



**A COLLECTION OF TEEN COMICS: STRUGGLES THEY FACE AND OVERCOME**



**RIPLEY**



**SHYLA**



**IMARI**



**SHYANNA**



**COURTNEY**



**ERIN**



**TAMARA**



**KELSEY**



**CAITLIN**



**CYNTHIA**

## FALL 2013

SEVENTEEN TEENAGERS WORKED WITH REACH STUDIO ART CENTER STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, AND GUEST ARTISTS TO CREATE 10 COMICS. THEY CHOSE "SOCIAL JUSTICE" AS THEIR THEME. THEY CONDUCTED VIDEO INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL ADVOCATES ON THEIR CHOSEN TOPICS: GENDER EQUALITY, ARTS IN SCHOOLS, BULLYING, LGBTQ COMMUNITY, AND SUICIDE PREVENTION. ENCLOSED ARE THEIR COLLABORATIVE ARTWORKS BASED ON THEIR PERSONAL LIVES AND COMMUNITY STORYTELLING SESSIONS WITH LOCAL ADVOCATES.

## FROM CYNTHIA

EVERY SINGLE PERSON IN THE WORLD HAS A REASON FOR DOING SOMETHING GOOD OR BAD. AND, EVEN THOUGH SOMETIMES SOME PEOPLE THINK THOSE REASONS ARE NOT GOOD ENOUGH. ...SAY SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED BY ANOTHER PERSON AND YOU ASK THE BULLY, "WHY ARE YOU BEING SOMEAN?" THEY TELL YOU, "BECAUSE I WAS BULLIED BEFORE." IS THAT ANY REASON TO BULLY SOMEONE?

EACH OF US AT TEEN OPEN STUDIO HAS OUR OWN STORY ABOUT WHAT LIFE CAN BE LIKE FOR OURSELVES. LIFE ISN'T ALWAYS FAIR AND IT CAN BE CRUEL AT TIMES. AND, NOT EVERYBODY IS TREATED FAIRLY. IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU SHOULD BE MEAN BECAUSE YOU WERE TREATED BADLY. WHAT I WANT YOU TO LEARN, WHOEVER IS READING THIS, IS THAT BULLYING IS WRONG. IT ALWAYS HAS BEEN AND IT ALWAYS WILL BE. DON'T LET BULLYING CHANGE WHO YOU ARE. AND, NO MATTER WHAT, BE HAPPY.



CYNTHIA TERRY, REACH STUDENT

**03**



**SHYANNA WALKER**

**05**



**KELSEY SMITH**

**08**



**COURTNEY DUNBAR**

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**CYNTHIA TERRY**

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**RIPLEY OLSON**

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**CAITLIN HUNT**

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**IMARI DAVIS**

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**TAMARA HUNT**

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**SHYLA WILLIAMS**

**18**



**ÉRIN ERCEG**

**31**

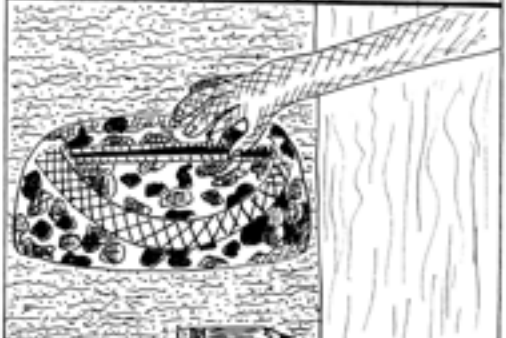


**THANK YOU!**



I woke with a start. It was the same nightmare I'd been having for weeks. My voice, urging me to leave my home.

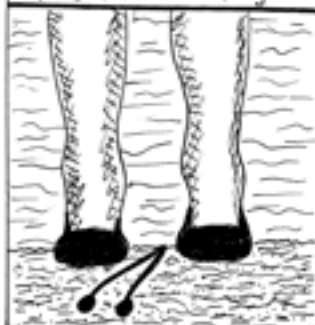
I'd left home many times before, but always came back. This time though, was different. I had a stronger urge to leave.



I was 16, when I decided I was leaving for good.

Why was I leaving? You might ask, because I was attracted to girls.

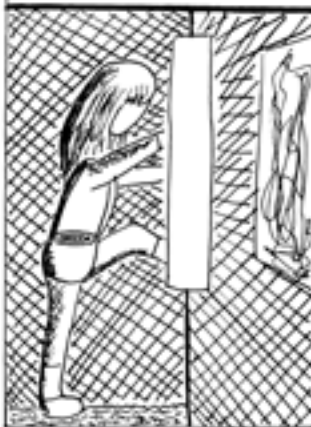
I didn't have real friends I could tell, and didn't tell my parents.



I just couldn't stand the pressure of having to pretend to be someone I wasn't.



I snuck out through my window, only the moon giving me light. I had to leave, and start a new life.



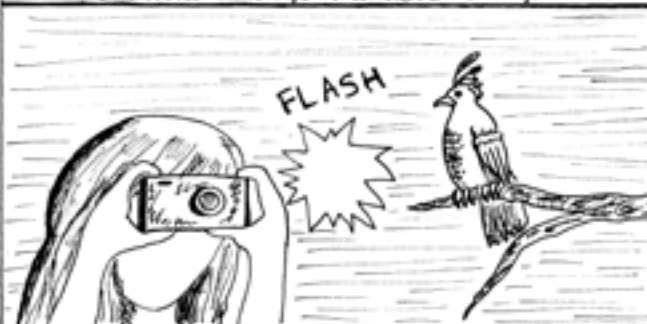
So I hitchhiked a ride, and my journey began.



With nothing but my knapsack filled with a few items, I traveled the world



As I tried to find my identity, I used my camera, which I'd had since I was a child, and saw the world through its lens. It helped me express my emotions in ways I'd never imagined



I eventually got enough money to buy a house, as far away from my hometown as I could



I cut my hair and started a whole new life. But even though I was free from my parent's control and had a decent life, I still felt empty inside



After years of avoiding my true self, I needed a heart transplant. I realized why I felt so empty and in pain. I wasn't being true to myself and I was hurting my body as well as my emotions

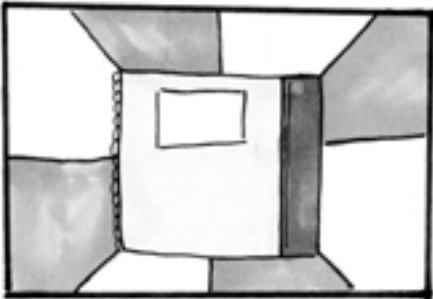
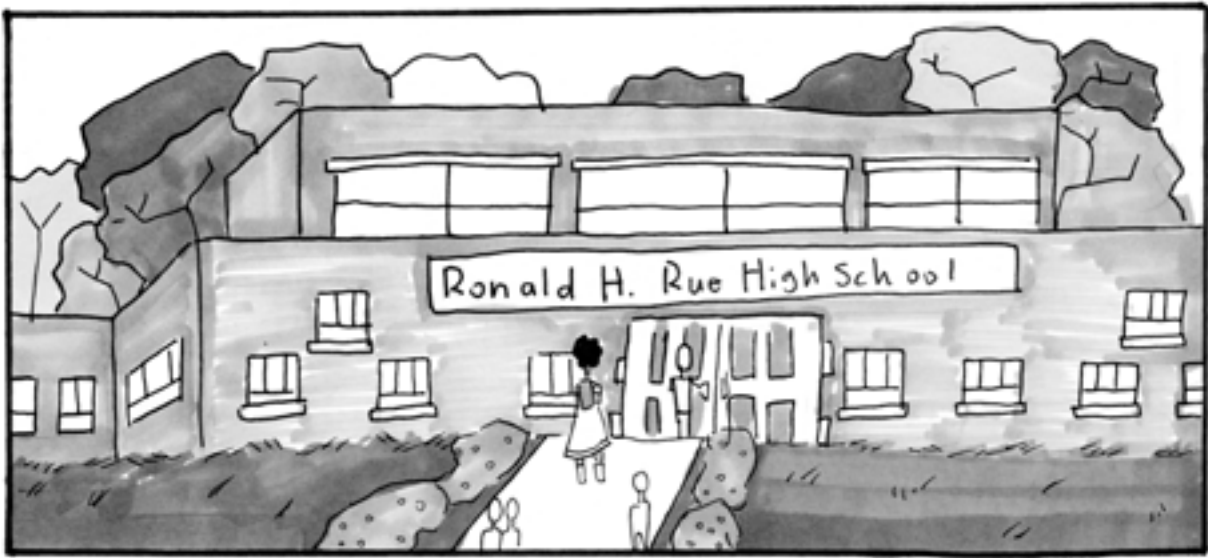
Once I began to accept myself, I started to heal, and I met people who were like me, and were happy. For once in my life, I had real friends

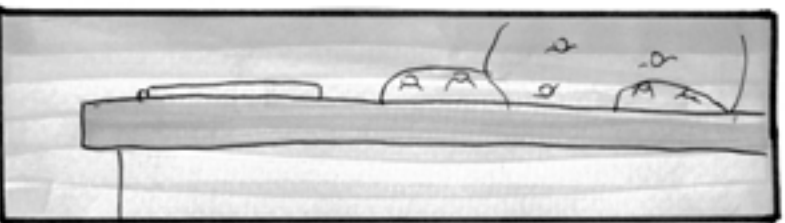


I grew stronger and gained confidence I never knew I had. It took a while, but after many years, I finally had an identity. I finally knew who I was and where I belonged. So, my message to you, whoever is reading this, accept yourself for who you are, no matter what you believe in, or who you love.



Shyanna Walker









3 2 0 2 5

Crying  
aegs // P:io

Self Kill Your

It got bullied  
to be his iser  
himself  
people killing them  
Bullying leads to  
Self Kill Your

Why  
Hopeless

Thank you here give me  
your hand

Go with you r life  
You're  
worthless

Peer  
Children

R.I.P R.I.P

Just  
Say bullying  
is wrong!!  
Nobody  
likes you

LOVED

Don't!!  
Hate!!

Talking about  
her  
friend

Why  
No one  
care  
about  
me

Have  
no life  
ok

Bullying  
leads to  
nowhere I mean

Don't  
like  
you

IS

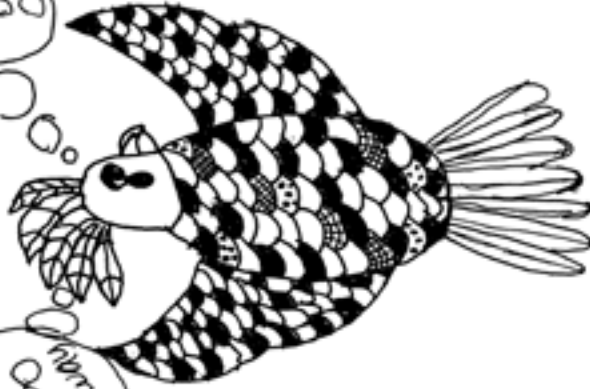
Why are  
you here

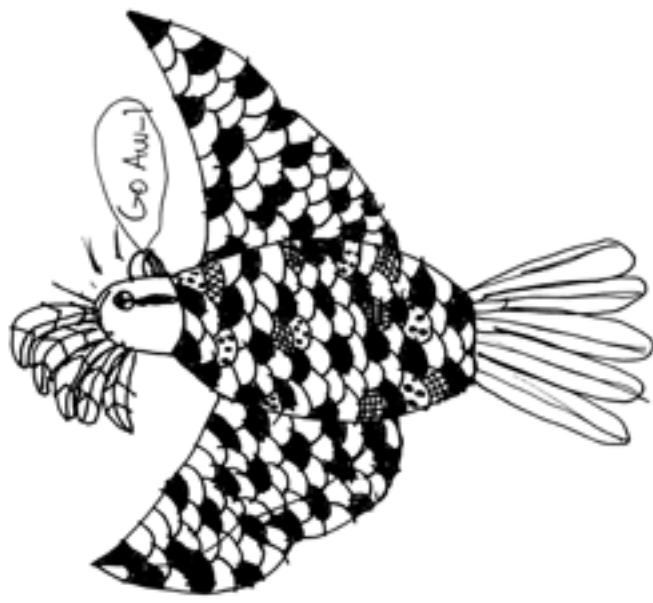
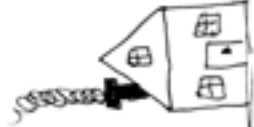
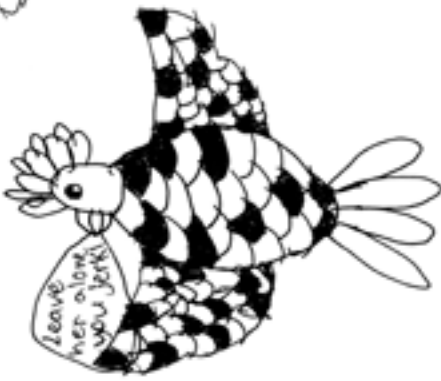
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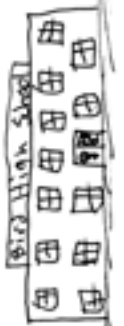
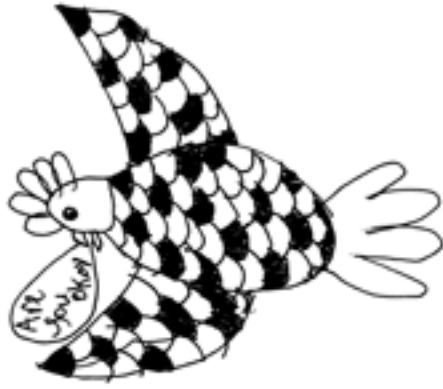
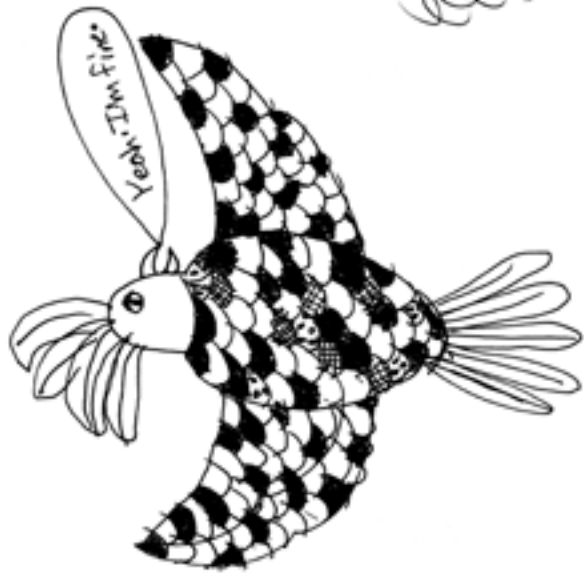
Stupid

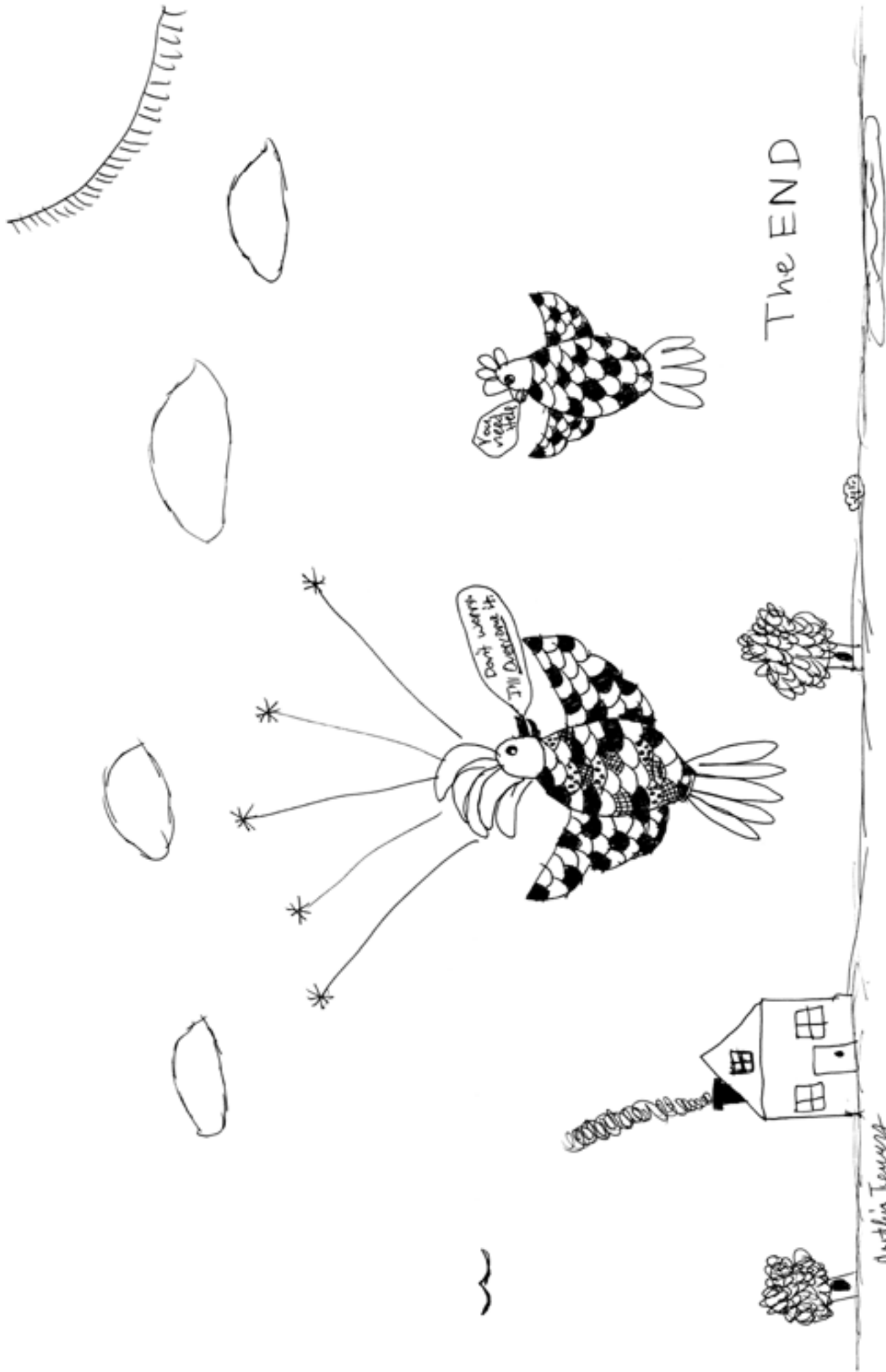
Fat

Think Positive  
I'll  
be  
happy

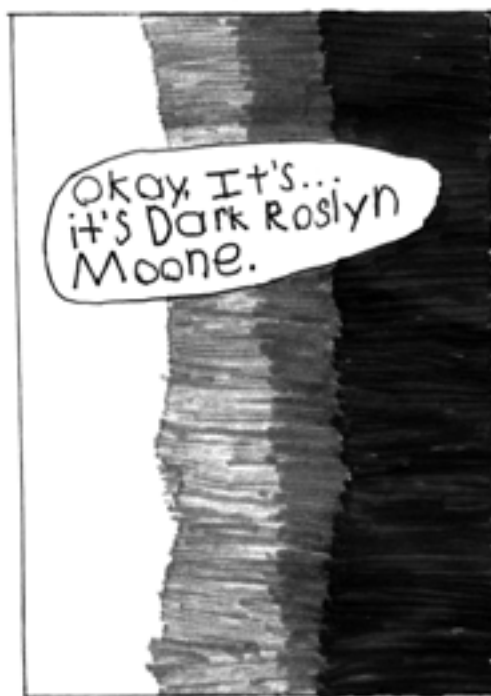








# Excerpt from 'Shadow Bloom



I GUESS I JUST DIDN'T HAVE A VERY GOOD EXPERIENCE WHILE I WAS IN SCHOOL.

20 YEARS EARLIER...

AM I DOING THIS RIGHT?

UM... WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO??

YOU'RE NOT LISTENING TO ME, YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO DO THIS.  
I'M SORRY.



NOW...  
OH, I SEE.

WELL, THEY'RE A LOT BETTER NOW. LOOK AT TYLA.  
YES, THEY ARE BETTER... EVERYONE SAID SO... BUT I'M STILL WORRIED.

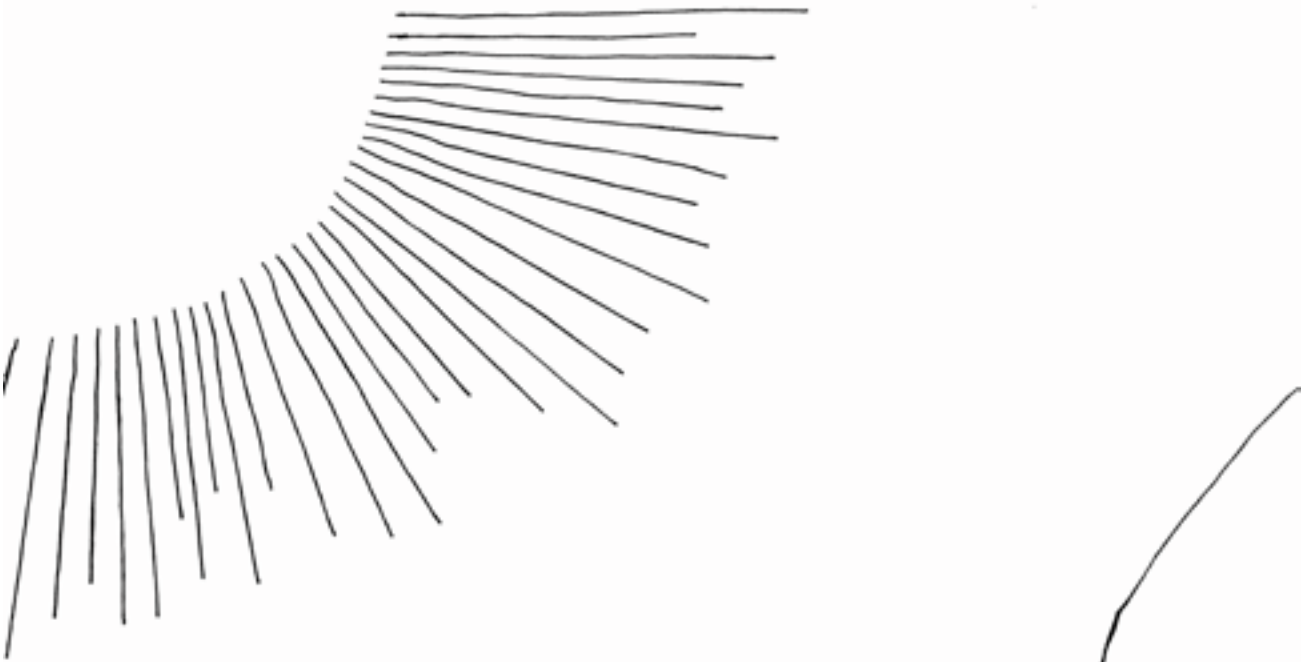
HEY! MAYBE YOU CAN COME WITH ME WHEN I GO GET TYLA!

WHEN DO YOU PICK HER UP?  
OH, AROUND 3:45-4M; BUT WE CAN GO A BIT EARLY AND WATCH WHAT THEY ARE DOING IN THE CLASSROOM IF YOU WANT.  
OH, ALRIGHT.

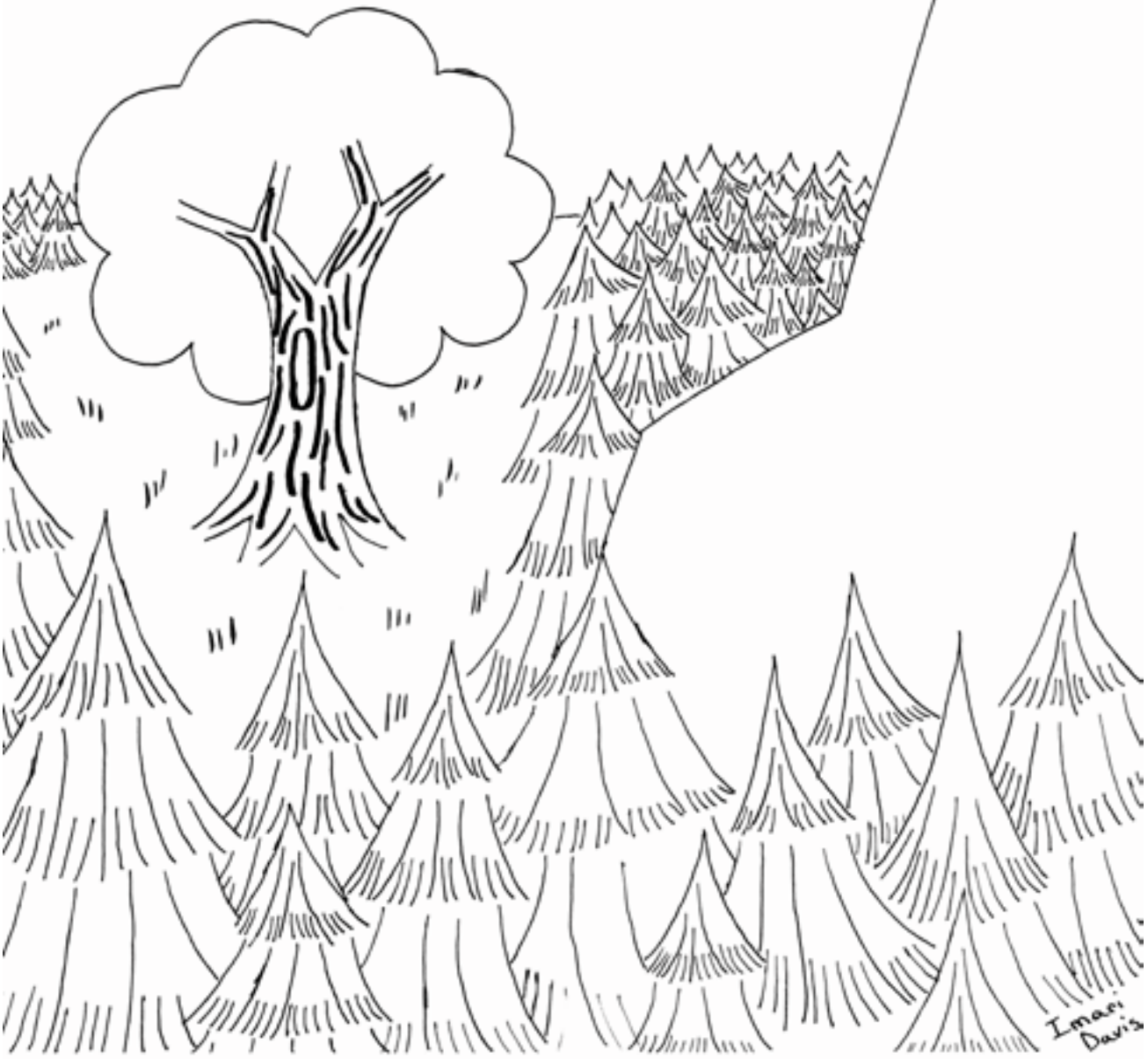
I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL. I WAS WORRIED TOO, WHEN I HAD TYLA.

I DIDN'T HAVE A VERY GOOD IMPRESSION OF SCHOOL EITHER...

Caillin Hunt



*Why is difference wrong?*





# MY STORY

Bullying sucks, take it from me...



I may not have had the worst experiences but any bullying experience sucks.

They say don't judge a book by its cover. But you usually can by the words people say.

When I was younger I used to walk down to the park. Some other kids did too, though they weren't very nice. They were about my age.



Now these kids weren't what you'd call nice, they called me names, threw sand at me, pushed me, and rammed their bikes into mine.



For awhile I didn't see them until a few years back... This time instead of giving them the satisfaction of giving in I just kept walking.



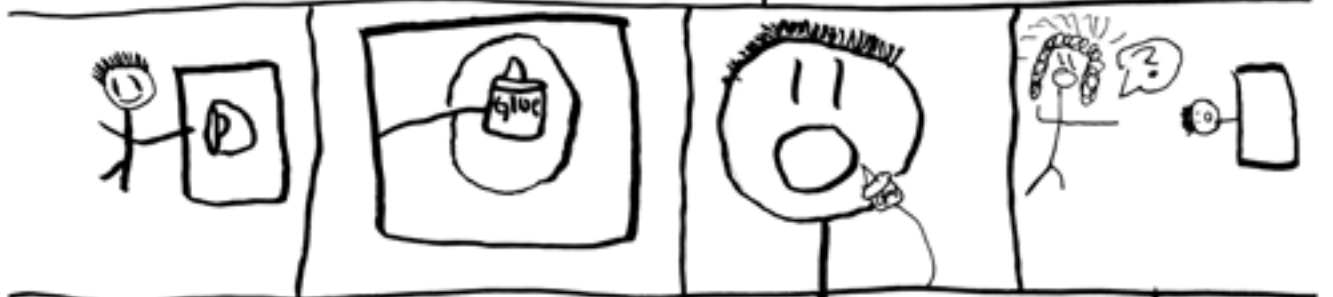
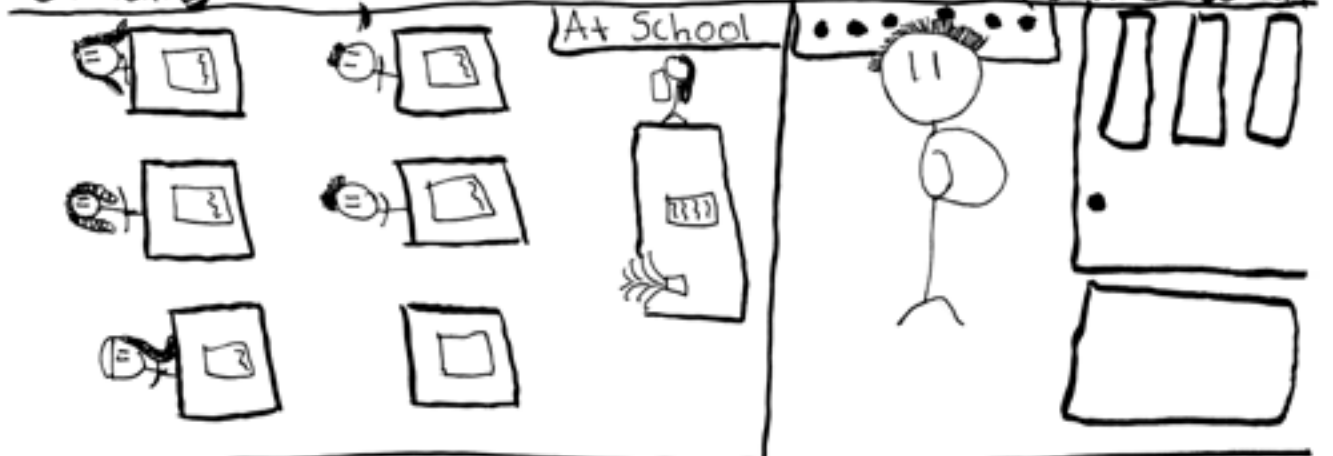
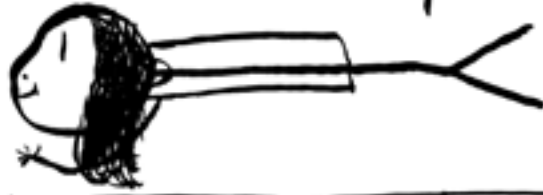
By: Kamara E. Hunt



# The Sticky Situation

By: Shyla Williams

featuring:  
Sparkle Women





...As always, I wish he would take that mask of his off.

He's the reason we're doing this. The prince likes to write, he's just having 'writer's block', a relatively weak one.







Daddy...



Aren't you a little young to be here alone, Deary?

Well, yes... my mother left me.

They played for hours

She was grateful



She acted as if he was the only one to care,

to acknowledge her existence.

It seemed he wasn't the only one...

... Just the one that stayed the longest.









You yourself will grow, the scar for the most part will not...

... It may even get darker or stretch with growing skin,

but I can assure you, you earned it.



I'm always thankful for your help, Daddy



I'm changing Benedikta...



It wasn't the fighting that irked her, it was the letter she was writing, addressed to one of the girls at her school.





I CAN'T  
TAKE  
THIS!



Beastboy  
HA HA

Before you wake up, I want you to know  
that I care; this world is rough, when  
you can walk outside and tell everyone  
you are attractive, and everyone is there to  
harass you and/or tell you otherwise.





He told me  
he couldn't finish  
seeing all of the  
key moments.



We'll have  
to go now, I  
don't like the  
rain, Master.

THE END

Erin A. Erceg

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U**

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