

UNSTABLE HONESTY



DARIO CORTIZO

UNSTABLE HONESTY

DESIGN, LAYOUT, STORY, ILLUSTRATIONS,
AND TRANSLATION BY DARÍO CORTIZO.

THIS BOOK WAS PRODUCED AND PUBLISHED INDEPENDENTLY.
IT MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT
THE EXPRESS PERMISSION OF THE AUTHOR, EXCEPT FOR
THE CREATION OF REVIEW OR RECOMMENDATION MATERIALS.

FOR INQUIRIES, QUESTIONS, OR COMMENTS, PLEASE CONTACT:

cortizodario@gmail.com

© DARÍO CORTIZO
MORELIA, MICHOACAN, MEXICO.
2025

THIS BOOK WAS DESIGNED
USING THE TYPEFACES PATRICK HAND SC, SCHOOLBELL,
AND COURIER PRIME.

AN INSOLUBILITY IS NOT A PROBLEM.

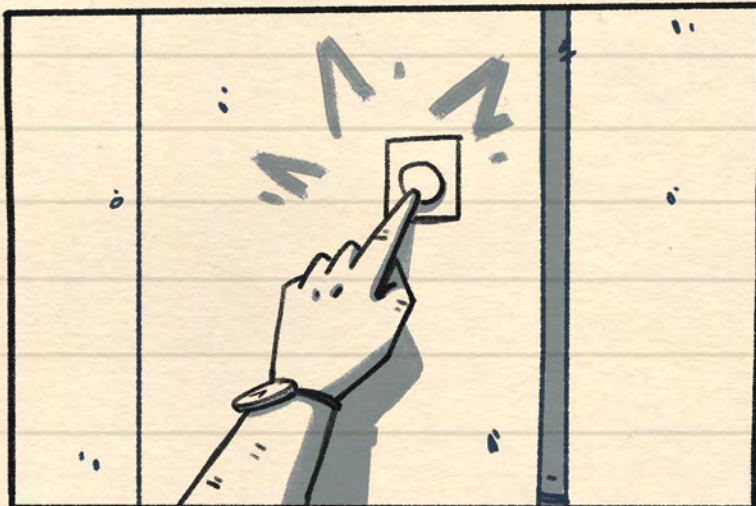
**ISAAC ASIMOV
THE GODS THEMSELVES**

**WHEN IT COMES TO THE PAST,
EVERYONE WRITES FICTION.**

**STEPHEN KING
JOYLAND**



TODAY I'M VISITING MY BEST FRIEND,
NOT AS PART OF OUR ROUTINE, BUT BECAUSE OF AN URGENT MATTER.



I MET AVI WHEN I STARTED UNIVERSITY.
I THINK SHE WAS THE FIRST PERSON I SPOKE TO.



I REMEMBER HOW GENUINELY INTERESTED SHE WAS
IN GETTING TO KNOW ME.

SO, WHAT'S
YOUR DEAL?



MY DEAL?



YEAH, LIKE WHAT
YOU SERIOUSLY
WANT TO DO WITH
YOUR LIFE.



WELL, I'M SORT OF
A WRITER, EXCEPT
I'M THE ONE WHO LIVES
THE EXPERIENCES
AND MY FUTURE SELF
WRITES THEM DOWN.



I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO TELL WHEN SHE'S
BEING SARCASTIC.

THAT'S OKAY.
I CAN BE KIND OF
LAZY SOMETIMES
TOO.



...







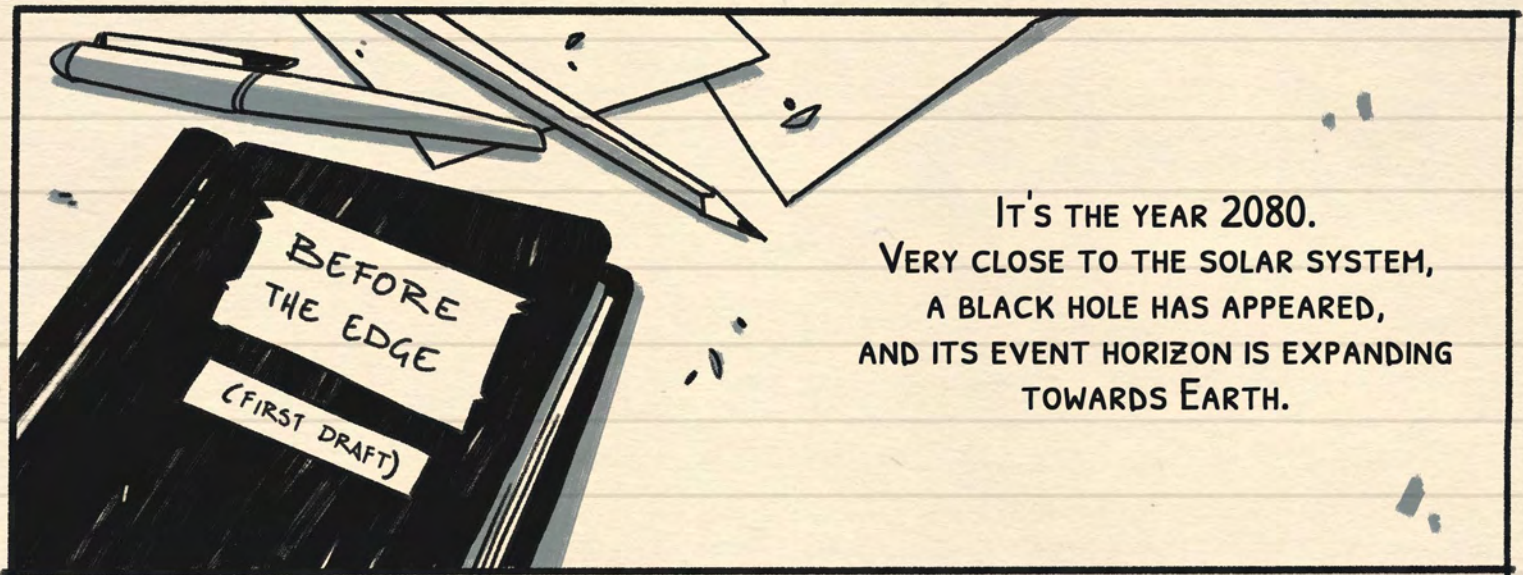


I DO KNOW. I JUST FEEL ASHAMED TO SAY IT OUT LOUD.

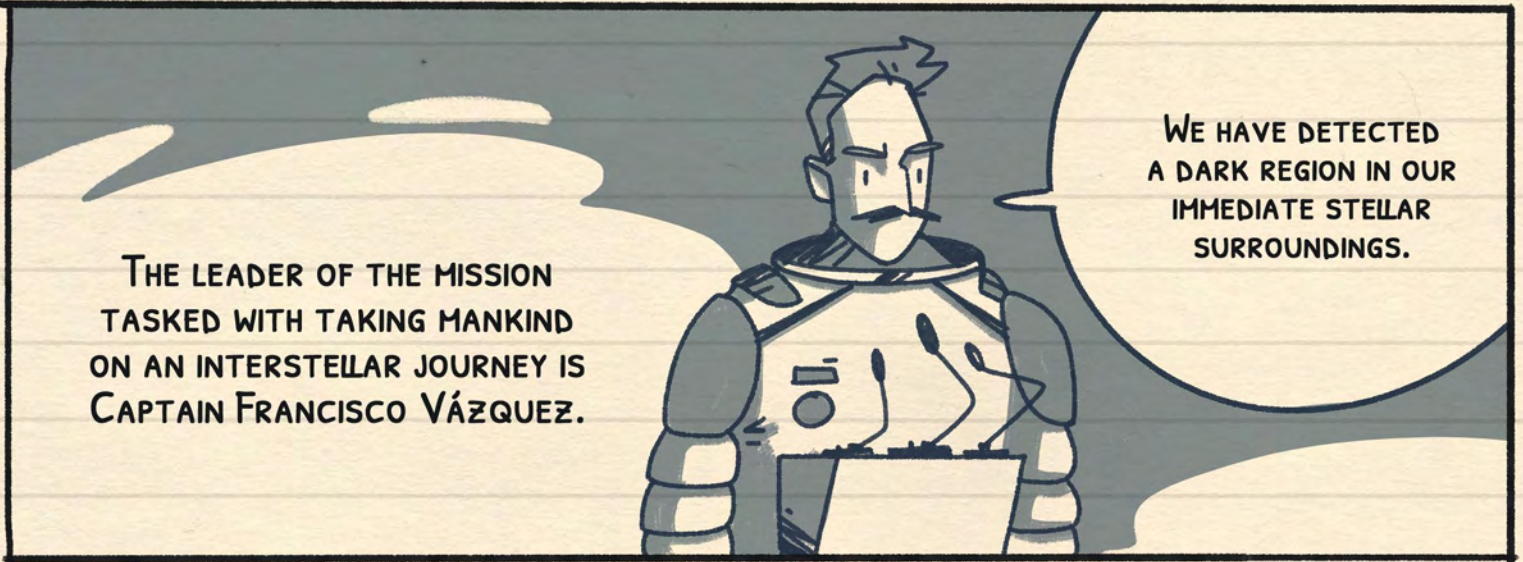


SHIT. THE BOOK.

I'VE SPENT YEARS READING SCIENCE FICTION NOVELS, AND A FEW WEEKS AGO I QUIT MY JOB TO TRY WRITING ONE.



IT'S THE YEAR 2080.
VERY CLOSE TO THE SOLAR SYSTEM,
A BLACK HOLE HAS APPEARED,
AND ITS EVENT HORIZON IS EXPANDING
TOWARDS EARTH.



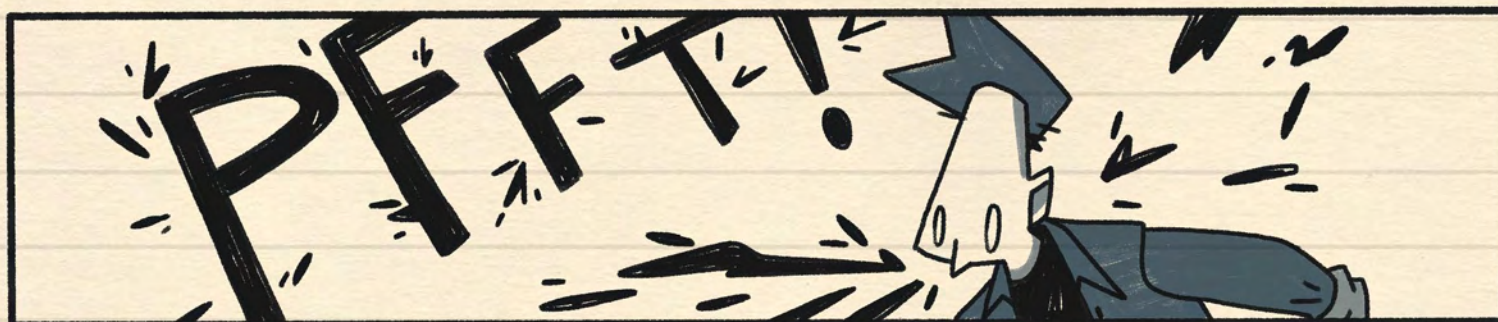
THE LEADER OF THE MISSION
TASKED WITH TAKING MANKIND
ON AN INTERSTELLAR JOURNEY IS
CAPTAIN FRANCISCO VÁZQUEZ.

WE HAVE DETECTED
A DARK REGION IN OUR
IMMEDIATE STELLAR
SURROUNDINGS.



A JOURNEY
IN SEARCH OF A
NEW HABITABLE
SYSTEM AND... THAT'S
BASICALLY IT.

NO SUPPORTING CHARACTERS, NO WORLDBUILDING, NO PLOT... JUST A PREMISE.









I GREW UP IN THIS SMALL CITY SURROUNDED BY MOUNTAINS.
I'VE ALWAYS FELT LIKE IT'S PROTECTING ITSELF FROM SOMETHING.



ITS SMALLNESS IS WHAT I LOVE ABOUT IT. THAT'S WHY
I'VE NEVER WANTED TO GO FAR.





IT ACCEPTS ITSELF COMPLETELY.
JUST AS I WOULD LIKE TO ACCEPT MYSELF.



BUT I DON'T THINK WE SHARE
THE SAME IDEA OF SMALLNESS.

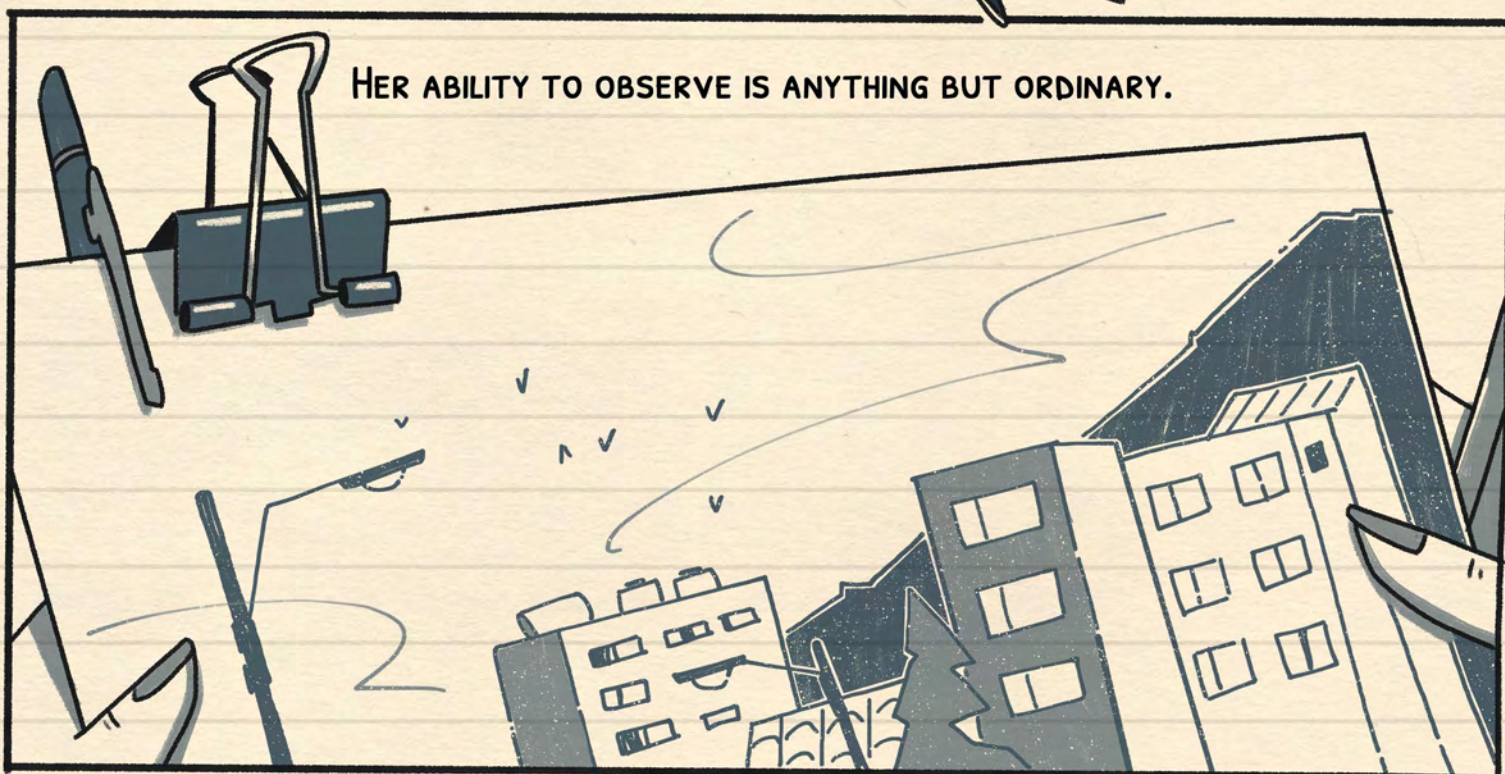


AVI, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS
GREAT CONTROL OF HER SKILLS.

SHE'S AN
AMAZING PAINTER.



HER ABILITY TO OBSERVE IS ANYTHING BUT ORDINARY.



I WAS STARTING
TO WORRY
I'D LOST THE HABIT.
I'M GLAD
YOU DECIDED
TO COME.



HAHA!
I THINK YOU PUSHED IT
A LITTLE FURTHER.





I'D ALREADY TRIED TELLING MYSELF,
BUT THE STAINS BRING A LOT OF UNCERTAINTY.



I GUESS I NEEDED TO THINK IT OUT LOUD—IT'S BEEN
A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE FOLLOWED THE COURSE OF WHAT'S HAPPENING.

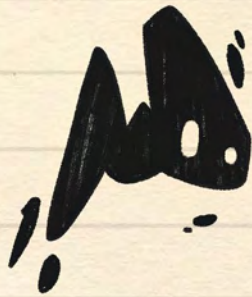


LOSING IDEAS IS JUST
PART OF MY DAY.

I NEVER THOUGHT
IT WOULD BECOME
A PROBLEM.



MAYBE IT'S THE BOOK THAT'S UNFINISHED...
OR MAYBE I'M THE UNFINISHED ONE.



SOMETHING CURIOUS HAPPENS
WHEN THESE THINGS GET A NAME.

SUDDENLY, IT ALL BECOMES DISTURBINGLY CLEAR.



WHEN YOU RECOGNIZE
YOUR OWN STAINS...

YOU GAIN THE
ABILITY TO SEE
OTHER PEOPLE'S.

IT'S REALLY OVERWHELMING
TO WATCH HOW THEY CONSTANTLY
TAKE OVER EVERYTHING.

JUST LIKE THAT, THEY ARRIVE
WITHOUT WARNING AND STAY CLOSE.

LIKE A CONSTANT
REMINDER OF DISCOMFORT.

I'VE TRIED LISTENING TO WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY,
BUT THEY SPEAK IN A LANGUAGE I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
I DON'T THINK THERE'S A WAY BACK ONCE THEY'VE BEEN SEEN.

BY FAR, THIS IS MY WORST TALENT.

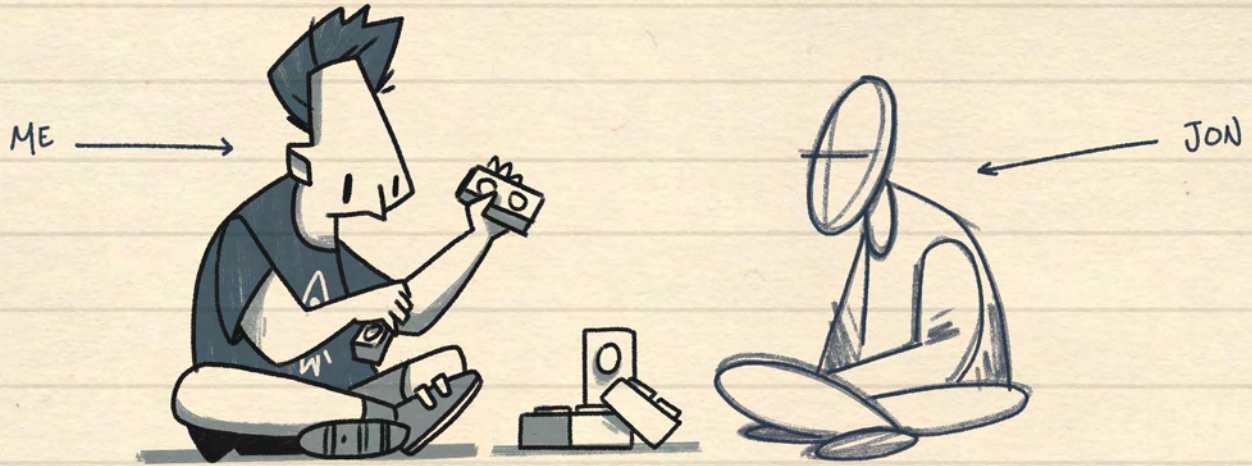






I THIS IS THE PERSON I'VE KNOWN THE LONGEST.

I'VE KNOWN HIM SINCE BEFORE HE WAS BORN.
HE USED TO BE MY IMAGINARY FRIEND.

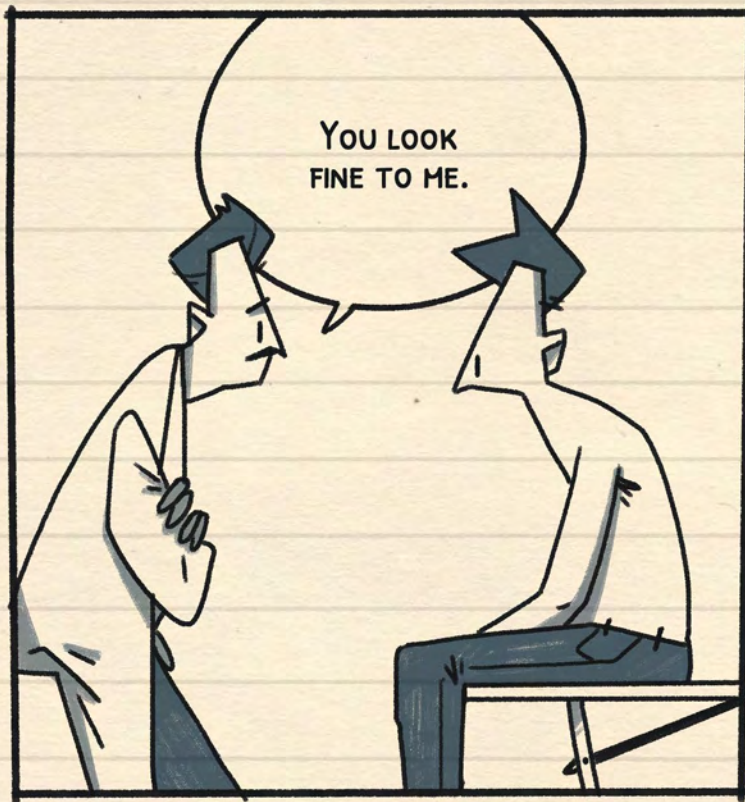


HIS OFFICIAL NAME IS JONAH,
BUT EVERYONE CALLS HIM JON
BECAUSE I PICKED THAT
NAME FOR HIM.

TURNS OUT, BESIDES BEING
MY BROTHER, HE'S ALSO A VET.
AND ME, WELL, I'M A HIGHLY
EVOLVED PRIMATE.
DOCTOR VISITS ARE FREE
OF CHARGE IF I COME WITH HIM.



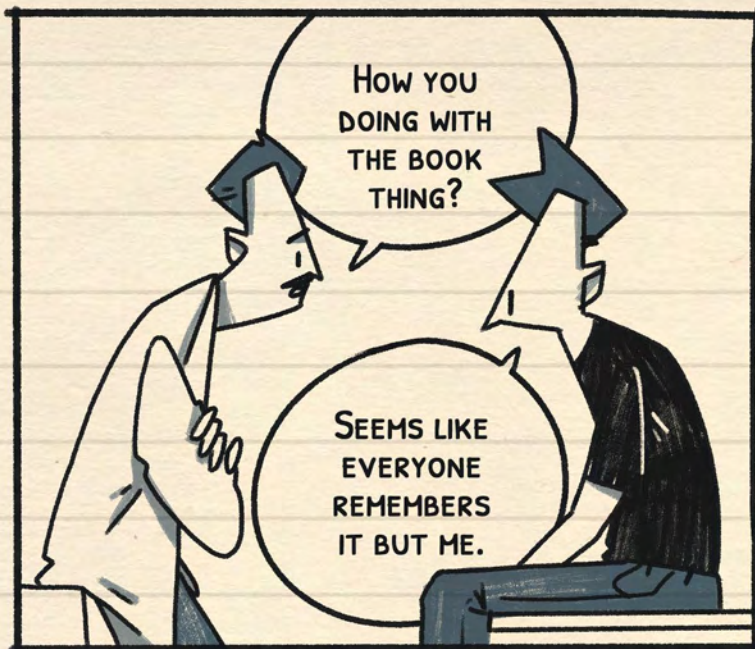
EVEN THOUGH I'M THE OLDER ONE, I'VE ALWAYS
FELT LIKE HE'S THE ONE WHO LOOKS AFTER ME.

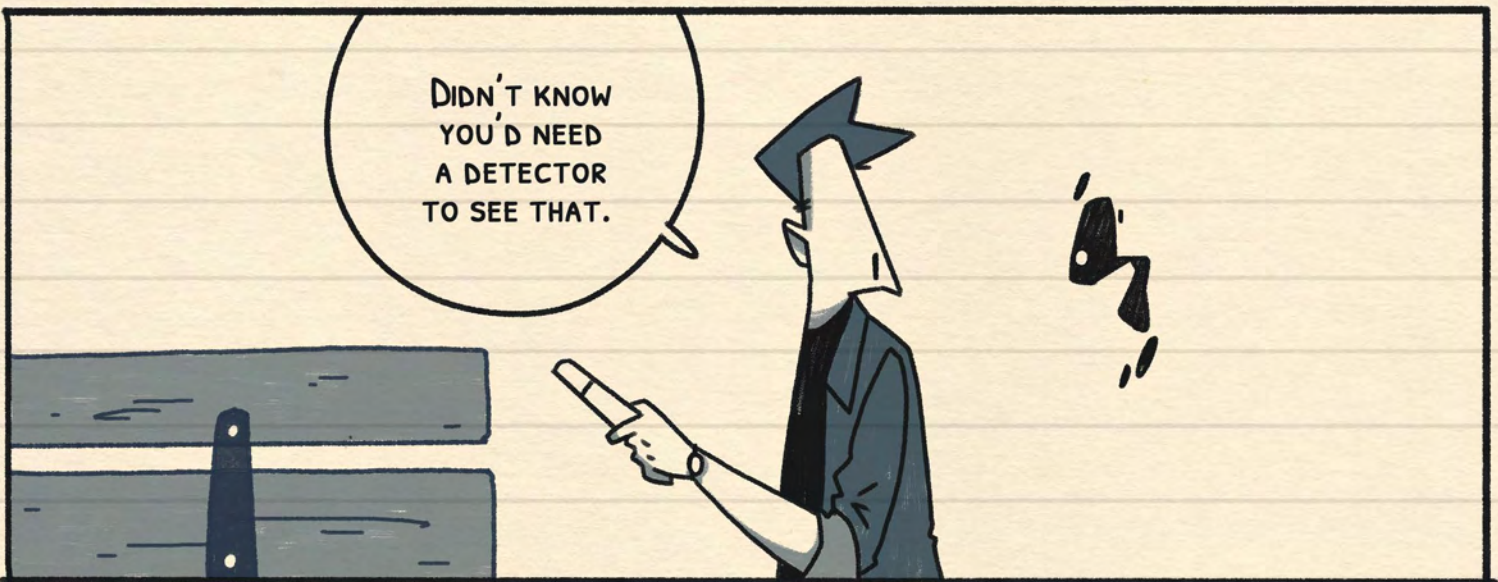
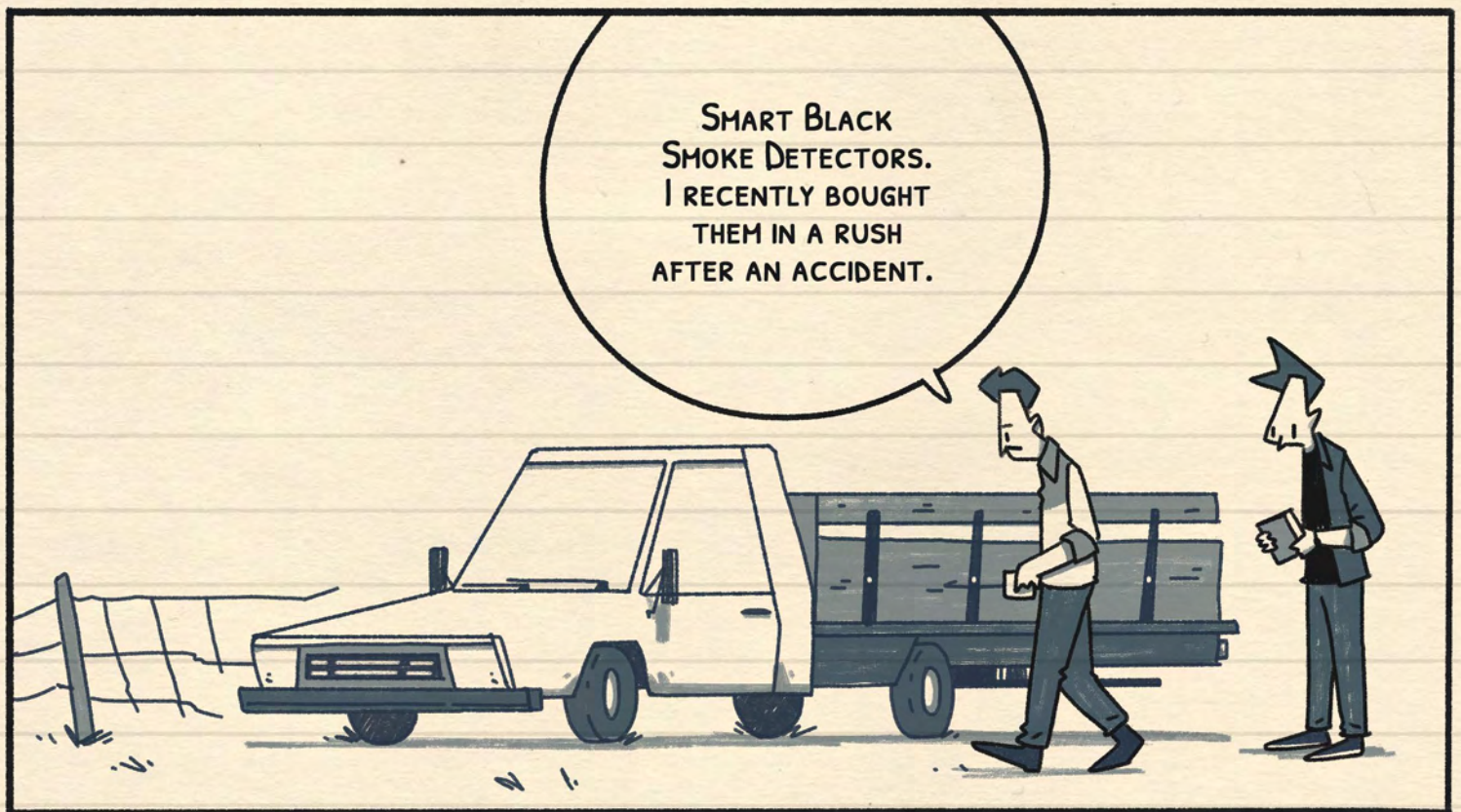
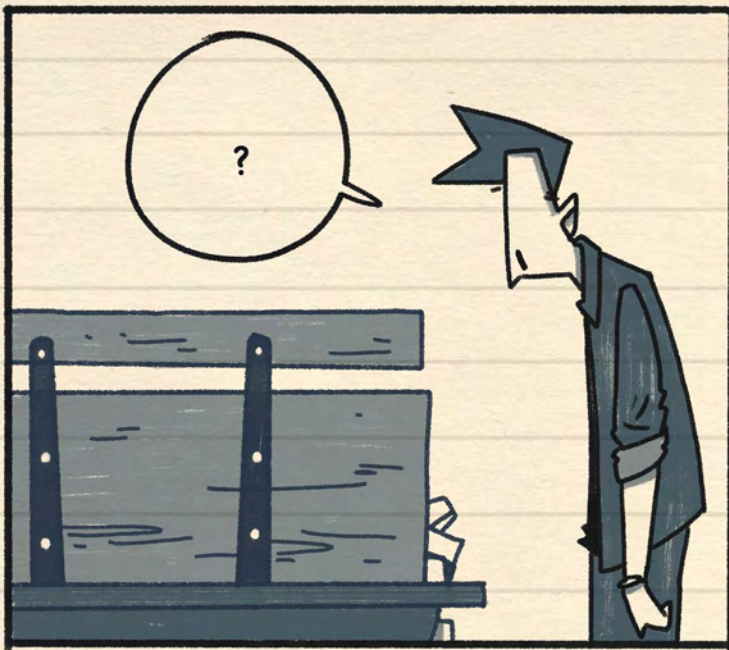




I TRUST HIS JUDGMENT; IT MAKES SENSE THAT, HAVING BEEN
BORN IN MY HEAD, HE OFTEN KNOWS MORE ABOUT ME THAN I DO.









THE STABLE
ALMOST CAUGHT
FIRE LAST WEEK,
BUT THE
FIREFIGHTERS GOT
HERE FAST.

I ASKED WHAT
CAUSED IT, AND
THEY JUST TOLD
ME TO "KEEP MY
EYES OPEN."

WHO THE
HELL KNOWS
WHAT THEY
MEANT.



TAKE ONE IF
YOU WANT.
I ALREADY
PROGRAMMED
THEM.

THANKS.
NEVER HURTS
TO BE PREPARED.



HEARD ANYTHING
ABOUT RALPH?

RALPH, RIGHT.



NOT MUCH,
REALLY.

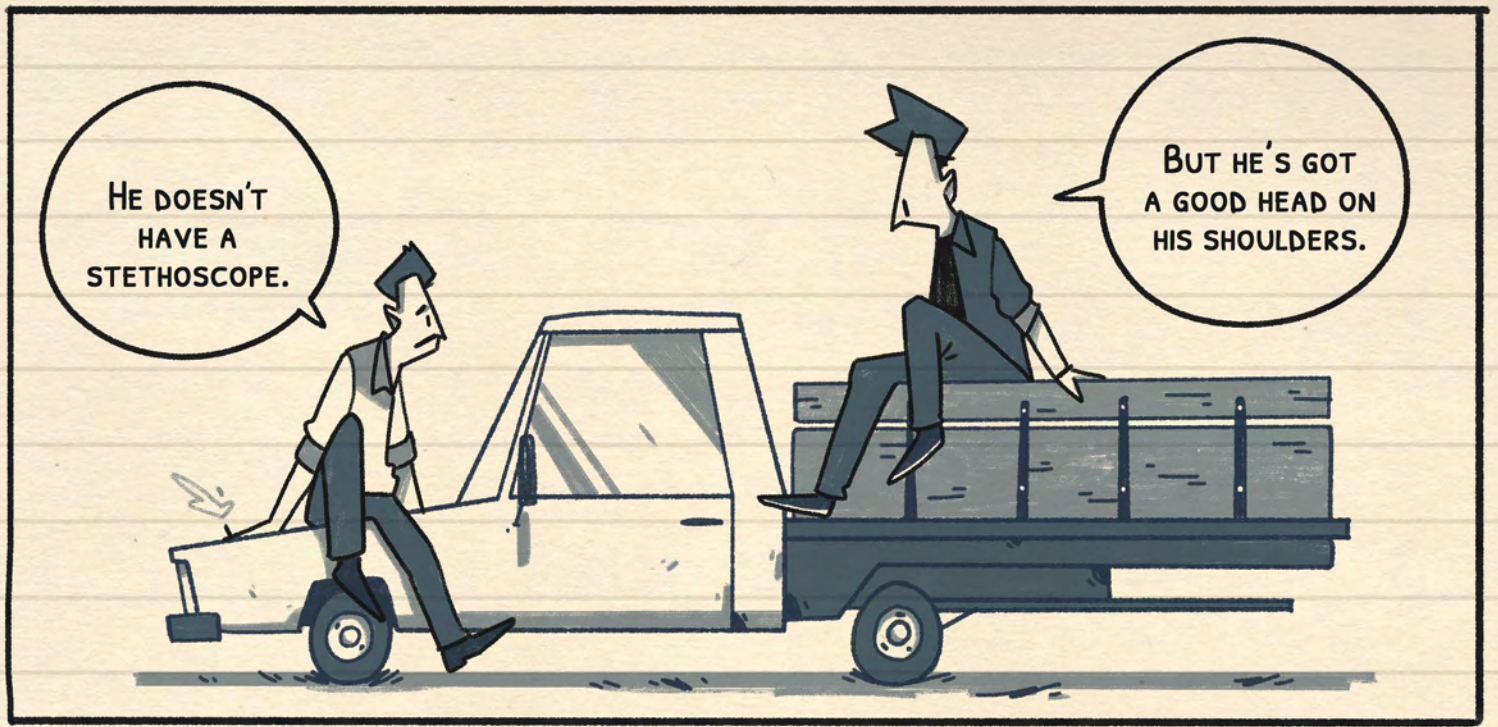
I SAW HIM ABOUT
A MONTH AGO,
BUT WE DIDN'T
TALK MUCH.

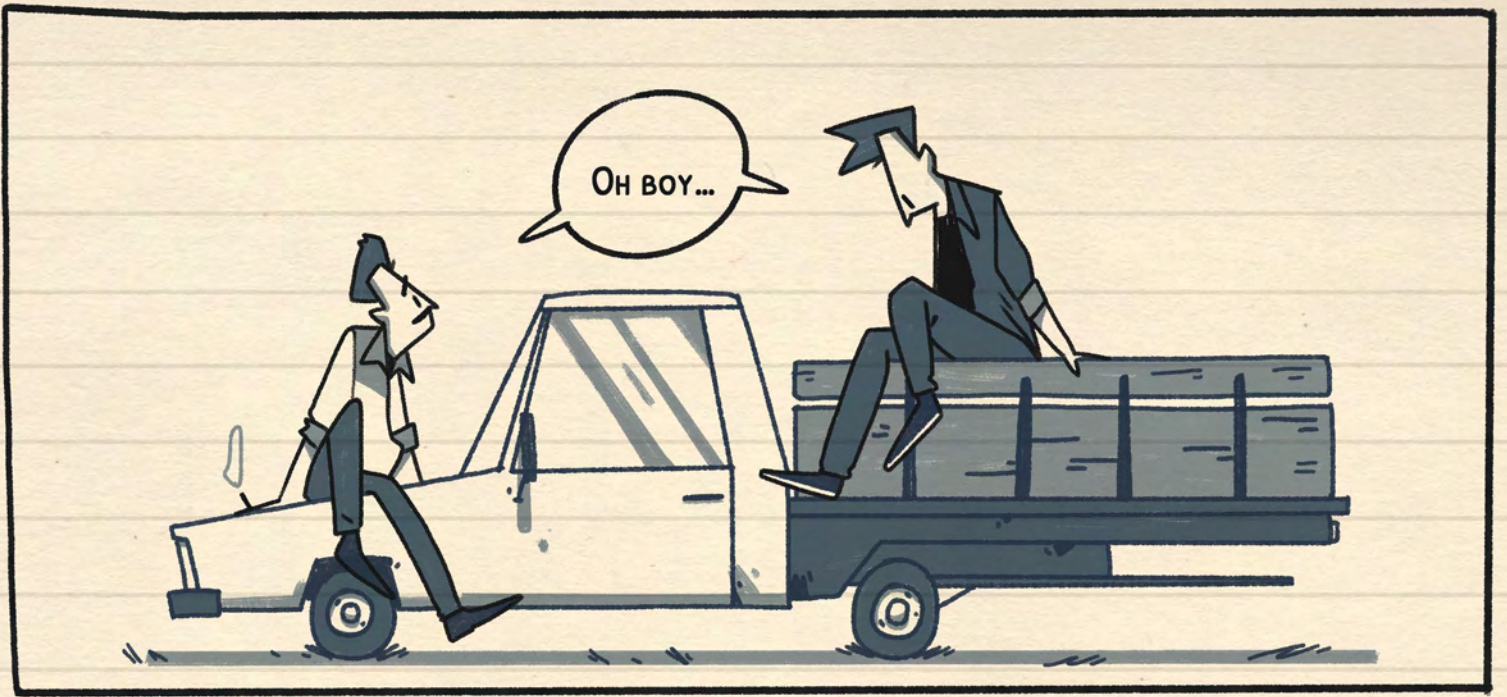


I REALLY LIKE
THAT GUY.

HE HELPED ME
WITH THE TRUCK
LAST WEEK AND
ASKED ABOUT YOU.

I'LL REACH OUT
TO HIM. I THINK HE
CAN HELP ME TOO.



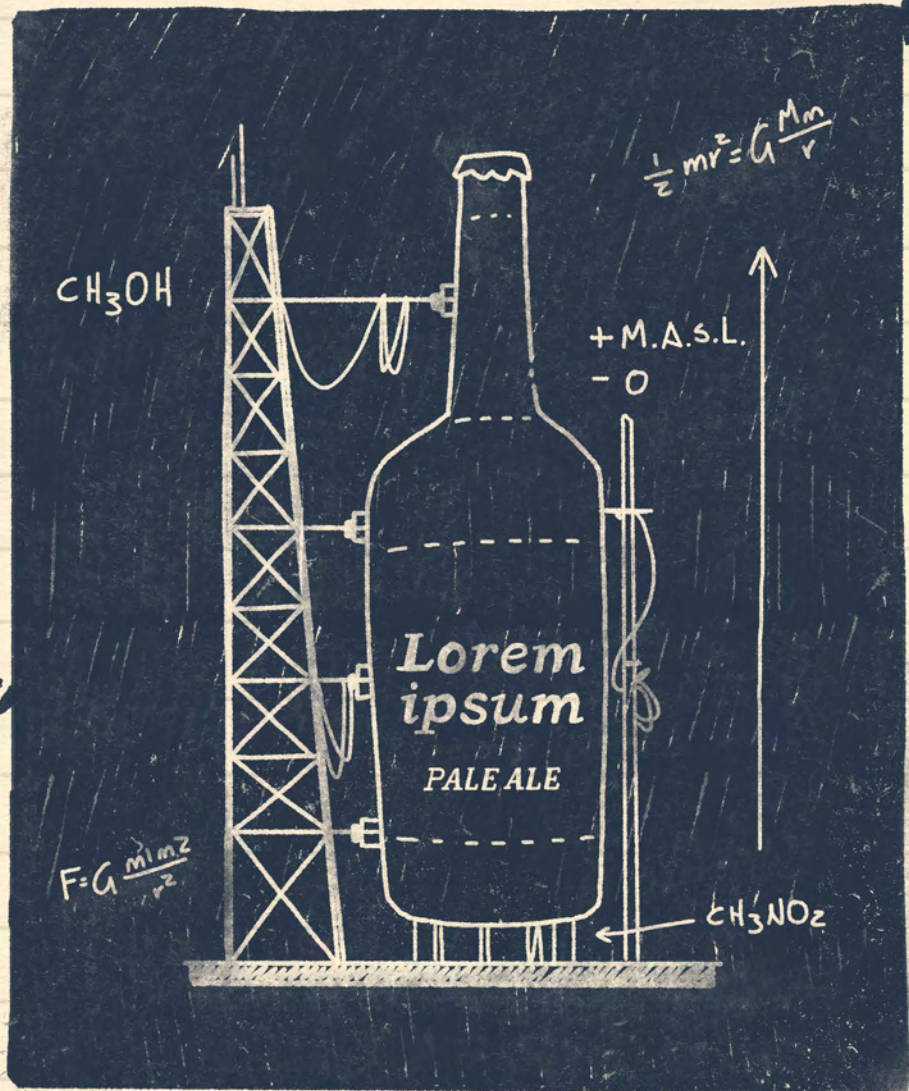




WHAT WAS
WRONG WITH
THE TRUCK?

SOMETHING IN
THE EXHAUST,
I THINK.

Lorem
ipsum



THIS IS RALPH. HE'S MY OLDEST FRIEND.

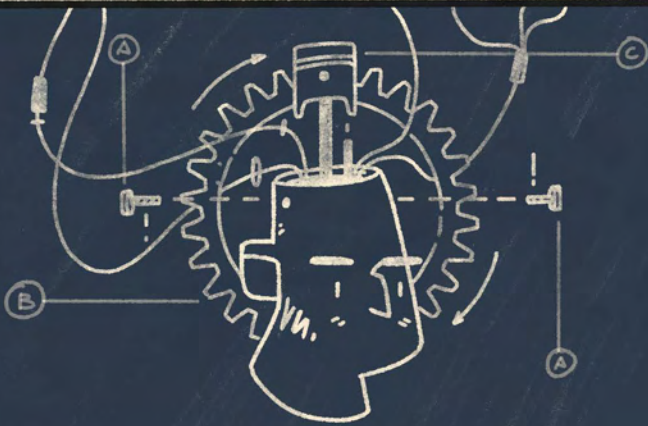


NOT BECAUSE HE'S AN OLD MAN, BUT BECAUSE
WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER SINCE WE WERE KIDS.

AND THERE'S A REASON WHY
HIS HEAD IS THAT BIG.



HE'S NOT JUST A
MECHANICAL ENGINEER.



HE'S ALSO AN EXCELLENT PILOT.



I CAN HONESTLY SAY HE'S A GENIUS.

IT'S NOT REALLY NECESSARY TO SEE RALPH OFTEN
TO KEEP THE TRUST ALIVE.

So,
WHAT'S UP?
How's
EVERYTHING?

WELL...

A SPORADIC UPDATE IS ENOUGH TO
KNOW HOW THE OTHER ONE'S DOING.

THOUGH HE DOES HAVE SOME TROUBLE GRASPING EMOTIONAL STUFF.

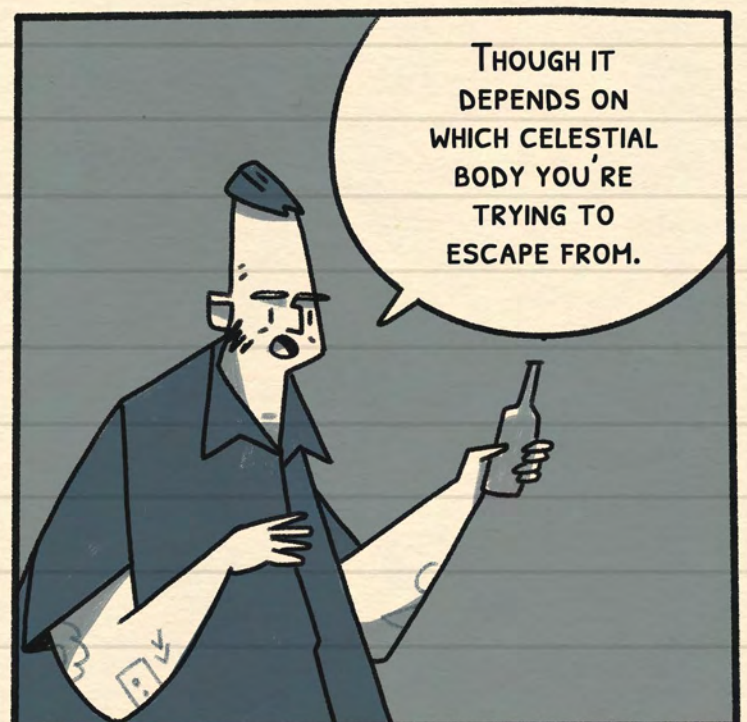
HE OFTEN REPLIES:

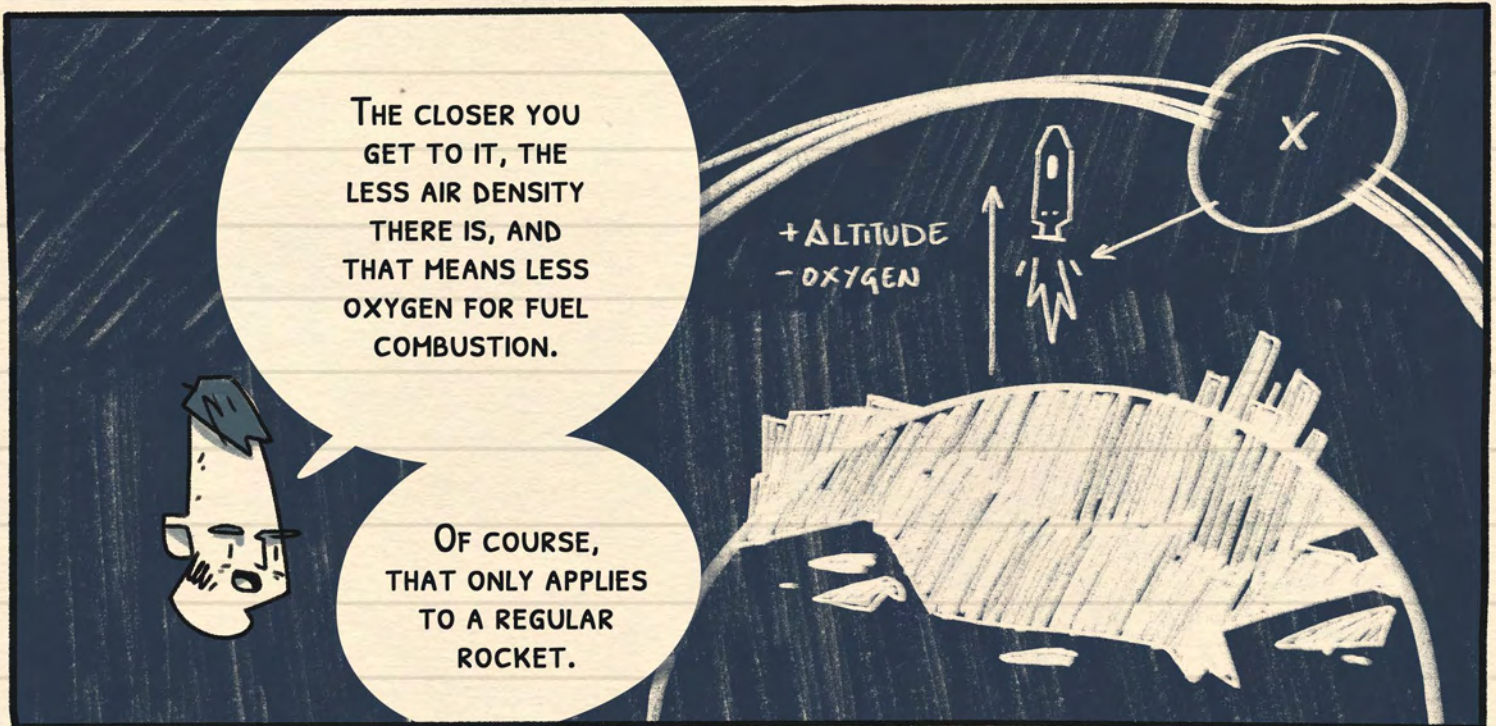
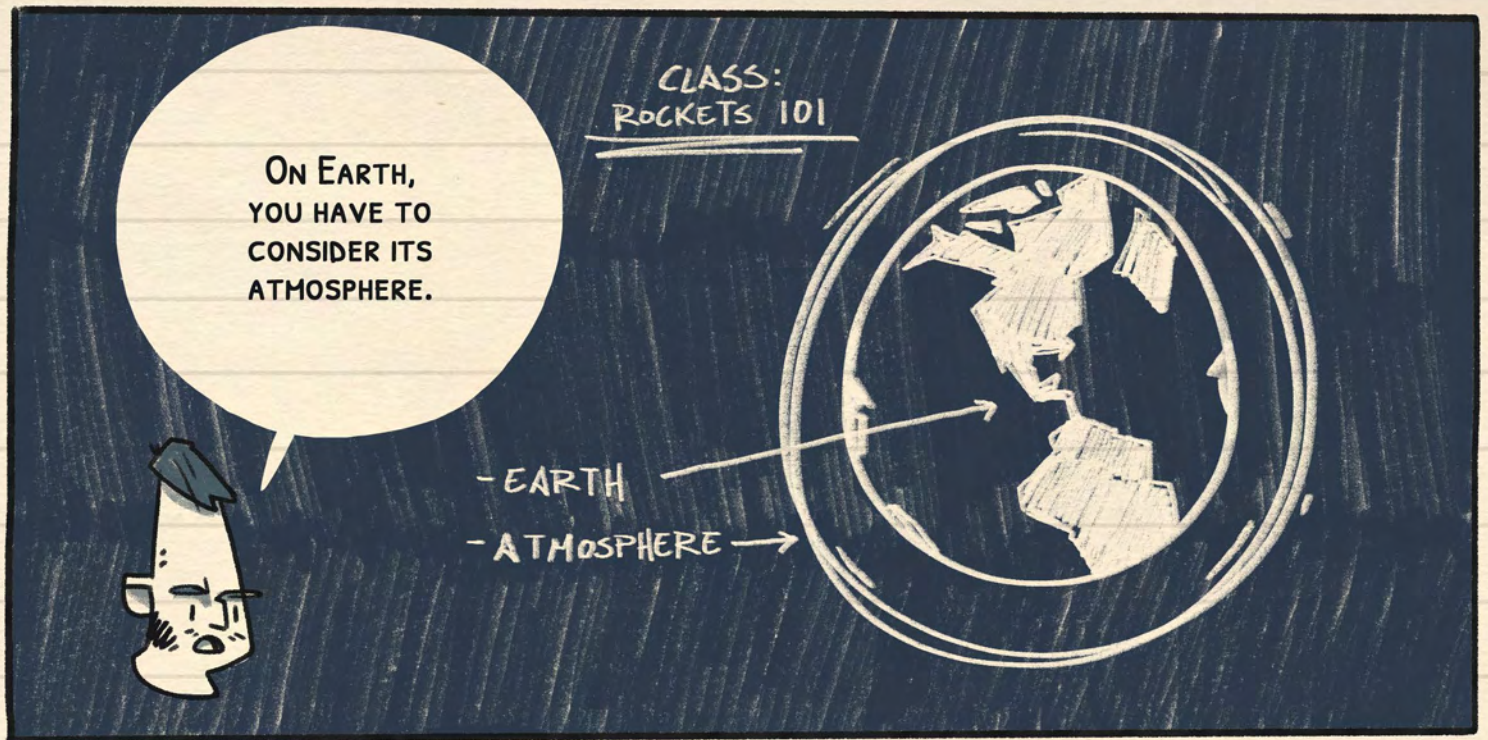


AND YOU'RE
COMPLAINING
JUST BECAUSE
OF THAT?

OR MAYBE HE'S ACTUALLY GREAT AT IT.







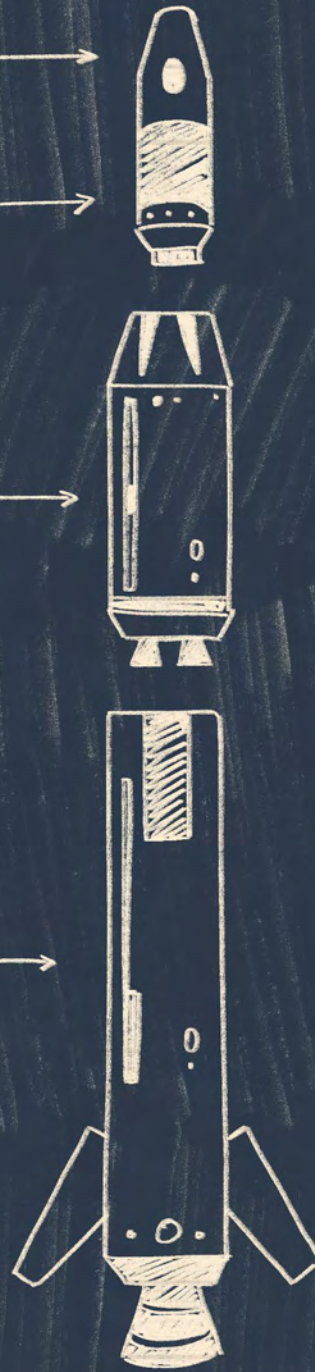
SPACECRAFT

SERVICE
MODULE

STAGE
#2

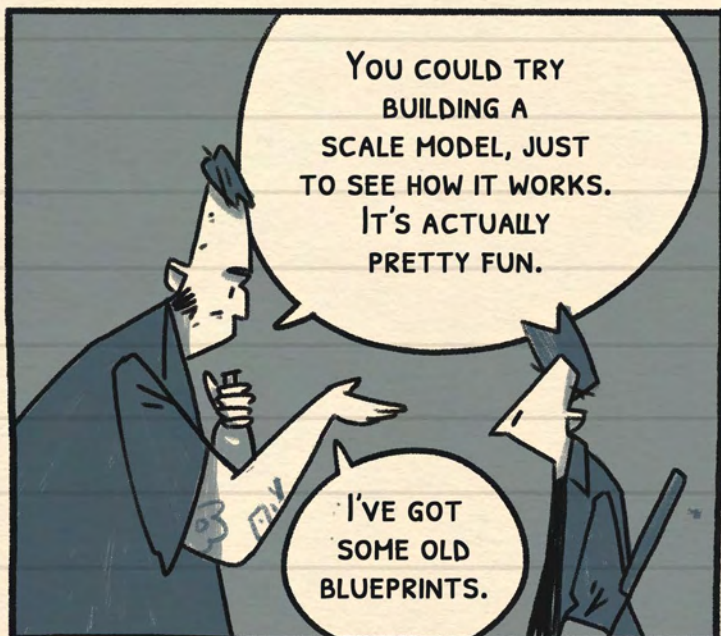
STAGE
#1

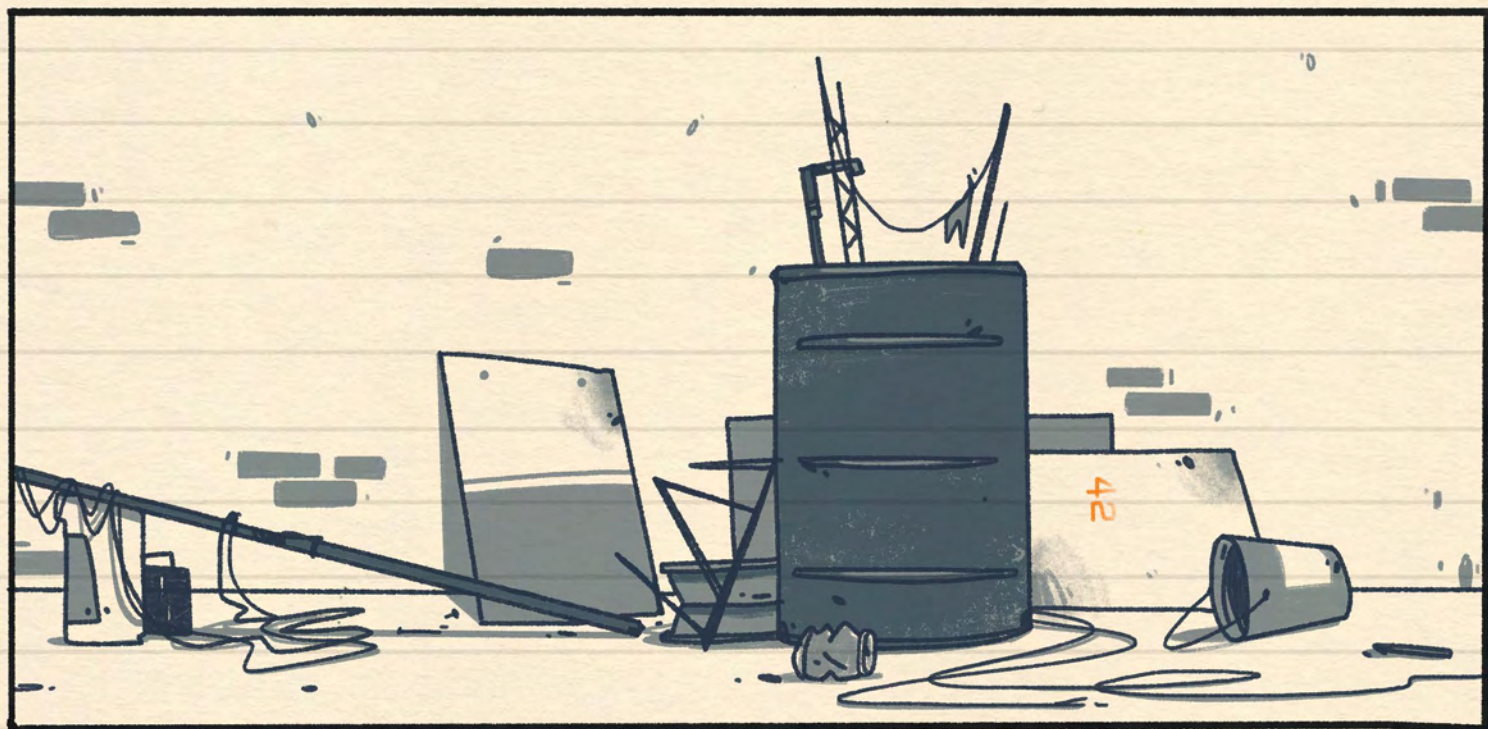
ROCKETS HAVE
MULTIPLE STAGES
FOR THAT REASON.

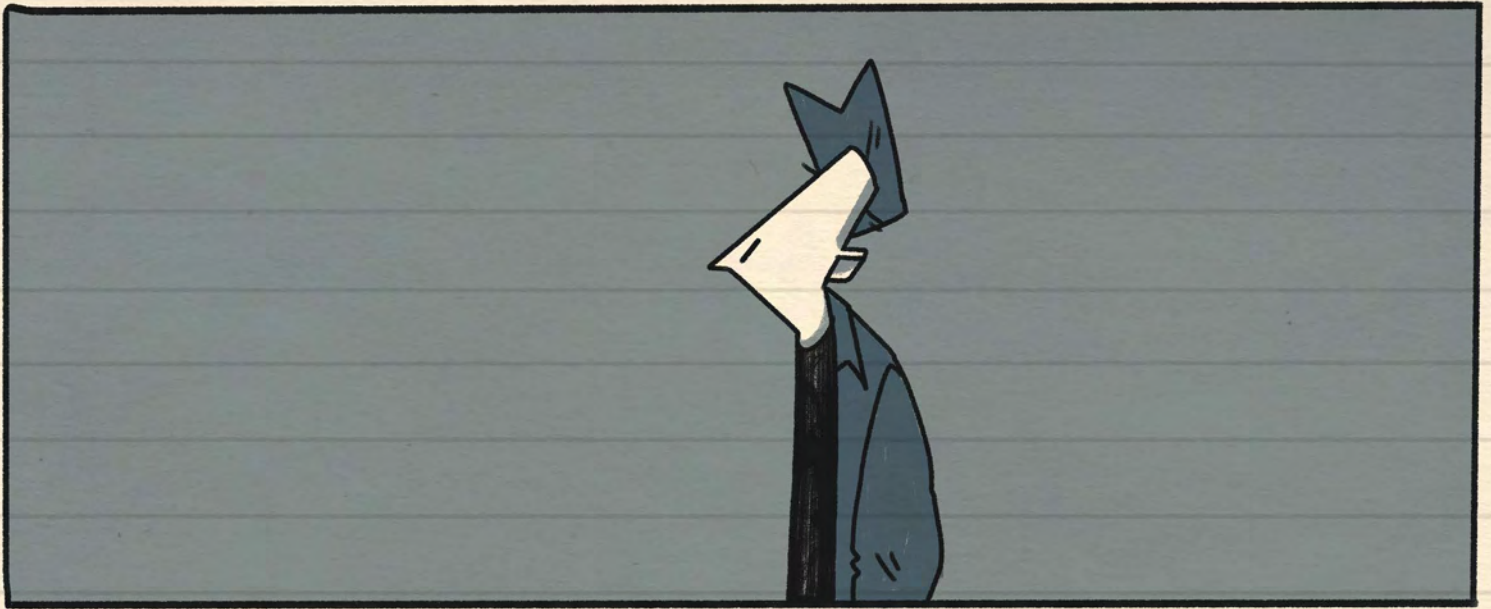


YOU HAVE TO LET GO
OF SOME HEAVY STUFF
WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE
ENOUGH ENERGY TO
KEEP GOING.









MAYBE MY IDEA WENT
ALL THE WAY UP THERE.

LOOK, THIS IS
WHAT THEY USED
IN THE FIRST
LUNAR MODULE.

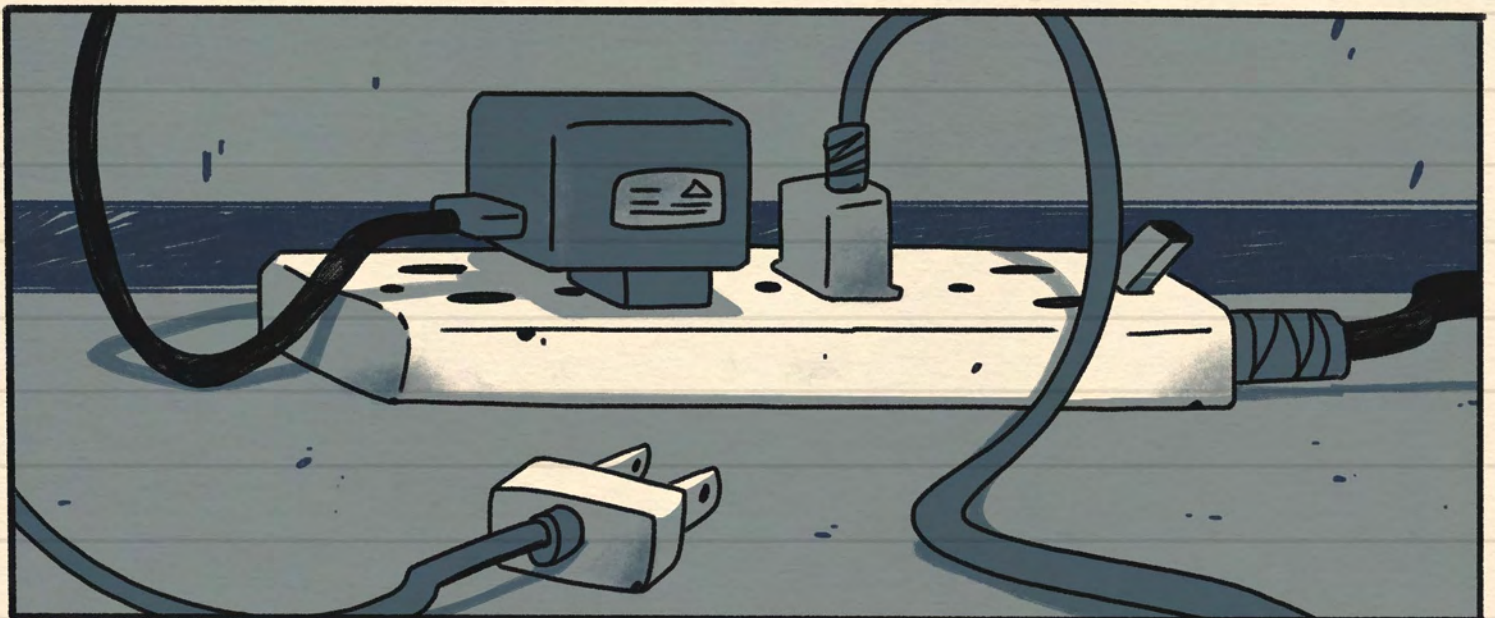
DO YOU THINK
I COULD GO
THAT FAR?

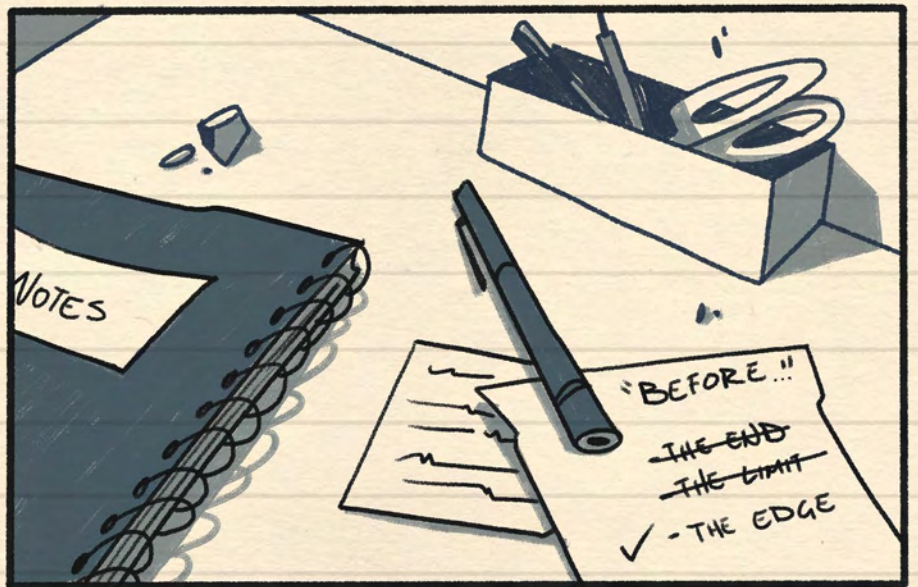
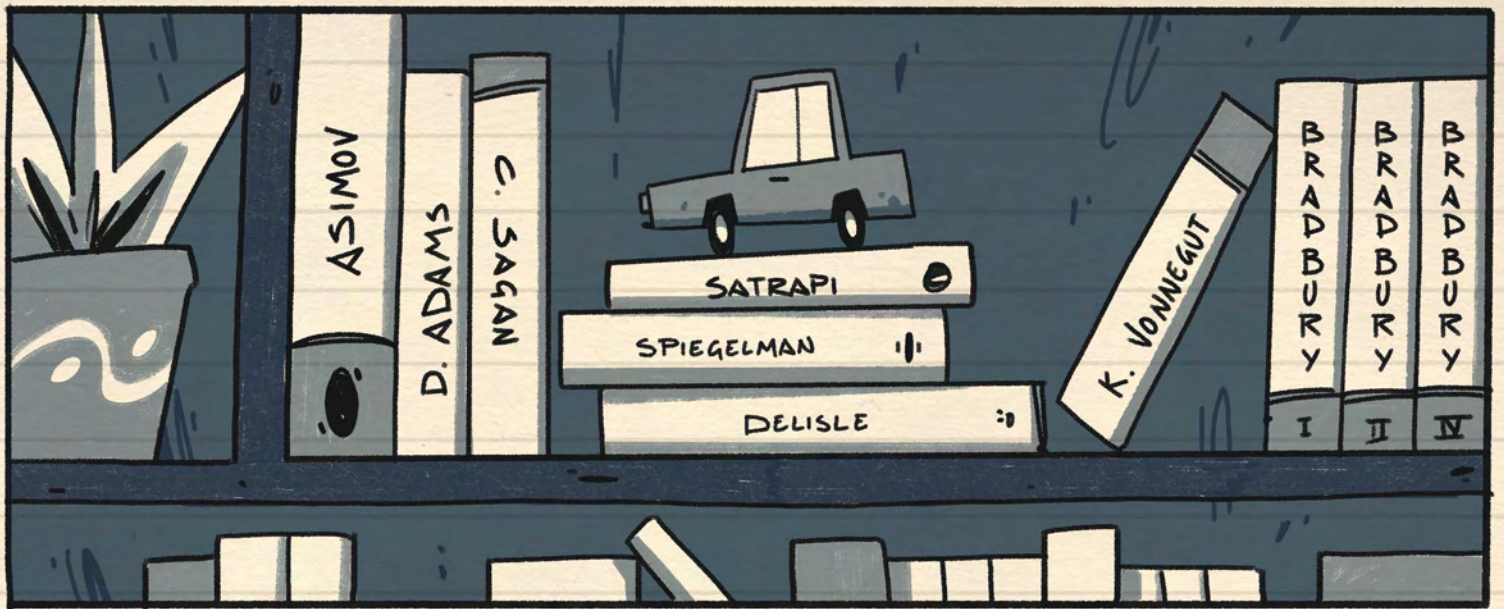
YOU NEVER
REALLY KNOW
WHAT YOU'RE
CAPABLE OF.

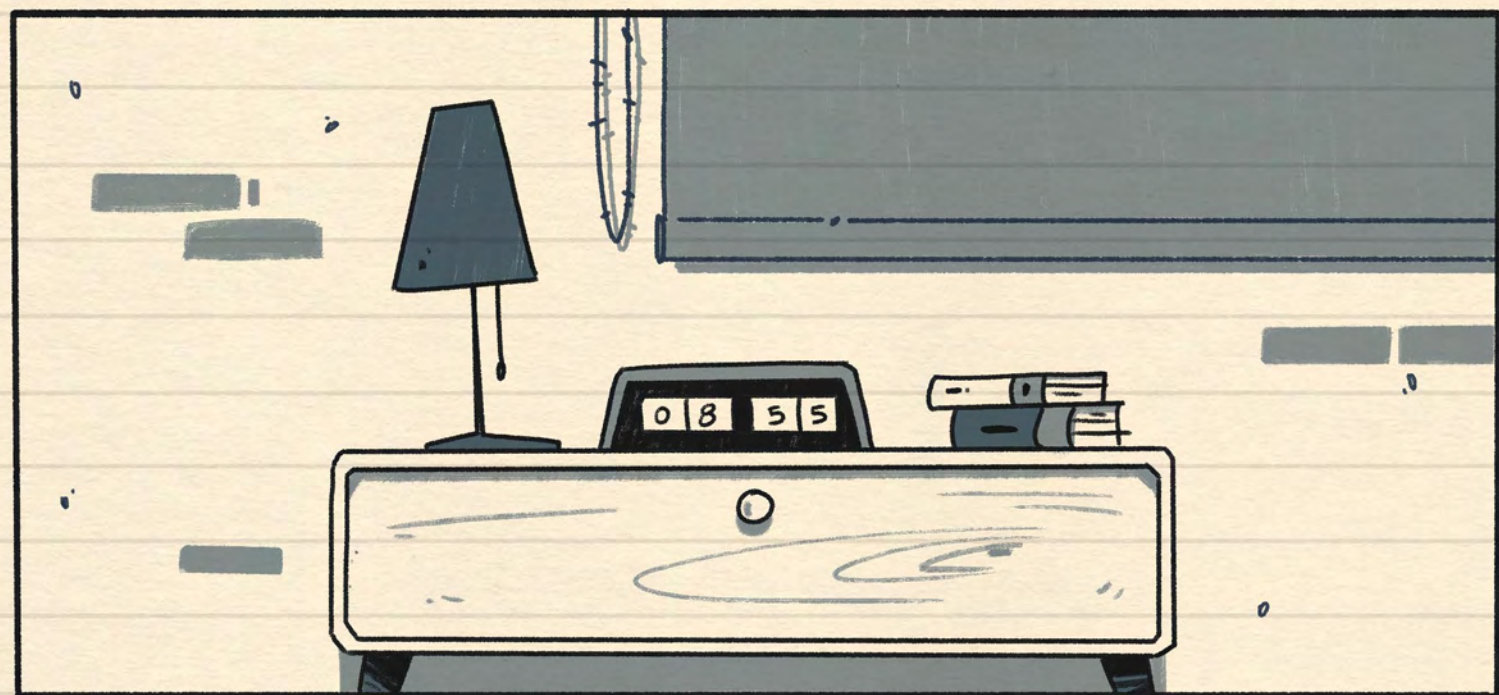
BUT IF YOU
GET IT TO LIFT OFF,
THAT'S ENOUGH.













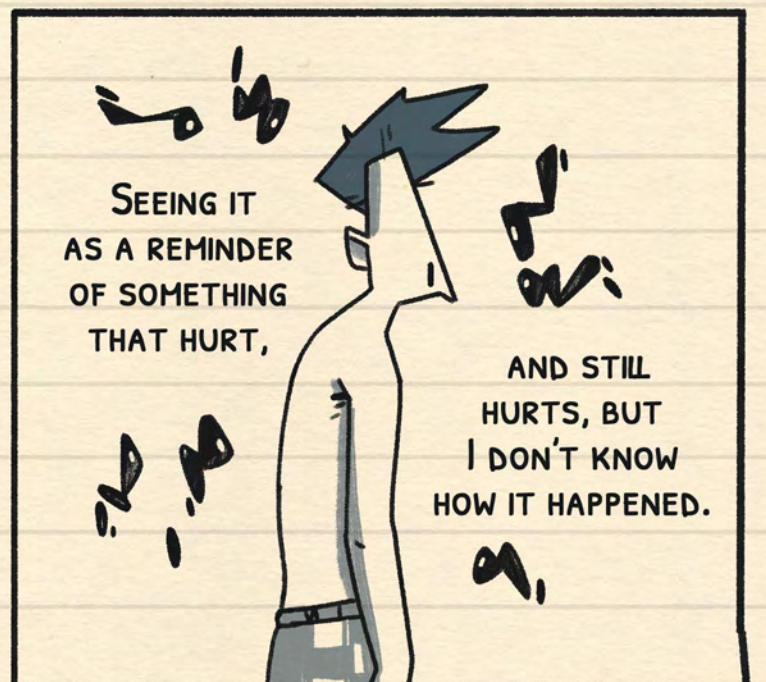
I WOKE UP LOOKING
THE SAME TODAY.



WITH THIS MARK
NO ONE ELSE SEEMS
TO NOTICE.



SOMETIMES
I SPEND HOURS
JUST STARING
AT IT.



SEEING IT
AS A REMINDER
OF SOMETHING
THAT HURT,

AND STILL
HURTS, BUT
I DON'T KNOW
HOW IT HAPPENED.



I SEE IT AS SOMETHING
THAT STOPS ME FROM
BEING WHO I AM,

BUT IT'S ALREADY
PART OF ME.



THE UGLIEST SCAR I HAVE
CAME FROM A WOUND
I DON'T REMEMBER GETTING.



3. KNOCK 4.
1. 2.

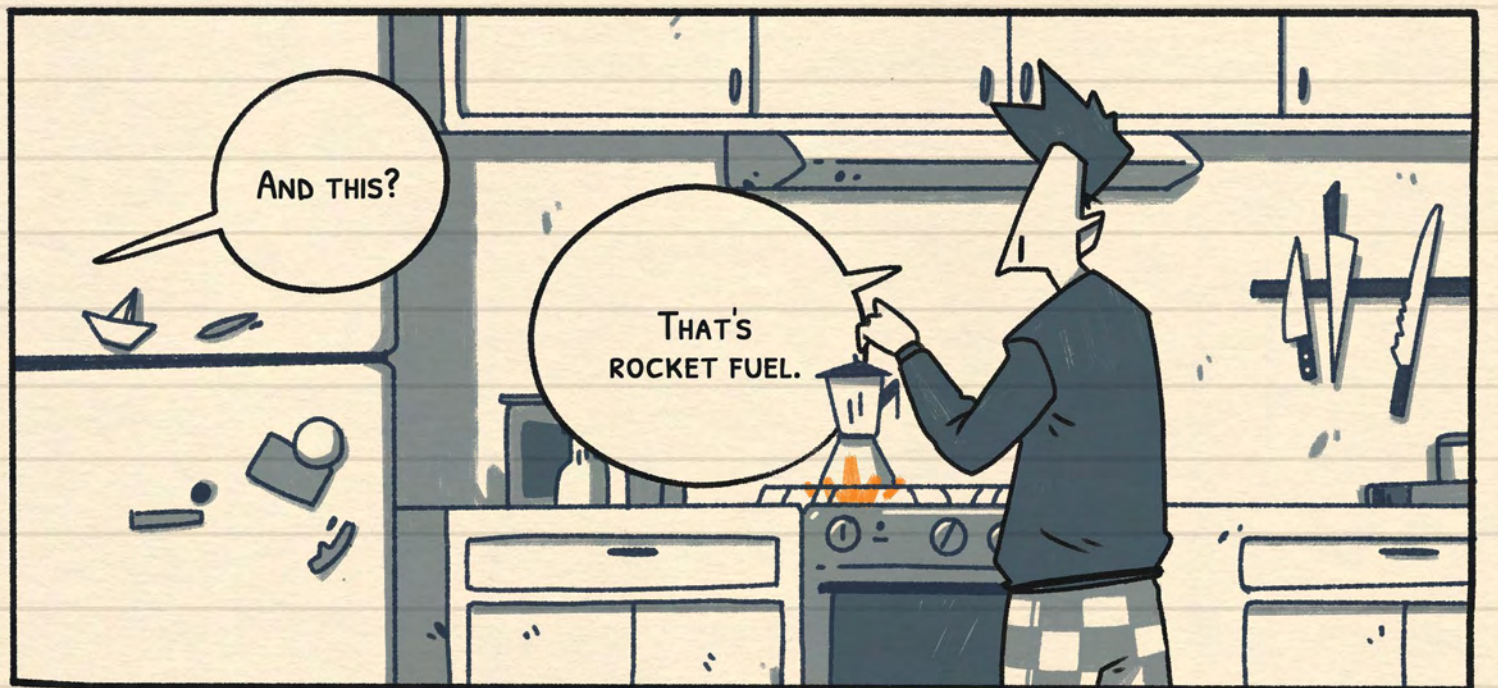
≥ KNOCK ≤

2. KNOCK
3. 1.



SHIT.

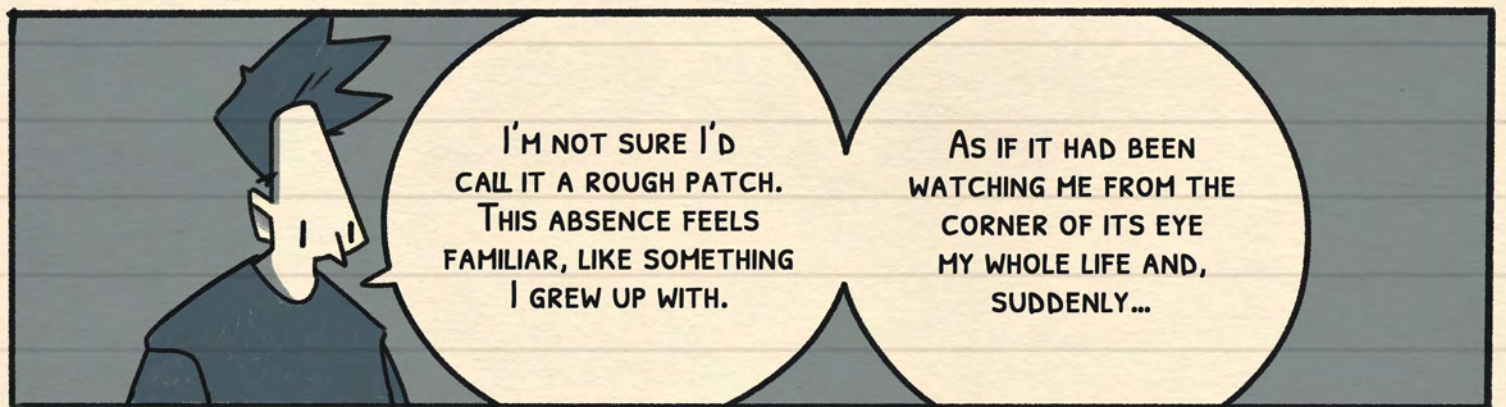






SO IT'S FINALLY OBVIOUS?
WHY DON'T I FEEL RELIEVED
BY THAT?



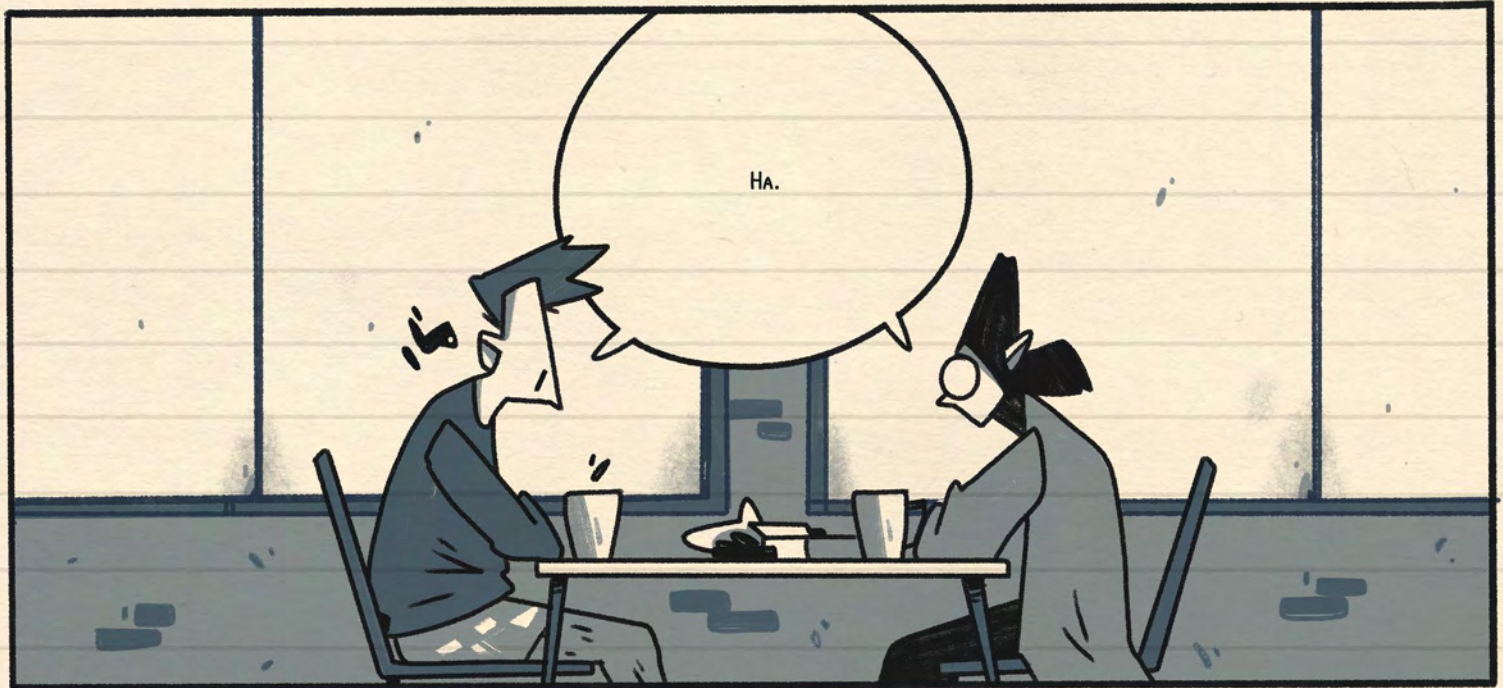


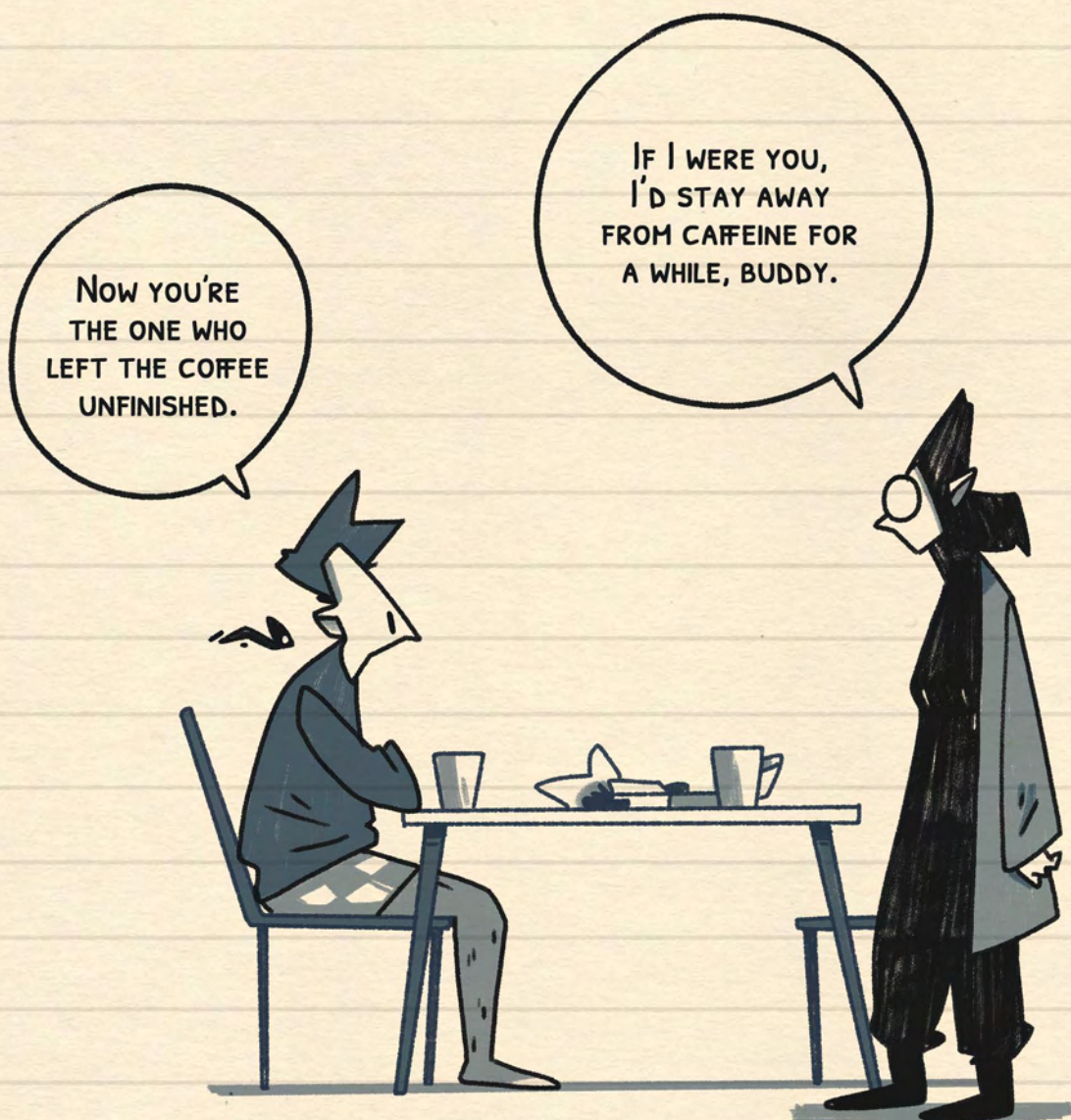




I'M NOT EVEN SURE IF WHAT I WANT IS HELP.



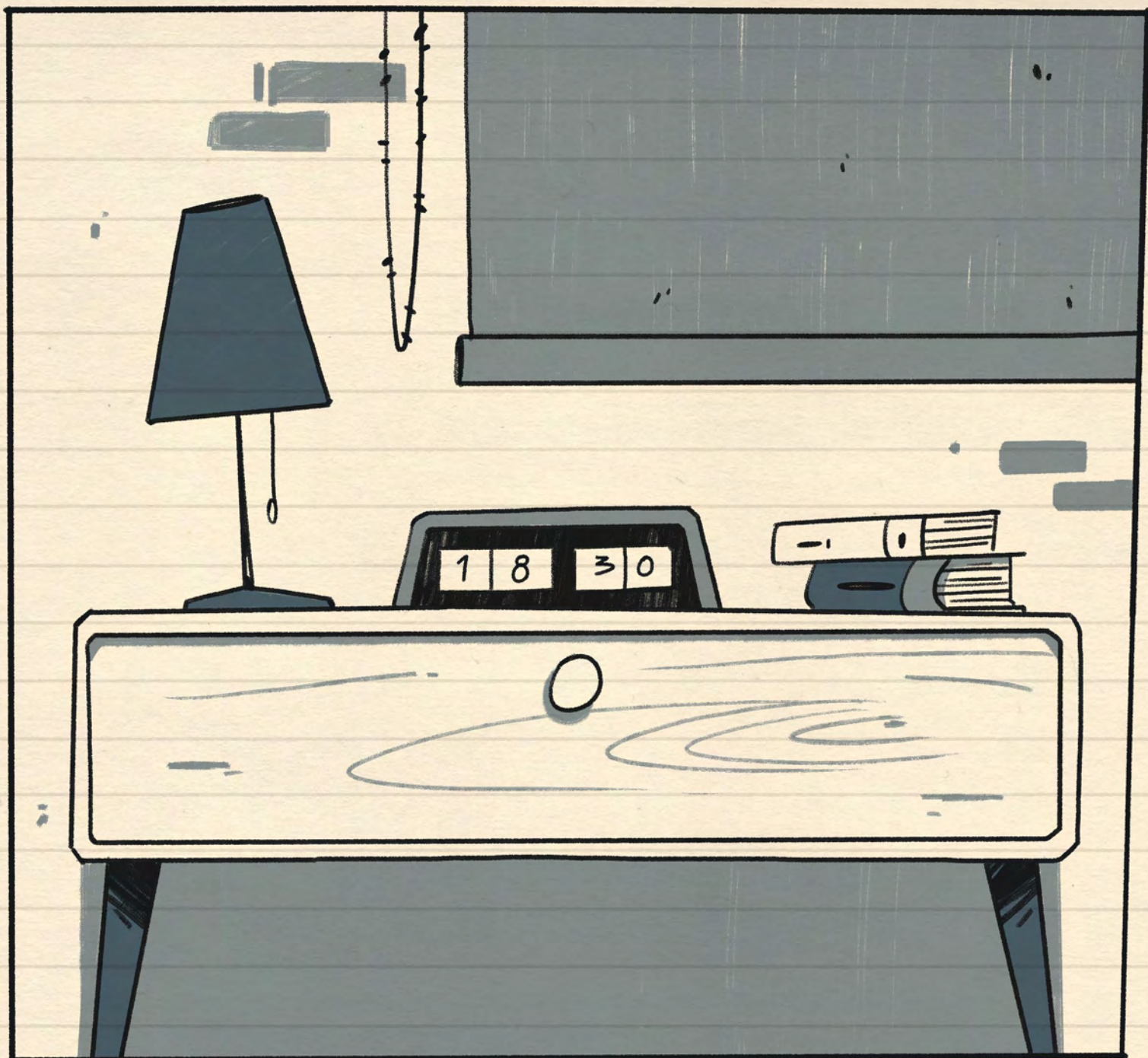


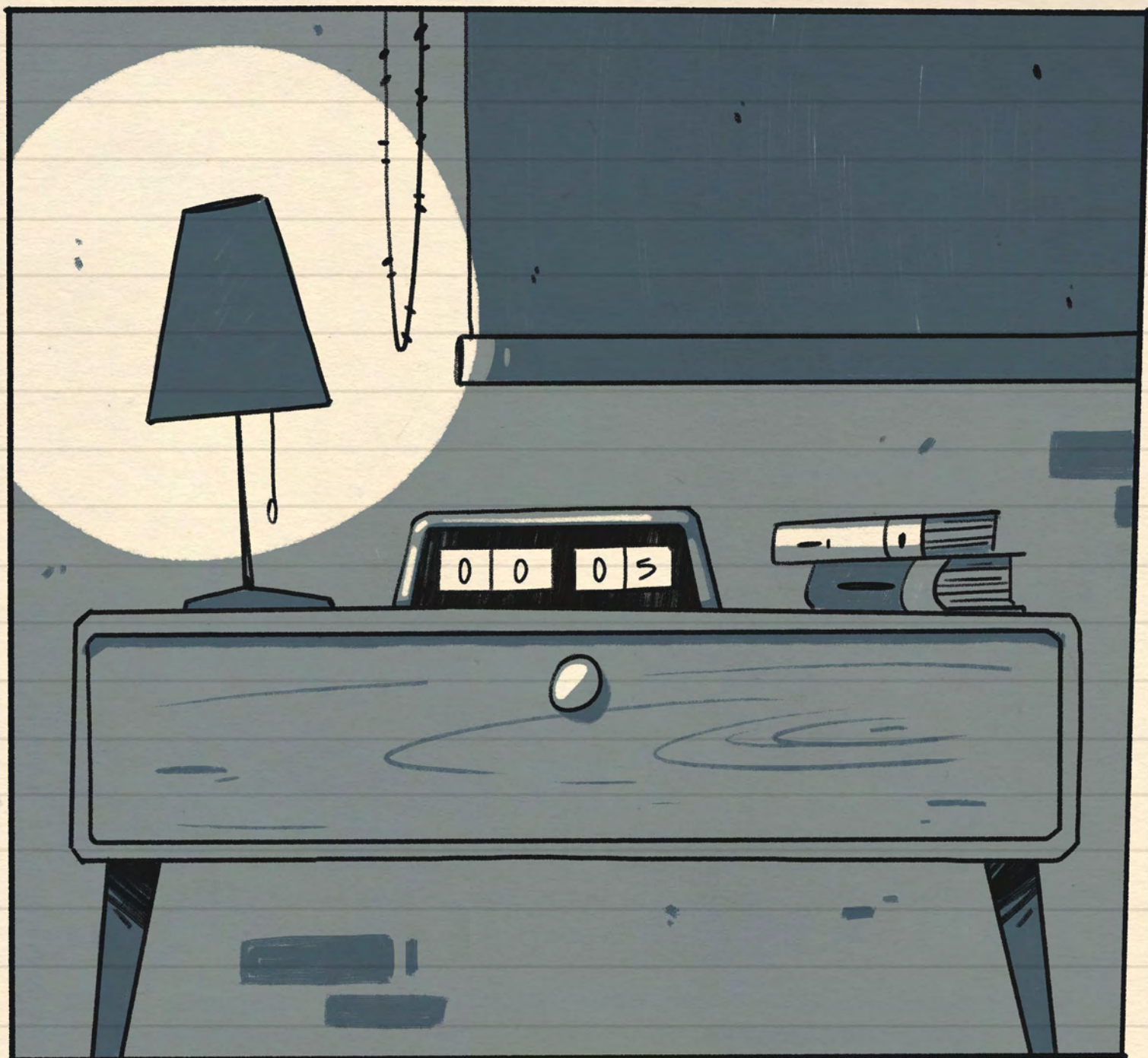


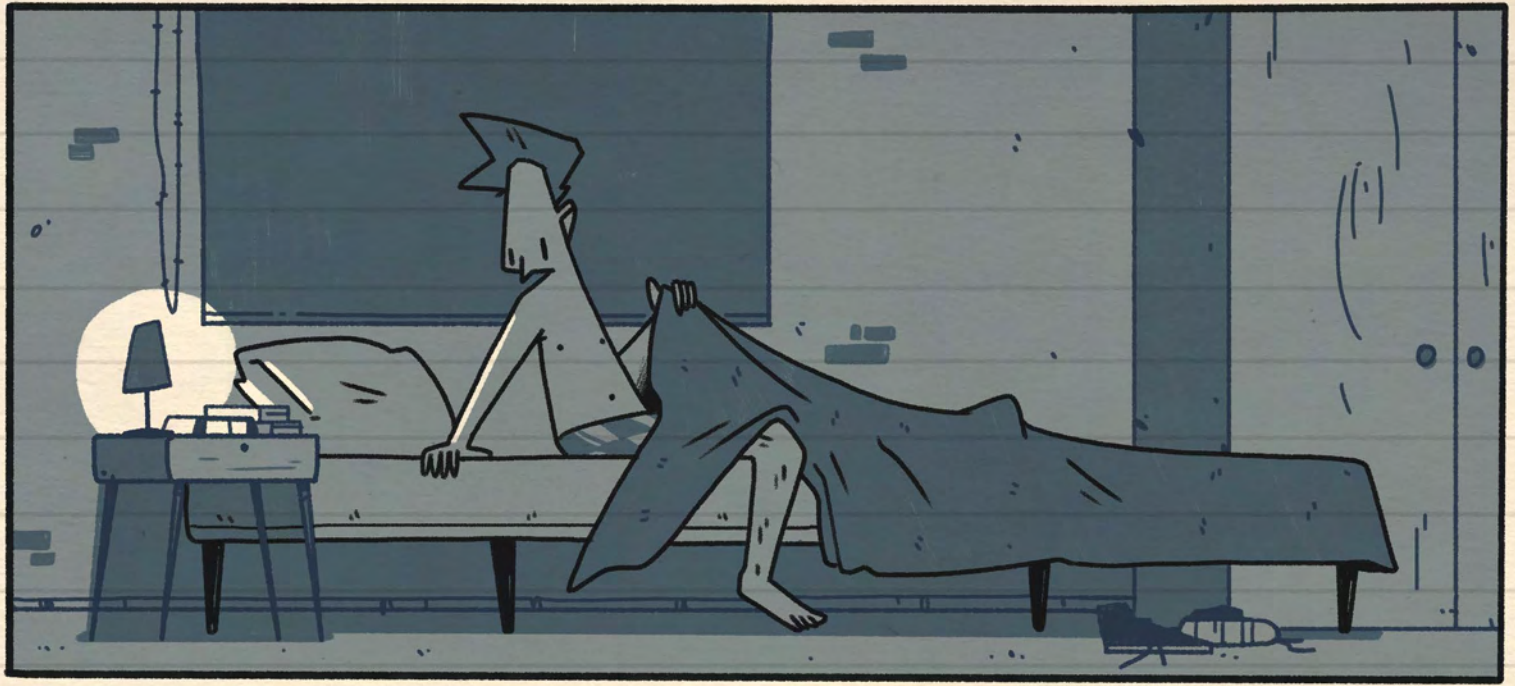


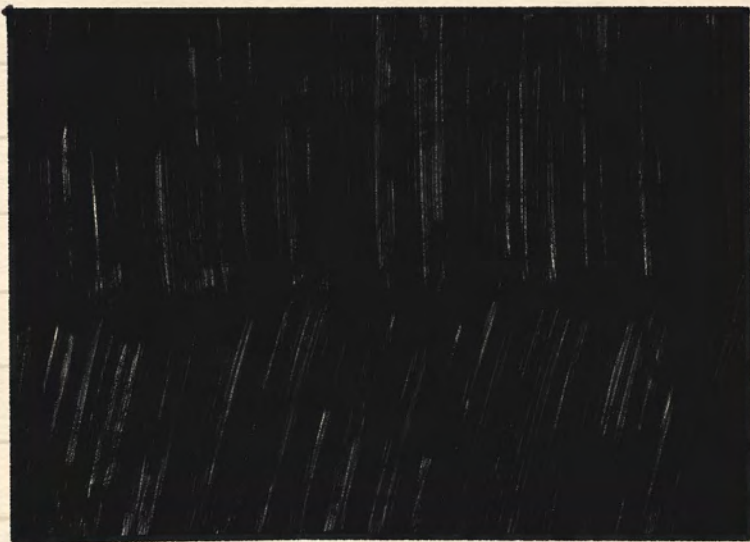








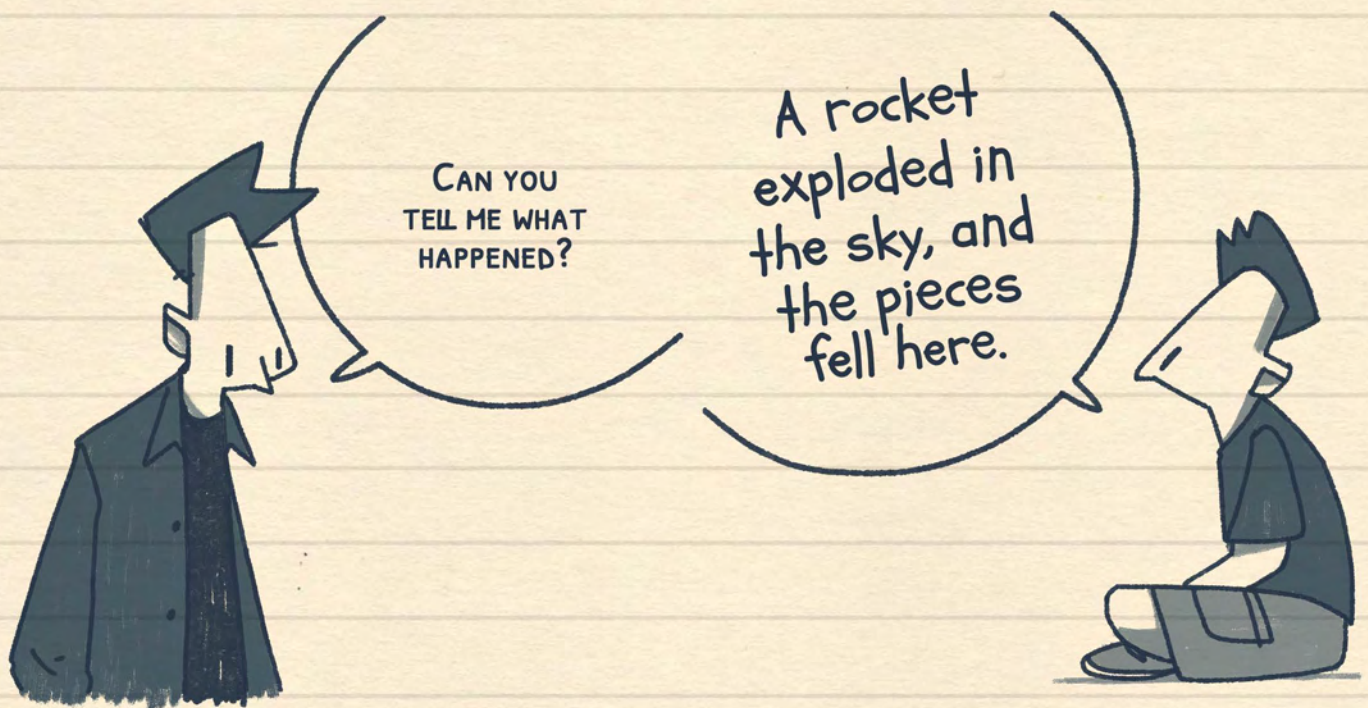




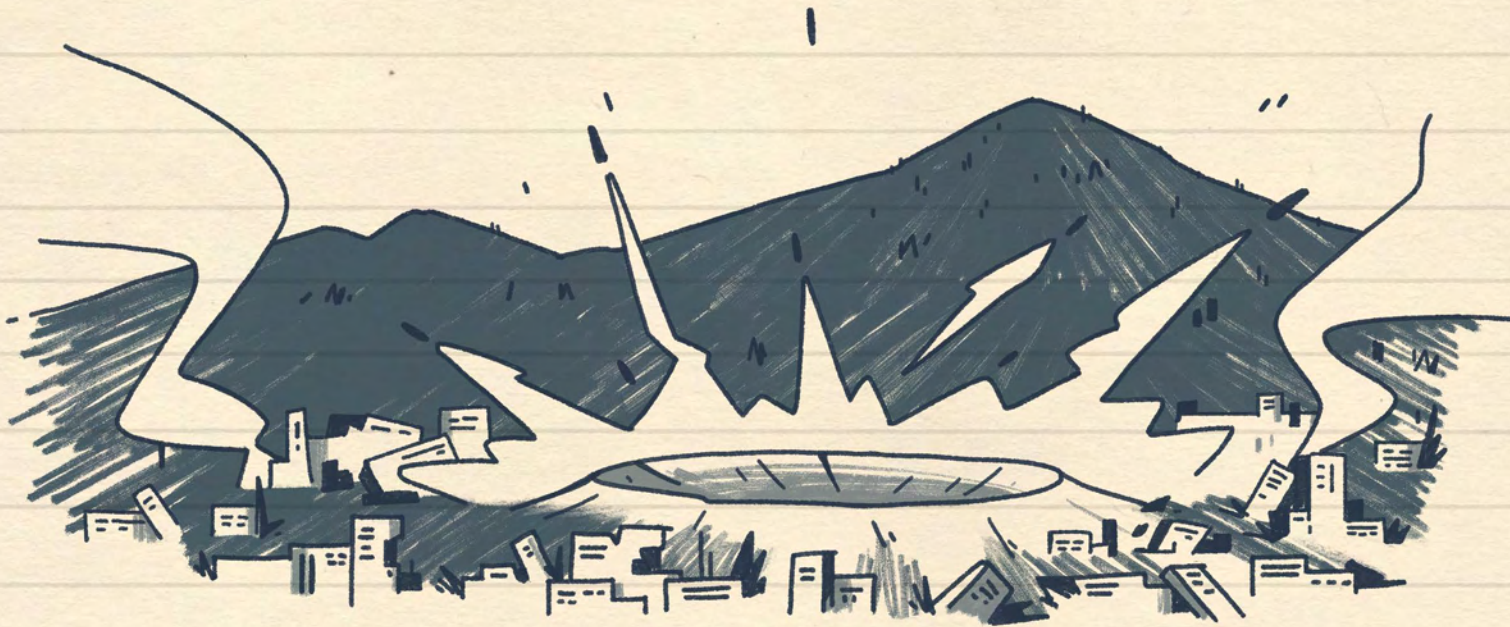








It looked amazing!
But it hurt the people
who love me.



What
happened
to your
hands?







**YOU HAVE
TO LET GO OF
SOME HEAVY STUFF
WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE
ENOUGH ENERGY
TO KEEP GOING.**



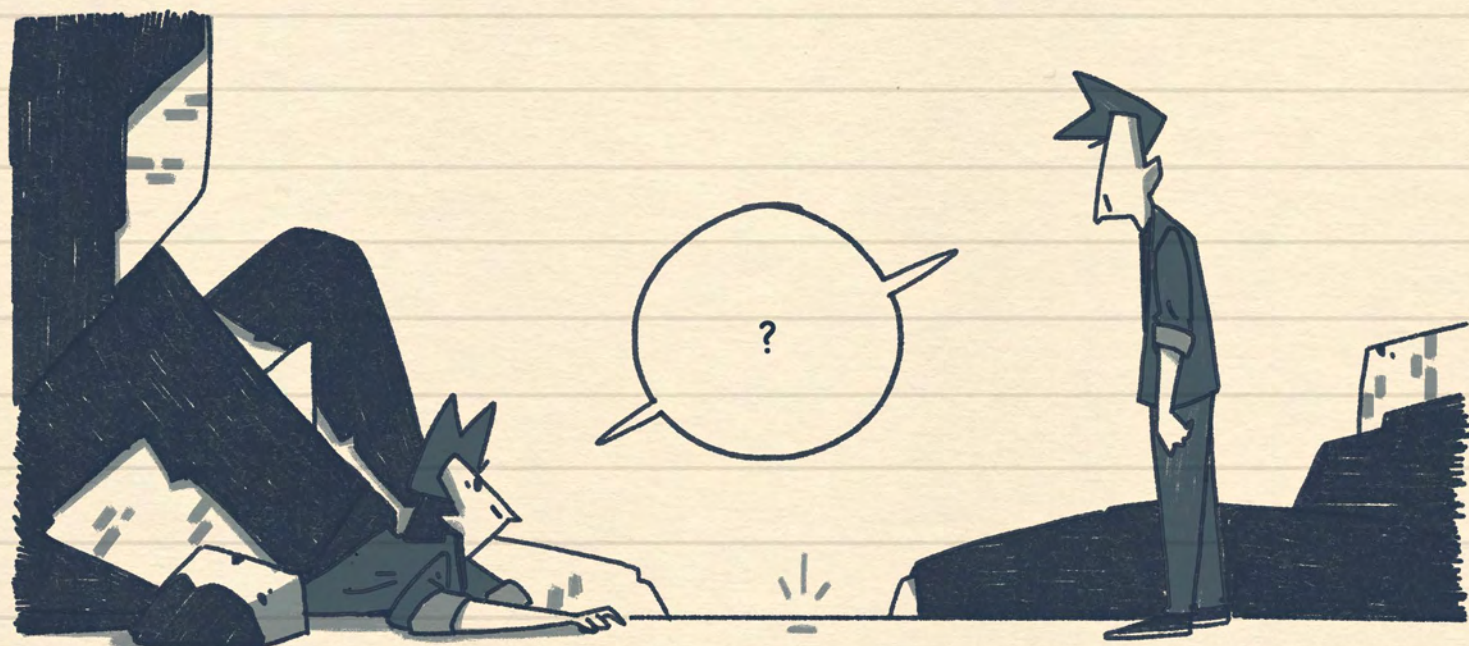
YOU HAVE

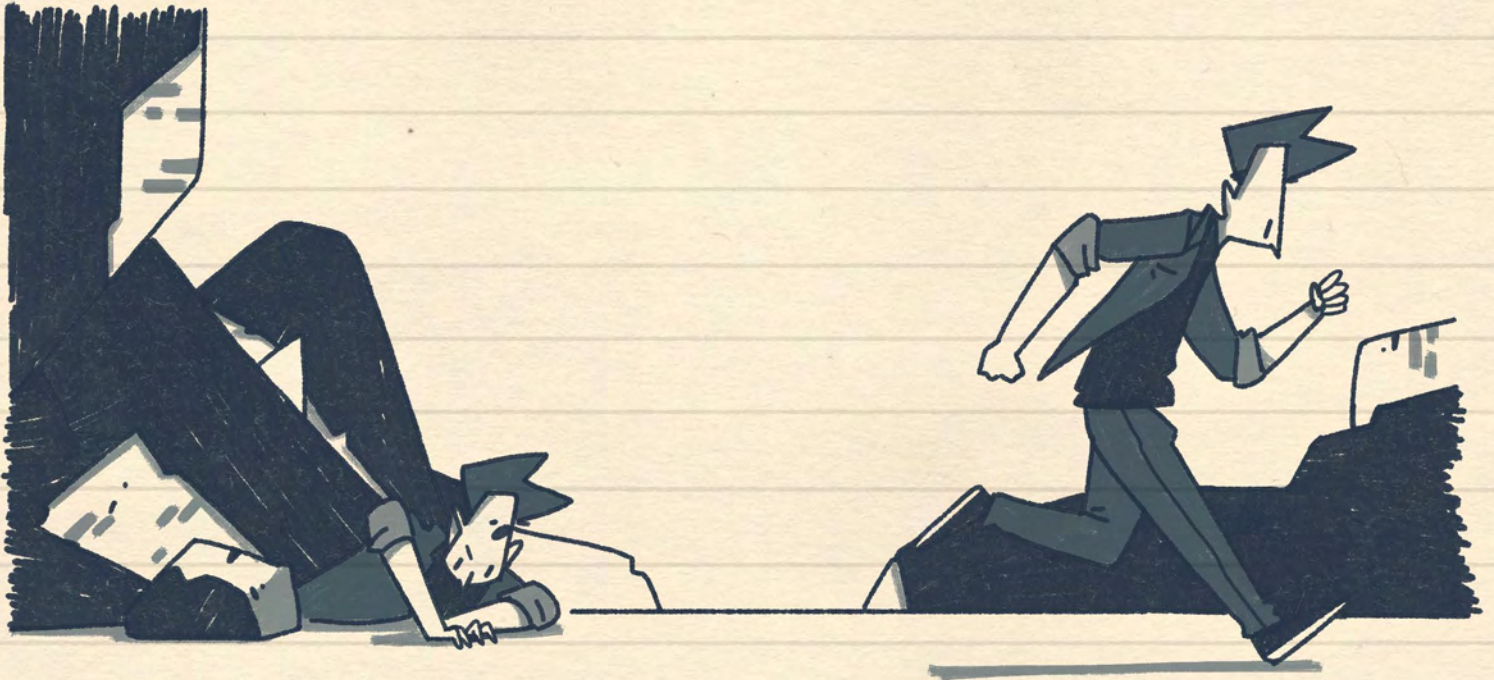


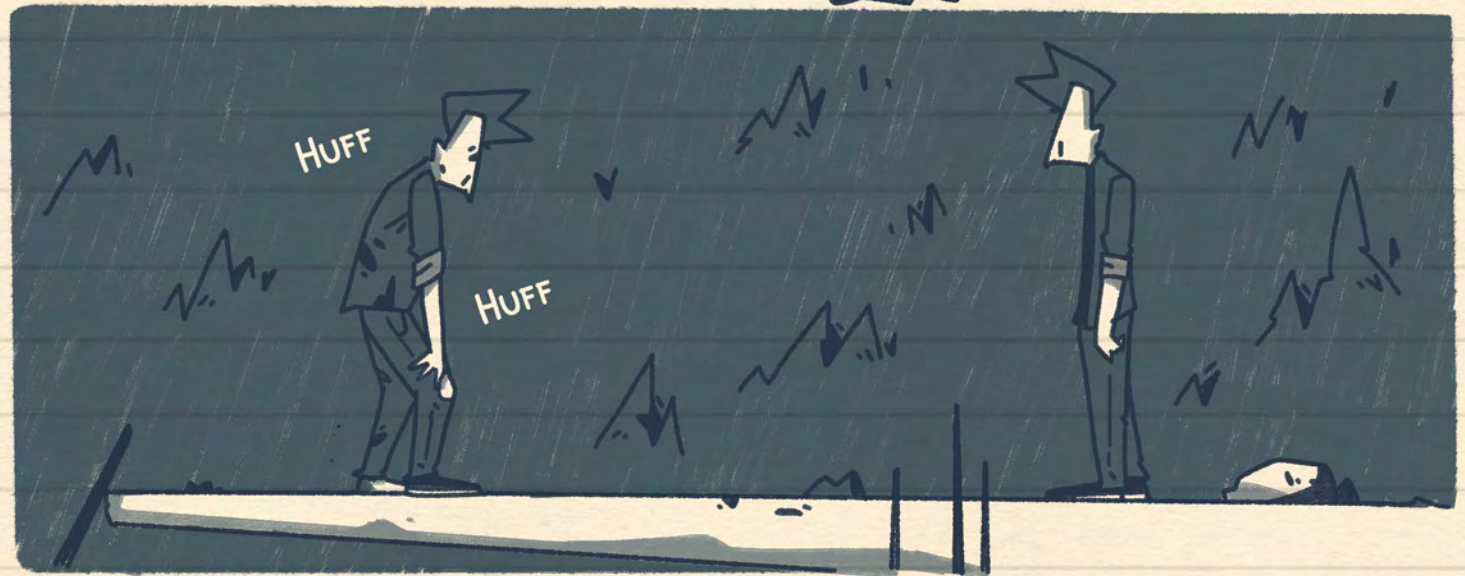
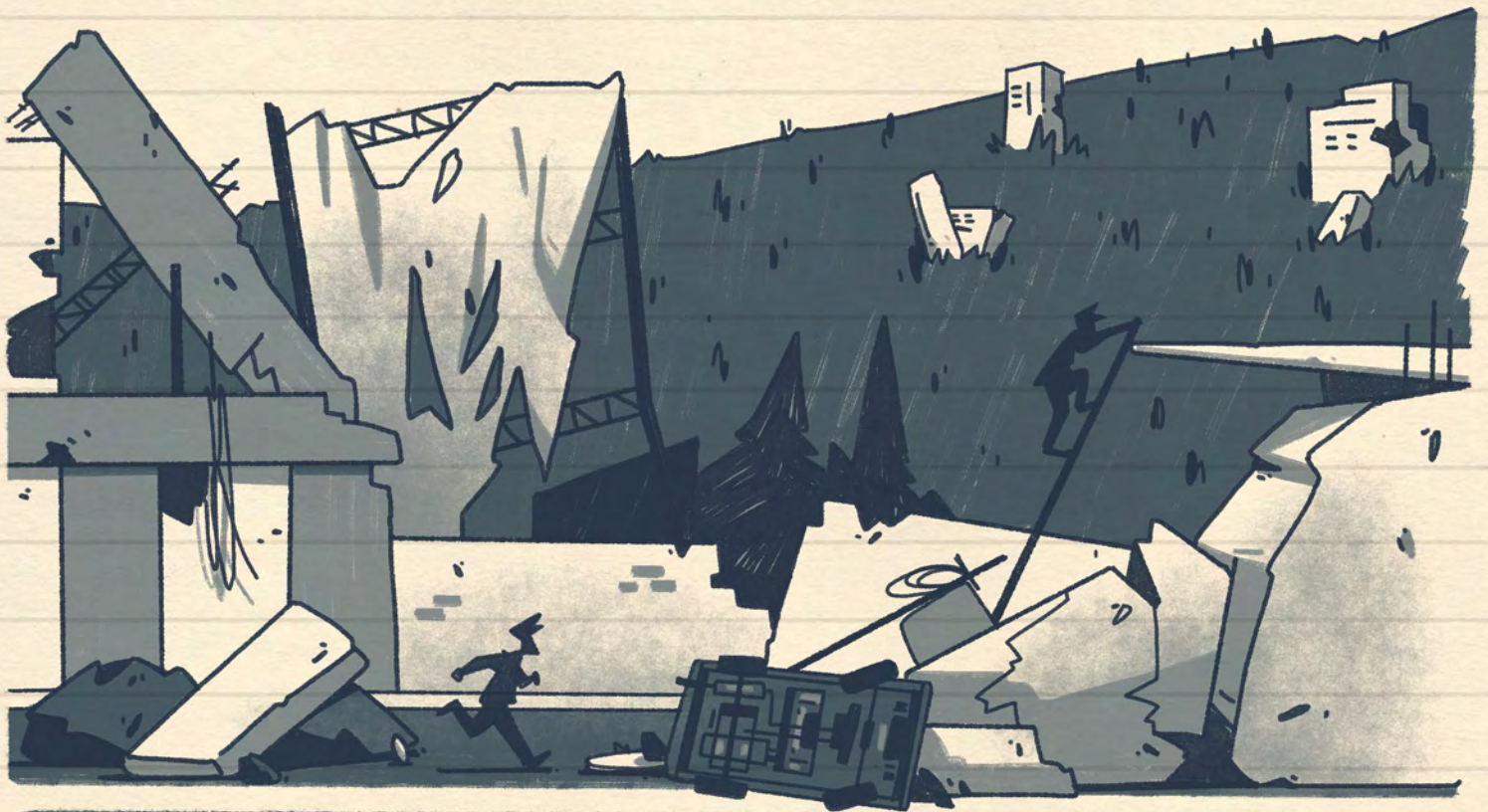


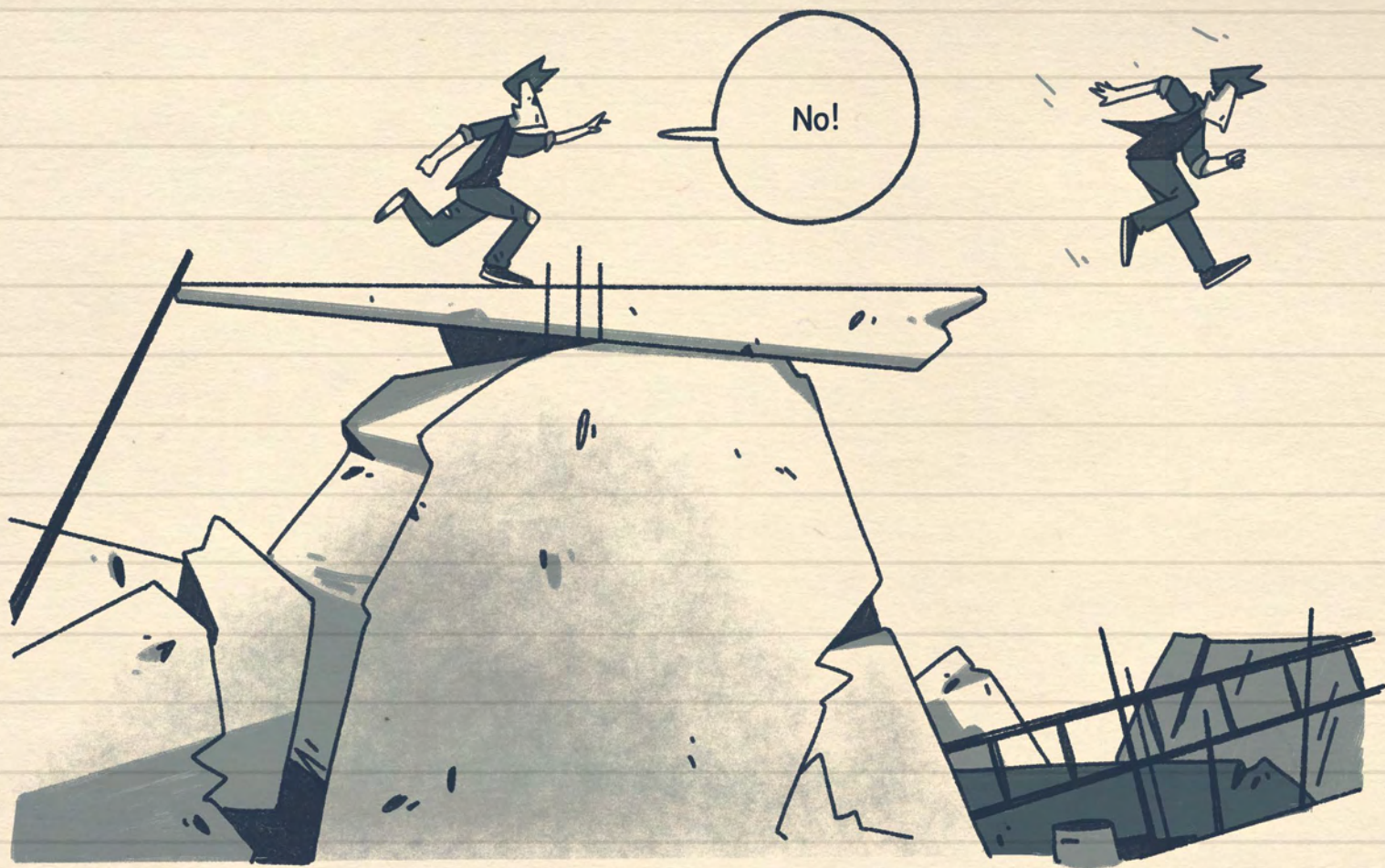
IS THAT MY...?

IT LOOKS A LOT
LIKE IT.



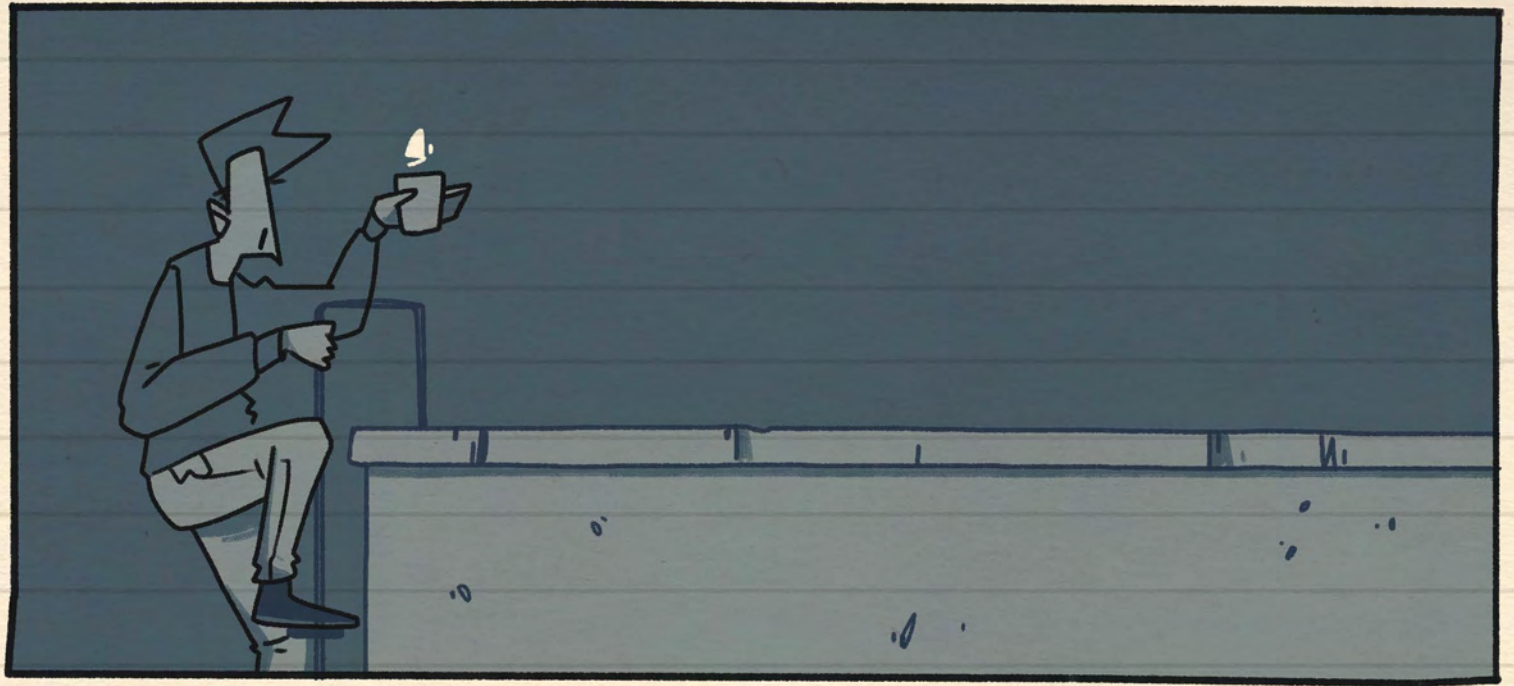










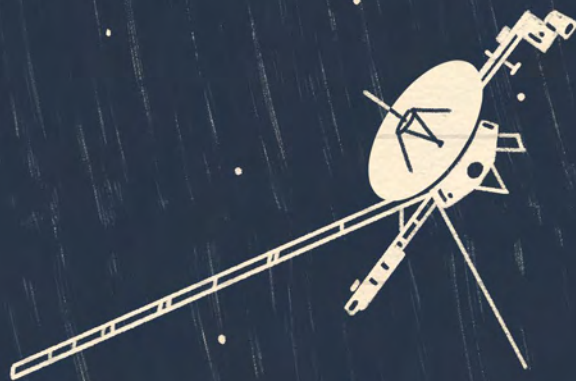




MAYBE I OVERREACTED BY ASSUMING
MY IDEA WENT ALL THE WAY UP THERE.
BUT GOING OUT THERE DOESN'T SOUND LIKE
A BAD EXCUSE TO LEAVE IT ALL BEHIND.

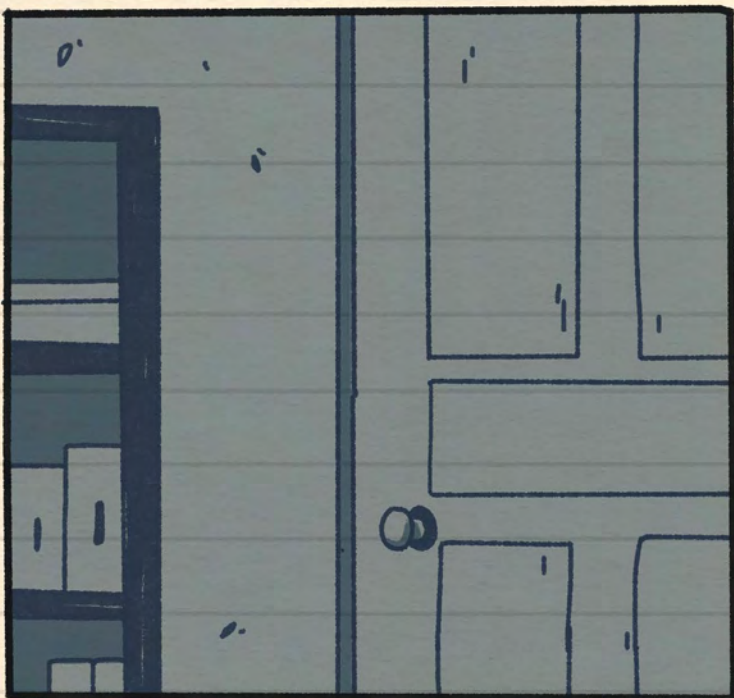
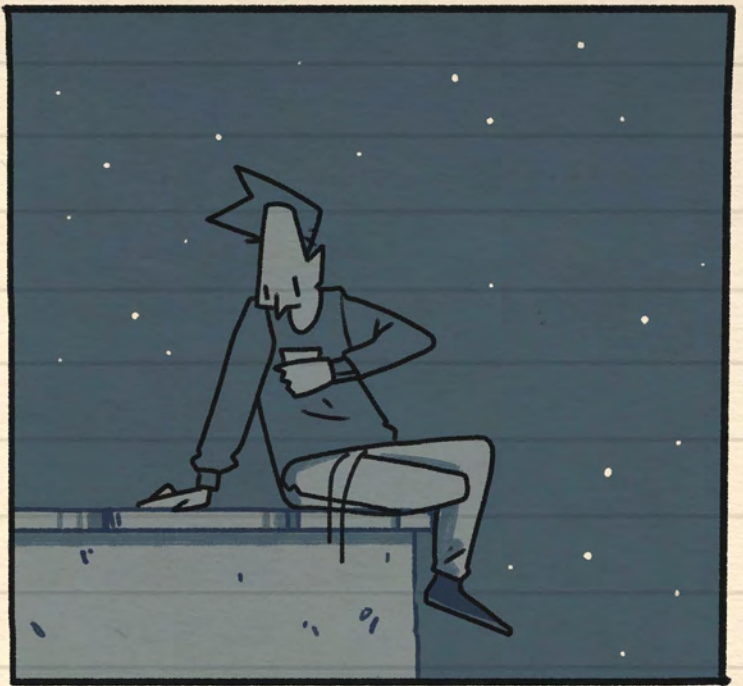


MAYBE IN THE OUTER VOID
I COULD FINALLY STOP HEARING
MY OWN THOUGHTS.

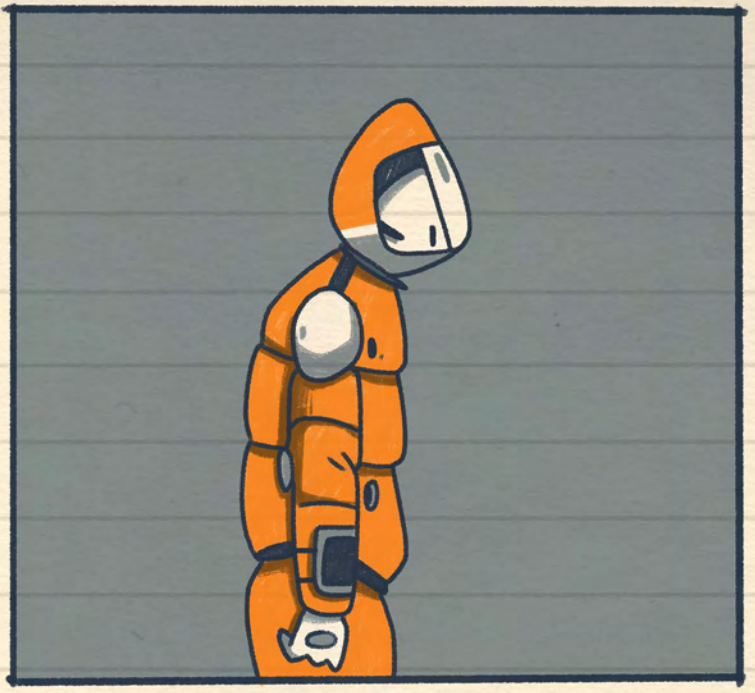
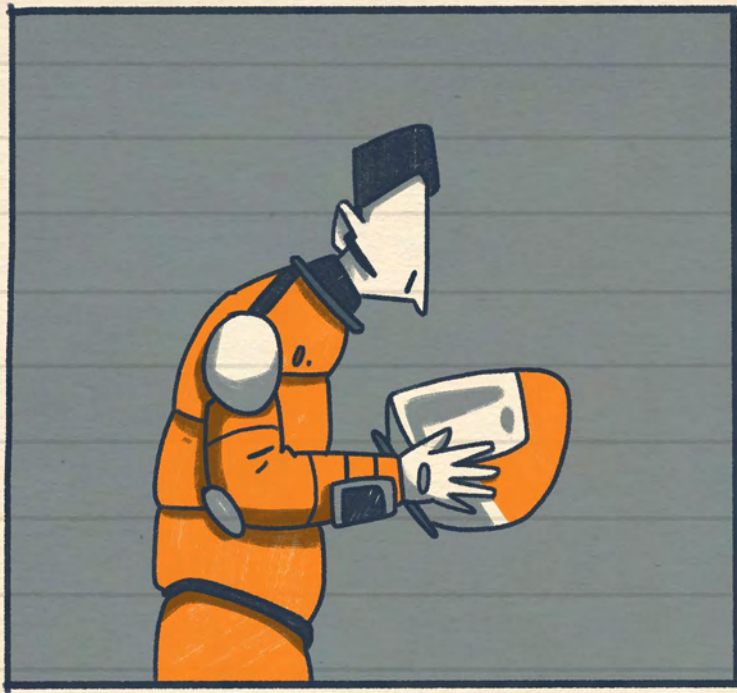


MAYBE IN OTHER WORLDS
I'D FEEL LIKE A FOREIGNER,
AND FOR ONCE, IT WOULD
MAKE SENSE.

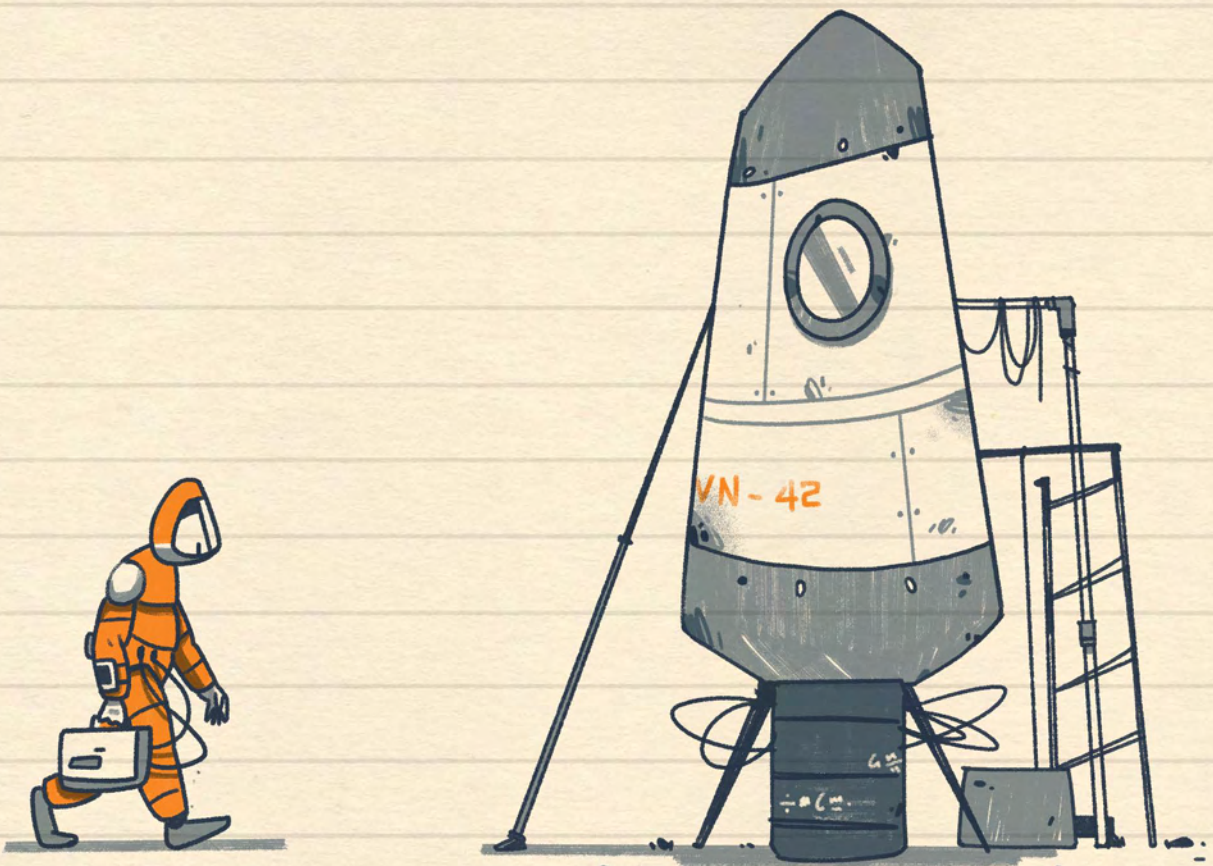


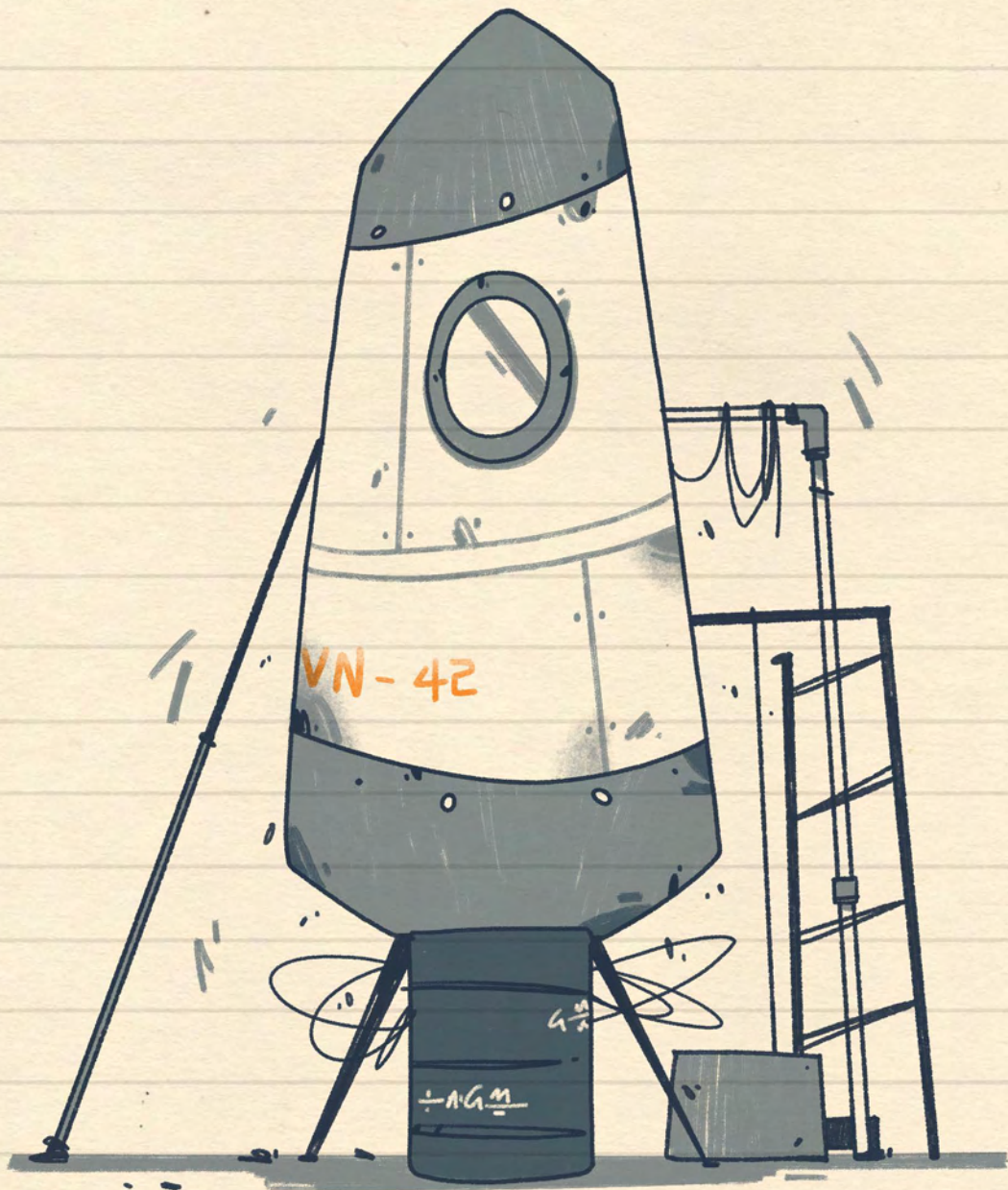
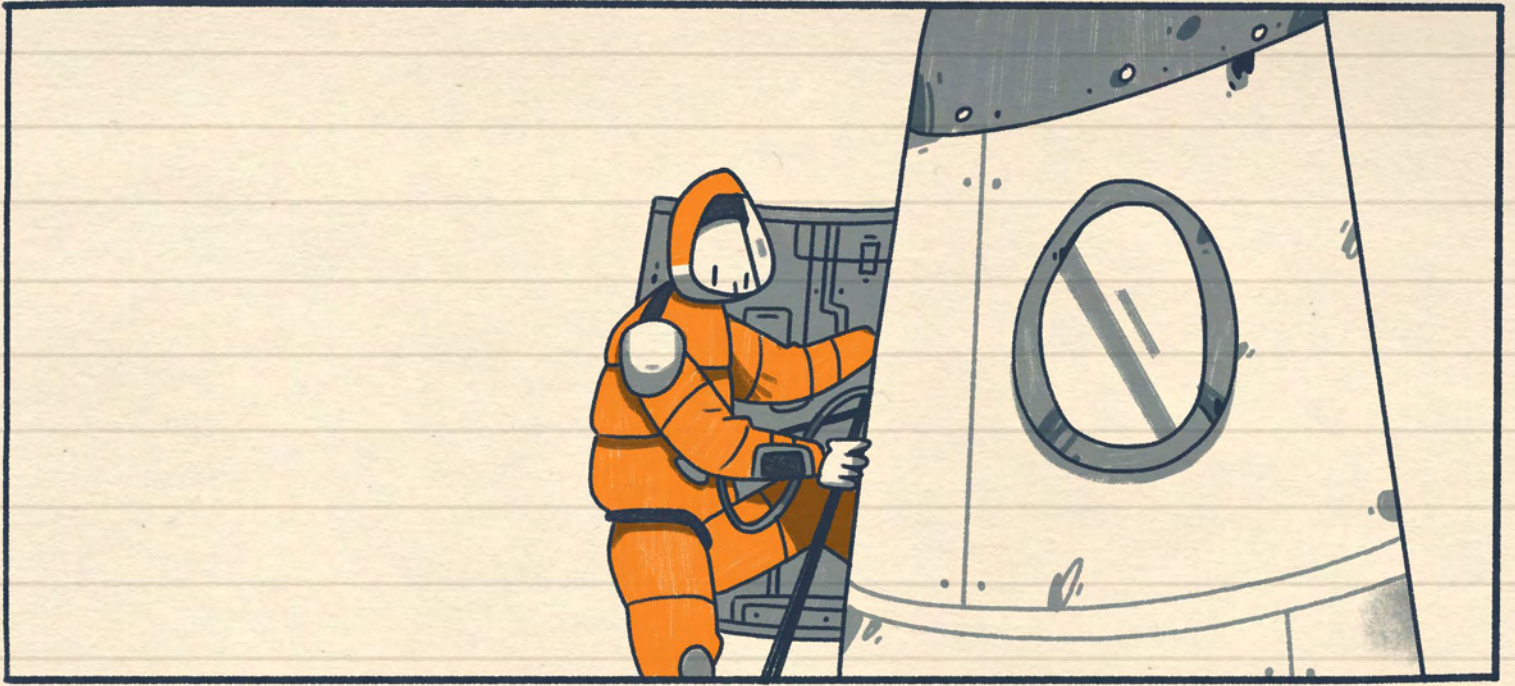


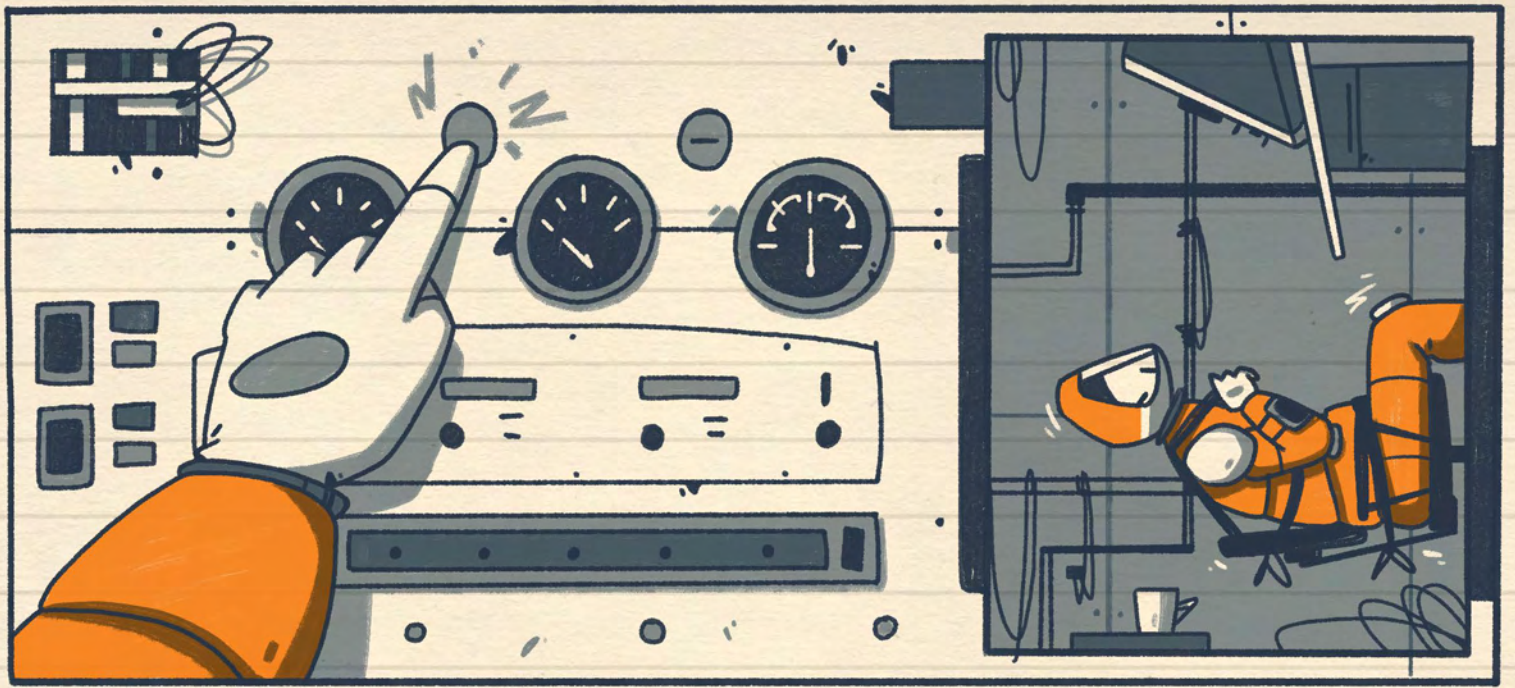




WHY NOT TAKE MY JUNK SHIP AND DRIFT AWAY?

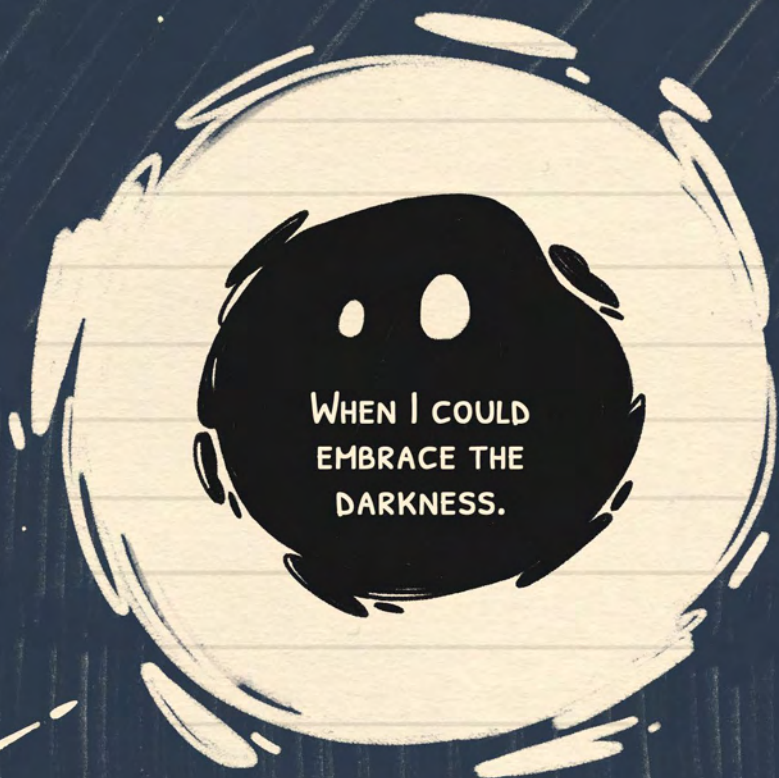








AND WHY WOULD I FOLLOW
CAPTAIN FRANCISCO VÁZQUEZ?



WHEN I COULD
EMBRACE THE
DARKNESS.





SBSD

SMART BLACK SMOKE DETECTOR

TOP TIER PREVENTION
FOR YOUR HOME



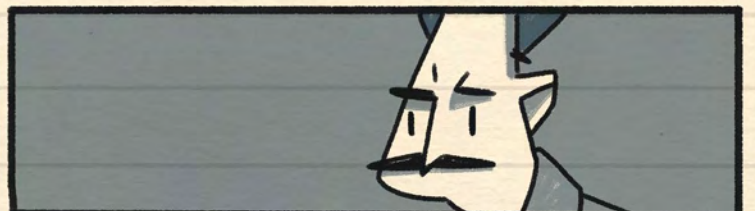
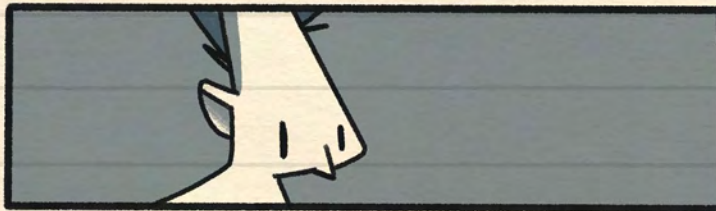
← SBSD
APP





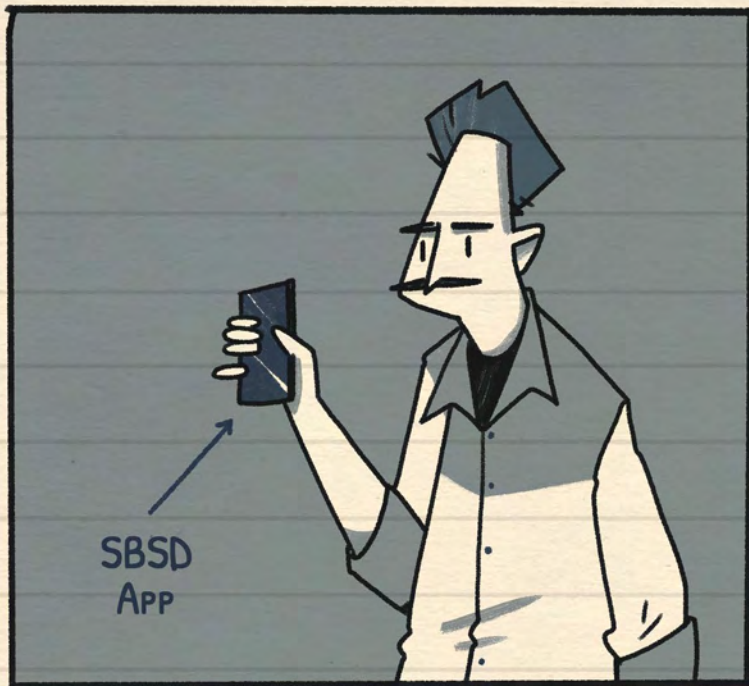


UNTIL NOW, I THOUGHT I WAS COMFORTABLE IN THE SILENCE.



I GUESS ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO SWALLOW MY PRIDE.





YOUR BROTHER
CALLED TO ASK IF
I COULD SEE SMOKE
COMING FROM
YOUR WINDOW.

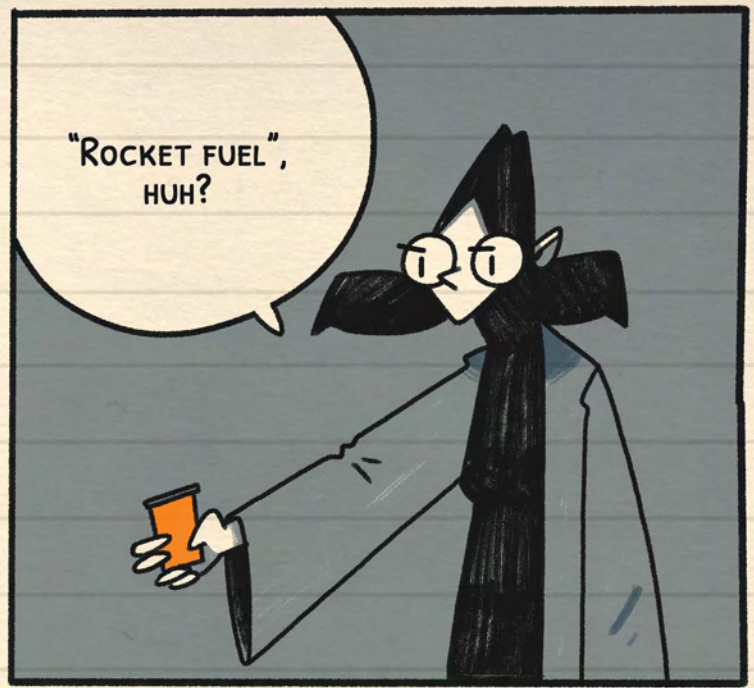


I THOUGHT YOUR ROCKET HAD EXPLODED.



I DON'T THINK
IT WAS ALL YOURS,
BUT YEAH... A GOOD
PART OF IT WAS.

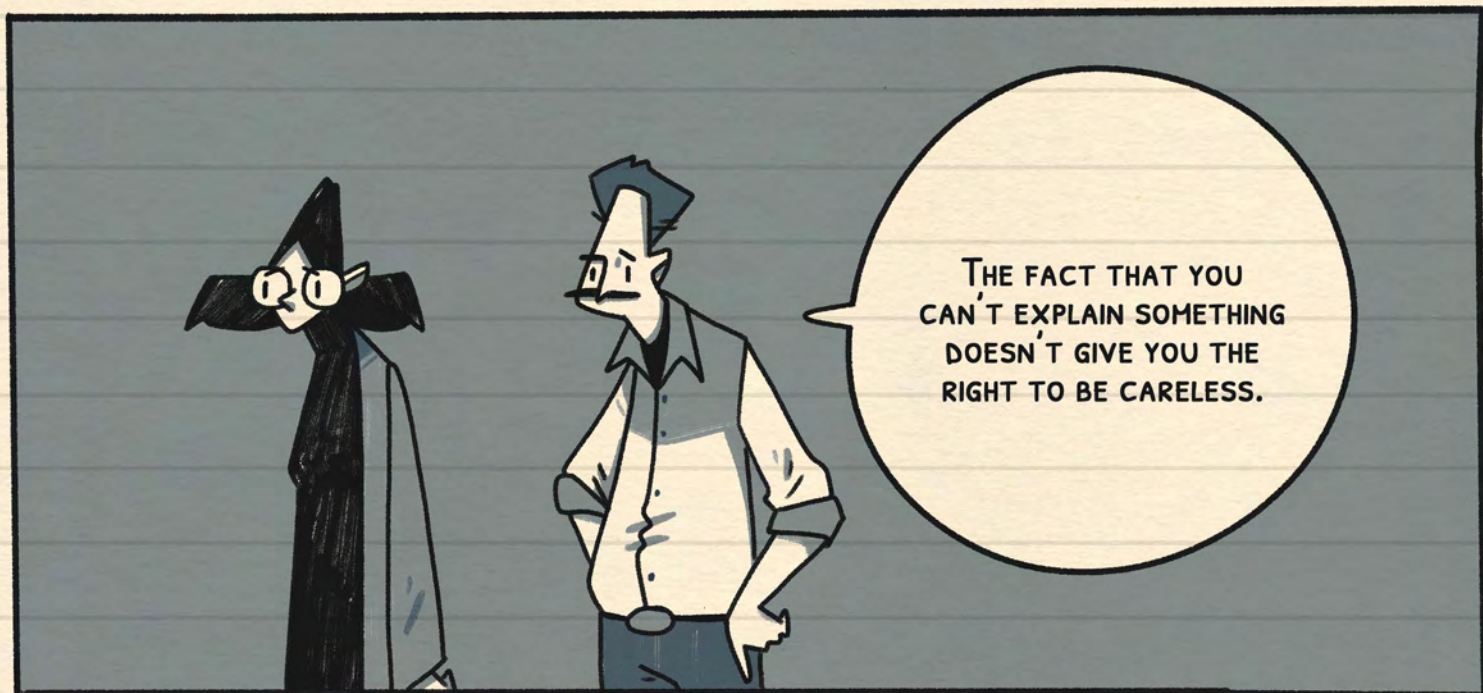


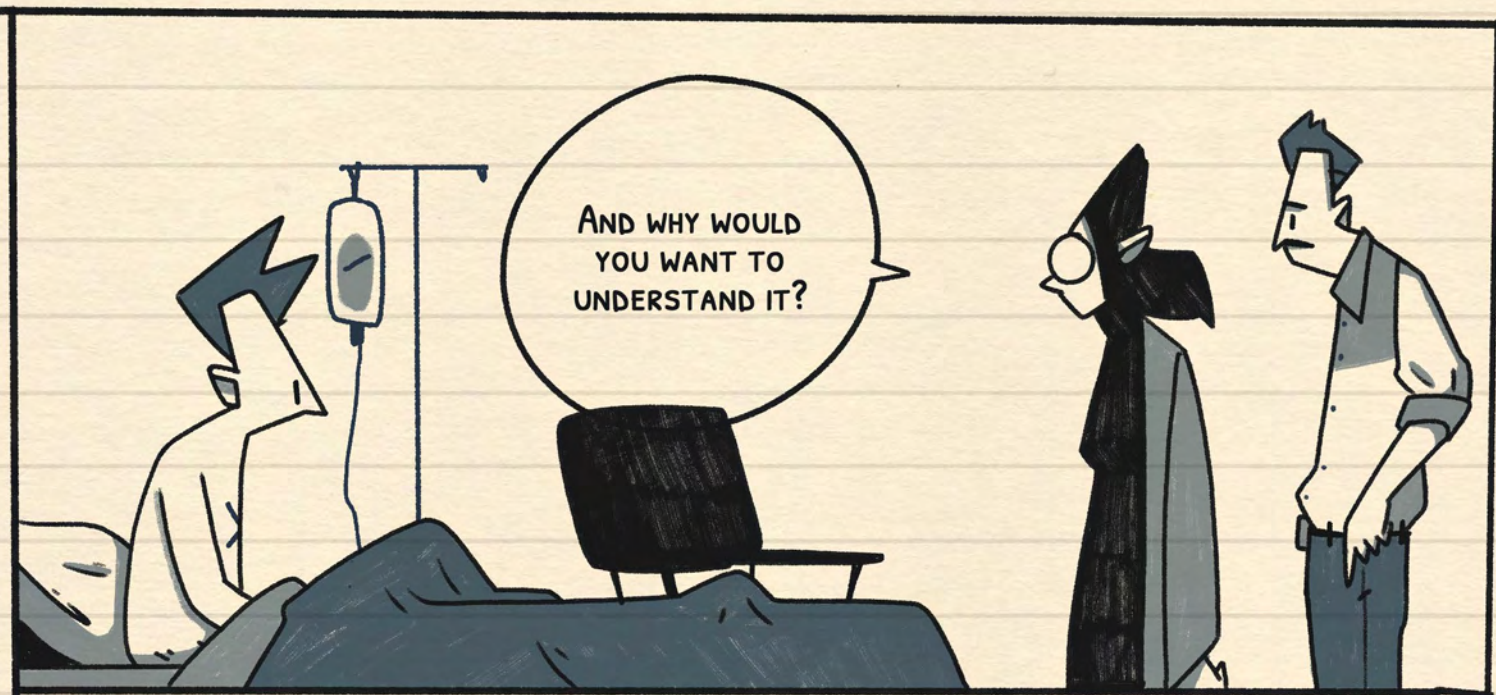


I'M STARTING TO THINK I WAS NEVER ANY GOOD AT SILENCE.



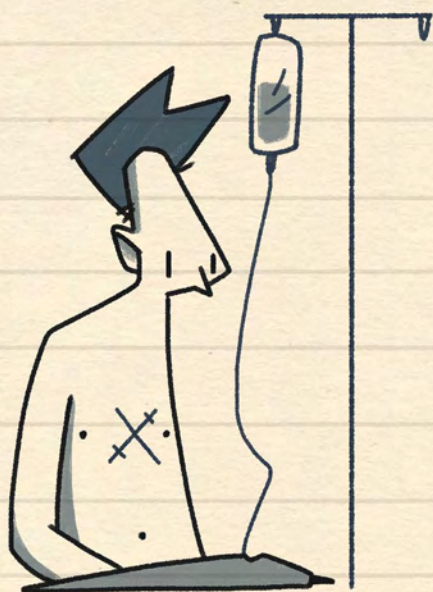










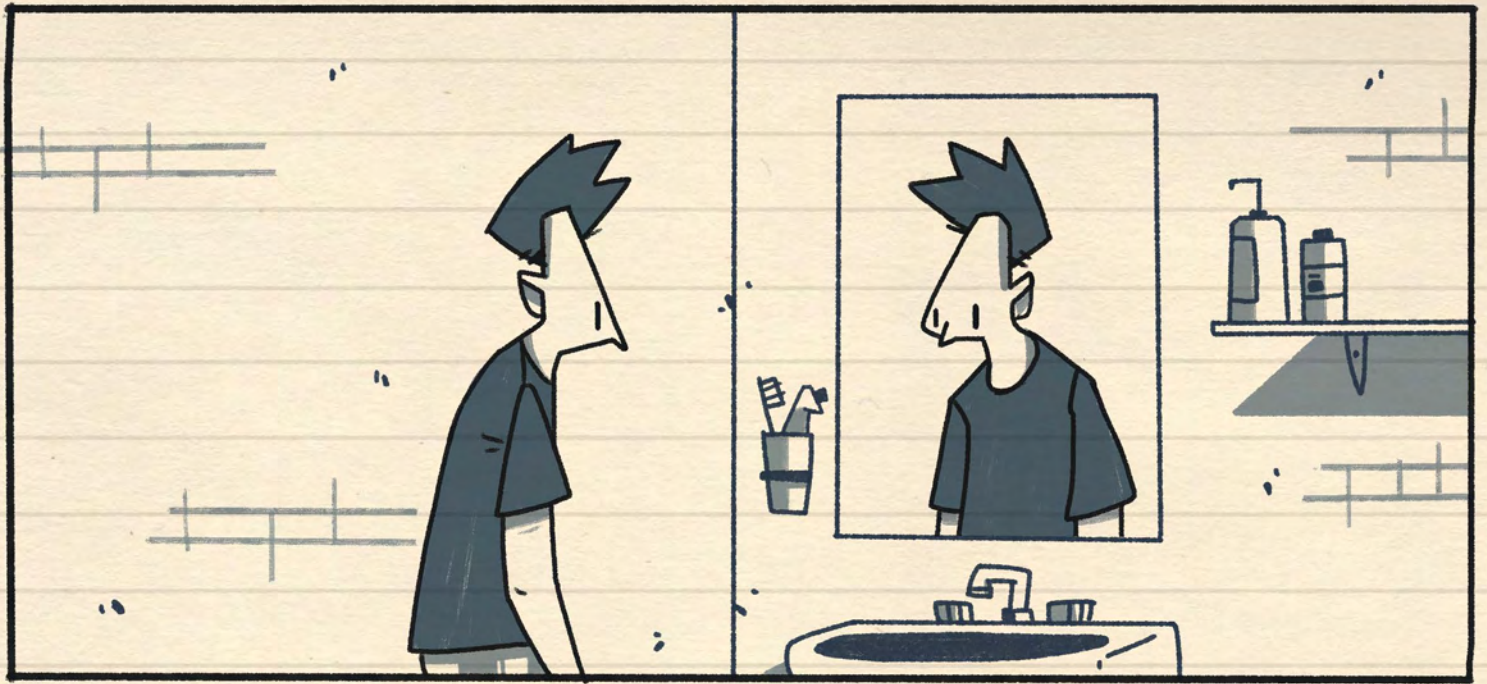


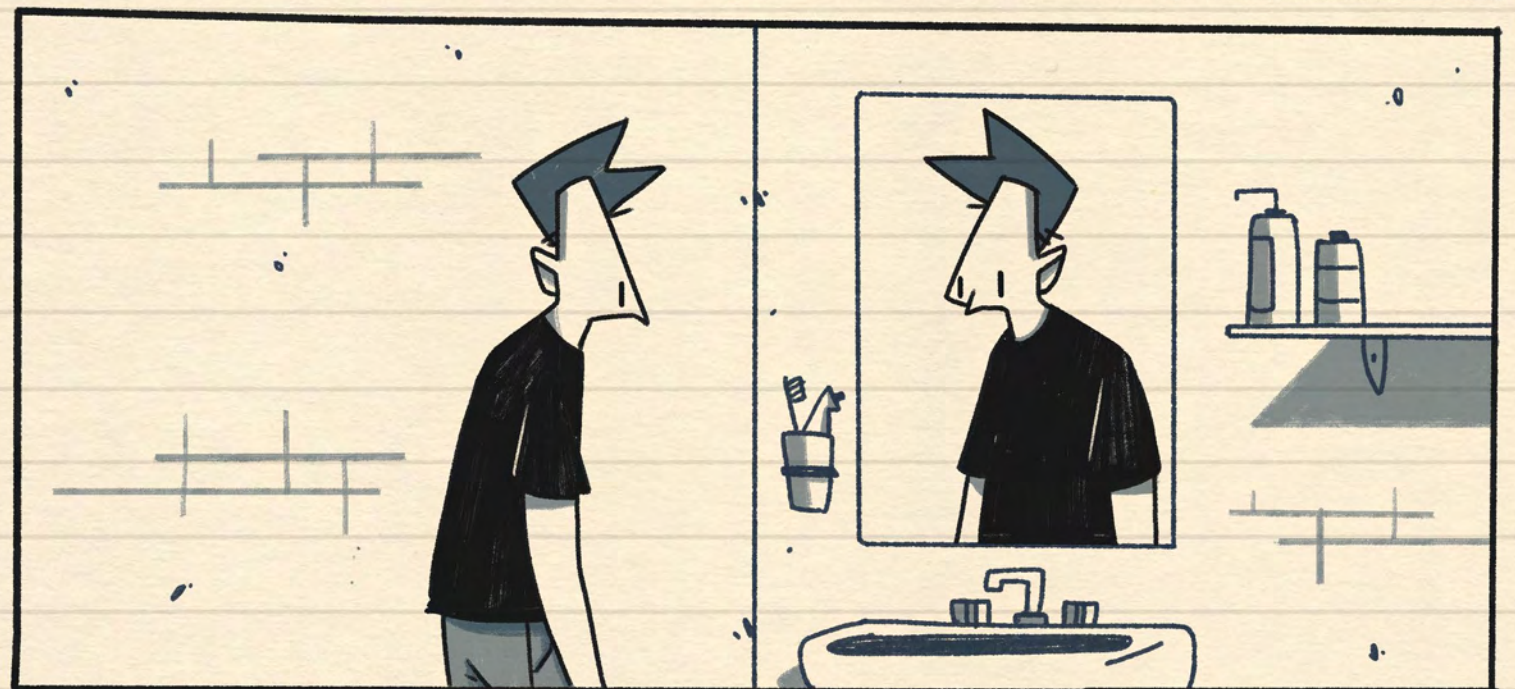
DOES THIS
DEFINE ME NOW?

THAT ONLY
DEPENDS
ON YOU.













Chapter 1

"We have detected a dark region in our immediate stellar surroundings." Said Captain Francisco Vazquez.



Chapter 1

"We have detected a dark region in our immediate stell



Chapte





"TODAY I'M VISITING MY BEST FRIEND,
NOT AS PART OF OUR ROUTINE, BUT BECAUSE
OF AN URGENT MATTER."



I HAVE MANY PEOPLE TO THANK FOR WALKING WITH ME THROUGH THE CREATION OF THIS BOOK, BUT IF I TRIED TO NAME THEM ALL, I'D NEED TWICE AS MANY PAGES. SO HERE'S A VERY BRIEF AND HUMBLE LIST:

THANKS TO JOSHUA CÓRDOVA, ALONDRA VITAE, JENS K. STYVE, AND CARINA VALLEJO. THIS PROJECT WOULDN'T EXIST WITHOUT YOUR PROFESSIONAL GUIDANCE.

THANKS TO CARMEN FOR YOUR SUPPORT, MOTIVATION, AFFECTION, AND THOUGHTFUL FEEDBACK. I LOVE YOU. TODAY AND ALWAYS.

THANKS TO PANTHO, ALO, YAYA, IVY, RAÚL, AND ALEX FOR LENDING ME (WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION) A LITTLE PIECE OF YOURSELVES TO SHAPE THESE CHARACTERS.

AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST, THANKS TO YOU, THE ONE READING THIS. I HOPE YOU'VE FOUND SOMETHING MEANINGFUL IN THESE PAGES.



DARÍO CORTIZO

BORN IN MORELIA, MEXICO, IN 1999.
HE ENJOYS EXPLORING SIMPLISTIC DRAWING STYLES
AND STORIES THAT REVOLVE AROUND AUTOFICTION
AND THE QUIET MOMENTS OF EVERYDAY LIFE.

YOU'RE HOLDING HIS FIRST GRAPHIC NOVEL.

UNSTABLE HONESTY