

MICHAEL AND I HAVE BEEN BEST FRIENDS SINCE WE WERE KIDS. OUR FAMILIES WERE SO CLOSE TO EACH OTHER THAT WE'VE ALWAYS FELT LIKE BROTHERS.

HE LOST HIS FATHER WHEN HE WAS VERY YOUNG. EVEN THOUGH I'M ONLY THREE YEARS OLDER THAN HIM, I FELT LIKE I WAS THE ONLY MALE FIGURE HE COULD LOOK UP TO. HE HAS ALWAYS CALLED ME HIS BIG BROTHER, AND I'VE EMBRACED THIS TITLE FIRMLY.

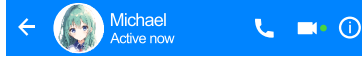


AT ONE POINT, THOUGH, HIS MOTHER HAD TO MOVE TO ANOTHER COUNTRY IN SEARCH OF A BETTER JOB.

WE'VE NEVER LOST CONTACT WITH ONE ANOTHER, BUT IT'S BEEN SEVEN YEARS SINCE THE LAST TIME I MET HIM PERSONALLY.

RECENTLY, THEY HAD A FIGHT SO INTENSE THAT HIS MOTHER ASKED HIM TO GO AWAY.

WITHOUT HAVING ANY PLACE TO GO, I OFFERED HIM TO LIVE WITH ME UNTIL HE STABILIZES FINANCIALLY.



So

What's the reason for your mother to kick you out?

It's a long story.



I'll explain everything as soon as we meet.

HE STILL HASN'T TOLD ME THE REASON OF THEIR DISAGREEMENT. HE SAID I WOULD UNDERSTAND WHEN WE MET IN PERSON.

I WONDER WHAT IT IS. IS HE DOING DRUGS? HAS HE COME OUT AS GAY? WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S TIME FOR ME TO FILL THE ROLE AS HIS BIG BROTHER.



I'M HEADING TO THE AIRPORT TO TAKE HIM.

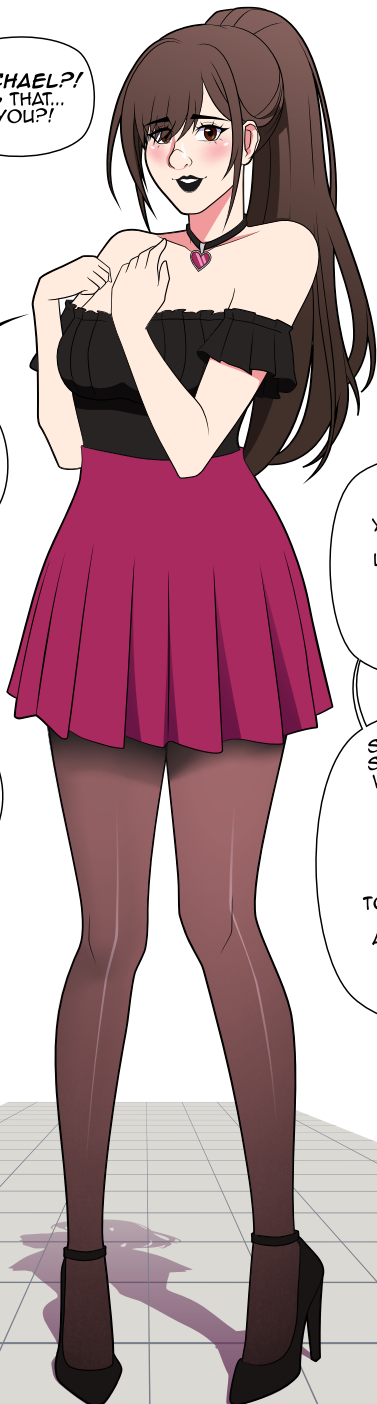


MICHAEL?! IS THAT... YOU?!

YES, BIG BROTHER! THAT'S ME! IT'S SO NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN AFTER SO LONG!

WOW, SO HUM... YOU'RE LOOKING QUITE DIFFERENT FROM WHAT I EXPECTED. IN A GOOD WAY.

SO, I BELIEVE YOU'RE TRANS NOW OR... SOMETHING? WHY HAVEN'T YOU TOLD ME ANYTHING BEFORE?



YES! AS I TOLD YOU BEFORE, THAT'S A LONG STORY. I GO BY A DIFFERENT NAME NOW: ISABELLA.

SINCE I WASN'T SURE HOW YOU WOULD REACT, I THOUGHT SEEING ME IN PERSON WOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOU TO UNDERSTAND MY POSITION AND WHY MOM KICKED ME OUT OF THE HOUSE.

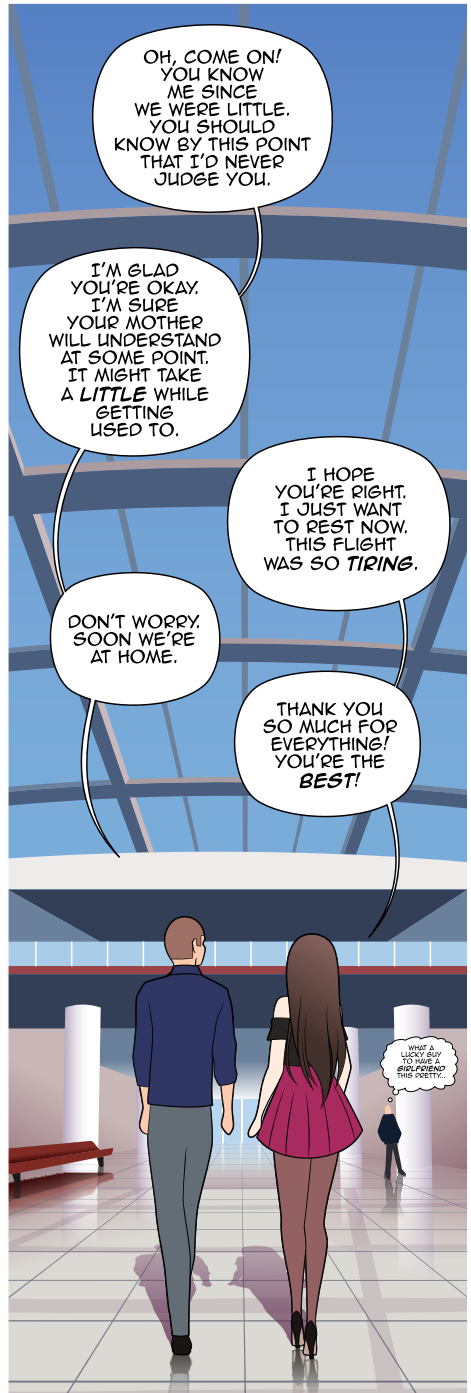
OH, COME ON! YOU KNOW ME SINCE WE WERE LITTLE. YOU SHOULD KNOW BY THIS POINT THAT I'D NEVER JUDGE YOU.

I'M GLAD YOU'RE OKAY. I'M SURE YOUR MOTHER WILL UNDERSTAND AT SOME POINT. IT MIGHT TAKE A LITTLE WHILE GETTING USED TO.

I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT. I JUST WANT TO REST NOW. THIS FLIGHT WAS SO TIRING.

DON'T WORRY. SOON WE'RE AT HOME.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR EVERYTHING! YOU'RE THE BEST!



WHAT A LUCKY GUY TO HAVE A SUPERFRIEND LIKE ME!