

# APEX

#2





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## ISSUE TWO

### NO LONGER AFRAID

**Simon is a very quiet & private man, never stand up for himself when it matters most. His life take a huge turn after he unlocks a special gift only a few are able to harness. With this new gift, Simon is able to take back his own self respect & protect the one person he holds dear. Fate has other ideas, as lifes cruel twists hardly ever reward those who deserve it the most. Being blessed with such an amazing power does not remain hidden for long, there are many who want to use this power for their own advantage & others who have much darker motives. Simon has to do the one thing he has never done his whole life... He must stand up against every obstacle & fight.**

**CREATED BY DAVE JONES**



...THEY SAY WHEN YOU TAKE A LIFE IT CHANGES YOU. EVEN WHEN IT'S JUSTIFIED. EVEN WHEN IT WAS FOR YOUR OWN SURVIVAL...



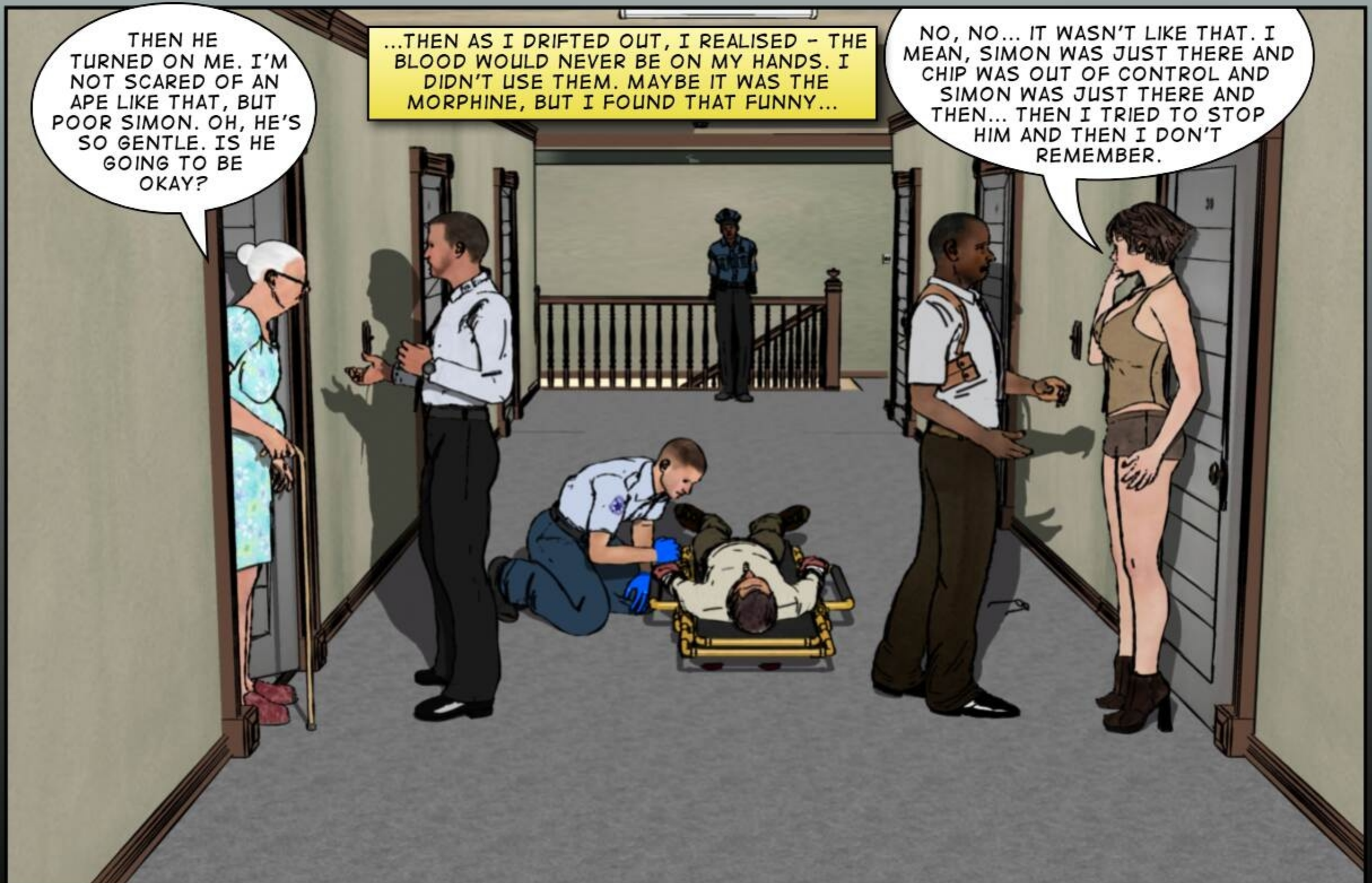
...YOU ALWAYS FEEL THAT BLOOD ON YOUR HANDS. THAT STAIN ON YOUR SOUL. INSTEAD I FELT NUMB. LIKE IT HAD HAPPENED TO SOMEONE ELSE...

## PART 2: NO LONGER AFRAID

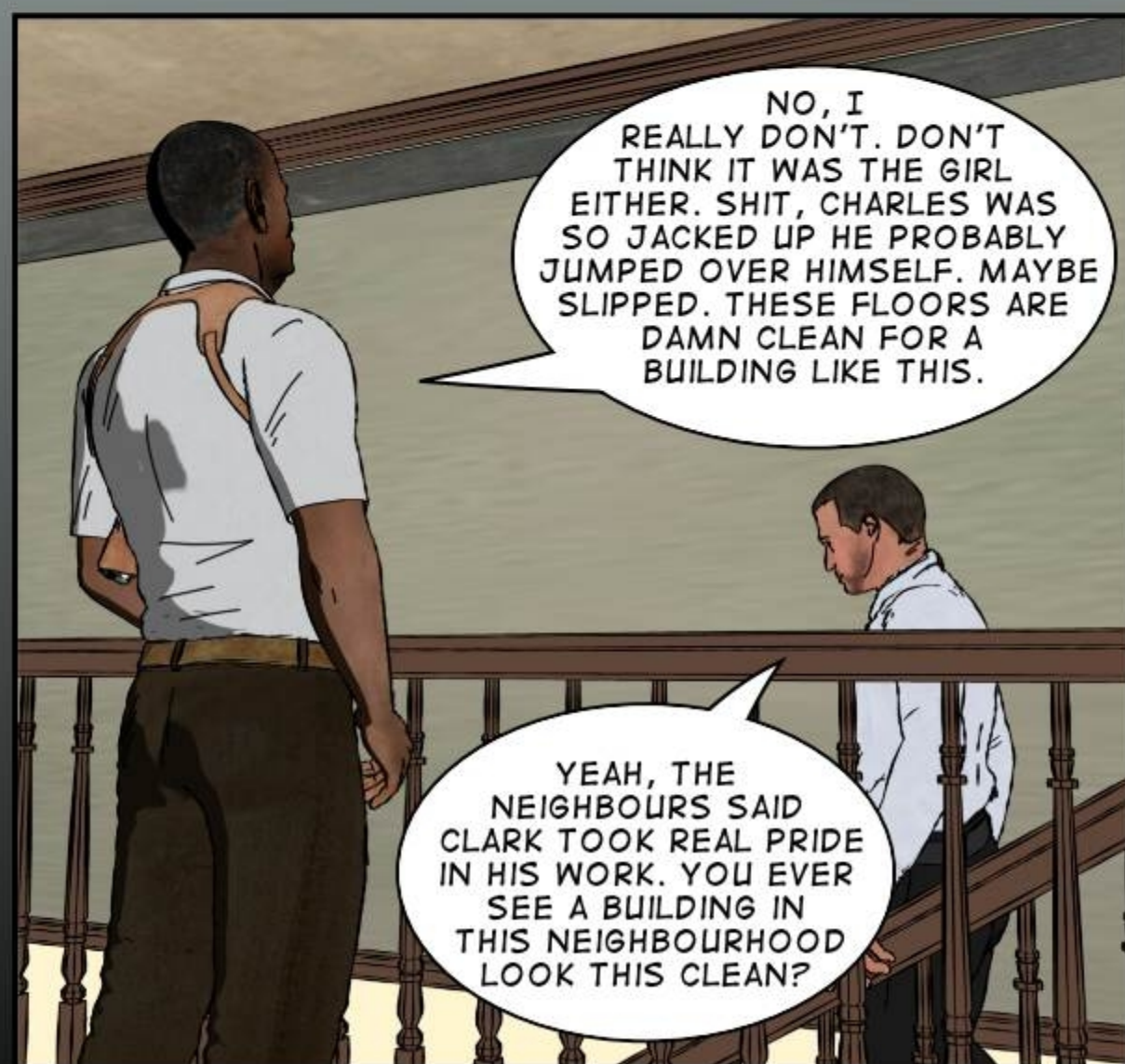
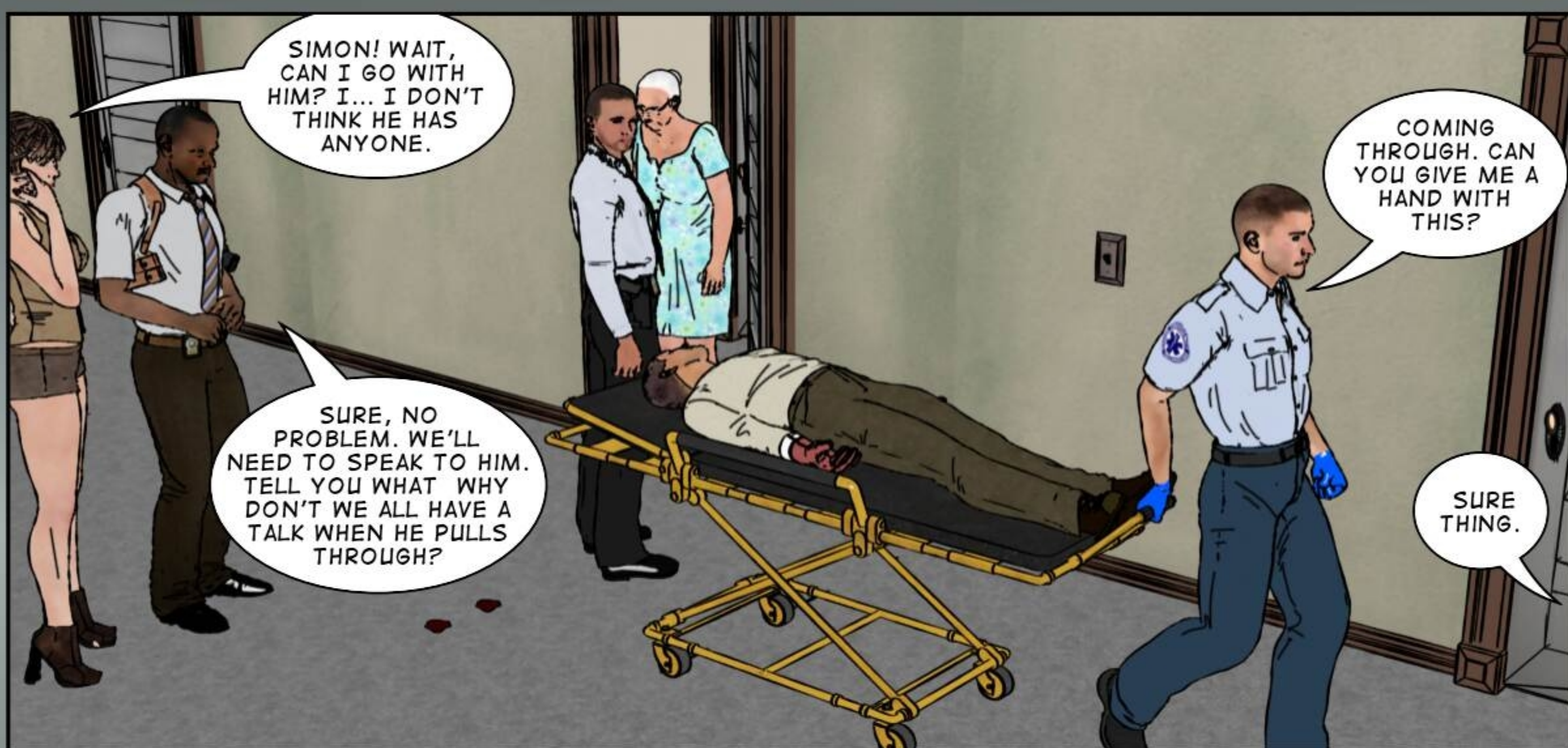
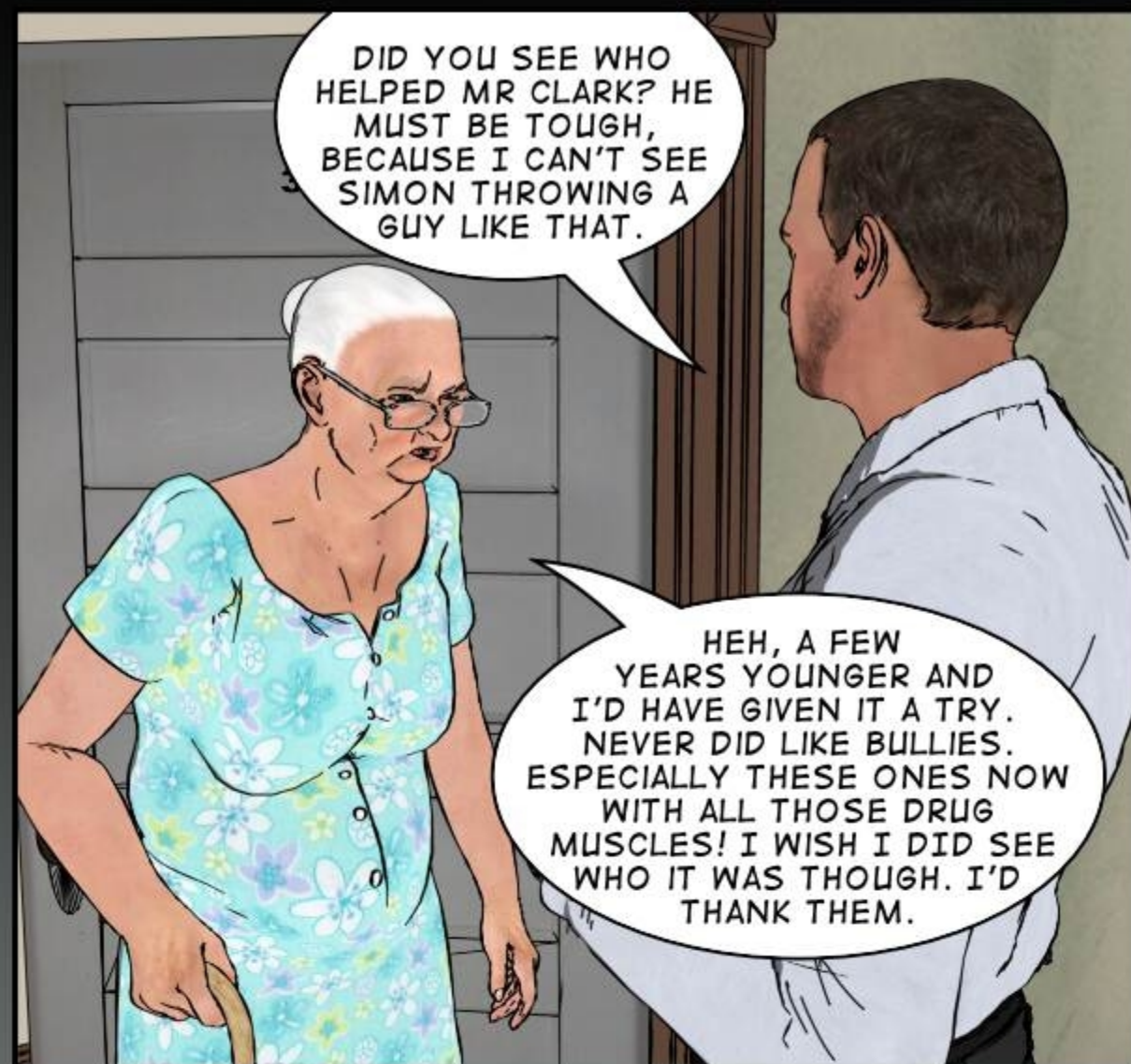
THEN HE TURNED ON ME. I'M NOT SCARED OF AN APE LIKE THAT, BUT POOR SIMON. OH, HE'S SO GENTLE. IS HE GOING TO BE OKAY?

...THEN AS I DRIFTED OUT, I REALISED - THE BLOOD WOULD NEVER BE ON MY HANDS. I DIDN'T USE THEM. MAYBE IT WAS THE MORPHINE, BUT I FOUND THAT FUNNY...

NO, NO... IT WASN'T LIKE THAT. I MEAN, SIMON WAS JUST THERE AND CHIP WAS OUT OF CONTROL AND SIMON WAS JUST THERE AND THEN... THEN I TRIED TO STOP HIM AND THEN I DON'T REMEMBER.















...I HAVE BEEN AFRAID OF EVERYTHING ALL MY LIFE, YET WHEN I LAID HELPLESS, IN PAIN & WAITING FOR THE DEATH BLOW, I NO LONGER HAD ANYTHING TO FEAR...



CAN YOU HEAR ME, SIMON?

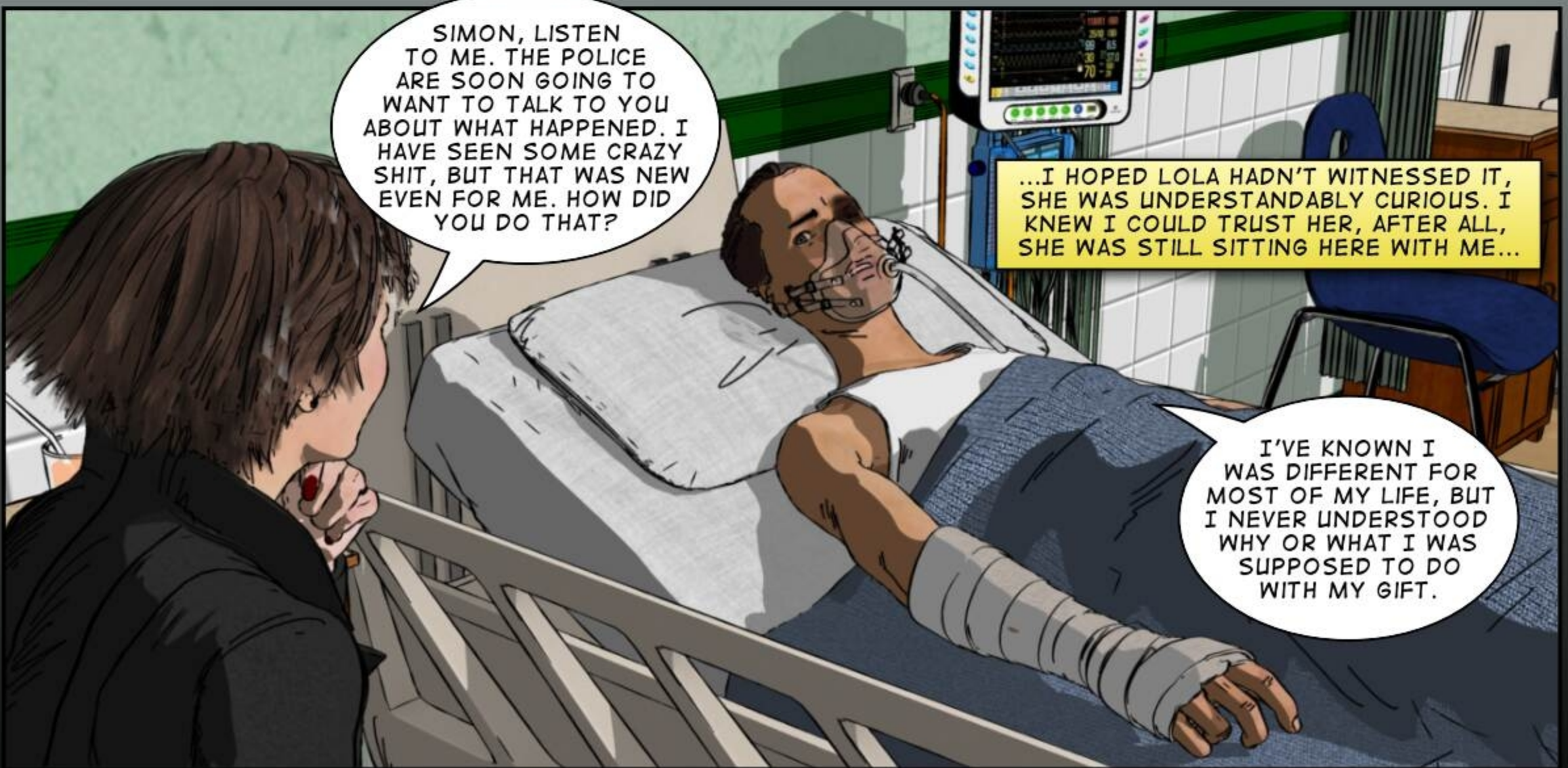
...IT WAS AT THAT POINT EVERYTHING BECAME CLEAR, IF THERE IS NOTHING TO FEAR FROM DEATH, THEN I HAD NOTHING TO FEAR FROM LIFE...



SIMON, IT'S LOLA, YOU ARE AT THE HOSPITAL.

MMMMHH!

...I ENDED UP WITH A FRACTURED WRIST, CRACKED EYE SOCKET, BROKEN CHEEK BONE, A RUPTURED SPLEEN & A SPRAINED KNEECAP. WHEN I FINALLY WOKE UP, I COULDN'T FEEL ANYTHING, THE MORPHINE KEPT ME DROWSY ALL THE TIME...



SIMON, LISTEN TO ME. THE POLICE ARE SOON GOING TO WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED. I HAVE SEEN SOME CRAZY SHIT, BUT THAT WAS NEW EVEN FOR ME. HOW DID YOU DO THAT?

...I HOPED LOLA HADN'T WITNESSED IT, SHE WAS UNDERSTANDABLY CURIOUS. I KNEW I COULD TRUST HER, AFTER ALL, SHE WAS STILL SITTING HERE WITH ME...

I'VE KNOWN I WAS DIFFERENT FOR MOST OF MY LIFE, BUT I NEVER UNDERSTOOD WHY OR WHAT I WAS SUPPOSED TO DO WITH MY GIFT.



...I TOOK A DEEP BREATH & BEGAN TO TELL HER ABOUT MY CHILDHOOD, SHE WAS THE ONLY PERSON I HAD EVER OPENED UP TO. I TOLD HER WHERE IT ALL BEGAN...

WHEN I WAS A CHILD... I HAD A NIGHTMARE & WHEN I WOKE UP THINGS WERE MOVING AROUND ON THEIR OWN. I THEN SPENT HALF AN HOUR JUST MOVING MY TOYS WITH GESTURES, BUT-- I ASSUMED IT WAS MY IMAGINATION.

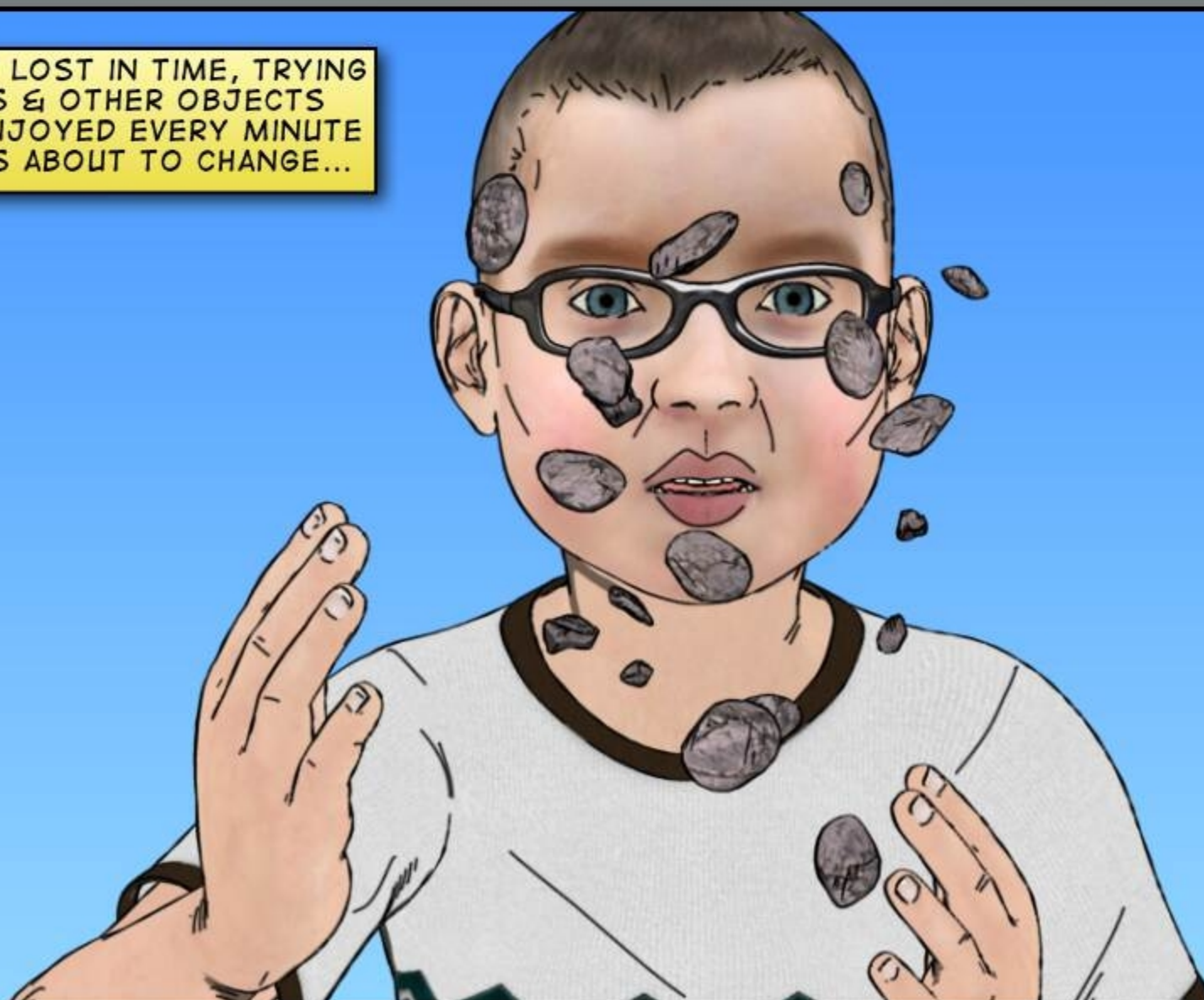


...AFTER A WHILE IT BECAME SECOND NATURE. I WOULD JUST SIT ON MY OWN IN THE LOCAL BASKETBALL COURT MOVING SOME ROCKS WITH MY MIND. I THOUGHT IT WAS NORMAL & DIDN'T YET UNDERSTAND HOW IMPORTANT THIS ABILITY REALLY WAS...



...IT WAS MY WAY OF PLAYING, I DIDN'T HAVE ANY FRIENDS & MY MOM HAD TO WORK A LOT, SO I DIDN'T GET TO INTERACT WITH MANY PEOPLE...

...I WOULD JUST GET LOST IN TIME, TRYING TO MAKE MY TOYS & OTHER OBJECTS FLOAT AROUND. I ENJOYED EVERY MINUTE OF IT. BUT THAT WAS ABOUT TO CHANGE...





...THE LOCAL BULLY TOMMY CARLTON SAW WHAT I WAS DOING WITH THE ROCKS, I KNEW WHAT WAS COMING...



FREAK BOY! THAT'S A NEAT LITTLE TRICK. SHOW ME HOW YOU DID IT?

IT'S NOT A TRICK.



I HAVE TO GO HOME NOW.

HEY! DON'T YOU WALK AWAY FROM ME WHEN I'M TALKING TO YOU! GET BACK HERE!

...ALL I WANTED TO DO WAS GET HOME, BUT TOMMY WOULDN'T LET IT GO...



DON'T IGNORE ME, FREAK BOY!

**CRACK!**

AAAHHHH!



DO YOU HEAR ME NOW? I ASKED YOU A QUESTION, YOU THINK YOU CAN JUST TURN YOUR BACK ON ME?

LEAVE ME ALONE, I WANT TO GO HOME.



AWW! YOU GONNA CRY & PISS YOUR PANTS? LIKE YOU DID IN CLASS LAST WEEK?



...I FELT A RELEASE. ALL MY STRENGTH, CHANNELLED THROUGH MY BODY & OUT INTO THE OPEN, WHAT HAPPENED NEXT SCARED ME TO DEATH...

**GO AWAY!**



...I'D SEEN A BOY AT SCHOOL CONVULSE ONCE. SOME KIND OF ALLERGY. IT TERRIFIED US ALL & A TEACHER HAD TO GIVE HIM A SHOT WHILE HE THRASHED...

GUUUUUUAAAAHHHHH!

...AT FIRST I THOUGHT IT WAS THE SAME THING. BUT THIS WAS DIFFERENT...

...THERE WAS A VIOLENCE TO IT. IT WASN'T JUST HIS BODY CONVULSING, I COULD FEEL IT TOO. IT WASN'T HIS BODY REACTING, IT WAS BEING ATTACKED. THE BLOOD, OH MY GOD, THE BLOOD. SO MUCH CAME OUT OF HIS MOUTH, NOSE EYES & EARS. IT WAS AS IF HIS BRAIN HAD JUST EXPLODED INSIDE HIS HEAD...

UUUUUUUUHH!

...I DID WHAT ANY CHILD WOULD DO. I RAN. BUT I SOMEHOW KNEW THAT I WAS CAUSING IT. I THOUGHT THAT IF I GOT AWAY FROM HIM, IT MIGHT STOP...

NOOOO!

...I NEVER SAW TOMMY AGAIN. OUR TEACHERS SAID HE HAD A STROKE OR SOME SORT OF BREAKDOWN. THE DOCTORS COULDN'T EXPLAIN IT. HE HAD TO LEARN HOW TO DO EVERYTHING ALL OVER AGAIN. WALK, TALK, EVERYTHING...

I SCARED MYSELF BECAUSE OF WHAT I WAS CAPABLE OF. I NEVER TRIED MOVING THINGS WITH MY MIND AGAIN.

...I FELT RESPONSIBLE FOR SO LONG, BUT I TOLD MYSELF THAT WHAT HAPPENED WAS REALLY A RESULT OF A NATURAL MEDICAL CONDITION...





I'M NOT A BAD PERSON, LOLA, YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE ME. I TRY TO STAY AWAY FROM PEOPLE JUST SO THAT I CAN'T HURT ANYONE ELSE LIKE I DID WITH TOMMY. I - <YAWN!> I-- JUST WANTED CHIP TO STOP HU--HURTING-- YOU. ZZZZZZ

...THE LAST THING I SAW BEFORE THE PAINKILLERS KNOCKED ME OUT WAS LOLA'S FACE. I COULDN'T TELL IF SHE WAS SCARED, DISGUSTED OR JUST FELT SORRY FOR ME. I HADN'T TOLD ANYONE ABOUT THAT STORY. I HAD SPENT MOST OF MY LIFE CONVINCING MYSELF IT NEVER HAPPENED & I ALMOST FORGOT ABOUT THE WHOLE THING...



S GENERAL HOSPITAL

...WHEN I WOKE UP LOLA WAS STILL THERE, SHE STAYED WITH ME THE WHOLE TIME. WHEN THE DOCTORS DISCHARGED ME, LOLA HELPED ME HOME. WAS THIS IT? HAD I FINALLY WON OVER HER HEART & SAVED HER LIKE I PROMISED?...





...WE STARTED TO GET CLOSE. I TRIED TO SHOW OFF MY ABILITY WHEN NO ONE WAS LOOKING JUST TO PROVE THAT THERE WAS NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF...

LOOK, NO HANDS.

SIMON, PUT IT DOWN, SOMEONE MIGHT SEE.



...I STARTED TO HEAL AS THE WEEKS WENT BY. EVERY DAY I HAD LUNCH WITH LOLA, I FINALLY FOUND MY CONFIDENCE, IT WAS ALL THANKS TO HER...

I GET A NEW LENS FOR MY GLASSES TO REPLACE THE CRACKED ONE, TODAY.

NO THANKS TO CHIP. YOU REALLY SHOULD THINK ABOUT TRYING CONTACT LENSES.



...I NEVER SAW HER SO HAPPY EITHER, LOLA COULD FINALLY BE HERSELF. SHE TAUGHT ME HOW TO DANCE, BUT I WASN'T VERY GOOD...

NOW YOU GOT IT, GO SIMON.



...FRIDAY WAS MOVIE NIGHT. WE ALWAYS PICKED SOMETHING FUNNY TO WATCH, BUT I FOUND MYSELF UNABLE TO TAKE MY EYES AWAY FROM HER. THAT SMILE, SHE COULD LIGHT UP A ROOM WITH THAT SMILE ALONE...



...THIS NIGHT WAS DIFFERENT, I COULD FEEL HER EMOTIONS, WE CONNECTED AS ONE & BECAME LOST IN EACH OTHERS EYES. SHE TOOK HOLD & LEANED TOWARDS ME, WAS THIS GOING TO BE OUR FIRST KISS?...



OPEN UP,  
LOLA! WE  
KNOW YOU'RE  
IN THERE!

**KNOCK!**  
**KNOCK!**

IT CAN'T BE.  
SIMON, DON'T  
YOU MOVE.

WHO IS IT?  
WHATS--

OH SHIT!--SHIT!--IT'S  
GOING TO BE  
ALRIGHT...JUST, DON'T  
DO ANYTHING. LET ME  
DO THE TALKING.



BUT WHO--  
ARE WE GOING  
TO BE OKAY?

PLEASE,  
SIMON. PROMISE  
ME.

...I KNEW HOW SCARED OF CHIP LOLA  
WAS, SO WHOEVER WAS AT THE DOOR  
MUST HAVE BEEN BIGGER. I COULD  
FEEL HER TERROR, BUT I PROMISED TO  
DO NOTHING JUST AS SHE ASKED...



WHA' CHU  
LOOKIN' AT,  
LITTLE MAN?

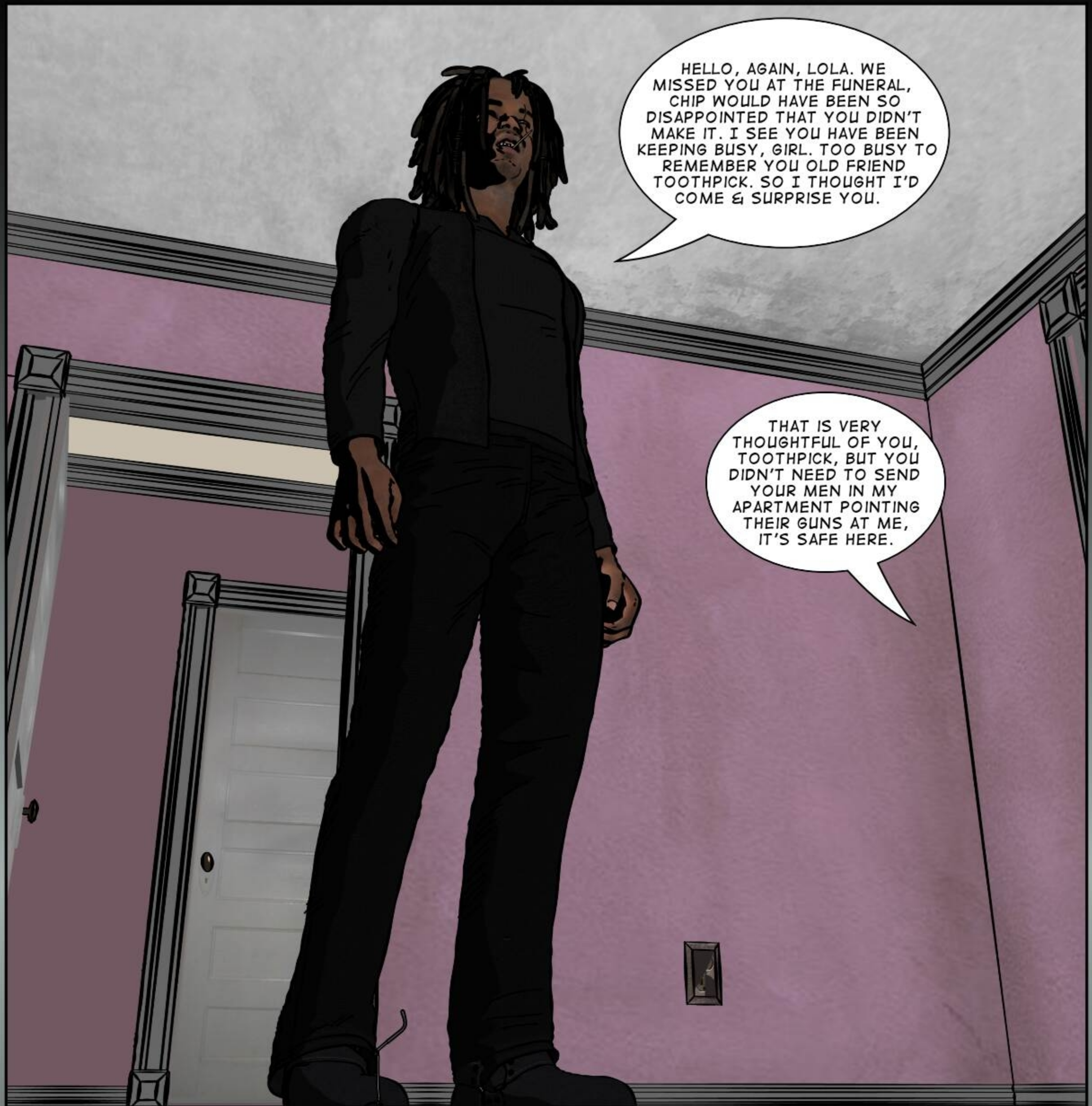
MOVE IT,  
PRINCESS. YOU  
TWO THE ONLY  
ONES HERE?

Y-YES, ITS  
JUST US. PUT  
DOWN THE GUN,  
JERMAIN, YOU  
DON'T NEED IT.









HELLO, AGAIN, LOLA. WE MISSED YOU AT THE FUNERAL, CHIP WOULD HAVE BEEN SO DISAPPOINTED THAT YOU DIDN'T MAKE IT. I SEE YOU HAVE BEEN KEEPING BUSY, GIRL. TOO BUSY TO REMEMBER YOU OLD FRIEND TOOTHPICK. SO I THOUGHT I'D COME & SURPRISE YOU.

THAT IS VERY THOUGHTFUL OF YOU, TOOTHPICK, BUT YOU DIDN'T NEED TO SEND YOUR MEN IN MY APARTMENT POINTING THEIR GUNS AT ME, IT'S SAFE HERE.



IT WASN'T SAFE ENOUGH FOR CHIP THOUGH, WAS IT? MY POOR BOY MET HIS END IN THIS BUILDING & I'M STILL NOT CLEAR ON THE DETAILS.



WHICH BRINGS ME TO THE NEXT ORDER OF BUSINESS. CHIPS DEBT, WITH HIM GONE I NEED TO FIND AN ALTERNATE WAY TO GET PAID WHAT I'M OWED.

I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE SAYING, BUT THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ME. I LEFT CHIP BEFORE HE DIED & HIS DEBT IS HIS DEBT, NOT MINE.





WE CAN PLAY THIS GAME ALL NIGHT, BUT IT DOESN'T SOLVE ME GETTING MY MONEY. CHIP WAS ALWAYS VERY DEFENSIVE OF YOU, BUT HE ISN'T HERE TO PROTECT YOU ANYMORE.



IF YOU PAY ME THE FULL TEN GRAND RIGHT NOW & I WILL LEAVE. IF YOU CAN'T, I HAVE ANOTHER SOLUTION. WE BOTH KNOW YOU HAVE THE SKILLS & EXPERIENCE I AM LOOKING FOR. YOU CAN WORK FOR ME & CLEAR THE DEBT.

**NO!** I DON'T DO THAT KIND OF WORK ANYMORE, I GAVE IT UP A LONG TIME AGO.



ENOUGH OF THIS BULLSHIT! I COME HERE, I GIVE YOU A CHOICE & YOU THINK YOU CAN REFUSE ME?

TOOTHPICK, PLEASE, BE REASONABLE!

I TRIED TO BE REASONABLE, BUT YOU AREN'T GIVING ME ANY OPTION. DARNELL! HELP LOLA MAKE A DECISION.



AH--AH--LOLA!



SIMON, PLEASE, DON'T DO ANYTHING.

YOU HAVE THREE SECONDS TO DECIDE OR SIMON'S BRAINS DECORATE YOUR WALL. THREE--TWO--ONE





OKAY, OKAY. I WILL HAVE THE MONEY FOR YOU BY TUESDAY.

NO! YOU HAVE UNTIL THE END OF THIS WEEK.



AH-AH-AH!

LOOKS LIKE YOU GET TO SEE TOMORROW, DAWG.



DO NOT MISTAKE MY GENEROSITY FOR WEAKNESS. IF YOU CAN'T PAY WHEN WE COME BACK, YOU **WILL** BE COMING TO WORK FOR ME.

I'LL HAVE IT FOR YOU, I SWEAR.

GOOD. COME ON BOYS, LETS LEAVE THEM TO ENJOY THEIR EVENING.



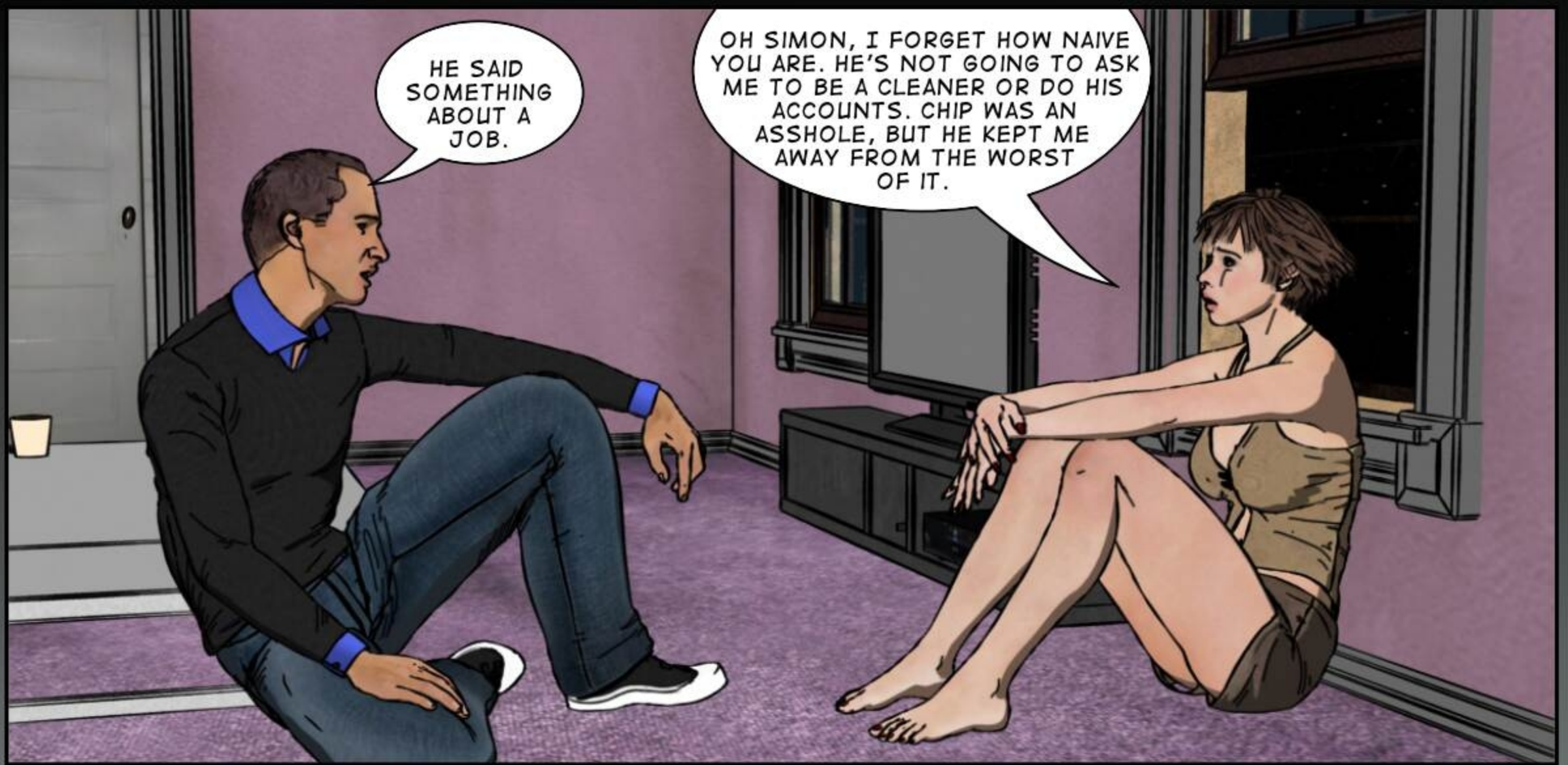
CLOCK IS TICKING, MISS HOLLAND. TICK-TICK- TICK.



I CAN HELP YOU GET THE MONEY, LOLA. I HAVE SOME SAVINGS, I WON'T LET THEM HURT YOU.

OH GOD! SIMON, YOU JUST DON'T KNOW THESE PEOPLE. IT WON'T BE AS SIMPLE AS PAYING THE MONEY, HE'LL PUT THE COST UP OR FIND A WAY TO KEEP ME PAYING. WHEN YOU ARE IN TOOTHPICKS DEBT, YOU ARE NEVER FREE OF IT.





HE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT A JOB.

OH SIMON, I FORGET HOW NAIVE YOU ARE. HE'S NOT GOING TO ASK ME TO BE A CLEANER OR DO HIS ACCOUNTS. CHIP WAS AN ASSHOLE, BUT HE KEPT ME AWAY FROM THE WORST OF IT.



WE COULD CALL THE POLICE.

THE POLICE WON'T HELP US. ANYONE WHO HAS GONE AFTER TOOTHPICK HAS BEEN FOUND DEAD OR GONE MISSING. WE ARE ON OUR OWN.



IF THEY COME BACK LIKE THAT AGAIN, I WON'T HOLD BACK NEXT TIME. YOU KNOW WHAT I CAN DO, THEY THINK I'M SCARED OF THEM, BUT THEY'RE WRONG. I SPENT TOO MUCH OF MY LIFE BEING SCARED, NOT ANYMORE.



YOU KNOW WHAT? YOU MIGHT NOT NEED TO DO ANYTHING. I KNOW SOMEONE WHO MAY BE ABLE TO HELP US & HE ISN'T SCARED OF TOOTHPICK EITHER. I USED TO WORK WITH A GUY THEY CALL KRUGER, HE HELPS RUN VALENTINES CLUB DOWN MAIN STREET. HE WAS ALWAYS GOOD TO ME & HAD A FEARSOME REPUTATION.

OKAY, I'M COMING WITH YOU.



LATER THAT NIGHT

# VALENTINES

THIS IS IT. I JUST HOPE KRUGER CAN HELP, I DIDN'T EXACTLY LEAVE ON GOOD TERMS.

OKAY, FINGERS CROSSED.

YEAH?

HEY, BEN, IT'S ME, LOLA. I CAME TO SEE KRUGER.

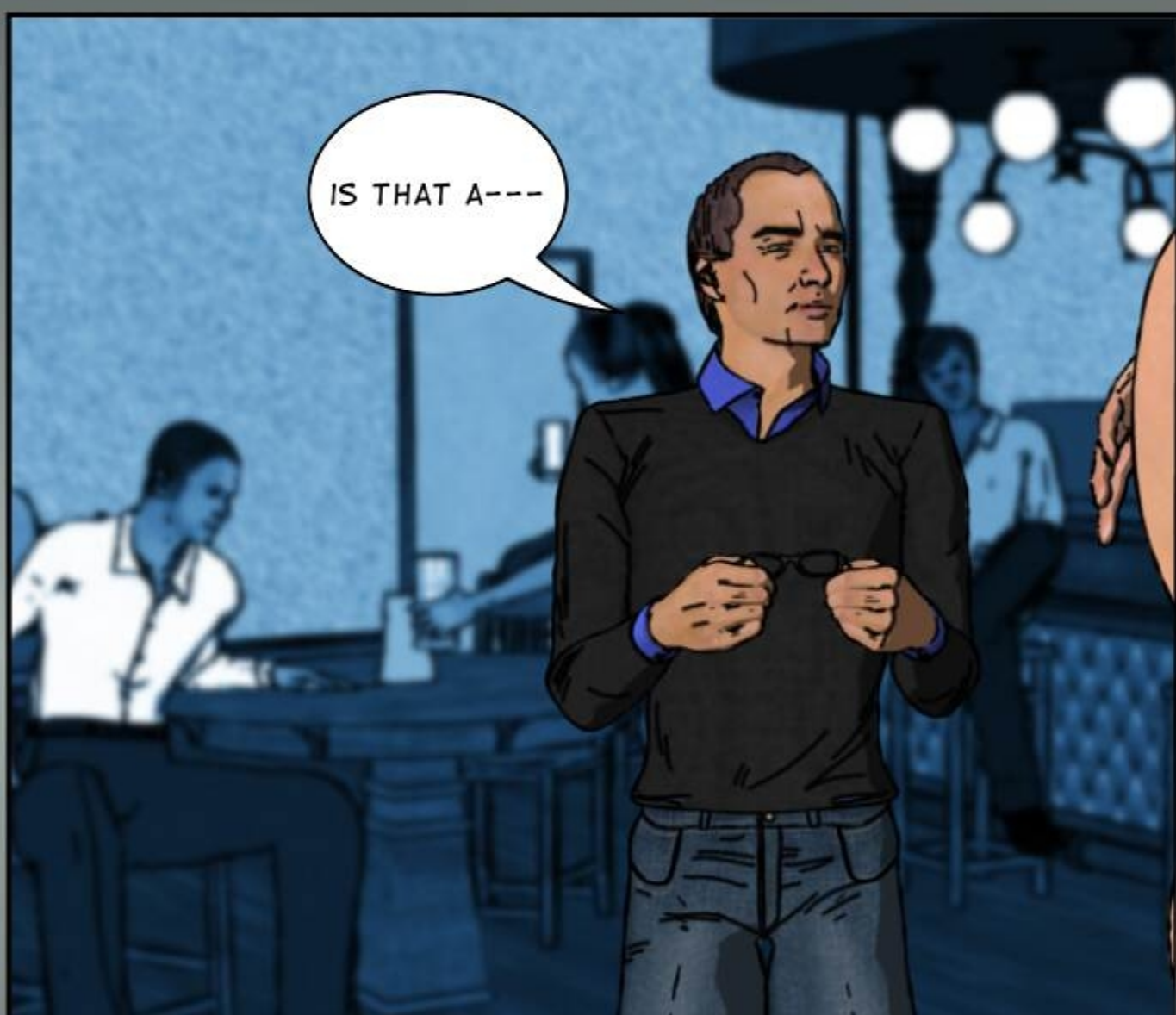
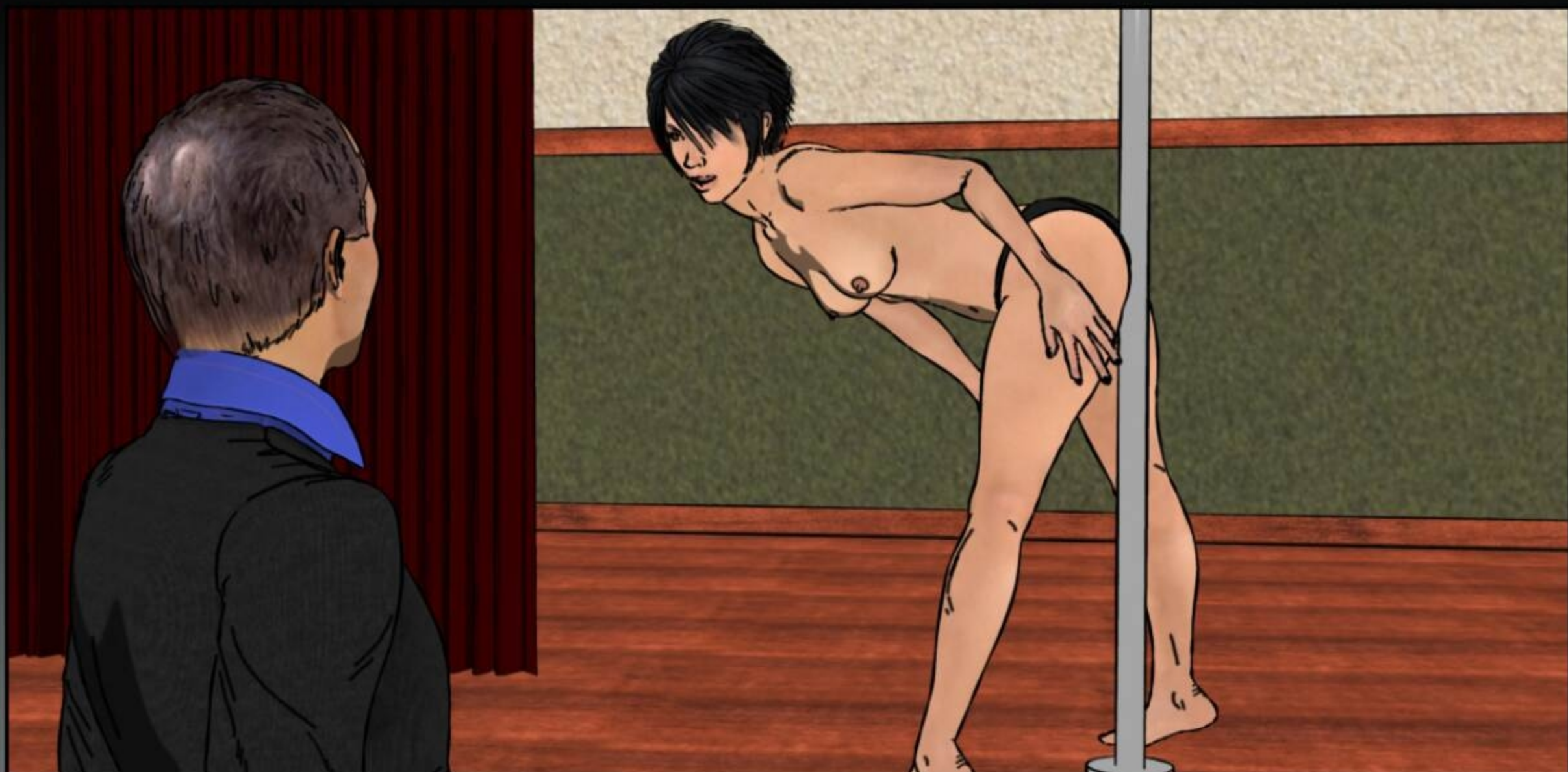
COME IN. YOU'LL HAVE TO DEAL WITH FRANK I'M AFRAID. EVERYTHING GOES THROUGH HIM NOW.

...I FOLLOWED LOLA INTO THE CLUB & THE NOISE WAS SO LOUD. I COULD FEEL EVERY BEAT OF THE MUSIC. I HAD NEVER BEEN IN A PLACE LIKE THIS BEFORE, IT WAS PACKED WITH RICH TYPES WEARING SUITS & EXPENSIVE LOOKING CLOTHES...

WHERE IS HE?

WHAT? -- I CAN'T HEAR YOU, ITS VERY LOUD IN HERE.













YOU CAUSED ME A LOT OF PROBLEMS WHEN YOU LEFT WORK ALL OF A SUDDEN. SO WHERE'S YOUR BOYFRIEND? CHIP OR WHATEVER HIS NAME IS. I HOPE HE WAS WORTH LEAVING A GOOD JOB OVER.



CHIP'S DEAD.

MY CONDOLENCES. I WOULD SAY I'M SORRY, BUT I'M NOT, THE GUY WAS AN ASSHOLE. IF YOU THINK YOU CAN WALK BACK IN HERE & GET YOUR JOB BACK, THEN YOU'RE MISTAKEN.



IT WAS CHIP THAT MADE ME LEAVE, YOU KNOW THAT, I NEED HELP WITH SOMETHING ELSE. TOOTHPICK IS THREATENING ME FOR MONEY. HE WANTS TEN GRAND BY THE END OF THE WEEK OR HE'S COMING FOR ME. I CAN'T AFFORD THAT & IT'S NOT EVEN MY DEBT.



HAHAHA! YOU'RE KIDDING ME RIGHT? YOU WALK OUT OF YOUR JOB WITHOUT GIVING NOTICE & VANISH FOR MONTHS, THEN YOU GET INTO DEBT WITH TOOTHPICK & SUDDENLY I'M GOOD ENOUGH TO COME & ASK FOR HELP. I DON'T THINK SO.



WE BOTH KNOW YOU DO BUSINESS WITH TOOTHPICK AND I COULDN'T GO AGAINST HIM ON MY OWN. KRUGER ONLY PUTS UP WITH HIM TO KEEP THE PEACE, I THOUGHT WITH HIM OUT THE WAY IT COULD HELP BOTH OF US.

YOU THOUGHT WRONG. WE HAVE ENOUGH PROBLEMS AS IT IS WITH POLICE INFORMANTS RATTING US OUT TO THE COPS. THE LAST THING WE WANT TO DO IS STIR UP THE HORNETS NEST.





SO WHO'S THE ANOREXIC GUY? DON'T YOU DATE MEN IN REGULAR SIZE ANY MORE? HEY, KID, GO TO THE BAR & GET A SANDWICH ON ME, YOU LOOK LIKE YOU NEED IT.



YOU SAID WE HAD TO TALK TO A GUY CALLED KRUGER, WHY ARE WE WASTING TIME WITH THIS JERK?

SIMON, DON'T.



WHAT THE FUCK DID YOU JUST SAY? DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO? FRANK VALENTINE, IT'S MY NAME ON THE FRONT OF THIS BUILDING. IF YOU BRING BUSINESS IN HERE IT GOES THROUGH ME.

PLEASE, FRANK. HE DIDN'T MEAN IT.



I DON'T GIVE A SHIT IF HE MEANT IT OR NOT, HE COMES INTO MY CLUB & INSULTS ME IN FRONT OF MY PEOPLE.



BEN, JOE! GET HER OUT OF MY CLUB & TAKE THIS GUY DOWN TO THE BASEMENT, THEN BREAK HIS FUCKIN' LEGS!

NO, DON'T! PLEASE, GUYS, DON'T DO THIS!

...WELL DONE, SIMON, YOU SCREWED IT UP AGAIN...

SNAP!



...SEEING LOLA GETTING THROWN WAS THE FINAL STRAW...

PLEASE!  
UUUUURGH!

BITCH, MOVE THE FUCK ON!



DON'T TOUCH HER!

...I THEN DID THE ONE THING I PROMISED I WOULD NEVER DO...



**BOOM!**

...I LET MY ANGER TAKE OVER & RELEASED MY POWER IN A CROWDED ROOM...









I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT YOU MADE A BIG MISTAKE COMING HERE.



LOLA, GET OUT THE WAY.

PLEASE, FRANK. YOU DON'T NEED TO DO THIS, I'M BEGGING YOU.



NNNGGHH!  
NO-- YOU AREN'T SHOOTING ANYONE. UHH!



I CAN'T FIRE--THE TRIGGERS JAMMED.

NNNGHH! MY GUN WON'T WORK EITHER. HOW ARE YOU DOING THIS?

FRANK!  
BEN! STAND DOWN. DO NOT SHOOT HIM.



I UNDERSTAND YOU WANTED TO SEE ME. YOU NOW HAVE MY ATTENTION. THE NAMES KRUGER, I THINK WE ALL HAVE A LOT TO TALK ABOUT.

NEXT ISSUE: WHERE I BELONG...