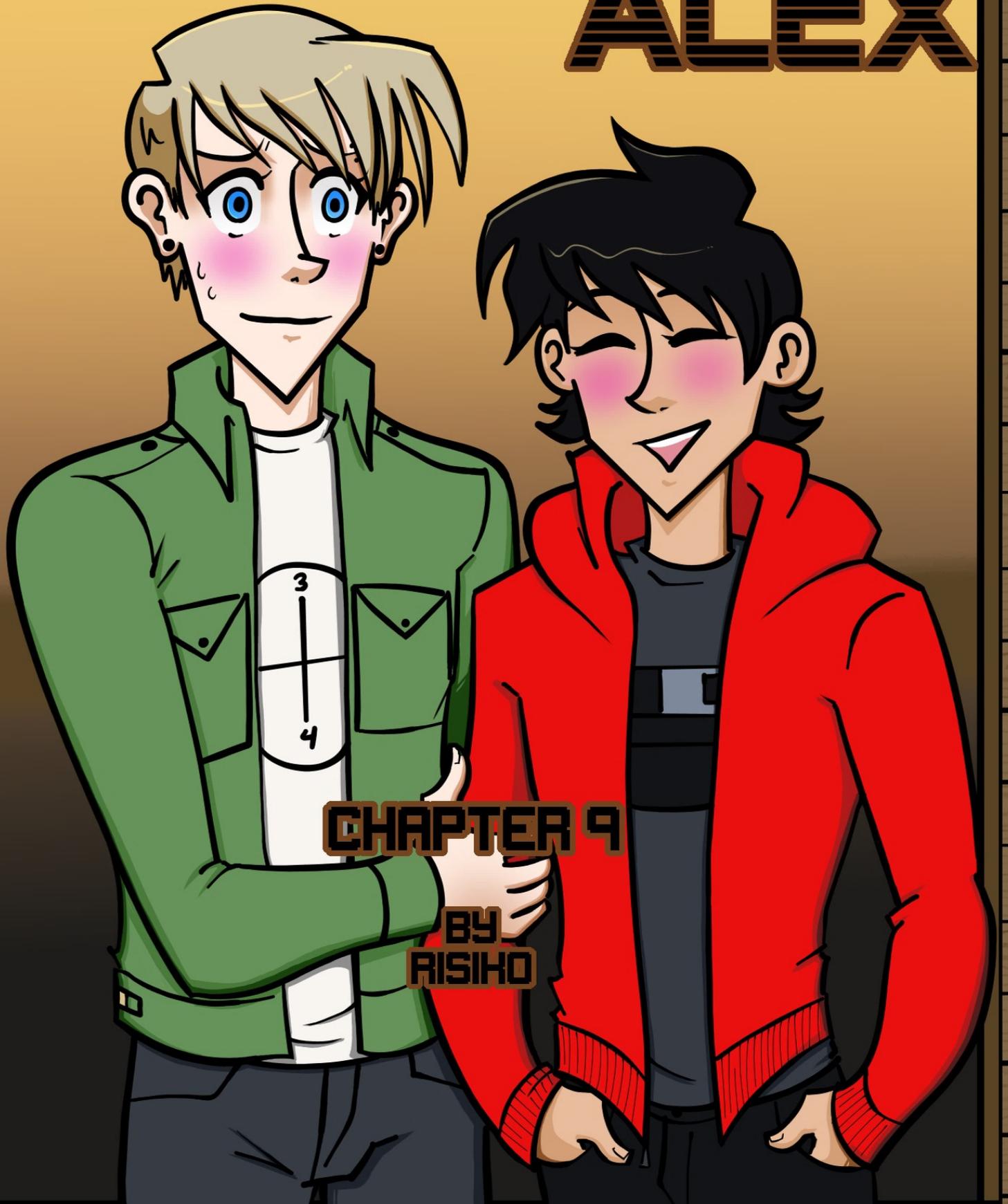


ARCADE

ALEX



CHAPTER 9

BY
RISIKO



ARCADE ALEX

CHAPTER 9

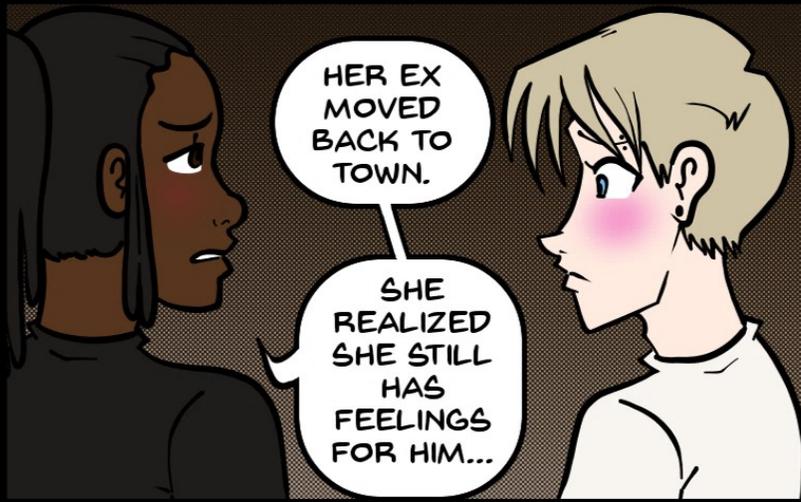
WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY
RISIKO

CHECK OUT THE FULL COMIC AT
RISIKOCOMICS.COM
(NSFW/18+)

CONTACT:
RISIKOCOMICS@GMAIL.COM

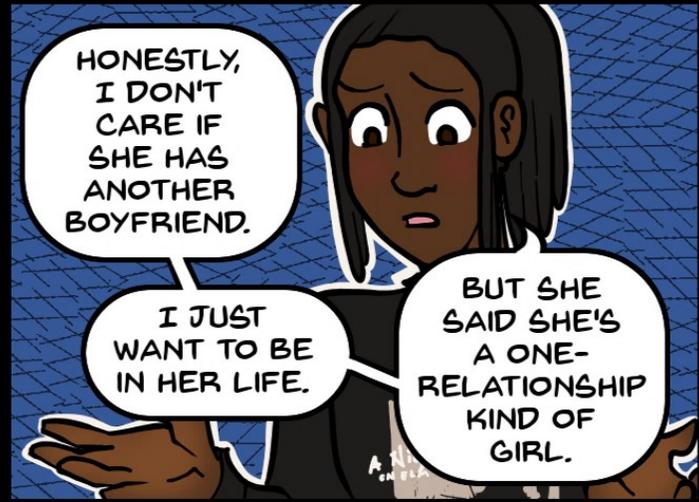
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HER EX
MOVED
BACK TO
TOWN.

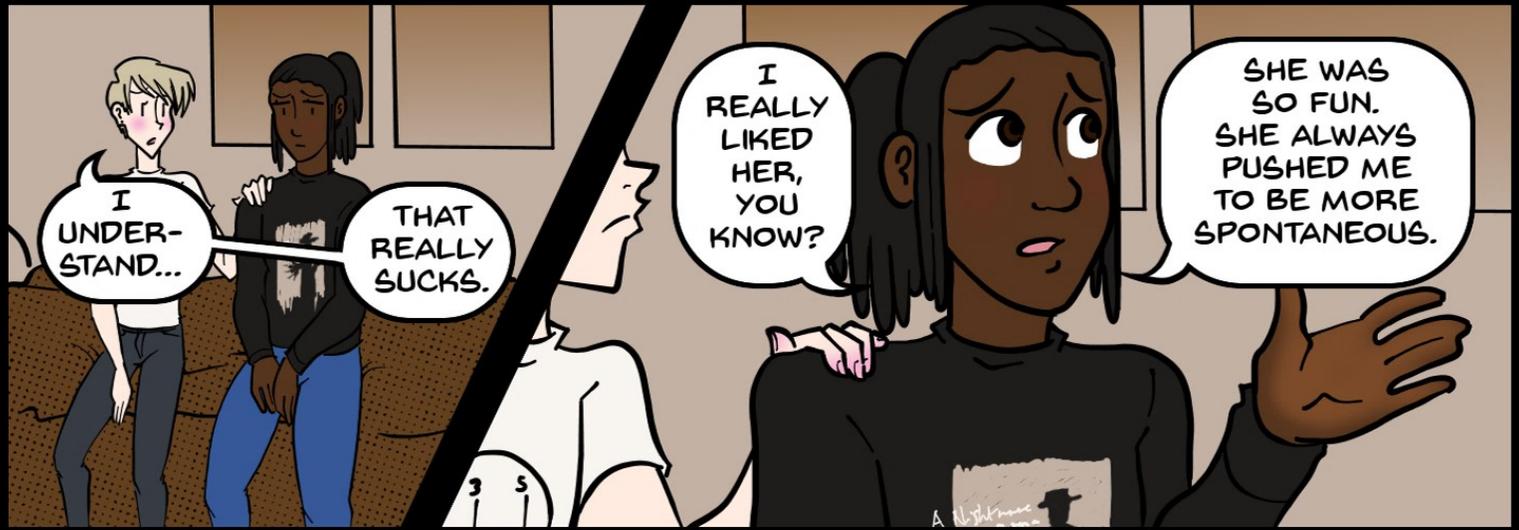
SHE
REALIZED
SHE STILL
HAS
FEELINGS
FOR HIM...



HONESTLY,
I DON'T
CARE IF
SHE HAS
ANOTHER
BOYFRIEND.

I JUST
WANT TO BE
IN HER LIFE.

BUT SHE
SAID SHE'S
A ONE-
RELATIONSHIP
KIND OF
GIRL.

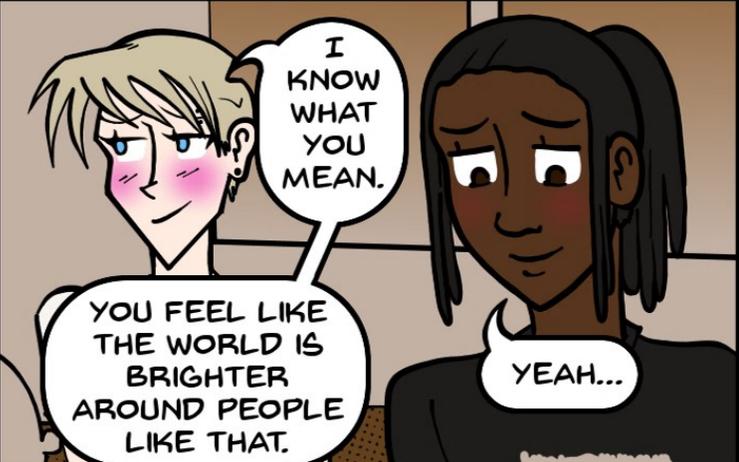


I
UNDER-
STAND...

THAT
REALLY
SUCKS.

I
REALLY
LIKED
HER,
YOU
KNOW?

SHE WAS
SO FUN.
SHE ALWAYS
PUSHED ME
TO BE MORE
SPONTANEOUS.



I
KNOW
WHAT
YOU
MEAN.

YOU FEEL LIKE
THE WORLD IS
BRIGHTER
AROUND PEOPLE
LIKE THAT.



YEAH...



I CAN'T
GET YOU
GUYS
BACK
TOGETHER
OR
ANYTHING
...

BUT I CAN GO
GRAB YOU SOME
SNACKS IF IT
WOULD HELP.



AW
DUDE...

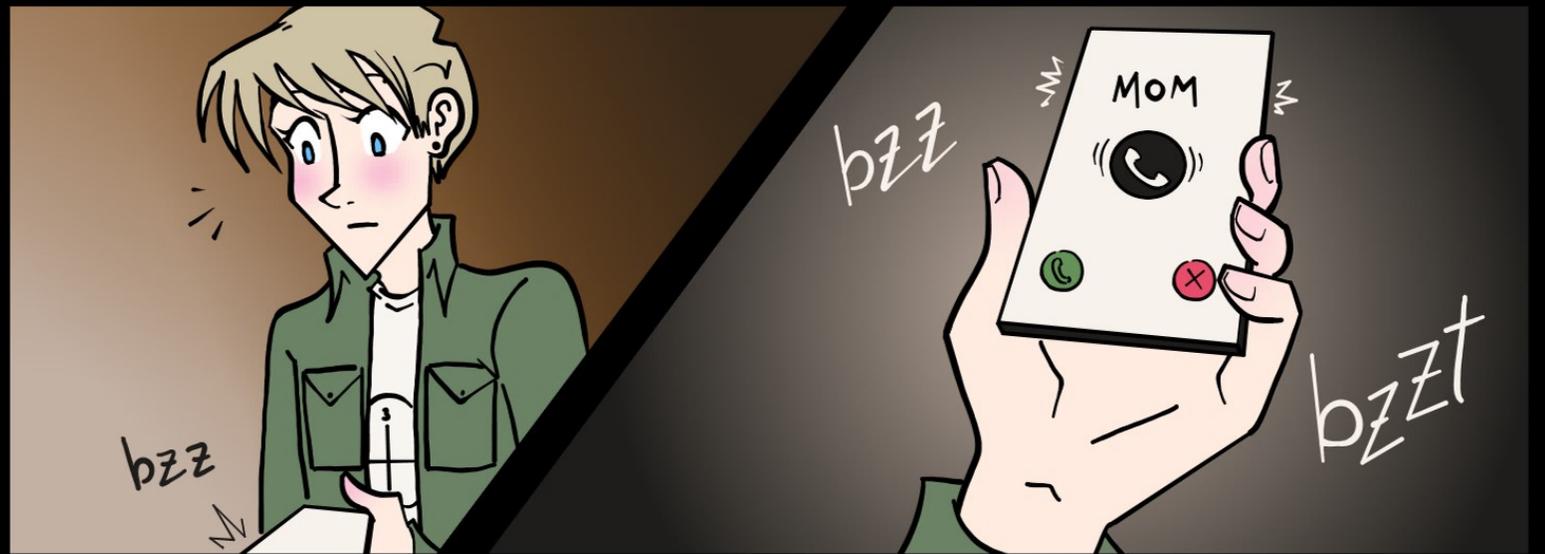


WHATEVER
YOU WANT!



I KINDA JUST
WANT TO
CURL UP
WITH SOME
CHAI AND A
DUMB
MOVIE...

YES SIR!
I'LL BE
BACK
SOON.





I'M FINE.

IS EVERYTHING OKAY?



I WANTED TO ASK WHAT YOU WERE DOING FOR CHRISTMAS.

CHRISTMAS, HUH...? I'M NOT SURE...

YOU SHOULD COME HOME. IT'S BEEN SO LONG.

MORE THAN TWO YEARS...



I GUESS IT HAS BEEN A WHILE.

I DON'T KNOW. I CAN'T PROMISE ANYTHING, BUT...



OH, I KNOW YOU HAVE A BUSY LIFE. BUT EVERYONE BACK HOME MISSES YOU.



I... OKAY. I'LL TRY TO MAKE IT UP FOR A FEW DAYS.

OH WONDERFUL!

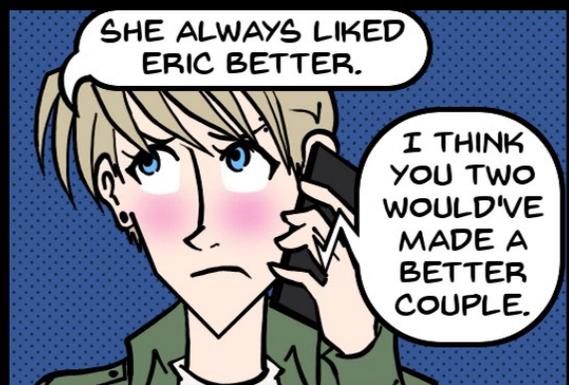
DO YOU UH... EVER SEE ERIC AROUND TOWN?



NO, BUT I DO SEE CHRISSEY.

I BET SHE'D LOVE TO SEE YOU.

YEAH. MAYBE.



SHE ALWAYS LIKED ERIC BETTER.

I THINK YOU TWO WOULD'VE MADE A BETTER COUPLE.

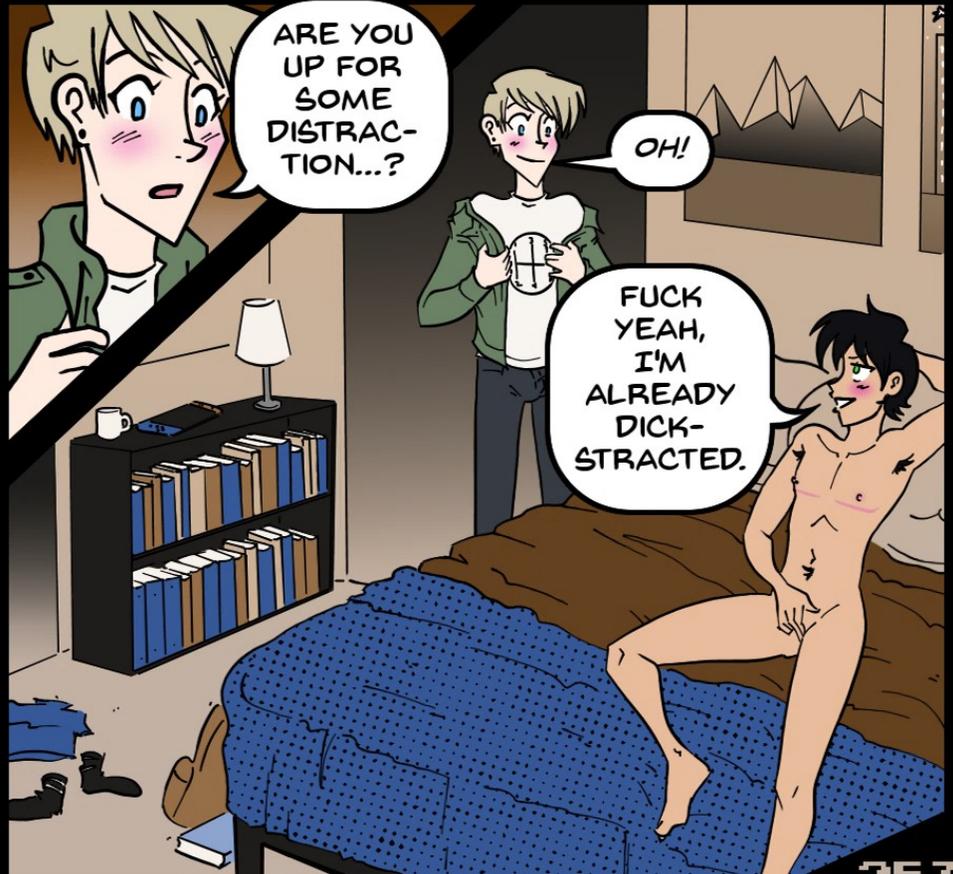


WELL, ANYWAY, MOM, I'LL SEE YOU FOR CHRISTMAS.

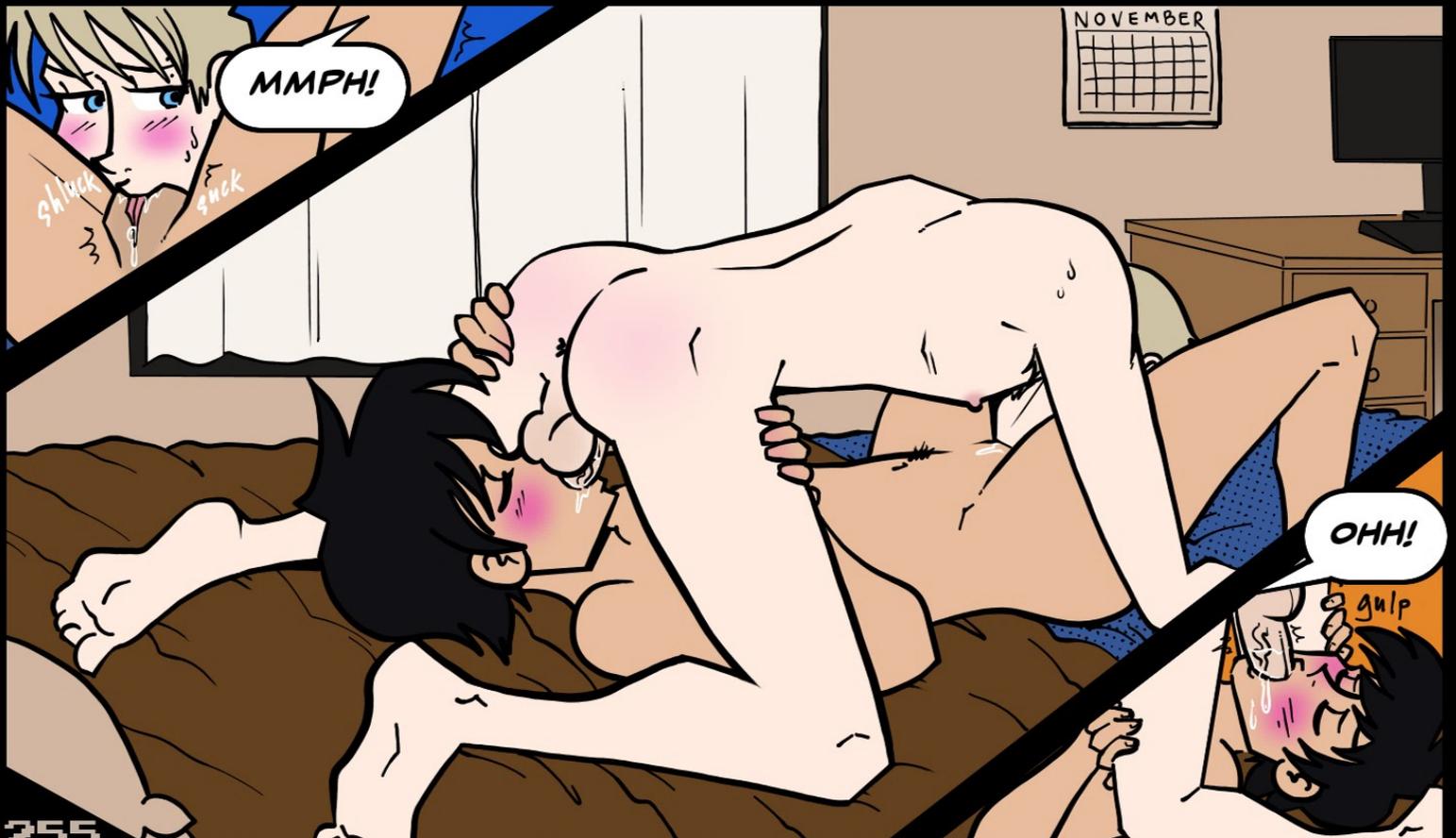
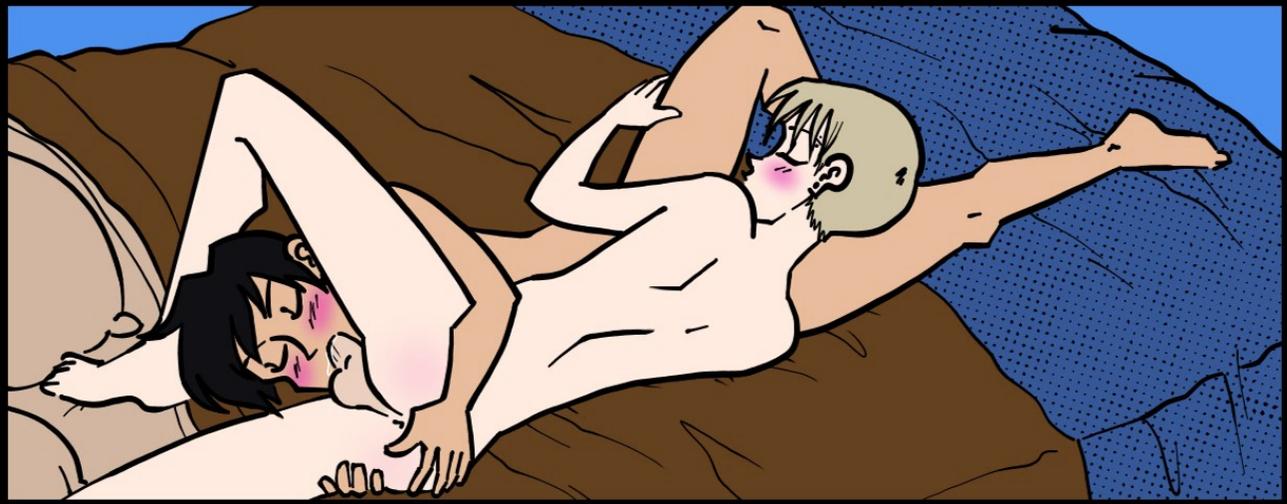
YES, I PROMISE.

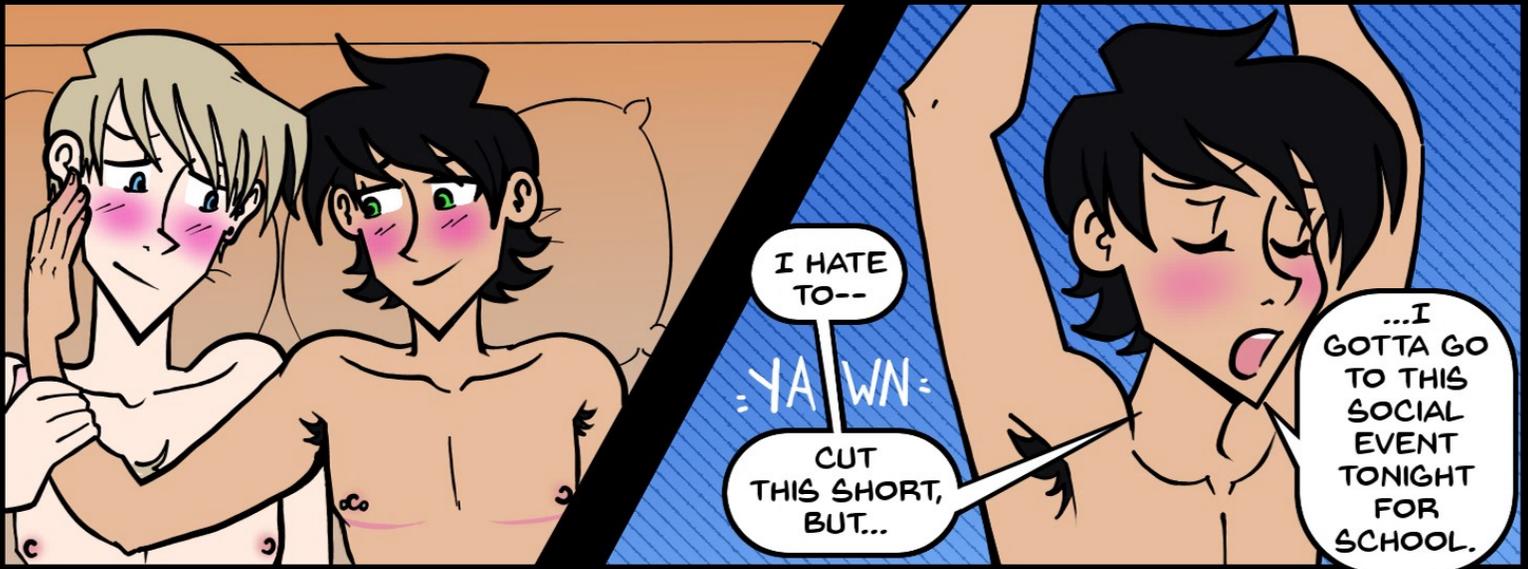
OKAY.

YOU TOO. BYE.









I HATE TO--
YAWN
CUT THIS SHORT, BUT...

...I GOTTA GO TO THIS SOCIAL EVENT TONIGHT FOR SCHOOL.

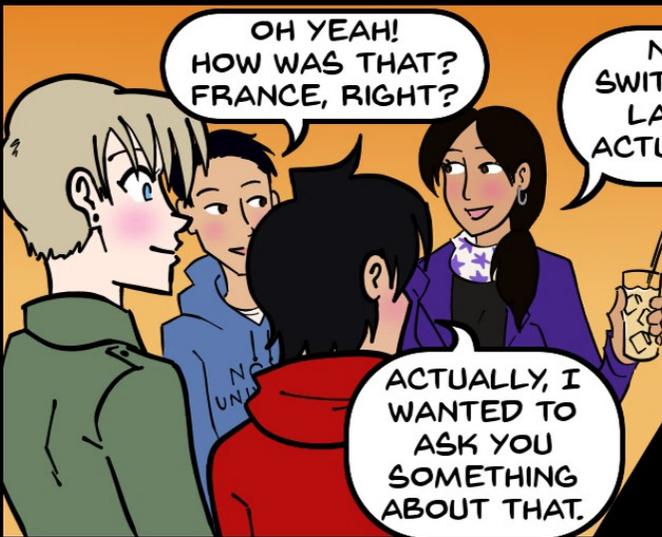
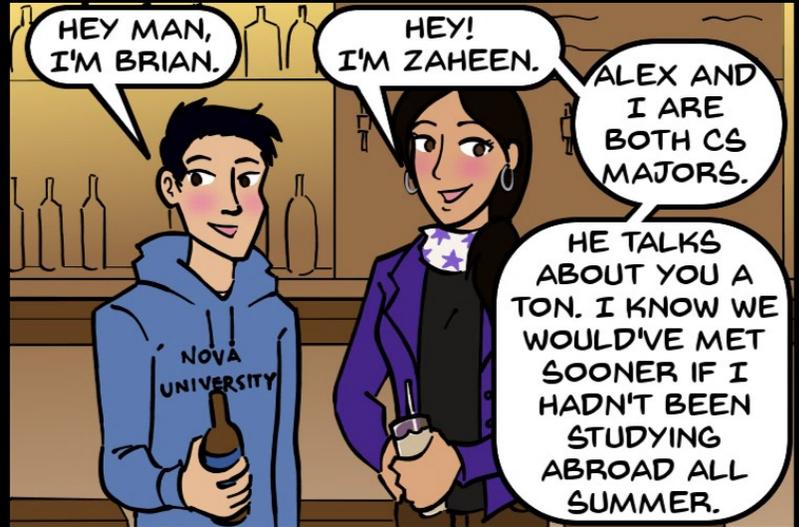


IT'S AN ALMOST THE END OF THE SEMESTER GET TOGETHER FOR JUNIORS, SINCE WE JUST HAVE FINALS AFTER NEXT WEEK.

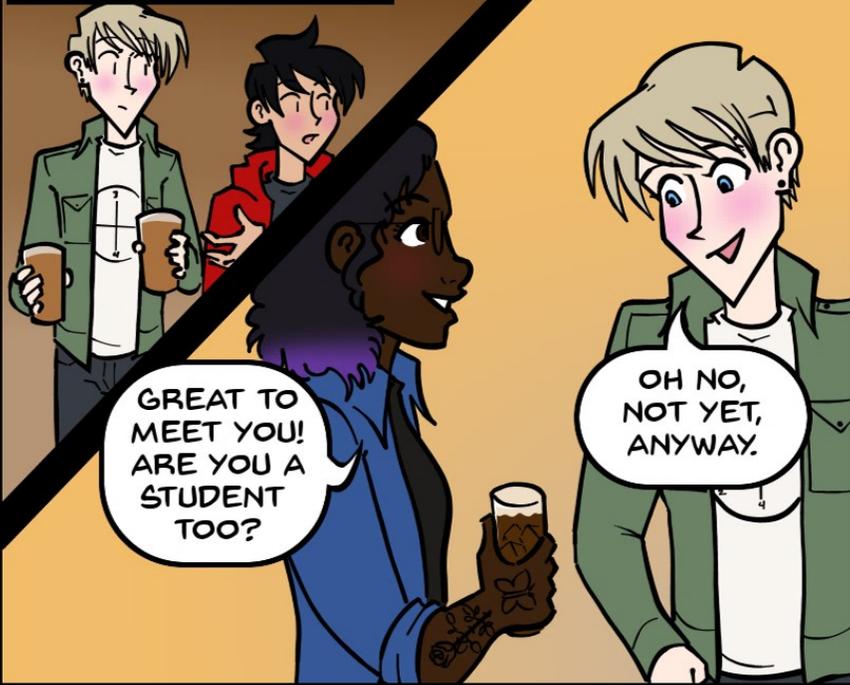
SURE. THAT SOUNDS FUN.

YOU'RE WELCOME TO COME. IT'S AT A LOCAL BAR, SO IT'LL BE CASUAL.





ALEX WAS DEEP IN CONVERSATION, SO I WENT TO GO MINGLE.



GREAT TO MEET YOU! ARE YOU A STUDENT TOO?

OH NO, NOT YET, ANYWAY.



WHAT'S YOUR MAJOR?

UH, I'M NOT IN SCHOOL.

OH GOTCHA. WHAT D'YOU THINK YOU'LL STUDY WHEN YOU GO?

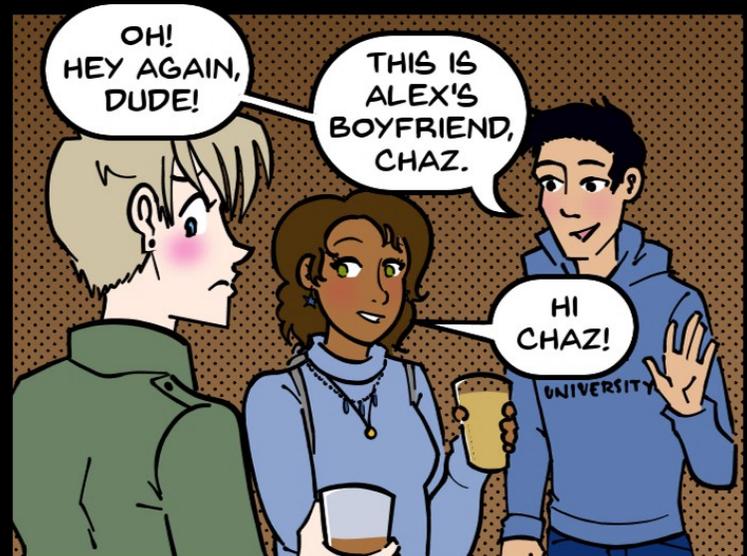
I DUNNO ...

TO ADD INSULT TO INJURY, NO ONE GOT MY NAME RIGHT...



YOUR NAME IS KATZ?

IS THAT YOUR LAST NAME OR SOMETHING?



OH! HEY AGAIN, DUDE!

THIS IS ALEX'S BOYFRIEND, CHAZ.

HI CHAZ!



AND AS IF THE AWKWARD QUESTIONS WEREN'T BAD ENOUGH, THE CONVERSATIONS I OVERHEARD WERE EVEN WORSE.

SO WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE ON THE RUSSIAN FINAL?

I THINK THE PROFESSOR MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT THE ABLATIVE CASE...



I HEARD SARAH GOT ACCEPTED TO STUDY IN TAIWAN NEXT YEAR!

OH WOW! GOOD FOR HER!

I'M HOPING I CAN STUDY ABROAD NEXT YEAR TOO. MY PARENTS ALREADY OFFERED TO HELP PAY FOR IT!

...ABOUT
TO
GRADUATE...

I FELT LIKE
SUCH A
LOSER.

...I'M SO
PROUD OF
MY GIRLFRIEND,
MAN...

...HE'S A
GENIUS! I'M
SURE
HE'S GOING
TO LAND A
GREAT JOB...

...ACCEPTED
TO
GRAD
SCHOOL...

...SHE'S WORKING
AS A SOFTWARE
ENGINEER NOW...

...WITH THAT
KIND OF DEGREE,
YOU COULD MAKE
SIX FIGURES
EASY...

WHAT WAS
I EVEN
DOING HERE?

WHAT COULD
A GUY LIKE
ALEX SEE
IN AN IDIOT
LIKE ME?



HEY, KAZ, RIGHT?

COOL NAME!

YEAH.



THANKS!

OH, UH

IT'S CZECH.



YOU LIKE CZECH PILSNER?

WE'RE ABOUT TO GRAB ANOTHER ROUND.

OH... SURE.

AWESOME! IT'S ON US.



HERE YA GO!

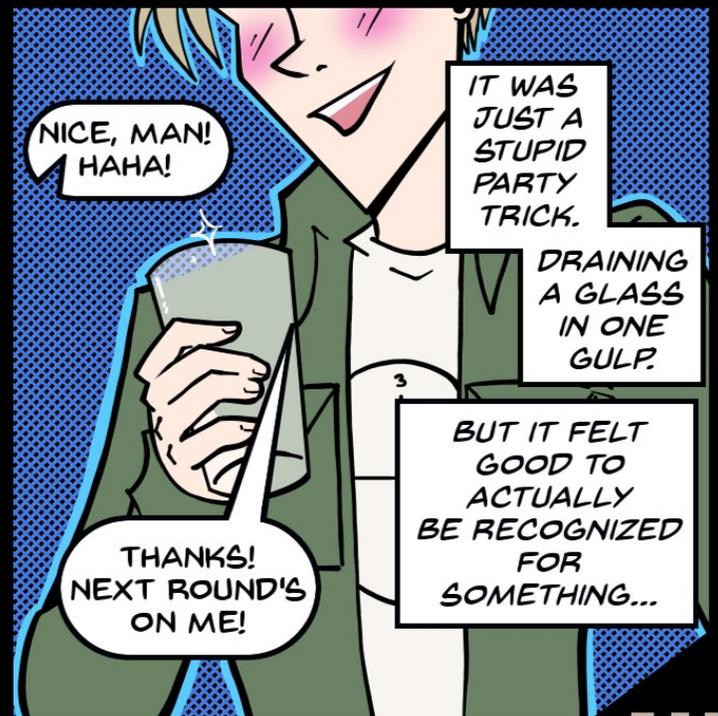
TO COLLEGE!



YEAH! TO COLLEGE!

CHECK THIS OUT, GUYS!

GULP



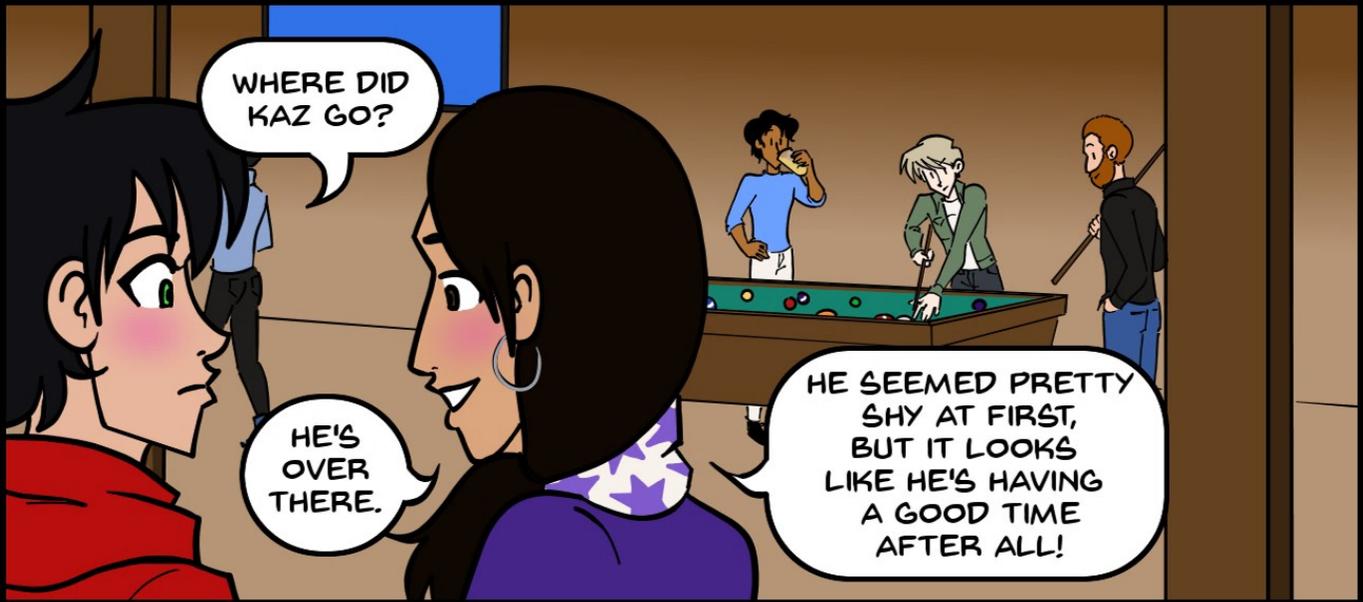
NICE, MAN! HAHA!

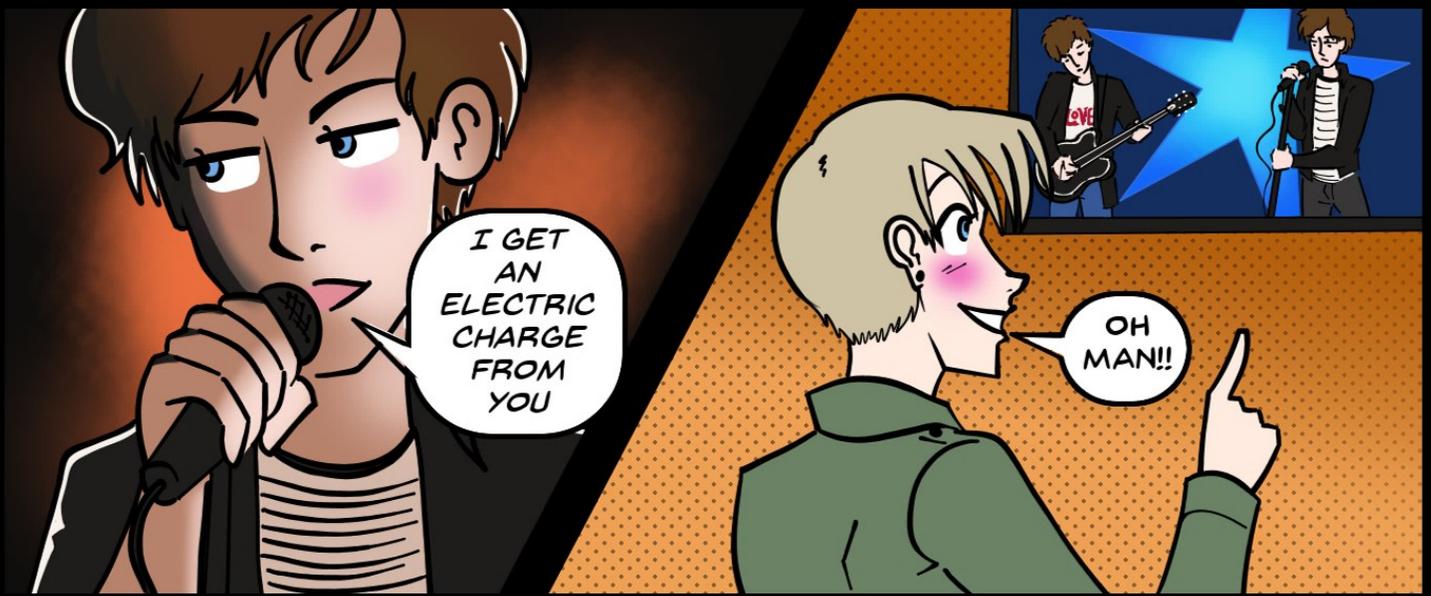
IT WAS JUST A STUPID PARTY TRICK.

DRAINING A GLASS IN ONE GULP.

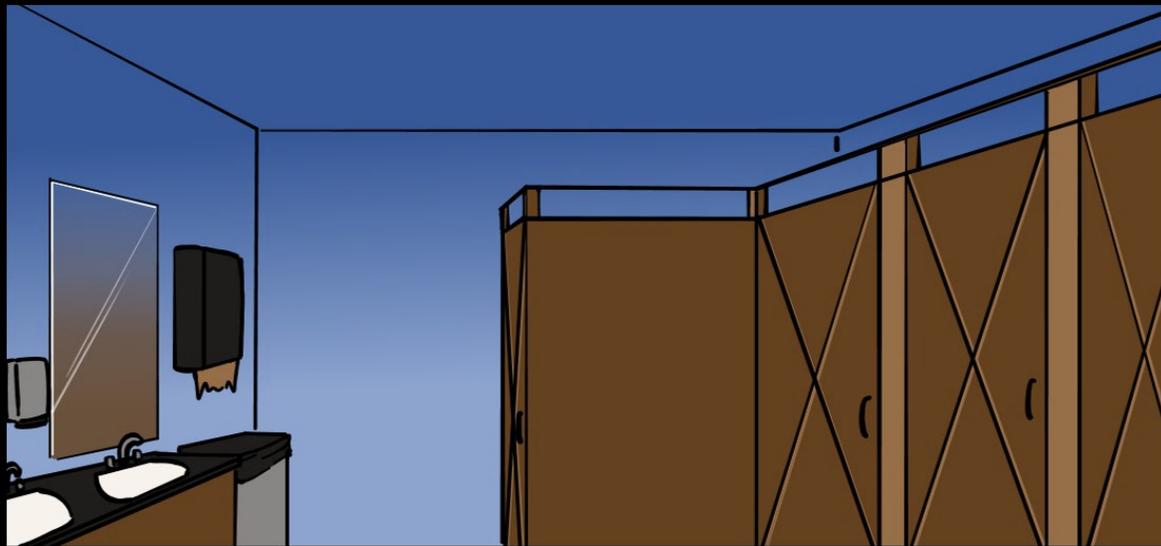
BUT IT FELT GOOD TO ACTUALLY BE RECOGNIZED FOR SOMETHING...

THANKS! NEXT ROUND'S ON ME!











KAZ
...

BESIDES
WHAT
YOU SAID
ABOUT
TONIGHT...

IS
EVERYTHING...
OKAY?



MY MOM
CALLED
EARLIER
TODAY.

SHE WANTS ME
TO COME HOME
FOR CHRISTMAS.
I TRIED TO SAY
NO, BUT... I
ENDED UP
SAYING I'D GO.



I'M NOT
OUT TO MY
FAMILY.
I DON'T
KNOW
HOW THEY
WOULD
TAKE IT.

IT
TERRIFIES
ME TO
EVEN THINK
OF THEM
FINDING
OUT.

AND YET...

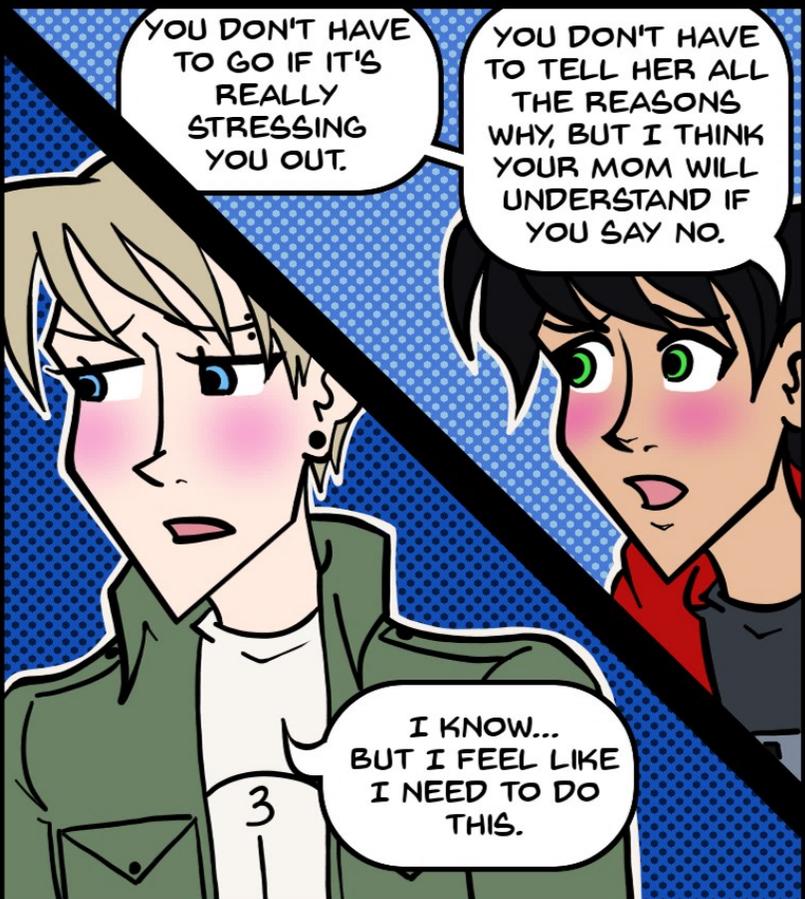


I GUESS A PART OF
ME WANTS TO SEE IF
THEIR VIEWS
HAVE CHANGED.

I HAD A BOYFRIEND
ONCE BEFORE, BUT...
THIS IS MY FIRST
REALLY SERIOUS
RELATIONSHIP.

SOMEDAY
I WANT
TO BE
ABLE TO
TELL
THEM.

I GET THAT,
BUT... IT SOUNDS LIKE
THIS IS REALLY
WEIGHING HEAVILY ON
YOU.



YOU DON'T HAVE
TO GO IF IT'S
REALLY
STRESSING
YOU OUT.

YOU DON'T HAVE
TO TELL HER ALL
THE REASONS
WHY, BUT I THINK
YOUR MOM WILL
UNDERSTAND IF
YOU SAY NO.

I KNOW...
BUT I FEEL LIKE
I NEED TO DO
THIS.





IT BEGAN
TO RAIN
AS WE
DROVE
HOME.

IN THE RAIN,
THE STREETS
LOOKED LIKE
GLASS...



...THE LIGHTS
REFLECTING A
LONG WAY DOWN,
INTO A DEEP ABYSS.

