

THE EVIL LIFE GROWING EVIL

VOLUME ONE



NORLIN
MARINO

A R T
NILS-PETTER NORLIN

W O R D S
NICK MARINO

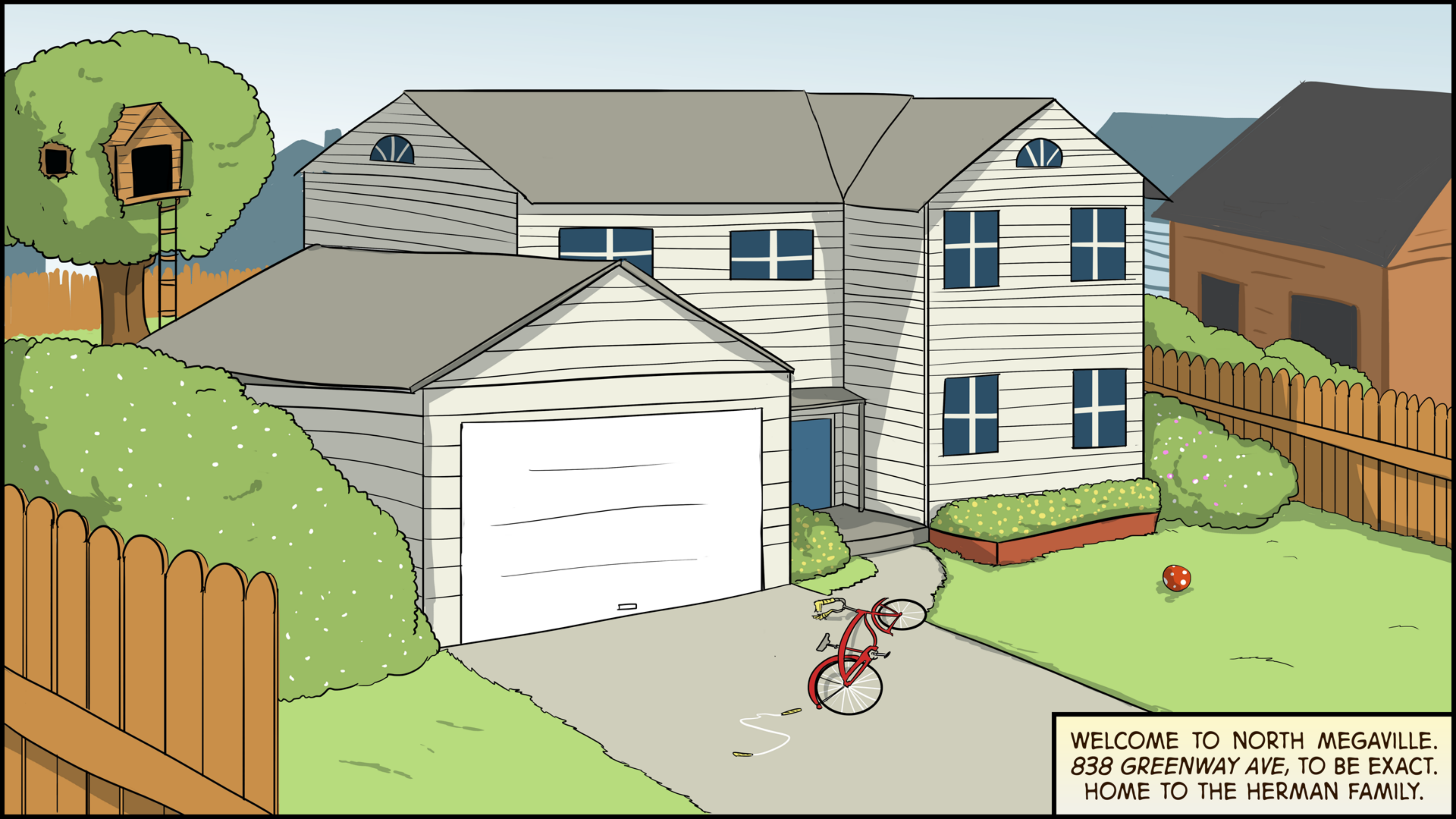


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CHAPTER ONE TAKE CARE





WELCOME TO NORTH MEGAVILLE.
838 GREENWAY AVE, TO BE EXACT.
HOME TO THE HERMAN FAMILY.

THEIR DAUGHTER, *HESTER*, IS CURRENTLY ENJOYING HER SUMMER VACATION.

FUZZY FRIENDS
WILL RETURN AFTER
THESE MESSAGES!



PRETTY SHARP

PONY



ISN'T IT A
BEAUTIFUL DAY TO
TAKE A STROLL THROUGH
ONE OF OUR CITY'S
LOVELY PARKS?

FOR THOSE WHO
DON'T KNOW ME YET--
HELLO! I'M **WADE KNIGHT**,
THE FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT
OF MEGAVILLE'S **KNIGHT
CORPORATION**.

WAAADE!

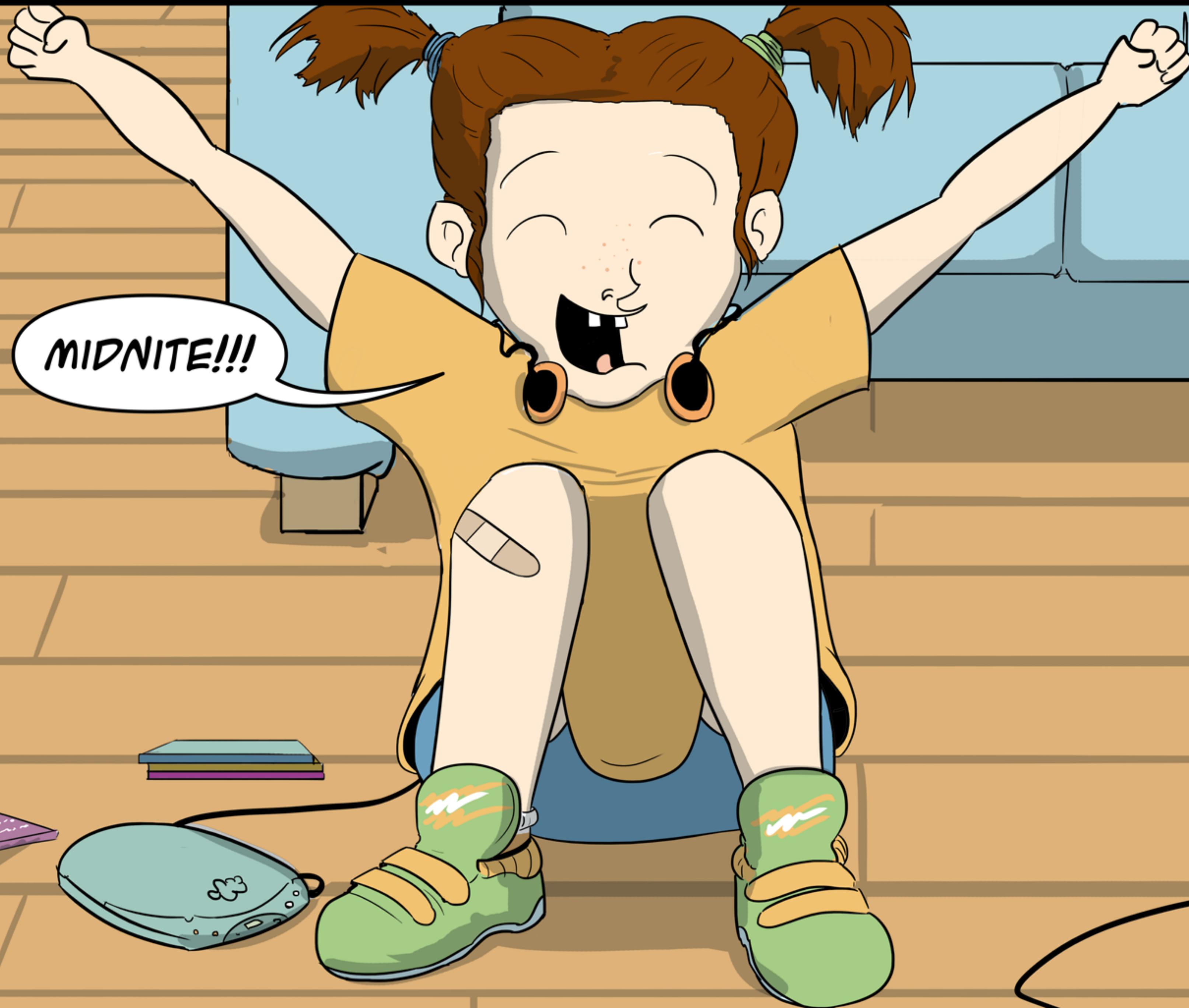




IT'S ALSO
A BEAUTIFUL DAY
FOR UPHOLDING
JUSTICE.

WISE WORDS,
CITIZEN!

HELLO THERE,
I'M **M.I.D. KNIGHT--**
MEGAVILLE'S INDUSTRIAL
DEFENDER.



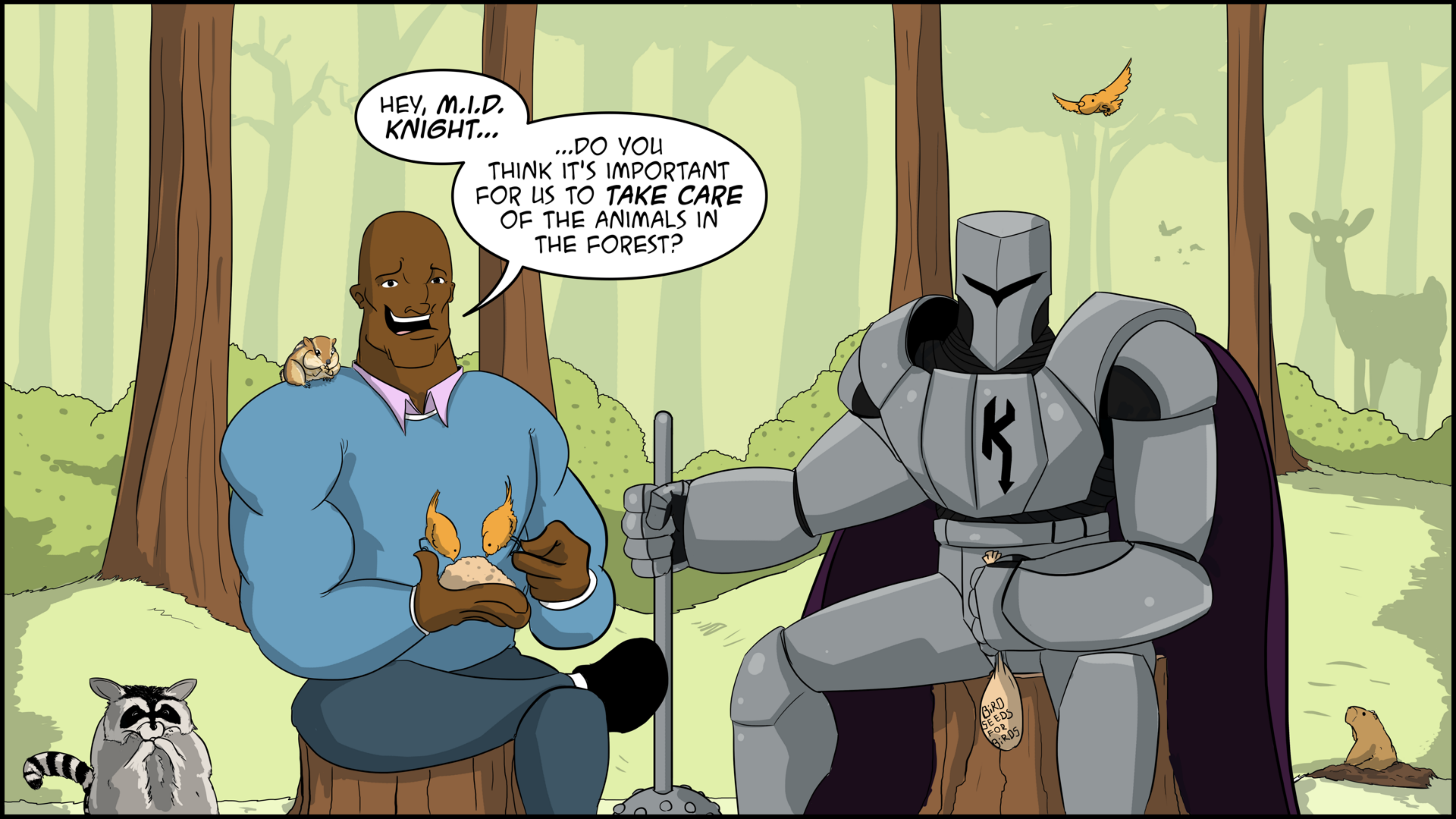
MIDNITE!!!

SLIMBOY-FAT

FRESH JEFF & the Jazzy Prince

HEY, M.I.D.
KNIGHT...

...DO YOU
THINK IT'S IMPORTANT
FOR US TO **TAKE CARE**
OF THE ANIMALS IN
THE FOREST?





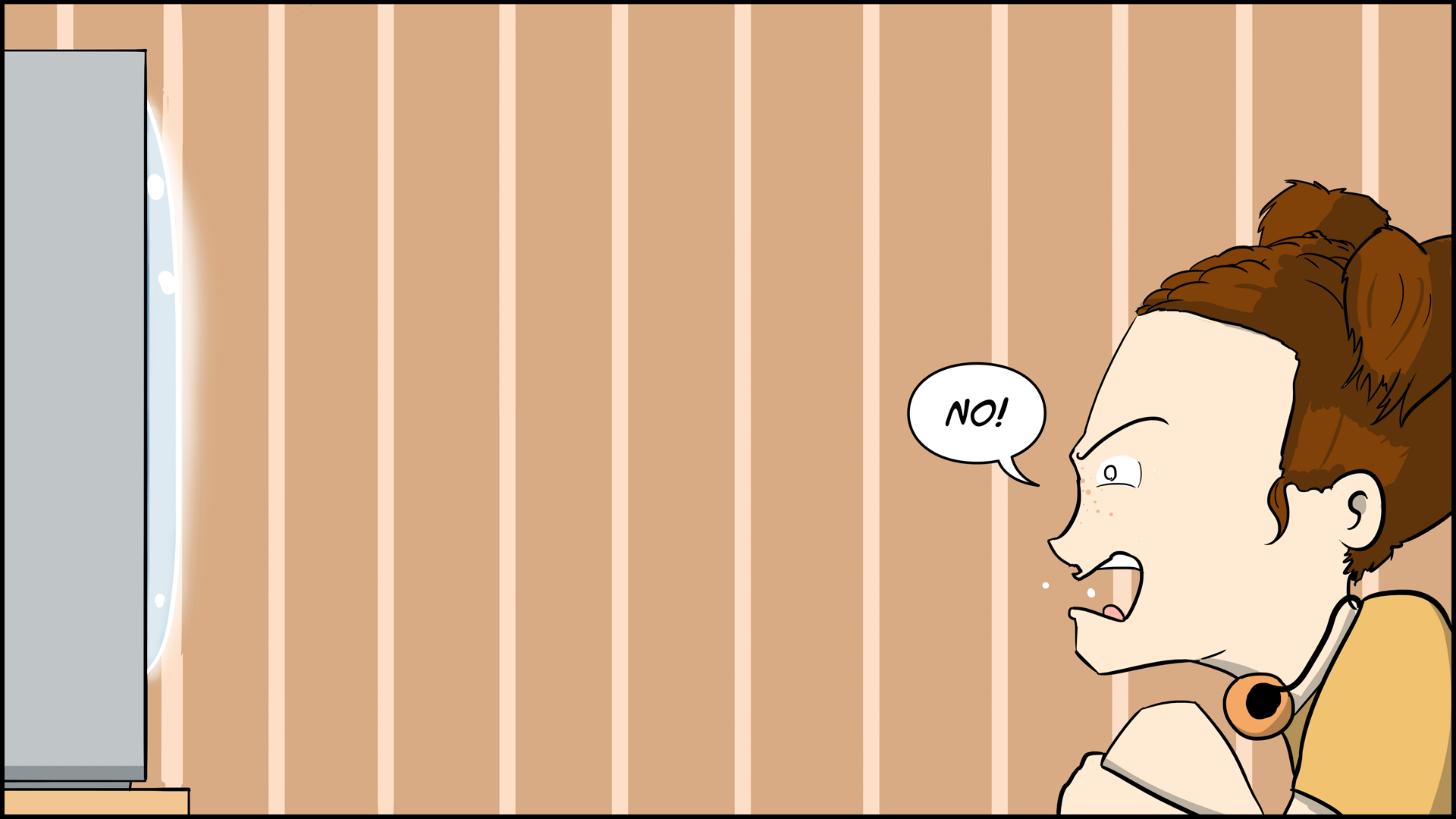
OF COURSE
IT IS, WADE.

YESSS!!!

LOVE
AMINALS!

SO DON'T GO DUMPING
YOUR **DEAD BATTERIES**
IN THE WOODS.

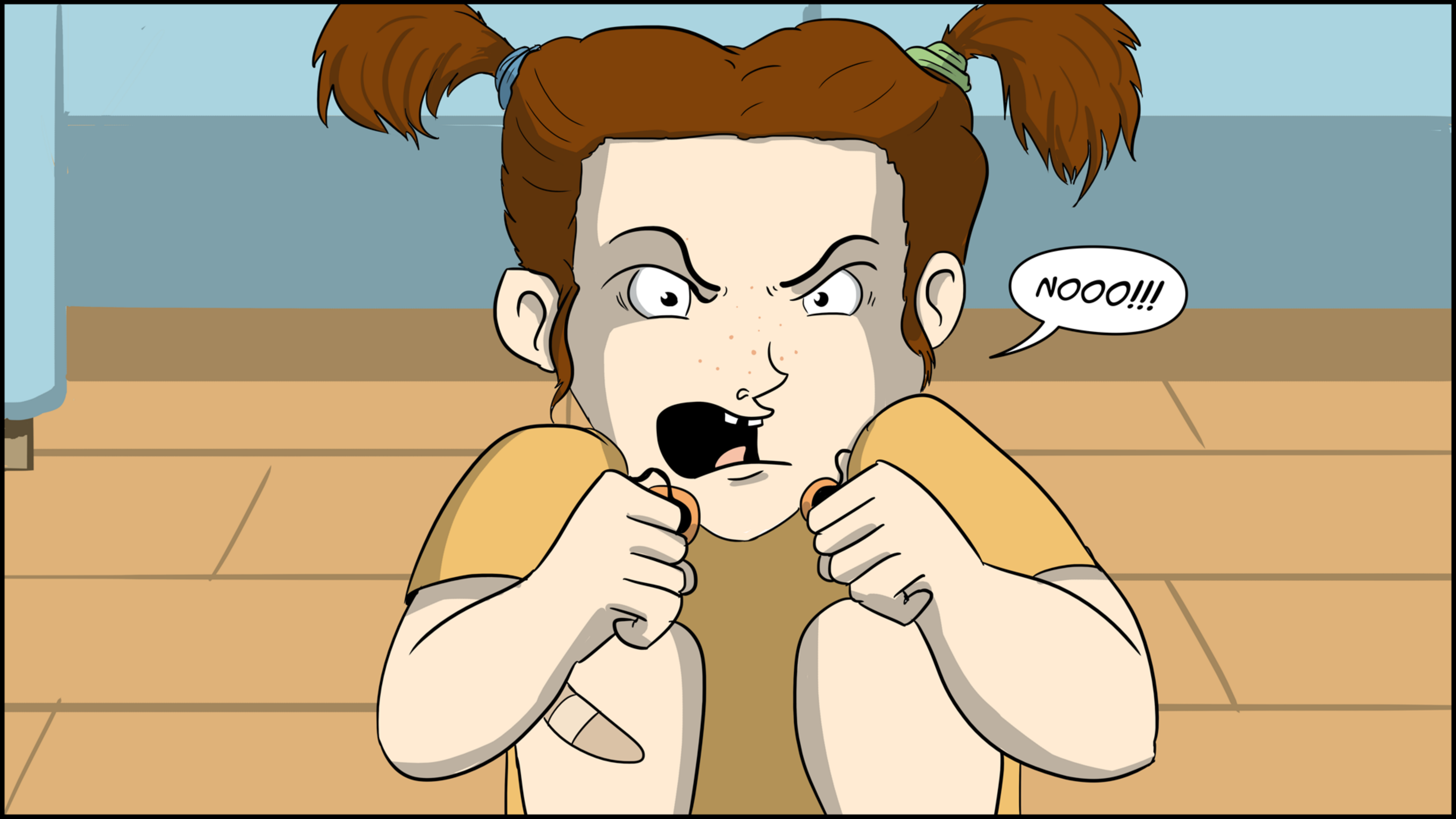




NO!

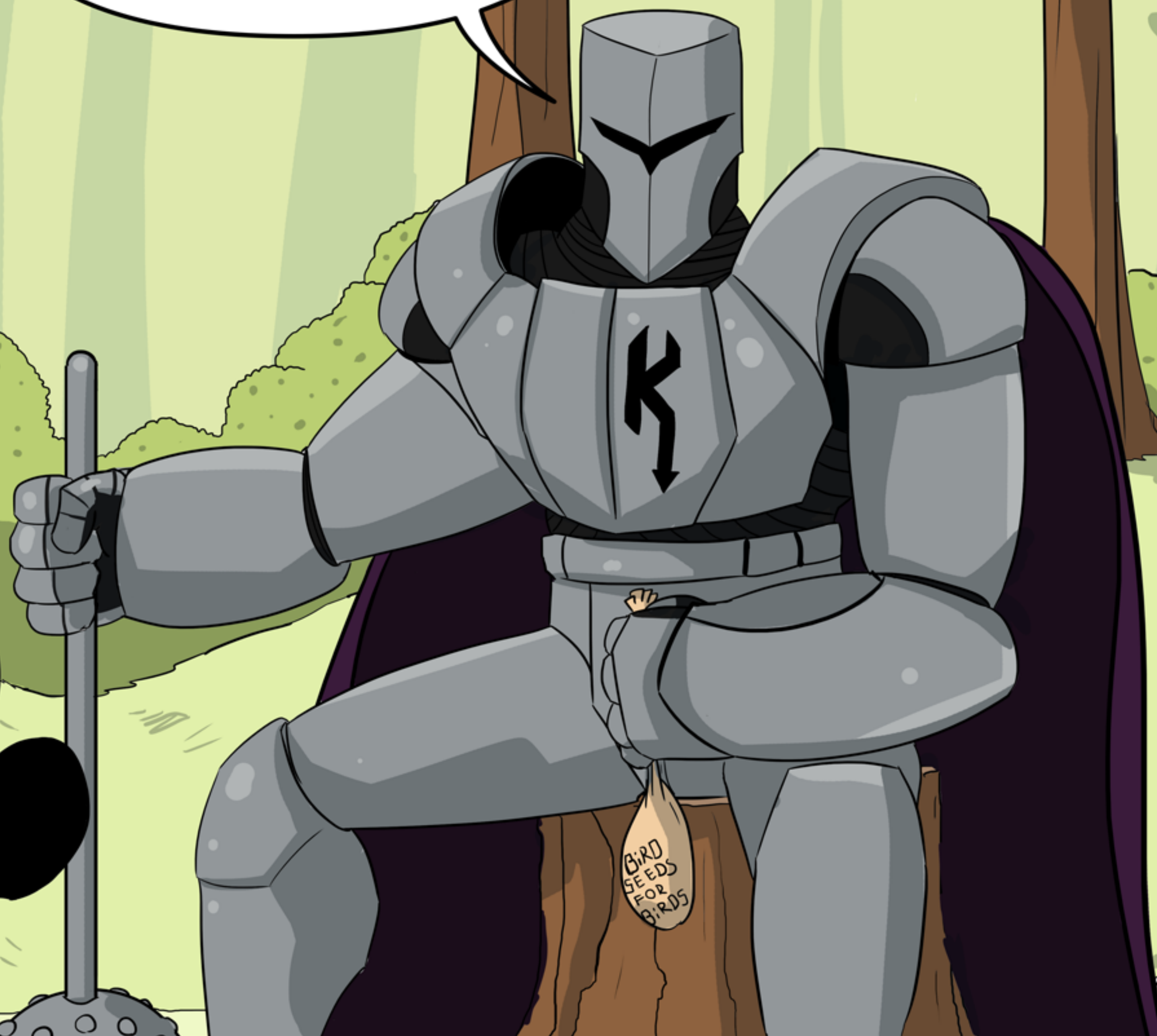


AND DON'T FLUSH YOUR
BUSTED CELL PHONES
DOWN THE TOILET.



NOOO!!!

REMEMBER, IF
SOMETHING BECOMES A
PART OF THE GROUND AND
THE WATER, IT BECOMES A
PART OF **ALL LIFE** THAT
SURROUNDS YOU.





YOU'RE RIGHT, M.I.D.
KNIGHT. THAT'S WHY
I *ALWAYS* SAY...

TAKE
CARE OF
NATURE AND
NATURE WILL
TAKE CARE
OF YOU!

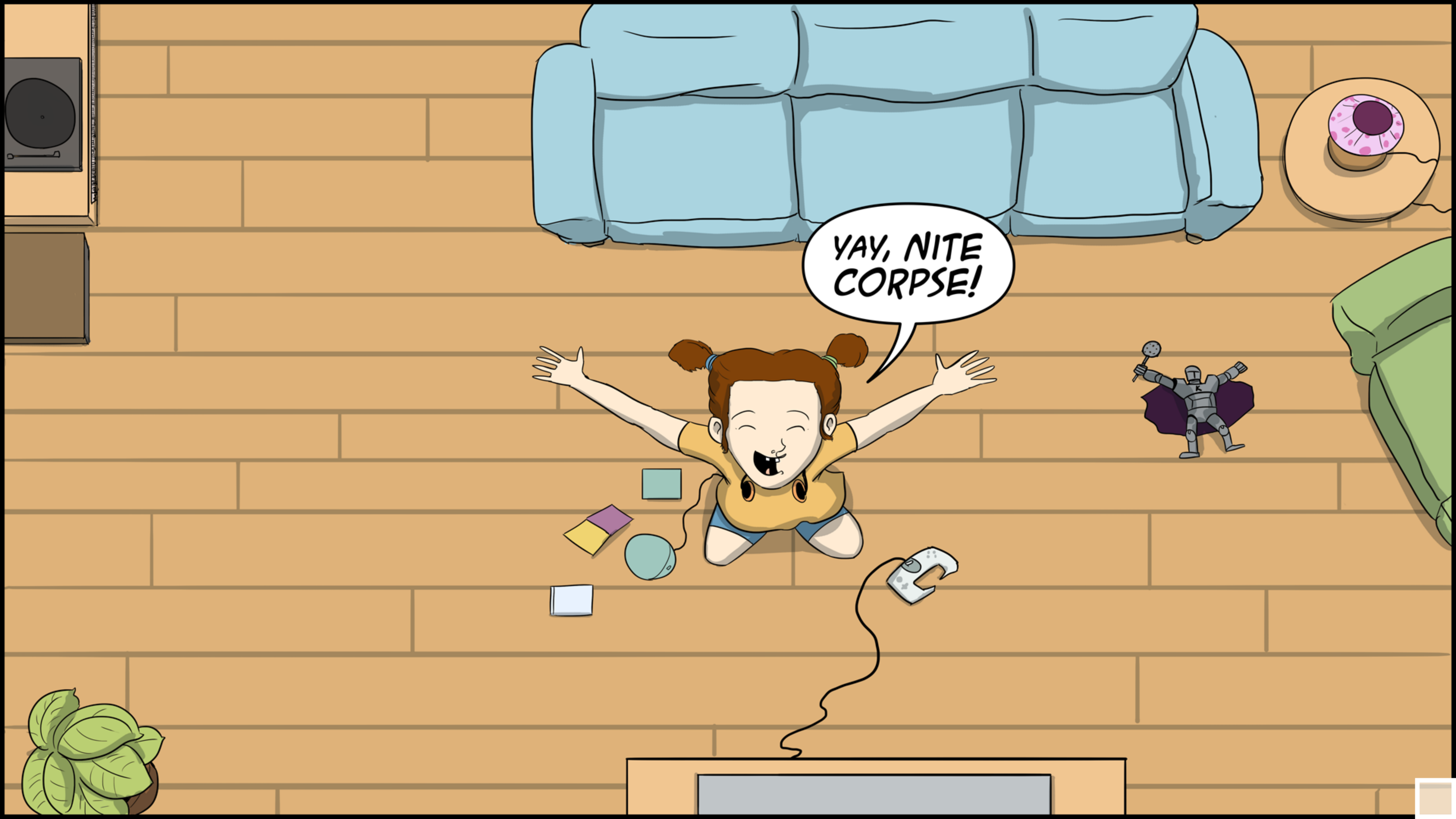
NO ANIMALS
WERE MAIMED
OR MANGLED
WHILE FILMING
THIS MESSAGE.

THIS MESSAGE WAS PAID FOR BY KNIGHT CORP



A BETTER TODAY. A SAFER TOMORROW

PRETTY SHARP



YAY, NITE
CORPSE!

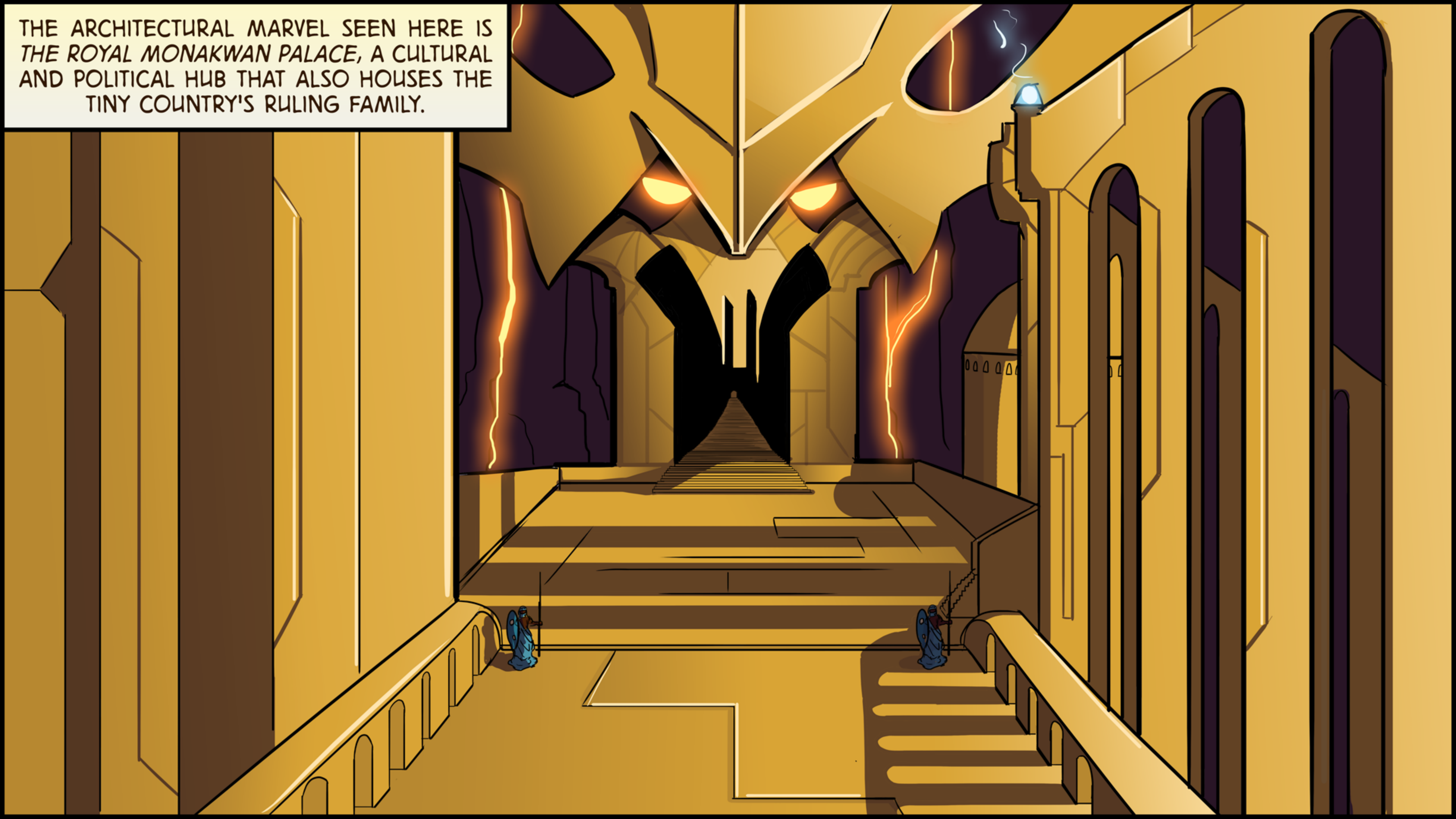
CHAPTER TWO ROYAL GRUMBLE



THIS IS THE SECRETIVE ISLAND NATION
OF *MONAKWA*. FEW HAVE HEARD OF
IT, EVEN FEWER HAVE WITNESSED IT.

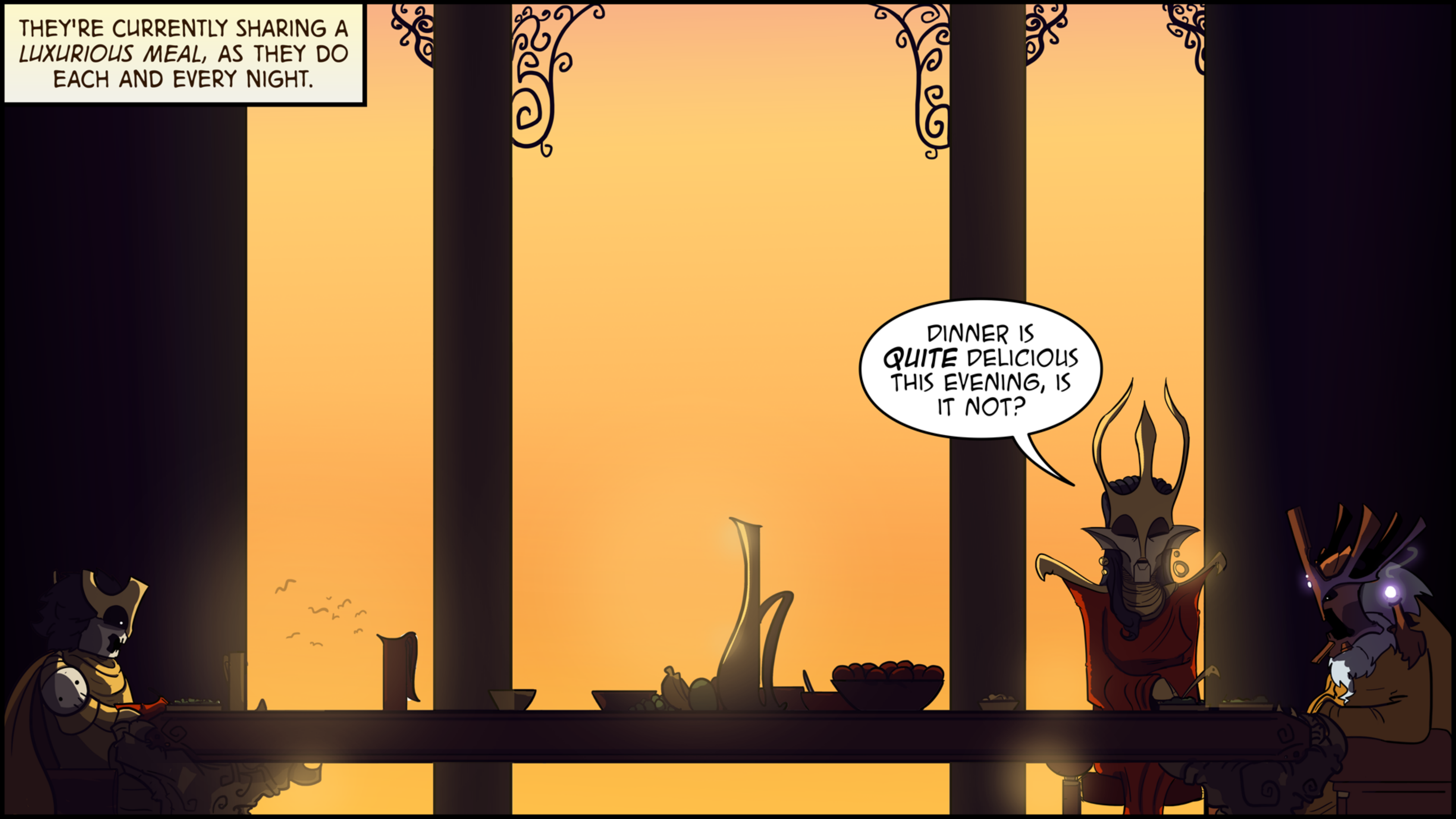


THE ARCHITECTURAL MARVEL SEEN HERE IS *THE ROYAL MONAKWAN PALACE*, A CULTURAL AND POLITICAL HUB THAT ALSO HOUSES THE TINY COUNTRY'S RULING FAMILY.



THEY'RE CURRENTLY SHARING A
LUXURIOUS MEAL, AS THEY DO
EACH AND EVERY NIGHT.

DINNER IS
QUITE DELICIOUS
THIS EVENING, IS
IT NOT?





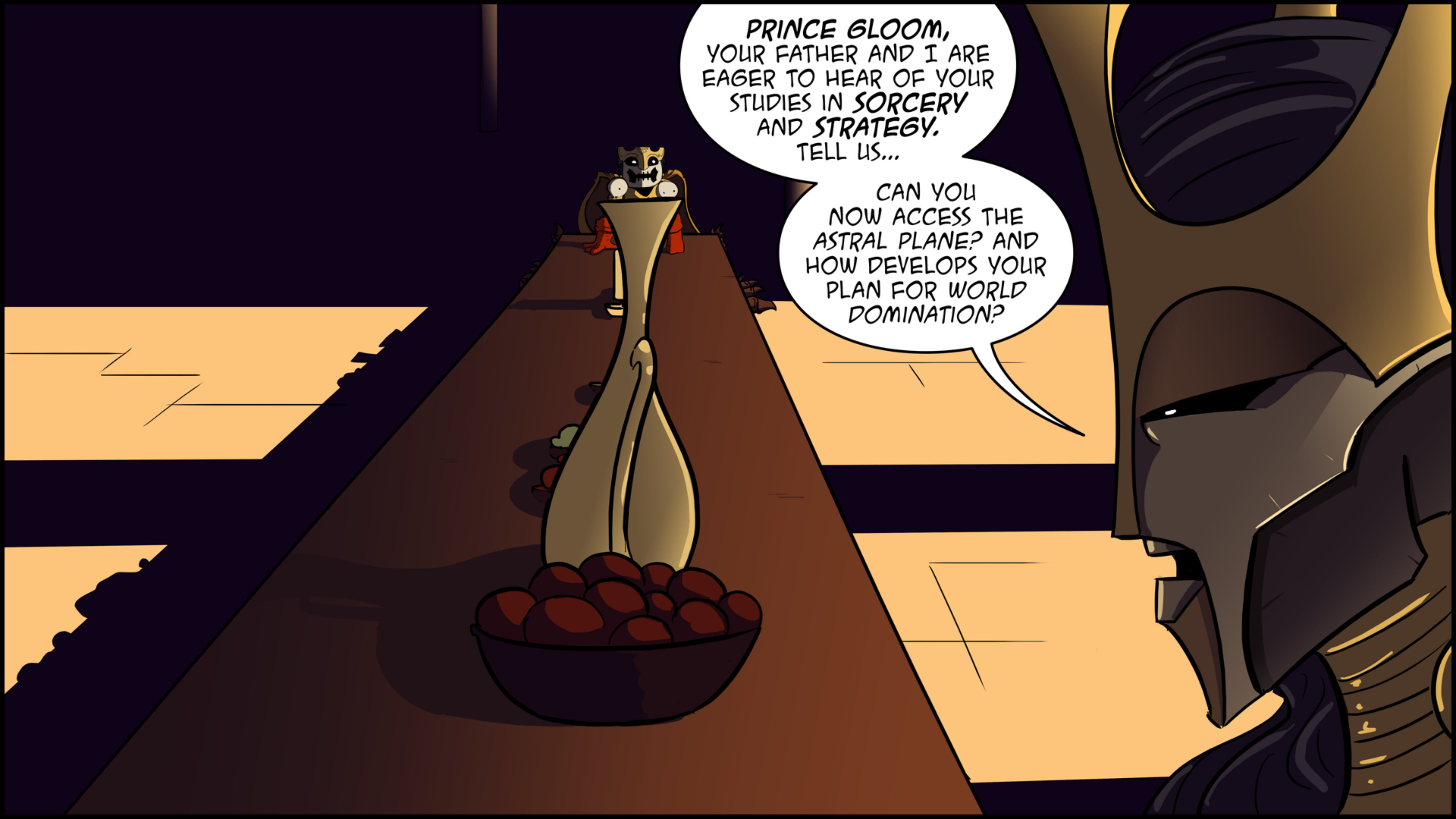
YES, POSITIVELY
SCRUMPTIOUS.



INCONTESTABLY
DELECTABLE.



UHHH,
IT'S OKAY,
I GUESS.



PRINCE GLOOM,
YOUR FATHER AND I ARE
EAGER TO HEAR OF YOUR
STUDIES IN *SORCERY*
AND *STRATEGY*.
TELL US...

CAN YOU
NOW ACCESS THE
ASTRAL PLANE? AND
HOW DEVELOPS YOUR
PLAN FOR WORLD
DOMINATION?

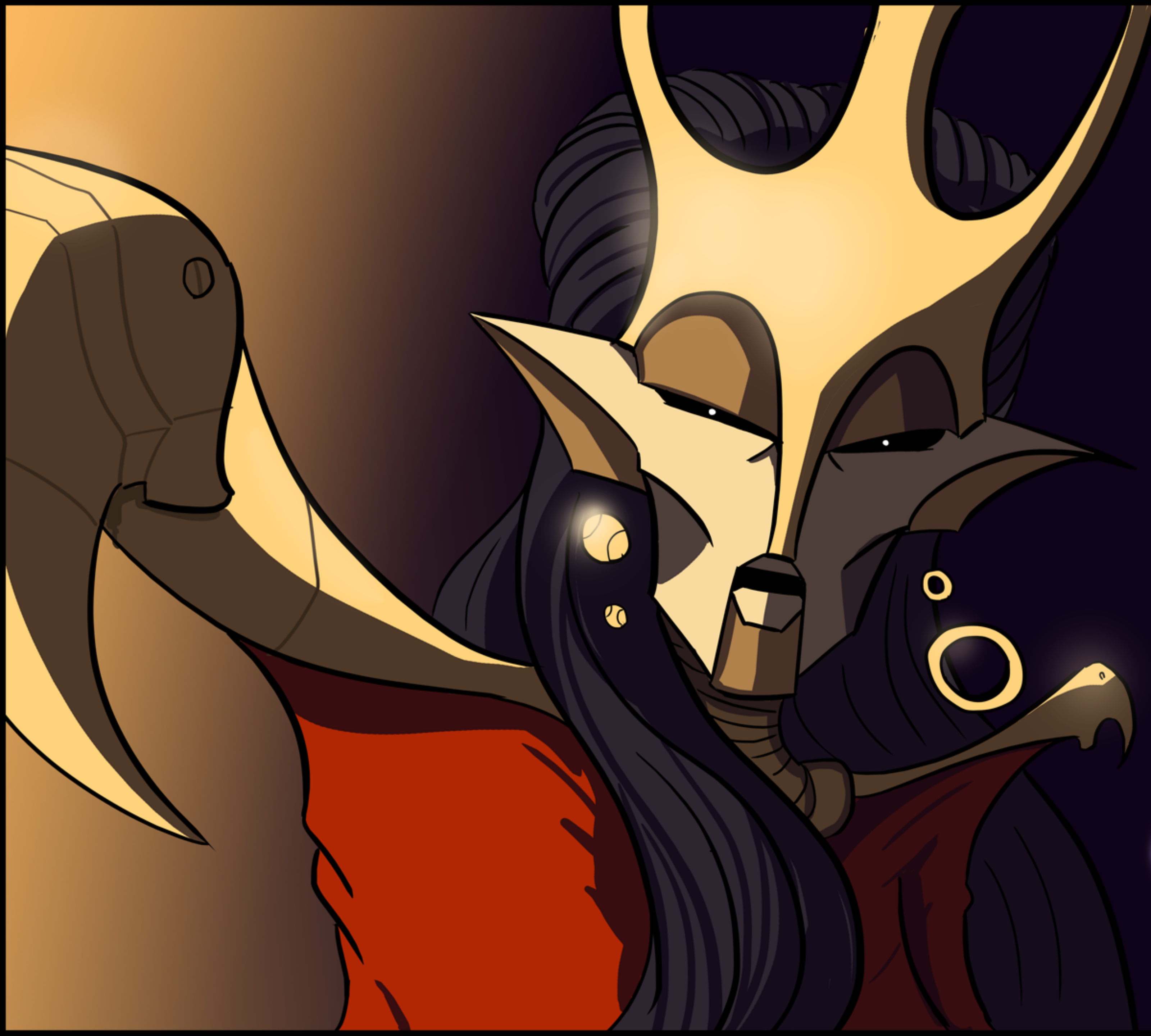
AW C'MON, MOM!
NOT THIS MALARKEY
AGAIN!!!

CAN'T WE HAVE *ONE*
MEAL WITHOUT NAGGING
ME ABOUT SORCERY *THIS*
AND DOMINATION
THAT?!





PRINCE,
YOUR MOTHER
AND I ARE AWARE
OF YOUR *PASSION*
FOR SCIENCE. BUT
IN TRUTH...



...WE FIND
YOUR EXTENSIVE
INTEREST IN IT TO BE
UNHEALTHY. WE THINK
IT **BEST** IF SCIENCE
REMAINS YOUR
HOBBY...





...AND YOU
ACCEPT *MAGICAL*
DOMINATION OF
EARTH AS YOUR
CAREER.



≡SIGH≡
YOU JUST DON'T
UNDERSTAND.

SCIENCE
ISN'T SIMPLY MY
HOBBY. IT'S MY
LIFE.

YOUR
LIFE SHOULD BE
RULING MONAKWA AND
TAKING OVER THE
WORLD.

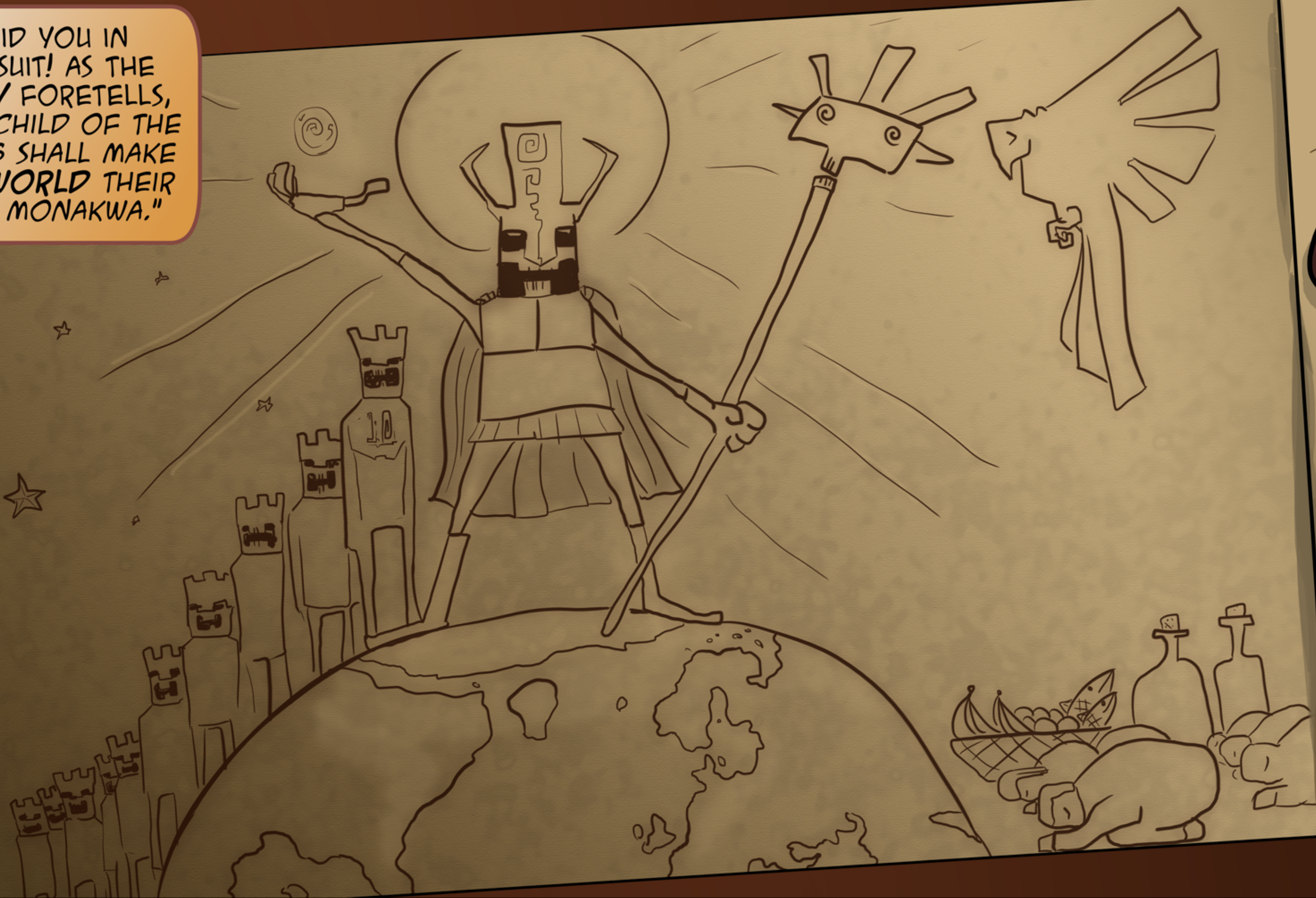


THE QUEEN
SPEAKS TRUE, SON.
GLOBAL DOMINANCE
SHALL BE YOUR
DESTINY.

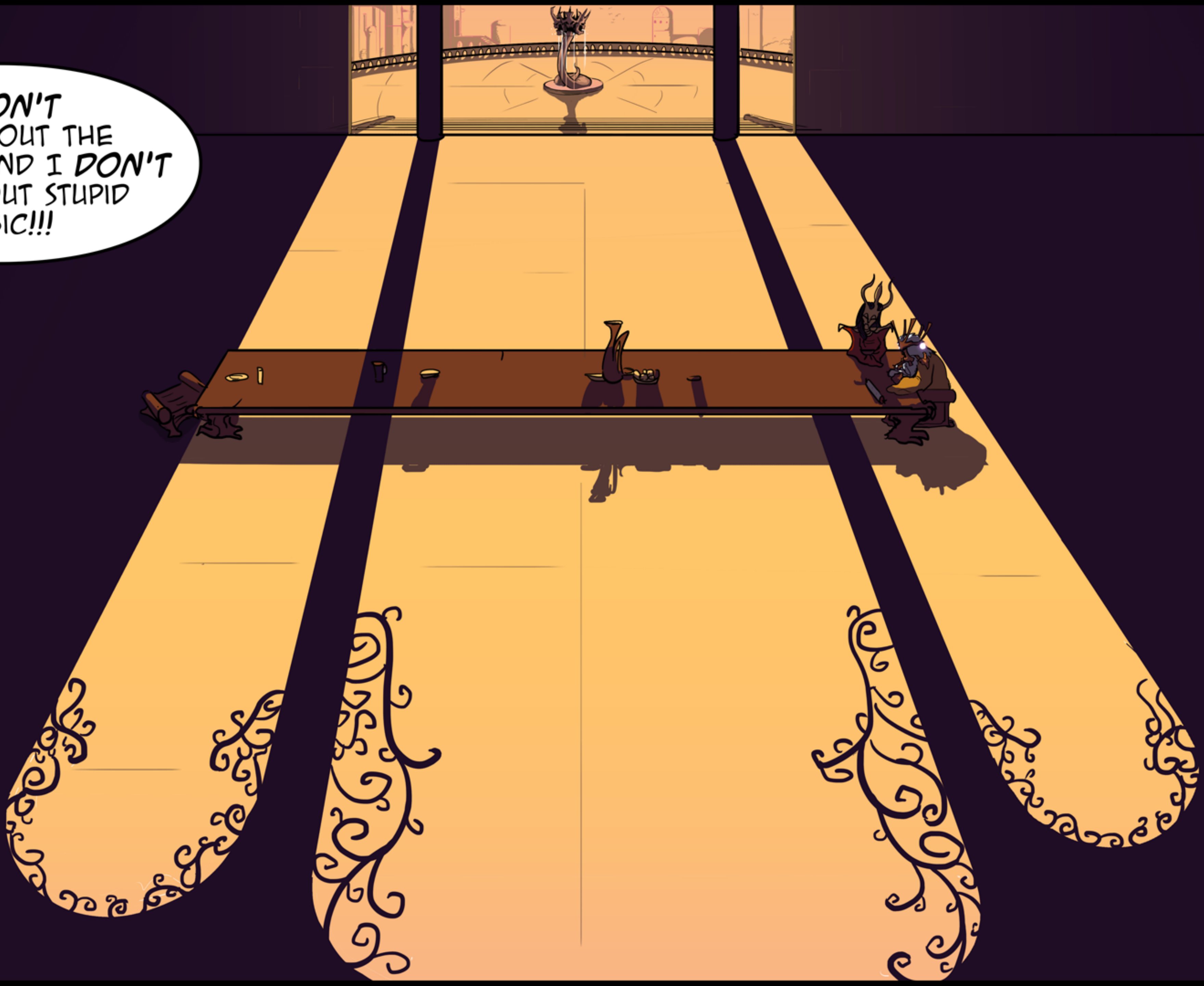


WE SPENT YEARS ABDUCTING
THE WORLD'S *FINEST* MYSTICS
AND ELDERS TO INSTRUCT YOU
IN THE *INTANGIBLE ARTS...*

...AND AID YOU IN
YOUR PURSUIT! AS THE
PROPHECY FORETELLS,
"THE FIRST CHILD OF THE
TENTH KING SHALL MAKE
THE VERY **WORLD** THEIR
PERSONAL MONAKWA."



I **DON'T**
CARE ABOUT THE
PROPHECY AND I **DON'T**
CARE ABOUT STUPID
MAGIC!!!



LATER THAT EVENING, PRINCE GLOOM
RUMINATES IN HIS ROYAL ROOM.

WHAT DO YOU
DO WITH A DEAD
CHEMIST?

56137.327

Ba





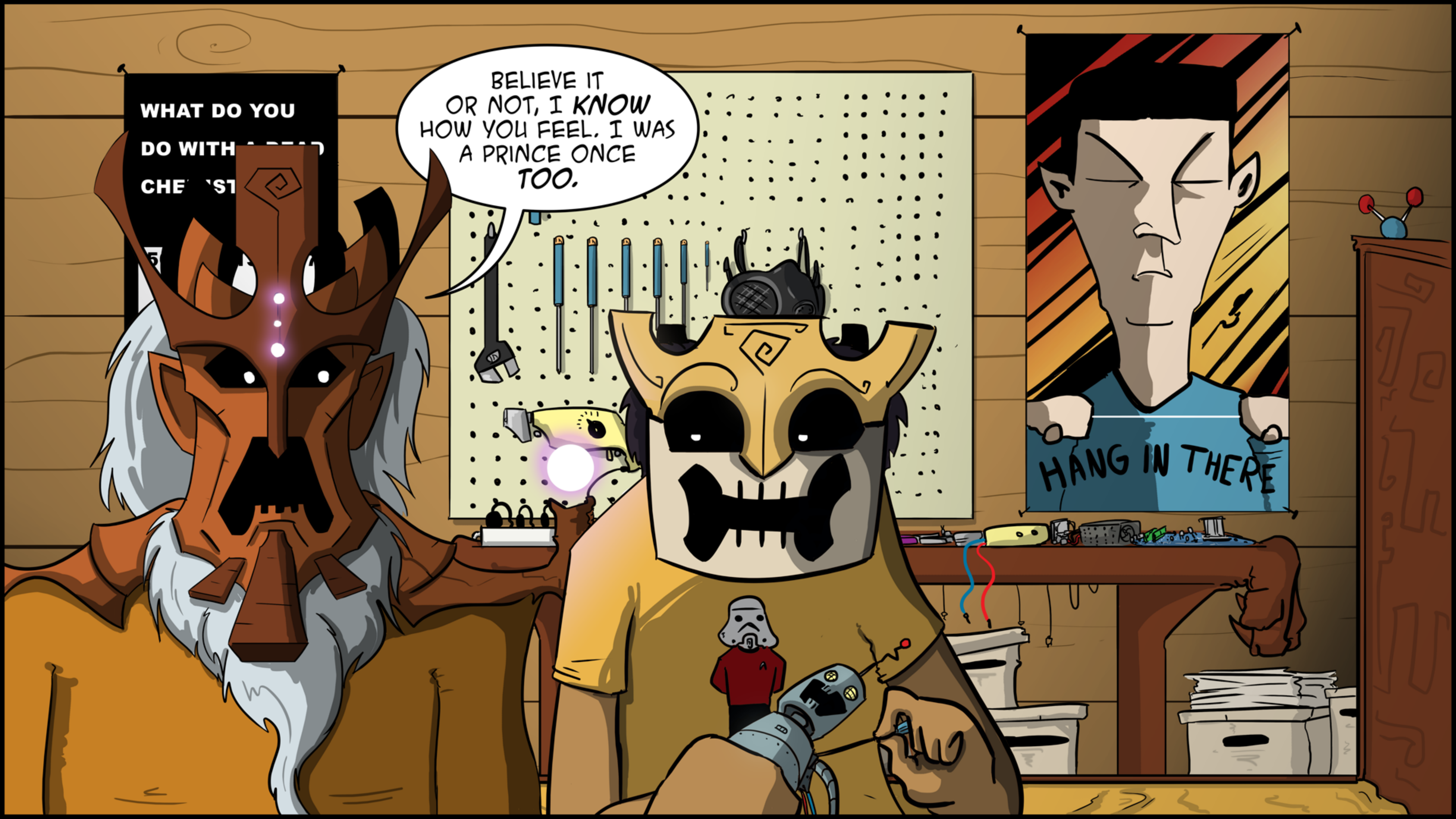
KNOCK
KNOCK!

OH, HI,
HERE TO **HASSLE**
ME MORE, YOUR
MAJESTY?

WHAT DO YOU
DO WITH A DEAD
CHEST

BELIEVE IT
OR NOT, I *KNOW*
HOW YOU FEEL. I WAS
A PRINCE ONCE
TOO.

HANG IN THERE



I KNOW
RIGHT NOW I
SHOULD TELL
YOU...

"GET IT
TOGETHER, BOY!
YOU **MUST** EMBRACE
YOUR ROYAL DUTIES!!
MONAKWA COMES
FIRST!!!"

BUT I
WON'T.

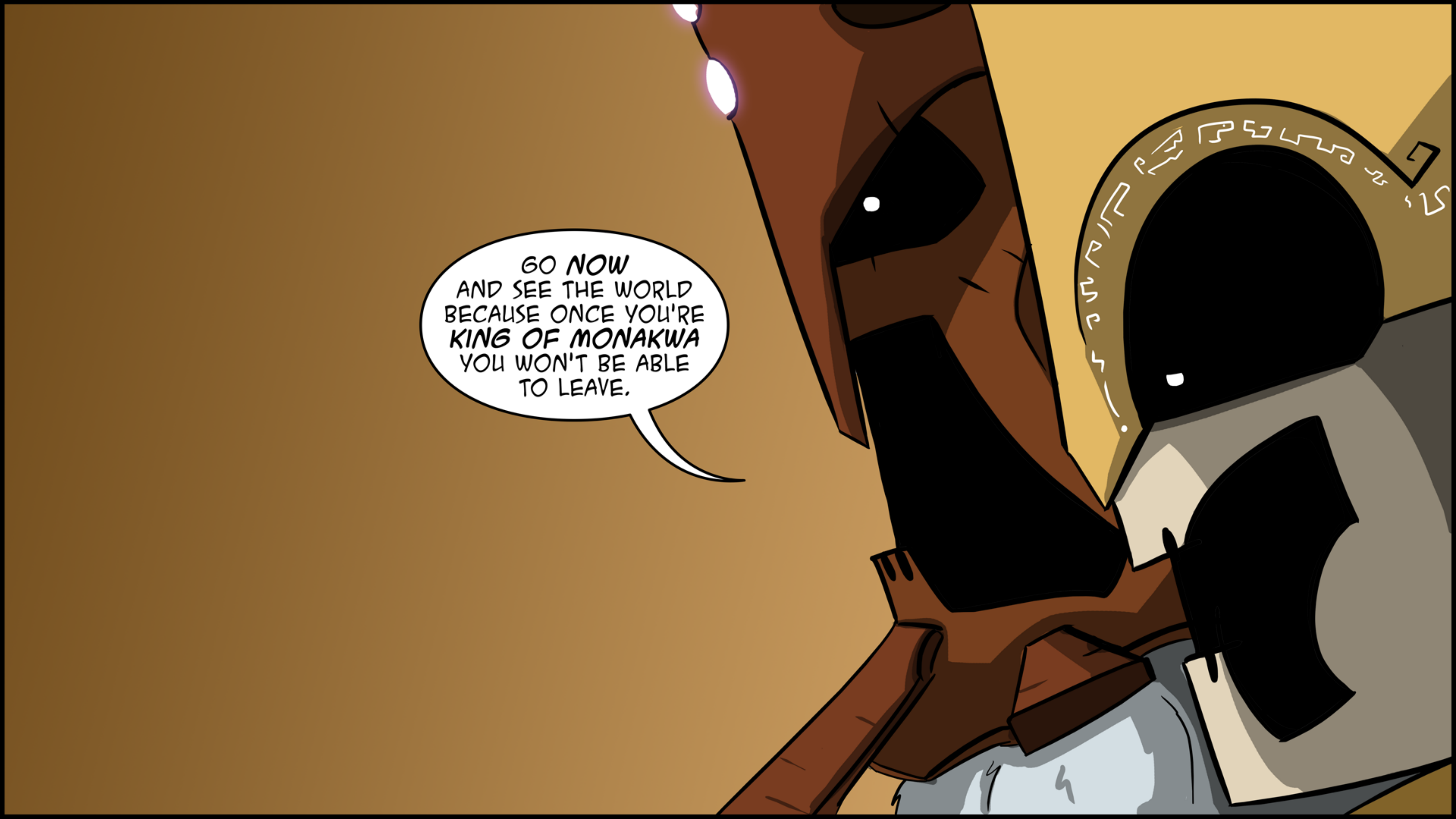


WHAT DO YOU
DO WITH A DEAD
"EMIS"

56

INSTEAD,
I'M GOING TO
TELL YOU WHAT I
WISH SOMEONE
TOLD ME--

HANG IN THERE



GO NOW
AND SEE THE WORLD
BECAUSE ONCE YOU'RE
KING OF MONAKWA
YOU WON'T BE ABLE
TO LEAVE.



INEVITABLY,
SOMETHING IN OUR
KINGDOM WILL **ALWAYS**
REQUIRE MY ROYAL
ATTENTION.

FRANKLY,
I'M **STUCK**
HERE.

BUT
YOU'RE
NOT.

THAT'S WHY I'M GOING
TO PAY FOR YOU TO **TRAVEL**
THE WORLD. I'LL FOOT THE BILL
AS LONG AS YOU **PROMISE** TO
RETURN AND FULFILL YOUR
ROYAL DUTIES.

WHAT DO YOU

DO WITH A DEAD

EMIS'

56

HANG IN THERE



WHOA,
REALLY? THIS
WILL BE TOTALLY
EPIC! I'M GONNA
DO SO MUCH
SCIENCE!!!



CHAPTER THREE *THE CURSE*



GALAXIES AWAY ON VALORONIA,
THE IDYLIC PLANET'S RENOWNED
CALM HAS BEEN SUPPLANTED BY
RIOTOUS COMMOTION.

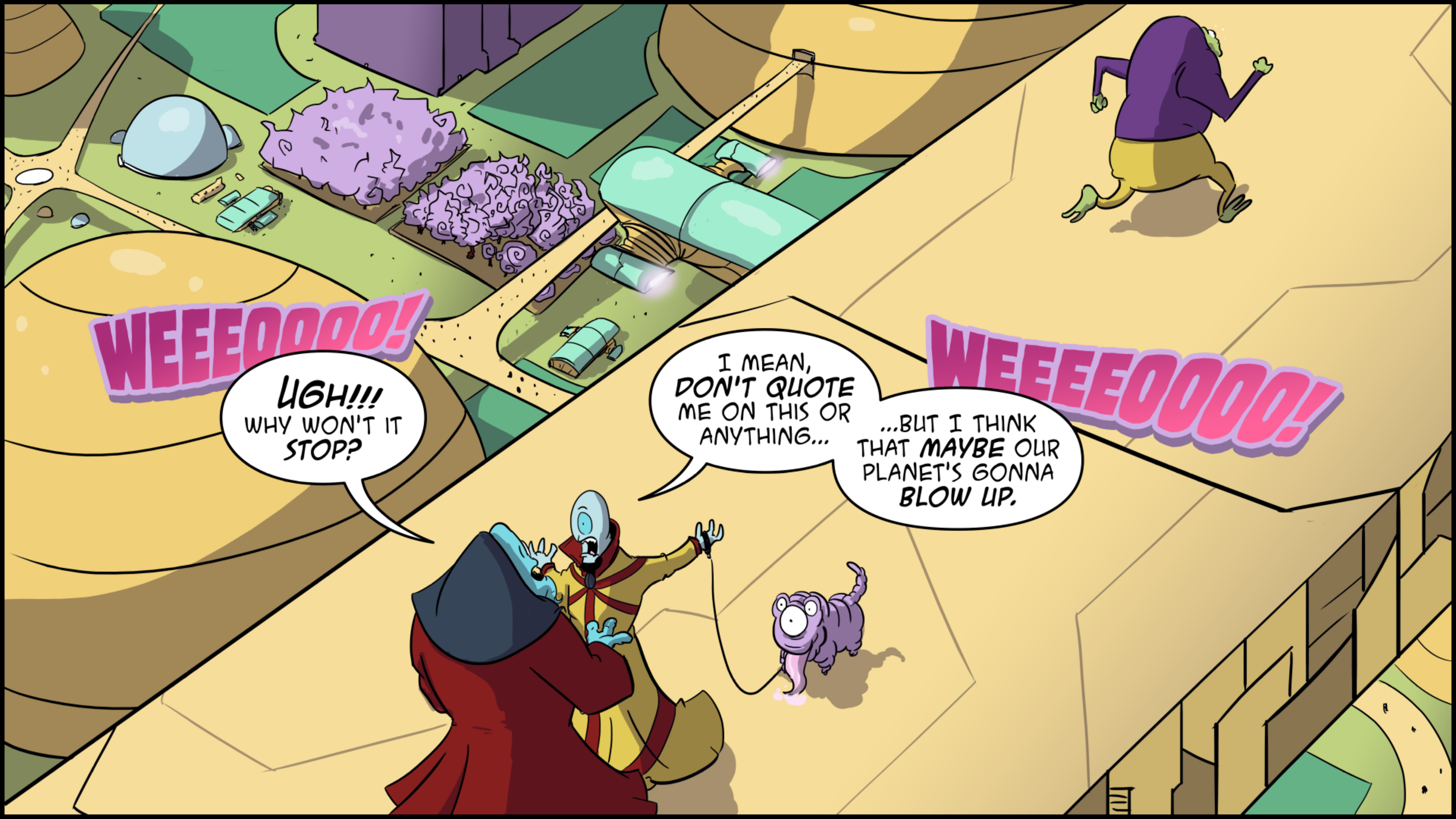
WEEEOOOO!
WEEEOOOO!

AHHHHH!!!

WHAT'S
THAT HORRIBLE
SOUND?!

I'M NOT
SURE! SIRENS,
I GUESS?





WEEEE0000!

LIGH!!!
WHY WON'T IT
STOP?

I MEAN,
DON'T QUOTE
ME ON THIS OR
ANYTHING...

...BUT I THINK
THAT **MAYBE** OUR
PLANET'S GONNA
BLOW UP.

WEEEE0000!



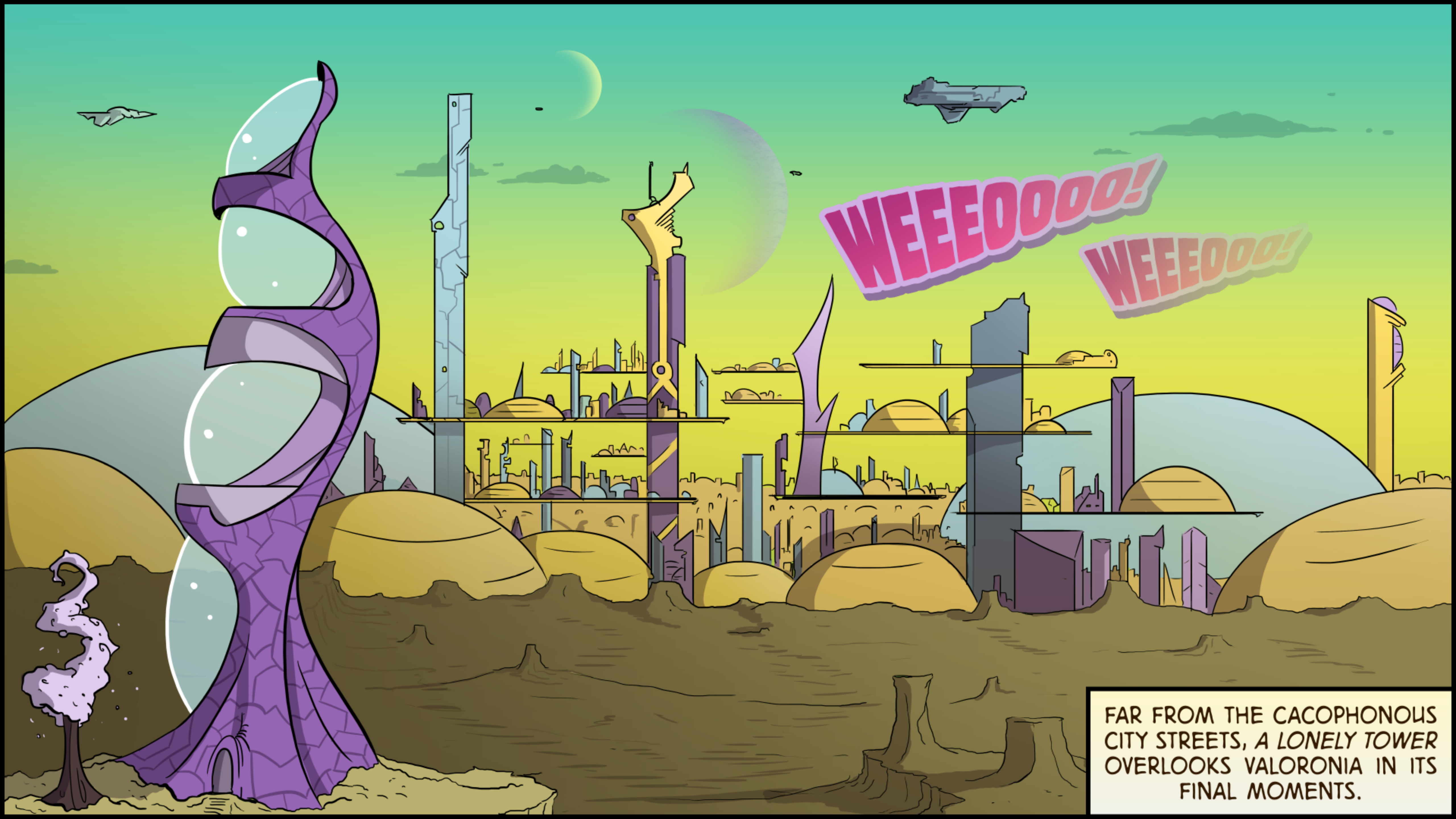
GORT, HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ON AN EXPLODING PLANET?

NO!
YOU?

NO!
WHAT DO WE DO!?

WE SHOULD PROBABLY...
RUN!

I'M IN NO WAY EMOTIONALLY OR PHYSICALLY EQUIPPED TO HANDLE THIS!



WEEEOOOO!

WEEEOOOO!

FAR FROM THE CACOPHONOUS
CITY STREETS, A *LONELY TOWER*
OVERLOOKS VALORONIA IN ITS
FINAL MOMENTS.

IT HAS BEEN BOTH *MY GIFT*
AND *MY CURSE* TO KNOW OF
THIS PLANET'S IMPENDING
DESTRUCTION.



MY CURSE TO KNOW
OF THIS CALAMITY WITH
NO WAY TO HALT
THE END.



BUT MY GIFT, MY
CHILD, TO GIVE YOU
ANOTHER CHANCE
AMONG THE
STARS.



GO FORTH,
LITTLE ONE.

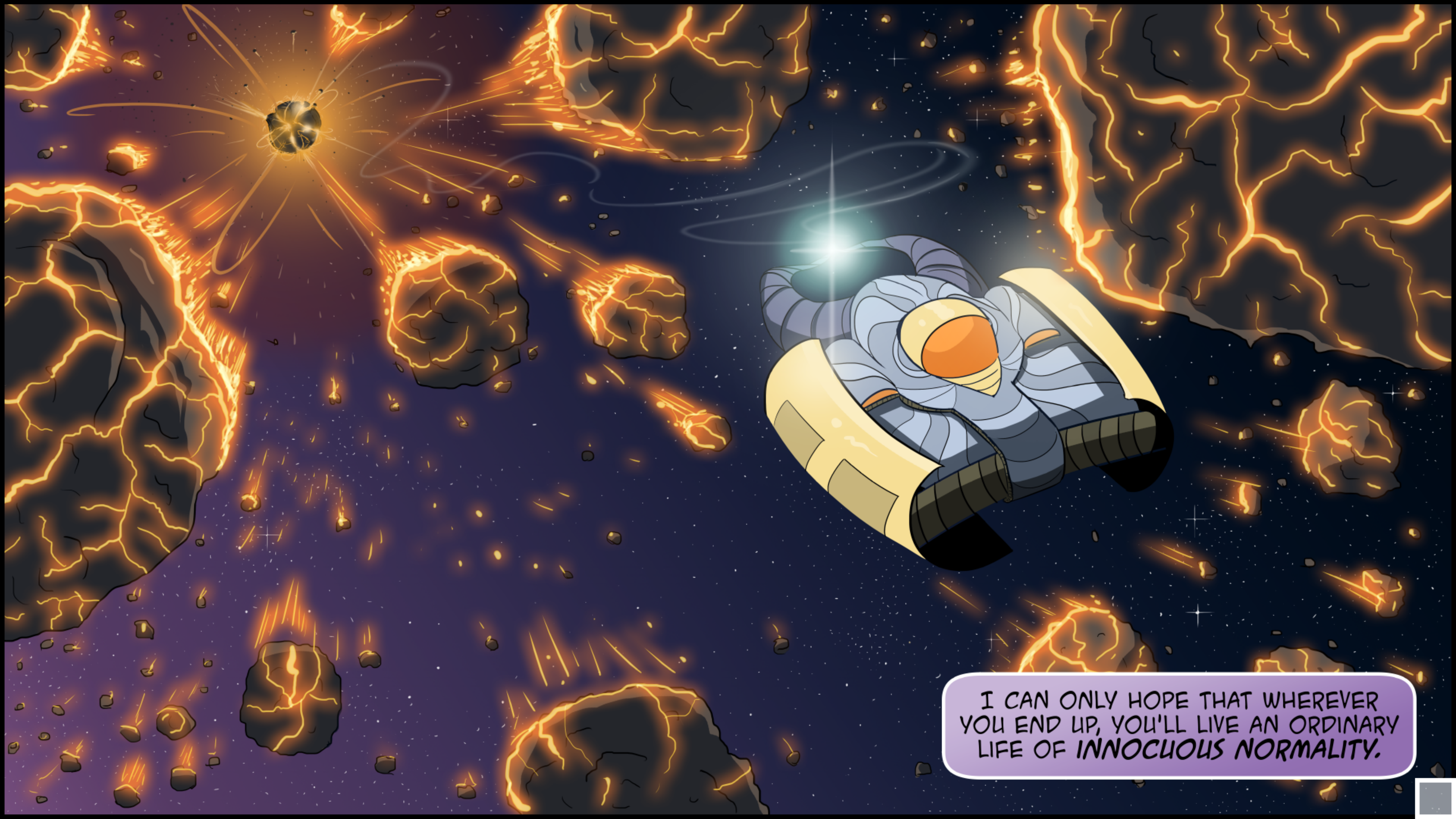


THE *UNIVERSAL LEGACY* OF OUR
PASSABLY PLAIN PLANET MUST NOW
LIVE ON THROUGH YOU.





I CRAFTED YOUR TINY SHIP IN SECRET,
DESIGNING IT TO SAFELY TRANSPORT YOU
TO THE NEAREST *HOSPITABLE* WORLD.



I CAN ONLY HOPE THAT WHEREVER
YOU END UP, YOU'LL LIVE AN ORDINARY
LIFE OF *INNOCHOUS NORMALITY*.

CHAPTER FOUR *FEELING FINE*



ON THE EDGE OF MEGAVILLE
COUNTY RESTS THE *CALIGATA*
NATURE PRESERVE, HOME TO
COUNTLESS CREATURES.

OH! HELLO,
LI'L *MARMOT*.
YOU'RE JUST **TOO**
CUTE. HOW ARE
YOU TODAY?

meep.





HESTER HERMAN IS ALL GROWN UP NOW, A STUDENT OF WILDLIFE ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION AT MEGAVILLE CITY COLLEGE.

HUH?

JUST
DUMP IT
HERE!

meep?



YO
PHIL, YOU
WATCH THAT
GAME LAST
NIGHT?

≡SIGH≡
YEP.

THE STEEDS
ARE CRAP THIS
YEAR, *BILL*.



TAKE CARE OF NATURE AND NATURE WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU... RIGHT, WADE? I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU AND M.I.D. KNIGHT ARE LETTING THIS HAPPEN!

GEEZ, THEY GAVE US WAAAY MORE BARRELS THIS TIME.

meep!



Meep!

AHHH!

Chomp

meep?



STILL REELING FROM HER ENCOUNTER,
HESTER ATTENDS CLASS AT MEGAVILLE
CITY COLLEGE THE NEXT DAY.

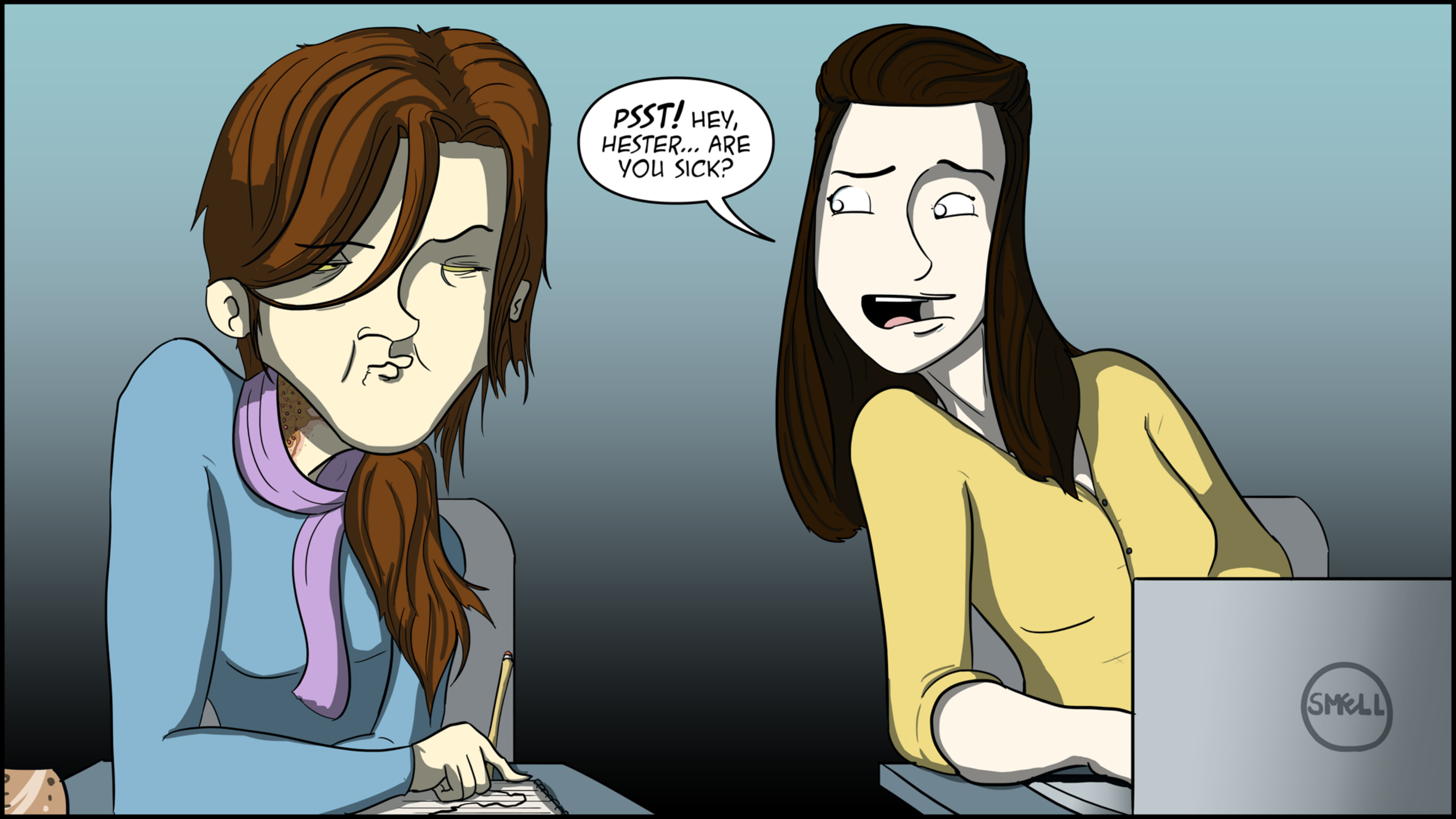


I HOPE
THAT YOUR
FIELD WORK
IS GOING
WELL.

REMEMBER,
YOUR **PROGRESS**
REPORTS ARE DUE
IN TWO DAYS.


DANG,
MY HEAD IS **SO**
STUFFED UP THAT
I CAN BARELY BREATHE
RIGHT NOW... LET ALONE
WRITE A **LOUSY REPORT!**
WHAT **AWFUL CRUD** DID
I CATCH FROM THAT
FREAKY MARMOT
MONSTER?





PSST! HEY,
HESTER... ARE
YOU SICK?





HOWEVER, MORE
IMPORTANTLY, YOUR
MIDTERM EXAM WILL BE
HELD IN THIS VERY ROOM
NEXT **MONDAY**, WHICH IS
PRECISELY WHAT WE'LL
FOCUS ON NOW.

HUH?
NAAAAH, DINI...
I'M ≡COUGH≡
FINE.



FINE?
JUST HOW STUPID
DO YOU THINK I AM?
YOU'RE SICK AS A DOG!
YOU NEED TO GO TO
A HOSPITAL.



ONE OF
THOSE *MEDICAL*
MEAT MARKETS RUN
BY KNIGHT CORP? *NO*
WAY! I'M GONNA
BE *OKAY.*

YOU'RE
ANYTHING
BUT OKAY, HESTER!
JUST PLEASE TELL ME
WHAT IN THE FLAP
IS GOING ON
WITH YOU.



NAG, NAG, NAG! GEEZ,
I'LL TELL YOU AS LONG
AS YOU JUST SHUT UP
ABOUT IT.

I GOT BIT
BY A FEKKIN'
RADIOACTIVE
MARMOT! YOU
HAPPY NOW?



PLEASE PARDON MY
INTERRUPTION, MISS
HERMAN...

...BUT OUR CLASS
HAS **SIGNIFICANT**
GROUND WE MUST
COVER TODAY!



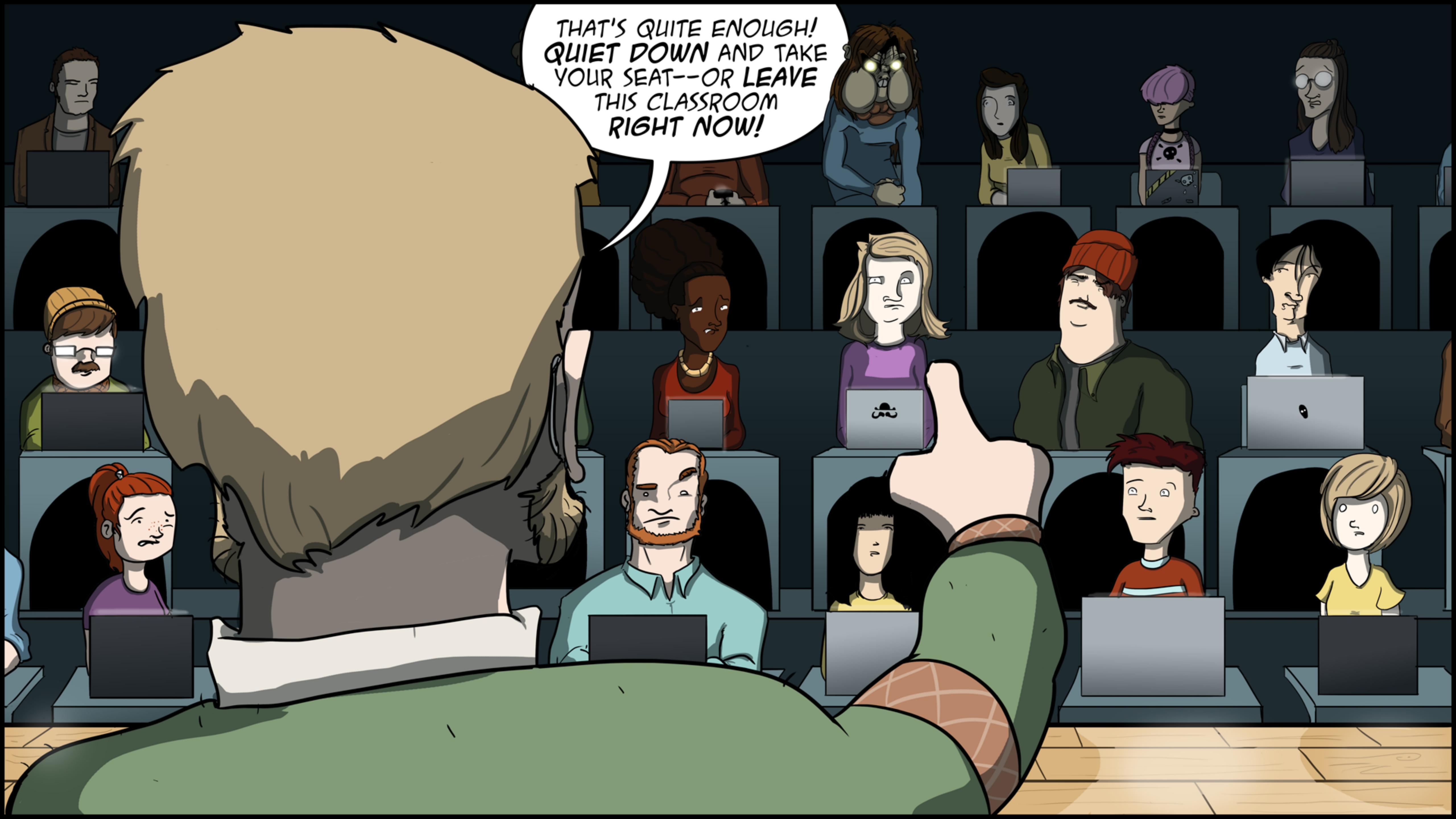
YOUR HIGHLY
DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR IS
COSTING US **VALUABLE**
REVIEW TIME.

≡GRUNT≡
I'M **SOOOO**
SORRY, YOUR
MAJESTY.





HOW VERY
IMPROPER OF ME!
I'VE DISTURBED YOUR
ROYAL REVIEW!!
=SNORT=



THAT'S QUITE ENOUGH!
QUIET DOWN AND TAKE
YOUR SEAT--OR LEAVE
THIS CLASSROOM
RIGHT NOW!



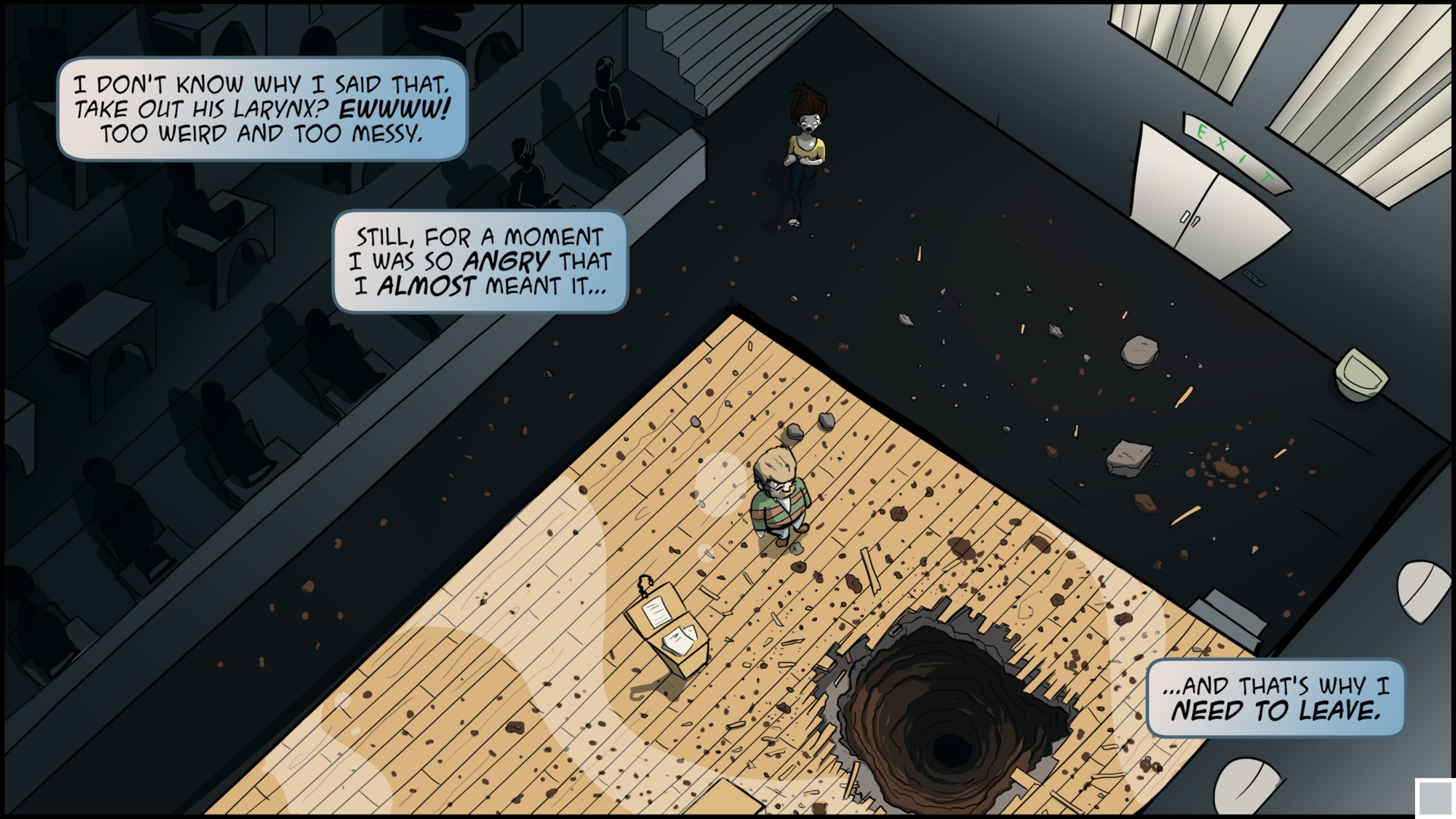
OH, I'LL
TAKE SOMETHING,
PROFESSOR... YOUR
TENDER LITTLE
LARYNX!

NO!
HESTER,
WAIT--



GRRAWRR

AHHH!




I DON'T KNOW WHY I SAID THAT.
TAKE OUT HIS LARYNX? **EWWW!**
TOO WEIRD AND TOO MESSY.

STILL, FOR A MOMENT
I WAS SO **ANGRY** THAT
I **ALMOST** MEANT IT...

...AND THAT'S WHY I
NEED TO LEAVE.

CHAPTER FIVE *ASTRAL PAIN*





I'M ON
THE **VERGE** OF A
BREAKTHROUGH HERE.
I CAN FEEL IT IN THE
BOTTOMLESS PIT
OF MY SOUL.

THIS
RESEARCH WILL
CEMENT MY NAME
IN THE ANNALS OF
**MAGNIFICENT
SCIENCE!**

NOW GROWN IN BODY AND
MIND, GLOOM TOILS AWAY IN
HIS *BASEMENT LABORATORY*
ON MEGAVILLE'S EAST SIDE,
STRIVING TO REACH HIS FULL
SCIENTIFIC POTENTIAL.

BRRRNE!

INCOMING ASTRAL
CALL FROM...
THE KING
ACCEPT?

NOT
NOW, I'M
BUSY!

DON'T WORK

MOVE TO
CERUM "M"

DOUBLE
DOSE

IF NEGATIVE
REACTION?

$\text{C}_2\text{H}_3 \times \text{NoX}$

BRRRNE!
ACCEPT?

BRRNE!

ACCEPT?

NO, I SAID
NOT NN--

Oww!



BRRNE!

ACCEPT?

BRRNE!

INCOMING ASTRAL
CALL FROM...
THE KING
ACCEPT?

≡SIGH≡
SURE, I'LL
ACCEPT.

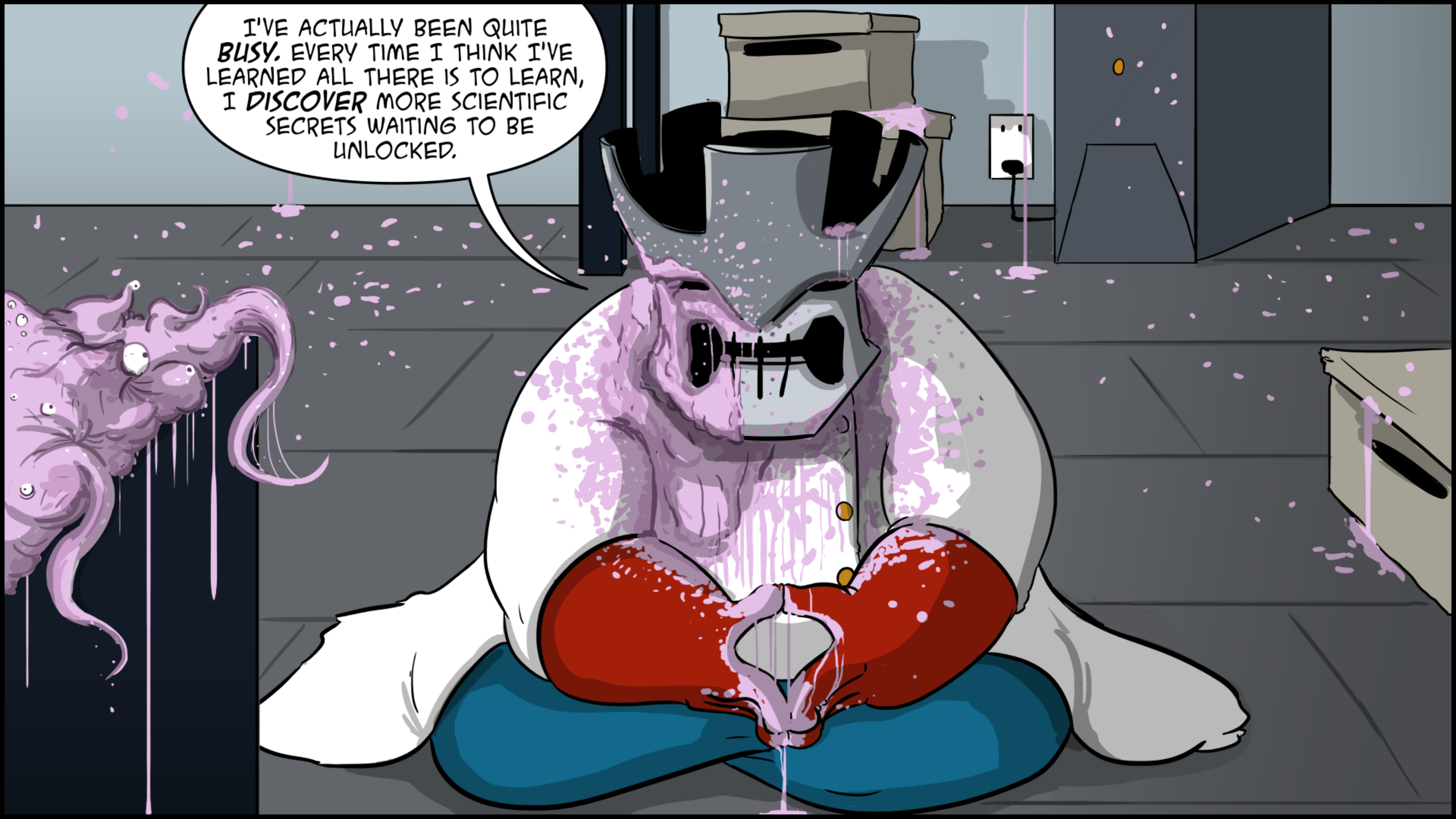
ACCEPTED.

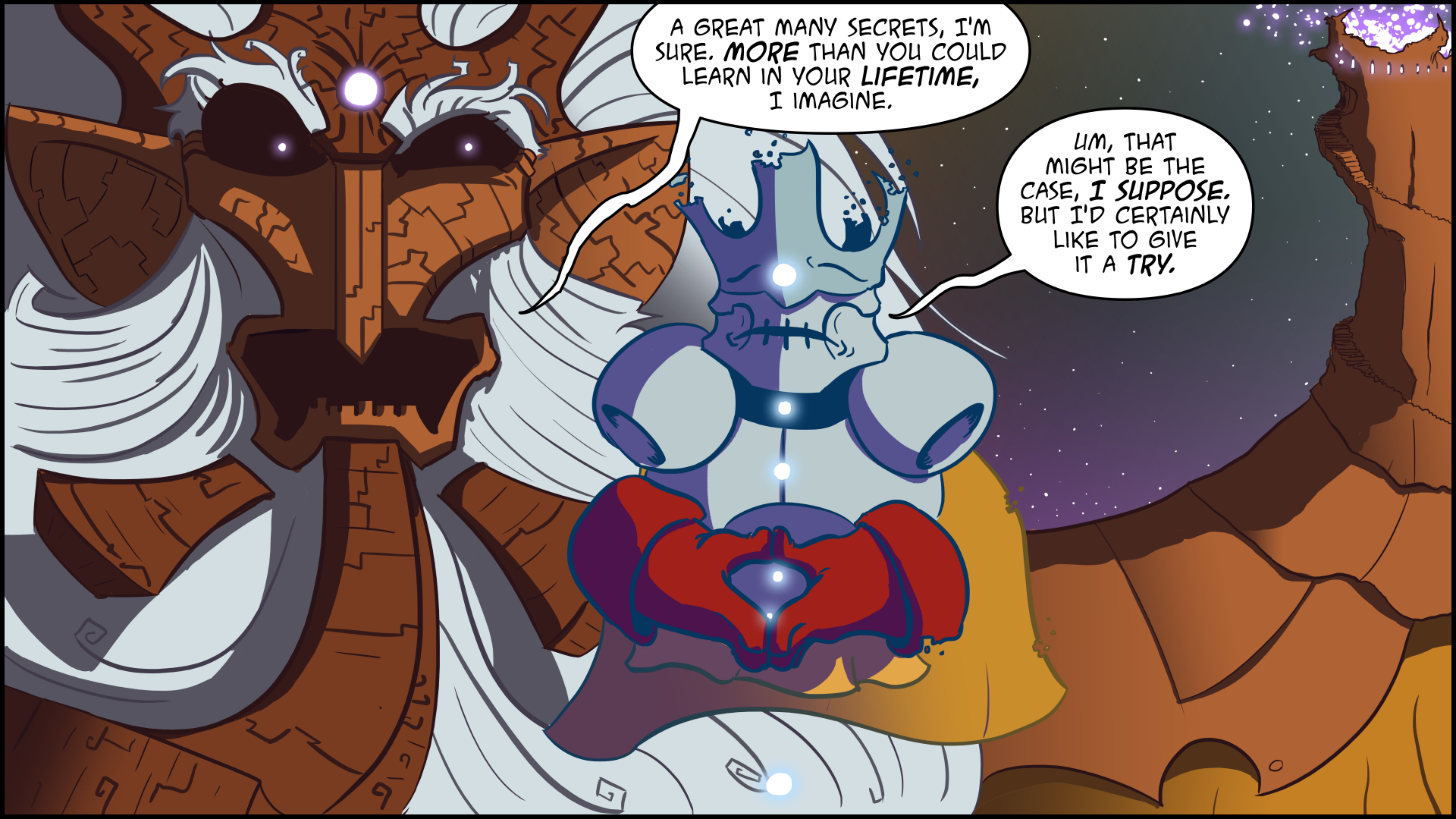


HEY,
DAD.

PRINCE
GLOOM! IT'S BEEN
INTERMINABLY LONG
SINCE WE LAST SPOKE.
HOW ARE YOU,
MY CHILD?

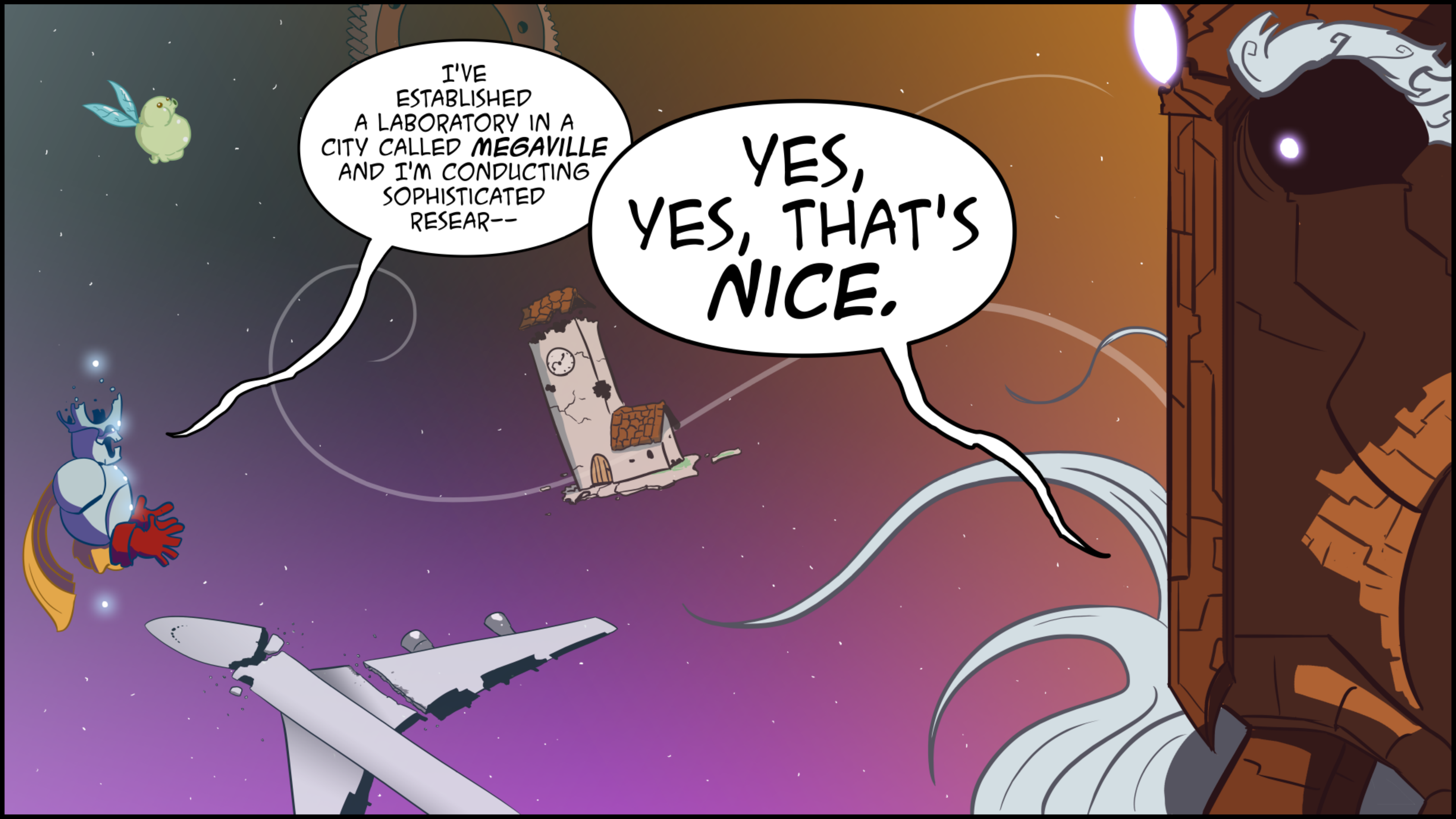
I'VE ACTUALLY BEEN QUITE **BUSY**. EVERY TIME I THINK I'VE LEARNED ALL THERE IS TO LEARN, I **DISCOVER** MORE SCIENTIFIC SECRETS WAITING TO BE UNLOCKED.





A GREAT MANY SECRETS, I'M
SURE. **MORE** THAN YOU COULD
LEARN IN YOUR **LIFETIME**,
I IMAGINE.

UM, THAT
MIGHT BE THE
CASE, **I SUPPOSE**.
BUT I'D CERTAINLY
LIKE TO GIVE
IT A **TRY**.



I'VE
ESTABLISHED
A LABORATORY IN A
CITY CALLED **MEGAVILLE**
AND I'M CONDUCTING
SOPHISTICATED
RESEAR--

YES,
YES, THAT'S
NICE.




I'M GLAD YOU'VE
ENJOYED **FIDDLING**
WITH YOUR LITTLE
EXPERIMENTS.

BUT I'M
LONGING TO
KNOW...

WHEN WILL
YOU **RETURN**
TO US?

HMMRRM
≡GRUMBLE≡



THE WORK
I'M PURSUING IS FAR
TOO VALUABLE FOR ME
TO CEASE AT THIS TIME, NOT
WHEN I'M ON THE BRINK
OF AN **AMAZING**
BREAKTHR--

BZZZZZ!

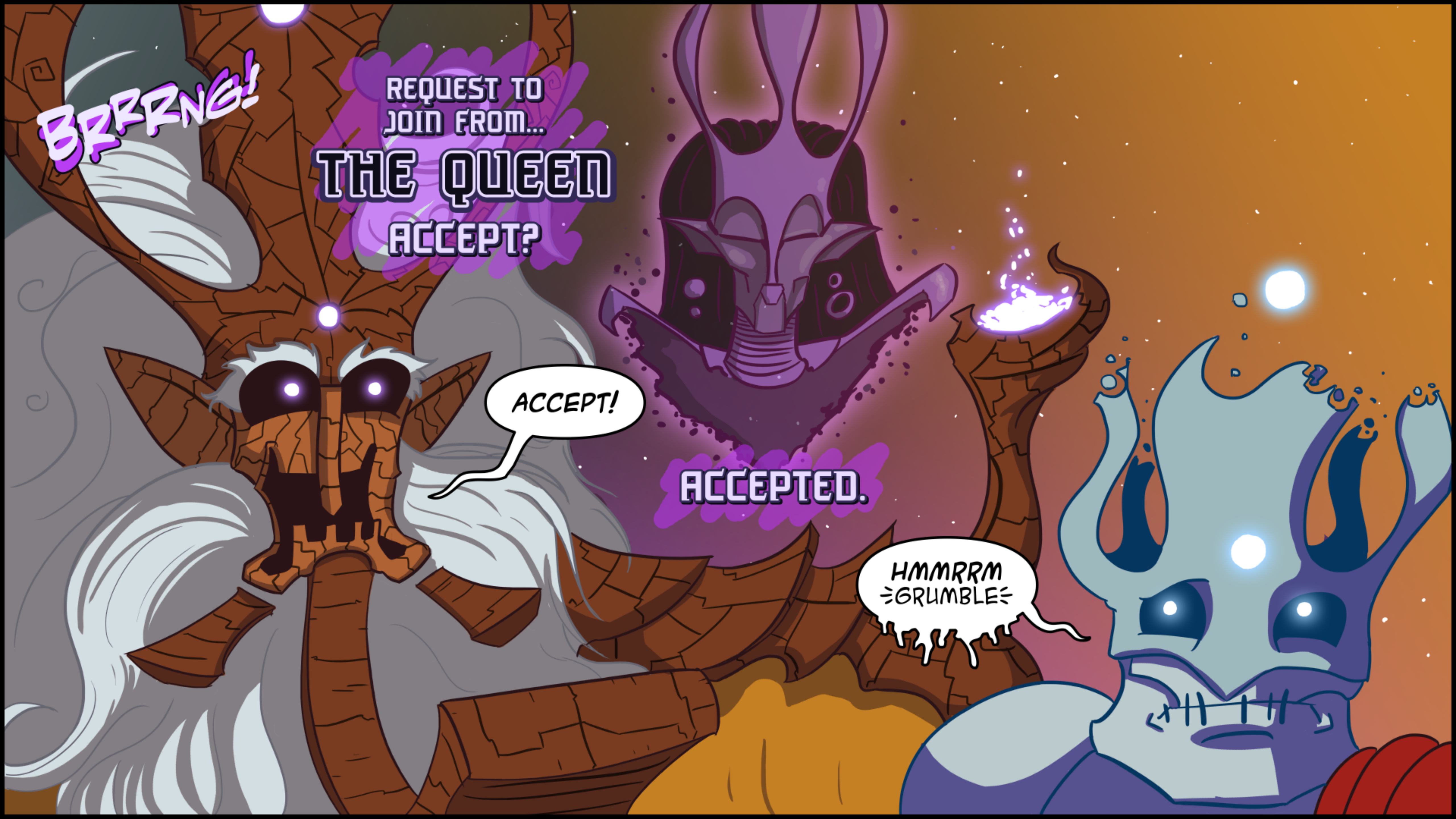
BRRNG!

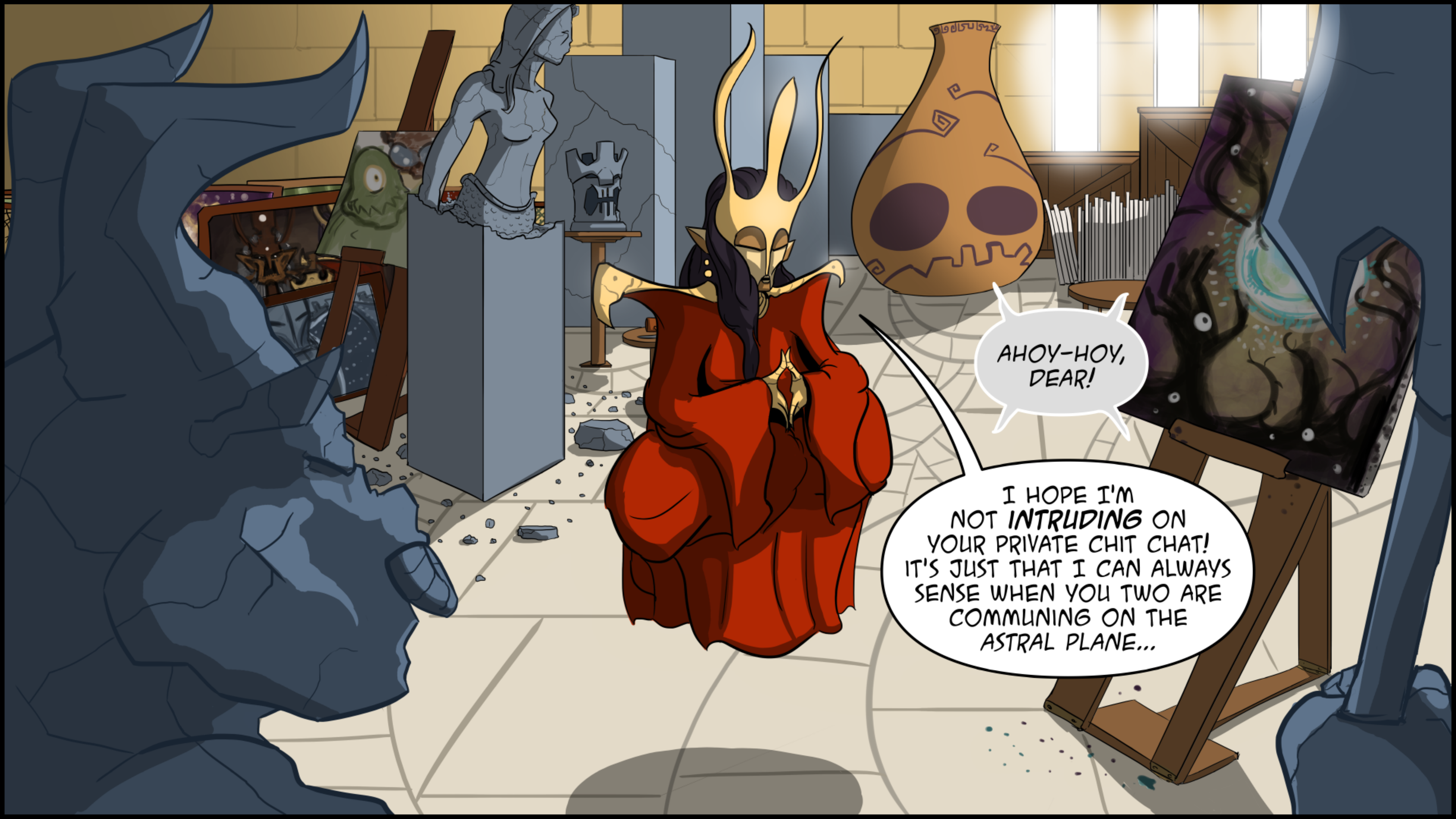
REQUEST TO
JOIN FROM...
THE QUEEN
ACCEPT?

ACCEPT!

ACCEPTED.

HMMRRM
≡GRUMBLE≡





AHOY-HOY,
DEAR!

I HOPE I'M
NOT **INTRUDING** ON
YOUR PRIVATE CHIT CHAT!
IT'S JUST THAT I CAN ALWAYS
SENSE WHEN YOU TWO ARE
COMMUNING ON THE
ASTRAL PLANE...



...AND I
SIMPLY **COULDN'T**
RESIST THE CHANCE
TO JOIN.



YOUR
TIMING IS
IMPECCABLE,
MY LOVE! I WAS
JUST ASKING
OUR SON...


...**WHEN**
HE PLANS TO
RETURN HOME,
CORRECT?

≡SIGH≡
YES.



I'LL COME HOME WHEN I'M READY, OKAY?!?

I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF SEVERAL VITAL PROJECTS. IT'S SIMPLY NOT AN OPTION FOR ME TO ABANDON THEM AT THIS STAGE.



IT'S STILL
THE **SCIENCE**
THING, ISN'T
IT?

I'M
AFRAID SO,
DEAR.



GRRR!
YOU DON'T
GET IT!

THESE
EXPERIMENTS
GIVE *MEANING* TO
MY LIFE. I *WON'T*
STOP THEM. AND
YOU *CAN'T* MAKE
ME RETURN.

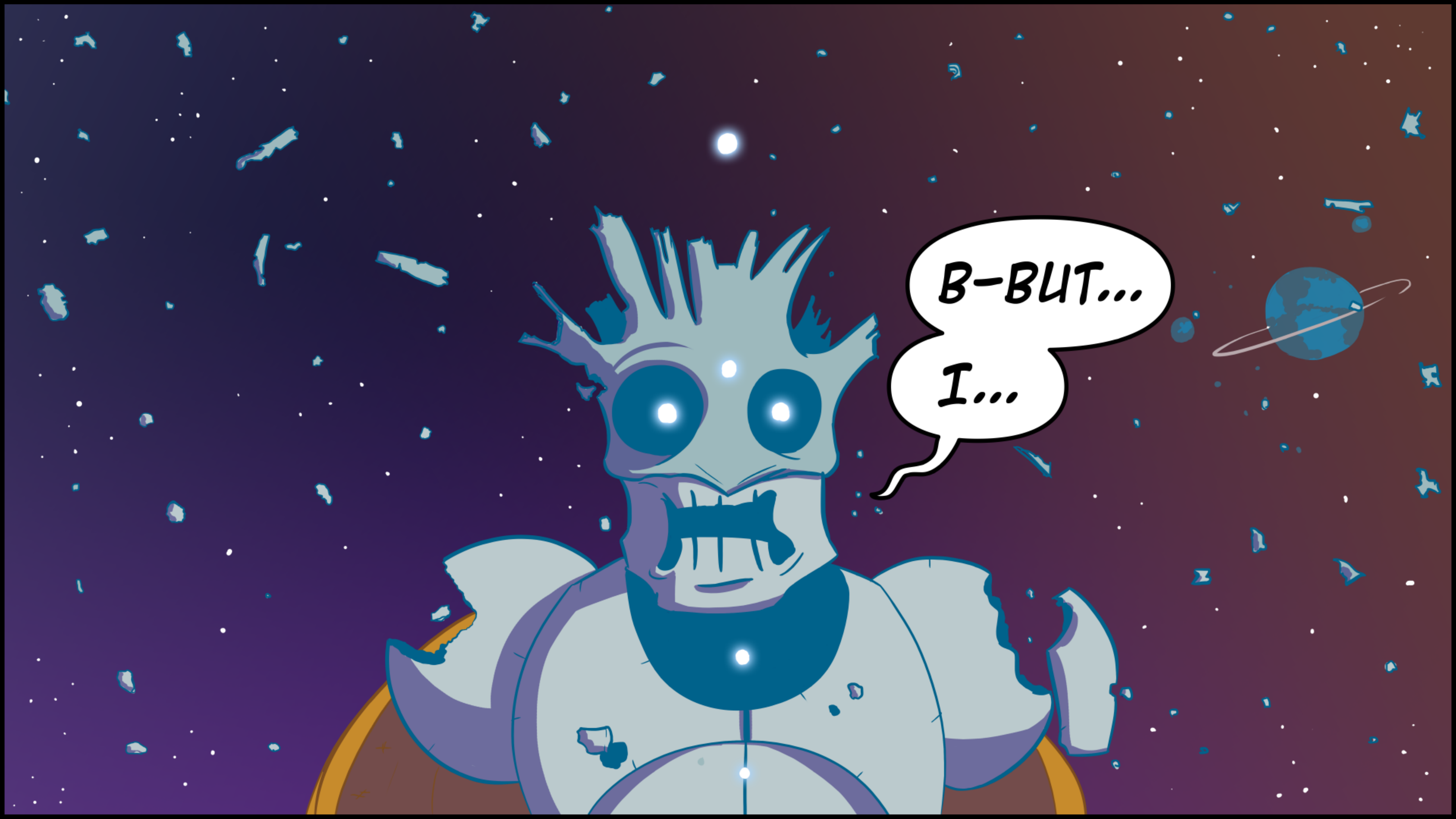


YES,
SON. YOU'RE
RIGHT.

IT BREAKS
MY HEART TO SAY
IT, BUT WE CAN'T MAKE
YOU COME **BACK**
HOME.

WE CAN,
HOWEVER, **REFUSE**
TO CONTINUALLY FUND
THIS EXPEDITION OF
YOURS.

STARTING
NOW.




B-BUT...

I...



FINE!
I DON'T NEED
YOUR **MONEY**
ANYMORE.

MY
RESEARCH
CAN **FUND**
ITSELF.



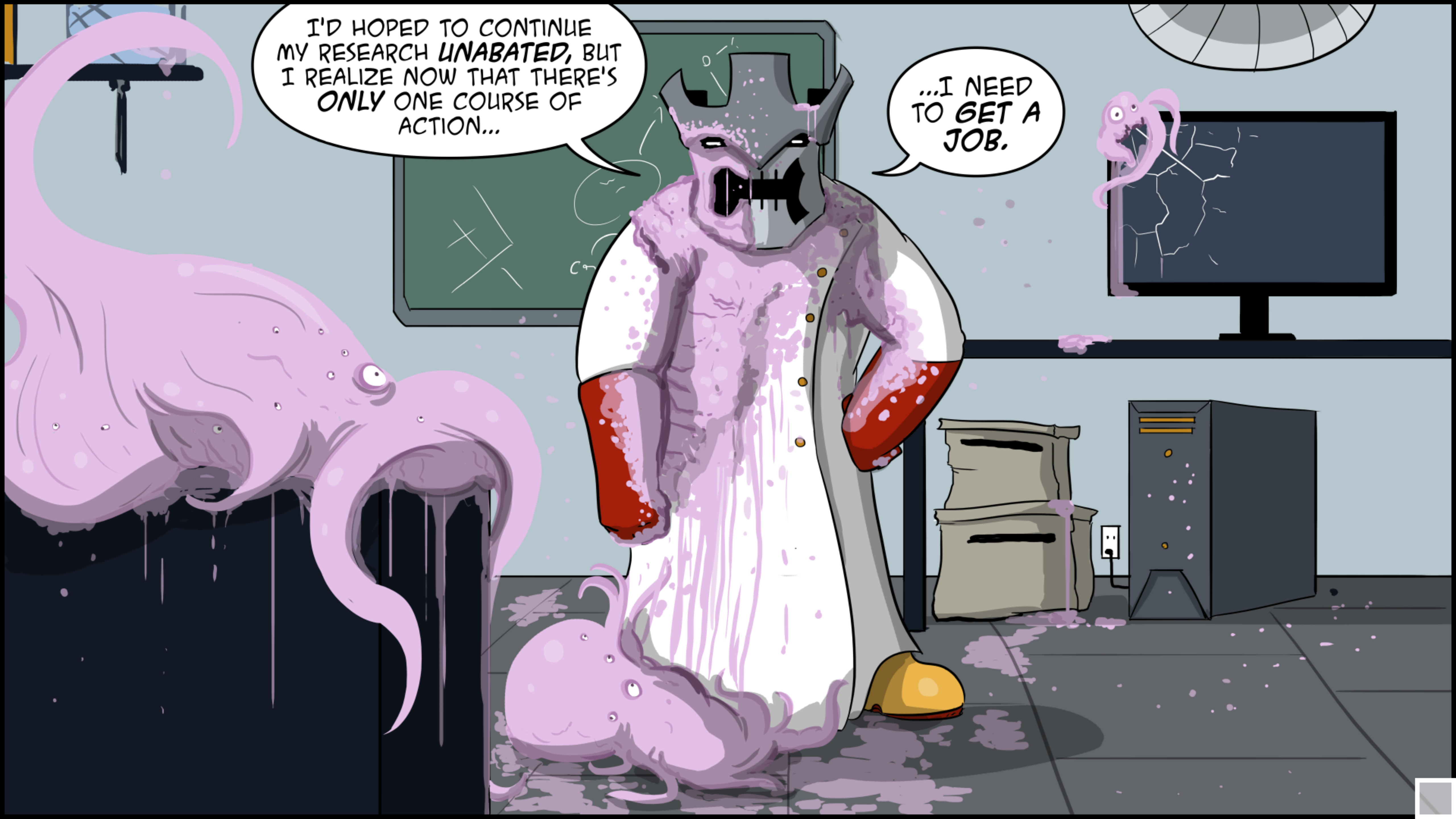
IT'S **NOT**
TOO LATE TO
CHANGE YOUR
MIND, SON.

COME
HOME. IT'LL
BE FOR THE
BEST.

I'LL DECIDE
WHAT'S **BEST** FOR ME.
END CALL.

I'D HOPED TO CONTINUE
MY RESEARCH *UNABATED*, BUT
I REALIZE NOW THAT THERE'S
ONLY ONE COURSE OF
ACTION...

...I NEED
TO *GET A*
JOB.



CHAPTER SIX *SIDE EFFECTS*



UNDERNEATH THE CALIGATA NATURE
PRESERVE, HESTER STRUGGLES TO
MAINTAIN HER HUMANITY.

URRGHH...



COURSING THROUGH HER BLOOD IS A
CURIOUS COCKTAIL OF RADIOACTIVE
TOXINS AND MARMOT DNA.

HELLO,
SAPIEN. WHAT
BRINGS YOU TO
OUR SOIL?

UHH?





IT H-HU
H-HHURTSSS.

YES, I CAN
SEE YOU'RE IN
A GREAT DEAL
OF PAIN.



MY NAME
IS m-meeep
meep mep
meeep.



MAH
MEEP MEPP
MEEP?



...
FORGET IT,
JUST CALL ME
JERRY.



YOU'VE
ENTERED OUR
HALLOWED HOLES
WHERE HUMANS ARE **NOT**
ALLOWED. I'LL PERMIT YOU
TO EXPLAIN WHY YOU'VE
TRESPASSED, BUT BE
WARNED...

...DO **NOT**
EXPECT TO
FIND REFUGE
HERE.



WAIT, JERRY...
I KNOW DIS **CHICK!**
SHE'S DA ONE DAT I
CHOMPED ON A
WHILE BACK.

SHE MUST BE
EXPERIENCING THE
SIDE EFFECTS OF
YOUR TOXIC BITE,
EDNA.

YEAHH,
SORRY 'BOUT
THAT...



EDNA HAS BEEN CHANGED BY
ALL THE **HORRID SLUDGE** THAT
YOUR KIND HAS **DUMPED** IN
OUR VILLAGE.


BUT YOUR
EXPOSURE WAS TO
EDNA AND THEREFORE
INDIRECT, WHICH GIVES
ME HOPE FOR YOUR
RECOVERY.

**STUPID
SLUDGE.**



WAIT... ARE YOU
SAYING THIS IS ONLY
TEMPORARY?

I'M SAYING IT
COULD BE IF WE
TAKE THE PROPER
APPROACH.

A close-up, comic-style illustration of a brown bear's face. The bear has a determined, slightly grimacing expression with its mouth open, showing its teeth. Its eyes are large and dark, with a reflection of a person's face visible in the left eye. The bear's fur is a mix of light and dark brown tones. Three speech bubbles are positioned on the left side of the frame.

TO BE HONEST,
I'VE NEVER **HEALED**
AN INFECTED HUMAN
BEFORE.

MAYBE
I CAN, **MAYBE**
I CAN'T.

BUT I'LL
TRY.

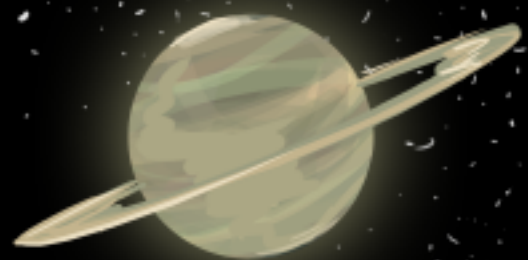


MY COMRADES
WILL GATHER HERBS AND
SEEDS WHILE I **CONCOCT**
A **REMEDY** FOR YOUR
PREDICAMENT.

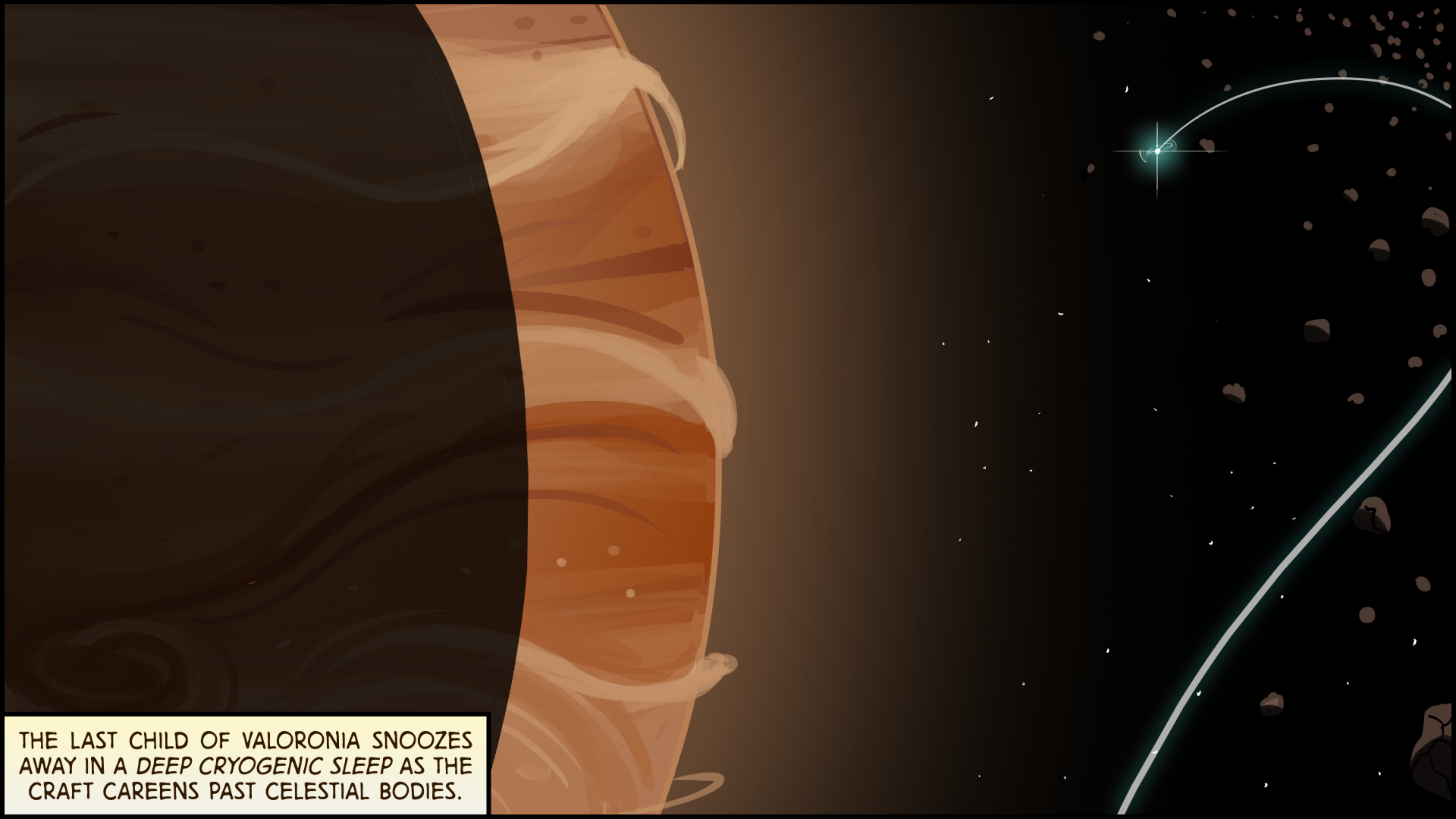
TH-HANK YOU
J-JERRY.

CHAPTER SEVEN THE GIFT

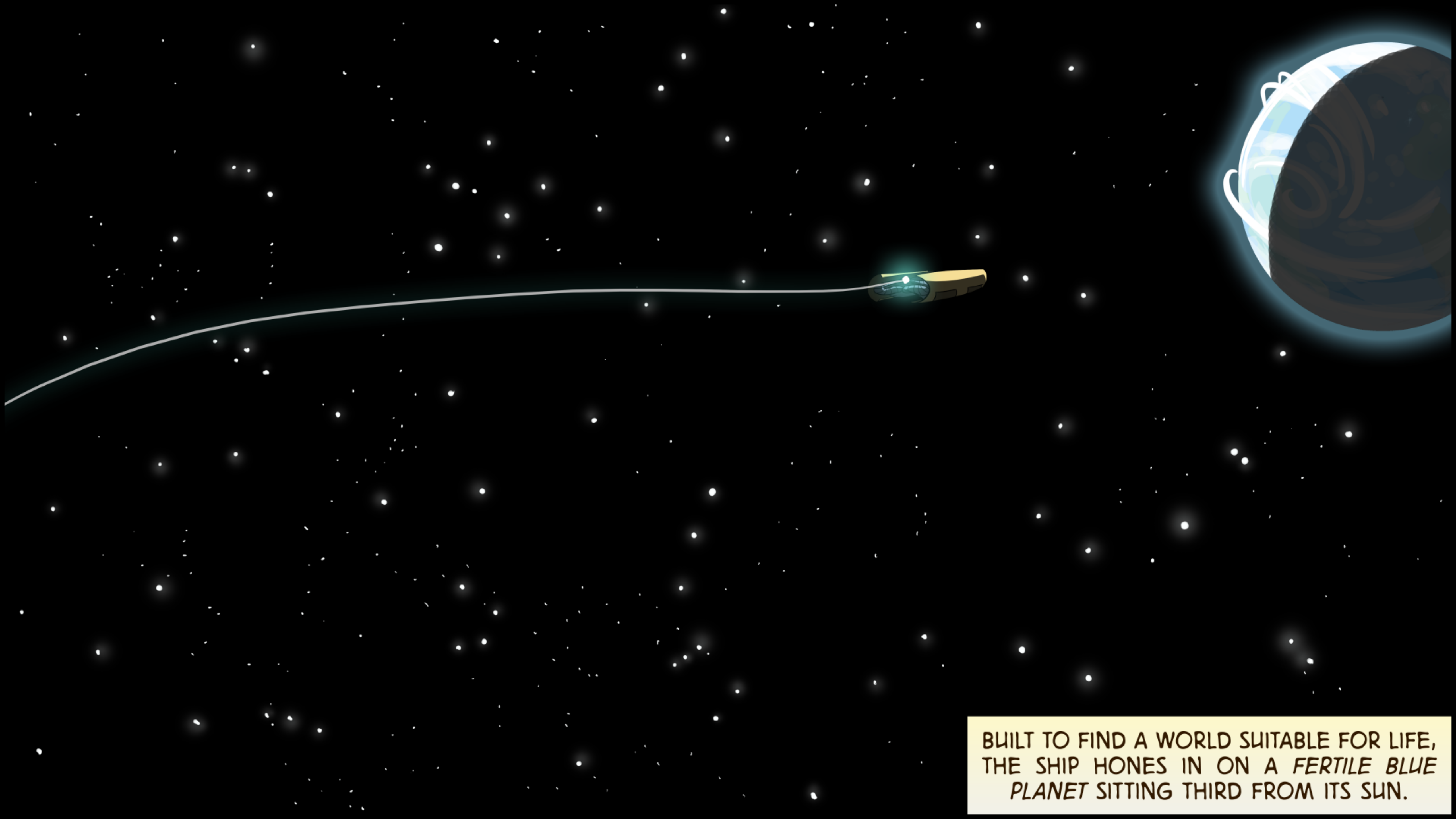




OUT IN THE *VAST VACUUM OF SPACE*, THE
LEGACY OF A DYING WORLD FINDS ITSELF
CONFINED TO THIS LONE ROCKET SHIP.



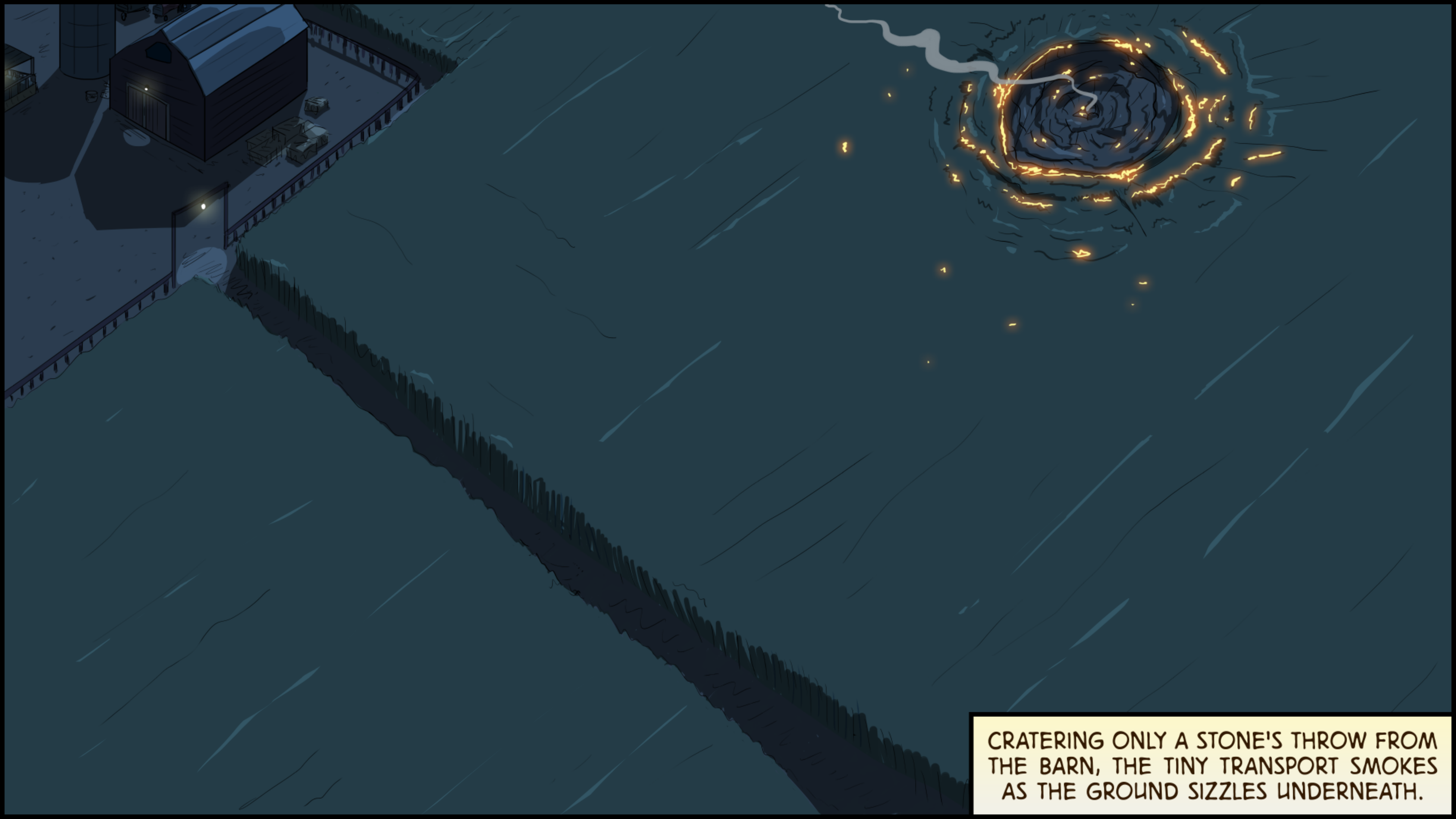
THE LAST CHILD OF VALORONIA SNOOZES
AWAY IN A *DEEP CRYOGENIC SLEEP* AS THE
CRAFT CAREENS PAST CELESTIAL BODIES.



BUILT TO FIND A WORLD SUITABLE FOR LIFE,
THE SHIP HONES IN ON A *FERTILE BLUE*
PLANET SITTING THIRD FROM ITS SUN.



SLICING THROUGH THE ATMOSPHERE, THE VESSEL AIMS STRAIGHT FOR A *SOLITARY* FARM 50 MILES OUTSIDE OF MEGAVILLE.

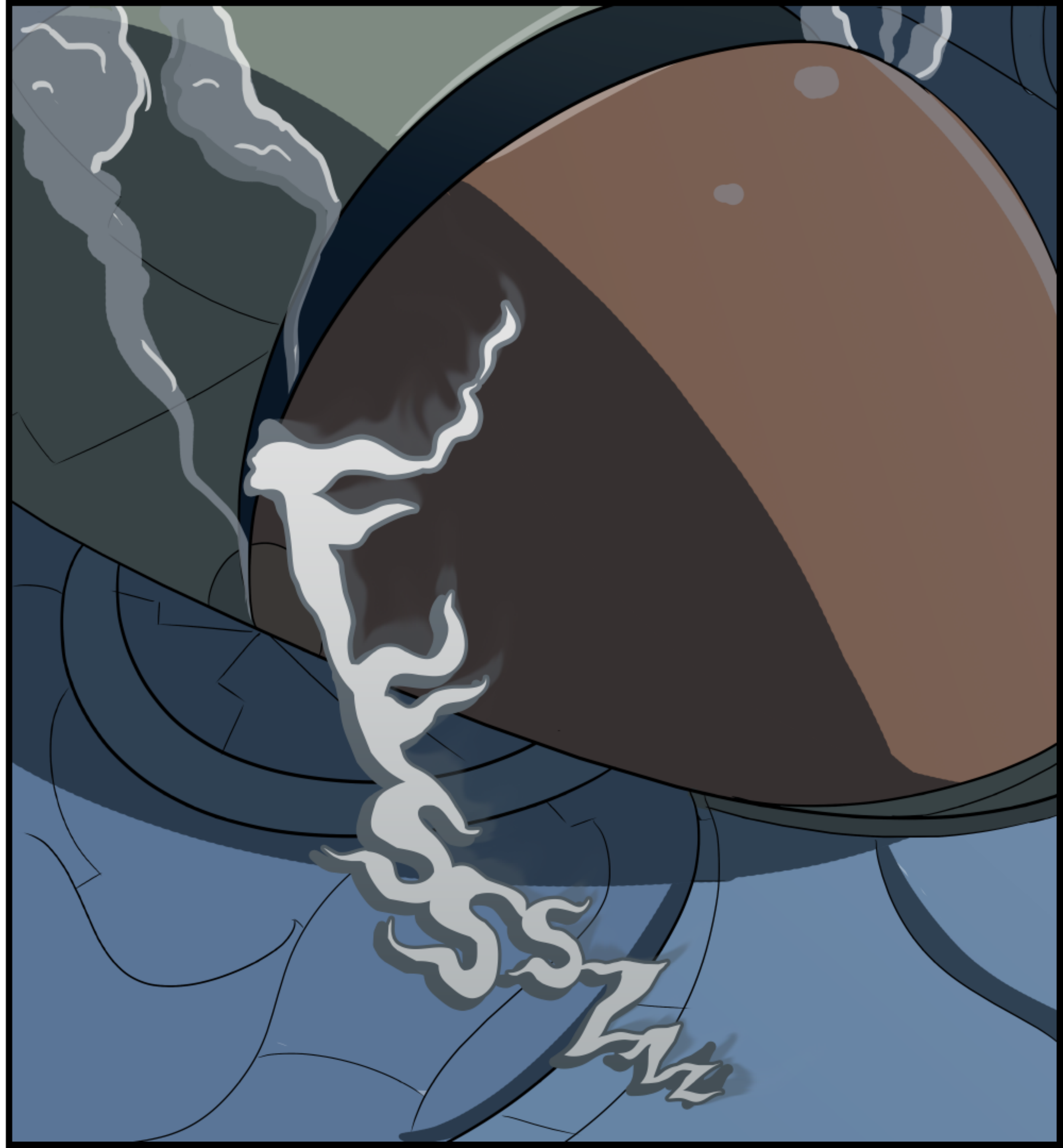


CRATERING ONLY A STONE'S THROW FROM
THE BARN, THE TINY TRANSPORT SMOKES
AS THE GROUND SIZZLES UNDERNEATH.



LOOK AT
THIS **CRAP**,
SARA!

THAT STUPID
THING PUT A **BIG**
OL' HOLE IN OUR
CORN FIELD!!!



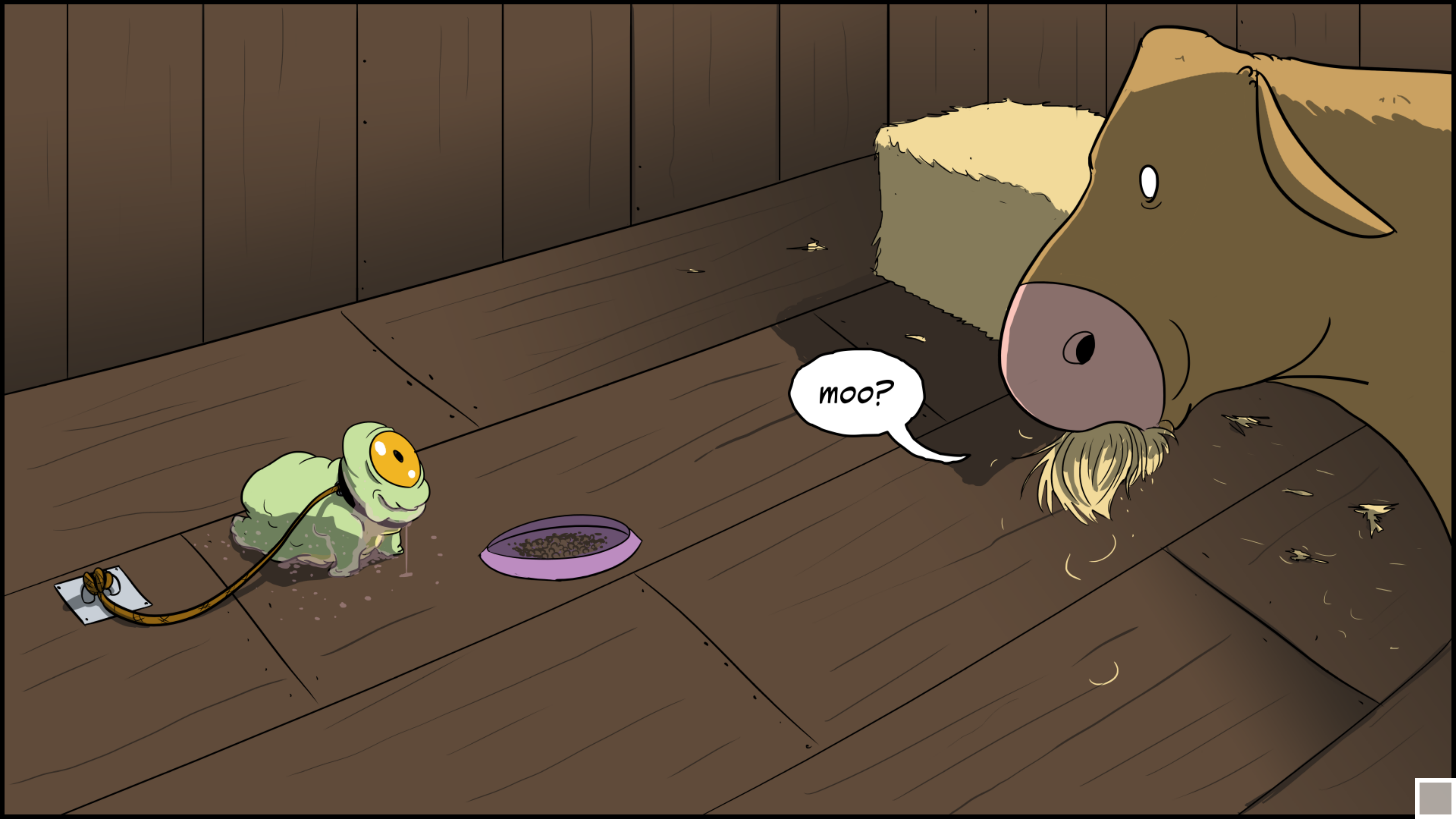


EWWW!

IT'S
UGLY AS SIN,
MIKE!!!

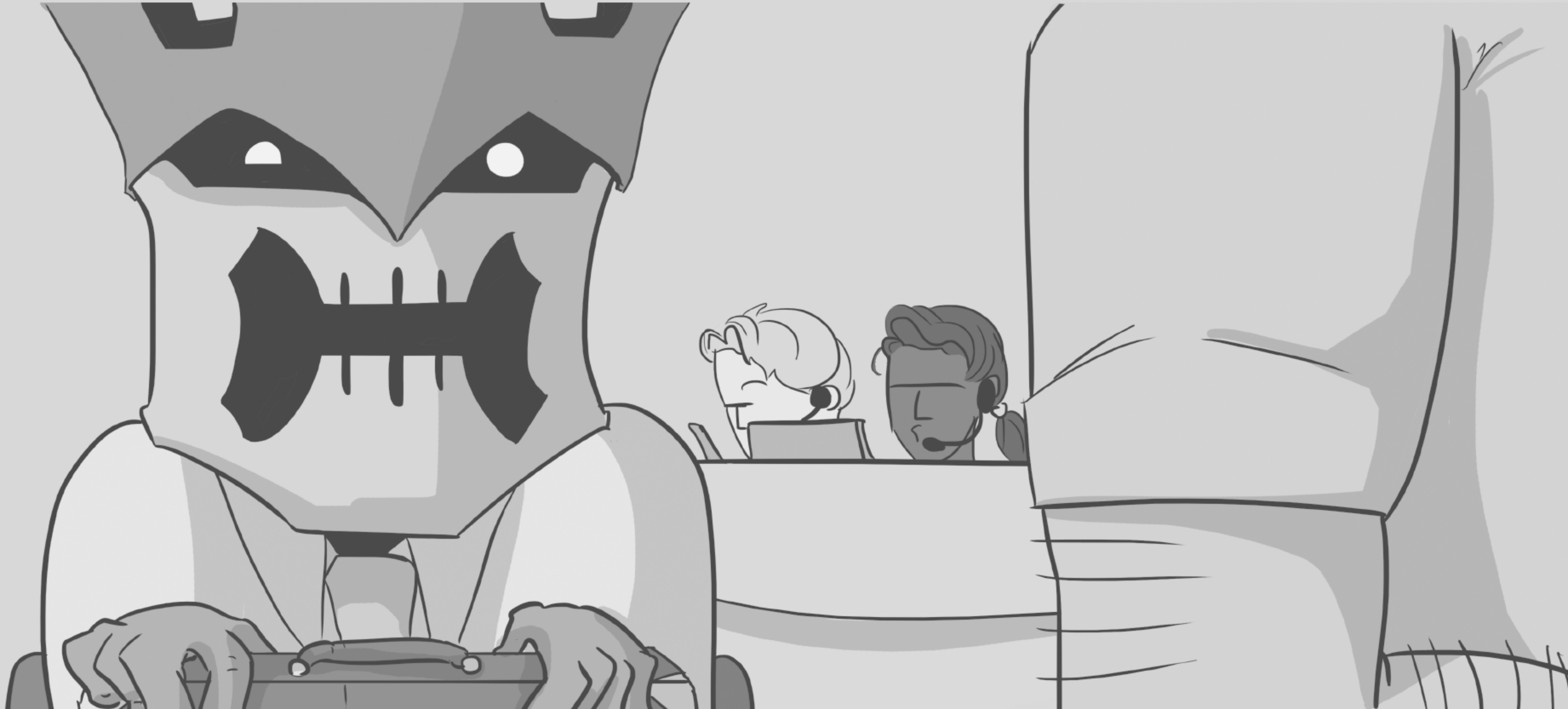
WHAT
SHOULD WE
DO?

HMM...

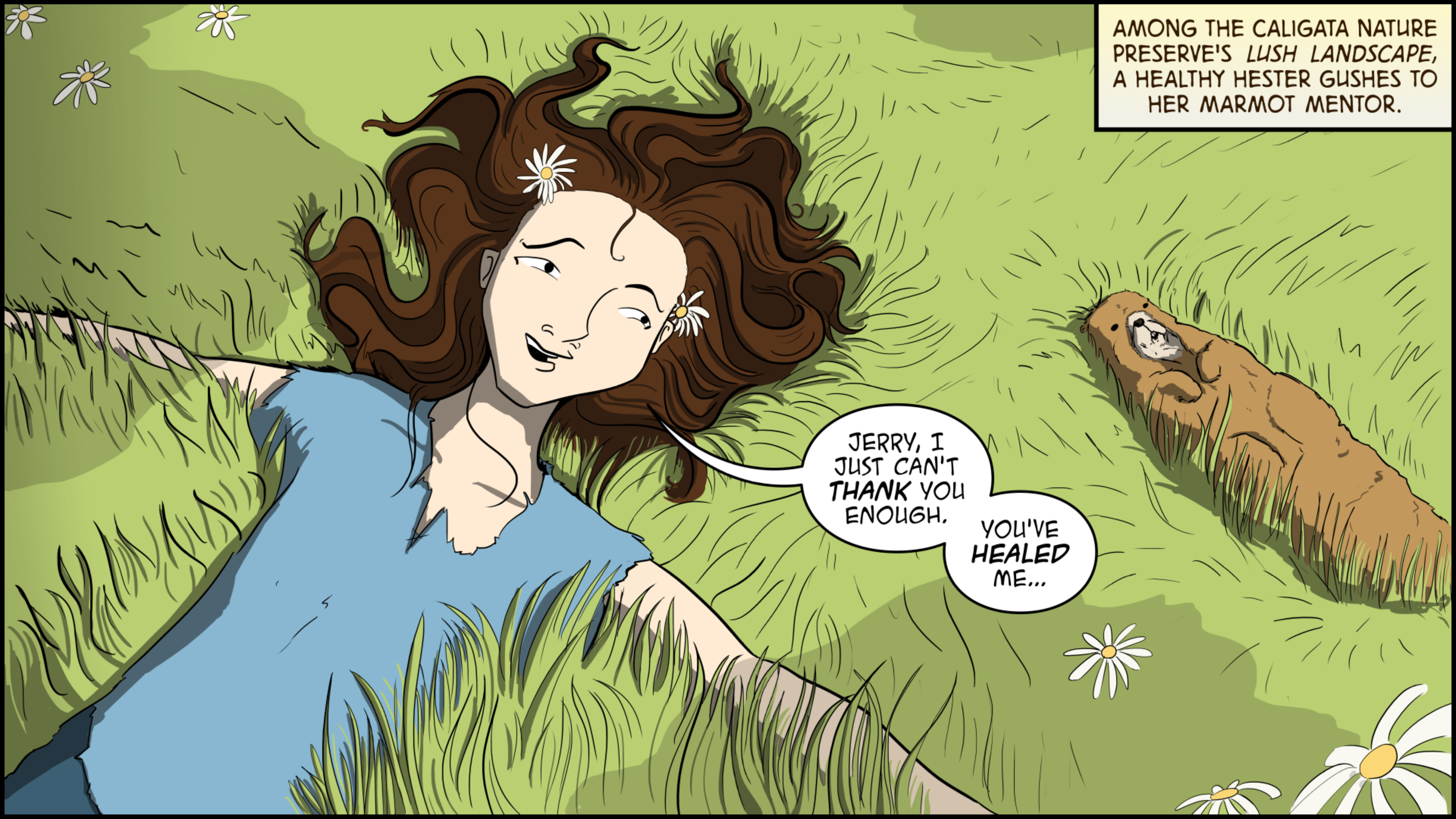


moo?

CHAPTER EIGHT *FIGHT OR FLIGHT*



AMONG THE CALIGATA NATURE PRESERVE'S *LUSH LANDSCAPE*, A HEALTHY HESTER GUSHES TO HER MARMOT MENTOR.

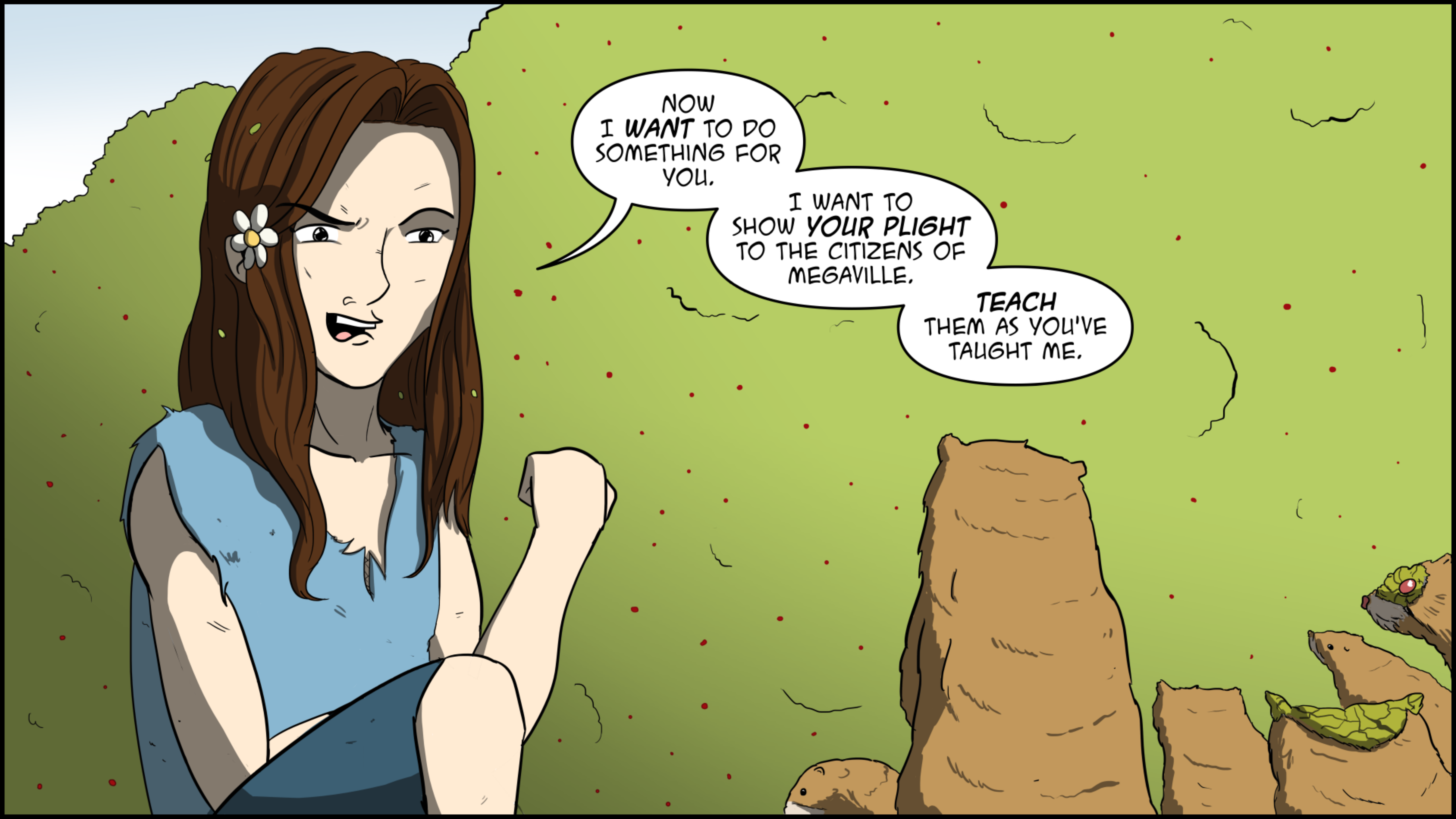


JERRY, I
JUST CAN'T
THANK YOU
ENOUGH.

YOU'VE
HEALED
ME...




...AND **TAUGHT** ME THE
WAY OF THE MARMOT.



NOW
I *WANT* TO DO
SOMETHING FOR
YOU.

I WANT TO
SHOW *YOUR PLIGHT*
TO THE CITIZENS OF
MEGAVILLE.

TEACH
THEM AS YOU'VE
TAUGHT ME.

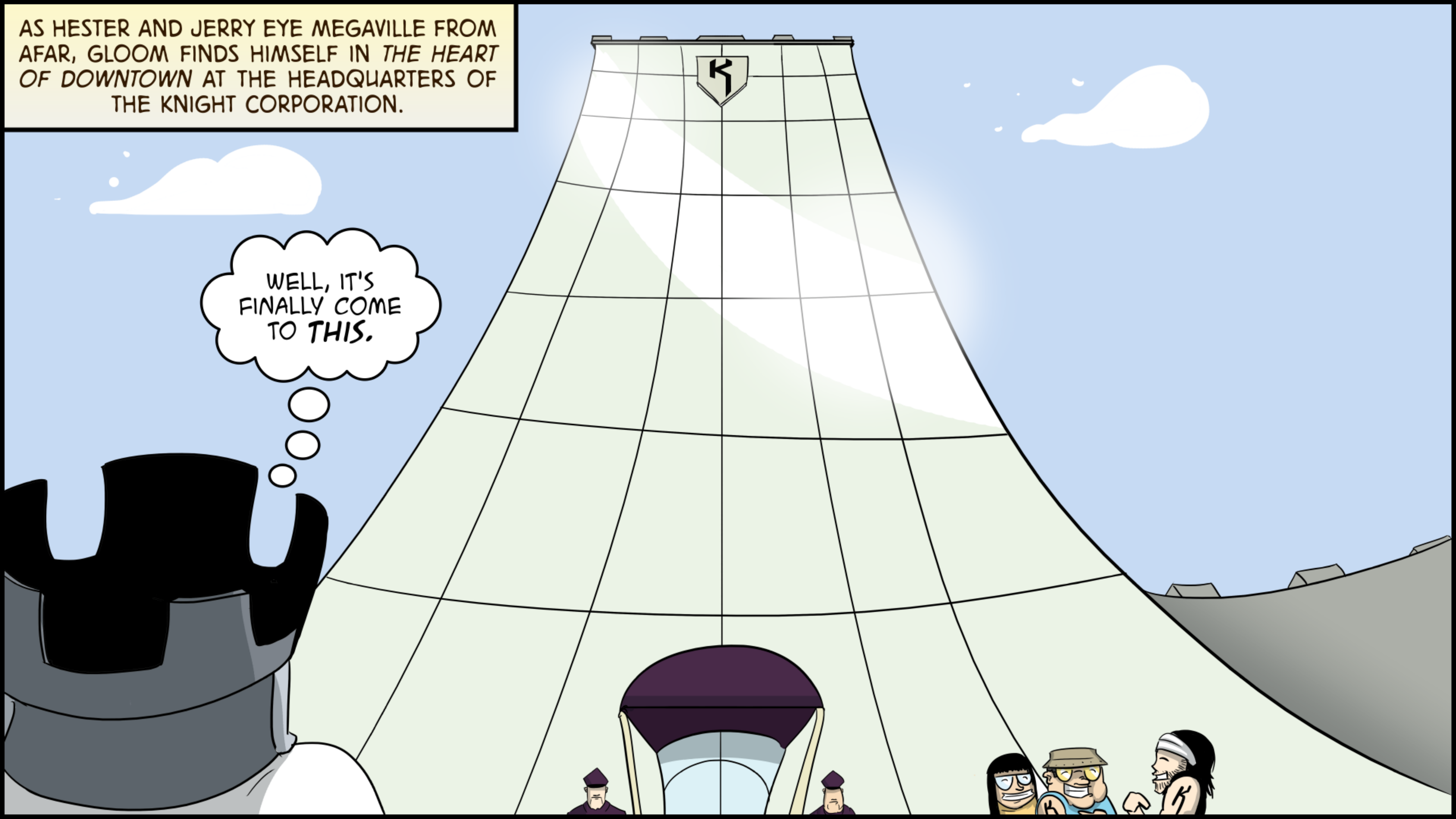


IN THE CITY
WHERE I COME FROM,
WE HAVE A **HERO**, ONE
WHO **ALWAYS** HELPS
OTHERS.

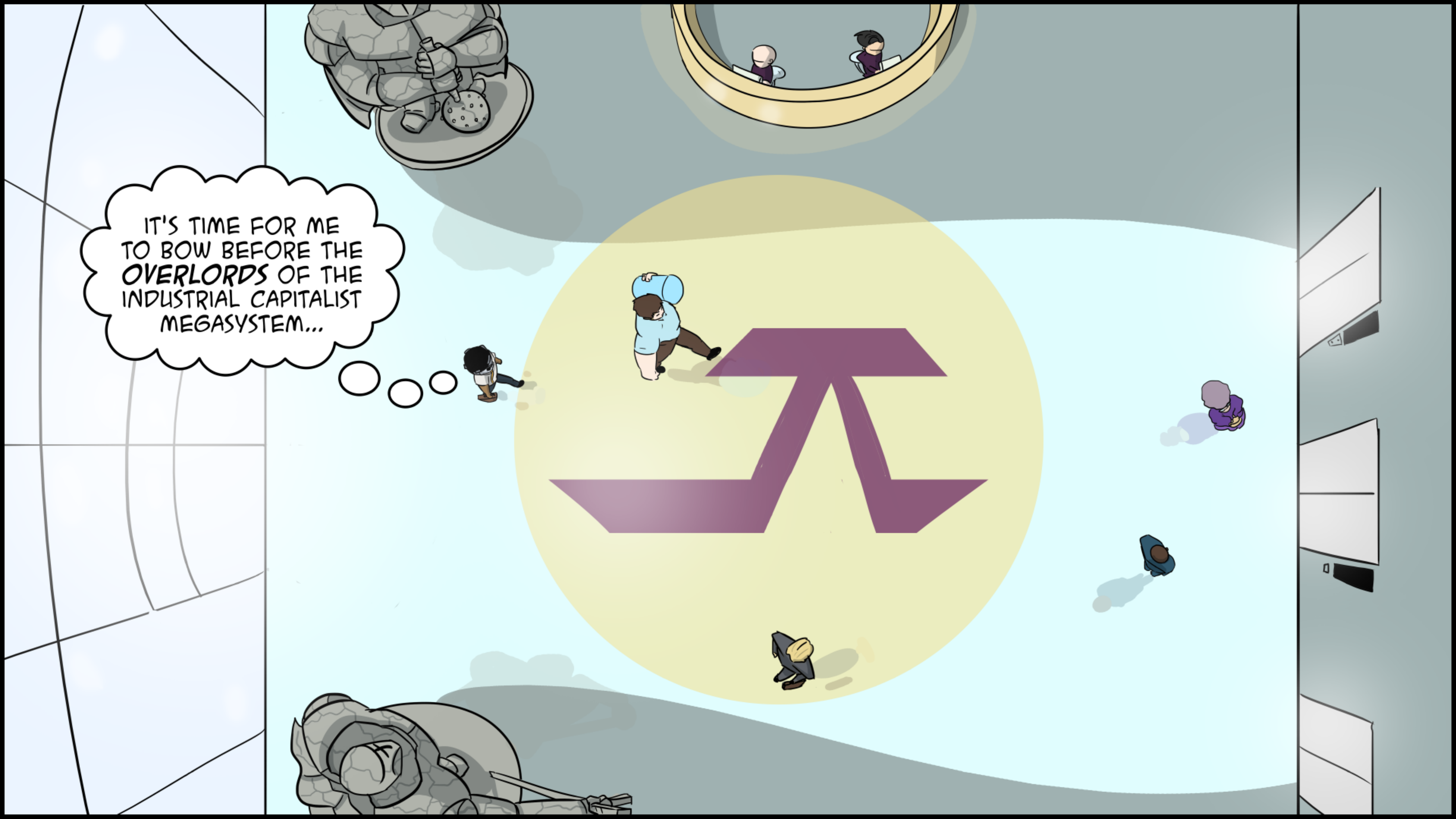
AND
I THINK HE'LL
WANT TO **HELP**
YOU TOO.

AS HESTER AND JERRY EYE MEGAVILLE FROM AFAR, GLOOM FINDS HIMSELF IN *THE HEART OF DOWNTOWN* AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE KNIGHT CORPORATION.

WELL, IT'S
FINALLY COME
TO *THIS*.



IT'S TIME FOR ME
TO BOW BEFORE THE
OVERLORDS OF THE
INDUSTRIAL CAPITALIST
MEGASYSTEM...

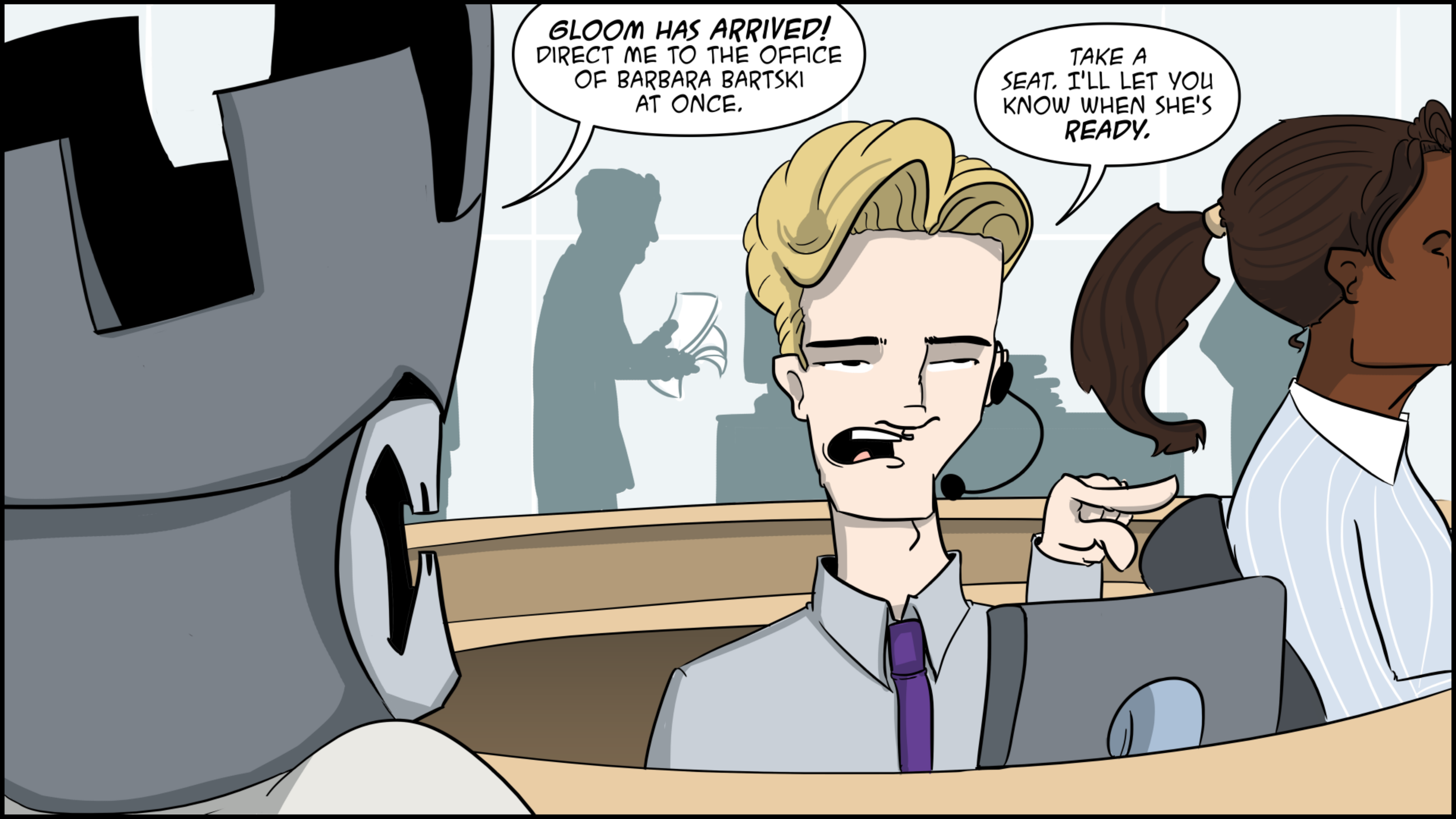


...AND
BEG FOR
PENNIES.



- 25th Wade Knight
Business office
- 24th Executive floor
- 23rd Marketing
- 22nd Gym
- 21st Ball pit
- 20th You decide!
- 19th Cubicle Maze
- 18th Cubicle Maze
- 17th Accounting
- 16th Corporate lounge
- 15th Cubicle Maze
- 14th Fantasy Football floor
- 12th Cubicle Maze
- 11th Corn Maze
- 10th The "think tank"
- 9th Grapefruit
- 8th Cubicle Maze
- 7th HR and stuff
- 6th File cabinet floor
- 5th Mail room & janitorial
- 4th Cafeteria
- 3rd Cubicle Maze
- 2nd Cubicle Maze
- 1st Lobby
- Basement: Parking





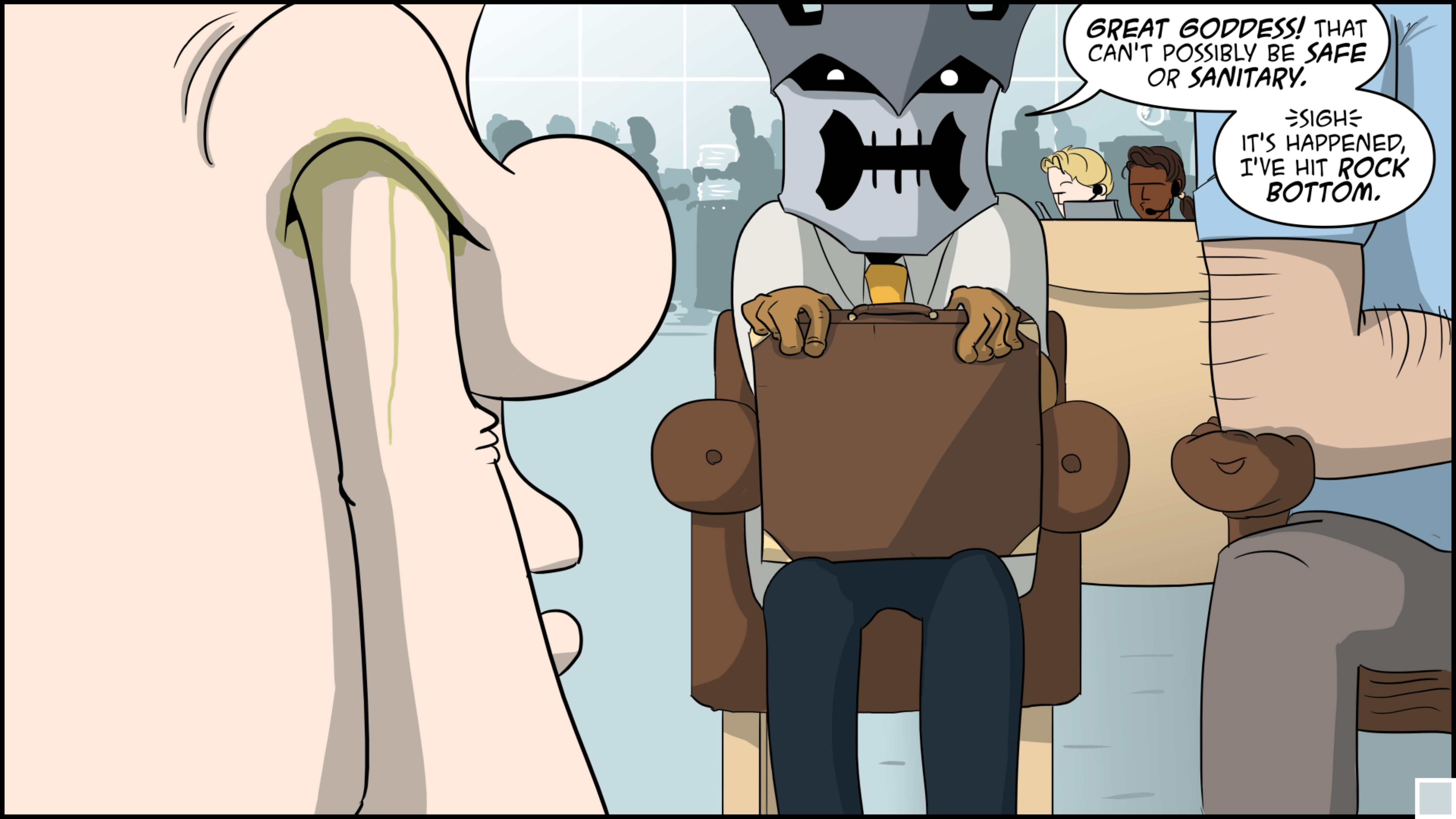
GLOOM HAS ARRIVED!
DIRECT ME TO THE OFFICE
OF BARBARA BARTSKI
AT ONCE.

TAKE A
SEAT. I'LL LET YOU
KNOW WHEN SHE'S
READY.



GAHH!

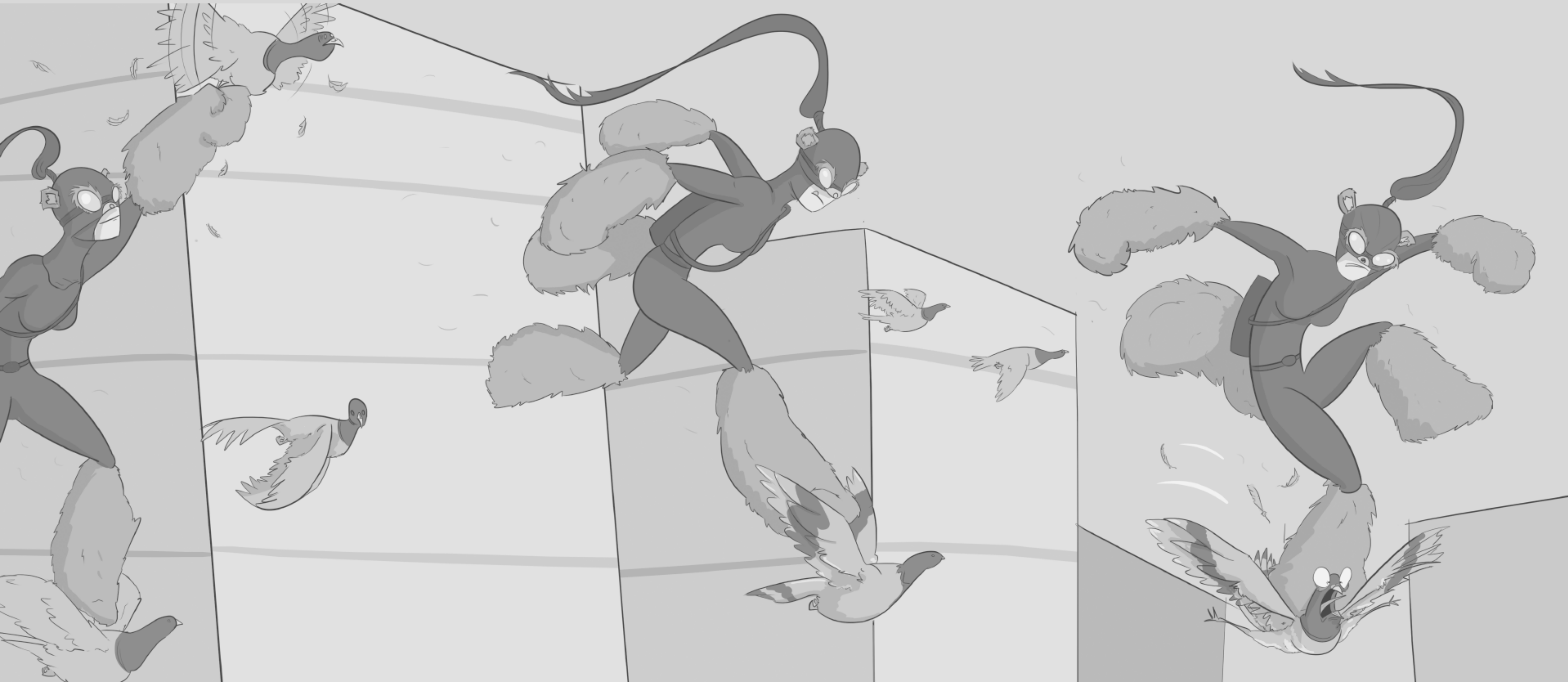
IT'S LIKE
REJECT NIGHT AT
THE KARAOKE BAR
FROM **HELL.**



GREAT GODDESS! THAT
CAN'T POSSIBLY BE *SAFE*
OR *SANITARY*.

⇒SIGH⇒
IT'S HAPPENED,
I'VE HIT *ROCK*
BOTTOM.

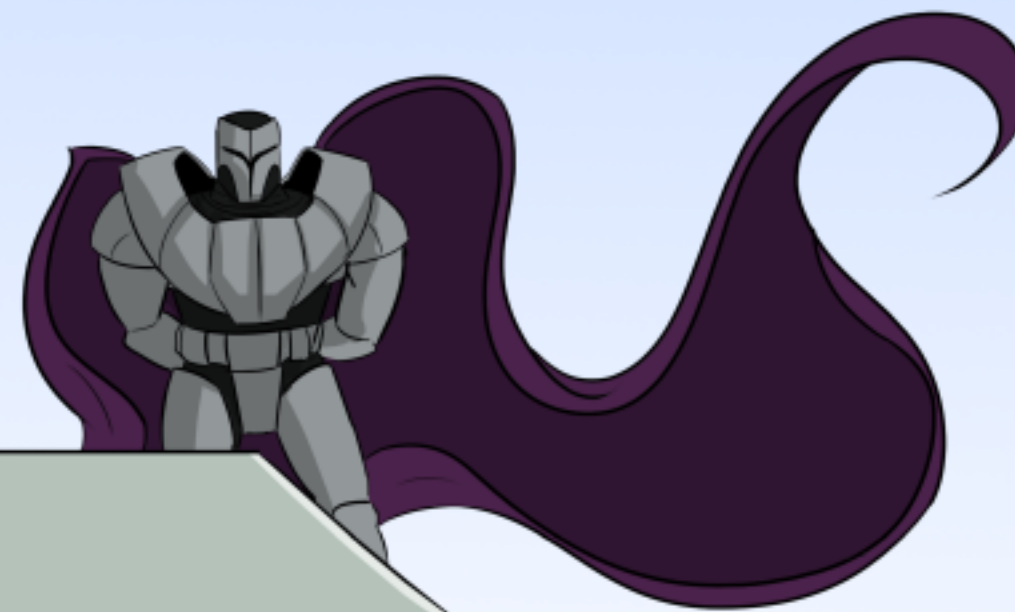
CHAPTER NINE DON'T LOOK DOWN



A BRISK BREEZE BLOWS ON *MEGAVILLE'S* ROOFTOPS AS HESTER HERMAN PERCHES ACROSS FROM KNIGHT CORP'S IMPOSING SKYSCRAPER, PLANNING HER APPROACH.



...AND NATURE WILL
TAKE **CARE** OF YOU.



THAT'S WHAT **YOU** SAID, M.I.D. KNIGHT.
AND NOW I **NEED** YOU TO HELP ME
TAKE CARE OF THE MARMOTS.

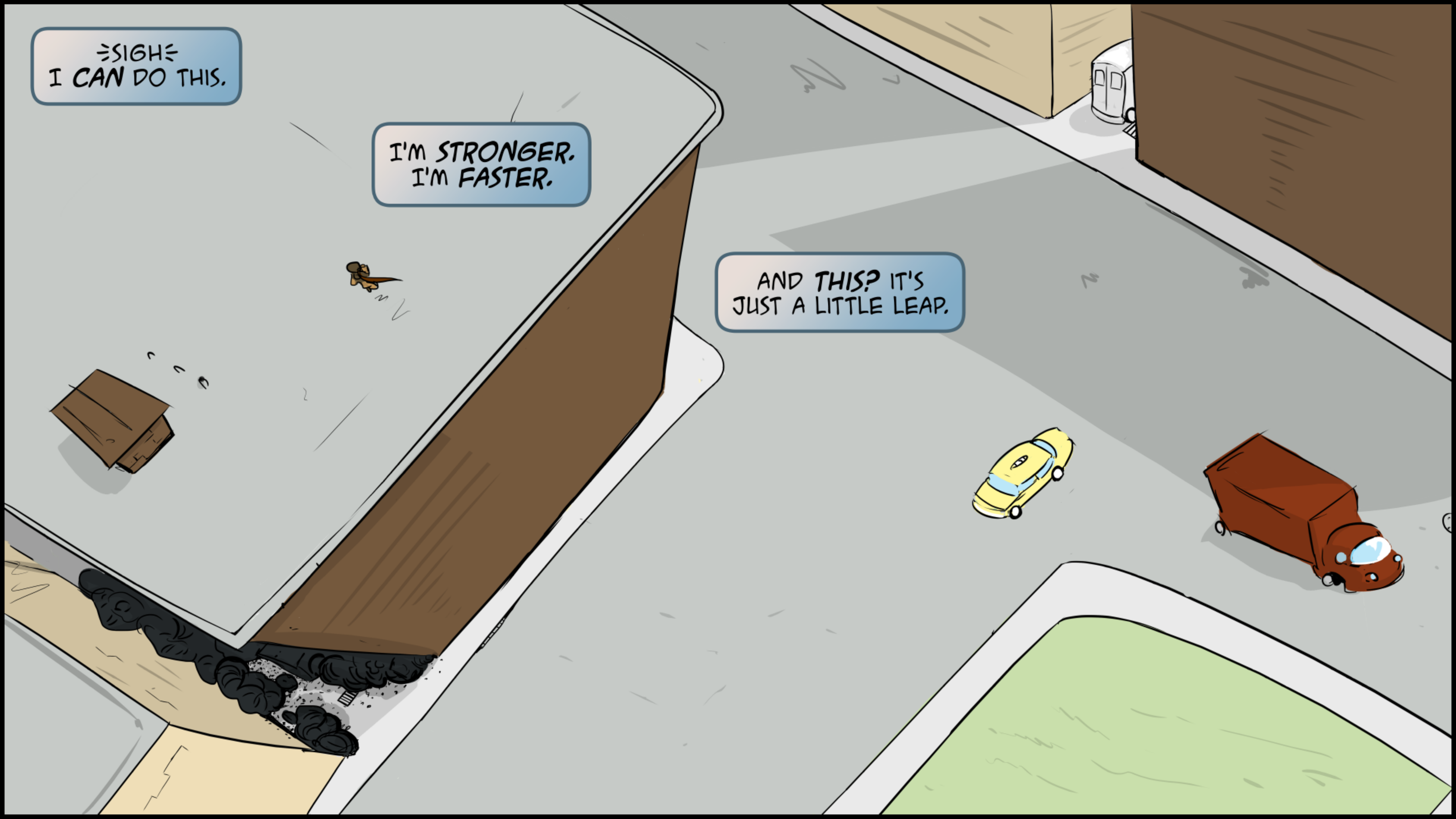


AND HE **NEEDS** TO
KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON.
THE HAZARDOUS WASTE, THE
MUTATIONS. HE'LL HELP ME
PUT A **STOP** TO IT.

≡SIGH≡
I CAN DO THIS.

I'M STRONGER.
I'M FASTER.

AND *THIS?* IT'S
JUST A LITTLE LEAP.



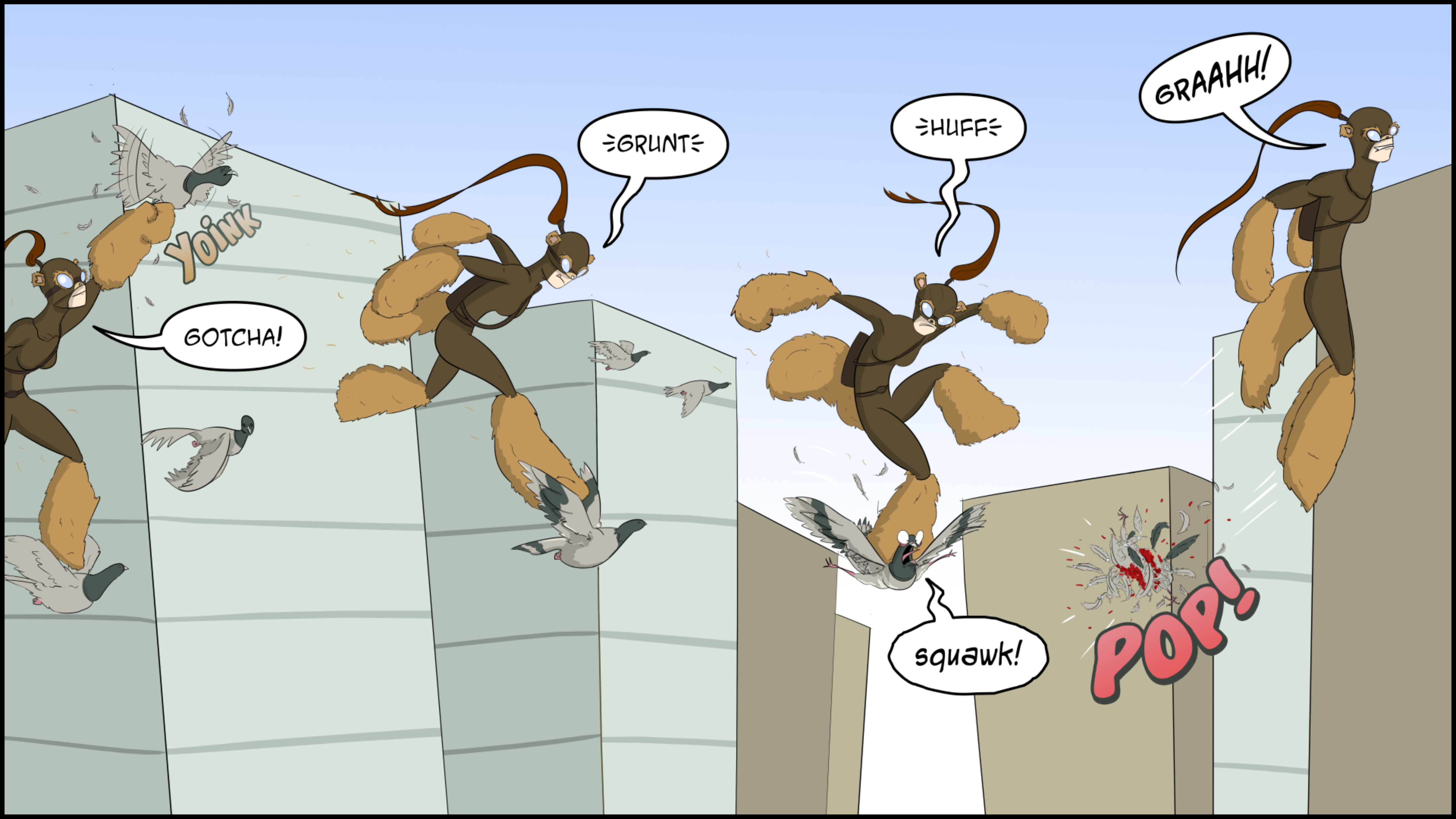


HAHAHA OMG
I'M DOING IT!



JUST DON'T LOOK DOWN!
DON'T. LOOK. DOWN.





Yoink

GOTCHA!

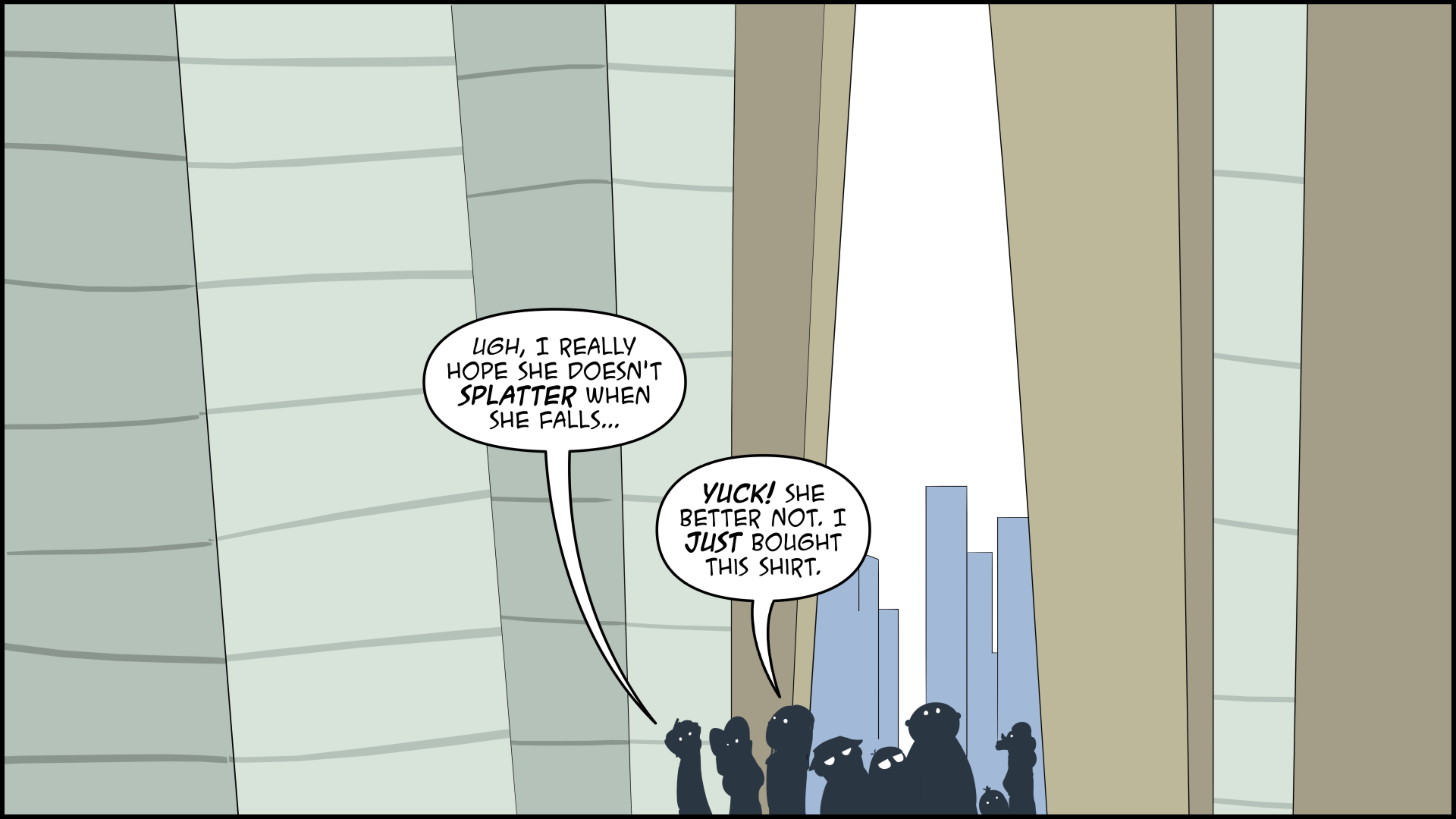
≡GRUNT≡

≡HUFF≡

GRAAHH!

squawk!

POP!



UGH, I REALLY
HOPE SHE DOESN'T
SPLATTER WHEN
SHE FALLS...

YUCK! SHE
BETTER NOT. I
JUST BOUGHT
THIS SHIRT.



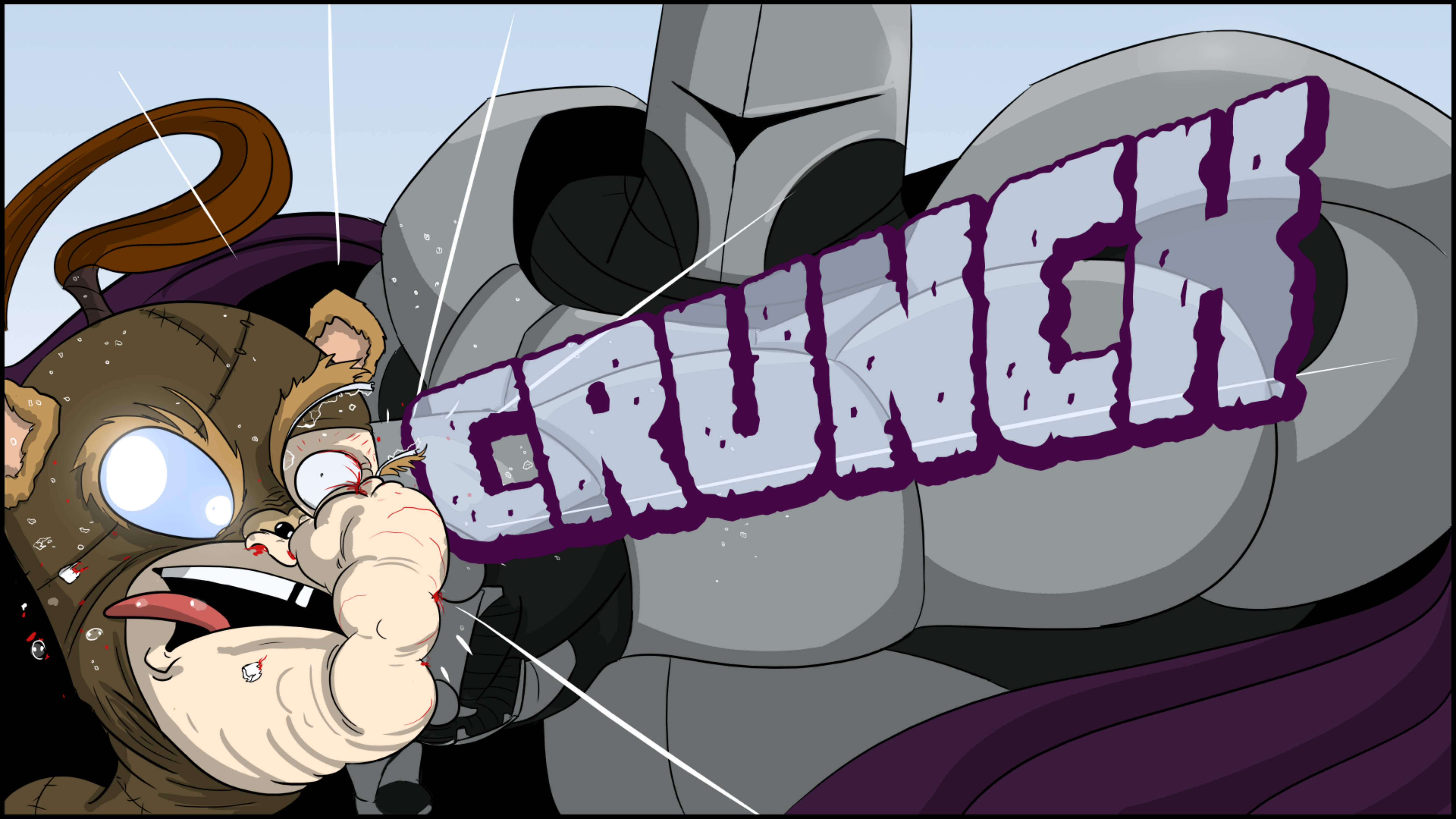


HALT,
VILLAIN!!!

WAIT...
VILLAIN? **ME?**
NO WAY!

M.I.D.
KNIGHT, I HAVE
SOMETHING HERE
THAT YOU **NEED**
TO SEE...

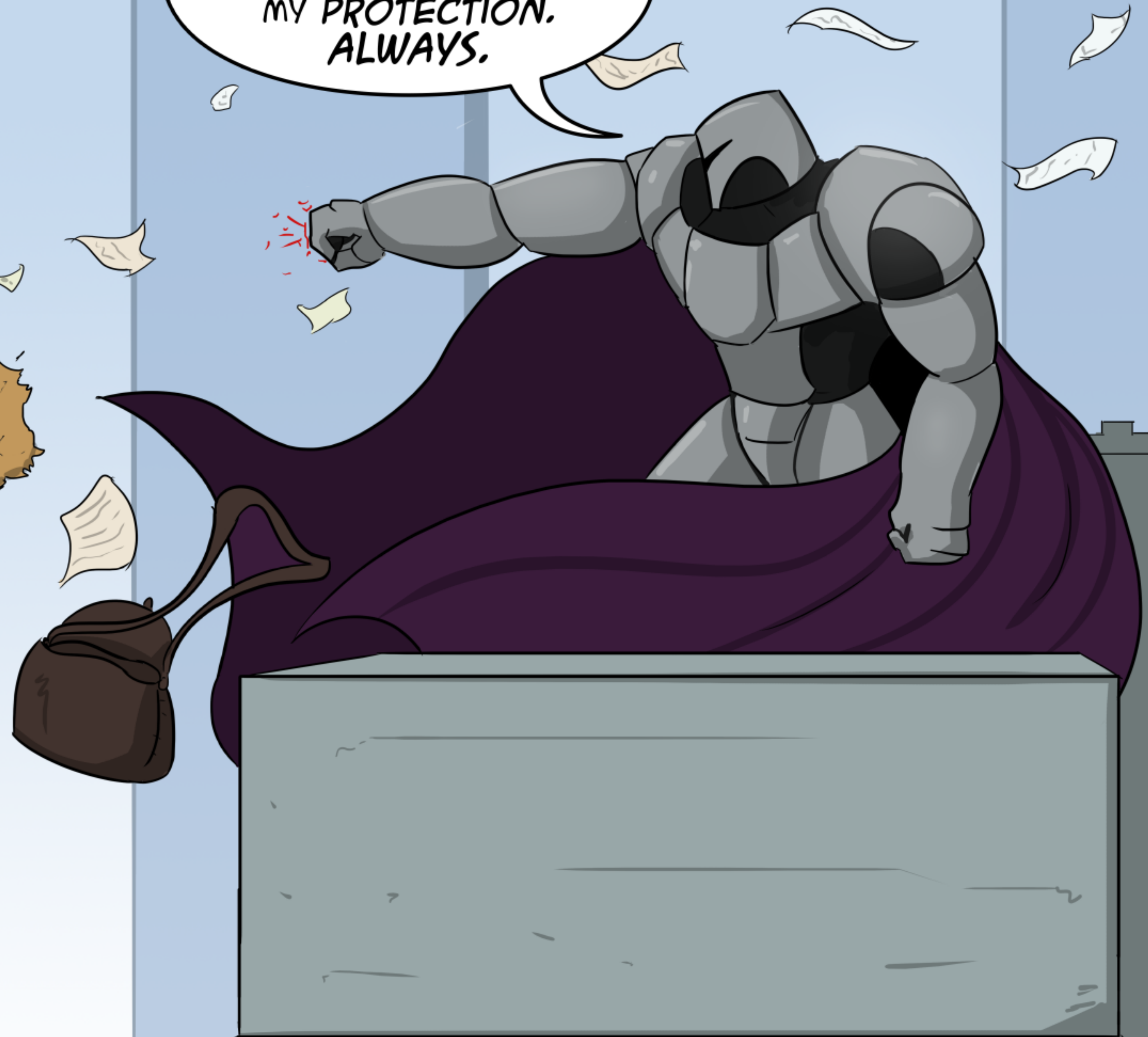
...**PROOF**
THAT KNIGHT
CORP HAS BEEN
DUMP--

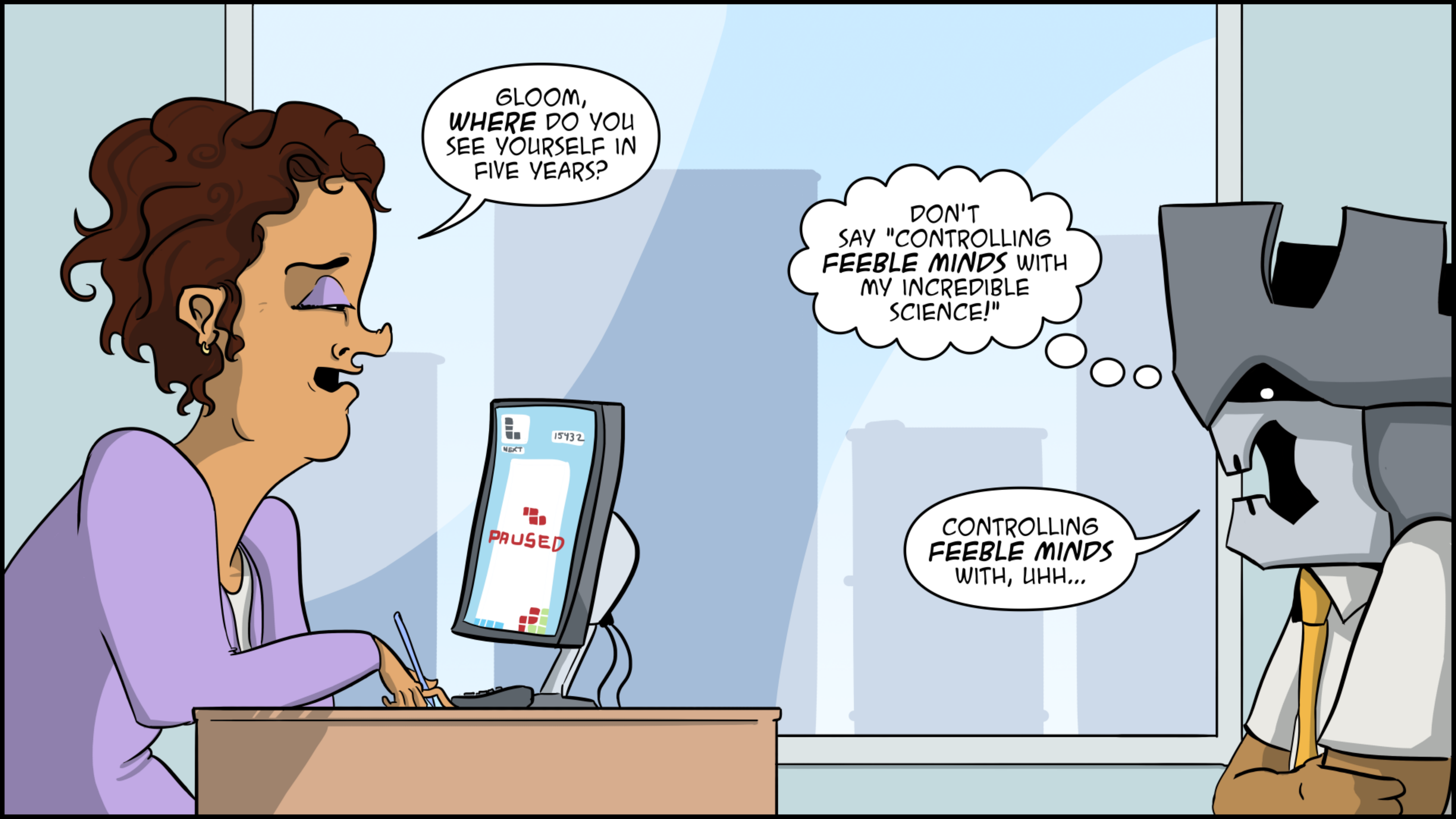


...M-MY
PAPERSS...



FOOL! THE KINGDOM
OF KNIGHT CORP IS UNDER
MY PROTECTION.
ALWAYS.

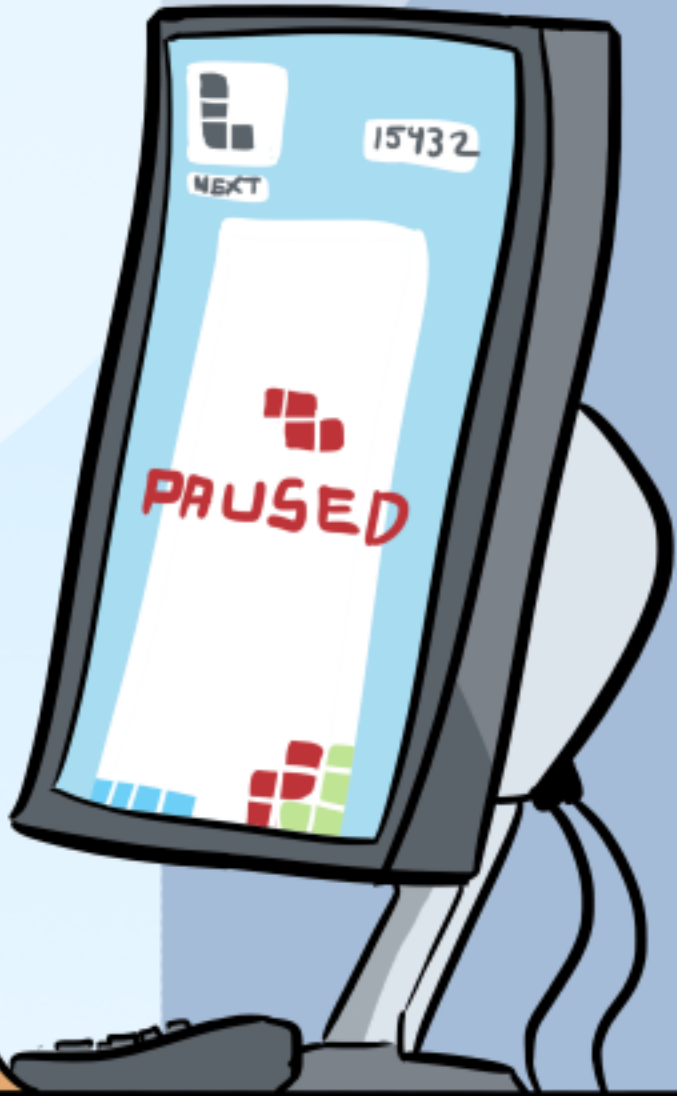


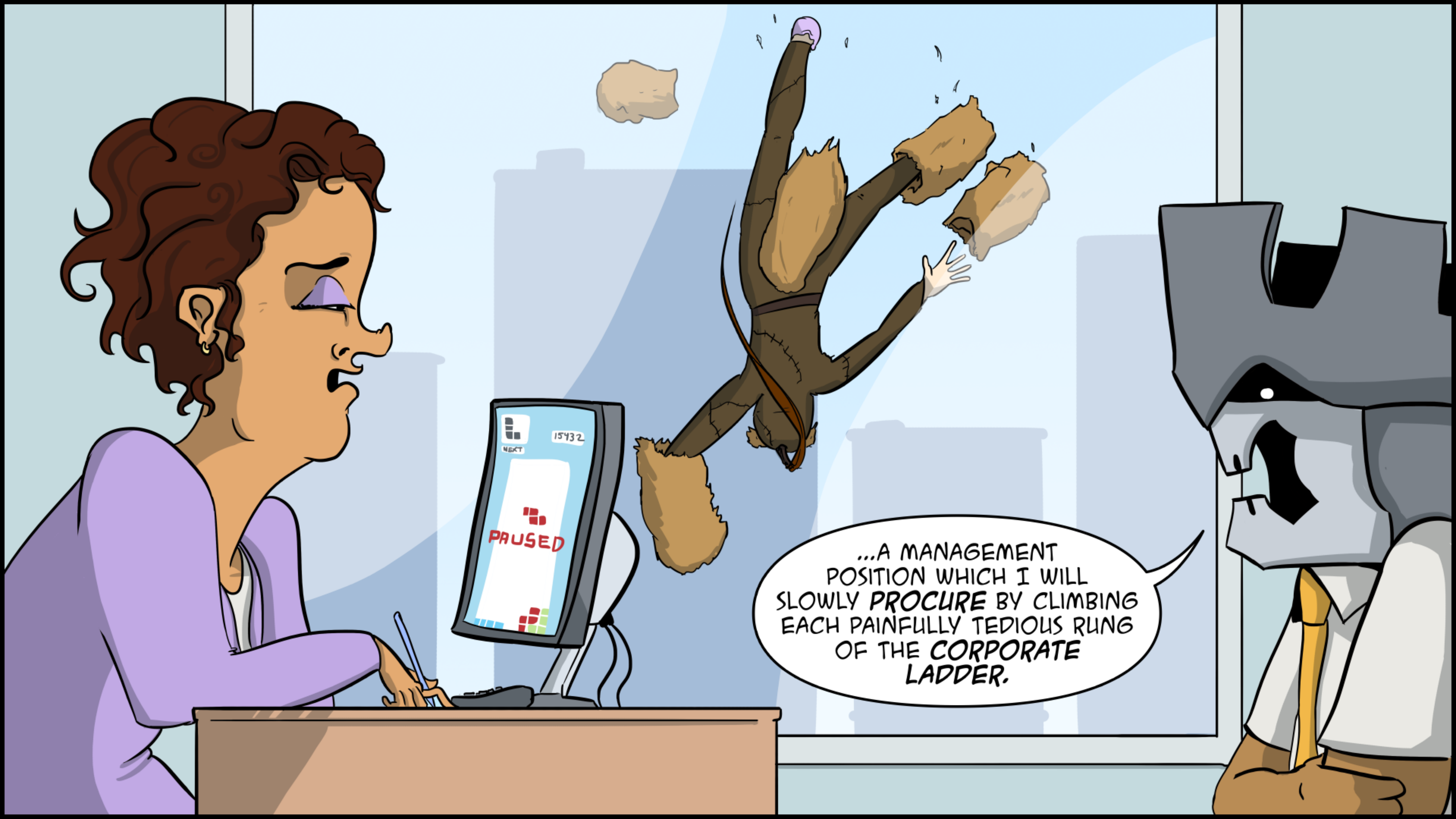


GLOOM,
WHERE DO YOU
SEE YOURSELF IN
FIVE YEARS?

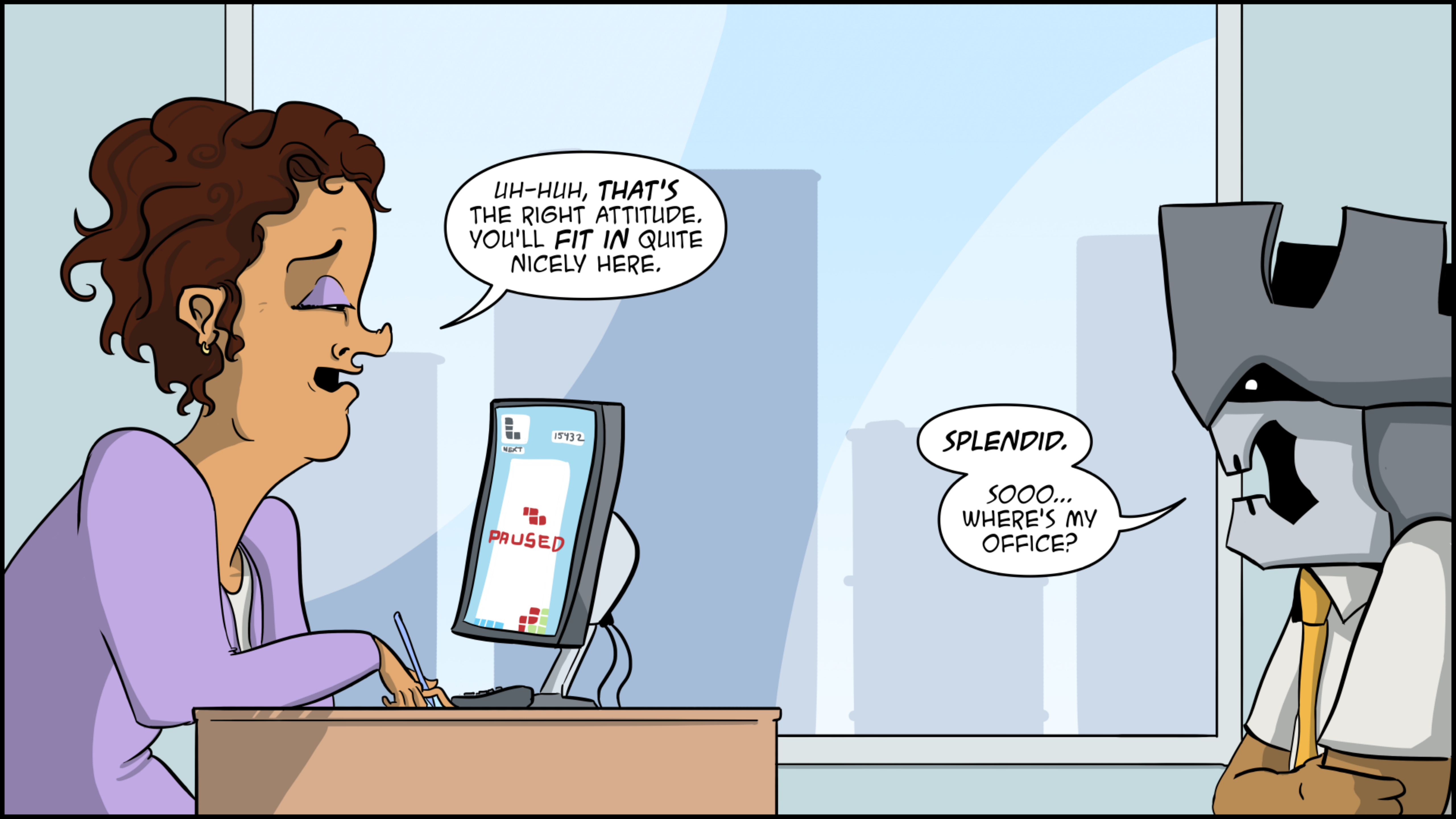
DON'T
SAY "CONTROLLING
FEEBLE MINDS WITH
MY INCREDIBLE
SCIENCE!"

CONTROLLING
FEEBLE MINDS
WITH, UHH...





...A MANAGEMENT
POSITION WHICH I WILL
SLOWLY **PROCURE** BY CLIMBING
EACH PAINFULLY TEDIOUS RUNG
OF THE **CORPORATE**
LADDER.



UH-HUH, THAT'S
THE RIGHT ATTITUDE.
YOU'LL **FIT IN** QUITE
NICELY HERE.

SPLENDID.

SOOO...
WHERE'S MY
OFFICE?





UUNHHH...

OUCH.

W-WHY?!?



UM, HOW
IS SHE **STILL**
ALIVE?

DUNNO! I'M
JUST RELIEVED SHE
LANDED OVER THERE,
FAR AWAY FROM
MY SHIRT.

**G-GOTTA
G-GET BACK TO THE
M-MARMOTSSS**

FWAM





HOT
JUMPING
MOSES!

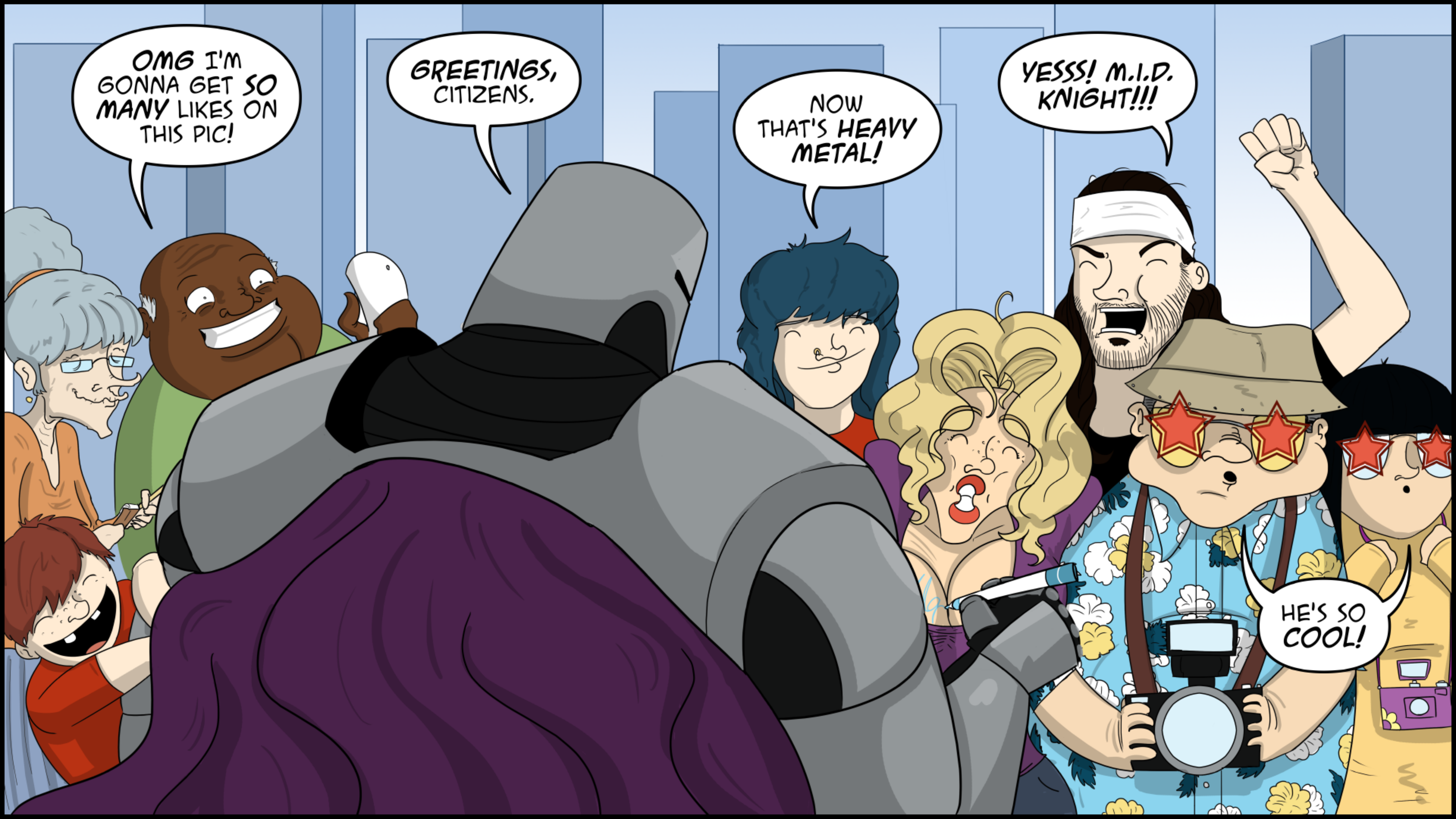
THERE'S
SO MUCH
BLOOD!

IS SHE...
...DEAD?!



HEY, LOOK
EVERYBODY...

...IT'S M.I.D.
KNIGHT!!!



OMG I'M
GONNA GET SO
MANY LIKES ON
THIS PIC!

GREETINGS,
CITIZENS.

NOW
THAT'S HEAVY
METAL!

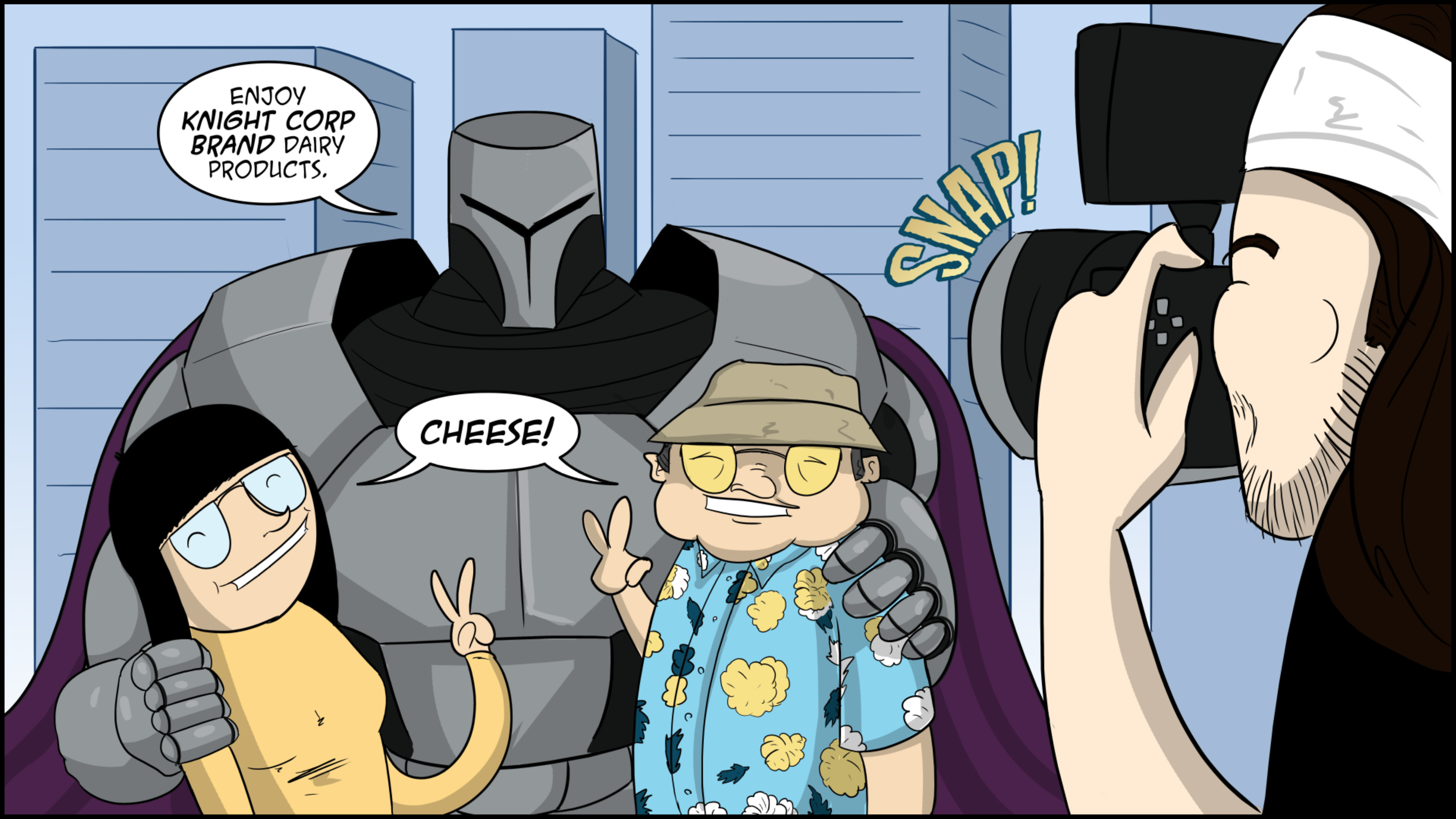
YESSS! M.I.D.
KNIGHT!!!

HE'S SO
COOL!

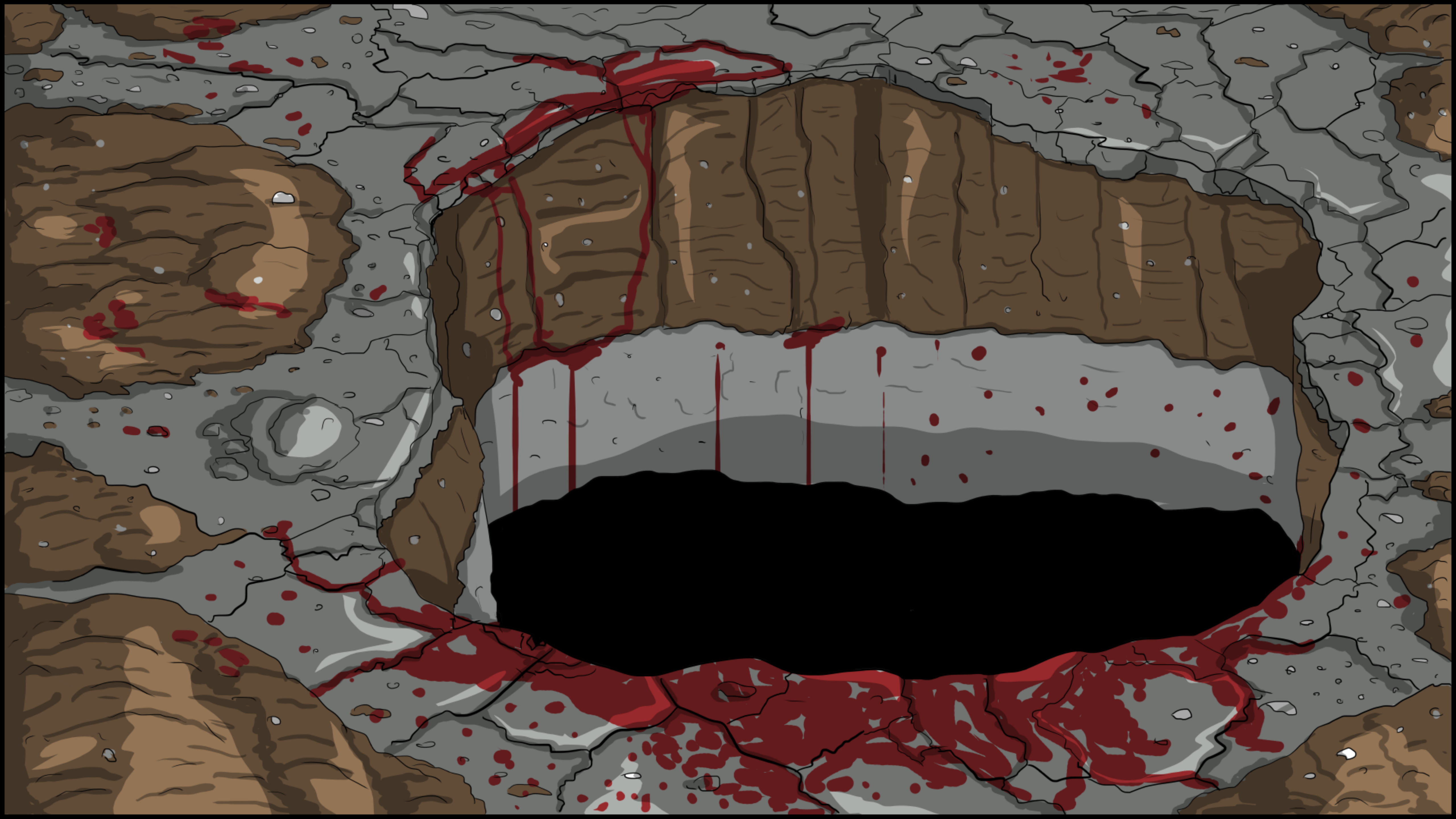
ENJOY
KNIGHT CORP
BRAND DAIRY
PRODUCTS.

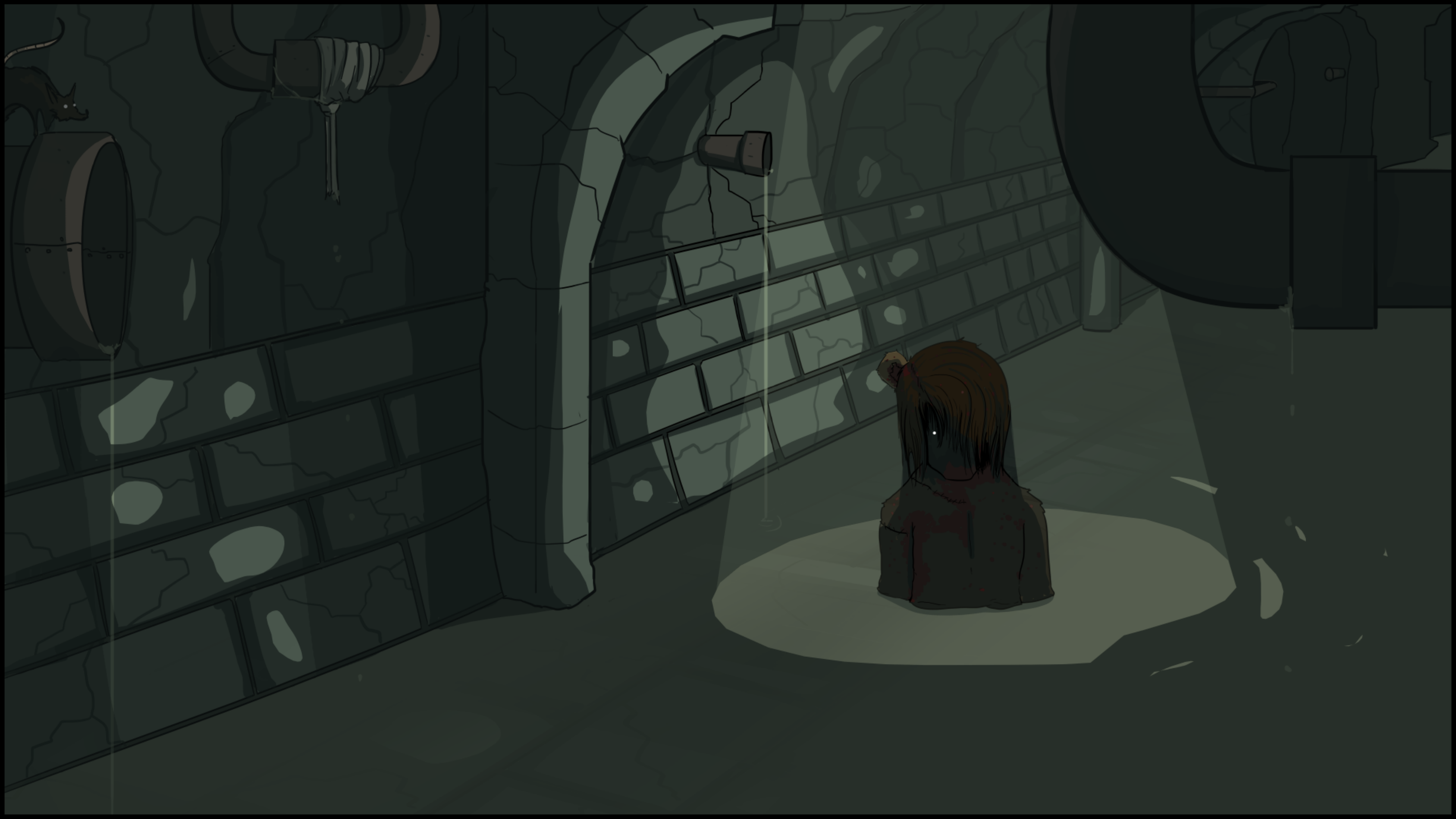
CHEESE!

SNAP!





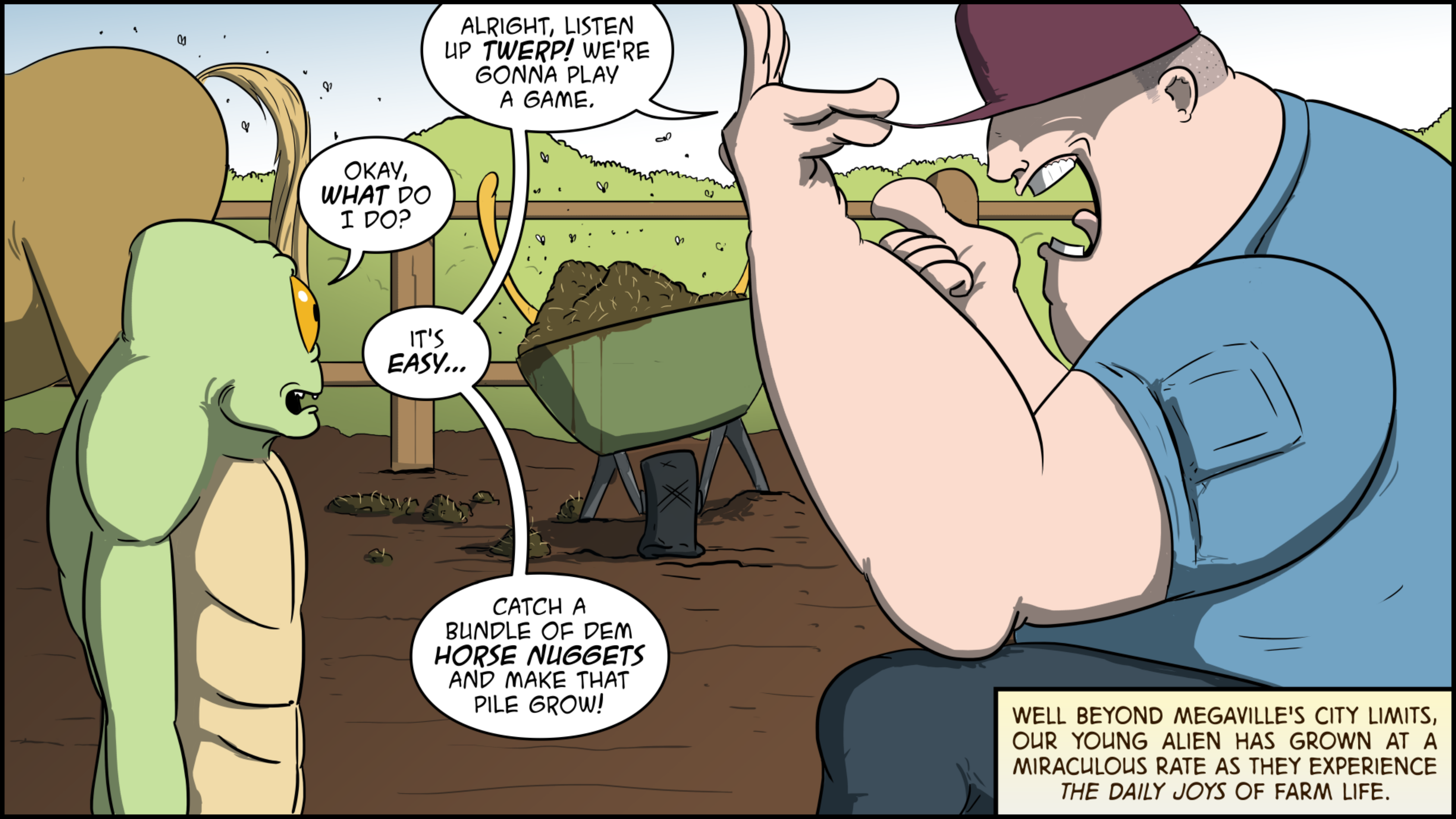






CHAPTER TEN *THE SECRET*





ALRIGHT, LISTEN UP **TWERP!** WE'RE GONNA PLAY A GAME.

OKAY, WHAT DO I DO?

IT'S EASY...

CATCH A BUNDLE OF DEM **HORSE NUGGETS** AND MAKE THAT PILE GROW!

WELL BEYOND MEGAVILLE'S CITY LIMITS, OUR YOUNG ALIEN HAS GROWN AT A MIRACULOUS RATE AS THEY EXPERIENCE THE DAILY JOYS OF FARM LIFE.

FLABBARATI!

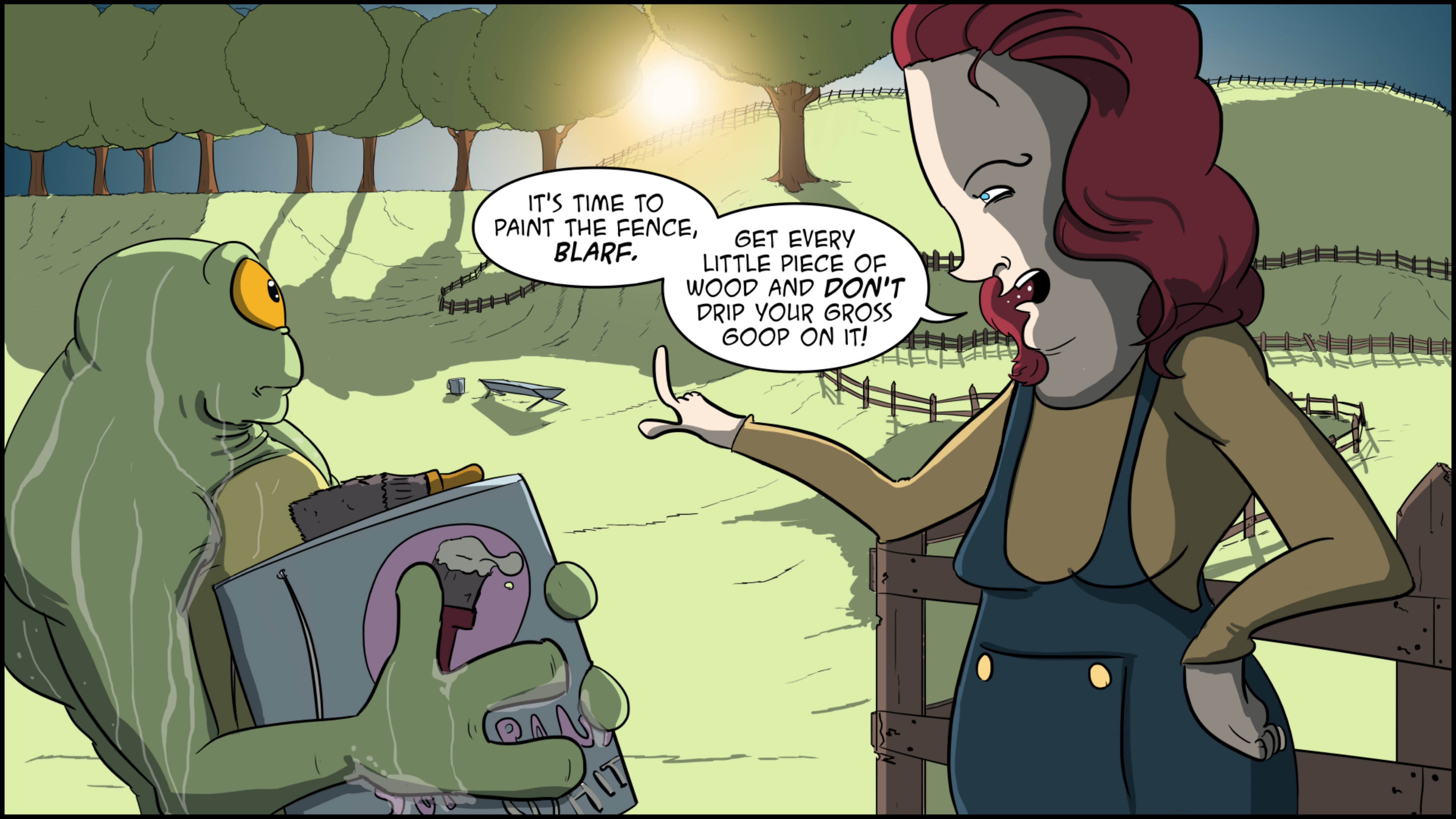
YAY!

I GOT
SOME!

I GOT
SOME!

AND BY "DAILY JOYS" WE MEAN AN
UNENDING STREAM OF DEGRADING
TASKS AND TAXING LABOR.





IT'S TIME TO
PAINT THE FENCE,
BLARF.

GET EVERY
LITTLE PIECE OF
WOOD AND **DON'T**
DRIP YOUR GROSS
GOOP ON IT!

AHH!!!

KER-ACK!

GIDDYUP,
YA FREAK!







I HATE
THIS STUPID
FARM!!!

PRE-OWNED
NAILS

X-MAS

THE
MSTERNOM

No. 2

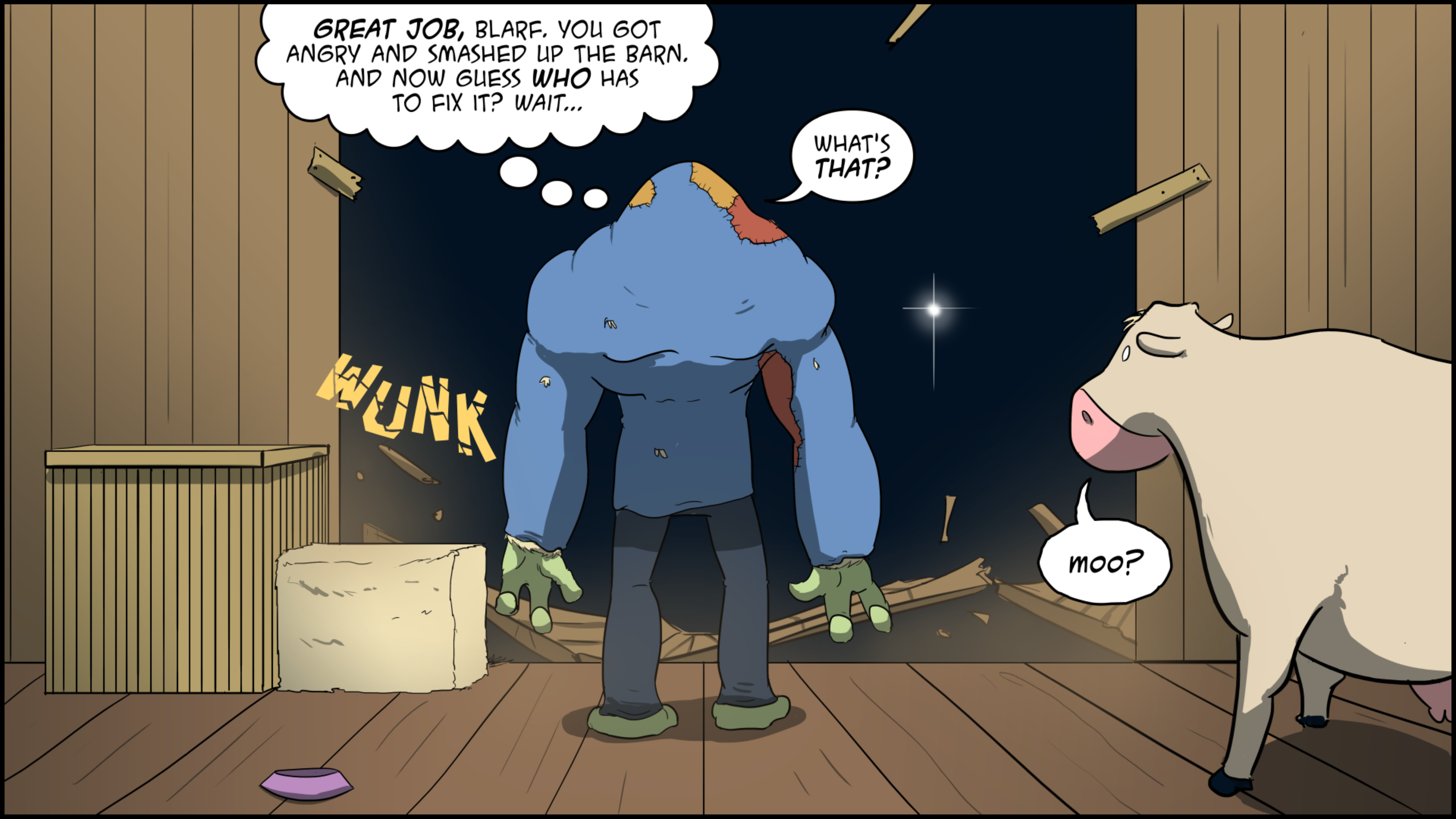


GREAT JOB, BLARF. YOU GOT
ANGRY AND SMASHED UP THE BARN.
AND NOW GUESS **WHO** HAS
TO FIX IT? WAIT...

WHAT'S
THAT?

WUNK

MOO?





OH HH
WOW, IT'S SO
BEAUTIFUL!

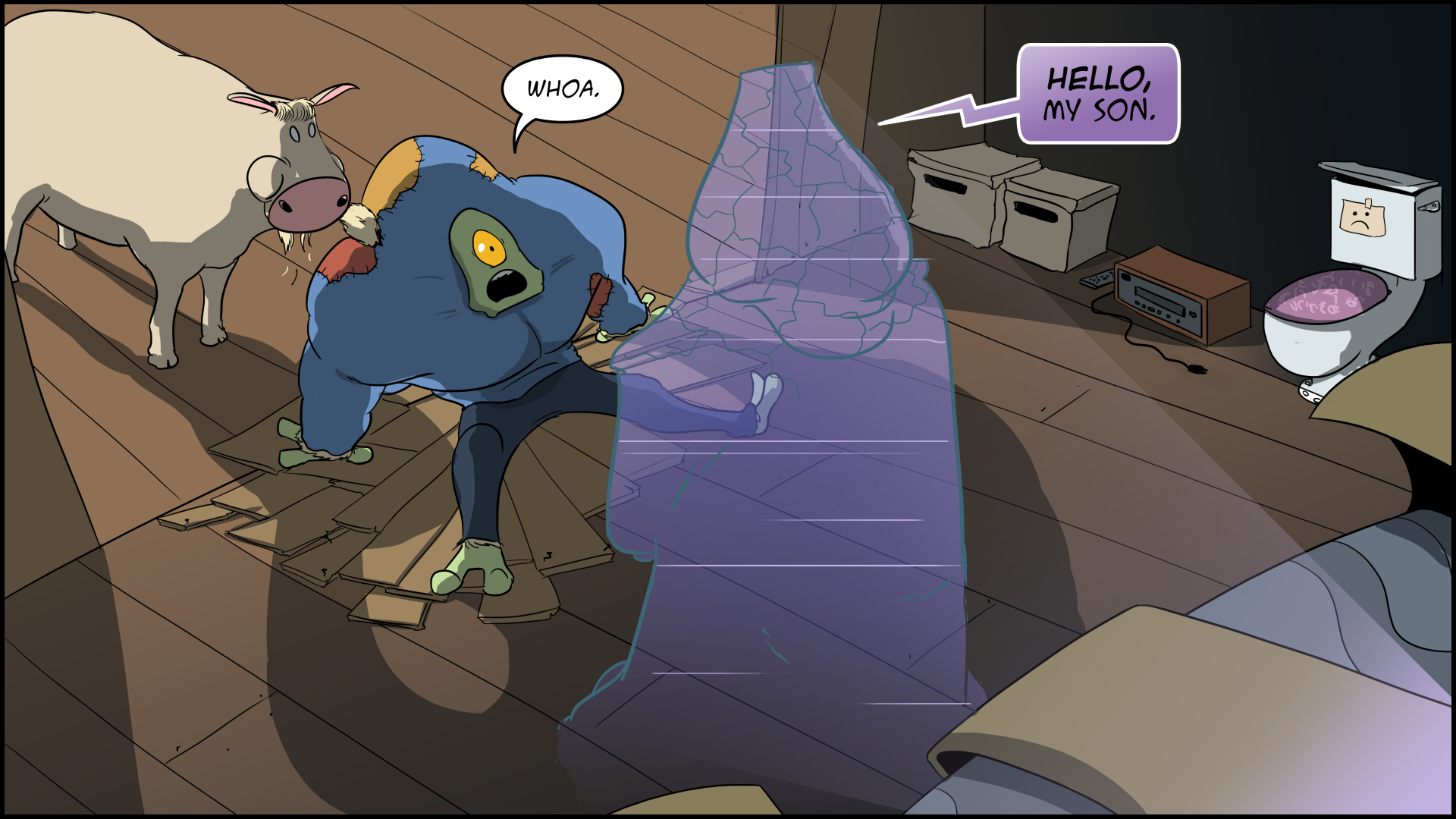


OUCH!



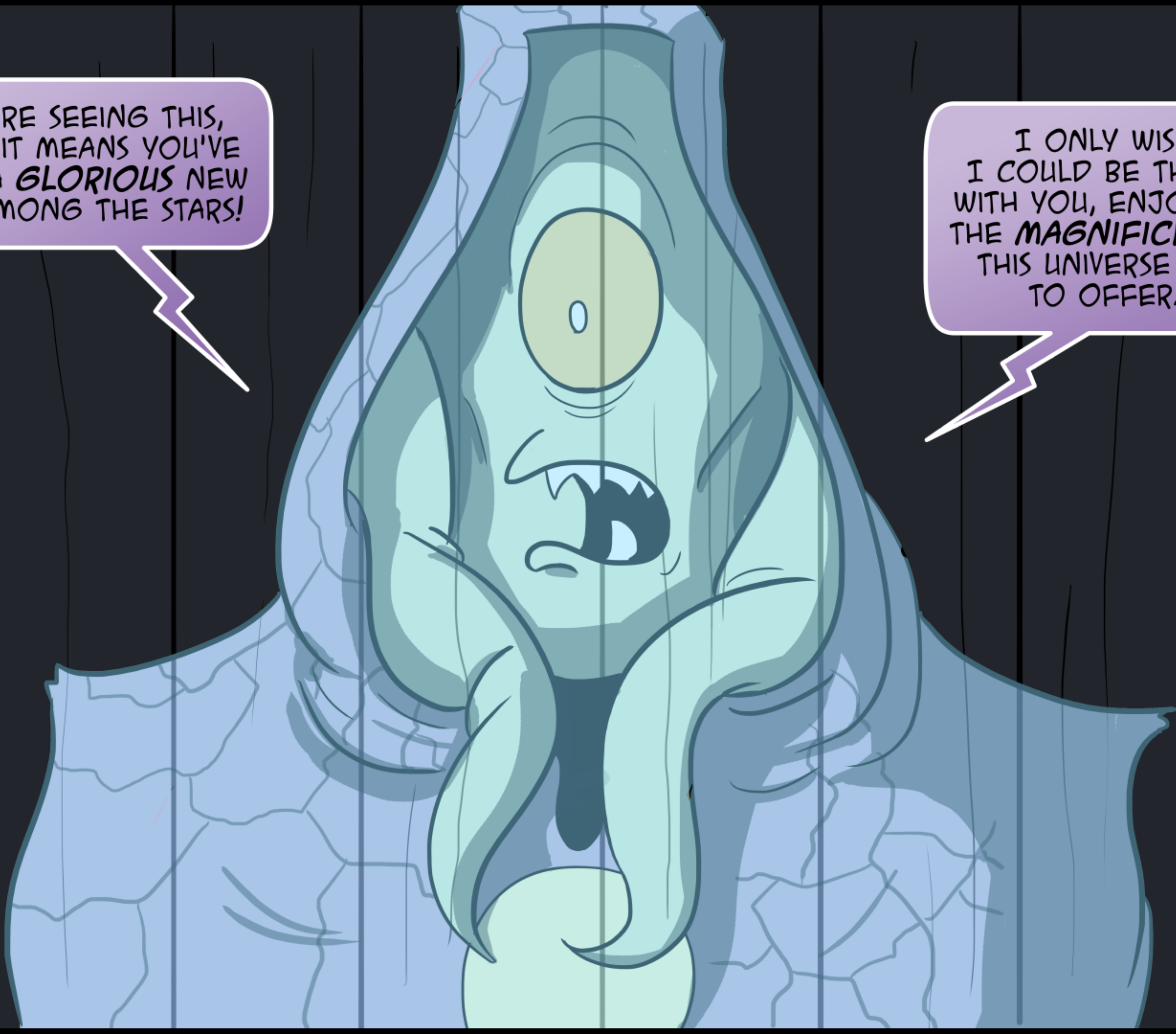
АННН!

FWHUMP



WHOA.

HELLO,
MY SON.



IF YOU'RE SEEING THIS,
I HOPE IT MEANS YOU'VE
FOUND A **GLORIOUS** NEW
HOME AMONG THE STARS!

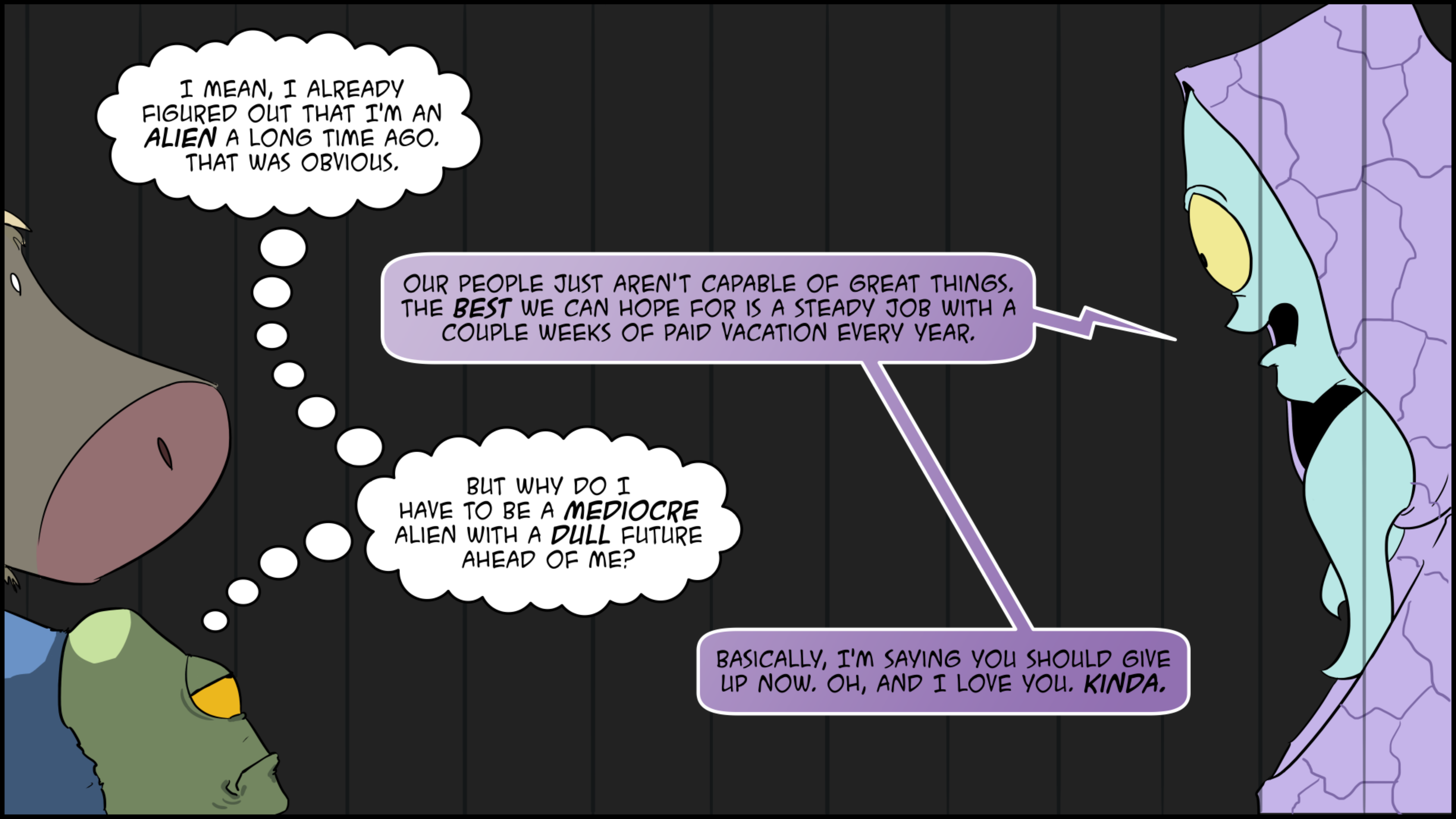
I ONLY WISH
I COULD BE THERE
WITH YOU, ENJOYING
THE **MAGNIFICENCE**
THIS UNIVERSE HAS
TO OFFER.



STILL, I *DON'T* WANT YOU TO
EXPECT MUCH OUT OF LIFE!

YOU *WEREN'T* MADE FOR
ANYTHING SPECIAL, SON.





I MEAN, I ALREADY
FIGURED OUT THAT I'M AN
ALIEN A LONG TIME AGO.
THAT WAS OBVIOUS.

OUR PEOPLE JUST AREN'T CAPABLE OF GREAT THINGS.
THE **BEST** WE CAN HOPE FOR IS A STEADY JOB WITH A
COUPLE WEEKS OF PAID VACATION EVERY YEAR.

BUT WHY DO I
HAVE TO BE A **MEDIOCRE**
ALIEN WITH A **DULL** FUTURE
AHEAD OF ME?

BASICALLY, I'M SAYING YOU SHOULD GIVE
UP NOW. OH, AND I LOVE YOU. **KINDA.**

I *MIGHT* LOVE YOU! I JUST
DON'T KNOW FOR SURE SINCE
I SENT YOU AWAY BEFORE YOU
DEVELOPED A PERSONALITY
OR WHATEVER.

BUT I ASSUME THAT
I WOULD *PROBABLY*
LOVE YOU IF I GOT TO
KNOW YOU. *MAYBE.*





GOODBYE,
MY BB-ZZT-
OY-ZZT-Y!



HMMRRM
=GRUMBLE=

moo?

BLARF

CHAPTER ELEVEN ABOVE GROUND

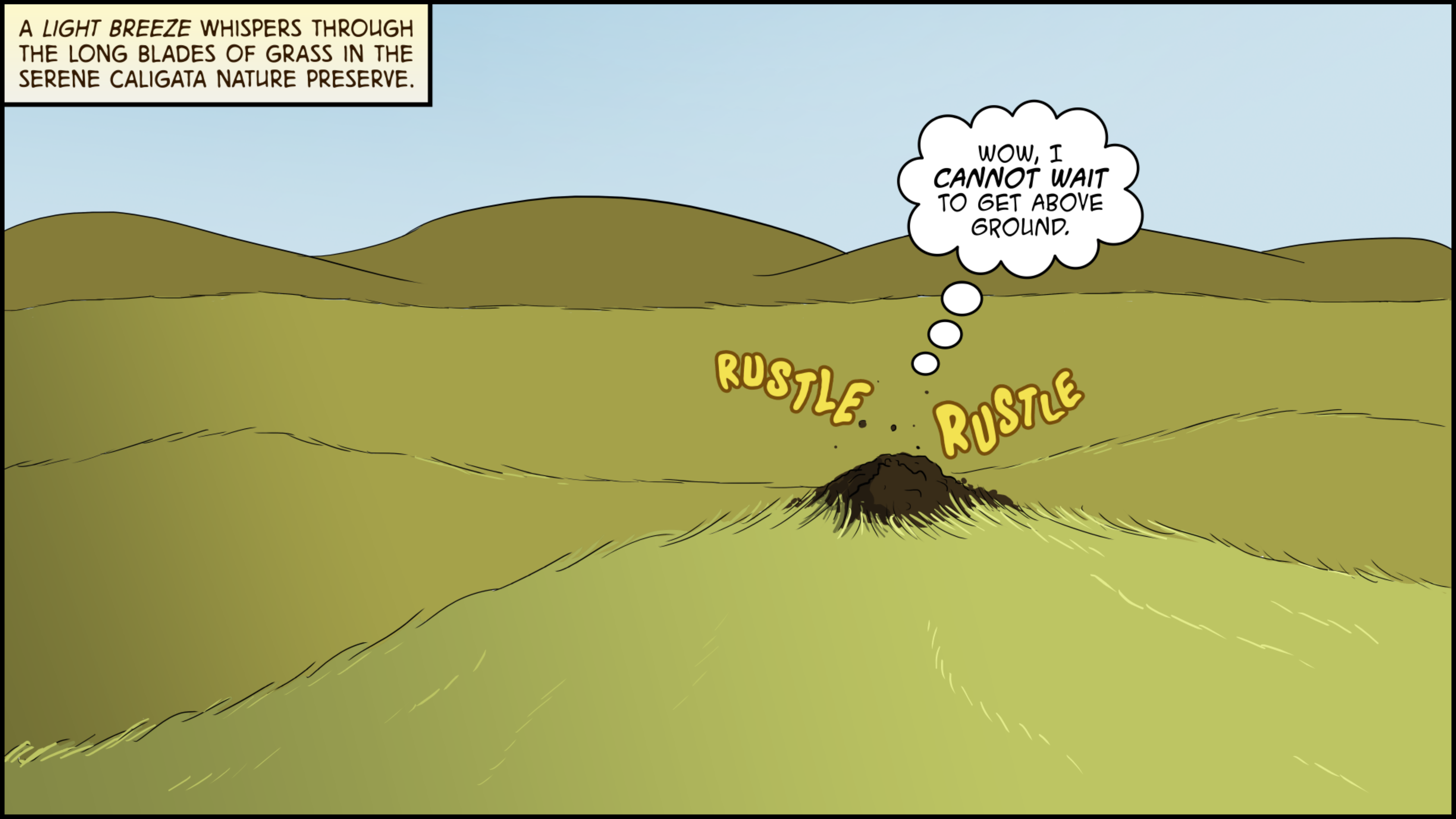


A *LIGHT BREEZE* WHISPERS THROUGH
THE LONG BLADES OF GRASS IN THE
SERENE CALIGATA NATURE PRESERVE.

WOW, I
CANNOT WAIT
TO GET ABOVE
GROUND.

RUSTLE

RUSTLE





IT'S BEEN *SO LONG* SINCE
I'VE SEEN THE SKY. FEELS LIKE
I HAD TO *DIG* FOR AGES JUST
TO GET BACK OUT HERE!

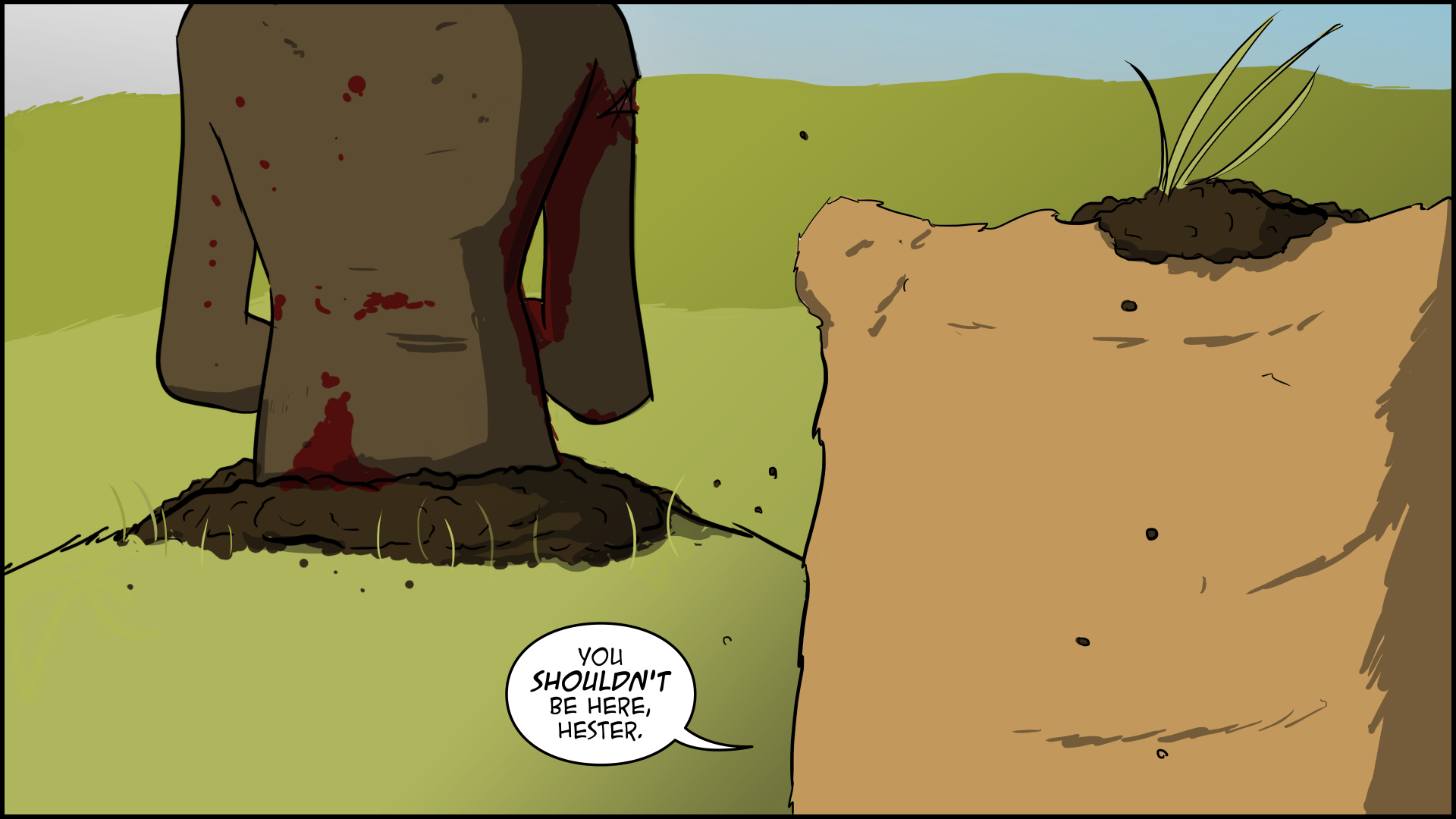
ERRRGAAH!

FOLLOWING HER BRUTAL RUN-IN WITH
M.I.D. KNIGHT, THE *SUN SHINES* ON
HESTER FOR THE FIRST TIME IN DAYS.



JERRY?
TINY TEDDY?
BARTHA?

RUSTLE RUSTLE



YOU
SHOULDN'T
BE HERE,
HESTER.



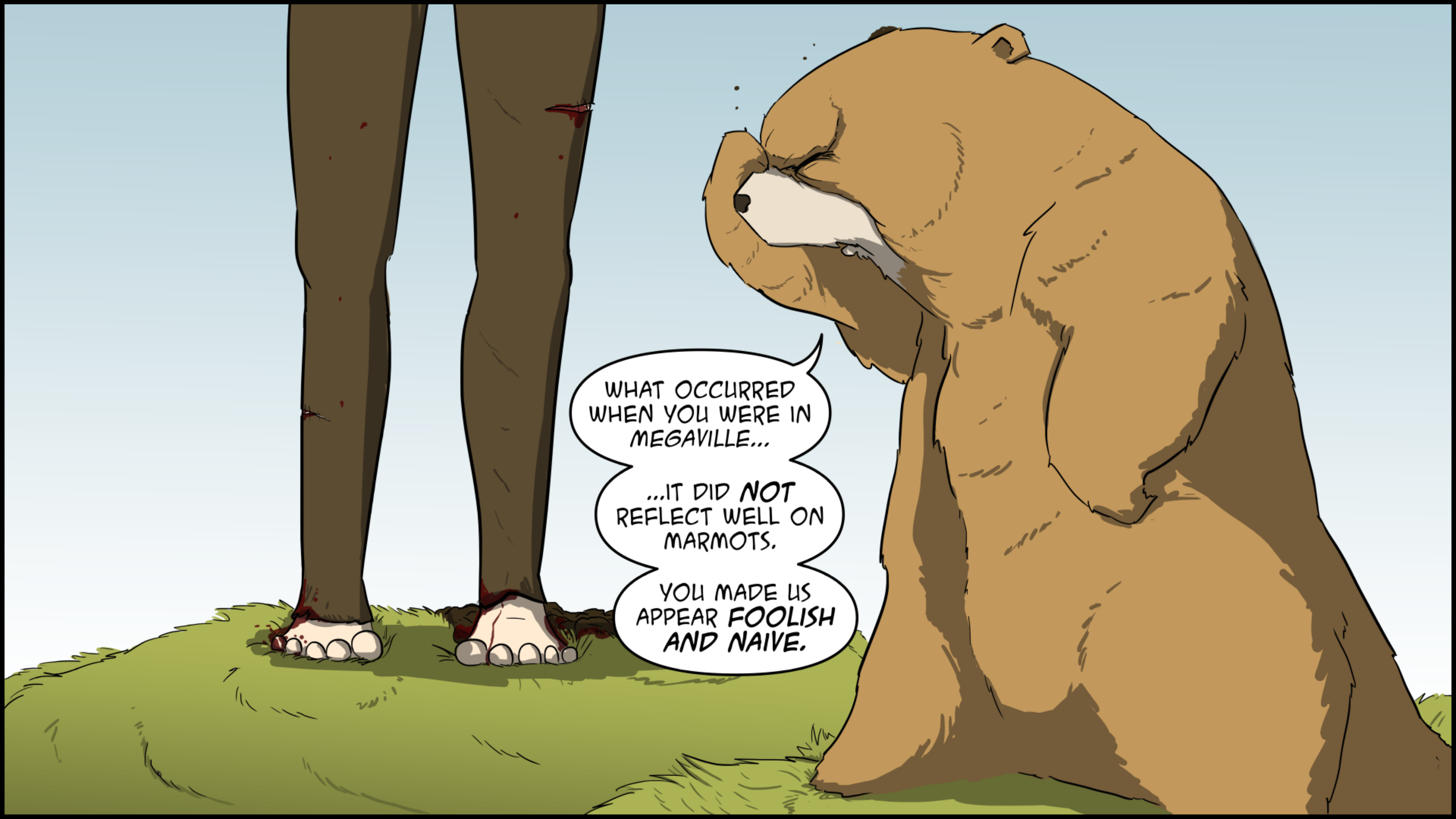
I'M SO
GLAD TO SEE YOU,
JERRY! YOU PROBABLY
EXPECTED ME TO STILL BE
WORKING WITH M.I.D. KNIGHT
IN MEGAVILLE TO SOLVE
OUR **POLLUTION**
PROBLEM.

BUT, WELL,
UMMMM... THINGS
DIDN'T QUITE GO AS
PLANNED. LEMME TELL
YOU EVERYTHING
THAT HAP--

NO NEED.
I **ALREADY**
KNOW.



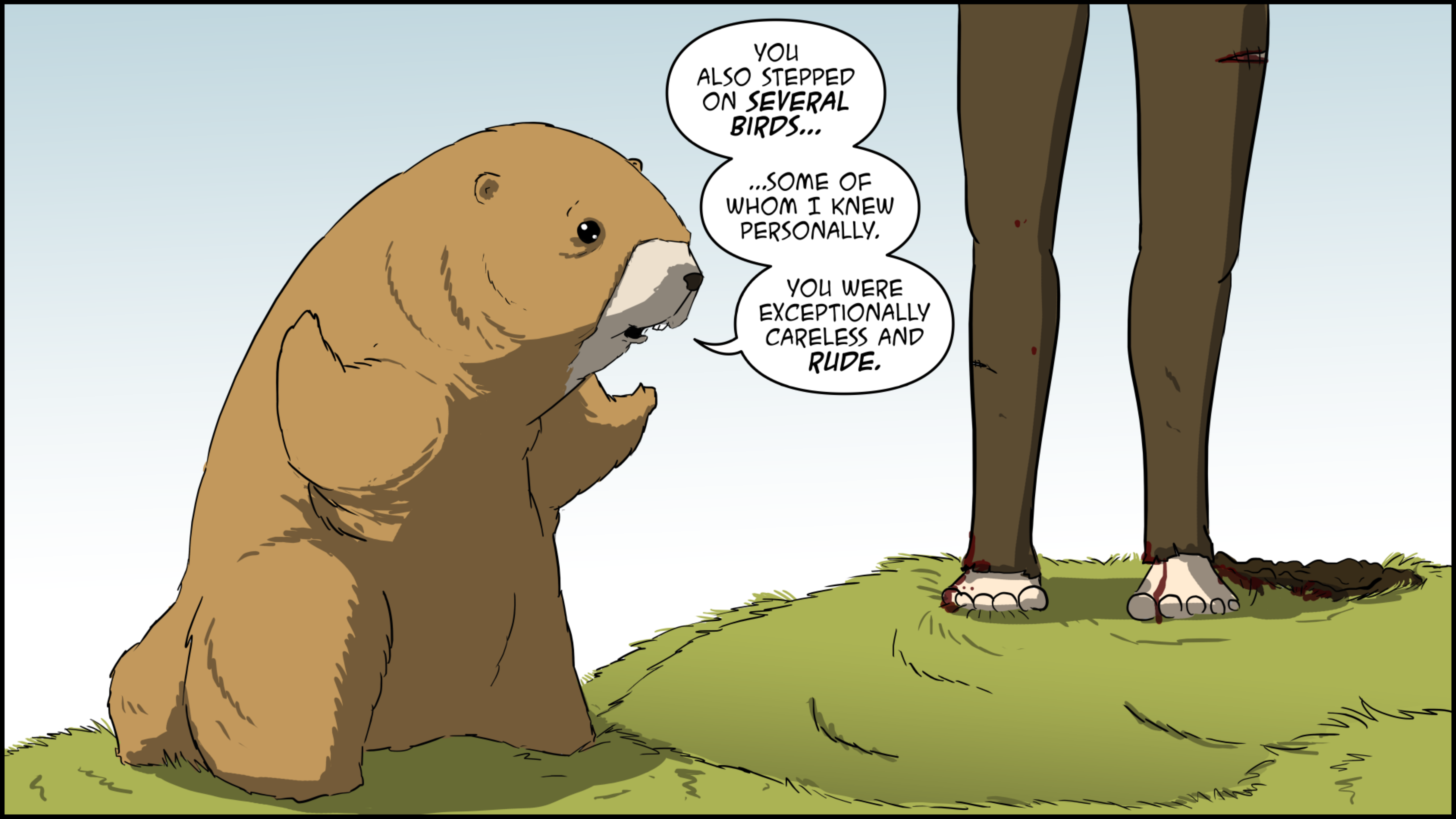




WHAT OCCURRED
WHEN YOU WERE IN
MEGAVILLE...

...IT DID **NOT**
REFLECT WELL ON
MARMOTS.

YOU MADE US
APPEAR **FOOLISH**
AND NAIVE.



YOU
ALSO STEPPED
ON **SEVERAL**
BIRDS...

...SOME OF
WHOM I KNEW
PERSONALLY.


YOU WERE
EXCEPTIONALLY
CARELESS AND
RUDE.



AHH CRAP,
YOU'RE RIGHT,
JERRY. I REALLY
MESSED UP. **BUT**
WE CAN TRY
AGAIN!

M.I.D. KNIGHT
NEEDS TO KNOW
WHAT'S GOING ON OUT
HERE. WE'LL DRAW UP A
NEW PLAN AND THEN
I'LL HEAD BACK
IN AND...

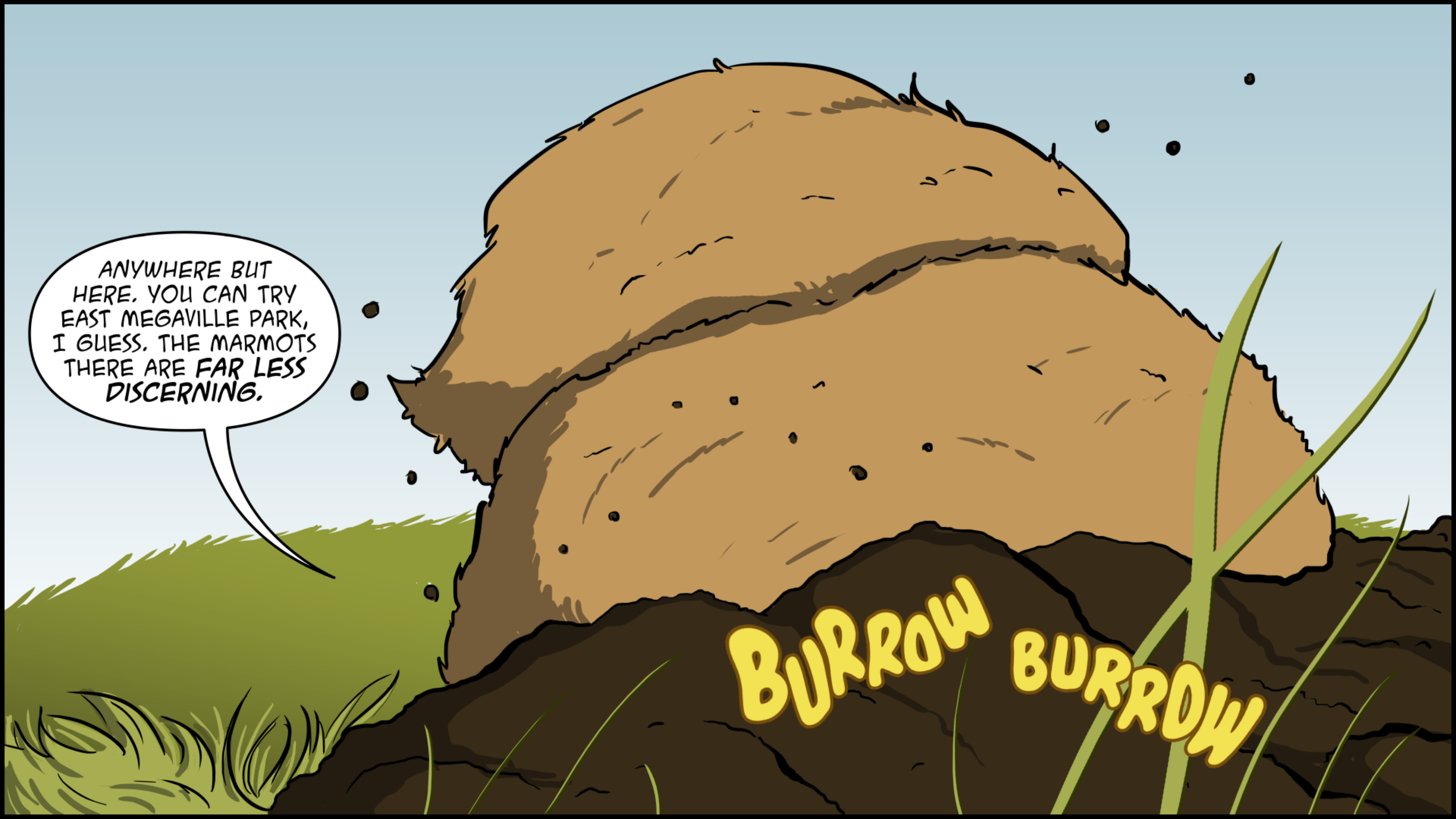




WE REFUSE TO
BE ASSOCIATED WITH
YOUR **FAILURE**. YOU
NEED TO LEAVE.



WAIT...
WHAT? WHERE
AM I SUPPOSED
TO GO?!?



ANYWHERE BUT
HERE. YOU CAN TRY
EAST MEGAVILLE PARK,
I GUESS. THE MARMOTS
THERE ARE **FAR LESS**
DISCERNING.

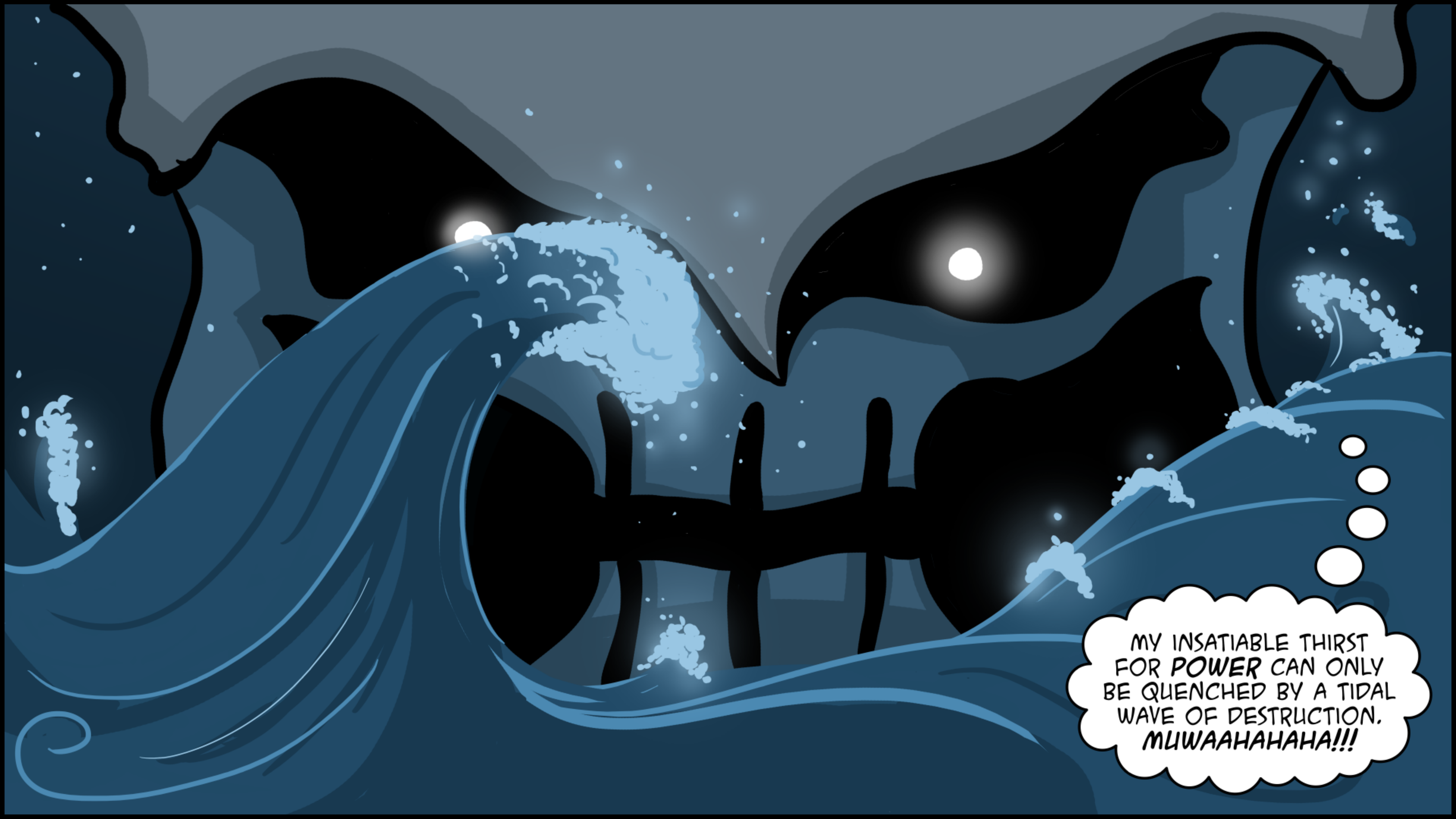
BURROW BURROW



FAREWELL,
HESTER.

CHAPTER TWELVE *DAILY BIND*





MY INSATIABLE THIRST
FOR **POWER** CAN ONLY
BE QUENCHED BY A TIDAL
WAVE OF DESTRUCTION.
MLUWAAHAHAHA!!!

IN THE OFFICES OF THE KNIGHT CORPORATION,
GLOOM IS GETTING TO KNOW HIS CO-WORKERS...
WHETHER HE LIKES IT OR NOT.

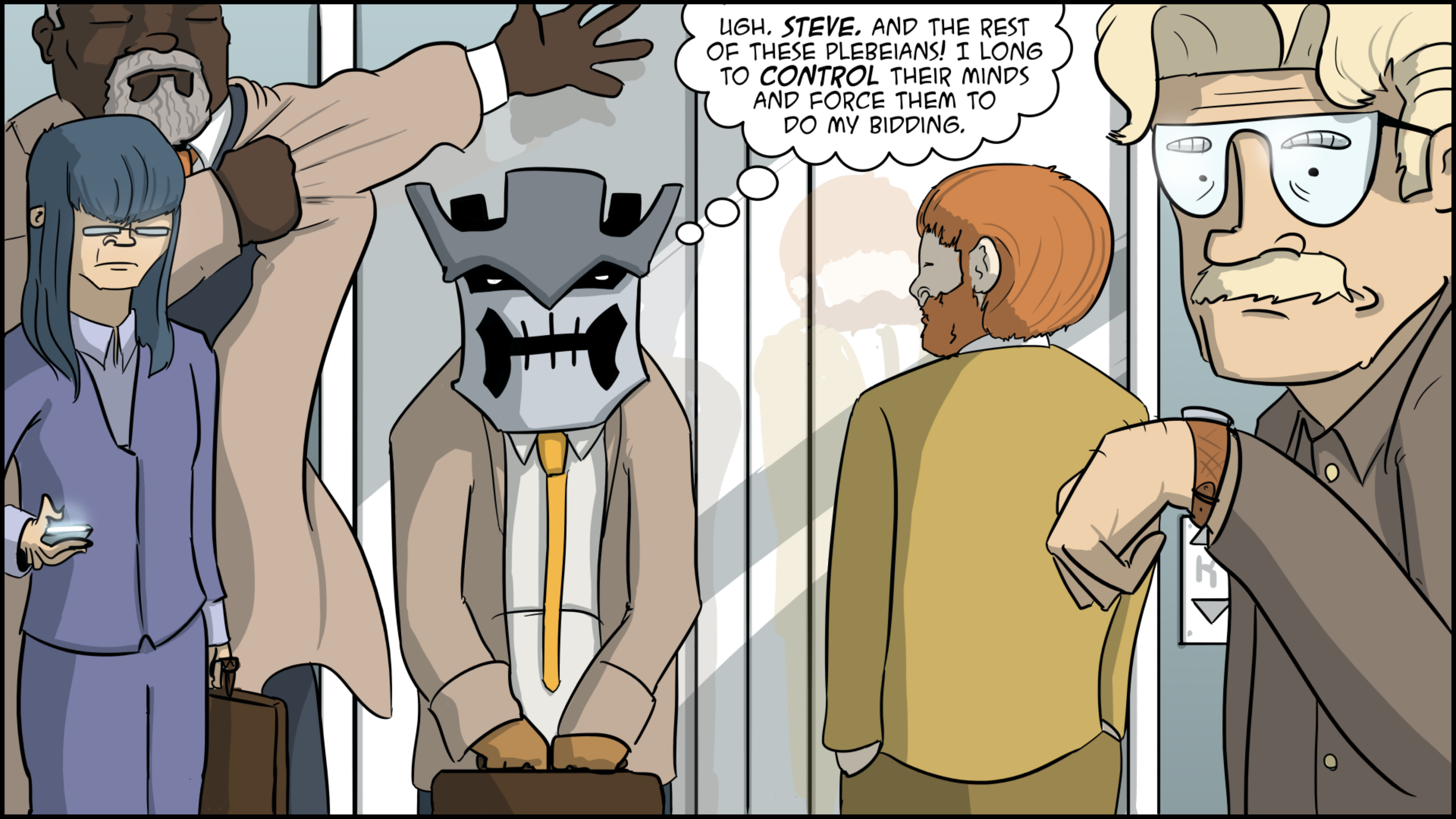
UHHH...
HEY, **NEW GUY**.
WHATCHA UP TO
OVER THERE?



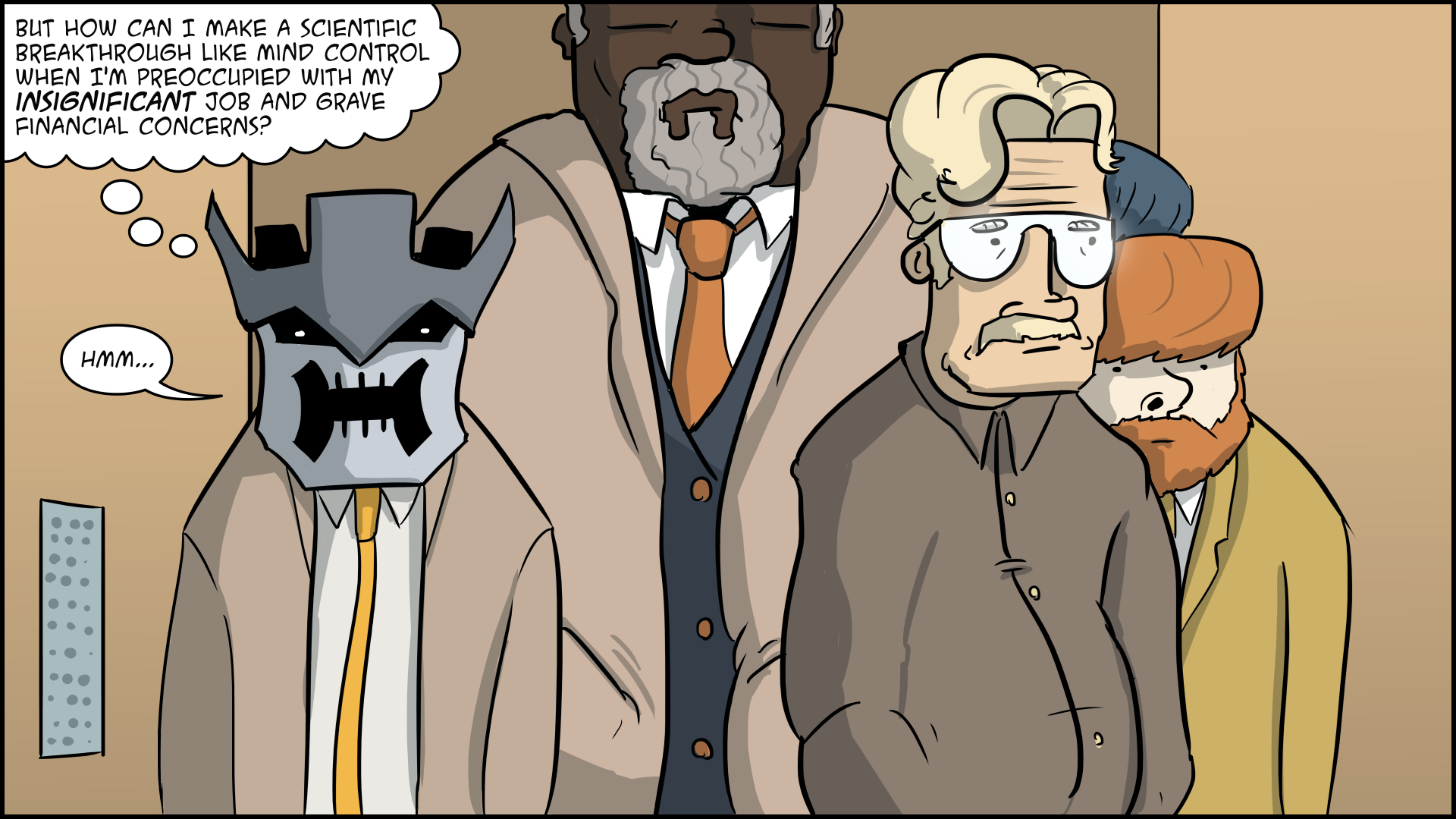
A cartoon illustration featuring two characters. On the left, a man with blonde hair, wearing glasses and a yellow short-sleeved shirt, is drinking from a white cup. He is standing next to a blue water cooler with a red base. On the right, a werewolf with grey fur, wearing a white shirt and a yellow tie, is holding a white cup in his right hand. He is wearing a grey, crown-like headpiece. A speech bubble from the werewolf contains the text: "I'M MERELY **INDULGING** IN SOME HYDRATING FLUID BEFORE THE CULMINATION OF YET ANOTHER PRODUCTIVE WORK DAY. **TALLY-HO!**". The background is a light blue wall with a green bush and a brown tree trunk.

I'M MERELY
INDULGING IN SOME
HYDRATING FLUID BEFORE THE
CULMINATION OF YET ANOTHER
PRODUCTIVE WORK DAY.
TALLY-HO!



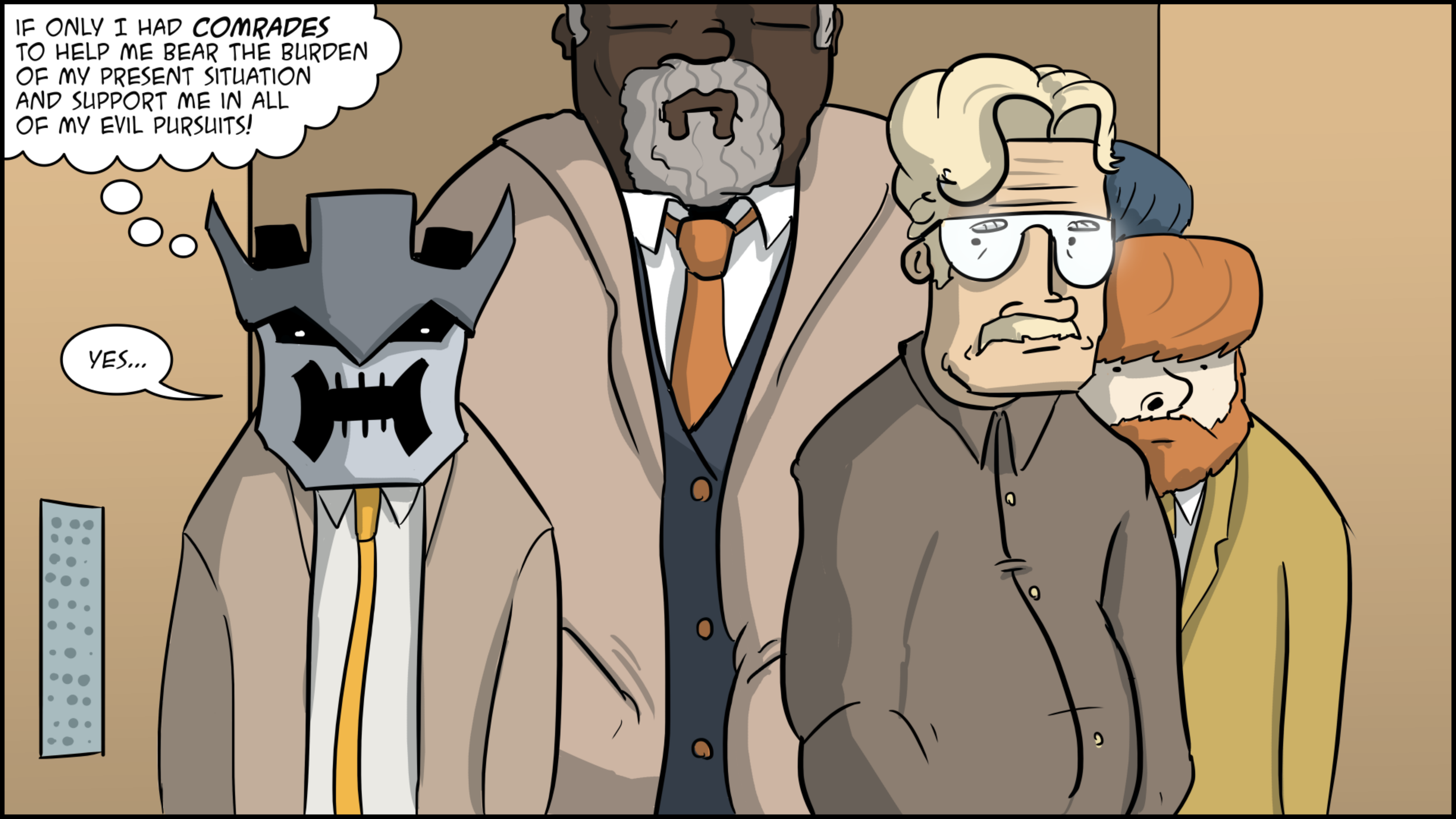


UGH, STEVE, AND THE REST
OF THESE PLEBEIANS! I LONG
TO **CONTROL** THEIR MINDS
AND FORCE THEM TO
DO MY BIDDING.



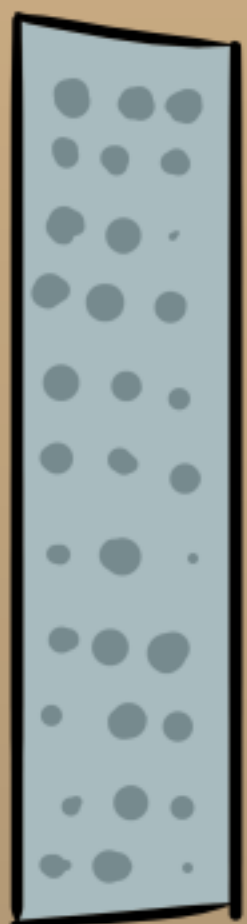
BUT HOW CAN I MAKE A SCIENTIFIC
BREAKTHROUGH LIKE MIND CONTROL
WHEN I'M PREOCCUPIED WITH MY
INSIGNIFICANT JOB AND GRAVE
FINANCIAL CONCERNS?

HMM...



IF ONLY I HAD *COMRADES*
TO HELP ME BEAR THE BURDEN
OF MY PRESENT SITUATION
AND SUPPORT ME IN ALL
OF MY EVIL PURSUITS!

YES...

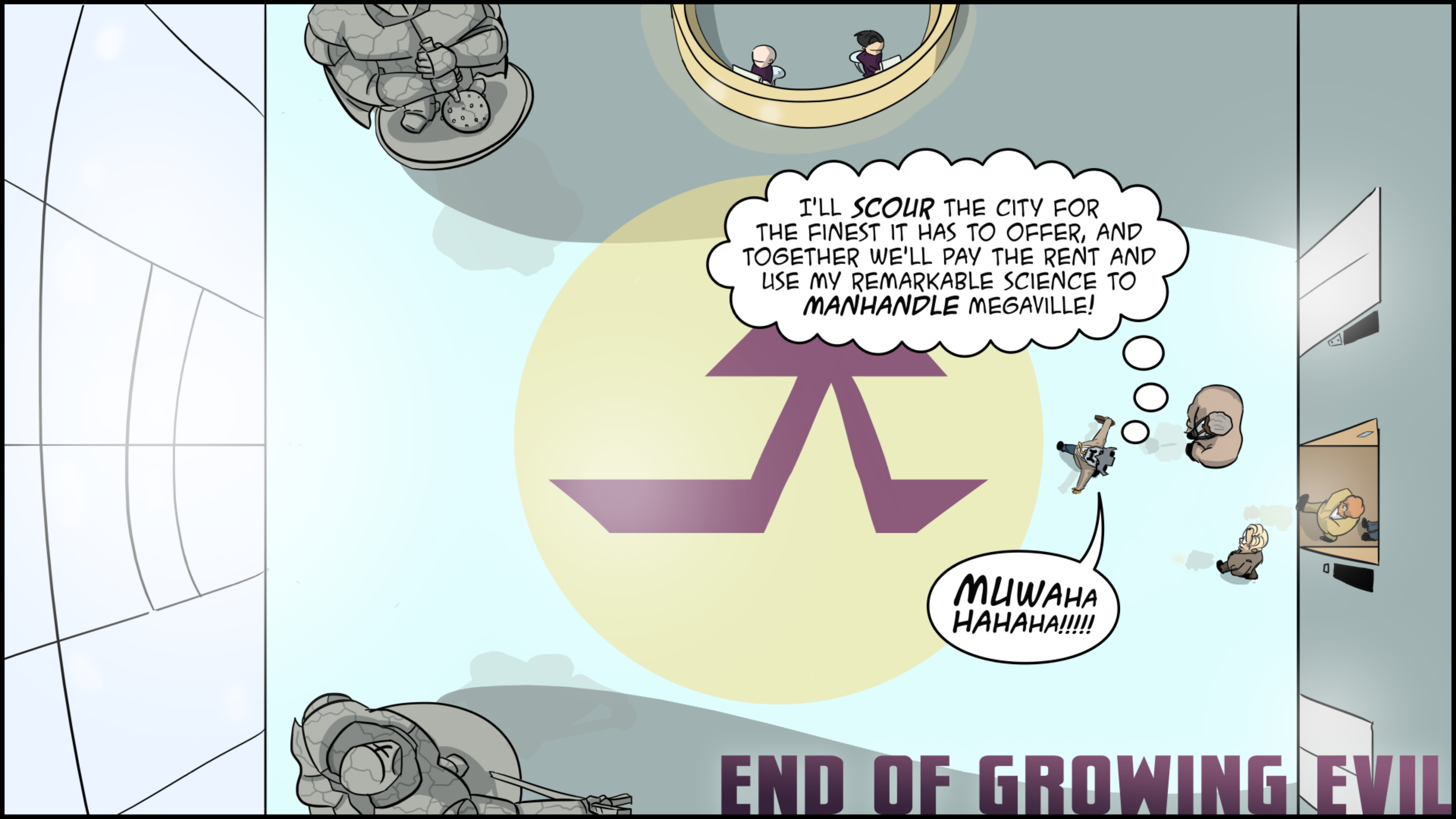




YES...



YES!
ROOMMATES!
THAT'S WHAT I
NEED!!!



I'LL *SCOUR* THE CITY FOR
THE FINEST IT HAS TO OFFER, AND
TOGETHER WE'LL PAY THE RENT AND
USE MY REMARKABLE SCIENCE TO
MANHANDLE MEGAVILLE!

MLIWAHA
HAHAHA!!!!

END OF GROWING EVIL