

Criminal Nostalgia

Written by "Ina Izumi"

Noah, a short man with a blond hair and a thin complexion, currently in his forties, in the early 2000's he was in his twenties; Those days were a great time for Noah, a diehard *NSYNC fan, who spent all the money his parents invested for his university to follow the famous group on all of the group's tours. Noah's obsession with *NSYNC was so great that he considered himself the number one fan, he had all the albums and all kinds of group merchandise, although he was never able to get close enough to the group members to achieve his big dream, meet his beloved group and become part of their lives. The years passed, Noah's parents grew old and died, Noah never went to university and there he is, in 2024, in his dirty little apartment in a problematic neighborhood, eating cold pizza from several days ago, watching TV while he wears a white shirt, black shorts and sandals with socks, and with an afternoon beard showing on his haggard face. Pizza is the only thing that his modest salary working in a self-service store allows him: great were the days of his youth, today he witnesses the twilight of youth itself while living a bitter life and crying every night because *NSYNC never got back together for another tour to date nor did he manage to meet them in person. Could his life be even more miserable? At least he barely survived the pandemic that occurred a few years ago and it seems that the economy is just beginning to recover, although that doesn't benefit Noah much anyway.

Noah scratches his head, haggard and depressed, as he suffers to recall those memories, on the local news they began to talk about something that seems a coincidence, or perhaps a product of fate: They comment on a K-pop group of five *NSYNC impersonators will be passing through the city as part of a tour. Noah got up from his worn sofa and walked to the screen, and touched it while watching the Korean girls sing and perform their choreographies as his favorite group did. After they stopped talking about the impersonators on the news, Noah turned off the TV and was silent for a few minutes, finding mixed feelings and analyzing what it was he just saw. Noah wonders, *will this be a new opportunity for me?*

At the same time that Noah's need to seek and meet these imitators was born, he was also born into an obsession with losing them. Noah thinks this is his last chance to be happy, and that if said group of impersonators break up or he doesn't get to meet them before they go to the next city on their tour, he'll lose that chance forever. Noah then, in his twisted mind and his darkest fantasies, thinks of a way so that they never give him up and always keep them together. A friend of his, dedicated to the underworld of smuggling, had told him that there were some chemicals that serve to shrink people and to biologically paralyze them, as if they were dolls. Much has been said for several years about these substances, considering public opinion, governments and the media to this as a fanciful myth of the internet, although Noah's drug dealer friend seemed very serious when he told Noah about that substance. So, Noah, with nothing to lose, decides to make a call to his friend and ask him for some of those chemicals; In the call, Noah tells his drug dealer friend that he does not fully believe that these substances exist, for which he wouldn't pay for these substances until Noah himself puts them to the test, so he asks him to provide him with these substances. His drug dealer friend, despite the risk involved, especially due to the high cost of these chemical substances, accepts the deal.

With this fixed, Noah must now come up with a plan: How can he get close to Korean idols without ending up in prison trying? Noah, in his younger years when he went on the tours of his favorite group, remembers that he could never get close to them because the security team and the music manager of that group always got in the way. Then Noah determined that the most logical thing would be to go disguised as a music manager to offer them a new job offer, perhaps that way he will somehow get closer to them. So, Noah leaves his apartment the next day to rent a suit and a modest car with all his savings, as well as go see his dealer friend to

pick up the substances, and get to work to plan what he would do until the day that Korean idols would arrive in his city.

Finally, that day arrived: there is Noah, well bathed and shaved as he hadn't done in many years, with the best suit he could rent, although he couldn't rent a very ostentatious car (a wagoner) as he would have liked. Noah sneaks through the crowd until he reaches the area where Korean Idols are preparing to enter the show. He was watching them hiding behind a prop for several minutes, watching how the idol manager is all the time. At one point, after a long time, the manager of the idols goes to the bathroom so Noah takes advantage of the situation and goes to the idols. Once Noah is inside the girls' room, who are making the last preparations to go on stage.

Noah using all his willpower to avoid behaving like an immature 40-year-old fanboy, starts chatting with them and, doing a bit of social engineering, by learning how certain types of people including a music manager behaves by attending a service store for so many years and serving to all kinds of people in it, he manages to deceive the idols by convincing them that he can offer them a juicy job offer in America where they would enjoy greater creative and economic freedoms than those that they already have in South Korea, where it's well known that the life of idols is more demanding than in America. Noah feels so fulfilled and happy to have gotten the girls' attention, but knowing that he doesn't have much time left as the manager of the five girls is coming soon, he decides to say goodbye to them and give them a fake contact card with his phone number. After it, Noah gives a half turn. He is nervous and doesn't know if his tactics worked or if they would really call him or what else he could do otherwise. As there are many witnesses around, it would simply be a bad idea to decide to take them. Maybe he didn't thought of every detail that could block the way of achieving his goal. However, the leader of the girls takes Noah's hand and tells him that they would like to speak with him after the concert that night, proceeding the leader to tell him about the restaurant where they will meet and the time, they will be there... Noah, very excited inside, but keeping a gesture denoting security itself same and seriousness, accepted the invitation of the girls and says goodbye effusively, retiring after it to avoid running into the manager of the idols.

Noah decides to go directly in the car that he rented to the restaurant where the girls mentioned him, since he worries that, if he stays at the concert, he will not be able to control his impulses and behave like another fanboy in the public making a fuss that may jeopardize his mission and the role he is acting as a serious and respectable manager and a normal forty-year-old person. So, while he waits, he buys a soda and a hamburger at a street stall and waits several hours while patiently eating in the car parked in the parking lot of that restaurant where he was summoned.

Already bored and desperate, Noah sees that the girls finally arrive at the restaurant, so he proceeds to get out of the car and enter the restaurant. Once inside sees the girls sitting at a table in the corner of the establishment making signs very excited to see Noah. So Noah rushed excited towards them and sat with them, having their full attention, apparently to himself, until everyone, both Noah and the Korean idols, noticed an obstacle that was looming inconveniently in the situation: The manager of the Korean idol group has arrived at the establishment, apparently he followed them there to see what they were up to, since they did not warn him and in any way notified where they were going or what they were going to do, something unexpected for the manager. Noah, puzzled and nervous about what he should do, just silently watches the manager to see what he proceeds to do or say. The manager, also puzzled to see that a strange person is along with his beautiful and talented idols, sits at the same table as them and begins to inquire, talking with his idols, what is happening while they order some dinner. *Noah is just a friend from America*, the idols claim, as Noah watches, mentally locked without saying a single word, all of this happening while a waitress brings coffee to the table.

Noah, trembling, stretches out his arm for a cup of coffee, but is so nervous that, in the blink of an eye, his coffee cup slips on top of the Korean manager's pants. Noah, distressed, to try appease the tension of a scandalized manager, tries to help him clean, what the manager only responds by asking where is the

bathroom... Then Noah proceeded to tell the manager where is the bathroom and accompany him to help to wipe the coffee off his pants. Once next to the entrance to the bathroom, while the Korean manager takes off their jacket he was wearing so that he can clean his pants properly, he drops what appears to be a passport on the floor; This gives Noah an impromptu idea, as in the end he has nothing to lose, as the plan is about to fail if he doesn't execute that risky idea. Noah just before entering the restaurant saw some policemen hanging around there, maybe if he makes the manager to appear like a rioter or an illegal immigrant he can possibly get rid of him indefinitely.

Noah, without thinking twice, takes and keeps the Korean manager's passport for himself, without the Korean not even realizing that he had dropped it. Then Noah takes the manager's arm without warning and throws him out of the restaurant through an emergency door that was right next to it, to immediately leave it and signal to the cops while the manager crawls in confusion around the parking lot. Noah, without hesitation, tells the cops who have approached that perhaps he is an immigrant, that he does not speak the local language well and that he was wreaking havoc and harassing some young ladies in the restaurant. Then the policemen dragged and scuffled the manager who, further baffled, could only shout a few things in Korean while the policemen struggled with him to get him into the patrol.

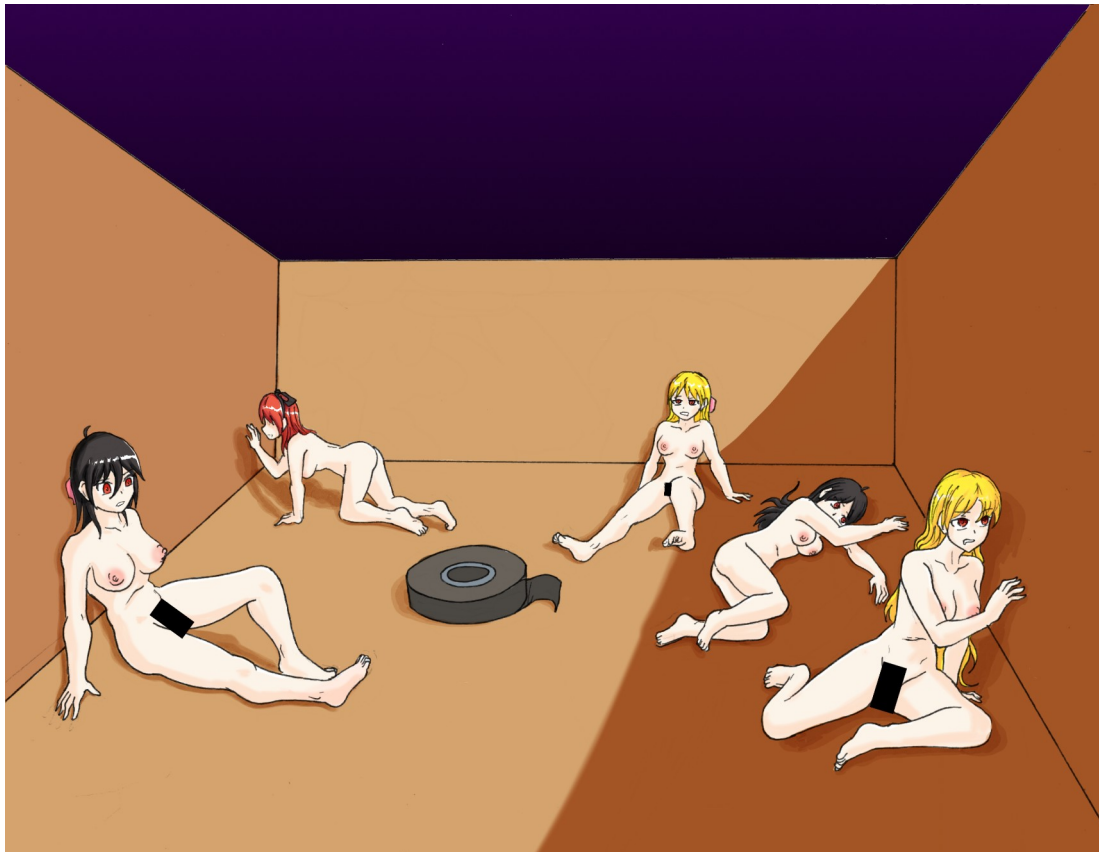
Noah, surprised that his risky contingency plan to get rid of the manager will work, victoriously re-enters the restaurant and heads to the idols, like a winner heading to collect his prize. Wasting no time, Noah explains that the manager decided to go to the hotel's early to change clothes, and offers to discuss the job offer that he offers at his home. The Idols quickly accepted, thinking in the luxuries that could be in Noah's house, who until then seems to have done well to give the image of a reputed American manager. So, Noah guides the idols to his wagoner. The idols, for the first time in the entire course of the day during which Noah has flawlessly presented his speech, when they see Noah's neglected truck, they begin to feel a little insecure and doubt the situation, but out of politeness they don't say anything to him to Noah, and they decide to get into his truck anyway.

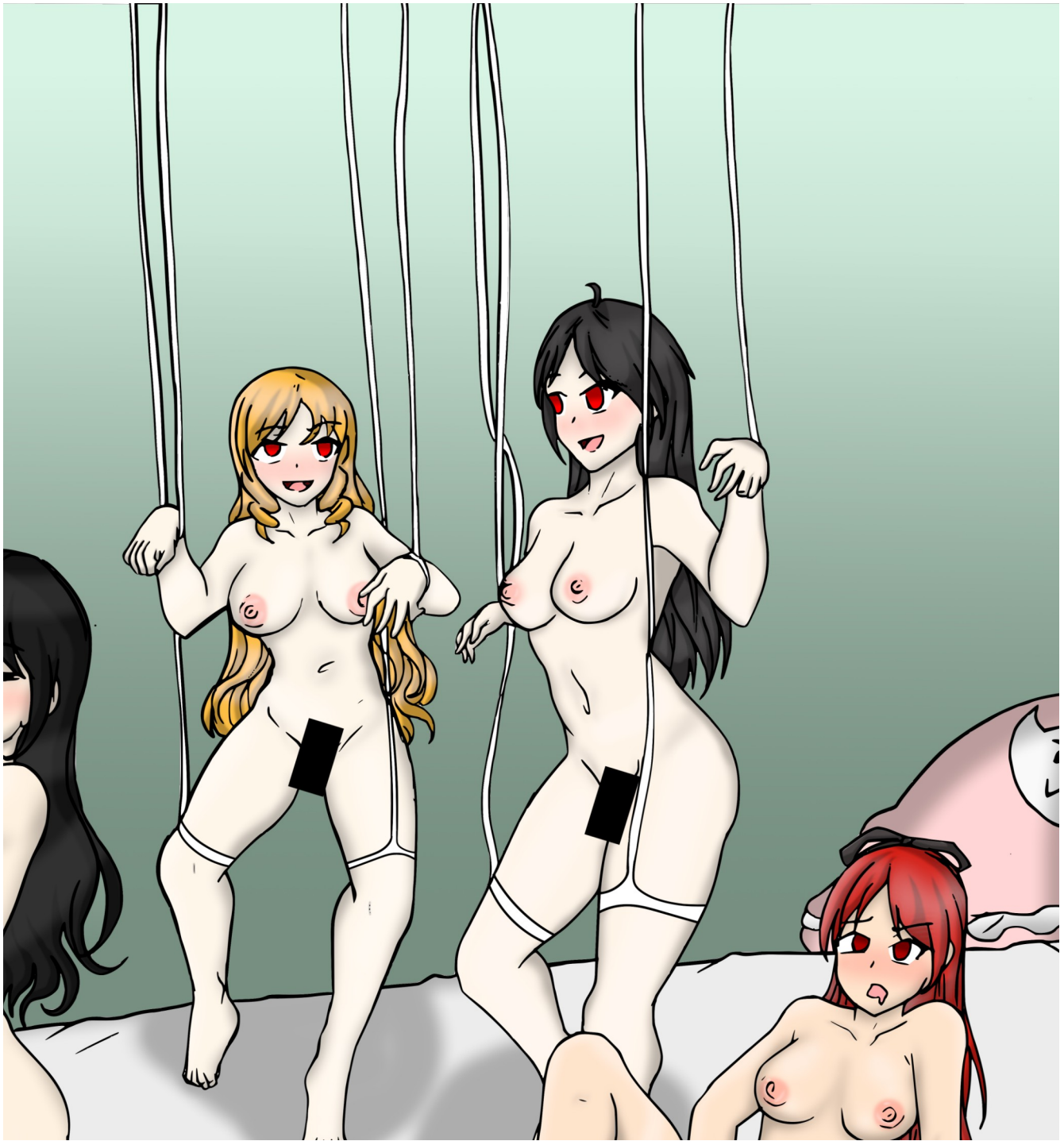
Along the way the idols begin to feel more and more insecure, it doesn't help much that they begin to enter less crowded areas of the city and that they clearly perceive themselves as more marginal from what can be seen of these areas when seeing through the vehicle's windows. Noah, noticing the insecurity that the girls are beginning to feel, and once they have moved away from the crowded areas, not long before arriving home, plans to take the next step in his plan flawlessly: he quickly gets safety earmuffs and reproduce in car stereo hypnotizing audios already had prepared for this occasion. The girls, quickly and without putting up much resistance, are stunned by listening to these audios and are left asleep in the wagoner. Noah, tired, comes to his apartment and just puts the girls inside garbage bags to enter in the apartment without suspicions. *Tomorrow will be a great day*, thinks Noah.

In the next day, the idols wake up slowly and one by one but almost the same time, they are lying on the floor of what appears to be a stage, *what happened?* one of them asks, while another notices that the clothes they are wearing have changed. Suddenly notice their limbs are attached to strings... without being given time to react, suddenly they all feel like how a great force raises them so they start moving a lot and struggle to free themselves from these strings, unable to do much anyway, as if something much bigger than they were using them as puppets; unexpectedly the song of "Bye Bye Bye" begins to hear in the background while the echo of the humming of a twisted one comes from the darkness, following the rhythm of the song. Noah is wicked, impressed by how the shrinking pill that his friend the trafficker gave him worked, while he loses what little he has left of sanity and while playing with the idols as if they were helpless puppets while he is the one who moves the strings and the one who directs their lives and destinies now, forcing them to imitate in miniature the choreography of the song that plays in the background. After several minutes playing with them like puppets, being such a magical and pleasant moment for him, unfortunately, it didn't last long, because the struggles, the hysterical screams and the insults that the idols shouted became more and more annoying, for so Noah decides to move on to the next phase of his plan.

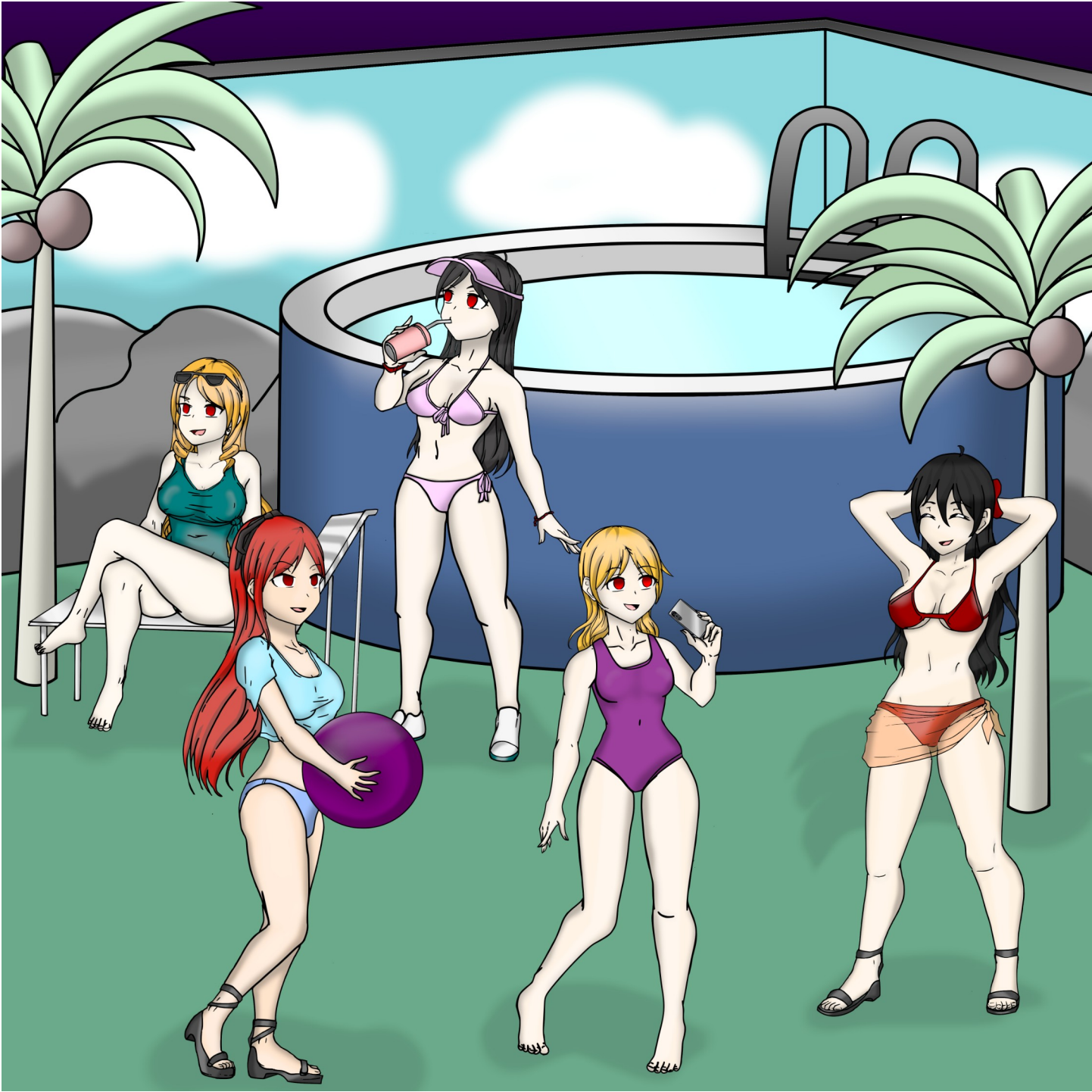


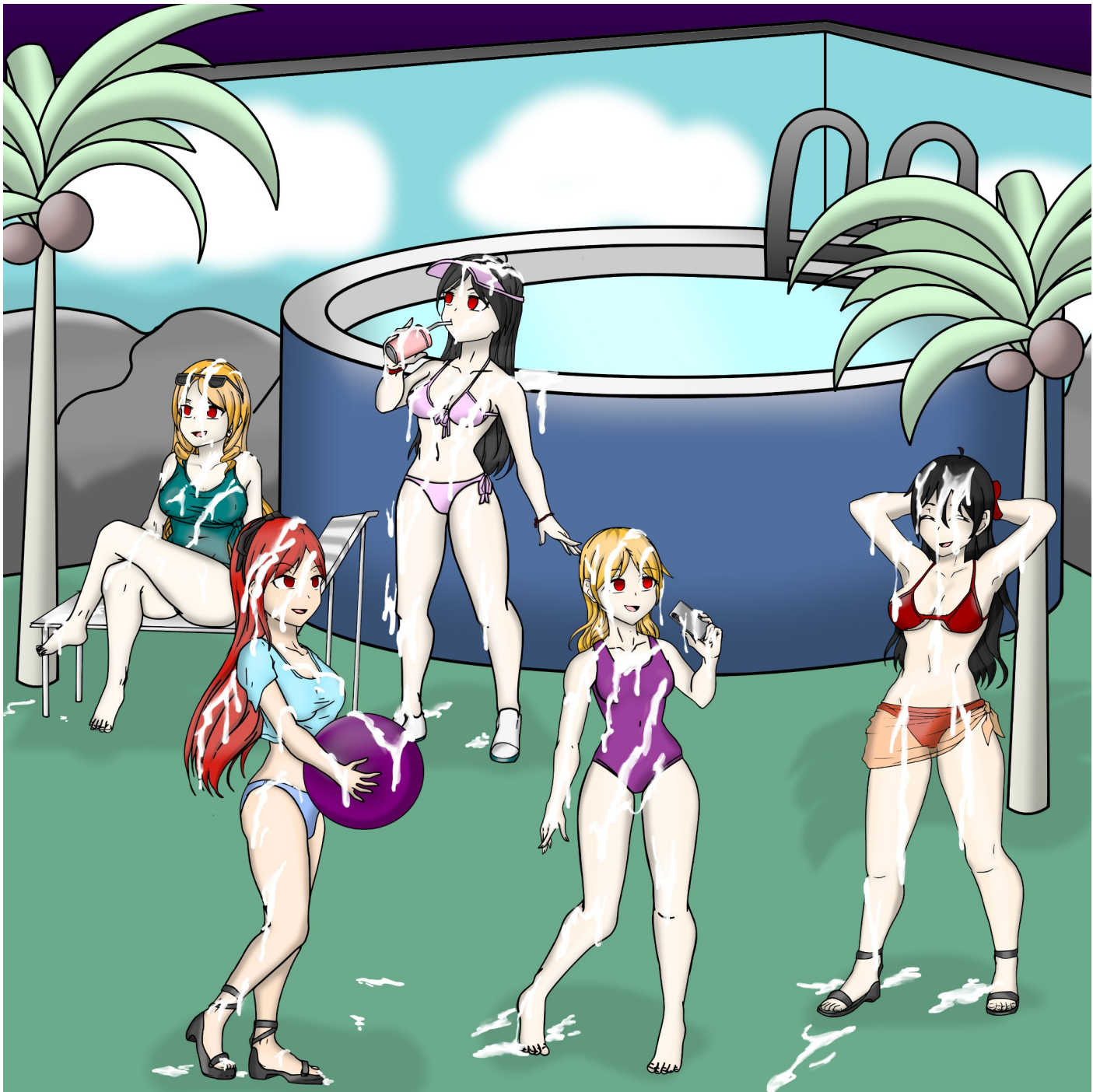
After a long session of hypnosis and brainwashing that Noah subjected the idols to, locking them in a box with a cell phone inside functioning as a screen with the volume set to maximum, the idols became docile and obedient. Noah will spend the next few hours playing with the idols, then Noah gets bored and decides to move on to the next part of the plan.





After having made the transfusions of the violet liquid (the substance) to the idols as his drug dealer friend had indicated, not without feeling somewhat uncomfortable because of how graphic and grotesque that process was, which seemed almost an embalming, the idols lie completely motionless and totally gone lying on the bed, disconnected from reality, having become, for Noah's sick eyes, small and defenseless dolls. Then, without even having the decency to clean them from the semen that Noah spilled on them for hours, he dressed them in bathing suits that he took from some dolls that he bought just to take off their clothes, and he poses them as if they were dolls spending the summer happily, while dripping semen. In that period of time, Noah took the opportunity to get some sleep, wake up, bathe, eat and knit clothes tailored for the idols, among other things.





After several hours, Noah deigns to wash his new idol-dolls and remove the semen with which they are stained and change their clothes. Noah would spend several minutes changing their clothes one by one delicately, with some custom garments that he had made before for them. He dresses them in clothes similar to the ones his favorite group wore in the "It's Gonna Be Me" music video, then carefully placed one by one in boxes made especially for them, and arranged on a shelf just above his bed... Noah can't believe what is happening. In a way, this is the closest thing to where he can live his old youth dream to be near his beloved favorite band. Meanwhile, the ex-idols, currently being Noah's dolls, pose cute and cuddly in their boxes as only people outside begin to realize the mysterious disappearance of the idols, being destined to remain as a few. cute little dolls for the rest of their days.

