

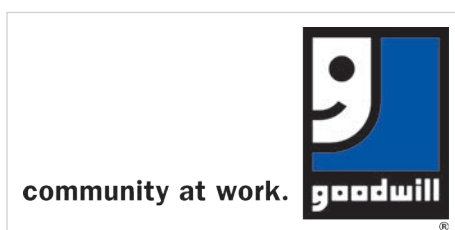
FEELING WEIRD





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**FEELING
WEIRD**



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FEELING WEIRD

CHRISTOPHER SWEENEY & SEAN DONAGHEY
Illustrated by DAVE SHEPHARD

Ru**bi**con



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PROLOGUE

GROSSMONT HIGH SCHOOL ...



PAY NO ATTENTION TO ME.

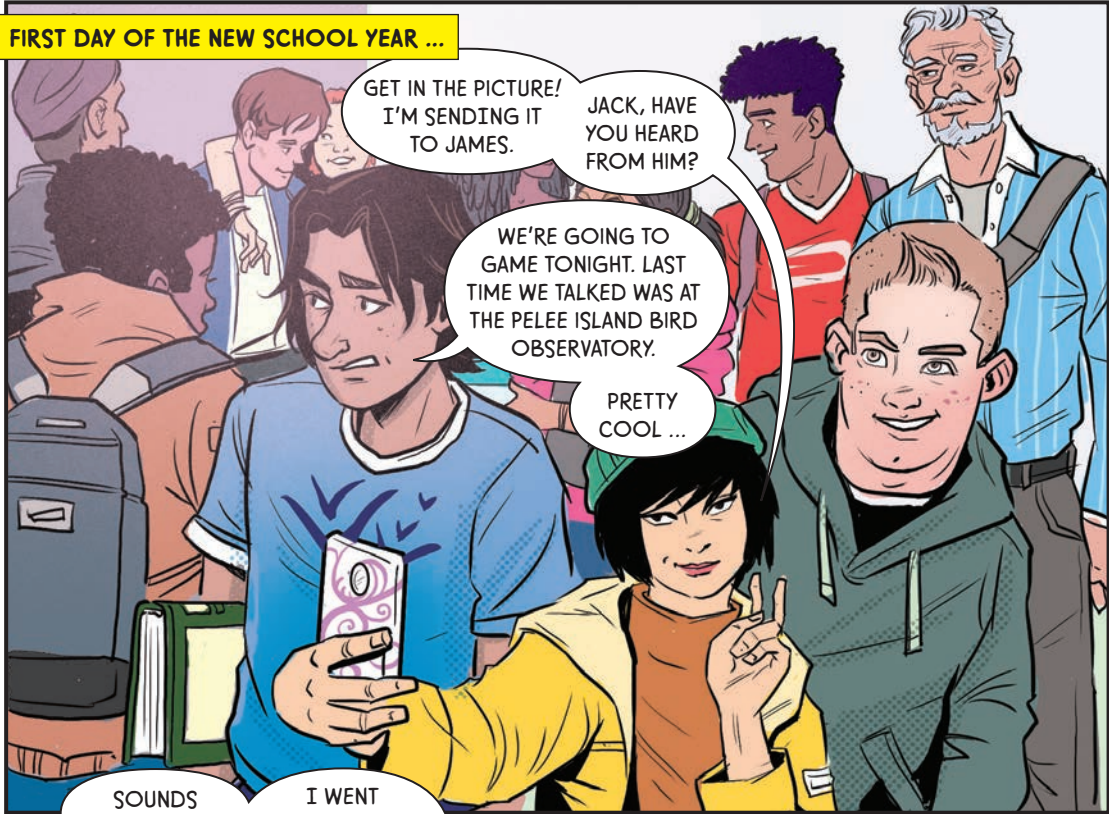


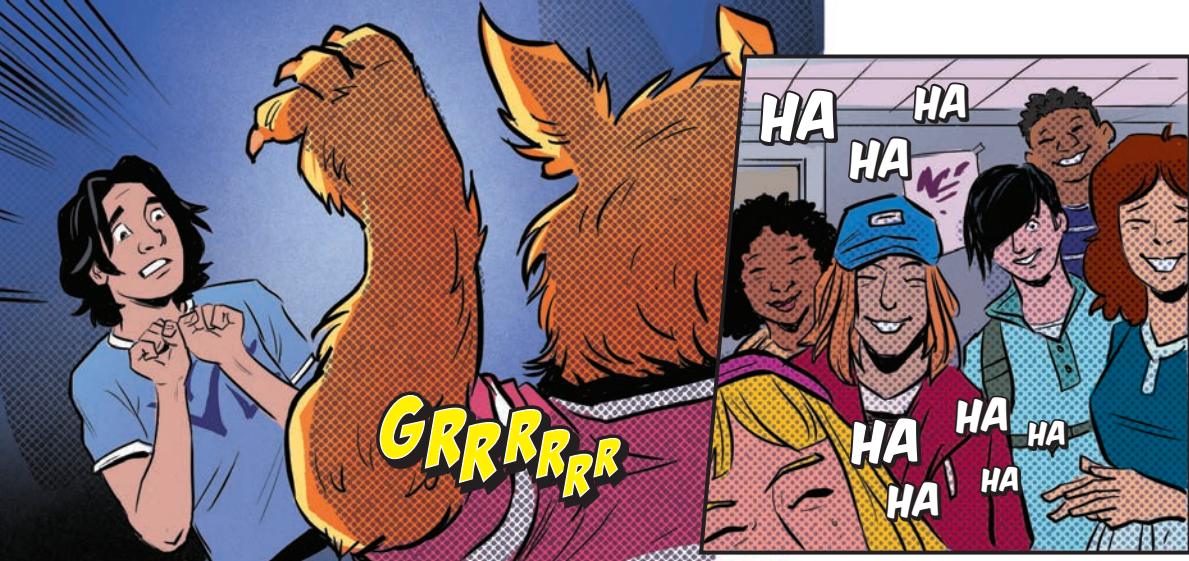
THIS STORY IS ABOUT MY INVESTIGATION INTO HOW TO
LIVE A PERFECT LIFE THROUGH A STUDY OF THE SUCCESSFUL
ONE PERCENTER. SPECIFICALLY — **ALPHA MALE TK!**



CHAPTER 1: A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

FIRST DAY OF THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR ...





THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD

I FEEL ... *WEIRD*.

LIKE I'M A BIRD IN THE SKY LOOKING
DOWN THROUGH A SKYLIGHT AT MYSELF.



TK — SUPER JOCK.
HONOUR ROLL. MR. POPULARITY.



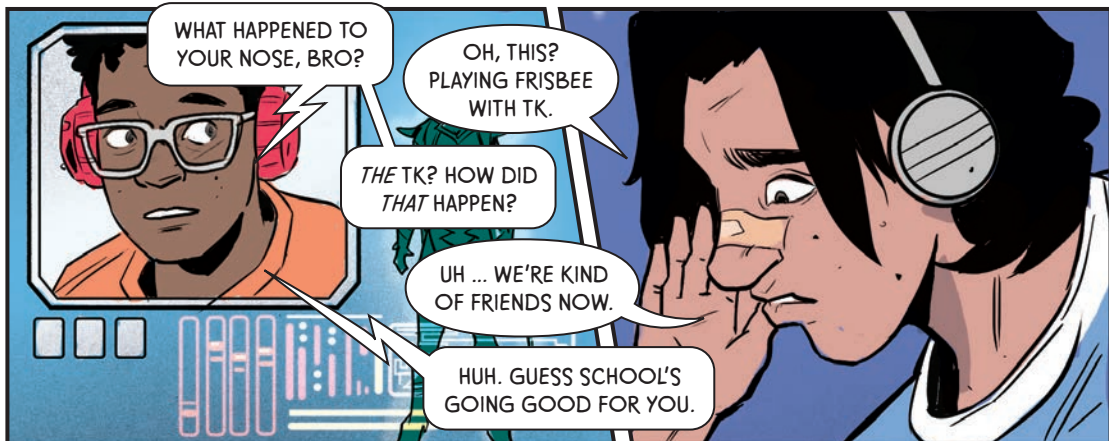
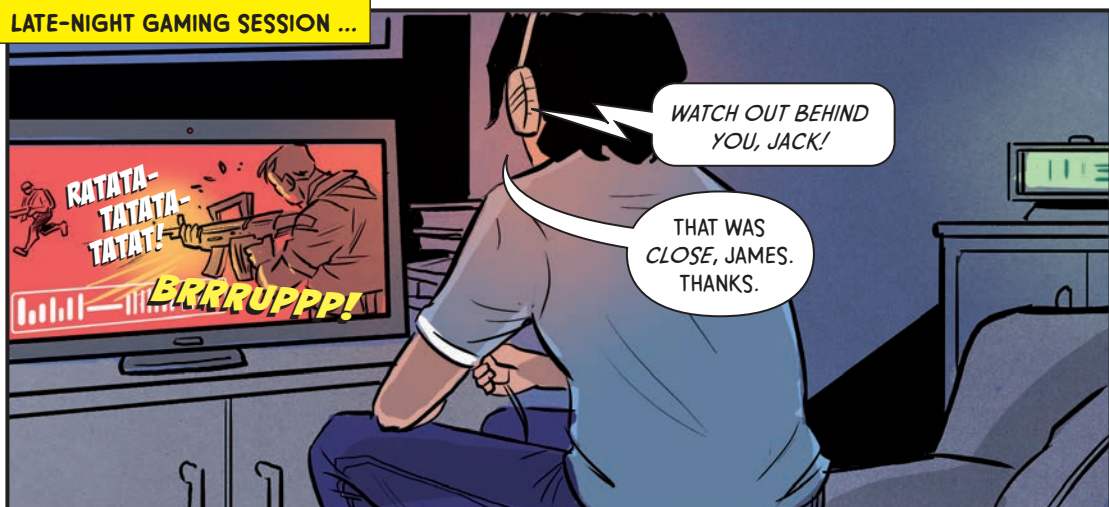
MY POLAR OPPOSITE.



**GO,
MONSTERS!**







GROSSMONT CAFETERIA, A FEW DAYS LATER ...

JAMES SOUNDS LIKE HE MISSES GROSSMONT. BUT THERE'S AN OUTDOOR CLUB AT HIS NEW SCHOOL AND —

DID YOU TELL HIM ABOUT THE LAUGHING CUCKOO?

SIT DOWN, BRO.

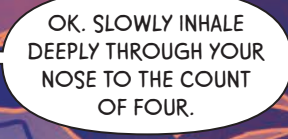
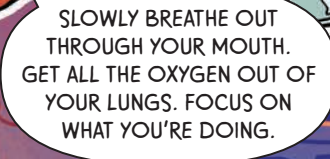


THAT WEIRD FEELING AGAIN. ME RISING UP LIKE A BIRD.

CUT OUT THE DRAMA, CUCKOO.

I JUST ... HAD TO GET OUT OF THERE. I NEEDED TO BE BY MYSELF.

BANG!



IVAN CALLED ME A CUCKOO. HE MEANT TO INSULT ME. BUT THE CUCKOO IS AN AMAZING CREATURE.

NOW HOLD IT FOR ANOTHER SLOW COUNT OF FOUR.

ONE ...
TWO ...

... THREE ...
FOUR.

A CUCKOO ADOPTS THE LOOKS AND MANNERISMS OF OTHER BIRDS TO SURVIVE. IT EVEN LAYS ITS EGGS IN OTHER BIRDS' NESTS TO HAVE THEM RAISED BY THOSE BIRDS.



NOW BREATHE OUT.

ONE.

SAME COUNT OF FOUR.

TWO.

EXPULS THE AIR FROM YOUR LUNGS AND BELLY.

THREE.

BE CONSCIOUS OF THE AIR LEAVING YOUR LUNGS.

FOUR.

IT CAME TO ME — MAYBE BY ADOPTING TK'S LOOKS AND BEHAVIOUR, I COULD BECOME SUCCESSFUL AND HAPPY TOO.

AND HOLD YOUR BREATH FOR THE SAME SLOW COUNT OF FOUR. REPEAT THE STEPS AS MANY TIMES AS YOU NEED TO TO FEEL CALM. AT LEAST FOUR TIMES IS A GOOD GUIDE.

HOW DO YOU FEEL NOW, JACK?

BETTER, THANKS. NOW I KNOW WHAT TO DO.

MY BRILLIANT AND FOOLPROOF PLAN.

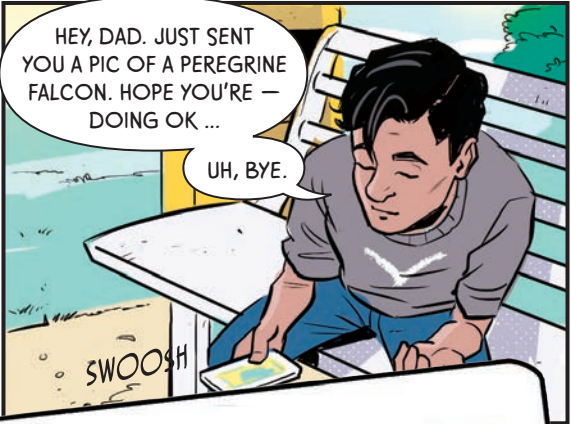
CHAPTER 2: A NEW FRIEND

LATE AFTERNOON, SCHOOL BACK FIELD ...



THE PEREGRINE FALCON, IN FULL DESCENT, IS AS FAST AS A SPORTS CAR.

ITS EYES ARE LARGE. ITS BEAK IS BIG. THE END HOOKS DOWN LIKE A FANG. IT IS REGAL, HANDSOME, AND CONFIDENT.

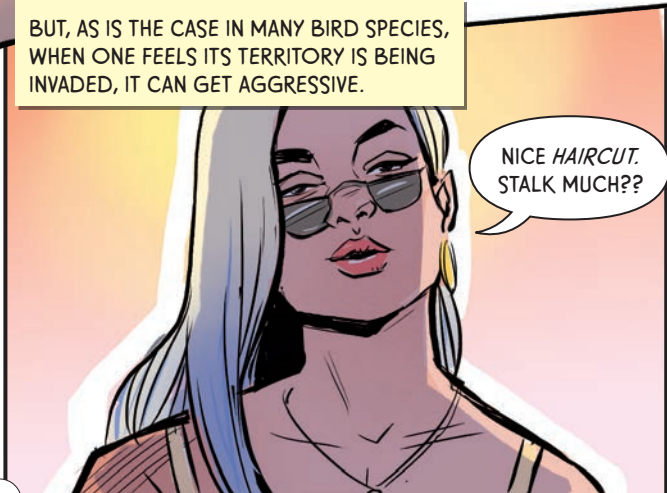


HEY, DAD. JUST SENT YOU A PIC OF A PEREGRINE FALCON. HOPE YOU'RE — DOING OK ...

UH, BYE.



MY PLAN HAD BEEN GOING WELL. I JUST NEED TO RECORD SOME STUDY MATERIAL.



BUT, AS IS THE CASE IN MANY BIRD SPECIES, WHEN ONE FEELS ITS TERRITORY IS BEING INVADED, IT CAN GET AGGRESSIVE.

NICE HAIRCUT. STALK MUCH??



TK DOESN'T HAVE TIME FOR YOU. TAKE A HIKE, FANBOY.

I NEED TO SPEND TIME WITH TK WITHOUT HANNAH INTERFERING. I'LL CONVINCE MS. PELLETIER THAT TK WILL BE A GREAT PEER MENTOR.

JACK'S HOUSE, A
FEW DAYS LATER ...

YOU'RE
LATE.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT
NONSENSE THE GUIDANCE
COUNSELLOR HAS TOLD YOU,
BUT JACK JUST NEEDS TO
BUCKLE DOWN —

YOU MUST
BE JACK'S MOM.
SORRY I'M LATE.

I'M TK.
I STOPPED FOR
SOME SMOOTHIES.
HERE, HAVE ONE.

HMM ...
THAT'S VERY
THOUGHTFUL.

SORRY FOR SNAPPING.
WORK IS SO HECTIC, AND
NOW WITH JACK'S SCHOOL
PROBLEMS ON TOP OF
EVERYTHING ELSE ...

IT'S NICE WHAT
YOU'RE DOING. JACK
NEEDS SOMEONE TO
LOOK UP TO.

WELL, I AM
KINDA TALL.

HA HA

JACK!
TK IS HERE!

HEY, TK.

TK BROUGHT
HEALTHY SMOOTHIES!
SO NICE OF HIM.

OK, MOM.
SO AWKWARD.

YOU KNOW, SO MANY
PEOPLE THESE DAYS LACK
IMPORTANT MICRONUTRIENTS.
THE BANANAS IN THE SMOOTHIE,
FOR EXAMPLE, OFFER
POTASSIUM ...

ER ... UM ...
SHALL WE GET GOING,
JACK? SUNLIGHT OFFERS
TONS OF VITAMIN D!

A FEW DAYS LATER ...

GROSSMONT HIGH ATHLETES OF THE YEAR



STUDYING IS
IMPORTANT. BUT YOU
NEED TO BE PART
OF A TEAM.

UH, I'M A KLUTZ.
REMEMBER THE FRISBEE
INCIDENT?



COACH
GOMEZ!

TK, MY MAN!
READY FOR THE
BIG GAME THIS
WEEKEND?

YOU KNOW IT,
COACH!



BY THE
WAY, THIS IS
JACK.

HE'D MAKE AN EXCELLENT
EQUIPMENT MANAGER — SMART,
DILIGENT, CAN COUNT ...

IF YOU VOUCH
FOR HIM, TK, THAT'S
GOOD ENOUGH
FOR ME.

WELCOME
ABOARD,
JACK.

A FEW WEEKS LATER ...



TK COMES OVER
ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK
TO TUTOR ME. MY MOM
ALWAYS INSISTS HE STAY
TO EAT WITH US.

A LITTLE
HELP HERE,
JACK!

IT'S BEEN COOL.
EVEN IF MY MOM KEEPS
COMPARING ME TO TK
ALL THE TIME ...



WHAT
THE —?
NO!

SIGH ... THANKS
FOR THE HELP, BUD.

HOW ARE KAI LING
AND IVAN DOING?



UH, I HAVEN'T
SEEN TOO MUCH OF
THEM.

I'VE BEEN WORKING
A LOT IN THE EQUIPMENT
ROOM. SOME OF THE
JOCKS AREN'T THAT
BAD ACTUALLY —

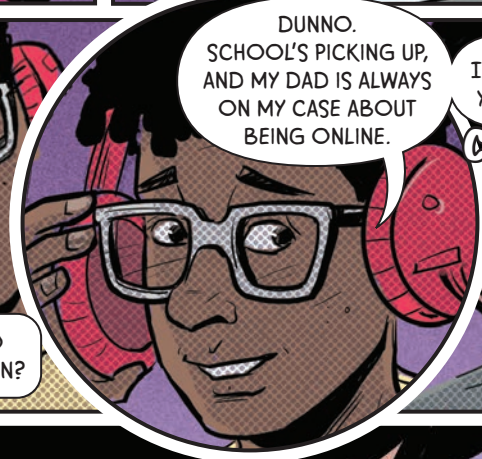


OH
YEAH?

JAMES!

DAMN, I
GOTTA GO.

UH, OK. SO, WHEN DO
YOU WANT TO PLAY AGAIN?



DUNNO.
SCHOOL'S PICKING UP,
AND MY DAD IS ALWAYS
ON MY CASE ABOUT
BEING ONLINE.

I'LL DM
YOU ...

CLICK!



DAD ...

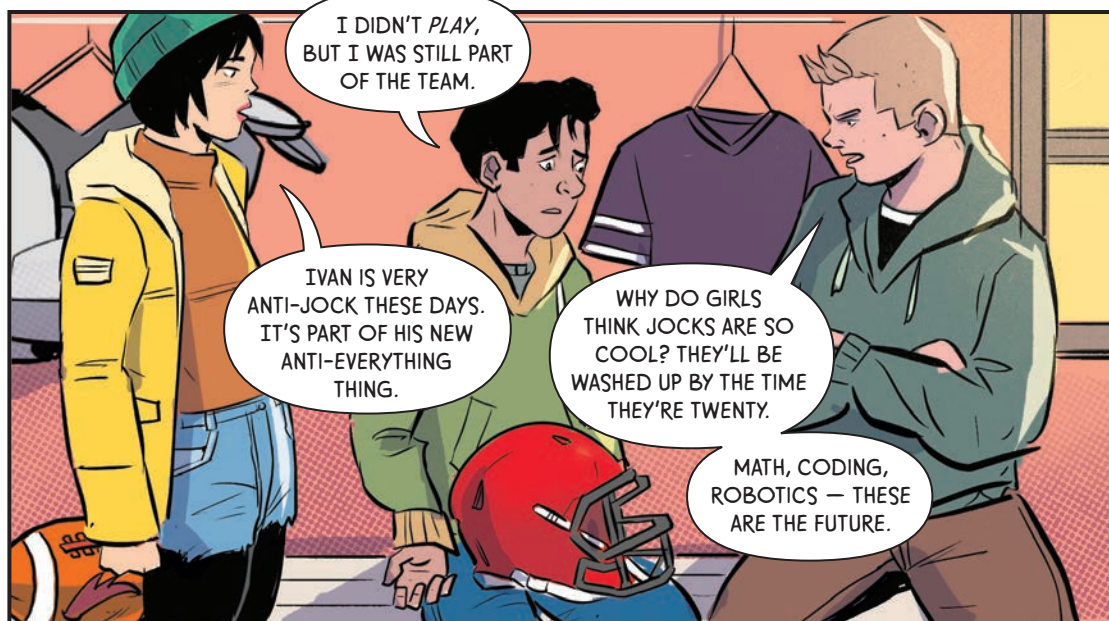
JACK CALLS HIS DAD ...

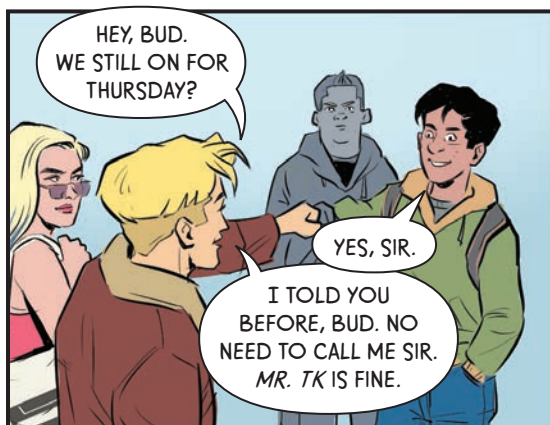
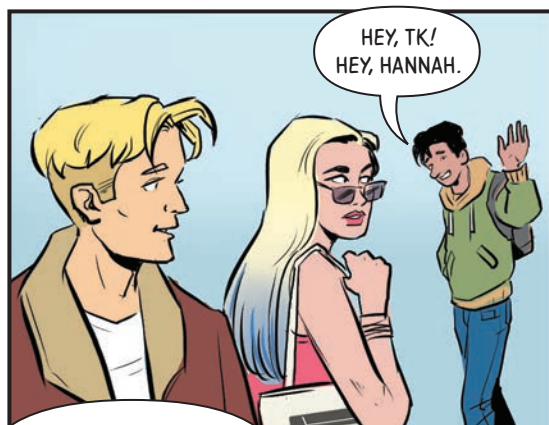


LEAVE A MESSAGE,
AND I'LL CALL
YOU BACK.

BEEP!

A FEW DAYS LATER ...







JACK!
YOU LAZY LUMP ...
GET UP!

I'M ... NOT
FEELING GOOD.

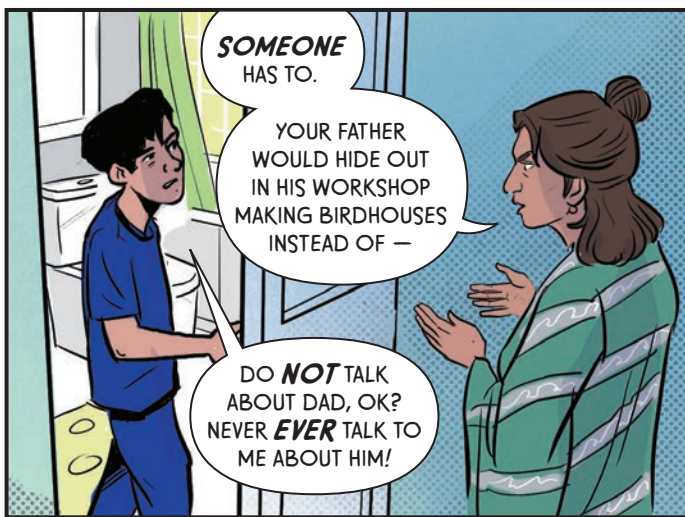
I'M SICK.



YOU WERE UP
ALL NIGHT PLAYING
VIDEO GAMES. YOU
CAN'T USE THIS ... THIS
THING AS AN EXCUSE
TO GET OUT OF THINGS
YOU DON'T LIKE.



LEAVE ME ALONE!
YOU'RE ALWAYS
NAGGING ME.



SOMEONE
HAS TO.

YOUR FATHER
WOULD HIDE OUT
IN HIS WORKSHOP
MAKING BIRDHOUSES
INSTEAD OF —

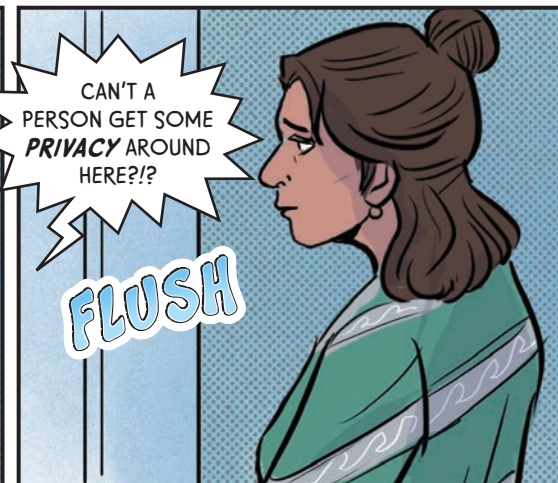
DO **NOT** TALK
ABOUT DAD, OK?
NEVER **EVER** TALK TO
ME ABOUT HIM!



SLAM!

SIGH

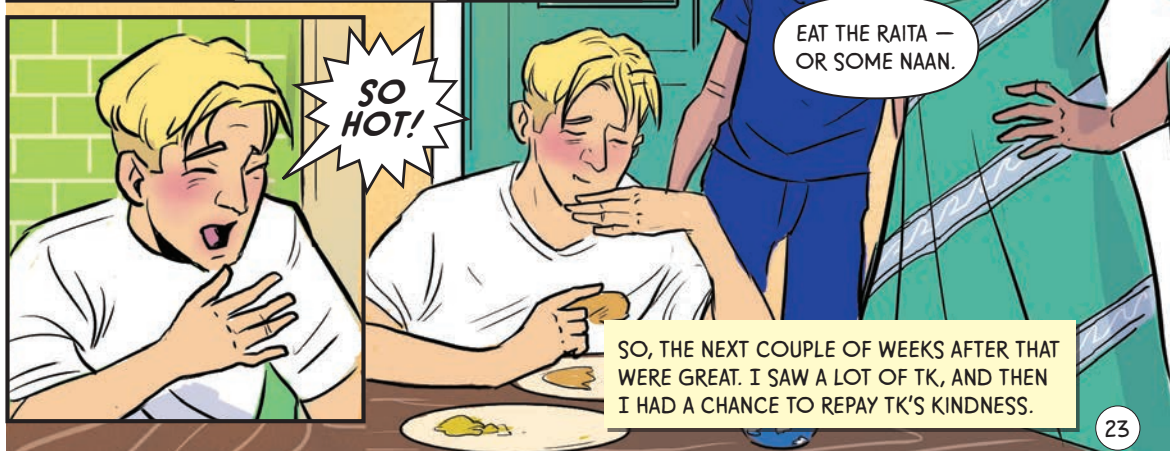
IT'S OK, JACK.
STAY HOME IF YOU
DON'T FEEL WELL.



CAN'T A
PERSON GET SOME
PRIVACY AROUND
HERE?!!

FLUSH

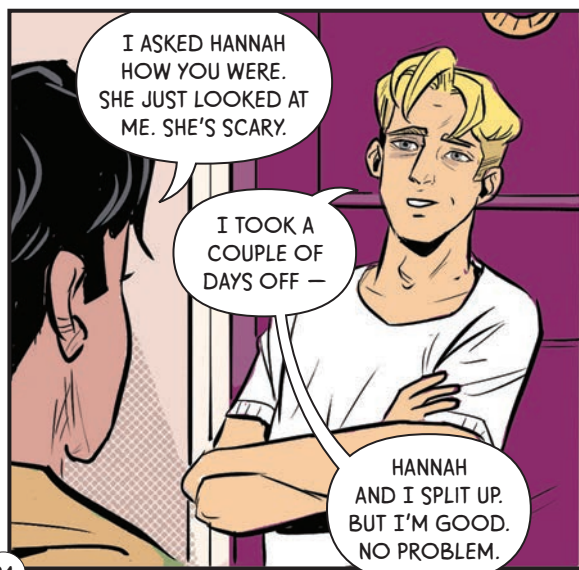
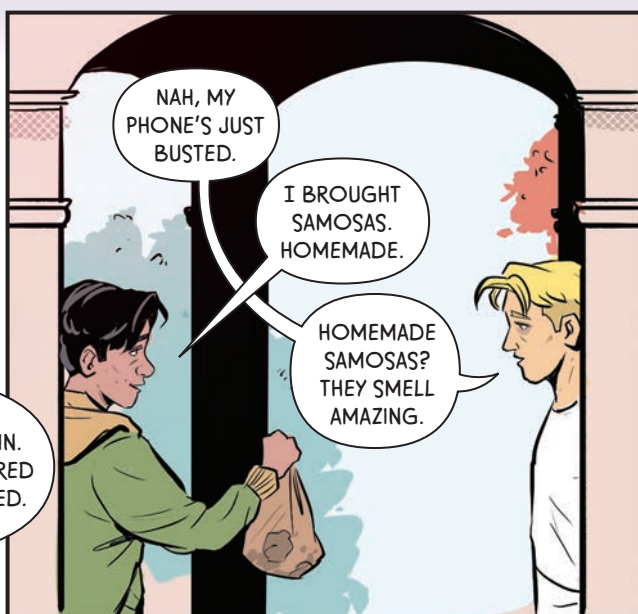
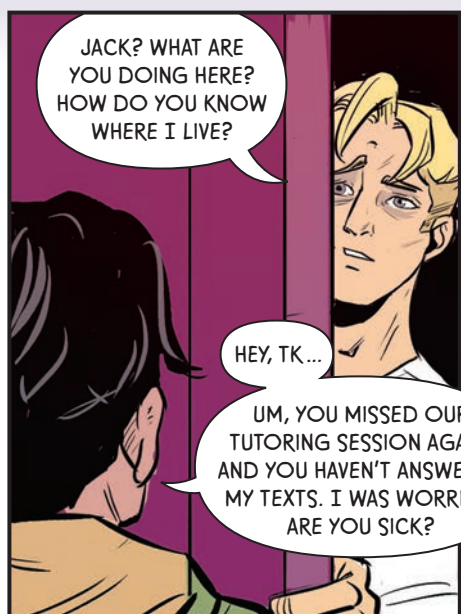
LATER THAT AFTERNOON ...

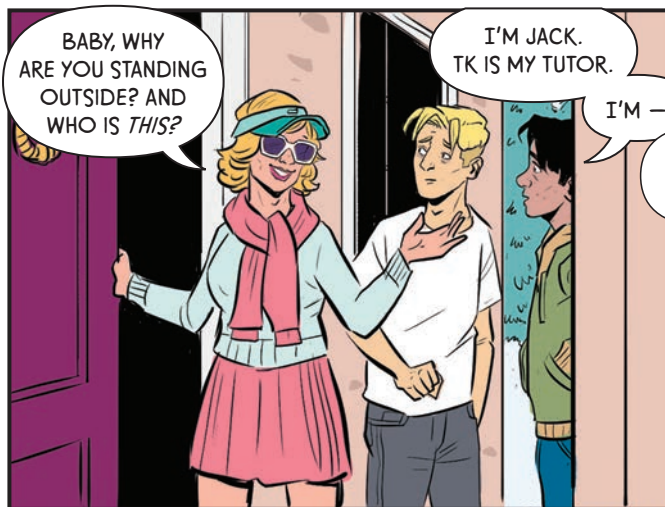


SO, THE NEXT COUPLE OF WEEKS AFTER THAT WERE GREAT. I SAW A LOT OF TK, AND THEN I HAD A CHANCE TO REPAY TK'S KINDNESS.

CHAPTER 3: HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES

TK'S HOUSE, A FEW WEEKS LATER ...





BABY, WHY ARE YOU STANDING OUTSIDE? AND WHO IS THIS?

I'M JACK. TK IS MY TUTOR.

I'M —

I'M LAUREN.



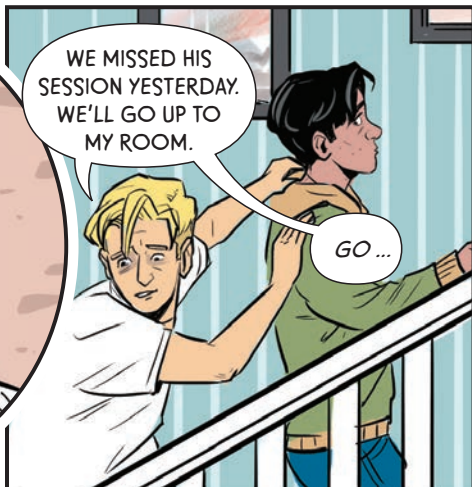
WHAT A NICE SURPRISE! TK NEVER HAS ANYONE OVER.



HUH? NOT EVEN HAN —?

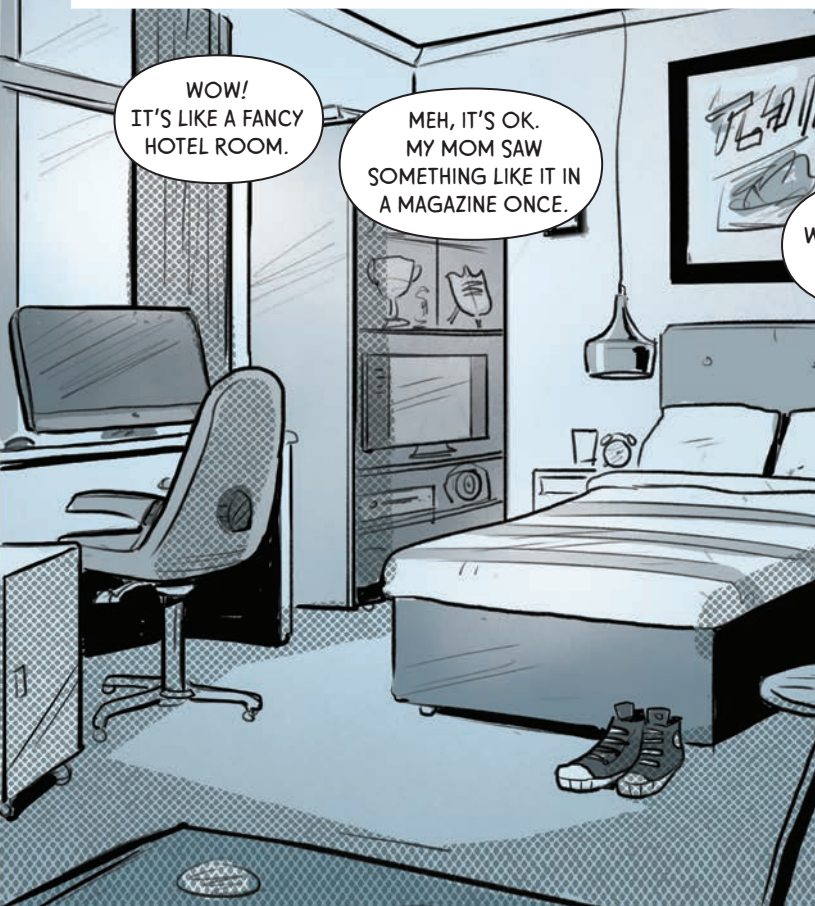
SHHH ...

COME ON IN, JACK.



WE MISSED HIS SESSION YESTERDAY. WE'LL GO UP TO MY ROOM.

GO ...



WOW! IT'S LIKE A FANCY HOTEL ROOM.

MEH, IT'S OK. MY MOM SAW SOMETHING LIKE IT IN A MAGAZINE ONCE.

TWO HOURS LATER ...

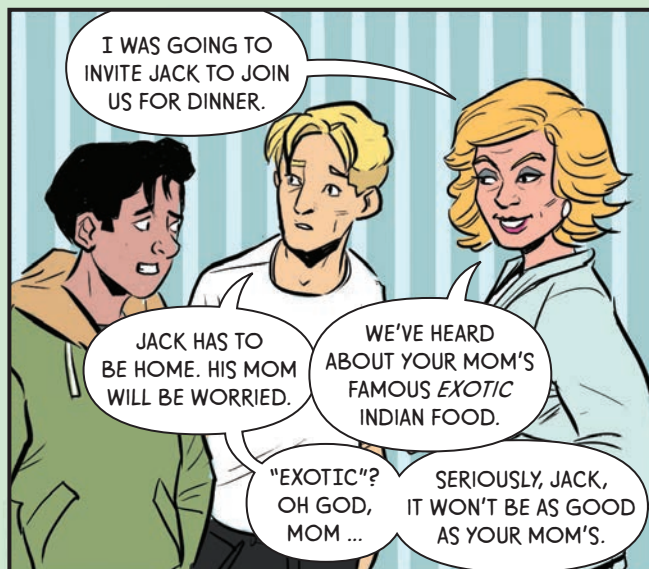


KNOCK KNOCK

YEAH, YEAH, MOM. WE'RE ALMOST DONE. JACK'S LEAVING SOON.

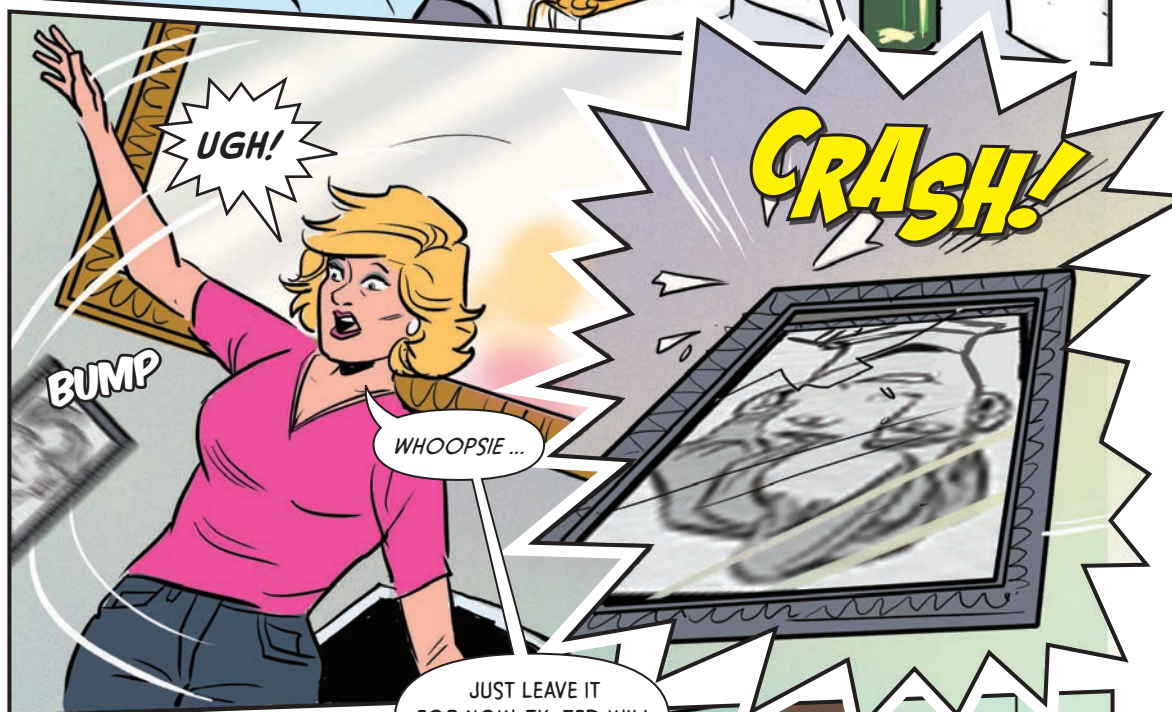
I ... SURE. OK.

YOU GOT THIS, BUD. YOU'RE READY TO RUMBLE!



DINNER WITH THE FAMILY ...







HOW OLD ARE YOU, KID? FIFTEEN?

YOU NEED TO BE WALKED HOME?

NO, I BIKED. I CAN GO ON MY OWN.



I HAD A JOB AT FIFTEEN.

SO DO I — TUTORING.

OH RIGHT. I FORGOT. HOW'D YOU BECOME A TUTOR ANYWAY?



LET'S GO, JACK ...

YOUR MARKS AREN'T SO GOOD THAT YOU CAN AFFORD TO BE DISTRACTED!

OUR BABY'S ON THE STUDENT COUNCIL, CAPTAIN OF THE FOOTBALL TEAM, DATING A LOVELY GIRL ...

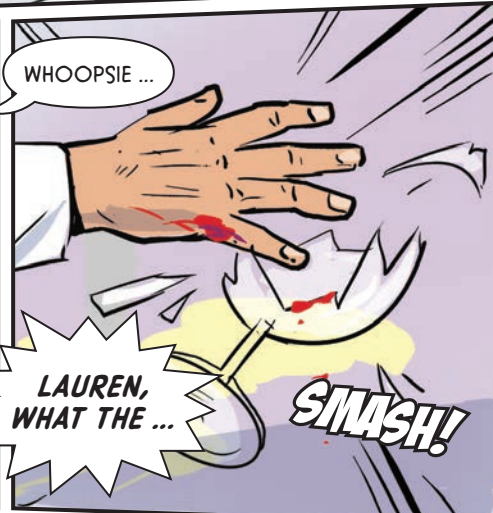
... WITH BLUE HAIR.



DON'T YOU THINK YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH, LAUREN.

TED, RELAX. WE HAVE COMPANY. IT'S A SPECIAL OCCASION.

IT'S ALWAYS A SPECIAL OCCASION WITH YOU. GIVE ME THAT!



WHOOPIE ...

LAUREN, WHAT THE ...

SMASH!



GO HOME, JACK.

A FEW DAYS LATER, IN THE GUIDANCE OFFICE ...



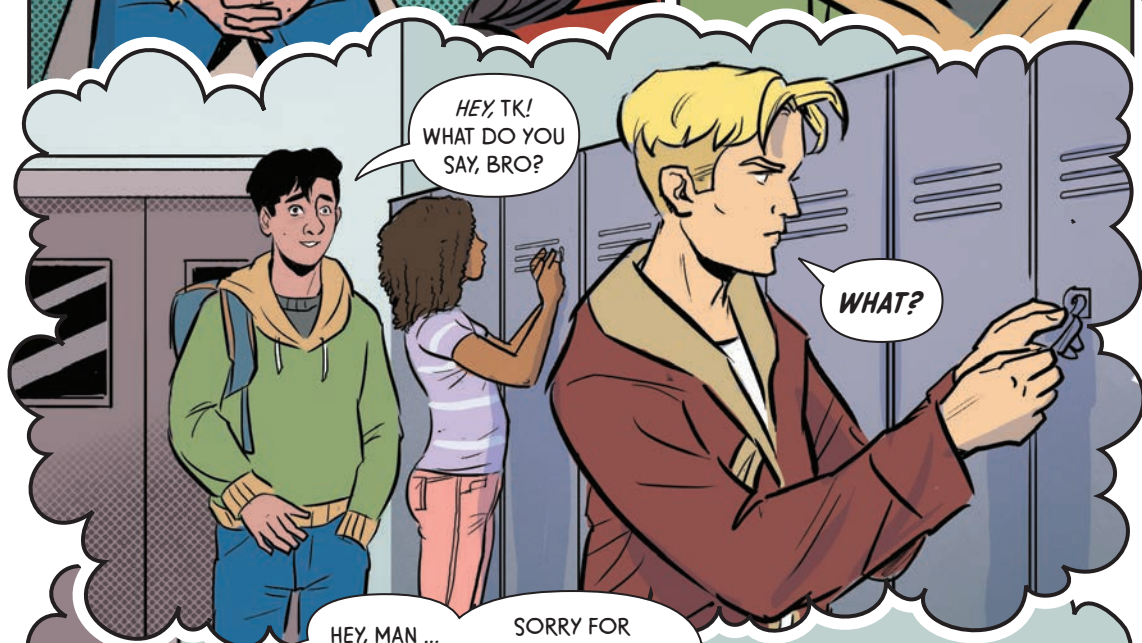
THIS ISN'T WORKING.

TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED.



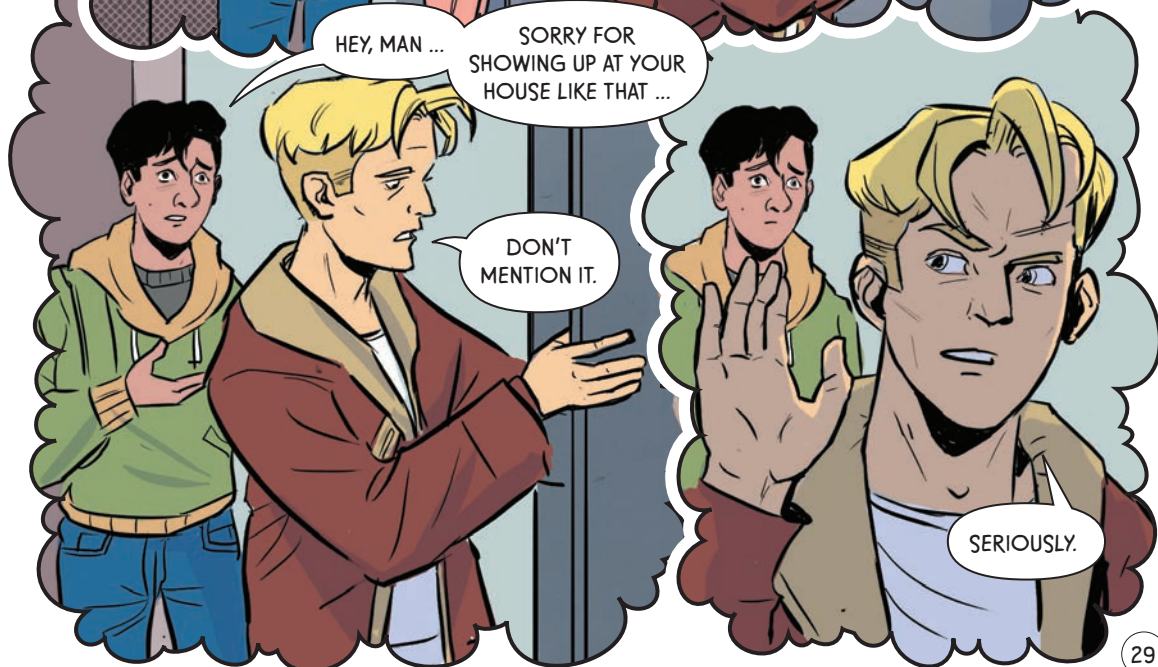
NOTHING.
NOTHING HAPPENED.

ARE YOU SURE?



HEY, TK!
WHAT DO YOU SAY, BRO?

WHAT?

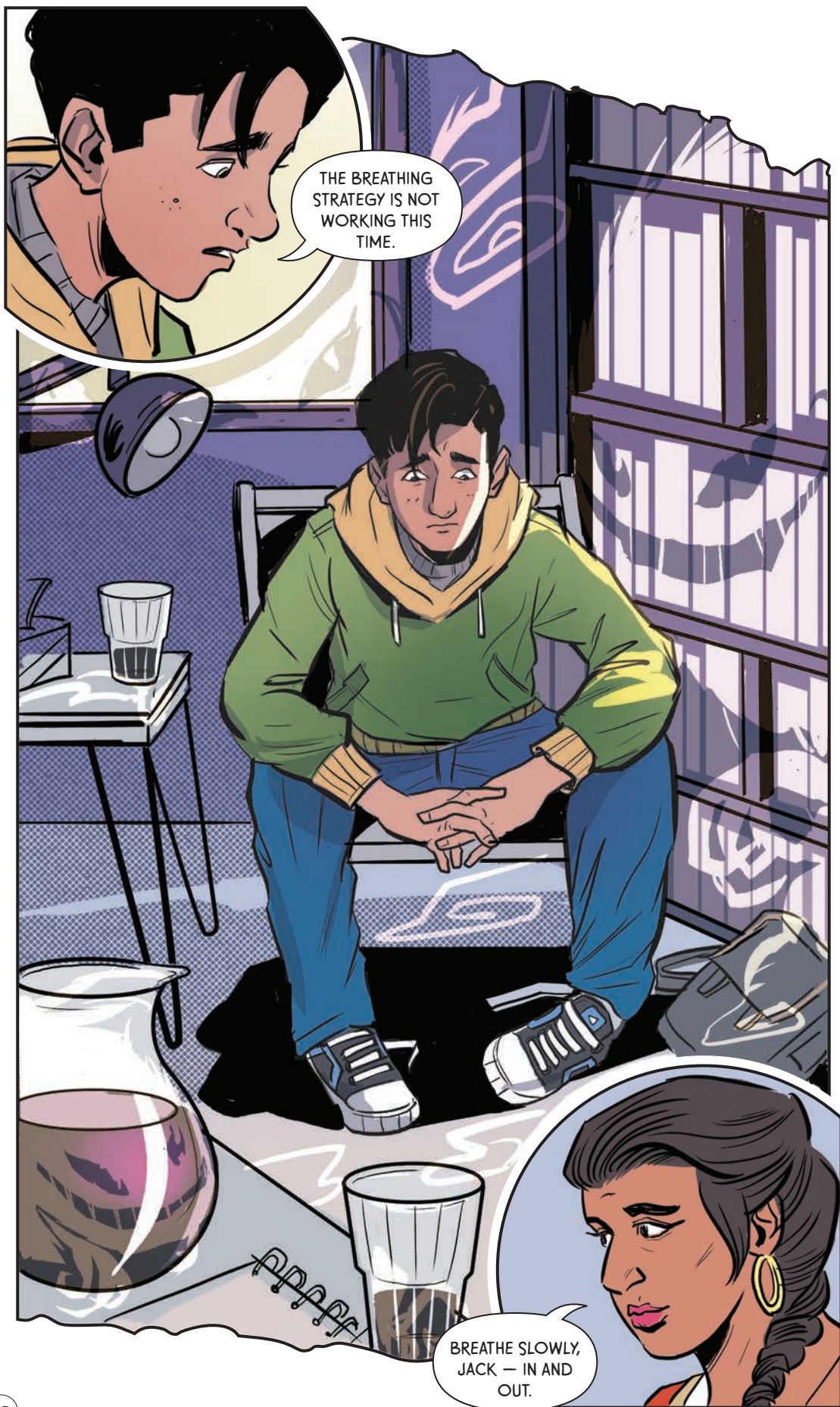


HEY, MAN ...

SORRY FOR
SHOWING UP AT YOUR
HOUSE LIKE THAT ...

DON'T
MENTION IT.

SERIOUSLY.



CHAPTER 4: THE REAL AND THE UNREAL

LATER THAT DAY, AT THE GUIDANCE OFFICE ...



NO, IT'S
NOT TRUE.

SOMETIMES ...
IT'S LIKE THERE ARE
TWO OF ME.

THE *SECOND* ME ...
IS WATCHING THE
REAL ME.





THE FIRST ME —
THE *REAL* ME —
IS LIVING IN THE
MOMENT.

DOES THAT
MAKE SENSE?
DO YOU THINK
I'M CRAZY?

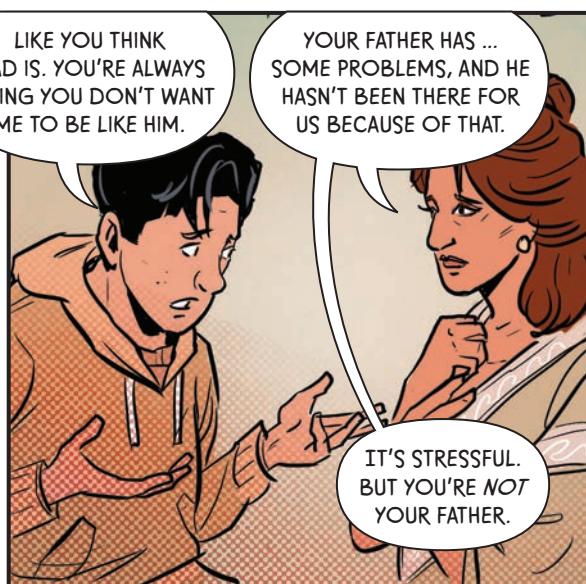
I DON'T THINK
YOU'RE CRAZY AT ALL.
I UNDERSTAND.

WELL, I *DON'T*.
THIS IS ALL SO —
SO *STRANGE*.



I'M *NOT* WEAK
AND USELESS!

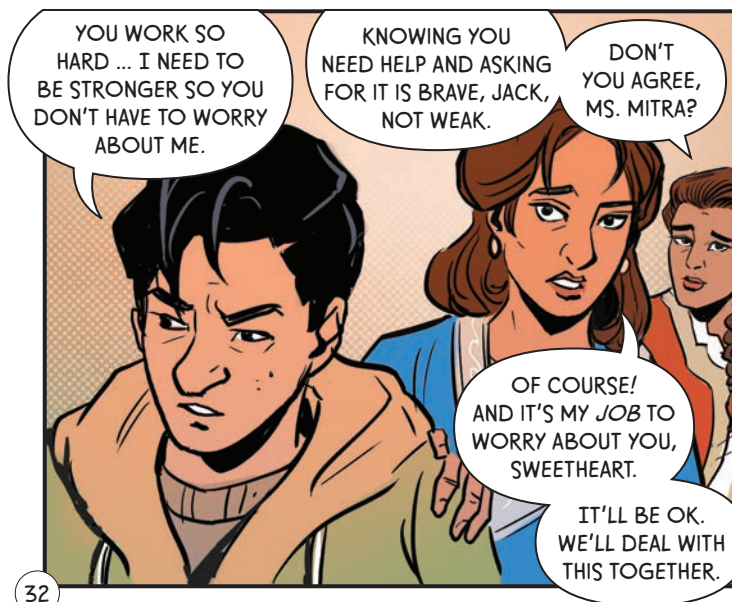
I NEVER
SAID THAT
YOU WERE!



LIKE YOU THINK
DAD IS. YOU'RE ALWAYS
SAYING YOU DON'T WANT
ME TO BE LIKE HIM.

YOUR FATHER HAS ...
SOME PROBLEMS, AND HE
HASN'T BEEN THERE FOR
US BECAUSE OF THAT.

IT'S STRESSFUL.
BUT YOU'RE *NOT*
YOUR FATHER.



YOU WORK SO
HARD ... I NEED TO
BE STRONGER SO YOU
DON'T HAVE TO WORRY
ABOUT ME.

KNOWING YOU
NEED HELP AND ASKING
FOR IT IS BRAVE, JACK,
NOT WEAK.

DON'T
YOU AGREE,
MS. MITRA?

OF COURSE!
AND IT'S MY *JOB* TO
WORRY ABOUT YOU,
SWEETHEART.

IT'LL BE OK.
WE'LL DEAL WITH
THIS TOGETHER.



HERE ARE THE NAMES
OF SOME PEOPLE I THINK
YOU SHOULD CONSIDER
TALKING TO.

ONE MONTH LATER ...



SPRING. A REVIEW WITH MS. PELLETIER ...

YOUR ATTENDANCE IS BETTER. GRADES TOO. NOT GREAT, BUT BETTER.

YEAH, WELL. MY MOM'S BEEN A TOTAL PAIN. NO SCREEN TIME AFTER 8:00 PM. SHE FOUND AN OLD IPAD UNDER MY BED AND FREAKED OUT. SHE SAID SHE NEEDED TO PROTECT ME FROM MYSELF.

SHE HID IT SO I COULDN'T EVER FIND IT.

AND DID YOU?

NO. BUT SHE HID IT SO WELL SHE CAN'T FIND IT EITHER NOW, HAHA.

ARE YOU SEEING MUCH OF TK?

NO.

I'VE GOT A NEW TUTOR. SHE'S OK. EXCEPT FOR SERIOUS COFFEE BREATH.

HOW ABOUT THE OTHER THINGS WE'VE TALKED ABOUT?

AND?

MAYBE I WAS LETTING THINGS GET TO ME TOO MUCH. BUT WE MOSTLY TALK ABOUT SCIENCE FICTION SHOWS.

HE'S OK — EVEN THOUGH HE THINKS THE ORIGINAL *TREK* IS BETTER THAN *DEEP SPACE NINE*.

IT IS! HAHA

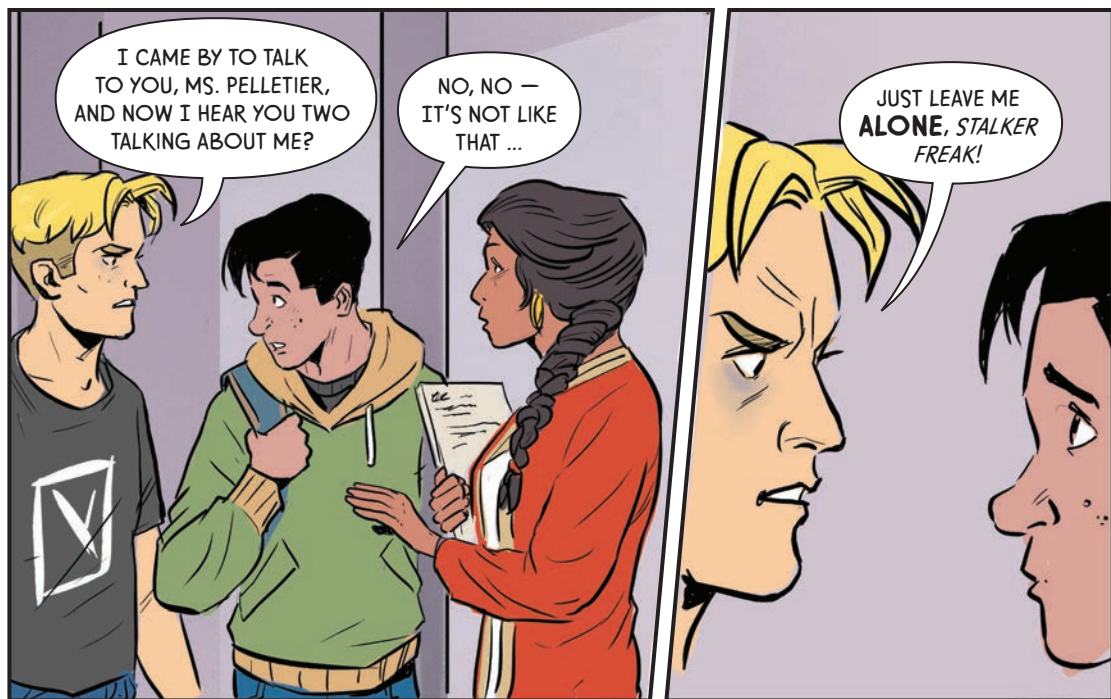
YEAH, WELL, I'VE GONE TO SEE THAT GUY YOU SUGGESTED, ALAN JOHNSON. ABOUT FEELINGS AND STUFF.

A FEW MINUTES LATER ...

SO, YOU DIDN'T ANSWER MY QUESTION ABOUT TK. I HAVEN'T SEEN MUCH OF HIM MYSELF.

I DUNNO WHAT TK IS UP TO. I SEE HIM WITH VARDHA A LOT IN SMOKERS' ALLEY —

IT'S A STRESSFUL TIME. SENIORS FIND OUT WHAT SCHOOLS THEY GOT INTO THIS WEEK.



JACK'S HOUSE,
LATER THAT
EVENING ...

I HADN'T BEEN FOLLOWING TK ONLINE FOR MONTHS — AFTER HE BRUSHED ME OFF. I'M TOO BUSY WITH TUTORING. AND SINCE MY MOTHER HAS CUT OFF MY LATE-NIGHT COMPUTER ACCESS, I DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME FOR SOCIAL MEDIA ANYWAY ...

at
alcatTK.com
owers

FOLLOW

MESSAGE

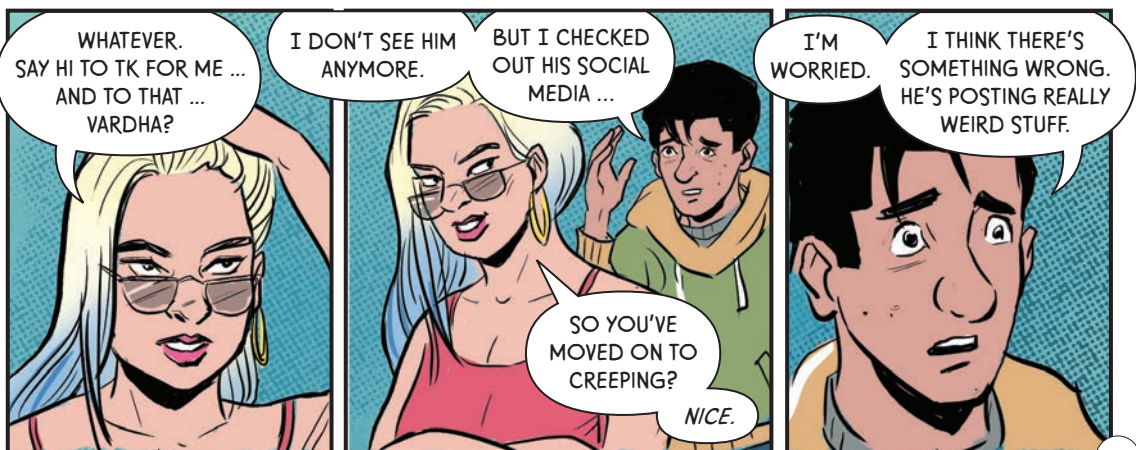
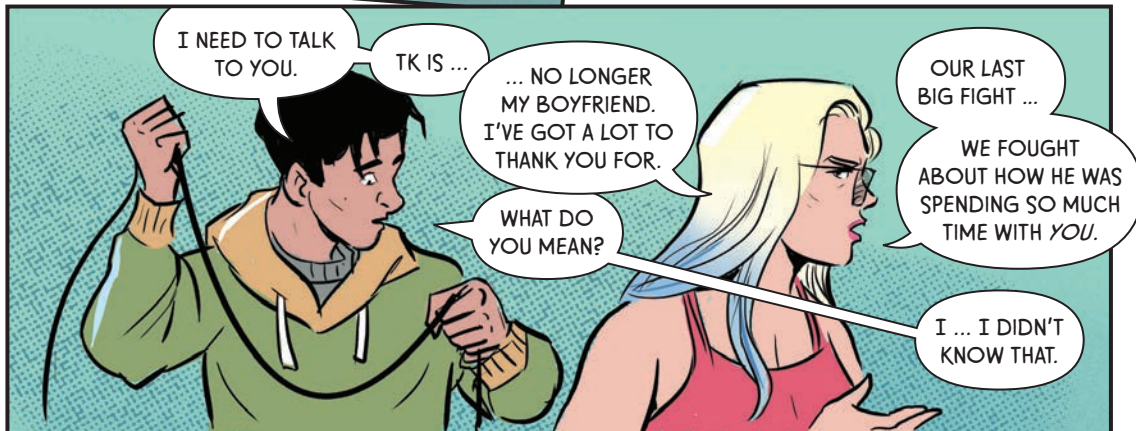
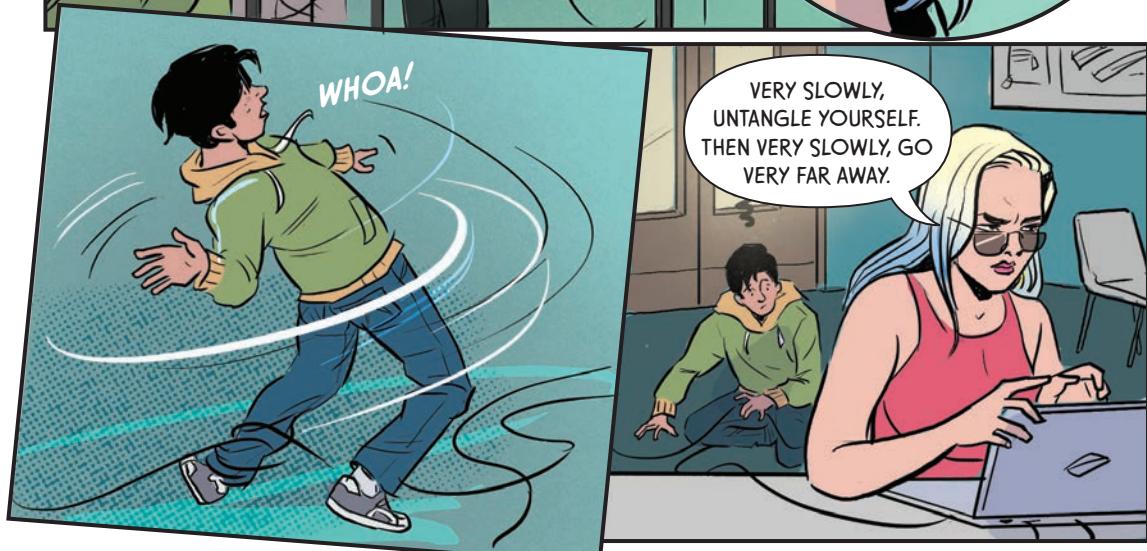
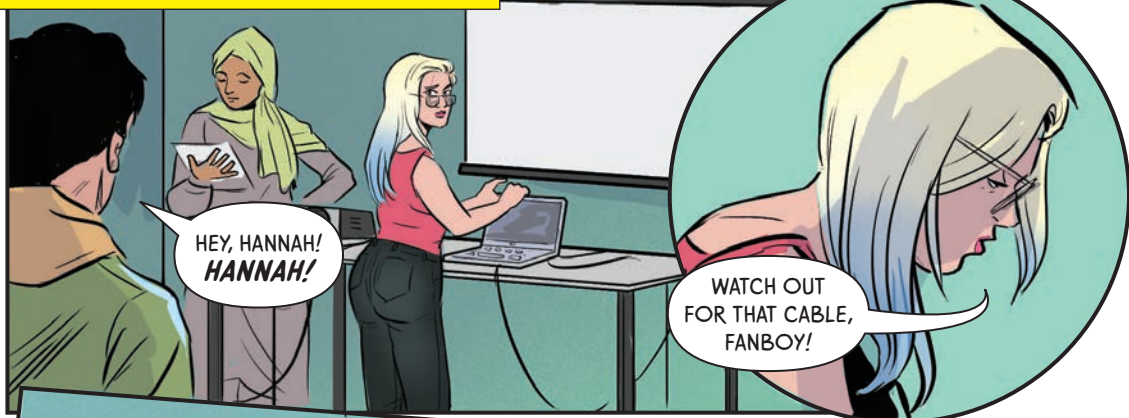


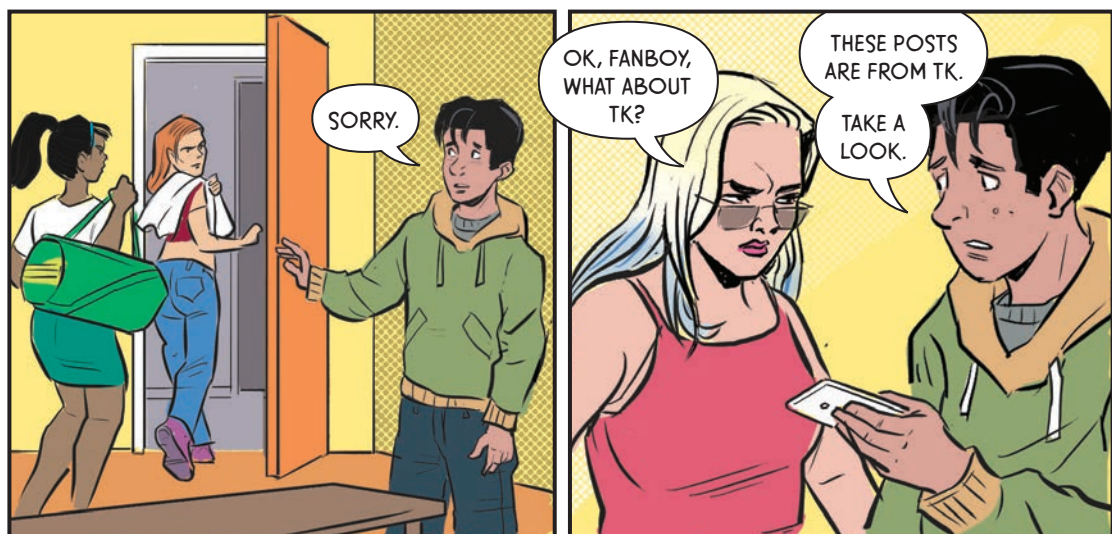
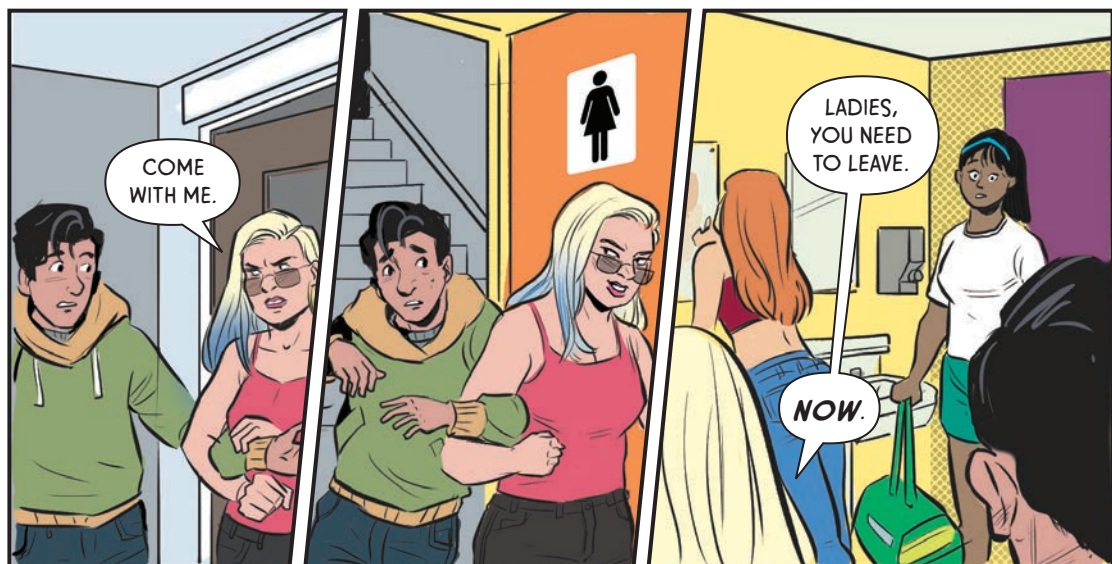
Football season over. Missing it already. Countdown to next fall. Longest winter ever. What is this? G.O.T.? Human garbage — you know who you are.

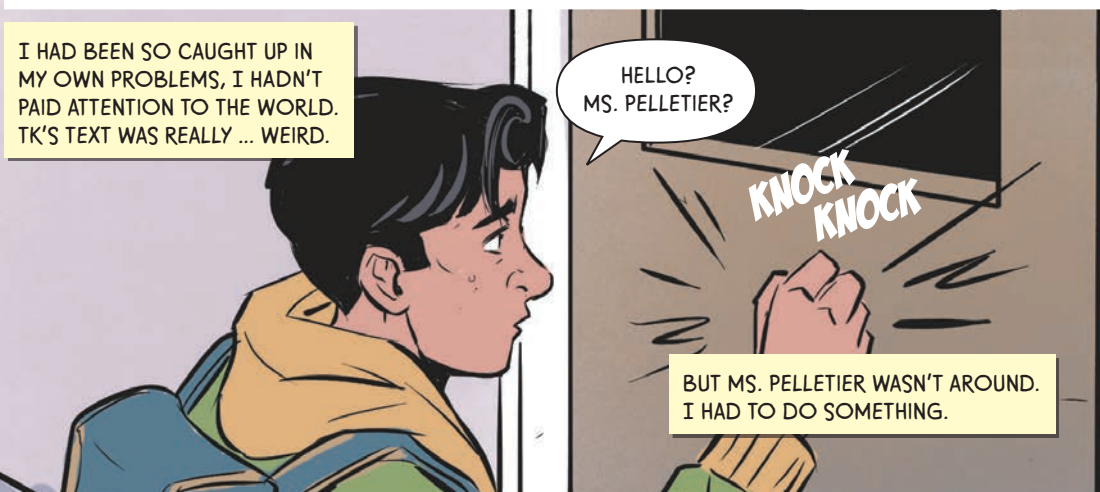
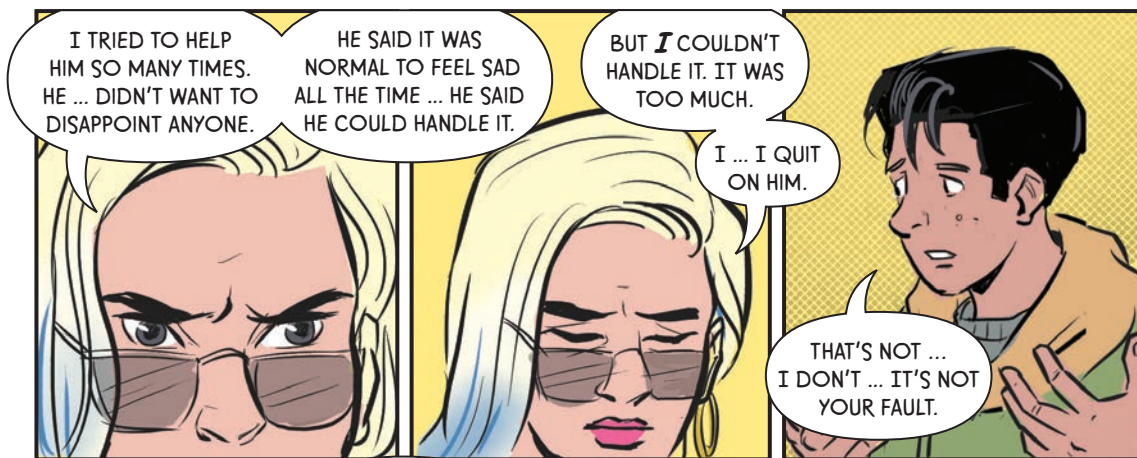
I'm done. No family. No friends. Stay out of my life. Wake me up when this is over.

I HAD TO DO SOMETHING.
SO I REACHED OUT.

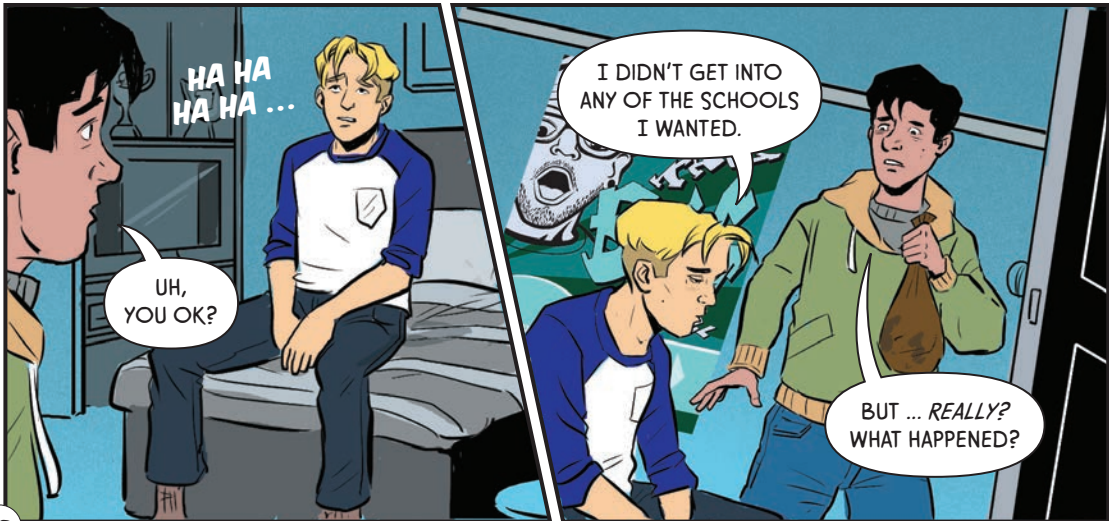
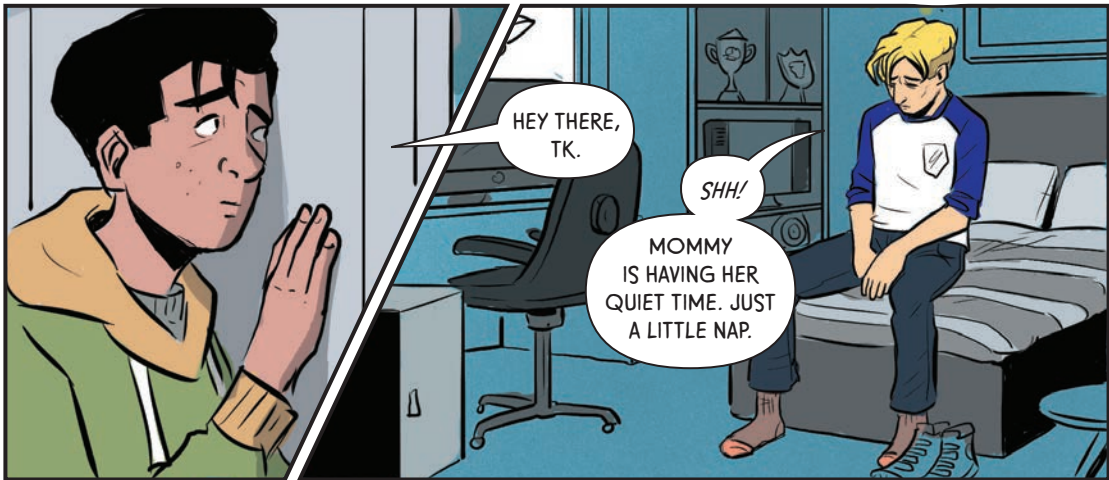
Hey, TK.
Are you doing OK?

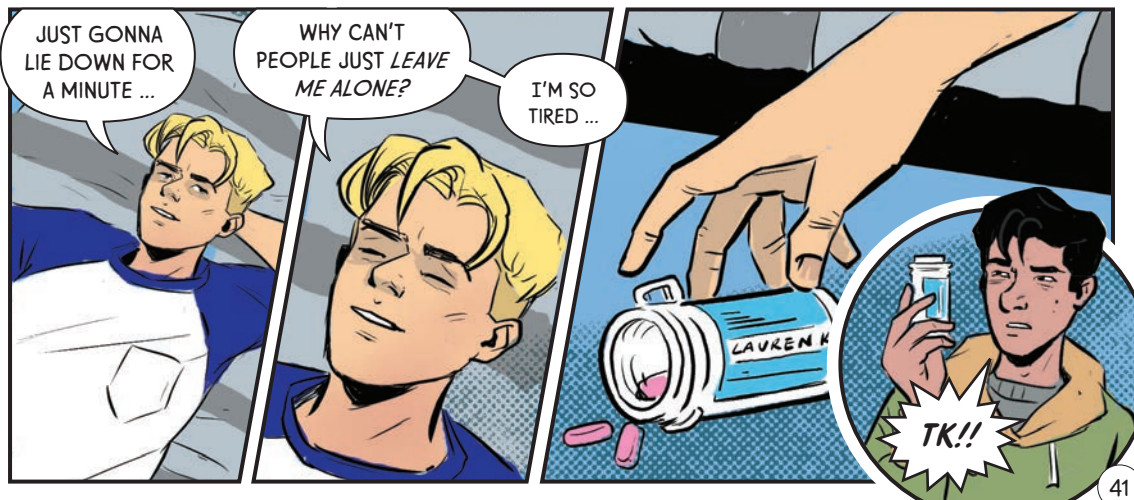
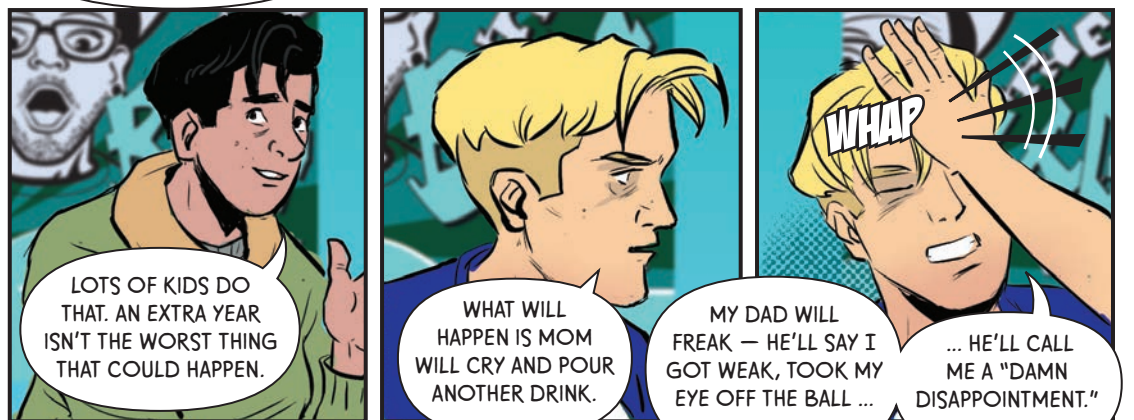
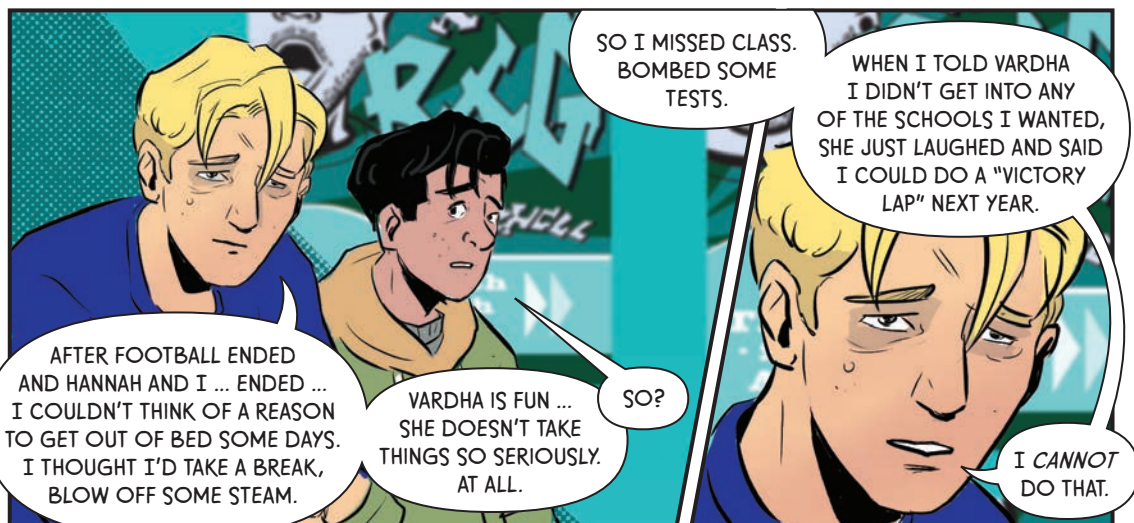




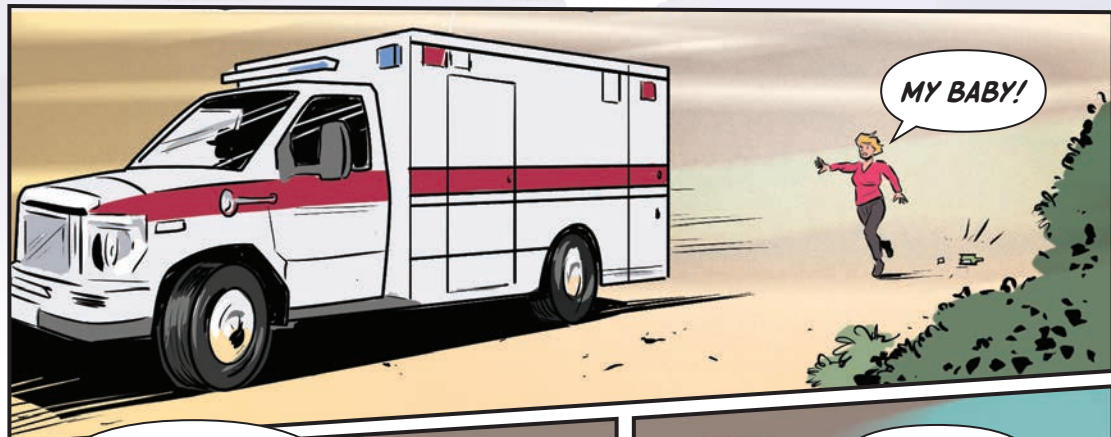


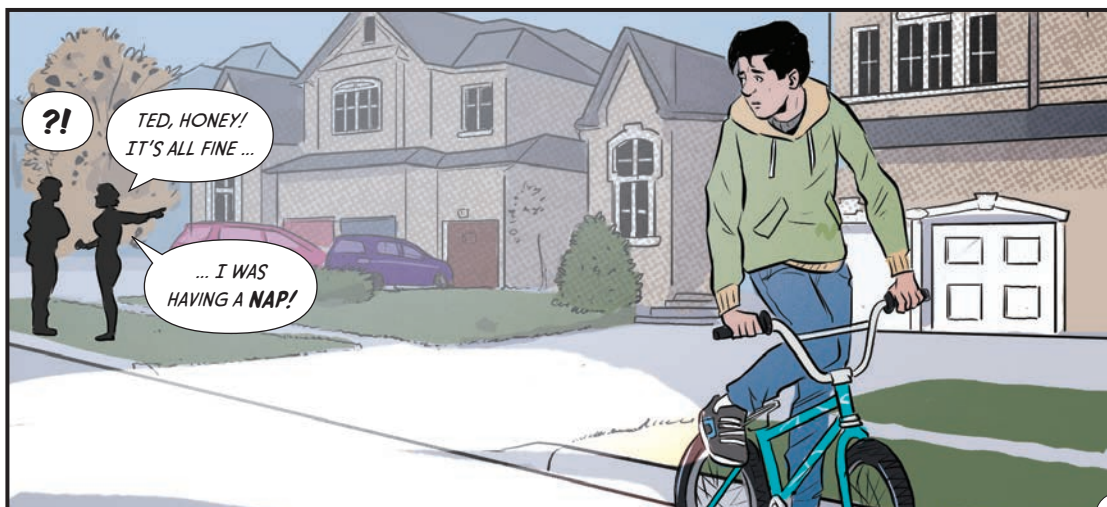
CHAPTER 5: HELPING A FRIEND





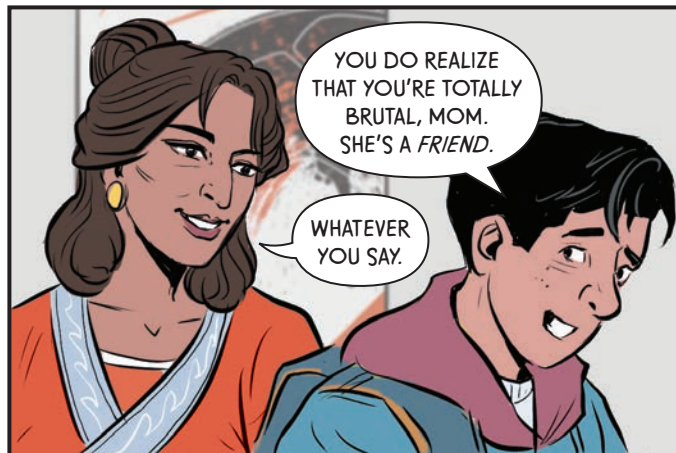
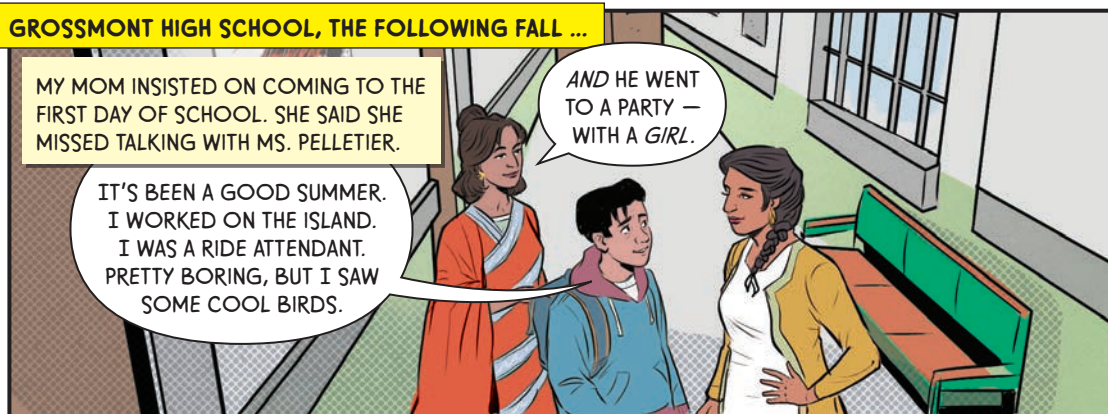
A LITTLE LATER ...





EPILOGUE

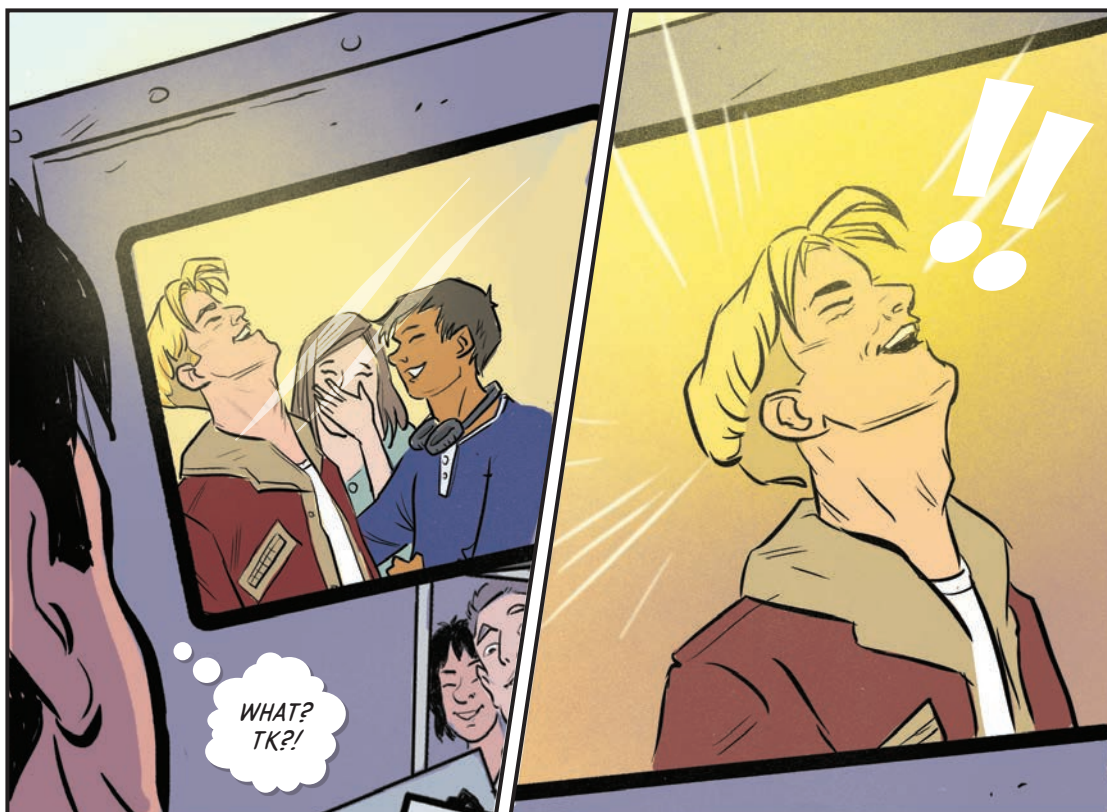
GROSSMONT HIGH SCHOOL, THE FOLLOWING FALL ...





A LITTLE LATER ...





HIGH SCHOOL ATRIUM ...



THE
END

NOTES AND STRATEGIES

Jack, TK, and their friends are fictional characters whose experiences were based on real-life experiences that many young people have had and continue to live with. Coping with hard times in high school is inevitable, but there are ways that you can manage what you or a friend is going through.

The following are some helpful self-care tips and information around panic attacks, healthy relationships, and managing expectations in your life.

Whatever is going on with your mental health, there is help out there for you. Find out factual information about mental illness, what to do in a crisis, and how to help a friend at www.mindyourmind.ca.

GETTING THROUGH A PANIC ATTACK

A panic attack is a sudden episode of intense fear or anxiety that someone can experience even when there is no real threat. A panic attack often has very intense physical symptoms. Some people describe a panic attack as feeling as if they are having a heart attack.

A panic attack can be triggered by a specific situation (such as being in a crowded place, experiencing a stressful event, feeling nervous, and so on), but the defining characteristic of a panic attack is that it usually comes on when there's no actual immediate threat (for example, no aggressive dog or no car speeding toward you). You're not in danger, but it really feels as if you are.

There are many different reasons that a panic attack may occur. Like all mental health issues, a panic attack is complicated and can be caused by a number of risk factors working in combination, such as genetics, biology, personality, and environmental or life experiences. If you or someone you know is having a panic attack, try out these strategies to help get grounded and calm.



ACTIVITY	INSTRUCTIONS
5-4-3-2-1 Coping Strategy	<p>Take a few deep breaths, and then get started.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for 5 things you can see. • Find 4 things you can touch. • Find 3 things you can hear. • Find 2 things you can smell. • Find 1 thing you can taste.
5 Senses	<p>Stop what you are doing, notice something you can sense for each category, and then write it down.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See _____ • Smell _____ • Taste _____ • Hear _____ • Feel _____
Square Breathing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a deep breath in for four seconds. • Hold your breath for four seconds. • Exhale for four seconds. • Hold your breath for four seconds. <p>Repeat four times, imagining each line of a square as you do each step.</p>

SELF-CARE WHILE HELPING A FRIEND

You can't always control what is going on in the lives of people you love. It can be very scary to know that people are going through an incredibly difficult time and not be able to do anything about it. That's why it's really important to take care of yourself. Here are some self-care tips for you to take care of yourself while helping a friend.

- Knowing about mental illnesses is a good first step to supporting a friend. Learn **Mental Health 101** by playing **Reach Out** on mindyourmind.ca or by checking out the illness pages on the website.
- Supporting a friend can mean feeling like you're on call 24/7, which is impossible. Help your friend identify others to call for backup too.
- Sometimes you need your own support when helping a friend. Make a list of two or three adults you could turn to if you need some advice or support.
- Having trouble setting boundaries with your friend? Fill in the blanks:
It's not okay for people to _____, and I have permission to _____.
- It's natural for relationships to end, but this doesn't mean it's easy to accept. If you've recently had a relationship end and you've been struggling, reach out for support. Connecting with different people will allow you to make other bonds.

PROMPTS

1. If you had to pick one self-care tip from the list above that you think could be helpful, which one would it be and why?
2. Do you think Jack was taking care of himself throughout the story? What would you have done differently?

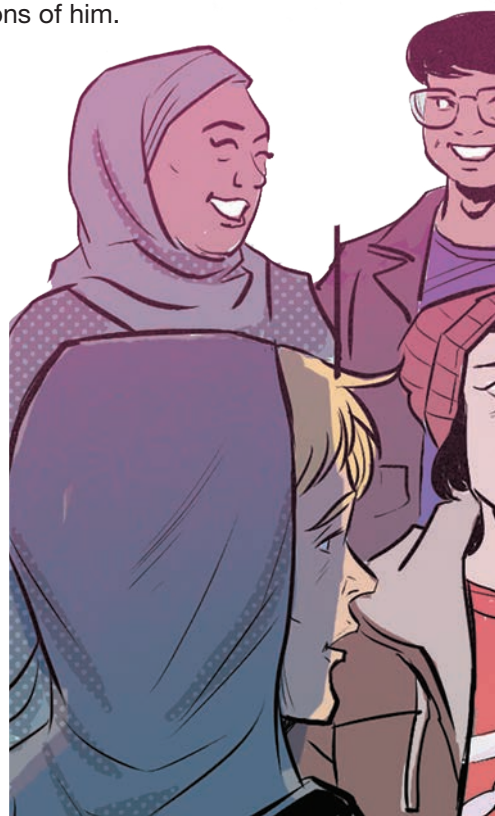
HOW TO COPE WITH HIGH EXPECTATIONS

High school students deal with a very high level of stress and pressure. You might be feeling pressure from your family to get good marks, from your friends to hang out all the time, from your school to figure out what you're going to do when you graduate, or from social media to look or act a certain way. Unfortunately, we can't get rid of the pressure, but we can do things to cope with these high expectations. Here are a few tips:

- Make sure you understand exactly what people expect of you. Their expectations might not be as bad as you think.
- Learn from your setbacks. Just because you've "failed" once doesn't mean you can never succeed again.
- Acknowledge your successes, no matter how small they are. Even if all you manage to do is get out of bed, value it.
- Give yourself a break. Don't let your mind settle on what you could be doing; instead, see value in relaxation.
- Try talking to the person who has high expectations of you. Start with "*When you expect me to _____, it makes me feel _____.*"
- Challenge your expectations. Would you expect the same of a friend that you expect of yourself? If not, how can you expect this of yourself?
- Talk to a neutral party. A neutral party can help you figure out how best to manage others' expectations and your needs.

PROMPTS

1. If you had to pick one coping tip from the list above to try, which one would it be and why?
2. TK's parents seem to have very high expectations of him. What would you do if you were in his shoes?



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

By their nature, relationships are complicated, but they should bring you satisfaction as well. If you're not sure what a healthy relationship looks like, check out these guidelines.

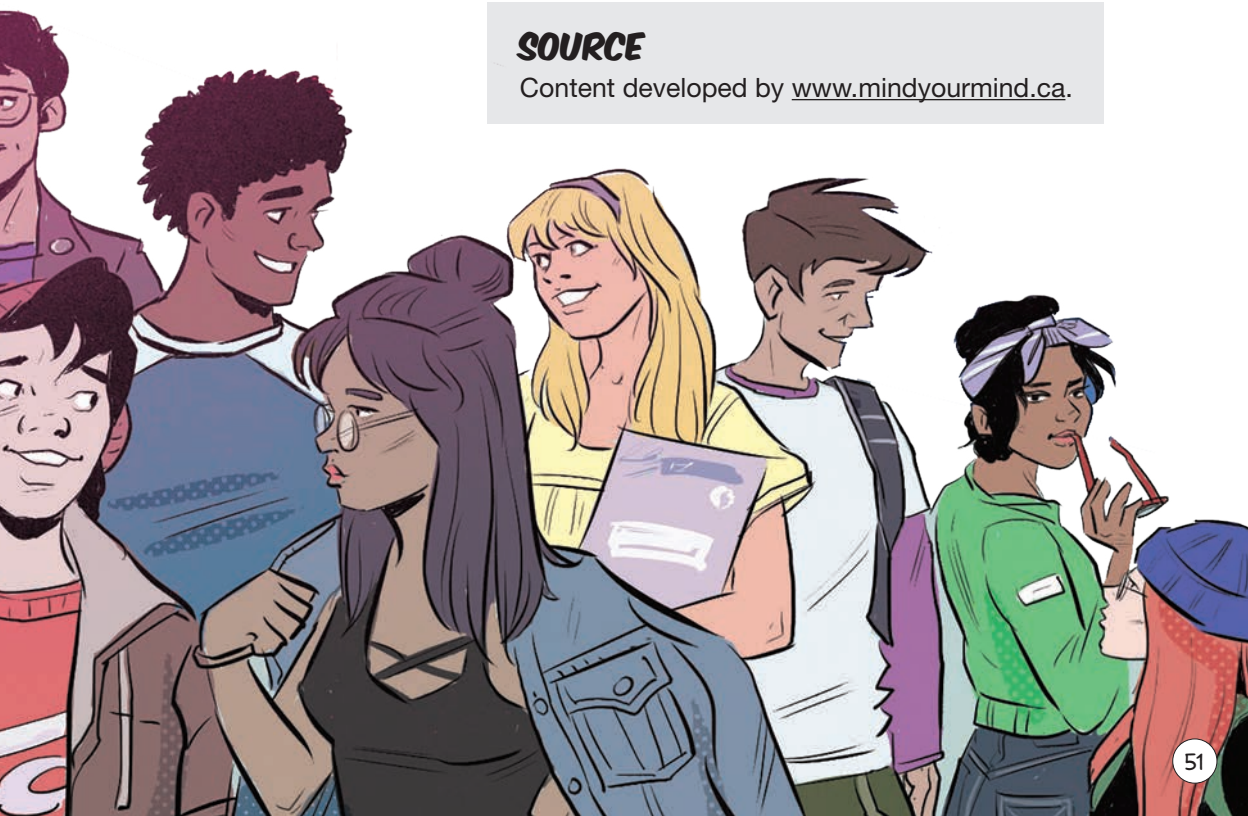
- There are four main things that make up a healthy relationship: communication, trust, respect, and boundaries.
- Know that one person cannot meet all the needs of another person. It's important to have relationships with friends and family too.
- Don't change who you are to please someone. People will have different needs and wants in a relationship, and that's okay.
- A healthy relationship will have good times and bad times. It's okay to have disagreements. It's how the disagreements are handled that matters.
- Take time for yourself. There's nothing wrong with wanting to be alone sometimes. Self-care is important within relationships.
- Be straightforward about your boundaries. Healthy boundaries make a relationship better for both of you.
- Don't forget to laugh. A healthy relationship should be fun most of the time and not feel like a chore.

PROMPTS

1. Which guideline resonated most with you? Why?
2. Do you think TK and Jack had a good relationship? Why or why not?
3. A loss of a friendship (regardless of whether the relationship was healthy or not) can be a difficult thing to deal with. What are some coping strategies you can think of to deal with this loss?

SOURCE

Content developed by www.mindyourmind.ca.



FEELING WEIRD

Jack is just a regular high school student dealing with some very irregular things. *Feeling Weird* is a graphic novel that explores mental health.

It is a sensitive presentation of mental health problems commonly experienced by youth ... woven through its entertaining presentation.

— Dr. Ben Loveday, FRCPC, Psychiatry

“Feeling Weird” is a compelling story about mental health and the complexities of teenage life. Edgy illustrations bring the story to life.

— Dr. Kimberly Harris, Clinical Psychologist

“Feeling Weird” is a highly readable graphic novel It does a great job of illustrating the fact that mental health issues affect us all, regardless of how we appear on the outside.

— Yasmin McNeilly, MSW, RSW

CHRISTOPHER SWEENEY & SEAN DONAGHEY

Illustrated by DAVE SHEPHARD