

Paper GirlsTM

27



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Paper Girls 27

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**“Rule #4: A paperboy is always clean
in appearance, dress and spirit.”**

–From *The American Newspaper Delivery
Guild Handbook*, published in 1932

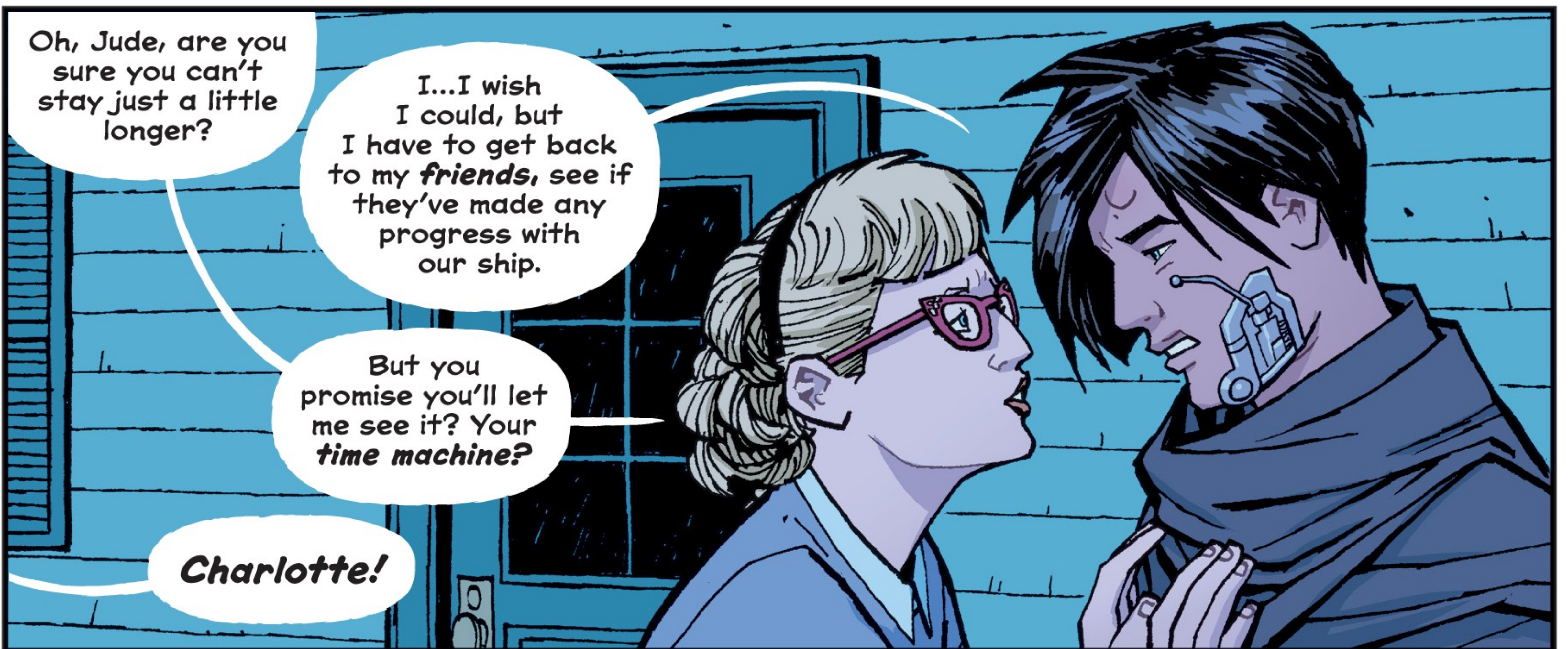


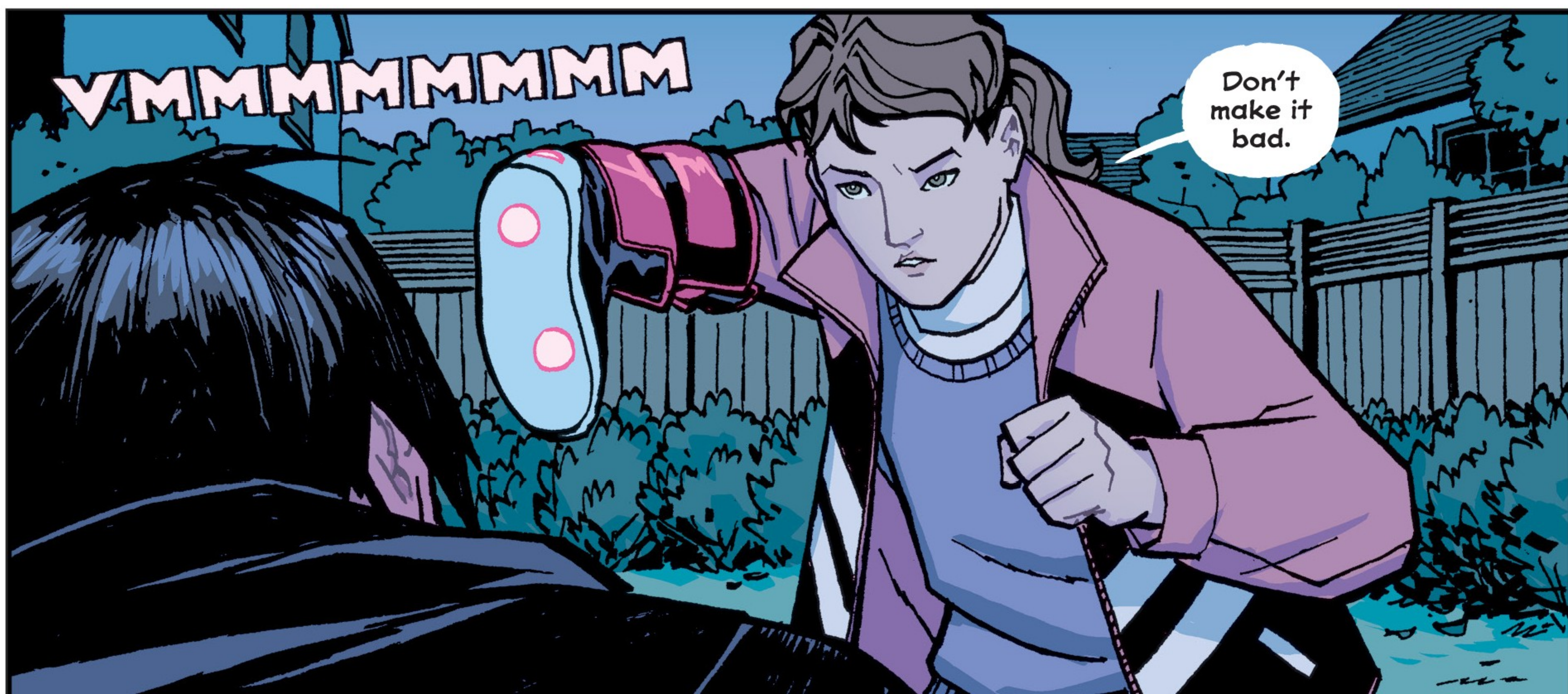
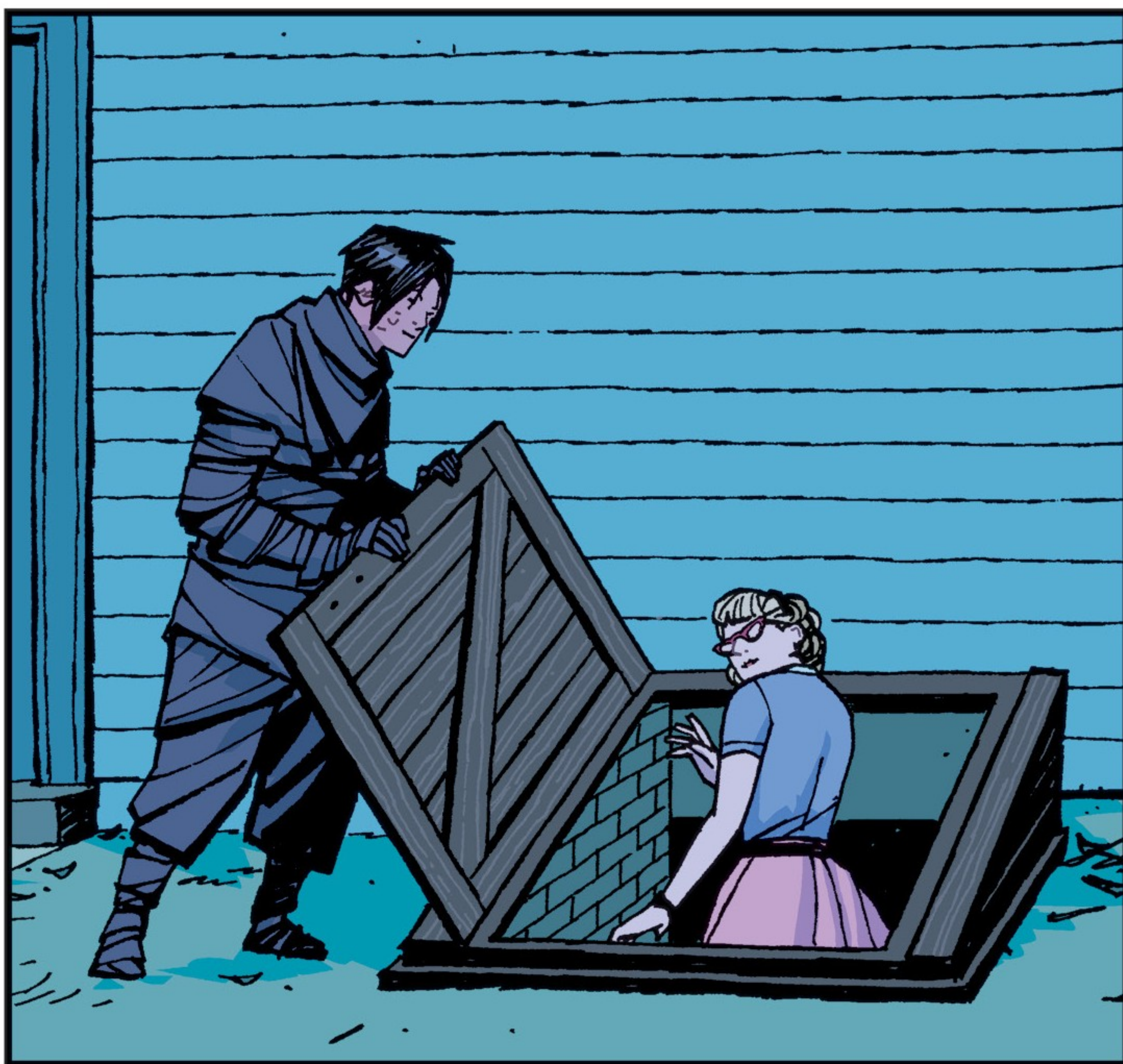


All clear.

It's safe for you to come out now.

About goddamn time.







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Yeah, I don't know what that means, but if you make any sudden moves, I'm gonna dropkick your face off.



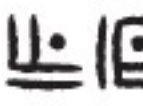
You work for the old-timers?

Hardly.

I'm just a regular old *kid* trying to get home to 1988. That's where I met your buddies Heck and Naldo.



'88?

What the  were we doing in that mess?



Beats me, but it started with you rolling my friend Tiffany for one of her pricey Radio Shack walkies.

Wait, not a TRC-218?

With channel 14 crystals?!



Huh?



My guys and I are like one of your old super-gods, **Robyne Hude**.

We steal from the greedy past to give to our needy present, dig?



Whatever, can you get me back to my girlfriend or not?



Your...?

I mean, we're not "official" or anything.

But we probably will be, *if* you let me tag along.

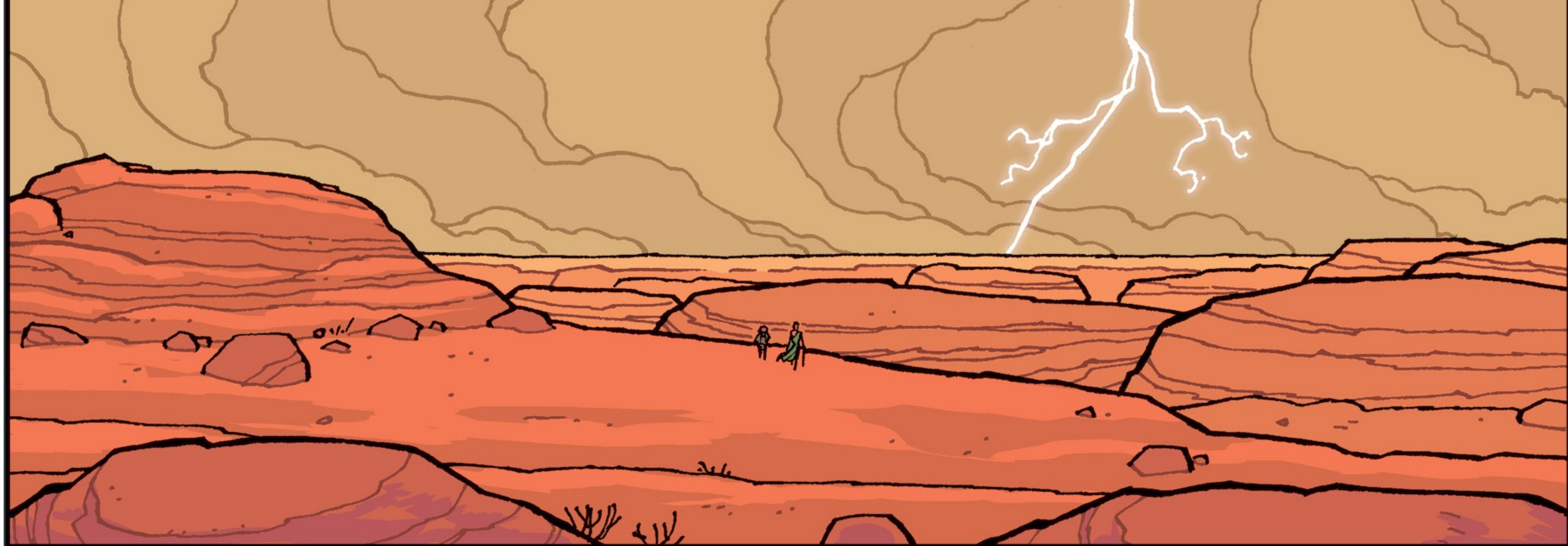


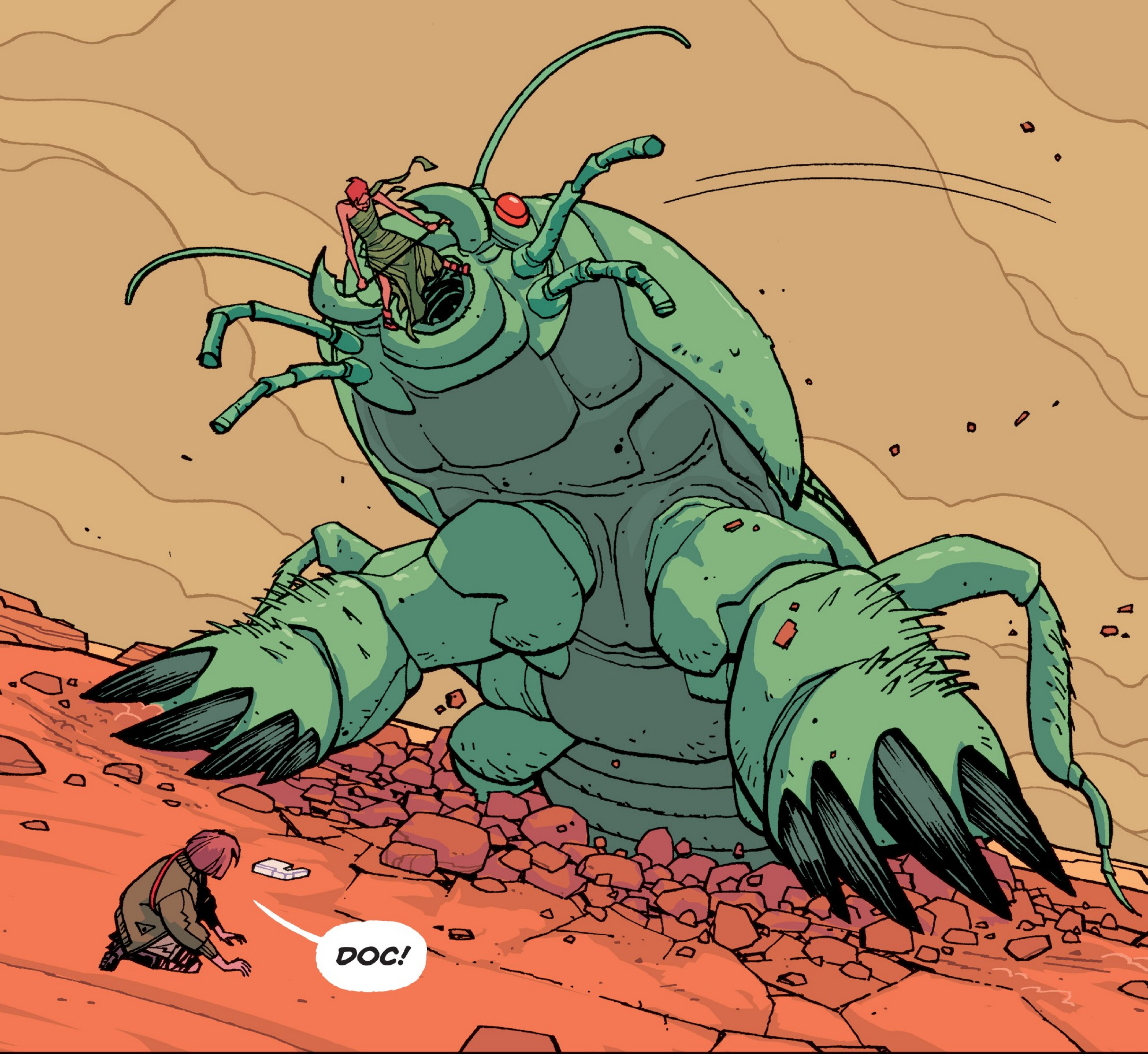
Respect, kid.

I was still in the closet at your age, and my people actually *like* our kind.



Guess your era's way cooler than the history books say.





DOC!



My weapon!

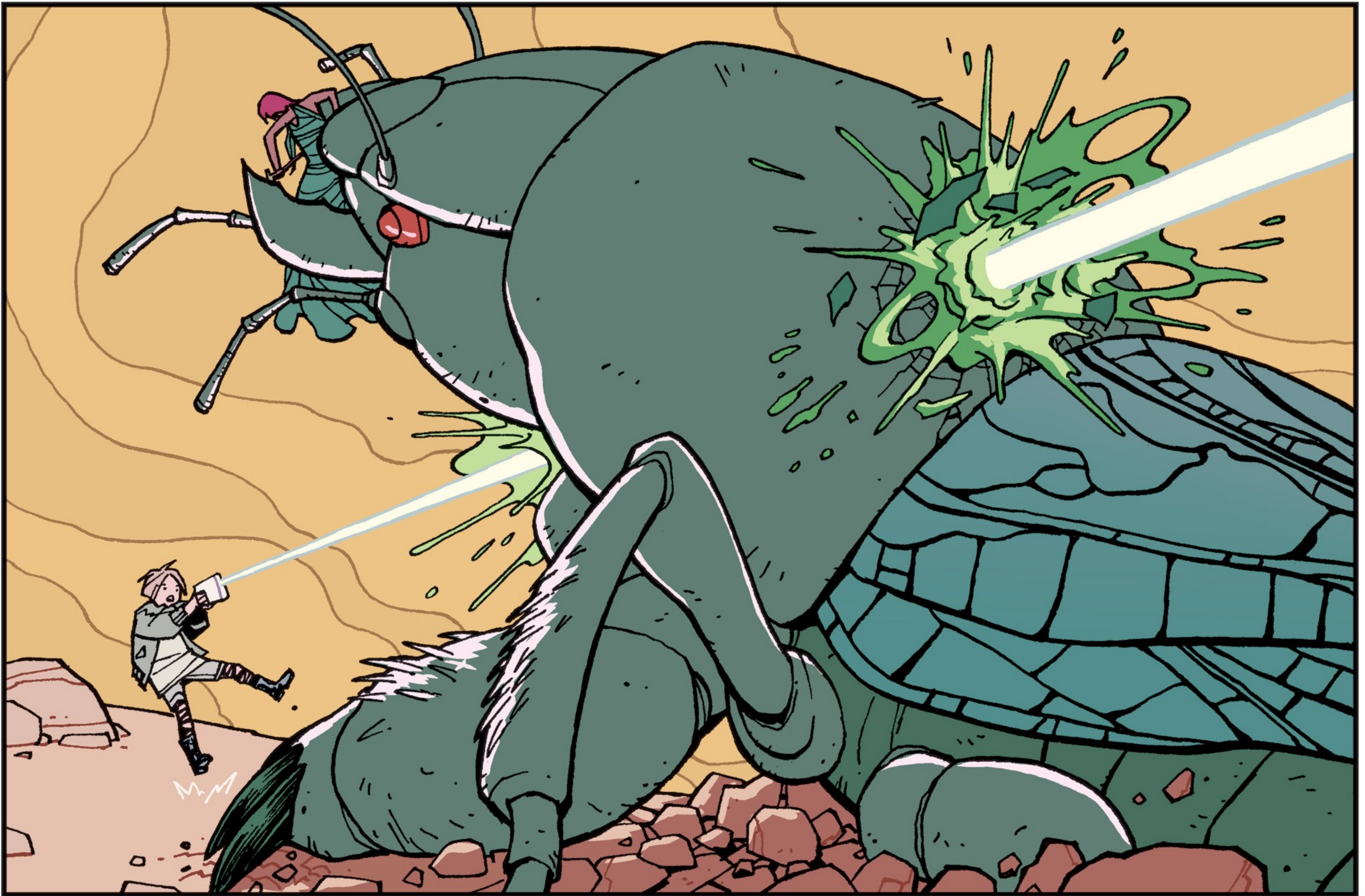
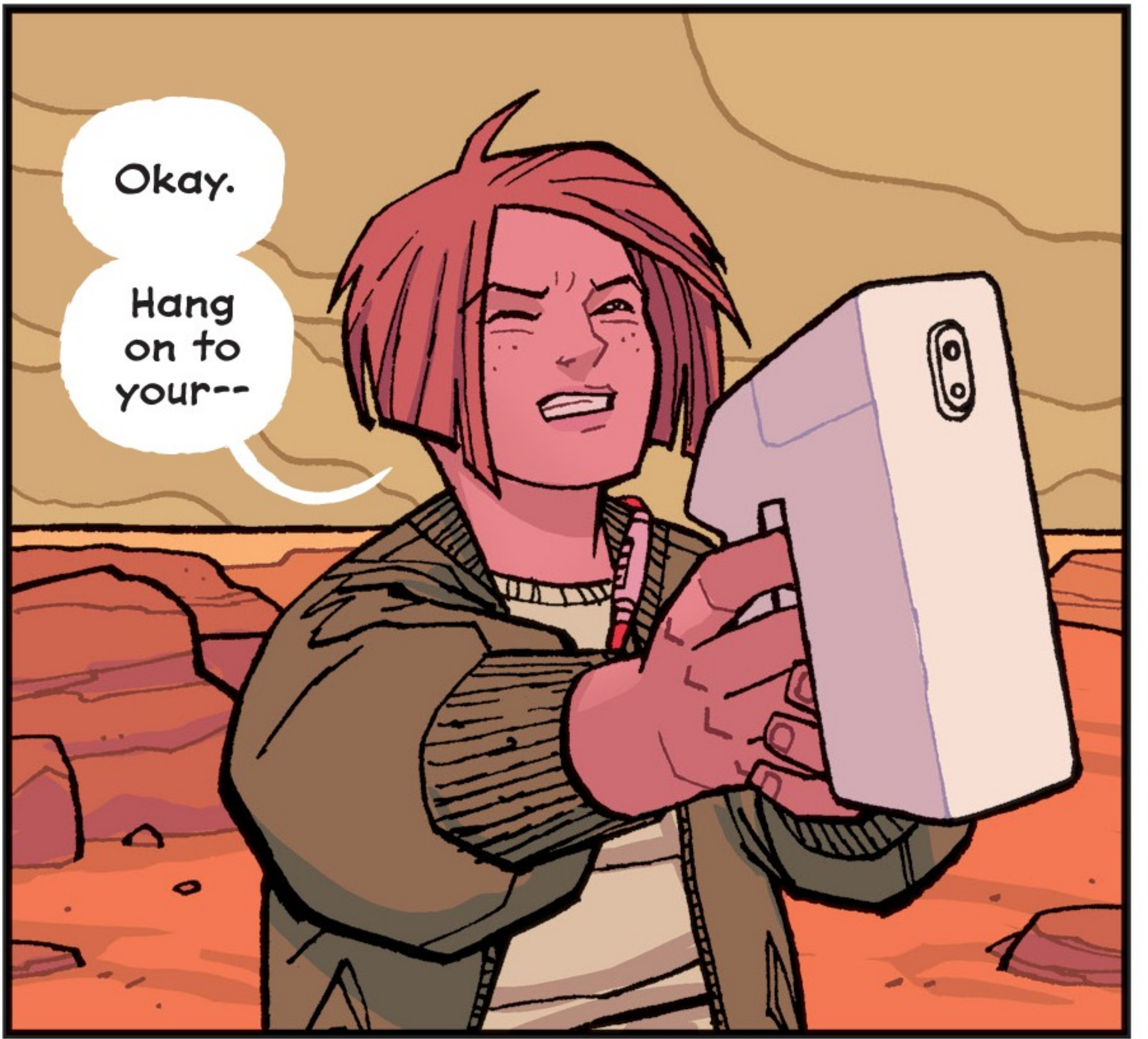
Use it!



I'm trying!

Stupid thing's not working!

klik
klik





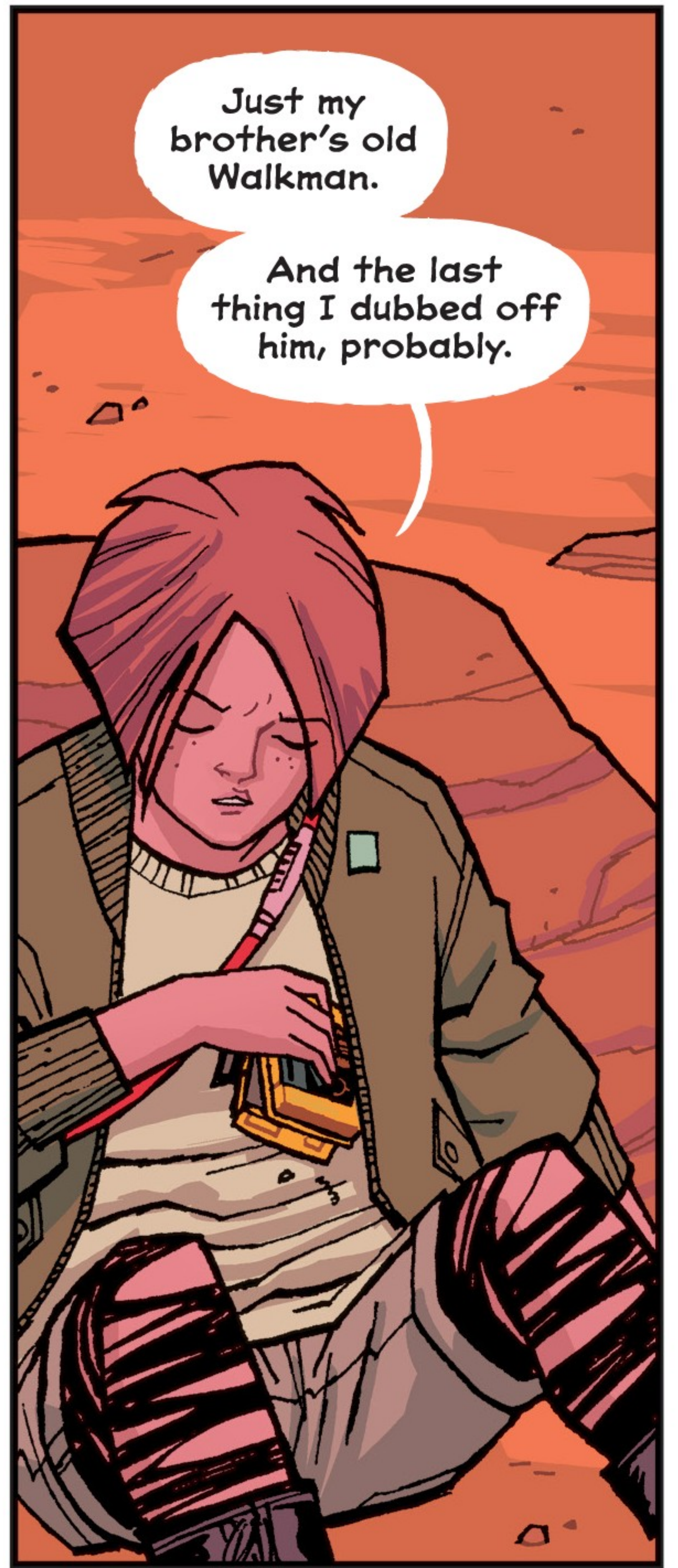
UNF!



That was *shnné* badass.

You all right?

Sounded like you *broke* something.



Just my brother's old Walkman.

And the last thing I dubbed off him, probably.



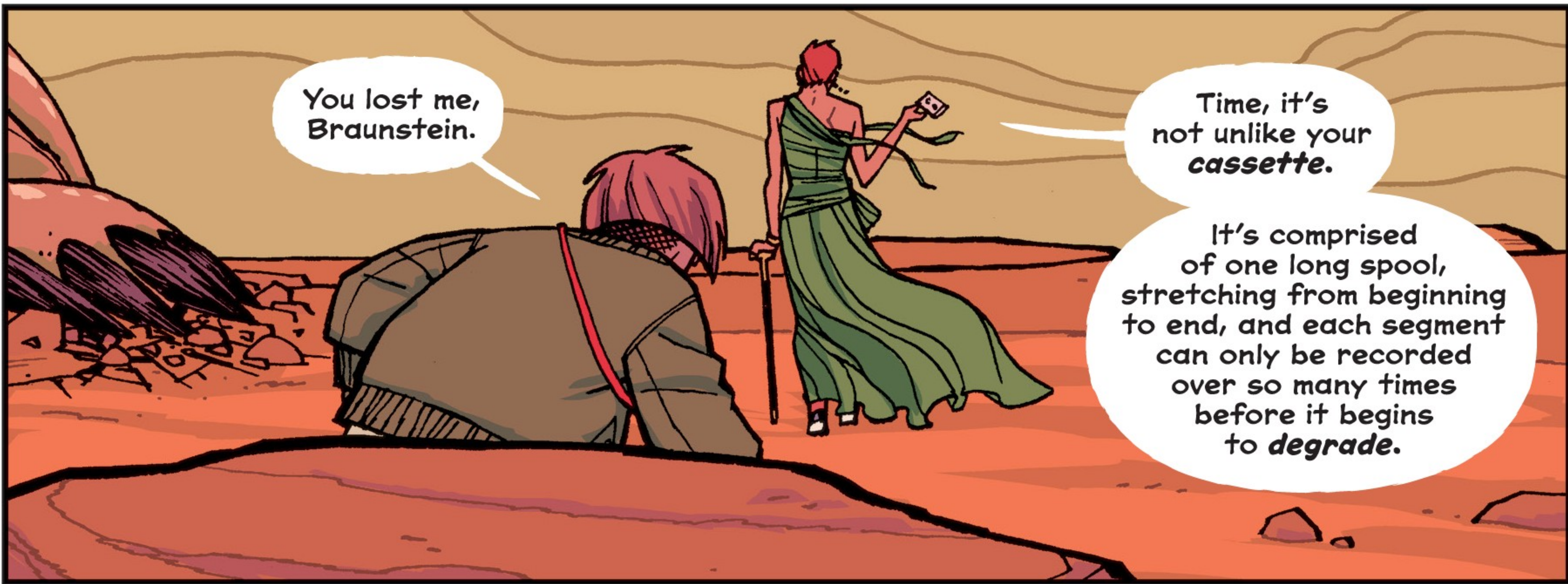
Huh, my *father* used to have one much like this.

Your father?

Hey, why don't we just go back to *his* time, tell your younger self never to invent any of this crap?



I wish that were a possibility, but unfortunately, the world is like one of *these*.



You lost me, Braunstein.

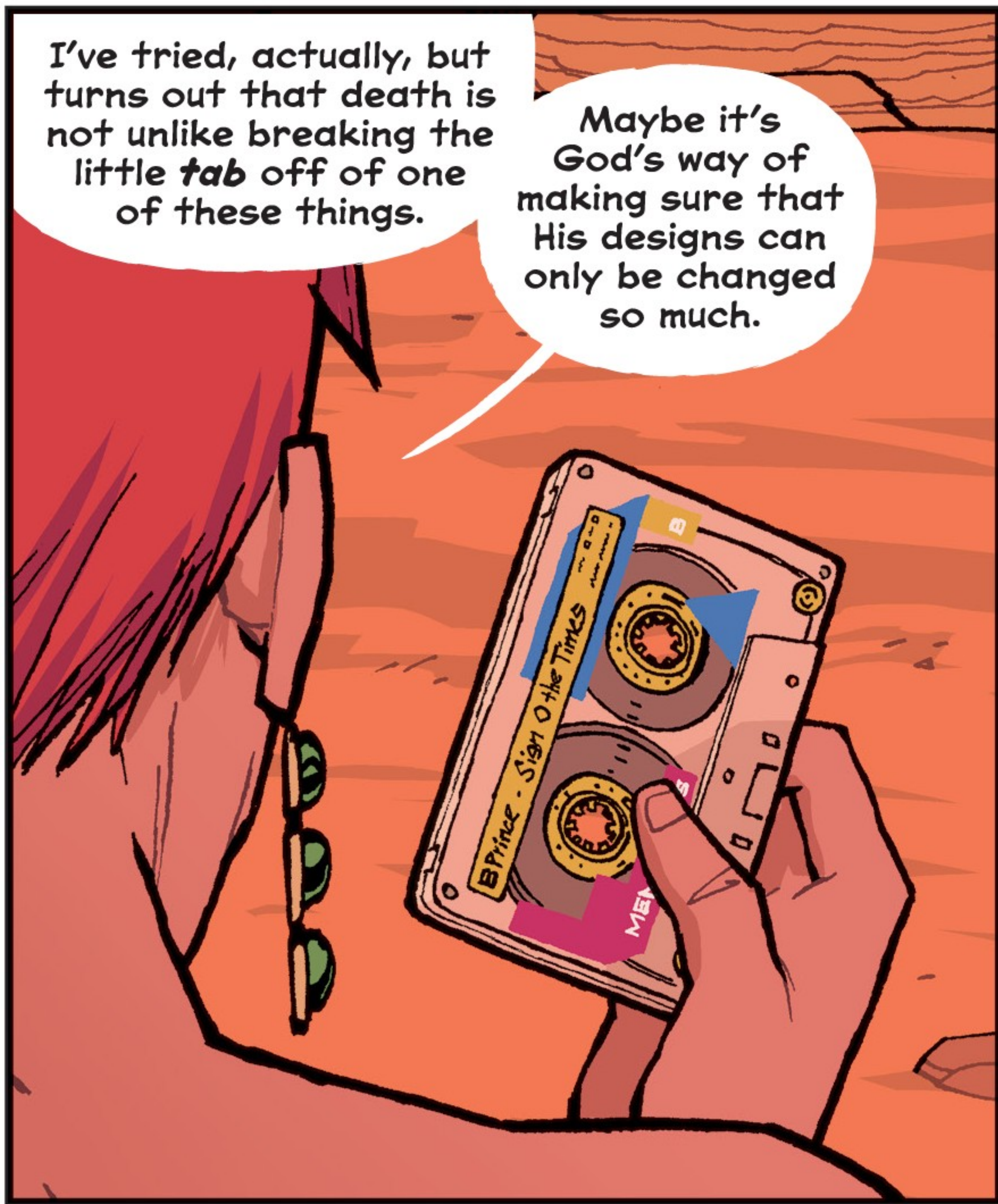
Time, it's not unlike your *cassette*.

It's comprised of one long spool, stretching from beginning to end, and each segment can only be recorded over so many times before it begins to *degrade*.



But, I'm not talking about erasing, like, all of human history!

Let's just go back and make sure that neither of us catch the shitty time-travel disease that's gonna do us both in!



I've tried, actually, but turns out that death is not unlike breaking the little *tab* off of one of these things.

Maybe it's God's way of making sure that His designs can only be changed so much.



Hold on.

You're saying God is *real*?



I know, when I was your age, I always *hated* when people ascribed whatever they didn't fully understand to some mythical being.

But the older I've gotten, the more I've come to believe that there must be *some* kind of higher power at work out there.



What kind of asshole creator would let a *kid* die?



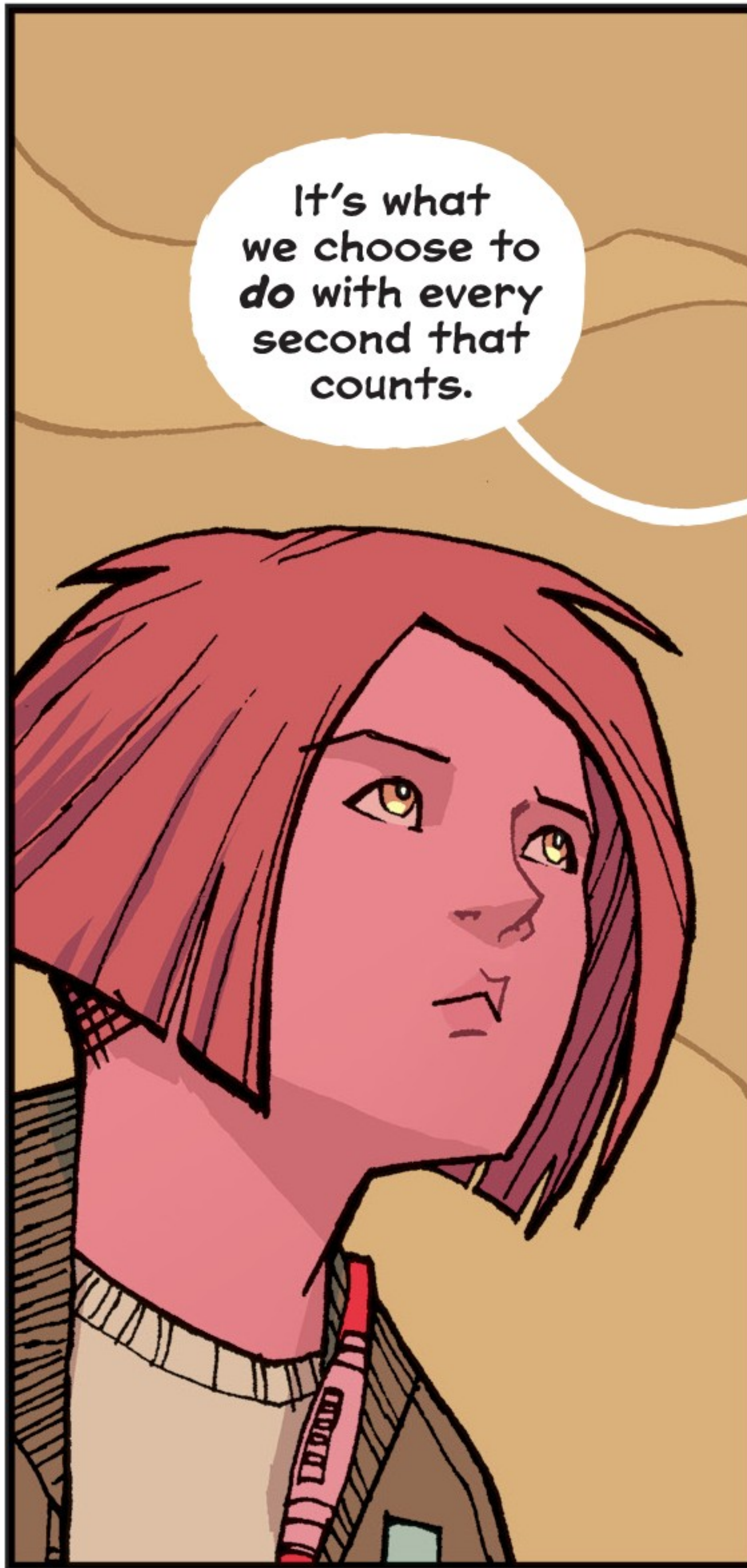
You have every right to be pissed, Mac.

Nothing about life is fair...but at least yours isn't over yet.

So what? Even if I escape this nightmare, I have what, a few more years left, tops?



I know this will sound strange coming from someone in my line of work, but the amount of *time* we're each given is irrelevant.



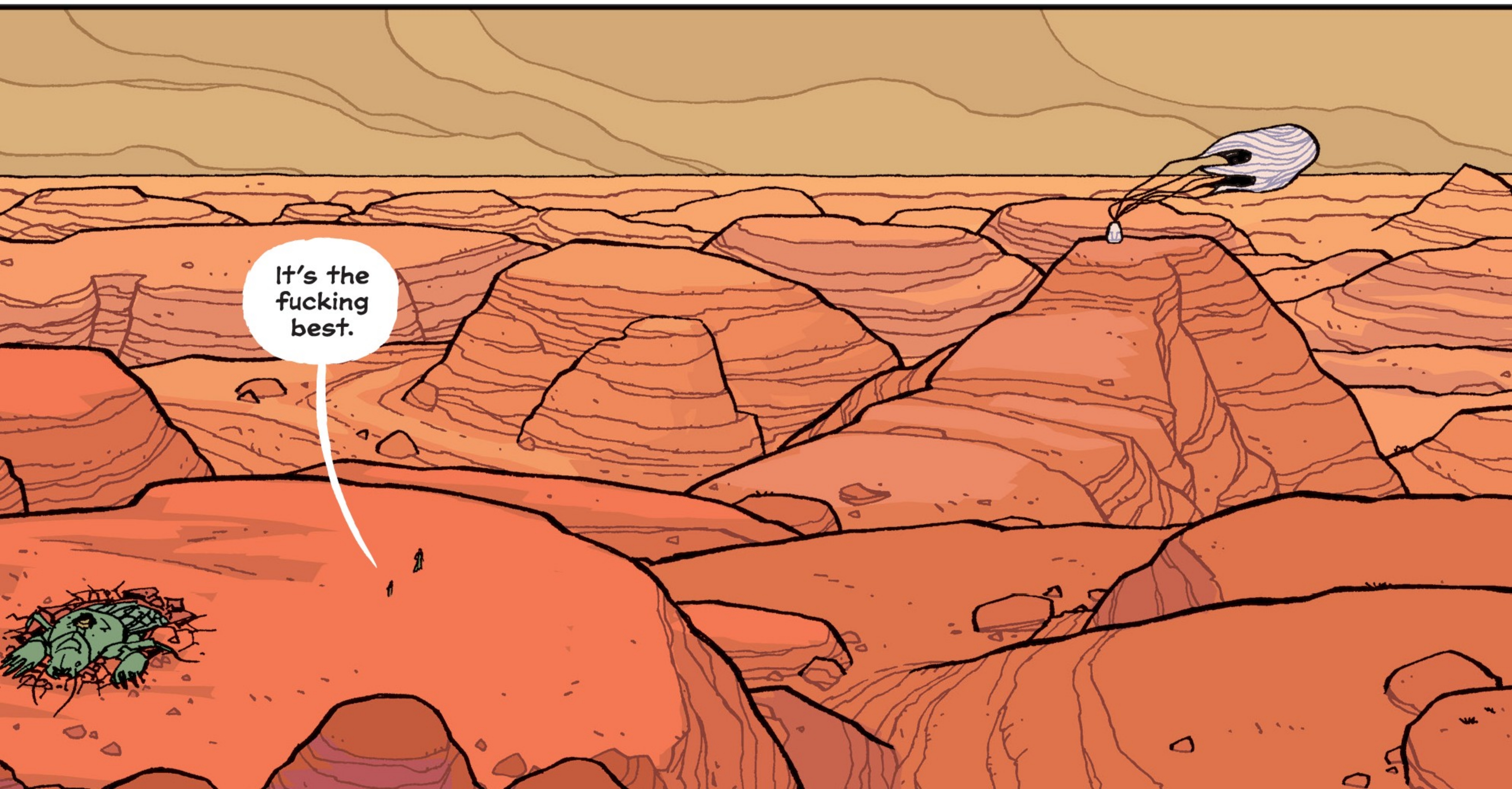
It's what we choose to *do* with every second that counts.



Anyway, at least your tape survived.

Is it a good one?

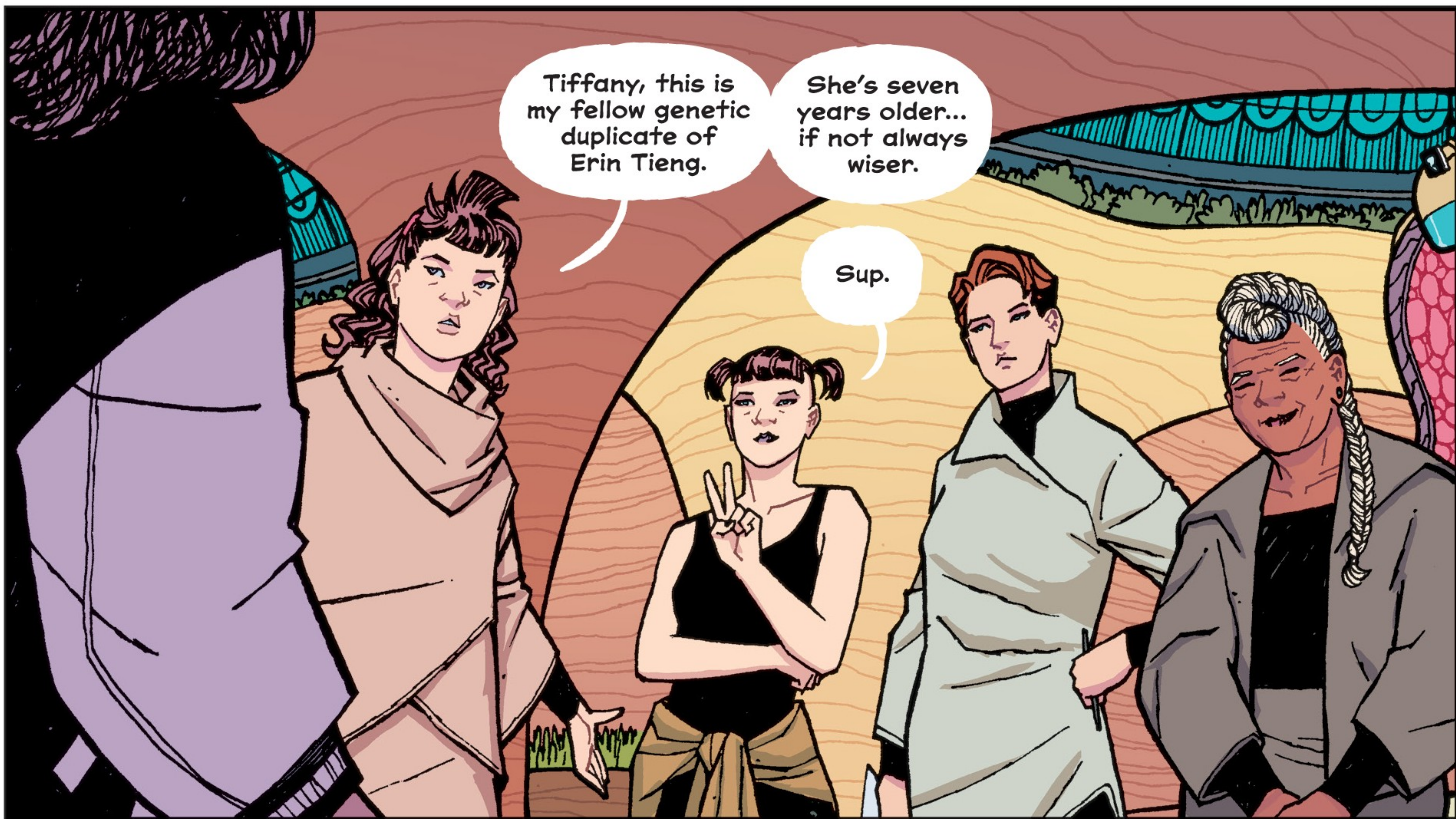
Nah.



It's the fucking best.



What the eff is even happening right now?



Tiffany, this is my fellow genetic duplicate of Erin Tieng.

She's seven years older... if not always wiser.

Sup.



And you may recognize your friend *KJ* in this more distinguished clone of--

You.

You're... you're a copy of *me*, aren't you?



No, sweetheart.

I *am* you.



Say what now?

It's me, "Double-Oh Tiff"!

I'm the same older version of us you saved from my train wreck of a life back in 2000!



That... that isn't possible.

Hmmm, how can I prove it to you?

Well, remember third grade? When we shoplifted that pack of Garbage Pail Kids without getting caught? We've never confessed that to *anyone*, not even--



But, I watched you *explode*! And...and how you die is how you die!



True, but it only *looked* as if I perished.

Sixty years ago, people from this glorious paradise swooped in a split second before that blast to transport me to their time. They *Freejack*-ed me!



Who the hell is Free Jack?



Was that not out in '88?

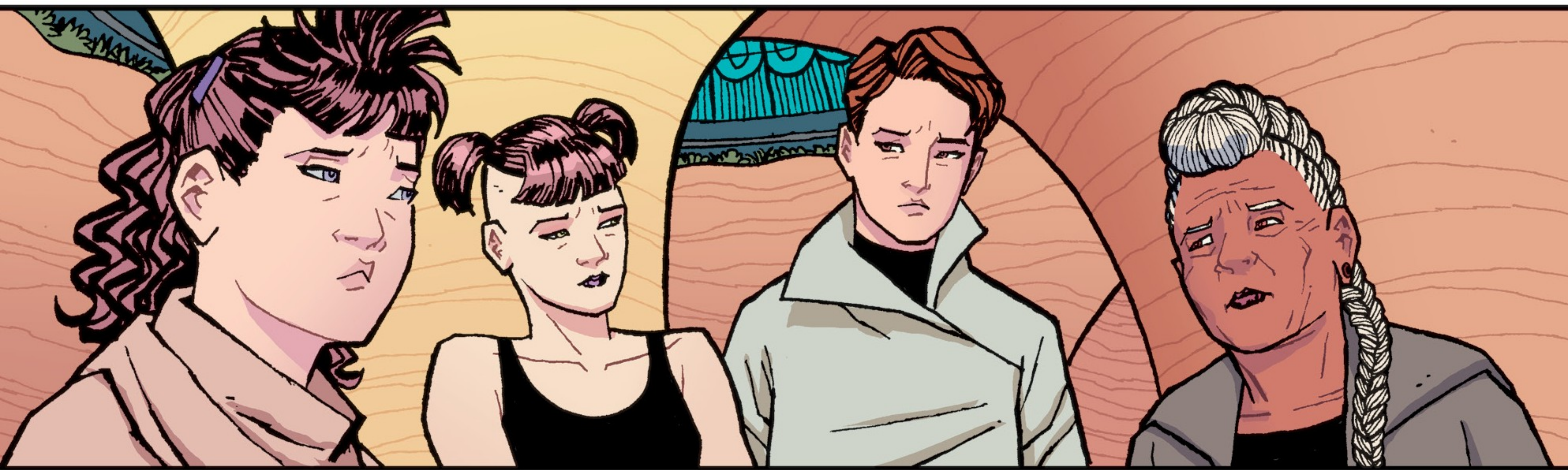
Thought for sure I'd seen that when we were your age.



Tiffany, our foremothers rescued your older self for the same reason they gave birth to us: because you and each of your friends are vitally important to the future.



If that's true, where's Mac?



Look, "it's complicated" is the understatement of the friggin' mega-annum.

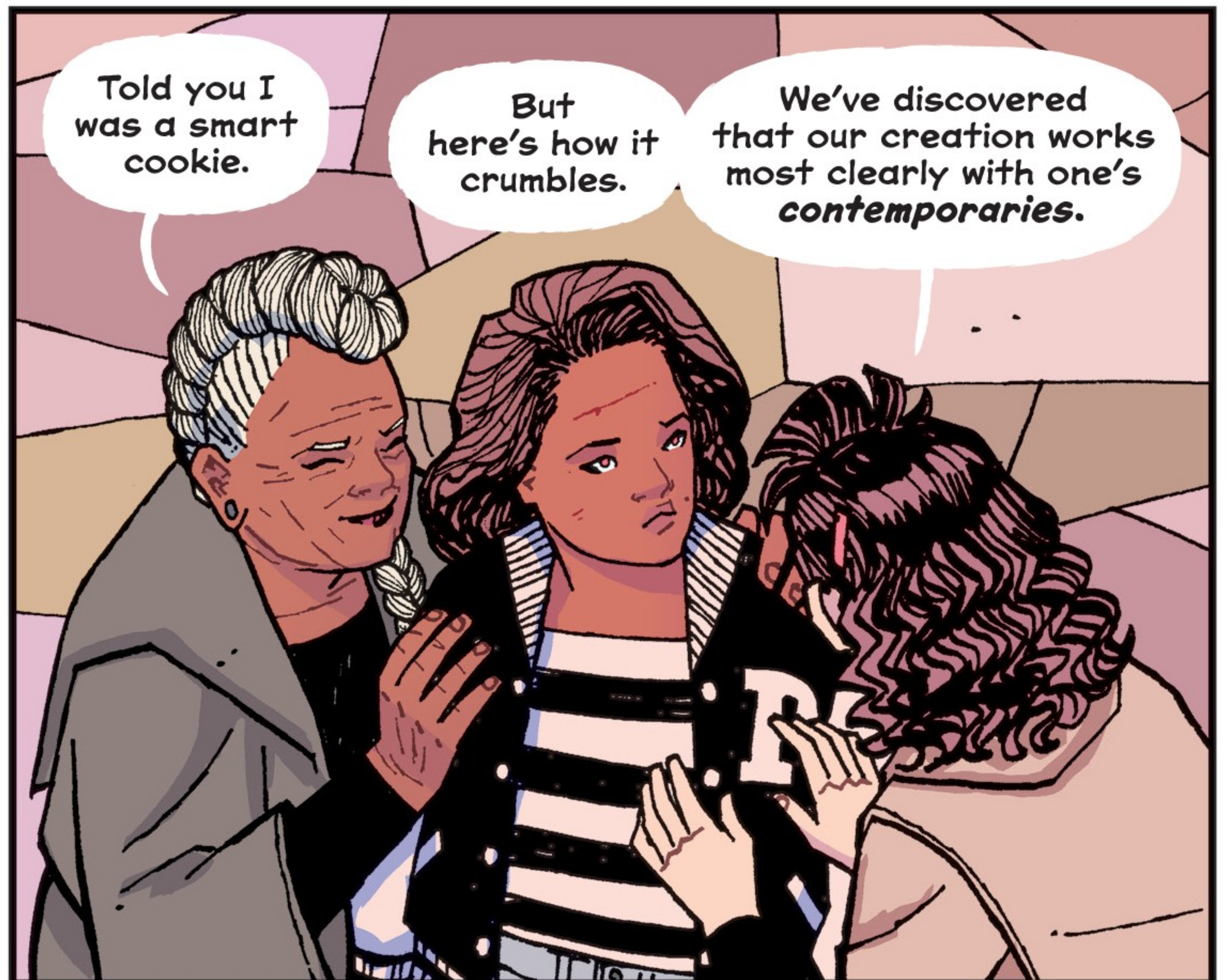
But all you need to know is that these ladies and I are gonna reunite you with *all three* of your fellow papergirls.

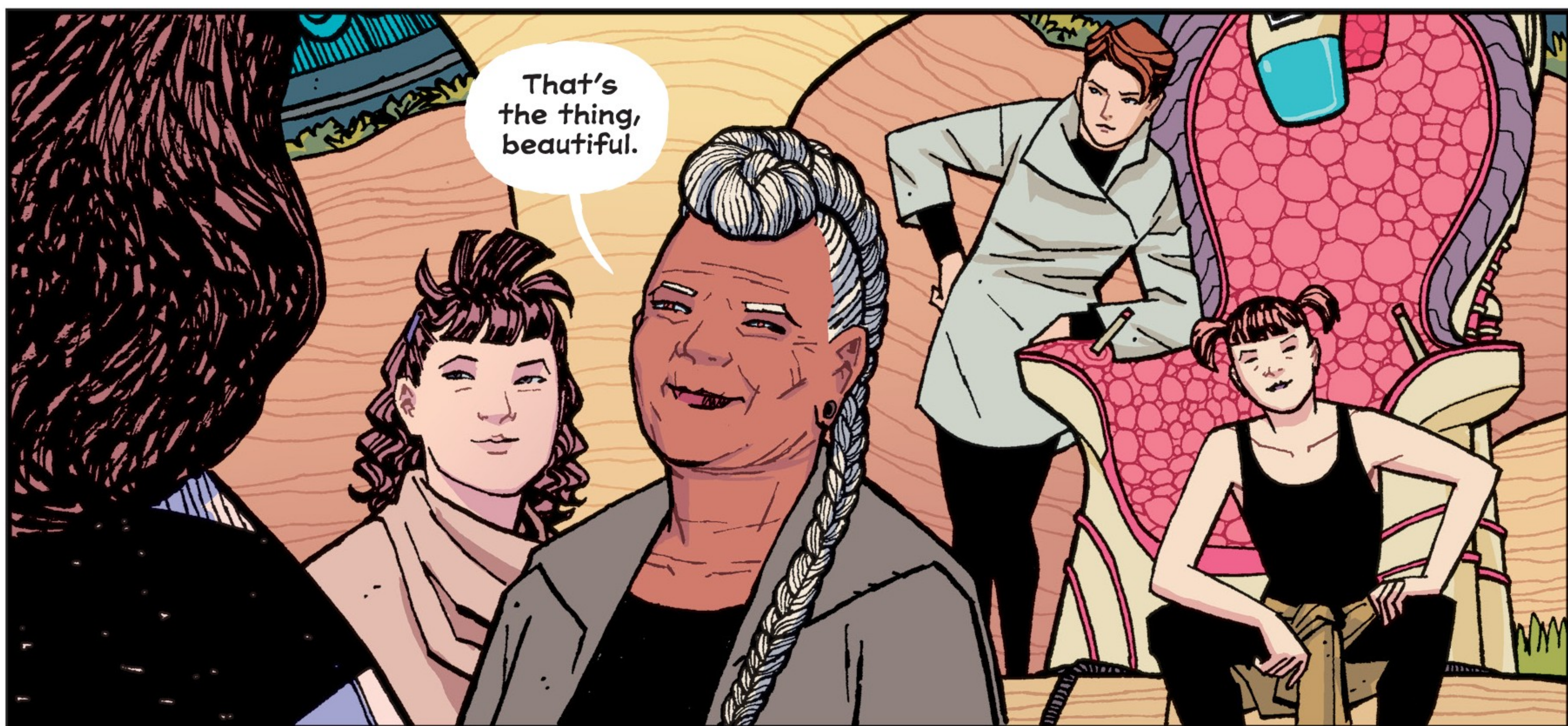


Then why haven't you done it already?

Because we still need your assistance.

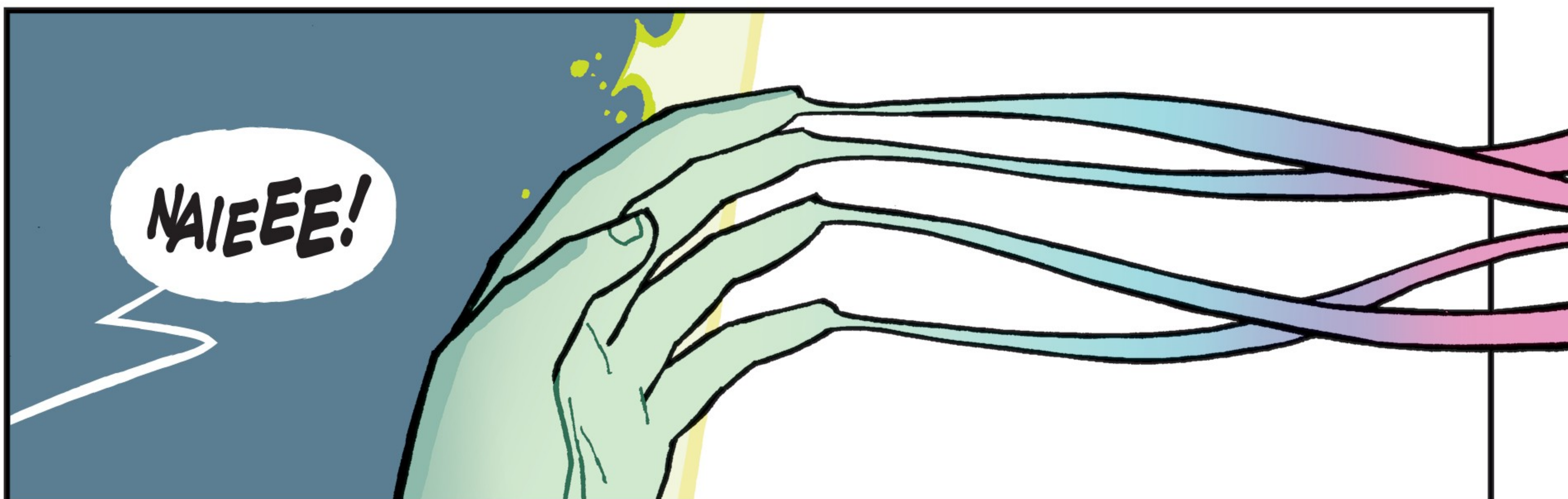
The only way our monstrous war--any war, really--finally ends is by opening up *lines of communication*.

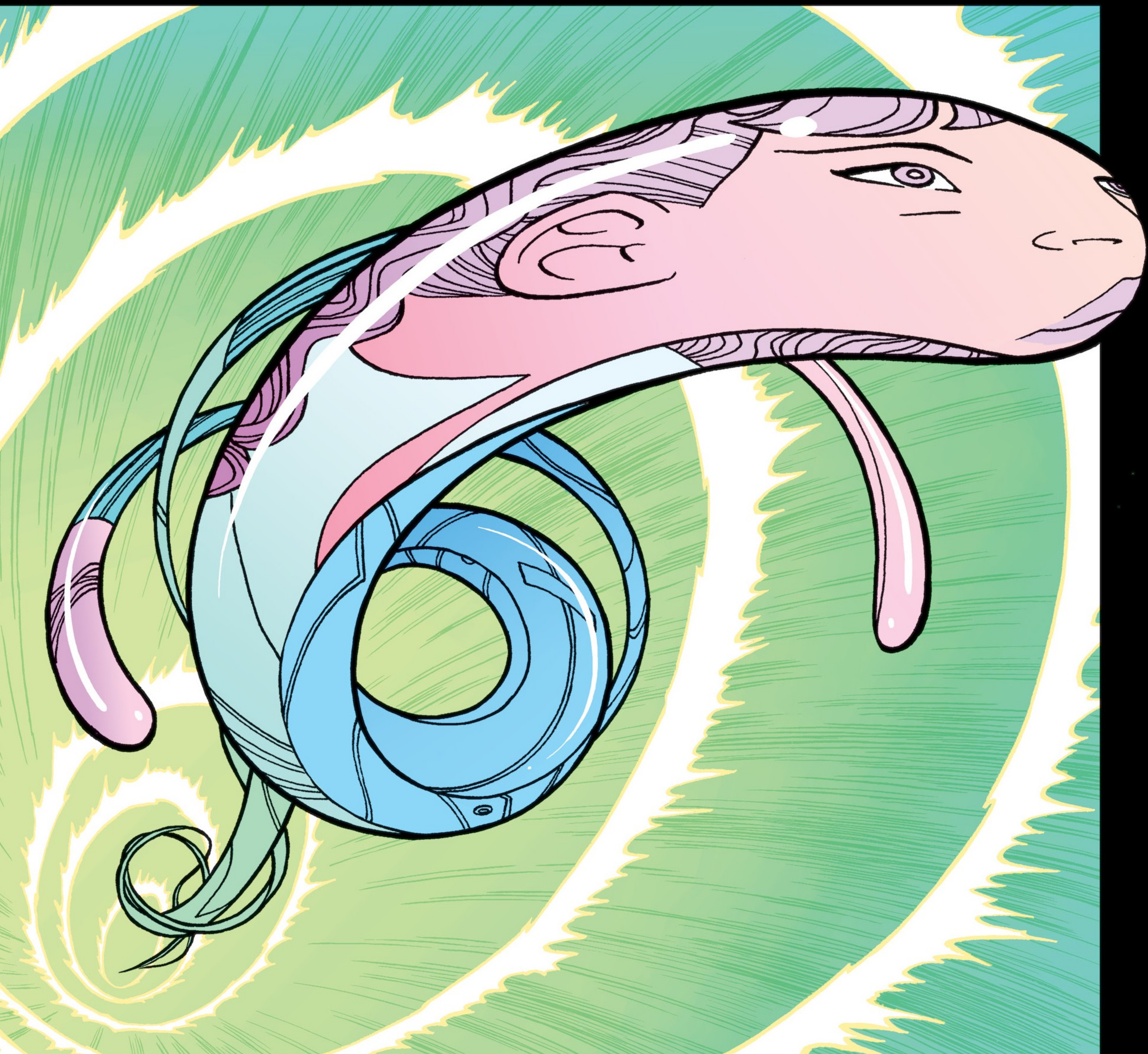














Awesome to finally make your acquaintance.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE AMERICAN NEWSPAPER DELIVERY GUILD

4335 Van Nuys Boulevard - Suite 332, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403 U.S.A.

SINCE 1899!



RITA PEARL, Papergirl

Hey, Gang!

Sorry I'm late, but Rita Pearl the Papergirl is BACK, and she is...

Wait, why am I dressed in my circa-2000 throwback gear? And why is the time on my old flip phone suddenly off by eighty-eight minutes?

Huh. Whoever was filling in for me here at the A.N.D.G. while I was away on a "secret mission" left a handful of old letters behind. Maybe there are some answers in here:



Dear Rita Pearl at A.N.D.G.,

Oh, this might be the last of the cloudy blue airmail envelopes, as I've forgotten where I bought them. Oh, well.

Anyway, Issue #20: First off, I really love the symbolic cover. I say symbolic only because while Mac, Erin and KJ seem harried, Tiffany appears relaxed and inviting - holding out her hand to Erin.

I also loved the story and not just because a lot happened and we get to go to still another time period, but the return of the teenaged boys' language was featured. Now, where did I put my cryptography notes? Gotta find 'em!

AND... this issue gets bonus points for the results of the readers' Y2K Survey. I didn't realize *O Brother, Where Art Thou* was released 18 years ago. I'm feeling rather old.

Anyway, it seems like a long wait until June and Issue #21. I'm already looking forward to it.

Alan B.

Saga City, Japan

Issue #21? Sorry, Alan, looks like old Rita is mighty behind on her correspondence.

And I almost forgot about that old Y2K Survey. Is that why I'm dressed like an extra from High Fidelity?

Dear Petey Roy,

As a deliverer, I really appreciate the A.N.D.G. newsletter, which I always pick up at Carol and John's Comic Shop in Cleveland. It's such an amazing store, I don't even mind riding my bike there all the way from the burbs.

Anyway, my question is about my route. A few times, I've seen a strange woman sitting in a parked station wagon just watching me as I deliver papers a little before five in the morning. She never talks to me or bothers me or anything like that, but it still weirds me out a little.

I'm not a kid (almost a teenager), so I don't want to bother my parents with this, but I was just curious

what you would do in my situation.

Very sincerely,

T.Q.

Stony Stream, OH

Yikes. Judging by the Summer Olympics in South Korea stamp on this envelope, poor T.Q. must have sent this in ages ago. Regardless, I hope he eventually did tell his parents about this totally reasonable concern!

I still can't believe they really let kids that age go out all by themselves back in the day...

Dear Rita Pearl,

First of all, let me please give you a long overdue thank-you for selecting my letter "Deliverer of the Month" a few issues back. I treasure the goodies I received via Time Courier almost as much as my A.N.D.G. membership (proud member #27281614). I took the liberty of paying the trade paperback forward in hopes of adding to the A.N.D.G. ranks.

I saw in Issue #24 that Dash-Dash Dot "can only DREAM of 1 day working in a PERIODICAL SECTION of a real LIBRARY, allpraise." My early newspaper delivery work ultimately led to my working at the reference desk of a REAL library, allpraise, and Dash-Dash Dot is welcome to come back and join me any time.

I always look forward to *Paper Girls* and love everything about this book. Like I said in my first letter to you, I've been reading comics since the 1960s, and this is the most fun I've had in a long, long time. Thanks for that.

Sincerely yours,

Tom H.

Harrisburg, PA

Thanks for writing, Tom, but I'm afraid I've never heard of this mysterious "Dash-Dash Dot" of whom you speak. But any friend

of libraries is a friend of mine, so thank you both for your service!

Dear Brian & Cliff,

I know it's short notice, but we at Arsenal Comics and Games are huge fans of the series and wanted to invite you to the grand-opening of our second location in Ventura, CA on September 1st! We would love to have either of you guys here for a signing, our fans and customers would lose their minds! Thanks for an amazing series!

Sincerely,

Arsenal Comics & Games Family
Newbury Park, CA

Apologies for not passing this along to our hosts here sooner, Arsenal Comics! I hope everyone visits your awesome-looking store (or at least checks them out online at www.arsenalcomicsandgames.com). Congrats on the second location!

And for future signing requests or what have you, some of the less antisocial creators behind Paper Girls are pretty accessible on social media, like @cliffchiang, @colormatt, @jaredkfletcher.

Mr. Vaughan,

Just a quick note to let you know how much I've loved all of your books, both digital and in print. *Paper Girls* is truly a unique work of art! Cheers to the whole amazing team. I've included a S.A.S.E. for a membership card to the A.N.D.G. I'd love for you to sign it if it's not too much trouble. Keep on doing what you do. It brings me much joy!

Thanks,

Chris E.

Hyde Park, NY

Much obliged, Chris! Sadly, A.N.D.G. membership cards are no longer being processed, but looks like yours was one of the last ever mailed out!

And while it might not have been signed by one of the dudes behind Paper Girls, rumor has it that each card was lovingly filled out by hand, laminated, and envelope-licked by the wife and/or children of one of the creators, who may or may not have delighted in turning his own family into a veritable sweatshop.

Shameful.

Hey Team,

What did everyone at the A.N.D.G. think of last year's brilliant *Twin Peaks* episodes?

Thanks,

Travis R.

Hatfield, PA

Travis, I have no idea what your question has to do with anything, but HELL YES Rita Pearl watched every second of the new Twin Peaks, and I still think about "Part 8" at least once a week. For your excellent taste in surreal dramas, I'm happily naming you DELIVERER OF THE MONTH. Congratulations, Mr. Jackpot!

As for my own ongoing phantasmagorical mystery, maybe I'll get some answers in thirty days? For now, whatever era you currently find yourself part of, remember to make the most of it!

Lotsa love,

Rita Pearl the Papergirl

THE WRITE-YOUR-OWN-OBIT CHALLENGE!

4335 Van Nuys Boulevard - Suite 332, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403 U.S.A.

Wow, my old supervisor warned me that this questionnaire was too morbid to print, but we received more responses to this than just about anything we've ever featured in the past. Hooray for being comfortable with our own inevitable demises!

1) When are you going to die?

"May 28, 2061 (+/- actuarial table accuracy)"

- **Aaron M.** from Murfreesboro, TN

2) And from what, or under what circumstances?

"In the mountains, after a long day of dangerous climbing and hiking, from eating a piece of cake. Anaphylactic shock sucks."

- **Mereida F.** from London, UK

3) Who will you be survived by?

"No offspring, but I have four siblings and donated sperm to a lesbian couple who are friends of mine and they now have two little boys."

- **Jonathan S.** from Jacksonville, FL

4) How did you impact the world?

"I wrote a manifesto for chimpanzee rights."

- **Jordan H.** from Salem, OR

5) What kind of funeral would you like?

"If everyone could show up and tell wildly conflicting accounts of my life, packaging my existence into a sarcophagus of mystery, that'd be great."

- **Jamie V.** from Greenbelt, MD

6) What should be done with your body?

"Dress me in my cadet grey & whites. Place an American flag and a Starfleet flag in my coffin. Bury me in a Mark-IV Torpedo, on the hill overlooking my beloved Norwich University. I'd be honored to have the Regimental Band play Echo taps and the Shock Platoon carry the colors."

- **Dave O.** from Severna Park, MD

7) If you have a tombstone or other marker, what do you want inscribed on it?

"I do want a tombstone (even though I'll be cremated). I want two things on it: 'She loved learning,' and a smallish Ouija board layout carved in (sorry, Mom, stealing your idea)."

- **Janel M.** from Tucson, AZ

8) What will you miss most about being alive?

"The kids, but also old-school punk shows and maintaining ye olde comic collection (20,000-plus, gonna be a hassle for somebody).

- **Rich K.** from Westchester, NY

9) Do you think you'll be part of any kind of afterlife?

"Hope not."

- **Jeremy L.** from Chicago, IL

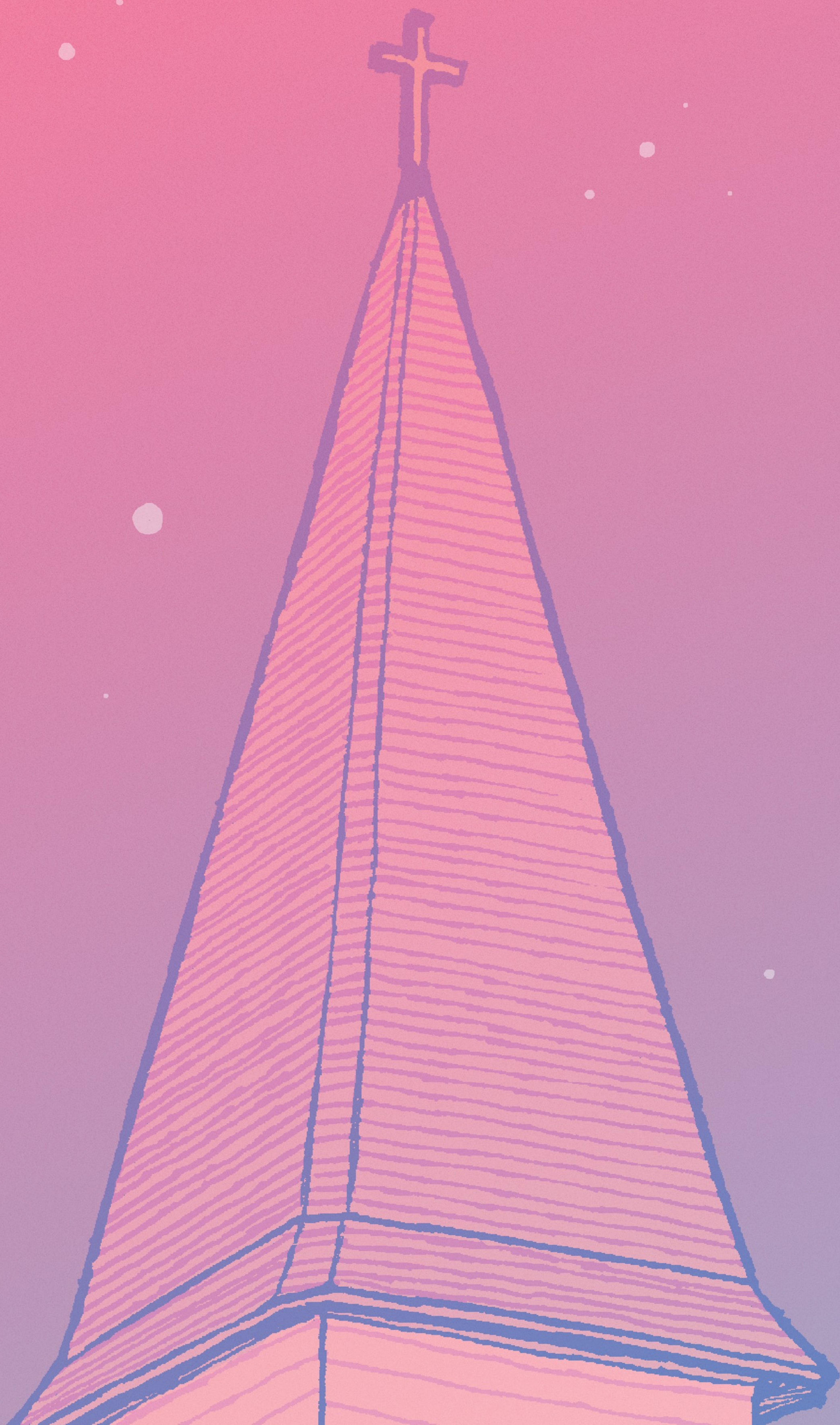
10) You're not dead yet, lucky, so what do you want to do tonight?

"I'm either gonna go to sleep early or ask a girl on a date. Haven't decided which yet."

- **Emily C.** from Ann Arbor, MI

Emily, life is short, so we kind of hope you asked for that date, but we also love sleep, so that's an acceptable option, too. Either way, your response was randomly selected to receive some life-affirming prizes! Congrats, and thanks to everyone who was brave enough to confront their mortality.

- Rita





1 of 4

1

2

3

4

Carefully remove each poster and connect
all four posters to see the bigger picture!





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ON SALE 05.01.19

BRIAN K. VAUGHAN
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