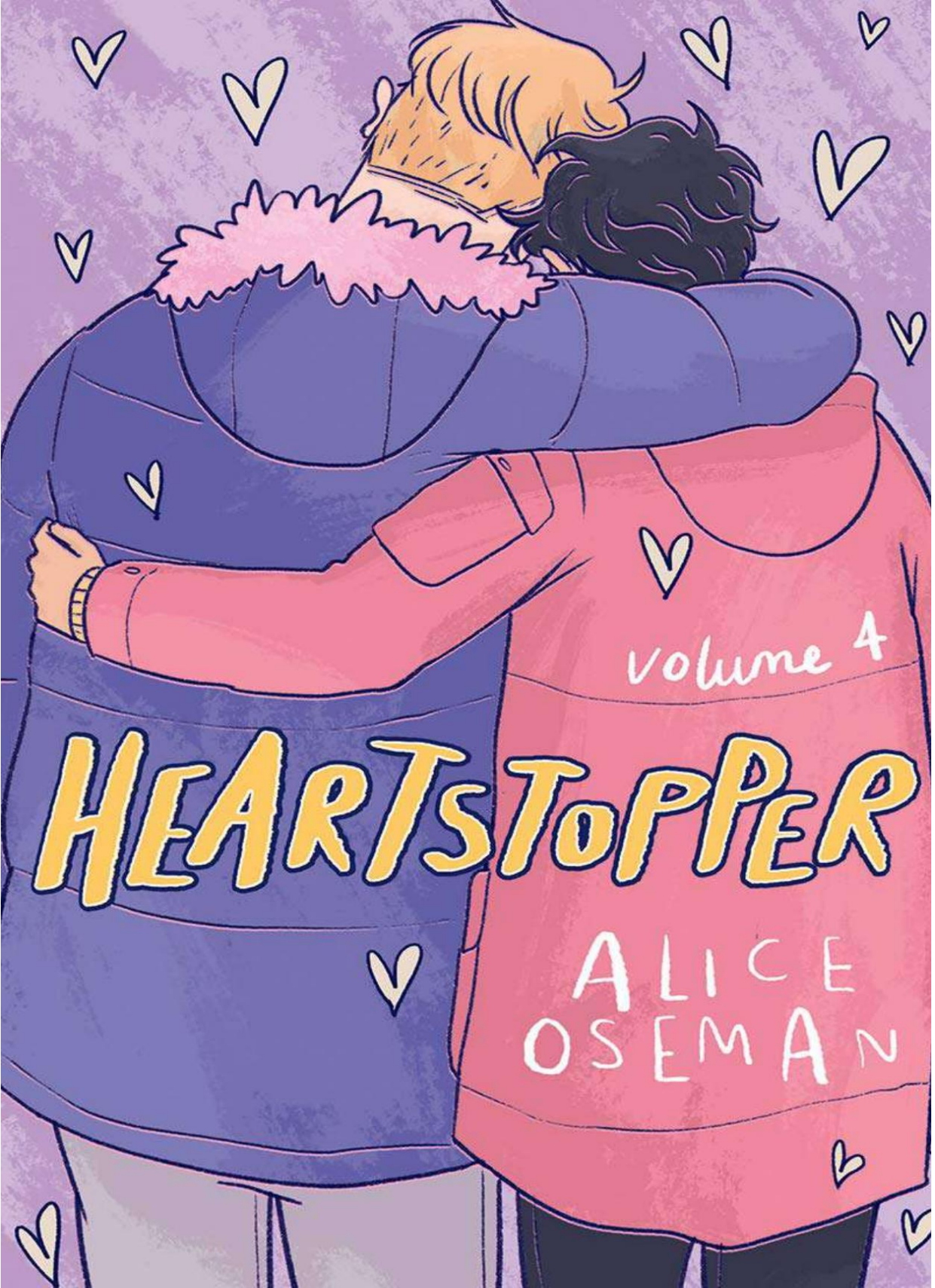
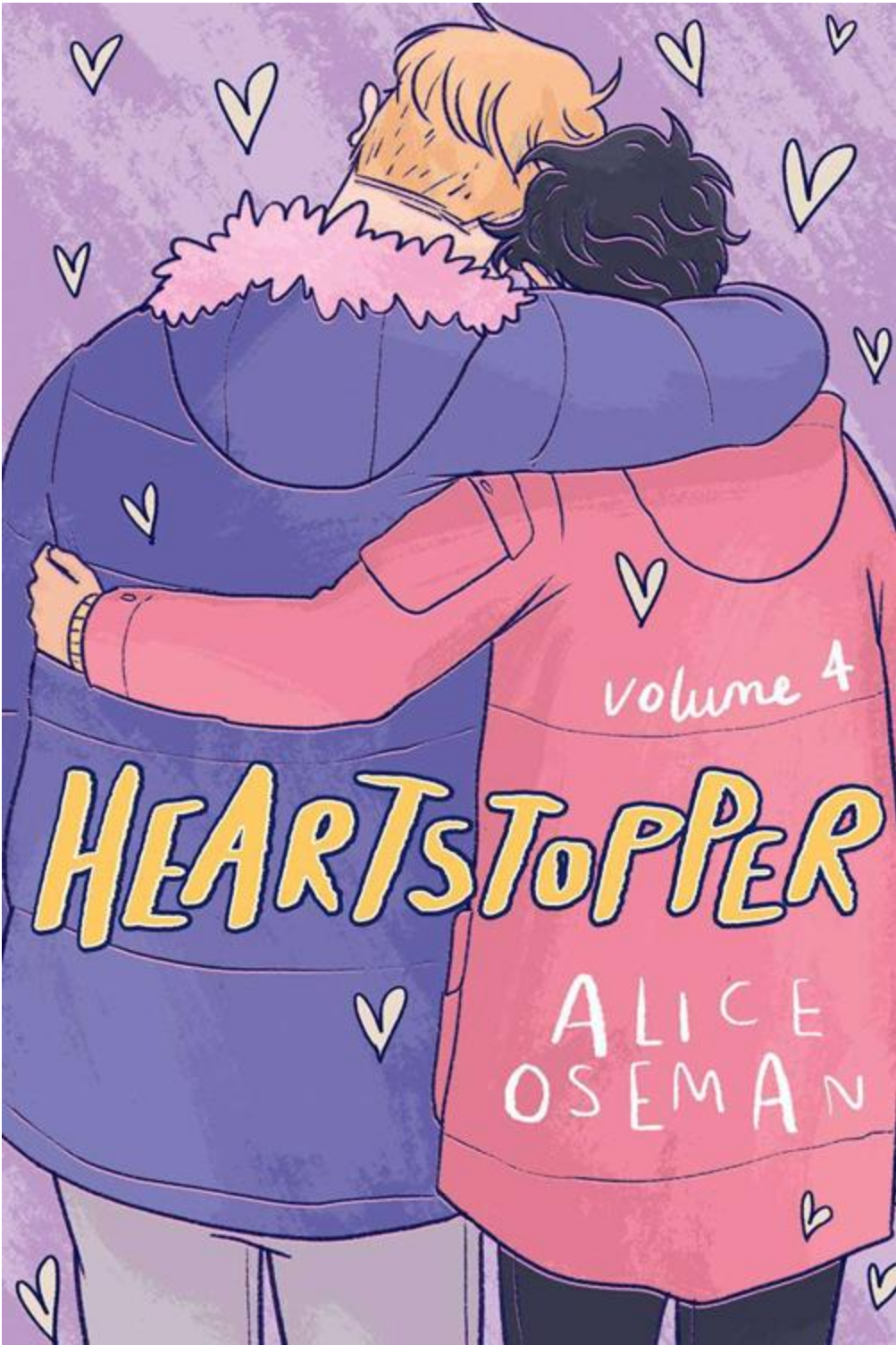


Volume 4

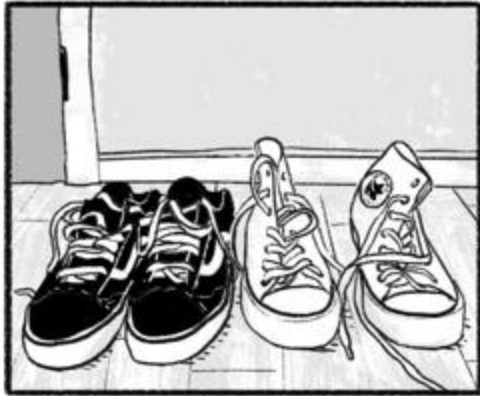
HEARTSTOPPER

ALICE
OSEMAN





5. LOVE



Nick...

I love you.

AUGUST



Um- I mean-
I'm in love
with you.

I...
just
wanted
you to
know.



And...
you
don't
have
to say
it back
yet...



or ever,
I guess?



I mean- I hope you
do say it one day
because I'm
properly in love
with you and
I hope you'll feel
the same way
eventually but
please don't feel
pressured to-









You want to tell Nick you love him?





It's probably too early. And if he doesn't feel the same, it'll just make things weird.



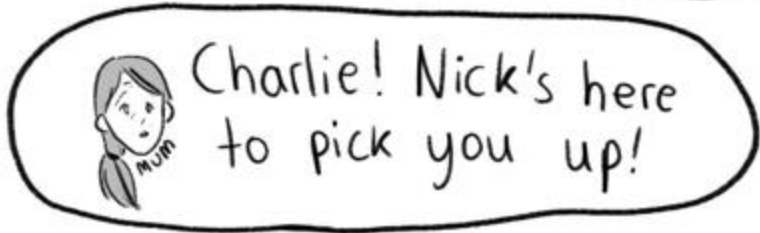




So... it's my last chance to tell him this summer.

















I'm driving you to the coast out of the goodness of my heart and this is the treatment I get-



Mum.



We're here!!

Thank God. I'm about to pee myself.



Elle!!

Don't forget to offer them round!

I won't!













933











936



























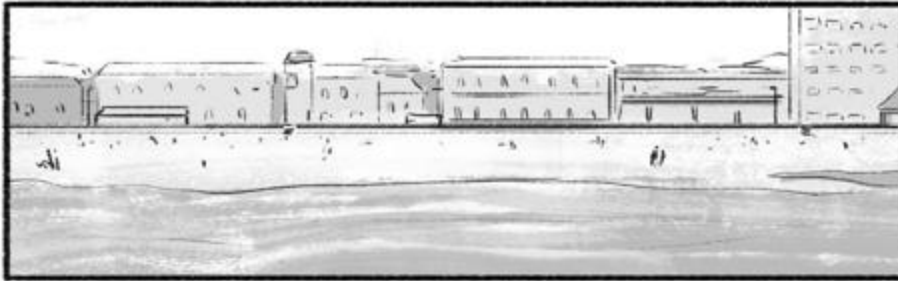
948

I WILL ACCEPT SOME SNACKS!















TAP
There are many different eating disorders, including anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating disorder. Some people are diagnosed with more than one.

TAP
What is an eating disorder?
An eating disorder is a mental illness that involves disordered eating behaviour.

TAP
CAN MEN GET EATING DISORDERS?
It is a common misconception that only women and girls are affected by eating disorders. Anyone could develop an eating disorder at any age, or life situation.

TAP TAP
How to support someone with an eating disorder
It is important to encourage the person to seek treatment as soon as possible. There are also many ways to help and support people with eating disorders in their everyday lives.

TAP
Some examples of anorexia symptoms:
- Lying about food intake
- Missing meals (fasting)
- Not wanting to eat with others
- Eating very slowly
- Wearing baggy clothes to hide weight loss
- Irritability
- Low self-esteem

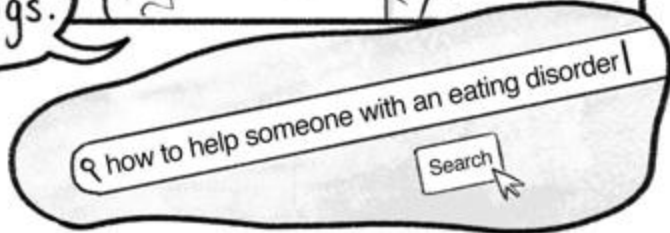
TAP

















Charlie?





FORMING A PLAN.







Hey!!

Are you two gonna keep flirting or are you gonna help us eat these snacks?

















But I have
you lot. So
I'm okay.







Fine.♡









Keep it on



It'll dry
in the sun











Hey!



I found a shallower bit!











Nick?
I wanted to talk
to you about
something...



I think you have an eating disorder.



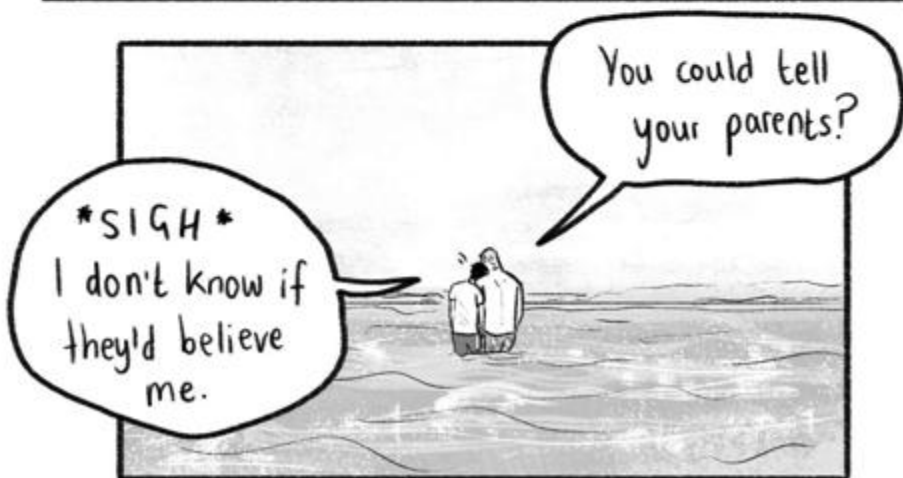
I've been doing some research and I know you don't want me to, like, try to cure you, but I care about you so much and I can see how much worse it's gotten over the past
.....
.....
.....



988











Am I dropping you back at your house, Charlie?




Can you drop me at Nick's, please?



993





994












998









Nick's so in love with you it's a little unbearable to watch sometimes.



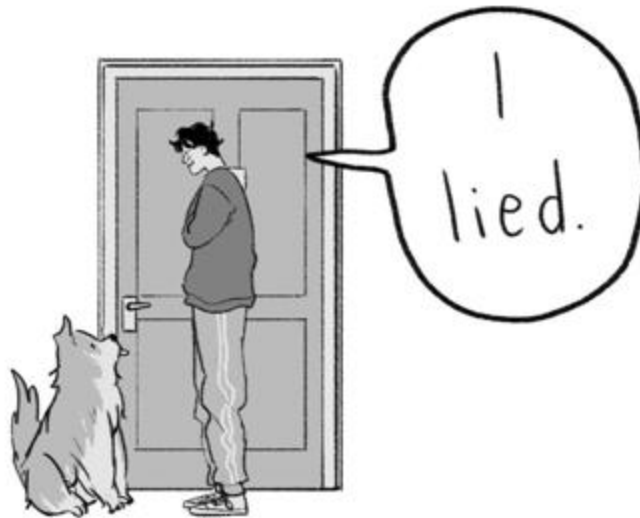


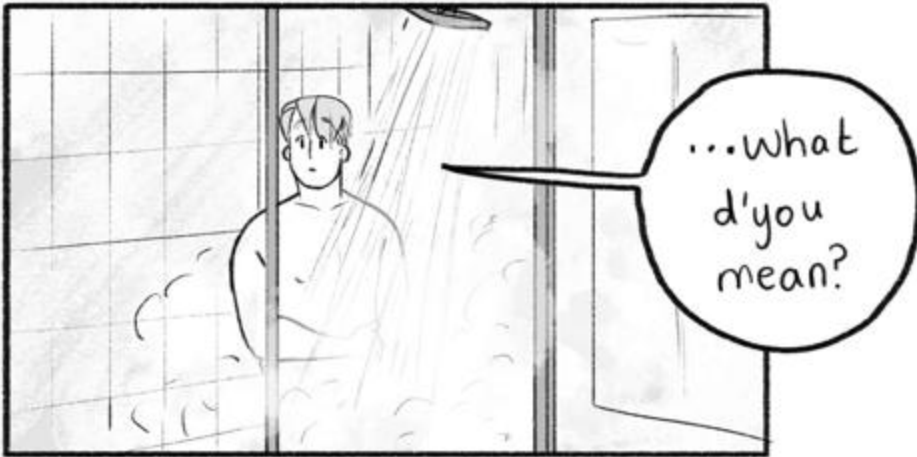








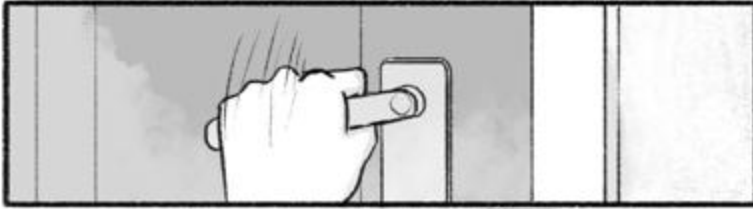


















Nicky!!
You could at
least put
some shoes
on!







PAT
PAT



PAT
PAT
PAT



PAT
PAT



PAT
PAT



PAT











1022





And you don't have to say it back! I just wanted you to know because I'm not gonna see you for weeks and-









You're still damp!



Yeah, well, you said 'I love you' for the first time while I was IN THE SHOWER.



Oh my God, why did I do that?

Why are we like this?

1026



Because you're Charlie

And you love me.

And I love you.





Charlie.





omg



can i come to menorca with you pls



Plane leaves in 90 mins!

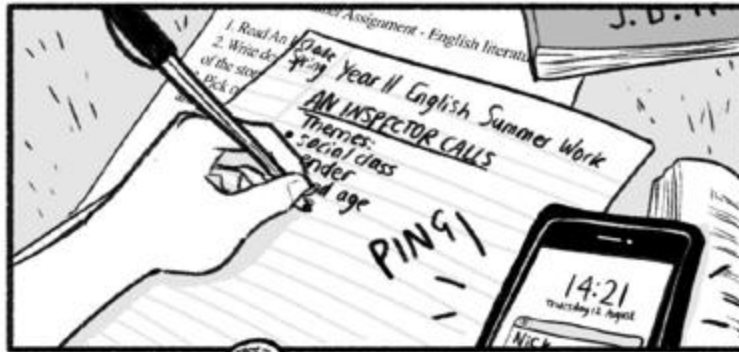
Can you run that fast??



i could try



i could fit in your suitcase



We've landed!!

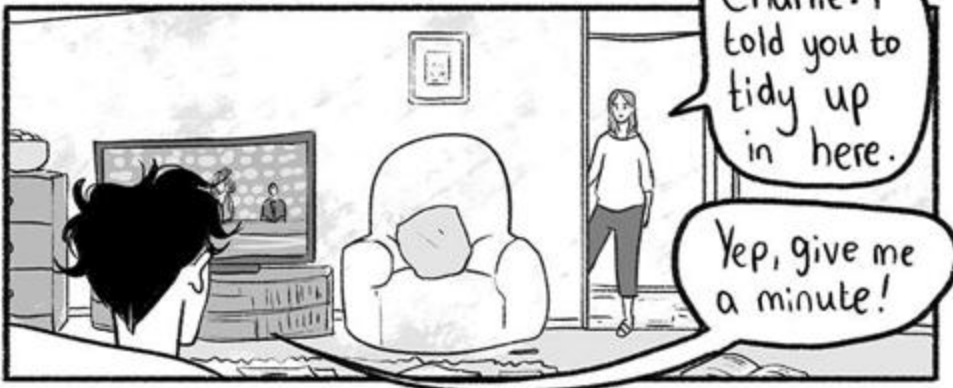
come back 😊



Are you gonna talk to your parents about the eating thing?

i'll try xx



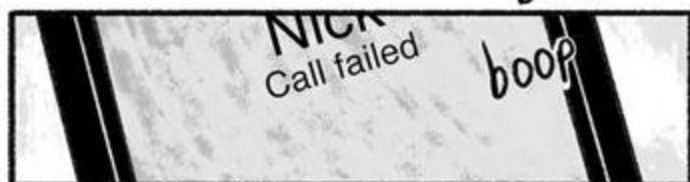




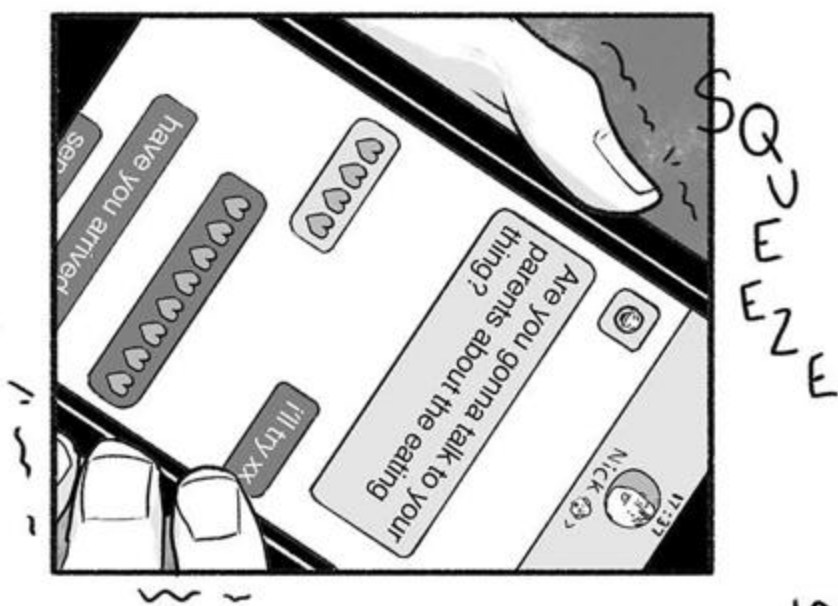




CLICK boop boop boop













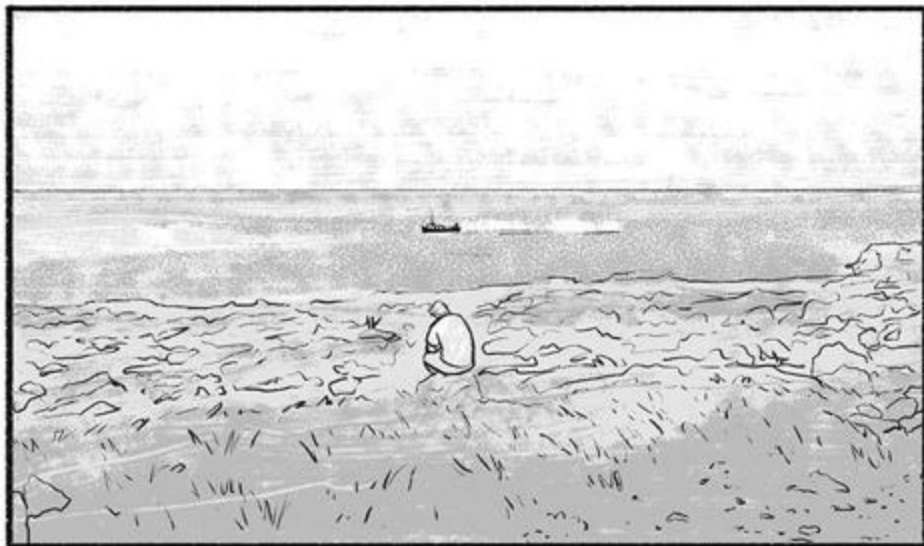
The first week.







The second week.



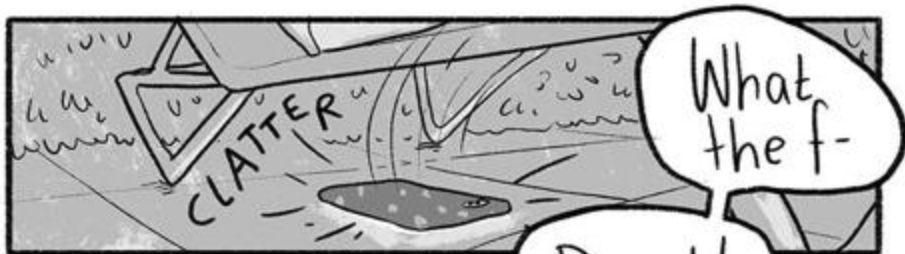
Hey!! How's your day??? 😊

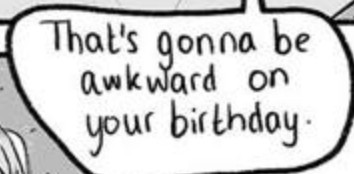


1048









The third week.



Tori! You couldn't have dressed up a bit for dinner? Your grandparents have come all the way from the south of Spain!



Just go and fetch your brothers, please! They'll be here soon!

EYE ROLL







Can you believe it's our last night in Menorca already? These three weeks have flown by!



I'm sort of missing good old English weather!

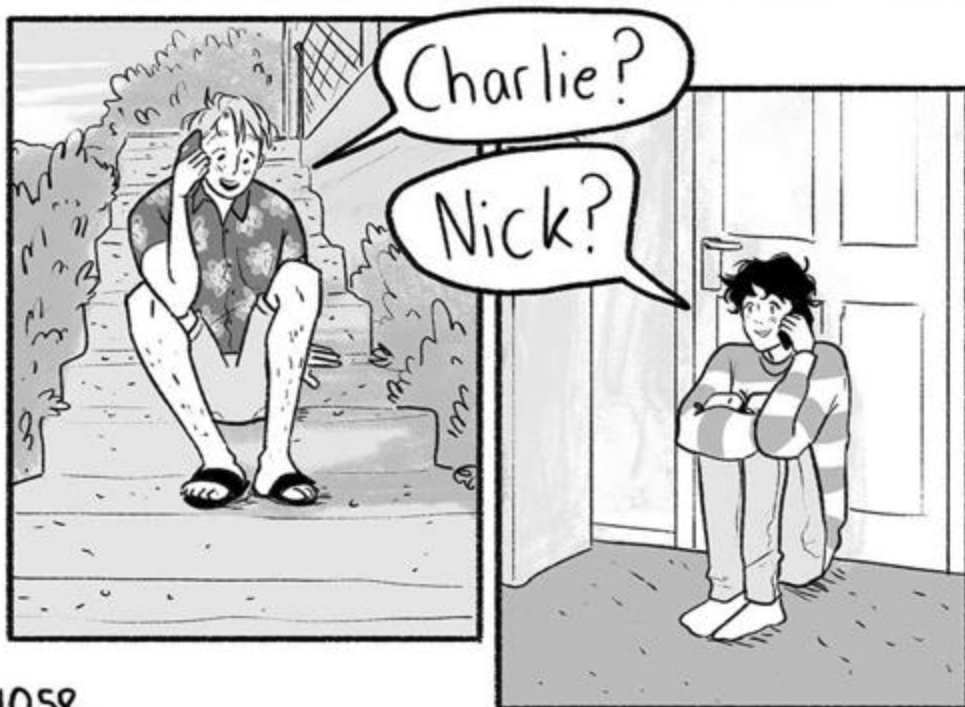
CONTENT WARNING: Eating disorders

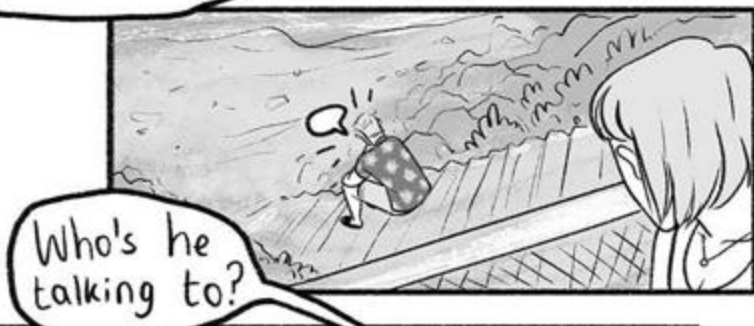


1056





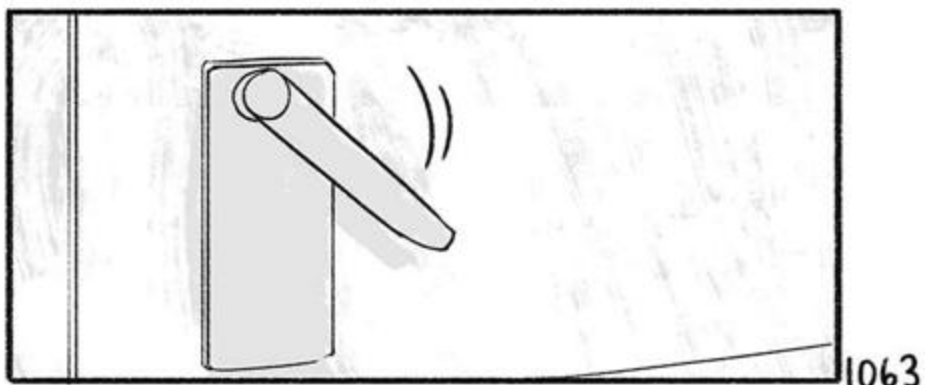




















1067







He finds eating really difficult and it makes him so anxious, and it's gotten really bad lately,



and I've been trying to get him to talk to his parents but he said he just CAN'T, he can't talk to them about stuff like that, and-



I just don't know what to do now. I don't want to force him to eat because that would just make him upset

and stressed, but...

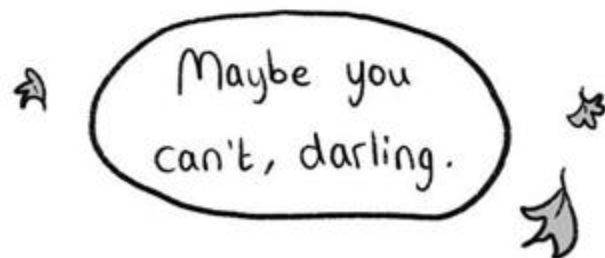
... if I don't do anything, then he'll- he'll just-

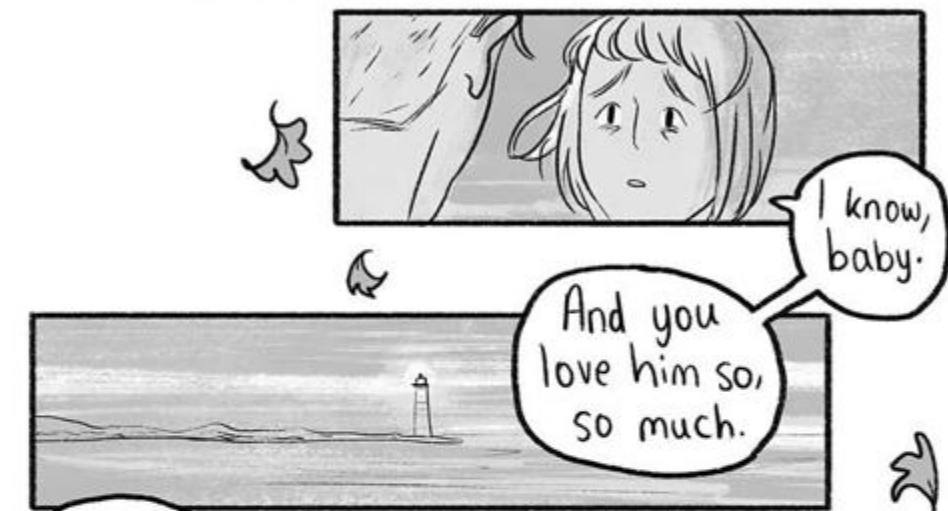




1070









I know it feels like you're both each other's whole world,

but that dependency isn't healthy for either of you.



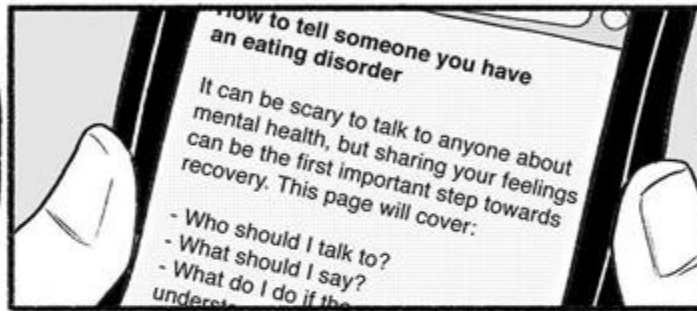
Charlie needs to seek help from someone who isn't his sixteen-year-old boyfriend.



He needs help from a doctor or a therapist-

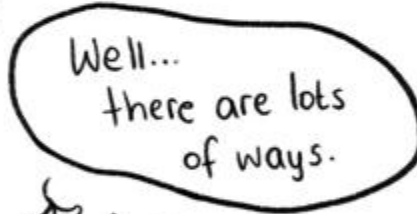


Someone who knows about eating disorders and how to treat them.



Love can't cure a mental illness.







You can just be there.

To listen.



To talk.

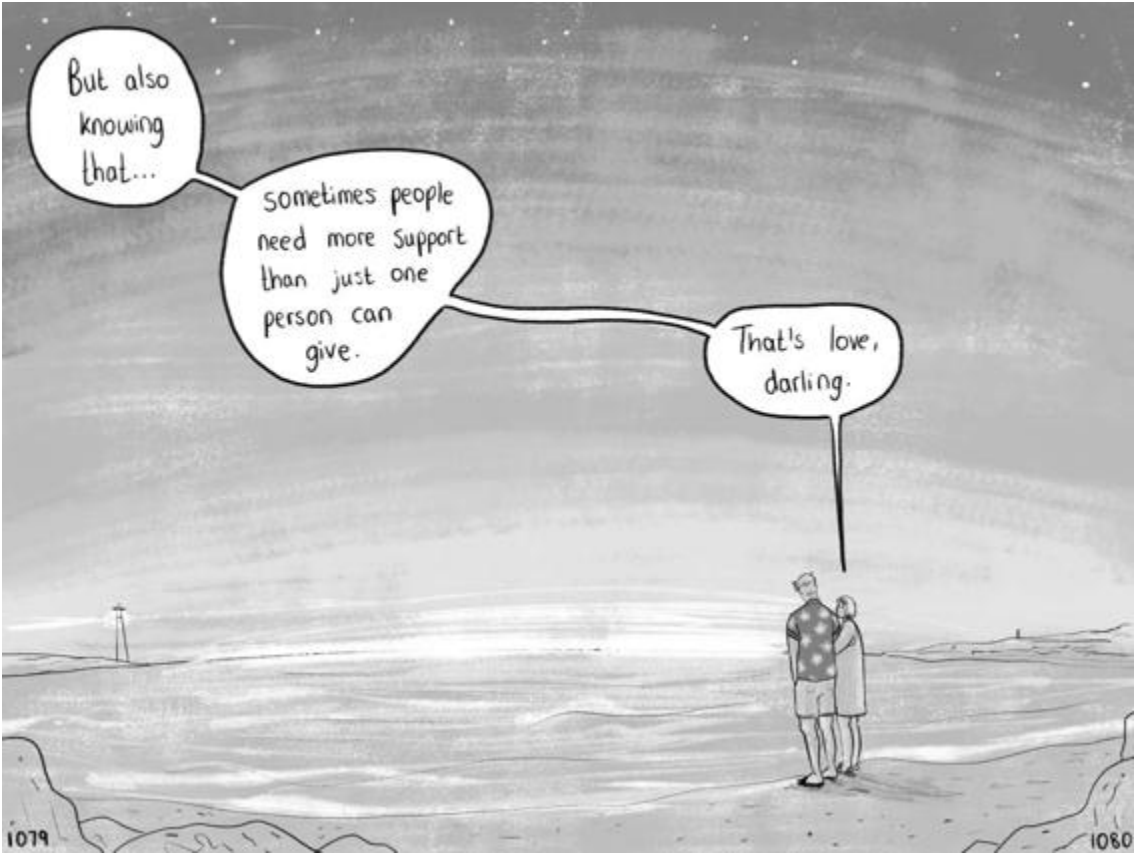


To cheer him up if he's having a bad day.





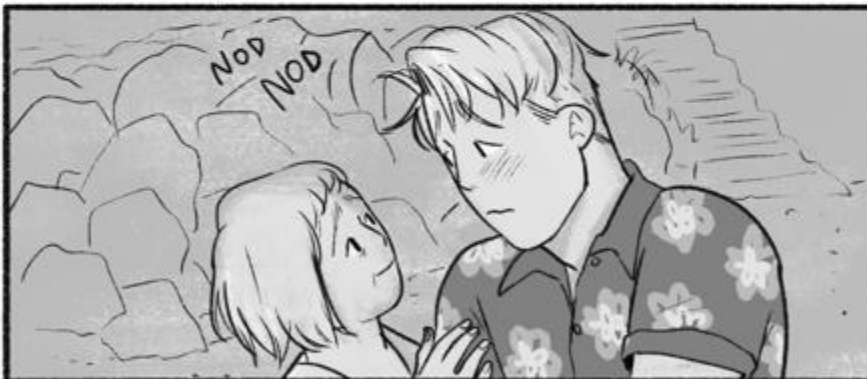
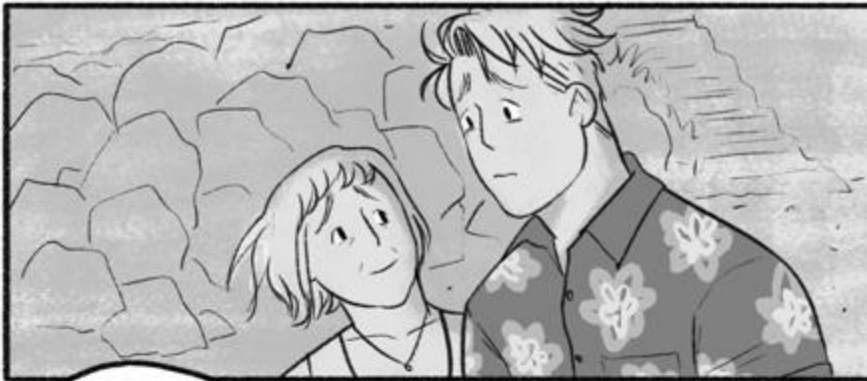




But also knowing that...

Sometimes people need more support than just one person can give.

That's love, darling.



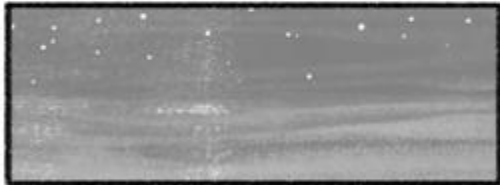


When we get home, me and you can sit down and do some proper research about how we could help Charlie talk to his parents or to a doctor.

Does that sound okay?



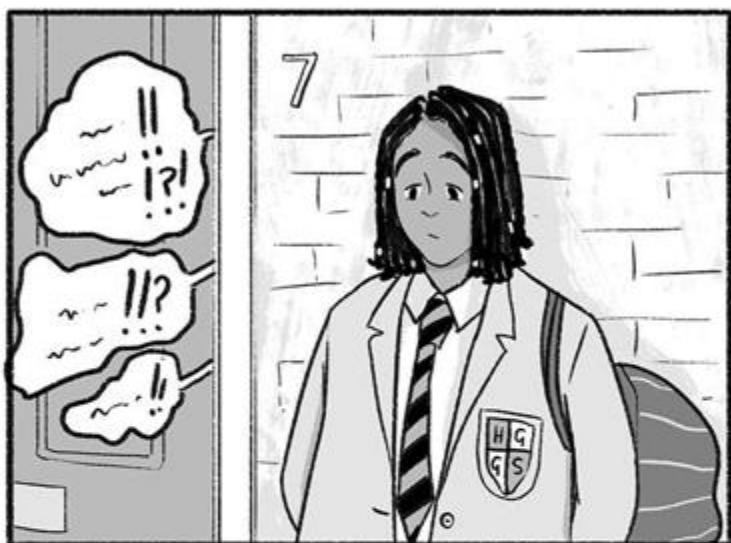
Yeah.





i can't wait to see you at school tomorrow!!!!!!!

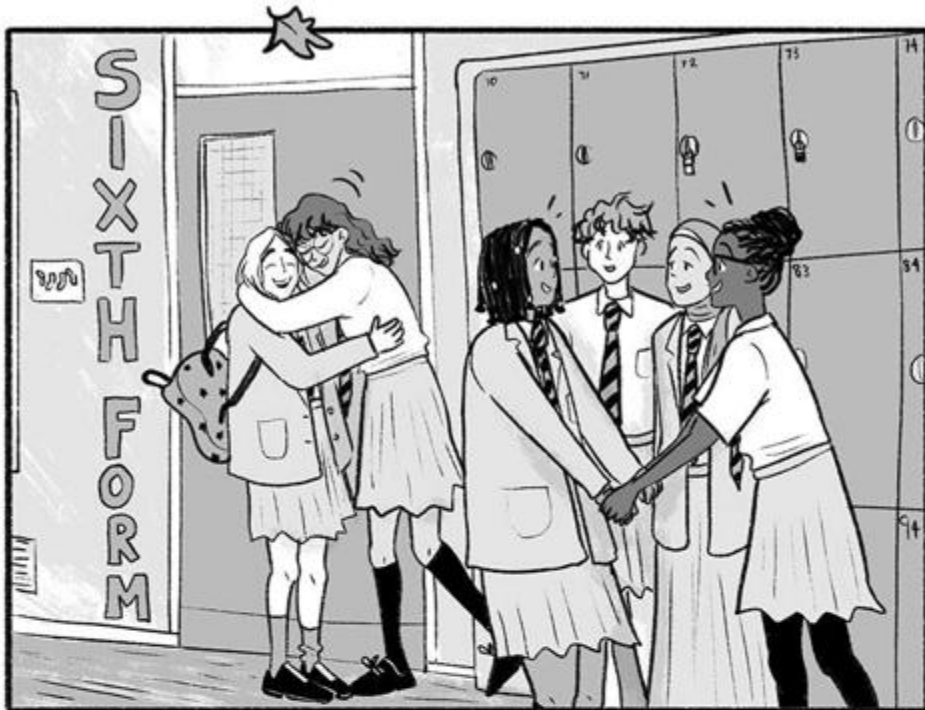
Same!!!!!! I MISS YOU













I sure hope we are. We spent the whole Summer seeing each other.





Name: Nicholas Nelson
Year Group: 12
Form Group: Hamlet 5
A Level Choices:
PSY: PSYCHOLOGY
PE: PHYSICAL EDUCATION
BIO: BIOLOGY
GEO: GEOGRAPHY

PERIOD	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI
1	FREE	PSY	PE	FREE	BIO
2	GEO				



Jesus, Nick, where have you been all summer?

Innit, I feel like you just disappeared!

Oh, yeah, well I was in Menorca for like three weeks, so...



So it's nothing to do with the fact that you have a **BOYFRIEND**.





So... you guys heard about me and Charlie?

I mean... I think everyone in our year knows.

Sorry if we made you feel awkward about telling us.



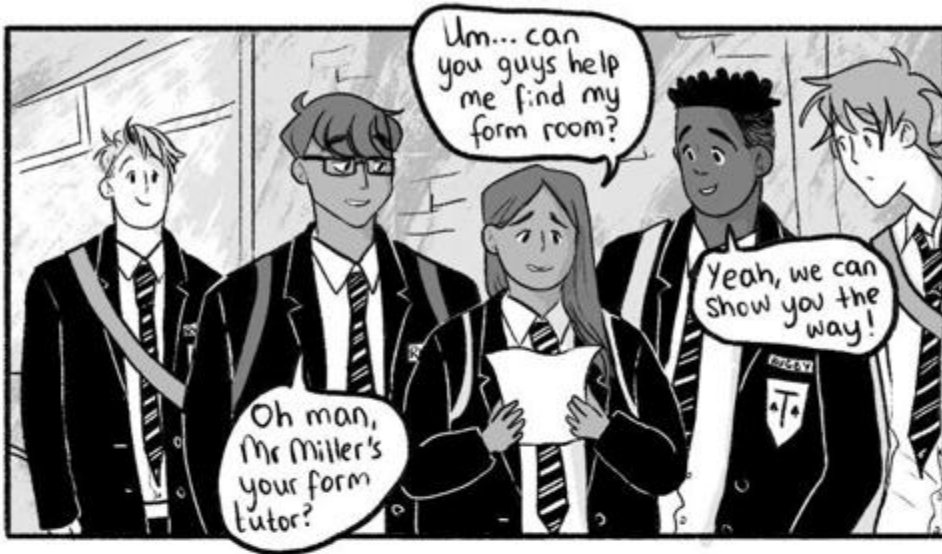
Your "good mates" comment probably didn't help.

That was ONE TIME.



When will you stop bringing that up?























So??



charlie!!



Welcome back
Hamlet 5!



If you're worried about a loved one

It can be difficult to bring up the topic of mental health, even with those closest to us. You may be worried about saying the wrong thing or upsetting the person in question. But breaking the silence can be the first important step towards recovery.

Here are some tips for talking to a loved one about their mental health:



Okay class!



1107





Saturday







My dad couldn't come.
He said something
came up.

I mean...
I guess he
never said
he'd definitely
come, but...
yeah...





It's fine, I don't really care...



Well, we're still gonna have a super fun birthday afternoon









1115









CONTENT WARNING: Discussions of mental health, including eating disorders



you gave me a photo of us in
the snow, so here's one of us
in the sun
Love Charlie xxx

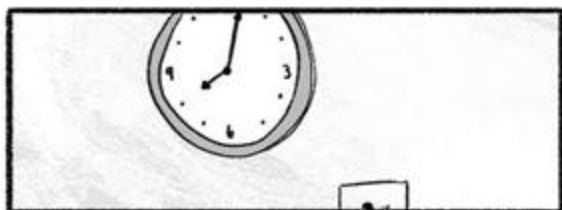


Uh...
I know it's
kinda cheesy,
but...
the rest
of the album
is empty so
you can-



Oh-





h-huh?

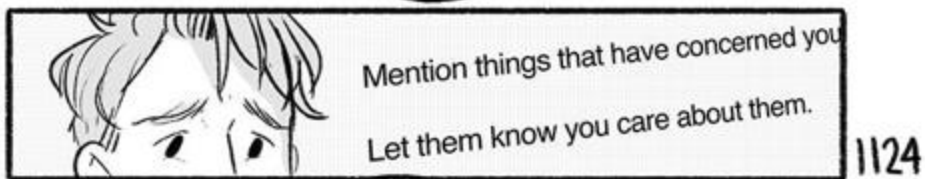
Char... you
said wake you
up at eight

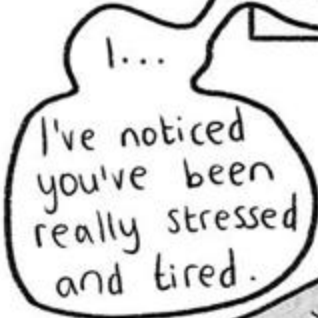


Starting the conversation

1. Choose a place you both feel safe



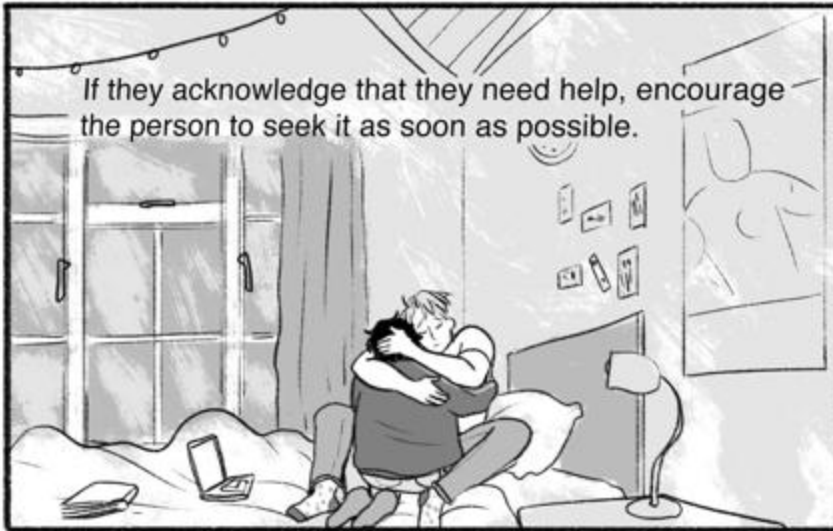












What if I came with you? I dunno... just to hold your hand? They probably wouldn't get angry if I was there!











...need to talk to you about something.





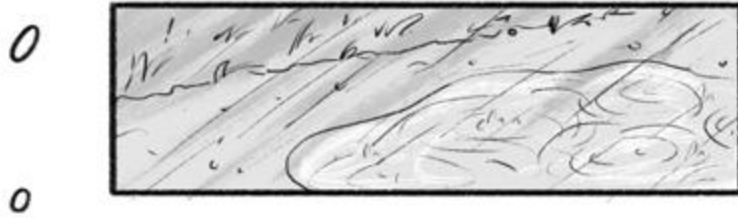




My mental health has been really bad lately. ~~I've~~ I've been finding eating really difficult. I feel like there's a voice in my head that's not me, telling me bad things will happen if I eat or if I do things the wrong way, and that voice has just been getting louder and louder. Sometimes it makes me really stressed or tired or angry. ~~And~~ And I think I've been ~~like this~~ like this for quite a long time but I just didn't want to admit it. I want to figure out how to manage it, so I was thinking I could go to the doctors. I want to get better.

6. JOURNEY

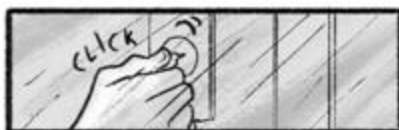




nearly
four
months
later



C'mon
Nell,
we're
nearly
home!



Nicky?
You home?

It's
chucking
it down!!

I'm
making
tea!

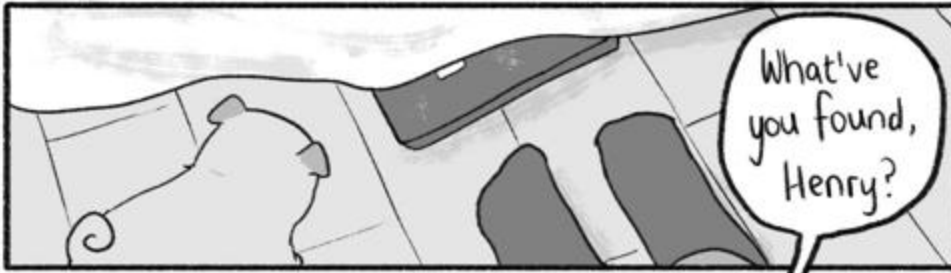


ARF!



In a couple of hours. We're not leaving for the party till eight.





I guess I haven't written in here for a while...





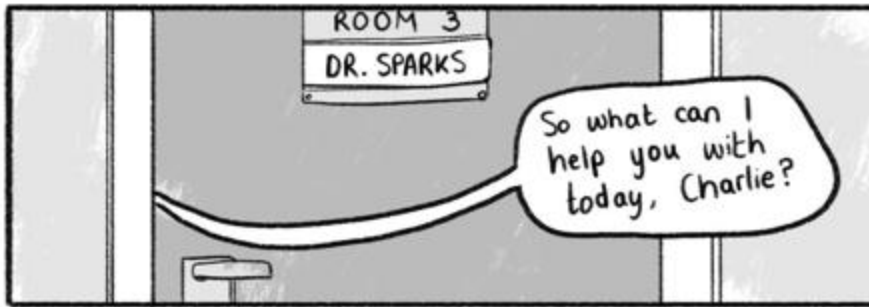
So... I haven't written anything for a while. The past few months have been stressful, but... I think things are looking up?

Although- you know that
saying that things sometimes
get worse before they get better?

Yeah. I think I understand
that now.



But this was extra scary.



For obvious reasons.

The doctor was helpful, and referred Charlie to an eating disorder service, but the waiting list was so long.







His eating disorder got worse. I could tell, but he wouldn't talk to me about it.



He skipped school a lot, which made his mum mad at him like all the time.



His thoughts and behaviour about food became... obsessive. It didn't make logical sense anymore. I guess it never did, really. But he'd always lie about it.

And you know he told me he used to self-harm?

Well, that kind of started again.

Sorry

It's not your fault

I think mostly because of the stress of everything else.

I didn't know what to do except just be there for him.

But things just got harder for him.
There was one night in October
where his parents had to take him to A&E.

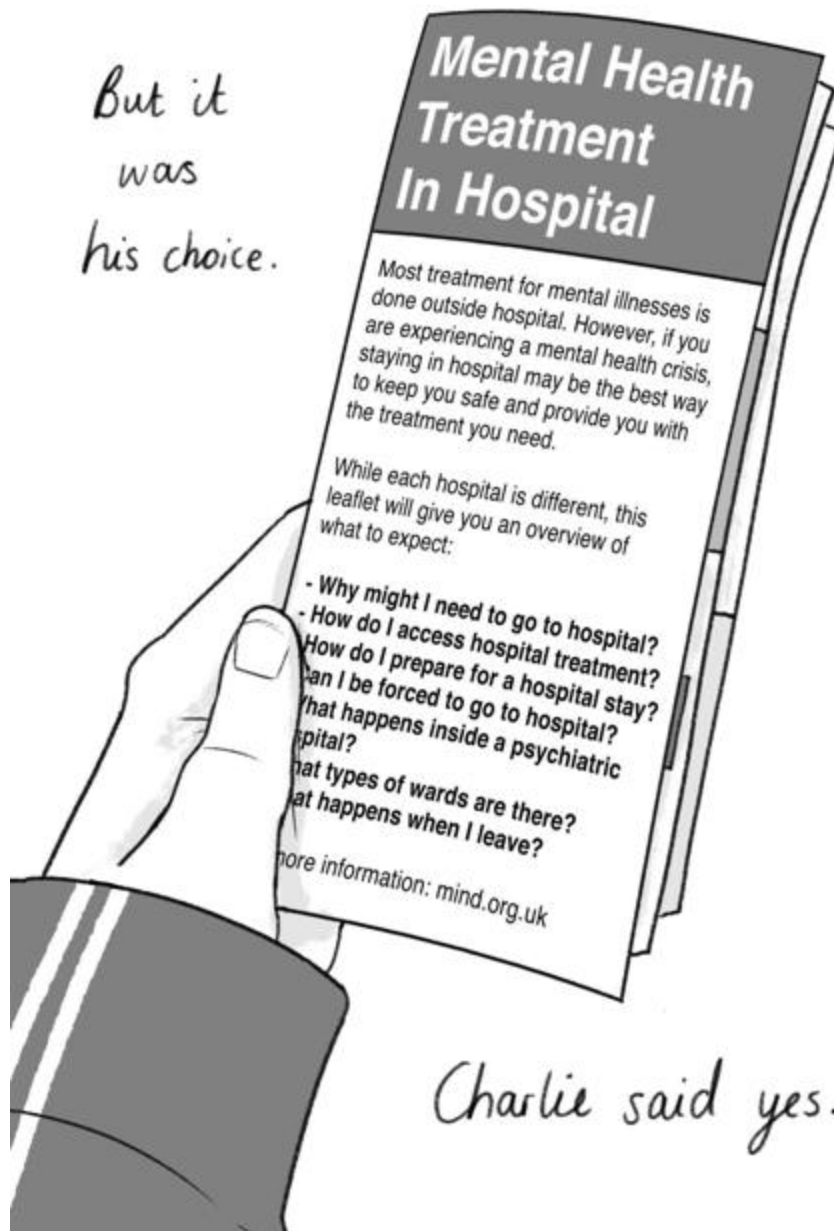


He knew the compulsions made no sense.
But he didn't know how to stop them.

Neither did I.

Charlie's mental health was assessed while he was there, and they told him that it'd be best if he spent some time as an inpatient.

But it was his choice.



Charlie said yes.

It happened really fast.

I was scared.

He was scared.



I mean, I only knew about psychiatric hospitals from movies, and the nearest available space at a ward was a two-hour drive away.

We knew it was the right thing to do.



He had to at least try and see if it would help.





It was
weird

being
at
school
without
Charlie.

I couldn't stop
worrying about him.

We spoke on the phone when we could,
and obviously I visited a lot too, but-

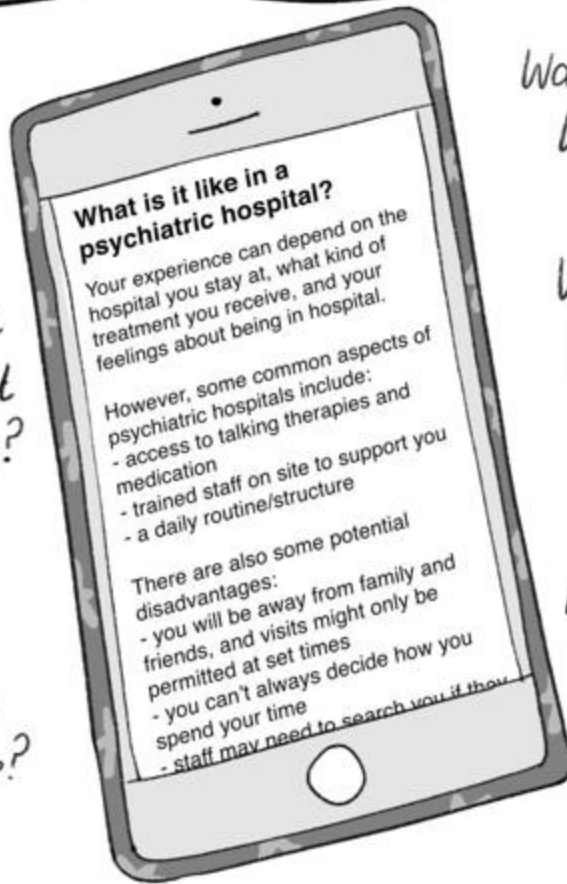


I kept wishing I knew how he was feeling all the time.

Was he homesick?

Was the treatment helping?

Was it making things worse?



Was he lonely?

Was he bored?

Had he made some friends?

It feels so awful to complain about my feelings when Charlie's been going through all of that, but I guess I've been pretty anxious these past few months.



But I talk to Mum about it a lot.
That helps.



Charlie asked me not to tell them
what was going on with him.

He was kinda scared of it spreading
around school.



They knew he was off school because he was
unwell, though, so they've been supportive
in their own way.



Charlie said I could keep the Paris Squad updated.



Elle Argent
darcy did you get the card for charlie?



Darcy Olsson
YEP i got a giant one, it's the length of my arm



Tara Jones
omg



Tao Xu
Nick does Charlie have access to a DVD player???
I was thinking we could send him some fun films to watch

Nick Nelson
yeah he does!!! Good idea, he literally said they don't have Netflix or anything and they've only got movies from like 2005 haha



Tara Jones
I got the gift basket! And some ribbons and stuff to make it pretty



Aled Last
i got him some art stuff!



Sahar Zahid
I got him a couple of books!! He said he likes to read so I hope that's okay

Nick Nelson
Do you all wanna come back to mine after school tomorrow?? You can sign the card and we can decorate the gift basket and stuff! also you can come on a walk with Nellie and me if you want!!



Darcy Olsson
I WOULD LIKE TO MEET NELLIE



Elle Argent
i also would like to meet nellie!!!!



Tao Xu
I think we all would like to meet Nellie tbh

He didn't want them all visiting - I think it would have been too overwhelming. But they still found ways to help.



And
they helped
me too.





She's kind of... intense.



CONTENT WARNING: Discussions of mental health, including eating disorders and self-harm.

It took a few weeks, and a lot of visits, but Charlie started to seem a little better.

Staying in a hospital was a big risk. It probably isn't helpful for everyone.

But it was for him.

Haha
Tao's always trying to get me to watch this



He could actually focus on his mental health without worrying about school and what everyone thought.



Hey

Hey

He came home in early December.



*Just in time for the
Christmas season.*



He's still dealing with a lot, so he stayed off school for the rest of term.



Christmas Day was especially hard. He came round mine after a big argument with his mum.



He got to meet our new puppy,
Henry, which cheered him up
a bit, but...



It was
a difficult day.

It's not like seven weeks in hospital made him magically okay again.

I know I'm not an expert or anything, but from what I've learnt over the past few months, mental illnesses take a long time to go away completely... if they ever do.



This is probably only the start of a long journey.

But he's definitely doing better.











I love him so much.
Well, I guess that's my life update.





Anyway, I'd
better go -
Charlie will be
here soon!
We're going to
a New Year's
Eve party
tonight!





A guy in my year is having a big house party with fireworks and stuff.



It's the first time Charlie will have been back with a bunch of people from school. We can always leave if it's awful, but I'm excited.





I'm excited to just hang out at a party with my boyfriend.





1177































1192

5/3
Geoff says I need to start writing
in my journal again



But I haven't written in here since last summer, and a lot has happened since then.

I can't believe I've been having therapy for like four months already.



I hated the idea at first.

Even though I admitted I needed it.



If you feel you may be experiencing mental health problems, seek professional help as soon as possible if you can.

And things didn't exactly get off to a great start, what with the waiting time, and me just spiraling after that.

Appointment date: Tuesday 4th January

You need to get out of bed and stop being so lazy

Are you off school again? Are you feeling ok? I can send you the maths homework because it's due tomorrow and Mr St... and if you don't have...

Does charlie read the group chat?? where is he??

You keep skipping meals, you're even trying to...

DISGUSTING

Please message me if you're worried about you!!!

don't deserve

Need to stay in control or ever had...

"Mental health waiting times for children and teens 'dangerous and unhelpful'"

Things got bad really fast.

Spending a few weeks in a psych ward was obviously not my plan.



And there were some ups and downs there, sure.



But I think I got lucky because the place I went to was actually helpful. 1196



I started therapy there. Not with Geoff, but the therapist was really nice.

I had a nutritionist, too. I know that isn't the case for all psych wards.



We weren't allowed mobile phones, but I could still call home from the ward phone.

Some of the rules kinda sucked, and some days were awful, but a lot of it was fine. I even made a couple of friends.



At first, I think there was a big part of me that didn't even want to get better. That just wanted to keep pretending I was fine, so I didn't have to put in the effort to change.



I was so scared of losing control.
Eating was something I could control.

But I wasn't fine. I had - have - a mental illness. Anorexia.

More information: <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>

What is anorexia?

Anorexia nervosa is an eating disorder of low weight due to limiting their food. They also do lots of exercise to get rid of food. They may experience cycles of bingeing and have a distorted view of their body and fear of gaining weight.

Studies have shown that people who "normal" weight can still be diagnosed. You can't tell if someone has anorexia.

Many people who have anorexia have a sense of control and a desire to be in control.

I also got diagnosed with OCD, which makes a lot of sense too. Geoff says they're connected.

More information: <https://www.oeduk.org/>

What is OCD?

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder is an anxiety disorder where a person experiences intrusive and unwanted thoughts, called 'obsessions', which result in a person carrying out repetitive behaviours or rituals to prevent a perceived 'compulsions'.

OCD can present itself in many forms. From OCD, it is likely that your obsessions will impact your daily life significantly in some way.

If you have OCD, it is common to experience other mental health problems as well. This makes OCD difficult to diagnose or treat.

Anorexia and OCD, apparently.

Well, yeah, that makes sense.

Haha yeah

Hearing the words was scary, but... also a relief.



Everything finally made a bit of sense. Especially the OCD stuff, which I don't think even Nick really knew about.



It's like... there's all these rules in my head about food.

Ordering and collecting and eating in certain ways at certain times.

And if I break the rules I feel like I'm gonna die.

My brain is literally SO weird.

Being in hospital didn't make me
completely free of mental illness.
Not even close.





Geoff is my therapist now that I'm back home.



He thinks he's hilarious. I don't know if humour is appropriate for a therapist, but it makes sessions slightly bearable, since I hate talking about my feelings.



Me and Geoff have talked about what's happened in my life over the past couple of years.





Geoff says it's
trauma.



Kind of a dramatic word, I guess,
but Geoff says trauma can come
from all sorts of things.

Geoff says I'm making progress, but I think I'm realising now that there might never be an 'end'.



But Geoff also says the bad days will get less common. And I can just enjoy my life and hardly ever stress out about food.



Some days I think he's full of shit.

But some days I feel hopeful. I guess I'll have to keep trying.

So I went back to school after the Christmas holidays!



A couple of teachers knew what had happened.



Mr Farouk and Miss Singh have been really supportive.



Especially as rugby has been kinda hard.



I think Tori feels guilty about everything.



She shouldn't, but...

her mental health hasn't been great either.



But she's made this new friend called Michael.

I don't think they're dating, but Tori won't tell me anything.



He's kind of the opposite of her, but they seem to get along in a way I can't quite explain.



They just click.

Maybe like Nick and me.

So I guess there've been some changes.
And maybe I won't be getting 'back to normal',
whatever that is.

I think that's okay, though.



It's not gonna
be a straightforward
journey.

Haha, since when is anything
I do straight? Okay, that's
not funny.

But really.



I just got the urge.

It wasn't anyone's fault. Relapses happen.
Tori told Nick what had happened, and
he came back later that night.



Mum and Dad even let him stay over to 'keep an eye on me'.



Not really necessary, but I wasn't complaining.









I love Nick.



I love Nick so, so much.



But what I've realised through all of this is that we need other people too.



That doesn't mean our relationship isn't strong.



If anything...

I think
we're stronger
now.







Yeah, I'll be okay. I've planned what I'm having. And I want to be there for Nick. He hasn't seen his dad for like a year, so he's pretty nervous.



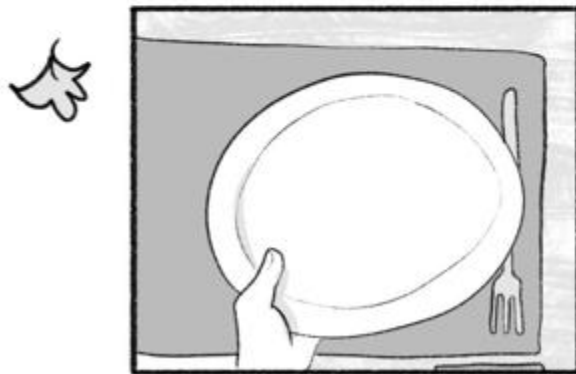
He's not out to him yet, is he?

No, I think he wants to do it tonight









I'm not doing it for him. I'm doing it for me.

DING
DONG

Will Nick's
dogs be there?







It's so good to meet one of Nicholas' closest friends!
Call me Stéphane!

Um, I'm Charlie, nice to meet you!
And this is my dad.

How are you, Jane?

Oh, not too bad, Sarah! You?

Hello, I'm Julio.

You cool with this happening?
Seems like a lot.

Yeah, well... usually when my dad visits we go out to a restaurant, but he wanted to meet Charlie, and..

Charlie doesn't like restaurants.

Yeah, exactly.

Hello doggies!! I'm your new friend Oliver!!





I'm gonna be fine.



Let me worry about you this time.



1229





You can do this. I'm here for you.



Mate



Oh my God, do not call me 'mate'.

Buddy.
Pal. Bro.

Charlie.

Later...



I grew up in the very south of France, near Narbonne!

Ah, not far from Spain, then!

My parents are from the south of Spain. Almería.

But your surname! It is so English! Or ... German?



Well, my father tells me we have a rather complicated family tree...











Have neither of you boys found girlfriends?





1236



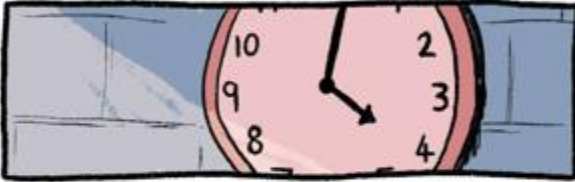


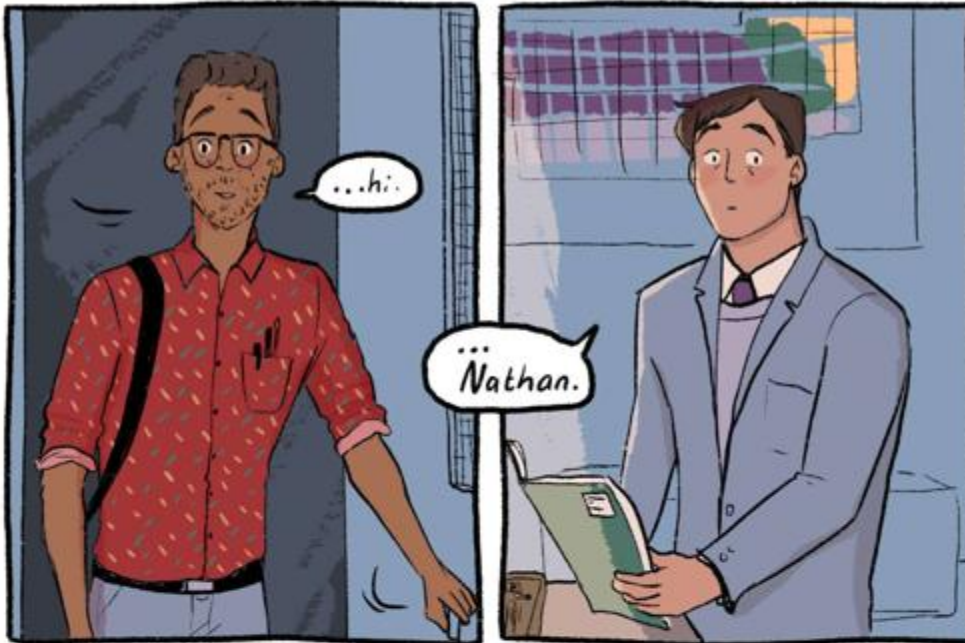
1237



The Teachers

a heartstopper mini-comic







That night in Paris...

It meant something to me.



I didn't see it as a casual thing.







Which is why, if we did it again, we should probably find a more sensible setting. Like one of our places. Ideally with drinks or dinner beforehand.



I'm asking you out, Youssef.









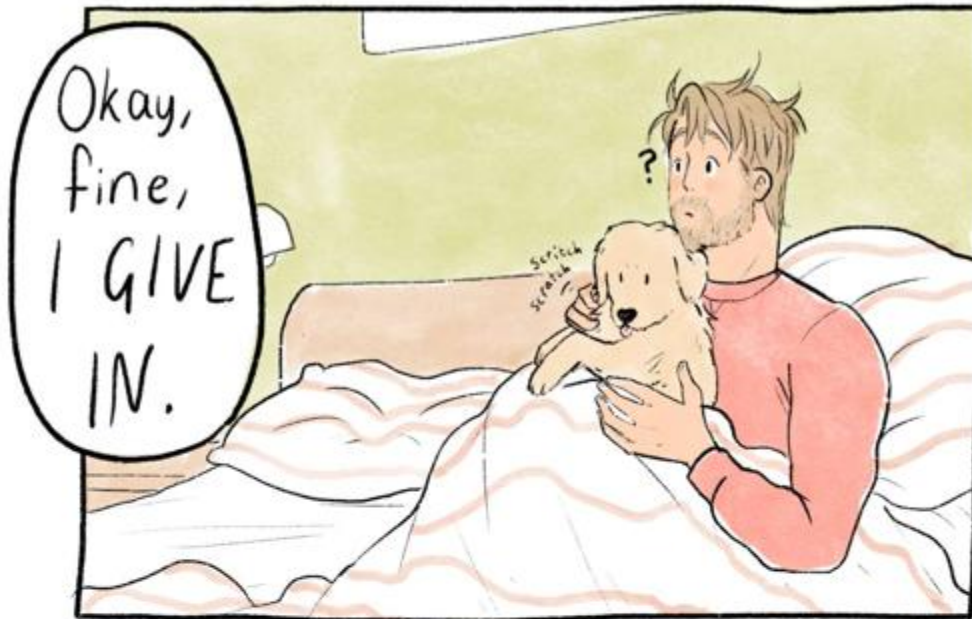


THE HAIRCUT

A HEARTSTOPPER MINI-COMIC

one day in Nick & Charlie's future...

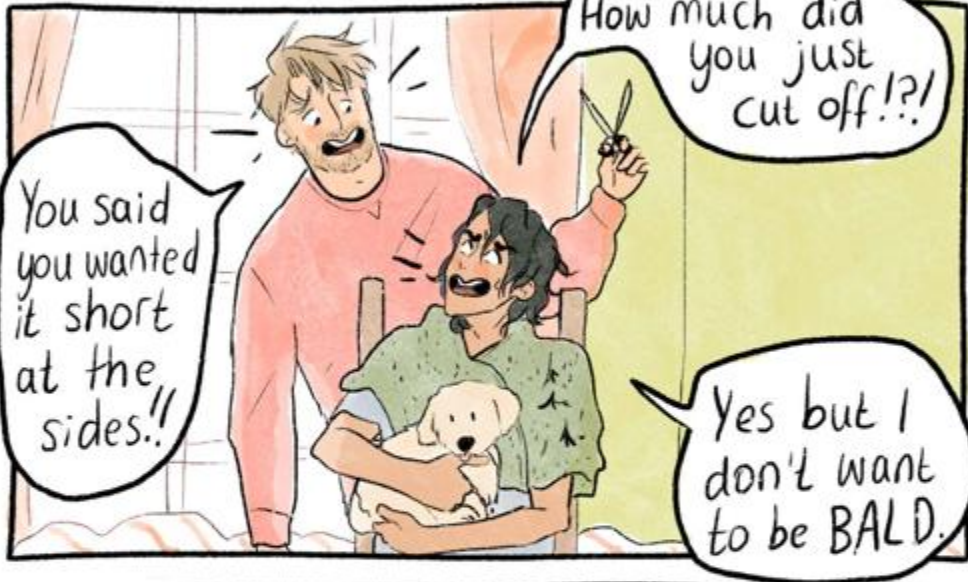








SNIP



Many minutes of squabbling
later...







ZZZZT.





Look who finally gave in and let me cut his hair



Omg that actually looks good

We did have one casualty though



LMAOOOOO



oh my GOD



Nick's new career - dog stylist?



I have confiscated the razor

The end



ZZZZT.





Look who finally gave in and let me cut his hair



Omg that actually looks good

We did have one casualty though



LMAOOOOO



oh my GOD



Nick's new career - dog stylist?



I have confiscated the razor

The end



It was the perfect situation if I planned it right. I knew I couldn't depend on Nick...

I knew what he'd do. He'd settle on the grass, read his book and that'd be it.

No, it was all up to me.





For a while, it seemed to work! At least they had seen one another.

But for some strange reason...

...he left!



Come on, Nellie, you silly girl. We're going home!



But I was not giving up!



I was determined that somehow, they just had to meet!











WOAH! WHAT GOOD WEATHER!

WHERE ARE YOU OFF TO CHARLIE?



ALRIGHT, C YA LATER MATE!

I'M GOING TO CHECK OUT THE ROCK POOLS!

I'LL CATCH UP TO YOU IN A BIT!

HUH? SOMEONE'S SINGING...

HEARTSTOPPER
MINI COMIC
Seaside Serenade
ART AND STORY BY SHAZLEEN KHAN



HEAR ME CALLIN' BOO!



YOU KNOW THAT I'M FALLIN AND I DON'T KNOW



I'LL SPEAK

LOUDER.

I'LL EVEN S

YOU SING SO WELL!

YOU KNOW

AH— PLEASE DON'T STOP, I JUST—

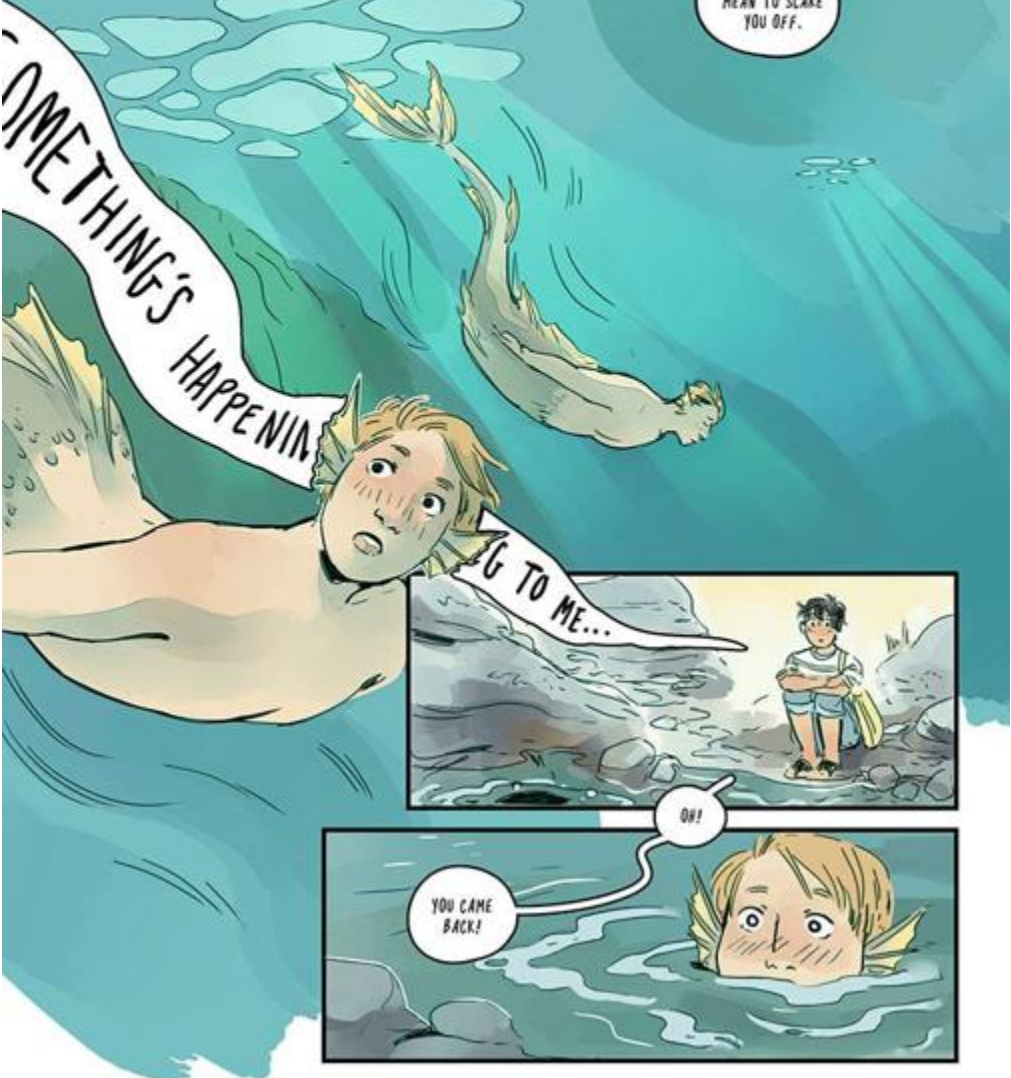


OH!



I'M SORRY...

I DIDN'T MEAN TO SCARE YOU OFF.



SOMETHING'S HAPPENING



...G TO ME...

OH!



YOU CAME BACK!



















It was the perfect situation if I planned it right. I knew I couldn't depend on Nick...

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ALRIGHT, CYA LATER MATE!



HUH? SOMEONE'S SINGING...



HEAR ME CALLIN' YOU TO SWIM



SWIM AND I DON'T KNOW

HEARTSTOPPER MINI COMIC Seaside Serenade

ART AND STORY BY SHAZLEEN KHAN

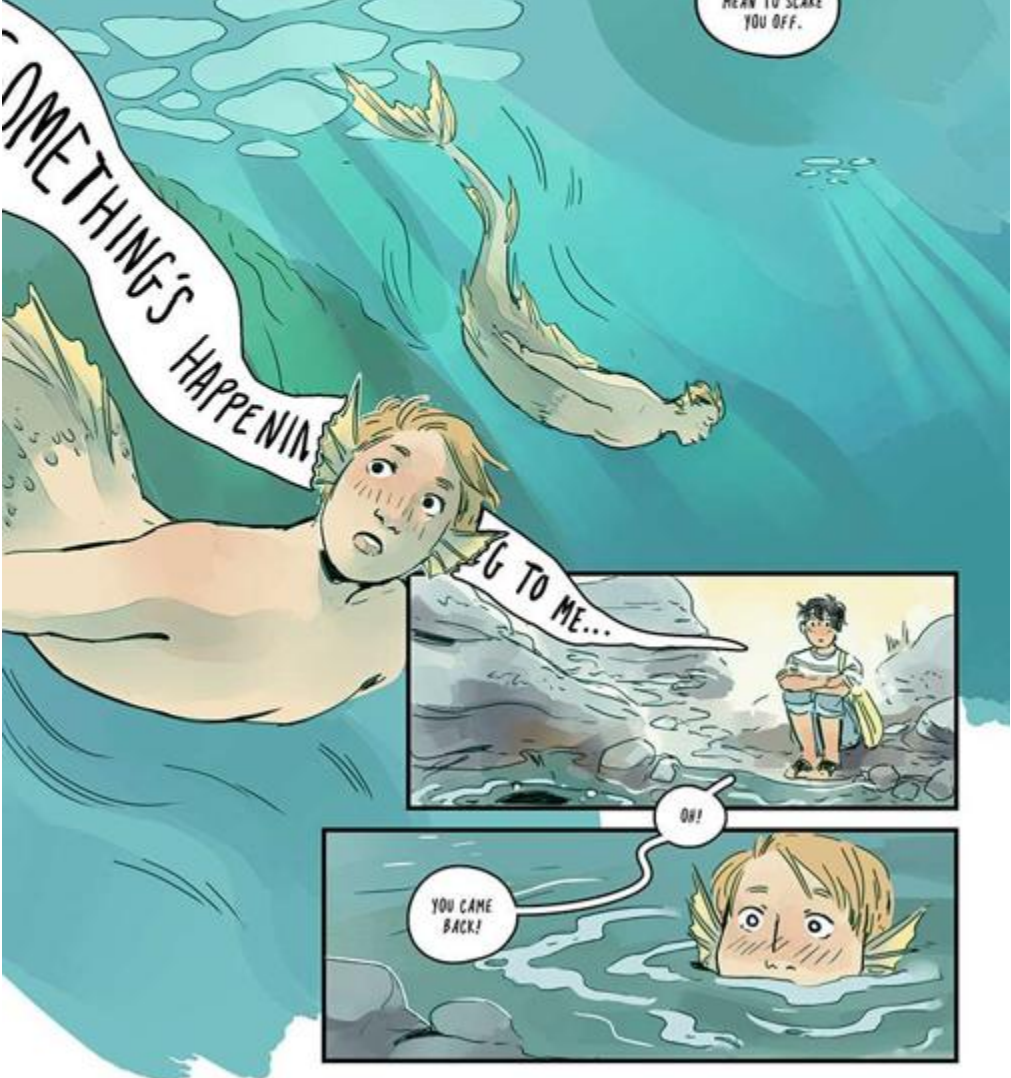
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SOMETHING'S HAPPENING



...G TO ME...

OH!



YOU CAME BACK!







IT WAS SO GOOD!!

Avenue's new shopping

Cap was so badass!

I'm glad you had fun But... the ending though?

How can you say that!

It's ok Nick...
Miiii

What's that noise?
Miii



Look! Someone abandoned this little one...















Happy Halloween!

How excited is Oly for trick-or-treating? Haha

OMG you have no idea
Did you figure out your costume!

trick or treat

A HEARTSTEPPER GUEST COMIC
BY LUCY



