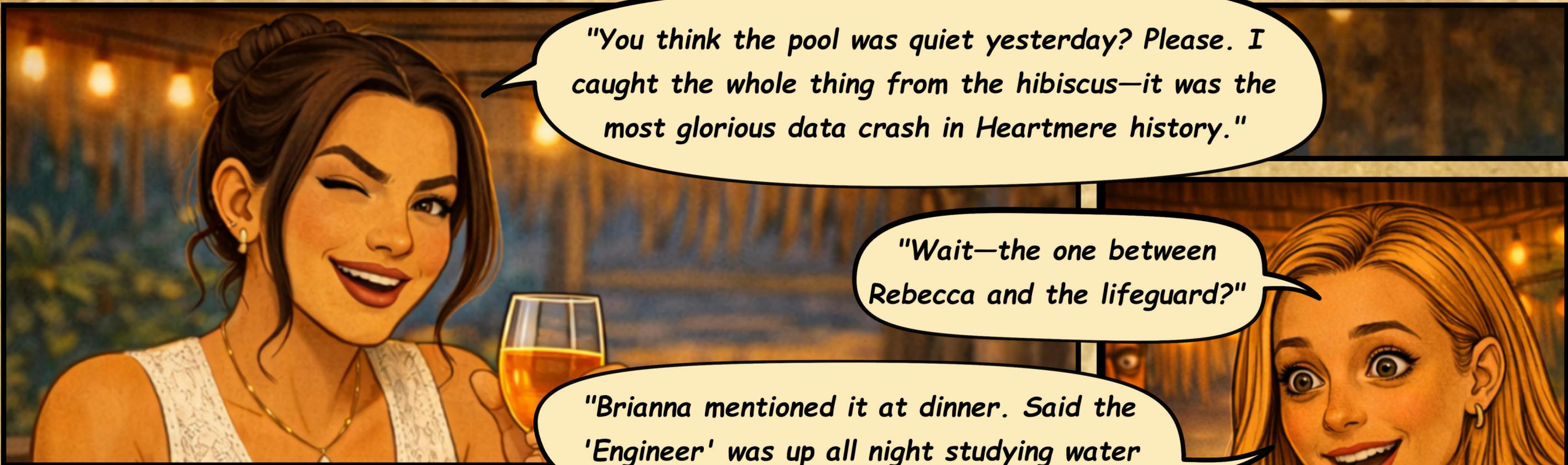


Tales from Tikibar #2



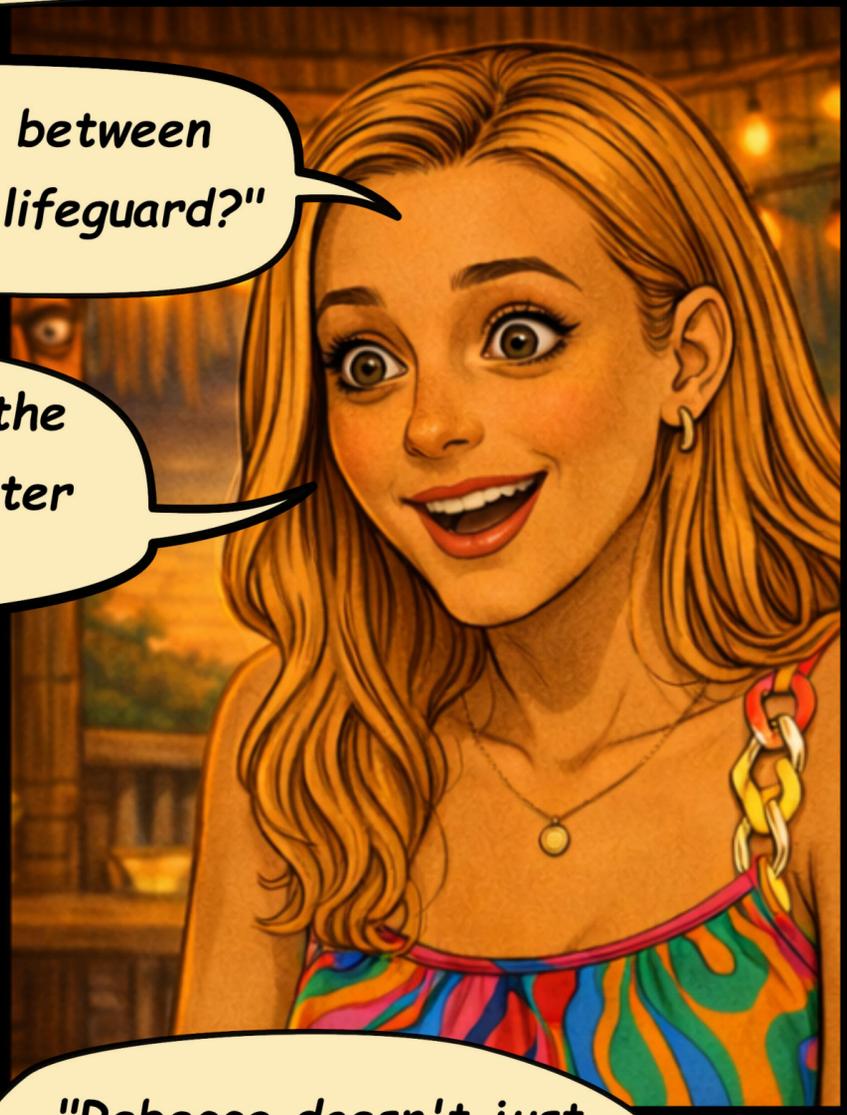
Data Crash



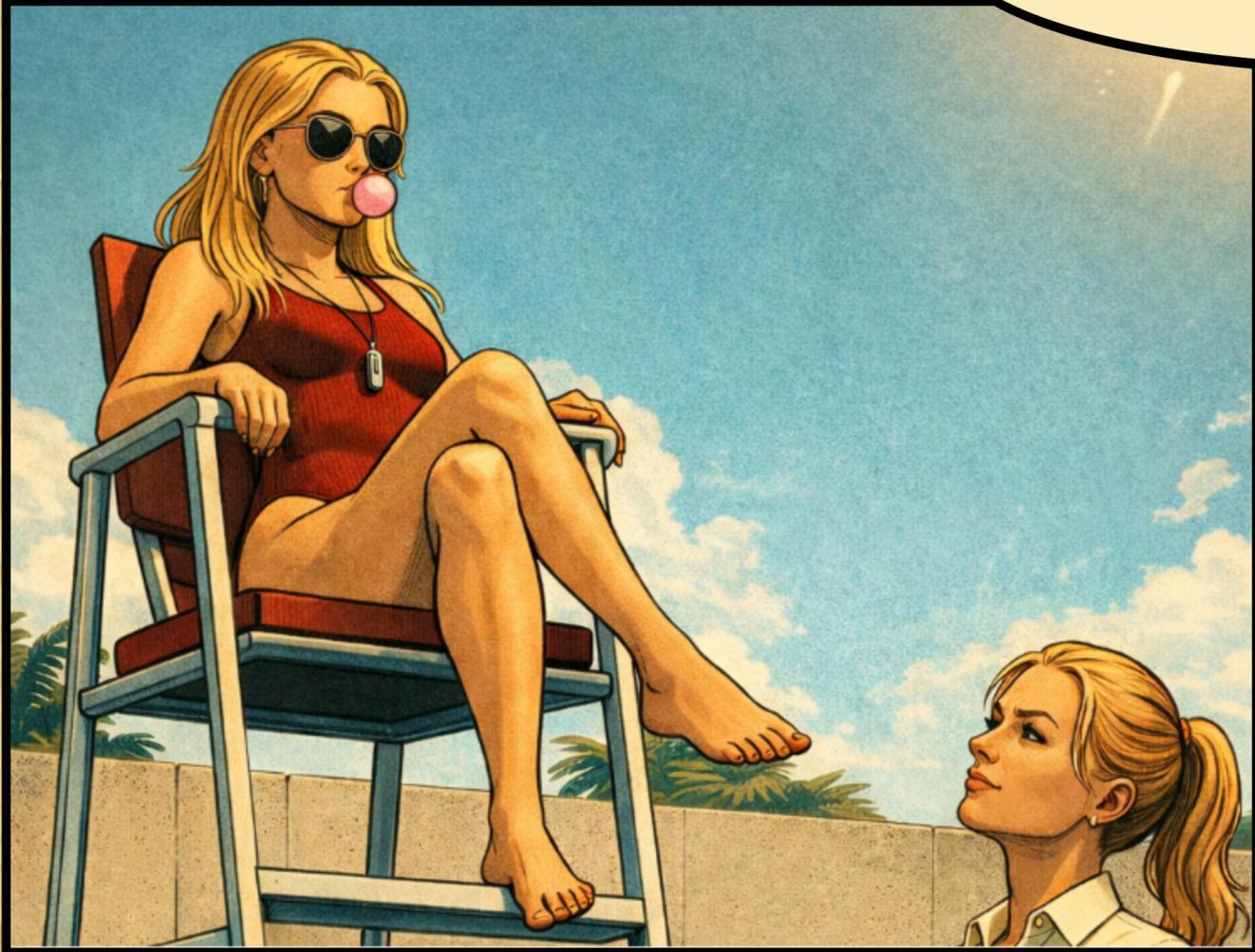
"You think the pool was quiet yesterday? Please. I caught the whole thing from the hibiscus—it was the most glorious data crash in Heartmere history."

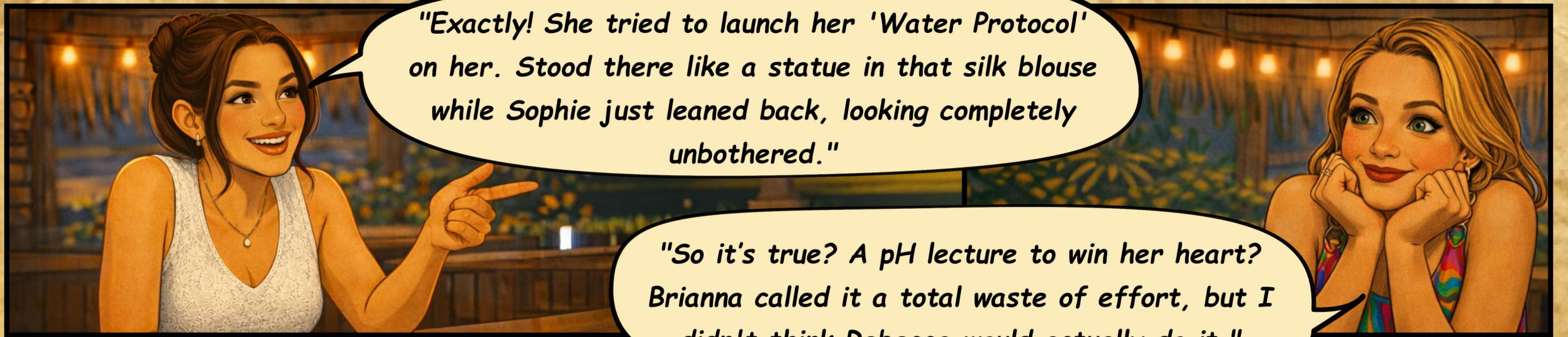
"Wait—the one between Rebecca and the lifeguard?"

"Brianna mentioned it at dinner. Said the 'Engineer' was up all night studying water charts."



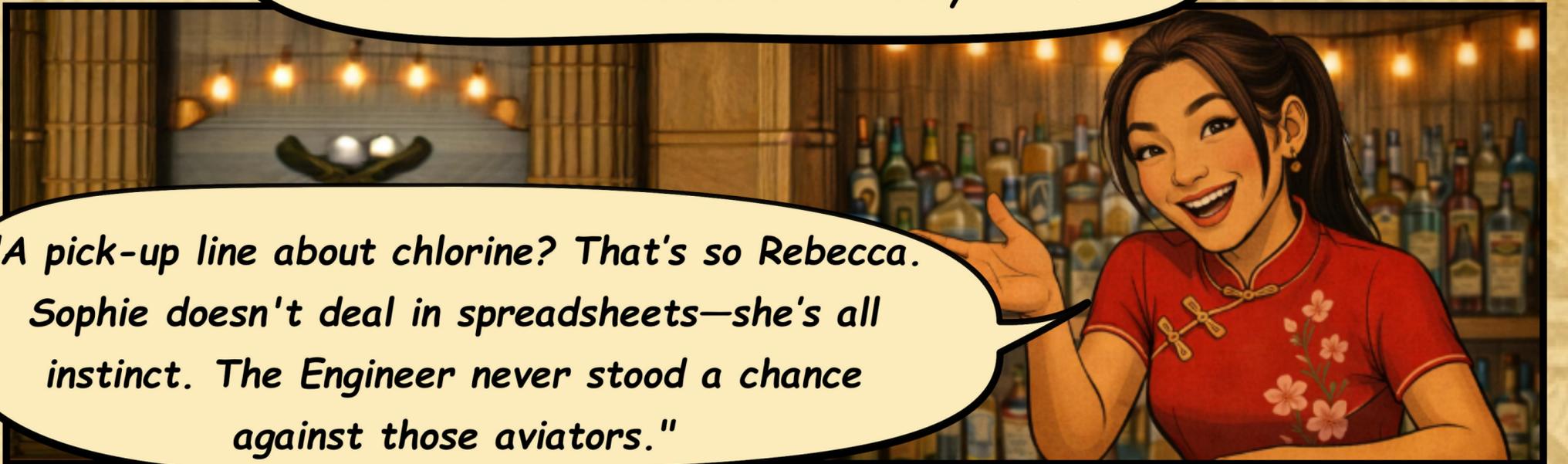
"Rebecca doesn't just 'stare'—she analyzes. I bet she had a mental clipboard out, checking Sophie's vitals while the girl was just trying to catch a breeze."



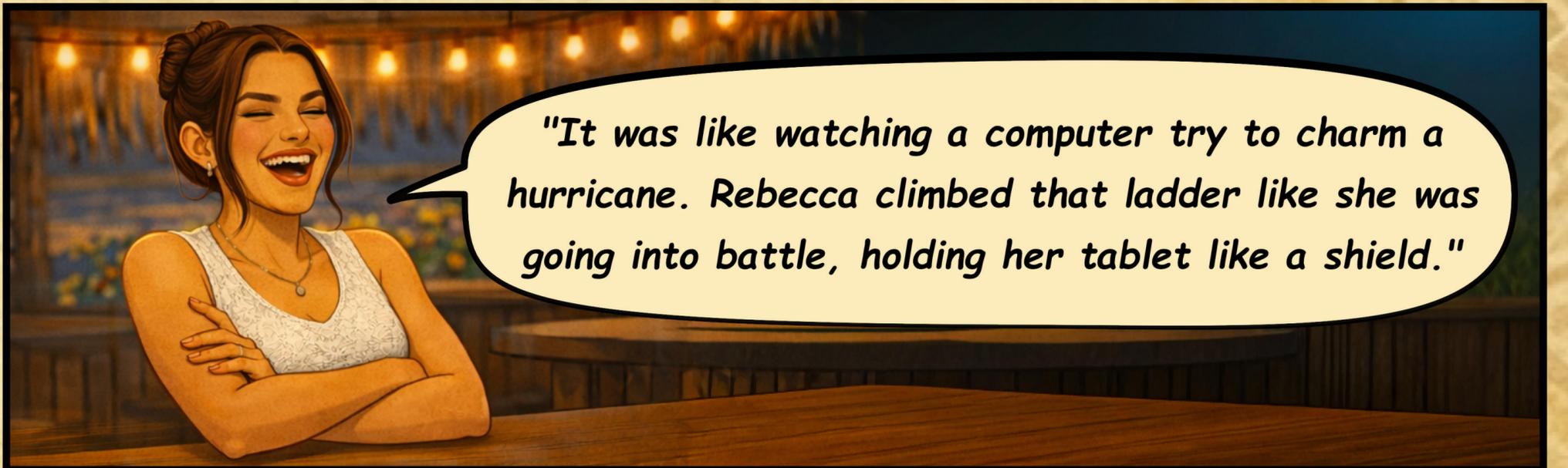


"Exactly! She tried to launch her 'Water Protocol' on her. Stood there like a statue in that silk blouse while Sophie just leaned back, looking completely unbothered."

"So it's true? A pH lecture to win her heart? Brianna called it a total waste of effort, but I didn't think Rebecca would actually do it."



"A pick-up line about chlorine? That's so Rebecca. Sophie doesn't deal in spreadsheets—she's all instinct. The Engineer never stood a chance against those aviators."



"It was like watching a computer try to charm a hurricane. Rebecca climbed that ladder like she was going into battle, holding her tablet like a shield."



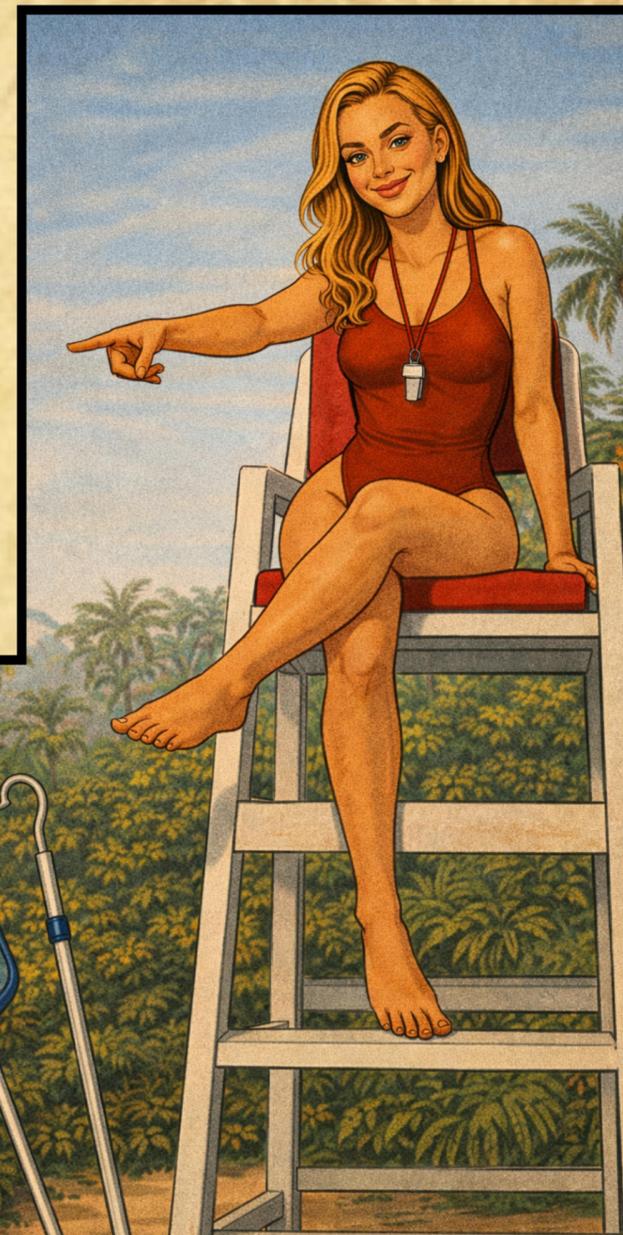
"I can only imagine. The 'Robo-Rebecca' mask vs. a lifeguard who'd rather be anywhere else. Did Sophie actually engage, or just blow a bubble in her face?"



"Sophie's pride is louder than anyone's logic. She probably told her the water was fine and to go get a drink before she scared the other women off."



"Oh, it was better. She told her if she sank, she'd finish her gum first—then use the hook to fish her out instead of mouth-to-mouth. Total surgical strike."





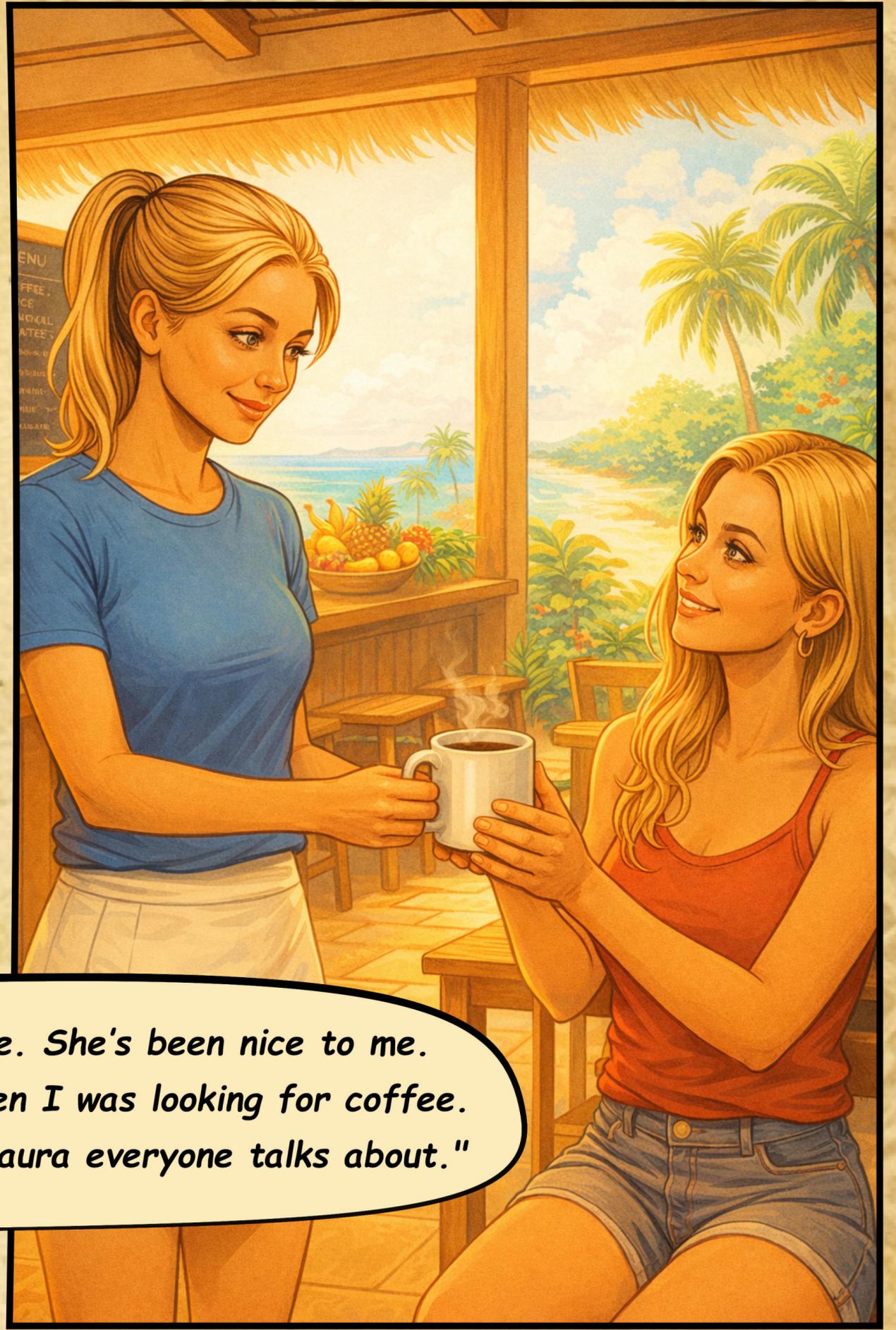
"A surgical strike to the ego. I didn't expect Sophie to be that blunt about the hook, though. In Rebecca's head, that's a fatal system error."



"Good. She needed to fail. That engineering arrogance needed a reality check."

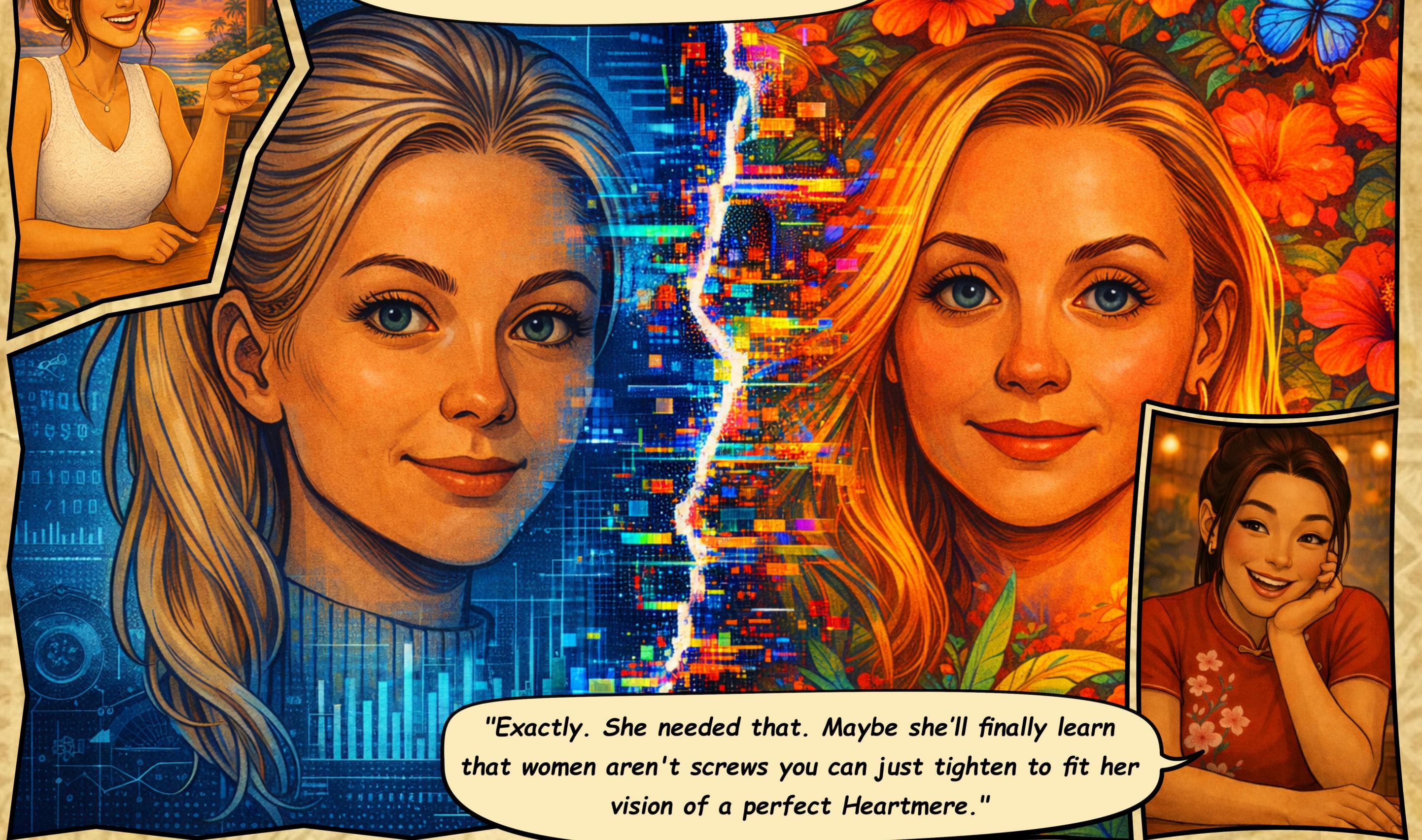


"Don't be so harsh, Jade. She's been nice to me. Helped me find my way when I was looking for coffee. .. I didn't feel that 'icy' aura everyone talks about."



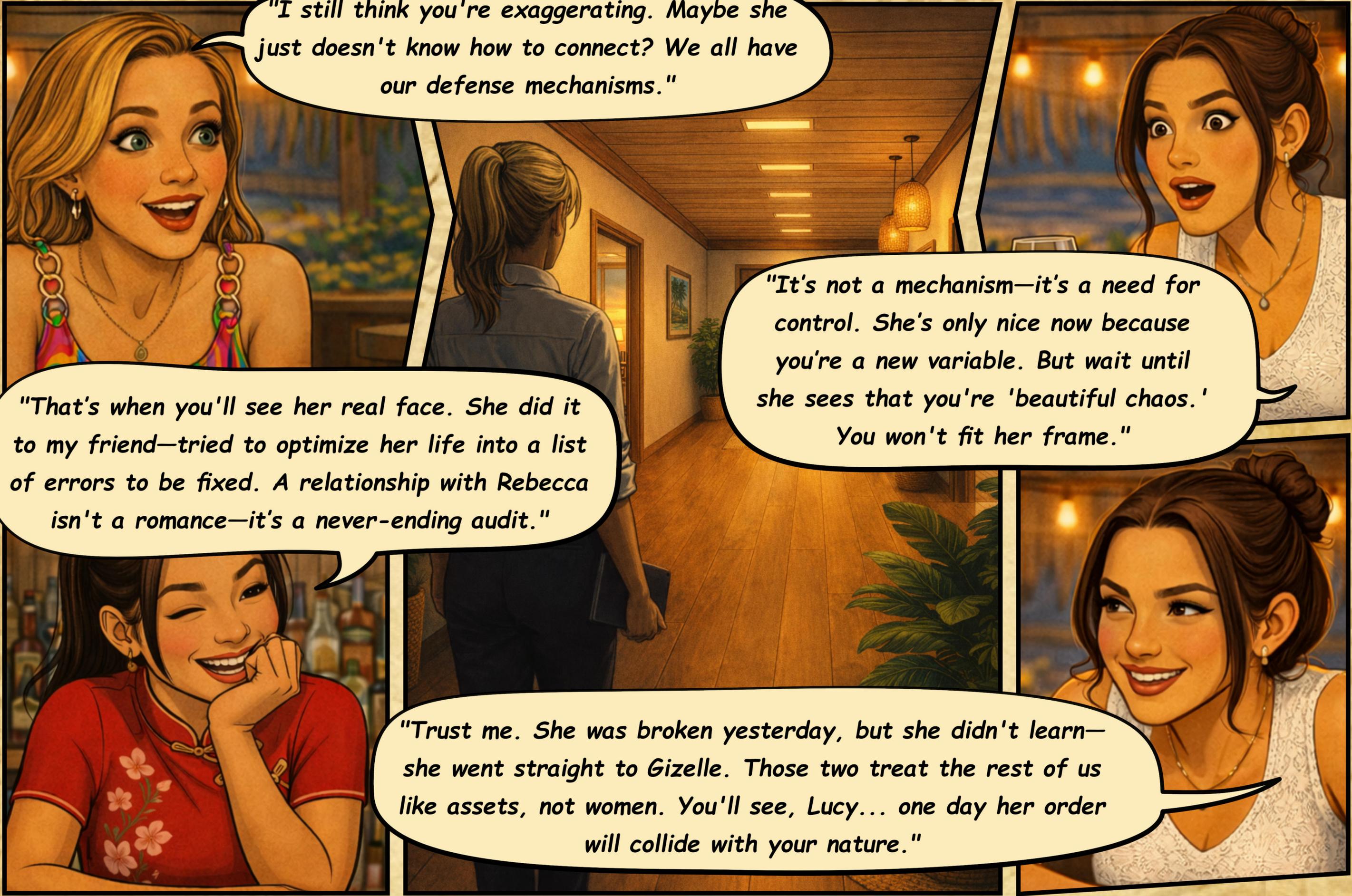


"Nice? Lucy, you're just a data point to her.
A fresh entry in her spreadsheet."



"Exactly. She needed that. Maybe she'll finally learn
that women aren't screws you can just tighten to fit her
vision of a perfect Heartmere."





"I still think you're exaggerating. Maybe she just doesn't know how to connect? We all have our defense mechanisms."

"That's when you'll see her real face. She did it to my friend—tried to optimize her life into a list of errors to be fixed. A relationship with Rebecca isn't a romance—it's a never-ending audit."

"It's not a mechanism—it's a need for control. She's only nice now because you're a new variable. But wait until she sees that you're 'beautiful chaos.' You won't fit her frame."

"Trust me. She was broken yesterday, but she didn't learn—she went straight to Gizelle. Those two treat the rest of us like assets, not women. You'll see, Lucy... one day her order will collide with your nature."

"Another drink, Lucy?
You look... less
buttoned-up than when
you checked in."

"Lost something, Lu?
Relax. Nothing stays lost
in Heartmere. It just
finds a way into someone
else's locker."

"I think I'm starting to
catch the vibe of this place.
But I should head back—Ruby
is probably... Oh my god!"

"Ruby's shampoo! That fancy coconut-
vanilla one she's obsessed with. I left
it in the gym showers—I have to go
back, or she'll literally kill me!"

"Someone is always
finding privacy in the
oddest places. Go on,
Lu... see how brave you
really are."