



SORRY...
BUT I AGREE WITH
WHAT LACEY SAID TO ME
EARLIER. IT'S PRETTY
FUCKED THAT YOU DIDN'T
MENTION THE 2020 OR
VELIX BEFORE WE
GOT DOWN HERE.

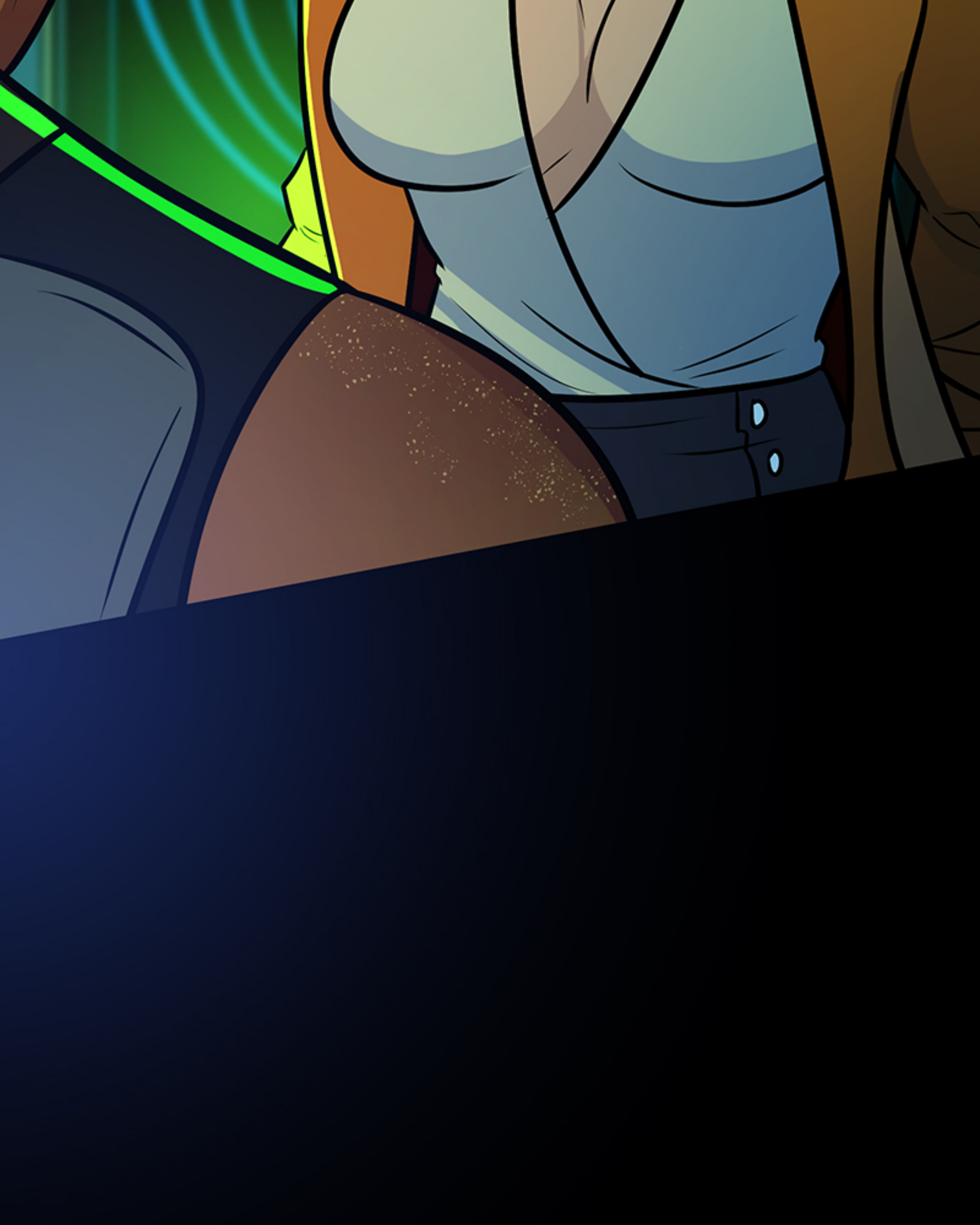
SO IT'S
A LITTLE HARD
FOR US TO TRUST
YOU JUST BECAUSE
YOU AND BRIZZ HAVE
A HISTORY.



A comic book panel showing a close-up of a character with dark, spiky hair, blue eyes, and a cigarette in their mouth. They are wearing a brown jacket over a grey shirt. A speech bubble from an unseen character on the left says "YOU'RE RIGHT." and another speech bubble above it says "YOU KNOW?". The background is a blurred green and blue architectural setting.

YOU
KNOW?

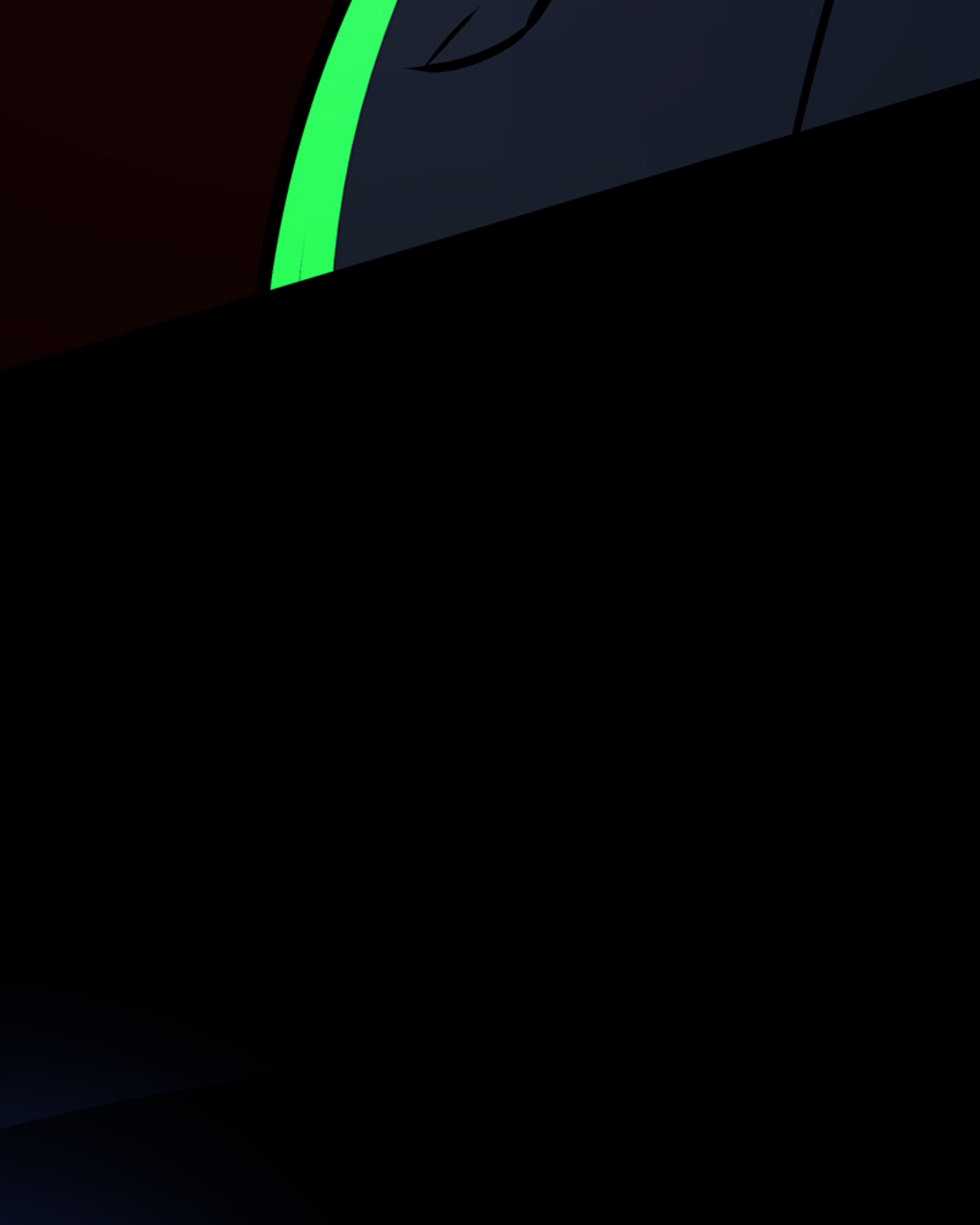
YOU'RE
RIGHT.





REACH

A stylized illustration featuring a hand reaching out from the right side. The hand is rendered in shades of blue and white, with a dark blue sleeve. The background is dark, with a bright yellow and orange rainbow-like arc on the left and a green beam of light on the right. The word "REACH" is written in a white, cursive font on the dark background, with a small white arc below it.



WHOA,
HEY!





A hand holding a handgun is shown in the bottom right corner. The hand is white with a black glove featuring blue polka dots. The handgun is blue and black. A speech bubble originates from the hand, containing two lines of text. The background is a blurred cityscape with green and yellow lights.

HERE.

IT IS LOADED.
FEEL FREE TO CHECK.
IF I START ACTING
FROGGY YOU CAN
USE THIS.

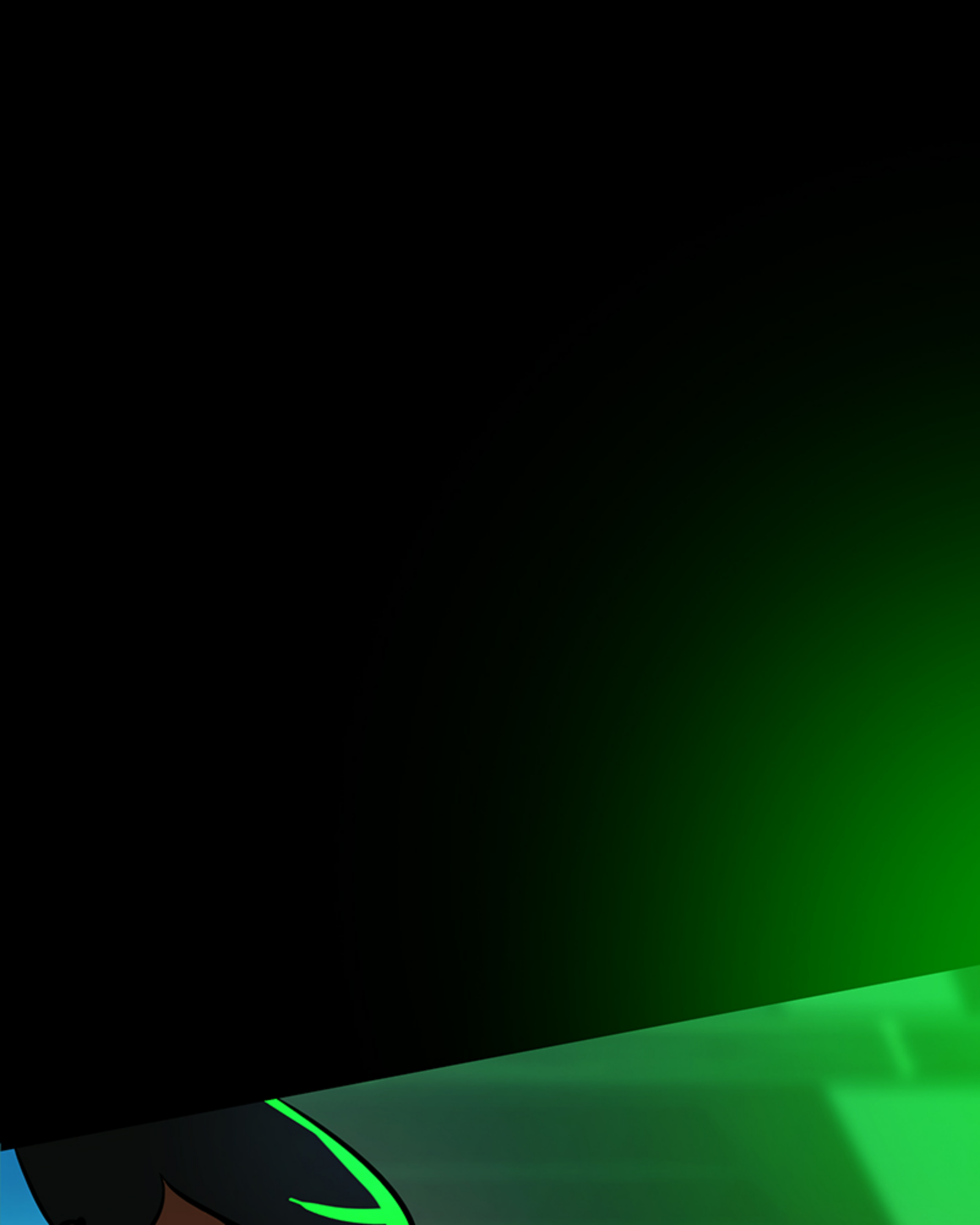


DOES THAT
HELP?

SERIOUSLY??











AW...DO
I REALLY NOT
GET THE SYMPATHETIC
"ANYONE CAN CHANGE"
SPEECH LIKE THE 2020
GOT?



A comic book panel featuring a close-up of a character's face. The character has dark skin, a prominent nose, and a serious expression. A speech bubble is positioned above the character's head, containing text. The background is dark blue with some light green and yellow highlights on the right side.

YOU MADE
HIM LIKE THAT.
HE DIDN'T HAVE PEOPLE
LIKE XADA, OR BRIZZ, OR
ERIK TO TEACH HIM WHAT
TO DO WITH HIS FREE
WILL.



HE ONLY

HE ONLY
HAD CHARLES
DALLAS.

AND
you.

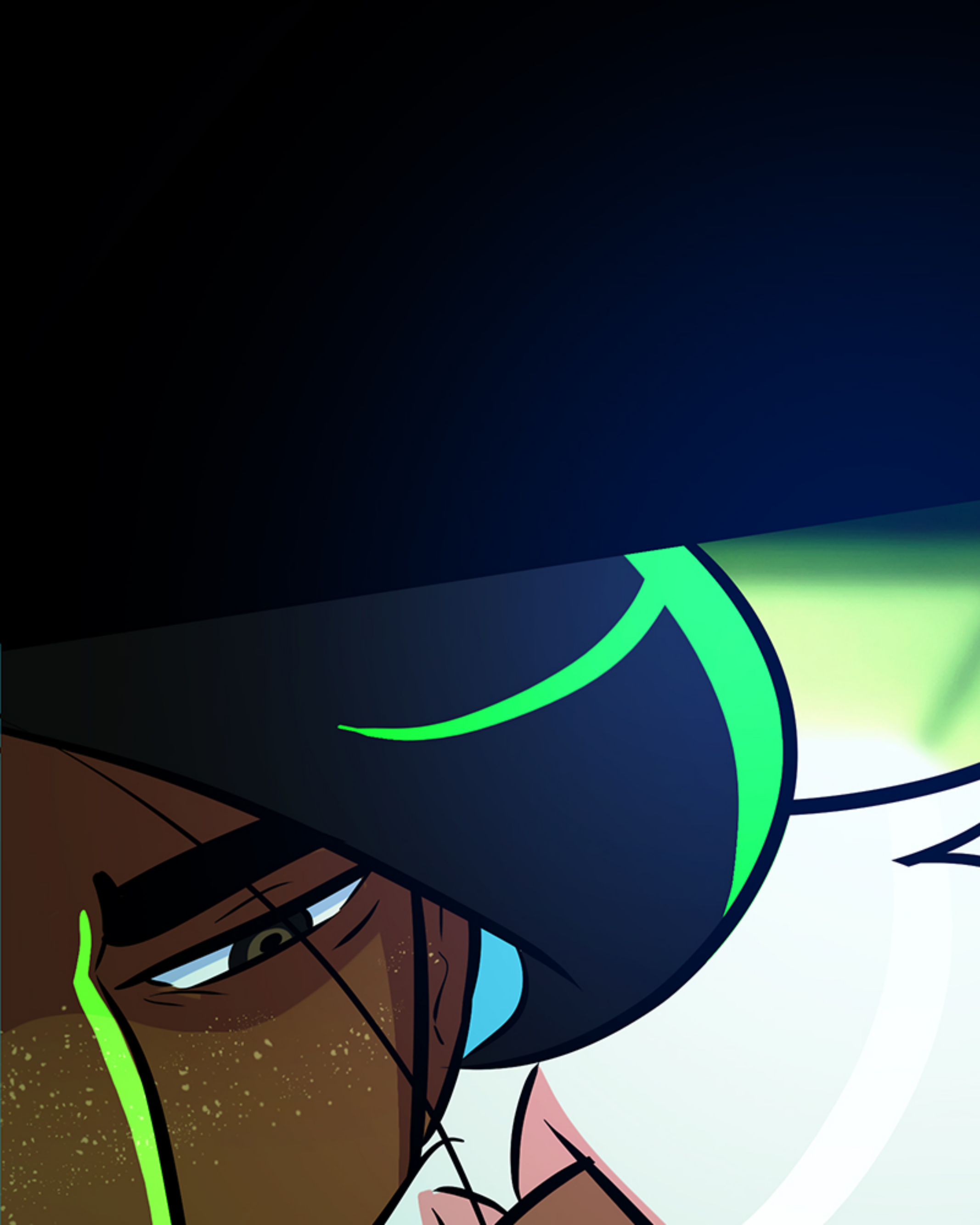
BRIZZ
ALSO HAD
ME.

AND YOU
AND THE 2020
BOTH HAD
VELIX.

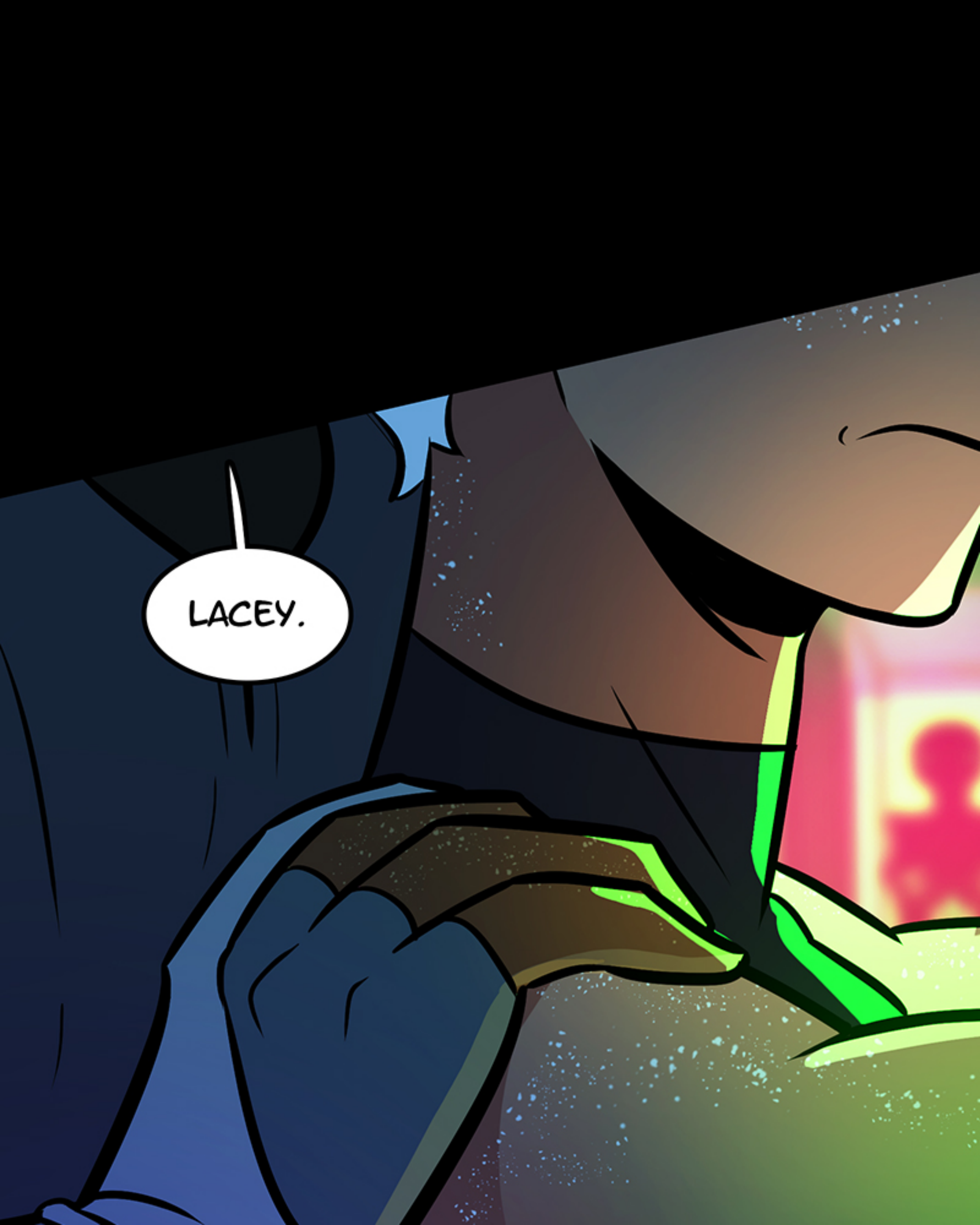


A comic book panel featuring a character's torso. The character is wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt and dark blue pants with two visible buttons. A large white speech bubble is positioned in the upper center of the frame. The background is dark, with some brown and yellow shapes visible at the top, possibly representing a cave or a rocky environment. The speech bubble contains the following text:

CAN WE SHELVE THE
"NATURE VS. NURTURE"
DEBATE UNTIL AFTER I
SHOW YOU WHAT I WAS
WORKING ON?







LACEY.



LET'S TRY
TO KEEP THE
GUN TO SELF
DEFENSE AS MUCH
AS POSSIBLE.



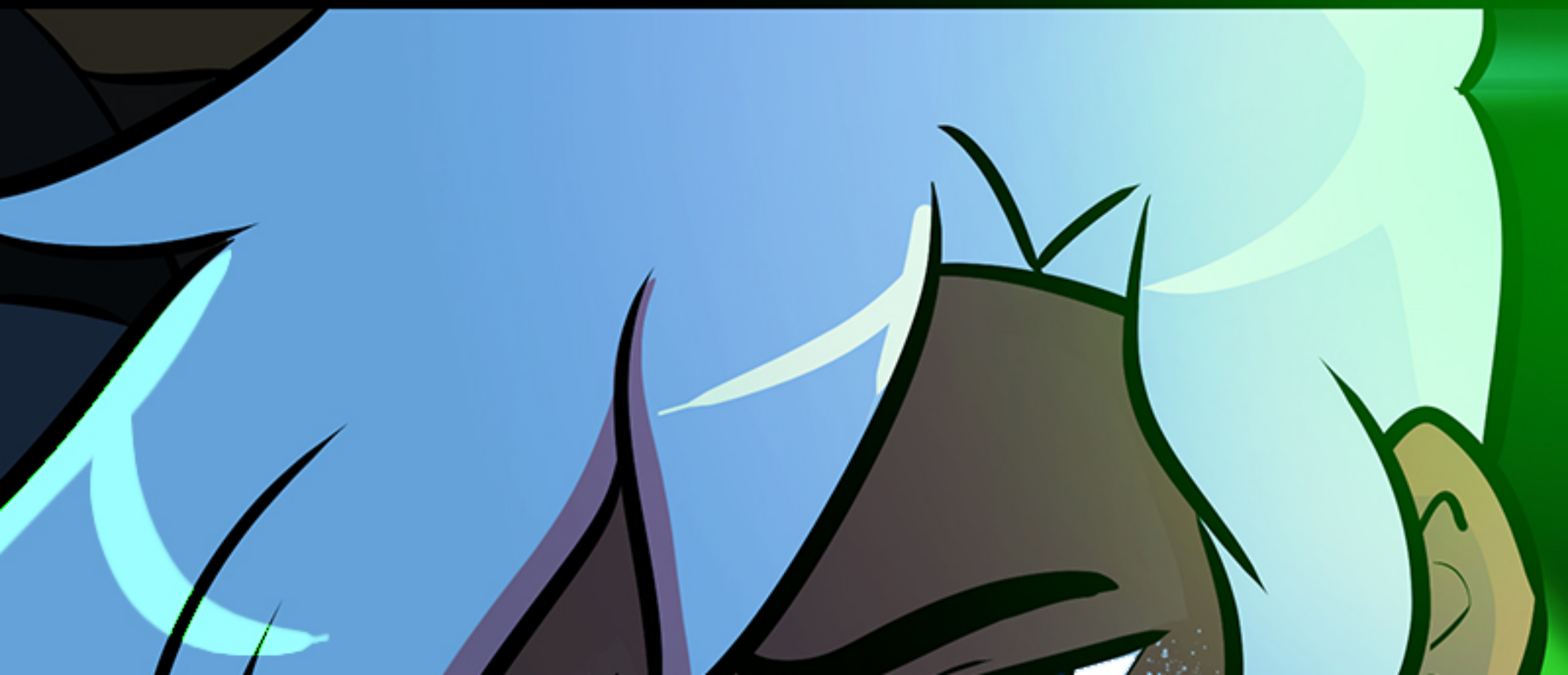


I UNDERSTAND
WHY YOU WANT TO,
BUT I KNOW HOW MUCH
IT WOULD WEIGH ON
YOU...

YOU'VE
ALREADY SEEN
TWO DEATHS
TODAY.

AND YOU
FACED ONE
YOURSELF.

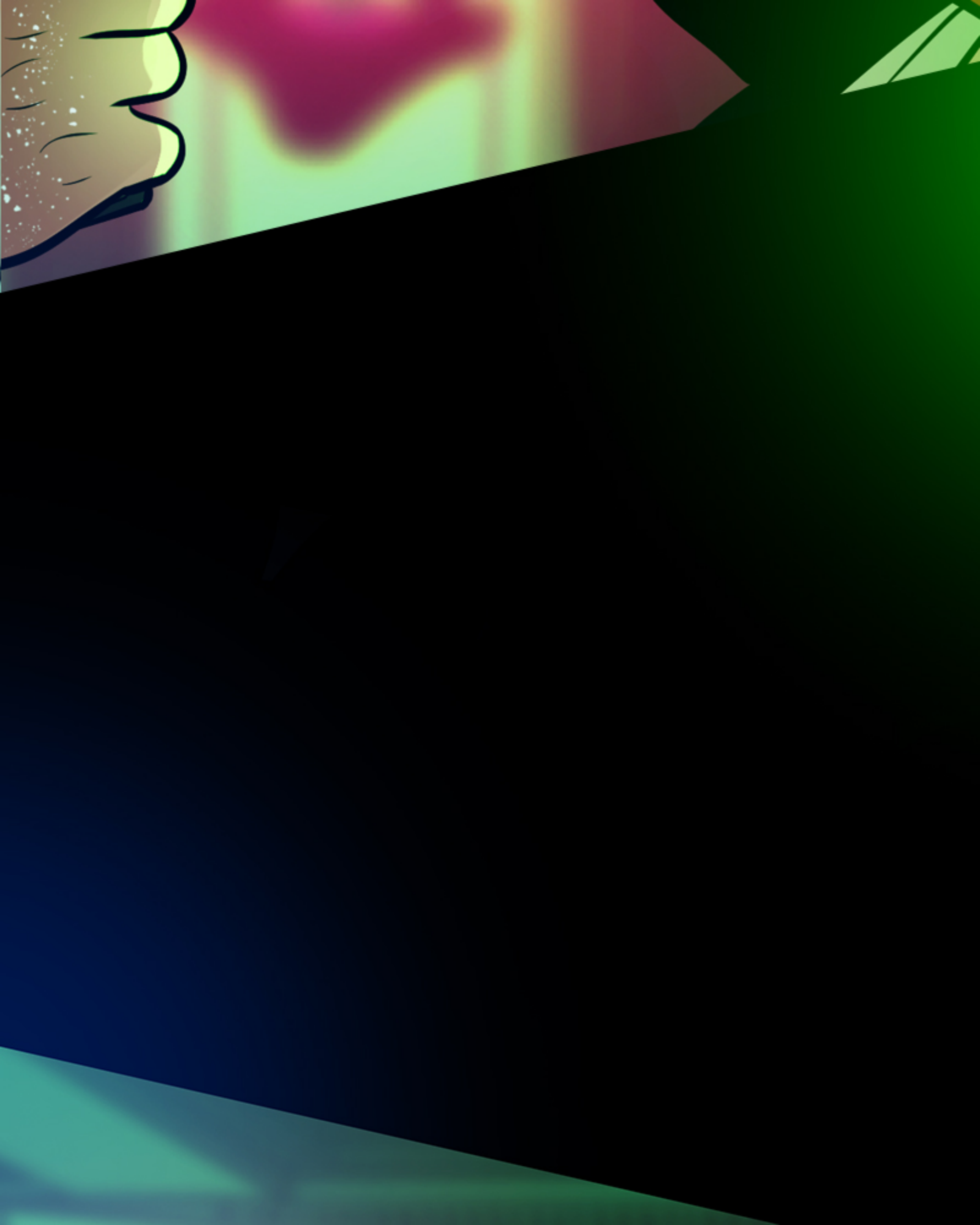
LET'S
TAKE A STEP
BACK...

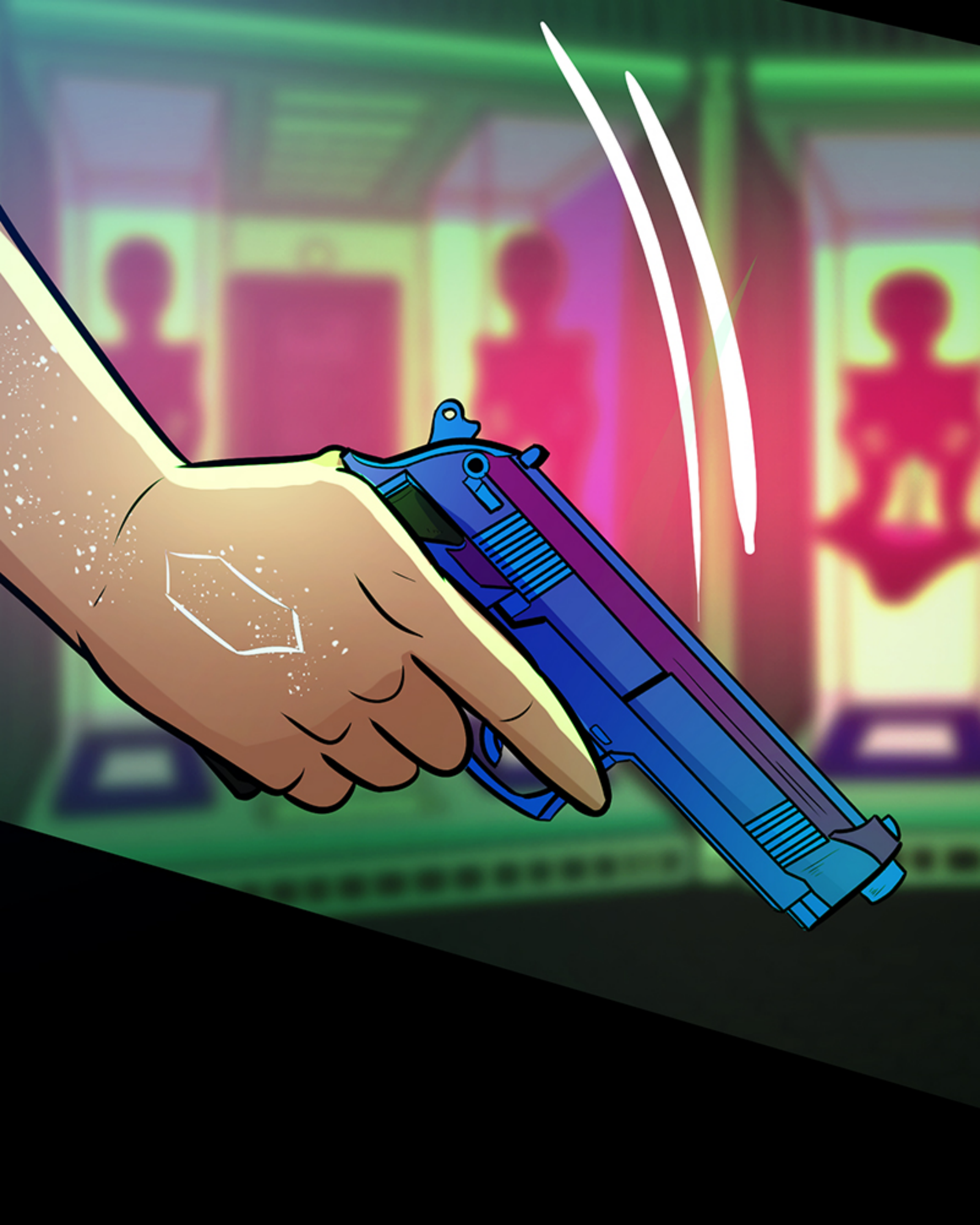












A comic panel with a dark blue background. At the bottom, there is a glowing blue and white horizontal band. Two speech bubbles are present. The first is a circle containing the text 'ALRIGHT... YOU'RE RIGHT.' The second is an oval containing the text 'GO BE WITH VELIX AND THE OTHERS.' A line connects the bottom of the first bubble to the top of the second. A third line extends from the bottom of the second bubble towards the bottom right corner, ending at a partially visible third speech bubble.

ALRIGHT...
YOU'RE
RIGHT.

GO BE
WITH VELIX AND
THE OTHERS.

I'LL BE
UP THERE
SOON.











VEE...





FUCK...

VEE, I'M SO
SORRY...





X...XADA...



I...HAH...

I CAN'T
REALLY...TALK
RIGHT NOW...

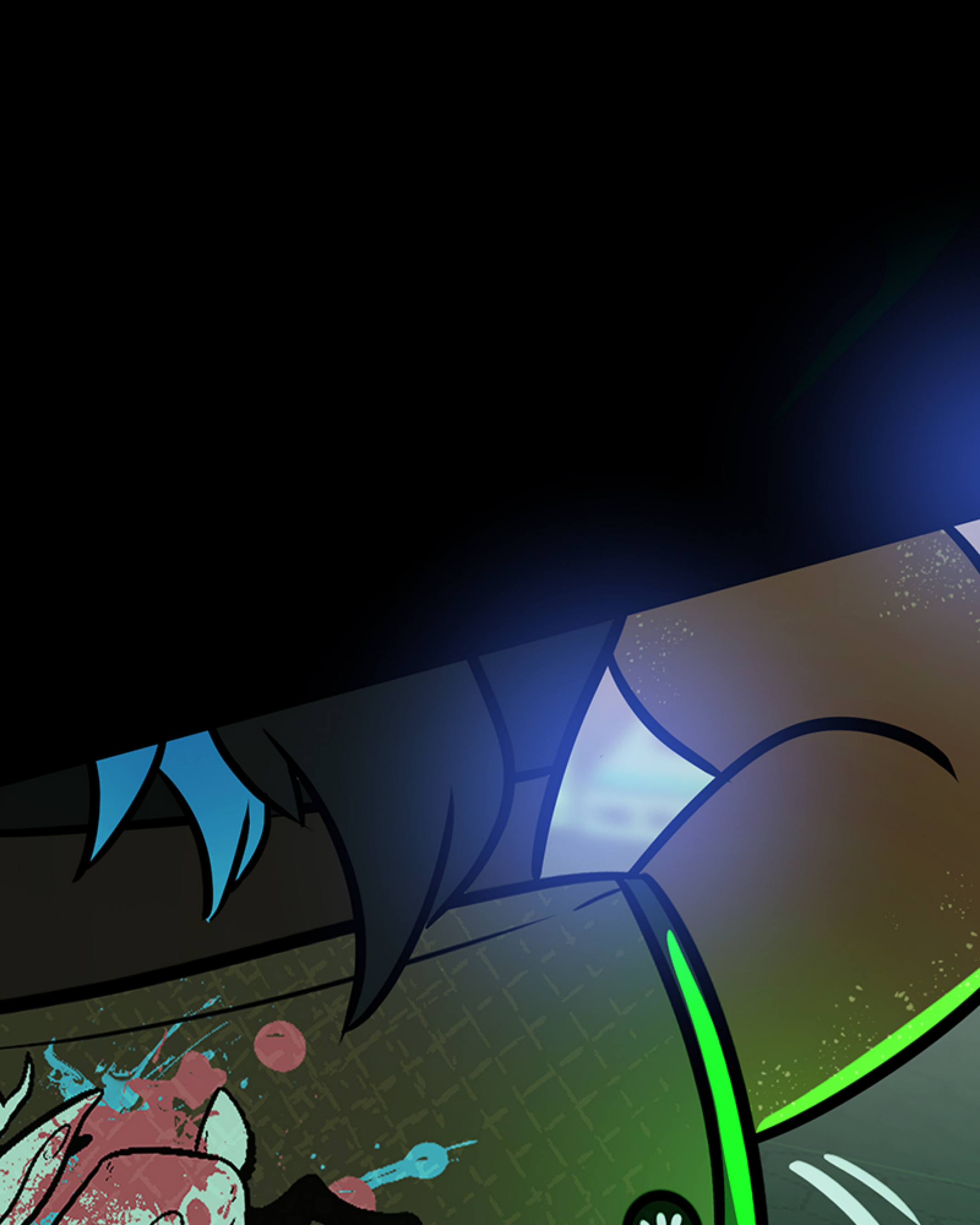


HAH,
YEAH-YOU'RE
RIGHT.

WE'LL
TALK WHEN
YOU'RE ALL
BETTER.

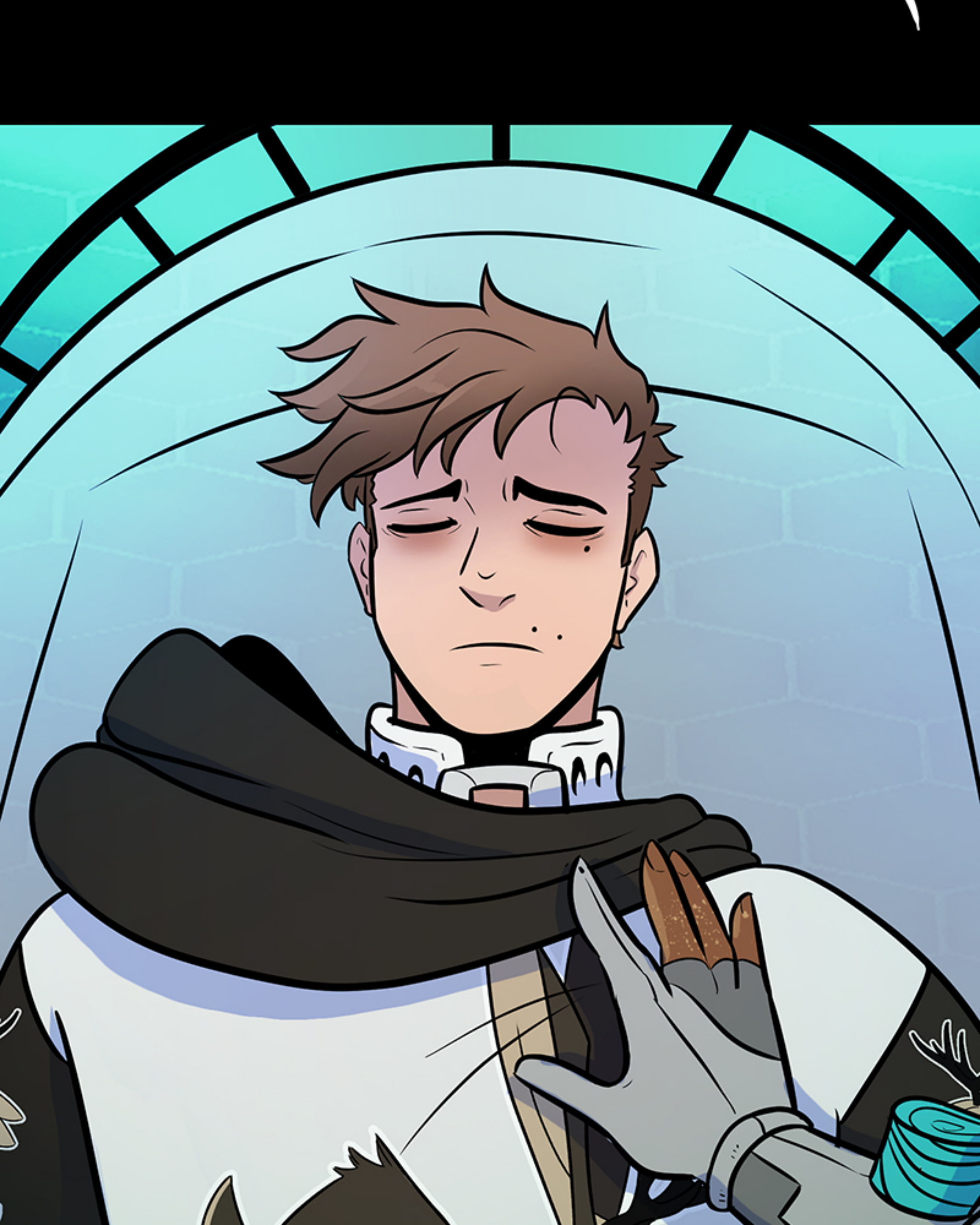


REST...
YOU'LL BE JUST
FINE...





YOU'RE
SAFE NOW.





YOU
KNOW...

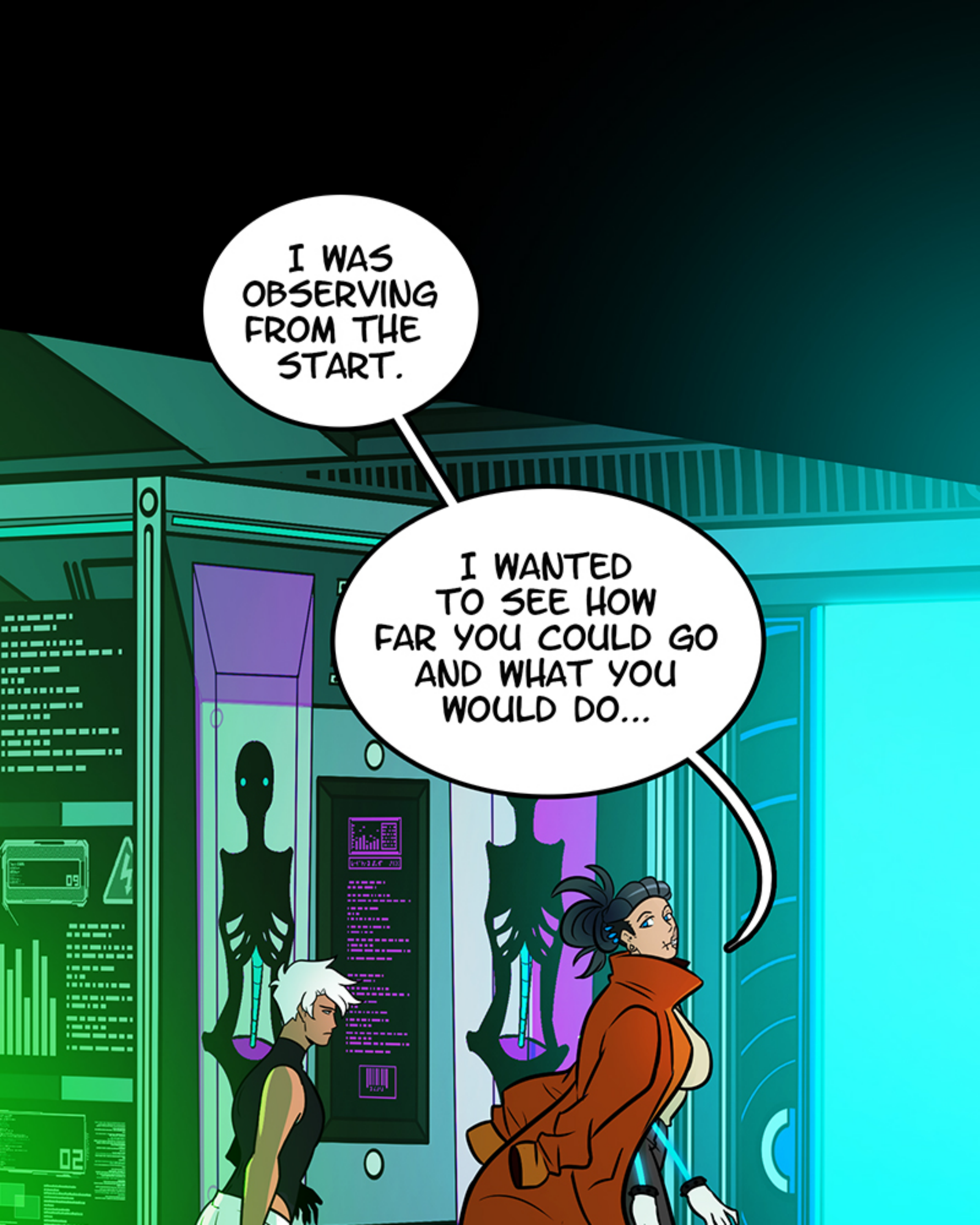
I DO
UNDERSTAND
WHY YOU HAVE
THIS HATRED

THIS HATRED
OF ME.

BUT I
REALLY HAVE
BEEN ROOTING
FOR YOU THIS
WHOLE TIME.





A comic book panel set in a futuristic laboratory. On the left, a character with short white hair and a black sleeveless top stands looking at a control panel. On the right, a character with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a brown trench coat, is speaking. The background features two large glass tubes containing black humanoid figures with glowing blue eyes. The left wall is covered in green digital displays and data. The right wall has a large blue glowing panel. Two large speech bubbles are present: one from the white-haired character and a larger one from the character in the brown coat.

I WAS
OBSERVING
FROM THE
START.

I WANTED
TO SEE HOW
FAR YOU COULD GO
AND WHAT YOU
WOULD DO...



YOU
EXCEEDED EVERY
SINGLE ONE OF MY
EXPECTATIONS.



THAT IS
EXACTLY MY
PROBLEM WITH
YOU.

THAT YOU
SEE THIS AS
SOME SORT OF
GAME OR SCIENCE
EXPERIMENT.



PEOPLE
HAVE BEEN
SERIOUSLY INJURED
OR TRAUMATIZED DUE
TO YOUR ACTIONS AND
YOUR INNACTION.

PEOPLE
HAVE DIED,
EVA.

HM...



SAME OLD
STORY. DAMNED
IF I DO, DAMNED
IF I DON'T.



I COULD
NEVER SEEM TO
FIGURE OUT THE
WHOLE "PERSON"
THING...

AWAITING

AWAITING

AWAITING

INPUT

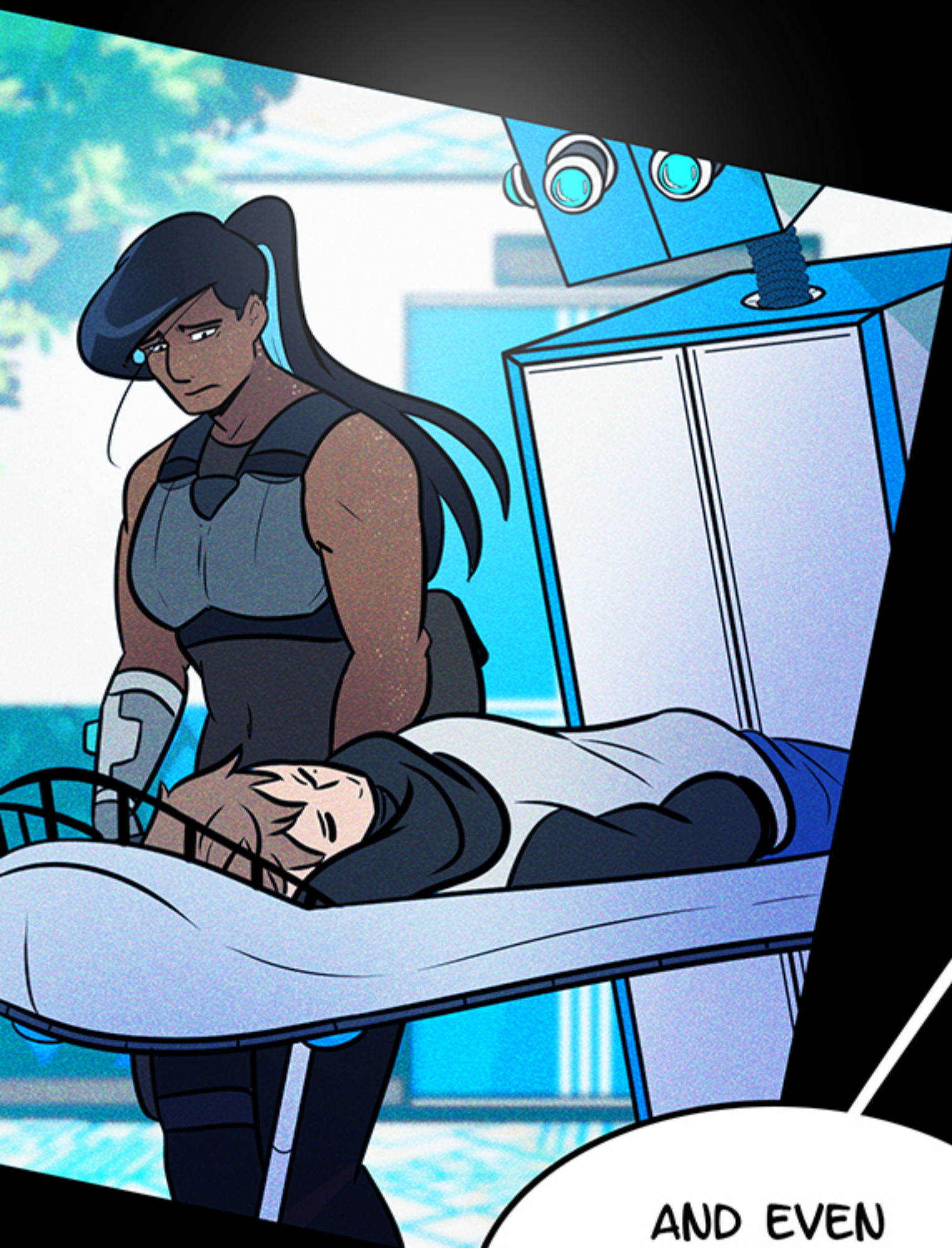


NO MATTER
WHAT I DID, IT
ALWAYS SEEMED LIKE
I WAS DOING IT
WRONG.





THE ONLY
THING I EVER
REALLY ENDED UP
BEING GOOD AT WAS
MAKING ROBOTS.



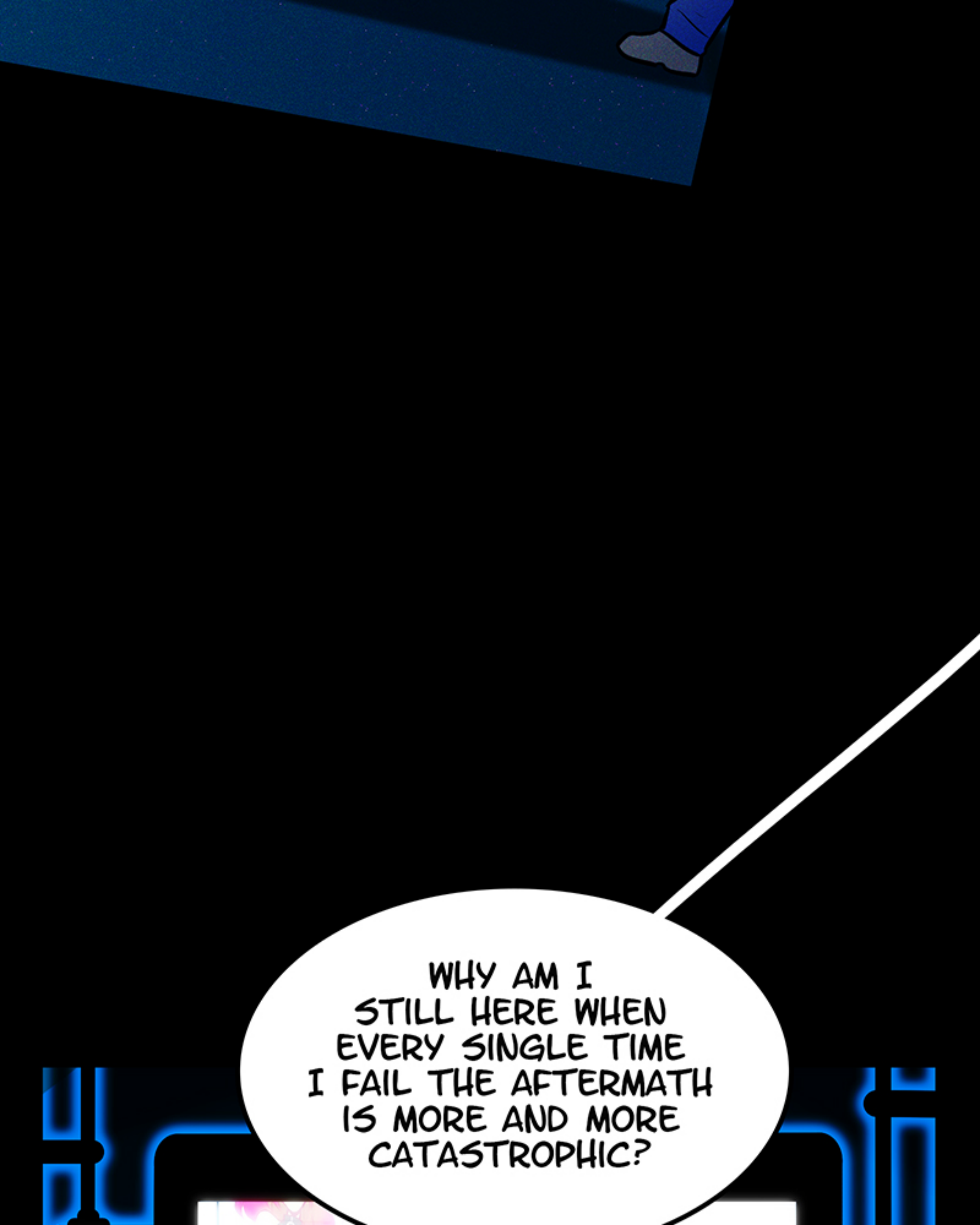
AND EVEN

THAT, AS YOU'VE
SEEN, HAS HAD
MIXED RESULTS.



SO WHAT'S
THE FUCKING POINT
OF ANY OF IT, RIGHT?
WHY DID I EVEN
DO ANY OF IT?



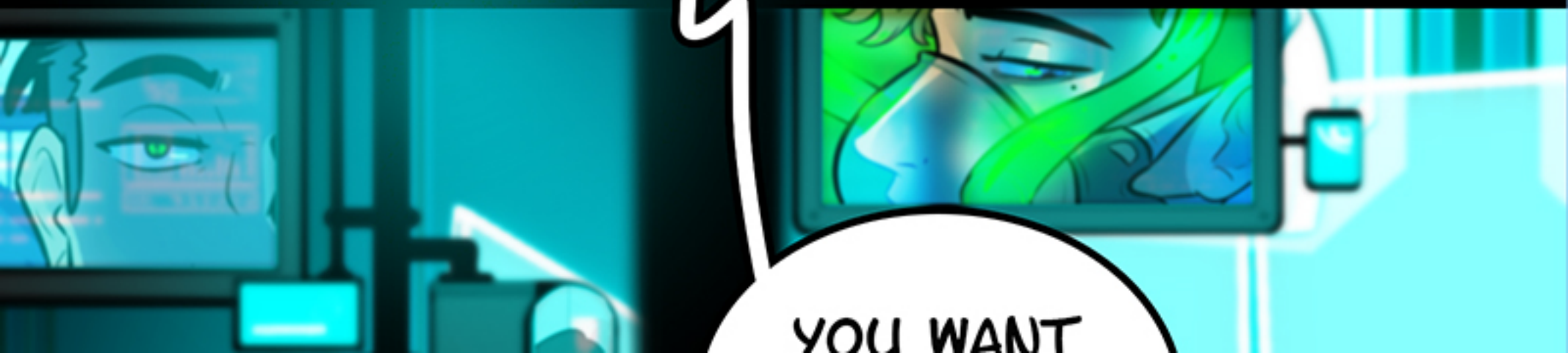


WHY AM I
STILL HERE WHEN
EVERY SINGLE TIME
I FAIL THE AFTERMATH
IS MORE AND MORE
CATASTROPHIC?

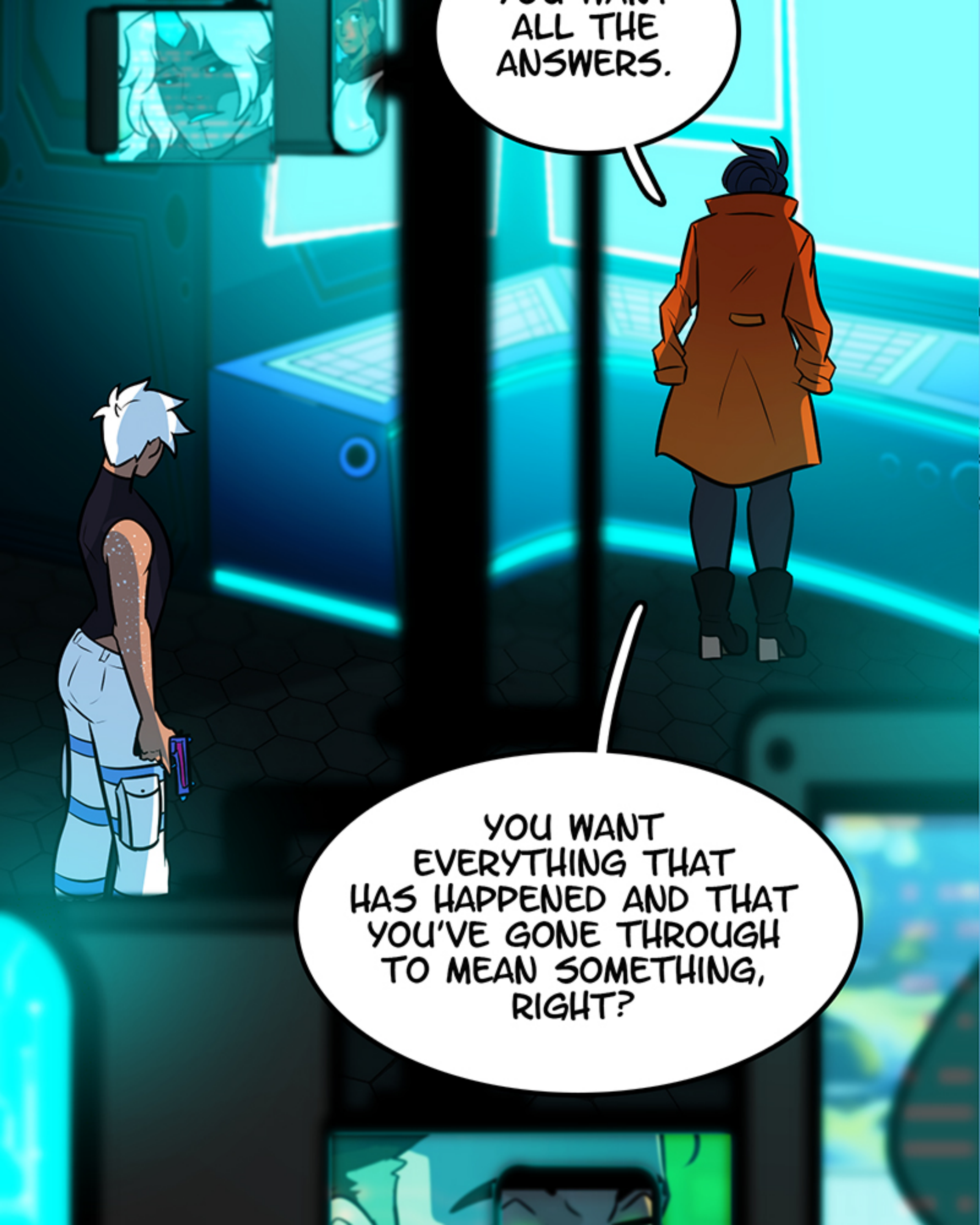




I GET
IT...



YOU WANT



YOU WANT
ALL THE
ANSWERS.

YOU WANT
EVERYTHING THAT
HAS HAPPENED AND THAT
YOU'VE GONE THROUGH
TO MEAN SOMETHING,
RIGHT?

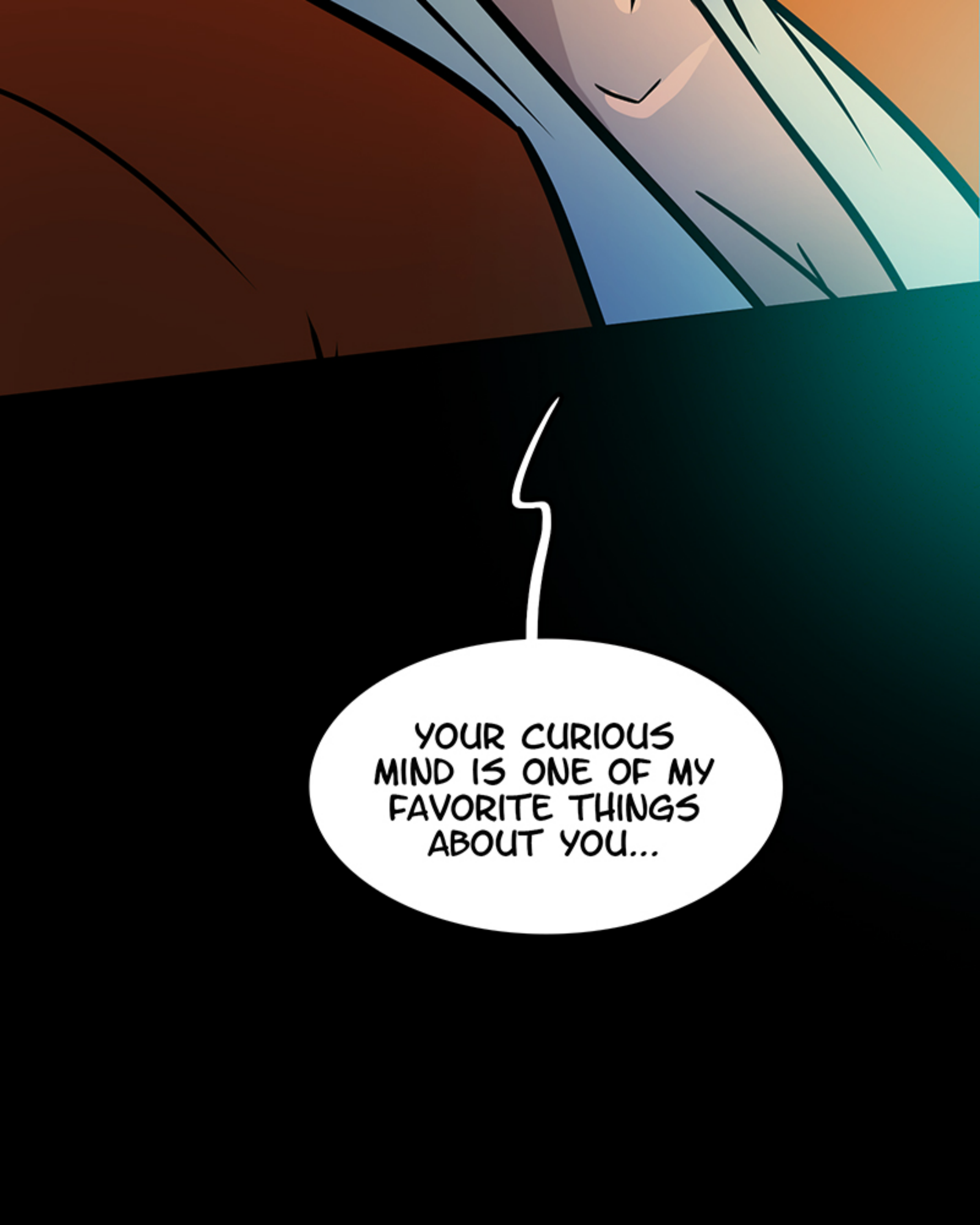


HOW
VERY...

HUMAN

OF YOU.





YOUR CURIOUS
MIND IS ONE OF MY
FAVORITE THINGS
ABOUT YOU...

A character with blue hair and a brown visor is shown from the chest up, looking upwards. The background is dark blue with vertical light blue streaks on the left side.

BUT THAT'S
THE SECRET, ISN'T
IT? THAT EVERYTHING
MEANS EVERYTHING AND
NOTHING AT THE
SAME TIME.

AND IT
WILL ALL MEAN
SOMETHING DIFFERENT
TO EVERYONE.



HUMANS
MAKE *CHOICES*
FOR BETTER OR
FOR WORSE...

OFTEN
WITHOUT EVEN
THINKING.

AND THOSE
CHOICES WILL TURN
OUT BETTER OR WORSE
THAN THEY INTEND IT TO.
WHETHER THEY LIKE IT
OR NOT.

BECAUSE OF OUT
OF ALL OF THE INFINITE
MOMENTS IN THIS
UNIVERSE OCCURRING
SIMULTANEOUSLY...



...AND OUT OF EVERY
OTHER POSSIBILITY
THAT WAS ABANDONED,
FOR BETTER OR
WORSE...



YOU ARE
HOLDING

HEKE



OVER AND
OVER-

AND OVER
AND OVER AND
OVER-

AND

AGAIN.



BUT
I SUPPOSE
I SHOULD GET

TO THE POINT,
HM?

READY...





BRIZZ
SENT YOU DOWN
HERE WITH SOMETHING
YOU'LL NEED.

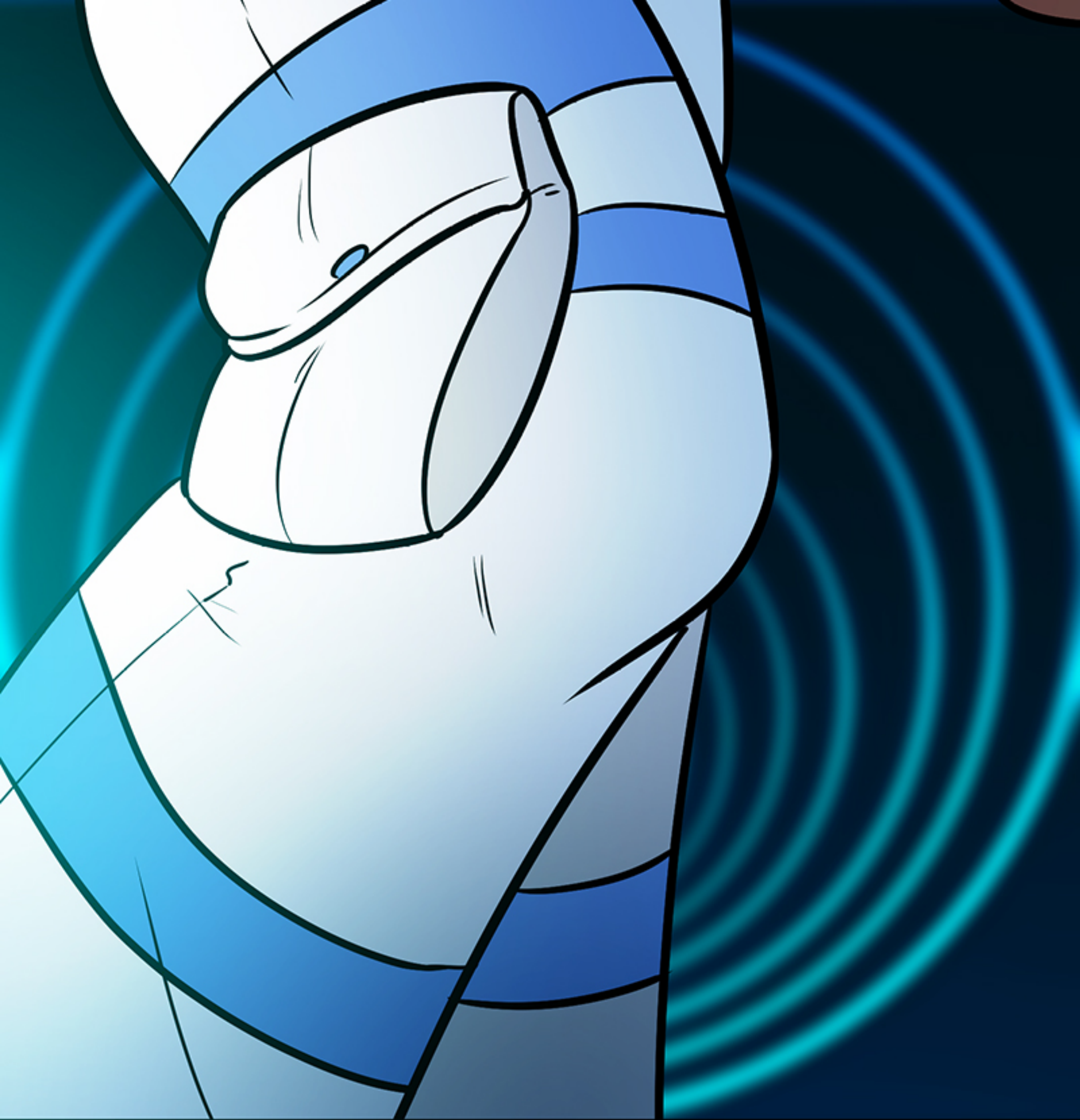
CAN YOU
CHECK YOUR
POCKETS FOR
ME?





WHAT??





LOVEBOT

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for reading! ♥



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