
A woman with long, straight blonde hair is shown from the chest up. She is wearing a teal, short-sleeved, button-down dress with a collar. Her hands are clasped in front of her. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

MEET AMANDA CHEN. AT TWENTY-SIX, SHE WAS THE DEFINITION OF AN INDEPENDENT, AMBITIOUS, AND WILDLY SUCCESSFUL ECONOMIST. ADMIRER BY HER PEERS AND FIERCELY DRIVEN, HER LIFE WAS A PERFECTLY CALCULATED EQUATION. EVERYTHING WAS FLAWLESS. UNTIL ONE DAY, STANDING IN HER OFFICE, THAT EQUATION SHATTERED. SHE WAS STRUCK BY A BLINDING, TERRIFYING FLASH. IT WASN'T A CAMERA FLASH. IT WASN'T A LIGHTNING STRIKE. IT WAS A FLASH AS IF EVERY STROBE AND EVERY BOLT OF LIGHTNING IN THE WORLD HAD CONSPIRED TO DETONATE IN THAT EXACT PLACE, AT THAT EXACT SECOND, JUST TO BLIND HER.

A woman is lying on her back on a dark, sandy or dusty ground. She is wearing a dark, possibly black, bikini or similar outfit. Her eyes are closed, and she appears to be unconscious or dead. A chain is attached to her neck and is connected to a vertical wooden post. To the left of the post, there is a bright, glowing orange and yellow light, possibly a fire or a lava flow. The overall scene is dark and desolate.

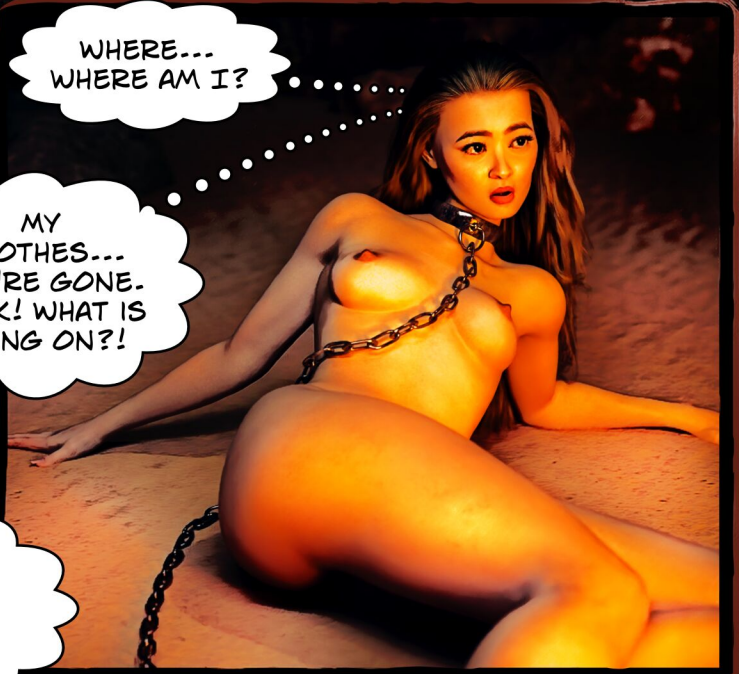
AMANDA KNEW NOTHING YET. HER MIND WAS STILL LOST IN THE DARK, BUT HER BODY WAS SLOWLY PULLING HER BACK. THE FIRST SENSATION TO CLAW ITS WAY THROUGH HER CONSCIOUSNESS WAS THE COLD. A BITING, ABSOLUTE COLD. A CHILL SO PIERCING IT CUT STRAIGHT THROUGH THE POUNDING AGONY IN HER SKULL. SHE HADN'T OPENED HER EYES. SHE HADN'T EVEN MOVED A MUSCLE. BUT THAT COLD WOULD SOON FORCE HER AWAKE. AWAKE IN THE MIDDLE OF A DESOLATE WASTELAND. NAKED. A HEAVY COLLAR LOCKED AROUND HER NECK. CHAINED TO A DEAD, SHATTERED TREE STUMP...



WHERE...
WHERE AM I?

MY
CLOTHES...
THEY'RE GONE.
FUCK! WHAT IS
GOING ON?!

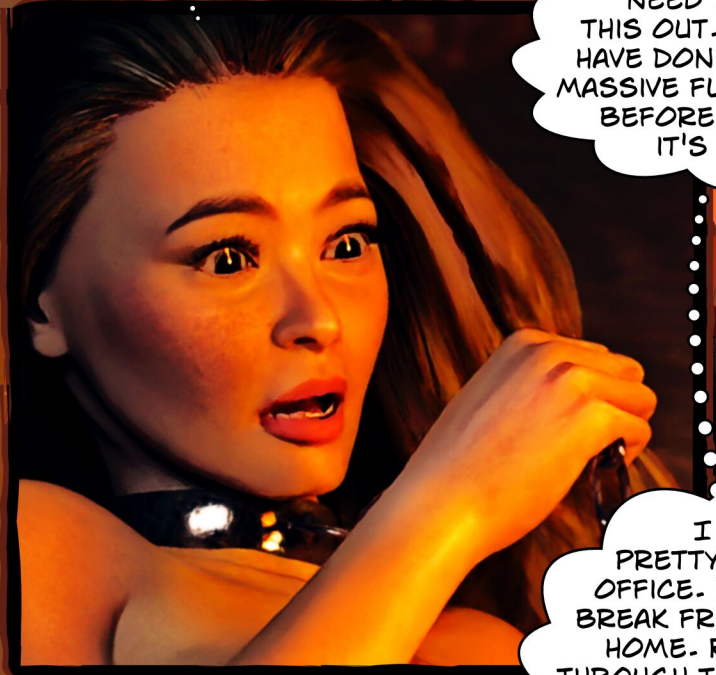
WHAT THE
FUCK...?



THE PIERCING NIGHT CHILL FINALLY FORCED AMANDA AWAKE. THERE WAS NO LOGIC TO THIS REALITY. NO VARIABLES SHE COULD CALCULATE. WAKING UP NAKED IN A DESOLATE WILDERNESS WITH COLD IRON LOCKED AROUND HER THROAT DEFIED EVERY RATIONAL RULE SHE KNEW. THE CRACKLING FIRE NEARBY WAS THE ONLY DATA POINT THAT MADE SENSE - SHE HADN'T ENDED UP HERE BY ACCIDENT. SOMEONE TOOK HER. BUT WHO? AND WHY?

A CHAIN...?

OKAY, I
NEED TO FIGURE
THIS OUT. WHO COULD
HAVE DONE THIS? THAT
MASSIVE FLASH... IT WAS
BEFORE NOON. NOW
IT'S NIGHT.



I MUST BE
PRETTY FAR FROM THE
OFFICE. FUCK! I NEED TO
BREAK FREE AND GET BACK
HOME. RUNNING NAKED
THROUGH THE STREETS WON'T
BE EASY, BUT IT BEATS
STAYING HERE AND
WAITING.

IF THIS IS SOMEONE'S SICK IDEA OF A JOKE, THEY ARE GOING TO SEVERELY REGRET IT.



DAMN IT... THE ANCHOR IS SOLID. I'M NOT PULLING THIS OUT BY FORCE.



FFFUUUUUCK!!!!



AMANDA TESTED THE CHAIN. SHE PULLED, YANKED, AND TRIED TO LOOSEN THE HEAVY IRON STAPLE DRIVEN INTO THE DEAD WOOD. AFTER SEVERAL GRUELING ATTEMPTS, LOGIC FORCED HER TO ADMIT IT WAS COMPLETELY POINTLESS. THE IRON WOULDN'T YIELD. BUT AT LEAST THE STRUGGLE - COMBINED WITH THE HEAT OF THE FIRE - FINALLY BROUGHT SOME WARMTH BACK TO HER FREEZING BODY.

CLANG RATTLE

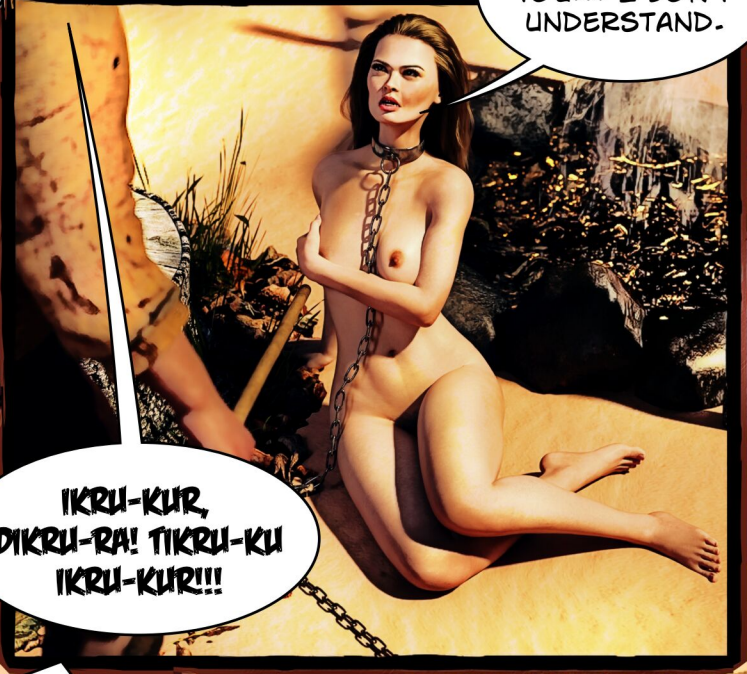
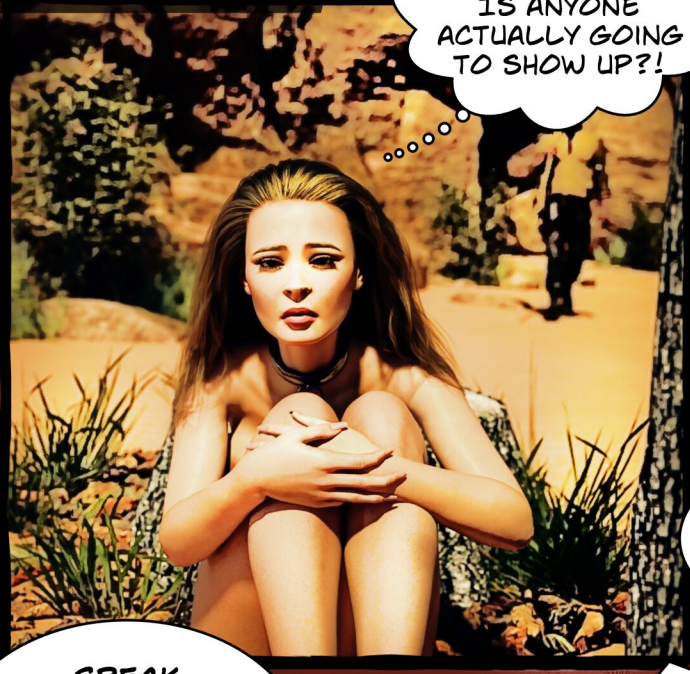
SEVERAL HOURS LATER. DAWN.



AMANDA HAD BEEN SITTING AND SHIVERING FOR HOURS, WAITING FOR THE SUN AND TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF THE VARIABLES. SOMEONE HAD TAKEN HER. BUT WHY LEAVE HER NAKED IN THE FREEZING NIGHT? TO HUMILIATE HER? BREAK HER WILL? WAS THIS SOME TWISTED PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS TEST? THEN WHY THE HELL HADN'T THEY SHOWN UP YET?! SURVIVAL INSTINCT HAD EVENTUALLY OVERPOWERED HER DISGUST, FORCING HER TO EAT THE TOUGH, CHARRED MEAT LEFT ROASTING OVER THE FIRE.

FUCK... WHAT IS THE ENDGAME HERE? IS ANYONE ACTUALLY GOING TO SHOW UP?!

TWO HOURS LATER.



WH-WHAT ARE YOU... I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

IKRU-KUR, DIKRU-RA! TIKRU-KU IKRU-KUR!!!

SPEAK ENGLISH! WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT?! TAKE THIS COLLAR OFF ME RIGHT NOW!

TIKRU-KU IKRU-KUR!!!

