

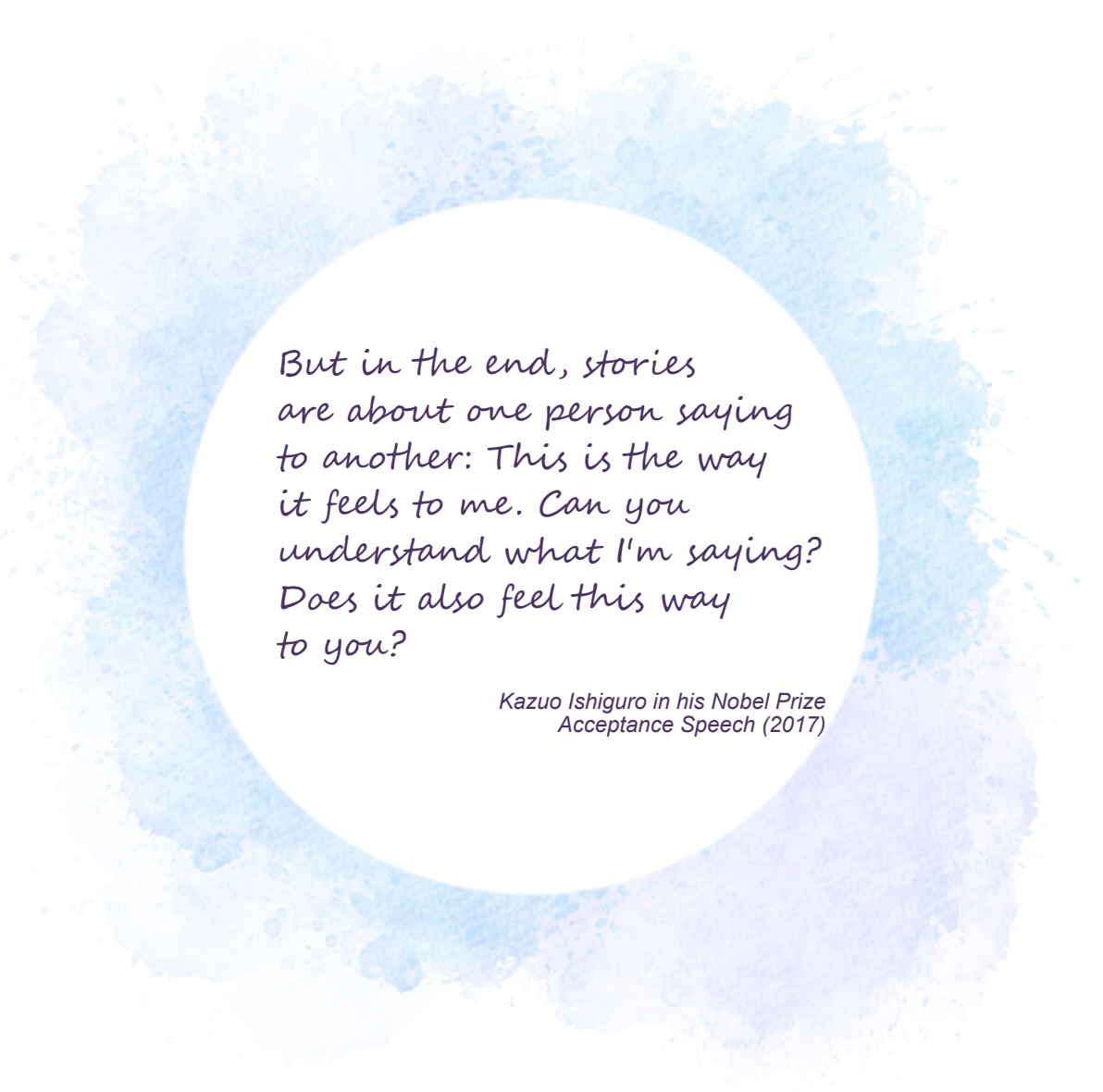
FRAGILE POWER

A COMIC ABOUT DISCOVERING HIGH SENSITIVITY



MATOUŠ HEKELA
NAJODONE

 *Fragile
Power*



But in the end, stories
are about one person saying
to another: This is the way
it feels to me. Can you
understand what I'm saying?
Does it also feel this way
to you?

*Kazuo Ishiguro in his Nobel Prize
Acceptance Speech (2017)*



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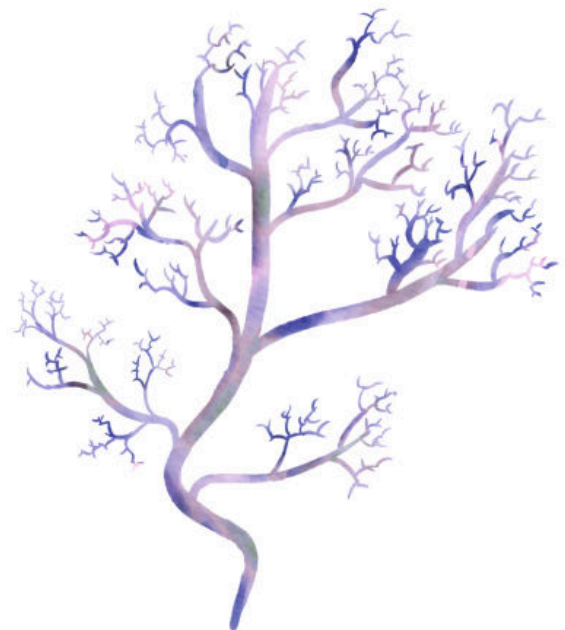
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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence on its own is no walk in the park... and what happens when you throw high sensitivity into the mix? All that craving and effort to understand yourself and the world goes to a whole new level. When you sometimes feel like you're from another planet, it's not easy to fit in, adapt, see the world like everyone else – and it's even harder to be proud of being different.

In the comic book *Fragile Power*, we're trying to show that sensitivity isn't some kind of flaw – quite the opposite. Even though it often doesn't seem that way, it can actually be a superpower. If we understand our sensitivity, accept it as part of who we are and learn how to work with it, it can become one of our biggest strengths.

The road to that kind of awareness isn't easy – you could say it's a lifelong commitment. And while high sensitivity has certain common traits, it shows up a bit differently in everyone. Some people are less sensitive, some more. Some need plenty of quiet, calm and order, while others are outgoing and sociable and can't live without a proper dose of adventure, freedom and space. The degree and type of high sensitivity are shaped by a mix of factors – our personality, upbringing, culture and the environment we grow up and live in. That's why the protagonists in our comic book aren't all the same – maybe they share a more finely tuned nervous system but each has their own path and their own needs. Just like you, our readers.

Life with high sensitivity is definitely an intense ride. Overwhelm and fatigue can hit earlier than they do for others but there are also plenty of upsides: empathy, imagination, creativity, an eye for detail, a sense of justice and a deep appreciation for beauty and connections. In that sense, we're truly unique – our lives may be more challenging but they can also be richer than the lives of those who aren't as high on the sensitivity scale.

Our goal is to encourage each of you not to feel inferior or “weird” – we want your differences to bring you confidence, not anxiety. And to help you see you're not alone. Once you understand your sensitivity, you'll start noticing how many others also experience the world more intensely, feel more deeply, think more profoundly and long for a harmonious environment – for a world that isn't so fast, loud, harsh or superficial, and where there's less pressure to perform and compare.

Our comic book isn't just for highly sensitive people, though. We believe it's equally important for those who aren't highly sensitive to understand it, too, so together we can work toward accepting high sensitivity as a “minority normal” – a natural variation that deserves respect. Being able to live happily is not only necessary for highly sensitive people, but also for those who live with highly sensitive people.

We wish for every one of you to see your sensitivity in a positive light. And even if it's not always easy, to create an environment for yourselves that meets your needs. And to find the strength to be who you are. That doesn't mean you should put pressure on yourself. Quite the opposite – be understanding and kind to yourself. And most of all, don't give up! The world today desperately needs sensitive souls.



HI,
I'M SENSEE.
A SUPERHEROINE, BUT
NOT REALLY ORDINARY.

ORDINARY SUPERHEROES
ARE PROBABLY FIGHTING OFF AN INVASION OF
SPACE COYOTES RIGHT NOW.

I'D JOIN THEM, BUT I HAVE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO.

A 13-YEAR-OLD GIRL,
LUCY, WHO FEELS A
LITTLE LOST.

WELL,
WHERE IS
SHE?

OH, BACK HERE.

SHE CAN'T HIDE
FROM ME.

FOR MY
POWERS ARE DETECTIVE
PERCEPTION, STRONG
EMPATHY AND INFINITE
IMAGINATION.

AND MY WEAPON
IS THE ALMIGHTY
PENCIL.

IT HAS
A SHARP POINT,
BUT I DON'T FIGHT WITH
FORCE. MY WEAPON IS
IMAGINATION!

OF COURSE
I COULD HANDLE
THOSE SPACE
COYOTES, TOO. BUT IN
MY OWN WAY.

MY JOB
IS TO AWAKEN THESE
ABILITIES. PARTICULARLY
IN LUCY.

WHERE IS SHE?

IN HER ROOM,
AS USUAL.



HI, I'M LUCY.

I'M THIRTEEN
AND I GUESS
I'M NOT REALLY
ORDINARY.

ORDINARY PEOPLE ARE OUT TOGETHER NOW.

SOMETIMES I'D GO OUT TOO, BUT I'D GET STUCK ON THE WAY. I'M AFRAID WE WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER.



PLUS, I DIDN'T GO TO SCHOOL TODAY BECAUSE OF NAUSEA, SO I CAN'T GO OUT ANYWAY.



AT LEAST I HAVE ECHO. HE NEVER TURNS ME DOWN. HE'S AN ECHIDNA. PLUSH, BUT PRETTY TOUGH. WHILE I'M NICE AND WELL-MANNERED...



GET UP
AND BRING
IT ON.

HIS GIRL'S
JUST JEALOUS OF THE PAVEMENT
BECAUSE THE DUDE KISSES IT MORE
THAN HE KISSES HER.



... ECHO MAKES SHARP AND
STINGING REMARKS.



SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE I WON'T
MAKE ANY MORE FRIENDS.



I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF IT'S WORTH IT.



THE CENTRE OF MY WORLD IS IN THIS ROOM, IN A FAMILY HOME ON HUMBOLDT STREET.

AND IN THE HOUSE THERE IS...



WELL, MY FAMILY, LIVING WITH ME.

THEY'RE A LITTLE WEIRD, TOO.

MY MOM WORKS IN A CHEMICAL LAB.



SHE WORKS A LOT, BUT ALWAYS FINDS TIME FOR ME.



EXCEPT IN THE KITCHEN. THERE SHE'S CAPABLE OF SETTING OFF A CHEMICAL ALARM.

SHE'S STRICTLY RATIONAL. I FEEL LIKE SHE DOESN'T REALLY UNDERSTAND FEELINGS.

SHE THINKS I'M ALWAYS EXAGGERATING.

I THINK SHE'S THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY.

MY DAD WORKS AT A NON-PROFIT. HE HELPS PEOPLE GET OUT OF TROUBLE. HE BALANCES THE HARD WORK WITH CONSTANT JOSES.



HE'S A BIT TOO GOOD. I'M A TOTAL LOSER COMPARED TO HIM.



I DON'T REALLY GET HIS HUMOR. AND HE DOESN'T REALLY GET MY FEELINGS. OTHERWISE HE WOULDN'T MAKE FUN OF THEM.



MY BROTHER ROBERT WILL SOON BE EIGHTEEN. TAKES AFTER HIS MOM WITH HIS RATIONAL ATTITUDE, AND AFTER HIS DAD WITH HIS SOCIABILITY AND POPULARITY.



C'MON, ONE DAY HE'LL LOOK BACK AT A PRETTY GIRL AND HE'LL TWIST HIS NECK.

YOU'LL BE SAVING HIS LIFE THEN.

AND THIS IS CHUNKY. WHATEVER HE DOESN'T EAT, HE AT LEAST LICKS.

TELL ME ABOUT IT.



HE ALWAYS UNDERSTANDS ME. PROBABLY BECAUSE THEY LAUGH AT HIM, TOO.



WELL, IT'S ACTUALLY QUITE A NICE FAMILY. I GUESS I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO'S NOT NORMAL.



I LIKE IT HERE. IT'S COMPLETELY QUIET, EVERYONE TALKS IN WHISPERS AND THE BOOKS SMELL LOVELY. THERE'S ALSO A NICE LIBRARIAN WHO IS HAPPY TO GIVE ADVICE WHEN ONE IS NOT LOUD.







THE UNIVERSE
IS AN AMAZING
PLACE! AND SO
VAST!

AND I'M TALKING ABOUT
THE INNER UNIVERSE
THAT WE ALL HAVE
INSIDE OF US...

INCLUDING
YOU AND ME.

LUCY HERSELF WILL SOON FIND OUT THAT SHE MUST
DISCOVER HER INNER UNIVERSE BEFORE SHE CAN
UNDERSTAND THE OUTER ONE.

SHE IS ONLY AT THE BEGINNING OF
HER JOURNEY.

AND IT'S A GOOD THING
SHE'S NOT ALONE.

ALONG THE WAY,
SHE MEETS MORE FRIENDS.
ONE IS ALREADY WAITING
FOR HER.

IN ONE PLACE,
STILL, FOR SEVERAL
YEARS. WHO IS IT?
YOU'LL FIND OUT
SOON.



IT'S SO QUIET HERE.
LIKE TURNING
OFF A VACUUM
CLEANER. SUPPENLY
YOU REALISE HOW LOUD
THE CITY IS.

BUT THERE ARE
PLENTY OF SOUNDS, LISTEN TO
THE FINCHES CALLING TO EACH
OTHER.

AND THE STARLINGS
DRILLING INTO THE
TREES.

BEING HIGHLY SENSITIVE,
WE CAN PERCEIVE EVERY
DETAIL IN DEPTH BUT WE NEED
TIME AND QUIET. BECAUSE WE
ALSO PERCEIVE CHAOS
IN DEPTH.

ANYWAY,
I THINK WE ARE
SURROUNDED BY TOO
MANY THINGS IN OUR
LIVES. IT'S LIKE WITH
PAINTINGS - IF YOU
OVERDO IT ON THE
CANVAS,
THE PAINTING IS
DIZZING.

YOUR MIND
CAN DO EVERYTHING
BUT IT'S NOT EASY TO
CONCENTRATE IN
CHAOS.

SO MUCH PEACE
AND SO MUCH LIFE AT
THE SAME TIME.

WORDS
ARE NOT
ENOUGH.

YEAH.



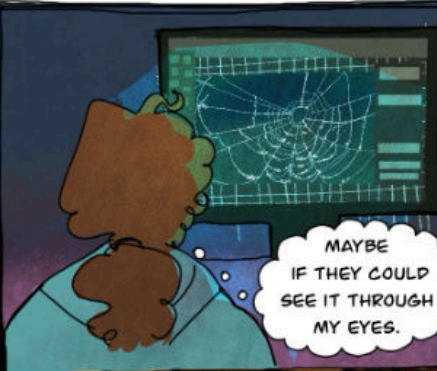
HOW CAN PEOPLE
TAKE NATURE FOR
GRANTED?



PLUS
A DESCRIPTION.



IMPRESSIONISM IN SPIDER
CONCEPTION. MATERIAL - SPIDER WEB,
TECHNIQUE - WATER DROPS.



MAYBE
IF THEY COULD
SEE IT THROUGH
MY EYES.

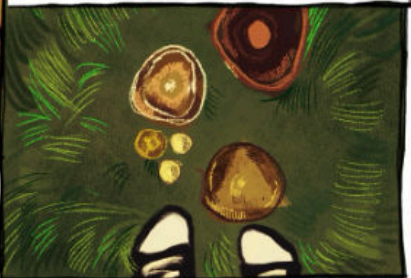


NATURE CAN ALSO MAKE BEAUTIFUL
PATTERNS. UNDER THE SCALES OF THIS
CONE LIES THE FUTURE OF HUNDREDS OF
TREES.

login:

I'M 13. OF COURSE I HAVE SOCIAL
MEDIA BUT AS A PROPER
INTROVERT I'M THERE
ANONYMOUSLY.

EVEN THOUGH WE CAN'T SEE IT, THERE ARE
THREADS OF THE HUGE MYCELIUM OF THE WHOLE
FOREST BRANCHING OUT UNDER OUR FEET.
IT'S LIKE WALKING ACROSS A JACKSON POLLOCK
PAINTING THAT YOU CAN'T SEE BUT YOU CAN FEEL.



THIS PHOTO IS THE
BEST ANYWAY.



Select as a profile photo



HI, I'M SALVATOR. WELL, THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL ME IN THE WOODS
BECAUSE I POSED FOR MASTER DALI'S PAINTING THE PERSISTENCE
OF MEMORY. YOU KNOW THAT TREE WITH THE CLOCK? THAT'S ME.
I STILL LOOK THE SAME, DON'T I? I HAVE A GOOD MEMORY
BUT I DON'T THINK I COULD CARRY THAT CLOCK ANYMORE.







HIGH SENSITIVITY
CAN BE QUITE
USEFUL...

UNTIL IT ISN'T.

A SENSE OF GOOD AND
MORAL VALUES...

...CAN LEAD TO FRUSTRATION AND
ANGER AT THOSE WHO DO NOT
PERCEIVE THEM.

STRONG PERCEPTION AND DEEP EXPERIENCE...

...CAN BRING AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE THAT
OTHERS MAY NOT UNDERSTAND.

HONESTY AND RESPONSIBILITY...

...CAN TURN INTO OUT-OF-CONTROL
PERFECTIONISM.

MASTERING THIS POWER
IS THE FIRST TASK OF ANY
FUTURE SUPERHERO.



MY PARENTS WERE SCARED. AND THEN THEY WERE ANGRY. THEY FOUND ME OUTSIDE, IN A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE TIE UP DOGS. THEY THOUGHT I'D RUN OFF AFTER THEM.



SO I'LL DRAW MY FEELINGS. AND SHARE THEM, TOO.



EVEN THOUGH IT MIGHT NOT HAVE EVEN BEEN AN ARGUMENT, I MIRRORED THOSE EMOTIONS. I WAS SICK ALL DAY AFTERWARDS.





MICHAEL DOESN'T HAVE A CELL PHONE. HE DOESN'T EVEN WANT ONE. HE SAYS HE KNOWS WHERE TO FIND ME. THAT'S FINE BUT I DON'T REALLY LIKE THIS KIND OF SURPRISE.



HE SEEMS TO REMEMBER US. WE'LL CALL HIM CROWLEY.



I'M READING A LOT ABOUT HIGH SENSITIVITY.

AND I'M STARTING TO UNDERSTAND A LOT OF THINGS. BUT I'M STILL WONDERING...HOW TO EXPLAIN IT TO OTHERS?

JUST BE HONEST ABOUT IT.

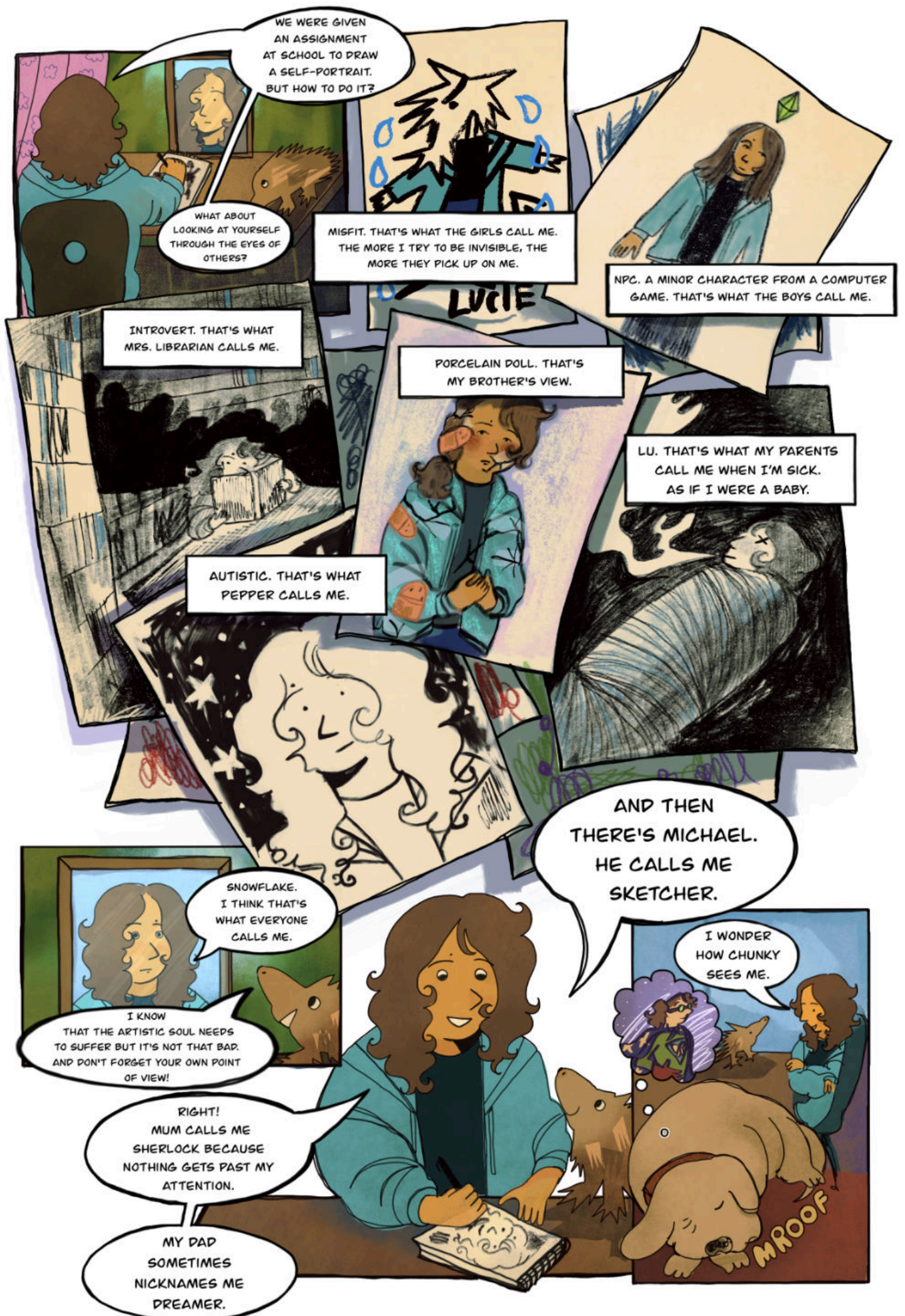
YOU JUST SAY HOW IT IS - CALMLY AND WITHOUT EMOTIONS.



MAYBE THEY WERE DOING SOMETHING ELSE OUT THERE, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.



MUDDY COYOTES!



WE WERE GIVEN
AN ASSIGNMENT
AT SCHOOL TO DRAW
A SELF-PORTRAIT.
BUT HOW TO DO IT?

WHAT ABOUT
LOOKING AT YOURSELF
THROUGH THE EYES OF
OTHERS?

MISFIT. THAT'S WHAT THE GIRLS CALL ME.
THE MORE I TRY TO BE INVISIBLE, THE
MORE THEY PICK UP ON ME.

NPC. A MINOR CHARACTER FROM A COMPUTER
GAME. THAT'S WHAT THE BOYS CALL ME.

INTROVERT. THAT'S WHAT
MRS. LIBRARIAN CALLS ME.

PORCELAIN DOLL. THAT'S
MY BROTHER'S VIEW.

LU. THAT'S WHAT MY PARENTS
CALL ME WHEN I'M SICK.
AS IF I WERE A BABY.

AUTISTIC. THAT'S WHAT
PEPPER CALLS ME.

AND THEN
THERE'S MICHAEL.
HE CALLS ME
SKETCHER.

SNOWFLAKE.
I THINK THAT'S
WHAT EVERYONE
CALLS ME.

I KNOW
THAT THE ARTISTIC SOUL NEEDS
TO SUFFER BUT IT'S NOT THAT BAD.
AND DON'T FORGET YOUR OWN POINT
OF VIEW!

RIGHT!
MUM CALLS ME
SHERLOCK BECAUSE
NOTHING GETS PAST MY
ATTENTION.

MY DAD
SOMETIMES
NICKNAMES ME
DREAMER.

I WONDER
HOW CHUNKY
SEES ME.

DRAWING HAS BEEN WITH ME ALL MY LIFE. EVEN AS A CHILD, I SCRIBBLED ON THE WALLS WITH CRAYONS. MY PARENTS HAD BEEN PLANNING A RENOVATION FOR YEARS, SO THEY'D LET ME.

I'VE LOVED GALLERIES SINCE I WAS A KID. THEY'RE QUIET AND BEAUTIFUL.

I HAVE MY OWN LANGUAGE WITH THE PAINTINGS. I CAN GET STUCK WITH ONE FOR QUITE A LONG TIME.

BUT I KNOW MY FAVOURITE PAINTINGS MAINLY FROM BOOKS. FOR INSTANCE...

I LIKE VAN GOGH'S STARRY SKIES. THEY HELP ME BLEND IN WITH THE UNIVERSE.

I LIKE GEORGIA O'KEEFFE BECAUSE I FEEL LIKE I ABSORB THE ENERGY FROM HER PAINTINGS. I'D LIKE TO TRY IT IN A GALLERY WITH THE ORIGINAL.

I LIKE FRIDA KAHLO, EVEN THOUGH SOMETIMES HER PAINTINGS MAKE ME FEEL PAIN. LITERALLY.

AND WHAT STICKS IN MY MIND THE MOST IS EDVARD MUNCH'S SCREAM. WHEN I WAS A KID, I FOUND IT IN A BOOK AND SHOWED IT TO MY DAD.

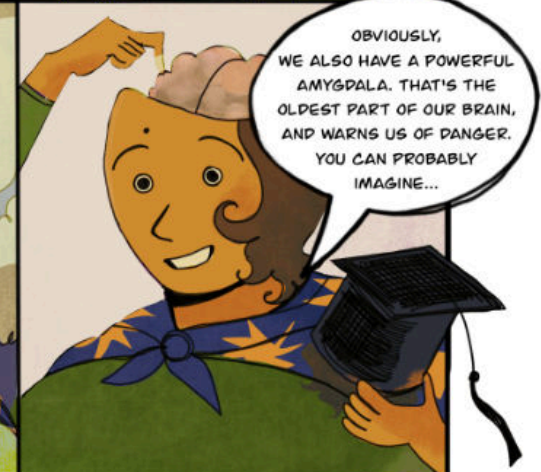
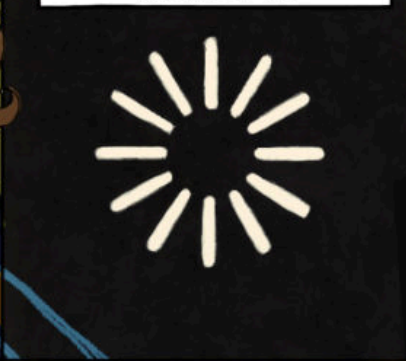
THE PAINTER EDVARD MUNCH ALSO SEEMS TO HAVE PAINTED SOUND. SEE? HOW IS EVERYTHING RIPPLED WITH THAT SCREAM? THE TWO STRANGERS IN THE BACK MUST HAVE SHUDDERED WITH FRIGHT.

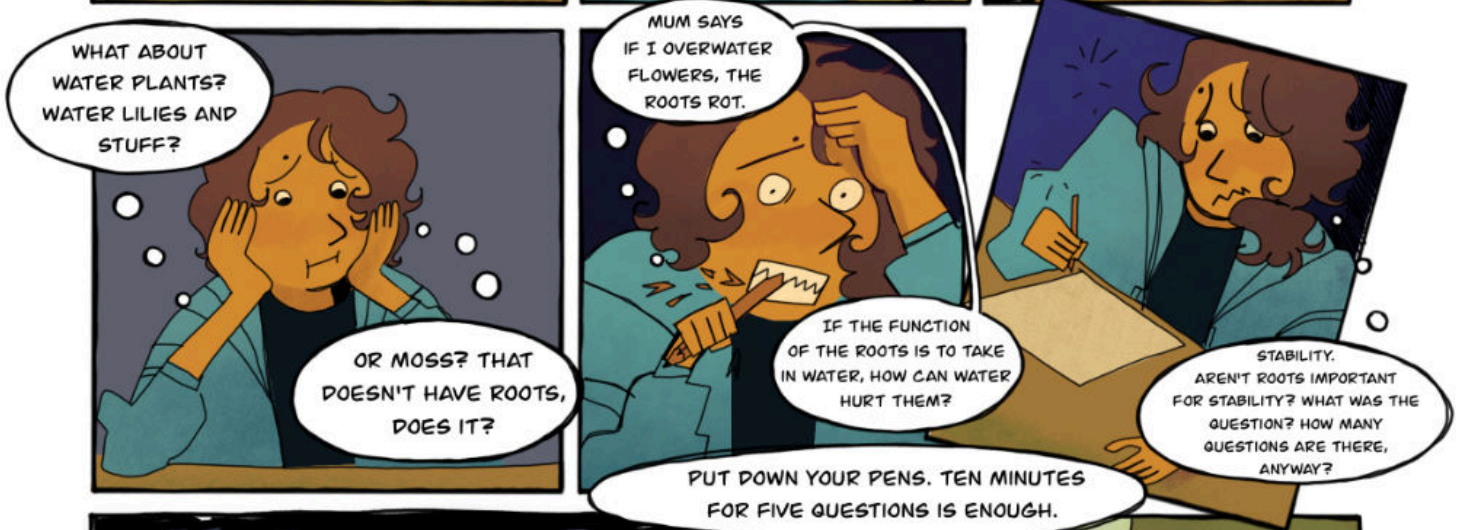
NO WAY, DAD. YOU CAN'T HEAR THE SCREAM AT ALL. EDVARD ONLY HAS IT IN HIS HEAD. EVERYTHING IS SHAKING BECAUSE IT'S ALL TOO MUCH FOR HIM. AND THOSE TWO ARE HIS FRIENDS WHO HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON.

I MAY HAVE CONFUSED DAD A LITTLE. BUT A FEW DAYS LATER HE CAME IN WITH A PENCIL AND CRAYONS AND SAID I SHOULD TRY IT, TOO. I'VE BEEN SKETCHING EVER SINCE.



BUT IT ACTUALLY PROCESSES DATA IN HIGH RESOLUTION AND IN DEPTH.

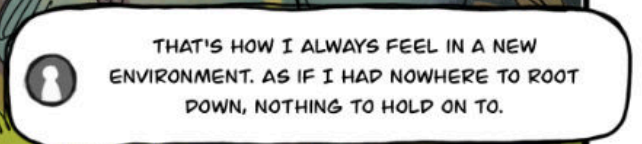
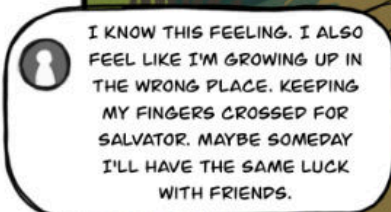


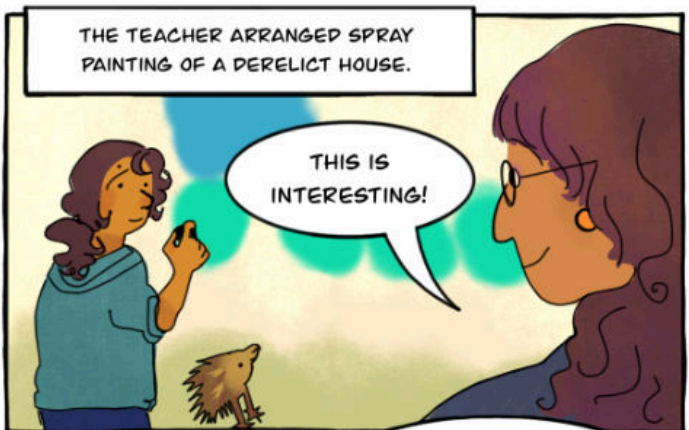
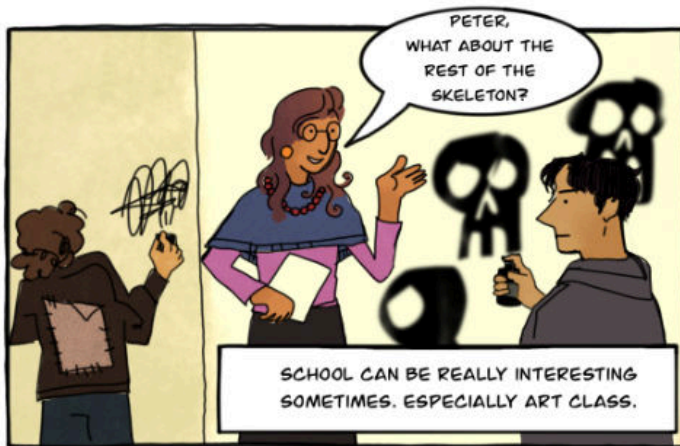


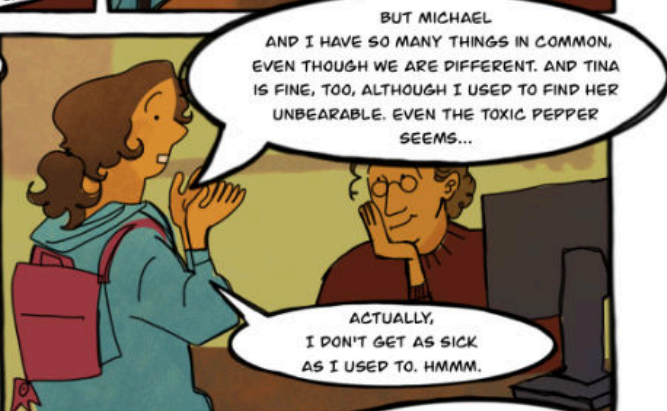














LIBRARY

HEY,
AUTIST, WHAT ARE
YOU CARRYING?

LET ME
SEE!

HIGHLY SENSITIVE
PEOPLE. SO THAT'S WHY
YOU'RE OVERSENSITIVE!

STAND YOUR
GROUND

SO WHAT,
I AM. JUST LIKE 30% OF
PEOPLE. I'M NOT ASHAMED OF
IT BUT YOU WON'T
UNDERSTAND.

OH PLEASE,
DON'T START
CRYING NOW,
SNOWFLAKE!

I CRY A LOT,
BUT MOSTLY OUT OF
COMPASSION.

AND YOU'RE NOT
SO BADLY OFF THAT
IT WOULD MAKE ME
CRY FOR YOU.

WATCH OUT OR SHE'LL
UNLEASH THE STUFFED
MOLE!

YOU'RE PLAYING
SMART? LET'S SEE!
WHAT DOES A STUFFED
ECHIDNA DO...

... WITHOUT
A HEAD?

WHEN YOU
CATCH A DOSE OF PEPPER
SPRAY, THEN YOU'D HAVE
A REASON TO CRY.
YOU KNOW WHY THEY
CALL HIM PEPPER!

ECHO!

IT'S AN ECHIDNA.
WHY ARE YOU DOING
THIS?

I'M SO FURRIOSUS!
IF THEY WEREN'T
OUTNUMBERED...

WHAT HAVE
I DONE
WRONG?

WE DON'T HAVE
TIME TO PLAY
WITH TOYS. SCREW
HER.



OH MY, SALVATOR. IF YOU ONLY KNEW HOW MEAN PEOPLE CAN BE. BE GLAD YOU'RE A TREE.



A TREE DOESN'T BOTHER ANYONE, DOESN'T ANNOY ANYONE... OR DOES IT?

SUCH A BROOMSTICK ISN'T EVEN FIT FOR SWEEPING. MAYBE FOR BURNING.

IS THAT THE KIND OF CRAP THE YOUNG CARE ABOUT TODAY? MEH...

I'M SENSITIVE TOO BUT THIS IS TOO MUCH.

WHEN WE WERE LITTLE, OUR PARENTS GAVE US A SLAP AND THAT WAS IT.

A TALKING TREE? WHAT KIND OF DRUGS DO THEY TAKE?

THIS ISN'T ABOUT YOU. IT'S NOT EVEN ABOUT SALVATOR. YOU'RE NOT TO BLAME FOR THESE COMMENTS.

YOU CAN NEVER PLEASE EVERYONE. PLUS...

CRINGE

PEOPLE WHO WRITE THIS HAVE TRAPPED THEMSELVES IN SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS. THEY CAN TALK TO THE WHOLE WORLD BUT NOBODY LISTENS. ON THE INTERNET, WHERE CELEBRITIES ARE SEEN AS PERFECT BEINGS, ORDINARY PEOPLE FEEL INFERIOR. THE WORLD DOESN'T NOTICE THEM.

LUCY!

STOP. BREATHE. AND LISTEN.

TS PMO

AND SO THEY BECOME MEAN TO THE WORLD IN RETURN. AND YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS?

THE WORLD NOTICES THEM. NEGATIVE EMOTIONS MAKE AN IMPRINT. LIKE THEY DO TO YOU NOW.

KYS

YOU'RE RIGHT, I WON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY ANYMORE. BUT NOW I FEEL FOR THEM AND THEIR STRUGGLES.

GYBAU

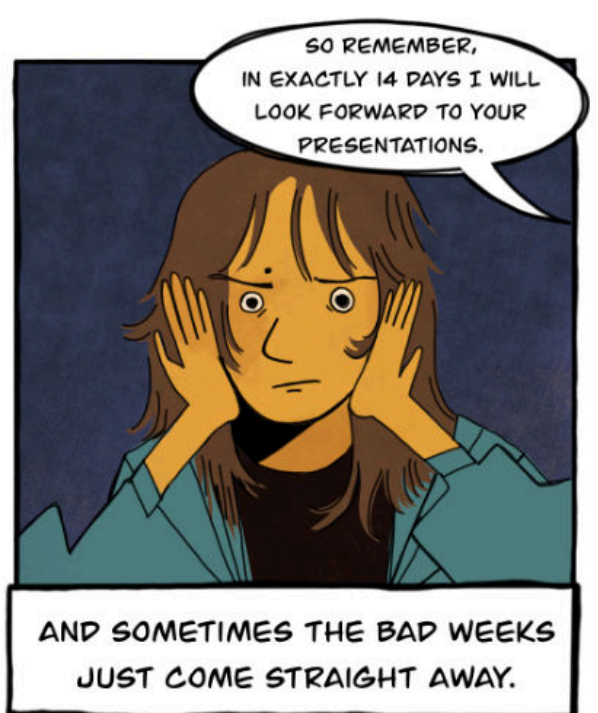




SOME DAYS ARE PLEASANT
FROM THE MORNING...



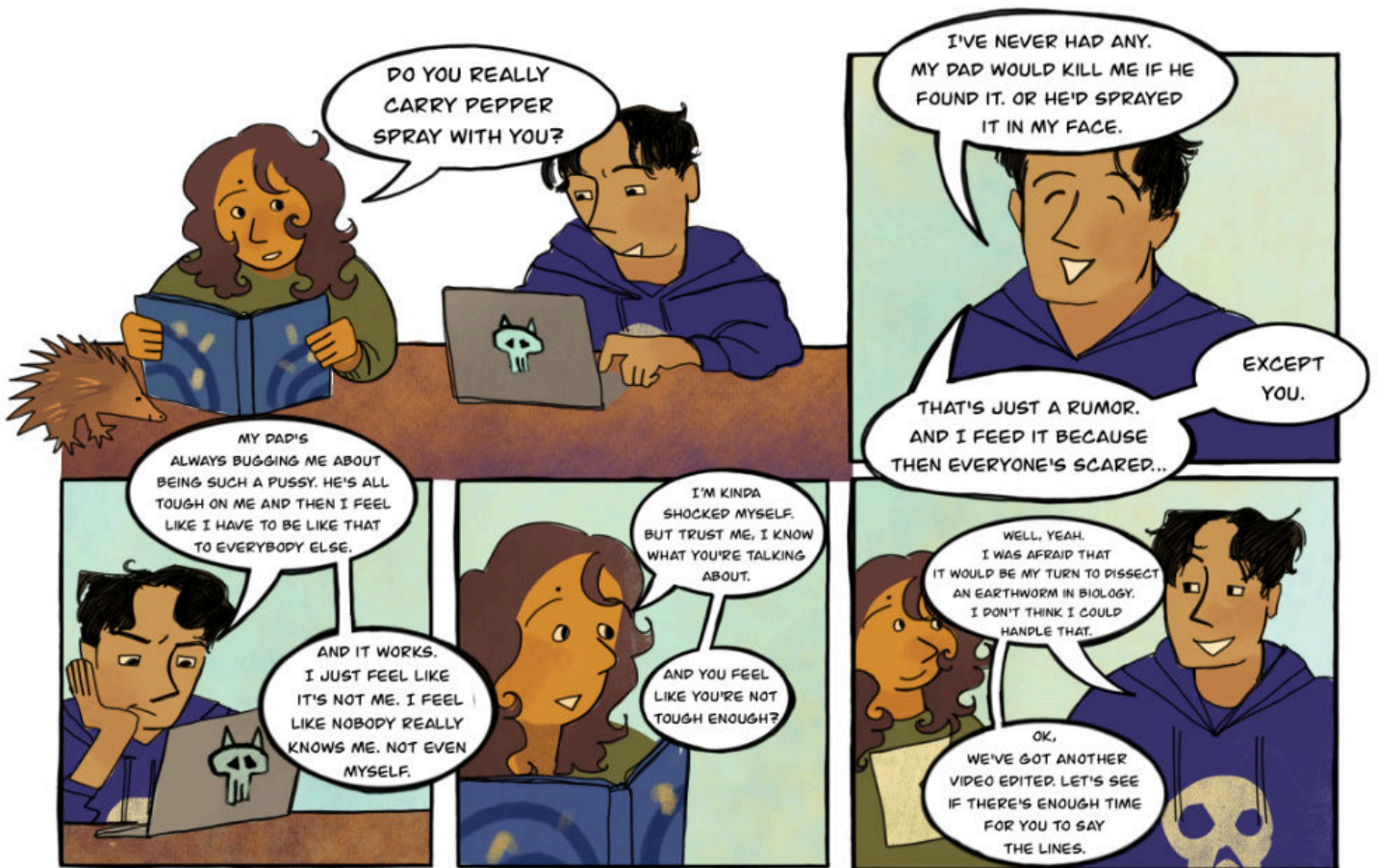
... AND SOME DAYS
NOT SO MUCH.



AND SOMETIMES THE BAD WEEKS
JUST COME STRAIGHT AWAY.









PEPPER
WON'T MAKE IT. NO
ONE WILL LAUGH AT
HIM. BUT YOU...

SHUT UP!



THE WORST PRESENTATION OF
ALL. YOU'LL END UP LIKE THOSE
INCOMPETENT CREATURES THAT
GOT THEMSELVES
EXTERMINATED...

NOT EVEN YOUR
CUDDLY ENDEMIC
WILL HELP YOU.



GIVE UP. TELL MOM
YOU'RE SICK IN THE
MORNING.

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE.
I'VE READ ABOUT YOU.
I KNOW WHAT TO DO.



I'M EVERYTHING
YOU FEAR..

YOU'RE NOT.
YOU ARE MY FEAR ITSELF. YOU SCARE
ME BECAUSE YOU WANT TO PROTECT
ME. AND I'M ACCEPTING YOU.

WHAT?



NOW THERE IS ONLY
THE PRESENT. AND IN IT THERE IS
ONLY BREATHING. AN INHALE,
AN EXHALE, AN INHALE.

CAUSE I DON'T
BREATHE IN THE PAST OR IN THE
FUTURE. ONLY NOW. BREATHING
IN. BREATHING OUT. INHALE.
EXHALE.



INHALE.
EXHALE.



INHALE.
EXHALE.



INHALE.
EXHALE.



... NOW
YOU'LL FIGURE OUT
WHAT I WANT TO POINT OUT
AT THE END. THAT IF WE DON'T
PROTECT ENDANGERED
SPECIES, WE ENDANGER
OURSELVES FIRST AND
FOREMOST.



ENDANGERED
SPECIES

THANKS
FOR YOUR ATTENTION. BUT MOSTLY
TO MY PARTNER LUCY WHO THOUGHT
UP THE WHOLE PRESENTATION, WROTE
IT AND HANDLED ALL THE EFFECTS.
RESPECT!





THIS TIME
WE'VE HAD QUITE
POSITIVE FEEDBACK.

WHAT A GREAT IDEA!
FIND YOUR TREE AND MEDITATE THERE.
WHERE ELSE BUT UNDER A TREE TO
REACH ENLIGHTENMENT?

I'M ALSO TAKING UP
MINDFULNESS. A GREAT
WAY TO RELEASE
STRESS.

TO BECOME AN OBSERVER
OF MY INNER WORLD? HARD LEVEL
BUT A TOTAL GAME CHANGER!
#MINDFULNESSVIBES

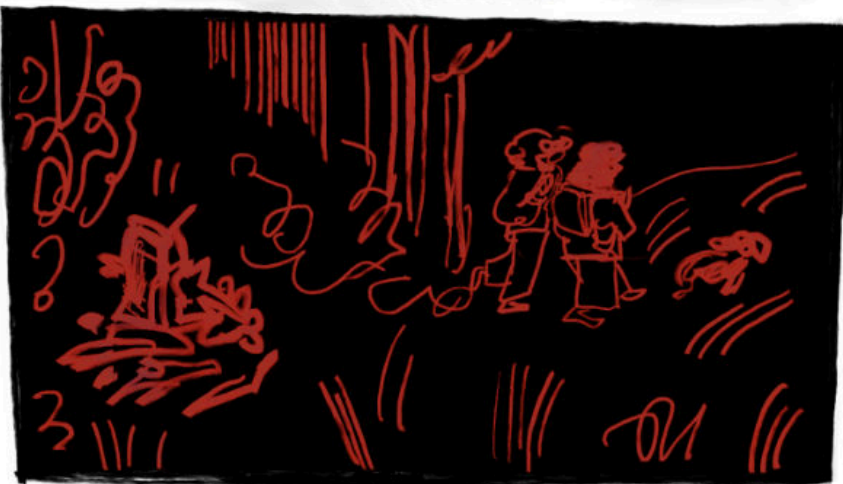
RESPECT FOR ALL THOUGHTS
- THE NICE ONES AND THE
ONES THAT TEST US!
#SELFACCEPTANCE

LUCY IS LEARNING TO COPE
WITH STRESS JUST AT
THE RIGHT MOMENT...

YESSS! I THOUGHT I HAD TO BE
POSITIVE ALL THE TIME TOO... BUT TRUE
PEACE IS IN EMBRACING WHATEVER
COMES! THANK YOU SALVATOR, I'M
GROWING WITH YOU.

... BECAUSE IT'S COMING.

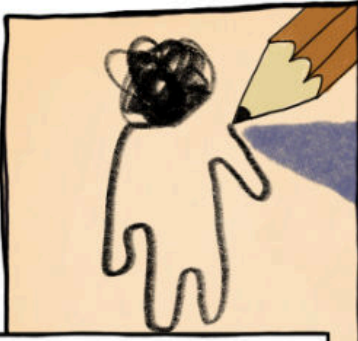
LUCY DOESN'T KNOW IT YET BUT
THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG IN
A QUIET CORNER OF THE FOREST.



IT'S BEEN TWO WEEKS. TIME PASSES TERRIBLY SLOWLY BUT IT FEELS LIKE EVERYTHING FELL APART JUST YESTERDAY.



FOR TWO WEEKS MICHAEL AND TINA AND I HAVE ONLY BEEN PASSING EACH OTHER. LIKE GHOSTS.



TINA HAS TAKEN UP TAEKWONDO. I UNDERSTAND. I NEED TO GIVE SOMEONE A KICK, TOO.

I ONLY GET TO SEE MICHAEL FROM A DISTANCE. HE HIDES BEHIND THE BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY. I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY TO HIM SO I LEAVE IT AT THAT.



MY SOUL IS LIKE A BLACK HOLE THAT ABSORBS MESS. WHO COULD HAVE DONE THIS?

WHY DID I BREAK DOWN? I LEFT SALVATOR IN THAT STATE.



I FEEL LIKE CRYING OR SCREAMING. MOSTLY, THOUGH, I JUST KEEP QUIET AND KEEP MY EMOTIONS INSIDE.



I TRY TO LIVE IN THE PRESENT MOMENT IN MINDFULNESS MEDITATIONS. BUT I CAN'T. THE PAST AND THE FUTURE HOLD ON TO ME LIKE TEETH.



I SHOULD HAVE HELPED SALVATOR. I MUST HELP HIM. EVEN IF I HAVE TO DO IT ALONE.



loner001001

MISSION: LET'S SAVE SALVATOR. SATURDAY MORNING I'M GONNA FIX HIM UP. KEEP YOUR FINGERS CROSSED.



THIS IS FINALLY ME. WELL, NOT IN THE PICTURE. I'VE DRAWN IT AND MY BROTHER PUT IT UP.



IT'S ME BECAUSE I DRAW! I'M NOT AFRAID TO GO DEEP AND THEN SHOW IT TO THE WORLD.



THIS IS MRS. LIBRARIAN. SHE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW I SKETCHED HER.



AND THIS IS THE NEW TINA. I MEAN, HER NEW PROFILE PICTURE I'VE DRAWN. SHE'S REALLY INTO TAEKWONDO. IT'S WHERE SHE GETS HER ENERGY OUT. SHE'S GOT MORE THAN SHE HAD BEFORE, THOUGH.

GIVE HER SOME TEETH!



AND FINALLY, THIS IS ME. I HAVE A REQUEST FOR ANOTHER PORTRAIT. I'M TAKING UP LANDSCAPE PAINTING. AND I MAY HAVE AN IDEA FOR A COMIC BOOK.



SALVATOR IS ON THE MEND. WE COME TO SEE HIM OCCASIONALLY, TO TAKE PICTURES AND SAY HI TO CROWLEY.

I'VE MADE LOTS OF NEW FRIENDS AT SCHOOL AND ONLINE. I HAD NO IDEA HOW SENSITIVITY COULD OPEN DOORS.



MOM AND DAD TRY NOT TO BE SO HARSH ABOUT EVERYTHING. AND I MEET THEM HALFWAY.



AND WHEN IT GETS TOO MUCH, I KNOW I CAN HIDE FOR A WHILE. THE OTHERS UNDERSTAND NOW.



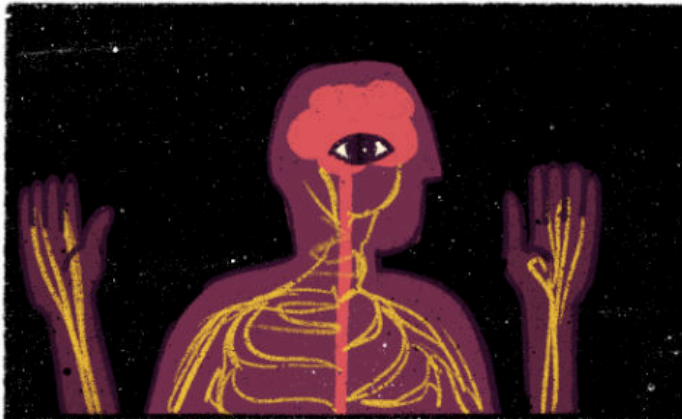
HOW THE OTHERS SEE HSPs



WHAT PARENTS THINK WE DO



WHAT FRIENDS THINK WE DO



WHAT PSYCHOLOGISTS THINK WE DO



WHAT SOCIETY THINKS WE DO



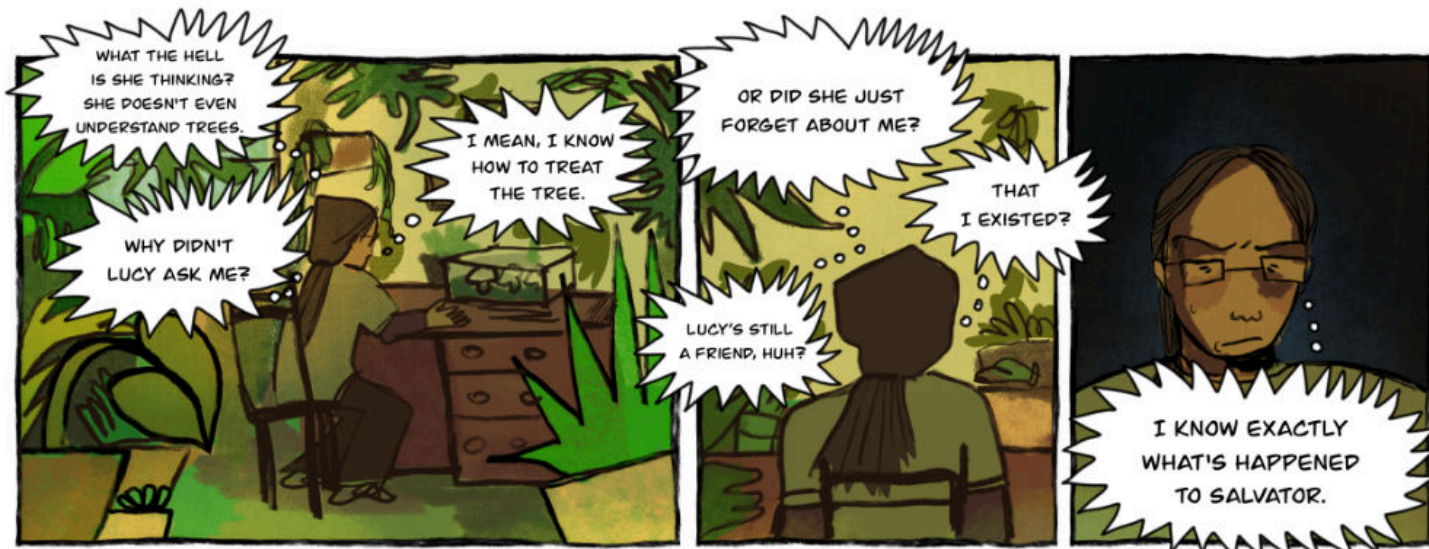
WHAT WE THINK WE DO



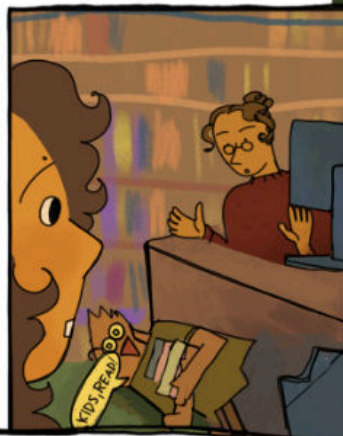
WHAT WE REALLY DO



ANOTHER WAY
TO DEAL WITH SENSITIVITY IS TO
NOT TAKE YOURSELF TOO SERIOUSLY.
NOW I KNOW HOW TO DO IT. AND I CAN
SEE I'M NOT ALONE!











SOMETHING
DIDN'T SEEM RIGHT.
MICHAEL WAS THERE THIS
AFTERNOON. COULD HE BE
HIDING FROM US?



WHY NOT TURN OFF
THE FLASHLIGHT.
I KNOW THE WAY
WELL.



I KNOW YOU'RE
HERE SOMEWHERE.
I CAN FEEL IT.





MICHAEL.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING
HERE? WHAT ARE YOU
UP TO?



I AM ESCAPING
INTO MY WORLD.
AS ALWAYS IN THE
WOODS.

BUT
I WON'T HIDE
ANYTHING FROM YOU,
EVEN IN THE DARK,
AM I?

OKAY,
I'VE BEEN THINKING
ABOUT WHAT WOULD
HAPPEN IF I WAS
GONE.

AND WHAT DID
YOU COME TO?



I FOUND OUT
A LOT OF THINGS.
SOME OF THEM WERE
PREDICTABLE.

THAT I LIKE LIFE.
IN ALL ITS FORMS, EVEN
MINE. AND I DON'T LIKE
PAIN.

BELIEVE ME,
THE TOXINS OF OUR
POISONOUS PLANTS ARE
NOT PAINLESS. BUT MAYBE
I WAS MORE AFRAID...

... THAT NO ONE WOULD
REMEMBER ME.



I UNDERSTAND,
THAT MUST BE A HELL
OF A FEELING.



MAYBE I JUST
WANT TO BLEND IN
MORE WITH NATURE.

I WAS THINKING
ABOUT IT A LOT.

BUT I WAS ALSO
THINKING WHY I WAS
THINKING ABOUT IT.

SALVATOR
DOESN'T THINK. NOR DOES
HE GIVE UP. HE'S DOING WHAT
HE CAN. AND HE'S BETTER AT
IT THAN I AM.



I LEARNED
A LOT FROM HIM, TOO.
WE SHOULD ALL LEARN
FROM TREES, SHOULDN'T
WE?



THAT'S
RIGHT.

TELL ME
ONE THING. WHY DO
COMIC ARTISTS KEEP
DRAWING SUPERHEROES?
EVEN YOU KEEP
DOODLING THEM.
WHAT IS IT
ABOUT THEM?



THEIR POWERS.

YOU
CAN USE THEM TO
EXPLAIN EVERYTHING
YOU FEEL.

SUPER STRENGTH,
THAT'S GETTING OLD. BUT THE
ULTIMATE SENSITIVITY TO DETAIL,
THAT'S GREAT TO DRAW. THAT'S
SOME DRAMA.

OR,
HMMM, DEEP
INSIGHTS?

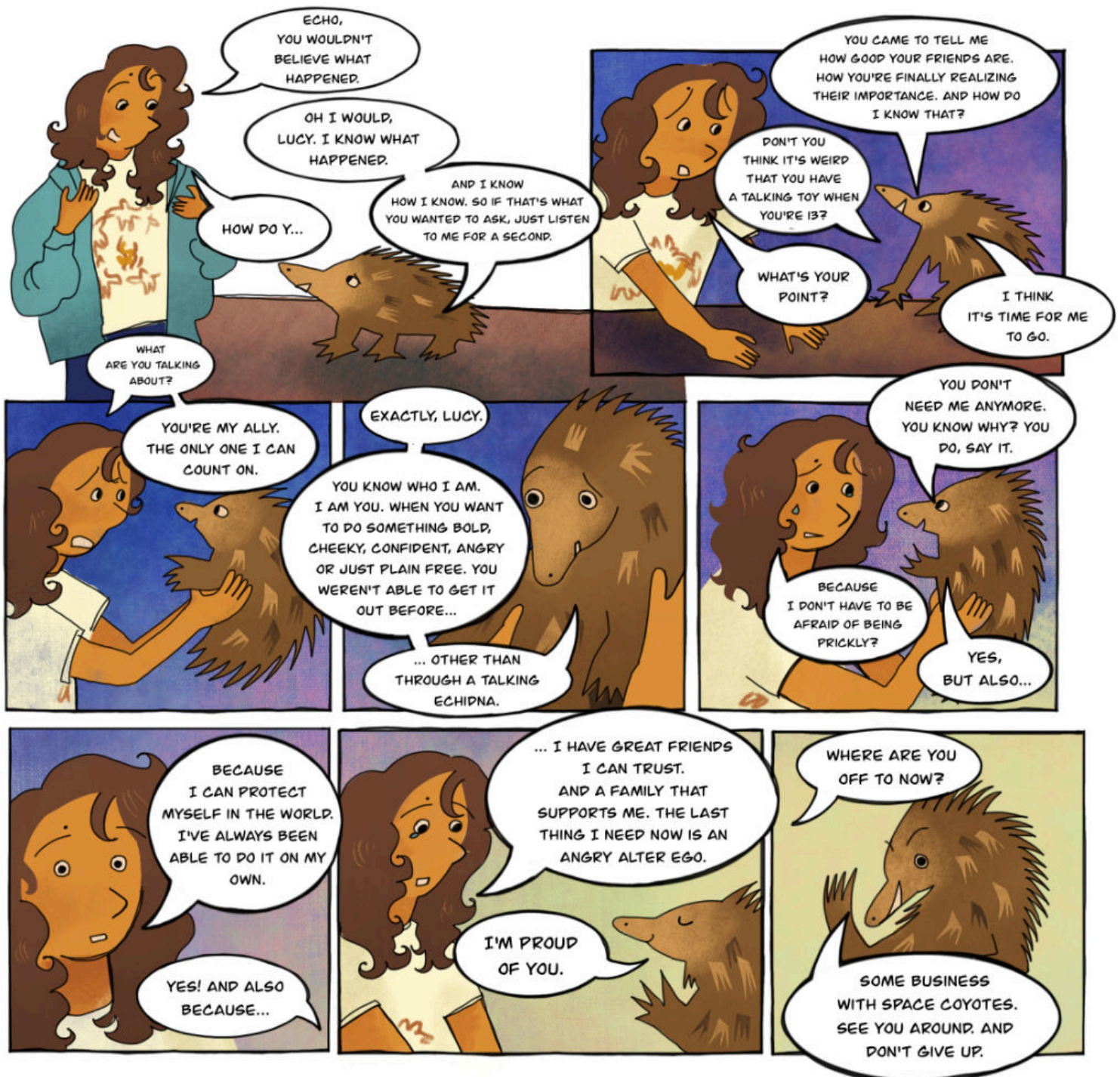
SOURCING ENERGY
FROM NATURE, FOR
EXAMPLE, IS AN INCREDIBLE
SUPERPOWER.

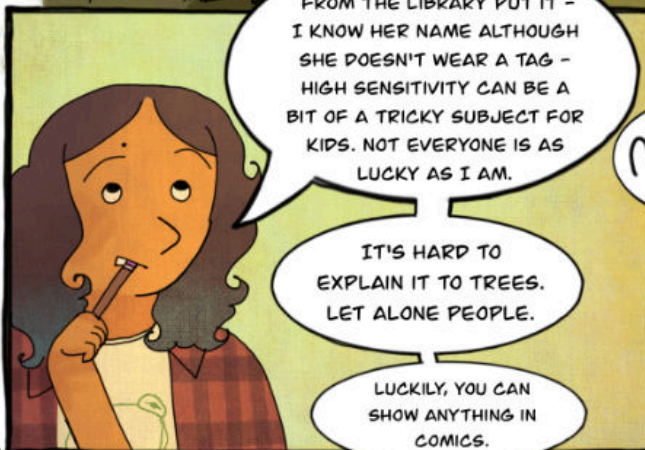


I KNOW WHAT
YOU'RE GETTING AT.

WHAT
OTHER POWERS
WOULD I HAVE AS
A SUPERHERO?







IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN IT TO TREES. LET ALONE PEOPLE.

LUCKILY, YOU CAN SHOW ANYTHING IN COMICS.





HI, IT'S ME.
LONG TIME NO
SEE.

YOU HAVEN'T
HEARD THE BEST
PART... IT'S TIME TO
UNVEIL THIS MASK,
TOO. GET READY...



BUT YOU
KNEW IT ALL ALONG,
DIDN'T YOU?



ALRIGHT,
BEFORE I UNMASK, I'LL
TELL YOU WHAT EVEN LUCY
DOESN'T KNOW YET. HOW IT
ALL TURNED OUT.

AFTER THE SCHOOL PRESENTATION,
PEPPER FOUND OUT THAT HE ENJOYED
PERFORMING IN FRONT OF PEOPLE.



HE SIGNED UP FOR THE DRAMA CLUB AND
A FEW YEARS LATER FOR ACTING SCHOOL.

MRS. CLAIRE, THE LIBRARIAN,
GRADUATED FROM UNIVERSITY
AND TOOK A PART-TIME JOB AS
A SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST.



NOW IT'S OFFICIAL.

TINA GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL
AND GOT HER BLACK BELT IN TAEKWONDO.
SHE MADE IT TO COLLEGE IN JAPAN.



LAST I HEARD, SHE WAS JUST
A STEP AWAY FROM ENLIGHTENMENT.

MICHAEL BECAME THE WOODSMAN.
HE'S STUDYING ENVIRONMENTAL
SCIENCE AND CARES ABOUT NATURE.



THANKS TO HIM, WOODPECKERS ARE STILL
DRILLING HERE, FINCHES ARE SINGING AND
MYSTERIOUS TREES ARE GROWING.

ECHO HAS A PLACE OF HONOUR ON
THE CABINET NOW. HE WATCHES MY
ROOM QUIETLY. EVERY NOW AND THEN,
I TELL HIM WHAT'S NEW BUT
HE DOESN'T SAY ANYTHING.

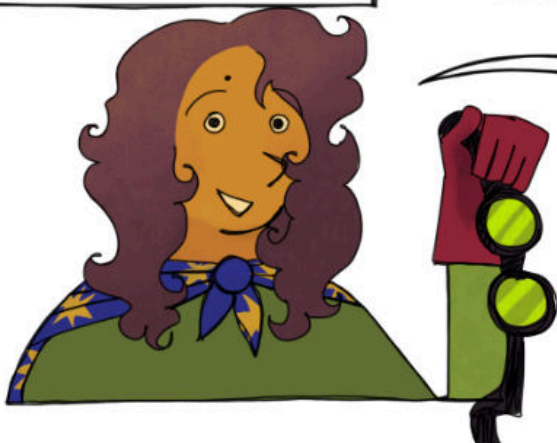


BECAUSE HE KNOWS.

SALVATOR KEEPS GROWING TO THIS DAY.
HE EVEN BEARS CHERRIES! THEY ARE
SMALL AND HARD. JUST LIKE HIM.



I GUESS CROWLEY
FINDS THEM TASTY.



AND LUCY?

I'M BUSY DRAWING
RIGHT NOW. IF YOU'VE MADE IT
THIS FAR IN MY STORY, THOUGH,
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

LET'S STAY IN TOUCH!



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