

SHRIMP OF THE HOUSE HOMESTEAD



BO REDDINGTON

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#1 of
4
LIMITED
SERIES



CREATED BY BO REDDINGTON

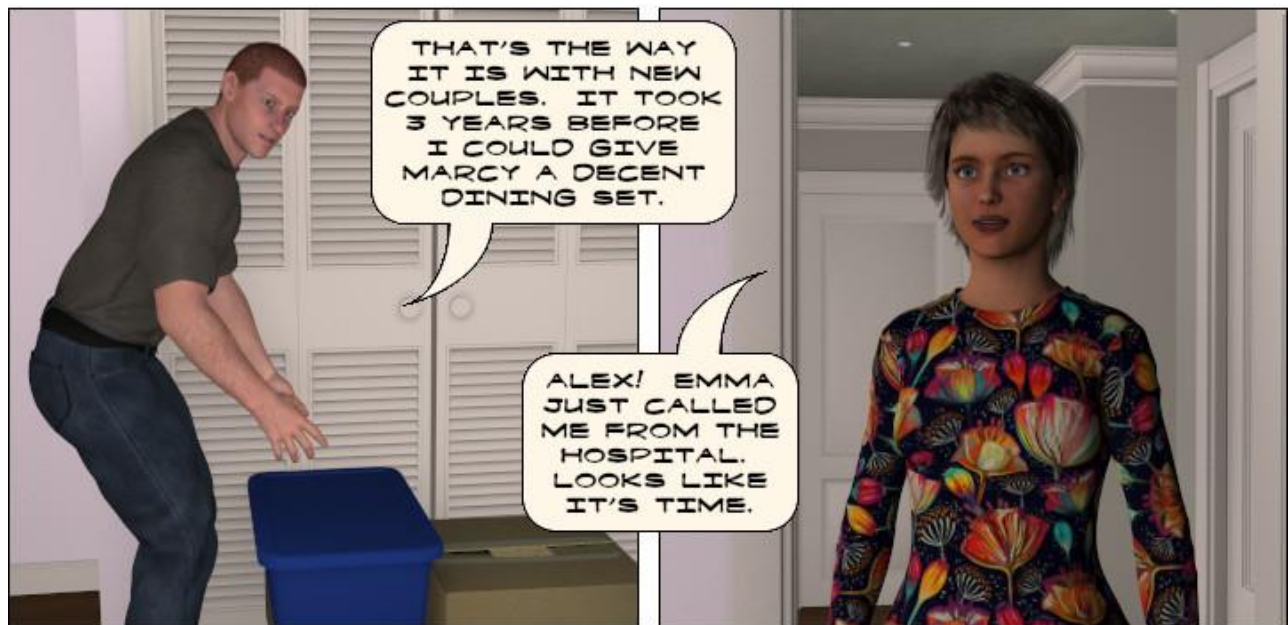
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NOW

LOOKING GOOD. GET EVERYTHING PUT AWAY, GET SOME MORE FURNITURE AND YOU'LL HAVE A PROPER NURSERY.



THANKS, BUT WE'LL HAVE TO DO WITHOUT SOME STUFF UNTIL MY NEXT COUPLE PAYCHECKS.



THAT'S THE WAY IT IS WITH NEW COUPLES. IT TOOK 3 YEARS BEFORE I COULD GIVE MARCY A DECENT DINING SET.

ALEX! EMMA JUST CALLED ME FROM THE HOSPITAL. LOOKS LIKE IT'S TIME.



IT'S TIME?
NOW?! SHE'S
NOT DUE UNTIL
NEXT WEEK!

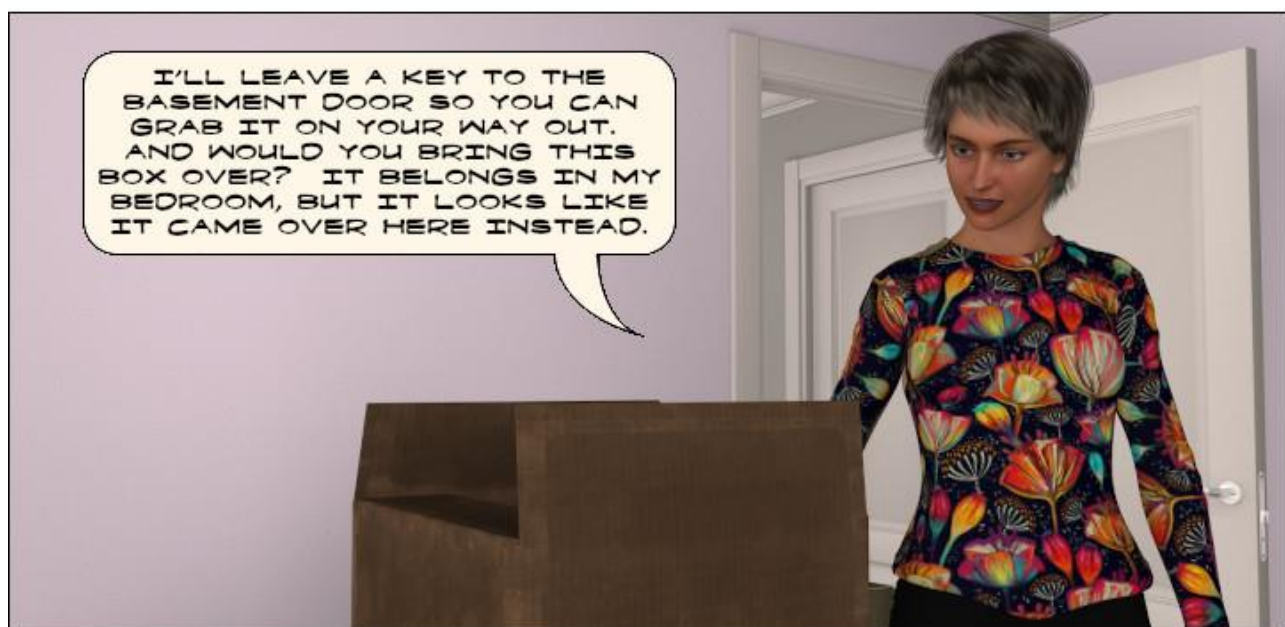
THERE'S NO
CALENDAR IN
THE WOMB.
BABIES COME
WHEN THEY'RE
READY, NOT
WHEN THEY'RE
EXPECTED.



DON'T PANIC.
YOU'RE READY
FOR THIS.
BUT, UH, WHY
DID SHE CALL
YOUR MOM
AND NOT YOU?

I THINK
I LEFT MY
PHONE NEXT
DOOR. I'M
SUCH AN
IDIOT.

YOU'RE
NERVOUS,
THAT'S ALL.
DON'T PUT
YOURSELF
DOWN.

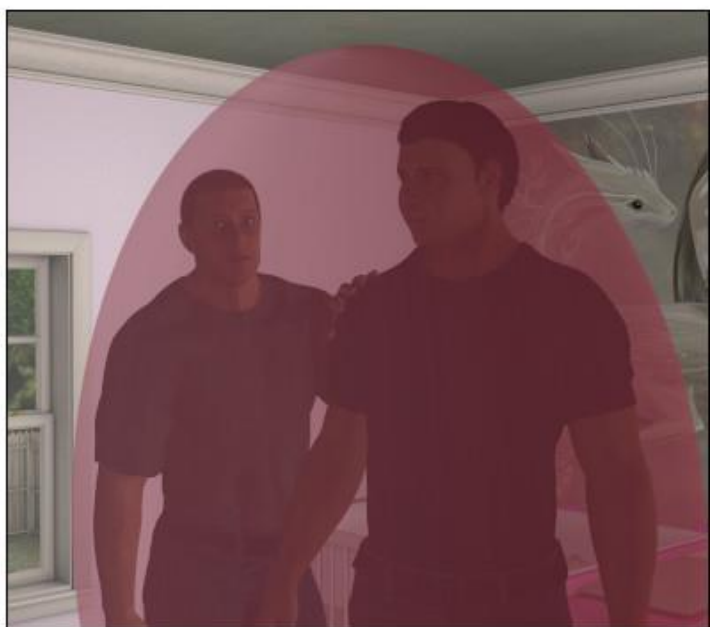


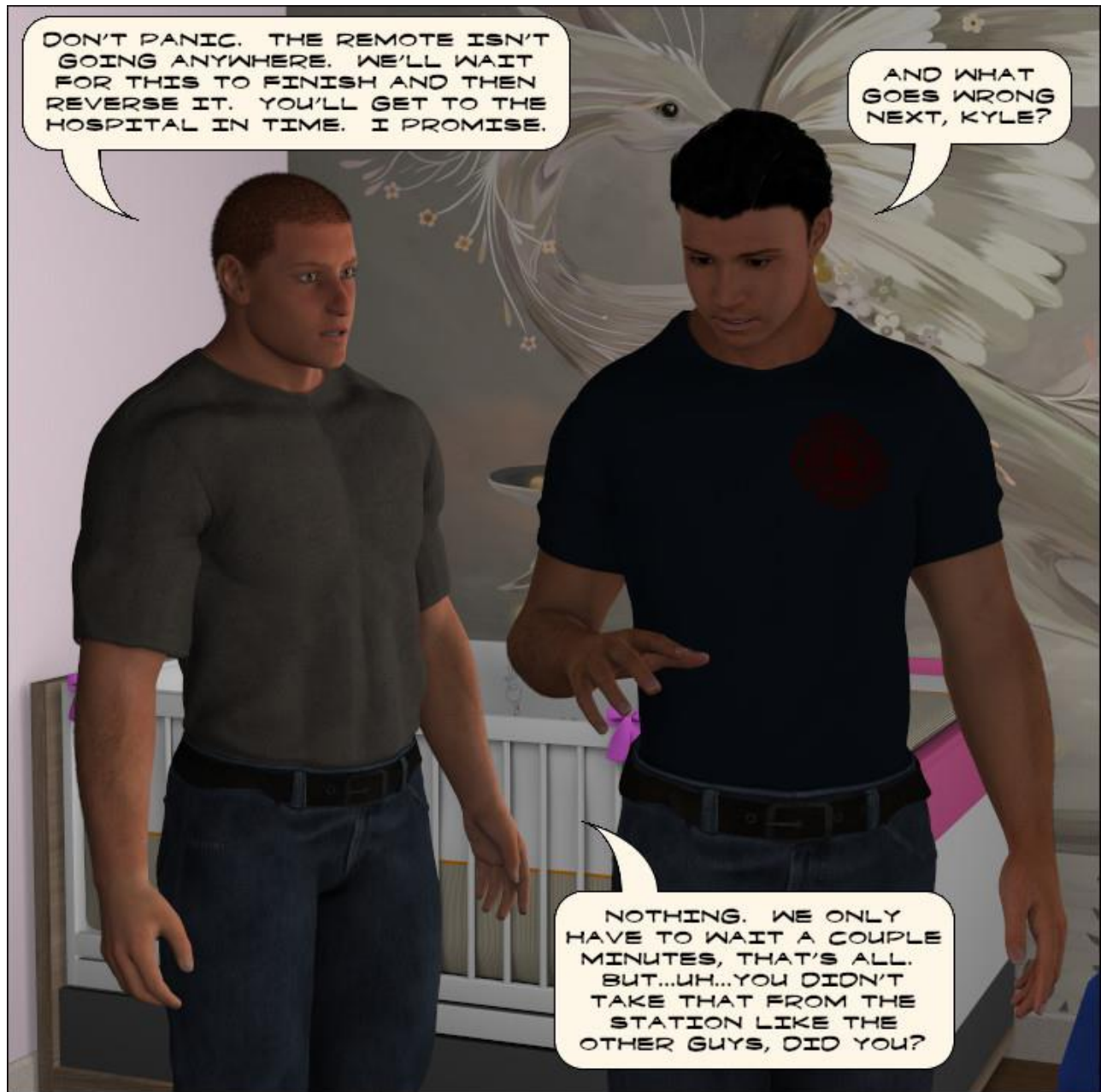
I'LL LEAVE A KEY TO THE
BASEMENT DOOR SO YOU CAN
GRAB IT ON YOUR WAY OUT.
AND WOULD YOU BRING THIS
BOX OVER? IT BELONGS IN MY
BEDROOM, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE
IT CAME OVER HERE INSTEAD.





DON'T HURT YOURSELF NOW!





DON'T PANIC. THE REMOTE ISN'T GOING ANYWHERE. WE'LL WAIT FOR THIS TO FINISH AND THEN REVERSE IT. YOU'LL GET TO THE HOSPITAL IN TIME. I PROMISE.

AND WHAT GOES WRONG NEXT, KYLE?

NOTHING. WE ONLY HAVE TO WAIT A COUPLE MINUTES, THAT'S ALL. BUT...UH...YOU DIDN'T TAKE THAT FROM THE STATION LIKE THE OTHER GUYS, DID YOU?



I HAD TO ASK.





THEN

WHAT ABOUT THIS ONE? 3 BEDS, 3 BATHS. OOH, IT HAS A GARAGE.



BUT THE MASTER BEDROOM IS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HOUSE. I'D LIKE TO BE CLOSER WHEN THE CRYING STARTS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. ON THE OTHER HAND, THAT'S A BIG YARD FOR THE KIDS TO PLAY IN WHEN THEY'RE OLDER.

I'LL SAVE IT AS A MAYBE THEN.



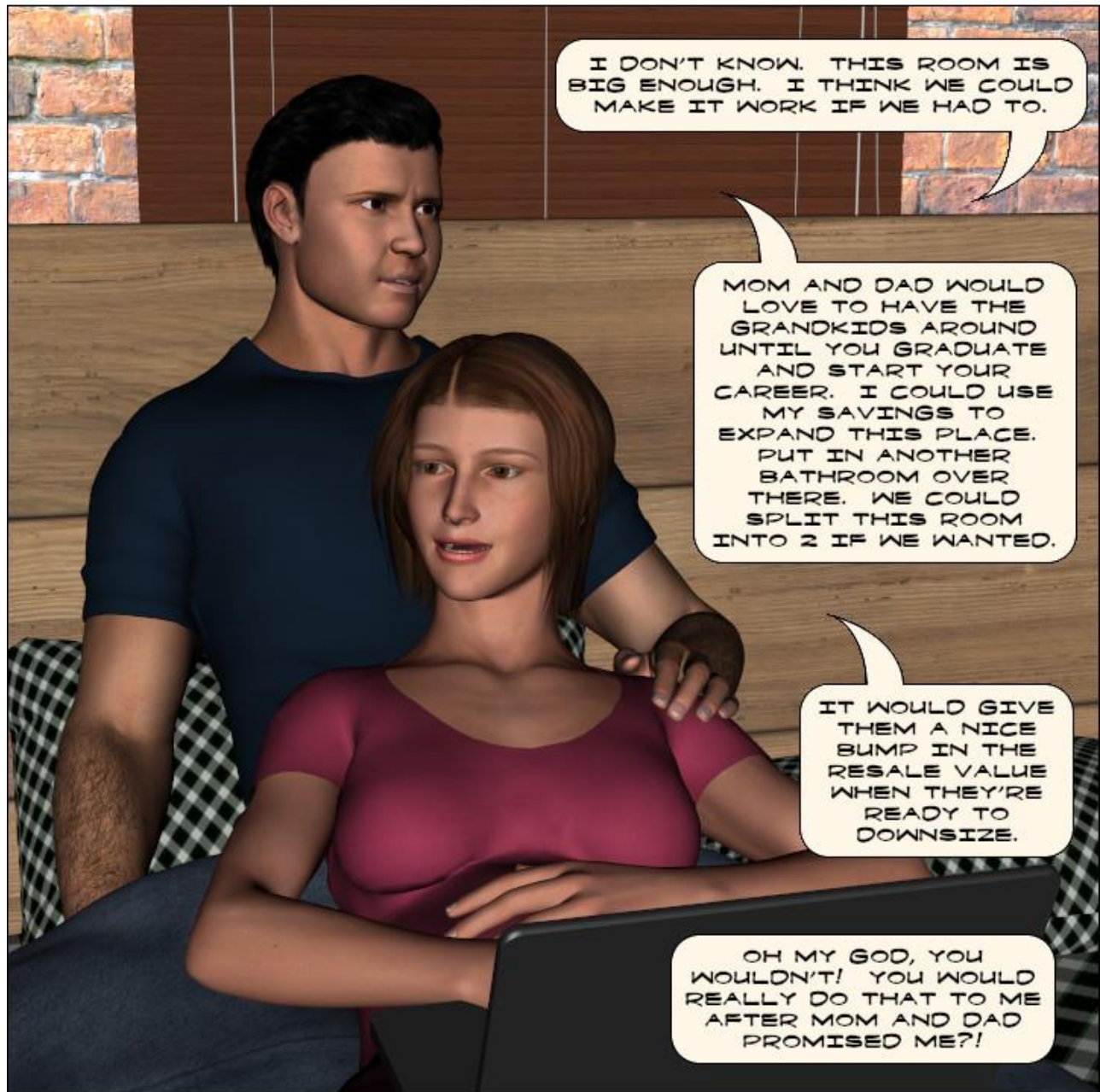
YOU BETTER PUT ONE IN THE YES COLUMN BECAUSE YOU DON'T HAVE A LOT OF TIME LEFT.

YES, WE DO. MY BROTHER SAYS THE SALE MOVES FAST. WE COULD HAVE THE KEYS IN A WEEK AFTER THE SELLER ACCEPTS OUR OFFER.



GO AWAY JACKSON. YOU'RE NOT GETTING MY ROOM ANY FASTER IF YOU KEEP BOTHERING ME.

I AM OFFENDED YOU WOULD THINK I'M THINKING ABOUT MYSELF WHEN I'M WORRIED THIS HOUSE IS TOO SMALL FOR MORE KIDS.



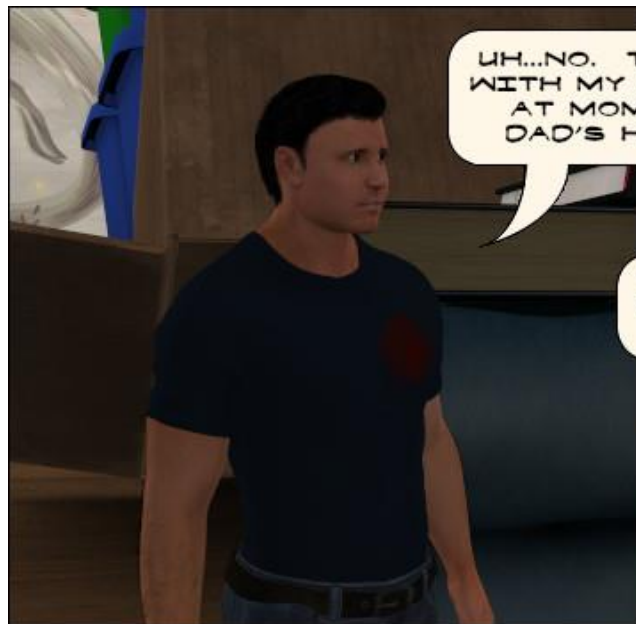
I DON'T KNOW. THIS ROOM IS BIG ENOUGH. I THINK WE COULD MAKE IT WORK IF WE HAD TO.

MOM AND DAD WOULD LOVE TO HAVE THE GRANOKIDS AROUND UNTIL YOU GRADUATE AND START YOUR CAREER. I COULD USE MY SAVINGS TO EXPAND THIS PLACE. PUT IN ANOTHER BATHROOM OVER THERE. WE COULD SPLIT THIS ROOM INTO 2 IF WE WANTED.

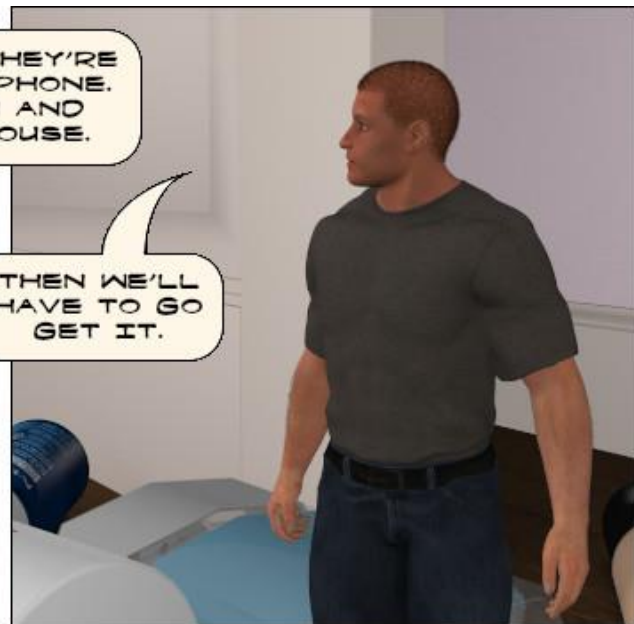
IT WOULD GIVE THEM A NICE BUMP IN THE RESALE VALUE WHEN THEY'RE READY TO DOWNSIZE.

OH MY GOD, YOU WOULDN'T! YOU WOULD REALLY DO THAT TO ME AFTER MOM AND DAD PROMISED ME?!





UH...NO. THEY'RE WITH MY PHONE. AT MOM AND DAD'S HOUSE.



THEN WE'LL HAVE TO GO GET IT.



I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU LEFT YOURS SOMEWHERE IN HERE.

YEAH, RIGHT HERE IN MY POCKET. I DON'T THINK THE BATTERY WILL FIT.



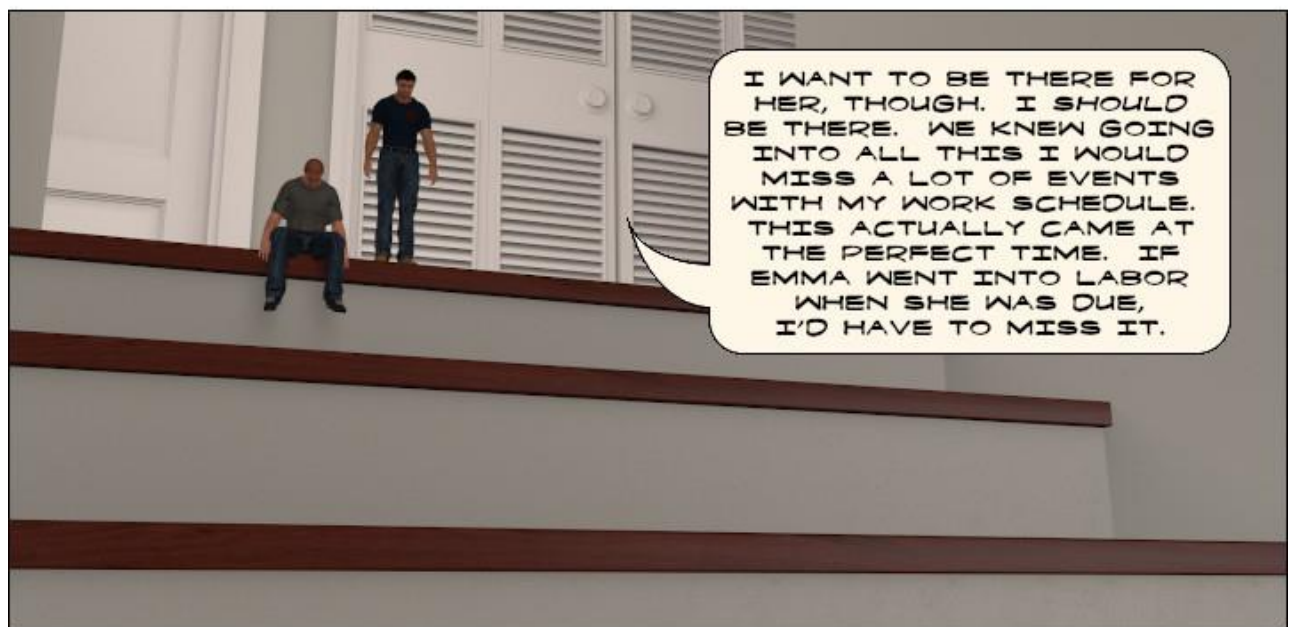
IT'S YOUR CALL WHETHER WE TAKE IT WITH US, BUT I THINK WE CAN MAKE A ROUND TRIP FASTER WITHOUT IT THAN A 1-WAY TRIP WITH IT.



WE'D PROBABLY BREAK IT TRYING TO GET IT DOWN THE STAIRS.

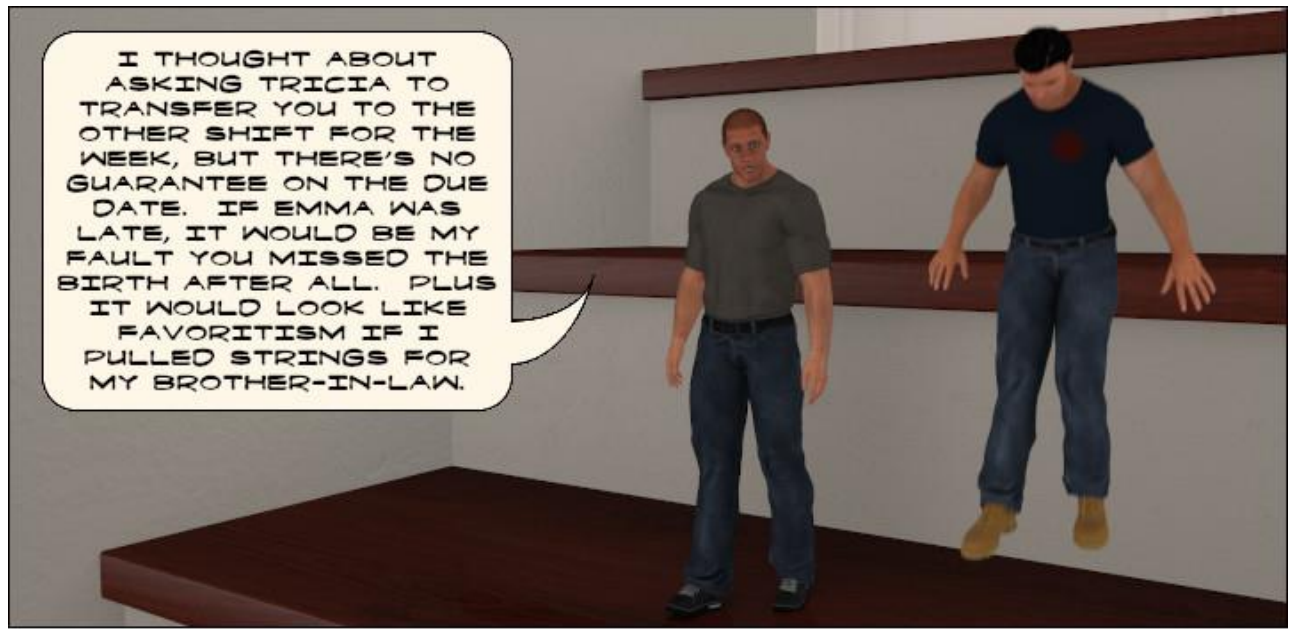


DON'T BREAK YOURSELF TRYING TO GET THIS DONE FASTER. MY FIRST ONE TOOK ALMOST 24 HOURS TO ARRIVE. YOU HAVE A LOT OF TIME. AND LIKE YOU SAID, IT'S A WEEK EARLY. THIS COULD BE A FALSE ALARM.

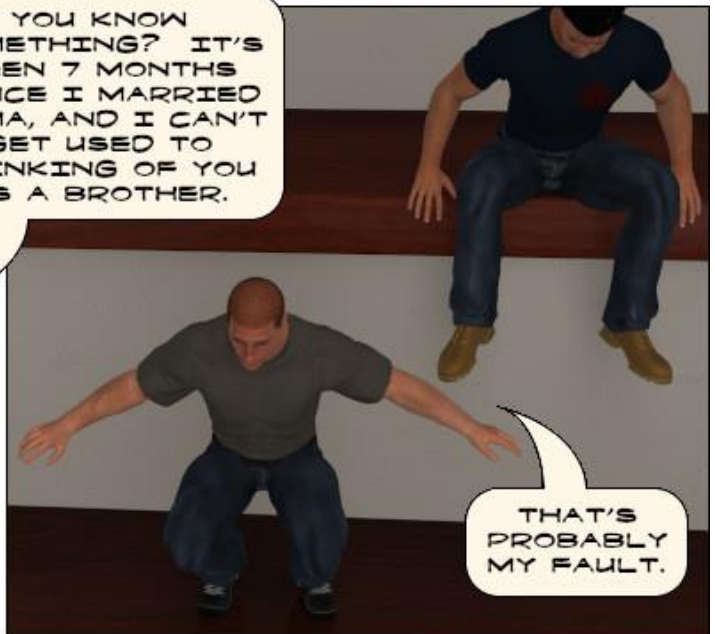
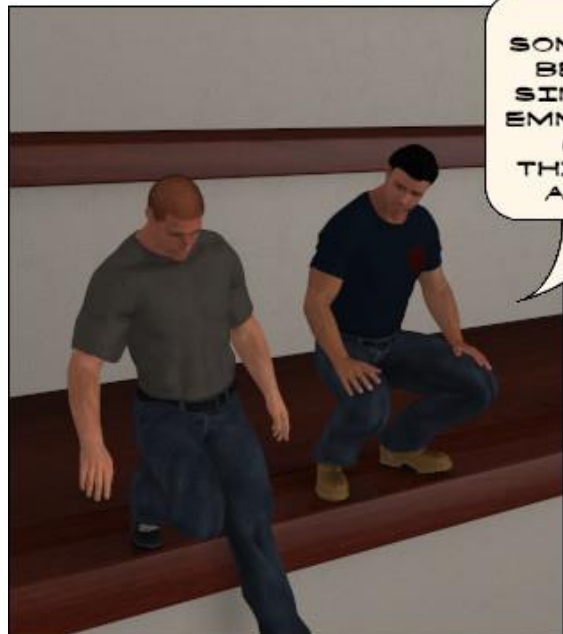


I WANT TO BE THERE FOR HER, THOUGH. I SHOULD BE THERE. WE KNEW GOING INTO ALL THIS I WOULD MISS A LOT OF EVENTS WITH MY WORK SCHEDULE. THIS ACTUALLY CAME AT THE PERFECT TIME. IF EMMA WENT INTO LABOR WHEN SHE WAS DUE, I'D HAVE TO MISS IT.

I THOUGHT ABOUT ASKING TRICIA TO TRANSFER YOU TO THE OTHER SHIFT FOR THE WEEK, BUT THERE'S NO GUARANTEE ON THE DUE DATE. IF EMMA WAS LATE, IT WOULD BE MY FAULT YOU MISSED THE BIRTH AFTER ALL. PLUS IT WOULD LOOK LIKE FAVORITISM IF I PULLED STRINGS FOR MY BROTHER-IN-LAW.



YOU KNOW SOMETHING? IT'S BEEN 7 MONTHS SINCE I MARRIED EMMA, AND I CAN'T GET USED TO THINKING OF YOU AS A BROTHER.



THAT'S PROBABLY MY FAULT.

NO, IT'S NOTHING LIKE THAT. I'M SO USED TO JACKSON AND ALLIE AND AIDEN. IT'S STILL FUNNY TO ME TO THINK I MAGICALLY HAVE A NEW BROTHER. IT'S EVEN FUNNIER YOU BEING OLDER BECAUSE I'M ALSO USED TO BEING THE OLDEST.



IT'S NEW TO ME, TOO, SINCE MY WIFE WAS AN ONLY CHILD.



WE'LL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT. ONCE YOU'RE SETTLED WITH YOUR FAMILY. WE'LL HAVE A GET-TOGETHER WITH MINE. THE KIDS ARE EXCITED AT THE IDEA OF HAVING COUSINS TO PLAY WITH.

THAT'S FUNNY BECAUSE MY BROTHER AIDEN IS STILL TRYING TO WRAP HIS HEAD AROUND BEING AN UNCLE.



LIKE UNCLE DANNY? BUT I'M NOT A GROWN UP.

THEN



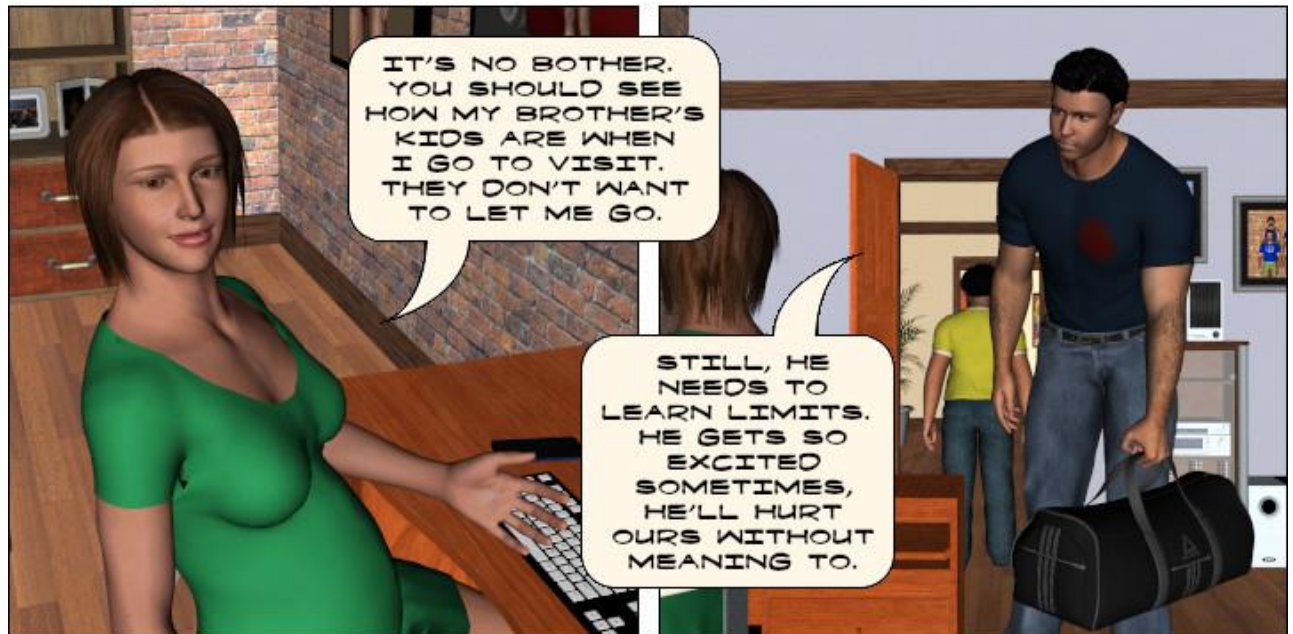
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE. YOU'RE ALEX'S BROTHER, THAT'S ENOUGH.

DO I HAVE TO GIVE THEM LOTS OF PRESENTS LIKE UNCLE DANNY?



MAYBE WHEN YOU'RE OLDER. RIGHT NOW, JUST PLAY WITH THEM OR WATCH SOME MOVIES WITH THEM LIKE YOU'RE THEIR BIG BROTHER.

AIDEN, I TOLD YOU TO STOP BOTHERING EMMA.



IT'S NO BOTHER. YOU SHOULD SEE HOW MY BROTHER'S KIDS ARE WHEN I GO TO VISIT. THEY DON'T WANT TO LET ME GO.

STILL, HE NEEDS TO LEARN LIMITS. HE GETS SO EXCITED SOMETIMES, HE'LL HURT OURS WITHOUT MEANING TO.



HOW WERE YOUR CLASSES?

BORING AS ALWAYS. HOW WAS WORK?

THE USUAL. THERE WERE ABOUT A DOZEN ACCIDENTS, SOME MEDICAL EMERGENCIES, CAT STUCK IN A TREE.



I CHECKED OUT THAT HOUSE YESTERDAY, THE ONE CLOSE TO YOUR SCHOOL. UNFORTUNATELY THE LISTING FORGOT TO MENTION THE CRACKED FOUNDATION.

OH, THAT'S TOO BAD. THE PRICE WAS RIGHT ON THAT ONE. IS IT SOMETHING WE CAN FIX LATER WHEN WE HAVE MORE MONEY?

I TRIED TO CONVINCE MYSELF OF THAT, BUT REALLY WE'RE BETTER OFF GOING WITH THAT OVERPRICED PINK HOUSE YOU LAUGHED AT.



IT WAS OVERPRICED BECAUSE THERE WAS NO YARD.

THAT WASN'T THE ONLY REASON.



I HAVE A HALF DAY TOMORROW, AND I FOUND A COUPLE MORE POSSIBILITIES. MAYBE WE COULD CHECK THEM OUT TOGETHER.

NO MAYBE ABOUT IT. LET'S DO IT!









I THINK WE SHOULD GO OUT THE BACK DOOR. IT WON'T DRAW AS MUCH ATTENTION WHEN WE LEAVE IT OPEN.

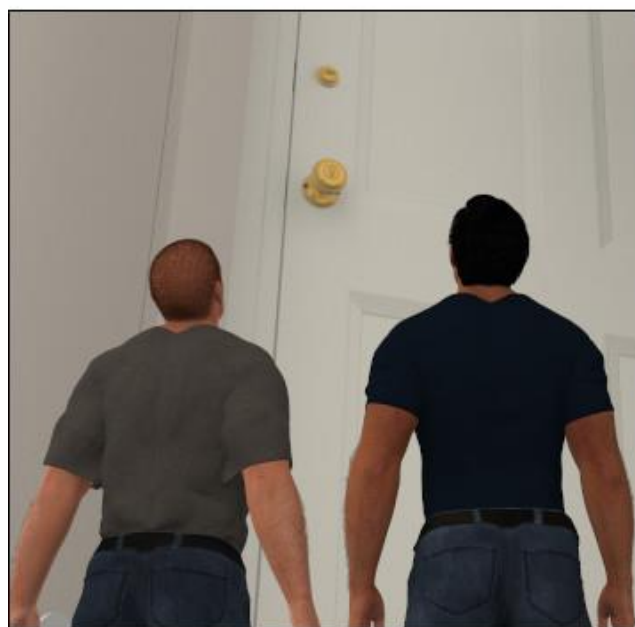


IT'S GOING TO GET COLD IN HERE. HECK, WE'RE GOING TO FREEZE WHEN WE GET OUT THERE.

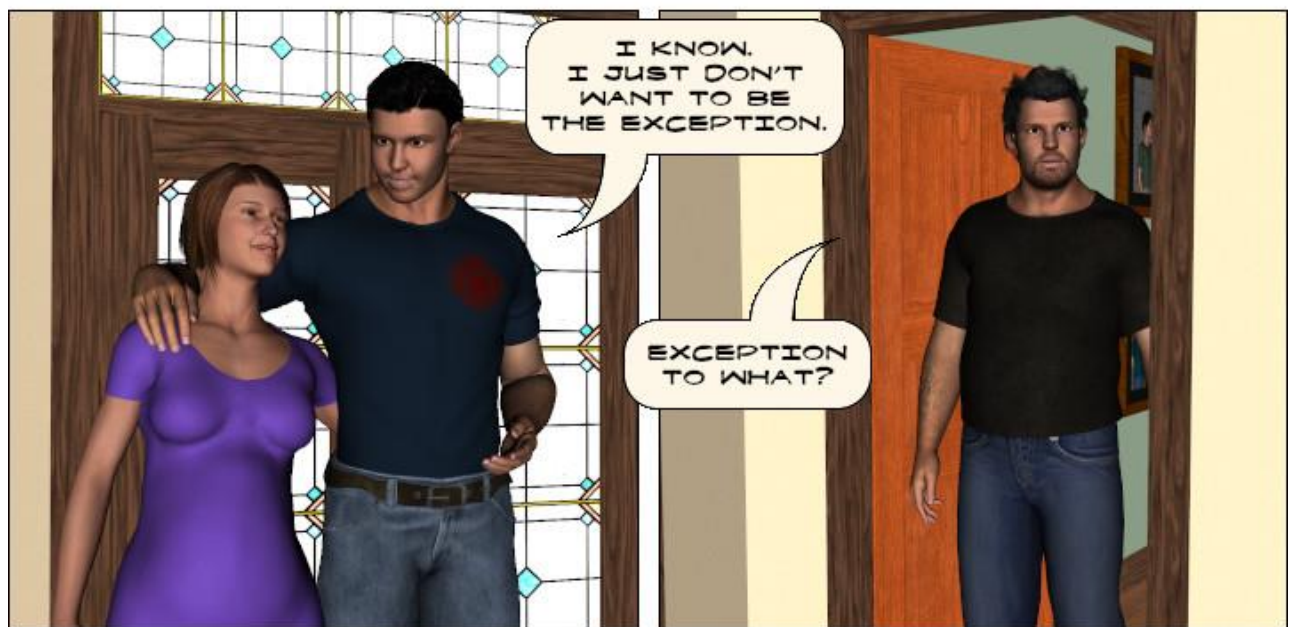
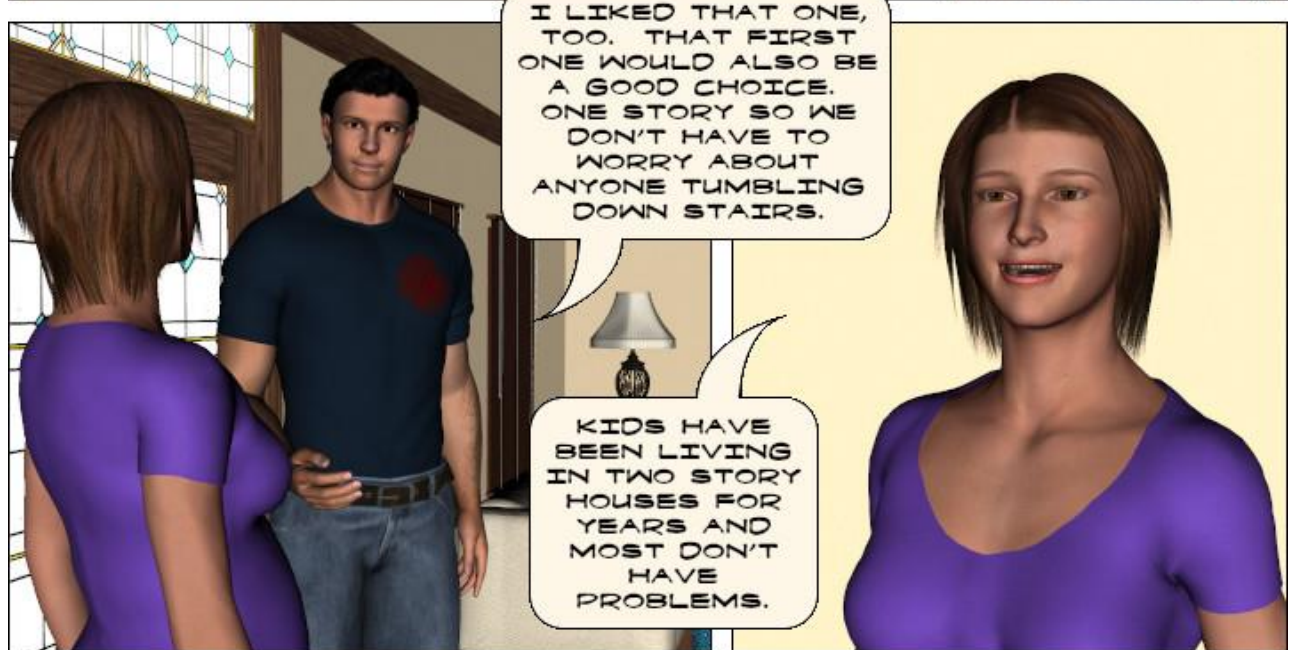


NO WE'RE NOT. GET MOVING, GET THE BLOOD PUMPING, WE'LL BE FINE. IT'S NOT LIKE IT HASN'T COME UP IN TRAINING.

DID OUR TRAINING EVER COVER HOW WE GET UP THERE TO OPEN THE DOOR?



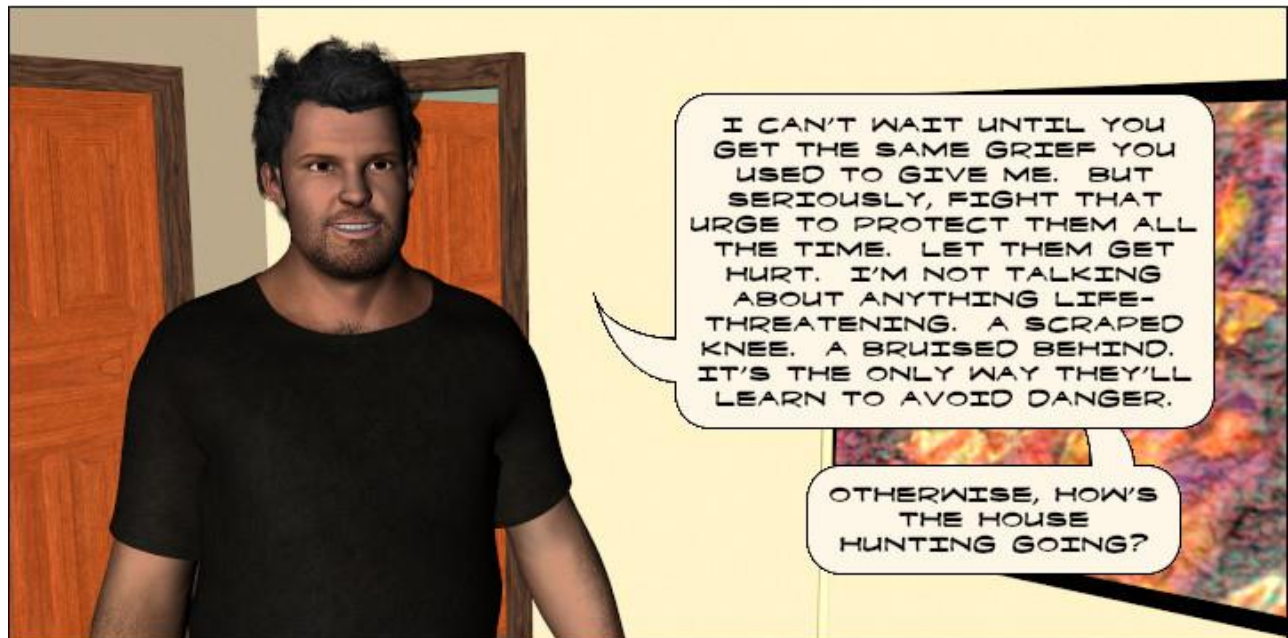
IT WON'T BE EASY, BUT I HAVE AN IDEA.





THINKING ABOUT SAFETY. I DON'T WANT MY SON OR DAUGHTER TO GET HURT WHEREVER WE END UP.

ALEX ISN'T EVEN A DAD YET AND HE'S ALREADY BECOME AN OLD MAN!



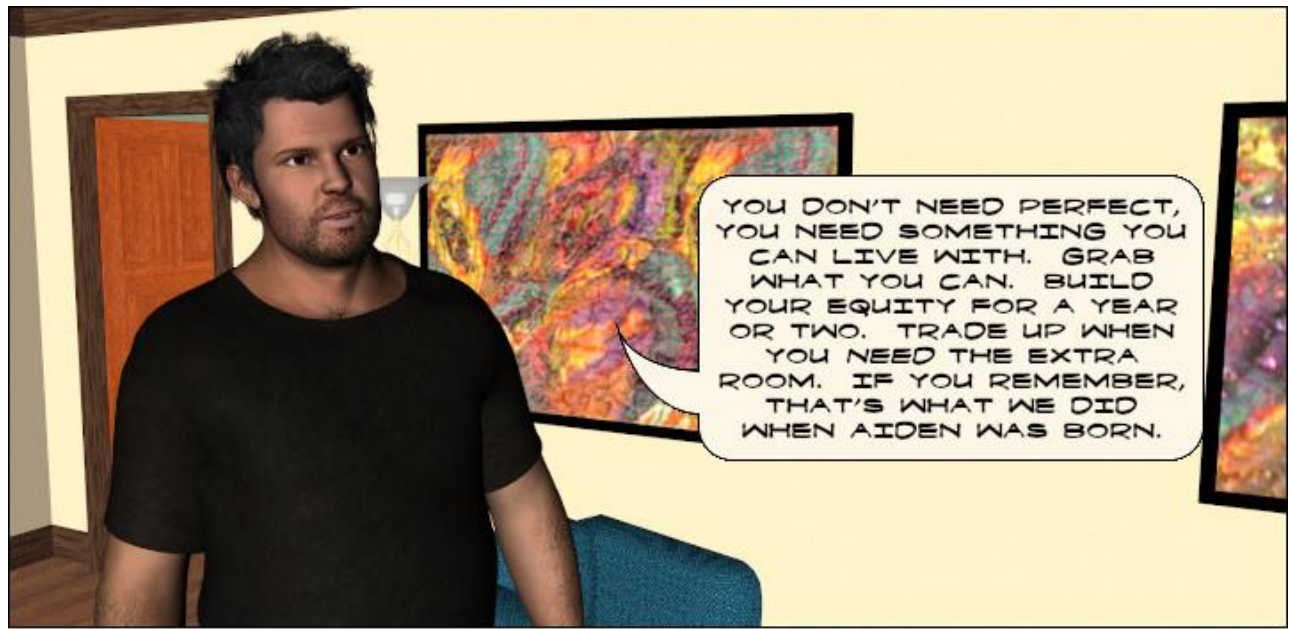
I CAN'T WAIT UNTIL YOU GET THE SAME GRIEF YOU USED TO GIVE ME. BUT SERIOUSLY, FIGHT THAT URGE TO PROTECT THEM ALL THE TIME. LET THEM GET HURT. I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT ANYTHING LIFE-THREATENING. A SCRAPED KNEE. A BRUISED BEHIND. IT'S THE ONLY WAY THEY'LL LEARN TO AVOID DANGER.

OTHERWISE, HOW'S THE HOUSE HUNTING GOING?



I THINK WE'RE GOING TO PUT OFFERS IN ON ALL THREE.

I HOPE WE DON'T HAVE TO TAKE THAT SECOND ONE. THE THIRD BEDROOM HAD AN ODD LAYOUT.



YOU DON'T NEED PERFECT, YOU NEED SOMETHING YOU CAN LIVE WITH. GRAB WHAT YOU CAN. BUILD YOUR EQUITY FOR A YEAR OR TWO. TRADE UP WHEN YOU NEED THE EXTRA ROOM. IF YOU REMEMBER, THAT'S WHAT WE DID WHEN AIDEN WAS BORN.



I REMEMBER. I REMEMBER I DIDN'T LIKE IT. LEAVING MY OLD FRIENDS BEHIND. BEING THE NEW KID AT A STRANGE SCHOOL. BUT I GET IT NOW. I'D RATHER NOT HAVE TO DEAL WITH THAT THOUGH.



NOW

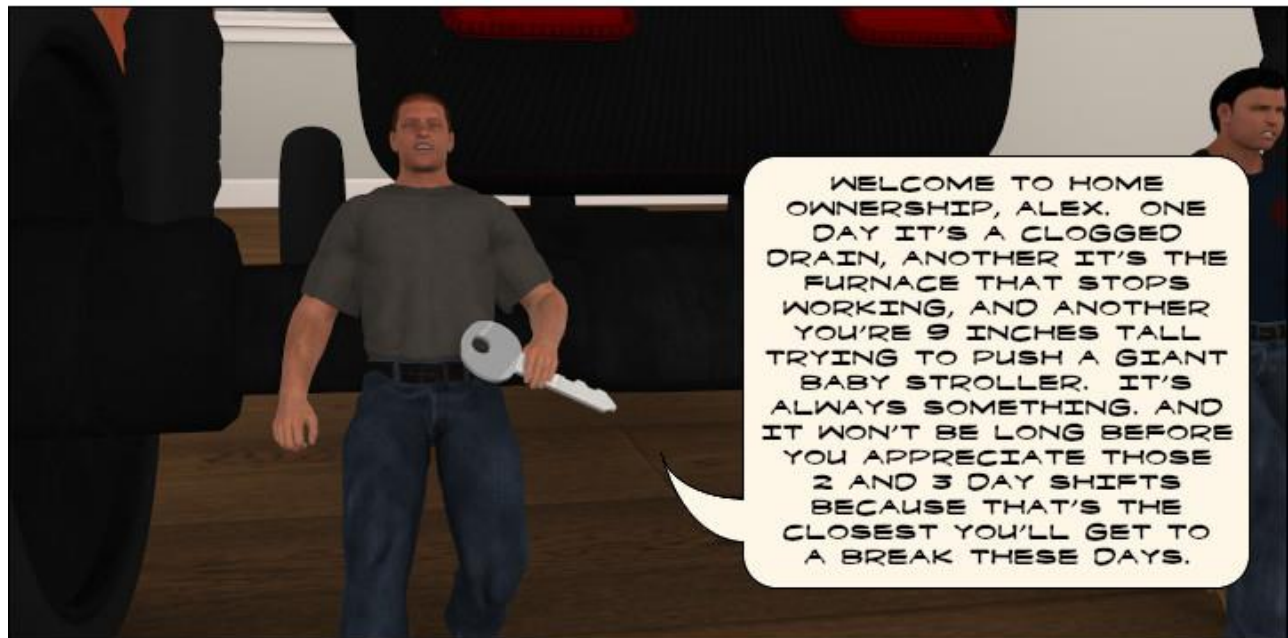
JUST LIKE WHEN THEY PULLED THAT HORSE TO THE WALLS OF TROY!

EXCEPT THEY HAD MORE MEN TO DO IT.



DON'T BE LIKE THAT. THEY ALSO HAD A ROCKY ROAD AND WE HAVE A SMOOTH FLOOR.

I KNOW, BUT I NEED TO COMPLAIN. AFTER EVERYTHING IT TOOK TO GET HERE AND I STILL CAN'T GET A BREAK.

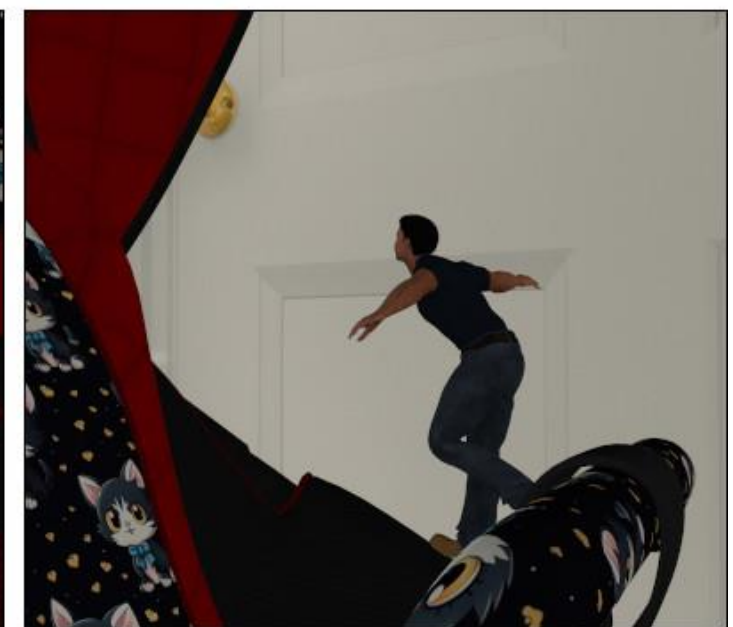


WELCOME TO HOME OWNERSHIP, ALEX. ONE DAY IT'S A CLOGGED DRAIN, ANOTHER IT'S THE FURNACE THAT STOPS WORKING, AND ANOTHER YOU'RE 9 INCHES TALL TRYING TO PUSH A GIANT BABY STROLLER. IT'S ALWAYS SOMETHING. AND IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE YOU APPRECIATE THOSE 2 AND 3 DAY SHIFTS BECAUSE THAT'S THE CLOSEST YOU'LL GET TO A BREAK THESE DAYS.



AND NOW IT'S TIME TO TURN THIS THING AGAIN.

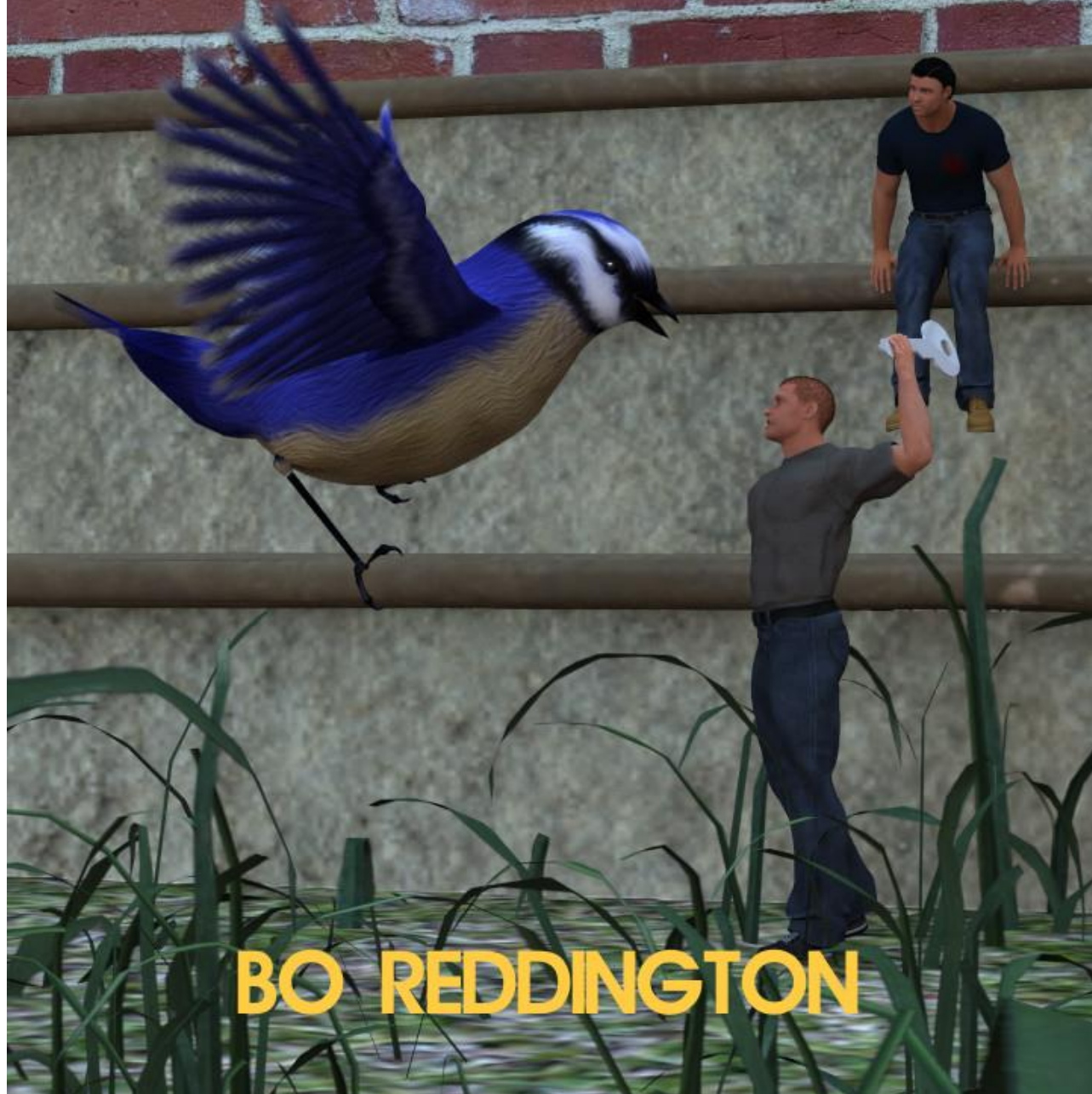
I'M ON IT. AND AFTER THIS, I'LL BE READY FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S STRONGMAN COMPETITION.





SHRIMP OF THE HOUSE HOMESTEAD

#2 of 4
LIMITED
SERIES



BO REDDINGTON



NOW

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

FINDING SOMETHING TO PUT IN THE DOOR.



WE DON'T WANT TO GET SHUT OUT WHILE WE'RE GONE.

BUT MY TV REMOTE? I JUST BOUGHT THAT.



YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ELSE UNPACKED. IF IT BREAKS, I'LL BUY YOU A NEW ONE.

I'M GIVING YOU A HARD TIME, THAT'S ALL.



NOW YOU ARE STARTING TO THINK OF ME LIKE YOUR BROTHER INSTEAD OF YOUR BOSS.



NAW. MY YOUNGER BROTHERS ARE A LOT MORE ANNOYING.



THAT SHOULD ACT AS A DOORSTOP IF THE WIND TRIES TO CLOSE THE DOOR.



IT'S A NICE LITTLE DECK. GET A GRILL AND A FEW CHAIRS AND YOU'LL BE READY TO ENTERTAIN THIS SUMMER.

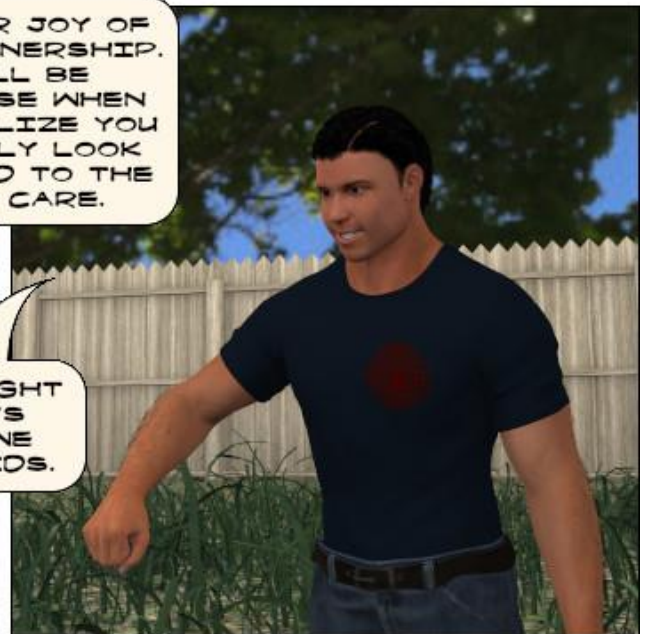


I THINK A
LAWNMOWER
IS THE FIRST
THING I NEED
TO INVEST IN.



ANOTHER JOY OF
HOME OWNERSHIP.
YOU'LL BE
SURPRISE WHEN
YOU REALIZE YOU
ACTUALLY LOOK
FORWARD TO THE
LAWN CARE.

I THOUGHT
THAT'S
WHY WE
HAD KIDS.





HOW WERE CLASSES?
ANY PROBLEMS YET?



I'M NOT AS FAST AS
I USED TO BE, BUT I
STILL MAKE IT ON
TIME. WHY DO YOU
LOOK SO DOWN?
SOMETHING HAPPEN
AT THE STATION?

THE BANK
WON'T GIVE
US THE LOAN.



BUT YOU'RE MAKING
ENOUGH TO COVER THE
MONTHLY PAYMENTS.
I THOUGHT FOR SURE IT
WOULD GO THROUGH.

ME TOO, BUT THEY HAD
A PROBLEM WITH YOU
STILL IN SCHOOL.
THEY THINK YOU'RE
GOING TO RACK UP
A MILLION DOLLARS
IN STUDENT LOANS.

BUT I ONLY HAVE
3 SEMESTERS
LEFT. AND THE
NEXT ONE IS
ALREADY FINANCED.



I TRIED TO EXPLAIN THAT, BUT THEY DIDN'T CARE. UNTIL YOU GRADUATE, THEY'RE TREATING YOU LIKE YOU'LL ALWAYS BE IN SCHOOL. IF I WANT A GOOD INTEREST RATE, I HAVE TO PUT 20% DOWN. I DON'T HAVE THAT.

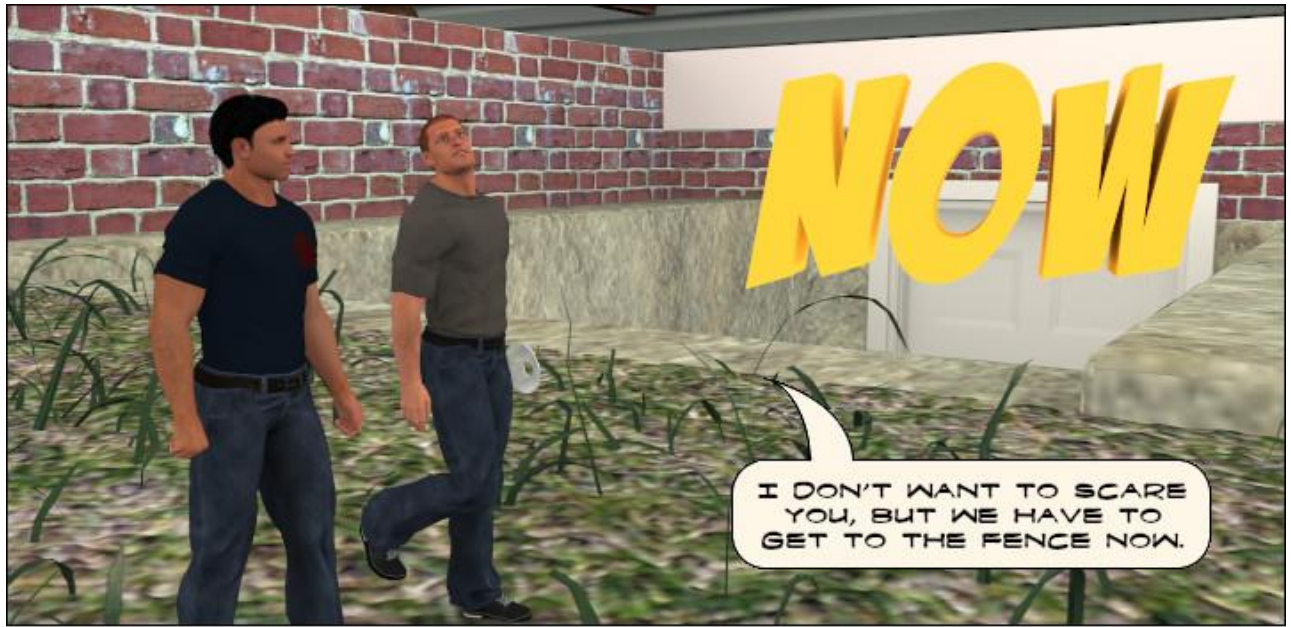
WITH WHAT I HAVE, I CAN ONLY GET A LOAN WITH A REALLY HIGH INTEREST RATE. THE MONTHLY PAYMENT IS ALMOST MY WHOLE PAYCHECK.

YOU'LL HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER BANK, THAT'S ALL. AND YOU HAVE A LITTLE MORE TIME BECAUSE...AH...OUR OFFERS WERE REJECTED. THE SELLERS WENT WITH PEOPLE WHO ALREADY HAD THEIR FINANCING.



WE DON'T HAVE A LOT OF TIME LEFT. YOU'RE DUE IN 3 MONTHS.

YOUR PARENTS WON'T KICK US OUT, RIGHT? BUT MAYBE IT WON'T COME TO THAT.

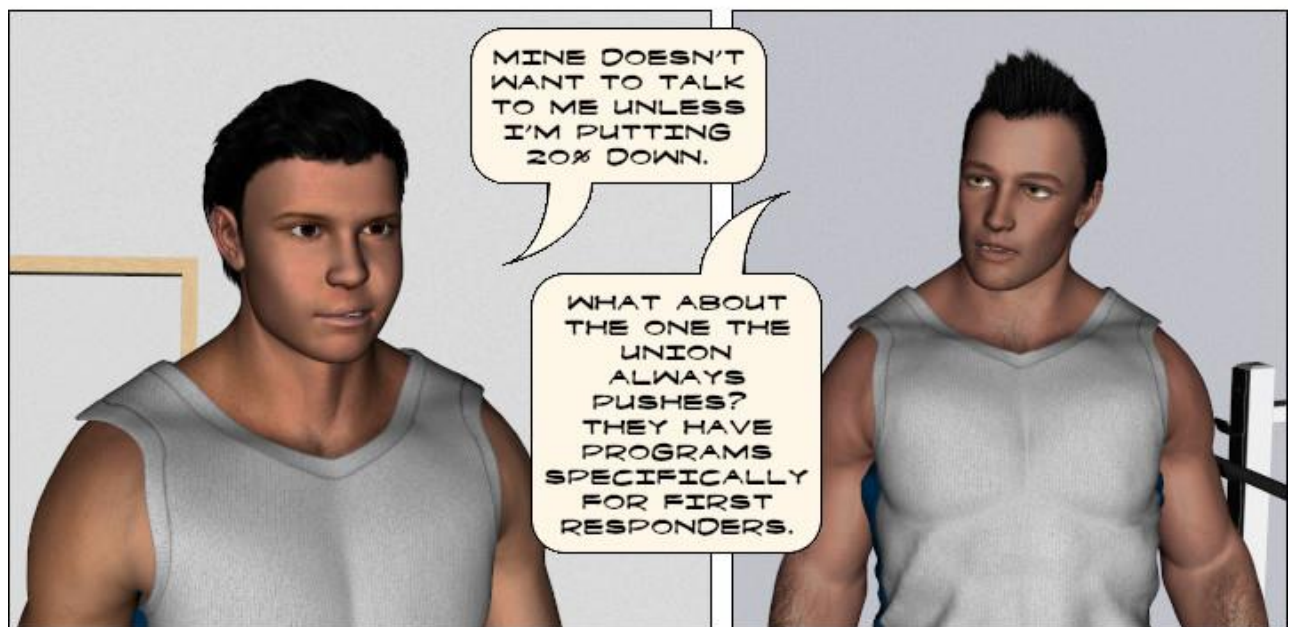
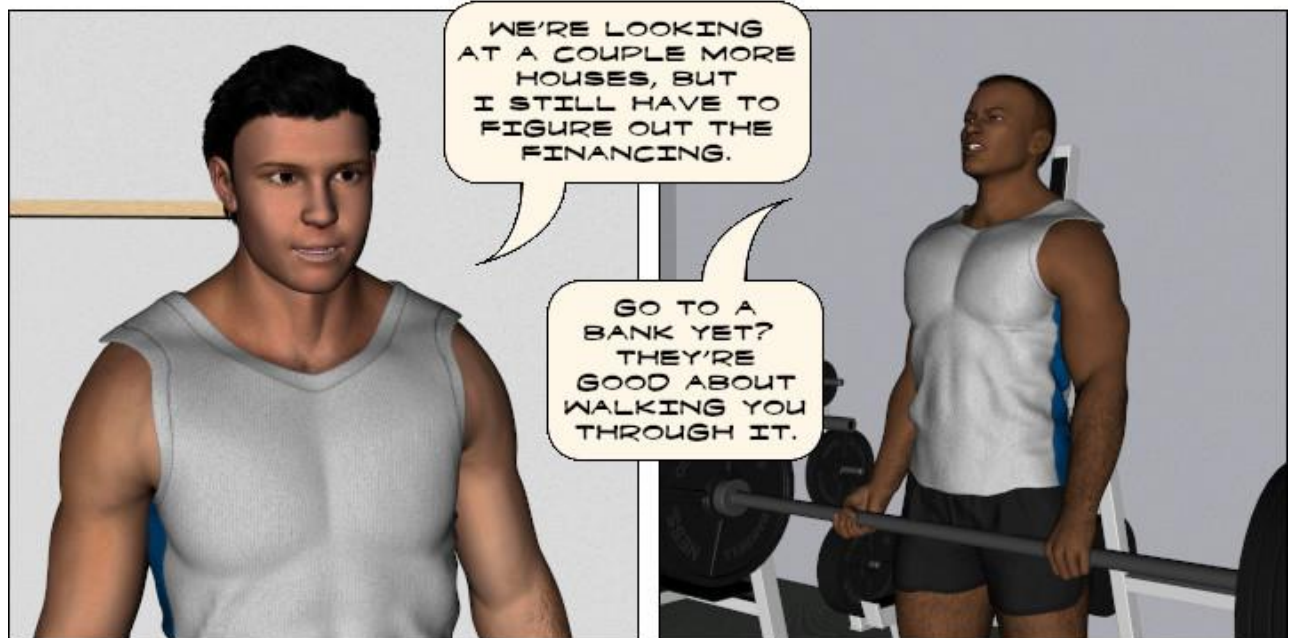


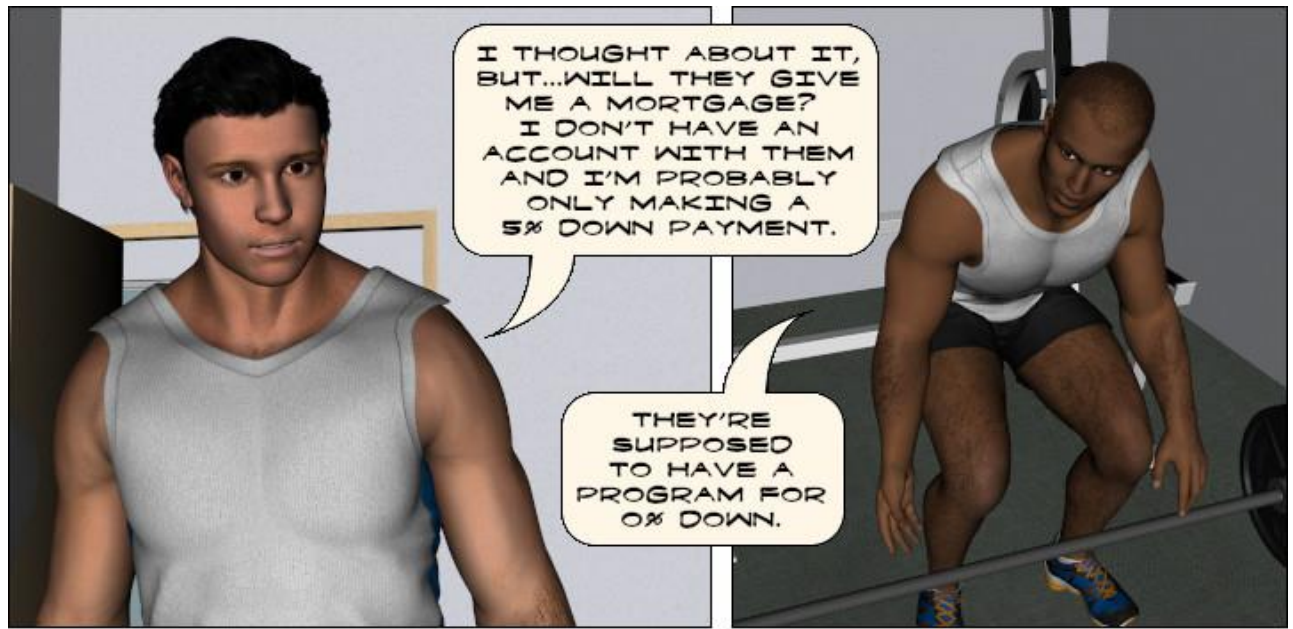












I THOUGHT ABOUT IT, BUT...WILL THEY GIVE ME A MORTGAGE? I DON'T HAVE AN ACCOUNT WITH THEM AND I'M PROBABLY ONLY MAKING A 5% DOWN PAYMENT.

THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO HAVE A PROGRAM FOR 0% DOWN.



AND YOU OPEN AN ACCOUNT WHEN YOU APPLY FOR THE MORTGAGE. THAT'S WHAT I DID.

HMMM. SOUNDS EASY ENOUGH.



LET'S SEE HOW EASY THIS IS. YOU'RE UP, SMITH.



NOW

DOESN'T LOOK LIKE WE'VE BEEN FOLLOWED.



HOW DO WE REACH THE KNOB?

I HAVE AN IDEA, BUT I NEED YOUR HELP.





I'LL TAKE THIS ONE.



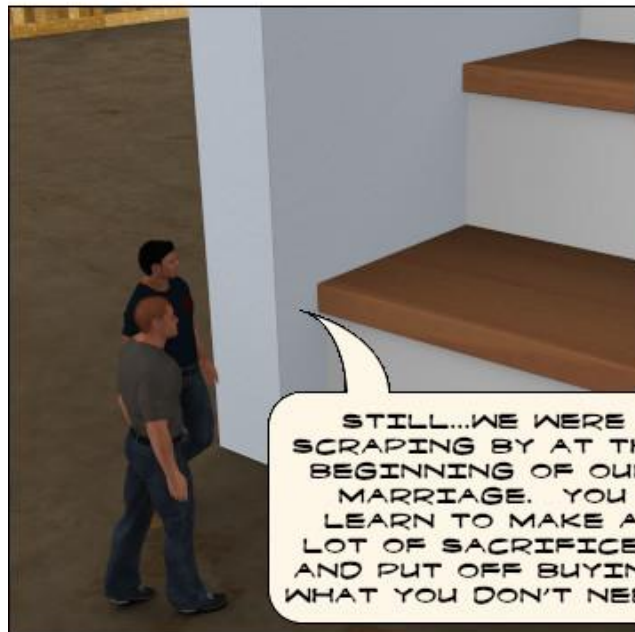




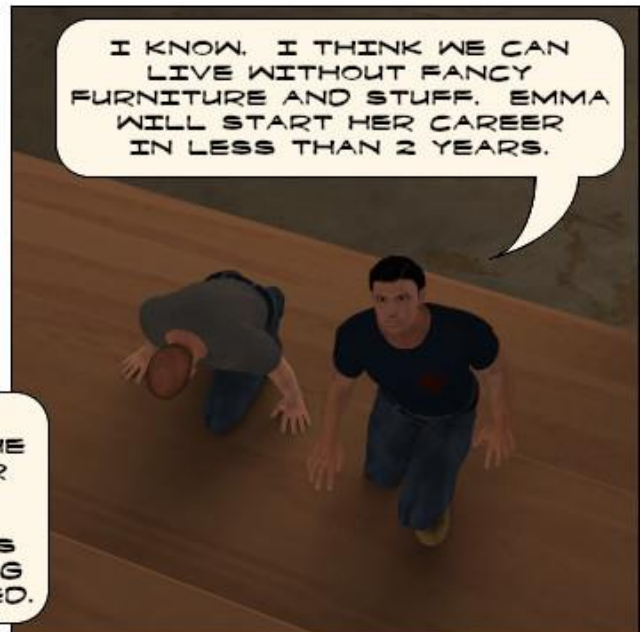
I DIDN'T MEAN TO PUT YOU ON THE SPOT EARLIER ABOUT THE GRILL. I WAS JUST MAKING TALK.



I KNOW. IT DIDN'T BOTHER ME.



STILL...WE WERE SCRAPING BY AT THE BEGINNING OF OUR MARRIAGE. YOU LEARN TO MAKE A LOT OF SACRIFICES AND PUT OFF BUYING WHAT YOU DON'T NEED.




I KNOW. I THINK WE CAN LIVE WITHOUT FANCY FURNITURE AND STUFF. EMMA WILL START HER CAREER IN LESS THAN 2 YEARS.




SO SHE'S NOT TAKING ANY TIME OFF BEFORE GOING BACK TO CLASS?

SHE SAYS HER CLASSES DON'T TAKE UP THAT MUCH TIME. SHE TRIED TO ARRANGE THEM SO SHE CAN SPEND AS MUCH TIME AT HOME AS POSSIBLE.



SHE'LL BE BUSY WITH PAPERS AND EXAMS LATER IN THE SEMESTER, BUT AT LEAST SHE CAN WORRY ABOUT THAT AT HOME. AND I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE ON MY DAYS OFF, SO I'LL BE AROUND IF SHE NEEDS TO GO TO THE LIBRARY.





YOU HAVE THAT AT THIS STAGE OF YOUR CAREER. THE PROMOTION TO SERGEANT COMES WITH 24/7 ON-CALL.


REALLY? I THOUGHT THE UNION DIDN'T ALLOW THAT.

IT'S ALLOWED FOR THE LEADERSHIP POSITIONS. I GET CALLED ALL THE TIME, BUT IT'S RARE I ACTUALLY GO IN. STILL, THE BUMP IN PAY IS NICE. I GET TO TAKE THE KIDS ON A REAL VACATION INSTEAD OF FINDING SOMETHING TO DO AROUND HERE.

I DON'T THINK I'M IN LINE FOR A PROMOTION ANY TIME SOON.



"SOON" IS RELATIVE. PEOPLE MOVE UP. THEY TRANSFER. QUIT. SOME AREN'T CUT OUT FOR IT. IN 5 YEARS, 10 AT THE MOST, YOUR TIME WILL COME.



AND I SAY THIS TO EVERYONE, BUT WITH YOU, I BELIEVE IT MORE THAN OTHERS. YOU WOULD MAKE A GREAT SERGEANT. YOU KEEP LEARNING, YOU KEEP PROGRESSING, AND YOU'LL BE READY WHEN IT'S YOUR TIME.




IS THAT BECAUSE I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO TAKES THE JOB SERIOUSLY?

AH...THAT IS ACTUALLY YOUR BIGGEST FLAW. MAX AND DARREN FOOL AROUND BECAUSE THAT'S HOW THEY UNWIND FROM THE STRESS. TAKE THE JOB TOO SERIOUSLY AND IT BREAKS YOU WHENEVER WE COME ON A HORRIFIC ACCIDENT OR WE FIND A BODY IN A HOUSE FIRE.


I USED TO BE LIKE THAT, BUT I THINK I GREW OUT OF IT.

DON'T LET THAT HAPPEN. LET YOURSELF HAVE FUN. I KNOW I SEEM LIKE A HARD ASS AT WORK, BUT THAT'S ONLY BECAUSE I HAVE TO REIGN THE REST OF YOU IN. IN CASE YOU DIDN'T NOTICE, ALL I DO IS YELL AT YOU GUYS.

AND ALL THIS TIME, I THOUGHT THE UNION WAS THE ONLY REASON DARREN AND MAX WEREN'T FIRED.



THEY'RE GOOD FIREMEN, THAT'S WHY. THEY'RE ALSO FAMILY. THEY'LL BE THERE WHEN YOU NEED THEM.



I KNOW. THEY TRIED TO HELP ME WITH THE MORTGAGE EVEN THOUGH IT DIDN'T WORK OUT.



I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

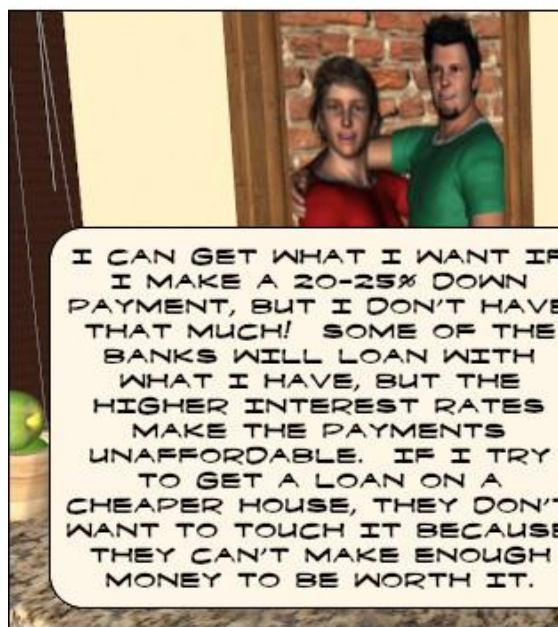
THEN



WHAT'S WRONG, ALEX?



I TRIED EVERY BANK IN TOWN AND A FEW ONLINE, AND NO ONE WILL GIVE ME A MORTGAGE! NOT EVEN THE BANK THE GUYS FROM WORK SUGGESTED!



I CAN GET WHAT I WANT IF I MAKE A 20-25% DOWN PAYMENT, BUT I DON'T HAVE THAT MUCH! SOME OF THE BANKS WILL LOAN WITH WHAT I HAVE, BUT THE HIGHER INTEREST RATES MAKE THE PAYMENTS UNAFFORDABLE. IF I TRY TO GET A LOAN ON A CHEAPER HOUSE, THEY DON'T WANT TO TOUCH IT BECAUSE THEY CAN'T MAKE ENOUGH MONEY TO BE WORTH IT.





YOU WERE LUCKY. THEY GAVE OUT MORTGAGES LIKE CANDY WHEN YOU AND DAD BOUGHT YOUR FIRST HOUSE.



THEY DID NOT. YOUR FATHER AND I HAD TO JUMP THROUGH ALL THE SAME HOOPS AS YOU. THE DIFFERENCE WAS WE SAVED UP FOR A FEW YEARS BEFORE WE BOUGHT. YOU JUMPED RIGHT INTO ALL THIS BEFORE YOU WERE READY. HOW MUCH DO YOU NEED TO MAKE UP THE DOWN PAYMENT.



ABOUT \$30,000. EVEN IF WE COULD STAY HERE, IT WOULD TAKE A COUPLE YEARS TO SAVE IT UP.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO TELL YOU. IF WE HAD THE MONEY, WE'D CERTAINLY LOAN IT TO YOU.

I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO, MOM. I'LL FIGURE SOMETHING OUT.



NOW

SOMEONE LEFT THE DOOR OPEN! IT'S THE FIRST BREAK WE'VE HAD.

SO WHERE DID YOU LEAVE IT?



THE KITCHEN, I THINK.



BE CAREFUL.



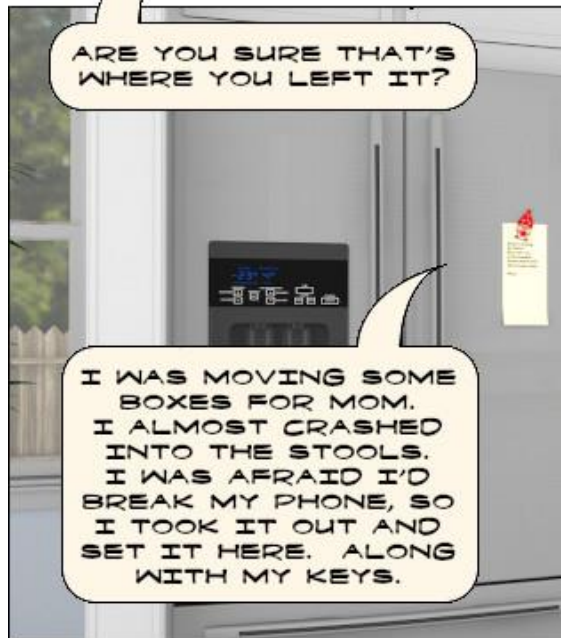




ARE YOU SURE?
MAYBE IT'S ON
THE LOWER PART
WHERE YOU
CAN'T SEE IT.



THERE'S NOTHING
UP HERE!



ARE YOU SURE THAT'S
WHERE YOU LEFT IT?

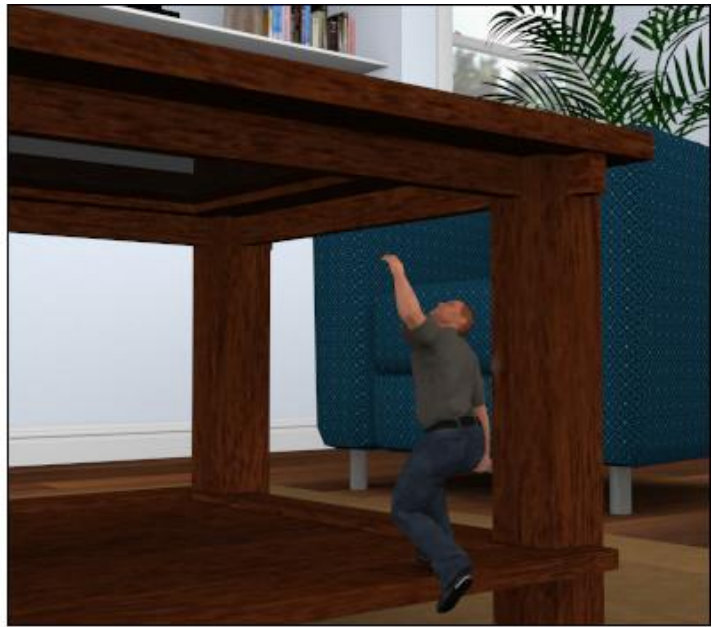
I WAS MOVING SOME
BOXES FOR MOM.
I ALMOST CRASHED
INTO THE STOOLS.
I WAS AFRAID I'D
BREAK MY PHONE, SO
I TOOK IT OUT AND
SET IT HERE. ALONG
WITH MY KEYS.



MAYBE YOUR
MOM MOVED
IT. IT COULD
BE SOMEWHERE
ELSE IN HERE.



NO, SHE WOULDN'T
HAVE BEEN
SURPRISED WHEN
EMMA CALLED HER.
MAYBE IT WAS DAD,
BUT...WAIT, THERE
IT IS! ON THE
COFFEE TABLE!



I DON'T BELIEVE IT. I MIGHT ACTUALLY MAKE IT IN TIME FOR THE BIRTH.



DON'T GET AHEAD OF YOURSELF. THAT CAT IS PROBABLY STILL OUT THERE.

SHRIMP OF THE HOUSE HOMESTEAD

#3 of
4
LIMITED
SERIES



BO REDDINGTON



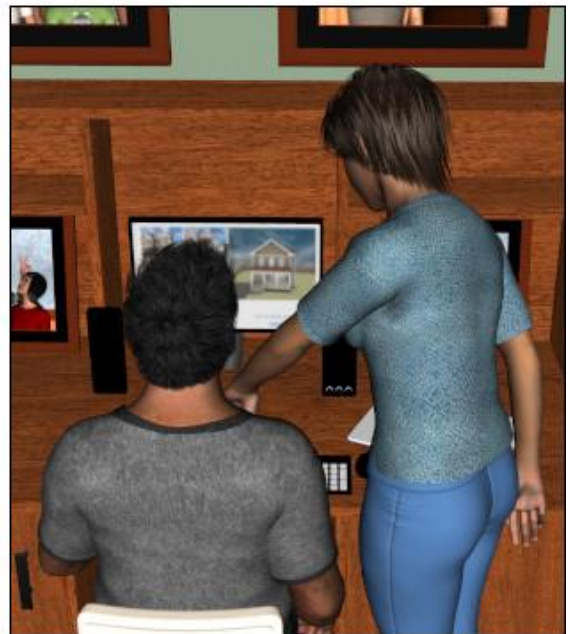


DAVID, THERE HAS TO BE SOMETHING WE CAN DO TO HELP ALEX.

YOU WANT TO GIVE HIM THE MONEY? BUT THE TAX BILLS ARE COMING IN A FEW MONTHS AND WE DON'T KNOW HOW BAD IT'S GOING TO BE.



I KNOW, BUT I'VE BEEN THINKING A LOT ABOUT THIS. I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING.



IS THAT THE ONE HE'S LOOKING AT NOW?

NO, I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE PERFECT... FOR US.

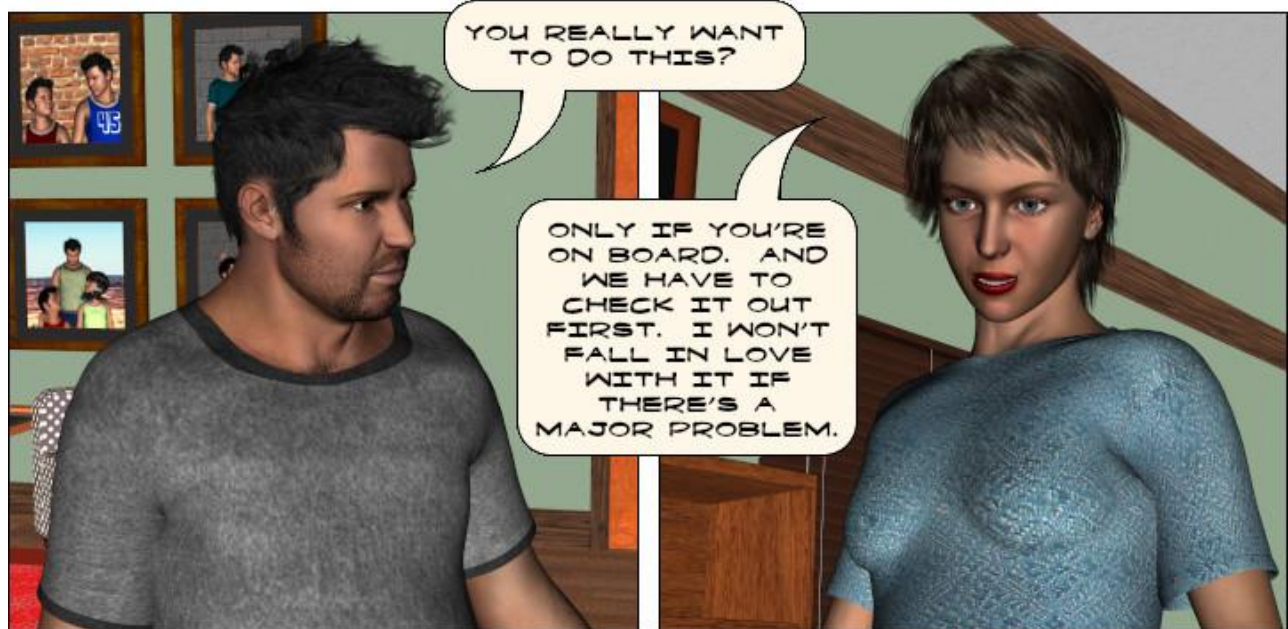


YOU WANT TO MOVE?

WE DON'T NEED ALL THIS SPACE ONCE ALEX MOVES OUT. AND JACKSON LEAVES FOR COLLEGE IN LESS THAN 2 YEARS. ALLISON, 2 YEARS AFTER THAT. THIS IS AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY TO DOWNSIZE.

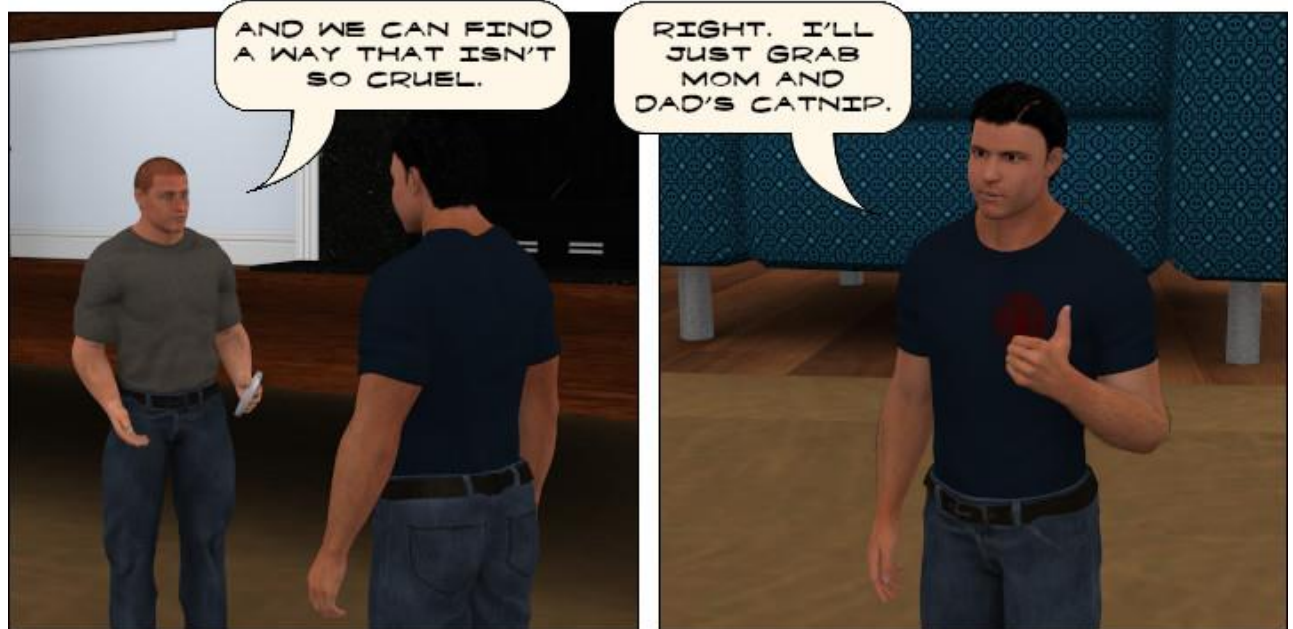
THE BEST THING ABOUT THIS HOUSE IS THE ONE NEXT DOOR IS ALSO FOR SALE. IF WE CAN GET THEM BOTH, WE'LL STILL HAVE OUR SON CLOSE BY. HE DOESN'T HAVE TO TRAVEL TO DROP THE KIDS OFF. AND IT'S EASY FOR US TO DROP IN WHENEVER WE WANT.

ANOTHER BONUS IS IT'S IN THE SAME SCHOOL DISTRICT, SO OURS DON'T HAVE TO CHANGE SCHOOLS MID YEAR. THEY DON'T HAVE TO LEAVE THEIR FRIENDS BEHIND AND MAKE NEW ONES.



YOU REALLY WANT TO DO THIS?

ONLY IF YOU'RE ON BOARD. AND WE HAVE TO CHECK IT OUT FIRST. I WON'T FALL IN LOVE WITH IT IF THERE'S A MAJOR PROBLEM.



I HATE STEALING THE LEFTOVERS. I'M PRETTY SURE MOM WAS COUNTING ON THIS FOR DINNER.

I'LL ORDER PIZZA FOR EVERYONE SO SHE DOESN'T HAVE TO COOK. BUT I'M PRETTY SURE THE CAT WOULD RATHER FEAST ON THAT THAN SOMETHING IT HAS TO WORK FOR. AND IF NOT, THEN I CAN BONK IT WITH THIS SPOON.

HOPEFULLY IT WON'T COME TO THAT. SINCE YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH TWO BIRTHS, WHAT WILL EMMA EXPECT OF ME WHEN I FINALLY GET TO THE HOSPITAL? I WANT TO STAY WITH HER UNTIL SHE'S RELEASED, BUT I HAVE TO FINISH UNPACKING UPSTAIRS BEFORE WE'RE READY.

YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT WILL PLEASE THE WIFE? IF MY SISTER IS ANYTHING LIKE MARCY, SHE'LL APPRECIATE YOUR ATTENTION, BUT SHE'LL APPRECIATE COMING HOME TO A CLEAN HOUSE MORE. ALL SHE WANTS IS A FEW DAYS OF REST WHILE SHE DOTES ON THE KIDS.









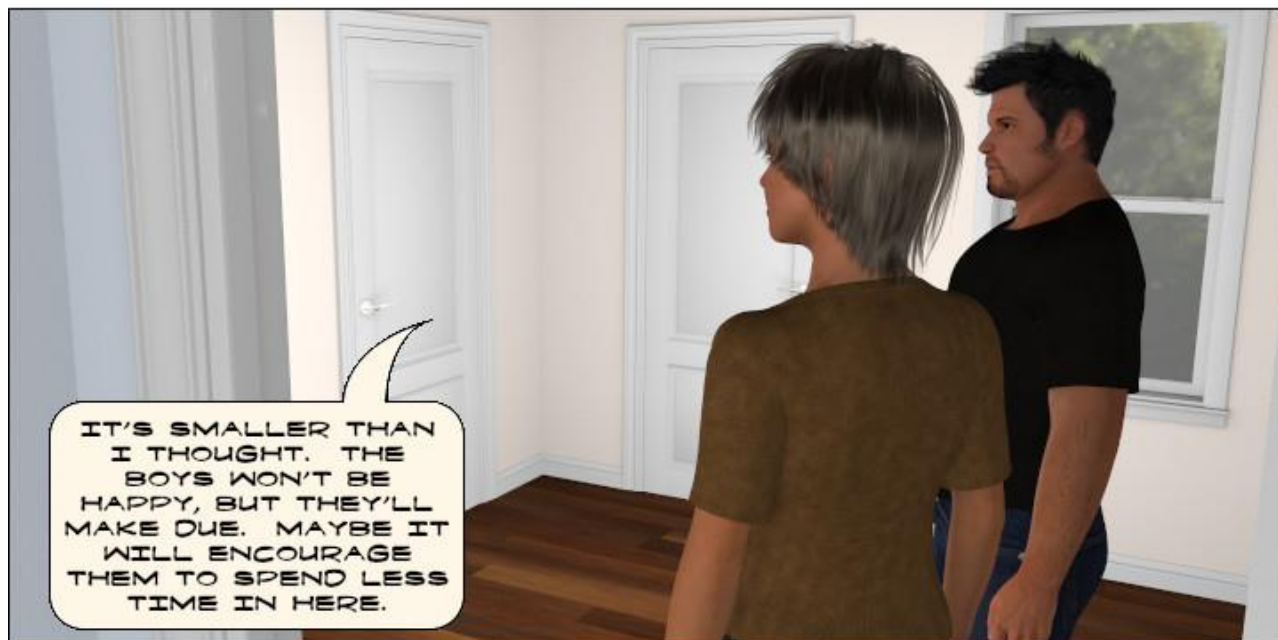




WE HAVE OUR OWN BALCONY!



BUT YOU SHOULD SEE THE KIDS' ROOMS.



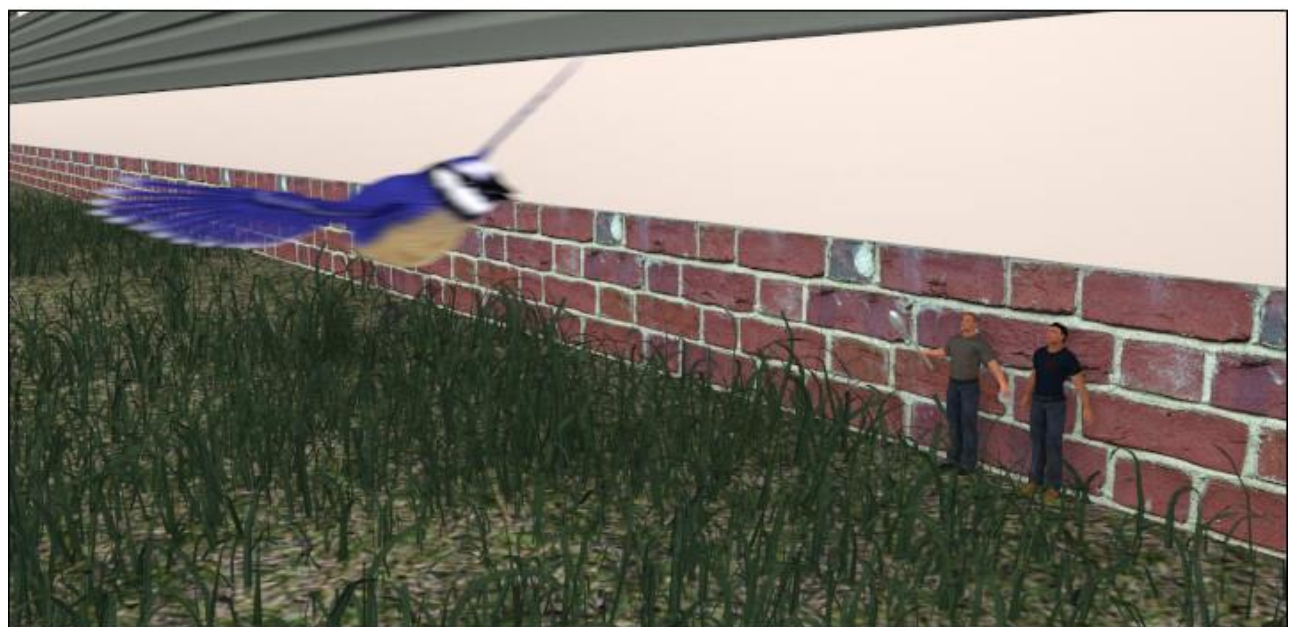
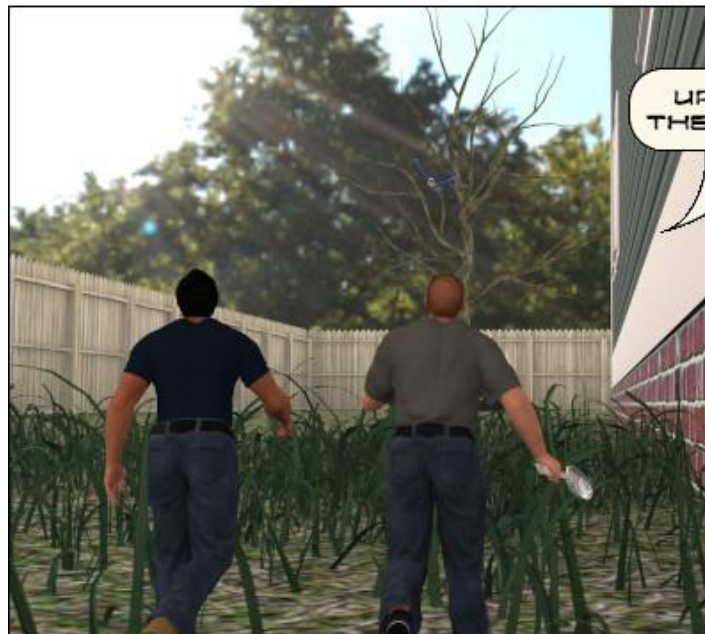
IT'S SMALLER THAN I THOUGHT. THE BOYS WON'T BE HAPPY, BUT THEY'LL MAKE DO. MAYBE IT WILL ENCOURAGE THEM TO SPEND LESS TIME IN HERE.



OTHERWISE, WHAT DO YOU THINK?



YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO DOWNSIZE. AND I'M NOT UNHAPPY WITH IT.







I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY IT'S SO INTERESTED IN US. WE'RE TOO MUCH TROUBLE AT THIS POINT!



MAYBE THIS TIME WE CAN MAKE IT INSIDE. STAY CLOSE TO THE WALL. MAYBE IT WON'T NOTICE US.





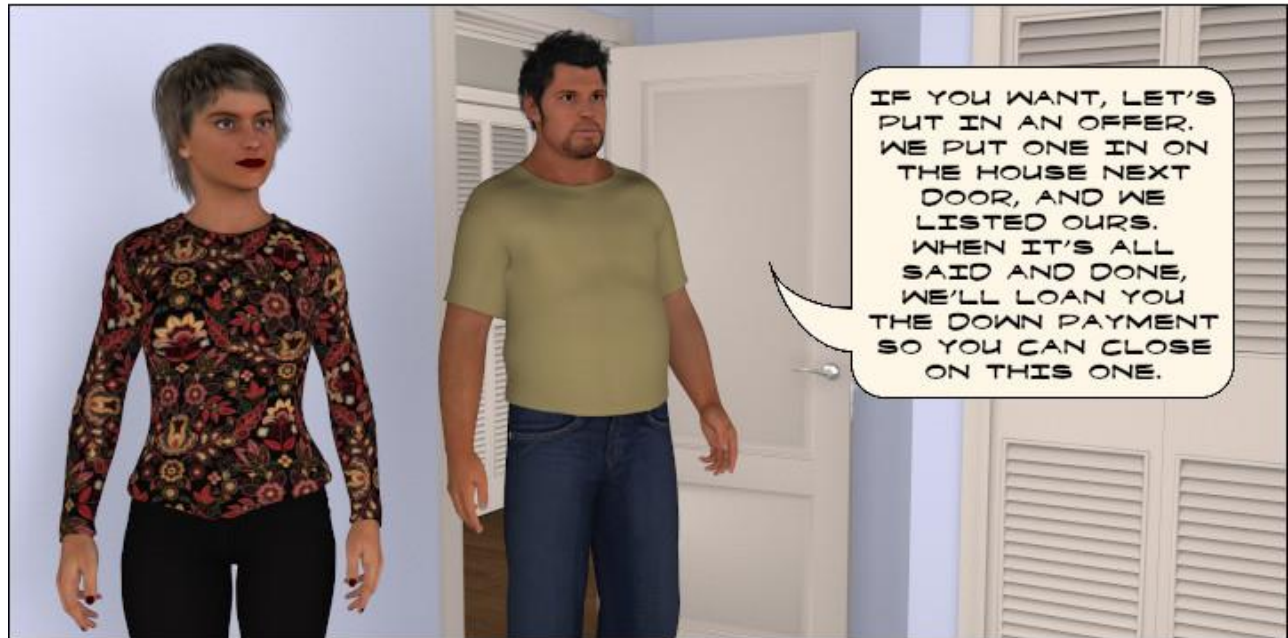




THEN

WHAT DO YOU TWO THINK?

IT LOOKS PERFECT. I CAN SEE US LIVING HERE.

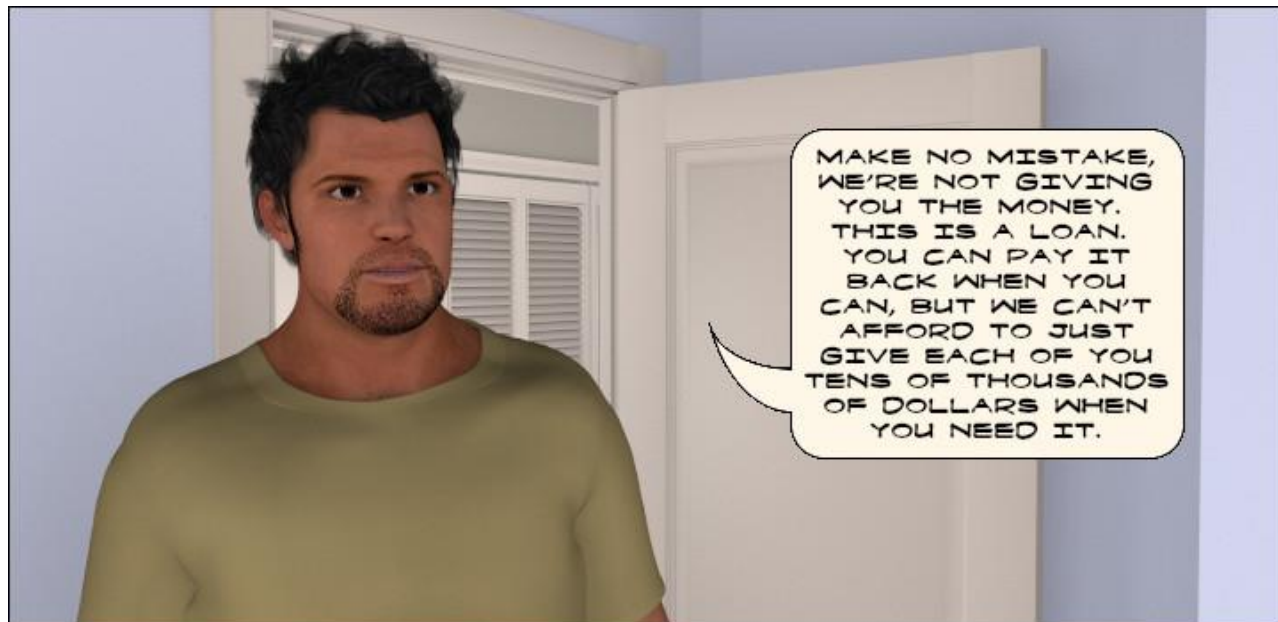


IF YOU WANT, LET'S PUT IN AN OFFER. WE PUT ONE IN ON THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR, AND WE LISTED OURS. WHEN IT'S ALL SAID AND DONE, WE'LL LOAN YOU THE DOWN PAYMENT SO YOU CAN CLOSE ON THIS ONE.



YOU DON'T NEED TO SELL THE HOUSE. CAN'T YOU JUST GET AN EQUITY LOAN OR SOMETHING?

I WON'T GET INTO IT, BUT NO. DON'T WORRY ABOUT US. WE'LL SAVE A LOT OF MONEY DOWNSIZING.



MAKE NO MISTAKE, WE'RE NOT GIVING YOU THE MONEY. THIS IS A LOAN. YOU CAN PAY IT BACK WHEN YOU CAN, BUT WE CAN'T AFFORD TO JUST GIVE EACH OF YOU TENS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS WHEN YOU NEED IT.



I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO. YOU'RE DOING SO MUCH FOR US ALREADY, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY. THANK YOU.

YOU MIGHT CONSIDER NAMING YOUR FIRST BORN SON DAVID. IT'S A CLASSIC, TRADITIONAL NAME.



ELIZABETH IS ALSO A TIMELESS NAME FOR A GIRL.

NICE TRY, BUT HE WON'T EVEN CONSIDER ALEXANDER.











IS MY YARD THE HANGOUT FOR ALL THE NEIGHBORHOOD ANIMALS?!



I HOPE SHE DOESN'T GET DISTRACTED EASILY LIKE THE CAT.

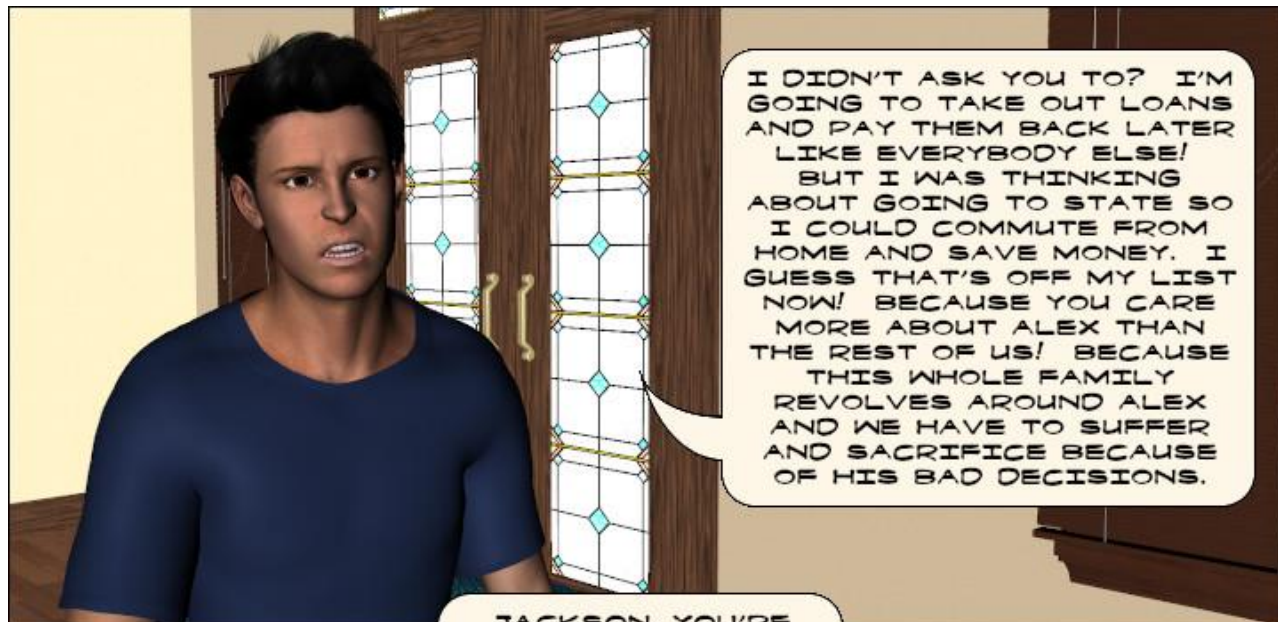


ALEX! YOU BETTER BE OK!



I AM! I WAS LUCKY THE DOG SHOWED UP WHEN IT DID. LET'S GET INSIDE AND UNDO THIS BEFORE THEY LOSE INTEREST IN EACH OTHER.





I DIDN'T ASK YOU TO? I'M GOING TO TAKE OUT LOANS AND PAY THEM BACK LATER LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE! BUT I WAS THINKING ABOUT GOING TO STATE SO I COULD COMMUTE FROM HOME AND SAVE MONEY. I GUESS THAT'S OFF MY LIST NOW! BECAUSE YOU CARE MORE ABOUT ALEX THAN THE REST OF US! BECAUSE THIS WHOLE FAMILY REVOLVES AROUND ALEX AND WE HAVE TO SUFFER AND SACRIFICE BECAUSE OF HIS BAD DECISIONS.



JACKSON, YOU'RE BEING SELFISH. THIS ISN'T ABOUT ALEX. IT'S ABOUT OUR GRANDKIDS. IT'S ABOUT YOUR NEPHEW...YOUR NIECE...I'D LIKE TO THINK YOU CARED A LITTLE ABOUT THAT.

NO, JACK'S RIGHT. THIS IS ABOUT ALEX, AND YOU DO CARE MORE ABOUT HIM.

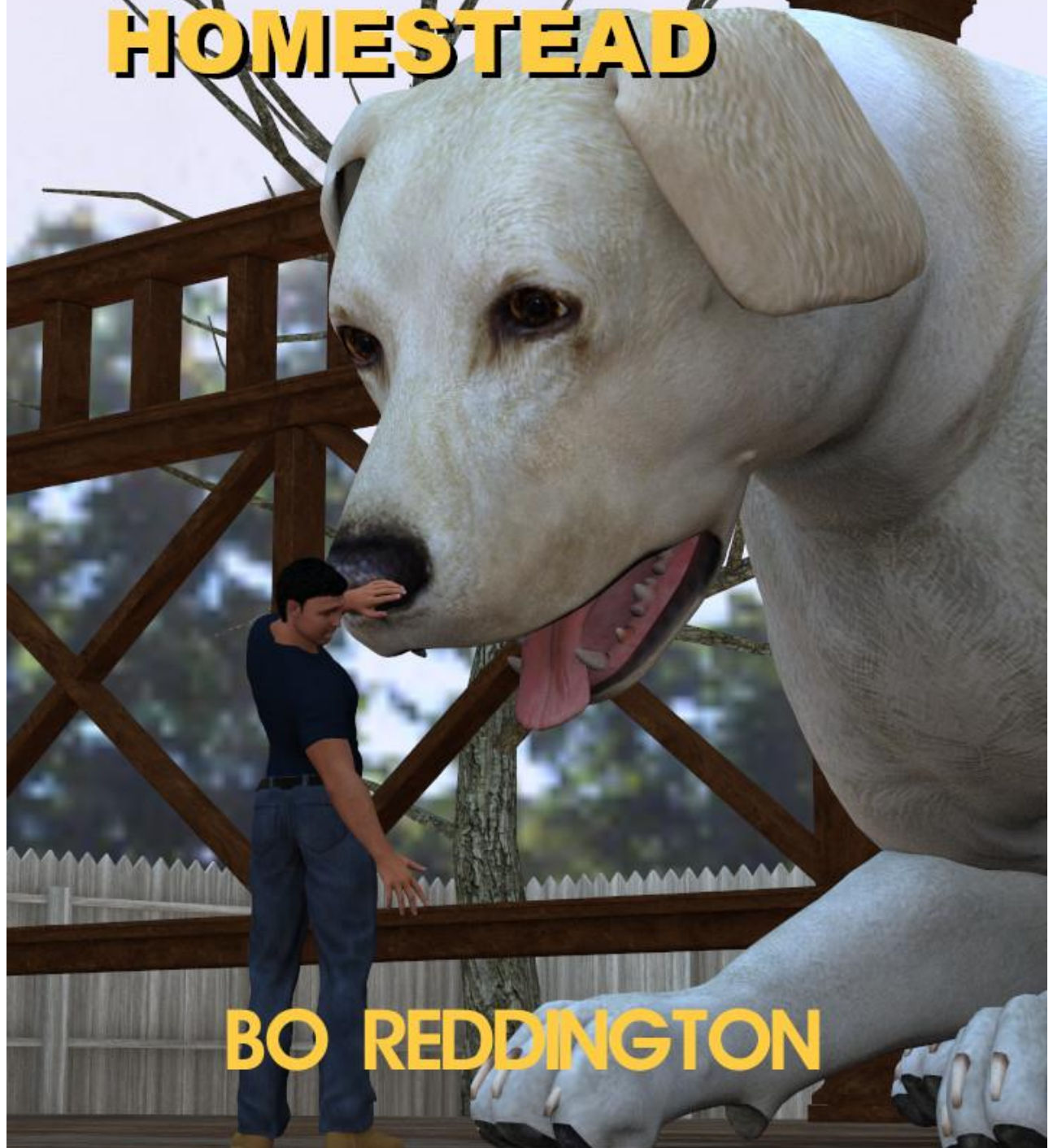


I DON'T WANNA MOVE.

AND I DID NOT EXPECT IT TO GO THIS BADLY.

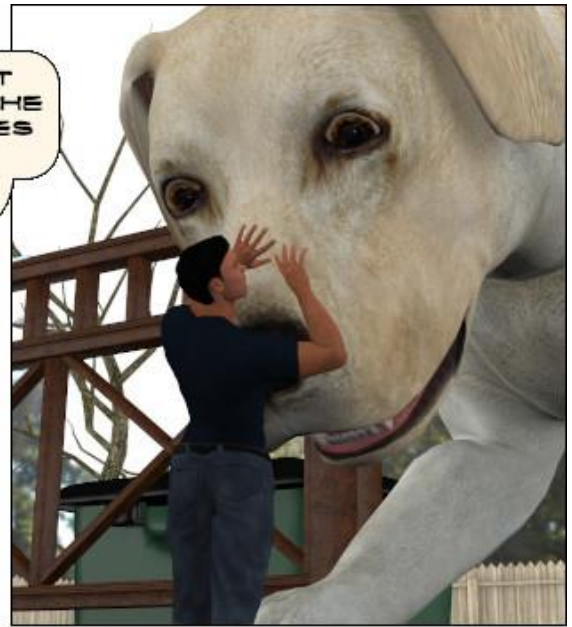
SHRIMP OF THE HOUSE HOMESTEAD

#4 of
4
LIMITED
SERIES



BO REDDINGTON









IT'S SO COLD
IN HERE!



DAD PROBABLY
TURNED THE
HEAT OFF TO
"SAVE MONEY."



IT'S COMING FROM
THE BASEMENT.
YOU LEFT THE
DOOR OPEN DOWN
THERE, DIDN'T YOU?



I DID NOT! MOM AND DAD
WOULD HAVE FOUND OUT
AND CLOSED IT THIS
MORNING IF I DID.



OUT OF THE WAY.
IF I DON'T CLOSE
IT, YOU'LL TELL
THEM I DID IT
AFTER SCHOOL.
BECAUSE THAT'S
JUST LIKE YOU.
ANYTHING TO GET
ME IN TROUBLE.



MOM OR DAD
PROBABLY LEFT
IT OPEN TO
FRAME ME.



WHAT IS
THIS?!



ALEX?







WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE?!
ARE YOU SPYING ON ME?

NO, I'M HERE TO SEE IF YOU WANT ANY HELP SINCE I'M DONE LOADING MY STUFF IN THE JEEP.

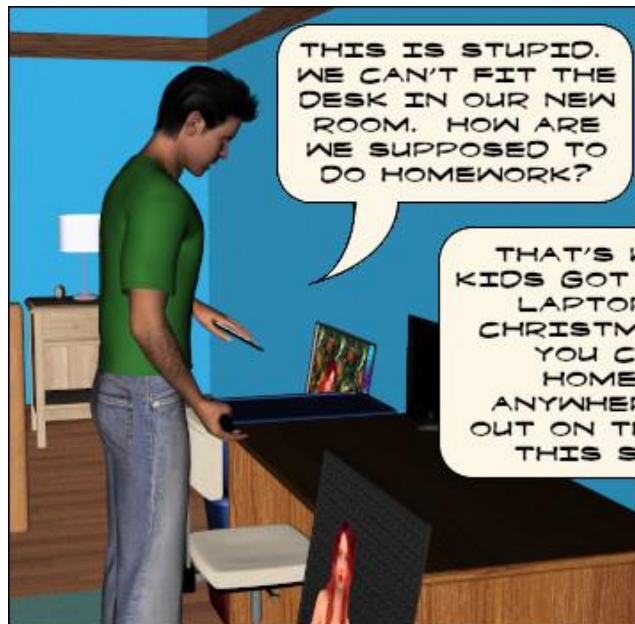


WHY WOULD I WANT YOUR HELP? I'M MOVING INTO A CLOSET BECAUSE OF YOU. I HAVE TO GET RID OF MOST OF MY STUFF BECAUSE THERE'S NO ROOM IN THE NEW HOUSE. I ALREADY HATE IT AND IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT!



I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T ASK MOM AND DAD TO DO ANY OF THIS.

THEY DID AND I DON'T WANT YOUR HELP. GO AWAY.



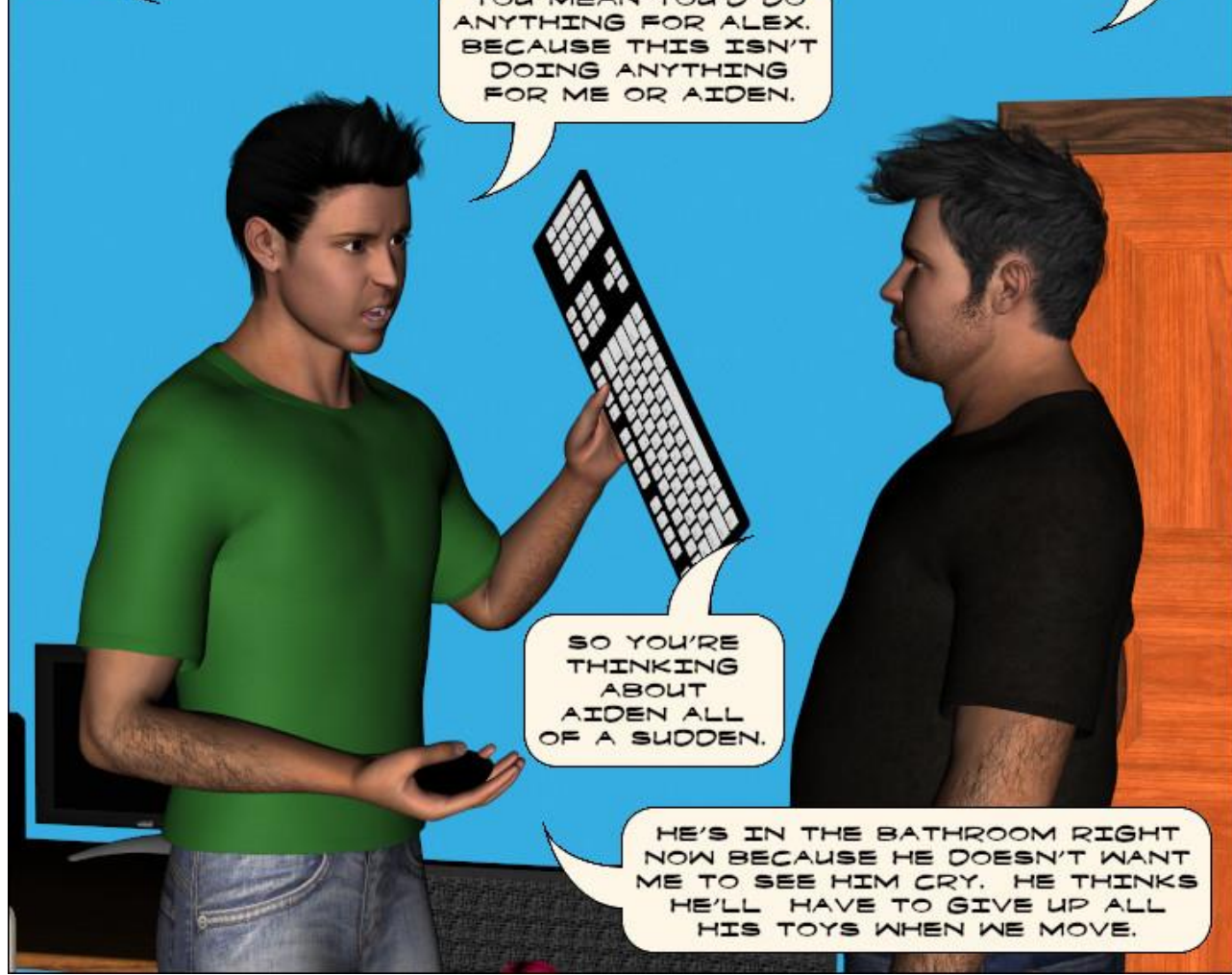
THIS IS STUPID. WE CAN'T FIT THE DESK IN OUR NEW ROOM. HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO HOMEWORK?

THAT'S WHY YOU KIDS GOT YOUR OWN LAPTOPS FOR CHRISTMAS. NOW YOU CAN DO HOMEWORK ANYWHERE, EVEN OUT ON THE PORCH THIS SPRING.



THAT MAKES EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT, HUH? WE CAN'T LIVE IN THAT ROOM. WE WON'T BE ABLE TO MOVE IN THERE. AIDEN'S TOYS WILL COVER EVERY INCH OF THAT FLOOR.

YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS TO MAKE SACRIFICES, JACKSON. YOUR MOM AND I ARE GIVING UP SPACE TO MAKE THIS WORK. BECAUSE YOU KIDS ARE FAMILY. WE'D DO ANYTHING FOR YOU.



YOU MEAN YOU'D DO ANYTHING FOR ALEX. BECAUSE THIS ISN'T DOING ANYTHING FOR ME OR AIDEN.

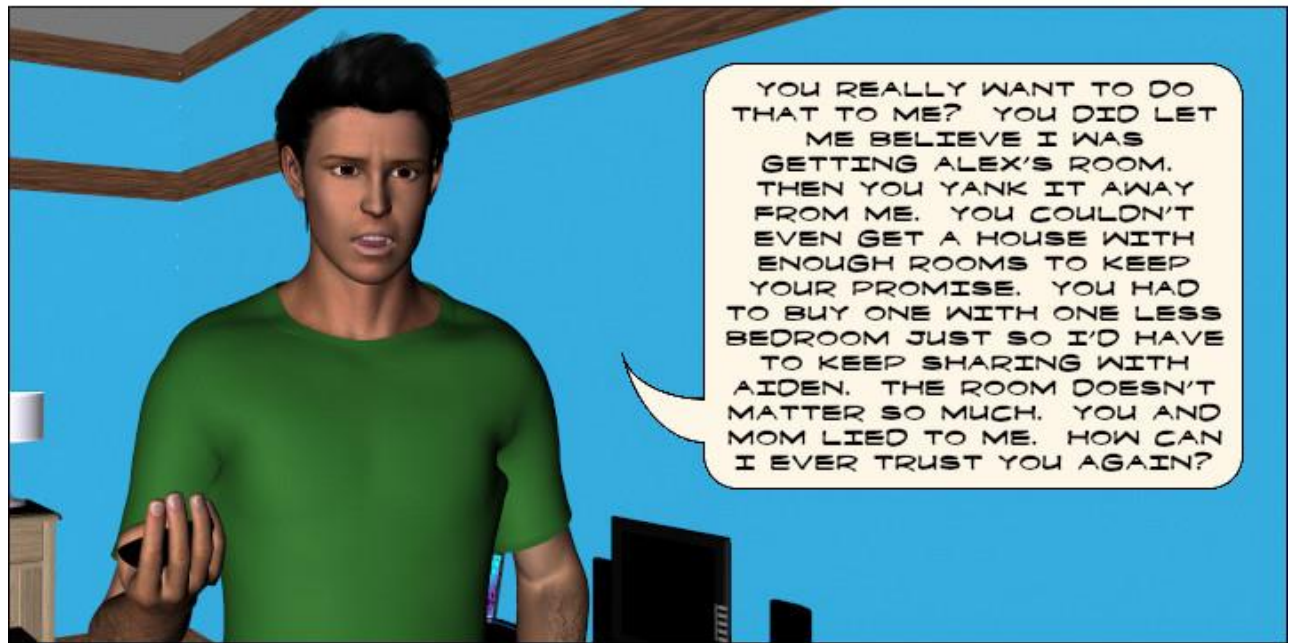
SO YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT AIDEN ALL OF A SUDDEN.

HE'S IN THE BATHROOM RIGHT NOW BECAUSE HE DOESN'T WANT ME TO SEE HIM CRY. HE THINKS HE'LL HAVE TO GIVE UP ALL HIS TOYS WHEN WE MOVE.



YOU KNOW THE WORST PART ABOUT ALL THIS? YOU AND MOM PROMISED I COULD HAVE THAT ROOM.

WE DIDN'T "PROMISE."



YOU REALLY WANT TO DO THAT TO ME? YOU DID LET ME BELIEVE I WAS GETTING ALEX'S ROOM. THEN YOU YANK IT AWAY FROM ME. YOU COULDN'T EVEN GET A HOUSE WITH ENOUGH ROOMS TO KEEP YOUR PROMISE. YOU HAD TO BUY ONE WITH ONE LESS BEDROOM JUST SO I'D HAVE TO KEEP SHARING WITH AIDEN. THE ROOM DOESN'T MATTER SO MUCH. YOU AND MOM LIED TO ME. HOW CAN I EVER TRUST YOU AGAIN?



JACKSON, THAT'S NOT FAIR.

DON'T TALK TO ME ABOUT FAIR. RIGHT NOW, I HATE YOU. I HATE MOM. AND I HATE ALEX FOR DOING THIS TO US.





ALL THE WHINING OVER HOW BROKE HE IS, BUT HE GETS A DOG?!



AND HE LEFT YOU OUTSIDE. WHAT A GOOD OWNER!



BUT YOU'RE A GOOD BOY, AREN'T YOU? YES, YOU ARE.



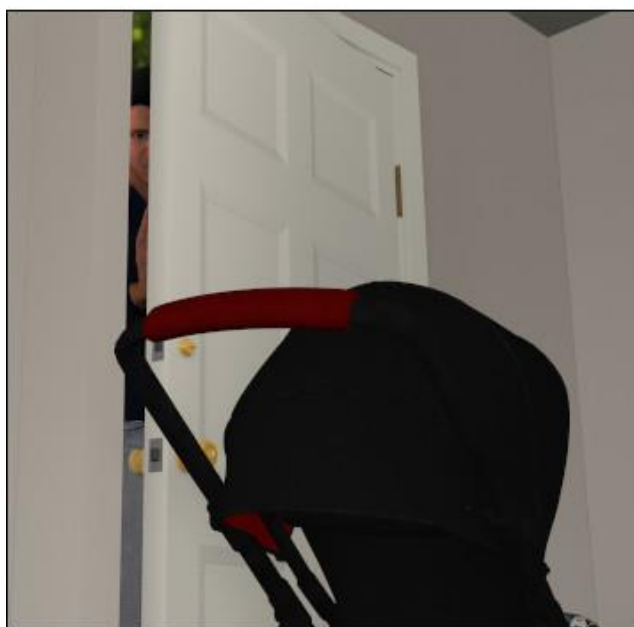
WHAT IS THAT?



ONE OF OUR SPOONS!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH IT?



HE LEFT HIS DOOR OPEN? WHAT IS WRONG WITH HIM?



HE MAKES AIDEN LOOK NORMAL!





THEN

THAT'S NOT SO BAD, IS IT?



I STILL CAN'T FIT THE COUCH AND CHAIRS IN HERE. WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH THEM?

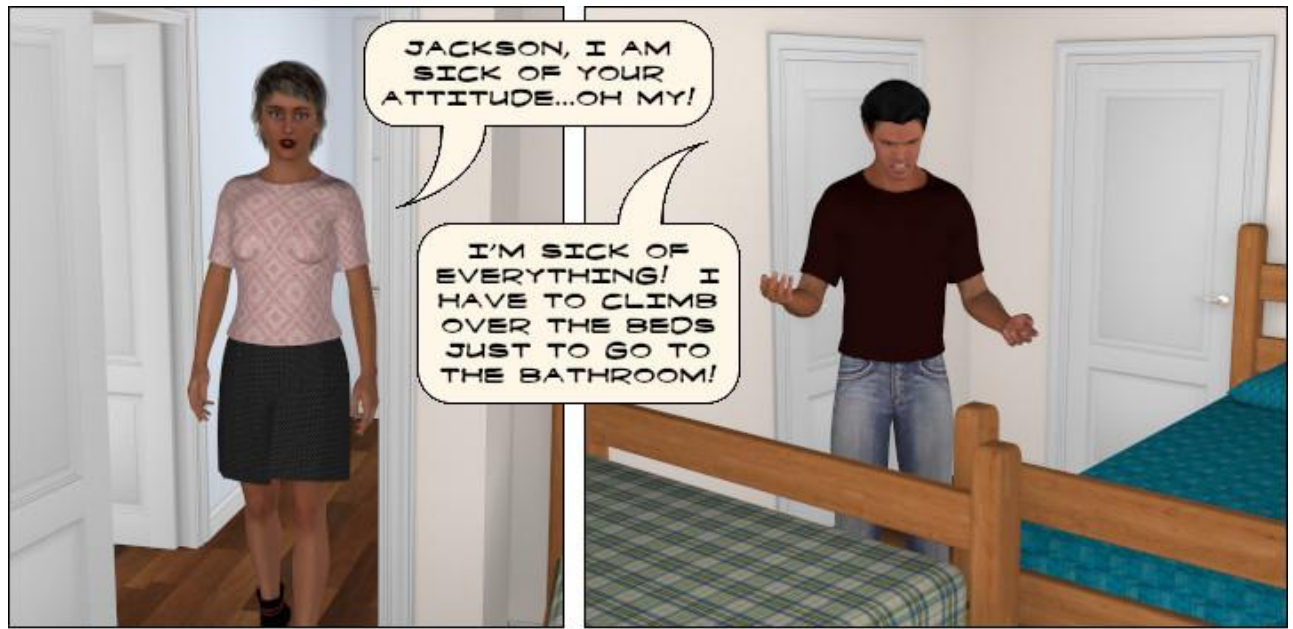
YOU COULD GIVE THEM TO ALEX. HE DOESN'T HAVE THE MONEY TO FULLY FURNISH HIS PLACE. HE'D BE GRATEFUL FOR A LIVING ROOM SET.

AND LATER WHEN YOU'RE SETTING UP YOUR FIRST PLACE, I'M SURE HE'D RETURN THE FAVOR. HE'LL BE MORE ESTABLISHED THEN. HE'LL PROBABLY OFFER SOMETHING NICER THAN A SECOND HAND THRIFT STORE FIND.



I SUPPOSE.

MOM! DAD! GET IN HERE NOW!!!



JACKSON, I AM SICK OF YOUR ATTITUDE...OH MY!

I'M SICK OF EVERYTHING! I HAVE TO CLIMB OVER THE BEDS JUST TO GO TO THE BATHROOM!



AND THERE'S NO ROOM FOR THE DESK! AIDEN'S TOYS! NOTHING!



WHAT'S WITH ALL THE YELLING IN HERE?



YOU DON'T SEE THE PROBLEM?!



OH DAVID! MAYBE WE CAN TAKE THIS ROOM AND LET THEM HAVE THE MASTER BEDROOM.



FIRST FIGHT AND AIDEN GOES THROUGH THAT GLASS DOOR. OR WORSE, ONE OF THEM FALLS OFF THE BALCONY.

THEN WE'LL HAVE TO GET AIDEN A SMALLER BED.



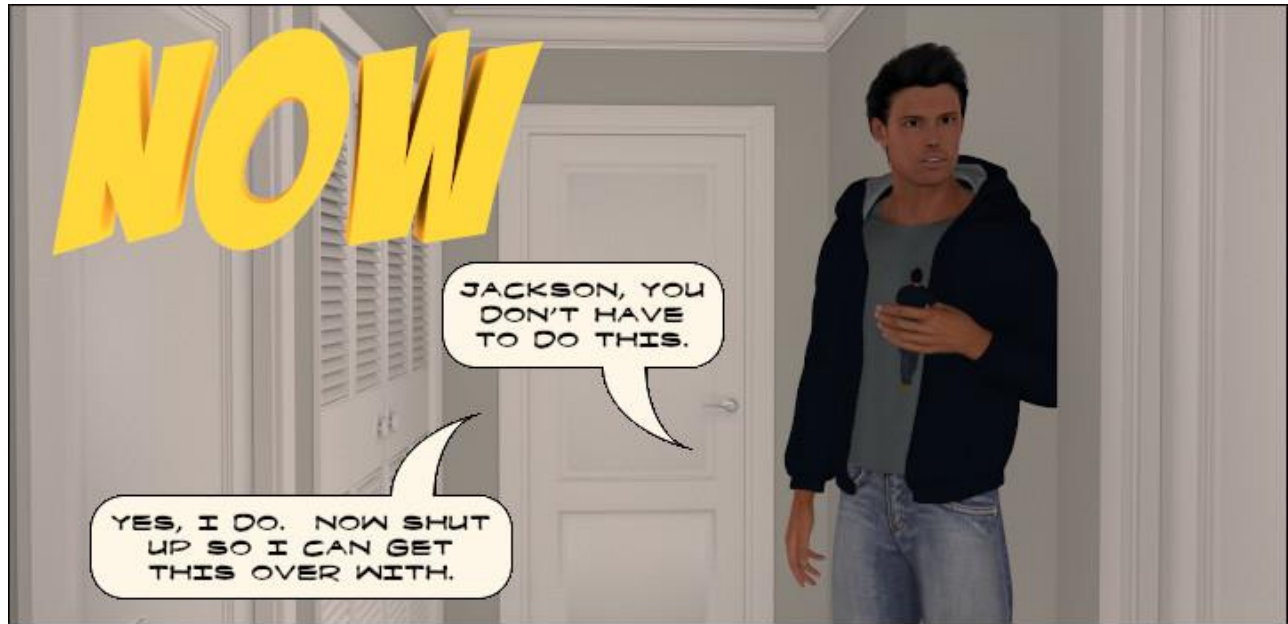
SPEAKING OF SMALLER THINGS, I NEED THE SIZE CHANGER AGAIN. I FOUND ANOTHER BOX OF STUFF THAT NEEDS RESTORING.

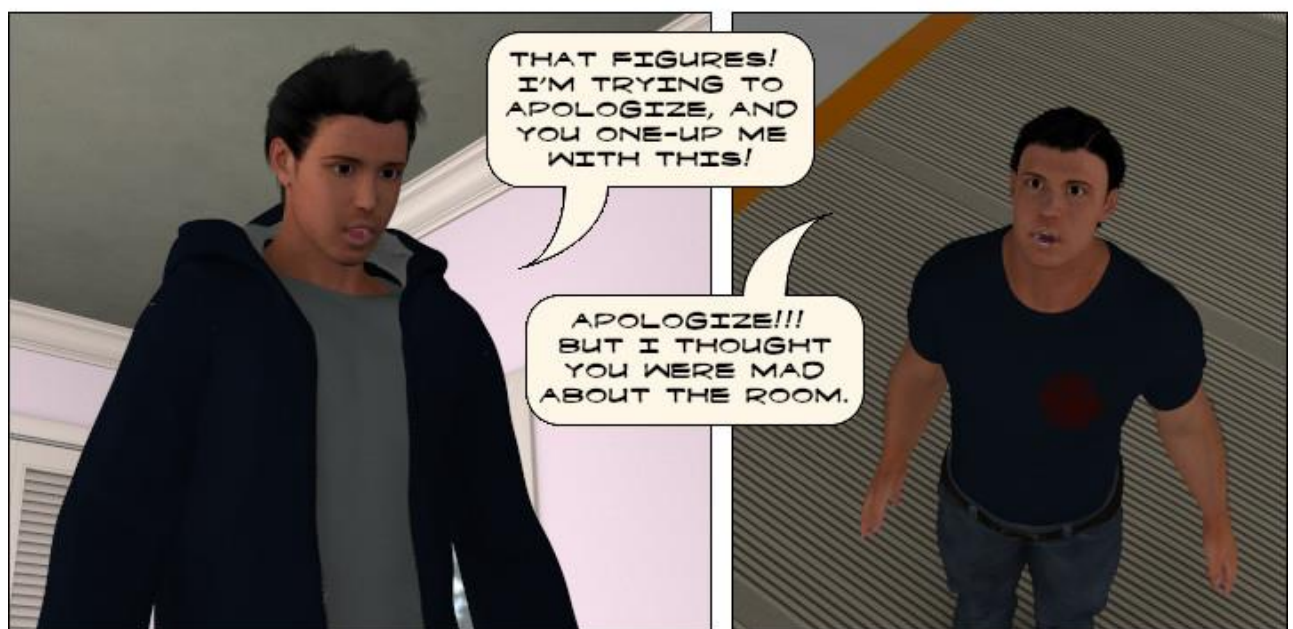
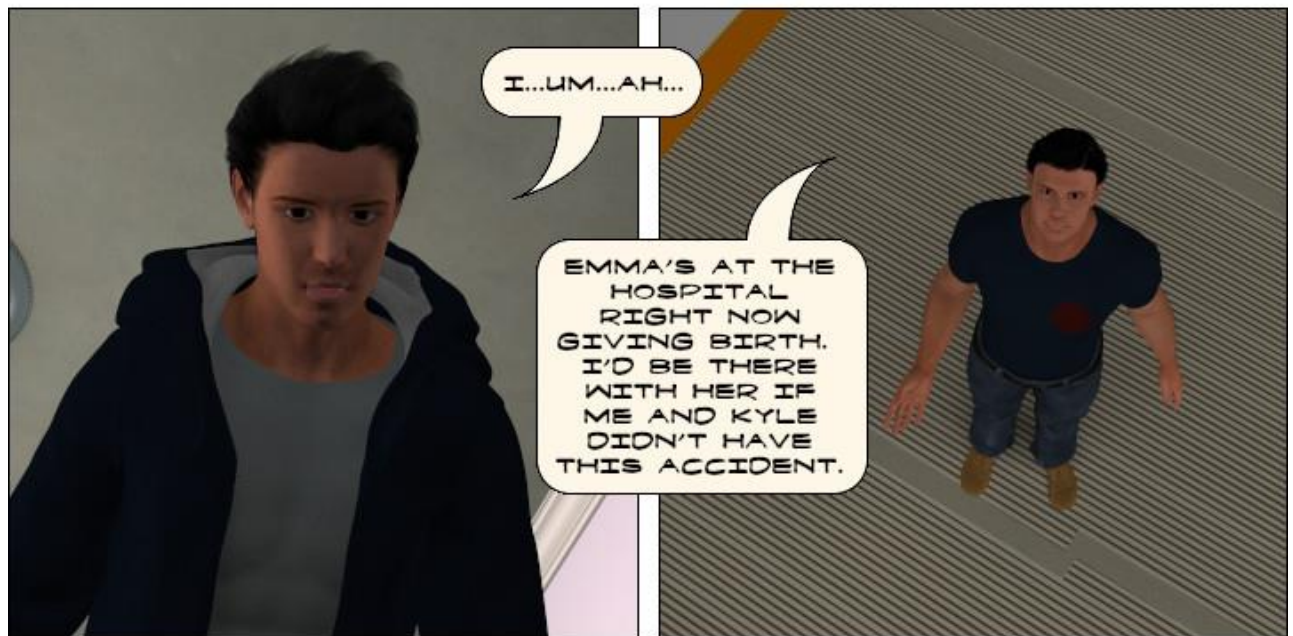
THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT, ALEX. I WISH YOU WERE NEVER BORN.



I'M MORE THAN ANGRY. IF I HAD THAT SHRINKER, I'D USE IT TO MAKE YOU DISAPPEAR, ALEX!

I KNOW YOU'RE ANGRY, JACKSON, BUT...









MOM! DAD!
WHY DIDN'T YOU
TELL US THERE
WERE MORE
ROOMS IN THE
BASEMENT?

THOSE AREN'T
ROOMS. THE
BASEMENT ISN'T
FINISHED AND WE
WON'T BE ABLE TO
FINISH IT ANY
TIME SOON.



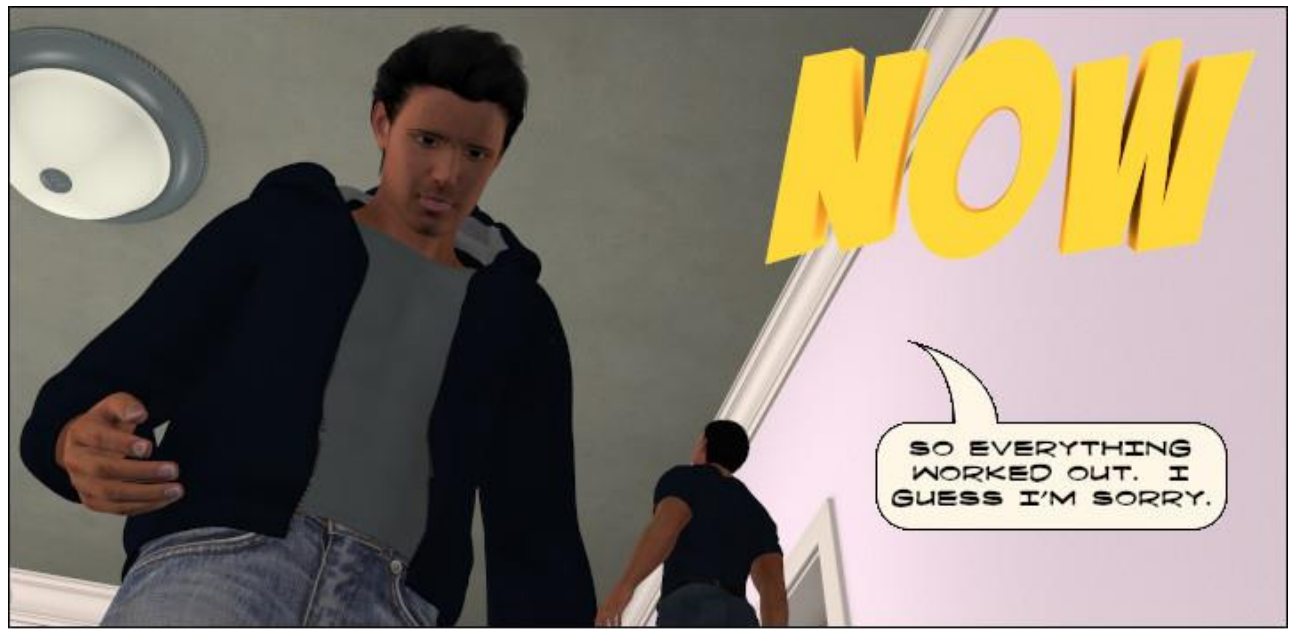
I CAN HANG
BLANKETS TO MAKE
WALLS. IF IT'S
GOOD ENOUGH FOR
YOUR OFFICE OR
AIDEN'S PLAY
ROOM, IT'S GOOD
ENOUGH FOR ME.

IT WOULD BE
BETTER. AND
IF IT MAKES
HIM HAPPY
AND KEEPS
THE PEACE...



MAYBE WE CAN
GET SOME
DRYWALL AND
CLOSE IT OFF
THIS SPRING.
BUT YOU WILL OWE
ALEX AN APOLOGY
FOR WHAT YOU
SAID TO HIM.

UH...YES...
ALEX...





I'LL STAY AND BRING THE KID HOME. AND I'LL GET THIS MESS CLEANED UP WHILE I'M WAITING.



I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'D HAVE DONE WITHOUT YOU.



WE'RE FAMILY. THAT'S WHAT WE DO.



GO GET YOUR KEYS AND YOUR PHONE, AND GET TO THE HOSPITAL. AND DON'T FORGET THE BATTERY FOR YOUR FOB.



AT LEAST YOU WON'T GIVE ANYONE ELSE ANY TROUBLE.

LATER

MOM. DAD.
I WANT YOU
TO MEET...



...YOUR
GRANDSON,
TROY.



DON'T WANT
TO SLEEP,
HUH?



THERE'S NO
GREATER JOY FOR
A FATHER THAN
TO HAVE A SON.
AND HE LOOKS
LIKE YOU, TOO.

I THINK HE
MISSES
SOMEBODY ELSE,
THOUGH. YOU
WANT TO GO SEE
HER? YES, YOU DO.





HE DIDN'T WANT TO SLEEP EITHER, HUH?

THIS IS HIS OLDER SISTER, CASSANDRA.

I THINK THEY KNEW COMPANY WAS COMING OVER.



I STILL CAN'T GET OVER TWINS. SOMETHING WE NEVER HAD. YOU'RE LUCKY THEY'RE NOT IDENTICAL BECAUSE THESE TWO ARE GOING TO BE ENOUGH TROUBLE.

BUT WORTH IT. I WOULDN'T TAKE ANY OF THIS BACK.



I'M SURE THE DIRTY DIAPERS WON'T SEEM SO BAD AFTER ALL THE TROUBLE YOU HAD GETTING TO THE HOSPITAL THE OTHER DAY.

SO MAYBE I'D TAKE THAT PART BACK.