

PHANTOMS

IN THE

DARK

PHANTOMS
IN THE DARK

a film by
Max Rubin

what is PHANTOMS IN THE DARK...?

It's a story of finding yourself in the enemy.

It's a story of growing up and becoming your own fear.

It's a story of not going with what people say is right.

It's a story of overcoming bullying.

It's a story of sticking it to people who want you to change.

It's a story of truly knowing what is best for yourself.

It's a story of being a confused young kid.

It's a story of finding pride in who you are

It's a story of a boy who gives up having human friends, and instead decides to hang with **party monsters**



PHANTOMS IN THE DARK

is about a confused, weird kid who just wants to make **friends**. His parents tell him to hang with the school yard kids, but the school yard kids tell him he's gotta work to get into their clique. Luckily, there is an alternative: the **monster house**. And while everyone fears the monsters and ghosts within the mansion, this lonely kid will end up joining what everyone calls the **dark side**.

Because when the bad guys treat you nicely, they're not bad anymore. This is a story of finding the pride and courage needed to be oneself, and creating a bond with what everyone else considers the **enemy**.



VISUAL RESEARCH: THE MONSTER HOUSE



I WANT THE MONSTER HOUSE TO LOOK LIKE AN OLD, GLAMOROUS, DECAYING, 1800'S VICTORIAN HOUSEHOLD. GREY GARDENS MEETS THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW.

VISUAL RESEARCH: THE SCHOOLYARD

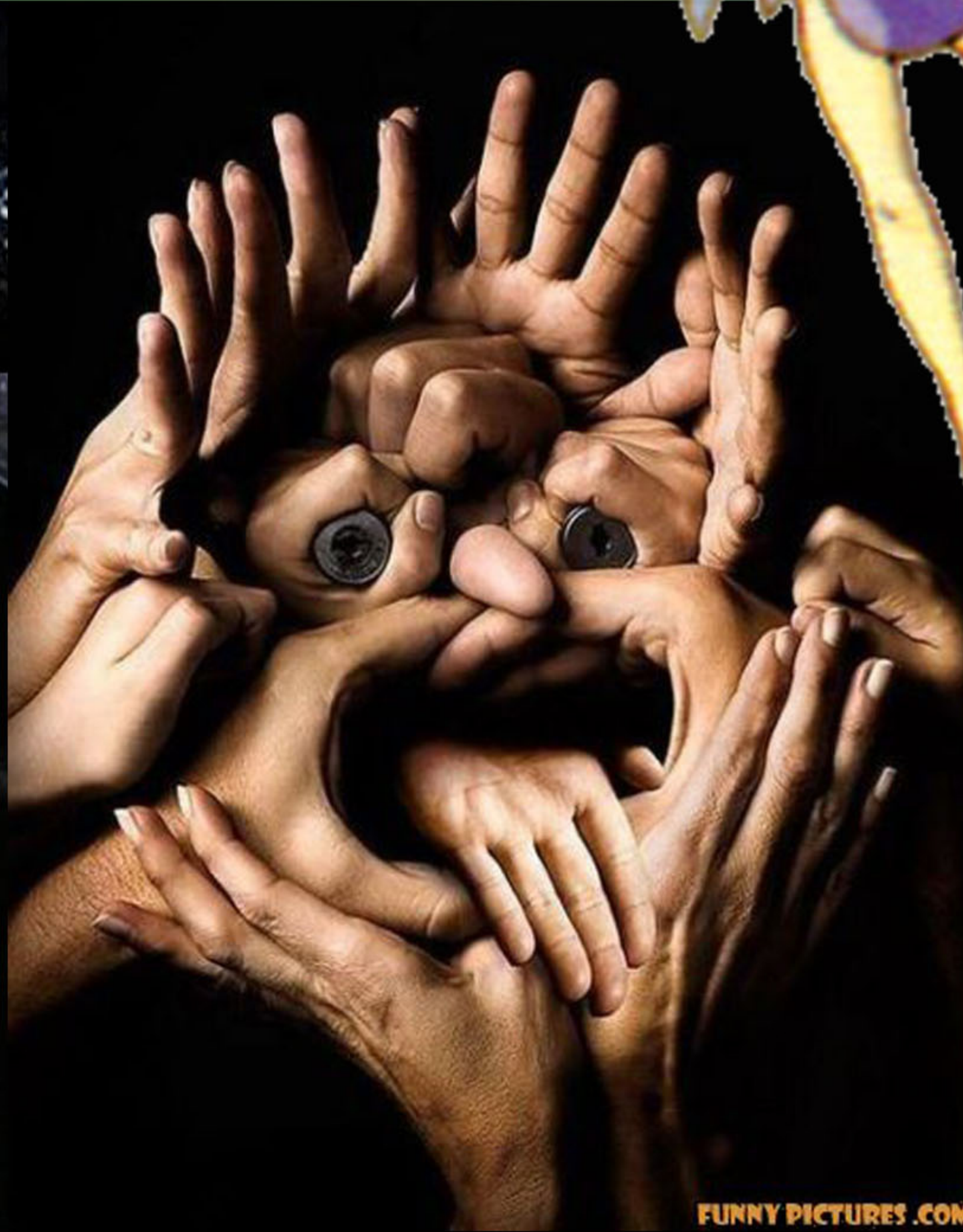
I WANT THE SCHOOL YARD TO BE A PLACE OF FUN, BUT I ALSO WANT IT TO HAVE A MOOD OF CHILDHOOD GRUNGE. THINGS LIKE WOOD CHIPS, DRY AIR, METAL POLES, CONCRETE, AND TIRES THAT MAKE IT LOOK LESS LIKE A FUN ZONE AND MORE LIKE A CONSTRUCTION SITE.



KEEPING IT LOOKING LIKE AN ACTUAL PLAYGROUND IS, OF COURSE, IMPERATIVE, BECAUSE OTHERWISE AUDIENCES WON'T GET IT IF IT LOOKS LIKE SOMETHING ELSE.

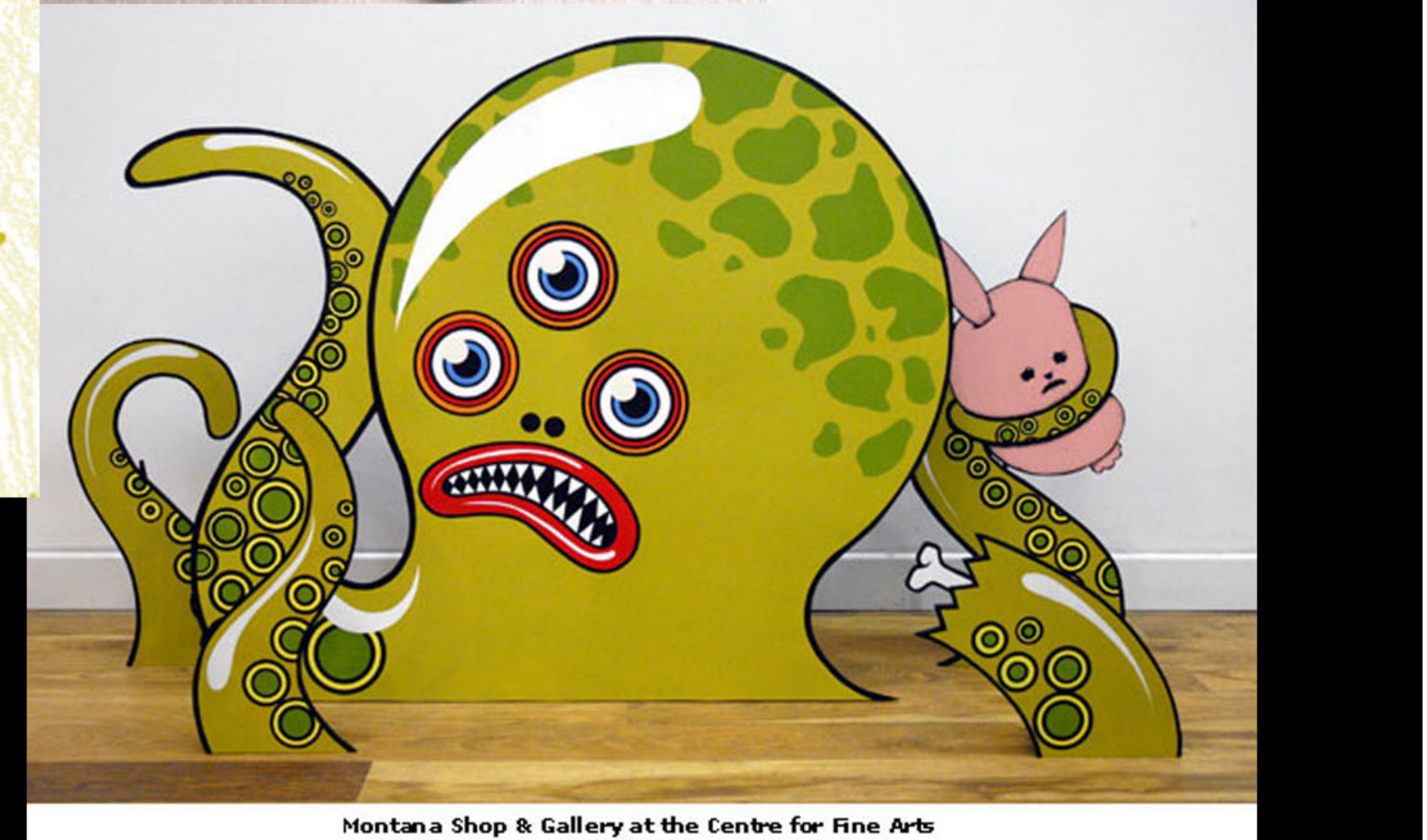
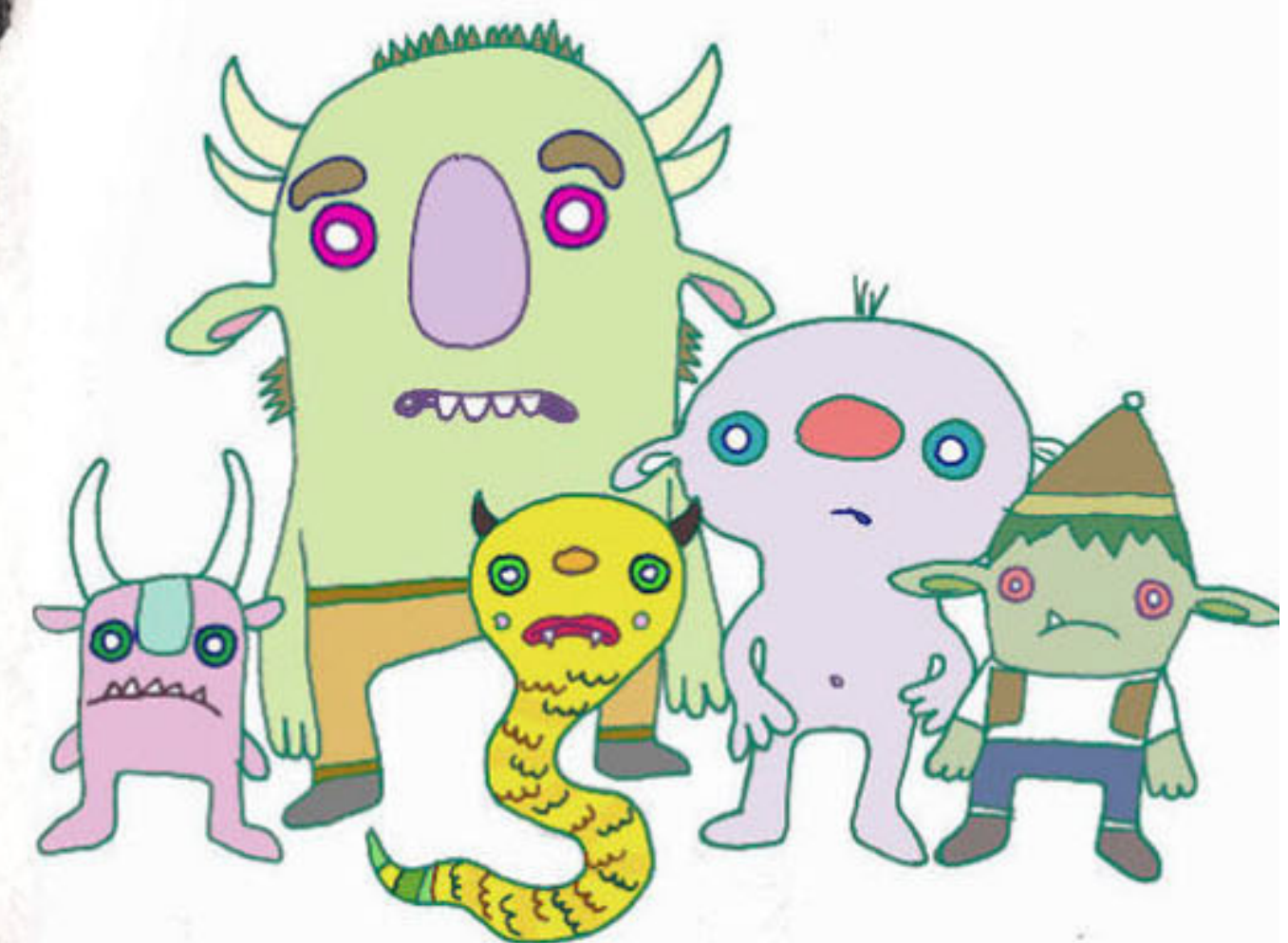
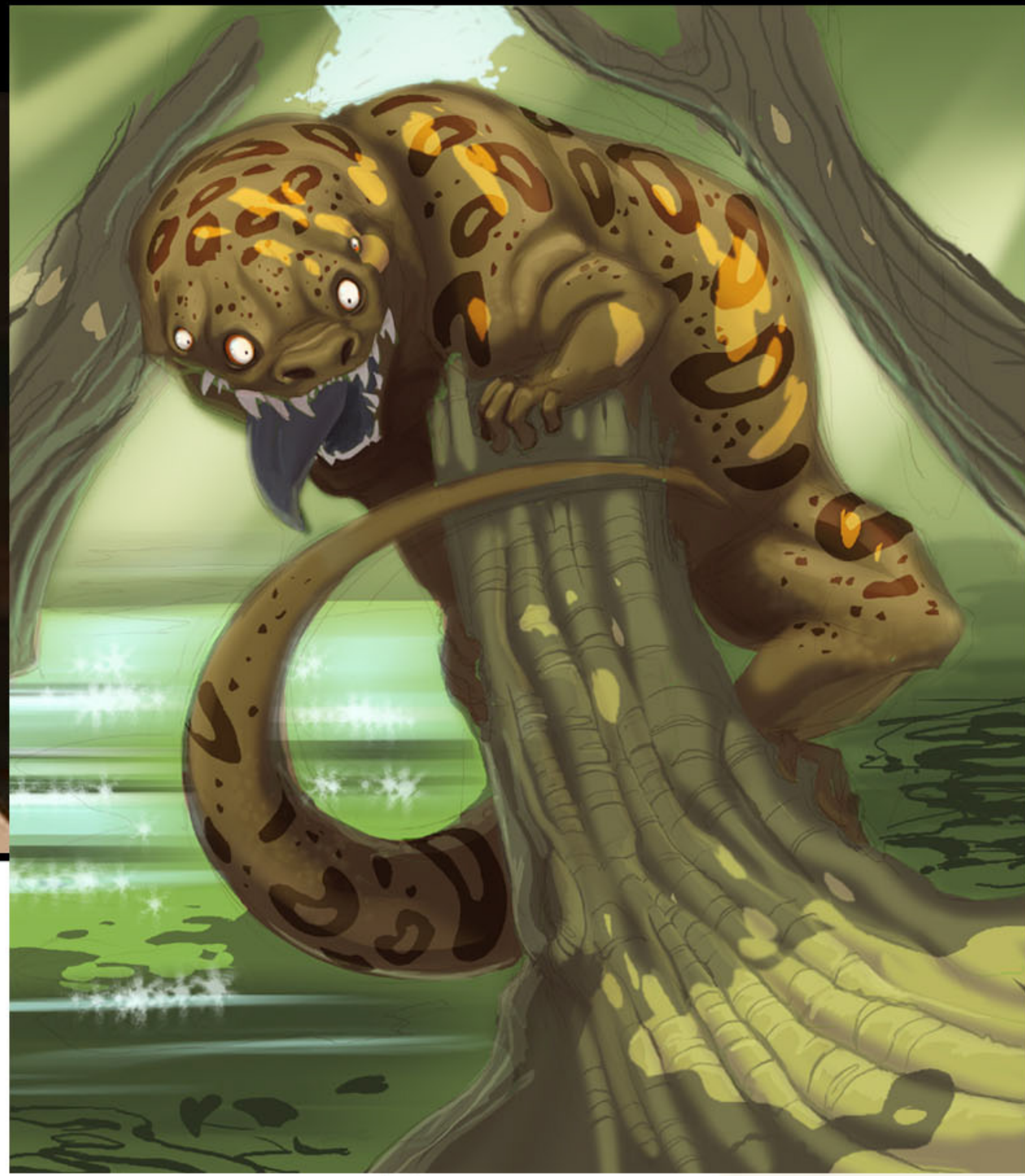


VISUAL RESEARCH: THE MONSTERS



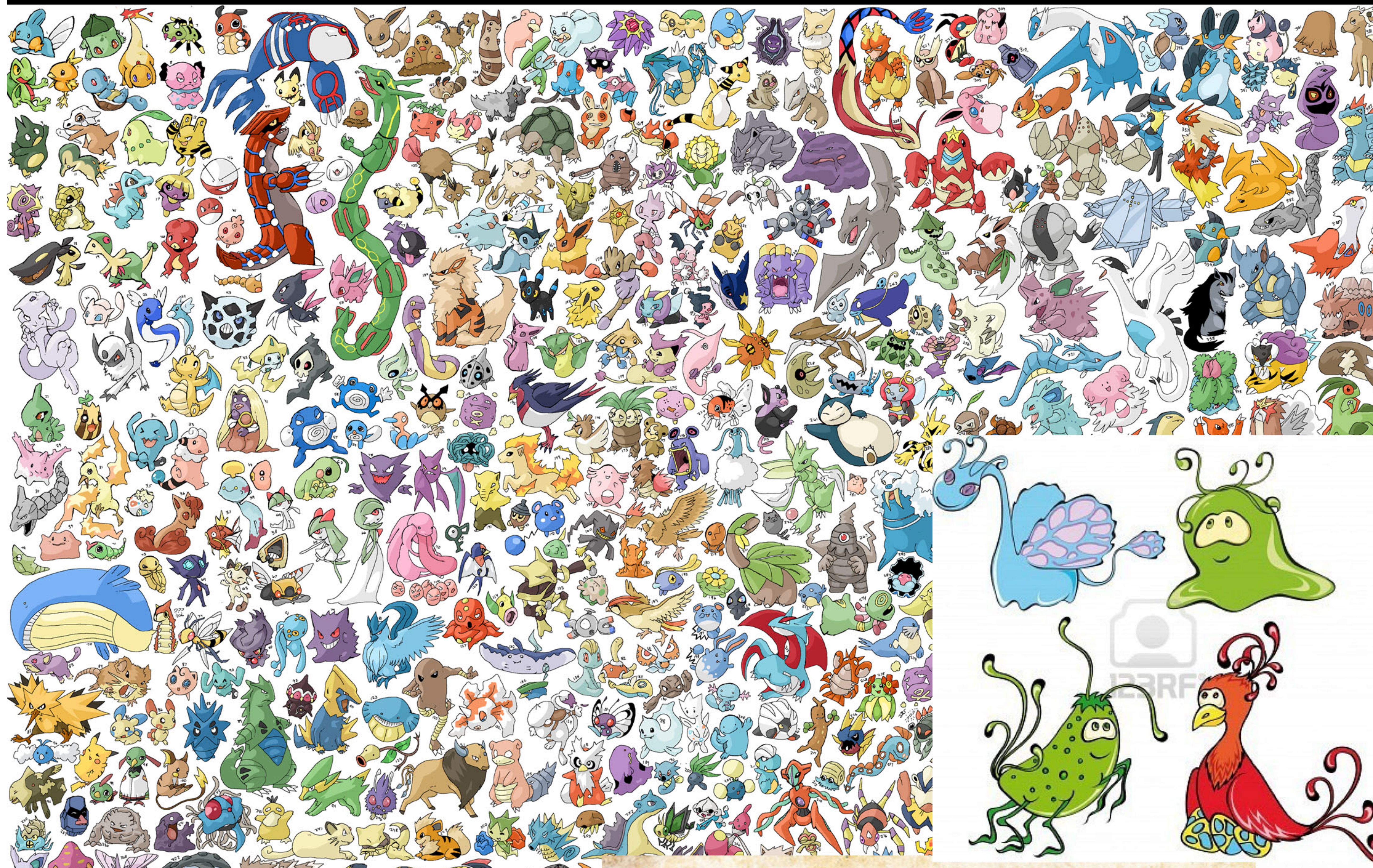
I WANT THE MONSTERS TO BE CREEPY YET CUTE, AND TO BE MARKED WITH A SENSE OF PURE ECLECTICISM AND RANDOMNESS.

VISUAL RESEARCH: THE MONSTERS

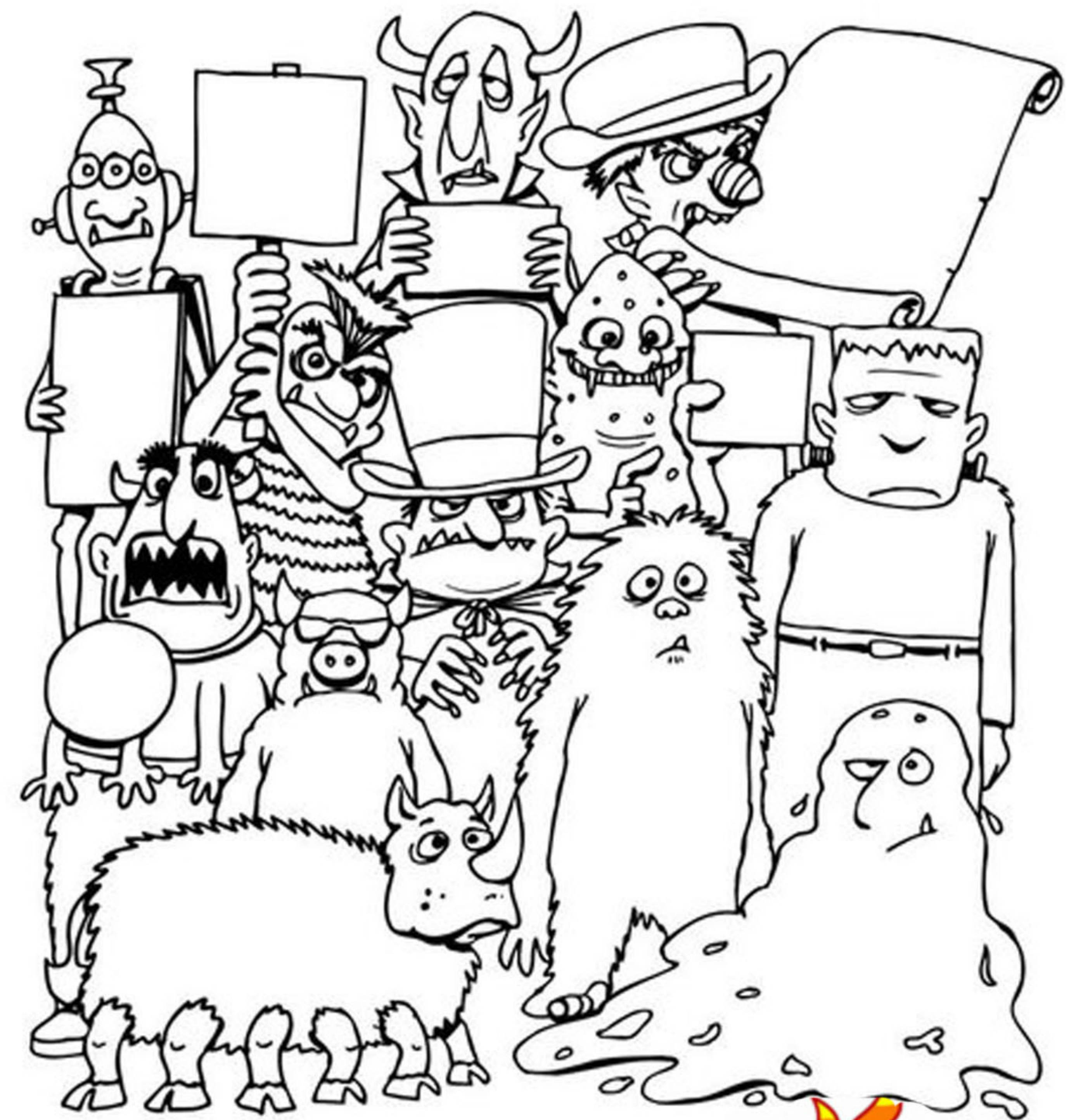


Montana Shop & Gallery at the Centre for Fine Arts

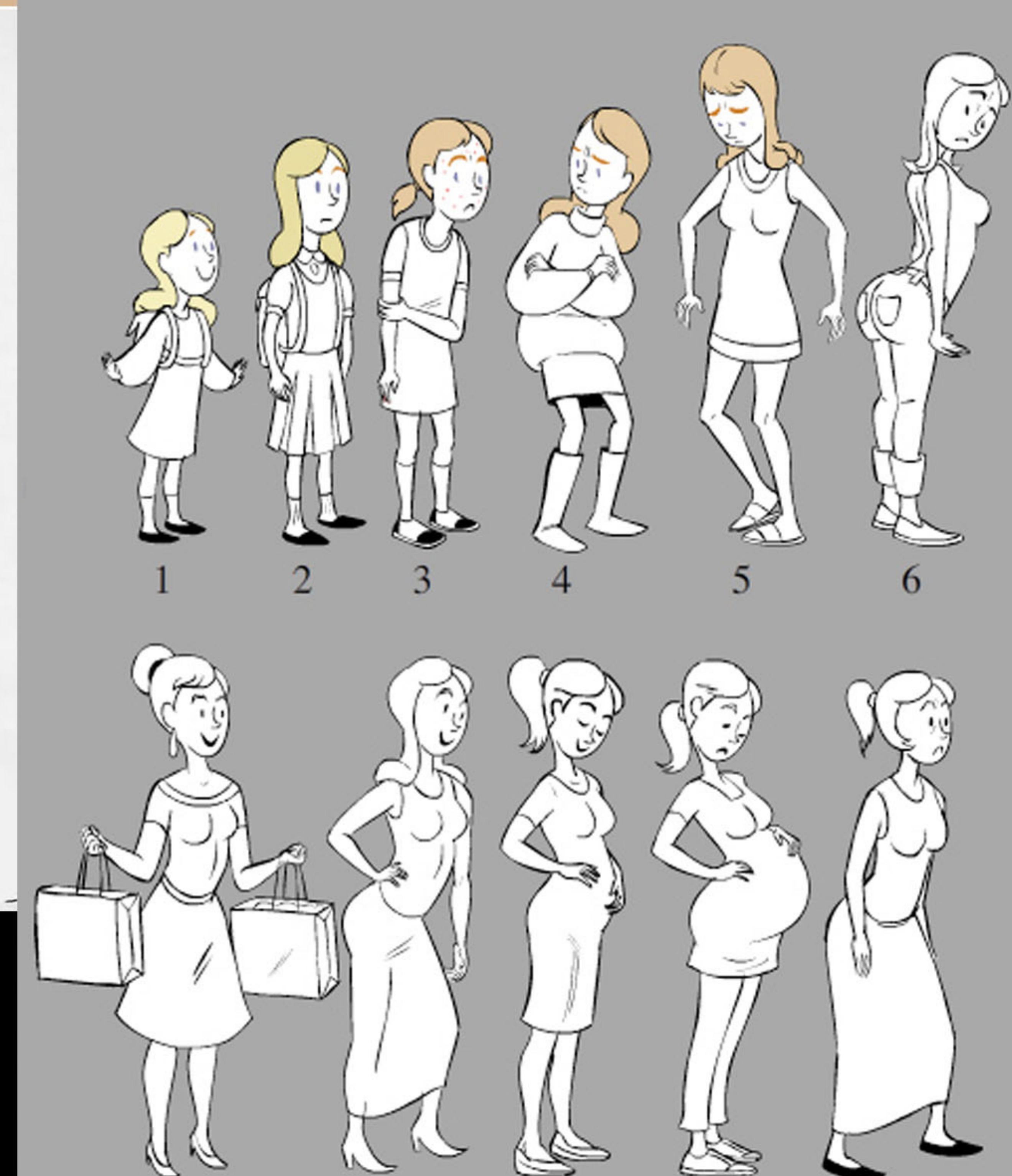
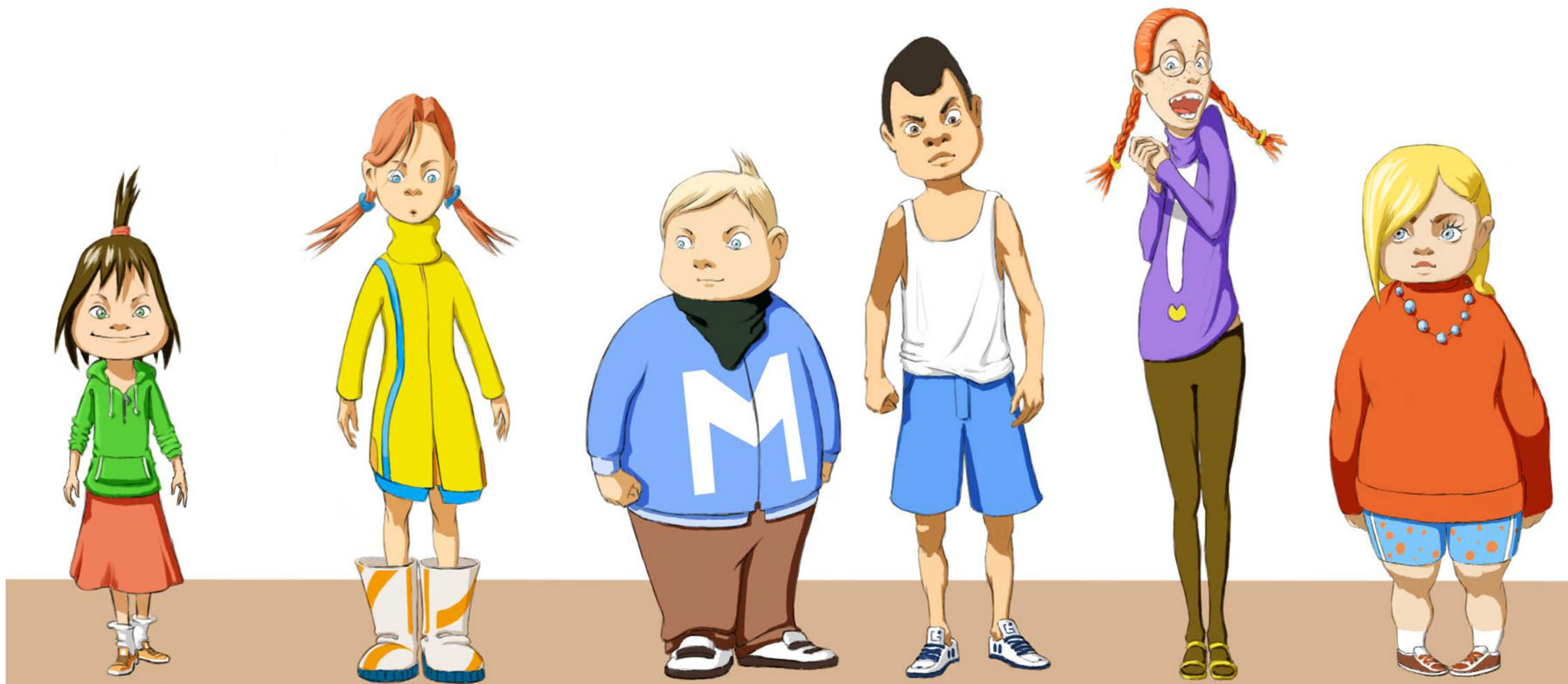
VISUAL RESEARCH: THE MONSTERS



Monster Party



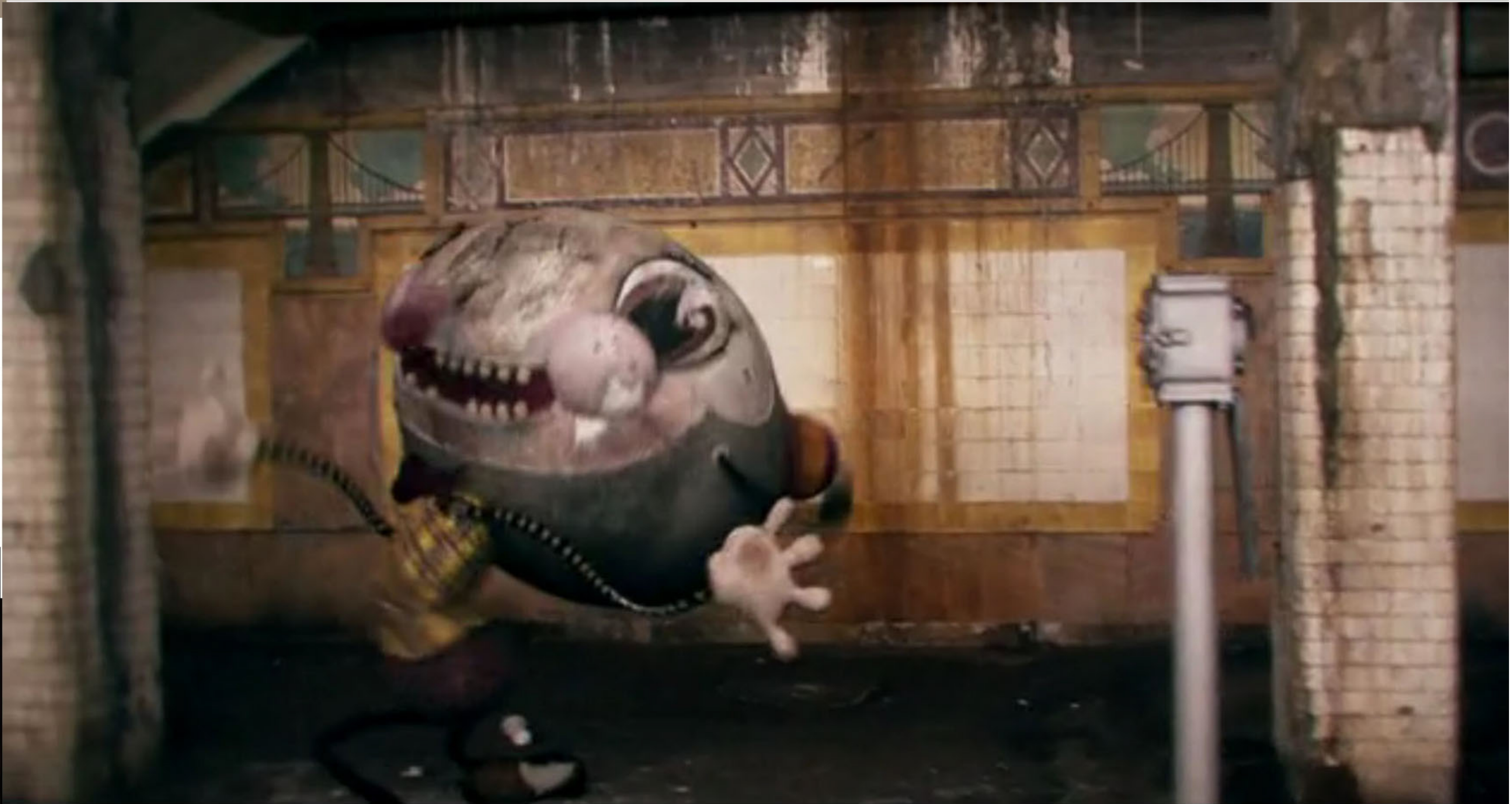
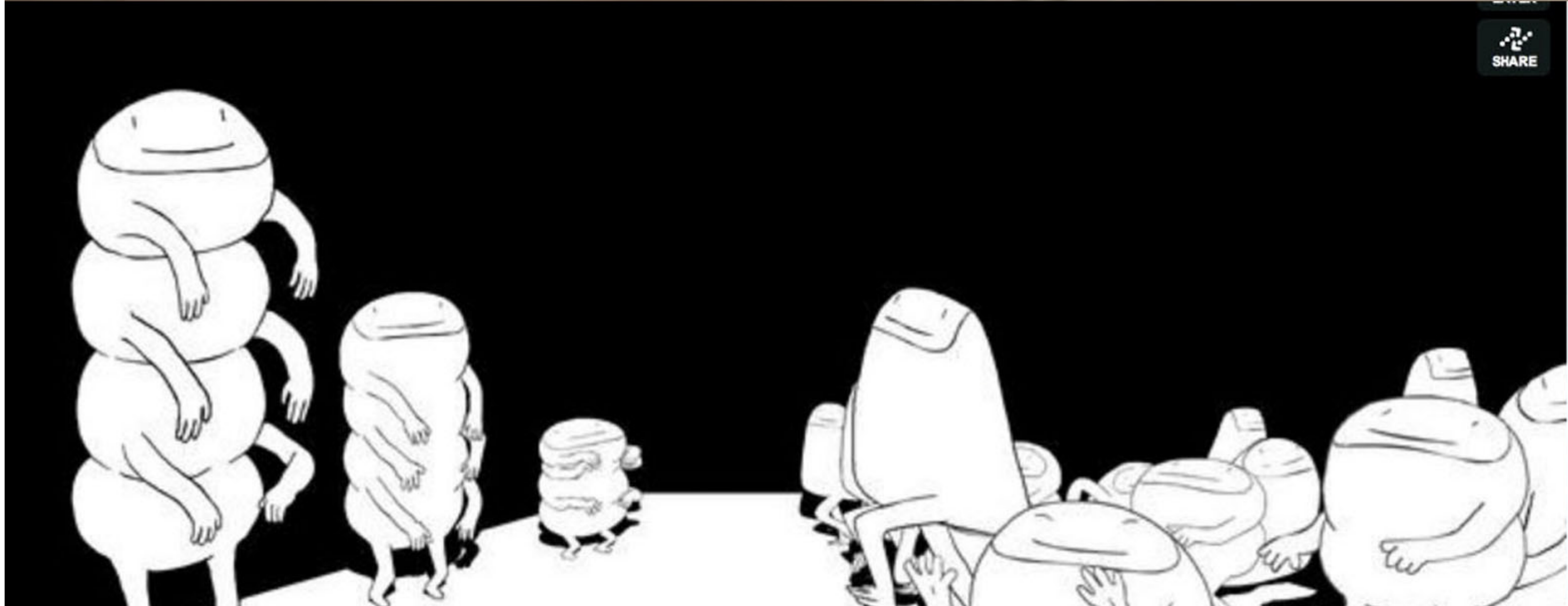
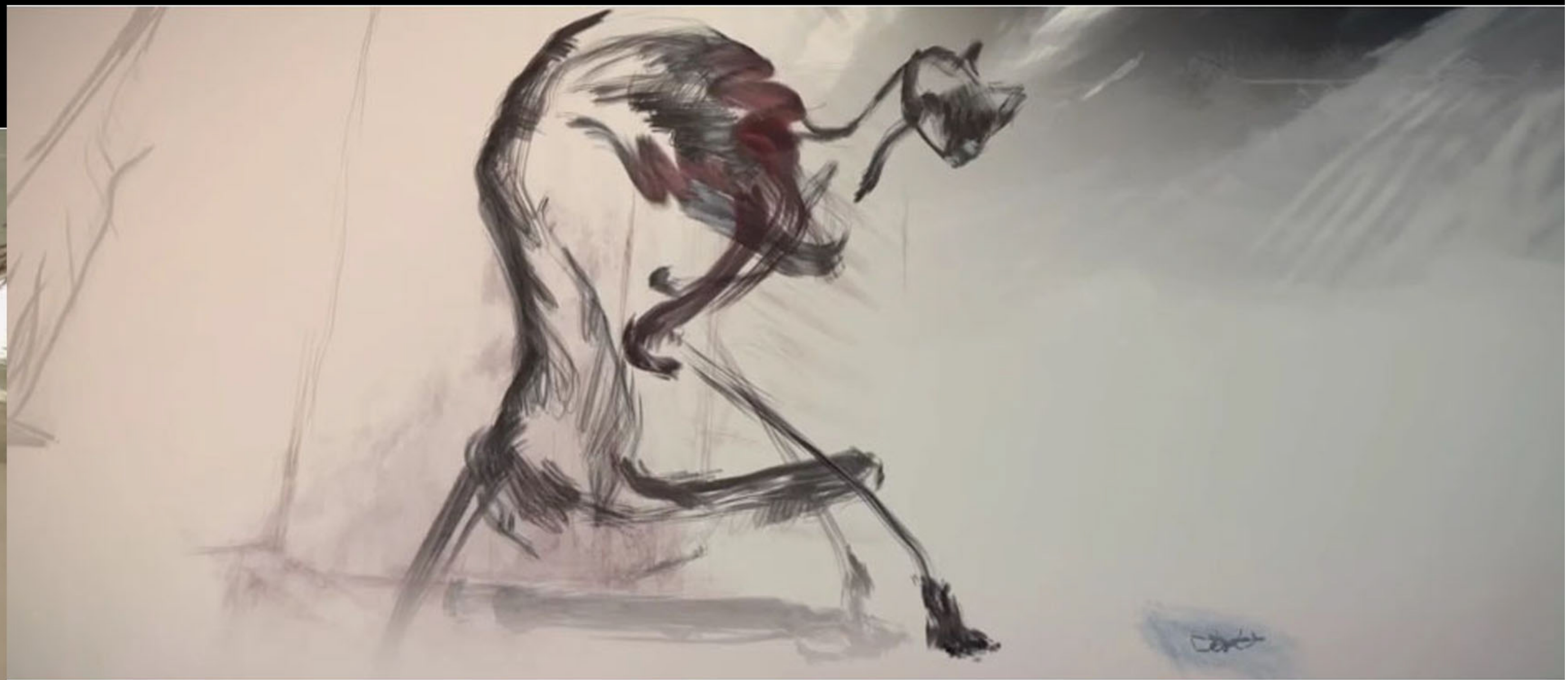
VISUAL RESEARCH: KIDS



I WANT THE KIDS (INCLUDING MAIN CHARACTER) TO BE LIVELY, IMPERFECT, FRESH, HUMAN.

VISUAL RESEARCH: ANIMATION TECHNIQUES

MONSTERS



I WANT THE MONSTERS TO BE CREEPY BUT CUTE. FRIGHTENING YET LOVABLE. IMPOSING YET APPROACHABLE.

VISUAL RESEARCH: ANIMATION TECHNIQUES

GENERAL



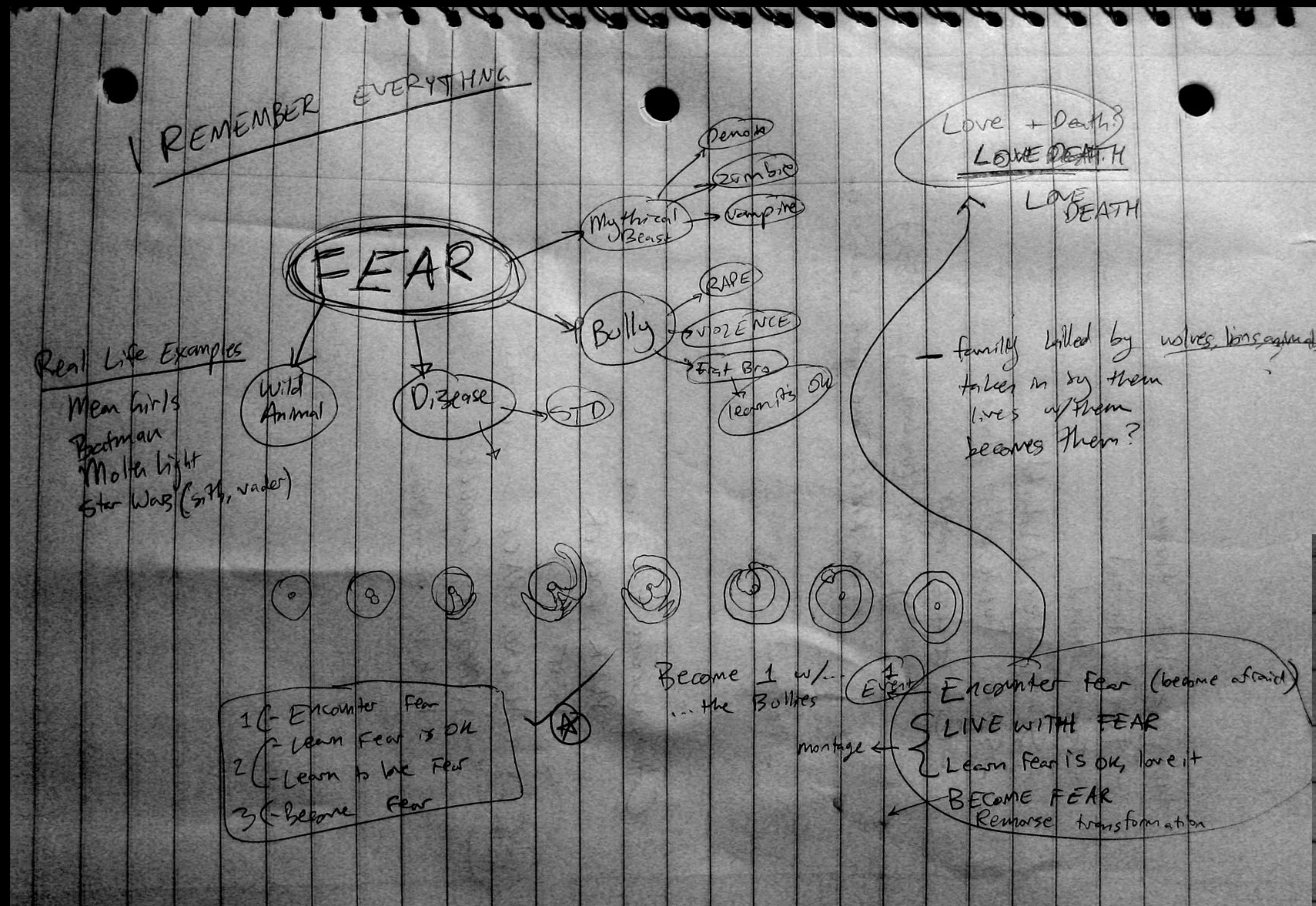
As for the visual style of the final, I want to avoid being too cutesy. It needs edge in order to keep the viewer from getting too **complacent**.



However, this is still a child-oriented story, after all, so I gotta keep it cutesy at some level. Kiddy grunge? **Fun Punk?** Whatever you wanna call it, it'll be straddling that line.

MIND MAP

growing one story out of another



The story of Phantoms In The Dark originally started as something totally different, it had two main characters, and they joined a circus, and it was full of all sorts of obscure emotional things that were really impossible to successfully translate into visuals, AND to fit it into something less than 10 minutes long. So my first step with figuring my film out was to boil the story of that film down to its core, and then build it back up again into something new, something readable, **something that worked.**

- Strong stylistic themes
- Forest, tribal
 - Forest Animal
 - Space, Aliens Abducted
 - Space, future, other planet?
 - City streets, night
 - gangsters? (modern day or 1920s)
 - Punk Kids? Rave youth rock scene?
 - Medieval
- Cultures + Series that I love
- PUNK, ROCKER
 - FRAT
 - ALIENS, SPACE or on earth?
 - MONSTERS, GHOULS?
 - FISH, lol, ocean, Nemo
- Phantoms In The Dark

From there, I learned that the the central issue of my film was dealing with FEAR. How do I best represent fear visually? Punks? Disease? Wild Animals? And then I realized that monsters were the best way to go. From there, I developed a simple plot structure:

- Encounter Monsters (and run away)
- Realize that the Monsters weren't so bad
- Learn to love Monsters
- Join Monsters

And so "Phantoms In The Dark" was born.



STORYBOARD

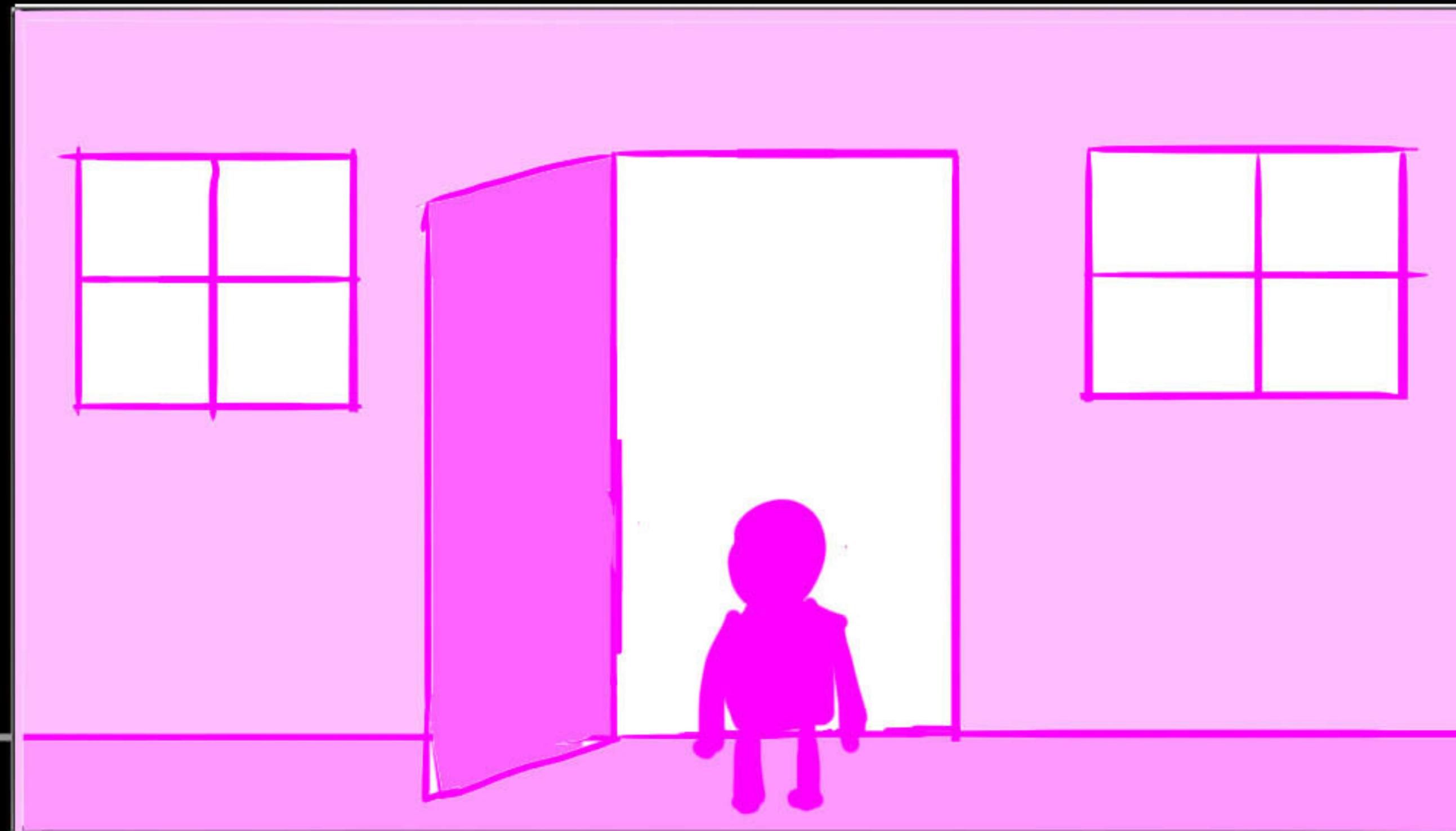


1



Opening title-card
Spooky, menacing, looming
music/ghost sounds

2



Open on HERO standing before the
front door to his house. We hear
outdoors-y sounds, like birds
chirping, a light wind passing by,
etc. It's a pleasant day.

3



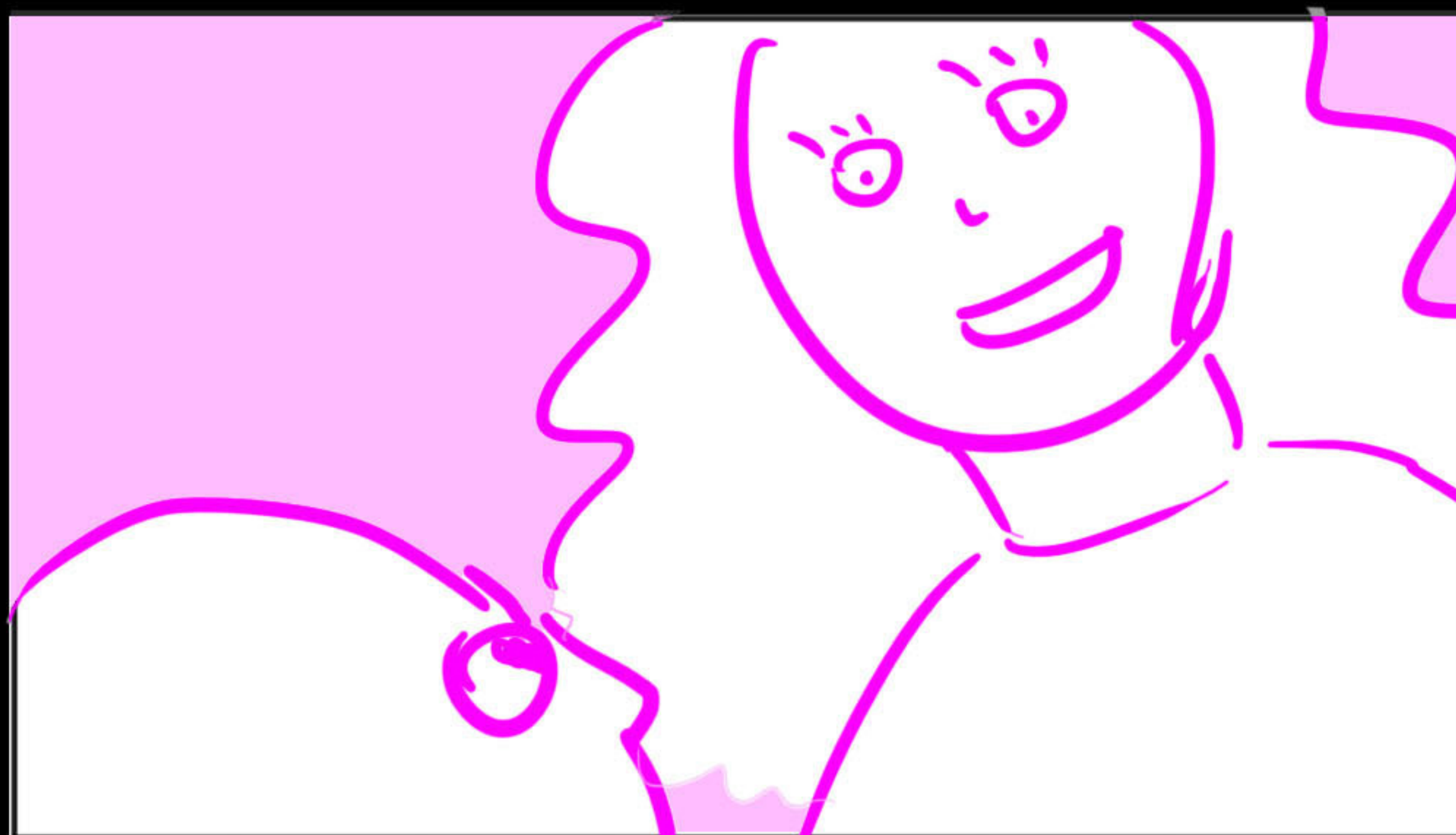
Cut to facing him, we see
that he looks terrified.

4



A hand comes down from above
and lays itself on his shoulder.
He jerks back nervously but then
looks up as his mother's voice
cuts in

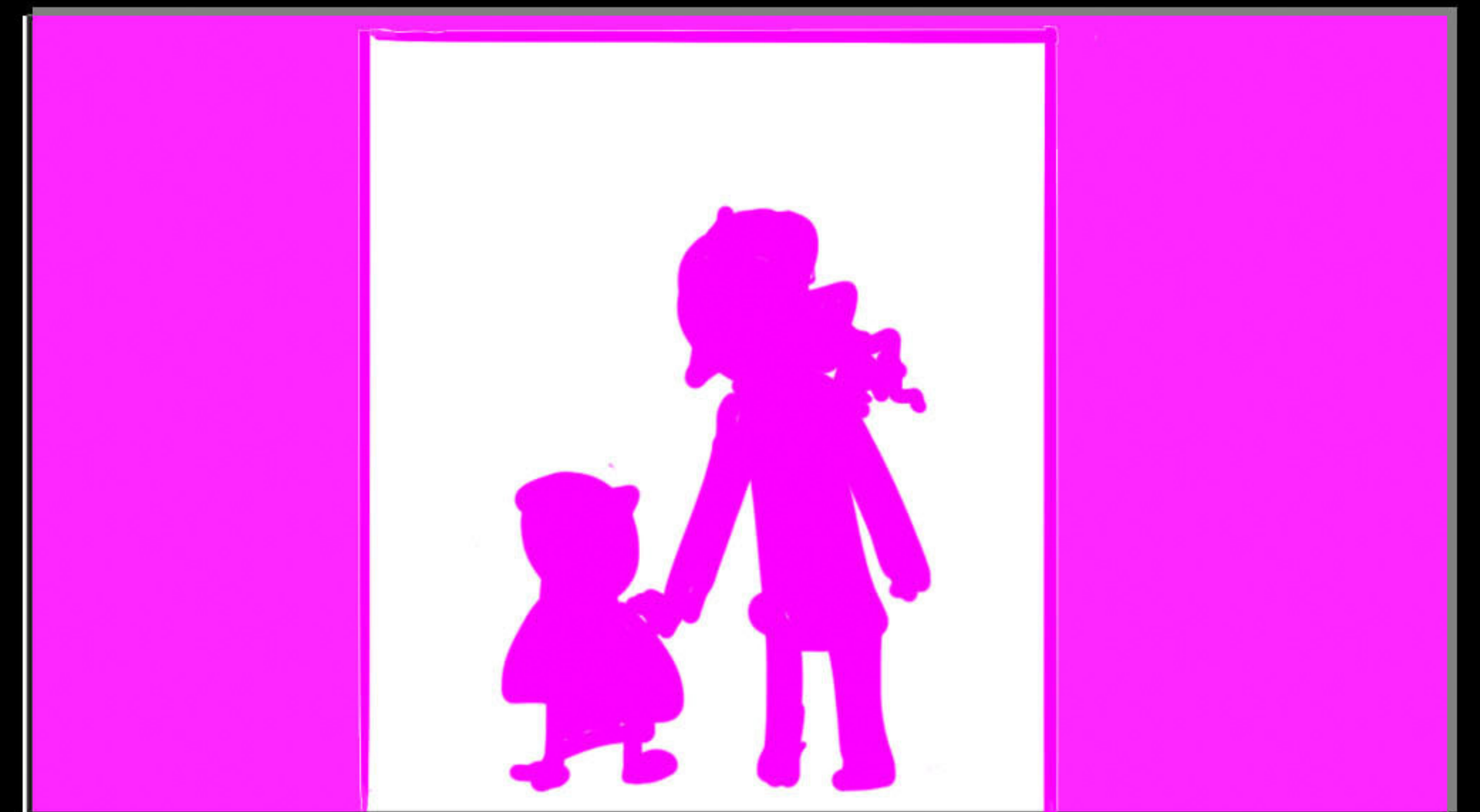
5



The camera shifts to focus on
mom's face.

MOM: "Don't worry about your
first day of school! Just be nice
to the kids and..."

6



Cut to facing MOM and HERO in
the doorway. MOM continues speaking

MOM: ... just don't act too weird
with them. And try to make
friends!

7



Fade to an establishing shot of the school playground, kids are playing and running around. Sounds: Birds tweeting, kids running around/playing in a sunny day setting.

10



Cut to looking over HERO's shoulder, we see that he's looking at a group of people somewhere else in the playground

8



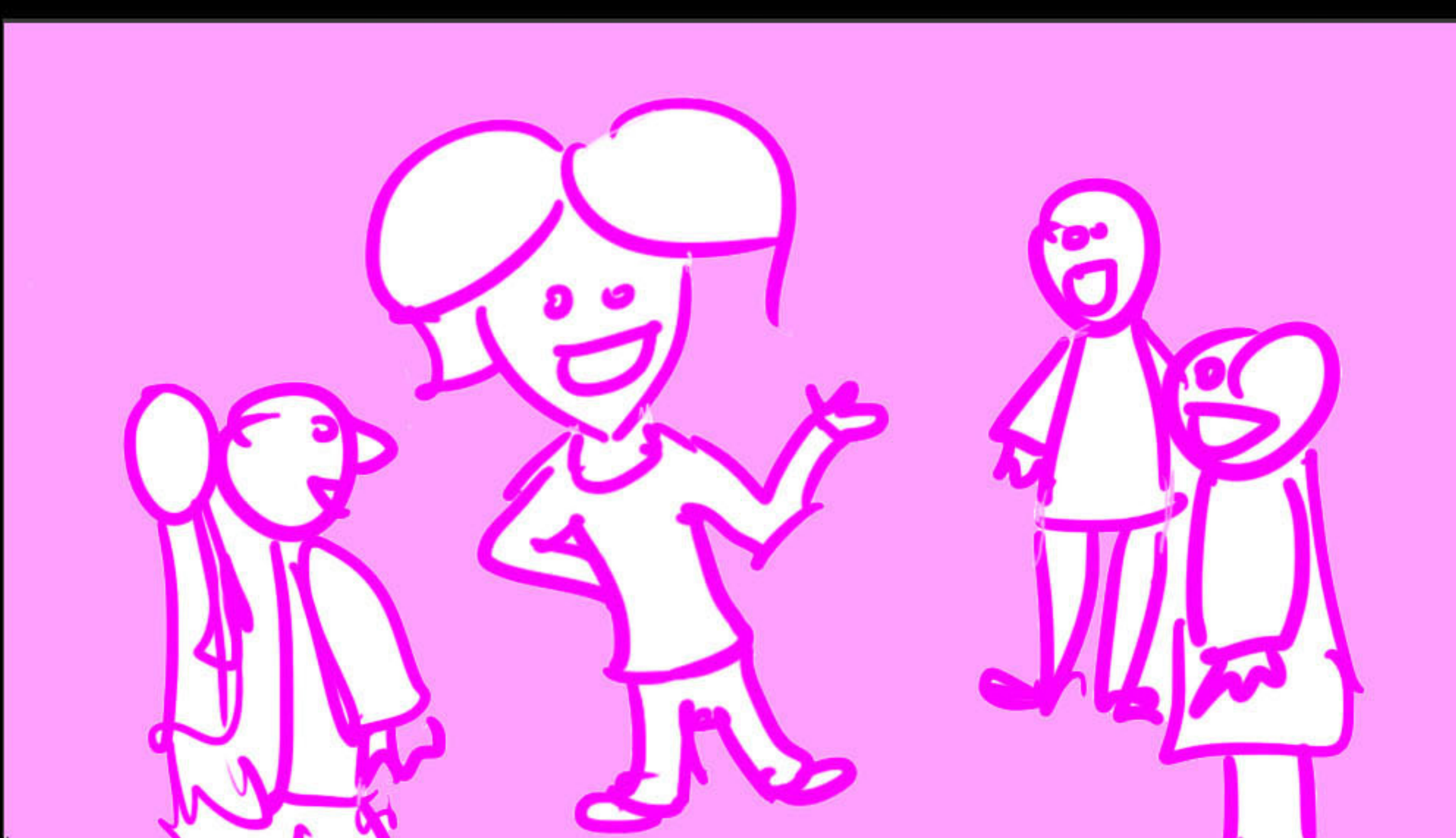
Cut to HERO, who is sitting by himself playing with a ball.

9



HERO looks up at something

11



Quickly zoom in to the group of people, we see it's a MEAN GIRL talking with her friends, we hear a bit of their conversation.
MEAN GIRL: "And then I was like oh my god!..."

12



Cut to a closer shot of the boy with his ball. He perks up

13



Cut back to the MEAN GIRL and her FRIENDS. The HERO then walks into frame.

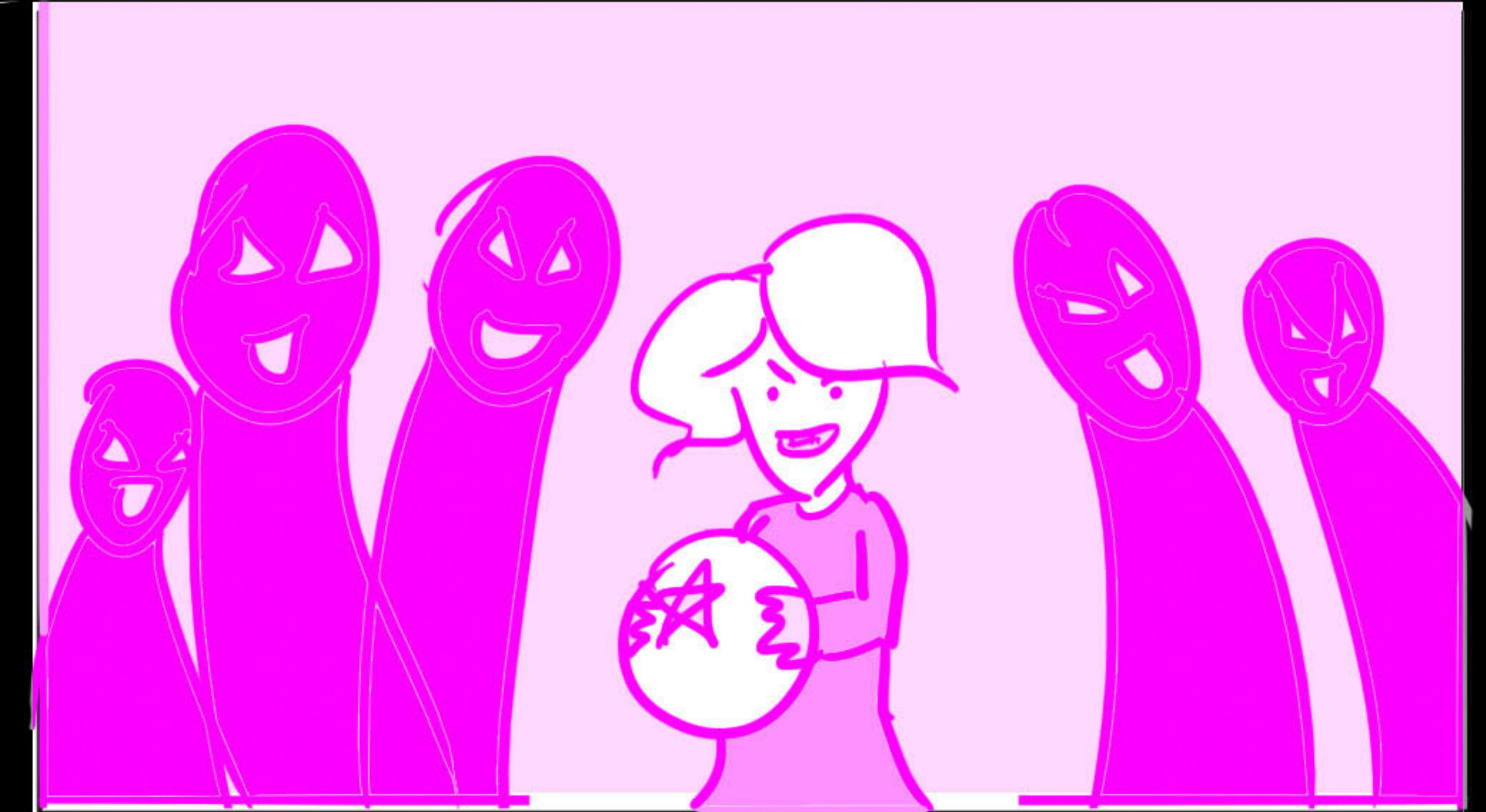
HERO (nervously):
Want to play catch?

14



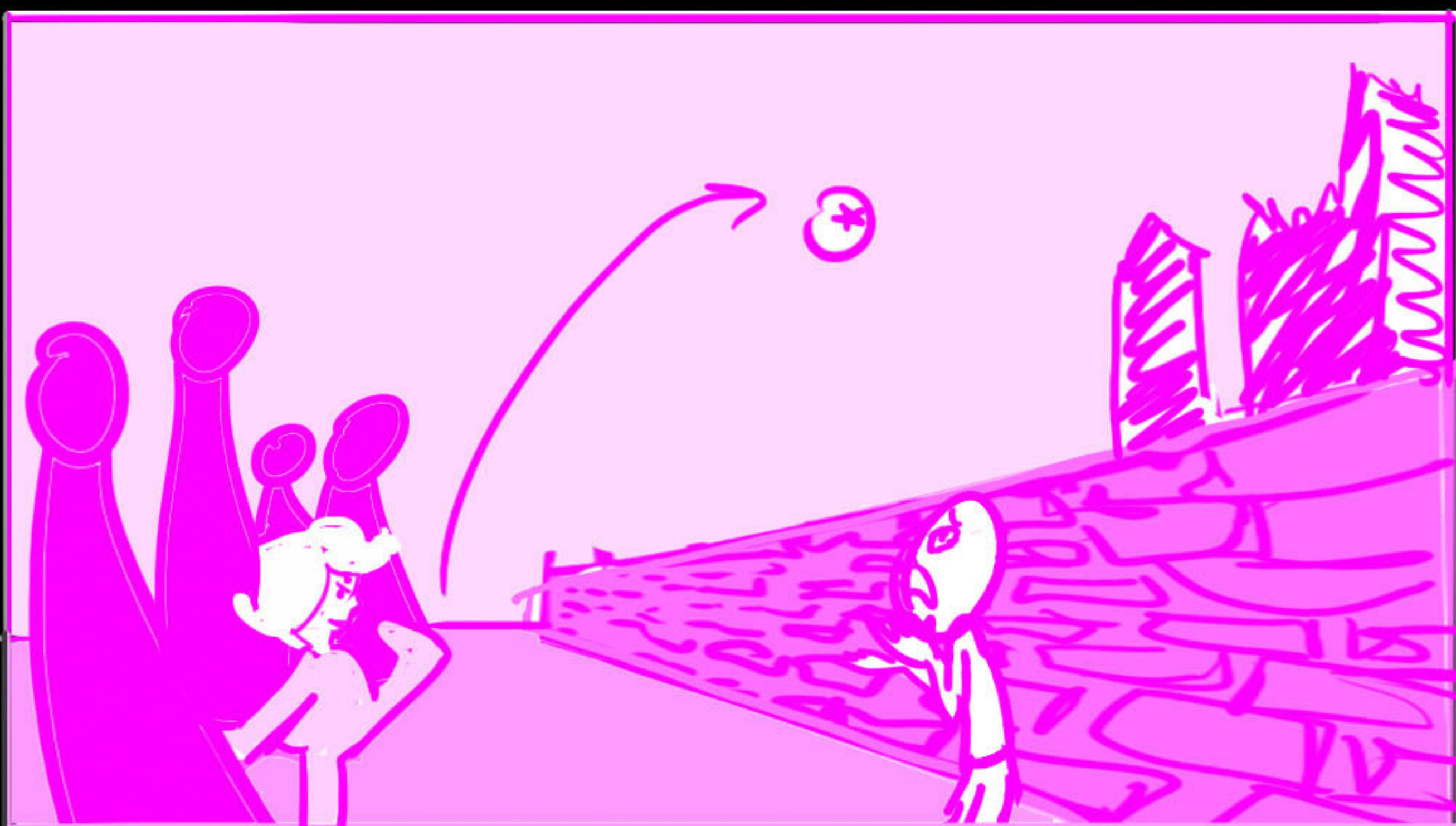
Suddenly, the MEAN GIRL's FRIENDS all crowd in on the HERO. The HERO looks scared. He drops his ball too

15



We cut to a shot of what HERO sees: the MEAN GIRL holding his ball with all her FRIENDS. MEAN GIRL: If you wanna play with us, you gotta go by our rules!

16



Cut to a side-shot of her kicking HERO's ball over the brick wall behind him. HERO follows the ball with his eyes and tilts his head up

17



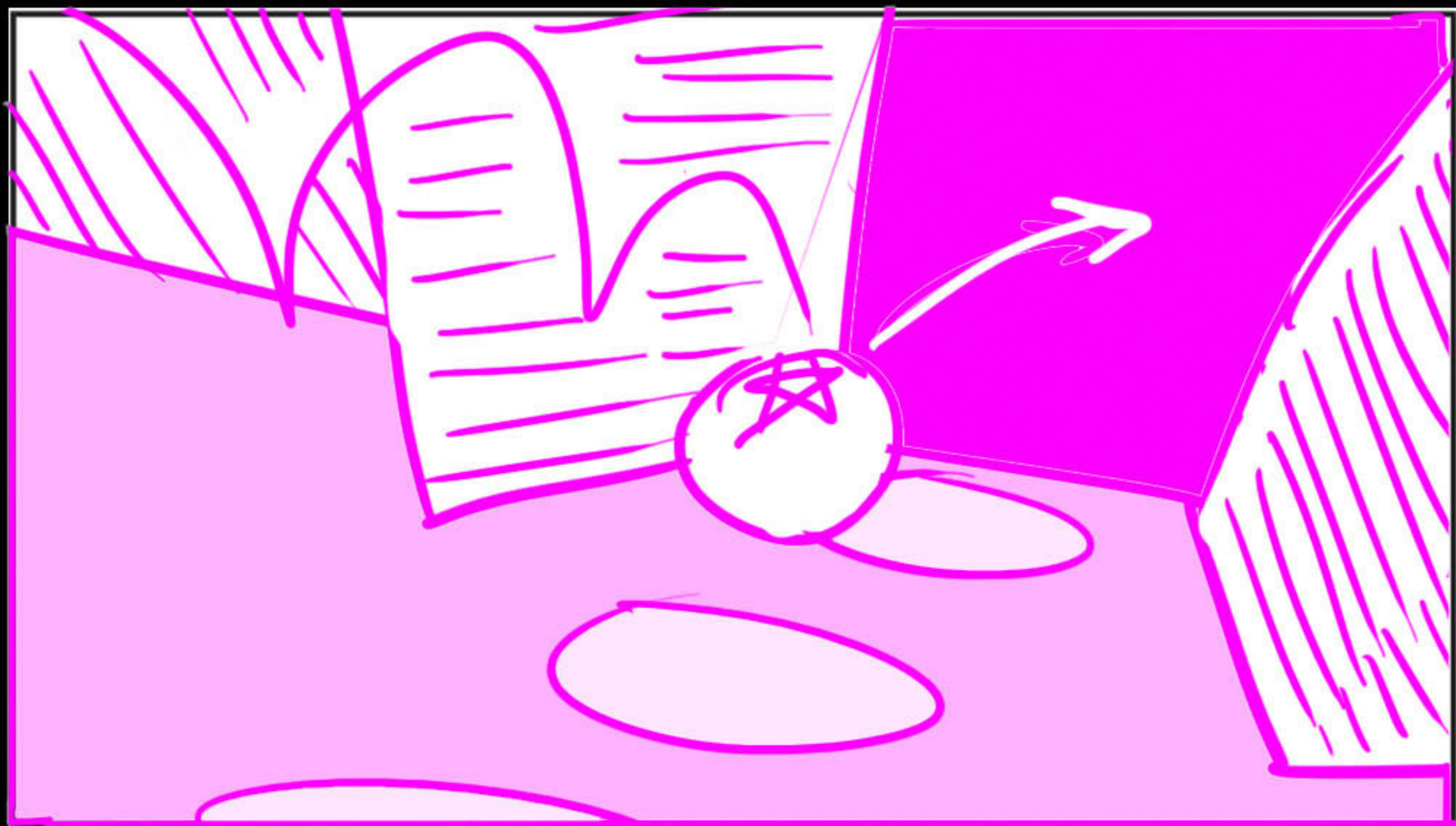
Cut to an shot from above showing HERO continuing to tilt his head up as he looks with terror as his ball flies away

18



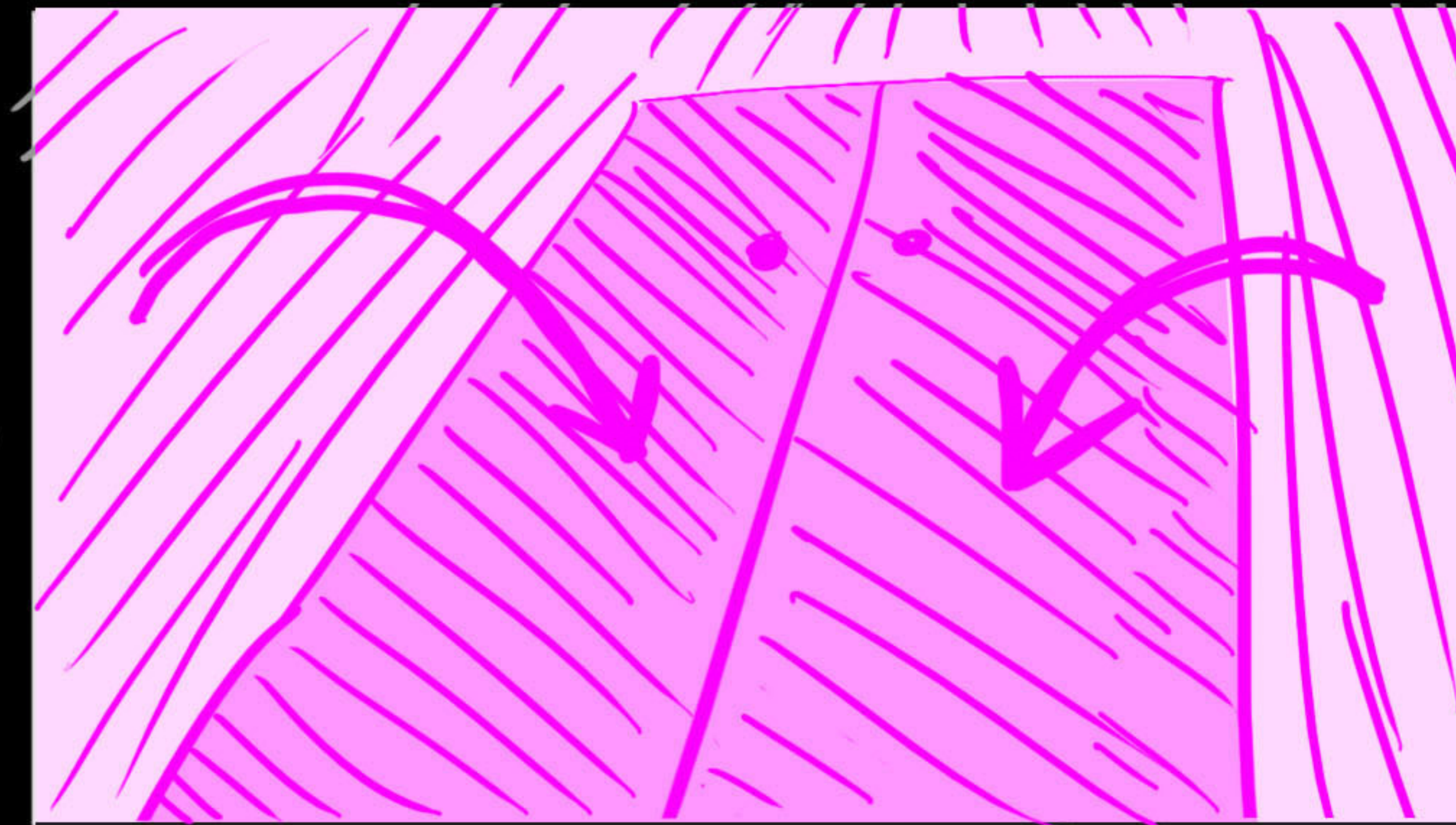
Camera Pans to the other side of the brick wall as the ball falls into the property of a mysterious mansion

19



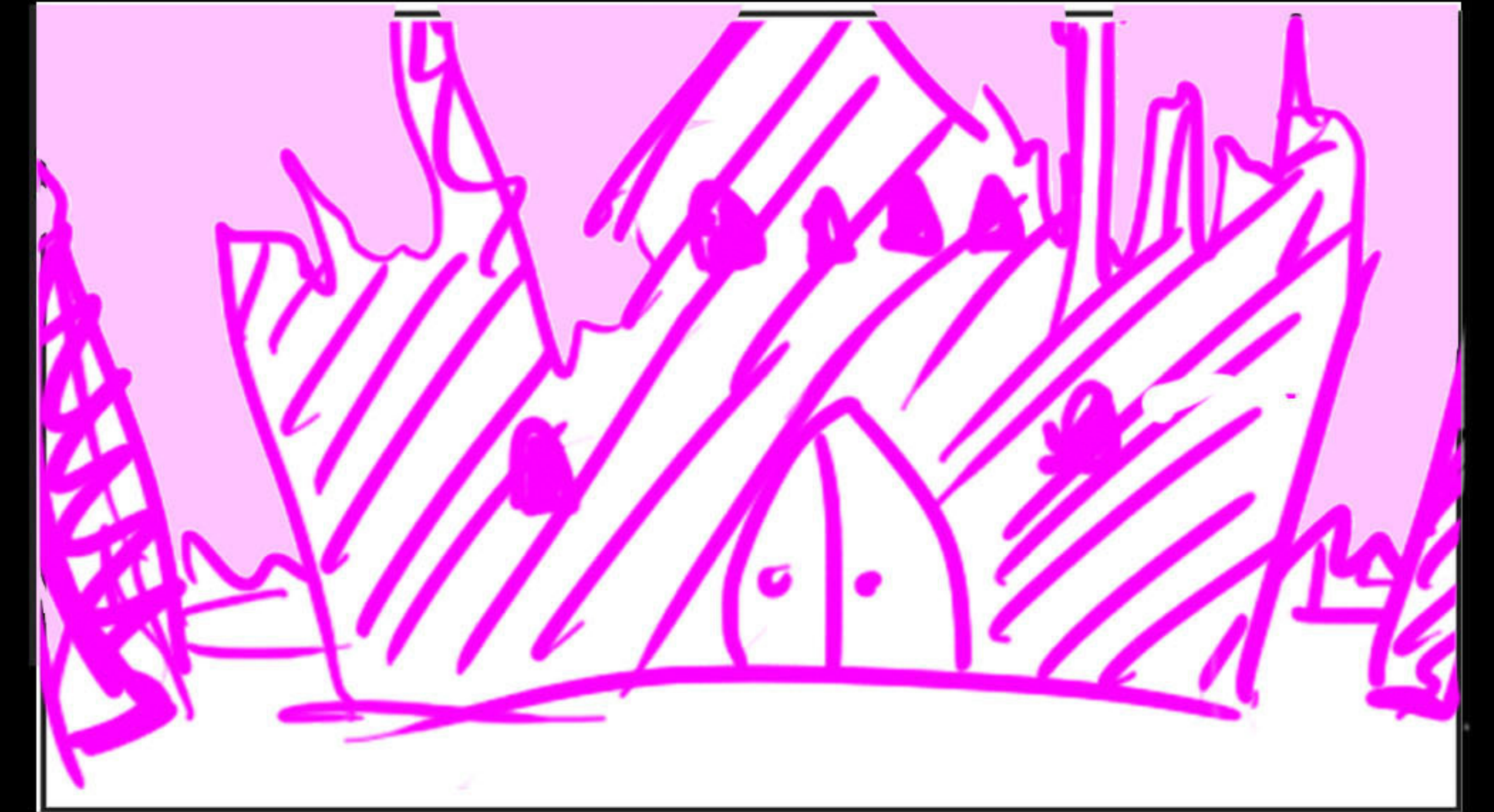
The ball bounces into the house

20



The doors then slams shut on its own accord (mysteriously)

21



Camera slowly zooms backwards

22



Camera zooms backwards more to reveal the HERO behind the brick wall, watching all of this happen.

23



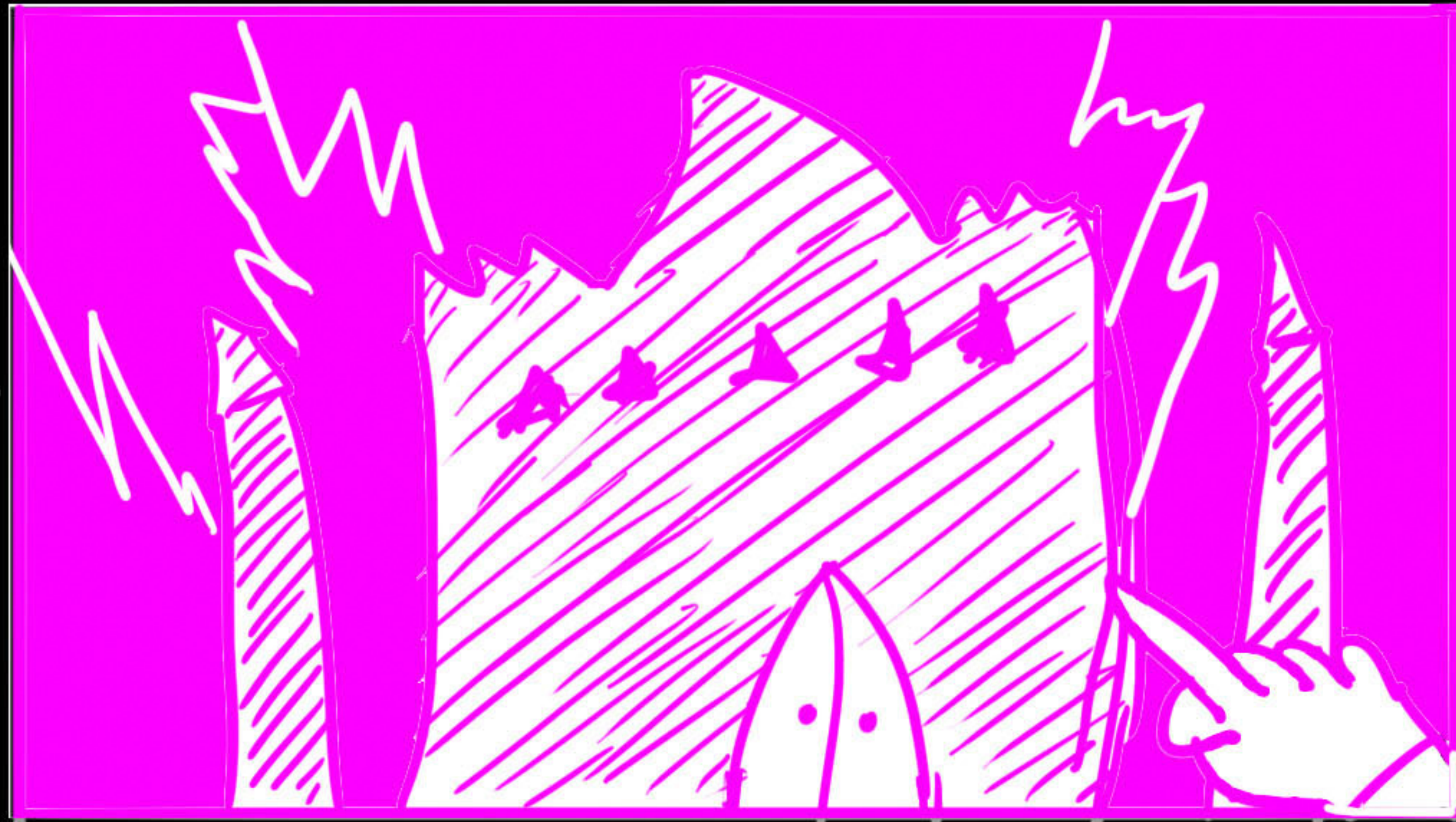
The camera finishes zooming backwards and HERO then whips around in fright as the MEAN GIRL makes a menacing laugh that startles him

24



Cut to the MEAN GIRL with her FRIENDS.
MEAN GIRL: Hahaha! Now you gotta go into the haunted house!

25



Cut to facing the house and we see MEAN GIRL's hand as she points at it. Lightning strikes MEAN GIRL: It's full of ghosts and scary dangerous stuff!! No one's ever come out alive!

26



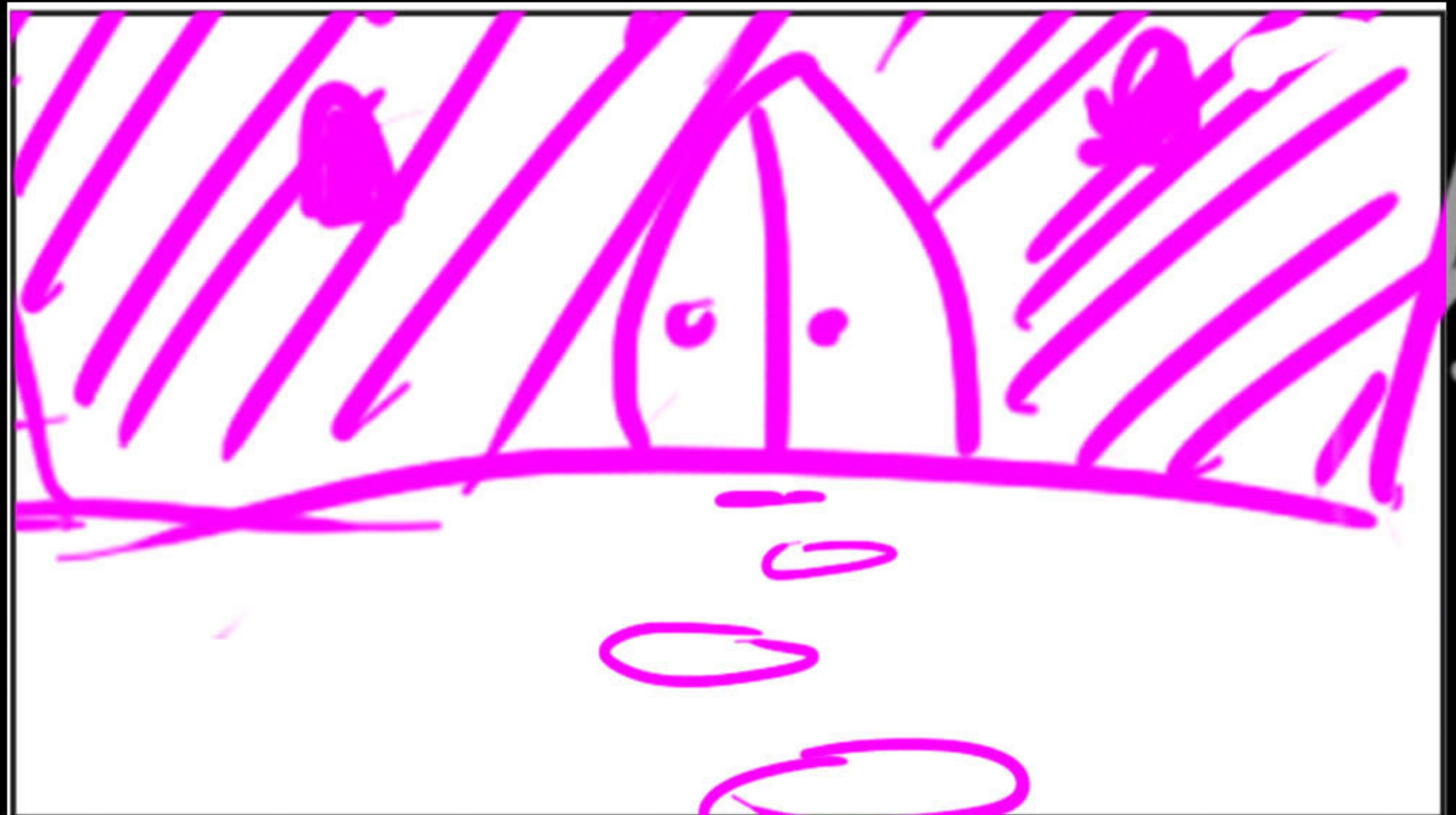
Close-up shot of HERO simply sighing to himself, as he realizes that he must now do this to get his ball back.

27



Side-shot of HERO climbing the fence

28



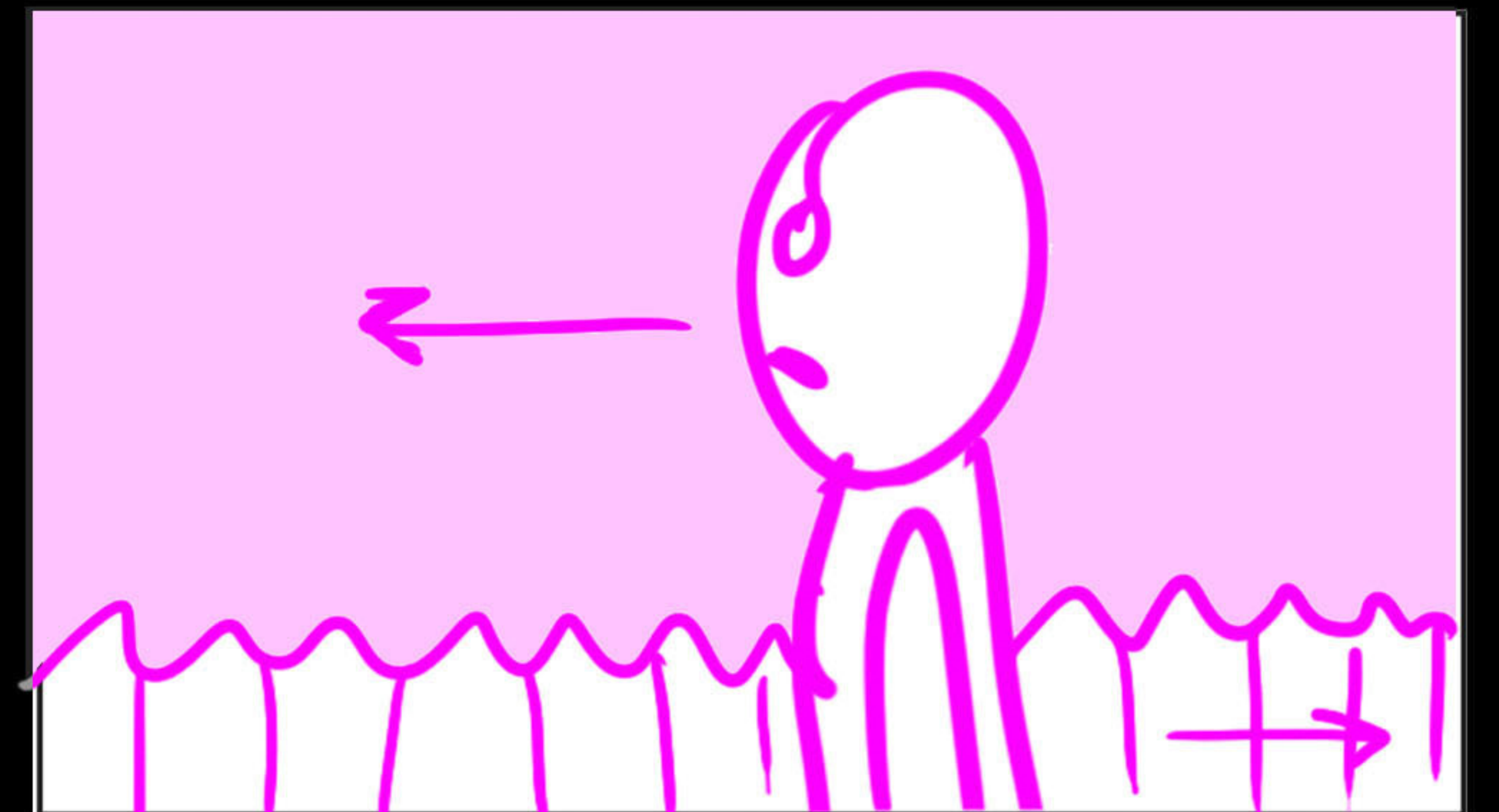
Low-angle view of the front door of the house

29



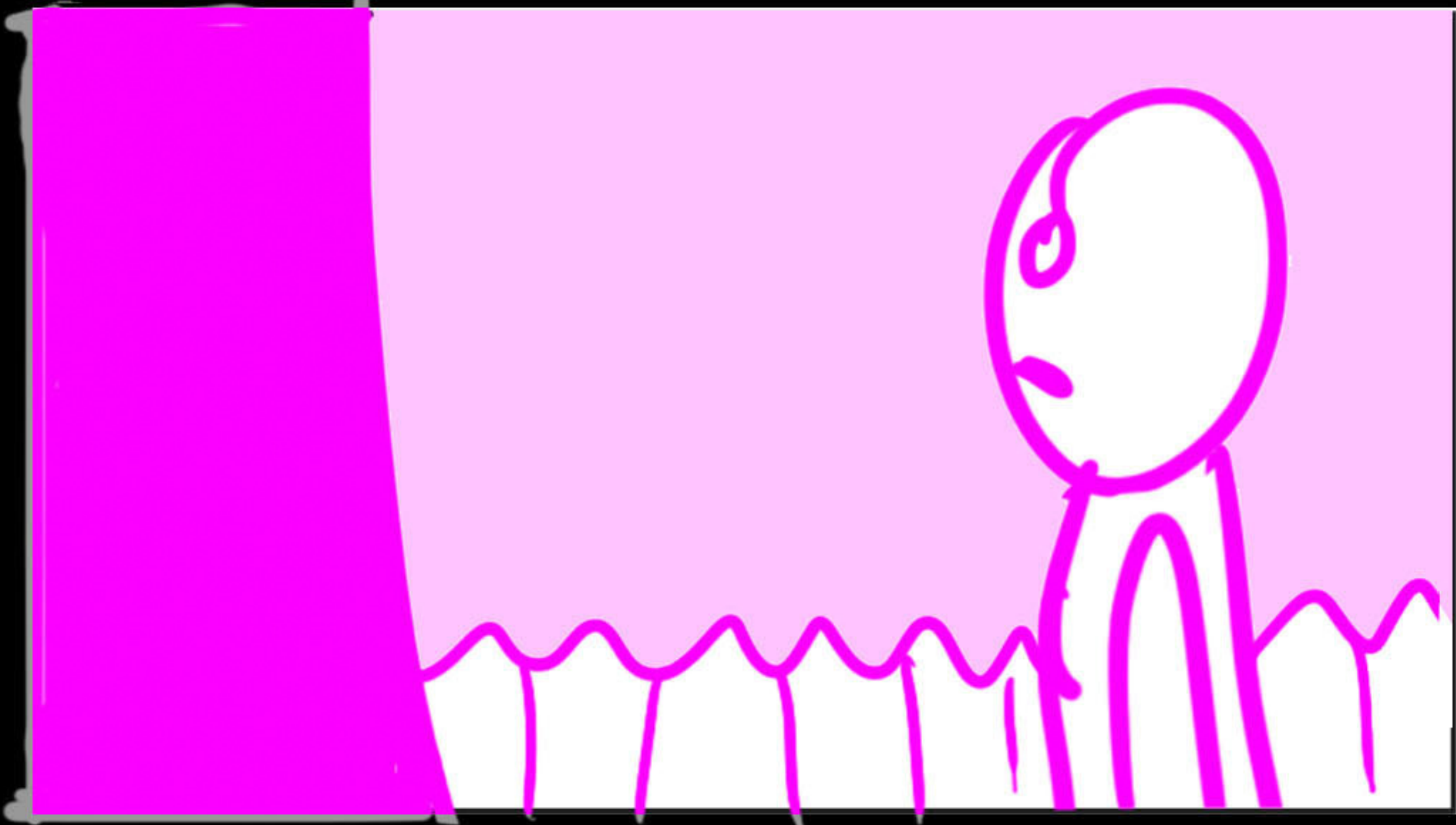
And HERO falls into frame (we only see his legs due to the low angle)

30



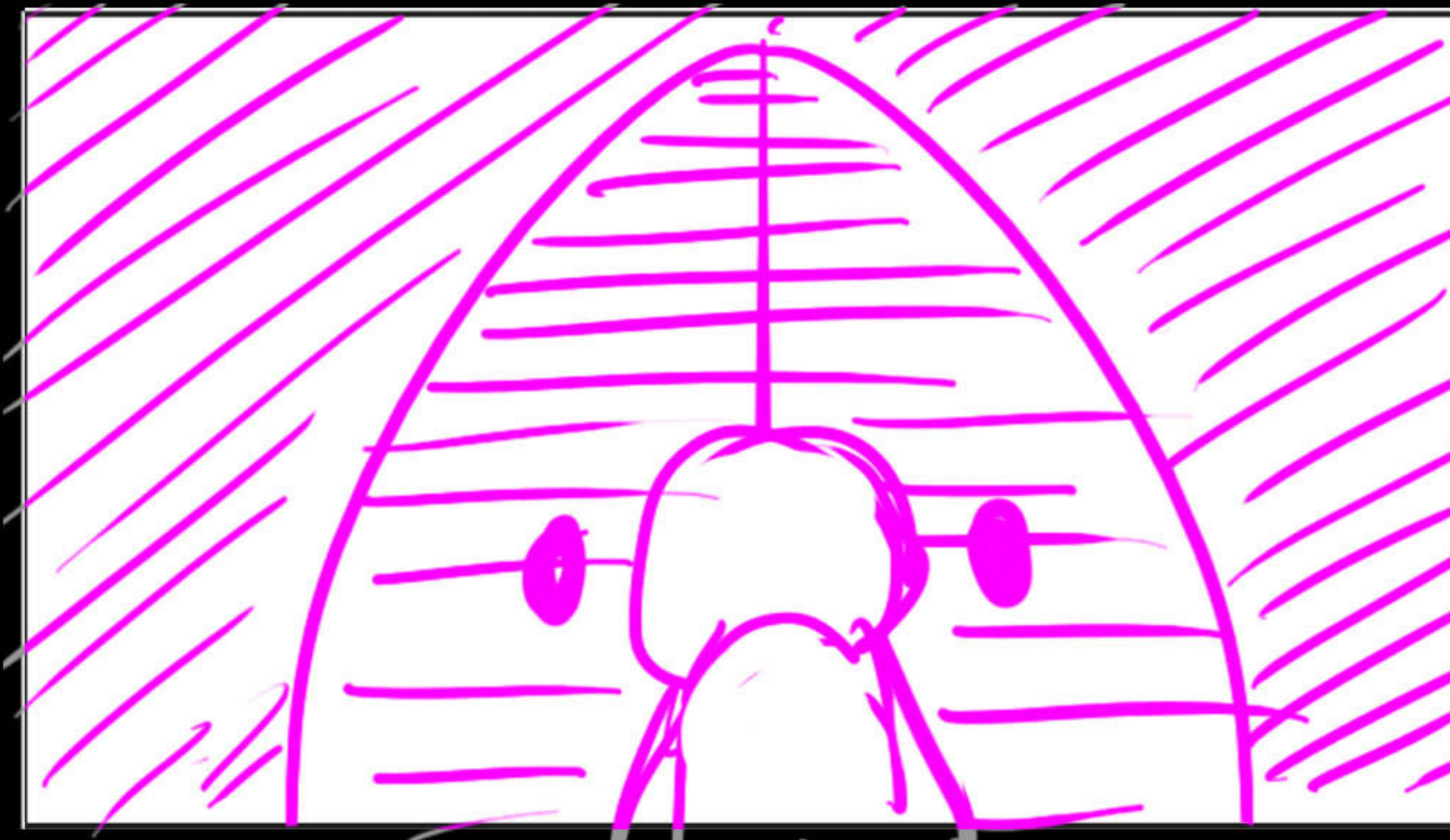
3/4 Shot of HERO walking up to the front door nervously

31



The HERO reaches the front door

32



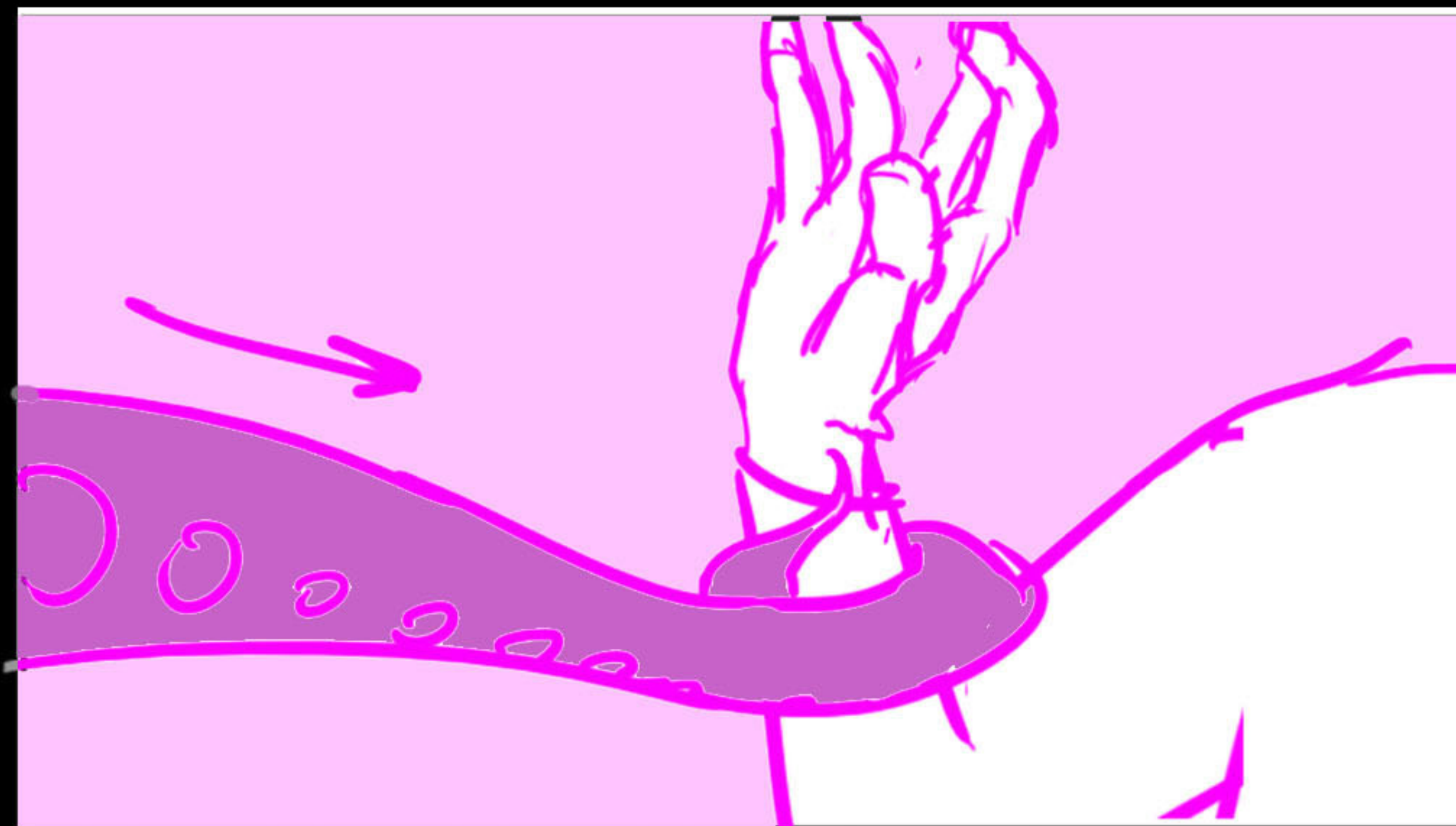
Low-angle shot from behind the HERO as he looks at the menacingly-large front door.

33



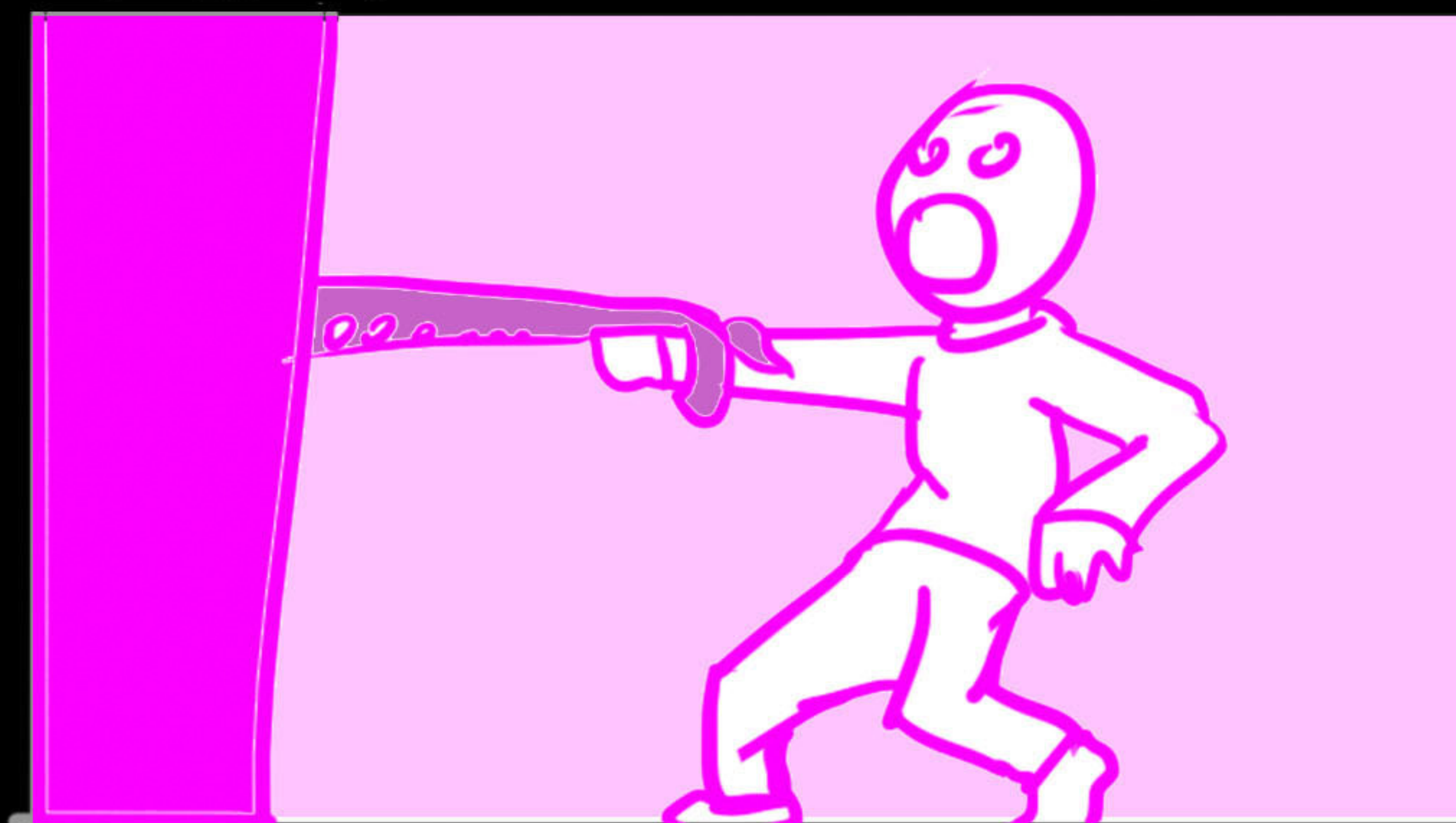
Close-up shot of HERO's fist as he lifts it to knock on the door

34



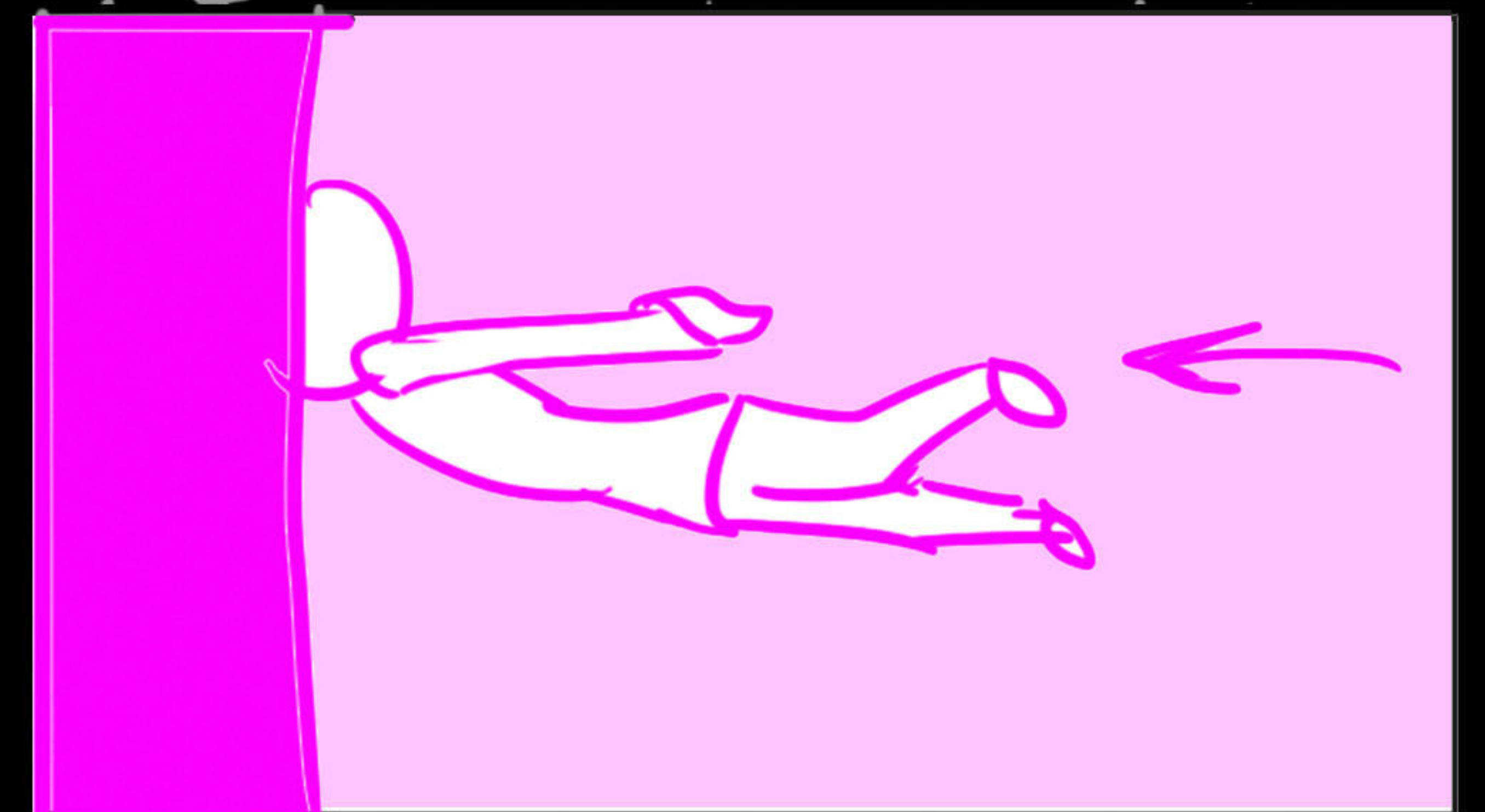
And then a tentacle flies out and grabs him by the wrist!!!

35



Wider side-shot of the boy gasping at what is happening

36



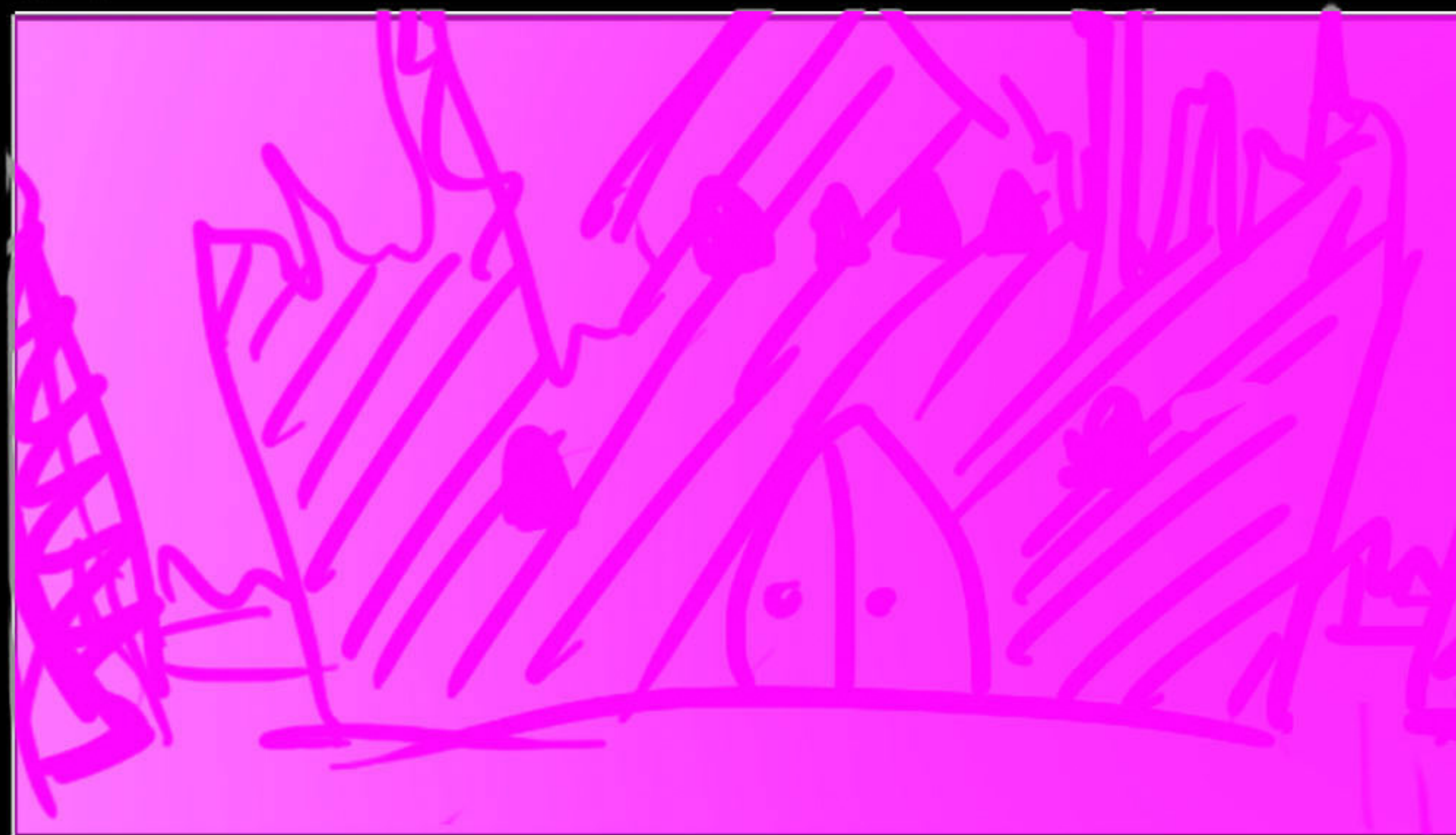
And then the tentacle pulls him into the house

37



Cut to facing the front door of the house as the door slams shut

38



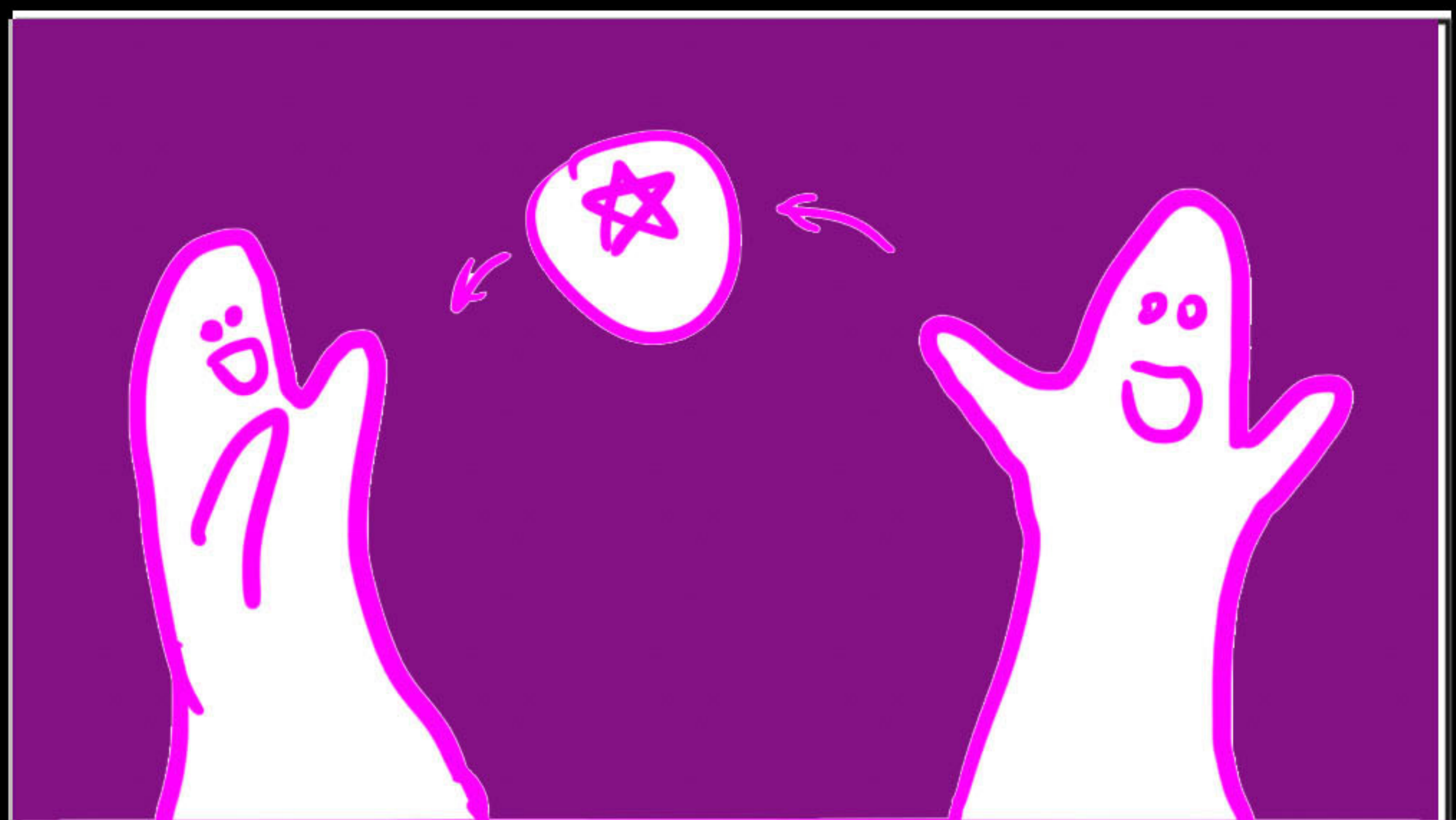
Camera slowly zooms out away from the house as the shot slowly FADES OUT to black

39



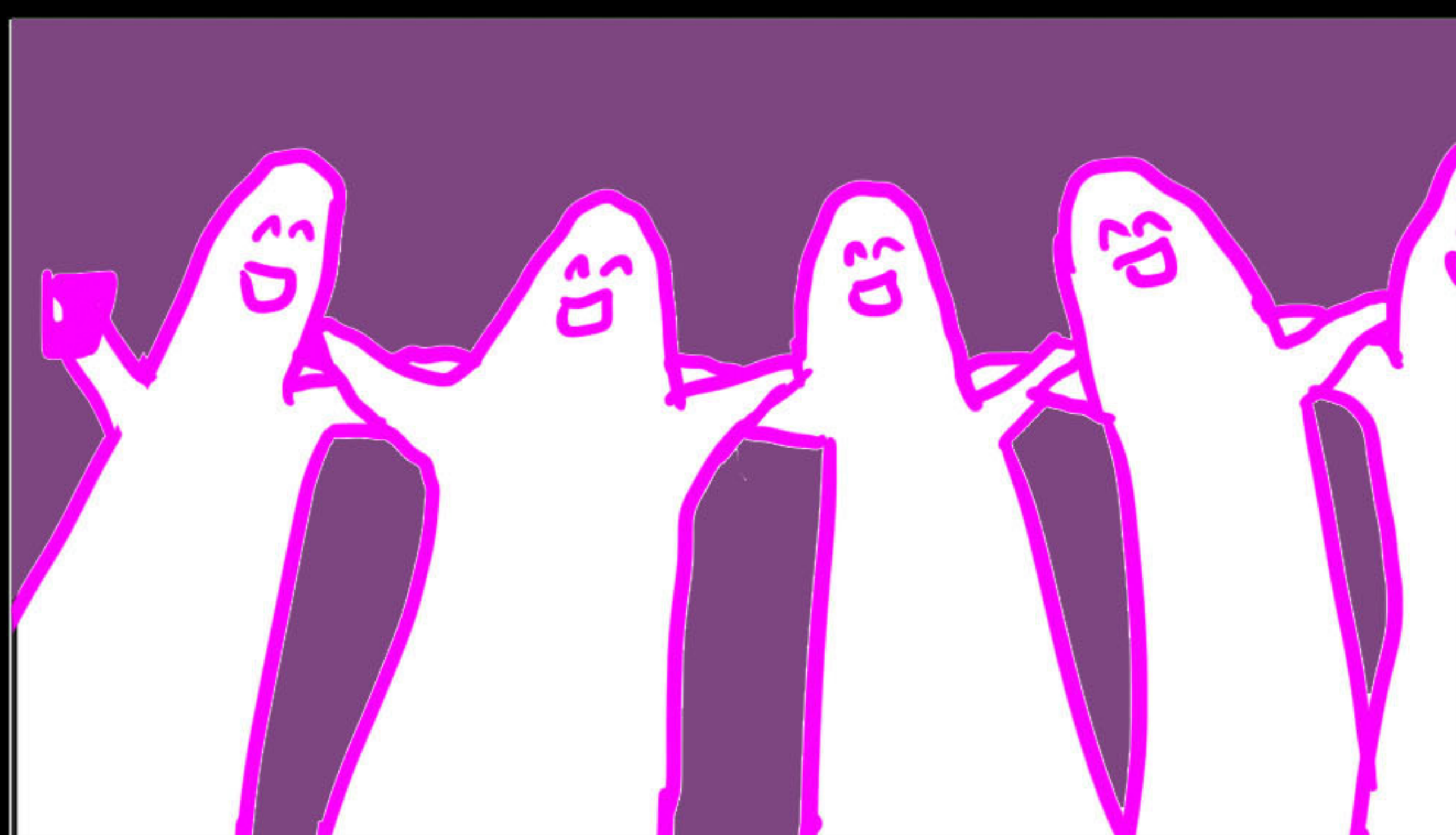
And then cut immediately to a shot of HERO inside the house, looking in shock/horror at what is happenin We see shadows on the wall and hear crazy hooting and howling

40



Cut to various shots of what's going on: There are ghosts and other creatures are inside and they're all having a party! Here are some ghouls playing with his ball

41



Here are a bunch of ghosts all drinking and singing together!

42



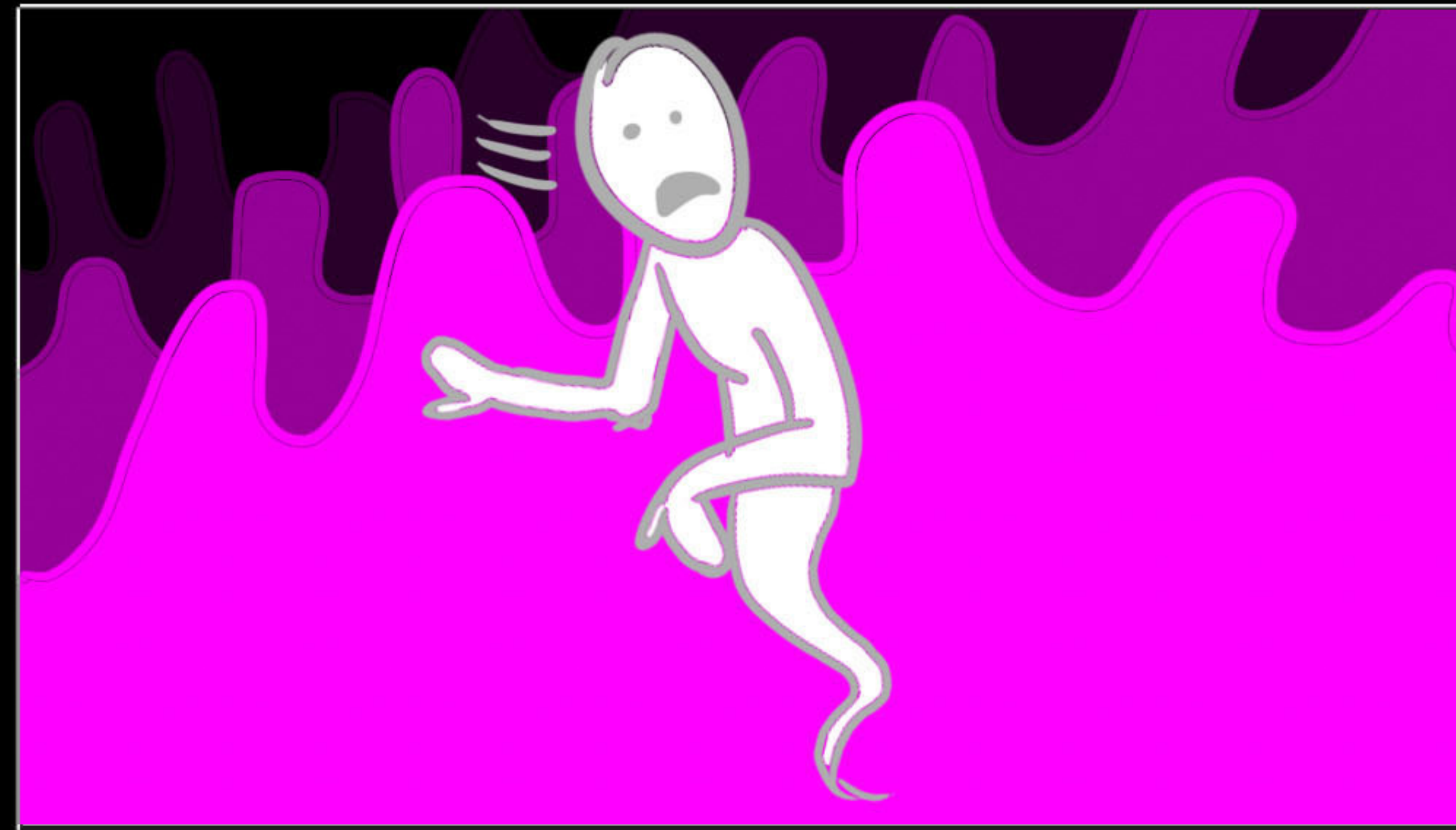
And then the ghosts all grab the HERO and do a crowd-surfing thing with him, carrying him above a crowd of monsters, ghouls, demons, pixies, fairies, and other supernatural beings

43



Cut to one GHOST who is having a good time at the party

44



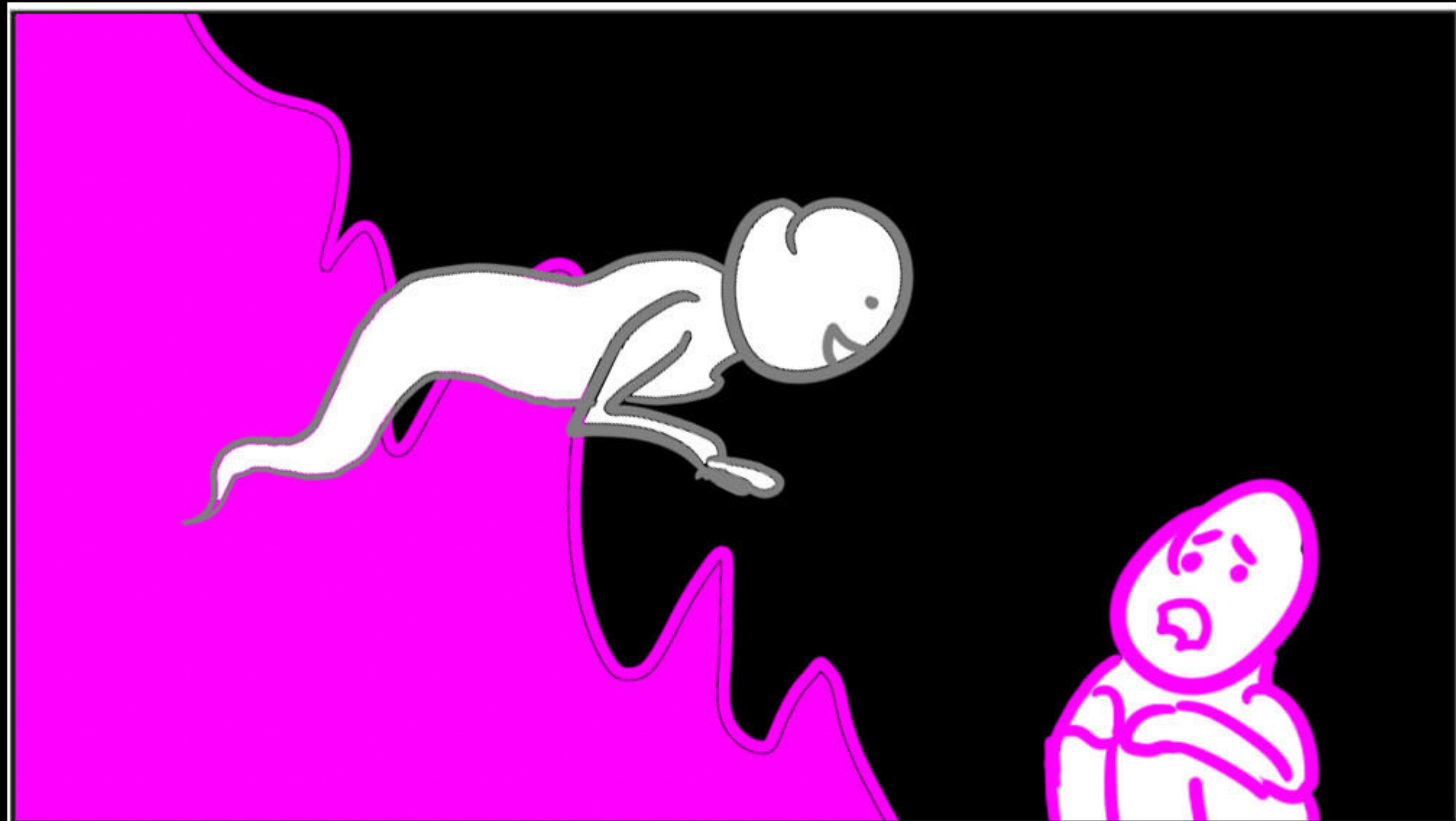
Suddenly, though, he looks over and sees the HERO hiding in a corner

45



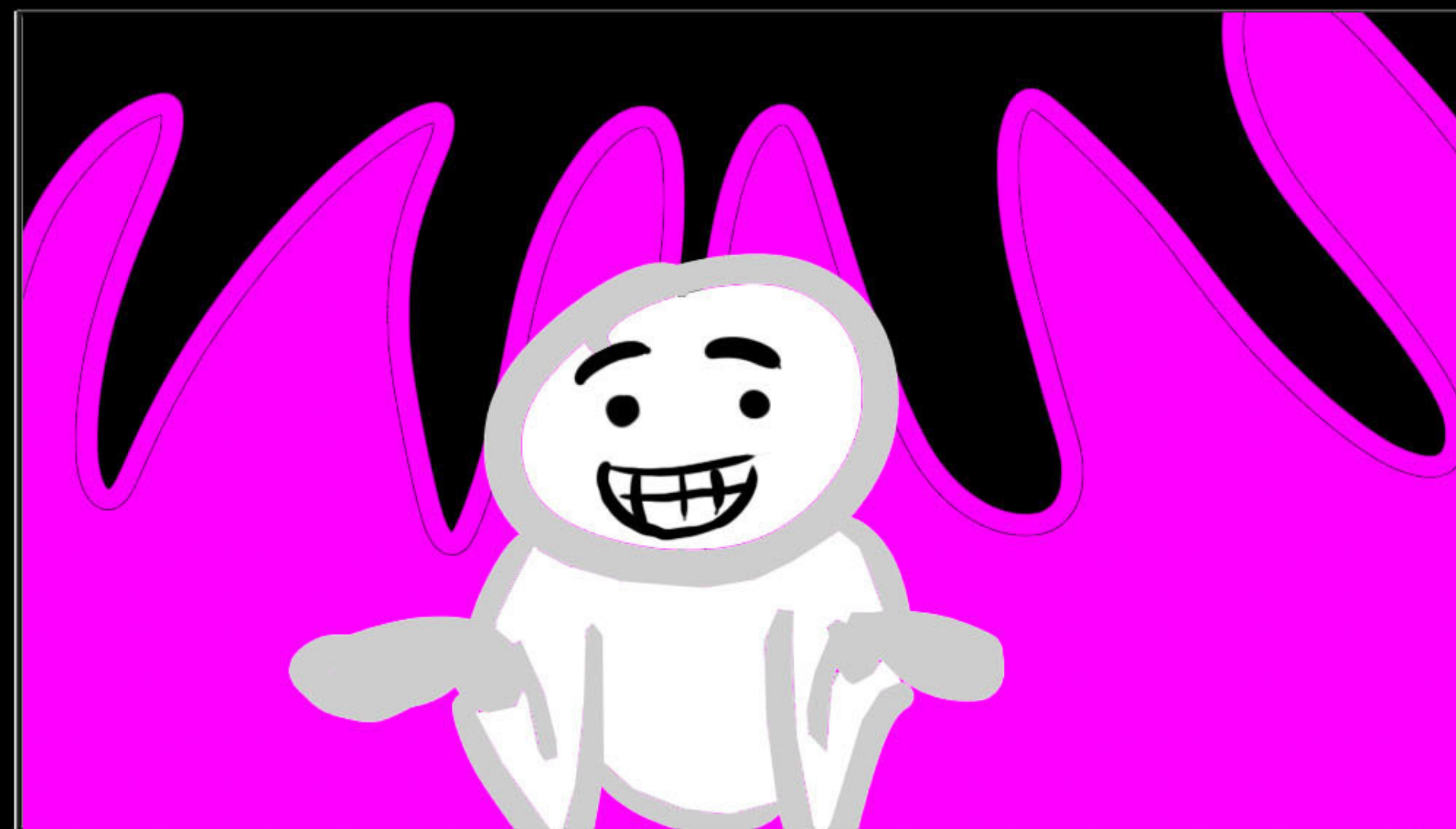
Cut to POV shot of what the GHOST sees

46



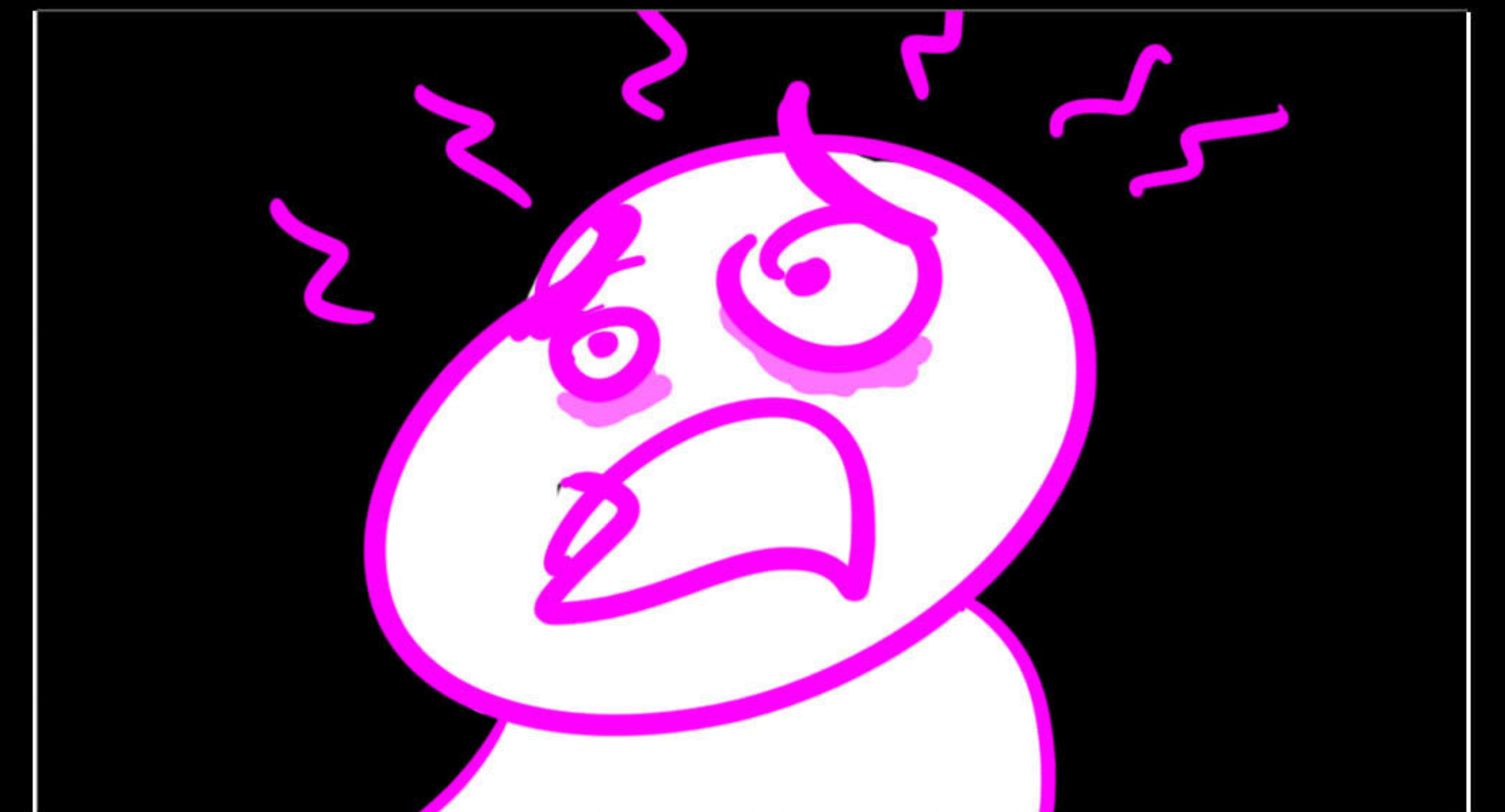
The GHOST floats over to the HERO and talks to him.
GHOST: "Hey, why aren't you dancing?"

47



GHOST: "Don't wanna have a good time with us?"

48



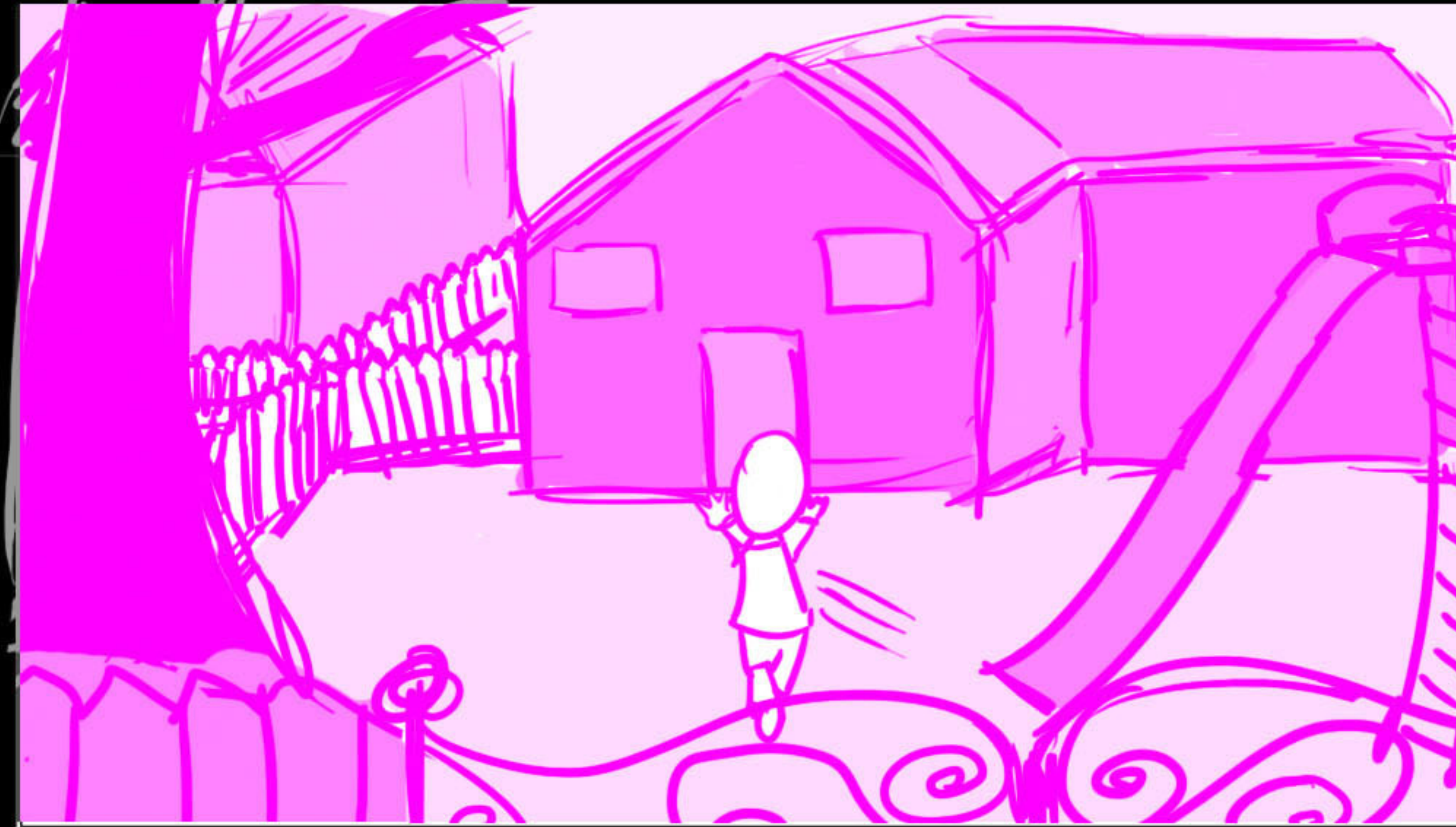
The HERO freaks out

49



We then cut to outside as the HERO bursting through the front doors of the mansion, screaming for his life as he runs away

50



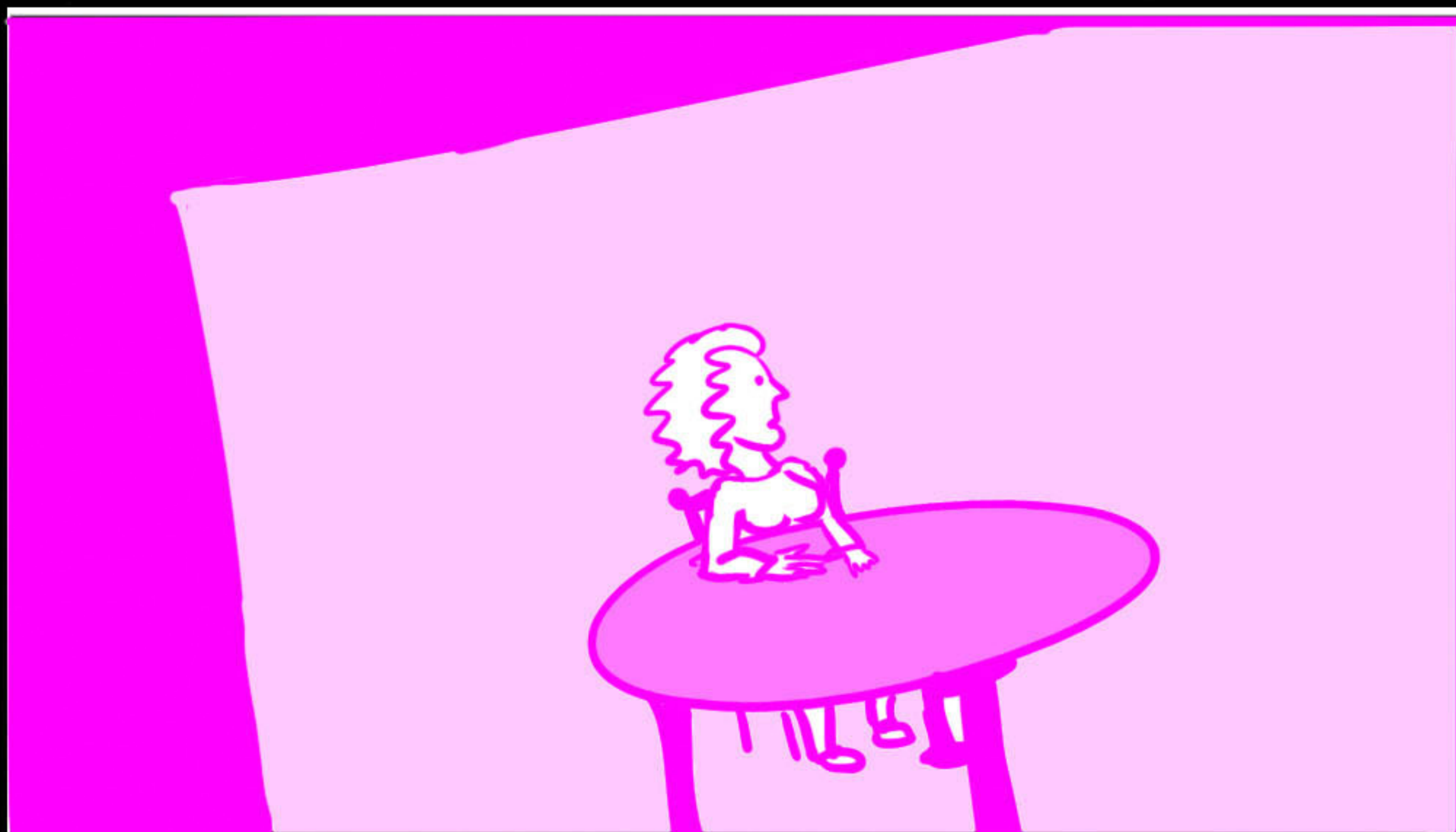
We cut to an establishing-shot of HERO's house as we see him run into frame and run into the house. He's still maybe screaming

51



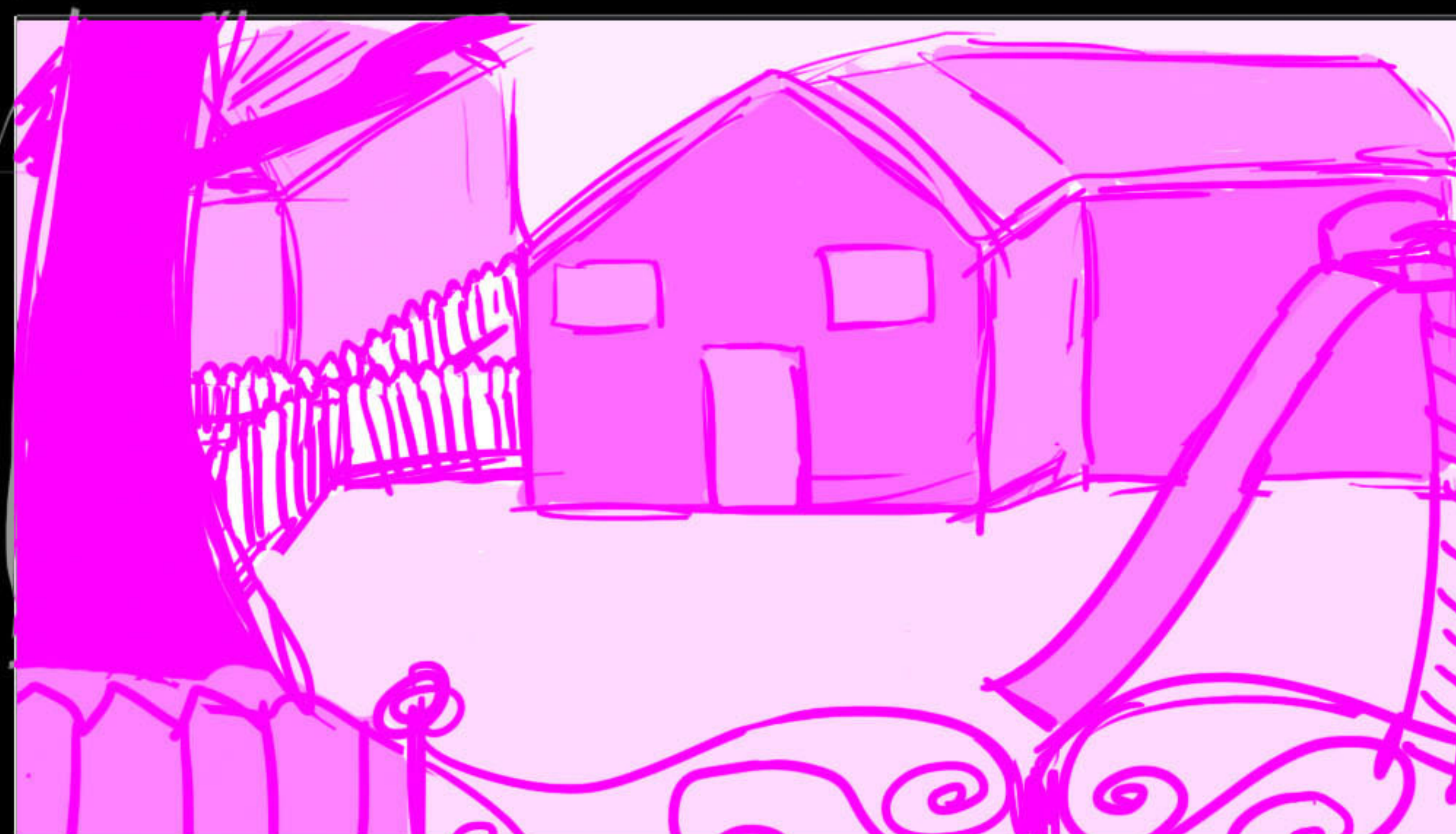
The HERO runs past his MOM, who is sitting at the dinner table. MOM: "Did you have a good first day at school?"

52



The HERO runs past her without paying her any attention, and we hear him slam the door to his room behind him. The mother looks over at where he ran too and seems confused.

53



We cut to the same establishing-shot of the HERO's house.

54



Time-lapse (still facing the house) to that night

55



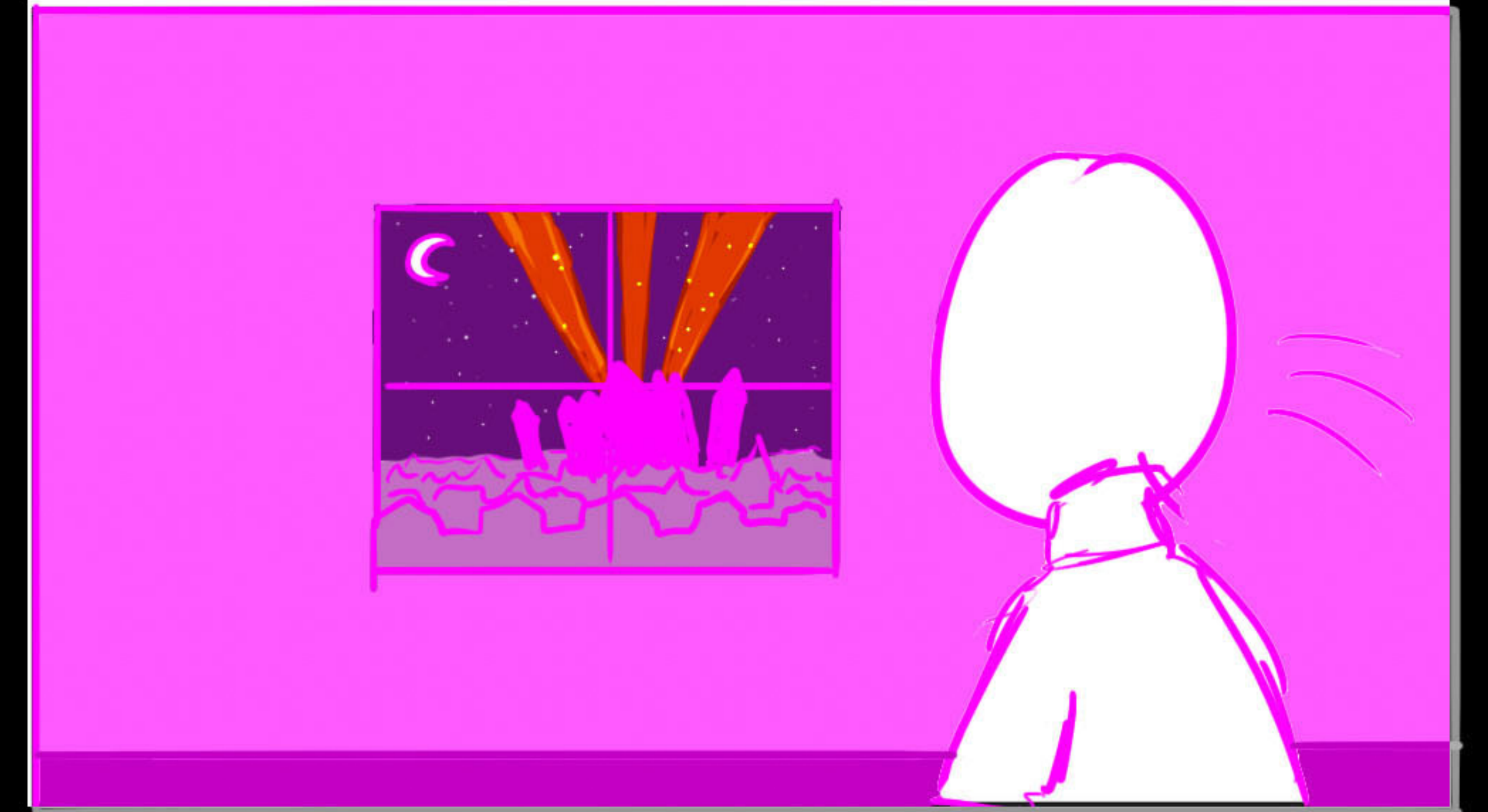
Cut to interior-shot of HERO in his bed, nervously staring at the ceiling

56



A thumping bass sound comes in through the walls, though, and the HERO hears it and looks to his right in confusion.

57



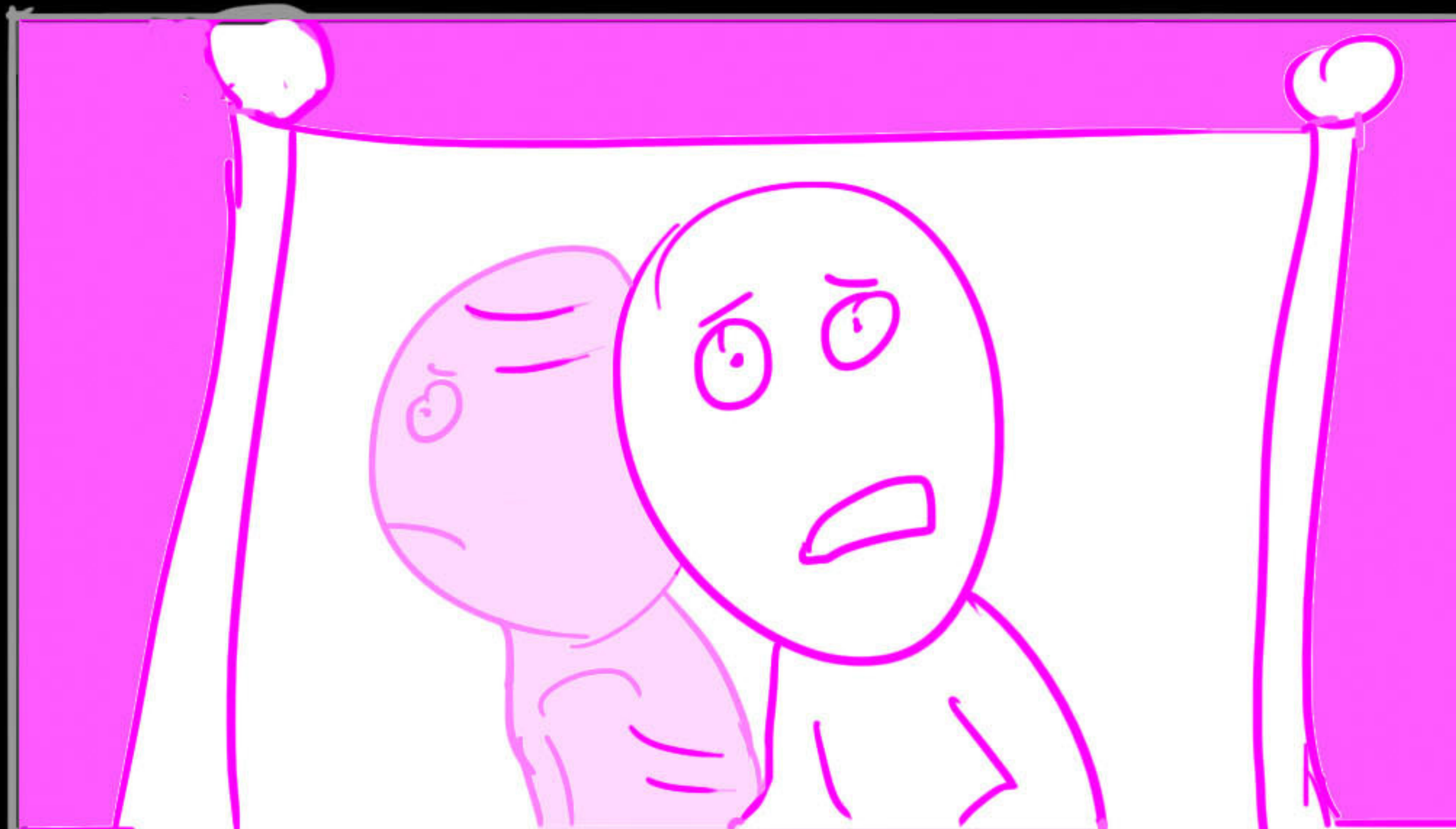
The HERO lifts his torso up to look out the window as we cut to a shot from behind him, looking out the window. We see the Mansion from before and see that lights and party music is pouring out of it.

58



Cut to a shot facing the boy looking out the window, but we then see that all the monsters from before have appeared in his room and are all waiting behind him

59



Cut to a close-up shot of the HERO as he turns around

60



And then he freaks out

67



...leaving the HERO alone in his room, unharmed.

68



Cut back to the over-head shot of the HERO in his bed as he lies back down and goes back to staring at the ceiling, his head full of thoughts.

69



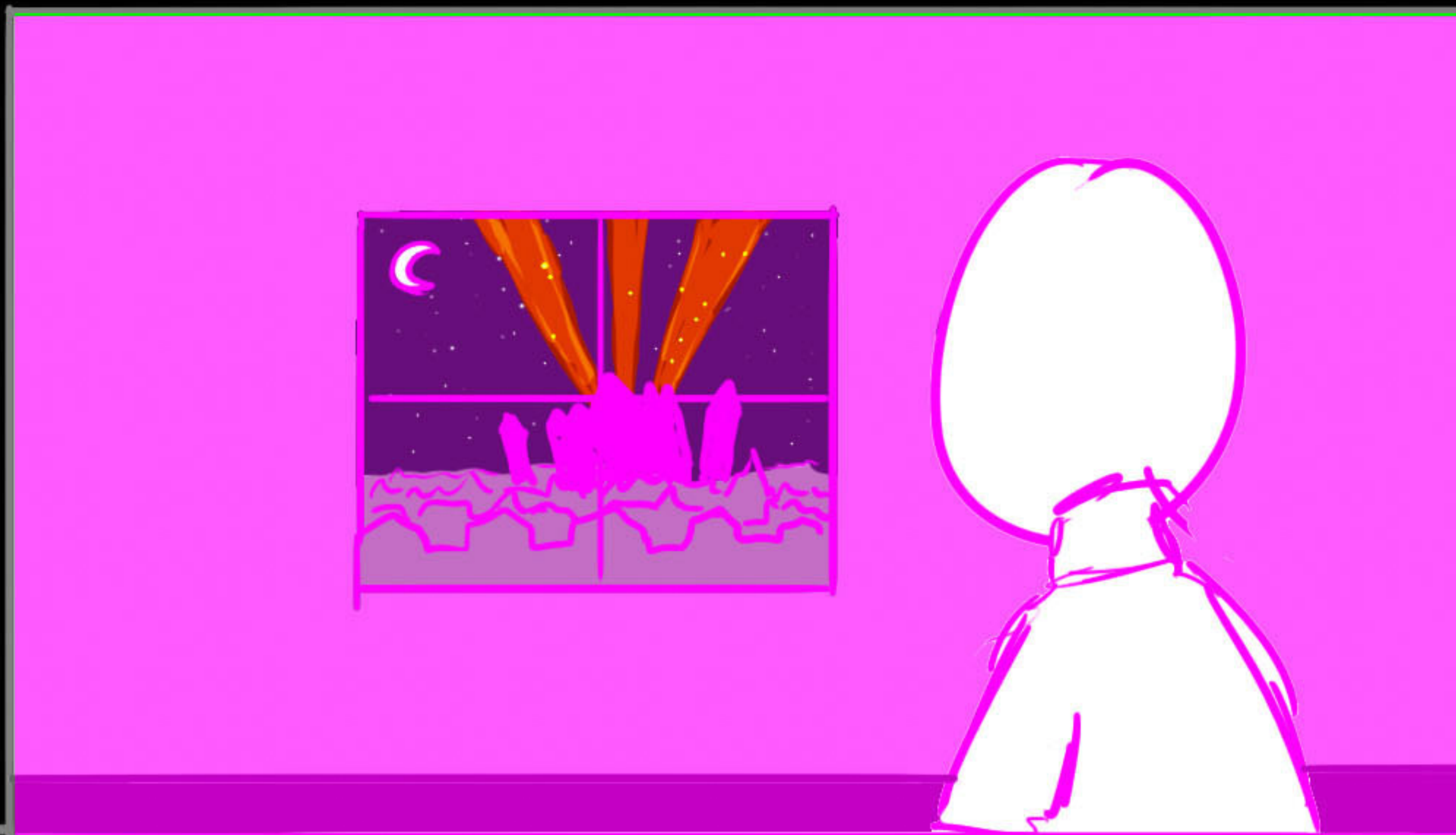
The HERO then lies back down in bed, contemplating the day's events. Sound clips from before flood through his head

70



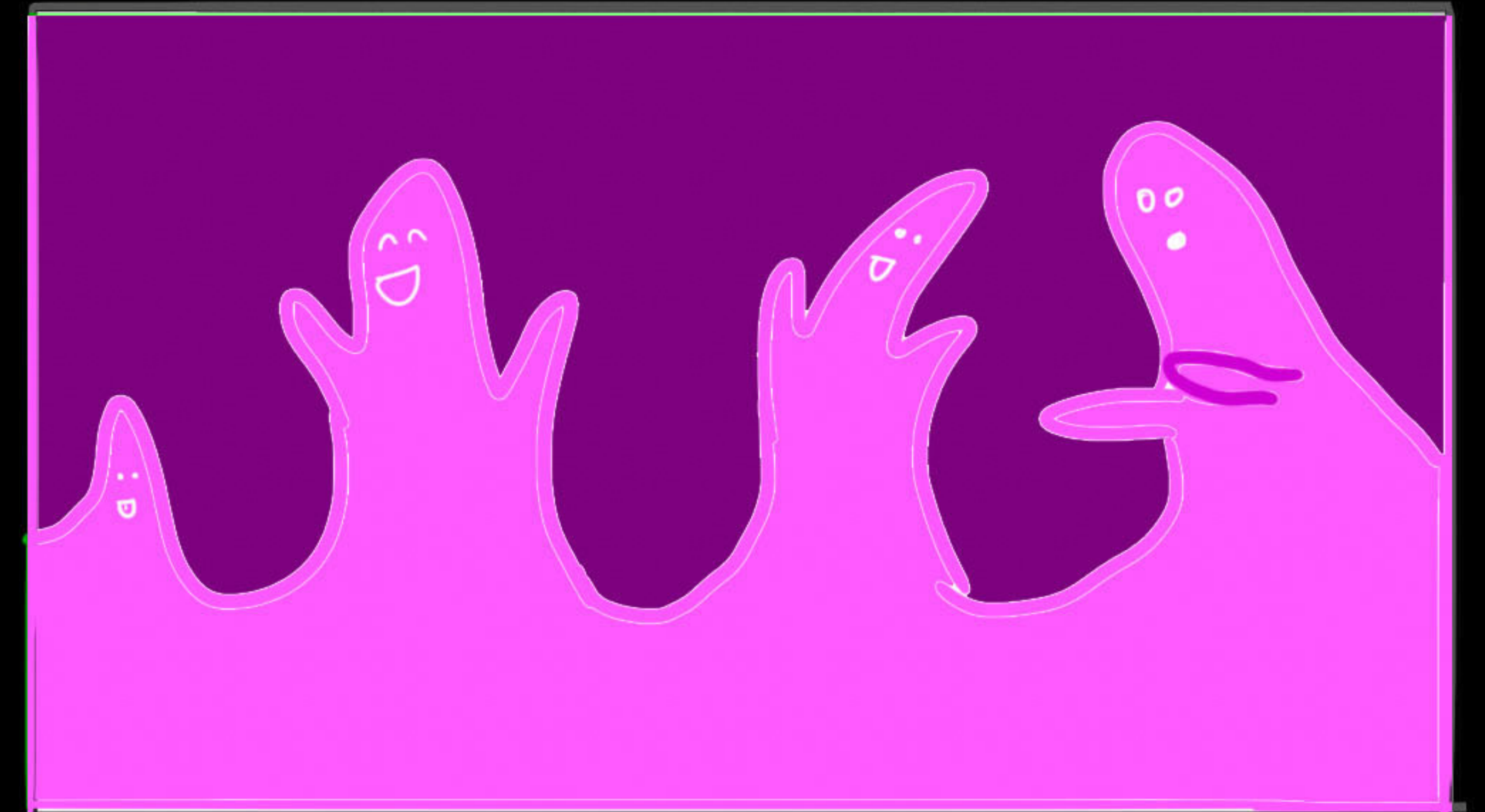
But then suddenly, he's made his decision about what to do as he sits up from his bed with a new sense of authority

71



He looks back over at the party house.

72



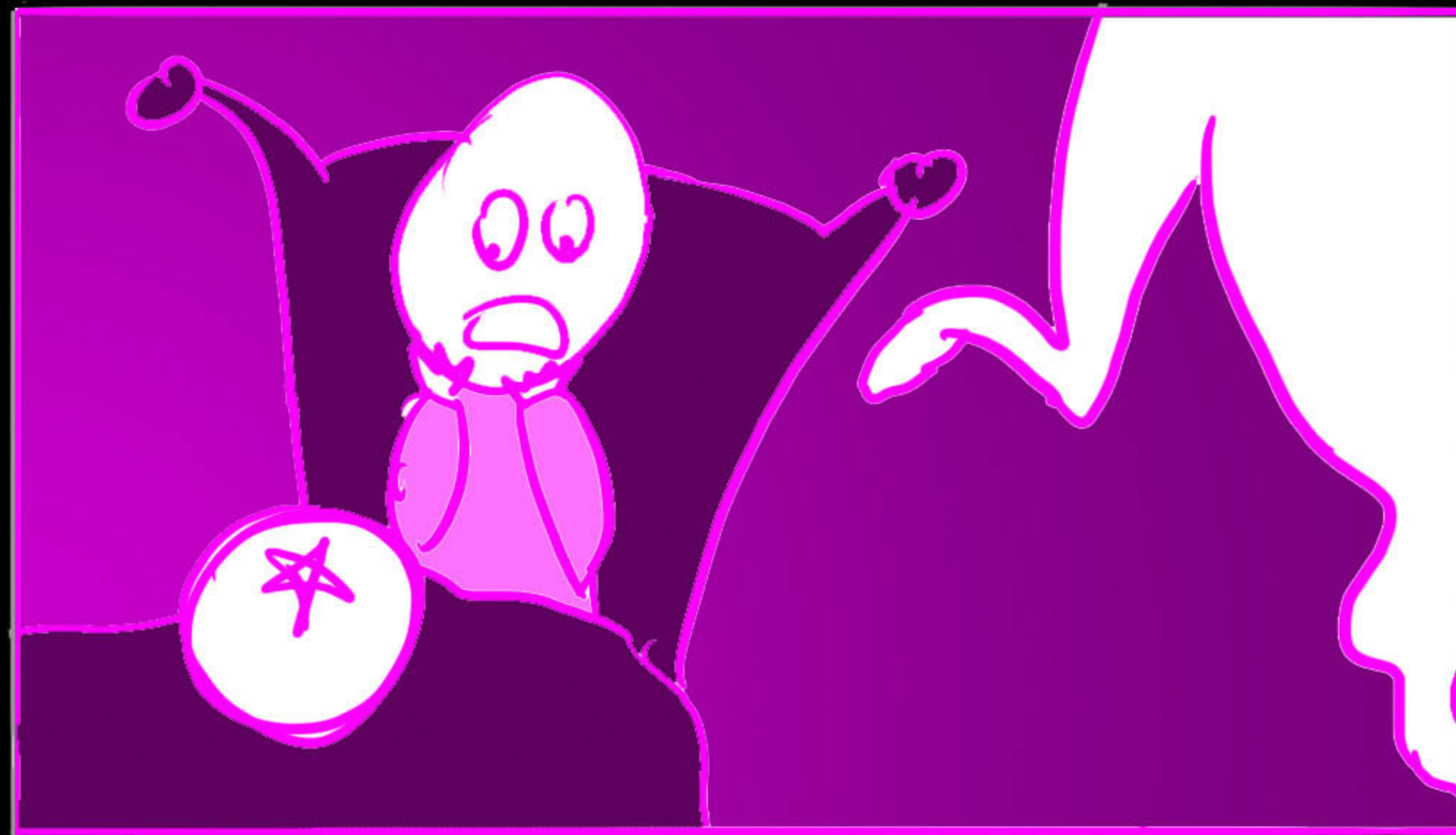
Cut to the ghosts partying again in their house

61



Cut back to the shot from behind the HERO as the same main GHOST from before apparates in front of him, holding his ball.
GHOST: "Hey, you forgot your ball!"

62



The GHOST lightly throws the ball over to the HERO's bed. The HERO looks down at the ball in fright

63



Cut to a shot of HERO being too scared to even respond

64



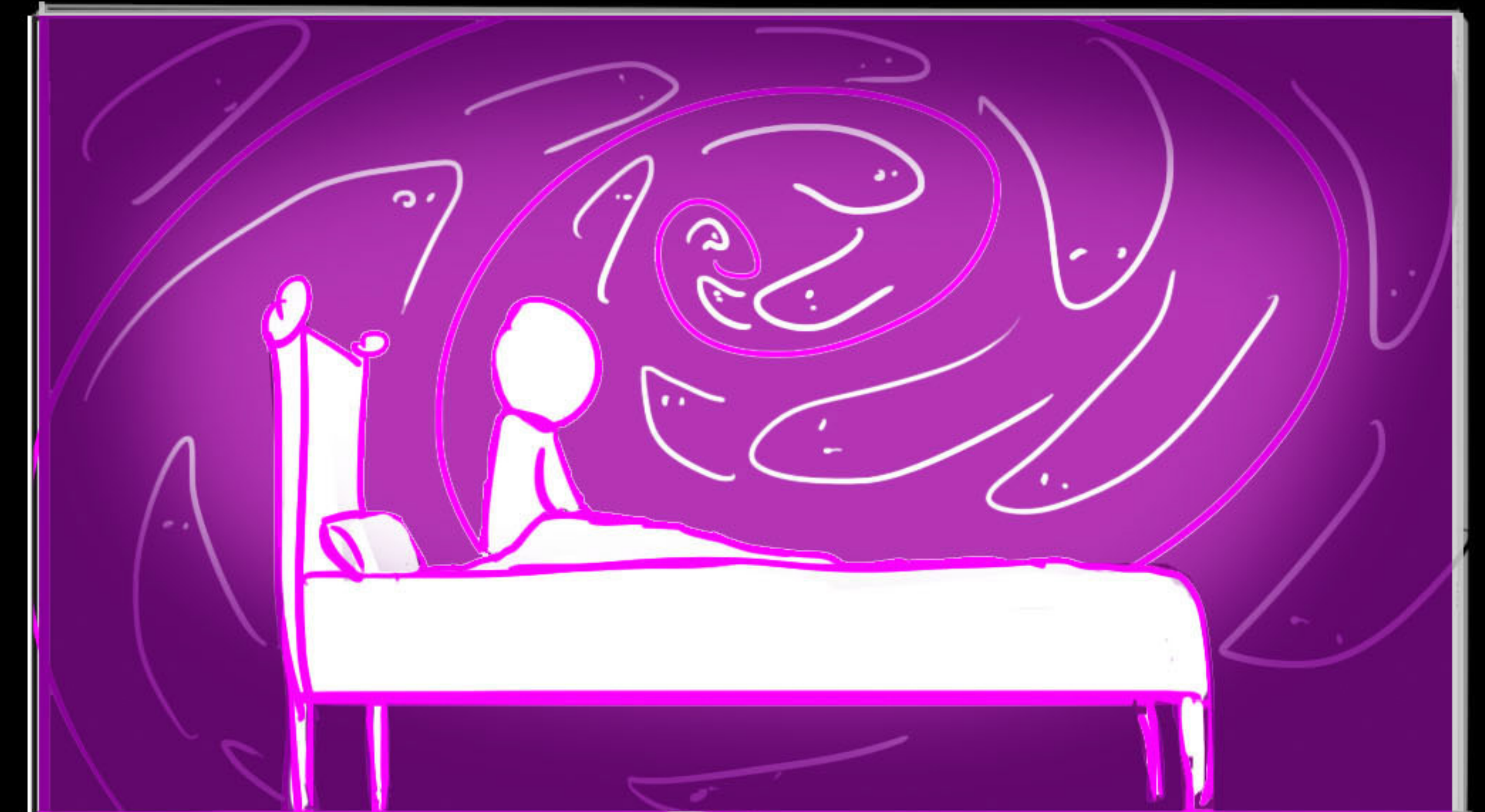
Cut to a close-up of the MAIN GHOST as he just looks confused as to why the HERO is so scared.

65



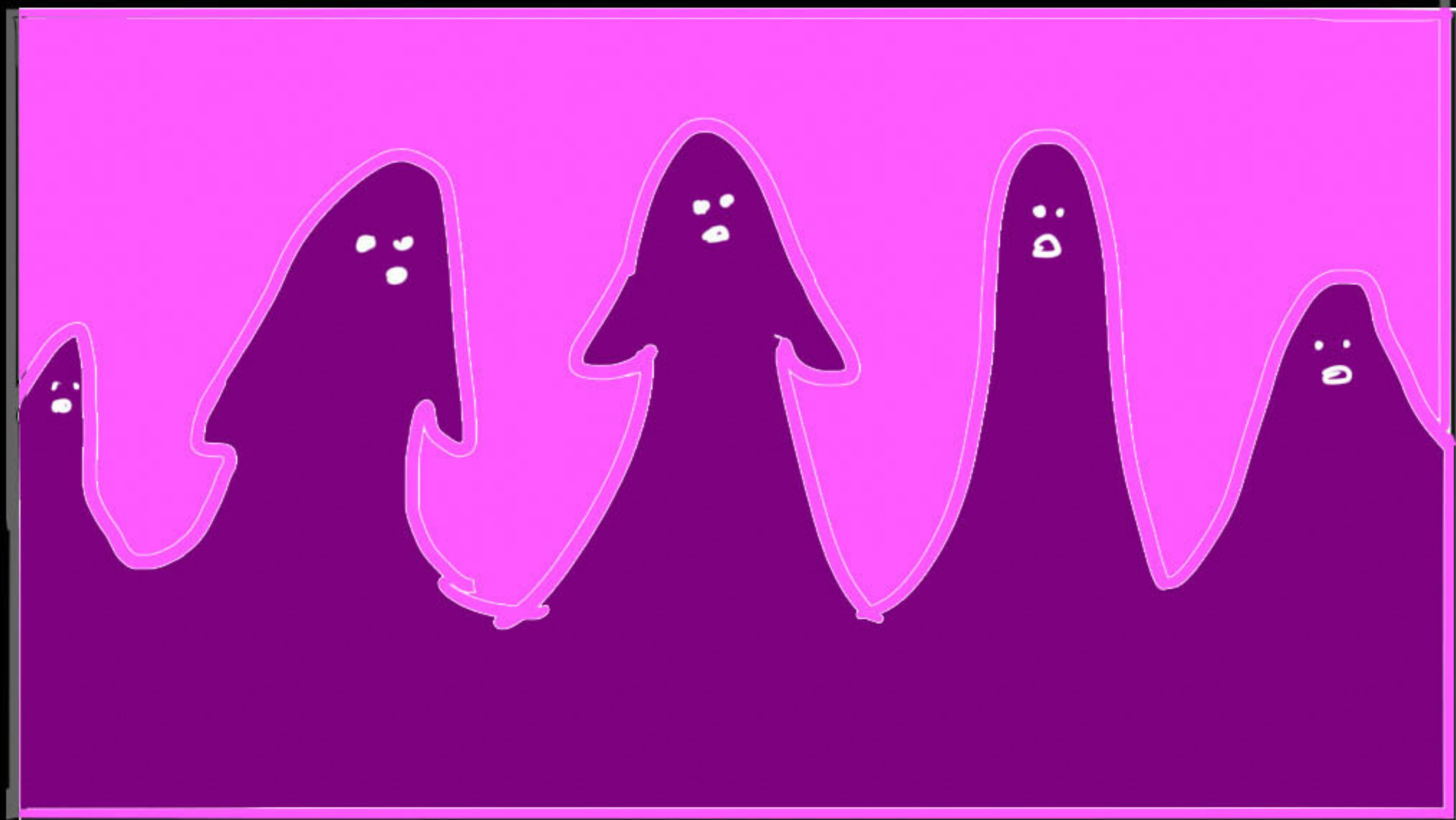
Cut back to the shot from behind the boy facing all the monsters.
MAIN GHOST: "well, OK dude. We won't force you to do anything you don't want to..."

66



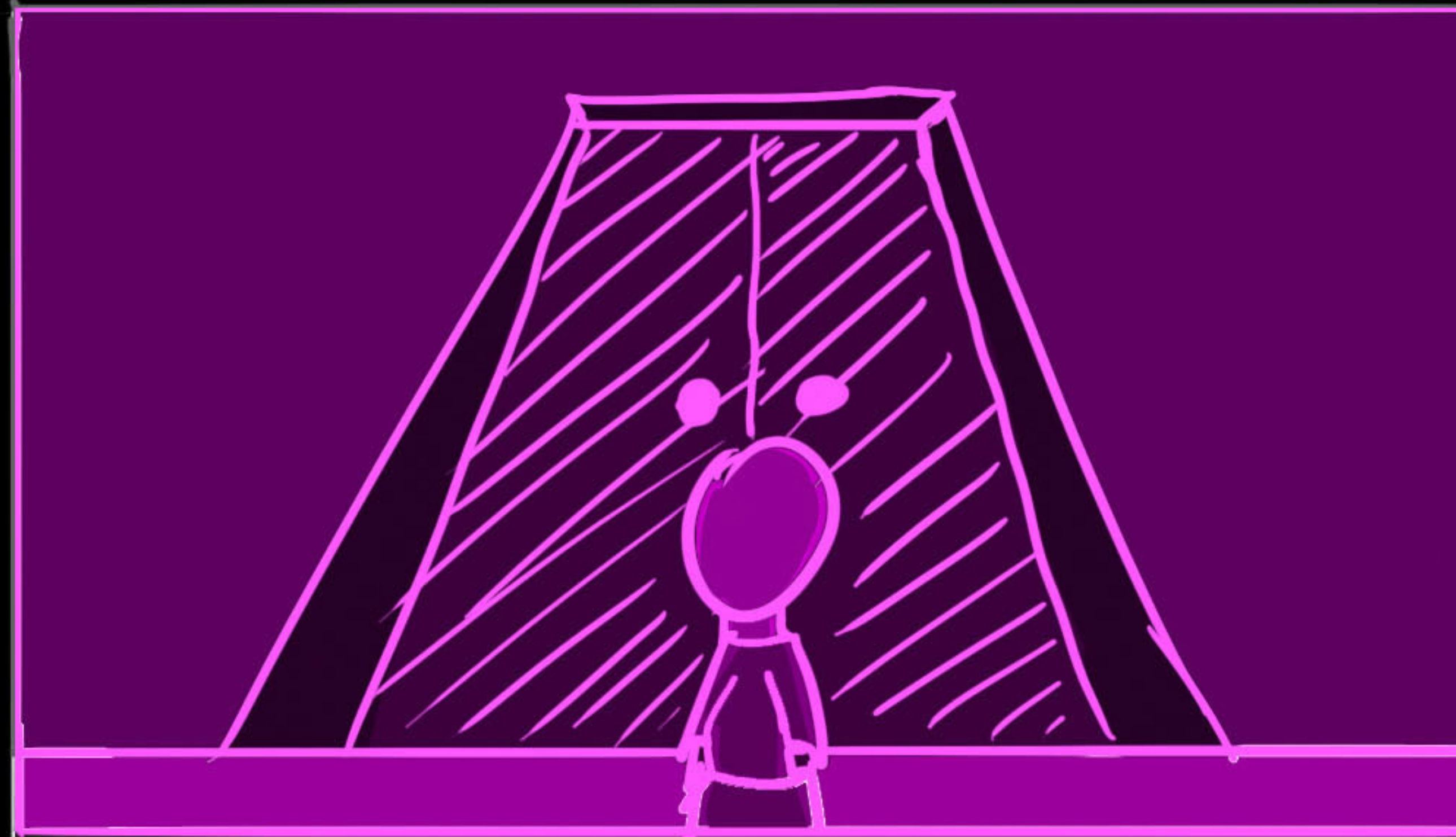
And then all the monsters/ghosts disappear into a ghostly vortex back to the party house

72



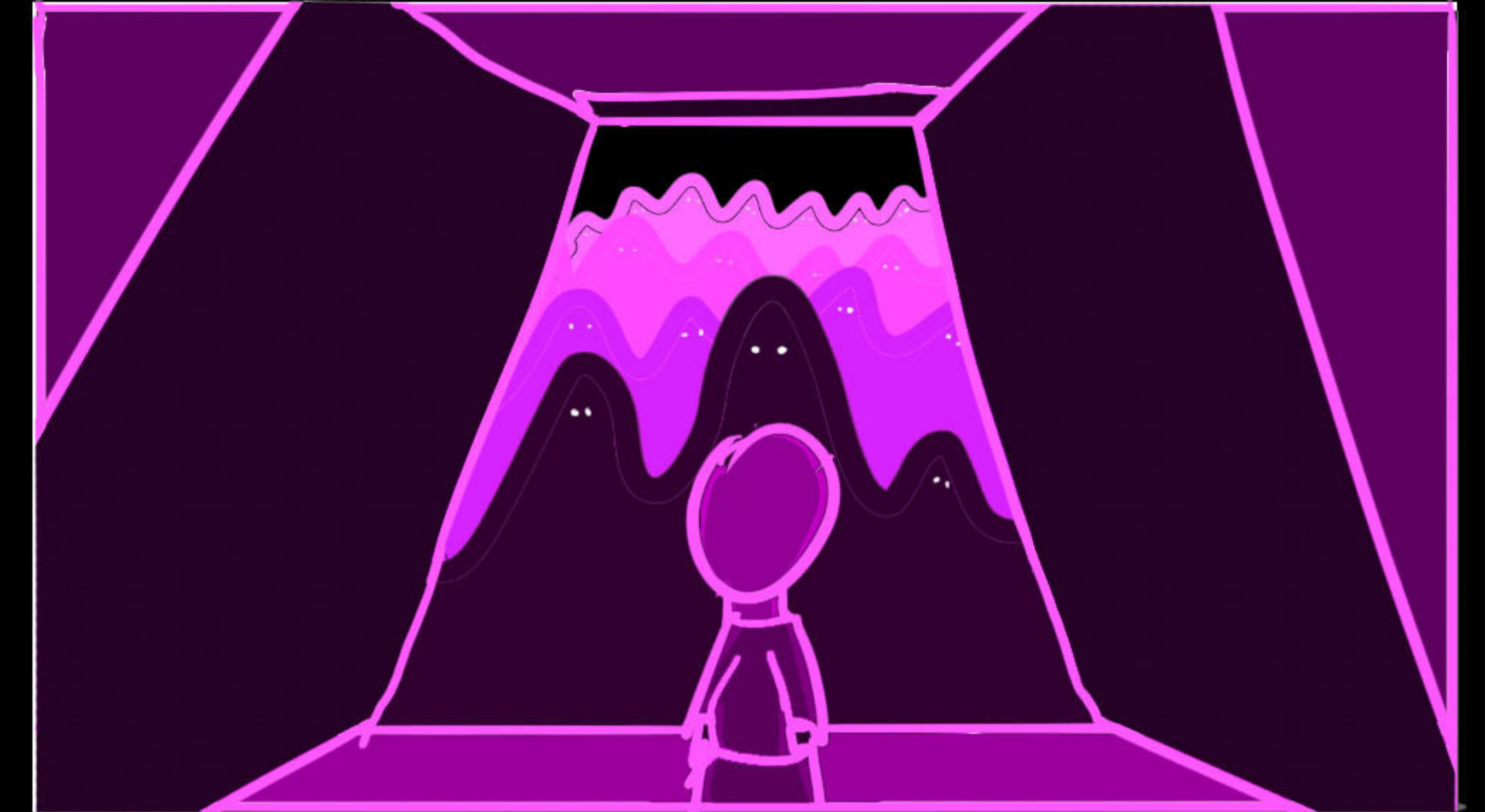
Suddenly, the ghosts all hear a knock at the front door. They all stop dancing.

73



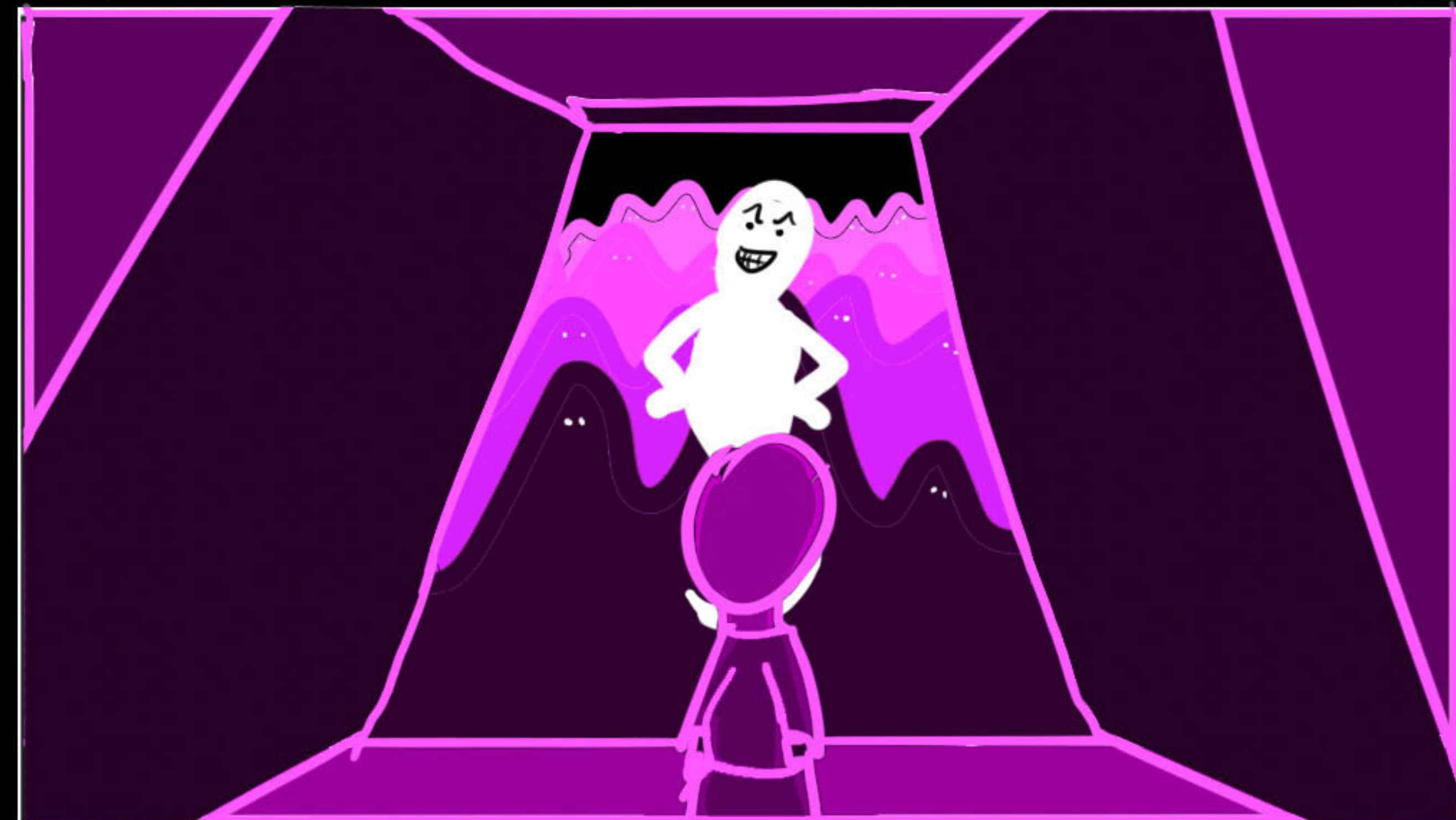
Cut to low-angle shot of HERO standing at the front door.

74



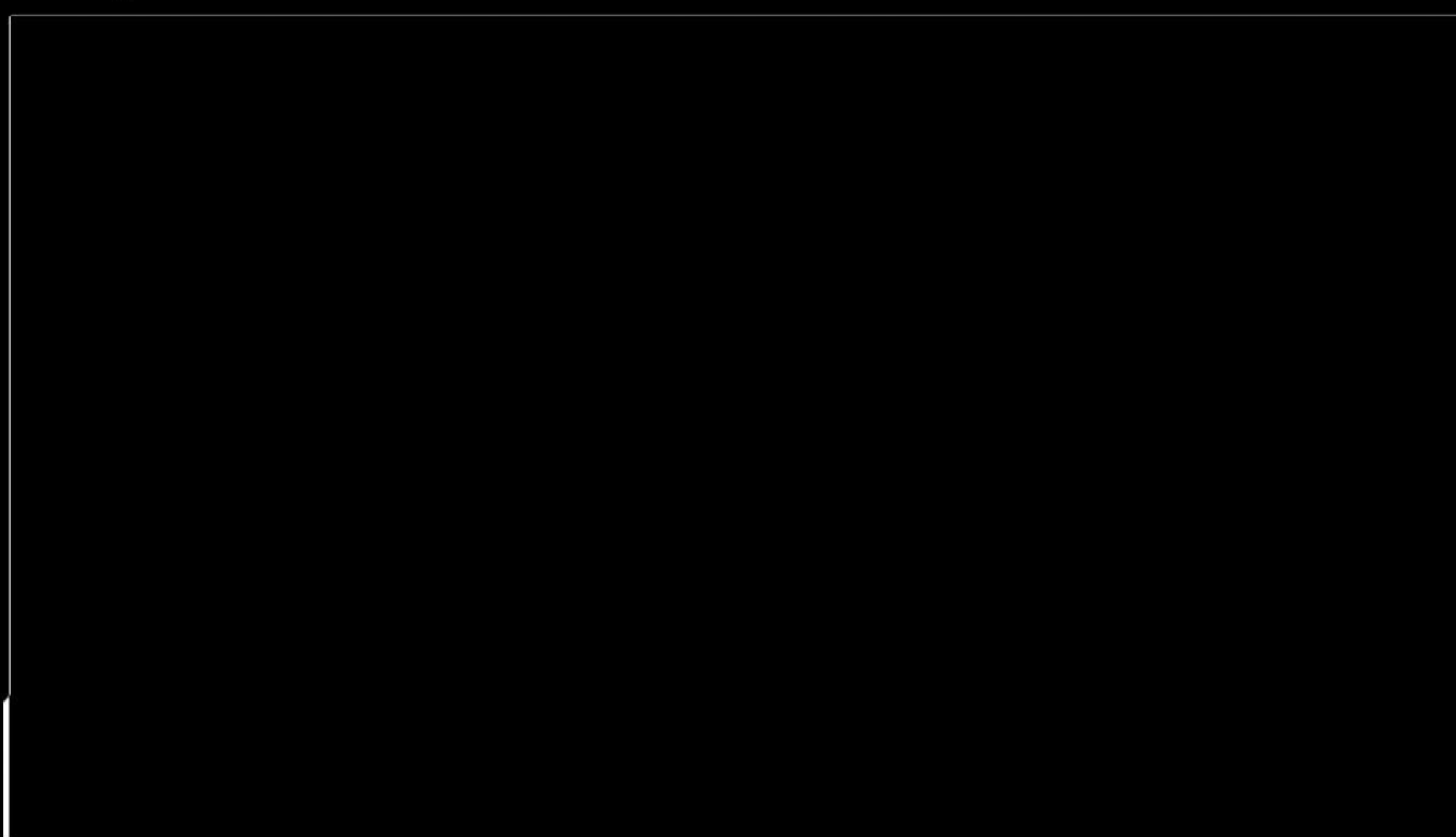
The doors all then swing open revealing all the ghosts standing together behind it.

75



The MAIN GHOST from before then appears in front of all the other ghosts and looks down at the HERO menacingly.
 MAIN GHOST: "Well well well... it seems you've come crawling back..."

76



Fade to black w/menacing scary music

77



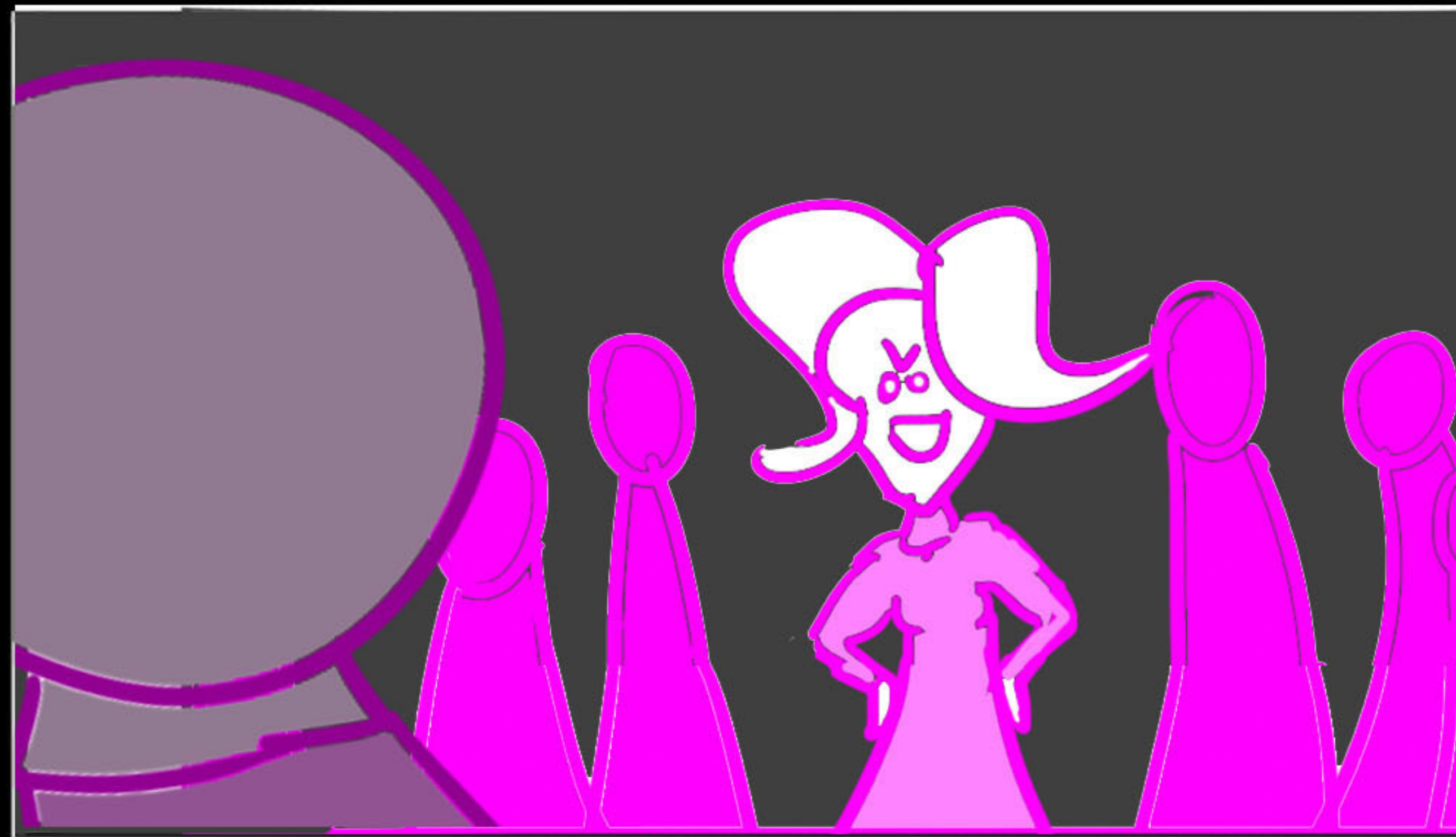
Cut to the next day at school, HERO is by himself again with his ball.

78



A bunch of people all crowd in on him

79



It's the MEAN GIRL and her friends.
MEAN GIRL: Well well! Seems the boy survived the Ghost house! Surely you've learned your lesson. Are you ready to come play with us? You've passed our test, you can be our FRIEND now...

80



The HERO then looks back at the MEAN GIRL menacingly

81



Cut to facing the MEAN GIRL and her friends,

82



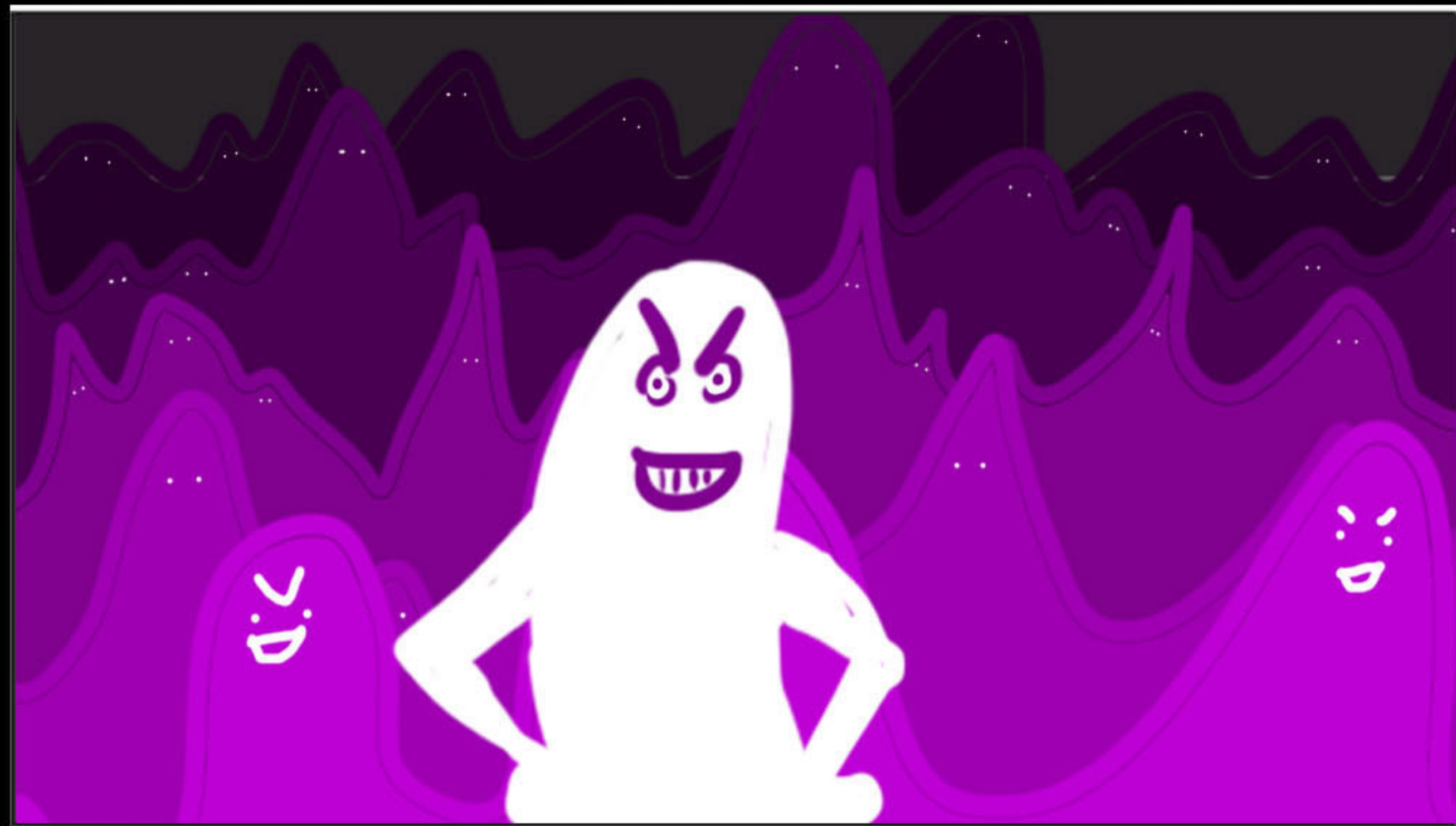
as all of the ghosts appear behind them.

83



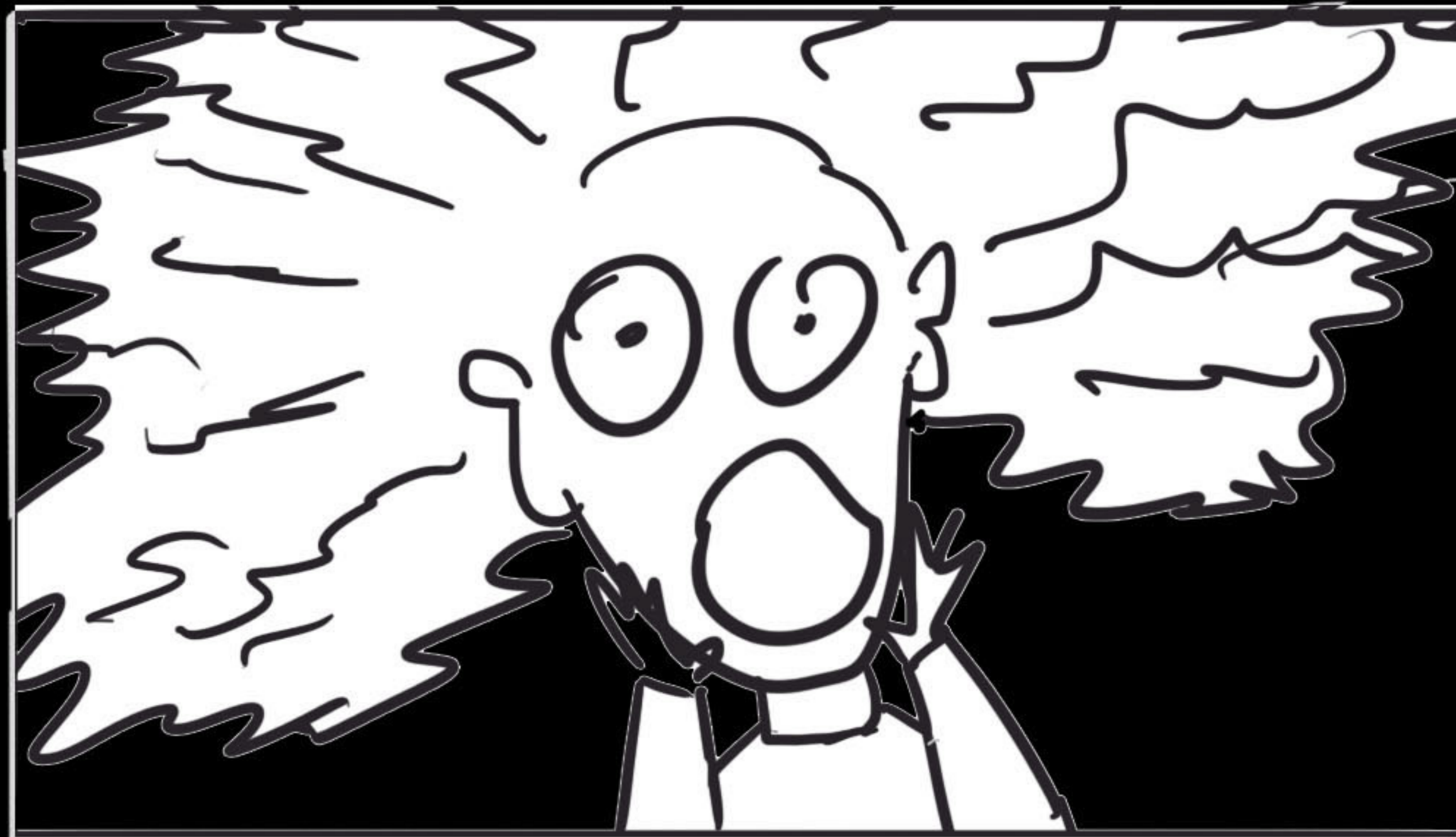
Close-up shot of the MEAN GIRL turning around suddenly as she realizes that something is behind her

84



POV shot (MEAN GIRL's persp.) as she sees all the ghosts behind her, with the MAIN GHOST in front of them all, making a menacing glare.

85



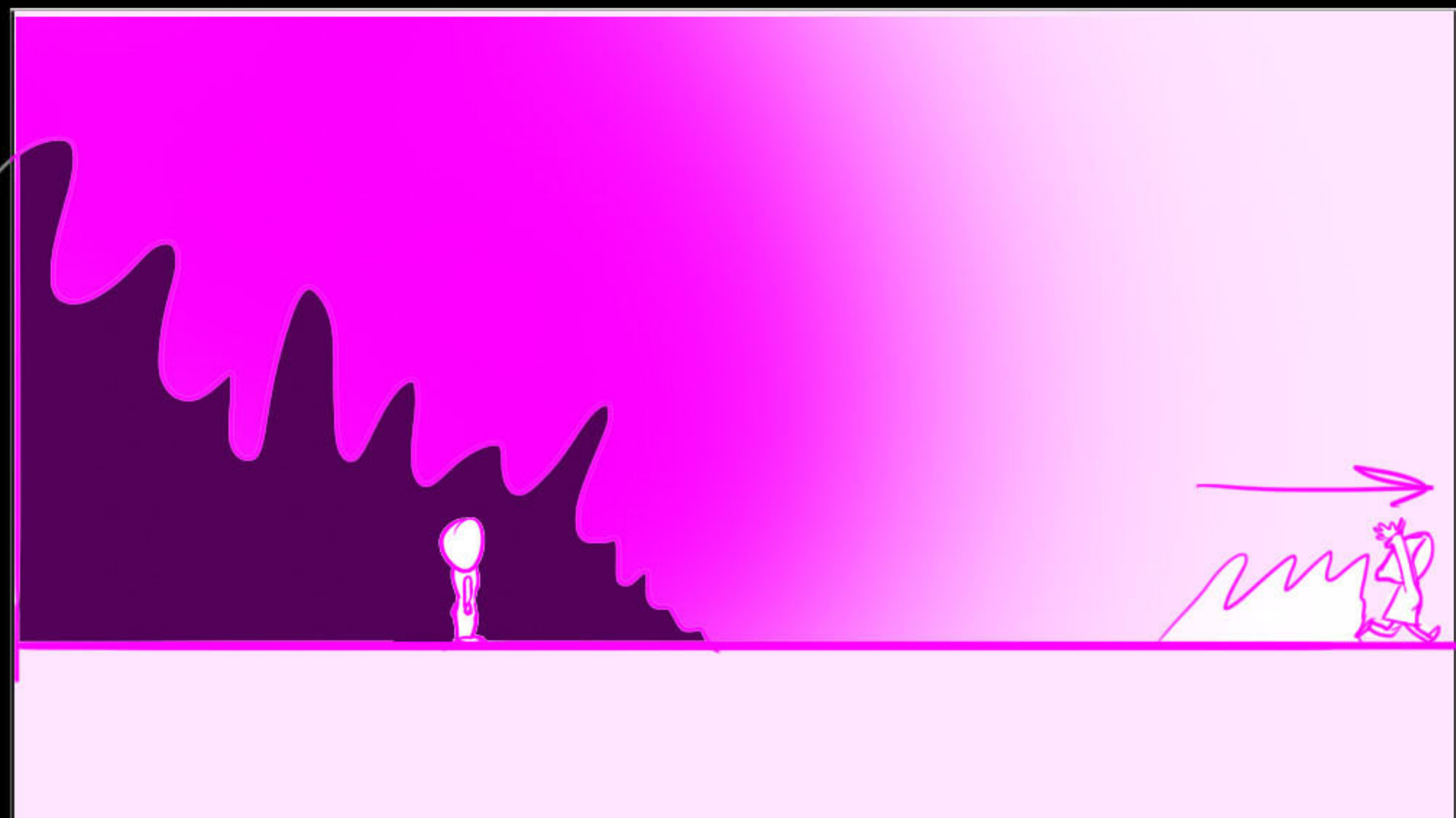
C.U. shot of the MEAN GIRL freaking out

86



Wide-shot of the MEAN GIRL and all her FRIENDS running away in a panic as the MAIN GHOST and all his MONSTER FRIENDS all chase after them, scaring them all away

87



Long shot of the HERO standing with the MONSTERS as they all watch the MEAN GIRL and her FRIENDS running away

88



Front-shot of the HERO standing in front of all of the MONSTERS, a powerful and menacing look on the HERO's face.

89



The HERO then throws his arms up in victory as the MONSTERS all rejoice in unison.
HERO: "LET'S PARTAY!!"



PHANTOMS
IN THE
DARK

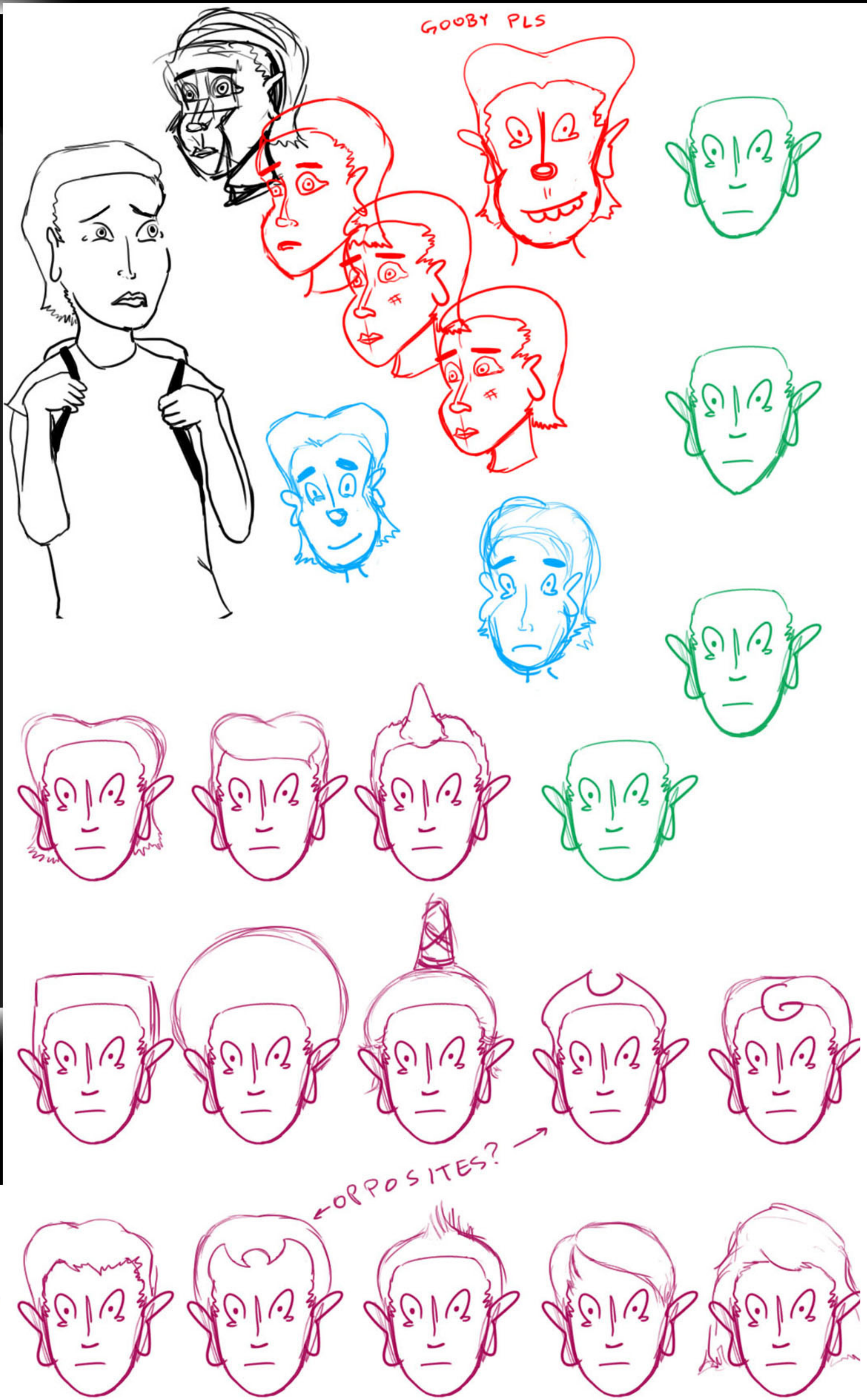
Cut to ending title card

(and then roll credits)

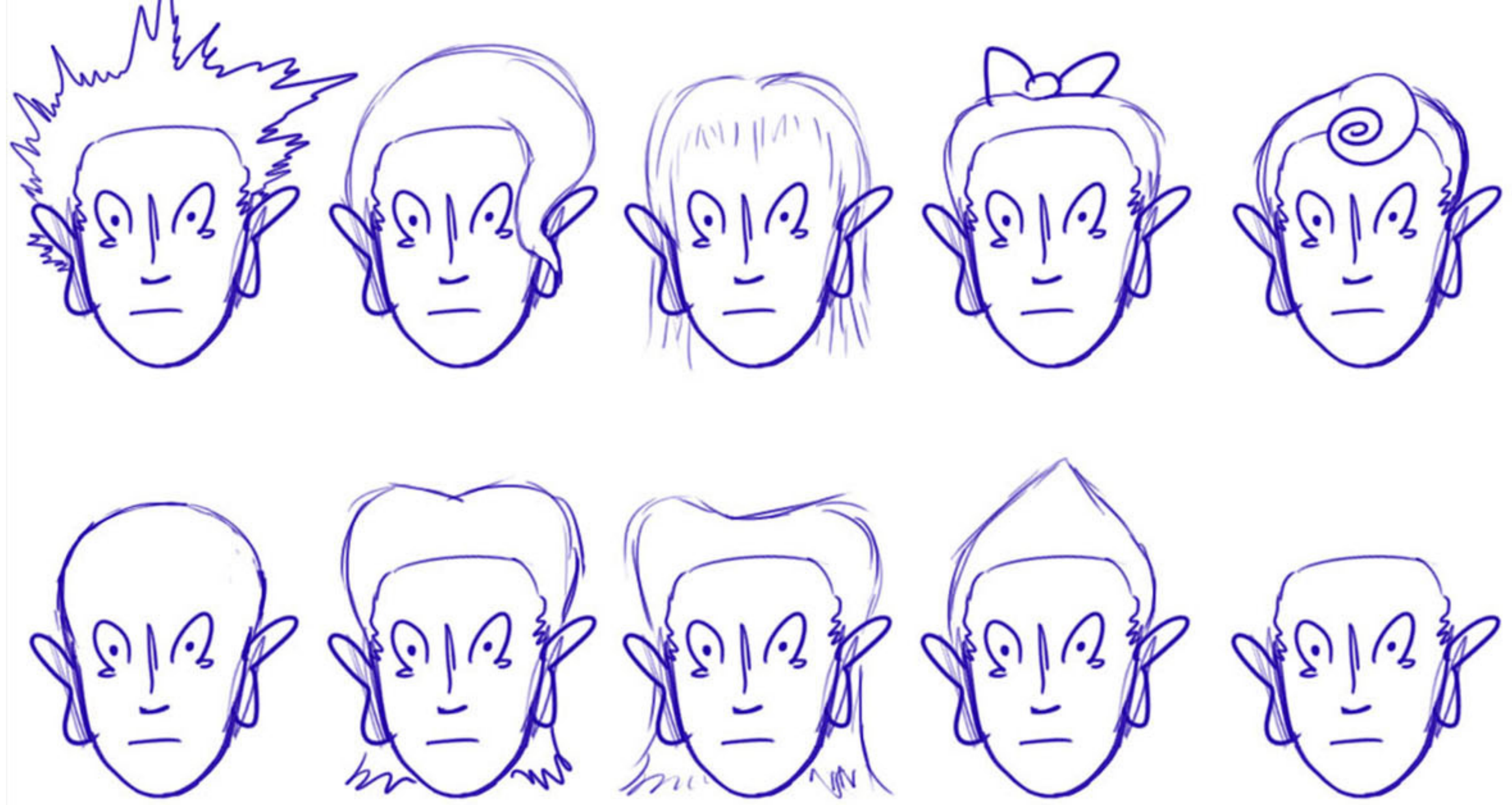
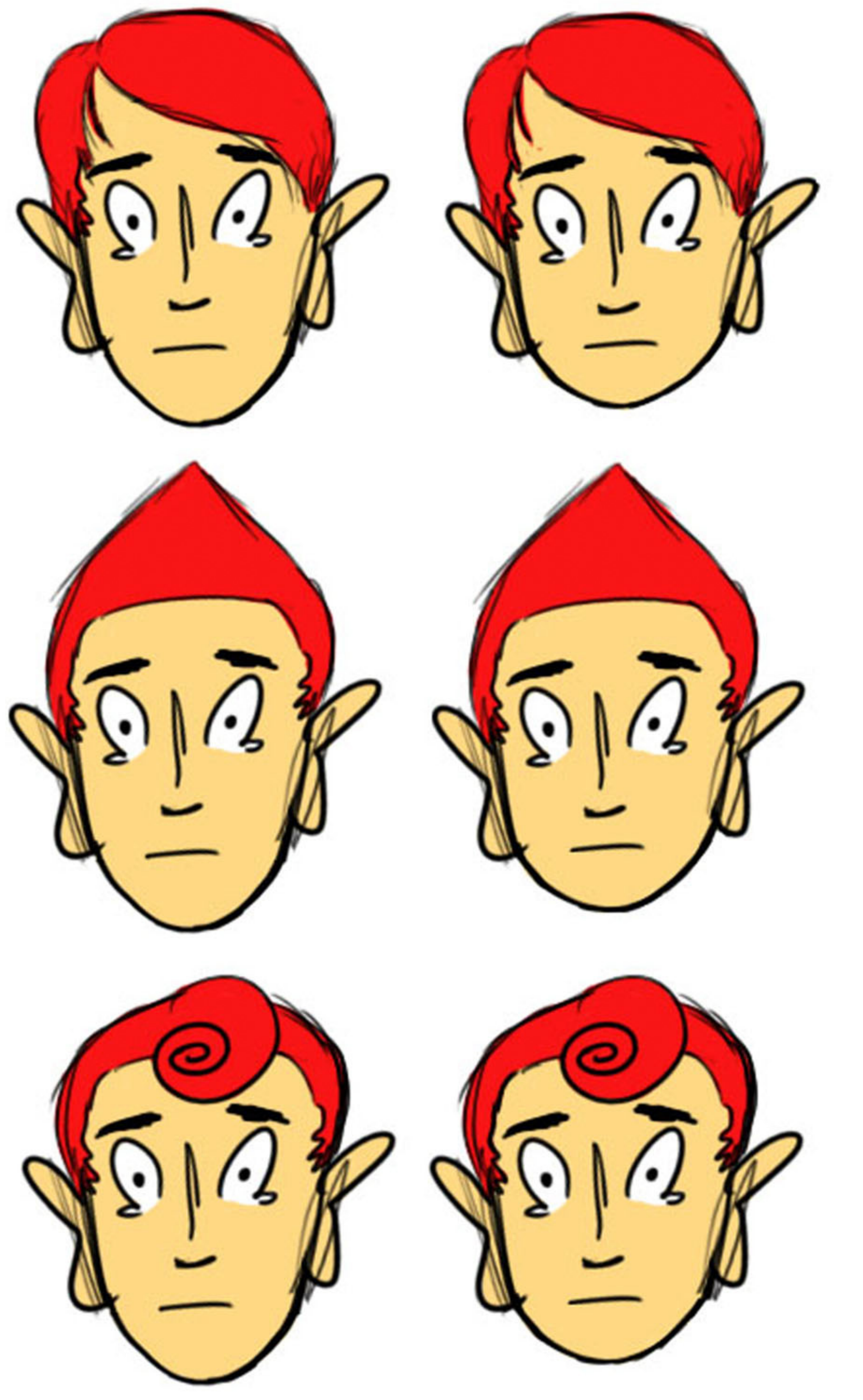
VISUAL DEVELOPMENT: THE HERO



(AN IMAGE I MADE FOR A DAILY TROJAN ARTICLE)



I ROUNDED THE HAIRSTYLES DOWN TO 3 THAT I LIKED BEST, AND THEN WORKED WITH MAKING HIM LOOK YOUNGER AS WELL



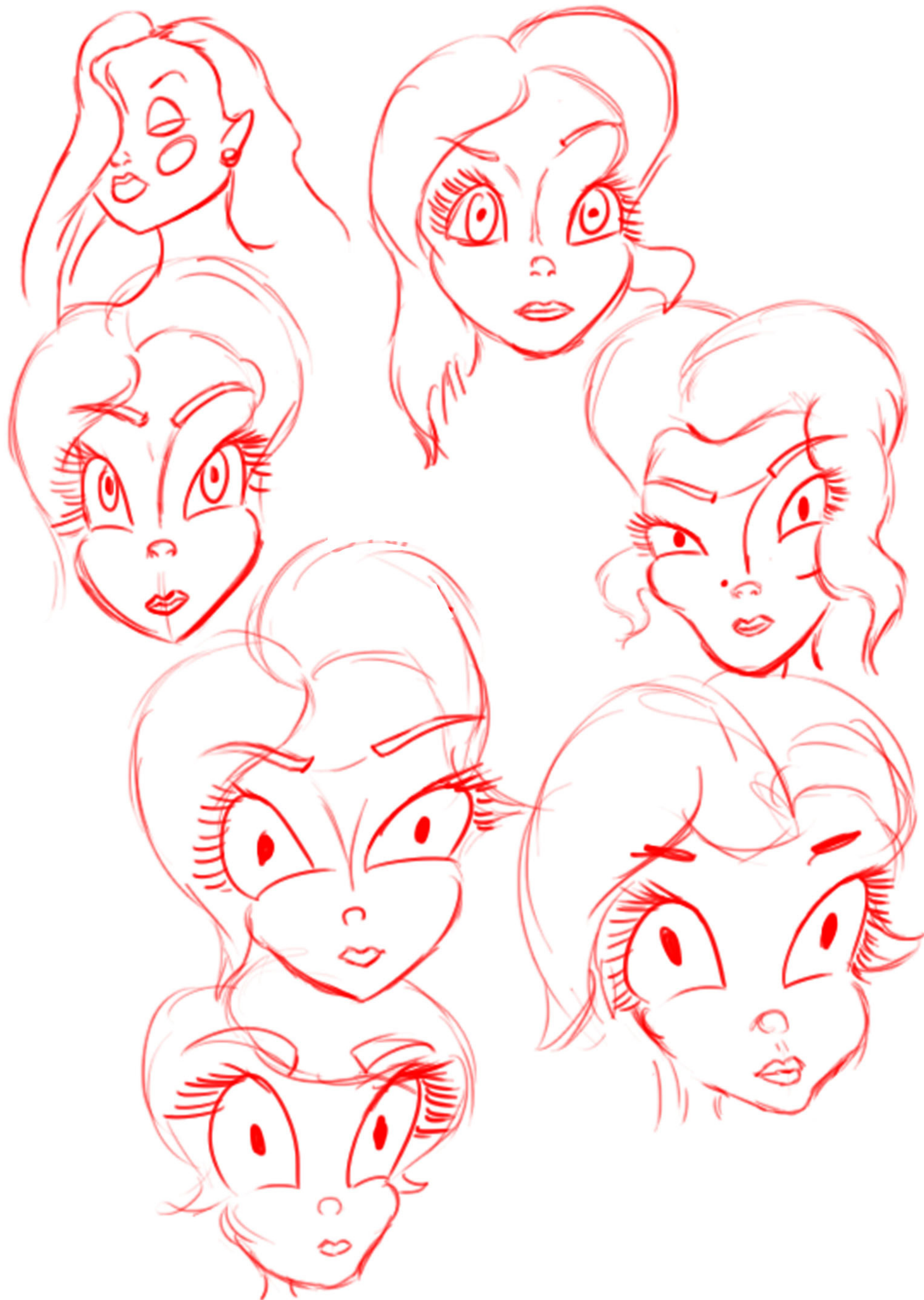
I THEN WORKED FROM THAT DRAWING INTO A DESIGN THAT I LIKED

VISUAL DEVELOPMENT: THE HERO



I THEN REALIZED THAT I WASN'T QUITE SATISFIED WITH ANY OF THOSE 3, BUT I LIKED THEIR STYLISTIC ELEMENTS. SO I WORKED WITH SWOOPING BANGS, FAUX-HAWKS, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY: CURLS.

VISUAL DEVELOPMENT: THE MEAN GIRL



I WANT THE MEAN GIRL IN PHANTOMS IN THE DARK TO BE CUTE, GIRLY, YOUNG, AND SOMEONE YOU COULD SEE YOURSELF TOTALLY HATING.

I STARTED BY WORKING OFF OF AN IMAGE OF JESSICA RABBIT, AND FROM THERE THINGS TOOK OFF PRETTY WELL, AND I KNEW I WANTED HER TO HAVE RIDICULOUSLY LARGE EYES, AND A SUPER ADORABLY SMALL NOSE. I ALSO KNOW I WANT HER TO BE BLONDE, AND TO HAVE A HEART-SHAPED FACE.

FOR NOW, THOUGH, HER DESIGN REMAINS UNFINISHED.

VISUAL DEVELOPMENT: THE MONSTERS



I WANT THE MONSTERS
TO BE STRANGE, YET
CUTE.



CREEPY, YET
LOVABLE.

(MORE TO COME)

VISUAL DEVELOPMENT: THE MONSTER HOUSE



I STARTED BY LOOKING AT MY REFERENCE IMAGES FOR THE MONSTER HOUSE AND THEN RE-DREW THE PARTS THAT I LIKED BEST.

VISUAL DEVELOPMENT: THE MONSTER HOUSE



I THEN THREW THOSE ELEMENTS TOGETHER INTO A HOUSE!
THIS VERSION IS WAY TOO PRISTINE LOOKING, THOUGH.