

LOOKS, BRAINS + EVERYTHING



1

John Allison

INTRODUCTION TO THE EBOOK (3RD) EDITION

I usually start the introduction for a reprint by saying how weird the pages look to me and how strange they are to read again. Well, I've said it now and I'm never going to say it again.

These comics were made when I still had a day job, I would bash them out over the weekend, and in the evenings if I could. That's why they're drawn in a rather stiff, computerised style. It was the fastest way that I could work at the time, with the limited artistic skills that I had to draw upon. They plainly did a job, as the second of the stories in this book remains one of my most popular.

As I said in the second edition, when I read the Looks, Brains & Everything storyline, I just want to write and draw it all over again. They were exciting times in my life. Rough and ready it may be, but it was good enough that I didn't have to work in an office any more. And thank goodness for that.

John Allison
Manchester, UK
March 2011

LOOKS, BRAINS & EVERYTHING

by John Allison

Collecting Scary Go Round from June 4th 2002 to February 28th 2003

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GAS

Reviews of Scary Go Round would often remark that the comic started as the adventures of Tessa and Rachel, before many of the characters from my previous comic, "Bobbins" were introduced. But there was a good reason for this.

The first story, which follows, was designed as a spin off of Bobbins to run on a pay-site called Modern Tales. It was to run twice a week, while Bobbins continued. It was originally intended to be a collaboration between myself and a friend, a gifted artist with a great talent for backgrounds. I would write and do the characters.

Unfortunately, my friend dropped out shortly before I started work on Scary Go Round, and after a month on Modern Tales, it was pretty evident that only about a tenth of the readership of Bobbins were going to pay for the pleasure of more of my work. I was one of several established webcomic artists who found the going very sluggish in the promised "brave new world".

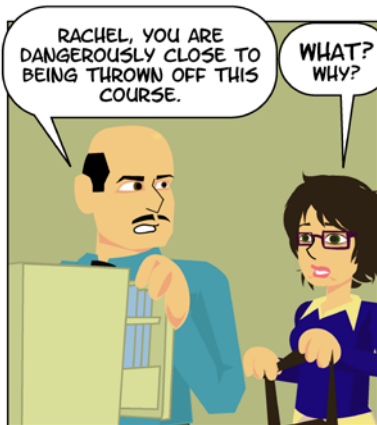
But having developed my art and writing styles further for Scary Go Round, I decided to make a fresh start for the characters from Bobbins (which comprised three and a half years of experiments, all of which under severe time - and talent - constraints in order to produce five comics a week).

So when this first story, "Gas", was over, I opened up the community of Tackleford, and have kept adding to it ever since.

I've always felt a little bit guilty about the way Scary Go Round was designed, because it set a bad example and was quite influential - there are still a few very popular internet comics that use its stiff staging style - a convenient one because it requires almost no composition skills at all! I had turnarounds of the characters drawn in Adobe Illustrator and would adjust eyes, arms, hands and mouths, and if I was feeling really racy, a leg or two.

Done properly, art done in Illustrator looks flashy and stylish, but it takes real care and craft. In the past, I had taken absolutely no care, but with this story, I took... *some care*. By the time (some years later) that I had begun to apply an appropriate level of care to art of this kind, I started to think that it would be a lot easier to just draw it with a pencil instead of poking and prodding lines around. At that point I found out just how rusty my drawing skills were, but it was the start of a whole new adventure.

So that's how Scary Go Round began, and why, for a month or two, it seemed to be a comic about two teen sleuths. After this, it became something else altogether. I regret nothing!



OH LOOK,
IT'S EMPTY.
THERE'S A
SPIDER IN IT.



I'M HONING IT,
PROFESSOR PICKERING.
I'M AN ARTIST. I CAN'T
LET YOU SEE IT UNTIL
IT'S PERFECT.

AND LET ME
GUESS, IT'S IN
YOUR HEAD,
BECAUSE YOU'RE
A CONCEPTUAL
ARTIST.

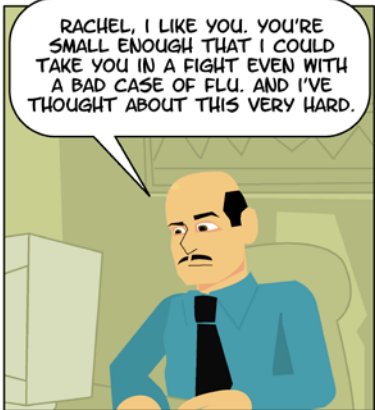



IT'S A HAPPY
SPIDER! SURELY
THAT COUNTS
FOR SOMETHING?

HOW CAN I NOT GET
KICKED OFF THE COURSE?
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN
MAKE UP ALL THAT WORK.



RACHEL, I LIKE YOU. YOU'RE
SMALL ENOUGH THAT I COULD
TAKE YOU IN A FIGHT EVEN WITH
A BAD CASE OF FLU. AND I'VE
THOUGHT ABOUT THIS VERY HARD.






THIS IS A JOURNALISM COURSE. AND YOU HAVEN'T JOURNALISED ENOUGH. SO YOU MUST JOURNALISE MORE.

OKAY.




YOU JUST BECAME EDITOR OF THE TACKLEFORD UNIVERSITY CLARION.

WHAT? NO! HOW CAN I DO THAT? I CAN'T PUT OUT A PAPER! WHAT IF I DO IT WRONG? WHAT IF I FAIL?



IF YOU FAIL, YOU GET TO WORK IN A MEAT-PACKING PLANT. FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!

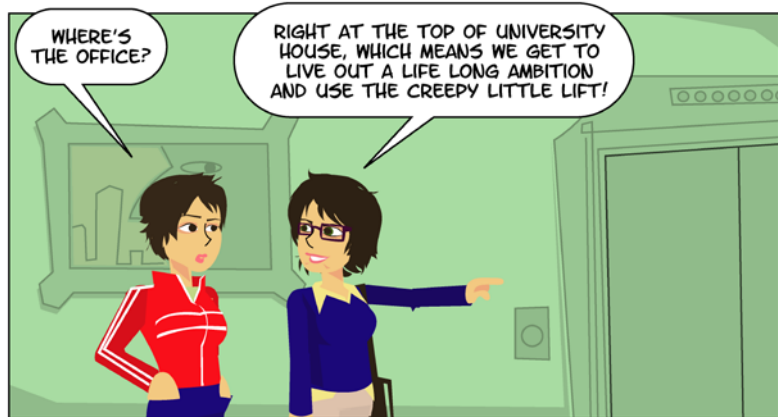
I'LL JUST GO AND EDIT A PAPER THEN.



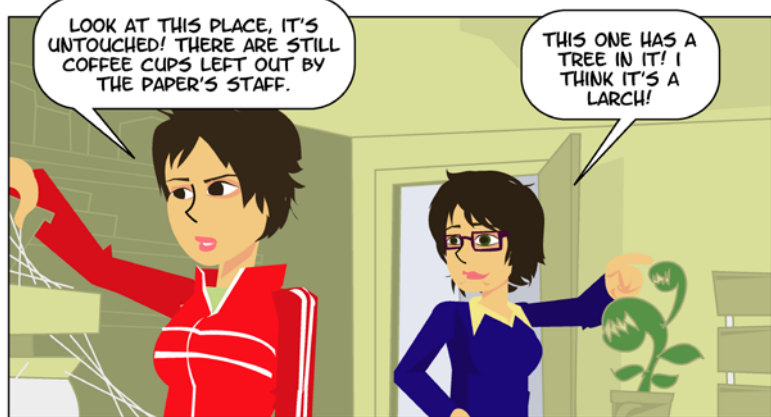
CECIL, WHAT DO YOU MEAN I SHOULD HAVE ASKED HER TO SWAP HER YOUNG BODY FOR COURSE CREDIT? BAD, DIRTY GUINEA PIG!

EEP















SO WHEN SHE DIED IT WAS LIKE, SURE, OH NO, GRANNY DIED, BUT, COOL, SHE'S NOT GOING TO TAKE HER CLOTHES OFF ANY TIME SOON.



I MEAN, SHE'D BEEN A GOOD LOOKING GIRL IN HER YOUTH BUT TIME AIN'T ALWAYS SO KIND AND-

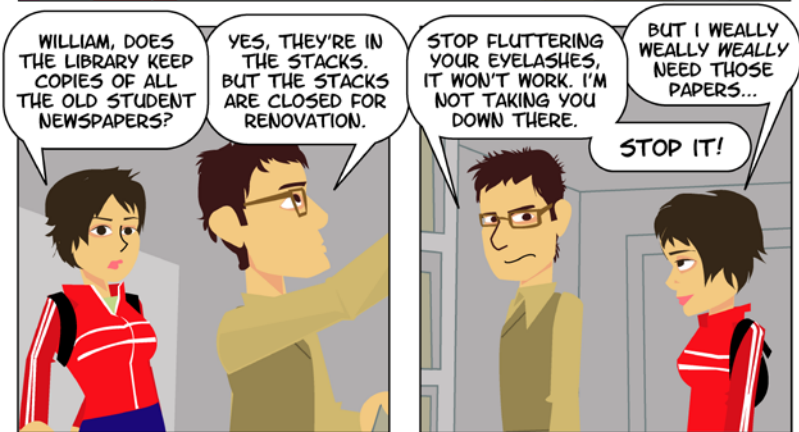
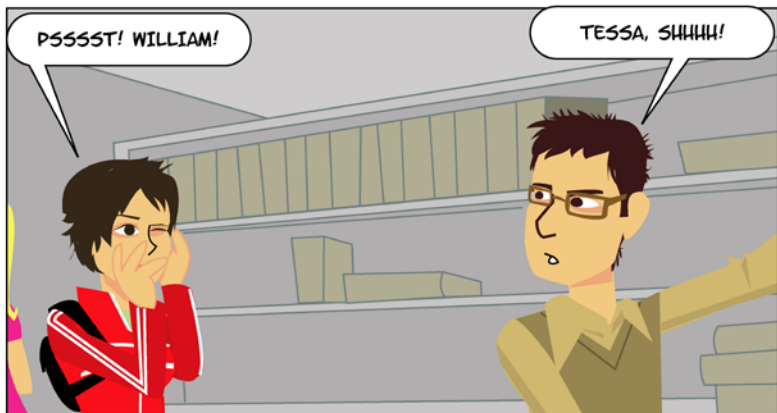
STOP TALKING, RYAN!



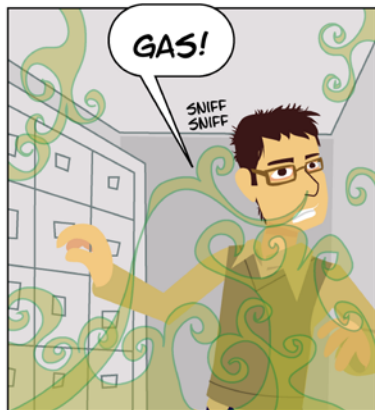
TRY TO BE GOOD!

PONK
PONK!














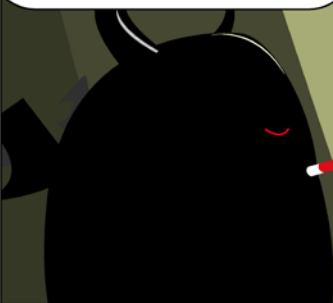





HE IS GLOSSY AND BLACK, AND HAS HORNS, AND SKIPS FROM ROOFTOP TO ROOFTOP LOOKING FOR PEOPLE TO SKIN!



SOMETIMES IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT, YOU'LL SEE HIS RED EYES GLOWING IN THE DARK. YOU MUST LAY STILL SO HE DOESN'T SPOT YOU!



HE HAS SIX LEGS, AND IS LIKE A BEETLE, BUT FATTER! ONE DAY HE WILL EAT ME, I KNOW HE WILL! HIS ONLY WEAKNESS IS SUGAR, IT MAKES HIM SLEEPY AND...



LET ME PUT FORWARD A THEORY, JUST A SHOT IN THE DARK. IT'S NOT A GIANT BLACK BUG YOU MADE UP.

PROVE IT.





I BET HE'S NEVER KISSED A GIRL. HE'S PROBABLY ALL TWISTED UP INSIDE.

EMAIL HIM, WE'LL MEET HIM AND GIVE HIM A THRILL.



"DEAR DR PROOPS. WE ARE PERIODIC TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS ENTHUSIASTS WHO WANT TO KNOW MUCH, MUCH MORE."

WE'RE GOING TO HELL.

TAPTAPTITTY!

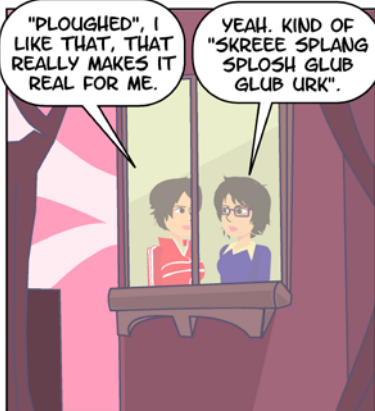


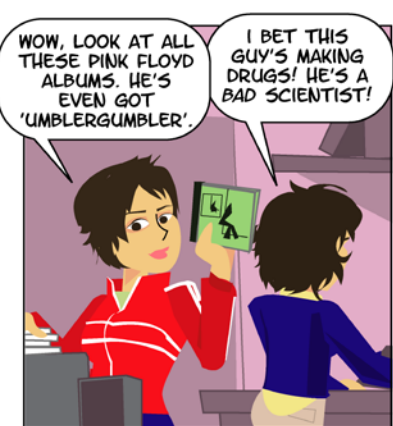
THE LAST FEW COLLEGE NEWSPAPERS BEFORE IT STOPPED ARE FULL OF INVESTIGATIONS INTO WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CHEMISTRY SOCIETY.



WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?

THEIR MINI-BUS PLOUGHED OVER A BRIDGE ON A TRIP TO VISIT AN IODINE FACTORY!







THERE WERE FIVE OF US IN CHEMISTRY SOCIETY WHO ALWAYS STAYED TOGETHER. PEOPLE USED TO CALL US THE 'FIVE MUSKETEERS', AT LEAST WE IMAGINED THEY DID BECAUSE THEY NEVER ACTUALLY SAID IT OUT LOUD.

FROGGY

LUPUS CRANE

BAD LARRY

ME, BARRY PROOPS

AND STEVIE SPRAKE. WE ALWAYS HAD A BIT OF FUN WITH STEVIE. THERE'S ALWAYS ONE, ISN'T THERE?

HEY, STEVIE, IS THAT AN ISOTOPE OF BUCKMINSTERFULLERENE?

WELL...

AH. YOU SPRAYED DE-IONIZED WATER ON MY TROUSERS, GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT I HAVE WET MYSELF. HA. HA.

HURRRR!

ALTHOUGH HE SOMETIMES CRIED OPENLY, YOU COULD TELL HE LOVED IT.

LUPUS ALWAYS PUSHED IT TOO FAR THOUGH. ONE DAY HE AND THE LADS THREW STEVIE INTO THE FUME CABINET.



SOMEHOW SOME HIGHLY VOLATILE COMPOUNDS WERE THROWN IN THERE WITH HIM. A TRAGIC, ONE IN A MILLION CHANCE.



THE MIXTURE OF THE SPILLED CHEMICALS AND THE POWERFUL WINDS OF THE FUME CABINET VAPOURISED HIS SKINNY BODY BEFORE WE COULD GET HIM OUT.



WE WROTE A NOTE FROM STEVIE SAYING HE'D RUN AWAY TO JOIN A CULT WHO WORSHIP BENZENE RINGS. BUT WITHIN A WEEK THE REST OF THE SOCIETY HAD DIED IN THE BUS ACCIDENT.



IT WAS KIND OF EXCITING
WHEN SHE GRABBED ME.
SHE SMELLED REALLY
NICE. MAYBE I'LL GET
MYSELF A GIRLFRIEND.



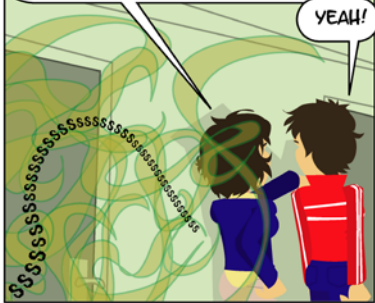
I LOOK PRETTY GOOD STILL,
RIGHT? THAT'S A GOOD LOOKING
TAIL. MAYBE I COULD COMB IT OVER
THE TOP OF MY HEAD... WHAT ARE
YOU DOING, STEVIE?



PLEASE... STEVIE... NO...
WE'RE MUSKETEERS...
COUGH COUGH HACK URGLE



...THING IS, IN ALIEN ABDUCTIONS, NO
ONE EVER COMES BACK SAYING THEY
HAD A GREAT TIME ON THE SPACESHIP.
EARTH NEEDS TO TEACH THE UNIVERSE
SOME STINKIN' HOSPITALITY!















SO WHY DID YOU
KILL ALL THOSE
PEOPLE, STEVIE?

I COULD NOT BE
DISCOVERED! I
HAD TO STAY A
SECRET!



AS A SOLID, BEAUTIFUL LADIES WERE
OUT OF MY REACH. BUT AS A GAS, I
COULD DRIFT INTO CHANGING ROOMS
AND LOOK AT THEM IN THE NUDEY.



I COULD ALSO SEE
MOVIES FOR FREE.
AND EXPLORE
CHIMNEYS.

YOU SAD,
SICK
GASEOUS
FREAK.



PRETTY
BIZARRE, EH
OFFICER?

ACTUALLY, IT
HAPPENS A LOT
MORE THAN YOU'D
THINK, MISS.

WE'LL JUST CONDENSE STEVIE IN THE POLICE LAB, THEN BRING THE FULL WEIGHT OF THE LAW TO BEAR ON HIM.

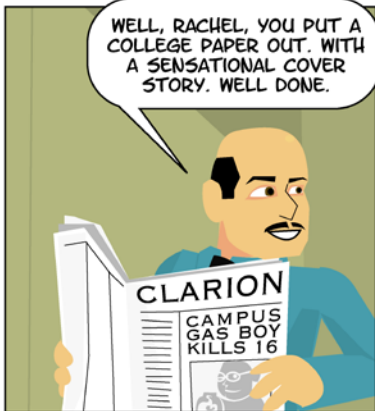
I THINK WE'VE LEARNED A VALUABLE LESSON TODAY.

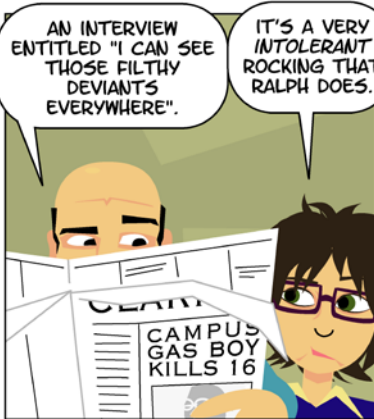
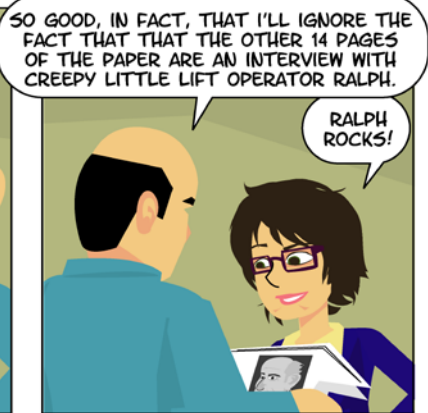
YES. SADLY IT IS FAR TOO NEBULOUS FOR THE DUMB HUMAN BRAIN TO ACTUALLY COMPREHEND.



WELL, RACHEL, YOU PUT A COLLEGE PAPER OUT. WITH A SENSATIONAL COVER STORY. WELL DONE.

DOES IT MAKE UP FOR THE COURSEWORK I KIND OF MANAGED NOT TO DO? WILL I GET AN OKAY MARK?



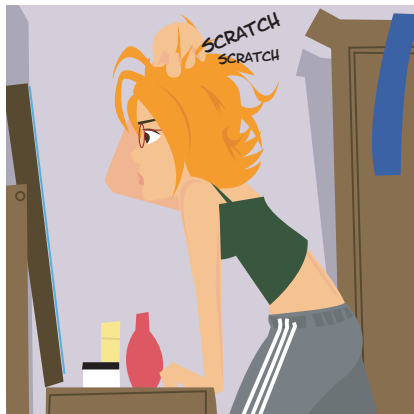
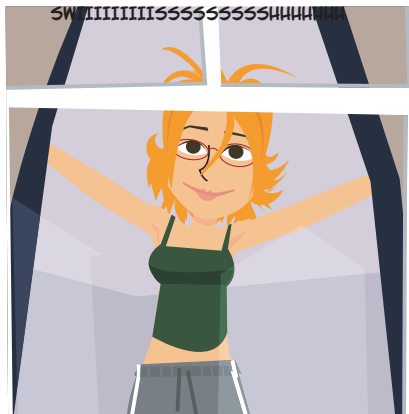


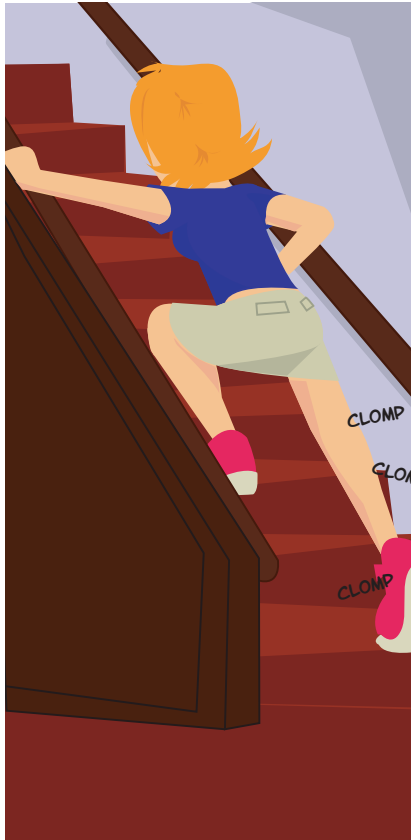




LOOKS, BRAINS & EVERYTHING

ONE





LADIES! DISHWATER HANDS
GETTING YOU DOWN? APPLY
DR RYAN'S NERVE TONIC
FOR BABY SOFT PAWS!

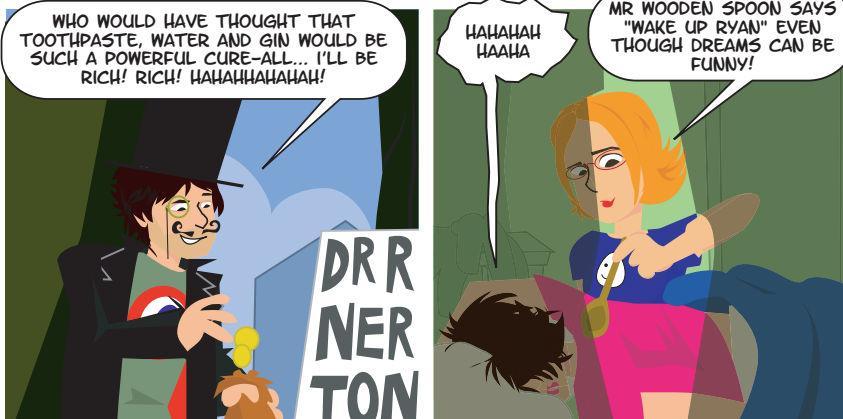
GENTS! ALL OUT OF BEDROOM ZING
AT THE END OF THE WORKING
WEEK? SPLASH ON A LITTLE NERVE
TONIC... BA-DA BING BOOM BAFF!



WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT
TOOTHPASTE, WATER AND GIN WOULD BE
SUCH A POWERFUL CURE-ALL... I'LL BE
RICH! RICH! HAHAHAHAHAHA!

HAHAHAH
HAHAH

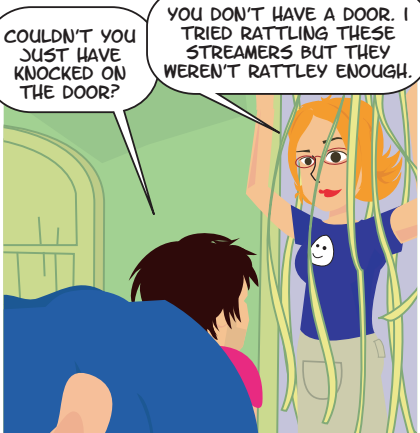
MR WOODEN SPOON SAYS
"WAKE UP RYAN" EVEN
THOUGH DREAMS CAN BE
FUNNY!





SHELLEY,
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING HERE?

WAKING
YOU UP!



COULDN'T YOU
JUST HAVE
KNOCKED ON
THE DOOR?

YOU DON'T HAVE A DOOR. I
TRIED RATTLING THESE
STREAMERS BUT THEY
WEREN'T RATTLEY ENOUGH.

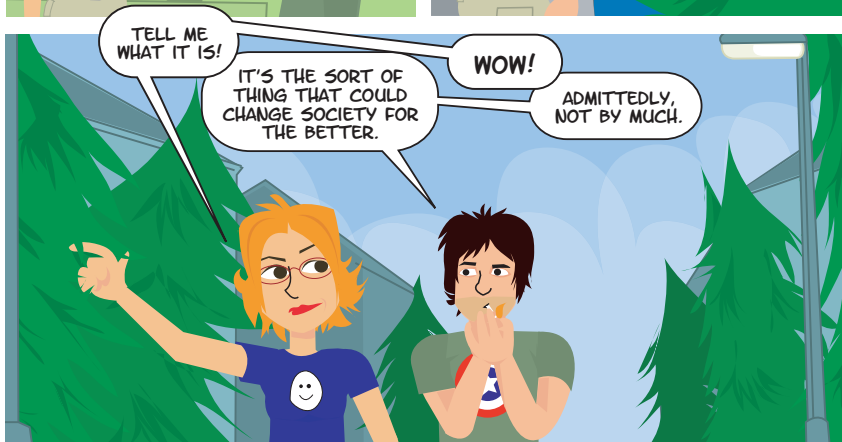


I WAS NAKED! YOU
COULDN'T HAVE
BEEN OFFENDED.

NAKEDNESS
DOES NOT
OFFEND ME.

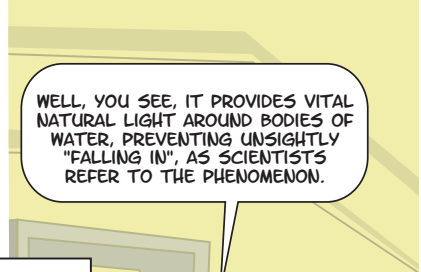


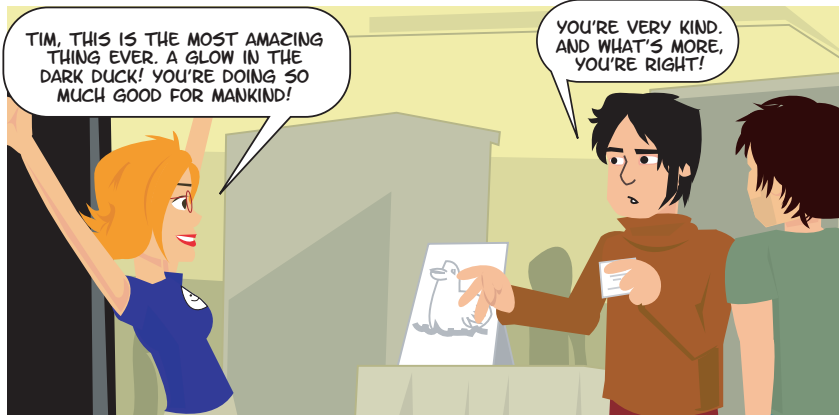
IF YOU WERE NAKED
AND JUMPING AROUND,
THAT WOULD HAVE
BEEN OFFENSIVE.

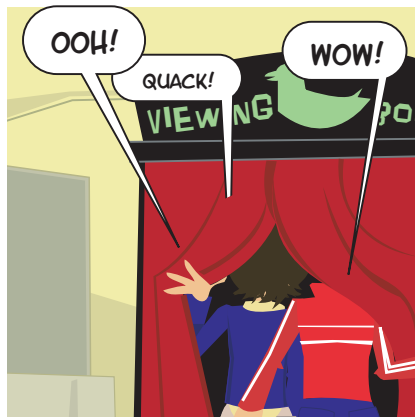
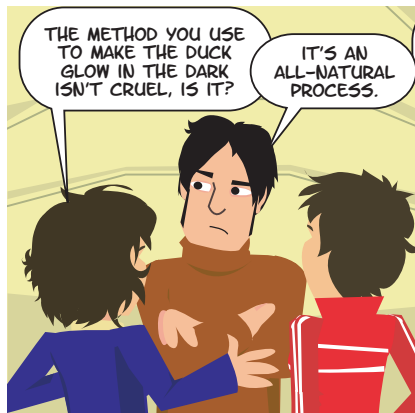


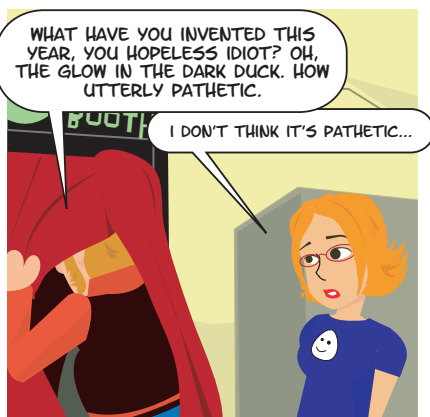


CIENCE FA









SO WHAT HAVE YOU COME UP WITH, FOGERTY?

MR BAKER! IT COOKS FRESH BREAD AND MAKES COFFEE FOR YOU BEFORE WAKING YOU UP IN THE MORNING.

THAT'S - THAT'S - THAT'S - THAT'S

YES, FECKING GREAT, I KNOW.

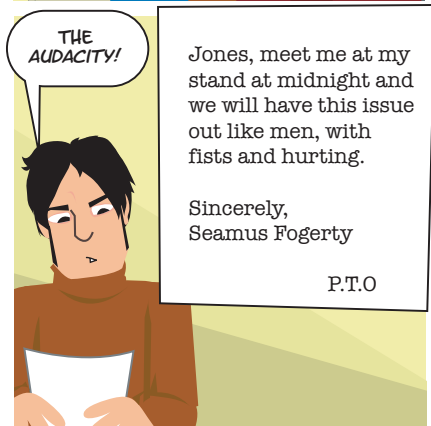
FLOUR GOES IN HERE AND...

THAT'S MY INVENTION FROM LAST YEAR! YOU'VE JUST USED MOULDED PLASTIC AND FIXED THE MINOR SCALDING PROBLEM!

I STRONG WORDS TIM. IN FACT I'D SAY SLANDER. YOU'LL BE HEARING FROM MY LAWYER.

I OUGHT TO THROTTLE YOUR FACE OFF!



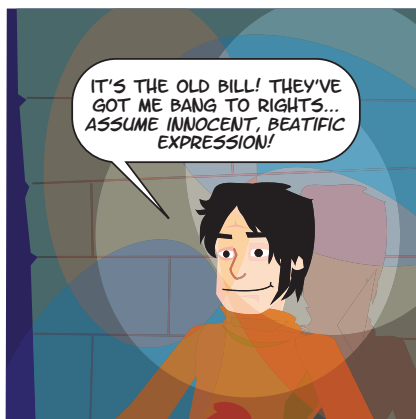
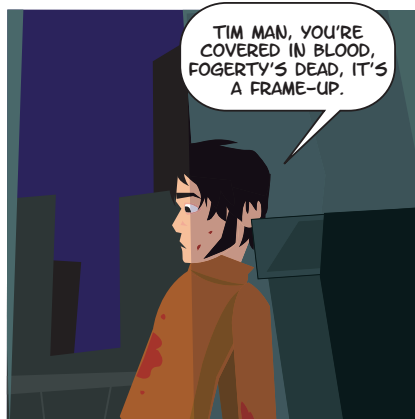


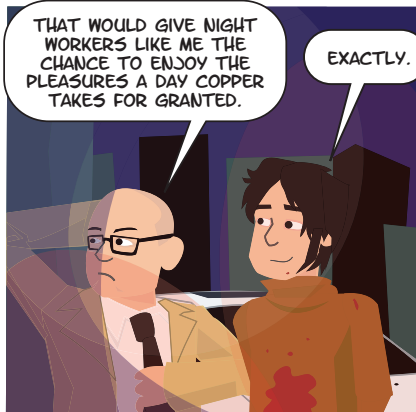


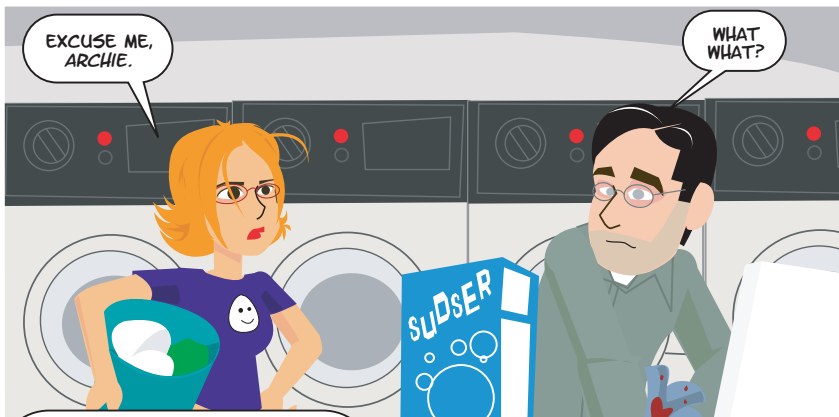


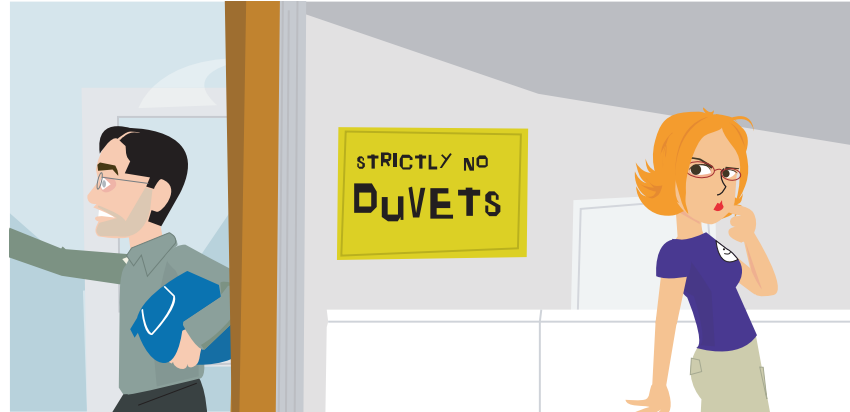
THERE, THAT'S...
BETTER... AAAH!!

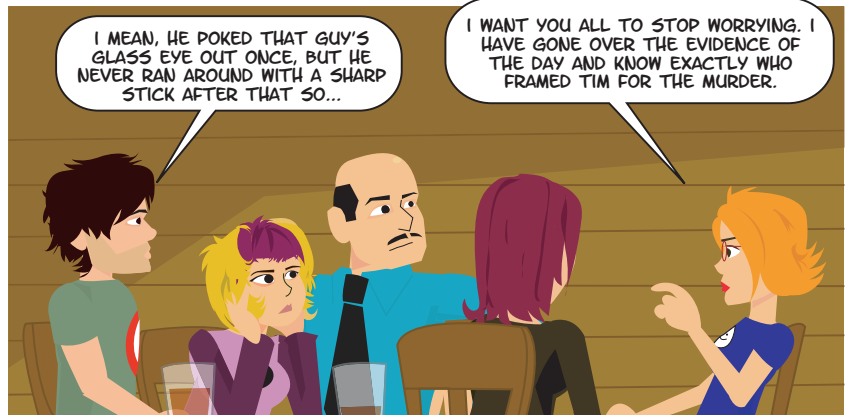
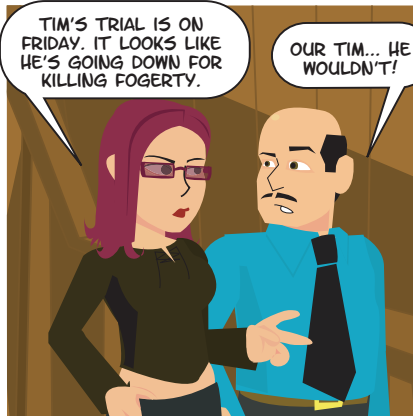
THINK, TIM, THINK... WHAT
WOULD PRESIDENT JIMMY
CARTER DO RIGHT NOW? HE'D
KNOW WHAT TO DO. HE'D
KNOW WHAT TO DO...

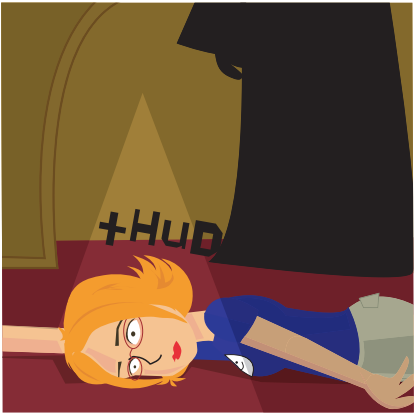
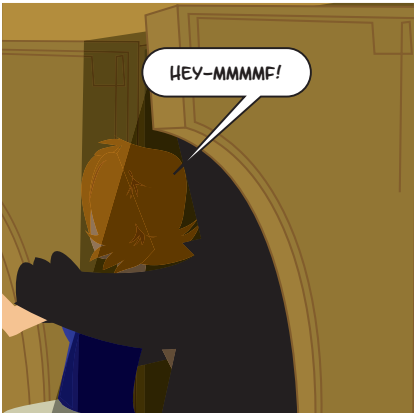
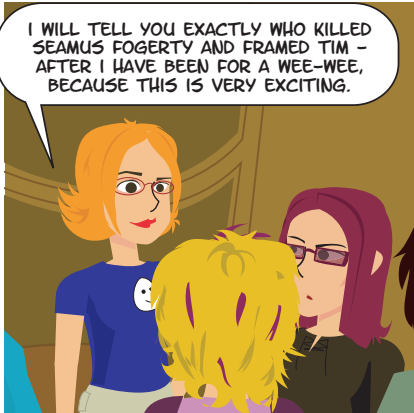






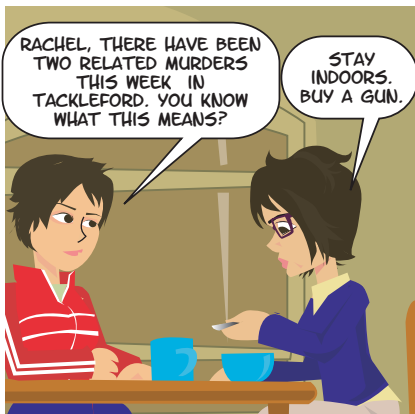


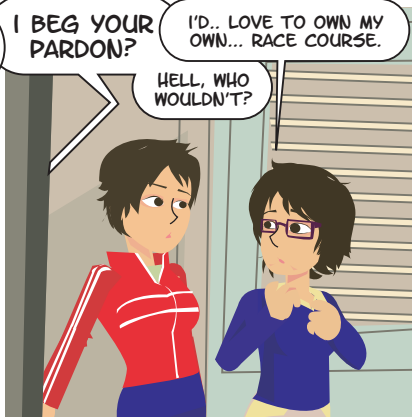
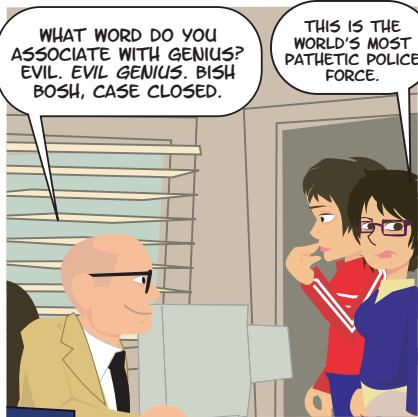
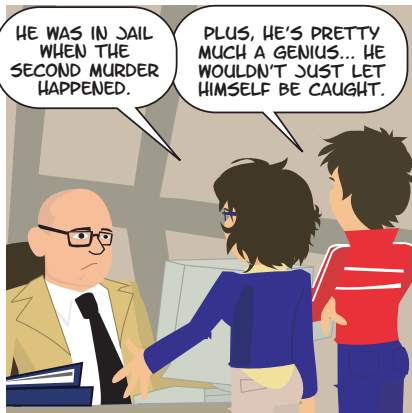


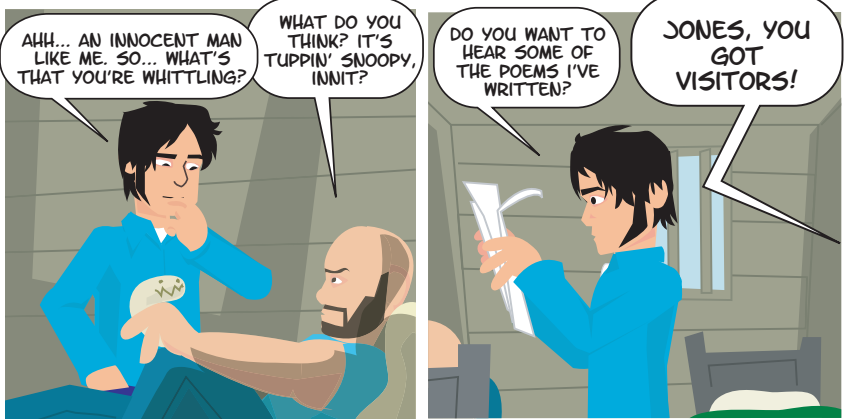
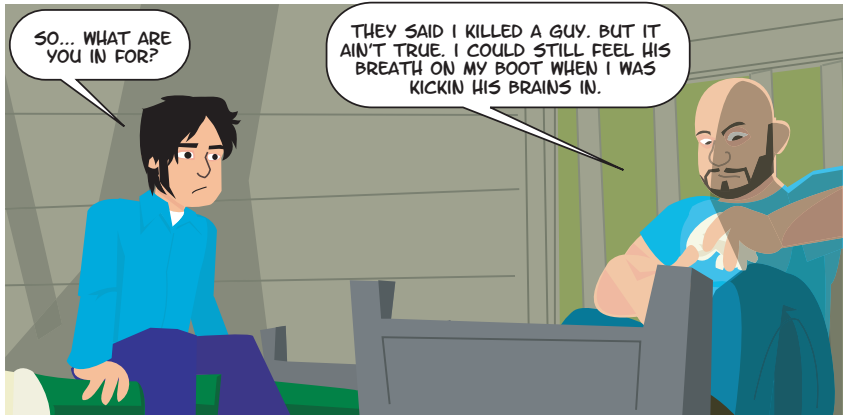






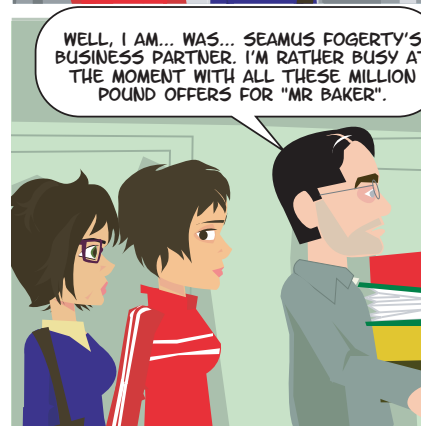
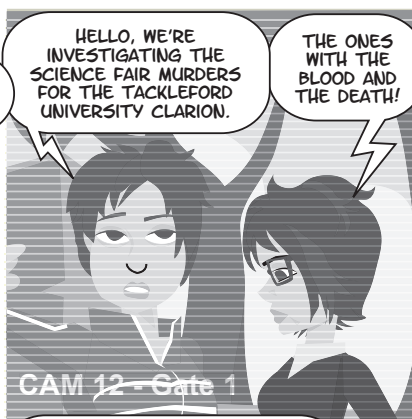
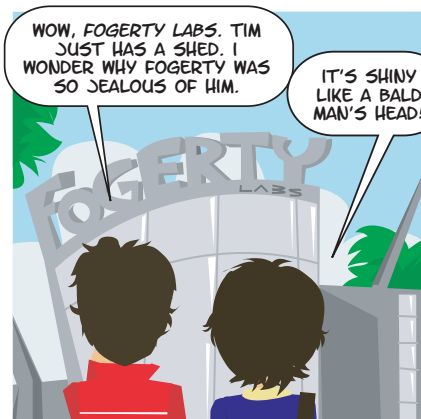


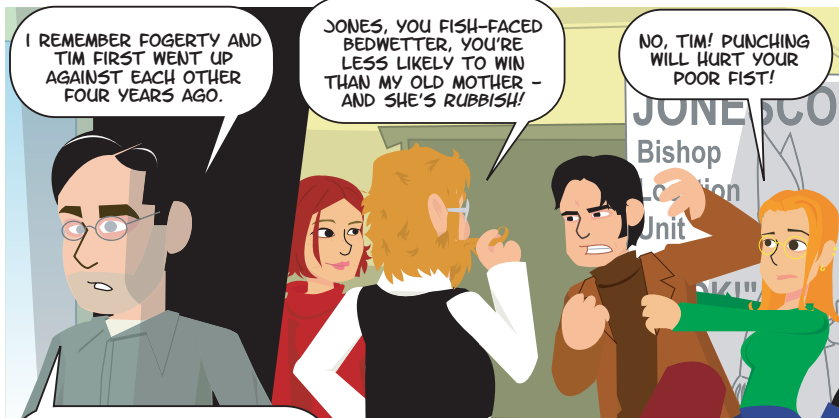


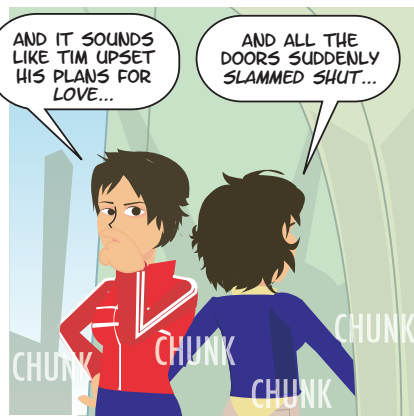
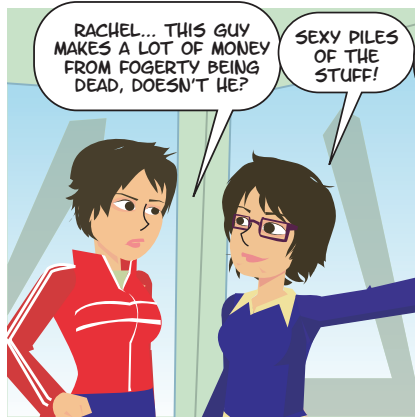


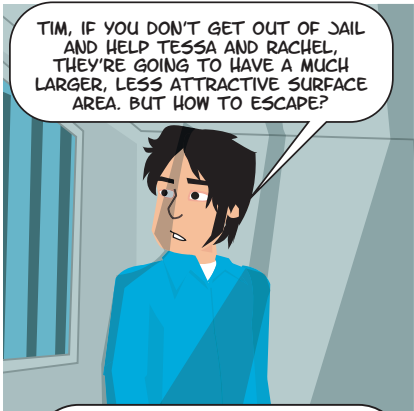













TIM, IF YOU DON'T GET OUT OF JAIL AND HELP TESSA AND RACHEL, THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE A MUCH LARGER, LESS ATTRACTIVE SURFACE AREA. BUT HOW TO ESCAPE?



HEY, IS THAT THE CLASSIC TWEED CAP, A BEIGE TOPCOAT AND SPORTSMAN'S PIPE?



AH, GOOD AFTERNOON MY MAN. JUST DECIDED TO TAKE A STROLL ROUND THE PRISON AS A GENTLEMAN WILL. OFF HOME NOW.



SPLendid. HOW'S THE GOOD LADY WIFE?

OH, JUST CAPITAL!

CAPITAL!



GIRLS, THAT AIRVENT LEADS TO THE ROOF! YOU'RE DOOMED! THE DOOMVISOR™ PREDICTS A 3.7% CHANCE OF YOUR SURVIVAL.



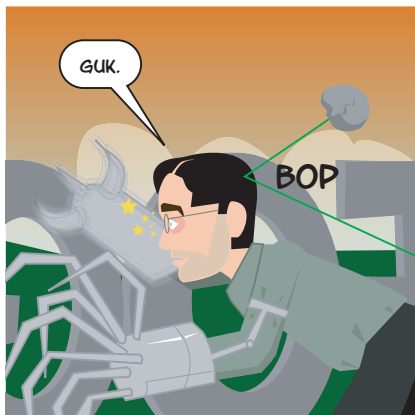
I DON'T WANT TO BE KILLED BY THAT FREAK'S MANGLING DEVICES!

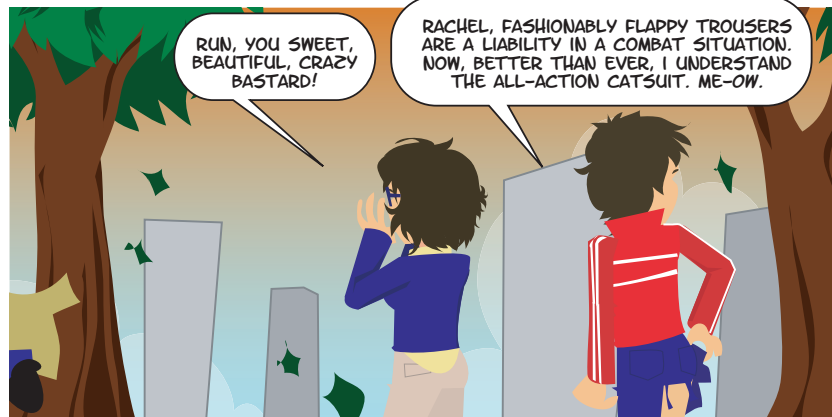
WE CAN THINK OF A PLAN. THINK OF A PLAN!

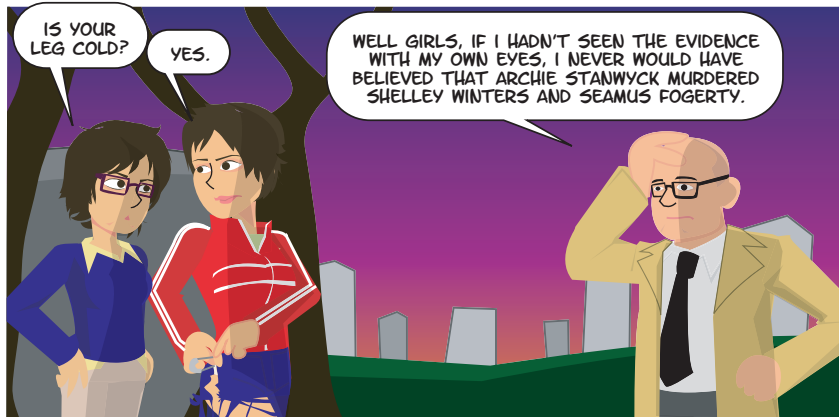
WELL... IF WE CAN'T HURT HIS BODY... MAYBE WE CAN INJURE... HIS FEELINGS...

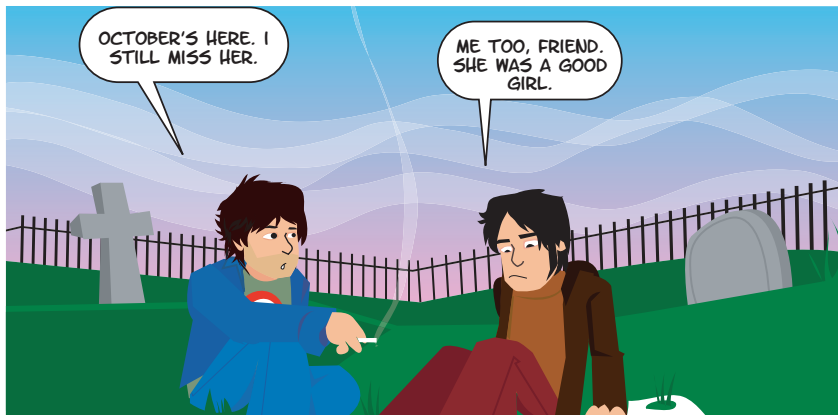
OR JAM THIS BALLPOINT PEN INTO HIS BRAIN.





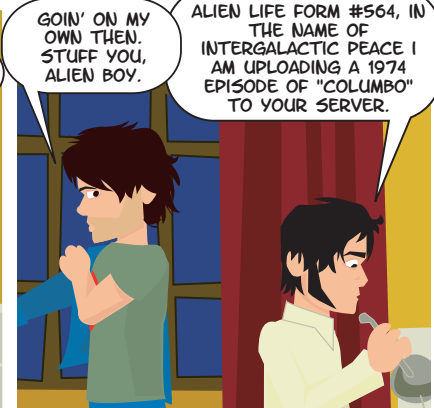
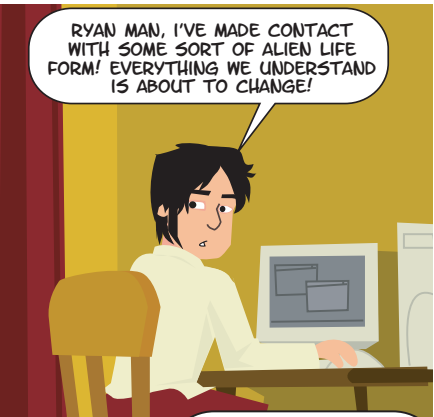






TWO









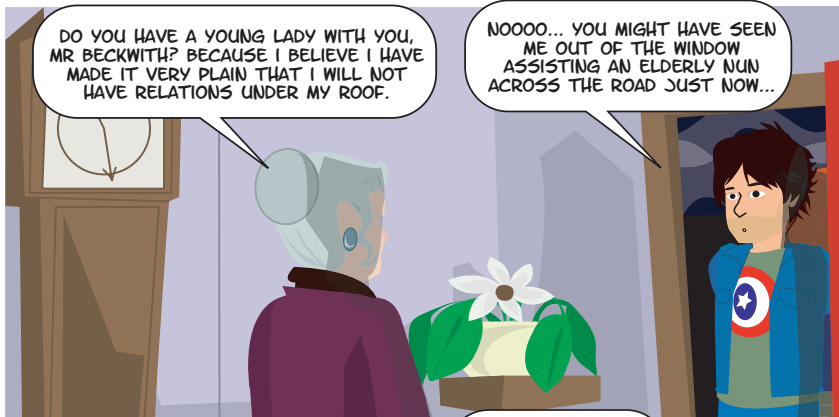












DO YOU HAVE A YOUNG LADY WITH YOU, MR BECKWITH? BECAUSE I BELIEVE I HAVE MADE IT VERY PLAIN THAT I WILL NOT HAVE RELATIONS UNDER MY ROOF.

NOOOO... YOU MIGHT HAVE SEEN ME OUT OF THE WINDOW ASSISTING AN ELDERLY NUN ACROSS THE ROAD JUST NOW...



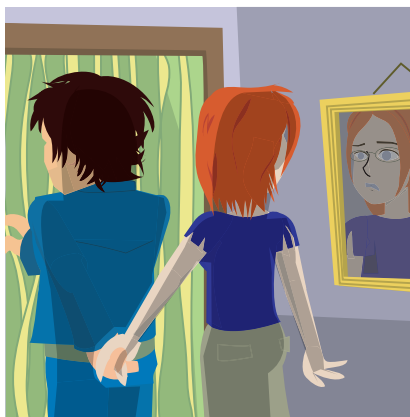
I DON'T WANT ANY HANKY-PANKY. I HAVE GOOD BOYS LIVE HERE, BOYS WHO GO TO OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE.

YES, OF COURSE.

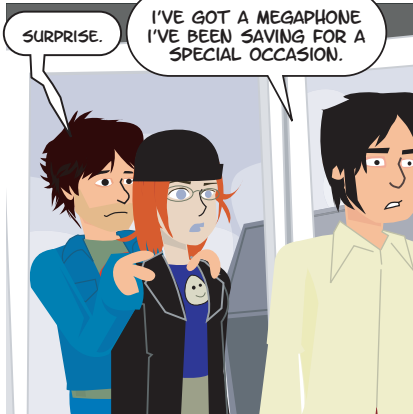


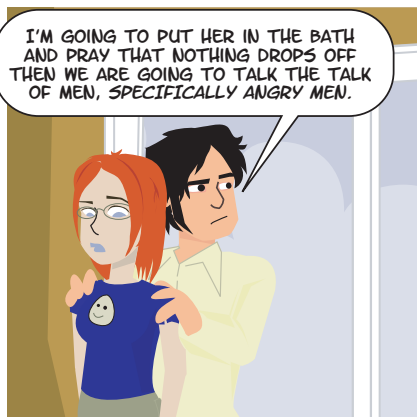
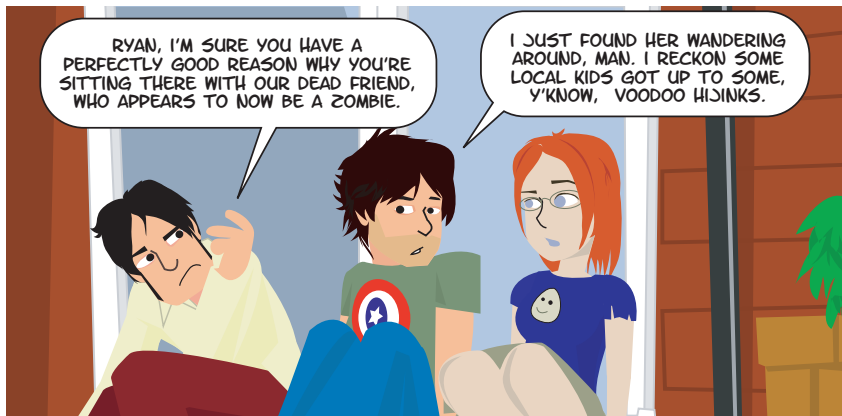
I'M VERY TIRED, MRS BIRCH, AND I HAVE THREE BOOKS OF MATTHEW I WANT TO STUDY TONIGHT...

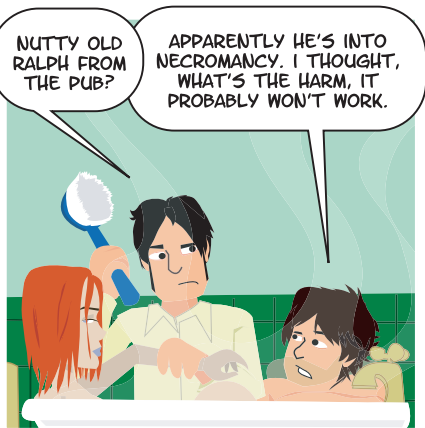
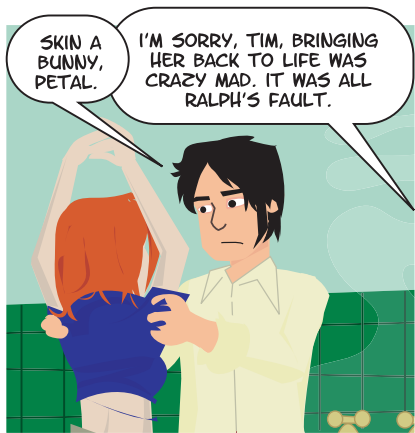
OFF TO BED, YOU GOOD, GOOD BOY.



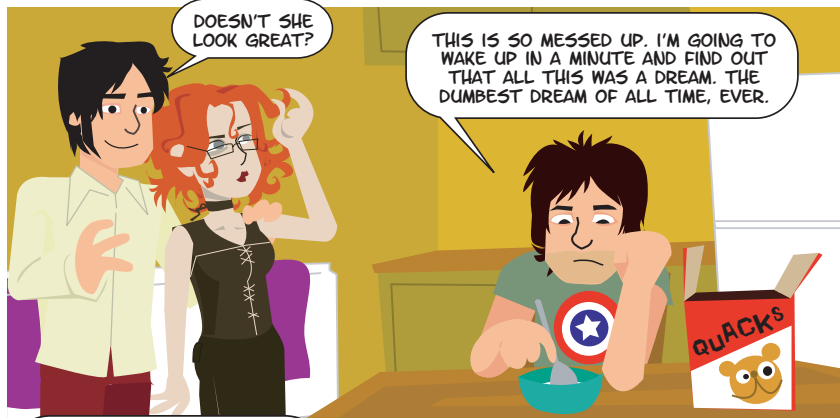






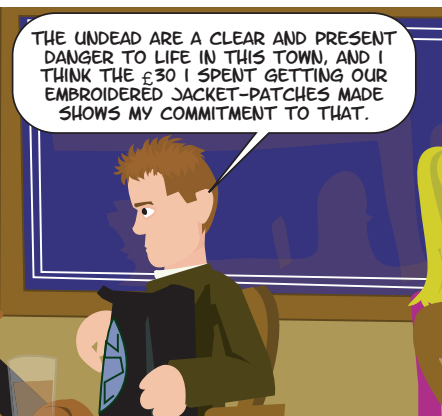


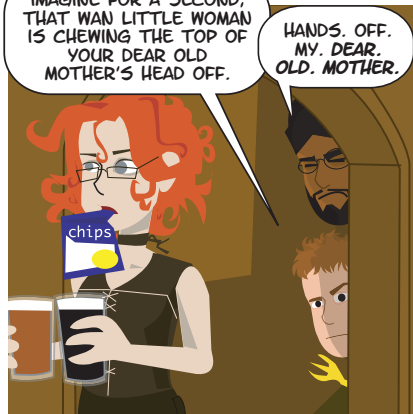








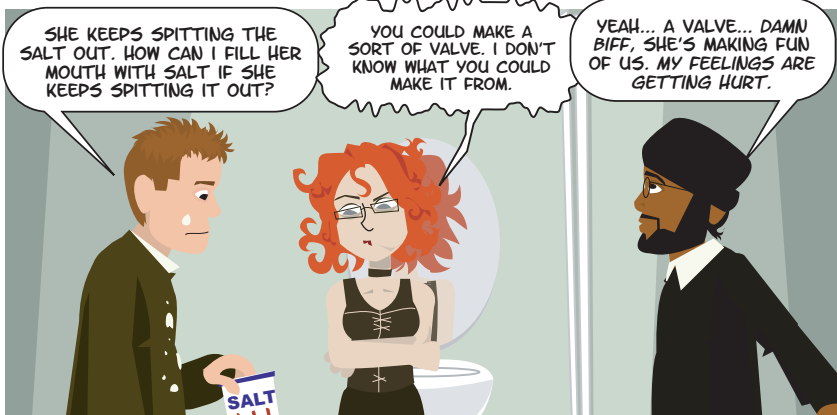


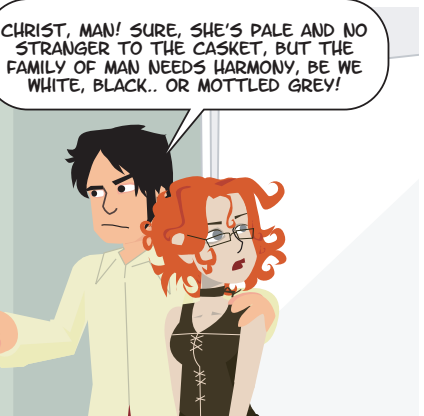
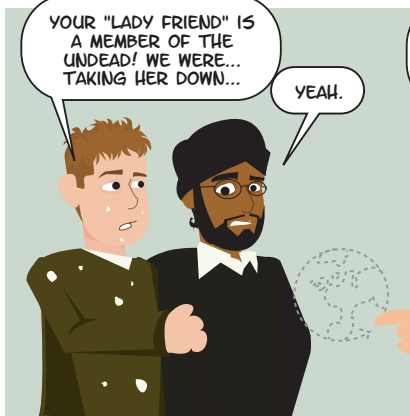
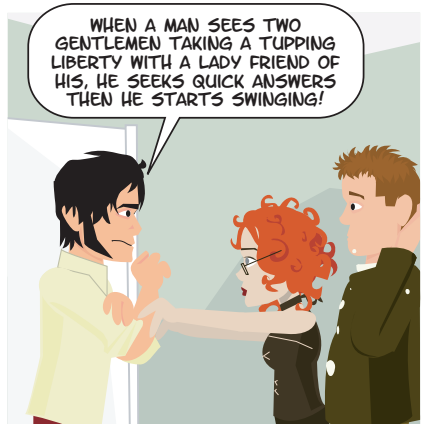




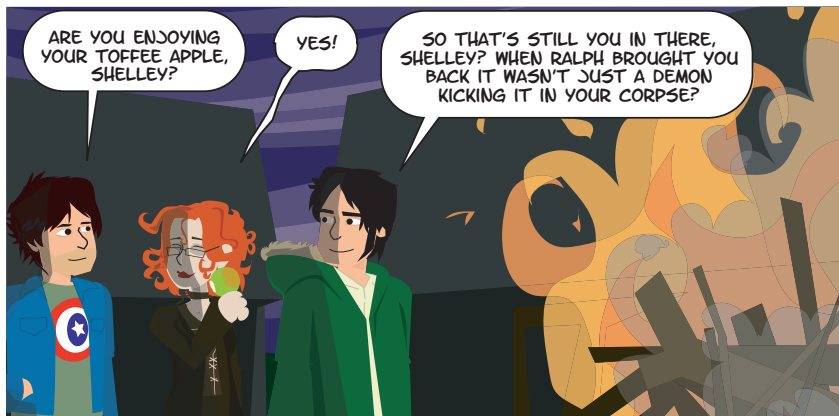














EXCUSE ME.
RYAN
BECKWITH?



I BELIEVE YOU OWE ME YOUR
SOUP. OH, WAIT, NO, CAN'T
READ MY OWN WRITING. SOUL.
YOU OWE ME YOUR SOUL.



RYAN...

TIM, TURN ROUND FOR A
SECOND AND TELL ME THAT'S
JUST A MARVIN GAYE FAN WITH
A SWITCHBLADE.



LISTEN, SATAN -- IF THAT'S YOUR REAL NAME -- I DON'T OWE YOU NO DAMN SOUL OR NOTHING.



I BROUGHT YOUR LITTLE PRINCESS BACK FROM THE DEAD. THAT ISN'T CHEAP! AND I NEED SOULS AS AN INEXPENSIVE WINTER FUEL.



DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE, TRYING TO KEEP THE UNDERWORLD HEATED? IT'S HELL! HA HA! I AM THE DARK PRINCE OF YOUR "OBSERVATIONAL HUMOUR" ALSO!



DEAR GOD, PLEASE DON'T MAKE ME HAVE TO SPEND ETERNITY WITH THIS GUY. I TOTALLY RENOUNCE THINKING ABOUT GIRLS IN A LOW-DOWN WAY.



SHELLEY...

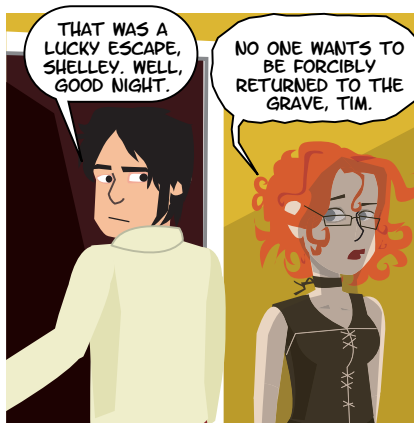
MR DEVIL, SIR, IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS I HAVE BEEN STRANGLED TO DEATH, BURIED, RE-ANIMATED, KIDNAPPED, WAS MADE TO WEAR A TIGHT GOTH-GIRL CORSET BY MY SO CALLED FRIENDS AND HAD TO EAT A LOAD OF SALT.



SALT ISN'T NICE!
CORSETS AREN'T
COMFORTABLE! THIS PUNCH
MEANS GO AWAY!

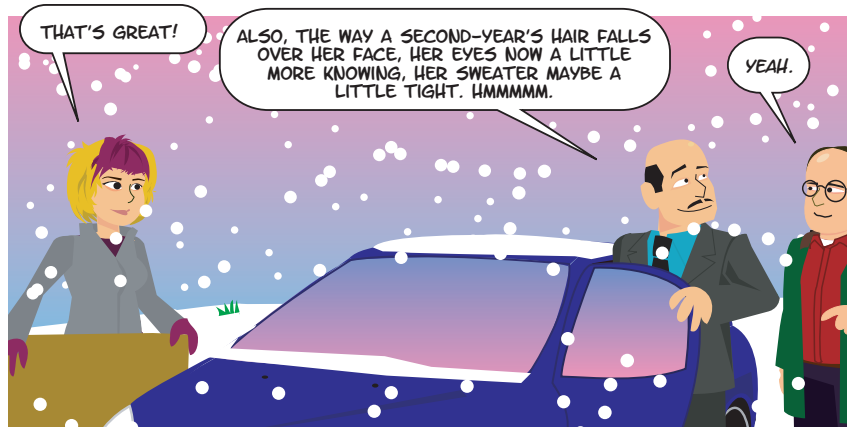
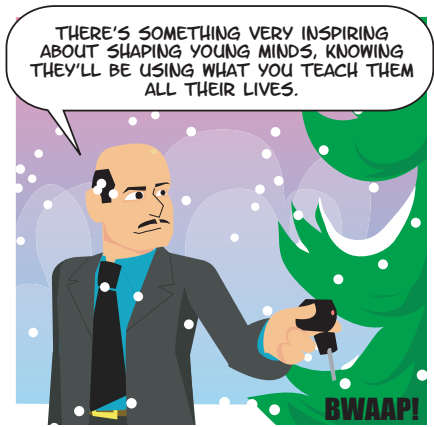
WHUFF!





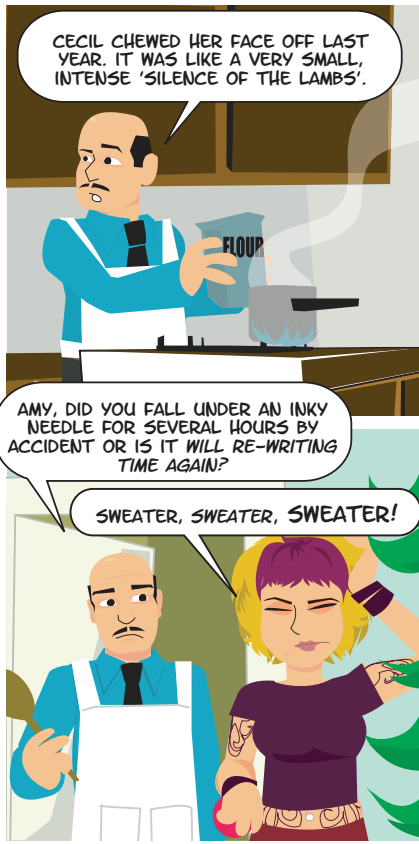
THREE







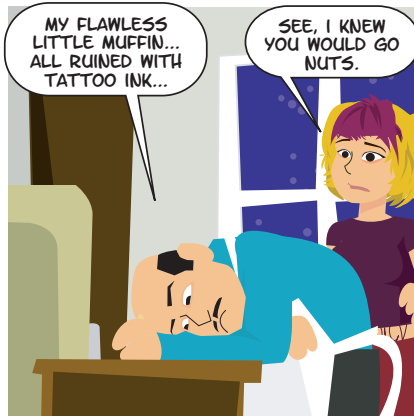
WHERE'S THE FAIRY FOR THE CHRISTMAS TREE?



CECIL CHEWED HER FACE OFF LAST YEAR. IT WAS LIKE A VERY SMALL, INTENSE 'SILENCE OF THE LAMBS'.

AMY, DID YOU FALL UNDER AN INKY NEEDLE FOR SEVERAL HOURS BY ACCIDENT OR IS IT WILL RE-WRITING TIME AGAIN?

SWEATER, SWEATER, SWEATER!



FOUR



Dear Tim, Ryan and Amy,

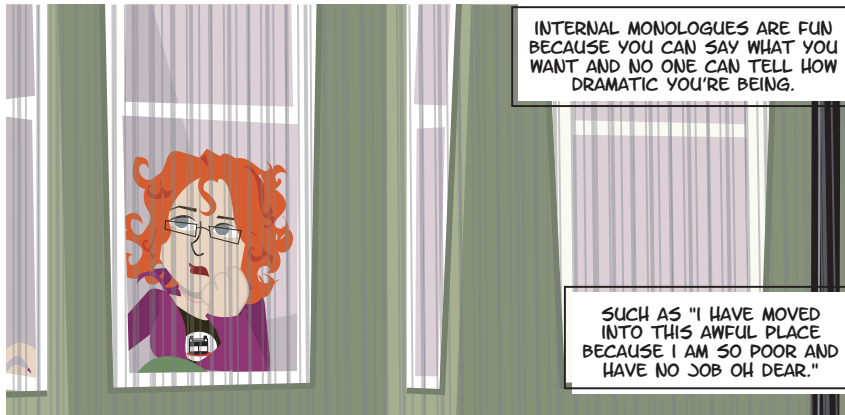
you have all been very kind to me since I came back as a zombie.

But I have to find out where I fit into the world, now that I have no chance of making it with boys any more due to my low body temperature and my weird, staring eyes.

I hope you all have nice lives. I will try to have a nice after-life.

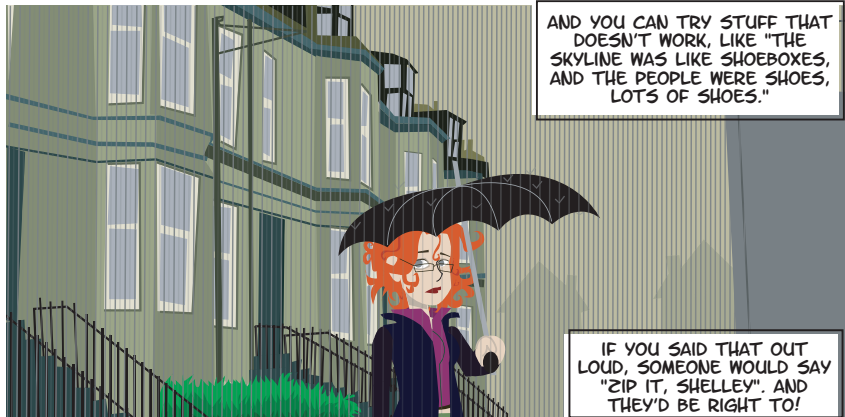
Love and hugs,
Shelley
XOXOXOXOX

P.S. Tim, i borrowed all the money from your wallet, will repay soon possibly.



INTERNAL MONOLOGUES ARE FUN BECAUSE YOU CAN SAY WHAT YOU WANT AND NO ONE CAN TELL HOW DRAMATIC YOU'RE BEING.

SUCH AS "I HAVE MOVED INTO THIS AWFUL PLACE BECAUSE I AM SO POOR AND HAVE NO JOB OH DEAR."



AND YOU CAN TRY STUFF THAT DOESN'T WORK, LIKE "THE SKYLINE WAS LIKE SHOEBOXES, AND THE PEOPLE WERE SHOES, LOTS OF SHOES."

IF YOU SAID THAT OUT LOUD, SOMEONE WOULD SAY "ZIP IT, SHELLEY". AND THEY'D BE RIGHT TO!



NOW, I LIKE THE REASSURING SMELL OF DRY ROT AS MUCH AS THE NEXT PERSON, BUT I HAVE MY PRIDE.



I HAVE TO FIND A JOB SO I CAN AFFORD THE IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE, LIKE SEXY BOOTS AND CHOCOLATE.



THIS WOULD BE EASIER IF I HADN'T BEEN MURDERED, THEN BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE TWO MONTHS LATER.



SHELLEY, YOU ARE SAYING, YOU MAY BE DEAD BUT BASICALLY YOU ARE ONE SEXY-ASS ZOMBIE, TO WHICH I REPLY YES, BUT, IT IS NOT THAT EASY!



ONCE YOU'RE DEAD, YOUR
PAPERWORK STOPS
PAPERWORKING. THE DEAD
CEASE TO EXIST! OBSCENE!



YOUR NOW-INVALID DETAILS
DON'T SEEM TO IMPRESS
POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS.



INTERVIEWS WITH RECRUITMENT
AGENCIES AREN'T MEANT TO
END WITH IMPROVISED
NO-STYLE KARATE GETAWAYS.

STROPPY.

BUT IF THE LEGITIMATE ECONOMY DOESN'T WANT ME, I'LL HAVE TO HAWK MYSELF ON THE BLACK MARKET. AS A FREELANCE NO-GOODNIK.

LOCAL BUSINESSMAN SEEKS DISCREET ASSISTANT. £300 P/W CASH IN HAND.

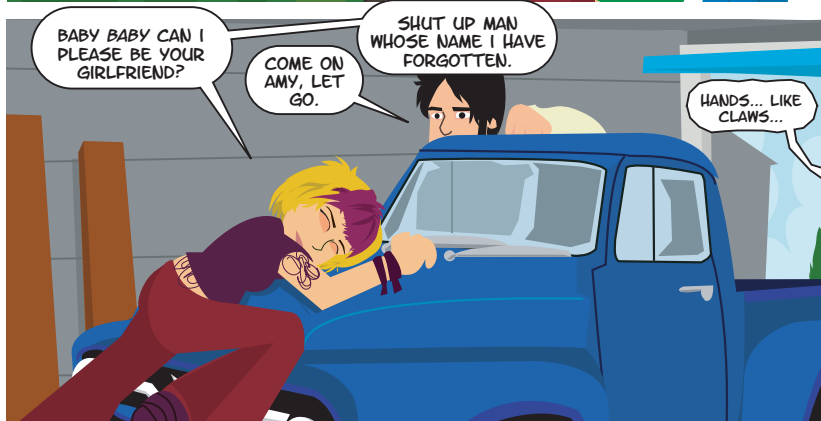
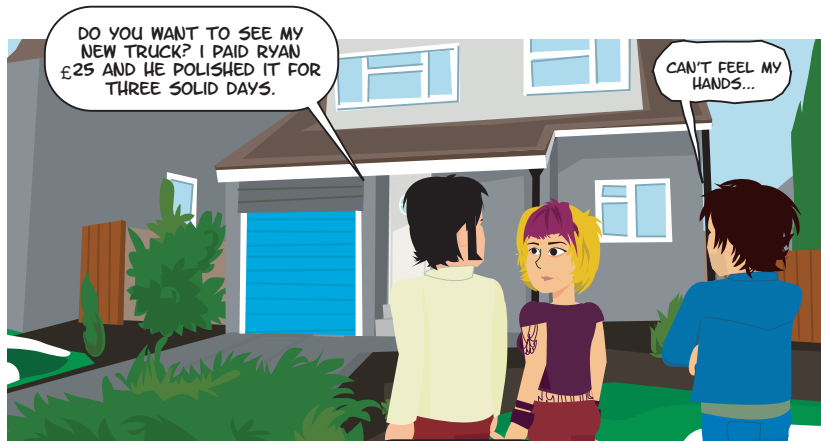


THAT IS THE MOST SINISTER CLASSIFIED AD EVER.

DEAR SIR, AS INVENTOR OF THE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL "WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAMME", I AM NOW LOOKING FOR NEW, DISCREET CHALLENGES...

HEE HEE HEE.



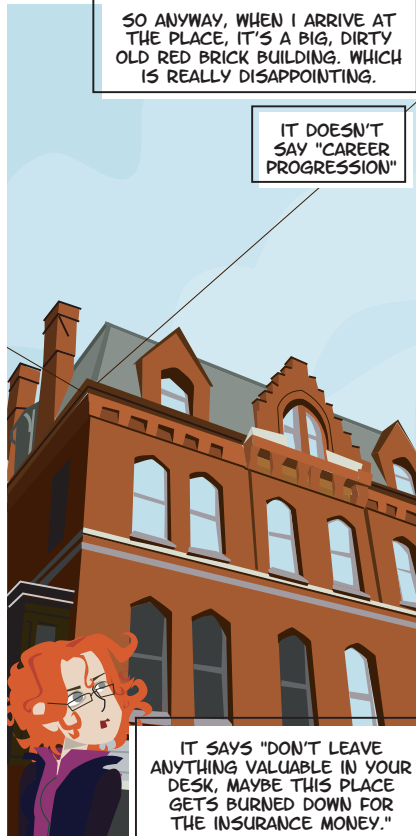




A... LETTER!



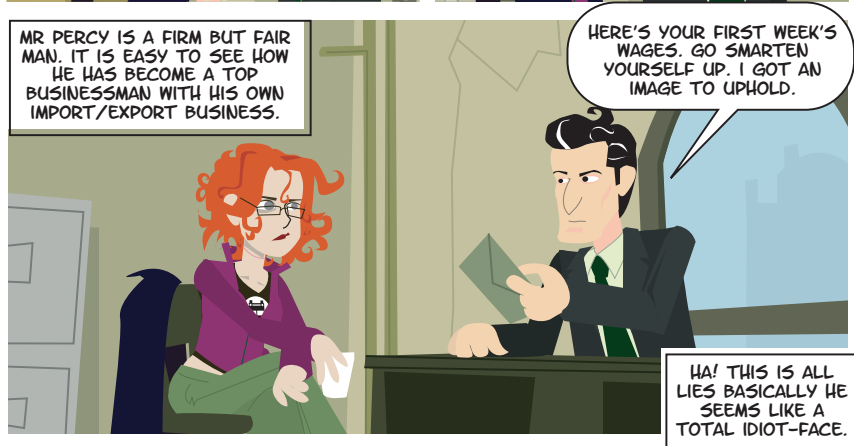
"DEAR MISS WINTERS, YOU ARE INVITED FOR INTERVIEW AT PERCY IMPORT/EXPORT. SINCERELY, HAMILTON PERCY." HAMILTON PERCY!



SO ANYWAY, WHEN I ARRIVE AT THE PLACE, IT'S A BIG, DIRTY OLD RED BRICK BUILDING. WHICH IS REALLY DISAPPOINTING.

IT DOESN'T SAY "CAREER PROGRESSION"

IT SAYS "DON'T LEAVE ANYTHING VALUABLE IN YOUR DESK, MAYBE THIS PLACE GETS BURNED DOWN FOR THE INSURANCE MONEY."





VERY NICE, SHELLEY! IT SIMULTANEOUSLY SAYS "BUSINESSLIKE" AND "OF THE CRYPT".

A comic panel showing two women in a closet. The woman on the left has black hair in a bun and is wearing a black long-sleeved top and pants. The woman on the right has red curly hair, glasses, and is wearing a black corset-style top and skirt. They are standing in front of a wardrobe with clothes hanging on a rack to the left and a large black wardrobe door to the right.

I CAN'T WEAR THIS TO WORK! MY UNRULY CHARGES ARE CLEARLY VISIBLE TO PASSERS BY.



OKAY, TRY THIS. 1940'S VAMPIRE SECRETARY.

"HELLO, PASSER-BY, MEET MY CHESTS"

A comic panel showing the two women. The woman on the left is holding a red garment. The woman on the right is adjusting her hair. The background is the same closet setting.

"HELLO, PASSER-BY, MEET MY CHESTS"



SUDDENLY I FEEL LIKE A VERY DANGEROUS LADY.

TIME TO ACCESS-O-RISE!

A comic panel showing the two women. The woman on the left is looking at the woman on the right, who is holding a large bouquet of purple flowers. The woman on the right is looking towards the camera.

TIME TO ACCESS-O-RISE!

YOUR FIRST DAY ON A JOB IS SCARY BECAUSE PLACES HAVE ALL KINDS OF PECULIAR RULES.

DON'T EVER, EVER TOUCH THAT BRUSH, YOU UNDERSTAND?

NOW THIS IS YOUR OFFICE. I GOT YOU ONE OF THOSE TOP OF THE RANGE COMMODORE 64 COMPUTERS, RIGHT. THAT'S WHAT THE GOVERNMENT USES, RIGHT.

UM...RIGHT...

MR PERCY, I KNOW THIS IS AN IMPORT/EXPORT COMPANY, BUT WHAT DO WE IMPORT AND EXPORT?

EVERY ONE OF THESE CRATES IS A DREAM, MISS WINTERS. WE'RE IN THE DREAM BUSINESS.

AH... WHAT KIND OF DREAMS?

SOMETIMES I DREAM I'M SAMMY DAVIS JR, AND I'M STRANGLING FRANK, RIGHT. DOES THAT MEAN SOMETHING?

WHEN I GET HOME I TRY TO MAKE SURE NO ONE SEES ME.

COPPER EDGE HEIGHTS
LODGING HOUSE FOR THE
RECENTLY DEAD
EST'D 1878

BECAUSE AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, I REPRESENT THE ACCEPTABLE FACE OF "RECENTLY DEAD".

THE OTHER RESIDENTS AND I WERE WONDERING WHY WE NEVER SEE YOU AROUND. WE THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE SHY.

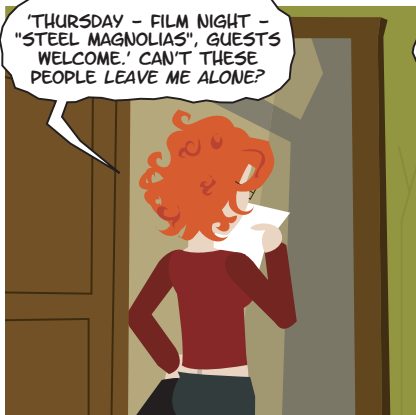
OH... AH, NO, I JUST JUST, UM...



...I'M TRAINING A CROW TO DANCE, AND WE'VE LIKE, GOT NO CHANCE AT THE REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS IF I DON'T FINISH MAKING HIS TINY TAP SHOES.



'THURSDAY - FILM NIGHT -
"STEEL MAGNOLIAS", GUESTS
WELCOME.' CAN'T THESE
PEOPLE LEAVE ME ALONE?

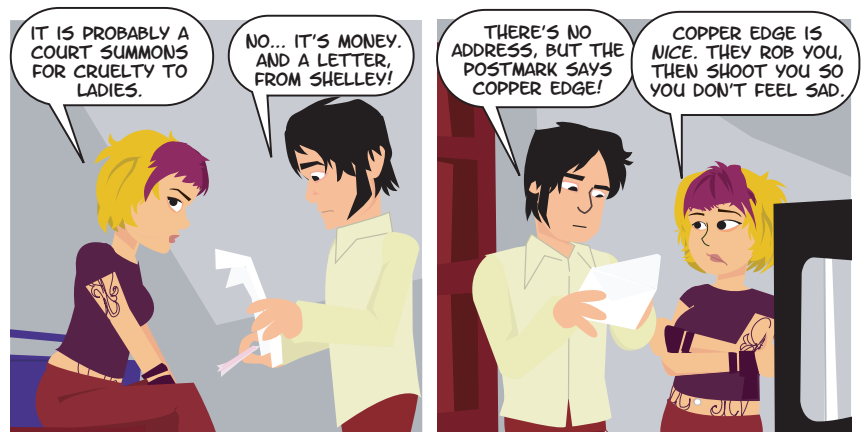


WHY CAN'T I HAVE AN
SUITE BATHROOM? WHY DO I
HAVE TO BE A STUPID
ZOMBIE GIRL NOW? WHY?

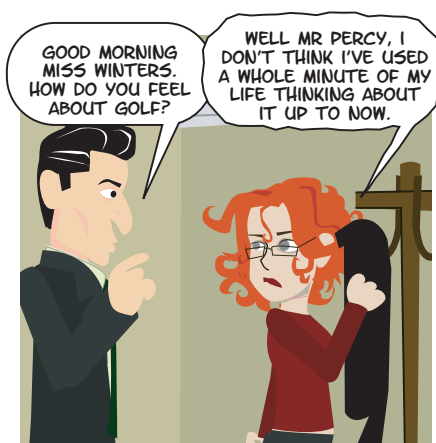


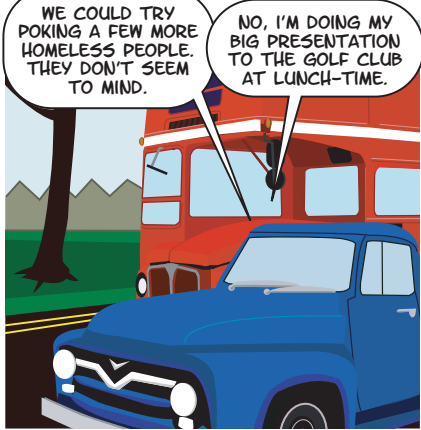
IT'S FUNNY, KICKING EVERYTHING
IN THE ROOM TO PIECES DIDN'T
HELP LIKE I THOUGHT IT WOULD.











I'M PLAYING A CHAP CALLED DAVE EYE. THIS IS IMPORTANT, NEVER LOOK DIRECTLY AT HIM, RIGHT?

DOES HE HAVE A BAD WART? WILL IT MAKE ME CRY?

LET'S GO. WE'RE NEVER GOING TO FIND SHELLEY, AMY.


WE COULD TRY POKING A FEW MORE HOMELESS PEOPLE. THEY DON'T SEEM TO MIND.

NO, I'M DOING MY BIG PRESENTATION TO THE GOLF CLUB AT LUNCH-TIME.

WE'RE GOING TO DRESS FANCY, SMELL FANCY AND TALK FANCY.

FAILING THAT: HYPNO SPECS.





SHELLEY, CAN YOU SMELL THE GOLF COURSE? CAN YOU FEEL IT?

YES MR PERCY. IF JESUS WERE HERE HE WOULD BASICALLY BE HITTING HIGH FIVES WITH EVERYONE.


KEANE END LINKS
Cocking a snook since 1914




I'M NERVOUS, TIM, I'M WORRIED. I'M ONLY HELPING YOU OUT. I COULD GO ALL CRAZY IN THE MEETING AND BLOW THE DEAL.

MANAGEMENT IS ALL ABOUT APPEARING TO BE AWAKE WHILE ACTUALLY ASLEEP, SO JUST SPEAK LOUD ENOUGH TO REGISTER SUBLIMINALLY. LIKE THIS THING IS REAL DANG GOOD NO WAY YEAH SWEET MARY WOW!






COME ON, COME ON,
SHADOWBOX WITH ME. WE'RE
GOING TO BUST THIS DEAL,
KOOL AND THE GANG STYLE.




HOW ARE WE GOING TO SELL TO GOLF
EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS? DON'T
WE HATE GOLF? GOLF COURSES
SHOULD BE BIG LOVELY PARKS!

AMY!



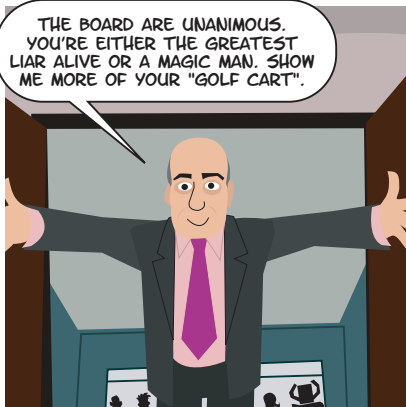
GOLF COURSES ARE WHERE
WHITEY MAKES HIS PLANS TO
CRUSH US UNDER HIS
JACKBOOT! DAMN YOU, WHITEY!

SHH!



OF COURSE GOLF IS WRONG. BUT WE
CAN USE OUR MILLIONS TO BUY A
BLIMP AND FLY OVER GOLF COURSES
PLAYING DIO AND BLACK SABBATH.

WHITEY HATES
DIO SO BAD!



THE BOARD ARE UNANIMOUS. YOU'RE EITHER THE GREATEST LIAR ALIVE OR A MAGIC MAN. SHOW ME MORE OF YOUR "GOLF CART".




SO THIS IS HOW YOU'RE GOING TO PROTECT US FROM LIGHTNING STRIKES?

THAT'S SO DIRTY!



THE 25 FOOT MAST SQUIRTS LIGHTNING INTO THE CART'S BATTERY, LEAVING YOU FREE TO HIT YOUR BALLS WITH IMPUNITY.




NO MISS WINTERS, I SAID,
NINE IRON, NOT ONE WOOD.
CAN'T GET THE HELP
THESE DAYS, EH DAVE?


WELL YOU
KNOW I DON'T
KNOW...



NINE IRON... *NINE IRON...* WHY
SHOULD YOU CARE? JUST BITE
THE TOP OFF HIS HEAD AND EAT
OUT HIS YUMMY BRAINS!



NO SHELLEY! EATING BRAINS IS
WRONG! SUPER WRONG! UNLESS YOUR
TEETH WERE TO ACCIDENTALLY FALL
FORWARD INTO HIS HEAD... NO! YES!



MR PERCY, YOU HAVE A BUG IN
YOUR HAIR! I THINK IT MIGHT BE
A SCORPION, OR A BIO-WEAPON!!!

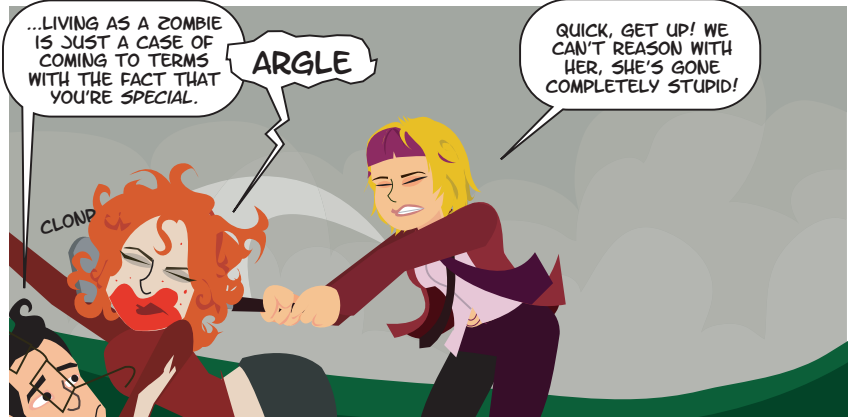
GET IT
OUT!

OKAY!











BRAINS! BRAINS BRAINS
BRAINS! BRAINS BRAINS
BRAINS BRAINS, BRAINS!!

BRAINS BRAINS BRAINS
GRRR NYGGH BRAIIIIINS
BRAAAAAIIIIINS!!!&)%



BRAINS?



I THOUGHT THAT THING WAS MEANT TO BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND A LIGHTNING STRIKE!

WELL, I NEVER ACTUALLY TESTED IT, AMY.



YOU NEVER TESTED IT?

TESTING IS FOR WEAKLINGS! I HAVE SUPREME CONFIDENCE IN OLD MAN SCIENCE AND, FURTHERMORE, MYSELF!

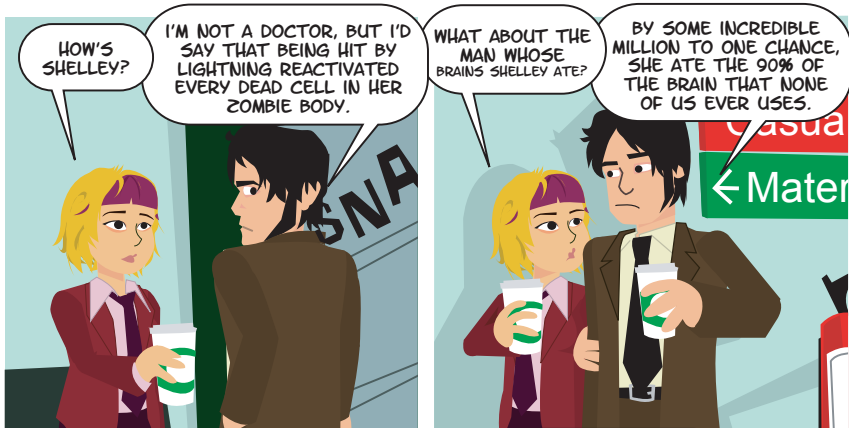


OH... SHELLEY, POOR LITTLE SHELLEY.

SHE LOOKS LIKE SHE'S SLEEPING.

SHALL I HIT HER WITH THE GOLF CLUB AGAIN?







I BET YOU'RE GLAD TO BE LEAVING HOSPITAL, SHELLEY.

YES. THE DOCTORS WERE VERY KIND THOUGH. ALL MY HAIR DROPPED OUT BECAUSE OF THE LIGHTNING STRIKE BUT THEY NEVER LAUGHED ONCE.



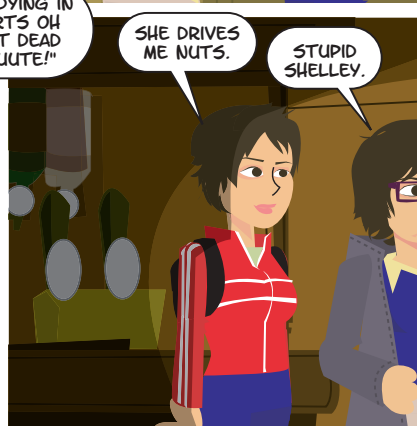
THEY MUST BE VERY RESTRAINED. YOU LOOKED LIKE A BIG IDIOT BABY, FROM THE MOON.

NO I DIDN'T AMY! I REALLY DID NOT!

AT LEAST I DON'T TIME DYING MY HAIR TO COINCIDE WITH HAVING A SEIZURE.

"I AM MOON BABY, GET ME MORE MAGAZINES AND BEDPAN PLEASE."







FIN

SELF-REFERENTIAL BANGING-ON

It's important, in the high-value, more bang for your "buck", Wal-Mart age, to fill the back of any collected retrospective with a few additional crumbs of knowledge. A rifling through the creative sock-drawer tends to ensue as one seeks to thrill their readers with dull pearls of extra insight.

What I want to make clear to anyone reading at this time, be you a lonely soul or one of eight or nine people crammed around the one copy in your African village, is that this book is no different. And why should it be? I (for one) read these pages first.

They represent, if this is not too glib an image, the artist with his or her trousers down. The mistakes. The blind alleys. The throwaways. And I guarantee that nobody has taken the opportunity to get it wrong more often than I, Scary Go Round creator John Allison.

So what led to the hundred or so brightly coloured pages in this volume? A young

man chasing the dream? A fervent wish to right the creative wrongs perpetuated by myself in the past?

Perhaps, and I am not saying that this is *definitely* the truth, it was the cowed figure who appeared at my bed end one night in late 2001 bearing script ideas, thousands of pounds worth of computer equipment and an everlasting flask of hot, strong coffee.

I'd like to thank that man. He smelled of sulphur and cat sick, but he showed me the way. And I am proud to say that even in his seven foot presence, I did not wet the bed even a little bit.

So please enjoy this "bonus" material, summoned from the scrap merchant's treasure trove of bad ideas and torn paper that lives under my desk and in the furthest recesses of my hard drive. It's all for you.

Columnated ruins domino!

THE ART OF ENDING BADLY

Scary Go Round is meant to be a comic built out of episodes, each one structurally similar to a 50 minute TV drama show. Like, say, Knight Rider, or maybe Northern Exposure (if your favourite is Hill Street Blues, I am not going to stop you screwing up your eyes and imagining that).

So I attempt to ramp up the tension until the last quarter of the story, then round out everything in a neat time-frame. Since I couldn't muster a plot better than "A-happens then B-happens" on my comics in the past, it's quite pleasant to be able to draw little lines on my plot sheet that show me when I can start knocking people off buildings or get people chewing on each other's heads.

The head chewing is a comfort. I'm not going to lie about that. Lying is wrong.

But at the bottom of my plot page, next to comics 31 and 32 are written the word "Epilog". I spell it the American way because the first place I ever saw that word was 'The Invaders', the 1960s

alien-fearing, communism-allegorising US TV show.

I don't write very good epilogues. It's not that I couldn't, simply that the pressure of the moment leads me to drop whatever the last, worst idea I had was onto the page and hope for the best. It's a bit like running a race from the front all the way then stopping six inches from the finish line to admire a lovely birch tree as five or six runners pass you.


DON'T BE LIKE ME.

The first two comics you'll see were meant to conclude the fourth part of the zombie Shelley story. They're a classic A-Team "everybody stands around and laughs while Hannibal smokes his cigar" ending. Awful.

After that is the page that originally ended part two. I can only question exactly how much spray mount I had to inhale to conclude that this was a fitting end to the story.







TIM, WHEN RYAN BROUGHT ME
ROUND HERE, AND I WAS ALL
UNDEAD AND SMELLY, YOU
HANDLED IT VERY WELL.



I BREATHED THROUGH MY MOUTH
UNTIL WE GOT YOU INTO THE BATH.
OLD ARMY TRICK. WORKS FOR NERVE
GAS, MUSTARD GAS, TRUMPS...



DO DEAD
GIRLS
TRUMP?



YOU'LL KNOW IN
FIVE SECONDS.

END

SPENDING TIME WITH THE MADE UP PEOPLE

“John”, you ask (and you are right to ask me because only I can answer this question), “who are these Scary Go Round characters? Did you make them up yourself? Are you channelling spirits? Are they people who you killed and now own the souls of? John you are a really awful person!”

That last point is not a question, it is a statement. But the thrust of this hypothetical argument is clear. Who are these fabulous kids? This “Tim”, this “Amy”, this “Ryan”, this “Shelley”?

Some comics are autobiographical. It's hard not to include an element of yourself in your comic work, because if you are the sort of person who spends his time demanding people look at your drawings, you are probably very self-centred and deeply vain.

But I am over all that. I got the autobiographical whining and self-flagellation out of my work when the world was still young and full of pep.

On occasion I have teased my readers that the cast are people I know. More frequently a friend who is new to the comic will posit that a character is based on a mutual friend of the both of us. Nothing fills me with more rage because they are always wrong and How Dare They Attempt To Decipher My Great Works Etc?

SGR FACT! Number of young women I have told that Amy is based on them: 72.

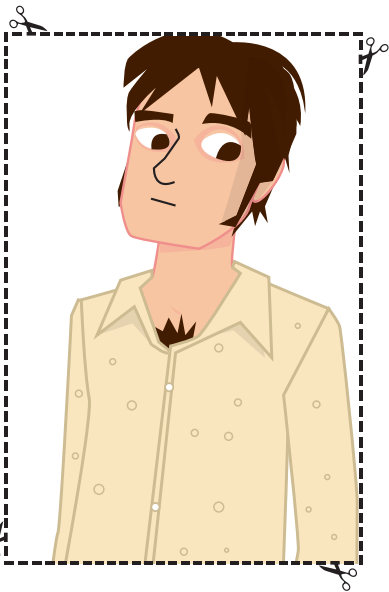
Over the next few pages I'll attempt to explain the reasoning behind the SGR cast. I cannot guarantee that any of what I say is strictly true, but there will be drawings to look at if you have to turn away from the misleading text in disgust.

TIM JONES

When I started Scary Go Round, Tim wasn't going to be in it. Not because I don't like him, but because he has a tendency to take charge of any situation. Scary Go Round was meant to be scary. It was meant to feature grievous, upsetting things happening that would worry people, potentially forcing them to have to sleep with their heads under their bedclothes at night. I couldn't have Tim around if that was to be the case. He is not frightened of anything. During one memorable sequence in my old comic, Bobbins, he managed to shrug off having been beaten almost to death by a large, square, red robot, his girlfriend leaving him and taking up with his best friend, his house burning down, and eventually his ending up in a coma. He did this by going down the pub and playing a few games on the Ted Rogers' 3-2-1 quiz machine.

But after 11 weeks without this hairy, kindly figure, I let him back in. It didn't seem so wrong.

In Bobbins, Tim was a music writer who dabbled in inventing, but in the comics I made prior to my published work, he was a full-time seeker into the mystery, who used his independent wealth to satisfy the mysterious requests of elderly, walrus-moustached Major Generals and the like. In those days he was accompanied by a much skinnier Amy, who sometimes scaled walls and acted in a surprised manner. The origin of his independent wealth was never made clear, but today he draws his funds from his fabricated hard-man autobiography, "Jonesy". Brave readers



can delve into this and other prototype Jones adventures at <http://www.bobbins.org>.

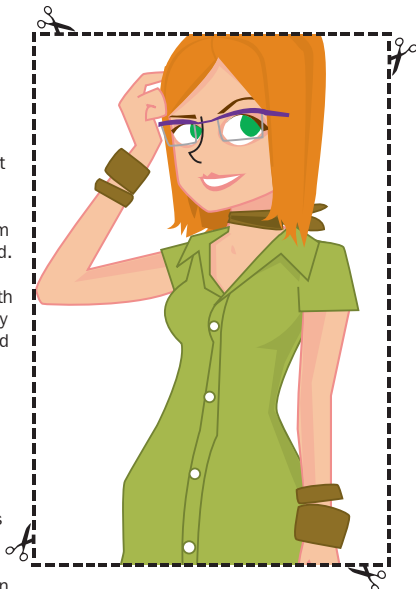
I do not wish it to seem that for the last 10 years I have been retreading the same material in the search for some kind of long-hoped-for magic. Unfortunately, that's exactly as it seems. But Tim's exploits always seem fresh to me. Half baked ideas take a firmer shape in his hands - some would say that this is useful, as they are the only kind I have.

SHELLEY WINTERS

Shelley was originally a makeweight to round out the cast of Bobbins. She is called "Shelley" because she was created for another project where, get this (and I don't mind saying that I am pretty clever to think this up) she was a mermaid. Shells. The sea. Crabs. Prawns. Oh, the hours I spent patting myself on the back about that. With the thick gravy of originality pounding through my veins that day, I gave her the Little Mermaid's red hair. If you wish to congratulate me on my world-beating vision, my office hours are 9 to 5.

Shelley originally had a room-mate called Holly who would join her in drunken escapades, and when I tired of Holly, she was replaced by Fallon Young (the self-styled "Sexy Super Spy"), a hapless secret agent. As time went on, Shelley's boozing, smoking and man-chasing were counterbalanced by a naive and childlike worldview. I can only imagine it is the result of an off-panel bump to the head. When she took on this kitten-loving, wide eyed persona, she (and the comic) became very much more successful, and she is always a pleasure to write.

Hence, nobody was very pleased when I killed her off. The emails I received! The entreats, the tears, the recriminations, the threats. Readers seemed so genuinely upset that it was very hard for me to resist telling them straight out that this was part of a (kind of) masterplan. A masterplan *even I was not wholly conscious of.*



Zombie Shelley was a lot of fun to create. She retains a cute quality despite her yellow teeth and milky eyes. Her wardrobe is the opposite of Shelley's casual post-student garb; I tried to capture some kind of faded glamour. I did debate whether her stockings and suspenders toward the end of the story weren't just a little too scratchy-nylon male fantasy, but then I thought, that is what 1940s secretaries wore.

They were simpler, sexier times. In my imagination.

RYAN BECKWITH

Ryan was, at the time of writing, the newest character I had created to become a regular. That is to say, he was finally allowed to carry stories on his own. It's always a bit of a risk when a character gets to go out on their own instead of simply appearing with the others, perhaps saying "BIG CHICKEN" in the last panel to raise a wan smile.

If readers can't take a week of someone new doing things in an entirely new way, they might not want to read any more. Which in real terms, makes them very unlikely to help me out paying for a new kitchen. But people seemed to warm to the inept little fellow, despite the fact that he is perpetually hungover and had been wearing the same t-shirt since September 2001.

Ryan abuses himself quite badly with booze and cigarettes and most likely anything else he is offered, and I get the idea that he's at a crossroads, and if he keeps going the way he is right now, he'll be totally burned out by 30. After Tim lost his house and his girlfriend, he met up with Ryan in the bar after a long time, and felt considerably better about his lot in life thereafter. Instead of a car, Ryan had a spacehopper.

When designing Ryan, I took care that he should always have the classic Fred Flintstone stubble. His hair was meant to look like Paul Westerberg of trainwreck Minneapolis 80s band the



Replacements. A bird's nest, but a well kept nest. Not a squat for swallows or a magpie doss-house.

The most important thing that Ryan does is: the exact opposite of what I would do, every time. Despite its obvious merits in the area of raising the dead, I am sure I would stop shy of black magic. Most of all, he brings to the party the knee-jerk stupidity that we resist 99% of the time. And really messy hair. He has really, really messy hair.

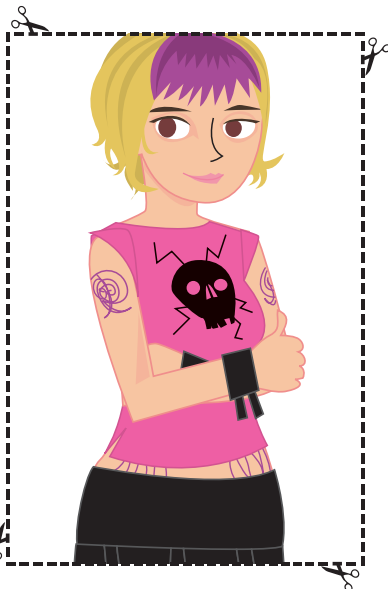
AMY CHILTON

I think I did my first comic with Amy in it in 1996. This is long before I let anyone read my comics. They were prototype versions of "Bobbins", which was the prototype version of Scary Go Round. I've had a lot of prototypes. I've wasted a lot of paper. In any case, at some point in those early waxings, Amy became Tim Jones' sidekick. When I started Bobbins, she returned and gained a father (Len Pickering, who you see at points in this volume).

So the story goes, Len has spoiled Amy rotten to compensate for the death of her model mother in a freak hairstyling accident. I have a feeling that Stella Chilton isn't actually dead at all, but in five years I have never quite managed to pin the issue down onto a comics page. I probably should have, rather than doing two weeks of comics about eggnog (December 2001; I was very tired).

In any case, Amy's strength is that she is far more grounded in reality than any of my other characters. So when Tim needed an anchor to stop him getting sent to prison in every story, I brought her back.

Amy's style has developed over the years, and I take care to keep her on the sharp edge of contemporary alternative fashion. This requires careful anthropological study (staring at ladies from behind a newspaper with two eyeholes cut in it). She does seem to have developed a lot of tattoos of late, but I take the opinion that she



believes that her father's money will pay to have them lasered off at some future date.

Back in early 1999 I received an email from the Size Acceptance Society of America saying that Amy was too thin. Given that at the time my readers numbered in the low hundreds, I plainly represented the frontline in the war on weight perception. Maybe as a result, Amy's weight has fluctuated ever since, though I prefer to think it is a result of the truly excellent on-set catering my organisation provides.