

# Perfect Wife

*Written by "Ina Izumi"*

Life is hard in that summer of 1892 for the already eroding peasantry of England in the late Victorian era, especially for a beautiful peasant woman in her twenties, Jessica, who suffers day and day in the sun growing potatoes. Life is hard and it does not seem that Jessica has great expectations for life, other than perhaps to continue growing potatoes for the rest of her life, although she has considered whether she should perhaps move to a city, although Jessica does not have much chance to do so as there are not many jobs in the city that she can do because of her limited knowledge and the few possibilities there were for women of the time to get work and a better life, perhaps and if anything she could aspire to be the maid of some wealthy noble woman. Jessica was not very optimistic about her life, but everything changed that day when he passed in front of her, on a white steed, the Baron who owned the land, Nathaniel Benjamin Scarlett, 4th Baron of Berwick.

Jessica had been in love with Baron Nathaniel for a long time, even though she had never tried to approach him, since she understood that as a peasant, she would never be able to get close to him or achieve any interaction, since the Baron was a very powerful person who did not usually relate to the humblest people of society. In addition, people usually avoid approaching or talking much with the Baron since, as they say, he usually has a somewhat depressive personality, probably due to the disappearance of many of his wives in strange circumstances, as if the misfortune pursued him and as if it were fate or a kind of curse that, every woman who marries him, usually disappears over the years without leaving features, being this situation something frequent in his family, as all his ancestors have suffered similar situations: the contracting of marriages with many women, one after another, for all or the great majority of them to disappear from the face of the earth as the years go by.

However, this does not discourage Jessica, since, despite her peasant status, she is not usually superstitious and believes that all that halo of mystery surrounding the Baron is surely unfounded rumors. But even so, anyway, it is not as if Jessica could ever dare to approach the Baron, and she is left only with her romantic fantasies about the Baron in the face of the null possibility of entering into a real relationship with him, or so she thought, until the Baron's horse stops in front of her. Then the Baron grabs Jessica's chin and lifts her face to see him clearly, while Jessica stares at him while blushing.

Jessica:

M-Mr. Baron, do you need anything from me?

Nathaniel:

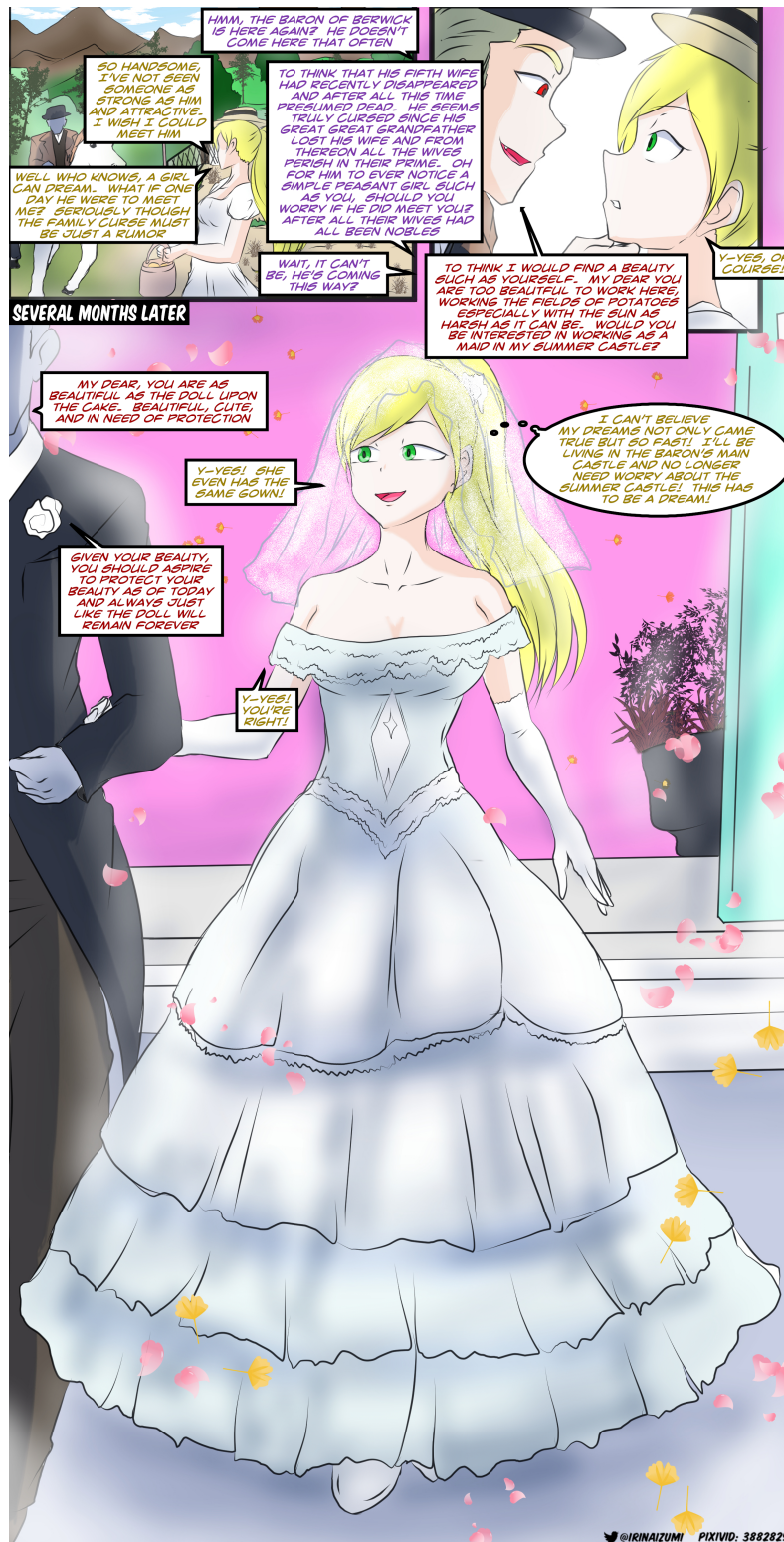
Huh? You can call me Nathaniel if you want, has anyone ever told you how nice you are? Maybe the countryside is not a good place for you, but can you start working in my summer castle next to the plantation starting tomorrow? Maybe that is the right place for you.

Jessica:

Y-yes Baron! I-I mean... Mr. Nathaniel...

Surprisingly for Jessica, after a few months of working as a maid in Nathaniel's summer castle, she was

able to establish a love relationship with him, as if her dreams started to come true by magic or as if it were a fairy tale. After a year of direct contact for the first time, Nathaniel has offered her marriage and she has accepted without hesitation, having a big wedding party afterwards and starting a radical change in her life since then.



The day after the wedding, when Jessica arrived at Nathaniel's main castle, which she had not visited since she was working all that time in the summer castle, and while smelling the strange but pleasant aroma of incense, so sweet that penetrates all the senses, Jessica was surprised to receive a beautiful gift from her husband, which was delivered by the maid, since at that moment her husband was out to resolve some matters at the court. Jessica is amazed by the beauty of the gift: a pretty green dress made to her measure, which she could not wait to try it on and be, somehow, to say the least, mesmerized by the beauty and by the softness to the touch of the dress, which is made of a delicate and beautiful silk on the outside, but with a layer of soft and pleasant velvet on the inside, as well as having some novel things for the time, such as straps that allow the dress to be bare-shouldered, to be more comfortable and less hot in that intense summer of 1893. However, even in spite of the heat, it is accompanied by green opera gloves, elegant black high-heeled shoes, white stockings, a big red rose on the chest and a nice green bow with which to make her usual ponytail.



The days passed without stopping and Jessica, who is usually somewhat hyperactive, has found some drawbacks in her new relationship with Nathaniel: he is never in his main castle, as he is busy most of the time at court or riding his steed in his potato meadows. On the other hand, there is nothing interesting to do in Berwick Castle, the most interesting thing is a library with vast books that the Scarlett family, the Barons of Berwick, have collected over centuries, but Jessica can't even read, so those books are of no use. After that, the most interesting thing Jessica has seen have been the paintings portraying Nathaniel and all his ancestors, mainly the first three Barons of Berwick. The resemblance between Nathaniel and them is absurdly great, to the point that Nathaniel looks like an exact copy of them, something that Jessica finds very curious, even though she supposes that, perhaps, this is due to the high level of cousin and sibling matching that happens in royalty.

After Jessica wandered around the castle, which is very large, she saw a group of maids cleaning, so she thought it was her chance to be distracted and, incidentally, her chance to be of use, since she felt very useless since she arrived there and she, because of her hyperactivity, likes to be of use. However, after grabbing a feather duster and starting to clean, she was reprimanded by a maid, who tells her that this is not the Baron's wife's job, as it would get her and her beautiful dress dirty, also pointing out to her that the Baron gets very angry when his wives make any physical exertion and that the Baron has always given strict directions that his wife must keep herself spotlessly clean, without having on her body or dress a single speck of dust or a single drop of sweat. This makes the experience of living in that castle more agonizing for Jessica, but she supposes she has no choice, besides she is used to follow orders, even from the maids, as she has received and attacked orders all her life and does not like to refuse orders, especially if they are indications from her husband about her cleanliness and appearance. On the other hand, there is something in the air that inspires so much confidence in Jessica that she doesn't expect anything bad to happen, what is the worst that can happen by blindly following her beloved's instructions?

LATER, AS JESSICA WANDERS THROUGH THE CASTLE

HUHH, THIS ROOM HAS PAINTINGS OF HIS ANCESTORS? BUT THEY'RE ALL SO SIMILAR, THEY COULD EASILY PASS AS IDENTICAL SIBLINGS?

HMM... THE CASTLE IS SO LARGE, BUT COMPLETELY EMPTY OF ANYTHING OF INTEREST. THIS HAS TO BE THE MOST INTERESTING THING I'VE MANAGED TO FIND THUS FAR. HOW DOES ONE KEEP FROM BEING BORED WHEN MY HUSBAND WHEN HE IS DONE WORKING WITH HIS BUSINESS ALL DAY LONG? I KNOW! I'LL HELP THE MAIDS!

THE BARON HAS GIVEN EXPRESS INSTRUCTIONS YOU ARE TO BE TREATED AS THE MOST PAMPERED PRINCESS. YOU ARE NOT TO DO ANY WORK. YOUR JOB IS TO BE HIS WIFE. MISS JESSICA AS A BARONESS YOU ARE NOT TO PUSH YOURSELF, YOU ARE NOT TO STRESS YOURSELF EITHER PHYSICALLY NOR MENTALLY. YOU'RE TO JUST BE BEAUTIFUL AND LOVED

WAIT WHAT?

SIGH, I SUPPOSE YOU'RE CORRECT, ALRIGHT THEN

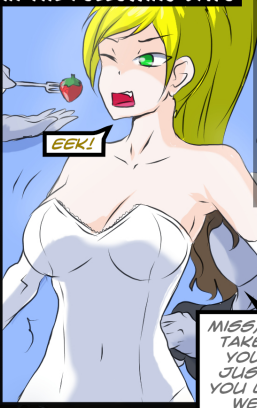
LATER, IN THE LIBRARY

WHERE HAD THIS PLACE BEEN? A LIBRARY, HOW HAD I MISSED IT BEFORE? IT'S VASTLY MORE INTERESTING BUT IT'S A PITY I CAN'T READ. ALL THIS WISDOM FOR THE TAKING. PERHAPS NATHANIEL WILL HIRE A TUTOR TO TEACH ME TO READ

Days go by, which turn into weeks, and then months. During this time Jessica has discovered that she cannot take advantage of her new status as Baron Nathaniel's wife to access all kinds of luxuries and excesses, since Nathaniel, whom she sees infrequently due to her husband's occupations, has indicated that, in order for Jessica to keep her slim figure, she must be under a strict permanent diet, in which the maids prepare her food and give it to her (even in her mouth or by force if necessary). Such a strict diet makes Jessica feel more and more tired and weak. She is also unable to accompany her husband on his horseback rides on the prairies and get some nutrients from the sun, as her husband is also angry that Jessica's beautiful, delicate skin burns, tans or deteriorates from exposure to the sun and the environment. Jessica, reluctant at first to all these changes, both the diet and the strict instructions not to leave the house, has eventually accepted with resignation and, the few times she sees her husband, he convinces her more and more of how important it is for his wife, a powerful Baron, to take care of her appearance. Also, to relieve all the stress that this situation causes Jessica, Nathaniel has made her a little hypnosis session with a watch, Jessica accepted since she does not distrust Nathaniel at all but trusts him blindly, so she slowly fell into a trance while listening to the suggestions... "You feel tired... you are weak... maybe it is better to let others do for you what you are no longer able to do... Just let yourself go... Just be beautiful and feel treasured and loved... let yourself be loved... and don't spend more energy than necessary... Don't move if it's not necessary to save energy..."

However, over time, and because of it (hypnotherapy and also the lack of food), Jessica has reached the point of not being able to move much because she is fatigued by the energy deficit she has because of the strict diet, to the point that she has to be fed by mouth by the maids, and is usually all the time sitting passively in a chair in the main room, and to move from one place to another, bathe or lie down on the bed, she has to be attended and moved by the maids. That is not ideal for Jessica, let alone that now for a couple of months she seems to be pregnant, even though with time she has become accustomed and resigned to the new living conditions, being convinced by Nathaniel himself that having to make any physical effort is for commoners, and that part of being a noblewoman is to let the maids and the Baron's subjects do everything for her, including moving her.... Besides, Jessica was so weak, she didn't even notice when the chair she usually sits in for a good part of the day has been covered with a glass box, which they only remove to move her to take her to her room to sleep, to change her clothes, to go to the bathroom or to feed her.

**IN THE FOLLOWING DAYS**



EEK!

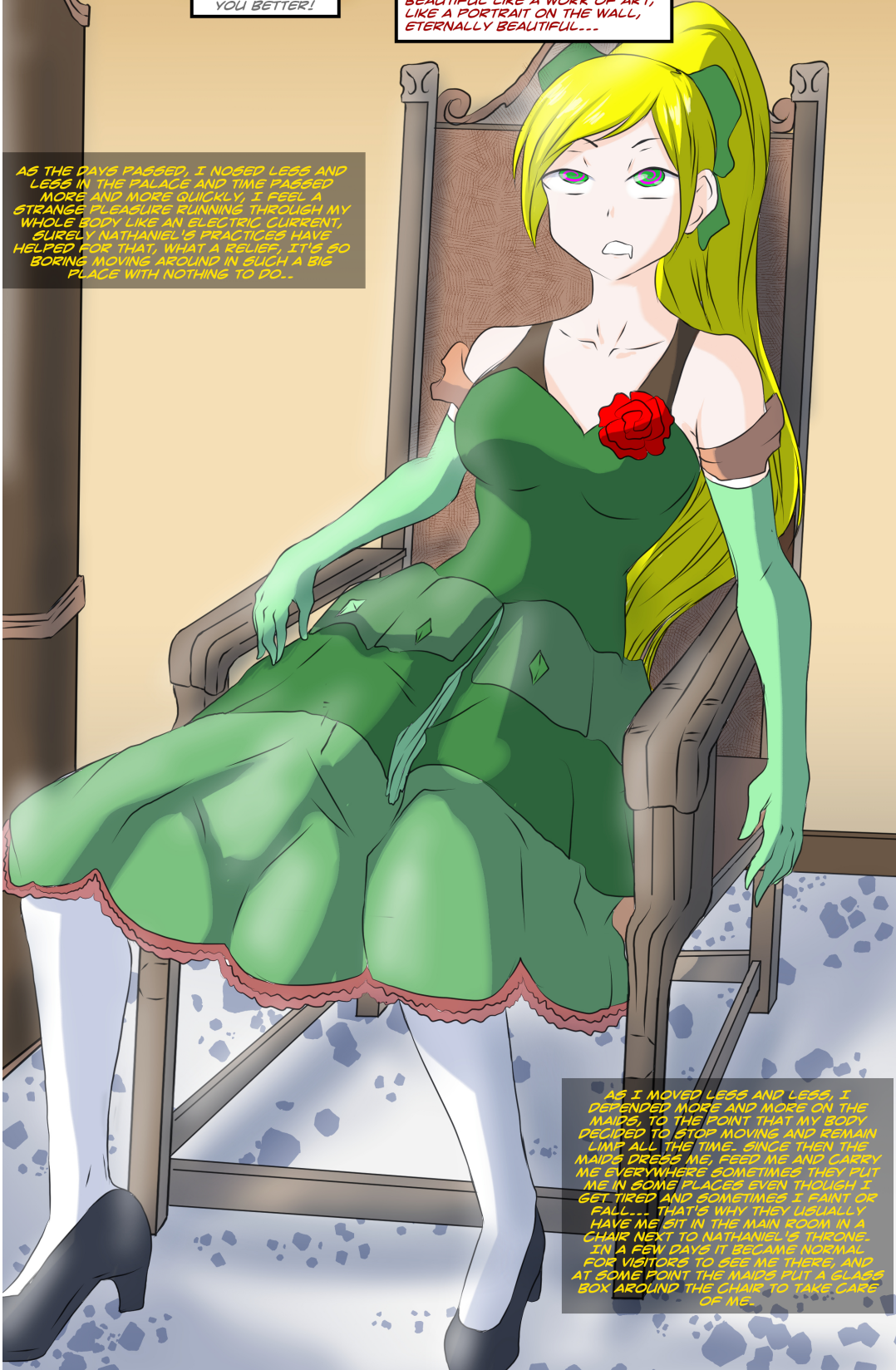
SINCE THEN THINGS HAVE BEEN LIKE THIS... THEY HAVE PUT ME ON A STRICT DIET WHERE I CAN ONLY EAT THESE STRANGE STRAWBERRIES WITH FLUCHSIA JUICE INSIDE. AND EVERY MORNING THEY DRESS ME DELICATELY AND CONSTANTLY SUPERVISE ME TO SEE THAT I COMPLY WITH THE DIET AND KEEP MY FIGURE

I TRIED COMPLAINING TO NATHANIEL THE FEW TIMES HE WAS HOME. EVEN THOUGH HE URGED ME TO TAKE IT EASY AND EVEN OFFERED TO HELP MAKE MY NEW POSITION AS BARONESS MORE TOLERABLE, NATHANIEL IS SO THOUGHTFUL AND GOOD AT CARING ABOUT ME...

TAKE A DEEP BREATH... SLOWLY, AND THEN HOLD YOUR BREATH... NOW EXHALE... LESS AND LESS WORRIES... MORE AND MORE FREE... YOU BOTHER LESS AND LESS TO THINK... BLANK MIND... BORN TO BE BEAUTIFUL LIKE A WORK OF ART, LIKE A PORTRAIT ON THE WALL, ETERNALLY BEAUTIFUL...

MISS, YOU MUST TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY! JUST THINK, IF YOU LOSE MORE WEIGHT THE CORSET WILL FIT YOU BETTER!

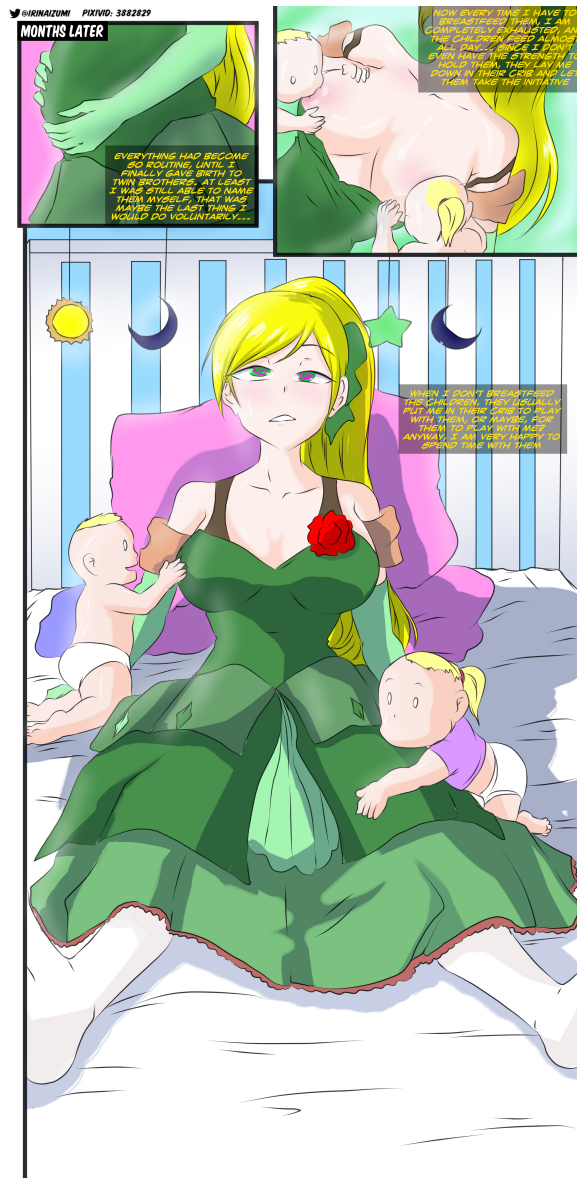
AS THE DAYS PASSED, I NOSED LESS AND LESS IN THE PALACE AND TIME PASSED MORE AND MORE QUICKLY, I FEEL A STRANGE PLEASURE RUNNING THROUGH MY WHOLE BODY LIKE AN ELECTRIC CURRENT, SURELY NATHANIEL'S PRACTICES HAVE HELPED FOR THAT, WHAT A RELIEF. IT'S SO BORING MOVING AROUND IN SUCH A BIG PLACE WITH NOTHING TO DO..



AS I MOVED LESS AND LESS, I DEPENDED MORE AND MORE ON THE MAIDS, TO THE POINT THAT MY BODY DECIDED TO STOP MOVING AND REMAIN LIMP ALL THE TIME. SINCE THEN THE MAIDS DRESS ME, FEED ME AND CARRY ME EVERYWHERE SOMETIMES THEY PUT ME IN SOME PLACES EVEN THOUGH I GET TIRED AND SOMETIMES I FAINT OR FALL... THAT'S WHY THEY USUALLY HAVE ME SIT IN THE MAIN ROOM IN A CHAIR NEXT TO NATHANIEL'S THRONE. IN A FEW DAYS IT BECAME NORMAL FOR VISITORS TO SEE ME THERE, AND AT SOME POINT THE MAIDS PUT A GLASS BOX AROUND THE CHAIR TO TAKE CARE OF ME.

After a long 9 months, Jessica finally gave birth to two beautiful blonde-haired boys, very much like her husband Nathaniel, but instead of inheriting Nathaniel's intense red eyes, they inherited Jessica's green eyes, full of purity and innocence. However, even though Jessica was cheerful, she was so weak from feeding and childbirth that she needed the maids to get close to her children, who were all the time drinking milk from her breasts. Jessica, despite practically no longer being treated as human for a long time, was able to decide on the name of her children in one of the brief moments of consciousness... The boy would be named Immanuel and the girl would be named Charlotte.

Even though Jessica considered that she could not sink any lower as a human being, being treated more and more as an object, every time she does not breastfeed her babies, or when she is not sitting in her chair in the main room, she is put in the crib together with her babies for them to play with her, as if she were a life-size doll, while passively waiting to be taken out of there.... Even though she cannot complain, at least she spends time with her children, even though in the following times that Jessica saw Nathaniel, she told him that they should look for a solution to this situation.





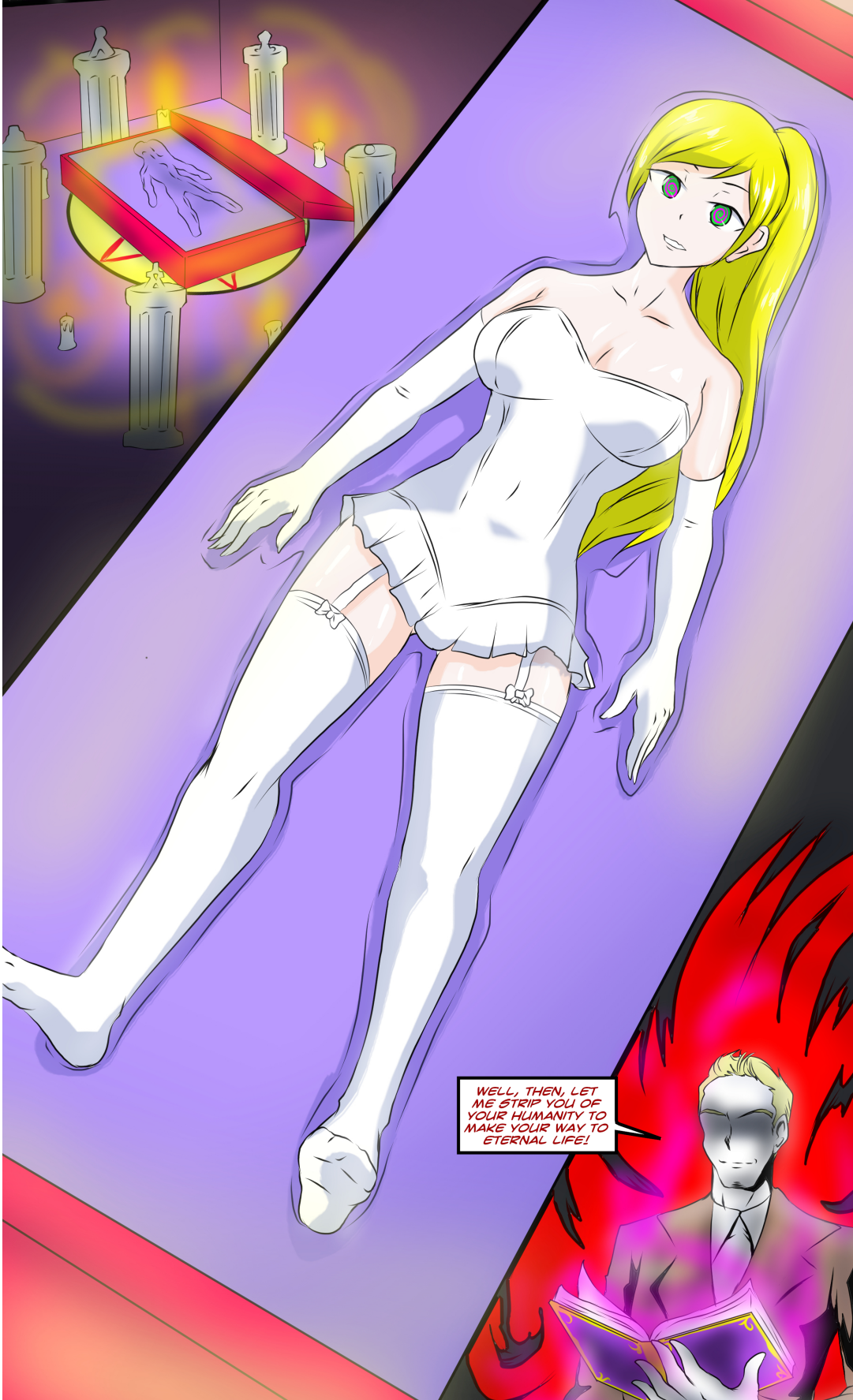
A few years later, in 1895, when Jessica's children no longer needed mother's milk, and due to Jessica's comments to Nathaniel on the few occasions they lived together, Nathaniel finally decides to help Jessica to overcome the decadent state of being a doll in a human body, so he supports Jessica to take the next step, while he takes her in a wheelchair to a secret room of the castle, which was adorned with huge Greek pillars and a stylized and mysterious floor of black and white tiles, as if it were a chessboard. In the middle of the room there is a strange but interesting pentagram drawn, which is adorned by candles, and in the center of the pentagram, there is a kind of box, case or... or bed?

To put it more concretely, it looks like a life-size case with a hole that molds perfectly to the shape of Jessica's body, who is conveniently without her usual dress, keeping only the lingerie of her dress. It is then that Nathaniel begins to explain to Jessica his proposal. That horrible world and era in which Jessica has had to live is no longer for her, a woman so delicate, beautiful, pure and innocent... However, Nathaniel presents himself as a generous savior to Jessica, offering her an offer that Jessica could not refuse. Nathaniel proposes to Jessica to take her decadent humanity, in exchange for a price as affordable as her human youth in exchange for living the eternal life in the dolls' Eden, without aging and without having to bother to do anything else, nor run any danger, because she would be cared for and treasured always with him, as a small, defenseless and innocent doll... Jessica, who may not have had the best possible rational capacity due to hunger, besides the fact that she has been convinced over time of the benefits of not moving and letting everyone do all your needs for you, accepts Nathaniel's proposal, as if it were to free herself from a great burden, and starts her way to immortality, being laid down in the hollow made perfectly to her measure while the pentagram on the floor begins to glow, at the same time that Nathaniel recites some words he sees in his grimoire.

MONTHS LATER

I MEAN AS I AM NOW IT'S NOT MUCH OF A STRETCH TO BECOME SUCH. I-I'M TIRED, I'M TOO TIRED TO LIVE LIKE THIS

WELL... IT SEEMS THAT CHILDREN NO LONGER NEED TO BE BREASTFED, BESIDES, THE WORLD HAS CHANGED A LOT FOR YOU, IT IS SUCH A HOSTILE WORLD. ESPECIALLY FOR ONE AS PURE AND DELICATE AS YOU'VE BECOME. JUST LIKE A DOLL. IT'S WHY I'M PROPOSING AN OFFER FOR YOU TO BECOME A DOLL, A LIVING DOLL TO BE MORE PRECISE FOR ME A SPECIAL DOLL, COULD YOU DO THAT FOR ME?



WELL, THEN, LET ME STRIP YOU OF YOUR HUMANITY TO MAKE YOUR WAY TO ETERNAL LIFE!

Then that large case, which appears to have a lid, closes, while six magical beams coming from the candles strike the case, shrinking the case rapidly.

The next thing Jessica remembers, after a sort of tumultuous and psychedelic fantasy, is being in the hands of her daughter, Charlotte, who is now somewhat older, maybe 10 years old, as she moves her arm and plays with it, very happy and excited by the beauty of her doll, while Jessica's mind is continuously eroding...



Finally, when Charlotte no longer plays with Jessica, or rather, with her doll, Jessica will spend the rest of her days standing on a small pedestal, posing beautiful forever, for eternity, next to Nathaniel's other previous wives, being one more doll, a trophy in the collection of her husband, who has been alive for perhaps 400 years now thanks to absorbing the vitality of his wives and expanding an increasingly vast collection.

A collection... of wives, of perfect wives, of perfect dolls.



Decades go by faster and faster; history is as quick as the blink of an eye....

In 1992 in a Newcastle antique store, a store employee named Lynnette, who is the young granddaughter and heiress of the store's original owners, being about 18 years old, finds a beautiful, forgotten doll with hair as blonde as gold and eyes as green as emeralds, full of dust in the attic of her grandmother Charlotte's old, worn-out house. Despite the dust, Lynnette notices that the doll she found is of very good quality, and somehow despite being so old, it is quite flexible, even as far as the doll's joints allow, but somehow those joints are... invisible to the eye? As if they were under her skin, as with human beings... So surely that doll must be worth thousands, so Lynnette proceeds to groom the doll carefully and pack her in a doll box properly. Lynnette does not have that doll for sale but considers it good ornamentation for the antique store.

