

NAAT'ÁANI



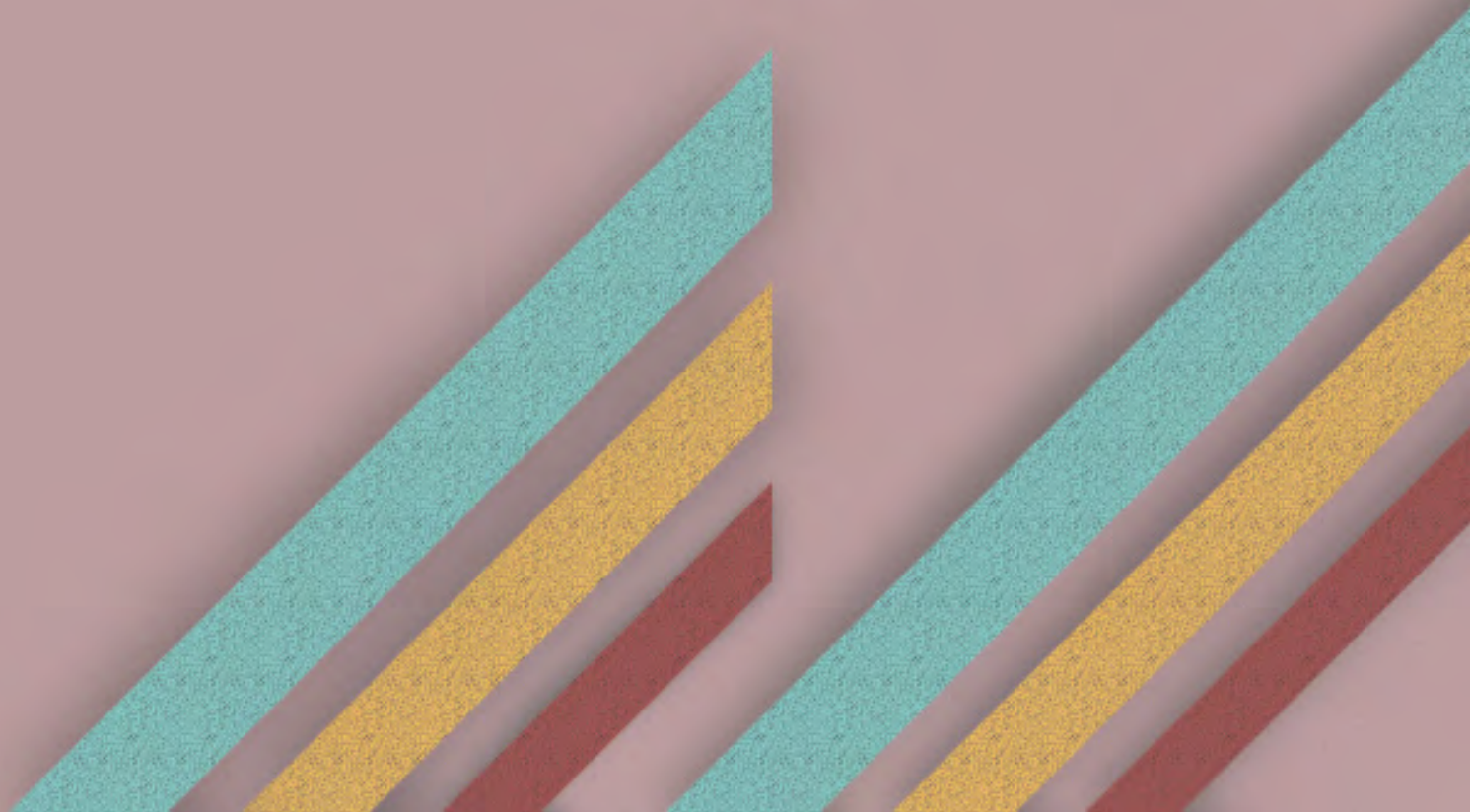
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Portfolio:
www.behance.net/ninjalizz

Instagram:
@Descheenie_Designs

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I began writing this comic in 2010 when I was a Freshman in high school. I started character designs a few years later as a Senior in 2014. The comic finally came to life when I applied for the Seabury Fellowship in September 2017.

This comic book isn't solely for entertainment, it's to educate on the reality of growing up on the Navajo Reservation as an interracial Navajo. For myself, and for many members of my family, it wasn't easy living on the rez.

My first encounter with racism, that I remember, was with one of my school teachers. She asked me what I was, I didn't really understand the question, but I remembered my dad told me I was Navajo.

So, that's what I told her.

She looked at me quizically and said, "Yes, but you're not full. You're not really Diné."

I was four. I went home that day unsure of myself, and from that point on began the evergoing battle of my identity. The next seventeen years, I would become accustomed to hearing, *"What are you? Really? You don't look Native, Are you sure you're not Asian?"*

And my all time favorite, *"That's your dad?"*

I was questioned and mocked because I didn't "look Native". I was always asked to "pick a side" or "claim" one or the other. To many, I was an abomination, a mutt, an outcast. But, to my grandfather, I was something beautiful.

One thing I learned from my grandfather, Lloyd House, was to love people regardless of what they thought about me. The legacy of my grandfather, a man who was Navajo and Oneida, yet he didn't "look Native", was to love people, and to help people. He taught me to see beyond my skin color, that I was more than what people wanted from me.

He taught me that I am Navajo, Oneida, and Spanish; I didn't need to take a side, because before all that, I am me.

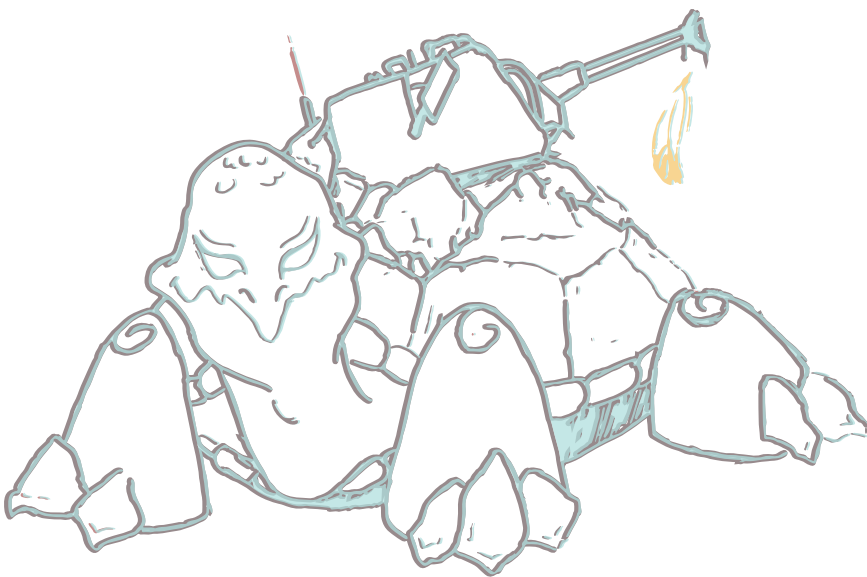


DEDICATED TO:

Dr. Lloyd House

“You’ll never do anything, unless you try.”





SPECIAL THANKS:

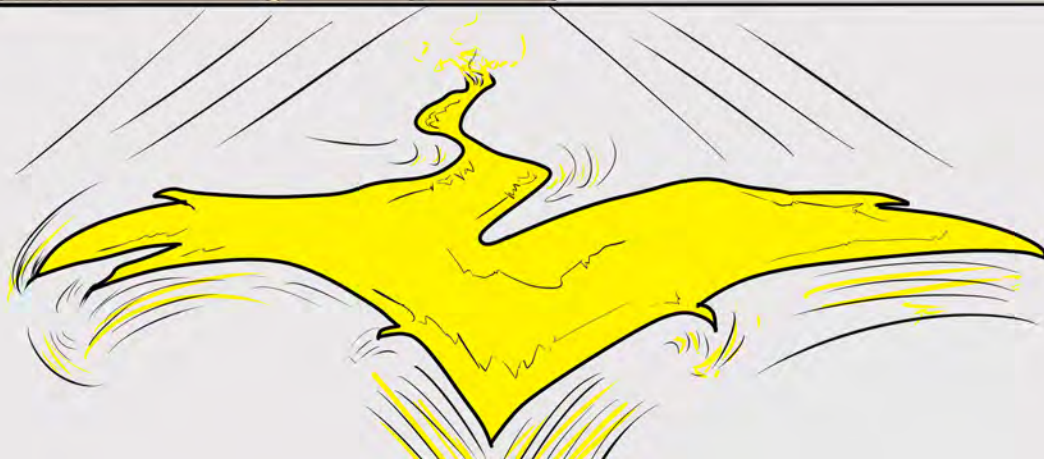
Margaret Lynch
Tina James-Tafoya
Seabury Foundation
Media Arts and Technology Department

I am not defined by the color of my

skin.

I am defined by the color of my

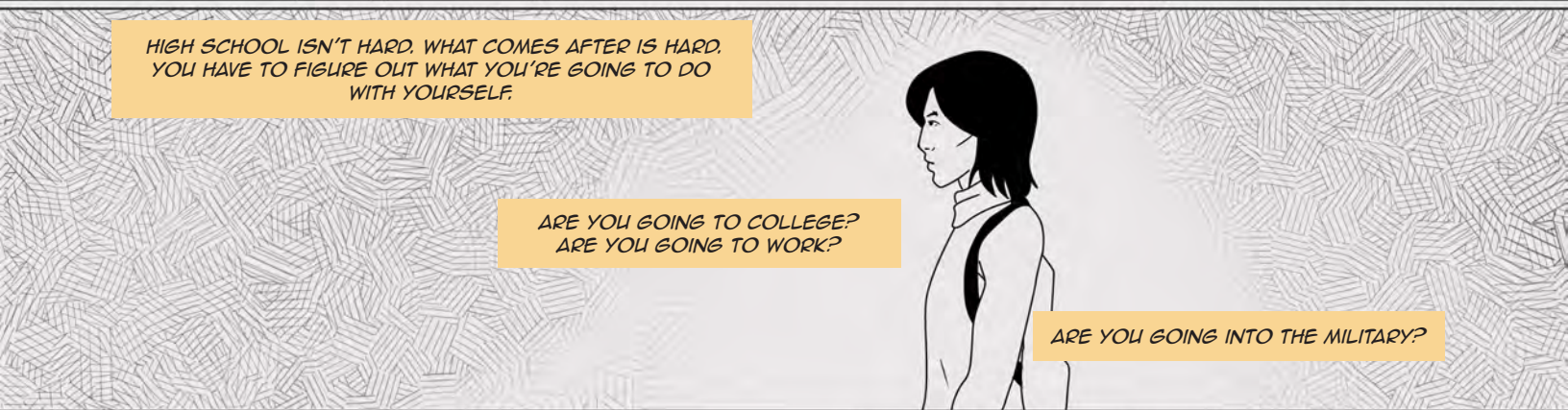
character.







I NEVER REALLY UNDERSTOOD WHY GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL WAS SUCH A BIG DEAL. YOU SHOULD GRADUATE, I MEAN, COME ON, IT SAYS SOMETHING ABOUT YOU IF IT WAS A MIRACLE THAT YOU GOT OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL. ESPECIALLY IN THIS PLACE.



HIGH SCHOOL ISN'T HARD. WHAT COMES AFTER IS HARD. YOU HAVE TO FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO WITH YOURSELF.

ARE YOU GOING TO COLLEGE?
ARE YOU GOING TO WORK?

ARE YOU GOING INTO THE MILITARY?



IF YOU'RE GOING TO COLLEGE, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO STUDY AND HOW ARE YOU GOING TO PAY FOR IT?

RIK, DID MOM TELL YOU TO COME STRAIGHT HOME FROM SCHOOL TODAY?

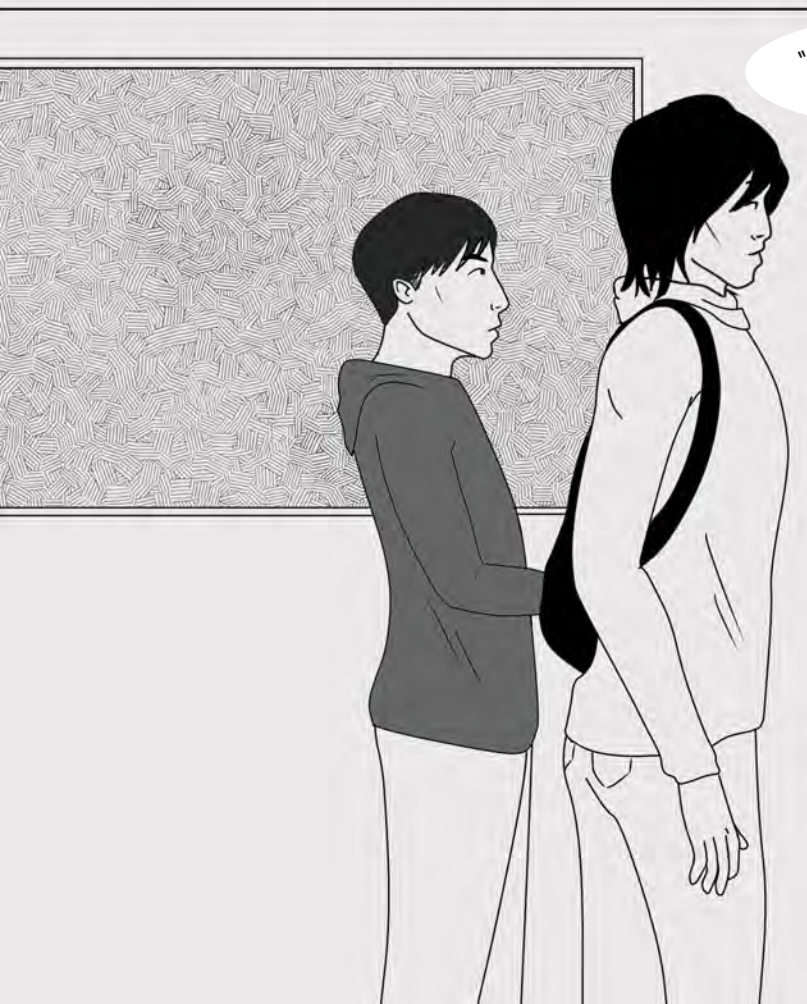
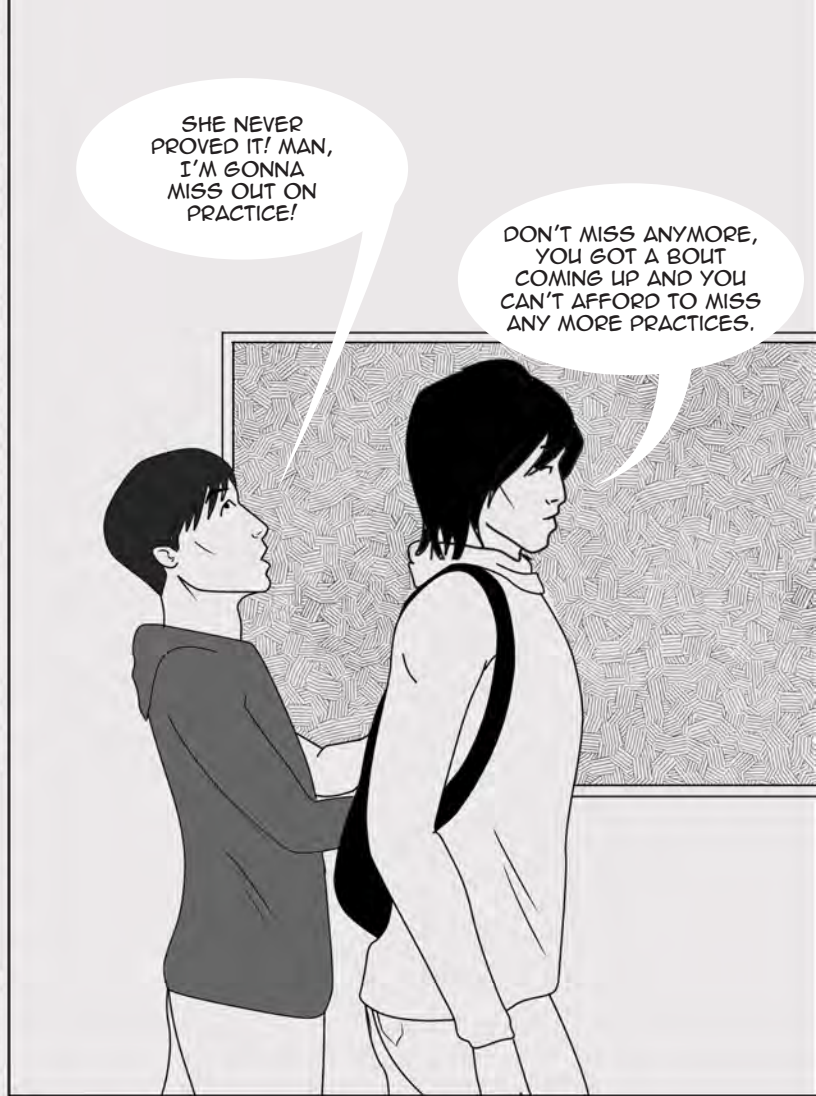


NOPE.
SHE TELL YOU THAT?

YEAH,
LOOKS LIKE SHE'S NOT TOO HAPPY ABOUT ME GETTING A D IN ENGLISH.

WELL, I WOULDN'T BE EITHER.
YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING.

YOU'RE JUST LAZY.



ALRIGHT CLASS, I'M GOING TO
MAKE A QUICK RUN TO THE OFFICE,

SO WORK ON THE HOMEWORK
WHILE I'M OUT, JASON, YOU KEEP
AN EYE ON THE CLASS.

1966: Dr. Lloyd House elected (D)
- AZ House of Rep.
- first American Indian to serve
Two years
1968: Dr. House runs for congress

HV: Pgs 130-145
#1-15
Test: Chpt 10-15

I DON'T GET WHY EVERYONE
FEELS THE NEED TO TURN UP THE
DECIBELS WHEN AN ADULT LEAVES
THE ROOM.

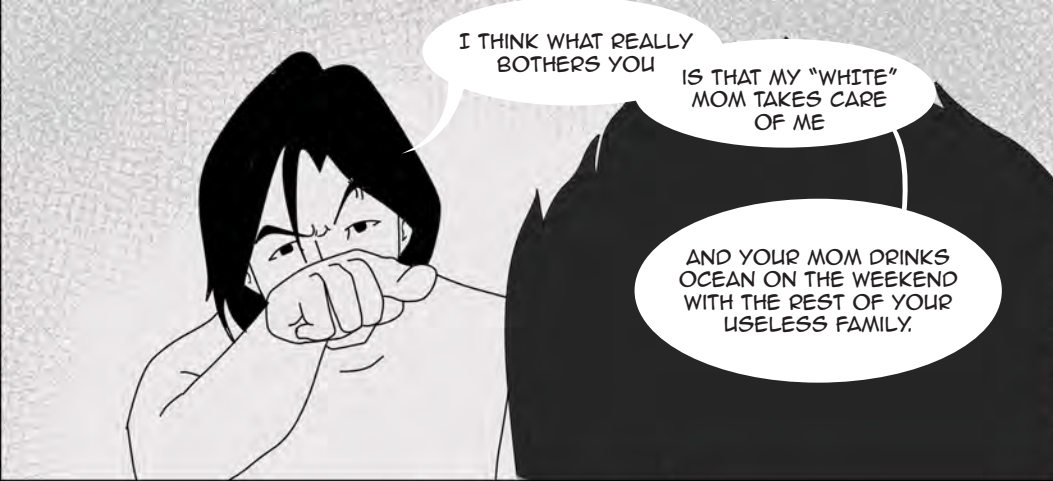
EVERYONE IS SO NOISY, IT'S
MAKING MY HEAD HURT EVEN MORE.

IS THERE
SOMETHING
WRONG RIK?

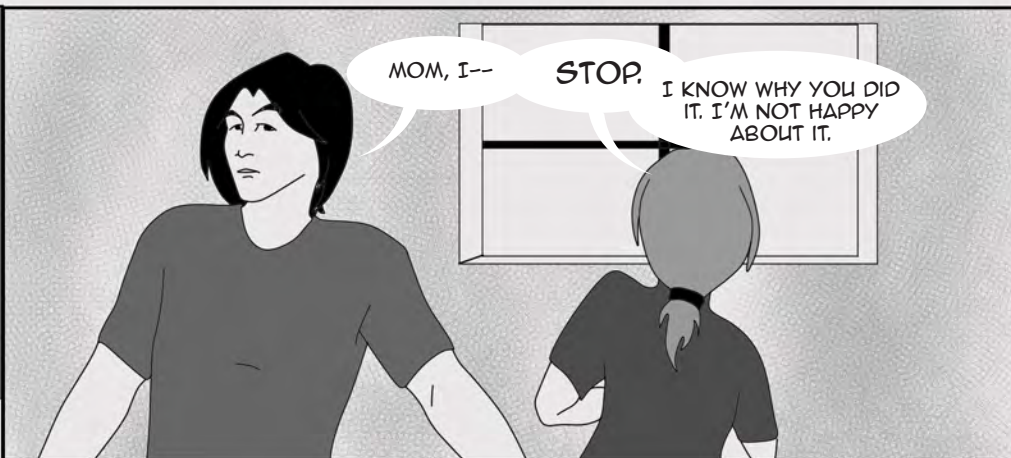
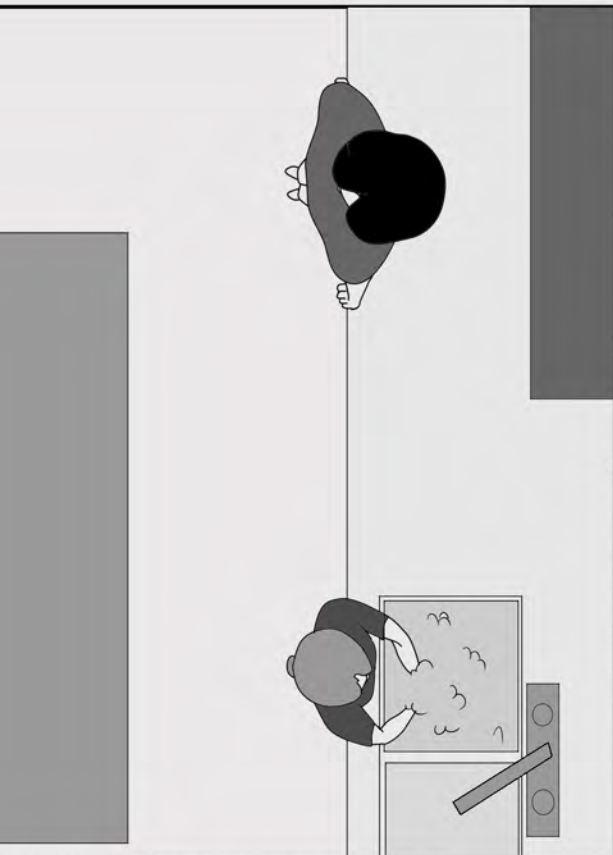
NOTHING IS WRONG
LORINDA, THANKS FOR
ASKING THOUGH.

ARE YOU SURE?
YOU'RE KIND OF
PALE.












I DON'T MEAN THAT
DISRESPECTFULLY, BUT
YOU DON'T.



YOU MAY HAVE KIDS THAT ARE
NAVAJO, BUT IT'S DIFFERENT
FOR YOU MOM. YOU HAVE NO
OBLIGATION TO STAY HERE. YOU'RE
NOT TIED TO THIS PLACE

EVER NOTICE THAT ALL THE RACIST
REMARKS WE GET ARE DIRECTED AT
ME AND MY BROTHERS? BUT NEVER
AT YOU. SURE, THEY SAY STUFF
ABOUT YOU, BUT NEVER TO YOUR
FACE. IF ANYTHING PEOPLE LIKE
YOU.

BUT, WHEN I WALK IN THE ROOM
WHAT HAPPENS?

IT GETS QUIET OR SOMEONE SAYS
SOMETHING TO ONE OF US.



THEY'RE OKAY WITH YOU MOM
BECAUSE YOU'VE
"CHOSEN A SIDE".



THEY WANT NOTHING TO DO WITH
US BECAUSE WE CAN'T CHOOSE A
SIDE. WE DON'T FIT INTO THE "US"
AND "THEM" PARADIGM.



WHAT?

I'M JUST IMPRESSED WITH
HOW SELF-ABSORBED YOU'VE
BECOME.

DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT
YOUR DAD AND I DIDN'T HAVE
PROBLEMS WHEN WE GOT
MARRIED?



NO, BUT IT'S
DIFFERENT.



NO IT'S NOT.



THE HARDEST THING
ABOUT BEING WHITE,

IS HEARING THAT YOUR
CHILDREN ARE BEING
ABUSED BECAUSE OF IT.



I JUST WANT YOU TO
KNOW THAT YOU ARE
NOT ALONE IN THIS.

YOU RELY ON YOURSELF
TOO MUCH. AND YOU'RE
SO BUSY WITH MAKING
SURE THAT YOUR
BROTHERS ARE OKAY.





YOU NEVER MISS PRACTICE. WHERE WERE YOU?

PLAYING HOOKEY?

MOM! I'M HOME!

NO. I WAS NOT PLAYING HOOKEY. I GOT--

I GOT INTO A FIGHT.

AGAIN?

WHAT HAPPENED?

WELL, I--

GROAN!

ROUGH DAY BUD?

MRGH.

SIT UP.

MMGH.

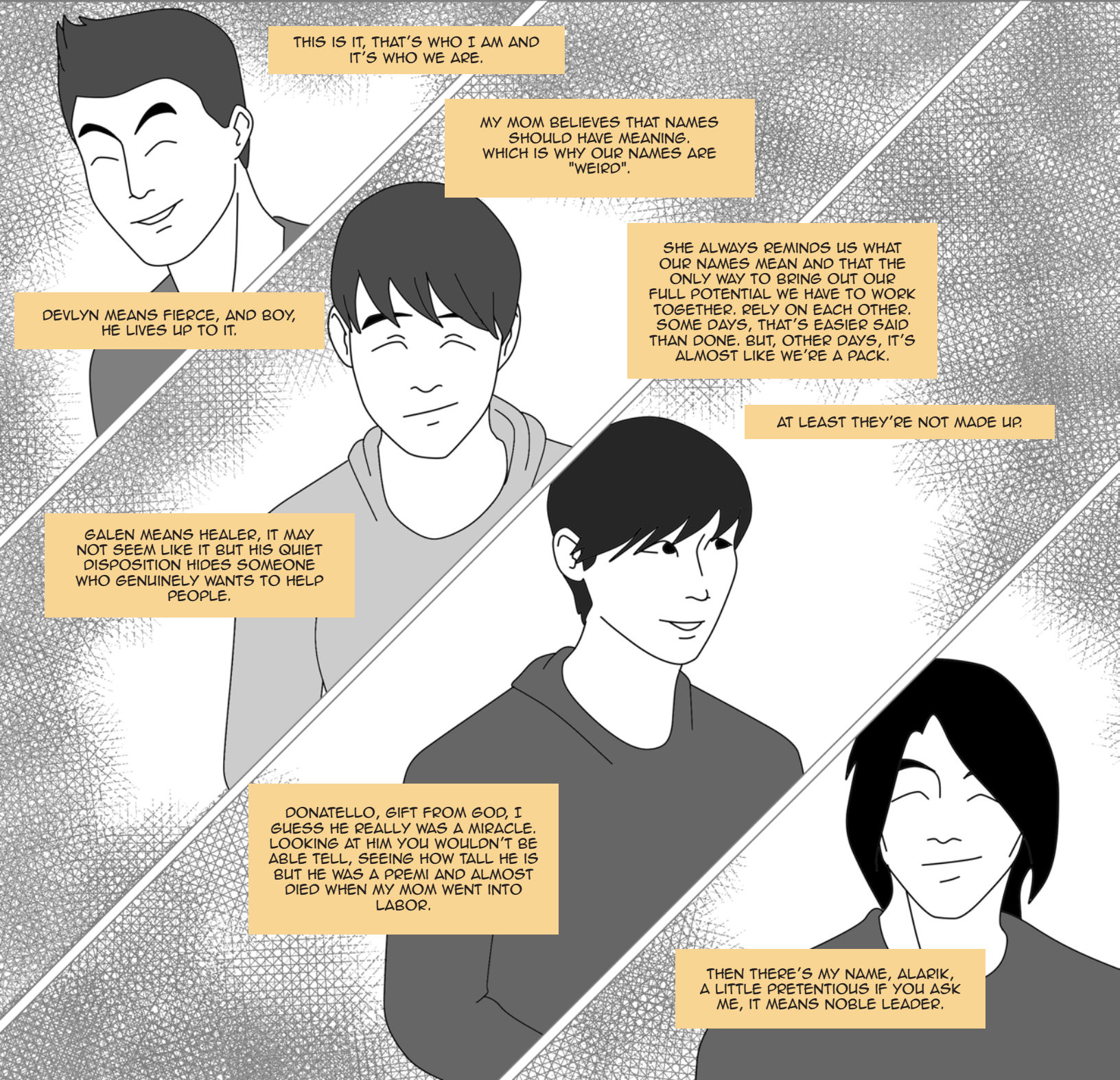




DID I ASK YOU?

DON'T START.

AW MAN, DID I TELL YOU
WHAT HAPPENED IN CHEM
TODAY?



THIS IS IT, THAT'S WHO I AM AND
IT'S WHO WE ARE.

MY MOM BELIEVES THAT NAMES
SHOULD HAVE MEANING.
WHICH IS WHY OUR NAMES ARE
"WEIRD".

DEVLYN MEANS FIERCE, AND BOY,
HE LIVES UP TO IT.

SHE ALWAYS REMINDS US WHAT
OUR NAMES MEAN AND THAT THE
ONLY WAY TO BRING OUT OUR
FULL POTENTIAL WE HAVE TO WORK
TOGETHER. RELY ON EACH OTHER.
SOME DAYS, THAT'S EASIER SAID
THAN DONE. BUT, OTHER DAYS, IT'S
ALMOST LIKE WE'RE A PACK.

AT LEAST THEY'RE NOT MADE UP.

GALEN MEANS HEALER, IT MAY
NOT SEEM LIKE IT BUT HIS QUIET
DISPOSITION HIDES SOMEONE
WHO GENUINELY WANTS TO HELP
PEOPLE.

DONATELLO, GIFT FROM GOD, I
GUESS HE REALLY WAS A MIRACLE.
LOOKING AT HIM YOU WOULDN'T BE
ABLE TELL, SEEING HOW TALL HE IS
BUT HE WAS A PREMI AND ALMOST
DIED WHEN MY MOM WENT INTO
LABOR.

THEN THERE'S MY NAME, ALARIK,
A LITTLE PRETENTIOUS IF YOU ASK
ME, IT MEANS NOBLE LEADER.

THE NEXT MORNING.

HONEY, ARE YOU GOING TO SEE YOUR GRANDFATHER TODAY?

MHM.

YOU'RE NOT STOPPING BY THE FLEA MARKET TO GET HIM A NAVAJO BURGER ARE YOU?

MMM.

ARE YOU BRINGING THE BOYS?

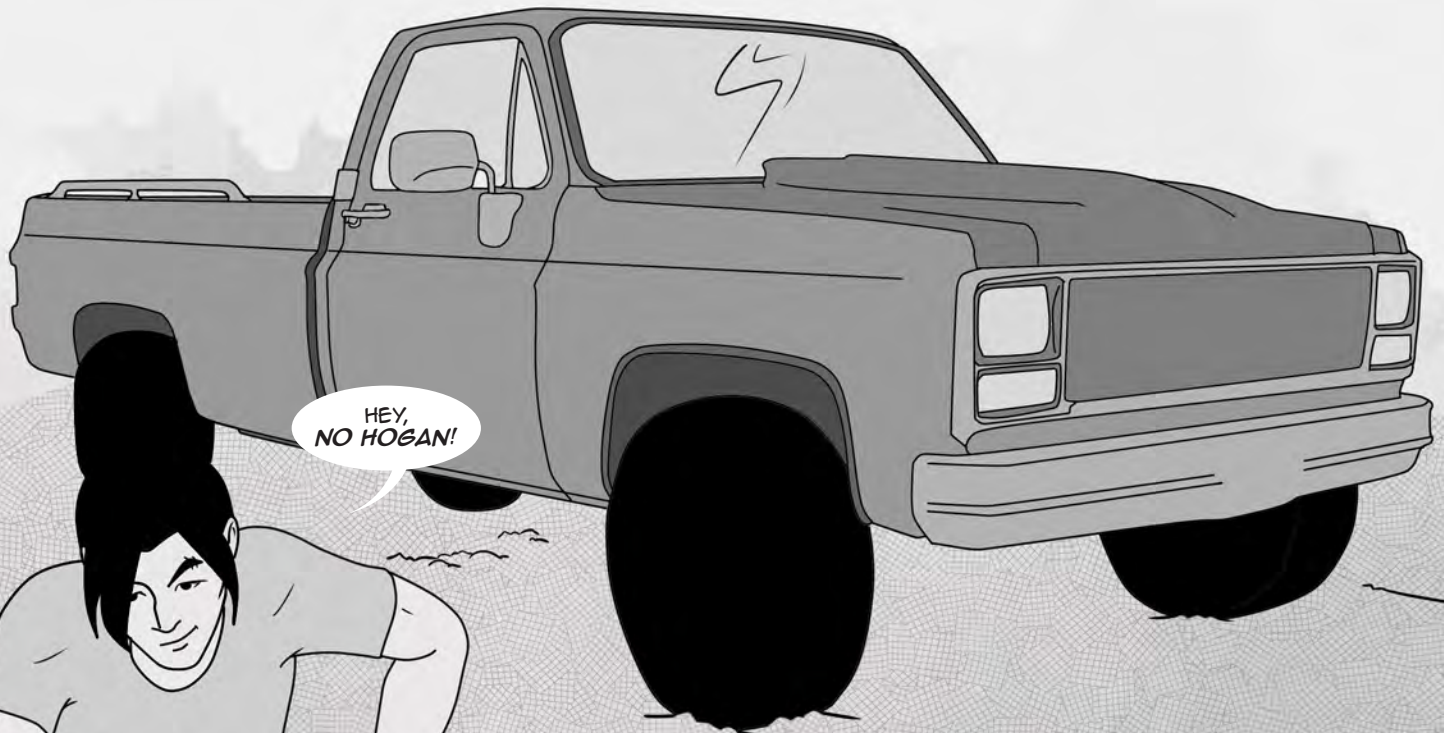
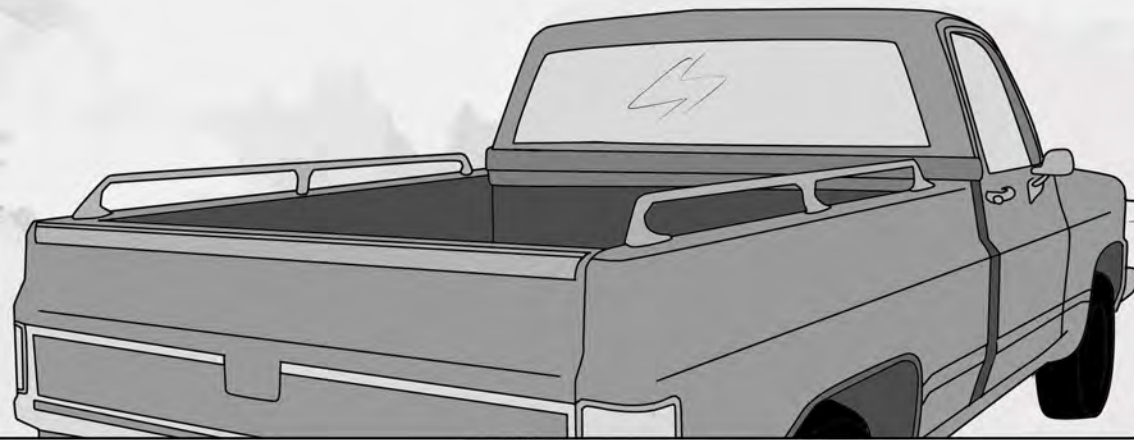
HM'M.

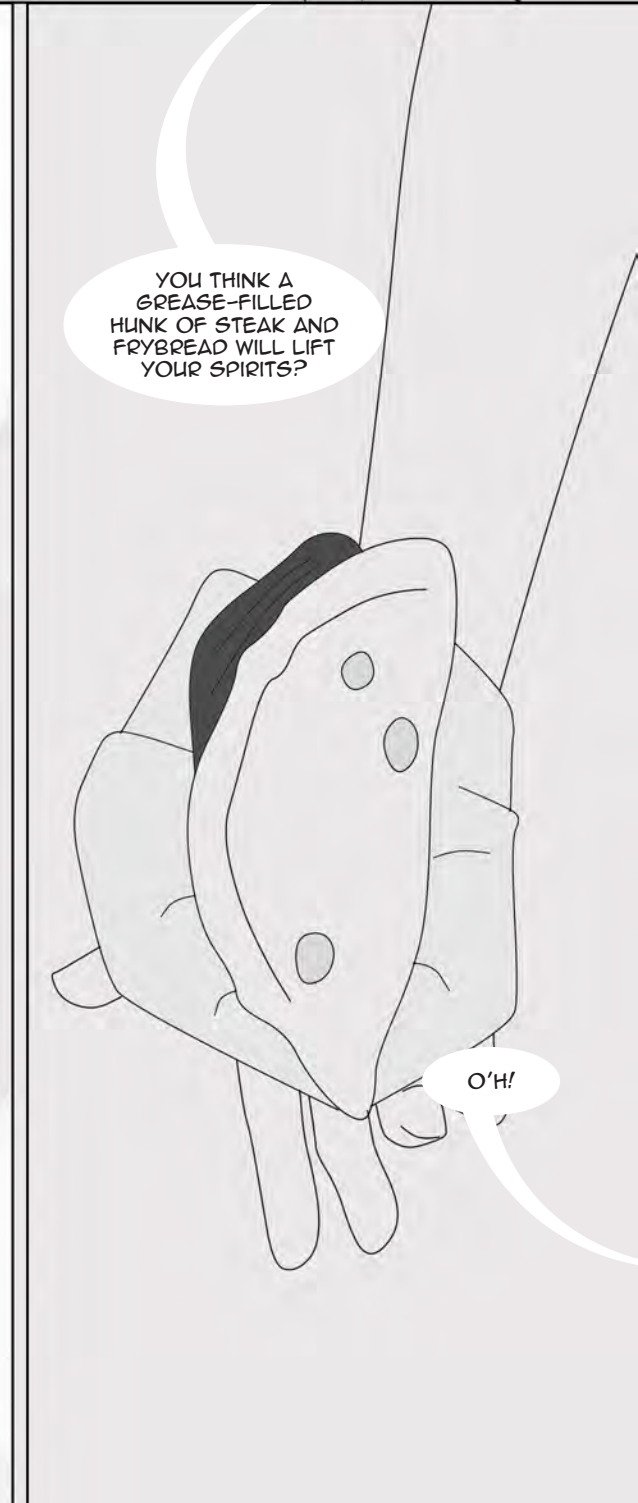
BE CAREFUL. IT'S FIRST OF THE MONTH SO EVERYONE WILL BE OUT ON THE ROADS.

MHM.

ALWAYS.

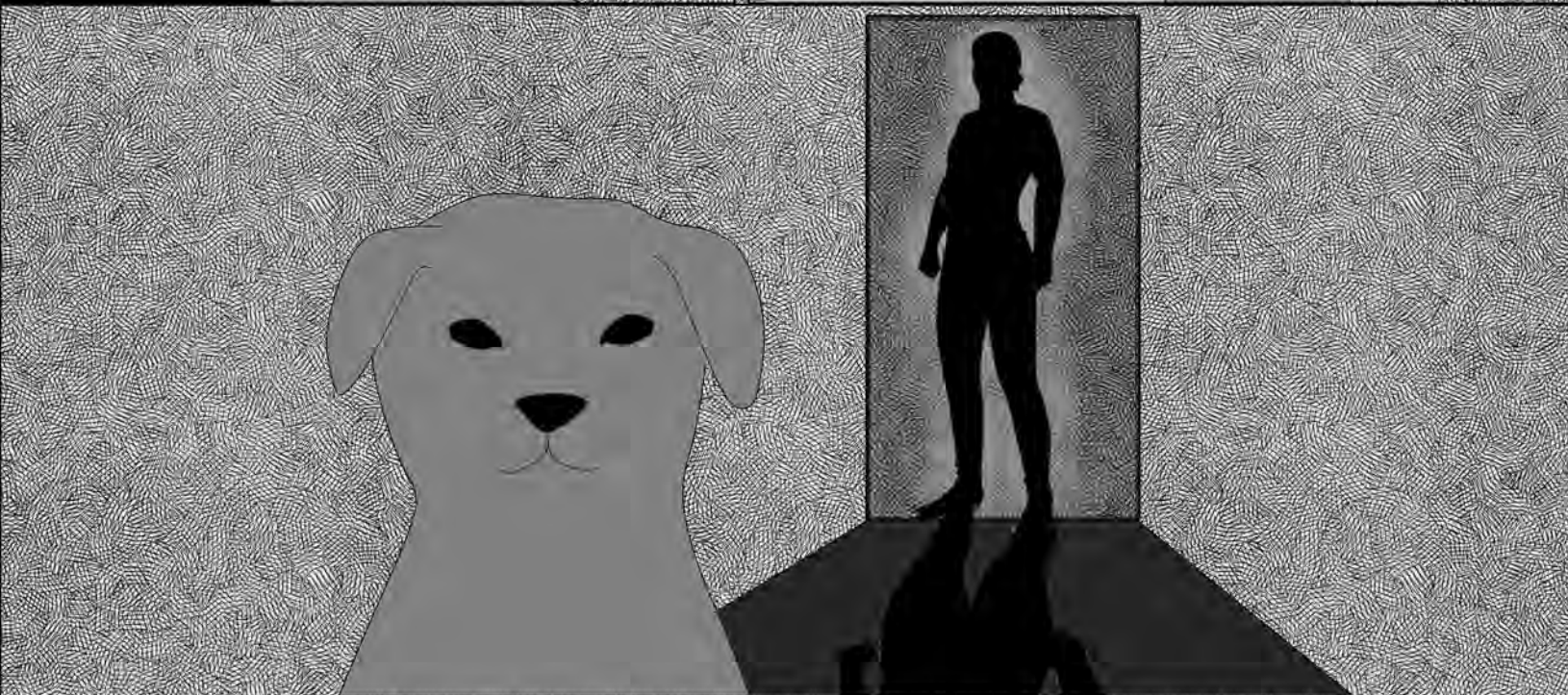
CHINLE, ARIZONA





THAT NIGHT.







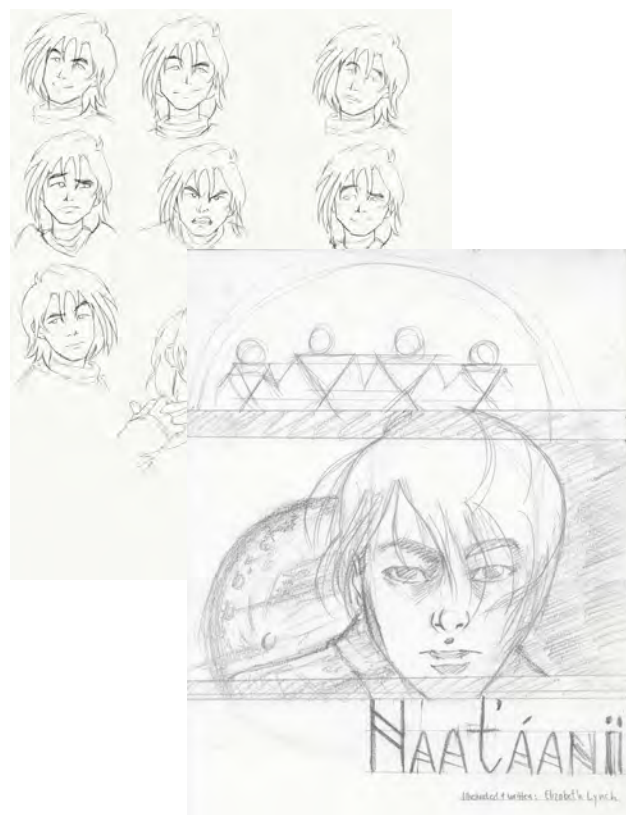
AFTER THAT NIGHT, MY LIFE WOULD
NEVER BE THE SAME.

END OF PART 1

EXTRA:



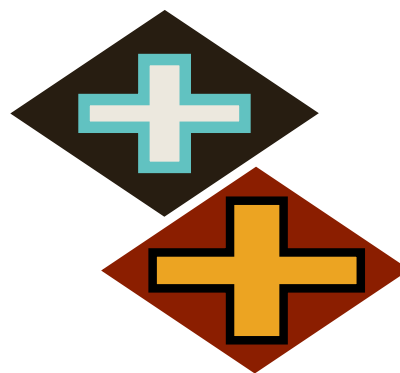
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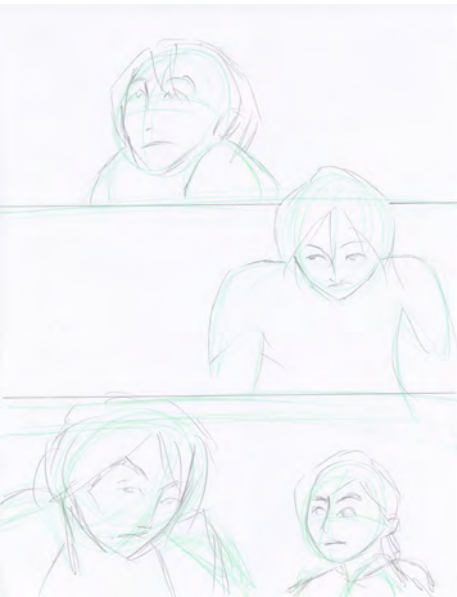


Early sketches



Mood designs





Base Sketches

Shi ei Naakaaii Dine'e' nishli. Deshchii'nii
ei bashishchiin. Aadoo che'ii' digahii' ei
dashicheii doo. Tsenijikini ei dashinali.

I am born of the Mexican People, and
born for the Red-Streaked People. My
maternal grandfather's clan is turtle, and my
paternal grandfather's clan is Cliff-Dwellers.

Here's an interesting bit history, in May
1942, two hundred young Navajo men were
recruited by the United States Marine Corps,
twenty nine of those men were shipped off
to boot camp and at Camp Pendleton a code
was created, for the Pacific Front of the war
because Japanese forces had continued to
break and intercept our transmissions.

Those men created a code within a
code, one of the code words they used in the
war for identifying a tank was the Navajo
word for turtle: che'ii' digahii'

My grandfather's clan from his mother,
who was Oneida is Turtle.

I created a logo that would have a lot of
meaning, and something that would spark
conversation.

