

KENNETH IRONS?

YOU THINK KENNETH "I HAVE MORE MONEY THAN FORT KNOX" IRONS IS INVOLVED IN HIDING EVIDENCE OF ALLEGED MONSTERS ATTACKING THE CITY?

REALLY, PEZZINI?



JOE, I'M NOT SAYING HE IS PERSONALLY BEHIND THIS, BUT YOU CAN'T TELL ME THIS WHOLE THING ISN'T FISHY!

THINK ABOUT IT! IRONS TECH IS IN ALL THE CELLPHONES, IRONS GRID IS OVERSEEING THE SAFETY OF THE CITY. AND JUST WHEN WE NEED IT, NO CELLPHONE FOOTAGE EXISTS, NO CITY GRID CAMERAS CATCH THE ATTACKS! NOTHING BUT SOME EYEWITNESSES WHO CLAIM THEY HAD FOOTAGE THAT MIRACULOUSLY VANISHED!

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU HEARD OF TECHNOLOGY FAILING SO SPECIFICALLY?

I GOT A TV THAT BREAKS DURING EVERY SUPERBOWL! WHAT'S YOUR POINT?



I WANT TO SEE IF THIS HUNCH LEADS SOMEWHERE.

WE SEEM TO HAVE MONSTERS AND ARMORED PEOPLE GOING RAMPANT ON THE CITY STREETS. AND WE HAVE NO VISUAL PROOF.

I WANT TO FIND OUT WHY!



BECAUSE IT'S NEW YORK, PEZZINI! BECAUSE EVERY YAHOO OUT THERE WILL TELL YOU THEIR STORY ABOUT GODDAMNED MONSTERS, FREAKS AND ALLIGATORS IN THE SEWERS!

NOW, GET BACK TO REAL WORK!

JOE!

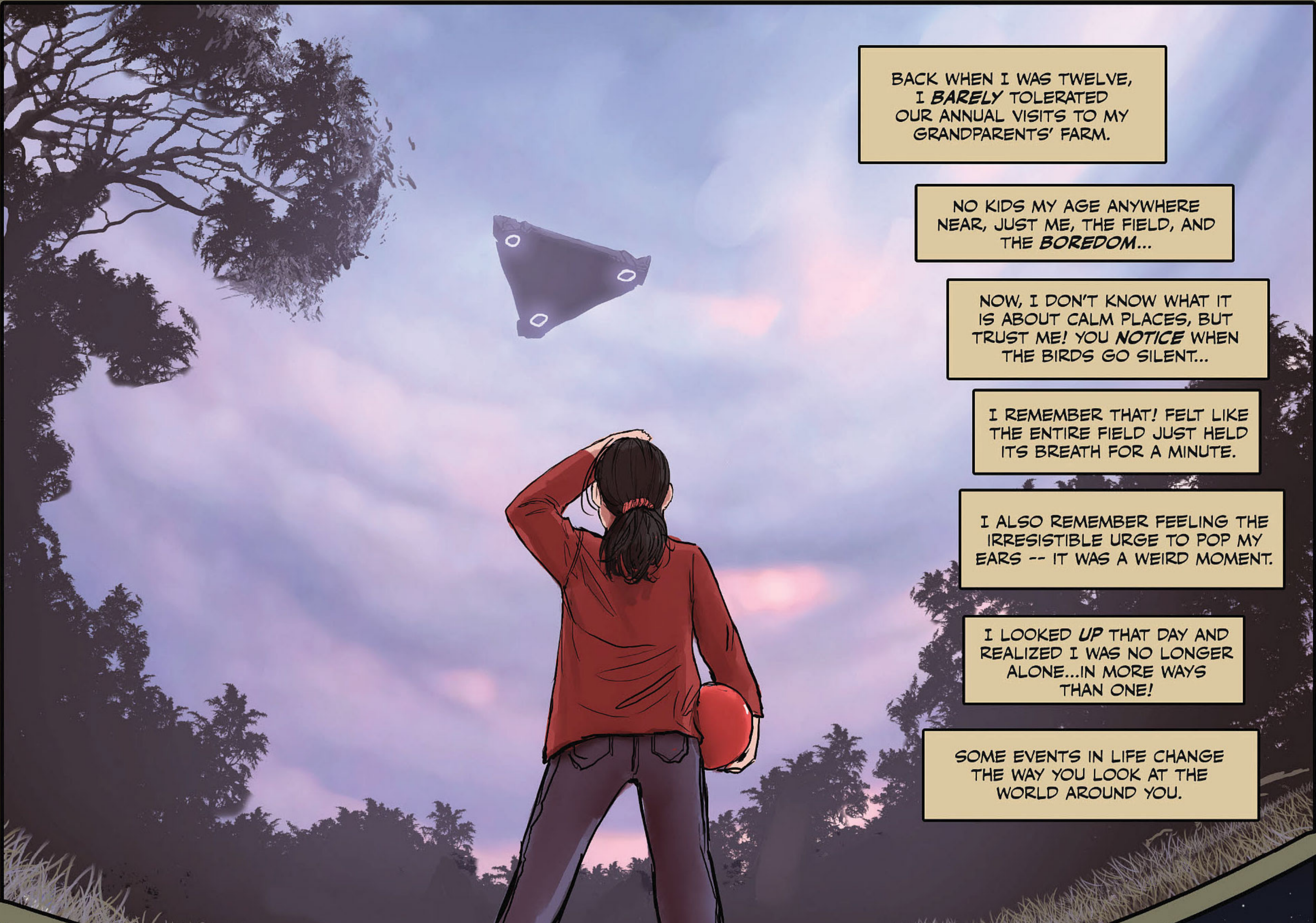
NO, PEZZINI! WE ARE THE NYPD!



NOT THE BLOODY X-FILES!

Joe Siry captain

IS THAT A



BACK WHEN I WAS TWELVE, I *BARELY* TOLERATED OUR ANNUAL VISITS TO MY GRANDPARENTS' FARM.

NO KIDS MY AGE ANYWHERE NEAR, JUST ME, THE FIELD, AND THE *BOREDOM*...

NOW, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS ABOUT CALM PLACES, BUT TRUST ME! YOU *NOTICE* WHEN THE BIRDS GO SILENT...

I REMEMBER THAT! FELT LIKE THE ENTIRE FIELD JUST HELD ITS BREATH FOR A MINUTE.

I ALSO REMEMBER FEELING THE IRRESISTIBLE URGE TO POP MY EARS -- IT WAS A WEIRD MOMENT.

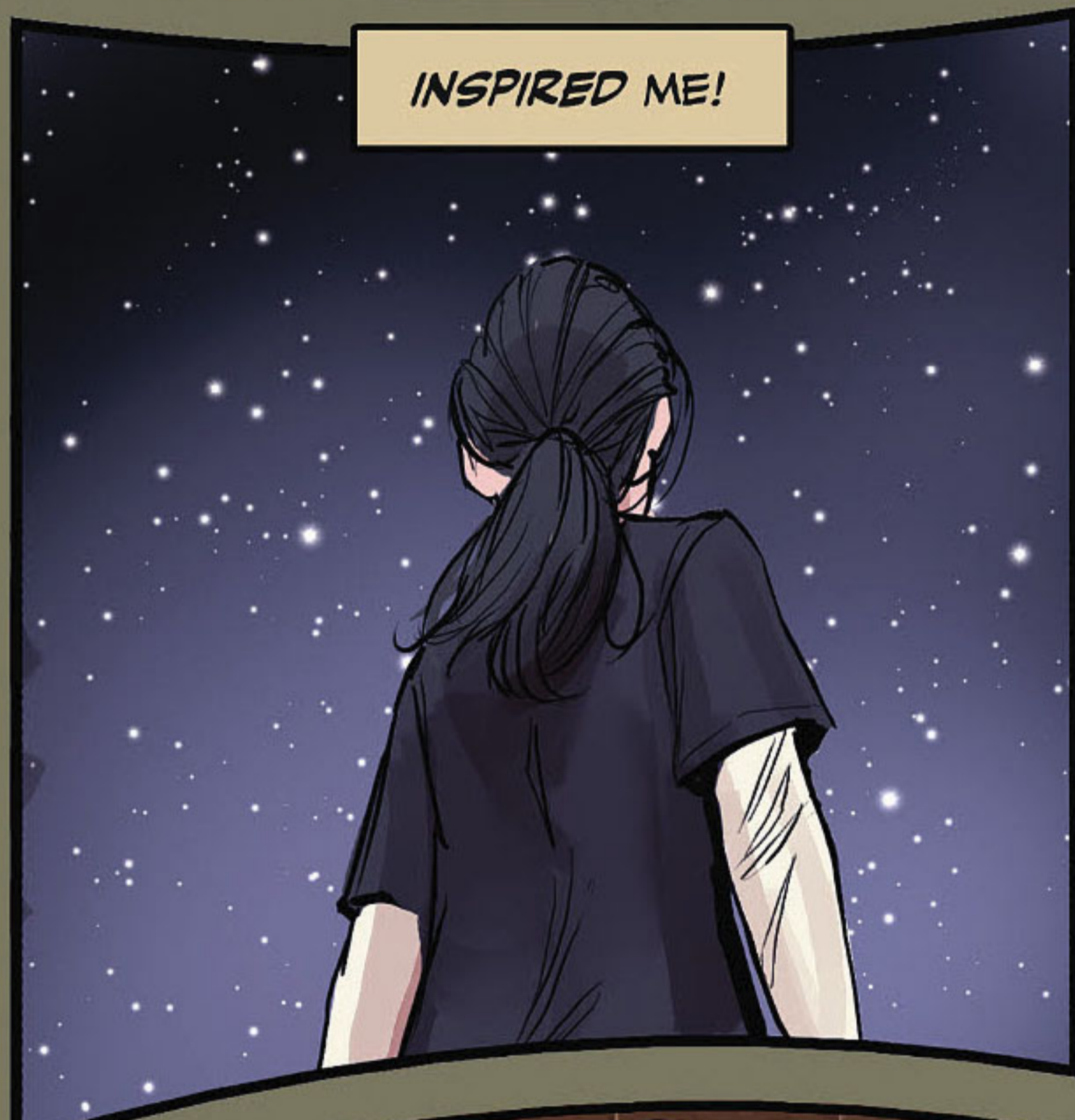
I LOOKED *UP* THAT DAY AND REALIZED I WAS NO LONGER ALONE...IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE!

SOME EVENTS IN LIFE CHANGE THE WAY YOU LOOK AT THE WORLD AROUND YOU.

SEEING A UFO THAT DAY *CHANGED* ME.



INSPIRED ME!



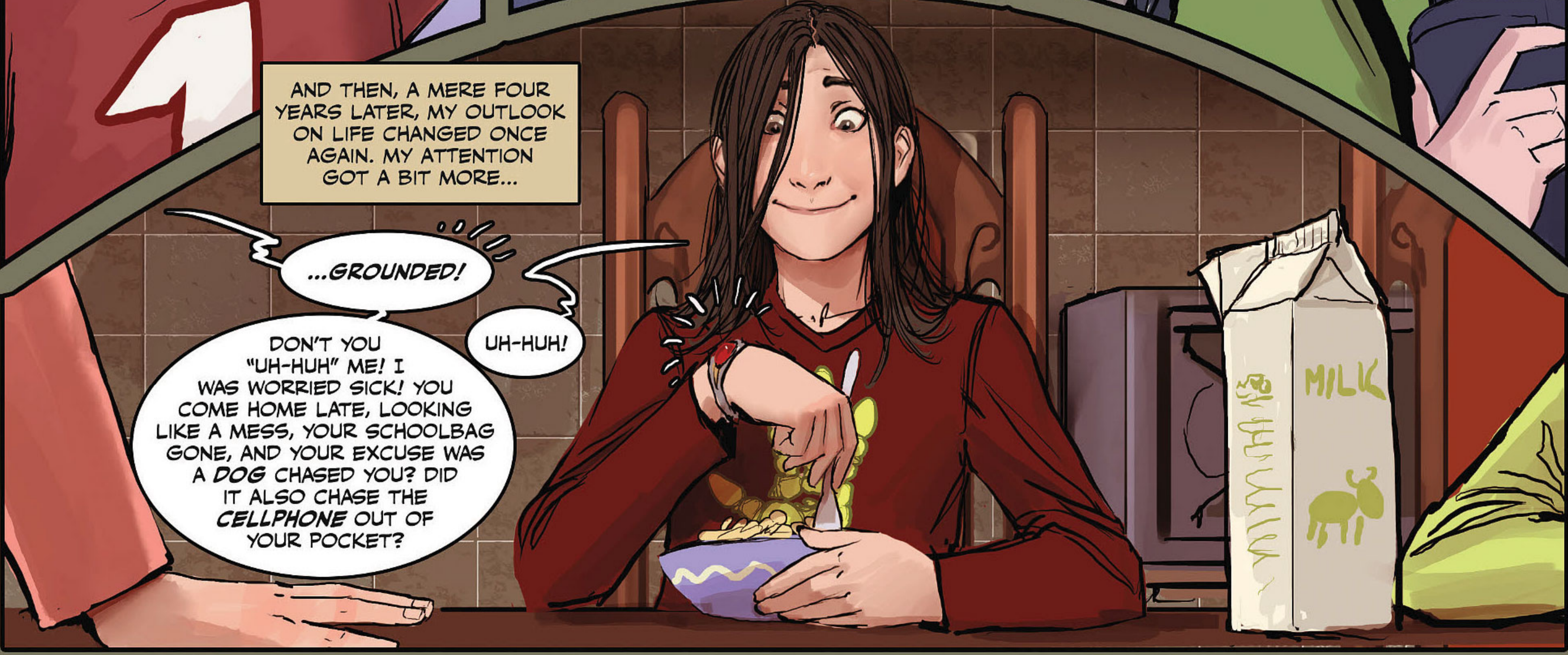
KEPT ME LOOKING AT THE SKIES.

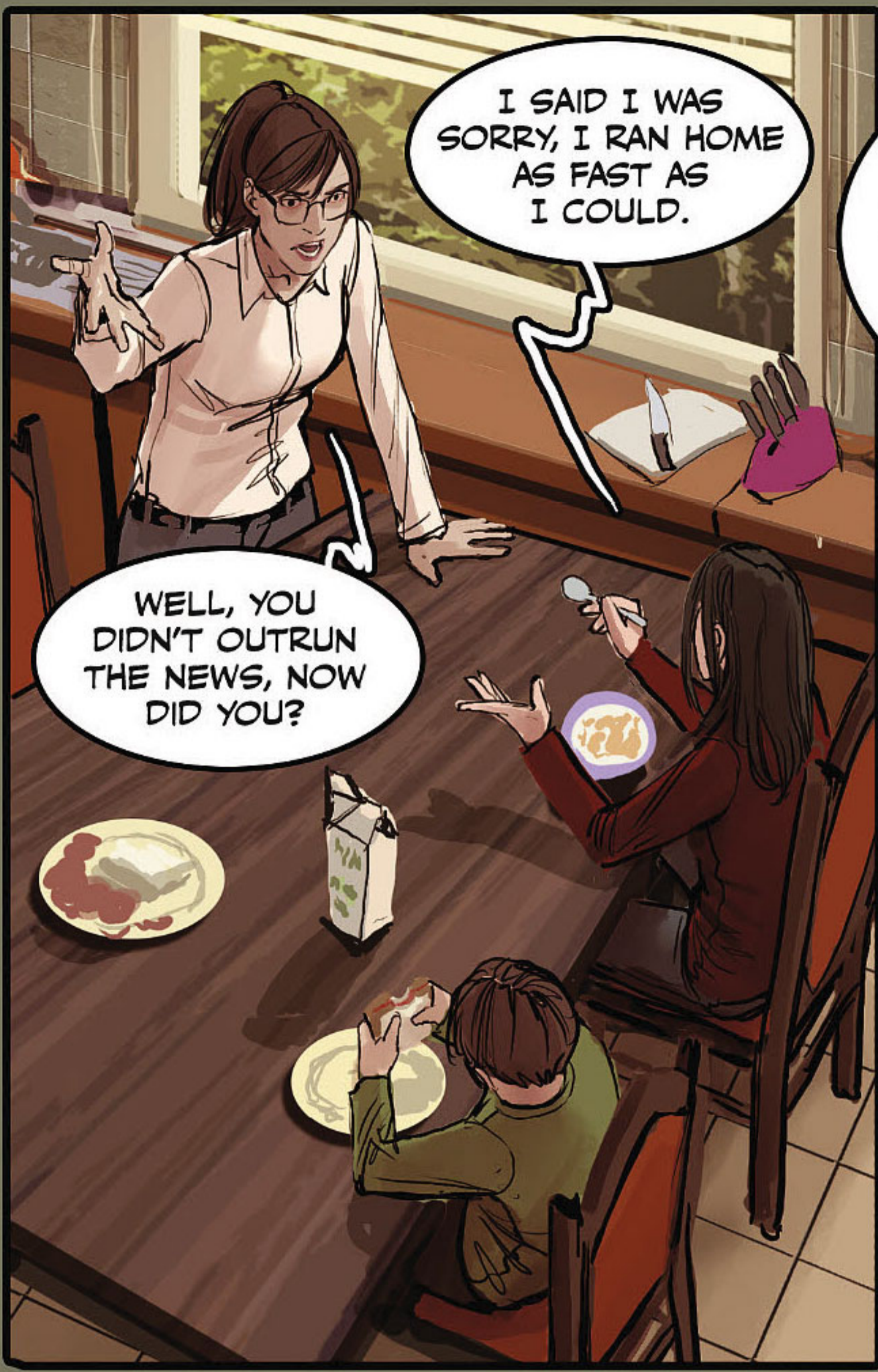


AND THEN, A MERE FOUR YEARS LATER, MY OUTLOOK ON LIFE CHANGED ONCE AGAIN. MY ATTENTION GOT A BIT MORE...

...GROUNDED!
DON'T YOU "UH-HUH" ME! I WAS WORRIED SICK! YOU COME HOME LATE, LOOKING LIKE A MESS, YOUR SCHOOLBAG GONE, AND YOUR EXCUSE WAS A *DOG* CHASED YOU? DID IT ALSO CHASE THE *CELLPHONE* OUT OF YOUR POCKET?

UH-HUH!





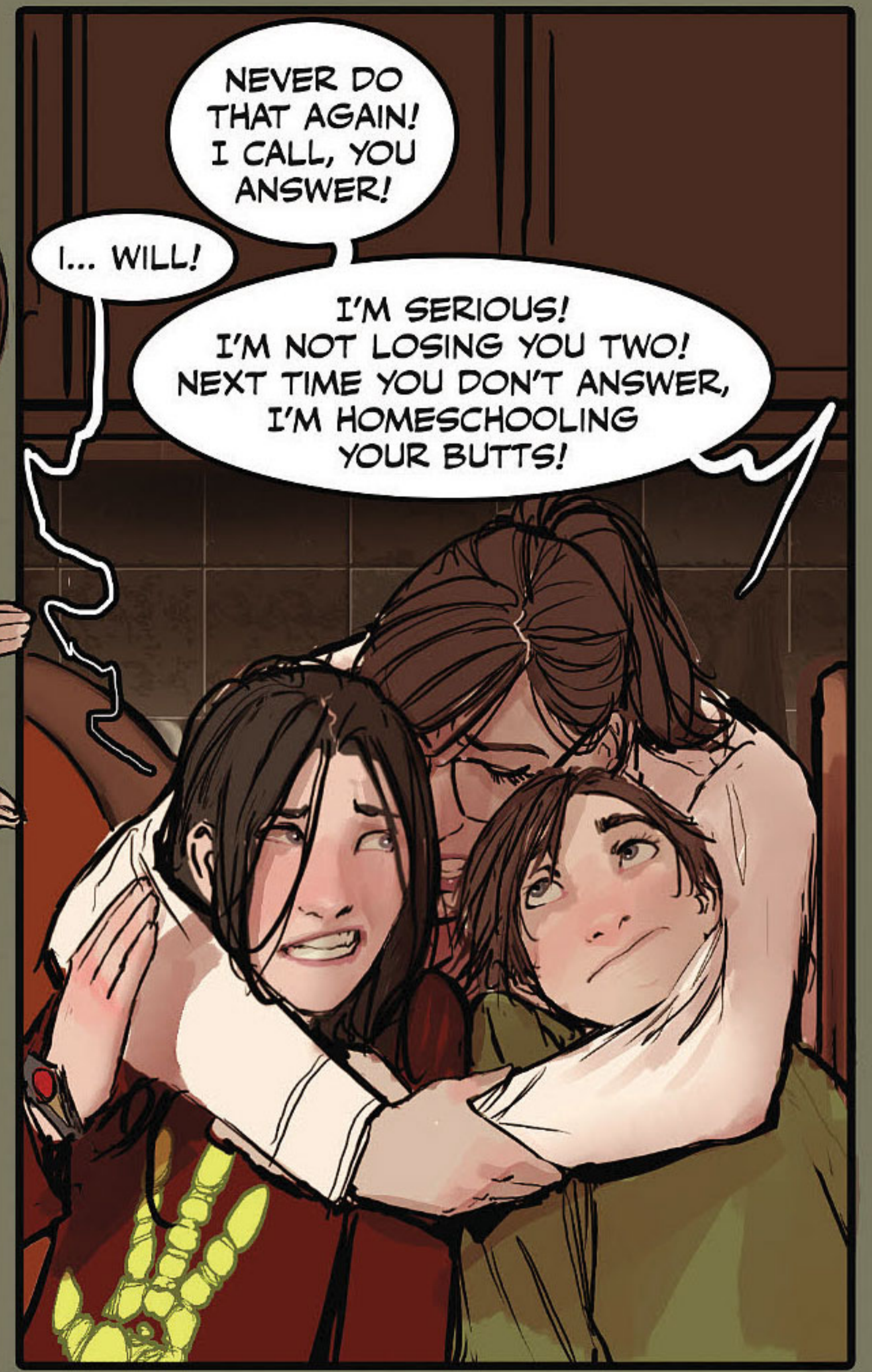
I SAID I WAS SORRY, I RAN HOME AS FAST AS I COULD.

WELL, YOU DIDN'T OUTFRAN THE NEWS, NOW DID YOU?



I'M HERE AT HOME WATCHING THE REPORTS SAYING THERE WAS ANOTHER STRANGE BATTLE IN THE CITY, AND THEY MENTION THERE WAS A BLACK-HAIRED GIRL INVOLVED, AND YOU'RE FOUR HOURS LATE, NOT ANSWERING YOUR CELLPHONE...

I DIED!!!



NEVER DO THAT AGAIN! I CALL, YOU ANSWER!

I... WILL!

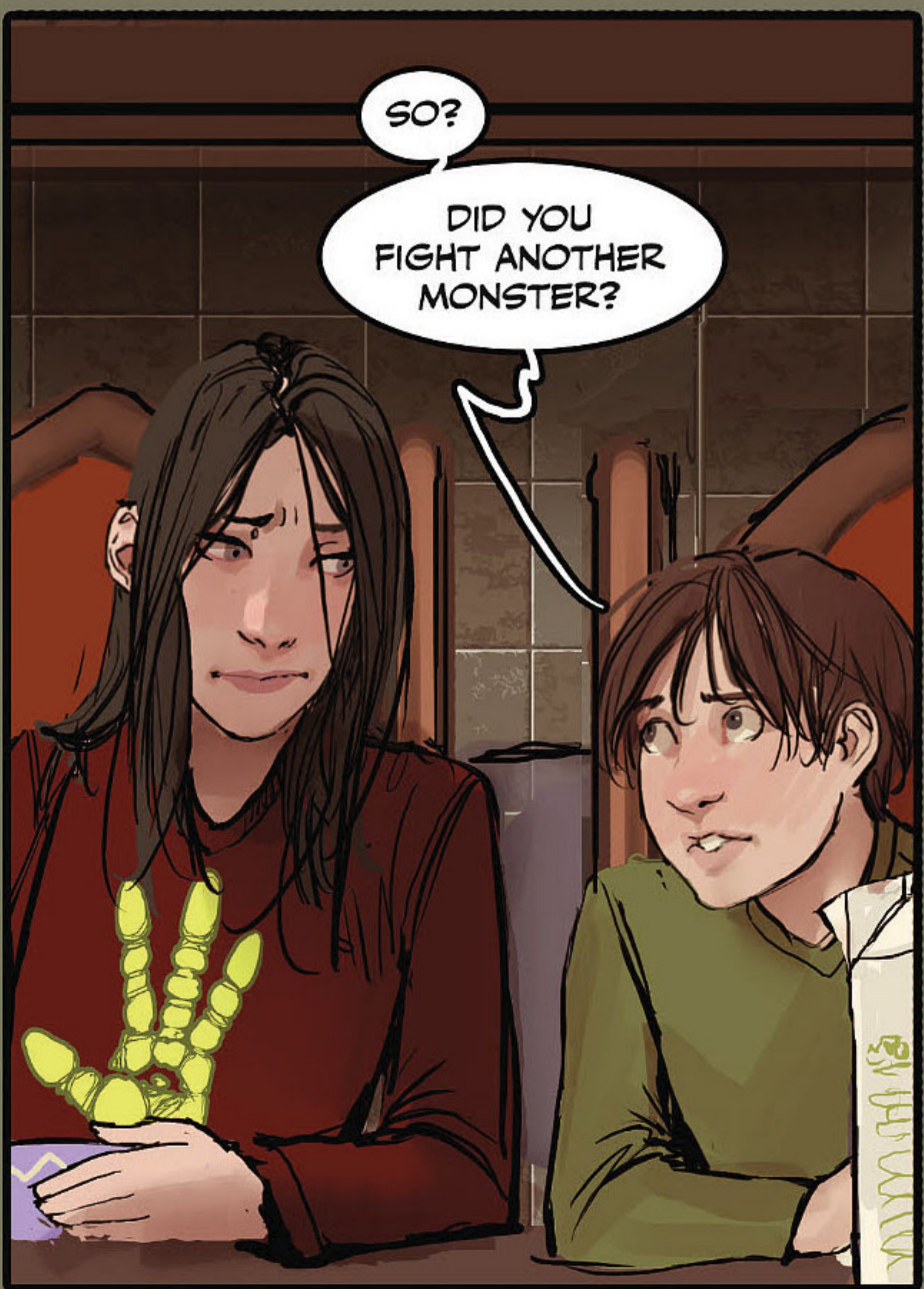
I'M SERIOUS! I'M NOT LOSING YOU TWO! NEXT TIME YOU DON'T ANSWER, I'M HOMESCHOOLING YOUR BUTTS!



WHICH IS WHY YOU ARE NOT GROUNDED!

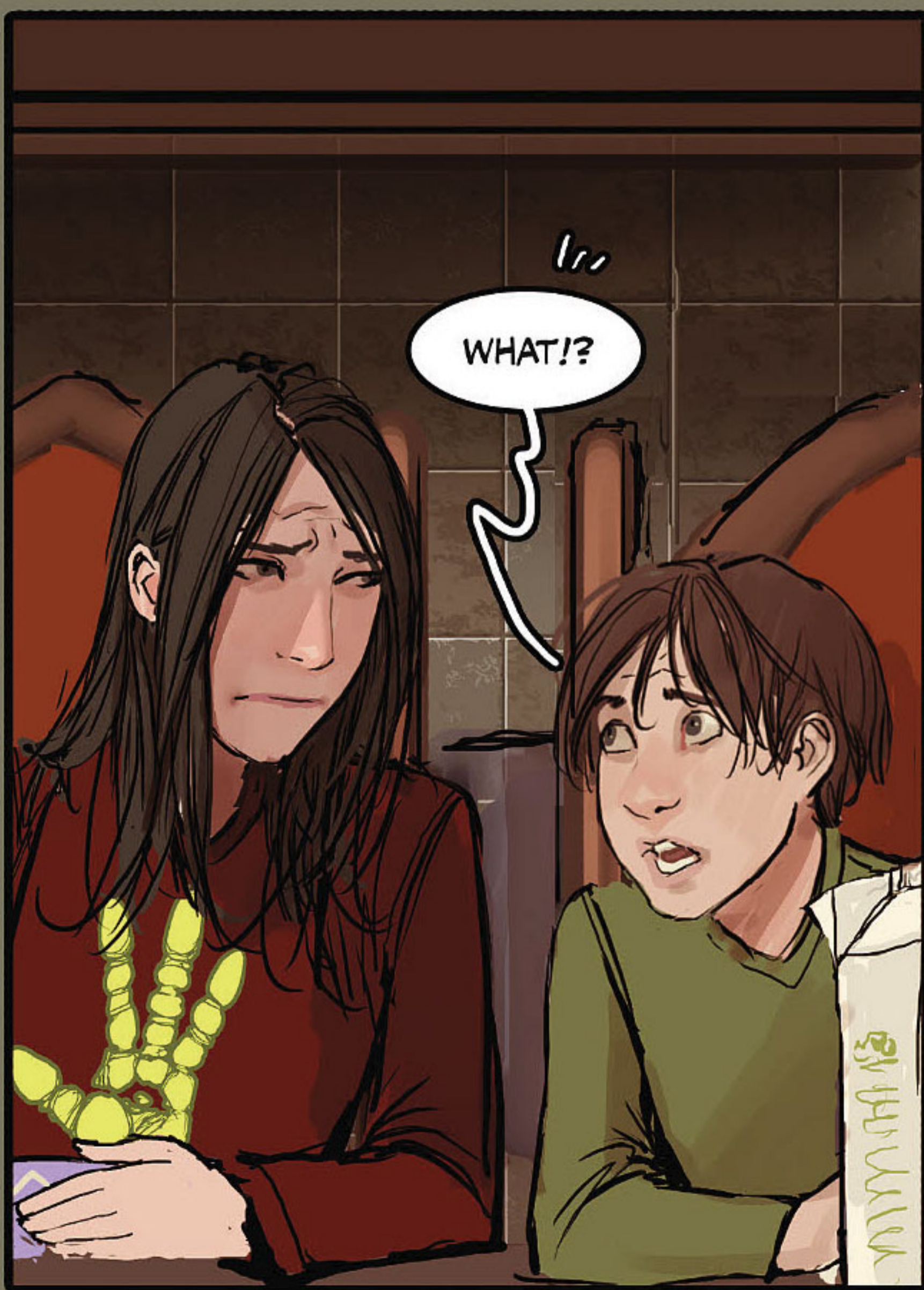
BUT I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!

NOW FINISH EATING, I'LL GO GET YOUR JACKET.



SO?

DID YOU FIGHT ANOTHER MONSTER?



WHAT!?



YOU FIGHT MONSTERS!

I DON'T FIGHT MONSTERS!



YUUUP...TIM WAS RIGHT!

I HATE IT WHEN THE LITTLE TWERP IS RIGHT!



A MAGICIAN'S STORE...

OH, HOW LOW THE MIGHTY HAVE FALLEN.



BA-LING-DING

I'LL BE WITH YOU IN A MINUTE.



WELCOME TO *THE HIDDEN*! HOW MAY I HELP YOU?

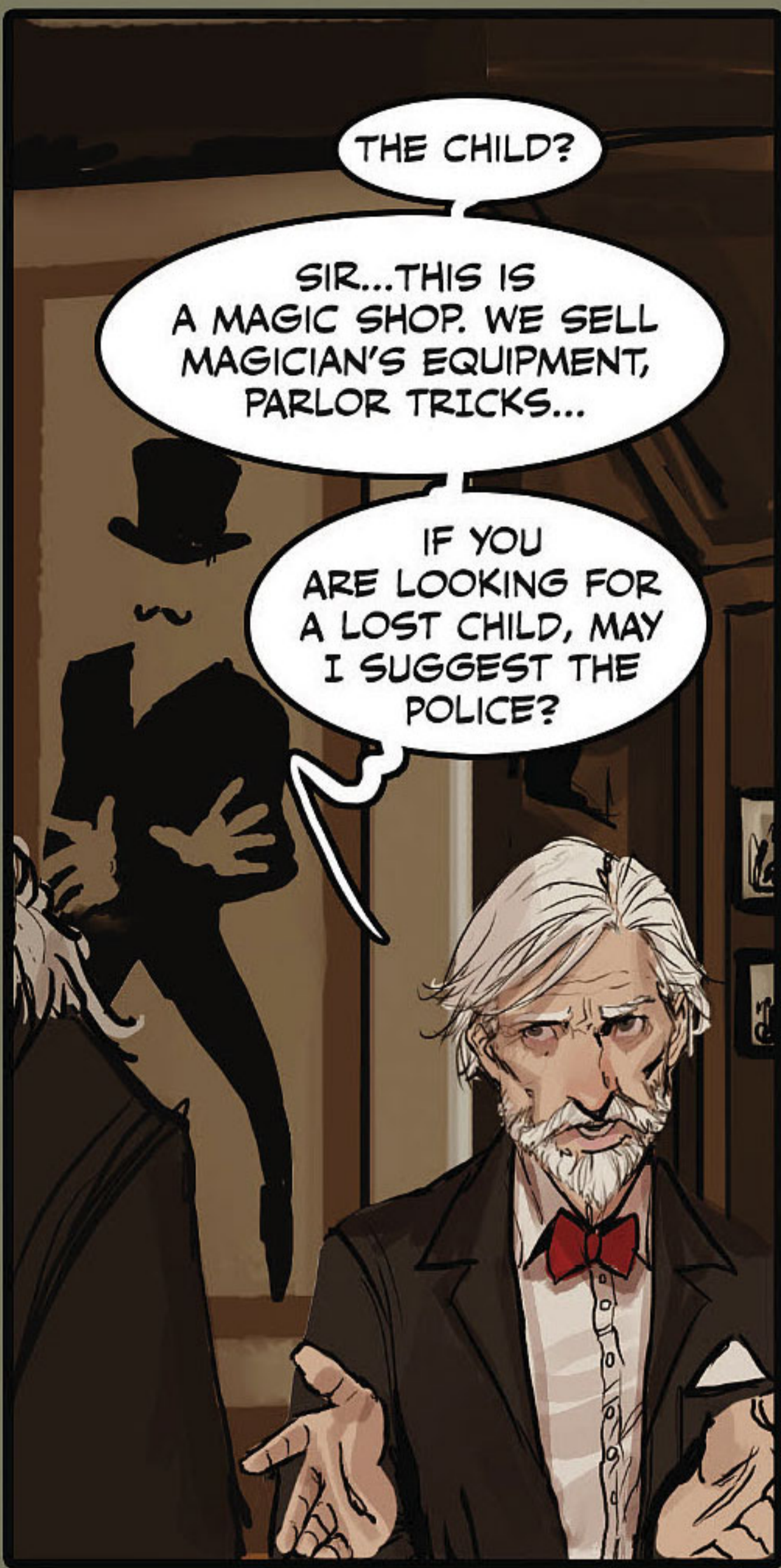
SO THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS TO WIZARDS WHEN ALL THEIR MAGIC HAS BEEN LOST...

I BEG YOUR PARDON?



I AM LOOKING FOR THE HALFBLOOD CHILD.





THE CHILD?

SIR...THIS IS A MAGIC SHOP. WE SELL MAGICIAN'S EQUIPMENT, PARLOR TRICKS...

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A LOST CHILD, MAY I SUGGEST THE POLICE?



I SEE...

MAGICIAN'S EQUIPMENT, YOU SAY?

YES!

ILLUSIONS AND OBFUSCATIONS ARE POWERFUL TOOLS.

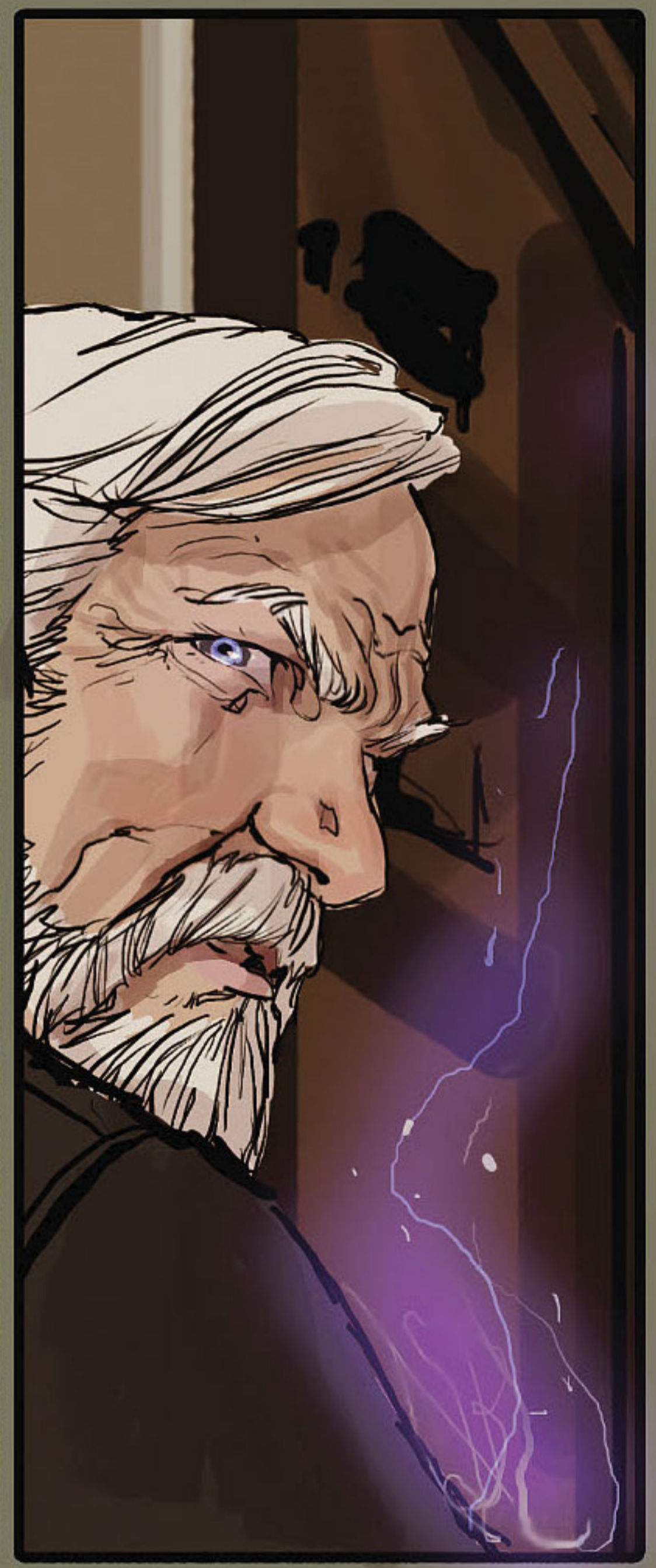
WELL, ENTERTAINING AT THE VERY LEAST.



I WAS TOLD YOUR TRICKS RECENTLY MADE A WHOLE FAMILY DISAPPEAR.

I BEG YOUR PARDON?

THE CHIANGS!



GO ON! TRY IT!

TEST THE HATRED I FEEL FOR YOUR KIND!

GHK!



Y-YOU ARE...

CALL, ME NAGA, WIZARD!

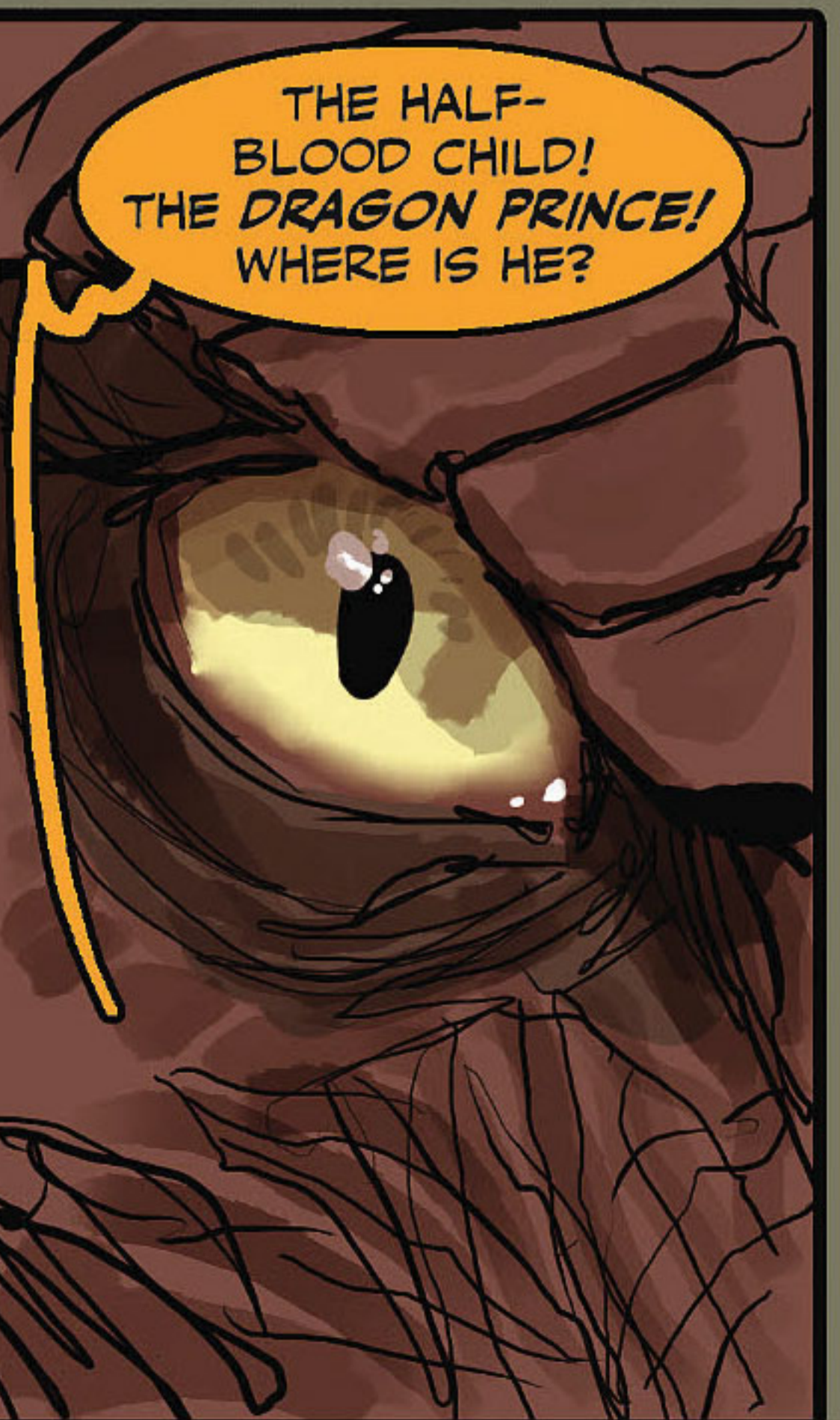


NOW, SHALL WE GET DOWN TO BUSINESS, AS I DO HAVE A BUSY SCHEDULE TO MEET!



A GOD TO RELEASE, HUMANITY TO DESTROY...

SO I'LL ASK YOU ONE LAST TIME!



THE HALF-BLOOD CHILD! THE DRAGON PRINCE! WHERE IS HE?



FUNNY THING ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL IS, THERE IS *ALWAYS* JUICIER GOSSIP.

IT WAS THE DAY AFTER MY LITTLE RUMBLE WITH THE *CRYSTAL FACED ARMORLADY* -- A DAY AFTER I WAS THE CENTER OF ATTENTION BECAUSE OF MY SATURDAY MONSTERMASH...

AND ALREADY, I WAS A *NOBODY!*

I WAS VERY MUCH *FINE* WITH THAT! IN FACT, I WAS HAPPY, I COULDN'T STOP SMILING...

BECAUSE I HAD AN *ALIEN WEAPON*...



THINGS I KNEW ABOUT IT:

IT WAS COOL!

IT COULD FORM WEAPONS AND ARMOR.

IT COULD HEAL INJURIES.

AND, ACCORDING TO THAT *ZALA LADY*, IT WAS RUMORED TO BE A MAGNET FOR *ODD STUFF*...

NOT TOO SURE ABOUT THAT LAST PART.



OFF! MAWY, WIGF?

?



UM, SWALLOW?

GULP HEH, SORRY!

S'FINE! NOW, YOU WERE SAYING?



I SAID, "MARY, RIGHT?"

DO I KNOW...

AARON! AARON CHIANG!

WE MET... BRIEFLY YESTERDAY.



I ASKED YOU ABOUT THE *WINGED MONSTER*?



MANY DID THAT.



YOU BLEW ME OFF?



I...UH, DID THAT TO MANY?



HEH, I BET!