



WELCOME BACK. OUR TOP STORY THIS HOUR: TODAY CONGRESS PASSED THE JUSTICE FULFILLED ACT, WHICH REQUIRES CONVICTED FELONS TO ENTER THE FULFILLMENT PROGRAM.

FOR THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS, PRESIDENT FULMER HAS BEEN MEETING PERSONALLY WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO PRESS FOR ITS PASSAGE.

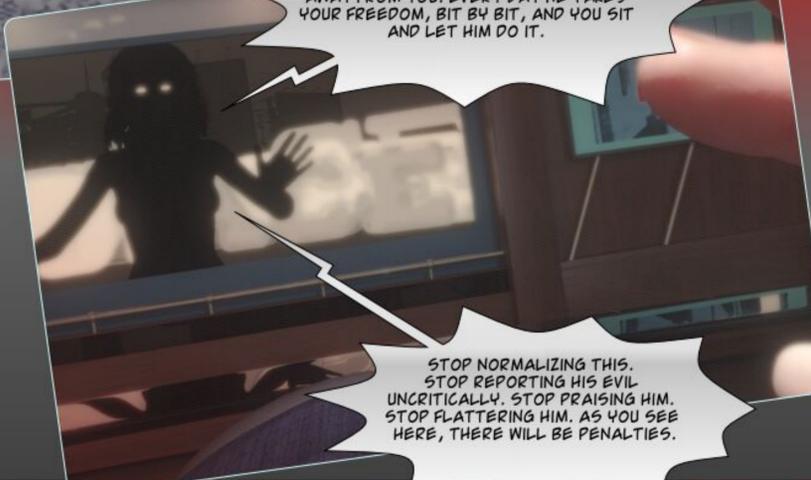
IN A RECENT INTERVIEW, THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT THE ACT WILL BOTH IMPROVE THE CRIMINAL SENTENCING PROCESS AND INCREASE THE WORKFORCE--



DIRK!!

DIRTY!

ATTENTION PLEASE. THIS IS SOLACE SPEAKING. THE TYRANT PRESIDENT TAKES MORE AWAY FROM YOU. EVERY DAY HE TAKES YOUR FREEDOM, BIT BY BIT, AND YOU SIT AND LET HIM DO IT.



STOP NORMALIZING THIS. STOP REPORTING HIS EVIL UNCritically. STOP PRAISING HIM. STOP FLATTERING HIM. AS YOU SEE HERE, THERE WILL BE PENALTIES.



IS HE OK?

CUT TO COMMERCIAL! CUT TO SOMETHING!

I THINK HIS AUGMENT WENT HAYWIRE!



OH SHIT-- AMBULANCE! HAS SOMEONE CALLED A FUCKING AMBULANCE?

SKIP, FOCUS! AN AMBULANCE IS ON THE WAY. YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING FOR HIM.

FIND LORNA AND GET HER ASS OUT HERE! BRING HER OUT NAKED IF YOU HAVE TO. WE'VE GOT TO PUT SOMEONE ELSE ON, NOW!



AND GET THAT SHIT OFF THE AIR!



MARY, DON'T JUST STAND THERE! WE NEED TO CUE UP FOR LORNA ...

I DON'T THINK SOLACE DID IT.

WHAT?

IT'S NOT THEIR STYLE. NOTHING THEY'VE DONE IN THE PAST SUGGESTS THEY'D DO ANYTHING LIKE THAT.

AND I DON'T THINK THEY'D BE STUPID ENOUGH TO DO SOMETHING THAT WOULD MAKE THEM LOOK SO BAD TO SO MANY PEOPLE.

AND I'M PRETTY SURE THEY DON'T HAVE THE TECH TO INTERCEPT A BROADCAST.

MARY! DON'T SAY THINGS LIKE THAT OUT HERE! YOU DON'T KNOW WHO'S LISTENING.

BUT I JUST--

NO! WE DON'T GO DOWN THAT PATH. USE YOUR BRAIN.

IF SOLACE DIDN'T DO IT, THEN THE POINT OF DOING IT WAS TO MAKE SOLACE LOOK BAD.

WHO WANTS TO MAKE SOLACE LOOK BAD? FULMER. AND HIS PEOPLE.

MR. KULK WAS AT A FIVE-THOUSAND-DOLLAR-A-HEAD FUNDRAISING DINNER WITH FULMER TWO NIGHTS AGO.

DO YOU WANT TO HAVE A JOB? BECAUSE I DO.



-- GRR --

I'M HOME! AND I'VE HAD A REALLY FUCKED-UP DAY. YOU WANT TO GET SOMETHING NICE FOR DINNER?

EDIE?

EDIE? YOU HERE? EVER CONSIDER TURNING A LIGHT ON?

ARE YOU OK? WHAT'S WRONG?

I GOT FIRED.

... OH, SHIT. WHAT HAPPENED?

EVERYBODY GOT FIRED. THEY'RE CHANGING TO FLATTOPS. GUESS THAT WAS COMING ... I MEAN, IT WASN'T LIKE THE JOB TOOK MUCH ...

AW, EDIE ... IT'LL BE OK. YOU'LL FIND SOMETHING ELSE ...

MARY ... I'M THINKING ABOUT TAKING FUL-FILLMENT.

EDIE, NO!

THAT'S YOUR BRAIN! THEY TAKE EVERYTHING THAT MAKES YOU YOU! YOU WANT TO BE A WORKER ROBOT? LOSE ALL YOU ARE? GIVE UP YOUR LIFE JUST FOR A--

--JOB? A GUARANTEED PLACE? NOT HAVING TO WORRY ABOUT ANY OF THIS SHIT ANYMORE?

NO, I WON'T. THERE'S BARELY ANYTHING ELSE LEFT. YOU HAVEN'T SEEN WHAT IT'S LIKE NOW. ALL THE JOBS THAT DON'T NEED ANYTHING SPECIAL ARE GOING TO THE FLATTOPS.

AND YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS. IF I'M OUT OF WORK, I'M GOING TO NEED TO GO ON SUPPORT ... HAVE TO GET A BLOCKER ... GET TREATED LIKE A CRIMINAL ...

I KNOW YOU HEARD ABOUT THE NEW LAW. HOW LONG BEFORE THEY PASS ONE THAT SAYS ANYBODY ON SUPPORT HAS TO TAKE FUL-FILLMENT? THEN I END UP THERE ANYWAY.

THERE'S NOTHING LEFT OUT HERE. I THINK THE ONLY REASON I'M STILL HERE IS YOU. AND YOU KNOW I LOVE YOU, BUT --

LATER



HEY, HOTPANTS! LOOKING FOR FUN? TWENTY BUCKS AND I'LL LICK YOUR BLOCKER TILL YOU SCREAM.

... I DON'T HAVE A BLOCKER.

OH, WELL, THAT'S EVEN MORE FUN. SAME LOW PRICE.

OR MAYBE YOU'D RATHER--

I'M LOOKING FOR SUELA.

...

CAN'T HELP YOU.

UH-HUH. WORD IS SHE OPERATES OUT OF THIS ZONE.

MAYBE THE WORD'S WRONG. YOU WITH THE ZAMS?

THE WHAT?

EXAMINERS.

HELL, NO!

WELL, EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT, IF YOU KNOW ANYTHING, YOU KNOW SUELA DOESN'T JUST SHOW UP FOR ANYBODY WHO--

WHORE!

END YOUR SINFUL WAYS, OR BE LOST TO GOD'S JUDGEMENT! DAMNATION AWAITS YOU ON THIS PATH!

AND YOU, HARLOT! DON'T ENCOURAGE THIS WICKEDNESS! GO, AND SIN NO MORE!



"HARLOT"? ARE YOU TALKING TO ME?

WHAT ELSE WOULD I CALL SOMEONE DRESSED LIKE THAT? WALKING AROUND FLAUNTING YOUR FLESH ...

YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH MY CLOTHES? YOU YELL NAMES AT ME BECAUSE OF MY FUCKING CLOTHES?

CHELSEA ... THIS IS A RED ZONE. YOU'VE BEEN WARNED BEFORE. YOU'RE OUT OF LINE AND YOU NEED TO STOP--



WELL, HOW ABOUT THIS?

HEY! WHAT ARE YOU-- GET AWAY!

--BEFORE YOU PISS SOMEONE OFF ENOUGH TO RETALIATE.

RRRRRRIP

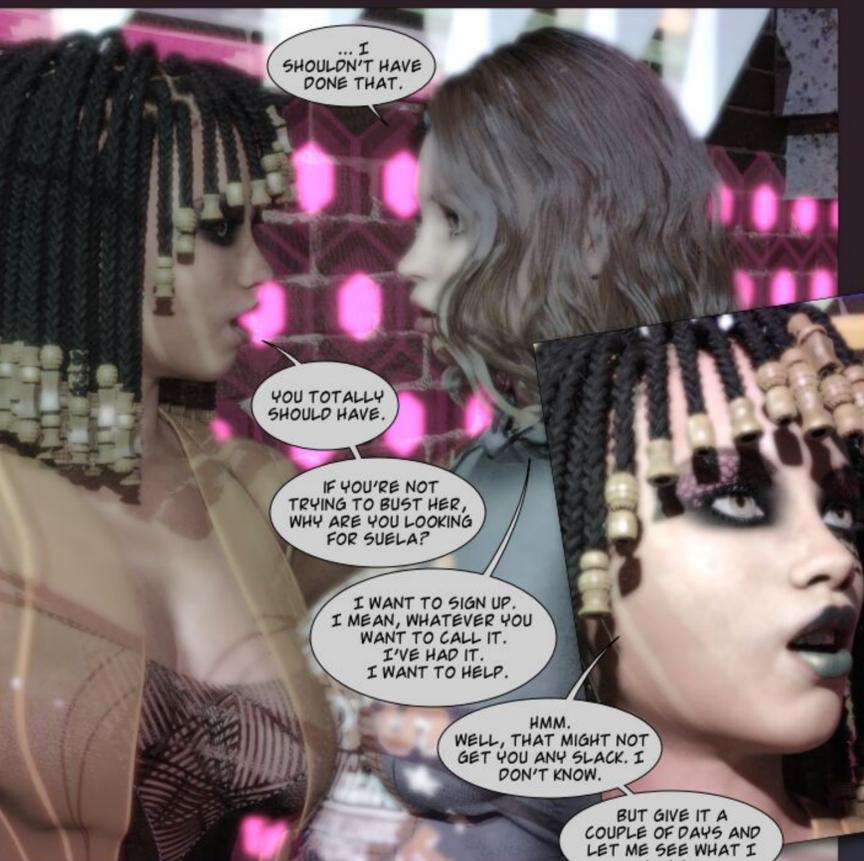


NOW WHO'S UNDERDRESSED, YOU GODGLICKING BITCH?

OOH! I DIDN'T THINK YOU JESUS PEOPLE WORE SUCH HOT UNDERWEAR! NAUGHTY! DOES YOUR REVEREND KNOW?

YOU BETTER CLEAR OUT BEFORE SOMEBODY THINKS YOU'RE LOOKING FOR TRADE!

AAAAAA!



... I SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT.

YOU TOTALLY SHOULD HAVE.

IF YOU'RE NOT TRYING TO BUST HER, WHY ARE YOU LOOKING FOR SUELA?

I WANT TO SIGN UP. I MEAN, WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL IT. I'VE HAD IT. I WANT TO HELP.

HMM. WELL, THAT MIGHT NOT GET YOU ANY SLACK. I DON'T KNOW.

BUT GIVE IT A COUPLE OF DAYS AND LET ME SEE WHAT I CAN DO.

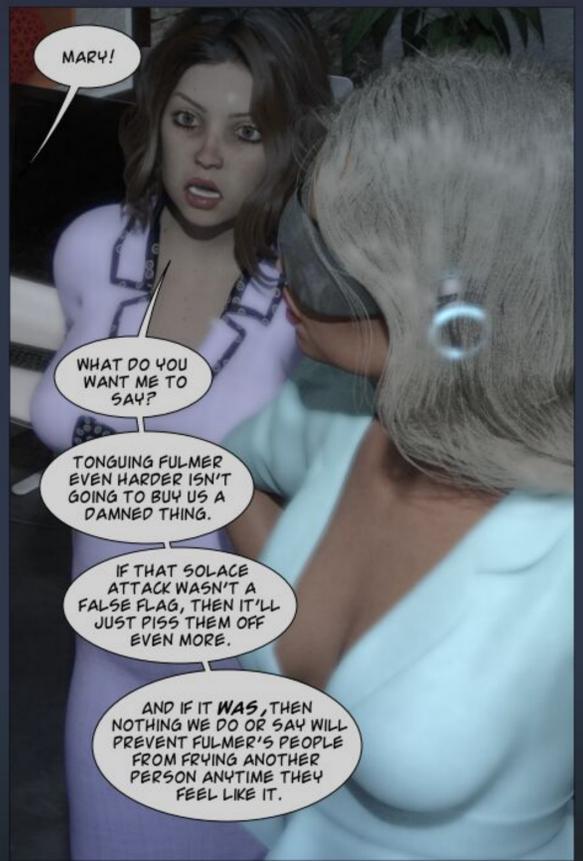
TWO DAYS LATER



OK, THE WORD'S COME DOWN STRAIGHT FROM MR. KULK.

WE HAVE TO EASE UP ON OUR COVERAGE OF FULMER.

"EASE UP"? SO WE NEED TO FIND A WAY TO GIVE HIM EVEN MORE OF A BLOWJOB EVERY NIGHT THAN WE DO NOW?



MARY!

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO SAY?

TONGUING FULMER EVEN HARDER ISN'T GOING TO BUY US A DAMNED THING.

IF THAT SOLACE ATTACK WASN'T A FALSE FLAG, THEN IT'LL JUST PISS THEM OFF EVEN MORE.

AND IF IT WAS, THEN NOTHING WE DO OR SAY WILL PREVENT FULMER'S PEOPLE FROM FRYING ANOTHER PERSON ANYTIME THEY FEEL LIKE IT.



MARY, FOR GOD'S SAKE!

I'M JUST TRYING TO KEEP THIS SHIP AFLOAT AS LONG AS I CAN.

WE ONLY HAVE TWO PEOPLE LEFT WITH NEWSREADER AUGMENTS, AND PAUL STINKS AT IT, AND NOW YOU WANT TO SCARE LORNA OFF?

VERA, WE'RE SCREWED NO MATTER WHAT!

WE MIGHT AS WELL SPEND WHAT TIME WE'VE GOT LEFT HANDING FULMER'S ASS TO HIM AS OFTEN AS WE CAN ...



ANOTHER CRAP DAY... I MIGHT NEED A DRINK.

EDIE, ARE YOU SITTING HERE IN THE DARK AGAIN?

HOW'D THE JOB HUNTING GO?

EDIE?

OH, NO.



THANK LESS BE MORE

DO WHAT YOU LOVE



--LISTEN TO ME!
WE DO ALL KINDS OF CHECKS.
SHE PASSED THEM ALL. SHE
MADE THE DECISION WHILE OF
SOUND MIND.

EXCEPT THAT'S
BULLSHIT, BECAUSE
NOBODY DOES THIS IF
THEY'RE IN THEIR
RIGHT MIND!

EITHER THEY BELIEVE
THE CRAP YOU PUT OUT
ABOUT THIS, IN WHICH CASE
THEY'RE FUCKING DELUDED, OR
THEY'RE LIKE EDIE AND SO
DEPRESSED THEY MIGHT AS
WELL BE INSANE--



LOWER YOUR VOICE!

WHAT, CAN'T
HAVE ME SCARING
ANYBODY OFF?

NO, BECAUSE
THIS IS A
HOSPITAL. AND
PEOPLE ARE
SLEEPING.

I REALIZE YOU'RE
DISTRAUGHT, BUT YOU'RE NOT
GOING TO CHANGE ANYTHING BY
SHOUTING.
IF YOU CAN CALM DOWN, I'LL
TAKE YOU TO SEE HER.



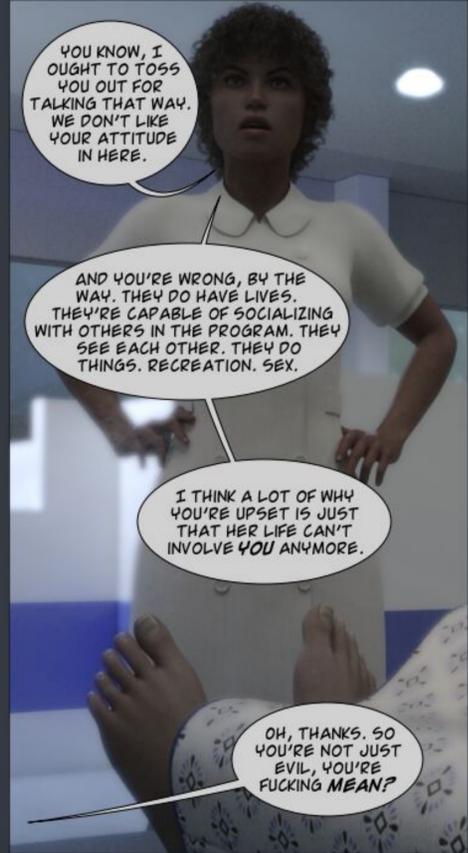
SHE'S RECOVERING WELL.
TOMORROW SHE'LL BE UP AND ABOUT,
AND WE'LL GET HER SET UP.
SHE'LL HAVE GUARANTEED
EMPLOYMENT, GUARANTEED
HOUSING--ALL HER NEEDS MET.

YEAH, AND ALL SHE
HAD TO DO TO GET THAT
WAS GIVE UP HER LIFE AND
HER BRAIN AND BECOME A
ROBOT.



WORK ALL DAY,
NEVER STRIKE,
NEVER FUSS, DO ANY
JOB YOU WANT ... AND
DON'T GET TO DO ANY
OF THE GOOD THINGS
AGAIN ... SLEEP IN A
CLOSET ... EAT MUSH ...
WHY BOTHER GIVING YOU
FOOD WITH FLAVOR?
YOU WON'T COMPLAIN.
YOU PROBABLY
WON'T EVEN
TASTE IT.

OH, GOD,
EDIE ... YOU
DIDN'T HAVE TO
DO THIS ... IT
WASN'T THAT
BAD ...



YOU KNOW, I
OUGHT TO TOSS
YOU OUT FOR
TALKING THAT WAY.
WE DON'T LIKE
YOUR ATTITUDE
IN HERE.

AND YOU'RE WRONG, BY THE
WAY. THEY DO HAVE LIVES.
THEY'RE CAPABLE OF SOCIALIZING
WITH OTHERS IN THE PROGRAM. THEY
SEE EACH OTHER. THEY DO
THINGS. RECREATION. SEX.

I THINK A LOT OF WHY
YOU'RE UPSET IS JUST
THAT HER LIFE CAN'T
INVOLVE YOU ANYMORE.

OH, THANKS. SO
YOU'RE NOT JUST
EVIL, YOU'RE
FUCKING MEAN?



-- SIGH --
OK, LOOK.

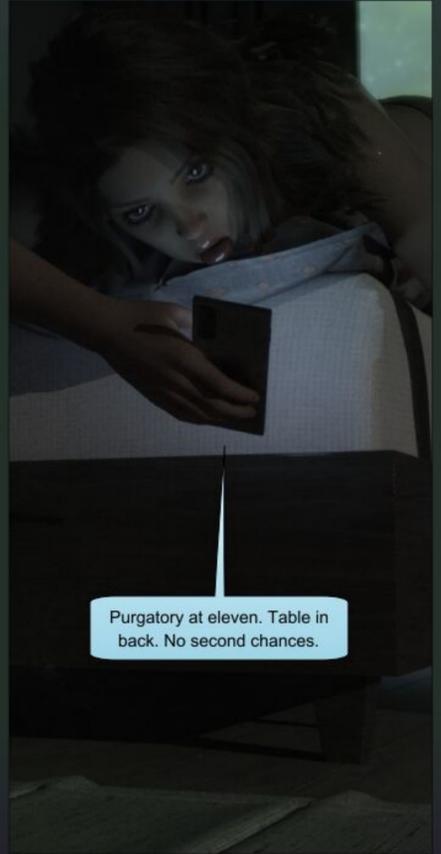
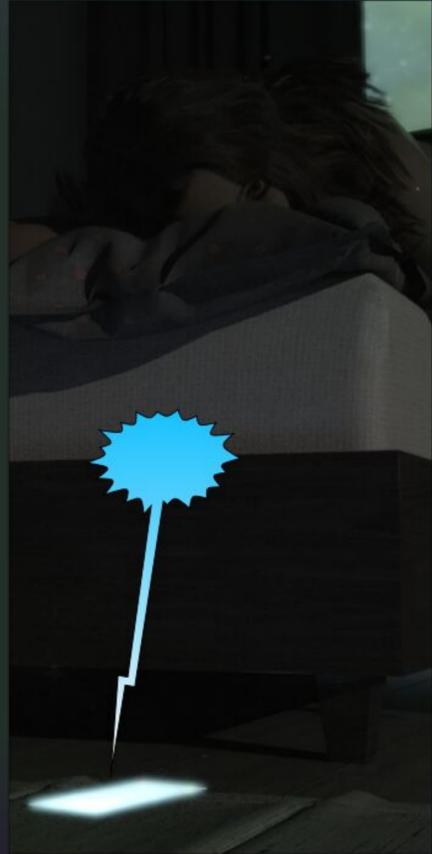
I DON'T
LOVE MY JOB.
MOSTLY I AGREE
WITH YOU. IT'S A
WASTE.

BUT IF I DIDN'T
DO IT, I WOULDN'T
HAVE A JOB. AND
THEN I'D BE IN HER
SITUATION.

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?
WHEN YOU TAKE AWAY ANYTHING
PEOPLE COULD USE FOR HOPE
--WHEN YOU DRIVE THEM TO
DESPERATION ON PURPOSE ...

SHE FELT THIS WAS THE
ONLY CHOICE THAT MADE
SENSE. THE SAD THING IS SHE
MIGHT HAVE BEEN RIGHT.

SHE'S GONE.
AND I AM SORRY. TRULY.
BUT YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE
TO ACCEPT IT.



Purgatory at eleven. Table in
back. No second chances.



YOU'RE
SUELA?

I MIGHT TAKE
YOU TO MEET HER
... IF I HEAR THE
RIGHT THINGS.

IRIS
SAYS YOU
COULD BE OK, BUT
THAT'S NOT GOOD
ENOUGH. YOU
NEED TO--

EVERYONE
STAY WHERE
YOU ARE!

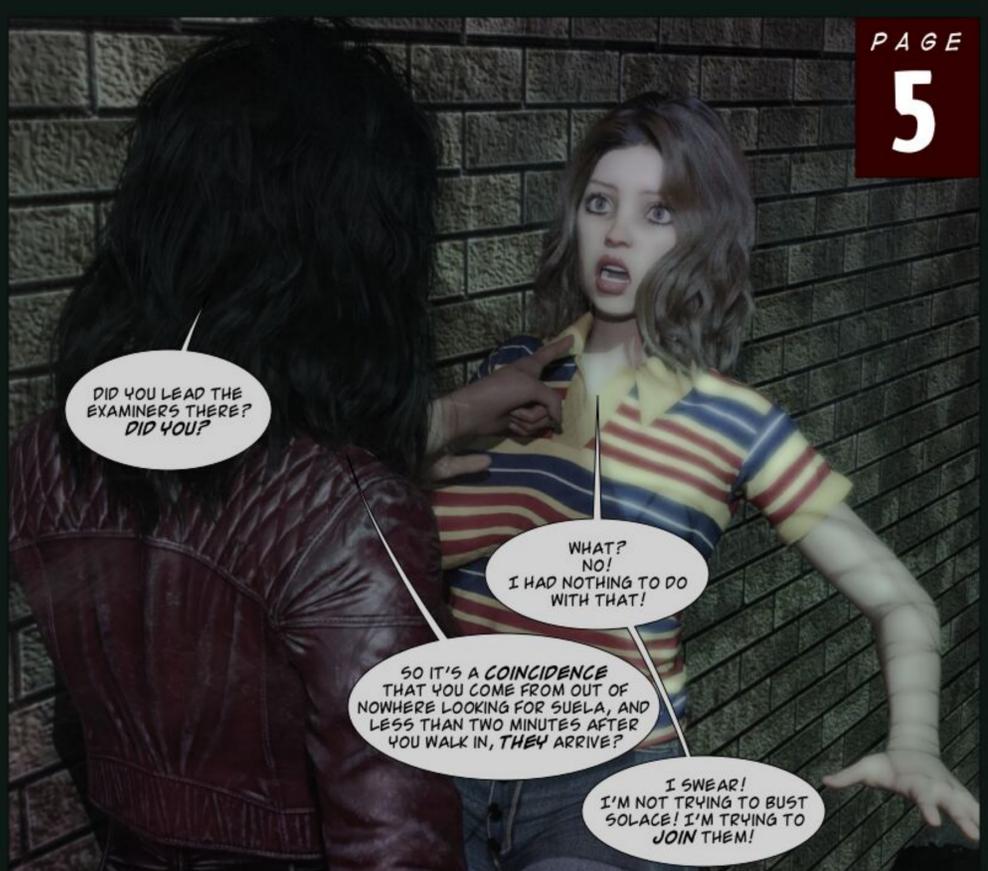
WE ARE
CONDUCTING A
SEARCH OF THE
PREMISES. YOUR
COOPERATION IS
REQUIRED.

FUCKING
ZAMS!

BACK DOOR!
NOW!



I THINK WE'RE CLEAR.



DID YOU LEAD THE EXAMINERS THERE? DID YOU?

WHAT? NO! I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT!

SO IT'S A COINCIDENCE THAT YOU COME FROM OUT OF NOWHERE LOOKING FOR SUELA, AND LESS THAN TWO MINUTES AFTER YOU WALK IN, THEY ARRIVE?

I SWEAR! I'M NOT TRYING TO BUST SOLACE! I'M TRYING TO JOIN THEM!



HM. WELL, IF YOU WERE TRYING TO BUST US, IT'S GOING TO BACKFIRE ON YOU.

THOSE ASSHOLES CATCH YOU WITH ANY OF US, THEY WON'T BOTHER SORTING OUT WHETHER YOU WERE ONE OF US TOO. THEY'LL JUST HAUL YOU IN AS WELL. AND THESE DAYS PEOPLE DON'T USUALLY COME BACK FROM THAT.

IRIS, WE'D BETTER SEPARATE. YOU CAN PROBABLY SNEAK OUT THE FRONT WAY. THEY WEREN'T LOOKING FOR YOU. BUT BE CAREFUL.

ALWAYS.



THIS BUILDING'S FALLING APART. THERE'S A WAY OUT THROUGH THE RUBBLE IN THE BACK.



IT'S A MESS IN HERE AND WE CAN'T RISK A LIGHT, SO WATCH YOUR STEP AND STAY CLOSE TO ME SO YOU DON'T GET--

-- LOST.



DON'T MOVE!!

SHIT!!



YAAAAAH!

HRK



WELL, DON'T JUST STARE AT HER! COME ON! SHE WON'T STAY DOWN FOREVER.

WIPE YOUR FINGERPRINTS OFF THAT PIPE BEFORE YOU TOSS IT.



YOU REALIZE IF YOU WEREN'T COMMITTED BEFORE, YOU SURE AS HELL ARE NOW.

YOU'D BETTER HOPE SHE DIDN'T GET A GOOD LOOK AT YOU, BECAUSE THEY DON'T LET UP.

YOU'RE WELCOME.

DO I --HFF-- DO I GET TO MEET SUELA NOW?

YOU JUST DID. CONSUELA IBIRI. HI.

I'D SAY "PLEASED TO MEET YOU" BUT I'M NOT SURE ABOUT THAT YET.

ALL RIGHT, SO WHAT'S YOUR HORRIBLE TRAGEDY?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN ...

SOMETHING WENT SERIOUSLY WRONG IN YOUR LIFE. NOT LONG AGO. LIKE, YESTERDAY.

UH ... A CO-WORKER GOT HIS BRAIN FRIED ON THE AIR AND THEY CLAIM SOLACE DID IT, BUT I DON'T BELIEVE IT.

... AND MY SIGNIFICANT OTHER DECIDED TO GO TAKE FULFILLMENT BECAUSE SHE LOST HER JOB.

AH. THERE IT IS.

SEE, YOU'RE A WHITE LADY WHO'S DOING OK, RIGHT? AND YOUR TYPE DOESN'T GIVE A SHIT UNTIL IT AFFECTS YOU PERSONALLY. COUNTRY TURNING INTO A HELLSCAPE? NO BIG. GIRLFRIEND GETS DESPERATE ENOUGH TO GO FLATTOP? THAT'S A CRISIS.

HEY, I CARE A LOT ABOUT THE WORLD GOING TO HELL! IT JUST NEVER SEEMS LIKE THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT ...

AND NOW SUDDENLY THERE IS?

I DON'T KNOW? MAYBE? YOU TELL ME.

I GUESS WHAT'S DIFFERENT IS SUDDENLY I DON'T CARE AS MUCH IF ...

... IF IT AFFECTS YOU. IF YOU GET HURT. IF YOU GET PUT IN JAIL. IF YOU GET FLATTOPPED. IF YOU DIE.

YOU KNOW REVOLUTION INVOLVES RISK, BUT YOU WEREN'T WILLING TO TAKE THOSE RISKS YOURSELF BEFORE IT AFFECTED YOU. LIKE I SAID.

OK, FINE! I'M A HORRIBLE PERSON. I'M ONLY CONCERNED FOR MYSELF. IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT ME TO SAY?

BUT EVEN IF MY REASONS AREN'T GREAT, I AM HERE, AND I HAVE HAD ENOUGH.

THERE'S GOT TO BE SOMETHING I CAN DO TO HELP.

ALL KINDS OF THINGS. BUT WHAT IF I DON'T TRUST YOU? YOU SAW THE SITUATION TONIGHT. I MAY BE RUNNING A RISK JUST TALKING TO YOU.

... ON THE OTHER HAND, IF YOU REALLY MEAN IT, I'VE GOT A COUPLE OF IDEAS YOU CAN TRY. BUT YOU'D BE GOING IN THE DEEP END, YOU UNDERSTAND? THIS ISN'T MARCHING IN A RALLY WITH A SIGN. I ALREADY HAVE WAY TOO MUCH OF THAT CRAP.

AND YOU'D BE PRETTY MUCH ON YOUR OWN. I CAN STEER YOU, BUT IF YOU FALL ON YOUR FACE, I WON'T BE ABLE TO HELP YOU.

WELL, LIKE WHAT?

WE'RE NOT GOING TO GET ANYWHERE WITH HIM IN POWER, FOR ONE THING.

HE'S TRASHED THE WHOLE PROCESS. THE LAST TWO ELECTIONS WERE STAGE SHOWS. HE'S DICTATOR FOR LIFE NOW, NO MATTER WHAT THE SIGN ON HIS DESK SAYS.

THE ONLY GOOD THING ABOUT RULE BY FORCE IS THAT IF HE'S GOTTEN OUT OF THE WAY AND SOMEONE REPLACES HIM, NO ONE CAN DO MUCH ABOUT IT. LIVE BY THE SWORD, DIE BY THE SWORD.

YOU WANT TO ASSASSINATE HIM?

YOU'D HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THAT? NOT SURE I WOULD.

ANYWAY, THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO GET RID OF HIM. BUT ALL OF THEM INVOLVE GETTING INTO THE CHANNELS OF POWER. BECOMING PART OF THAT GROUP.

AND I CAN'T DO IT. NOT ONLY DO SOME OF THEM KNOW MY FACE, I'M NOT WHITE ENOUGH. CAN'T GET ANYWHERE NEAR.

YOU, AH, SEEM PRETTY WHITE ... SORRY ...

NOT WHITE ENOUGH. MY PARENTS WERE FROM SOUTH AMERICA. NEVER MIND THAT MY MOTHER WAS A DOCTOR ... I'M IMMIGRANT TRASH TO THAT BUNCH.

THEY'RE ALL BIGOTS UP AT FULMER'S LEVEL. HORRIBLE PEOPLE.

KEEPING AMERICA GREAT

YOU MAKE IT SOUND SO APPEALING.

YOU WANT ME TO LIE TO YOU?

BUT IF THAT DOESN'T WORK FOR YOU, I'VE GOT SOMETHING ELSE.

THERE ARE A WHOLE LOT OF PEOPLE WALKING AROUND NOW WHO ARE PROGRAMMED. THEY FOLLOW ORDERS STRAIGHT TO THEIR HEADS.

FLATTOPS.

THERE ARE OTHER KINDS TOO. WHAT IF WE DISRUPTED THEIR PROGRAMMING? OR EVEN ALTERED IT? THE STATE DEPENDS ON THEM BEING UNDER CONTROL. IMAGINE WHAT'D HAPPEN IF THEY WEREN'T.

ANYWAY, THAT'S WHAT I'VE GOT. HAVE I SCARED YOU OFF?

ARE YOU REALLY AT THE POINT WHERE YOU DON'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT YOUR LIFE ANYMORE? BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE YOU'LL NEED TO BE.

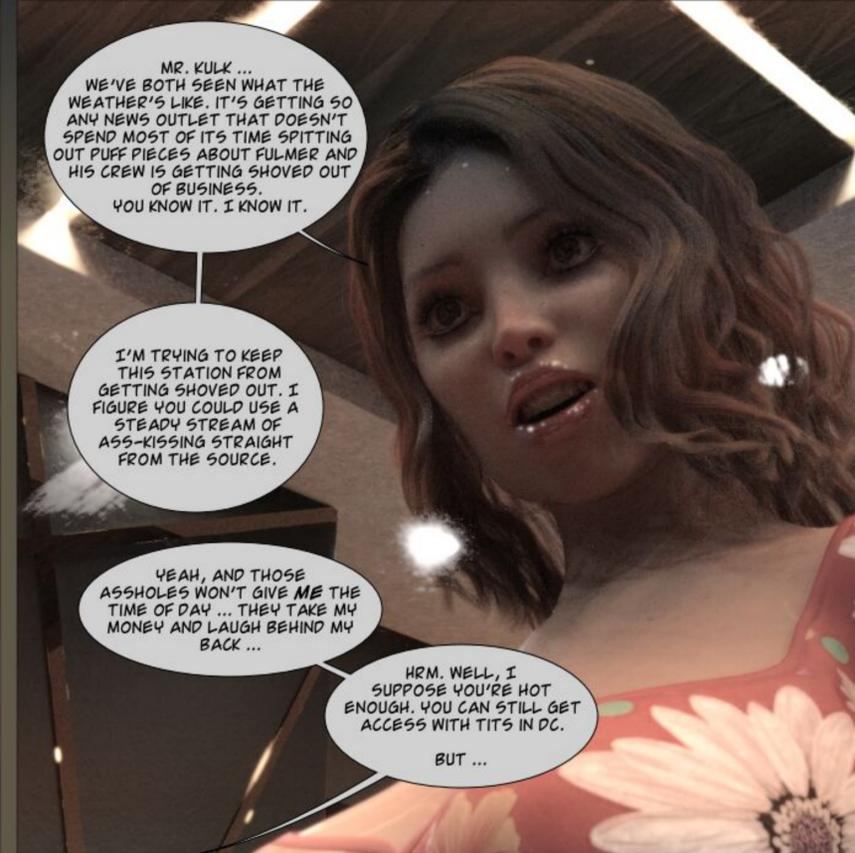
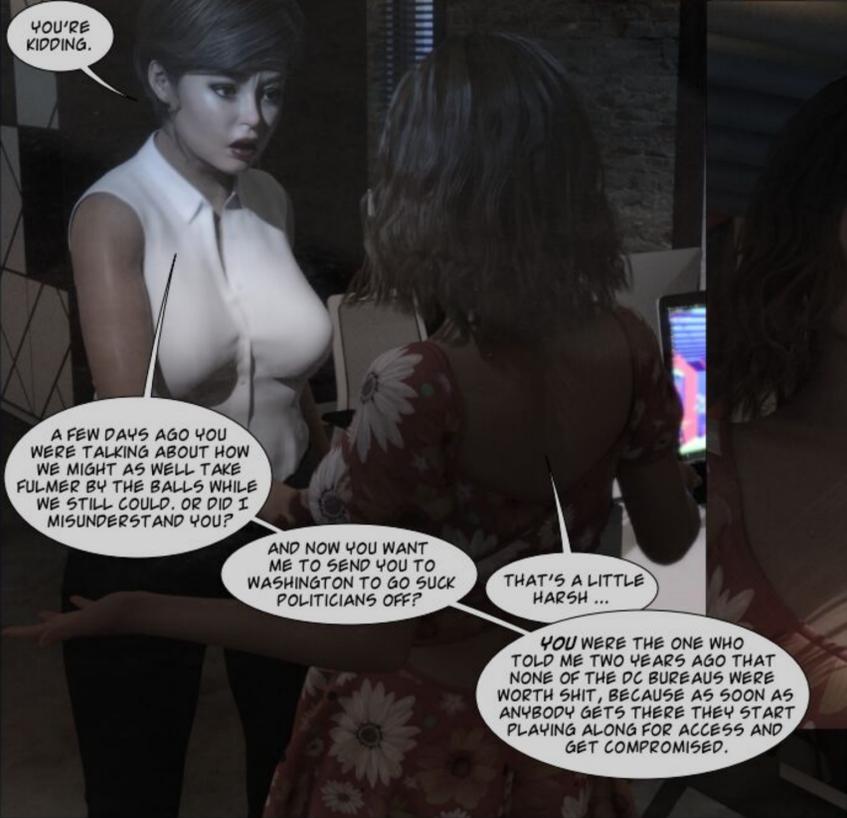
I ... I THINK I MIGHT BE.

THEN PICK ONE.

IF YOU WOULD PREFER TO TRY INFILTRATION CONTINUE TO PAGE

IF YOU WOULD PREFER TO TRY SABOTAGE SKIP TO PAGE

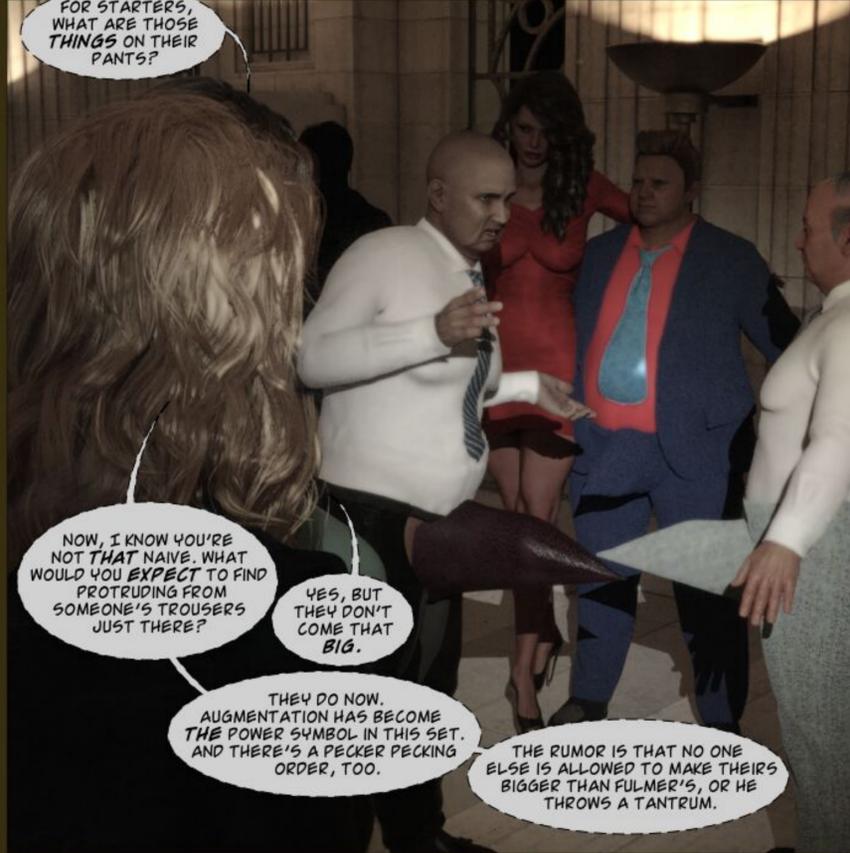
IF YOU JUST WANT TO SEE ALL THE ENDINGS, GO AHEAD AND READ STRAIGHT THROUGH IF YOU LIKE, BUT DON'T BLAME US IF YOU GET CONFUSED ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON.





SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK? NOT IMPRESSED? YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE YOU ARE. SMILE.

... I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK, KAELIN.



FOR STARTERS, WHAT ARE THOSE THINGS ON THEIR PANTS?

NOW, I KNOW YOU'RE NOT THAT NAIVE. WHAT WOULD YOU EXPECT TO FIND PROTRUDING FROM SOMEONE'S TROUSERS JUST THERE?

YES, BUT THEY DON'T COME THAT BIG.

THEY DO NOW. AUGMENTATION HAS BECOME THE POWER SYMBOL IN THIS SET. AND THERE'S A PECKER PECKING ORDER, TOO.

THE RUMOR IS THAT NO ONE ELSE IS ALLOWED TO MAKE THEIRS BIGGER THAN FULMER'S, OR HE THROWS A TANTRUM.



BUT ... THERE'S NOBODY THEY'D EVEN FIT ...

OH, IT'S NOT ABOUT THAT. THIS LOT IS MOSTLY PAST SEX, EXCEPT PERHAPS TO USE AS A TOOL, AND MOSTLY PAST MAKING MORE CHILDREN. THESE ARE TIRED OLD MEN WHO JUST WANT TO APPEAR VIRILE. THE ERECTIONS ARE PERMANENT, YOU KNOW. THEY NEVER GO BELOW HALF-MAST.

HOW DO THEY PISS?

MESSILY, I SUSPECT.

THERE ARE ALL SORTS OF THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH THEM THAT DON'T INVOLVE INJURING YOURSELF.



AND I'LL PROBABLY HAVE TO LEARN ALL OF THEM.

NOT NECESSARILY! AS I SAID, SEX ISN'T A PARTICULARLY BIG MOTIVATOR FOR A LOT OF THEM.

... THOUGH IT COULDN'T POSSIBLY HURT.

TO CLIMB THE LADDERS HERE YOU EITHER NEED TO MAKE YOURSELF USEFUL, OR MAKE YOURSELF EXPLOITABLE. ACTUALLY, IT'S HARD TO TELL THOSE APART.

NOW, LET ME HAVE A LOOK AT YOU ...

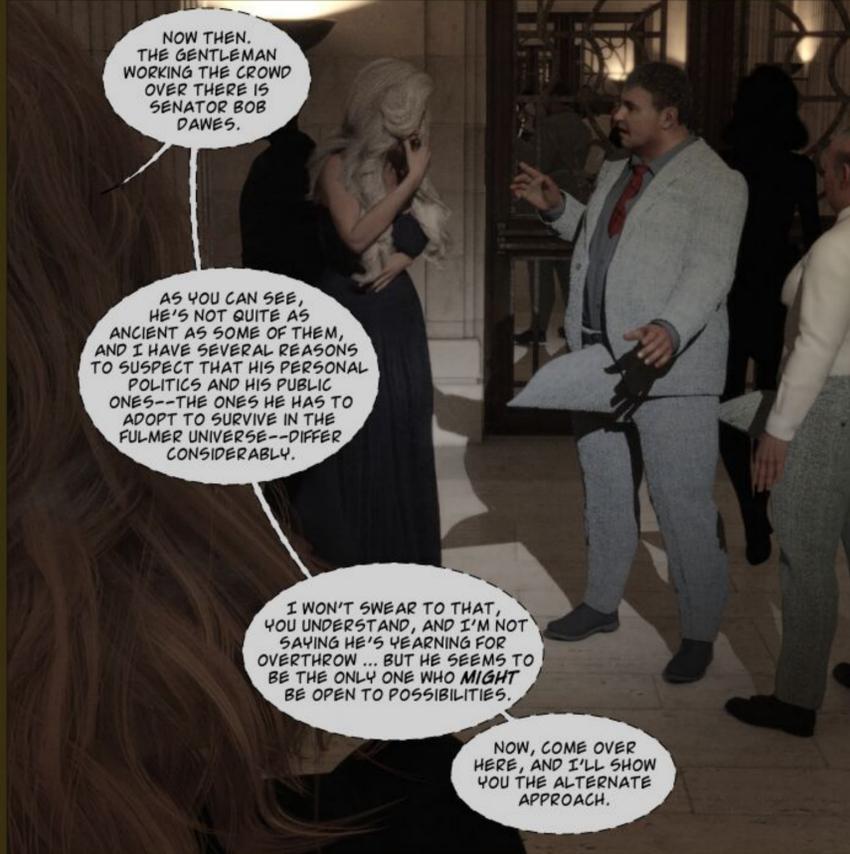


CLEAVAGE IS ALWAYS GOOD IF YOU HAVE IT, BUT THE PROBLEM IS YOU'RE NOT DRESSED WELL ENOUGH.

YOU LOOK LIKE SOMEONE'S AIDE. AIDES ARE INVISIBLE.

LOOKING SEXY TAKES SECOND PLACE TO LOOKING LIKE MONEY. ALWAYS. YOU NEED TO BE SEEN WEARING THINGS THAT LOOK MUCH MORE EXPENSIVE THAN THAT. BUT NOT FLASHY. FULMER LIKES BLING--THE MAN HAS A GOLD TOILET, FOR PITY'S SAKE--BUT MOST OF THE REST OF THEM THINK IT'S GAUCHE.

AND YOU WILL DEFINITELY WANT A BIT MORE MAKEUP.



NOW THEN. THE GENTLEMAN WORKING THE CROWD OVER THERE IS SENATOR BOB DAWES.

AS YOU CAN SEE, HE'S NOT QUITE AS ANCIENT AS SOME OF THEM, AND I HAVE SEVERAL REASONS TO SUSPECT THAT HIS PERSONAL POLITICS AND HIS PUBLIC ONES--THE ONES HE HAS TO ADOPT TO SURVIVE IN THE FULMER UNIVERSE--DIFFER CONSIDERABLY.

I WON'T SWEAR TO THAT, YOU UNDERSTAND, AND I'M NOT SAYING HE'S YEARNING FOR OVERTHROW ... BUT HE SEEMS TO BE THE ONLY ONE WHO MIGHT BE OPEN TO POSSIBILITIES.

NOW, COME OVER HERE, AND I'LL SHOW YOU THE ALTERNATE APPROACH.



OH, I KNOW HIM! RUNS THAT BIG HORRIBLE CHURCH.

DON'T LET HIM HEAR YOU DESCRIBE IT THAT WAY, WHATEVER YOU DO. THE REVEREND JEREMIAH SAVAGE, OF THE NATIONAL EVANGELICAL REVIVAL.

HE HATES THESE FUNCTIONS AND MANY OF THE PEOPLE HERE HATE HIM. BUT HE HAS THE PRESIDENT'S EAR, BECAUSE THE PRESIDENT DEPENDS UPON HIM TO DELIVER HIS BASE.

HE IS ALSO, WORD HAS IT, GETTING MORE THAN A BIT IMPATIENT WITH FULMER.

HE DOESN'T HAVE ONE OF THOSE RIDICULOUS THINGS ...

OH, NO. HE COULDN'T SIRE CHILDREN WITH ONE OF THOSE, NOT EASILY. AND HE IS VERY MUCH INTO THAT. WATCH YOUR STEP IF YOU PICK HIM.



THOSE ARE THE ONLY TWO CHOICES?

THEY'RE THE ONLY TWO WHERE I'D SAY YOU HAD ANY CHANCE AT ALL OF GETTING ANYWHERE.

EVERYONE ELSE HAS BOUGHT IN TOO THOROUGHLY. THEY FEEL THEY'VE MADE OUT QUITE WELL FROM THE FULMER REGIME, AND WON'T ROCK THE BOAT.

THESE TWO ARE NO HEROES, BUT THEY BOTH WANT SOMETHING FULMER ISN'T GETTING THEM. OR I BELIEVE THEY DO. AT ANY RATE, IT'S THE BEST I CAN GIVE YOU.

AND REMEMBER, I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT ANY OF THIS.

IF YOU APPROACH SAVAGE SKIP TO PAGE

11

IF YOU APPROACH DAWES SKIP TO PAGE

15



YOU GOTTA HAVE A BLOCKER. AND THERE'S A TWENTY DOLLAR COVER.

I'M JUST HERE TO SEE THE OWNER. SHE KNOWS I'M COMING. MY NAME'S MARY SUTTON.

OH, YEAH. SHE'S PROBABLY BACK BY THE BOOTH.

DON'T FOOL AROUND WITH ANYBODY UNLESS YOU'VE GOT A BLOCKER.



MARY! MY GOD. IT REALLY IS.

HELLO, TANDRI. BEEN A WHILE.

I THOUGHT MY MESSAGE WAS PRETTY CLEAR ...

OH, I UNDERSTOOD IT, I JUST WASN'T SURE IF I BELIEVED IT. IT HASN'T BEEN "A WHILE," IT'S BEEN SIX YEARS. AND SINCE WHEN DO YOU SET FOOT IN PLACES LIKE THIS?



ARE YOU CHANGING LIFESTYLE? THAT COULD BE REALLY INTERESTING ...

MAYBE, KIND OF? BUT NOT THE WAY YOU MEAN. I DON'T THINK.

I'M LOOKING FOR "THE HARE."



NOW, WHY ON EARTH WOULD A SWEET INNOCENT BE LOOKING FOR THE MOST NOTORIOUS HACKER IN TOWN? THIS SOUNDS LIKE A GREAT STORY.

MAYBE I'M NOT ALL THAT SWEET OR INNOCENT. MAYBE I'M TRYING TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT.

OOH, EVEN BETTER, THEN.



BUT THE THING IS, THE HARE HAS TO BE VERY CAREFUL, AND I HAVE SORT OF AN OBLIGATION ... I MEAN, I TRUST YOU BUT I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH ...

SINNERS! YOUR JUDGEMENT HAS COME!



HEY!

AN ARMY OF GOD IS UPON YOU! LEAVE THIS PLACE AND GIVE UP YOUR WICKED WAYS! FEAR ETERNAL DAMNATION!

OH, IS IT THAT TIME AGAIN ALREADY?



THIS PLACE IS A PIT OF SIN! SEEK NOT THE TEMPTATIONS OF FLESH LEST YE MMPH...



THE USUAL?

MMHM. FLUSH THEIR BOWELS, UNDRRESS THEM, 10CC OF REDALINE.

THERE ARE ALREADY PEOPLE WAITING. I SWEAR, I SHOULD UP THE COVER WHEN THEY'RE HERE.



UH ... I'M THINKING REDALINE MUST BE PRETTY POTENT STUFF.

NAH. IT'S A PARTY DRUG, FOR SURE, BUT IT JUST LOOSENS YOU UP A LITTLE.

WE GET THESE RAIDS ABOUT ONCE A WEEK. I THINK A LOT OF THE "ARMY OF GOD" CHOOSE THAT GIG BECAUSE IT LETS THEM ACTUALLY GO OUT AND DO THINGS. THE N.E.R. ISN'T REAL GOOD TO ITS WOMEN, Y'KNOW?

AND THEY'RE SO FUCKING REPRESSED. IT'D BE HILARIOUS IF IT WASN'T SO SAD. THEY KNOW THEY DON'T STAND A CHANCE IN HERE, BUT THEY ALSO KNOW THERE'S NO CONSEQUENCES. EVERYBODY ELSE IN HERE HAS A BLOCKER.

"WE WERE FORCED TO HAVE SEX ALL NIGHT! THOSE PERVERTS DID HORRIBLE THINGS TO US! HOT, HOT HORRIBLE THINGS!"



THAT ONE'S CHELSEA. SHE'S BEEN HERE FOUR TIMES THIS MONTH.

SHE REALLY NEEDS TO HAVE A LITTLE TALK WITH HERSELF.

UNGH

UNGH

UNGH



KIND OF IMPRESSIVE, ISN'T IT?

ANYWAY. THE HARE LIVES OVER THE CLUB. GO OUT THE BACK TUNNEL AND ALL THE WAY UP THE STAIRS.



... HELLO? ANYBODY UP HERE?



AAAA!



NO AUGMENTS, NO IMPLANTS, NO WEAPONS. CLEANEST SCAN I'VE SEEN IN A WHILE.

YOU COULD TRY FOR UNARMED COMBAT, BUT I'M PRETTY SURE I CAN KICK YOUR ASS.

I GUESS YOU'RE THE HARE.

HARE'S A MYTH. CONVENIENT. MY NAME'S JIRA.

... OK. HELLO, JIRA. I'M MARY SUTTON. I CAME TO FIND YOU BECAUSE--

I KNOW. SUELA TOLD ME YOU'D BE COMING.



SHE'S USING YOU, YOU KNOW. SHE'S BEEN AFTER ME ABOUT THIS FOR A LONG TIME. BUT THE CODE HAS TO BE POISONED BY HAND, AND SHE WON'T GO DO IT. SHE'S SCARED TO.

DID SHE GIVE YOU A BIG SPEECH ABOUT RISK?

SOUNDS LIKE YOU DON'T WANT TO GO DO IT EITHER, THOUGH.

IT'S NOT MY PROBLEM.

THE WORLD COMING APART ISN'T YOUR PROBLEM?

WHY SHOULD ANYTHING BE MY PROBLEM?



EVER SINCE THE 1960S, PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SAYING "LEARN COMPUTERS! THE FUTURE'S GOING TO BELONG TO THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW COMPUTERS!"

AND HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE DONE THAT? DAMNED FEW. THOSE OF US THAT DID OWN THE WORLD, AND THE REST OF YOU ARE SO DUMB YOU DON'T REALIZE IT.

I CAN DO WHATEVER THE FUCK I WANT. EVEN IF I GET CAUGHT--THEY WON'T DO ANYTHING TO ME, THEY NEED ME TOO MUCH.

AND YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT FULMER AND HIS CROWD DESTROYING THE PLANET? OR MAKING EVERYONE MISERABLE? OR GETTING RID OF EVERYBODY WHO ISN'T WHITE?

LOOK, IF PEOPLE REALLY WANTED TO FIX ALL THAT, THEY'D RIOT. THEY'RE NOT RIOTING, ARE THEY?

I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT THE FUNDIES, BECAUSE THEY'RE EVEN DUMBER THAN MOST PEOPLE. I MEAN, THINK ABOUT THE BLOCKERS. DESIGNED TO KEEP THE WRONG PEOPLE FROM MAKING BABIES. BUT THEY ALSO PREVENT STDs AND UNWANTED BABIES, AND YOU CAN STILL COME WITH THEM ON. SO NOW PEOPLE GET BLOCKERS ON PURPOSE. AND THERE'S PLENTY OF PLACES THAT'LL HACK THEM TO BE REMOVABLE IF YOU WANT TO MAKE A BABY ON THE SLY. THE FUNDIES HAVE NO IDEA.



AND WHAT ABOUT THE FLATTOPS? YOU HAVE A HACK TO PUT THEIR BRAINS BACK? I DON'T THINK SO.

OK, SURE, THE LOBOS ARE KINDA TRAGIC. BUT THOSE JOBS ARE THE BOTTOM OF THE LABOR POOL, AND THE PEOPLE WHO BECOME LOBOS ARE PRETTY DUMB. IF THEY WEREN'T, THEY WOULDN'T BE THERE.

MY LOVER WENT FLATTOP. BECAUSE SHE DIDN'T THINK SHE HAD A CHOICE.

AND WHAT KIND OF JOBS WAS SHE DOING? NOT THE KIND YOU DO. I LOOKED YOU UP. YOU RESEARCH AND WRITE AND FACT-CHECK TV NEWS STORIES. NEED A BRAIN FOR THAT. DID SHE NEED A BRAIN FOR WHAT SHE DID?

I OUGHT TO COME OVER THERE AND PUNCH YOU IN THE FACE.

BUT YOU WON'T. BECAUSE YOU NEED ME, AND BECAUSE YOU KNOW I'M RIGHT. DON'T BE KIND TO THE STUPID. THEY'RE THE MAIN PROBLEM.

OK, LOOK, YOU WANT TO BUST YOUR ASS TRYING TO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN FASTER, I'M DOWN WITH THAT. THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO GO. YOU CAN CHANGE THE INSTRUCTION SET FOR THE LOBOS, OR YOU CAN CHANGE IT FOR THE EXAMINERS.

THE EXAMINERS? REALLY?

OH, SURE. THEY'RE JUST AS FLY-BY-WIRE AS THE LOBOS. AND IF YOU MESS WITH THEM, YOU COULD REALLY GET SOMETHING BIG THERE. BUT THEIR SECURITY'S MUCH STRONGER. BIGGER RISK.



BUT I'MNA WANT SOMETHING FIRST.

YOU'RE A STRANGER. I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE REALLY THINKING, WHAT YOU WANT, AND NEITHER DOES SUELA, NO MATTER WHAT SHE SAYS.

PUT SOMETHING ON THE LINE FOR ME. SOME SACRIFICE. DOESN'T HAVE TO BE BLOOD. COULD JUST BE HUMILIATION ... HEY!

I'VE GOT A METHOD I NEED SOMEONE FOR. I'D BE REPROGRAMMING YOU ... BUT IT'S TEMPORARY. ONLY LASTS AS LONG AS I SEND YOU SIGNALS.

THAT'D WORK. BE MY ROBOT FOR A WEEK AND I'LL CALL THAT GOOD ENOUGH.



ROBOT FOR WHAT? YOU WANT A MAID?

LOOK AROUND. DO I LOOK LIKE I CARE ABOUT MAID SERVICE? NO, NO, I WANT A SEX BOT.

I DON'T GET OUT OF HERE MUCH, AND I DON'T REALLY LIKE MOST PEOPLE ...

I'D NEVER HAVE GUESSED.

HOW DO I KNOW YOU'LL PUT ME BACK AFTER A WEEK?

LEAVE A MESSAGE FOR SUELA. OR FOR TANDRI. OR BOTH.

BUT IT'S NOT NECESSARY. I KEEP MY PROMISES. AND THE METHOD'S TESTED. NO DANGER. I JUST DON'T HAVE SOMEONE TO USE IT ON.

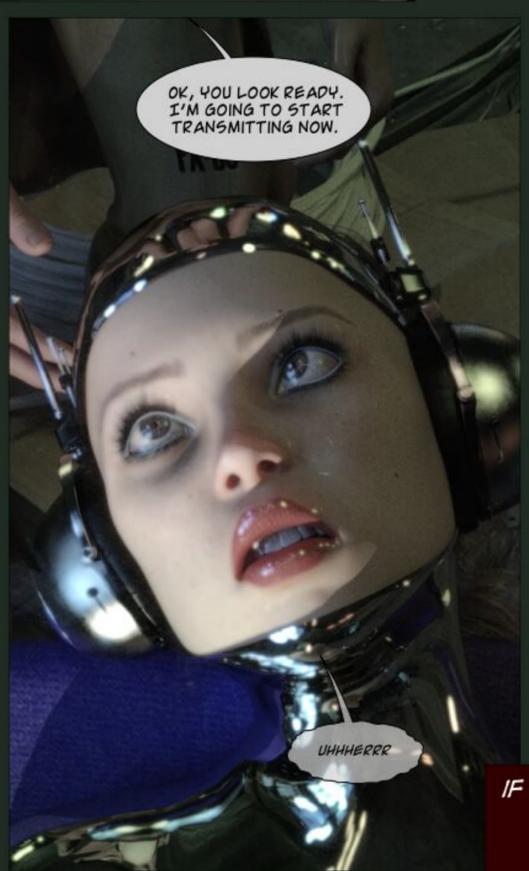


WE'LL GIVE THE DRUG A FEW MINUTES TO KICK IN.

PEOPLE ARE BOTH REALLY EASY TO REPROGRAM AND REALLY HARD. THERE'S A WHOLE CHUNK OF YOUR BRAIN THAT YOU HAVE TO TURN OFF. OR IF YOU'RE A FLATTOP, CUT OFF. ONCE YOU DO THAT, THEN THE BRAIN JUST DOES WHAT IT'S TOLD.

IF YOU FEEL A TUG, I'M NOT DOING ANYTHING WEIRD. I'M JUST PULLING YOUR HAIR THROUGH THE OPENING IN THE BACK OF THE HELMET SO IT'LL BE OUT OF THE WAY.

DIDN'T FIGURE YOU WANTED TO SHAVE IT OFF, THOUGH YOU'D LOOK CUTE LIKE THAT.



OK, YOU LOOK READY. I'M GOING TO START TRANSMITTING NOW.

UHHERRR

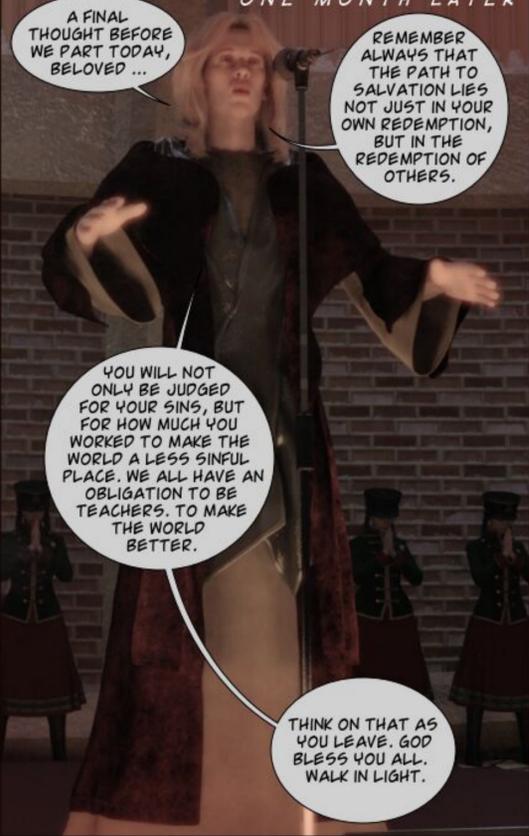


NICE! ALL UNIT TESTS PASS.

READY TO BE TRIED OUT?

YES, MISTRESS.

ONE MONTH LATER



A FINAL THOUGHT BEFORE WE PART TODAY, BELOVED ...

REMEMBER ALWAYS THAT THE PATH TO SALVATION LIES NOT JUST IN YOUR OWN REDEMPTION, BUT IN THE REDEMPTION OF OTHERS.

YOU WILL NOT ONLY BE JUDGED FOR YOUR SINS, BUT FOR HOW MUCH YOU WORKED TO MAKE THE WORLD A LESS SINFUL PLACE. WE ALL HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO BE TEACHERS. TO MAKE THE WORLD BETTER.

THINK ON THAT AS YOU LEAVE. GOD BLESS YOU ALL. WALK IN LIGHT.



THE LIGHTING CUES WERE COMPLETELY OFF, EVALINE.

YES, SIR, I--

I WAS PRACTICALLY STANDING IN THE DARK AT THE END.

THE TECH'S NEW, SIR, HE'S STILL LEARNING THE--

... AND I SAID TO HIM, "DON'T YOU KNOW I'M IN THE ARMY? I CAN'T DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT!"

AND YOU KNOW WHAT HE SAID? "WELL, THERE'S OTHER THINGS WE CAN DO ..."



I DON'T CARE. FIX IT BY TOMORROW'S SERVICE.

... YES, SIR.

LUCINDA. A WORD, PLEASE?



LUCINDA, YOU'VE BEEN A DEFENDER OF THE FAITH FOR FIVE YEARS NOW, AND YOU'VE DONE AN EXEMPLARY JOB ... BUT IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO MOVE ON.

YOU KNOW HOW IMPORTANT CONTINUANCE IS TO US. YOU NEED TO MARRY WHILE YOU'RE STILL AT YOUR PEAK OF HEALTH AND FERTILITY.

BUT, SIR ... I, AH, I JUST DON'T FEEL LIKE I'M READY FOR THAT KIND OF--

I HAVE GREAT CONFIDENCE IN YOU, AND I KNOW YOU KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF DUTY.

YOUR SPIRITUAL ADVISOR HAS A LIST OF CANDIDATES, AND I EXPECT YOU TO BEGIN LOOKING INTO THEM RIGHT AWAY.



MS. DALLY?

MISS DALLY. NOT BY CHOICE. HE'LL ARRANGE A MARRIAGE FOR EVERYBODY BUT ME ...

OH, GOD OH, GOD PLEASE, HAVE MERCY ...

NEVER MIND THAT I KEEP HIS ENTIRE SHOW RUNNING ... THAT'S PROBABLY WHY HE HASN'T, HE KNOWS I'D GIVE UP THE JOB.

WELL, FROM WHAT I HEAR, HE'S MOSTLY INTERESTED IN CHILDREN, AND YOU AREN'T VIABLE ANY MORE, ARE YOU? AH ... NO OFFENSE MEANT.

ARE YOU UPSET ABOUT THAT? OR ARE YOU FEELING DEPRIVED OF SOMETHING ELSE?

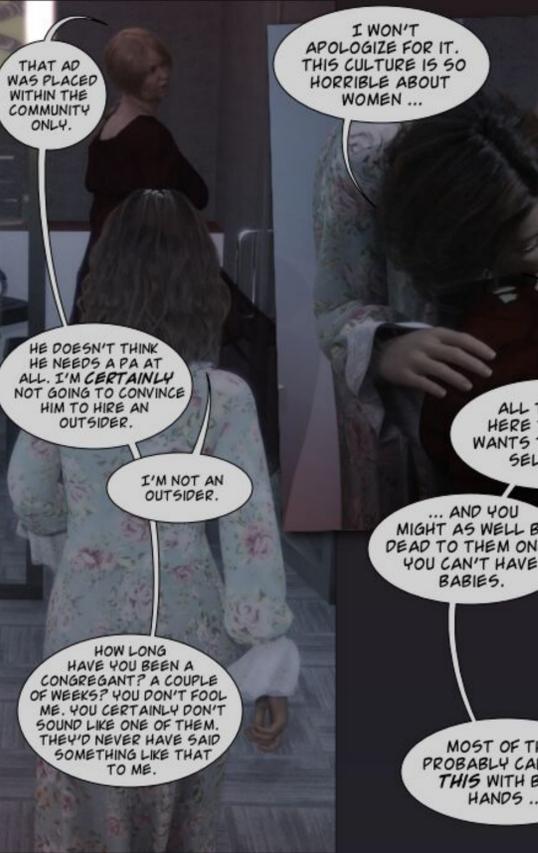


WHAT IMPERTINENCE! YOU CAN'T SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT AND EXPECT "NO OFFENSE" IS GOING TO MEND ANY FENCES ...

WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

A JOB.

MY NAME'S MARY SUTTON. I'M HERE ABOUT THE AD YOU PLACED FOR HIS PERSONAL ASSISTANT.



THAT AD WAS PLACED WITHIN THE COMMUNITY ONLY.

HE DOESN'T THINK HE NEEDS A PA AT ALL. I'M CERTAINLY NOT GOING TO CONVINCE HIM TO HIRE AN OUTSIDER.

I'M NOT AN OUTSIDER.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A CONGREGANT? A COUPLE OF WEEKS? YOU DON'T FOOL ME. YOU CERTAINLY DON'T SOUND LIKE ONE OF THEM. THEY'D NEVER HAVE SAID SOMETHING LIKE THAT TO ME.



I WON'T APOLOGIZE FOR IT. THIS CULTURE IS SO HORRIBLE ABOUT WOMEN ...

HEY! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE--

STOP THAT --UHHHH-- AT ONCE!

ALL THE MEN HERE THINK GOD WANTS THEM TO BE SELFISH ...

... AND YOU MIGHT AS WELL BE DEAD TO THEM ONCE YOU CAN'T HAVE BABIES.

MOST OF THEM PROBABLY CAN'T FIND THIS WITH BOTH HANDS ...



UHHAAAAAAHHH

I'M JUST TRYING --MMH-- TO BE ATTENTIVE --SLURP-- TO EVERYONE'S NEEDS ...

THIRTEEN DAYS LATER

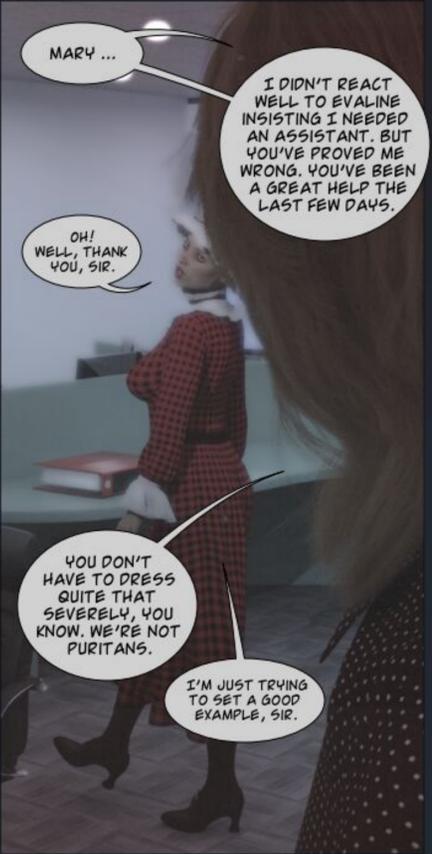


SIR? MR. BENNETT FROM THE FCC CALLED WHILE YOU WERE OUT.

I RELAYED THE INFORMATION YOU GAVE ME. HE DIDN'T SEEM PLEASED.

HE WANTS A BRIBE. THAT'S WHAT FULMER TEACHES THEM.

THANK YOU, MARY.



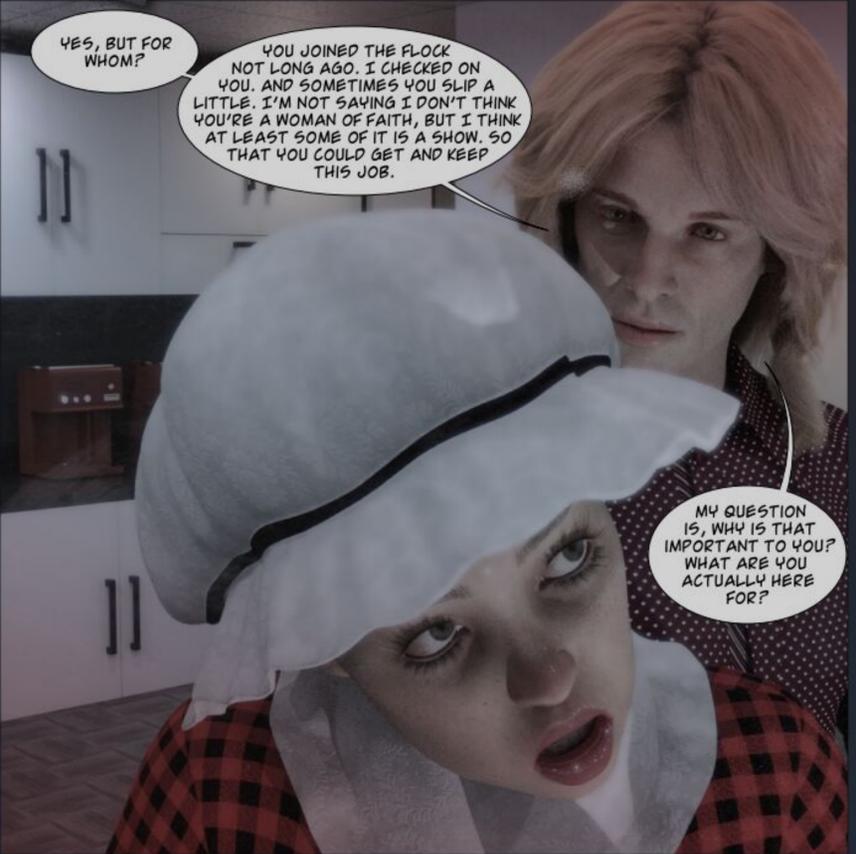
MARY ...

OH! WELL, THANK YOU, SIR.

I DIDN'T REACT WELL TO EVALINE INSISTING I NEEDED AN ASSISTANT. BUT YOU'VE PROVED ME WRONG. YOU'VE BEEN A GREAT HELP THE LAST FEW DAYS.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DRESS QUITE THAT SEVERELY, YOU KNOW. WE'RE NOT PURITANS.

I'M JUST TRYING TO SET A GOOD EXAMPLE, SIR.



YES, BUT FOR WHOM?

YOU JOINED THE FLOCK NOT LONG AGO. I CHECKED ON YOU. AND SOMETIMES YOU SLIP A LITTLE. I'M NOT SAYING I DON'T THINK YOU'RE A WOMAN OF FAITH, BUT I THINK AT LEAST SOME OF IT IS A SHOW. SO THAT YOU COULD GET AND KEEP THIS JOB.

MY QUESTION IS, WHY IS THAT IMPORTANT TO YOU? WHAT ARE YOU ACTUALLY HERE FOR?



I ... DON'T LIKE FULMER, SIR. HE'S NOT A MAN OF FAITH, NO MATTER WHAT HE SAYS, AND HE'S TAKING THE COUNTRY IN THE WRONG DIRECTION.

I HAVE A FEW FRIENDS WHO GET ALL THE POLITICAL GOSSIP. THEY SAY YOU'RE ALSO UNHAPPY WITH FULMER. YOU COULD CHANGE THE SITUATION.

I'D LIKE TO SUPPORT YOU IN DOING THAT. ANY WAY I CAN.

HMM. YOU MAY OVERESTIMATE MY ABILITIES. FULMER IS VERY ENTRENCHED.

AND THERE ARE OTHER OBSTACLES. ANYTHING I DO IS THWARTED BY A SENATOR NAMED BOB DAWES, WHO APPARENTLY HAS NO MOTIVE OTHER THAN MALICE.

YOU WANT TO HELP THE CAUSE? FIND A WAY TO DEFAANG DAWES, FOR GOOD. THEN WE CAN DISCUSS WHAT COMES NEXT.



FIVE WEEKS LATER

... AND I'M GOING TO NEED THAT SUMMATION FOR THE COMMITTEE BY THE END OF THE DAY TOMORROW.

ALREADY DONE, SIR! IT'S OVER THERE ON THE DESK.

HONESTLY? I DON'T. IT'S GOING TO BE A MAJOR PAIN IN THE ASS FOR BOTH OF US. BUT I SUPPOSE WE'D BETTER.

OH.

YOU KNOW, MARY, YOU MAY HAVE COME OUT OF NOWHERE, BUT WHEN KAELIN CLARKE RECOMMENDED I HIRE YOU, SHE KNEW WHAT SHE WAS DOING.

AS DO YOU.

THANK YOU, SIR.

WHEN DO YOU WANT TO START ON THE FULL REPORT?

ARE YOU FREE? COME TO MY HOUSE FOR DINNER. WE CAN AT LEAST GET THE STRUCTURE FIGURED OUT TONIGHT.



MARY, THIS IS MY WIFE LILLIAN.

DON'T WORRY, SHE DOESN'T ACTUALLY BITE.

UH ... PLEASÉD TO MEET YOU.

WELL, THAT'S A COMPLICATION. I KNEW HE WAS MARRIED BUT SOMEHOW I GOT THE IDEA THEY WERE SEPARATED ...



AFTER A WORKING DINNER AND A FEW HOURS BEYOND THAT ...

IF WE TRY TO DO ANY MORE TONIGHT WE'LL BOTH LOSE OUR MINDS. MY EYES ARE BLEEDING. THIS IS A GOOD START. WE'LL BEGIN THE HEAVY LIFTING TOMORROW.

I'LL SEE YOU AT THE OFFICE BRIGHT AND EARLY.

OH! ... YES. RIGHT.

DAMN.

I'LL SHOW HER OUT, DEAR. I'M SURE YOU HAVE THINGS YOU WANT TO ATTEND TO.



AS YOU CAN SEE, HE CAN'T BE SEDUCED.

I CAN'T EVEN GET HIM TO HAVE SEX WITH ME, THESE DAYS.

THE GOOD NEWS FOR YOU IS THAT I'M IN A STATE OF SEXUAL DESPERATION, AND I CAN BE SEDUCED.



UH ... RIGHT HERE IN THE LIVING ROOM, MS. DAWES?

TRUST ME--HE'S GONE FOR THE NIGHT. IF HE DOES COME OUT FOR SOME REASON, HE PROBABLY WON'T NOTICE.

OR HE'LL SIT DOWN AND WATCH.



AND --UUUHHMM!-- CALL ME LILLIAN.



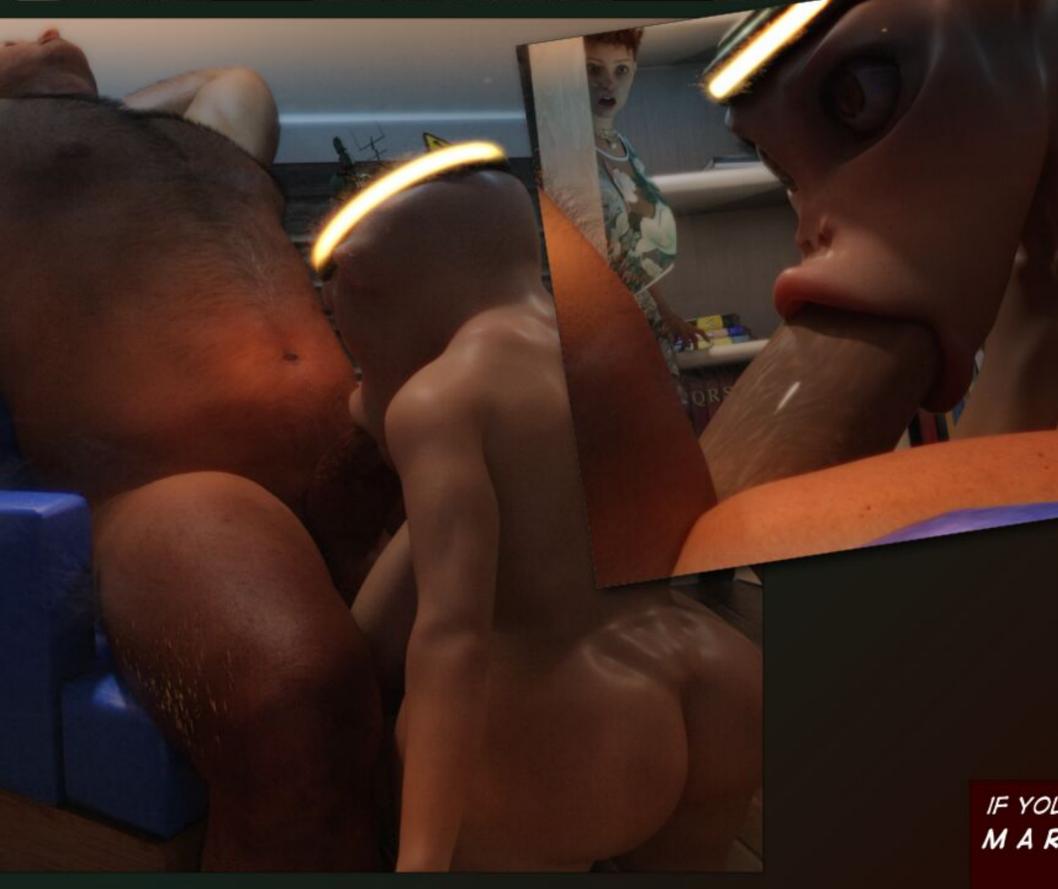
LATER

OK, BUT WHAT'S HE DOING? DID HE JUST GO TO SLEEP?

ZZZZ

OR IF NOT, WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT HE IGNORES TWO WOMEN HAVING SEX--LOUDLY?

THIS COULD BE SOMETHING I CAN USE.



TWO DAYS LATER

I'M FRANKLY SURPRISED.

I'D HEARD RUMORS OF THESE CREATURES, AND I KNEW HE WAS A SINFUL MAN, AND YET ...

BUT, A GOOD SOLUTION! HIS VOTERS AREN'T TAKING IT WELL AND FULMER HAS LET HIM TWIST IN THE WIND OVER IT. HE WON'T GET ANOTHER TERM IN OFFICE.

SO WHAT NEXT?

WELL, THERE IS A COMPLICATION. YOU SEE, WHILE I BELIEVE WE COULD WORK WELL TOGETHER, MY CONGREGANTS WILL BE SUSPICIOUS OF SUCH A CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH A YOUNG WOMAN WHO ISN'T MY WIFE.

IF YOU WANT TO CONTINUE SUPPORTING MY WORK, I BELIEVE THE ONLY SOLUTION IS TO MARRY ME.



BRAIN ALL BACK NOW?

YOU'VE GOT A NICE SHOWER, BUT WHO THOUGHT IT WAS A GOOD IDEA TO PUT IT SO FAR FROM THE BEDROOM?

JIRA, HOW'D I GET HERE? WHEN DID WE CHANGE LOCATIONS?

YOU DON'T REMEMBER TRAVELING? HOW MUCH DO YOU REMEMBER?

UH ... I REMEMBER MOST OF THE STUFF WE DID, BUT THERE'S A LOT OF GAPS, I THINK ...

THOSE ARE PROBABLY WHEN YOU WERE IDLE. IF YOU'RE NOT GIVEN SOMETHING TO DO, THE BRAIN JUST KIND OF GOES BLANK.

I MOVED US BECAUSE I WASN'T SURE IF THE LOCATION WAS SAFE.

YOU MEAN YOU WEREN'T SURE WHETHER I WAS A FINK.

NOTHING HAPPENED, ANYWAY. NO INCIDENTS HERE OR THERE.

MAYBE NOT YOU. NOBODY SPECIFIC. SOMETIMES I JUST GET A FEELING.

ALSO, YOU'VE GOT A BETTER BED. AND A SHOWER.

SO IF YOU WERE WORRIED THAT EXAMINER ID'D YOU, FORGET IT.

I ALSO MADE SOME CALLS TO YOUR WORKPLACE. YOU'RE ON SHORT-TERM MEDICAL LEAVE NOW. THAT SHOULD HOLD YOU LONG ENOUGH TO DO THIS.

OH, SHIT. THANK YOU. I DIDN'T EVEN THINK ABOUT THAT.

OF COURSE THE PROBLEM NOW IS ...

... YOU'RE NOT SURE IF YOU WANT TO GO BACK.

LET'S TALK ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE.

SO IT'S ALL ON MY PHONE? I WAS EXPECTING TO NEED SOME KIND OF FANCY DEVICE.

YOUR PHONE IS A FANCY DEVICE.

THEY BLOCK OUTSIDE SIGNAL--NO WIFI, OR WE COULD JUST HACK THEM FROM HERE--YOU'LL HAVE TO GET INTO THE ROOM WITH THE ACTUAL SYSTEM CONSOLES TO USE IT. BUT ONCE YOU'RE CLOSE ENOUGH, YOU CAN JUST TRANSMIT THE NEW INSTRUCTIONS.

WHY DID YOU GIVE ME TWO SETS?

WELL, THERE'S A--

BZZZZZZZZ

I'M NOT EXPECTING ANYONE. AM I?

IT'S PROBABLY SUELA. BUT CHECK BEFORE YOU OPEN IT.

MUST BE PRETTY GOOD SEX. I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T EVER SEEN BY DAYLIGHT.

NO, THAT'S YOU. I DON'T GET SEEN UNLESS I WANT TO BE. DAY OR NIGHT.

I'M NOT THE ONE TAKING A RISK COMING HERE.

YOU'RE BOTH COMPROMISING MY HOME, YOU KNOW.

I GAVE YOU TWO OVERRIDE SETS BECAUSE I'M NOT SURE WHICH WAY YOU WANT TO GO ON THIS.

BOTH SETS TELL THE LOBOS TO STOP DOING THEIR WORK AND PROTEST THEIR EXPLOITATION.

I WISH YOU WOULDN'T CALL THEM THAT.

BUT ONE OF THEM, THAT'S AS FAR AS IT GOES. THEY JUST STOP WORKING AND REFUSE TO COOPERATE. TOOLS DOWN. GENERAL STRIKE.

THE OTHER TELLS THEM TO ACTIVELY REBEL AGAINST THEIR EXPLOITERS. FIGHT BACK. TORCHES AND PITCHFORKS.

OH, I DON'T LIKE THAT AT ALL.

THE THING IS, I DON'T THINK JUST STOPPING WORK IS GOING TO DO ENOUGH.

YES, BUT IF THERE'S VIOLENCE ...

YOU NEVER HAD A PROBLEM WITH VIOLENCE IN A GOOD CAUSE BEFORE.

THIS IS DIFFERENT. THEY FIGHT, FULMER SENDS OUT THE EXAMINERS, AND A LOT OF FLATTOPS DIE. THEY'RE PAVNS, JIRA. THEY DIDN'T VOLUNTEER FOR THIS.

MAYBE YOU SHOULD HAVE HACKED THE EXAMINERS INSTEAD, THEN.

TELL ME ABOUT THIS GUARD.

HE'S MORE LIKE A MONITOR. THE ONE PERSON IN THE BUILDING. HE'S THEIR ONLY SECURITY BECAUSE HE'S THEIR ONLY EVERYTHING.

HOW DO I DEAL WITH HIM, THOUGH?

I DON'T KNOW. USE YOUR BODY? EIGHT-HOUR SHIFT ALONE IN THAT PLACE, HE'S GOT TO GET PRETTY BORED.

I'LL GIVE YOU A GUN.

YOU WON'T RISK A FEW LOBOS, BUT YOU'LL SHOOT A GUY WHO JUST HAPPENED TO GET THE WORST DESK JOB IN THE WORLD?

I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT FIRING IT.

WAIT, YOU'RE LEAVING?

I'VE GIVEN YOU WHAT YOU ASKED FOR. I'M NOT GETTING ANYWHERE NEAR THAT FACILITY. YOU KNEW THAT WAS THE DEAL.

COME SEE ME TO THE DOOR, WOULD YOU? I'D LIKE A KISS GOODBYE.

SOMETIMES I REALLY DON'T LIKE SUELA.

THAT'S WHY I DON'T TELL HER THINGS. LIKE WHAT WE DID THIS WEEK.

HOLD OUT YOUR HAND.

THAT'S A DOSE OF THE SAME STUFF YOU'VE BEEN ON THE LAST FEW DAYS.

PROBABLY WORK BETTER THAN A GUN, IF YOU CAN GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO GET IT INTO HIM.

AND REMEMBER, YOU'RE TAKING THE RISK, SO YOU GET TO MAKE THE CHOICES.

COME FIND ME SOMETIME IF YOU GET OUT OF THIS INTACT. IT WAS FUN.

LATER THAT DAY
CENTRAL FACILITY OF THE NATIONAL FULFILLMENT PROGRAM, SOMEWHERE IN UPSTATE NY

I EXPECTED SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE ... UH ...

YEAH, IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE MUCH, DOES IT?

JIRA SAID THEY'VE DEPENDED ON "SECURITY BY OBSCURITY." NOBODY HACKS THEM BECAUSE NOBODY EVEN KNOWS THEY'RE HERE.

THIS IS AS FAR AS I CAN GO. REMEMBER TO BE ALERT FOR THE CAMERAS.

ASSUMING THAT FAKED KEYCARD FOR THE BACK DOOR WORKS, ALL YOU HAVE TO DEAL WITH IS THE GUARD.

IF IT GOES BAD, GET OUT FAST AND DON'T STOP RUNNING.





IF YOU CHOOSE VIOLENCE SKIP TO PAGE 21

IF YOU CHOOSE A GENERAL STRIKE SKIP TO PAGE 22

ONE MONTH LATER



... AND I'M GOING TO NEED THAT SUMMATION FOR THE COMMITTEE BY THE END OF THE DAY TOMORROW.

ALREADY DONE, SIR! IT'S OVER THERE ON THE DESK.

OH.

YOU KNOW, MARY, YOU MAY HAVE COME OUT OF NOWHERE, BUT WHEN KAELIN CLARKE RECOMMENDED I HIRE YOU, SHE KNEW WHAT SHE WAS DOING.

AS DO YOU.

THANK YOU, SIR.

WHEN DO YOU WANT TO START ON THE FULL REPORT?

HONESTLY? I DON'T. IT'S GOING TO BE A MAJOR PAIN IN THE ASS FOR BOTH OF US. BUT I SUPPOSE WE'D BETTER.

ARE YOU FREE THIS EVENING? COME TO MY HOUSE FOR DINNER. WE CAN AT LEAST GET THE STRUCTURE FIGURED OUT TONIGHT.



MARY, THIS IS MY WIFE LILLIAN.

DON'T WORRY, SHE DOESN'T ACTUALLY BITE.

UH ... PLEASSED TO MEET YOU.

WELL, THAT'S A COMPLICATION. I KNEW HE WAS MARRIED BUT SOMEHOW I GOT THE IDEA THEY WERE SEPARATED ...

AFTER A WORKING DINNER AND A FEW HOURS BEYOND THAT ...



IF WE TRY TO DO ANY MORE TONIGHT WE'LL BOTH LOSE OUR MINDS. MY EYES ARE BLEEDING. THIS IS A GOOD START. WE'LL BEGIN THE HEAVY LIFTING TOMORROW.

I'LL SEE YOU AT THE OFFICE BRIGHT AND EARLY.

OH! ... YES. RIGHT.

DAMN.

I'LL SHOW HER OUT, DEAR. I'M SURE YOU HAVE THINGS YOU WANT TO ATTEND TO.



I LIKE YOUR INITIATIVE ... BUT AS YOU CAN SEE, HE CAN'T BE SEDUCED.

I CAN'T EVEN GET HIM TO HAVE SEX WITH ME, THESE DAYS.

THE GOOD NEWS FOR YOU IS THAT I'M IN A STATE OF SEXUAL DESPERATION, AND I CAN BE SEDUCED.

OH ...



UH ... RIGHT HERE IN THE LIVING ROOM, MS. DAWES?

TRUST ME--HE'S GONE FOR THE NIGHT. IF HE DOES COME OUT FOR SOME REASON, HE PROBABLY WON'T NOTICE.

OR HE'LL SIT DOWN AND WATCH.



AND --UUUHHM!-- CALL ME LILLIAN.

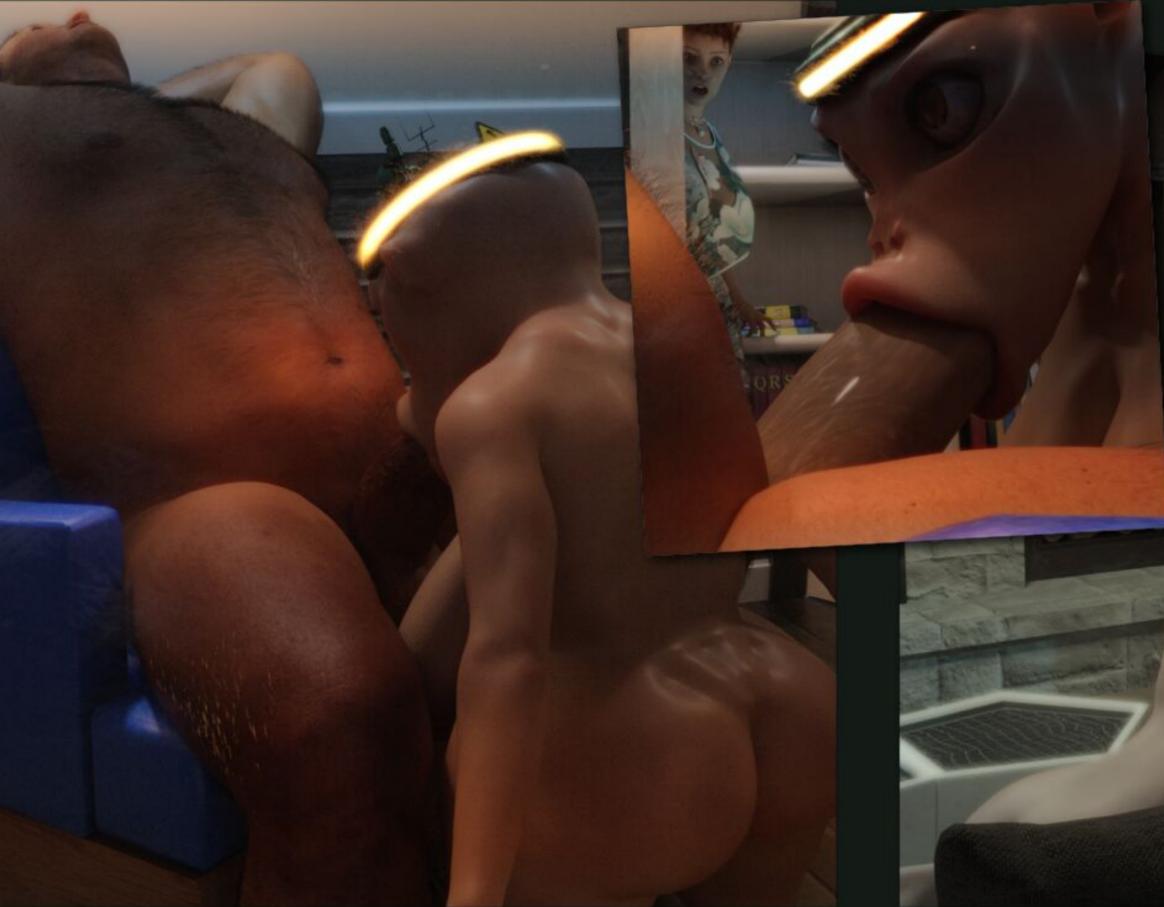


OR IF NOT, WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT HE IGNORES TWO WOMEN HAVING SEX--LOUDLY?

OK, BUT WHAT'S HE DOING? DID HE JUST GO TO SLEEP?

ZZKZ

THIS COULD BE SOMETHING I CAN USE.



MARY! WAIT!!

OH, DEAR. DID SOMEONE SEE SOMETHING THEY WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO?



LOOK, I'M NOT GOING TO APOLOGIZE FOR IT. THERE'S NOT REALLY ANY OTHER WAY I CAN HAVE SEX THAT WORKS ...

I KNOW IT'S EXTREME, BUT I TREAT HER WELL AND SHE SEEMS HAPPY. I'M NOT A MONSTER.

BUT THE PUBLIC ... I DON'T THINK THEY'D UNDERSTAND. AND I DO STILL ANSWER TO THE VOTERS.

WHAT HE'S TRYING TO SAY, DEAR, IS THAT YOU'VE GOT HIM BY THOSE RATHER OVERSIZED BALLS.

DON'T HELP, LILLIAN.

WELL ... I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO BLACKMAIL YOU, SIR.

WHAT DO YOU WANT?



I WANT A WAY UP. NATIONAL OFFICE, OR SOMETHING ELSE IN THAT TIER. I SIGNED UP WITH YOU TO SEE IF YOU COULD HELP GET ME THERE.

HMM. MISPLACED SENSE OF CIVIC DUTY? OR DO YOU JUST WANT THE CASH? THERE'S NOT A LOT OF POWER IN IT ANYMORE, YOU KNOW.

I ... AH ... DON'T LIKE THE WAY FULMER DOES THINGS. I THINK HE'S TAKING US IN THE WRONG DIRECTION.

OH, WELL, JOIN THE CLUB. AND BE CAREFUL WHO YOU SAY THAT AROUND. SPEAKING OF BLACKMAIL. IT'S A STRANGE WORLD NOW.

THE PROBLEM IS, FULMER'S THE REASON THERE'S NOT A LOT OF POWER ANYMORE. HE'S GOT IT ALL. YOU'LL HAVE A HARD TIME GETTING ANYWHERE.



I'LL HAVE AN EVEN HARDER TIME FROM DOWN HERE.

TRUE, THAT.

HERE'S THE THING: OUR JUNIOR SENATOR SEAT JUST OPENED. SPECIAL ELECTION. THEY'RE LOOKING FOR ME TO ENDORSE SOMEONE FOR IT.

YOU SEEM LIKE A GOOD CHOICE ... BUT MY CHOICE MEANS NOTHING WHILE JEREMIAH SAVAGE IS AROUND. HE HATES ME, AND FULMER LISTENS TO HIM. GET HIM OUT OF THE PICTURE AND WE MIGHT GET SOMEWHERE.

ANY SUGGESTIONS HOW I'D DO THAT?

SEX. THE MAN'S GOT AN IMAGE TO UPHOLD WITH HIS FLOCK. THEY'LL ROAST HIM IF IT TURNS OUT TO BE A LIE.



TWO WEEKS LATER

SIR? MR. BENNETT FROM THE FCC CALLED WHILE YOU WERE OUT. I RELAYED YOUR MESSAGE. HE DIDN'T SEEM PLEASED.

HE WANTS A BRIBE. THAT'S WHAT FULMER TEACHES THEM.

THANK YOU, MARY.

ACTUALLY, MARY ... A WORD IN PRIVATE, PLEASE?



I DIDN'T REACT WELL TO EVALINE INSISTING I NEEDED AN ASSISTANT. BUT YOU'VE PROVED ME WRONG. YOU'VE BEEN A GREAT HELP THE LAST FEW DAYS.

I CAN'T HELP FEELING THERE'S SOMETHING MORE GOING ON HERE, THOUGH.

UH-OH ...

BE HONEST, NOW. YOU'RE ATTRACTED TO ME, AREN'T YOU?

WHEW!

OH, SIR ... I'M ASHAMED OF MYSELF ...

ATTRACTION ISN'T SHAMEFUL, MARY. IT'S NATURAL. SO IT'S TRUE?

YES, SIR. I MEAN, I LIKE THE JOB ... BUT I ALSO WANTED TO ... GET CLOSER TO YOU.



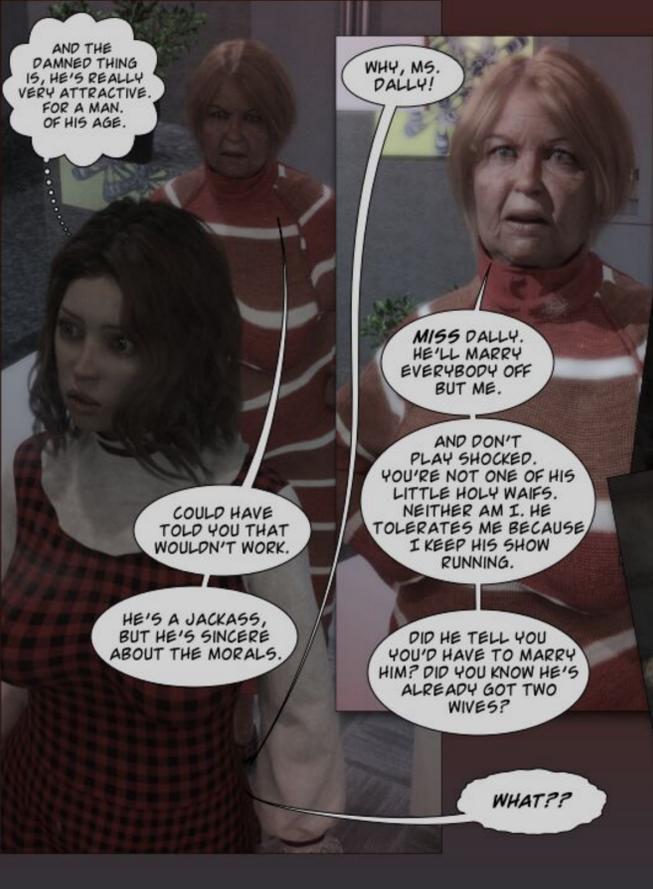
WELL, I'M FLATTERED. BUT WHILE ATTRACTION ISN'T SHAMEFUL, SEX OUTSIDE OF WEDLOCK IS. AND YOU KNOW I HAVE A DUTY TO BE AN EXAMPLE TO MY FLOCK.

UNLESS ... HOW WOULD YOU FEEL ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF MARRIAGE?

OH, SIR ...

I, UH ... I APPRECIATE THAT YOU'D THINK ENOUGH OF ME TO OFFER ...

... BUT I DON'T THINK I'M READY FOR THAT JUST YET.



AND THE DAMNED THING IS, HE'S REALLY VERY ATTRACTIVE. FOR A MAN. OF HIS AGE.

WHY, MS. DALLY!

MISS DALLY. HE'LL MARRY EVERYBODY OFF BUT ME.

AND DON'T PLAY SHOCKED. YOU'RE NOT ONE OF HIS LITTLE HOLY WAIFS. NEITHER AM I. HE TOLERATES ME BECAUSE I KEEP HIS SHOW RUNNING.

DID HE TELL YOU YOU'D HAVE TO MARRY HIM? DID YOU KNOW HE'S ALREADY GOT TWO WIVES?

WHAT??

COULD HAVE TOLD YOU THAT WOULDN'T WORK.

HE'S A JACKASS, BUT HE'S SINCERE ABOUT THE MORALS.



THAT NIGHT

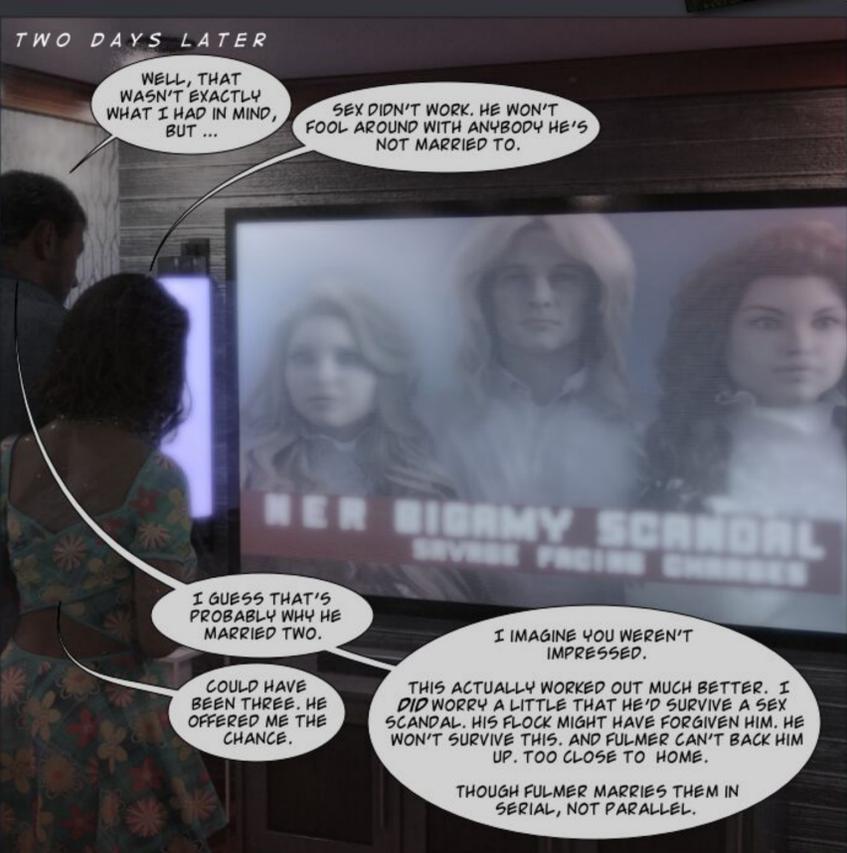


DARLING ... YOU HAVE TO CHOOSE WHICH OF US YOU WANT TONIGHT.

WELL ... WHO'S SEEING TO THE CHILDREN?

THEY'RE ALL ASLEEP, LOVE. SO TAKE YOUR PICK.

OR ... -- GIGGLE -- YOU COULD JUST HAVE US BOTH ...



TWO DAYS LATER

WELL, THAT WASN'T EXACTLY WHAT I HAD IN MIND, BUT ...

SEX DIDN'T WORK. HE WON'T FOOL AROUND WITH ANYBODY HE'S NOT MARRIED TO.

I GUESS THAT'S PROBABLY WHY HE MARRIED TWO.

COULD HAVE BEEN THREE. HE OFFERED ME THE CHANCE.

I IMAGINE YOU WEREN'T IMPRESSED.

THIS ACTUALLY WORKED OUT MUCH BETTER. I DID WORRY A LITTLE THAT HE'D SURVIVE A SEX SCANDAL. HIS FLOCK MIGHT HAVE FORGIVEN HIM. HE WON'T SURVIVE THIS. AND FULMER CAN'T BACK HIM UP. TOO CLOSE TO HOME.

THOUGH FULMER MARRIES THEM IN SERIAL, NOT PARALLEL.



SO ABOUT THAT SENATE SEAT ...

THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO GO. YOU CAN TRY TO WIN THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY, BY GETTING THE VOTES. OR YOU CAN JUST GET FULMER TO DECIDE TO BACK YOU.

IS THAT EASIER?

YES AND NO. IF FULMER GOES FOR IT, YOU GET THE JOB, THE END. BUT YOU HAVE TO KISS HIS ASS. SAY ALL THE THINGS HE WANTS TO HEAR. HE'LL WANT TO KNOW HE HAS YOU COMPLETELY IN HIS POCKET.

AND YOU'LL NEED TO GET AN AUGMENT.



AN AUGMENT-- YOU MEAN THAT KIND OF AUGMENT?

HE WON'T TAKE YOU SERIOUSLY WITHOUT ONE.

BUT I'M A WOMAN!

NOT AN ADVANTAGE, WITH HIM.

ANYWAY, YOU WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST. THERE AREN'T MANY, BUT THEY'RE AROUND.



HMMRRRH ...

BRAIN ALL BACK NOW?

YOU'VE GOT A NICE SHOWER, BUT WHO THOUGHT IT WAS A GOOD IDEA TO PUT IT SO FAR FROM THE BEDROOM?

JIRA, HOW'D I GET HERE? WHEN DID WE CHANGE LOCATIONS?

YOU DON'T REMEMBER TRAVELING? HOW MUCH DO YOU REMEMBER?

UH ... I REMEMBER MOST OF THE STUFF WE DID, BUT THERE'S A LOT OF GAPS, I THINK ...

THOSE ARE PROBABLY WHEN YOU WERE IDLE. IF YOU'RE NOT GIVEN SOMETHING TO DO, THE BRAIN JUST KIND OF GOES BLANK.

I MOVED US BECAUSE I WASN'T SURE IF THE LOCATION WAS SAFE.

YOU MEAN YOU WEREN'T SURE WHETHER I WAS A FINK.

NOTHING HAPPENED, ANYWAY. NO INCIDENTS HERE OR THERE.

MAYBE NOT YOU. NOBODY SPECIFIC. SOMETIMES I JUST GET A FEELING.

ALSO, YOU'VE GOT A BETTER BED. AND A SHOWER.

SO IF YOU WERE WORRIED THAT EXAMINER ID'D YOU, FORGET IT.

I ALSO MADE SOME CALLS TO YOUR WORKPLACE. YOU'RE ON SHORT-TERM MEDICAL LEAVE NOW. THAT SHOULD HOLD YOU LONG ENOUGH TO DO THIS.

OH, SHIT. THANK YOU. I DIDN'T EVEN THINK ABOUT THAT.

OF COURSE THE PROBLEM NOW IS ...

... YOU'RE NOT SURE IF YOU WANT TO GO BACK.

-- SIGH --

AN HOUR LATER

IF YOU'D TOLD ME THE DRESS CODE, I'D HAVE PUT ON SOMETHING MORE ... FUNCTIONAL.

IT'S OK. IF WE GET STOPPED WE'LL LET YOU BE A DISTRACTION.

BESIDES, I LIKE SEEING YOU IN THOSE LOW-CUT DRESSES. I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GET AWAY WITHOUT WEARING A BRA. ME, I DON'T HAVE ANY TO SPEAK OF, BUT SUELA'S GOT TO WEAR AN ARMORED ONE JUST TO KEEP THEM IN PLACE.

I'M NOT ACTUALLY ASLEEP, YOU KNOW.

AND WHEN WE GET THERE YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO TAKE IT ALL OFF ANYWAY.

YOU PROBABLY SHOULD TRY TO GET A NAP TOO. ONCE WE GET THERE, YOU'RE GOING TO NEED TO BE SHARP.

I DON'T THINK I CAN SLEEP. TELL ME ABOUT THE PLAN.

OK ... THE FBE FACILITY'S NOT LIKE THE HALFASSED PLACE WHERE FULFILLMENT RUNS THE FLATTOPS.

THEY TAKE SECURITY FOR THE EXAMINERS SERIOUSLY, AND THE MAIN WAY THEY DO IT IS REAL SIMPLE: NO PEOPLE IN THE BUILDINGS. EVER.

EXAMINERS ARE PEOPLE. AREN'T THEY?

I MEAN, BESIDES THEM. THEY'RE CONTROLLED. ROBOT MODE AT ALL TIMES.

THEY DON'T TRUST ANY UNPROGRAMMED PEOPLE TO RUN ANY PART OF THIS, SO THE FACILITIES ARE OPERATED BY HBO5. WHO ARE ACTUAL ROBOTS.

EXAMINERS AND HBO5 HAVE CODED SIGNAL EQUIPMENT. IF YOU AREN'T MAKING THAT SIGNAL BLIP, YOU DON'T GET IN THE DOOR.

SEVEN HOURS LATER

FEDERAL BUREAU OF EXAMINATION CENTRAL HANDLING FACILITY SOMEWHERE IN NORTHERN VA

BUNCH OF BIG UGLY BUILDINGS WITH ABSOLUTELY NO SIGNS OR MARKINGS AND A WALL ALL THE WAY AROUND.

NOTHING SUSPICIOUS ABOUT THAT, RIGHT? I'D HAVE DONE A LOT BETTER. THESE PEOPLE HAVE NO IMAGINATION.

THERE'S GOT TO BE A GATE SOMEWHERE.

THERE IS, BUT WE WON'T BE USING IT. OUR ENTRANCE IS A MILE AWAY. I JUST WANTED YOU TO SEE THE PLACE.

WHERE ARE WE? THIS ISN'T PART OF THE FACILITY, IS IT?

KIND OF. THEY BUILT THE FACILITY ON LAND THEY HAD LYING AROUND. THIS PART OF THE PROPERTY USED TO BE A WASTE TREATMENT PLANT. HASN'T BEEN USED IN YEARS.

THERE ARE CONNECTING TUNNELS DOWN BELOW THAT THEY MOSTLY FORGOT ABOUT.

MOSTLY?

OK, THAT'S ALL OF IT. UNDRRESS AND START PUTTING THIS ON. YOU'LL NEED SOME HELP.

THIS DOESN'T LOOK LIKE AN EXAMINER ...

YOU'RE NOT GOING AS AN EXAMINER. THEY DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO WHERE YOU NEED TO BE.

YOU'RE GOING IN AS A HBO5.

BUT THEY'RE ROBOTS! THEY'RE GOING TO KNOW I'M NOT --

NOPE. THEY ABSOLUTELY WILL NOT CARE.

THE SYSTEMS CHECK TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE MAKING THE SIGNAL BLIP, AND THE OTHER HBO5S JUST CHECK TO MAKE SURE YOU LOOK LIKE ONE OF THEM. IF THEY EVEN NOTICE YOU AT ALL.

MOST OF THIS STUFF IS ACTUAL HBO PARTS, SO IT'LL PASS. AND I'VE MODIFIED THE HELMET TO SHOW YOU THE FLOORPLAN AND YOUR ROUTE.

HOW DID YOU GET YOUR HANDS ON ALL THIS?

SAME WAY I GOT THE PLANS AND THE SIGNAL CODE. YEARS BACK. I GAVE ONE OF THE PEOPLE WHO SET UP THE PLACE A COUPLE OF BLOWJOBS.

I THINK THEY WERE REALLY GOOD BLOWJOBS, BUT I'M NOT SURE HE CARED. PEOPLE UNDERESTIMATE HORNNESS AS AN ATTACK VECTOR.

WHEN I PUT THE HELMET ON YOU, NO ONE WILL HEAR YOU TALK, AND YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO MOVE YOUR JAW MUCH ANYWAY. HBO5S DON'T SPEAK.

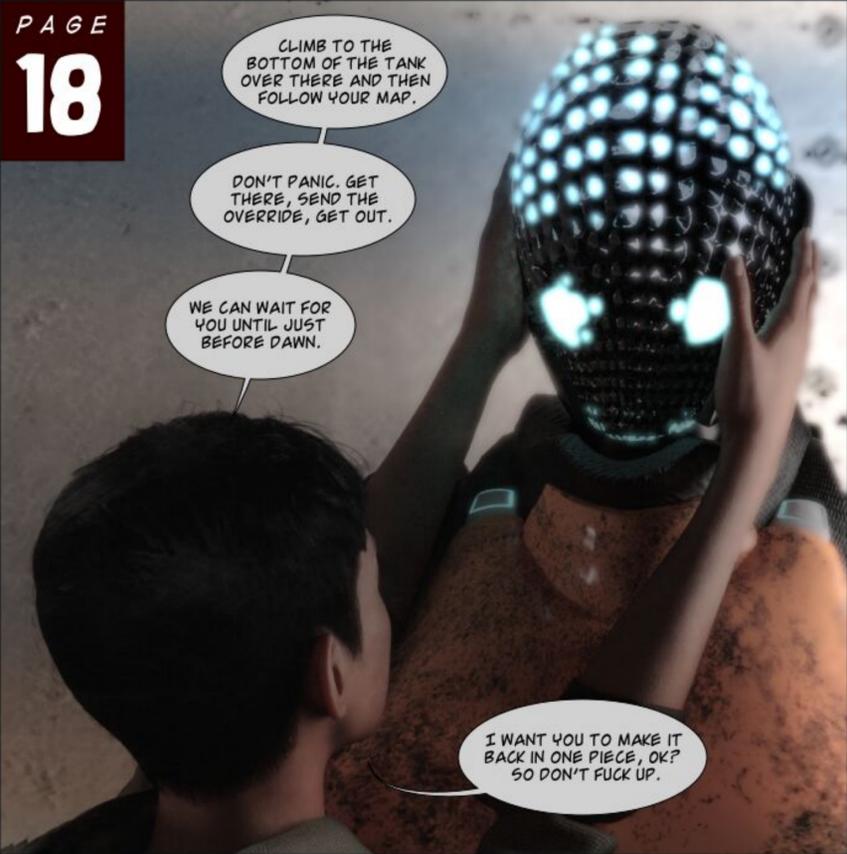
YOU'RE ALSO GOING TO HAVE A HARD TIME HEARING ANYTHING, SO THIS IS IT, FOR INSTRUCTIONS.

I'VE GIVEN YOU TWO DIFFERENT OVERRIDE SETS. YOU'LL HAVE TO DECIDE WHICH YOU THINK IS BEST.

SUELA'S THINKING IS THAT IT'S BEST IF THE EXAMINERS JUST STAND DOWN. MAYBE HELP REMOVE ANY BARRIERS IN THE WAY OF SOLACE DOING ITS REBELLION, BUT NOTHING ELSE.

I THINK THAT'S BULLSHIT. I THINK THEY SHOULD ACTIVELY HELP FIGHT. USE THEIR FIREPOWER AND MAKE FULMER AND HIS PEOPLE SHIT THEMSELVES.

BUT YOU'RE TAKING THE RISK, SO YOU GET TO MAKE THE CHOICE.



CLIMB TO THE BOTTOM OF THE TANK OVER THERE AND THEN FOLLOW YOUR MAP.

DON'T PANIC. GET THERE, SEND THE OVERRIDE, GET OUT.

WE CAN WAIT FOR YOU UNTIL JUST BEFORE DAWN.

I WANT YOU TO MAKE IT BACK IN ONE PIECE, OK? SO DON'T FUCK UP.



WHY WOULD ANYONE DESIGN A ROBOT TO LOOK LIKE THIS ANYWAY? I CAN'T SEE MY FEET AND I FEEL LIKE I HAVE A TRAILER ATTACHED.



OK, HERE WE GO.



RIGHT, HURRY OFF TO MAKE TROUBLE FOR SOMEBODY.

IGNORING ME, THOUGH. GOOD.



THIS IS ... THEY STORE THEM LIKE THIS? IN THESE RACKS? THESE ARE PEOPLE!

AND HERE COMES A HBO. I MEAN, ANOTHER HBO. THAT'S RIGHT. I'M A HBO. NOTHING TO SEE HERE ...



HUH. OK.

WORKED UP ABOUT NOTHING.



OH GOD. IF THEY DO NOTICE ME, THOUGH, I'M FUCKED.

DON'T THINK ABOUT THAT ... JUST KEEP MOVING ... YOU'RE ALMOST THERE ...



I EXPECTED SOMETHING MORE ... MODERN?

THIS LOOKS LIKE IT'S FROM THE COLD WAR. MAYBE THEY HAD SOME SURPLUS LYING AROUND OR SOMETHING.

OH, WELL. I DON'T NEED TO BE ABLE TO FIGURE IT OUT. I JUST HAVE TO SEND THE OVERRIDE.

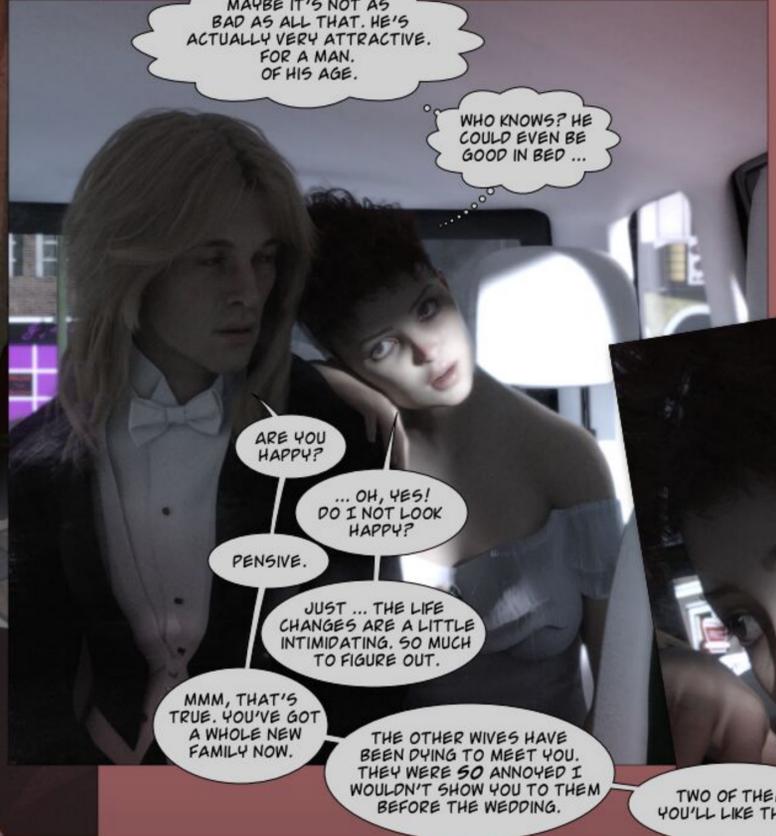
IF YOU USE THE EXAMINERS AS SUPPORT SKIP TO PAGE 25

IF YOU USE THE EXAMINERS AS SOLDIERS SKIP TO PAGE 26



DO YOU, MARY, TAKE JEREMIAH TO BE YOUR LAWFULLY WEDDED HUSBAND?

... I DO.



MAYBE IT'S NOT AS BAD AS ALL THAT. HE'S ACTUALLY VERY ATTRACTIVE. FOR A MAN. OF HIS AGE.

WHO KNOWS? HE COULD EVEN BE GOOD IN BED ...

ARE YOU HAPPY?

... OH, YES! DO I NOT LOOK HAPPY?

PENSIVE.

JUST ... THE LIFE CHANGES ARE A LITTLE INTIMIDATING. SO MUCH TO FIGURE OUT.

MMM, THAT'S TRUE. YOU'VE GOT A WHOLE NEW FAMILY NOW.

THE OTHER WIVES HAVE BEEN DYING TO MEET YOU. THEY WERE SO ANNOYED I WOULDN'T SHOW YOU TO THEM BEFORE THE WEDDING.

TWO OF THEM. YOU'LL LIKE THEM.

THE ... OTHER WIVES??

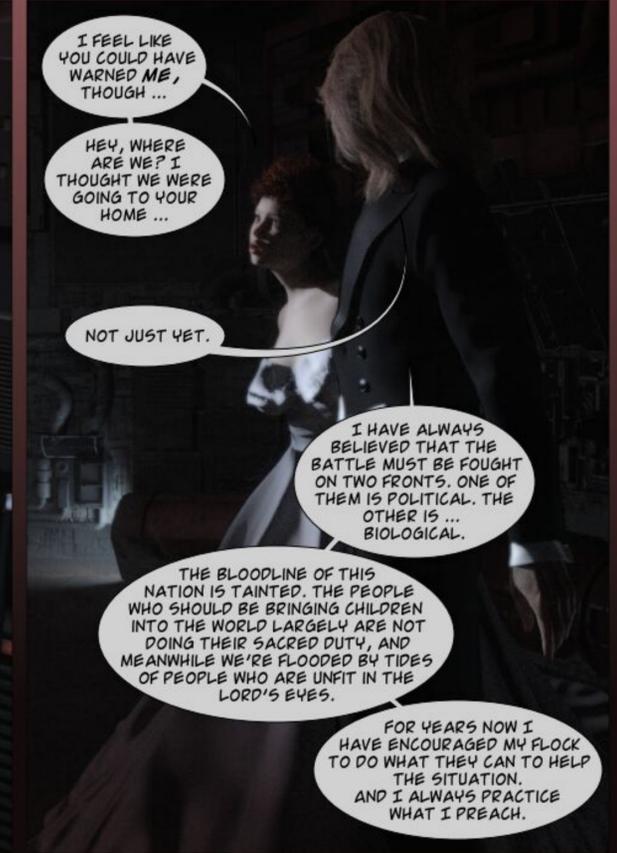


BUT ... THAT'S ILLEGAL ...

UNFORTUNATELY, YES. SOMETIMES GOD'S WILL AND THE LAW DON'T COINCIDE.

PERHAPS ONE DAY WE WILL BE IN A POSITION TO CHANGE THAT.

IN THE MEANTIME, WE HAVE TO KEEP IT SECRET. I'M NOT ASHAMED, BECAUSE I DON'T BELIEVE IT TO BE WRONG ... BUT I THINK THE PUBLIC WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.



I FEEL LIKE YOU COULD HAVE WARNED ME, THOUGH ...

HEY, WHERE ARE WE? I THOUGHT WE WERE GOING TO YOUR HOME ...

NOT JUST YET.

I HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT THE BATTLE MUST BE FOUGHT ON TWO FRONTS. ONE OF THEM IS POLITICAL. THE OTHER IS ... BIOLOGICAL.

THE BLOODLINE OF THIS NATION IS TAINTED. THE PEOPLE WHO SHOULD BE BRINGING CHILDREN INTO THE WORLD LARGELY ARE NOT DOING THEIR SACRED DUTY, AND MEANWHILE WE'RE FLOODED BY TIDES OF PEOPLE WHO ARE UNFIT IN THE LORD'S EYES.

FOR YEARS NOW I HAVE ENCOURAGED MY FLOCK TO DO WHAT THEY CAN TO HELP THE SITUATION. AND I ALWAYS PRACTICE WHAT I PREACH.



I HAVE NO DOUBTS ABOUT YOUR SINCERE COMMITMENT TO THE FIRST OF THOSE FRONTS.

I HAVE ABSOLUTELY ZERO FAITH, THOUGH, IN YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE SECOND.



BUT THAT WILL CHANGE.

... WHAT??



YOU CALL YOURSELF A MAN OF MORALS! WHAT SORT OF MORALS LET YOU DO THIS TO SOMEONE? SOMEONE YOU PRETENDED TO CARE FOR!!

I WASN'T PRETENDING. AND I WOULD LIKE TO HOPE YOU WEREN'T EITHER. BUT NOW WE'LL BOTH BE SURE.

I'LL SEE YOU IN A FEW DAYS.

NOOOOO!



EIGHT MONTHS LATER



I'M HOME, EVERYONE!

AND I HAVE EXCELLENT NEWS. FULMER HAS RESIGNED.

APPARENTLY HE FINALLY READ THE LETTERS OF FIRE ON THE WALL.

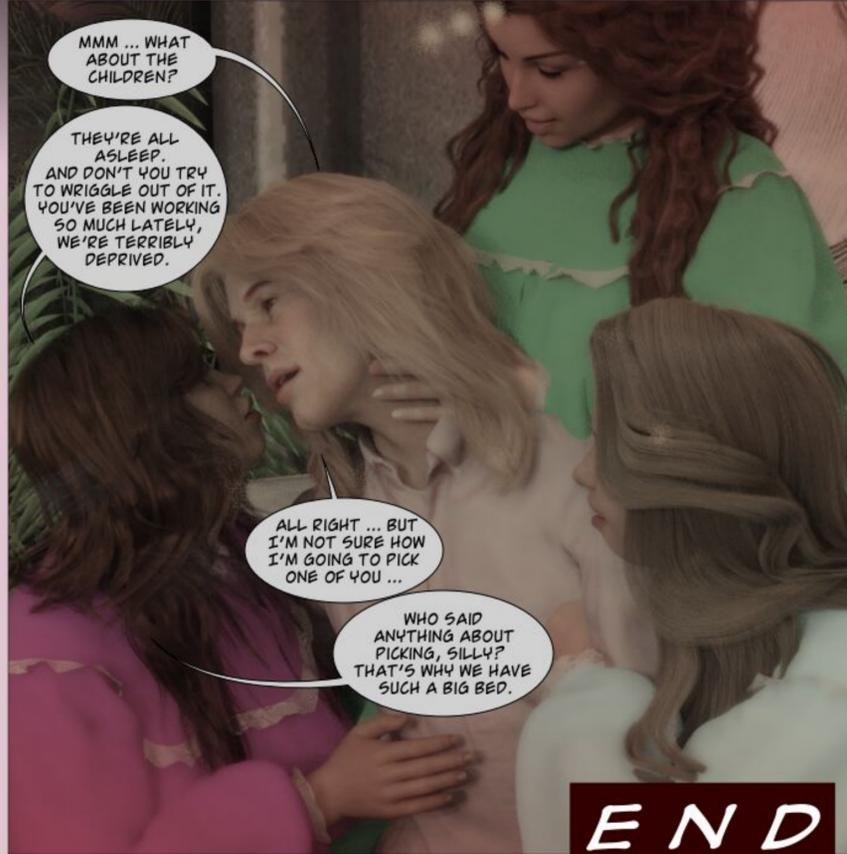
I HAVE THE COALITION'S FULL SUPPORT. UNLESS SOMETHING DISASTROUS HAPPENS, I DO BELIEVE YOU'RE LOOKING AT THE NEXT PRESIDENT.



OH, DARLING, THAT'S WONDERFUL!

YOU KNOW I COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU. YOU'VE BEEN THE SECRET WEAPON. AND STILL WILL BE. WE'VE A LONG ROAD YET.

I THINK WE SHOULD DO SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE.

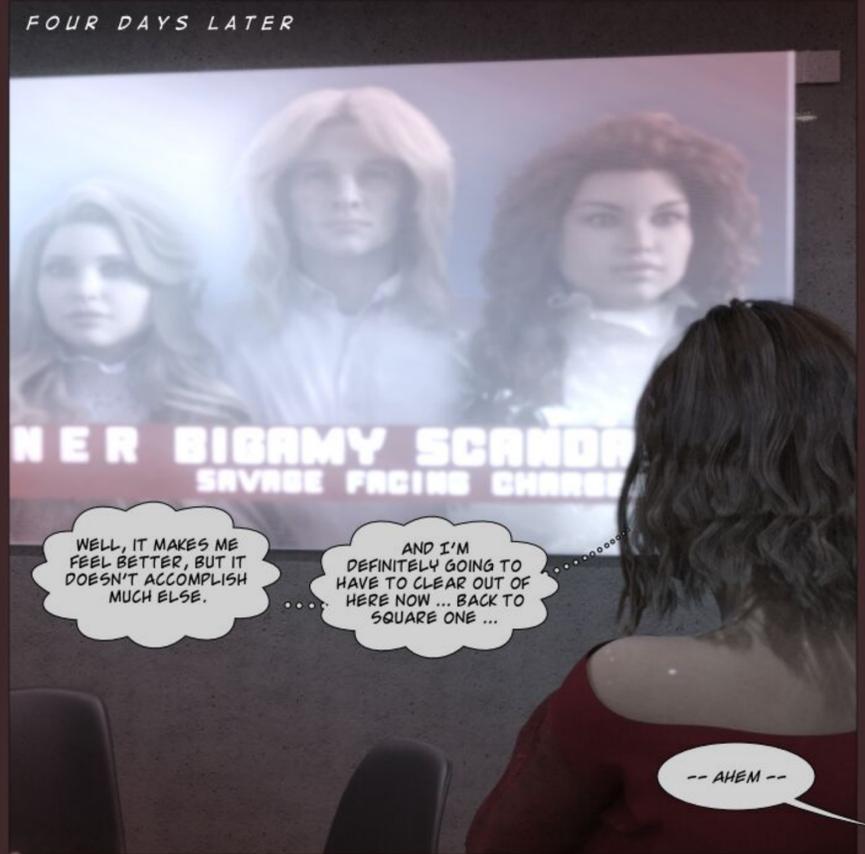
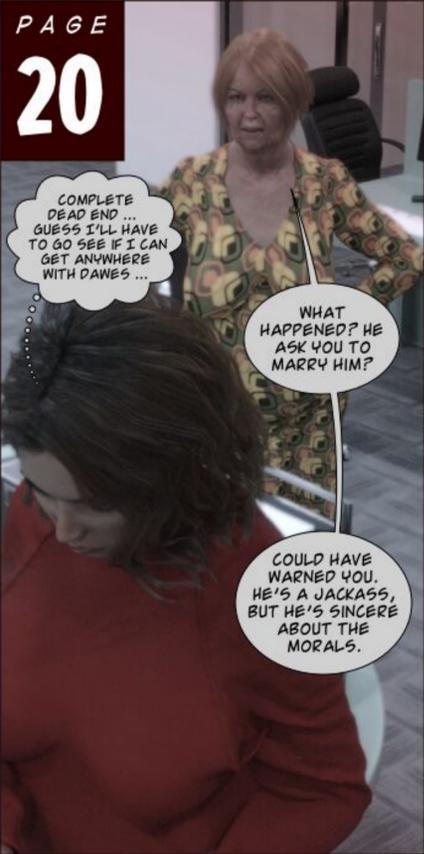


MMM ... WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN?

THEY'RE ALL ASLEEP. AND DON'T YOU TRY TO WRIGGLE OUT OF IT. YOU'VE BEEN WORKING SO MUCH LATELY, WE'RE TERRIBLY DEPRIVED.

ALL RIGHT ... BUT I'M NOT SURE HOW I'M GOING TO PICK ONE OF YOU ...

WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT PICKING, SILLY? THAT'S WHY WE HAVE SUCH A BIG BED.



COMPLETE DEAD END ... GUESS I'LL HAVE TO GO SEE IF I CAN GET ANYWHERE WITH DAWES ...

WHAT HAPPENED? HE ASK YOU TO MARRY HIM?

COULD HAVE WARNED YOU. HE'S A JACKASS, BUT HE'S SINCERE ABOUT THE MORALS.

EVA, SHUSH!

RELAX. HE'S NOT IN THE OFFICE.

AND DON'T BOTHER KEEPING UP THE ACT FOR ME. I'M NO MORE INTO THE PURITY BULLSHIT THAN YOU ARE.

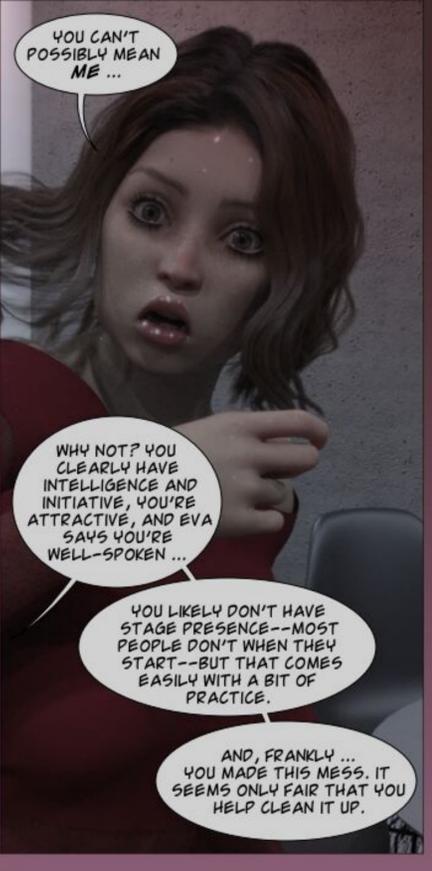
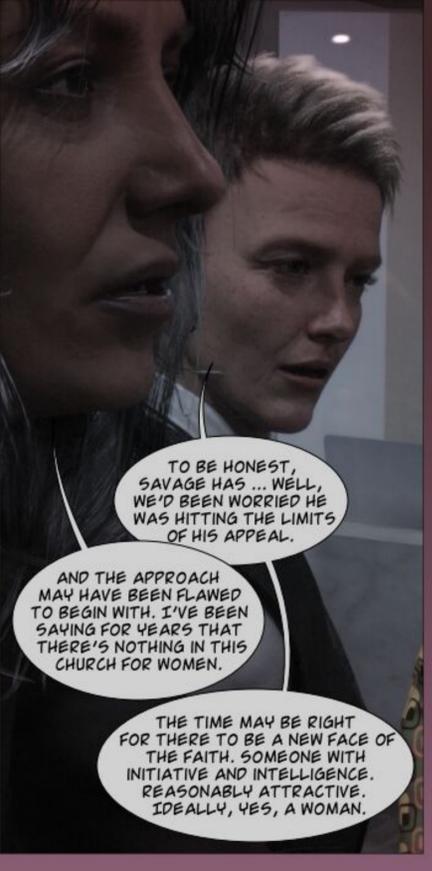
IT'S JUST AS WELL YOU TOLD HIM NO, YOU KNOW. HE'S ALREADY GOT TWO WIVES. YOU DON'T WANT TO GET TANGLED UP IN THAT.

HE WHAT???

WELL, IT MAKES ME FEEL BETTER, BUT IT DOESN'T ACCOMPLISH MUCH ELSE.

AND I'M DEFINITELY GOING TO HAVE TO CLEAR OUT OF HERE NOW ... BACK TO SQUARE ONE ...

-- AHEM --



YOU KNOW, THE N.E.R. ISN'T JUST A MINISTRY. IT'S A BUSINESS. A BUSINESS THAT BRINGS IN MANY MILLIONS OF DOLLARS A YEAR.

DID THAT EVEN OCCUR TO YOU BEFORE YOU DROPPED A DIME ON THE ONE PIECE OF THE MACHINE THAT'S ABSOLUTELY VITAL?

EVA! YOU TOLD THEM? WHY?

HOLD ON, MARY, IT'S NOT LIKE THAT. LISTEN TO WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY.

TO BE HONEST, SAVAGE HAS ... WELL, WE'D BEEN WORRIED HE WAS HITTING THE LIMITS OF HIS APPEAL.

AND THE APPROACH MAY HAVE BEEN FLAWED TO BEGIN WITH. I'VE BEEN SAYING FOR YEARS THAT THERE'S NOTHING IN THIS CHURCH FOR WOMEN.

THE TIME MAY BE RIGHT FOR THERE TO BE A NEW FACE OF THE FAITH. SOMEONE WITH INITIATIVE AND INTELLIGENCE. REASONABLY ATTRACTIVE. IDEALLY, YES, A WOMAN.

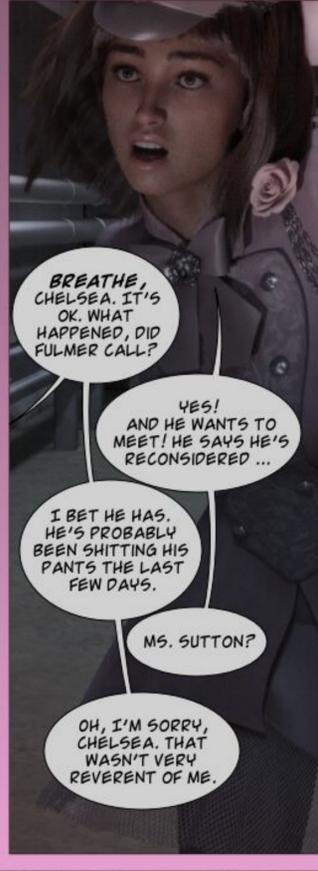
YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY MEAN ME ...

WHY NOT? YOU CLEARLY HAVE INTELLIGENCE AND INITIATIVE, YOU'RE ATTRACTIVE, AND EVA SAYS YOU'RE WELL-SPOKEN ...

YOU LIKELY DON'T HAVE STAGE PRESENCE--MOST PEOPLE DON'T WHEN THEY START--BUT THAT COMES EASILY WITH A BIT OF PRACTICE.

AND, FRANKLY ... YOU MADE THIS MESS. IT SEEMS ONLY FAIR THAT YOU HELP CLEAN IT UP.

SIX MONTHS LATER



AND REMEMBER ALWAYS, BELOVED, TO TAKE TIME IN YOUR LIFE FOR JOY.

JOY IS SANCTIFIED. JOY IS A BLESSING. JOY IS GOD'S GIFT TO US.

WHEN YOU FEEL JOY, YOU FEEL THE HOLY SPIRIT. YOU FEEL IT AROUND YOU AND WITHIN YOU. YOU FEEL IT MOVING THROUGH YOU.

AND WHEN YOU DO, YOU KNOW THAT CHRIST IS WITH YOU, THAT HE LOVES YOU, THAT HE IS WATCHING OVER YOU.

SO BE REVERENT, YES, BE PURE, YES ... BUT BE ALSO JOYFUL.

AMEN.

THAT WAS A GOOD PERFORMANCE. YOU GET BETTER EVERY DAY.

WHY, THANK YOU, EVA! I WAS PLEASSED WITH IT MYSELF.

I THINK I'M FINALLY GETTING WHERE I CAN HIT THE TONE RIGHT MOST OF THE TIME. PART OF IT'S REALIZING I CAN'T ACTUALLY COME ON TOO STRONG. IT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE POSSIBLE.

YES. THIS IS NOT A CROWD THAT APPRECIATES SUBTLETY.

MS. SUTTON! MS. SUTTON!!

BREATHE, CHELSEA. IT'S OK. WHAT HAPPENED, DID FULMER CALL?

YES! AND HE WANTS TO MEET! HE SAYS HE'S RECONSIDERED ...

I BET HE HAS. HE'S PROBABLY BEEN SHITTING HIS PANTS THE LAST FEW DAYS.

MS. SUTTON?

OH, I'M SORRY, CHELSEA. THAT WASN'T VERY REVERENT OF ME.



HE DOESN'T LIKE TO ADMIT HE NEEDS US, SO HE HAS PERIODS WHERE HE'S AN ASSHOLE ABOUT IT. THEN AFTER A WHILE HE MAKES NICE.

THIS TIME'S GOING TO BE DIFFERENT. WE'VE BECOME A FAITH PEOPLE ACTUALLY LIKE. WE'VE GOT PEOPLE JOINING UP WHO HAVEN'T BEEN INSIDE A CHURCH SINCE THEY WERE TODDLERS.

HE STILL NEEDS US, BUT HE'S JUST FIGURED OUT WE NO LONGER NEED HIM.

-- MMM -- ... CHELSEA. ARE YOU FEELING SPIRITUAL?

OOOH ...

YOU THINK I COULD GET YOU TO DO THAT THING YOU DO WITH YOUR TONGUE?

OH, YES, MA'AM!!

OOOOHHHH!

I FEEL THE SPIRIT! YES! OH, YES! YESSSSSS!

PRAISE GOD! MOST HOLY! AAAHHHHH!!



FOLKS, PRESIDENT FULMER HERE. NOW YOU MIGHT HAVE NOTICED WE'RE HAVING A LITTLE PROBLEM WITH THE FULFILLMENT PROGRAM. IT'S A GREAT PROGRAM! REALLY GREAT. GOOD PEOPLE.



BUT YOU KNOW WE HAVE A LOT OF BAD PEOPLE TRYING TO WRECK THIS GREAT NATION OF OURS. THEY'RE THE ONES DOING THIS.



WE'VE GOT PEOPLE WORKING ON THE PROBLEM NOW. THE BEST PEOPLE. THEY'LL HAVE IT FIXED REAL SOON. DON'T YOU WORRY.



WELCOME TO MCGREEBLES MAY I TAKE --

MAY --

MA'AM?

ARE YOU OK?



EDIE? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

GET ON WITH THE TRANSACTION!



UNHF



SHUT IT DOWN! JUST SHUT THE WHOLE THING DOWN AND RESTART!

AND THEN WE'RE GOING TO FIN THOSE SOLAC PEOPLE AND

I CAN'T! WHOEVER DID THIS LOCKED EVERYTHING OUT!



AND THEN THEY YANKED FULMER? JUST LIKE THAT?

THE MONEY ALWAYS WINS. THEY LOST A SHITLOAD DURING THE TWO DAYS WITHOUT THEIR SLAVE LABOR AND THEY WERE ALL SCARED FOR THEIR LIVES.

THAT'S THE ONLY BRIGHT SPOT, THOUGH THEY'LL PROBABLY TRY TO REPLACE HIM WITH SOMEBODY JUST AS BAD.

AND MEANWHILE WE'VE GOT EVERY EXAMINER IN THE COUNTRY LOOKING FOR US. WE'RE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING FOR MONTHS!

ALL BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T DO WHAT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO DO!

BUT ... IT DID WHAT WE WANTED IT TO DO! IT WAS MEANT TO GET RID OF--



THAT'S NOT THE POINT! YOU DIDN'T DO WHAT I TOLD YOU TO DO!!

I KNEW I COULDN'T TRUST YOU! I KNEW I COULD NEVER TRUST YOU! I DON'T KNOW WHY I EVEN--



THE OTHER WAY WOULDN'T HAVE WORKED! IT WASN'T ENOUGH--

AND WHO TOLD YOU THAT? ARE YOU A STRATEGIST NOW? NO, YOU'RE A STUPID LITTLE WHITE GIRL WHO WANTED TO PLAY REVOLUTIONARY AND YOU GOT THAT FROM JIRA, WHO IS --

OH, NEVER MIND. I'M DONE WITH THIS. I'M DONE WITH YOU.



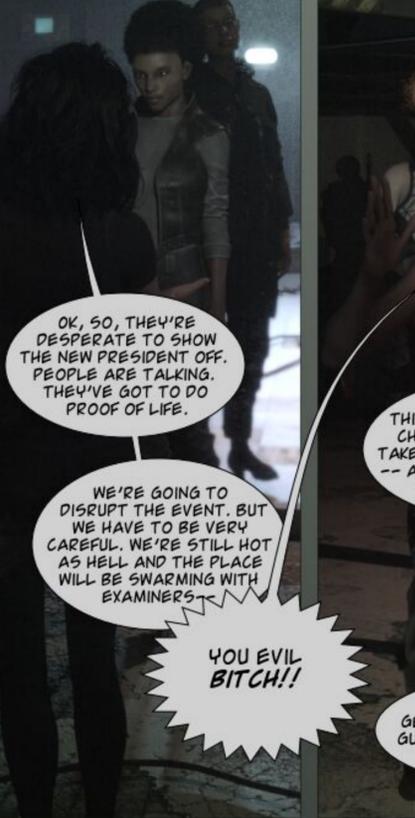
HEY! WHAT IS -- --KAFF--

I CAN'T TRUST YOU NOT TO MAKE OUR LIVES EVEN MORE DIFFICULT, NOW.

SO YOU'RE GOING TO VOLUNTEER FOR FULFILLMENT.

--KAFF-- WHAAA...

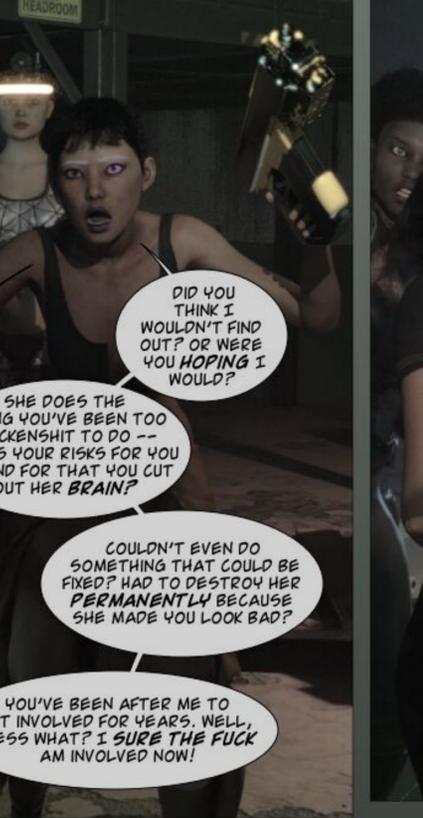
TWENTY DAYS LATER



OK, SO, THEY'RE DESPERATE TO SHOW THE NEW PRESIDENT OFF. PEOPLE ARE TALKING. THEY'VE GOT TO DO PROOF OF LIFE.

WE'RE GOING TO DISRUPT THE EVENT. BUT WE HAVE TO BE VERY CAREFUL. WE'RE STILL HOT AS HELL AND THE PLACE WILL BE SWARMING WITH EXAMINERS

YOU EVIL BITCH!!

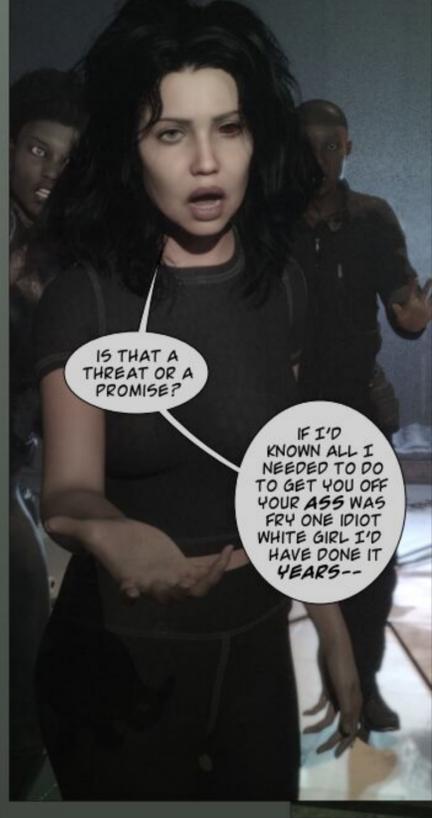


DID YOU THINK I WOULDN'T FIND OUT? OR WERE YOU HOPING I WOULD?

SHE DOES THE THING YOU'VE BEEN TOO CHICKENSHIT TO DO -- TAKES YOUR RISKS FOR YOU -- AND FOR THAT YOU CUT OUT HER BRAIN?

COULDN'T EVEN DO SOMETHING THAT COULD BE FIXED? HAD TO DESTROY HER PERMANENTLY BECAUSE SHE MADE YOU LOOK BAD?

YOU'VE BEEN AFTER ME TO GET INVOLVED FOR YEARS. WELL, GUESS WHAT? I SURE THE FUCK AM INVOLVED NOW!



IS THAT A THREAT OR A PROMISE?

IF I'D KNOWN ALL I NEEDED TO DO TO GET YOU OFF YOUR ASS WAS FRY ONE IDIOT WHITE GIRL I'D HAVE DONE IT YEARS--



AAHUUUUH!!

NOW THERE'S A RISK YOU DIDN'T ANTICIPATE, HUH?

BITCH.

THREE MONTHS LATER



UH, MR. PRESIDENT ... WE HAVE A SITUATION WITH THE EXAMINERS ...

DAMN IT, DODGE! I KEEP YOU AROUND SO I DON'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH ALL OF THAT!

WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO, MAKE AN EMERGENCY SPEECH AGAIN?

AH ... ACTUALLY, SIR, WE WERE THINKING MORE IN TERMS OF AN EMERGENCY EVACUATION.

HAVE A LOOK OUT THE WINDOW.



... BUT WE KNOW WHERE HE HIDES. SO WE'LL RAID THAT.

THEN WE DECLARE THE OFFICE VACANT. WE'VE GOT MOST OF CONGRESS SCARED SHITLESS. IT'LL STICK.

ISA, EVER WANTED TO BE PRESIDENT?

UH ... THERE'S GOT TO BE SOMEONE BETTER FOR THE JOB?

WELL, IT'S SURE NOT GOING TO BE ME. GIVE IT SOME THOUGHT, WOULD YOU?

I'M CUTTING OUT FOR NOW. THIS IS ALL WAY TOO MUCH WORK AND I NEED A BREAK. WE'LL DO THE NEXT BIT IN A COUPLE OF DAYS.



SUELA!

MISTRESS?

SHE IS LYING ON THE BED. THAT'S A CLEAR CUE. WHY AREN'T YOU TAKING CARE OF HER?

I'M SORRY, MISTRESS ...

NO, YOU'RE NOT. I'M GOING TO HAVE TO TUNE YOUR INSTRUCTION SET AGAIN.

IT'S SO DIFFICULT TO KEEP YOU FULLY AWARE AND YET NOT GIVE YOU ANY DISCRETION ...



YOUR JOB IS TO KEEP HER HAPPY. YOU SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT THAT AT ALL TIMES.

YOU DESTROYED HER, AND NOW YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR HER. YOU'RE GOING TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR HER FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE. IT'S THE LEAST YOU CAN DO, AND I DON'T CARE IF YOU HATE EVERY SECOND OF IT.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

--MMHF-- VHS, M4SHRS.



FOLKS, PRESIDENT FULMER HERE. NOW YOU MIGHT HAVE NOTICED WE'RE HAVING A LITTLE PROBLEM WITH THE FULFILLMENT PROGRAM. IT'S A GREAT PROGRAM! REALLY GREAT. GOOD PEOPLE.

BUT YOU KNOW WE HAVE A LOT OF BAD PEOPLE TRYING TO WRECK THIS GREAT NATION OF OURS. THEY'RE THE ONES DOING THIS.

WE'VE GOT PEOPLE WORKING ON THE PROBLEM NOW. THE BEST PEOPLE. THEY'LL HAVE IT FIXED REAL SOON. DON'T YOU WORRY.

SHUT IT DOWN! JUST SHUT THE WHOLE THING DOWN AND RESTART!

AND THEN WE'RE GOING TO THOSE SOLACE PEOPLE AND WE'RE GOING TO TAKE THEM FOR GOOD. WE'RE KEEPING A GREAT.



WELCOME TO MCGREEBLES MAY I TAKE --

MAY --

MA'AM?

ARE YOU OK?



EDIE? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

GET ON WITH THE TRANSACTION!

... EDIE?



I CAN'T! WHOEVER DID THIS LOCKED EVERYTHING OUT!



... BUT IT DIDN'T DO ANYTHING! THEY FIXED IT IN TWO DAYS AND I DON'T KNOW IF ANYBODY EVEN NOTICED!

DON'T UNDERRATE YOURSELF. PEOPLE NOTICED.

AND PEOPLE KNOW SOLACE WAS RESPONSIBLE. THAT RAISES OUR PROFILE. IN A GOOD WAY.

IN A COUPLE OF WEEKS, WHEN WE DO OUR NEXT ACTION, PEOPLE WILL BE A LITTLE MORE AWARE OF US, AND A LITTLE MORE SCARED.



BUT NOW WE HAVE A LITTLE FREE TIME ... AND ...

OH! I ... UH ...

DON'T MOVE!!



DID YOU TELL THEM WHERE WE WERE? DID YOU??

NO!!

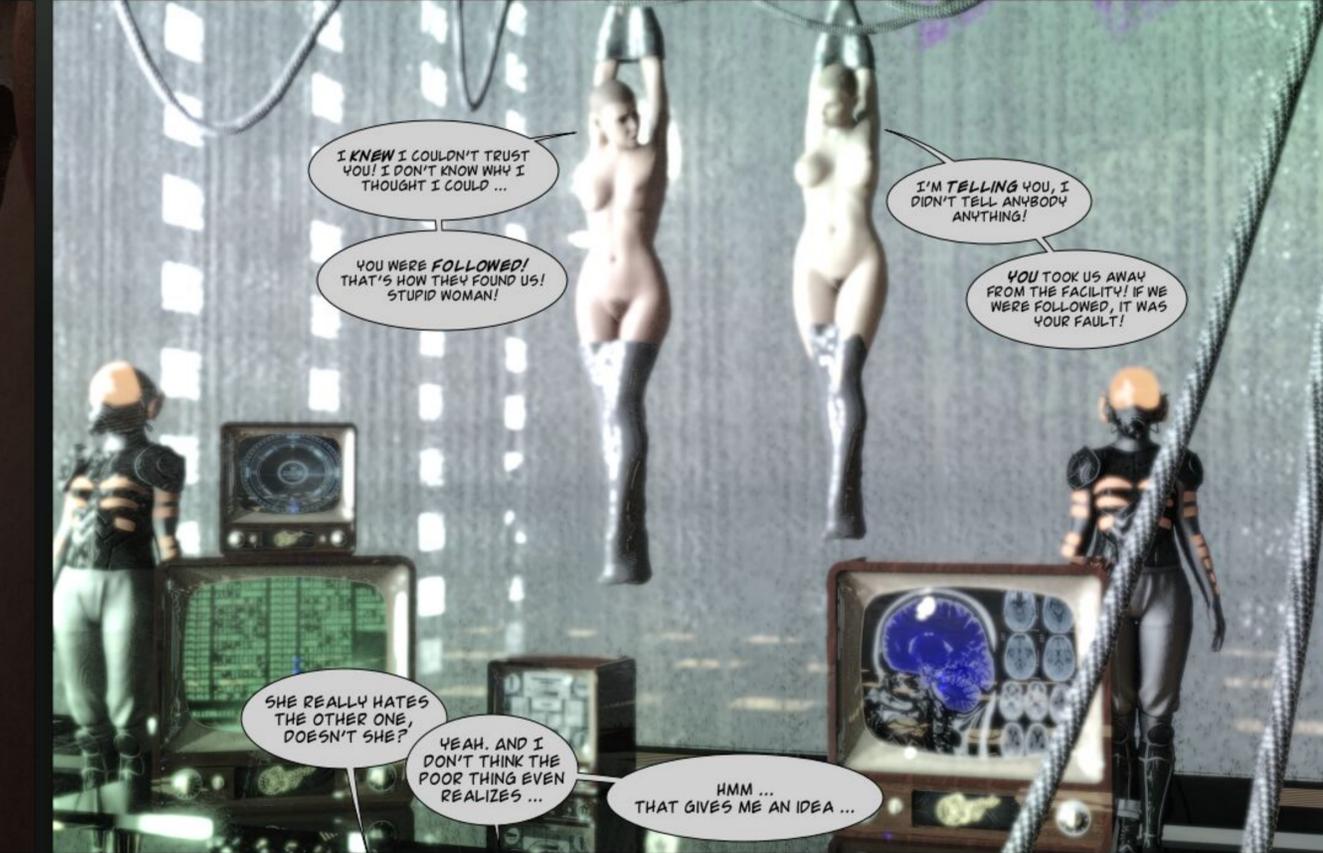


MR. PRESIDENT, WE DON'T THINK THEY SHOULD JUST BE THROWN INTO A PROGRAM. WE THINK YOU SHOULD MAKE AN OBJECT LESSON OF THEM.

DODGE, I WANT TO DO SOMETHING REALLY BAD TO THEM. SOMETHING WHERE EVERYBODY CAN SEE WHAT HAPPENS TO BAD PEOPLE.

AH ... YES, SIR. THAT'S ... WHAT I WAS SUGGESTING.

GOOD! YOU FIGURE IT OUT.



I KNEW I COULDN'T TRUST YOU! I DON'T KNOW WHY I THOUGHT I COULD ...

YOU WERE FOLLOWED! THAT'S HOW THEY FOUND US! STUPID WOMAN!

I'M TELLING YOU, I DIDN'T TELL ANYBODY ANYTHING!

YOU TOOK US AWAY FROM THE FACILITY! IF WE WERE FOLLOWED, IT WAS YOUR FAULT!

SHE REALLY HATES THE OTHER ONE, DOESN'T SHE?

YEAH. AND I DON'T THINK THE POOR THING EVEN REALIZES ...

HMM ... THAT GIVES ME AN IDEA ...



HERE YOU ARE, FOLKS! WITNESS WHAT BECOMES OF TERRORISTS WHO WANT TO OVERTHROW OUR AMERICAN WAY!

LOOK AS LONG AS YOU LIKE, BUT TAKE NOTE OF THE SAFETY ZONE ON THE FLOOR. DON'T GET TOO CLOSE TO THE CAGE!

OH MY GOODNESS!

ARE THEY REAL?

I HEAR THEY WERE BEHIND THE FLATTOPS GOING HAWWIRE ...

MOMMY, ARE THOSE PEOPLE?

HUSH, GLADYS.

HAD A LOT OF WORK DONE, HUH?

RIGHT? CAN YOU IMAGINE?

CAN THEY UNDERSTAND US?

I DON'T THINK SO. I DON'T THINK THEY'VE GOT MUCH BRAIN LEFT.

YOU WOULDN'T WANT THAT TO HAPPEN TO YOU ...

MOMMY! THAT ONE'S GOT A PEEFEE!

HUSH, GLADYS.

SO THIS IS JUST FULMER BEING SADISTIC?

SHH! YOU NEVER KNOW WHO'S LISTENING ...

MOMMY, WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

COVER YOUR EYES, GLADYS!



EEEE! EEEEEEE!!

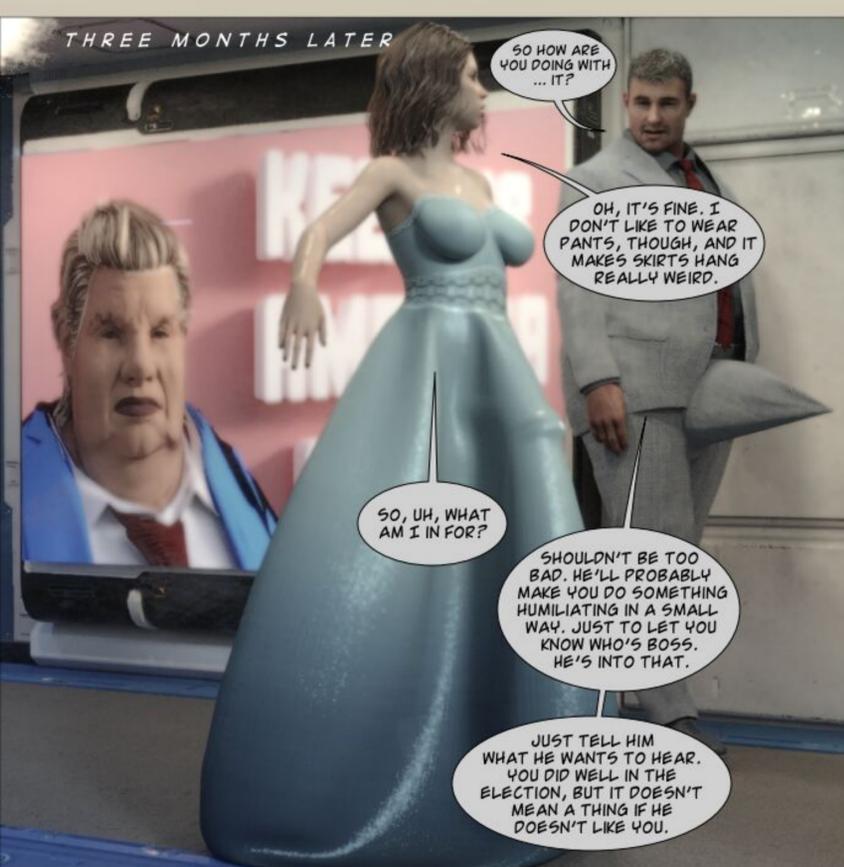
OOK! OOOAAH! OOK! OOHHEEE??



--HEH-- DON'T MIND THEM, FOLKS. THEY DO THAT A LOT!

OOOHEEE! EEE! EEEEEEEEEE!

END



SO HOW ARE YOU DOING WITH ... IT?

OH, IT'S FINE. I DON'T LIKE TO WEAR PANTS, THOUGH, AND IT MAKES SKIRTS HANG REALLY WEIRD.

SO, UH, WHAT AM I IN FOR?

SHOULDN'T BE TOO BAD. HE'LL PROBABLY MAKE YOU DO SOMETHING HUMILIATING IN A SMALL WAY. JUST TO LET YOU KNOW WHO'S BOSS. HE'S INTO THAT.

JUST TELL HIM WHAT HE WANTS TO HEAR. YOU DID WELL IN THE ELECTION, BUT IT DOESN'T MEAN A THING IF HE DOESN'T LIKE YOU.



I SHOULD WARN YOU ... HE ... DOESN'T LOOK LIKE HE DOES ON TV.

AND STAY ON THE GOOD SIDE OF DODGE AND DESOTO. THEY'RE NOT JUST HIS ADVISORS, THEY'RE HIS HATCHET MEN. IF YOU PISS THEM OFF, YOU MIGHT JUST DISAPPEAR.

I CAN'T GO IN WITH YOU. HE WANTS TO SEE YOU ALONE.

GOOD LUCK.



... MR. PRESIDENT?

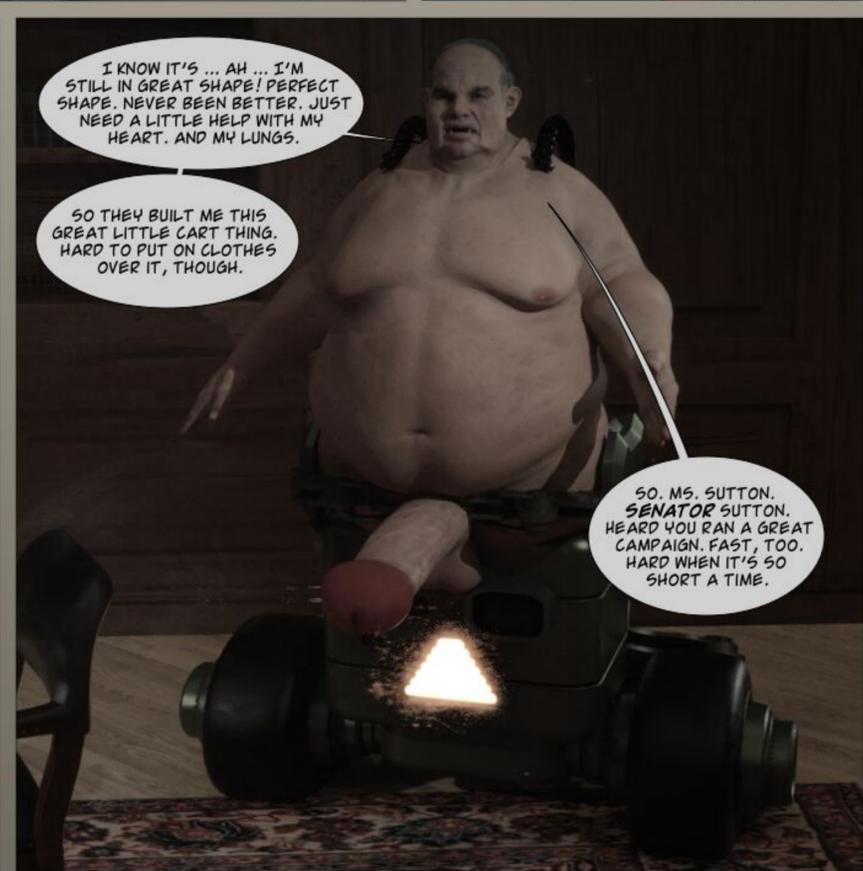
COME IN! COME IN.



WHOA!

THAT'S JUST LITTLE LINA!

MY PREVIOUS APPOINTMENT. RAN LONG. I ALWAYS RUN LONG. --HEH--



I KNOW IT'S ... AH ... I'M STILL IN GREAT SHAPE! PERFECT SHAPE. NEVER BEEN BETTER. JUST NEED A LITTLE HELP WITH MY HEART. AND MY LUNGS.

SO THEY BUILT ME THIS GREAT LITTLE CART THING. HARD TO PUT ON CLOTHES OVER IT, THOUGH.

SO. MS. SUTTON. SENATOR SUTTON. HEARD YOU RAN A GREAT CAMPAIGN. FAST, TOO. HARD WHEN IT'S SO SHORT A TIME.



DAWES SAYS GOOD THINGS ABOUT YOU. AND YOU WALK THE WALK. I LIKE THAT. SO HERE'S HOW WE'RE GONNA GO.

TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTHES. NEVER SEEN A WOMAN WITH AN AUGMENT BEFORE. I WANT TO HAVE A LOOK.

THEN YOU'RE GOING TO KISS MY DICK, BECAUSE THAT MEANS YOU LIKE ME, AND I LIKE PEOPLE THAT LIKE ME.

IT WOULDN'T BE TOO HARD ... I COULD JUST UNPLUG A BUNCH OF THINGS ... I BET THAT WOULD DO IT ...



HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? GET AWAY FROM THAT!

GET -- GET AWAY -- I COULD --

-- HRK --



I -- SOMETHING WENT WRONG WITH IT ... I WAS TRYING TO SEE IF I COULD HELP ...

WE WEREN'T BORN YESTERDAY, MS. SUTTON. THAT EQUIPMENT GETS CHECKED EVERY EIGHT HOURS.



YOU KNOW, I COULDN'T TELL YOU HOW MANY POWERFUL PEOPLE HAVE BEEN IN THIS ROOM ALONE WITH HIM, AND NOT ONCE HAVE ANY OF THEM EVEN TRIED TO DO WHAT YOU JUST DID.

YOU'VE GOT INITIATIVE. AND DAWES SAYS YOU'RE NOT STUPID. AND IT'D DO US SOME GOOD WITH THE PUBLIC TO HAVE SOMEONE WITH TITS IN THE JOB. WHO HASN'T WRECKED THEIR BODY SO BAD THEY NEED LIFE SUPPORT.

DESOTO, I THINK WE'VE GOT OUR NEXT PRESIDENT HERE.

TWO YEARS LATER



NO, WE'RE NOT GOING TO GIVE HIM AN EXCEPTION. IF HE'S GOING TO DO SOMETHING THAT PEOPLE WILL HATE, THEN HE NEEDS TO DAMNED WELL MAKE IT WORTH OUR WHILE. WE'RE THE ONES WHO'LL TAKE THE HIT.

COULDN'T AGREE MORE, MA'AM. I'LL TELL HIM.

OH, BY THE WAY ... DESOTO HAS A SURPRISE FOR YOU.

WE FINALLY CAUGHT CONSUELA IBIRI A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO. WE WENT AHEAD AND MODIFIED HER.



OH, HOW THOUGHTFUL! THANK YOU.

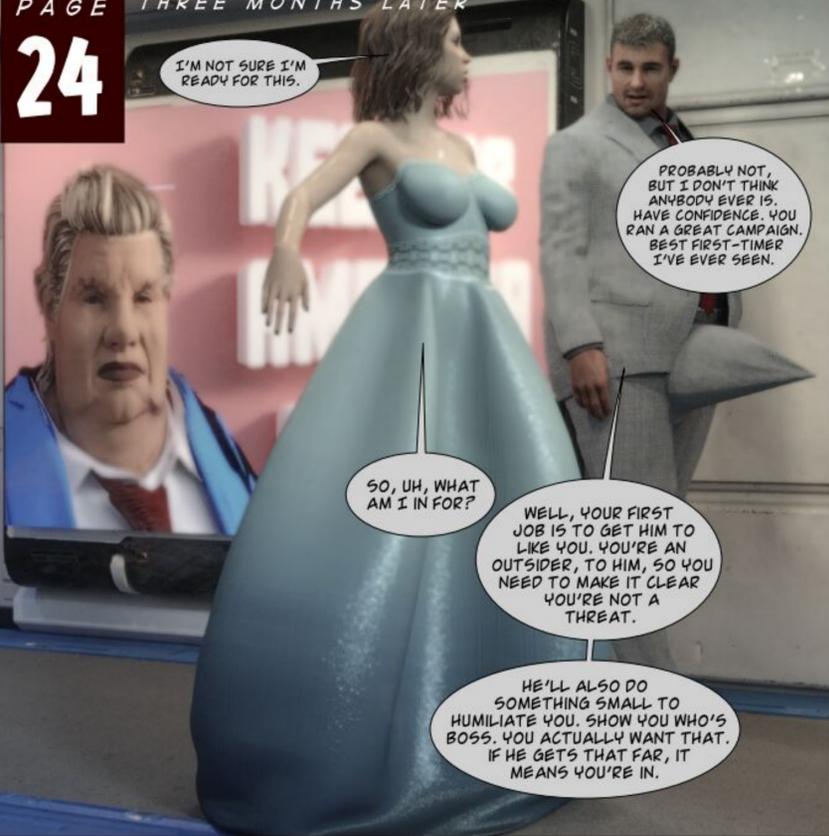
... I'D LIKE SOME TIME ALONE WITH HER, PLEASE.



OOOOHHHH! OH MY GOD!!

OOOOOO!!!

IT'S GOOD TO BE THE QUEEN!



I'M NOT SURE I'M READY FOR THIS.

PROBABLY NOT, BUT I DON'T THINK ANYBODY EVER IS. HAVE CONFIDENCE. YOU RAN A GREAT CAMPAIGN. BEST FIRST-TIMER I'VE EVER SEEN.

SO, UH, WHAT AM I IN FOR?

WELL, YOUR FIRST JOB IS TO GET HIM TO LIKE YOU. YOU'RE AN OUTSIDER, TO HIM, SO YOU NEED TO MAKE IT CLEAR YOU'RE NOT A THREAT.

HE'LL ALSO DO SOMETHING SMALL TO HUMILIATE YOU. SHOW YOU WHO'S BOSS. YOU ACTUALLY WANT THAT. IF HE GETS THAT FAR, IT MEANS YOU'RE IN.



I SHOULD WARN YOU ... HE ... DOESN'T LOOK LIKE HE DOES ON TV.

AND STAY ON THE GOOD SIDE OF DODGE AND DESOTO. THEY'RE NOT JUST HIS ADVISORS, THEY'RE HIS HATCHET MEN. IF YOU PISS THEM OFF, YOU MIGHT JUST DISAPPEAR.

I CAN'T GO IN WITH YOU. HE WANTS TO SEE YOU ALONE.

GOOD LUCK.



... MR. PRESIDENT?

COME IN! COME IN.



THAT'S JUST LITTLE LINA!

WHOA!

MY PREVIOUS APPOINTMENT. RAN LONG. I ALWAYS RUN LONG. --HEH--



I KNOW IT'S ... AH ... I'M STILL IN GREAT SHAPE! PERFECT SHAPE. NEVER BEEN BETTER. JUST NEED A LITTLE HELP WITH MY HEART. AND MY LUNGS.

SO THEY BUILT ME THIS GREAT LITTLE CART THING. HARD TO PUT ON CLOTHES OVER IT, THOUGH.

SO. MS. SUTTON. SENATOR SUTTON. HEARD YOU RAN A GREAT CAMPAIGN. FAST, TOO. HARD WHEN IT'S SO SHORT A TIME.



LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING: I LIKE PEOPLE WHO'LL DO ANYTHING TO GET WHERE THEY ARE.

PEOPLE TRY TO WARN ME ABOUT THAT, THEY SAY THAT'S THE KIND OF PEOPLE THAT'LL TRY TO STICK A KNIFE IN YOUR BACK.

BUT I LIKE THAT KIND BECAUSE I KNOW HOW THEY THINK, AND THAT MEANS I CAN ALWAYS GET THEM TO DO WHAT I WANT.



PROBLEM IS, I DON'T THINK YOU'LL DO ANYTHING TO BE SENATOR.

AND THAT MEANS YOU WON'T DO ANYTHING I WANT TO BE SENATOR.

AND THAT'S NO GOOD.



HEY!!

SO YOU DON'T GET TO BE SENATOR. WE'RE GOING TO TELL THE WORLD YOU HAD A CAR ACCIDENT OR SOMETHING. I DON'T KNOW WHAT. DODGE AND DESOTO HANDLE ALL THAT.



SHAME. YOU WERE PRETTY HOT. WE COULD USE MORE HOT WOMEN IN CONGRESS.

ONE YEAR LATER



NO! I'VE TOLD HIM BEFORE AND I'M NOT GOING TO TELL HIM AGAIN. HE CAN GO TO HELL.

NOW GET OUT OF HERE. WHERE'S LITTLE MARY?

AH, I THINK SHE'S WAITING OUTSIDE, SIR.



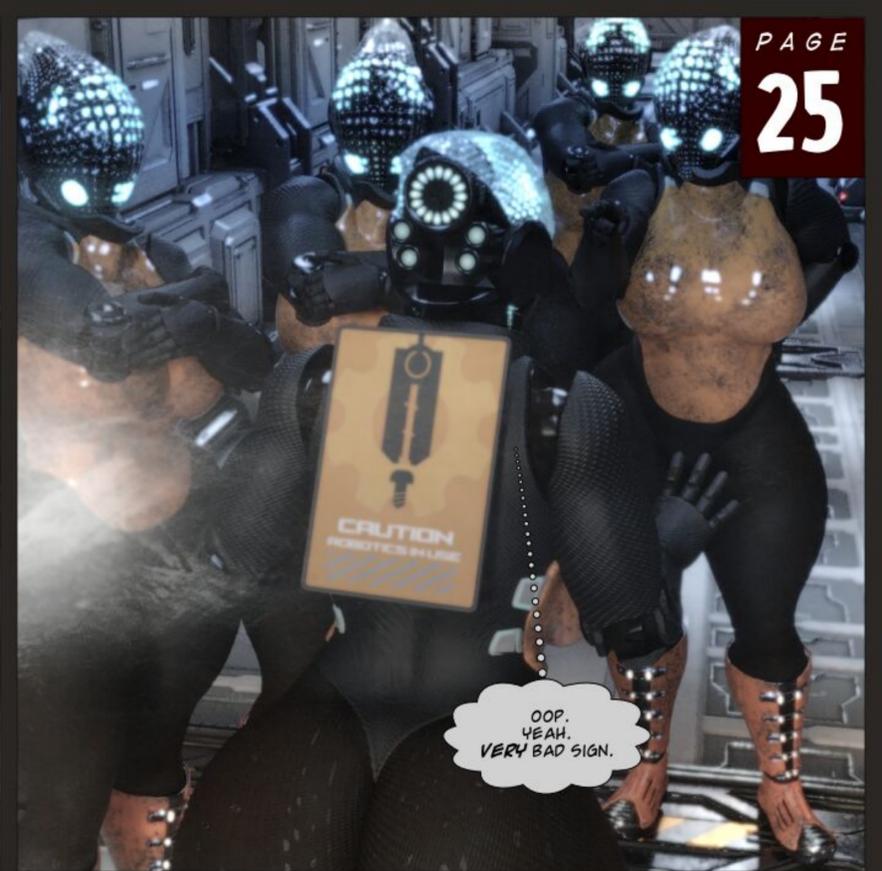
IT'S FUNNY. HE'S GOT I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY SUCKERS, BUT ALWAYS WANTS HER.

SADISM.

NAH. IT'S GOT TO BE SOME OTHER REASON.



I WONDER IF SHE'D HAVE BEEN ANY GOOD AS A SENATOR.

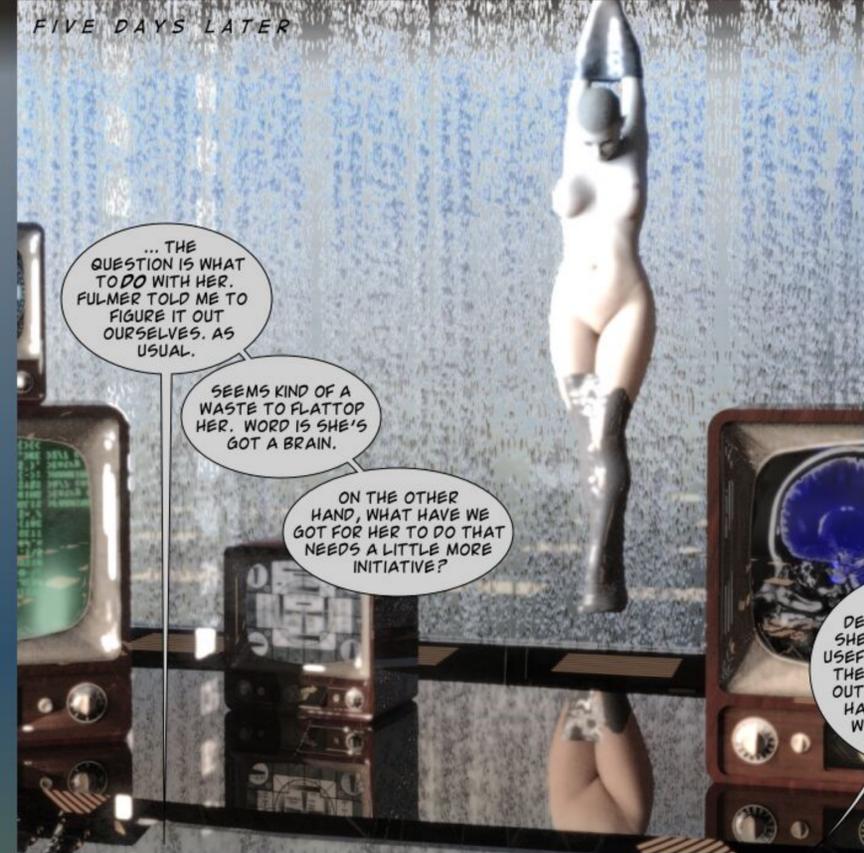


OK, JUST NEED TO MAKE IT OUT NOW ... NO ALARMS WENT OFF, NOTHING BAD ... DON'T PANIC AND GET OUT THE WAY YOU CAME IN ...

HUH. THE PLACE IS EMPTY? NO EXAMINERS ... NO H805 ... IS THAT A BAD SIGN?

OOP. YEAH. VERY BAD SIGN.

FIVE DAYS LATER



... THE QUESTION IS WHAT TO DO WITH HER. FULMER TOLD ME TO FIGURE IT OUT OURSELVES. AS USUAL.

SEEMS KIND OF A WASTE TO FLATTOP HER. WORD IS SHE'S GOT A BRAIN.

ON THE OTHER HAND, WHAT HAVE WE GOT FOR HER TO DO THAT NEEDS A LITTLE MORE INITIATIVE?

HMM ... DESOTO, YOU THINK SHE KNOWS ANYTHING USEFUL ABOUT SOLACE? THE OTHERS CLEARED OUT, BUT THEY HAD TO HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH HER BEFORE THAT ...

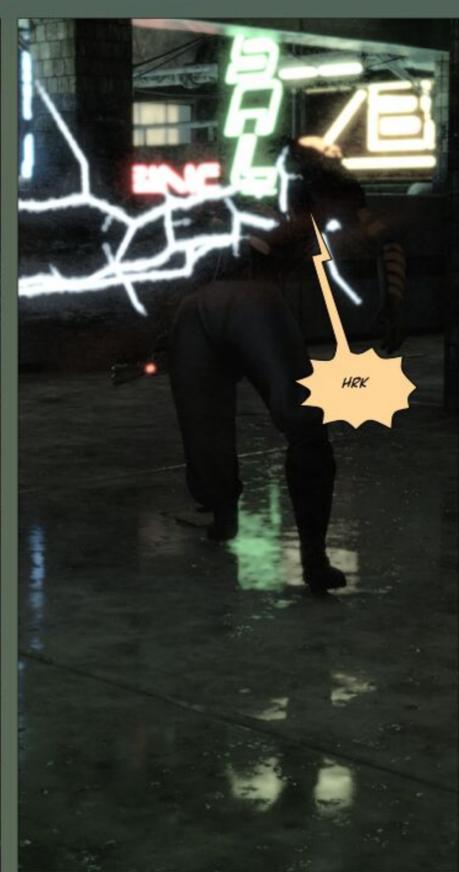
... WHAT THE HELL, LET'S GIVE IT A TRY.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR INSTRUCTIONS?

YES.

GOOD. IF YOU GET SOMETHING SOLID, COME BACK FOR A SQUAD.

TWO MONTHS LATER



JIRA, YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING! I KNOW IT'S HER! IT'S GOT TO BE! AND SHE'S RUNNING ME DOWN! I LOST FIVE PEOPLE THIS WEEK AND--

NOT ONLY IS IT TOTALLY NOT MY PROBLEM, SUELA, YOU'VE COMPROMISED ME BY COMING HERE. I TOLD YOU NOT TO.

WOULDN'T SURPRISE ME IF THEY CAME IN ANY MINUTE--

DON'T MOVE!!

AAAAAA!

LET ME GO! PUT ME DOWN, YOU ORANGEHEADED FASCISTS!

WHERE DID THE OTHER ONE GO?

HRK

SIX HOURS LATER



UHHHR?

MORNING. GOT YOUR BRAIN BACK?

SHOULDN'T BE ANY LEFTOVERS. IT'S THE SAME SYSTEM I USE. JUST NEEDED THE DRUGS TO WEAR OFF.

JIRA! WHERE ARE WE?

ONE OF MY SAFEHOUSES. NOT A VERY CLEAN ONE BUT I DIDN'T HAVE TOO MANY CLOSE OPTIONS.

I FIGURED SUELA WOULD LEAD YOU TO ME, AND I FIGURED YOU'D BE LEADING THE SQUAD. SO I WAITED UNTIL I COULD FEEL YOU OFF, THEN ZAPPED YOU.

SUELA! I GOT HER CAPTURED, DIDN'T I? WE NEED TO GO SAVE HER!

NO, WE DON'T.

BUT--

WE REALLY DON'T, MARY.

LISTEN. SUELA IS NOT A NICE PERSON. SHE WANTS OVERTHROW ... BUT ONLY HER WAY, AND ONLY WITH HER AT THE TOP. SHE DOESN'T WANT TO TAKE ANY OF THE RISKS HERSELF, AND SHE THROWS PEOPLE UNDER THE BUS. PEOPLE LIKE YOU.

SHE DOESN'T LIKE YOU AND SHE'LL NEVER TRUST YOU, BUT SHE'LL LIE TO YOU ABOUT IT IF IT'S USEFUL. YOU'RE BETTER THAN HER. YOU'RE ALWAYS WHAT YOU SAY YOU ARE. I LIKE THAT.

--OOOOUH-- BUT WHAT ABOUT OVERTHROW ...?

IF YOU --MMH-- IF YOU STILL WANT IT, I'M SURE THE TWO OF US CAN COOK SOMETHING UP.

... BUT NOT TODAY, OK?

END



I'M JUST SAYING, IT WOULD INCREASE THE AVAILABLE POOL AND REMOVE A LOT OF FRICTION ... RIGHT NOW SOME PEOPLE CAN GET THEM AND SOME CAN'T ...

THE PROBLEM WITH MAKING PEOPLE FLATTOPS IS IT'S VERY, VERY PERMANENT. IT WAS ONE THING TO DO IT FOR FELONS, SINCE WE'VE SPENT SO LONG TEACHING PEOPLE FELONS NEVER GET TO HAVE A NORMAL LIFE AGAIN. MISDEMEANORS ARE ANOTHER THING ENTIRELY.

--SCREECH--

WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?



NEARLY GOT HIT BY THAT TRUCK ...

EXAMINERS? NEVER SEEN SO MANY OF THEM IN ONE PLACE ...

NO, SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT ...



THEY'RE HEADED FOR THE WHITE HOUSE! MOVE YOUR ASS, DESOTO!

THREE DAYS LATER



DODGE, HE'S GOT TO DO SOMETHING! ALL YOUR BUSINESS LEADERS ARE DISAPPEARING!

SURE, WHEN THE POLITICAL LEADERS STARTED DISAPPEARING, IT WASN'T A PROBLEM, HUH?

I WANT TO TALK TO THE PRESIDENT, DAMN IT! WHERE IS HE?

IN A SAFE LOCATION. AND HE'S GOING TO STAY THERE.

DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHERE PEOPLE ARE BEING TAKEN?

ONE OF SEVERAL FBE FACILITIES, WE ASSUME. THE ENTIRE FBE IS UNDER THEIR CONTROL AT THIS POINT.

WELL, THAT'S JUST GREAT! SO HOW DO WE STOP THEM?

WE'RE IN THE PROCESS OF MOBILIZING THE ARMY. IT JUST TAKES A WHILE. THEY'LL BE IN THE FIELD TO CLEAN THIS UP. A MATTER OF --

DON'T MOVE!

WELL, HELL.



YOU ARE ALL BEING TAKEN INTO CUSTODY. REMAIN WHERE YOU ARE.



THIS IS SOME BULLSHIT.

RIGHT? I JOINED THE ARMY 'CAUSE IT WAS THE ONLY THING I COULD GET THAT THESE ASSHOLES HADN'T FUCKED UP. WHY WE SHOULD SAVE THEIR BUTTS ...

TWO DAYS LATER IN AN UNDISCLOSED LOCATION



I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT! JUST DEAL WITH IT! IF DODGE AND DESOTO WERE HERE, THEY'D HAVE ALREADY DEALT WITH IT!

WE'VE GOT THE ARMY ON IT, AND I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU UNTIL YOU'RE COMING TO TELL ME THEY'RE DONE!

BUT, SIR --

WHAT DID I JUST SAY?



--AHM-- I THINK WHAT YOUR ASSISTANT IS TRYING TO TELL YOU IS THAT THE ARMY HAS REMOVED ITSELF FROM THE CONFLICT.

GENERAL?

WE HAD TWO COMPANIES MUTINY, IN EFFECT, AND THREE OTHERS LIKELY WOULD HAVE IF WE HADN'T CALLED A HALT.

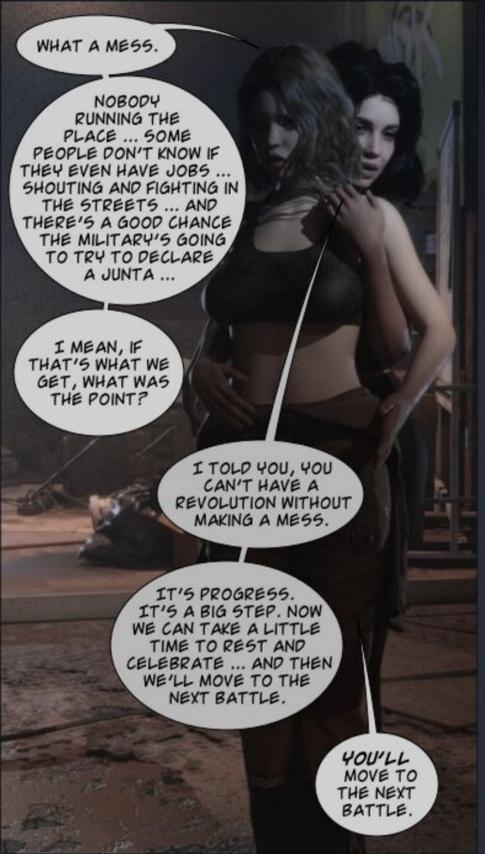
I CAN'T COURT-MARTIAL THEM ALL, AND FRANKLY I FIND MYSELF SYMPATHETIC TO THEIR OBJECTIONS. YOU HAVEN'T BEEN GOOD TO THE ARMY, YOU KNOW.



SO I'VE MADE OTHER ALLIANCES.

NO!!!

SIX WEEKS LATER



WHAT A MESS.

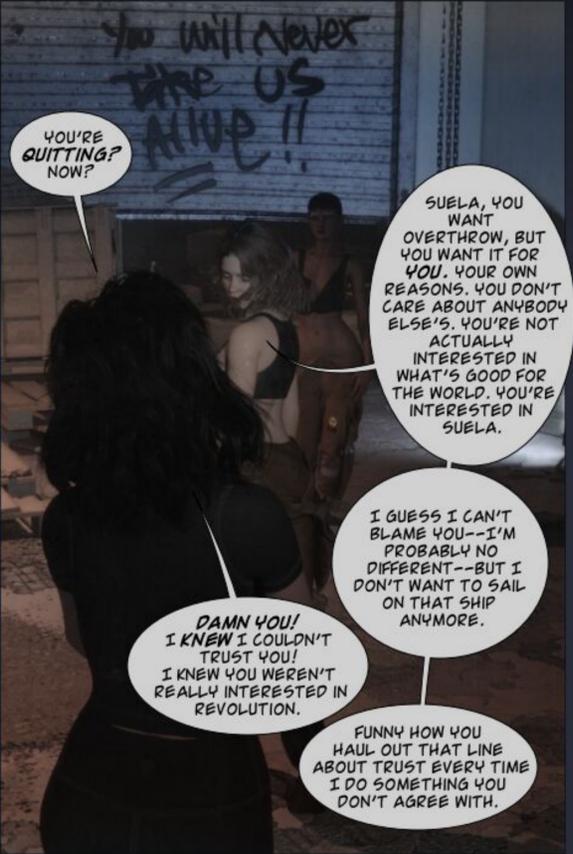
NOBODY RUNNING THE PLACE ... SOME PEOPLE DON'T KNOW IF THEY EVEN HAVE JOBS ... SHOUTING AND FIGHTING IN THE STREETS ... AND THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE THE MILITARY'S GOING TO TRY TO DECLARE A JUNTA ...

I MEAN, IF THAT'S WHAT WE GET, WHAT WAS THE POINT?

I TOLD YOU, YOU CAN'T HAVE A REVOLUTION WITHOUT MAKING A MESS.

IT'S PROGRESS. IT'S A BIG STEP. NOW WE CAN TAKE A LITTLE TIME TO REST AND CELEBRATE ... AND THEN WE'LL MOVE TO THE NEXT BATTLE.

YOU'LL MOVE TO THE NEXT BATTLE.



YOU'RE QUITTING? NOW?

SUELA, YOU WANT OVERTHROW, BUT YOU WANT IT FOR YOU. YOUR OWN REASONS. YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT ANYBODY ELSE'S. YOU'RE NOT ACTUALLY INTERESTED IN WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE WORLD. YOU'RE INTERESTED IN SUELA.

I GUESS I CAN'T BLAME YOU--I'M PROBABLY NO DIFFERENT--BUT I DON'T WANT TO SAIL ON THAT SHIP ANYMORE.

DAMN YOU! I KNEW I COULDN'T TRUST YOU! I KNEW YOU WEREN'T REALLY INTERESTED IN REVOLUTION.

FUNNY HOW YOU HAUL OUT THAT LINE ABOUT TRUST EVERY TIME I DO SOMETHING YOU DON'T AGREE WITH.



AND YOU'RE WRONG. I'M VERY INTERESTED IN REVOLUTION. JUST NOT YOURS.

BUT, HEY, ENJOY YOUR OVERTHROW. I HOPE YOU WIN THE FIGHT WITH THE MILITARY YOU'VE GOT COMING.

WE'LL CHECK ON YOU IN A COUPLE OF YEARS TO SEE HOW BADLY YOU FUCKED IT UP.

MAYBE WE'LL EVEN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

END