA-CHAN!

THAT'S WHERE YOU
ARE WRONG, HE WANTS
HIS SON, RAKU, TO
ENGAGE WITH YOU.

W- WHAT? I MEAN
IT'S BASICALLY THE
SAME THING, RIGHT?

IT'S NOT. THINK ABOUT
IT, THERE'S NO WAY
YOU CAN ENGAGE WITH
RIKA, BECAUSE YOU'RE
RIKA, RIGHT?

Y- YEAH! I TOLD YOU
IT'S NOT POSSIBLE!

BUT WHAT IF... WE CAN
MAKE RAKU ENGAGE
WITH YOU?



R- RAKU ENGAGE WITH ME....? Y- YOU'RE NOT MAKING ANY SENSE, MOM...

I'M RIKA-CHAN....? THEN WHAT ABOUT RAKU....?

?!
D- DON'T TELL ME...

WELL, IT WILL MAKES SENSE ONCE YOU STOP THINKING THAT YOU'RE BOTH RAKU AND RIKA. YOU'RE THE ONE AND ONLY, RIKA-CHAN RIGHT NOW!

WELL, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT THAT?

YEP, WE JUST NEED TO FIND RAKU FOR YOU, AND THAT'S IT!



Y- YOU CAN'T BE
SERIOUS, MOM!!

L- LET BE REALISTIC,
MOM! THERE'S NO WAY
WE CAN FIND SOMEONE
WHO LOOKS LIKE ME-
UGH, I MEAN LIKE RAKU!

H- HUH... ...?
W- WHAT???

I'M AFRAID I'M REALLY
SERIOUS, RIKA-CHAN.

WHAT IF I TELL YOU I
ALREADY FOUND
SOMEONE WHO
LOOKS "EXACTLY" LIKE
RAKU?

LET ME SHOW YOU
SOMETHING THEN.



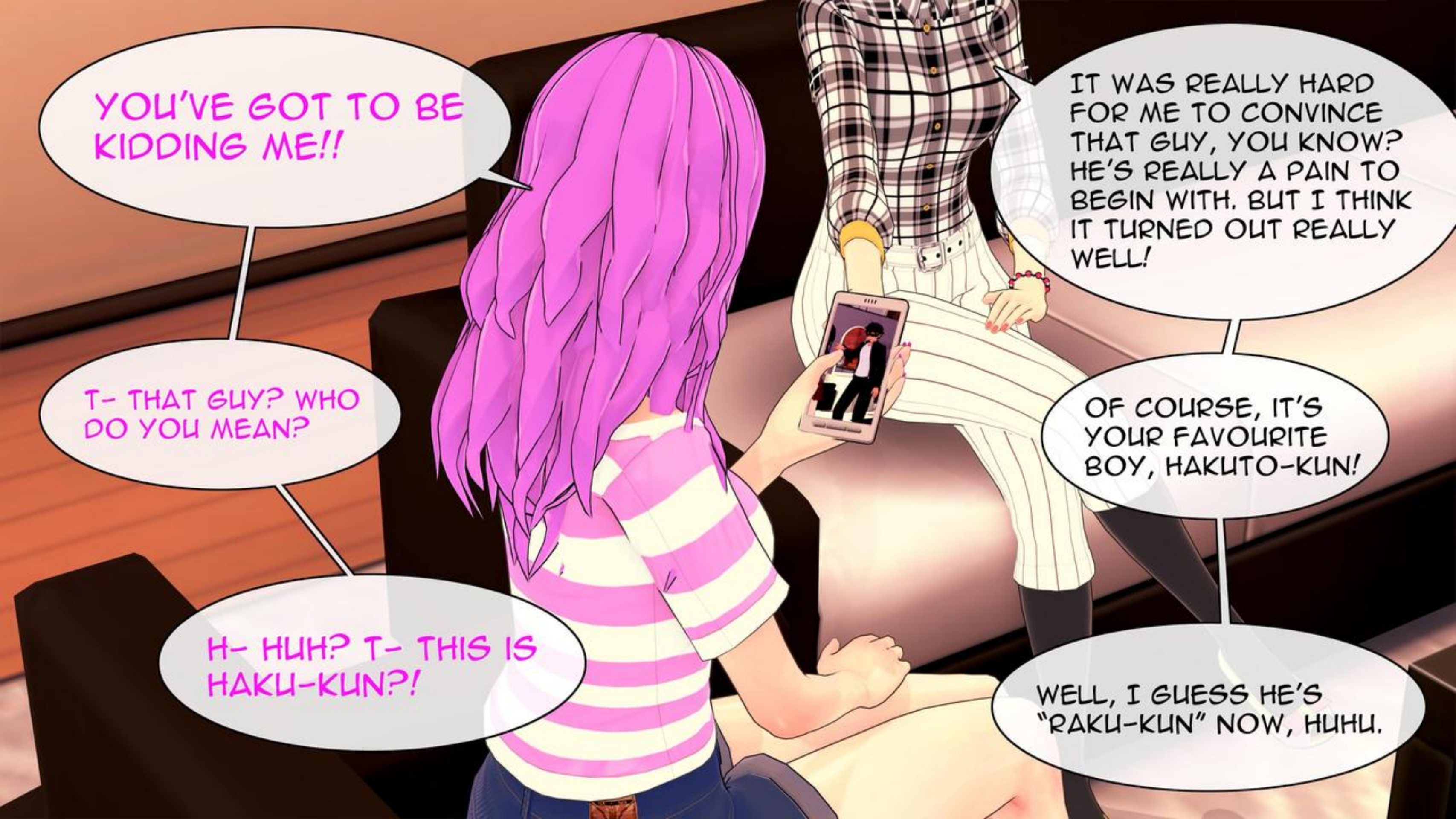
HMM? WHAT IS THIS?

WHOOOPS, THAT'S YOUR
PICTURE FROM TODAY'S
SESSION. JUST SLIDE TO
THE LEFT AND FIND YES-
TERDAY'S PICTURES.

O- OKAY....?

OH, THAT'S IT~
TAKE A LOOK!

...
T- THERE'S NO WAY
THIS IS...



YOU'VE GOT TO BE
KIDDING ME!!

T- THAT GUY? WHO
DO YOU MEAN?

H- HUH? T- THIS IS
HAKU-KUN?!

IT WAS REALLY HARD
FOR ME TO CONVINCE
THAT GUY, YOU KNOW?
HE'S REALLY A PAIN TO
BEGIN WITH. BUT I THINK
IT TURNED OUT REALLY
WELL!

OF COURSE, IT'S
YOUR FAVOURITE
BOY, HAKUTO-KUN!

WELL, I GUESS HE'S
"RAKU-KUN" NOW, HUH.



T- THIS IS MADNESS!
W- WE CAN'T DO THIS,
MOM!!

B- B- BUT MOM! THIS IS
NOT RIGHT! W- WE CAN'T
HAVE A GUY LIKE HAKU-KUN
WALKING AROUND LIKE
THAT!

T- THAT'S...
B- BUT STILL!

HMM? WHAT DO YOU
MEAN "WE CAN'T DO
THIS"? OF COURSE WE
CAN, AND WE WILL.

OH, THAT WAS JUST A
TEST. AFTER THAT
MAKE OVER, HE
CHANGED BACK TO
HIS NORMAL LOOK.

RIKA-CHAN, YOU HAVE
TO CALM DOWN. THIS
IS JUST THE FIRST
STEP.



F- FIRST STEP....? YOU
MEAN THERE'S MORE....?!

UGH... T- THAT'S...

H- HUH....? WHAT?
I DON'T GET IT...

OF COURSE! THERE'S NO
WAY JUST HAVING "RAKU"
WALKING AROUND IS
ENOUGH, RIGHT?

AND YOU KNOW, THIS
IS NOT JUST THE
APPEARANCE. THE GUY
IN THE PICTURE IS
REALLY RAKU-KUN!

AND DO YOU THINK
HAKUTO WOULD DO
SOMETHING LIKE
THIS UNDER NORMAL
CIRCUMSTANCES?



T- THAT'S ANOTHER THING
I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
HOW CAN YOU GET HIM TO
DO THIS....?

WELL, THEN LET ME
TELL YOU ABOUT
WHAT HAPPENED LAST
WEEK THEN.

UGH... I DON'T LIKE
THE SOUND OF THAT.

AFTER AKIO-KUN TOLD
ME ABOUT KAZUMA-SAN,
I WAS REALLY WORRIED
ABOUT OUR SITUATION. IT
WAS EARLIER THAN I EX-
PECTED, SO I HAVE TO
CHANGE OUR PLAN A
LITTLE BIT. YOU SEE...

THREE DAYS EARLIER...



DAMNNNNN! THIS IS SOME FINEST BEER I'VE HAD IN A WHILE! THIS BAR REALLY KNOWS THEIR STUFF!

HAHA, I SEE. WELL, YOU ALREADY KNEW MY NAME, BUT I NEVER KNOW YOURS. YOU'RE RIKA-CHAN'S AUNT, RIGHT?

HUHU, I KNOW, RIGHT? THAT'S WHY I OFTEN COME HERE TO RELAX.

YES, YOU CAN CALL ME, "AUNTY". I DON'T MIND.

A man with short blonde hair, wearing a dark red jacket, sits at a wooden bar with his back to the viewer. A woman with short red hair, wearing a white top and a grey skirt with white stripes, sits next to him. A large mug of beer sits on the bar. The background is a green wall with two small framed pictures. The scene is lit with warm, indoor lighting.

ALRIGHT, AUNTY... YOU KNOW WHY I'M HERE. YOU SAID YOU HAVE SOMETHING THAT MIGHT HELP ME WITH YOUR NIECE, RIGHT?

OH MY, YOU'RE NOT WASTING YOUR TIME, HUH? I THOUGHT WE'RE GOING TO ENJOY OUR DRINKS A BIT LONGER.

WELL, WE COULD, BUT ONLY AFTER I KNOW WHAT EXACTLY IS GOING ON WITH THAT GIRL.

BEFORE WE START, I JUST NEED TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT HER.

O- OF COURSE, I'M SERIOUS! T- THAT GIRL IS LIKE... L- LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT!

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT YOU SAY? LET'S SEE HOW FAR YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE THEN.



ALRIGHT, GOOD.
DO YOU REMEMBER
WHAT I TOLD YOU,
ABOUT RIKA-CHAN'S
BEING SINGLE?

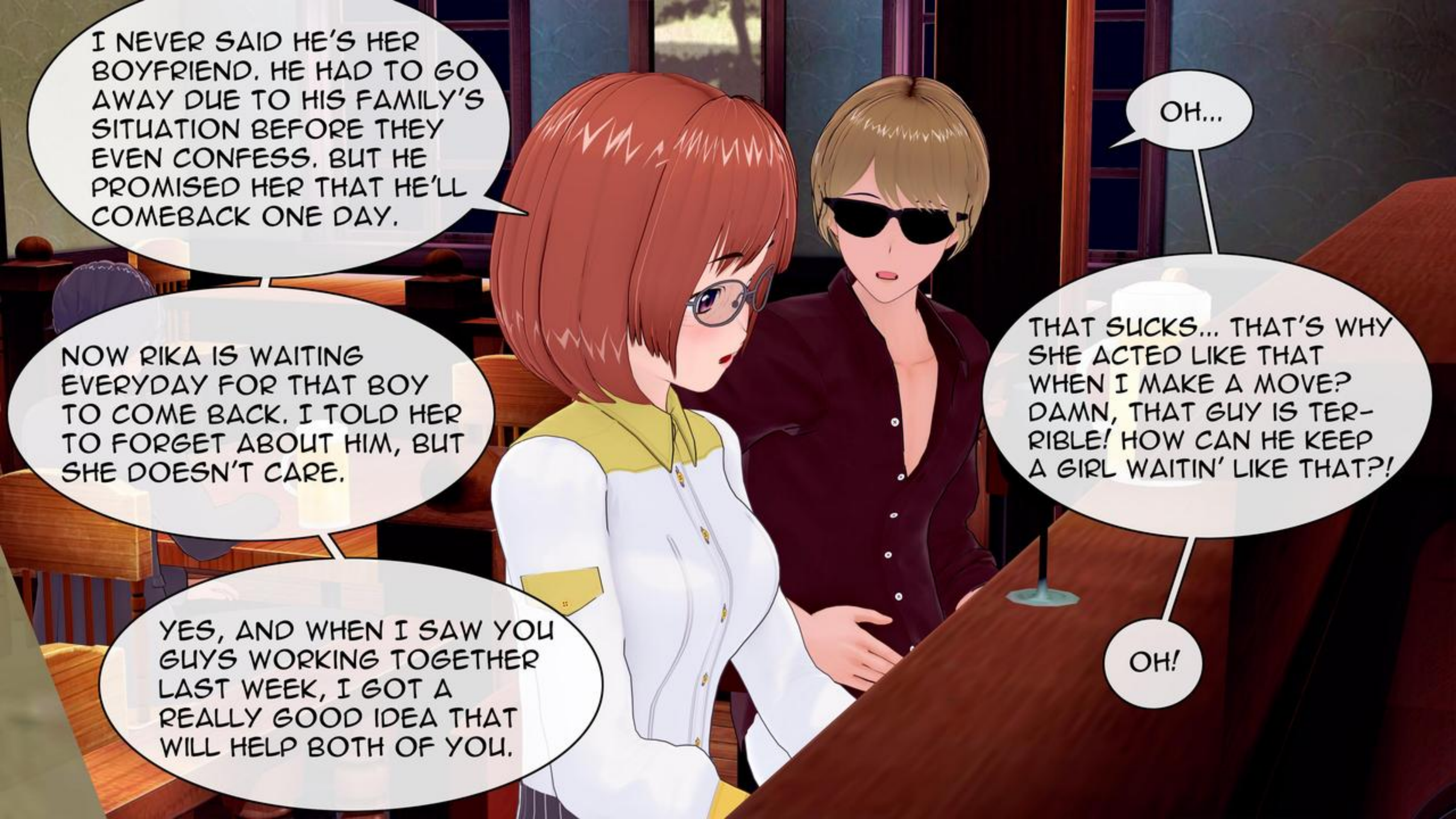
OF COURSE, THAT'S WHY I
WENT AFTER HER IN THE
FIRST PLACE. I CAN'T
LEAVE A GIRL LIKE HER ALL
ALONE, YOU KNOW?

THAT'S NOT
ENTIRELY TRUE.

W- WHAT?

EVEN THOUGH SHE
DOESN'T LOOK LIKE IT,
BUT RIKA-CHAN ALWAYS
HAD A SPECIAL SOMEONE
IN HER HEART.

WHAT THE HELL, SO SHE
HAS A BOYFRIEND? DAMN
IT, SO I JUST WASTED MY
TIME FOR FREE?!



I NEVER SAID HE'S HER BOYFRIEND. HE HAD TO GO AWAY DUE TO HIS FAMILY'S SITUATION BEFORE THEY EVEN CONFESS. BUT HE PROMISED HER THAT HE'LL COMEBACK ONE DAY.

NOW RIKA IS WAITING EVERYDAY FOR THAT BOY TO COME BACK. I TOLD HER TO FORGET ABOUT HIM, BUT SHE DOESN'T CARE.

YES, AND WHEN I SAW YOU GUYS WORKING TOGETHER LAST WEEK, I GOT A REALLY GOOD IDEA THAT WILL HELP BOTH OF YOU.

OH...

THAT SUCKS... THAT'S WHY SHE ACTED LIKE THAT WHEN I MAKE A MOVE? DAMN, THAT GUY IS TERRIBLE! HOW CAN HE KEEP A GIRL WAITIN' LIKE THAT?!

OH!



"WHAT IF I CAN FOOL RIKA BY MAKING YOU LOOK LIKE THAT BOY RIKA LIKES?"

H- HUH...? WHAT?!

THEN RIKA WOULD BE REALLY HAPPY, AND YOU WILL GET TO DATE HER. ISN'T THAT SOUND TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

W- WOAH WOAH, HOLD UP, AUNTY! WHAT DO YOU MEAN? MAKING ME LOOK LIKE THAT BOY?

OF COURSE, I HAVE A PICTURE OF THAT GUY. WE'LL JUST HAVE TO GIVE YOU A BIT OF A MAKEOVER.

T- THERE'S NO WAY THAT WILL WORK! SHE'LL KNOW THAT I'M NOT THE REAL ONE!



HMM? RIKA-CHAN IS NOT THE BRIGHTEST GIRL IN THE ROOM, YOU KNOW? I DOUBT THAT SHE'LL EVEN NOTICE IT.

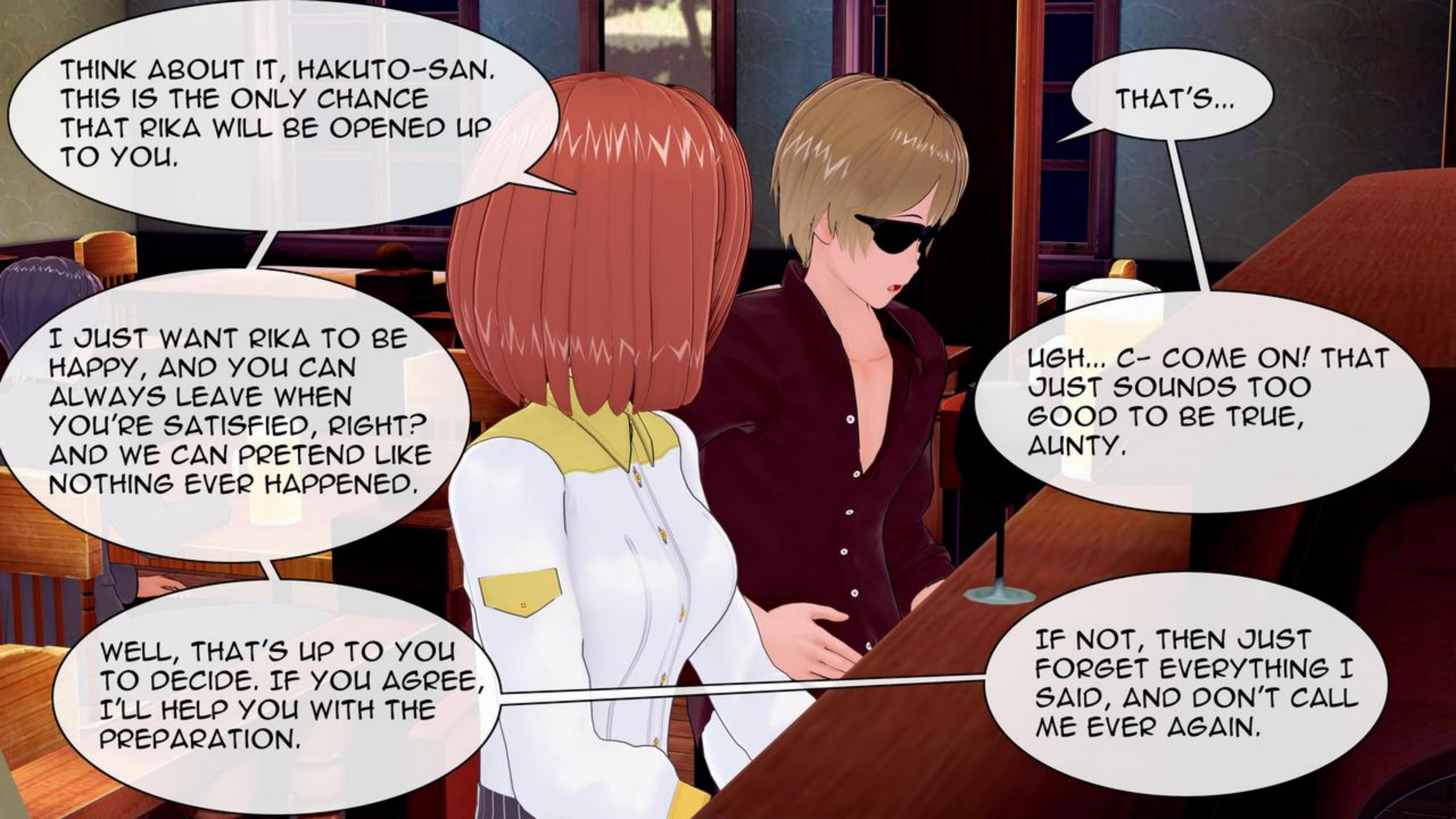
OH MY, SEEMS LIKE YOU'RE NOT THAT SERIOUS ABOUT HER AFTER ALL.

REALLY? THEN WHY ARE YOU EVEN HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE?

B- B- BUT THIS IS CRAZY! WHY WOULD I TRY TO DRESS LIKE SOMEONE I DON'T EVEN KNOW TO IMPRESS HER?

UGHHHHHH... O- OF COURSE, I'M SERIOUS! BUT THIS IS JUST MAD! I- I CAN DO THAT EVEN WITHOUT THE DISGUISE!

THAT'S... UGH...



THINK ABOUT IT, HAKUTO-SAN.
THIS IS THE ONLY CHANCE
THAT RIKA WILL BE OPENED UP
TO YOU.

I JUST WANT RIKA TO BE
HAPPY, AND YOU CAN
ALWAYS LEAVE WHEN
YOU'RE SATISFIED, RIGHT?
AND WE CAN PRETEND LIKE
NOTHING EVER HAPPENED.

WELL, THAT'S UP TO YOU
TO DECIDE. IF YOU AGREE,
I'LL HELP YOU WITH THE
PREPARATION.

THAT'S...

UGH... C- COME ON! THAT
JUST SOUNDS TOO
GOOD TO BE TRUE,
AUNT.

IF NOT, THEN JUST
FORGET EVERYTHING I
SAID, AND DON'T CALL
ME EVER AGAIN.

BACK TO THE PRESENT...

UGH...

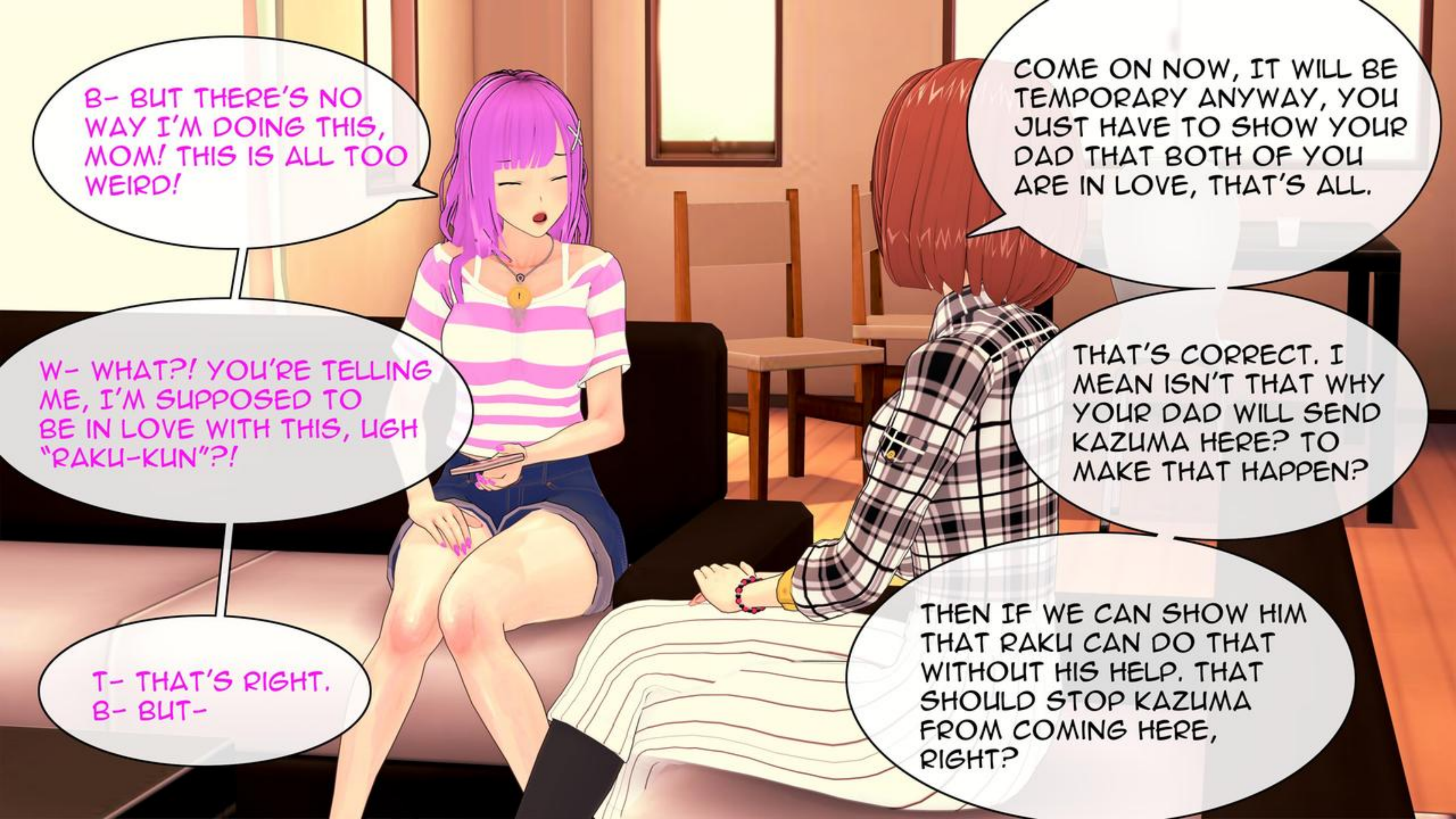
G- GOSH, MOM! I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU TOLD HIM I HAD A LOVER. B- BUT WORST OF ALL, I DON'T LIKE BOYS!!!!

THEN, A DAY LATER, HE CALLED ME AND I'M SURE YOU CAN SEE WHAT HAPPENED NEXT IN THE PICTURE.

I HEARD YOU'RE QUITE GOOD WITH ACTING, RIGHT? NOW IT'S TIME TO PUT THOSE SKILLS TO THE TEST!

WELL, YOU KNOW HOW HAKUTO IS. THERE'S NO WAY, HE'LL DO IT IF I DON'T LURE HIM IN LIKE THIS, RIGHT?





B- BUT THERE'S NO WAY I'M DOING THIS, MOM! THIS IS ALL TOO WEIRD!

W- WHAT?! YOU'RE TELLING ME, I'M SUPPOSED TO BE IN LOVE WITH THIS, UGH "RAKU-KUN"?!

T- THAT'S RIGHT. B- BUT-

COME ON NOW, IT WILL BE TEMPORARY ANYWAY, YOU JUST HAVE TO SHOW YOUR DAD THAT BOTH OF YOU ARE IN LOVE, THAT'S ALL.

THAT'S CORRECT. I MEAN ISN'T THAT WHY YOUR DAD WILL SEND KAZUMA HERE? TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN?

THEN IF WE CAN SHOW HIM THAT RAKU CAN DO THAT WITHOUT HIS HELP. THAT SHOULD STOP KAZUMA FROM COMING HERE, RIGHT?



W- WHAT? UGH, I HATE
TO SAY IT, B- BUT
THAT'S KINDA TRUE...

H- HUH?

W- WHY? HE AGREED
TO THIS, RIGHT?

BUT BEFORE WE REACH
THAT GOAL, THERE'S
ONE MORE THING WE
NEED TO DO.

WHAT REALLY IMPORTANT
IS, YOU NEED TO CONVINCE
HAKUTO TO CONTINUE
BEING "RAKU"

THAT'S TRUE, BUT HE
DOESN'T DO IT FOR FREE,
OKAY? IF HE FEELS LIKE IT
DOESN'T WORTH HIS
EFFORT, HE MIGHT JUST
QUIT. THEN WE'LL BE BACK
TO SQUARE ONE.



AND I DON'T THINK WE
CAN AFFORD THAT. TIME
IS TICKING, YOU KNOW?

BUT REALLY, IT'S NOT THAT
HARD, HAKUTO IS JUST AN
IDIOT, RIGHT? YOU JUST
NEED TO KEEP HIM BUSY
UNTIL EVERYTHING SOLVES.

W- WHAT IF DAD FOUND
OUT THAT HE'S NOT THE
REAL R- RAKU?

N- NO... T- THAT'S
REALLY BAD...

I- I DON'T KNOW,
MOM... I DON'T LIKE
THE SOUND OF THIS
ONE BIT...

BLUSHING

WHAT? HIM? HE COULDN'T
EVEN RECOGNIZE THAT HIS
SON IS THE SEXY GIRL IN
THE POSTER.

T- THAT'S...

SO WHAT DO YOU SAY?

UGH, Y- YOU ALREADY
KNEW THAT I DON'T
HAVE ANY PLAN... B- BUT
YOUR PLAN IS JUST
TOO...

WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE I
FORCE YOU TO DO IT,
OKAY? I JUST TOLD
WHAT I THINK IS THE
BEST FOR YOU.



FROM NOW IT'S UP TO
YOU TO CHOOSE WHAT
YOU'RE GOING TO DO.

GOSH... N- NOW IT'S UP
TO ME? C- COME ON, DO
I REALLY HAVE A
CHOICE??

B- BUT JUST THINKING
ABOUT ACTING LIKE THAT TO
GUY JUST MAKES ME FEEL
SO WEIRD IN THE STOMACH.

WORST OF ALL, THAT
GUY IS HAKU-KUN!

W- WHY HIM OF ALL
PEOPLE?! GOSH, AM I THE
UNLUCKIEST GIRL IN THE
WORLD OR WHAT?



BUT REALLY, EVERYTHING
STARTS FROM DAD, I KNEW
HE DID IT FOR OUR FAMILY,
BUT...

OR SHOULD I JUST CALL
HIM AND TELL HIM THE
TRUTH?

BUT THEN EVERYTHING I
BUILT SO FAR IS FOR
NOTHING... AND I'M
ALMOST THERE TOO...

UGH, W- WHAT AM I
THINKING? YOU CAN'T
LET IT END LIKE THIS,
GIRL!

J- JUST LOOK AT HOW
MANY THINGS YOU GOT
THROUGH, T- THIS IS JUST
ANOTHER BUMP IN THE
ROAD, R- RIGHT?

A- ALRIGHT, IF IT'S
UP TO ME THEN...



INHALEEEEEEE

EXHALEEEEEEE

HMM? RIKA-CHAN,
ARE YOU OKAY?

W- WELL, I CAN'T SAY
I'M PERFECTLY FINE...

B- BUT, MOM. IF YOU
THINK THIS IS THE BEST
COURSE OF ACTION FOR
ME...

G- GOSH, I CAN'T
BELIEVE I'M SAYING
THIS...

A- ALRIGHT,
I... I'LL DO IT.



AHHH~ FINALLY! I KNEW
THAT MY GIRL WOULD
SEE HOW INGENIOUS MY
PLAN IS~

HUHU, JUST LET ME
BE, OKAY?

OF COUSE, WE'LL HAVE
YOU MEET HIM FIRST.

Y- YOU'RE JUST OVER-
REACTING, MOM! I-
IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVE A
BETTER PLAN THAN
YOURS ANYWAY...

S- SO, HOW DO
WE DO THIS THEN?



O- OKAY...?

UGHHH, T- THAT'S
THE HARDEST
PART...

OKAY... AND WHEN
IS THIS?

THEN YOU HAVE TO
PRETEND THAT HE'S
REALLY RAKU-KUN.
REMEMBER, YOU HAVE
TO MAKE HIM THINK
THAT HE FOOLS YOU
COMPLETELY.

THEN TRY TO GET AS
MANY PHOTOS AS YOU
CAN AND SEND IT TO
YOUR DAD. THAT'S THE
FIRST STEP.

OH, A DATE YOU
MEAN? TOMORROW,
OF COURSE!



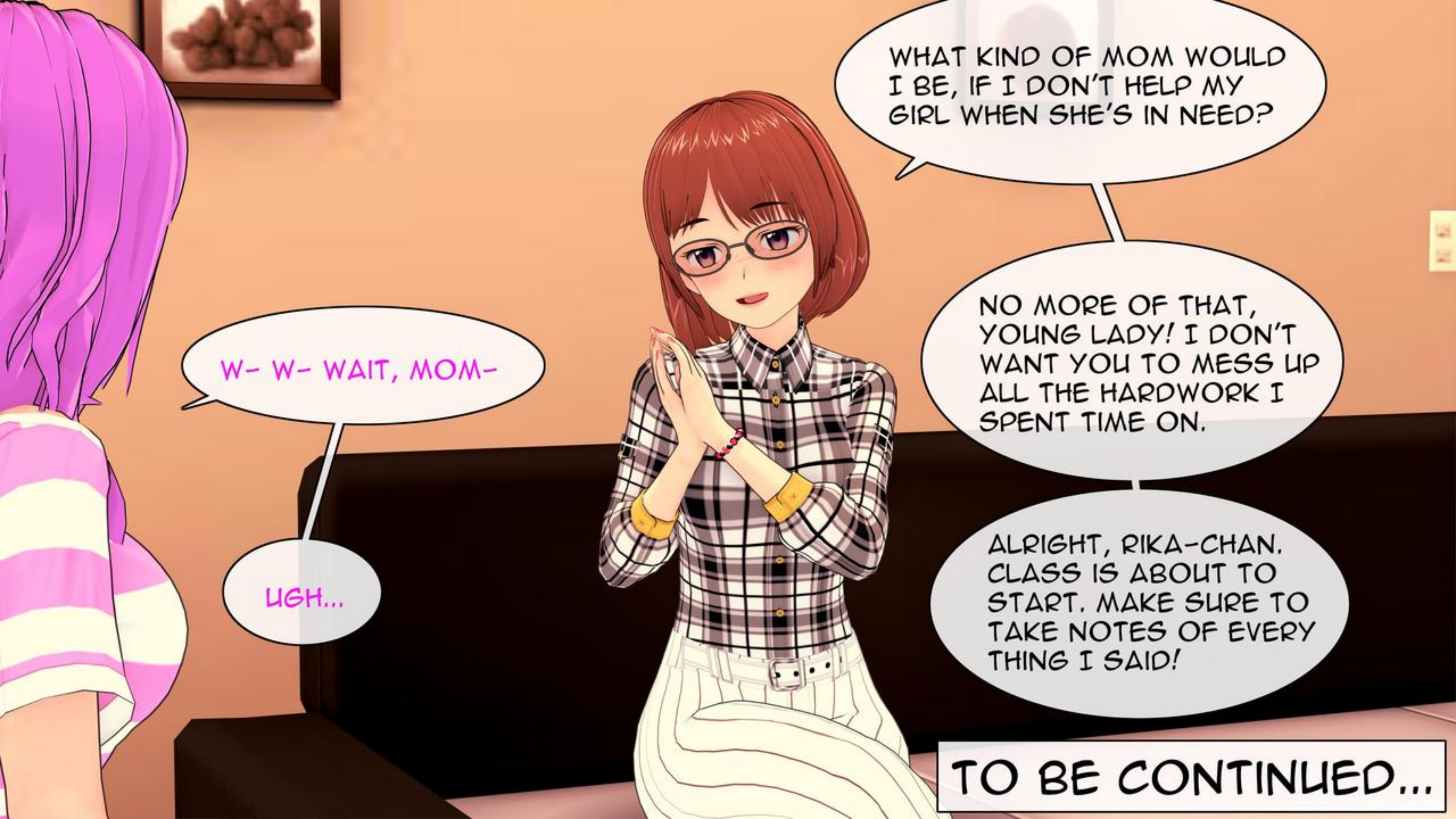
T- TOMORROW?!

B- B- BUT I HAVEN'T GOT
ANY TIME TO PREPARE
FOR THIS RIKA-RAKU
STUFF!!

H- HUH?

LIKE I TOLD YOU, TIME IS
TICKING. THE FASTER WE
DO THIS, THE BETTER.

WELL, THAT'S WHY I
TOOK MY DAY OFF AT
THE CAFE, YOU SEE?



WHAT KIND OF MOM WOULD I BE, IF I DON'T HELP MY GIRL WHEN SHE'S IN NEED?

NO MORE OF THAT, YOUNG LADY! I DON'T WANT YOU TO MESS UP ALL THE HARDWORK I SPENT TIME ON.

ALRIGHT, RIKA-CHAN. CLASS IS ABOUT TO START. MAKE SURE TO TAKE NOTES OF EVERY THING I SAID!

W- W- WAIT, MOM-

LIGH...

TO BE CONTINUED...