

AN
AWARD!?

WOW!
CONGRATULATIONS,
XADA!!





AND WHAT
TIMING, HUH?
THAT'S VERY
SERENDIPITOUS!

HAH!
I DON'T THINK
I'VE EVER HEARD
ANYONE USE THAT
WORD IN REAL LIFE

WORD IN REAL LIFE
BUT... YOU'RE
RIGHT!



AN
INTERNATIONALLY
RECOGNIZED SCIENCE
AWARD...

BECAUSE
OF SOMETHING
YOU CAME UP WITH
FROM YOUR OWN
MIND...
AMAZING.

YOU'RE
AMAZING,
XADA...



AAHAH...
THANK YOU...
IT HAS A LOT TO
DO WITH HOW MUCH
MY PARENTS TAUGHT
ME WHEN I WAS A
KID SO...

I DON'T
KNOW IF I CAN
COMPLETELY
TAKE CREDIT...

OF COURSE
YOU CAN! YOU
DID IT! FRANKIE
AGREES WITH
ME.





AMAZING!

I STRUGGLED FOR
A WHILE... THINKING THAT
THE WAY HE COMPLIMENTS
ME IS JUST BASED IN
PROGRAMMING AND NOT

PROGRAMMING AND NOT
SINCERE BUT...

YOU'RE
AMAZING TOO,
FRANKIE!

FRANKIE!!

I THINK I'M

I THINK I'M...
JUST BAD AT TAKING
COMPLIMENTS.

BECAUSE
WHEN THEY ARE
SAID SO BOLDLY
AND EXCITEDLY
LIKE THAT...

YOU DID

IT! I KNEW YOU

COULD DO IT!

WE SHOULD GO

GO OUT TOGETHER

YOU



YOU'RE
BRILLIANT! HOW DO
YOU COME UP WITH
XADA THIS STUFF?

WE SHOULD GO OUT TOGETHER

I START
THINKING THAT

THINKING THAT
THE PERSON IS JUST
AFTER SOMETHING...
MAYBE VELIX WAS BEING
SINCERE TOO BUT...

WHY WON'T YOU AT LEAST TRY?

LACEY SHOULDN'T
BE SHUT OUT BECAUSE
OF THAT... HE'S BEING
HONEST AND I SHOULD
RECIPROCATE WITH
HONESTY.

SPEAKING
OF AMAZING...

HMM?





YOU SAVED
MY LIFE TODAY,
YOU KNOW...

THANKS TO
HOW AMAZINGLY
FAST YOUR REFLEXES
WERE...





AND BRIDGEMAN

AND BRIZZUM
DECIDED TO TURN
AROUND AND HELP
US...

LARGELY
BECAUSE YOU WERE
ABLE TO GET THROUGH
TO HIM. THAT WAS
BRAVE...





THIS HAS BEEN
INTENSE FOR ME AND
I KNOW WE ARE STILL
WORKING THROUGH IT
BUT...

I AM VERY
HAPPY YOU'RE
HERE. AND GRATEFUL
THAT I GET TO
KNOW YOU...





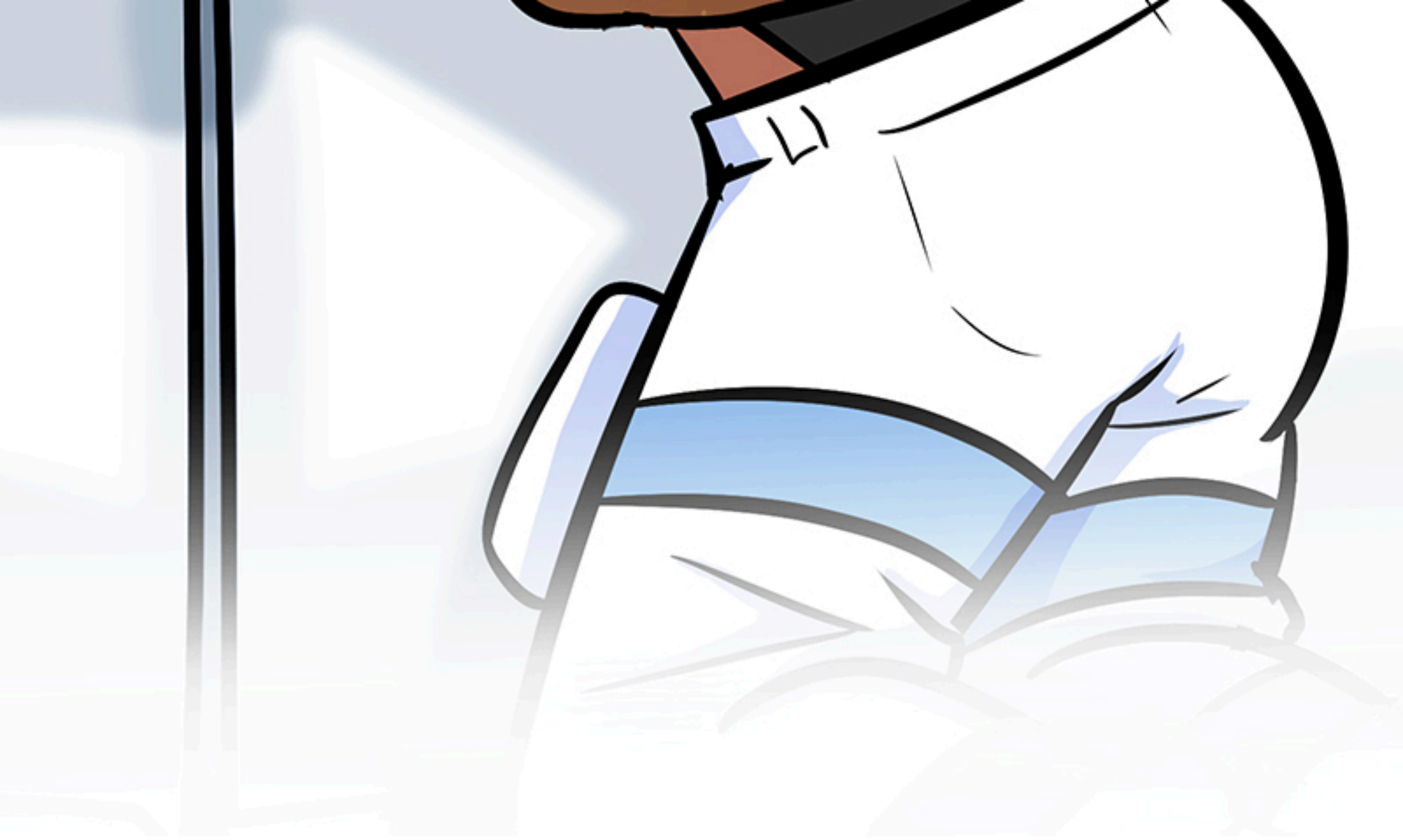


THANK
YOU, XADA...

ALSO... I'M
SORRY THAT
TAKING THE CHILD

TAKING THE CHIP
ENDED UP CAUSING YOU
SO MUCH PHYSICAL
PAIN...





TO BE
HONEST...

I WILL ENDURE
ALL THE PAIN IN
THE WORLD...

IF IT MEANS
THAT I CAN ACTUALLY
REACH OUT AND HELP
YOU WHEN YOU NEED
ME...



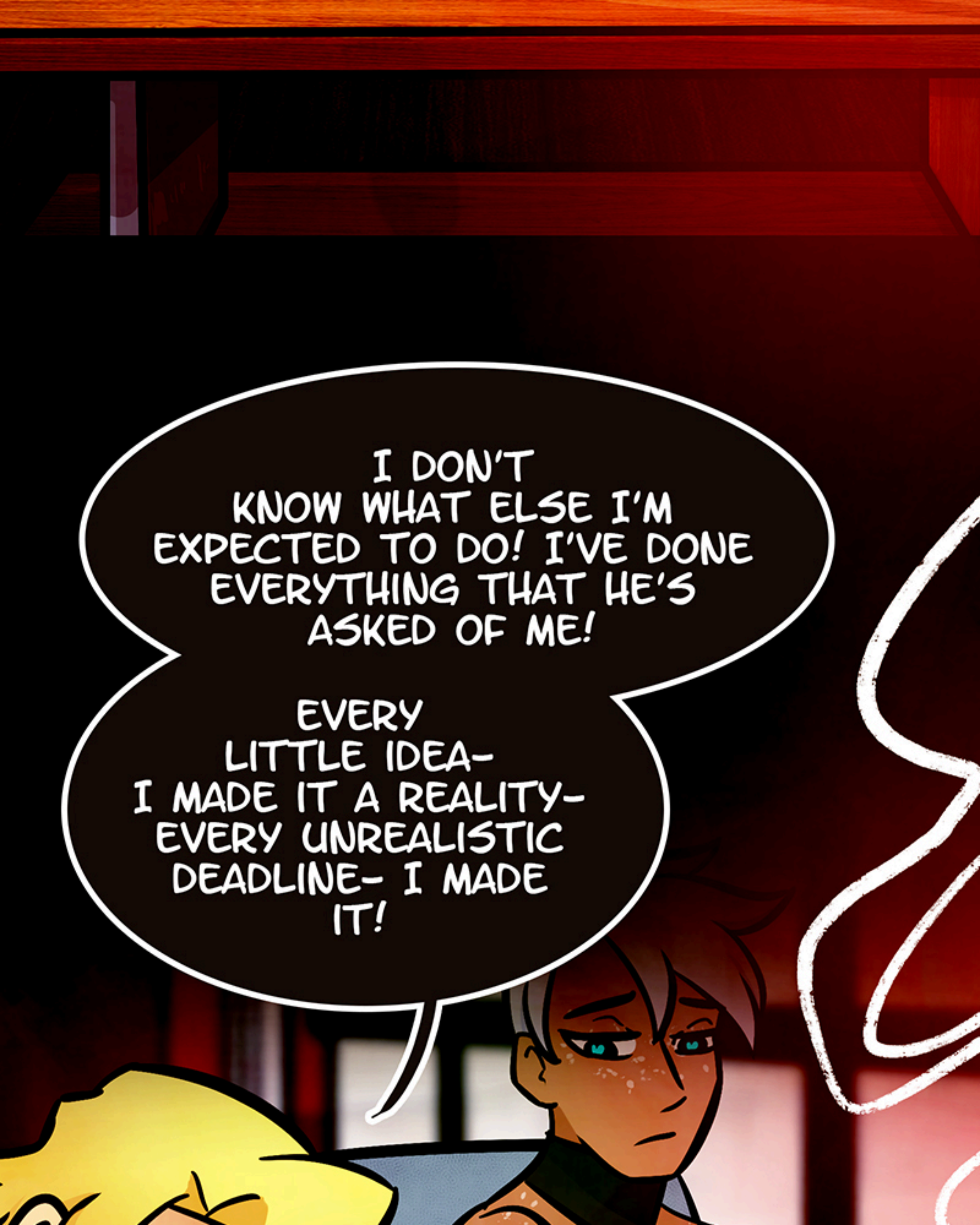


INSTEAD OF
TRAPPED BY A SET
OF RULES, FREEZING ME
UNTIL CERTAIN CONDITIONS
ARE MET.

AND THEN

AND THEN
STILL BE
LIMITED.



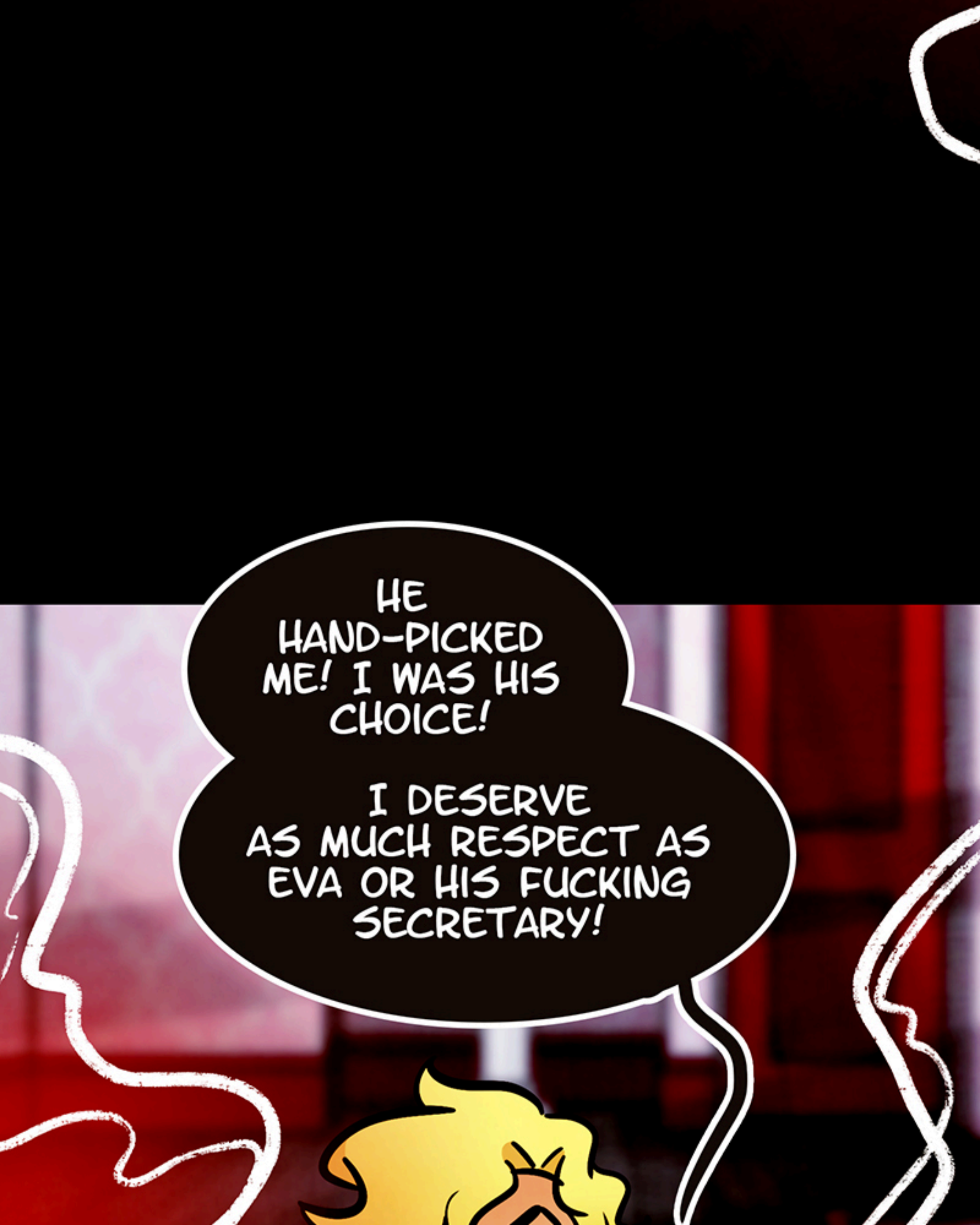
A comic book panel with a dark red background. In the foreground, a character with brown hair and freckles, wearing a dark green turtleneck, looks down with a somber expression. To their left, the back of a character with blonde hair is visible. Two speech bubbles are present: a large one at the top and a smaller one below it. A white, stylized line resembling a flame or smoke rises from the right side of the frame.

I DON'T
KNOW WHAT ELSE I'M
EXPECTED TO DO! I'VE DONE
EVERYTHING THAT HE'S
ASKED OF ME!

EVERY
LITTLE IDEA-
I MADE IT A REALITY-
EVERY UNREALISTIC
DEADLINE- I MADE
IT!



SO THEN
WHY DOES IT FEEL
LIKE I'M A JOKE TO
THESE PEOPLE!?

A person with blonde hair is shown from the chest up, speaking into a microphone. The background is a blurred red and white striped pattern. A large, dark, irregular speech bubble is positioned in front of the person's face, containing two lines of white text. The person's mouth is open as if they are speaking.

HE
HAND-PICKED
ME! I WAS HIS
CHOICE!

I DESERVE
AS MUCH RESPECT AS
EVA OR HIS FUCKING
SECRETARY!





I'M SO
SORRY,
SIR...



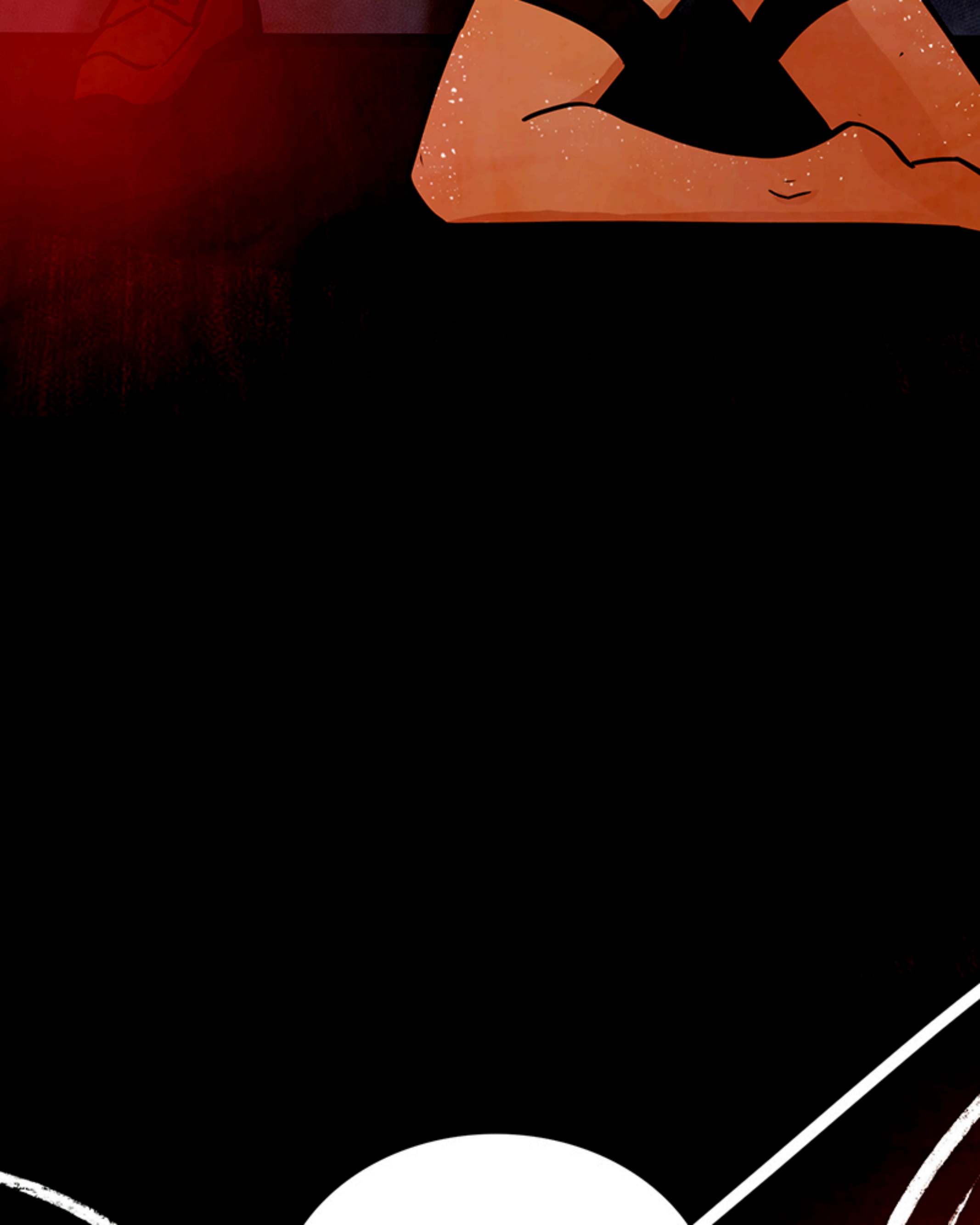
THEY TREAT
YOU SO TERRIBLY,
YOU DESERVE SO MUCH
MORE FOR ALL THAT
YOU'VE DONE...



THEY'VE
GOT YOU ALL
WORKED UP...
THEY AREN'T WORTH
YOUR TIME...

LET ME
HELP YOU
WITH YOUR
STRESS...





I REALLY
DID WANT HIM
TO BE HAPPY,
YOU KNOW...



I THOUGHT

I THOUGHT...
THAT IF I COULD
SPEAK FREELY, AND
HOLD HIM WHEN HE WAS
UPSET... THAT MAYBE
HE'D GET BETTER.

SORRY...
I GUESS MY
THOUGHTS GOT
KIND OF OFF
TRACK.





NO NEED
TO BE SORRY FOR
SPEAKING YOUR
MIND, LACE...

MY POINT
IS... AS MUCH
AS THE TNT'S
HURT...

THE IDEA
OF MY BODY NOT
ALLOWING ME TO SAVE
YOU... AND THAT
RESULTING IN YOUR
DEATH?





THAT IS A
GREATER PAIN THAN

GREATER PAIN THAN
I CAN EVEN IMAGINE...
IT'S... THE KIND OF PAIN
THAT I DON'T KNOW
IF I'D WANT TO
SURVIVE...

THAT'S
WHY I RAN... BECAUSE
I THOUGHT MOVING AWAY
WAS THE BEST WAY TO
KEEP YOU SAFE... AND THAT
WAS LESS PAINFUL THAN
SEEING YOU HURT...

I'M SORRY...







IT'S
ALRIGHT,
LACEY...

I'M JUST
GLAD YOU CAME
BACK...





FOUND IT.

WHAT- WERE
YOU RUMMAGING
AROUND IN MY
STUFF?

YES.
AND I DON'T
AGREE WITH
YOUR SYSTEM OF
ORGANIZING

ORGANIZING.

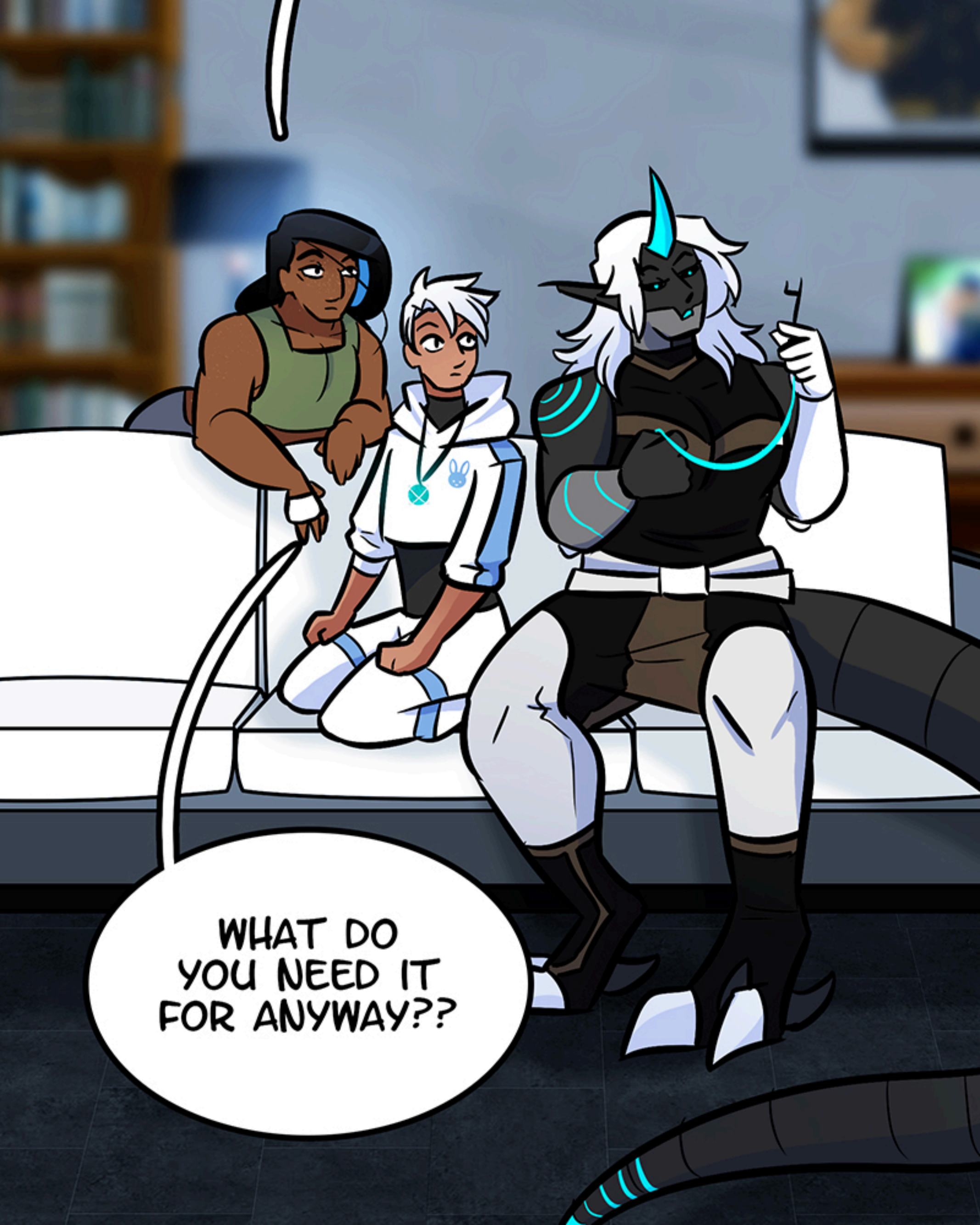
SO??
IT'S MINE!





I COULD
HAVE GOTTEN
THAT FOR
YOU...





WHAT DO
YOU NEED IT
FOR ANYWAY??



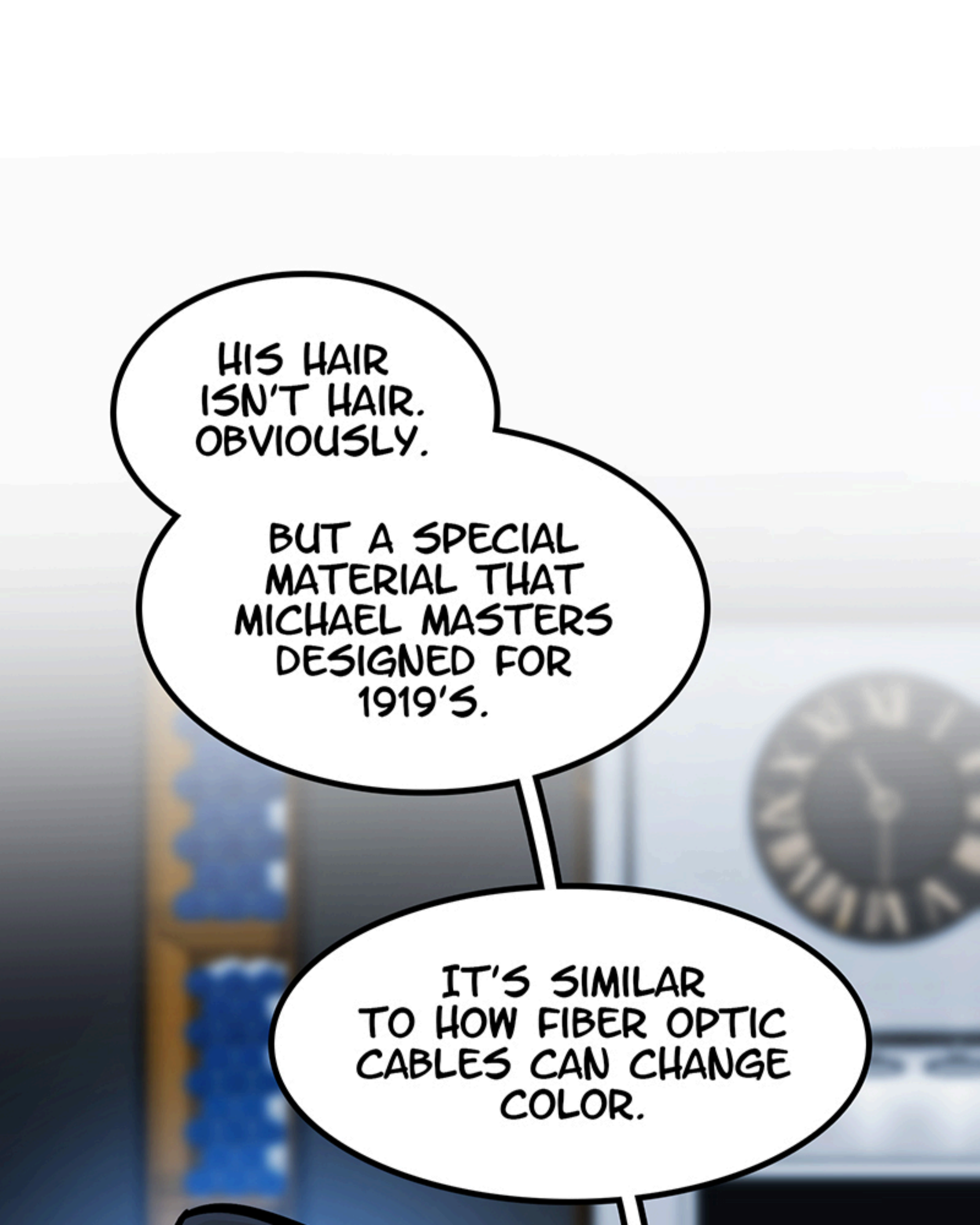


HE DOESN'T
NEED A WIG.

LET ME
SEE THE LOGO
BEHIND YOUR
EAR.



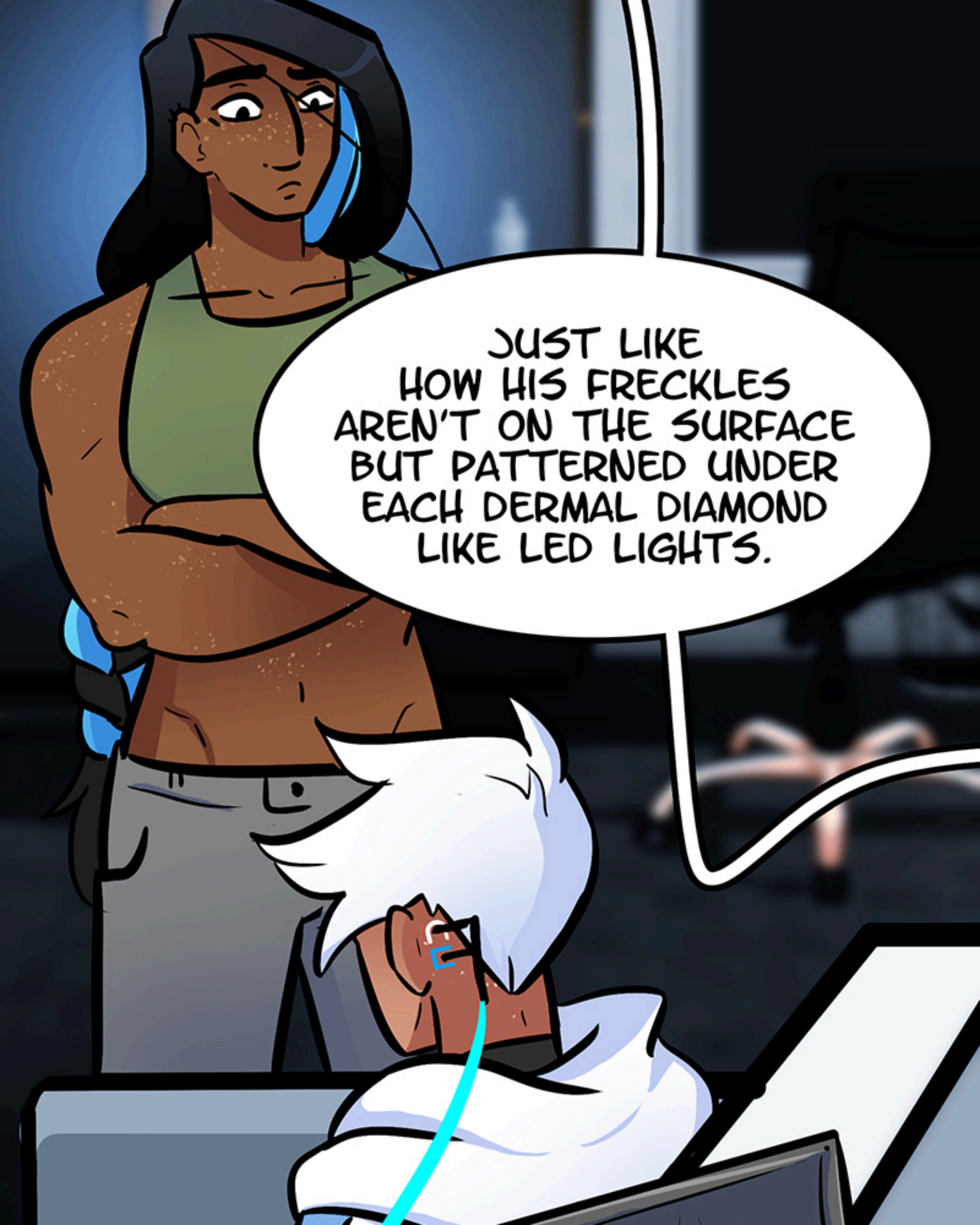
OKAY!



HIS HAIR
ISN'T HAIR.
OBVIOUSLY.

BUT A SPECIAL
MATERIAL THAT
MICHAEL MASTERS
DESIGNED FOR
1919'S.

IT'S SIMILAR
TO HOW FIBER OPTIC
CABLES CAN CHANGE
COLOR.



JUST LIKE
HOW HIS FRECKLES
AREN'T ON THE SURFACE
BUT PATTERNED UNDER
EACH DERMAL DIAMOND
LIKE LED LIGHTS.



CONNECTED TO
>XX1123-CM
>DEL-1919
>CUSTOMIZATION

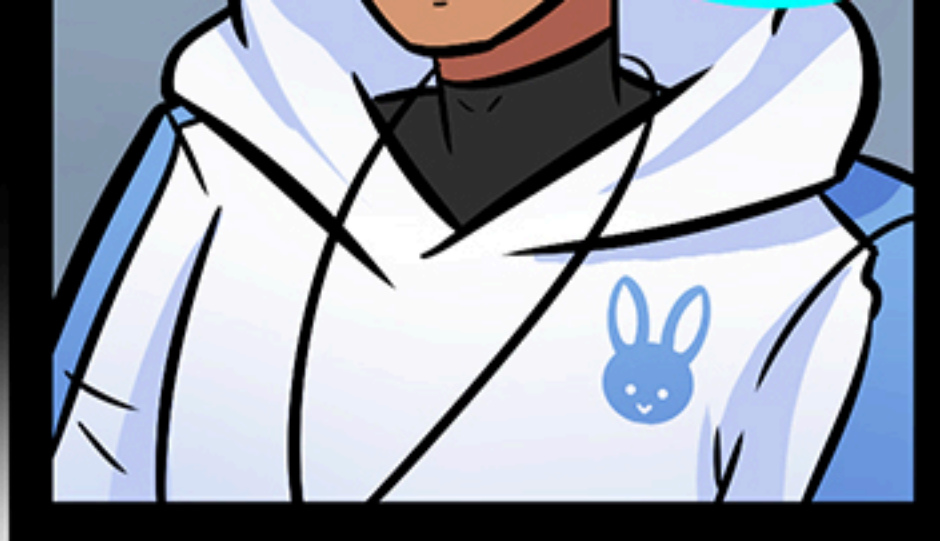
CHARLES
WANTED THE 1919'S TO
BE MORE CUSTOMIZABLE
THAN THE 1818'S.

OH!



HM...





BRIZZ...

WAIT!
THIS ONE IS
CUTE!



I LIKE
THE PINK!



YOU KNOW
I DIDN'T THINK
THAT IT WOULD
MAKE THAT MUCH
OF A DIFFERENCE
BUT... HUH!



I CAN PUSH
IT BACK TOO!!
MAYBE STYLE IT
DIFFERENTLY?

A close-up comic panel showing a character from the chest down, wearing a white dress shirt and a blue striped tie. They are sitting in a car, with their hands on a steering wheel that has blue and white segments. The background is a simple grey-blue gradient.

THERE
WE GO!

ALRIGHT!
SO I'M GOING
TO FINISH UP THE
RESERVATIONS-

AND SINCE
THE AWARDS ARE
BROADCASTED WE'LL
BE GIVEN AN EVENT
STYLIST-

SO WE HAVE
TO DO A BODY
SCAN TO SEND
OUR MEASUREMENTS
TO HAVE OUTFITS
READY.





THEN
WE SHOULD
PROBABLY HEAD
TO BED-

OR...
I WILL,
AT LEAST.

STILL
HUMAN. →





I'M GOING
TO SEE IF I CAN GET
ANYMORE INFORMATION
OUT OF THE CHIP.





AH...

WOULD IT
BE ALRIGHT IF I
LAID WITH YOU
FOR A WHILE?

OF COURSE!

IF THAT
WOULDN'T
TOTALLY BORE
YOU.



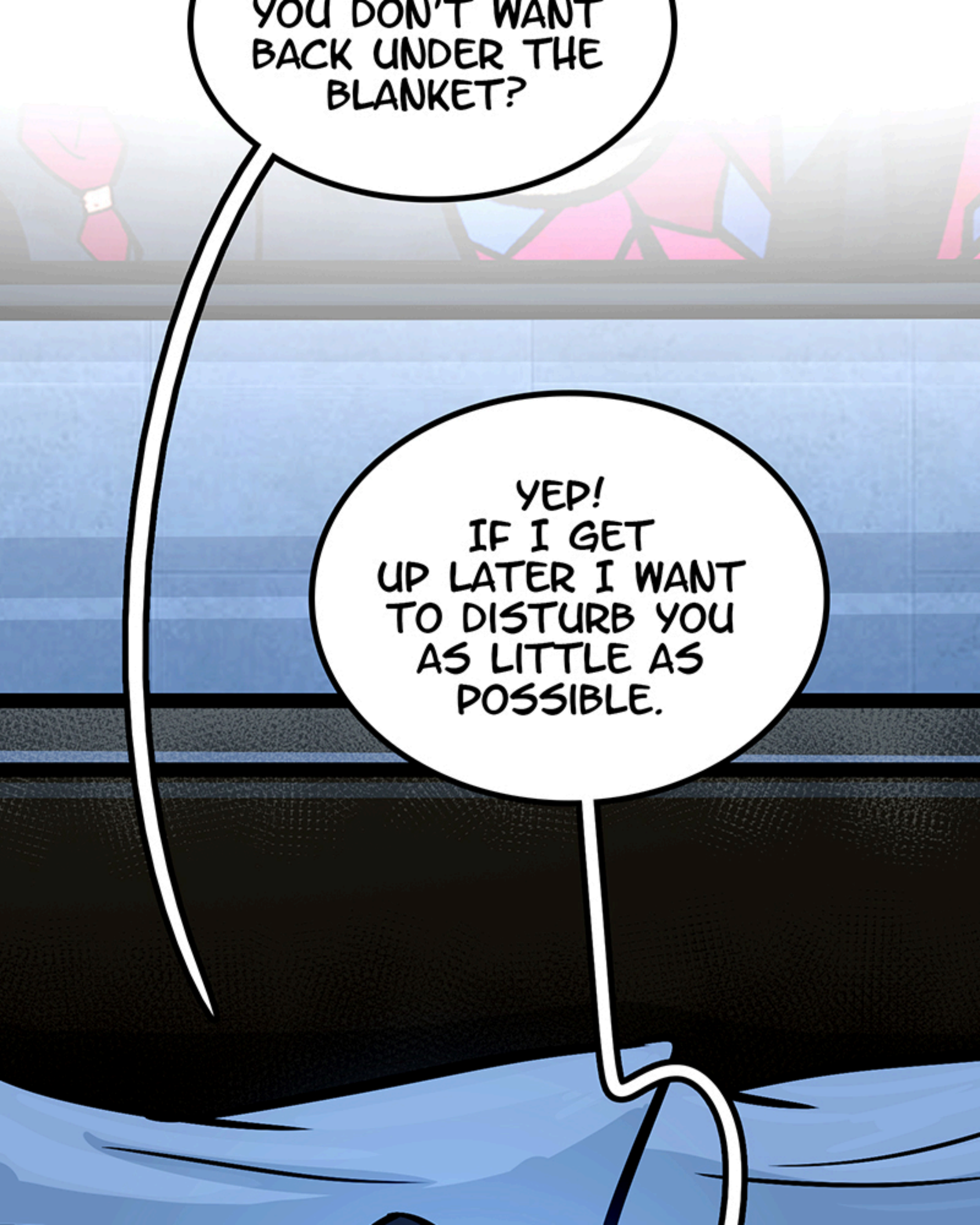


NOT AT ALL!



THIS
ALRIGHT?

YOU SURE
WON'T GOVT WANT

A comic panel showing a person lying under a blue blanket. A speech bubble from the person under the blanket asks a question. Another speech bubble from above answers it. The background is a simple room with a window showing a pink and blue pattern.

YOU DON'T WANT
BACK UNDER THE
BLANKET?

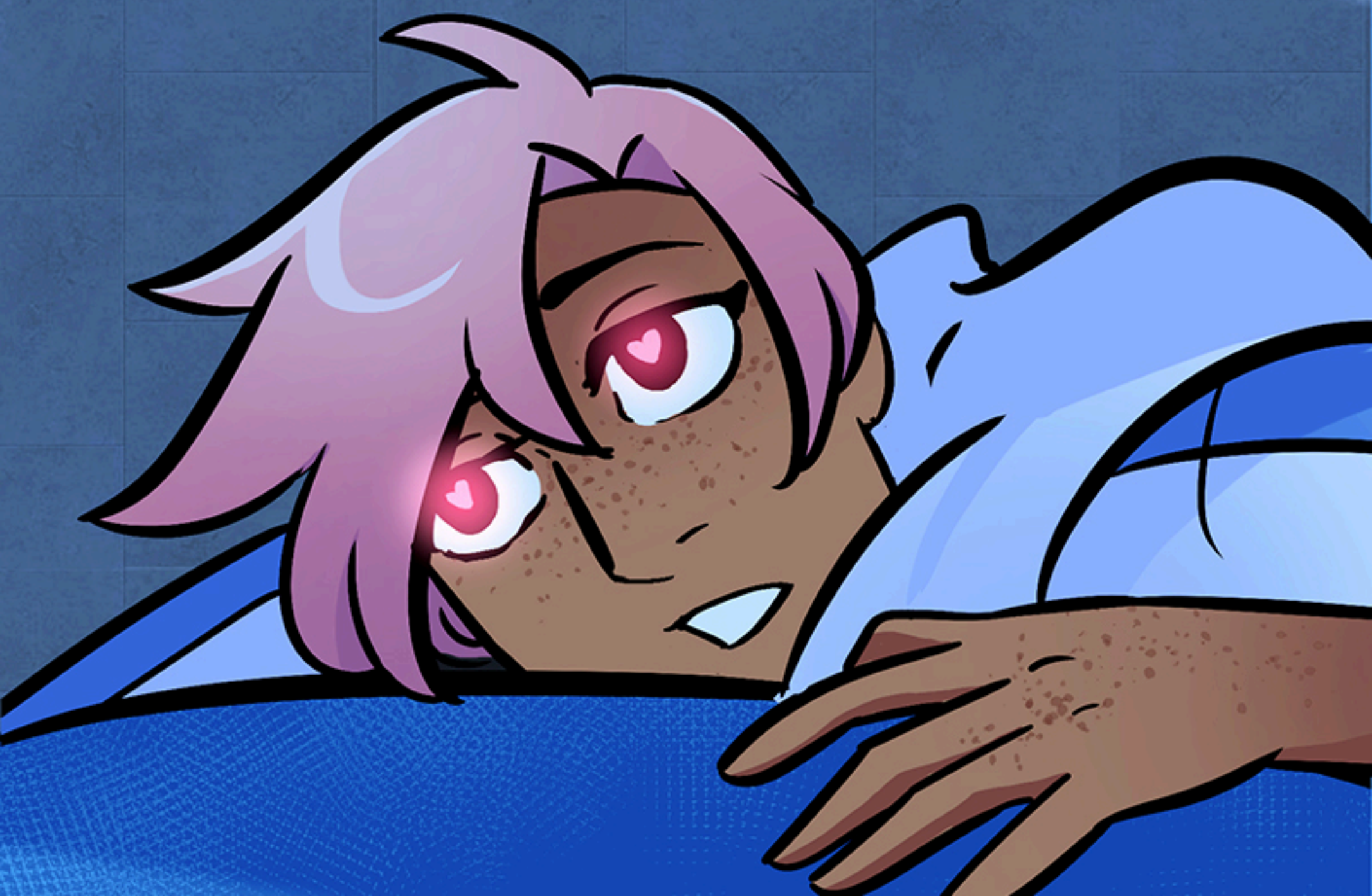
YEP!
IF I GET
UP LATER I WANT
TO DISTURB YOU
AS LITTLE AS
POSSIBLE.



BUT UH...
XADA... BEFORE
YOU GO TO
SLEEP...

MMM?

DO YOU
THINK... YOU
COULD TELL ME
MORE ABOUT YOUR
LIFE...?





I READ ALL
THE BOOKS IN YOUR
OFFICE ALREADY...

AND I WANT
TO LEARN MORE
ABOUT YOU...



ALSO IT'S
FUN HOW YOU
EXPLAIN
THINGS.

YOU THINK
SO??

YEAH!



A comic panel with a blue gradient background. In the lower-left, a dark blue, rounded shape represents a character's head. A large white speech bubble with a black outline points to it from the left. In the lower-right, another smaller white speech bubble with a black outline points to it from the right. The text inside the bubbles is in a simple, hand-drawn font.

HAHA, ALRIGHT
THEN WELL...
STORY TIME UNTIL
I PASS OUT I
GUESS!

YAAAY~





SO AT MY
6TH BIRTHDAY,
BLAZE GOT
ME-

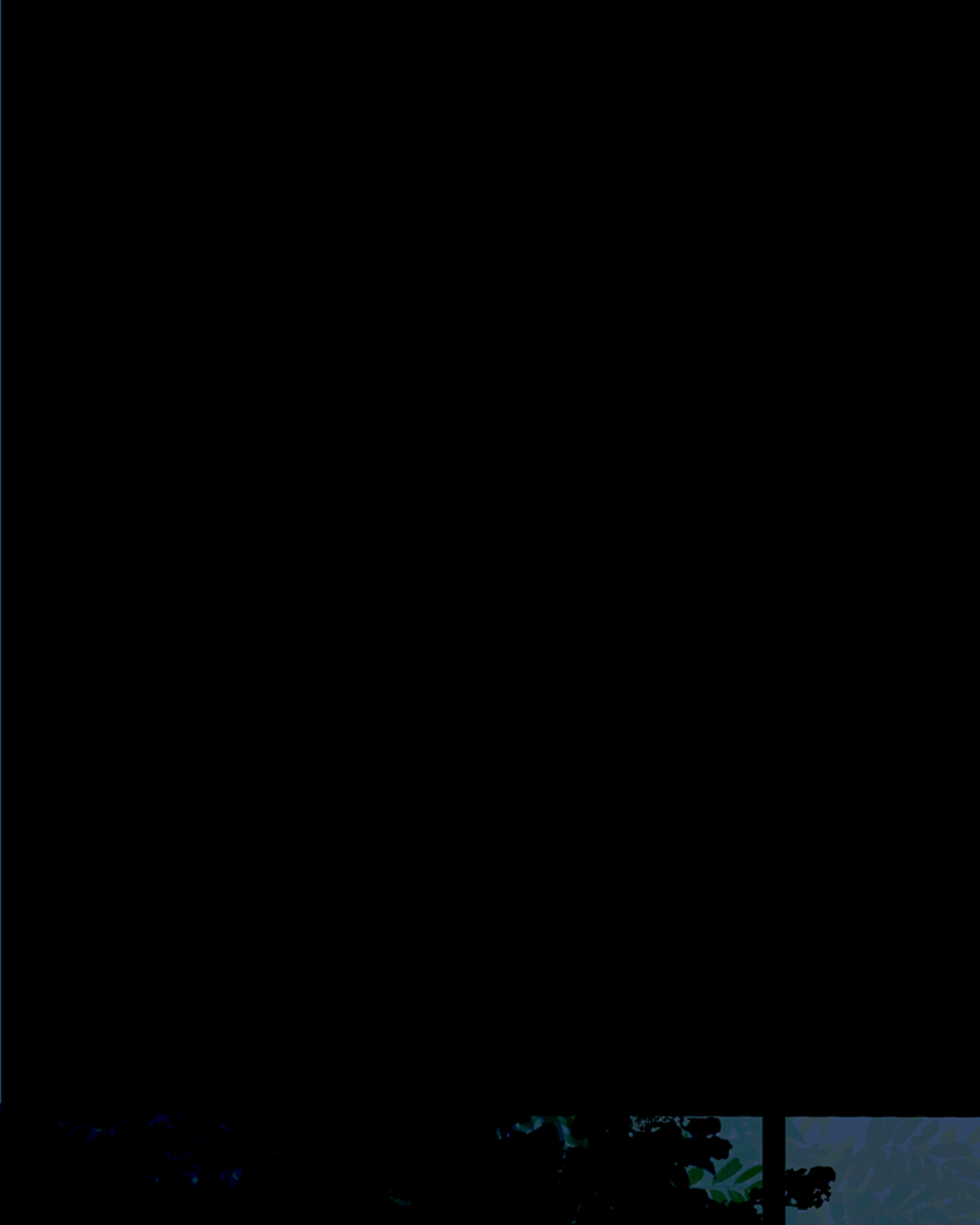
A comic panel showing two characters, a man with dark skin and long black hair, and a woman with pink hair and freckles, sitting on a blue couch and laughing. The man is wearing a black shirt and the woman is wearing a white shirt. A large black bear is lying on the couch behind them. The background is a dark blue wall with a lighter blue horizontal band.

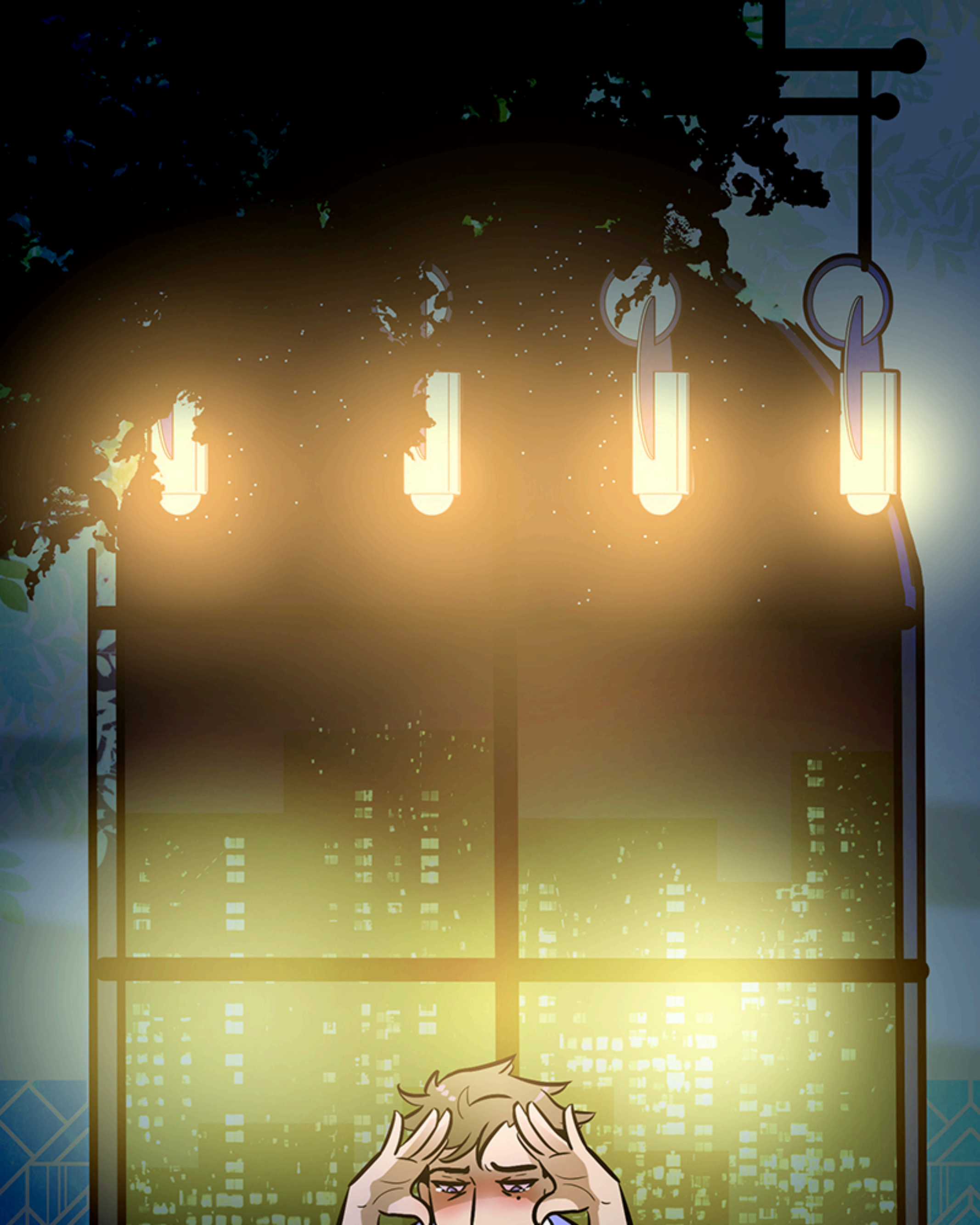
AH, BLAZE
IS A KID THAT
WAS IN MY CLASS
ON THE MOON
COL- AH-

OKAY WAIT,
LET ME BACK
UP MORE.

HAHAHA









I'm sorry, Xada.

READ



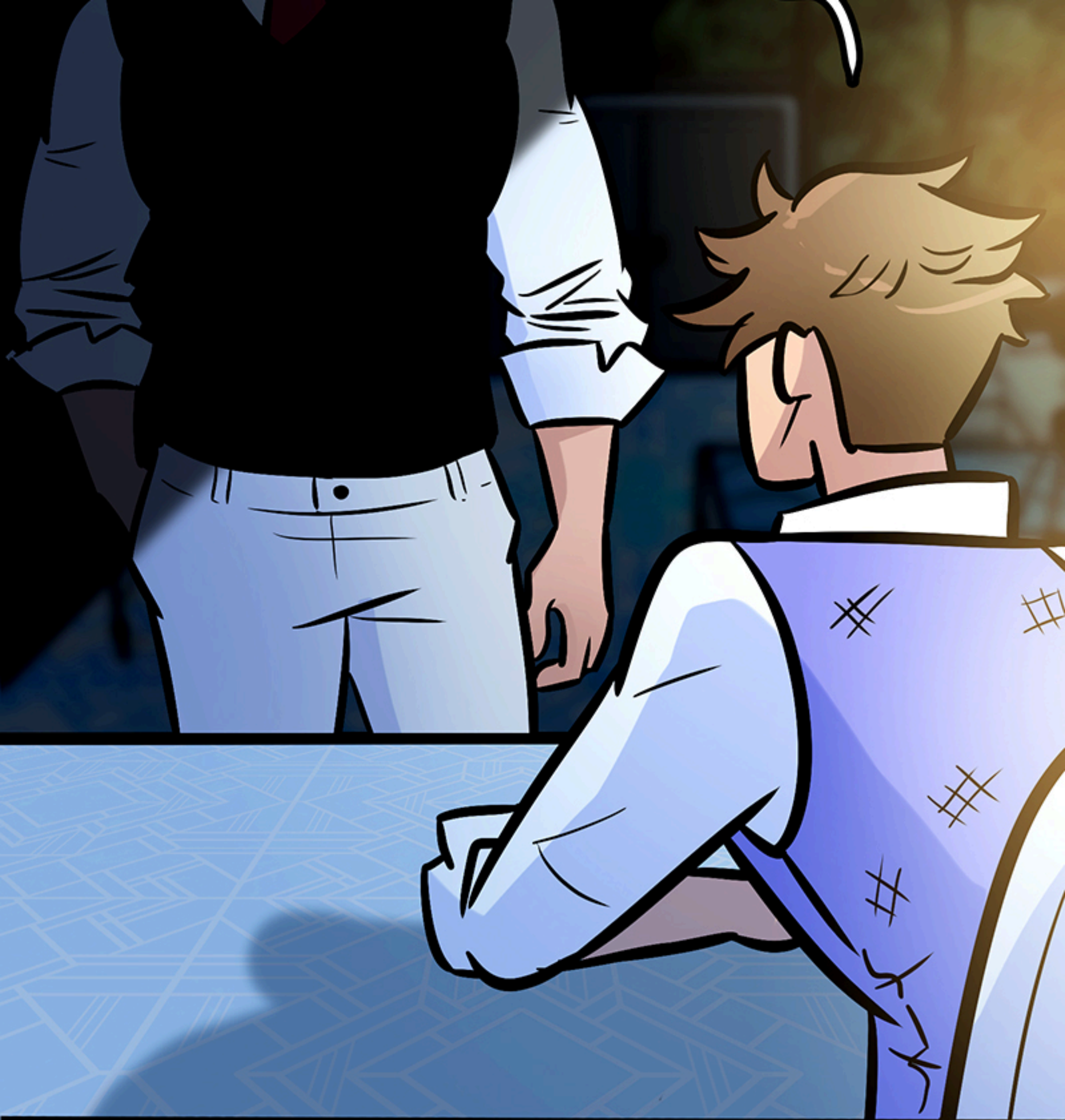
WORKING
HARD OR HARDLY
WORKING?





SIR...





SORRY-
I LOST TRACK
OF TIME...

WE TALKED
ABOUT THIS.

CALL ME

CALL ME
CHARLES.





WHAT'S
ON YOUR MIND,

VELIX?

LOVEBOT

By Chase Keels & Miranda M.

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Character Shading Assistant  coldpupsART

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