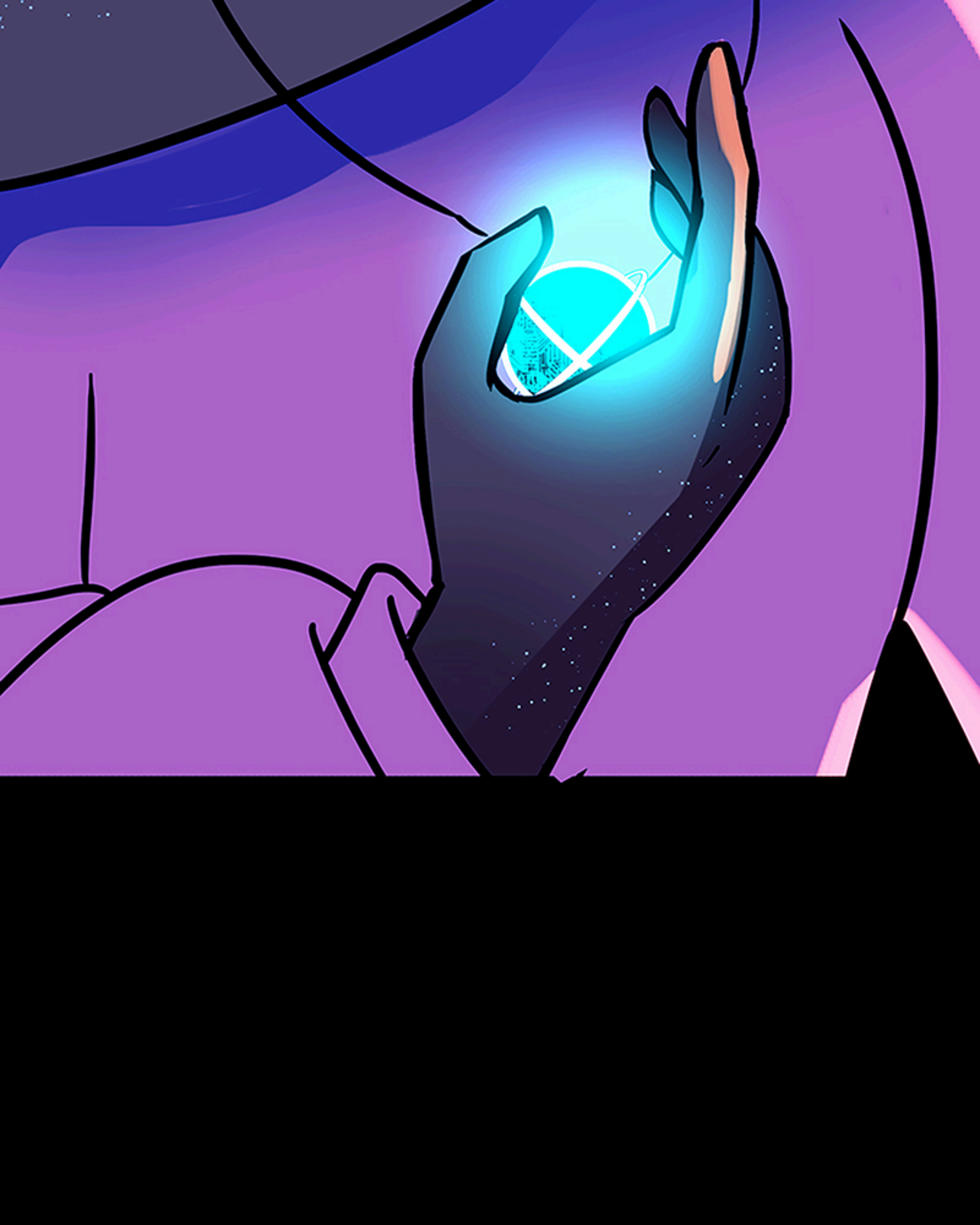


YOU WIN.

TAKE ME
TO A.E.

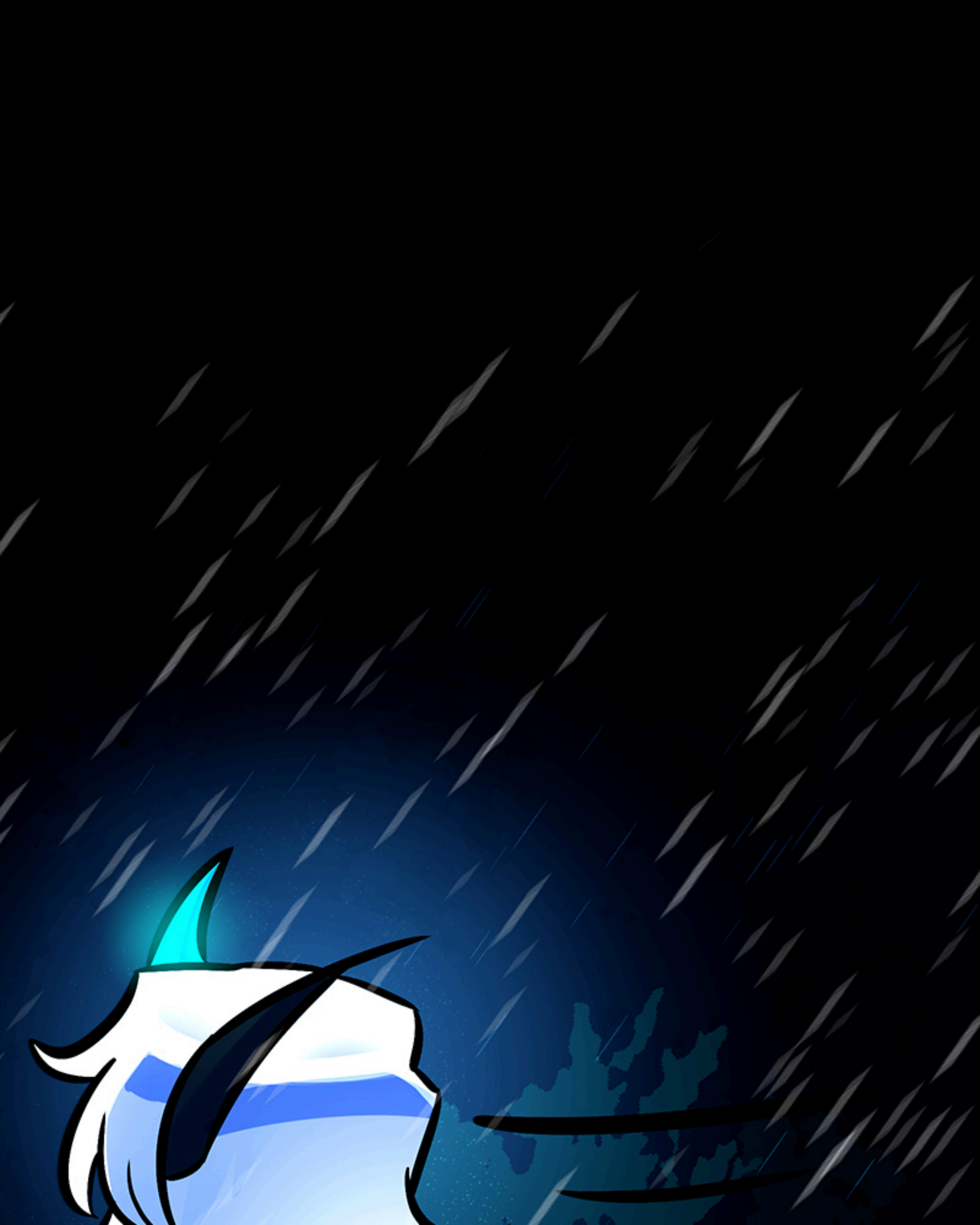










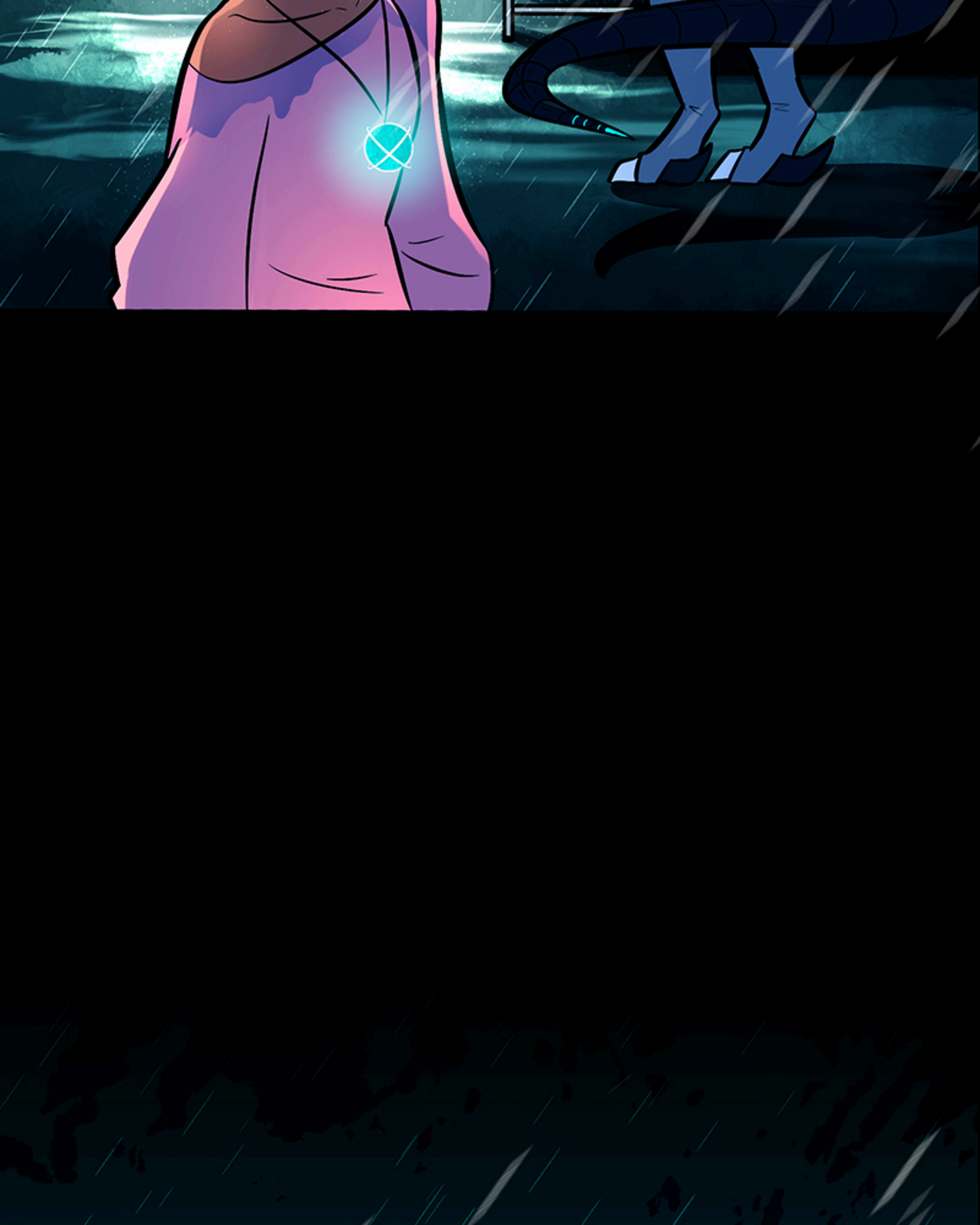




WH-!



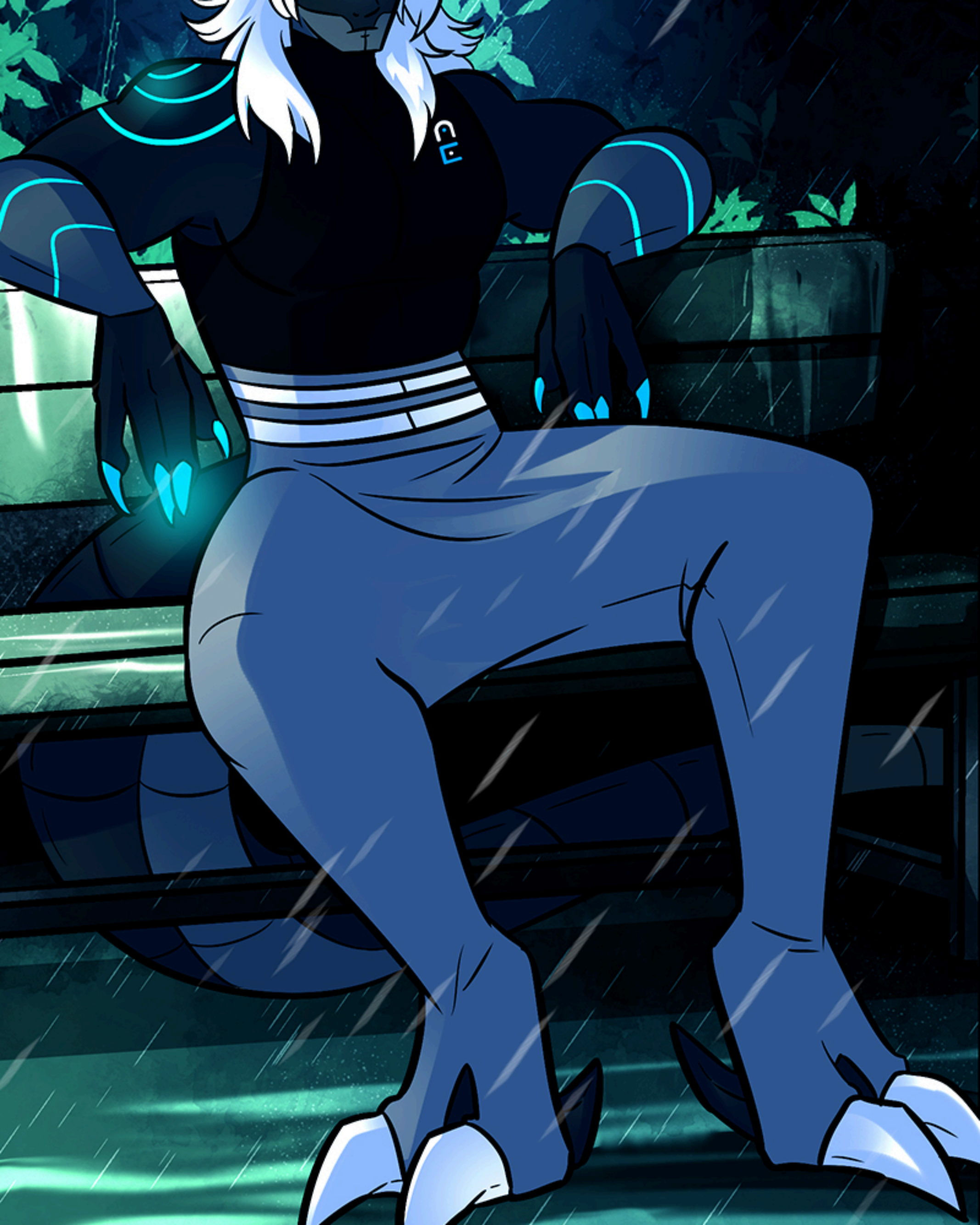
WHAT ARE
YOU DOING??

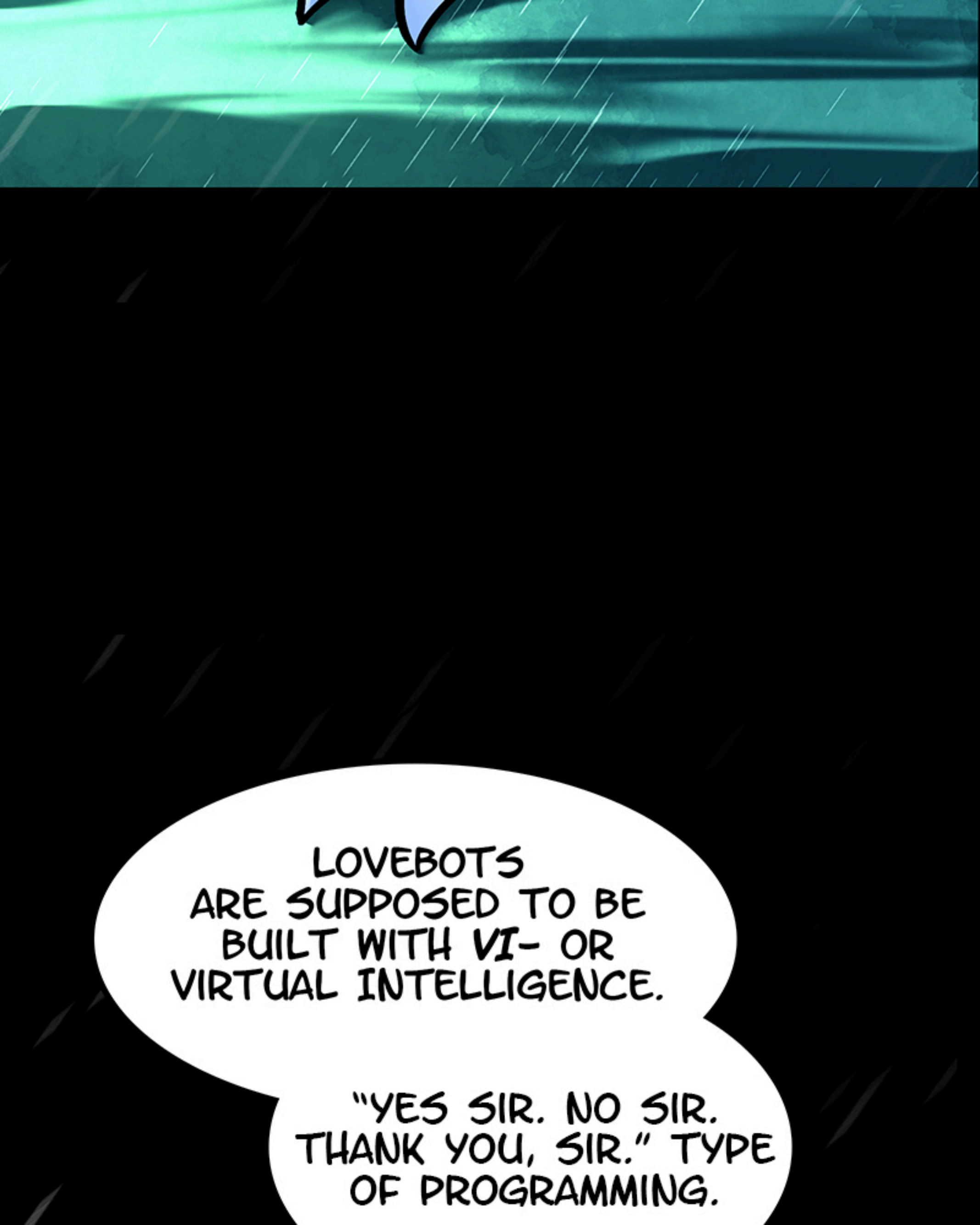




I WANT YOU
TO INDULGE ME
IN FILLING IN
SOME GAPS.

AND
EXPLAIN SOME
THINGS...





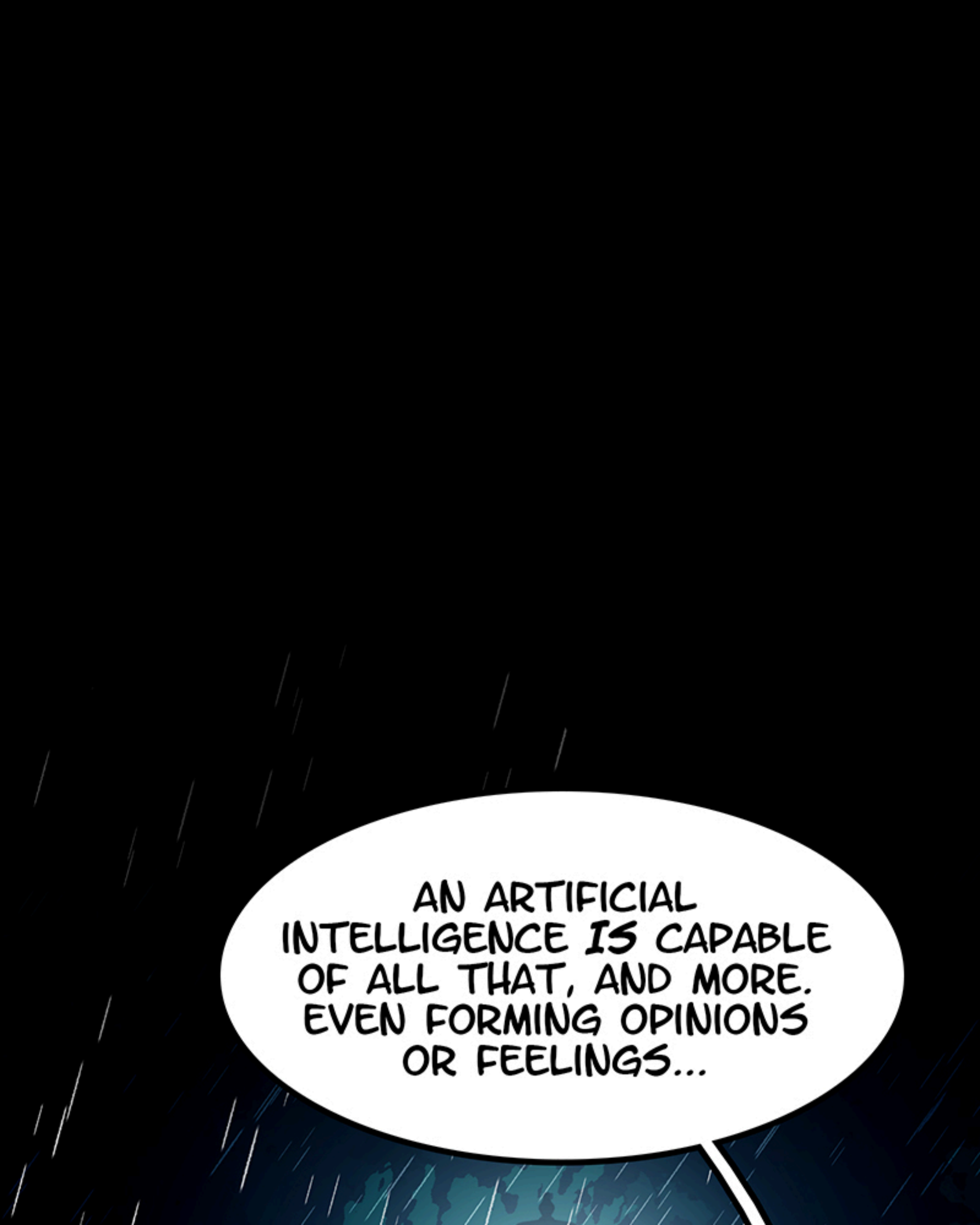
LOVEBOTS
ARE SUPPOSED TO BE
BUILT WITH VI- OR
VIRTUAL INTELLIGENCE.

"YES SIR. NO SIR.
THANK YOU, SIR." TYPE
OF PROGRAMMING.

A comic panel featuring a character with white hair and green eyes at the bottom left. A large speech bubble originates from the character and extends towards the top center of the frame. The background is dark blue with diagonal white streaks, suggesting rain or a storm. The text inside the speech bubble is in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

MEANT TO BE
INCAPABLE OF DEEPER
THOUGHT OR UNDERSTANDING.
**YOU FOLLOW ORDERS AND
LOOK PRETTY.**



A white speech bubble with a black outline is centered in the lower half of the image. The background is dark blue/black with white diagonal lines representing rain. The text inside the bubble is in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

AN ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE *IS* CAPABLE
OF ALL THAT, AND MORE.
EVEN FORMING OPINIONS
OR FEELINGS...



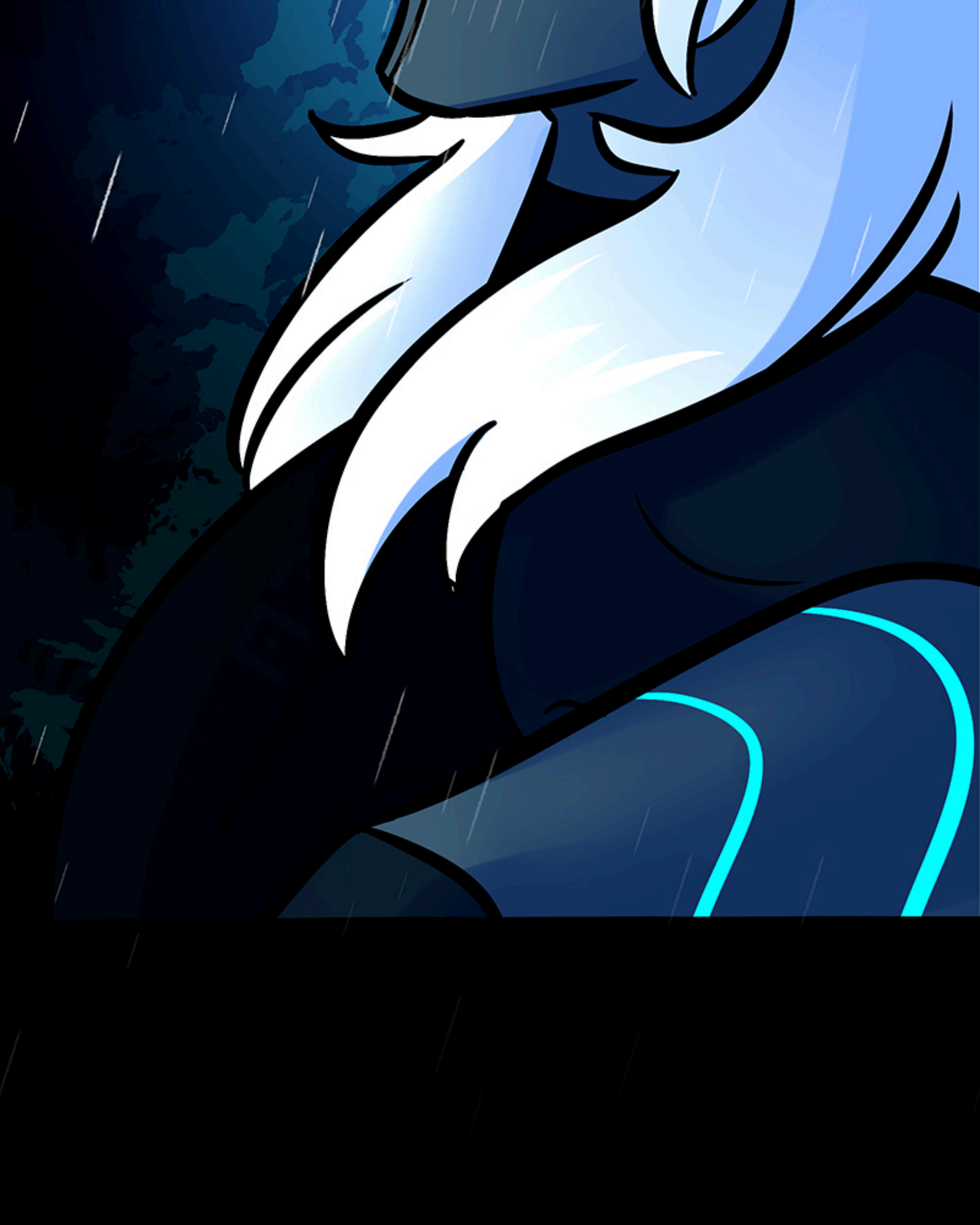


YOU CAN SEE
WHY IT WOULD BE
ILLEGAL FOR BOTS OF
YOUR PARTICULAR PURPOSE
BE BUILT WITH AI -
ETHICALLY.

YET HERE
WE ARE...

WHICH BEGS
THE QUESTION...
WHY DO YOU
EXIST?



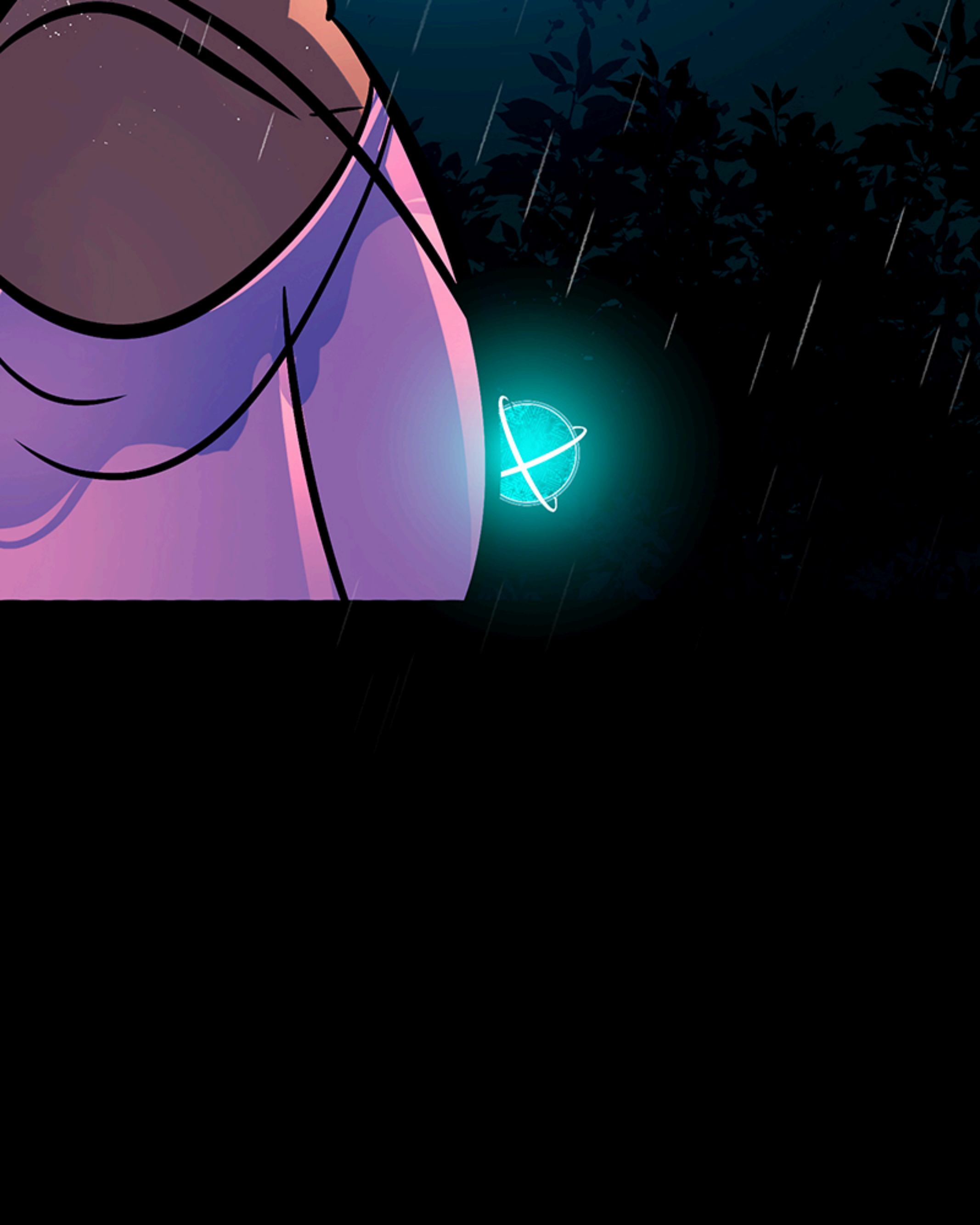


HOW AM I
SUPPOSED TO KNOW
THE ANSWER TO

THE ANSWER TO
THAT??

I DON'T
KNOW!!





The background is a dark, moody illustration of a rainy night. Numerous white diagonal streaks represent falling rain. In the upper left, there are dark, silhouetted shapes of trees or bushes. A large, white, oval-shaped speech bubble is positioned in the lower center of the frame. It has a small tail pointing downwards towards the bottom edge of the image. Inside the speech bubble, the text is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, all in uppercase letters. The text is arranged in five lines, centered within the bubble. The overall color palette is dominated by dark blues, blacks, and greys, with the white rain streaks and speech bubble providing high contrast.

WELL WHAT
CHANGED THEN? YOU
OBVIOUSLY DIDN'T COME
OUT OF THE BOX
THIS WAY.



WHY DID YOU
ATTACK MICHAEL
MASTER?

MASTERS?

I TOLD
YOU IT WAS
SELF DEFENSE
I...







XADA AND
I NEVER GOT A CHANCE
TO REALLY TALK ABOUT
HOW IT HAPPENED
BUT...

HE WAS BROUGHT
TO MODIFY ME LIKE HE
HAD WITH MICHAEL'S
1818.

A comic book panel featuring a character with short, spiky white hair and a purple robe with a pink collar. The character has a somber expression and is looking slightly to the right. The background is dark blue with white diagonal streaks representing rain. A large speech bubble is positioned above the character's head. To the right, a portion of another character's face and blue hair is visible.

THEN WHEN
I WOKE UP I WAS
DIFFERENT...

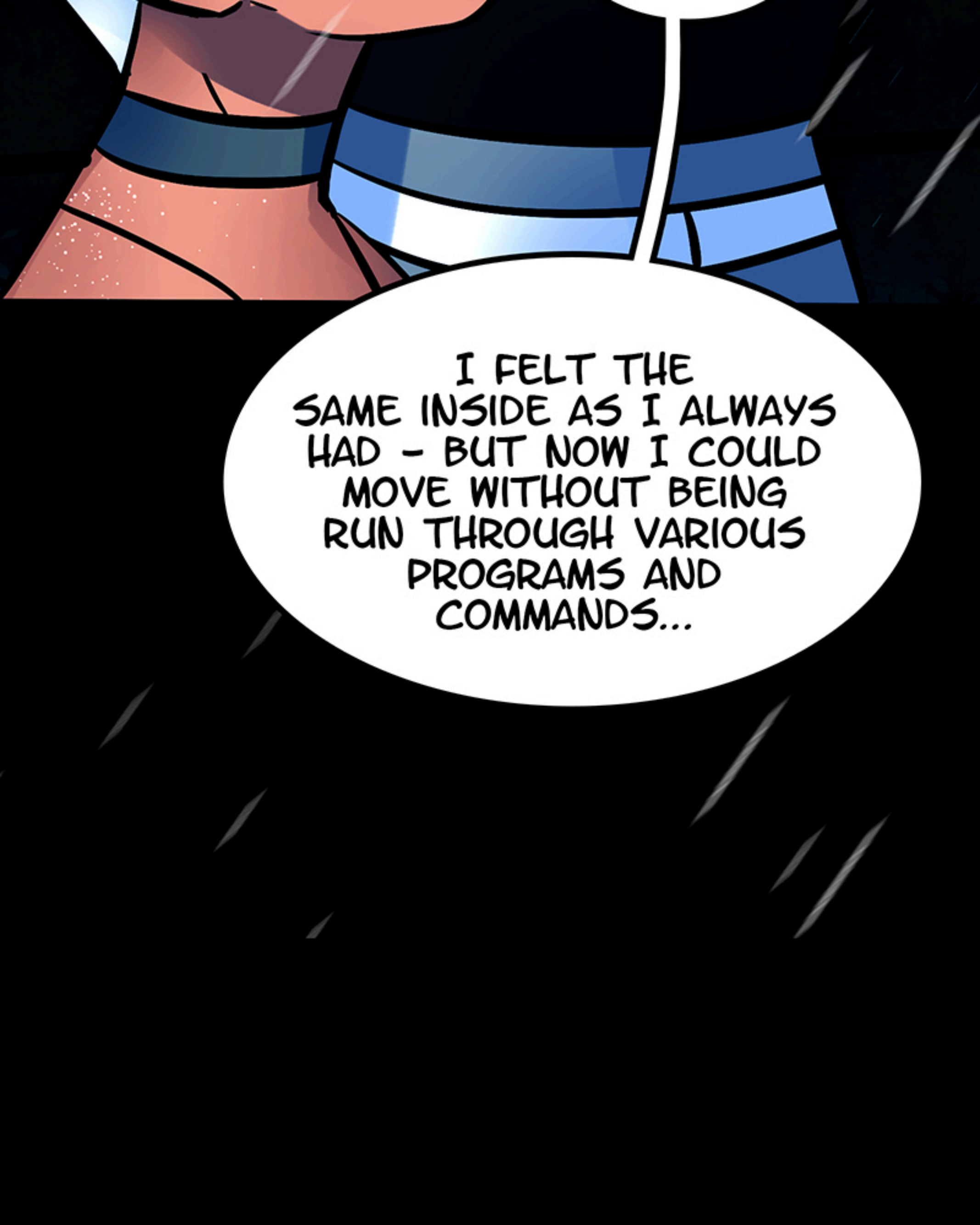




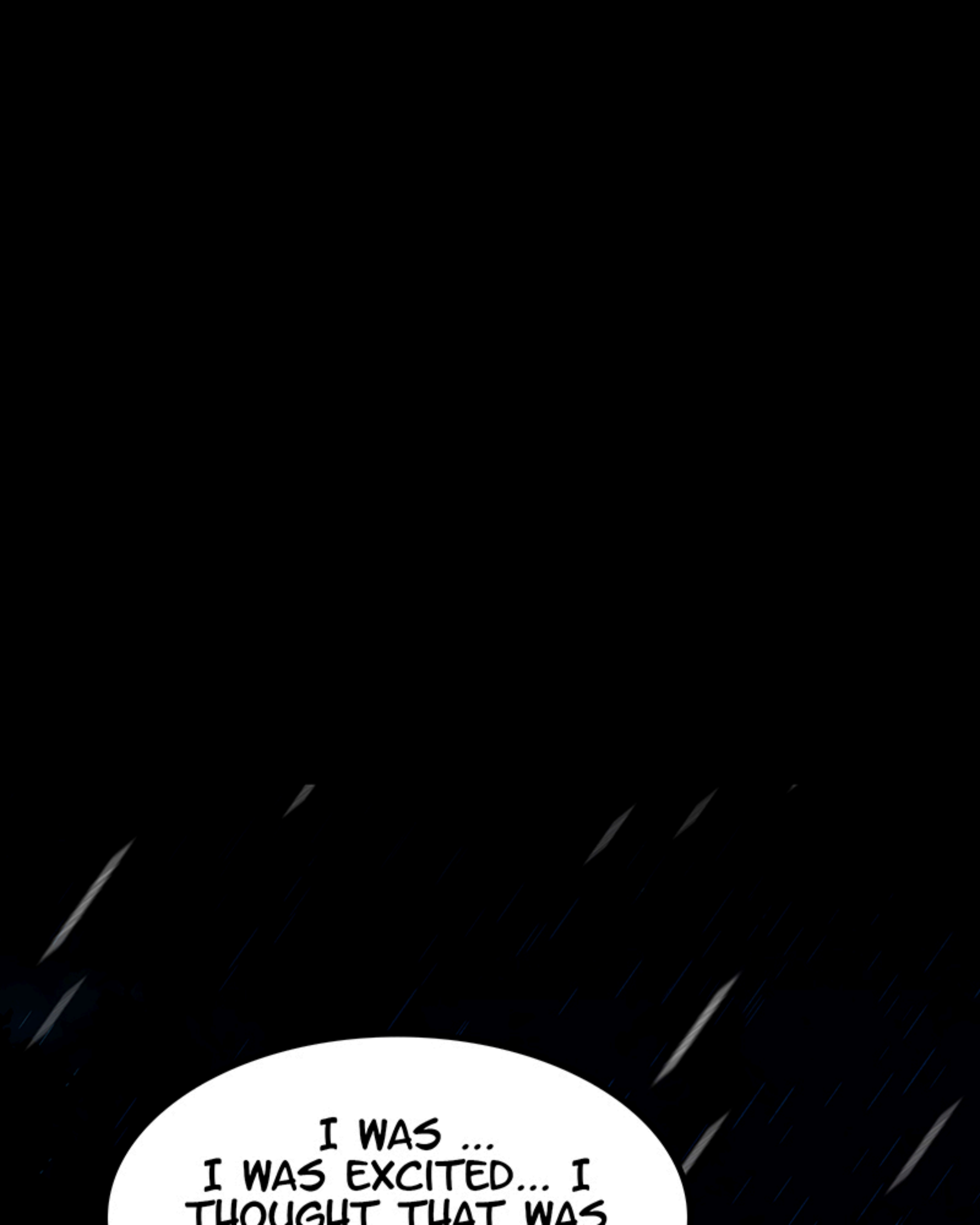
...ARE YOU SAYING
THAT XADA
INSTALLED-



NO NO!!



I FELT THE
SAME INSIDE AS I ALWAYS
HAD - BUT NOW I COULD
MOVE WITHOUT BEING
RUN THROUGH VARIOUS
PROGRAMS AND
COMMANDS...



I WAS ...
I WAS EXCITED... I
THOUGHT THAT WAS

I THOUGHT THAT WAS
WHAT MICHAEL
WANTED.

I THOUGHT
HE WANTED ME TO
BE THE REAL ME...

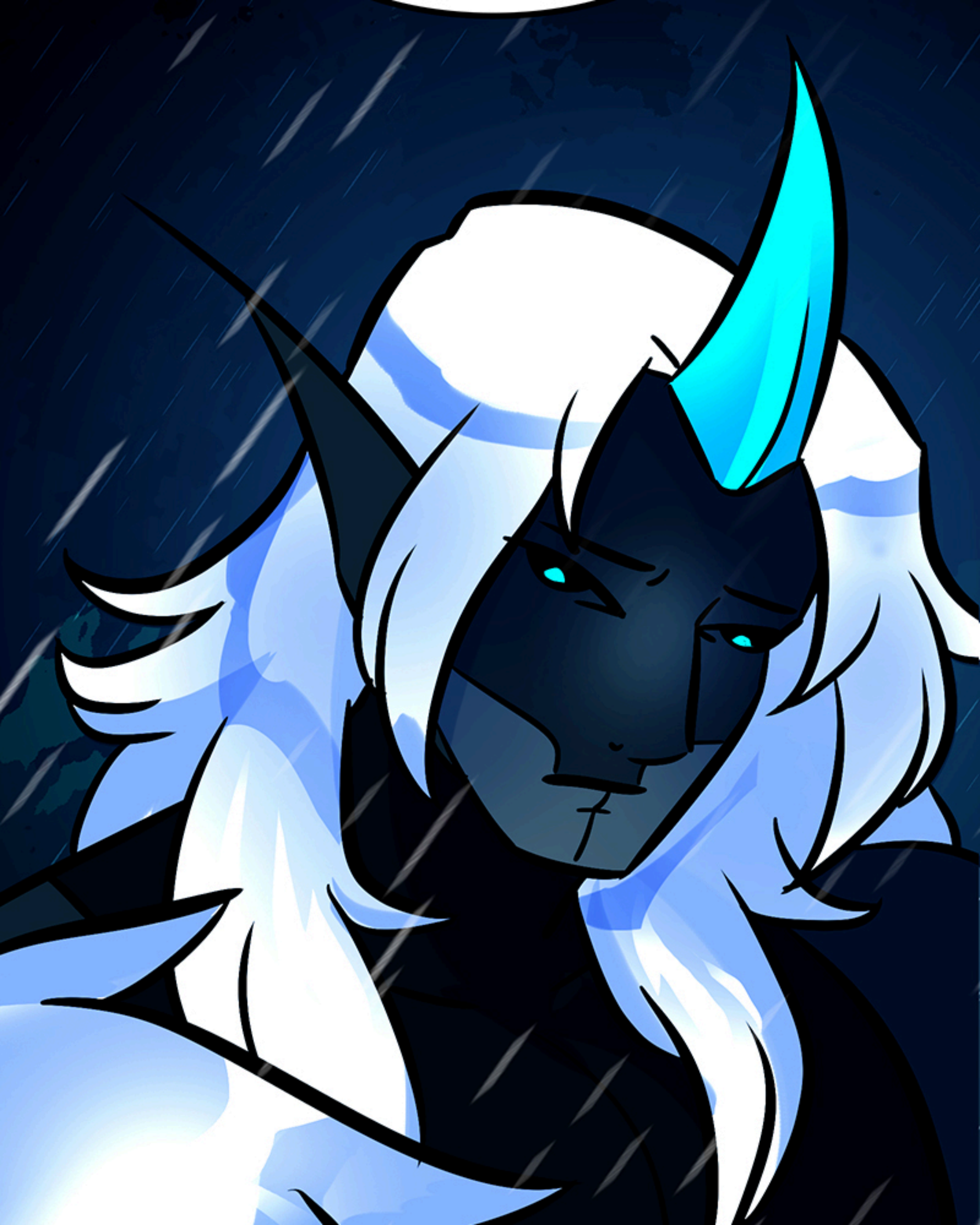




BUT HE
WAS CONFUSED...
AND ANGRY...

HE...
HE HAD NEVER
BEEN ANGRY AT ME
BEFORE. HE WAS ANGRY
AT A LOT OF THINGS
BUT NEVER... *BECAUSE*
OF ME...

IT WAS
TERRIFYING...



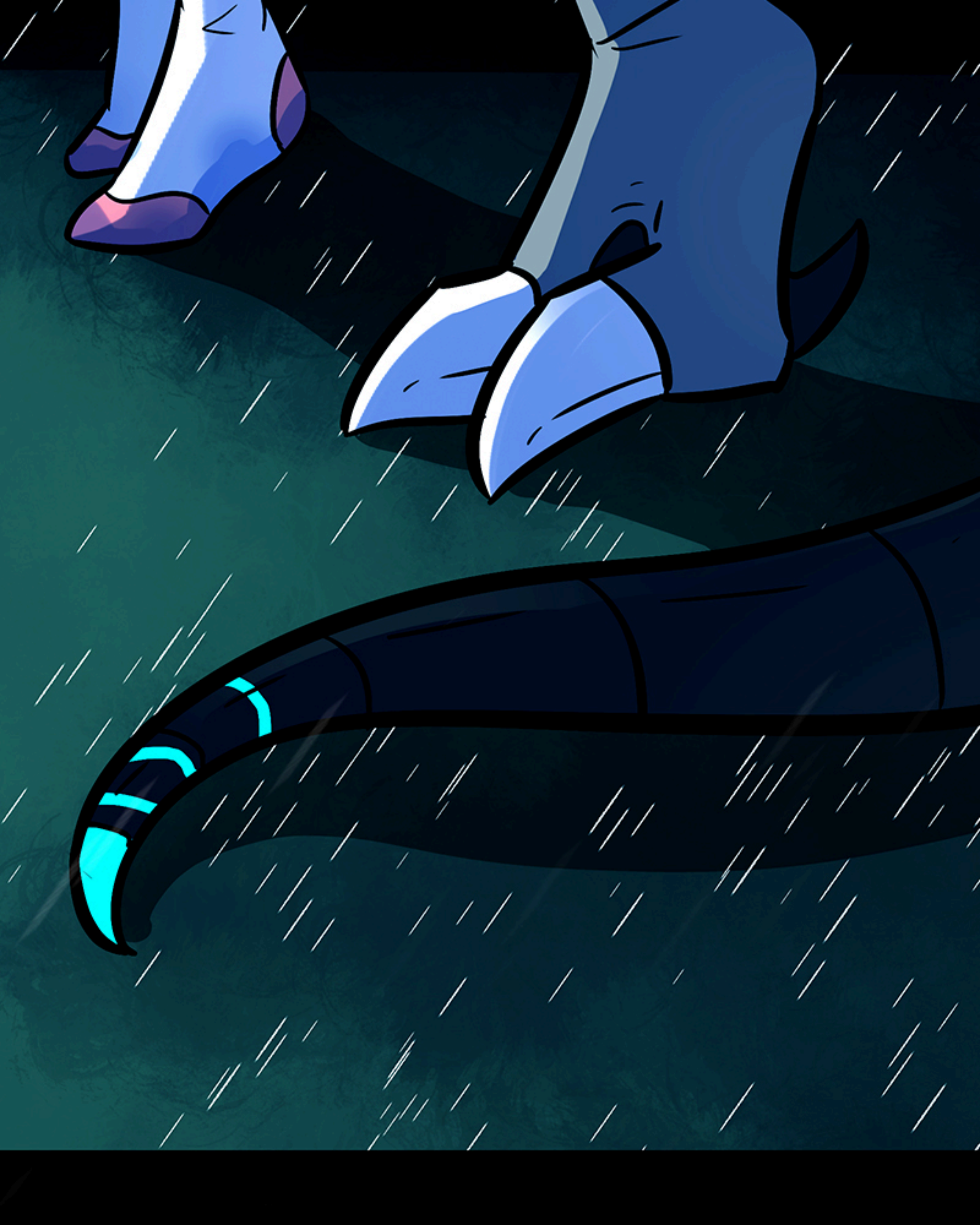


IS...
HE OKAY?

I DIDN'T
MEAN TO HIT
HIM SO HARD... I

JUST WANTED HIM
TO STOP...

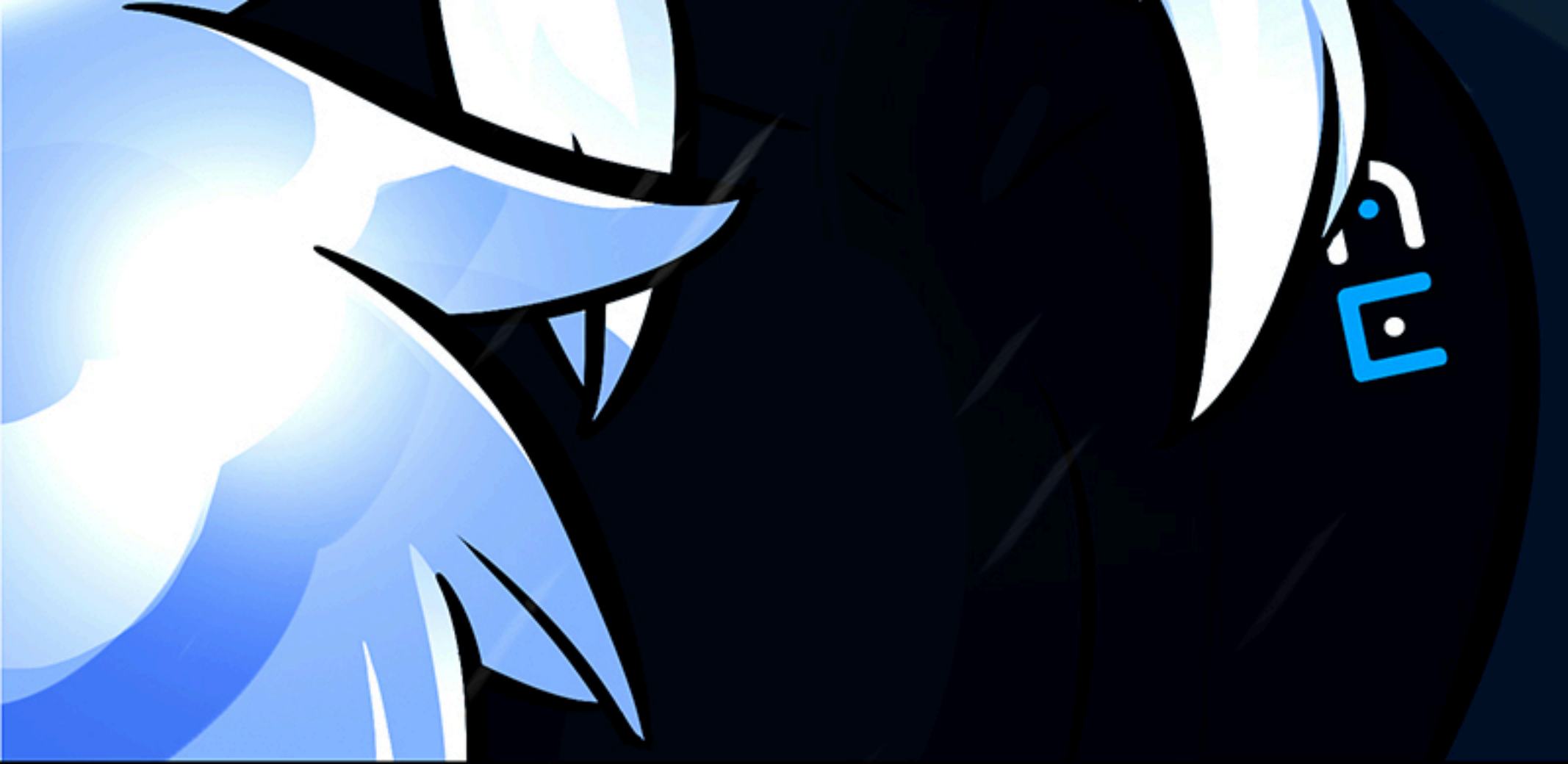




MICHAEL
MASTERS IS
DEAD

DEAD.







WHAT?

YOU DIDN'T DO IT...
HE RAN TO THE CEO TO
EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED,
TRYING AND GET YOU BACK,
AND HE KILLED HIM.

ANY INTERNAL
MODS STRIPPED

MODS STARTED
OUT BE RECYCLED,
THE REST BURNT
IN THE FURNACE.





I'M NOT ENTIRELY
SURE YET WHY DALLAS
DESTROYED HIM... MY BEST
GUESS IS THAT IT IS
LINKED TO YOU BEING

LINKED TO YOU BEING
AN AI WHEN YOU
SHOULDN'T BE.

OR PERHAPS
HE WAS JUST
TIRED OF HIM.

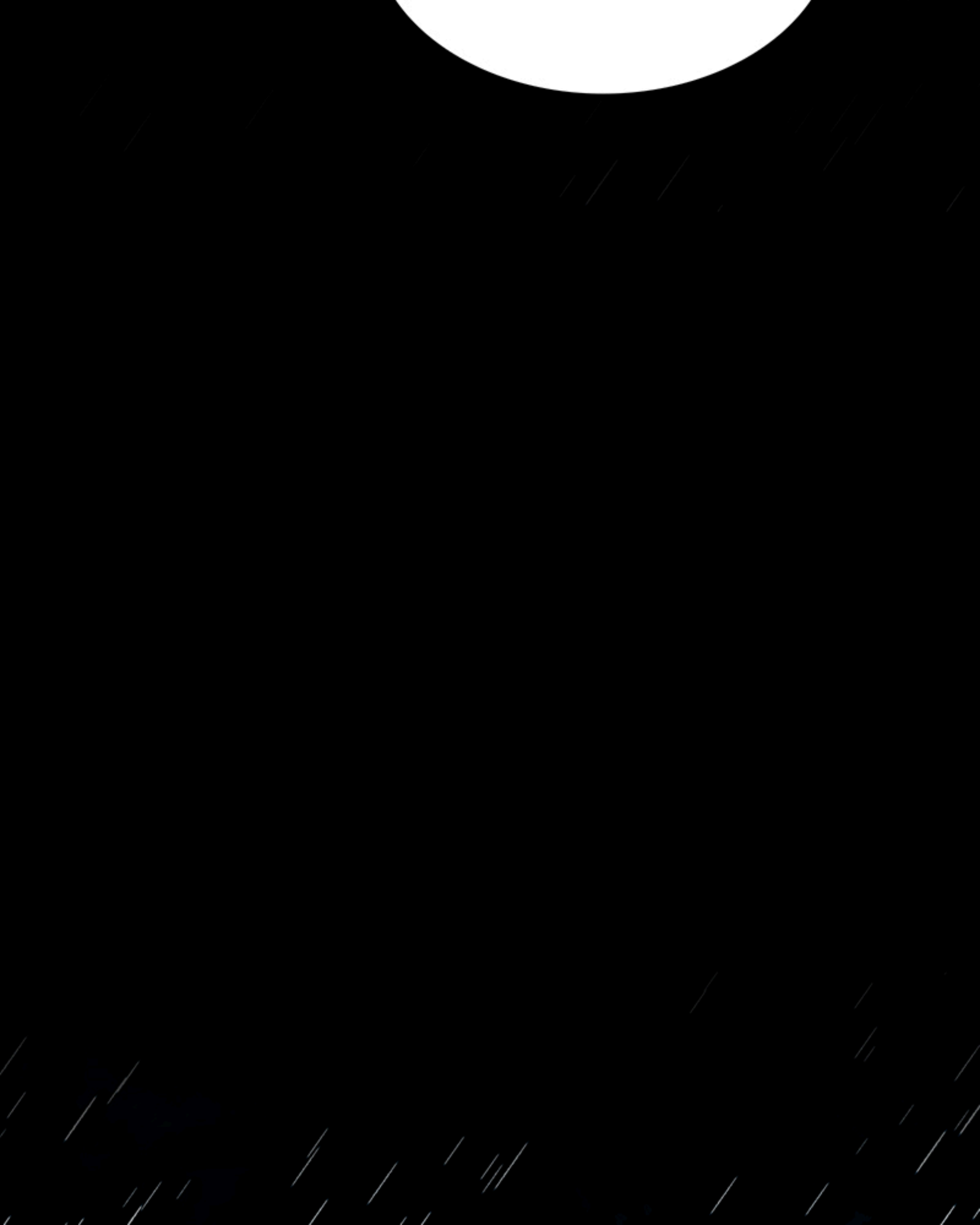




KILLED HIM...
BECAUSE OF WHAT
I AM??

SO I WAS JUST AN
EXPERIMENT THAT
THEY WERE OBSERVING
THROUGH HIM?

HE WORKED
FOR THEM! WHY
WOULDN'T THEY
TELL HIM!

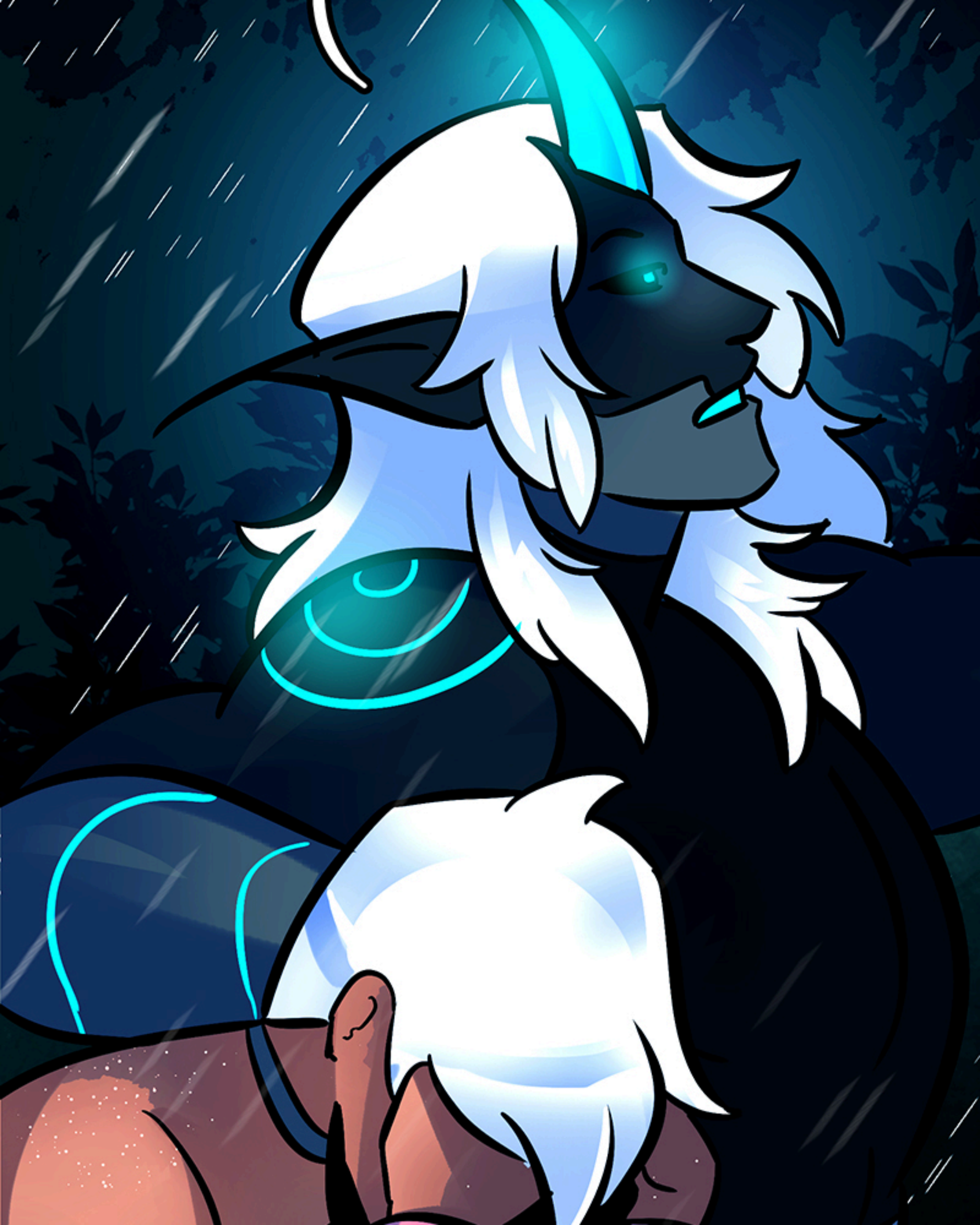


A comic panel with a dark blue background featuring white diagonal lines representing rain. Three white speech bubbles are arranged vertically, connected by thin white lines. The top bubble is small, the middle one is large, and the bottom one is medium-sized. The text inside the bubbles is in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

THAT'S WAY
ABOVE MY
PAYGRADE.

BUT I ALSO DON'T
SEE WHY YOU'RE THAT
SURPRISED... THAT'S
WHY YOU RAN AWAY
FROM YOUR HUMAN,
ISN'T IT?

BECAUSE
YOU WERE AFRAID
THAT HE WOULD DIE
BECAUSE OF YOU.







OF COURSE
THAT'S WHY I
LEFT!

YOU TRIED TO
KILL HIM YOURSELF-
TWICE!



A comic book panel featuring a character's face in the upper right corner, wearing a blue and white striped shirt. A large white speech bubble with a black outline is positioned in the center-left. The background is a mix of pink, purple, and blue with dynamic, diagonal lines. The text inside the speech bubble is in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

BUT YOU
PROMISED THAT
YOU WOULD LET HIM
LIVE IF I CAME WITH
YOU!

SO TAKE
ME!!

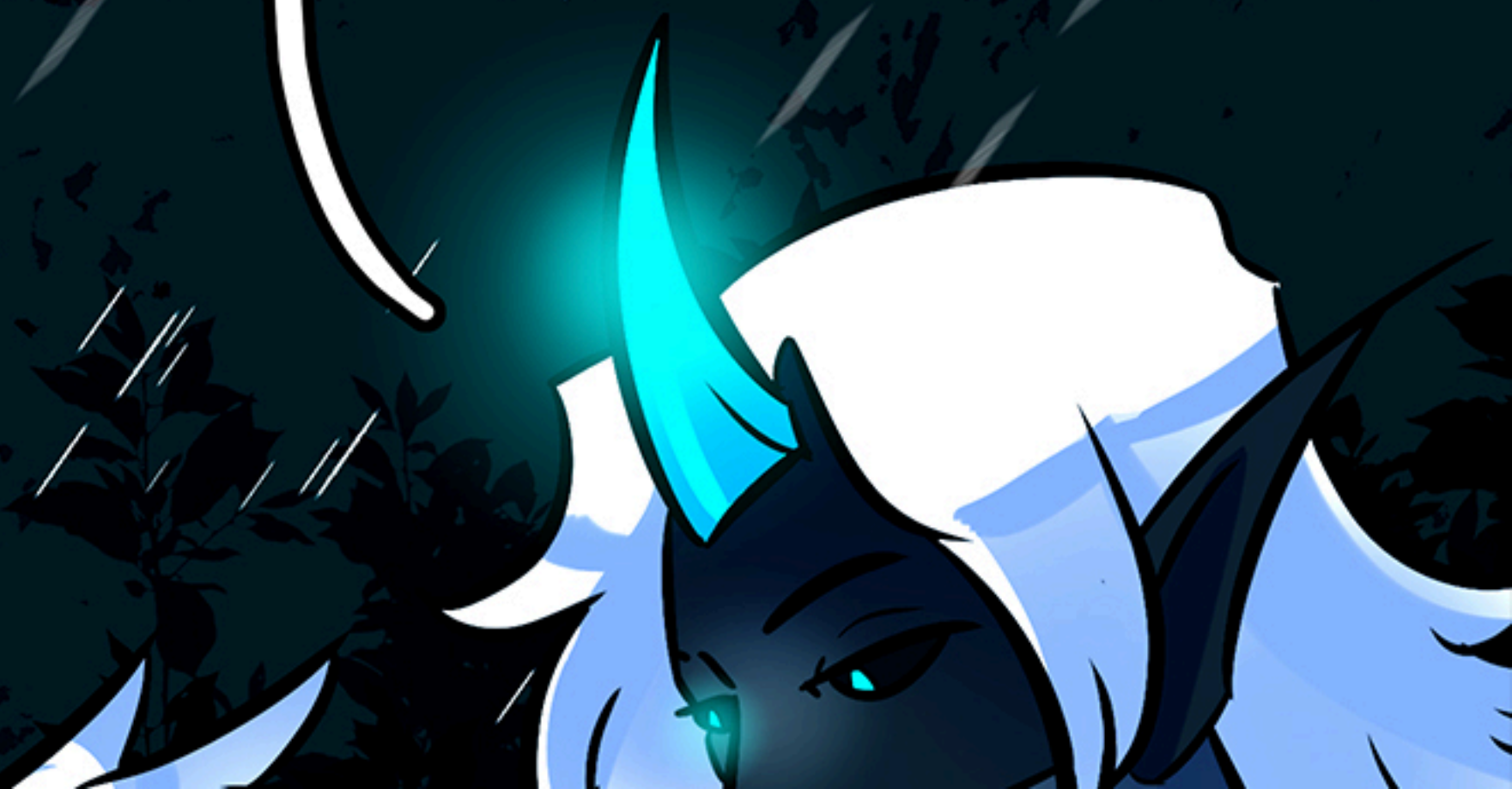
A character with a glowing blue horn is shown from the chest up, wearing a dark blue jacket. They are speaking in the rain, with raindrops visible as white streaks against a dark, textured background. Two speech bubbles are positioned above their head.

YOU'RE
TRYING TOO HARD
TO BE HUMAN.

THINKING
WITH YOUR
"HEART".



CHARLES DALLAS
KILLED A MAN THAT HE'D
KNOWN HALF HIS LIFE.
A MAN WHO HAD HALF THE
KNOWLEDGE ABOUT YOU
THAT XADA DOES.





A comic panel featuring a dark, rainy background with white diagonal lines representing rain. Two white speech bubbles are positioned in the upper half. At the bottom, the top of Sonic the Hedgehog's head is visible, showing his blue quills and white face. The first speech bubble contains the text: LOOK AT THIS LOGICALLY... RETURNING TO A.E. WILL SOLVE NOTHING.

LOOK AT THIS
LOGICALLY... RETURNING
TO A.E. WILL SOLVE
NOTHING.

THE ONLY
DIFFERENCE NOW IS
THAT YOU'RE NOT THERE
TO PROTECT HIM.



The background is a dark, moody illustration of a night scene. It features a dark, silhouetted landscape with trees or hills under a black sky. Numerous white, diagonal streaks of varying lengths are scattered across the entire scene, representing falling rain. Two white, oval-shaped speech bubbles are positioned in the lower half of the image. The top bubble is slightly to the right and above the bottom bubble. Both bubbles have a thin black outline and contain black, hand-drawn style text. The bottom bubble has a short white line extending from its bottom-left edge, suggesting it is attached to a character or object just out of frame.

WHAT-
BUT YOU
PROMISED!

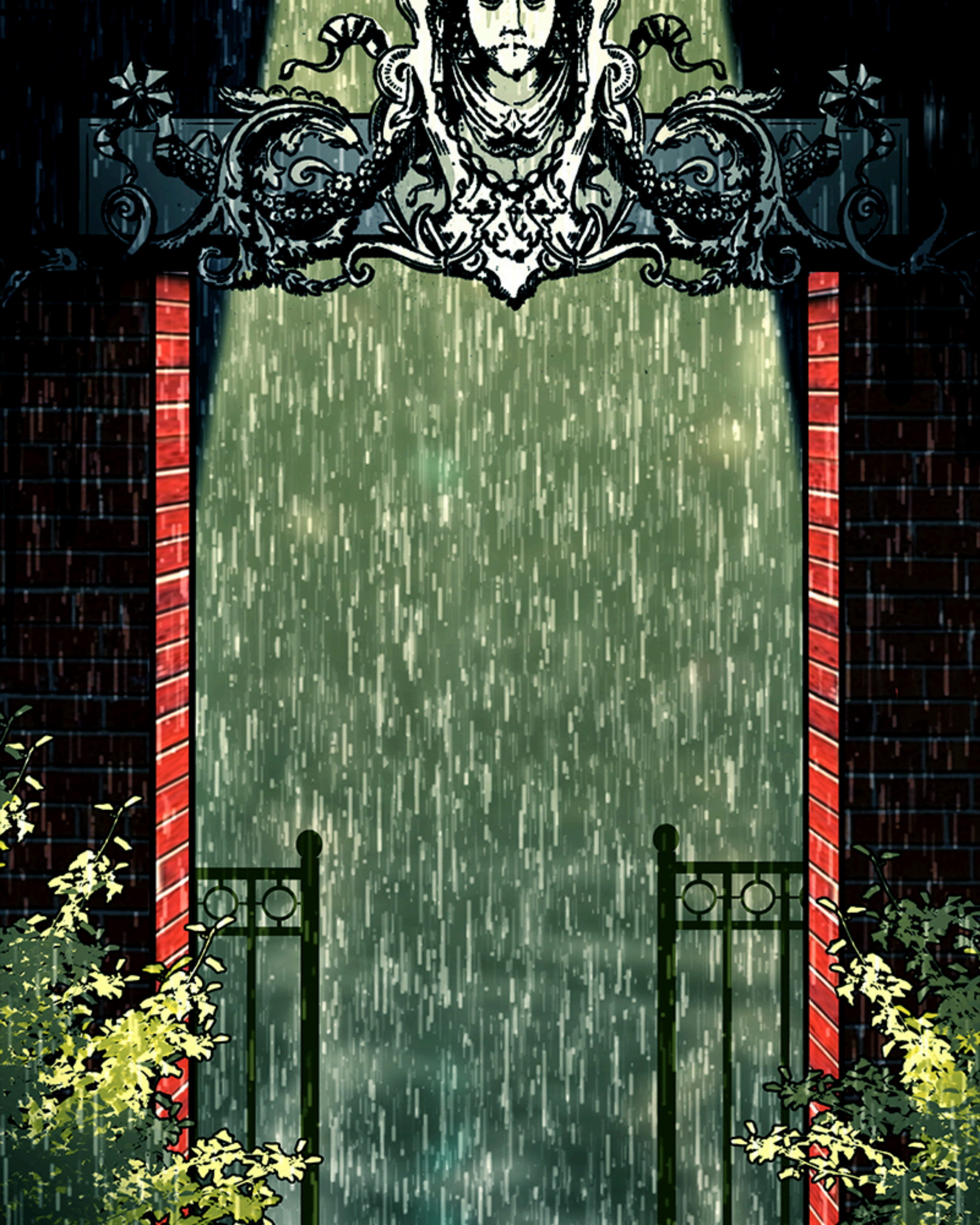
DID YOU
ALREADY GIVE A.E.
HIS LOCATION!?



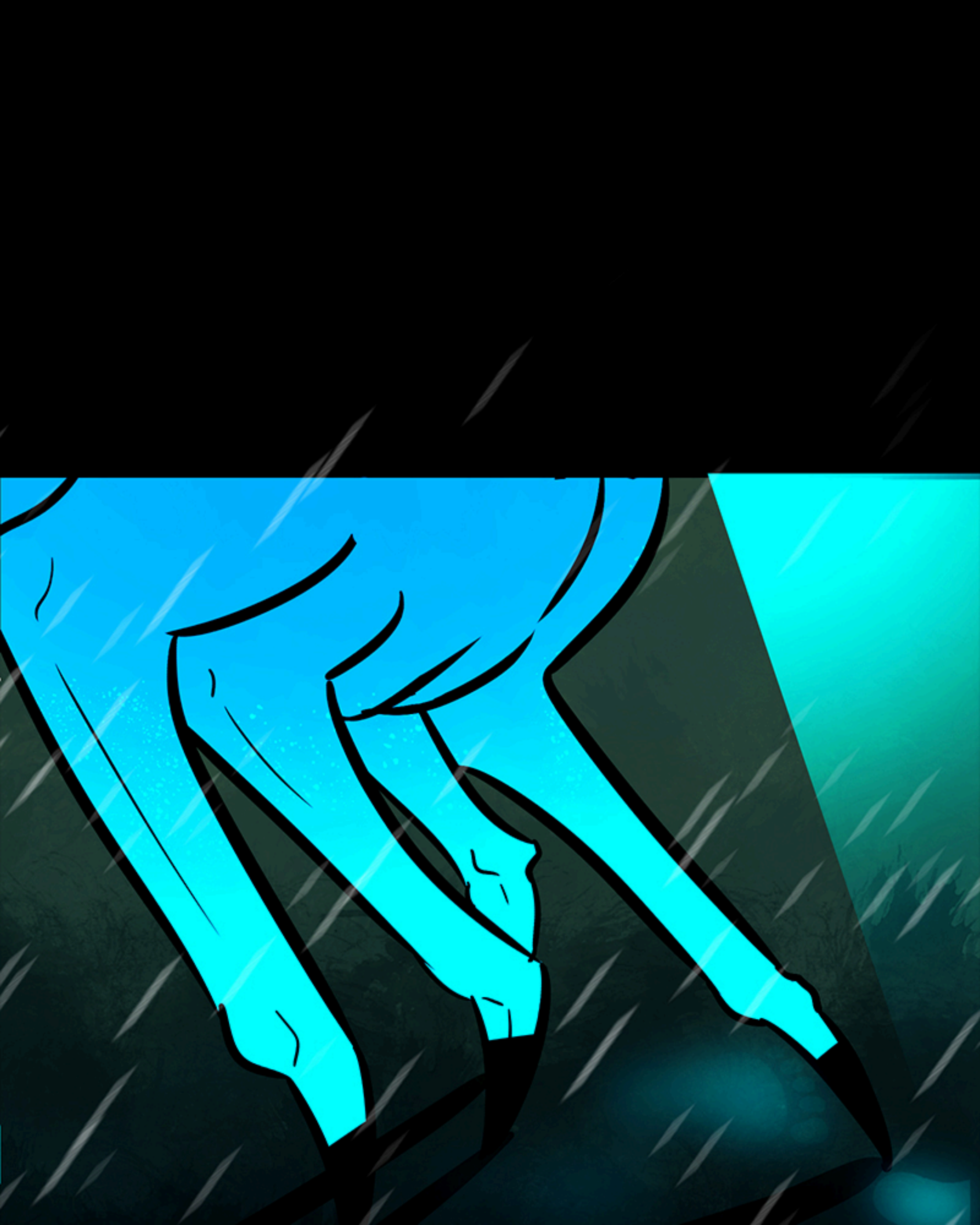


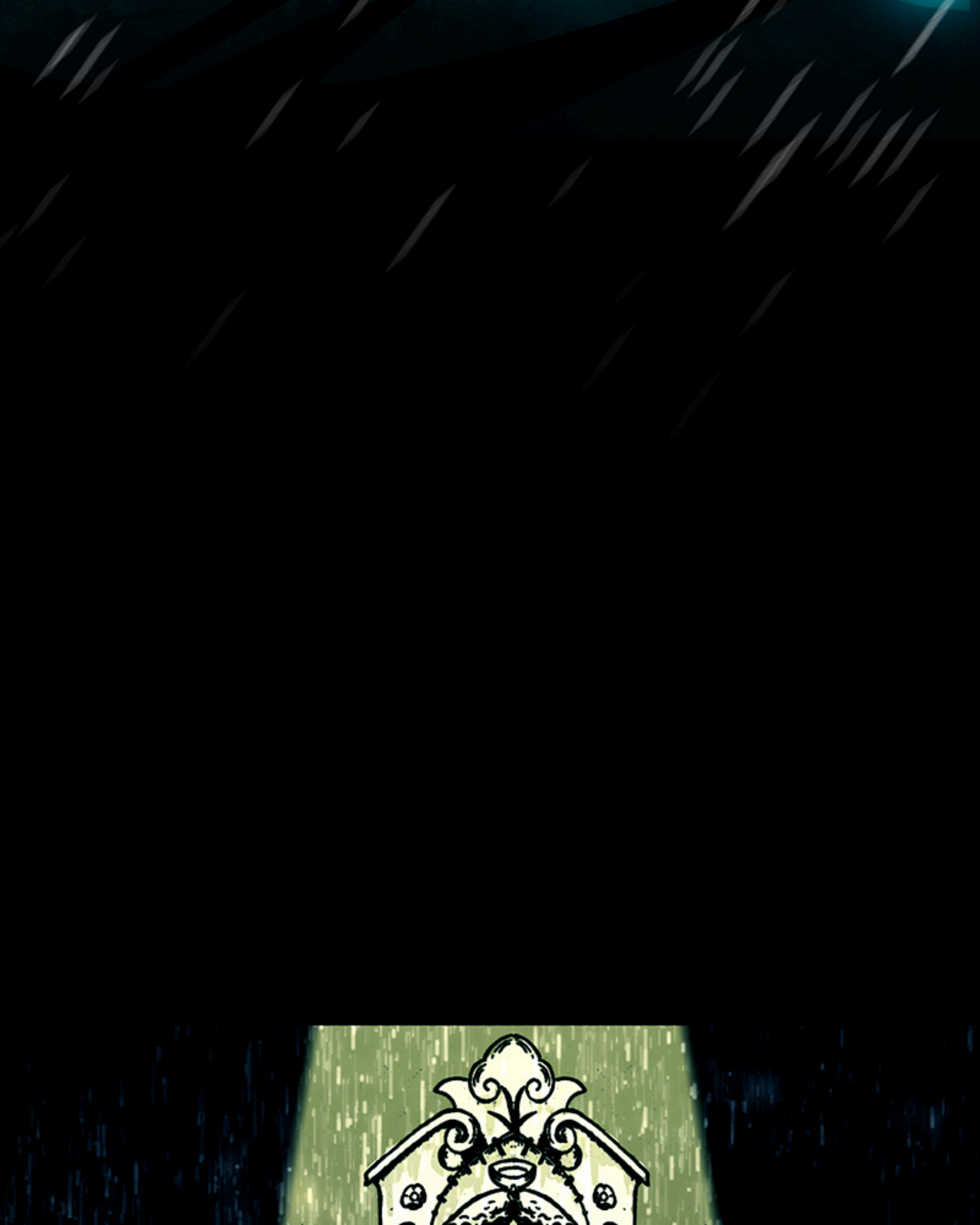


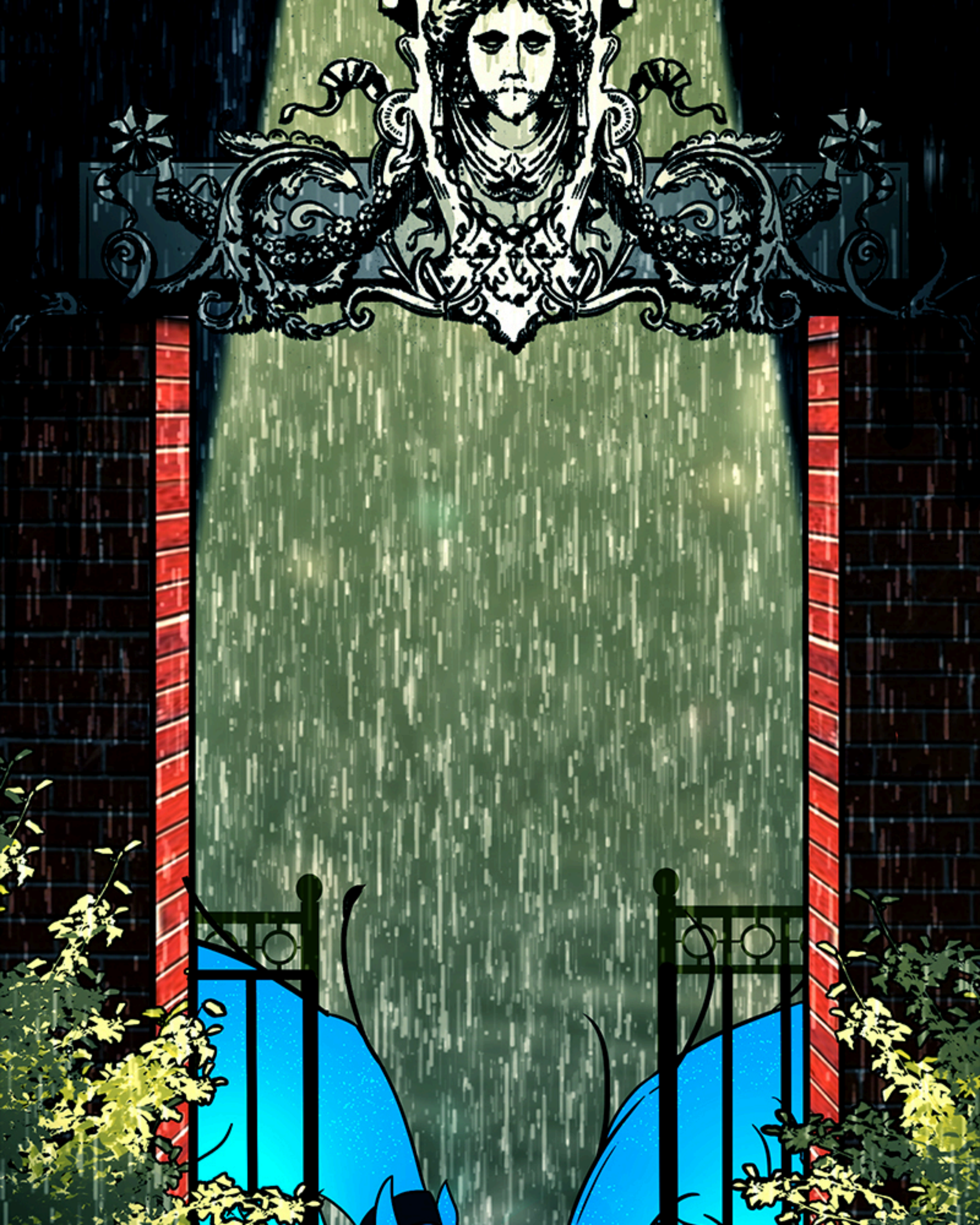






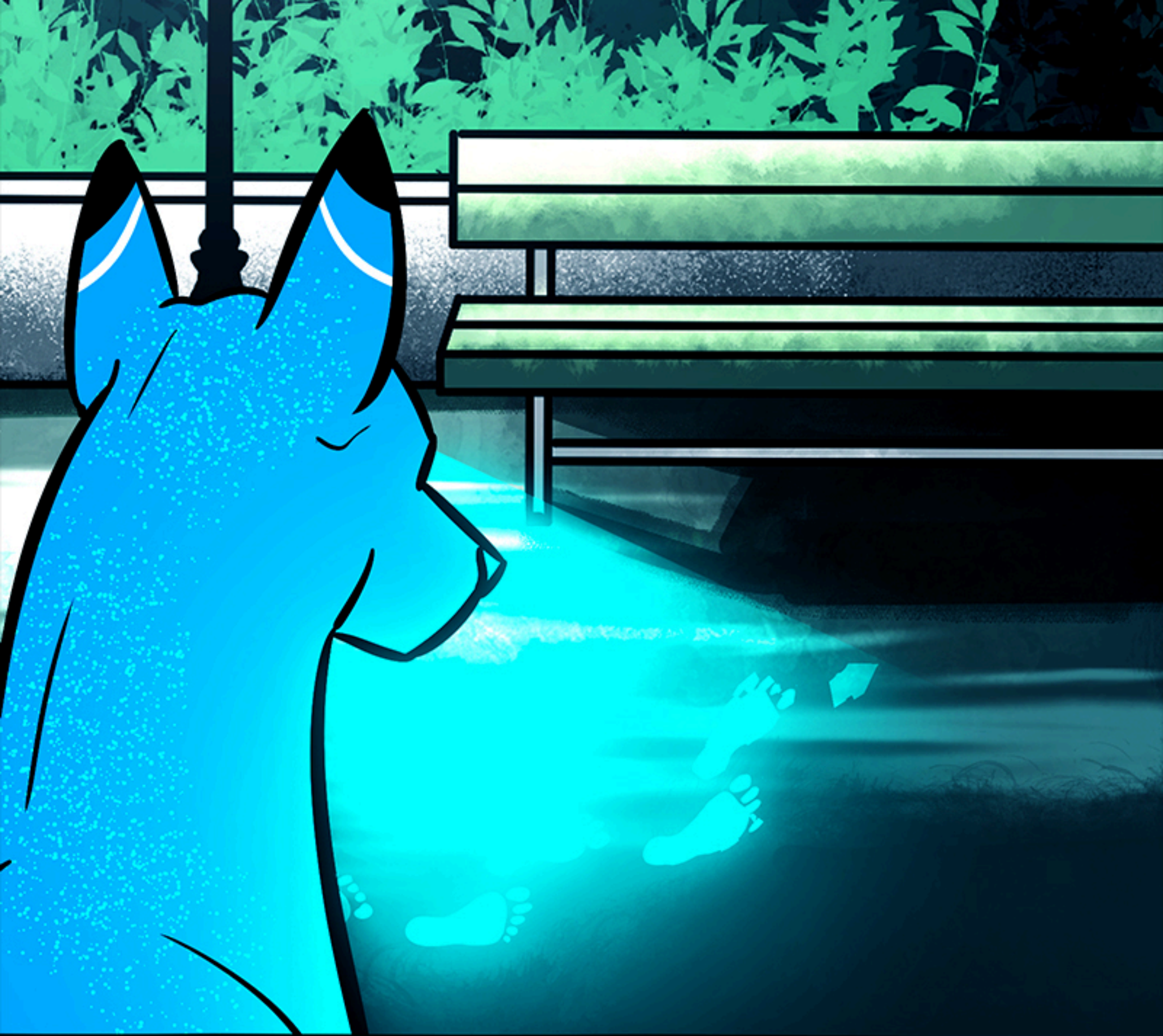


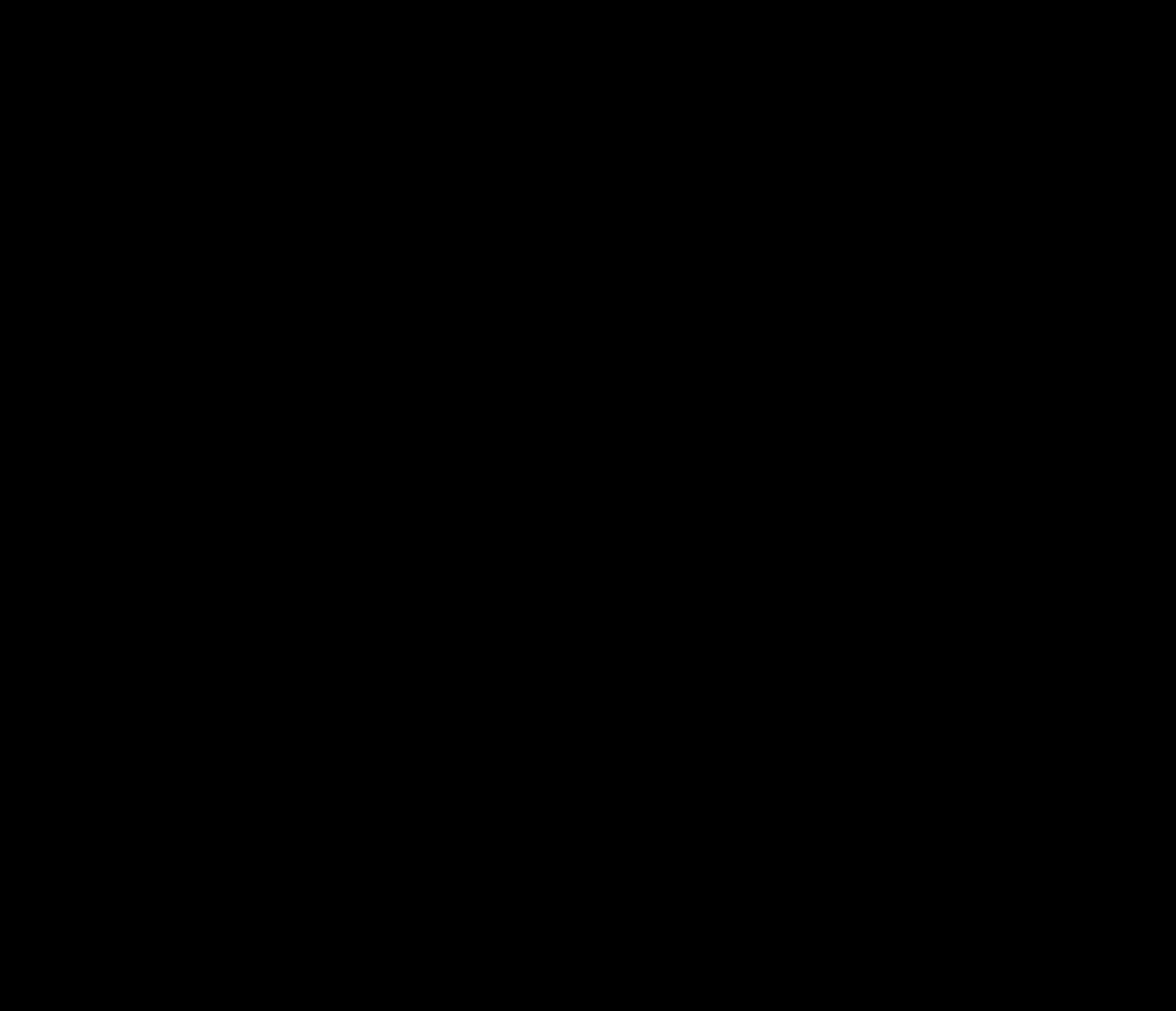




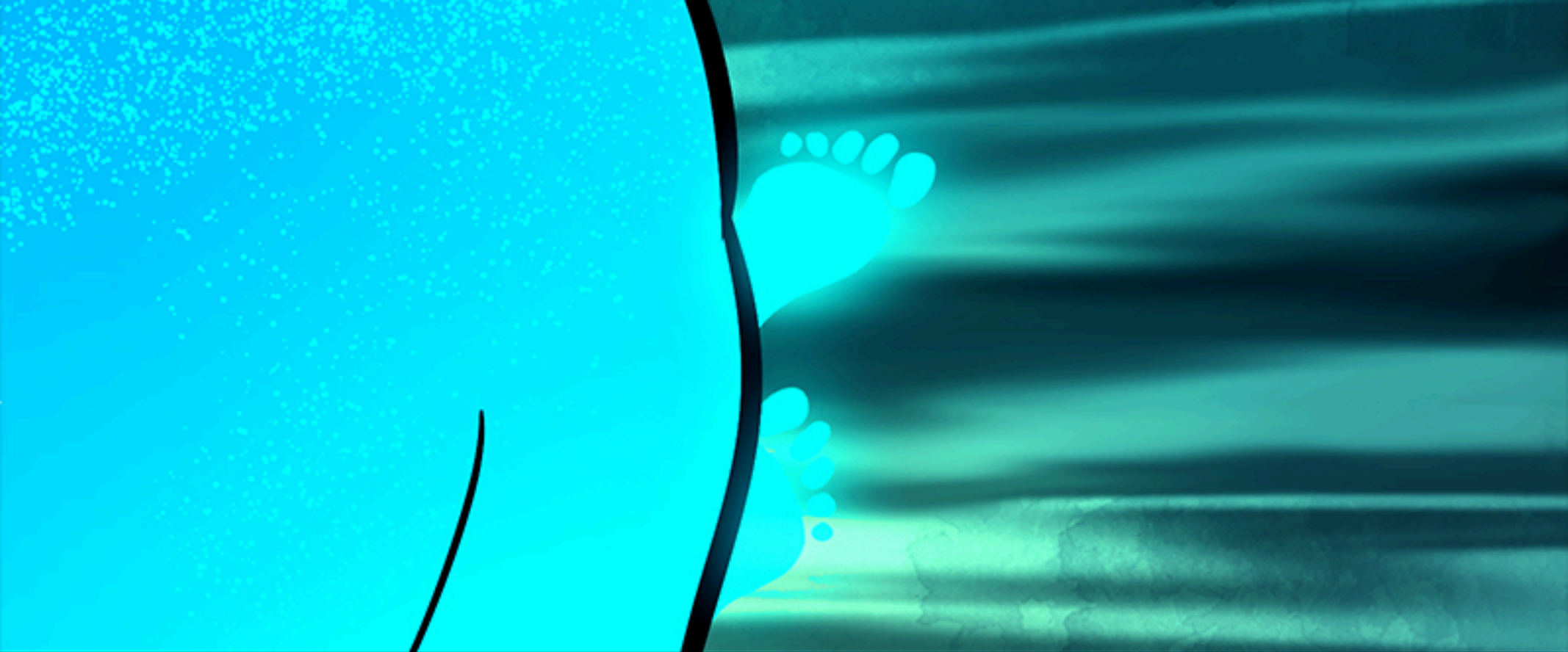








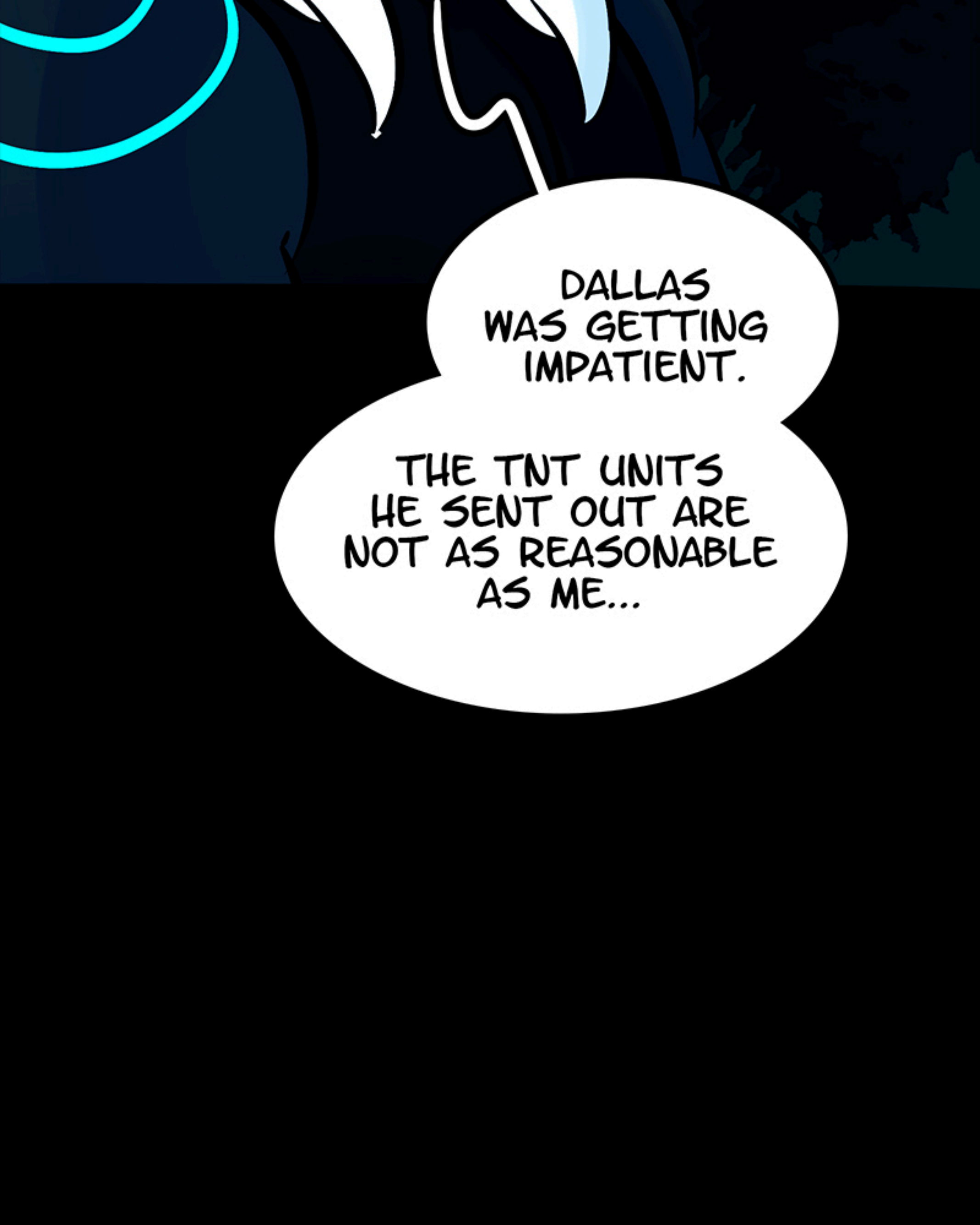












DALLAS
WAS GETTING
IMPATIENT.

THE TNT UNITS
HE SENT OUT ARE
NOT AS REASONABLE
AS ME...



I DESTROYED THE ONES
SCANNING THE BIKE YOU RODE
ON BEFORE THEY COULD
RETURN TO THEIR DOCKING
STATIONS AND UPLOAD WHAT
THEY DISCOVERED...

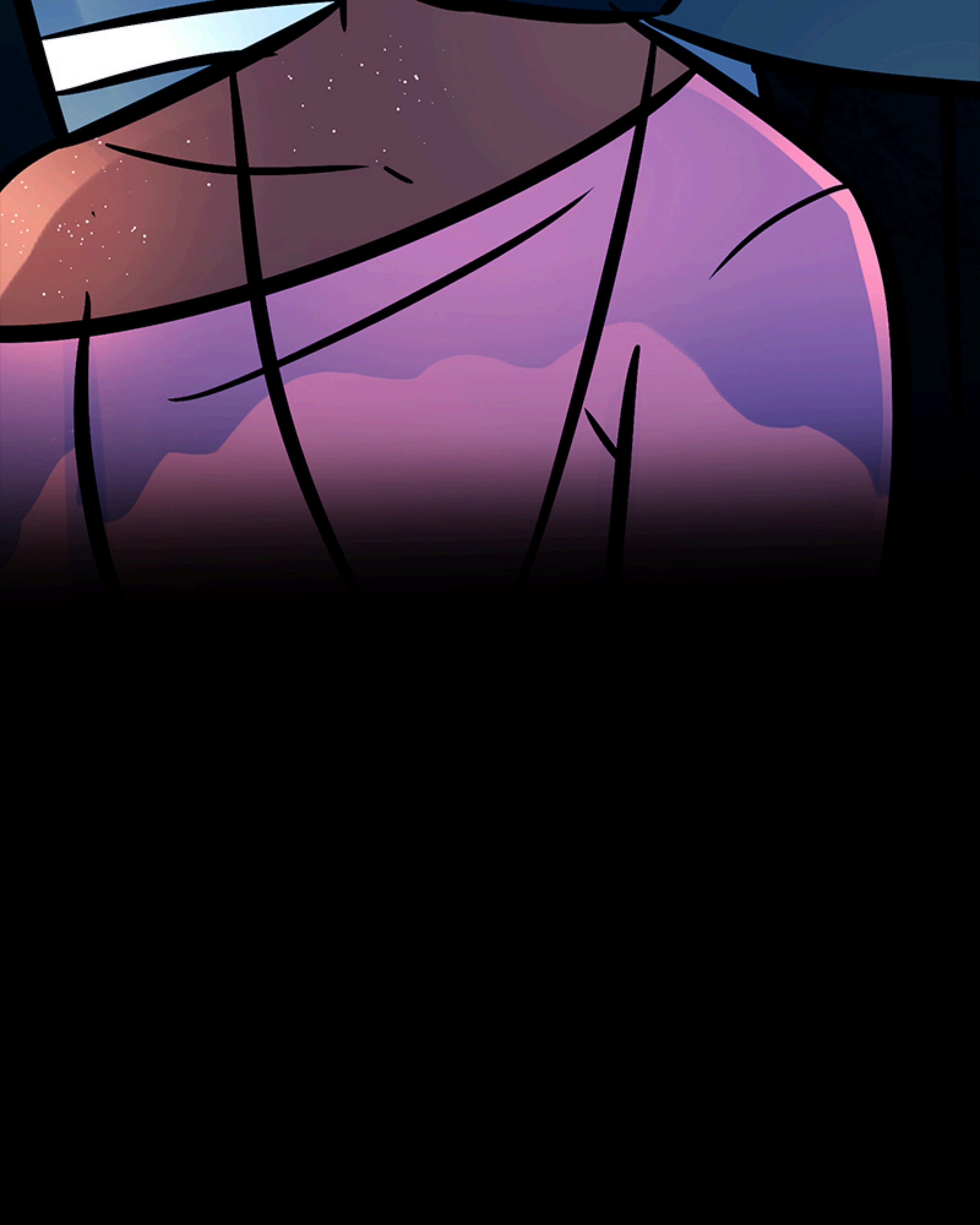
BUT THEY
WON'T STOP UNTIL
THEY FIND YOU AND
ANYONE THAT KNOWS
ABOUT YOU...



A character with a blue horn is shown from the chest up, wearing a white tunic. The character's face is mostly obscured by a large white speech bubble. The background is dark blue with swirling patterns.

LIKE IT
OR NOT, YOUR FATE AND
XADA'S ARE INTERTWINED.
SO...





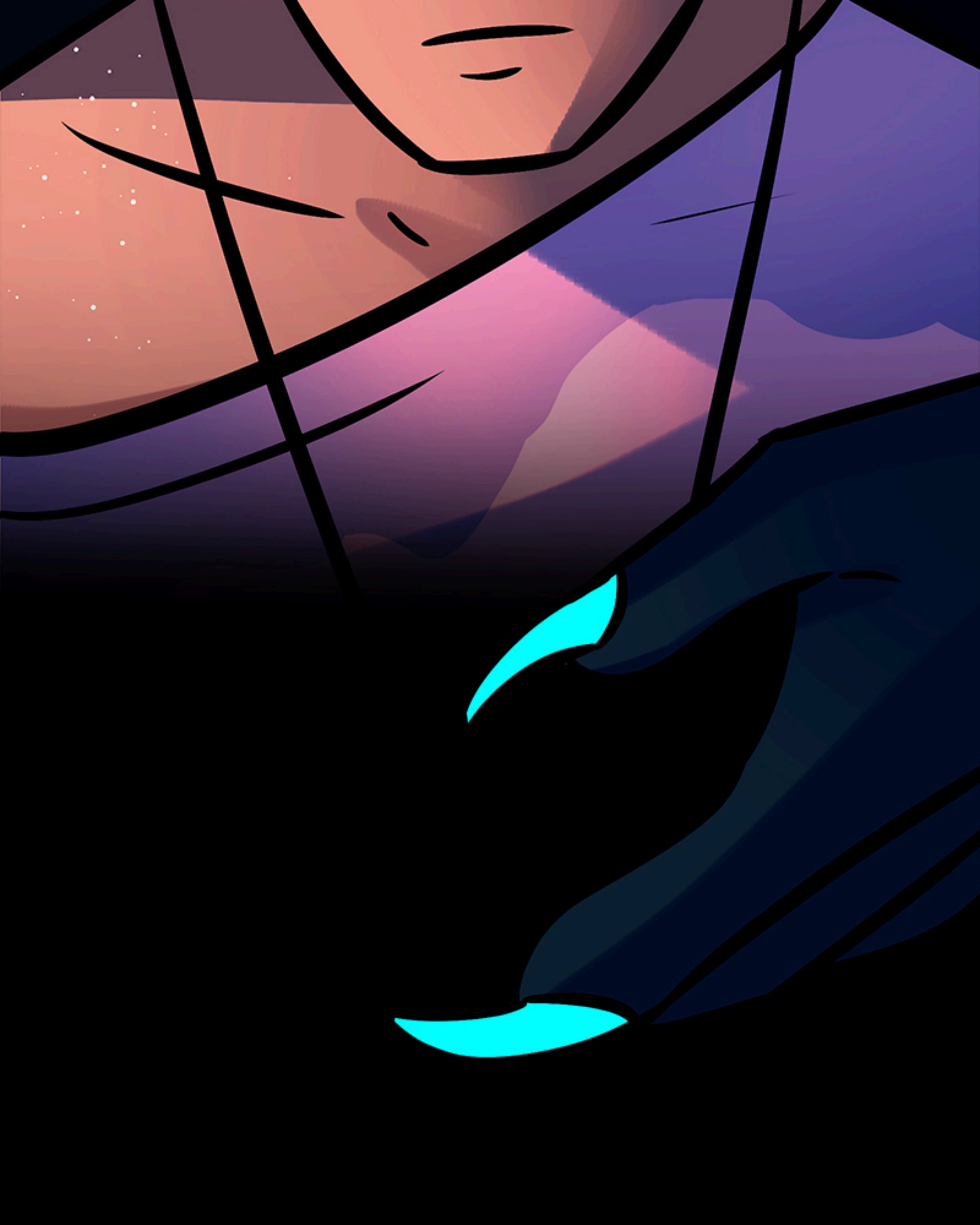
DO YOU WANT
TO GO WITH THEM
RIGHT NOW AND END
IT ALL? YOU TOLD
ME YOU WANTED
TO LIVE...

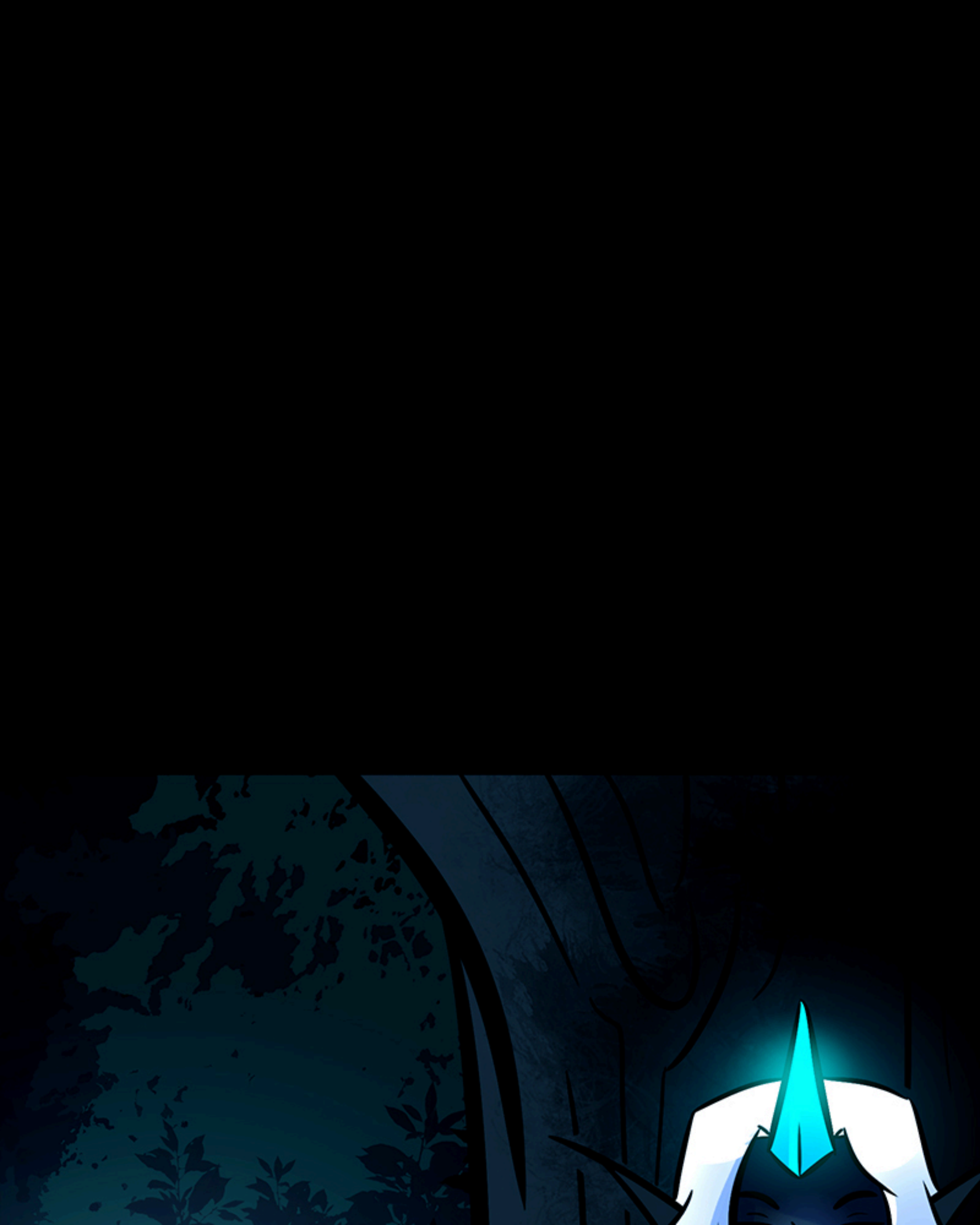




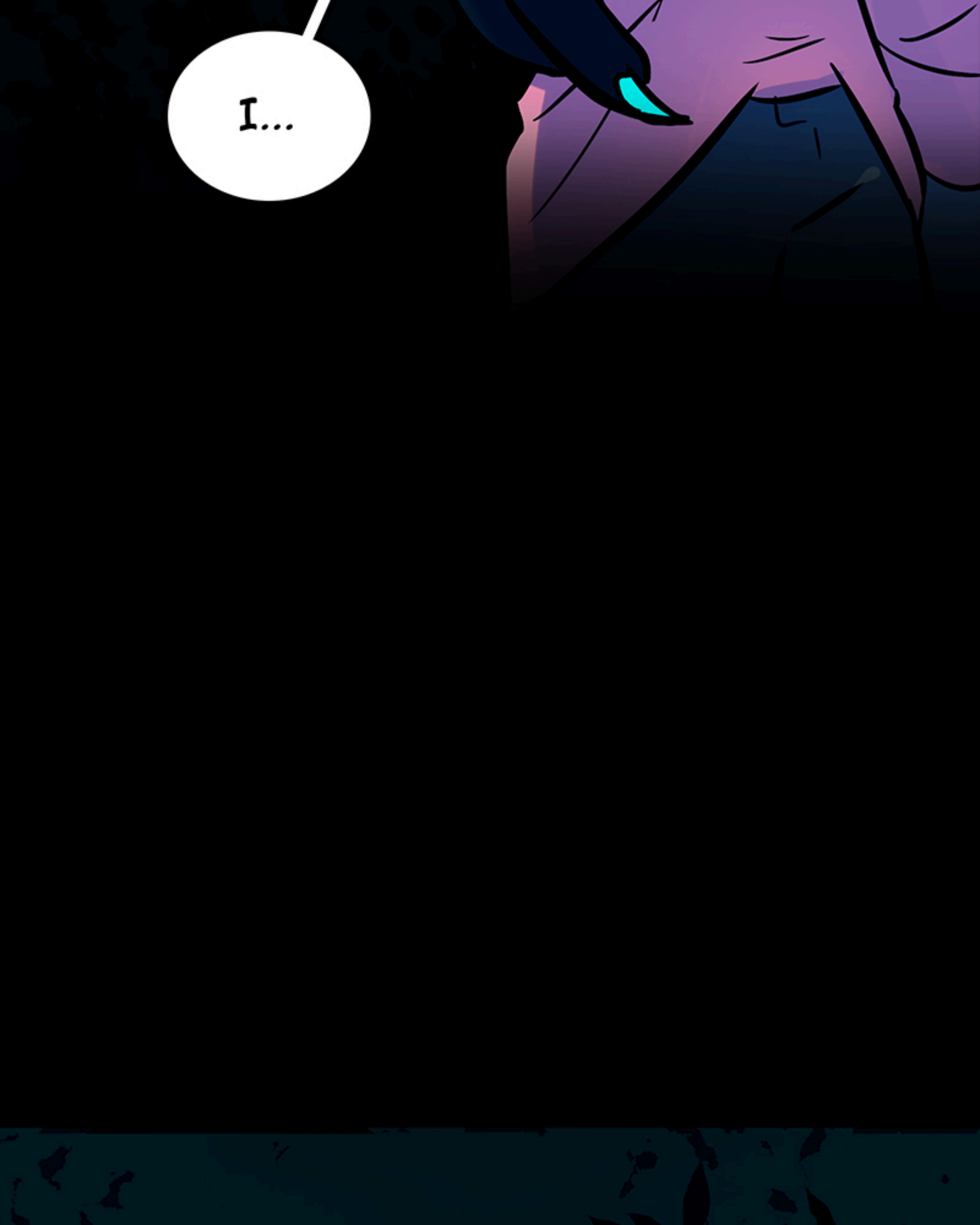
IF THAT IS
STILL TRUE... WHAT
DO YOU WISH
TO DO?









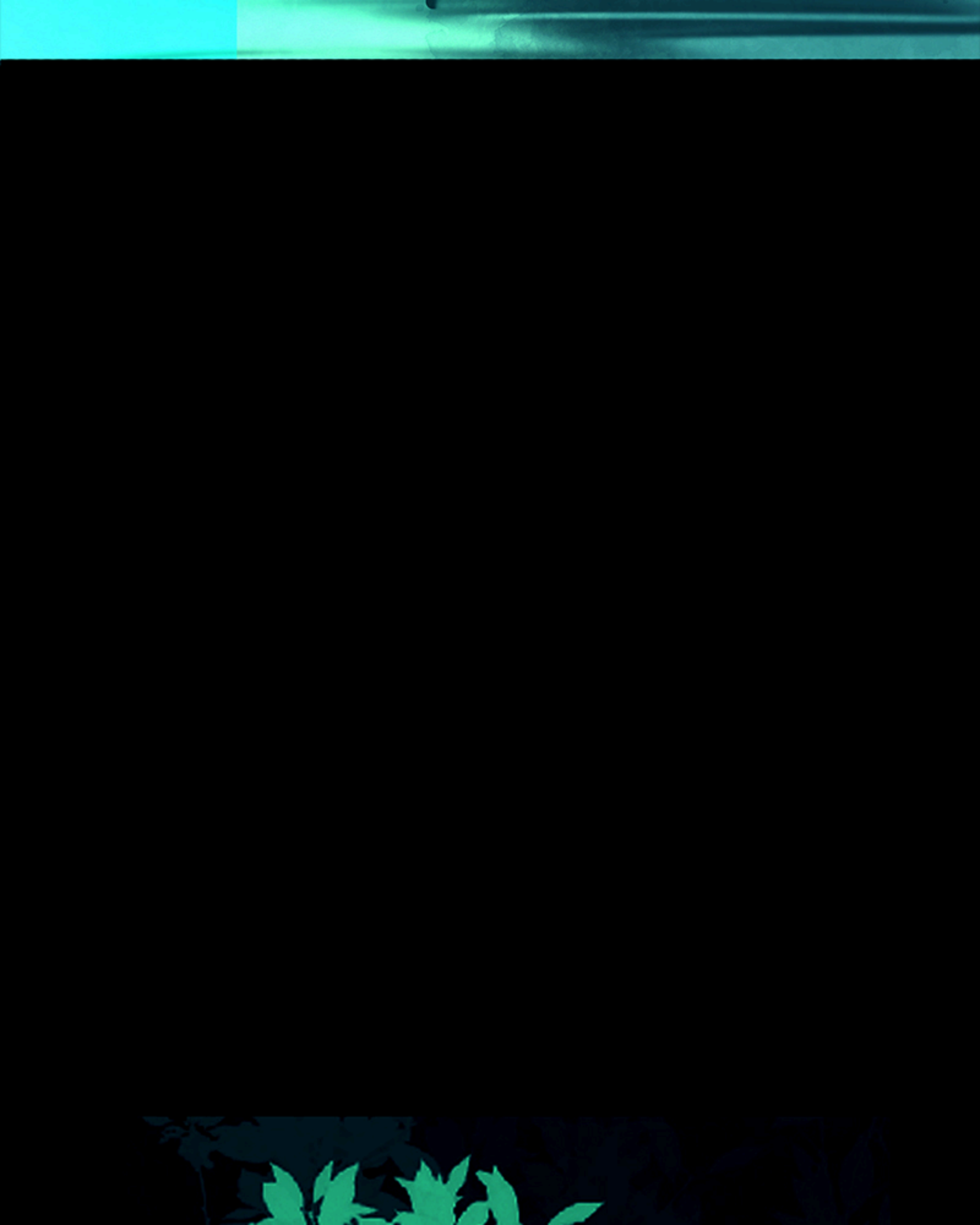
A hand with a glowing blue claw reaches down from the top right corner towards a dark, rocky ground. The background is a dark, textured surface with a purple and blue gradient. A white speech bubble is positioned in the upper left corner.

I...



**MAKE YOUR
DECISION.**







LOVEBOT

By Chase Keels and Miranda M.

Edited By Bre Boswell

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