

KILL YOUR DAR LING¹ S

PARKER • SHERIDAN • QUINN • HILL



KILL YOUR DARLINGS 1

IMAGE COMICS, INC.

ROBERT KIRKMAN - Chief Operating Officer

ERIK LARSEN - Chief Financial Officer

TODD McFARLANE - President

MARC SILVESTRI - Chief Executive Officer

JIM VALENTINO - Vice President

ERIC STEPHENSON - Publisher / Chief Creative Officer

NICOLE LAPALME - Vice President of Finance

LEANNA CAUNTER - Accounting Analyst

SUE KORPELA - Accounting & HR Manager

MATT PARKINSON - Vice President of Sales & Publishing Planning

LORELEI BUNJES - Vice President of Digital Strategy

DIRK WOOD - Vice President of International Sales & Licensing

RYAN BREWER - International Sales & Licensing Manager

ALEX COX - Director of Direct Market Sales

CHLOE RAMOS - Book Market & Library Sales Manager

EMILIO BAUTISTA - Digital Sales Coordinator

JON SCHLAFFMAN - Specialty Sales Coordinator

KAT SALAZAR - Vice President of PR & Marketing

DEANNA PHELPS - Marketing Design Manager

DREW FITZGERALD - Marketing Content Associate

HEATHER DOORNINK - Vice President of Production

DREW GILL - Art Director

HILARY DILORETO - Print Manager

TRICIA RAMOS - Traffic Manager

MELISSA GIFFORD - Content Manager

ERIKA SCHNATZ - Senior Production Artist

WESLEY GRIFFITH - Production Artist

RICH FOWLKS - Production Artist

IMAGECOMICS.COM

ETHAN S. PARKER
GRIFFIN SHERIDAN
STORY

ROBERT QUINN
ART

JOHN J. HILL
LETTERS/DESIGN

KILL YOUR DARLINGS #1 - September 2023. Published by Image Comics, Inc. Office of publication: PO BOX 14457, Portland, OR 97293. Copyright © 2023 Ethan S. Parker, Griffin Sheridan, & Robert Quinn. All rights reserved. "KILL YOUR DARLINGS" and the likenesses of all associated characters herein are TM & © 2023 Ethan S. Parker, Griffin Sheridan, & Robert Quinn. All rights reserved. "Image" and the Image Comics logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means (except for short excerpts for journalistic or review purposes), without the express written permission of Ethan S. Parker, Griffin Sheridan, & Robert Quinn, or Image Comics, Inc. All names, characters, events, and locales in this publication are entirely fictional. Any resemblance to actual persons (living or dead), events, or places, without satirical intent, is coincidental. Printed in the USA. For international rights, contact: foreignlicensing@imagecomics.com.

COVER A
ROBERT QUINN

COVER B
RYAN STEGMAN
ROBERT QUINN

SPECIAL THANKS

RYAN STEGMAN

DONNY CATES

MATTHEW ROSENBERG

SONIA LIAO

BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS

CHARLES SOULE

TYLER JENNES

ASHLEY COURTER

MELISSA QUINN

RYANE LYNN HILL

DONALD PLEASENCE





PLEASE...

I
PROMISE
I'LL BE
GOOD.

1692.

GOD
ALMIGHTY...

CHIK
CHIK

I-I
BEG OF
YOU...

DON'T
DO THIS
TO ME...

WE DO
ALL THAT WE
DO IN THY
NAME.

CHIK

CHIK

NO!!
PLEASE!!

WE
HUMBLY
BESEECH
YOU...

FATHER!!
PLEASE, MAKE
THEM STOP!

CHIK

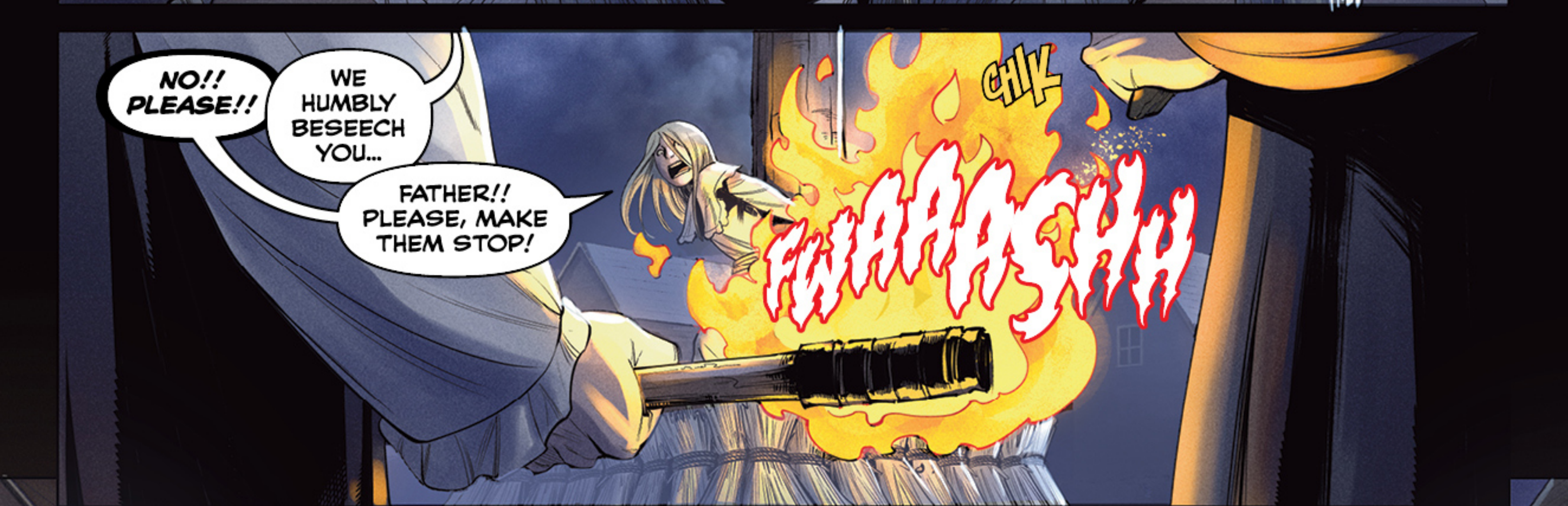
IT MUST
BE DONE.
IT--

MOTHER!!

DON'T
LOOK,
JANE.

CAST OUT
THE PRESENCE
OF THINE
ENEMY...

GET
AWAY!!! NO
NO NO--



...AND
DELIVER
US FROM
EVIL.

AAAIEEEEE!!
AIEEEEE!!!

**KILL
YOUR
DAD**

CHAPTER ONE

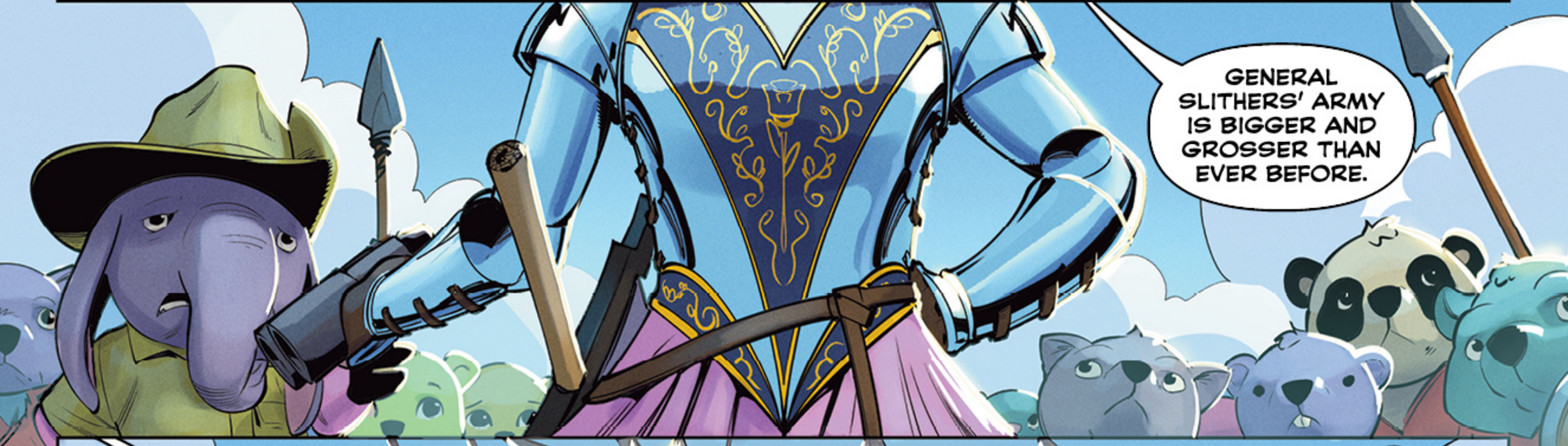
LINGS



WHAT DO YOU SEE, YOUR HIGHNESS?



JUST AS I FEARED.



GENERAL SLITHERS' ARMY IS BIGGER AND GROSSER THAN EVER BEFORE.



STEADY, EVERYONE...

RUUUMMMMMBBBLLLLLLLLLEEEEEEE



GOTTA SAY, I'M NOT FEELING GREAT ABOUT THESE ODDS, MATE.

HAVE FAITH, WALLACE. ARMIES FLEE AT THE SIGHT...



OF THE MIGHTY SWORD **FRANCINE.**

1995.

HOLD THE
LINE!!!



CRUIKEY,
ROSE!

PTEW!

I THINK
THERE'S TOO
MANY OF THEM!
WE'RE GONNA NEED
REINFORCE-
MENTS!



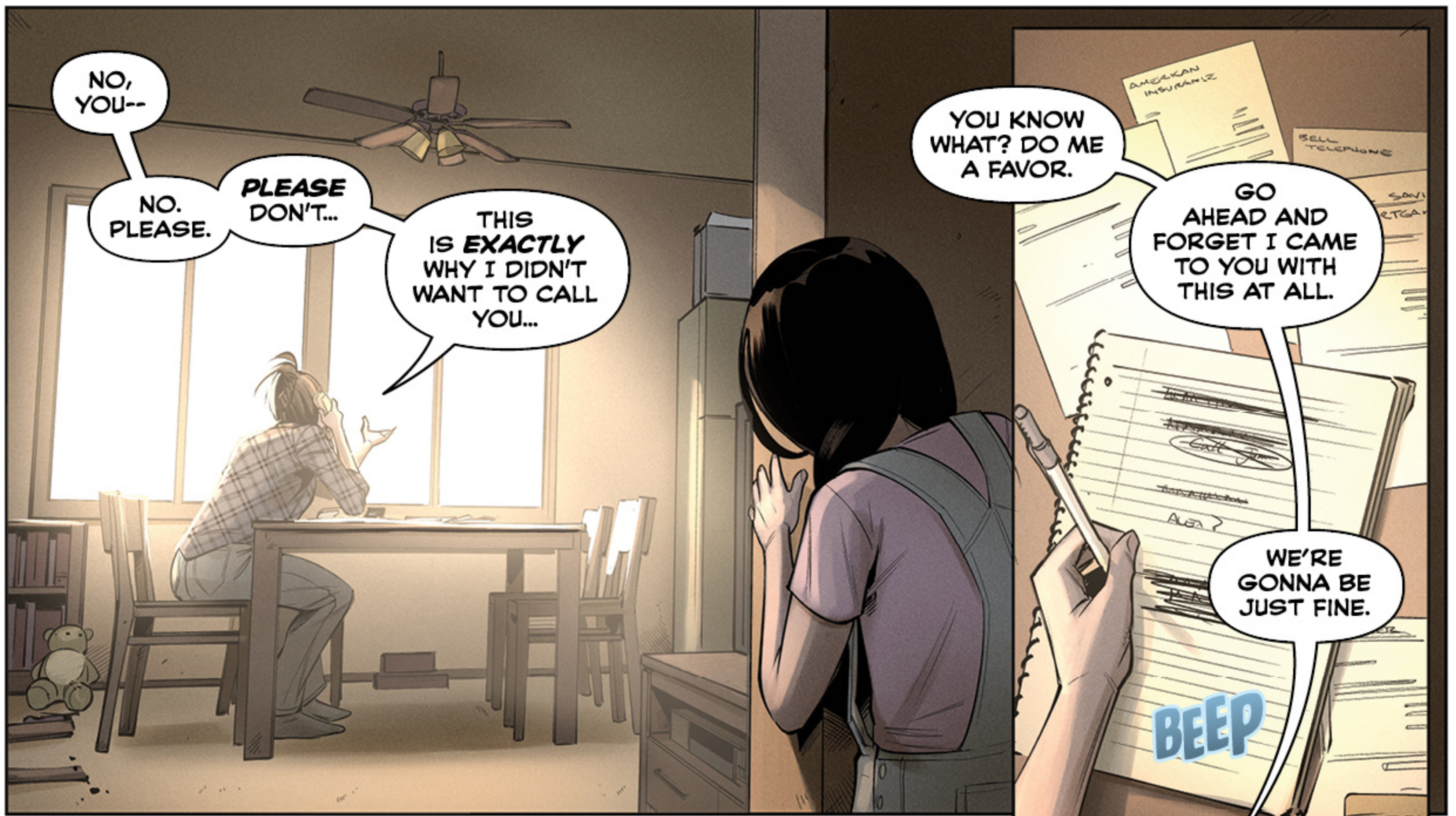
WALLACE
IS RIGHT!
EVERYONE,
TIMEOUT!

SWACK



I'LL FIND
US SOME
BACKUP.





NO, YOU--

NO. PLEASE.

PLEASE DON'T...

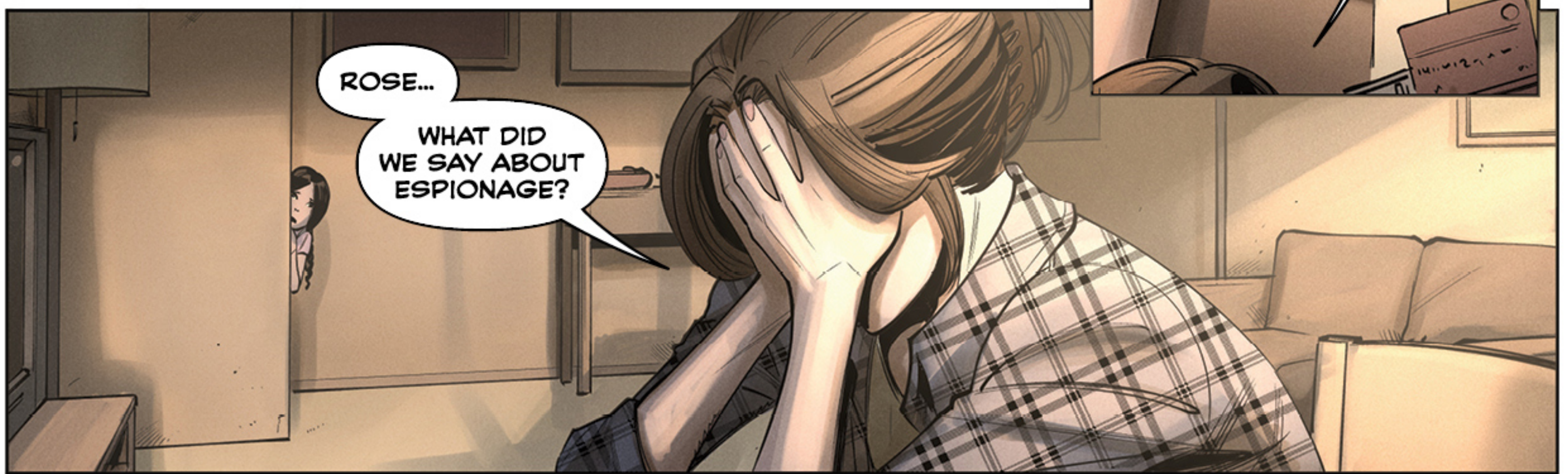
THIS IS **EXACTLY** WHY I DIDN'T WANT TO CALL YOU...

YOU KNOW WHAT? DO ME A FAVOR.

GO AHEAD AND FORGET I CAME TO YOU WITH THIS AT ALL.

WE'RE GONNA BE JUST FINE.

BEEP



ROSE...

WHAT DID WE SAY ABOUT ESPIONAGE?



DID WE SAY WE LIKED IT?

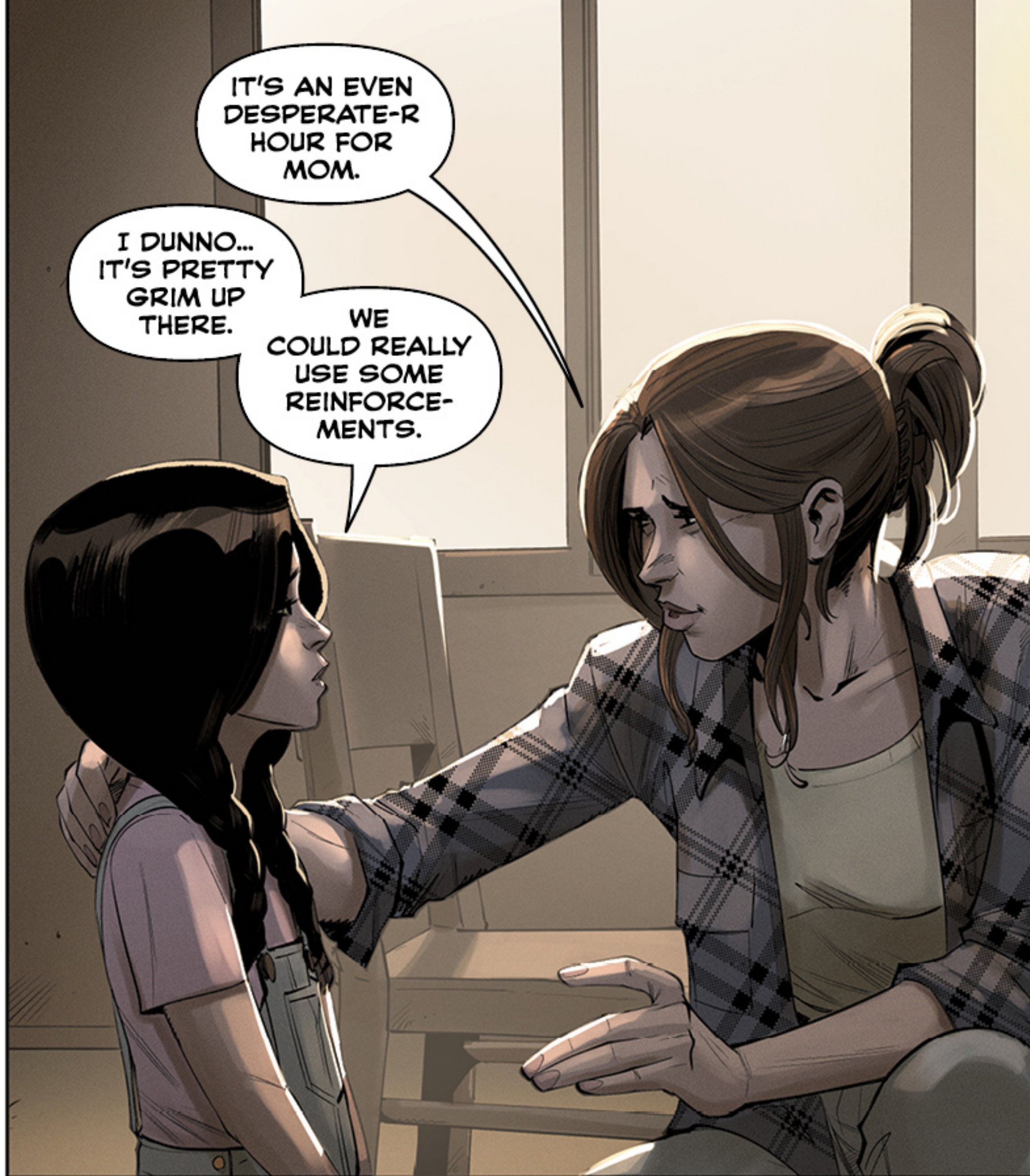
CUTE.

HOW'S THE WAR EFFORT?

GOOD SOLDIERS HAVE FALLEN. IT'S A DESPERATE HOUR.

WHAT'S ALL OF THIS?

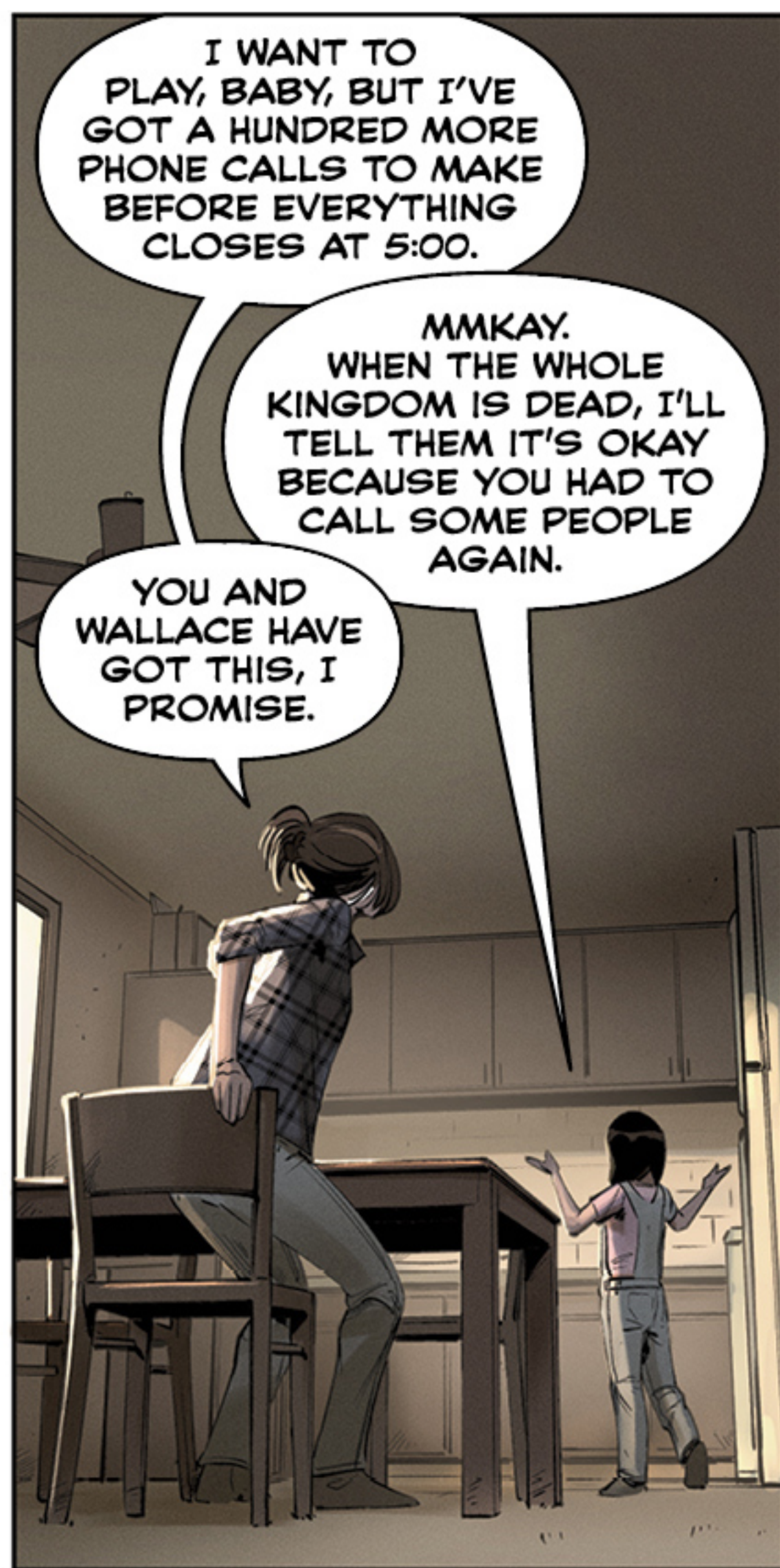
BILLS...



IT'S AN EVEN DESPERATE-R HOUR FOR MOM.

I DUNNO... IT'S PRETTY GRIM UP THERE.

WE COULD REALLY USE SOME REINFORCEMENTS.



I WANT TO PLAY, BABY, BUT I'VE GOT A HUNDRED MORE PHONE CALLS TO MAKE BEFORE EVERYTHING CLOSES AT 5:00.

MMKAY. WHEN THE WHOLE KINGDOM IS DEAD, I'LL TELL THEM IT'S OKAY BECAUSE YOU HAD TO CALL SOME PEOPLE AGAIN.

YOU AND WALLACE HAVE GOT THIS, I PROMISE.



HE'S STILL HEALING FROM YESTERDAY'S RAID, BUT HE DOES HIS BEST.

HEY, TRY NOT TO USE...

SSHHHHHIIICK

...ALL OF THAT.



HEY, ROSE.

PANCAKES FOR DINNER?



YES.



 BACK TO BUSINESS.

THIS WAS NOT THE FIRST TIME THAT THE **CREEPY ARMY** FROM THE AISLE OF MONSTERS HAD INVADED ROSEWOOD, TRYING TO STEAL OUR KINGDOM'S MOST AWESOME TREASURE FOR THEIR OWN **CREEPY** PURPOSES.

OF COURSE, WE'VE SAFELY HIDDEN IT AWAY UNDER THE CASTLE.

THE SILVER FLAME OF KICHENDORR.

I DUNNO WHAT IT DOES, BUT THE PROPHECY SAYS IT'S SUPER IMPORTANT, SO I HAVE SOME OF MY BEST TROOPS GUARDING IT.



THE MONSTERS NEVER HAD A CHANCE.

THE BATTLE RAGED ON UNTIL LATE INTO THE NIGHT.

NEARLY EIGHT O'CLOCK.



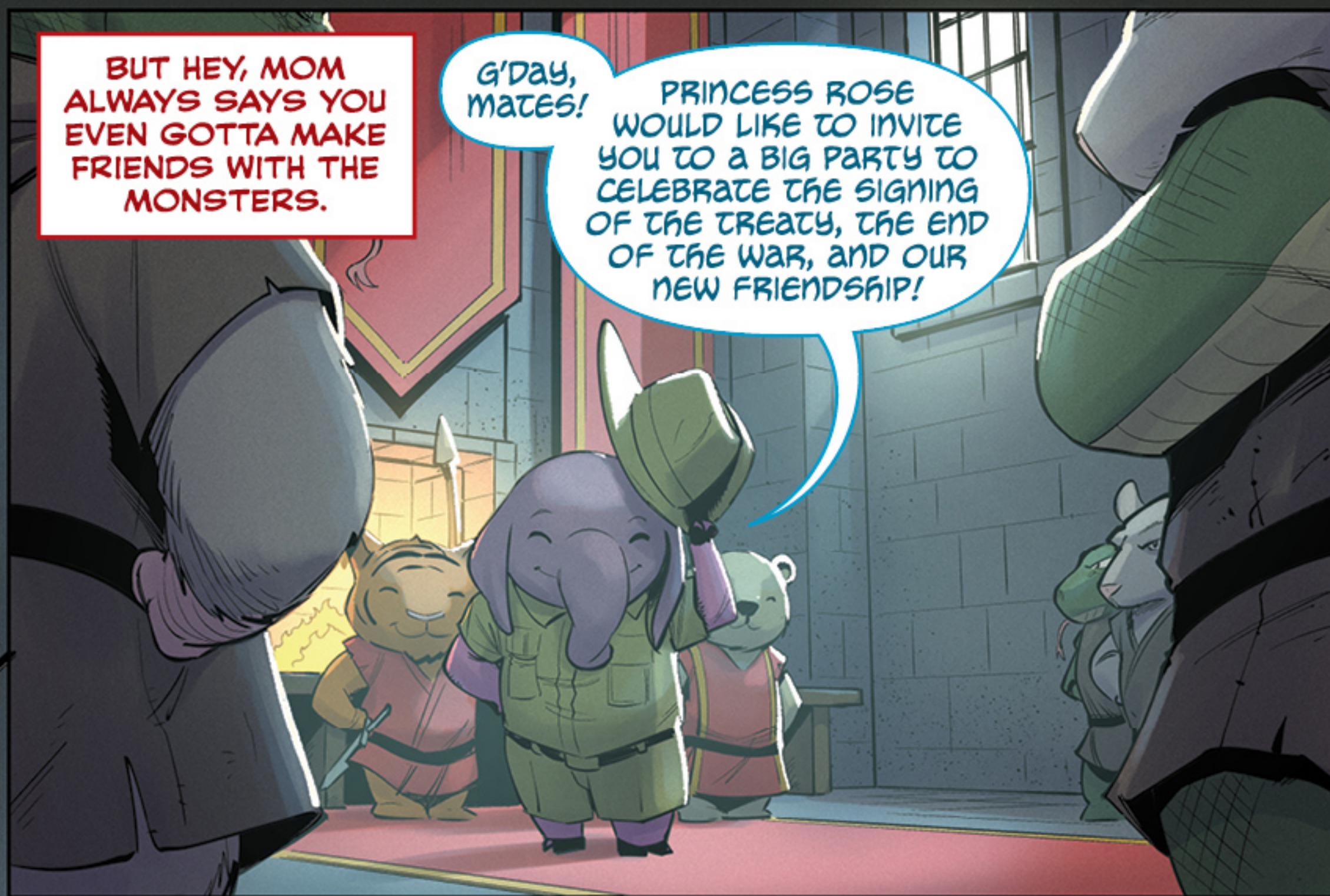
IN THE END, WE FINALLY SIGN THE PEACE TREATY.



HSSSSSSS. FINE.



SO CREEPY.



BUT HEY, MOM ALWAYS SAYS YOU EVEN GOTTA MAKE FRIENDS WITH THE MONSTERS.

G'DAY, MATES!

PRINCESS ROSE WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO A BIG PARTY TO CELEBRATE THE SIGNING OF THE TREATY, THE END OF THE WAR, AND OUR NEW FRIENDSHIP!



HSSSSSSSS. WHATEVER.

IT'S MY JOB TO KEEP THE REALM UNITED.

AFTER ALL...



I AM ROSE.

WARRIOR AND PRINCESS OF THE KINGDOM ROSEWOOD.

LOVED BY ALL.



I HATE TO INTERRUPT THE FESTIVITIES, MYLADY, BUT WE HAVE WORD OF DISAPPEARANCES IN THE NORTH.



I FEAR TROUBLE MAY BE BREWING. WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEND A SEARCH PARTY?

WAIT, WHAT?

I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT...

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

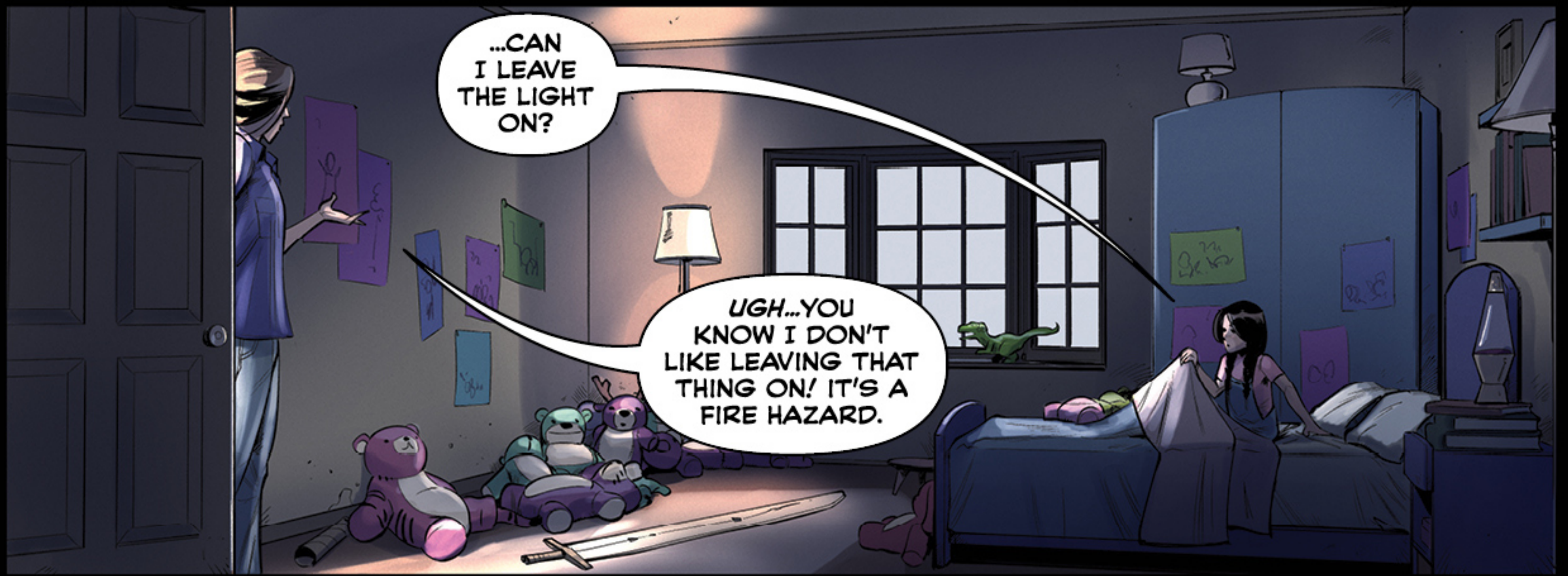


ROSE...

HUH?

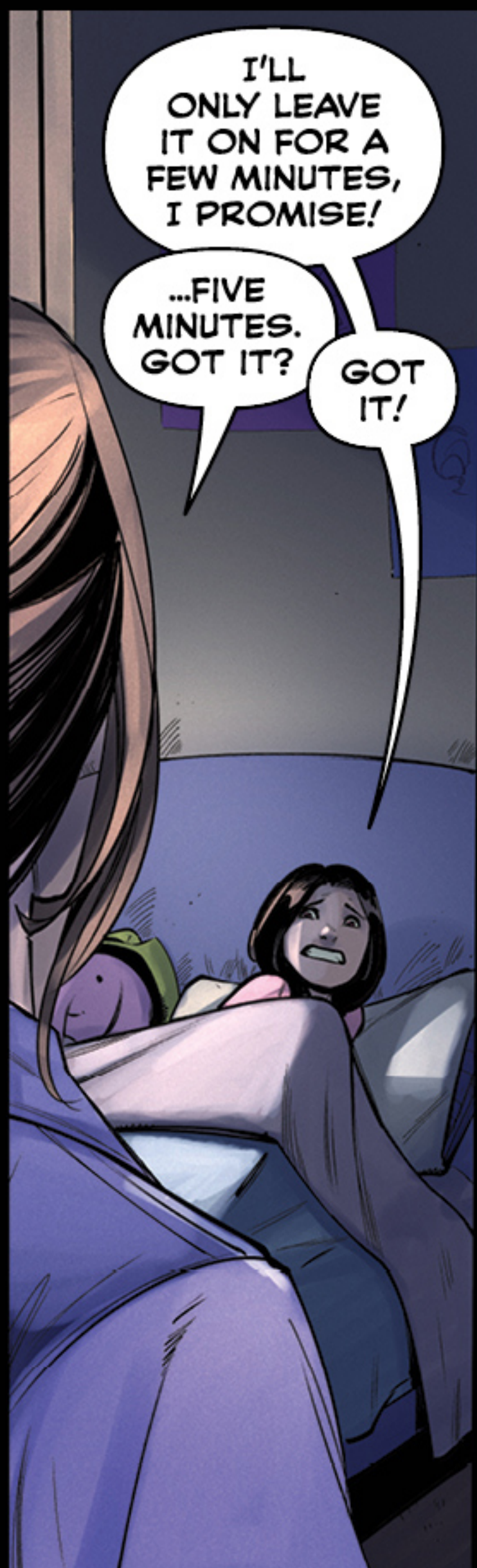
TIME FOR BED. IT'S A SCHOOL NIGHT, YOUNG LADY.

OH...



...CAN I LEAVE THE LIGHT ON?

UGH...YOU KNOW I DON'T LIKE LEAVING THAT THING ON! IT'S A FIRE HAZARD.



I'LL ONLY LEAVE IT ON FOR A FEW MINUTES, I PROMISE!

...FIVE MINUTES. GOT IT?

GOT IT!



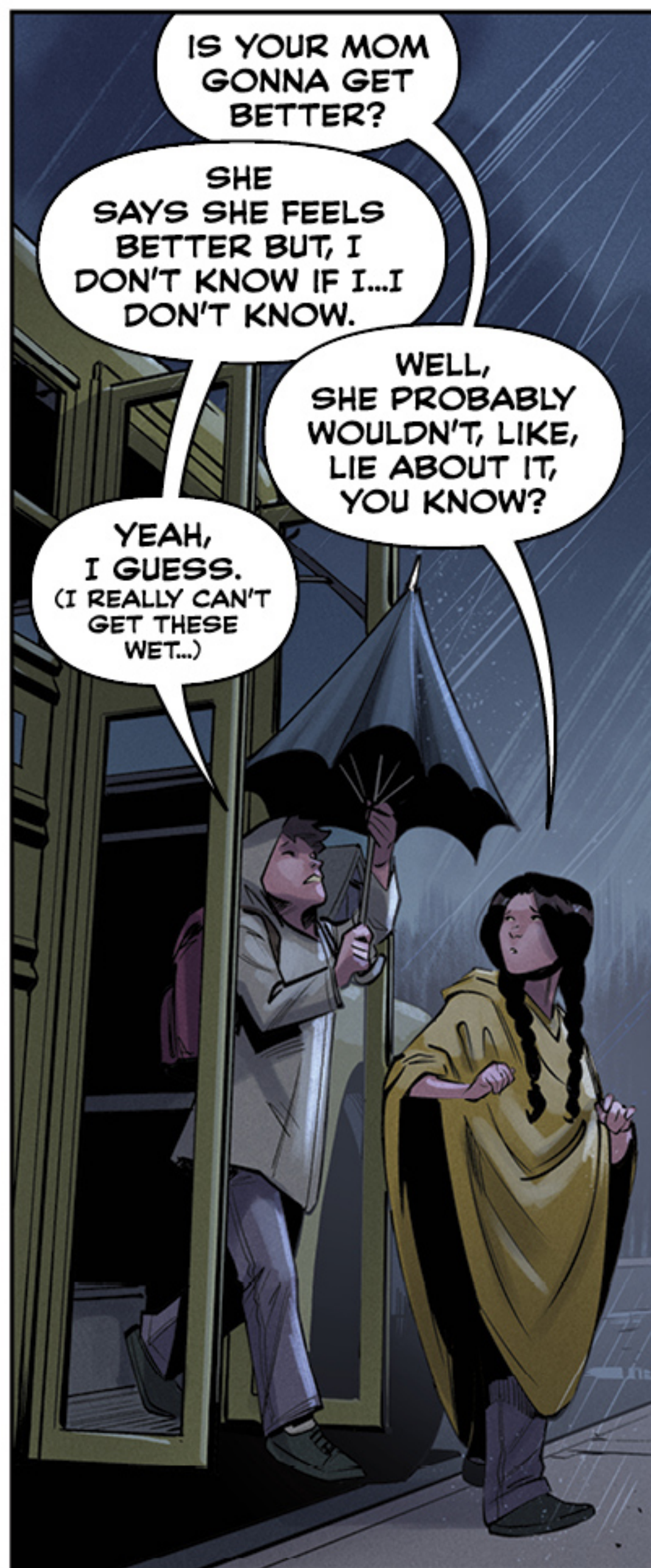
GOODNIGHT, MOMMY.

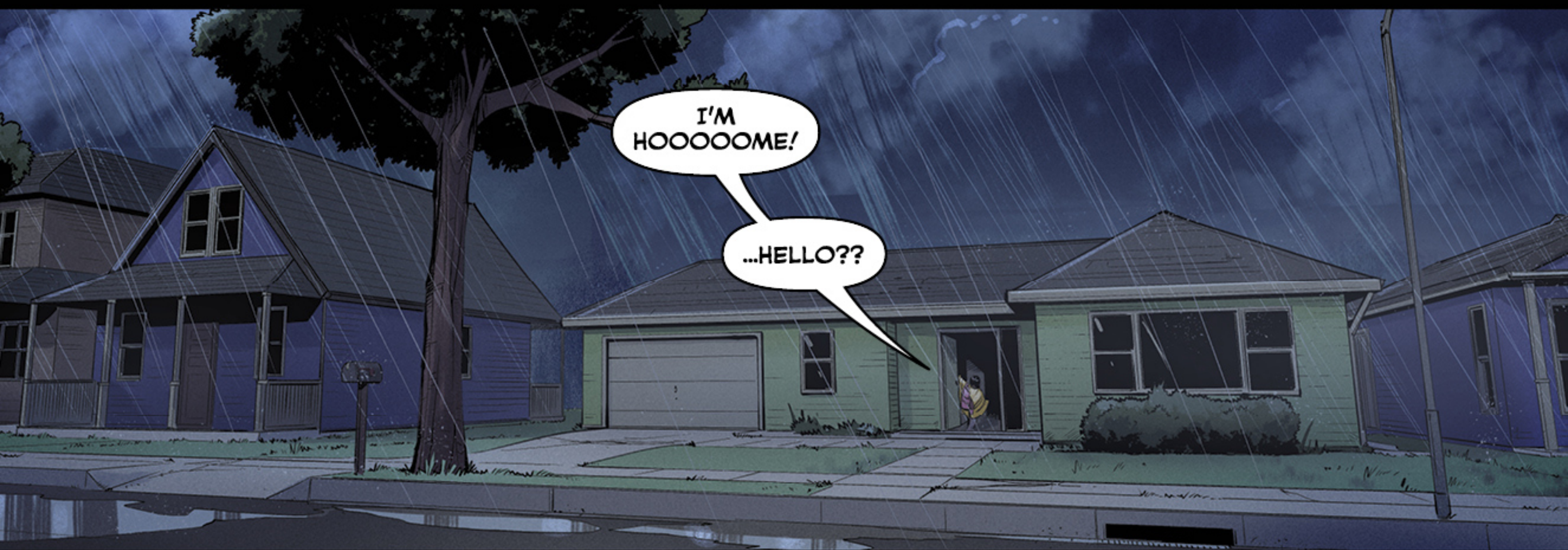
GOODNIGHT, ROSEY.

CLICK



"IT'S CALLED BEAT-EM-BEASTS!"





I'M
HOOOOOME!

...HELLO??



MOM?

HEY...
ARE YOU
SLEEPING?

MM.



I'M HOME.
CAN WE PLAY?
I COULD REALLY
USE YOUR HELP.
THERE WAS--
WALLACE TOLD
ME THAT--

HONEY,
CAN YOU
PLEASE...

...DESPERATE
HOUR?

I'M
TOO...I'M TOO
SLEEPY, BABY.
I'M SORRY.

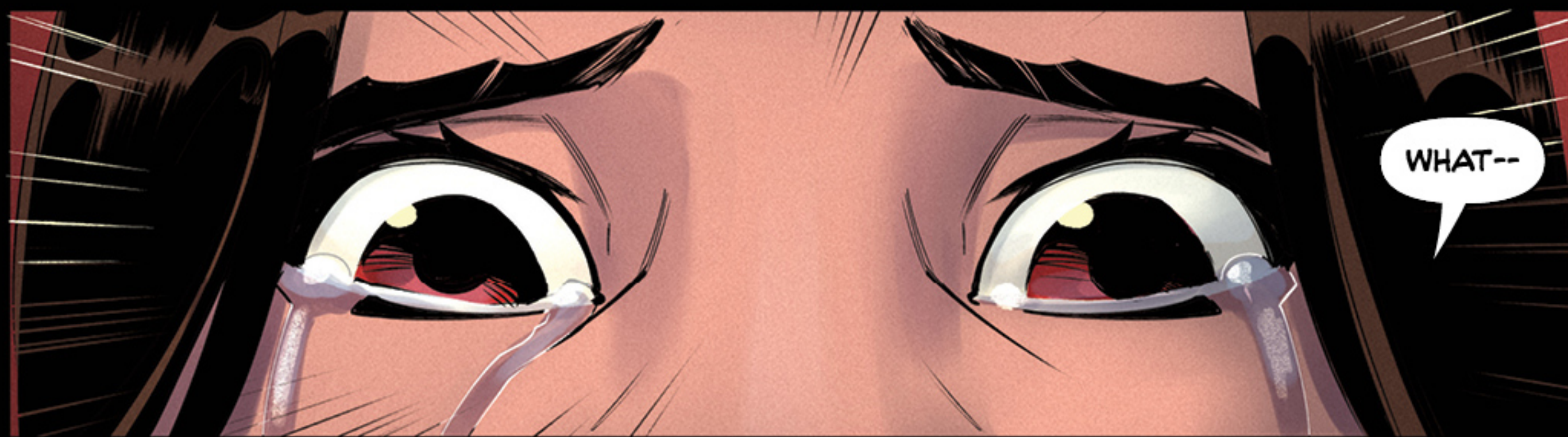
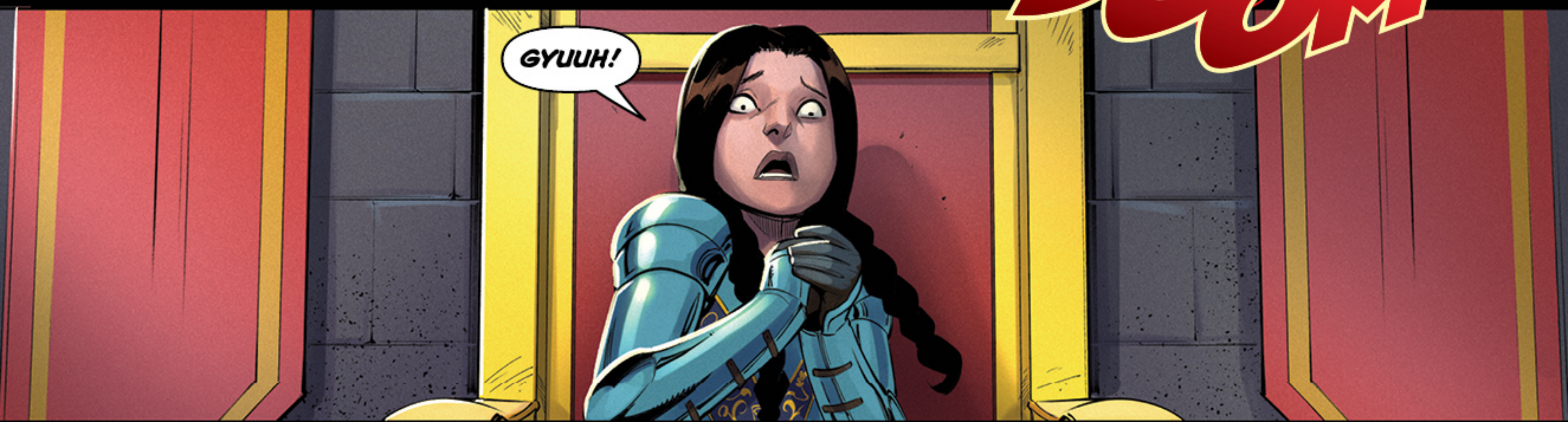


IT'S
OKAY...I HOPE
YOU FEEL
BETTER.

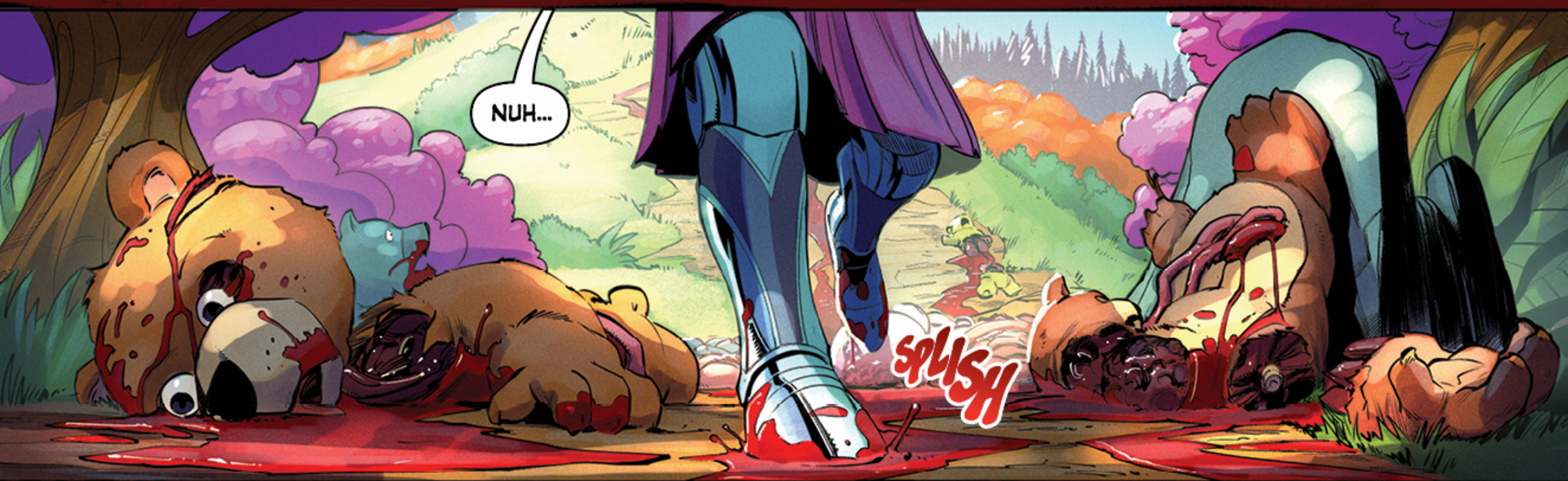


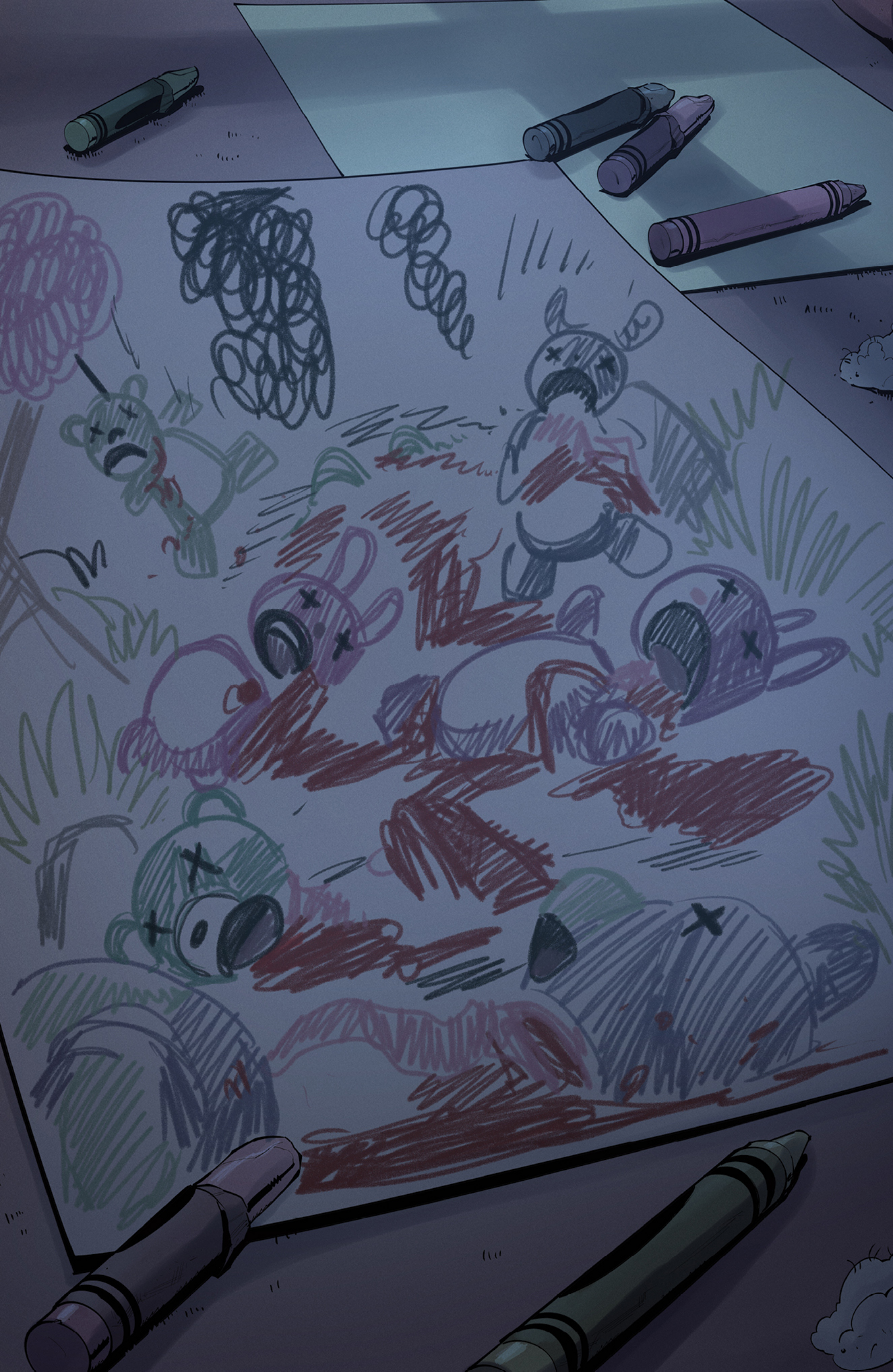
I
LOVE
YOU.

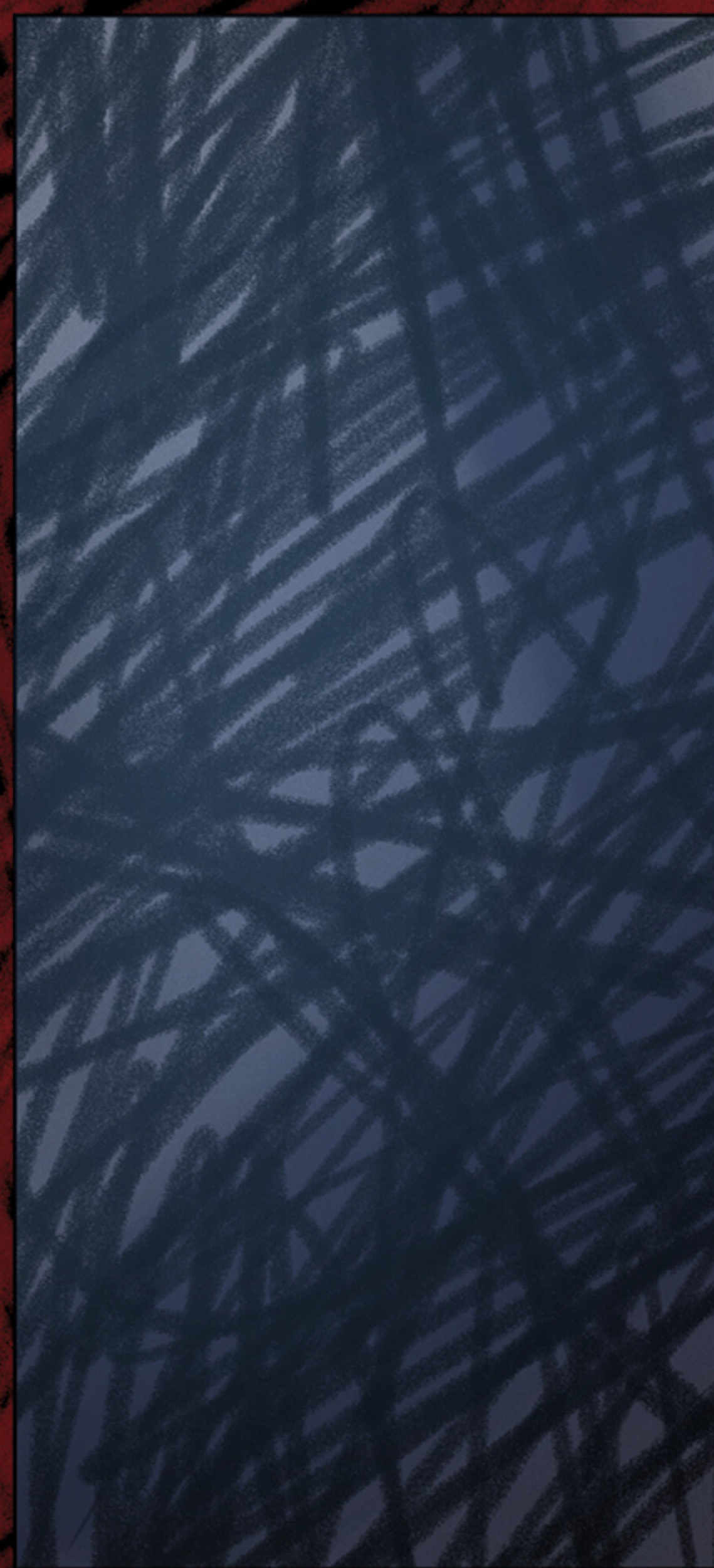




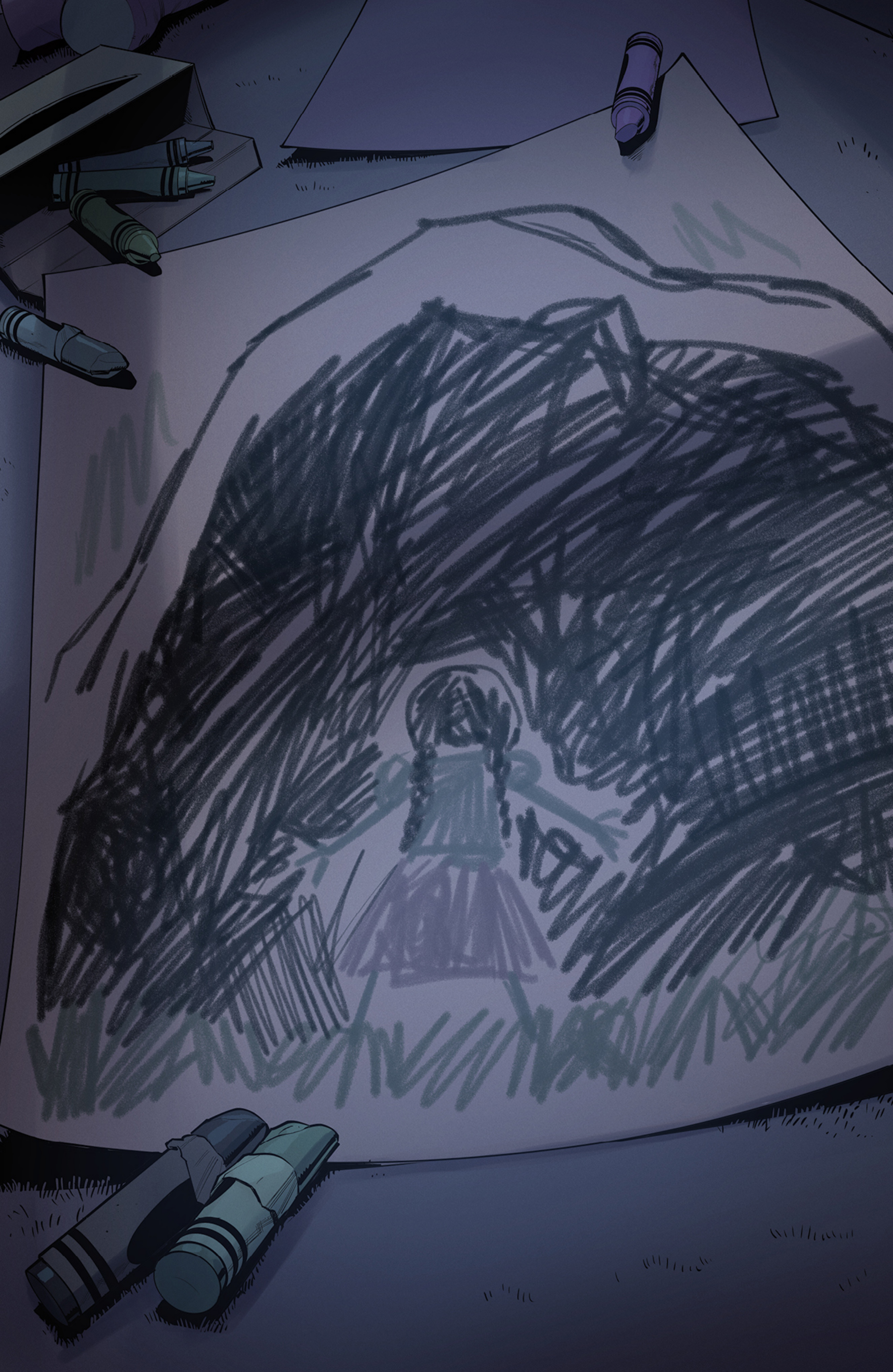










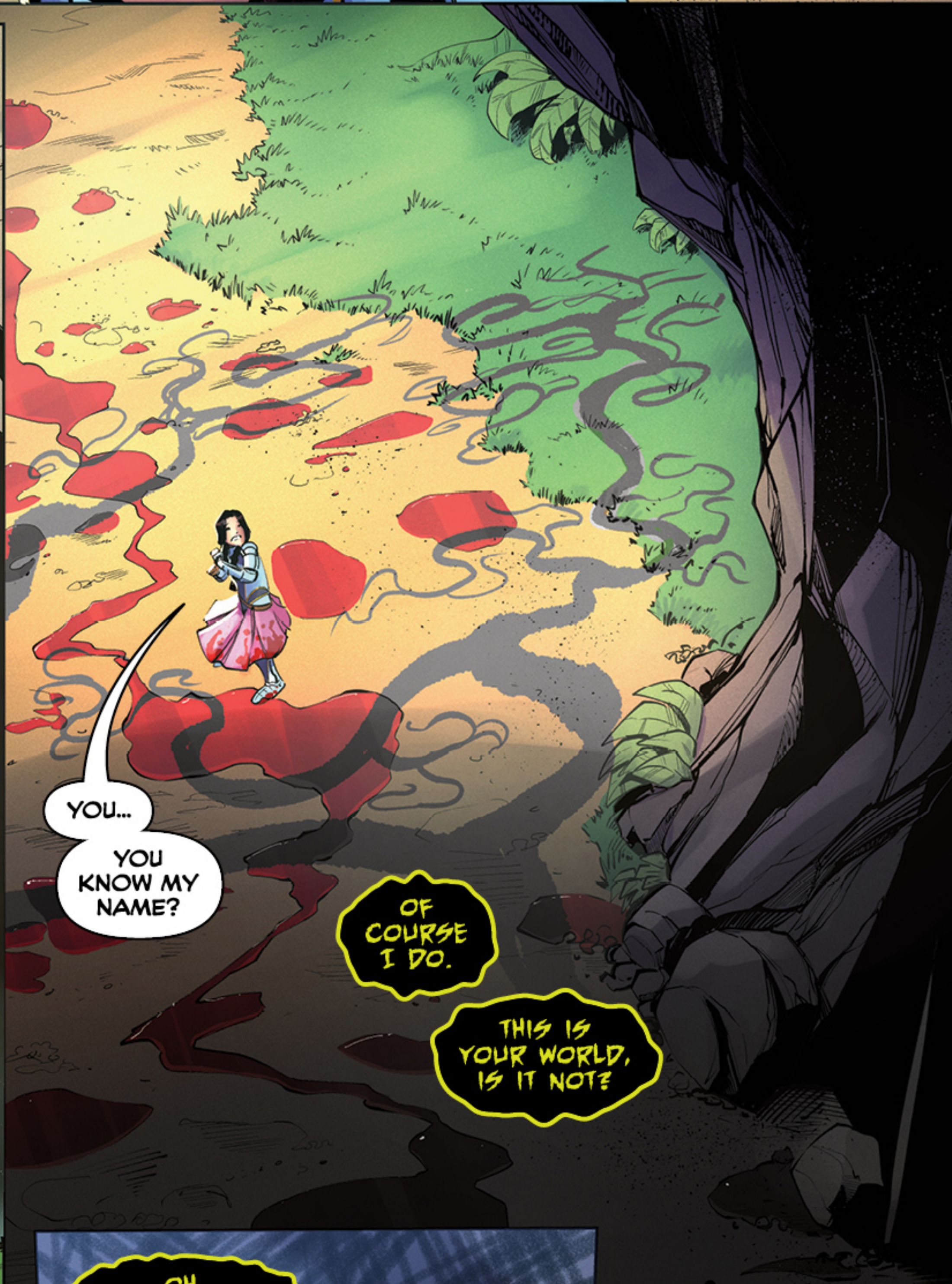




HE-HELLO?



HELLO, ROSE.



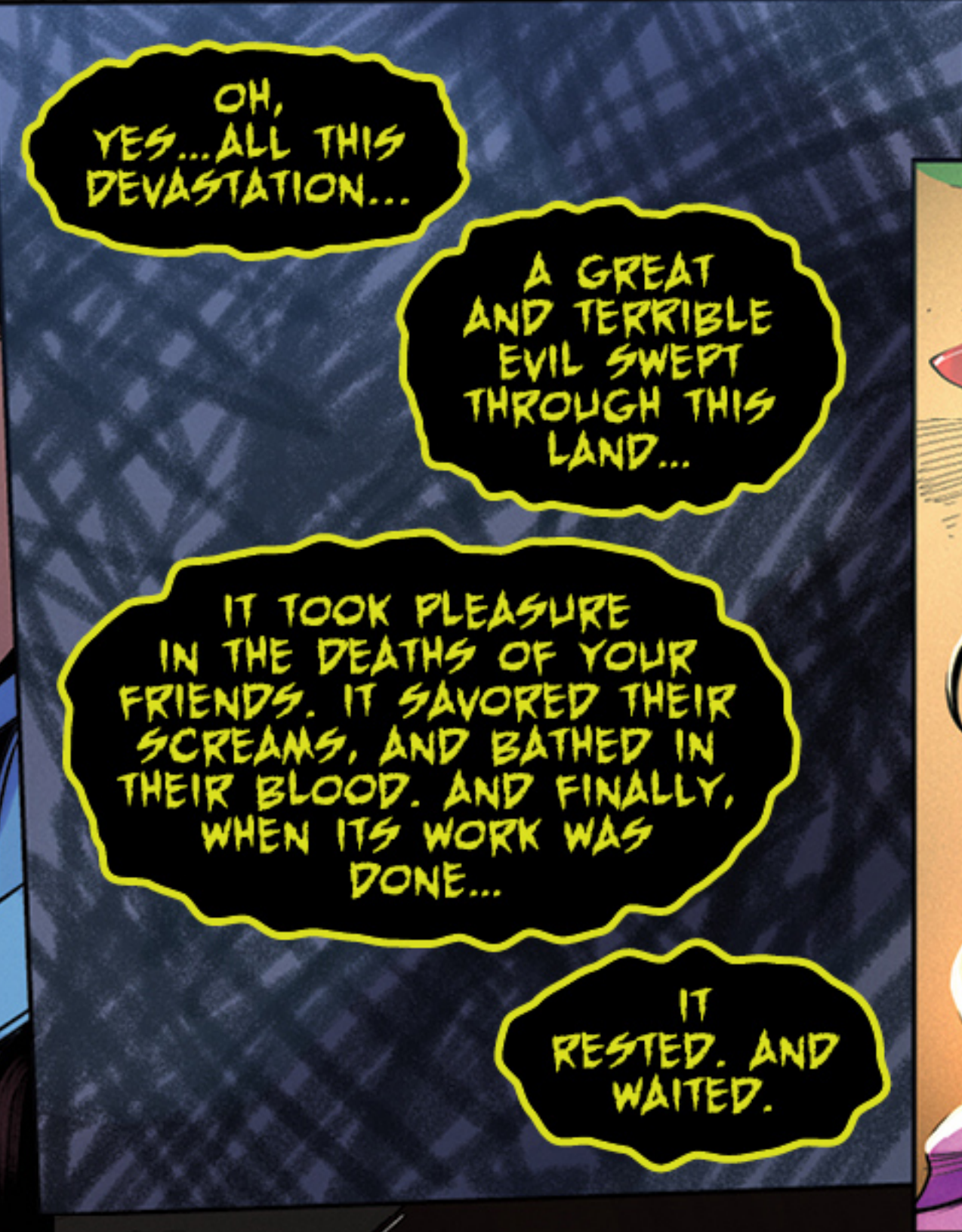
YOU...
YOU KNOW MY NAME?

OF COURSE I DO.

THIS IS YOUR WORLD, IS IT NOT?



DO YOU...
DO YOU KNOW WHO DID THIS TO MY FRIENDS?



OH, YES... ALL THIS DEVASTATION...

A GREAT AND TERRIBLE EVIL SWEEPED THROUGH THIS LAND...

IT TOOK PLEASURE IN THE DEATHS OF YOUR FRIENDS. IT SAVORED THEIR SCREAMS, AND BATHED IN THEIR BLOOD. AND FINALLY, WHEN ITS WORK WAS DONE...

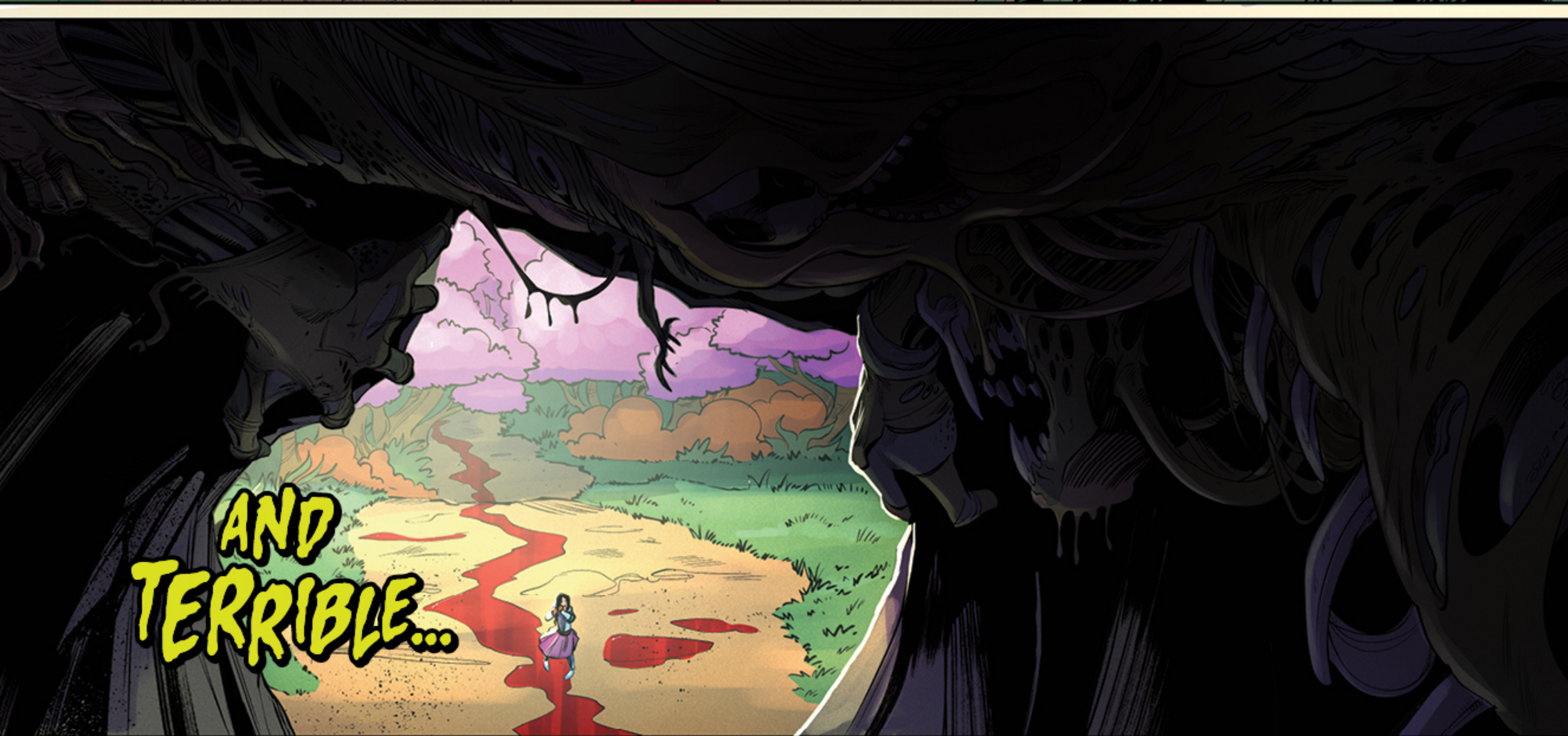
IT RESTED. AND WAITED.



AND... WHA-- WHO...
WHO ARE YOU?



A
GREAT...

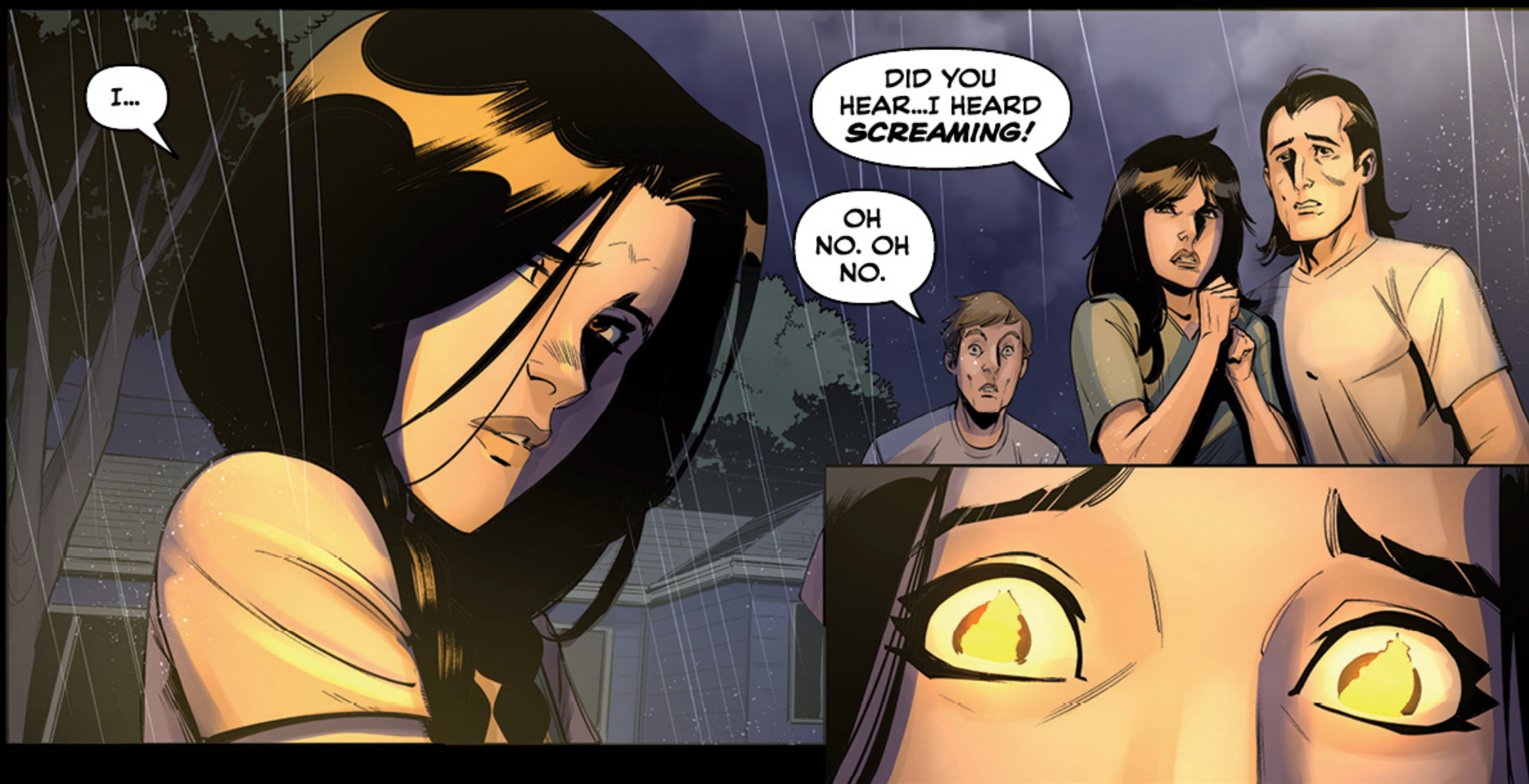


AND
TERRIBLE...



EVIL.







MY MOM...

WHERE'S MY MOM?



TO BE

GON

TINUED



FROM THE AUTHORS



It's always been comics.

I've wanted to do nothing but tell stories since I was very little, and I've wanted to tell them in the medium of comics since that fateful day a friend let me borrow a trade paperback of *Ultimate Spider-Man* on the playground.

I never gave it back. And I was never the same again. (Sorry Ben.)

Comics taught me the importance of fiction, helped me understand the world around me, and led me to find my place in that world.

I spent my time as a kid making thousands of comics out of notebook paper. I have always been a writer, and comics have always represented a realm where anything is possible.

Most importantly, they're fucking *cool*.

Now, my friends and I have made a much prettier comic on much glossier paper. *KILL YOUR DARLINGS* means a great many things to me. In some ways it's my story, in some ways it's Griffin's story, in some ways it is Rose's story and Rose's alone. But maybe it's yours too. I hope so. But also, sorry to hear that.

I'm so proud of our team. Griffin, my best friend, is evolving into an amazing storyteller in front of my eyes. Bob was already a master before we met, yet he never stops leveling up and topping himself. John is a wizard and has delivered for us in so many ways I don't even have the space to get into here.

My wife Ashley has been unconditionally supportive throughout the literal years of me chasing my comic book dreams, even when there was nothing to show for it. I couldn't have done any of this without her, or without the nonstop cheers and love from our wonderful family and friends. Thank you Liam, Brian, Lisa, and Fred. Thank you Mom and Dad for teaching me empathy and fostering my love of story. I love you all, and thank you for believing in me.

Donny Cates and Ryan Stegman, you made our dreams reality and taught us how to make dope shit. Matthew Rosenberg, you are maybe the most generous person I've ever met and you've guided us like no one else (much like Obi-Wan Kenobi in that *Star Wars* you love so much). Brian Michael Bendis, you started it all in that very first comic I stole from a friend who trusted me... And made dialogue my favorite thing in the entire world.

I can't thank you enough for reading.

Unless you're looking at this on one of those websites, I see you.

I wish I could've read *KILL YOUR DARLINGS* as a kid. It would've messed me up in the best way.

I hope it means something to you.

Or you just think it's cool.

ETHAN S. PARKER



I think I blacked out for a couple years making this book. But I've come to just in time to write this letter and it feels very surreal. Ever since the opportunity to create this book presented itself, I feel like I've been death gripping my reality, steering it towards this one thing that made sense during a time in my life where nothing else did.

I really have no idea what to say other than to give my many thanks...

Thank you to my incredible writing partner and best friend, ETHAN S. PARKER. Before we began *working* together, I was already so grateful to have him as a truly unique friendship in my life. Now, our minds are thoroughly melded and I can't wait to tell stories together for a very long time. (Can you believe this shit, dude??! It's happening!! WE'RE GOOOOOOOODDSS!!)

Thank you to our amazing collaborators BOB QUINN and JOHN J. HILL. You guys are so fucking talented and should have no business working with a couple of rookies like us. But you are, and it has been... so many things. It has certainly been educational. You both have been so patient and understanding as Ethan and I learn the ropes. Mostly, it has been truly thrilling to see you bring this story into reality in spectacular fashion.

Thank you RYAN STEGMAN and DONNY CATES. When Ethan and I told them we wanted to make comics, without missing a beat, these gentlemen got to work pointing a couple of extremely eager creators in all the right directions. And if Ryan and Donny opened the floodgates, MATTHEW ROSENBERG has helped us navigate the chaotic waters. This book would likely not exist without all of their immense faith, generosity, kindness, and creative spirit. I hope we make you guys proud.

Thank you STAN LEE, STEVE DITKO, and BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS whose works mean the world to me and set this whole affair in motion.

Thank you to the SUPPORTERS who have been with me and Ethan since the Rewind days.

Thank you MR. KUPKE for starting Comic Book Club when I was in middle school and sharing your passion with kids who were just looking for people like them.

Thank you to all the people in my life who let me pitch the book to them over and over again, who read it before anyone else, and who gave me endless amounts of love and encouragement on this long journey... KI, JAX, RY, PARKER, KYLE, OLI, JULES, ERIC, BENJI, HUGH, GARRETT, ALY, J., SPENCER, FELDKAMP, DYLAN, and CONNOR.

Thank you NAOMI for your patience, for putting up with me, and for always being my number one fan.

Thank you to MY PARENTS, for getting me all the way here and for having *just enough* faith to let me take the leap into this. I don't think I could have done it without all the skills I learned from you both. Dad, you taught me how to talk to people and appreciate the stories in their everyday lives. Mom, you work so hard... too hard, really. But so do I, and I know that was crucial in arriving to this point.

And lastly, thank YOU for reading this book. For spending your time and money on something I've helped create. I'm very proud of it and I hope you love it. I hope it makes you feel something, or realize something about yourself or the world around you, or that it just distracts you from all the noise for even a few minutes. Like many works of art before it – and many after it – there is blood, sweat, and tears on every page. Be sure to stick with us! There is so much more to come from *KILL YOUR DARLINGS...* and beyond!

I owe everyone listed above so much. I will forever be in your debts. And I love you all so damn much.

GRIFFIN SHERIDAN





DONNY CATES
RYAN STEGMAN
JP MAYER
SONIA OBACK
JOHN J. HILL



VOLUME ONE

THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE
BRUTAL AS HELL EPIC!



COLLECTS ISSUES 1-4



GET IT NOW!

VANISH™ & © 2023 Donny Cates & Ryan Stegman. Image Comics and its logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. All rights reserved.

FROM FILLING CAVITIES TO SAVING HUMANITY

THE SCHLUB

RYAN STEGMAN

(VANISH, *Venom*)

KENNY PORTER

(*Superboy, The Flash*)

TYRELL CANNON

(*Beef Bros*)

MIKE SPICER

(*Beta Ray Bill*)

JOHN J. HILL

(*Harley Quinn*)

ON SALE NOW

VISIT YOUR LOCAL COMIC SHOP & GRAB A COPY!



THE SCHLUB™ & © 2023 Ryan Stegman, Kenny Porter, Tyrell Cannon, & John J. Hill. Image Comics® and its logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. All rights reserved.





THE HERO INITIATIVE CREATES A FINANCIAL SAFETY NET FOR COMIC CREATORS WHO MAY NEED EMERGENCY MEDICAL AID, FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ESSENTIALS OF LIFE, AND AN AVENUE BACK INTO PAYING WORK. SINCE INCEPTION, THE HERO INITIATIVE HAS BEEN FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BENEFIT OVER 70 CREATORS AND THEIR FAMILIES WITH OVER \$1,000,000 WORTH OF MUCH-NEEDED AID, FUELED BY YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS! IT'S A CHANCE FOR ALL OF US TO GIVE BACK SOMETHING TO THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE GIVEN US SO MUCH ENJOYMENT.

EVERYONE DESERVES A GOLDEN AGE

HEROINITIATIVE.ORG



**GOOD SOLDIERS HAVE FALLEN.
IT'S A DESPERATE HOUR.**

KILL YOUR DARLINGS #1

KLC PRESS SUBSCRIBER DIGITAL EDITION
COVER BY BOB QUINN • IMAGECOMICS.COM
FANTASY/HORROR • RATED M / MATURE
KLCPRESS.COM

