

“The Collection”

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w/ art from the Digital Foundations Class Archive

This story isn't about aliens in the way we often imagine them. Invaders, conquerors, or distant gods. Instead, it asks a quieter, more unsettling question: what if we were simply interesting to them?

We build enclosures for creatures we don't fully understand. We study them, preserve them, and even care for them in controlled environments we believe are safe, humane, and necessary. We call it conservation, education, even curiosity.

But those ideas depend entirely on perspective.

What happens when the roles are reversed? When a human life is reduced to something observed behind an invisible barrier? When the one doing the collecting doesn't see cruelty in the act, only purpose?

This story explores that imbalance: the quiet horror of being removed from your world not out of malice, but out of fascination. It's about the loss of agency disguised as preservation, and the uneasy possibility that, to something greater, we might look very small, very fragile... and very worth keeping.



It was late evening on a Saturday.

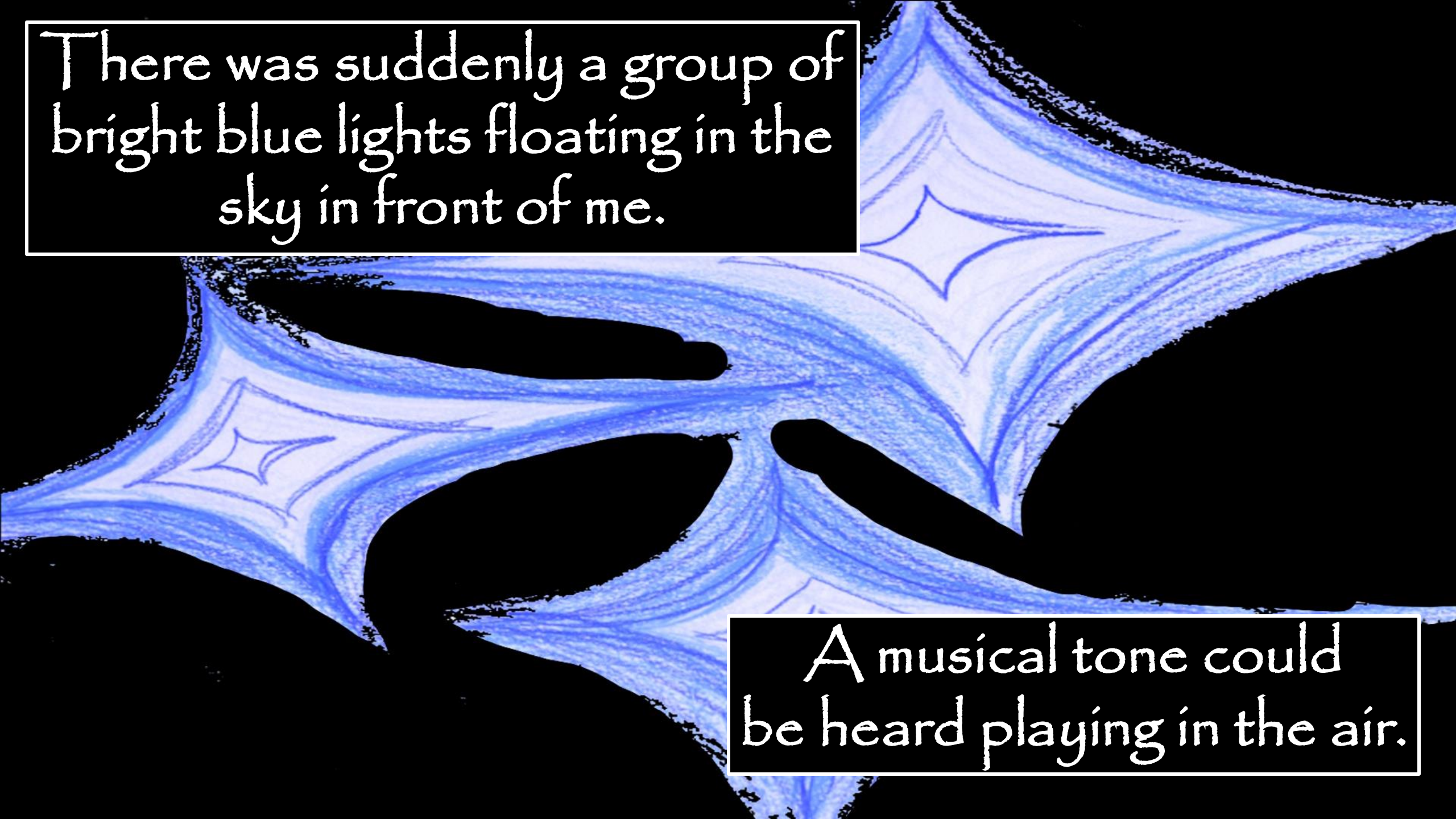
I had slept in far too long, tired from partying the night before.

I was late to meet a group of friends for dinner.

I got up and got dressed.
Heading out into the rain.



I was soaked within minutes
of walking to meet my
friends.



There was suddenly a group of
bright blue lights floating in the
sky in front of me.

A musical tone could
be heard playing in the air.

Then, through the light, a ship appeared.



The object quickly
sucked me up into the air.

It felt as if my body had just become
weightless, floating up towards the craft.



It was dark, cold, and quiet inside the craft.

I was scared and felt very hopeless and lonely.

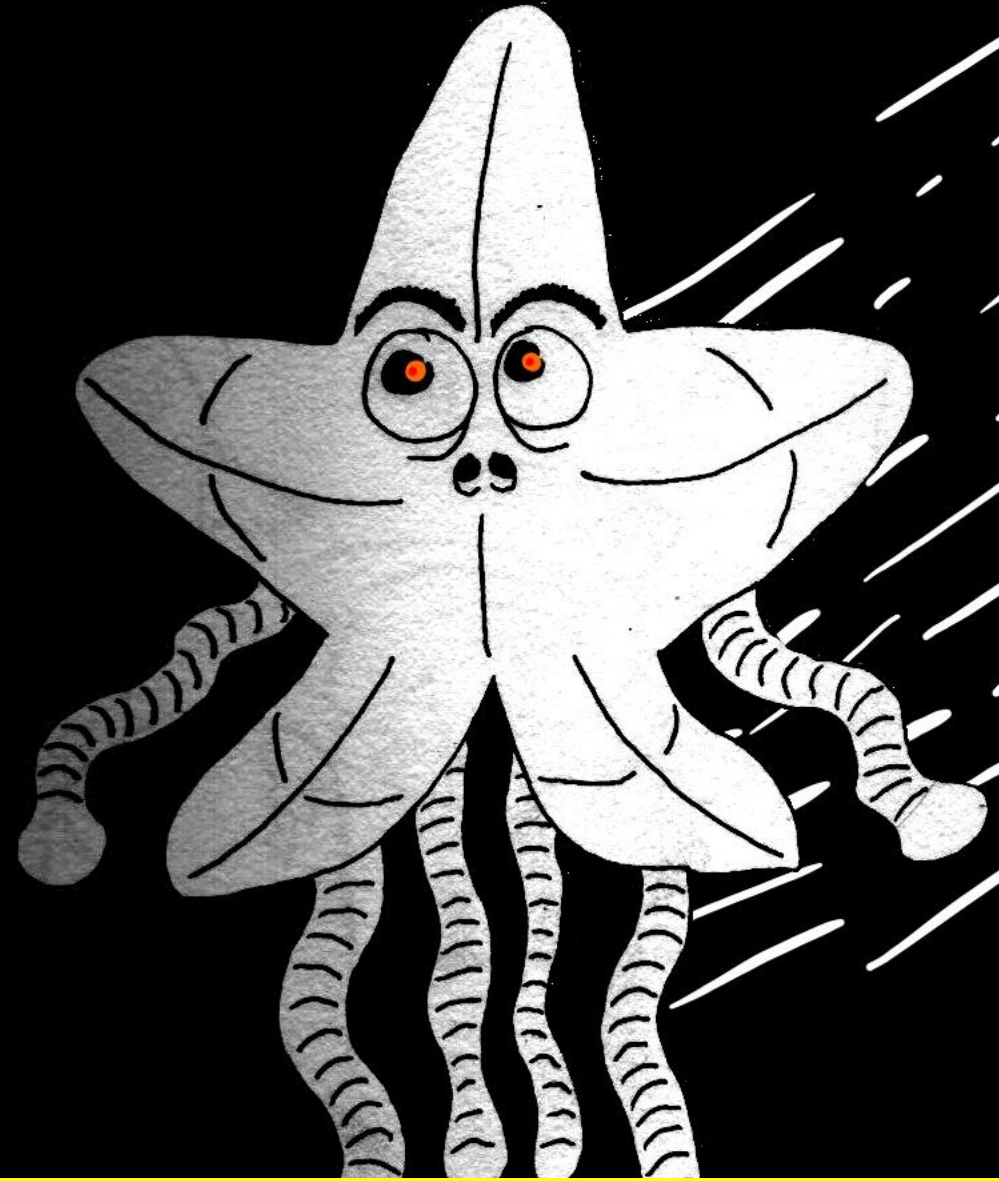
The owner of the craft eventually came by to introduce itself.

I could hear it talking in my mind.




“Hello there, little fellow!
Don't be sad!”

“Why come here, and
I'll show you some
really cool things!”

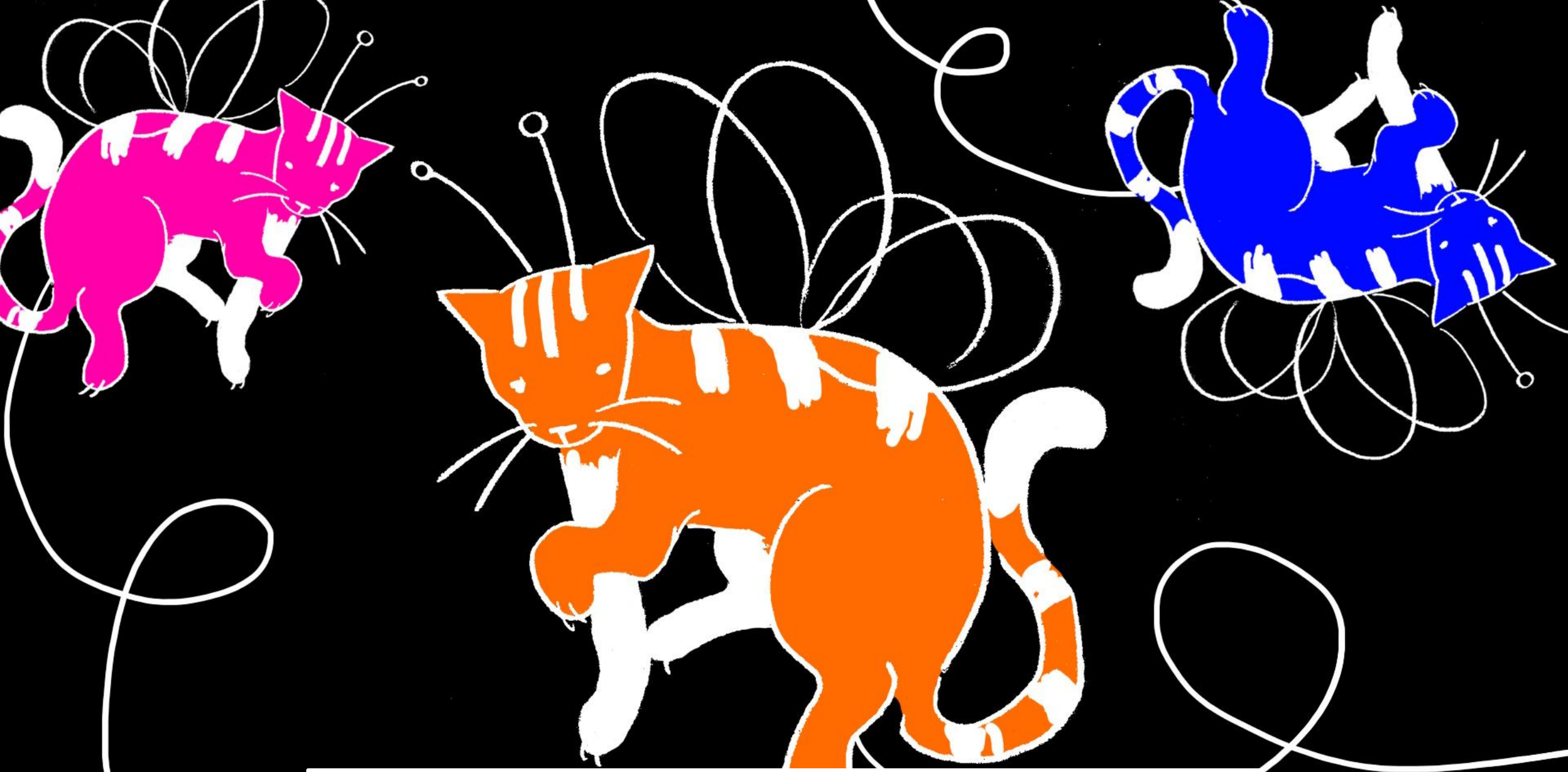


“Maybe then you will cheer up!”

The being showed
me around its ship.



It let me see all the other creatures
that it had collected over the years.



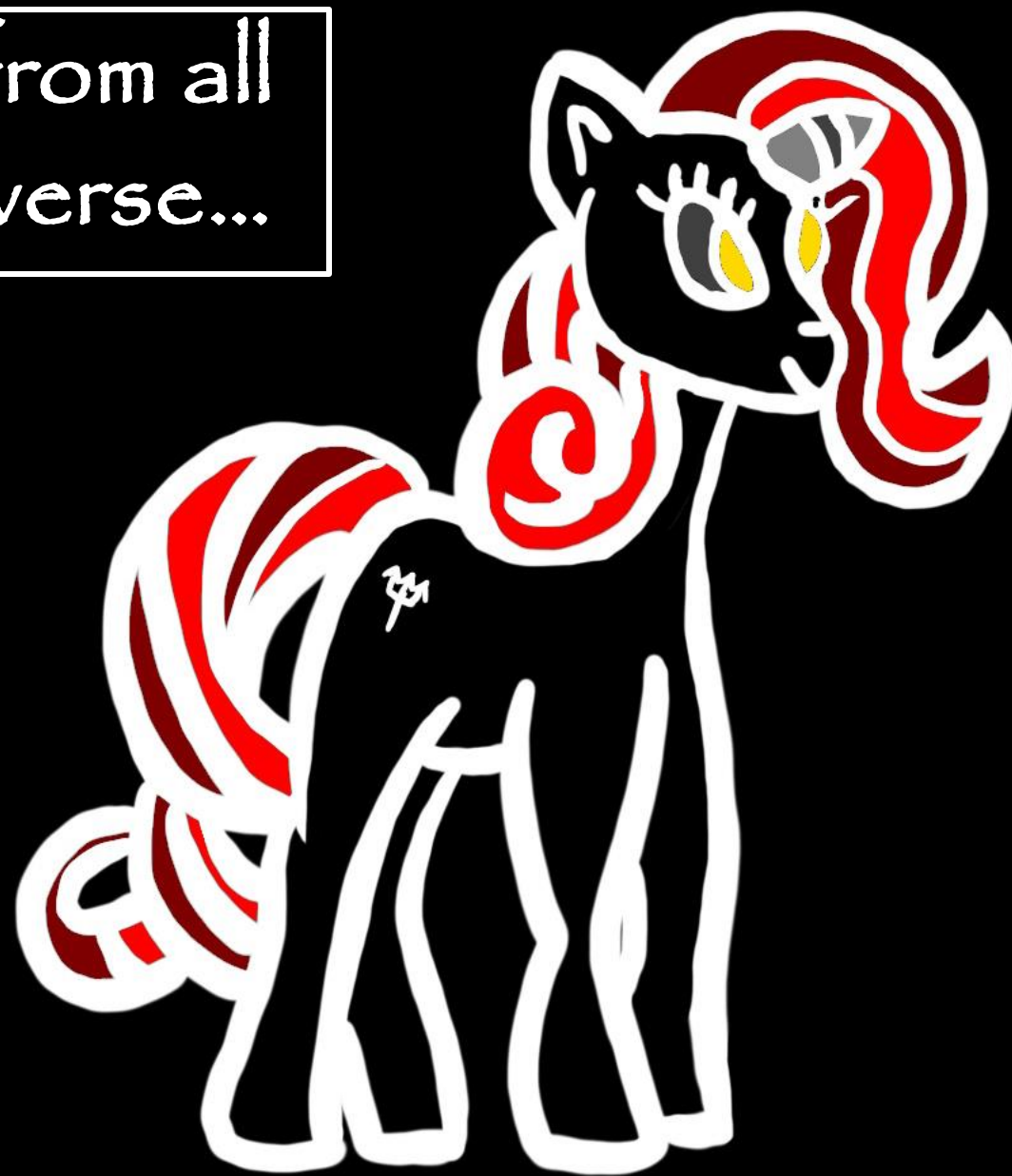
From alien-like flying fairy cats...



to giant, monstrous
worm-like creatures.

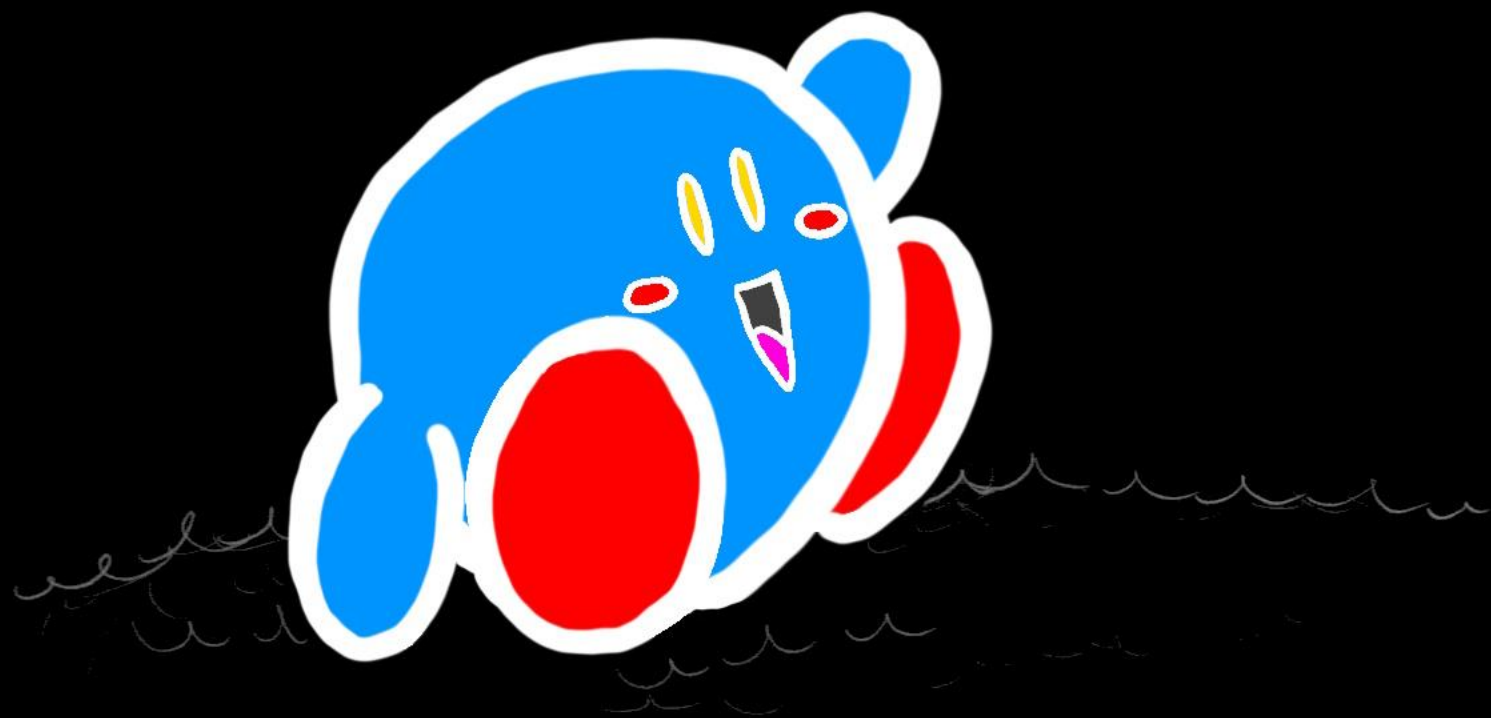


Creatures from all
over the universe...





Creatures of all colors and sizes...



Some of them were cute...



Some of them were scary...

Most of them were at the
least a little odd...

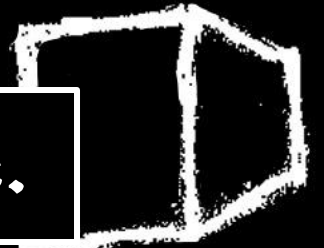
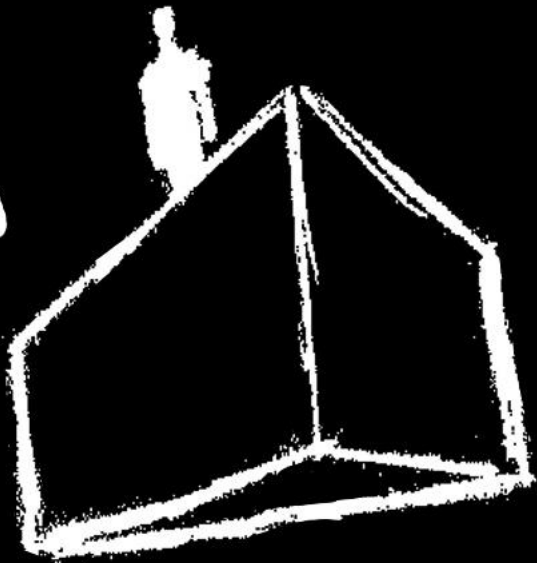
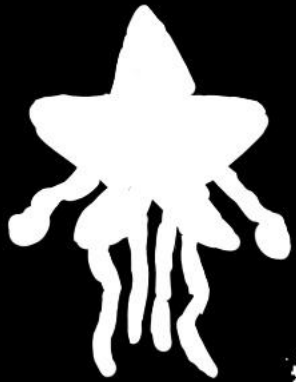




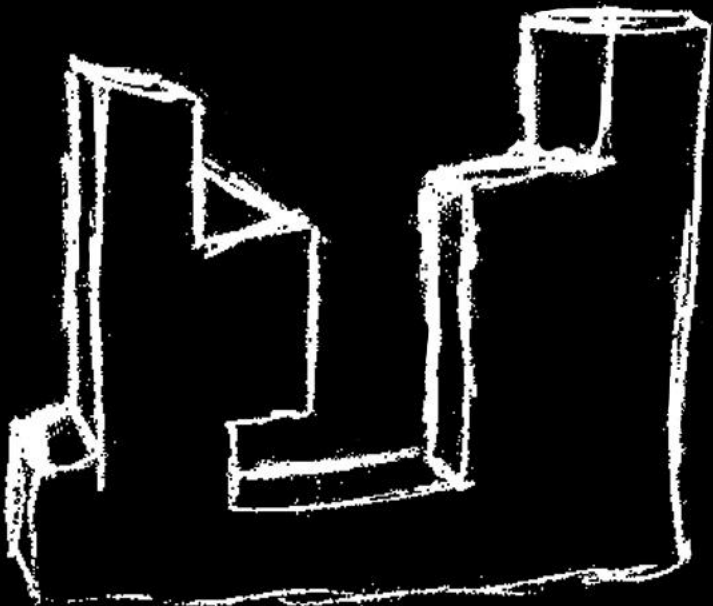
Some of them were oddly familiar...

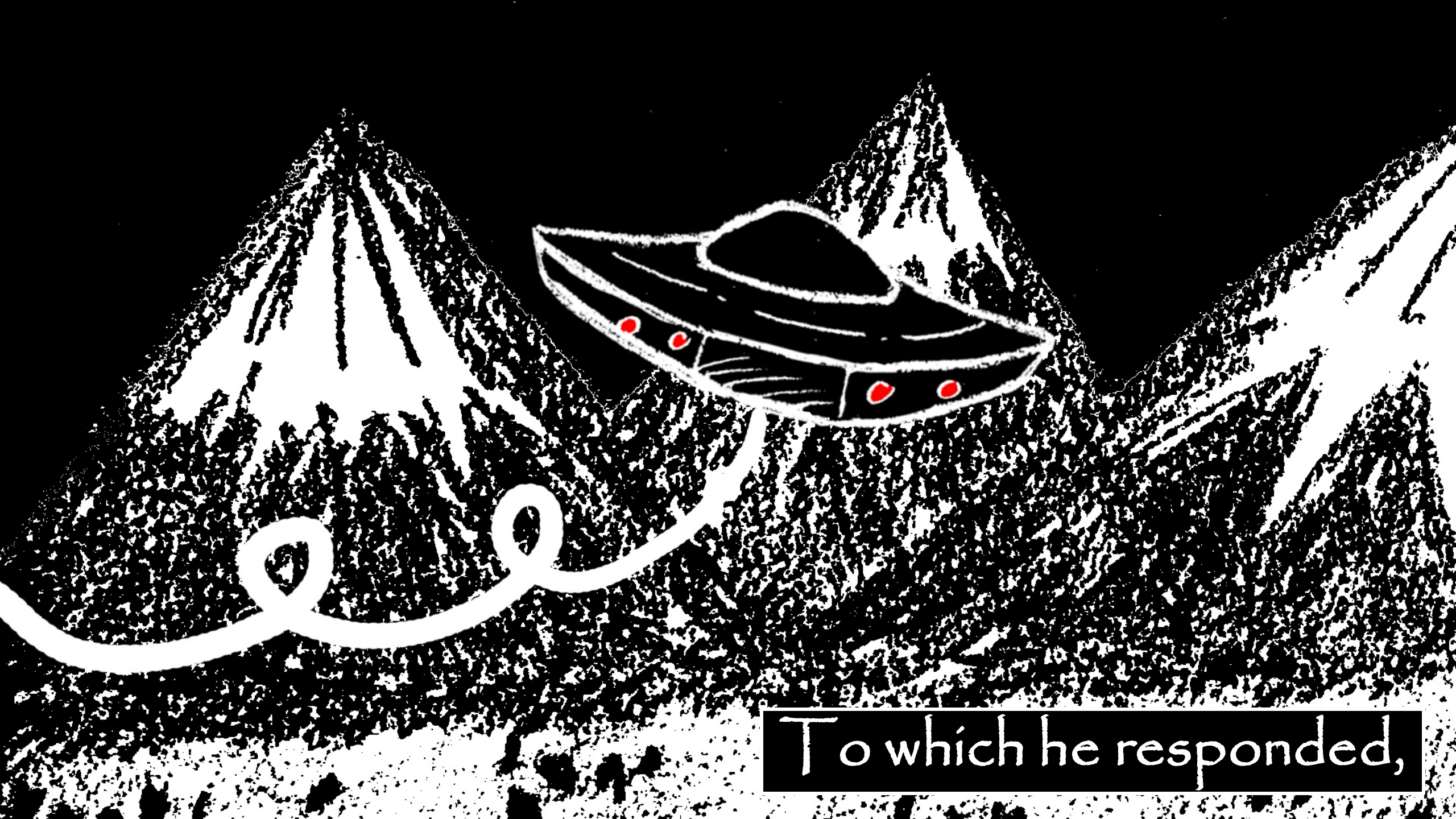


And more than a few were nothing more than a frog
dressed up in a hat...



I told them I just wanted to go home.





To which he responded,



“But this is *your*
home now!”

The end...?