

DOUGGIE

a fairy tale

Sean Stephane Martin




to everyone who was the same...

... but different...

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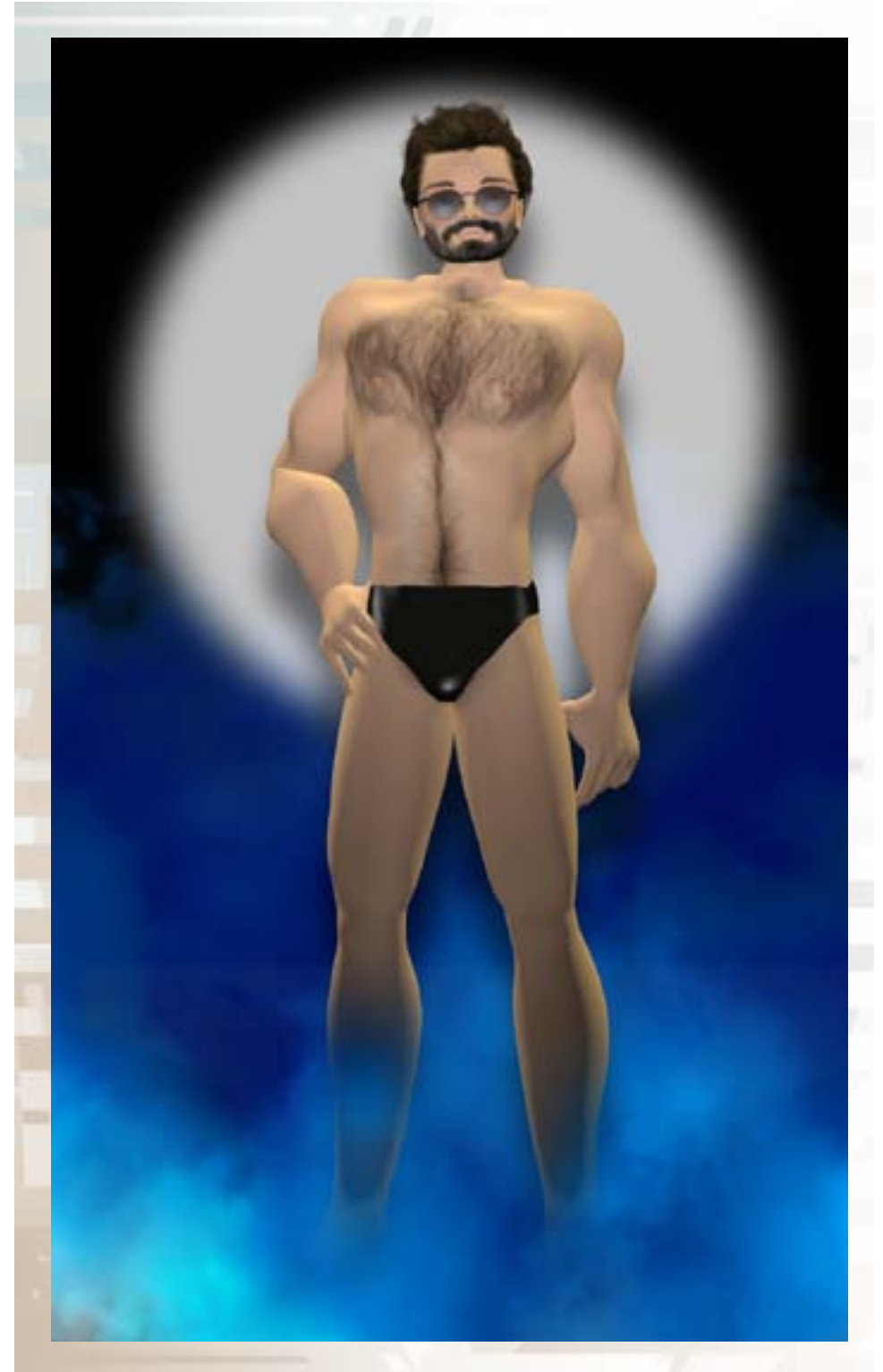
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A faint, stylized background illustration of a city street. It features a car on the left and a person walking on the right, both rendered in a soft, painterly style. The scene is set against a backdrop of buildings and a bright, hazy sky, creating a nostalgic and dreamlike atmosphere.

Once upon a time...

... there was a boy named Douggie.

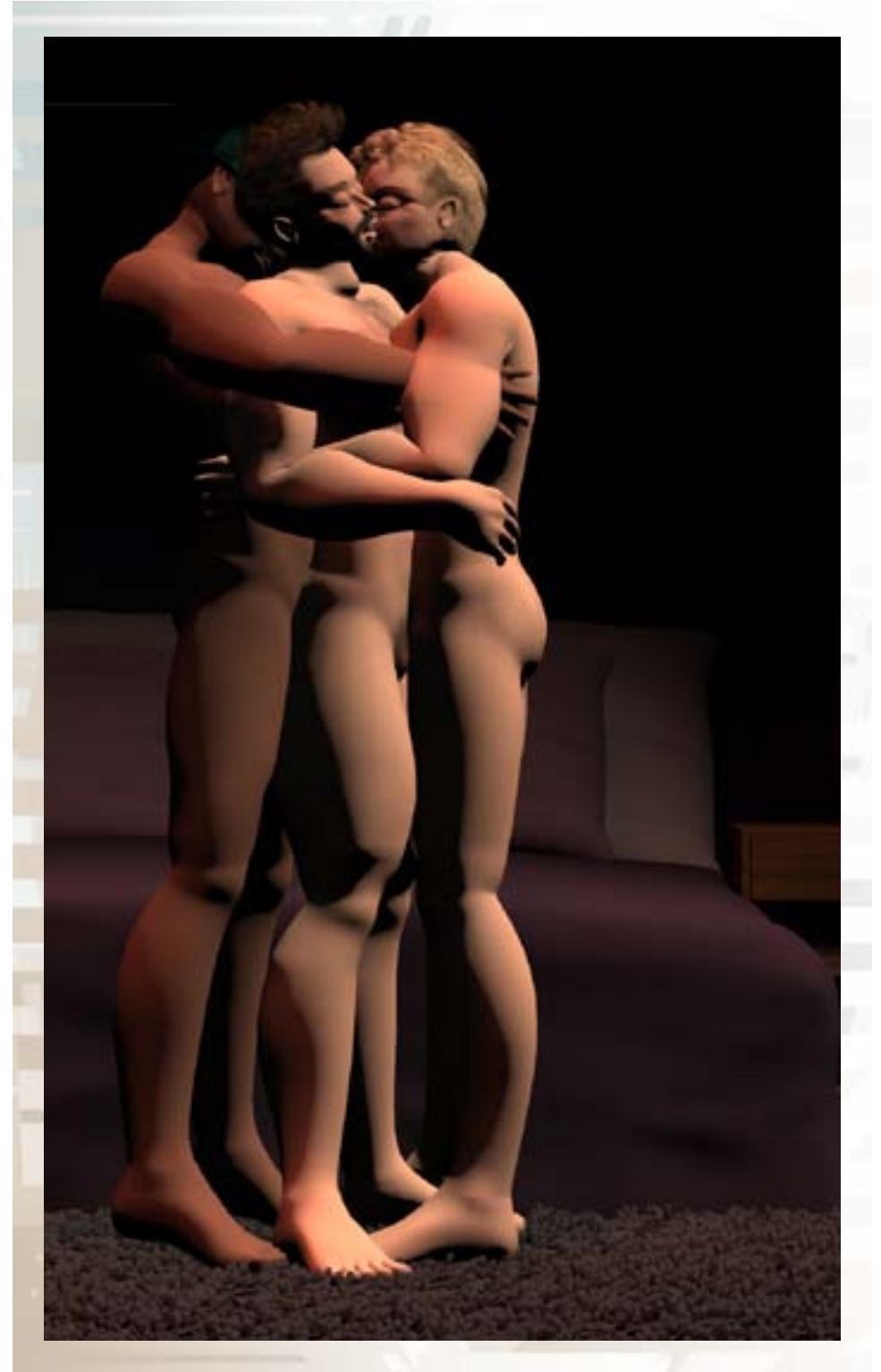
Everyone liked Douggie.



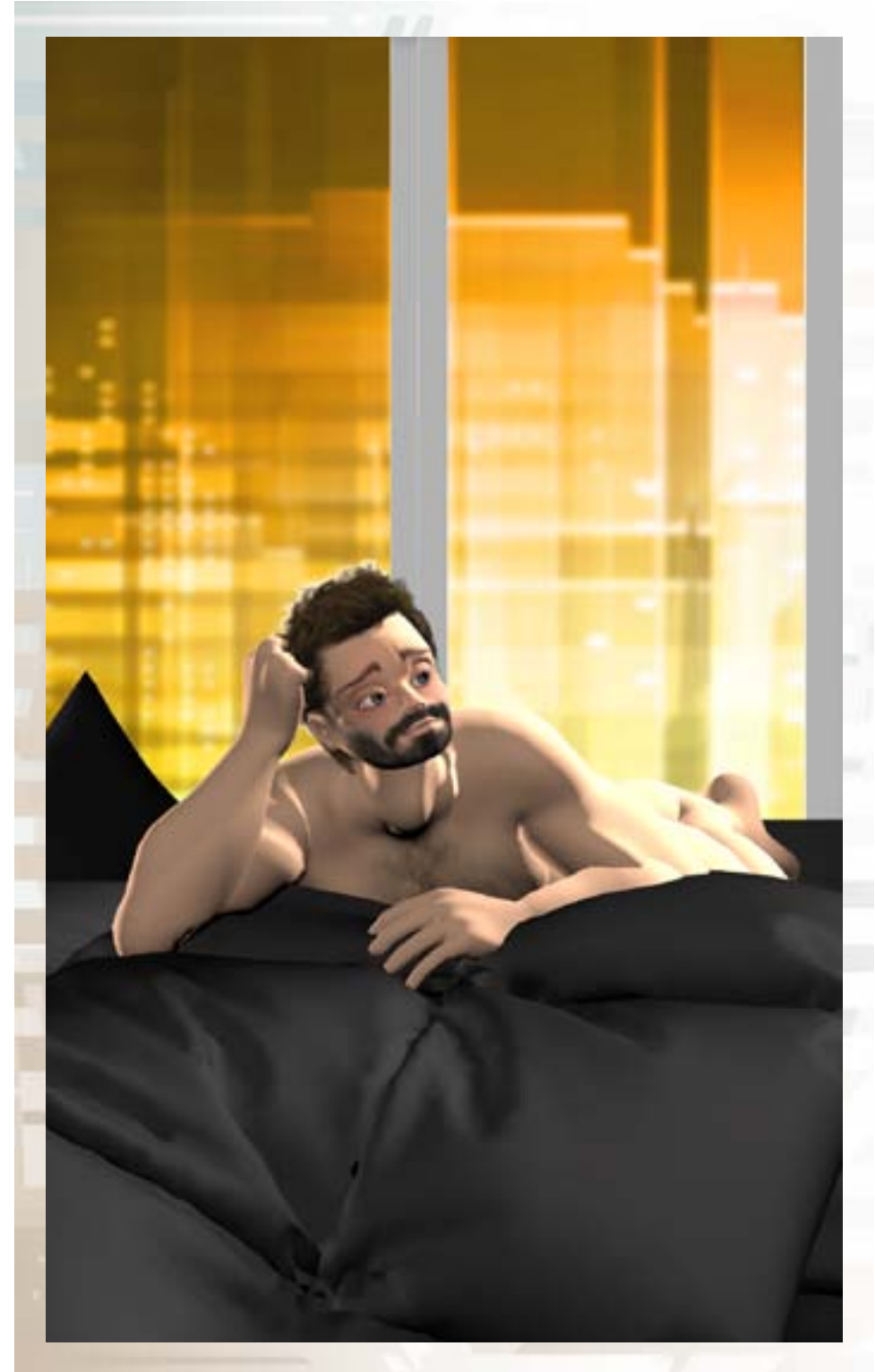
Douggie had a lot of friends, because
Douggie was a *really* friendly sort of boy.

Douggie liked to play all *kinds* of games.

Douggie had *great* parties.



But Douggie was sad, because he wanted a special friend, one that would play games with him all the time. In all of Douggie's many friends, there was no one who was *really* special. Tommy's hair was the wrong colour, and Frankie was too short, and Billy was... well, Billy.



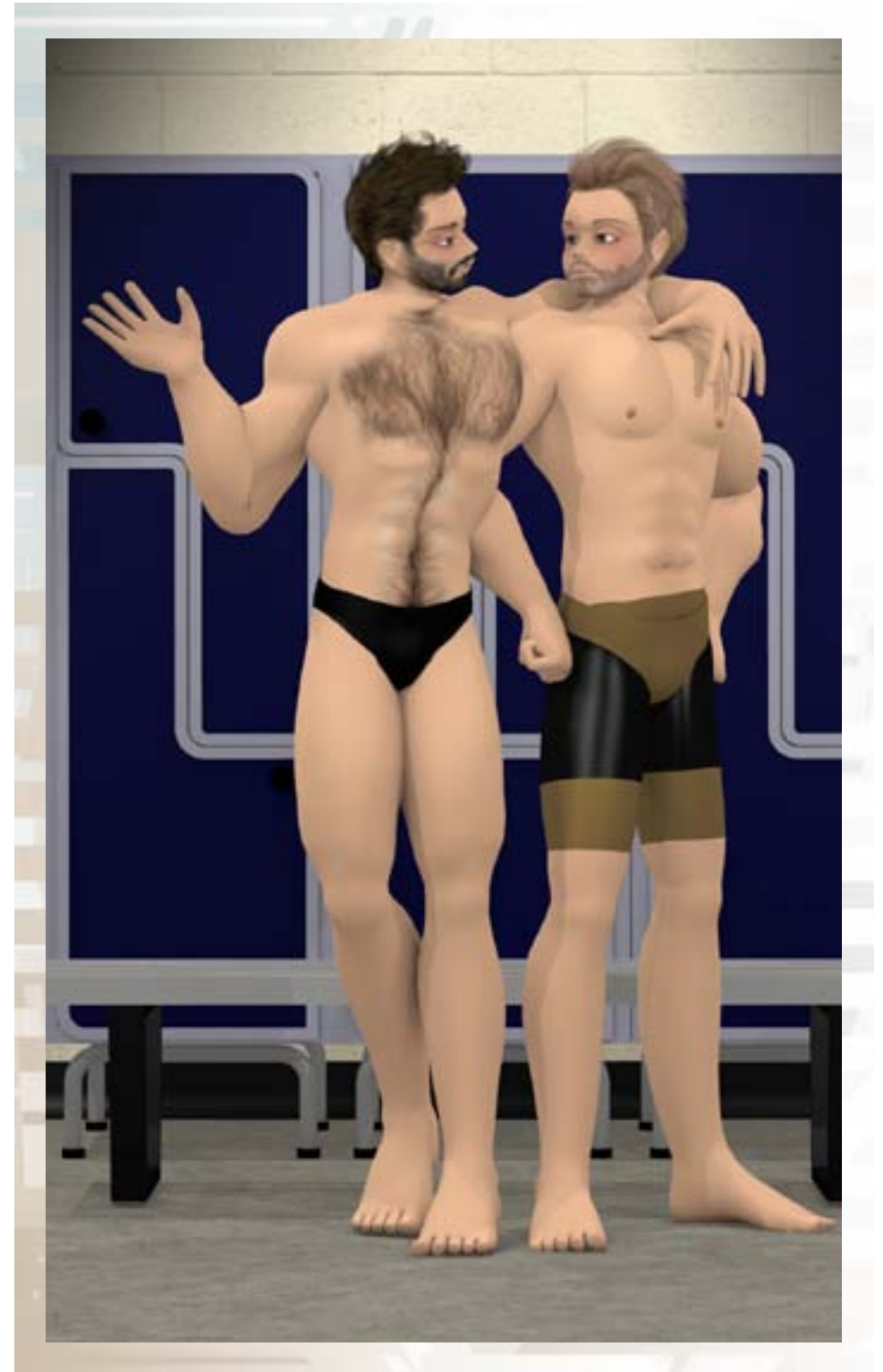
Then one day, a new boy moved into the neighbourhood, and Douggie thought, “Wow! He’s the right height, and his hair’s the right colour, and he’s not at all like Billy! Maybe *he* could be my new special friend!”



He told the new boy all about the cool games he liked to play. He told him all about the swell parties Douggie liked to throw. And then he said, "Would you like to come over and play sometime?"

But the new boy (whose name was Mickey) said,

"No."



That upset Douggie a lot. Wasnt he friendly enough for the new boy? But no matter how hard he tried, he couldnt get Mickey to say yes. Mickey never wanted to play or even come over for one of Douggie's really fun parties.

Well, no one *ever* said no to Douggie, so he tried again and again.

And again.

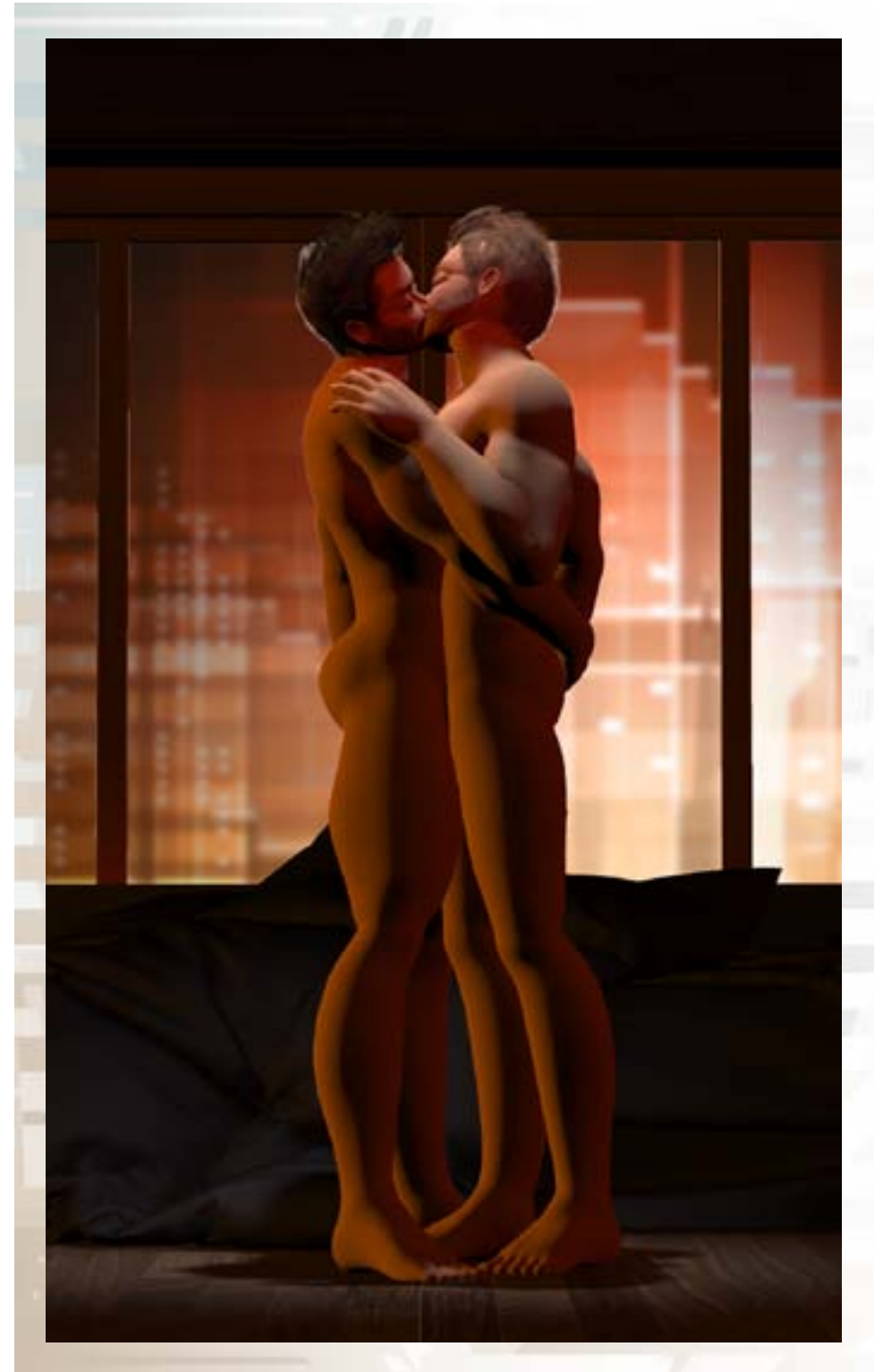
And *again*.



Finally, one day Mickey said, “Okay, but I have to be home by midnight.”

And Douggie said “That’s cool”, but on the inside he said “Hurray!” because now he really wanted Mickey to be his very special friend because Mickey was *just* the right height and had *just* the right colour of hair and wasnt anything at all like Billy.

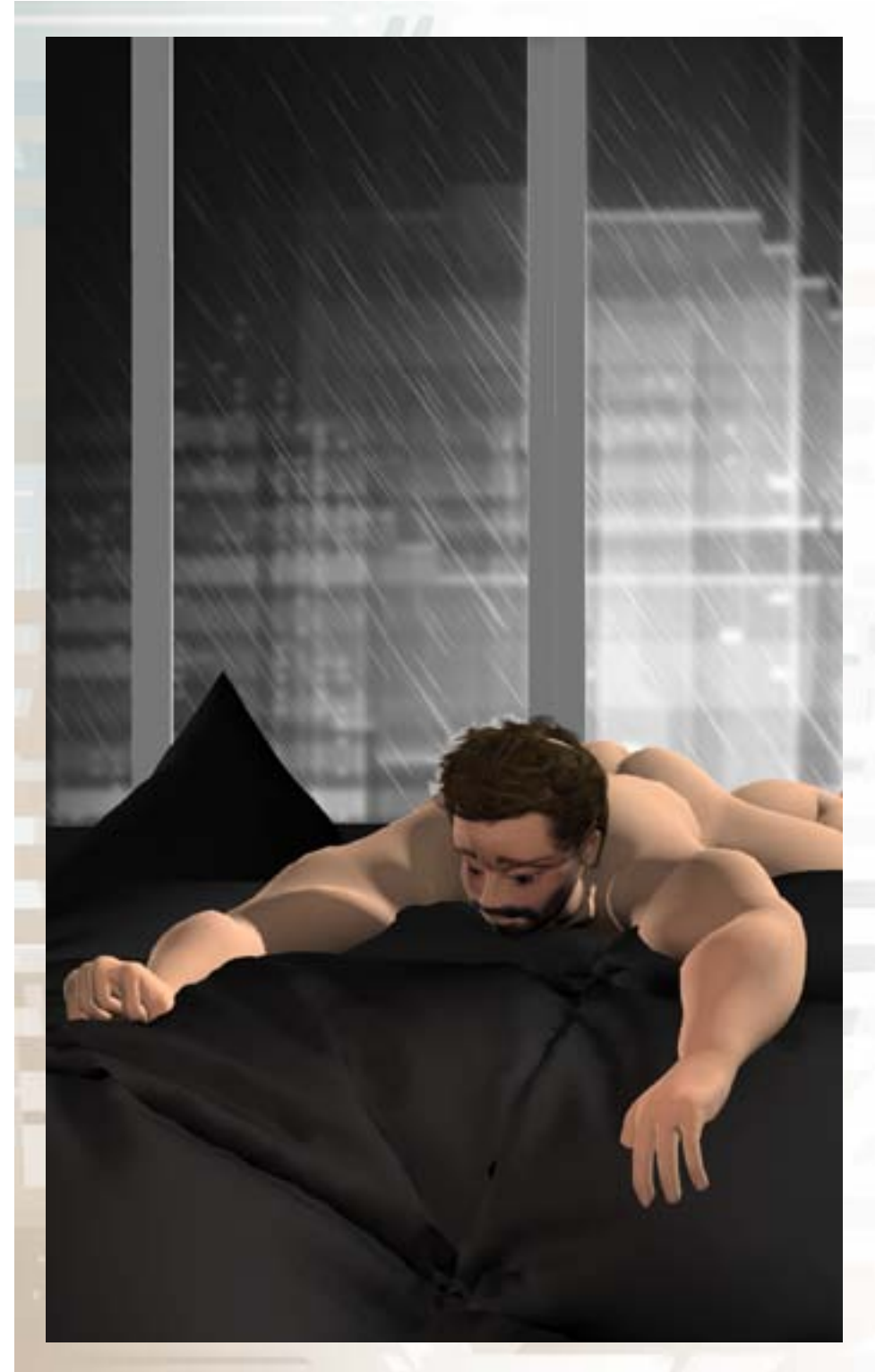
So they played a lot of fun games and had a really great time together — but right at the stroke of midnight, Mickey disappeared.



Every night for a week, Mickey came over to play. And every night for a week, Mickey disappeared right at midnight.

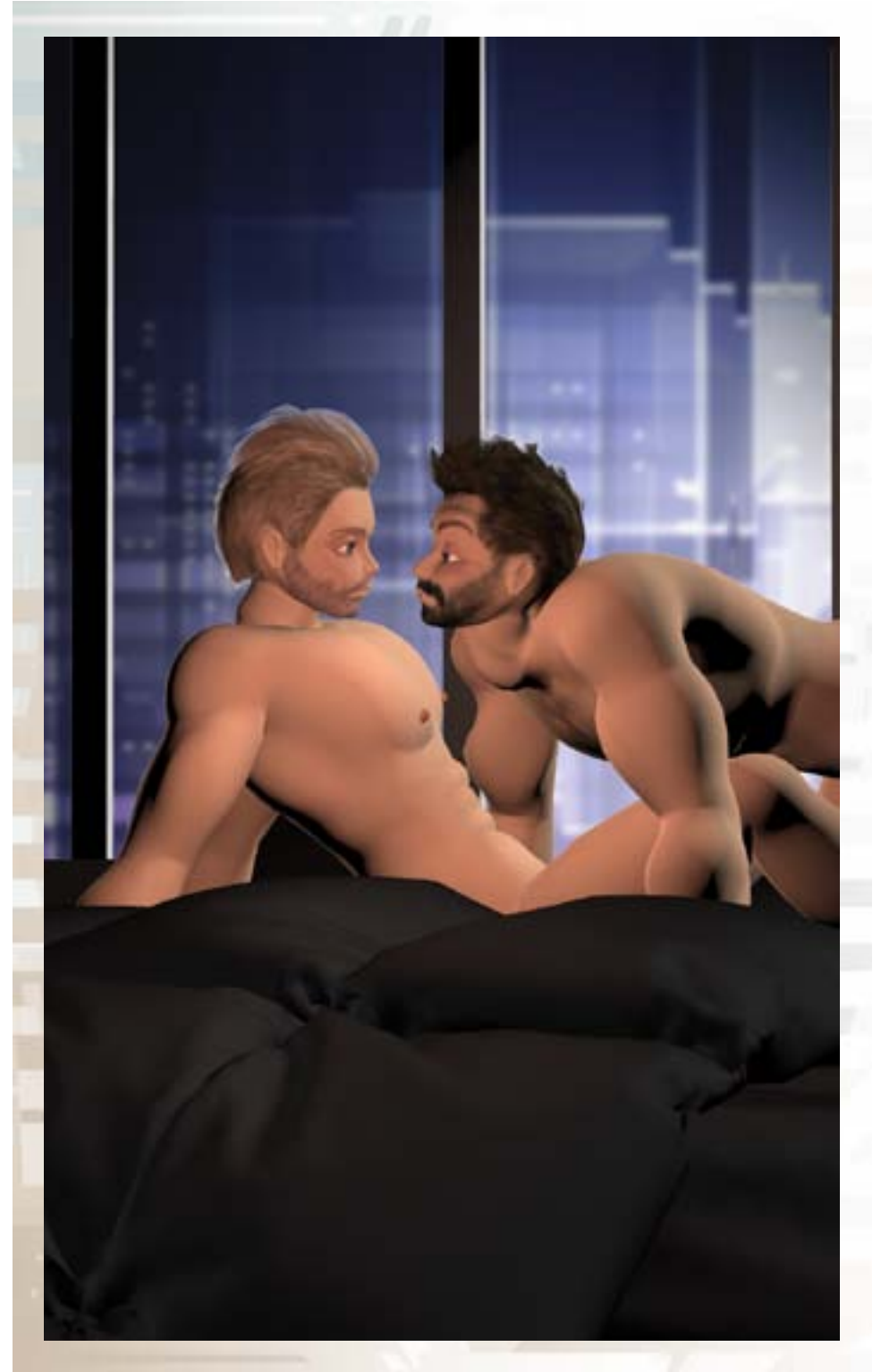
This perplexed Douggie. Why didnt his friend want to stay? They could have a grand sleepover and play all night and then make pancakes!

And even more, he really *liked* Mickey. Mickey was fun at all kinds of things, not just playing games. Douggie wanted Mickey to come live with him so they could stay up late and play lots of games and have really great parties together all the time!



So Douggie decided to play a little trick on his new friend. He went around to all the clocks and set them all back exactly one hour.

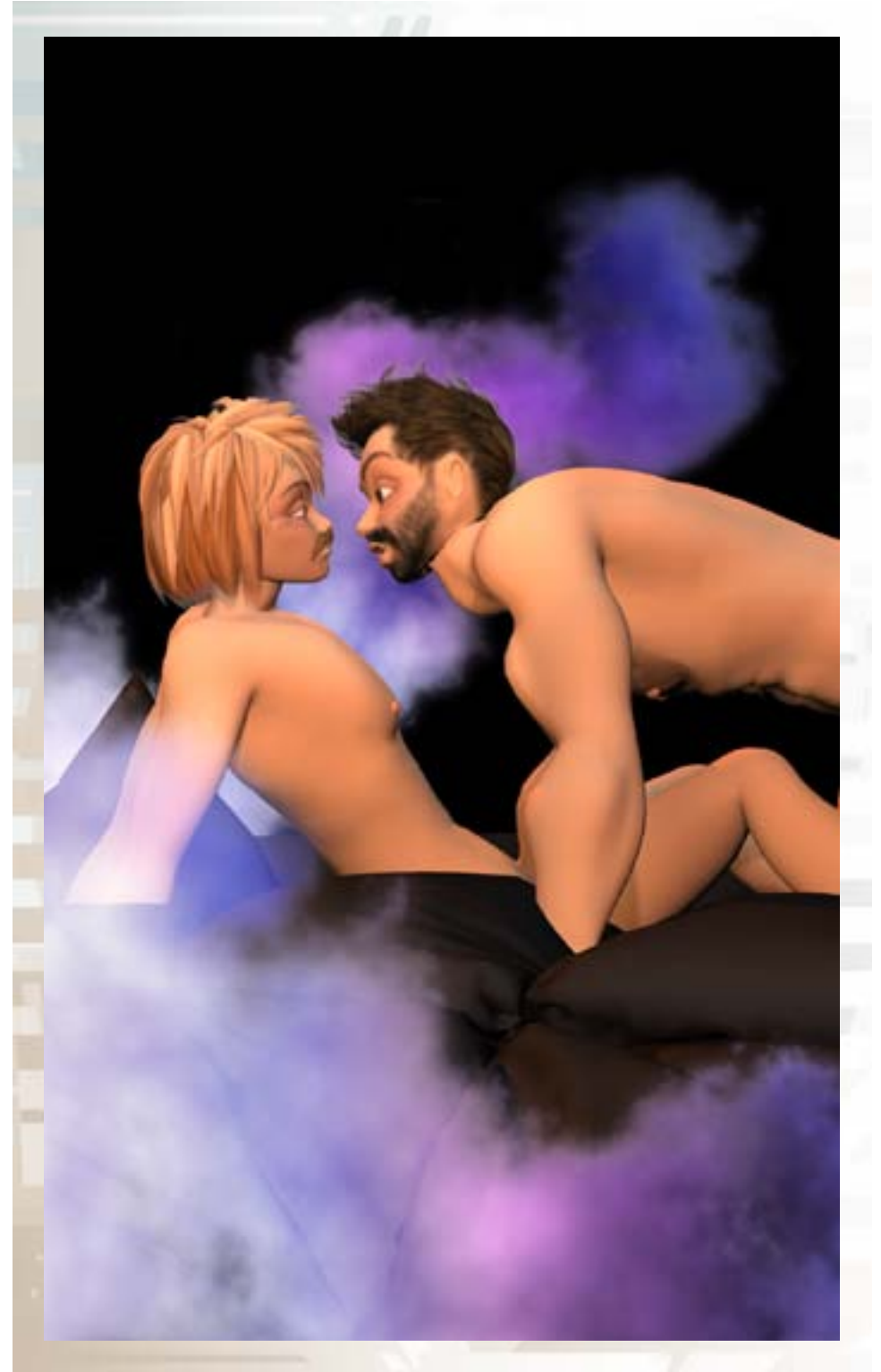
So when Mickey came over to play again, he said, “Hey, what time is it?” Douggie pointed at the clock and said, “It’s only eleven,” when it was really midnight. And no sooner had Mickey said, “Cool”, when suddenly —





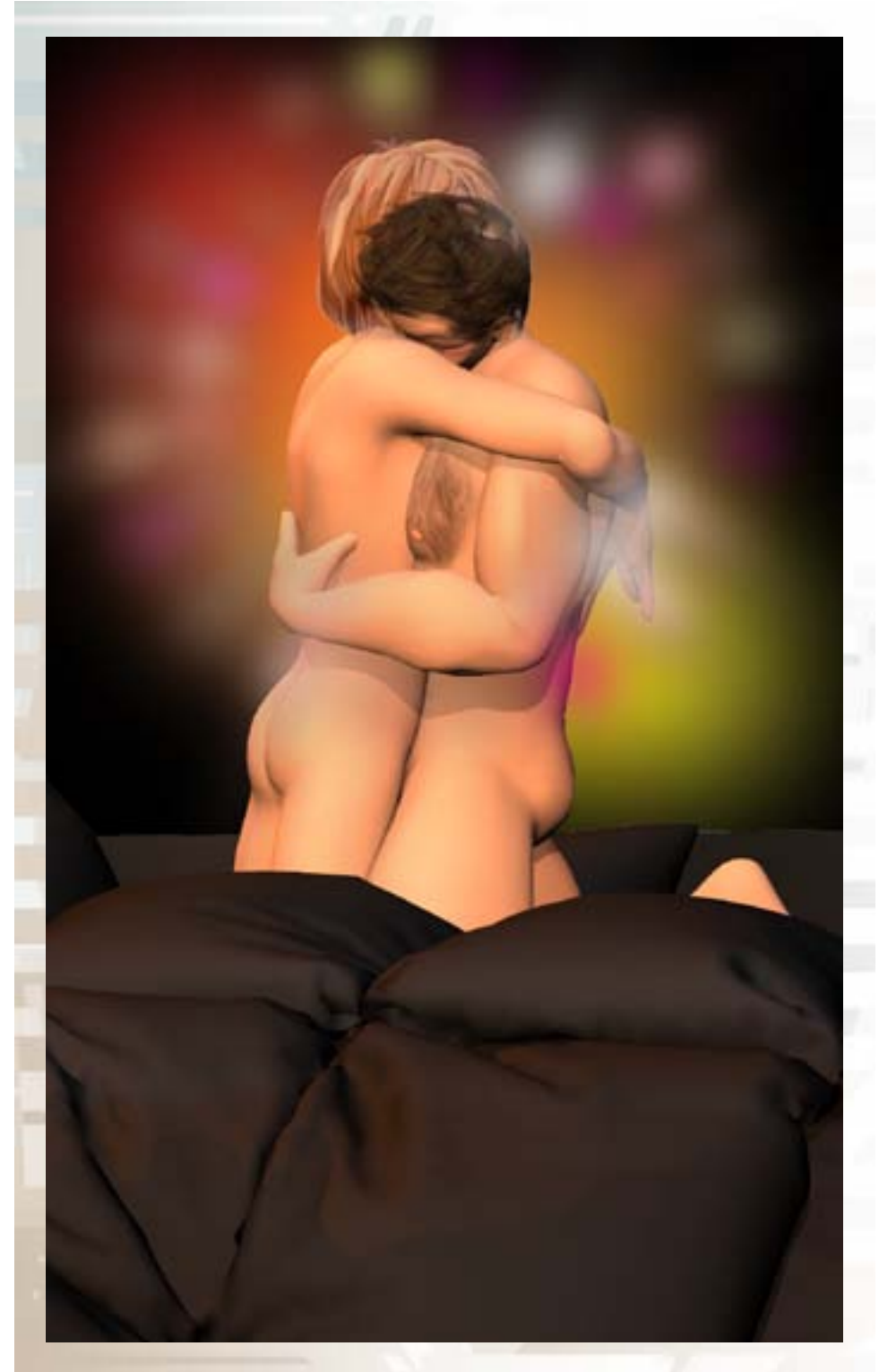
There was a big explosion and lots of smoke! When it all settled, Mickey was gone, but there was another boy in his place. And his hair wasn't quite the right colour. And he wasn't quite the right height. And he was a bit like Billy.

“What happened?” cried Douggie. “Who are you?” he yelled. “Where’s Mickey?”



“I’m right here, Douggie,” said the new boy, who was now really frightened. Douggie looked closer. and it was Mickey! But he was different! But at the same time, he was *ex-actly the same*, the same Mickey who liked to play games and do all sorts of neat stuff.

Suddenly Douggie was very sorry he played the trick on his new friend. And he started to cry, and Mickey hugged him close and told him it was okay and Douggie said no, it wasnt, because it was a mean trick, and he really liked Mickey, and he was really sorry and he didnt care if Mickey’s hair wasnt the right colour or Mickey wasnt the right height or even if Mickey was a bit like Billy.



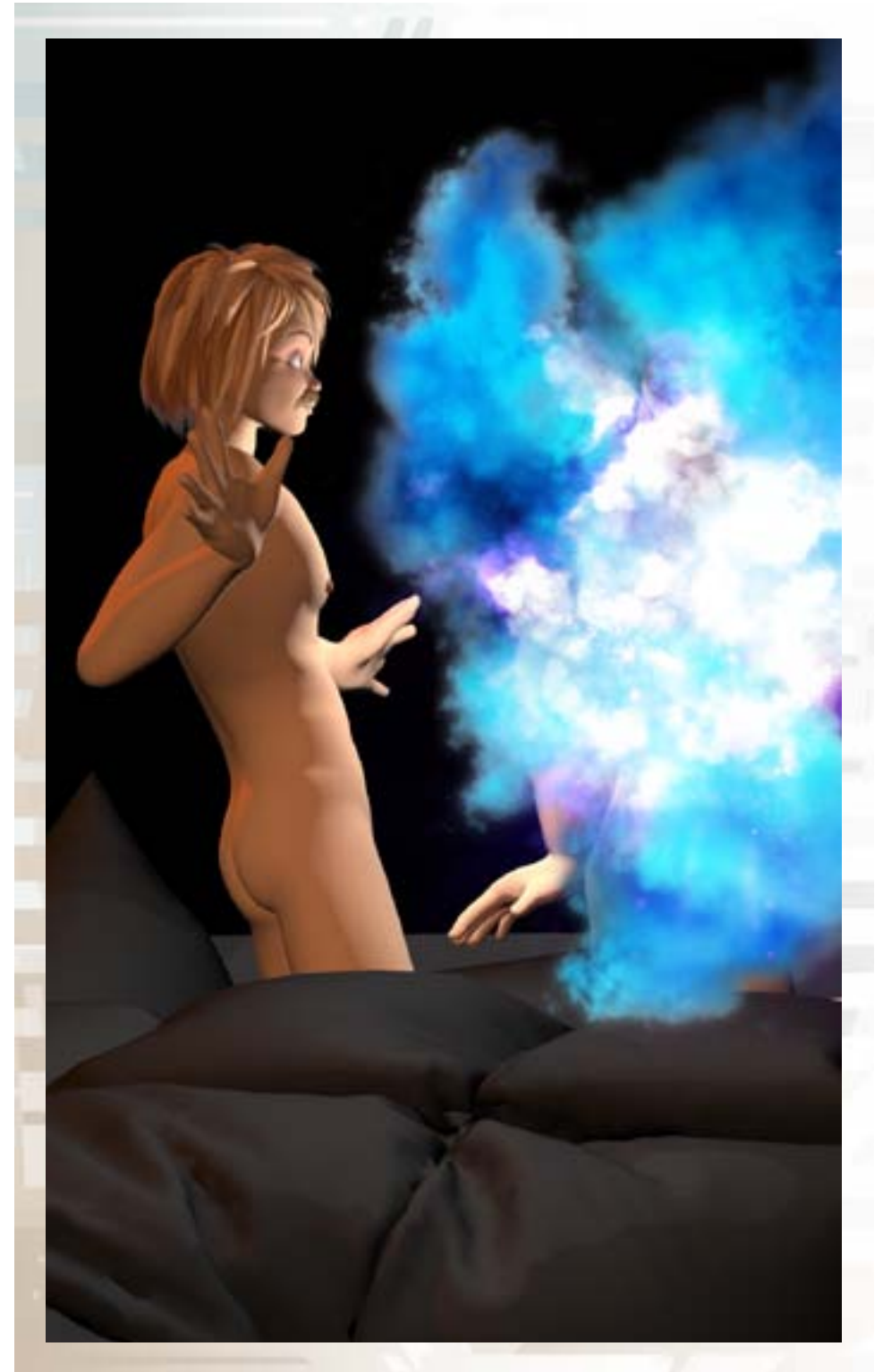
And Mickey said, “It’s okay, because I really like you a lot too.”

“Really?” asked Douggie.

“Well, sure,” said Mickey. “I don’t care what colour your hair is or how tall you are. I just like you!”

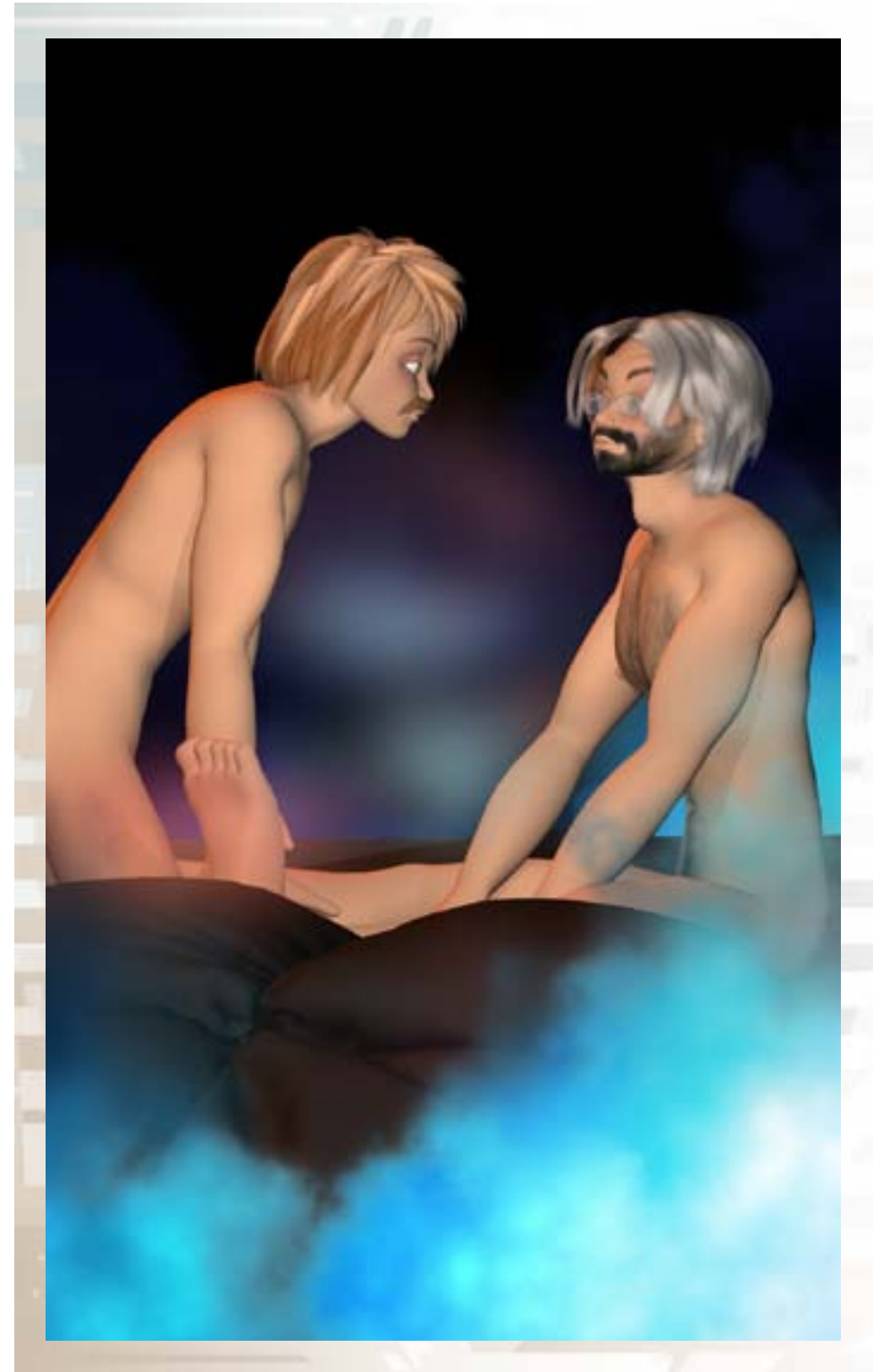
And suddenly —

KA-BOOM!



And when the smoke cleared, Mickey looked and saw Douggie was gone — and there was another boy in *his* place. His hair wasn't quite the same colour as Douggie's, and he wasn't the same height as Douggie, and he was a lot like that boy Billy everyone talked about.

Then Mickey looked closer — and realized *it was Douggie!* He was different, but he was also the same. And Mickey hugged Douggie all the harder because now they were even better than special friends! And then they both laughed and played all night and slept until noon.

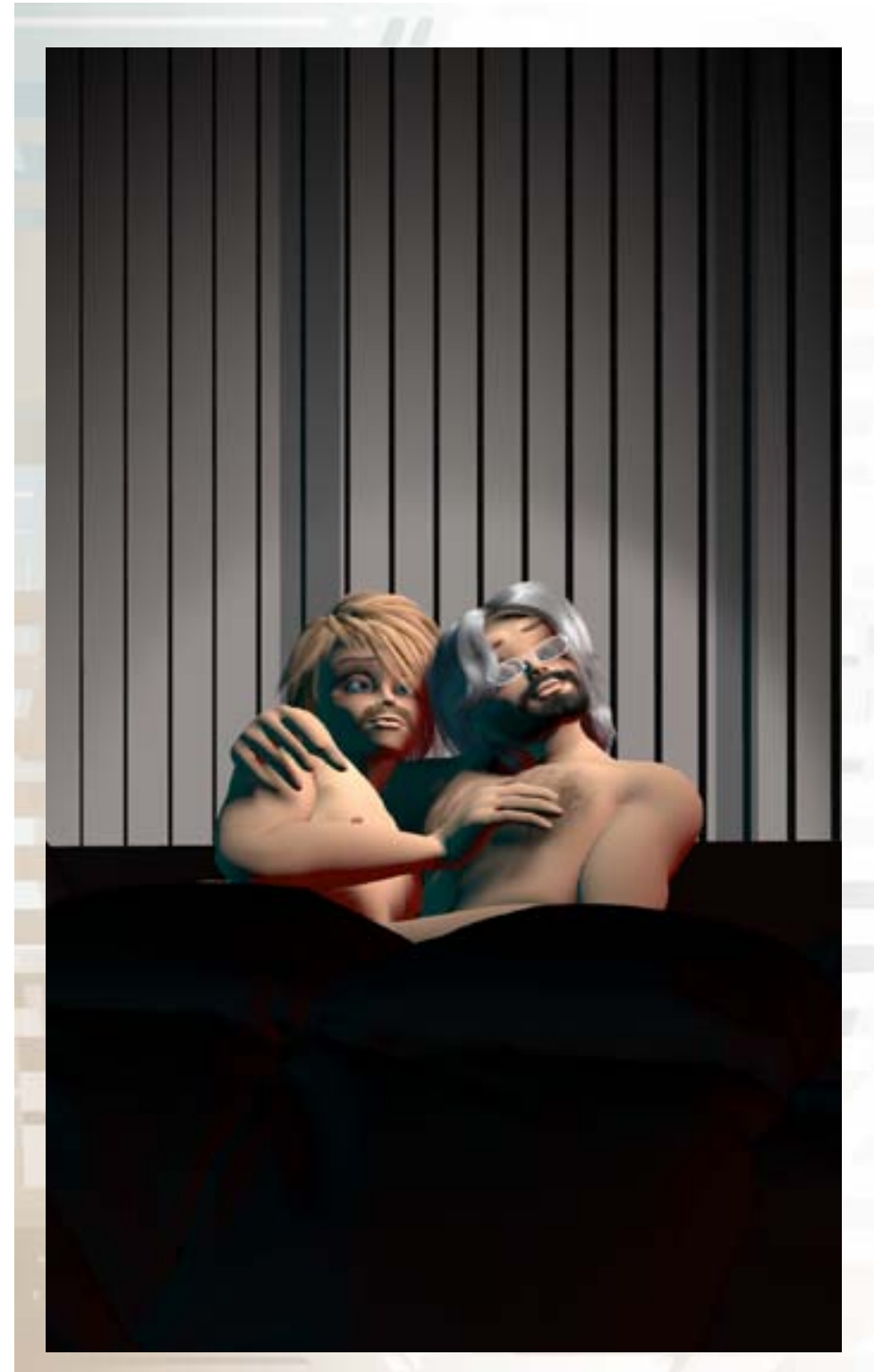


And when they woke up, they looked at each other in amazement. Their hair colour was *just right*. Their height was *just right*. And even though they liked Billy a lot, they were nothing like him.

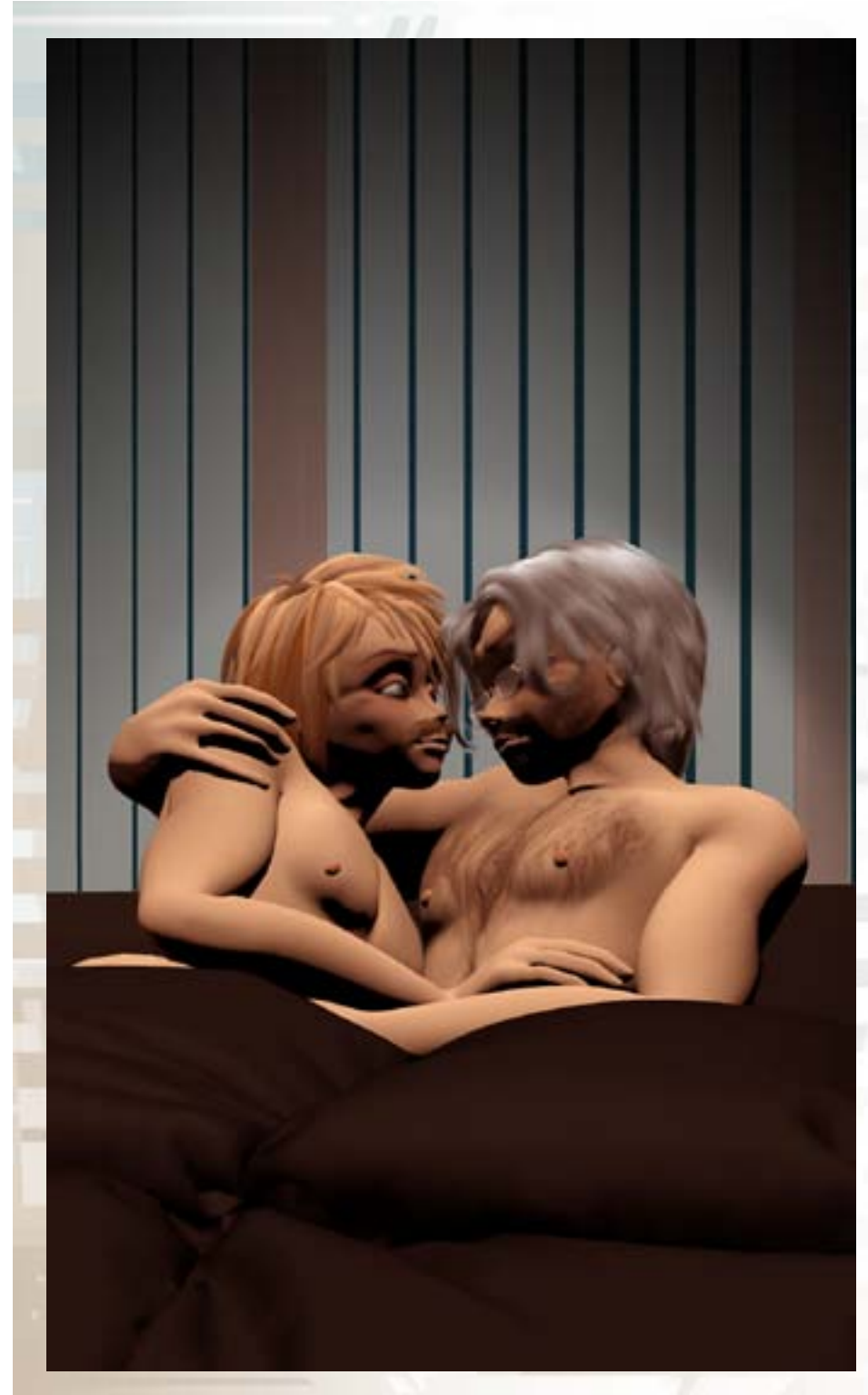
And so they got up and made pancakes and then went to the gym, and everyone was amazed at what a perfect set of friends they were. And some people were jealous, but that was their problem.



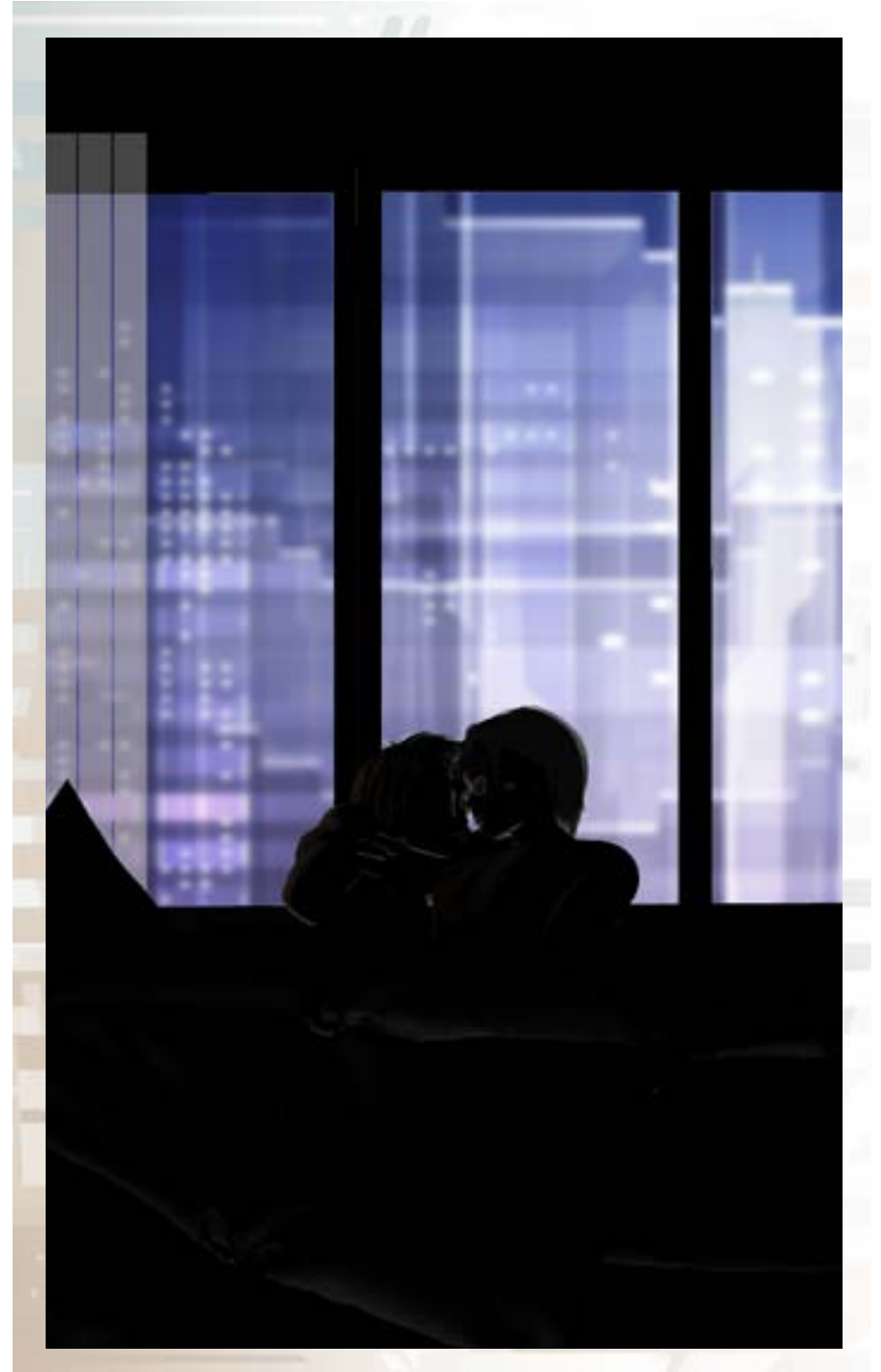
And that night, at midnight,
they waited to see what would
happen...



... but nothing did. They were still *just right*.
And so they laughed and then played some
more games...



... and they lived
happily ever after...



... and they still gave really great parties that
were the same...

... just *different*.

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