

MAGGIE TOKUDA-HALL LISA STERLE

# SQUID

Anyone would kill to belong







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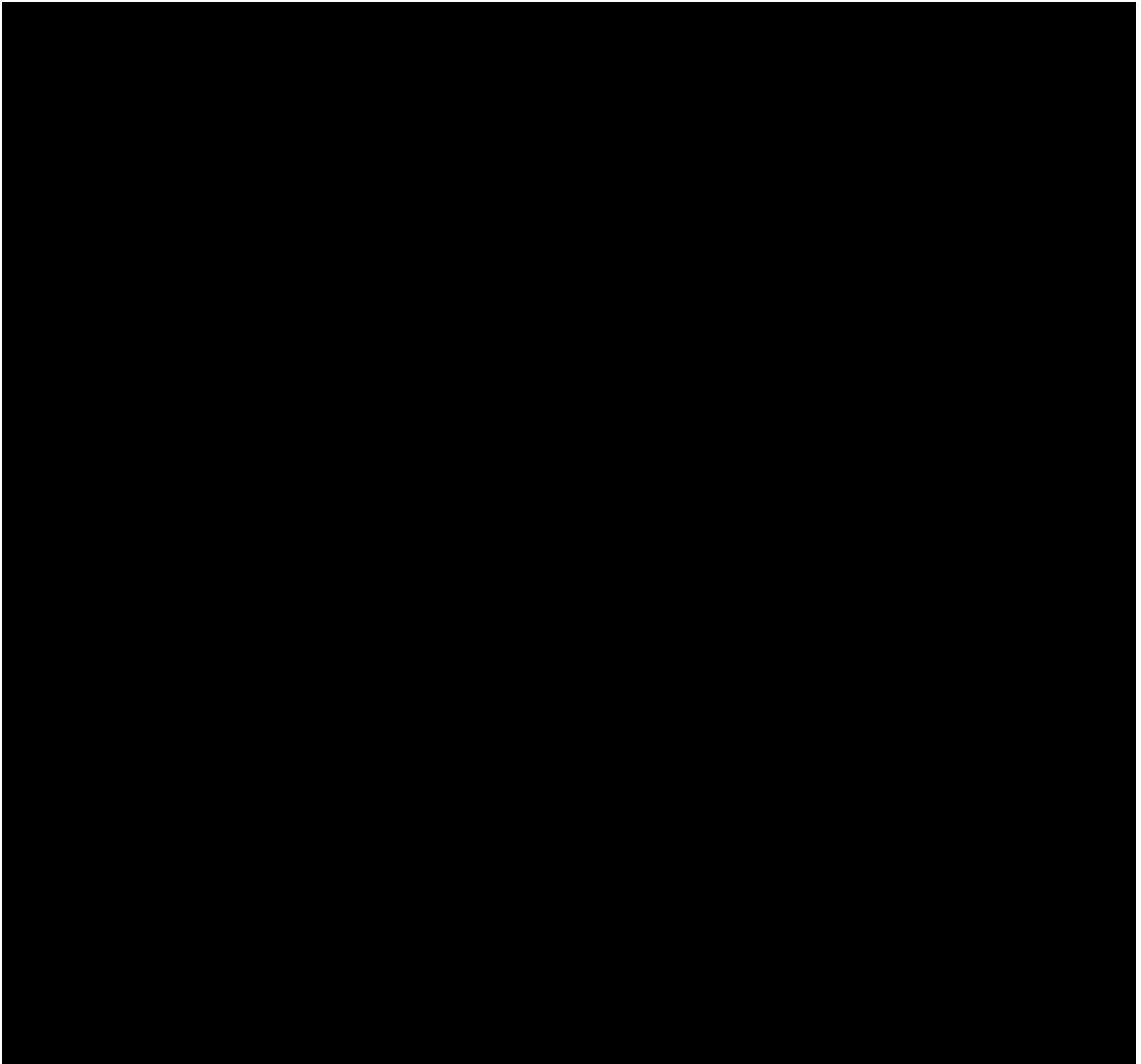
**SQUAD**

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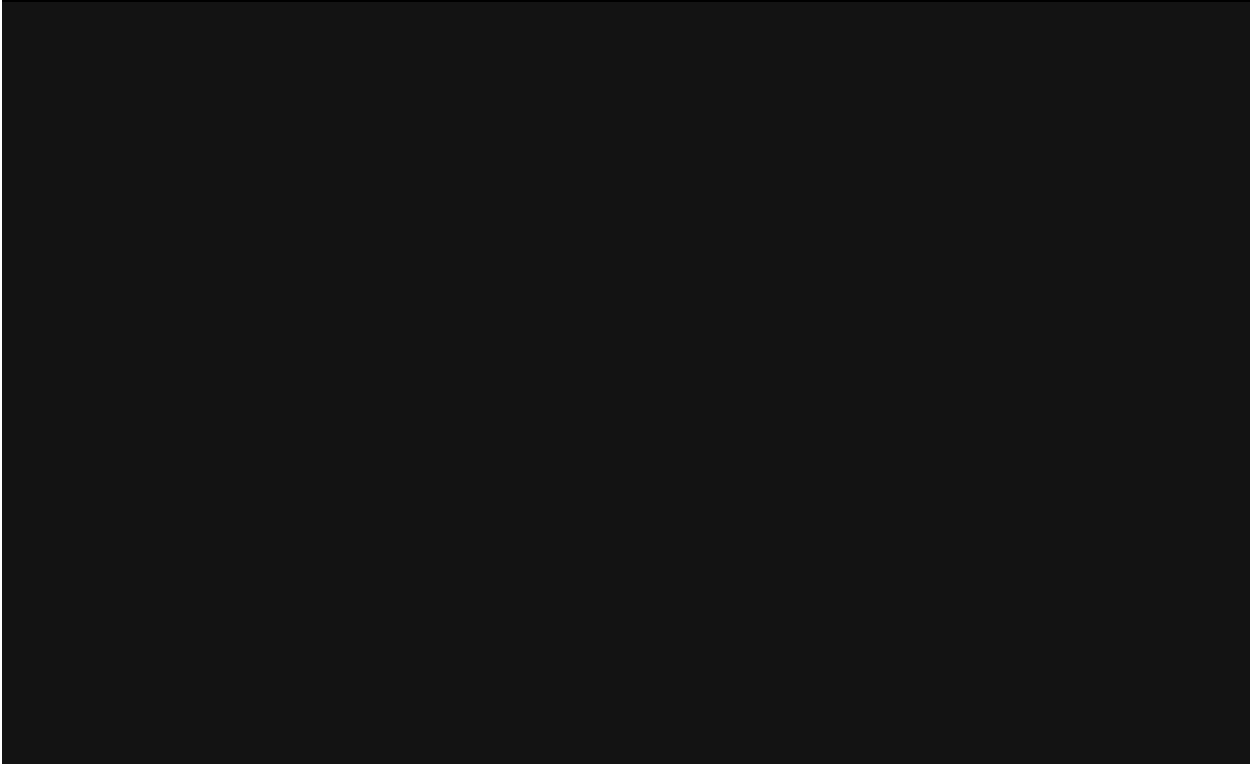
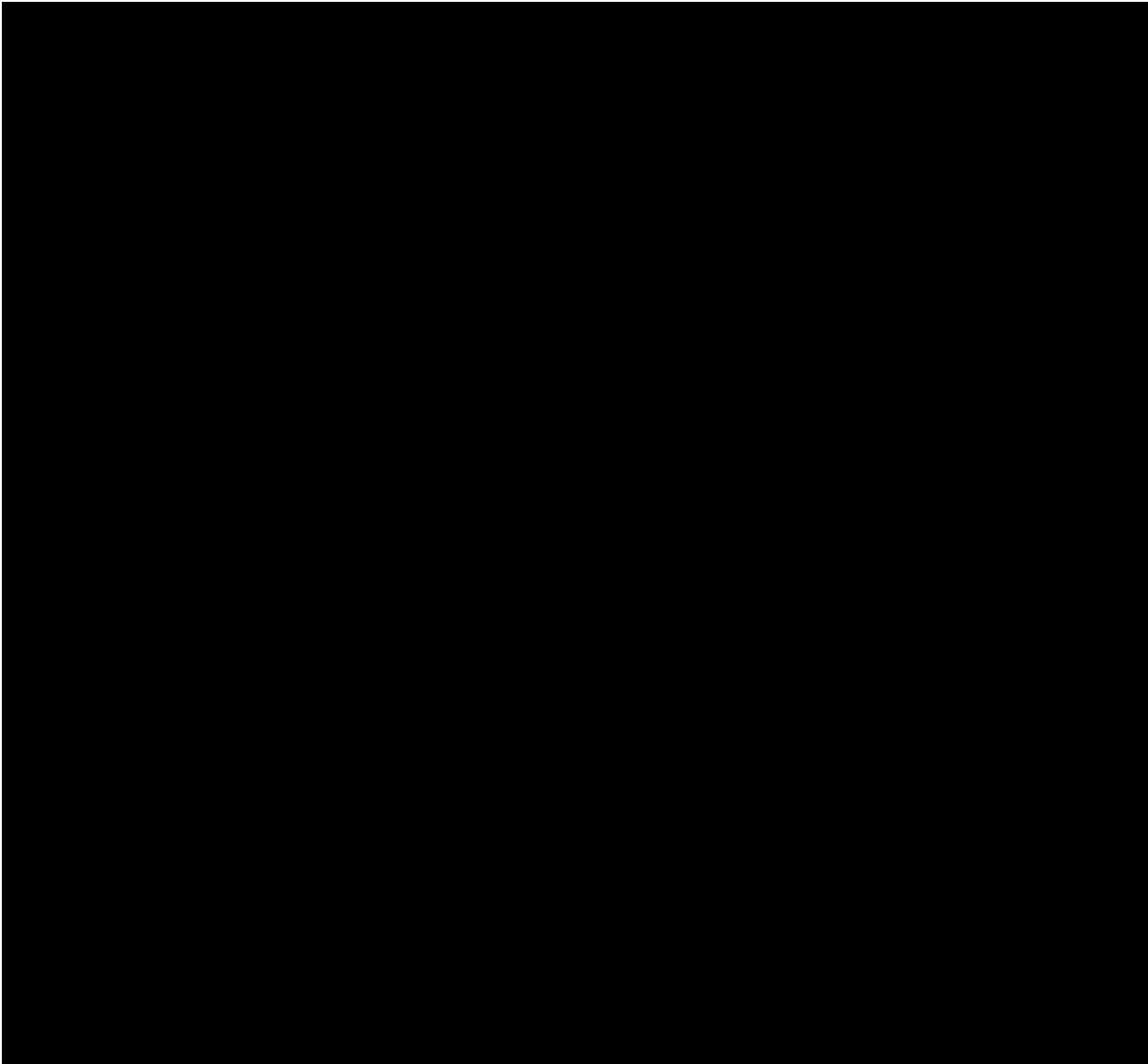


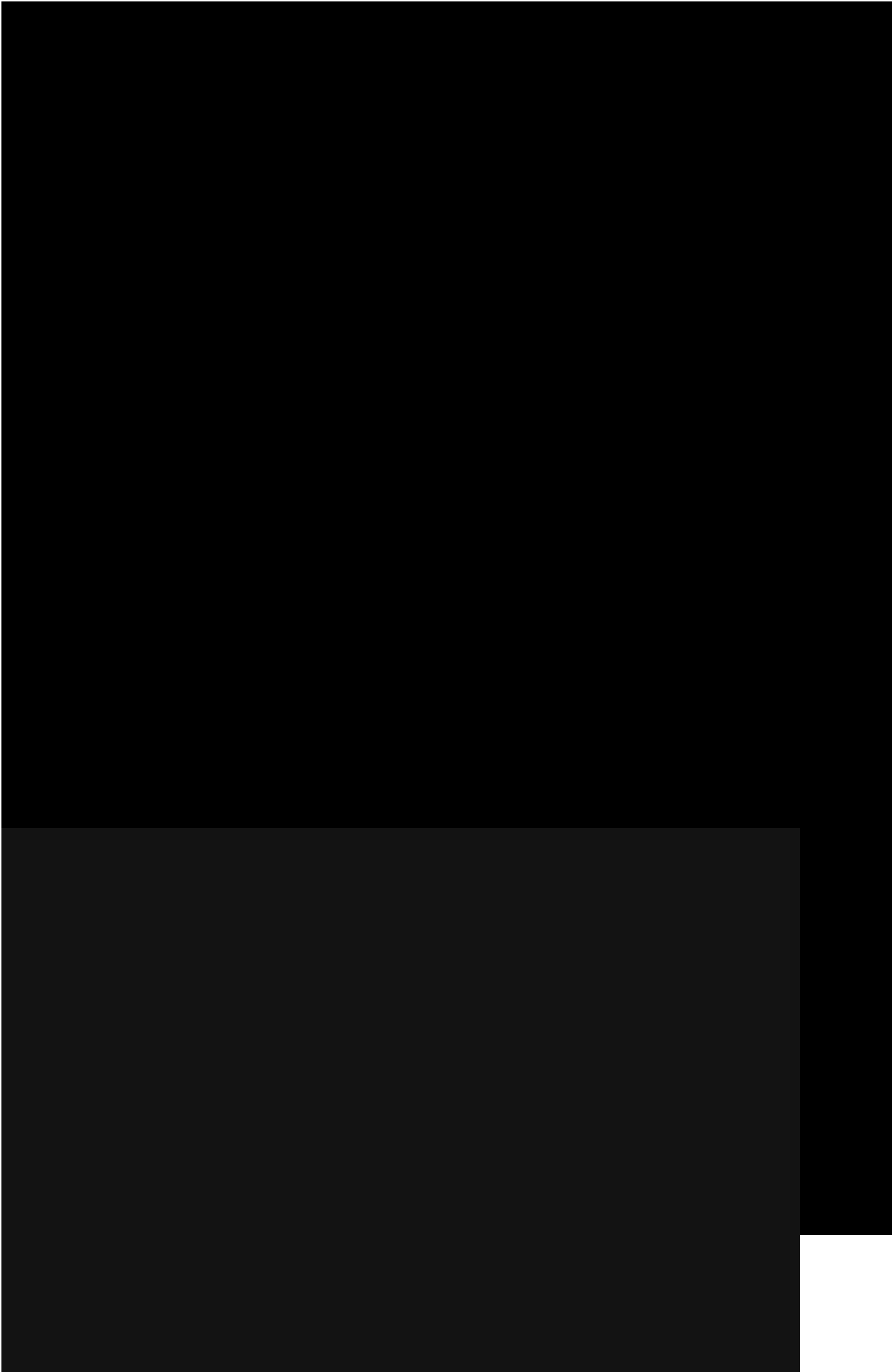


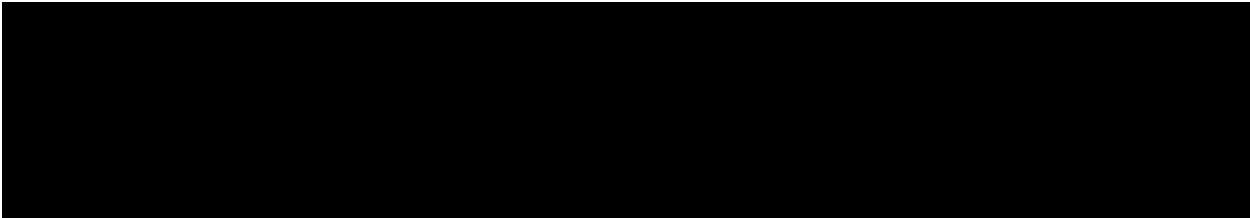
MAGGIE TOKUDA-HALL  
LISA STERLE

SQUAD













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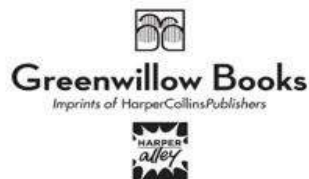
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FIRST EDITION



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To BH: I remember  
To BL: I'll never forget  
—M. T. H.

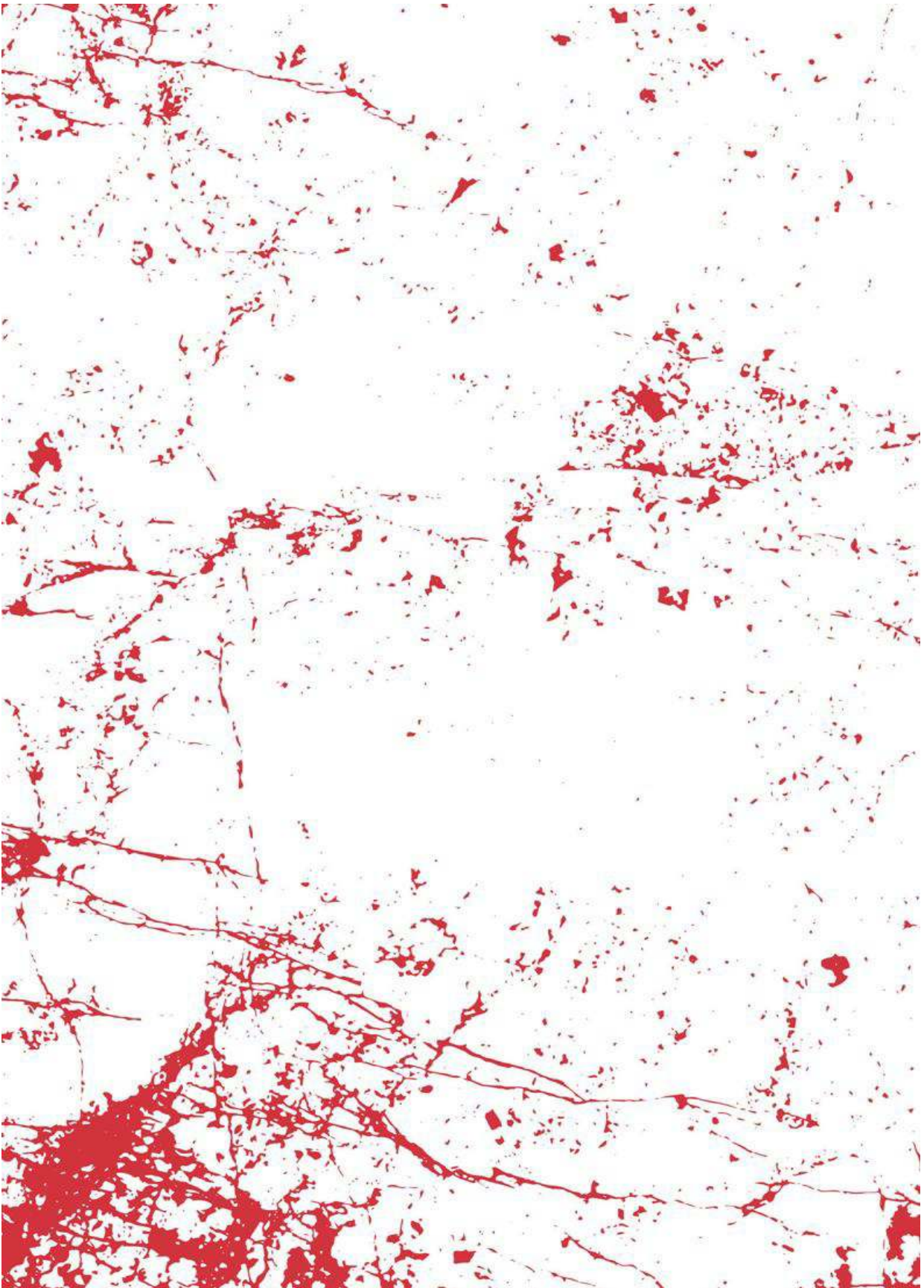
To my mom, who has been my unwavering support  
and biggest fan for as long as I can remember  
—L. S.

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## CHAPTER ONE

# WELCOME TO PIEDMONT

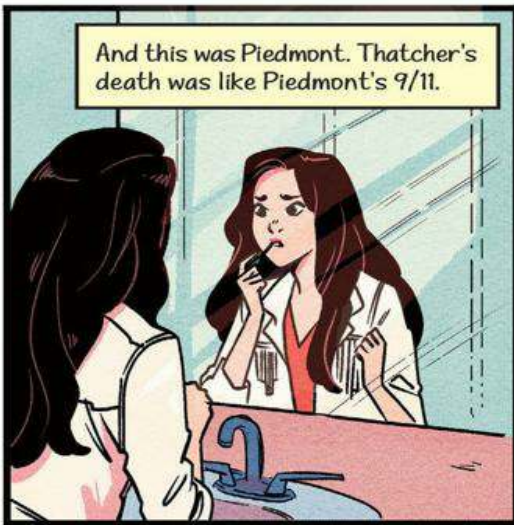
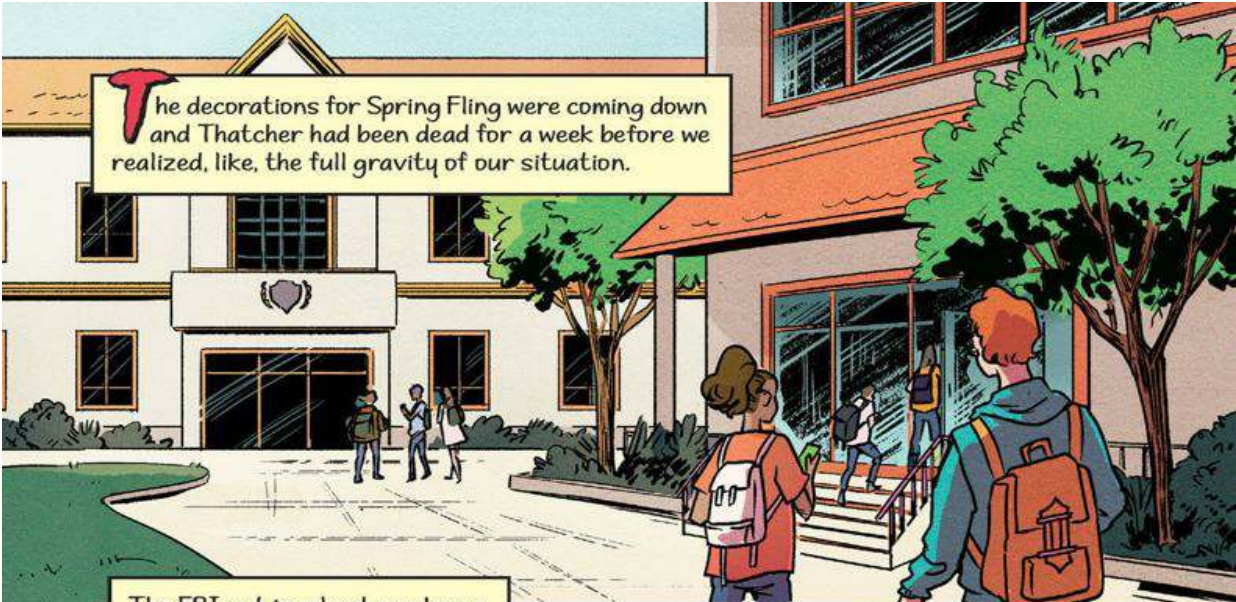


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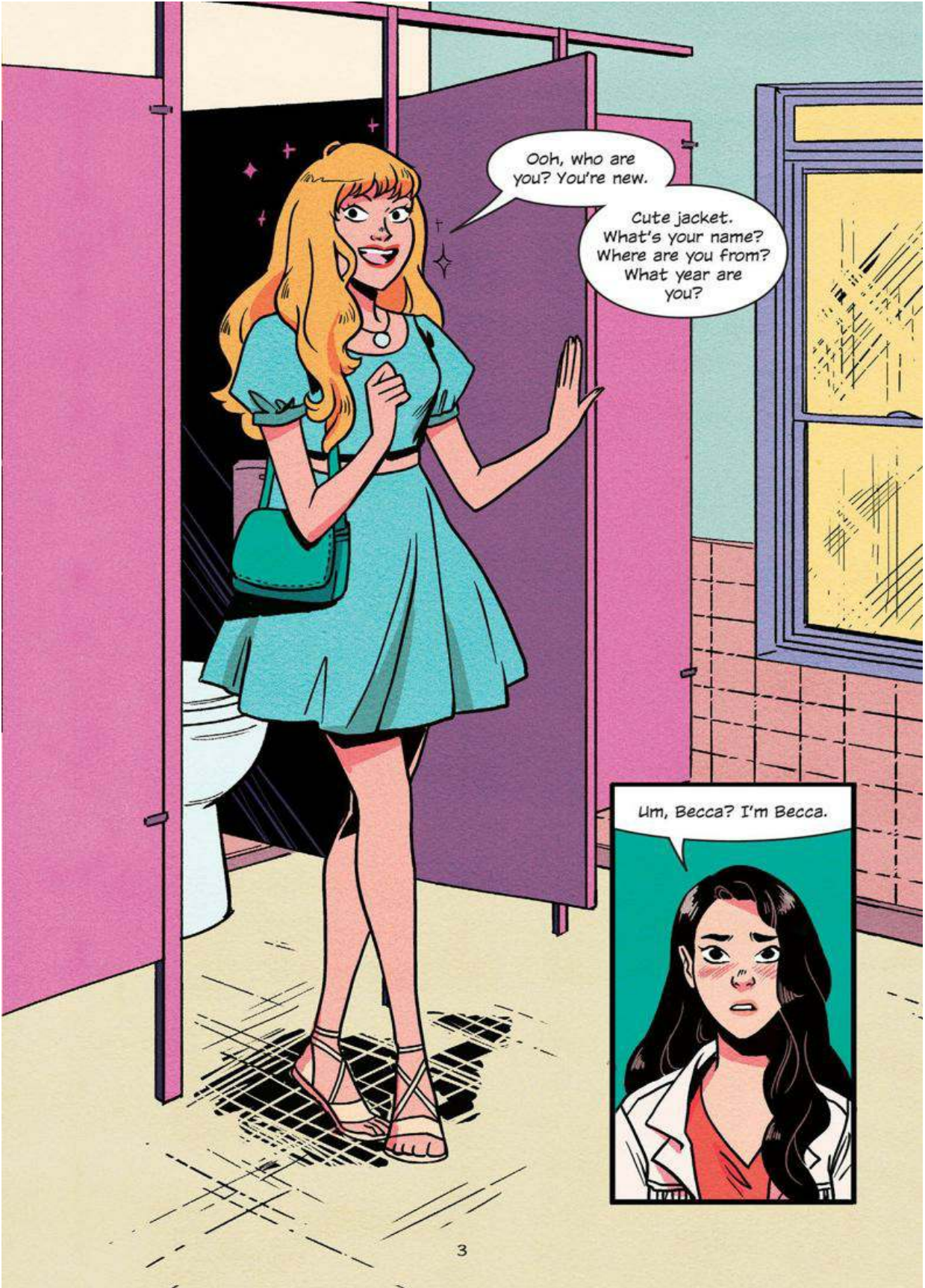


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Ooh, who are you? You're new.

Cute jacket.  
What's your name?  
Where are you from?  
What year are you?

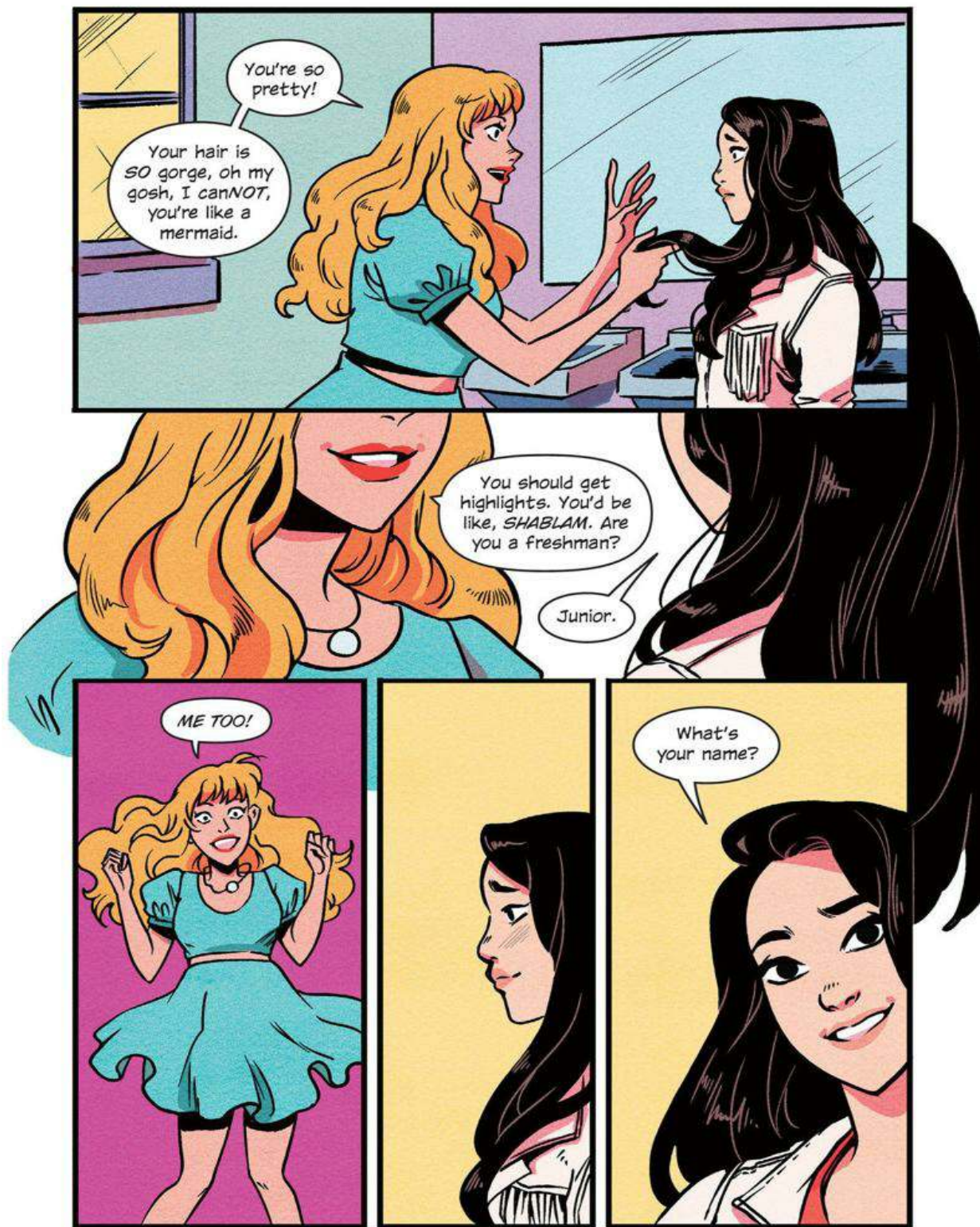
Um, Becca? I'm Becca.

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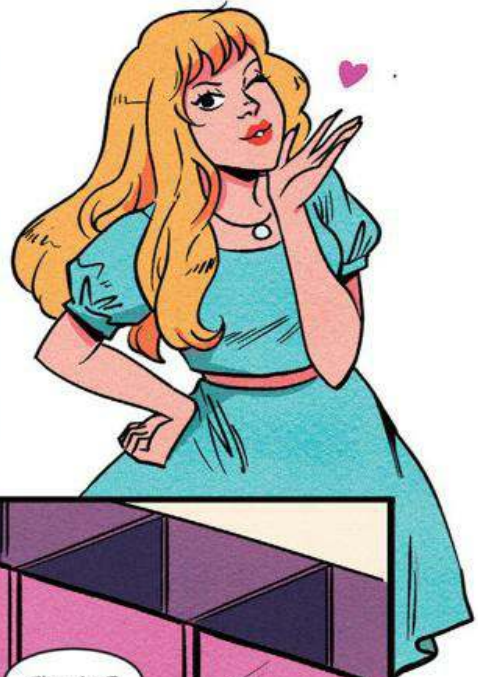
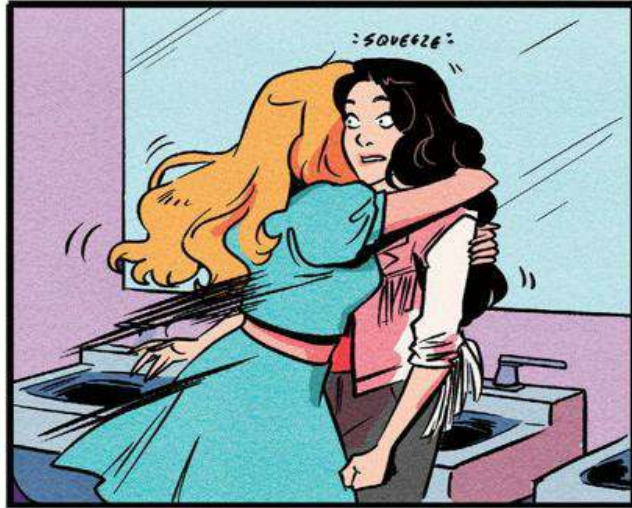


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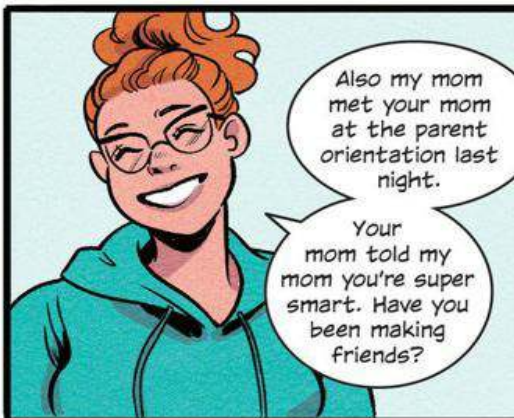
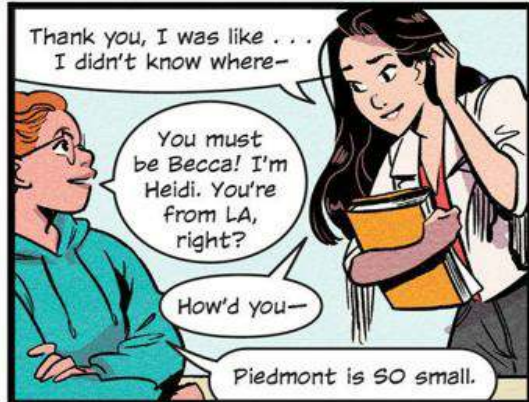


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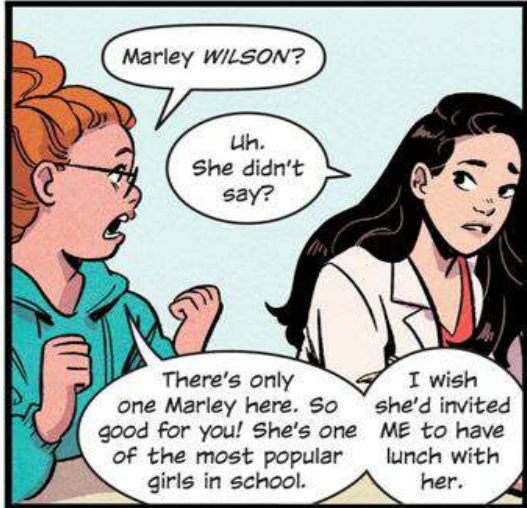


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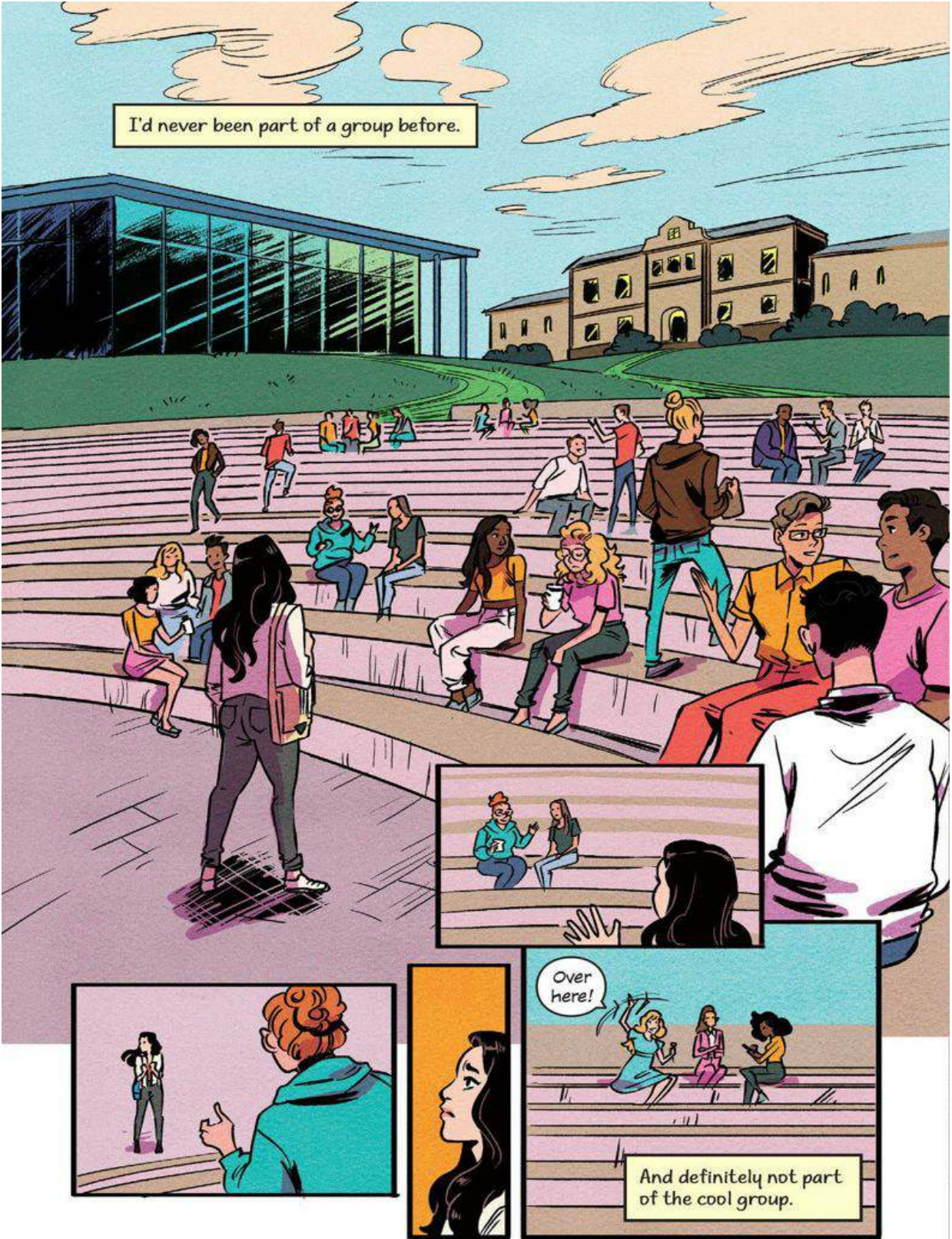


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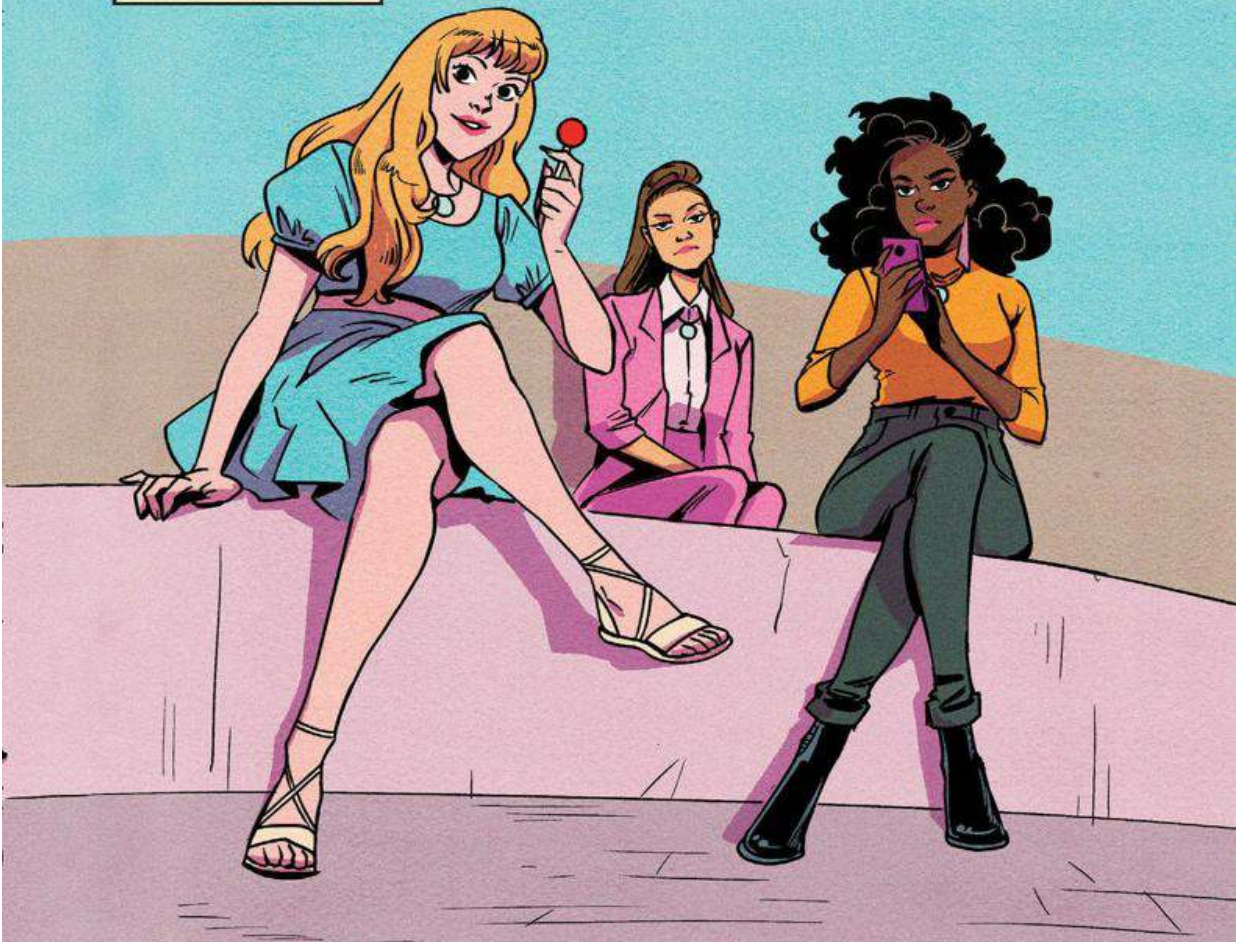
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But I wanted to be.



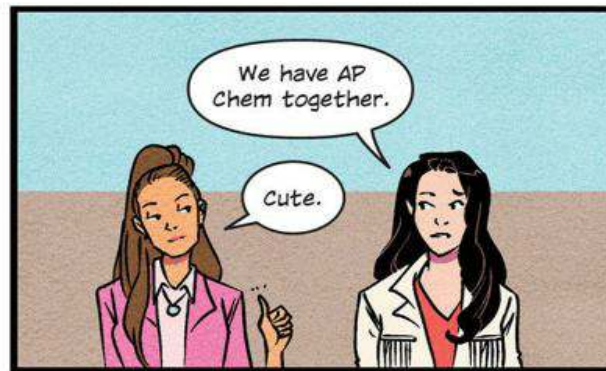
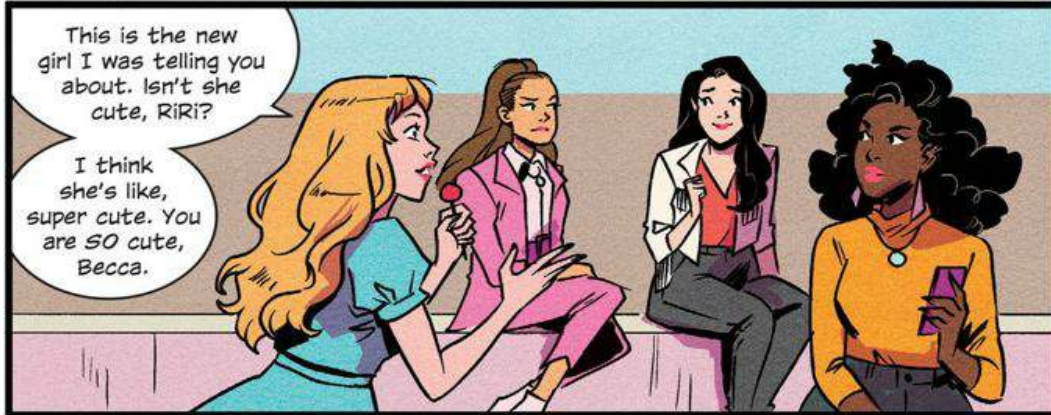
More than anything.

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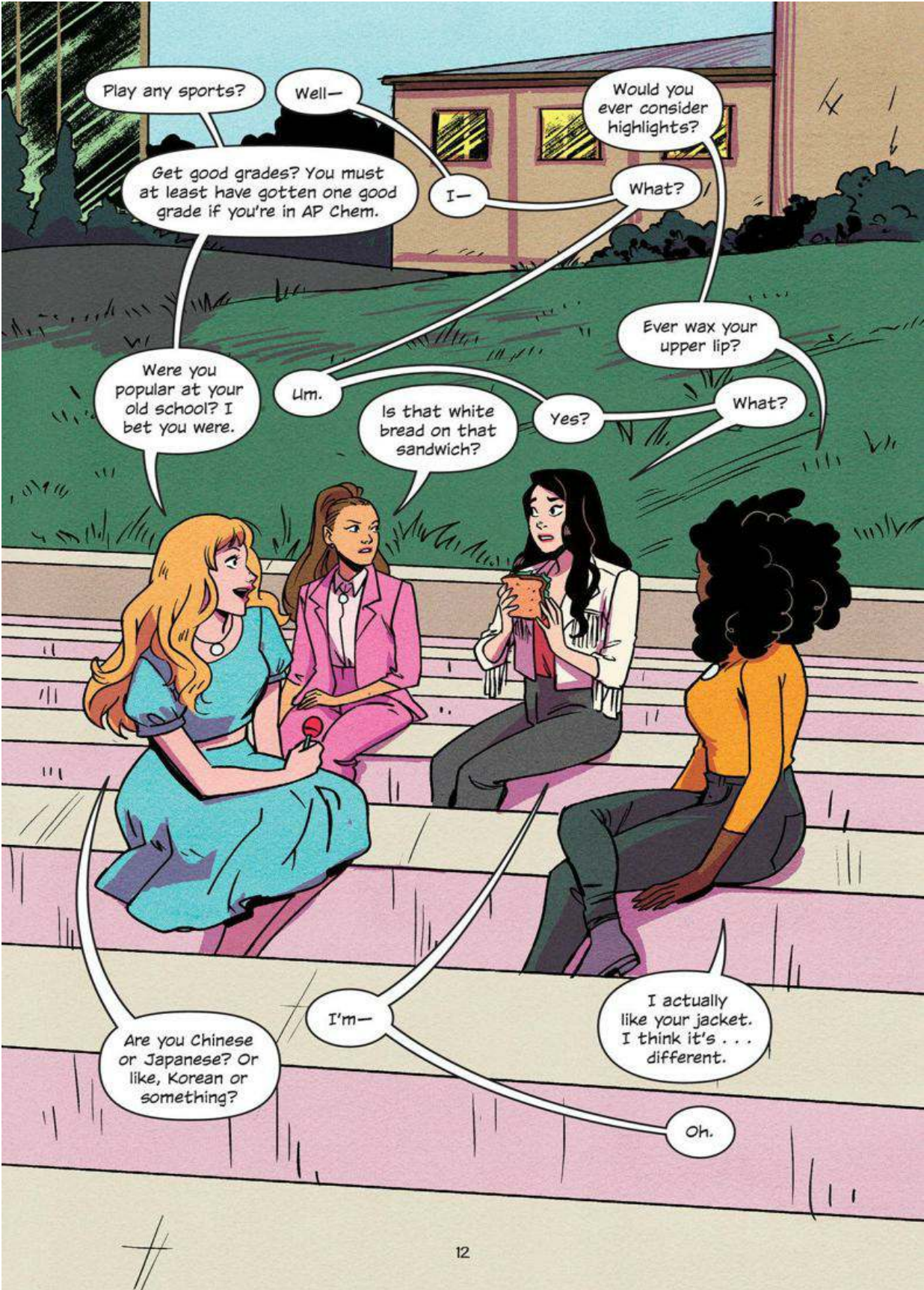


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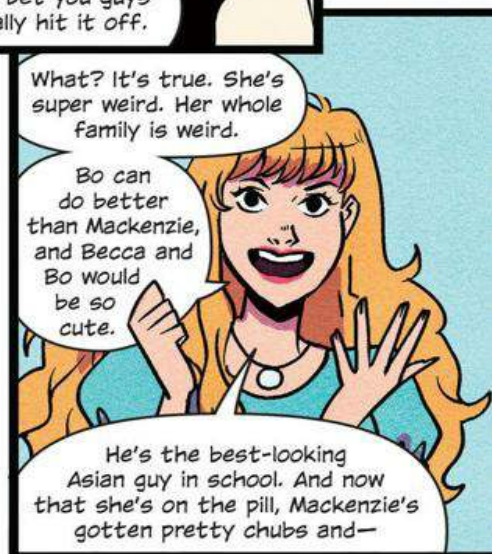
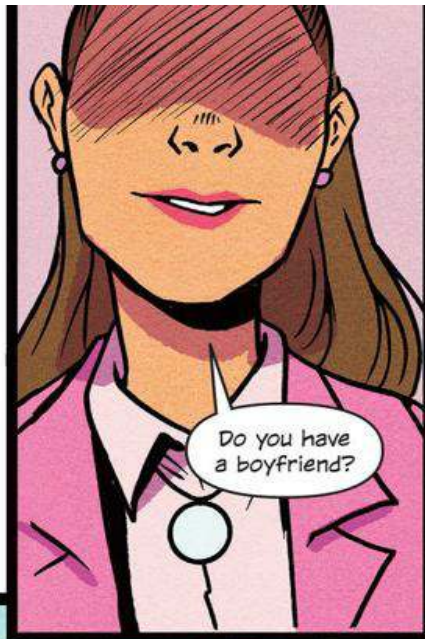


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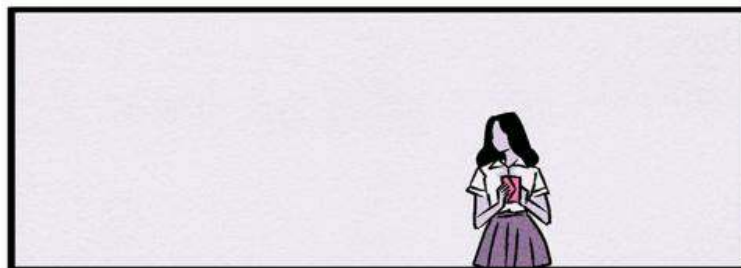


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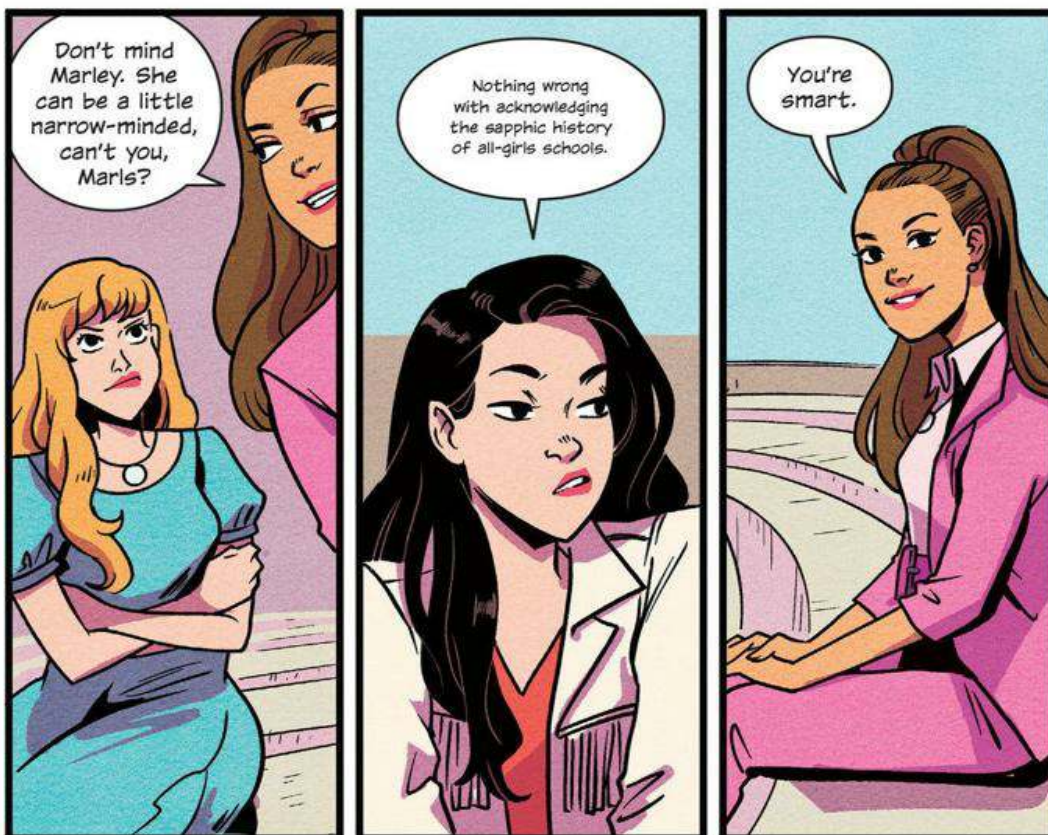




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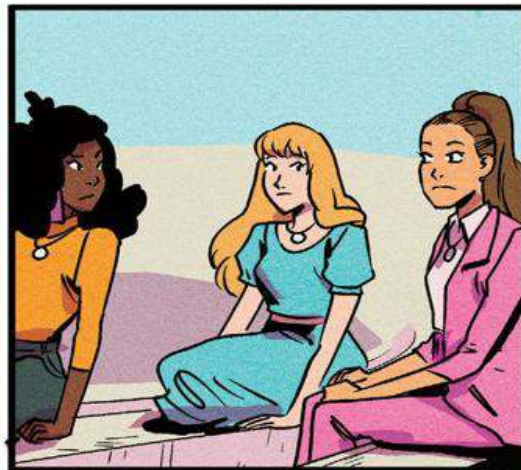
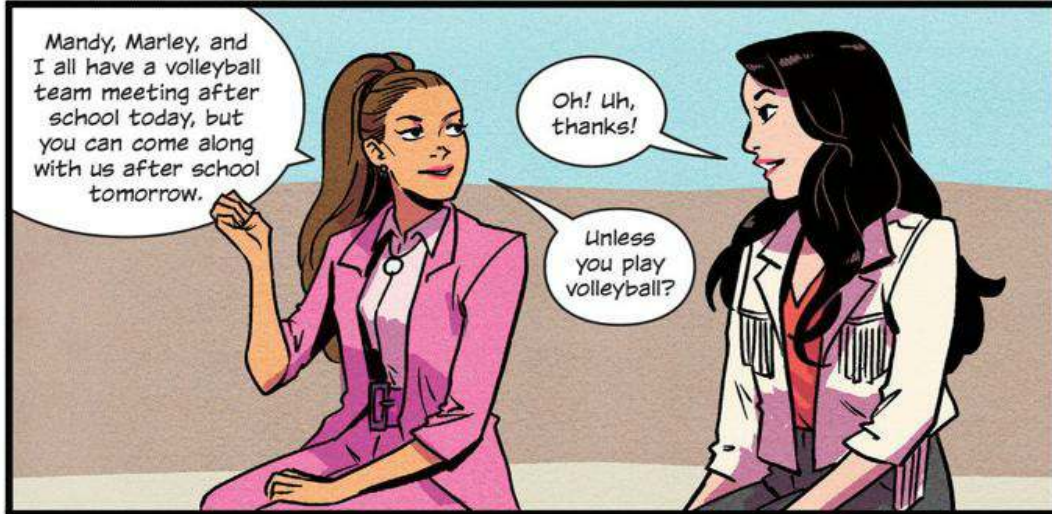


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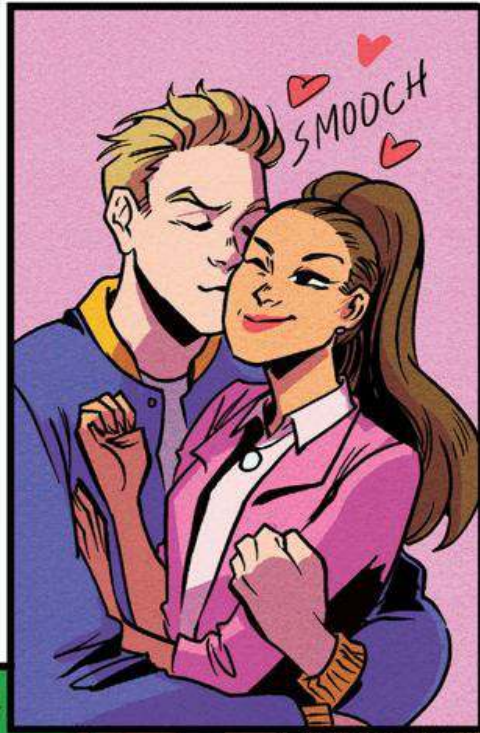
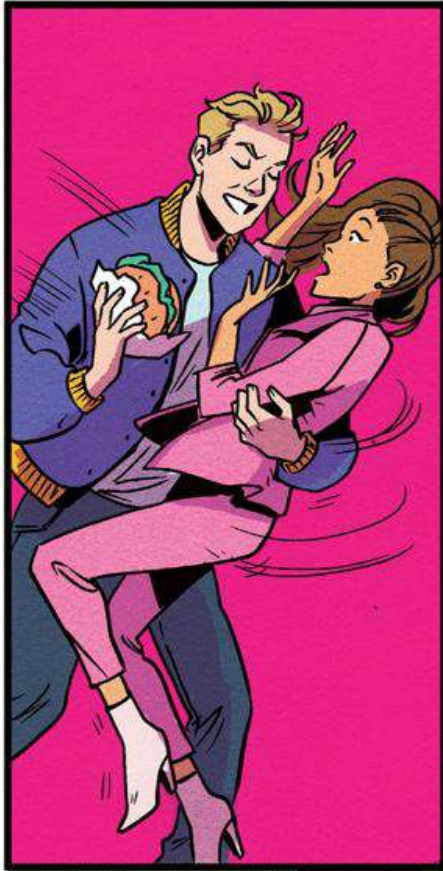


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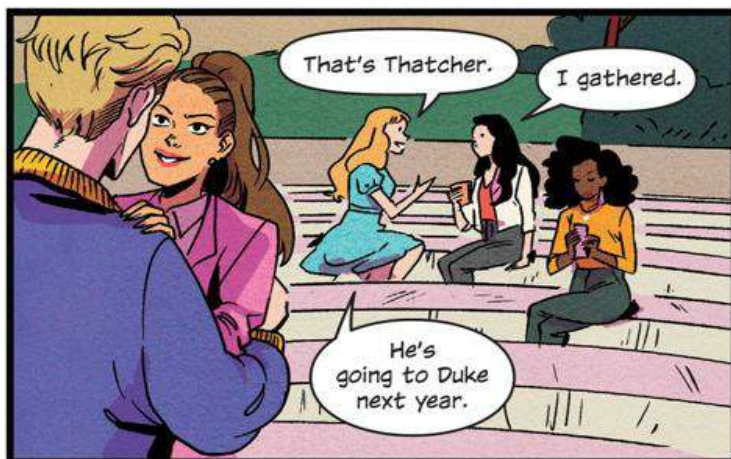


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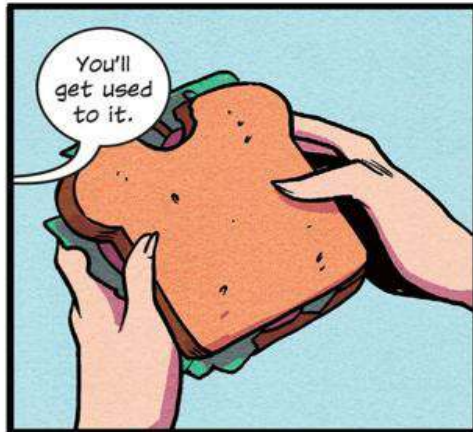




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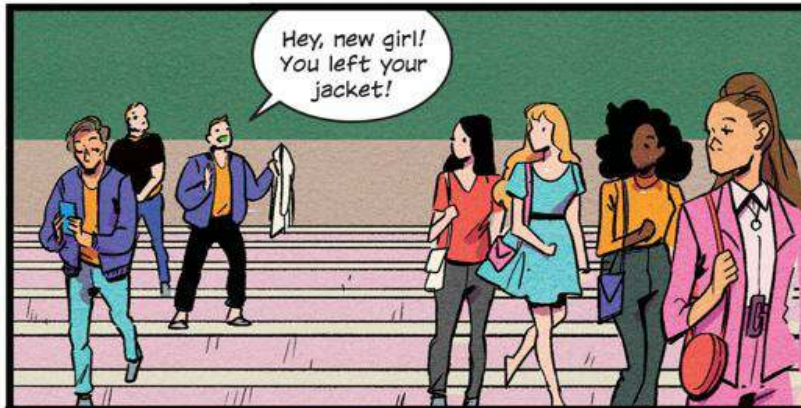


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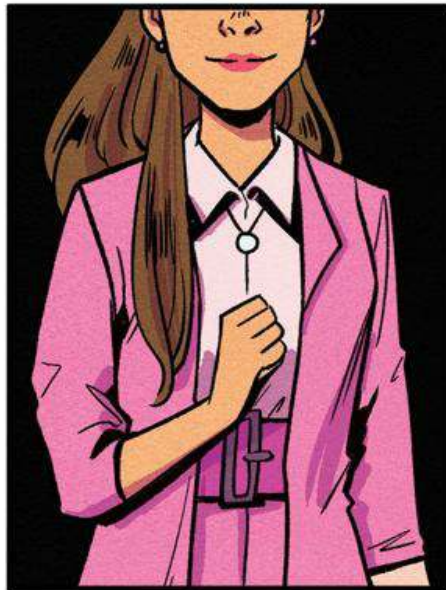




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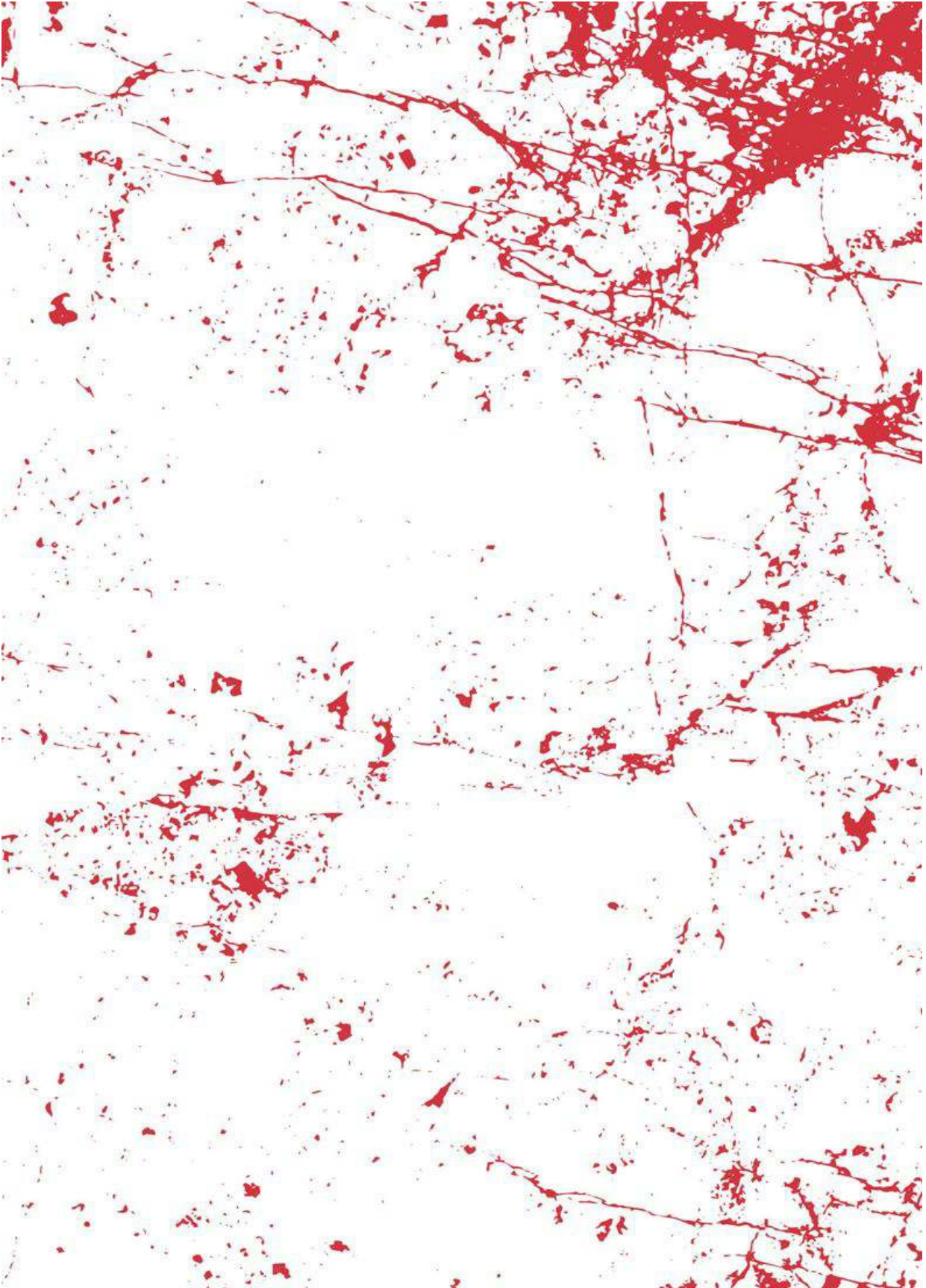


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## CHAPTER TWO

# SQUAD GOALS

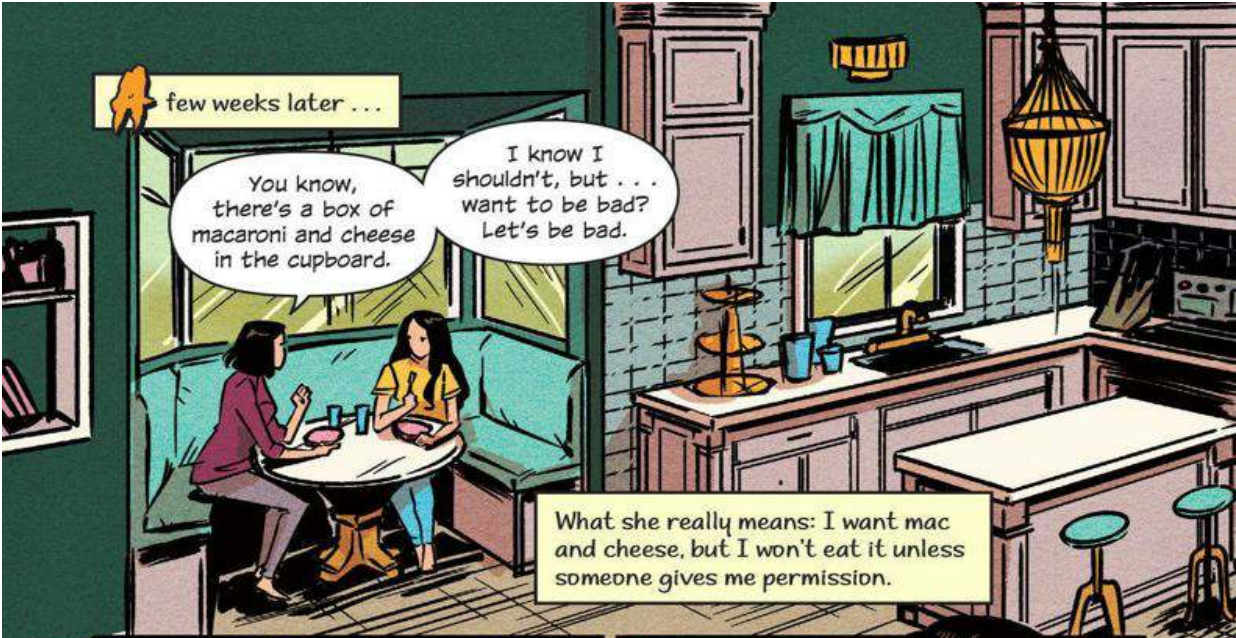


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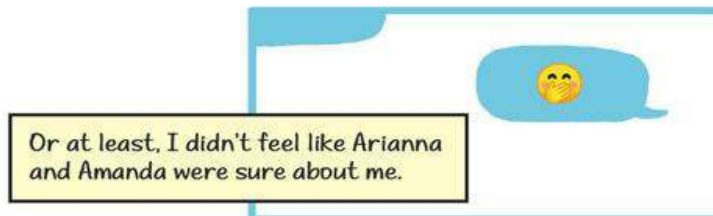
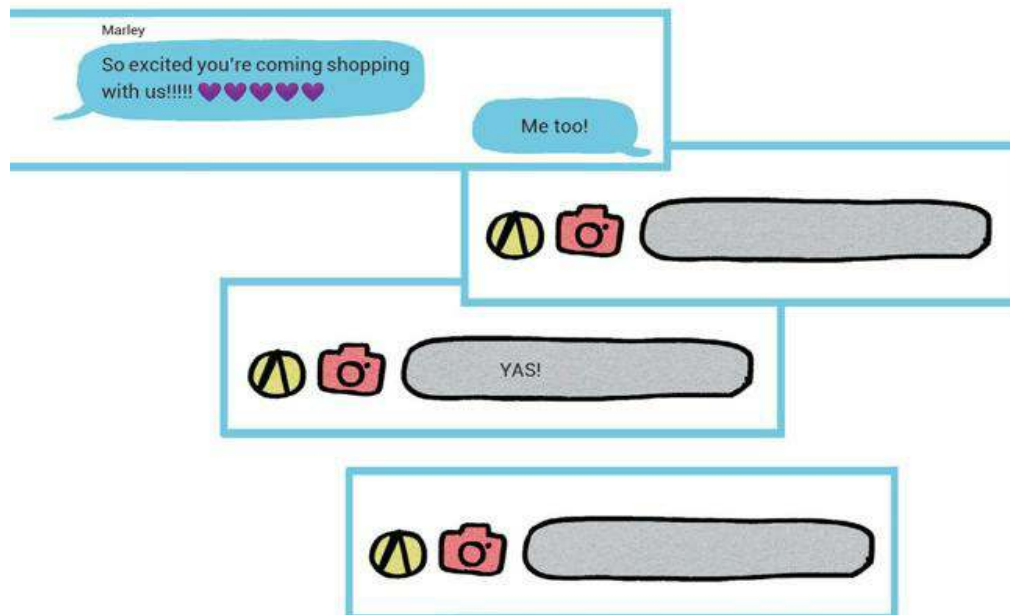
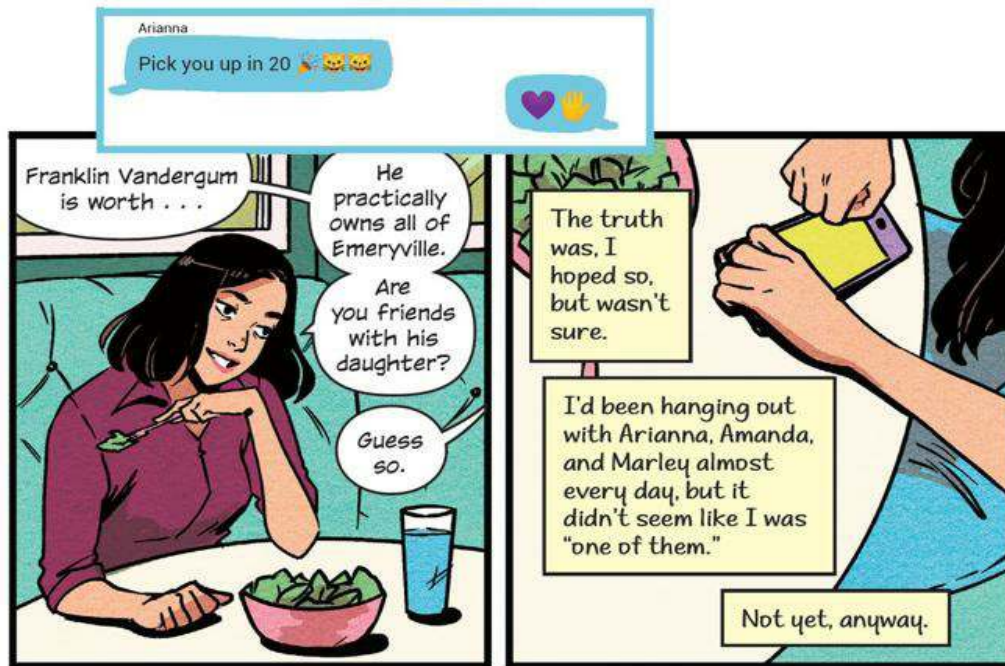


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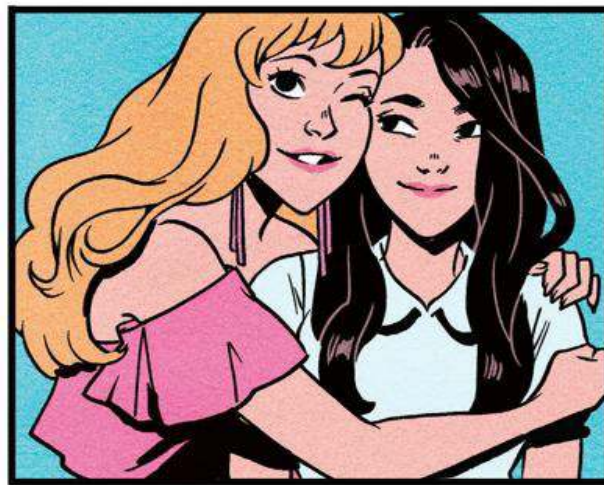
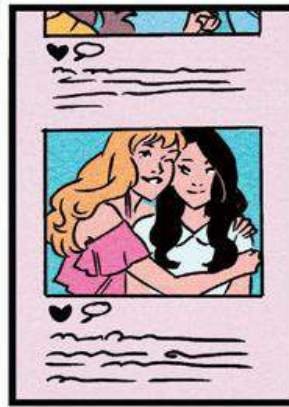


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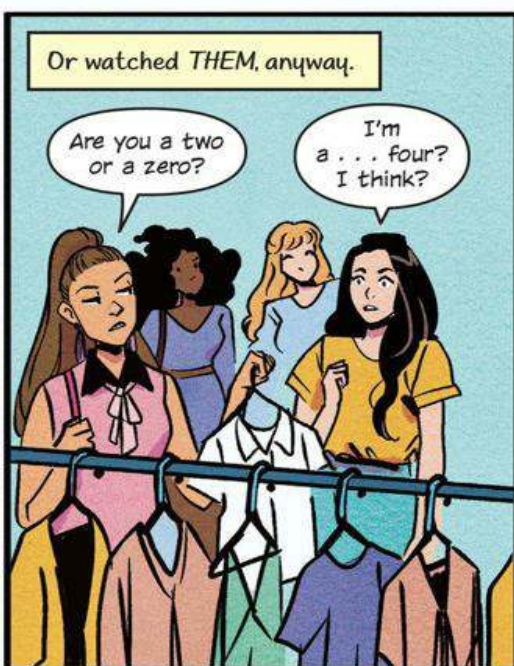


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Take this.



Oh my god, this is so effing heavy, how did she carry-

Here, give me some of that.



You're way too pretty to be dressing like a Santa Monica basic.

Oh.

With secret rules I'd only catch hints about.



She doesn't mean it like that. She just means there's like, a way we dress here.

We?



You know. The squad.



WINK!

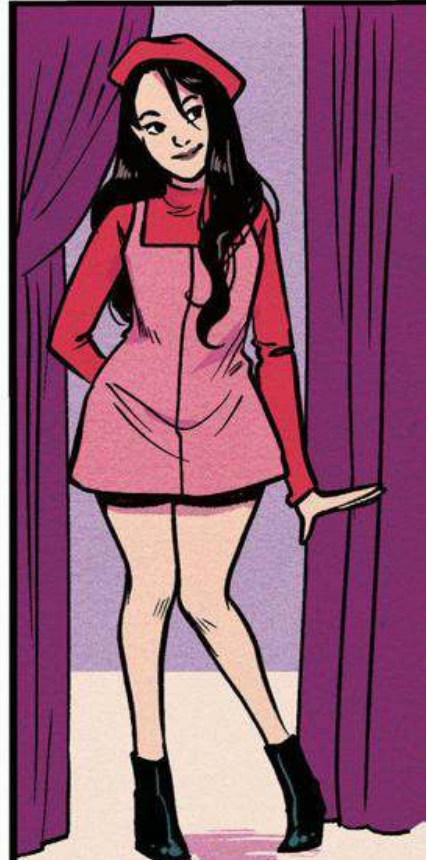


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Like, do as Arianna says, but not as Arianna does.

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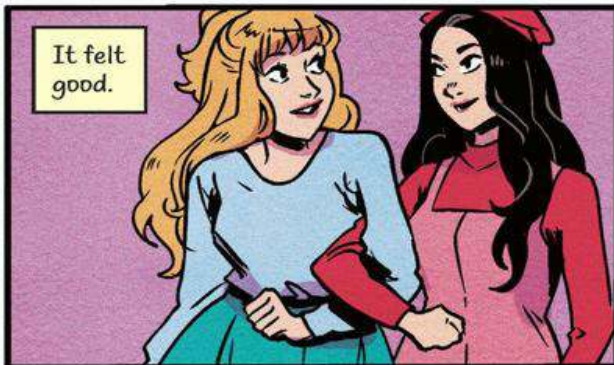


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I had never even *BEEN* to a party at my old school.

Heidi canNOT hold her booze.

I mean, like, not any that had drinking.

Should we go—

→Sigh← Probably.

Yeah, make sure she doesn't barf on a grave.

And keep her away from Kevin. He's a creep.

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That's fuckin' gnarly.

Are you okay?

Yeah! Yeah, totally.

I'm fine.



Oh my gosh, Becca!

You.

Are.

**BLEEDING!**

Here!



Let me—

I got her, Heidi, we're fine.



Thank you, though, you're *SO* sweet but also like, *SO* wasted? So.

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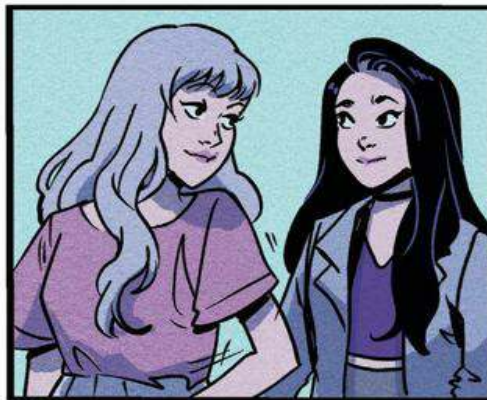
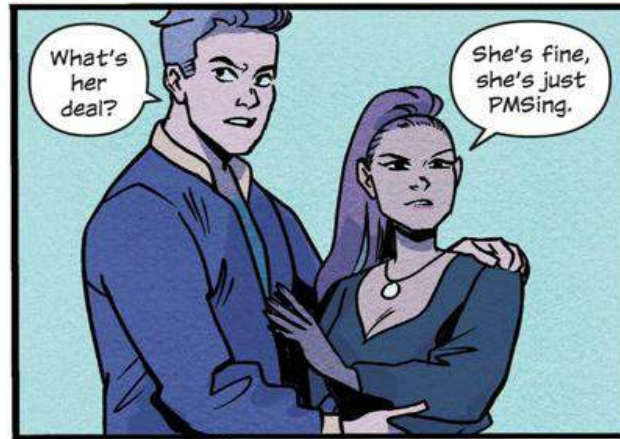




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This year's  
Homecoming  
King is . . .



no  
surprise,  
Thatcher  
Lang!



WOOOO!  
**YEAH!**  
AWOO!



**CLAP! CLAP! CLAP! CLAP! CLAP! CLAP! CLAP!**

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YAAAAAAY!



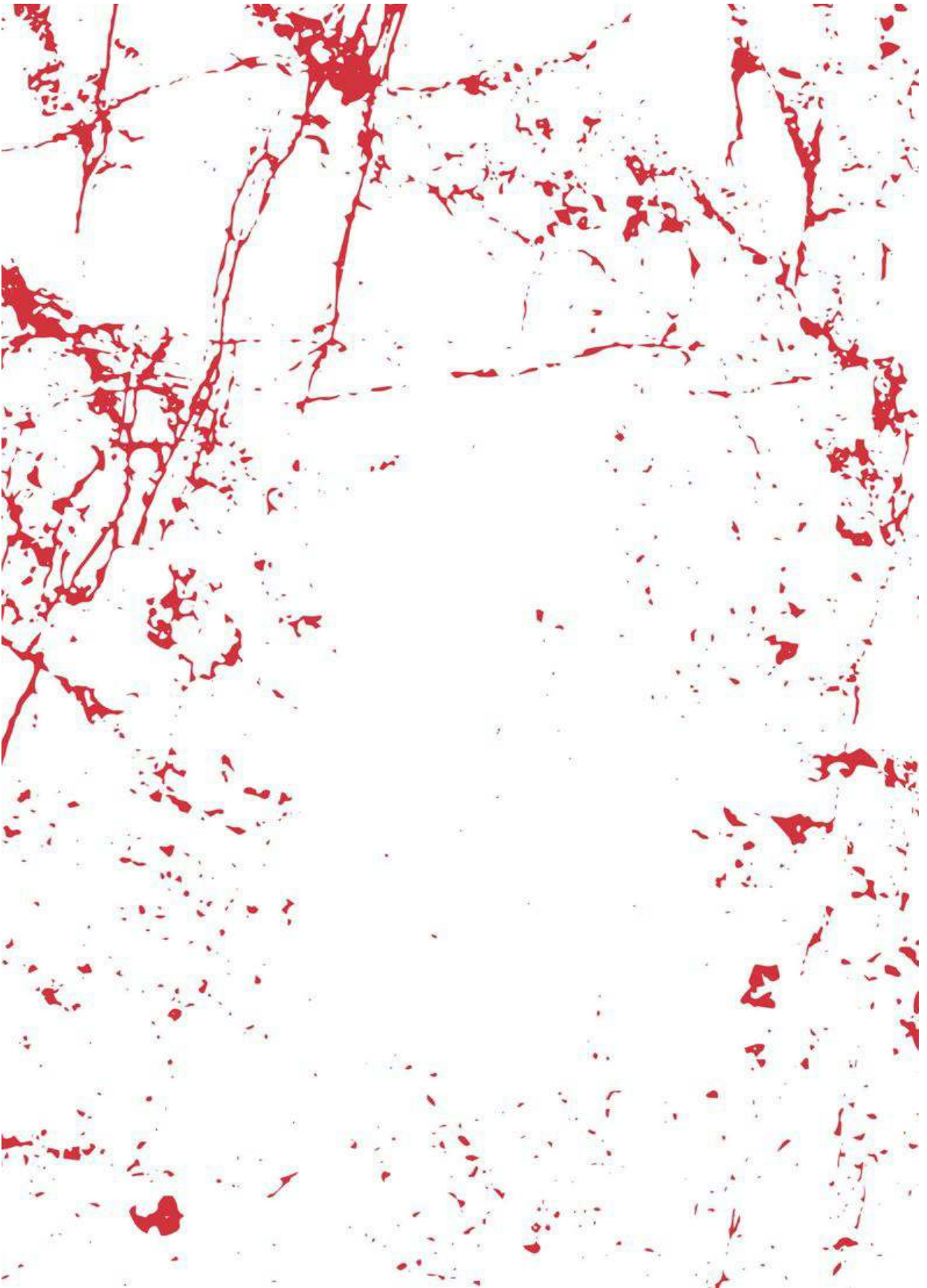
Nothing mattered.  
Except for them.

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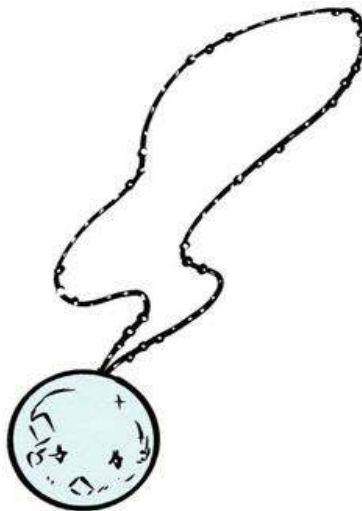
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## CHAPTER THREE

# SCREAM BLOODY MURDER

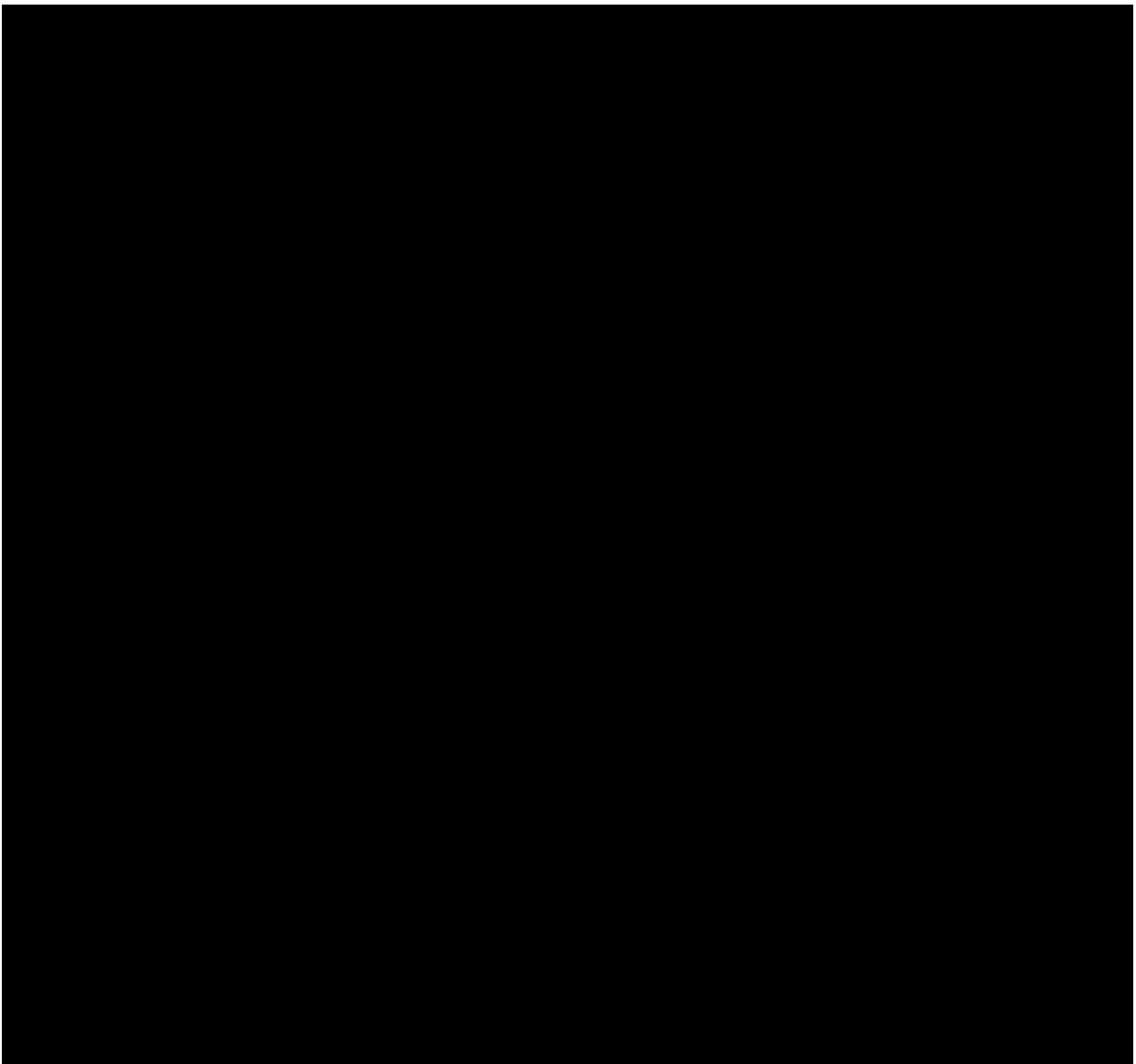


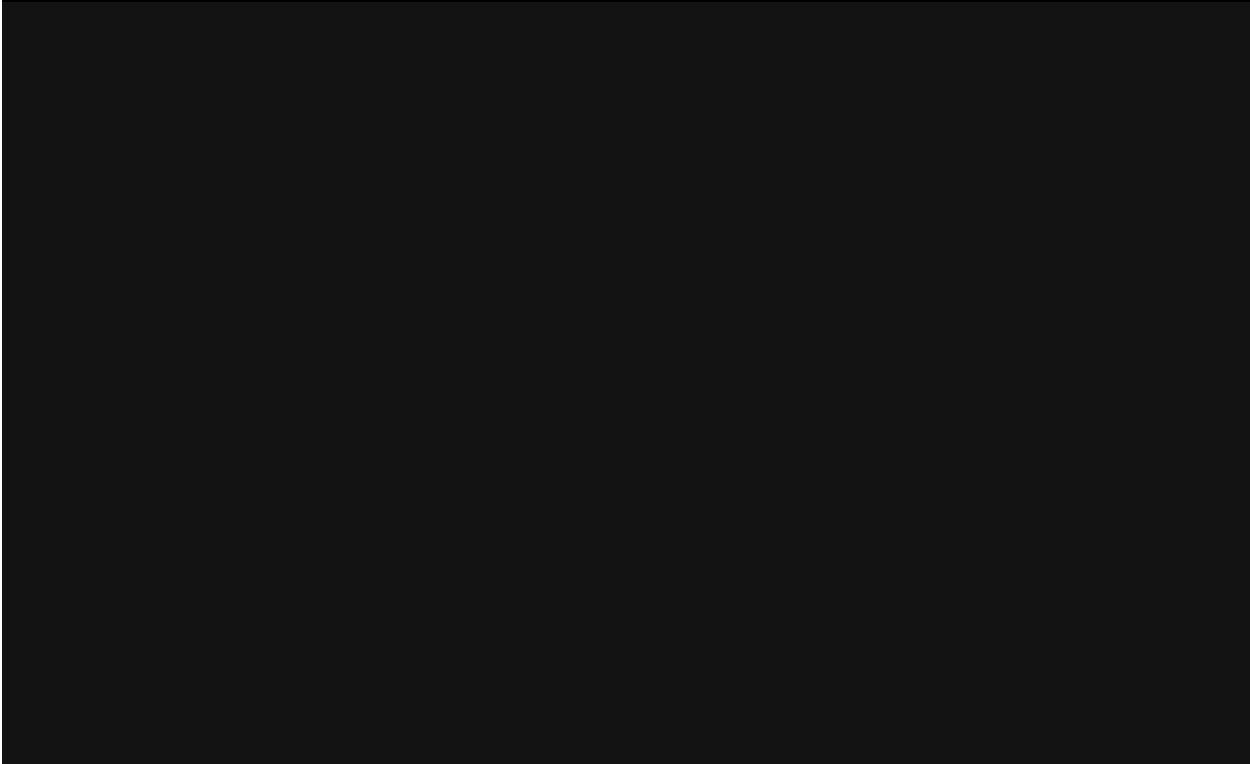
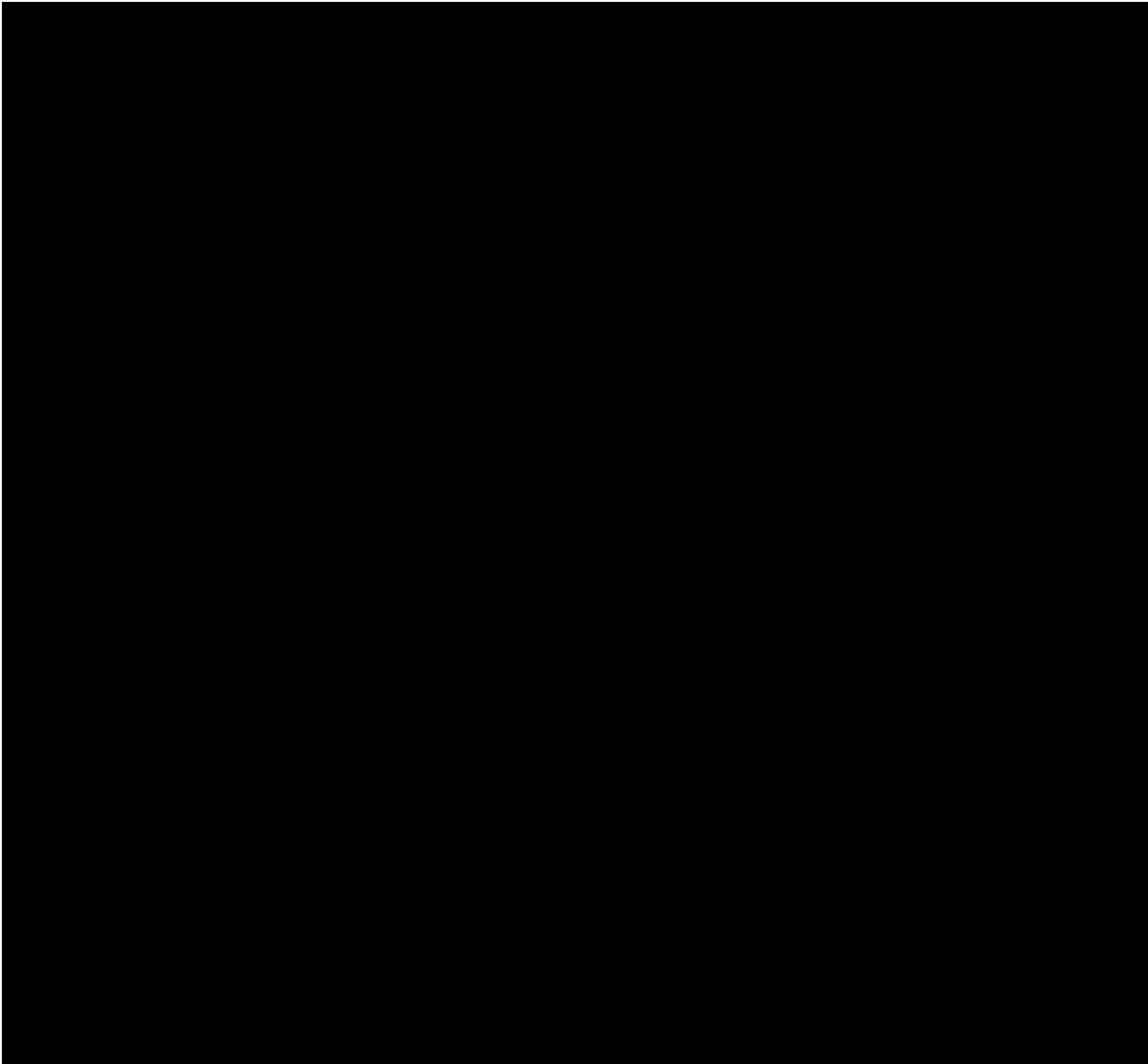


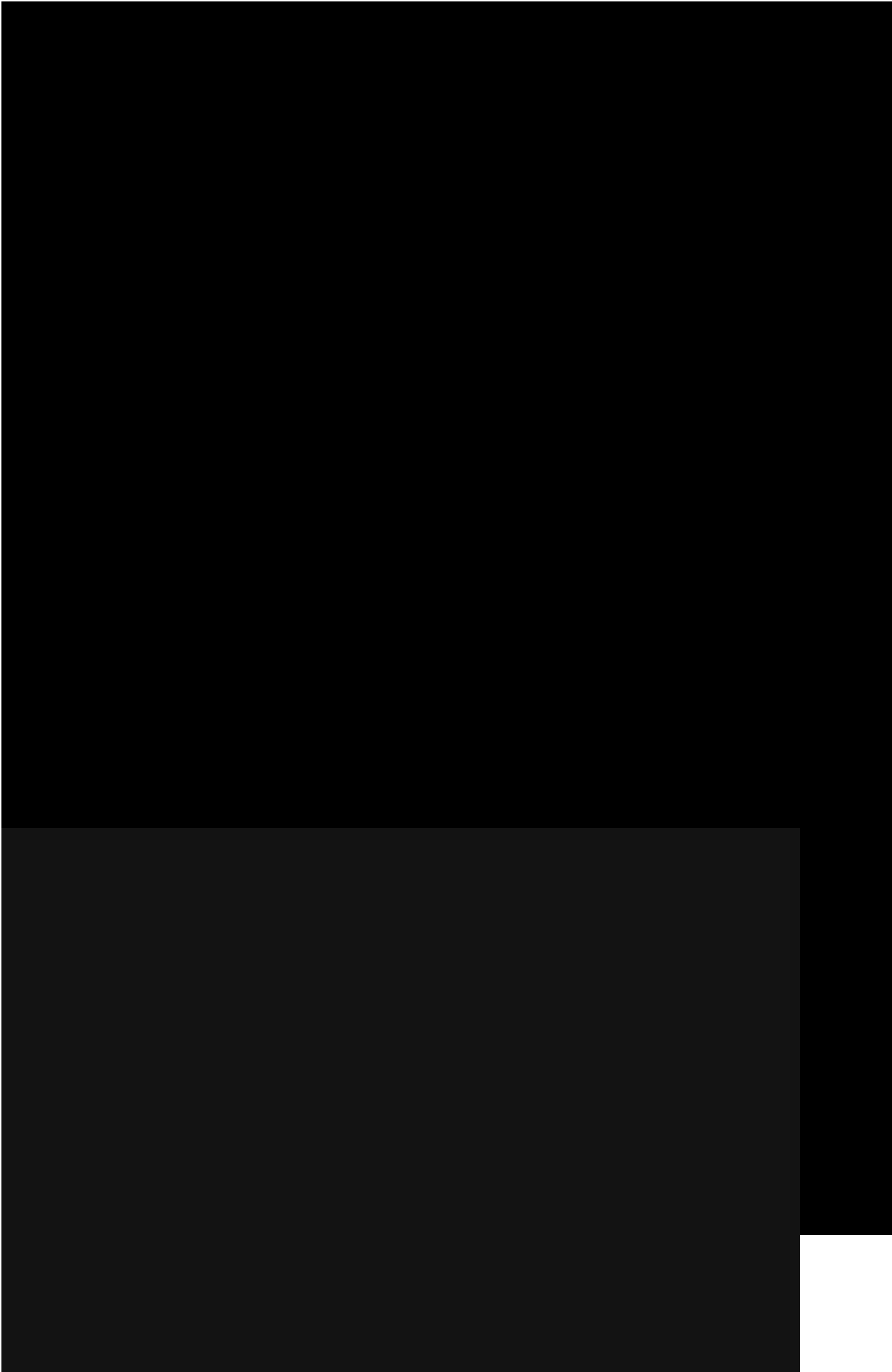
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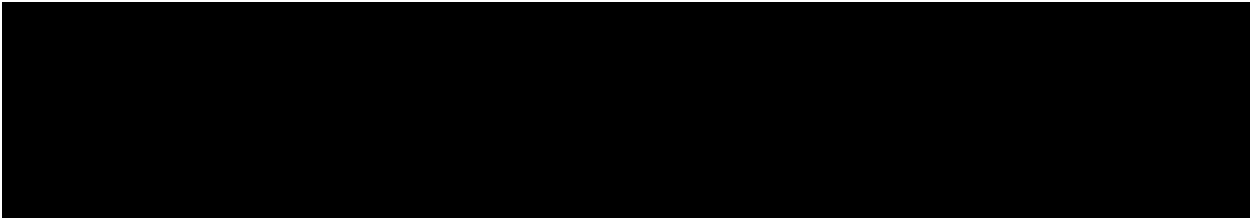














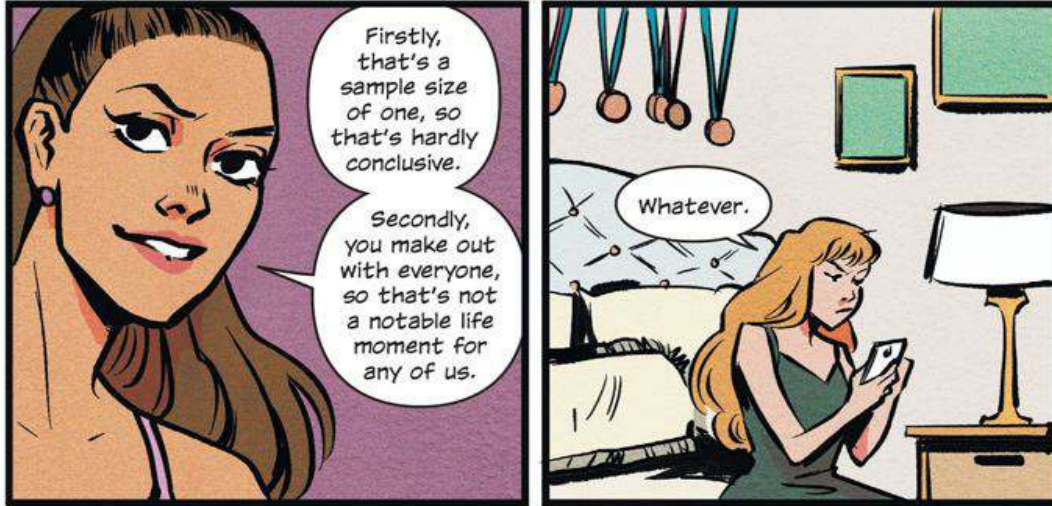




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FINALLY!

I GET THE  
LIVER THIS  
TIME!



What.

The.

Fuck.

We were  
hungry.



And now  
we're not.

I...

I don't  
understand-

GRRRRRRRR



Here's  
the deal:  
We were  
all given a  
choice.

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We could be normal. Or?



We could be powerful.

Ourselves, but better.

We're never cold.

We're never tired.



The thing is, there's a cost.

Every month at the full moon, we HAVE to eat.



A deer won't cut it.

Rats don't do shit for us.



It has to be human.



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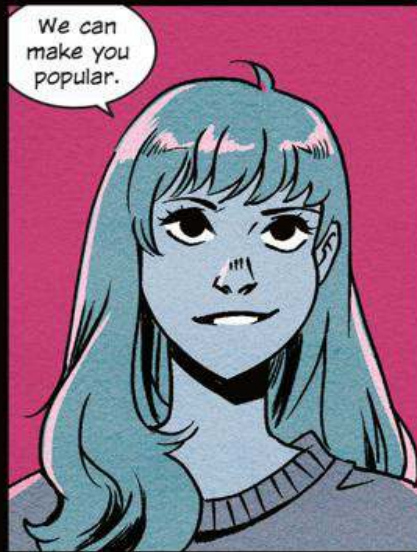


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You've seen what we are, now.

So either you walk away as one of us, or you stay here.

Forever.



With . . . Brad? Was it?



She means we'd have to kill you. Which like, no one wants to.

We want you to *WANT* to join us, but like, this isn't exactly the kind of offer we can float, you know?



It's fucking rad, Becca.  
Join us.

We want you.

This is when a normal person would have run away screaming.

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I didn't want to escape.

Okay.

That's my girl.

I didn't run.

Oh my god, YES! You mean it?

You'll be like this every month. You get that, right?

You get that this is a trade?

Being hungry isn't cute, it's a burden. It's dangerous.

You'll BE dangerous.

Jesus, she gets it, she's fucking smart!

Yeah, no. I get it.

I mean, yes.

Yes. I'm in.

I didn't scream.

Let's just do this!

What happens now?

I didn't think about the people I'd kill.

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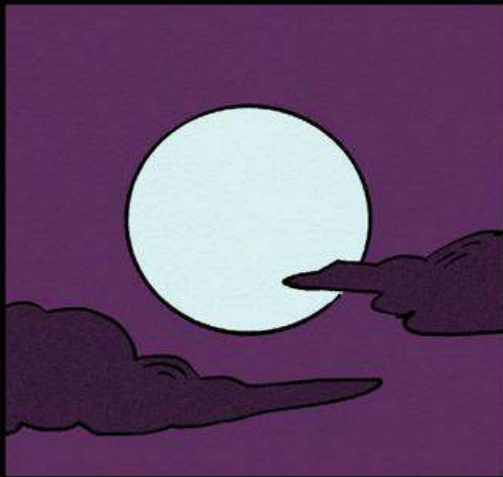




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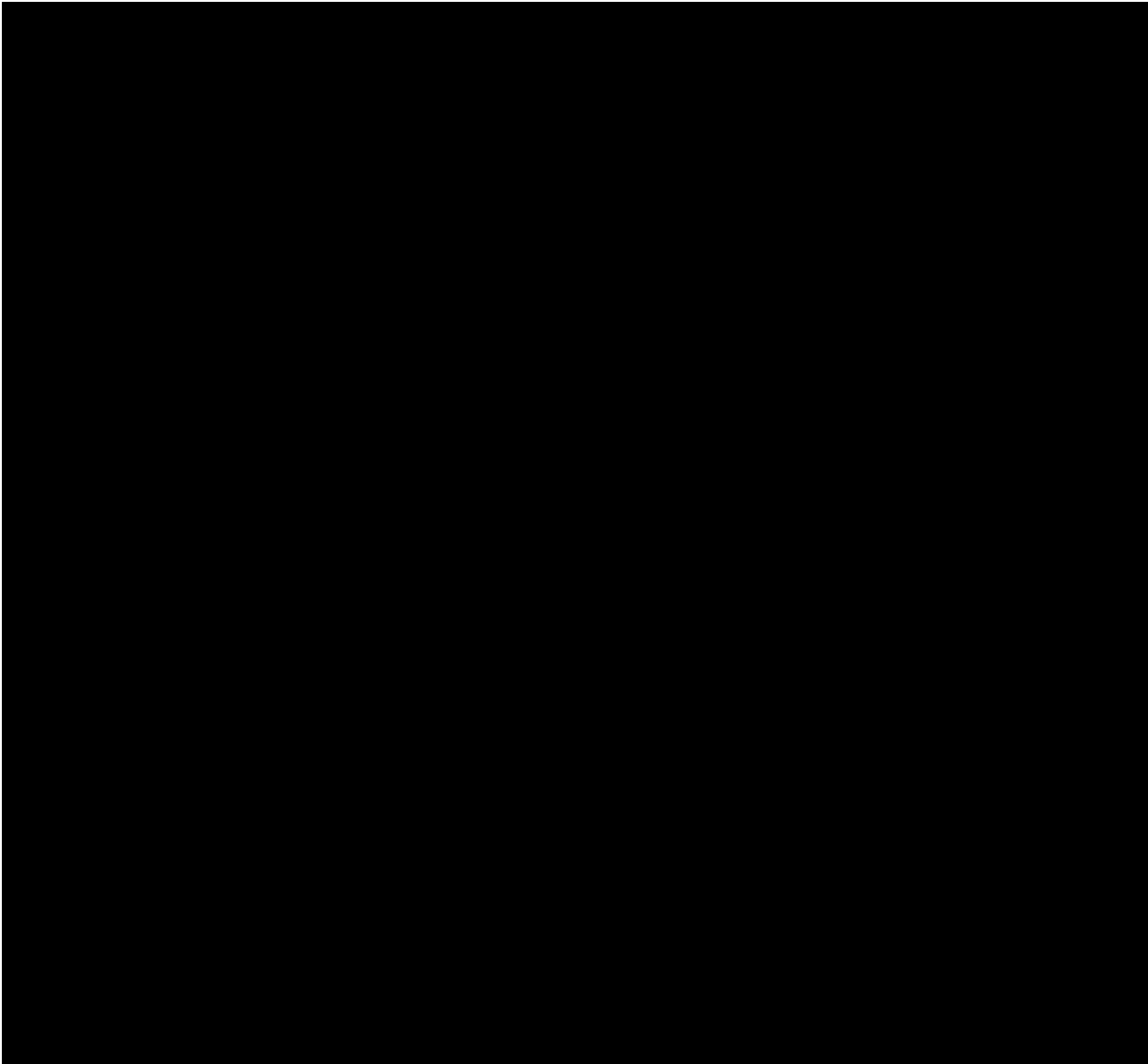
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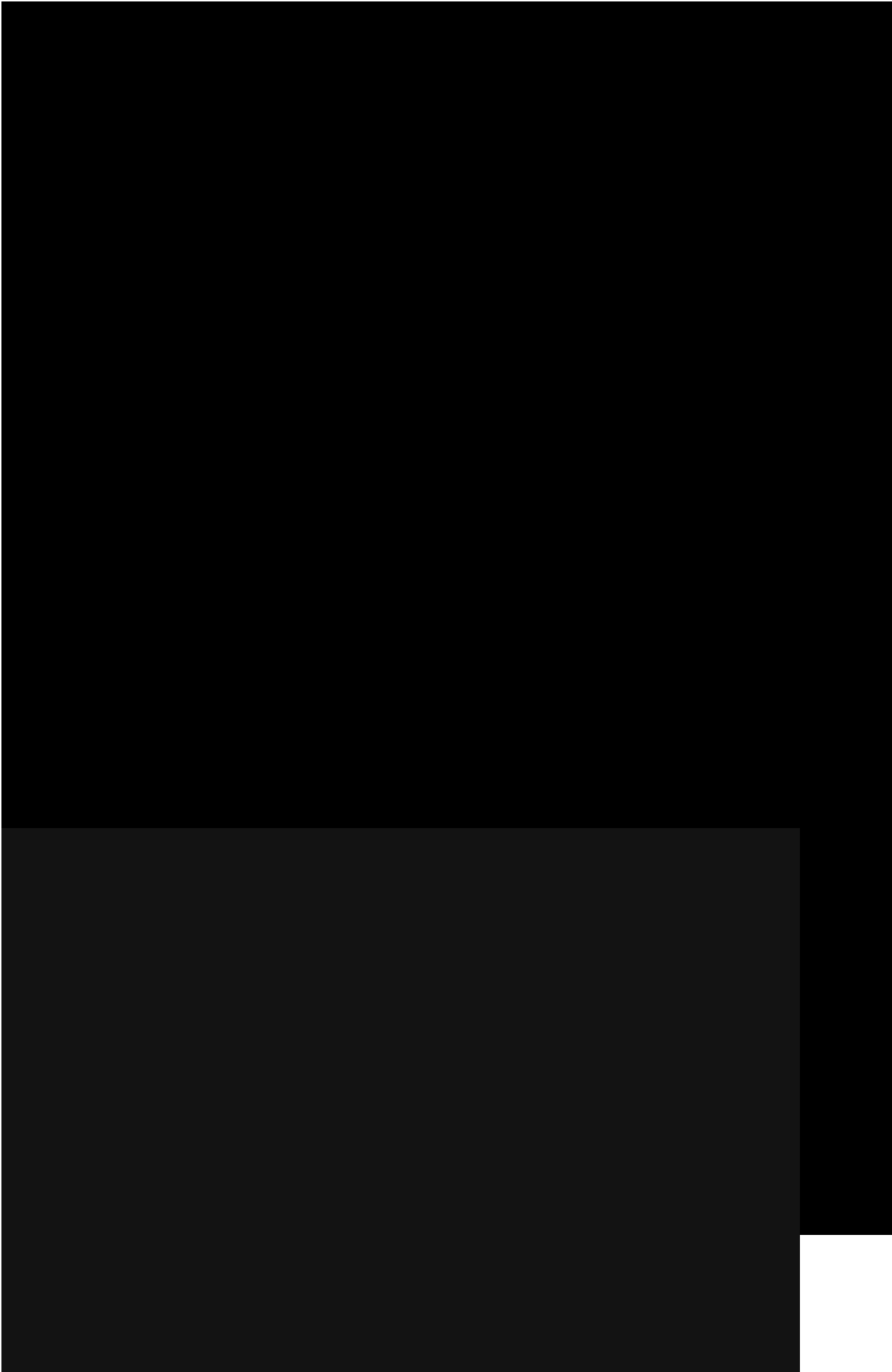


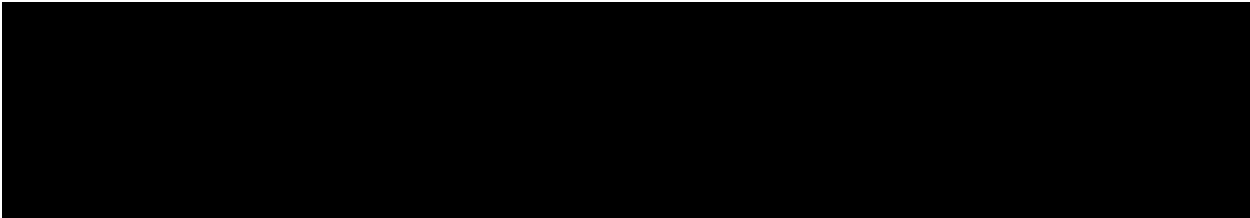


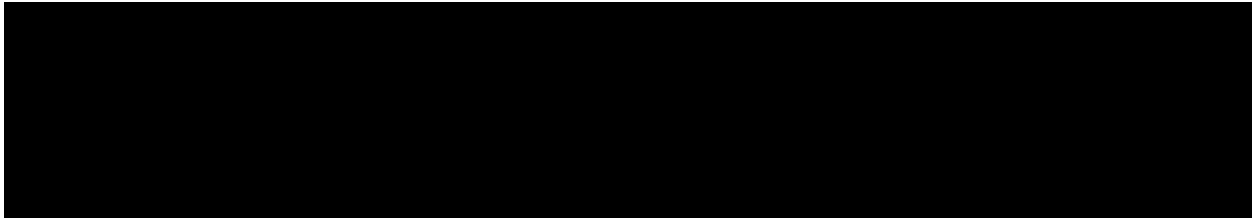




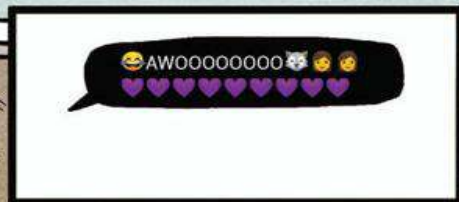
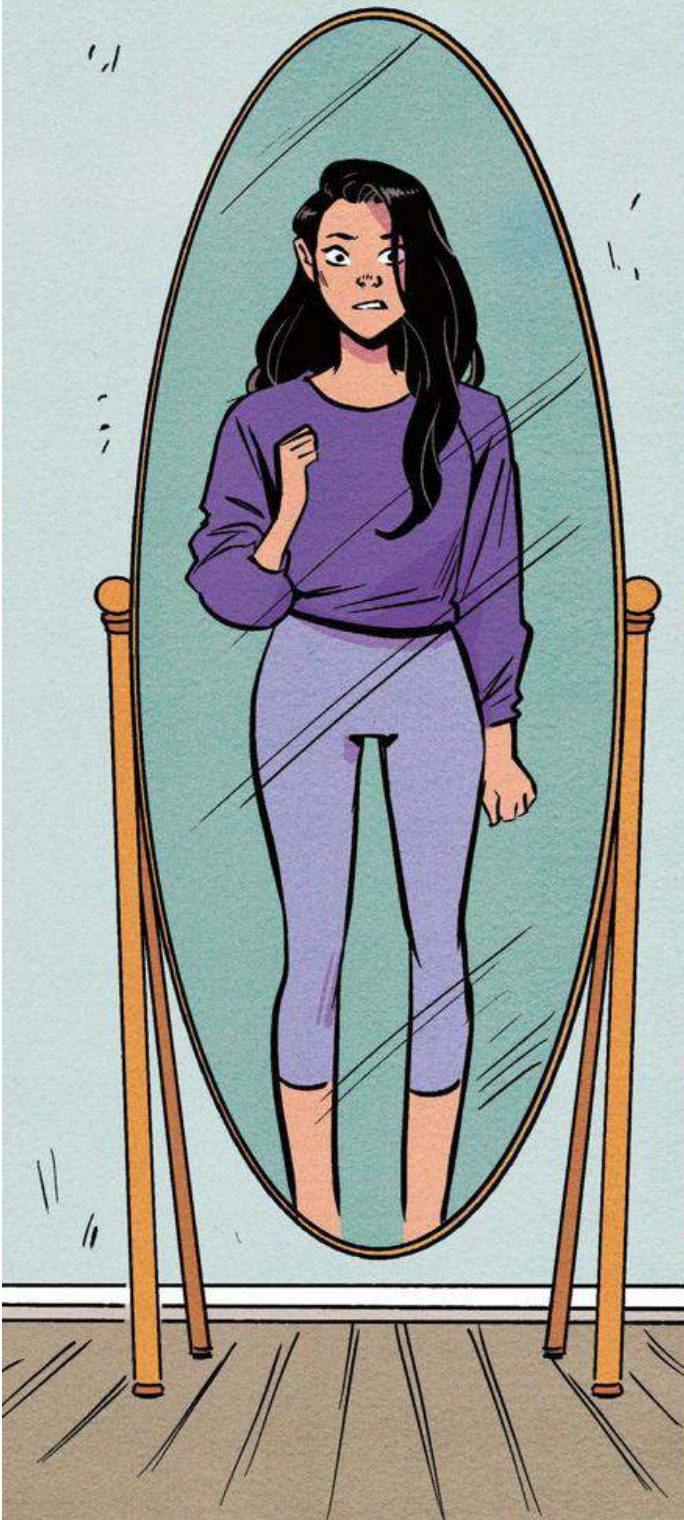








I mean. I WAS a stranger.

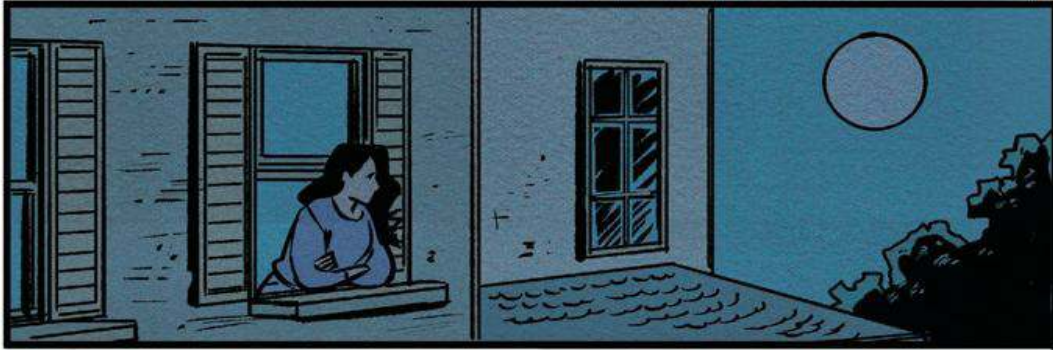




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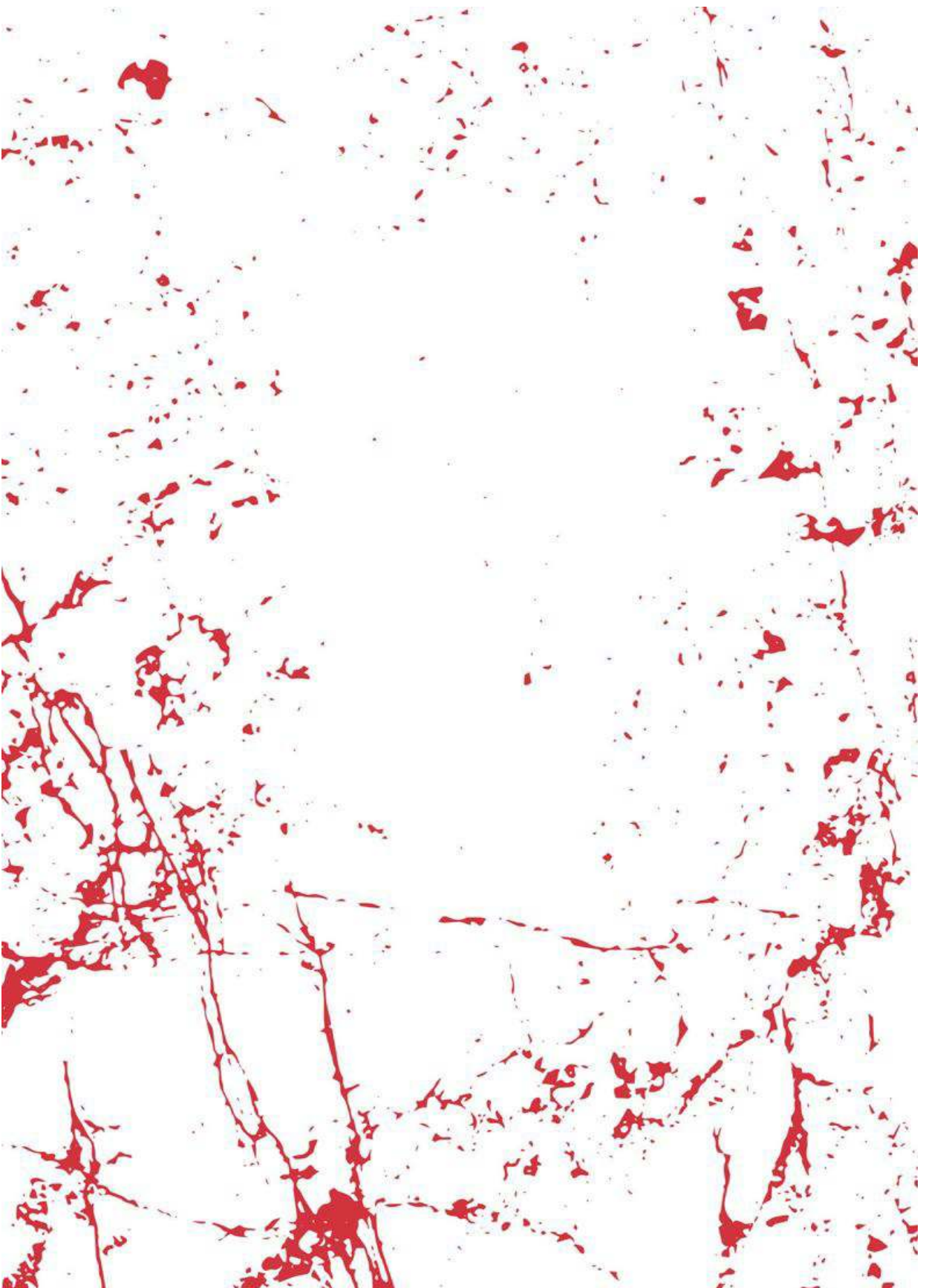
I was all new.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

# PARTY



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**H**ave you ever gotten on the same cycle as a group of friends?

Let's  
get out of  
here.

**NOVEMBER**



People make jokes.  
Like, what about the  
plumbing or whatever.

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**DECEMBER**

None of the girls at my school get me, you know? I'm like, the king of the friend zone.

That's SO unfair.

I know, right? Right?

I have spent SO much time listening to Amber vent, just blah blah blah ALL THE TIME.

Ugh. Girls, right?

You seem like such a nice guy.

You're not like them.

Oh god, are you friend zoning me too?

I fucking knew it. I KNEW it!

Every ti—

I'd never.

Just . . . let's get a little privacy.

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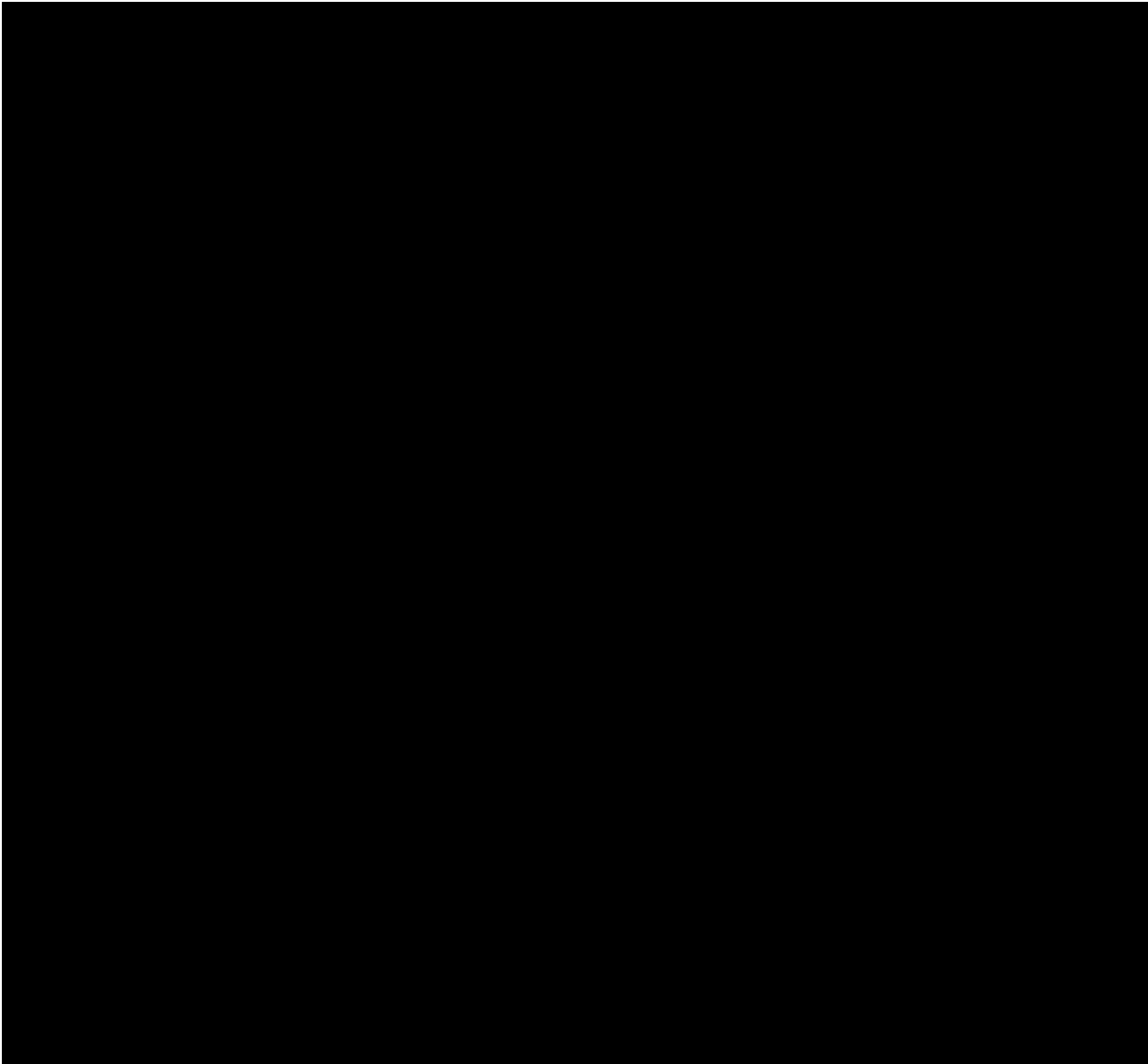
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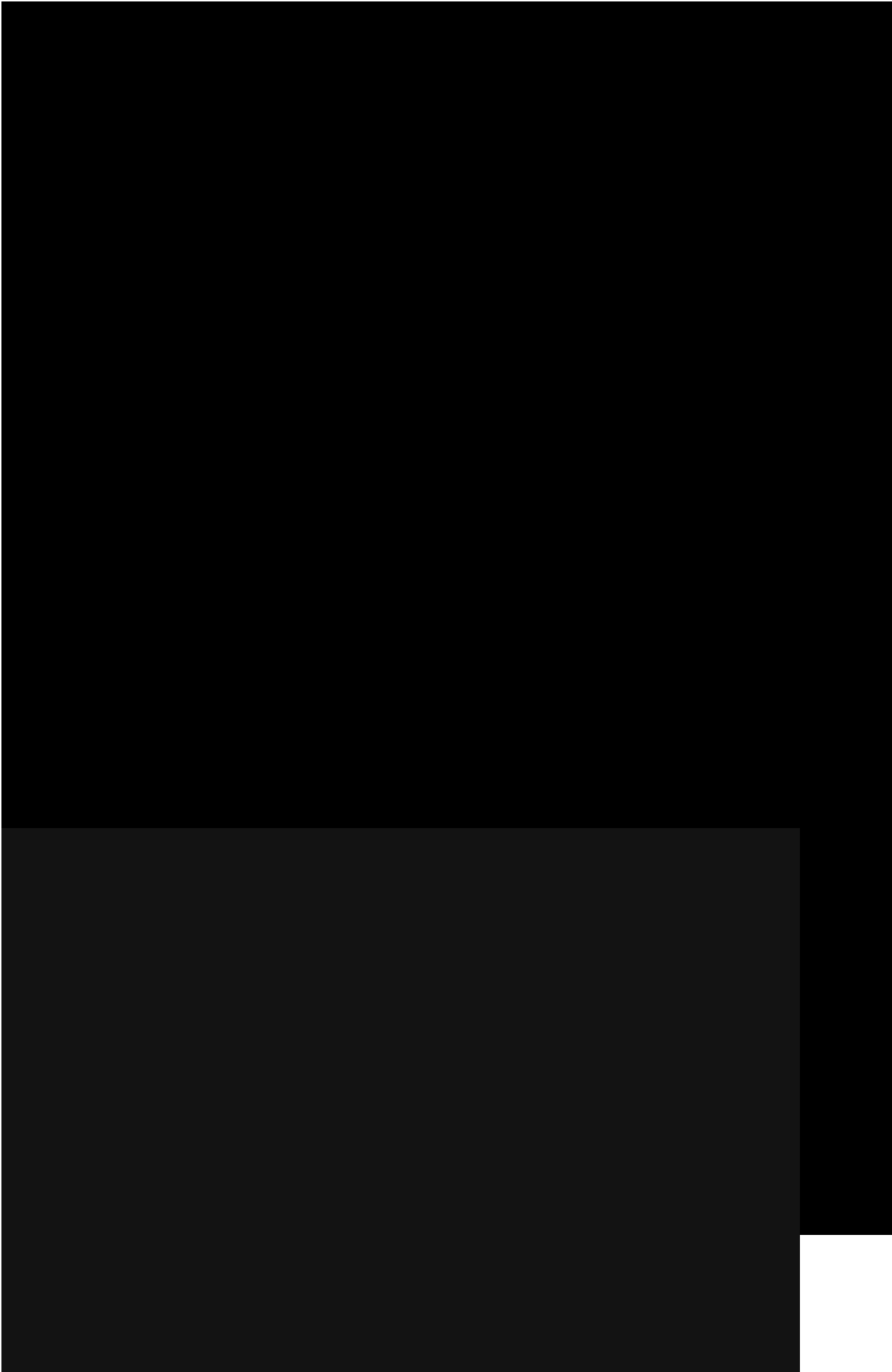


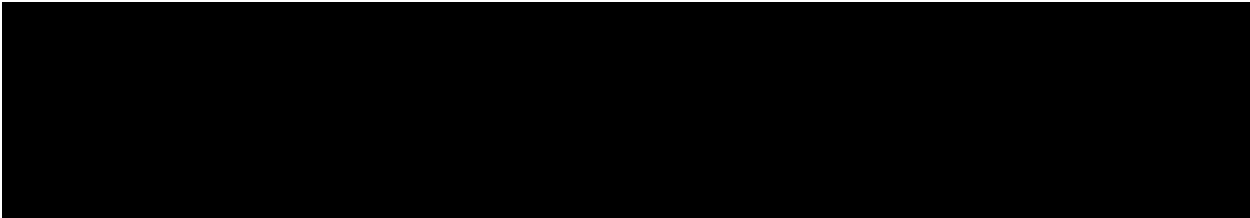


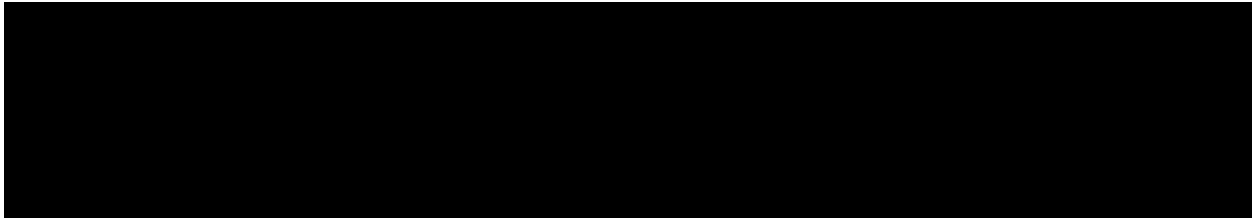




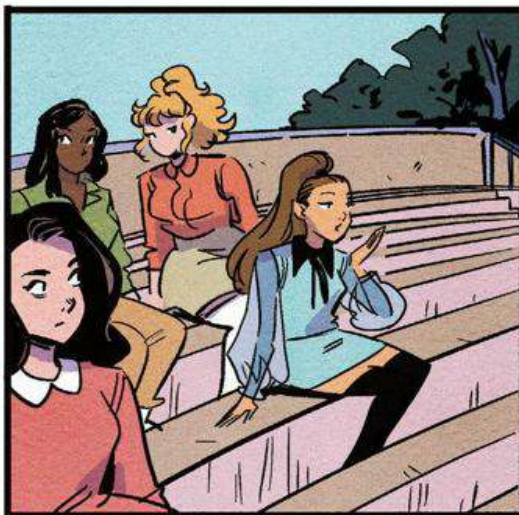
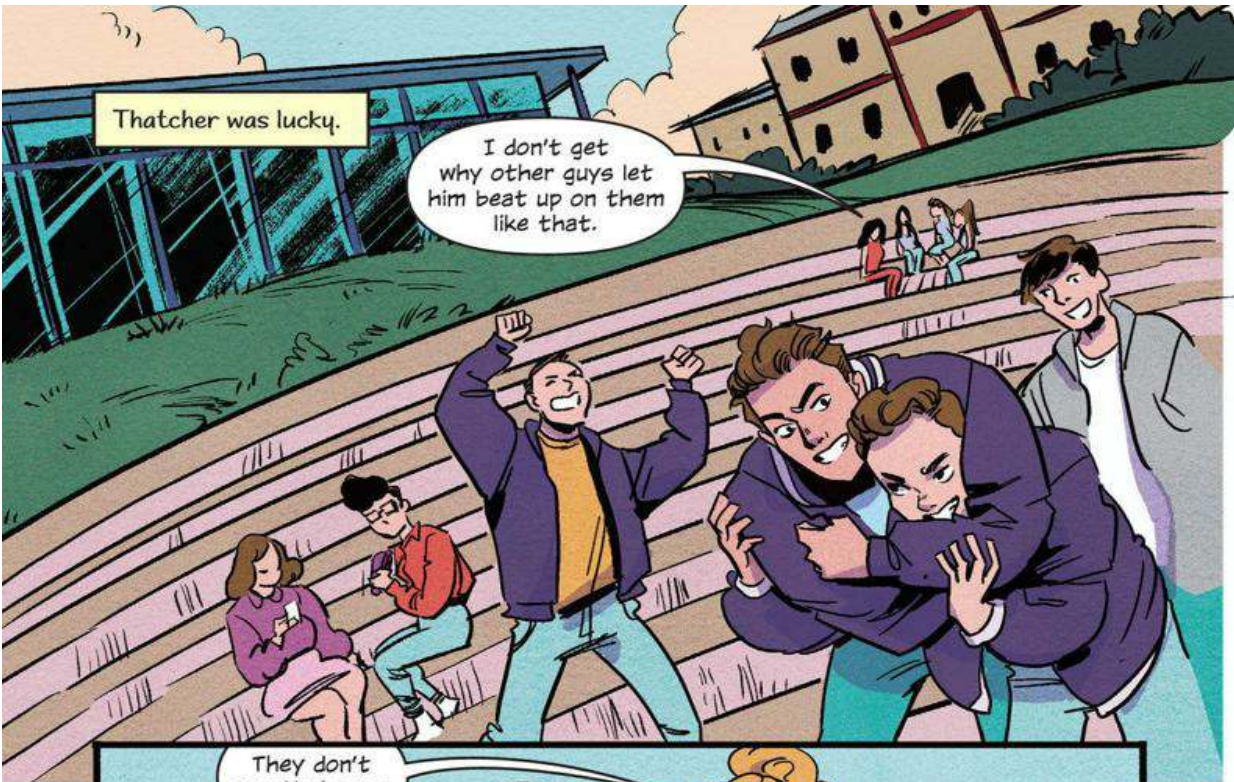












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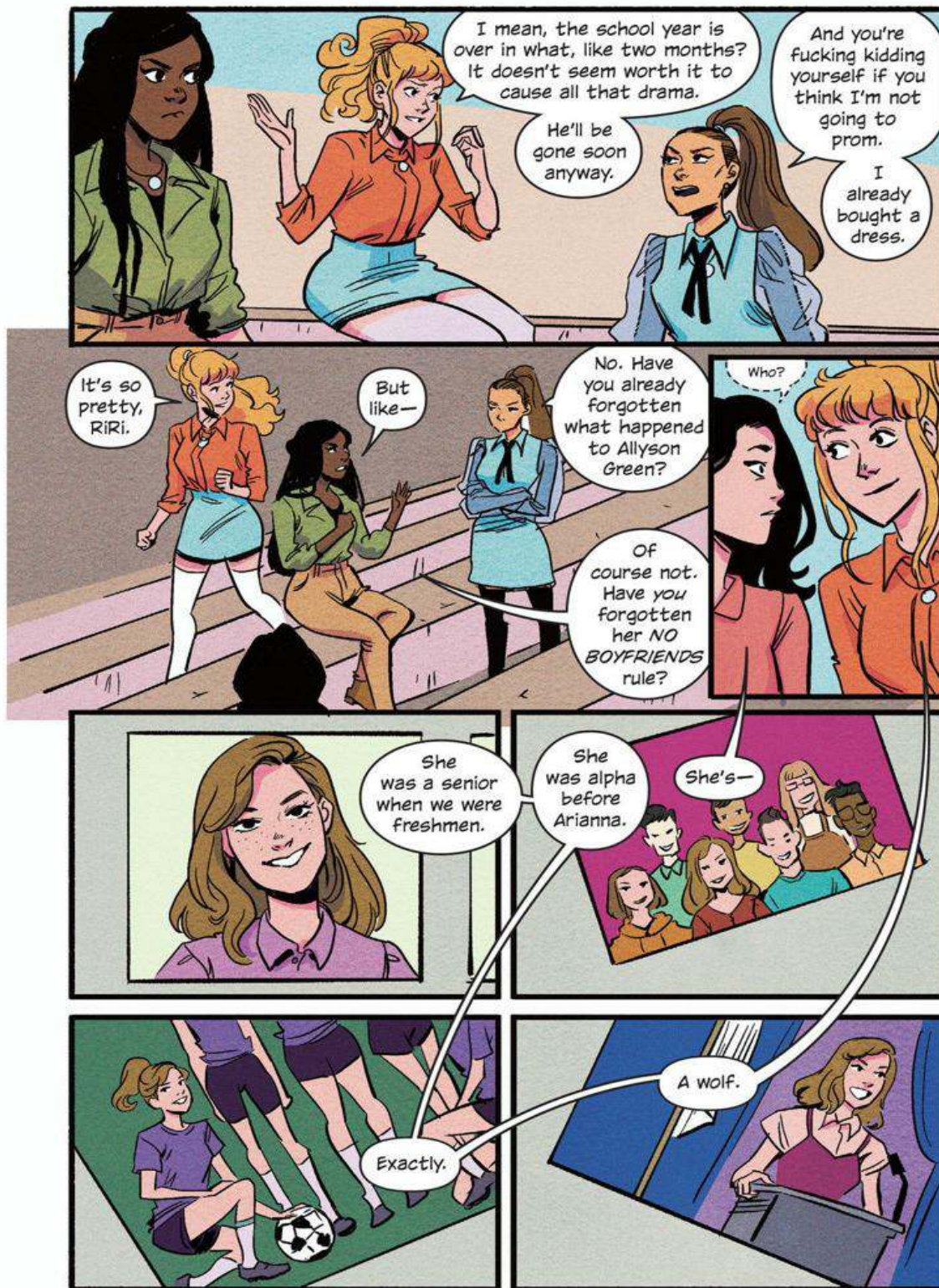


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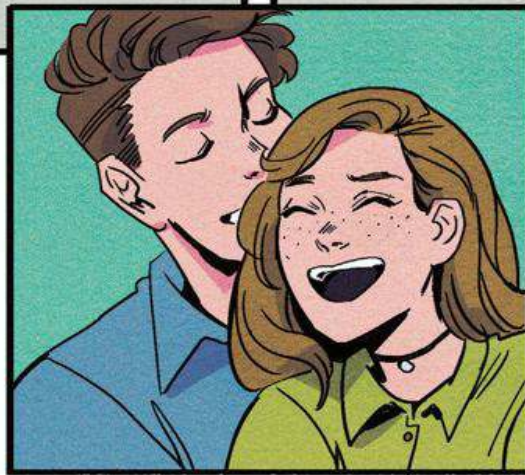




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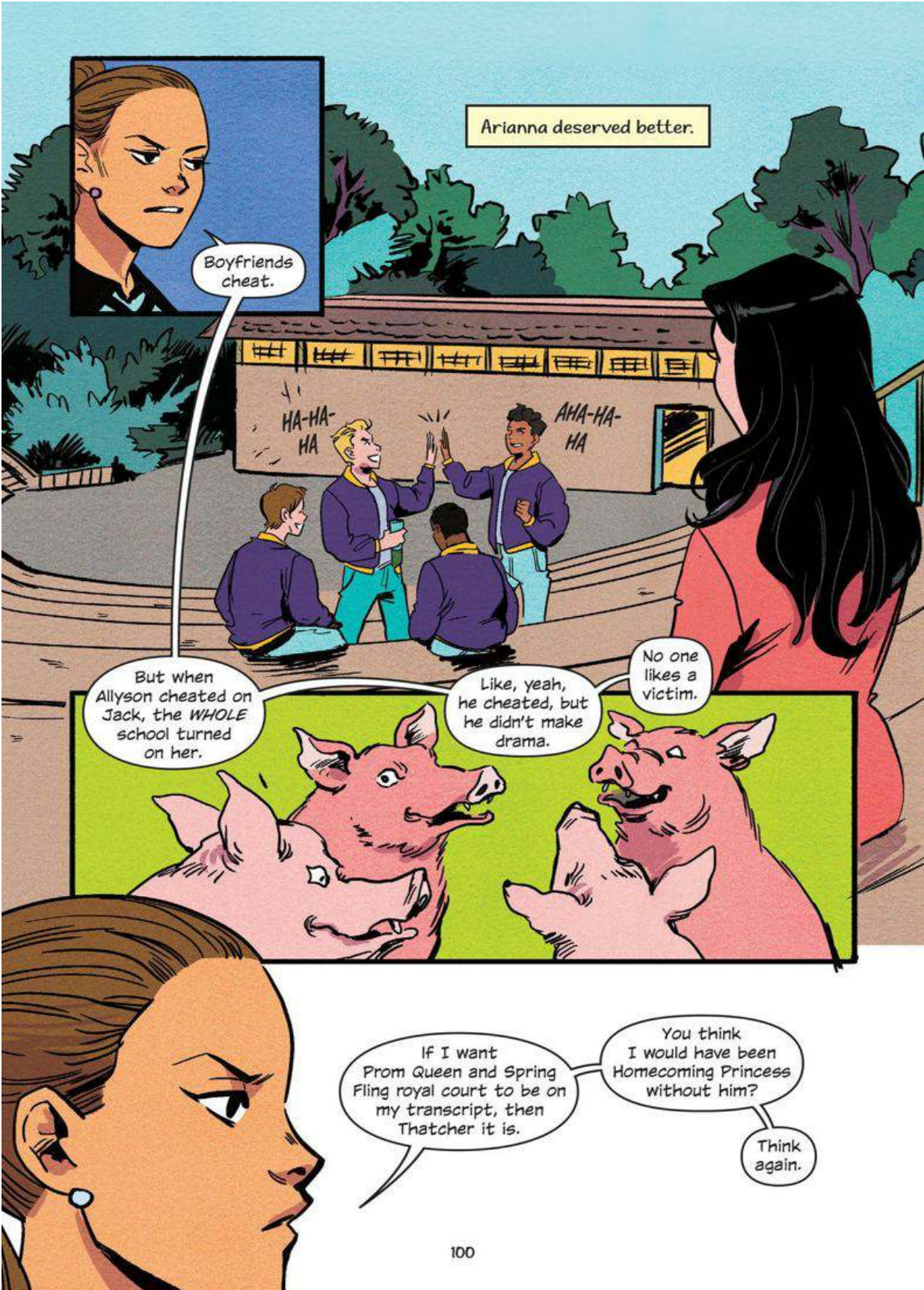


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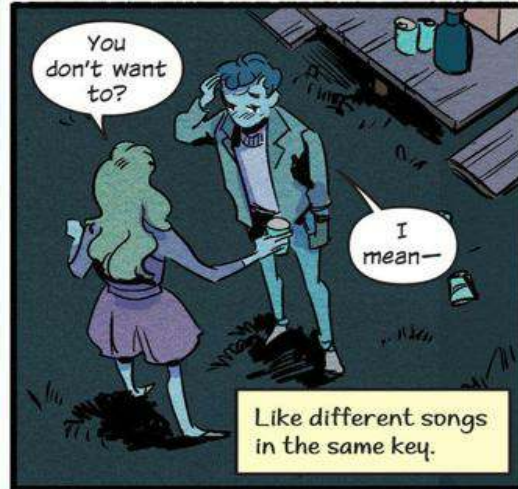


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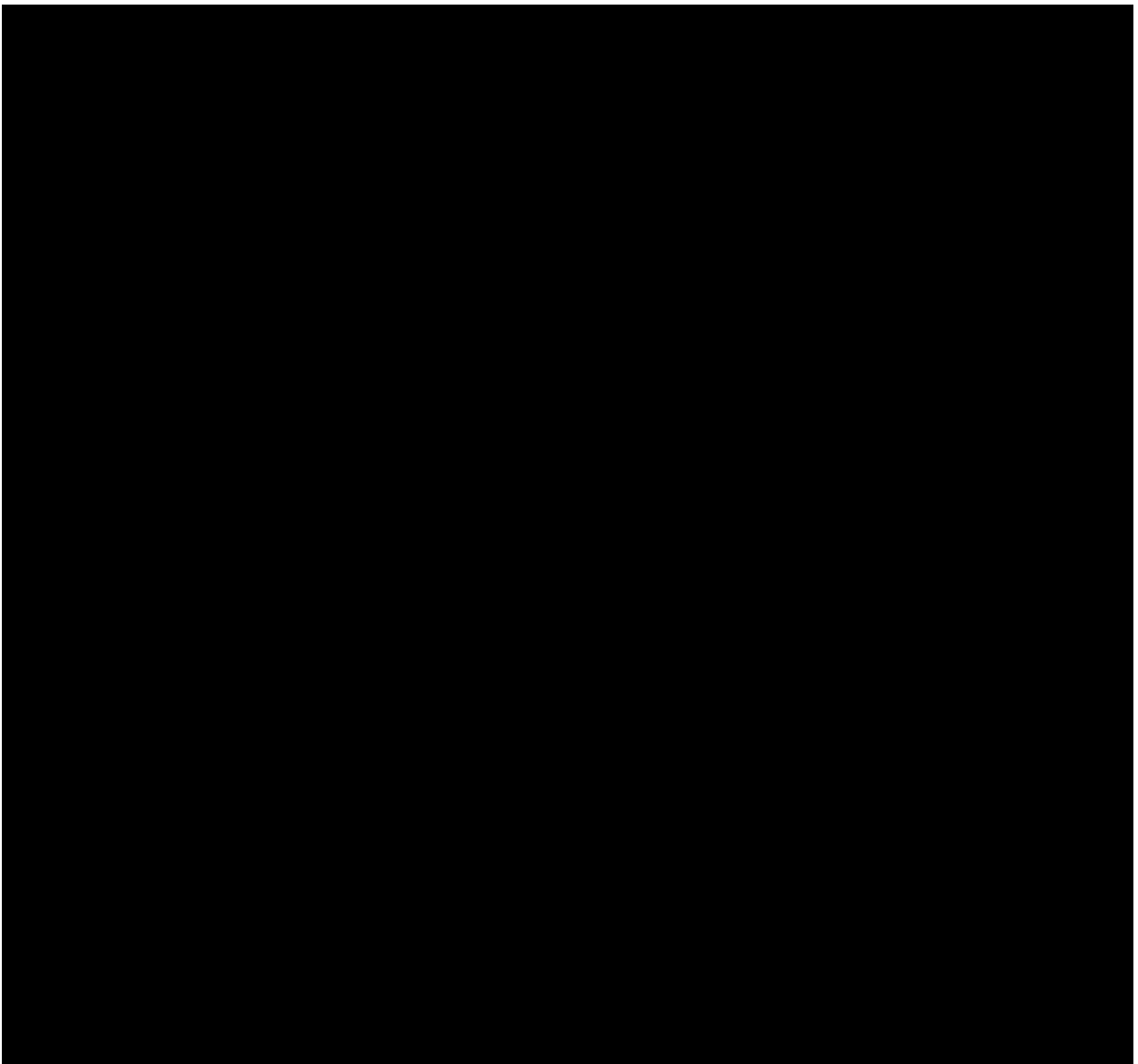


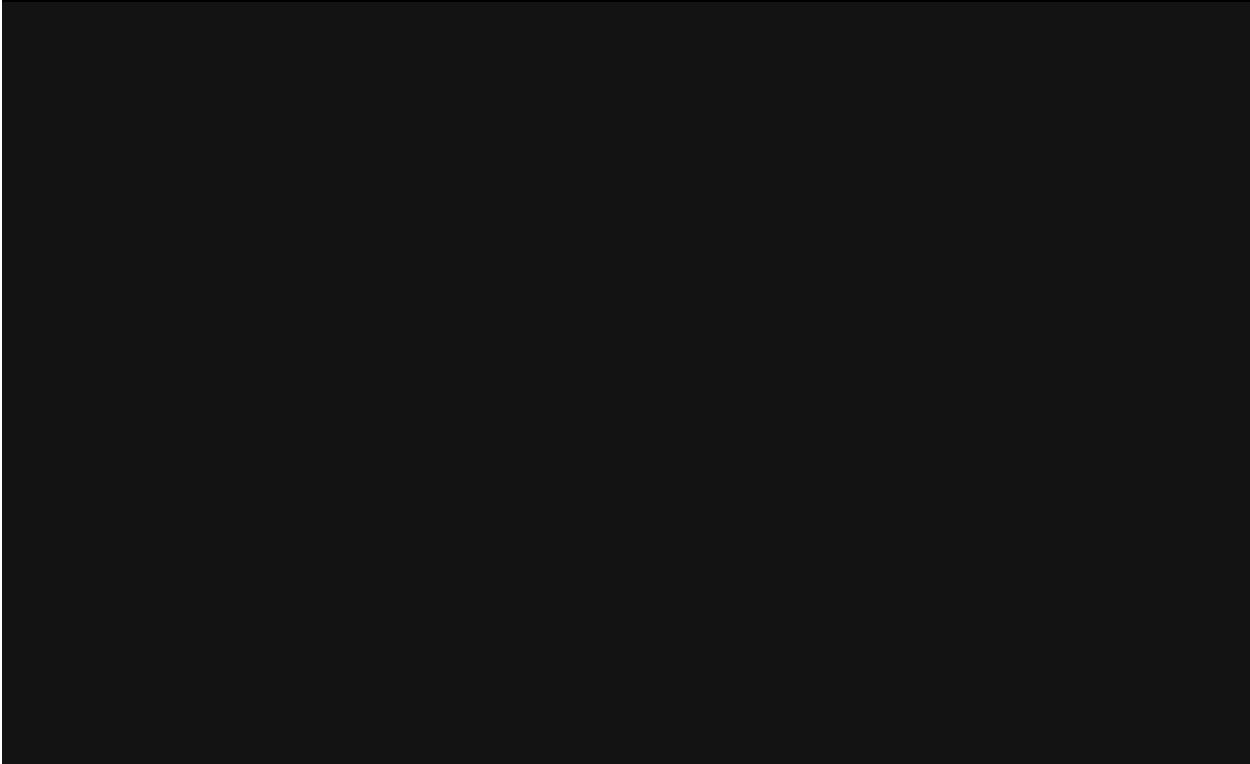
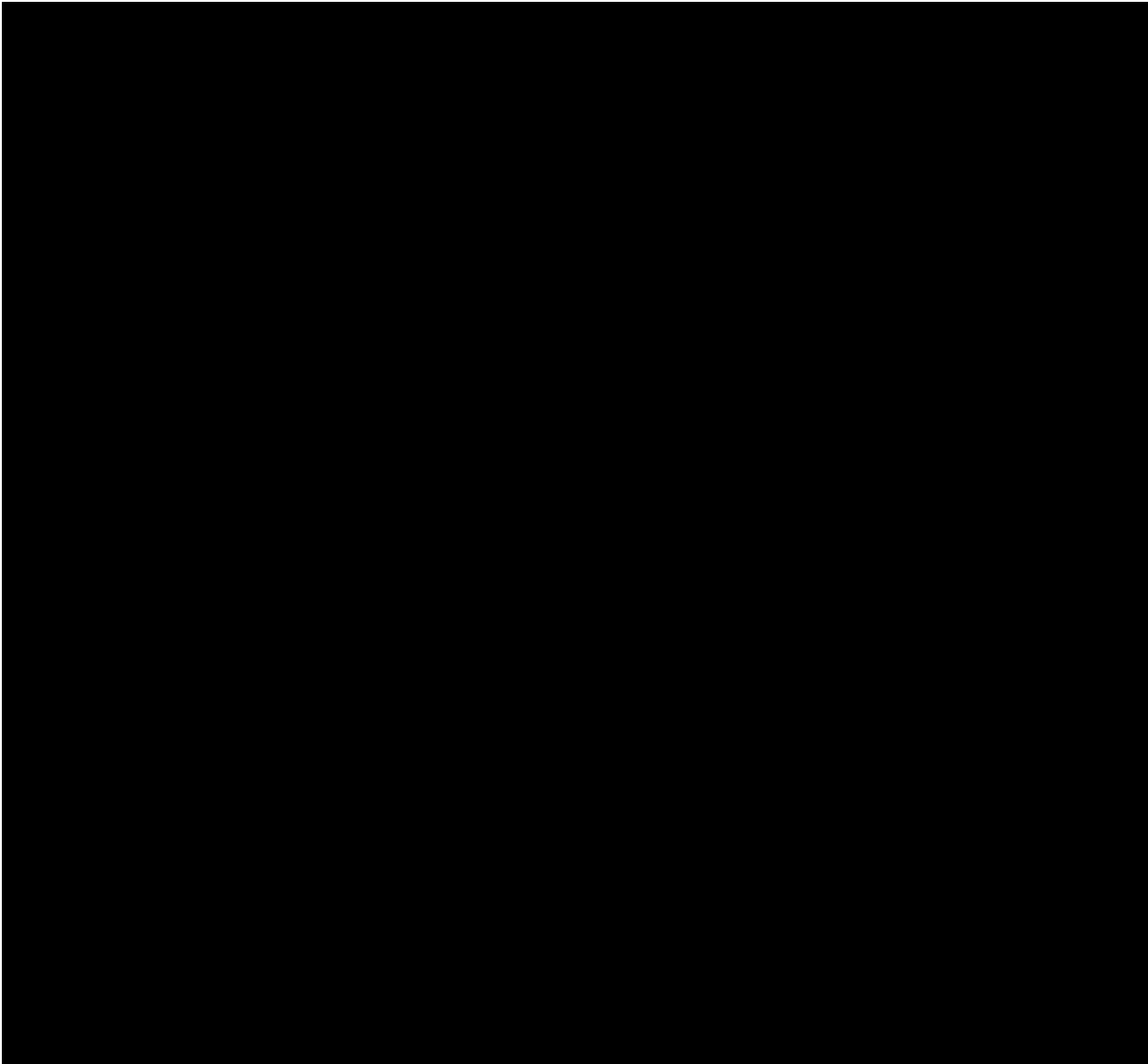
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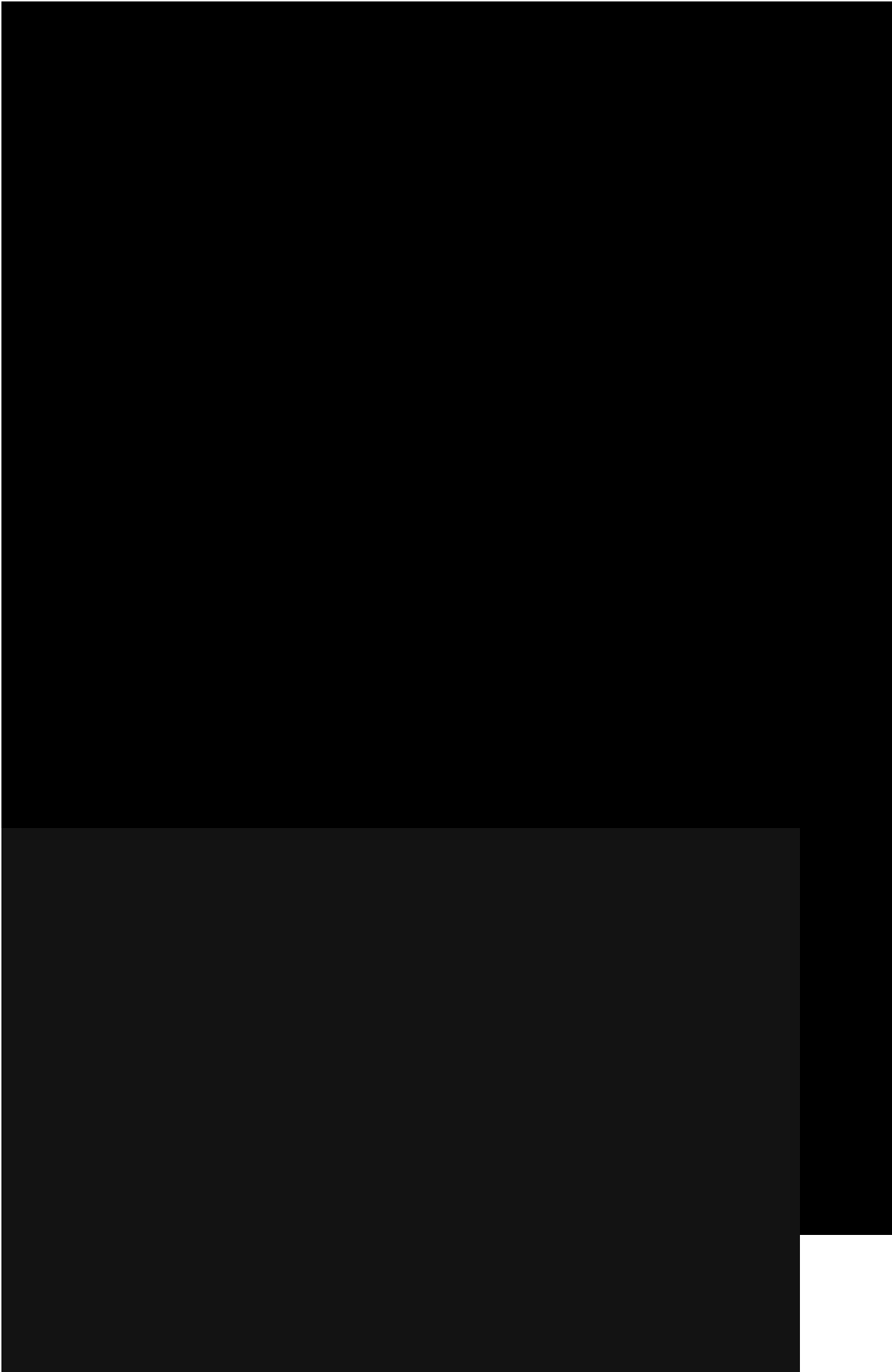


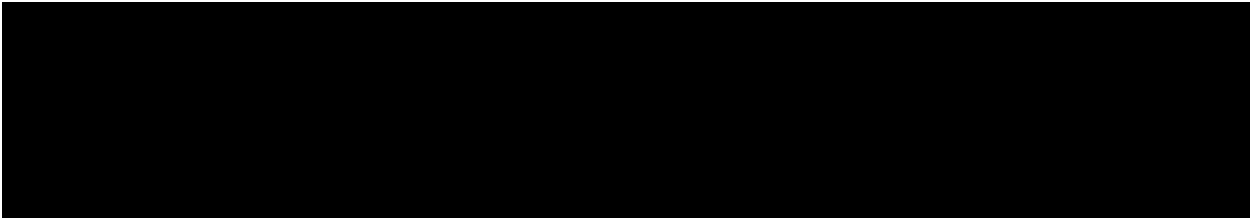






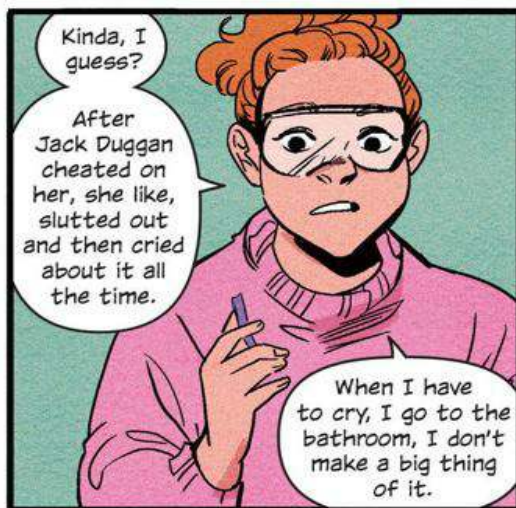
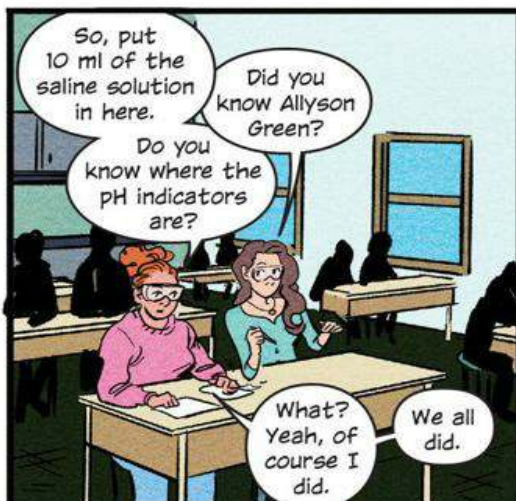










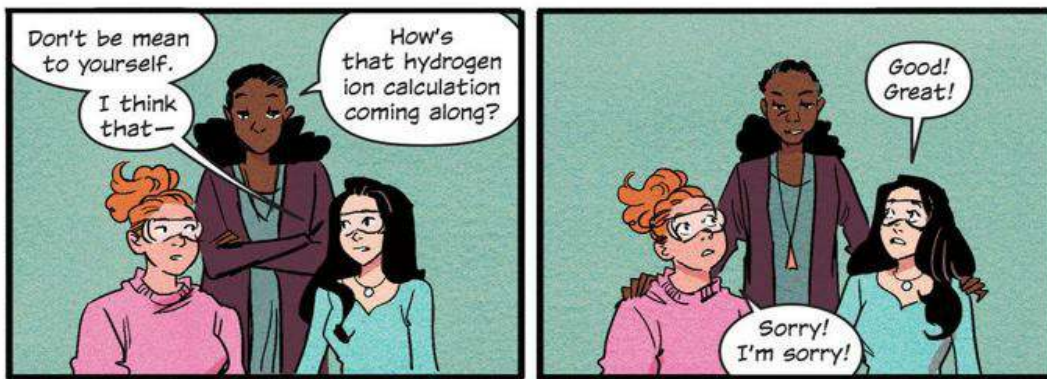


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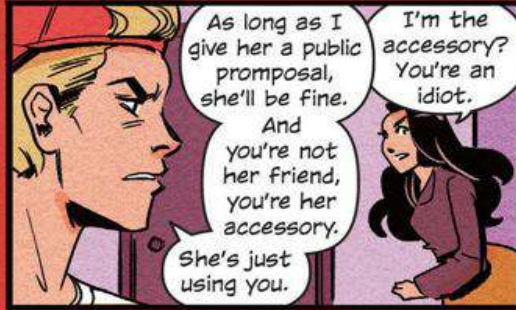


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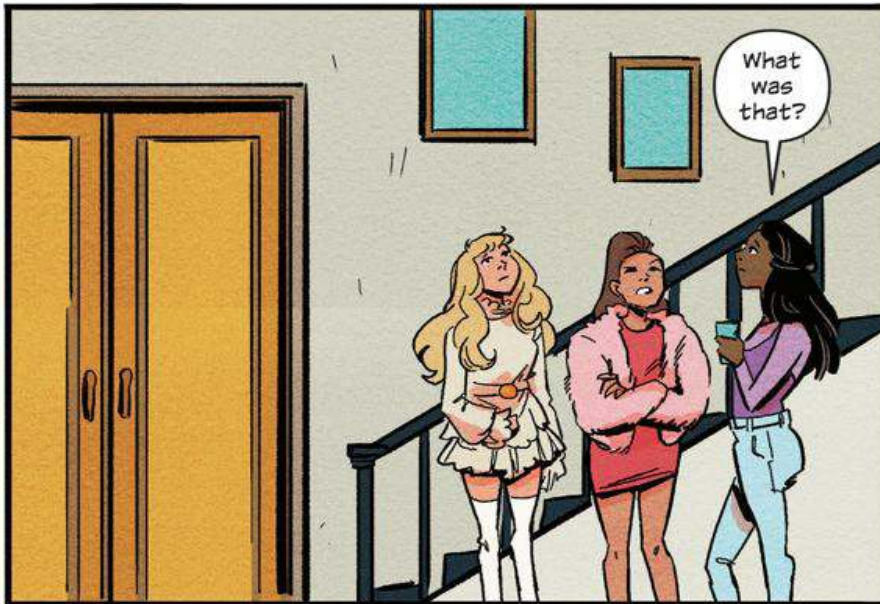


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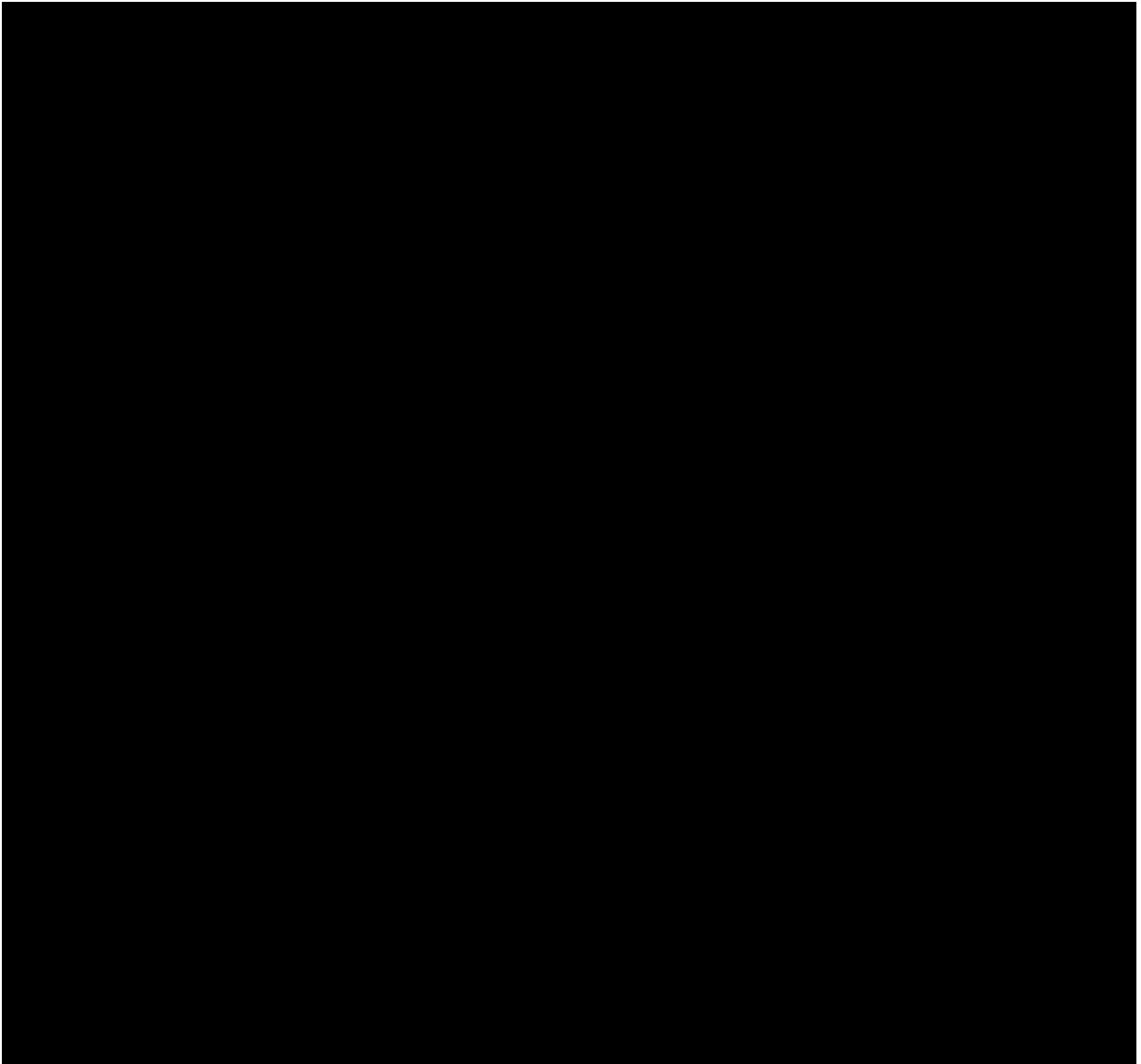


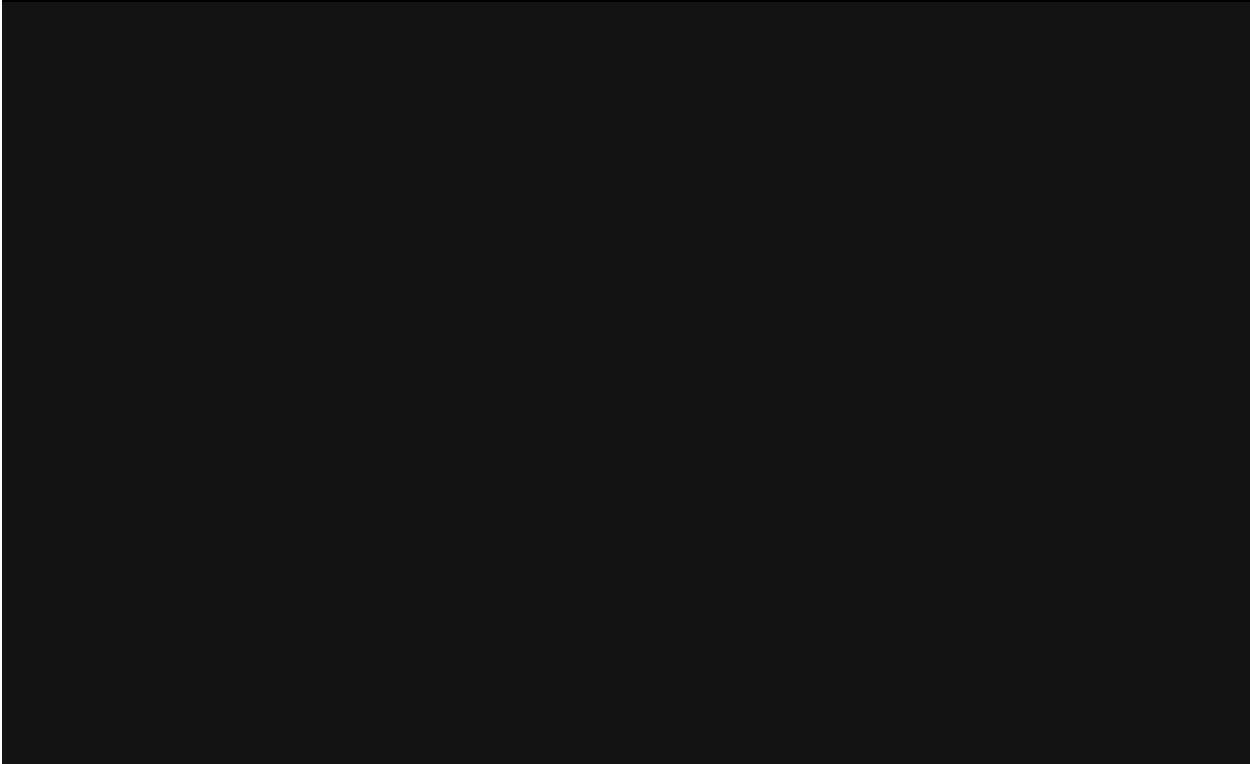
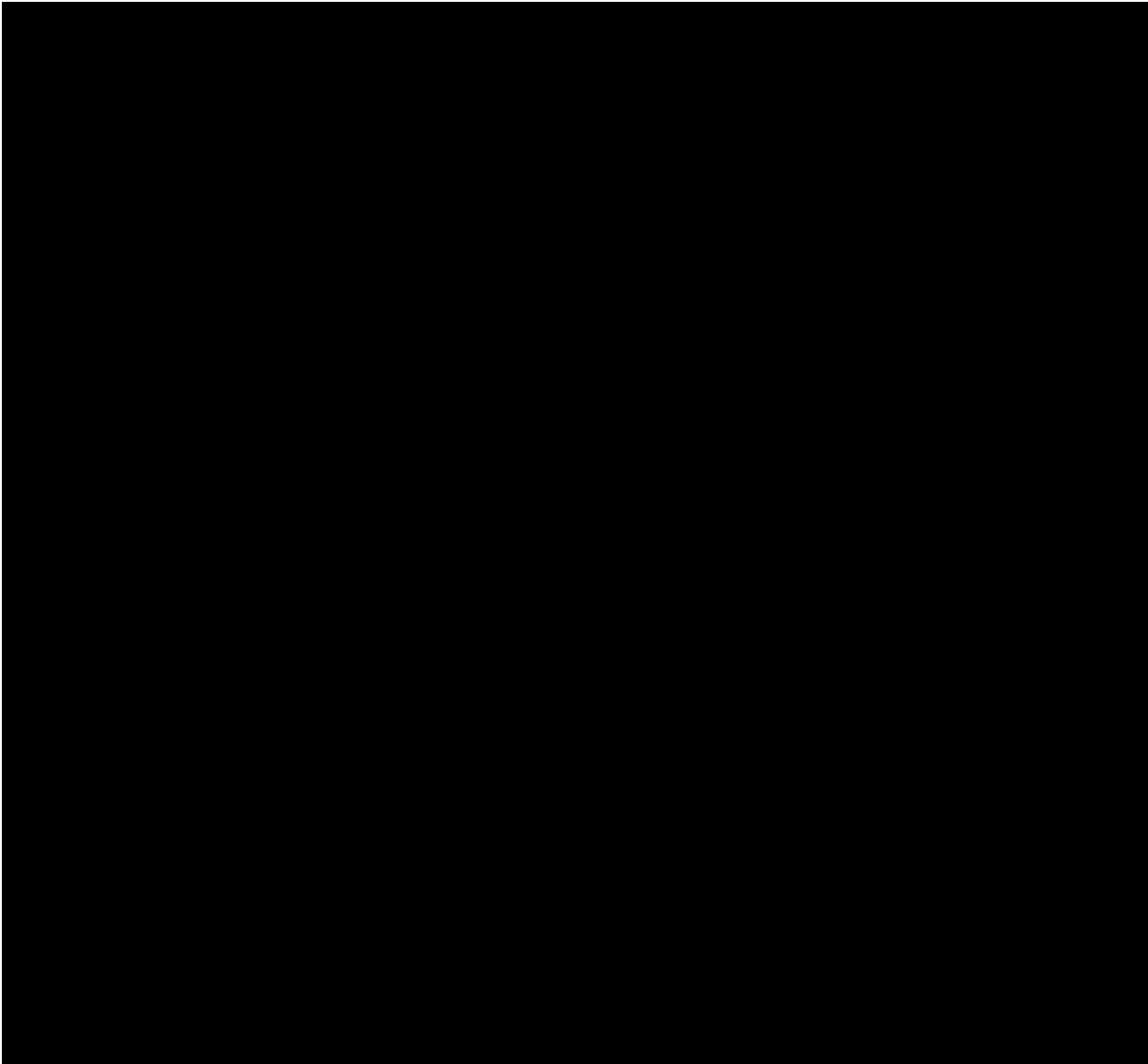


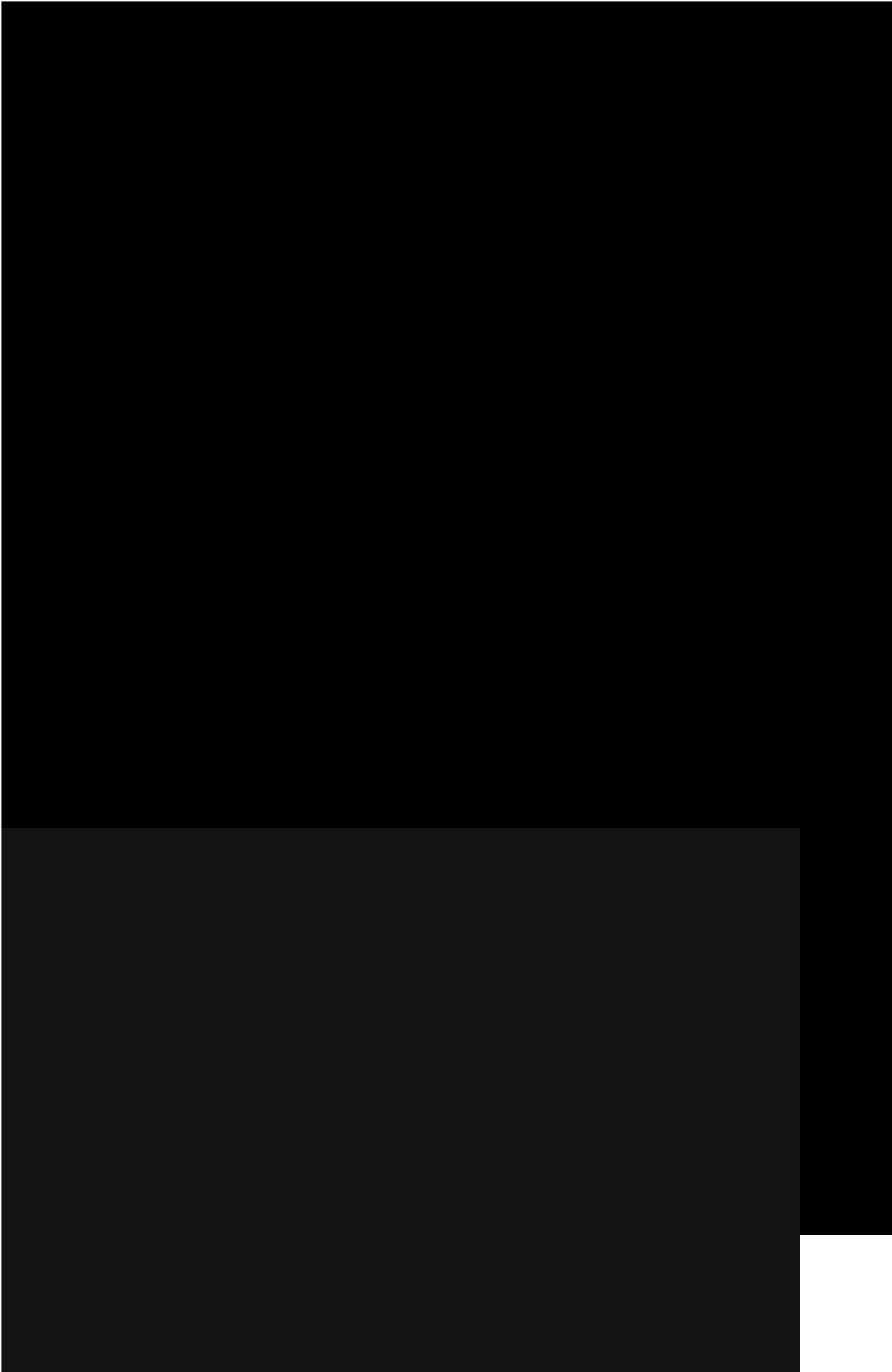
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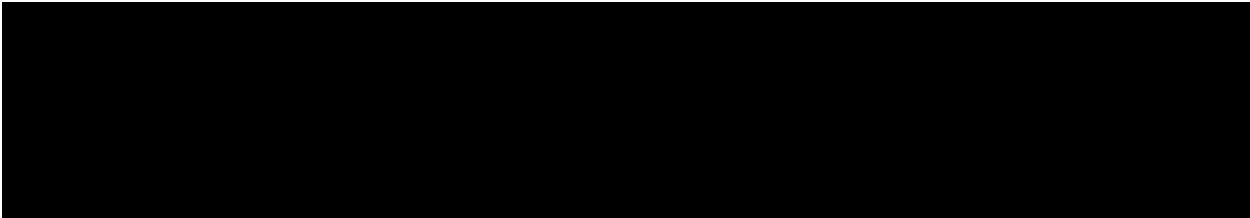


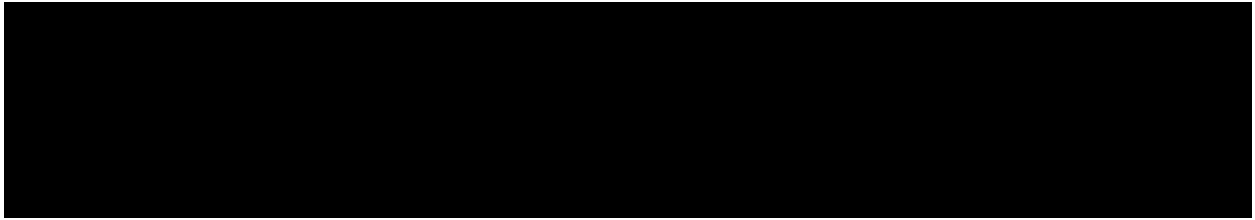


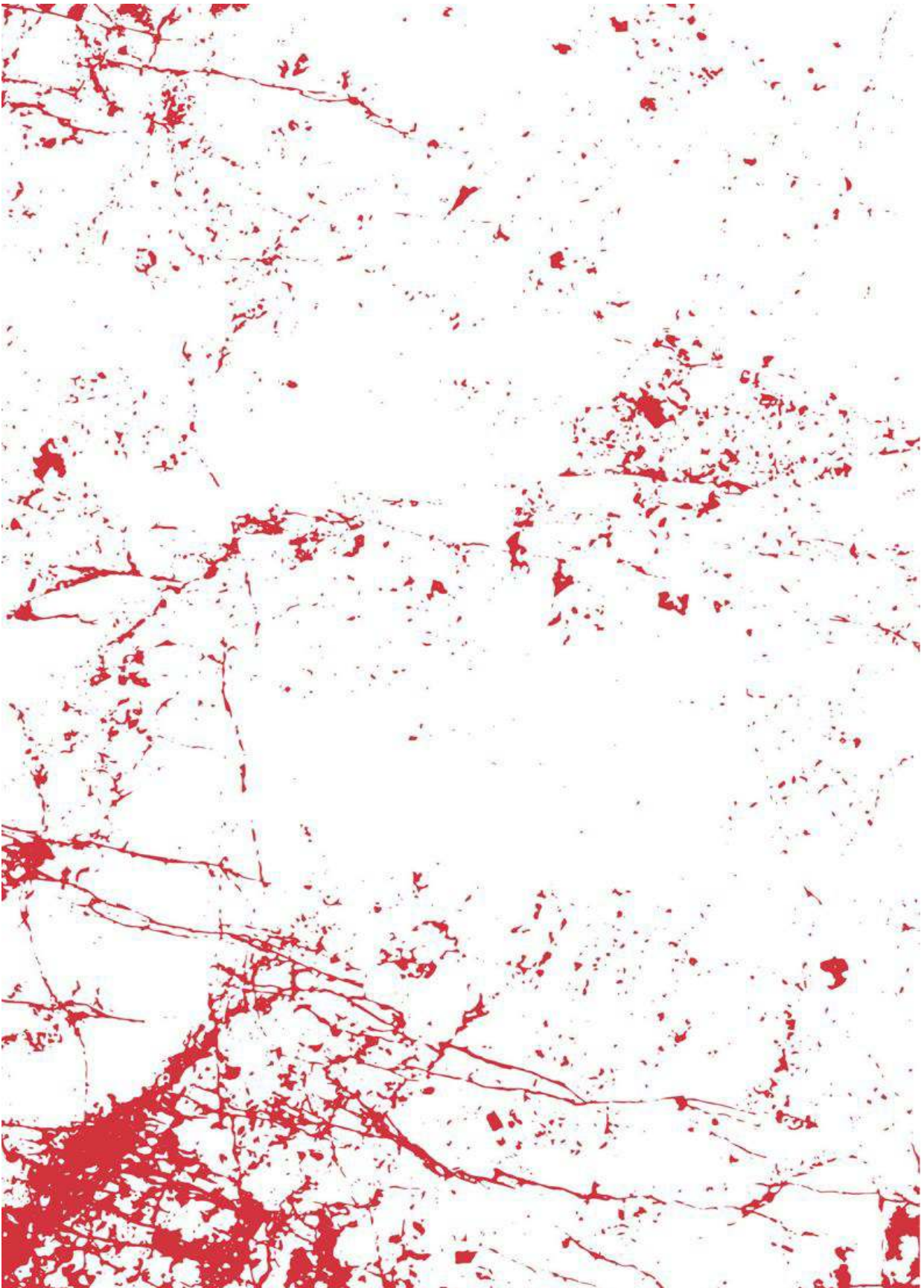












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## CHAPTER FIVE

# THATCHER'S BODY





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rianna wasn't even mad. She just went into problem-solving mode.



Hold it together.



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She was so ready to clean everything up, her mind so fucking clear.

It was like she'd been waiting for the moment one of us lost control.

Did something stupid.



Good riddance.

I feel bad for whoever finds him.

Kids got wasted and wandered around in the creek all the time.

Arianna figured it wasn't a huge stretch of the imagination that Thatcher had gotten drunk, slipped, and fallen down the bank and died.



That's not our problem.

She was ready.



You okay?

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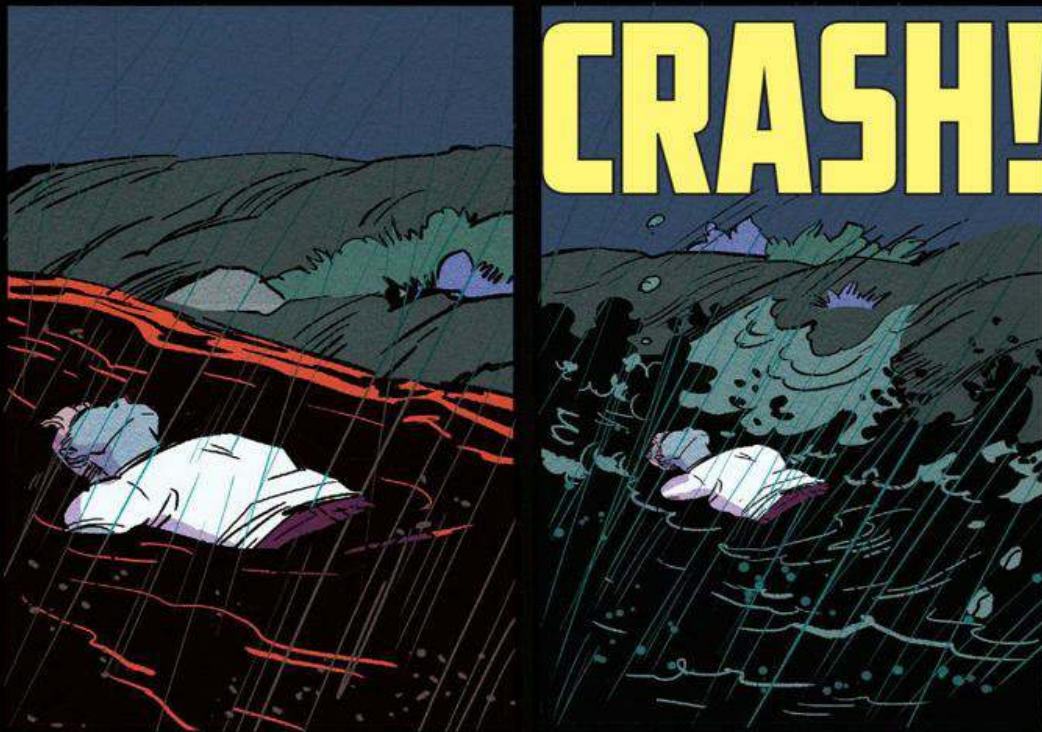


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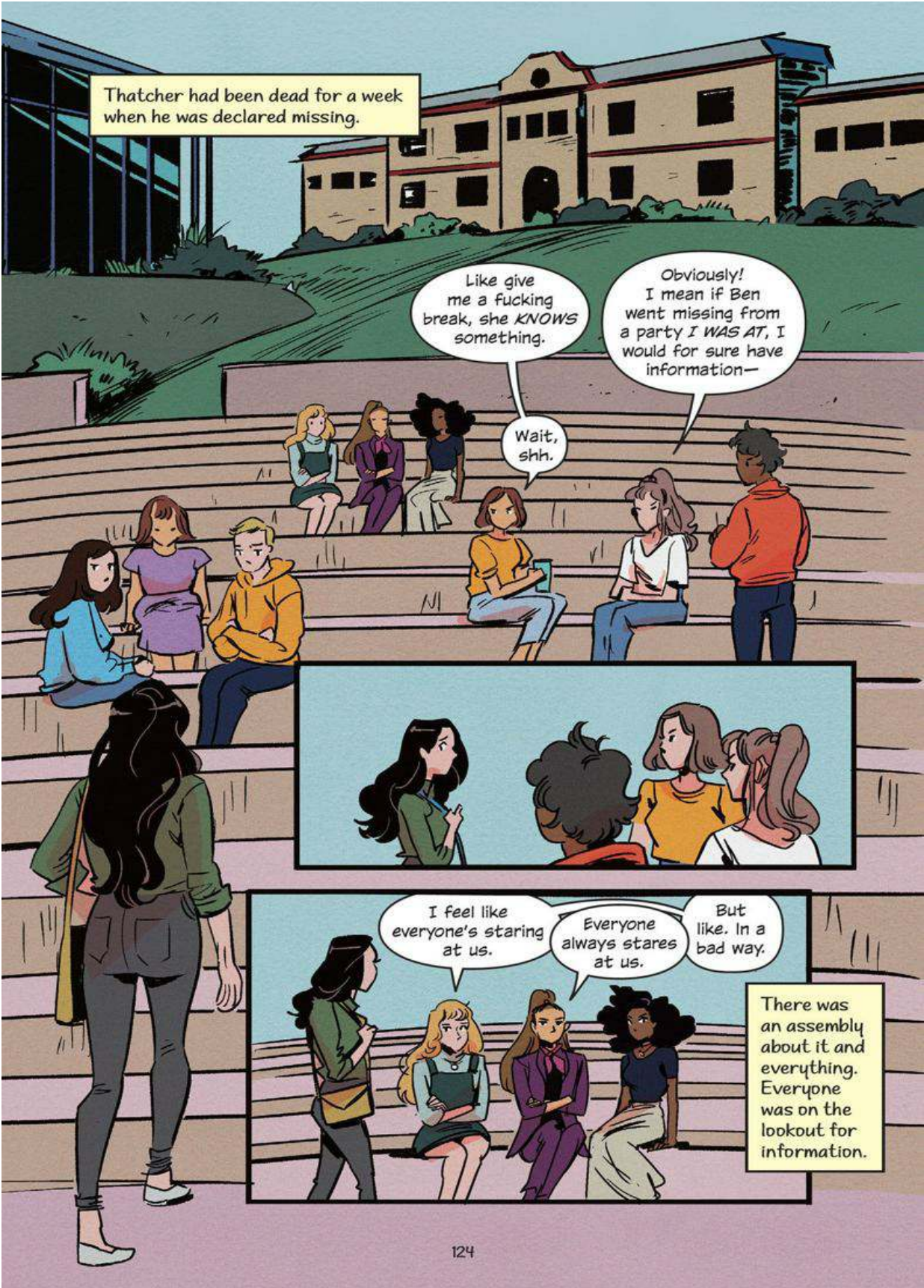


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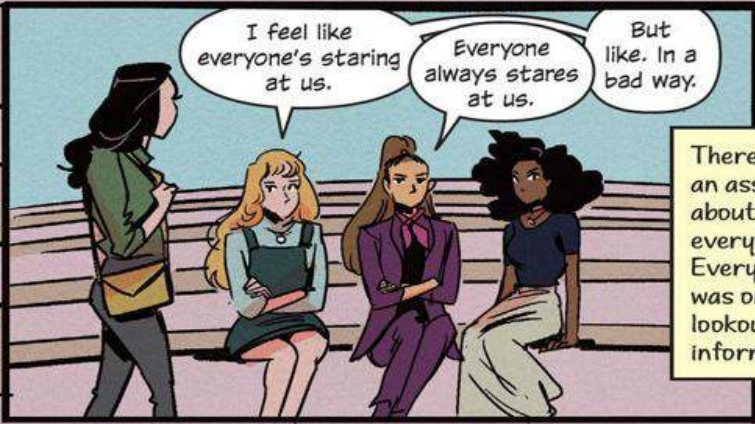


Thatcher had been dead for a week when he was declared missing.

Like give me a fucking break, she *KNOWS* something.

Obviously! I mean if Ben went missing from a party *I WAS AT*, I would for sure have information—

Wait, shh.



I feel like everyone's staring at us.

Everyone always stares at us.

But like. In a bad way.

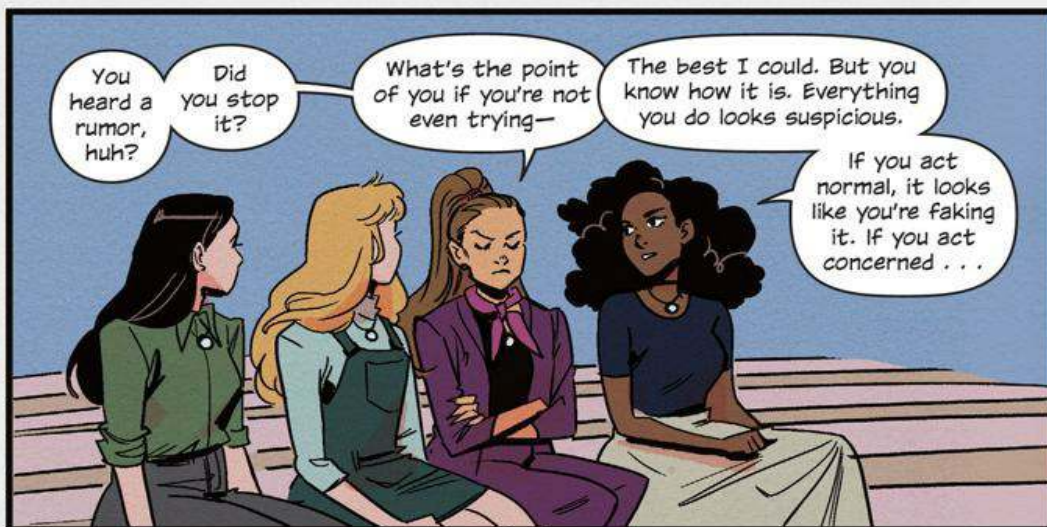
There was an assembly about it and everything. Everyone was on the lookout for information.



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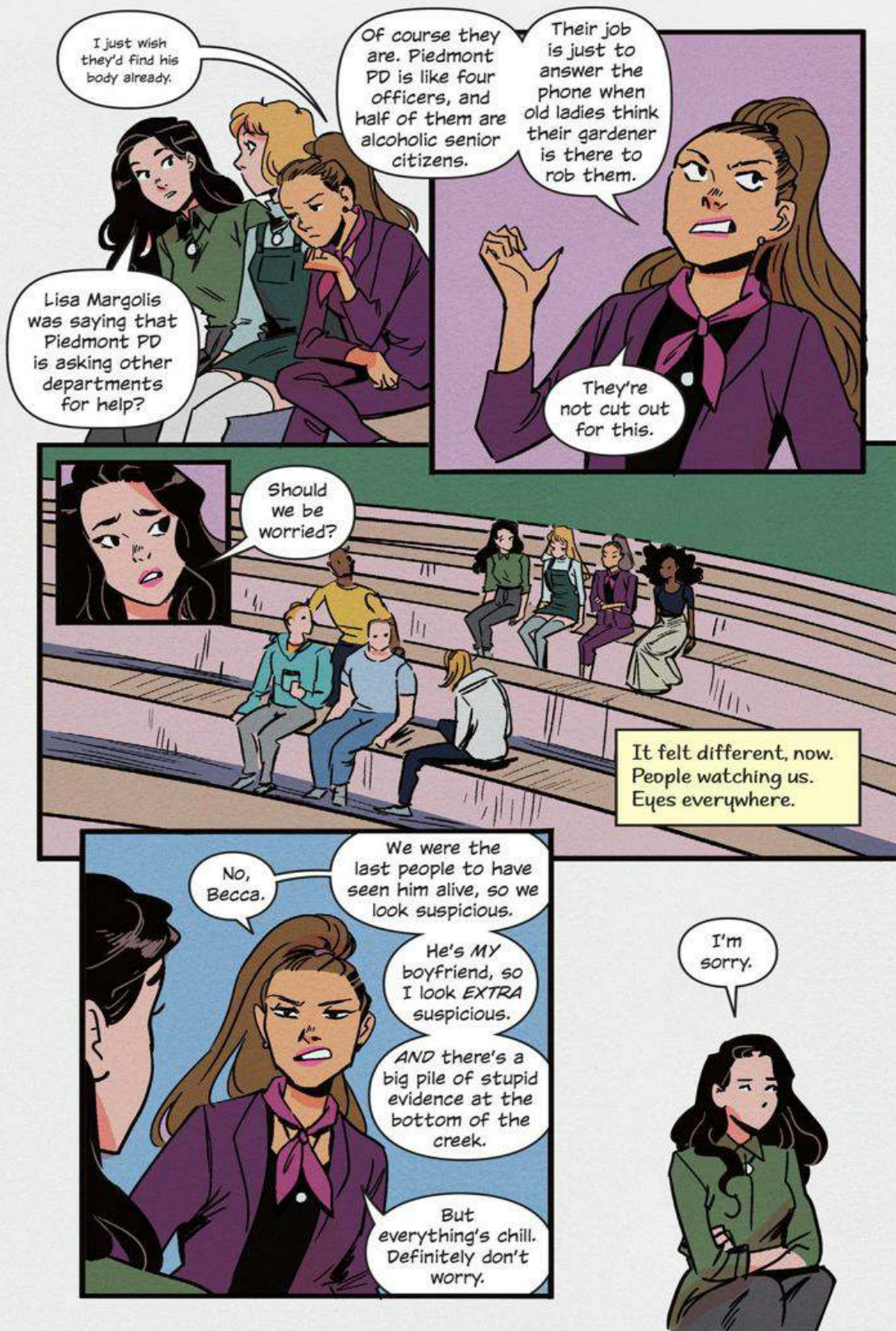


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**R-I-I-I-I-I-I-I-I-I-I-I-I-I-I-I-I-NG**



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She's just trying to be nice.

She's just trying to get likes.

A tragic end in the search for Thatcher Lang...

Wait, shut up. All of you.



... Piedmont High School senior and Duke scholarship winner.

Oh, shit.

Shh.

After weeks of searching, police have found his body close to home.

Officers confirm that the remains found in Piedmont Creek this afternoon do indeed belong to Thatcher Lang.

His parents are in seclusion.



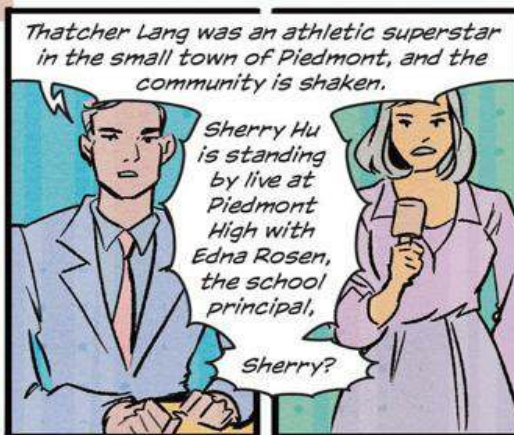
You're going to have to act your face off tomorrow at school. And not just tomorrow.

For weeks.



I have been.

But like. Better.



Thatcher Lang was an athletic superstar in the small town of Piedmont, and the community is shaken.

Sherry Hu is standing by live at Piedmont High with Edna Rosen, the school principal,

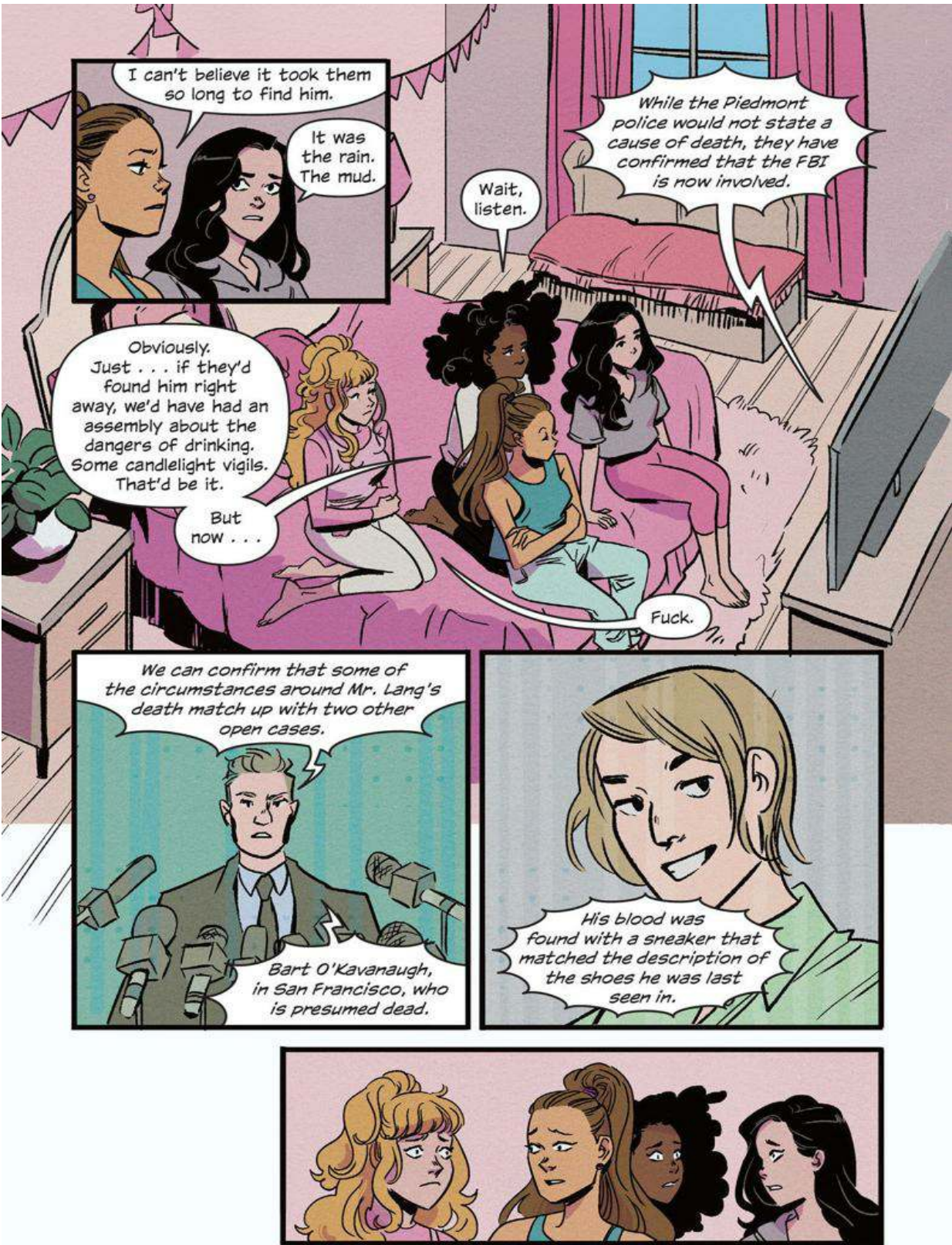
Sherry?

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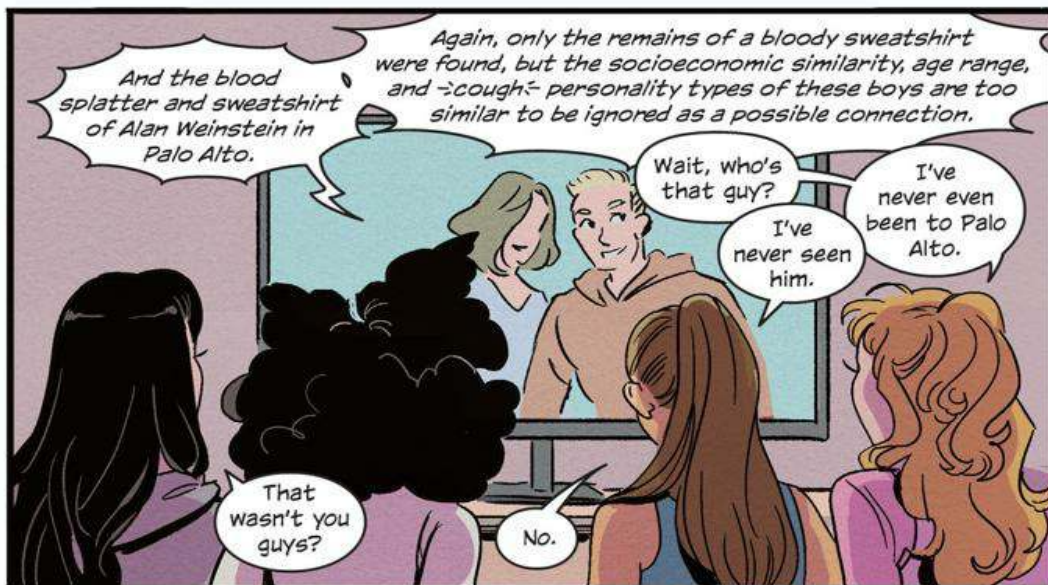


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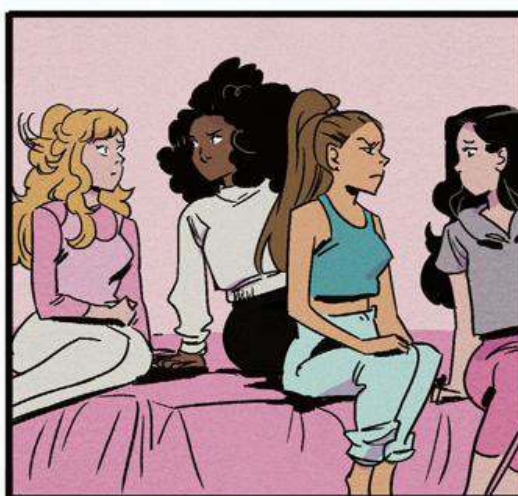




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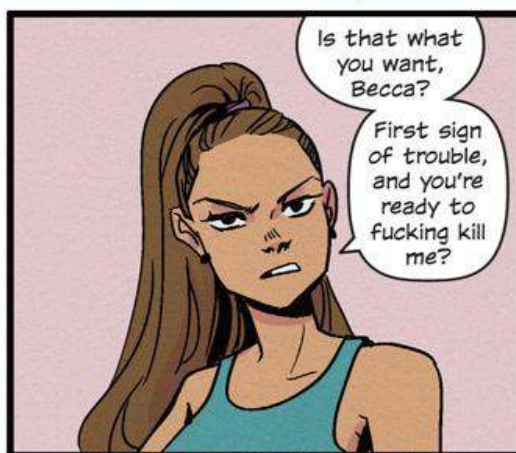


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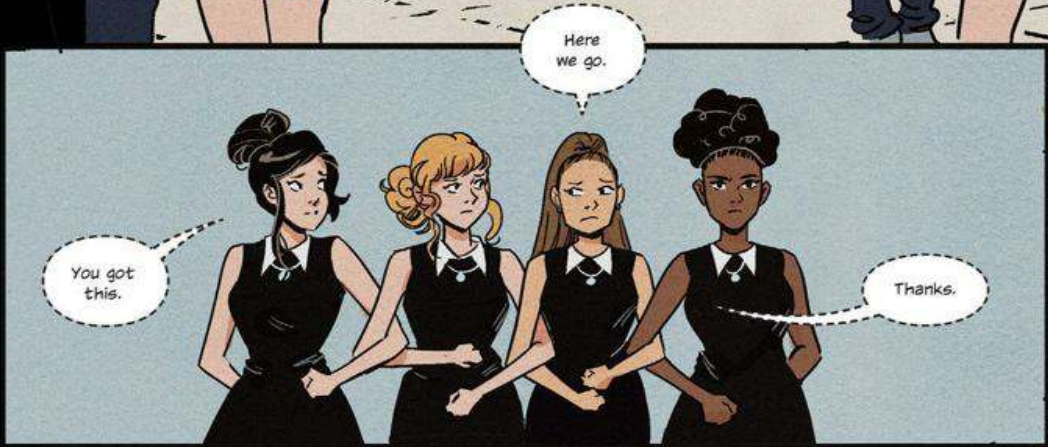


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You got this.

Here we go.

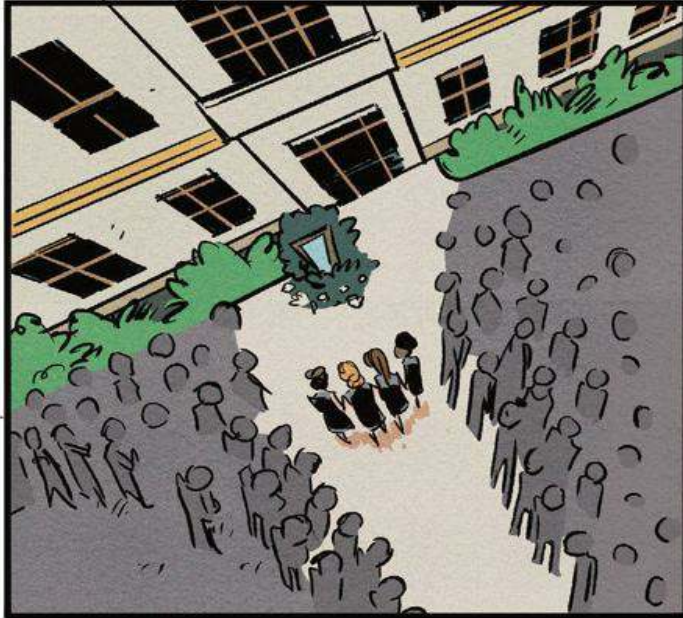
Thanks.

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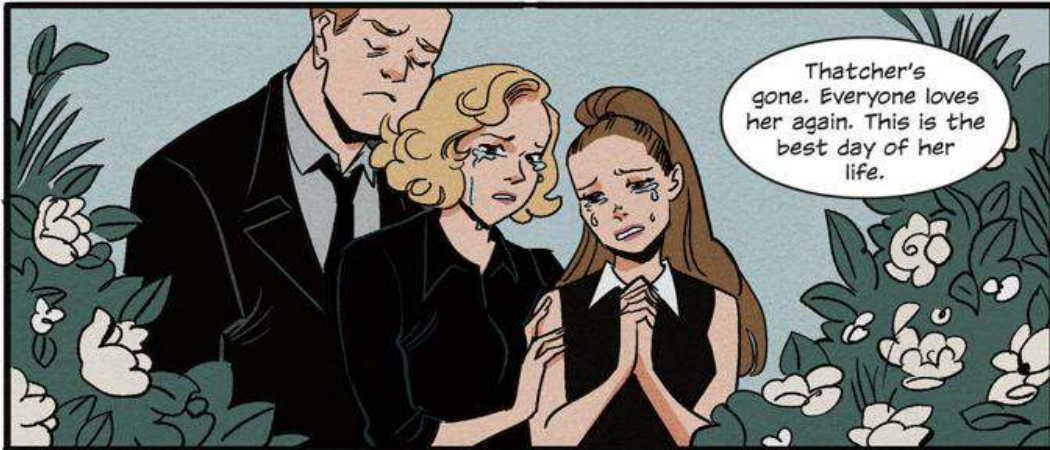
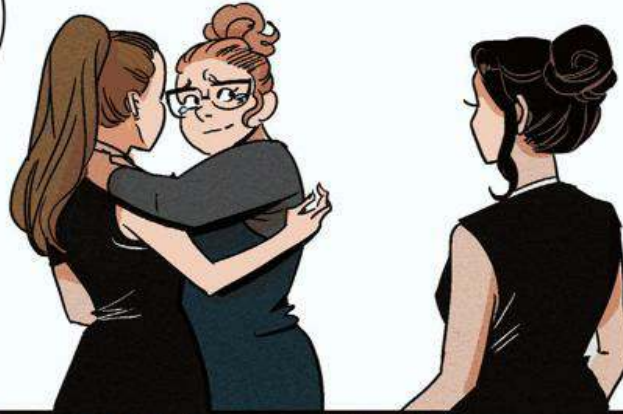








She's like, the queen of mourning now.



Thatcher's gone. Everyone loves her again. This is the best day of her life.



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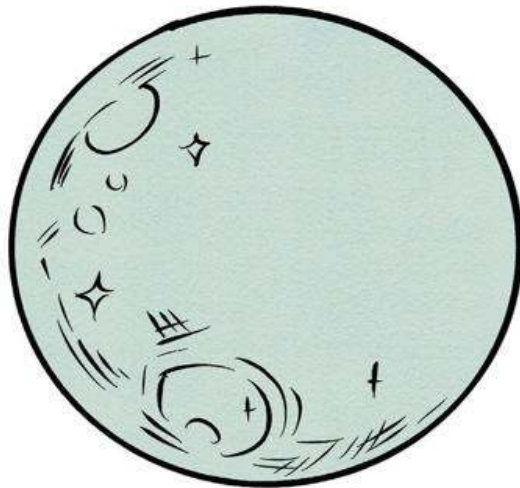
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## CHAPTER SIX

# THINGS FALL APART



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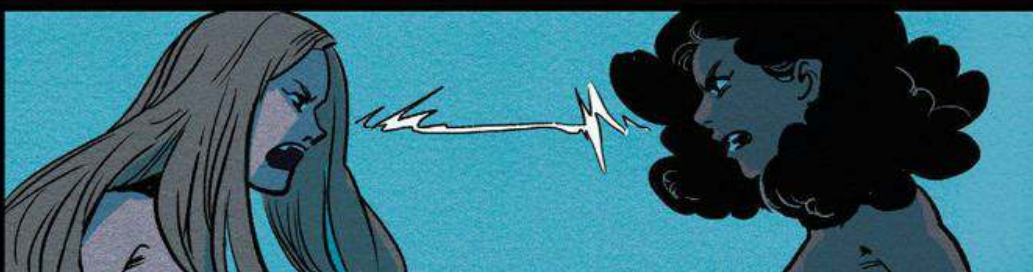


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What the actual and entire living **FUCK**, Amanda.

We **HAVE** to eat.

Not like this.



You're not in charge!



Maybe I should be! Maybe if I was in charge **NONE OF THIS** would have happened!

We wouldn't have to worry about a dead boyfriend **OR** the FBI!

We wouldn't be hunting homeless people when there are like, **REAL** ass-holes out there, just for us!

You're messing it all up, you're messing it all up for **ALL OF US**, do you even **GET** that?

And maybe that was the problem.

Maybe we were just too hungry.

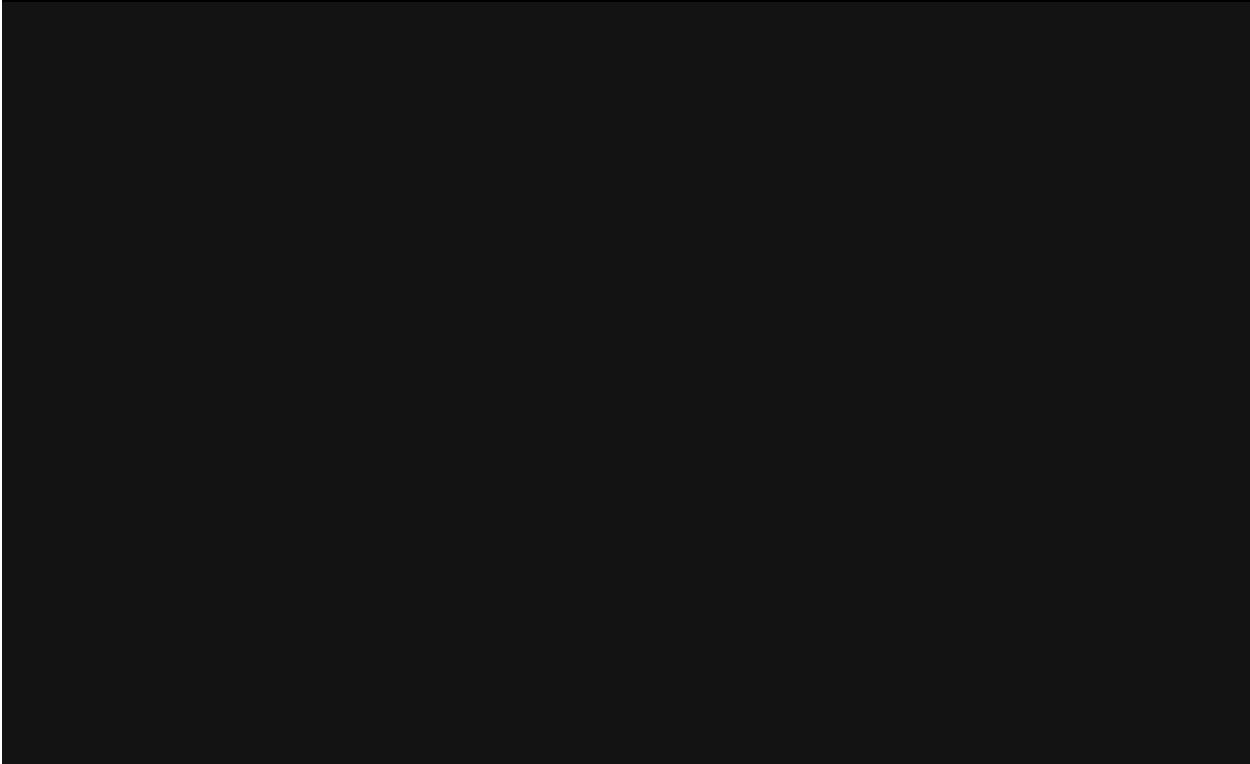
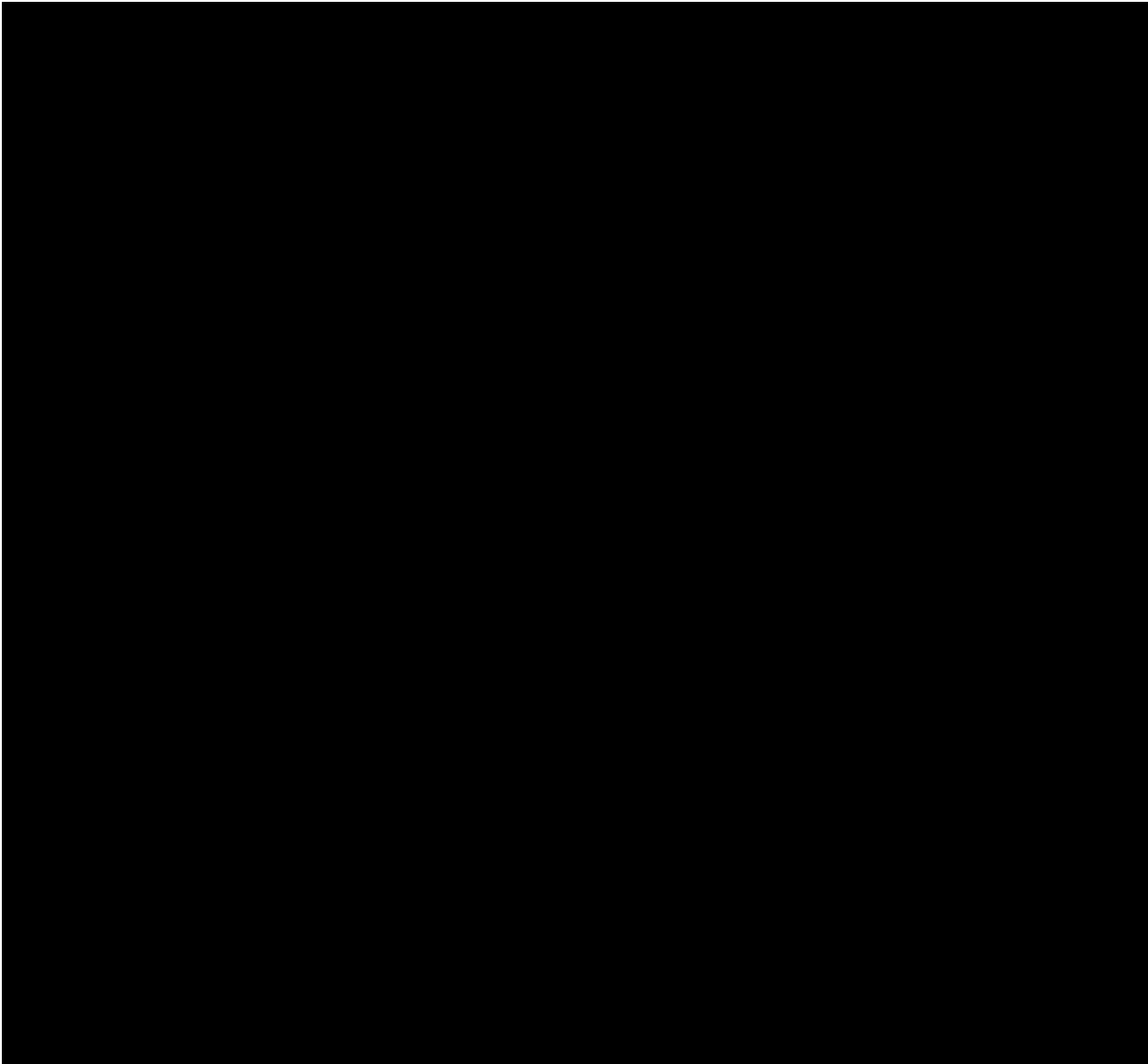
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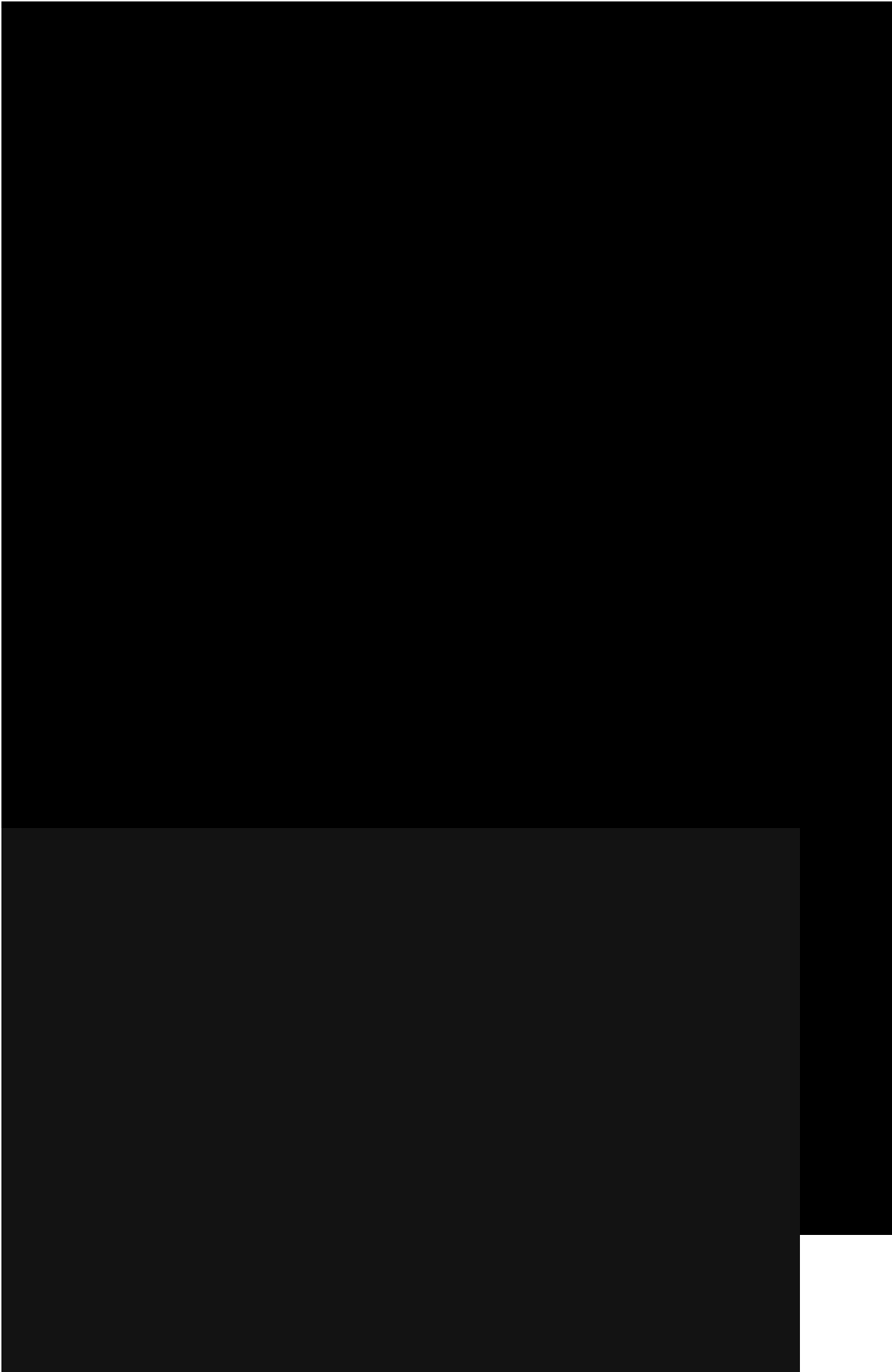


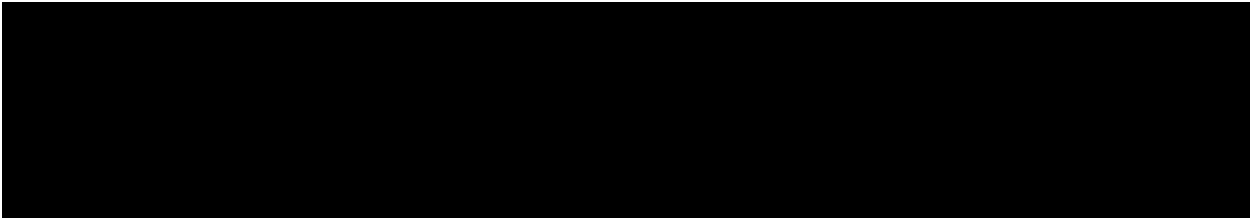


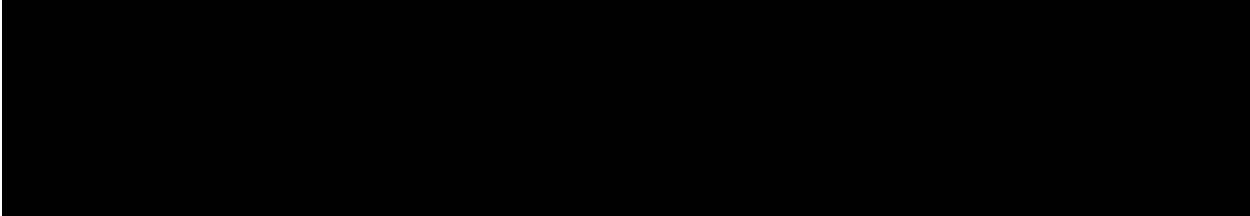




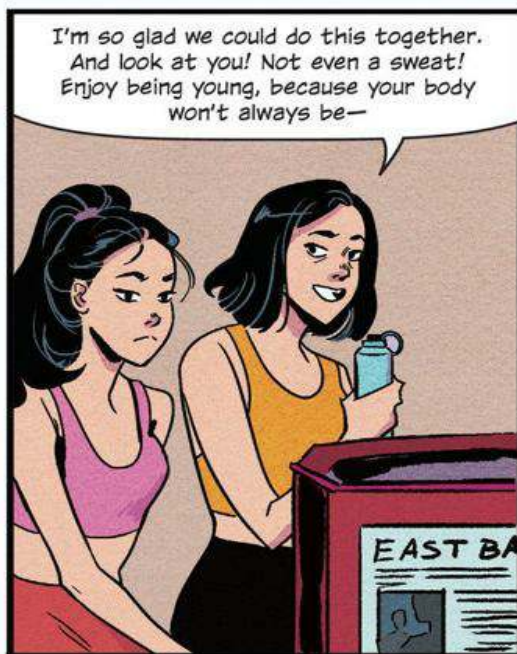












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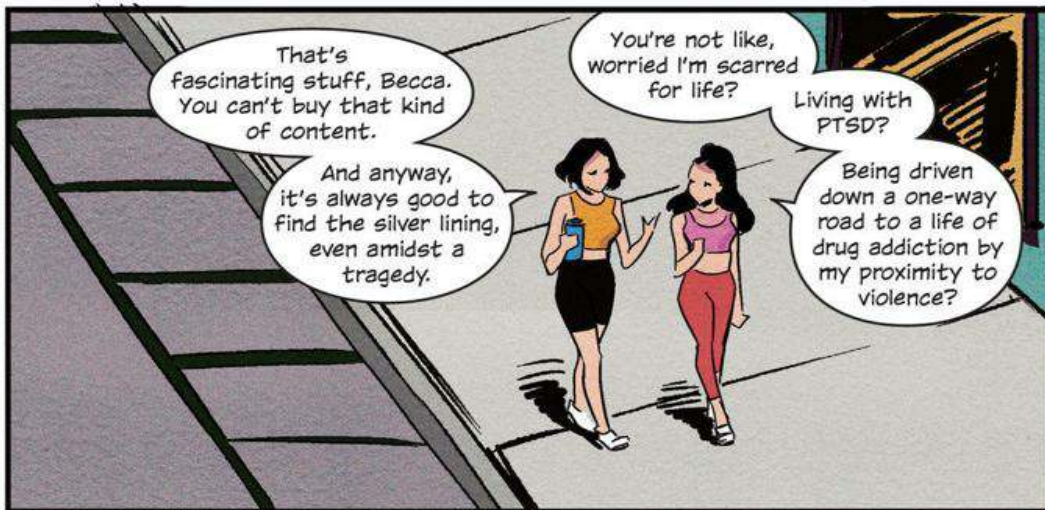


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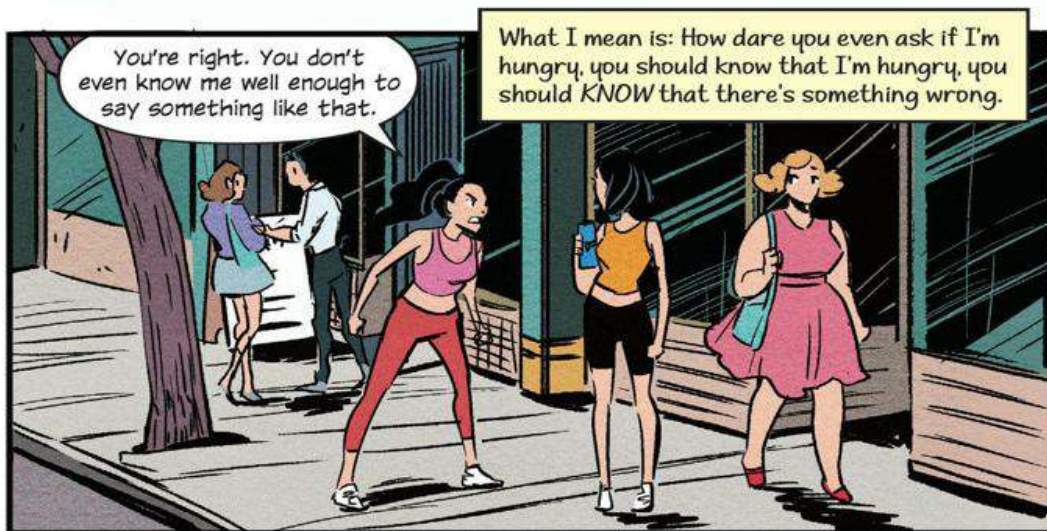


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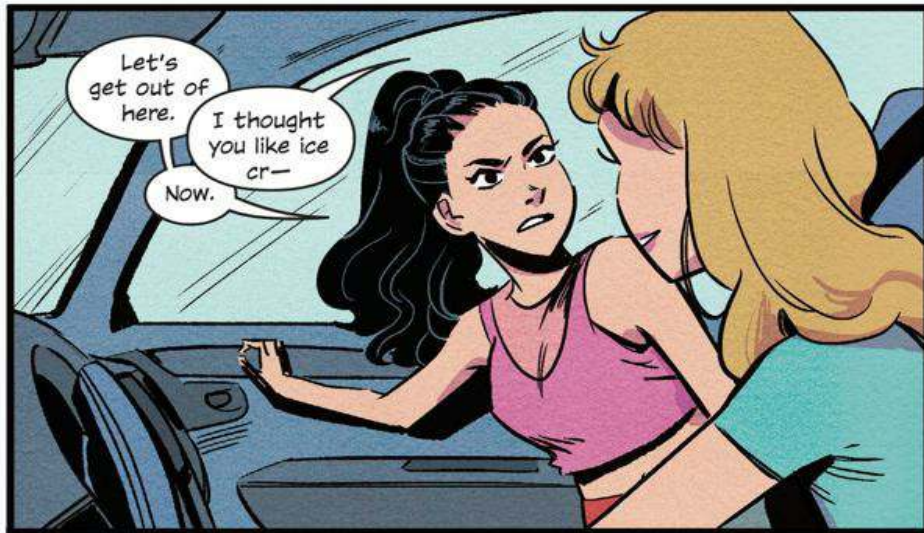


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Listen. The truth is, just because I knew him doesn't mean Thatcher was special.

He was exactly like all the other guys.

And they were all special to someone.



I don't feel bad for **THATCHER**. I feel bad because now everything is **COMPLICATED**, and it's all my fault!

I had everything—**FINALLY**—but I couldn't . . . handle it, not like you guys.

And maybe I could cope with the guilt if I wasn't. **SO. HUNGRY.**



I know. I'm fucking starving too.

The other day at practice I spiked the volleyball so hard it dented the gym floor.

Seriously?



Luckily, Coach didn't notice, but RiRi did.

I thought she was going to rip my face off.

This is hard for all of us.

It's the first time it's felt like there was actually a price.

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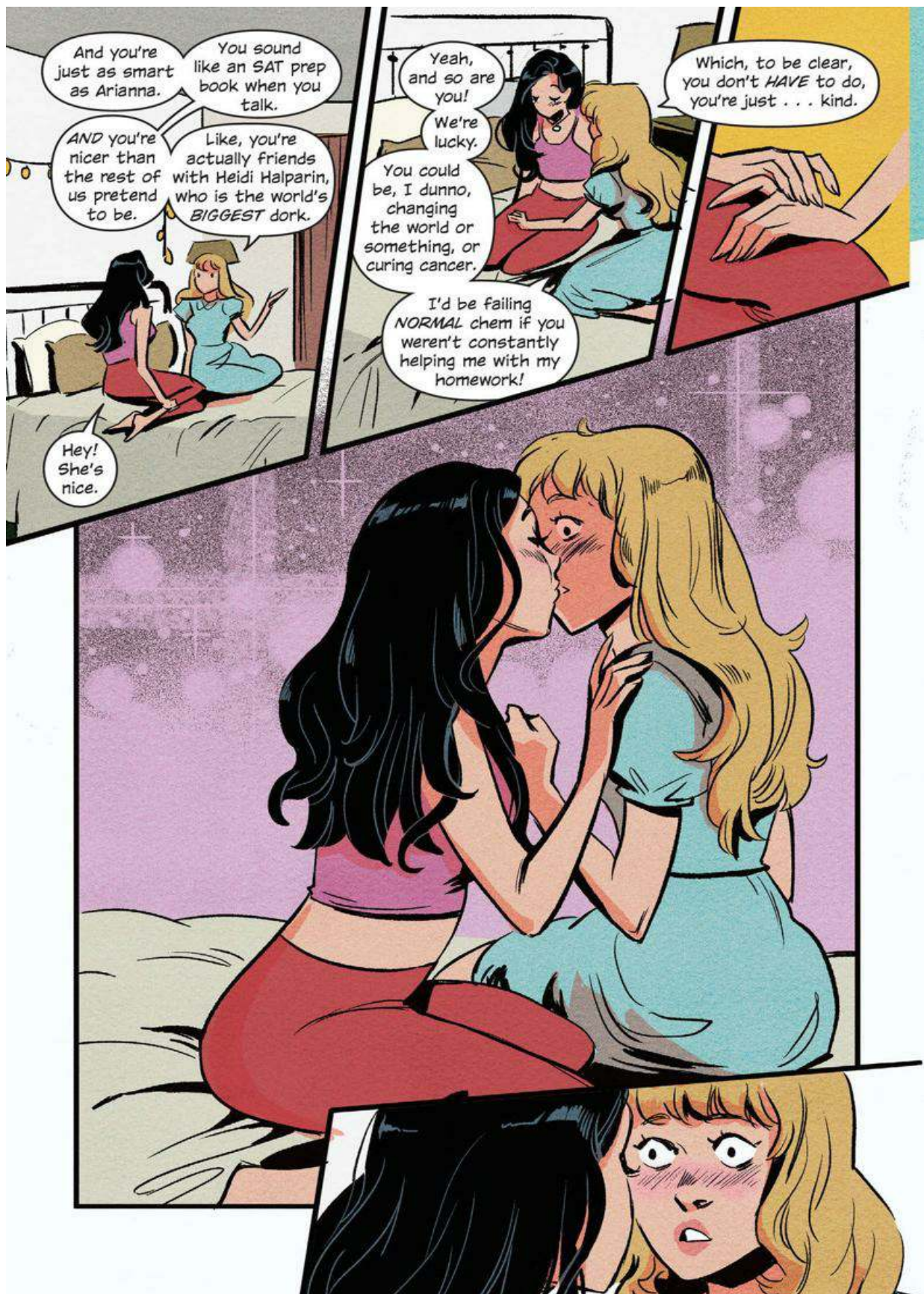


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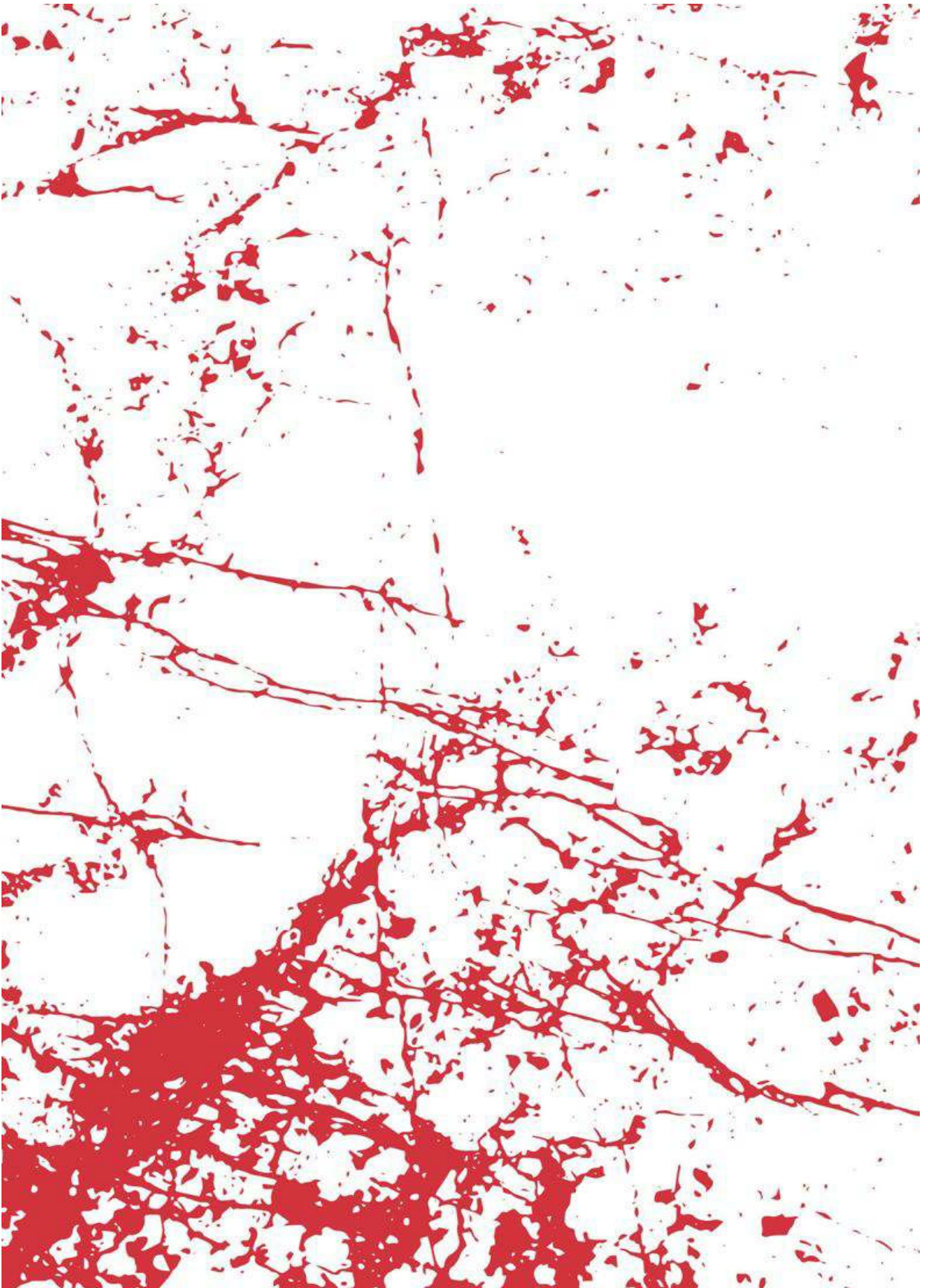


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## CHAPTER SEVEN

# END OF THE ROAD



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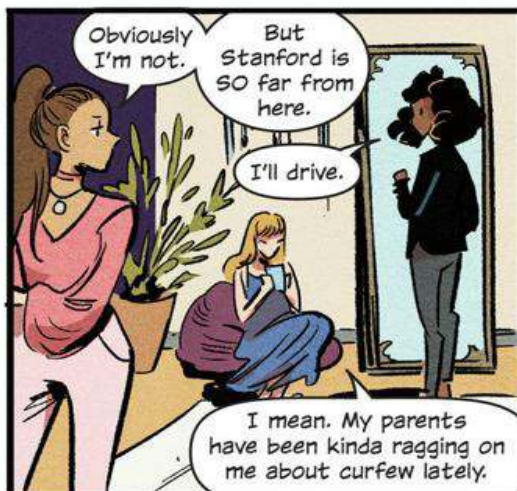


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Look, I'm sorry,  
but I'm not the  
only cranky bitch  
in this room.

Let's not  
pretend we're  
not all DYING  
of hanger.

It's a  
full moon. I can  
hardly THINK I'm  
so fucking hungry  
right now.

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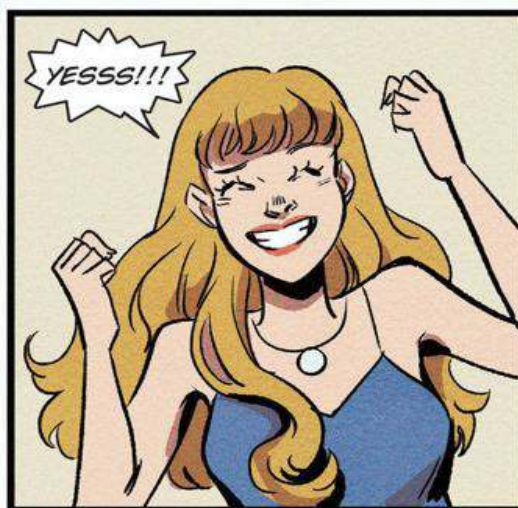


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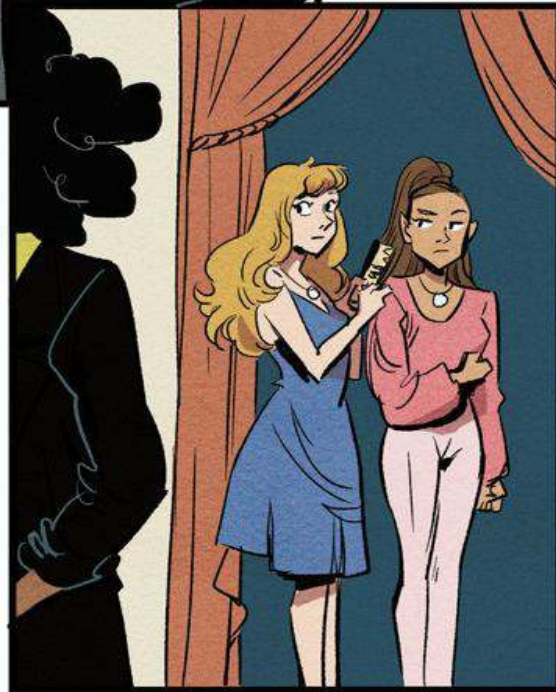


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PANT  
PANT



CHOMP

AAAAAHHH!!



THWACK  
THWACK  
THWACK

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YAAAAHHH!



I was gonna—

That's okay. You can now.



Cool. Yeah. Thanks.



I can't believe you could shift back without eating.

You're a fucking badass, Becca.

That should have been you, first. Feeding.

It was your kill.

It doesn't matter.

GNAW  
CHEW

It does, though.



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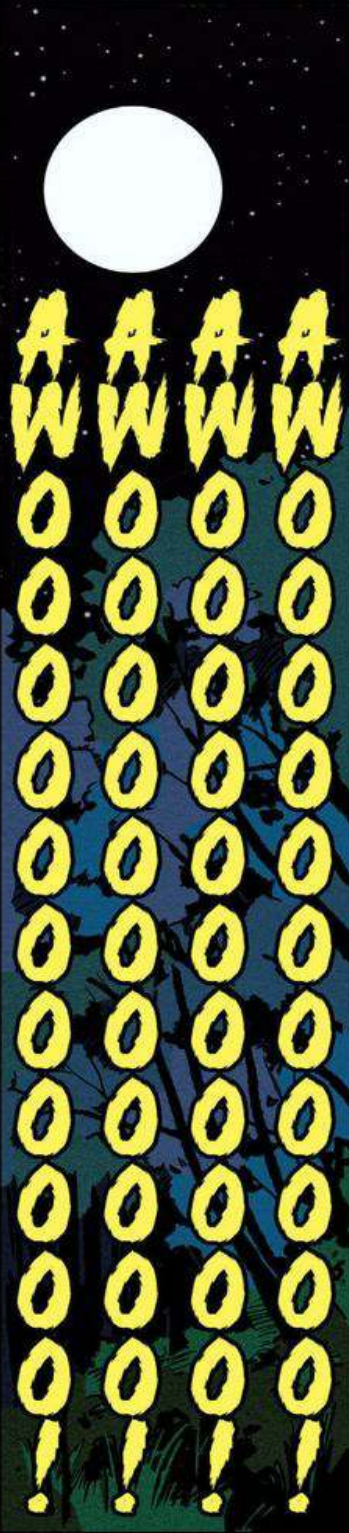


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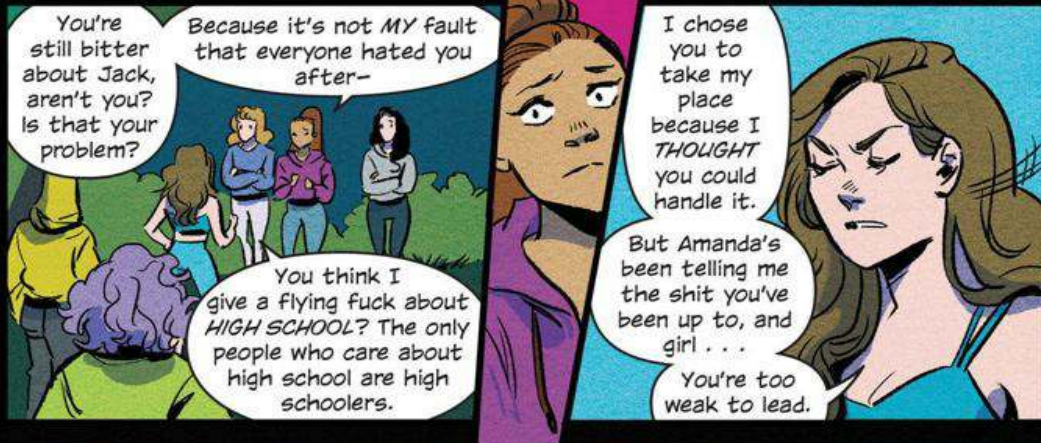


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**GRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR**

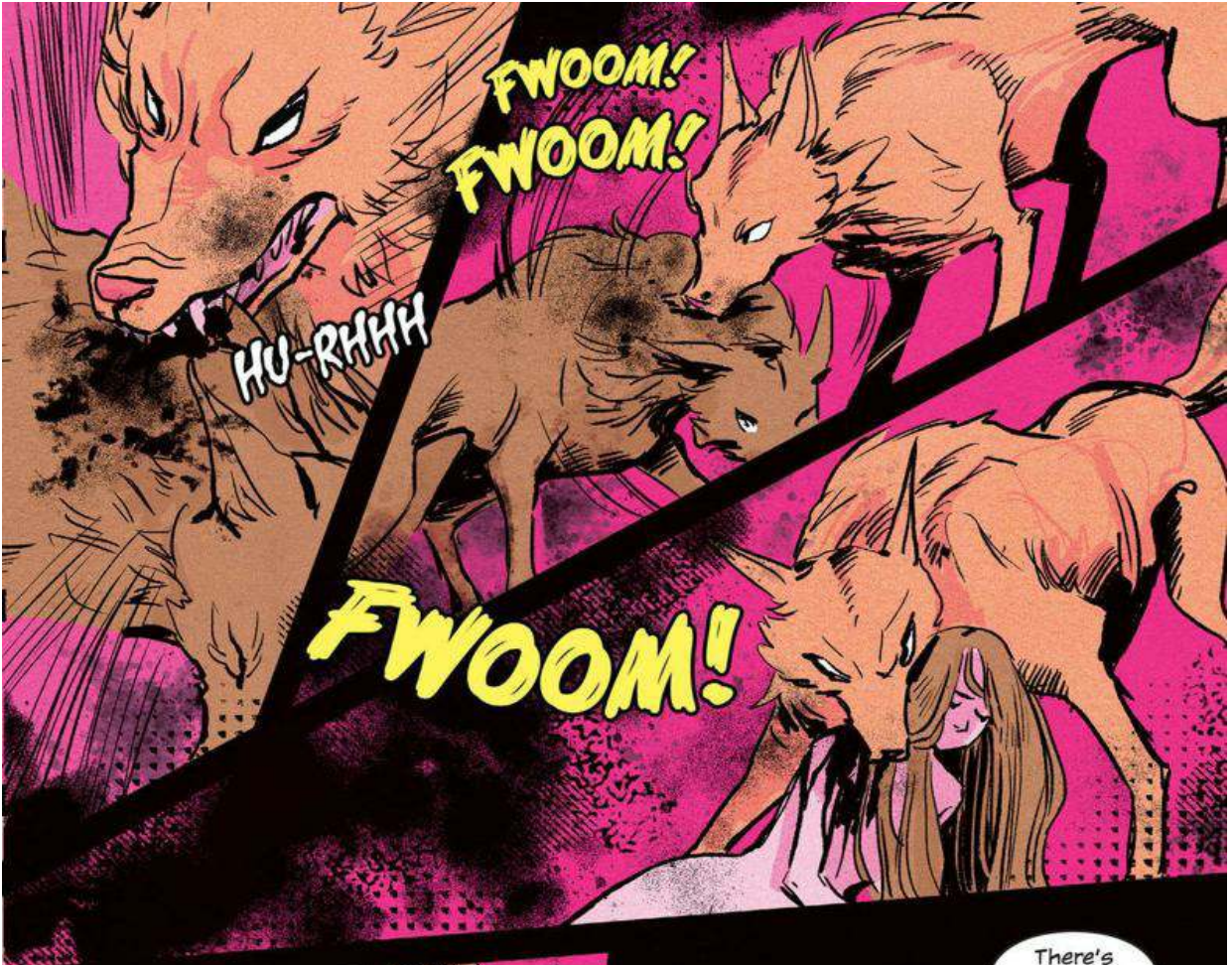


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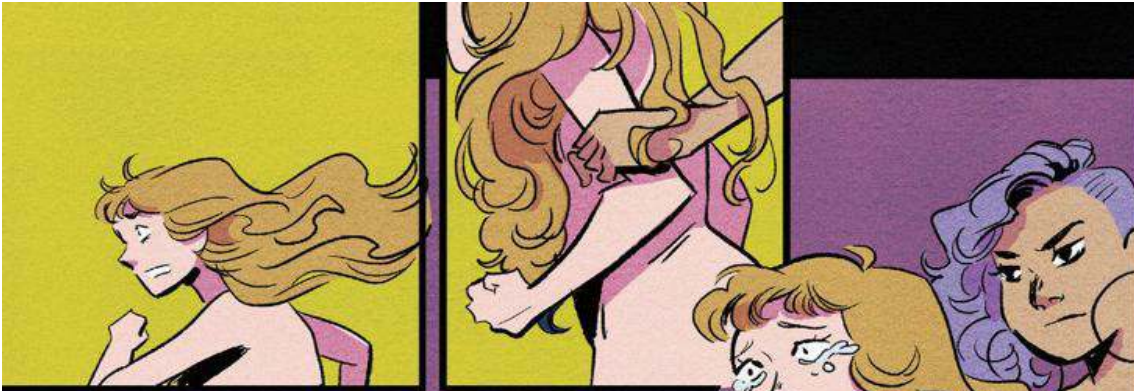


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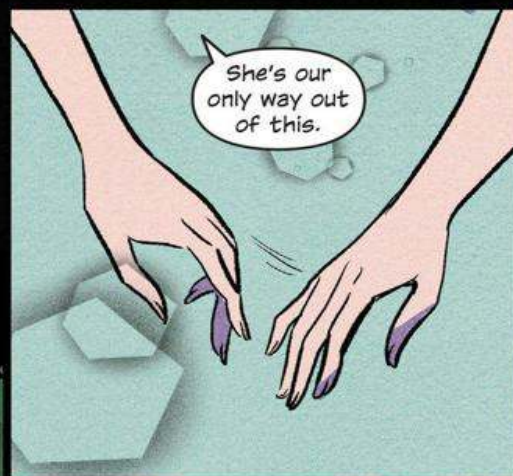


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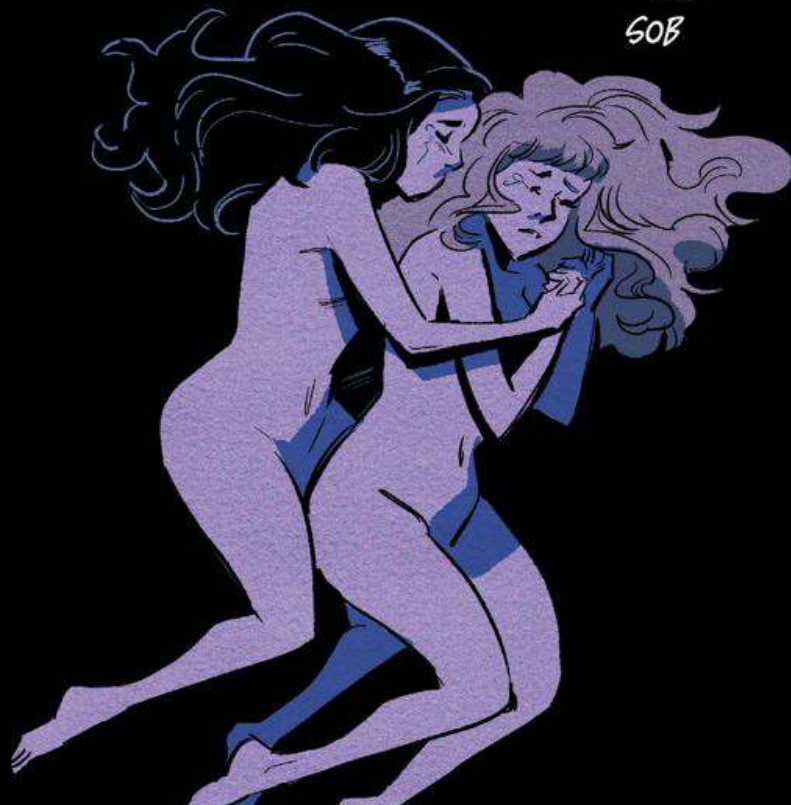
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SOB  
SOB

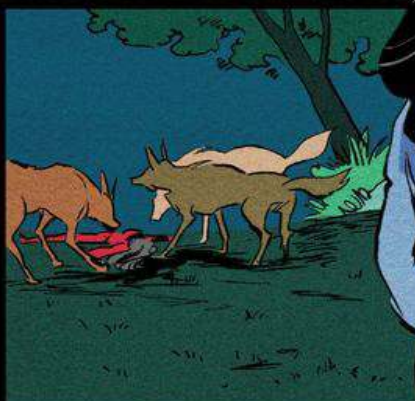


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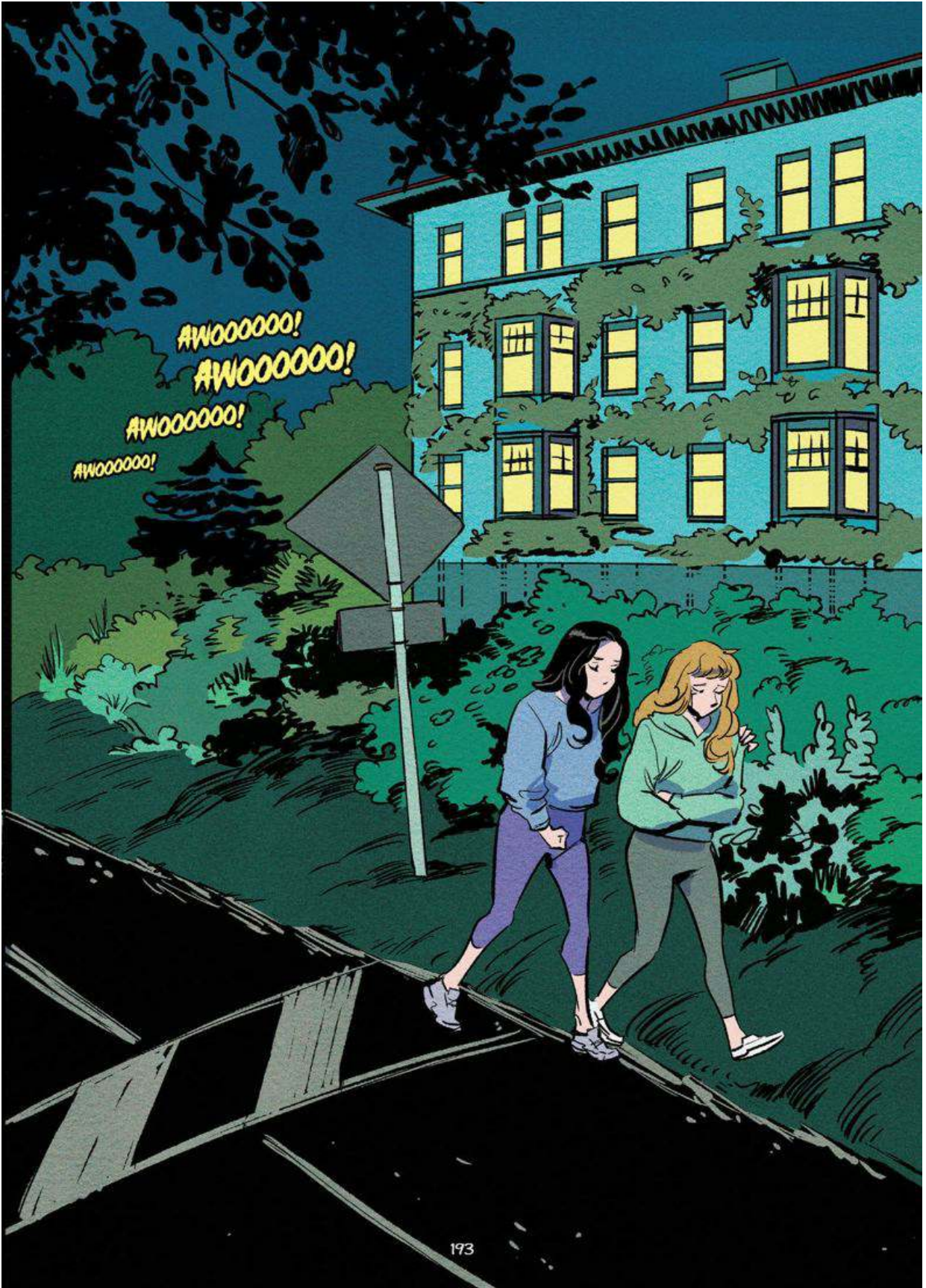


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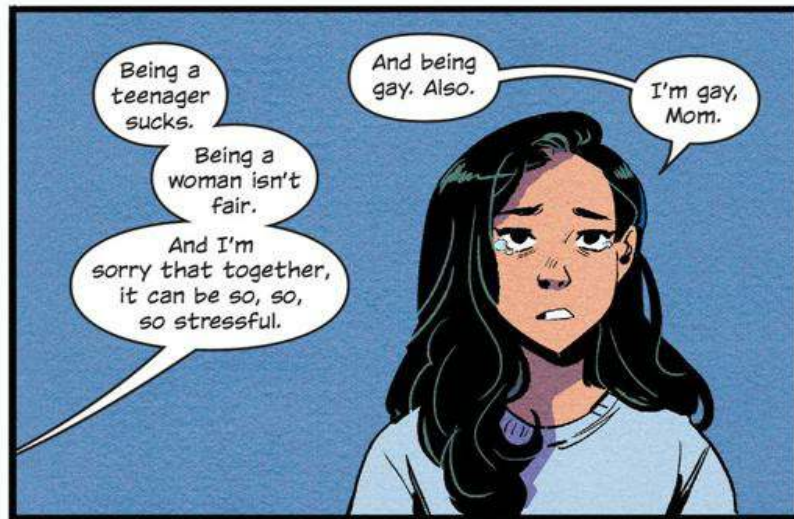


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EPILOGUE

PROM



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It seems impossible now  
that any of this happened.

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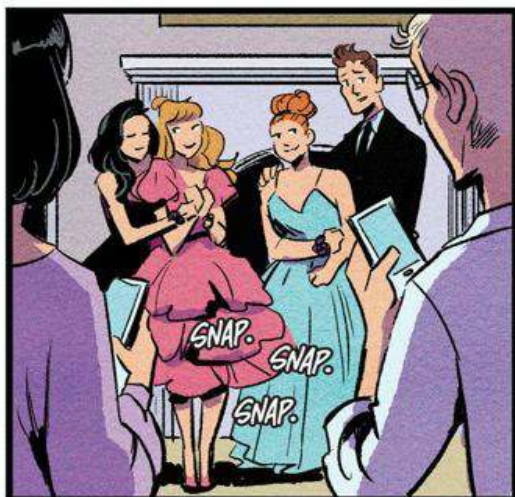


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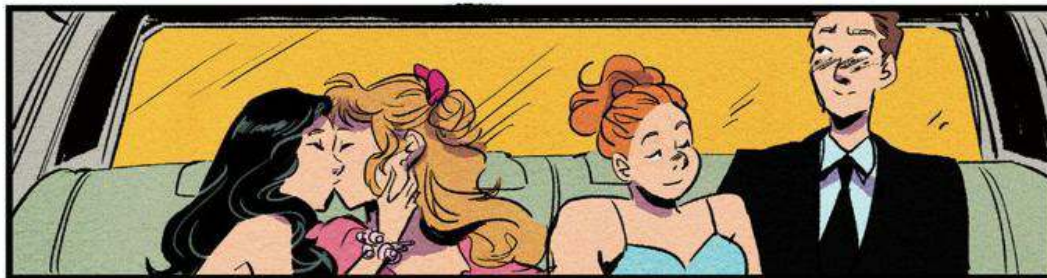
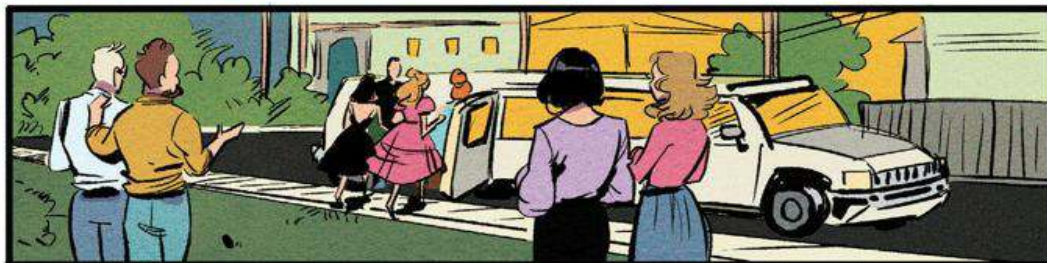


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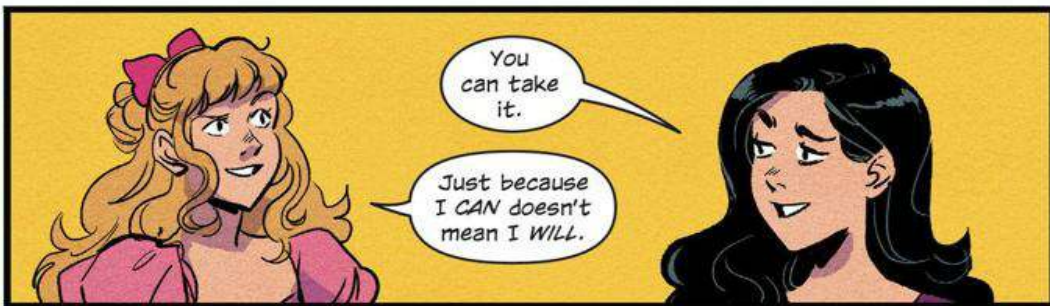




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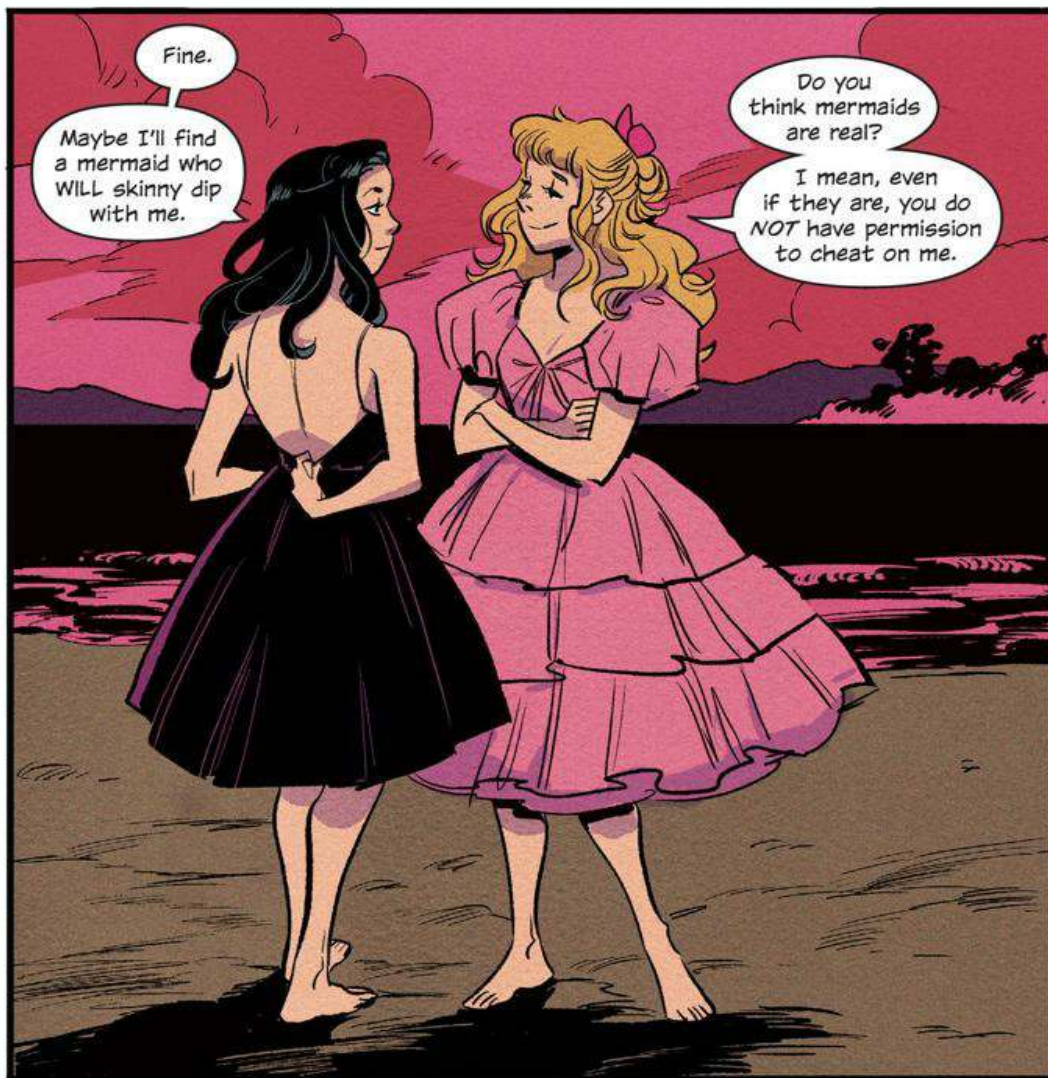


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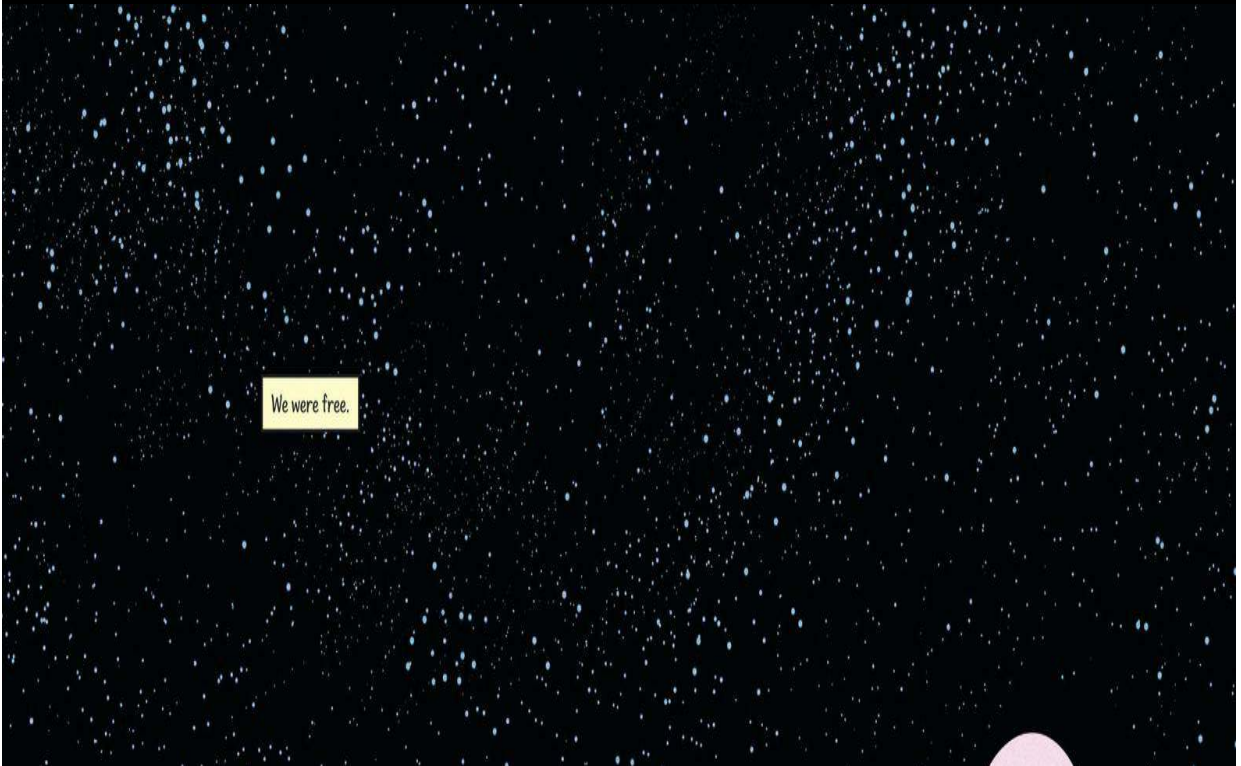
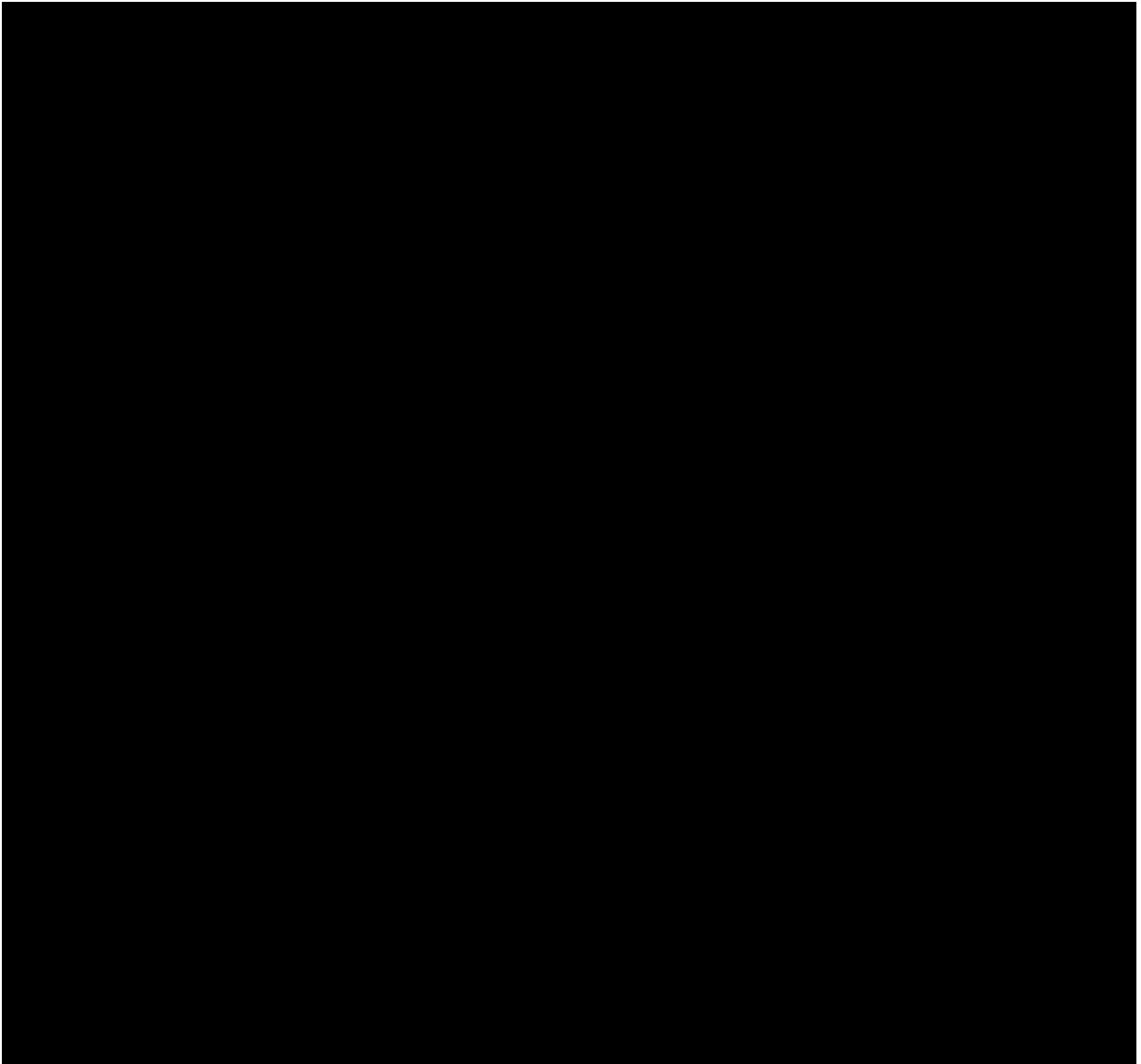




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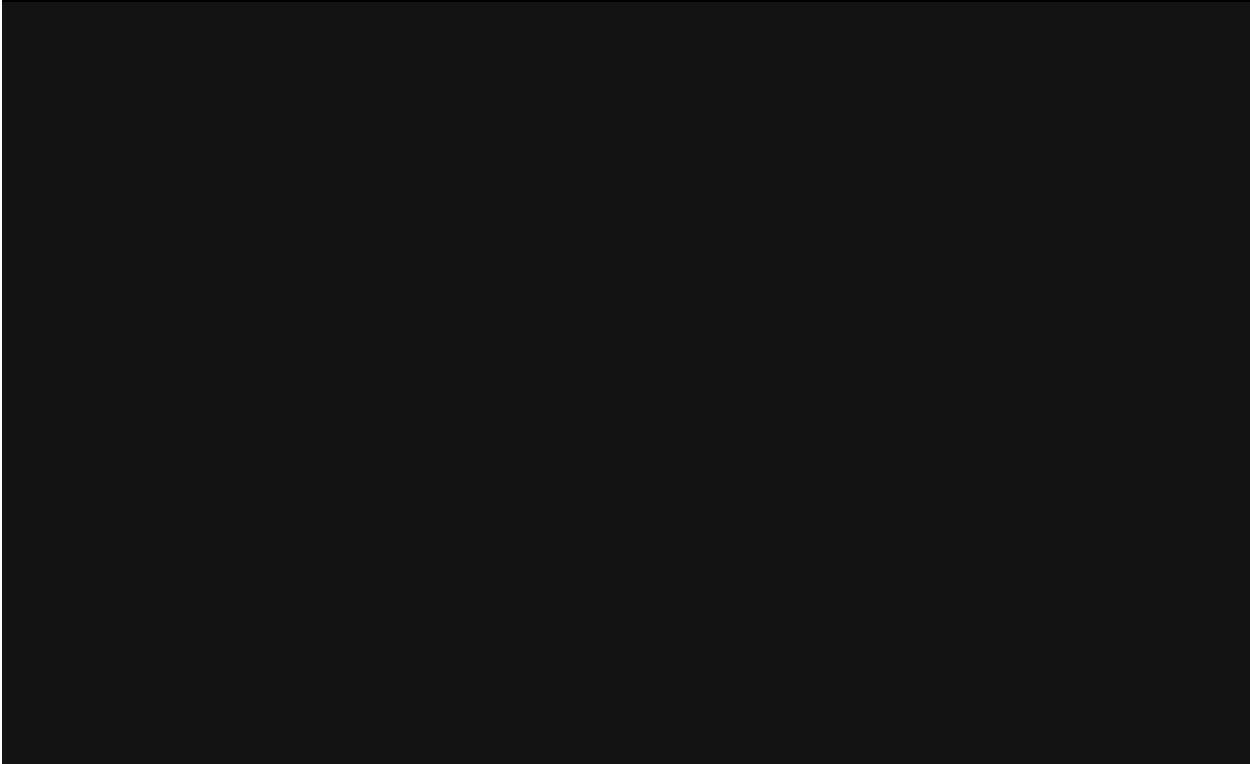
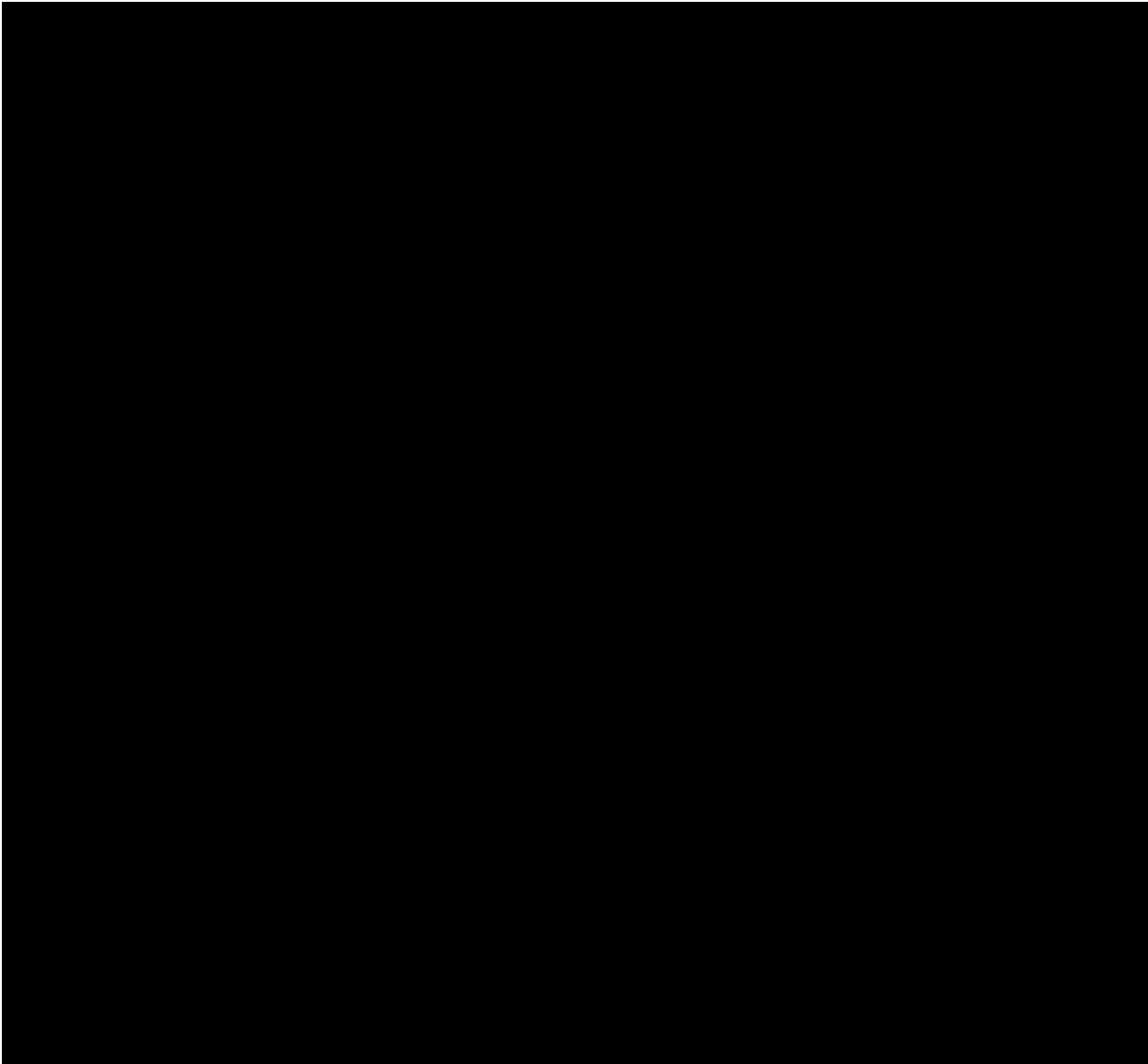


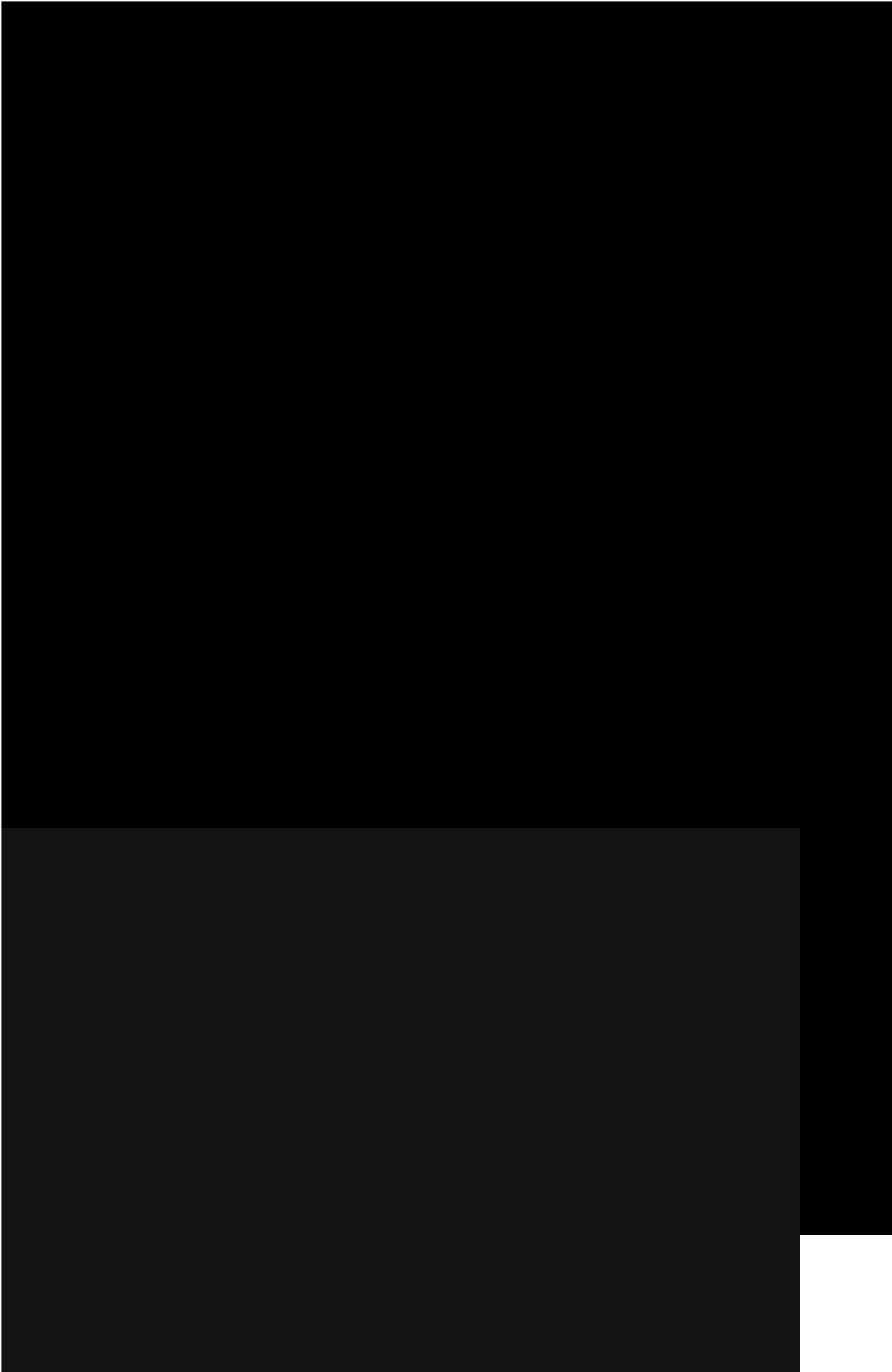




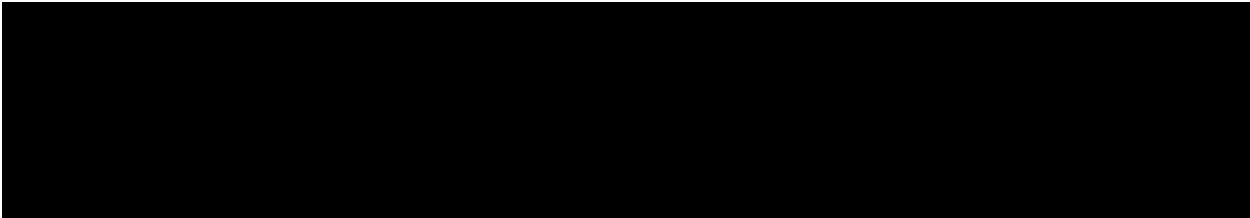
We were free.

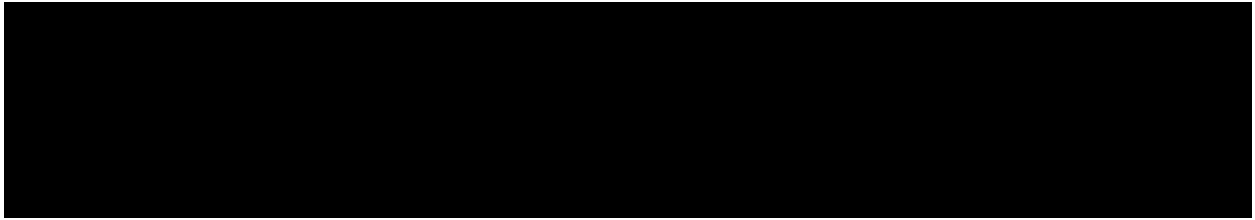


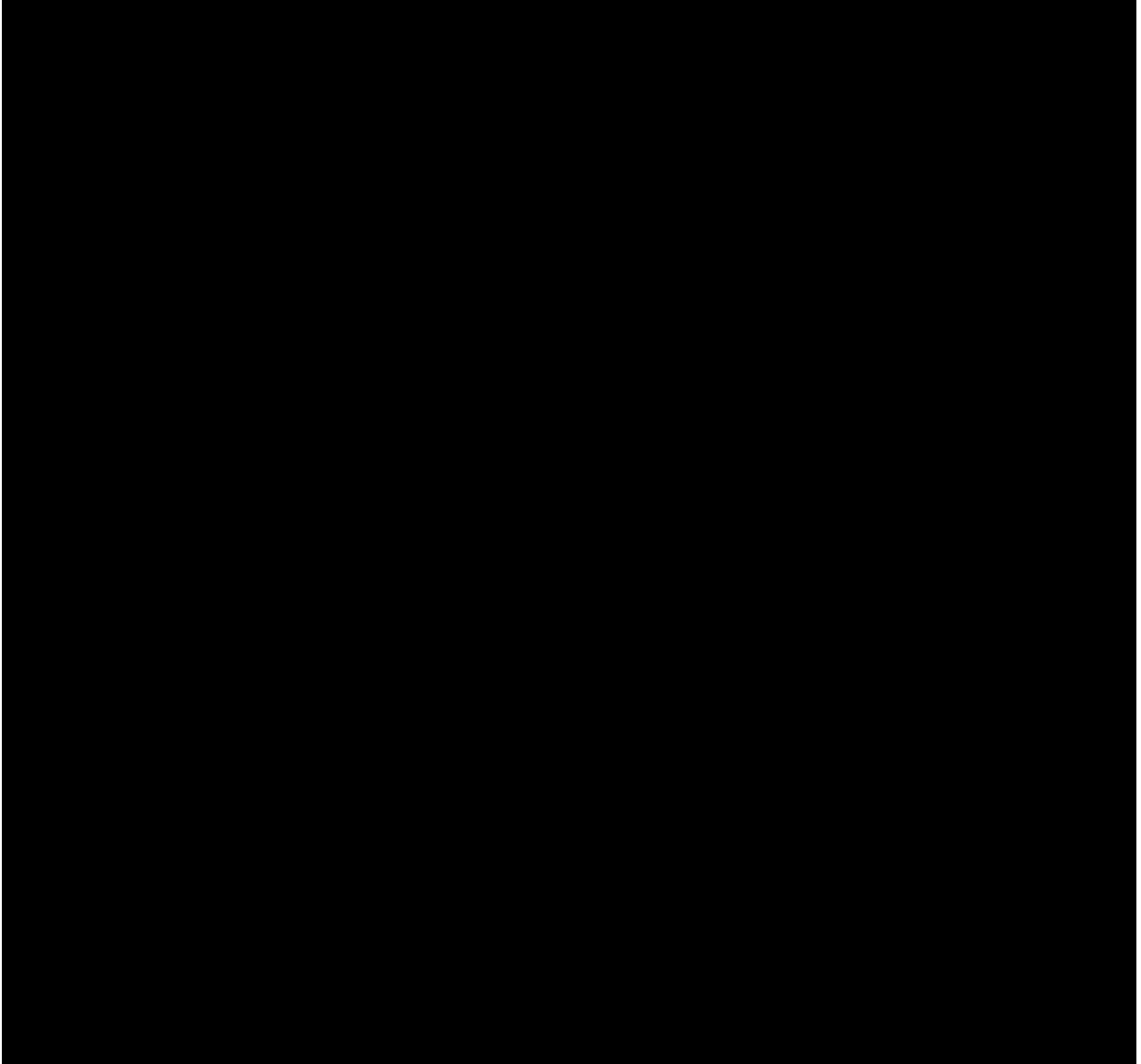


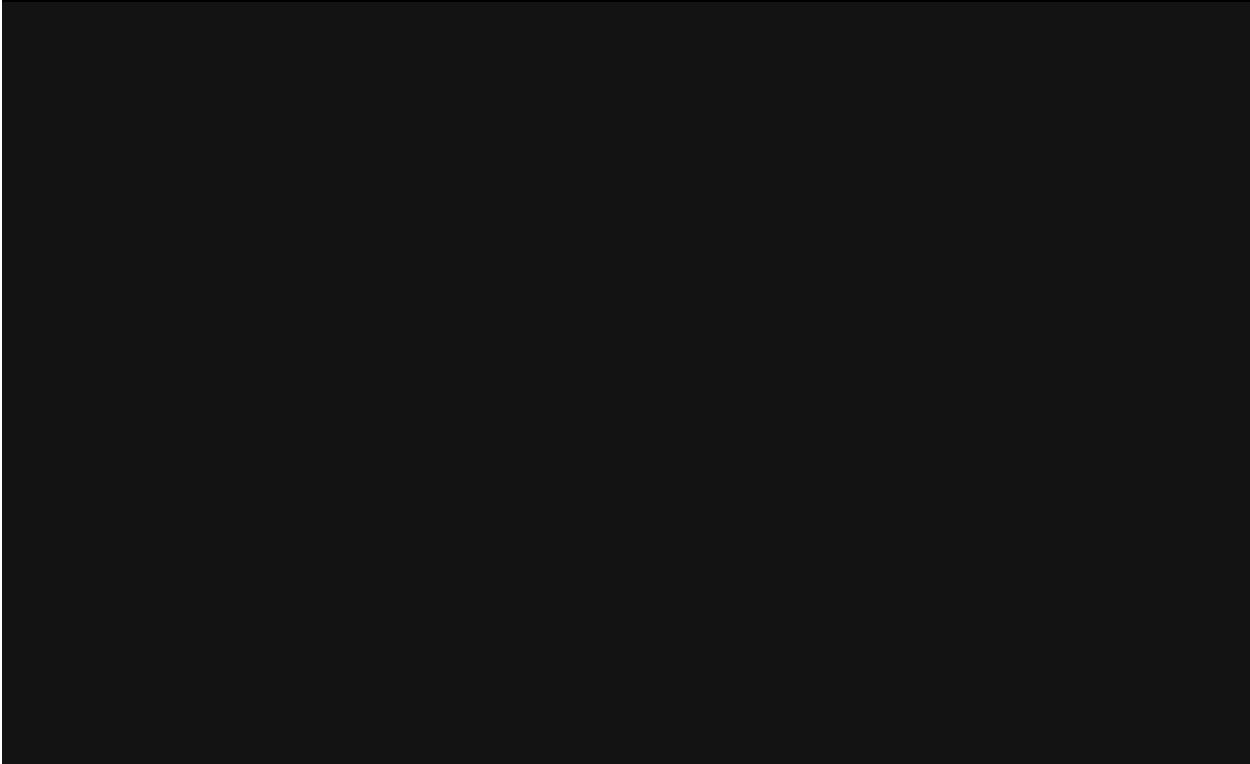
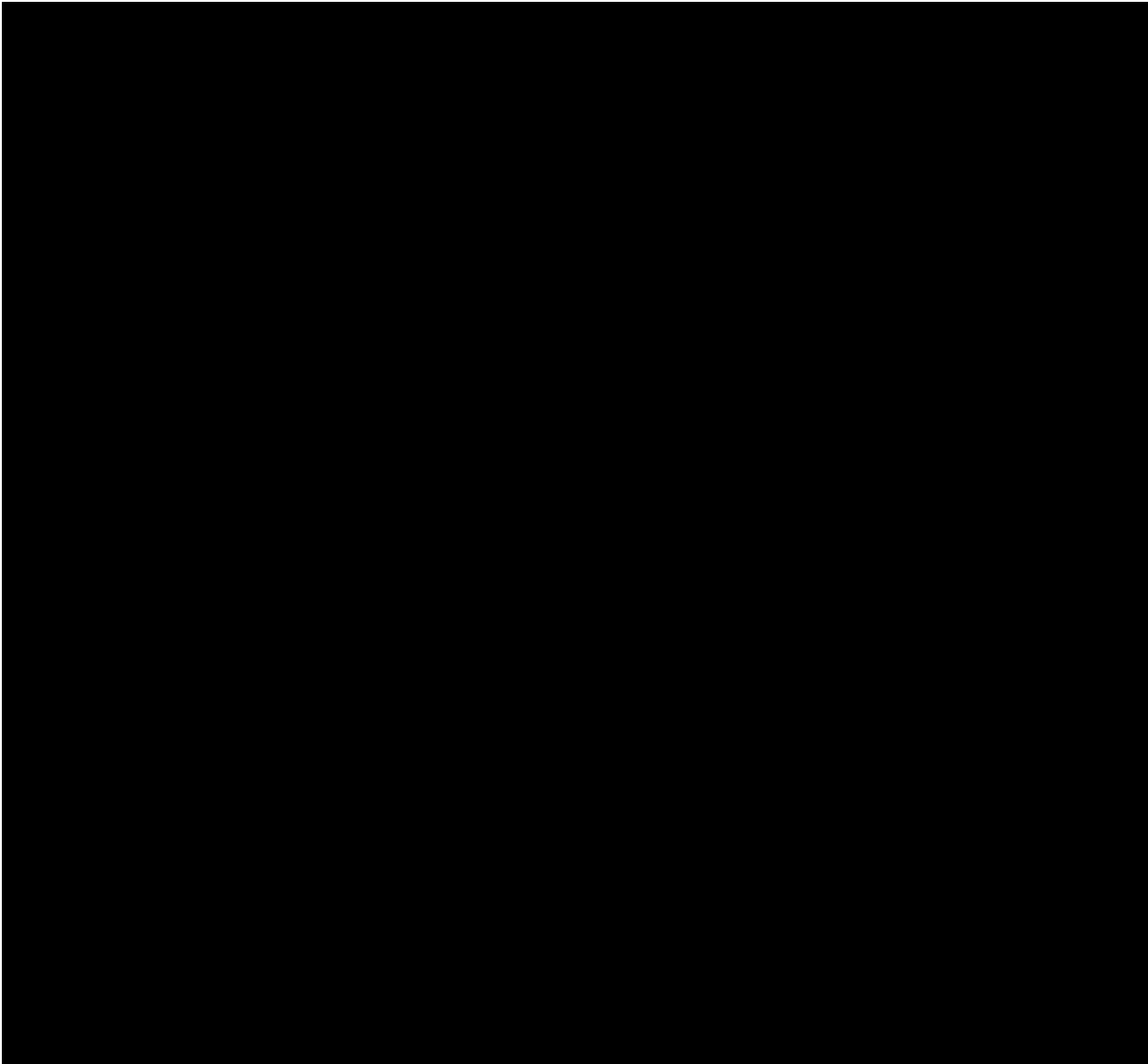


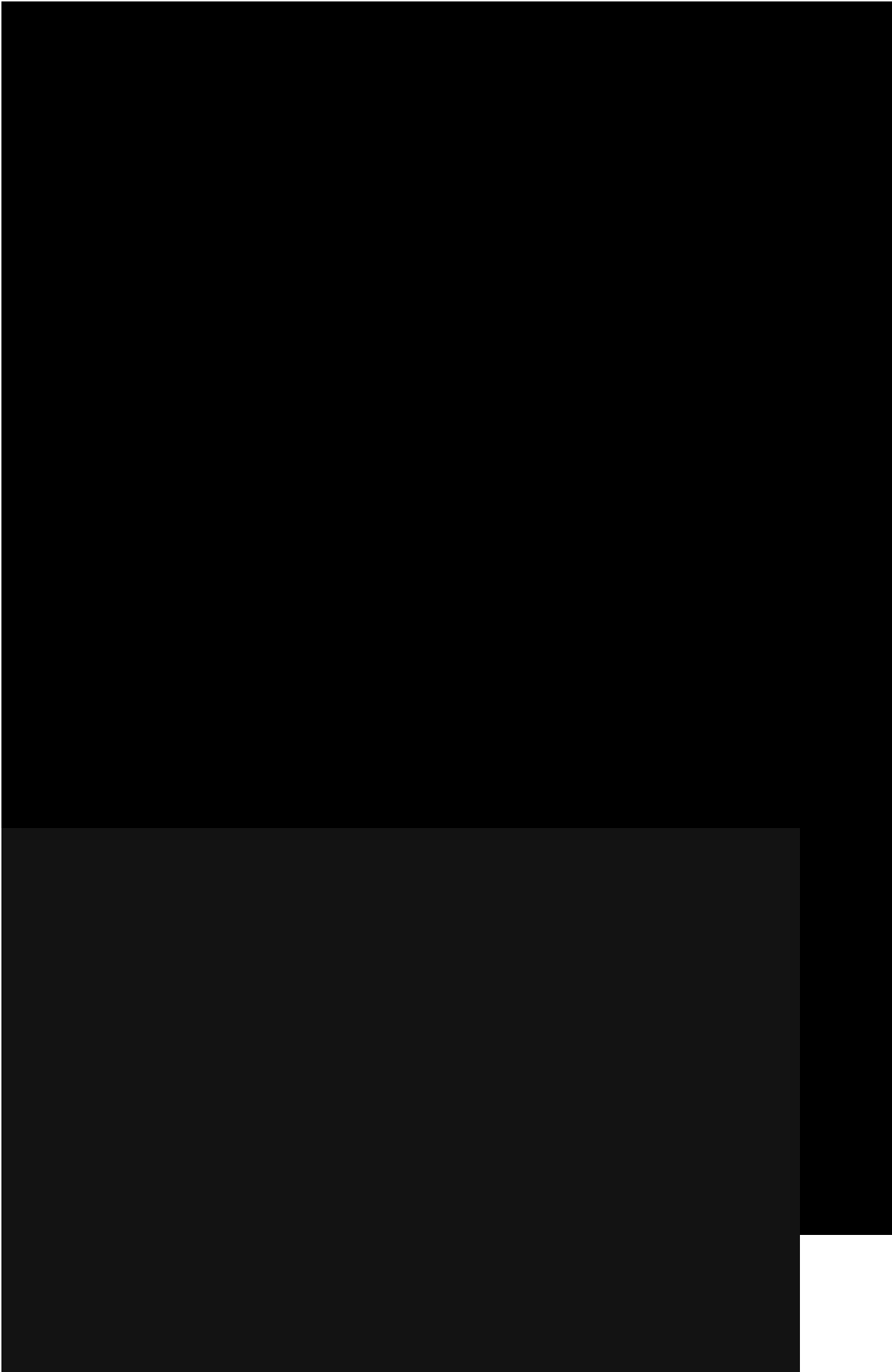


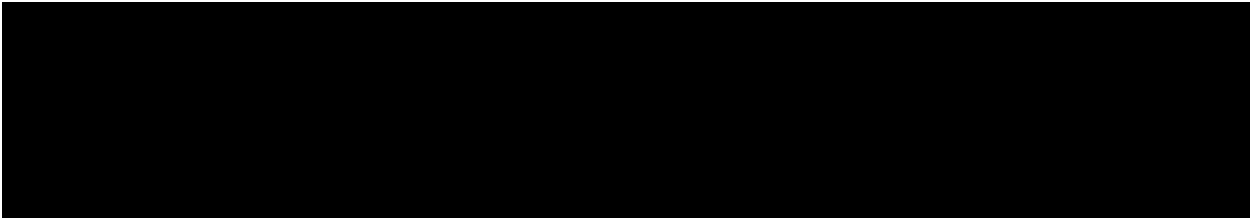






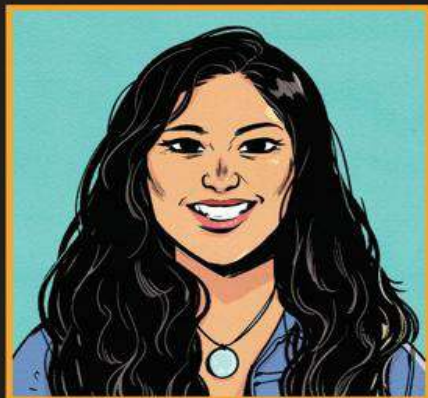












## MAGGIE TOKUDA-HALL

is the author of the acclaimed young adult novel *The Mermaid, the Witch, and the Sea*, which was named to several best book of the year lists, including NPR, *Kirkus*, and *School Library Journal*. She is also the author of the 2017 Parents' Choice Gold Award-winning picture book, *Also an Octopus*, illustrated by Benji Davies. She received her BA in studio art from Scripps College and an MFA in writing from the University of San Francisco, and she has worked as a bookseller. She lives with her husband, son, and objectively perfect dog in Oakland, California.

[www.prettyokmaggie.com](http://www.prettyokmaggie.com)

FIND MAGGIE TOKUDA-HALL ON



1







## LISA STERLE

is a Columbus artist with work spanning from comic books to concept design to pop-culture-fueled illustration. Her work is often bright, expressive, and occasionally tinged with horror—marrying her two favorite themes, the beautiful and the grotesque. She is the co-creator of the monthly comics *Witchblood*, *Long Lost*, and *Submerged*, as well as the creator of the Modern Witch Tarot Deck. She received her BFA from Columbus College of Art & Design and currently resides in Columbus, Ohio.

[www.lisasterle.com](http://www.lisasterle.com)

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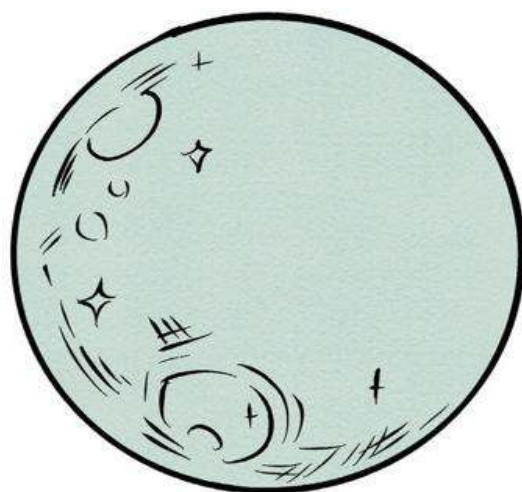


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"A fast-paced and feminist horror story for every girl who's ever felt like prey and asks how far a girl should go to hunt the hunters."

—LAURA RUBY, National Book Award Finalist and Printz Medalist

When Becca starts at a posh new high school, she never expects to be noticed by the most popular girls. She never expects them to invite her into their pack. But they do. They show her how to dress and how to act and what parties to go to. And then one night under the full moon, they let her in on their secret: they're werewolves. This is when a normal person would run screaming. But Becca doesn't run. She doesn't scream. She doesn't want to escape. She wants to belong. And now she does. She is all new. It is perfect. For a little while, anyway. Until Thatcher dies. And things get complicated.

"A story you can't help but sink your teeth into."

—COLLEEN AF VENABLE, author of National Book Award nominee *Kiss Number 8*

"Monstrously delightful and delightfully monstrous."

—SARAH GAILEY, author of *When We Were Magic*

  
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