











I JUST

The background of the comic panel is a dark, blurry image of a building at night, with some lights visible in the distance.

DON'T GET
IT...

THERE WAS
NO SIGN OF HIM
AT ALL??

HE TOLD ME
HE WAS GOING TO
UNBLOCK YOU...



IT'S OKAY,
LACEY. YOU
CALLING HIM DID
REALLY HELP...

BASED ON
WHAT YOU SAID...
I FEEL LIKE HE'S JUST
GONE BACK TO A REGULAR
LEVEL OF MAD...

WHICH
IS FAR LESS
ALARMING THAN
WHAT ERIK WAS
SAYING...





THE ONLY
THING TO DO
NOW IS WAIT...

HE HAS
A TENDENCY TO
RETREAT BACK TO
WHAT IS FAMILIAR TO
HIM WHEN HIS WORLD
IS CHALLENGED.

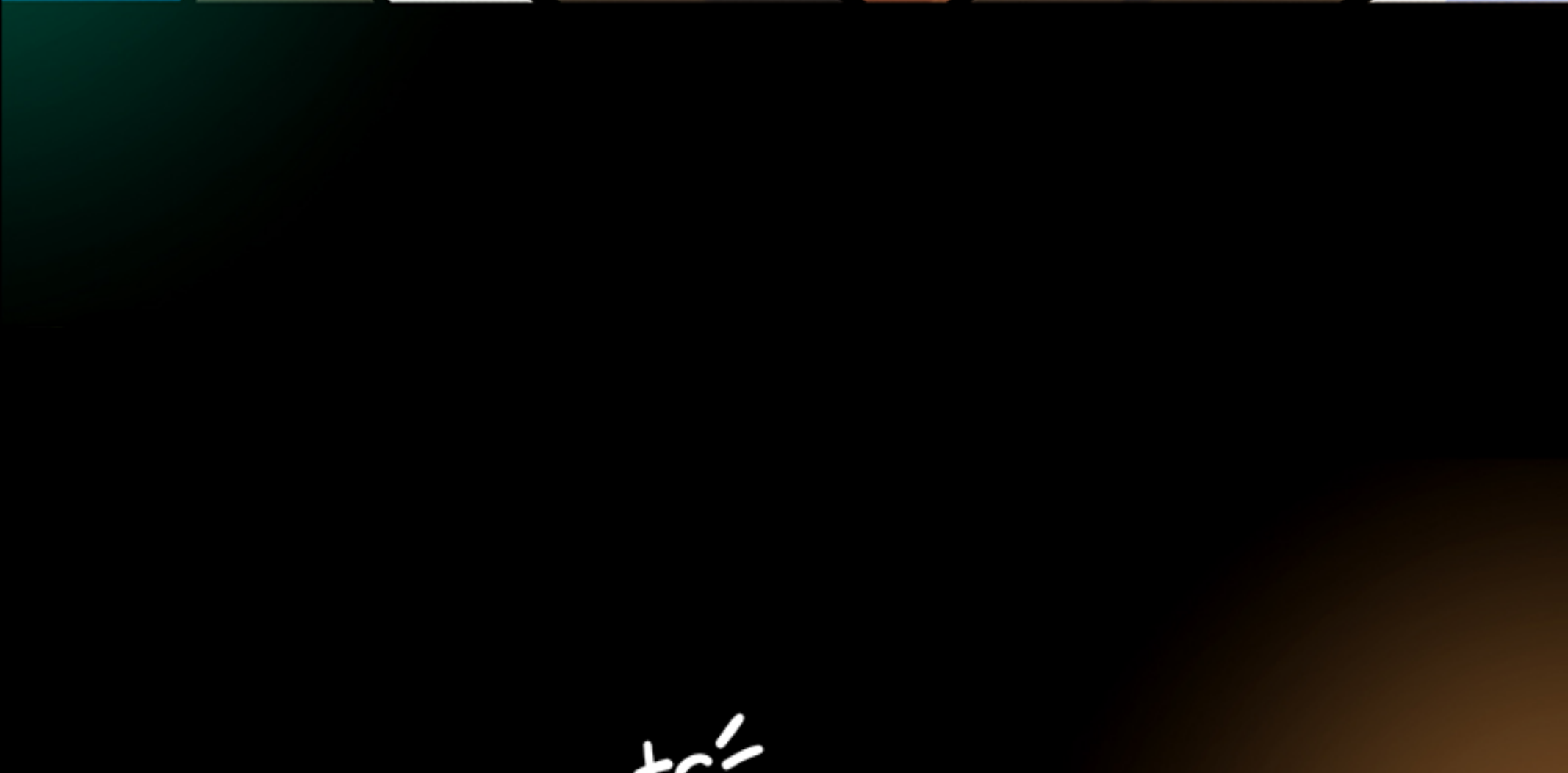
USUALLY
HE ENDS UP
WITH SOME KIND OF
NEW PERSPECTIVE
WHEN DIRECTLY
COMPARING THE
TWO BUT...





IN THIS
CASE I THINK
HE WENT HOME TO
HIS STUPID FUCKING
DAD AND HIS PIECE OF
SHIT STEP-MOM.







IT'S JUST

IT'S JUST
FUNNY WHENEVER
YOU GET SO ANGRY
ABOUT SOMETHING
THAT WE DON'T HAVE
THE CONTEXT
FOR.

YOU JUST
GET SUPER
VENOMOUS OUT
OF NOWHERE.

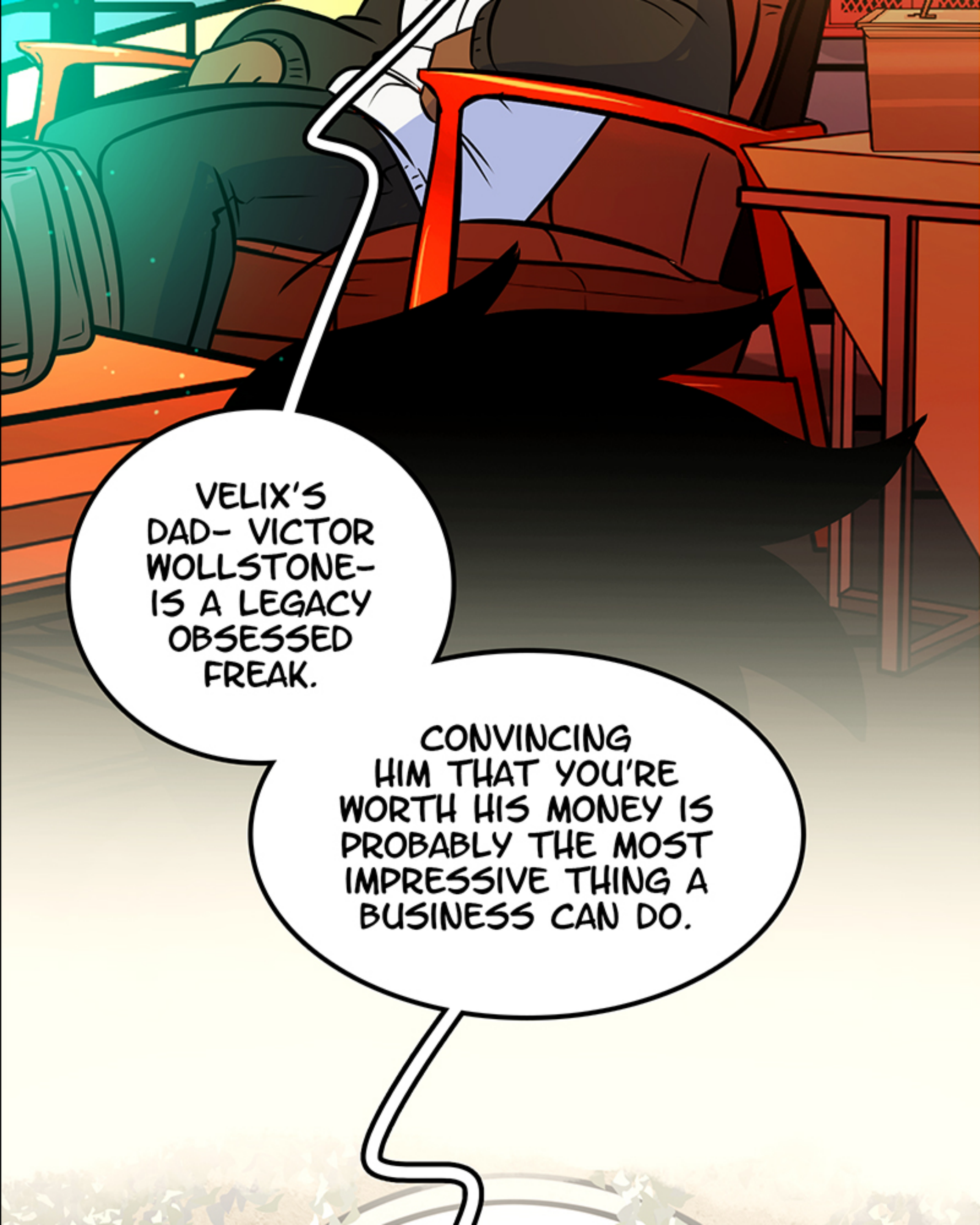


YOU
SHOULD DO
IT MORE.

A comic panel featuring a person with dark skin and hair in a bun, wearing a dark jacket with a blue heart and a white rabbit on the sleeve. A white cockatoo with a red crest is perched on their shoulder. The background shows a window with a green and yellow geometric pattern. Two speech bubbles are present. The top speech bubble contains the text: "UGH. I'M NOT SURE HOW MUCH CONTEXT I COULD EVEN GIVE YOU REALLY....". The bottom speech bubble contains the text: "SINCE IT'S OVER 10 YEARS WORTH OF JUST... LIVING WITH IT."

UGH. I'M NOT
SURE HOW MUCH
CONTEXT I COULD
EVEN GIVE YOU
REALLY....

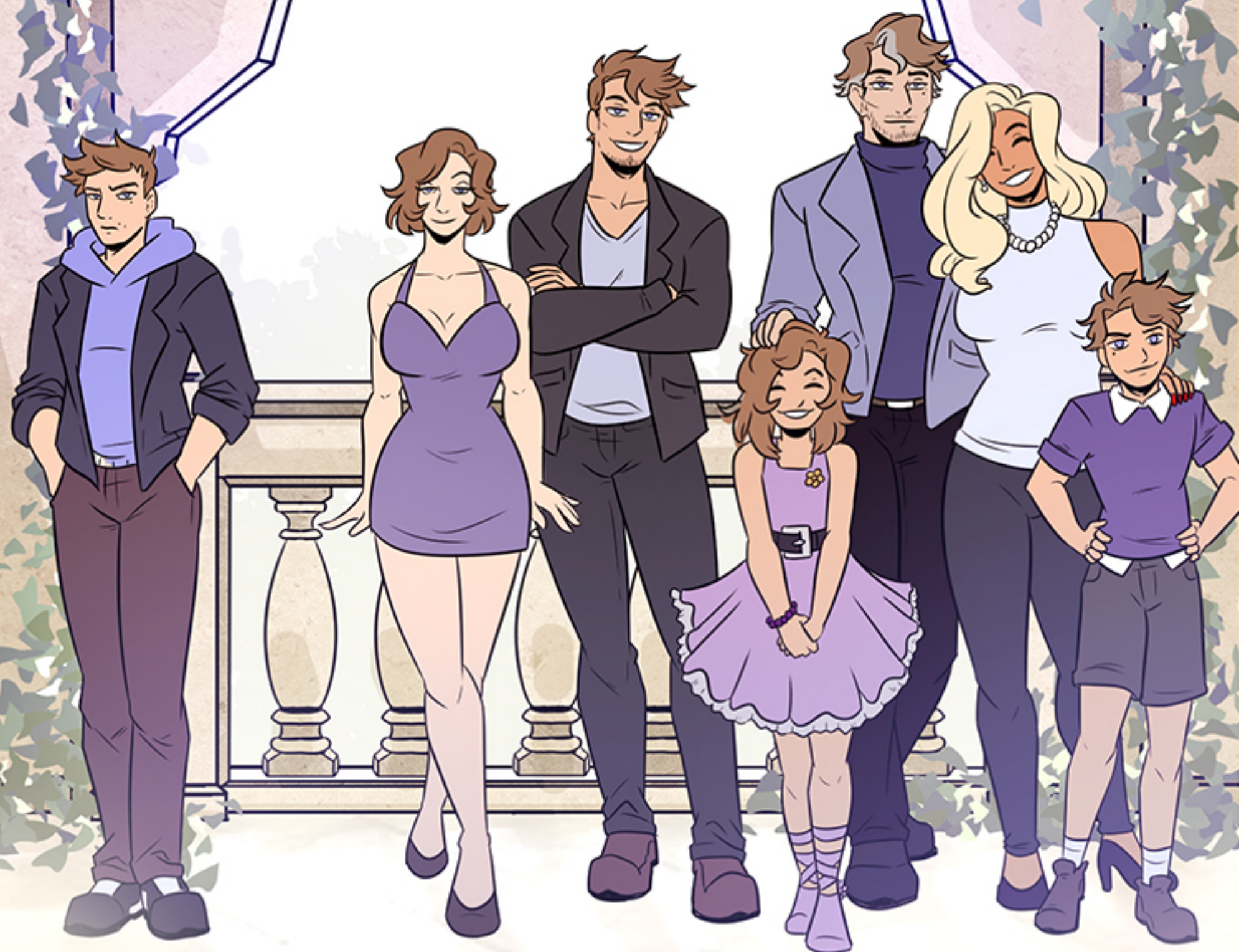
SINCE IT'S
OVER 10 YEARS
WORTH OF JUST...
LIVING WITH IT.

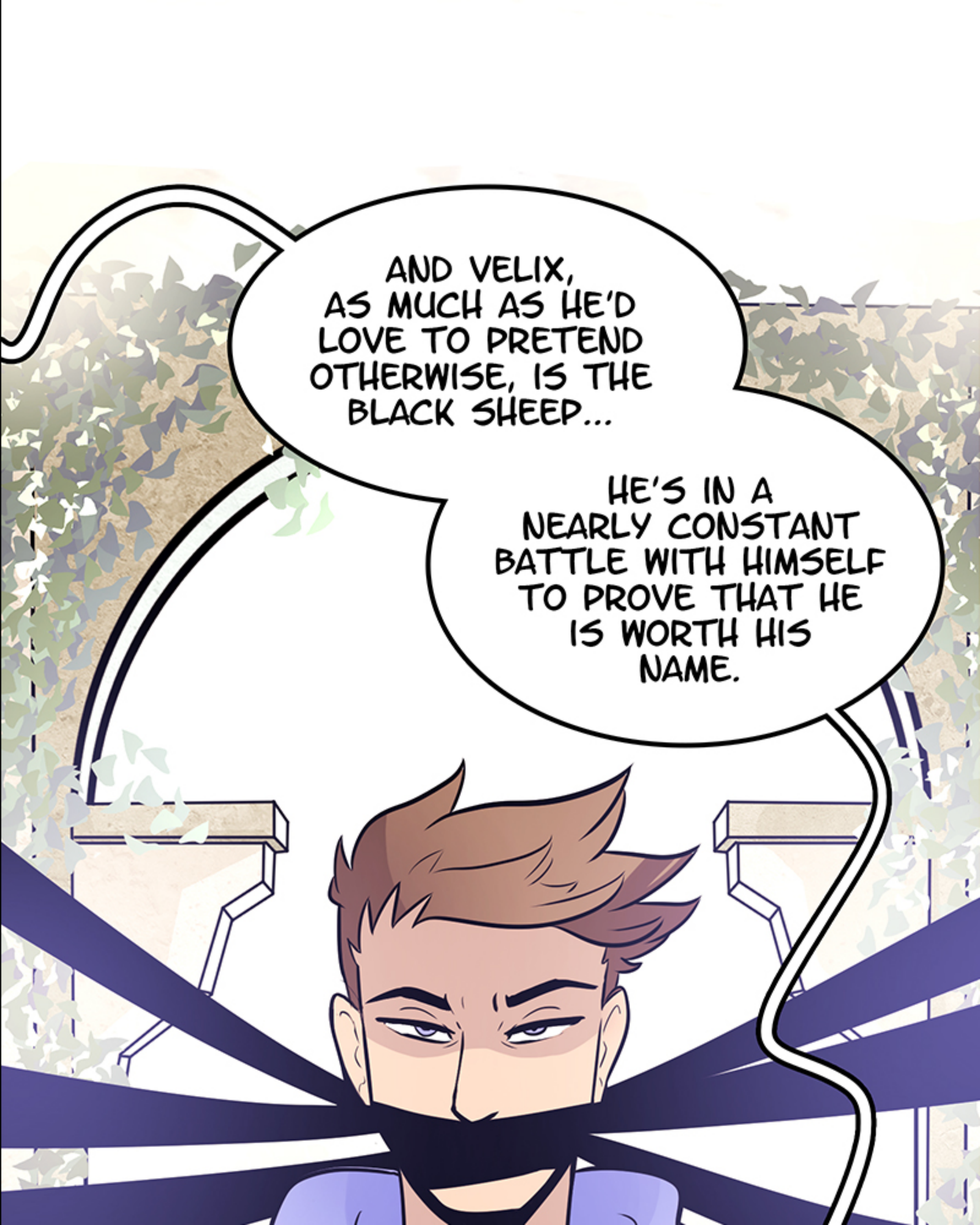


VELIX'S
DAD- VICTOR
WOLLSTONE-
IS A LEGACY
OBSESSED
FREAK.

CONVINCING
HIM THAT YOU'RE
WORTH HIS MONEY IS
PROBABLY THE MOST
IMPRESSIVE THING A
BUSINESS CAN DO.

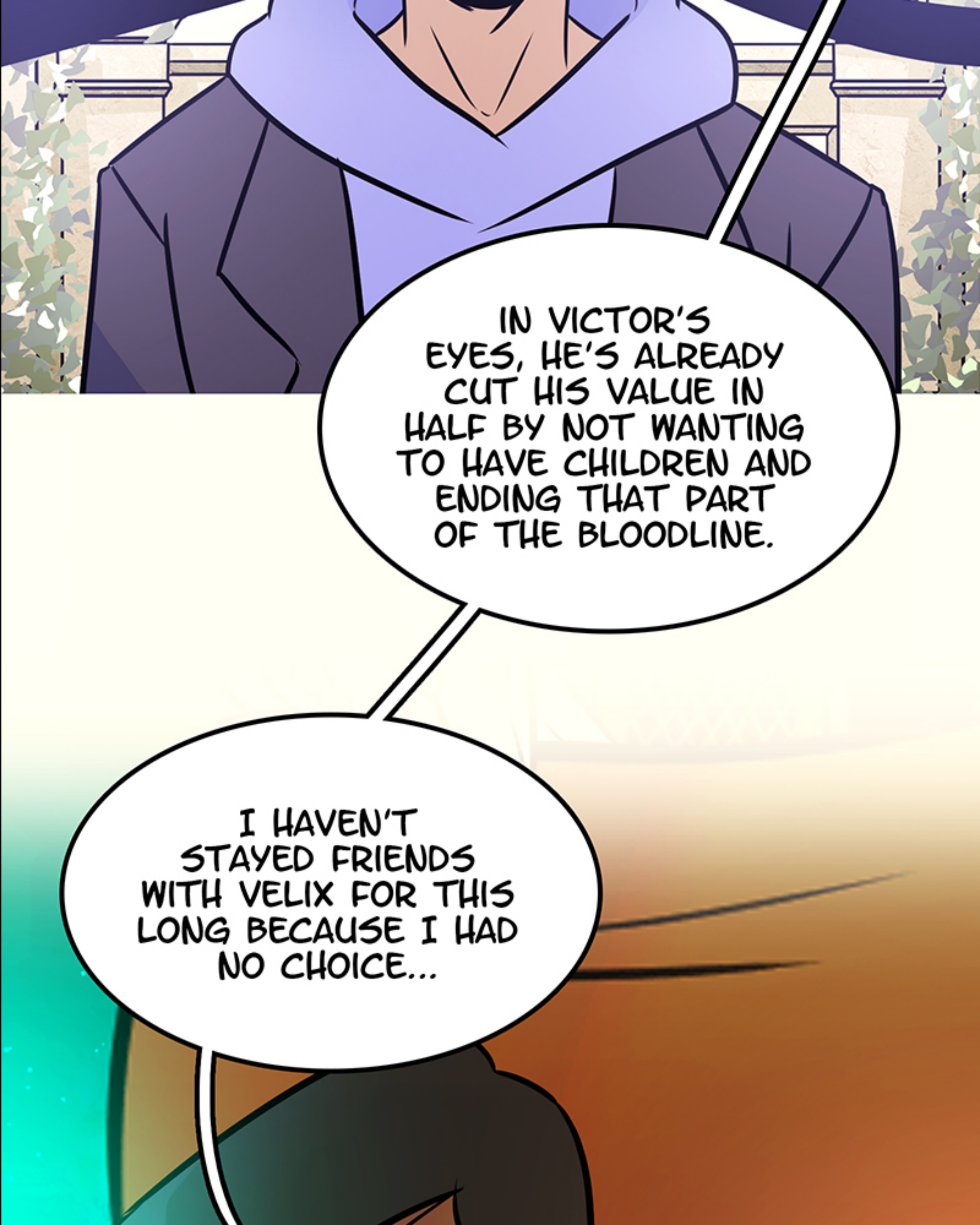
BUT OF
COURSE THOSE
EXPECTATIONS
EXTEND DIRECTLY TO
HIS UNNECESSARILY
LARGE FAMILY.



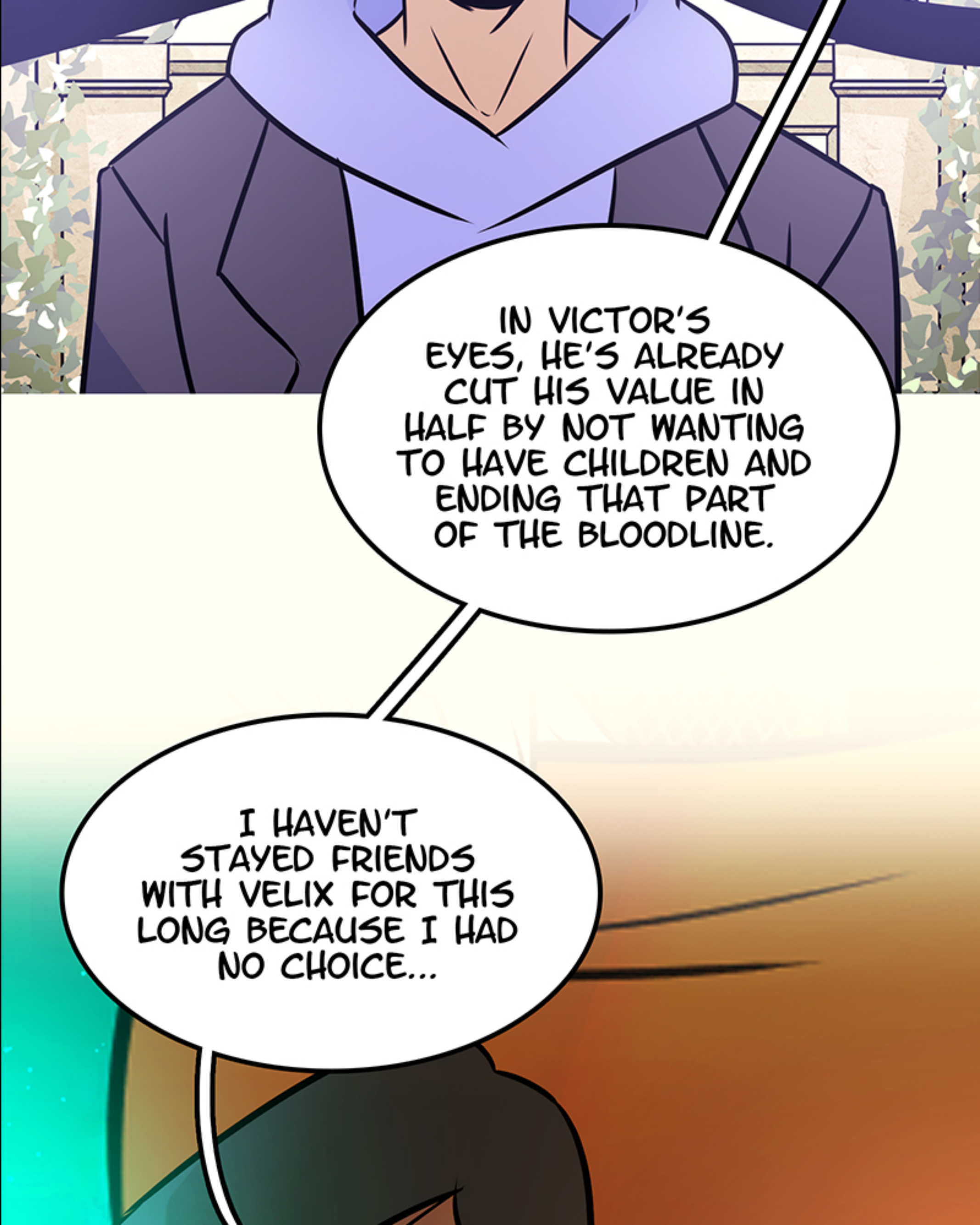


AND VELIX,
AS MUCH AS HE'D
LOVE TO PRETEND
OTHERWISE, IS THE
BLACK SHEEP...

HE'S IN A
NEARLY CONSTANT
BATTLE WITH HIMSELF
TO PROVE THAT HE
IS WORTH HIS
NAME.

A comic panel featuring a character in a purple robe with a white collar, holding a white staff. The character is speaking into a large speech bubble. The background shows a stone wall and some foliage.

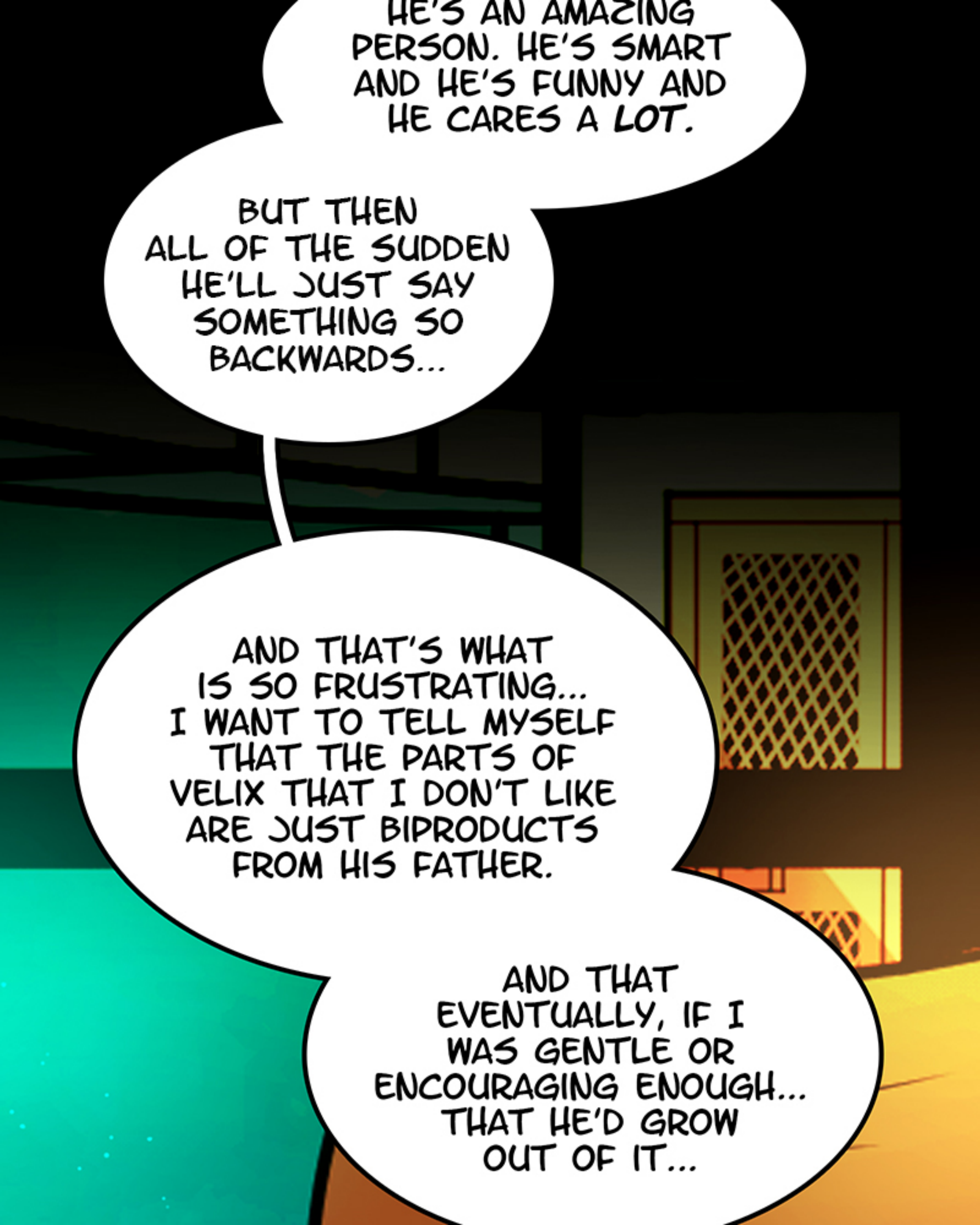
IN VICTOR'S
EYES, HE'S ALREADY
CUT HIS VALUE IN
HALF BY NOT WANTING
TO HAVE CHILDREN AND
ENDING THAT PART
OF THE BLOODLINE.

A comic panel featuring a character in a dark green robe with a white collar, holding a white staff. The character is speaking into a large speech bubble. The background shows a stone wall and some foliage.

I HAVEN'T
STAYED FRIENDS
WITH VELIX FOR THIS
LONG BECAUSE I HAD
NO CHOICE...



WE'RE
FRIENDS BECAUSE
I'VE SEEN HIM.



HE'S AN AMAZING
PERSON. HE'S SMART
AND HE'S FUNNY AND
HE CARES A LOT.

BUT THEN
ALL OF THE SUDDEN
HE'LL JUST SAY
SOMETHING SO
BACKWARDS...

AND THAT'S WHAT
IS SO FRUSTRATING...
I WANT TO TELL MYSELF
THAT THE PARTS OF
VELIX THAT I DON'T LIKE
ARE JUST BIPRODUCTS
FROM HIS FATHER.

AND THAT
EVENTUALLY, IF I
WAS GENTLE OR
ENCOURAGING ENOUGH...
THAT HE'D GROW
OUT OF IT...



BUT HOW
MUCH OF IT IS JUST...
HIM? HOW MUCH OF IT
CAN'T BE SOOTHED
AWAY?

I READ
THOSE TEXTS
WHEN WE WERE IN
THE WAREHOUSE...





YOU REALLY
CONSIDER THAT
A BIPRODUCT?

TO ME THAT
JUST SOUNDS LIKE...
AN APPLE NOT FAR
FROM THE TREE
SITUATION.

I...

THERE IS
NO WAY FOR ME TO
EXPLAIN THAT IN A
WAY THAT WILL MAKE
EITHER OF US SOUND
GOOD, SO...



SO YOU'RE
JUST GOING TO
STOP TALKING?

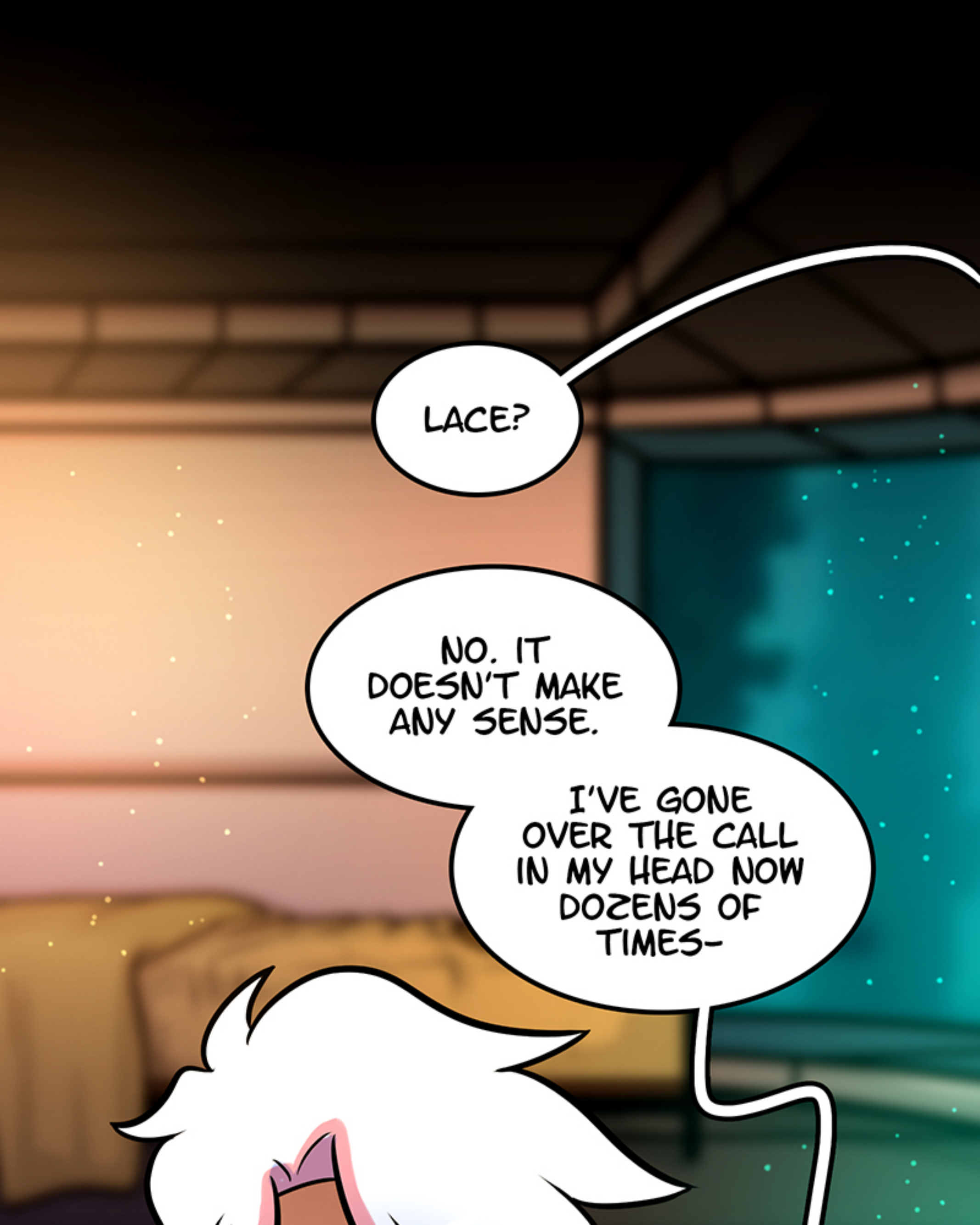
The scene is set in a room with large windows showing a green landscape. A dark-skinned character with white hair and blue horns is on the right, wearing a dark, textured tunic. They have a smug expression and are gesturing with their hands. On the left, a person with dark skin and a white cockatoo on their head is lying down, looking away. The cockatoo has a small blue and red crest. A speech bubble from the dark-skinned character points towards the person with the cockatoo.

BLEH.

YEAH,
REAL MATURE.
I GUESS YOU TWO
ARE A MATCH
MADE-







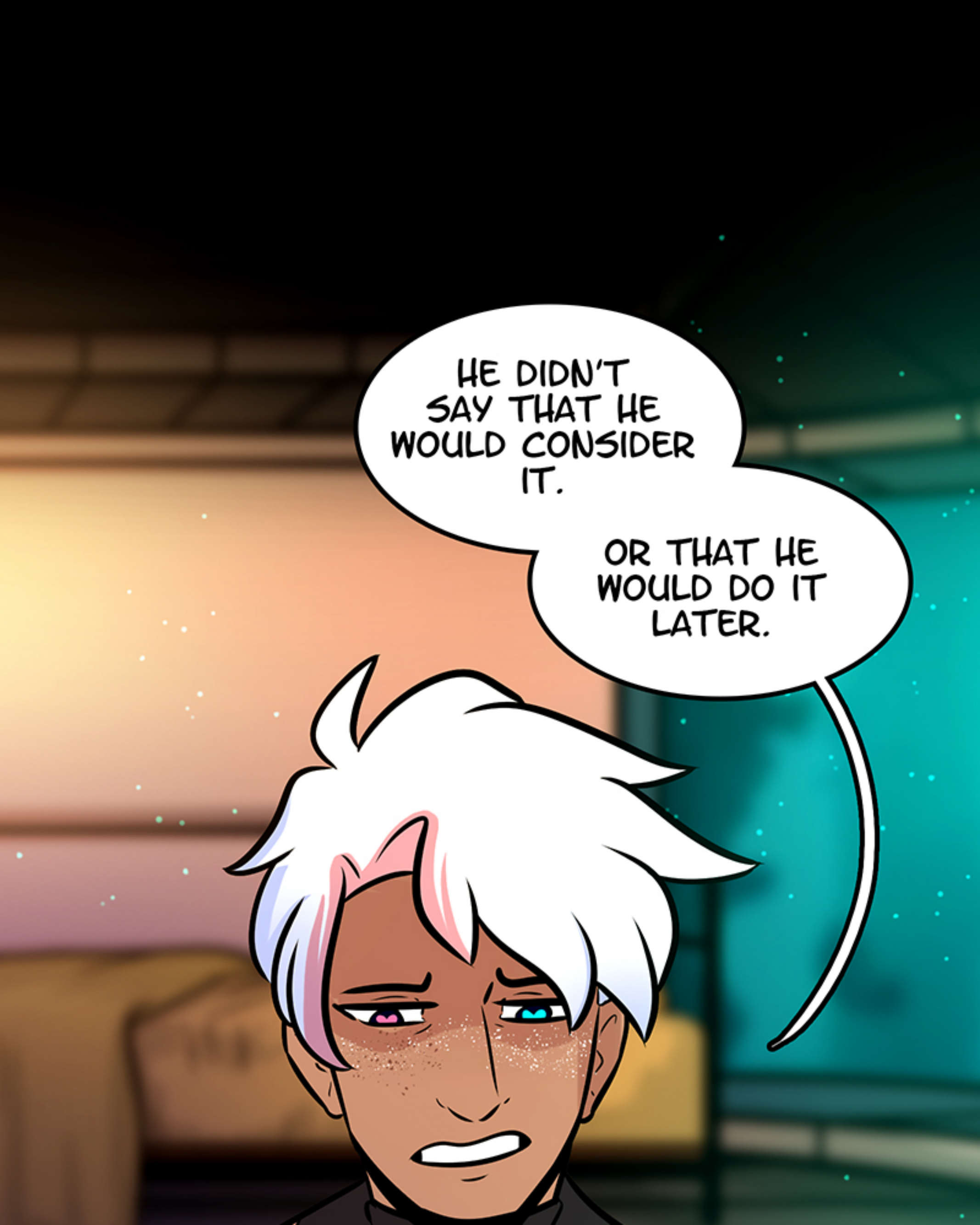
LACE?

NO. IT
DOESN'T MAKE
ANY SENSE.

I'VE GONE
OVER THE CALL
IN MY HEAD NOW
DOZENS OF
TIMES-

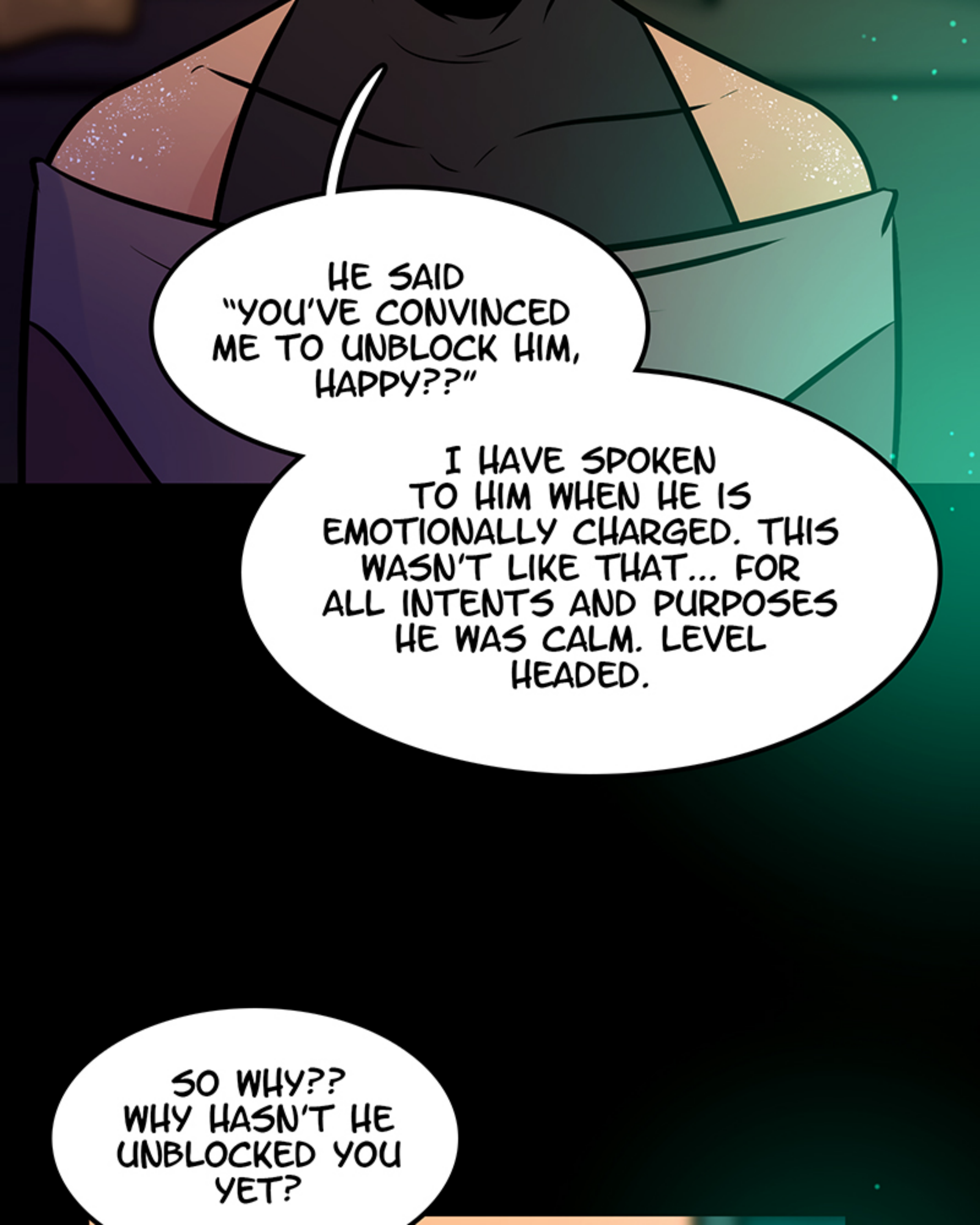


HE
SHOULD HAVE
UNBLOCKED
YOU.



HE DIDN'T
SAY THAT HE
WOULD CONSIDER
IT.

OR THAT HE
WOULD DO IT
LATER.



HE SAID
"YOU'VE CONVINCED
ME TO UNBLOCK HIM,
HAPPY??"

I HAVE SPOKEN
TO HIM WHEN HE IS
EMOTIONALLY CHARGED. THIS
WASN'T LIKE THAT... FOR
ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES
HE WAS CALM. LEVEL
HEADED.

SO WHY??
WHY HASN'T HE
UNBLOCKED YOU
YET?



WHY HASN'T
HE REACHED
OUT TO YOU?



A comic panel featuring two characters in a futuristic, brightly lit interior. On the right, a tall, dark-skinned character with long white hair and a single blue horn stands with arms crossed, wearing a dark grey long-sleeved shirt and dark purple pants. On the left, a shorter, dark-skinned character with a blue headband and a white t-shirt with a blue heart is sitting on a large, brown, cushioned chair. A white cockatoo with a blue crest is perched on the back of the chair. The background shows a grid-like ceiling and glowing yellow light sources. Two speech bubbles are present: one from the standing character and one from the sitting character.

BECAUSE
HUMANS LIE TO
EACH OTHER AND
THEMSELVES.

DUDE-



HAVE YOU
TRIED TO CALL HIM
SINCE THEN?? MAYBE
HE DID UNBLOCK YOU
AND YOU JUST
ASSUMED-

I DID,
LACEY...



I'M SURE
THAT YOU DID
GET THROUGH
TO HIM.

BUT ALL
WE KNOW IS THAT HE
WILL UNBLOCK ME
EVENTUALLY - WHEN
HE'S READY.



YOU HELPED
US BOTH A LOT BY
HAVING THAT CALL,
THANK YOU.





YEAH.

NO PROBLEM.

YOU KNOW
HIM BEST, SO
HOPEFULLY HE'LL
REACH OUT
SOON...

THIS IS
MY FIRST TIME
GETTING BLOCKED
BUT... IN REALITY

HE BLOCKS PEOPLE
ALL THE TIME...

IF HE
UNBLOCKS ME
IN UNDER TWO

IN UNDER TWO
WEEKS THAT WILL
BE A RECORD!

AH- HEY
BRIZZ. DO YOU
HAVE MORE OF AN
OFFICE TYPE DECK

YEAH.
OVER HERE.

OFFICE TYPE DESK
THAT I CAN SPREAD
OUT AT?





WHAT
WERE YOU
THINKING?

WELL MY
FIRST INSTINCT IS
SOME SORT OF EMP
DEVICE THAT IS TUNED
TO THE FREQUENCY
OF THE CHIP BUT...



I'M STRUGGLING
WITH THE LOGISTICS
OF HOW TO GET THAT
TO EVERY 1919...



LET ME
WORRY ABOUT
THAT PART. I HAVE
ACCESS TO A.E.'S
SYSTEM THAT YOU
DON'T.

IF YOU COULD
ACTUALLY BUILD
SOMETHING THAT YOU
THINK WOULD WORK
THEN WE'LL GO
FROM THERE.

AHHH
WE'LL SEE. BUT
THAT'S GOOD
TO KNOW.

LEARN TO
TRUST YOUR
INSTINCTS
MORE.





DID YOU
BRING FOOD,
TOO?

...WHY?

... FOR
YOURSELF?? TO
EAT?? BECAUSE
YOU'RE HUMAN?



A comic panel featuring two characters. On the right, a character with a dark grey face, a single bright blue horn, and white hair with a blue streak is shown in profile, looking down with a mischievous, toothy grin. On the left, a character with dark skin, a blue headband, and a blue scarf is shown from the chest up, looking up at the first character with a wide, happy smile. The background is a blurred interior with warm lighting and framed pictures on the wall.

EHEHE...NO.
I FORGOT.

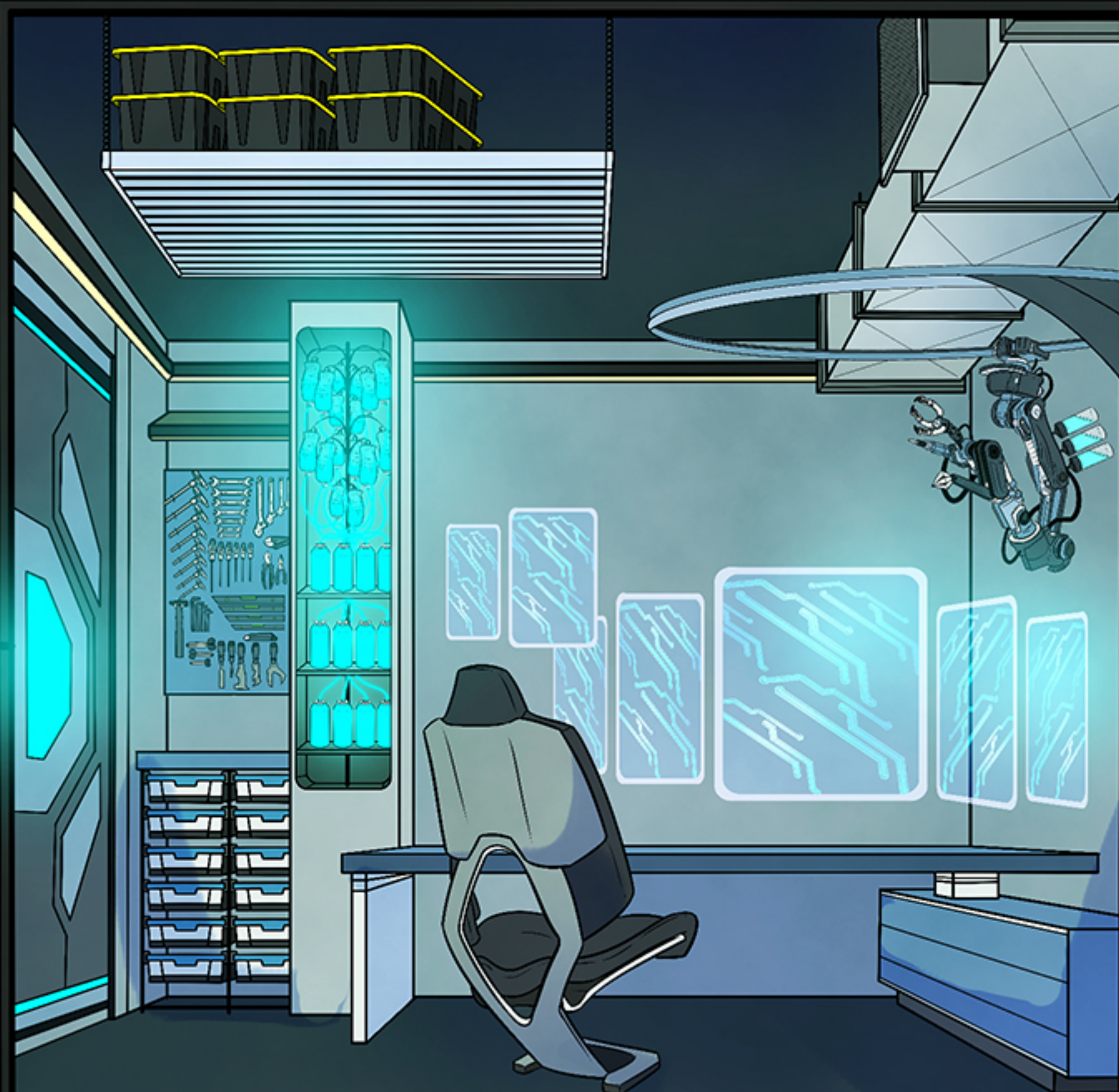
UGH!

A comic panel featuring a character with dark skin, blue eyes, and a black face mask. The character has dark hair tied in a ponytail and is wearing a black top. They are holding a blue book with the word "Heheh" written on it twice. The background is dark with some purple and blue elements. Two speech bubbles are present, one above the other, containing text. A small brown rabbit with antlers is visible in the upper left.

YOUR TYPE OF
HUMAN IS ALWAYS
THE SAME.

MORE FOCUSED
ON YOUR PROJECTS
THAN TAKING CARE
OF YOUR OWN
BODIES.

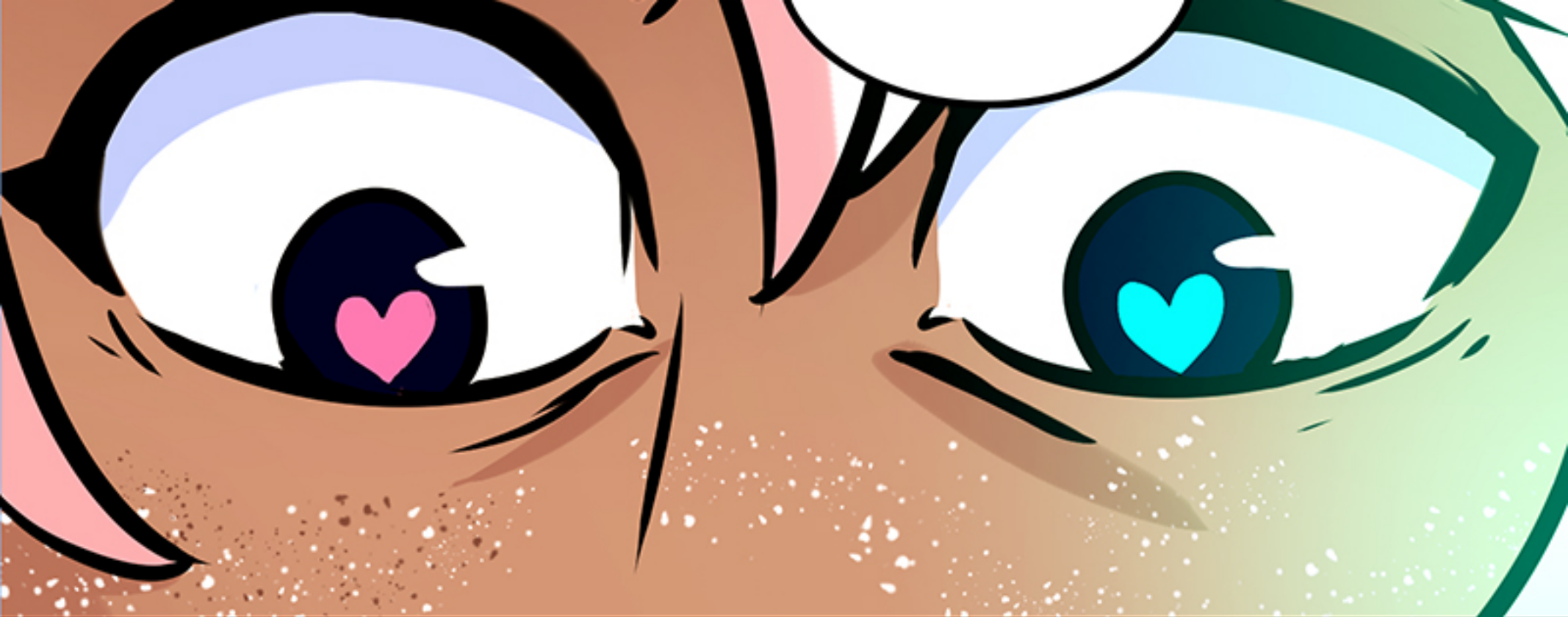
I'LL TAKE
CARE OF IT, YOU
CAN SET YOUR
STUFF UP HERE.



THANK
YOU.

HEY LACEY
DID YOU HAVE
ANY THOUGHTS
ON...

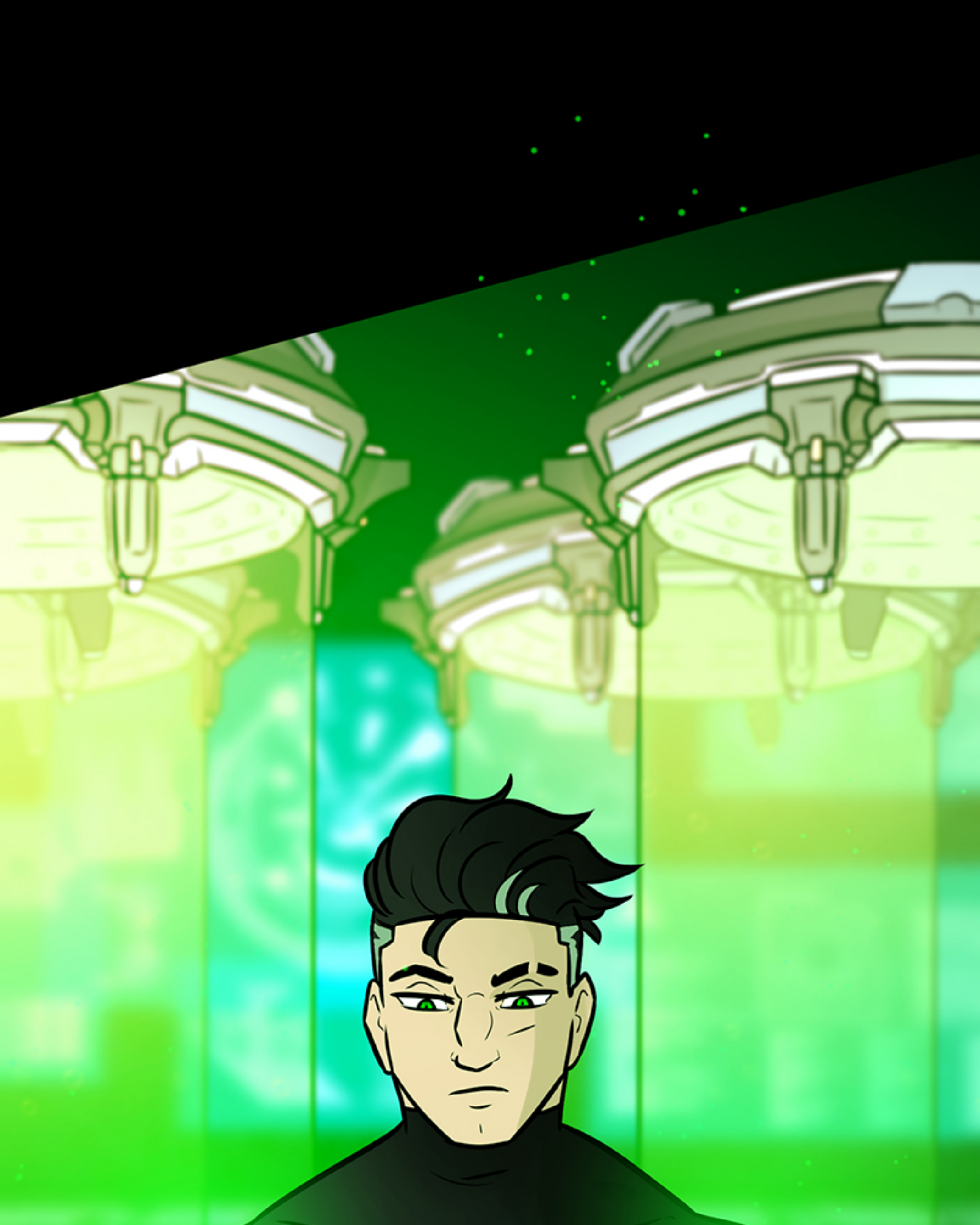
LACEY??



CALLING VELIX









B111  B111

VRRRR



UGH...



WHAT???

ARE YOU HERE
TO LECTURE ME ON
TAKING THE REMAINDER

TAKING THE REMAINDER
OF MY VACATION TIME
EVEN IF I LEFT THE
CONFERENCE EARLY?

OH...

WAIT....
YOU'RE...





WHAT ARE
YOU DOING?





DID CHARLES
SERIOUSLY GIVE
YOU ACCESS TO FREE
ROOM IN MY LABS?



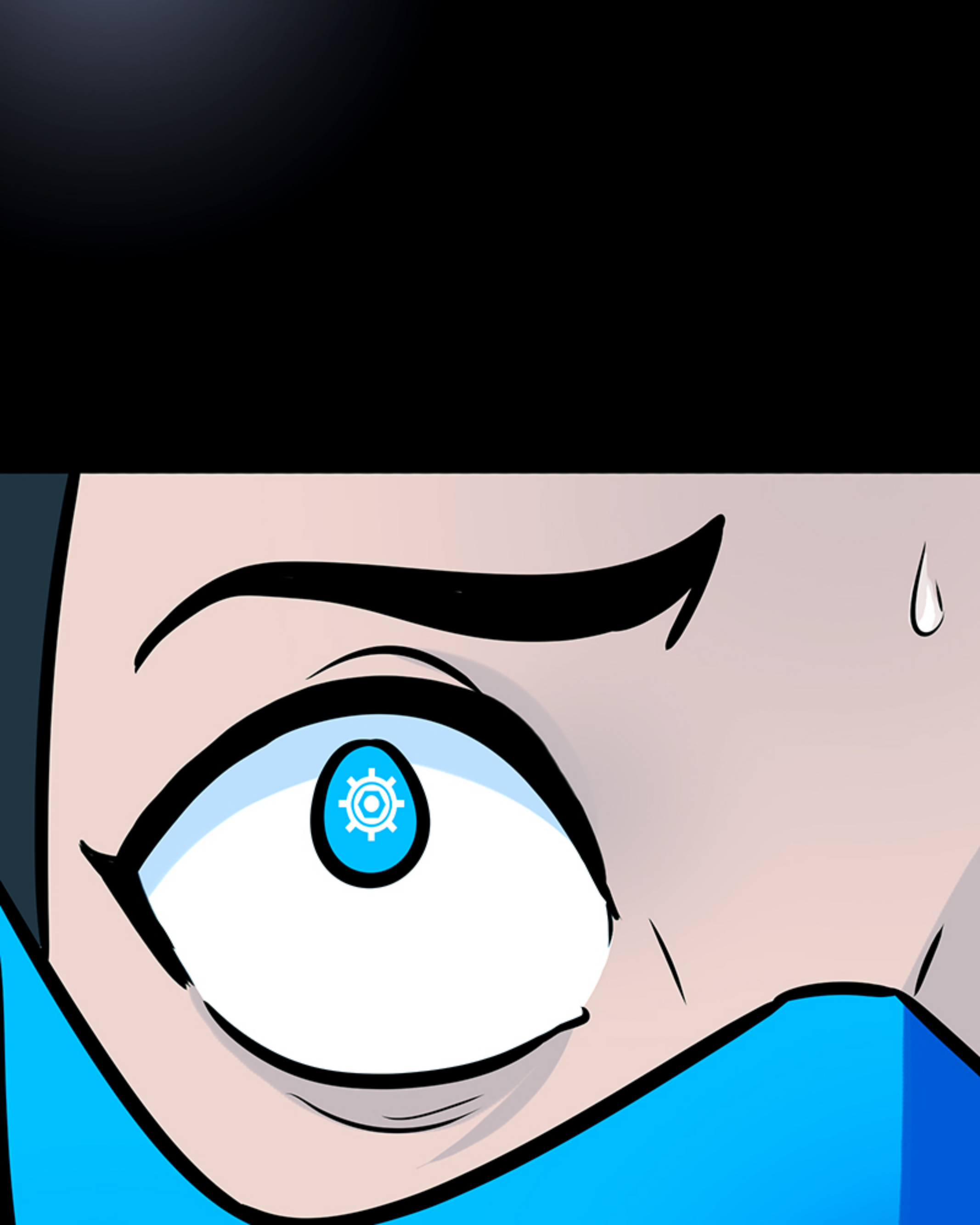
I NEEDED
ACCESS TO YOUR
EQUIPMENT.

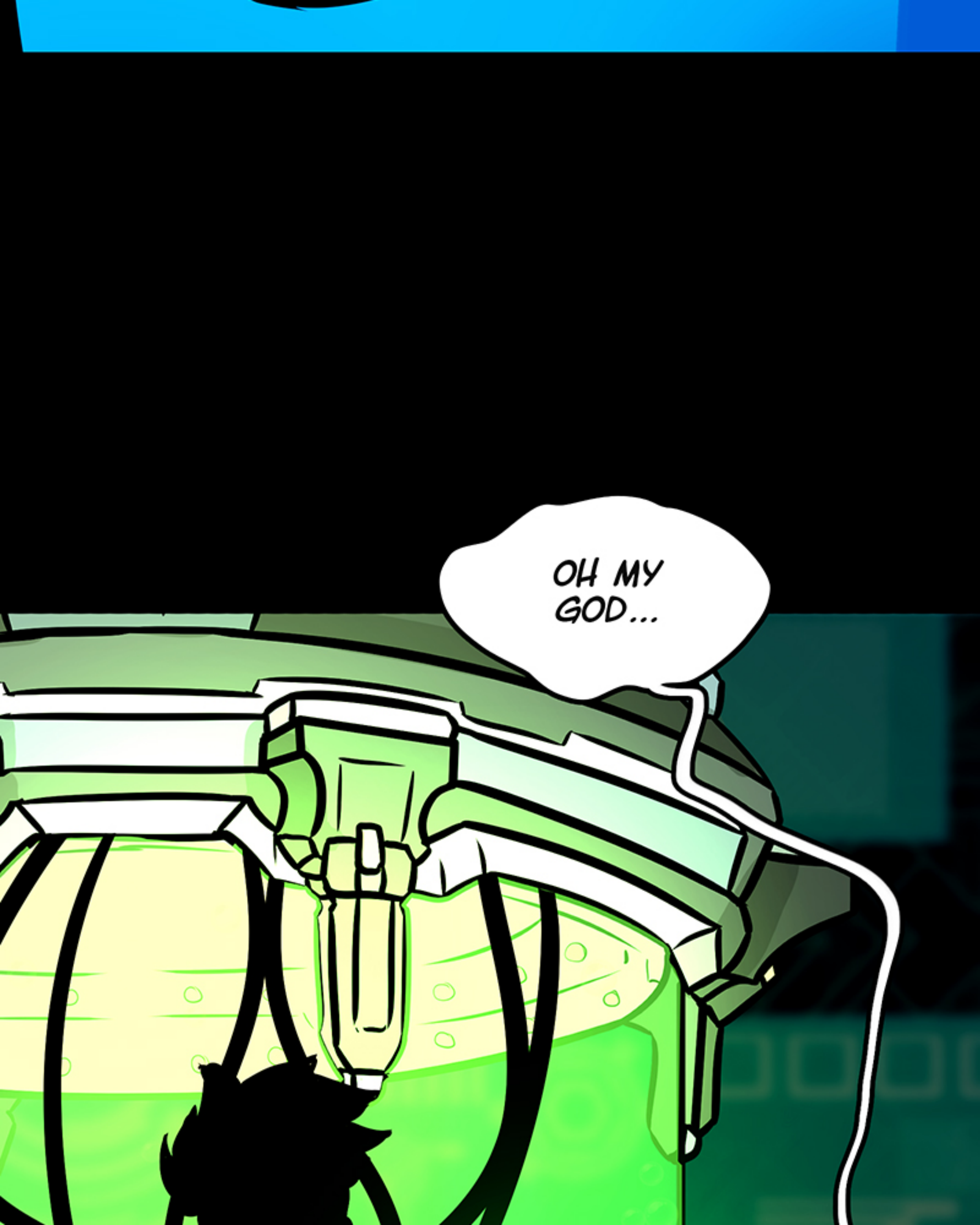
THERE WAS A
MEDICAL EMERGENCY.
I NEEDED TO FIX
HIM.



FIX "HIM"...?
WHO...







OH MY
GOD...





**WHAT
DID YOU
DO?!**



LOVEBOT

By Chase Keels & Miranda M.

Editors | Griffin Freitas & Bre Boswell

Flat Colors | Sydney Brunzell

Thank you
for reading! ♥



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