

REC

LOST IN THE MIDDLE

A STORY BY THE NEW YORK LIFE FOUNDATION

[LOST IN THE MIDDLE]

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CREATIVE PRODUCTION BY **ANOMALY & JELLY**
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Chapter 1: KAI & COUSIN CAM page 4

Chapter 2: ELLE page 28

Chapter 3: CAMERON page 42

Chapter 4: JAXON (WITH AN "X") page 54

Chapter 5: KAI & ELLE page 60

Chapter 6: MR. BENOIT page 70

Chapter 7: @EVERYONE AT FAMS page 96

Chapter 8: MILA-ELLE-ALEX page 116

Chapter 9: CANCELED page 126

Chapter 10: *THE LOST CHAPTER* page 140

Chapter 11: KAI & MOM page 160

Chapter 12: LOST & FOUND page 168

EPILOGUE page 188

NEW

THROUGHOUT THE BOOK, YOU WILL SEE QR CODES IN DIFFERENT SCENES. SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH A VIDEO FROM ONE OF THE CHARACTERS TALKING DIRECTLY TO YOU!



CHAPTER 1

Kai AND COUSIN CAM

Just try and catch me,
Cam!





CAM AND HIS PARENTS HAD JUST MOVED TO KAI'S NEIGHBORHOOD FROM BASICALLY ACROSS THE WHOLE COUNTRY...



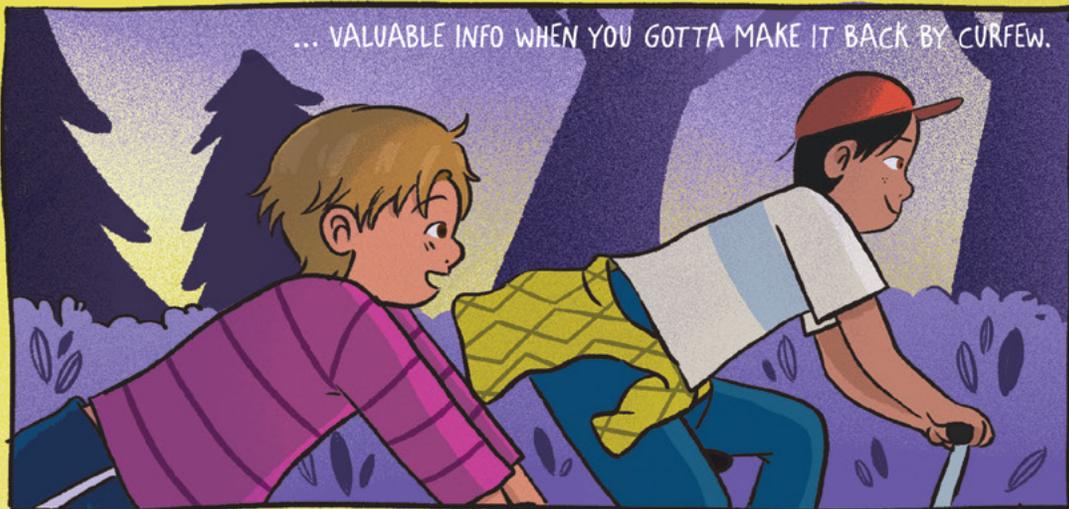
...AND KAI HAD MADE IT HIS "SUMMER JOB" (MOM SAID HE'D EVENTUALLY HAVE TO GET ONE) TO SHOW HIS LITTLE COUSIN THE ROPES.



EVERYTHING FROM THE ACTUAL HIDDEN ROPE SWING AT JOSHUA'S POND, TO THE TOP-SECRET BIKE PATH HOME THROUGH THE WOODS...



... VALUABLE INFO WHEN YOU GOTTA MAKE IT BACK BY CURFEW.



KAI'S MOM DIDN'T MESS AROUND WITH CURFEW.
NOT EVEN ON SUMMER BREAK.

Pleeeeee don't take our phones away, Aunt Nora!



We broke a sweat!



AFTER THE NEWS ABOUT ADRIAN,
NORA KEPT A CLOSER EYE ON THE BOYS.

DAILY NEWS

YOUNG BASKETBALL STAR TRAGICALLY DIES



WHEN THEY WERE YOUNGER, KAI AND CAM SAW EACH OTHER A FEW TIMES A YEAR.
THANKSGIVINGS. WINTER BREAKS. COUSINS-WHO-LIVE-ACROSS-THE-COUNTRY KINDA
STUFF. BUT EVER SINCE KAI'S DAD DIED, THEIR FAMILIES GOT A LOT CLOSER.



ready?

haha!

NOW THAT THEY LIVED IN THE SAME TOWN, HE AND LIL' CAM WERE
BASICALLY LIKE BROTHERS. KAI WAS PSYCHED FOR CAM TO START 6TH
GRADE AT FOURTH AVENUE MIDDLE SCHOOL...A.K.A FAMS.



KAI WAS CATCHING UP ON HIS SUMMER READING, WHEN HE HEARD A *PING.*



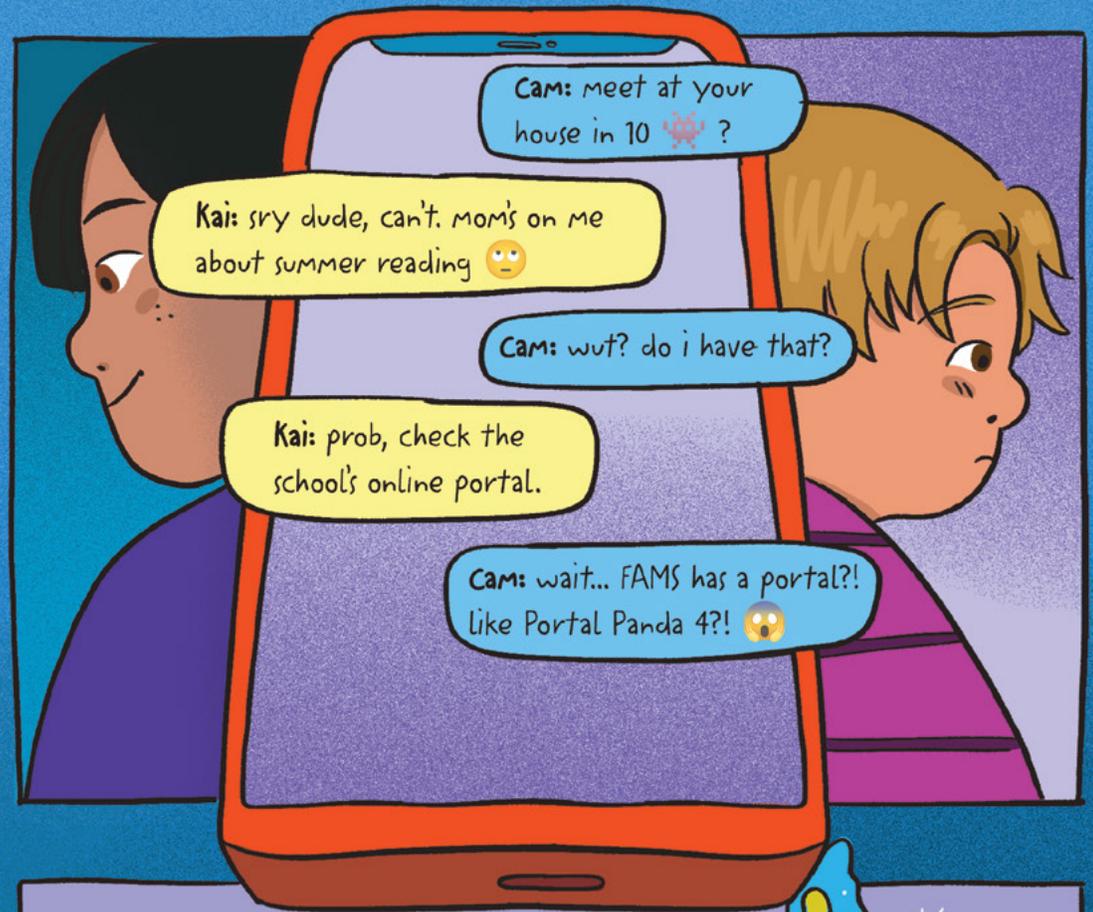
IT WAS CAM. SHOOT!

HE FORGOT.



IT WAS WEDNESDAY.

CAM WAS SUPPOSED TO BEAT THE 14TH LEVEL OF PORTAL PANDA 4. AND KAI WAS SUPPOSED TO HELP.



Cam: meet at your house in 10 🦊 ?

Kai: sry dude, can't. mom's on me about summer reading 😞

Cam: wut? do i have that?

Kai: prob, check the school's online portal.

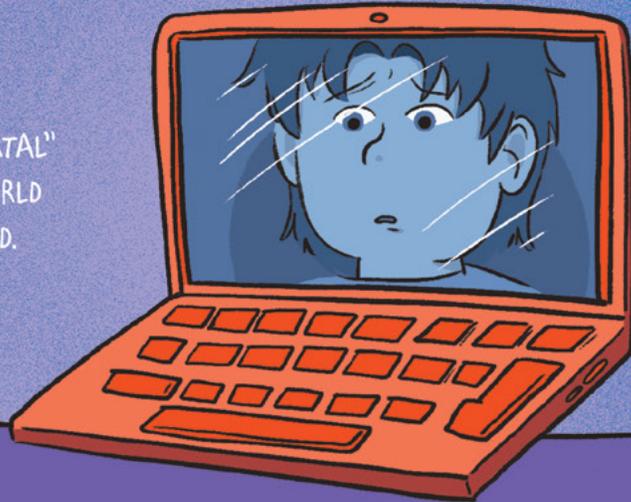
Cam: wait... FAMS has a portal?! Like Portal Panda 4?! 🤯



CAM'S MIND STARTED SWIRLING. THEN FULL-ON SPIRALING. HE'D STUFFED THESE FIRST-DAY-OF-MIDDLE-SCHOOL FEARS FAR, FAR AWAY. BUT NOW, THEY WERE STARING RIGHT BACK AT HIM.



THIS WHOLE SCHOOL "PORTAL" WAS A BRIDGE TO A WORLD HE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND.



CAM HAD QUESTIONS...

How long do I have between classes?

Are lunch boxes "dope" or "nope?"

Who do I sit with at lunch?

Do I do soccer? Band? History of Breakdancing?

... AND HE NEEDED KAI FOR ANSWERS.

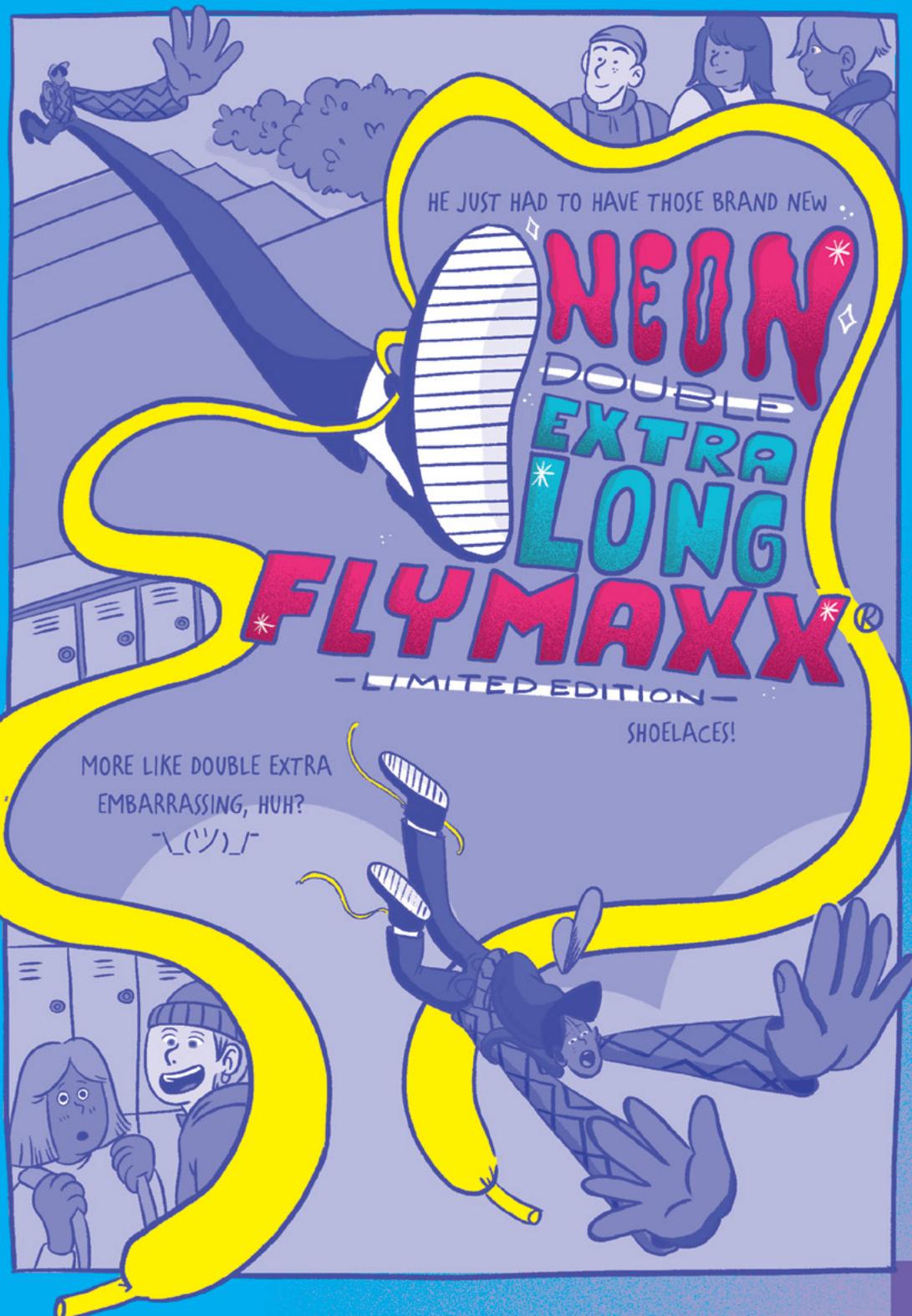


AS CAM'S FIRST DAY INCHED CLOSER AND CLOSER, IT WAS OBVIOUS HE WAS GETTING MORE AND MORE NERVOUS.



KAI GOT IT. HE REMEMBERED HIS FIRST DAY OF 6TH GRADE LIKE IT WAS YESTERDAY.





BUT THIS TIME, KAI HAD TWO YEARS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL UNDER HIS BELT.



HE COULD HANDLE ANYTHING.

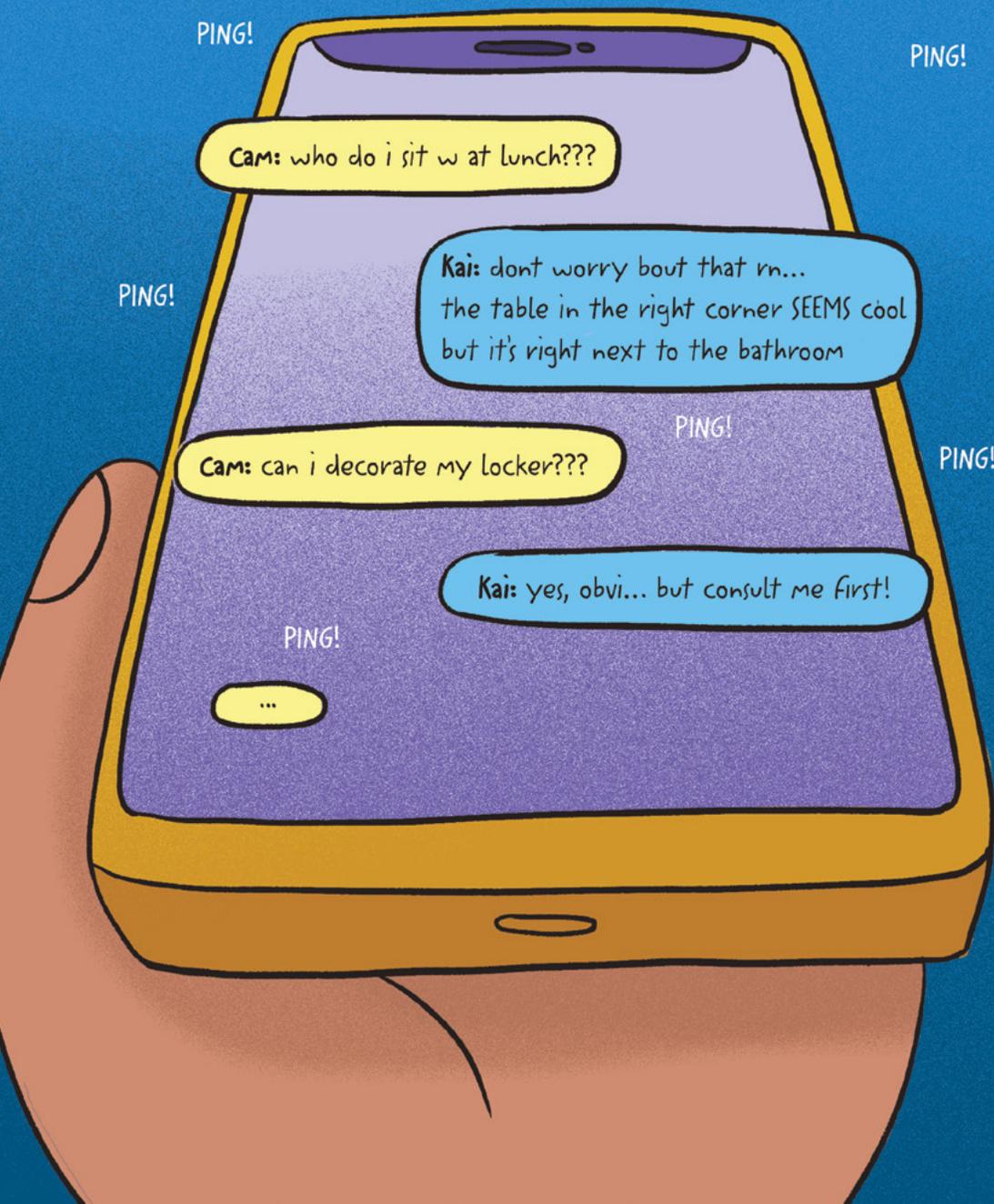


WELL, ALMOST ANYTHING.

EVERY TIME A NEW QUESTION POPPED INTO CAM'S HEAD, KAI RATTLED OFF AN ANSWER.



QUESTION, ANSWER. QUESTION, ANSWER. QUESTION, ANSWER.



PING!

Cam: who do i sit w at lunch???

PING!

Kai: dont worry bout that rn...
the table in the right corner SEEMS cool
but it's right next to the bathroom

PING!

Cam: can i decorate my locker???

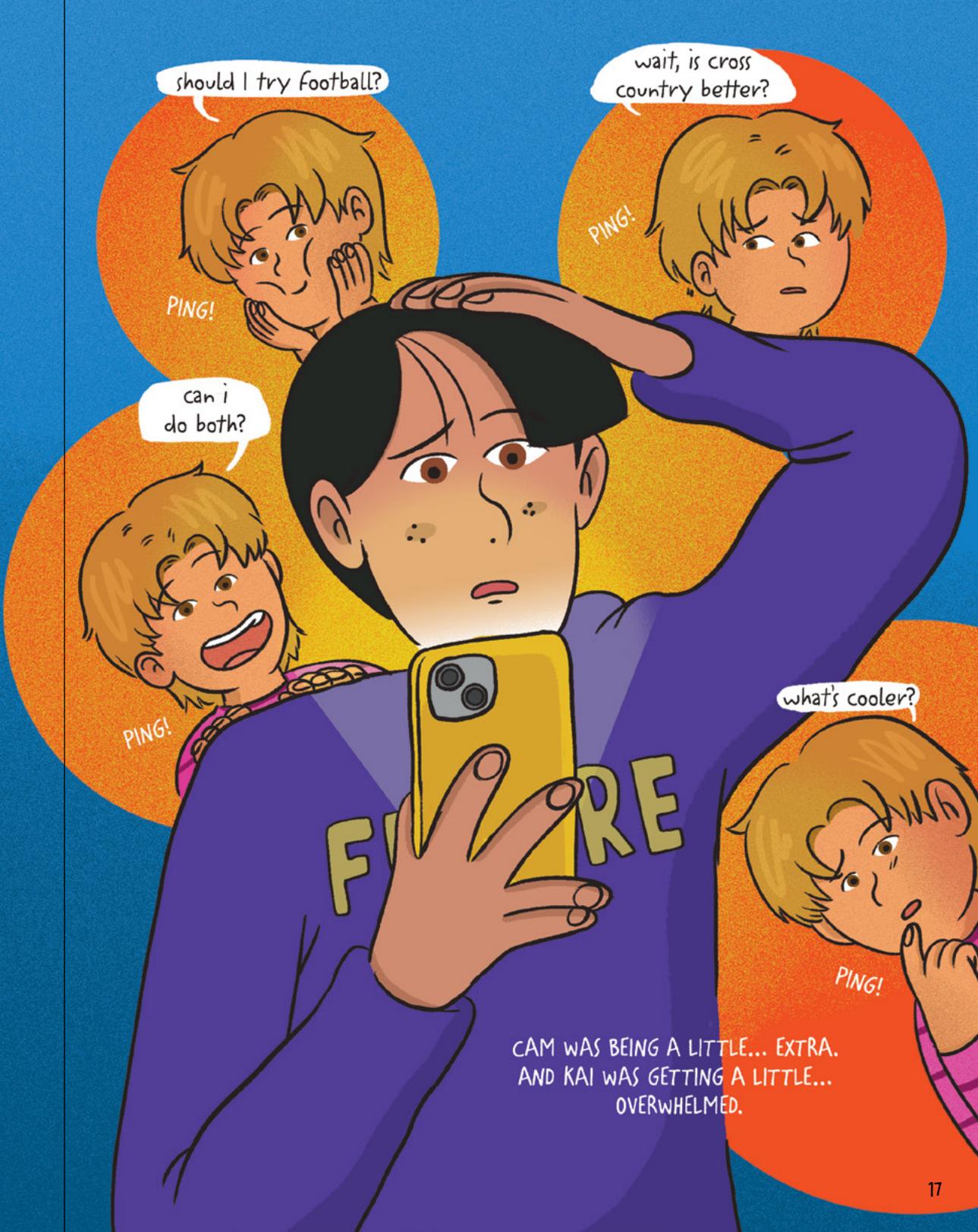
PING!

PING!

Kai: yes, obvi... but consult me first!

PING!

...



should I try football?

wait, is cross country better?

PING!

PING!

can i do both?

PING!

what's cooler?

PING!

CAM WAS BEING A LITTLE... EXTRA.
AND KAI WAS GETTING A LITTLE...
OVERWHELMED.

BUT CAM HAD BIGGER THINGS THAN NEON DOUBLE EXTRA LONG FLYMAXX® LIMITED EDITION SHOELACES TO WORRY ABOUT...



miss you guys, already!

HE AND HIS PARENTS HAD MOVED FROM LIKE, 2,000 MILES AWAY. AND AS MUCH AS CAM LOVED HIS BIG COUSIN, IT WAS A LOT OF CHANGE! HE WASN'T READY TO LEAVE ALL HIS FRIENDS BEHIND.



HERE, AT FOURTH AVENUE,

HE WAS STARTING FROM SCRATCH.



NEW LIFE.



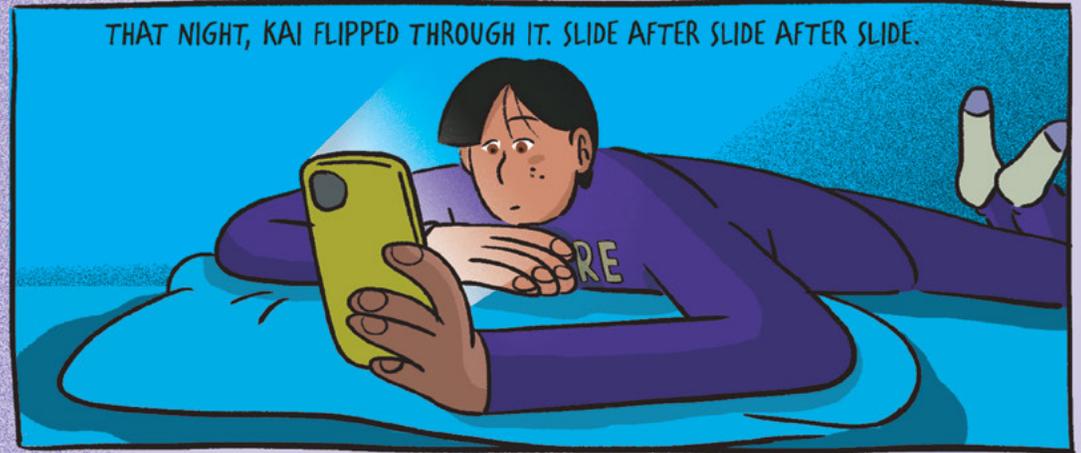
A FEW DAYS LATER, CAM SENT KAI A SLIDESHOW.
30 PAGES OF QUESTIONS. 72 BULLET POINTS. 84 PICTURES.



HE WANTED ADVICE ON EVERYTHING. HIS FIRST-DAY 'FIT. HOW TO USE THE BUNSEN BURNER. HE'D EVEN CREATED A SECTION WITH: "🔥 BOOKBAG OPTIONS." JUST TO SEE WHAT KAI THOUGHT.



THAT NIGHT, KAI FLIPPED THROUGH IT. SLIDE AFTER SLIDE AFTER SLIDE.



THIS THING WAS BECOMING A BEAST. HE NEEDED SOMEONE'S HELP.



SOMEONE LIKE ELLE.





Kai: u know how my cuz is starting 6th grade?

Elle: ya, exciting

Kai: not for him 😬 he's freakin' out. soooo many questions...

Elle: i mean.. I get it.

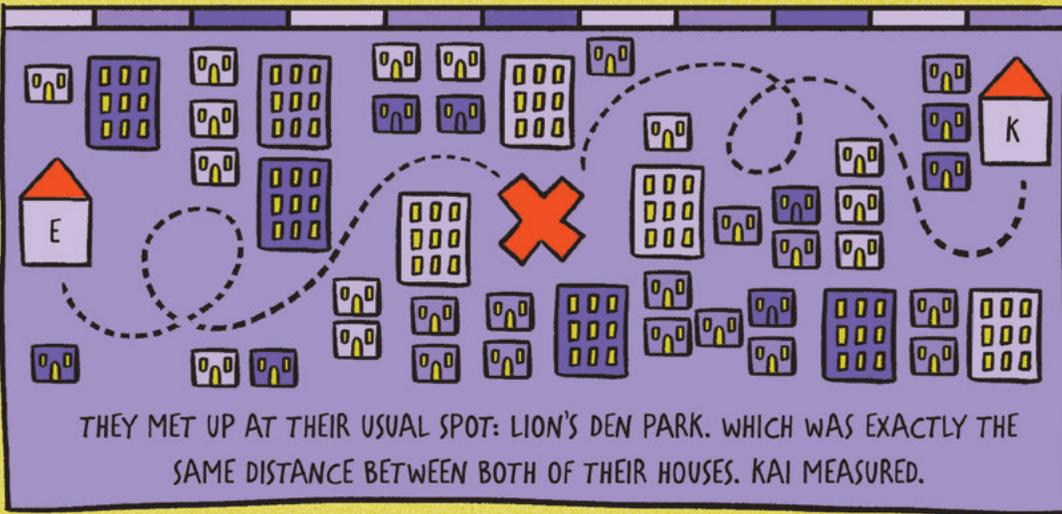
Kai: i have an idea tho. meet up tomo?



KAI AND ELLE ALWAYS HAD EACH OTHER'S BACKS ON BIG FIRST DAYS. THEY'D MET ON THEIR FIRST DAY OF CAMP, YEARS AGO.

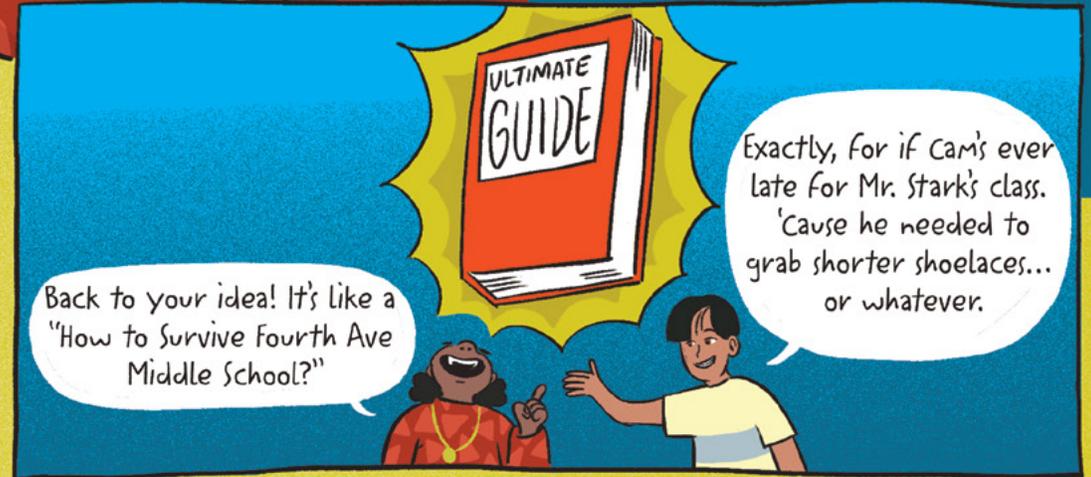


THEY BOTH KINDA FELT HOW CAMERON WAS FEELING: LOST AND CONFUSED. BUT EVER SINCE THEY FOUND EACH OTHER, THEY WERE INSEPARABLE. AN UNSTOPPABLE DUO. TRUE DAY ONES.



THIS TIME, ELLE MADE A PIT STOP AT THE CORNER STORE BEFORE.

It's summer.
Lemonade is good
for your brain!



I guess everyone could use a little help on day one.





wait...

ELLE PUSHED A LITTLE HIGHER, AND THE WHEELS IN HER BRAIN STARTED TO TURN A LITTLE FASTER.



Maybe there's a way to help all the sixth graders.



Oh no. Elle. The lemonade. It's going to your brain.



Don't you worry about my brain, Kai... it's workin' just fine.



Swish

NOTHING BUT NET.

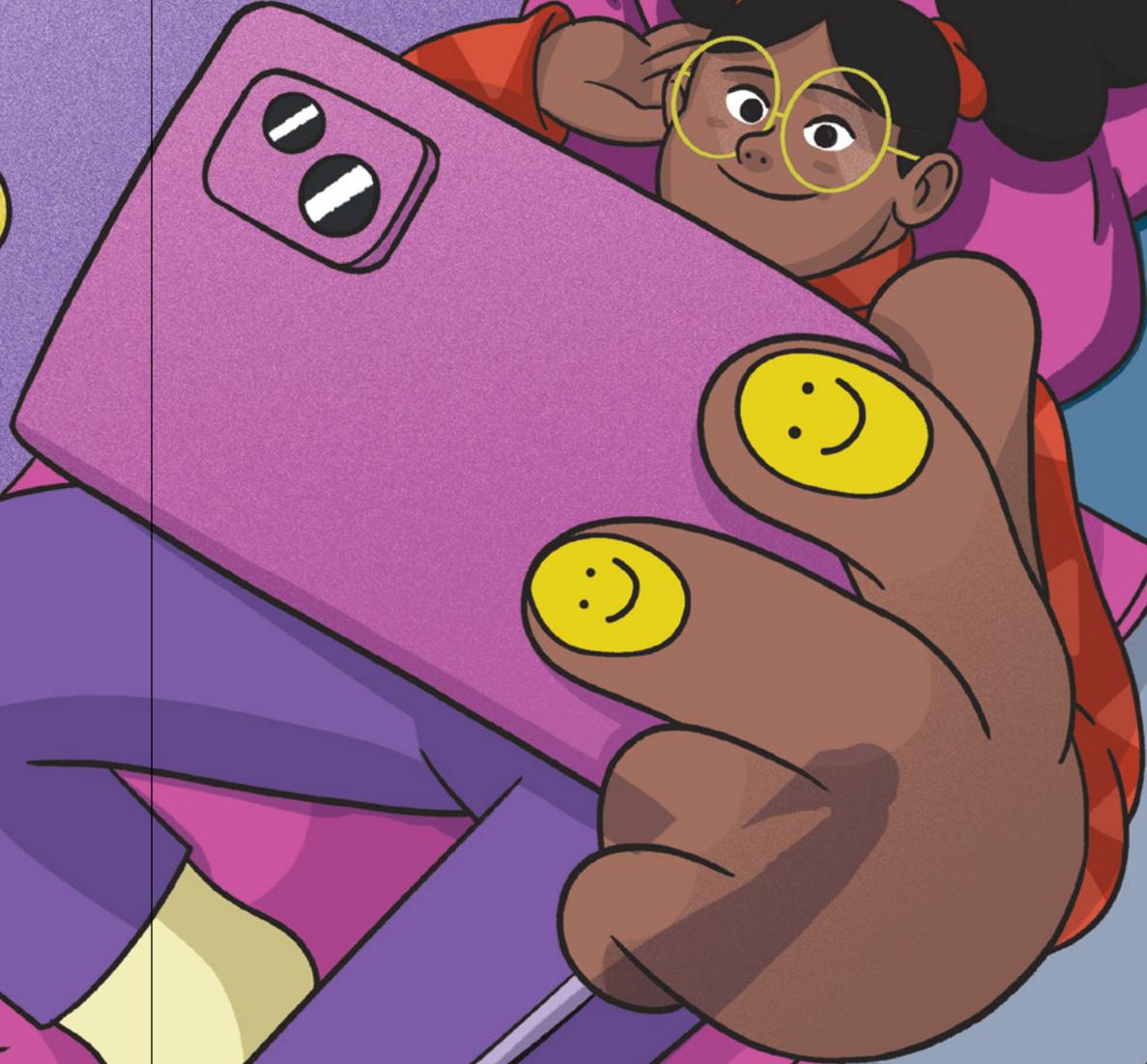


ELLE NEVER MISSED.



CHAPTER 2

ELLE



ELLE HAD LOGGED A LOT OF HOURS WATCHING VIDEOS THE PAST FEW YEARS.



SOMETIMES, SHE JUST COULDN'T 🙌 STOP 🙌 SCROLLING 🙌

SHE WAS KINDA CURIOUS ABOUT EVERYTHING. AND VIDEOS TAUGHT HER HOW TO DO... WELL, ANYTHING.



NO PROBLEM.



HOW TO BEAT THE 14TH LEVEL OF PORTAL PANDA 4? EASY. BUT THERE WERE NO SEARCH RESULTS FOR "HOW TO SURVIVE DAY ONE AT FOURTH AVE MIDDLE SCHOOL?"

YET.

OKAY, BACK TO THE PARK.



We'll use the most powerful invention in the WORLD: The *Internet*

You're obsessed.



How else could I have learned this!?

You'll have to show me how to do that, sometime.



wait... camera!?

Gotta have good nails, Kai... if you're gonna be on camera!



We'll film it. And post it all on 4Reel.



You know the camera hates me!! Hello!? My yearbook pic?!

I thought you looked cute! That pic lives in my head RENT FREE!



... aaagh. Ok. Fine.

Meet me at the bus before orientation. Tomorrow. 8:47 A-M. Sharp.



Today's the day, baby!

KAI AND ELLE GAME PLANNED ON THE WAY TO SCHOOL.



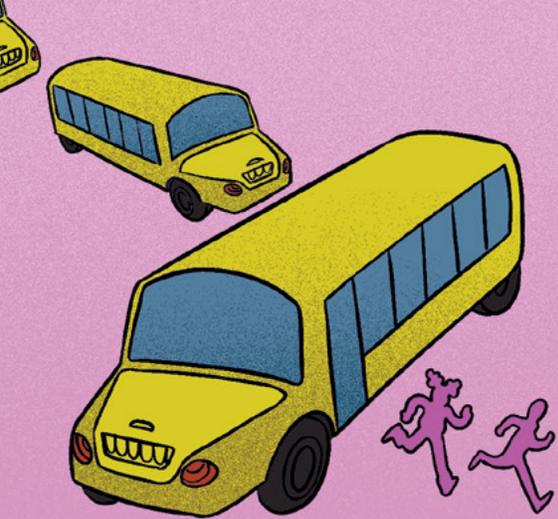
Camera 1 will be my phone. Why? I have a better camera.

Yes, Director!

Action!

Ok, ready?

Set?



REC

Every bus has a number.

Learn. Your. Number!

A boy with a backpack is pointing to the number '45' written on his palm.

REC

It's the end of the day. Crunch time. You need to get home. But how?

A boy with a backpack looks confused with his arms outstretched.

REC

This has been a PSA about the B-U-S from K-A-I and yours truly, Elle.

A girl with glasses and a necklace is talking to a boy with a backpack.

CUT! Take 2?

Nope, next location! We're on a tight schedule.

A girl with glasses holds a pink card. In the background, a boy with a backpack is running away.

REC

This place is a total maze!

A boy with a backpack is talking to a group of people in a hallway.

What if I get lost?!

REC

A boy with a backpack is standing in a locker room, looking lost.

Screenshot this map.

And whatever you do, remember: don't EVER use the basement bathroom!

A school floor plan map showing various rooms: LOCKERS, CLASS 1, CLASS 2, CLASS 3, CLASS 4, CLASS 6, Gym, PRINCIPAL, KITCHEN, BR, and FOOD COURT. A red dot is placed on the map.

THEY WRAPPED JUST IN TIME TO MAKE IT TO THE GYM FOR ORIENTATION.

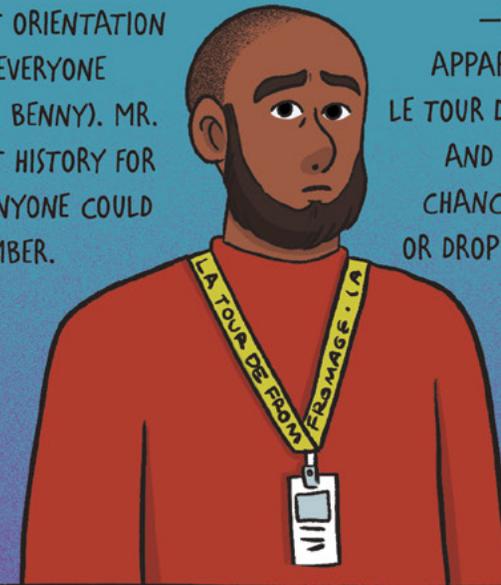


Good morning, everyone. Before we dive into details, there's something we want to talk to you all about. Very sad news for Fourth Ave Middle School...



MR. BENBIT ALWAYS GAVE THE LAST SPEECH AT ORIENTATION (*PSST* - EVERYONE CALLS HIM MR. BENNY). MR. BENNY TAUGHT HISTORY FOR AS LONG AS ANYONE COULD REMEMBER.

HE WAS OBSESSED WITH BIKING —SORRY, "CYCLING." APPARENTLY HE'D RACED IN LE TOUR DE FROMAGE A FEW TIMES, AND HE NEVER MISSED THE CHANCE TO REMIND THE KIDS. OR DROP SOME FRENCH ON THEM.



HE WAS ALSO THE MOST POPULAR TEACHER AT SCHOOL.



Middle School amis... as Mrs. Hoffman just shared, we're all deeply saddened by Adrian's tragic death.



Adrian was a beloved graduate of fourth Avenue. He's actually the one who made it cool to call this place FAMS.



He had such a presence in these halls...

what up FAMS?!



And at home, too. Alex, I am so sorry to hear about your brother. We will all miss Adrian, and are here for you.



I want you all to know that my door is always open if you ever need to talk.

About anything! There are lots of people to talk to here. Grief counselors, support groups...

BUT NO ONE WAS READY TO TALK.



THAT NIGHT, ELLE LOOKED THROUGH THE VIDEOS THEY FILMED. AND "HEARTED" HER FAVORITE TAKES.



BUT IN HER ACTUAL HEART, SHE COULDN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT ADRIAN. AND ALEX.



Elle: feel so bad for alex :(

Kai: i know.. me too.

Elle: can't stop thinking about her.

Kai: bring up any feelings for u?

Elle: ya. our vids are taking my mind off it tho

Kai: when u gonna post them?

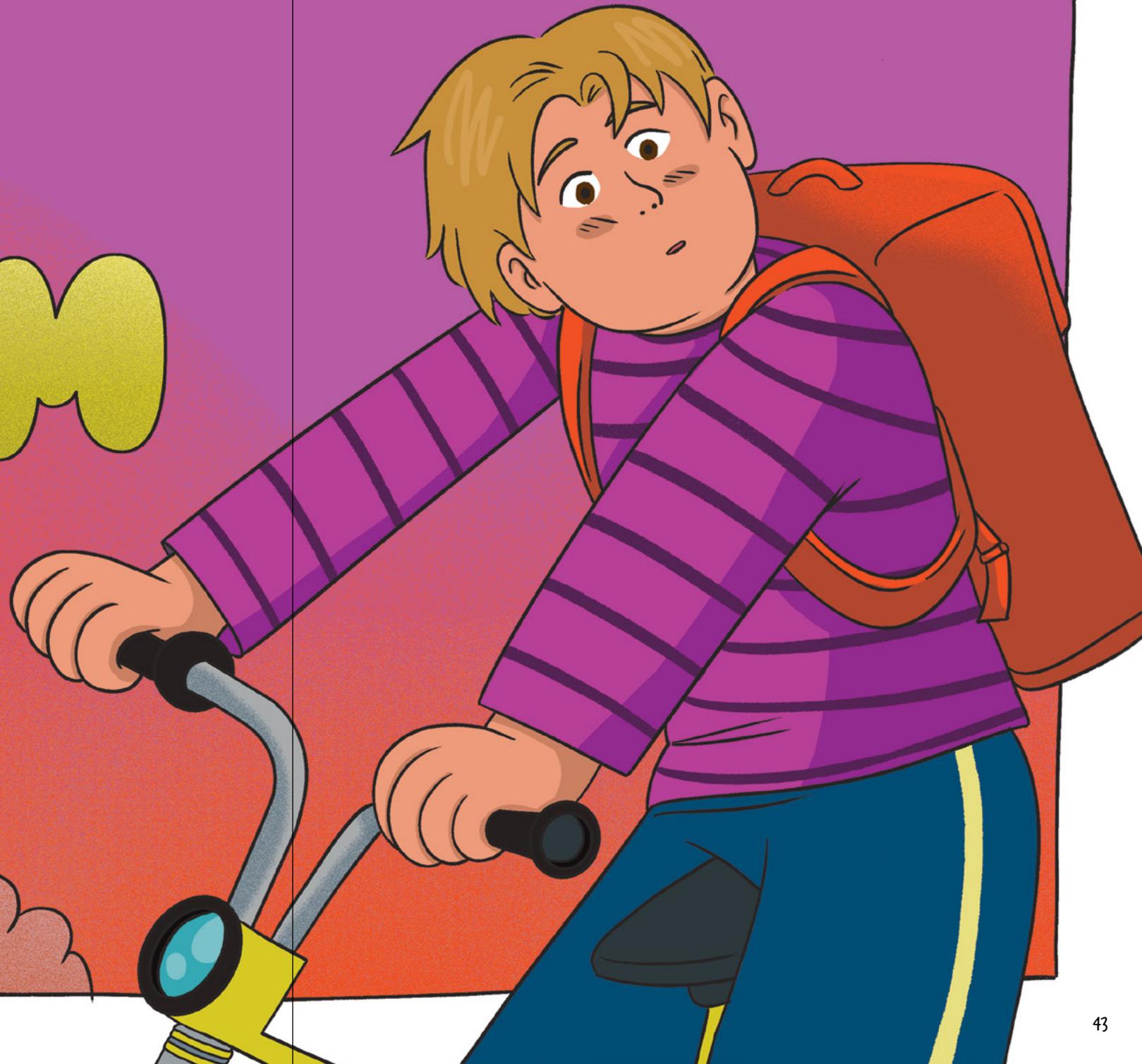
Elle: uploading now, think cam & the other 6th graders will watch? 🙌

Kai: you leave that up to me...

NOW, TO PUT THEIR PLAN INTO ACTION.

CHAPTER 3

CAM



THE NEXT MORNING, CAM RODE HIS BIKE TO KAI'S.
BUT KAI WASN'T OUTSIDE WAITING FOR HIM LIKE USUAL.

15

AND KAI DIDN'T ANSWER
THE DOOR THIS TIME, EITHER.



Forget we had plans?

Sorry man.
Totally blanked.

Elle and I have
been up
to something.

Well, I've been stuck inside
reading thanks to you.

About that.
Remember all those
questions you had?

I still got like 200 pages left,
and school starts Monday!

Lil' Cam! Come on in, Kai's up in his room.
I think he's been working on
something for you.



Ha! Wait, this is funny!
You make videos, too?
I thought you were like, an
"artist."



I'm a man of many
talents, Cam.

Anyway, we were thinking.
Maybe you could post the link
on your class page?
So the other 6th graders can see it?

What's in it
for me?

You're so annoying.

Fine.

I'll give you one of
my Portal Panda 4
bobbleheads.

But it **NEEDS** to be
the golden one!!!

Deal.

Now what do I need
to do again?



AND JUST LIKE THAT, THE COMMENTS STARTED ROLLING IN.

CAM FELT BETTER ON DAY ONE AT FAMS. AND ALL THE OTHER NEW KIDS? WELL, LET'S JUST SAY THEY DID, TOO.



SO KAI AND ELLE DECIDED TO FILM MORE VIDEOS.

BUT FIRST, THEY HAD TO MAKE IT DOWN THE HALL. FULL OF STUDENTS. EXCITED TO BE BACK. TO CHECK OUT ALL THE FIRST DAY 'FITS.



BUT ALEX WASN'T SO EXCITED. THE NEWS OF ADRIAN WAS LIKE THE ELEPHANT IN THE HALLWAY.



NO ONE KNEW WHAT TO SAY.



Alex is even dressed differently...

No basketball gear this year...



FRESH KICKS WERE ALEX'S SIGNATURE THING. ESPECIALLY ON DAY ONE.

FINALLY, THEY MADE IT TO THEIR LOCKERS, JUST IN TIME TO FILM THEIR NEXT 4REEL.

THERE ARE RULES ABOUT PHONES AT FOURTH AVE DURING SCHOOL HOURS (DUH), AND ELLE COULDN'T GET CAUGHT... NOT AGAIN.

REC

Kai, you always remember your locker combo. How'd you crack that code?

I make up a song in my head.

But this time, I'll sing it for all my new followers out there...

BUT WHEN THEY TOLD MR. BENNY IT WAS FOR THE GOOD OF THE 6TH GRADERS, HE AGREED TO STAND GUARD WHILE THEY FILMED: "THE LOCKER NUMBER."

LA TOUR DE FROMAGE & L.L.

REC

MUSIC NOTES

ZERO, I NEED A HERO
FOUR, IS MORE THAN...

THREE, MY BOOKS NEED TO BE FREEEEE,
NINE, I'M RUNNING OUT OF TIME,
BUT NUMBER ONE IS...
Um, the last...one!?

AND THERE YOU HAVE IT, FOLKS.
OH-4-3-9-1

He really is a man of many talents, huh?

Kai... that was such a BOP.



JACCCKSSSSON!

We're NOT going to do this again... put that marker DOWN. Now!!!

Or what...

CHAPTER 4

JAXON

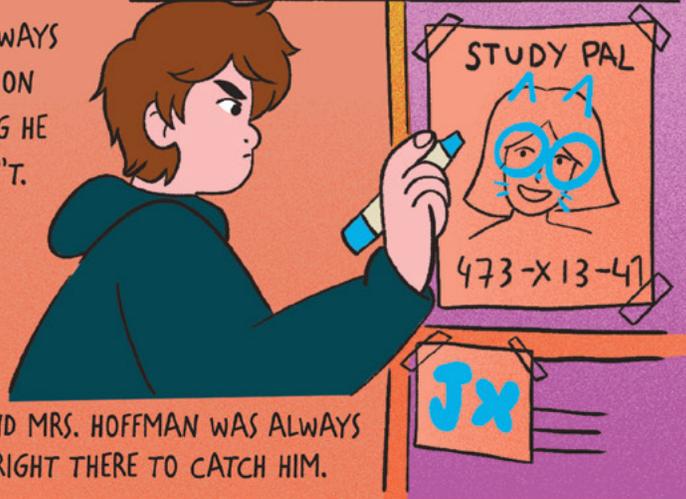
(WITH AN "X")



A BIT ABOUT JAXON.



HE WAS ALWAYS DRAWING ON SOMETHING HE SHOULDN'T.



AND MRS. HOFFMAN WAS ALWAYS RIGHT THERE TO CATCH HIM.

JAXON WAS A 7TH GRADER, BUT HIS LITTLE BEEF WITH THE PRINCIPAL DATED BACK TO HIS VERY FIRST DAY OF 6TH GRADE.



De-ten-tion!!!



KAI AND ELLE DIDN'T KNOW JAXON. NOT WELL. NOBODY AT FOURTH AVE DID, REALLY. ALL THEY KNEW IS THAT HE WAS USUALLY UP TO NO GOOD.



HE WAS DISTANT.

KEPT PEOPLE AT ARM'S LENGTH.



OH, AND JAXON DEFINITELY HAD A TEMPER.

(*PSSST* DON'T EVER SPELL IT "JACKSON").



HE DIDN'T LIKE CLASS. TEACHERS... NOT EVEN FRIENDS.



HE DIDN'T LIKE ANYTHING ABOUT FOURTH AVENUE AT ALL.



BUT JAXON HAD HIS REASONS FOR BEING, WELL... JAXON.

HIS DAD WASN'T AROUND ANYMORE. SO THERE WAS PLENTY HE DIDN'T LOVE ABOUT BEING AT 500 WALNUT STREET, EITHER.



NOBODY AT SCHOOL KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT HIS LIFE OUTSIDE OF FAMS. AND HE WANTED TO KEEP IT THAT WAY.

SO IT WAS NO SURPRISE THAT HE WASN'T A FAN OF KAI AND ELLE'S LITTLE "PROJECT." AND HE DEFINITELY MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE THOUGHT IT WAS... WELL,

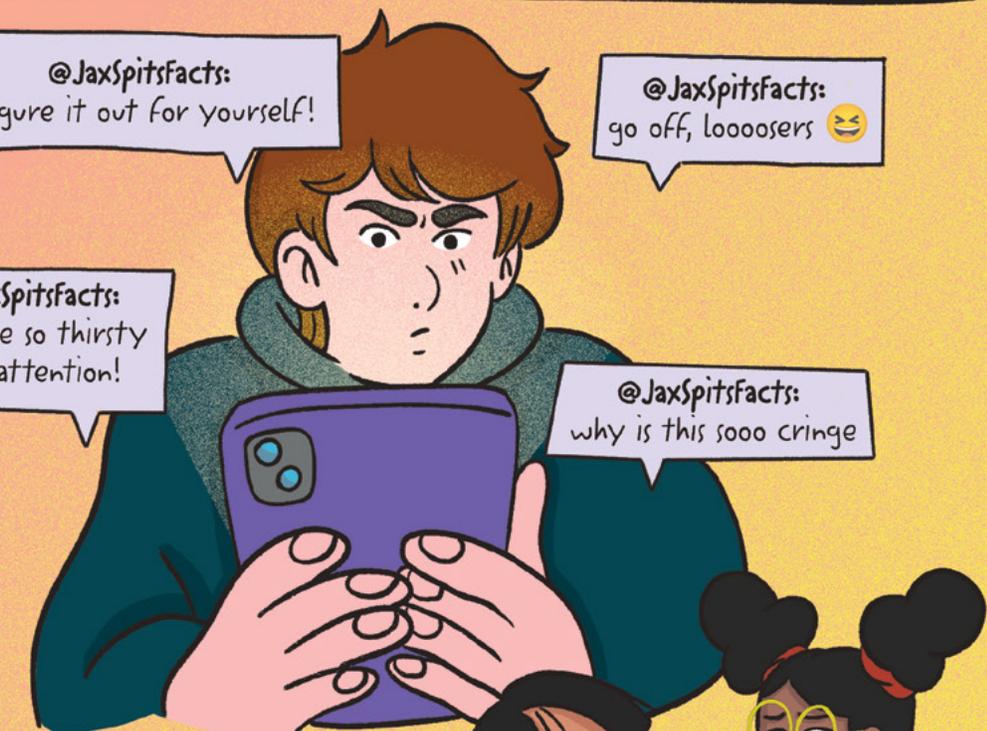


@JaxSpitsfacts: figure it out for yourself!

@JaxSpitsfacts: go off, looosers 😏

@JaxSpitsfacts: y'all are so thirsty for attention!

@JaxSpitsfacts: why is this sooo cringe



WHY WAS JAXON SUCH AN—UGH! KAI AND ELLE HONESTLY HAD NO IDEA. MAYBE SOMETHING ELSE WAS UP...



CHAPTER 5

Kai AND ELLE

REC



FOR THEIR NEXT 4REEL VIDEO, KAI AND ELLE WERE OFF TO THE CAFETERIA.

REC

Cam wants to know:
Eat school lunch?
Or bring your own?

Depends on the day
of the week!

But unless your mom's
delivering you a pizza,
don't bring lunch
on Mondays!

REC

IYKYK.

NOW TO FILM ONE LAST SHOT AT THE GYM.

Do you see
what I see?

Yeah...

Come onnn,
let's just play a little
one-on-one.

Maybe later.
I don't feel like
it right now.

It'll be quick. First to ten?

Ughhh, please Mila,
I said not now.



What if I give you first ball?!



Mila!

Just stop!

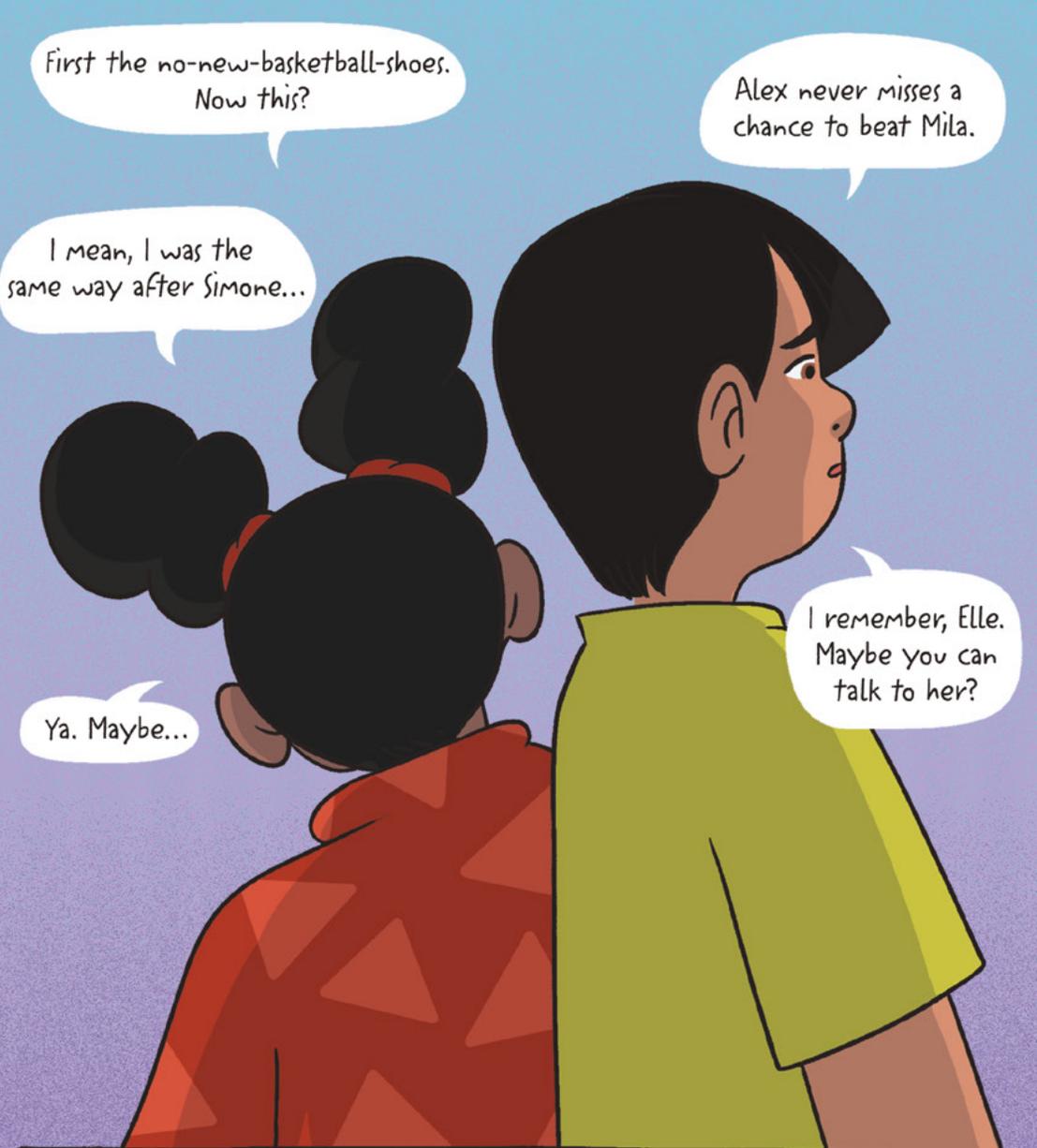
Seriously.



What?

What did I say?

I'm sorry...



First the no-new-basketball-shoes. Now this?

Alex never misses a chance to beat Mila.

I mean, I was the same way after Simone...

Ya. Maybe...

I remember, Elle. Maybe you can talk to her?

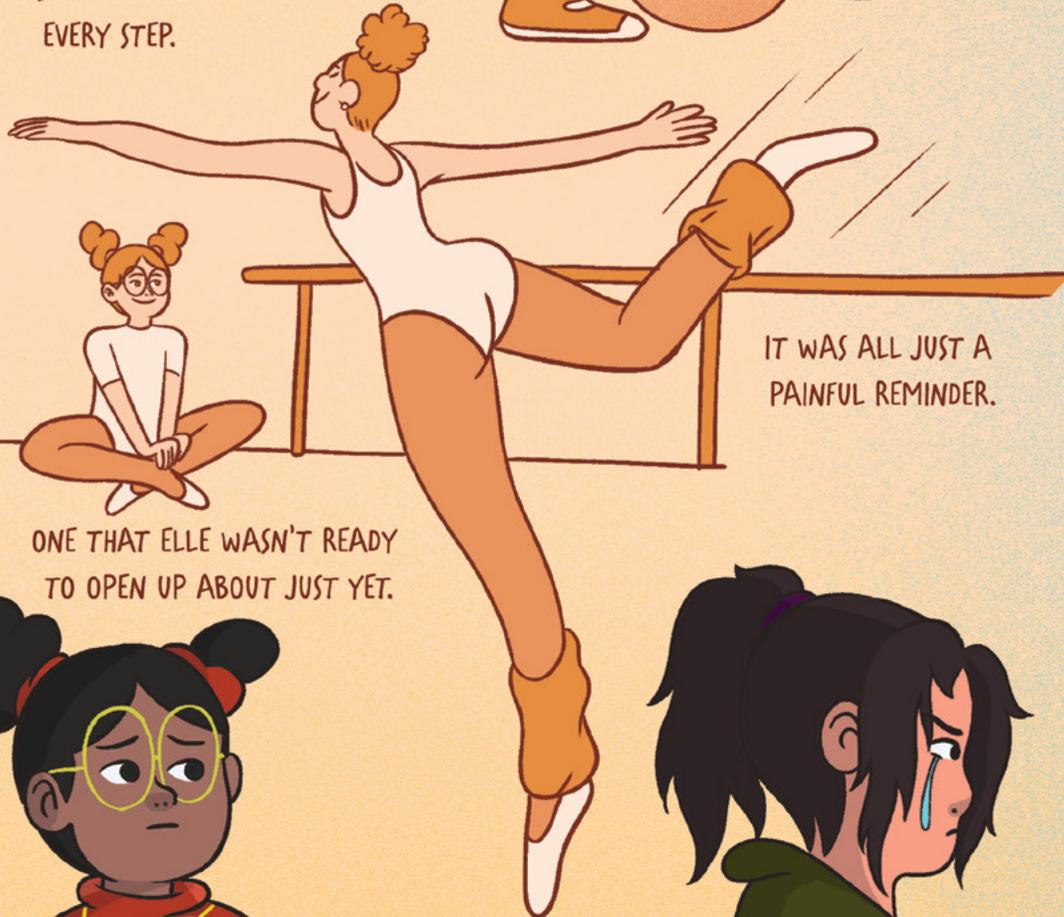
DESPITE HOW DIFFERENT ELLE THOUGHT THEIR SITUATIONS WERE, DEEP DOWN, SHE KNEW WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO LOSE AN OLDER SIBLING.

ALEX HAD AVOIDED BASKETBALL EVER SINCE ADRIAN DIED. JUST LIKE ELLE HAD AVOIDED BALLET AFTER WHAT HAPPENED TO SIMONE.



EVERY MOVE.

EVERY STEP.



IT WAS ALL JUST A PAINFUL REMINDER.

ONE THAT ELLE WASN'T READY TO OPEN UP ABOUT JUST YET.



AND ONE THAT ALEX DIDN'T FEEL LIKE EXPLAINING TO MILA.



Hey, wait up!

Cam showed us those videos you made.

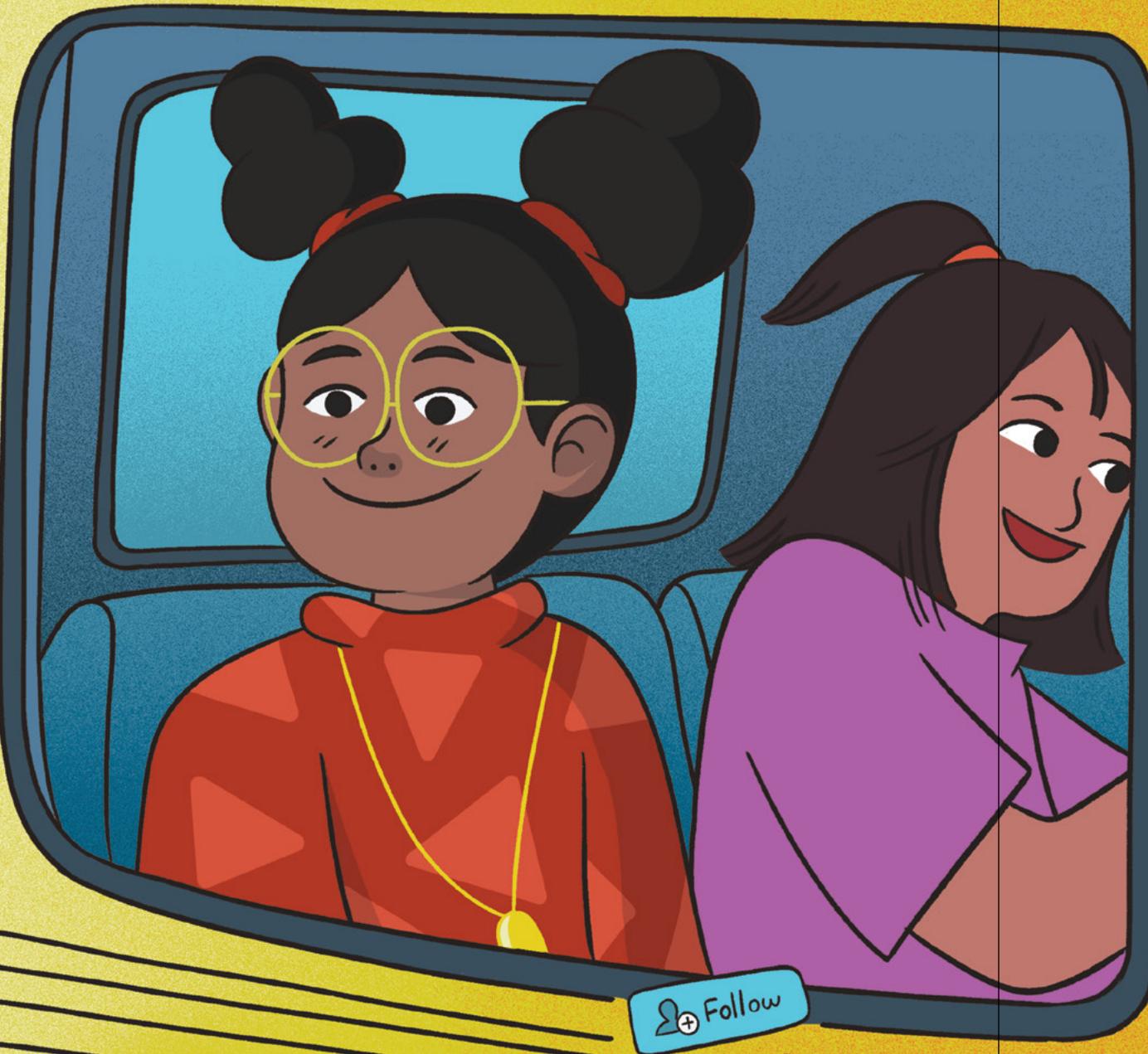


We thought 8th graders were gonna jam our lockers. Not show us how to OPEN them!

Who says we can't do both!?



KAI AND ELLE RUSHED HOME TO POST THEIR NEW CONTENT.



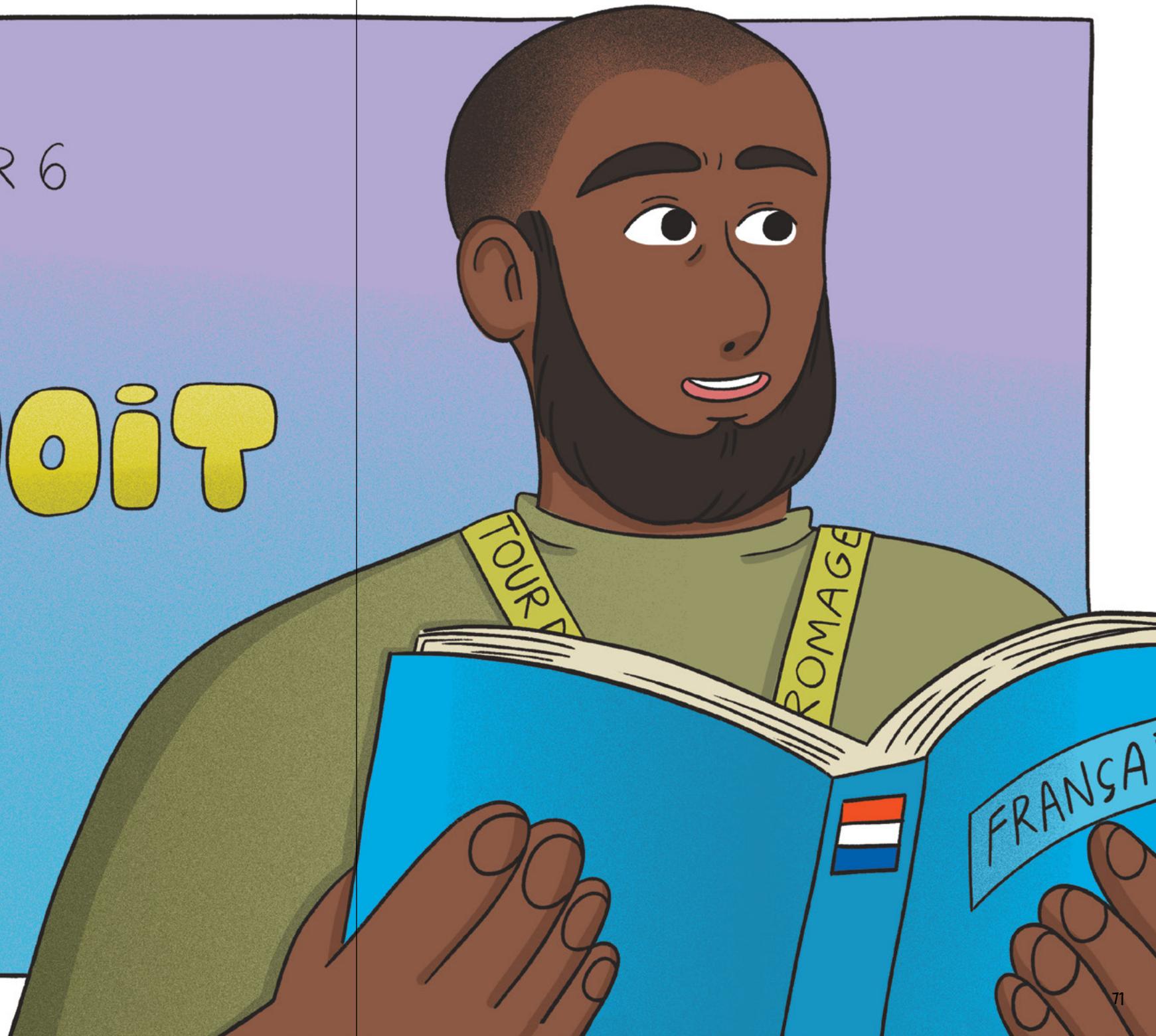
ELLE COULDN'T WAIT TO SEE IF THEY HAD ANY COMMENTS.
MAYBE EVEN A FEW NEW *FOLLOWERS*!



SHE COULD FEEL IT.
THIS WHOLE 4REEL THING WAS ABOUT TO TAKE OFF.

CHAPTER 6

MR.
BENOÏT



KAI WAS BUSY THAT FIRST WEEK BACK AT SCHOOL. THIS WHOLE 4REEL THING WAS BECOMING A FULL-TIME JOB... AND NOT THE KIND HIS MOM WANTED HIM TO GET.



BUT SOMEONE ELSE HE KNEW CLEARLY DIDN'T MIND THE SPOTLIGHT...

THE HALLWAYS,
THE CAFETERIA...



NOWHERE WAS SACRED
ANYMORE.

Kai: wasn't expecting all this...

Elle: i know 🤪
the vids r a hit!

Kai: i cant concentrate in class

Kai: if things don't change,
i'm legit gonna fail 8th grade



No no, not like that mom.

What's going on, Kai guy?



Kai!

What'd I tell you about slamming that front door!

Nothing, I'm fine. Just tired. First week of school stuff.

Okay, well... you know you can always talk to me, right?

I know. Thanks, mom.



Sorry mom, didn't think you'd be home.

My meetings ended early and I wanted to beat you home from school.

Yeah well, I feel like I got beat up AT school.



Just don't stress yourself out too much with those 4Reel videos, okay?



BUT KAI WAS
ALREADY STRESSED.



HE'D STARTED THIS WHOLE 4REEL THING. AND HE
WANTED TO FINISH IT. WITHOUT HIS MOM'S HELP.



AS FOR ELLE, SHE WAS ALREADY WORKING ON A NEW PLAN.



AND TO SAVE
KAI'S SANITY.

What if we just let them ask their questions on 4Reel?

It'll save us from getting mobbed at school, at least...



DURING THEIR NEXT FREE PERIOD, THEY ASKED MR. BENNY IF THEY COULD USE HIS PRINTER.

Make it quick, or next time I'll make you ask Mrs. H!



Jaxon, that's your art on the bathroom stall? Siiiick!



Well, I draw too...

That wasn't for YOU!



... and why do I care?

AS USUAL, JAXON TOOK OFF QUICKLY. KAI THOUGHT ART MIGHT BE A WAY TO CONNECT WITH HIM. MAYBE HE WAS WRONG.



THE POSTERS WORKED. KAI AND ELLE WOKE UP TO AN AVALANCHE OF NEW QUESTIONS THE NEXT DAY.



@mellowJ: How do I make friends if I don't do sports?

llllle

llllle
llle

@CraftyKaty: How do I not fail Mr. Stark's class?

uuuu

@SkateLife: History of Horses: Yay? Or Neigh?

@EvalsMyName: I can remember my locker code now (thanks, Kai), but what do I do if it gets jammed?



Cam: seeee!! i knew i wasn't the only one who had questions

Kai: omg elle when r we gonna answer all these

Elle: come over after school



ELLE HAD A PLAN. FOR THEIR PLAN, SHE WOULD TAKE THE QUESTIONS THAT CAME IN ON MONDAYS, TUESDAYS, AND WEDNESDAYS. THURSDAYS AND FRIDAYS WERE KAI'S NIGHTS.

M	T	W	T	F
E	E	E	K	K



AND THAT WAS THEIR LIFE FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. EVERY DAY AFTER SCHOOL, THEY'D POST RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONS. THEN PATIENTLY WAIT FOR THE NEXT BATCH.

A FEW MONTHS LATER

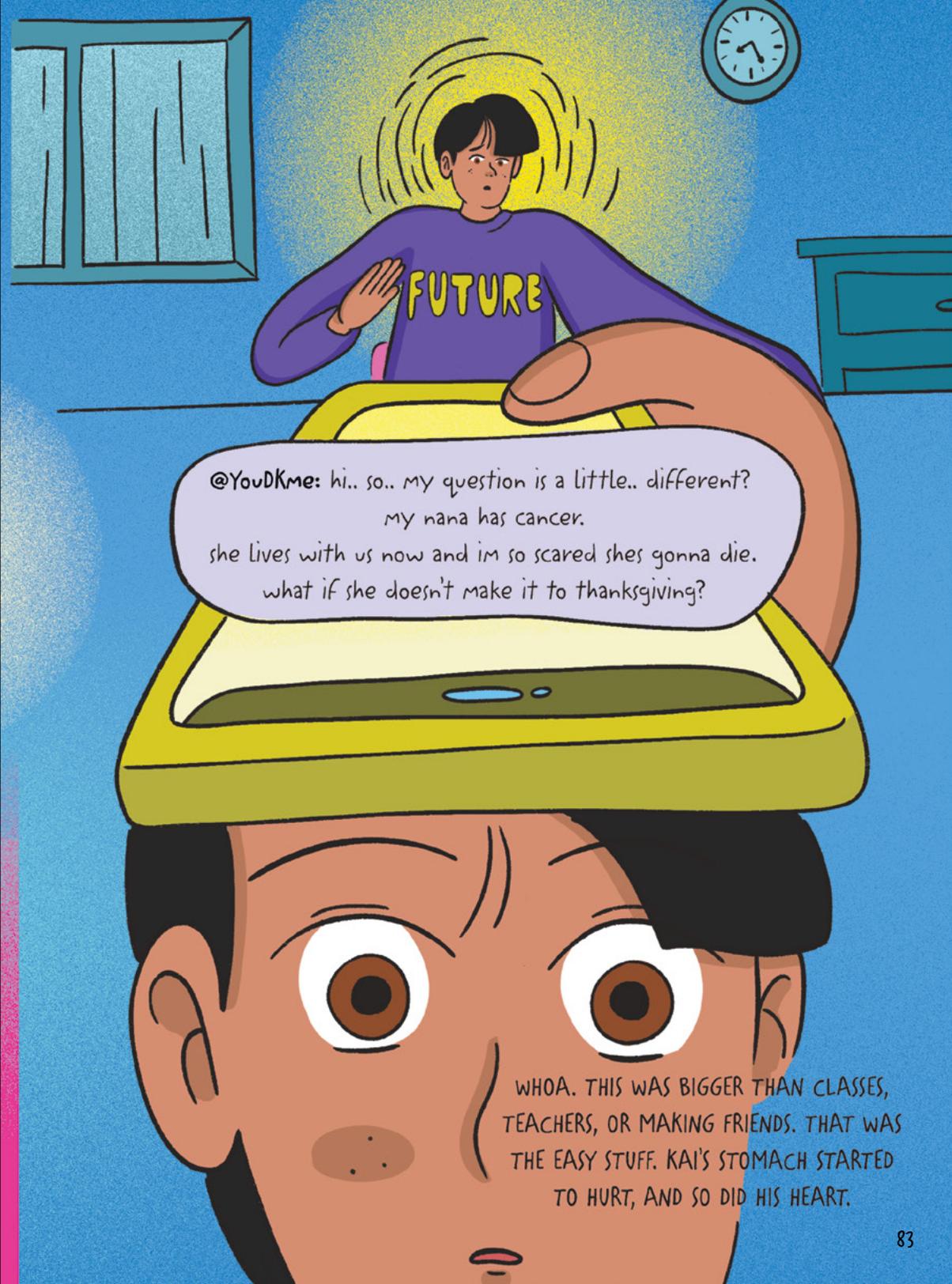
IT WAS THURSDAY. KAI'S NIGHT.
JUST ONE MORE QUESTION, HE THOUGHT.



NOT SO BAD.
HE'D BE DONE BY 8:55 PM.



JUST IN TIME TO GET A LITTLE
PORTAL PANDA 4 IN BEFORE BED.



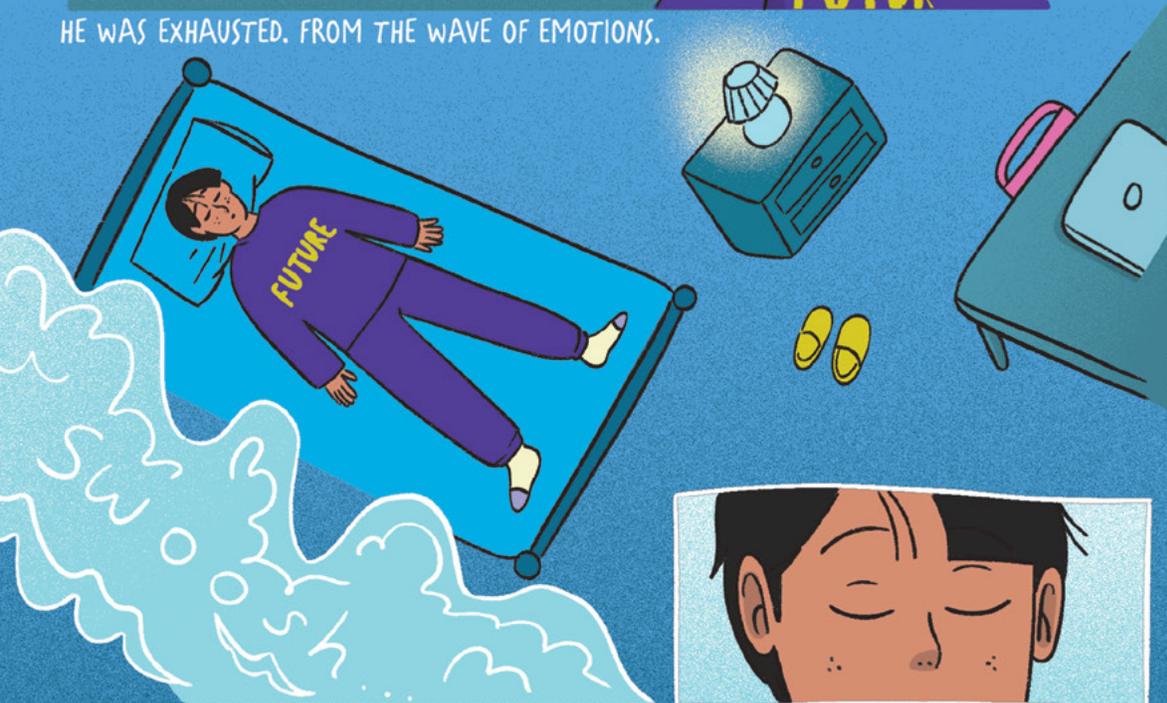
@YouDKme: hi.. so.. my question is a little.. different?
my nana has cancer.
she lives with us now and im so scared shes gonna die.
what if she doesn't make it to thanksgiving?

WHOA. THIS WAS BIGGER THAN CLASSES,
TEACHERS, OR MAKING FRIENDS. THAT WAS
THE EASY STUFF. KAI'S STOMACH STARTED
TO HURT, AND SO DID HIS HEART.

HE TRIED RECORDING A RESPONSE. THEN STOPPED. THEN STARTED. AND STOPPED AGAIN. HE WAS SCARED TO SAY THE WRONG THING.



HE WAS EXHAUSTED. FROM THE WAVE OF EMOTIONS.



FROM THINKING ABOUT HIS DAD. MAYBE HE'D FIND THE RIGHT WORDS IN HIS DREAMS.

I know you're scared, Kai.

I just want to give the right answer!



Maybe there's not just one "right" answer...

How many are there?

Everyone needs something different. Sometimes they just need someone to listen.

But what do I say right now?



AND JUST LIKE THAT, HIS DREAM WAS OVER.

WHEN KAI WOKE UP, HE STILL WASN'T ANY CLOSER TO AN ANSWER.



AND HE MISSED HIS DAD. IT WASN'T A GOOD MORNING.



Kai: did u see this? plz help

Elle: Yah :(who posted that? do you know @YouDKme?

Kai: no clue. tried to respond but idk what to say

Elle: i get it.. u ask ur mom for advice?

Kai: no, i don't want to make her sad and this kind of thing would def make her sad

Elle: let's talk more at school

KAI TOOK THE LONG WAY THAT DAY.



HE STILL FELT LOST. HE FELT LIKE HE OWED IT TO WHOEVER IT WAS TO HELP THEM OUT. AND SO DID ELLE.

I dunno Elle, how did we even get to this point?

It was supposed to be about bus trips and locker numbers. Normal school stuff like that...

We were helping Cam! And all the 6th graders!

Lemme handle this one, okay?

KAI WAS RELIEVED AND GRATEFUL. HE HAD ENOUGH TO WORRY ABOUT RIGHT NOW.





Morning, Mr. Benny.

Salut, Elle!



Remember when we used your printer?

And used up all my precious ink!



Whoops... so we've been making these videos to help out the new kids. And we started letting them ask us their questions online.

What kinds of questions?



Simple stuff. Like which basketball shoes to get for tryouts.

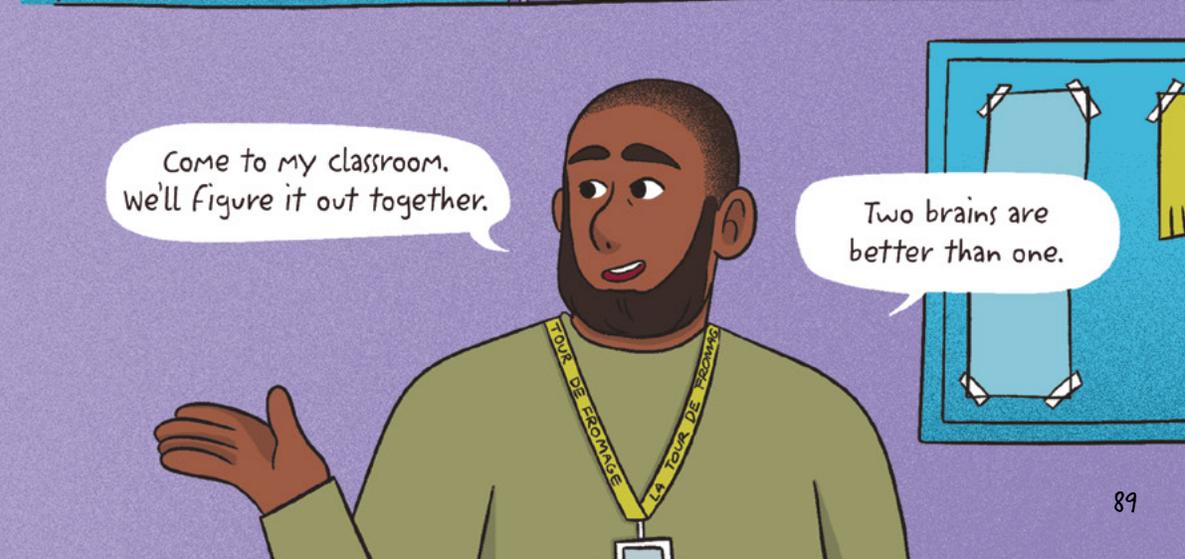
What about shoes for cycling!?



...anyway, things were going great. 'Til last night.

Phew. That's... difficile.

I know. It's really been eating at Kai.



Come to my classroom. We'll figure it out together.

Two brains are better than one.



We just want to give the right answer!

Maybe there's not just one "right" answer?



So... how many are there? Seven?



When my mom was sick, everyone in my family needed different things.



What did you need?

To talk. To someone who could relate.



I talked A LOT to Kai when I met him at camp.

What about?

I met him right after my sister died ... so, I talked about her.

What's your favorite memory with her?



OMG, too many to pick from... probably when she was dancing in the kitchen, and I came up behind her to scare her and...



Sorry, had to log that one. I was scared I'd forget these memories someday. So now I just write them all down.



Elle, I think you might have more to say than you realize.

Definitely.

You think?

Actually, Mr. Benny? Take my phone. I'm ready to record an answer.

SO ELLE OPENED UP ABOUT SIMONE.

Are you sure that was good?

Positif! That was brave, Elle. You never know who needs to hear your story. I just have one small thing to add...

Elle shared her story!

REC

Share yours! You never know who might need to hear it.

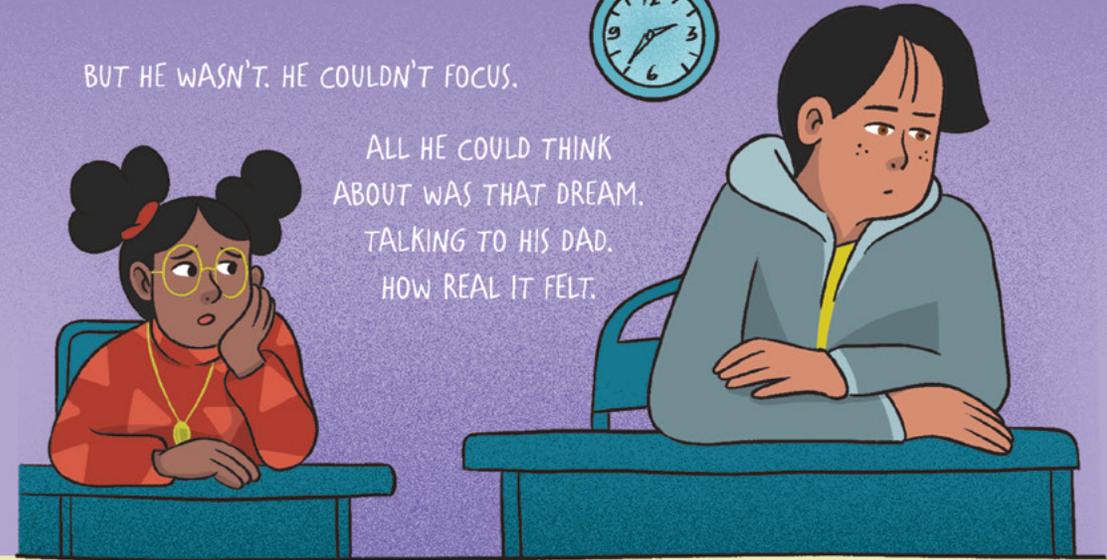
CLAP!

POST

ELLE WAS FEELING BETTER. SHE JUST HOPED KAI WAS FEELING BETTER, TOO.

BUT HE WASN'T. HE COULDN'T FOCUS.

ALL HE COULD THINK ABOUT WAS THAT DREAM. TALKING TO HIS DAD. HOW REAL IT FELT.



ON THE WAY TO THE BUS THAT AFTERNOON, ELLE RAN INTO KAI.

This is wild, Kai. Look. Look at all these people responding.

It's wild, right!?

Kai!? Hello!?!?



4REEL

@ShakespeareSonia: have u tried writing?
when i cant find the words to say out
loud that usually helps me

@gabby123: that must b so hard
idk what i would do if my grandma died

@RapsLyfe: when im sad i blast
music and dance around my room

@Billgames37: try taking a break
& playing portal panda 4



"THERE IS NO ONE RIGHT ANSWER"



SO, MAYBE KAI AND ELLE DIDN'T NEED TO
HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS, AFTER ALL...

CHAPTER 7

EVERYONE
@
FAMS

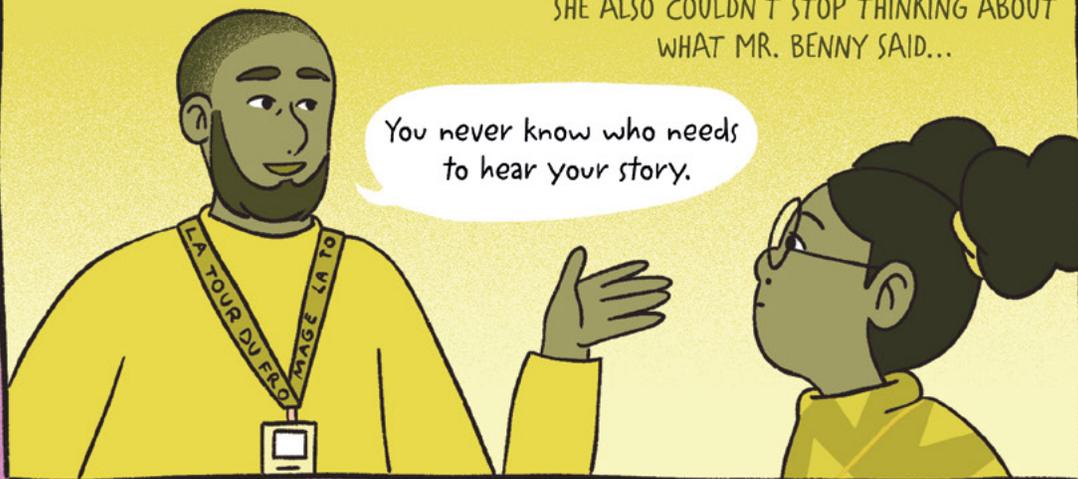


ALMOST ALL 505 KIDS AT FAMS HAD WATCHED THE VIDEO. BUT THERE WAS STILL ONE PERSON WHO HADN'T. AND IT WAS REALLY BUGGING ELLE.



SHE ALSO COULDN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT WHAT MR. BENNY SAID...

You never know who needs to hear your story.



WAIT... MAYBE SHE DID KNOW. SHE JUST DIDN'T KNOW WHERE TO START.



HMMM. ALEX LIKED SNEAKERS... MAYBE SHE'D TRY A JOKE?

THE NEXT DAY, ELLE FOUND ALEX IN THE HALLWAY.

Never thought I'd see the day I had sicker sneakers than you, haha!



GREAT. NO RESPONSE. ELLE WAS OFF TO A STELLAR START.

Uh, I was just trying to...

Trying to what?

I... think I know why you haven't felt like playing basketball.

No one knows how I feel.

Did you see my last 4Reel post?

What? No, why would I?





Okay... well, I lost my older sister Simone when I was 7 years old. We did everything together. I was like her little shadow.



She's the reason I got into ballet. After losing her, I wanted nothing to do with those dumb pointe shoes...

And I just wanna let you know...



I should get going.

Wait! Let's sit together at lunch today?

But... can we sit somewhere quiet?



Absolutely. I'll reserve a table for us.

Hi, I'd like to reserve a table for two in the fourth Ave cafeteria?



FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME, ALEX SMILED.

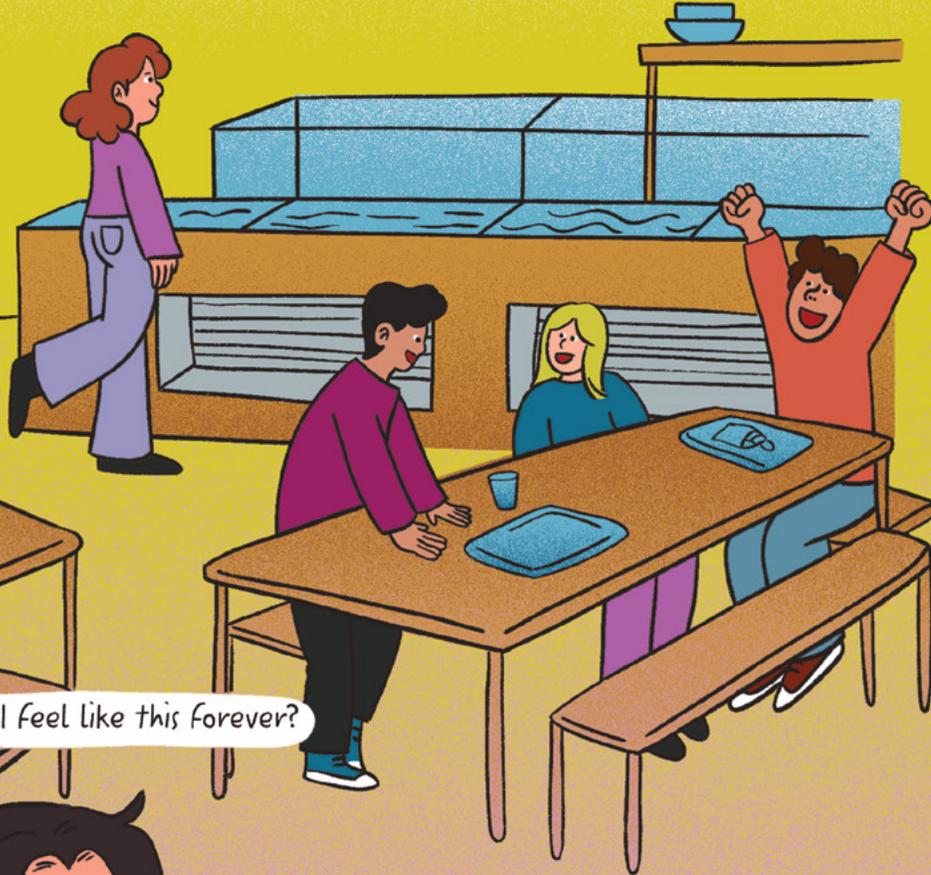


WAIT... WHAT JUST HAPPENED? THEY DON'T TALK...



WHAT COULD ELLE POSSIBLY HAVE SAID TO MAKE HER SMILE LIKE THAT?

AT LUNCH THAT DAY, ALEX AND ELLE PICKED UP WHERE THEY LEFT OFF.



... Will I feel like this forever?

Maybe not exactly like this.
But it will always be different.



No one here gets it.

Not even Mila.

Your friends can
still be there for you...

and listen.

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE SCHOOL STARTED, ALEX DIDN'T FEEL LIKE SUCH A LONER.
THERE WAS SOMEONE ON HER TEAM.



EVEN IF SOMEONE ELSE FELT LIKE SHE WAS
STILL RIDING THE BENCH.

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM 4REEL, THE OVERALL VIBE AT SCHOOL WAS GOOD.



KIDS USED TO TROLL EACH OTHER ONLINE. NOW THEY ACTUALLY HAD EACH OTHER'S BACKS.



THEY WERE ASKING QUESTIONS THEY WOULDN'T NORMALLY SAY OUT LOUD.



NEW

@FAMsweeper: my dad lost his job and we dont have extra money... we couldn't even buy new school clothes this year!! I wanna join the soccer team but im scared to ask my dad for new cleats

NEW

@FitsByMads: what size r u?

NEW

@ReadyPlayerDri: my older brother played soccer... he has small feet tho 😂

NEW

@SilviaHere: my mom's a recruiter, she helps people get jobs. maybe she can help ur dad?

NEW

@JaxSpitsFax: at least ur dads around



THE REST OF THE MONTH HAD A POSITIVE BUZZ. AND NOT JUST FOR @FAMsweeper... WHO NOW HAD CLEATS FOR EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK.

NEW

@NotTedTheBear: my 13th birthday is coming up. I didn't get to have a birthday party last year so i want to do something big. Are people even gonna come?

NEW

@CandidCam: kai told me about that new skate park. do it there!!

NEW

@RadChad345: mine's coming up too what weekend you thinkin?

NEW

@TDKiing: partys rule u should def throw one

NEW

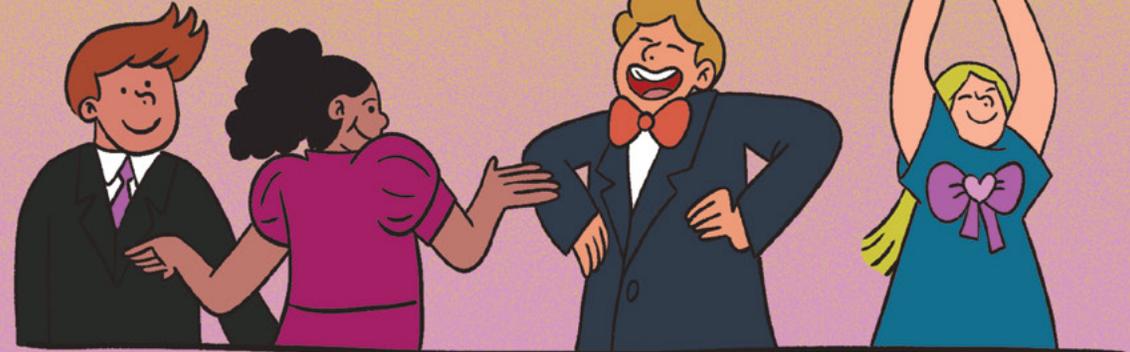
Jx

NEW

@JaxSpitsfax: nope birthdays r cringe

NEW

@fitsByMads: 4th ave squad! what are we wearing to the winter dance?!



NEW

@graceface723: my moms a nurse and she has to work on thanksgiving this year. whos gonna make turkey and stuffing for me and my little brother?!

NEW

@CutTheChase: we'll drop off mac n' cheese!

NEW

NEW

@Car10s: We eat early and never finish turkey. We'll take leftovers :)

NEW

@PaloPalomaaa: my mom makes the best tres leches ill save u a slice!

NEW

DETENTION:
NO PHONES
NO TALKING!!

@JaxSpitsFax: thanksgiving food sucks anyways



JAXON ALWAYS HAD THE LAST COMMENT. AND THE LAST LAUGH. BUT NOT THIS TIME.

NEW

@LightUpTheSkai: my mom's a single mom
& she works alot too. Maybe you
can come over to thanksgiving at my house??



LIKE



LIKE



LIKE

KAI WAS FEELING GOOD ABOUT 4REEL AGAIN.
BUT HE STILL COULDN'T GET HIS DAD OFF HIS MIND.
OR JAXON.



WHAT'S HIS PROBLEM WITH BIRTHDAYS?

AND WHAT'S THE DEAL
WITH HIS DAD?



AND A FEW FEET AWAY... MILA COULDN'T GET ALEX OFF HER MIND. OR ELLE.



SHE FELT LIKE SHE WAS LOSING HER BEST FRIEND. SO SHE TURNED TO THE ONE PLACE EVERYONE SEEMED TO BE GOING FOR ADVICE THESE DAYS.

NEW

@BallerMila: my best friend is so different. we used to talk about everything, and now she barely tells me anything. I know she lost someone close, but I did too! And now she'd just rather spend all her time with her NEW best friend.

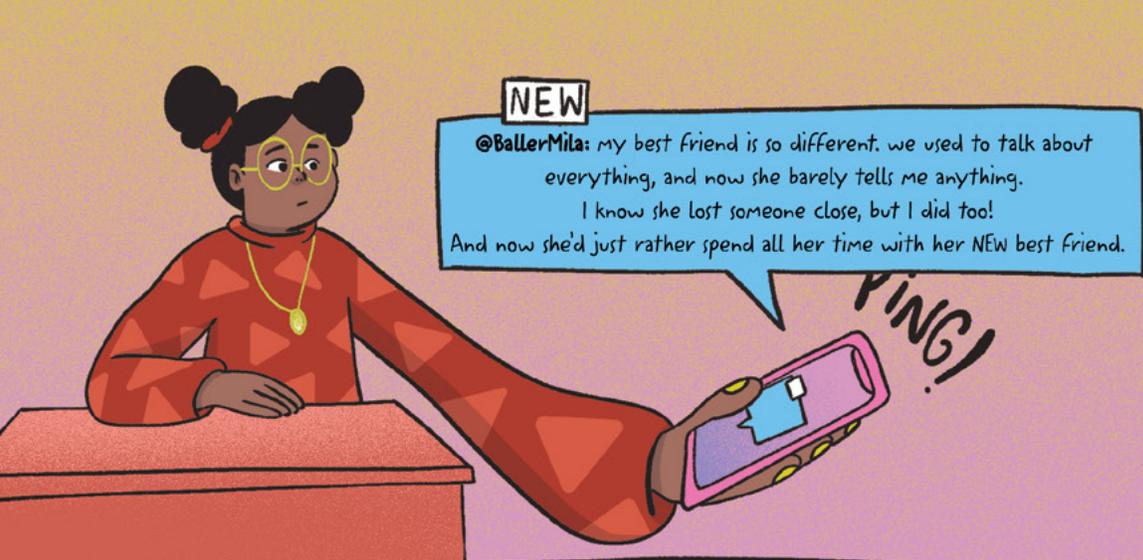


Bonjour, Mila are you there?!
Earth to Mila!

Sorry... what was the question?



No problem, Mila!
I'll give you a moment.



NEW
 @BallerMila: my best friend is so different. we used to talk about everything, and now she barely tells me anything. I know she lost someone close, but I did too! And now she'd just rather spend all her time with her NEW best friend.



OH NO!



ELLE DIDN'T MEAN TO SAY THAT OUT LOUD.
 Whoops.



Elle: ur not gonna believe what just happened

Kai: ???

Elle: u check 4Reel?

Kai: nah been too busy working on this new art thing

Elle: what art thing?

Kai: just some graffiti proj... but I can't get it right

Elle: u should talk to Jaxon lol

ELLE HATED BEING IN THE MIDDLE.
 AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHERE SHE FOUND HERSELF NOW.

CHAPTER 8

MILA

ELLE

ALEX





THE NEXT DAY AT SCHOOL, ELLE WAS ON ANOTHER MISSION. THIS TIME, SHE NEEDED TO CLEAR THINGS UP WITH MILA.



Mila... can we talk?



BUT MILA WAS ON HER OWN MISSION.



Alex... can we talk?



ANYTHING RELATED TO ADRIAN WAS A TRIGGER.



AND THAT INCLUDED BEING AROUND MILA. ESPECIALLY AFTER HER LAST POST.

MILA, ALEX, AND ADRIAN HAD ALWAYS BEEN INSEPARABLE.
THEY DID EVERYTHING TOGETHER. ON...



ADRIAN WAS A
POPULAR F.A.M.S. GRADUATE.



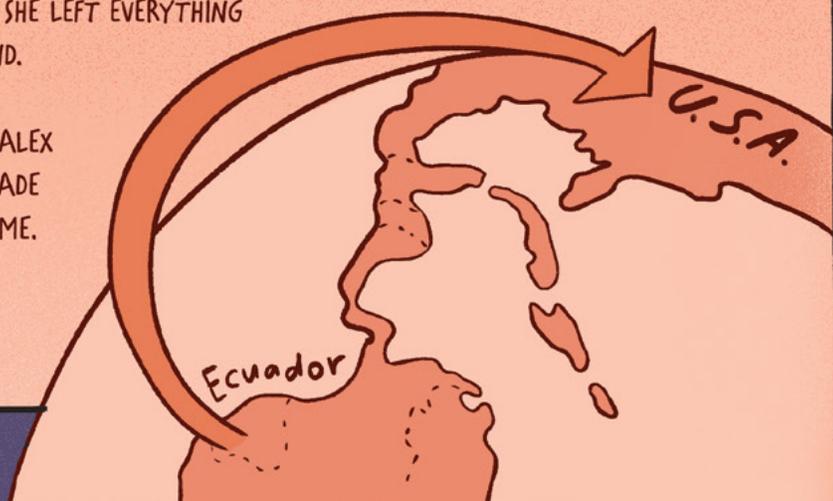
AND EVEN THOUGH HE WAS A HIGH SCHOOLER, HE WAS STILL THE BIGGEST GOLDEN BEARS FAN.



...AND OFF THE COURT.

WHEN MILA'S FAMILY MOVED FROM ECUADOR
SIX YEARS AGO, SHE LEFT EVERYTHING
SHE KNEW BEHIND.

BUT SOMEHOW, ALEX
AND ADRIAN MADE
HER FEEL AT HOME.



ADRIAN TAUGHT THEM EVERYTHING THEY KNEW ABOUT BASKETBALL.

ALEX'S
ANKLE-BREAKING
CROSSOVER.



MILA'S SIGNATURE
FADEAWAY.



BUT HE WAS BIGGER THAN BASKETBALL.
HE SHOWED THEM HOW TO BE
BETTER TEAMMATES. HOW TO OPEN UP.
HOW TO BOUNCE BACK.



STILL, HOW COULD THEY BOUNCE BACK FROM THIS?

THINGS WEREN'T ALWAYS SO TENSE BETWEEN ALEX AND MILA.



We REALLY need to show you how to make them!

Omg, I've been craaaaving your mom's suspiros for the 437th time.



I think I know who Adrian is crushing on these days.

OMG. Who?!?
Is it Jamie?
I knew it was Jamie.



How do you say best friends in Spanish?

ME-JO-RES A-MI-GAS

Me horses,
uh-me-gaas.

Got it.

ELLE AND ALEX WEREN'T EXACTLY MEJORES AMIGAS YET. BUT ELLE WAS THE CLOSEST THING ALEX HAD RIGHT NOW.



Alex: mila keeps trying to talk to me 😬

Elle: she was def just trying to help

Alex: honestly, it's not even about the post. she just reminds me too much of Adrian.

Elle: i think i kno what u mean

Alex: every time i see her, i see him too

Elle: maybe shes hurting too.. she was close to Adrian right?

MILA WAS HURTING. AND SHE WANTED TO EXPLAIN HERSELF. BUT ALEX WOULDN'T LET HER. SO SHE WENT BACK TO THE ONLY PLACE WHERE PEOPLE WOULD LISTEN.





@BallerMila: my best friend is so different. we used to talk about everything, and now she barely tells me anything. I know she lost someone close, but I did too! And now she'd just rather spend all her time with her NEW best friend.

@BallerMila: Turns out i didnt just lose one friend



.. i lost 2.

CHAPTER 9

CANCELED



KAI HAD BEEN WORKING ON HIS "NEW ART THING." BUT HE STILL COULDN'T GET IT RIGHT.



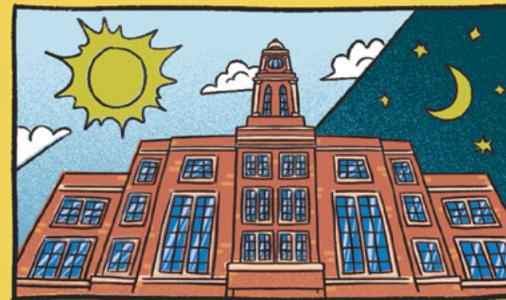
Kai: hows it going w mila n Alex?

Elle: not good. im still in the middle of it

Kai: you used to love monkey in the middle 🐒

Elle: lol kai im being serious. u talk to jax yet?

Kai: no... but ask me again tmrw 😂



Jeeeee, Kai. Ever heard of personal space?!

Jax!!! I've been trying to finish this and I don't know if it's the way I'm holding the marker, or—



Whoa whoa whoa. Kai. Chill.

I just can't get the 'L' to look like yours.

Mmm... well, you're doing the tail WAY too long.

That's doooope. Who showed you that?

My dad. A while ago.



He show you how to do a "throwie," too?

KAI HAD NO IDEA WHAT THAT WAS. BUT HE HAD LOOKED IT UP TO IMPRESS JAX.

Nah. He knows how, though. I don't see him...

You don't... see him?



You know what Kai, stop asking me questions. We're not FRIENDS. So leave me ALONE.

OH... KAI WAS STARTING TO SEE WHY JAX WASN'T A FAN OF DADS. AND WHY ART WAS IMPORTANT TO HIM, TOO.



OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, JAXON'S ART WAS SLOWLY STARTING TO GET COVERED UP AROUND SCHOOL. BY SNOWFLAKES. COLORFUL LIGHTS...

And CORNY ornaments.



MAILBOXES (AND INBOXES) WERE FILLING UP WITH "HAPPY HOLIDAYS" AND "SEASONS GREETINGS."

AND EVERYONE WAS SHARING THEM ON 4REEL.

NEW!



@Charlie456: Omg my mom is so lame look at our familys xmas card this year!! I cant believe she made us pose like this lollll

THE POST WASN'T UP FOR 5 MINUTES AND JAXON ALREADY HAD SOMETHING TO SAY.

@JaxSpitsfacts: no one is THAT happy around the holidays

AND THIS TIME, JAX WAS ACTUALLY KINDA RIGHT.

@CandidCam: i know i wont be this year... i miss my homies

@AnkleBreakinAlex: @JaxSpitsfacts are u EVER happy?

@LightUpTheSkai: @CandidCam but we're alllll ur homies now

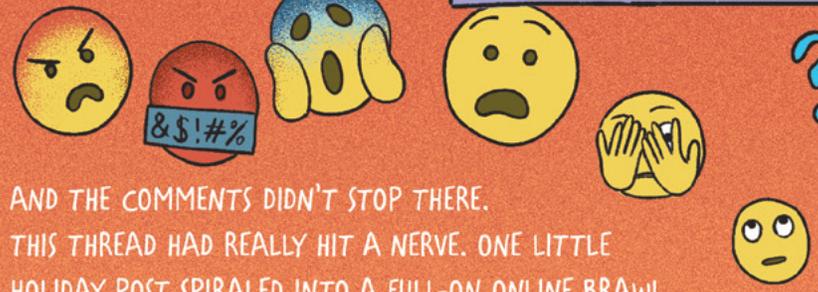
@JaxSpitsfacts: @AnkleBreakinAlex no one here is happy... especially u

@Car10s: i can't believe you just said that.. wth

@BallerMila: @CandidCam at least u still have ur homies

4 REEL

REPLY



AND THE COMMENTS DIDN'T STOP THERE. THIS THREAD HAD REALLY HIT A NERVE. ONE LITTLE HOLIDAY POST SPIRALED INTO A FULL-ON ONLINE BRAWL.

IT MIGHT'VE BEEN THE HOLIDAY SEASON, BUT NOBODY AT FOURTH AVE WAS IN THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT ANYMORE.

AND AFTER THIS LAST 4REEL FIGHT, EVERYONE WAS FEELING PRETTY DEFEATED.



MAYBE THE WINTER PEP RALLY WOULD HELP... AT LEAST A LITTLE?



I know it's hard, but you can't put off your news anymore. You've got to tell them.

I just feel... guilty. But I guess it's now or never!

Get things started. I'll be right there. Have to call a parent back.

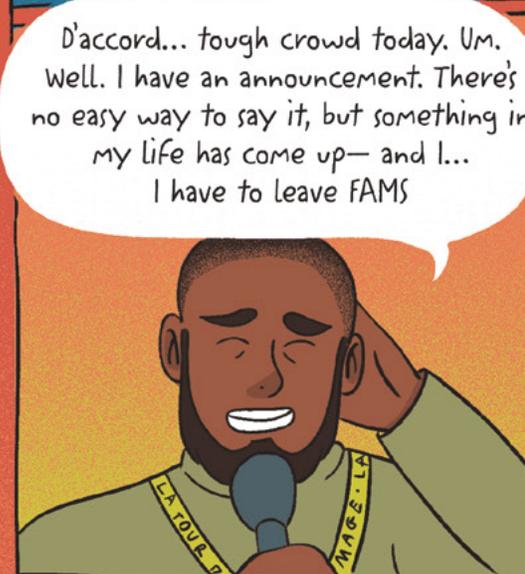


Hello kids, ça va?

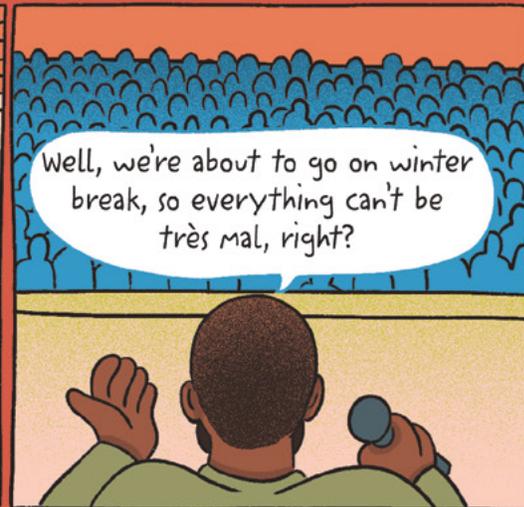


CRICKETS...

D'accord... tough crowd today. Um. Well. I have an announcement. There's no easy way to say it, but something in my life has come up— and I... I have to leave FAMS

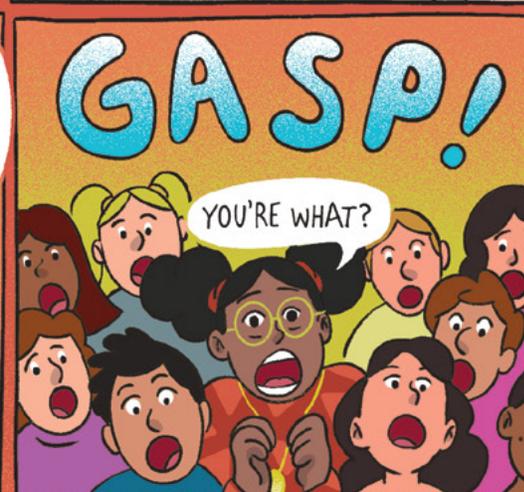


Well, we're about to go on winter break, so everything can't be très mal, right?



GASP!

YOU'RE WHAT?

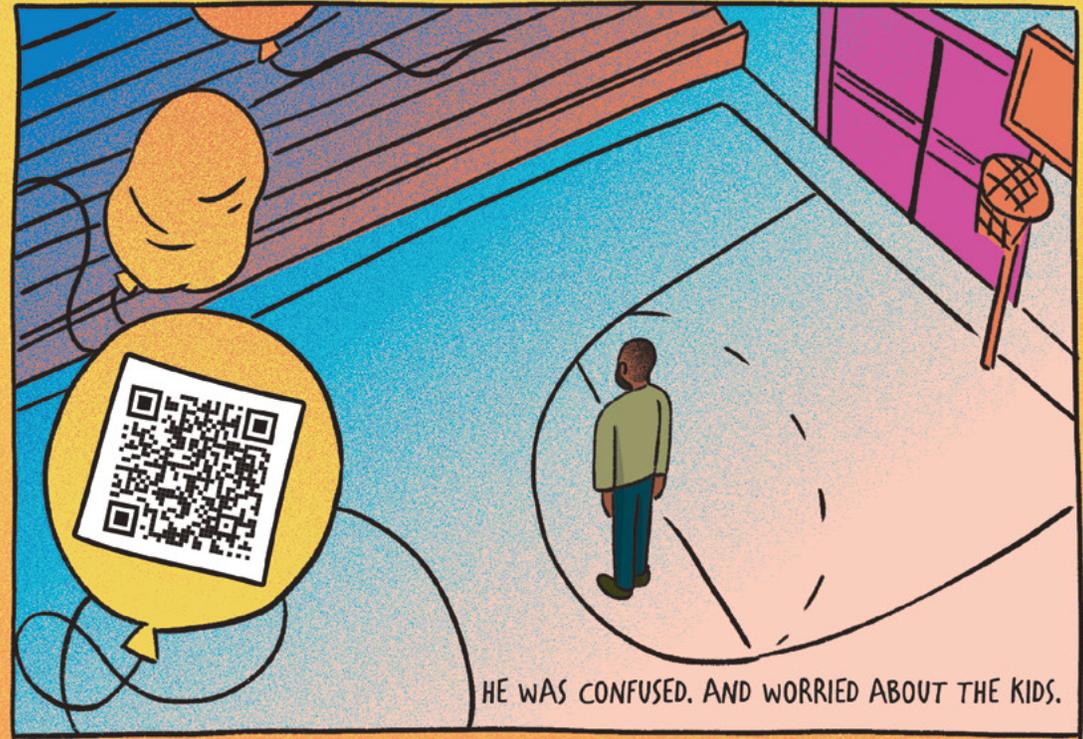
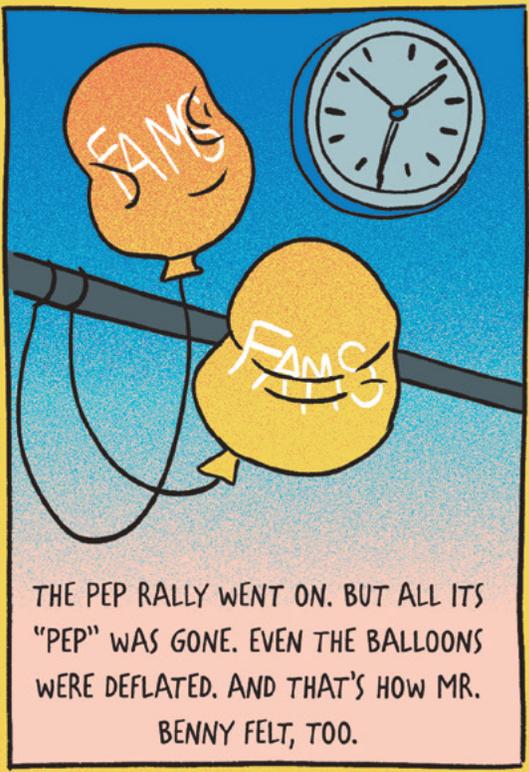
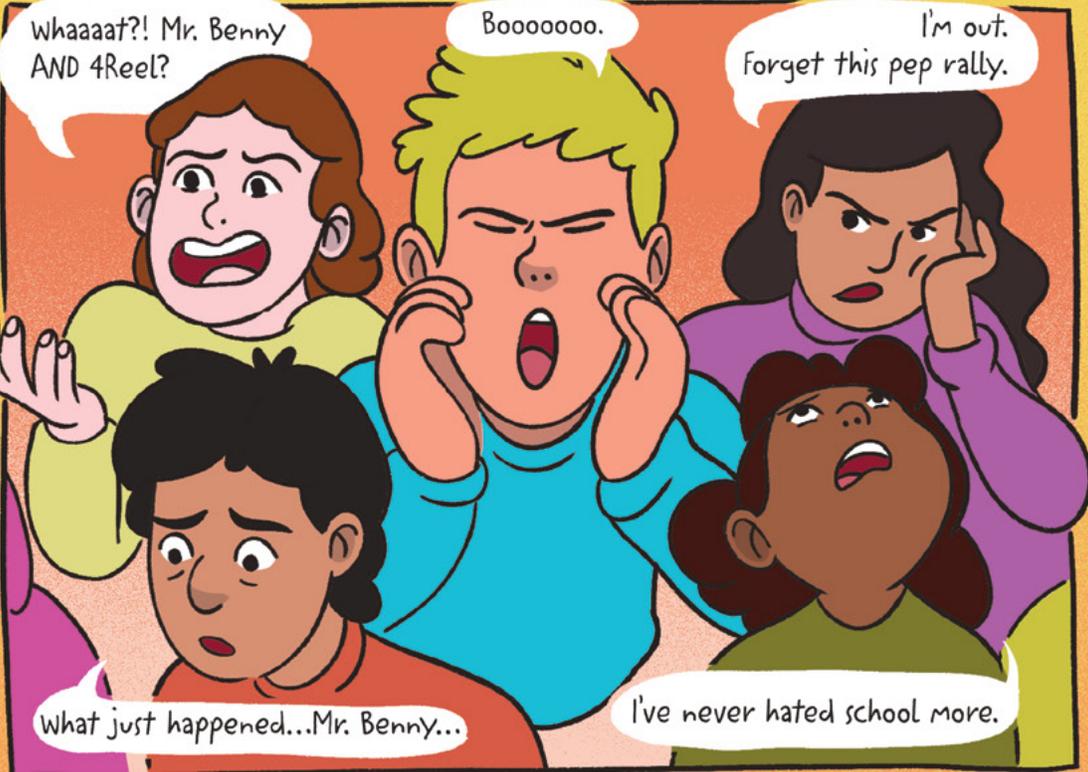


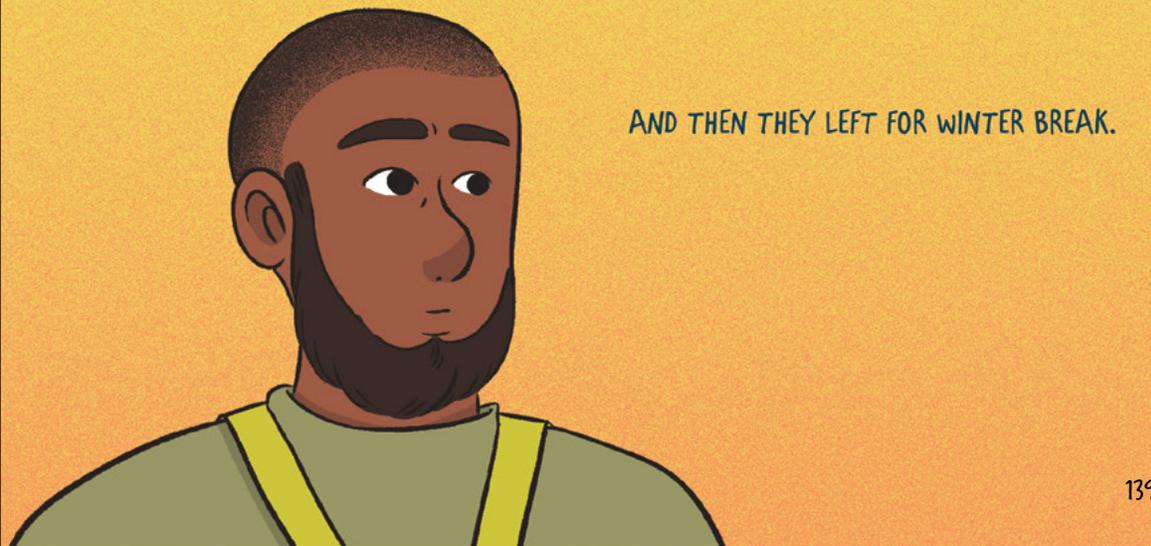
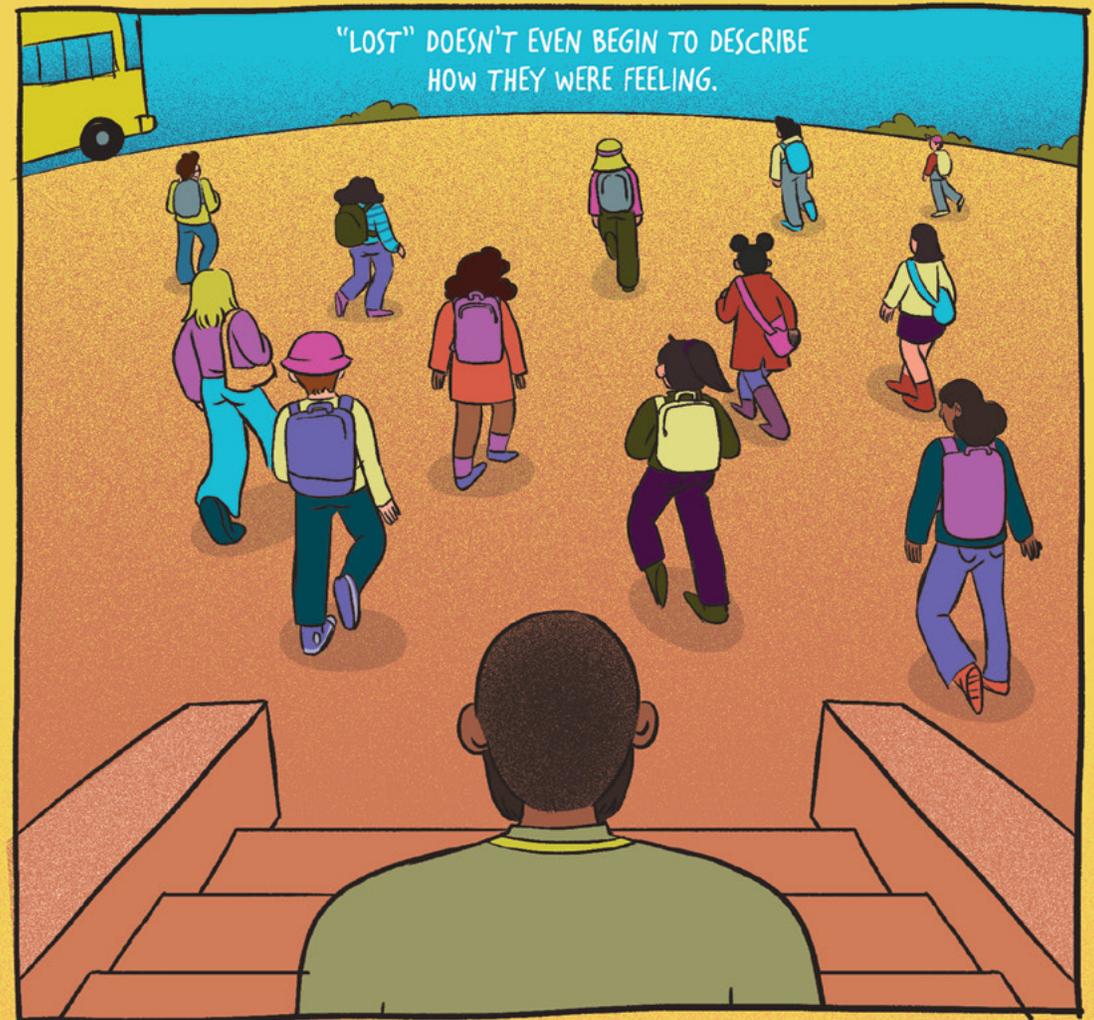
Attention! I have an important announcement.

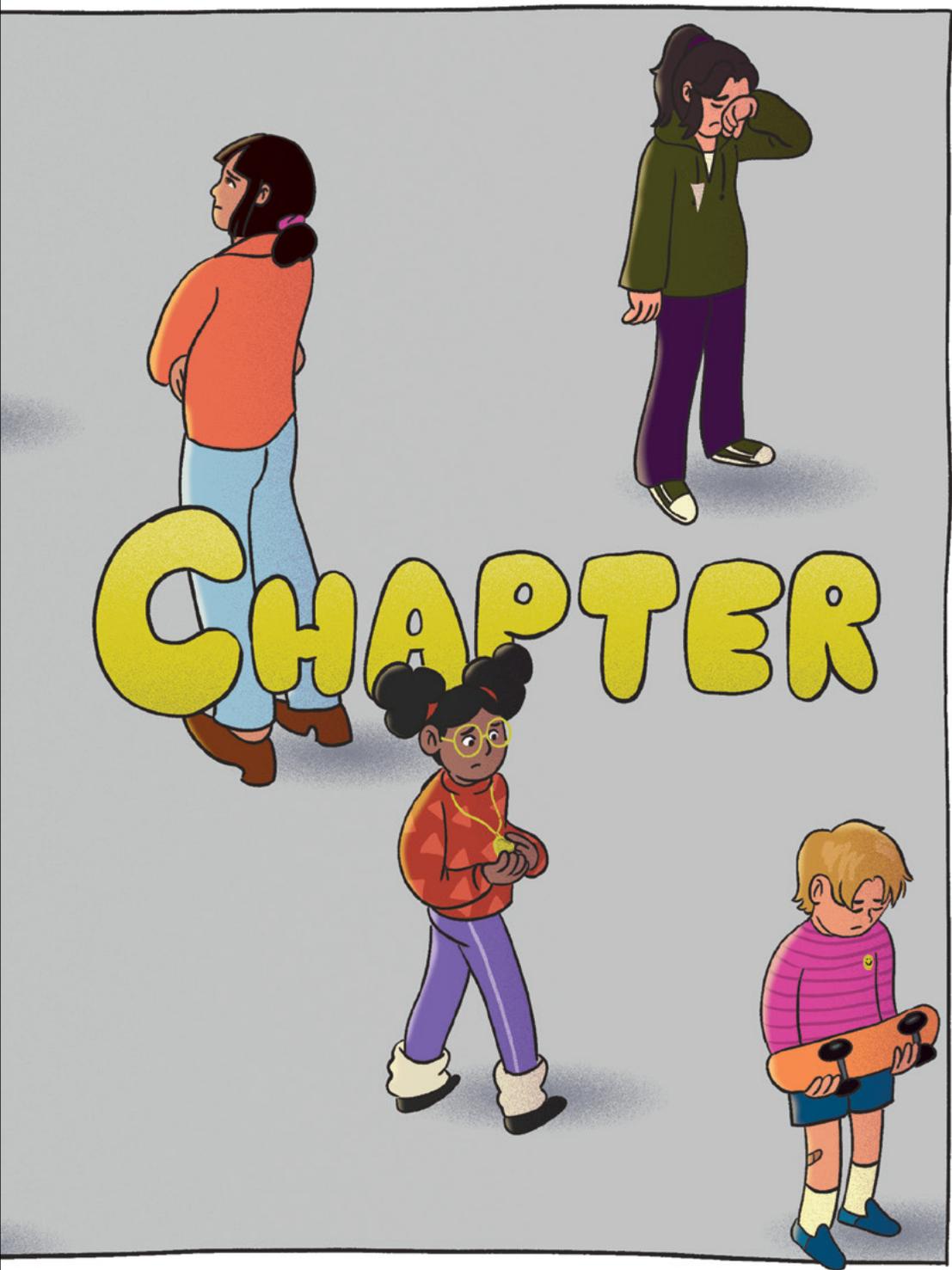
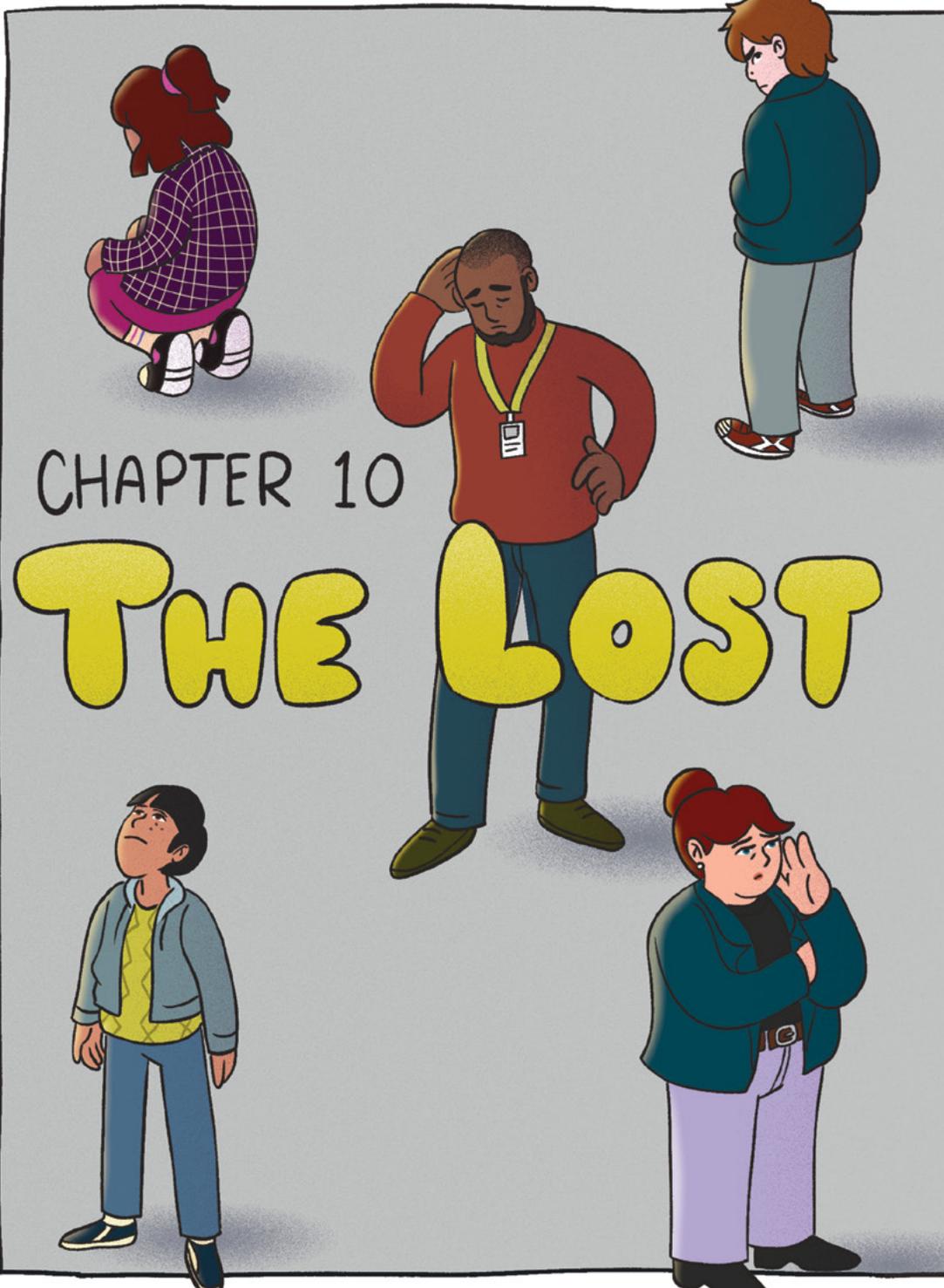


I just got off the phone with ANOTHER parent complaining about 4Reel.









NOW IT WAS JUST EVERYONE. ALONE. WITH THEIR THOUGHTS.

Is Elle taking my spot?
Is she better?
What does she have
that I don't...

I ruined our
friendship forever

It's always been me
and Alex and Adrian
since I was forced
to move here

Why did I post that
dumb post on 4Reel

What about our christmas
plans now we're not gonna
get to make suspiros together

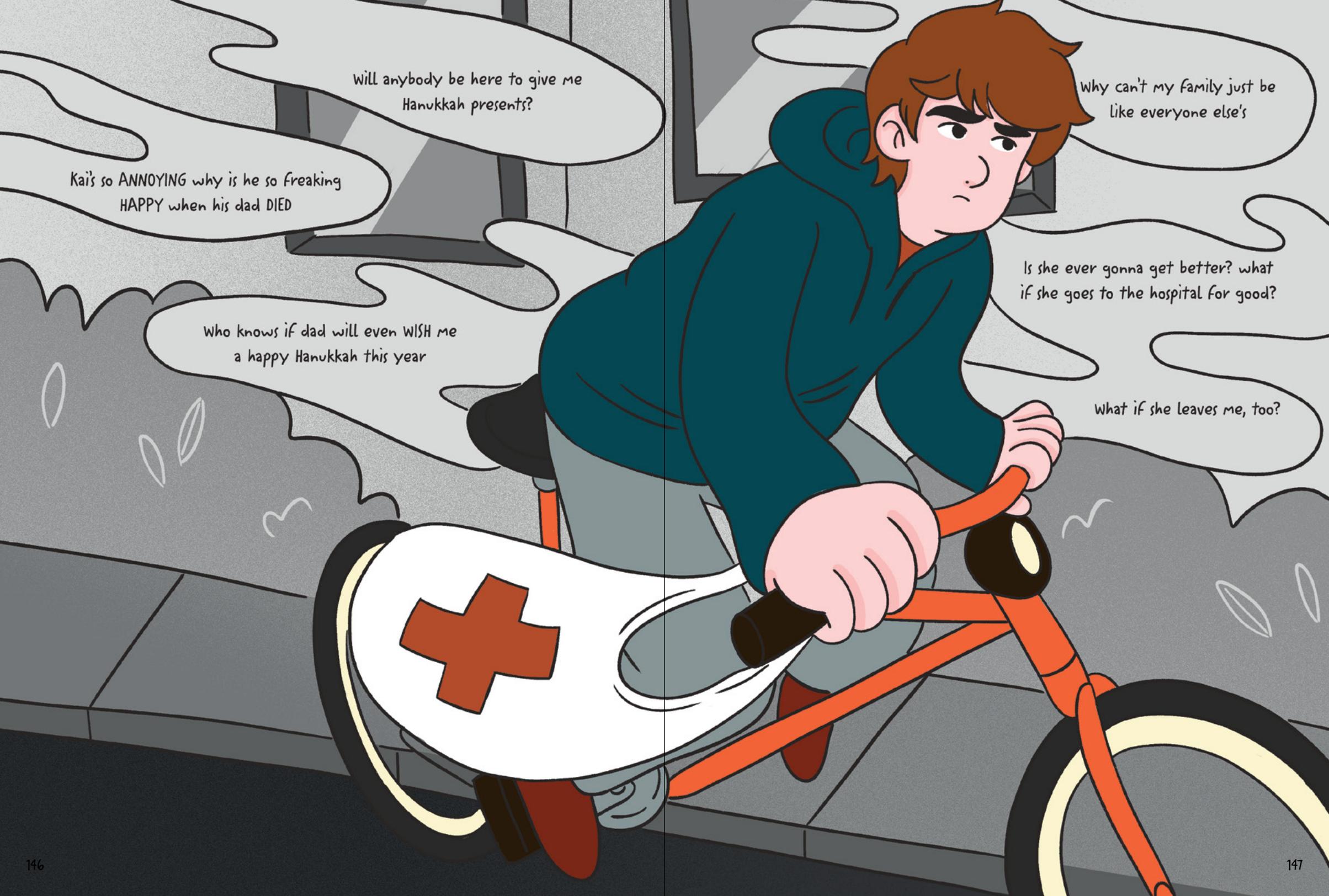


What's it gonna feel like without him? He always gave the funniest presents

Mom doesn't even want to celebrate... great... no Adrian, no christmas

Does Elle still feel like this about Simone?

Maybe I'm not being fair to mila I do love her too



Will anybody be here to give me Hanukkah presents?

Why can't my family just be like everyone else's

Kai's so ANNOYING why is he so freaking HAPPY when his dad DIED

Is she ever gonna get better? what if she goes to the hospital for good?

Who knows if dad will even WISH me a happy Hanukkah this year

What if she leaves me, too?

This is not good, really not good... I let
all the kids down

I didn't even get to tell them WHY I'm
leaving it's breaking my heart

Was it a bad time to break the news?

I need to fix it fast! Fast!

The kids already seemed upset
before I even told them

... what happened!?



Mr. Benoit is their favorite teacher

I had to do something about 4Reel, but was it right?

And now he's leaving them too

I know I'm supposed to be the principal but did I take it too far?

I love my job but I hate when I have to do something that disappoints the kids

Another christmas without Simone, I wonder how Kai's doing

Did she put gummy bears or jelly beans on top of her gingerbread house?

Ughhh I forget I really need to write that down so I remember

Did I ruin their friendship? I don't think I did anything wrong, did I?

I cant believe Mr. B's leaving us

4Reel made EVERYONE feel heard but what's gonna happen now





ommmgg they went to that new skatepark without me?!

Ugh I miss my old crew they probably already found someone else to play Portal Panda 4 with at 6:37 on wednesdays

I gotta do something about 4Reel they were trying to help ME



Is this all my fault?

Maybe I should've just told mom about 4Reel being canceled

I still can't believe you're not here dad...

She'd probably know what to do

4Reel was supposed to make everyone feel better, not worse

Wait... is Cam thinking the same thing?



I hope I'm doing this right, Ethan, I'm trying my best

It was so much easier when you were here. Kai's growing up so fast

Kai didn't even tell me they put a pause on 4Reel!

He's been struggling I see him trying to take on everyone's problems

CHAPTER 11

Kai & MOM



THE HOLIDAYS WERE OVER. AND SCHOOL WAS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER. BUT NORA KNEW THAT KAI STILL WASN'T TELLING HER SOMETHING.



So, are you boys excited to go back to school?

Oh yeah...

What do you mean Kai? Everything has gone to SH—!

LANGUAGE!

Sorry Aunt Nora, those are facts tho.

What Cam is trying to say is that...

We're not excited about having to do, um, homework again!



It's okay honey, I know what happened with 4Reel. Mrs. Hoffman emailed the parents.

But why didn't you tell me?

It's just... I didn't want to worry you.

Kai, it worries me more to see you struggling.



Okay enough mushy-gushy stuff. Look Aunt Nora. Look, look, look!

It seems like everyone's been through a lot.

Tell me about it.

Cam, this is serious!





Did you ever find out who @YouDKme was?

No, they stayed anonymous.

I wonder how their Nana's doing...



Why is Jaxon...

Give him a break. His dad's not around.

Such an—ugh!

And why was Mila so upset?



Turns out Elle's been hanging with Alex. And Mila's been feeling jelly!

Mila just misses her best friend. And Adrian.

Yeah. I can see why Elle and Alex would connect.



And Mr. Benny's LEAVING!

Leaving!?

Before winter break, he told us he was leaving Fourth Ave.



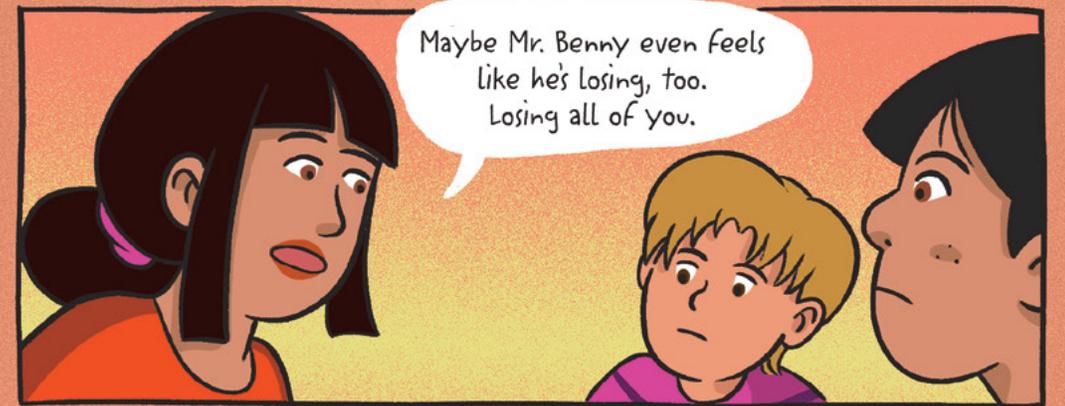
It feels like everyone at Fourth Ave has lost something, huh?

Mila feels like she lost Alex.
Alex literally lost her brother.

Jaxon feels like he lost his dad,
even though he's still alive...

ANDDDD we're all losing Mr. Benny.

Yup. And I lost all
my old friends.
Guess we're all a
bunch of losers,
huh?



Maybe Mr. Benny even feels
like he's losing, too.
Losing all of you.



It's like we're aaallllll losers!

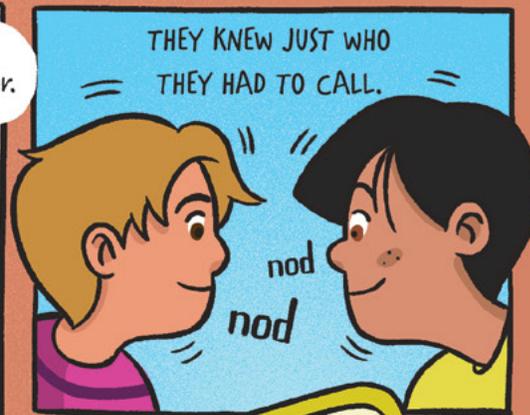
Whoooooa. 

Totally! We're all
taking 'L's.



Hah! Maybe we should start a club?!
Where we can all be losers... together.

wait...



THEY KNEW JUST WHO
THEY HAD TO CALL.

nod
nod



ELLE 

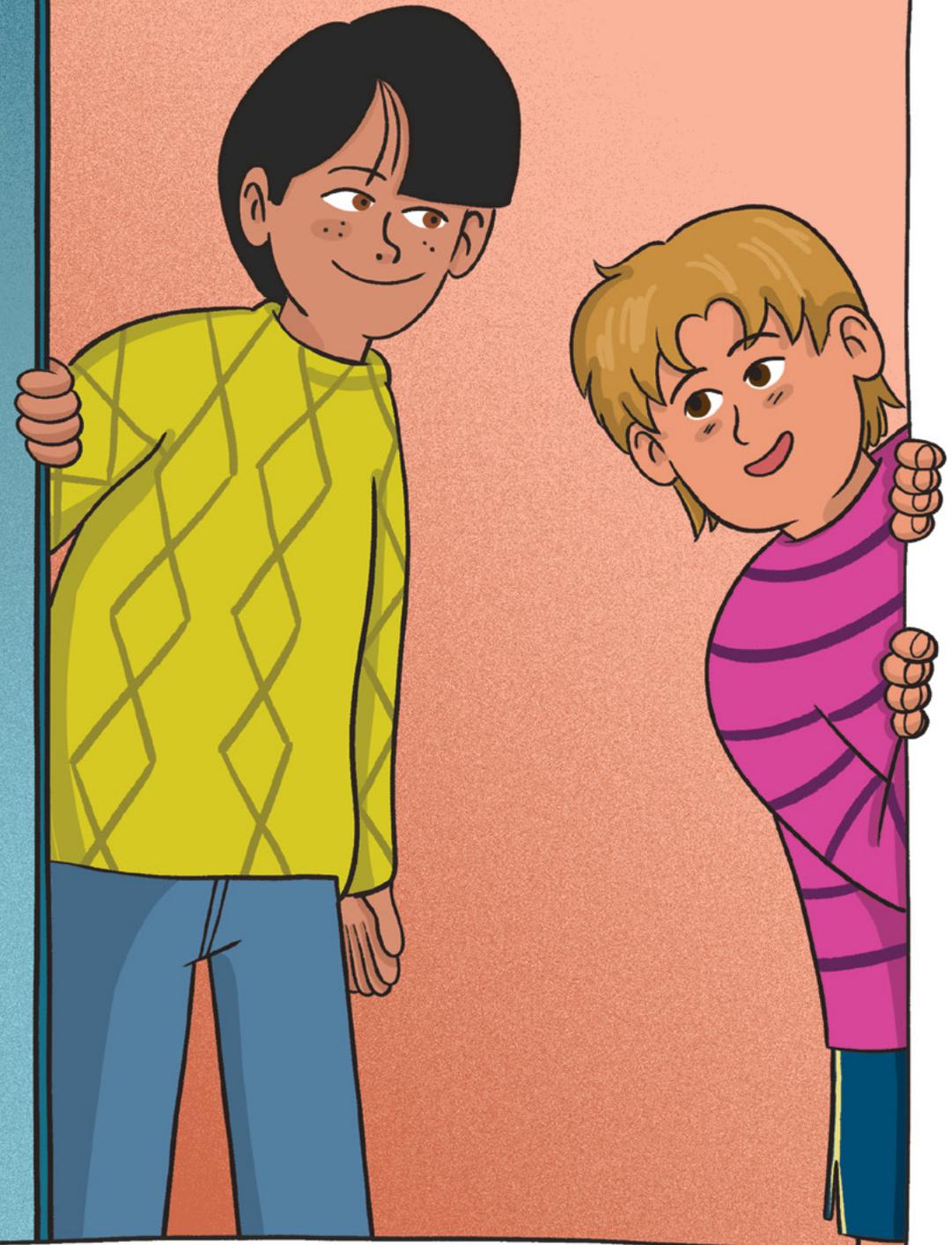


...Hello???

CHAPTER 12

LOST & FOUND

MRS. HOFFMAN



BREAK WAS OVER. SCHOOL WAS BACK.
AND THE VIBES WEREN'T MUCH BETTER THAN WHEN THEY LEFT 9 DAYS AGO.

BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP KAI AND CAM. THEY HAD A PLAN.
ONE THEY NEEDED TO RUN BY MRS. HOFFMAN.

Good luck, you two! I'll
go talk to Mr. Benny.

MRS HOFFMAN

Gooooood morning, Mrs. Hoffman!!!
How was your break?!

It was—

That's great! We have something
very important we need to talk
to you about...

It's about 4Reel.

10 REASONS
WHY YOU NEED
TO BRING BACK
4 REEL



Oh yeah, about that—

You NEED to bring it back.

Cam. Please. Let me handle this.

Yes, Director!



No idea how much people would open up. No idea...

Please see Page 3.

Kai, you're right.



4Reel has helped me so much this year. And despite how it seems right now, I think everyone at FAMS feels the same way.



I am!

wait

I am?



When Elle & I started making those videos

we had no idea how important the channel would become.



I thought a lot about it over break. The way I paused the FAMS 4Reel channel wasn't right.



I might be the principal. But that doesn't mean I'm perfect.

I'm unpausing 4Reel. But there will be some rules.

RULES FOR 4REEL



You principals LOVE your rules!

I just want you to use 4Reel... for good.

Yes! It all depends on how you use it.



Kai, would you do us the honor? Of recording the first new 4Reel post.

I know exactly what I want to say.



REC

Hey Fourth Ave squad... yes, your eyes are working correctly. The 4Reel channel is officially BACK ONLINE!

WOOOOOO



REC

WHOOOPS. CAM DIDN'T MEAN TO SAY THAT OUT LOUD.

I know this year has had its ups and downs. Sure, we've had some fights. We've also been there for each other. We've opened up.



REC

But there's still one person who hasn't really opened up yet... me.



● REC

A lot of you might not know, but I lost my dad years ago. I still think about him every day.

But you all helped me realize... we don't have to face hard stuff like that alone.

● REC

Because even when we feel lost in the middle—we're not lost forever. We can always still find each other.



● REC

Which is why we're introducing...

Drumroll, please...

The Lost & Found Club!!!

● REC

THEY ALL PRESSED 'POST' TOGETHER.



A PING?

ON THE CANCELED FAMS 4REEL?

NO WAY.

4REEL

@PaloPalomaaa: omg we need a logo!!!

@CutTheChase: ... and BADGES

@ReadyPlayerDri: HERE FOR IT!

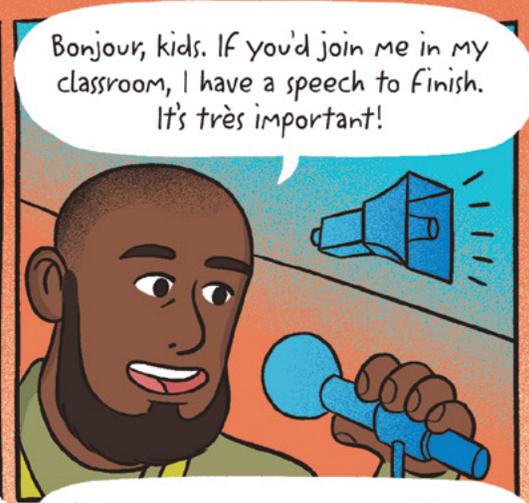
@JaxSpitsfacts: its still dumb lol

AND JUST LIKE THAT, THE COMMENTS STARTED ROLLING IN.

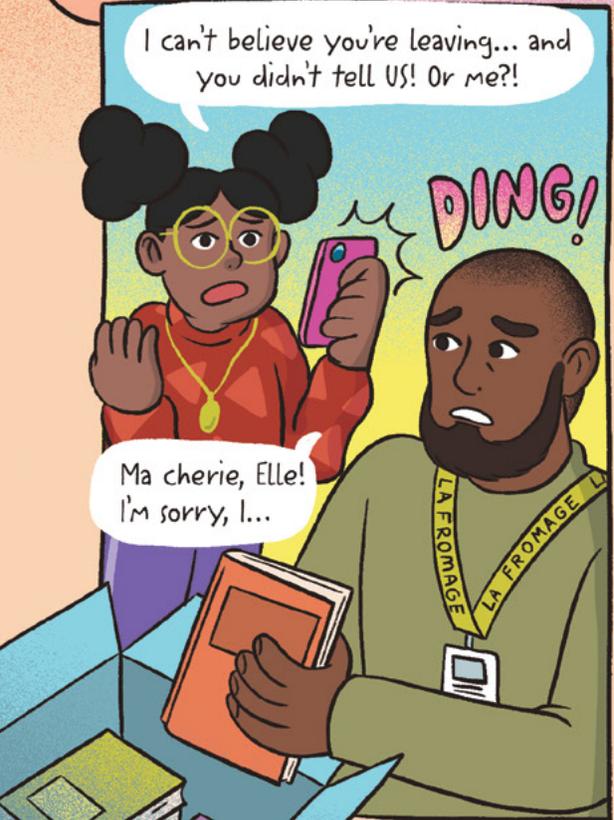


Did you see Kai's video?

Oui, oui. Actually, it gave me an idea.

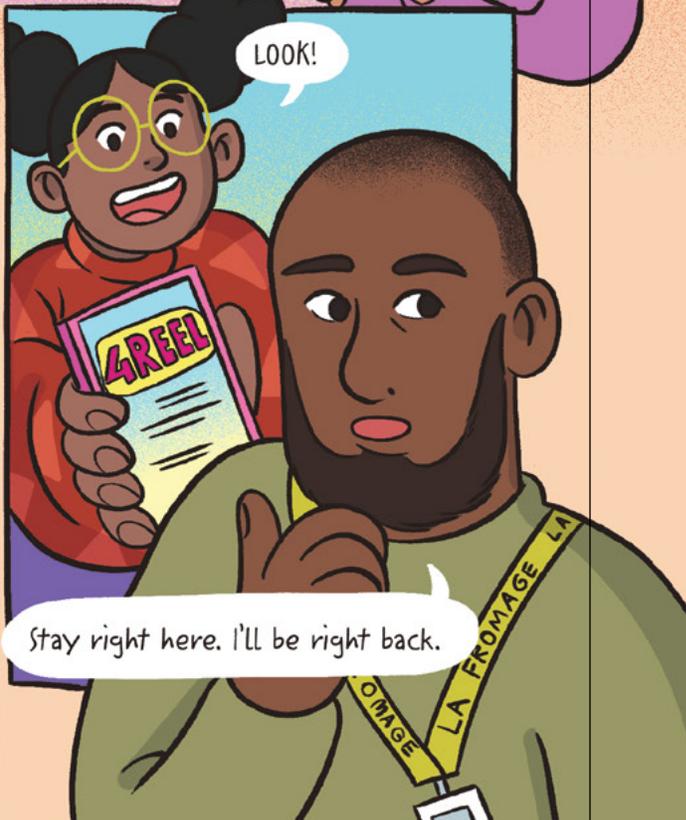


Bonjour, kids. If you'd join me in my classroom, I have a speech to finish. It's très important!



I can't believe you're leaving... and you didn't tell US! Or me?!

Ma cherie, Elle! I'm sorry, I...



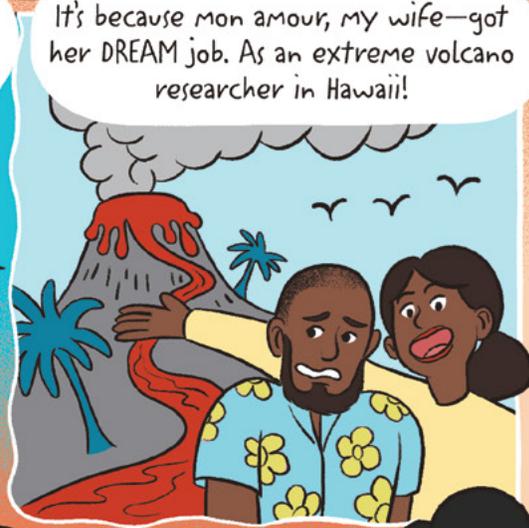
LOOK!

Stay right here. I'll be right back.



Yes, I'm leaving FAMS. But I want you to know why. It's not because I want to be farther away from you all.

The Lost & Found Club is a great way to keep being there for each other. In person. And that's why I want to give you this space. From this day on, my old classroom is officially yours!



It's because mon amour, my wife—got her DREAM job. As an extreme volcano researcher in Hawaii!



It's ours?

For what??

Do we have to teach ourselves?

Mrs. Hoffman & I talked... we're going to make this room the new homebase for The Lost & Found Club.



JAXON!! JAXON!! JAXON!! JAXON!!



Jaxon, I bet you've been dying to do a "throwie" on one of these walls. Well this time, the entire wall is yours.



Okay, okay, okay. But I'm just doing this so you guys shut up.



Wow that's so fire!

Look at that tail on that "L"

Niiiiice



Thanks man. Anyone else want in on this?

AS KIDS STARTED TO ADD THEIR OWN ART TO THE WALL, THEY LOOSENED UP.

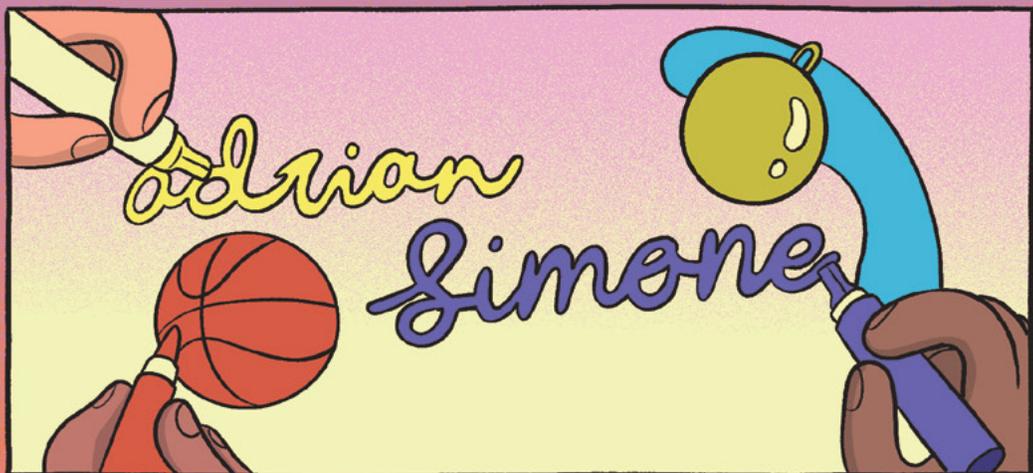


THEY WERE TALKING AGAIN. REALLY TALKING.

I'm sorry I've been ignoring you. It's just, every time I see you, I think of Adrian. But I've realized that you must miss Adrian, too.

I'm sorry about what I posted on 4Reel. And for not giving you space. I do miss Adrian, too. And I miss my best friend.

And I'm sorry I got in the middle of your friendship.



JAXON WAS IN THE BACK CORNER WORKING ON SOMETHING. AND IT CAUGHT KAI'S ATTENTION.



IT MIGHT HAVE LOOKED SMALL, BUT THIS ONE LITTLE DRAWING WAS A BIG DEAL TO JAX.



Yeah well, it's easy for you.
Everyone LIKES you!

Jax, you know the entire middle school
was just chanting your name, right?

They wouldn't chant my name
if they knew the real me.

I bet you they would.
If you let them.

THEN SUDDENLY, HE GOT ON
TOP OF MR. BENNY'S DESK.

AND FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, JAXON SHARED HIS STORY.
ABOUT HIS DAD... HIS NANA... ALL OF IT.

Hey losers... and I mean that as a compliment
this time!!! Now I have something to tell YOU.

EPILOGUE



IT WAS NOW SPRINGTIME. AND THE KIDS HAD BEEN BUSY OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS. GETTING LOST AND FOUND, TOGETHER.



CAM WAS NOW THE UNOFFICIAL TOUR GUIDE. FOR ANYONE NEW WHO MOVED TO TOWN.



IF YOU'RE LOST IN THE MIDDLE OF YOUR NEW NEIGHBORHOOD, GIVE HIM A CALL!

MILA AND ALEX GOT BACK INTO BASKETBALL, TOGETHER... THEY'RE EVEN STARTING A BASKETBALL CAMP FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS.



IF YOU'RE LOST IN THE MIDDLE OF YOUR JUMP SHOT, GIVE THEM A CALL!

ELLE STARTED A PODCAST AND MR. BENNY WAS HER FIRST ON-AIR GUEST. HE FLEW ALL THE WAY BACK FROM HAWAII FOR IT. ALEX AND MILA SOMETIMES GUEST HOST.



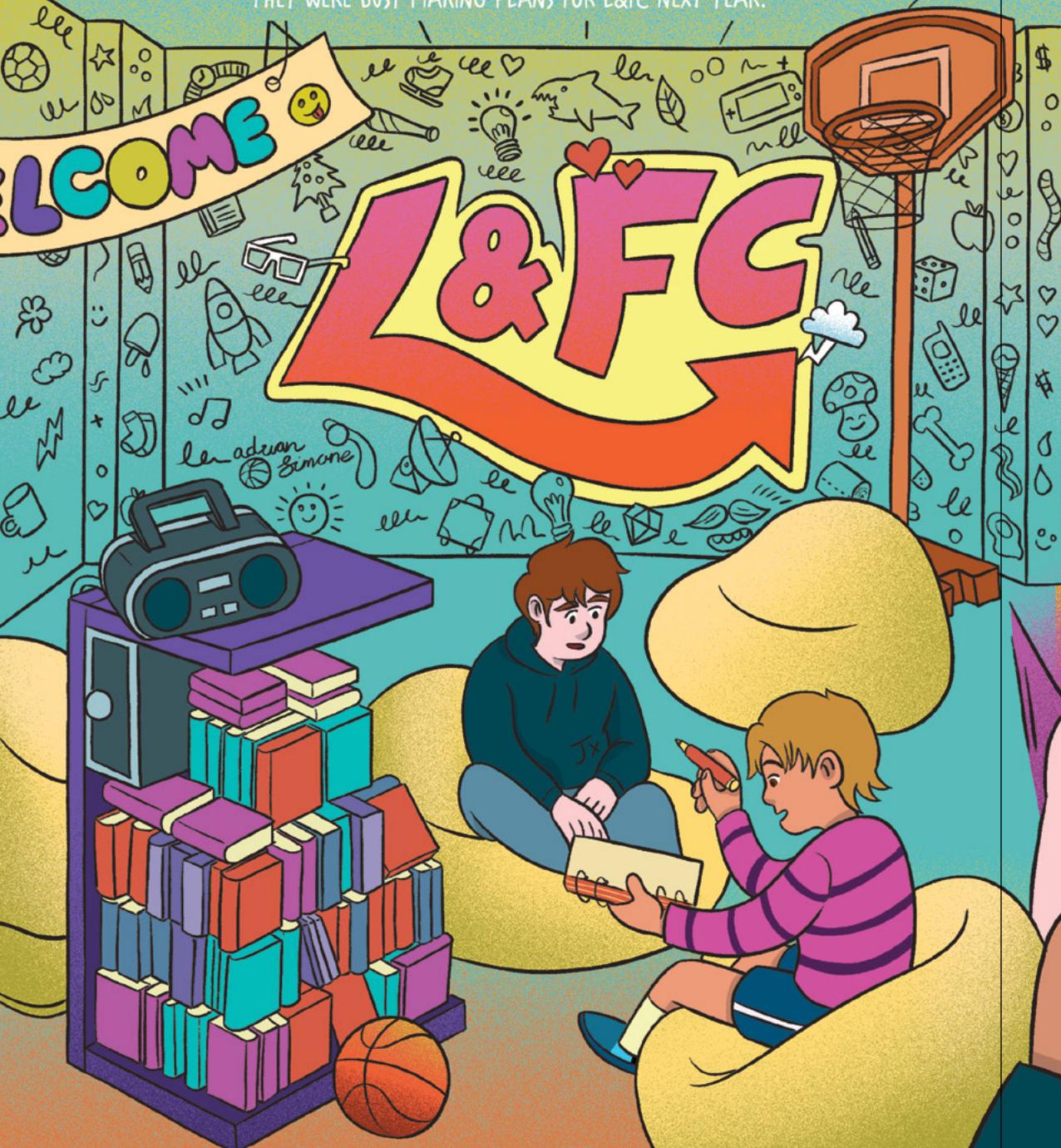
IF YOU'RE LOST IN THE MIDDLE OF YOUR FRIENDSHIP, GIVE HER A CALL!

AS FOR KAI? WELL, HE AND JAXON ARE ABOUT TO GO TO PRINT FOR THEIR FIRST GRAFFITI ZINE. AND THE FIRST EVER AT FOURTH AVE MIDDLE SCHOOL.



IF YOU'RE LOST IN THE MIDDLE OF YOUR ART PROJECT, GIVE THEM A CALL!

WHENEVER CAM WASN'T BUSY GIVING TOURS, AND JAXON WASN'T BUSY WITH THE ZINE...
THEY WERE BUSY MAKING PLANS FOR L&FC NEXT YEAR.



KAI & ELLE WERE GRADUATING. AND SO WAS THE REST OF THE 8TH GRADE CLASS.



On to the next journey!

Hello, high school.

I think we'll always feel a little lost...

At least we'll always have each other.

DARN RIGHT, ELLE.

AND IF YOU EVER FEEL A LITTLE LOST, TOO...
THE LOST & FOUND CLUB WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU.

NEW COMMENTS

"I remember feeling like the only 12 year old who had lost his mom when she died, and I would have benefited from having a safe place like Judi's House—or the Lost & Found Club—to connect with other kids who were grieving. I hope that reading these relatable stories of feeling "lost and found" can help countless kids cope with grief, find their own voice, and know they are not alone."

**Brian Griese, NFL Coach and Former Quarterback,
Co-founder of Judi's House and JAG Institute for Grieving Children and Families**

"Through Kai and friends, readers are called to imagine and reimagine what's possible in peer grief support when spaces are created for youth to lead and offer culturally-centered support to peers coping with death and non-death losses. The writing is grief-informed, approachable and engaging, taking readers through diverse manifestations of adolescent grief, and offering concrete ways in which adults can be allies to young people."

**Dr. Tashel Bordere, Center for Family Policy & Research, University of Missouri-Columbia
Certified Thanatologist and Vice-President of National Alliance for Children's Grief**

"Lost in the Middle is a visually thrilling, sensitive, and emotionally grounded work that recognizes the universality of grief, anxiety, and alienation. The book offers all of us a roadmap to reconnection via empathic communication, creativity, vulnerability, and collaboration. This book gave me hope."

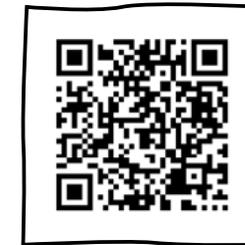
**MK Czerwiec RN, MA, Co-founder, GraphicMedicine.org,
Creator, "Taking Turns: Stories of HIV/AIDS Care Unit 371"**



AS OF 2023, THE NEW YORK LIFE FOUNDATION
HAS PROVIDED MORE THAN \$400 MILLION
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Your story doesn't have
to end here.

Share it with someone
else who feels stuck in
the middle.





CAM'S NERVOUS ABOUT STARTING 6TH GRADE AT FOURTH AVE. LIKE, REALLY NERVOUS. NEW TOWN. NEW SCHOOL. NEW FRIENDS. LUCKILY, HIS OLDER COUSIN'S GOT A FEW YEARS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL UNDER HIS BELT.

LOST IN THE MIDDLE FOLLOWS 8TH GRADERS KAI AND HIS BFF, ELLE, AS THEY RECORD VIDEOS FOR THE SOCIAL NETWORK 4REEL TO HELP CAM AND THE REST OF THE 6TH GRADERS DEAL WITH THEIR PROBLEMS.

IT STARTS WITH THE EASY STUFF, LIKE HOW TO OPEN A JAMMED LOCKER, BUT QUICKLY GETS TO THE HARDER STUFF, LIKE HOW TO OPEN UP TO A FRIEND ABOUT DEATH. TURNS OUT, EVERYONE AT FOURTH AVE HAS LOST SOMETHING, OR SOMEONE. THE QUESTION IS... WILL THEY BE ABLE TO FIND A WAY THROUGH IT, TOGETHER?