



bad machinery
THE CASE OF THE
SIMPLE SOUL

John Allison



Bad Machinery™

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AN ONI PRESS PUBLICATION





Bad Machinery™

THE CASE OF THE SIMPLE SOUL

By
John Allison

Edited by
James Lucas Jones & Ari Yarwood

Designed by
Jason Storey

Colour Assists by
Adam Cadwell

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publisher, Joe Nozemack

editor in chief, James Lucas Jones

v.p. of business development, Tim Wiesch

director of sales, Cheyenne Allott

director of publicity, John Schork

editor, Charlie Chu

associate editor, Robin Herrera

production manager, Troy Look

senior designer, Jason Storey

inventory coordinator, Brad Rooks

administrative assistant, Ari Yarwood

office assistant, Jung Lee

production assistant, Jared Jones



Oni Press, Inc.

1305 SE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Suite A

Portland, OR 97214

onipress.com

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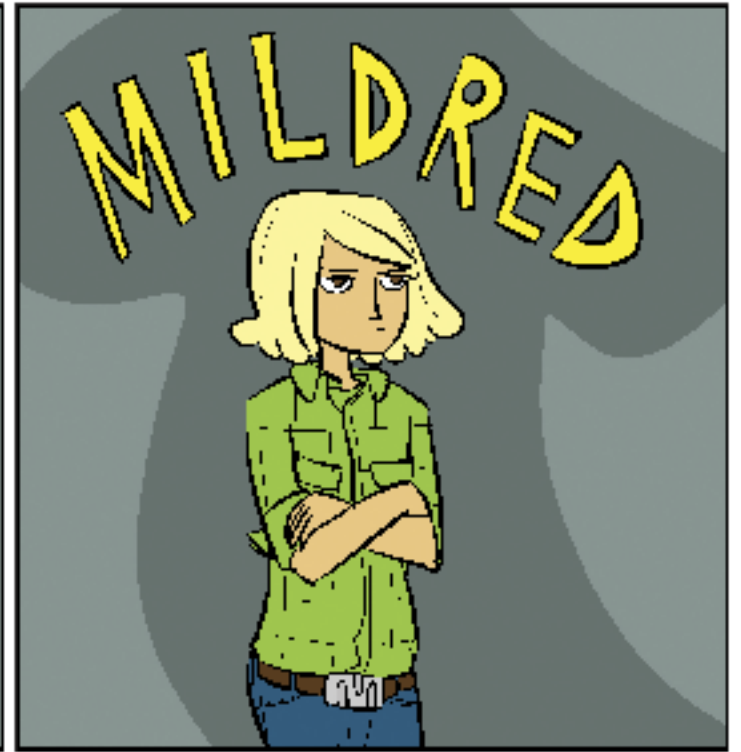
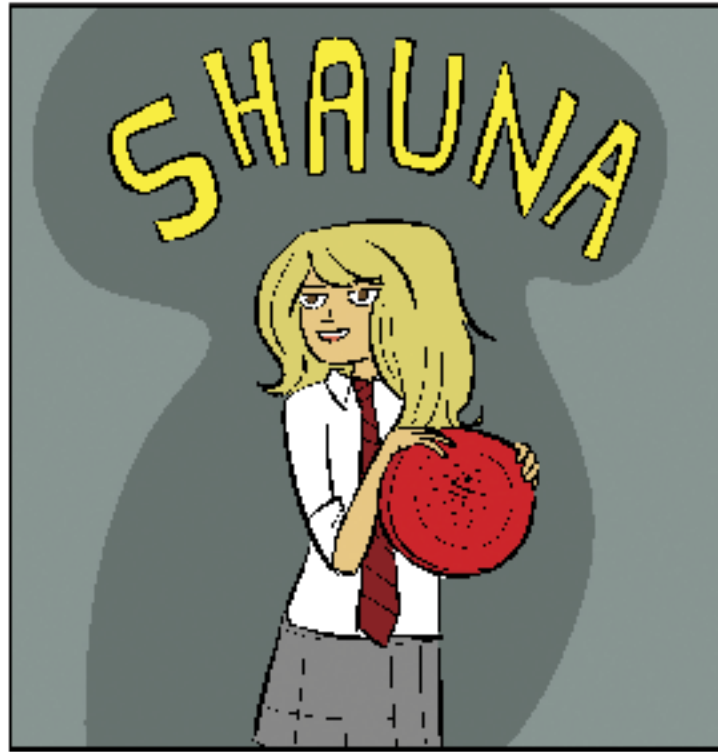
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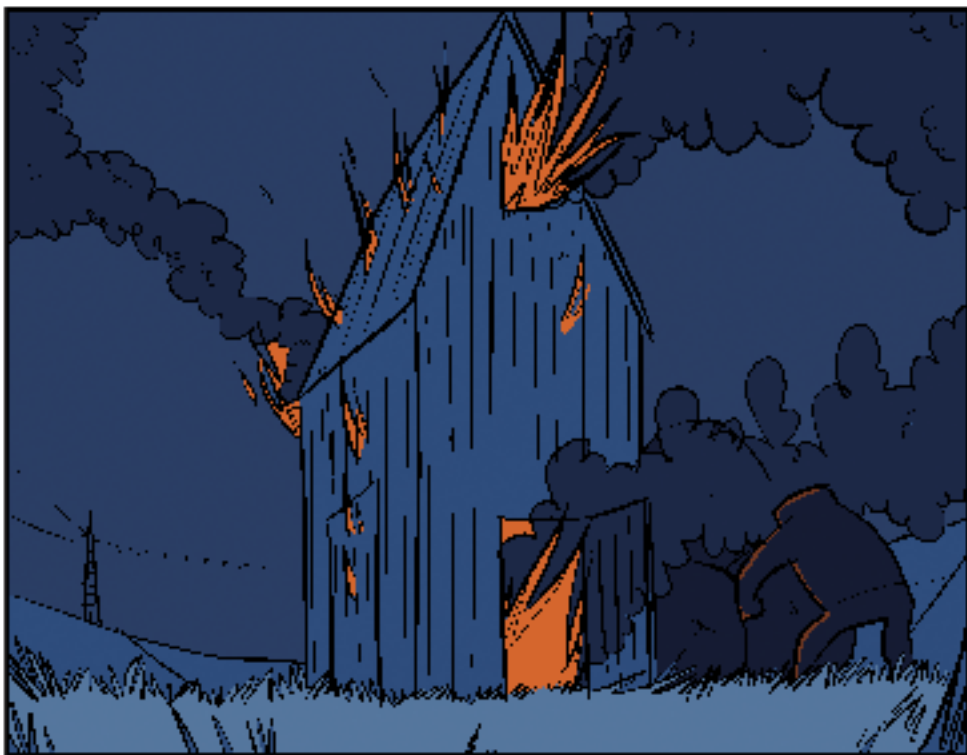
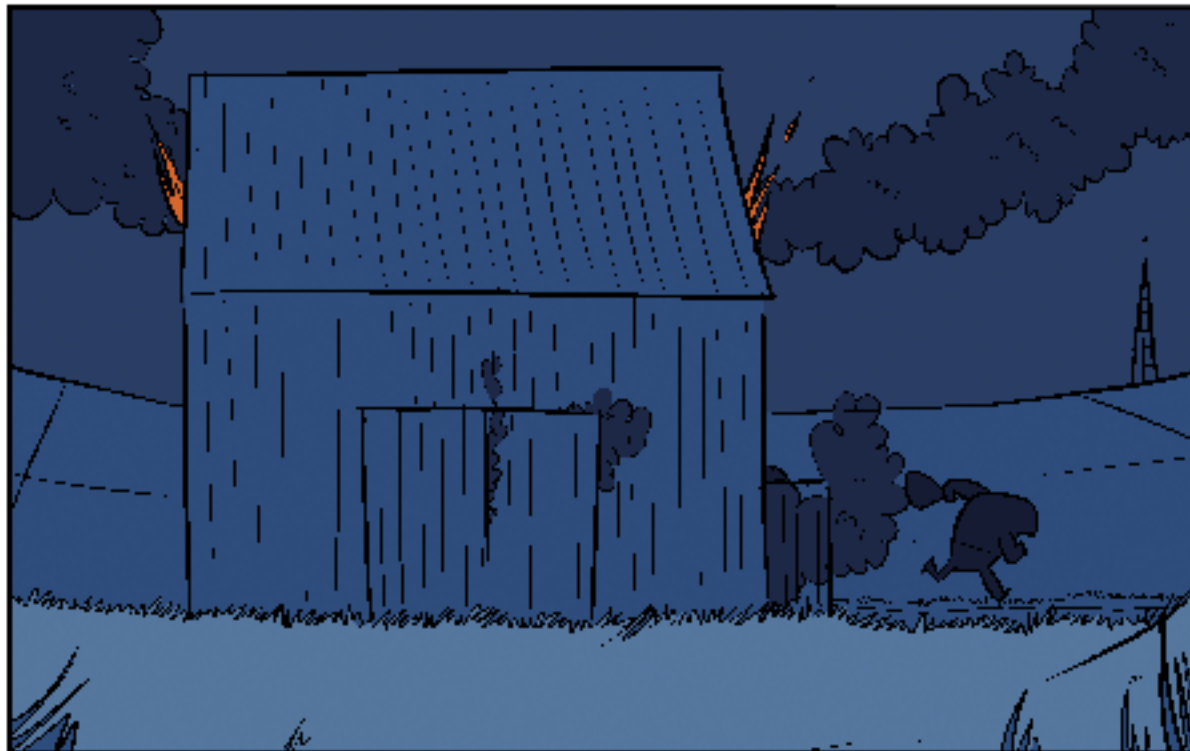
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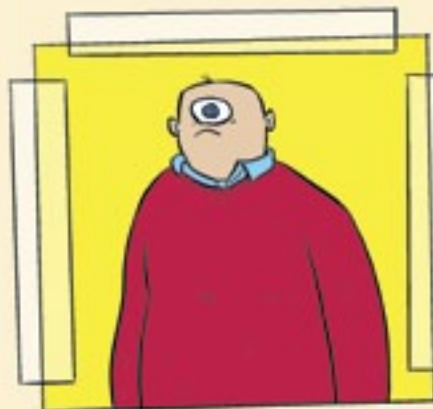






Tackleford Mummy

Museum menace. Average member of staff unabel to repel using gift shop contents. Slightly murderess.



Jerry the cyclops

Fearsome looking but his lack of depth perceptien and phisycal fitness mean he is NON-THRETTENING.



Giant bee

Does it make giant honey?

NOT SURE.



Local cyborg

Not billionaire playboy as suspected, just an idiot with a soldering iron and too much spare time.



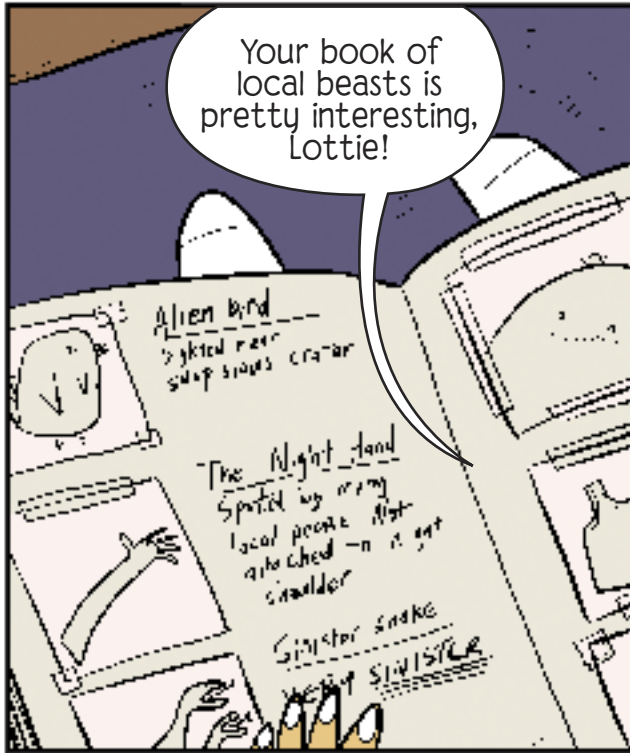
House of evil

On no account put your hand through the letter box.



Wee folk

Almost too wee!
Reminder: watch where you are walking.



Your book of local beasts is pretty interesting, Lottie!

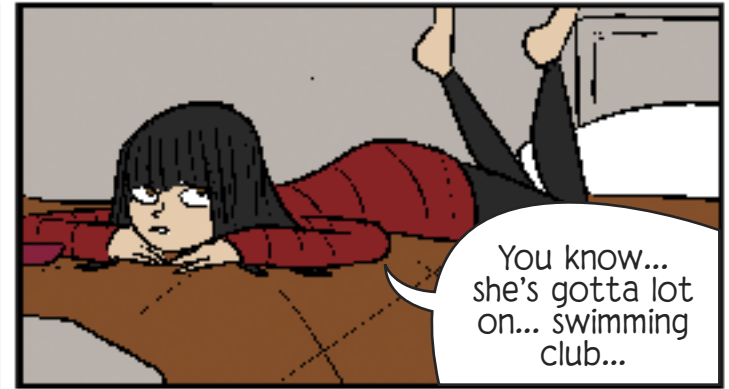


Hm well yes, I've been doing it for a few years.

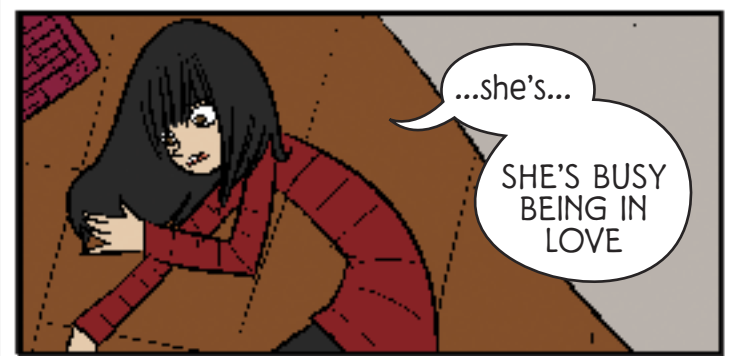
Shauna and I have investigated sev'ral.



Where is Shauna today?



You know... she's gotta lot on... swimming club...



...she's...

SHE'S BUSY BEING IN LOVE

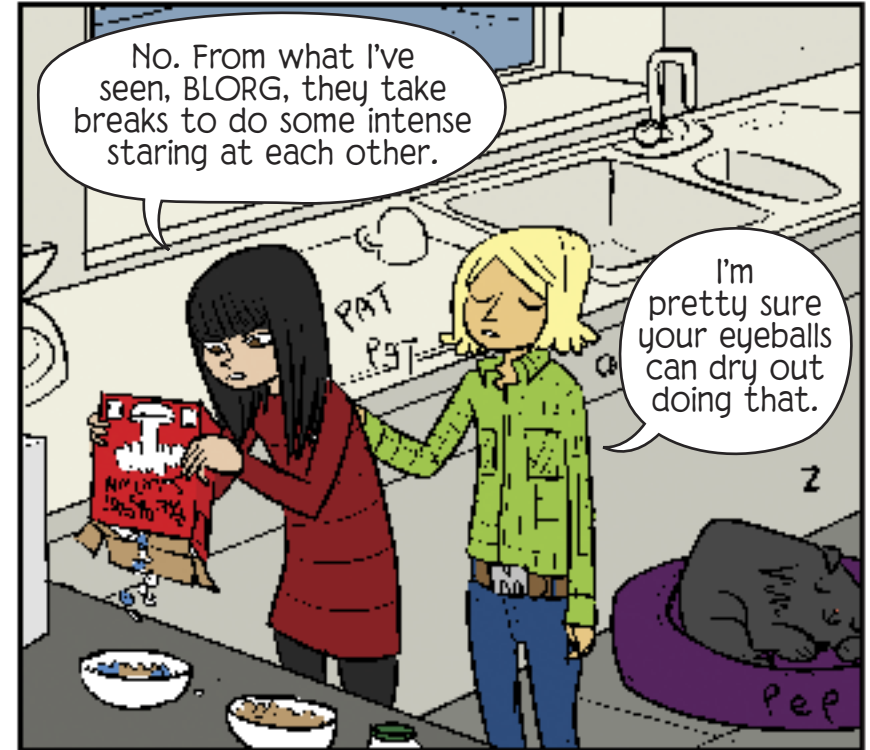


We had a lot of plans for what we were going to do, too.

Don't let love ruin your summer!

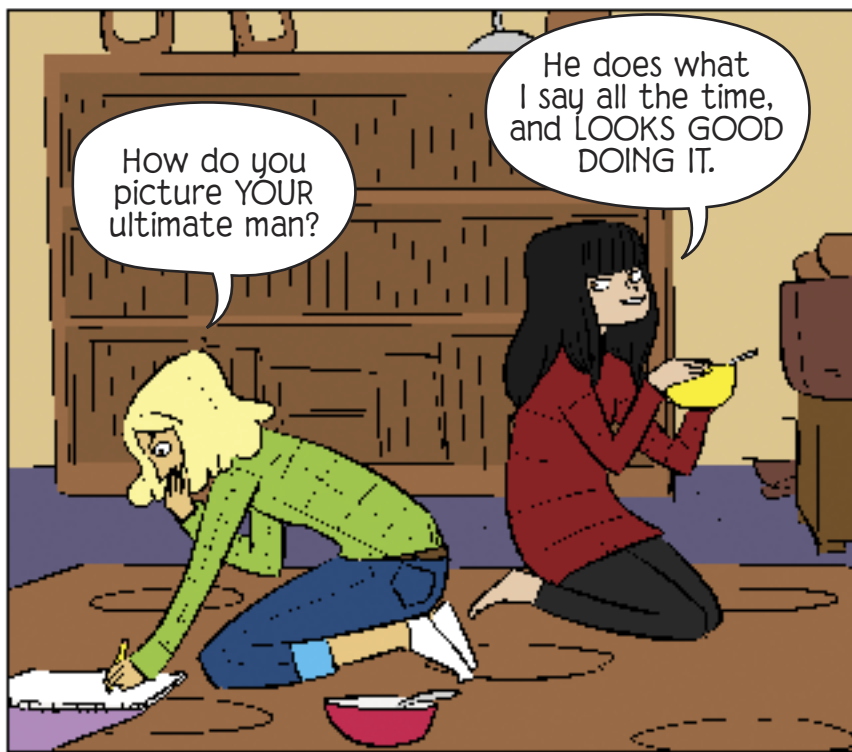
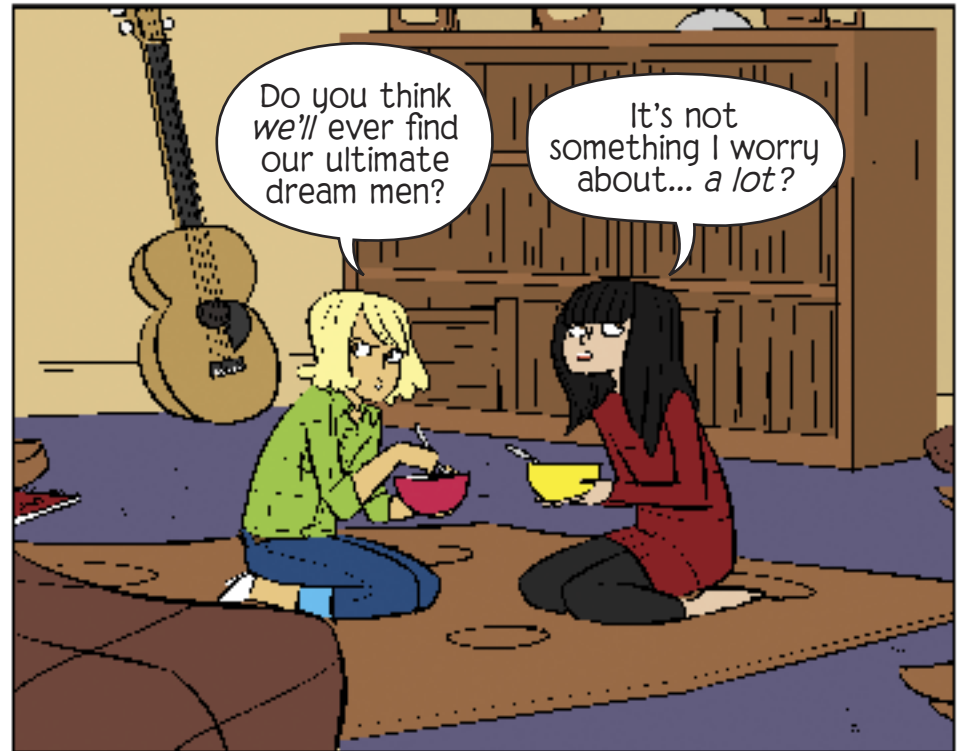
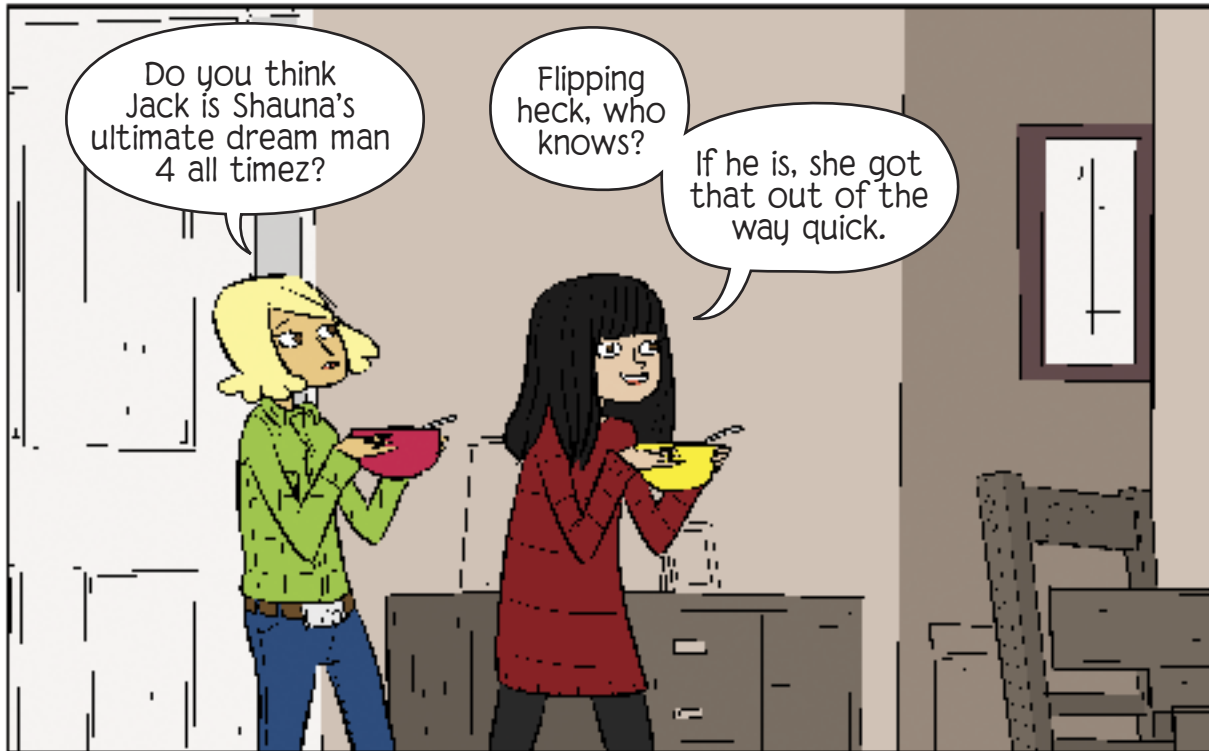


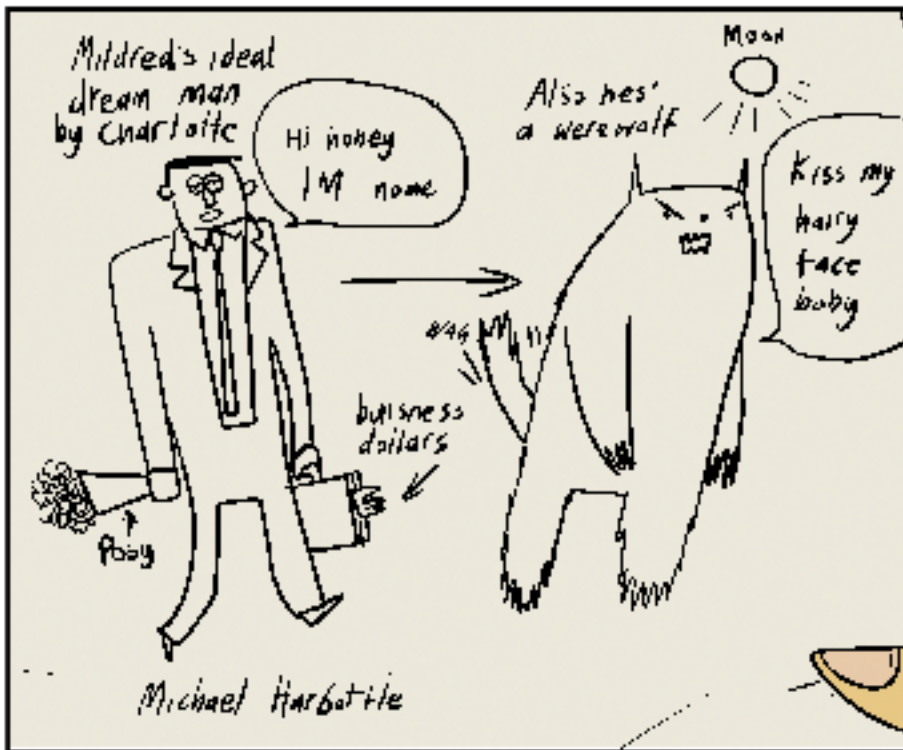
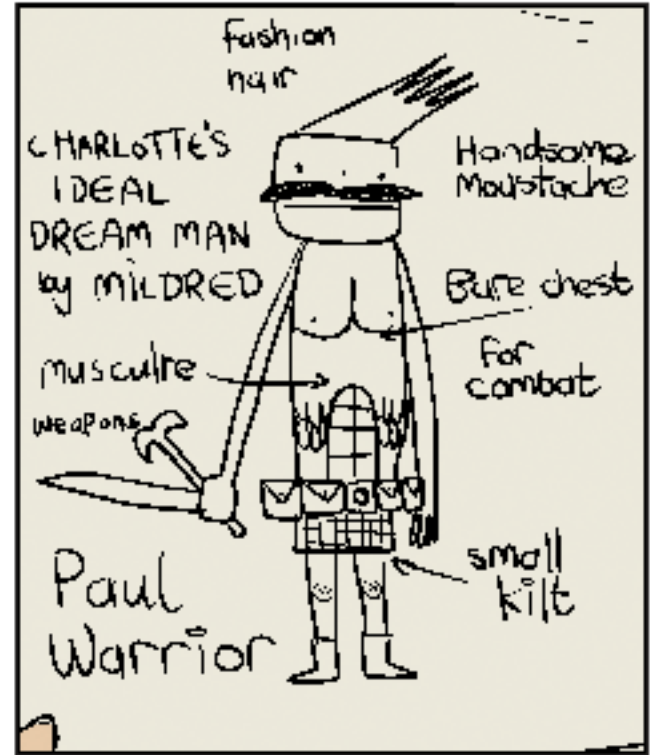
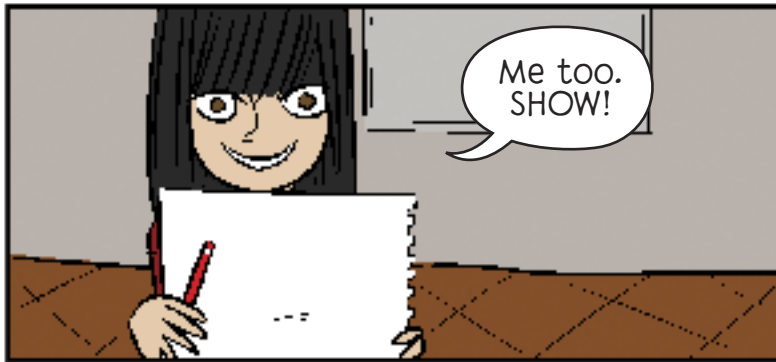
She'll get bored of kissing, eventually your lips must get worn out.

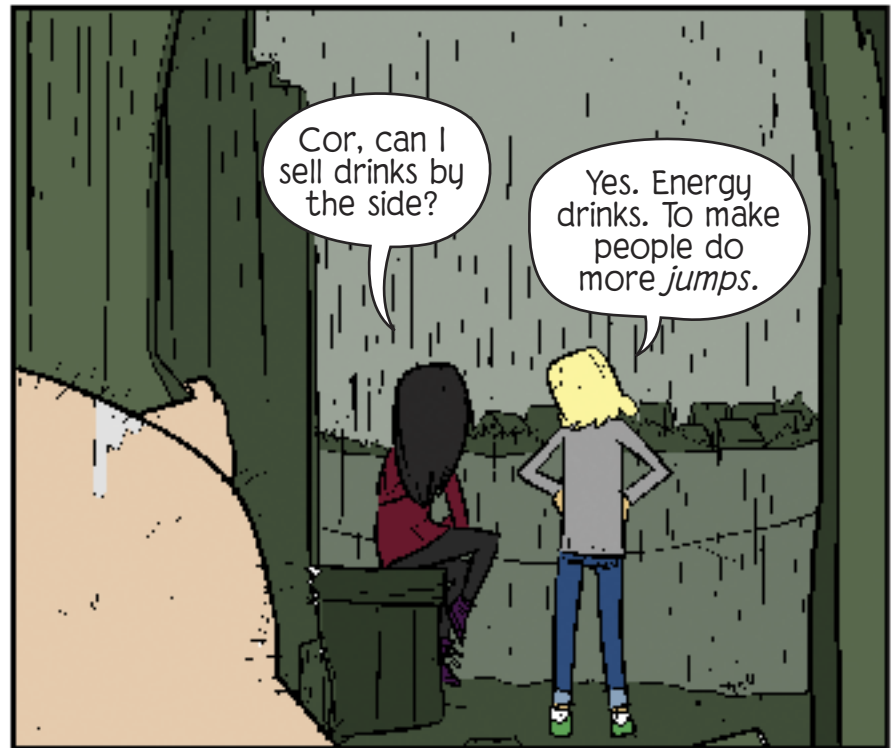
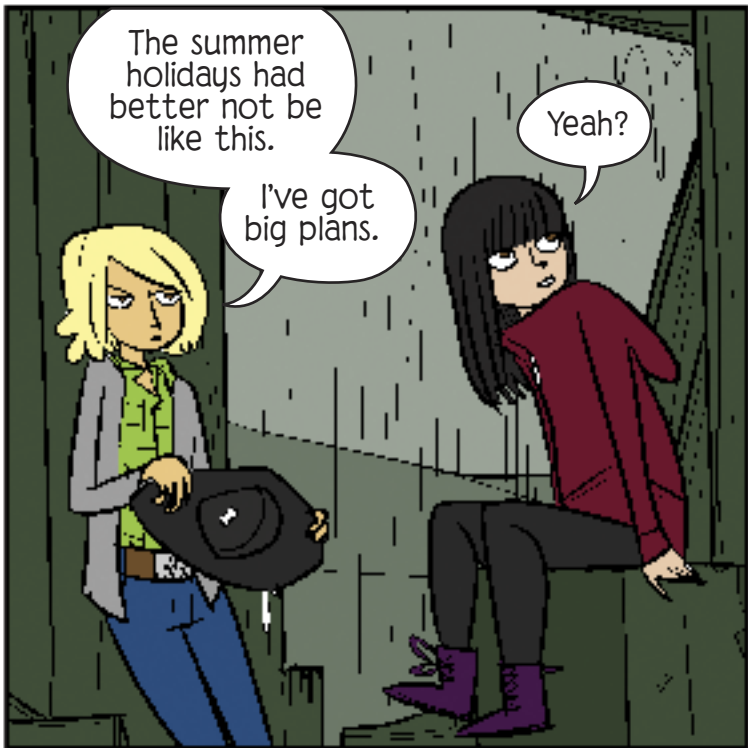
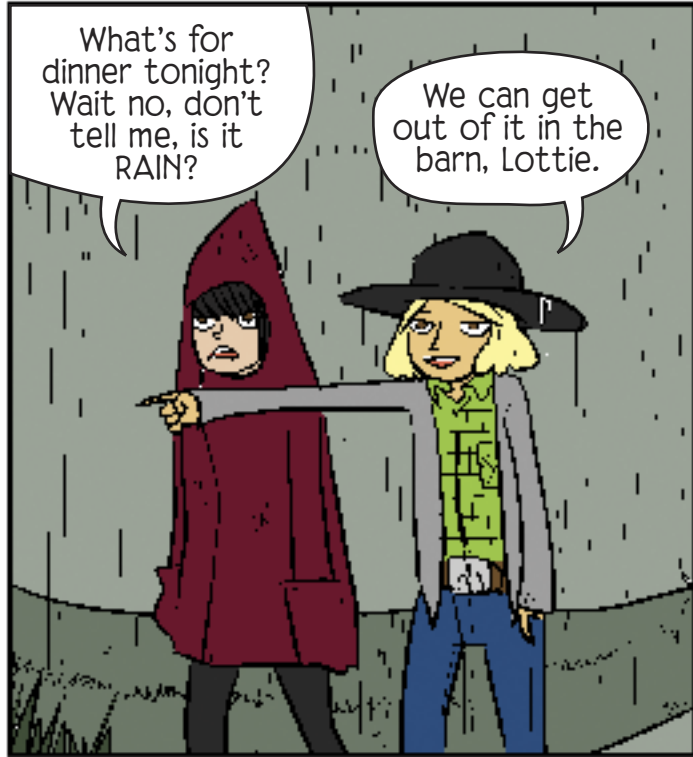


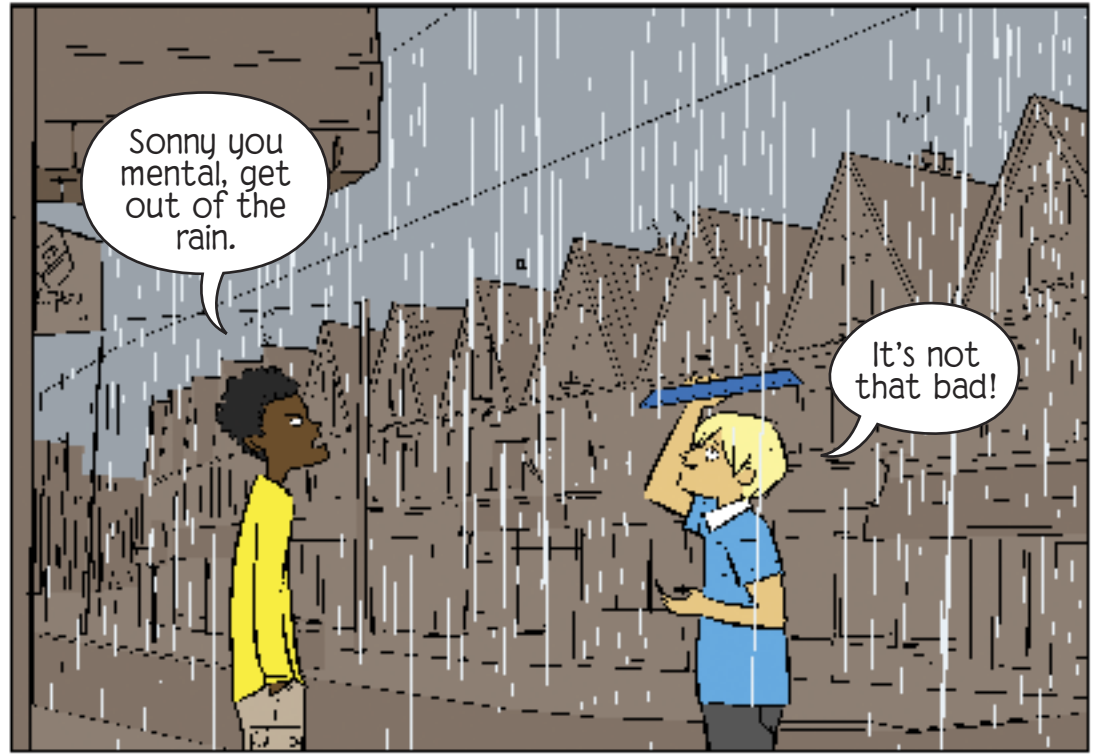
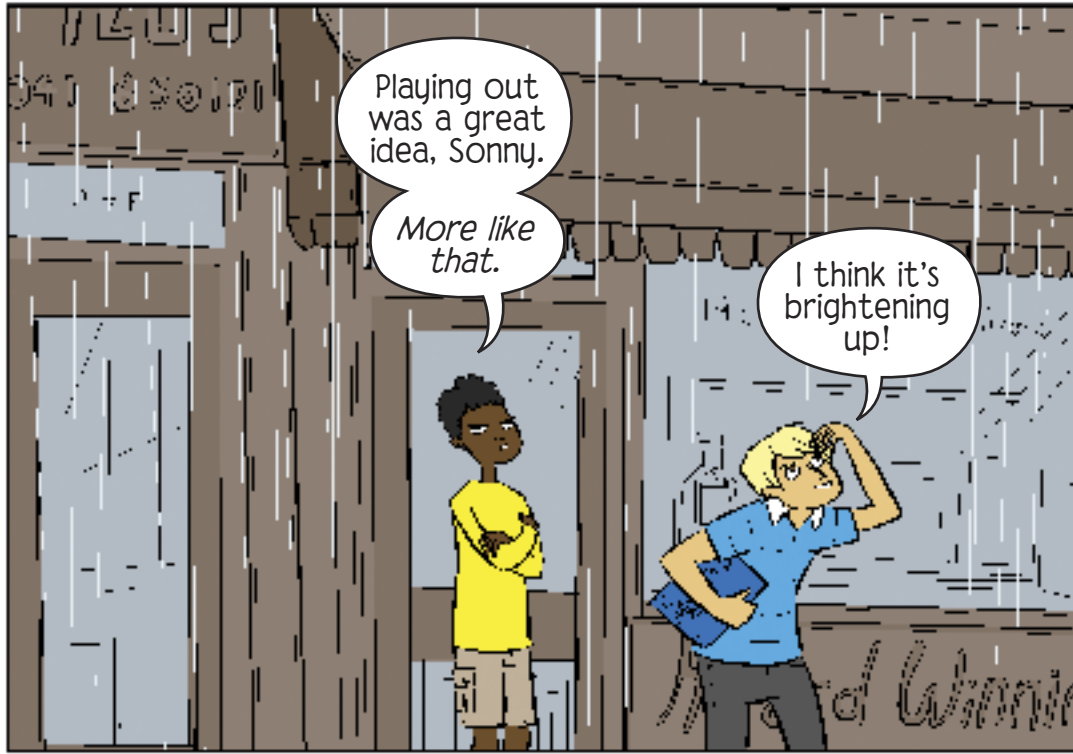
No. From what I've seen, BLOOG, they take breaks to do some intense staring at each other.

I'm pretty sure your eyeballs can dry out doing that.

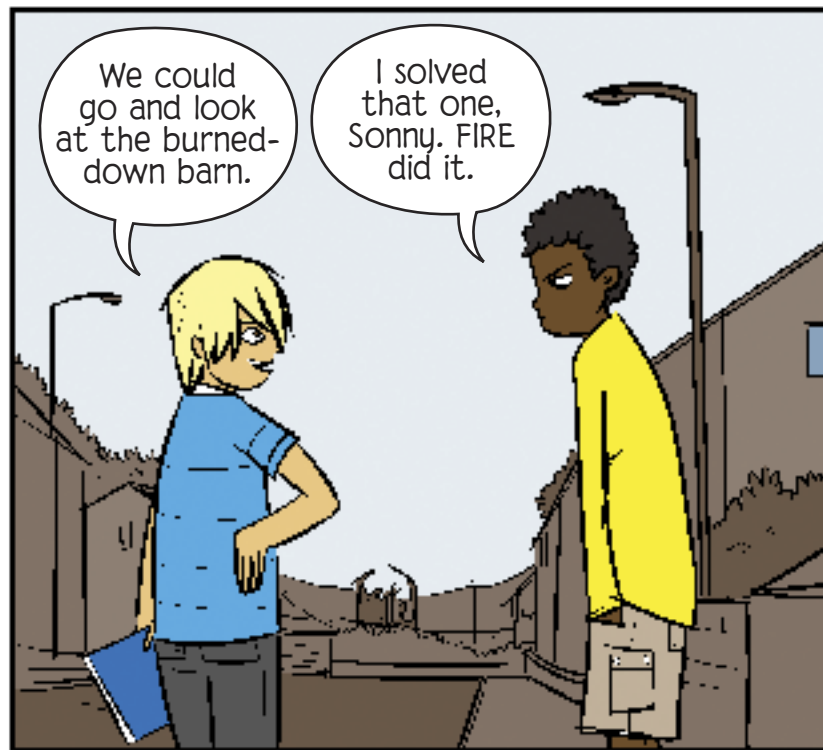
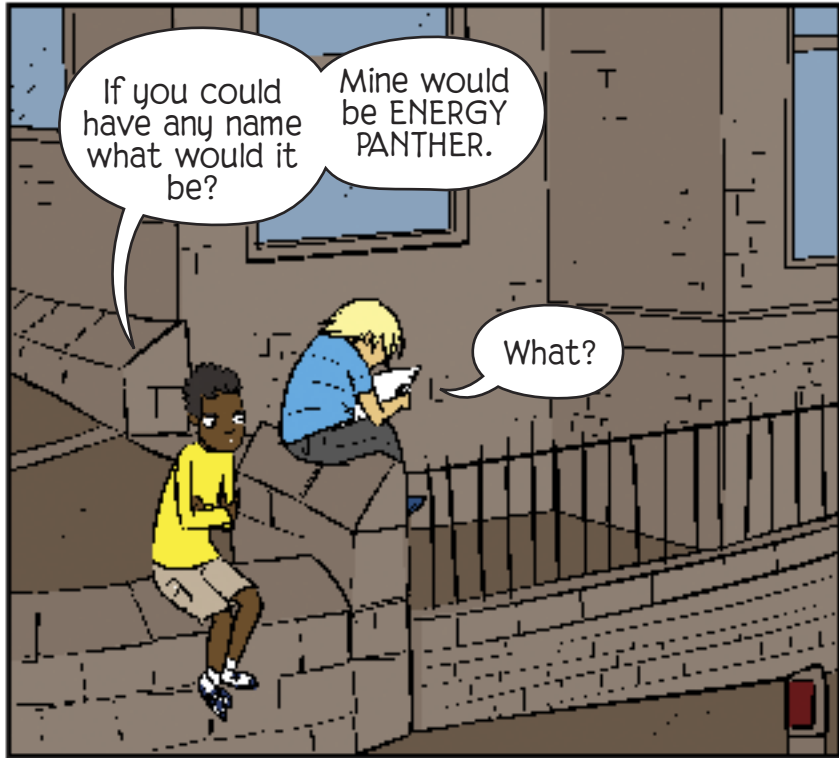


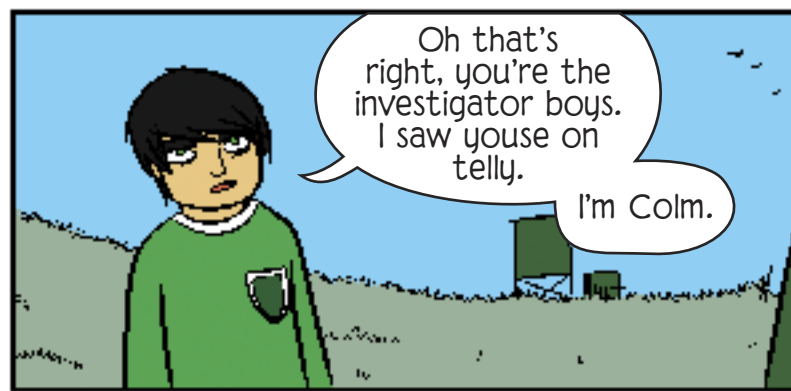
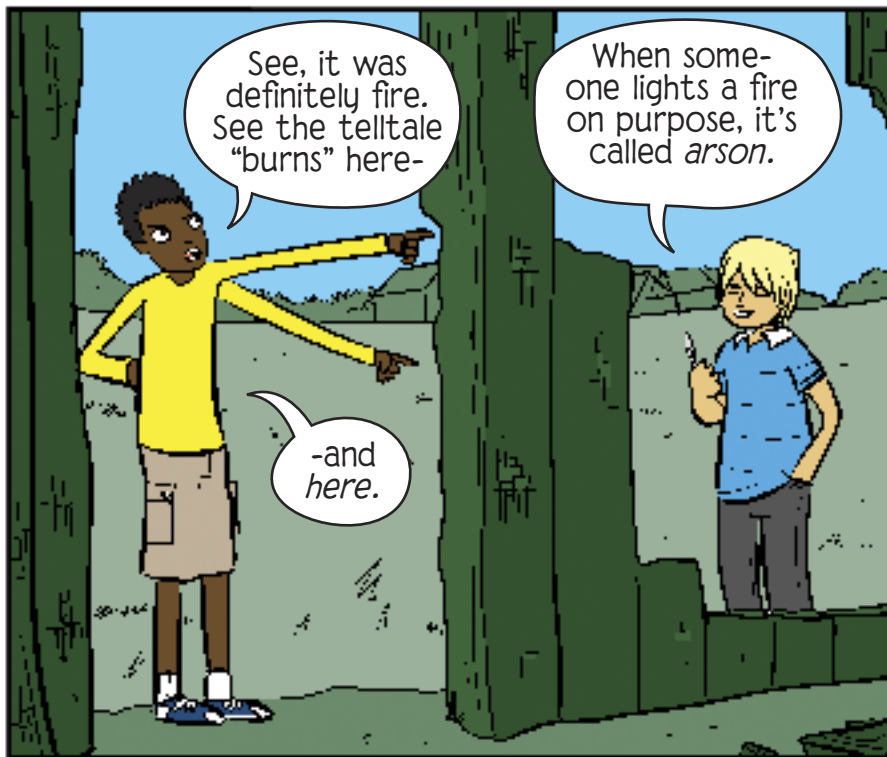


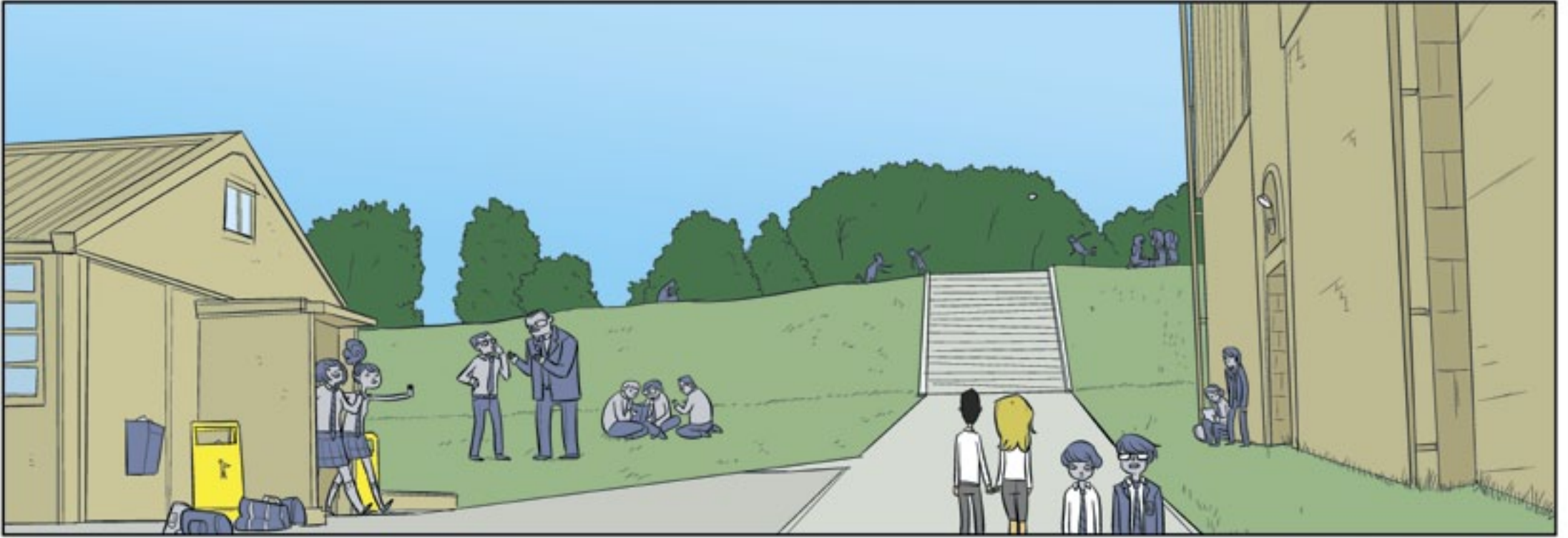


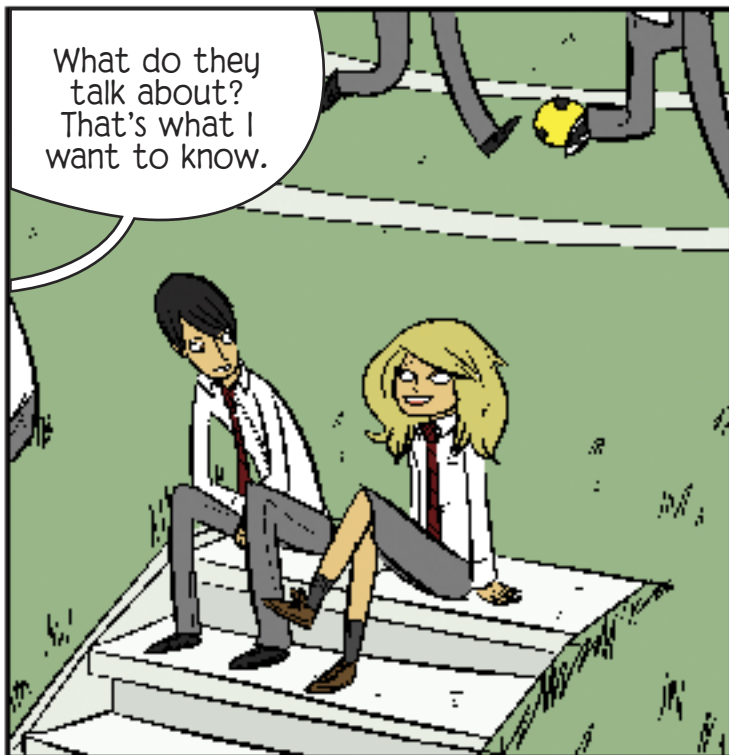




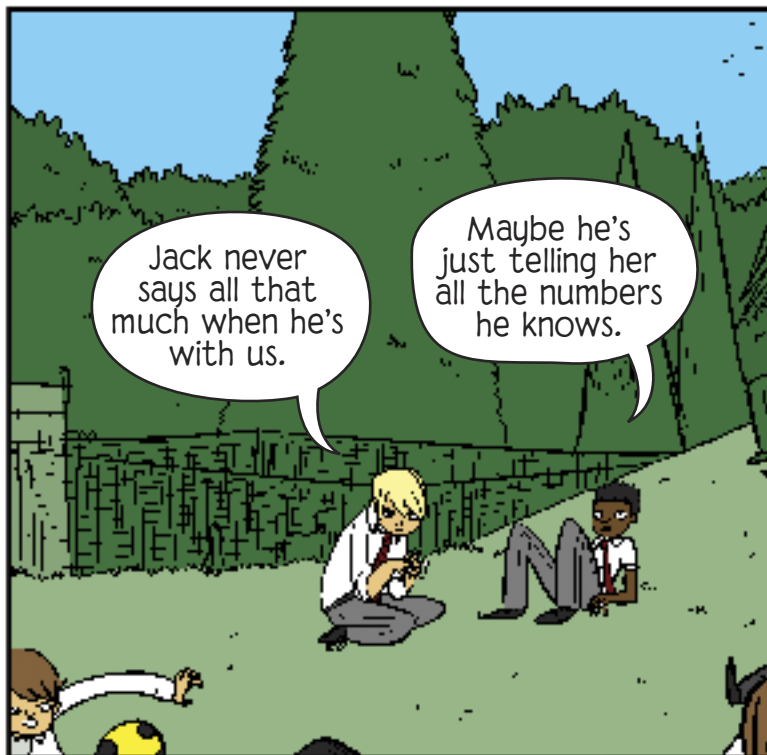








What do they talk about?
That's what I want to know.

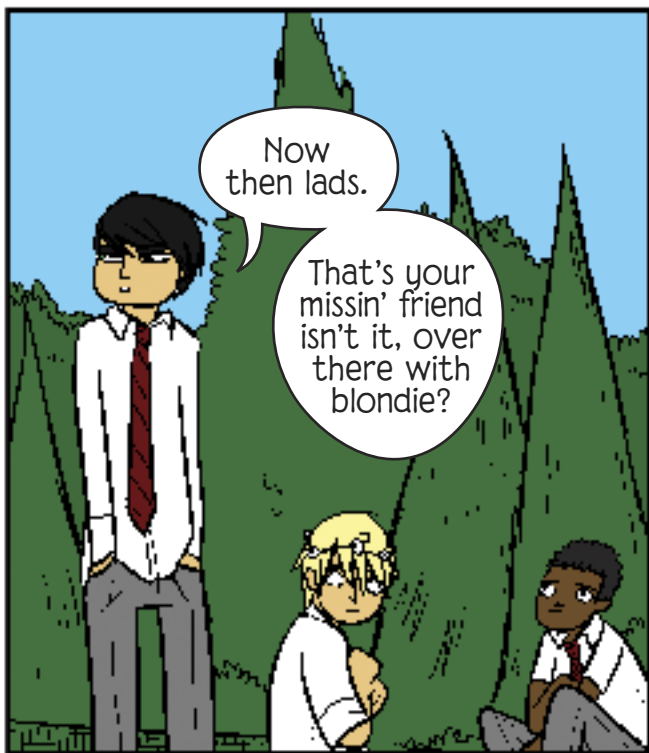


Jack never says all that much when he's with us.

Maybe he's just telling her all the numbers he knows.



Sonny, take that off. Someone'll thump the dinner out of you.



Now then lads.

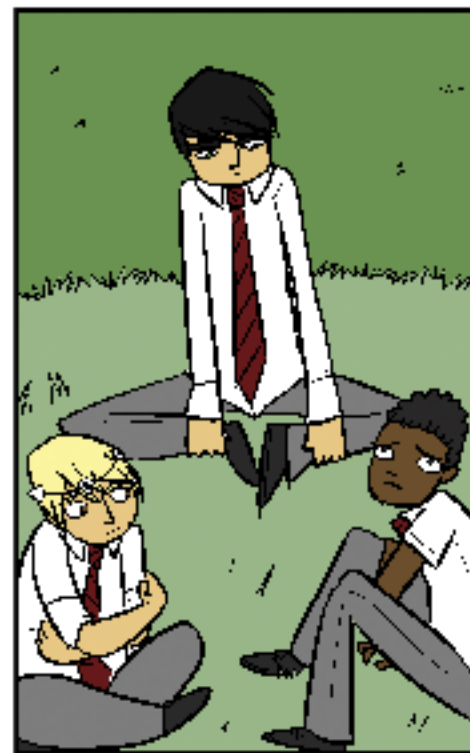
That's your missin' friend isn't it, over there with blondie?



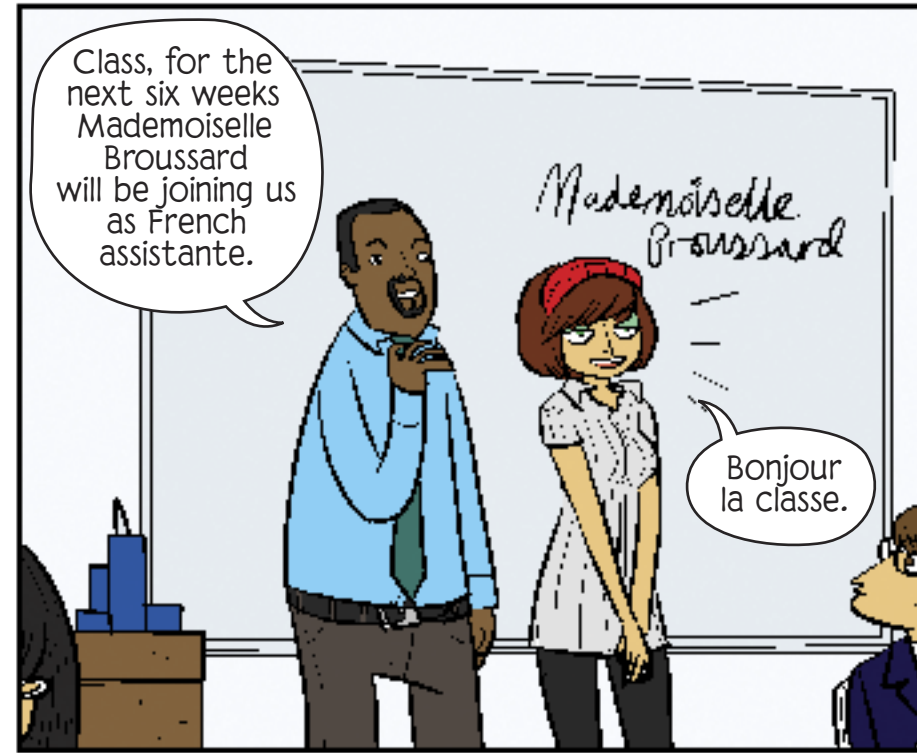
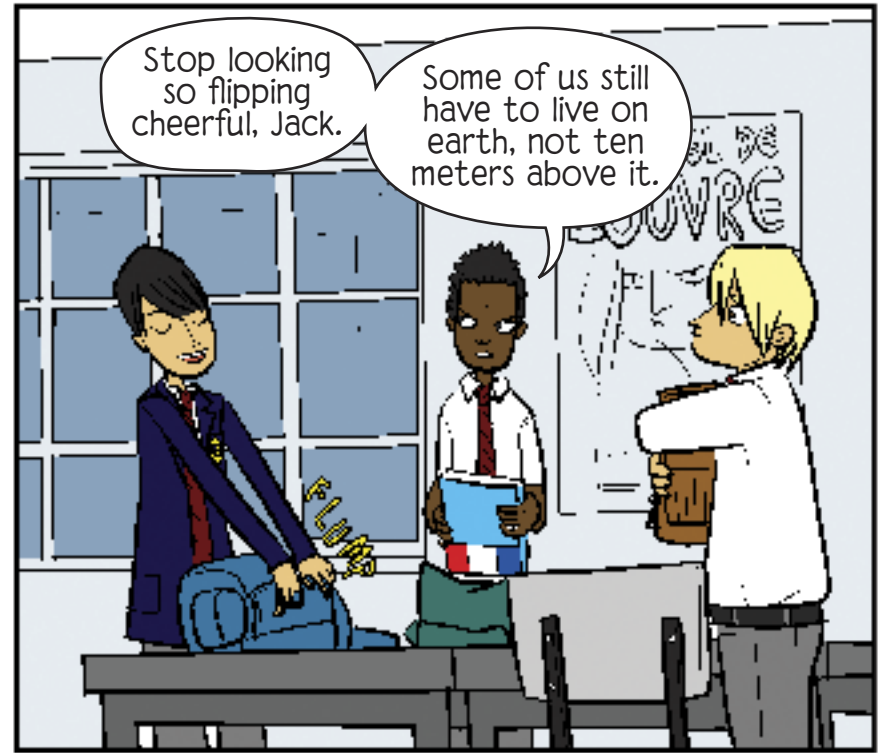
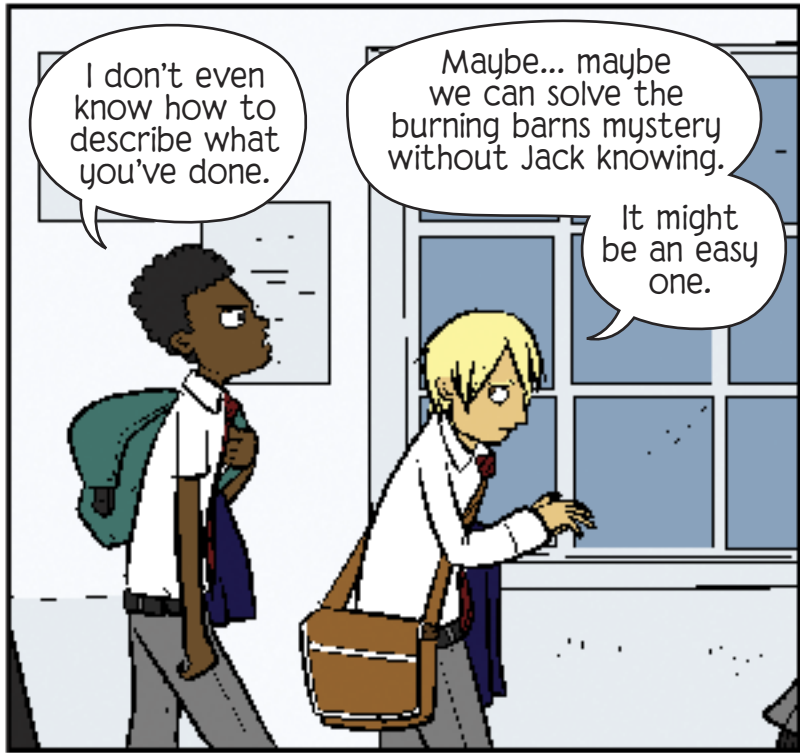
Don't worry, you've got to let em go so they'll come back.

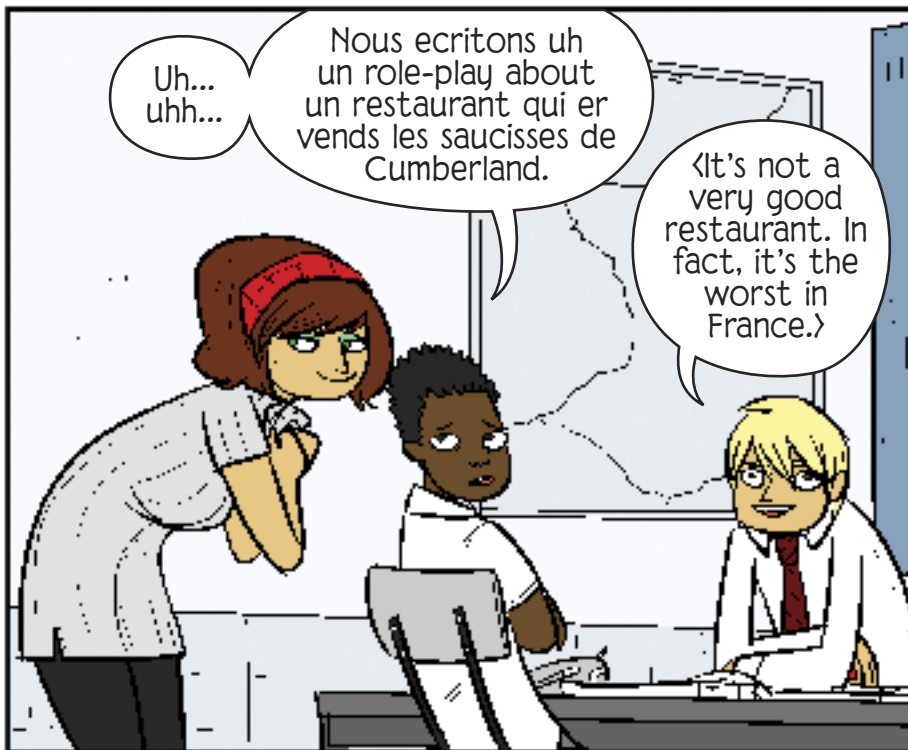
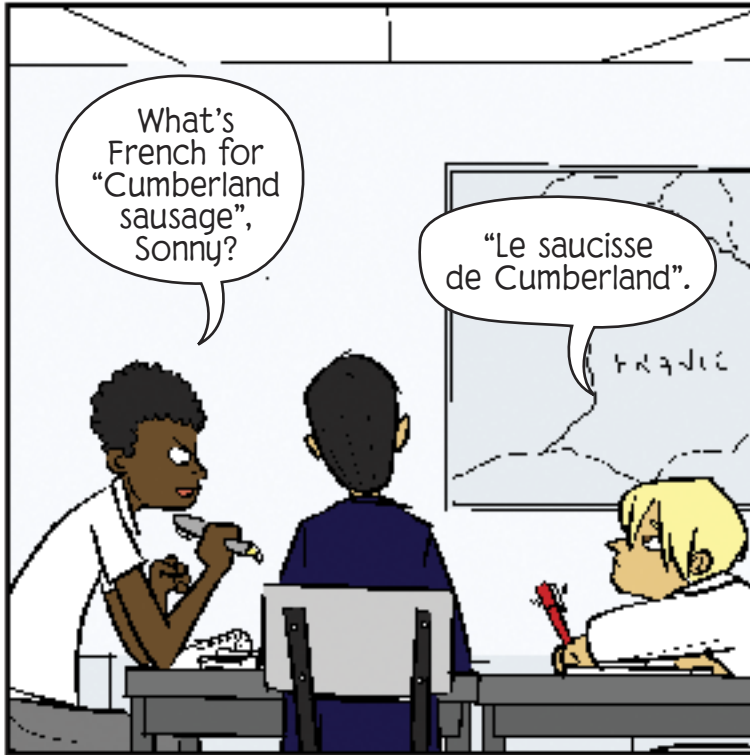
That's what my da' says.

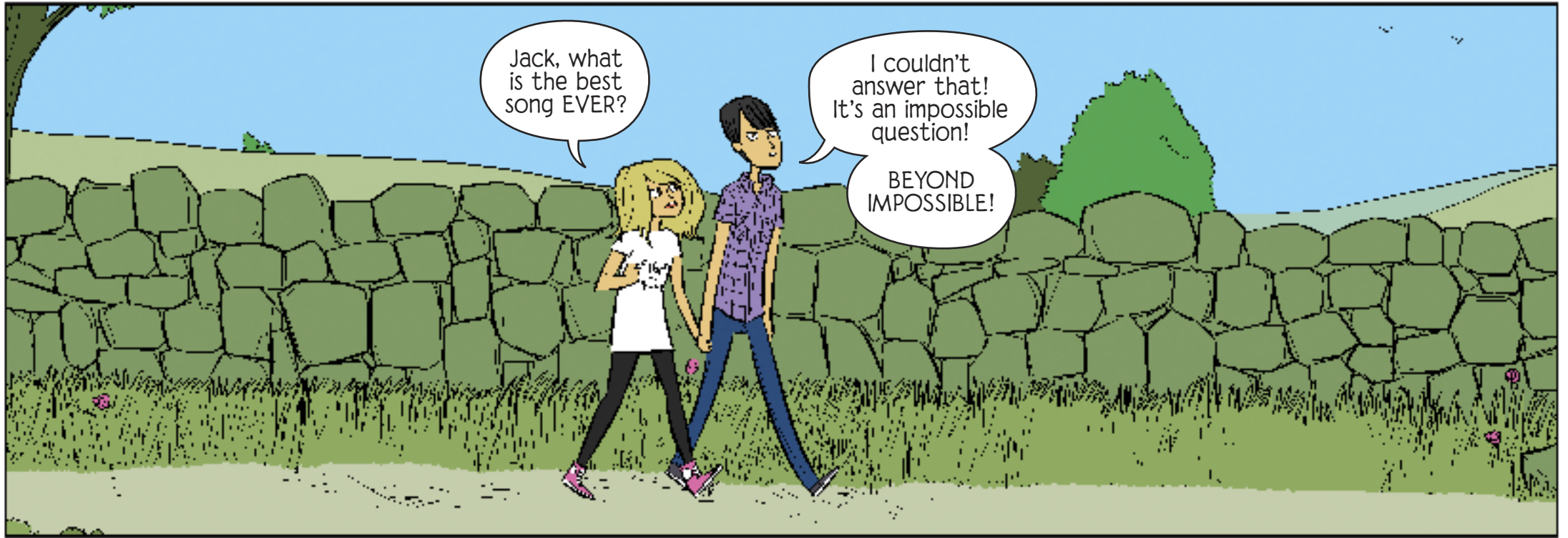
Of course, he's talkin' about pigeons.



I believe pigeons are in some way... *magnetic*?







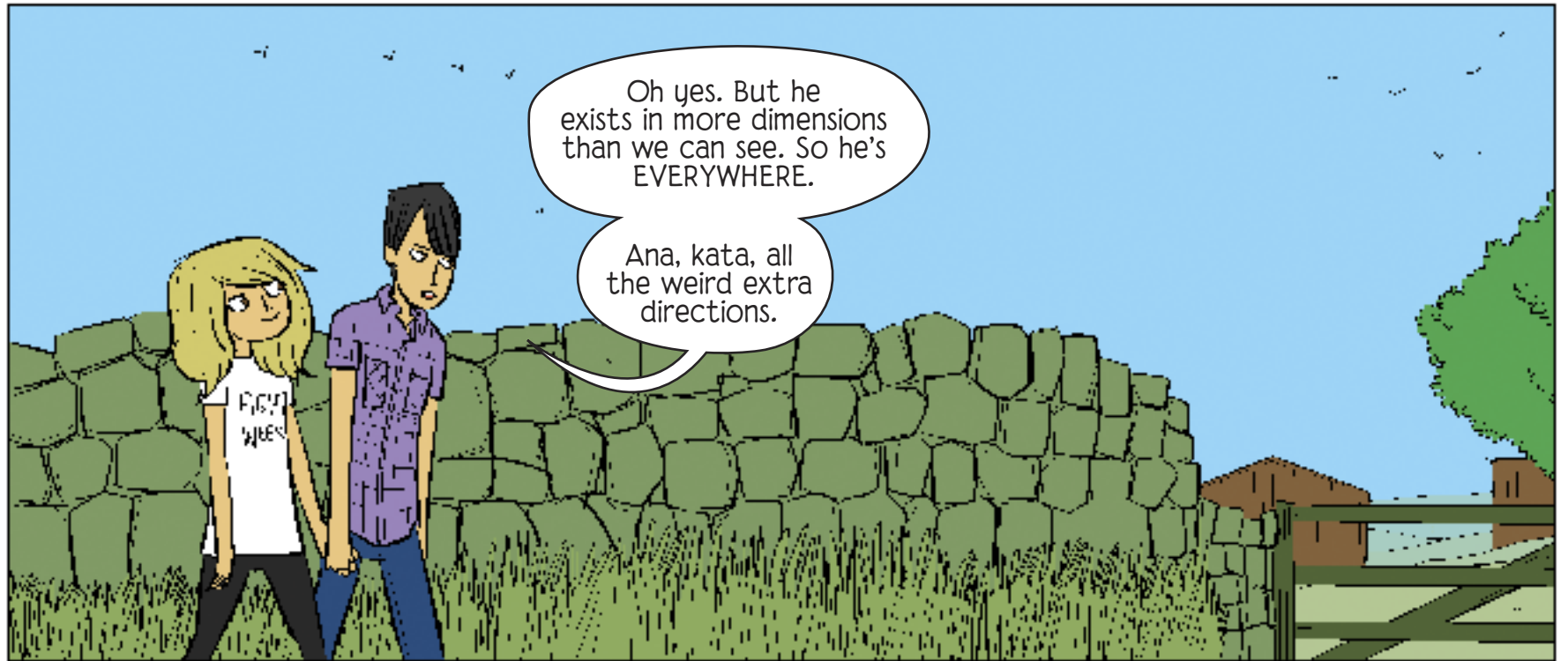
Jack, what is the best song EVER?

I couldn't answer that! It's an impossible question!

BEYOND IMPOSSIBLE!



Do you think there's a GOD?



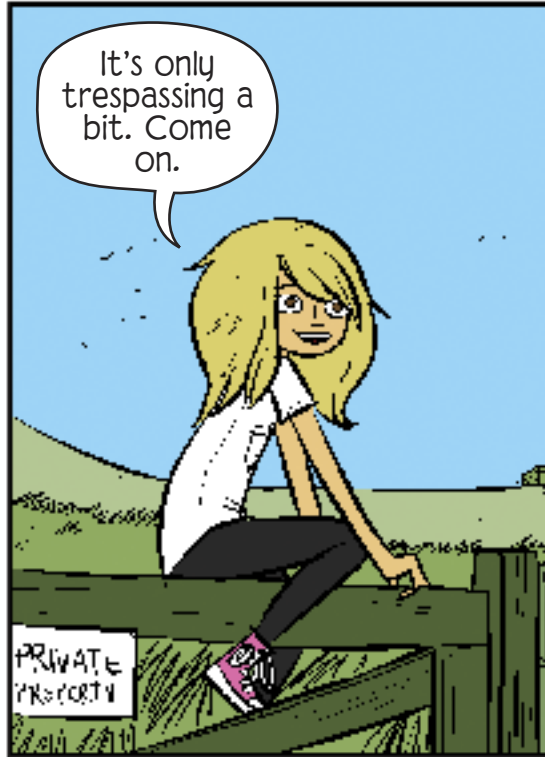
Oh yes. But he exists in more dimensions than we can see. So he's EVERYWHERE.

Ana, kata, all the weird extra directions.



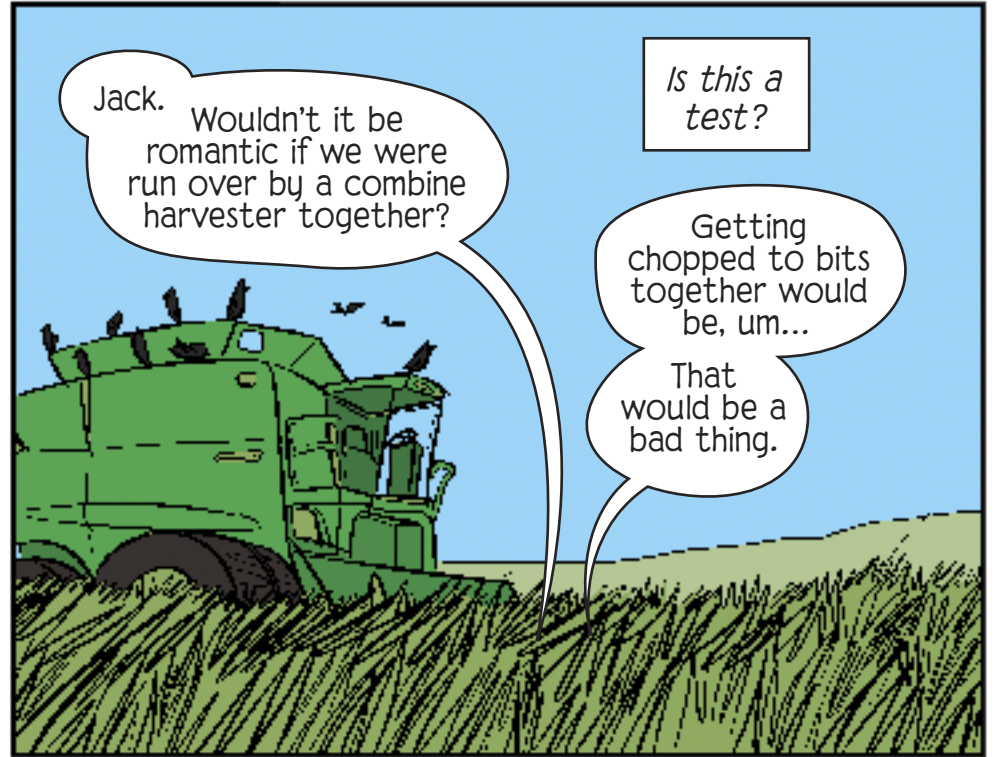
Let's go sit in the field.

Isn't that trespassing?



It's only trespassing a bit. Come on.

PRIVATE PROPERTY

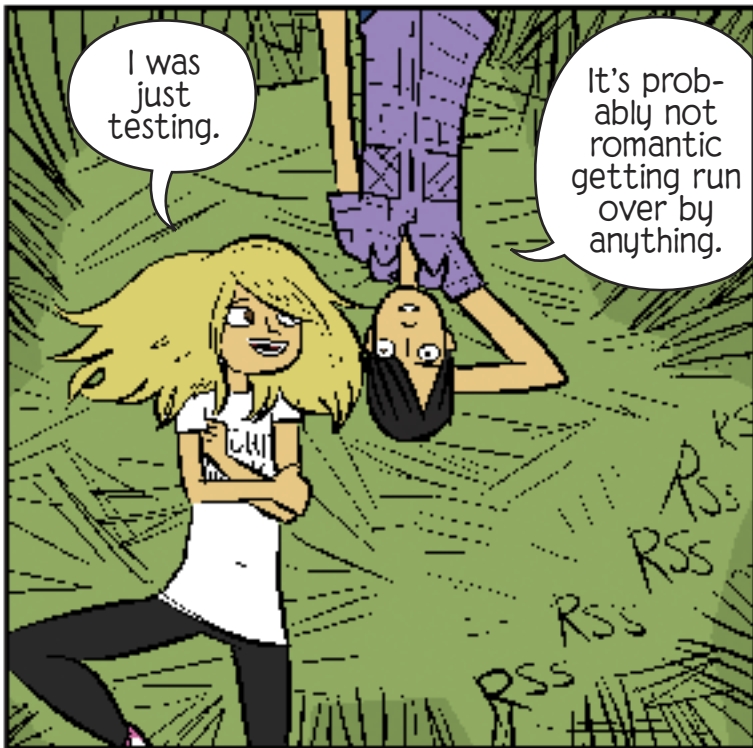


Jack. Wouldn't it be romantic if we were run over by a combine harvester together?

Is this a test?

Getting chopped to bits together would be, um...

That would be a bad thing.



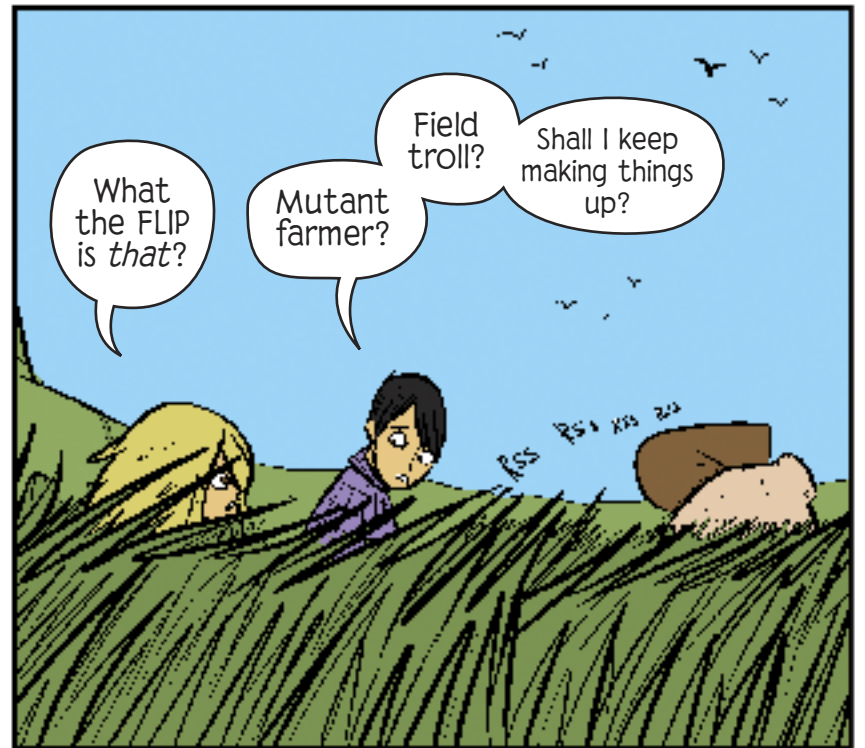
I was just testing.

It's probably not romantic getting run over by anything.



Maybe a-

SHHH!

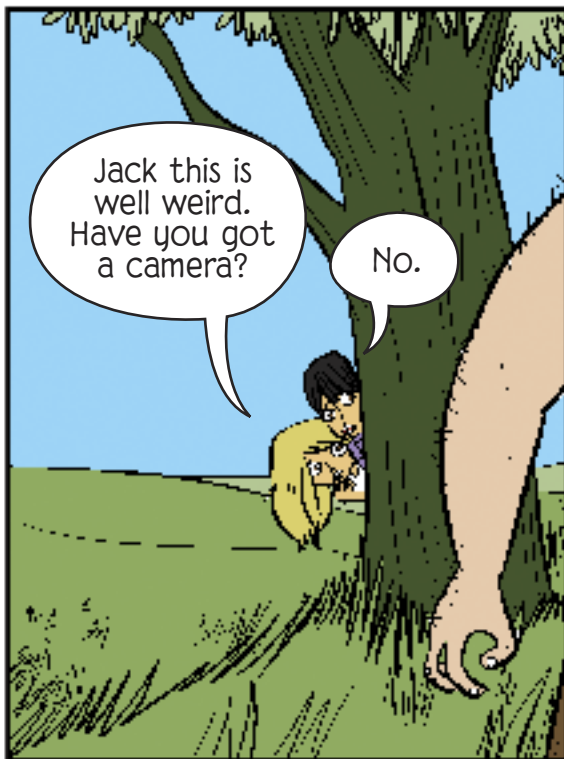


What the FLIP is that?

Mutant farmer?

Field troll?

Shall I keep making things up?



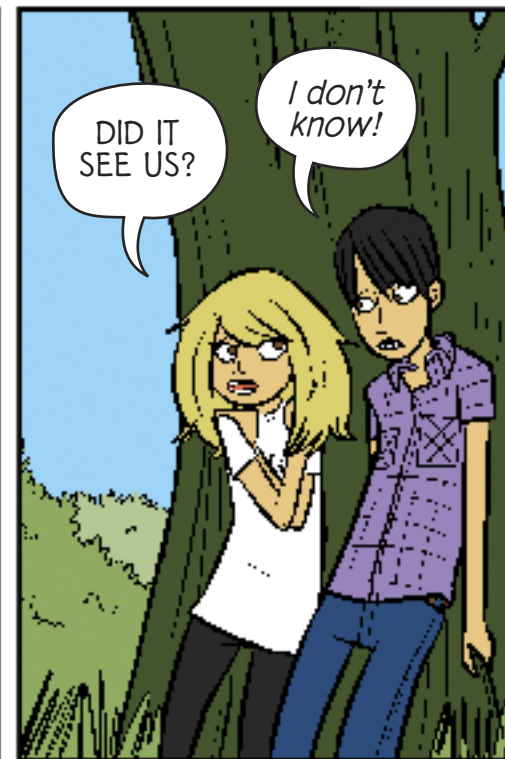
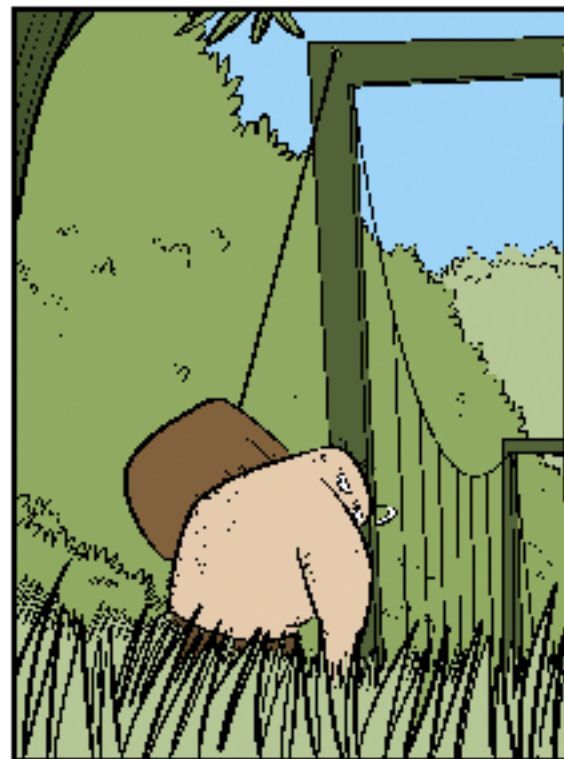
Jack this is well weird. Have you got a camera?

No.



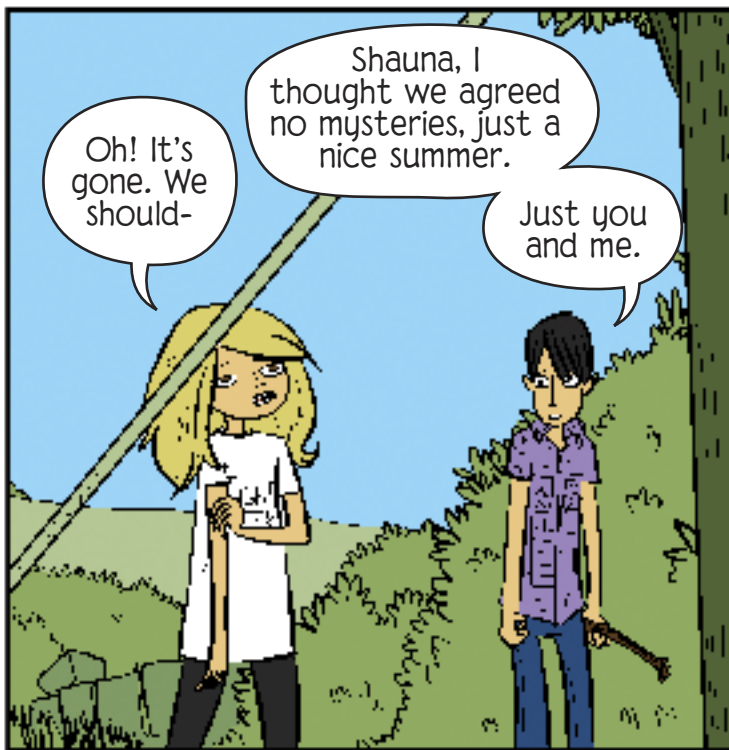
Is this a new local beast? A secret creature?

It's not hiding very well if it is.



DID IT SEE US?

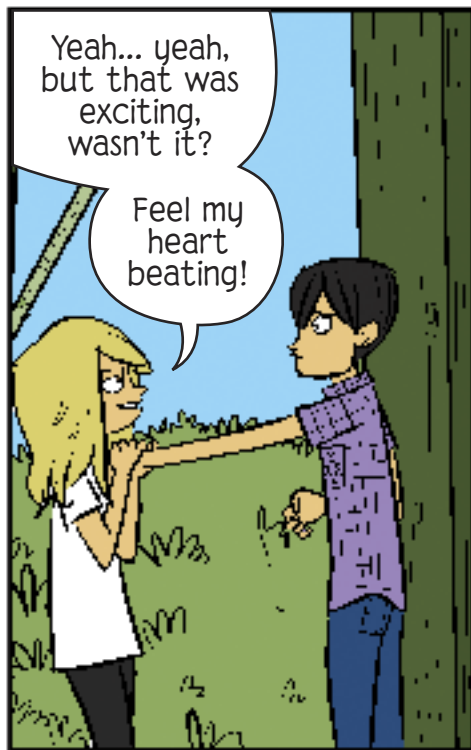
I don't know!



Oh! It's gone. We should-

Shauna, I thought we agreed no mysteries, just a nice summer.

Just you and me.



Yeah... yeah, but that was exciting, wasn't it?

Feel my heart beating!

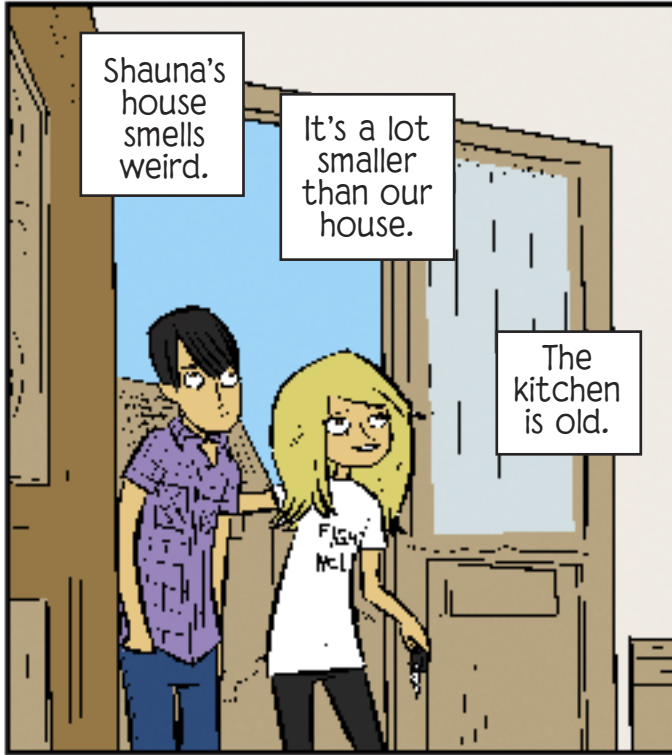


I've always found sitting down exciting.

Maybe that's just how I am.

You should have a go at it, maybe.

Lots of different chairs to try.



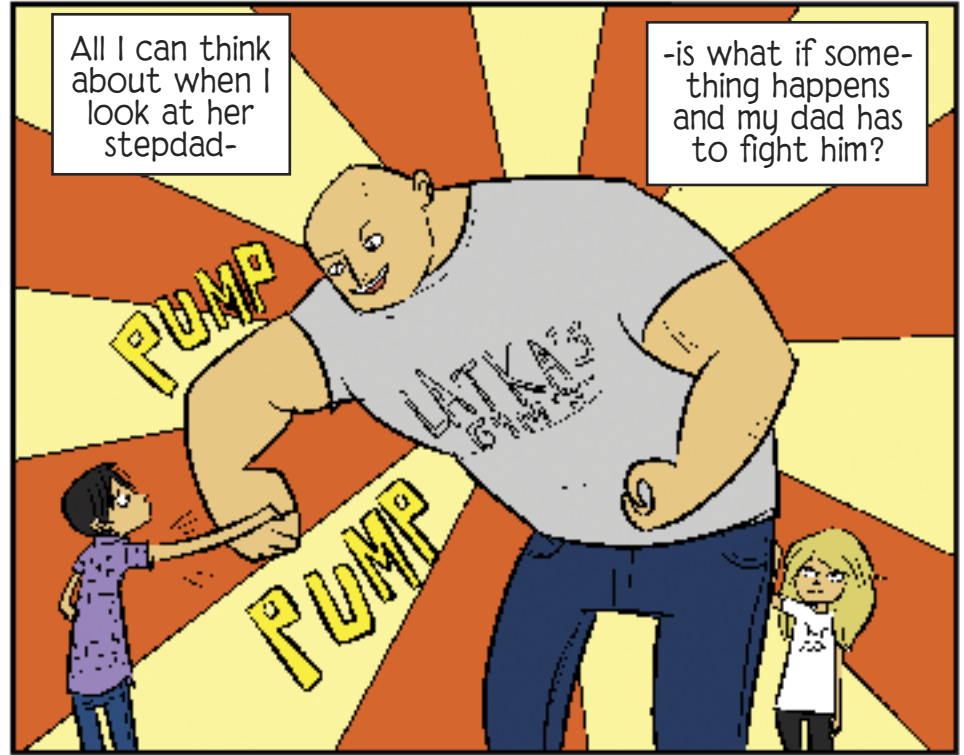
Shauna's house smells weird.

It's a lot smaller than our house.

The kitchen is old.

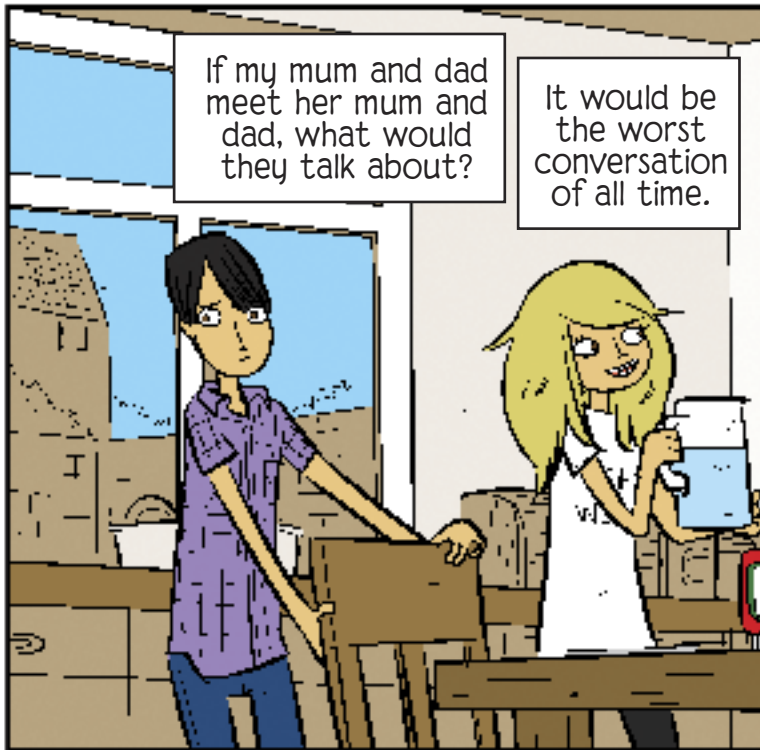


Her mum is nice to me though. She reminds me of the dinner ladies at school.



All I can think about when I look at her stepdad-

-is what if something happens and my dad has to fight him?



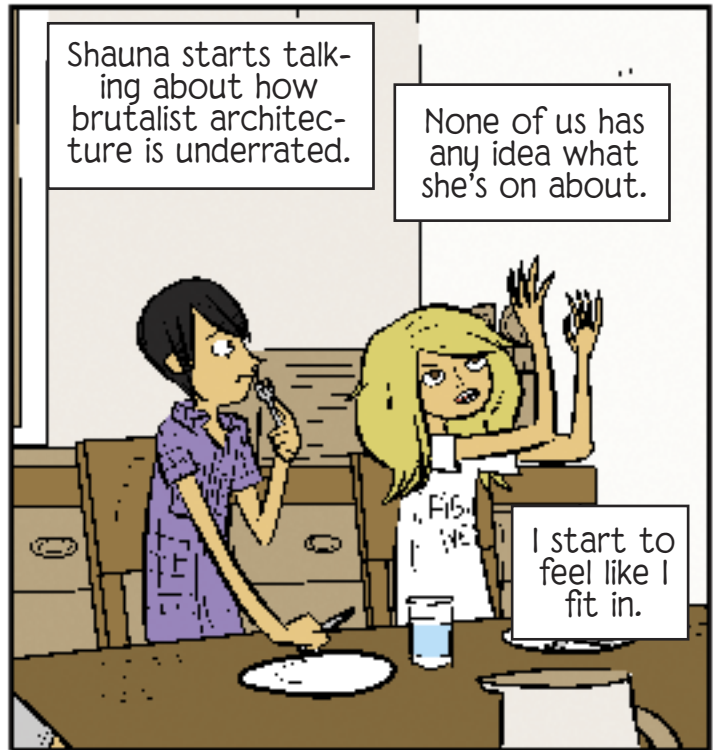
If my mum and dad meet her mum and dad, what would they talk about?

It would be the worst conversation of all time.



I say something funny and everyone laughs.

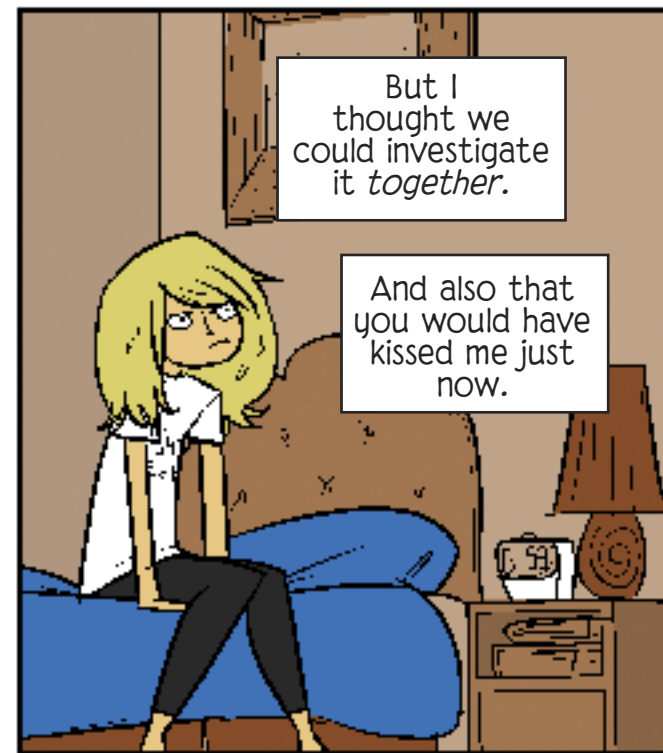
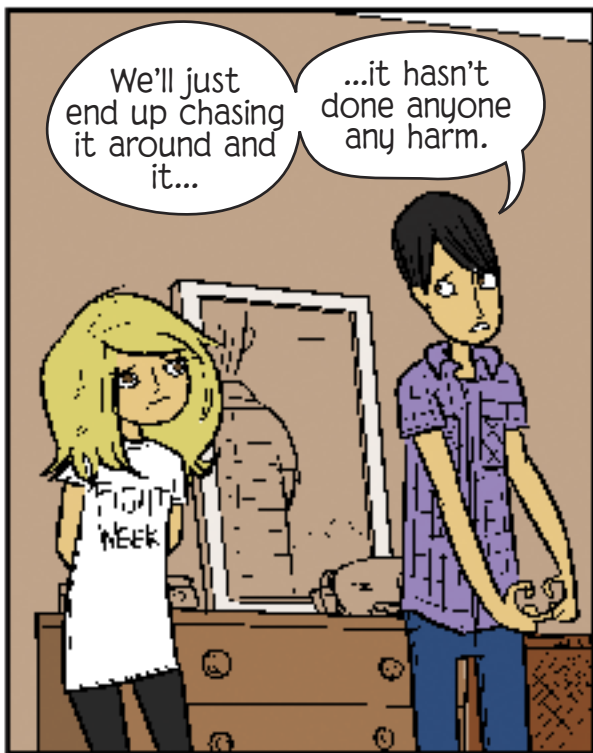
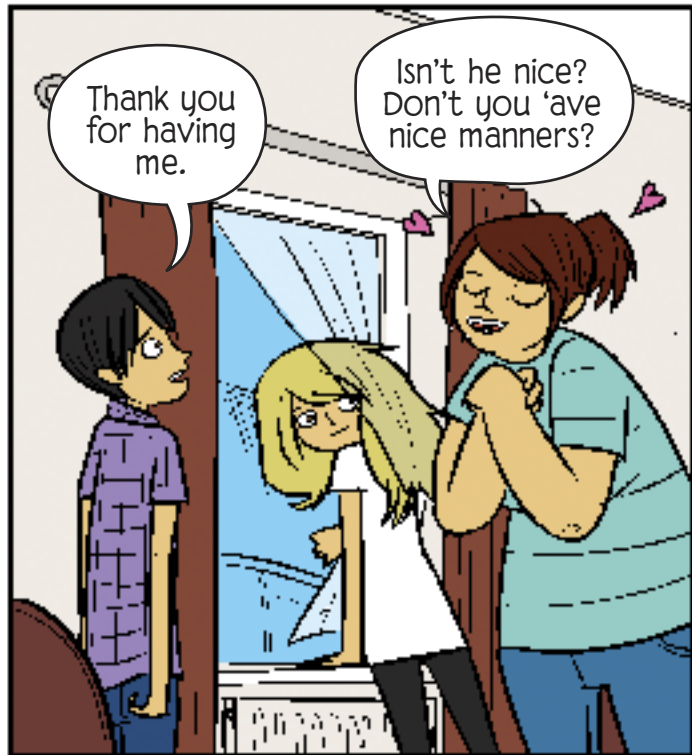
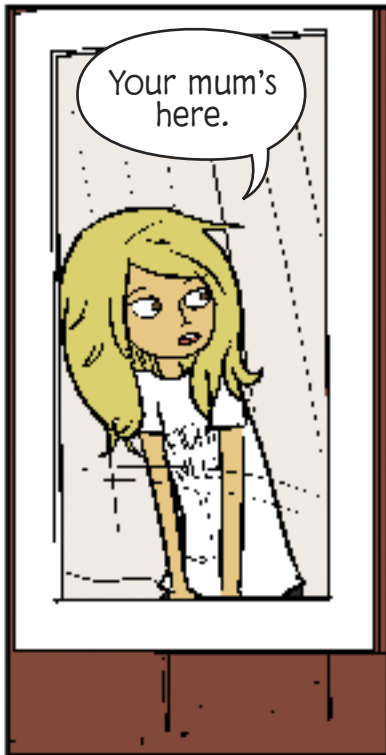
They all use their knife and fork wrong but I pretend not to notice.

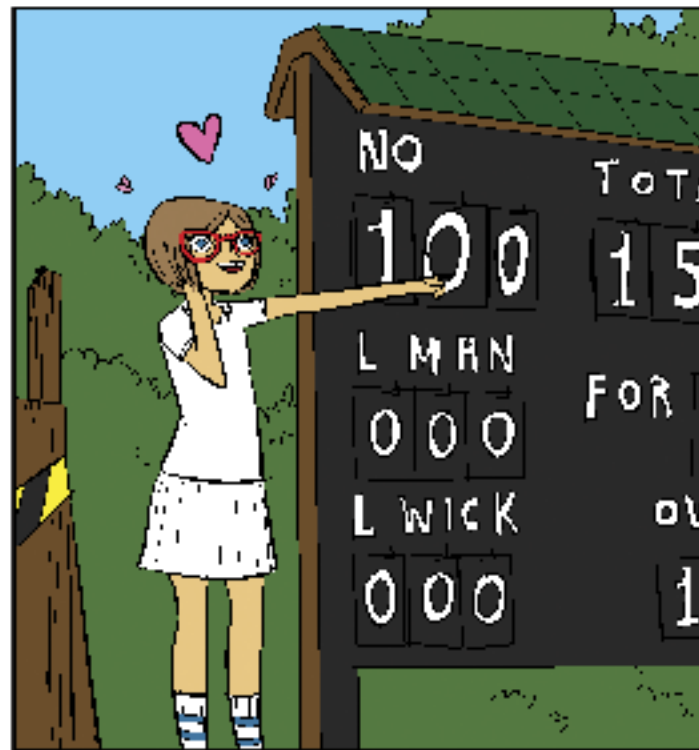
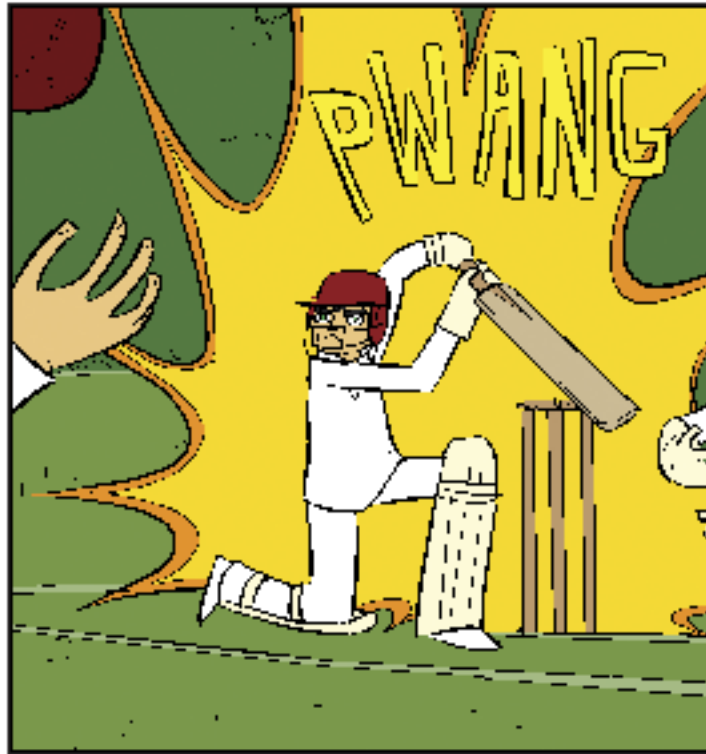


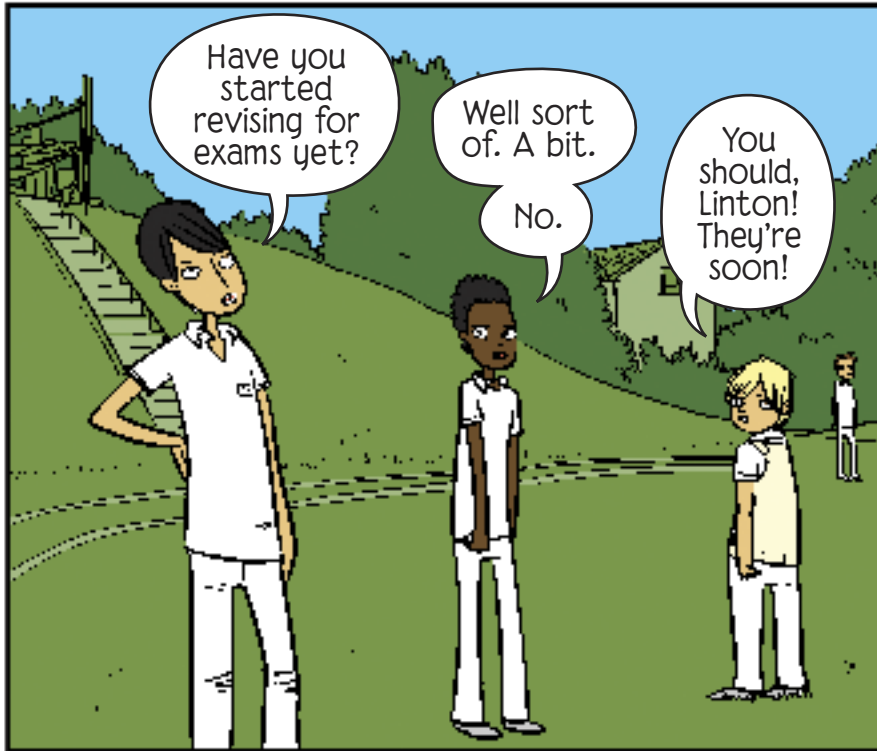
Shauna starts talking about how brutalist architecture is underrated.

None of us has any idea what she's on about.

I start to feel like I fit in.







Have you started revising for exams yet?

Well sort of. A bit.

No.

You should, Linton! They're soon!



At least I know I'll do better than Jack.

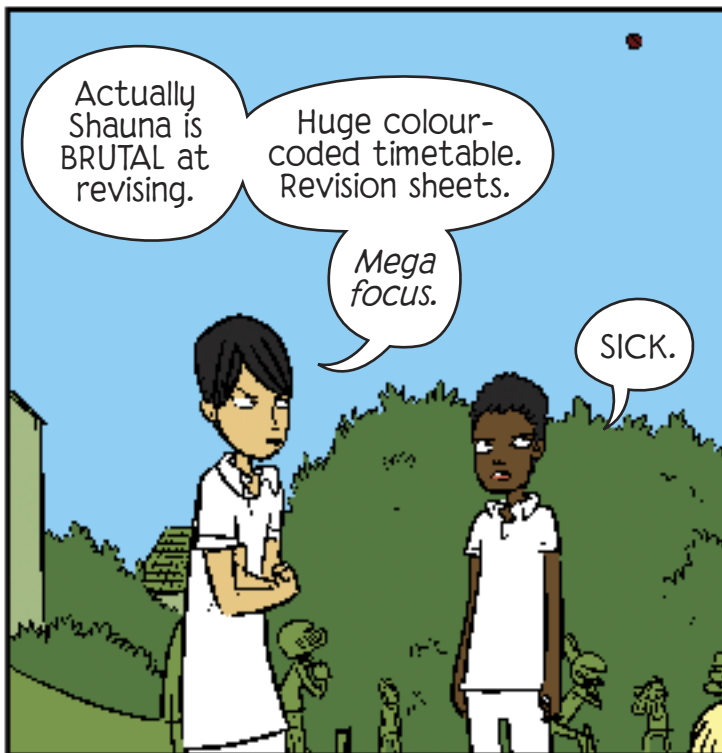
He's too busy making up pet names for Shauna to revise.



I will chuck you over the pavilion if you don't shut up.

MOON-PIE, KISSYSAURUS REX, SHAU-SHAU, WICKLE PRINCESS

Sigh.



Actually Shauna is BRUTAL at revising.

Huge colour-coded timetable. Revision sheets.

Mega focus.

SICK.



CATCH IT CATCH IT!

Maybe her big hair is hiding an enormous BRAIN!

DUST

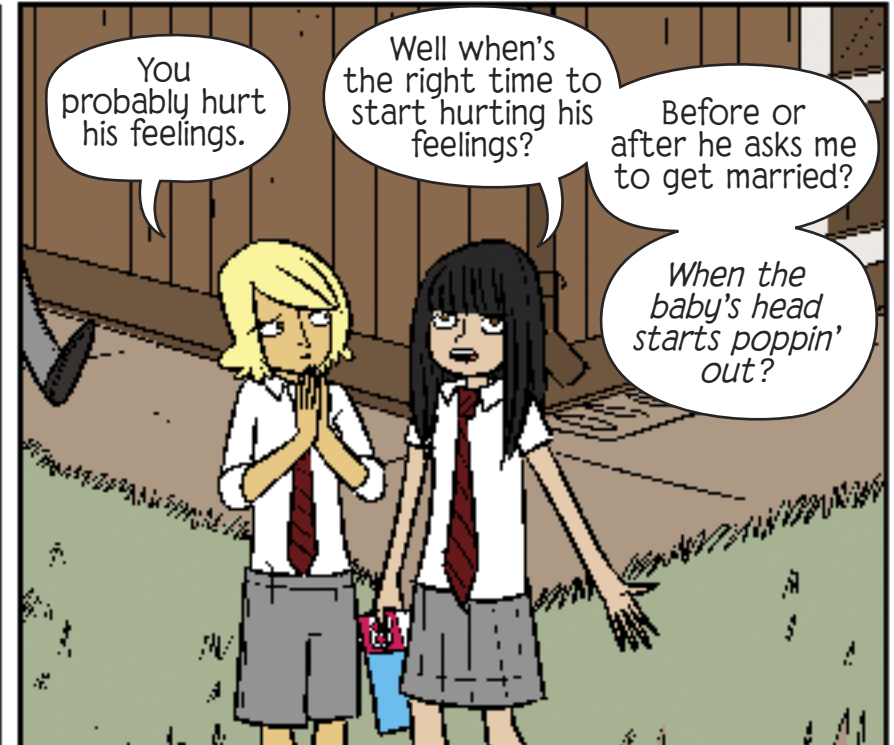
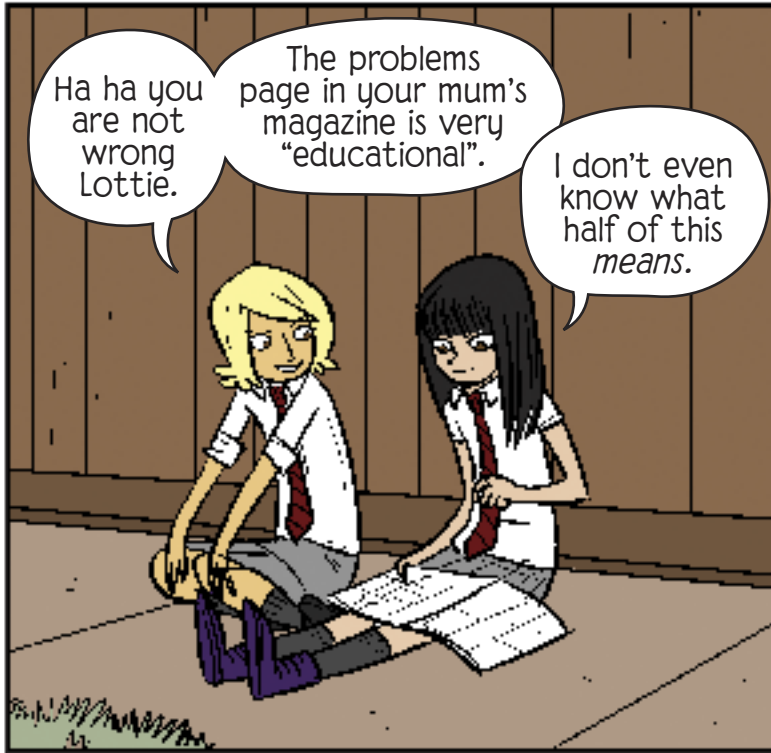


PLIOP



Hurray?

What do I do with this now?





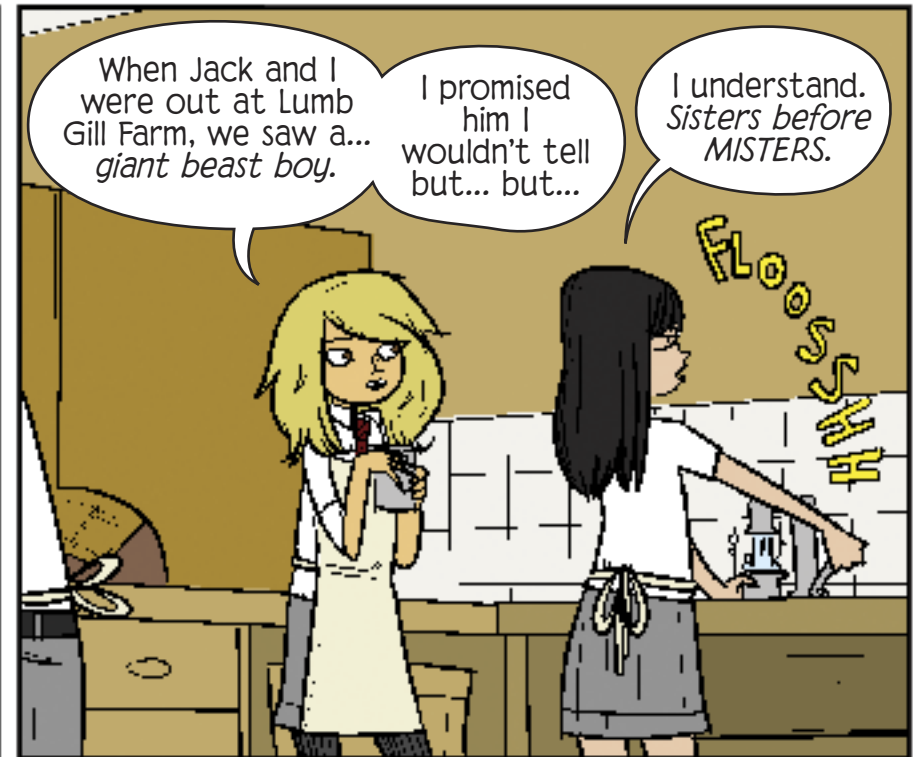
I need to speak to you.

I am *all ears*.



No, it's secret. Over by the sink.

Worr dangerous gossip, just how I like it.



When Jack and I were out at Lumb Gill Farm, we saw a... *giant beast boy*.

I promised him I wouldn't tell but... but...

I understand. *Sisters before MISTERS.*

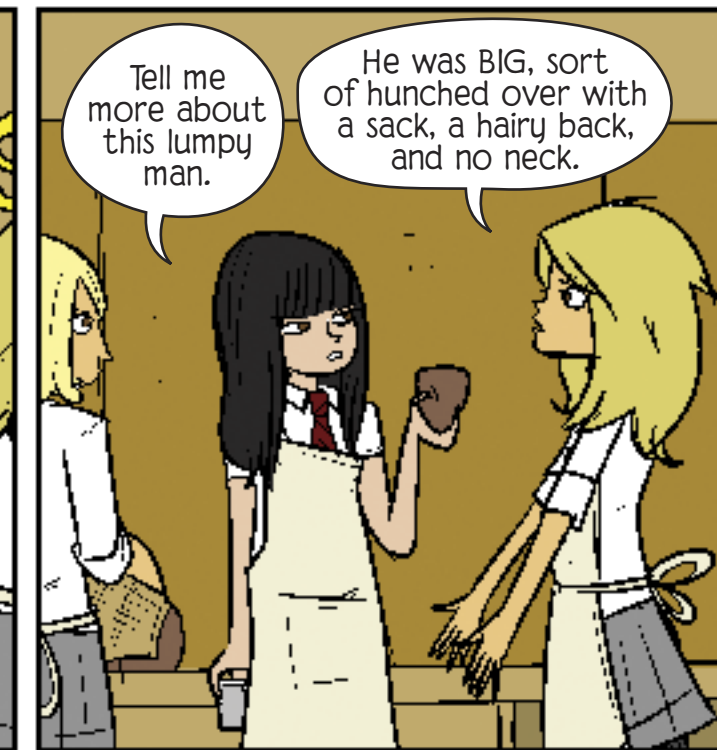
FLOOSSHH



I will put my best man on it.

I'm not listening in!

FLOOSSHH



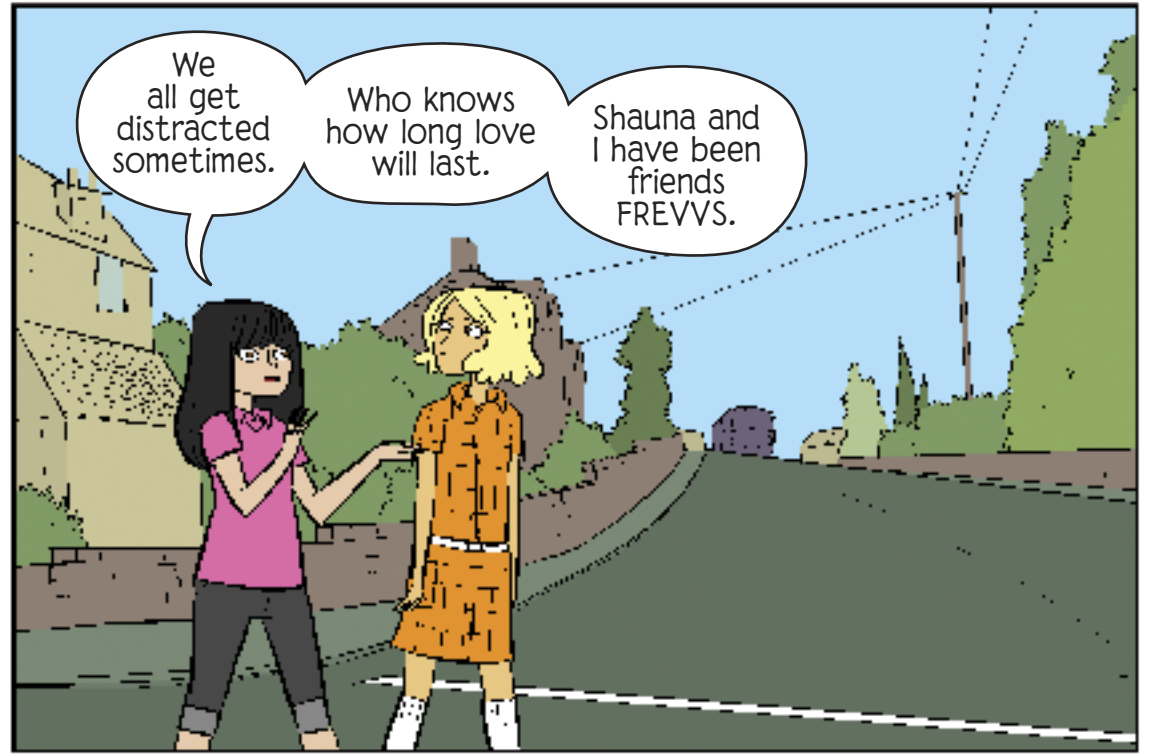
Tell me more about this lumpy man.

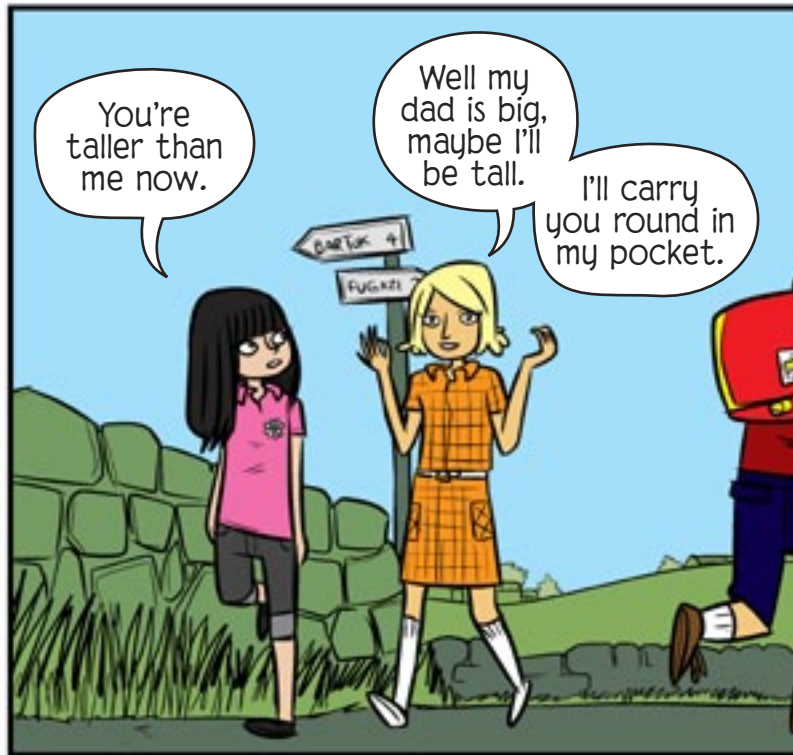
He was BIG, sort of hunched over with a sack, a hairy back, and no neck.



Aha, so we are investigating a mystery creature and potential HUSBAND for MILDRED.

Soon I will be the only spinster in town.







Lottie put down the pants! HIDE! HIDE!



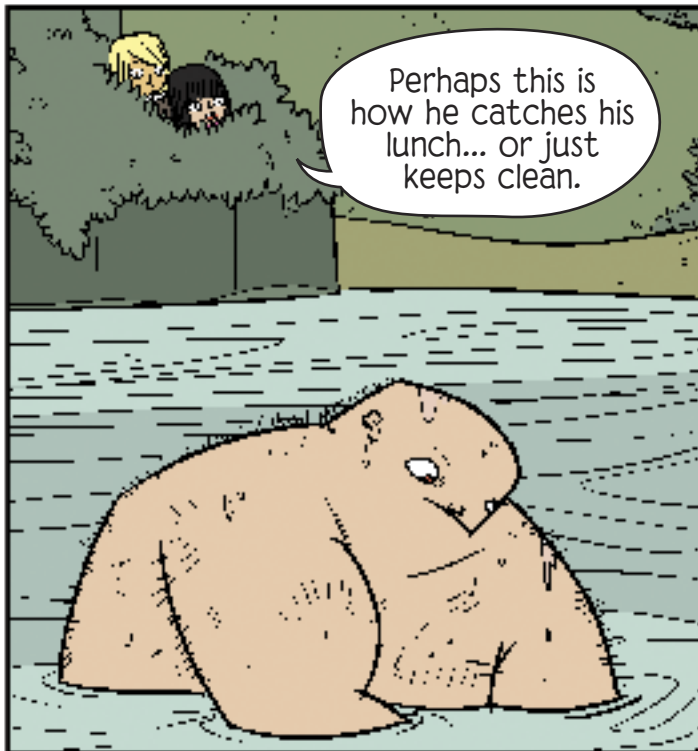
Oh my god.
Oh my god.
OH MY GOD



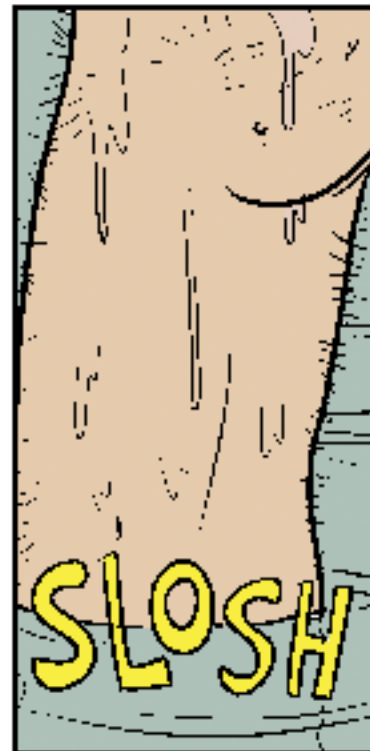
Oh my *days* Mildred I have never seen such a beast.
Really? COR.



Look at his hairy back! The hairiest!
I'm noting it down.



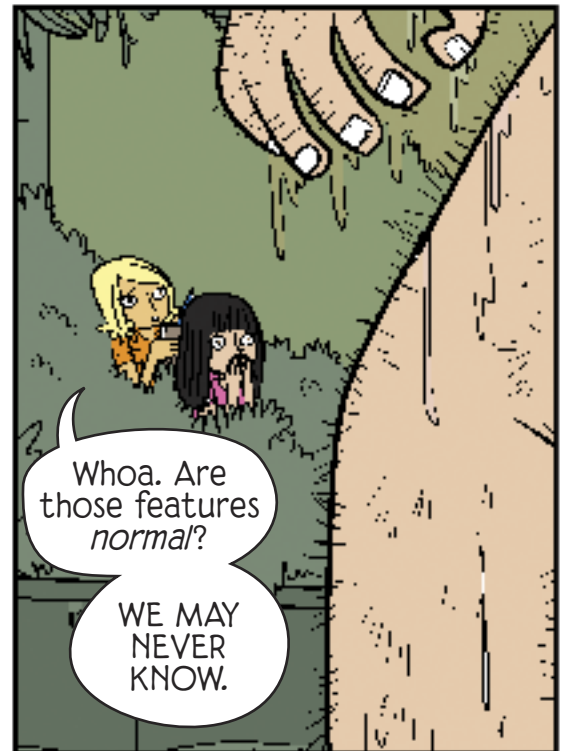
Perhaps this is how he catches his lunch... or just keeps clean.



SLOSH



Cover my eyes, I've frozen in fear!
He is not a trunks wearer, this is *clear*.



Whoa. Are those features *normal*?
WE MAY NEVER KNOW.



Look at this poor creature.

Eating his tin of beans what he has opened with a big rock.



I notice that he put his pants back on to eat.

Yes, this could be important.



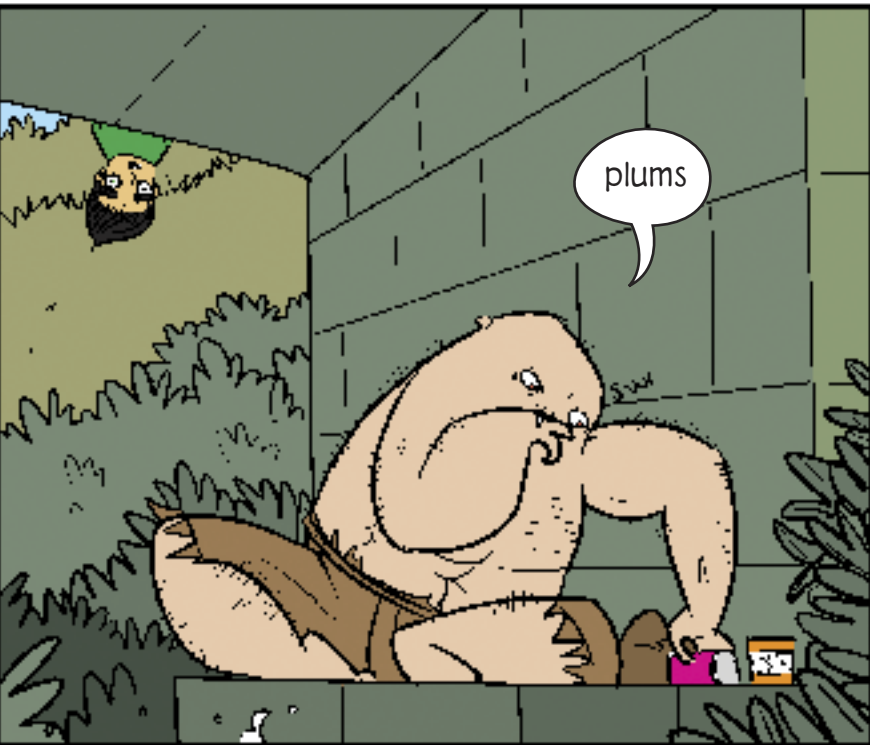
Is he civilised?

I think no but maybe he wants to be?

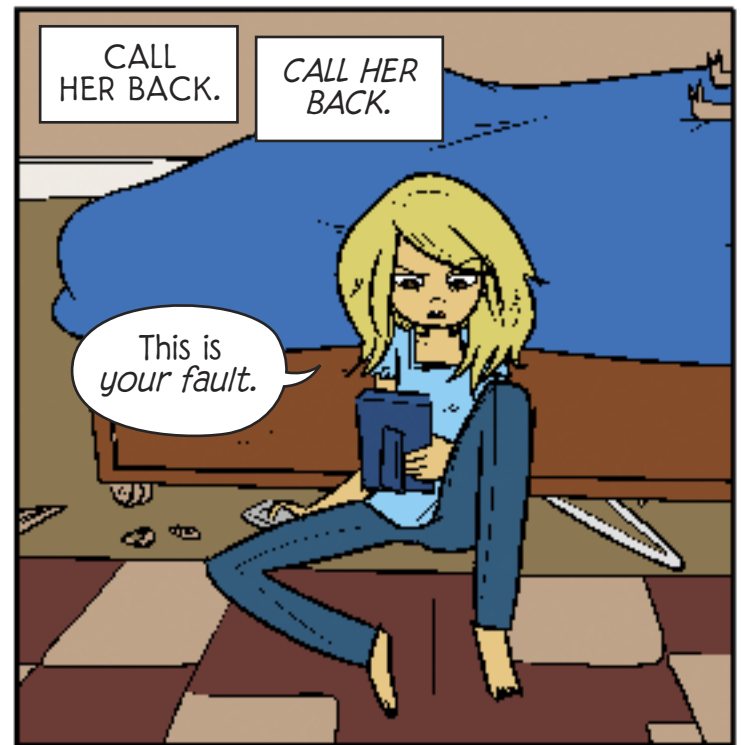
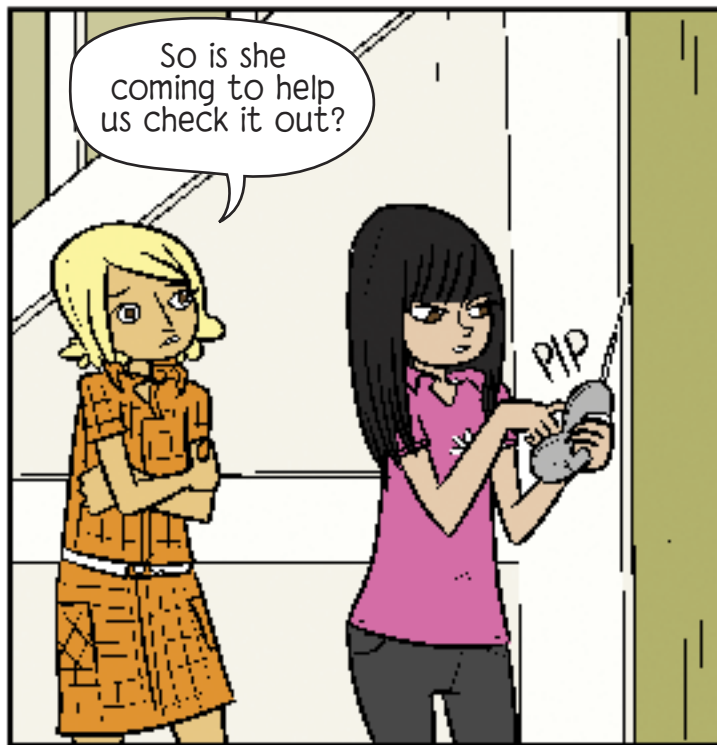


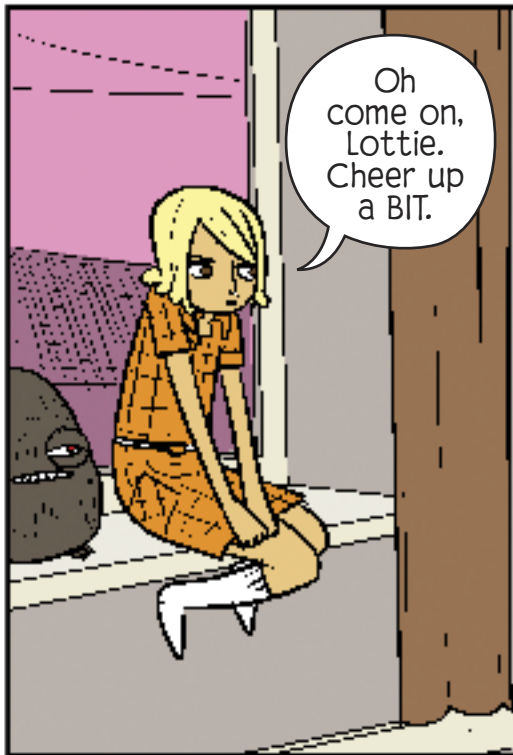
This is plenty, let's go home before he finishes his beans.

First rate beast watching work, Mildew.



plums

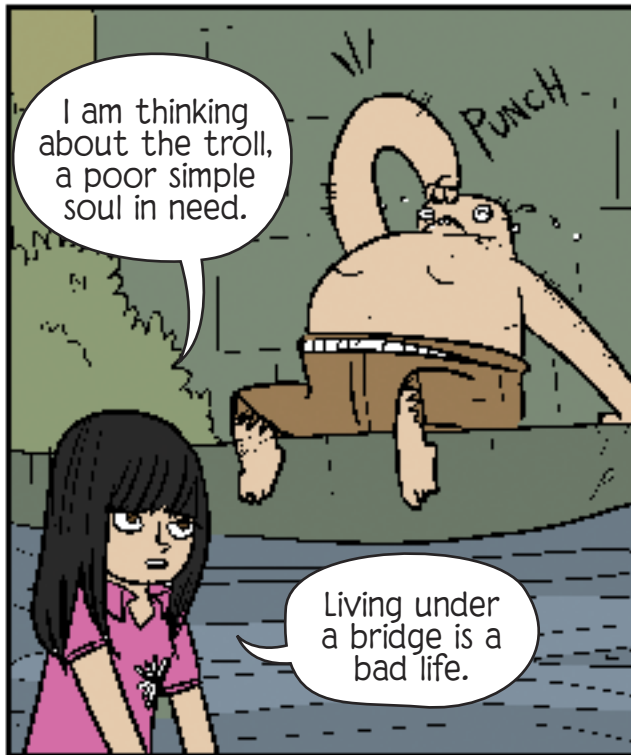




Oh come on, Lottie. Cheer up a BIT.



AX-UALLY I am not thinking about Shauna.



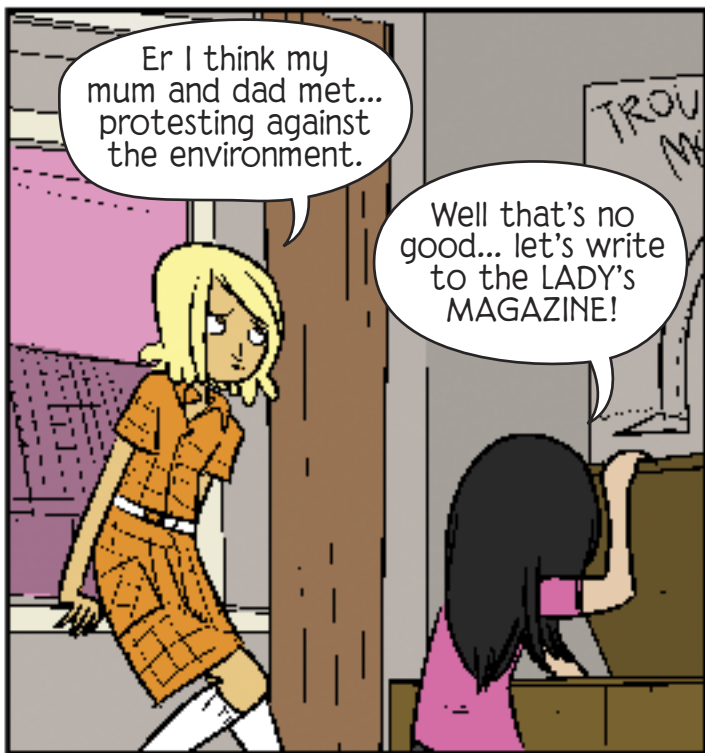
I am thinking about the troll, a poor simple soul in need.

Living under a bridge is a bad life.



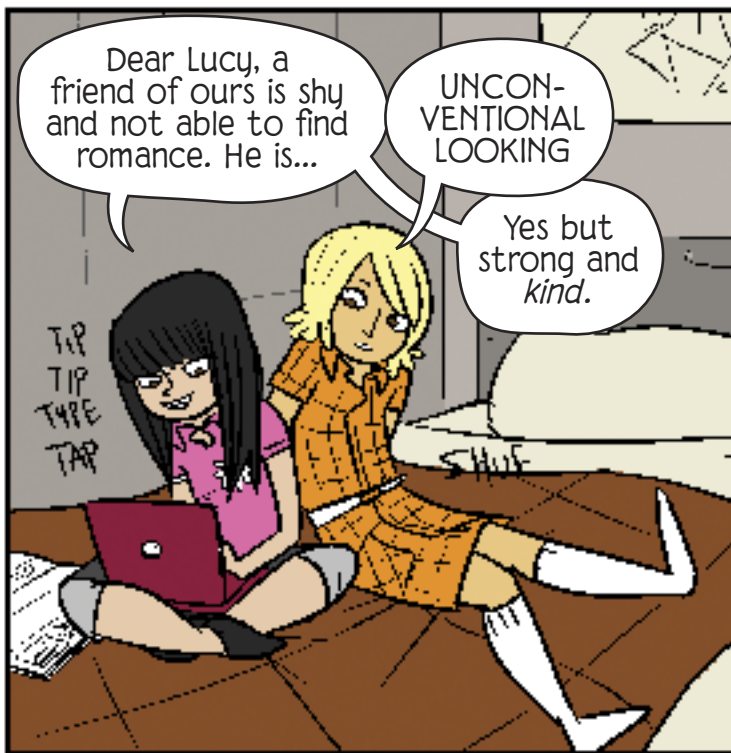
He needs love! A nice wife to care for him!

How do grown-ups find love?



Er I think my mum and dad met... protesting against the environment.

Well that's no good... let's write to the LADY'S MAGAZINE!



Dear Lucy, a friend of ours is shy and not able to find romance. He is...

UNCONVENTIONAL LOOKING

Yes but strong and kind.

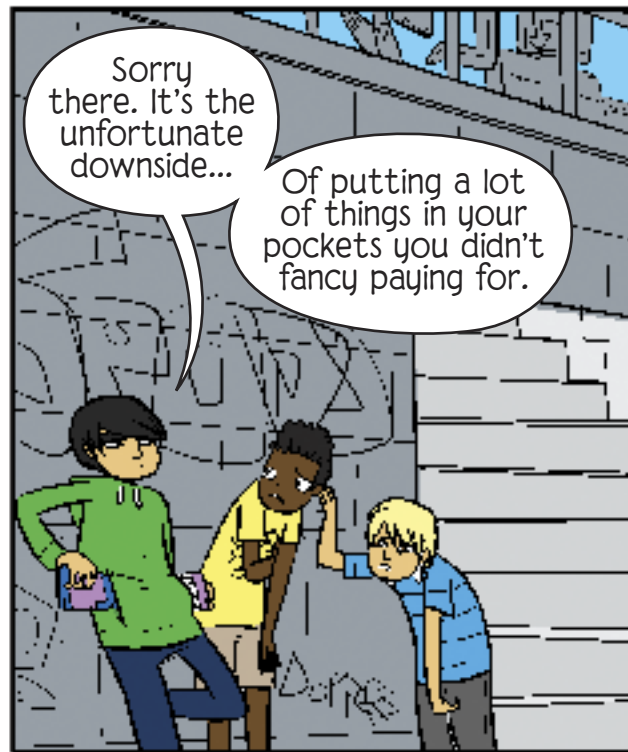
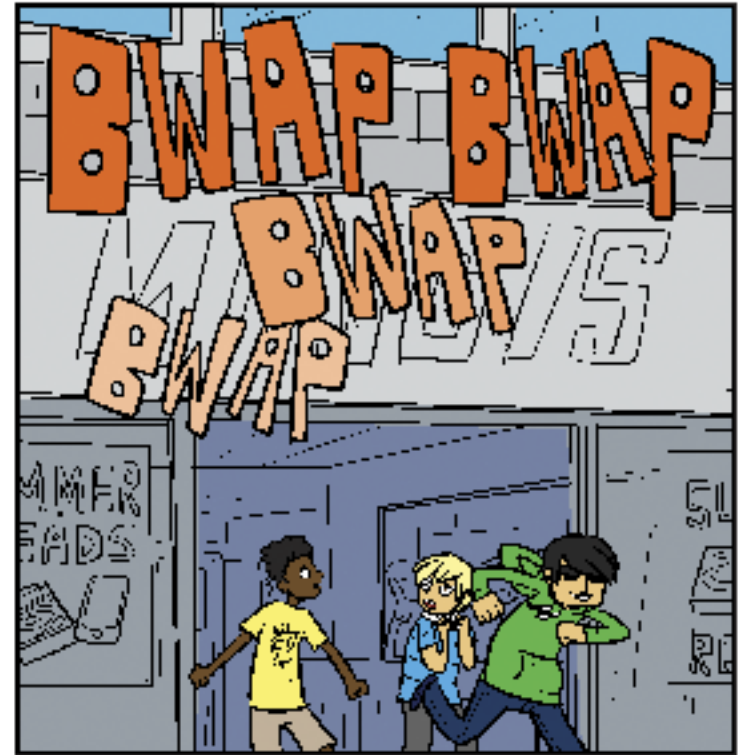


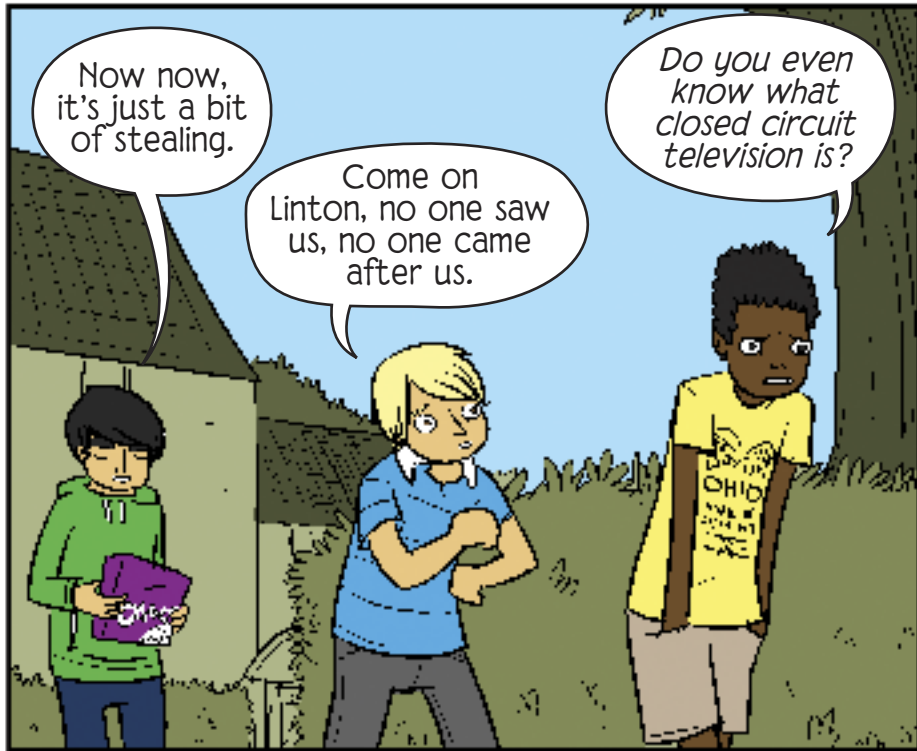
Are you sure he's "kind"?

Well, we didn't see him bite the head off anything.











Big man, remember, YOU didn't actually steal anything.

Finger-prints, Colm, fingerprints!



Calm down, no one's ever taken our finger-prints.

My dad's a police sergeant, remember, Sonny?

He's got the whole lab at work.



He probably practices on my prints when he's bored.

Not FLOSSING, eh Linton?



Well before the top of your head explodes off...

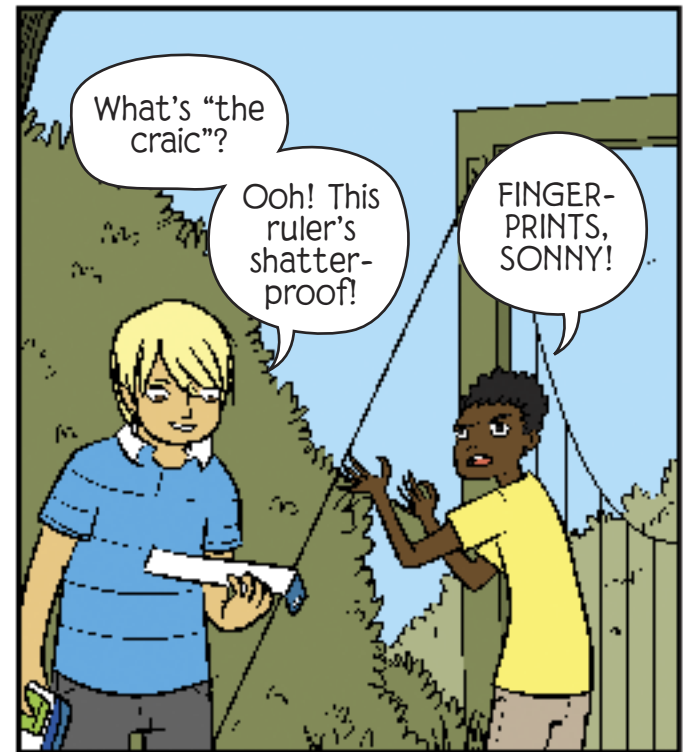
...your troll boy's under this bridge.



Stop making things up.

I gotta run.

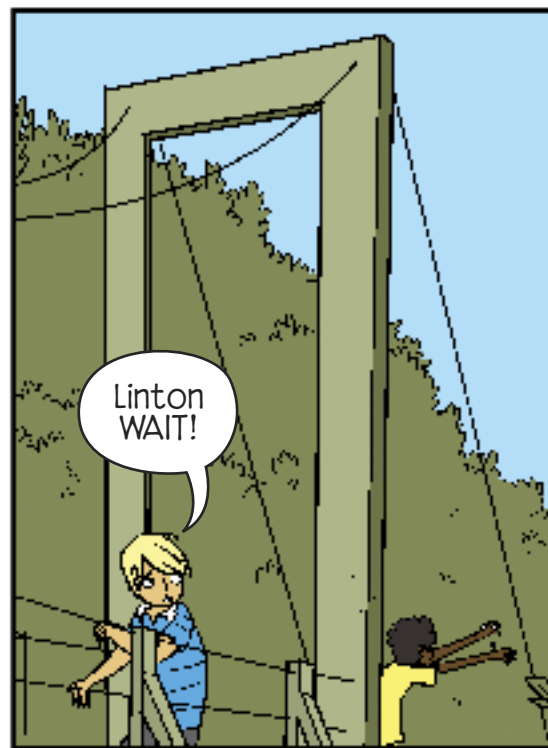
Take this lot, I only pinched most of it for the craic.

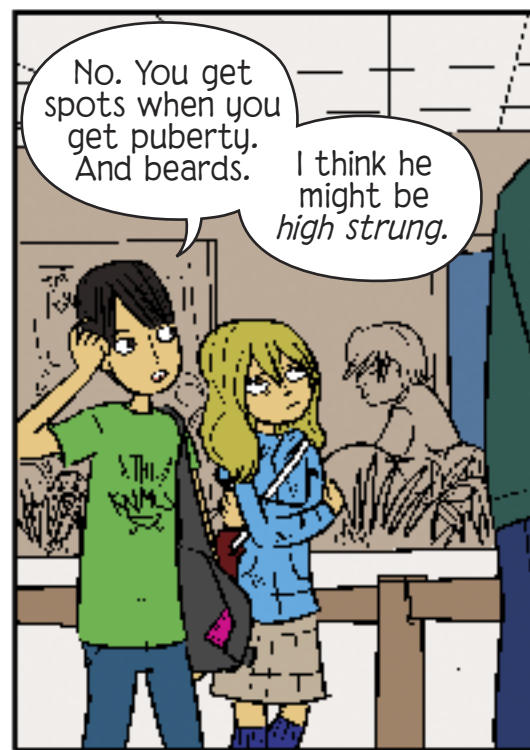


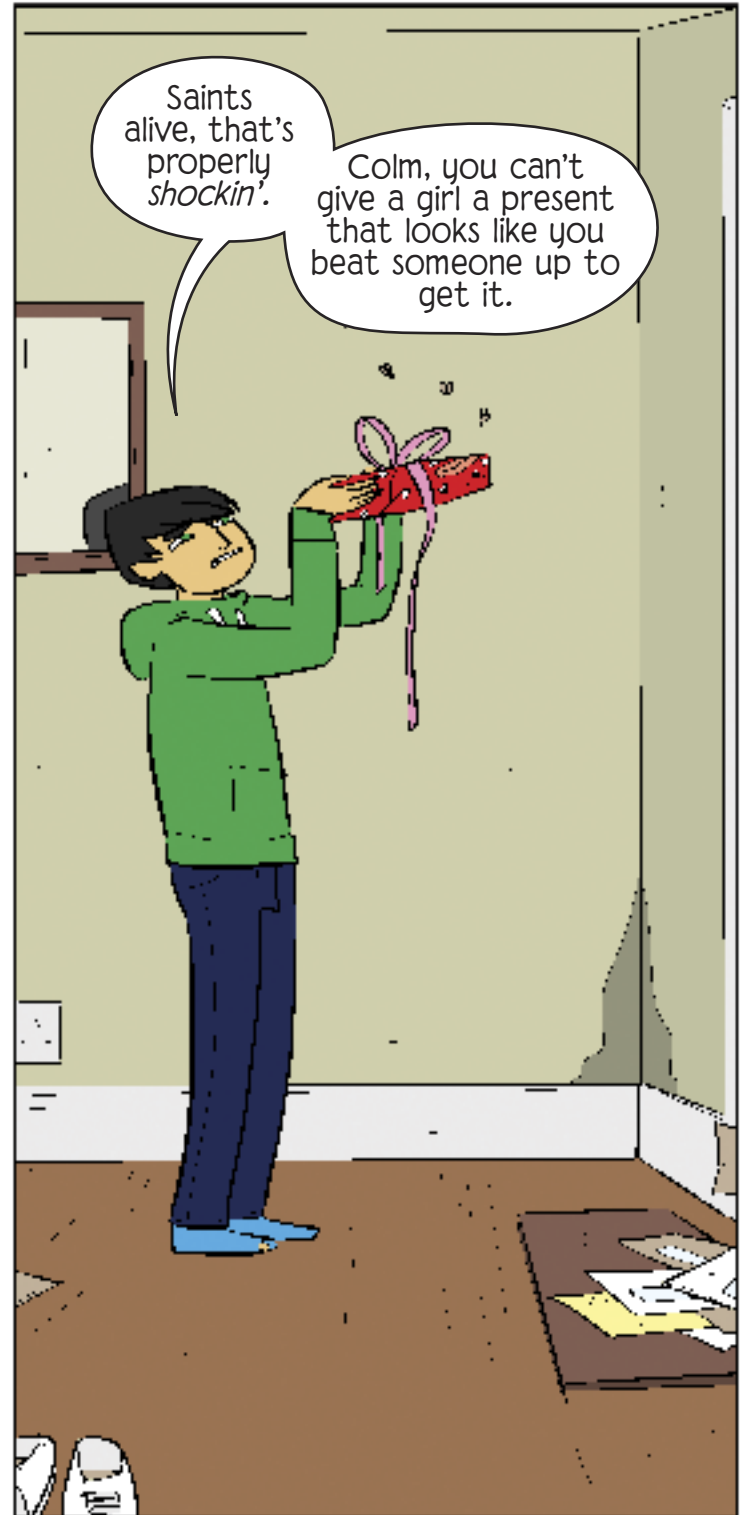
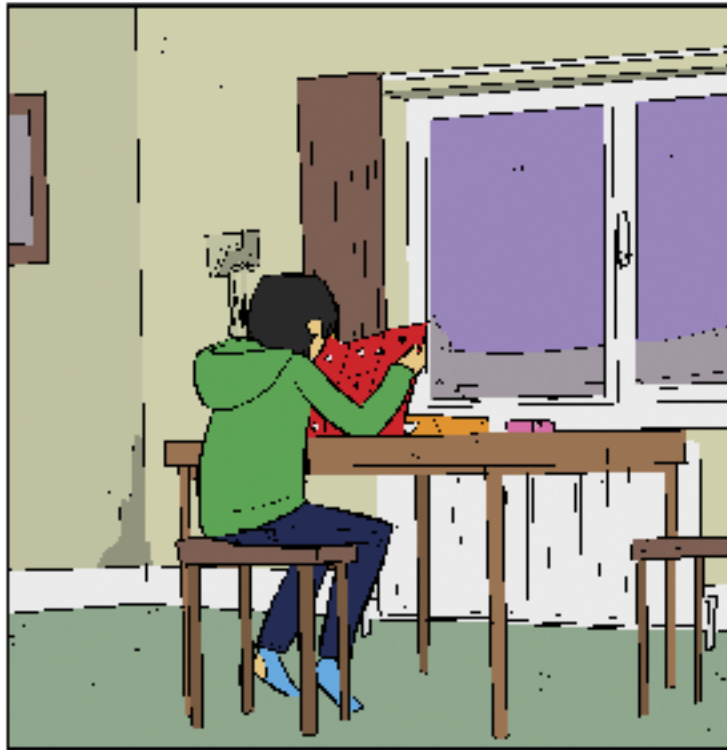
What's "the craic"?

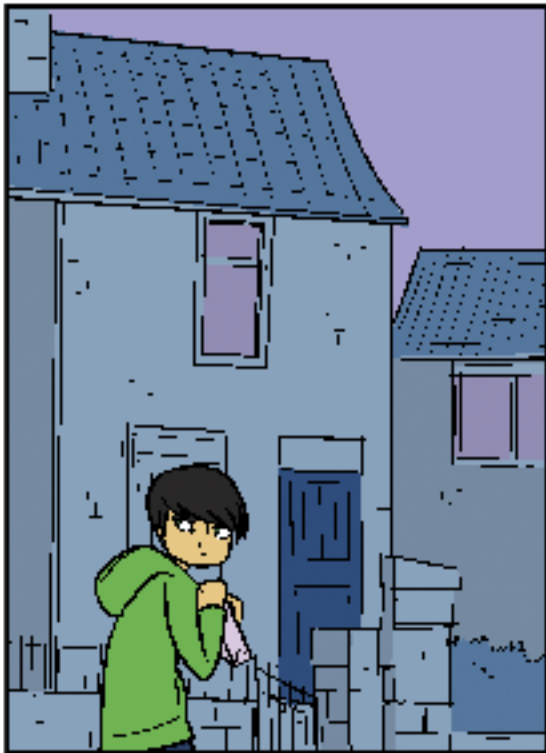
Ooh! This ruler's shatter-proof!

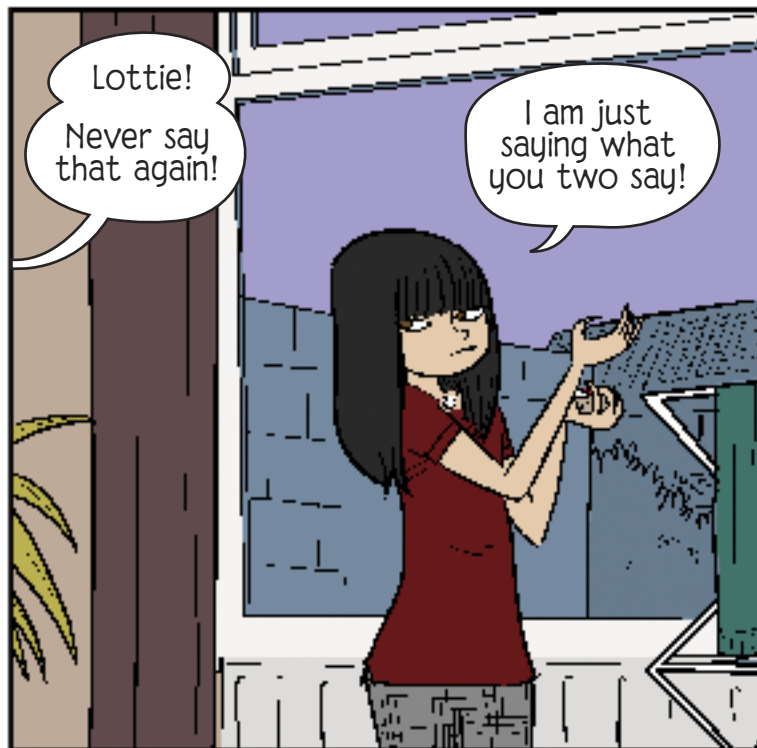
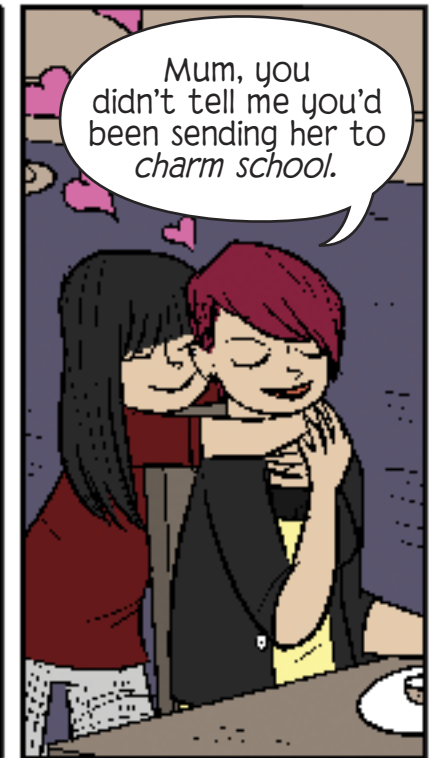
FINGER-PRINTS, SONNY!

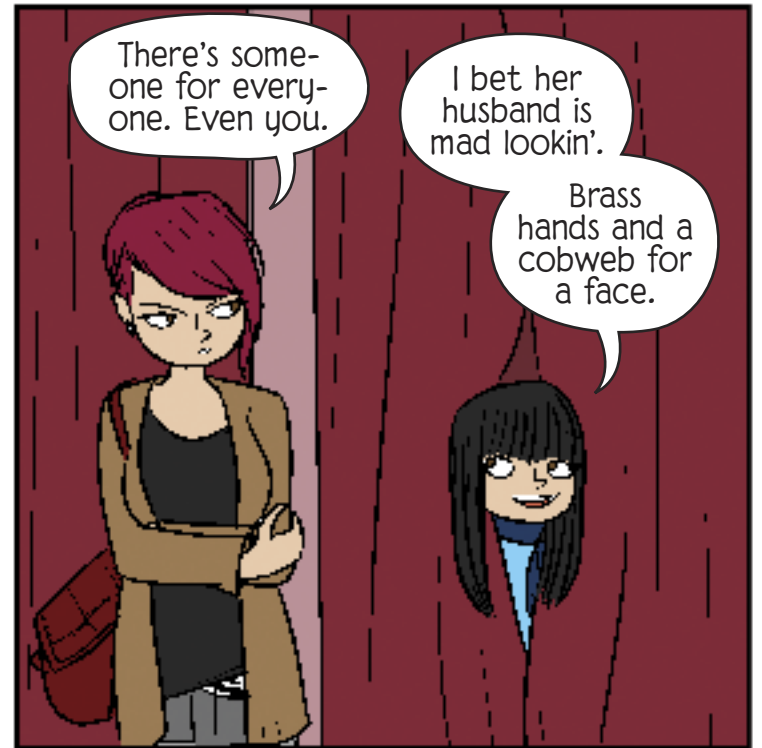
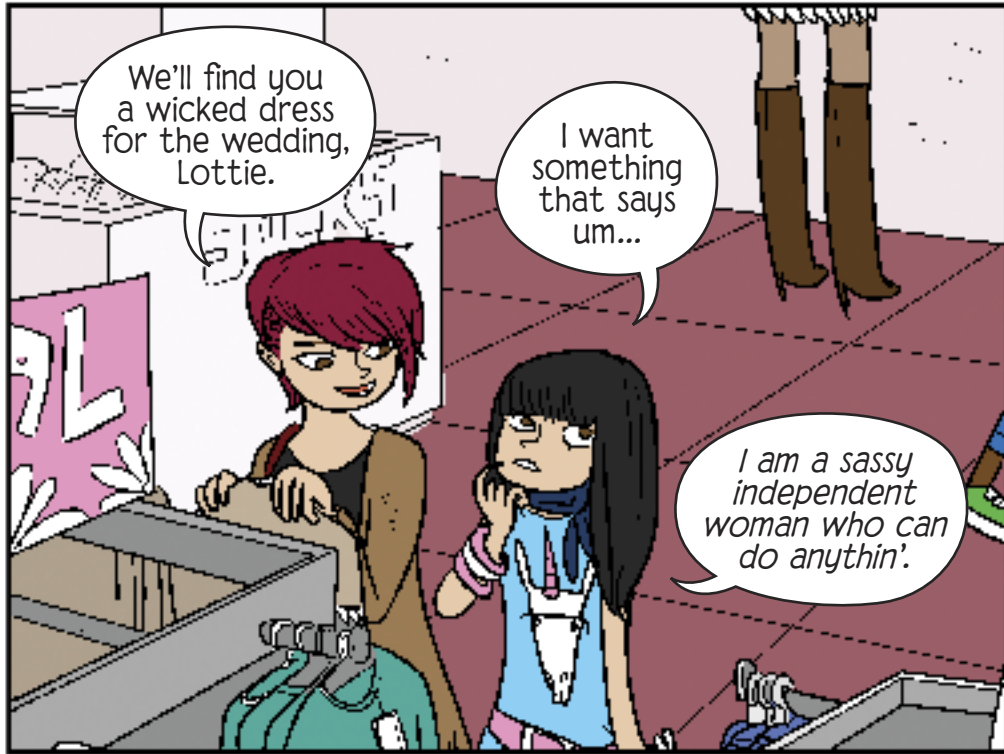


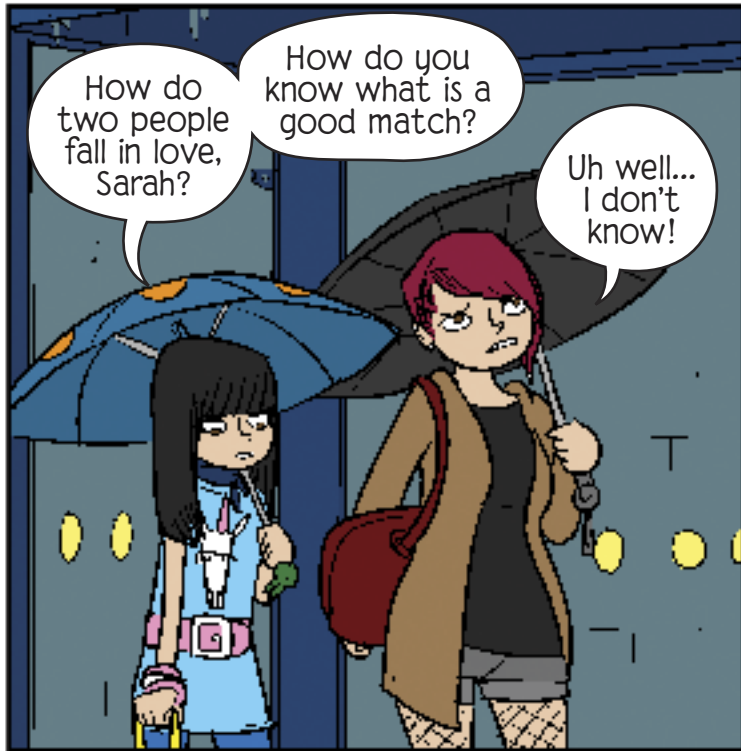












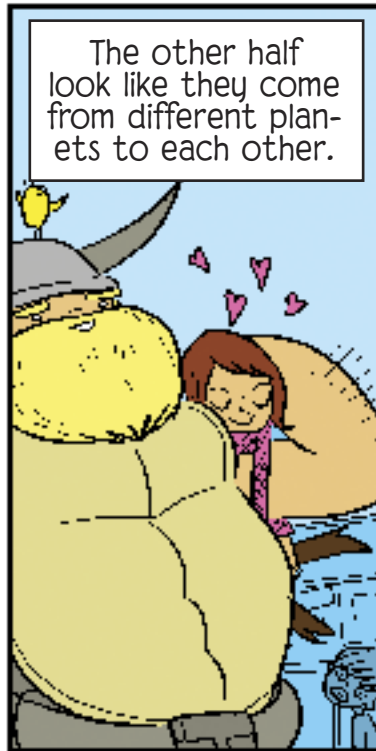
How do two people fall in love, Sarah?

How do you know what is a good match?

Uh well... I don't know!



Half of couples look like they came out of the same pastry cutter...

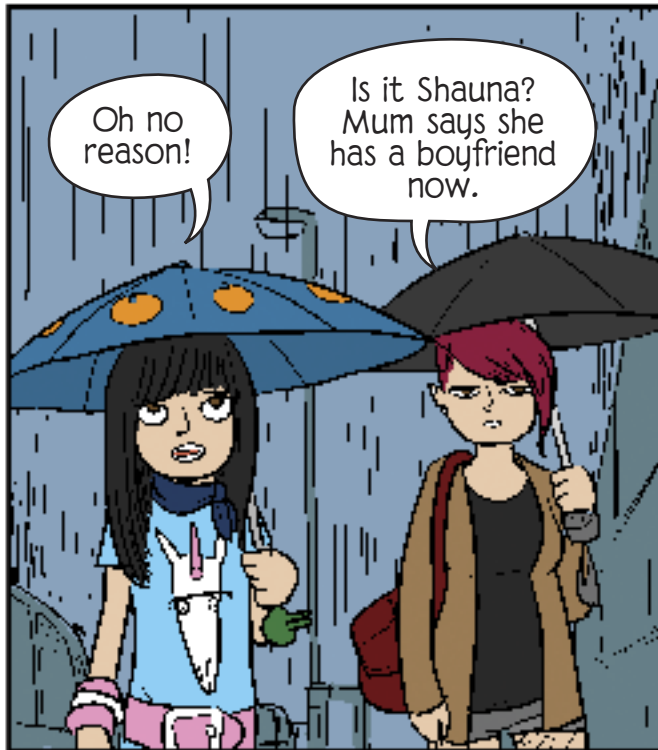


The other half look like they come from different planets to each other.



Hmm. Love is mysterious.

Why do you want to know?



Oh no reason!

Is it Shauna? Mum says she has a boyfriend now.



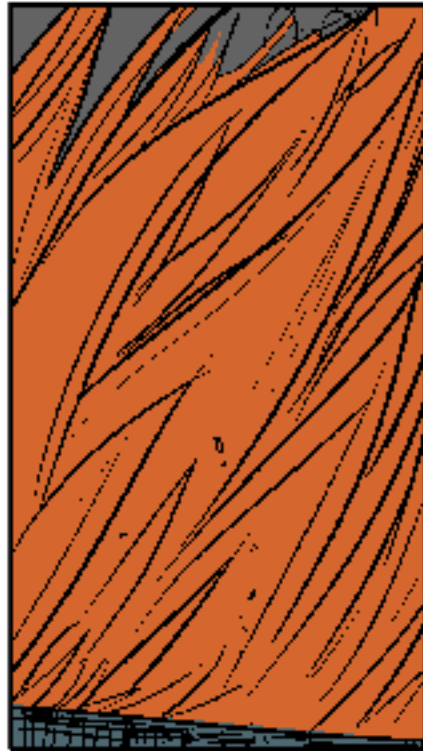
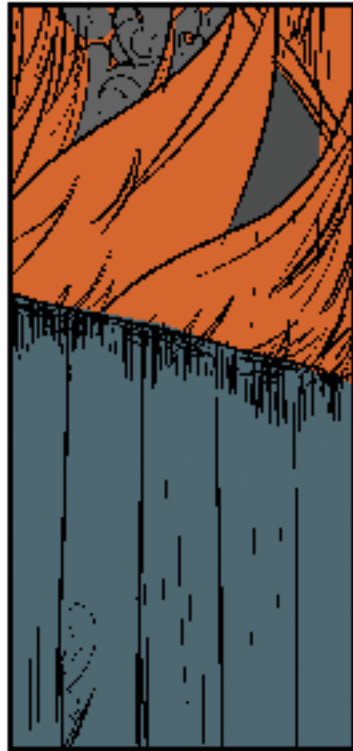
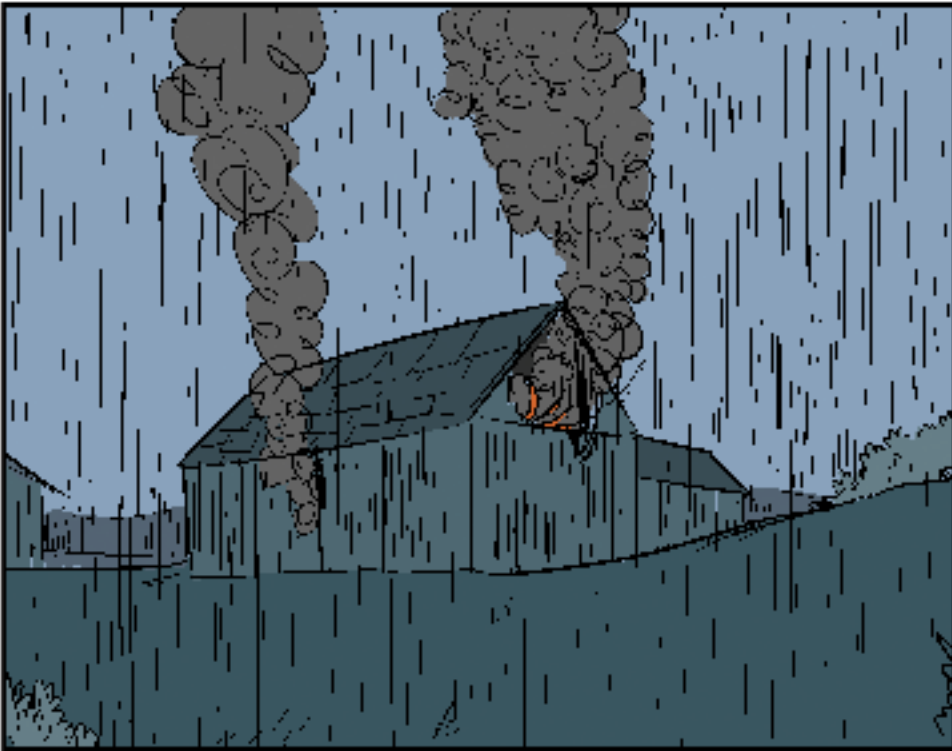
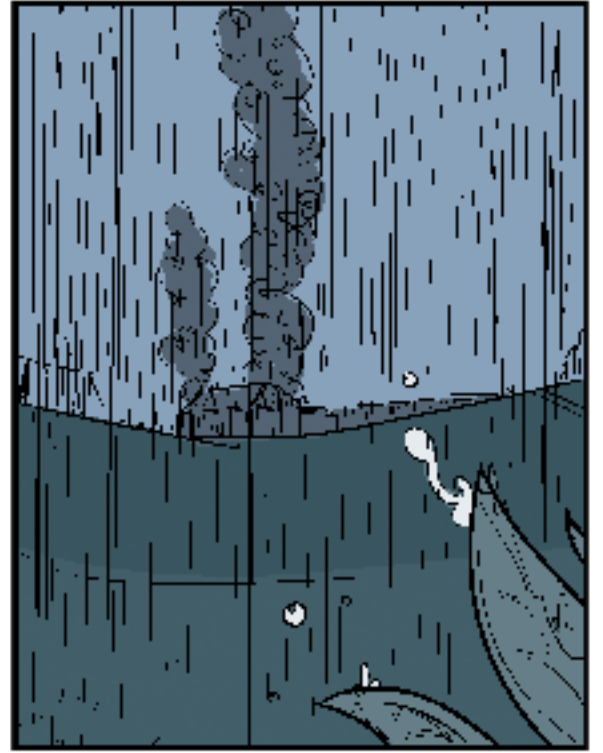
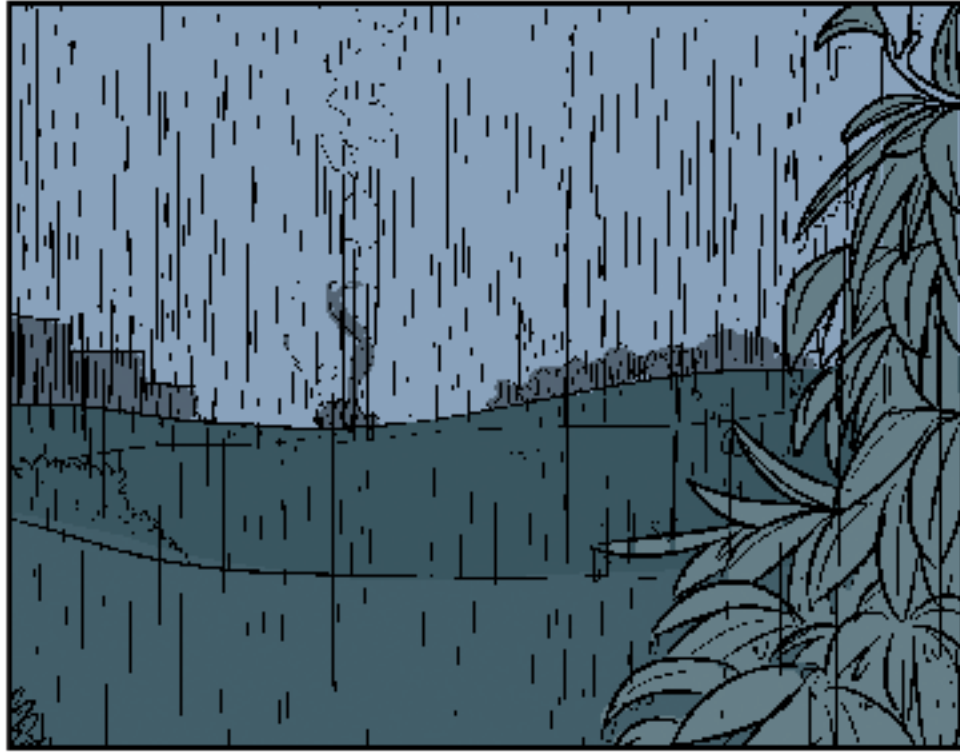
Another mystery is why you don't have a CAR...

...and we have to walk home in the rain.

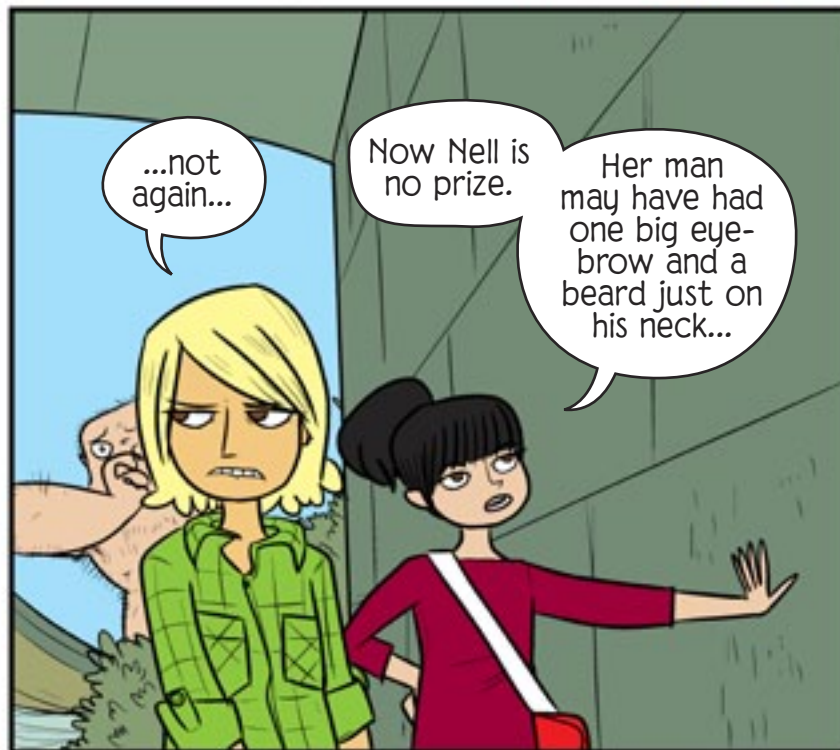
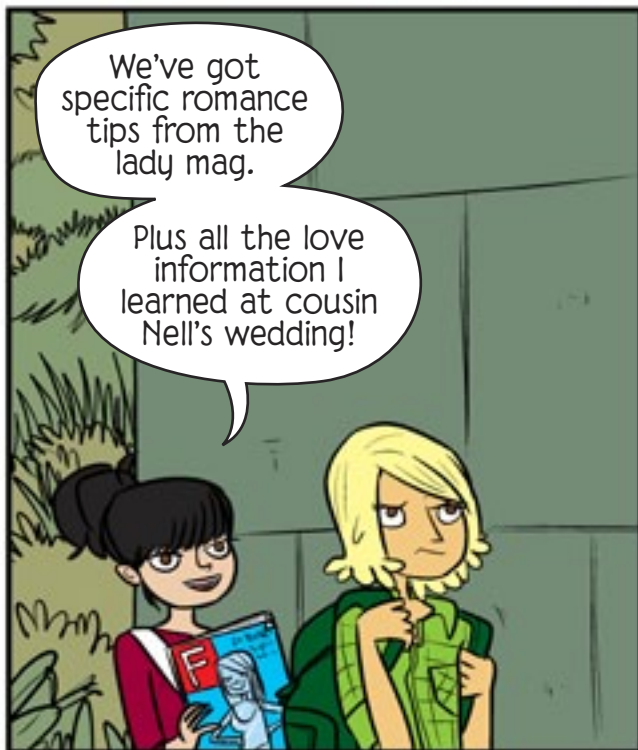


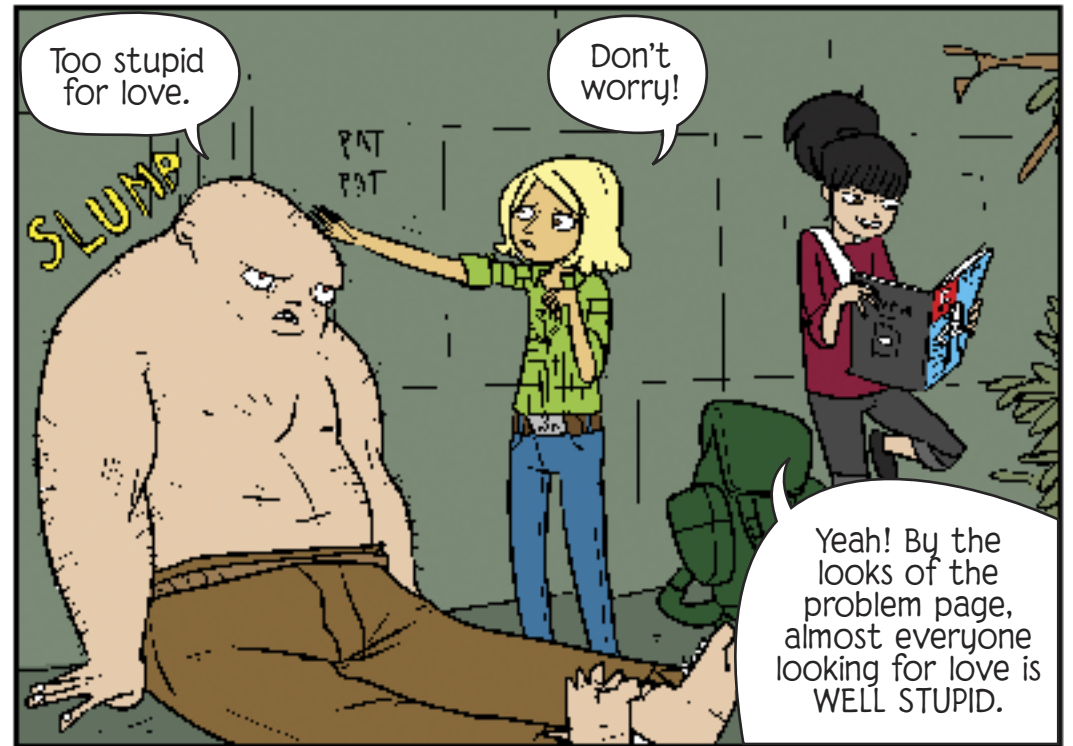
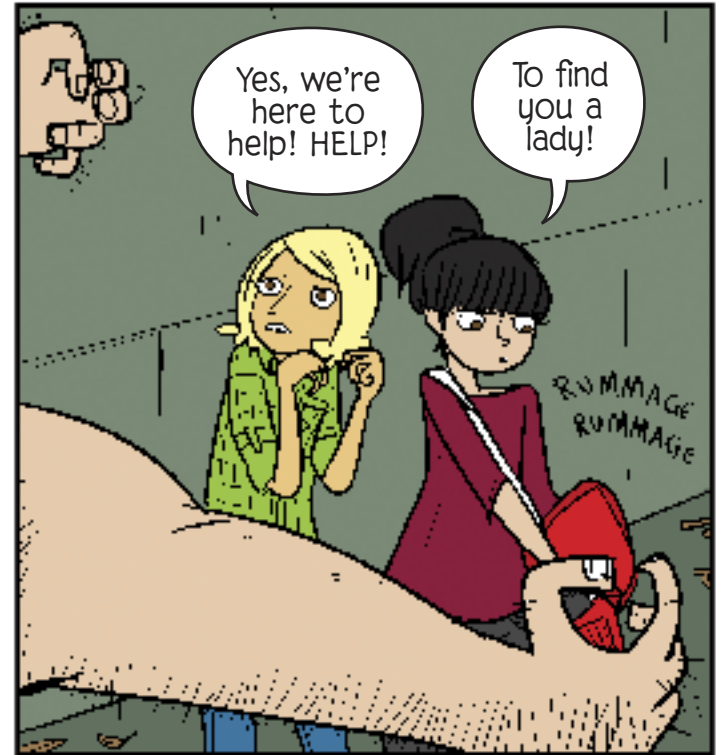
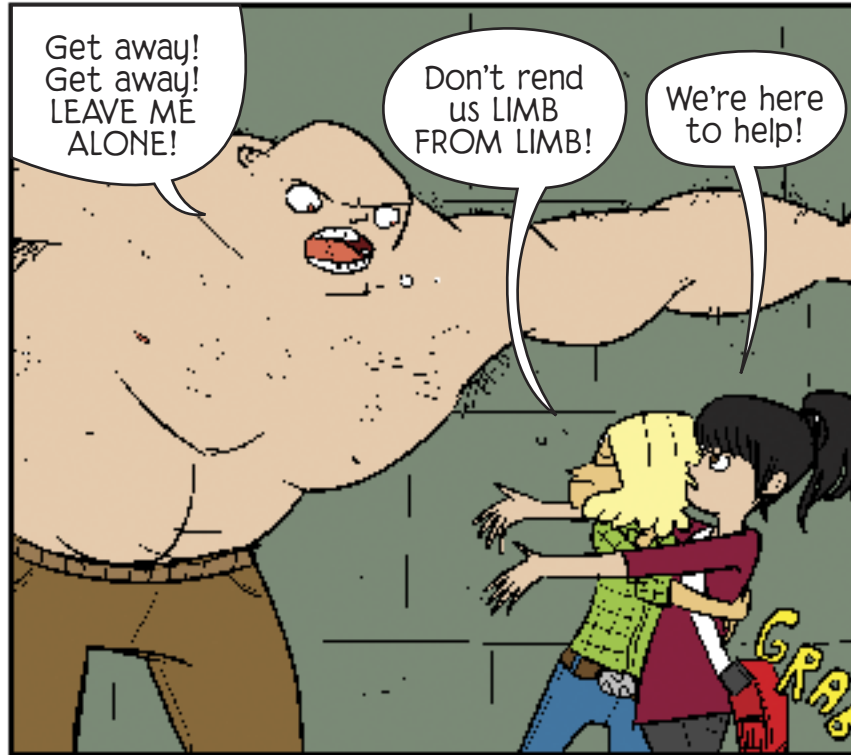
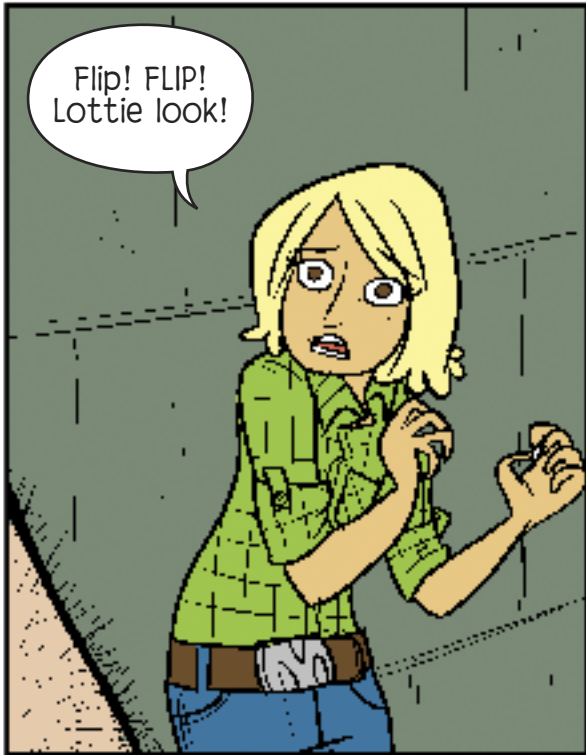
Or the mystery of why you only have a haircut on one side.

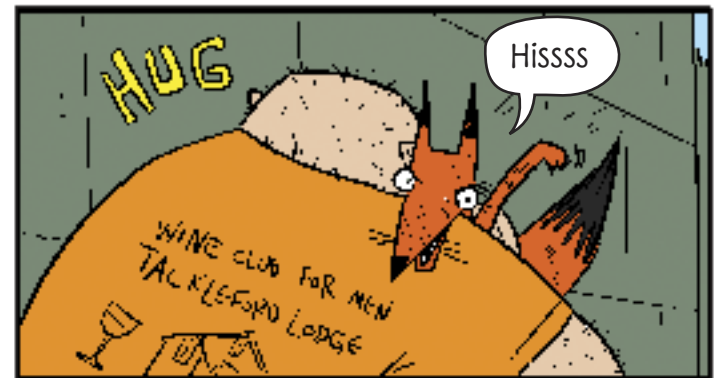
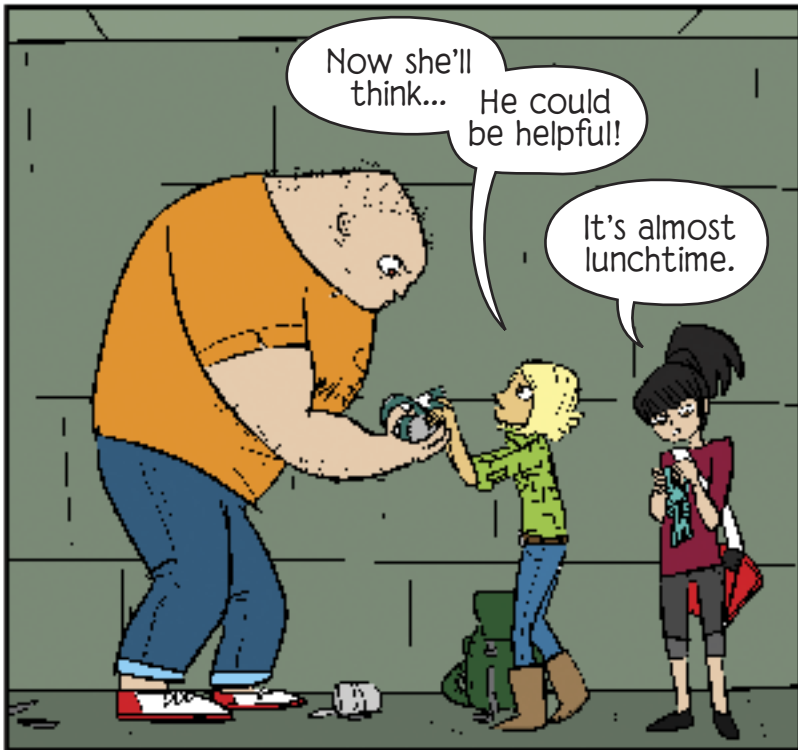
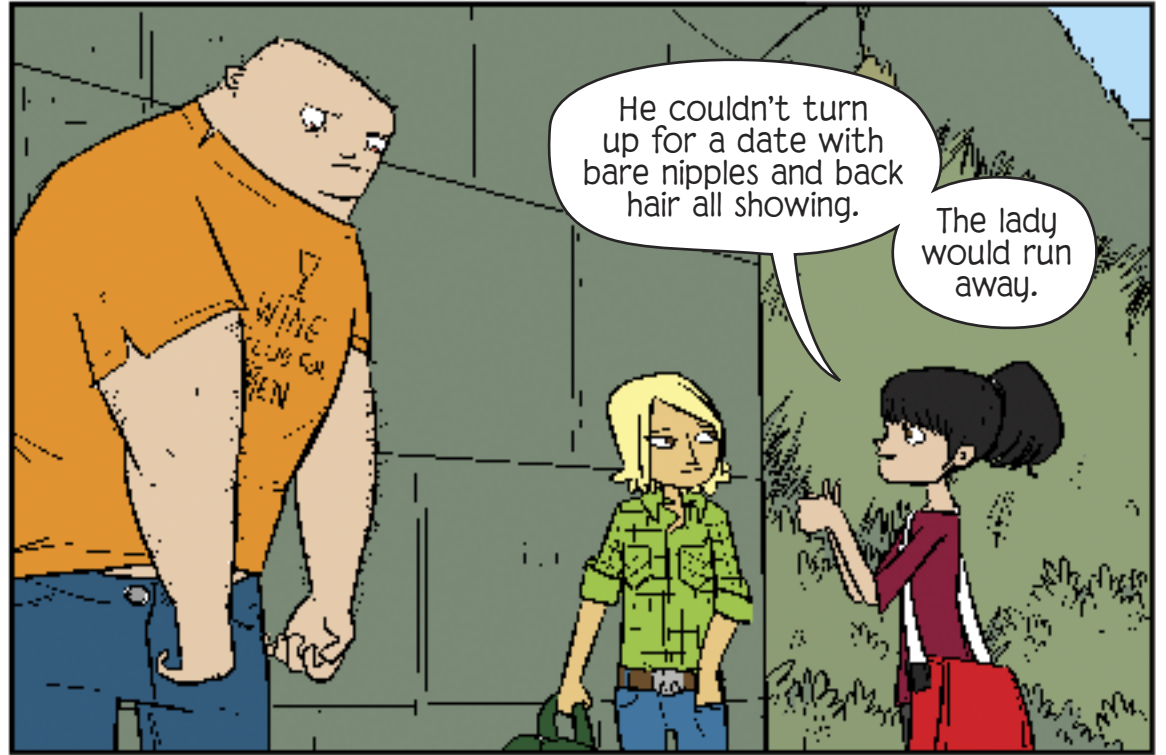
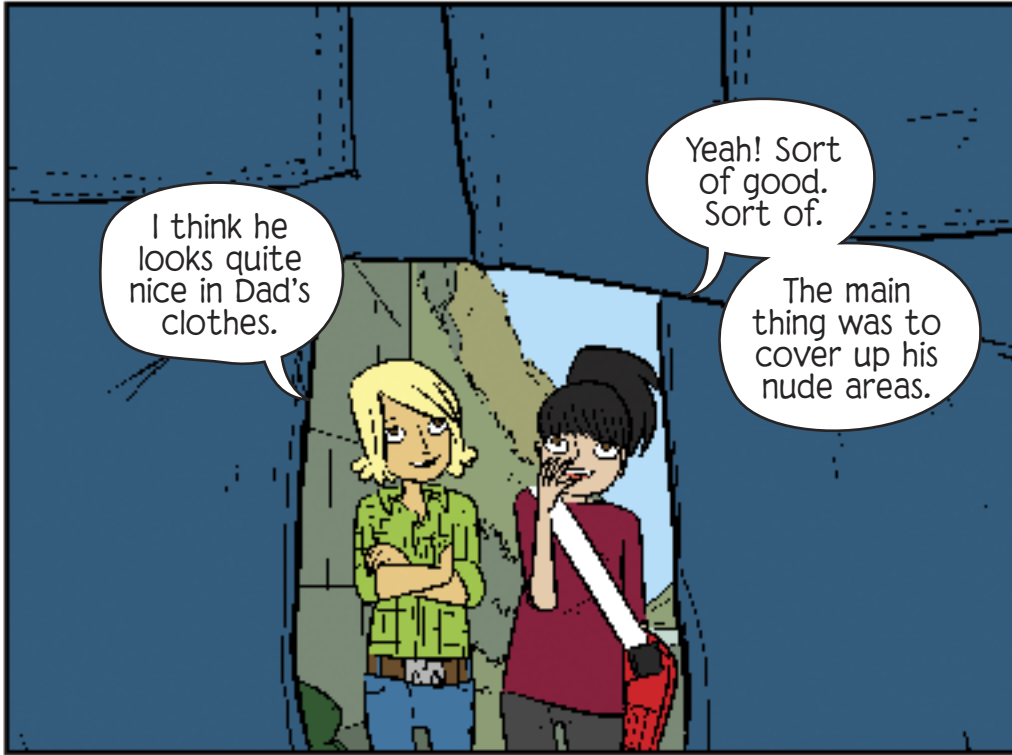
HEY you, it's very on trend.

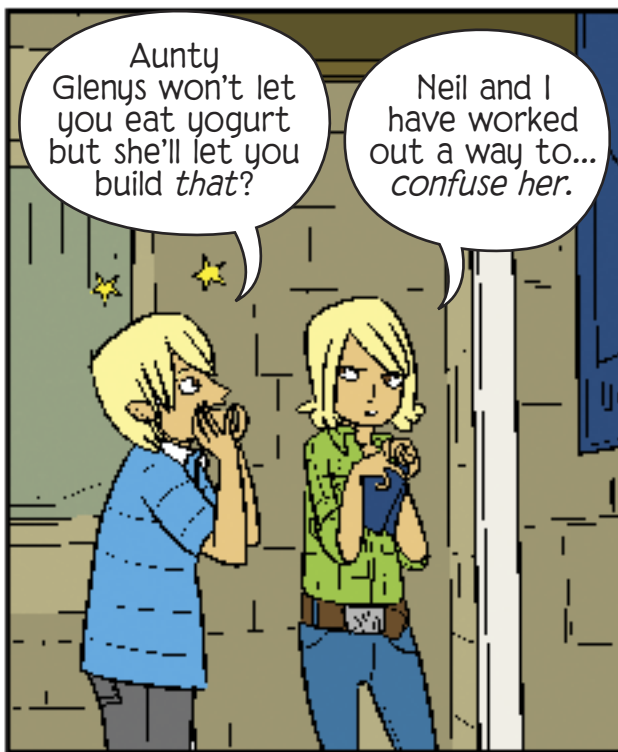
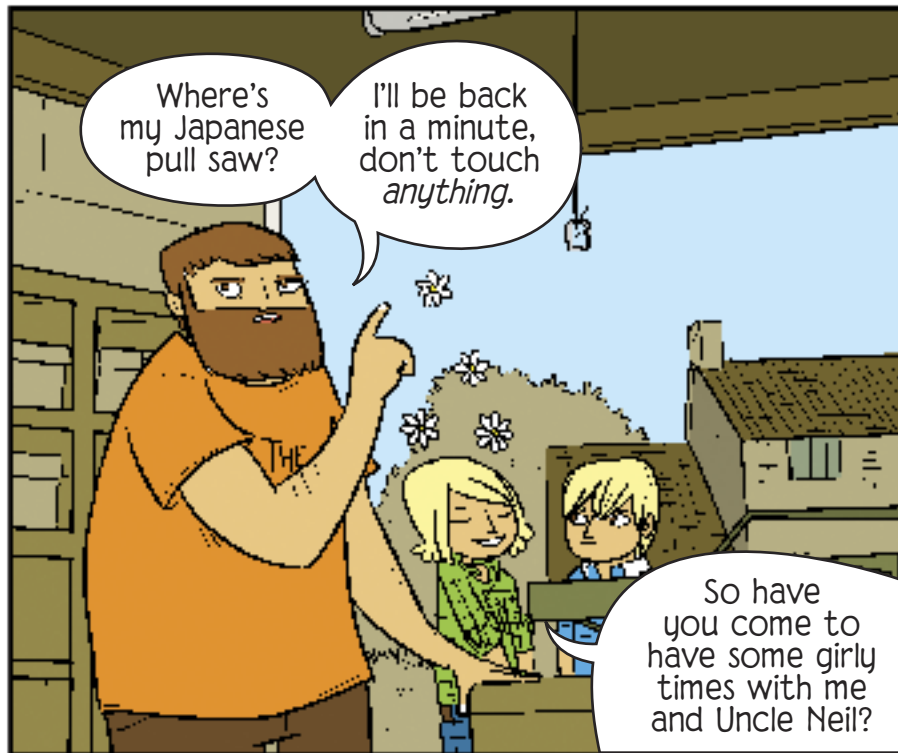
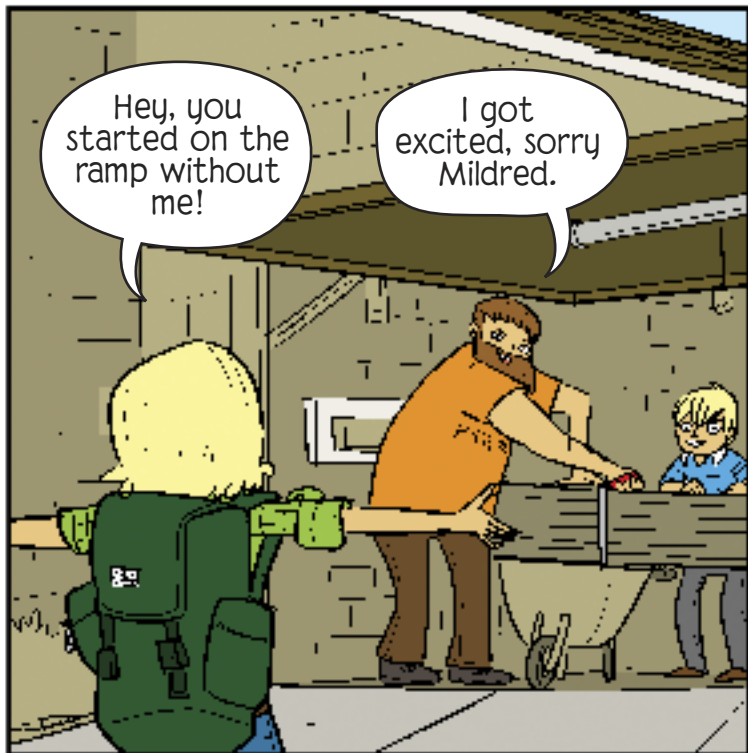


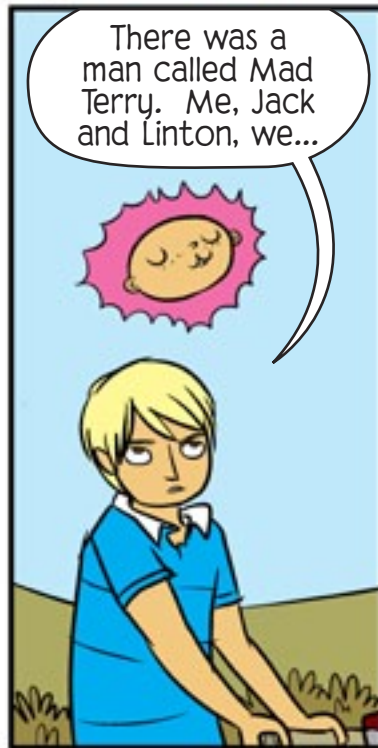
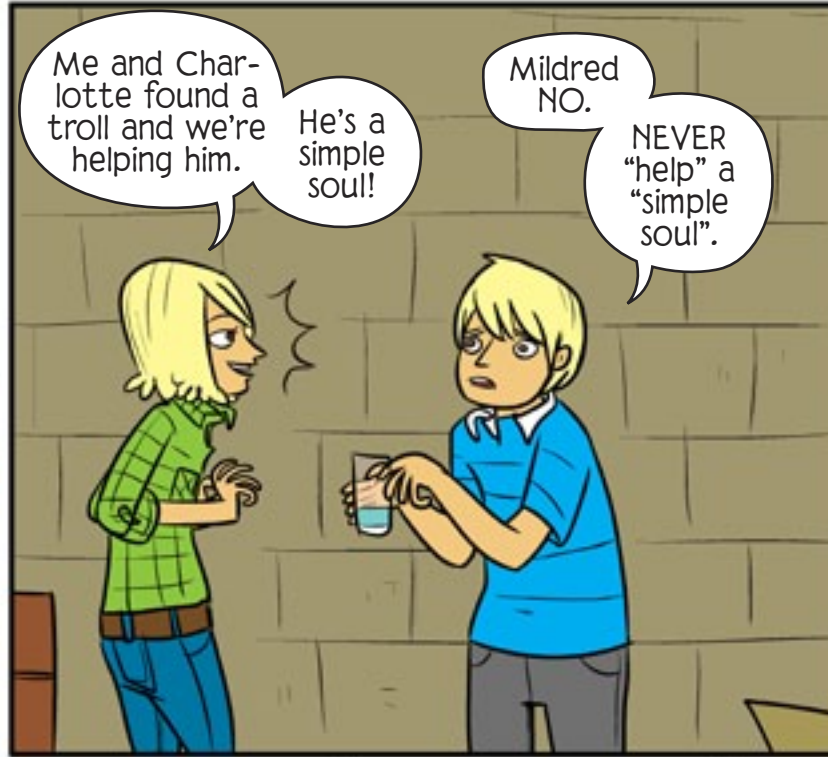




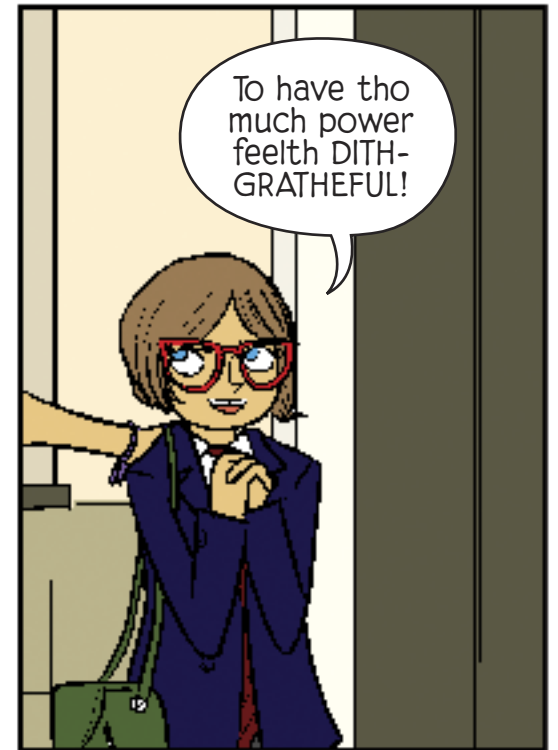
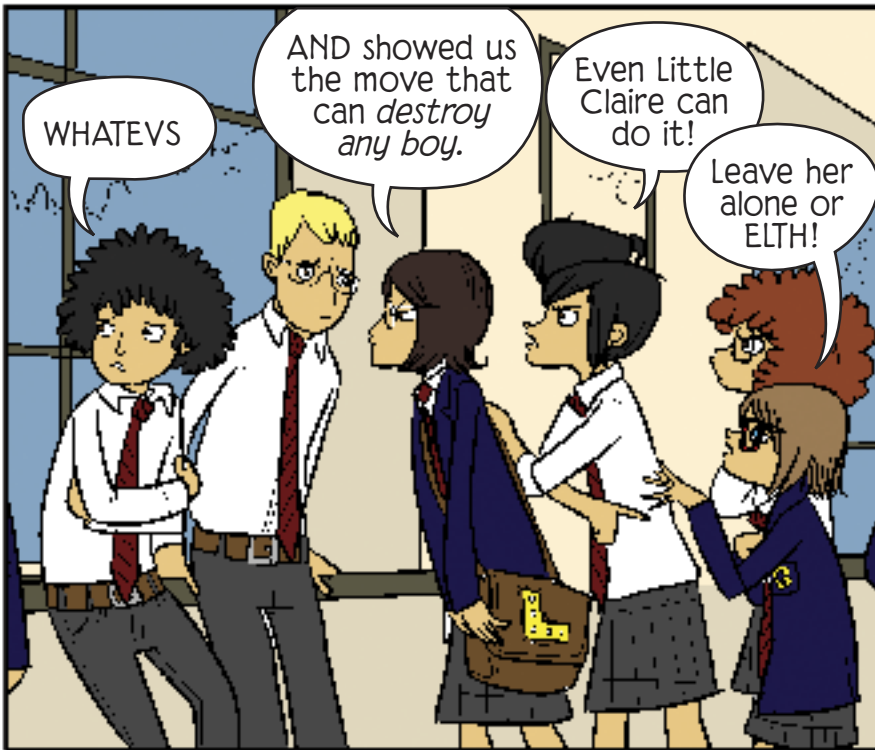
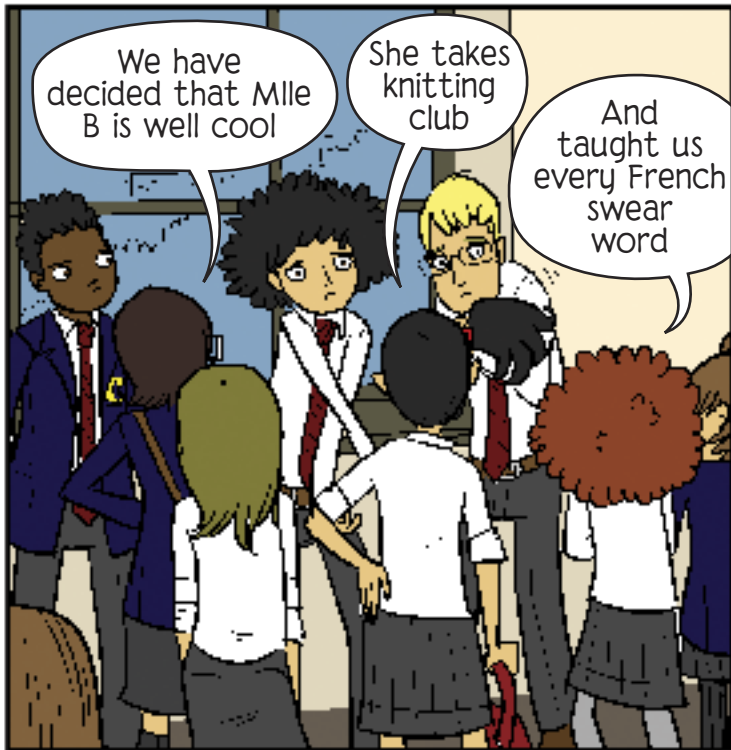
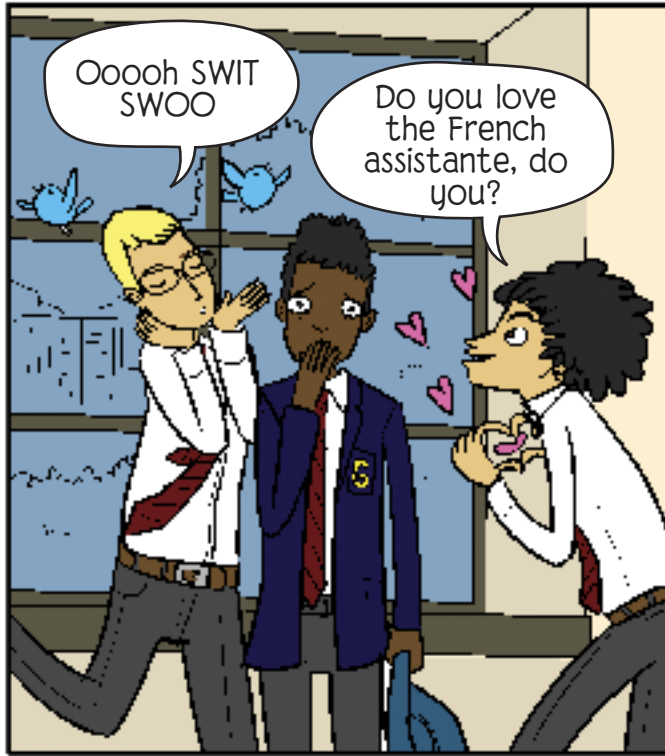
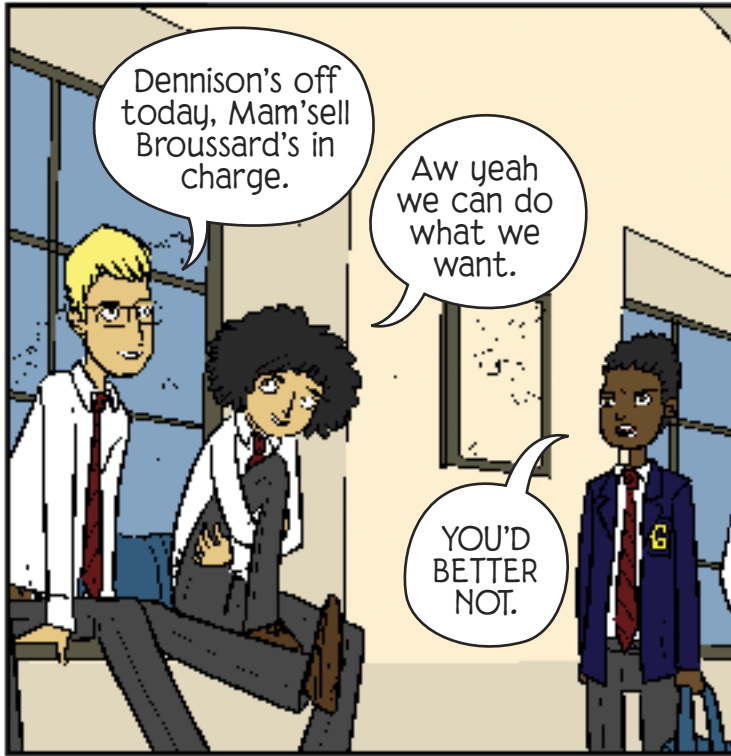


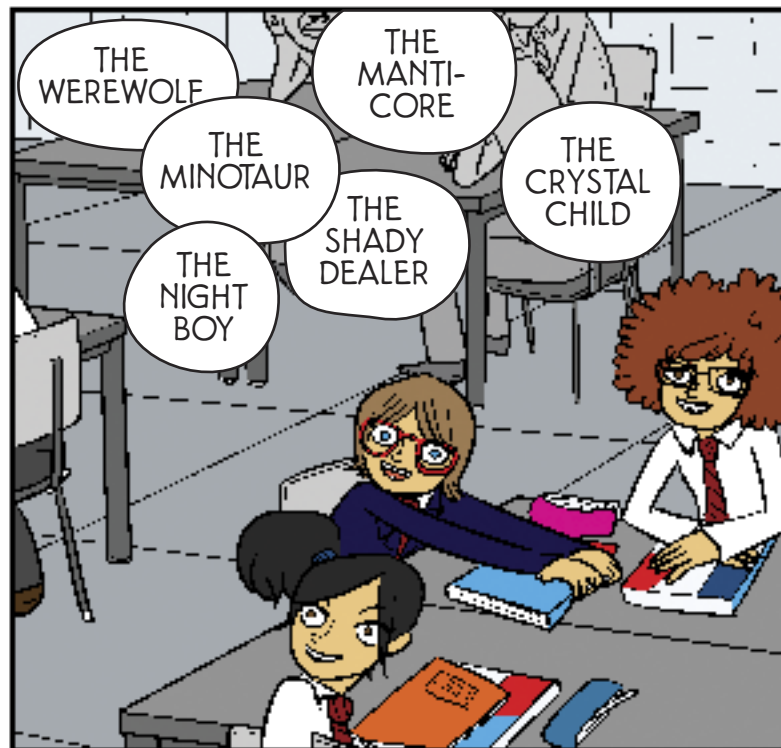
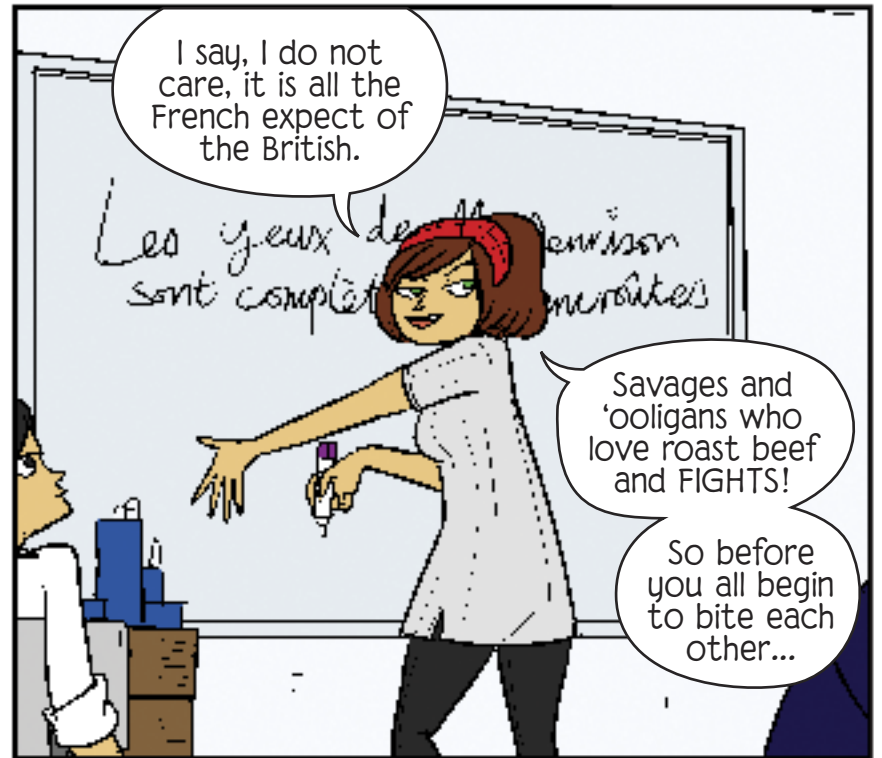
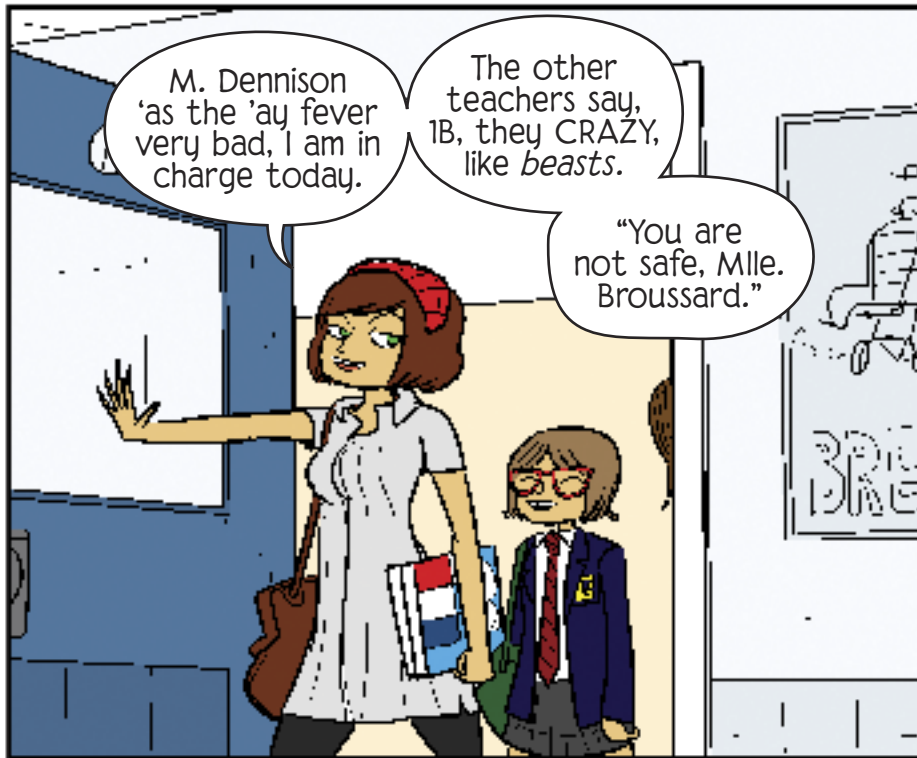


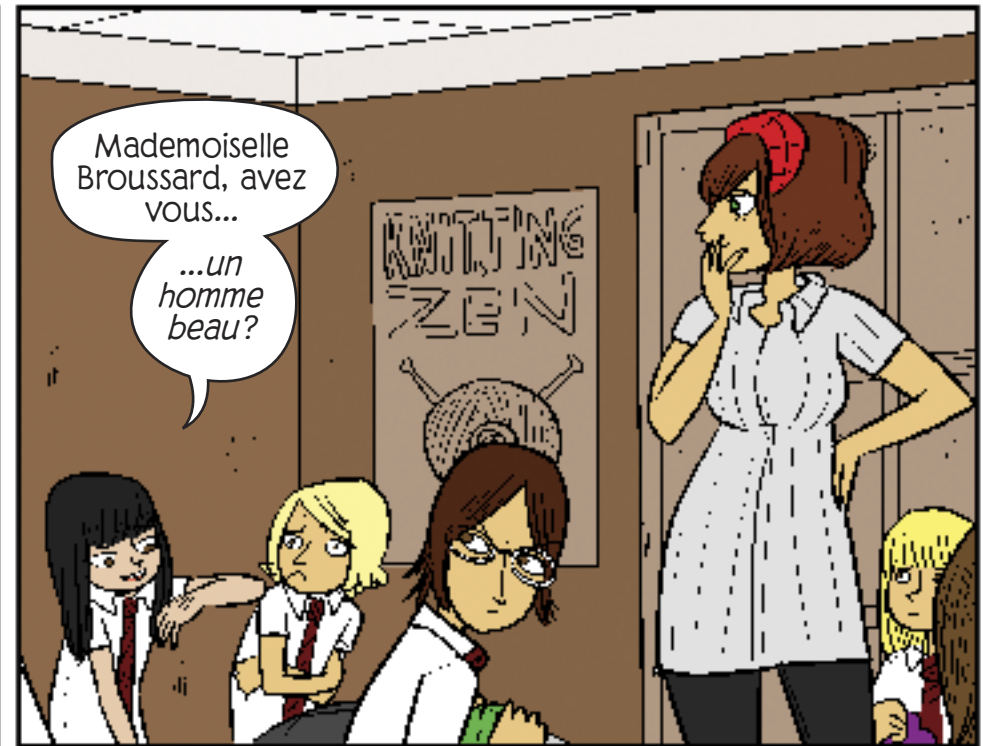
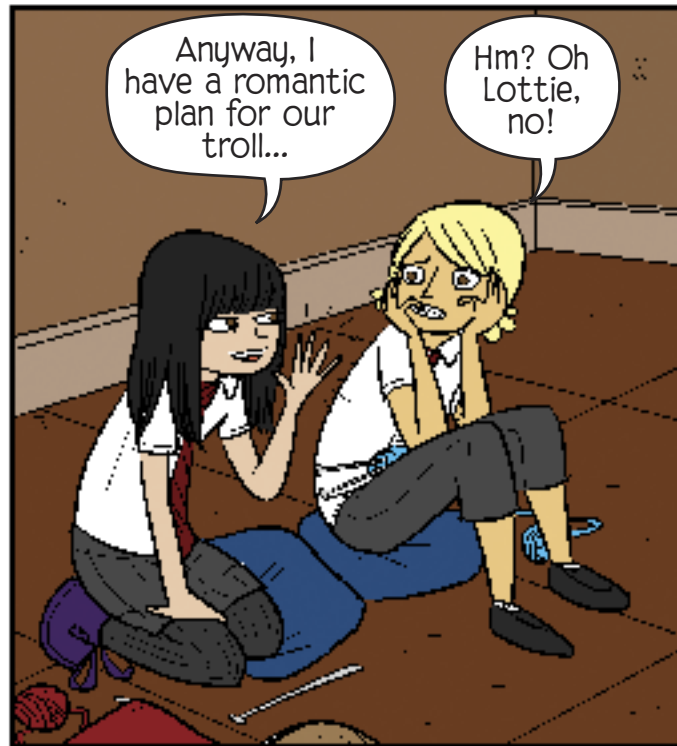
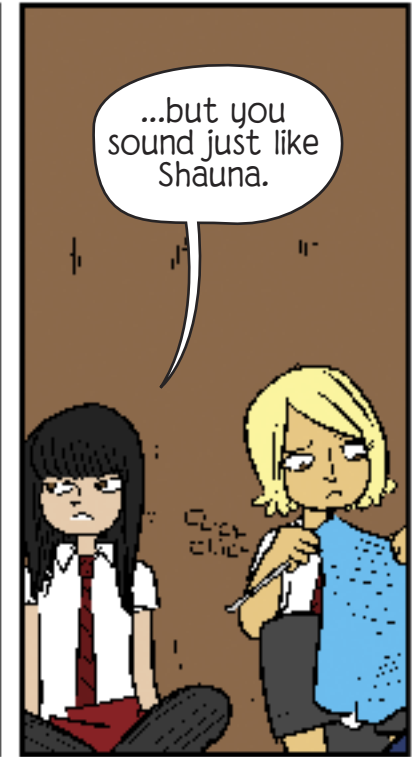
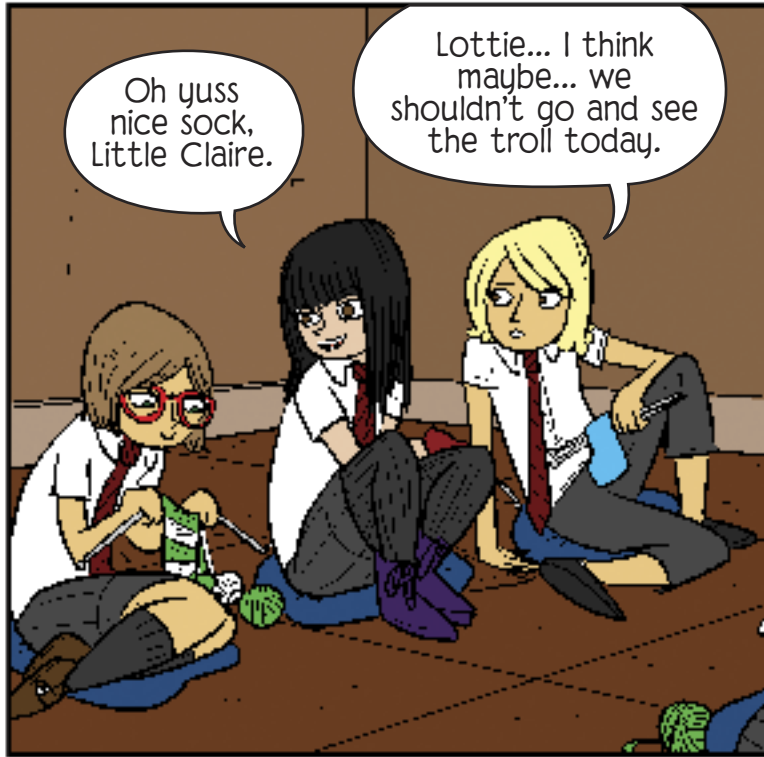


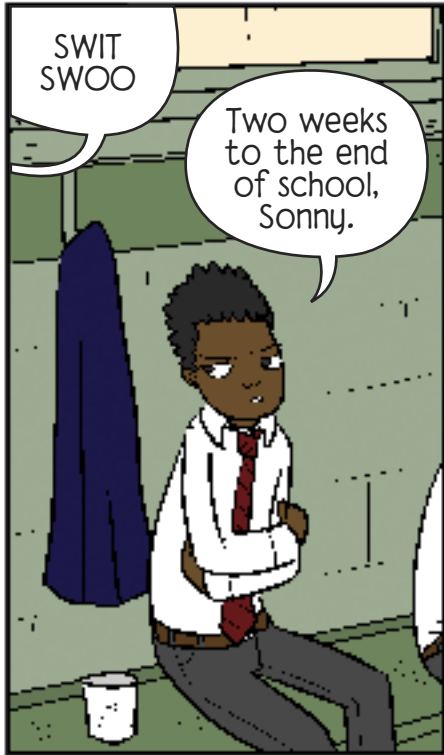




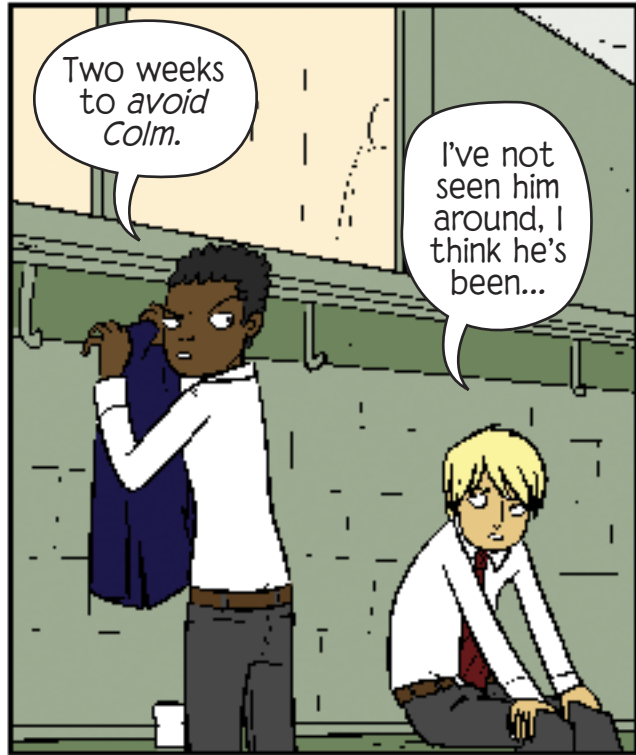






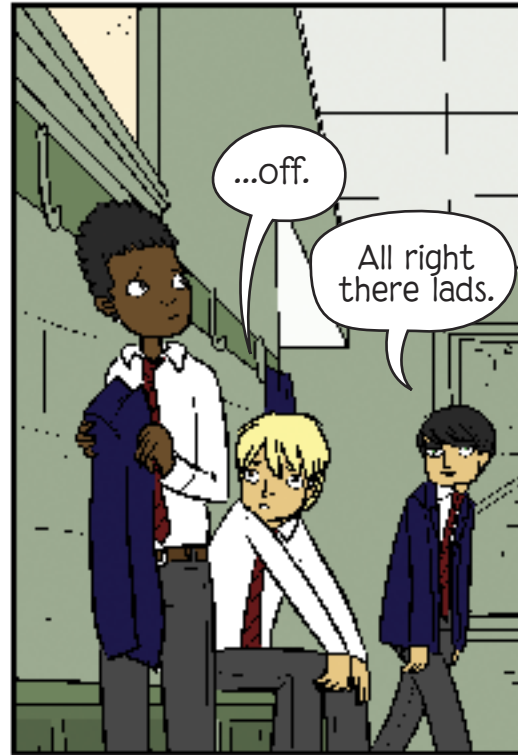


Two weeks to the end of school, Sonny.



Two weeks to *avoid Colm*.

I've not seen him around, I think he's been...



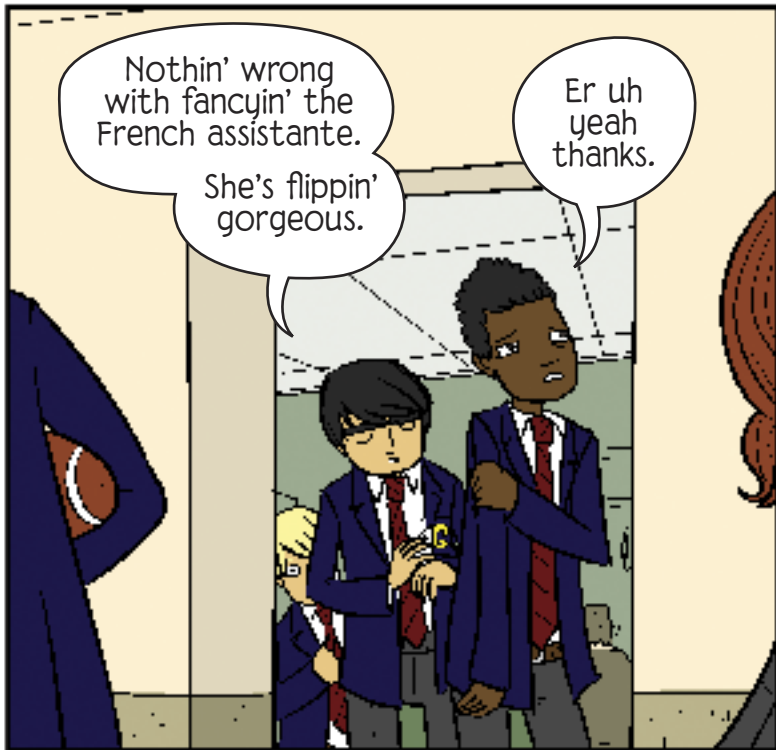
...off.

All right there lads.



I punched that swit swoo lad on the ear for ye, Linton.

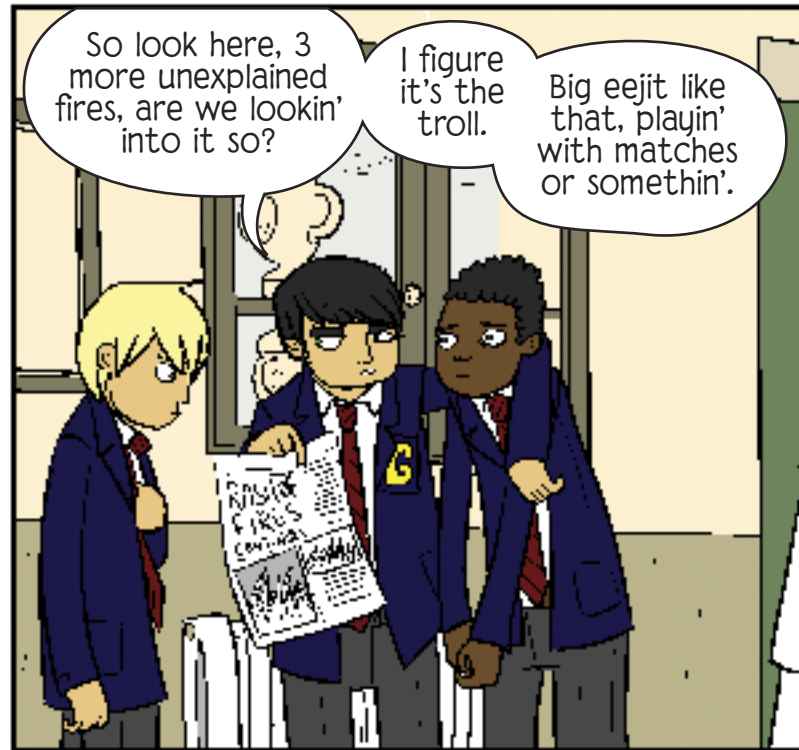
I'm sure you'da gotten around to it.



Nothin' wrong with fancyin' the French assistante.

She's flippin' gorgeous.

Er uh yeah thanks.



So look here, 3 more unexplained fires, are we lookin' into it so?

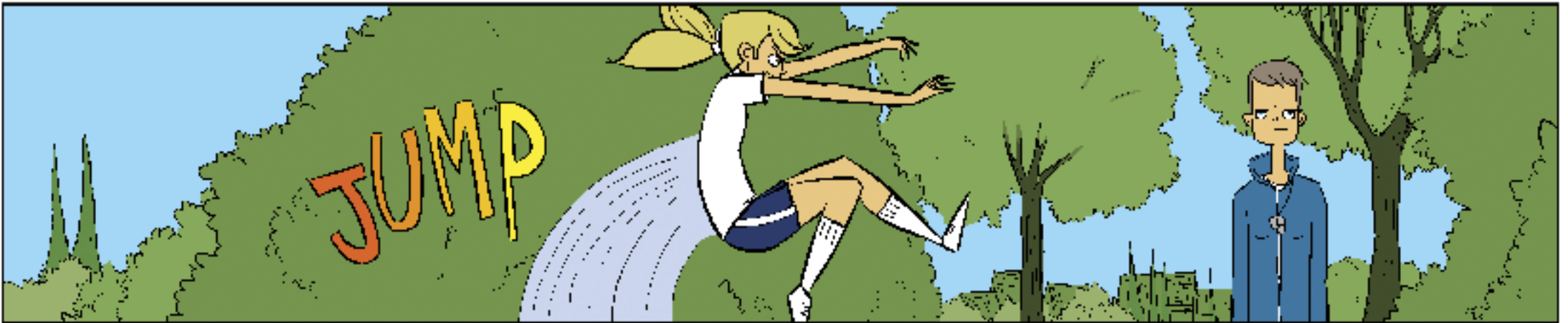
I figure it's the troll.

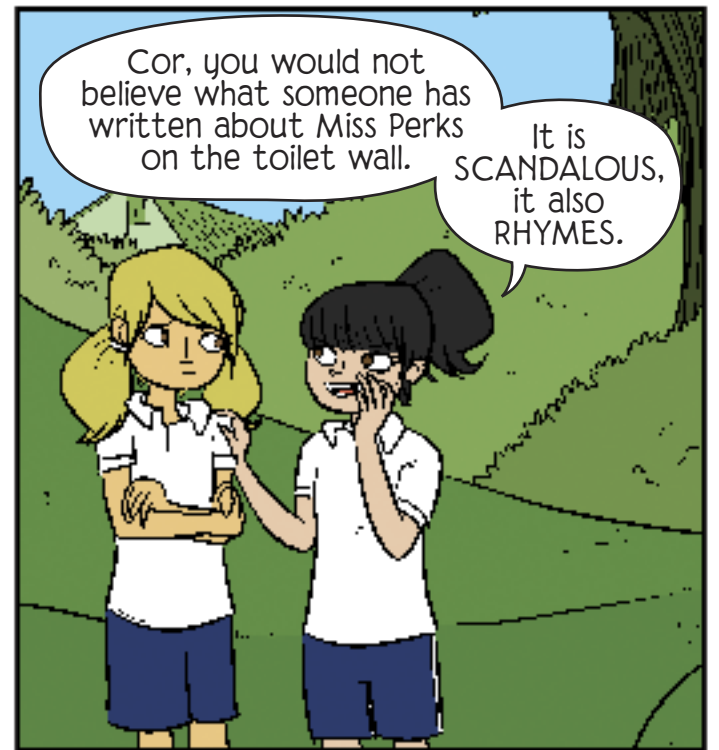
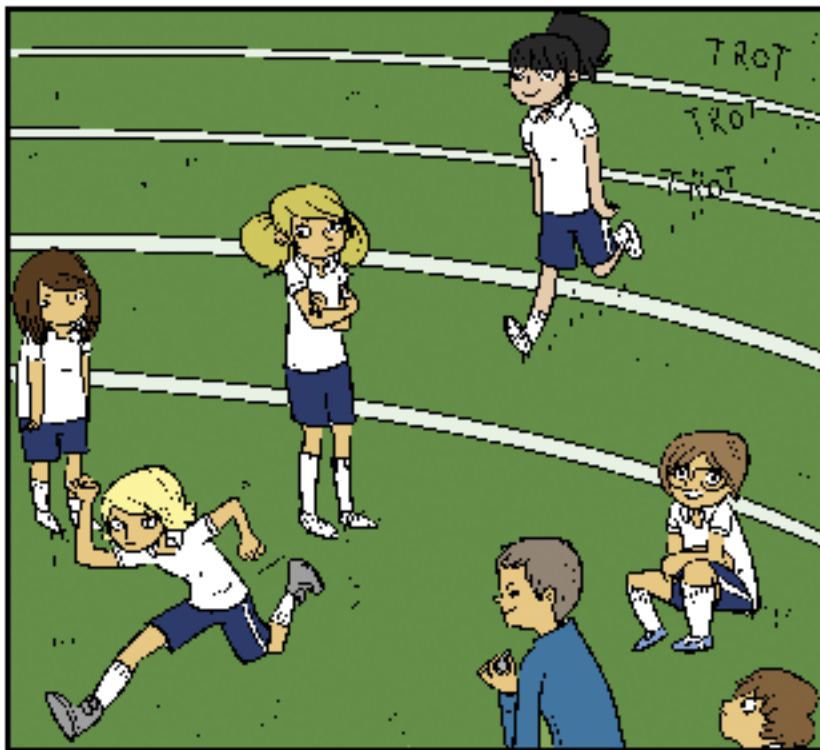
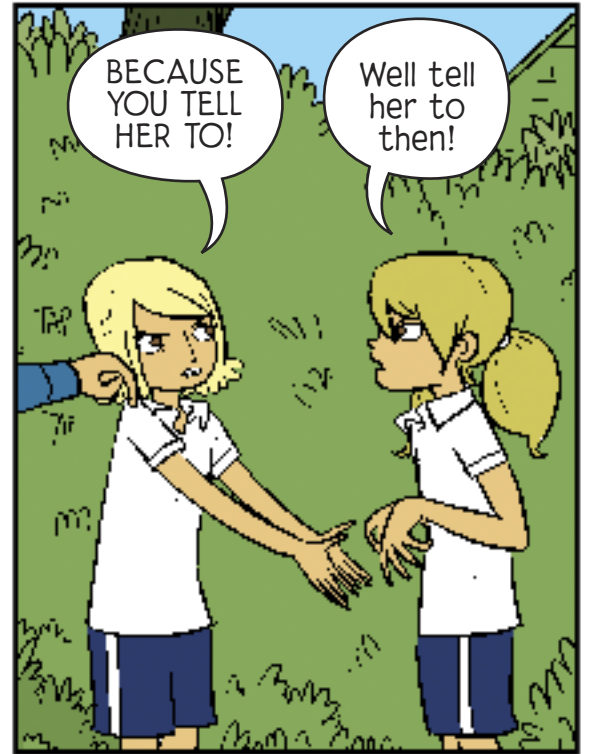
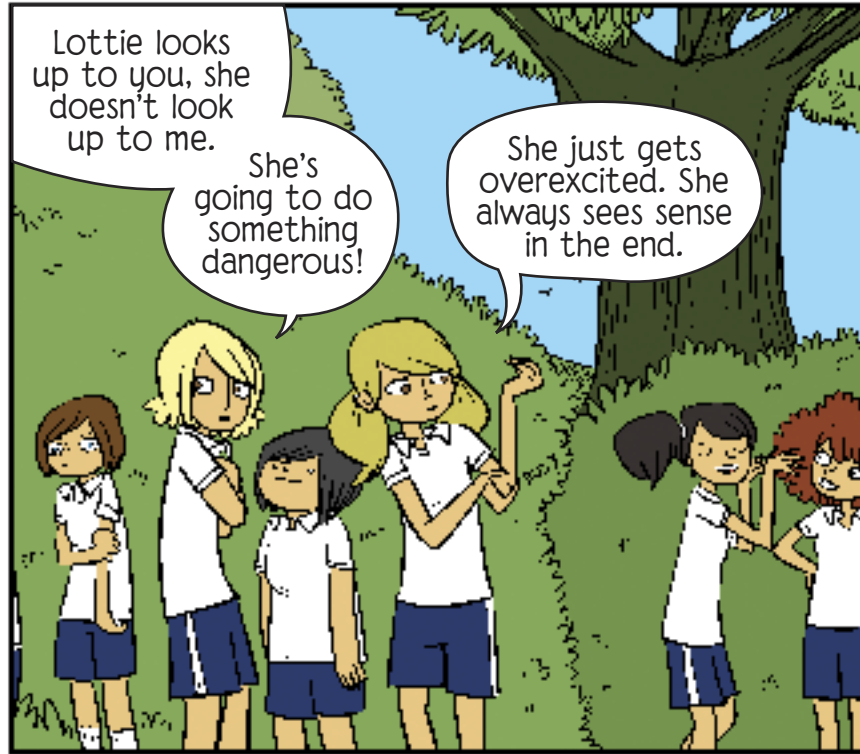
Big eejit like that, playin' with matches or somethin'.

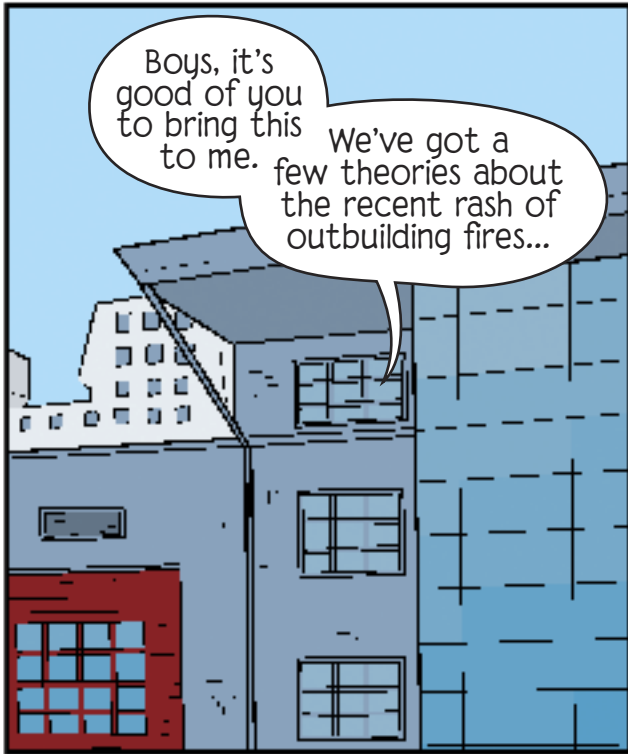


I was only JOKING Linton.

That REALLY HURT.



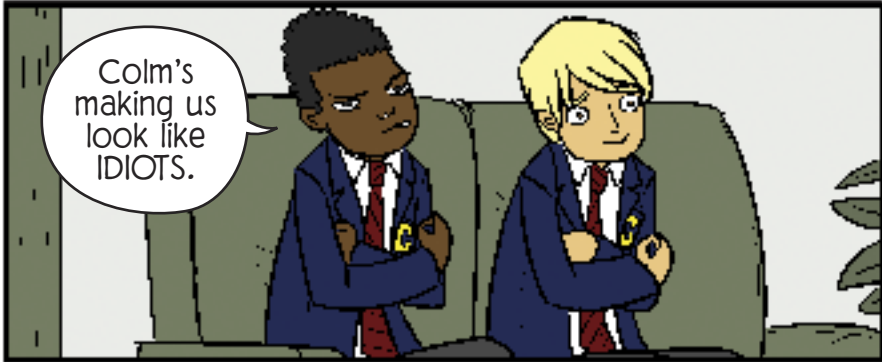




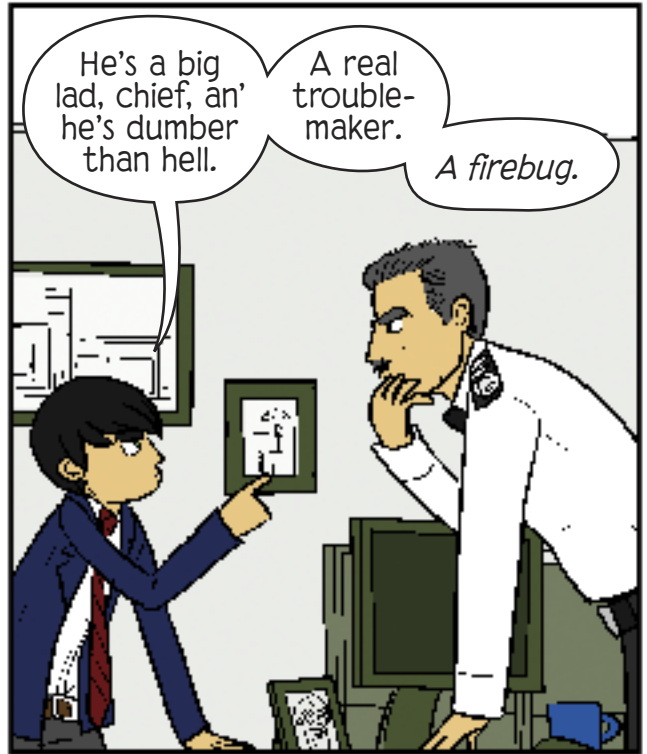
Boys, it's good of you to bring this to me. We've got a few theories about the recent rash of outbuilding fires...



But we never suspected a bridge-dwelling troll.



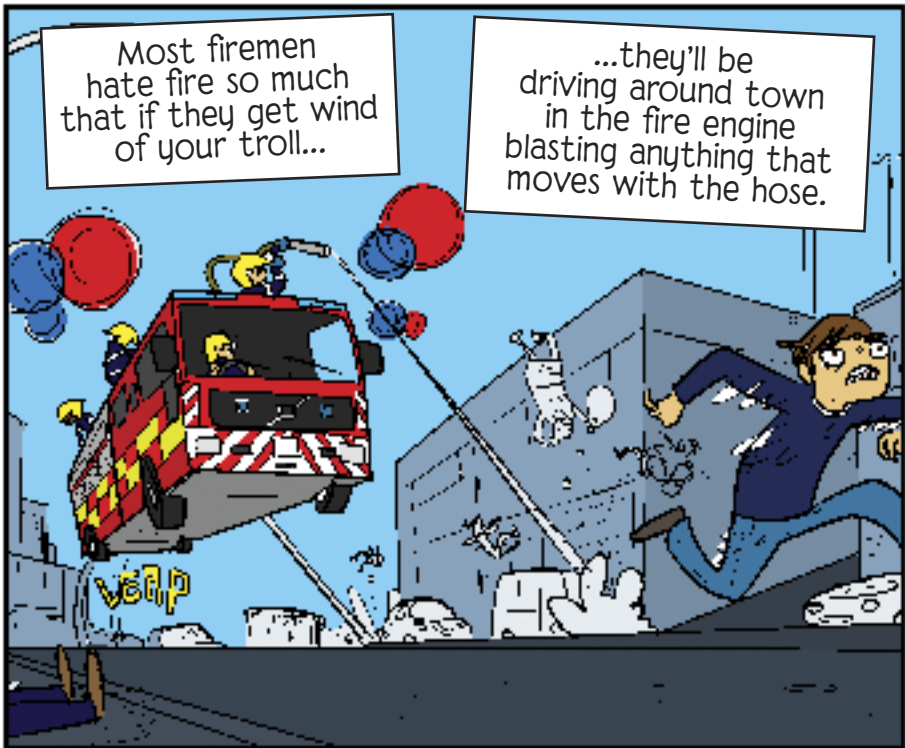
Colm's making us look like IDIOTS.



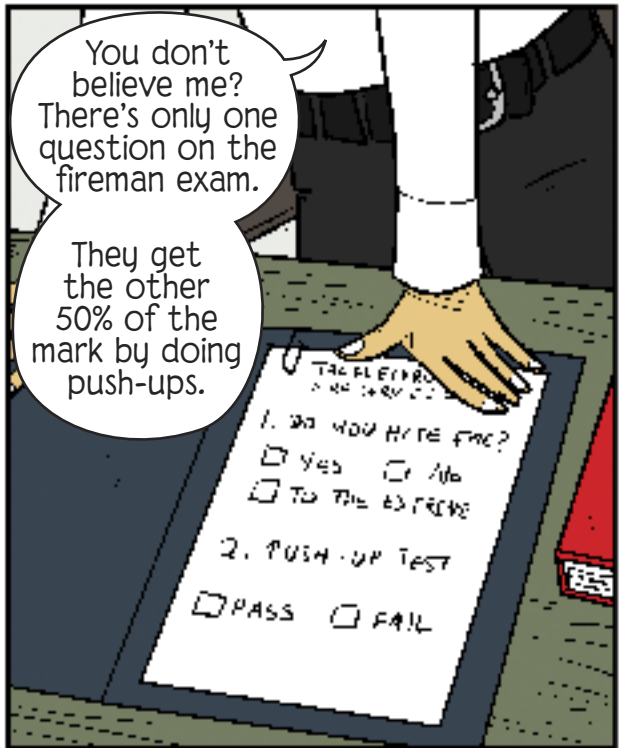
He's a big lad, chief, an' he's dumber than hell. A real trouble-maker. A firebug.



I'm going to get someone on this. But for Pete's sake, keep it to yourselves.



Most firemen hate fire so much that if they get wind of your troll... ...they'll be driving around town in the fire engine blasting anything that moves with the hose.



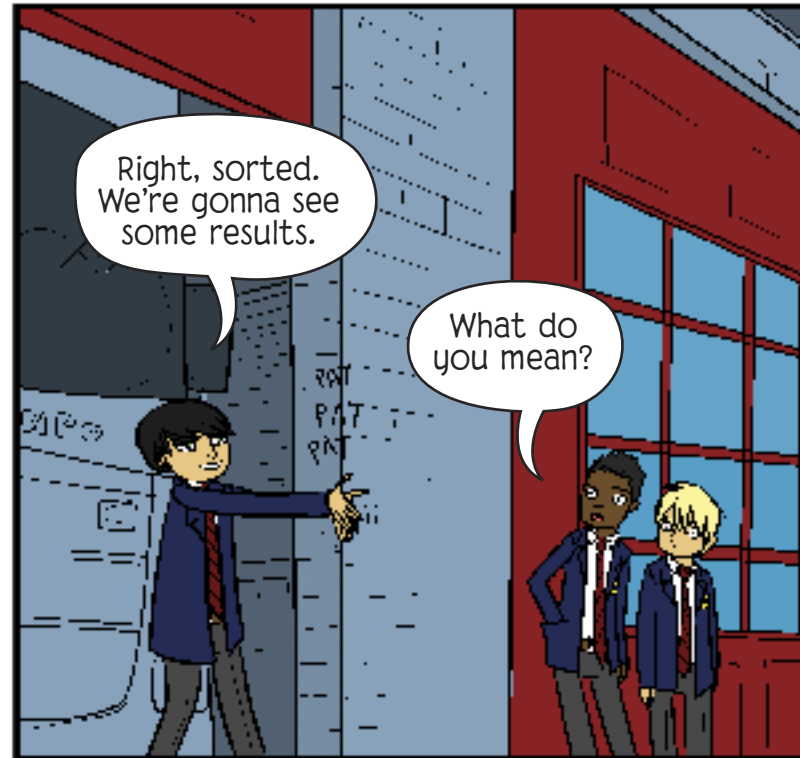
You don't believe me? There's only one question on the fireman exam. They get the other 50% of the mark by doing push-ups.

TAC FEYR...
 1. DO YOU HATE FIRE?
 YES NO
 TO THE EXTREME
 2. PUSH-UP TEST
 PASS FAIL



What is Colm doing in there?

I think he wanted a go on the fire pole.



Right, sorted. We're gonna see some results.

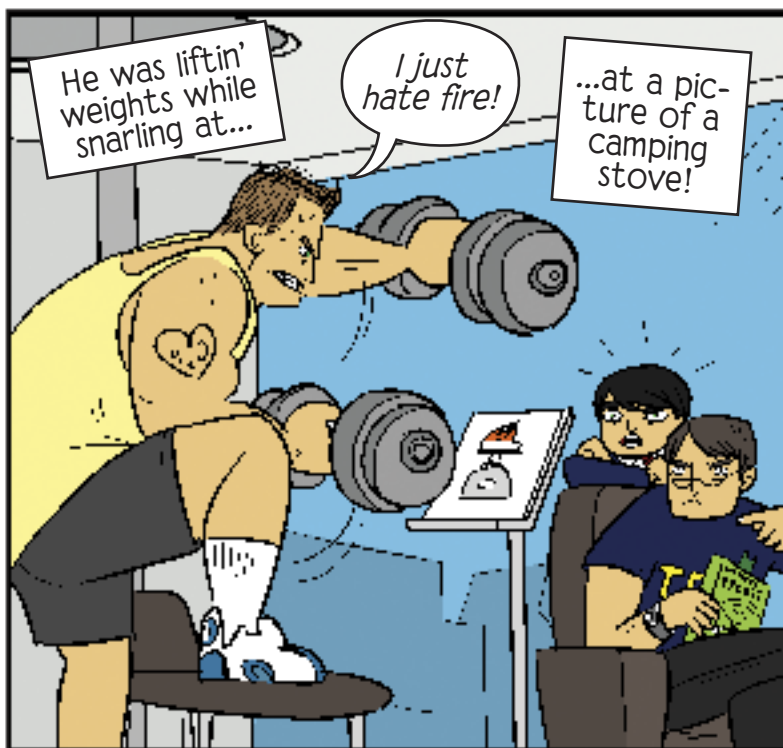
What do you mean?



That fire chief had gone soft on fire. He was too old.

So I went lookin' for the biggest, maddest fireman to tell.

AND I FOUND 'IM.



He was liftin' weights while snarling at...

I just hate fire!

...at a picture of a camping stove!



He wasn't... the brightest spark?

Ha ha! You're all right, Sonny.



Well I'm looking forward to when this ends well.

Which I reckon will be NEVER.



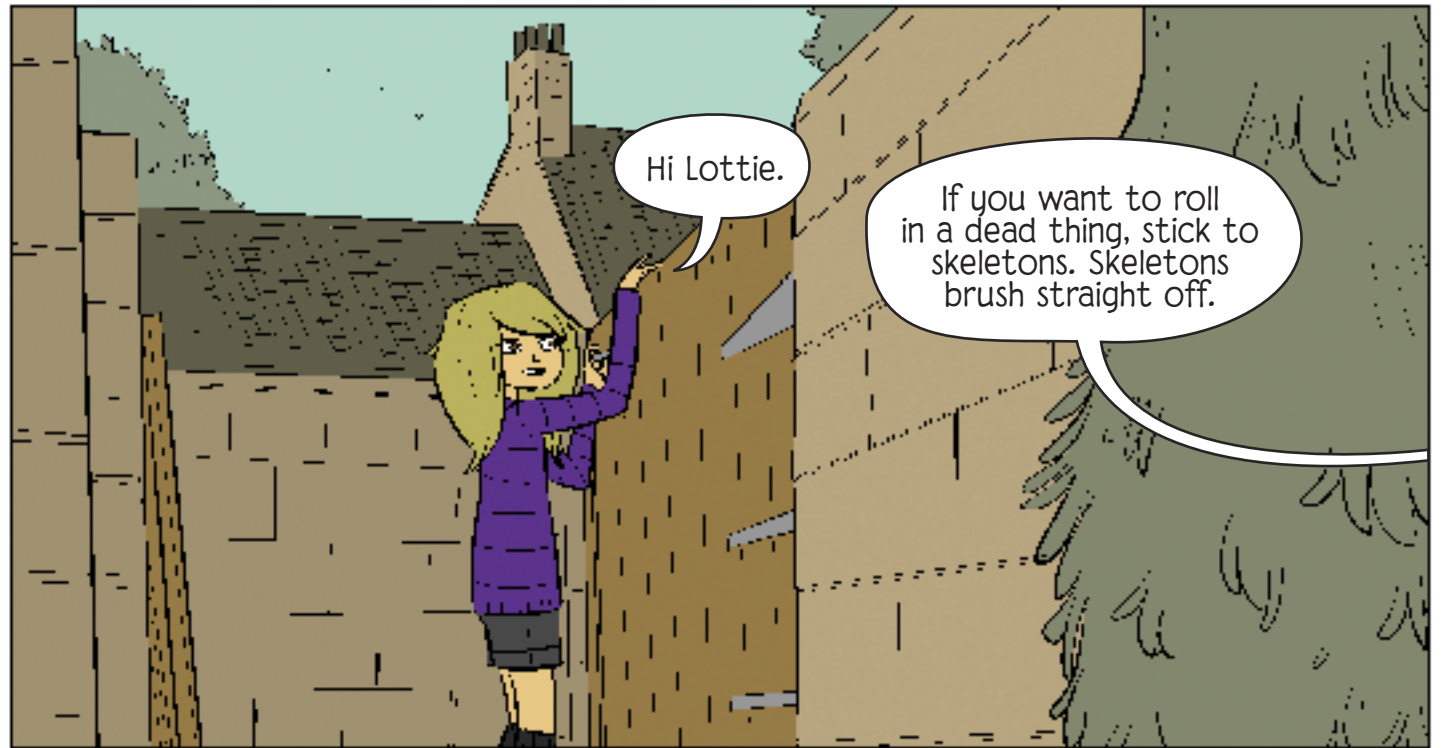
Pepper, I realise this isn't what you want to hear.

But it's absolutely fine to jump into a big pile of brushes or sponges.



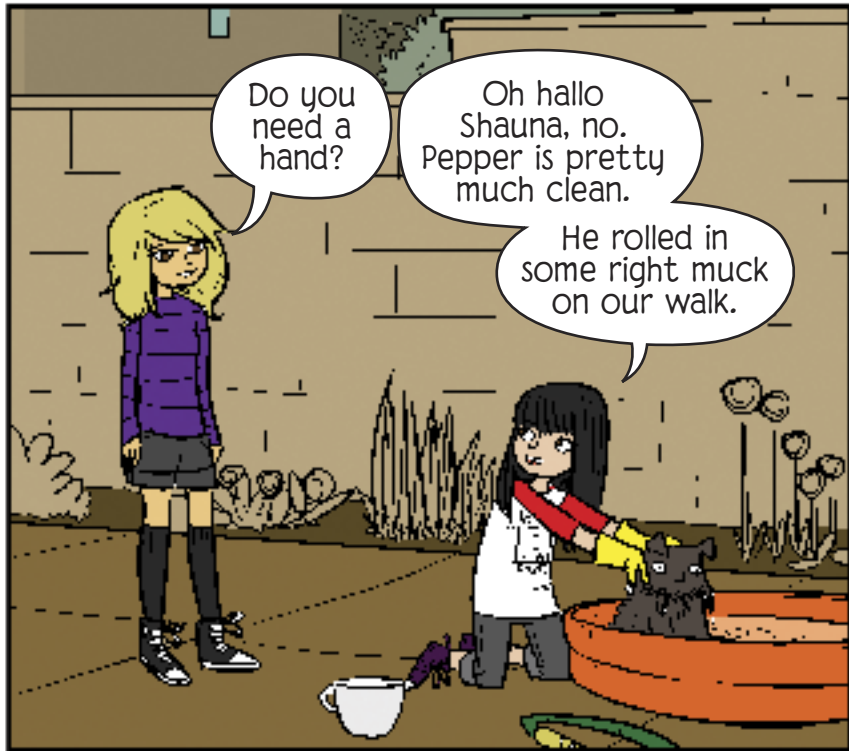
Maybe don't roll in maggoty old dead beasts so much.

That's less cool.



Hi Lottie.

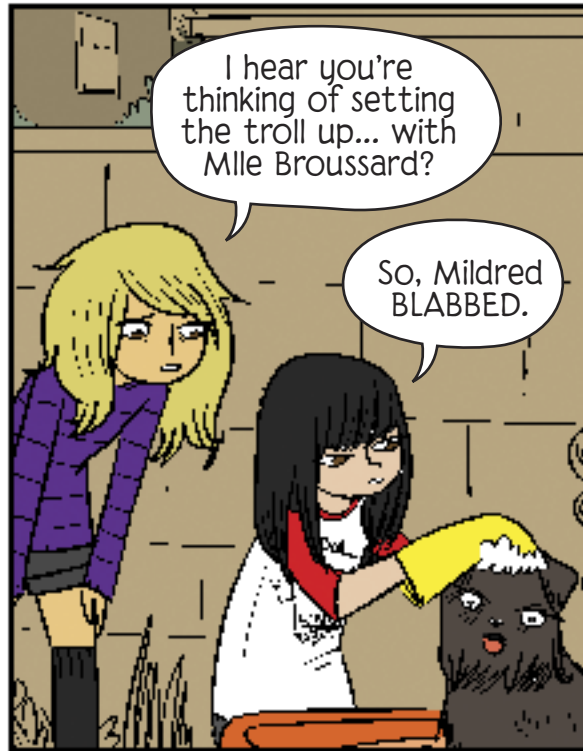
If you want to roll in a dead thing, stick to skeletons. Skeletons brush straight off.



Do you need a hand?

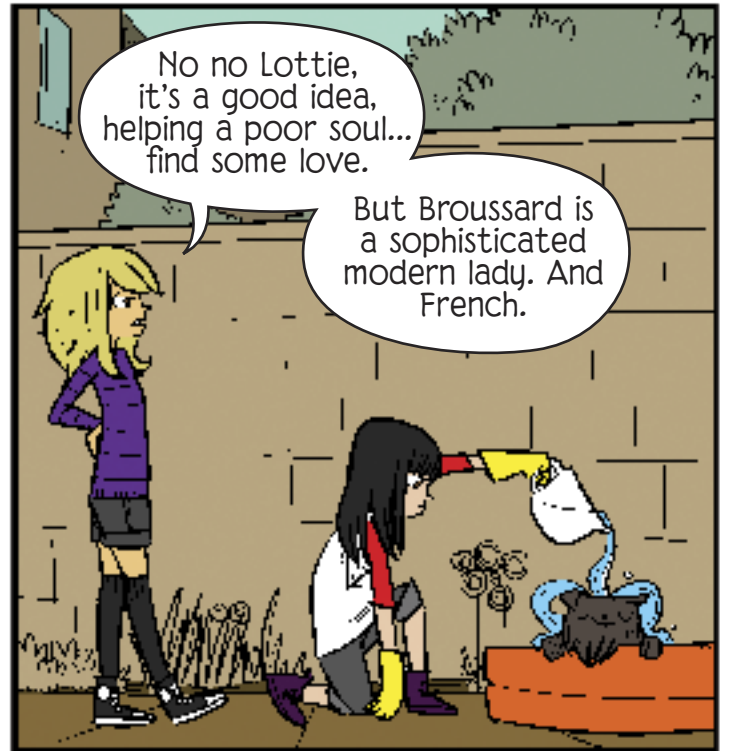
Oh hallo Shauna, no. Pepper is pretty much clean.

He rolled in some right muck on our walk.



I hear you're thinking of setting the troll up... with Mlle Broussard?

So, Mildred BLABBED.



No no Lottie, it's a good idea, helping a poor soul... find some love.

But Broussard is a sophisticated modern lady. And French.



You know, probably too sophisticated for even normal English men.

I... I suppose.

SCUFF SCUFF



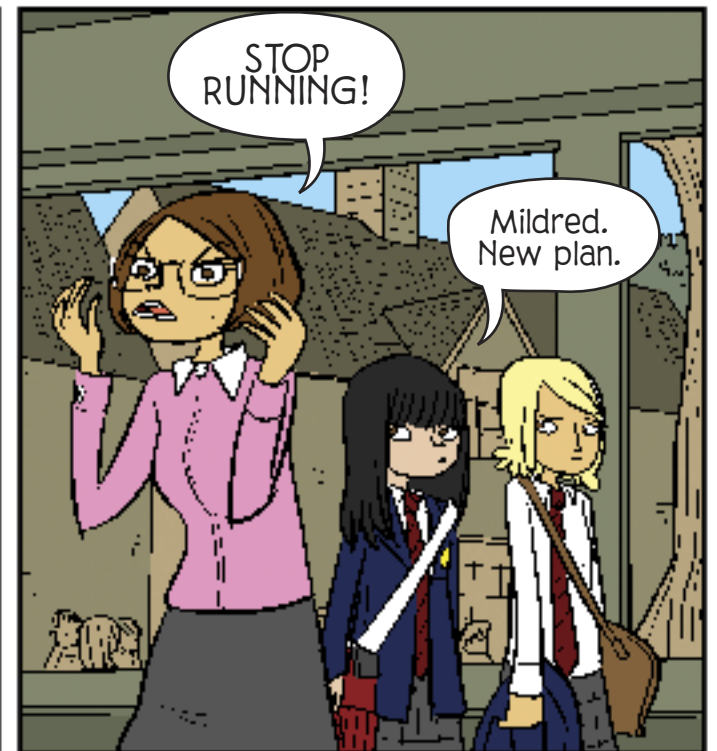
She could get a pretty good man. A hero!

Sigh, yes I understand. Let's get Pepper dried off.

SLOSH

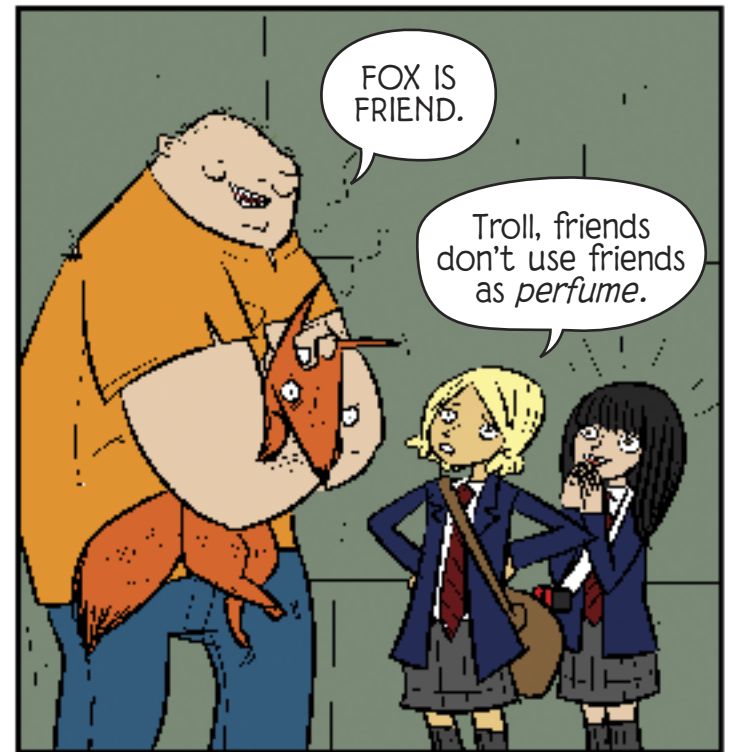
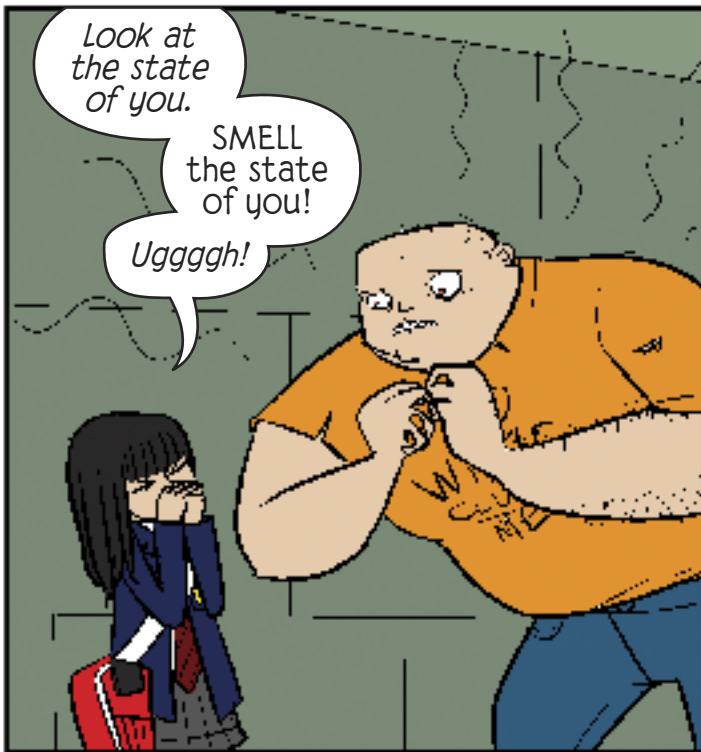
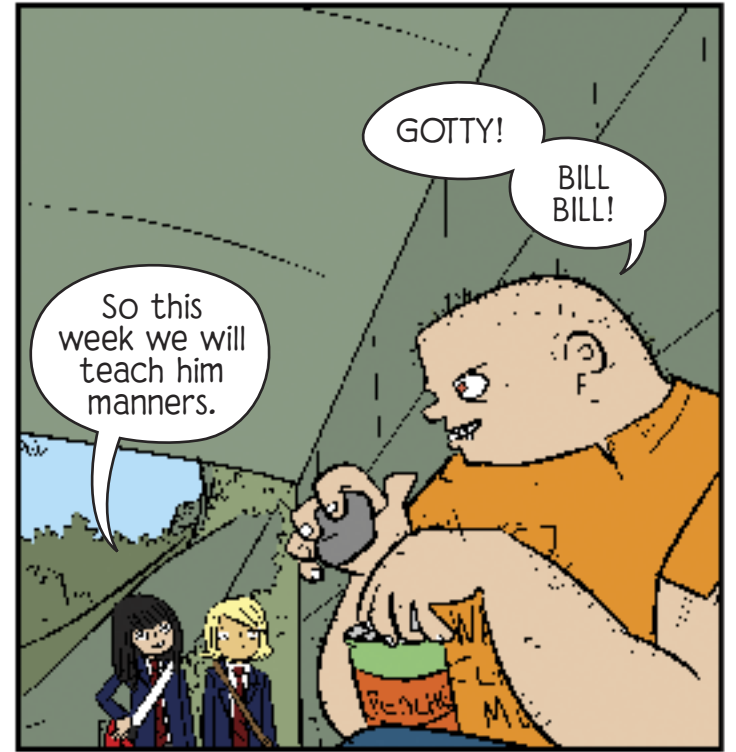
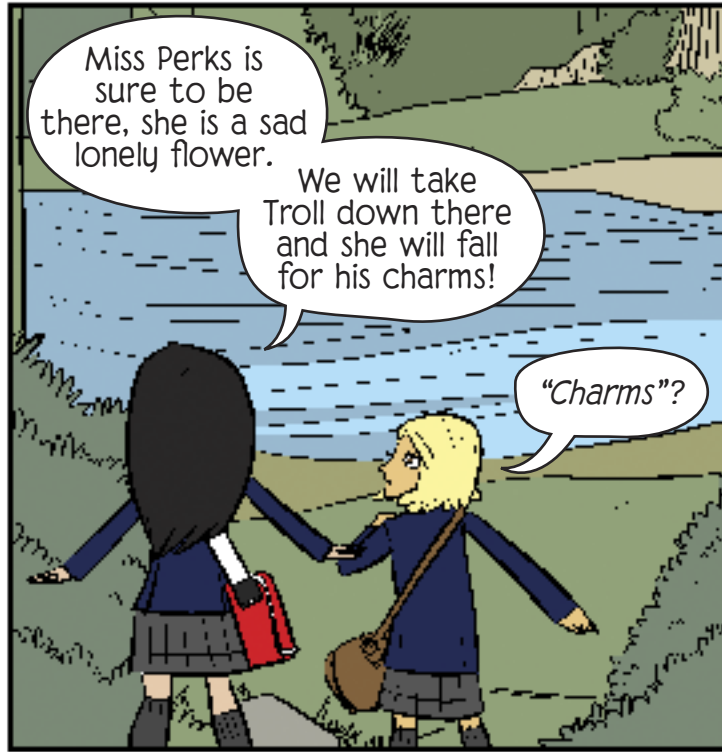
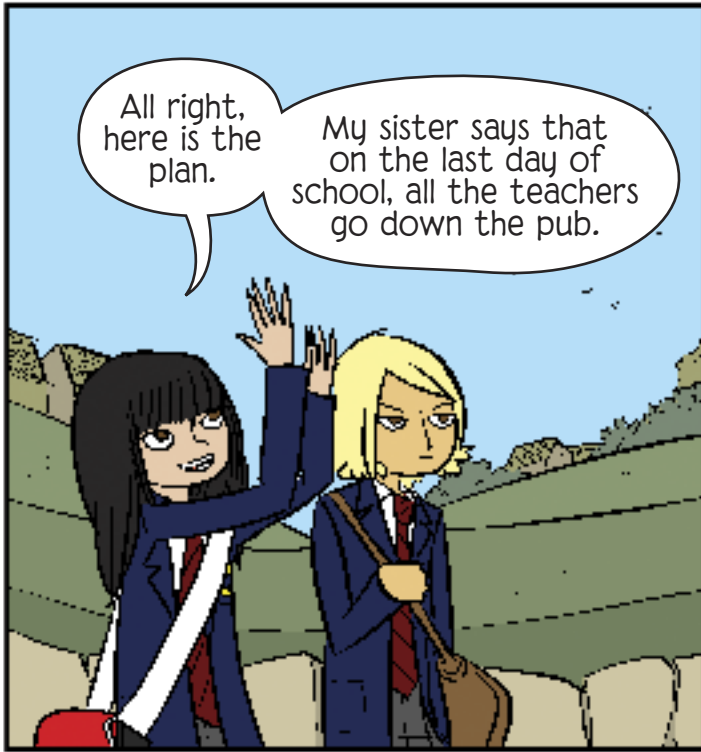


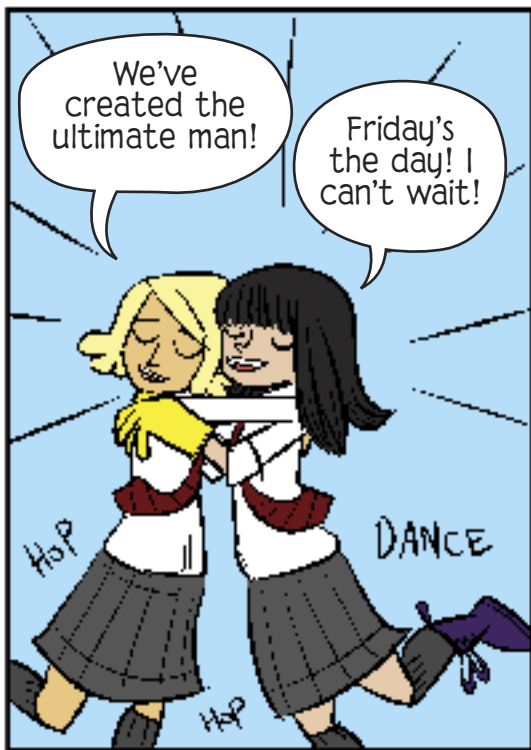
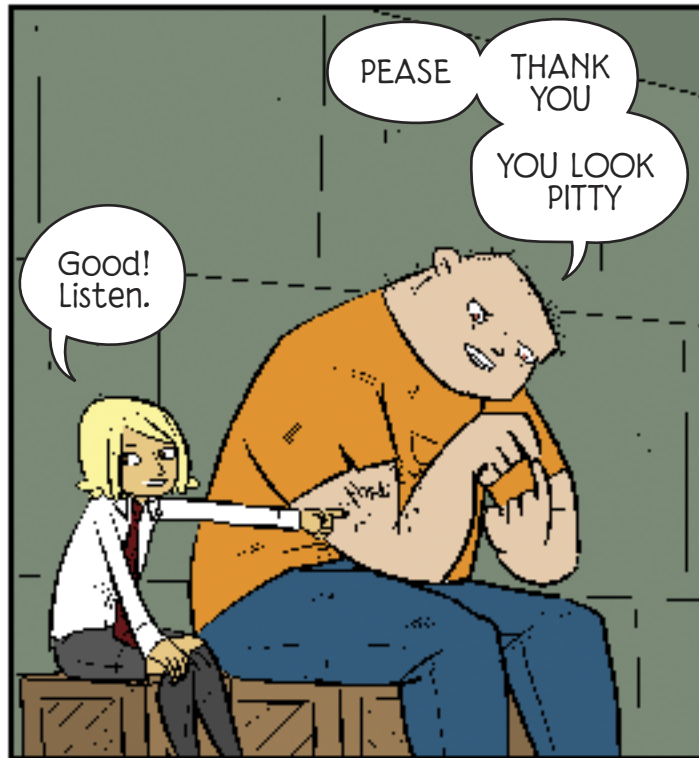
PHEW.



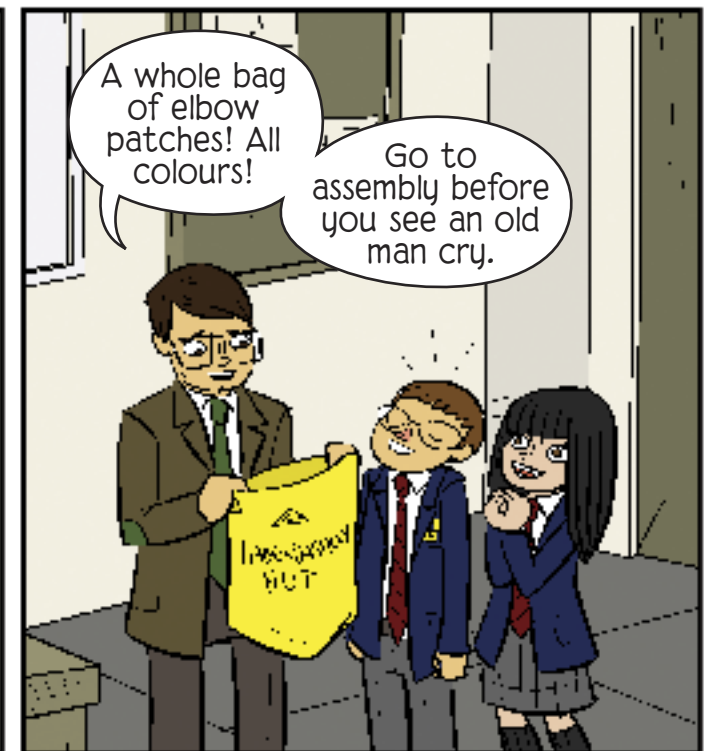
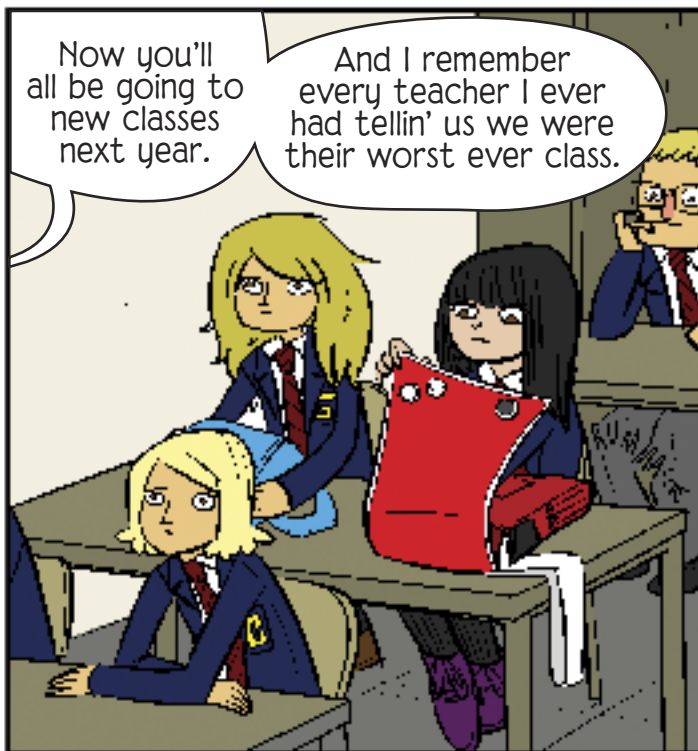
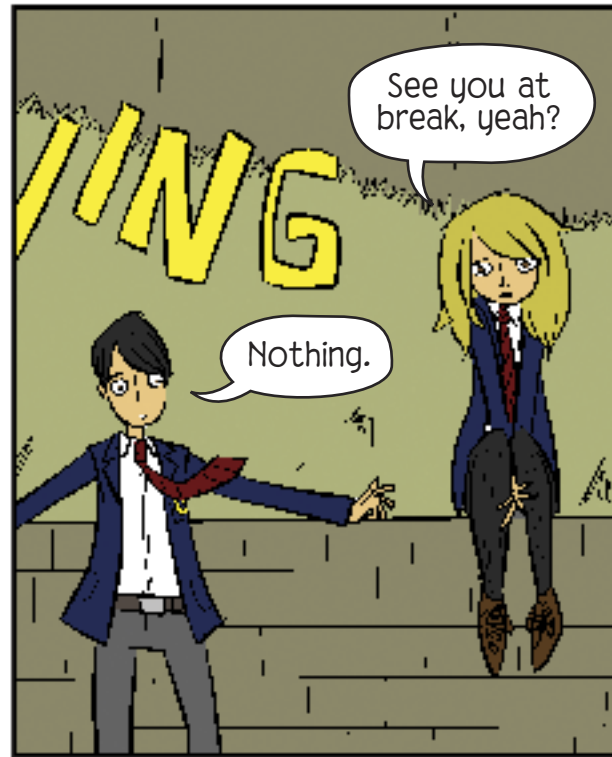
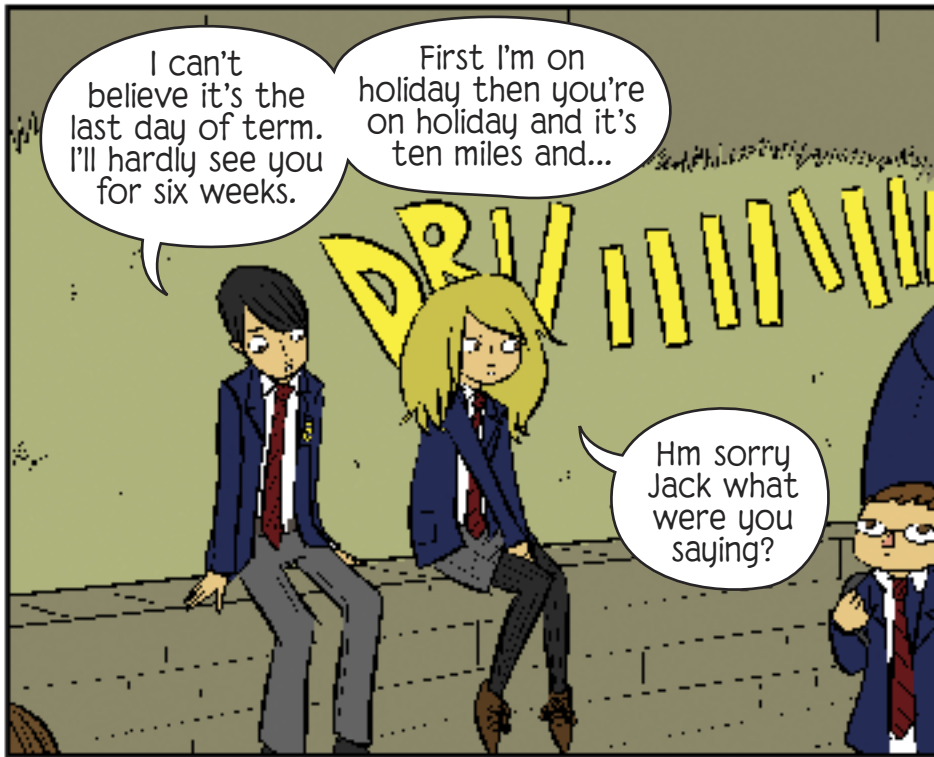
STOP RUNNING!

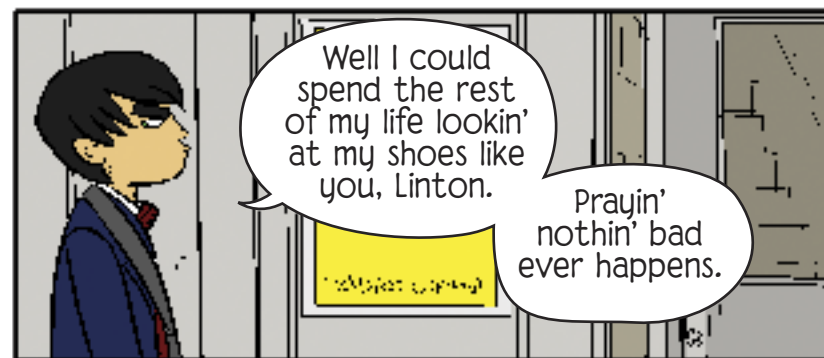
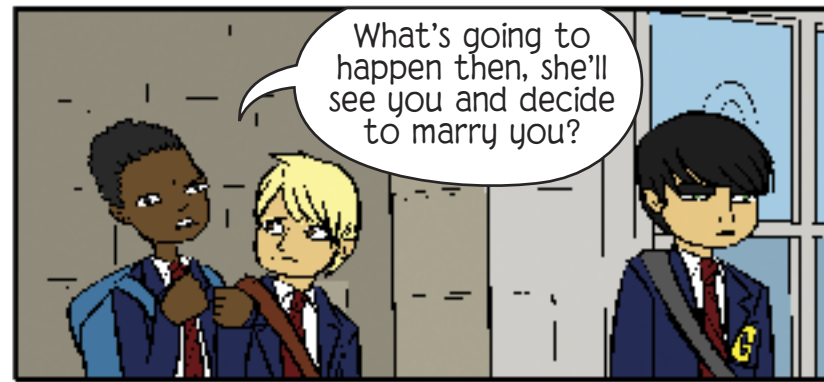
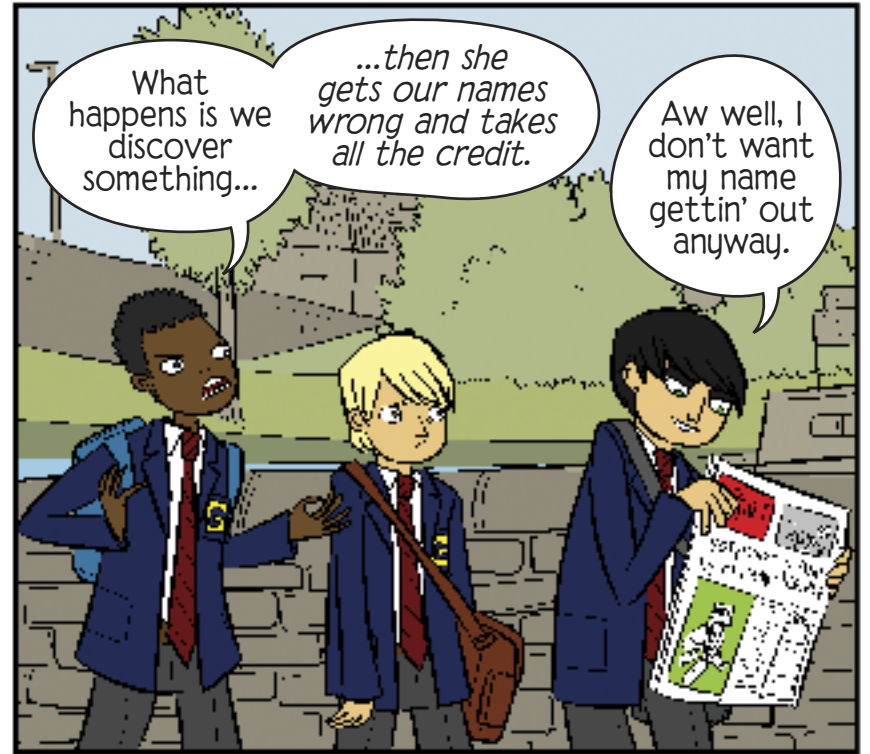
Mildred. New plan.













Sorry boys, Erin's not here.

The reporters knock off early on Friday afternoon. They'll be down the pub.

Try again Monday.



Well, look at that, the mystery boys in all their glory.

"Nobby, St John and Mack"?



Erin Winters is a bad egg, Colm.

Well I'm gettin' a whiff of brimstone right now, let's go.



You'll get a break soon, Erin.

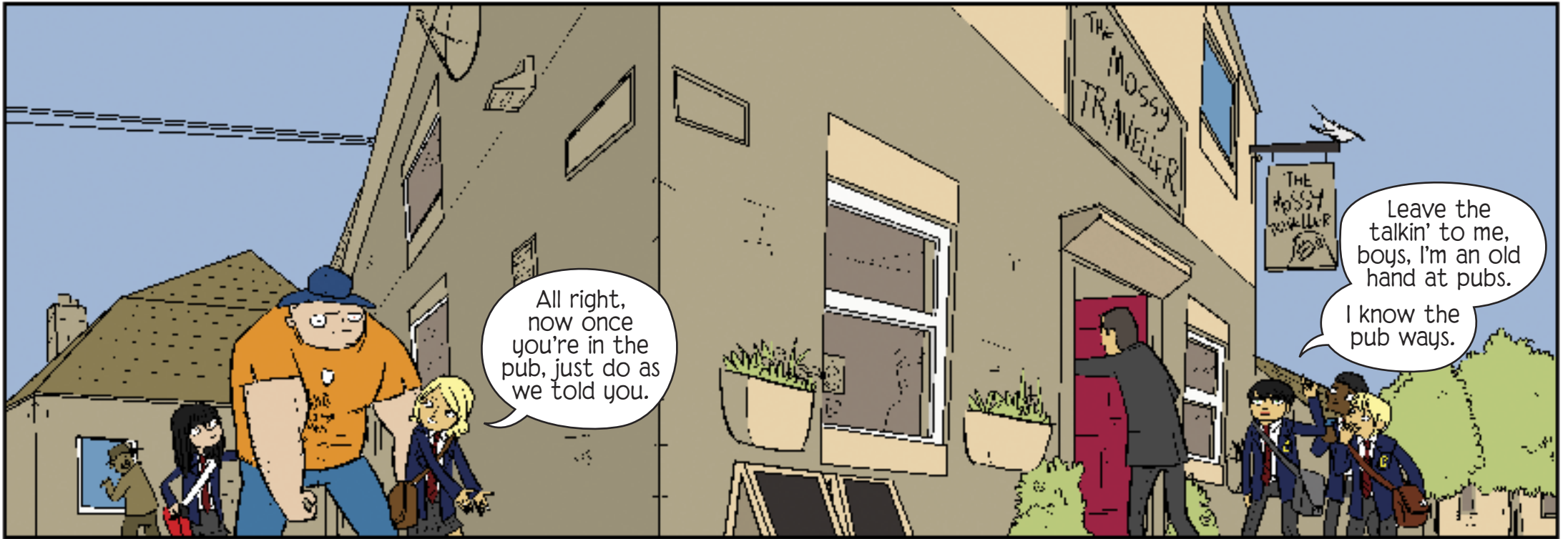
Huh. The only mystery left in town is why I'm still here.

You've got your whole life ahead of you, Elodie.

So long as you keep away from teaching.

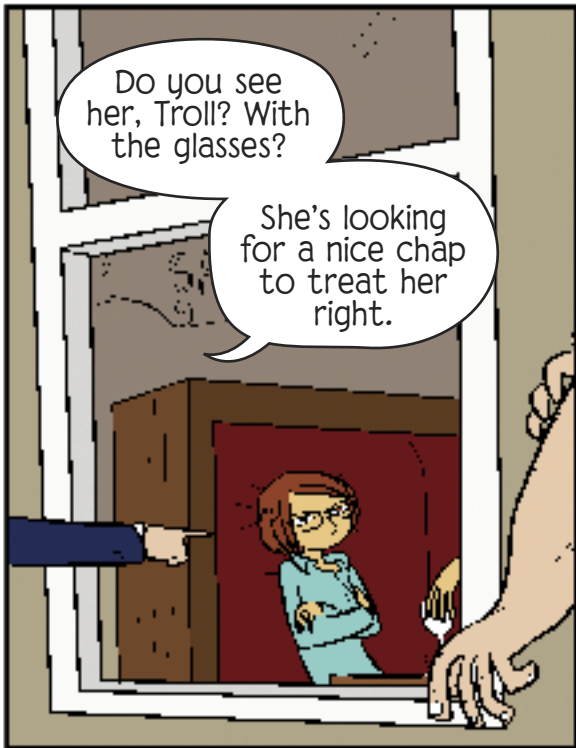
Aw Perks, you just had a bad term is all.

Miss Perks, I am sure there is a way to prove that your boyfriend is not "super imaginary".



All right, now once you're in the pub, just do as we told you.

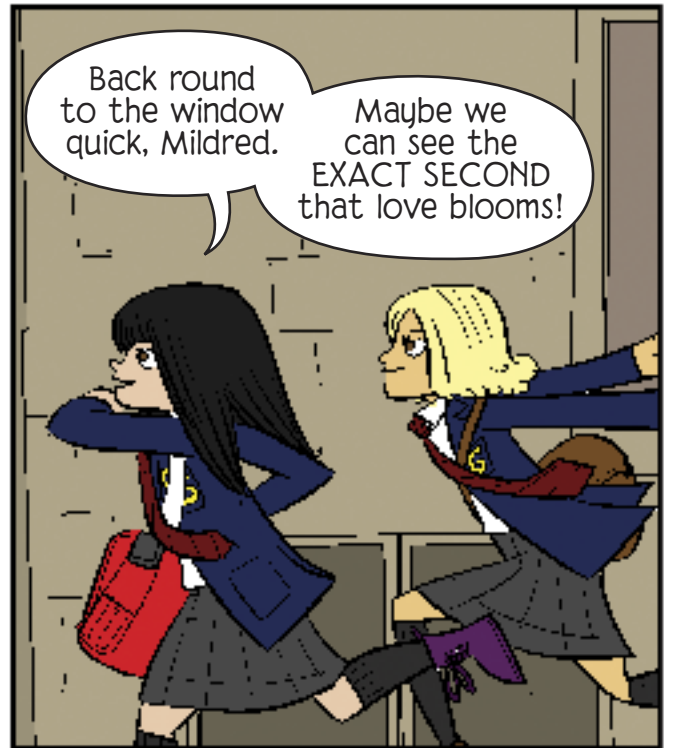
Leave the talkin' to me, boys, I'm an old hand at pubs. I know the pub ways.



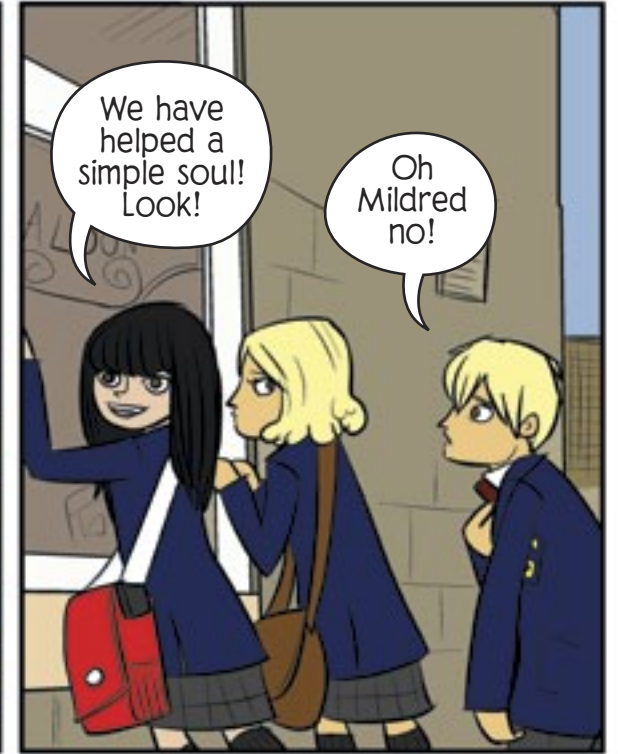
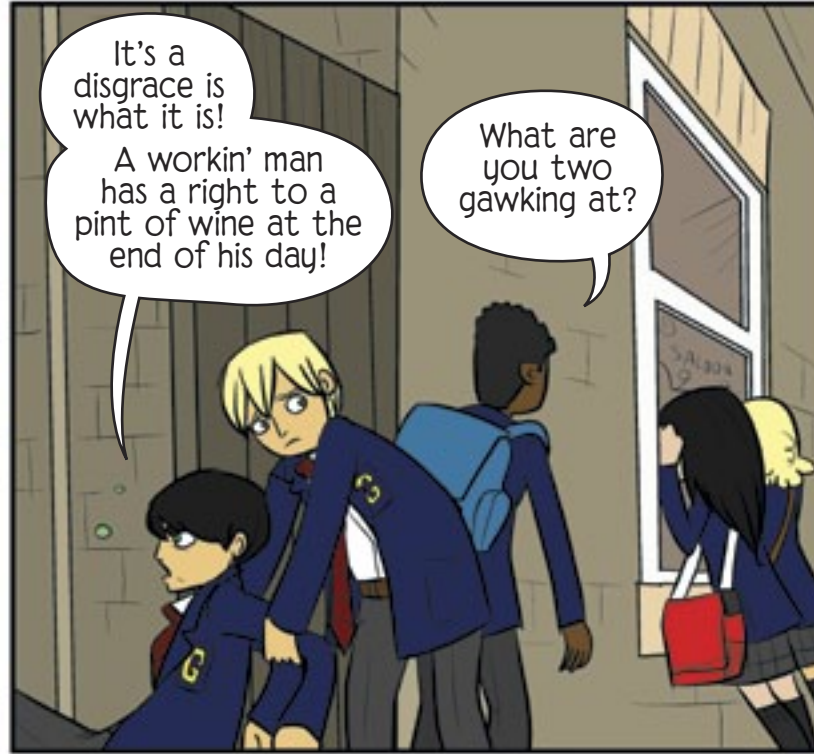
Do you see her, Troll? With the glasses? She's looking for a nice chap to treat her right.



BREATHE IN! SHOVE



Back round to the window quick, Mildred. Maybe we can see the EXACT SECOND that love blooms!



It's a disgrace is what it is!
A workin' man has a right to a pint of wine at the end of his day!

What are you two gawking at?

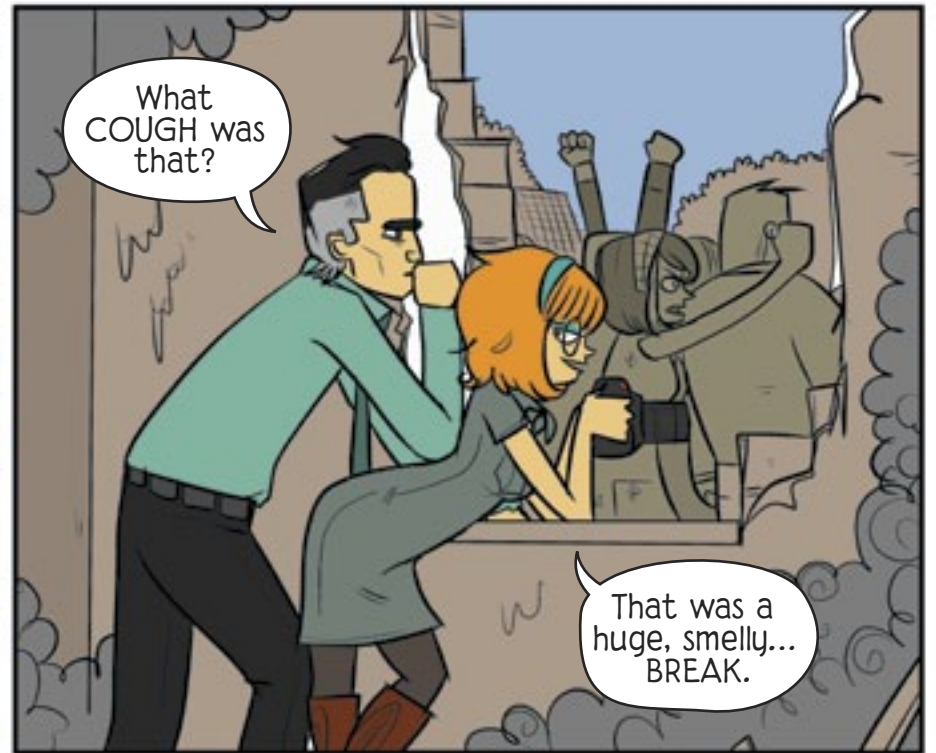
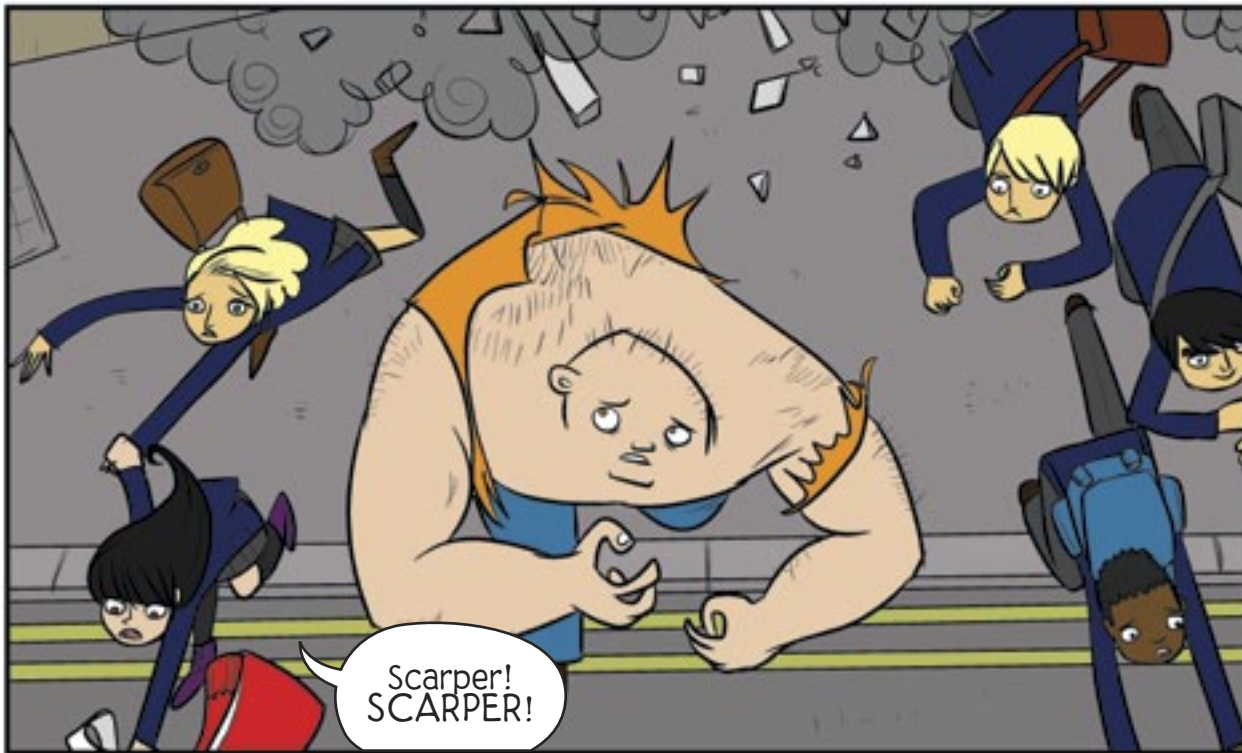
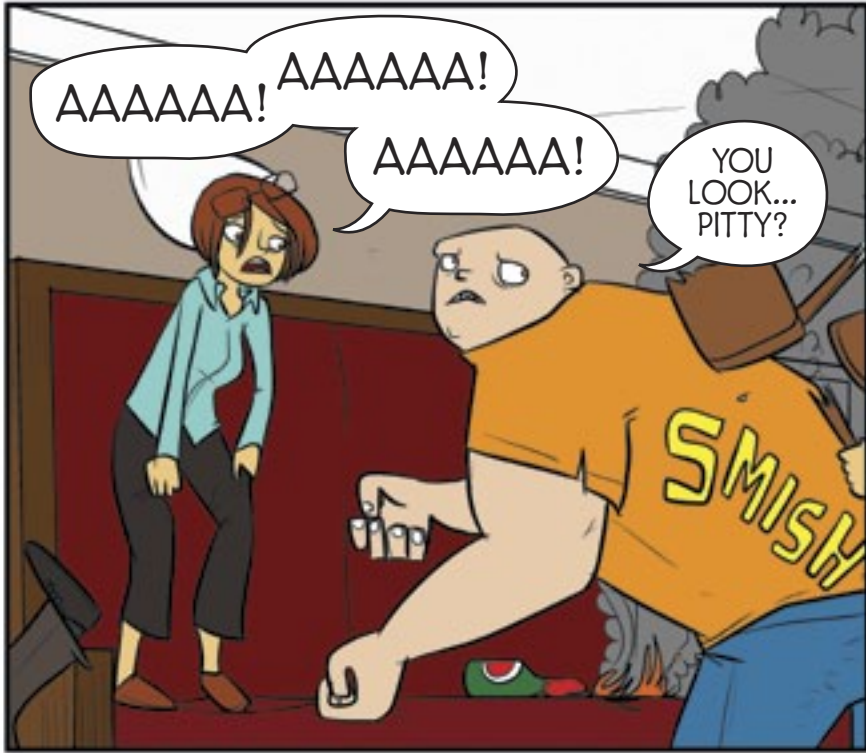
We have helped a simple soul! Look!

Oh Mildred no!

It's fine! Look, Lottie and I...

CLIP!

CLOBBER





Great. Great. Just great.

Erin didn't even manage to get our names wrong this time...



...since she got to the troll before we did!

So what do we do now?

Actually lads, I'm out.



They'll catch this fire-startin' orc now.

I got me own plans for the summer.



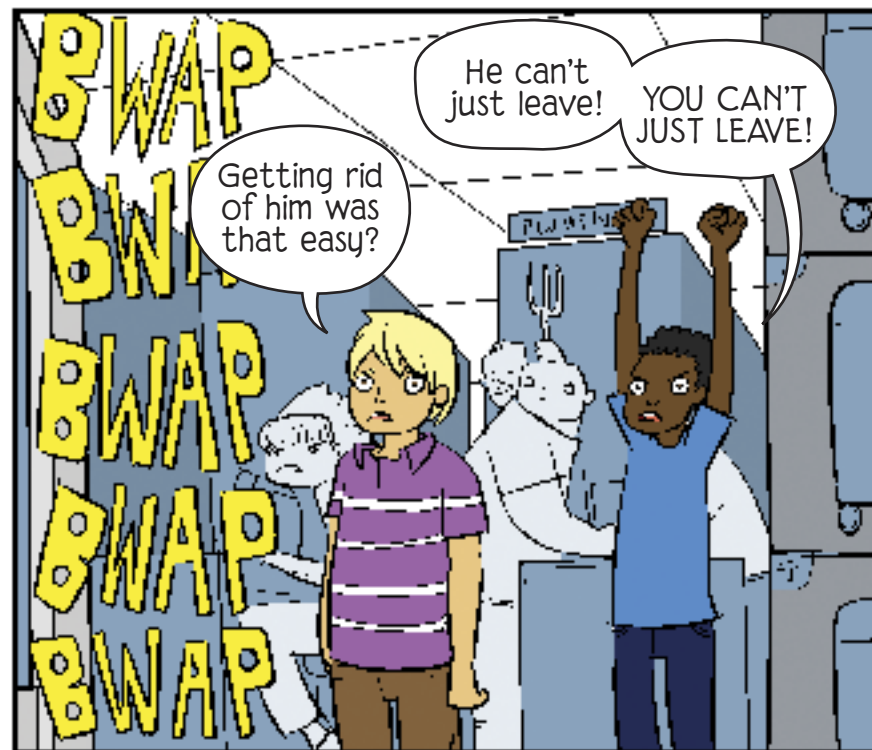
I reckon Lottie Grote's startin' to weaken to me charms.

One big romantic gesture, she'll come around.



But it's been fun solvin' this. And if I find any other mysteries...

...maybe I'll let you know.



Getting rid of him was that easy?

He can't just leave!

YOU CAN'T JUST LEAVE!



Oh man oh man oh man oh man oh man PEPPER

Oh MAN
Wish wish wish wish wish it didn't happen



SLAP



LOTTIE. What did you do?



Did you let a big mad thing loose on a pub?

No!



Well YES but we practised him for ages being good.

Like three HOURS or something.

It says here maybe he did the fires.



No WAY.

No way PLUS, he couldn't light a match with his big sausage fingers.

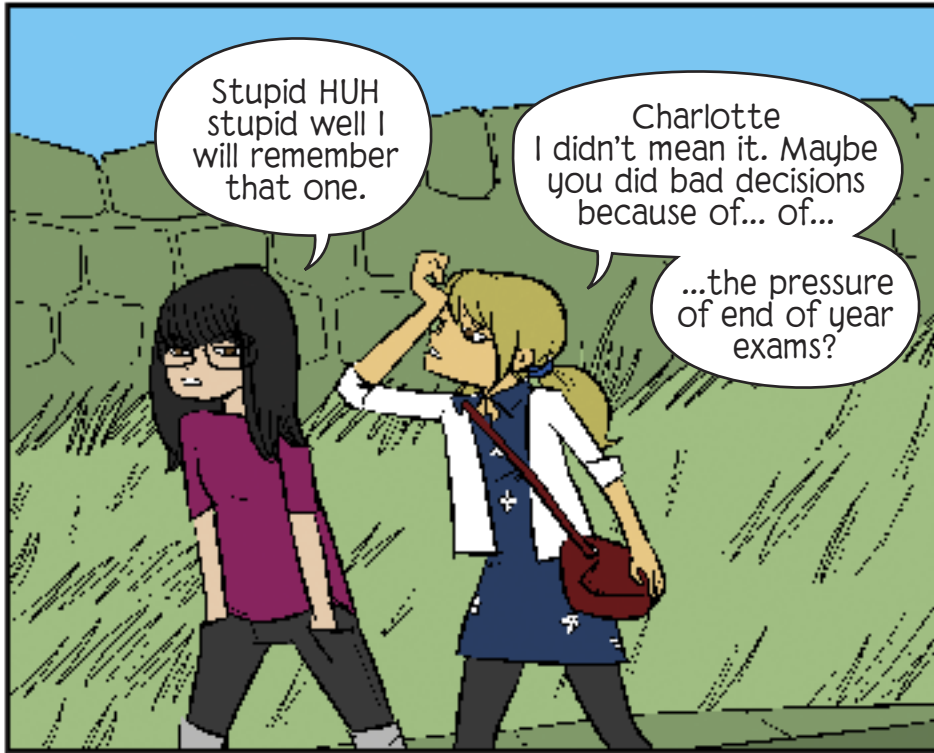


GLASSES! Glasses are COOL! Can I try them on?

Do you want to go blind...

...as well as stupid?





Stupid HUH stupid well I will remember that one.

Charlotte I didn't mean it. Maybe you did bad decisions because of... of...
...the pressure of end of year exams?



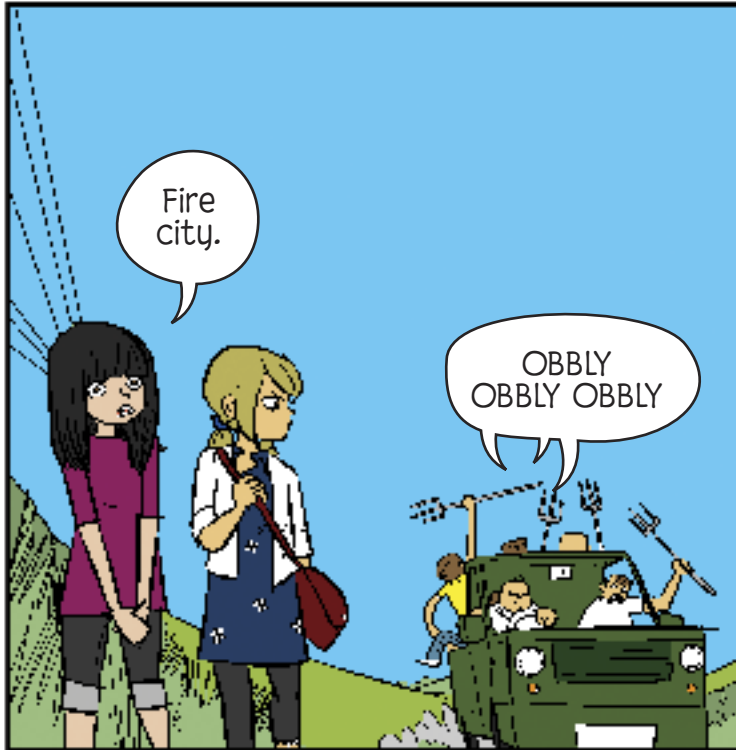
Yeah... yeah that's what I thought it was.

I'm thinkin' clearer now.



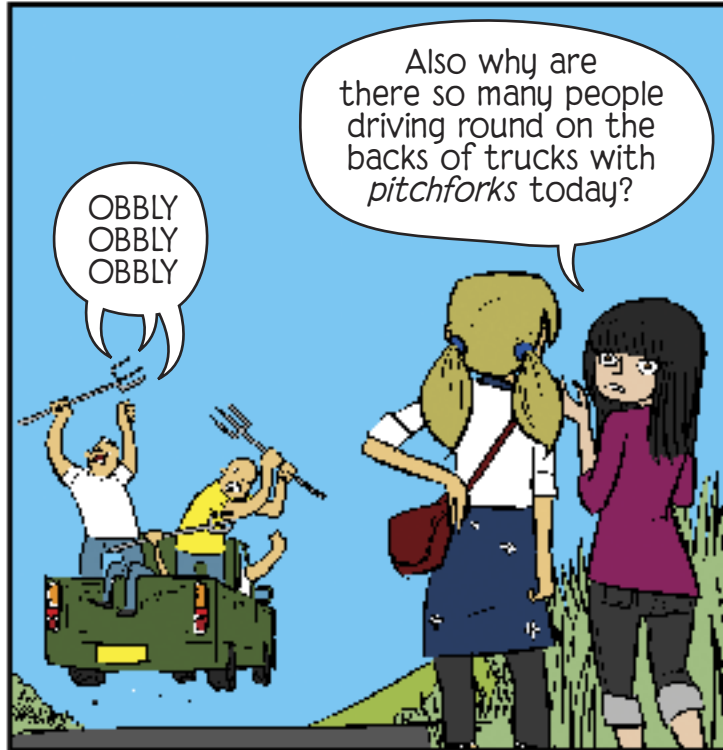
Why are there so many fire engines driving around today?

It hasn't rained for weeks. Everything's dry.



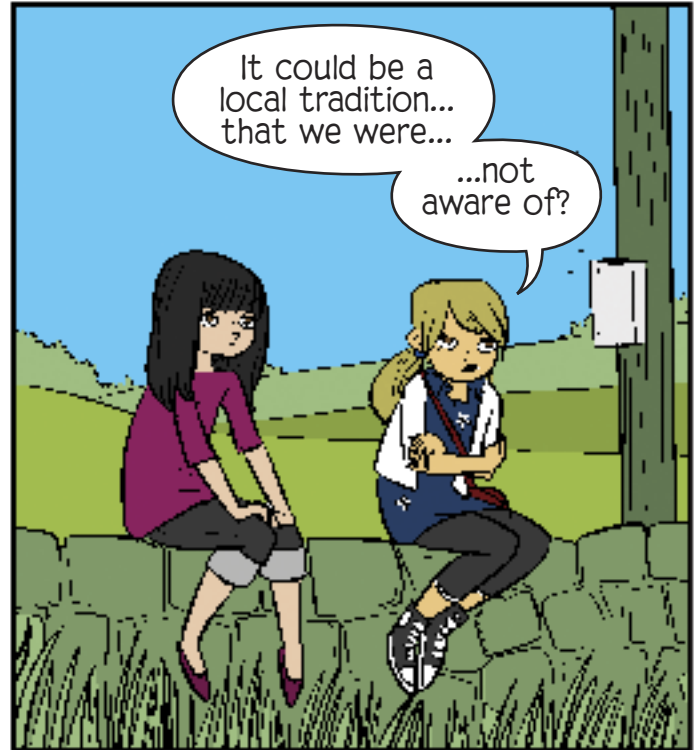
Fire city.

OBBLY OBBLY OBBLY



OBBLY OBBLY OBBLY

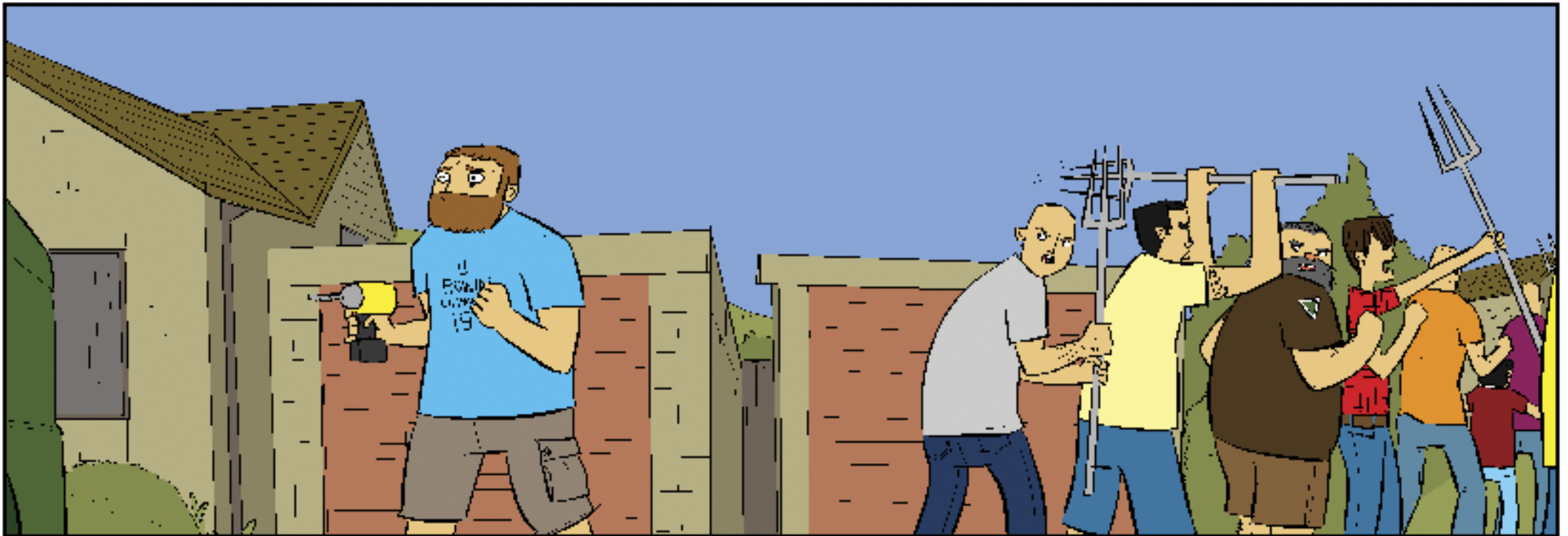
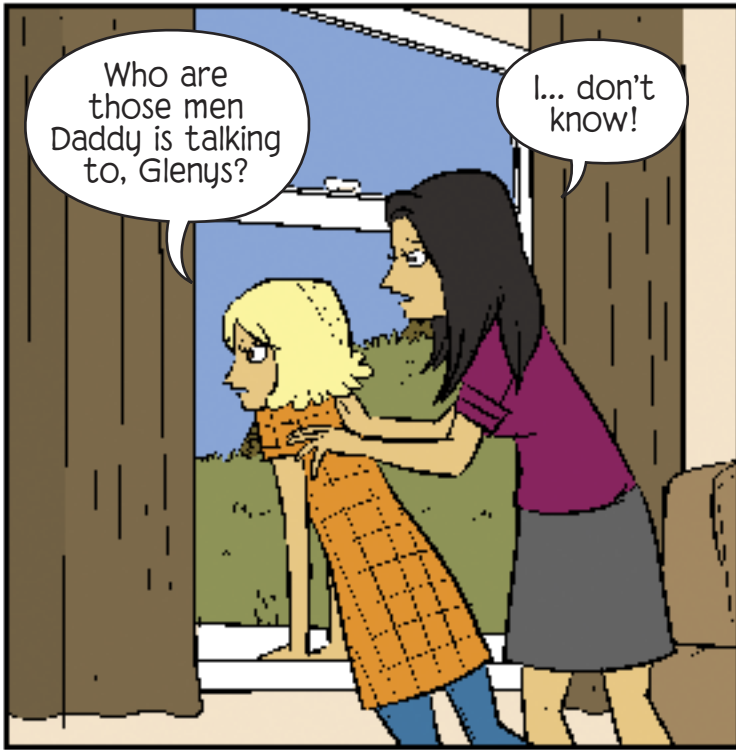
Also why are there so many people driving round on the backs of trucks with pitchforks today?



It could be a local tradition... that we were...

...not aware of?







Where are all these shouters heading?

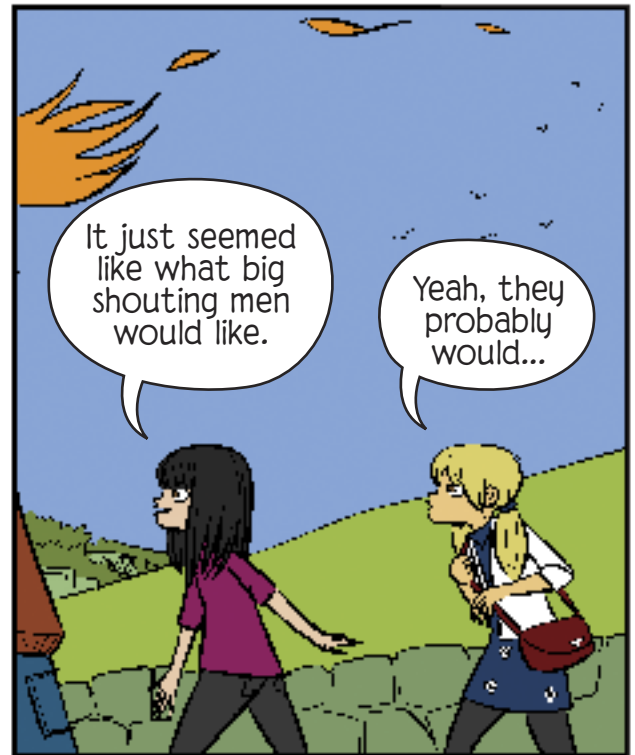
Down towards the river! But why?



Maybe Tackleford's toughest man is fighting Wendlefield's toughest man!

TO BE THE BEST!

What?



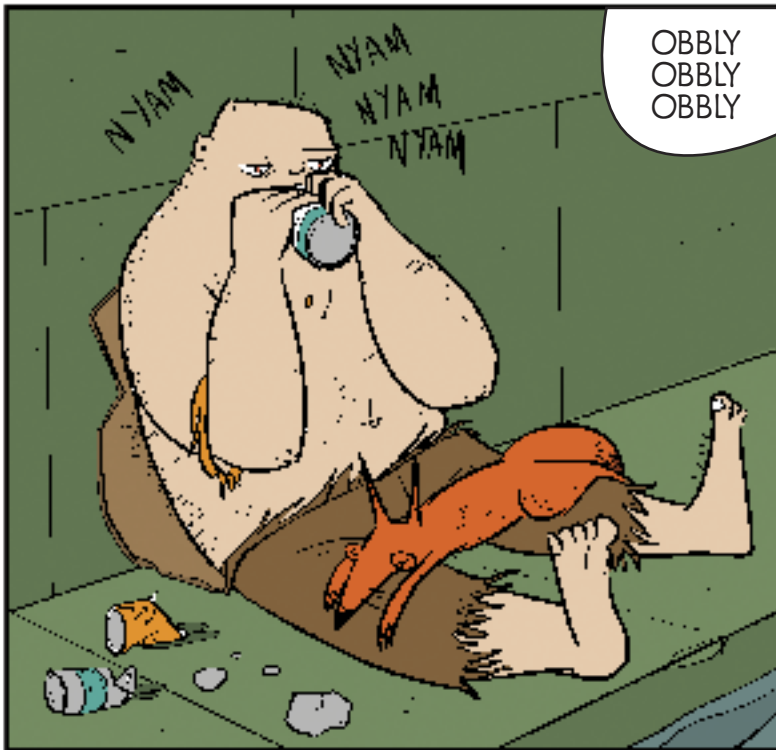
It just seemed like what big shouting men would like.

Yeah, they probably would...



Oh Shauna NO.

They're going after TROLL!

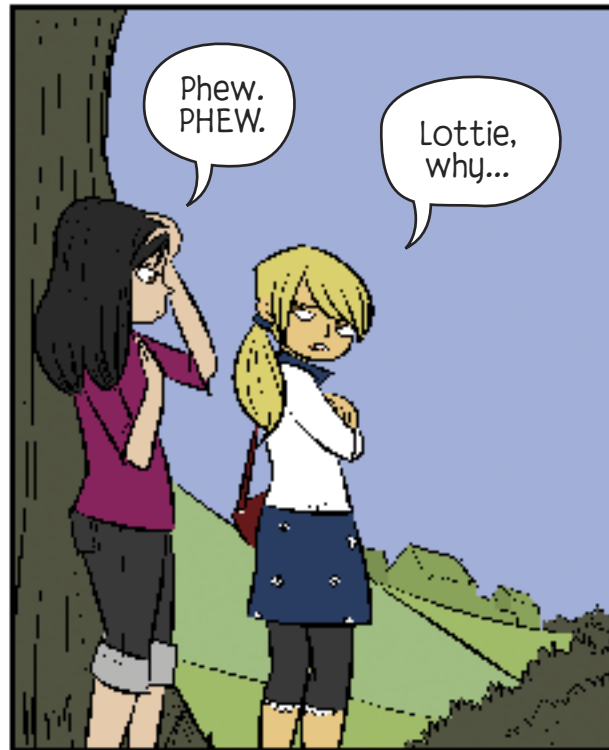
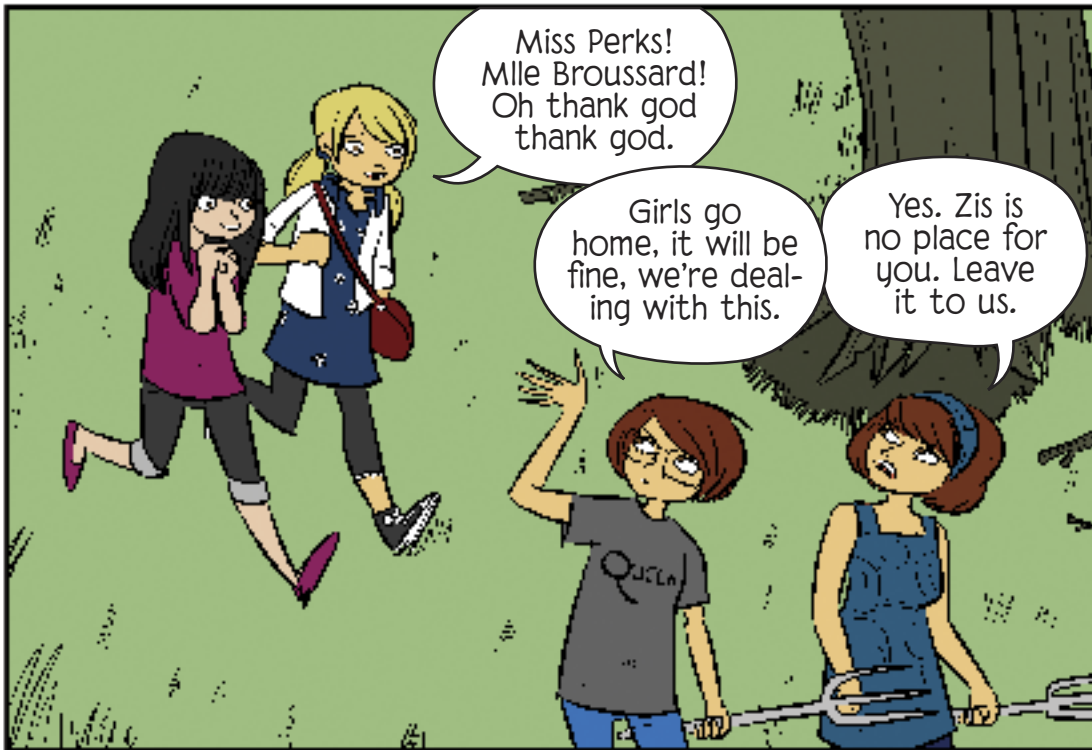
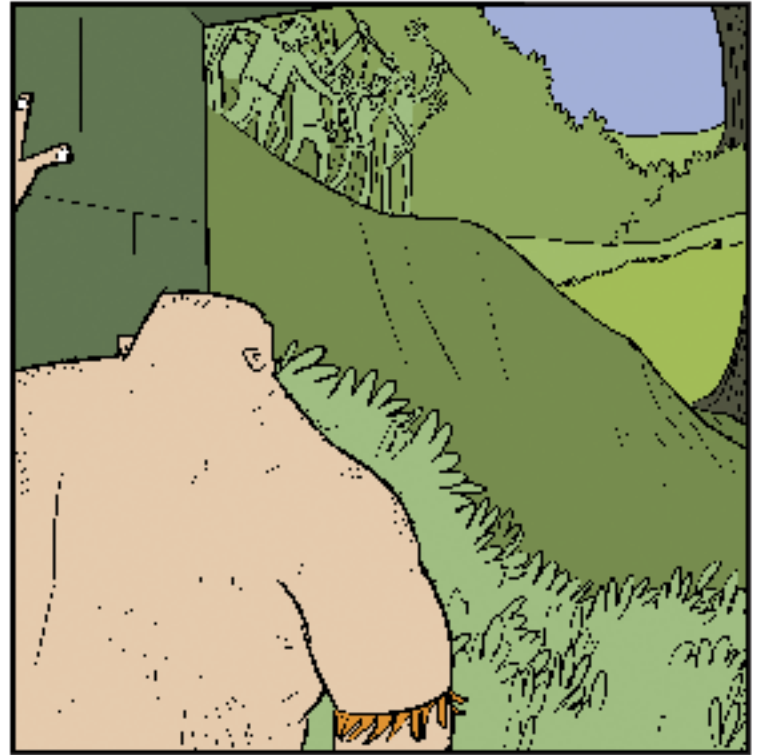


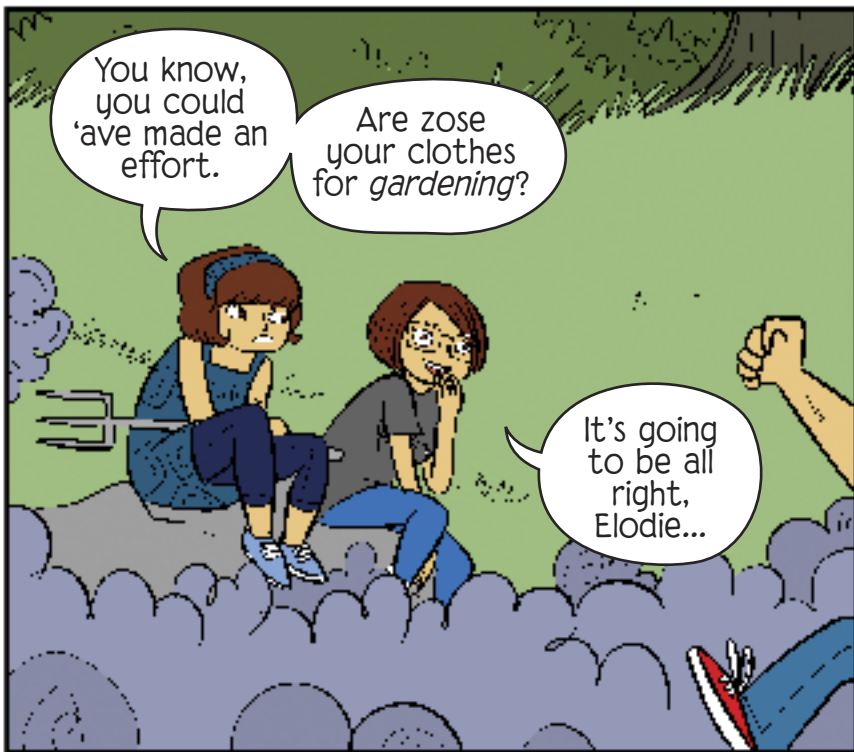
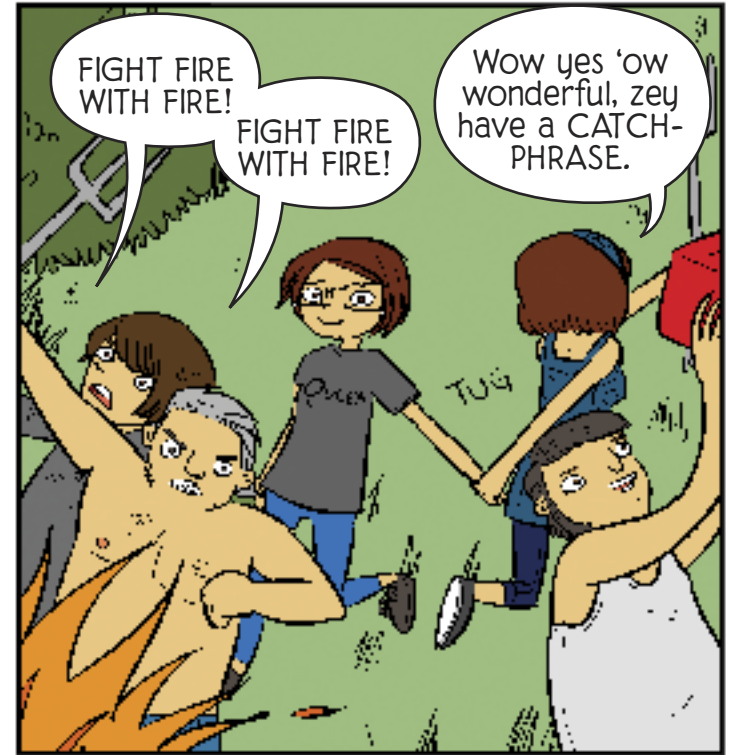
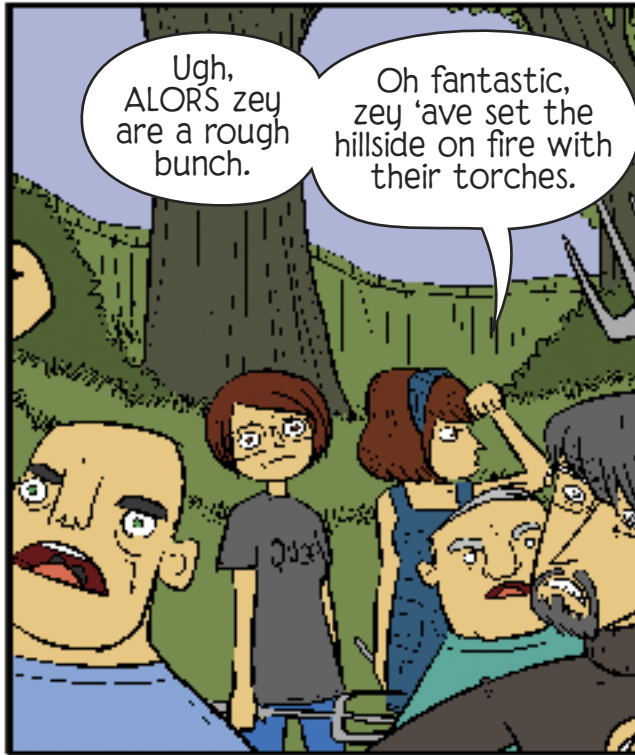
OBBLY OBBLY OBBLY

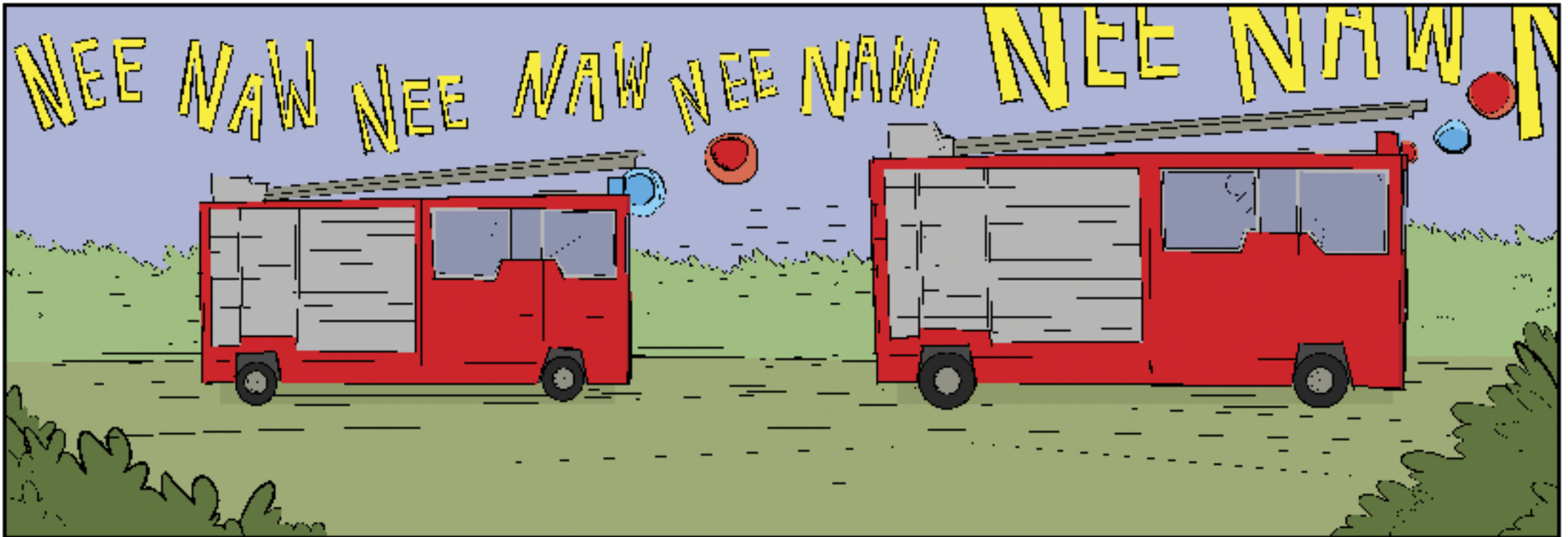
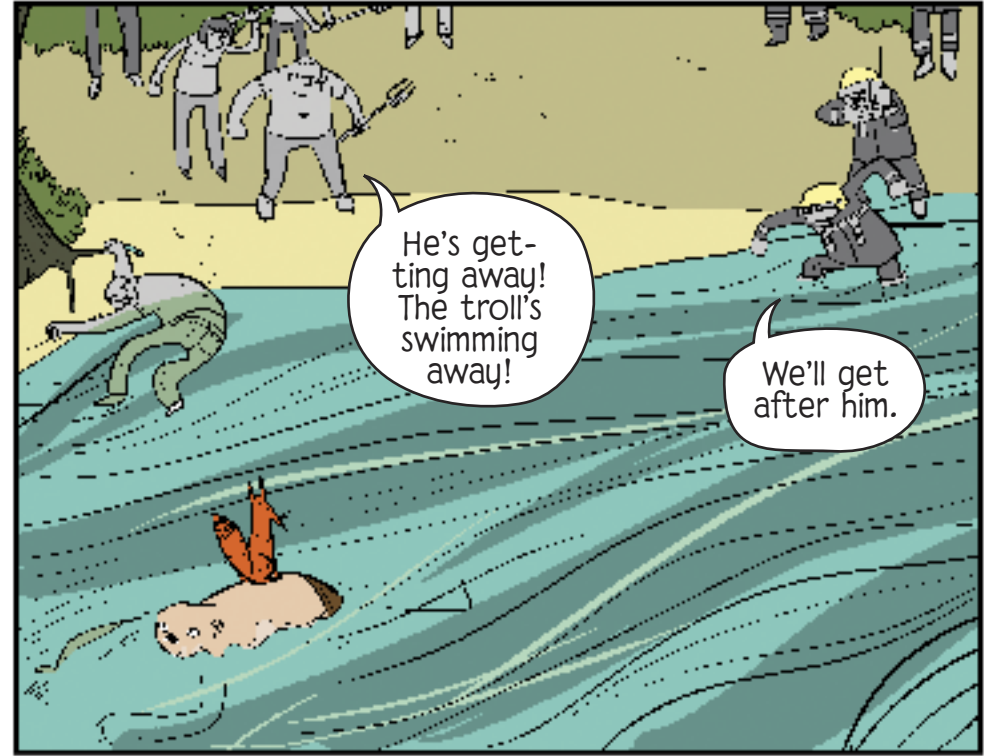


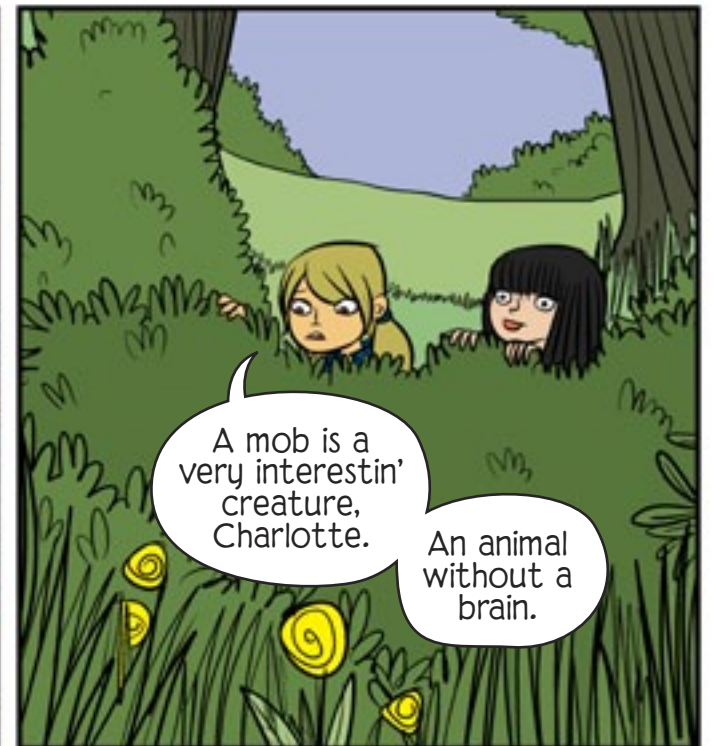
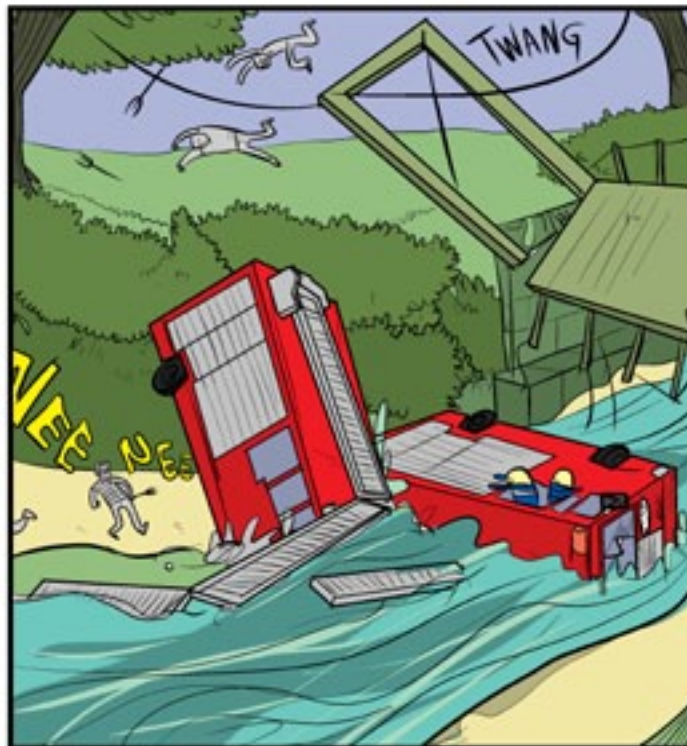
LOUD MEN FRIGHTEN FOX!

SPOIL DINNER!



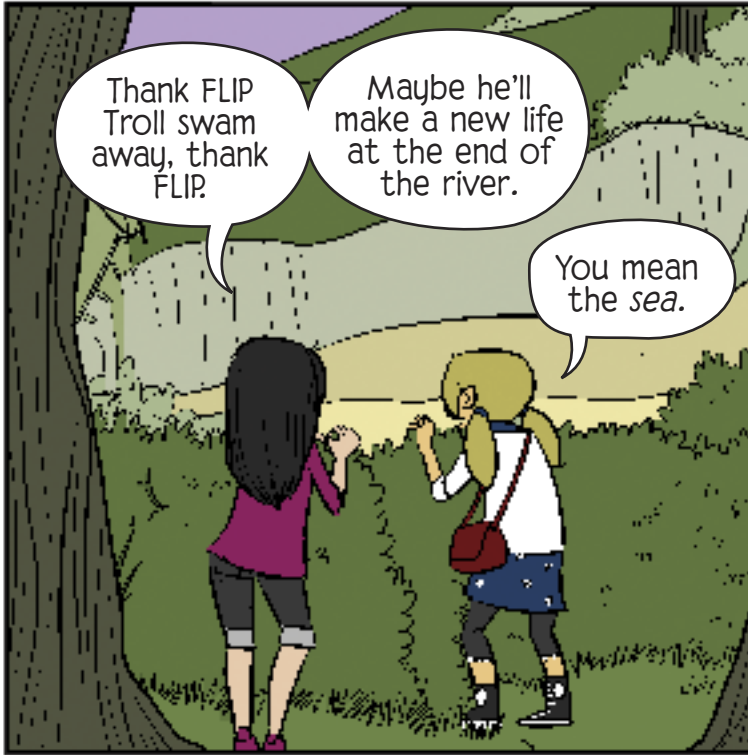






A mob is a very interestin' creature, Charlotte.

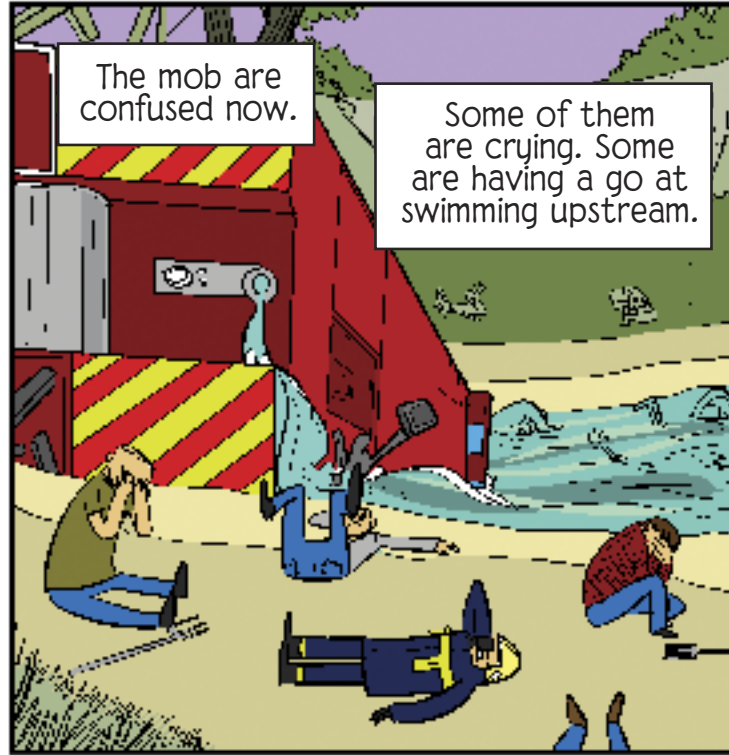
An animal without a brain.



Thank FLIP Troll swam away, thank FLIP.

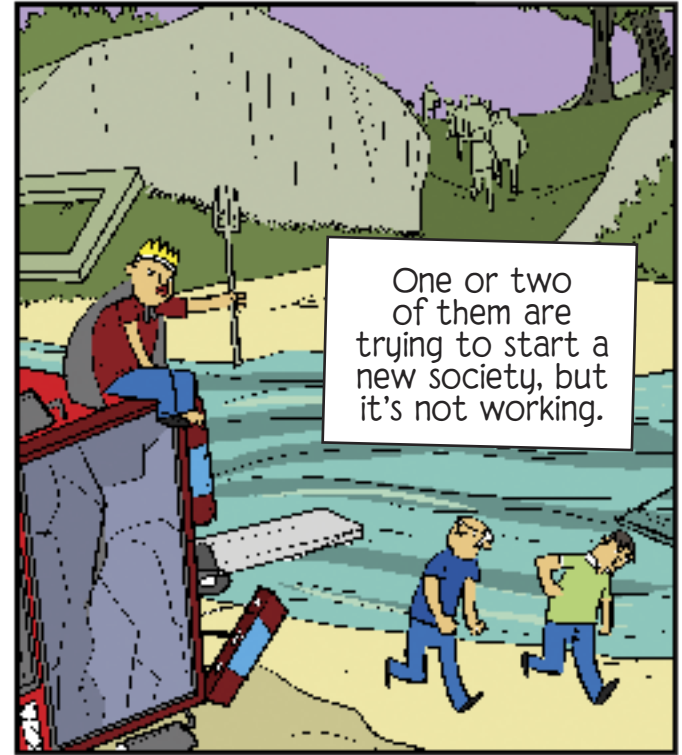
Maybe he'll make a new life at the end of the river.

You mean the sea.



The mob are confused now.

Some of them are crying. Some are having a go at swimming upstream.

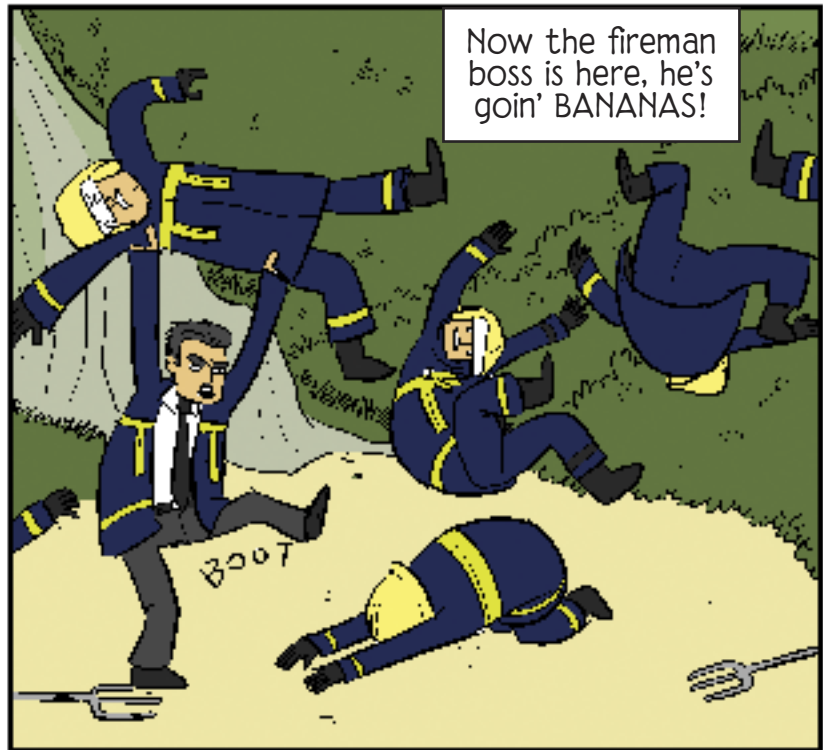


One or two of them are trying to start a new society, but it's not working.



What will they do next?

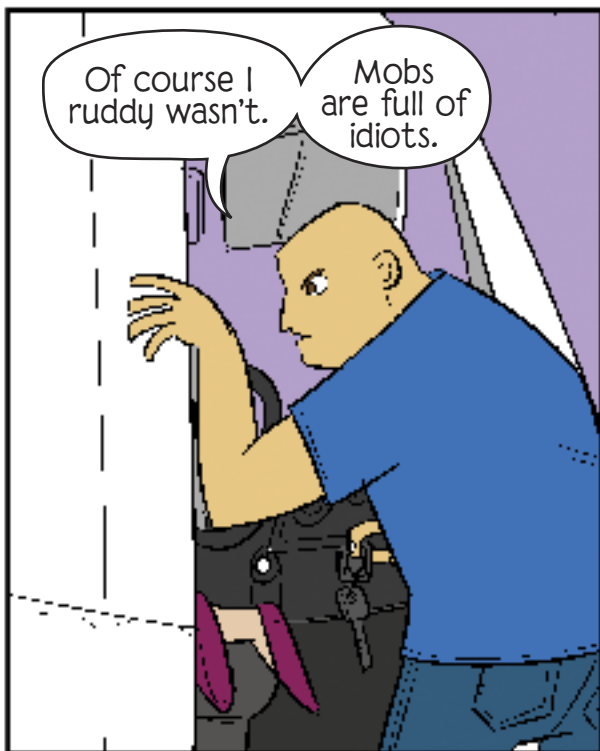
Probably just go home for their tea.

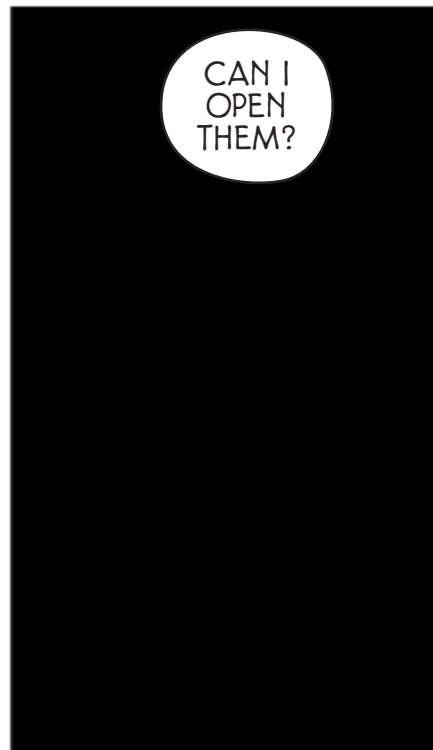
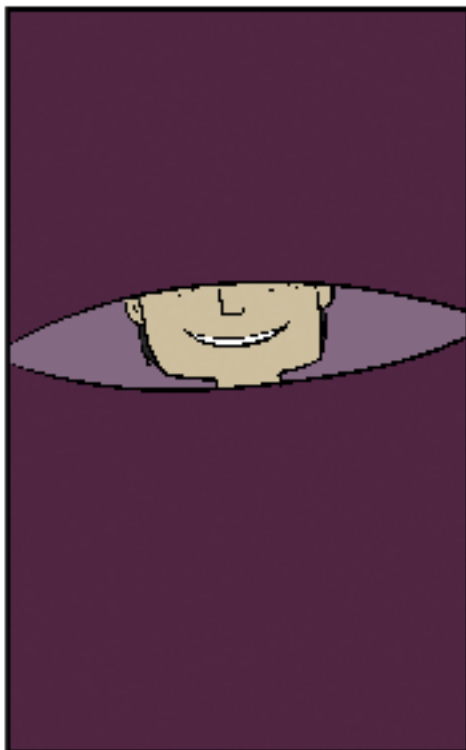
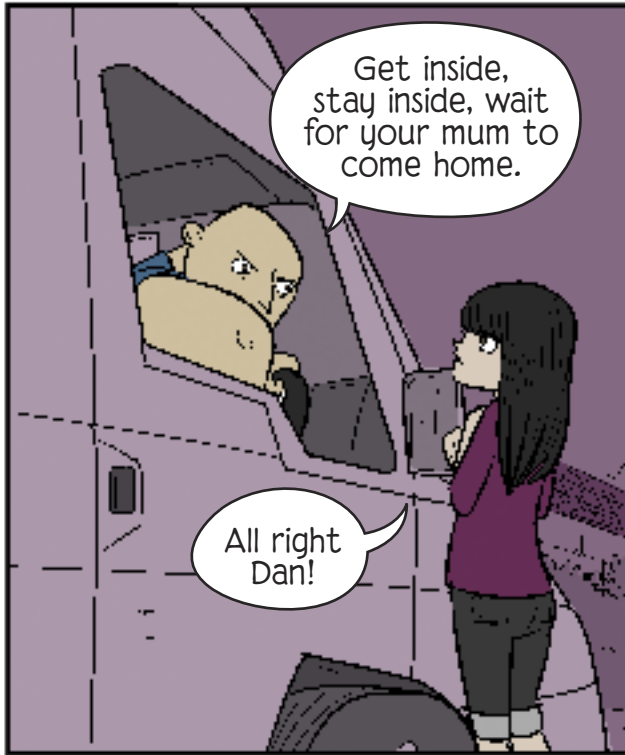


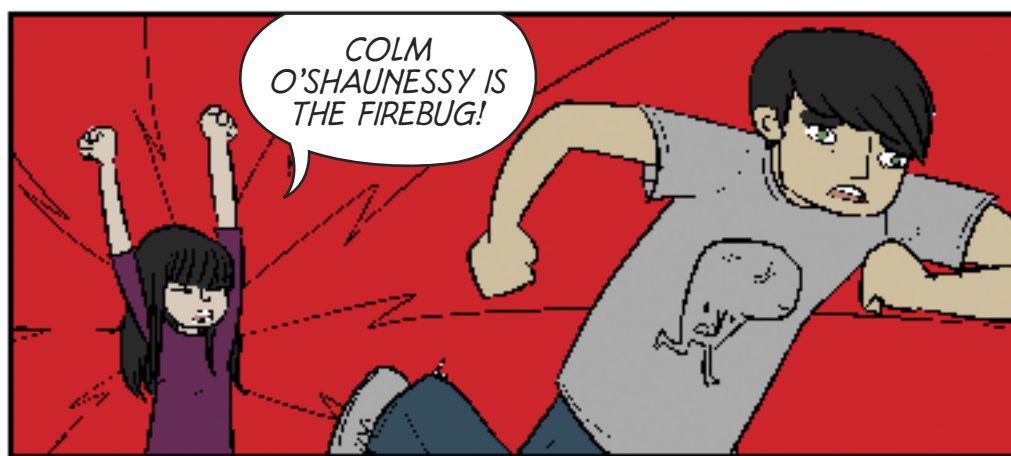
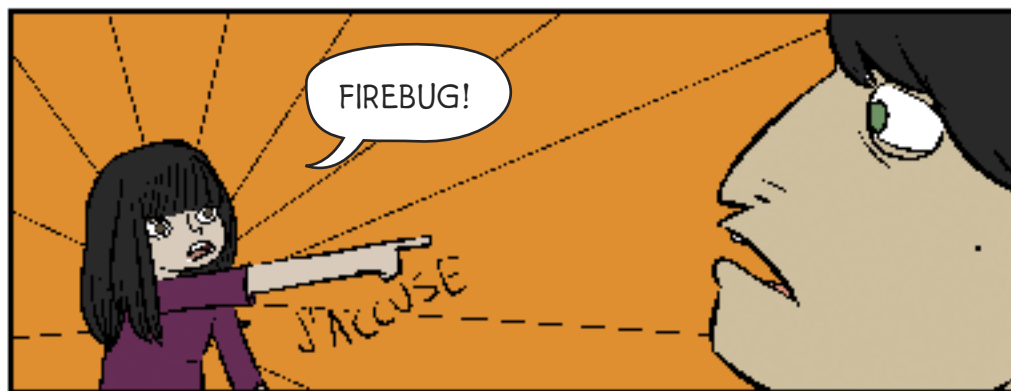
Now the fireman boss is here, he's goin' BANANAS!

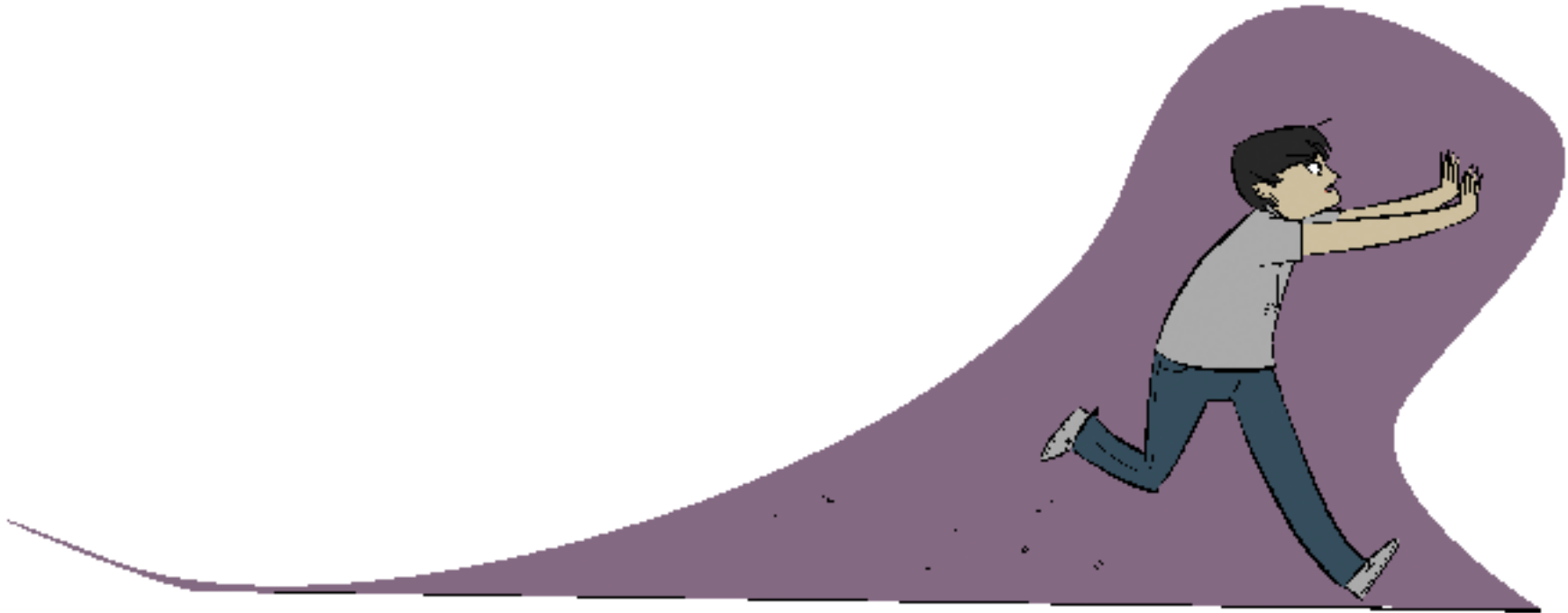


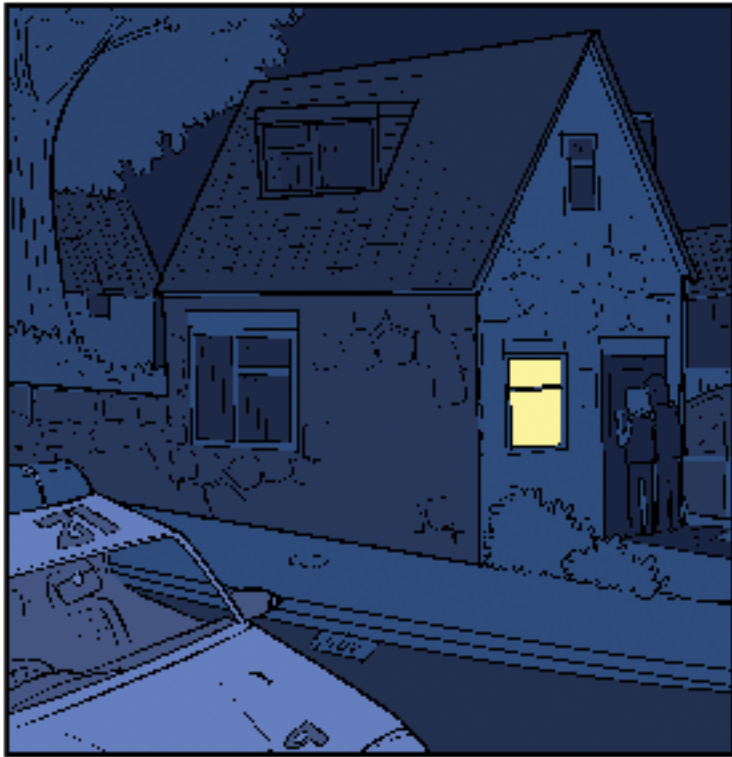
This is better than TELLY-









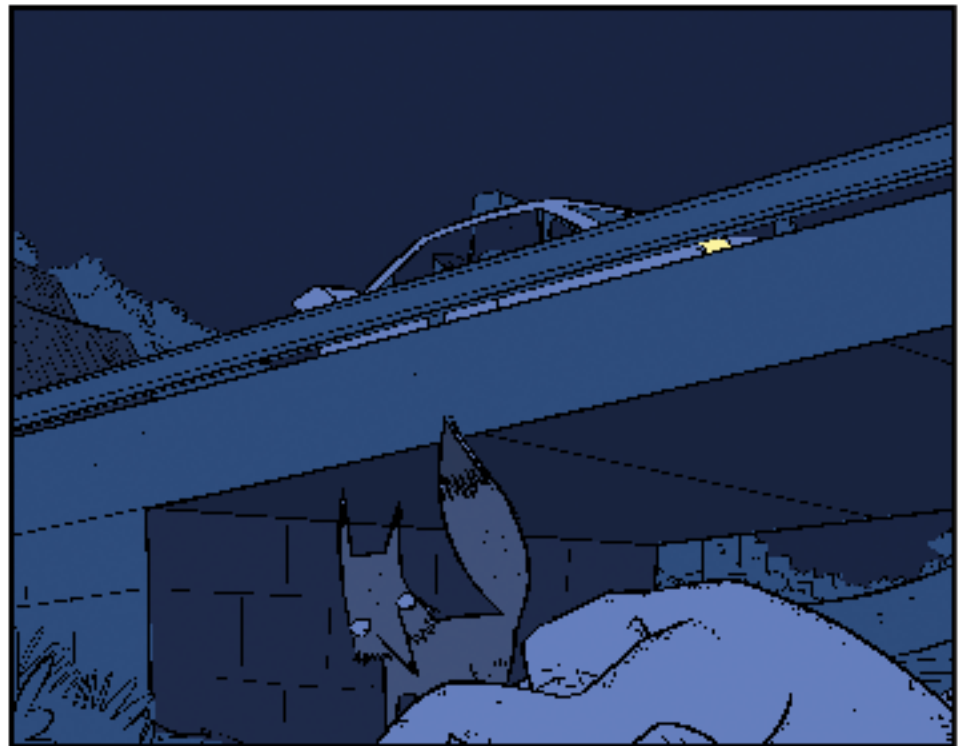


I'm innocent!
I DONE NOTHIN'!
NOTHIN'!

DRAG



CLUNK
CLICK





Let me see, please, Linton, I want to see it!

I don't know, Sonny.



They've locked up Colm for doing those fires.

He's too dangerous for society.

This letter's probably full of his mad fantasies.



But he wanted to catch the arsonist more than anyone!

You can't understand how a mad person's mind works!

It's mad in there.



Oh, FINE.



So they put me in the nuthouse rather than the big house. They think I'm crackers. You're less likely to get beaten up here but more likely to get bitten.



Tell Lottie Grote I don't blame her for dopping me in. I'm sorry about her tree, and I'm growing her a new one from an apple pip.

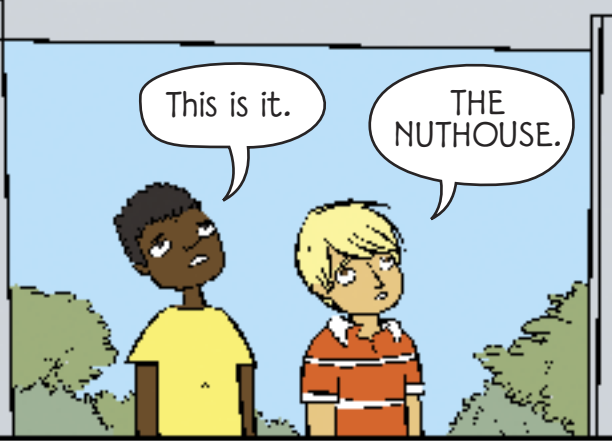


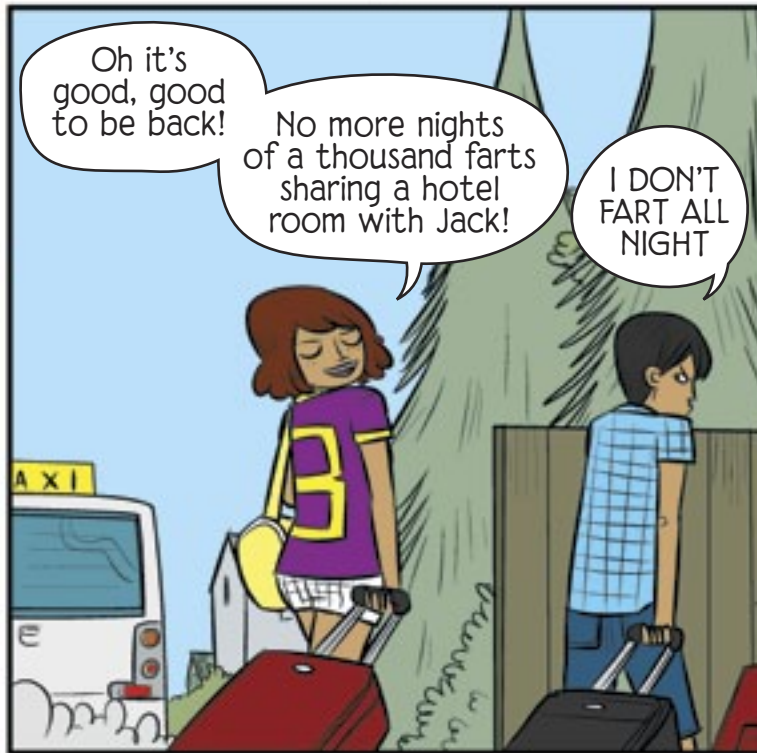
Dear Sonny and Linton, how's it going?



Aw.

They let us out for playtime at 2 o'clock. I'll wait for you by the fence every day. I didn't do the rest of those fires. - COLM





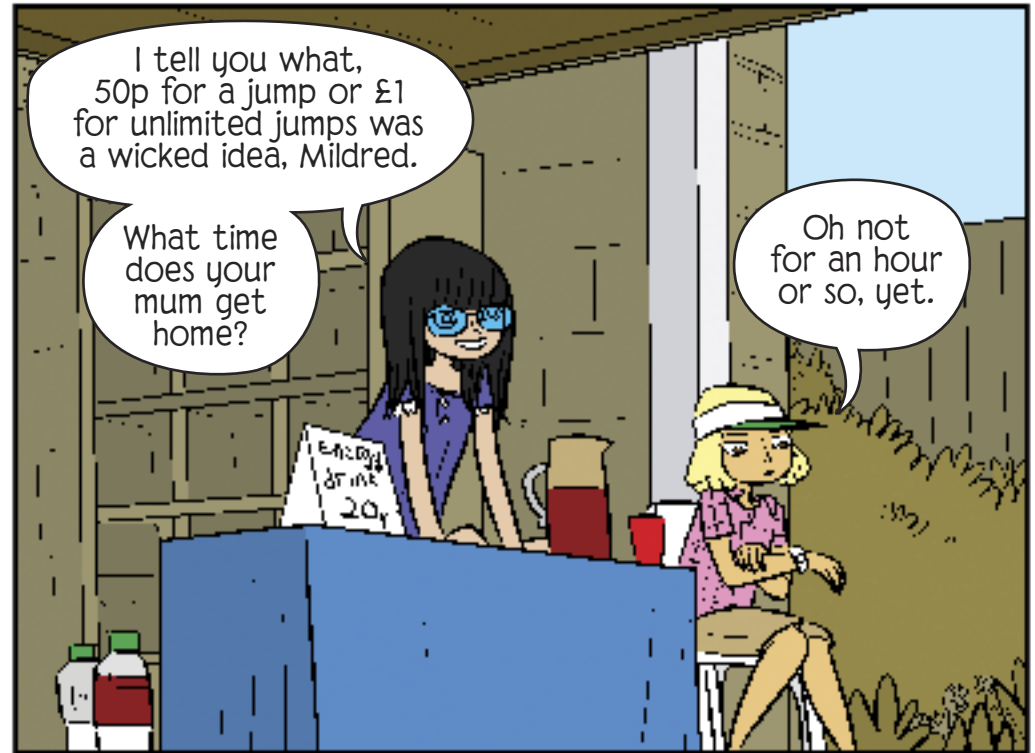


Uh her her her herrr



AAAGHH!

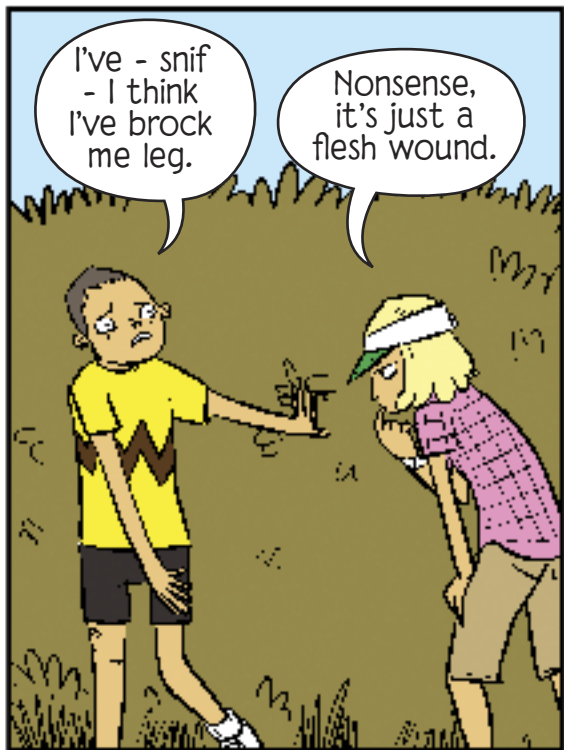
WHAT



I tell you what, 50p for a jump or £1 for unlimited jumps was a wicked idea, Mildred.

What time does your mum get home?

Oh not for an hour or so, yet.



I've - sniff - I think I've brock me leg.

Nonsense, it's just a flesh wound.

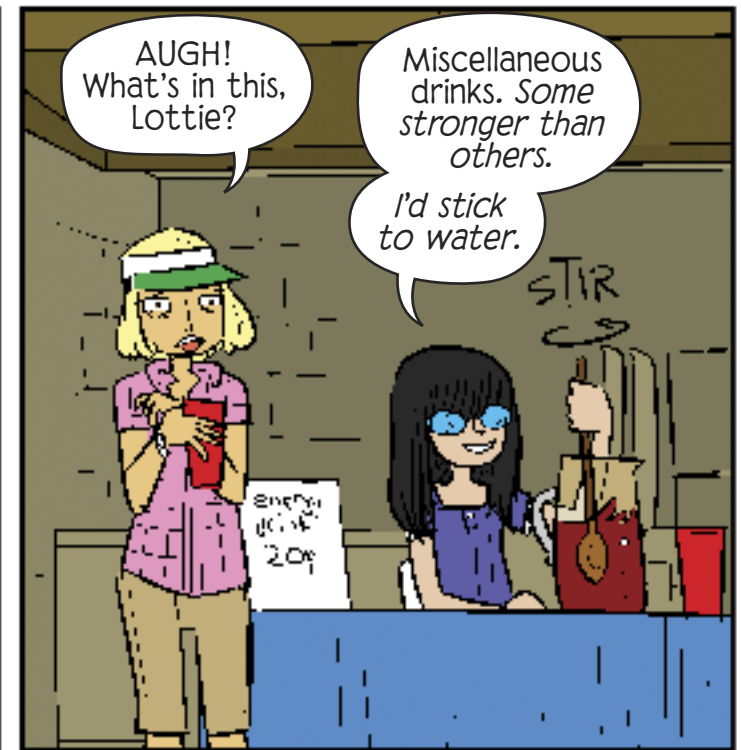


Have a complementary energy drink, it'll restore you up.



It tastes... funny.

That's it WORKING!



AUGH! What's in this, Lottie?

Miscellaneous drinks. Some stronger than others.

I'd stick to water.



Pack it up,
pack it up!
No more
jumps today!
No more
"energy drink"!



JACK IS
BACK.

Oh hello
Jack.

Fancy a
ramp jump
before we
pack up?
50p!



Do
you
think...

...I'm
MENTAL?

Your loss, it's
well the thrill
of a lifetime.

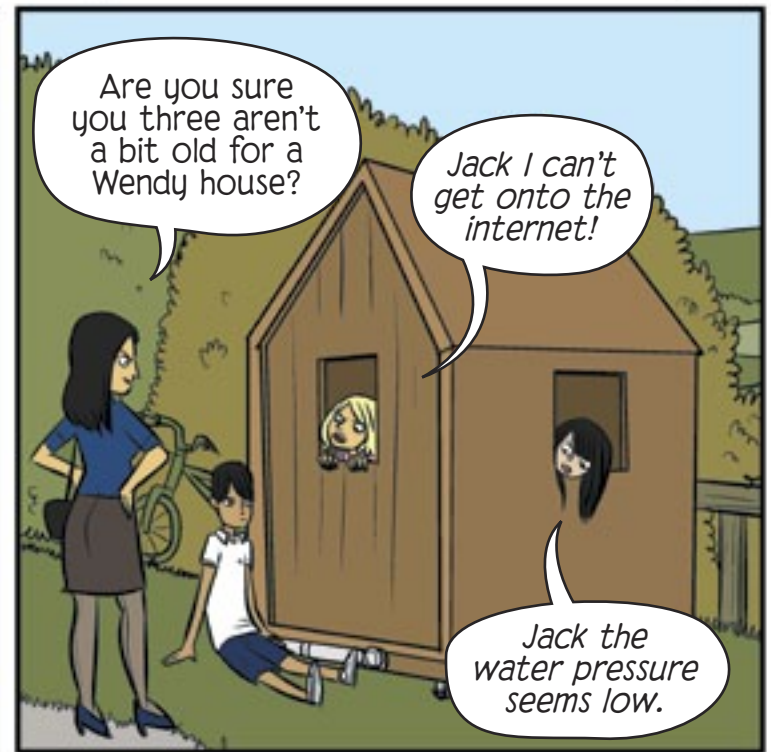


FLIP LOTTIE,
IT'S MY MUM!
We got greedy!

Jack! Pull
that handle!



CHUNK
CHONK



Are you sure
you three aren't
a bit old for a
Wendy house?

Jack I can't
get onto the
internet!

Jack the
water pressure
seems low.





A ha ha ha ha haaaa



PUSH OFF.

SHOVE

I told you they wouldn't just give us CCTV recordings, Sonny.

But they prove Colm couldn't have started the Eccup Lane barn fire.



We were in here keeping out of the rain for *hours!*

I don't think they just give security tapes to... *youths.*

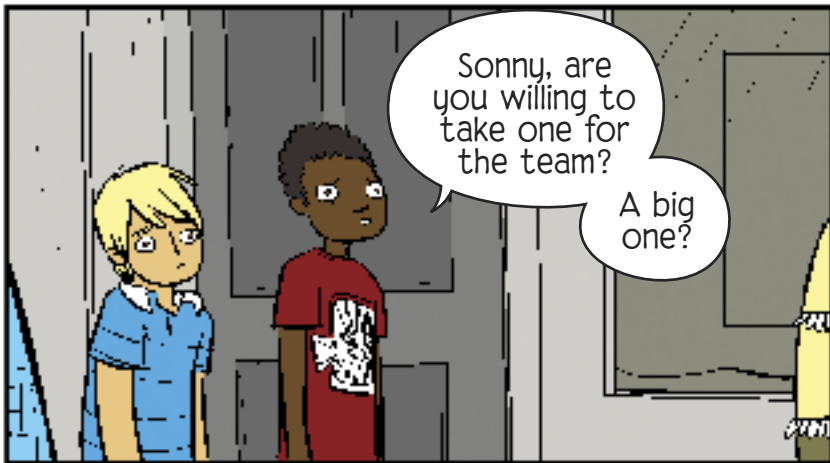


Well they should.



Does one of us have to DIE so the other one gets the tapes?

WORSE.



Sonny, are you willing to take one for the team?

A big one?



You're going to have to do something that goes against every instinct you have.

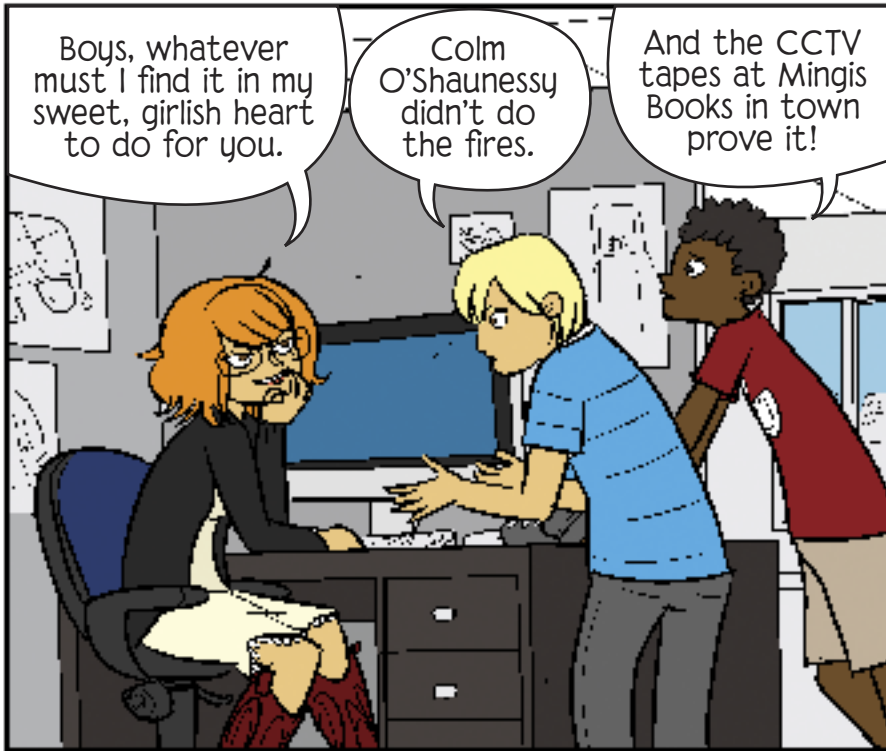
Give a cat a bath?



We need... a favour.



Well. Well well well. Well well well well well. WELL.



Boys, whatever must I find it in my sweet, girlish heart to do for you.

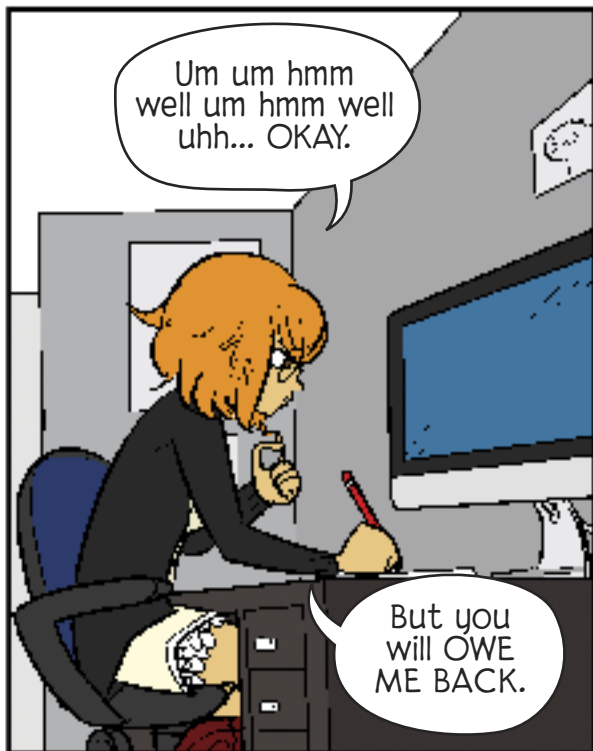
Colm O'Shaunessy didn't do the fires.

And the CCTV tapes at Mingis Books in town prove it!



OHO. I see.

You really DO need me.



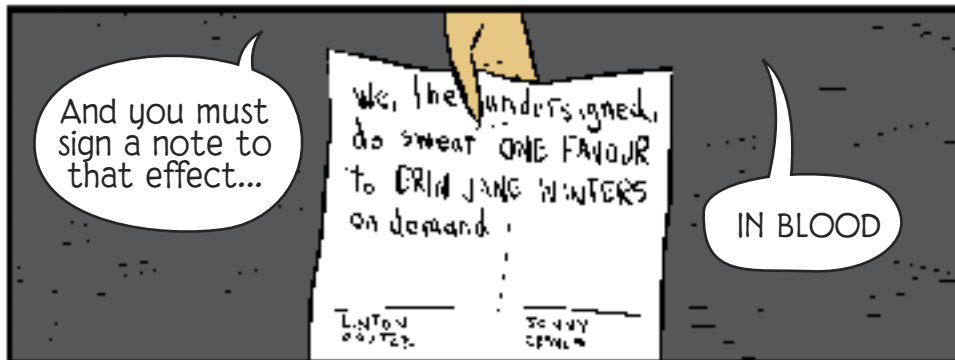
Um um hmm well um hmm well uhh... OKAY.

But you will OWE ME BACK.



Okay yes sure.

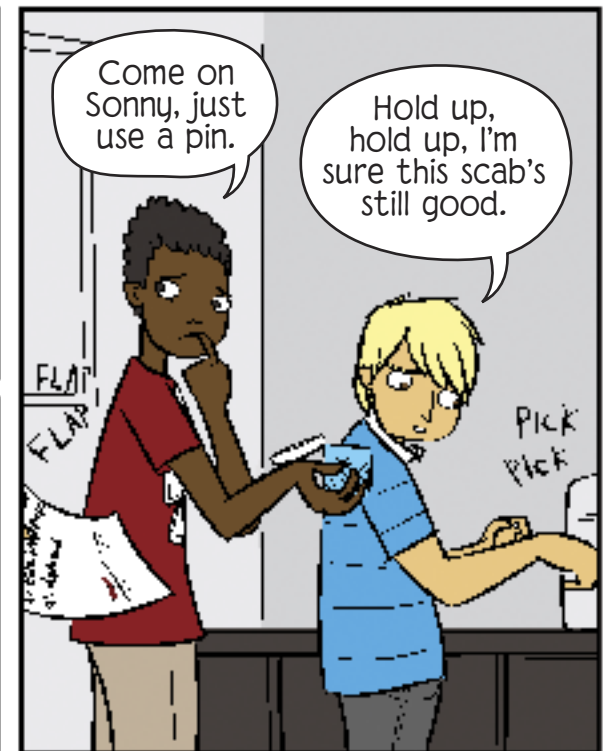
YES!



And you must sign a note to that effect...

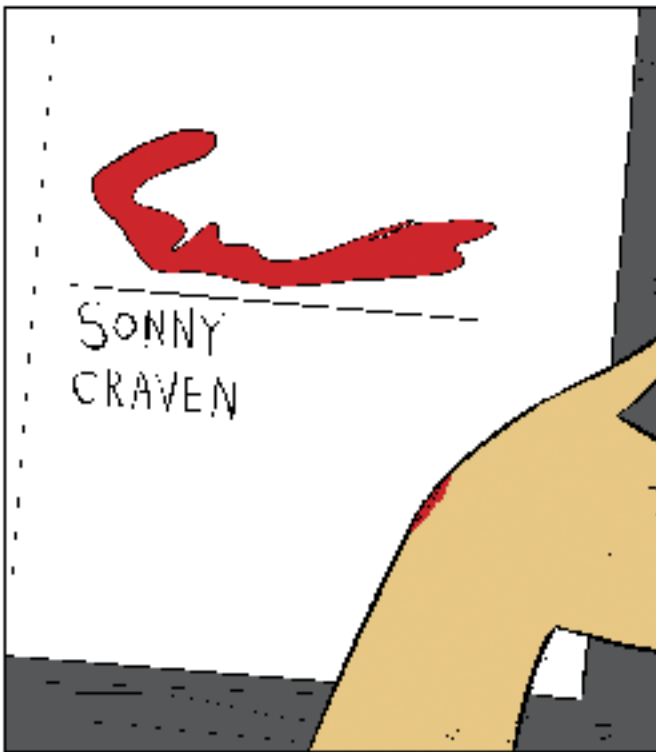
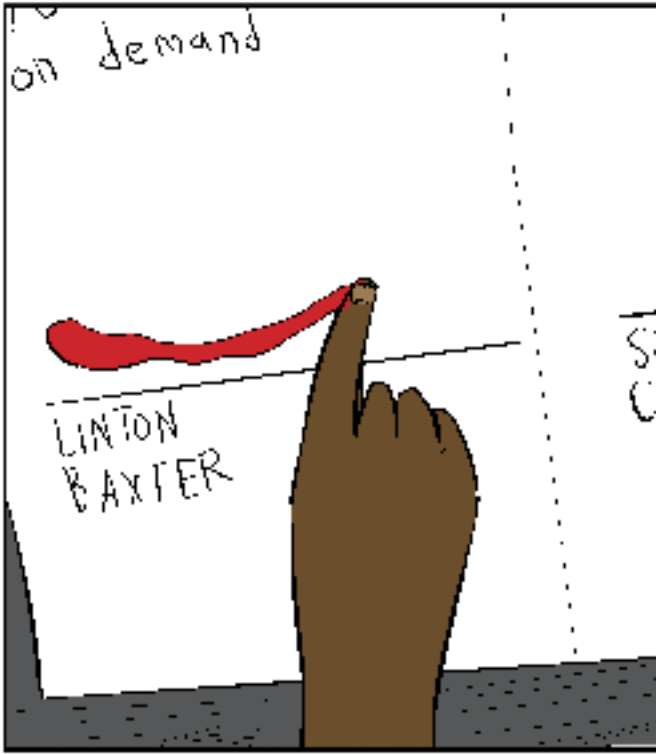
We, the undersigned, do swear ONE FAVOUR to BRID JANE WINTERS on demand.

IN BLOOD

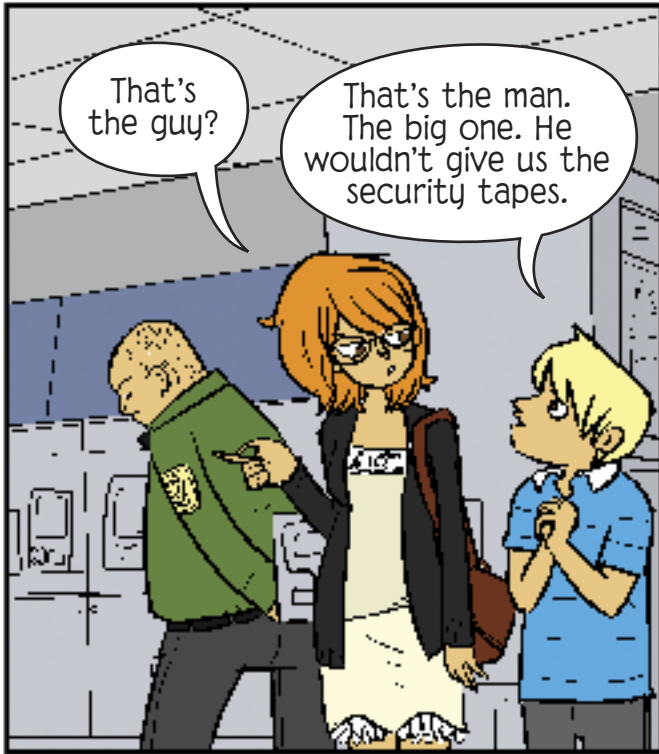


Come on Sonny, just use a pin.

Hold up, hold up, I'm sure this scab's still good.







That's the guy?

That's the man. The big one. He wouldn't give us the security tapes.



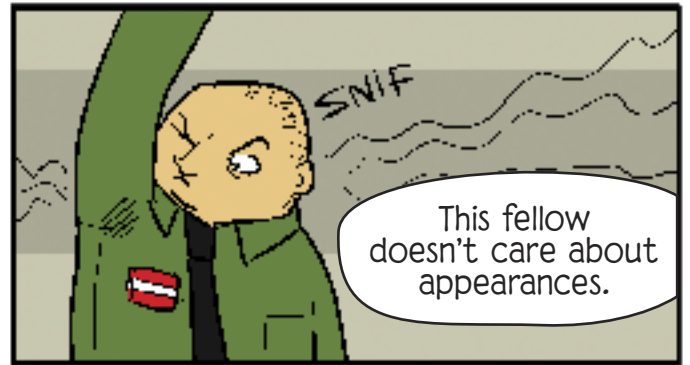
Now boys, look carefully. You have to *know your enemy*.



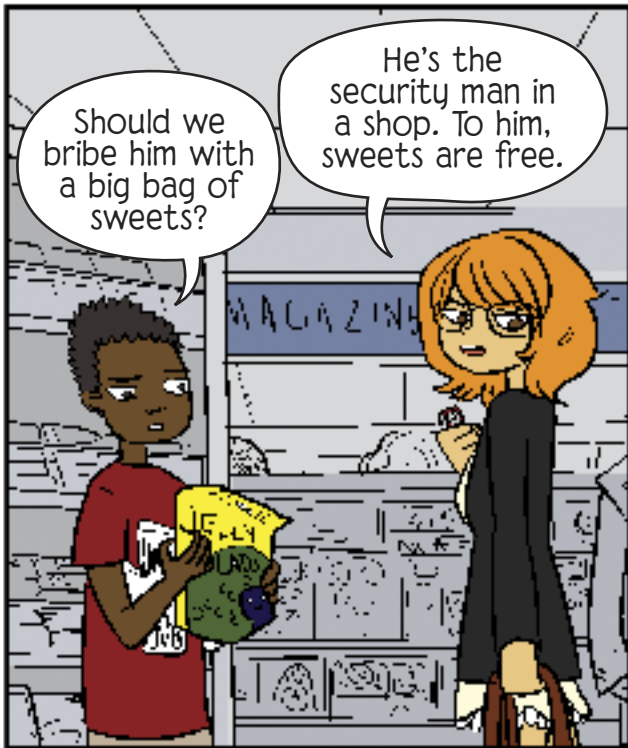
He either loves sweets or hates exercise, either way he lives for PLEASURE ALONE.



Cheap shoes. They say only a rich man can afford cheap shoes.



This fellow doesn't care about appearances.



Should we bribe him with a big bag of sweets?

He's the security man in a shop. To him, sweets are free.



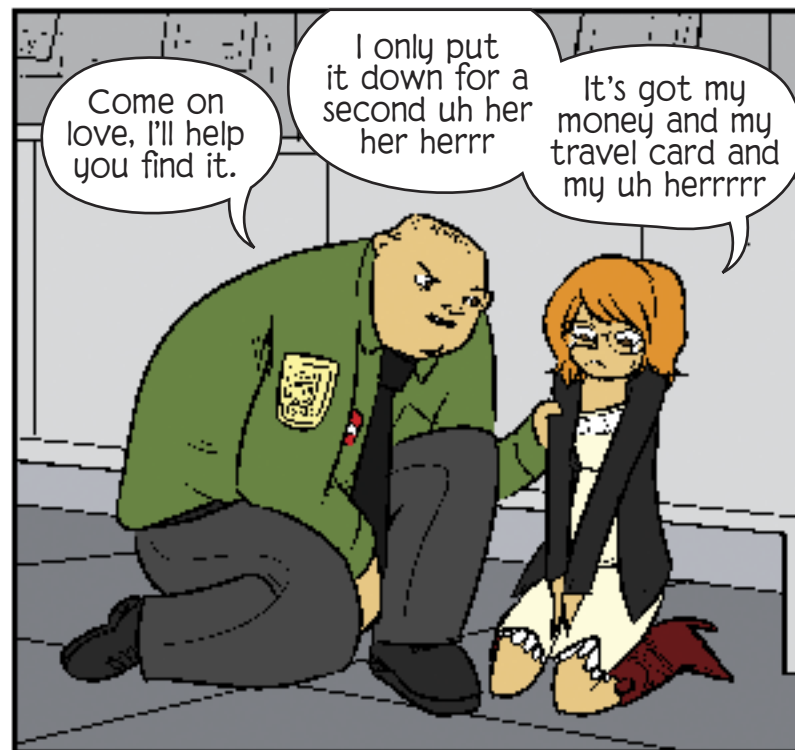
In the outside world he's a fat mess in bad pumps.

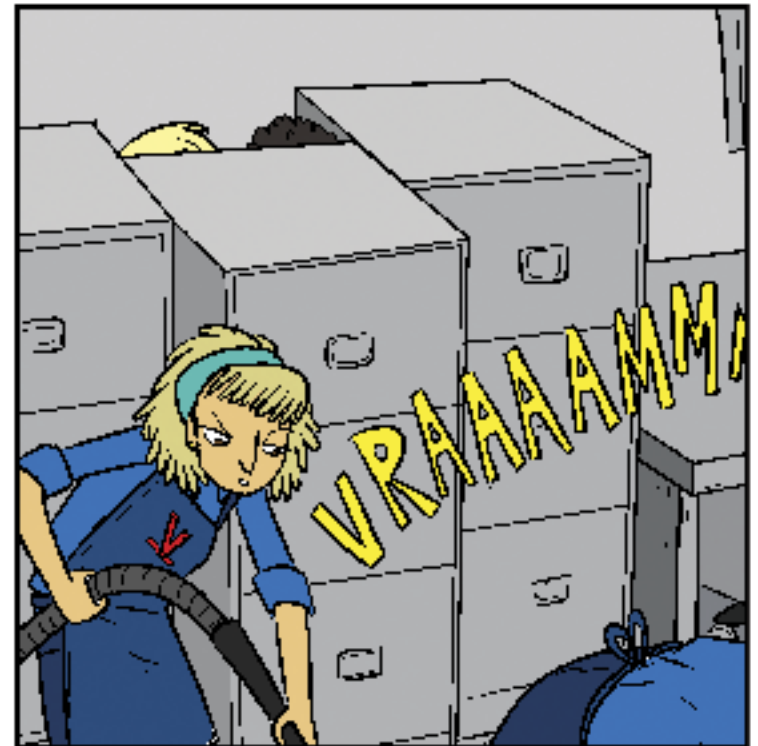
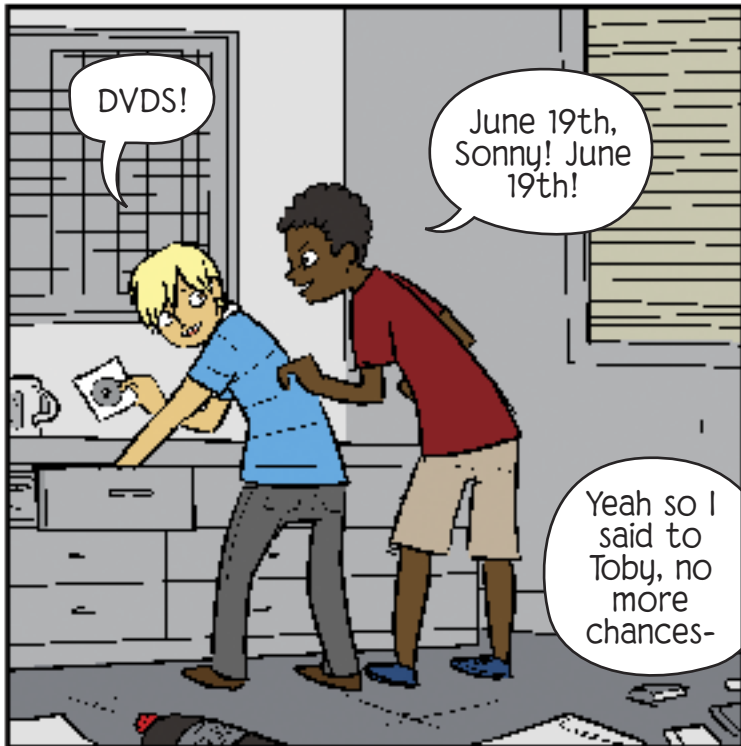
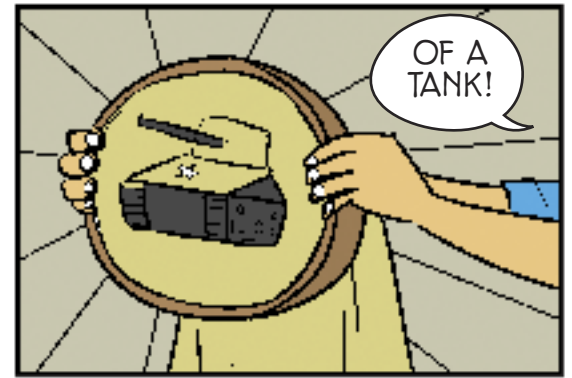
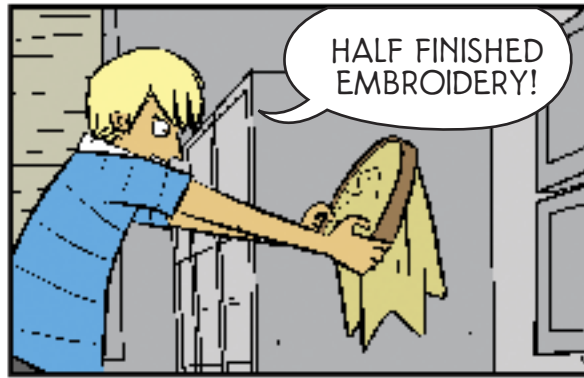
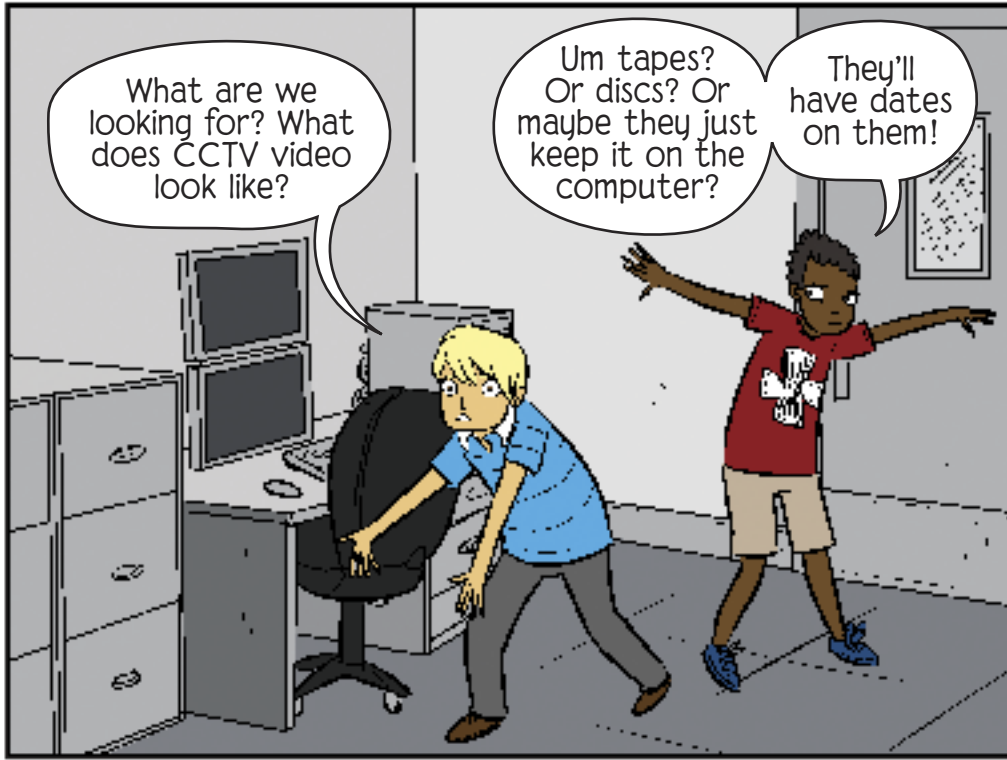
But in here he's a king, and that's our angle.

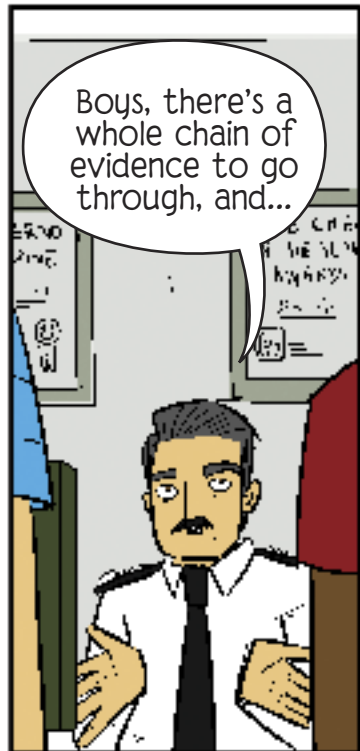
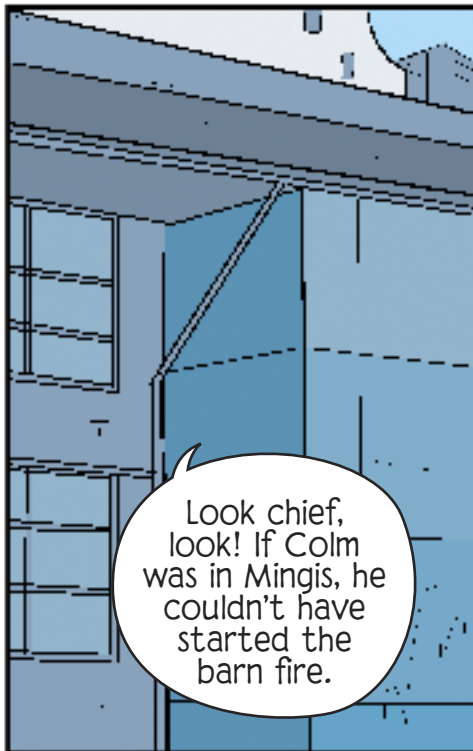


Is she going to make us do a crime... ..to prove someone didn't do a crime?

START MAKING A DISGUISE.

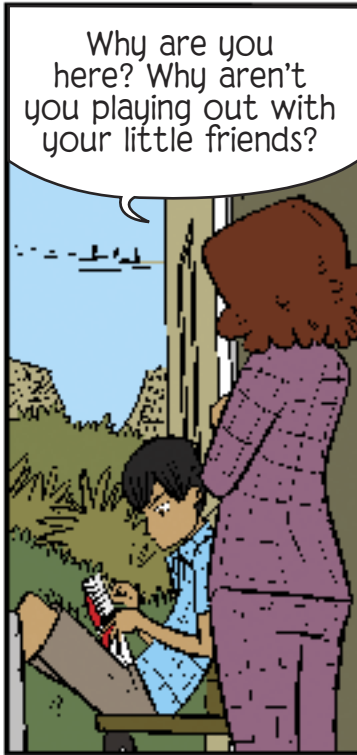




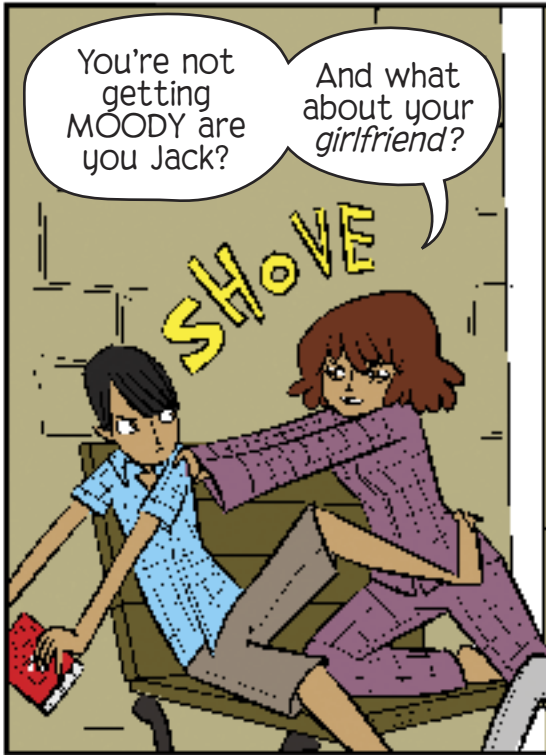




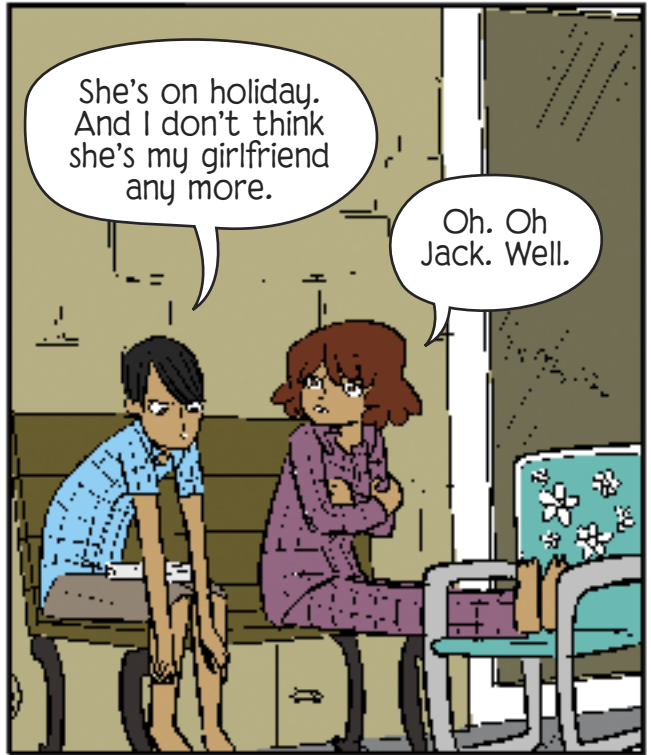
Oh so you decided to get up, did you?
You heard the cock crow for afternoon.



Why are you here? Why aren't you playing out with your little friends?



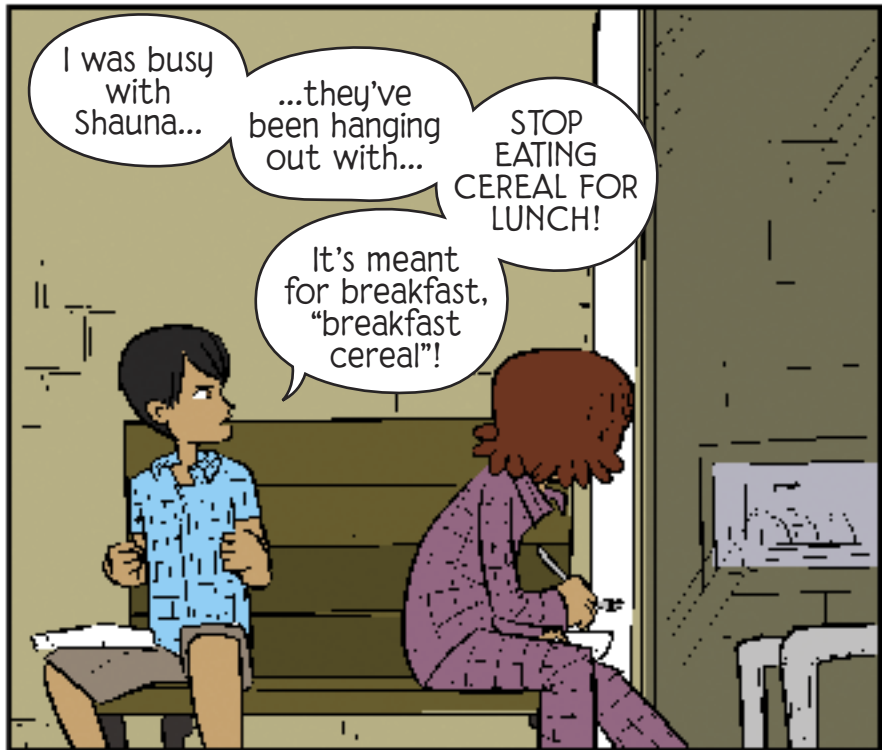
You're not getting MOODY are you Jack?
And what about your girlfriend?



She's on holiday. And I don't think she's my girlfriend any more.
Oh. Oh Jack. Well.



But your friends! You've not fallen out, have you?
Little Sonny would never fall out with you. You're his hero.



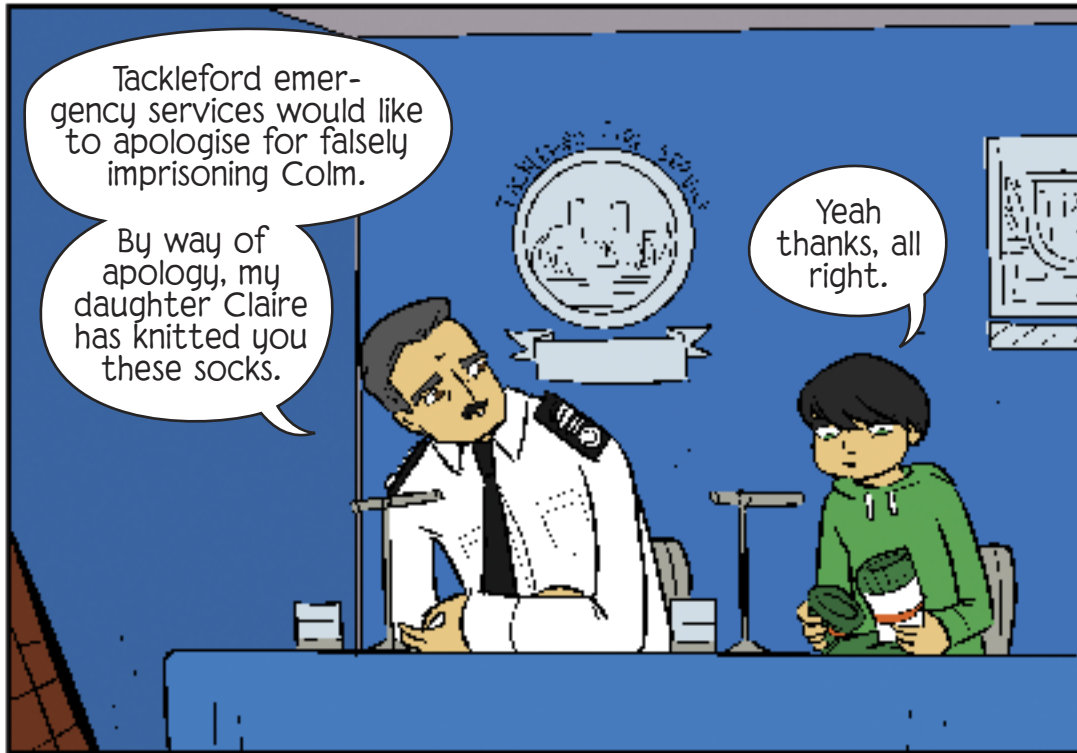
I was busy with Shauna...
...they've been hanging out with...
STOP EATING CEREAL FOR LUNCH!
It's meant for breakfast, "breakfast cereal"!



Look on TV! It's the mad kid in your year who sets fires. They've let him out.



So intense.



Tackleford emergency services would like to apologise for falsely imprisoning Colm.

By way of apology, my daughter Claire has knitted you these socks.

Yeah thanks, all right.



Colm, do you have anything you'd like to say?



Well I'd like to thank my friends Linton and Sonny for gettin' me out.



But I also want to say that Tackleford fire brigade are a right bunch of eejits.

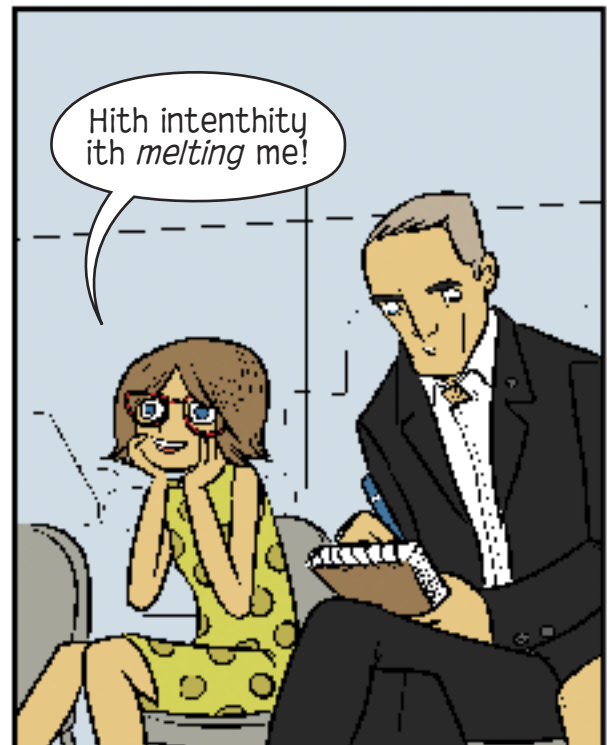
I told you who did the fires, you lost him, then banged me up.



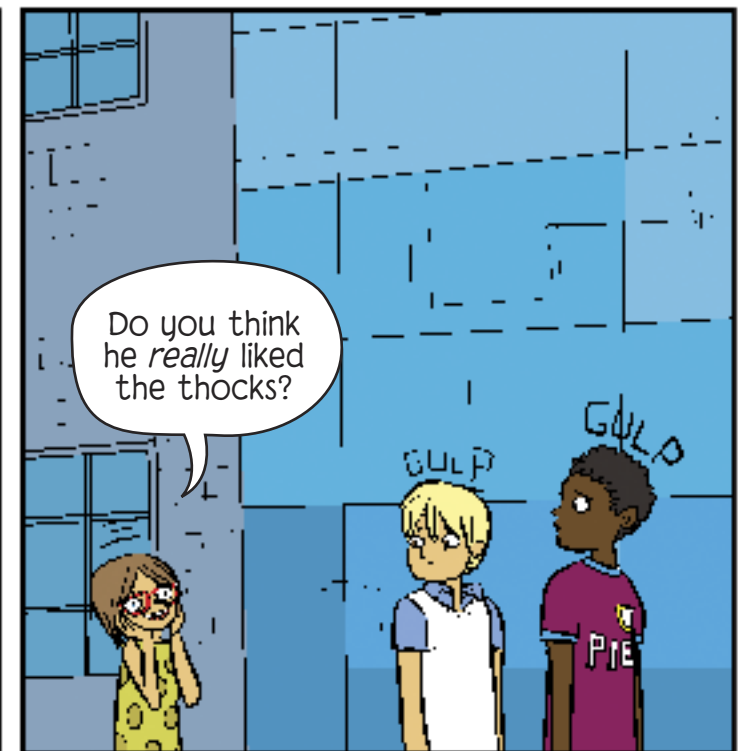
But I'm the bigger man. I forgive ye. The firebug on the other hand...

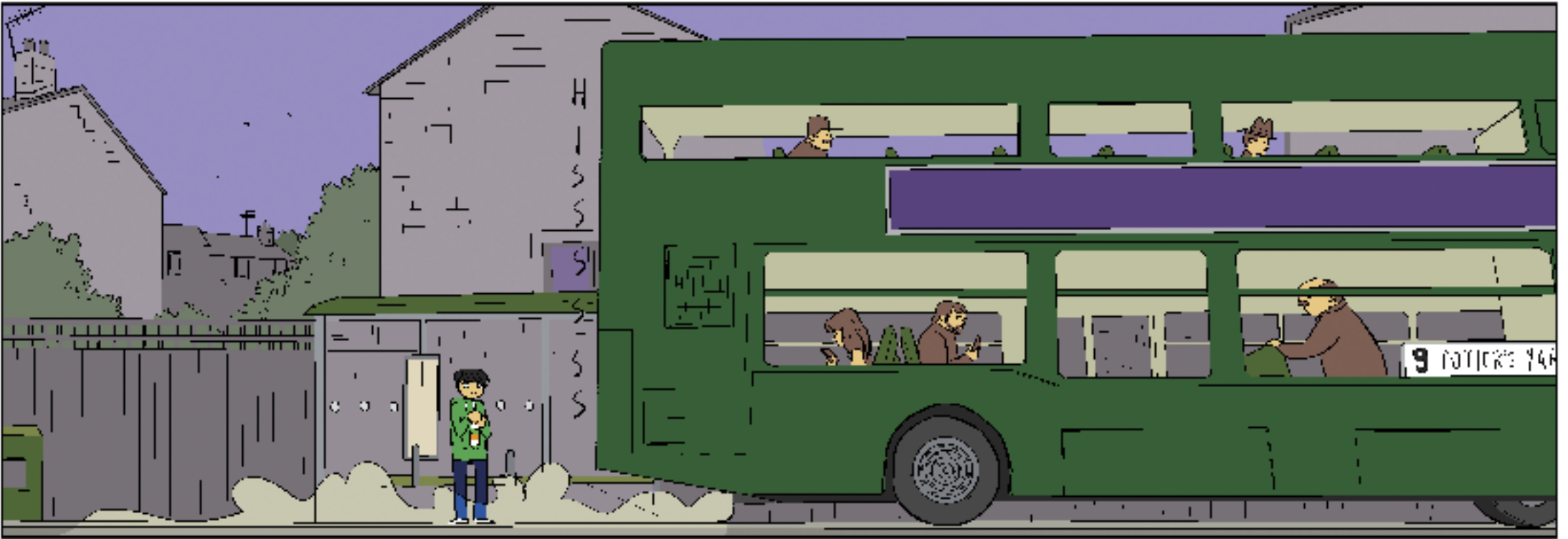


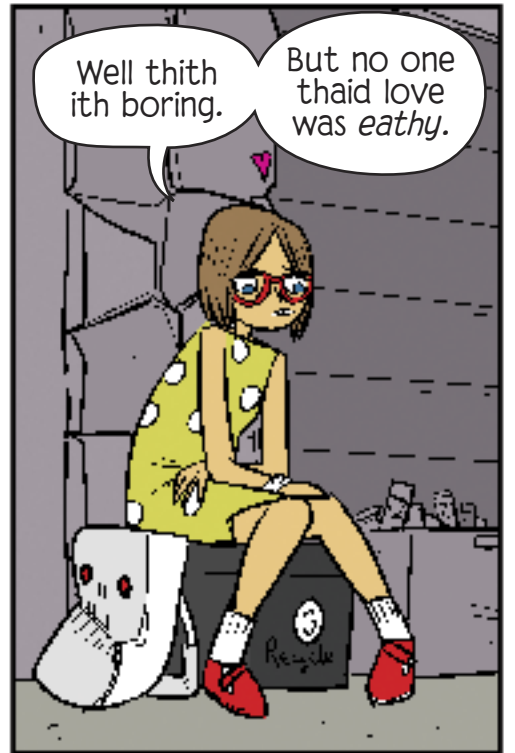
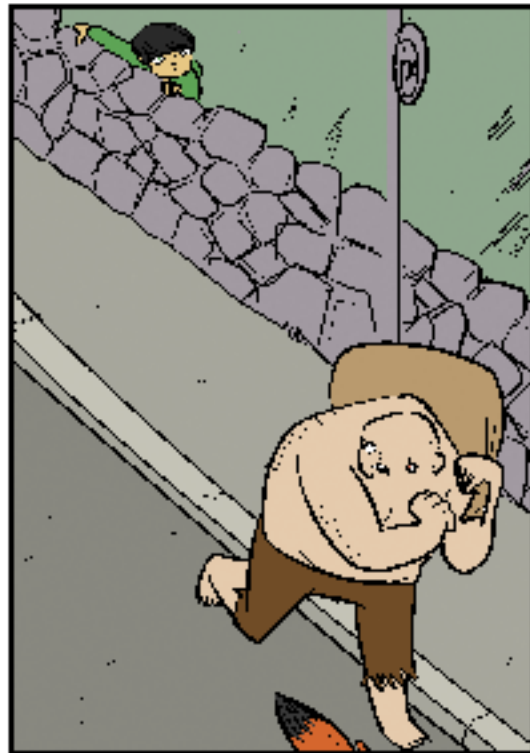
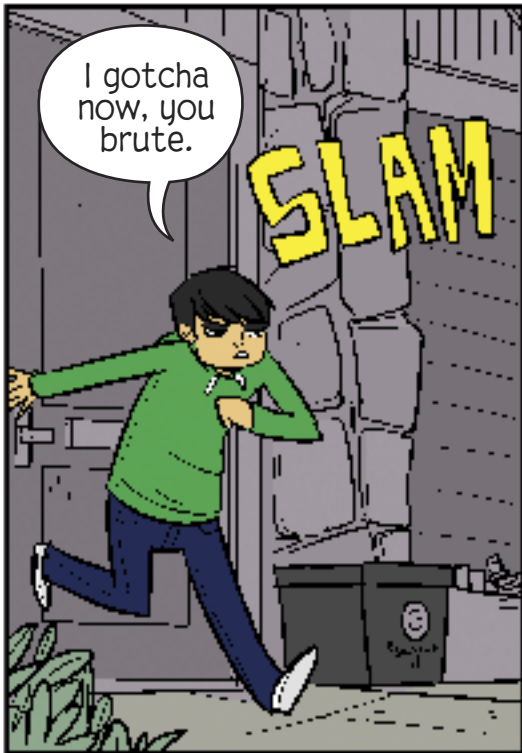
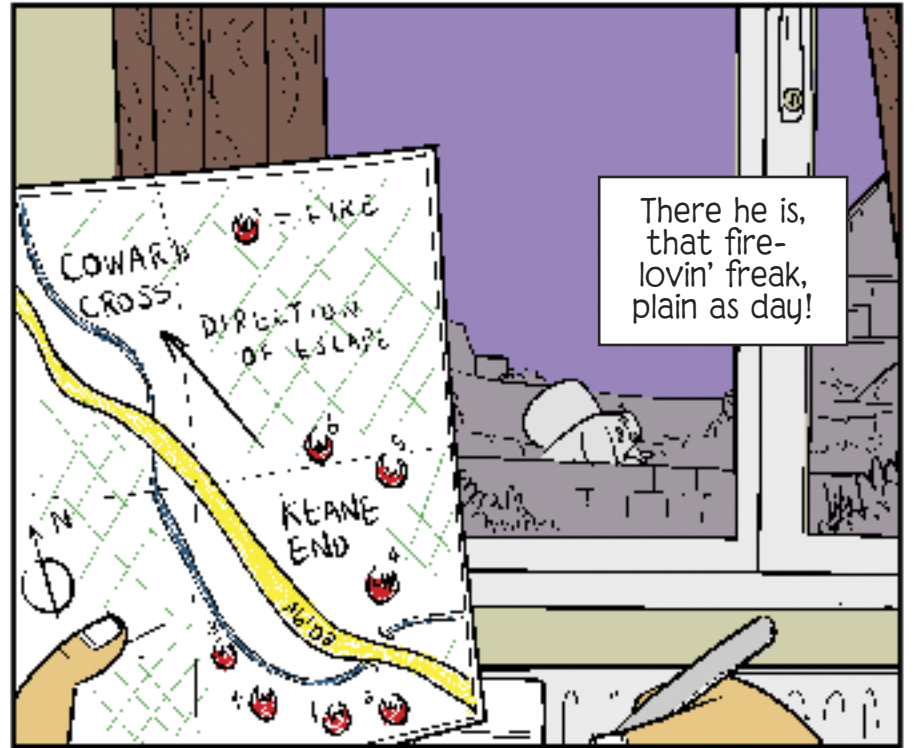
THIS JUST GOT PERSONAL.

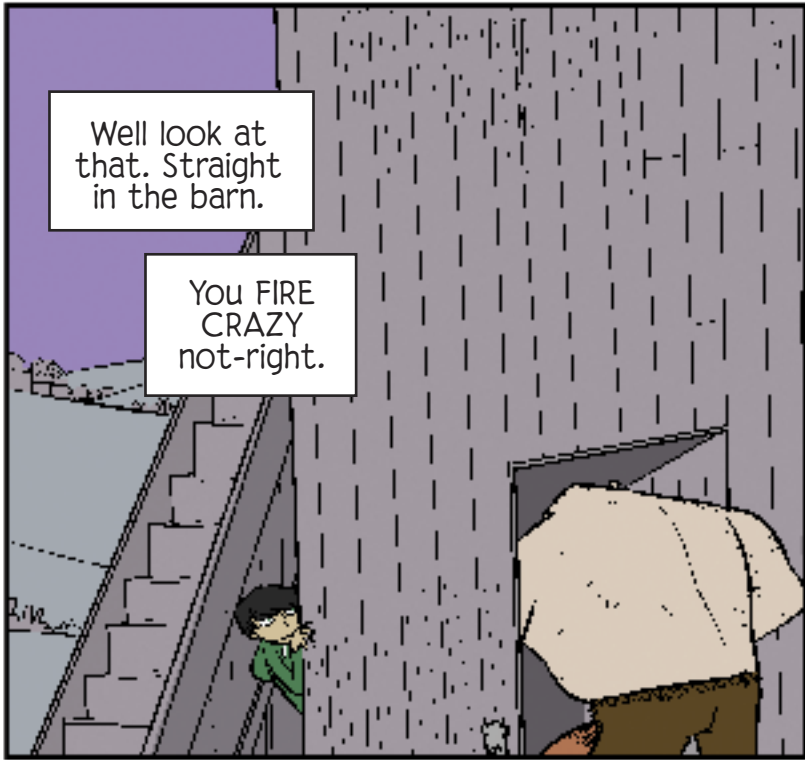


Hith intenthity ith *melting* me!









Well look at that. Straight in the barn.

You FIRE CRAZY not-right.



DO NOT BE SCARED FOX.

CANDLE.



I knew it! Here comes the inferno.



GO BRIGHT! SHINE CANDLE SHINE!

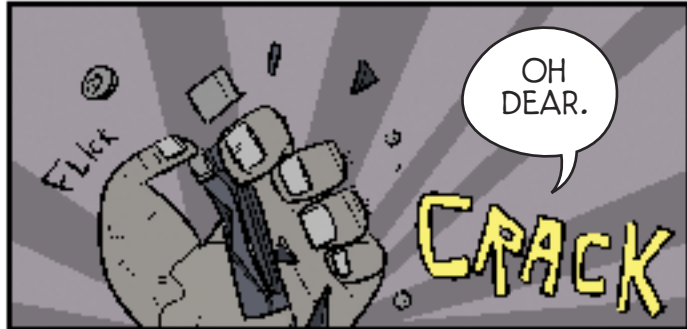


Come on, no one's that flippin' slow.

If this guy's a criminal mastermind...



LIGHTER!



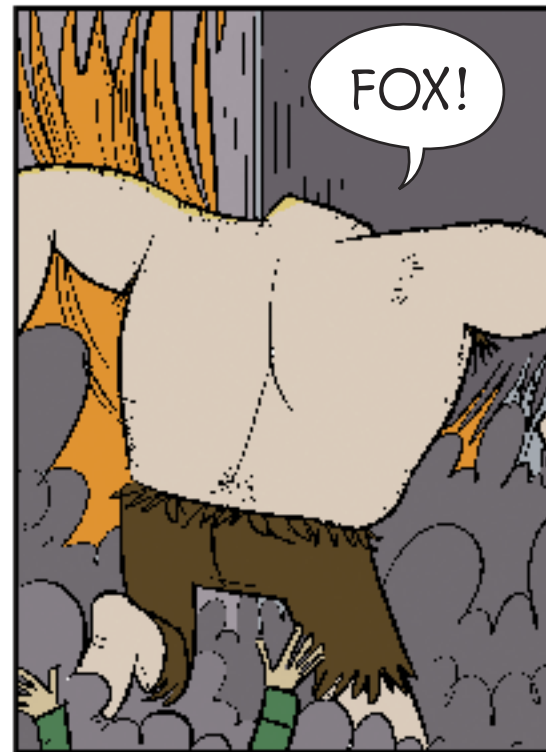
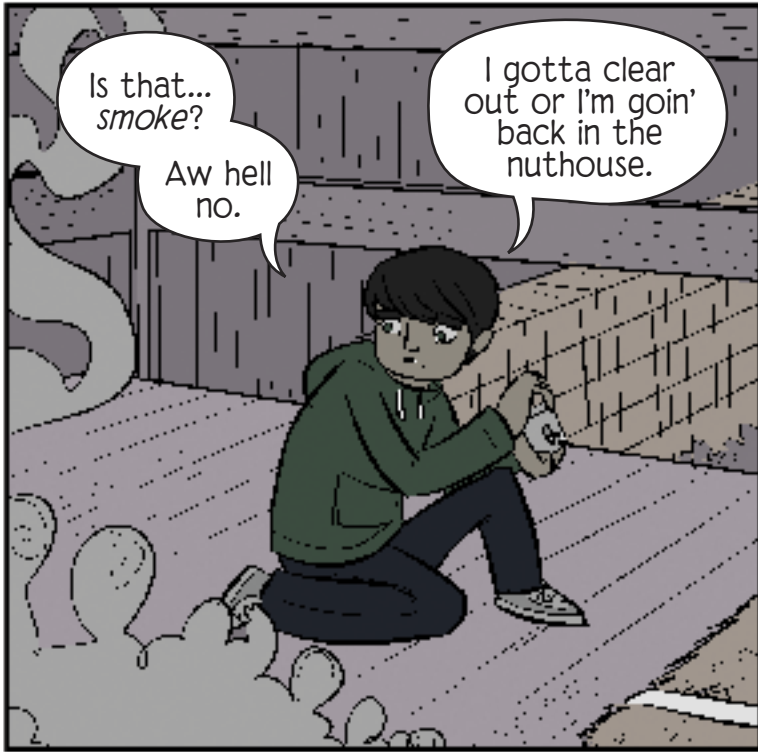
OH DEAR.

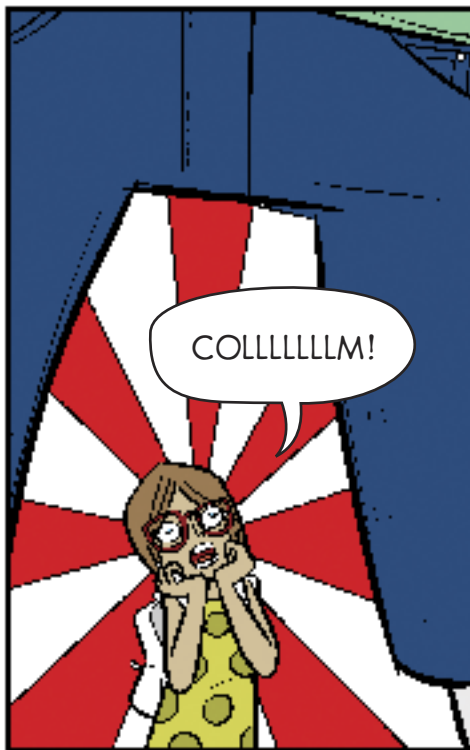


GO ASLEEP FOX, GO ASLEEP.



...he's also history's greatest actor.







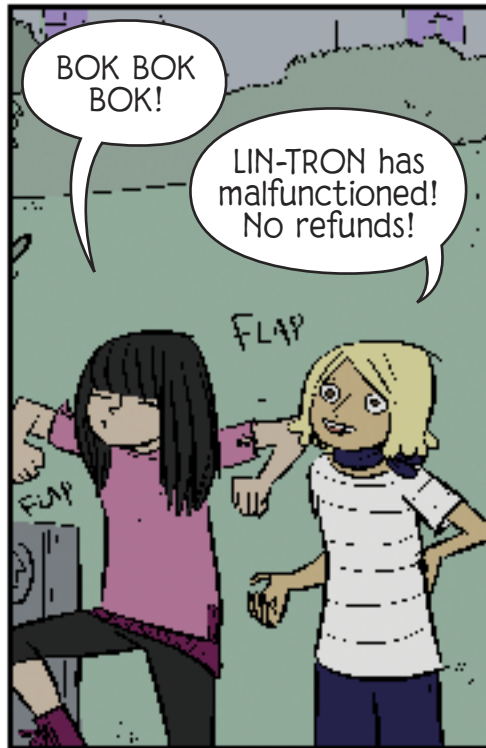
Hello Jack!

Linton's going to have a go on Mildred's ramp.

I've set it to "bike", Linton, you are going to fly like a *bird*.

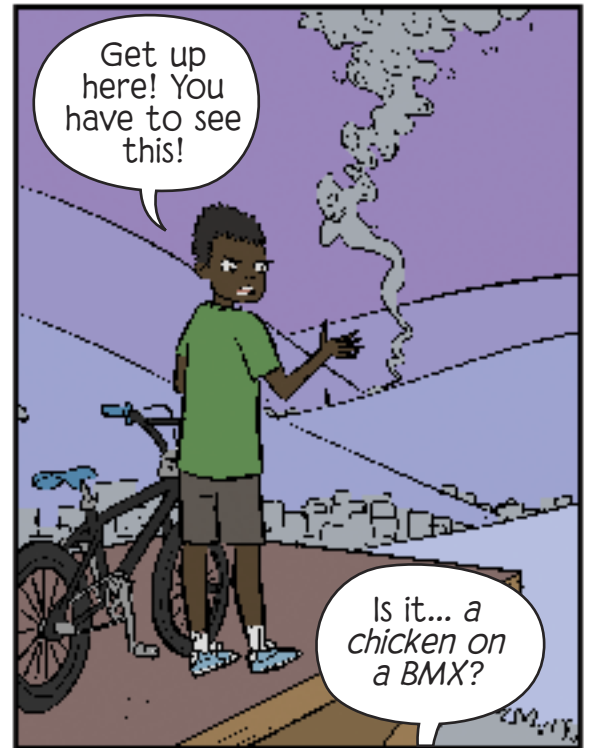


I can do this.
LINTON can DO THIS.



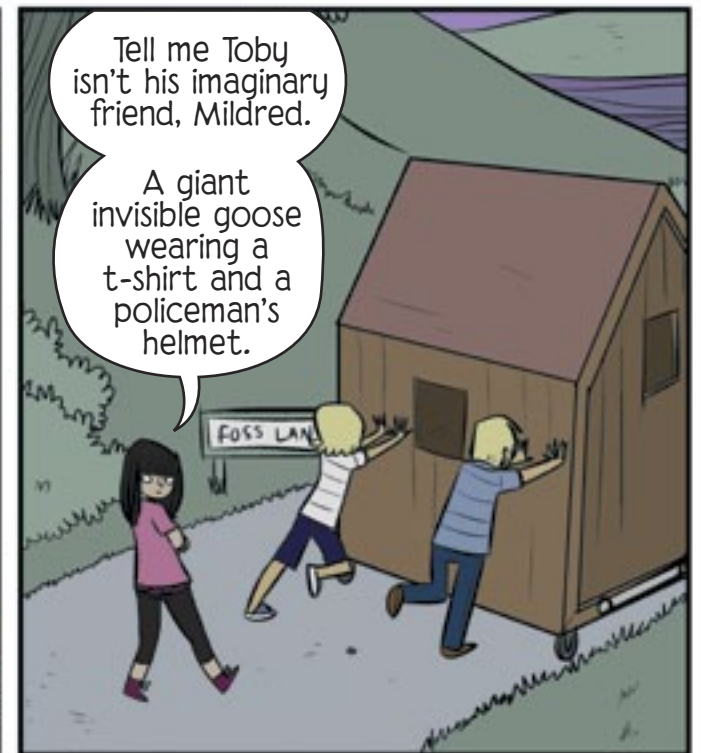
BOK BOK BOK!

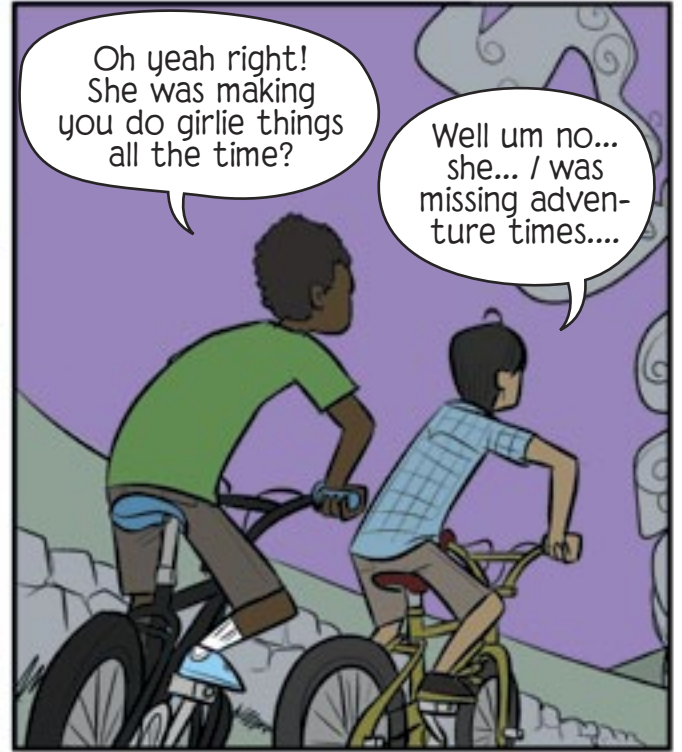
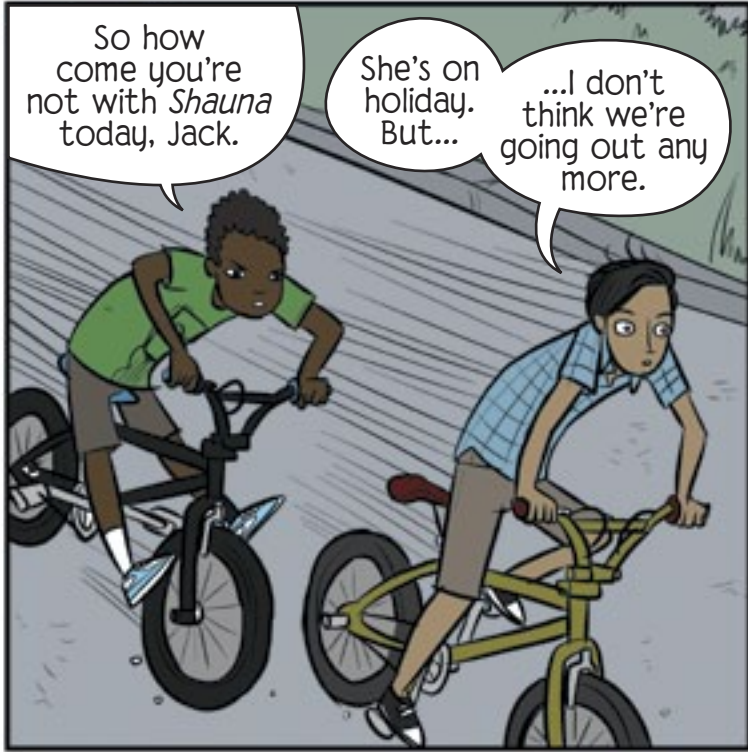
LIN-TRON has malfunctioned! No refunds!

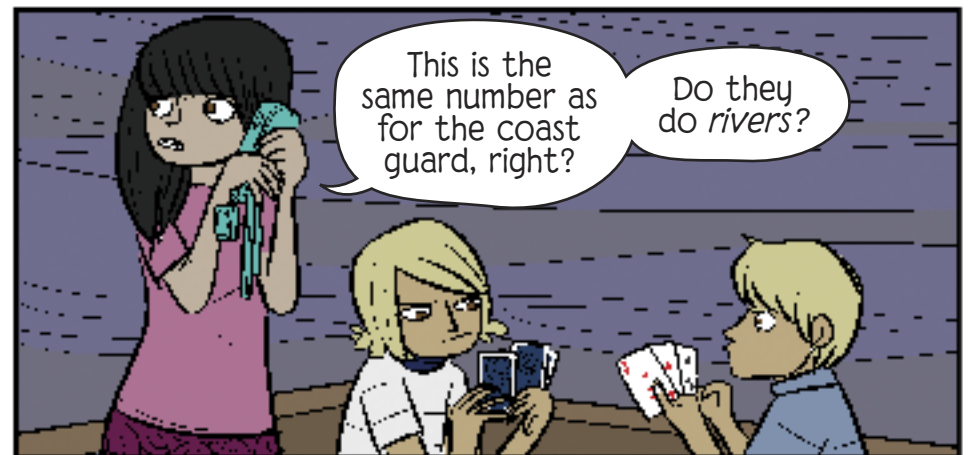
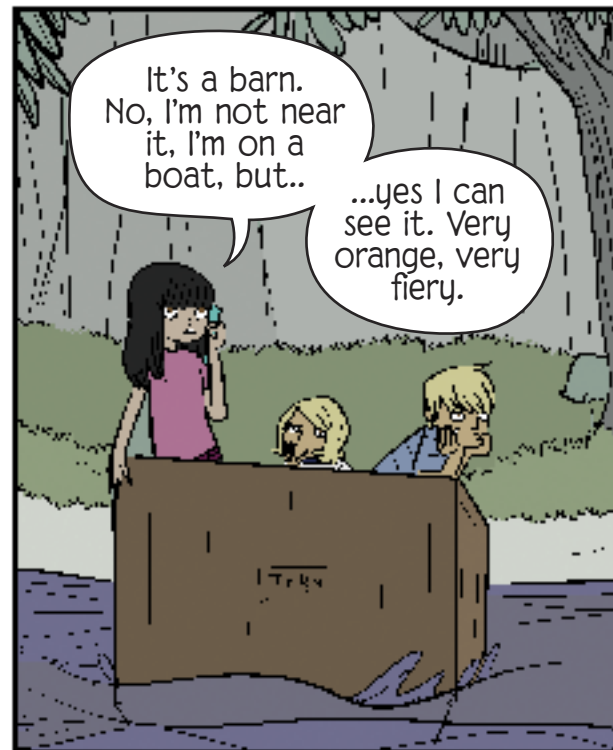
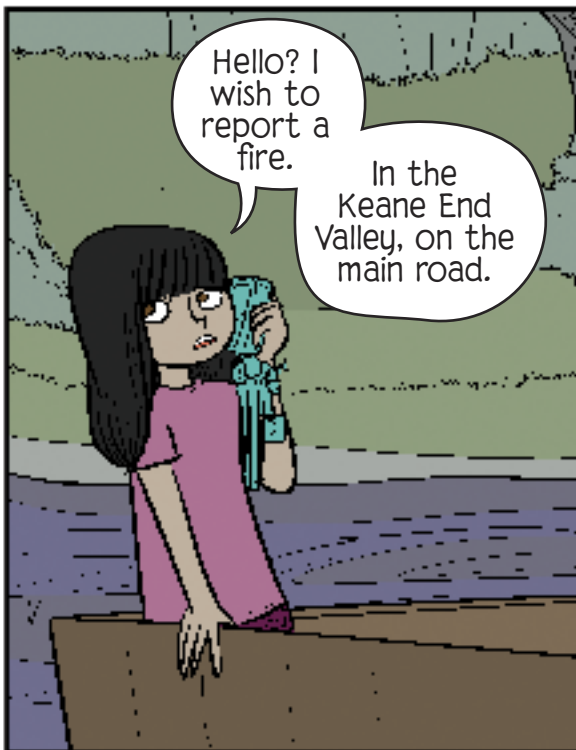
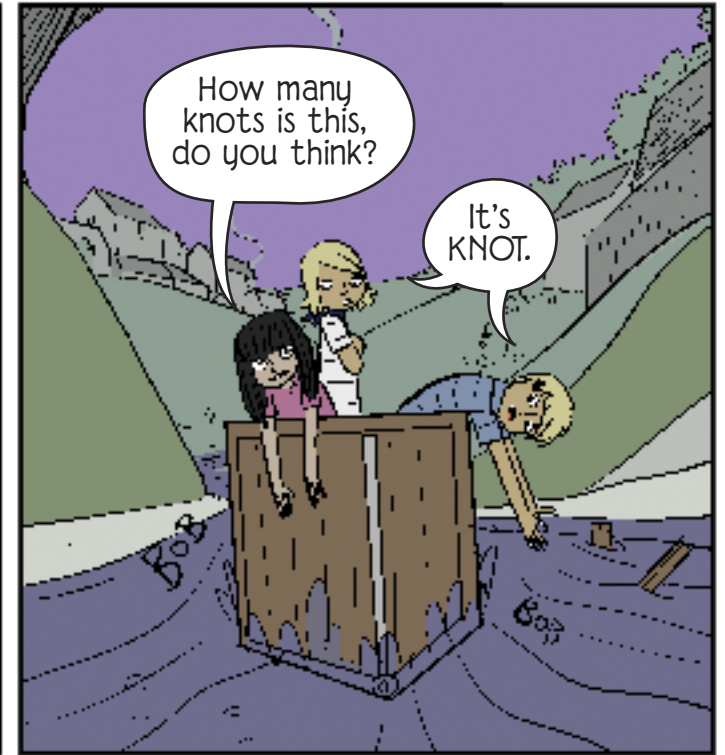
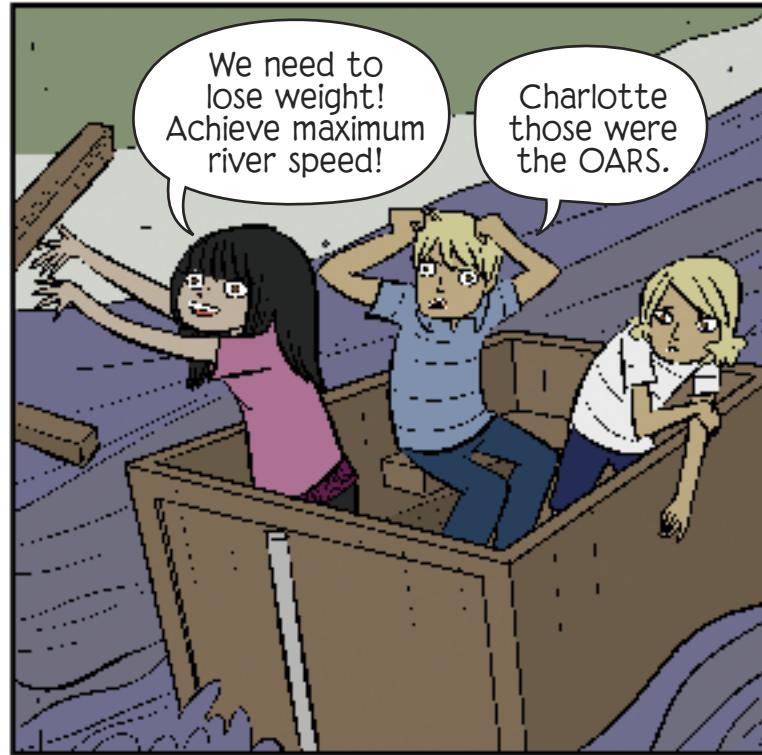


Get up here! You have to see this!

Is it... a chicken on a BMX?









THTOP!
THTOP!



Come quickly!
Colm ith hurt!

He wath hurt in the barn, I pulled him free, but-hurt!



Oh god, look at him!

You pulled him out of the fire?



I'm not afraid of fire...



It'th in my blood.

I realise that the Minister For Fire doesn't visit for no reason, but...



Chief Little, Tackleford Fire Brigade is in the last chance saloon.

One more bungle and I'm handing operations over to Wendlefield Fire Service and-



Minister, come with me. I'll show you that in this town, hating fire is always a pleasure...



...never a chore.



Minister, it's *completely normal* to scream on the fire pole.

We've all done it.



TEE HEE

Pipe down Williams.

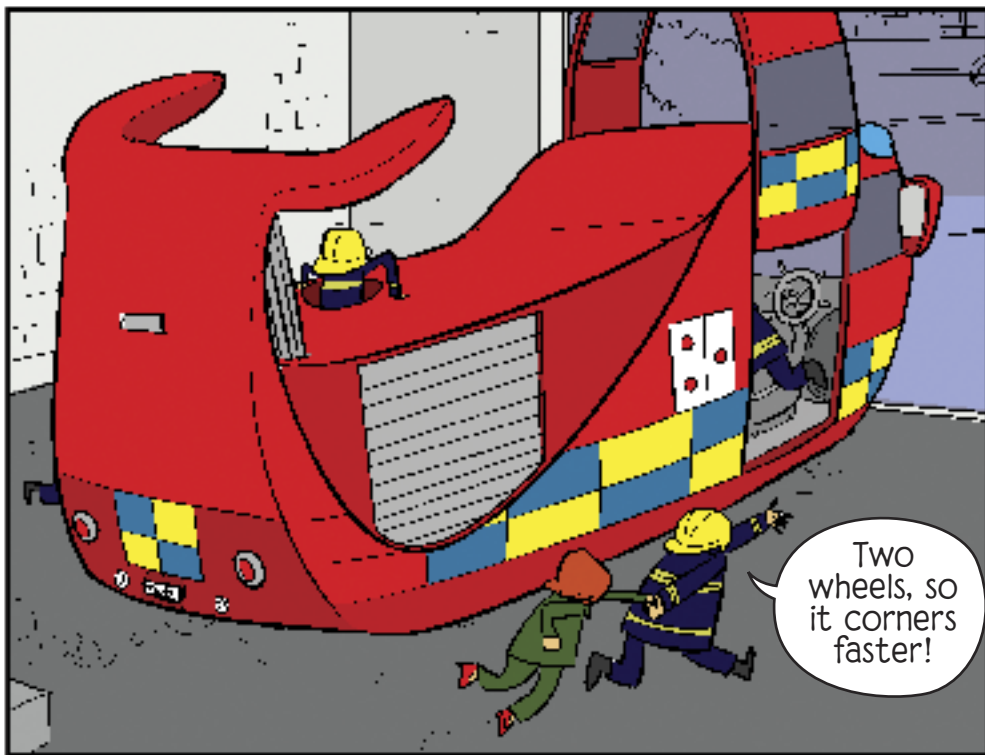


Yes, Tackleford fire brigade has made mistakes.

But following the accidental destruction of two vehicles...
...we've invested in the FUTURE!



The Grampus 80 Fire Destroyer is Japan's most advanced fire engine.



Two wheels, so it corners faster!



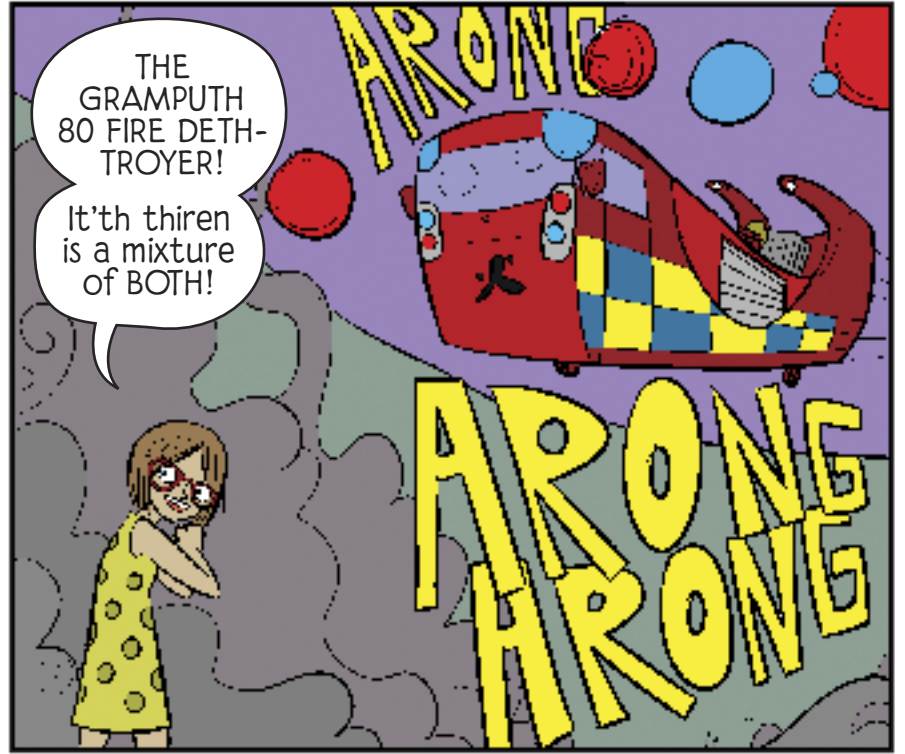
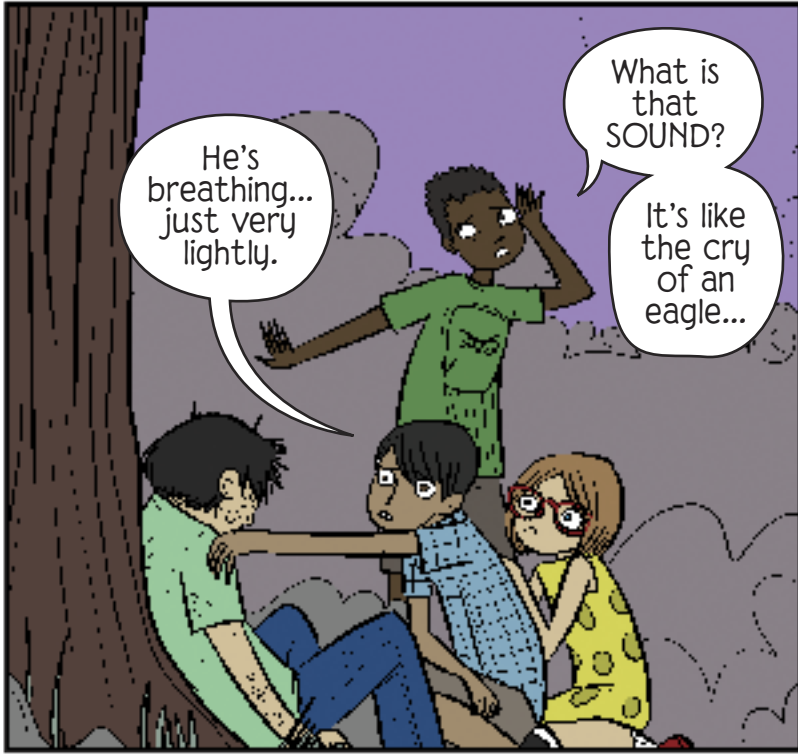
In scientific tests fire has been shown to be actively AFRAID of the G80FD.

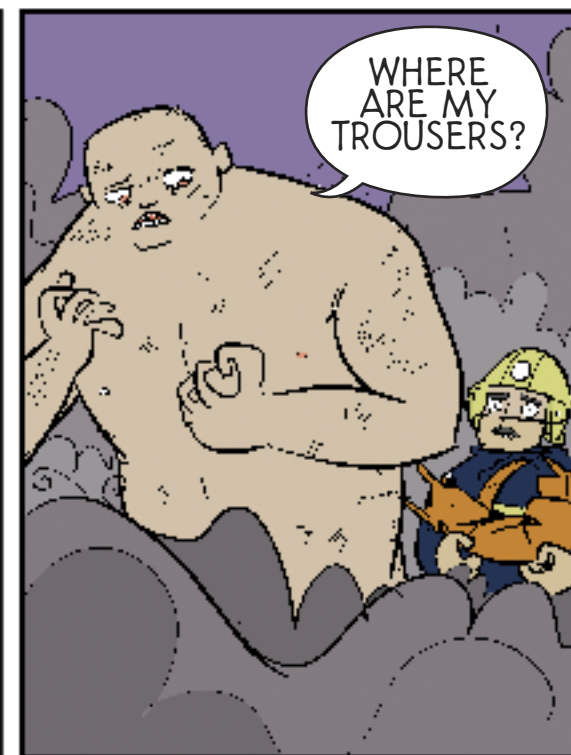
WOO-EE-WOO

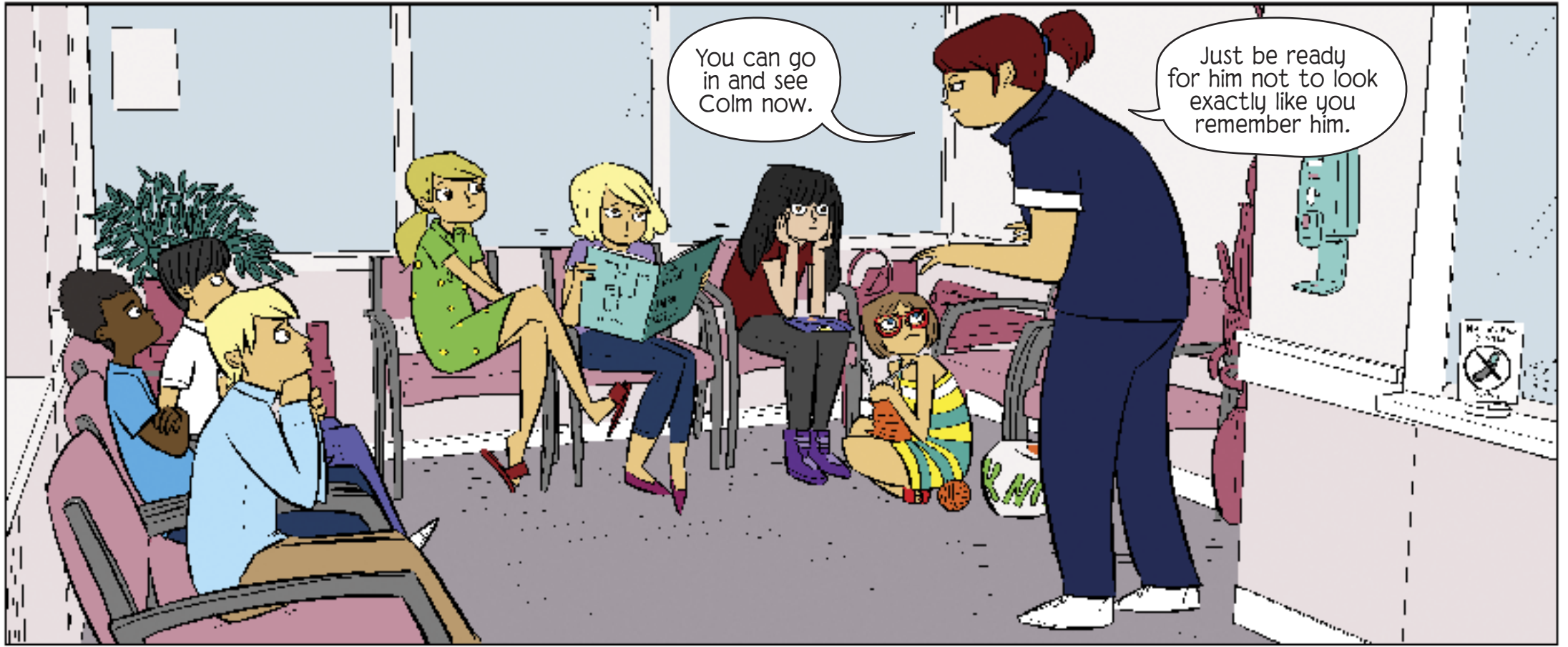


How much did this COST?

WHAT PRICE FIRE SAFETY?

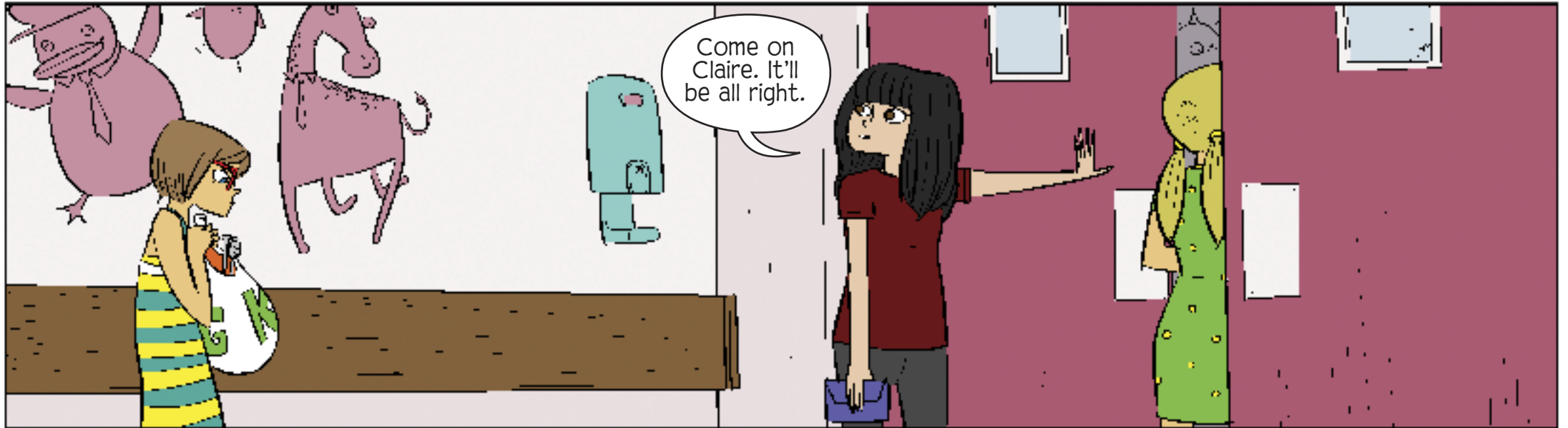






You can go in and see Colm now.

Just be ready for him not to look exactly like you remember him.



Come on Claire. It'll be all right.



Tackleford Fire Brigade would like to apologise for persecuting Mr Troll.

...we're offering him a position as a fire fighter.

By way of apology, due to his intense hate of fire and vast strength...

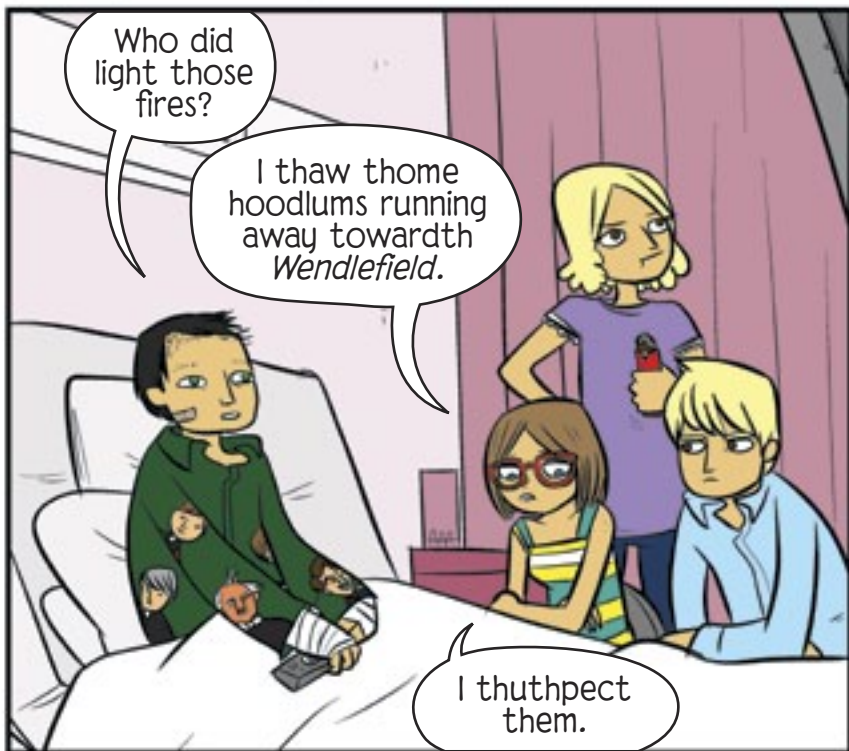


Mr Troll, do you have anything you'd like to say?



THEY GAVE ME A FIRE HAT!

Well I'm none the flippin' wiser.



Who did light those fires?

I thaw thome hoodlums running away towardth Wendlefield.

I thuthpect them.



Will they grow back?

SHH LINTON.

I knitted you these, Colm.



Eyebrows! Cheers Charlotte.



I'm not the best.

But I'm getting better.





Well thith
ith nice,
ithn't it?

Yeah it's a
real nice
picnic, thanks.



I like how
quiet it ith out
here! You never
thee a thoul.

It's peace-
ful, I'll say
that, so.



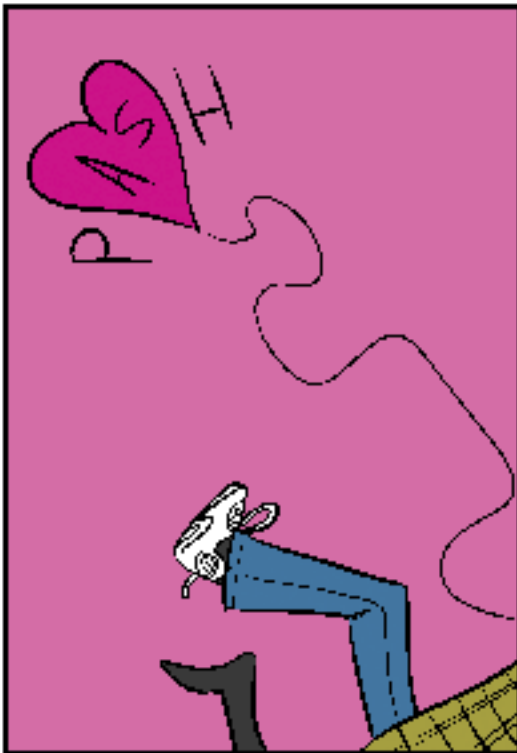
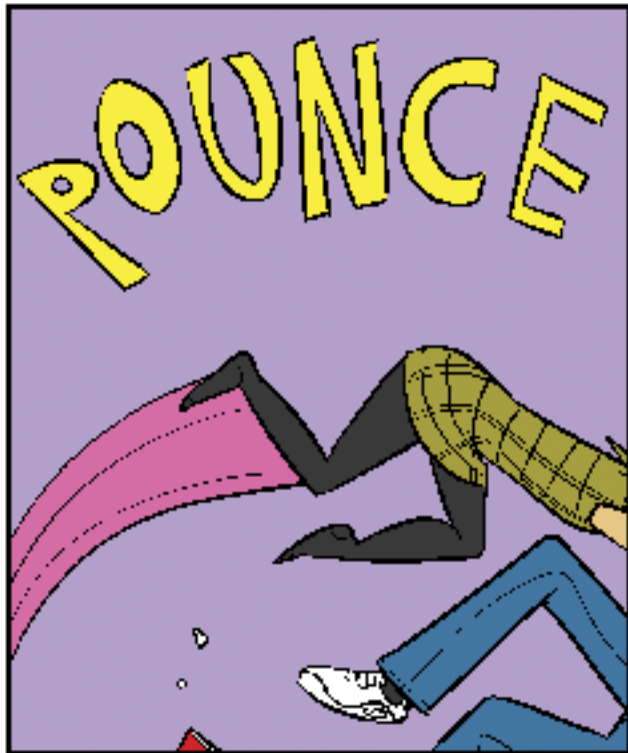
Colm, can
I athk a
favour?

I reckon after
you pulled me outta
that fire, it'd be
hard to say no.



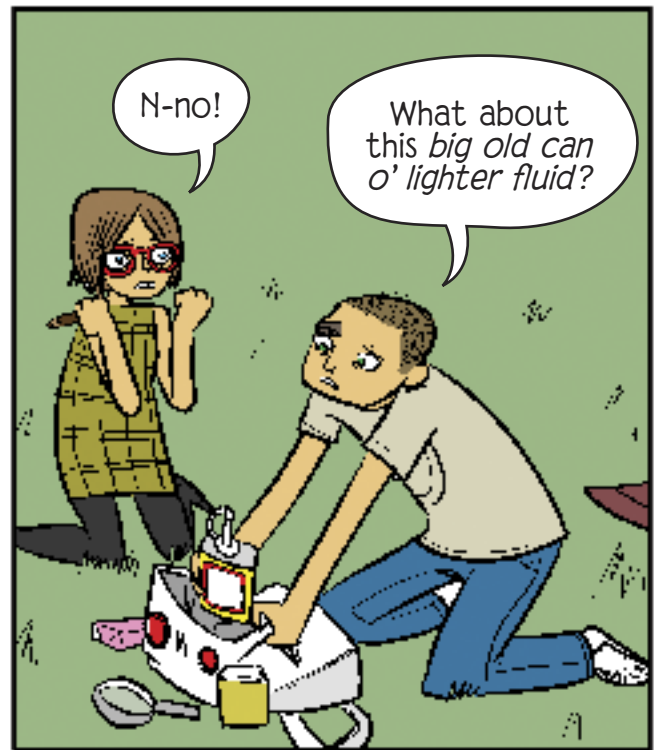
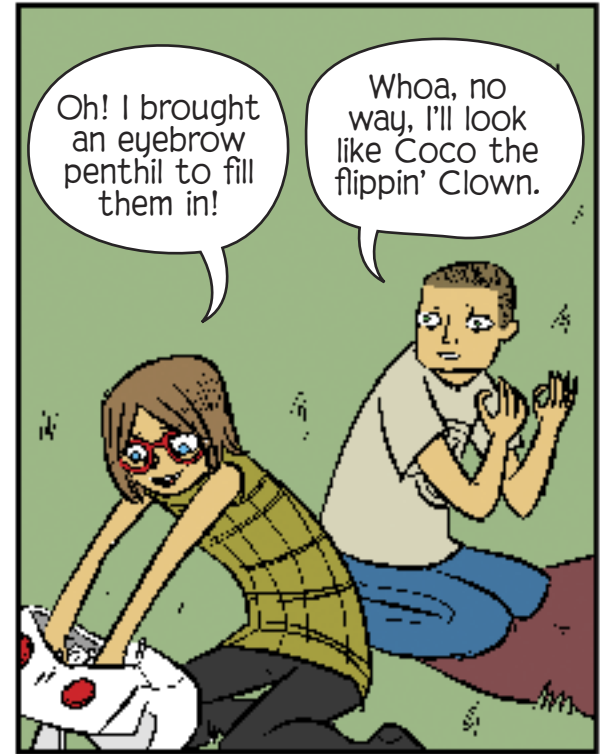
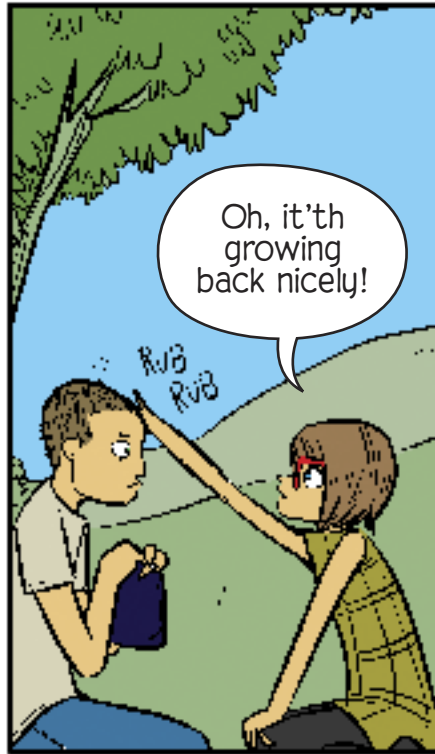
Can I
KITH you?

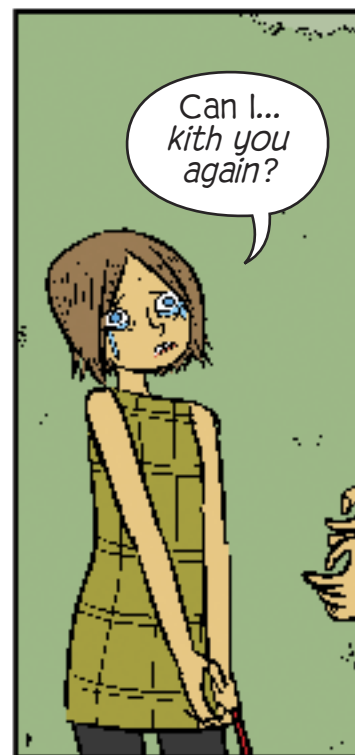
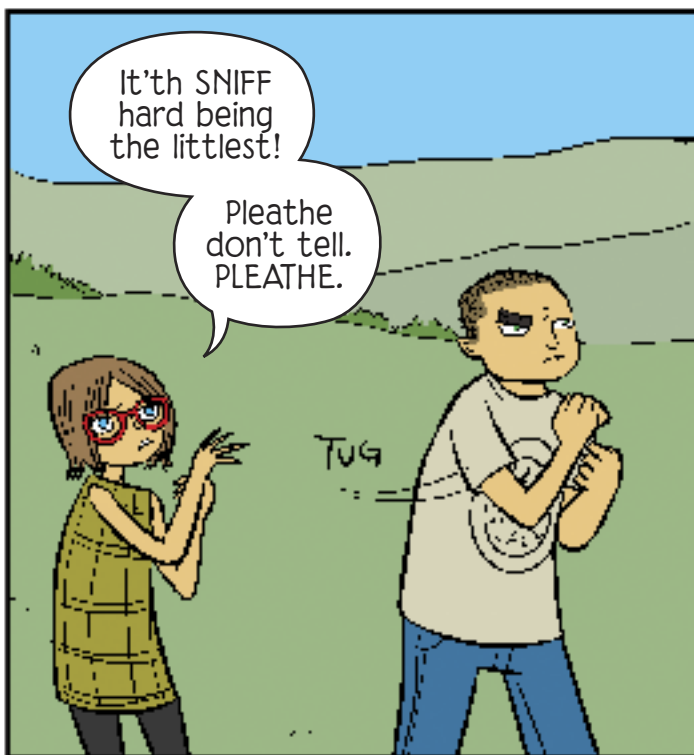
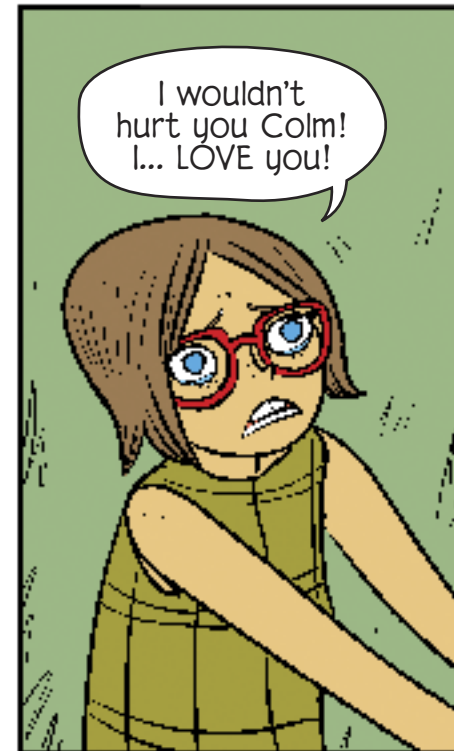
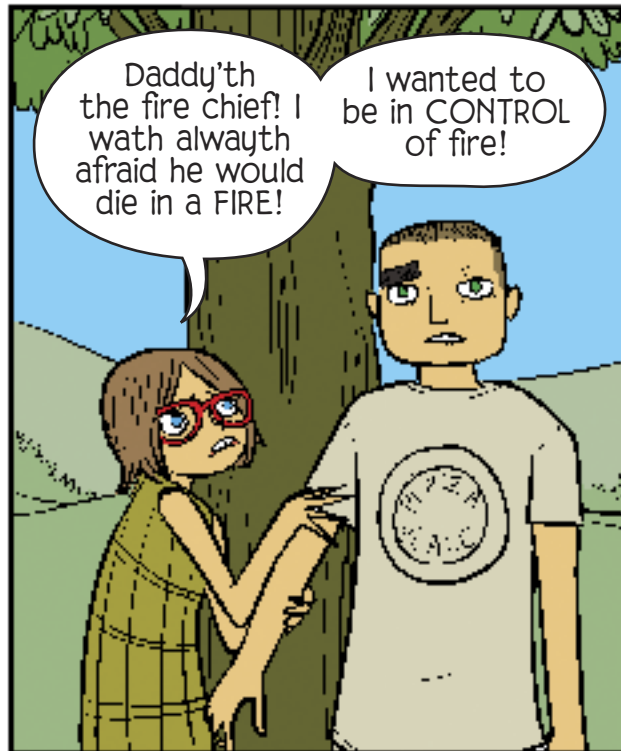
Yeah I guess-

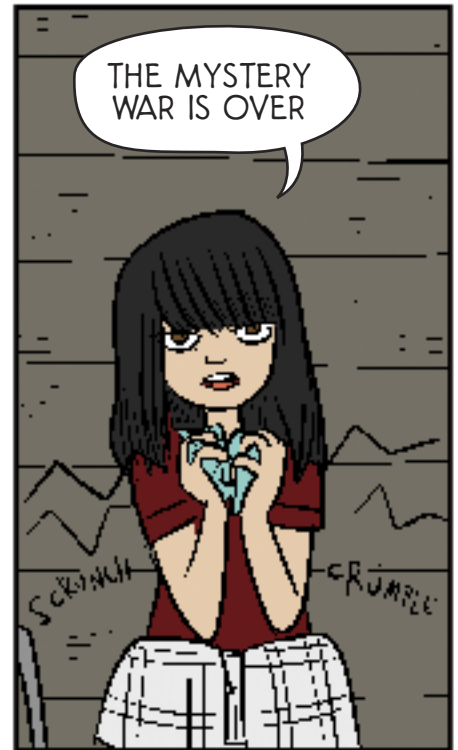
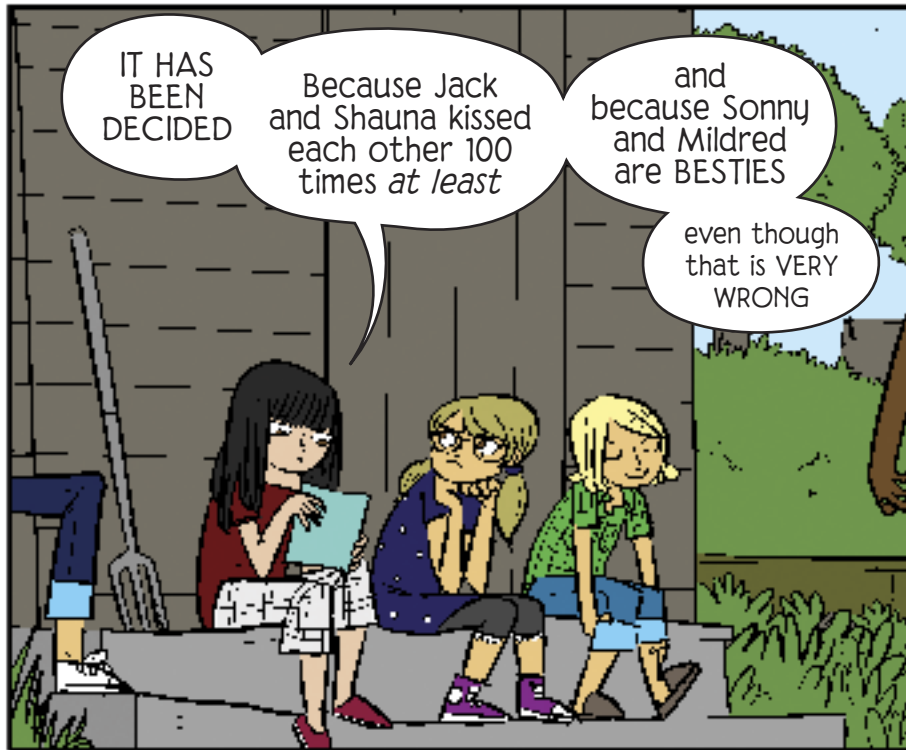
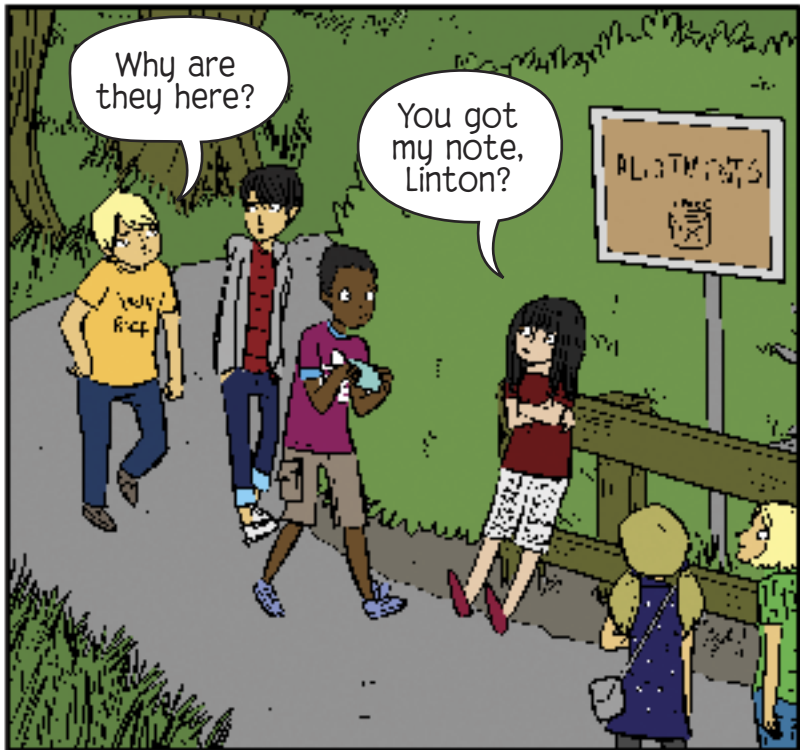
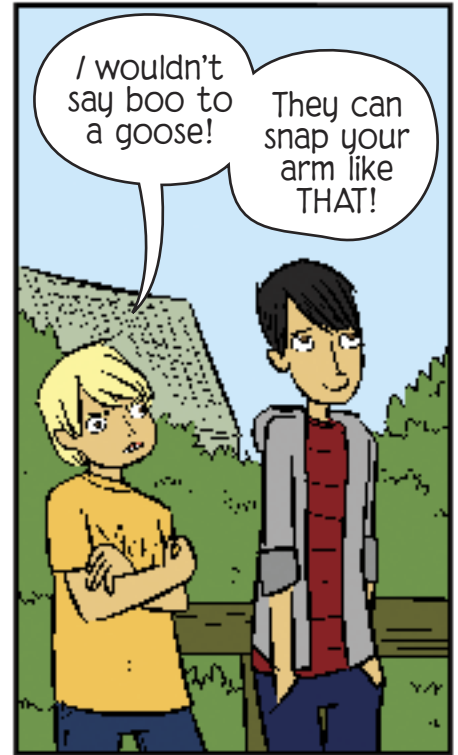


Next time
you do that,
can you give me
some warnin'?

I've not
been well,
you know.









So what do we do now?

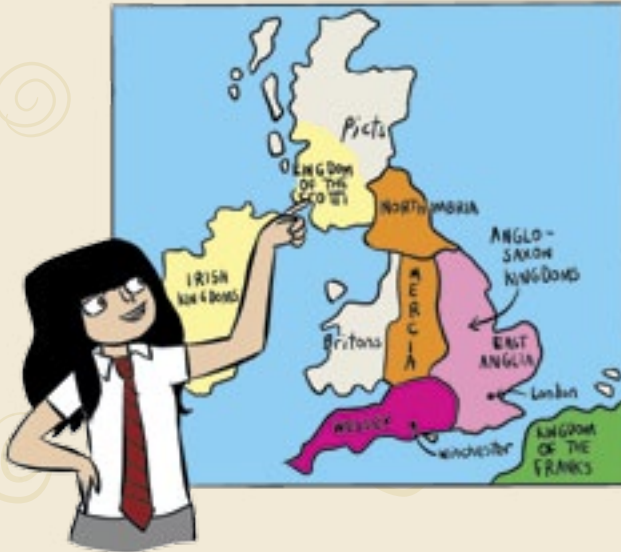
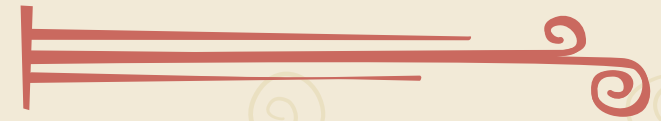
Jack... geese... they're like little DINOSAURS.

Solve the case of how many ice creams we can buy with this money my gran gave me.

It sounds INTRIGUING!



GLOSSARY



Great Britain is a comprised of four countries: England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Then there is Cornwall what has its own flag and language but is too obsessed with surfing to really be a country. They don't have a government but they do have "Surfers Against Sewage" which deals with probably 75% of their concerns as a nation. This mixture of people has created a lot of interesting phrases that you may wish to add to your international dictionary.

LOVE,
Charlotte
XXX

Mental: This is when your brainbox does not work quite right. Not to be confused with "The Mentalist" who is a man whose brain works maybe too well?

Parson: A holy man, a cleric. When picturing a parson as the people of Britane might think of him, imagine a priest in a cassock who has gone bright red because a lady in a short skirt just walked in. Maybe there is the sound of a swannee whistle at the same time.

Telly: Television. Please note, belly is not an abbreviation of "bellyvision" which is well a nightmare scenario.



Potty: See "mental". I resent the implication that I do not have a fully working mind. I think eventually Potty Grote will be replaced by "Hottie Grote" or, among less shallow members of the school, "Polyglotty Grote", because of my great mastery of the Froneh long-uage.



Dinner lady: In America, "lunch lady". Any meal served by the school at lunchtime is referred to as "school dinner". School dinners are a Controversial Area because in the past schools were always trying to feed you meat they found at the town dump and childers liked that bad meat because the government had made it into a fun shape and put breadcrumbs on it. Then Jamie Oliver got involved.

They all use their knife and fork wrong: Cutlery skills are very important in the UK because for many years the food was not worth eating so you had to concentrate on something else.

The craic: Something Irish people say. Maybe it means “a good time”, but that could be too simple, it can also mean gossip, fine entertainment or just some red hot chat. It is a catch-all term for anything that floats the Irish boat I reckon.

Sports Day: Day on which the whole school competes with each other in a load of track and field events. Well, most do. The kids with kind parents get notes written and enjoy pulling buttercups and daisies out of the living earth in the summer sun while watching Sonia Williams from 4B throw a “shot put”.



Wendlefield: Tackleford’s main enemy town. As soon as you go under the bridge to Wendlefield, there are no colours, milk goes sour, and a lad scratches your car with a coin while you’re in the supermarket.

Property prices: If you listen carefully on any bus or train in our fine nation, this is what the adult humans are talking about.

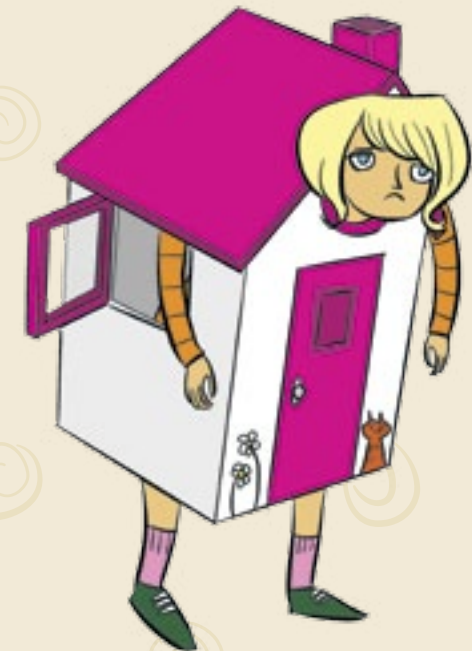


The glad eye: When a lady has taken a shine to a man, she bestows upon him a loving and sen-sual gaze and that is the glad eye. See also: the skunk eye, the dead eye, the kill eye.

Bare nipples and back hair all showing: As soon as the sun is out, certain men head to the downtown zone with this look. The sun has confused them about how much we want to see their bare top halves. It is a national disgrace hem hem.



The nuthouse, nutters: It is important to be very respectful of people who have mind problems, as it is not their fault. Sadly most boys have about as much respect for the feelings of the unwell as they do for an atmosphere untroubled by farts.



Wendy house: A little play house. The day you no longer fit in a Wendy house is the day you take on the cares and concerns of the adult world. Or, well, the concerns of the older than seven world. You will never own a house again (see “property prices”).

Tip: The town dump (*repository for old mattresses and future school dinner meats pre-breadcrumbing*).

MISS
CHARLOTTE
GROTE



Raw
glamour
Poise
Grace



HUSBANDS,
HUSBANDS,
HUSBANDS



Miss
Mildred
Haversham



Beautiful
mind
+
beautiful
face

FOOTBALLER HUSBAND

YES:
Great
wealth
+
strong
physique



BUT:
1%
chance
of
mental
agility

VICAR HUSBAND

YES:
free
house,
listening
ear,
good
behaviour



BUT:
might
grass your
sins up
to
GOD

DOCTOR HUSBAND

YES:
"in-house"
expert
on
dropsy,
penicillin
and
mystery
aches



BUT:
carries a
lady's
handbag
everywhere
with him

(even to
the
toilet?
CHECK)

Builder husband

YES:
willing
participant
in Fancies
such as
bothy,
gazebo,
motte and
bailey



BUT:
hard hat
leads to
premature
baldness,
hat
hair

Architect husband

YES:
all the
benefits
of a
builder
but
cleaner



BUT:
dangerous
obsession with
expensive
spectacles
+
"FRANK
GENRY"

Actor husband

YES:
handsome
and
charismatic



BUT:
in love
with
own
reflection
+
sensual
danger of
leading
ladies

SCIENCE HUSBAND



YES:
powerful mind

BUT:
basically a
brain on legs

PRACTICAL HUSBAND



YES:
good
with
tools

BUT:
old
fashioned
attitudes
+
beer
belly

ACADEMICAL HUSBAND



YES:
Wise
and
learned.

Access
to
capes!

BUT:
smells
like the
inside of
an old
chest
of
drawers

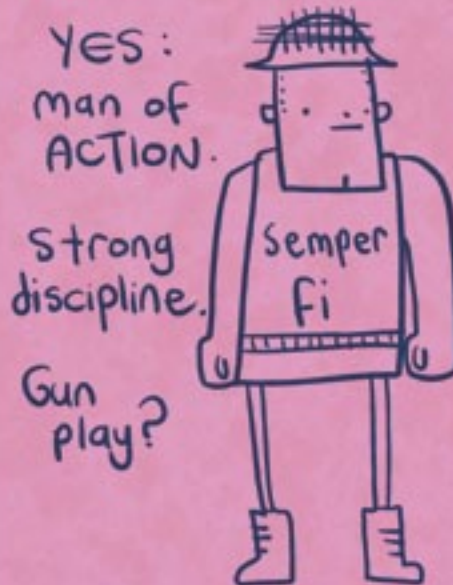
"Alternative husband"



YES:
relaxed
ways.
Extrem
muscles.

BUT:
Terrible music
taste.
Sand
everywhere!!!

Army husband



YES:
man of
ACTION.

Strong
discipline.

Gun
play?

BUT:
Rigid
attitude
to
bed
making

Spy husband



YES:
Sensual
air of
mystery

BUT:
possibility
of
death
a) him
b) you

MUSICIAN HUSBAND



YES:
Can write great
tributes to
your beauty
+ wisdom

BUT:
You may
not like
his new
direction

BANKER HUSBAND



YES:
might leave
some money
lying around

BUT:
Constant cigar
smell.
Also, uses
poor people
as furniture

WIZARD HUSBAND



YES:
Mastery of
the arcane
arts

BUT:
might turn you into a postage
stamp during bad divorce

Farmer husband

YES:
Lots of
baby animals
to play
with



BUT:
will probably
make
you stick
your
arm up
a cow

Centaur husband



YES: Fast, strong,
don't need a car
for short
journeys

BUT:
"the toilet
issue"

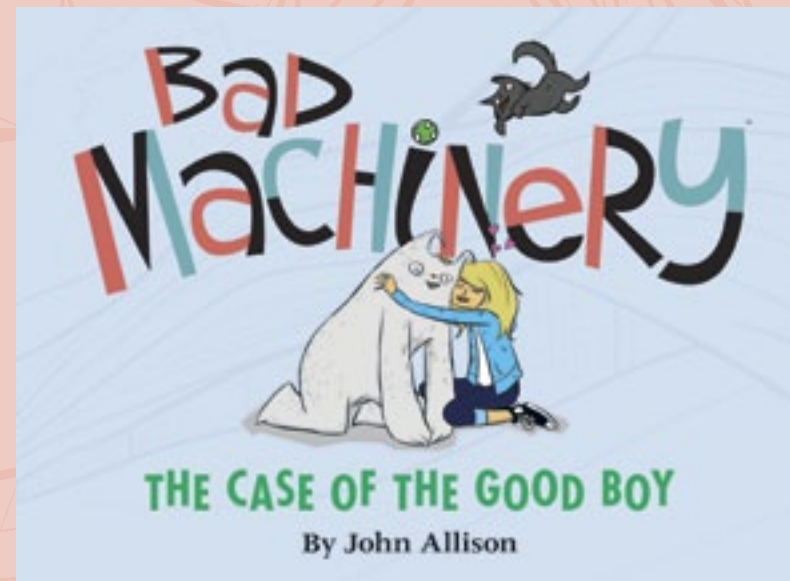
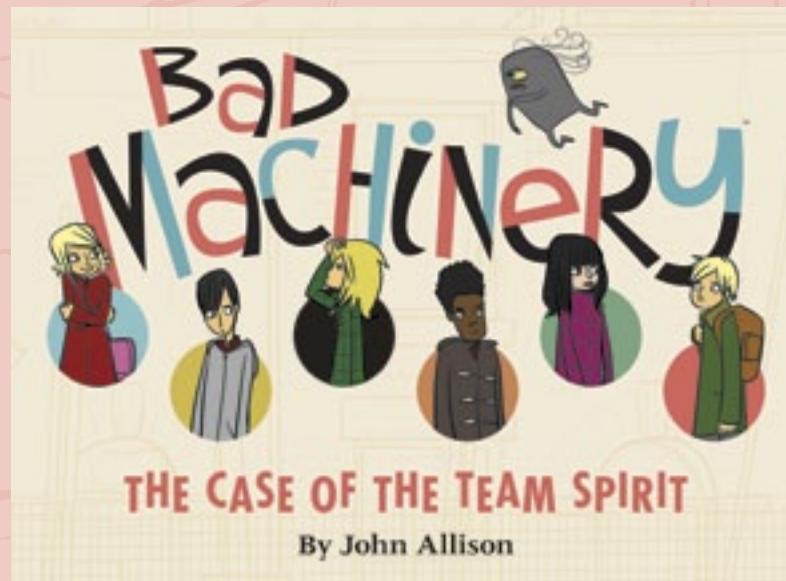
Clown Husband



YES:
=
NO
==

BUT:
Ultimate
nightmare

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