

TRILBY'S TRUE* TALES OF TRANSFORMATION

* CONTAINS LESS THAN 2% ACTUAL TRUTH BY VOLUME. ALL CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY ARE FICTIONAL, AND ANY RESEMBLANCE TO ANY REAL-WORLD FIGURES IS PURE COINCIDENCE.

MEET THE WOMAN OF YOUR DREAMS IV HEART HELPERS

STORY AND IMAGES BY TRILBY







So, did I pass the audition?

It wasn't an audition.

We'll have a look at your data and you should hear from us again within three weeks.



I hope I did OK ... I don't really remember any of it ...

That's normal.

You did pine. It wasn't a test.

We'll contact you sometime in the next three weeks.



OK, line 'em up.

Not too many today, looks like?

No, it was quiet. Only ten appointments, and a couple of walk-ins.

Kind of a relief, after Thursday ...

Yeah, I don't know what was up with that.



Matthew Malloy. Twenty-seven. Basic incel profile, no surprises here.

So, salvageable?

Definitely. He hasn't even been flirting with Nazis or any of that, he's just got no idea how to have a relationship. Standard match will fix him.

He's kind of sweet, actually. Very polite, no posturing.

I like the easy ones. OK, next?



He looks familiar ...

He should. That's James Vantage.

Oh, good heavens. Isn't he married?

Yes. Apparently that's no longer sufficient.



Salvageable?

Not a chance. The man embraced traditional Catholicism because he decided its doctrine was "white men get to run everything and their wives get to stay home and make babies" --

Well, depending on how traditional you go, he's not wrong.

He should have gone Mormon, then. He wants a lot of wives and a lot of babies. Can't tell if he peels dynastic or just likes having a harem or whether it's a race thing. Doesn't matter. The point is, that path paid off for him. He's got a lot more opportunities now to rake in graft than he did as a third-rate author ...

He has no incentive to reform and no interest in it. He's only forty, but I think it's too late for him.

But I also think we should walk away from this one.



We've never before flat-out refused to take on a customer ... no matter which path they ended up on.

It's too messy, though! This isn't a person who can just disappear.

In that job? You could replace him with a trained dog and it'd be months before anybody noticed. Especially with that boss.

His bodyguards will notice.

Yeah, we'll have to piness them, that'll be a challenge ...

Let me give it some thought. I really do hate to walk away from it.

Who's next?

SEVERAL DAYS LATER.



What is this? I thought you'd have a match for me ...

Still a lot to do first, sir.

This is our media room. We're going to show you some pictures and see which ones you like.



When do the pictures start? I'm a busy man! I can't sit here all day.

... Hello? Are you there?



Hey! -- kaff -- What is this stuuff?

what are you ..? -- kaff -- Hey!! Let me -- kaff -- out of here--



Good.

Summer's waiting outside with a gurney. You'll need to help her move him. Make sure he didn't leave anything in here.



Let's call it an hour. Fifteen minutes for the van to get clear, and forty-five for his goons to get itchy.

Then go out front and be surprised they're still waiting. Tell them he left a half hour ago.

They'll say they didn't see him come out and you'll say he must have gone out the back for some reason.

They'll probably want to search the place, so be ready for that.



He's waking up.

uhrrr?

So I see.

Hey there, Jamiepants! You're about to go on a voyage of personal discovery!



I'm usually not here for this, but you're a VIP -- I guess -- and I thought you deserved to know what's going on.

I'm going to need to start shaving him while you talk. It'll take a while.

That's fine.

... going on ...?

Hey, what is this? Let me out of these things!



Pass me the kit. I'm going to work on his chest while you do that. Save some time.

Oh, thanks. He's got a lot of hair.

What are they doing?

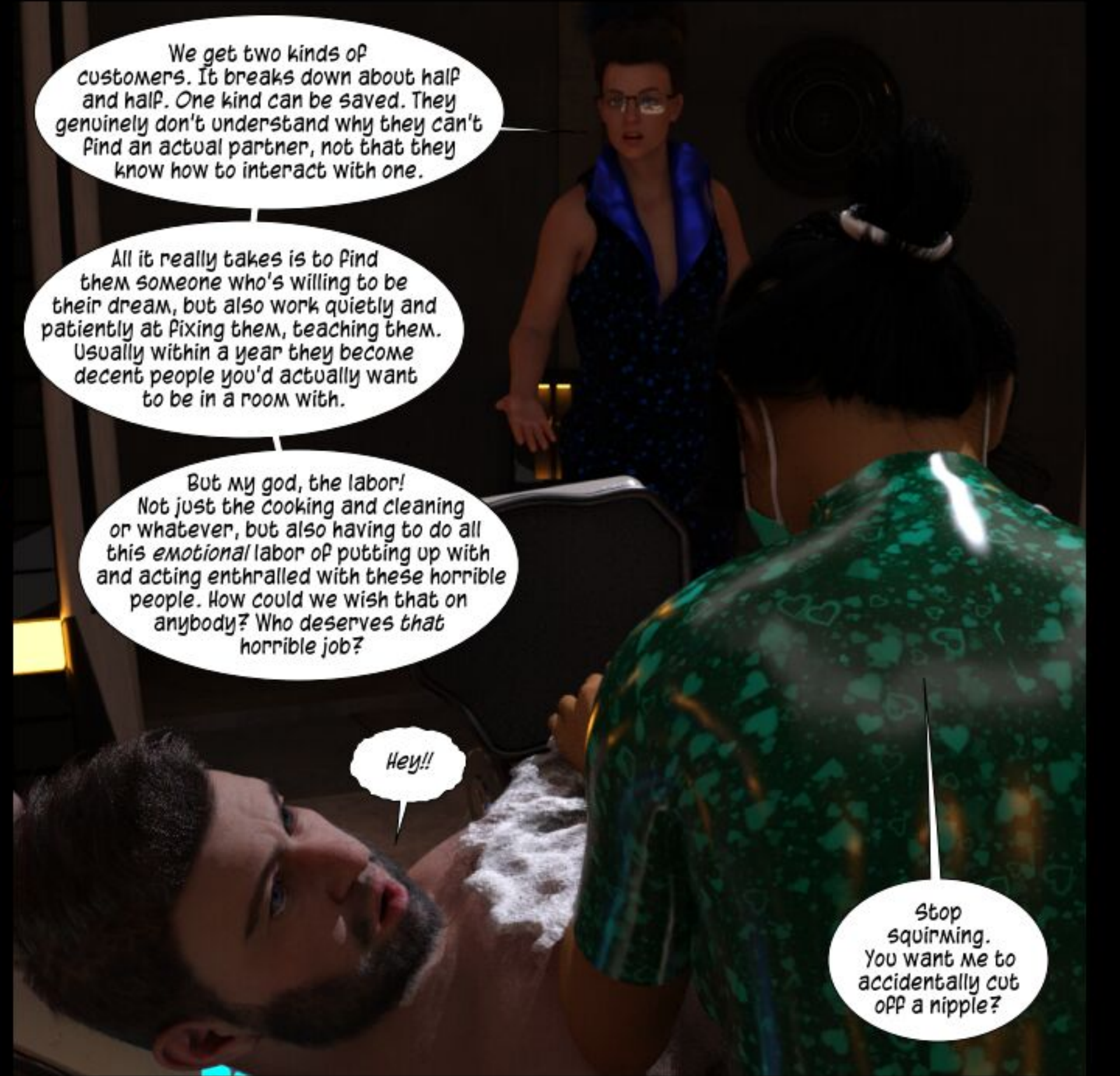
They're shaving you, silly. Some of the equipment won't seat well otherwise.

Equipment? What --? I didn't sign up for this! Whatever it is, I came to you to find a match!!

Except you didn't.

People don't come to us looking for that. We don't market to them. We pitch very specifically for people who aren't looking for an actual relationship. We get the people who are looking for women -- sometimes men, but usually women -- to exploit. They want maids and cooks and sex toys and baby mommas, and nothing else. They think that's what a relationship is. One-sided.

People like you.



We get two kinds of customers. It breaks down about half and half. One kind can be saved. They genuinely don't understand why they can't find an actual partner, not that they know how to interact with one.

All it really takes is to find them someone who's willing to be their dream, but also work quietly and patiently at fixing them, teaching them. Usually within a year they become decent people you'd actually want to be in a room with.

But my god, the labor! Not just the cooking and cleaning or whatever, but also having to do all this emotional labor of putting up with and acting enthralled with these horrible people. How could we wish that on anybody? Who deserves that horrible job?

Hey!!

Stop squirming. You want me to accidentally cut off a nipple?



Now, wait ...

It's got to come off. And I'll need you to hold still.

... What's all this got to do with anything? Why am I here? What are you doing to me??



Well, I was getting to that.

See, those people -- the ones who take on this horrible job of redemption ...

... We make those out of the other half of our customers. The ones who can't be saved. The ones who don't care, won't ever care, who may be too sociopathic to care.

It's kind of a poetic-justice thing.



I'm going to need to put on the headgear now.

That's fine. I don't think there was anything more to say anyway.

Wait, what is that thing? What are you --

No!
No!!!

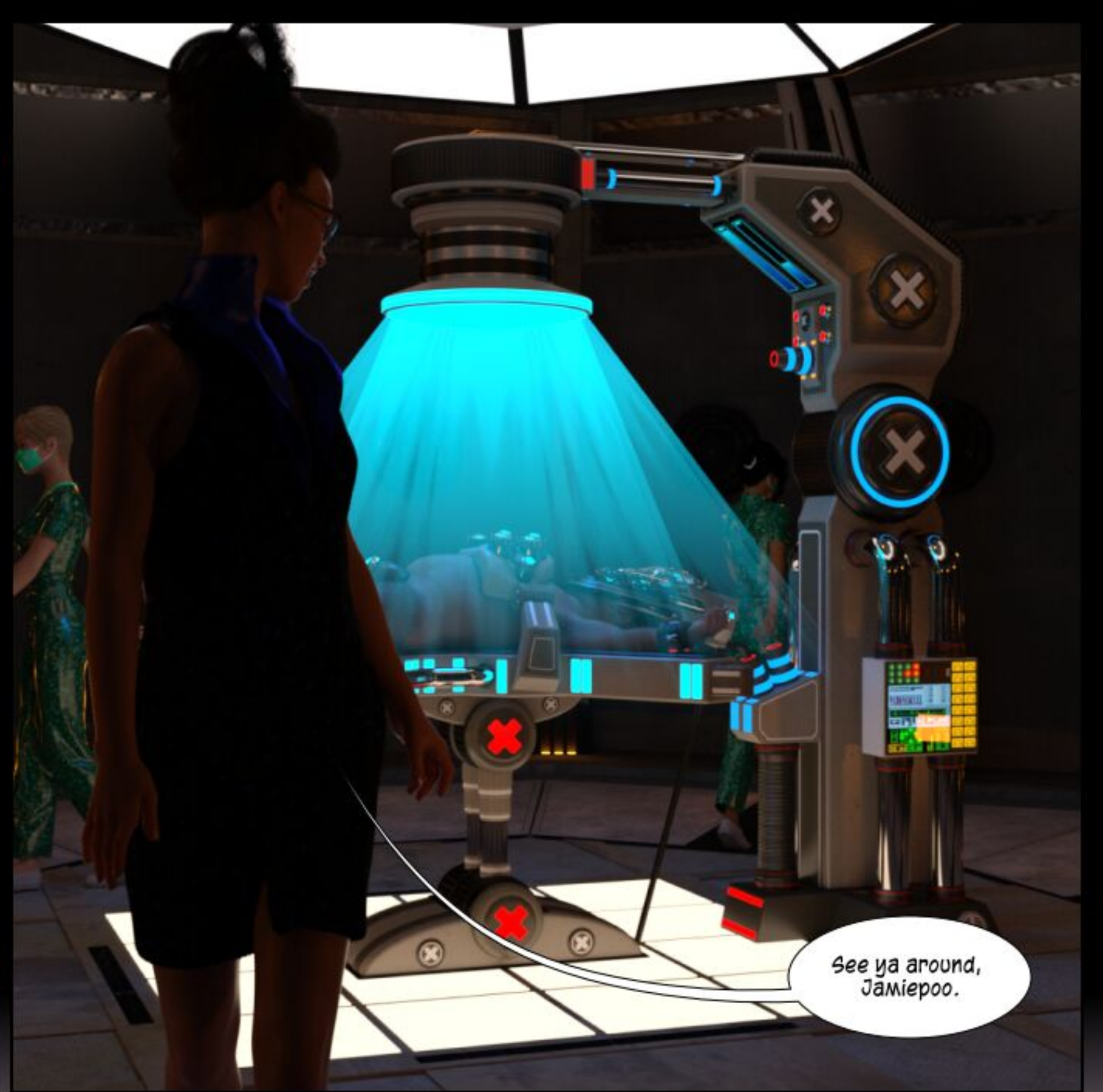


No, you MMPGH!

Beginning sequence.

He's a little slow, isn't he?

Just heavy on the denial, I think.



See ya around, Jamiepeoo.

TWO WEEKS LATER.



... I didn't know I was actually going to meet her! I thought you were calling me in to look at more pictures or something ...

Is that a problem?

No! It's just that, if I'd known, I'd have, uh, worn something a little better ...

That's sweet.

It'll be fine, don't worry.



Matt, this is Jamie. Jamie, this is Matt.

uh.



Hi.

Hi.

AND LIFE, STRANGELY ENOUGH, SOMEHOW MANAGES TO CONTINUE ALONG DESPITE EVERYTHING ...



Sir, are we going to do anything about the Vantage situation?

What about him?

He's been missing for nearly a month, sir. No one can find him.

He's not in Europe talking up Nazis?

Apparently not, sir.

-- sigh --

OK, issue a statement. Say all the right things.

And find me another trained dog.

Yes, sir.



... but you've called off the private investigation?

I have.

It's been two months. I don't want to assume the worst, but if neither the police nor that team can find him, I have to assume either he can't or won't be Pound.

Maybe he doesn't want to be Pound. Lorna, I don't want to come off as a monster, but ... it became clear more than a year ago that he wasn't the person I thought I'd married.

I don't wish him ill ... but I also want to take my life back.

Food for thought!

We've been talking with Ashi Vantage about the disappearance of her husband. Coming up next on Inside View, the man who wants to change the way you buy shoes. After these messages.



... AND SOME PEOPLE GET WHAT THEY NEED, WHETHER THEY KNEW THAT WAS WHAT THEY NEEDED OR NOT.

END