

# TRADE OF FATE


## -PART.1-

\*the story is entirely fictional, and all characters in it are adults.

Shanghai. Inside a luxury villa.

小林緑子  
KOBAYASI



A woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a white dress and white heels, sits on a plush blue sofa with ornate gold trim. The room is elegantly decorated with dark grey walls, gold-framed artwork, a chandelier, and a patterned rug. A speech bubble is positioned above her.

Gingge, my dear, you are already twenty-two.  
It is high time you gave proper thought to  
your future.

I have arranged a most suitable acquaintance for you this weekend, the young heir of the Kang family conglomerate. A most appropriate union, truly an excellent choice.




Once you have completed your studies,  
the two of you ought to marry without delay.  
In due course, the affairs of the company may  
be entrusted to you young people to manage.




Mom! I just got back for summer break and only rested for two days, do you really have to start right away with all this?






But since you brought it up...  
I actually wanted to discuss  
something with you.



After I graduate, I plan to go  
study art in London... and then...



Qingge. You are the only child of this household, and the inheritance of our family's enterprise is your solemn duty.

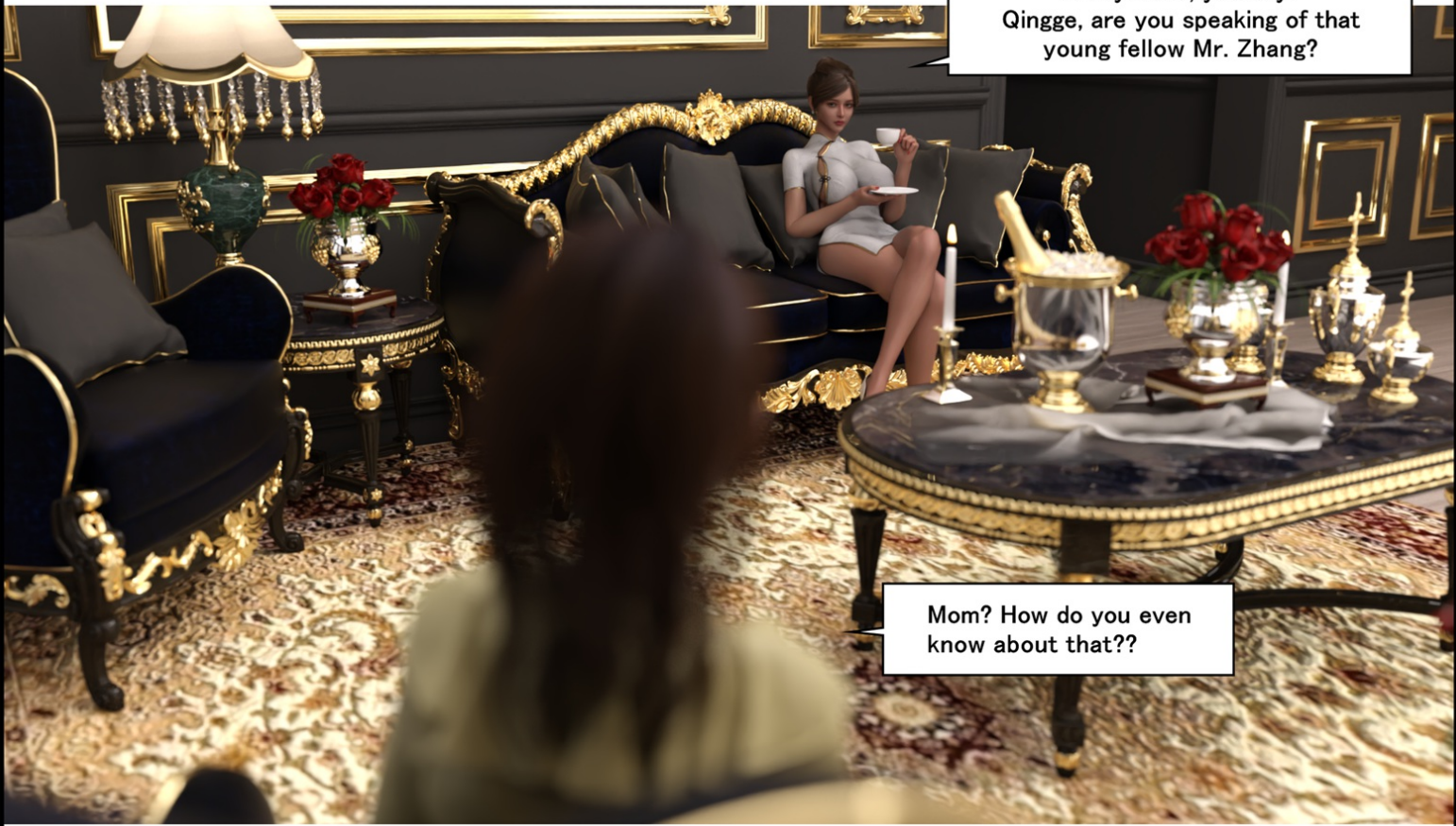
The course of your life has been carefully set, you must not indulge in idle fantasies, my dear.

Mom!

Your marriage concerns not merely yourself  
but the interests of the entire family.  
How could we possibly allow you to act on mere whims?


Upon graduation, you must acquaint yourself  
with the proper manners of high society, and  
only then proceed to these introductions.  
That, my dear, is the true matter at hand.

Mom, I'm not a child anymore.  
I can make my own decisions about my life.  
Besides... I already have a boyfriend...



A boyfriend, you say?  
Qingge, are you speaking of that  
young fellow Mr. Zhang?

Mom? How do you even  
know about that??



He hasn't contacted you these  
past two days, has he?


Qingge, you must understand,  
the affections of someone your age  
are worth very little indeed.  
At best, perhaps fifty thousand yuan.

Mom?! Don't tell me you...


When will you come to realise what truly makes this society turn?

Enough!

stands up



Mom, I'm done with your control!  
This is my life, not yours!




What right do you have to interfere with my choices again and again? I don't want a marriage arranged by you, I don't want a life that you've mapped out!



I don't want to be some  
"Miss Ye, the heiress."  
I just want to be myself!

M... Miss?



Miss, is there anything you'd like for dinner tonight?

Auntie Li, don't bother with me, I'm heading back to campus.

Bang!

Wha...



It's nothing, pay it no mind.  
Hardly the first time she's done this.

Tomorrow, cut off her credit card,  
once she runs out of money,  
she'll know to come back on her own.

Madam, what has come over  
the young miss?



Li, today's coffee is far too sour.

Understood, Madam. I'll have them change the supplier tomorrow.

School dormitory.

小林緑子  
KOBAYASI




A person wearing black pants and grey shoes is shown from the waist down, walking on a light-colored wooden floor. The person is leaning forward slightly, suggesting they are sneaking. In the background, there is a curved wooden counter with a white top. The lighting is warm and soft.

\*sneaking around



Stop right there!




You kid! Why' re ya sneakin'  
back so late again? Come here,  
write down your name!

Auntie, you're bein' way too strict.  
I'm only one minute late!

Late is late, reckon ya gotta sign the  
book 'fore I let ya in. Rules are rules!

Auntie, you know me already.  
Can't you just let it slide this time?  
It's the holidays anyway.

Ain't no way. Rules is rules.  
Now hold on.



Huh, how the heck does this thing work again?



Stop right there?!

You brat! Don't you dare pull this stunt again, or I swear I won't let ya off so easy!



Lord above, you're drivin' me mad!

Comin' back this late again?  
Don't ya know dorm rules say  
doors close at ten o'clock sharp?

Sorry, Auntie Sun.


Well, ain't this little miss from the Ye family?  
What's this then, only two days into summer  
break and you're not stayin' in that big ol'  
villa of yours, runnin' back here to the dorms  
instead?

Auntie Sun, even though I didn't fill out an  
application before, I'd like to stay in the  
dorm for a while...



Alright then, that room of yours is empty anyway, if you wanna stay, just stay.

So... do I need to sign anything?




What's the fuss for?  
Just head on up.

Ye Qingge had heard bits and pieces about this woman before. Her name was Sun Guifang, fifty-four, a migrant worker from rural Henan. Her husband used to be a school guard, but he hadn't shown up for work in quite some time.



Thank you, Auntie Sun.


Looking at the disheveled, heavy-set middle-aged woman before her, Qingge couldn't help but sigh, this outsider seemed to understand her better than her own mother ever did.



Such a pretty little thing, truly worthy  
of bein' called a rich family's daughter...  
Lord, folks' fates just can't be compared.

Back when I was her age, I was already out in the fields breakin' my back with farm work. Never had no such life of comfort.






Phew, a shower feels so good. Thank God I got this international dorm with AC, otherwise this heat would be unbearable.

Looks like my roommates are all gone too.  
Perfect, I can enjoy the space to myself.

As she settled down, Ye Qingge couldn't help but recall the quarrel with her mother earlier that day. It wasn't the first time they had clashed like this, but this time she felt her mother had gone far too far. She simply couldn't bear it any longer.



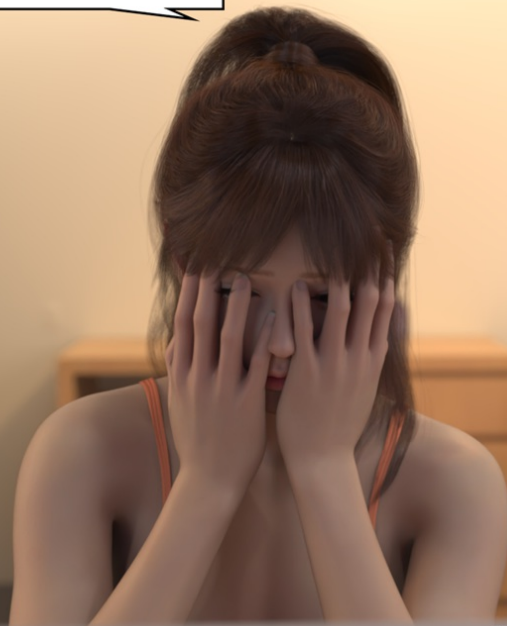
As the heiress of a wealthy family, she had everything most people could only dream of a luxurious villa, expensive clothes, top-tier education. Her delicate features and perfect figure drew endless envy. Yet she was only now realizing the cost of it all.



Zhang Heng still hasn't replied to me.  
He never used to leave me waiting this long.  
It really must have been my mother...

Her despair came not just from her boyfriend's betrayal, but more from the helplessness of facing her mother's bullying. She couldn't think of any way to resist.

Why? Why must it come to this?  
I hate it so much!



From past experience, Qingge knew that whenever she defied her mother's will, the first thing her mother would do was cut off her finances. Not just cutting living expenses, her mother would ensure there was no way for her to make a living anywhere in Shanghai. The only road left to her was submission.



What am I supposed to do...

Suddenly Qingge remembered seeing Sun Guifang downstairs. So many times she had looked at her with quiet pity, thinking what a hopeless, dreary life that woman must have, like dry straw waiting to rot. But now she realized, compared with her own enslaved existence, at least Sun Guifang was free.

Yes. If “Ye Qingge” is destined never to be free, to bow her head forever, then what if I became someone else?

She recalled her recent internship at the family’s research institute, where she had learned about a newly developed technology that could alter a person’s appearance. Curious, she had secretly studied the files on her mother’s computer. What if she could use it for herself?






Yes, that's it! With that technology, I could swap identities with someone else entirely.

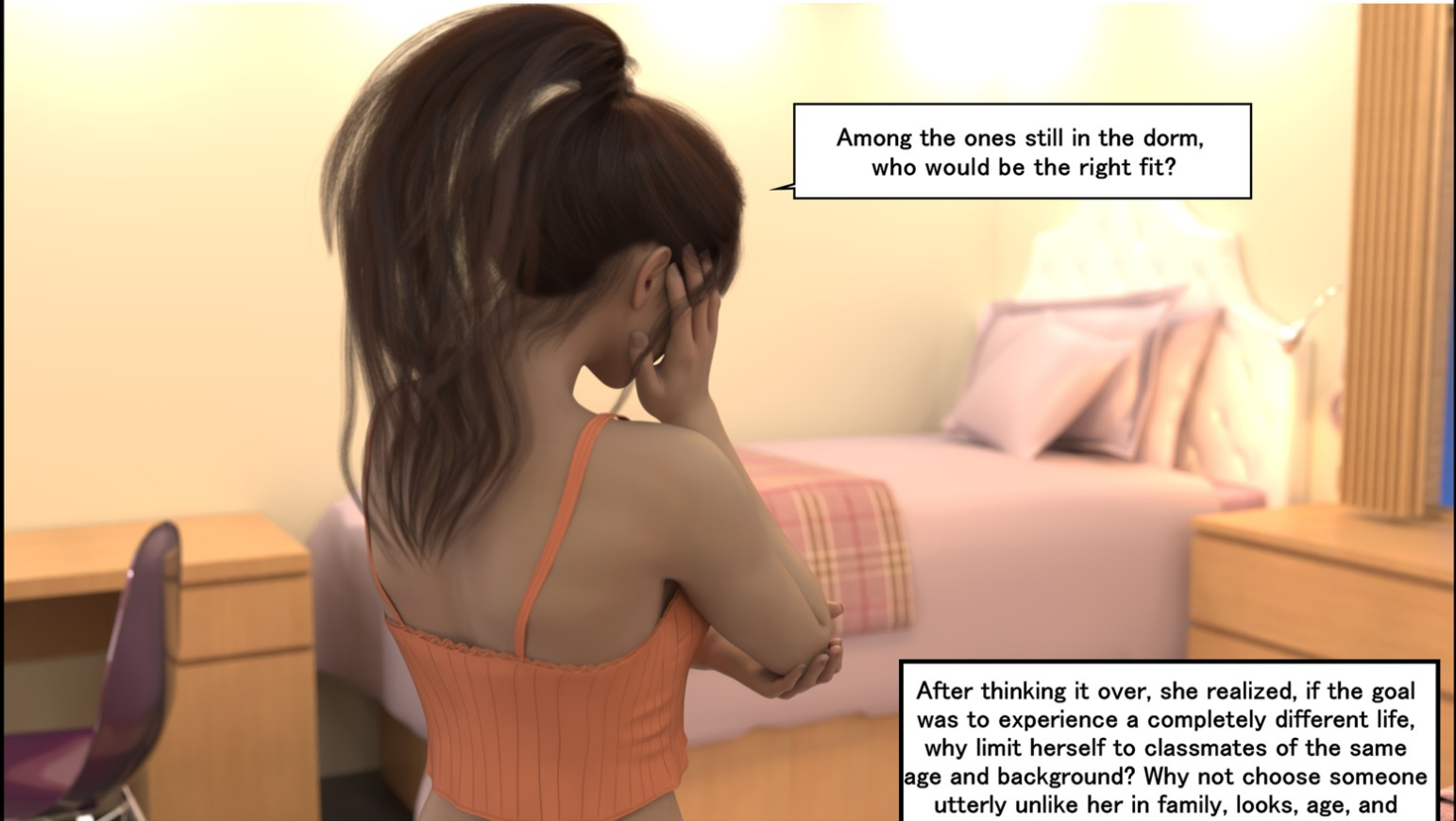
She could go back in my place, bow her head, apologize, even go on the blind dates!

And I could finally enjoy even just one summer of freedom, living as an ordinary girl.



But... but who should I swap with?  
Everyone's gone home for summer break...

She knew almost no one would turn down the chance to live her life, so she wasn't worried about rejection. The hard part was deciding who it should be.



Among the ones still in the dorm,  
who would be the right fit?

After thinking it over, she realized, if the goal was to experience a completely different life, why limit herself to classmates of the same age and background? Why not choose someone utterly unlike her in family, looks, age, and education? That thought brought a very particular candidate to mind.

Mother, since you want me to be a polished high-society heiress, then I'll turn myself into a coarse village woman instead.

The next morning.






Perfect, Auntie Sun, you're here.

Mornin', little miss.

What's this, need somethin' from me?  
Hold on, lemme finish up what I'm doin' first





It's nothing urgent, Auntie Sun.  
Take your time, I just wanted to chat a bit.



Auntie Sun, do you work this hard every single day?

It ain't so bad now it's summer break. Most of y' all gone home, only a few outta-towners still stayin' here, so it don't get too dirty. Just check the rooms at night, easy work compared to usual.

Then... Auntie Sun, do you think  
my life is comfortable?



Well, ain't it obvious? You're a rich family's daughter, livin' life like a little goddess. Folks like us can't even imagine what it's like for ya.



What if I told you I had a way for you to  
actually live my life, Auntie Sun?  
Would you want to try it?



What? Live your life? Little miss,  
you jokin' with me, ain't ya?




No, Auntie Sun, I'm not joking.  
I really have a way for you to  
experience my life.

You serious, little miss?  
What kinda way?

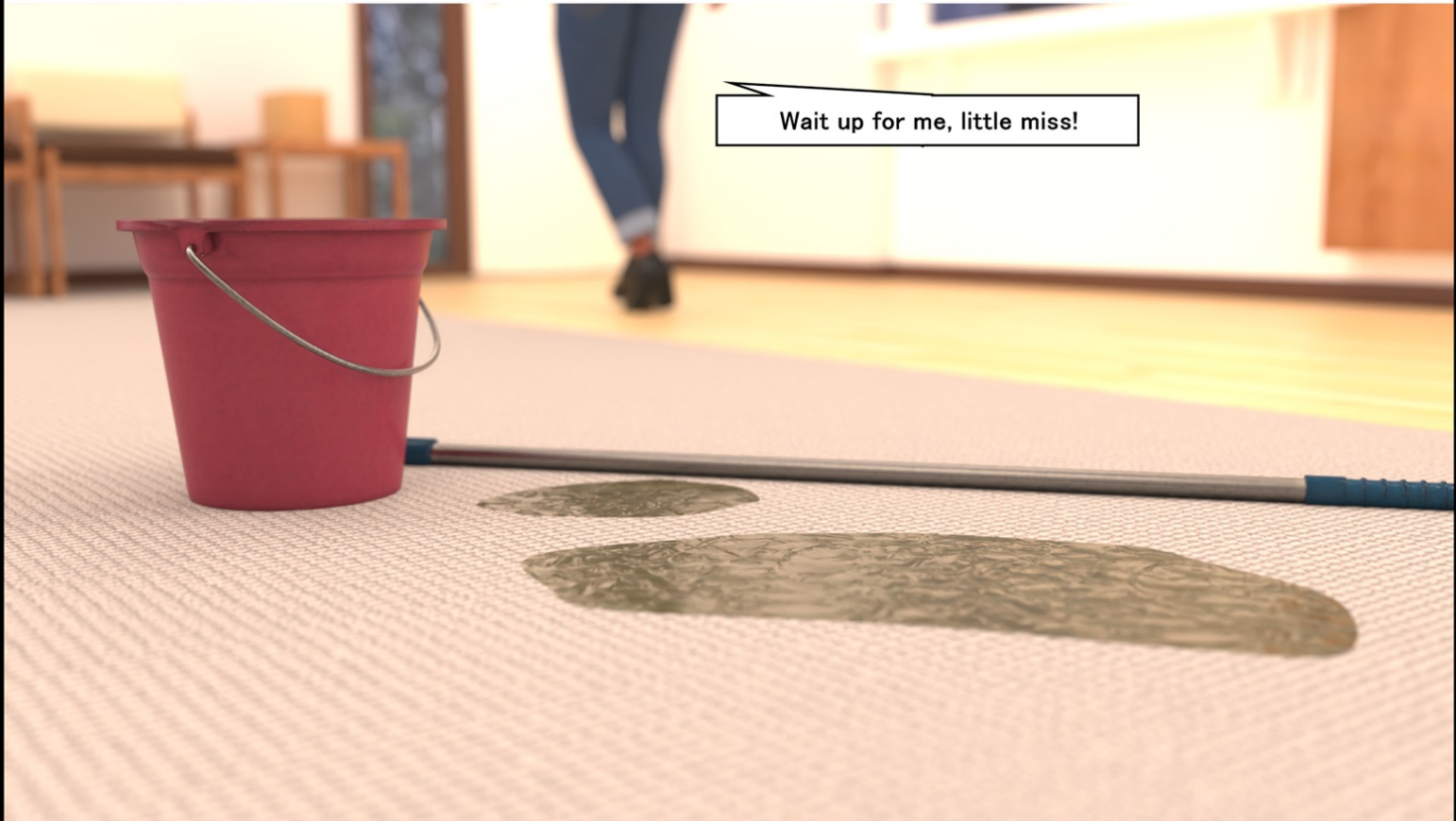
Not here. If you're interested,  
meet me outside in ten minutes.  
I'll drive you somewhere, and I'll  
explain everything.



A woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a colorful patterned shirt, is shown in profile, looking towards the left. Her hands are clasped together, resting on a blue textured object. In the background, another woman in a grey dress is walking away from the camera towards a large window. The room is brightly lit with warm light. A speech bubble is positioned above the woman in the foreground.

Where' re we goin' , little miss?

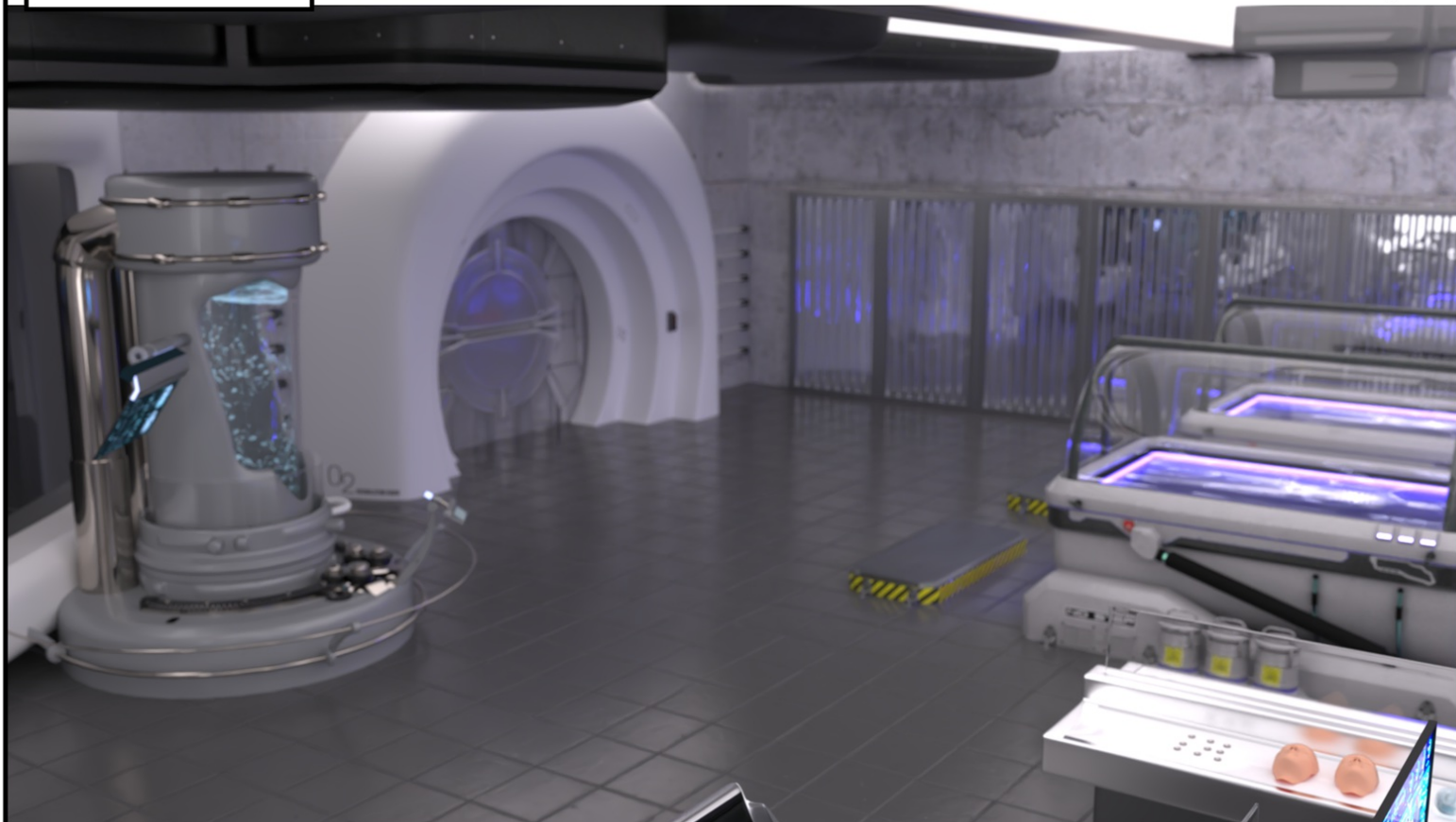
Sun Guifang was baffled by Qingge' s sudden words. She had no idea what the young heiress was planning, yet she felt a strange hunch that this might bring a turning point to her stagnant life.

A red bucket with a silver handle sits on a light-colored, textured carpet. A mop with a blue handle lies on the carpet next to a large, dark, irregular puddle. In the background, a person wearing blue jeans and black shoes is walking away from the camera. The scene is lit with warm, golden light, suggesting an indoor setting like a home or a cafe.

Wait up for me, little miss!

Half an hour later.

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Don't worry, Auntie Sun. This is one of my family's secret labs. It's highly restricted, only the top researchers in the company even know it exists.

Lord have mercy, little miss, what is this place? Looks all high-tech an' stuff.

Why'd ya bring me here, then?  
That thing ya said 'bout lettin' me  
live your life, what's that supposed to mean?



I want to use this equipment to turn you into me. Then you can spend this summer living in my place.



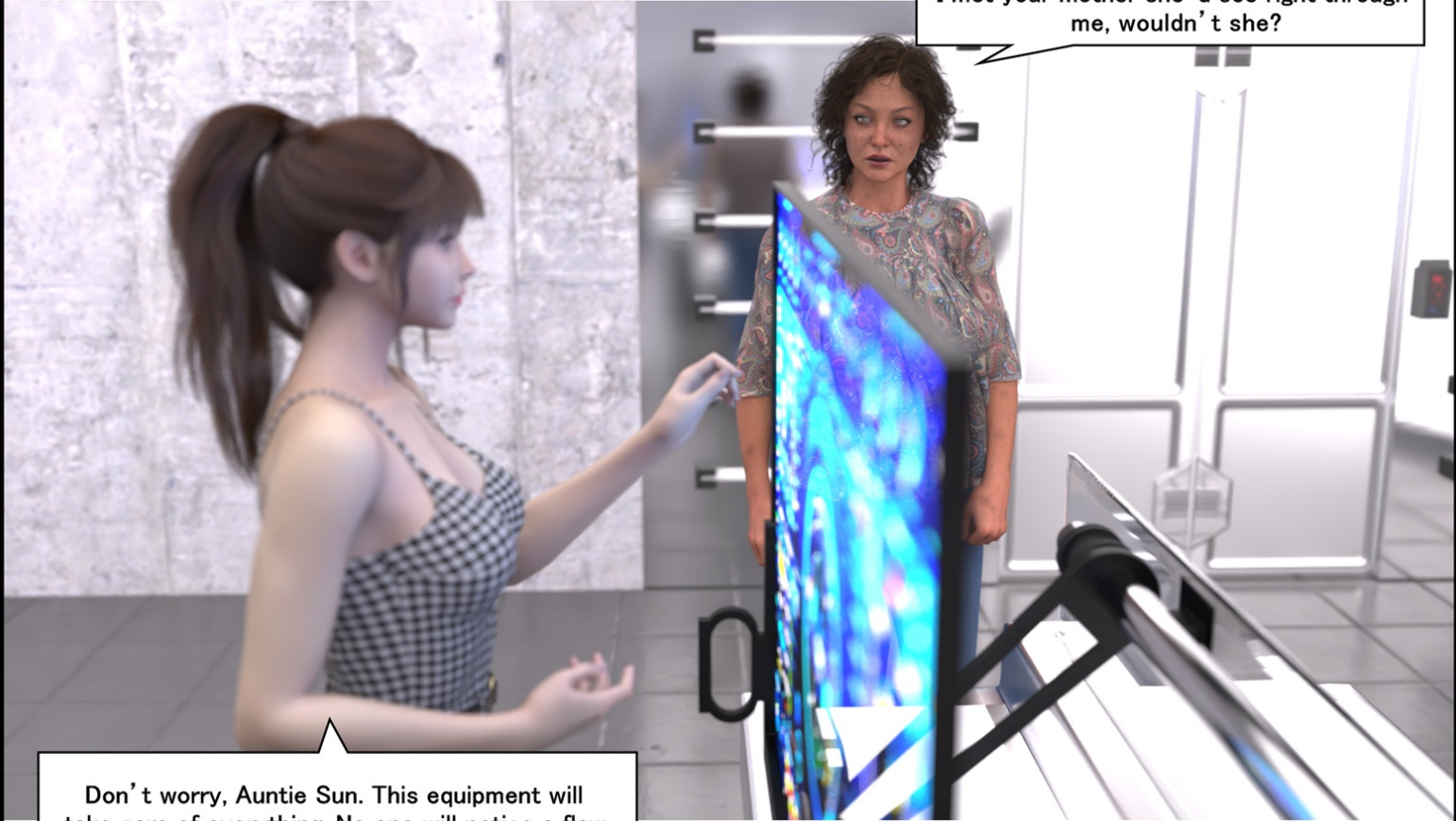
What? Turn me into you?  
That's gotta be a joke!



It's real, Auntie Sun. As me, you can eat, wear  
, and use anything you like. The only thing is,  
you might have to follow my mother's  
arrangements and attend some events.  
Would you agree?



Well, of course I would! But still...




Even if I did look like you, the moment I met your mother she'd see right through me, wouldn't she?


Don't worry, Auntie Sun. This equipment will take care of everything. No one will notice a flaw.

If it really works, then sure I'd do it.  
But how's somethin' like this even possible

You don't need to worry about that,  
Auntie Sun. Just do as I say.  
Sit down and wait here.



But... but Qingge, I just thought of somethin' ...




Even if I become you and go live your life,  
what about the dorms?  
Nobody watchin' 'em would be a problem too.

Don't worry, Auntie Sun. While you're living as me, I'll become you and take your place here at the dorm.



What?! You're gonna turn into me?!

Sun Guifang was struck speechless.  
She glanced at Qingge's radiant face,  
full of doubt and confusion.

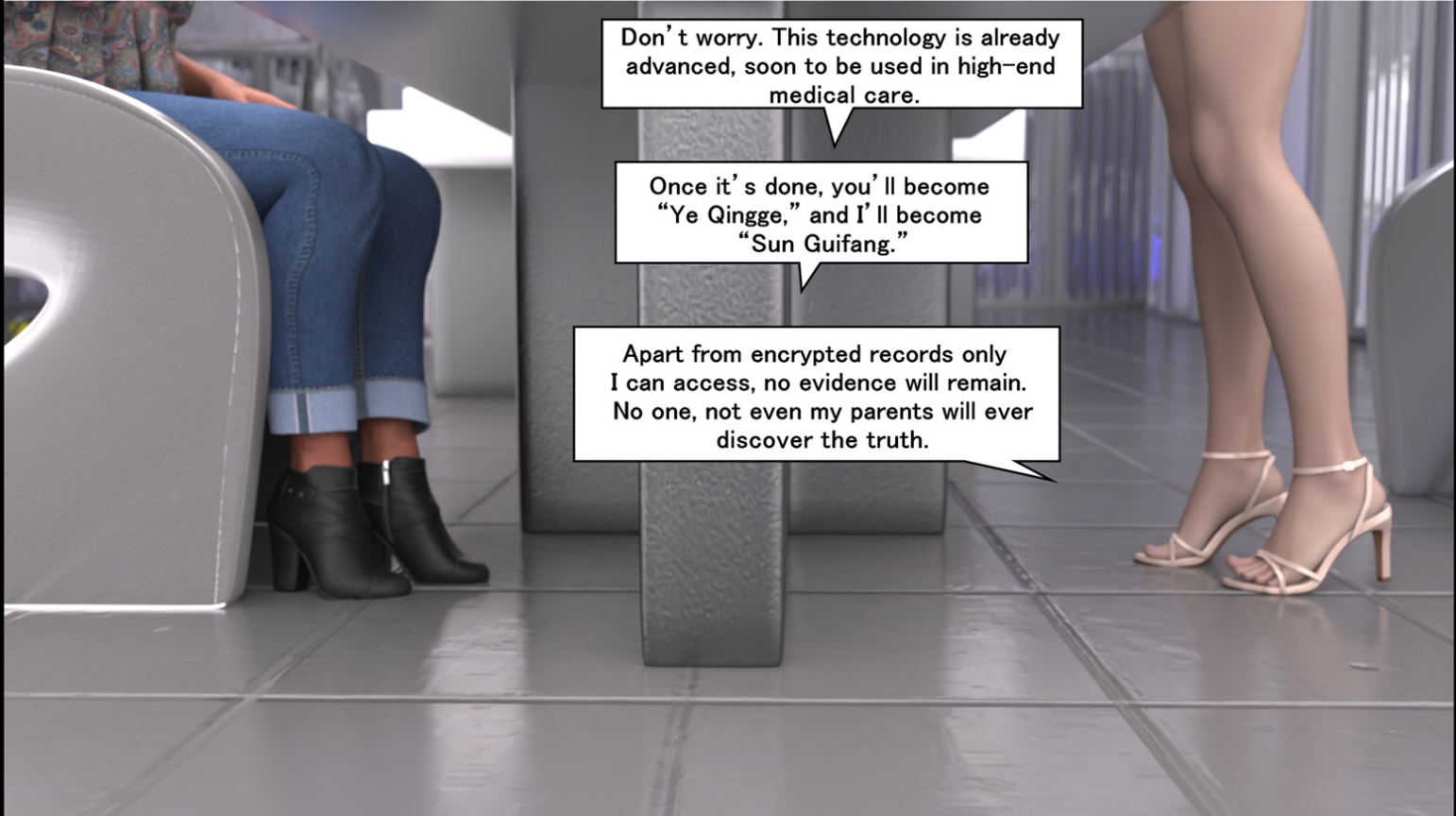


I don't get it... You're the Ye family's heiress.  
Folks envy you more than I can count.  
Why'd ya give up all that to taste my  
poor life instead?

Though she'd heard that the rich often had  
strange whims, she couldn't fathom why a  
twenty something heiress would want to live  
her own life. Still, who could refuse wealth  
dropped in their lap?

Just think of it as me wanting to experience life.

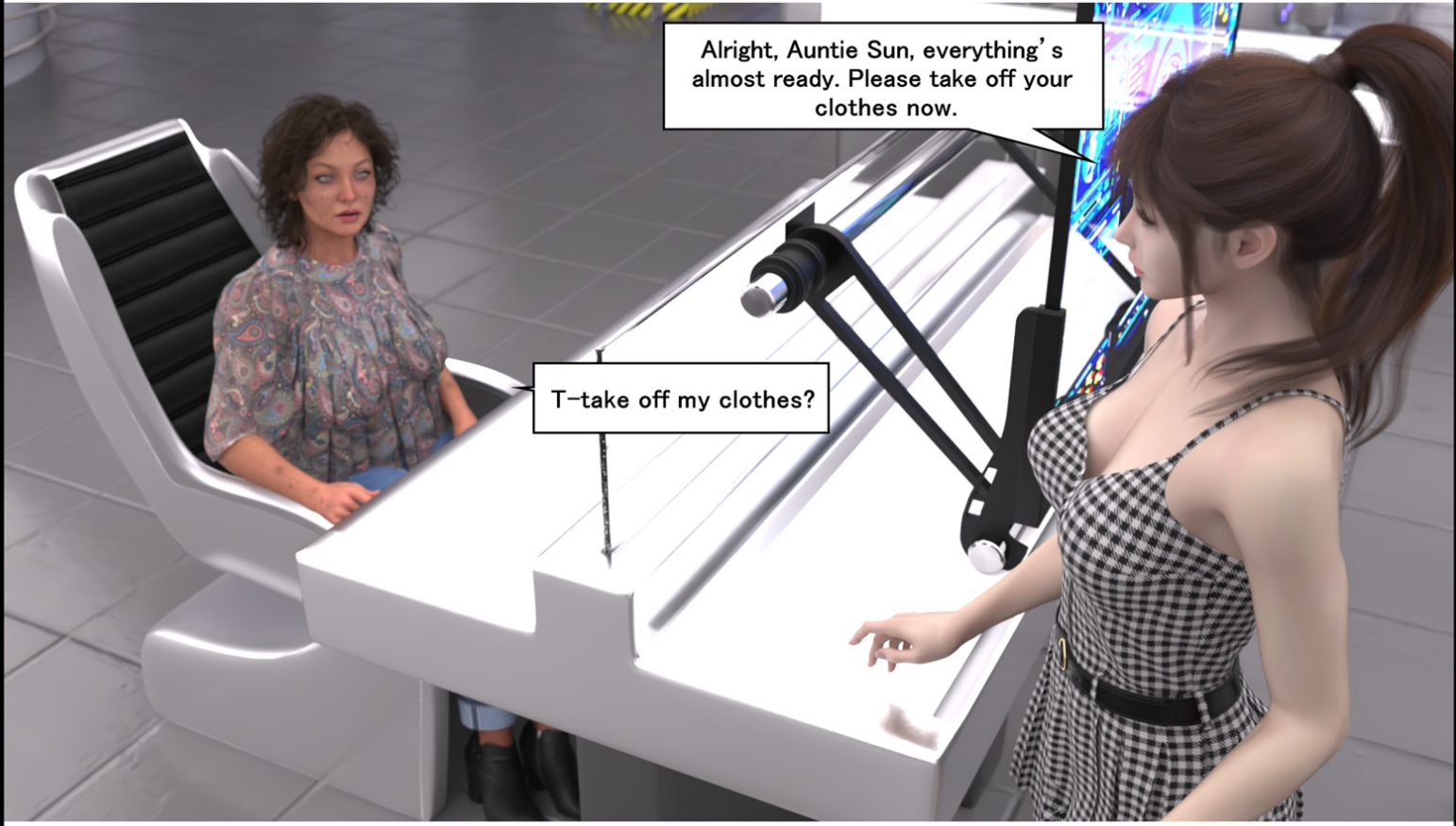
Well... if I agree, is it dangerous?



Don't worry. This technology is already advanced, soon to be used in high-end medical care.

Once it's done, you'll become "Ye Qingge," and I'll become "Sun Guifang."

Apart from encrypted records only I can access, no evidence will remain. No one, not even my parents will ever discover the truth.



Alright, Auntie Sun, everything's almost ready. Please take off your clothes now.

T-take off my clothes?

Yes, the procedure requires complete nudity.  
Undress while I fetch something.

Alright then.



Sun Guifang hesitated, but then thought, she was already fifty-four, the same age as Qingge's mother. What shame could there be before a young girl? With a deep breath, she began to undress.

Still, she felt a twinge of regret.  
If only she had worn cleaner clothes today.  
Her shoes hadn't been changed in ages, and  
the smell wasn't pleasant.



If what Qingge said was true, then in a moment the heiress would have to put on these very clothes, clothes that cost less than a hundred yuan altogether. Could she ever get used to them?




As each piece of clothing fell away, Sun Guifang's misshapen figure was laid bare. Layers of fat clung to her stomach, her chest sagged from age and toil, her skin rough and yellowed with time. Staring at herself, she doubted that any machine could truly give her the fair, flawless beauty of Ye Qingge.




Keep going, Auntie Sun.  
You must take off everything,  
not a single piece left.





All... all of it?

A woman with brown hair in a ponytail, wearing a shiny red latex bodysuit, stands in a room with a stone wall and a metal grate. She is holding a piece of black latex fabric. A speech bubble is positioned to her right.

Yes, strip completely, then put on this suit and step into the machine.



Go on, Auntie Sun, undress fully.



A-alright then...





Heh, it's fine, Auntie Sun.  
Just hurry and put this on.

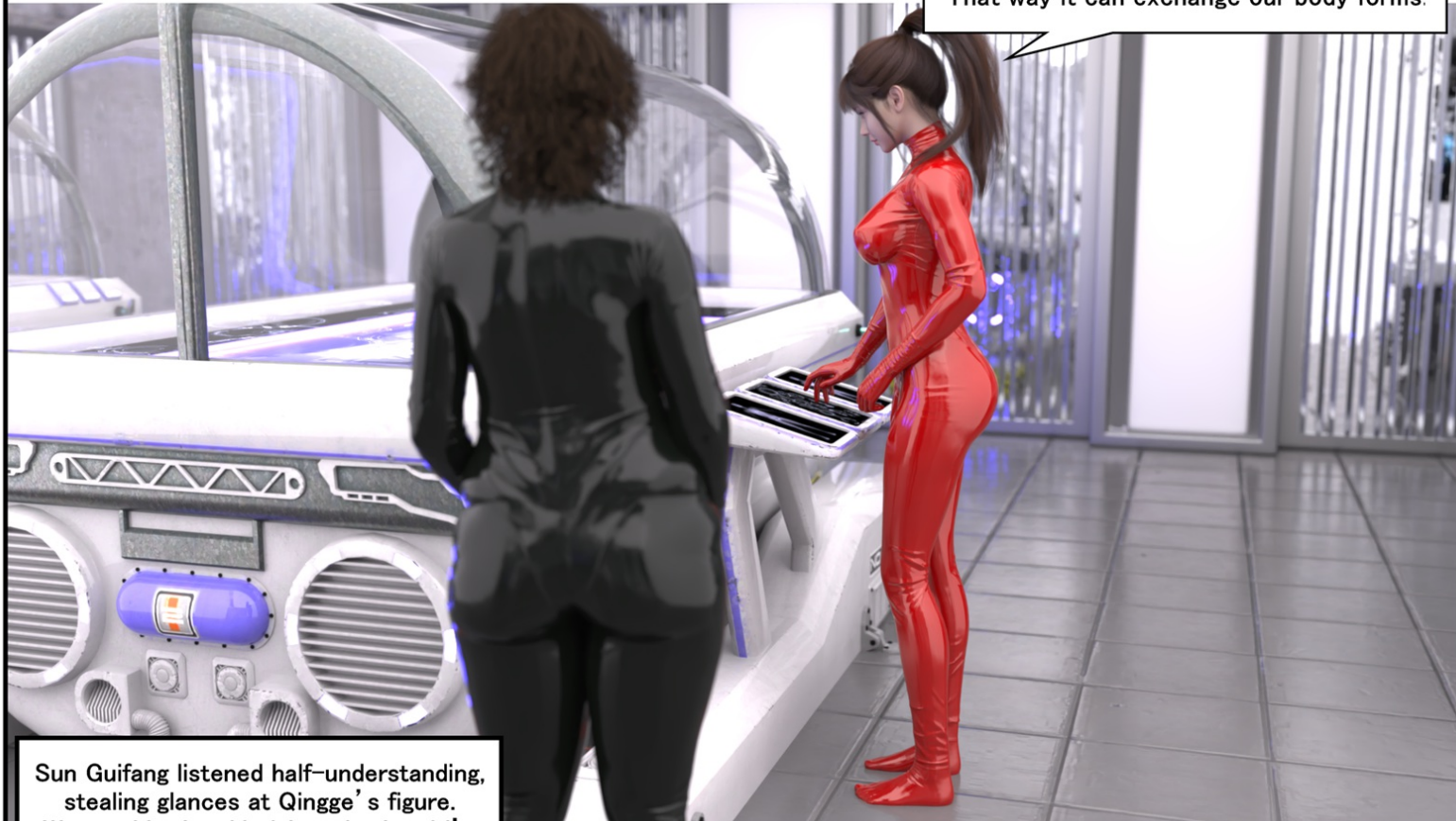
Little miss, what's this contraction for?  
Looks mighty fancy.



Of course it's advanced. This machine repairs damaged tissues. No matter how severe the injury, even a severed limb, it can rebuild the body.



Right now, I've set it to clone mode.  
That way it can exchange our body forms.



Sun Guifang listened half-understanding,  
stealing glances at Qingge's figure.  
Wrapped in the skintight suit, the girl's  
body looked all the more flawless.


By contrast, her own bulk looked even worse in the suit. She couldn't help doubting whether the machine could really work. If it truly had the power Qingge claimed, it would be nothing short of miraculous.



It's nearly ready, Auntie Sun.  
Please step inside.




L-little miss, ya think...  
if I lie down like this... this okay?

A woman with brown hair in a ponytail, wearing a shiny red bodysuit, is sitting on a white futuristic machine. She is looking towards the right. In the foreground, another person is lying face down on a similar machine, their head resting on a control panel. The room has large windows with vertical blinds. The lighting is somewhat dim, with blue accents from the machines.

Don't be so nervous, Auntie Sun,  
it hasn't even started yet.

Oh, oh.



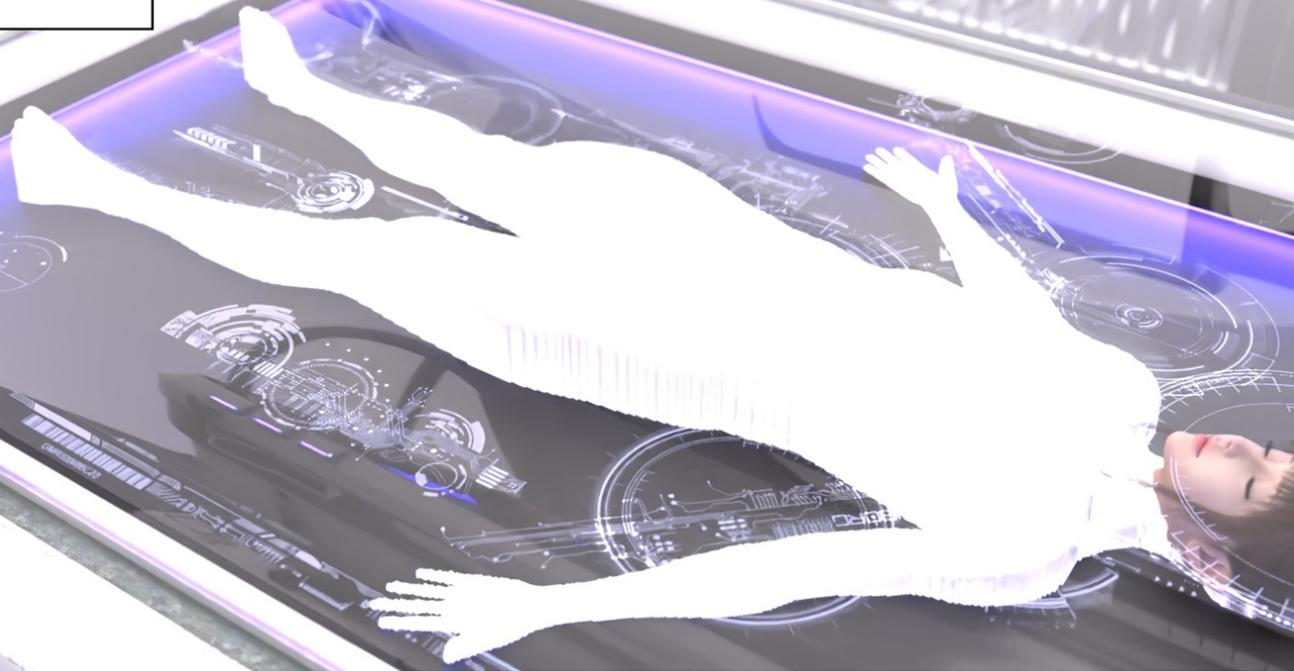
Just relax. Think of it like a regular check-up.

Though she said this lightly, Qingge's heart was still racing. It wasn't that she doubted her family's technology, but rather that she was filled with anticipation for the change to come

Auntie Sun, we're about to begin.

*\*Machine: Commencing body scan.\**

*\*Machine:  
Subject: Ye Qingge  
Biological age: 23  
Height: 165 cm  
Weight: 81 g  
No illnesses detected.\**



*\*Machine:*

*Subject: Sun Guifang*

*Biological age: 54*

*Height: 169 cm*

*Weight: 130 g*

*Multiple health conditions detected:*

*Fungal foot infection,*

*Chronic gastritis,*

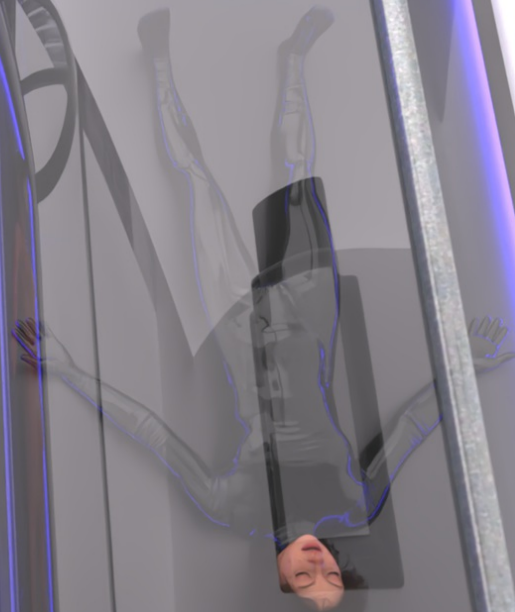
*Mild fatty liver...\**



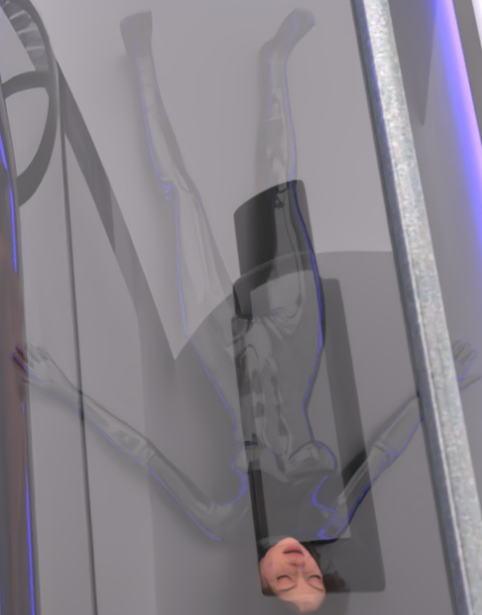
*\*Machine: Body data matching complete.  
Tissue correction commencing...\**



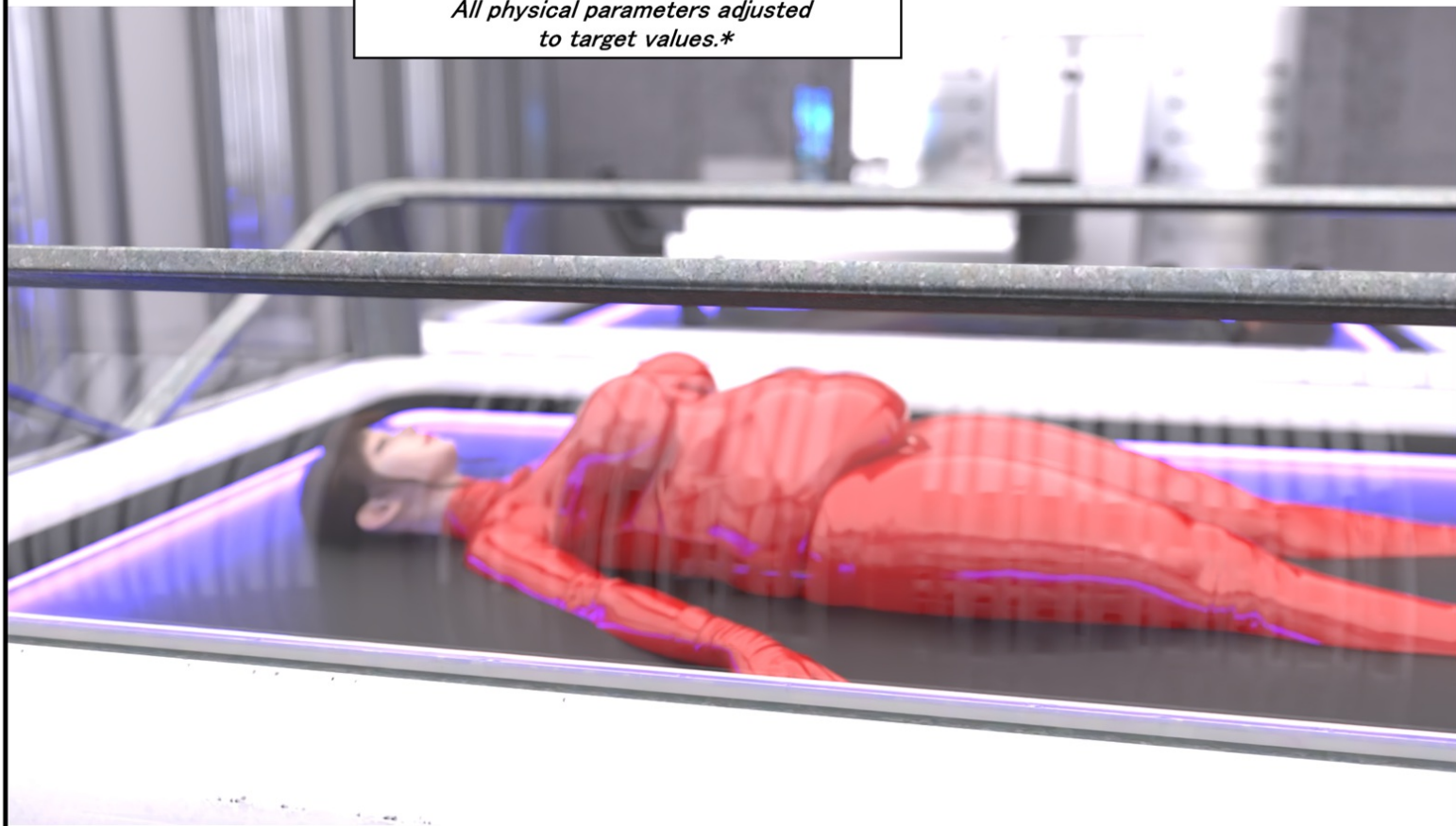
*\*Machine: Progress at 50 percent...\**




*\*Machine: Progress at 100 percent...\**



*\*Machine: Correction complete.  
All physical parameters adjusted  
to target values.\**





It's done... \*cough, cough\* my voice...  
it sounds like this now.

\*Cough\* Auntie Sun, you can get up now.


When Qingge spoke, she felt a strange tightness in her throat. The machine had altered her larynx as well, her vocal cords now thick and coarse, producing the same hoarse, low voice as Sun Guifang.

Lord above... this body feels so light!



And my voice! It's just like  
the little miss's!



A woman with dark, curly hair is sitting on a futuristic, glowing blue platform. She is wearing a black, shiny latex bodysuit that accentuates her physique. She has her hands on her hips and is looking down with a thoughtful expression. In the background, there is a futuristic interior with white walls and a glowing blue light strip. To the right, another person in a red suit is lying on a similar platform.

My waistline... not even when I was young was it ever this slim...

And these legs, I can lift 'em so easy and high, unbelievable.



\*Cough..\* Yes, Auntie Sun. The machine rebuilt your body structure to match my twenty-year-old state. Not just the appearance, your organs, your bones, everything is now like mine.



Ah, little miss, you... you sure you alright?

I'm fine, Auntie Sun. But could you give me a hand? Your body is heavier than I expected.

Qingge hadn't realized that under those loose clothes, Sun Guifang's actual weight was far greater than it looked.




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Don't worry, Auntie Sun. Quite an experience, isn't it?

Easy there, little miss.  
This body ain't like a young one

Little miss, your pretty face with  
my raspy voice... it don't match one bit.



What's wrong, little miss?

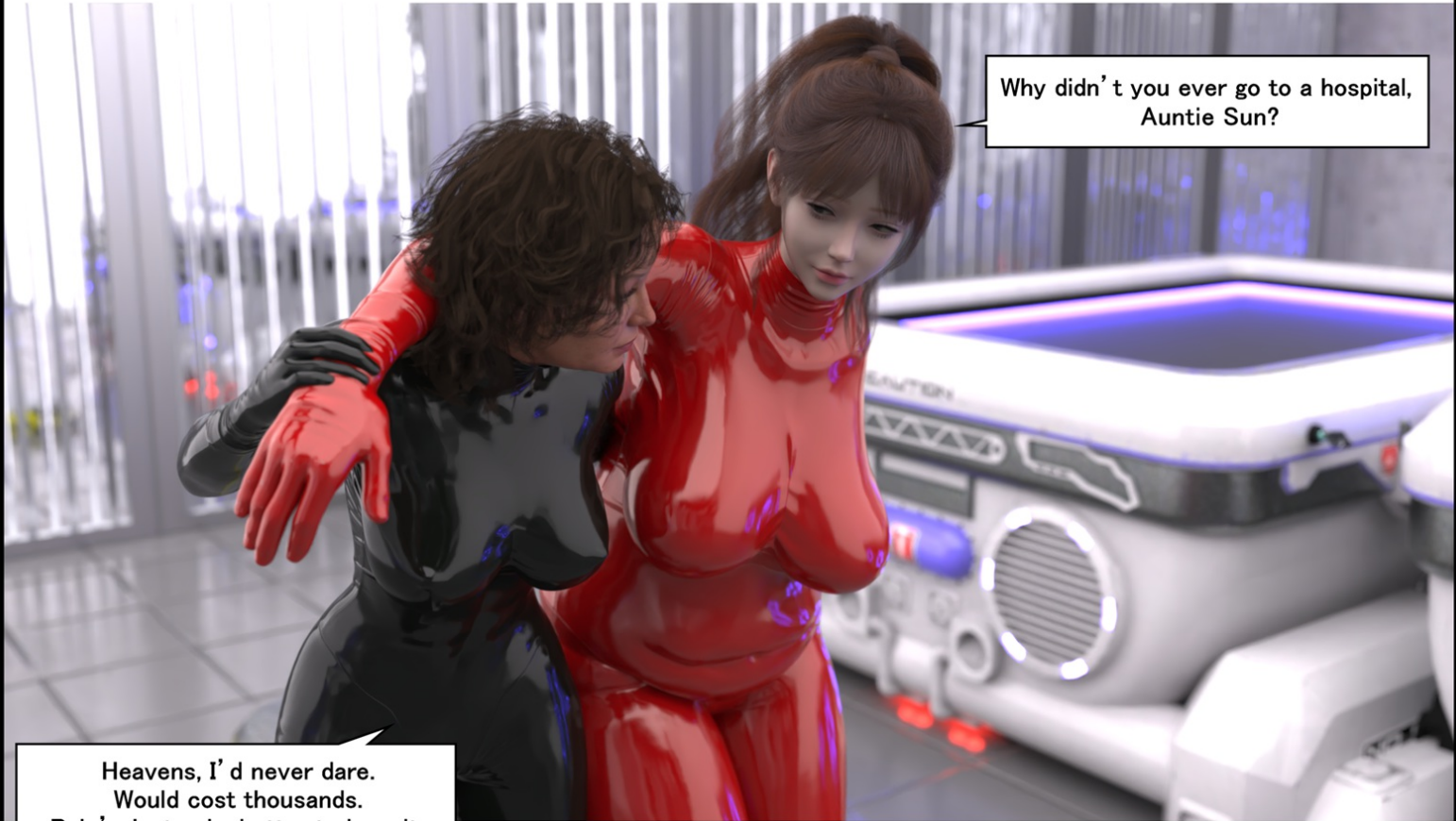
Ow!!

My... my waist hurts.

Ah, that's from years of farm work.  
Old injury.



Feels like lumbar strain or something.



Why didn't you ever go to a hospital,  
Auntie Sun?

Heavens, I'd never dare.  
Would cost thousands.  
Pain's just pain, better to bear it  
than spend that kind o' money.

This is really harder than I thought...



Little miss, I reckon we best stop this...  
I know well enough what this body feels like,  
and it sure ain't as light and fine as yours.




She looked at Qingge, now slightly hunched,  
her voice hoarse, her once slender figure sagging  
with obvious folds of flesh that shook with every  
movement. She felt a pang of guilt at letting the  
girl suffer like this.

Auntie Sun, you're really kind. But don't worry. I'll manage. You live like this every day, don't you? Once we change back, I'll use this equipment to fix your problems.



Alright then, Qingge, since you insist...



So what do we do next?

First, take off that suit, Auntie Sun.  
Then we'll use this machine to alter  
the skin so it looks like mine.

This suit... Lord, it's a pain to peel off.

Still, what a body this is!



Ah!

What now, little miss?  
You alright?

I-it' s fine, Auntie Sun, go on.

ASSEMBLY ROOM

Her scream came when she caught sight of her own hand. Though the skin was still smooth for the moment, the thick joints and heavy palms could no longer be called delicate or dainty.





She lowered her eyes further, her feet were broad, at least size 41. Soon, when the nanobots finished their work, those feet would be covered in calluses and dead skin just like Sun Guifang's.

Even standing as straight as she could,  
her shoulders hunched forward of their  
own accord.



The folds of fat at her stomach, the sagging breasts, every detail reminded her she no longer had the body of a twenty-two-year-old girl. She now inhabited the form of a fifty-four-year-old woman.

Little miss...

The tight suit had softened the shock before, but now, seeing the body fully exposed, the impact hit her hard. For a moment she wavered, what if she could never return?



Little miss!

Ah—Auntie Sun?

Why' re ya starin' off?  
What' s next?

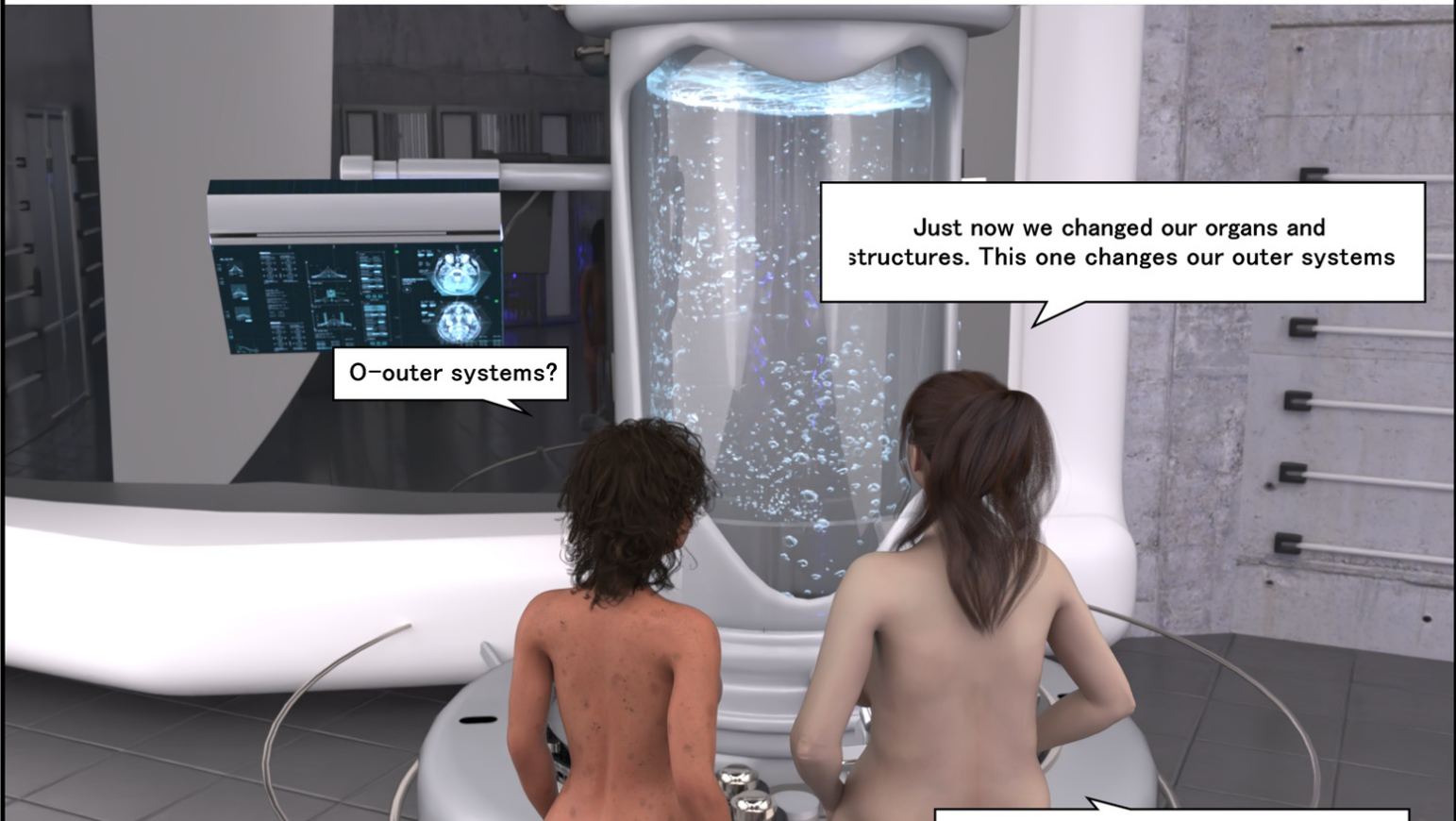
Her voice pulled Qingge back to reality.  
She told herself silently, this was only for one summer. She wasn't trapped forever.  
The fear she felt now was only because the change wasn't complete yet. Once she fully became Sun Guifang, she would get used to it.  
Thinking that, she felt the anticipation rise again





Ah, this is next, Auntie Sun.

This... what's it for?



O-outer systems?

Just now we changed our organs and structures. This one changes our outer systems

That means skin, hair, nails, and so on.

This machine already recorded my DNA. When you go in, it will make your skin identical to mine—even birthmarks will match. Then it'll record your DNA, and when I go in, it'll change mine to look like yours.

So... magical?

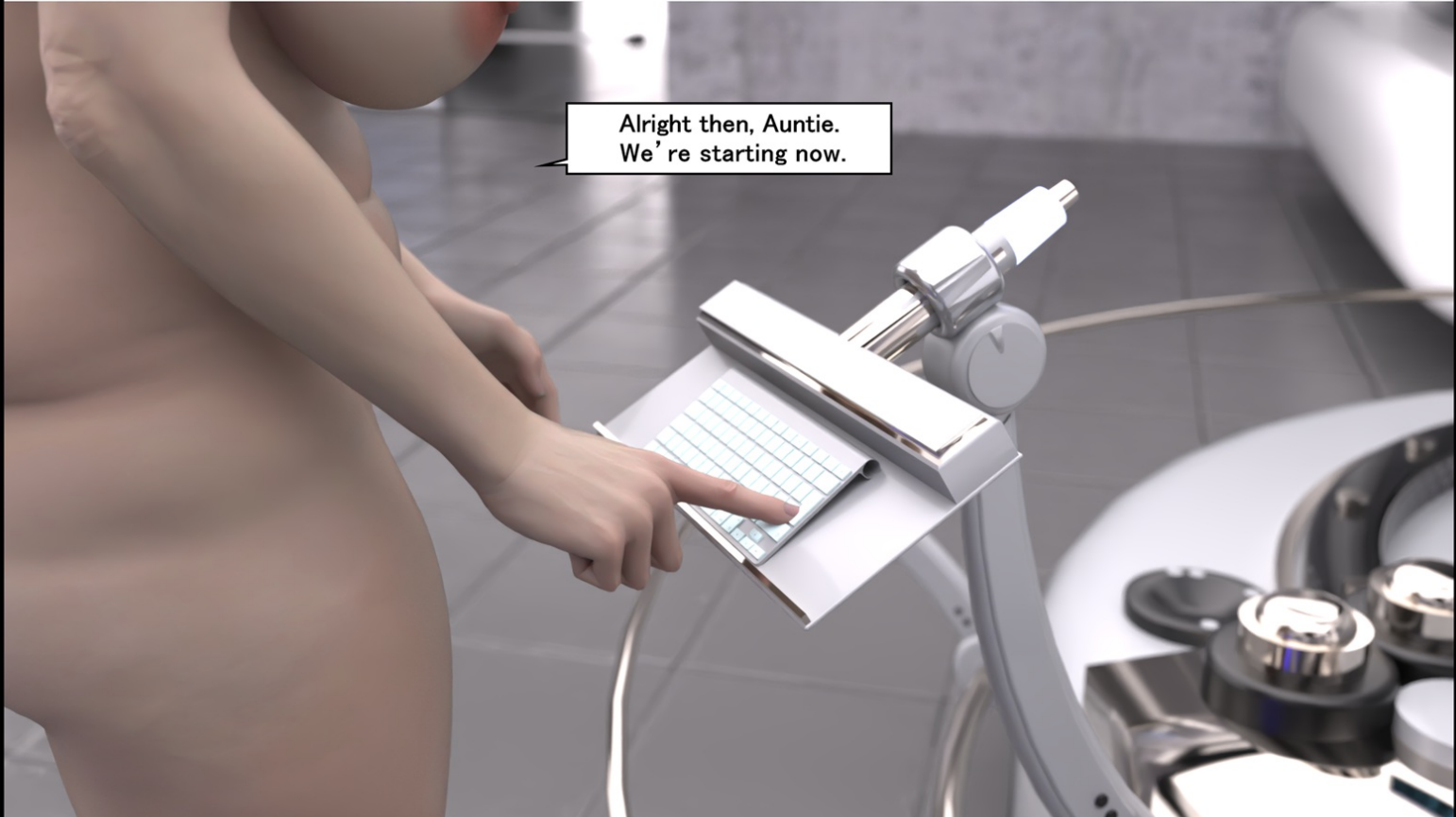
Alright, Auntie Sun, step inside.

Well then, guess I'll do as I'm told.

Auntie, don't be nervous. It's all liquid in there, but you won't run out of air.

R-really? That's amazin'.

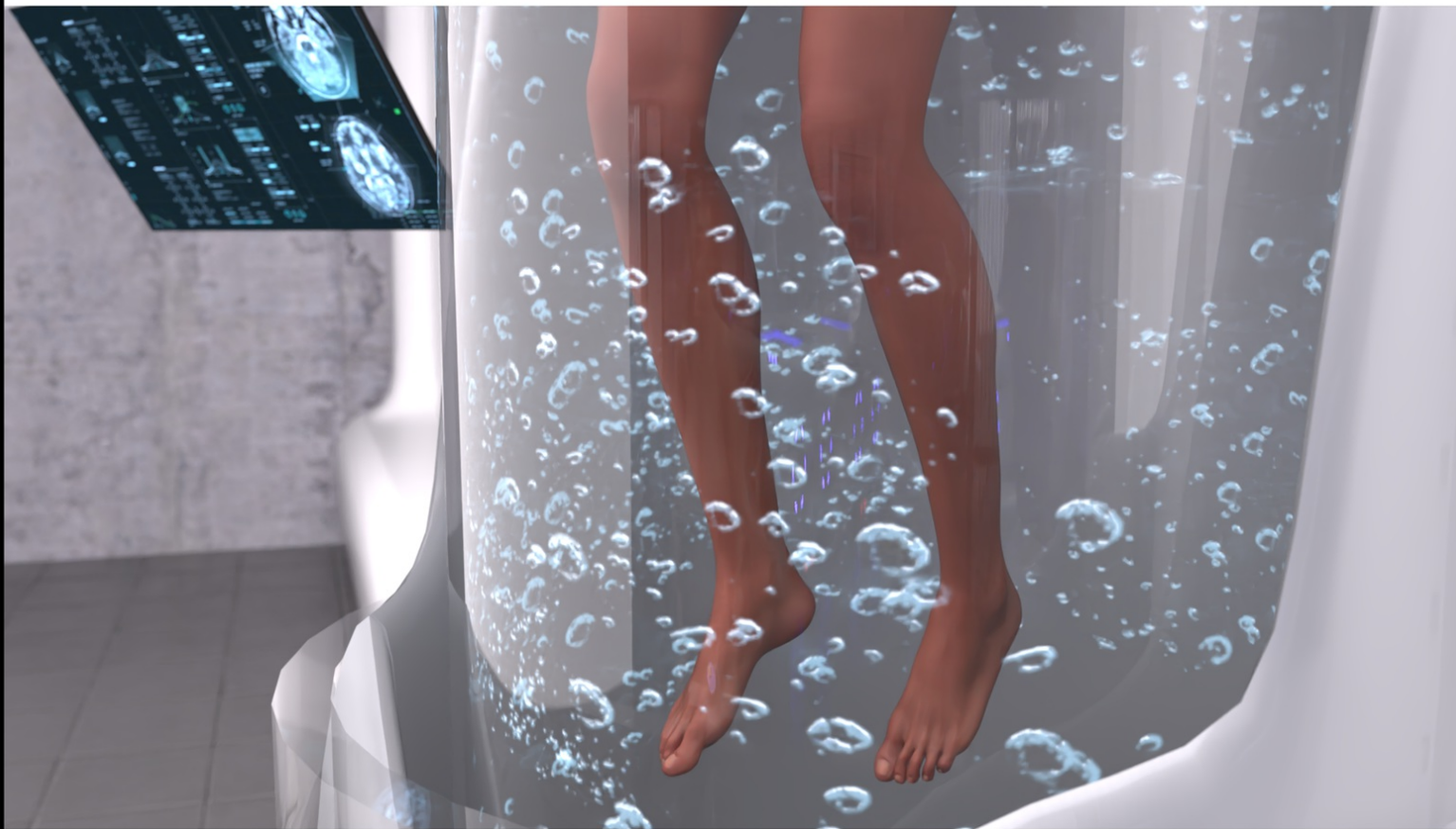




Alright then, Auntie.  
We're starting now.

As the machine whirred to life, the age spots and pigmentation on Sun Guifang' s skin began to slowly fade.





Within just seconds, they had vanished completely.

M-my spots...  
they're gone!

Next, her coarse hair fell away,  
replaced by soft, glossy strands.



Finally, her skin tone began to change. Pale patches spread over the dull yellow surface, as if someone were painting on a layer of delicate foundation.

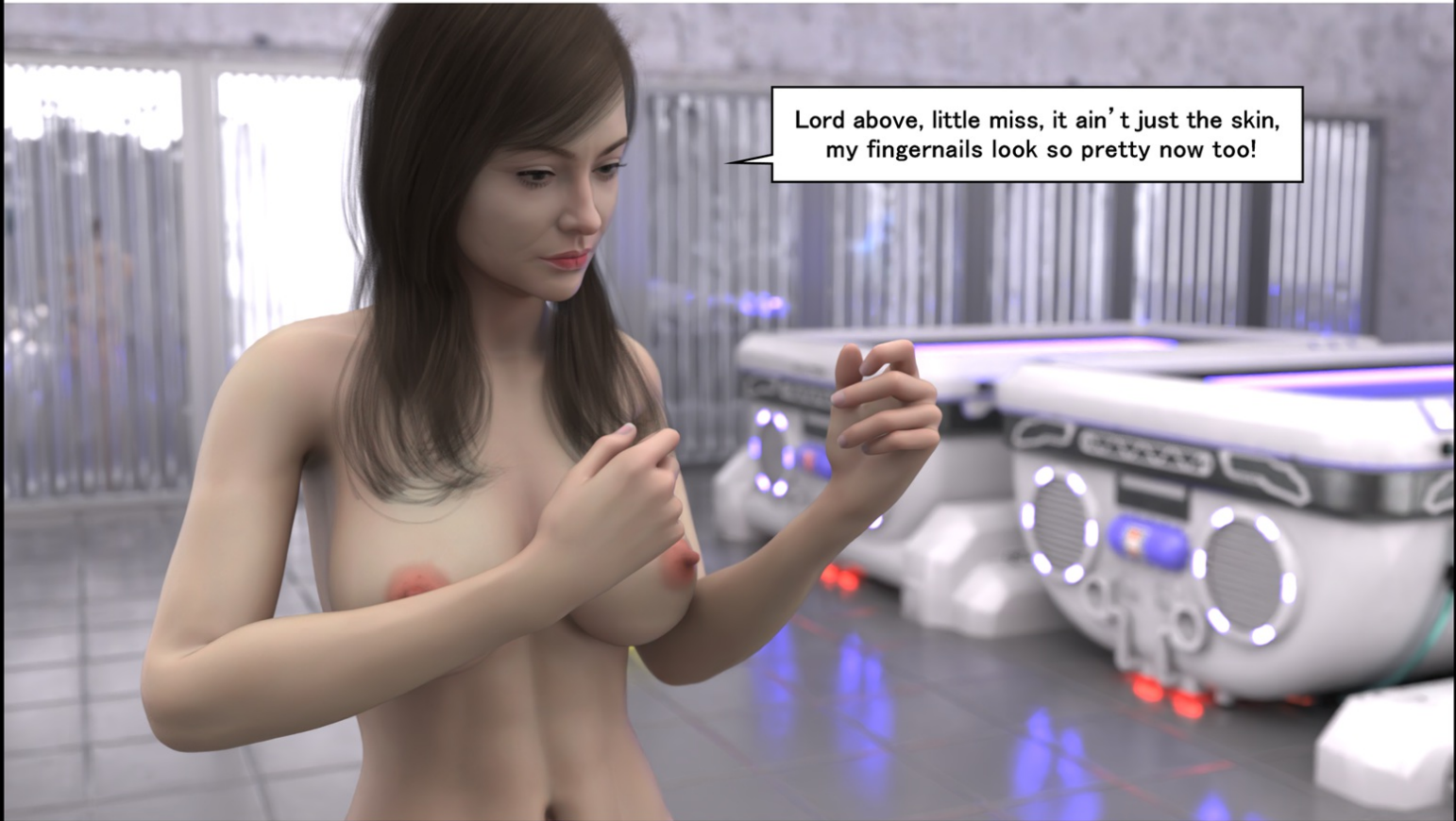




Ah!

Well, Auntie Sun, how does it feel?  
My skin's smooth, isn't it?




A 3D rendered character with long dark hair and a neutral expression, looking down at her hands. She is unclothed, with visible red marks on her chest. The background is a futuristic laboratory with white equipment and blue lighting.

Lord above, little miss, it ain't just the skin,  
my fingernails look so pretty now too!

The skin's so springy!  
The wrinkles on my face are much less!





Yes, though many of your wrinkles have faded, it's still not quite enough. Your face will get some extra treatment later. Now, it's my turn to change skin.



The moment Qingge stepped into the machine, her transformation reversed. Her once fair, delicate skin turned coarse and yellowed, as if years of aging had swept across it in an instant

Fine wrinkles crept over her cheeks, especially around her eyes and forehead. The smooth surface dulled, the glow gone, her complexion now sun-worn and uneven.

This feeling...

Qingge brushed her cheek lightly, feeling the changed texture. Age spots began to appear across the back of her hand, and the elasticity of her skin diminished sharply.



Her nearly hairless underarms sprouted thin hairs that soon thickened into coarse strands



Her glossy black hair started falling,  
replaced by dry, yellow, brittle strands  
stripped of their sheen.





Meanwhile, Sun Guifang was lost in marvel at her new body. Her skin now entirely matched Ye Qingge's, though faint wrinkles still lingered on her face.



Auntie Sun...

TON ROOM


Sorry, little miss, I got carried away  
starin' at myself... You done already?

Heavens, little miss!  
What happened to you?



This way, my voice matches my looks, doesn't it?





Mercy me, Qingge, you look...  
my age now!

Wrinkles on your face,  
and those spots!

Those lines and spots are exactly the same as yours just now, Auntie.

At this point, except for our actual faces, everything else about us has already switched

So by rights, you oughta be callin' me Auntie now.



No way, little miss, don't you  
go makin' fun o' me.



Haha, Auntie Sun, I'm not joking.  
We'll get to that soon enough.

For now, let's tidy things up a bit.




Little miss, are you sure 'bout this?  
You want me wearin' your clothes  
just like that?

Why not? Auntie, your body only suits  
this set of clothes right now anyway.

This outfit ain' t cheap, is it?  
Feels so smooth. Bet with labor  
cost and all, must be five hundred  
at least.



Pretty close, Auntie. The outfit, the sandals,  
and the belt altogether, just under fifty  
thousand.




How much?! F-fifty thousand?!

Don't move, Auntie, your hair's not tied up yet.

Lord Almighty, a single outfit...  
I couldn't afford that in two, three  
years even if I didn't eat or drink.



There, all done. Hair's tied.



Wow, just like this, if you went out,  
people would say you're barely thirty.

Really? ...Thank you, Qingge.

Alright, now I'd better put on clothes too.  
Auntie Sun, did you leave your things here?



Qingge, you really mean to wear  
the rags I just took off?

These are dirt-cheap from the  
street market, worn for ages,  
filthy as hell.



Auntie, look at me, inside and out,  
I'm already you. Even if there's sweat  
or stains, it's from my own body now.  
How could I possibly despise myself?





Stand steady then, little miss.

Well, Auntie Sun, those clothes fit you perfectly, don't they? If I wore my own clothes right now, people would probably think I stole them.



By the way, Auntie Sun, your socks, where are they? I didn't see you take them off just now.

Oh, I stuffed 'em in my shoes...

Are they in here?


Well now, little miss, lemme grab 'em for ya. These shoes... they're real dirty.



That won't do. You're the heiress now, you can't be doin' things like that.

Mercy me, little miss! You even tryin' to talk like me now? Don't go makin' fun o' me.






Haha, I'm not making fun of you, Auntie Sun.  
Since we're going to live each other's lives,  
I ought to practice a little, right?

But honestly, copying your Henan accent directly is a bit tough. Guess I'll still have to rely on technology for that later.



Auntie Sun, your socks are soaked through with sweat.





Ay, little miss, I told ya these clothes were dirty.  
Didn't expect nothin' like this today, so I didn't  
bother changin' before I left home.

You misunderstood me, Auntie Sun.  
I wasn't complaining.



I just meant, wearing such thick shoes must've been uncomfortable for your feet!



When I go back, I'll swap into lighter shoes.



You alright, little miss?

I'm fine, Auntie Sun. Just got dizzy for a moment when I stood up too fast.

Okay then, Auntie Sun. You see?  
We've pretty much completed the  
swap now.



But Qingge, how're we  
supposed to fool folks?



Look here, my face still don't look exactly like yours! And even if it did, I'm usin' your body but talkin' in my Henan tongue. Feels all wrong, don't it?

Since you mentioned it, Auntie Sun,  
sit tight a moment. I'll fetch something



Here, Auntie Sun, put this on.

What's this thing, Qingge?



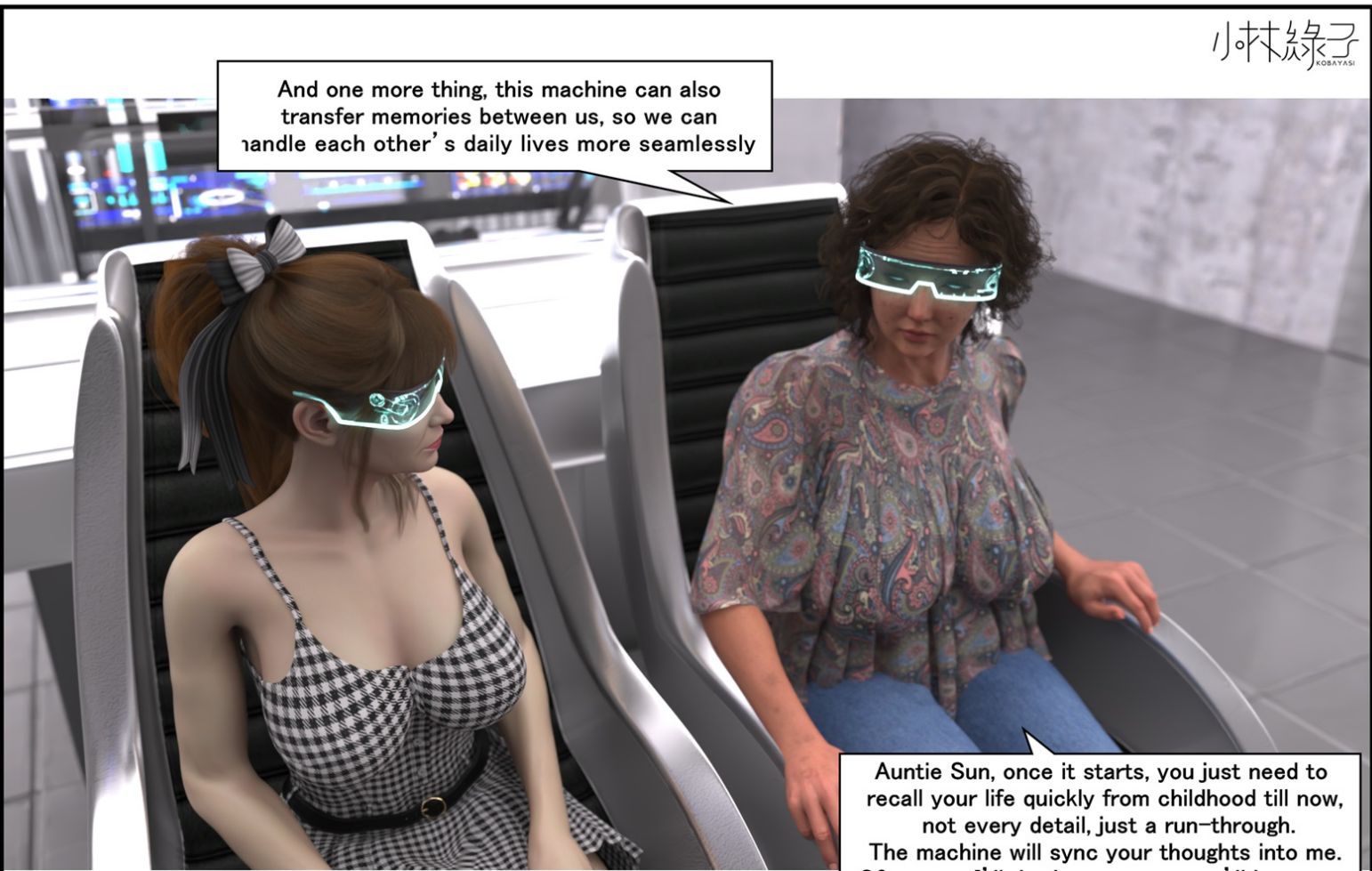
Adopt?

Yes. This device will help us adopt each other's habits and speech patterns, so we can live more convincingly as one another.

You mean I'll start thinkin' I'm you without realizin'? What's that even like

Exactly. This VR headset adjusts our subconscious. Unless we deliberately recall our old habits, we'll naturally speak and act like the other person.

You'll see soon, Auntie Sun.



And one more thing, this machine can also transfer memories between us, so we can handle each other's daily lives more seamlessly

Auntie Sun, once it starts, you just need to recall your life quickly from childhood till now, not every detail, just a run-through. The machine will sync your thoughts into me. Of course, I'll do the same, so you'll know my life as well.

I get it now.

Let's start.



When the machine began, Sun Guifang had expected to see Qingge's memories, but instead her vision filled with strange, shifting shapes and colors, accompanied by soft music. Not knowing what else to do, she quickly followed Qingge's instructions and began recalling the most vivid moments of her life from childhood till now.

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Half an hour later, the flickering in the headset ceased, and the process was over.

Is it finished?



Aye, all done. Little miss, how ya feelin' ?

Qingge lifted the headset, intending to ask, "Auntie Sun, how do you feel?" But the moment she spoke, even she was startled.



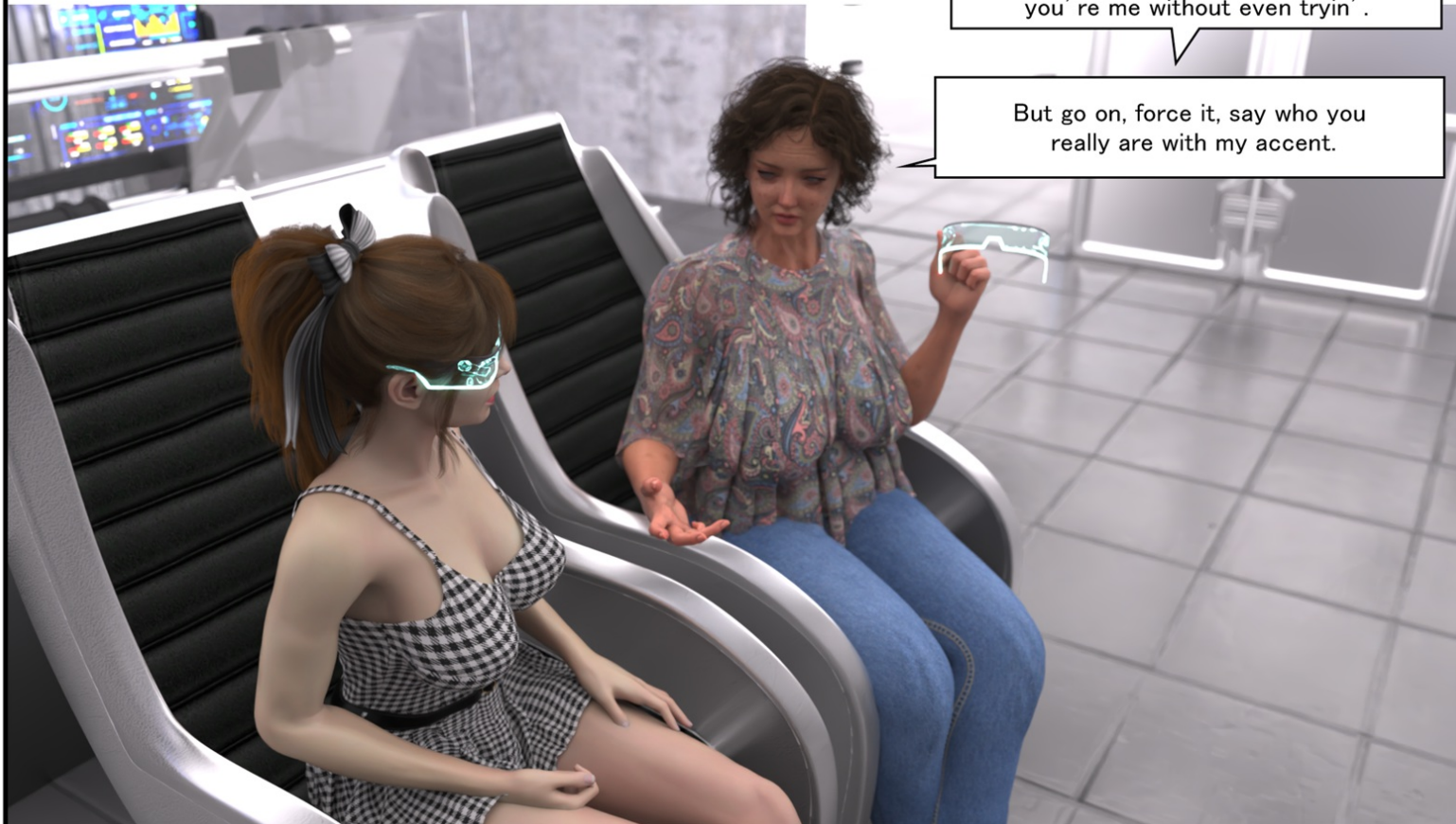
I... I'm... "Sun Guifang"?

The words spilled out in flawless Henan dialect. Her face flushed red. Though she had prepared herself, actually hearing her own voice speak like a fifty-year-old country woman left her embarrassed—and yet, beneath the shame, a strange thrill spread through her. The corruption of it excited her secretly.

It's alright, "Auntie Sun." It just feels like a flood of things rushed into my head, though I can't recall them clearly yet.



Wait! "Auntie Sun"? I' m... "Ye Qingge"?



Haha! Ain't it somethin', little miss?  
That's what I said, you'll start thinkin'  
you're me without even tryin'.

But go on, force it, say who you  
really are with my accent.

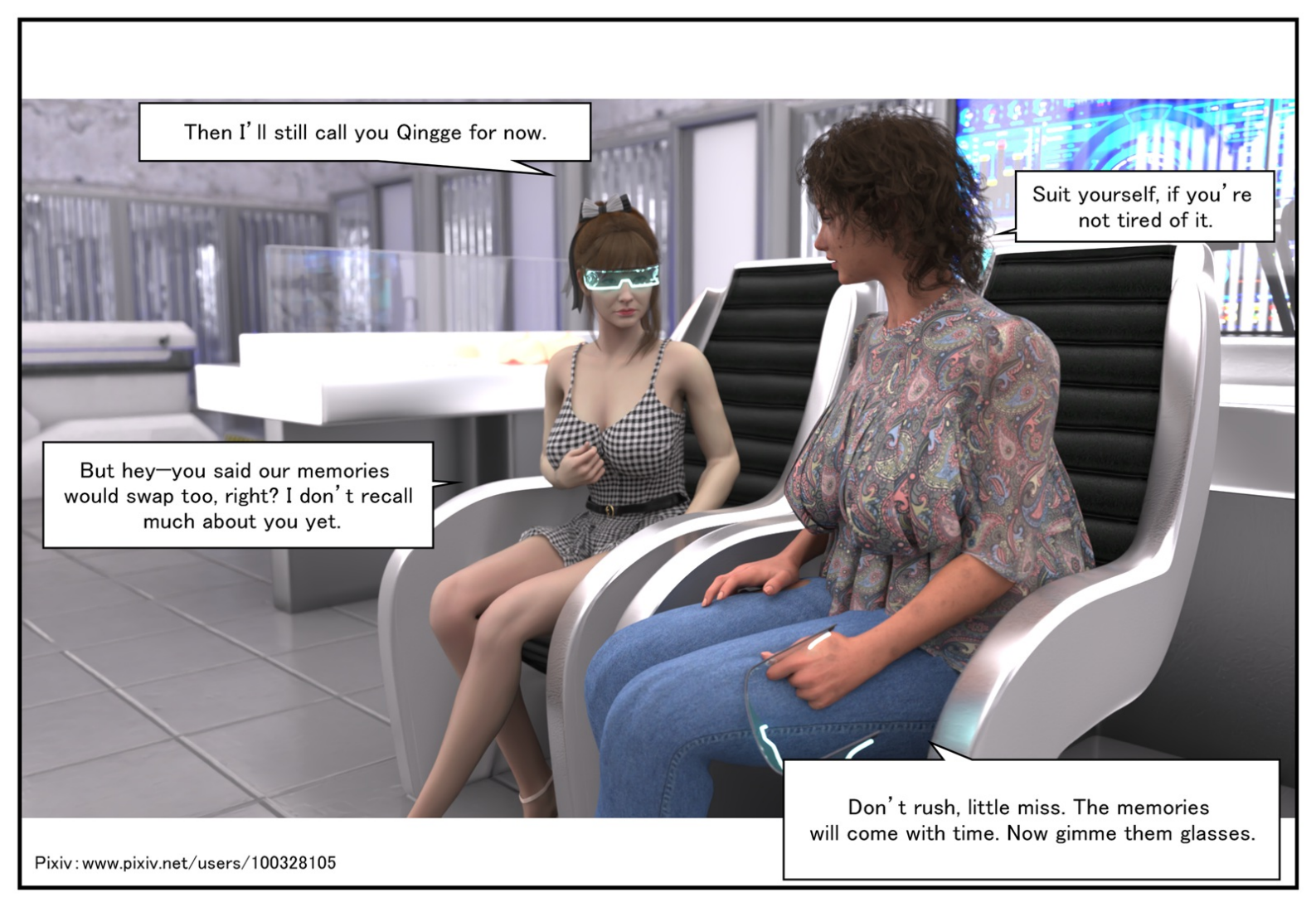
I... I'm Sun Guifang!

It's true, I can still speak Henan dialect when I try.

Yes, we still keep our old habits. It's just, unless we force it, they won't come out naturally.

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Her cheeks burned again. Though she had braced herself, saying such words in that rustic, coarse voice filled her with both shame and a secret, intoxicating pleasure.



Then I'll still call you Qingge for now.

Suit yourself, if you're not tired of it.


But hey—you said our memories would swap too, right? I don't recall much about you yet.

Don't rush, little miss. The memories will come with time. Now gimme them glasses.

This is fascinating, Qingge. Our way of speaking's completely reversed.



That's right! With this voice and this accent, nothin' feels outta place anymore!



Alright, no need to hurry. Step by step.

Well then, girl, time for the next step, makin' ya look even more like Ye Qingge!



Mercy me, who's callin' now?



Oh no, must be the school.  
Qingge, maybe let me take it...

Hearing the phone buzz in her pocket,  
Sun Guifang instantly guessed it was the  
school staff calling about her absence.  
It had happened before, but now she  
worried Qingge might not be able to handle it.



Director Li? What's wrong?

What, a student lost his keys?

Where am I? Oh dear, Director, I ate somethin' bad yesterday, spent all morning runnin' to the toilet, couldn't even stand straight, so I came to the hospital!

Don't be mad now, Director.  
Give me one more hour tops,  
I'll be right back!

Tell the student to wait a bit.

Alright then, I'll hang up.


Watching Qingge rattle off in heavy Henan dialect, spouting crude excuses, her gestures and tone like a real village woman, one would never guess this was once the refined heiress Ye Qingge.

Heh heh, little miss, how was that?  
Not a hint o' suspicion, he thought  
I was Sun Guifang through and through!



Just wait, once we swap faces too,  
I could stand right in front o' him  
and he still wouldn't know I'm not you!



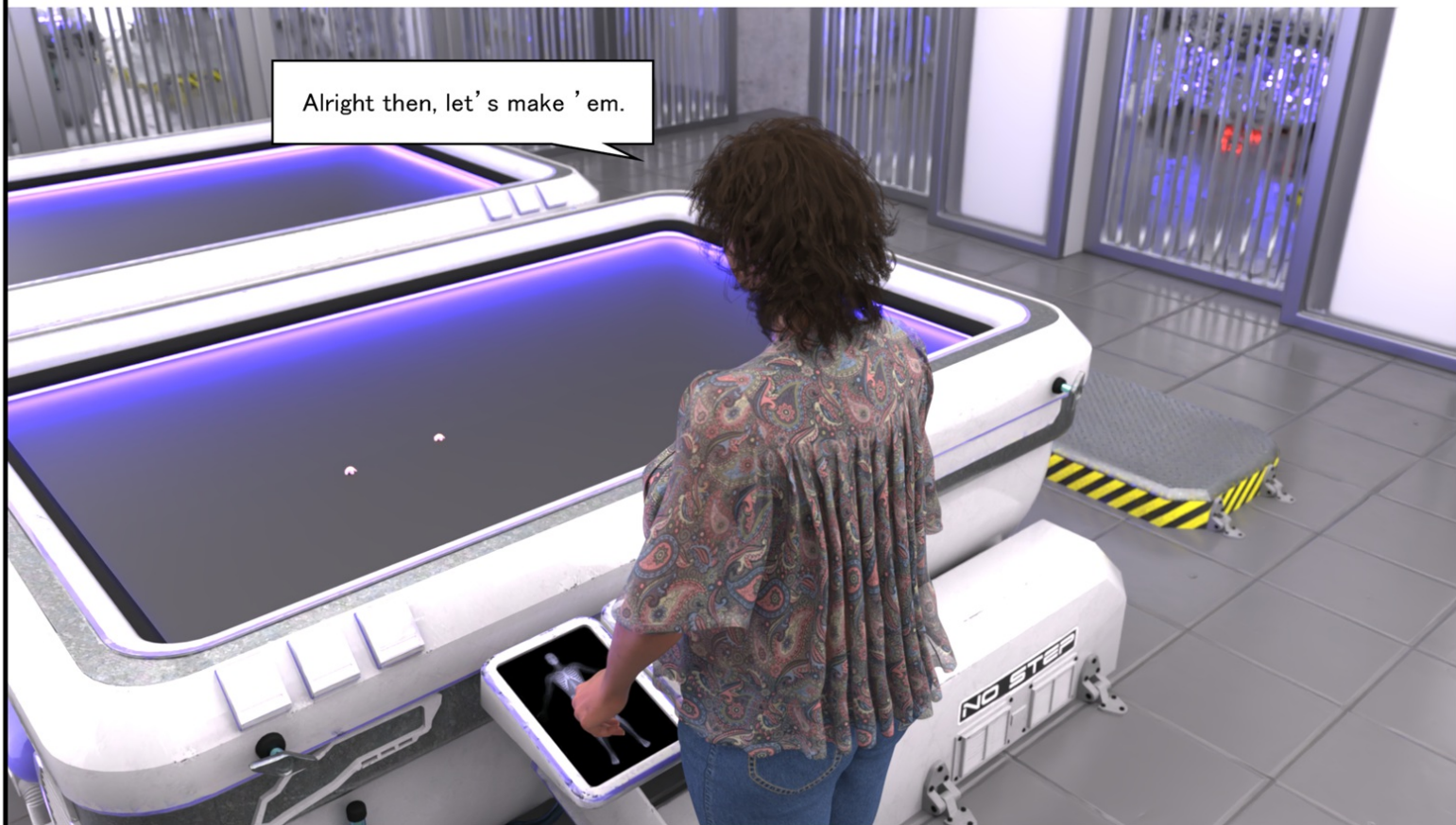


So Qingge, how do we switch  
our faces? Surgery?

No need. We'll use the same scanner as before, and it'll print out two masks that reshape our features.



Alright then, let's make 'em.



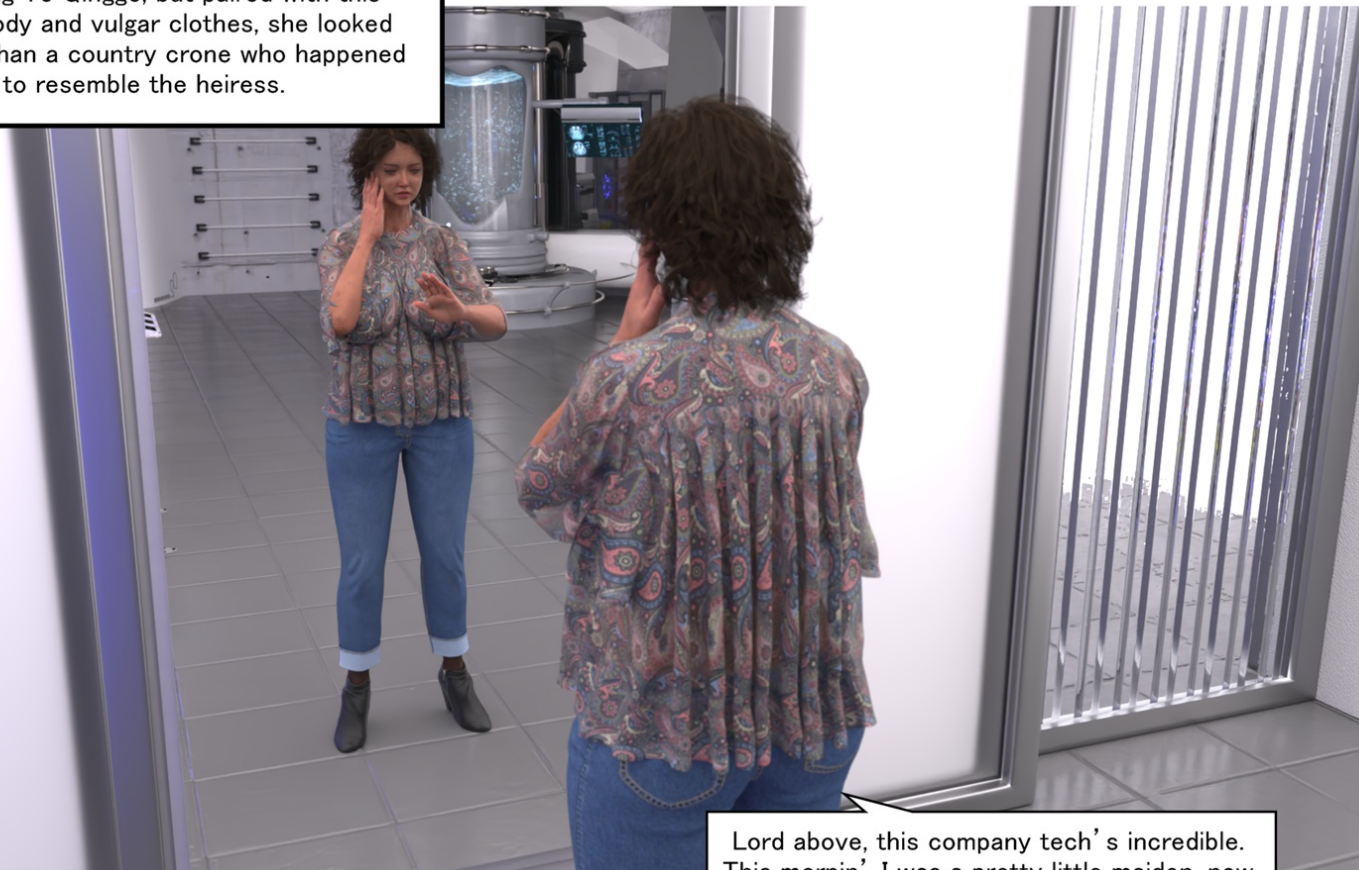
As the machine worked, Qingge turned and caught her reflection in the lab's wall mirror. What stared back was Ye Qingge's face, aged into Sun Guifang's bloated body, belly sagging, skin yellow and rough, hair brittle and dry.





She froze, drawn to the glass. Her footsteps heavy, clad in a cheap floral blouse, faded jeans, and worn-out blocky heels, her figure hunched and aged.

She studied the face staring back, still faintly resembling Ye Qingge, but paired with this shabby body and vulgar clothes, she looked no more than a country crone who happened to resemble the heiress.




Lord above, this company tech's incredible. This mornin' I was a pretty little maiden, now look at me, a worn-out woman of fifty!

Mother, look at me now. Would you still recognize your daughter? I wish I could see your face when you realize what I've become.



She lifted her calloused, roughened hand, a surge of vengeful glee rising within her. The thought of her mother fainting in fury thrilled her, quickening her heartbeat and even sent a strange shiver through her body.

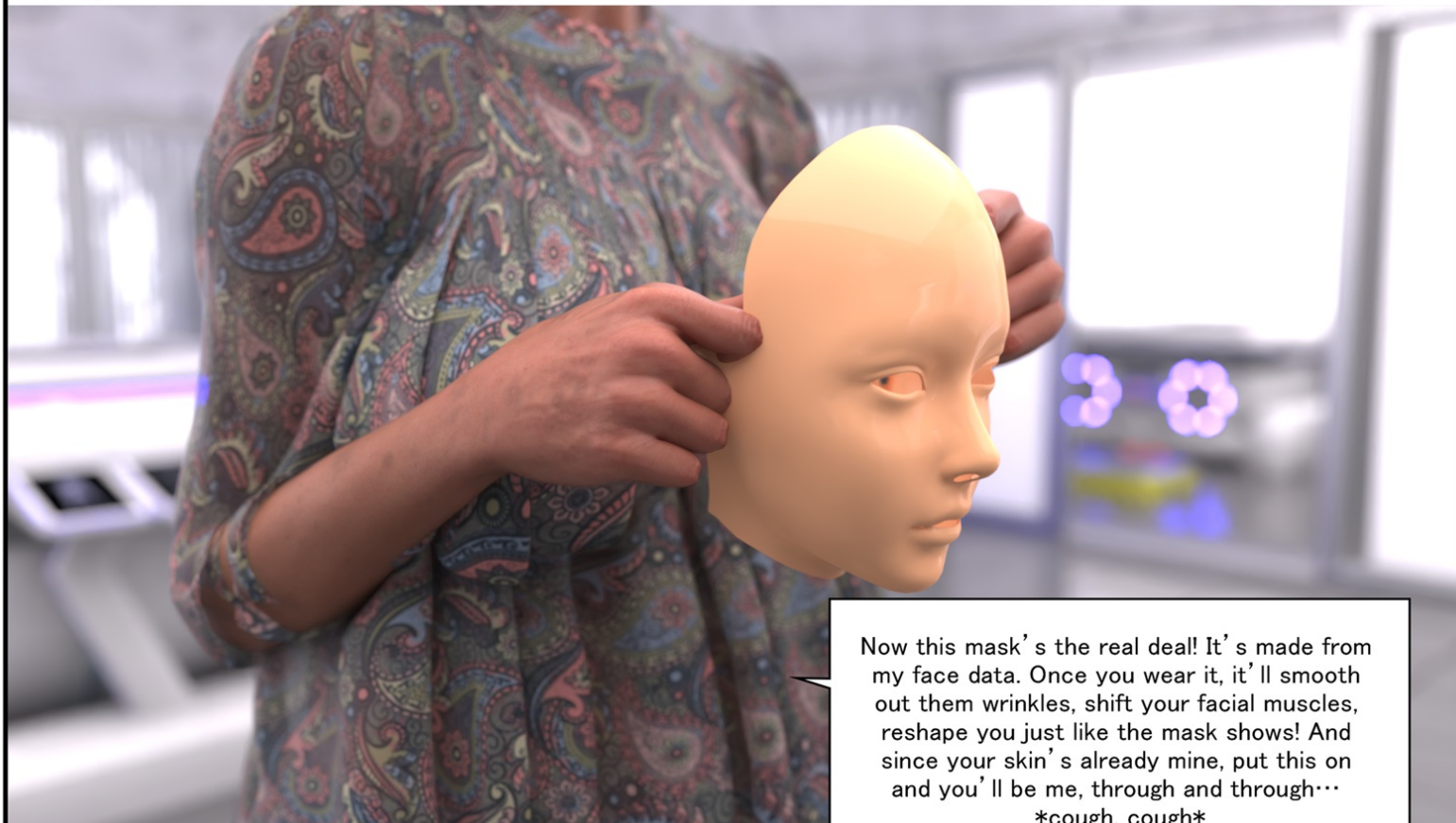


Little miss, tell me, like this, who'd ever believe I'm Ye Qingge? Once I put on that mask, even your mother'll have to call me "Auntie Sun"! Ha! Ain't that somethin'!

Yes... Qingge.

Sun Guifang still couldn't fathom why the girl took such joy in becoming ugly and old. Yet from her words, she sensed it was Qingge's way of striking back at her family. She still wondered, what hatred lay between mother and daughter? Perhaps soon, living as Qingge, she could find out.

*\*Machine: Print complete.\**




Now this mask's the real deal! It's made from my face data. Once you wear it, it'll smooth out them wrinkles, shift your facial muscles, reshape you just like the mask shows! And since your skin's already mine, put this on and you'll be me, through and through...  
\*cough, cough\*

Before she could finish, Qingge' s throat tightened, as if clogged by something thick.

A sharp itch rose in her windpipe.

\*Cough, cough—ugh, cough!\*

A woman with dark, curly hair and a colorful paisley top is shown in a futuristic, brightly lit environment. She has a distressed expression and is coughing. A speech bubble next to her contains the text '\*C-cough...\* damn...'. The background features a large, curved structure with vertical slats and blue lighting.

\*C-cough...\* damn...







Sun Guifang stared at the smear of phlegm Qingge had spat and smeared with her shoe. Her stomach churned, her brow furrowed. Though she herself often spat on the ground, seeing the once-refined Ye Qingge do it felt filthy to the point she almost turned away.

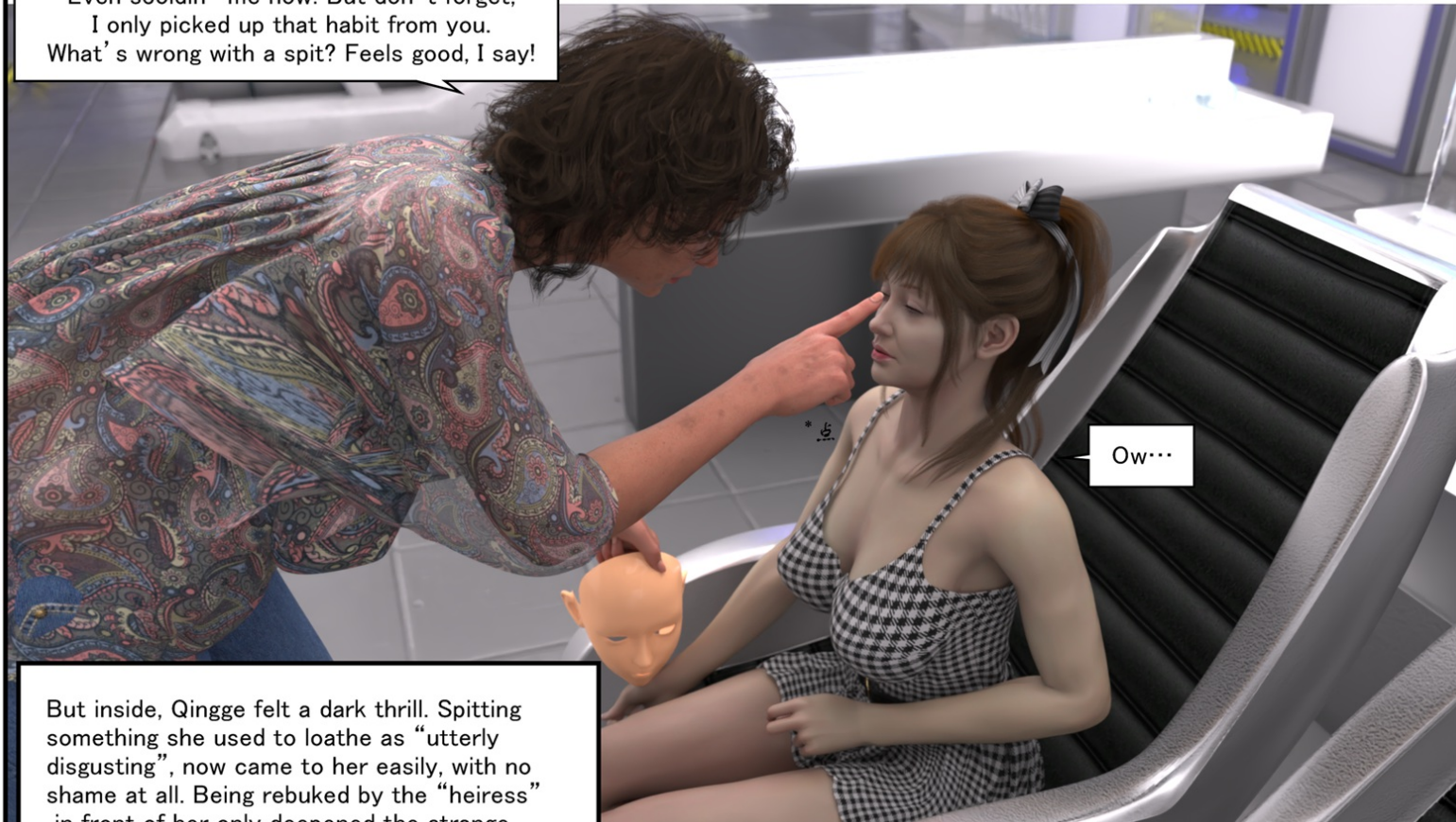
Cough... just had some phlegm stuck in my throat, couldn't stand it. I'm tellin' ya, once this mask is on, no one'll doubt you're the real Ye Qingge.



Qingge, this is your family's lab, isn't it?  
You spit like that here and smear it with  
your shoe, turns the place into a marketplace.  
That really isn't proper.



Heh, little miss, pickin' it up quick, huh?  
Even scoldin' me now! But don't forget,  
I only picked up that habit from you.  
What's wrong with a spit? Feels good, I say!



But inside, Qingge felt a dark thrill. Spitting something she used to loathe as “utterly disgusting”, now came to her easily, with no shame at all. Being rebuked by the “heiress” in front of her only deepened the strange excitement, as if she were mocking her old self.

Just you wait. Once this mask is on and I'm the lofty Ye Qingge, then you can sneer at us country folk for being crude all you like!



Isn't this stiff? How does it stay on?

Stick it to your skin, it'll fuse tight.

Like this?

That's it.



*\*Mask tightening.*

Alright then, sit still. I'll fetch mine too.



See? The mask's already working.

Feels prickly on my face.




Gradually, a strange sensation spread across Sun Guifang's skin, like countless tiny needles pricking into her flesh.

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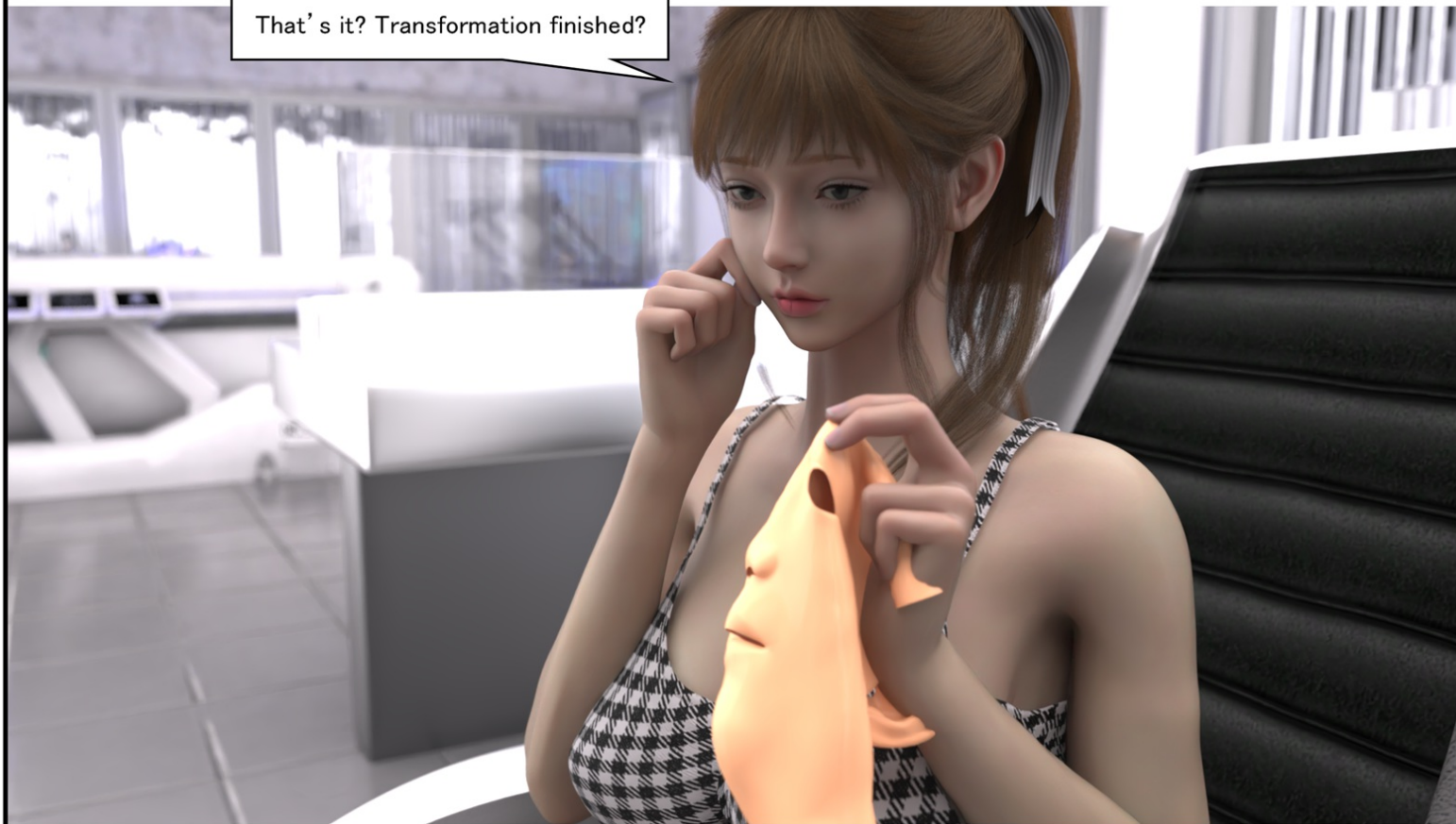
Is it done?

Yeah, go ahead and peel it off.

Just tug it the way I showed you.



That's it? Transformation finished?



Of course. Don't believe me?  
Look at me now.

Wow, Qingge... your face!

How's this? Who wouldn't take me for Sun Guifang?


That face... it's identical.



R-right... the mirror.

Go on, little miss, take a look at your new self!





Good heavens... this is my face now?

In the mirror, Sun Guifang saw the girl's reflection: Ye Qingge's delicate beauty, straight nose, moist lips, bright eyes, flawlessly duplicated. Even the spirit in her gaze was indistinguishable from the original.



That's you now. This transformation really is somethin'!


No one'll doubt it.



She turned toward Qingge. Her own old face now looked back at her, rough skin freckled with age spots, deep forehead lines, even the mole at the corner of her mouth. It was her, down to every flaw.

Qingge, you truly mean to give me this beautiful face, while you live with mine for over a month?






Oh, little miss... don't  
say it like that...

From now on, I'm Sun Guifang.  
And you are Miss Ye Qingge, the heiress.  
Don't you forget it.



I... I am Ye Qingge.



That's right. Don't worry, child, Qinge'll manage everything perfectly.


Yes, exactly so. That's my good girl.



Well then, Qingge, I'd best tidy up here and get back to the dorm before the bosses skin me alive.

You should ring home and let your mother know you're returning.

Alright, Auntie Sun. Thank you for cleaning up here.



Mother... it's me, Qingge.

About yesterday... I'm sorry.  
I shouldn't have talked back to you.

Yes, I know it was wrong of me to  
storm out in anger.



Very well, Qingge. Very well, Qingge. I am pleased you've reflected on matters. If you truly understand, then let us put it behind us.


You shall not pursue art further. You shall obey in all things, and attend the introduction as arranged.

Hearing her mother's voice, memories of the quarrel flowed naturally into Sun Guifang's mind. Only then did she realize: Qingge had swapped lives over something as trivial as this. Compared to her own lifetime of hardship, it was nothing.

Yes, Mother. I know I've been stubborn.  
I won't argue anymore.

I'm at school now, but I'll come  
home this afternoon. Whatever  
you arrange, I'll follow.

As she spoke, she admired her reflection,  
now moving and speaking exactly like the  
heiress. She even found herself anticipating  
the coming months of luxury.



Mother, from now on Qingge will do whatever you say.




Coming, Auntie Sun.

Qingge, I've cleaned up.  
Phone call done? Can we leave?



Nothing much. I just apologized.  
She asked me to come home early  
this afternoon.

So, what'd your mother say?




Hmph! That damned woman.  
After all she did, and still expects  
me to apologize?



But none of that concerns Sun Guifang.  
You're the one who'll suffer now, little miss.

It's alright, Auntie Sun. I'll handle it.



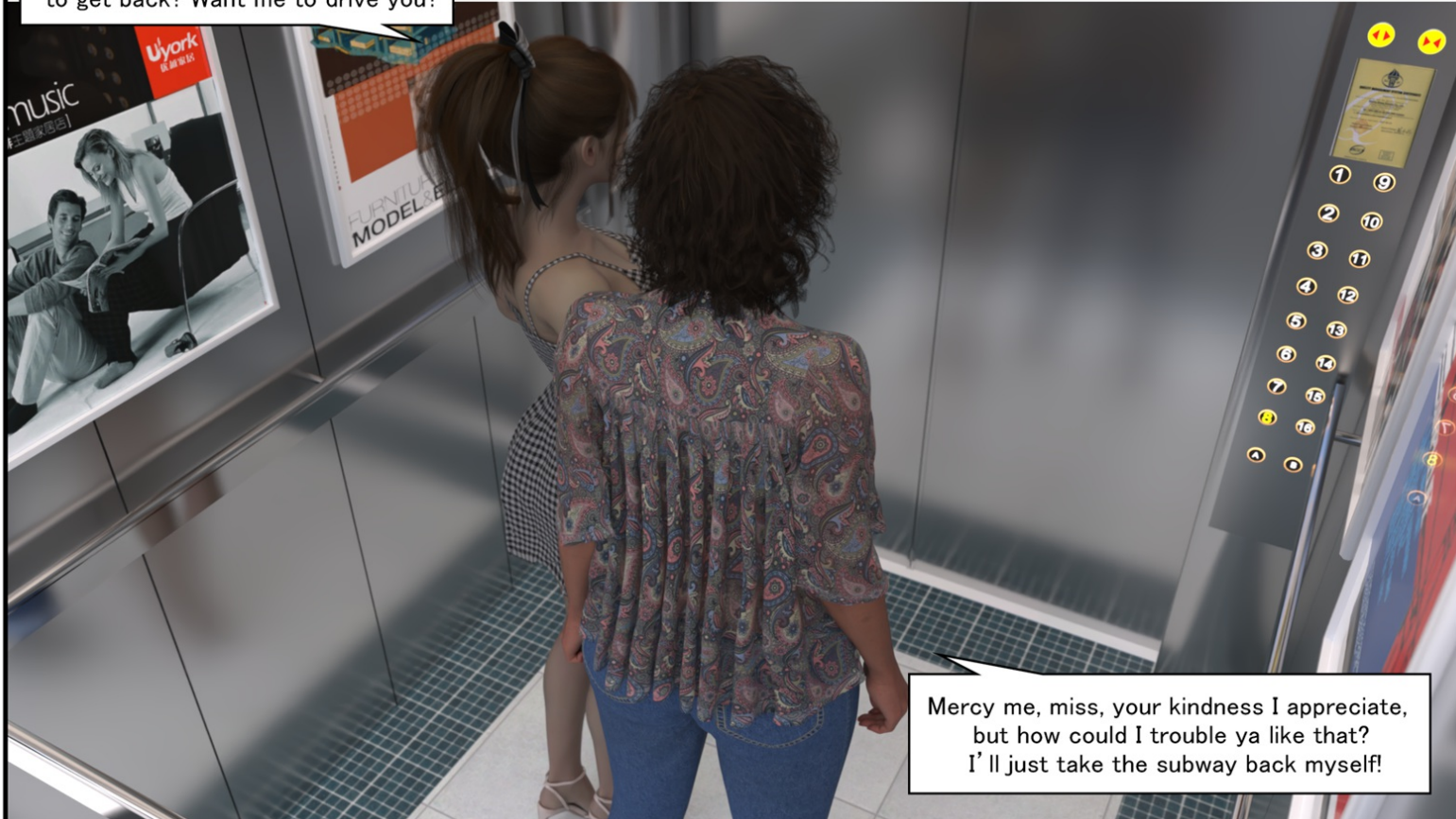
Hm? Auntie Sun, why've you been standing here so long without pressing the elevator?

Ay, little miss, this ain't my fault!  
This elevator's high-tech. Your hand works on it, mine don't do nothin'!

Ah, right. Forgot this one's got access settings.

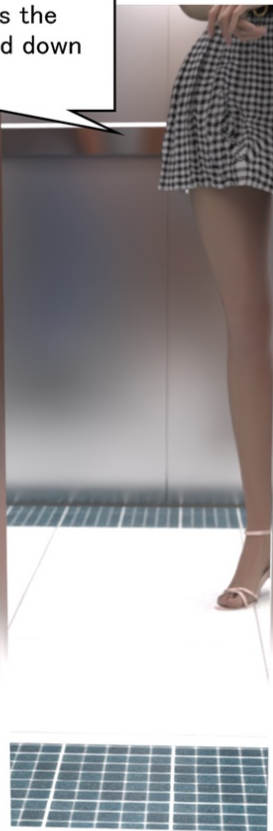


Auntie Sun, how're you planning to get back? Want me to drive you?



Mercy me, miss, your kindness I appreciate, but how could I trouble ya like that? I'll just take the subway back myself!

Alright then, Auntie Sun, here's the first floor. You go ahead, I'll head down to the parking garage.




Good then, Qingge. If anything comes up,  
just call me.

Don't worry, Auntie Sun.  
Nothing'll go wrong.

After saying goodbye, Qingge dropped the country accent and tried speaking in her own natural tone again.

Amazing. Auntie Sun's imitation was flawless.




Heh, but mine must be flawless too.  
“Perfect disguise” is the only word for it.

She lifted her eyes to the grandly decorated Ye Group lobby. Though she had walked through it countless times before, seeing it now through Sun Guifang's perspective filled her with unease—as though she had trespassed into a world that didn't belong to her.



So this is how Auntie Sun must've felt here...  
no wonder she was so timid and cautious at first.





Hey, auntie! Who are you looking for?  
It's the weekend, no one's working today.


Ah, uh... I... I...

What' re you mumbling?  
Auntie, what' re you here for?

Young man, I'm the dorm matron where Miss Qingge stays. She left in a rush this morning and forgot something. I came to bring it. If you don't believe me, she should still be down in the garage, you can go check.



Oh, I see. That's fine then, auntie.  
Just had to ask. Go on.

A 3D rendered scene showing a woman with dark, curly hair walking away from the viewer. She is wearing a patterned, short-sleeved blouse and blue jeans. In the foreground, the back of a bald man's head and shoulders is visible, looking towards the woman. The setting is a waiting area with several orange chairs in the background and a tiled floor. A speech bubble is positioned to the left of the woman.

Heh, thanks, young man.


Now, no one would ever mistake me for Ye Qingge. To everyone, I'm only Sun Guifang.



The realization struck her with a wave of corruption and thrill. Her mind reeled, and in her newly aged body she felt heat and dampness stir between her thighs, an itch born of forbidden excitement.




She had lost her beauty, her jade, white skin, refined features, hair like silk, all gone. In their place, a bloated body marked by time. Yet with that loss, she had also shed her chains: her mother's suffocating expectations, the weight of family duty, the suffocating etiquette of wealth. For the first time, she was free, not to please, not to perform, not to be the "Ye heiress."



Finally, a seat...

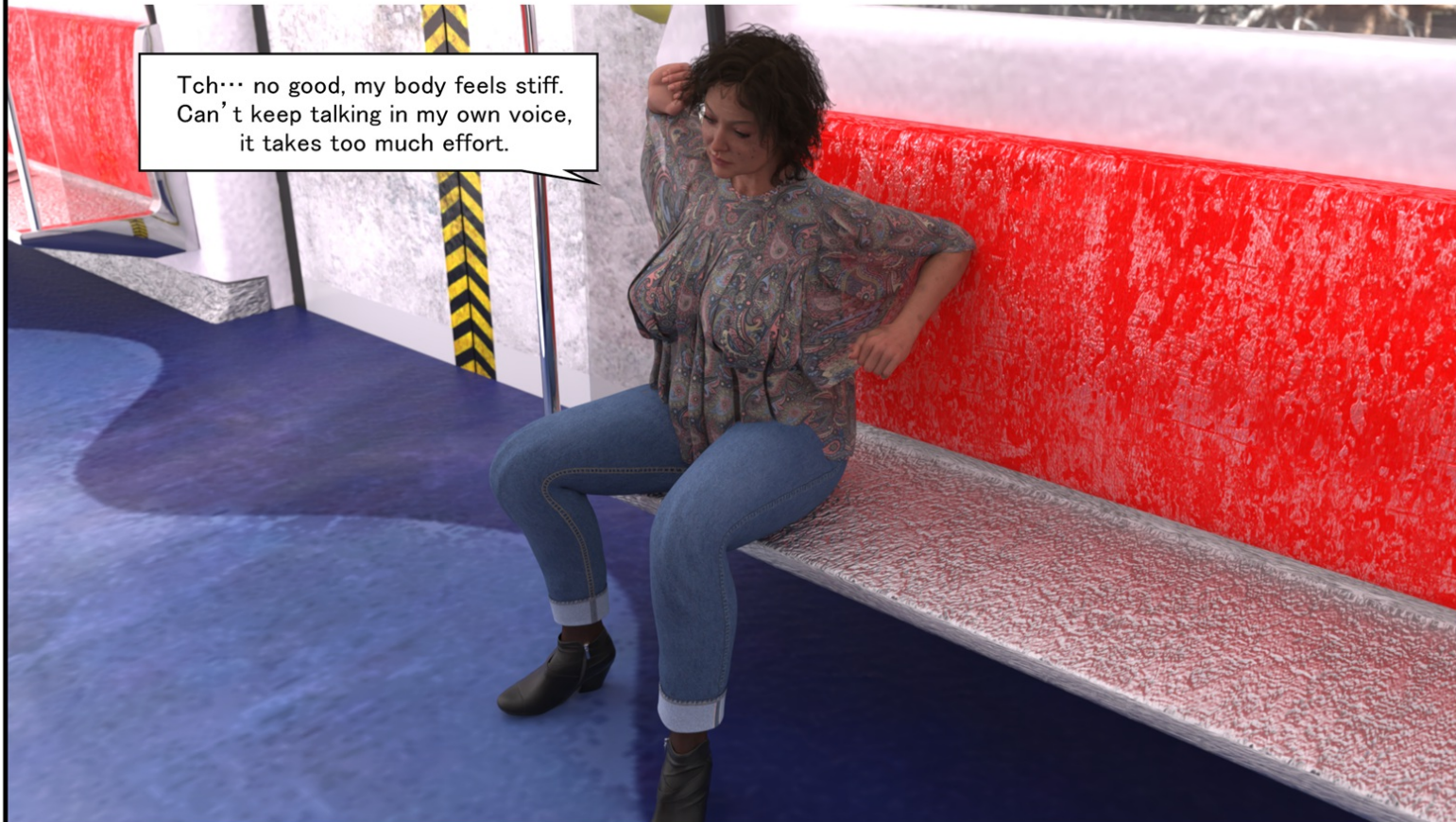
Auntie Sun's body gets worn out after just a few hundred meters. My back's killing me.



A woman with dark, curly hair is sitting on a subway bench. She is wearing a patterned short-sleeved blouse, blue jeans with white cuffs, and black high-heeled boots. The bench has a red backrest and a silver seat. The floor is blue. A speech bubble is positioned to her right.

Good thing she's used to riding the subway,  
or I wouldn't even know how to get back to  
campus.

Tch... no good, my body feels stiff.  
Can't keep talking in my own voice,  
it takes too much effort.



Better stick to Auntie Sun's habits.  
At least it doesn't drain my head so much.



Ugh, I' m beat... gotta close my eyes a bit...





\*Snore—snore—snore—\*