

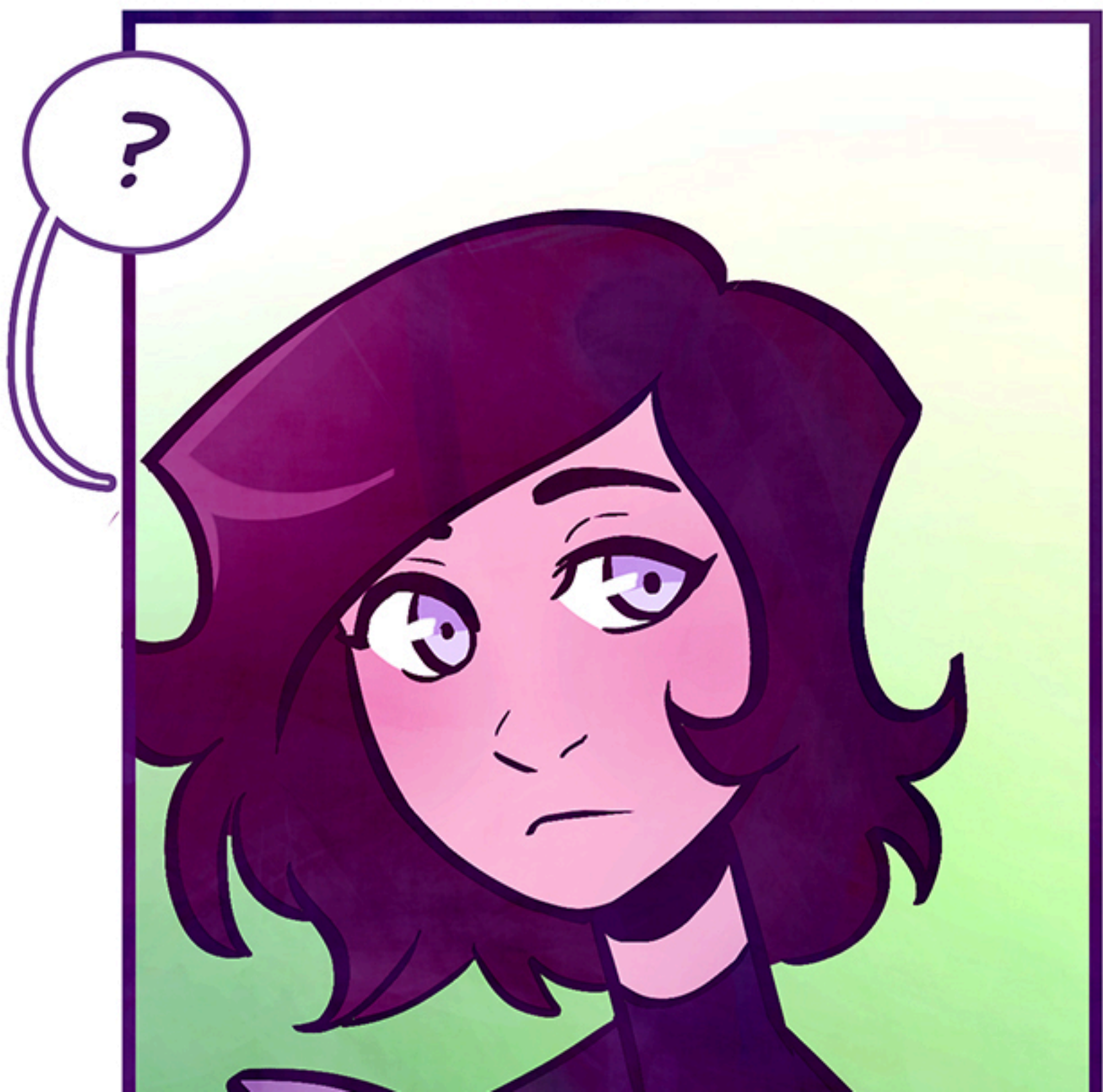
A watercolor illustration of a dense forest. The trees have thick, pinkish-red trunks and are covered in lush green foliage. The leaves are painted in various shades of green, from light lime to deep forest green, with some yellow highlights suggesting sunlight filtering through. The background is a bright, pale yellow-green, creating a soft, ethereal atmosphere.

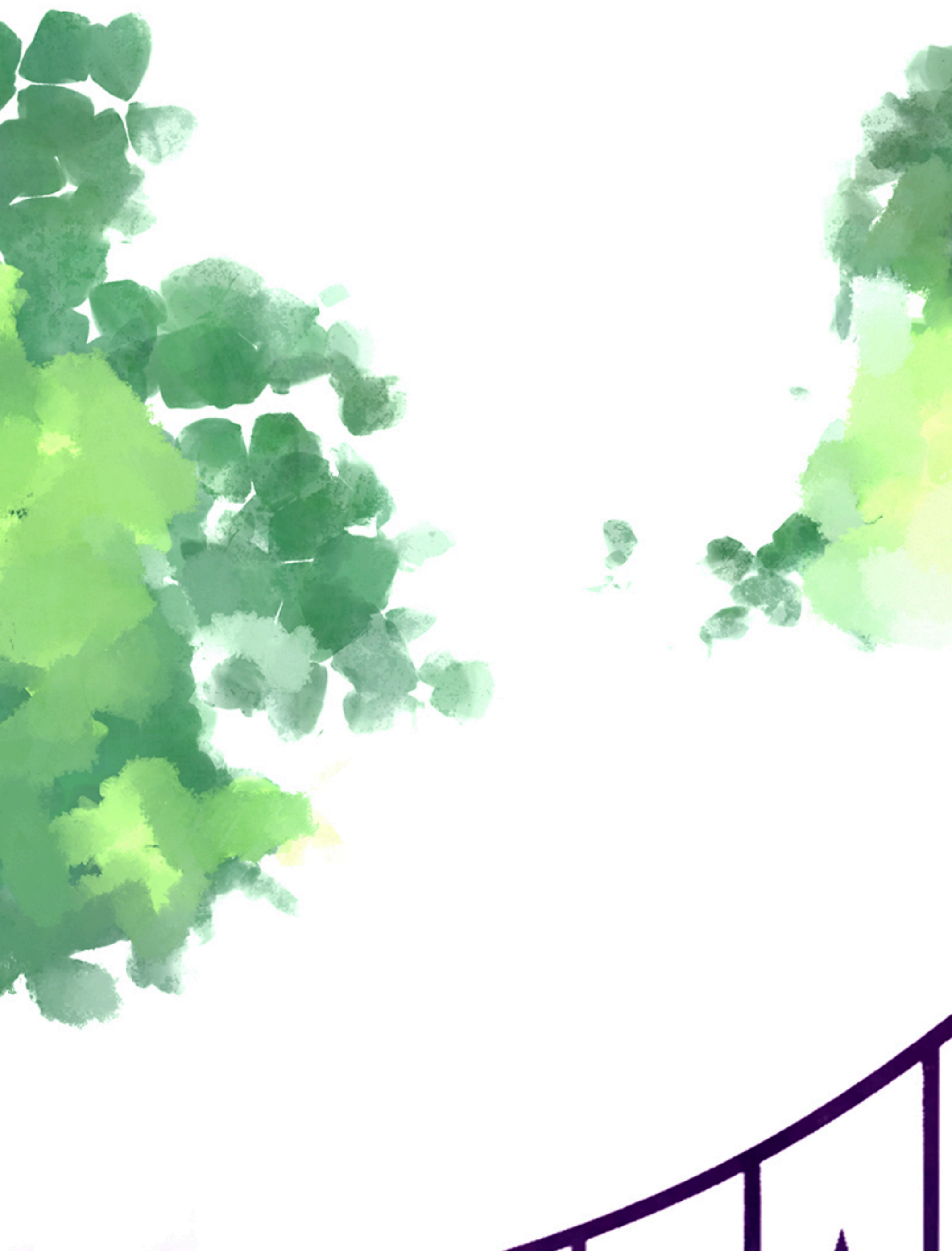
MY SISTER AND I HAD
GOTTEN INTO YET
ANOTHER FIGHT-

SO I WENT FOR
A WALK AROUND
THE GROUNDS TO
CALM DOWN.

AND BECAUSE
MY MOTHER TOLD
ME TO.











WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING?

AH!





WHO WANTS
TO KNOW?





I'M A
FRIEND OF
HERS-

MY NAME
IS KALEN...





AND I
UH-

I BROUGHT
HER THESE!





AUNTIE
ALETTE DOESN'T
LIKE FLOWERS.

SHE SAYS
THEY STINK.

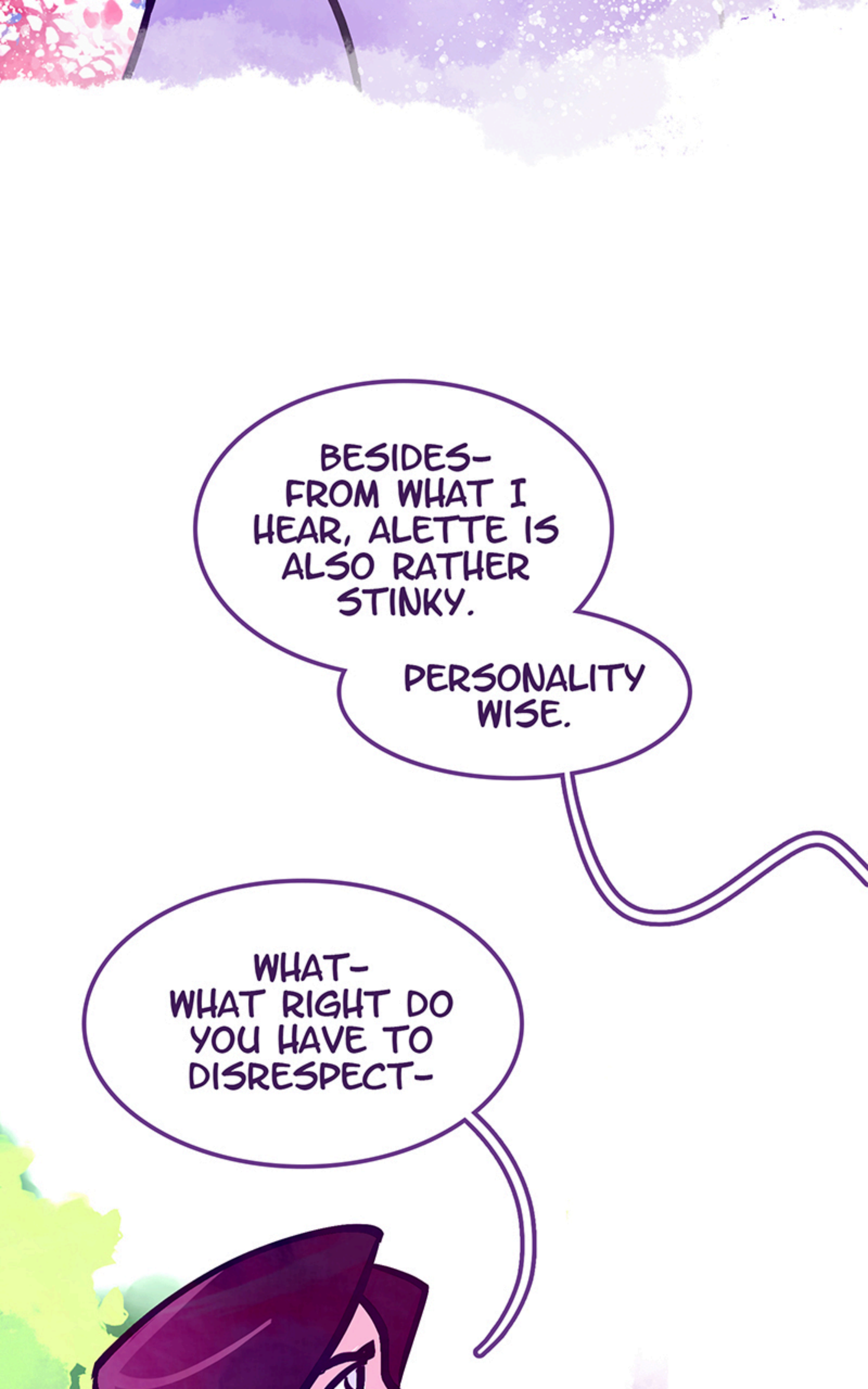




WELL THEY
AREN'T FOR ALETTE
THEY'RE FOR HER
DAUGHTER.

A comic panel featuring two characters. In the foreground, a character with spiky red hair and a pinkish complexion is shown in profile, looking towards the left. In the background, a character with dark hair and a pinkish complexion is shown from the chest up, looking angry with furrowed brows and a grimace. This character is behind a dark metal cage. The background consists of green foliage. The art style is a mix of hand-drawn outlines and digital watercolor-style coloring.

SHE IS
STILL THE
MATRIARCH!

A comic panel featuring two speech bubbles and the top of a character's head. The first speech bubble contains the text 'BESIDES- FROM WHAT I HEAR, ALETTE IS ALSO RATHER STINKY.' The second speech bubble, which is smaller and positioned below the first, contains the text 'PERSONALITY WISE.' The character's head, wearing a dark purple beret, is visible at the bottom left. The background has a light purple and pink watercolor-like texture at the top.

BESIDES-
FROM WHAT I
HEAR, ALETTE IS
ALSO RATHER
STINKY.

PERSONALITY
WISE.

WHAT-
WHAT RIGHT DO
YOU HAVE TO
DISRESPECT-



AND LET'S
SEE... FROM WHAT I
KNOW OF THE REST
OF YOU...



YOU
MUST BE
SILVIA!





I DON'T KNOW
WHAT ABRIELLE
HAS BEEN TELLING
YOU OR WHY!

BUT SHE
IS CURRENTLY
BUSY WITH SEVERIN
BUSINESS!

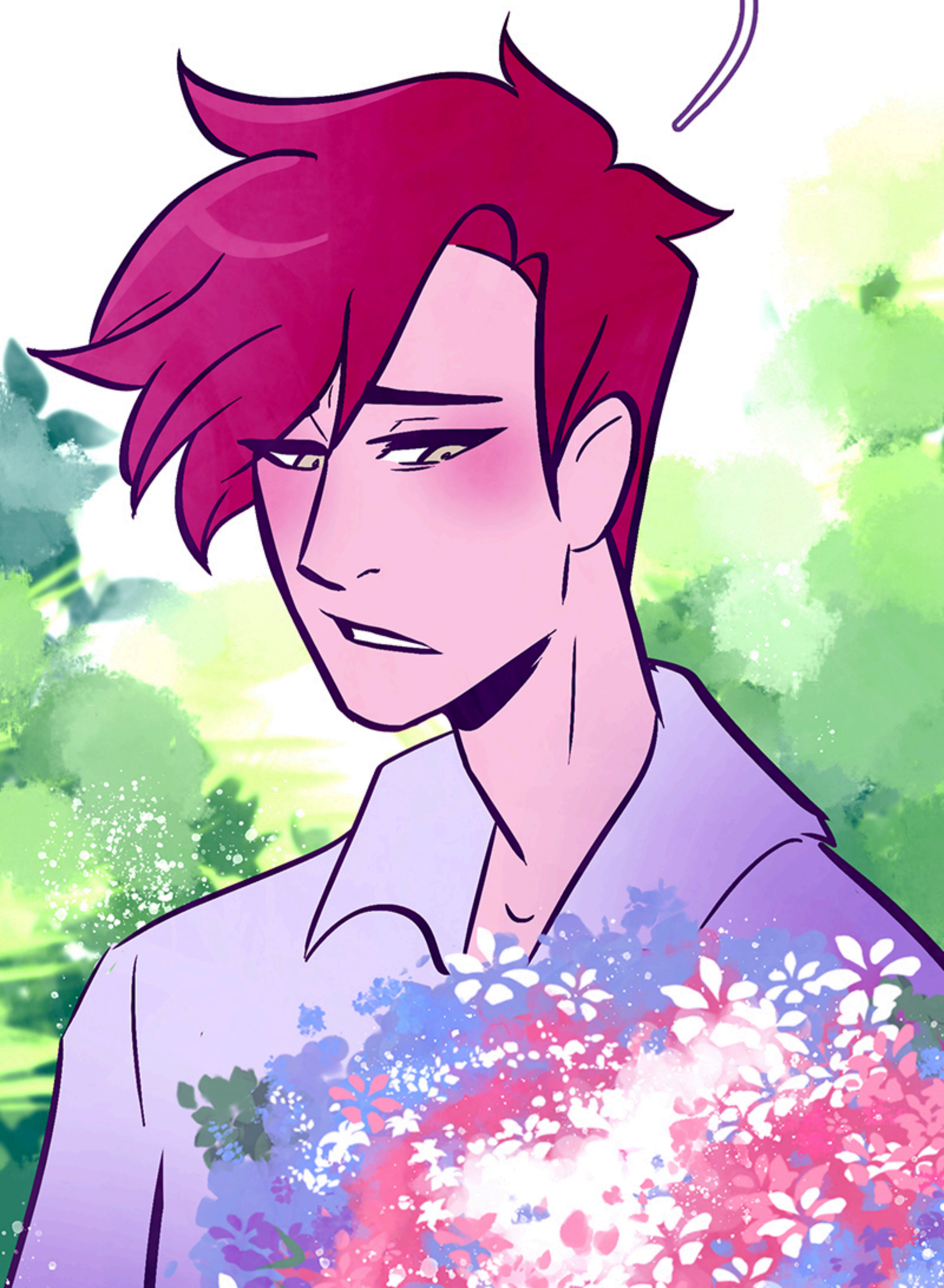




SHE
SAID THAT
SHE'D MEET ME
TODAY BUT...

I GUESS
WE DIDN'T SPECIFY
A TIME.. I WAS HOPING
TO SURPRISE HER

TO SURPRISE HER.

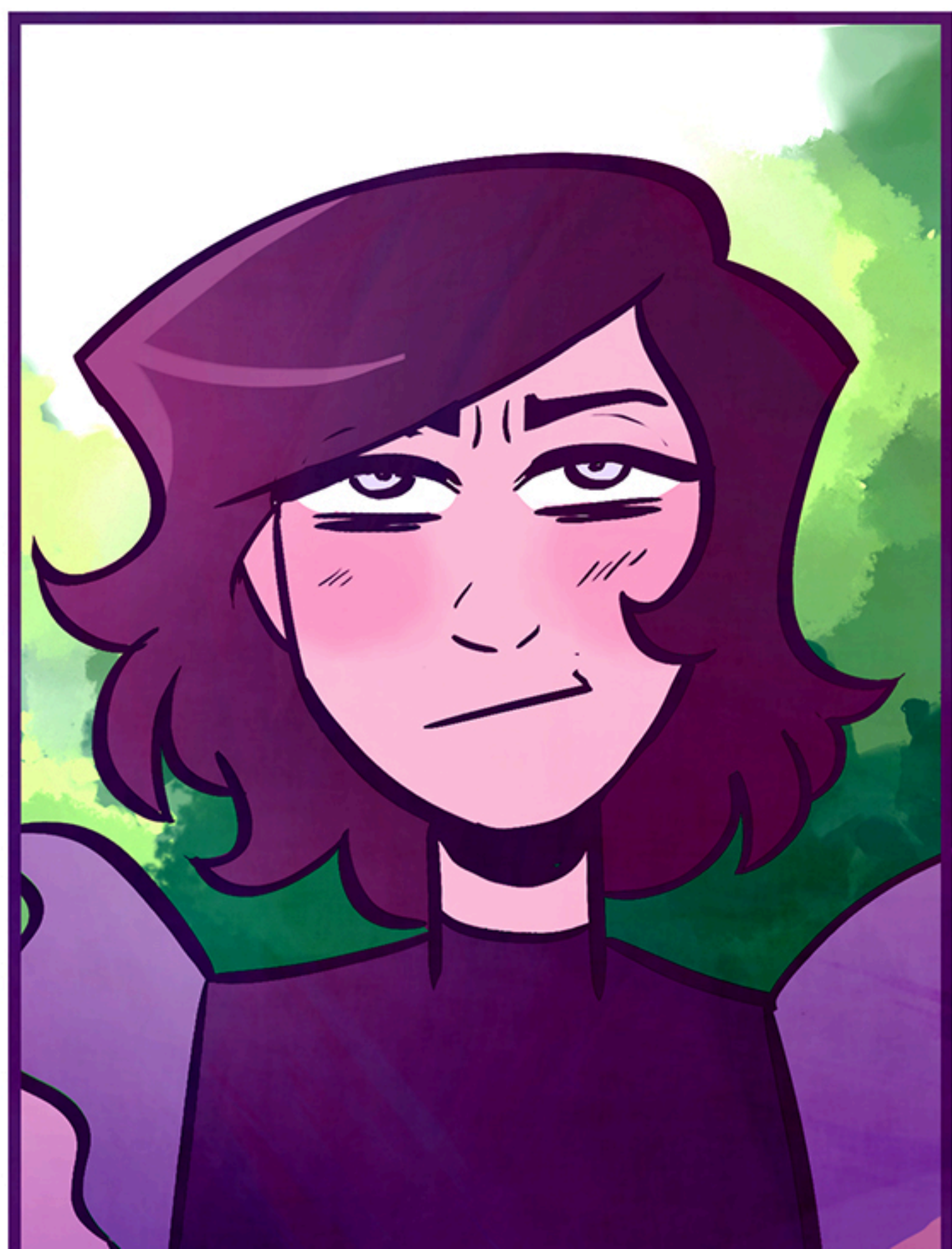




COULD
YOU PLEASE
TELL HER THAT
I'M HERE....?

IT'S REALLY
IMPORTANT...





A hand with a pinkish skin tone is shown from the wrist up, holding a dark, textured stick vertically. A speech bubble originates from the stick, containing the text "10 BUCKS.". The background is white. At the top of the page, there is a small, partially visible rectangular panel with a purple and pink background.

10 BUCKS.



HUH!?
WHAT THE
HECK-



CONSIDER
IT A FINDER'S
FEE.



AND GRATUITY
TO ENSURE I DON'T
TELL ATHALIE OR MY
MOTHER ABOUT YOU
BEING OUT HERE.

LOT OF
BIG WORDS
FOR A 10 YEAR
OLD.





I ONLY
HAVE FIVE
DOLLARS.





THAT'S
FINE

FINE.

I'LL GIVE
YOU A DISCOUNT
BECAUSE YOUR PUPPY
DOG EYES MADE ME
FEEL BAD.

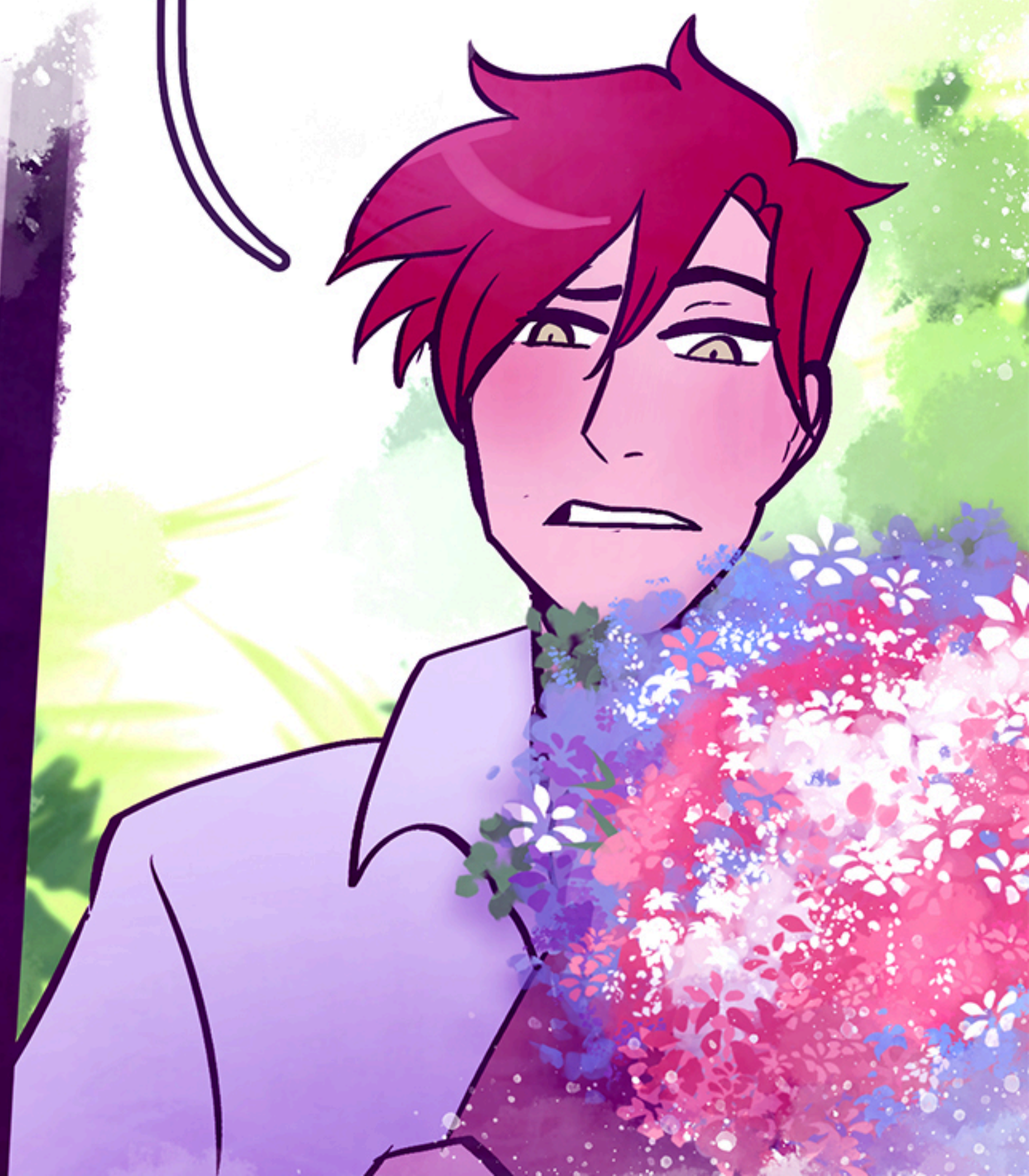
GEE,
THANKS.





HEH.
NOW I HAVE
MORE MONEY
THAN SOPHIA.

NOW DON'T
JUST TAKE THAT
AND RUN, OKAY?



A woman with short dark hair, wearing a black dress with a ruffled collar, is shown from the waist up. She is smiling and holding a small green rectangular object in her right hand, which is raised. The background consists of soft, painterly green and yellow foliage. Two speech bubbles are connected by a line to the woman. The top speech bubble contains the text 'I KNOW HOW TO DO BUSINESS. I'M NOT A THIEF.' and the bottom speech bubble contains 'BE BACK IN A BIT!'.

I KNOW
HOW TO DO
BUSINESS. I'M
NOT A THIEF.

BE BACK
IN A BIT!



I COULDN'T
STOP THINKING
ABOUT HOW STUPID
HE WAS.

WHAT IF SOMEONE
ELSE HAD SPOTTED
HIM? SOPHIA? OR
ATHALIE?

WE JUST HAD
THE WISH RITUAL—
WHICH MEANT THERE
WERE WAY MORE FAMILY
MEMBERS AT THE MANOR
THAN USUAL... ANYONE
OF THEM COULD HAVE
SEEN HIM...





ALETTE
ISN'T VERY
WELL, IS SHE?
SEEMS LIKE SHE
CAN BARELY
STAND...

BLA

BLAH

NONSENSE!
SHE IS AS
STRONG AS
EVER!

THOUGH I GUESS
THE CHANCES WERE
SLIM, SINCE THEY
WERE ALL FOCUSED
ON THEMSELVES.

BLAH



I ALWAYS
HATED LARGE
GATHERINGS. SO
MUCH GOSSIP.

DID YOU
HEAR THAT
LUCINDA IS NOW
WORKING AT A
MALL SINCE SHE
WAS KICKED
OUT?

HOW TERRIBLE! I
FEEL LIKE ALETTE
WAS TOO HARSH

WHO DO YOU
THINK WILL BE
MARRIED FIRST?
ABRIELLE OR
ATHALIE?

I DON'T
KNOW WHAT I
WOULD DO IF I
DIDN'T GET MY
ALLOWANCE.

WELL
THAT'S
OBVIOUS!

WELL
SHE WASN'T
BRINGING ANYTHING
OF VALUE TO THE
FAMILY—





I DON'T ENVY
THE MATRIARCH
LINE. THERE IS SO
MUCH PRESSURE.

BUT YOU
KNOW WHAT THEY
SAY- THE NEEDS OF
THE MANY OUTWEIGHT
THE NEEDS OF A FEW

RIGHT?

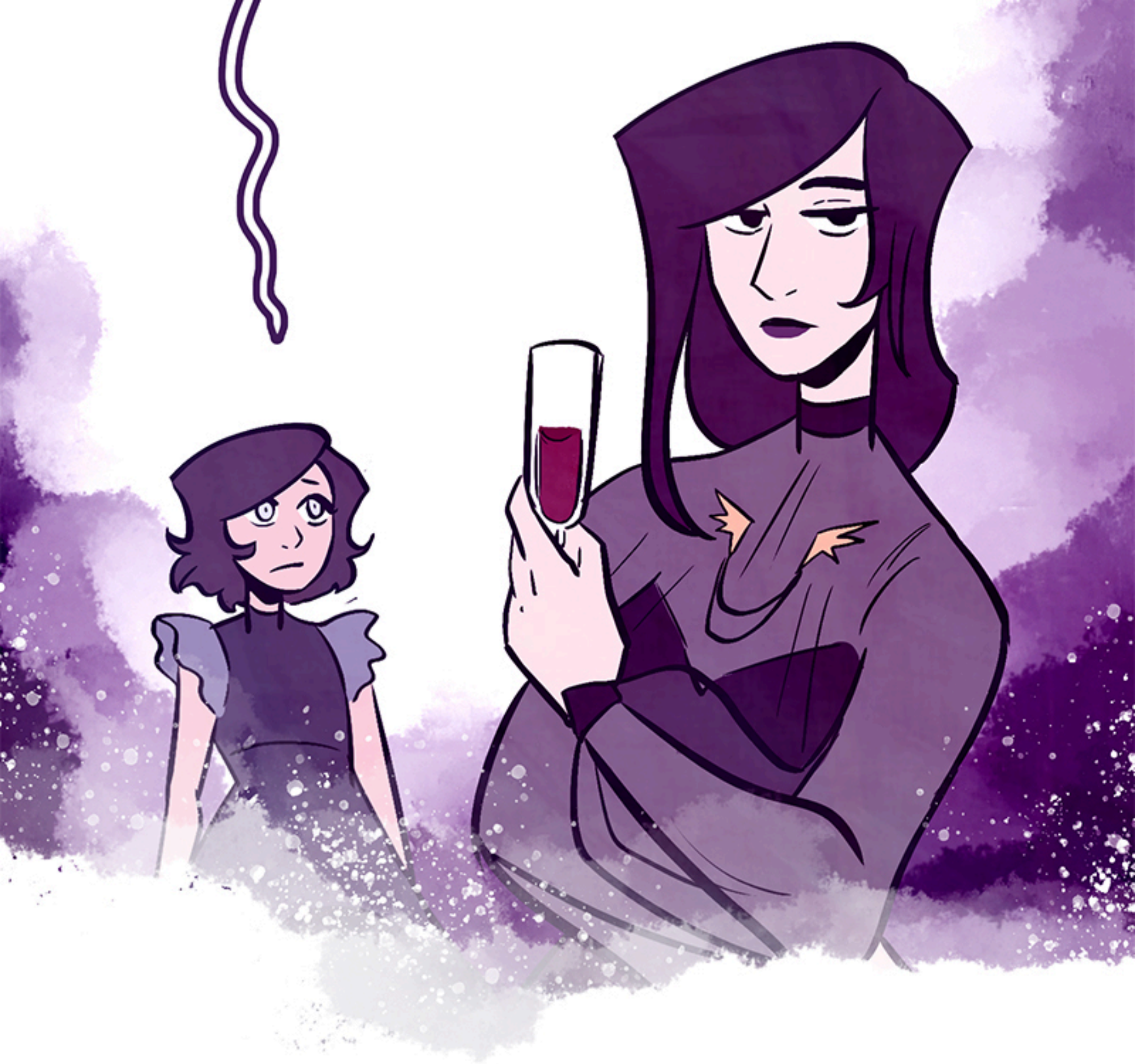
LET THEM
MARRY RICH SO I
CAN GO TO PRAUGE
EH? HAHA!

CAREFUL
WITH THAT OR
YOU'LL END UP
JUST LIKE CINDY!





ABRIELLE.



SOMEONE
BY THE GATES
IS LOOKING FOR
YOU.





PLAN

BLAH

BLAH

Blah
21



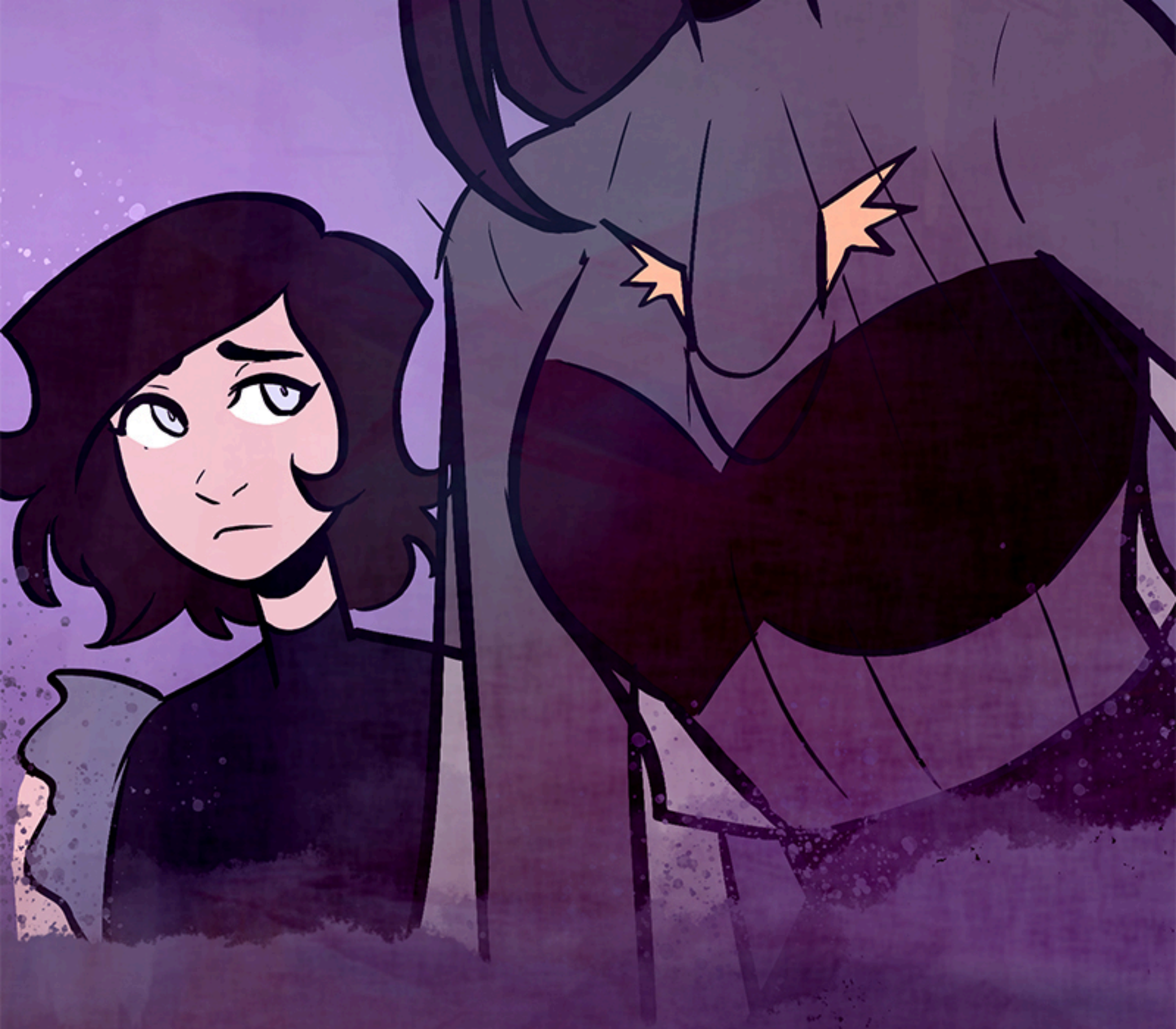


WHERE THE
HELL ARE YOU
GOING?



A comic book panel with a purple background. At the top, a dark, triangular shape with a lighter, textured interior is visible. A hand is seen at the top right, holding a small object. In the center, a white speech bubble with a purple outline contains the text. At the bottom, a woman with long dark hair and a slight smile is looking upwards. The background is filled with a purple gradient and scattered white specks, resembling a night sky or a magical atmosphere.

SILVIA WANTED
TO SHOW ME
SOMETHING SHE
FOUND.



MOTHER WILL
BE FURIOUS IF SHE
SEES THAT YOU
LEFT

LET IT.



THEN TELL
HER WHAT I TOLD
YOU- THAT I'M
TAKING A BREAK

TAKING A BREAK.

NO ONE
IS TALKING TO
ME ANYWAY.

YOU KNOW
THAT'S NOT GOING
TO CUT IT!

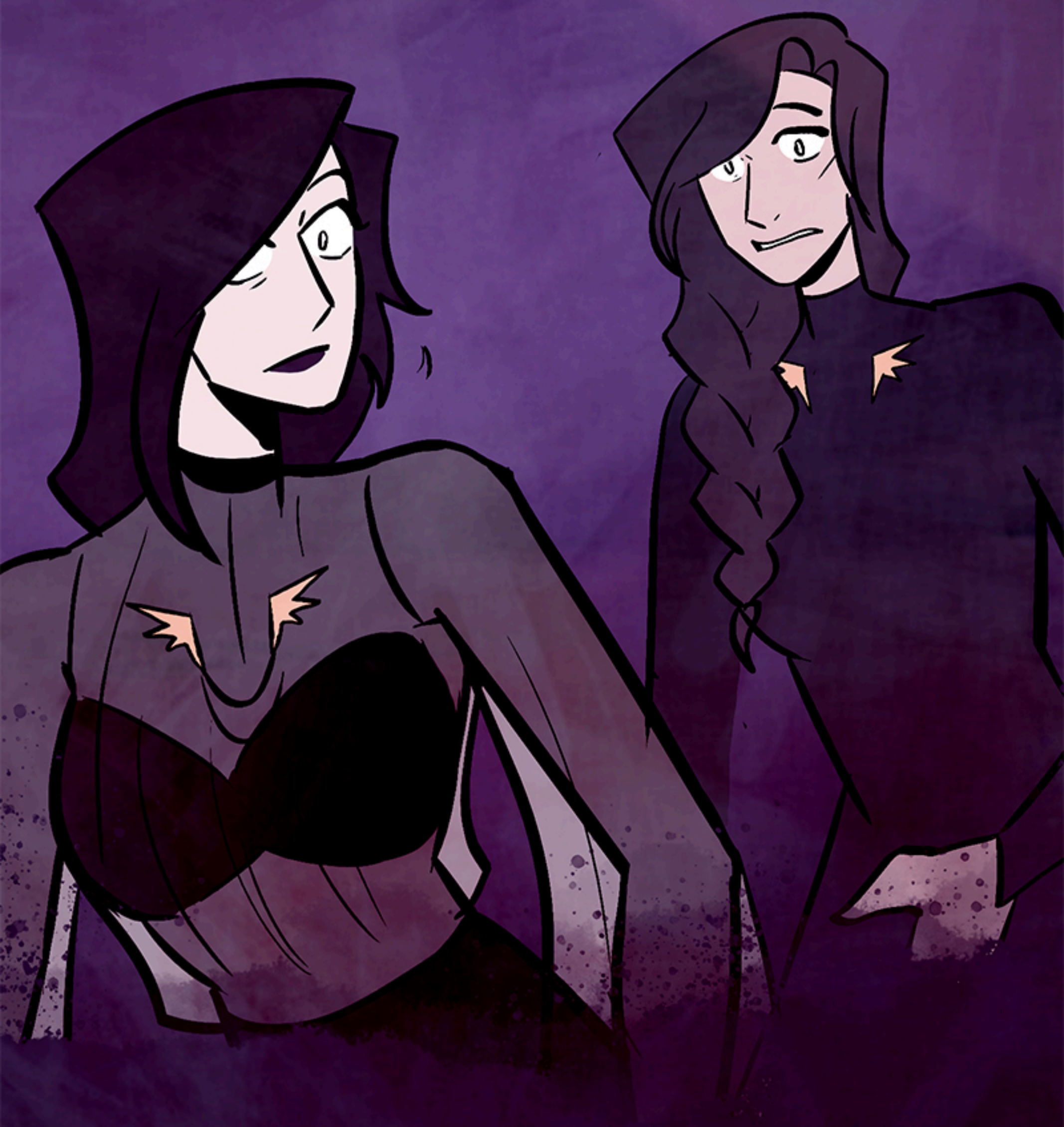






LITTLE
SILVIA...







WHAT IS
THAT TERRIBLE
SMELL...



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