



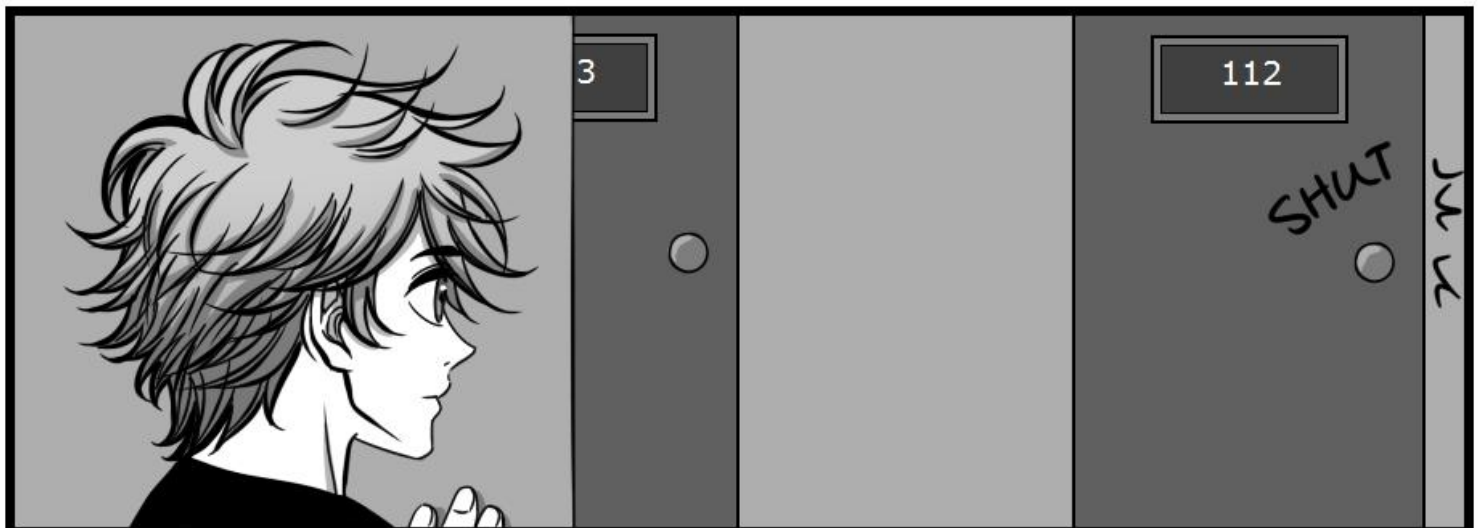
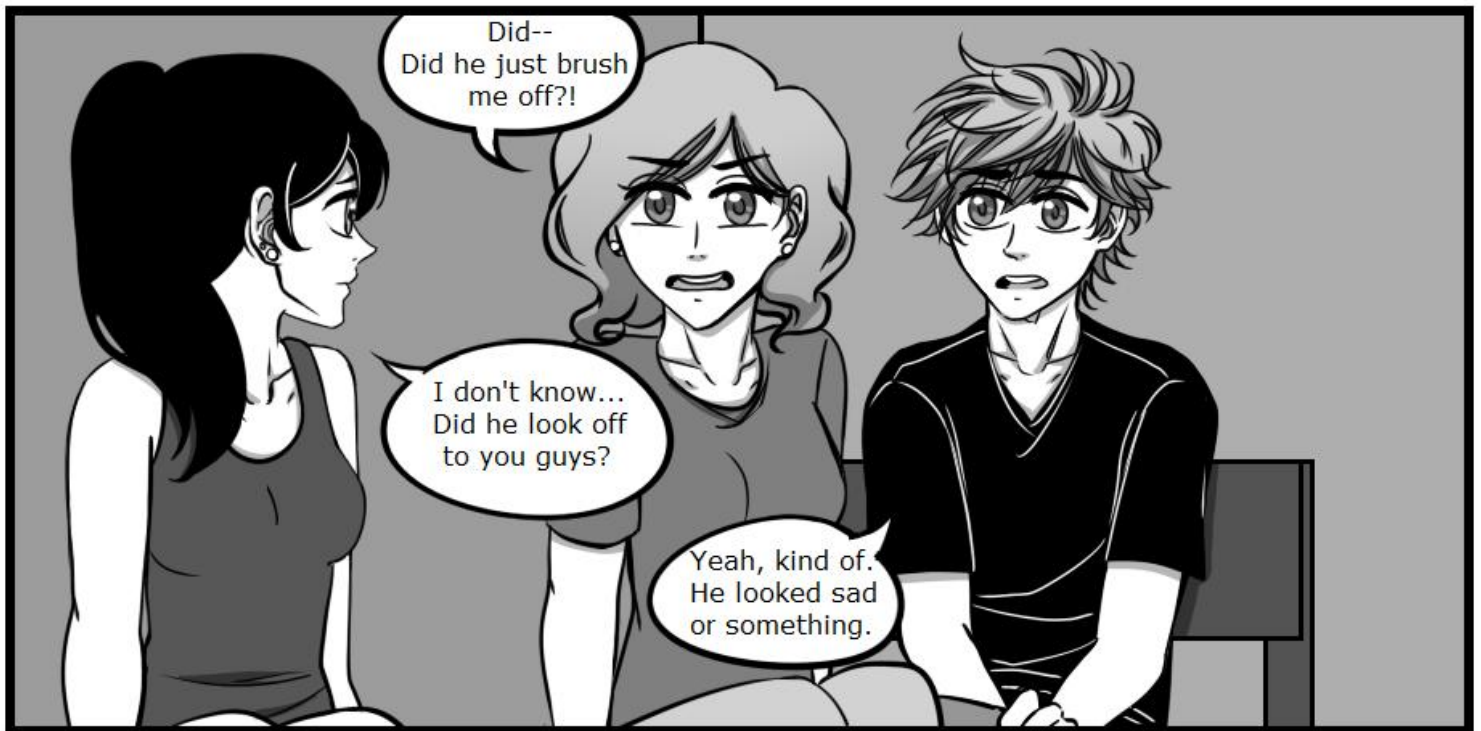
Howie!!

Hey!

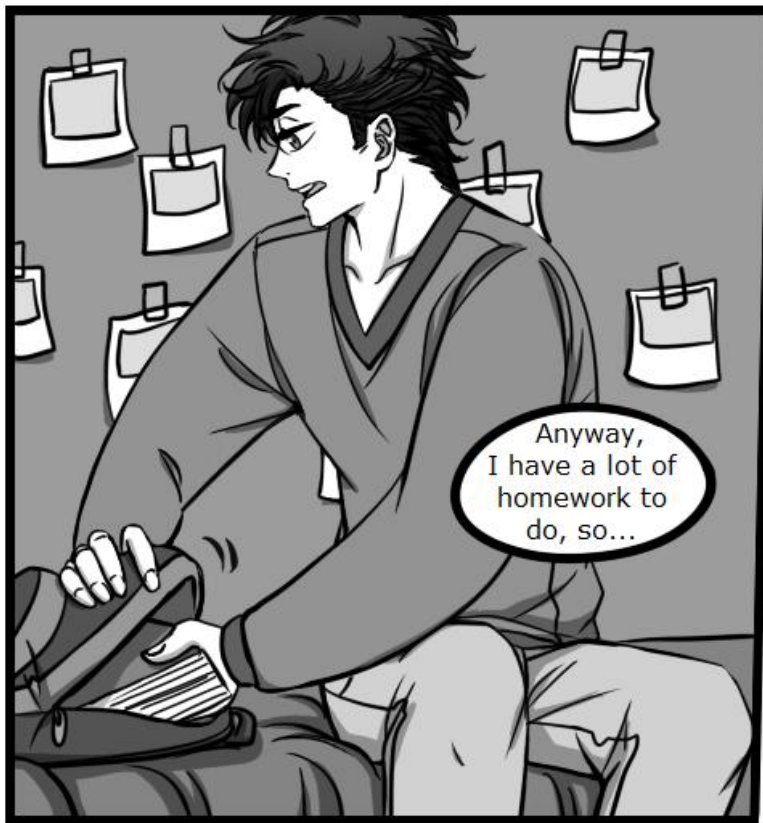


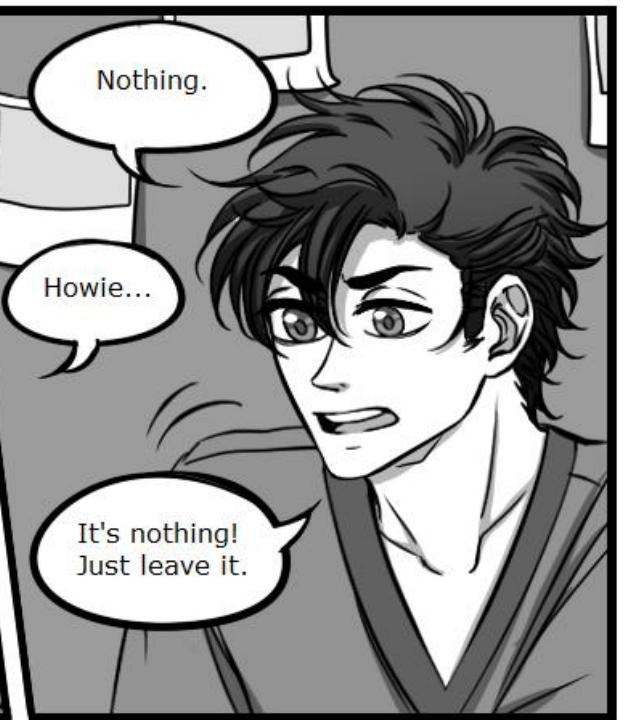
...Kay.













Like, they were being mean about it?

I mean, yeah. I guess.

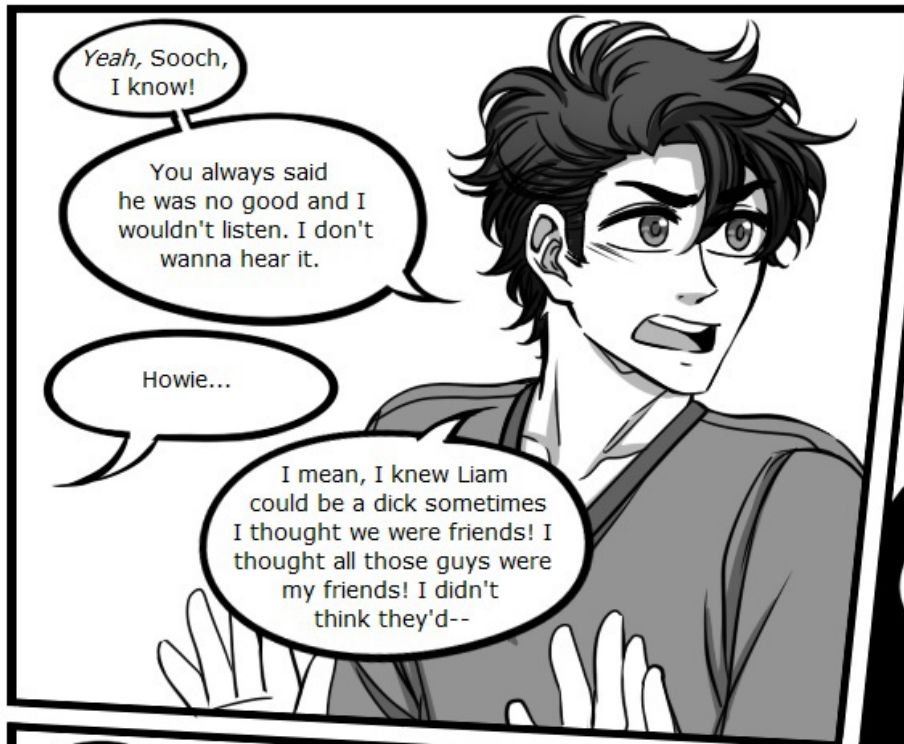
...Can I ask who?

I don't- I don't think you know any of them. They're kids from my classes... Well, you do know Liam.



Oh god, Howie...

...You're kidding.



Yeah, Sooch, I know!

You always said he was no good and I wouldn't listen. I don't wanna hear it.

Howie...

I mean, I knew Liam could be a dick sometimes I thought we were friends! I thought all those guys were my friends! I didn't think they'd--



...Liam.

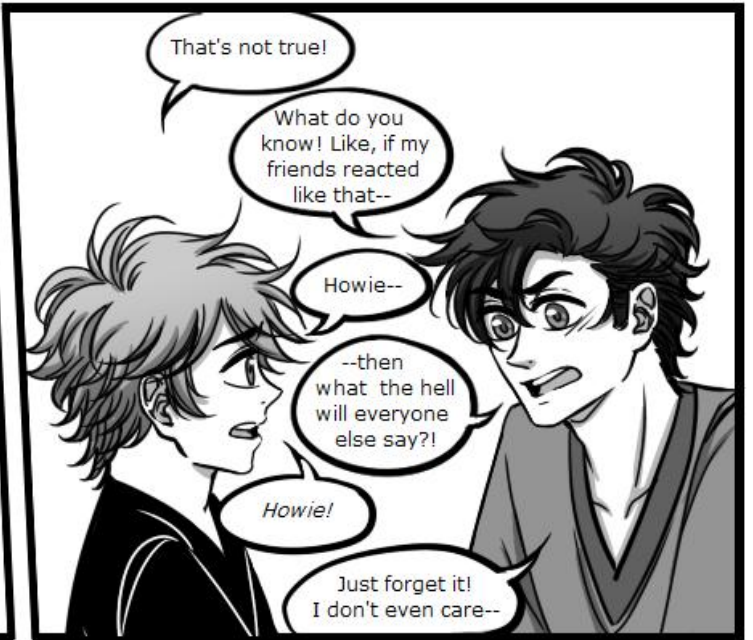


Ugh.

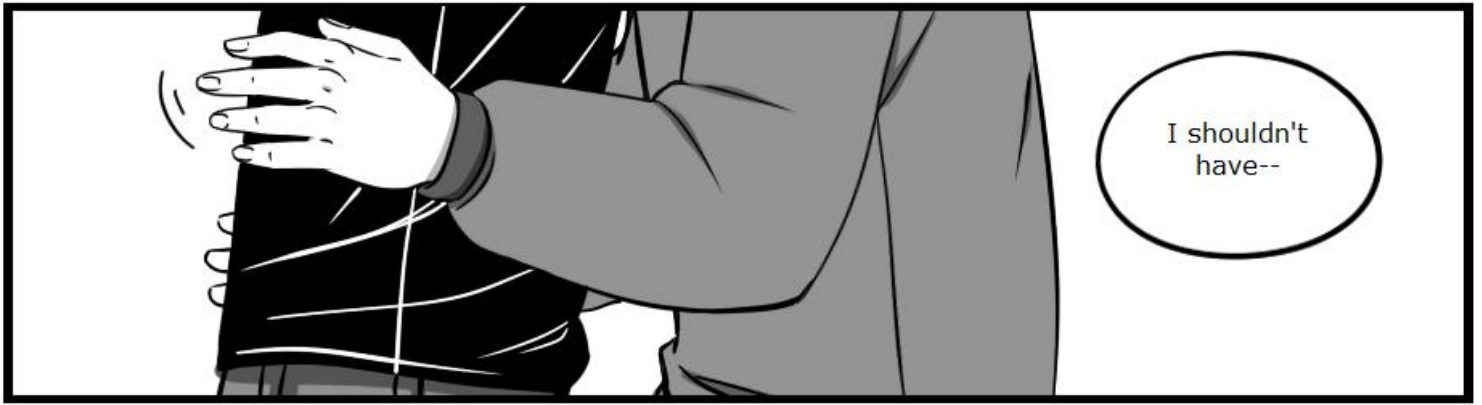
You know what, I don't know why I'm even surprised.

Howie! Don't say that...

Well it's the truth! The reality is I'm gonna get a lot of shit for what I am. I don't know what I was expecting!











Actually....

to be
perfectly honest



When it comes
down to it, I guess I
don't really care
what anybody
thinks.

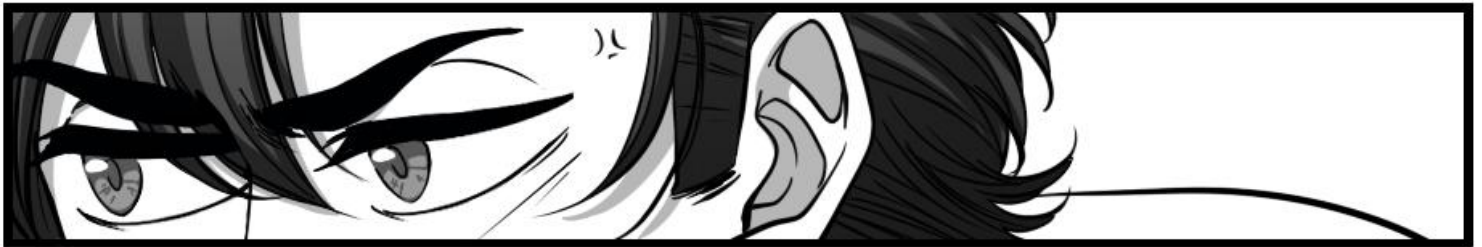
And if I lose a few
friends over it, fine.

I don't need um.



....
I don't need anyone else...
as long as I have y--

CLICK







Good.

You'd feel even better if you came with us to the frat tonight. We're having a party and it should be a lot of fun.

We got a couple kegs, and everyone is gonna be there. It'll help you forget about whatever's bugging you.



I'm just fucking with you.

Seriously though, you okay?

O-oh, yeah... I'm fine.



Are you going?

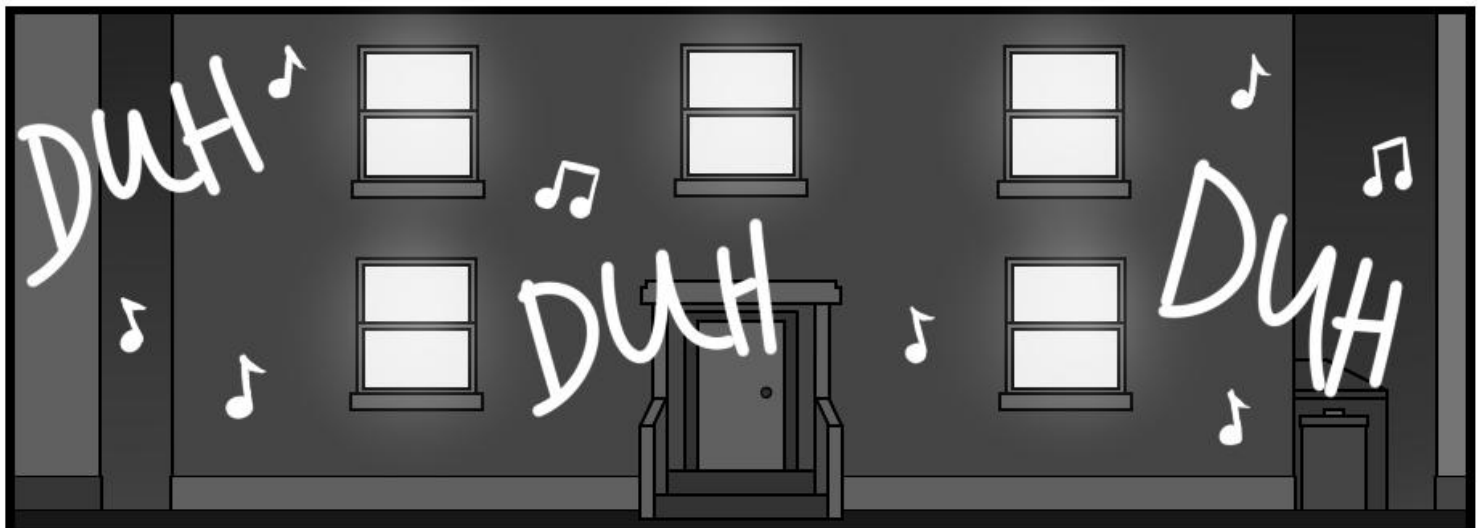
Yeah.

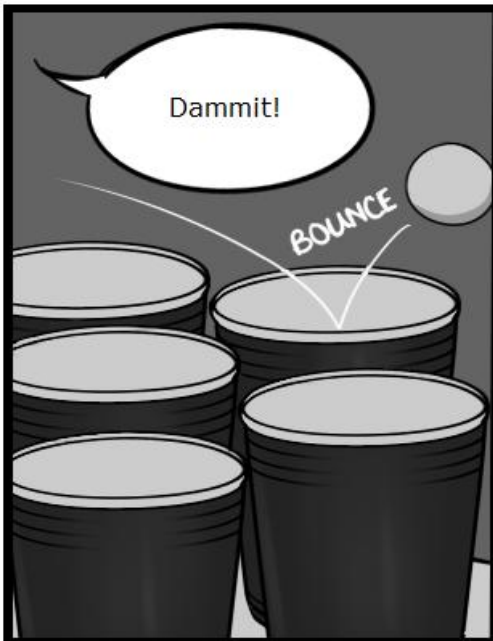
.....Alright, I'll go.



I don't know... I just don't think I'm up for it tonight.

...I wish you'd come. I think Ben's right. Plus it'll be a lot more fun if you're there.

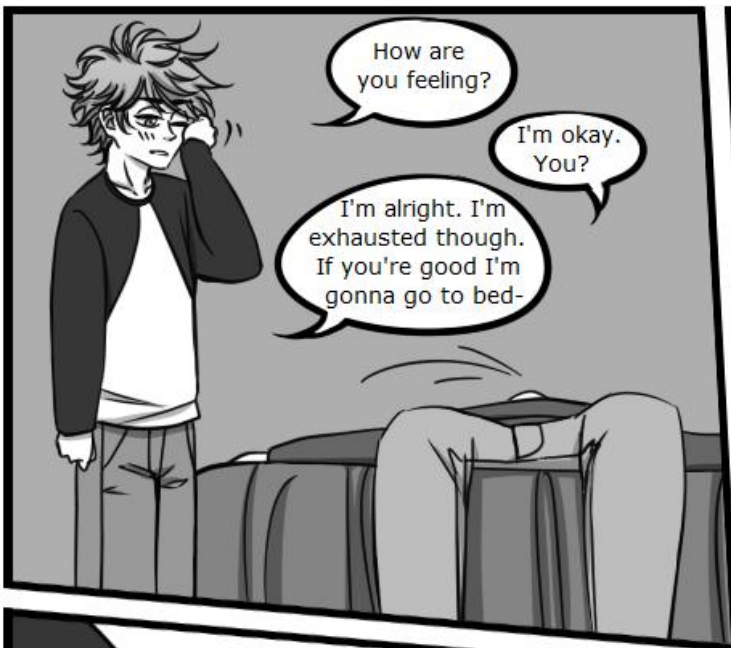
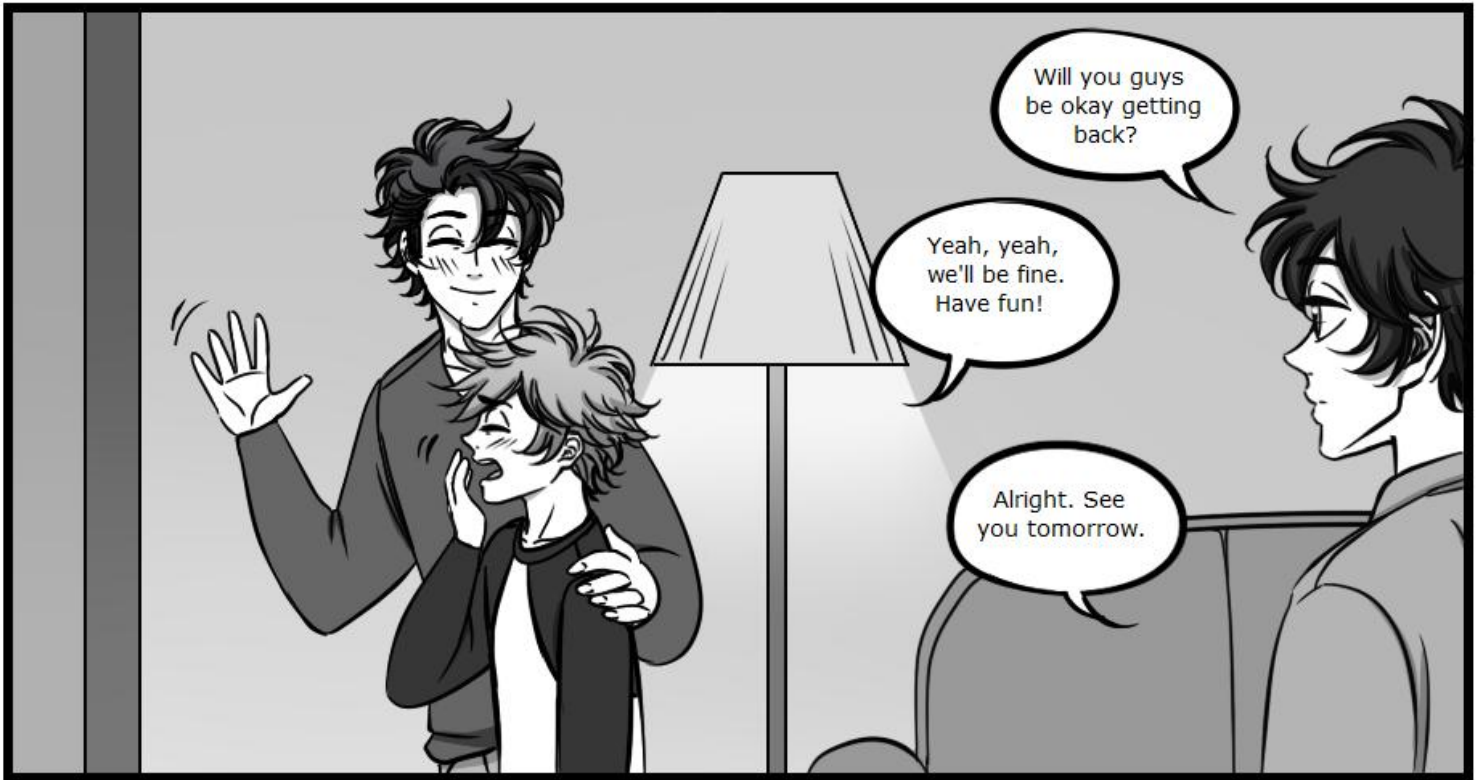
















O-oh. Well, I mean...

...It's only Ben. Even if he did misunderstand, it's nothing an explanation couldn't fix, right?

Besides, he said he's not coming back tonight... remember?



...So it's okay as long as Ben isn't here to see it?



...Oh, right. I forgot.

I guess I could hang out for a little.

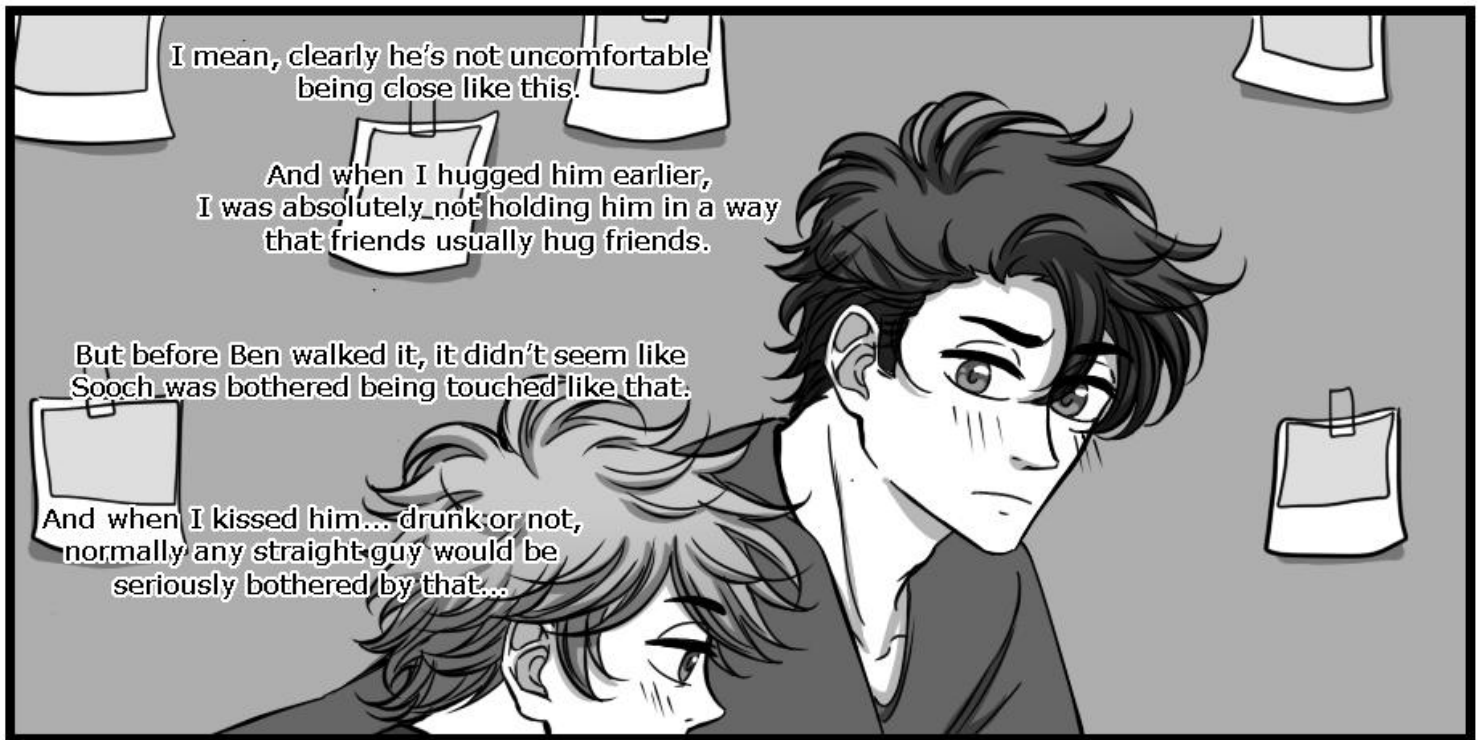


For a second I thought that Sooch was acting paranoid about Ben because me was embarrassed about being close to me since I'm gay, but...

...I wonder if it's not that he's embarrassed...

...But he realizes that our relationship is more intimate than most other friendships.

And that someone who knows I'm gay could easily misunderstand it to be romantic, if they see it.



I mean, clearly he's not uncomfortable being close like this.

And when I hugged him earlier, I was absolutely not holding him in a way that friends usually hug friends.

But before Ben walked it, it didn't seem like Sooch was bothered being touched like that.

And when I kissed him... drunk or not, normally any straight guy would be seriously bothered by that...



The only reason Sooch let me hug him like that was because he was being a good friend.

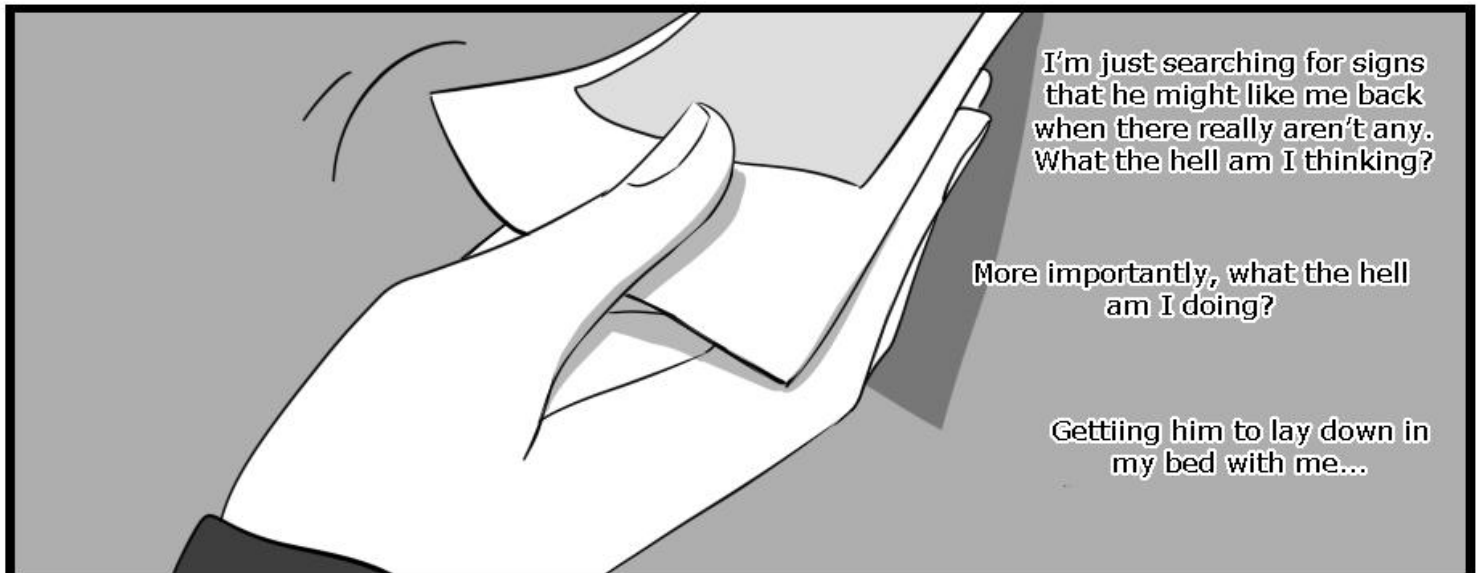
And the only reason he's scared of Ben is because he doesn't want to be mistaken for being gay.



Ugh. Stop. Just stop.

Those are some dangerous thoughts, Howie.

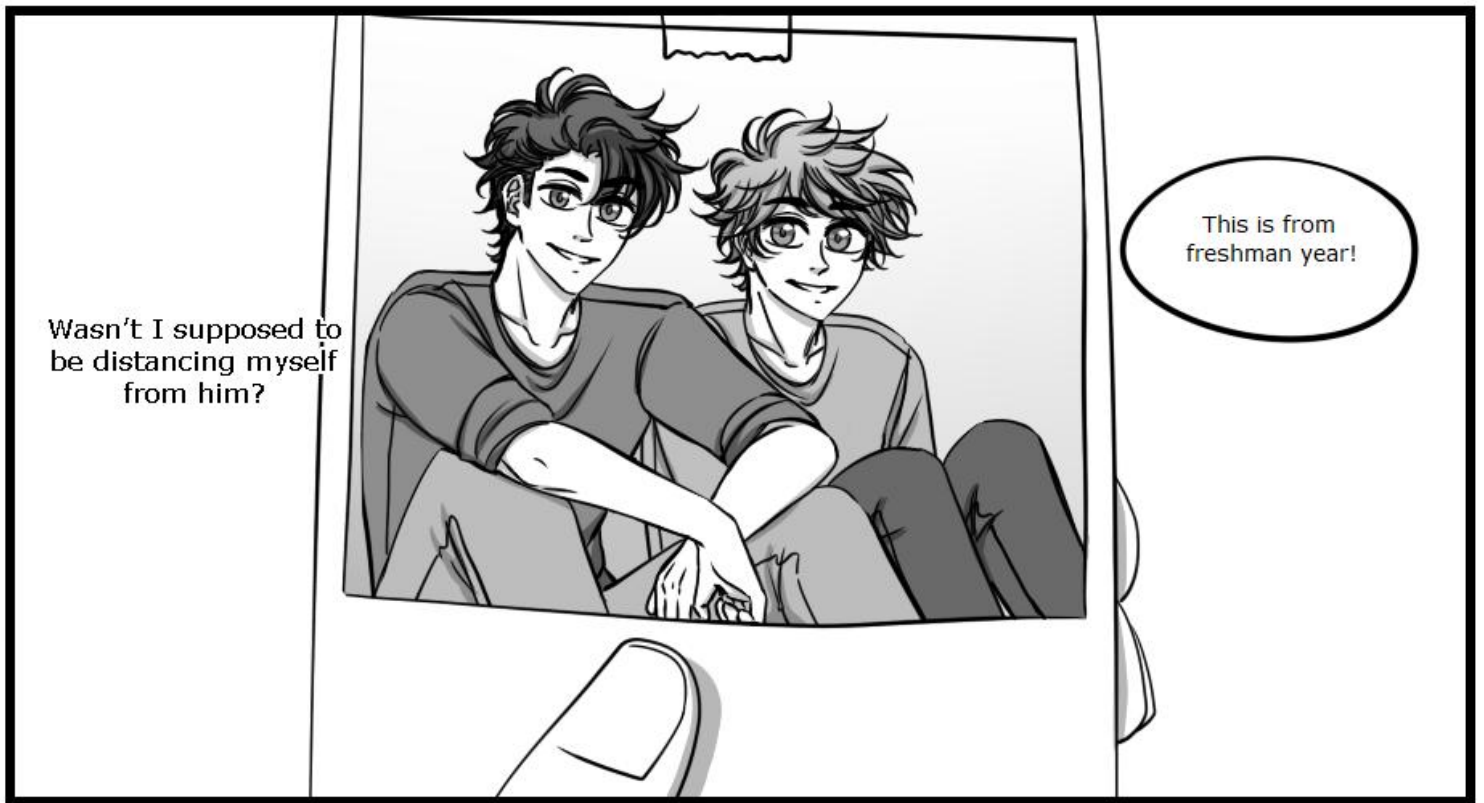
You're getting yourself excited over nothing.



I'm just searching for signs that he might like me back when there really aren't any. What the hell am I thinking?

More importantly, what the hell am I doing?

Getting him to lay down in my bed with me...



Wasn't I supposed to be distancing myself from him?

This is from freshman year!



I feel like we've known each other forever.

I know.

Yeah. That's the day we met.

Can't believe this was only a year ago.

Wasn't I supposed to be giving up on him?



I feel like I met so many great people here. Especially compared to high school.

I want to remember everything.

Oh... I don't know.

...What made you want to take so many pictures?

Sept 9 '14



I feel the same way.

'Bout what?

That's what I'd been trying so hard to do, but...



...

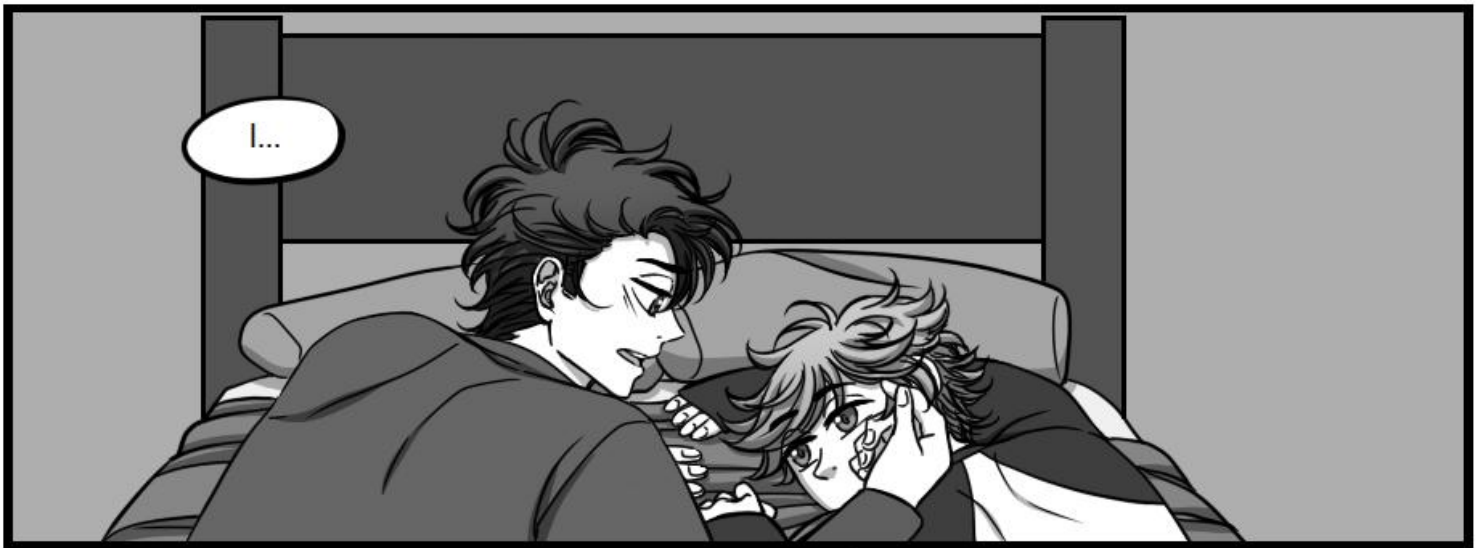


Just about meeting better people here than in high school.

Oh, just--

Sept. 9 '14



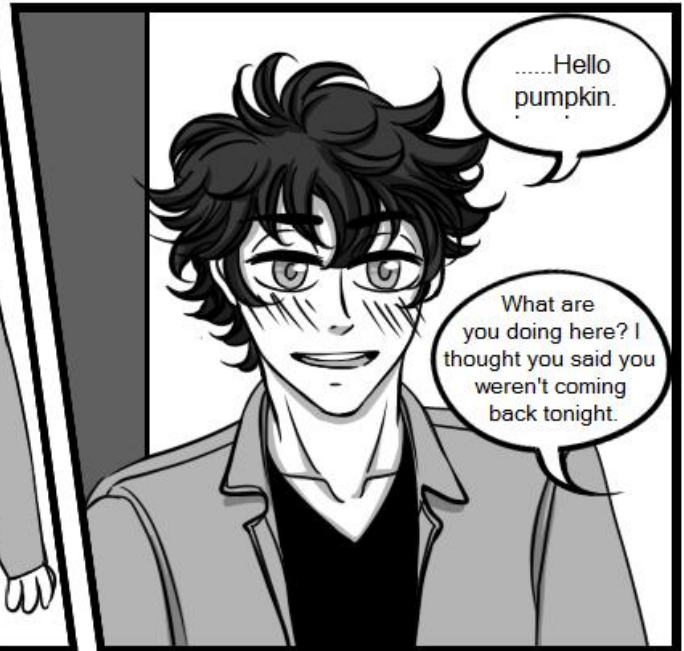






The party got busted!
Someone called the cops on
us over a noise complaint.

And when they
got there, there was
alcohol everywhere. And
underage drinking is
assumed...



.....Hello
pumpkin.

What are
you doing here? I
thought you said you
weren't coming
back tonight.



Aw. I'm sorry
your night sucked.



And now the frat
is getting this huge
fucking fine...



It was totally
worth it. And we'll
split the fine between
all the brothers so it
won't be so bad

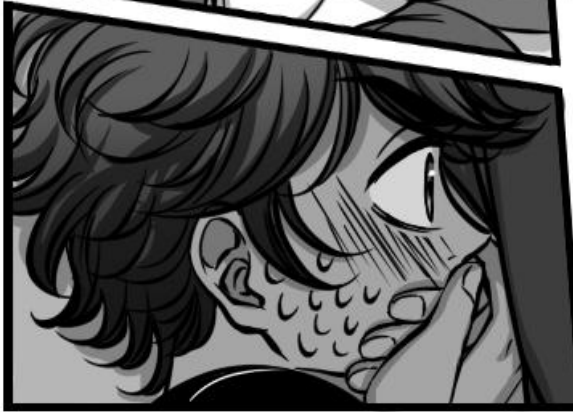
I wish you
were there.



What? It
didn't suck.

Before the cops
showed up it was
awesome!

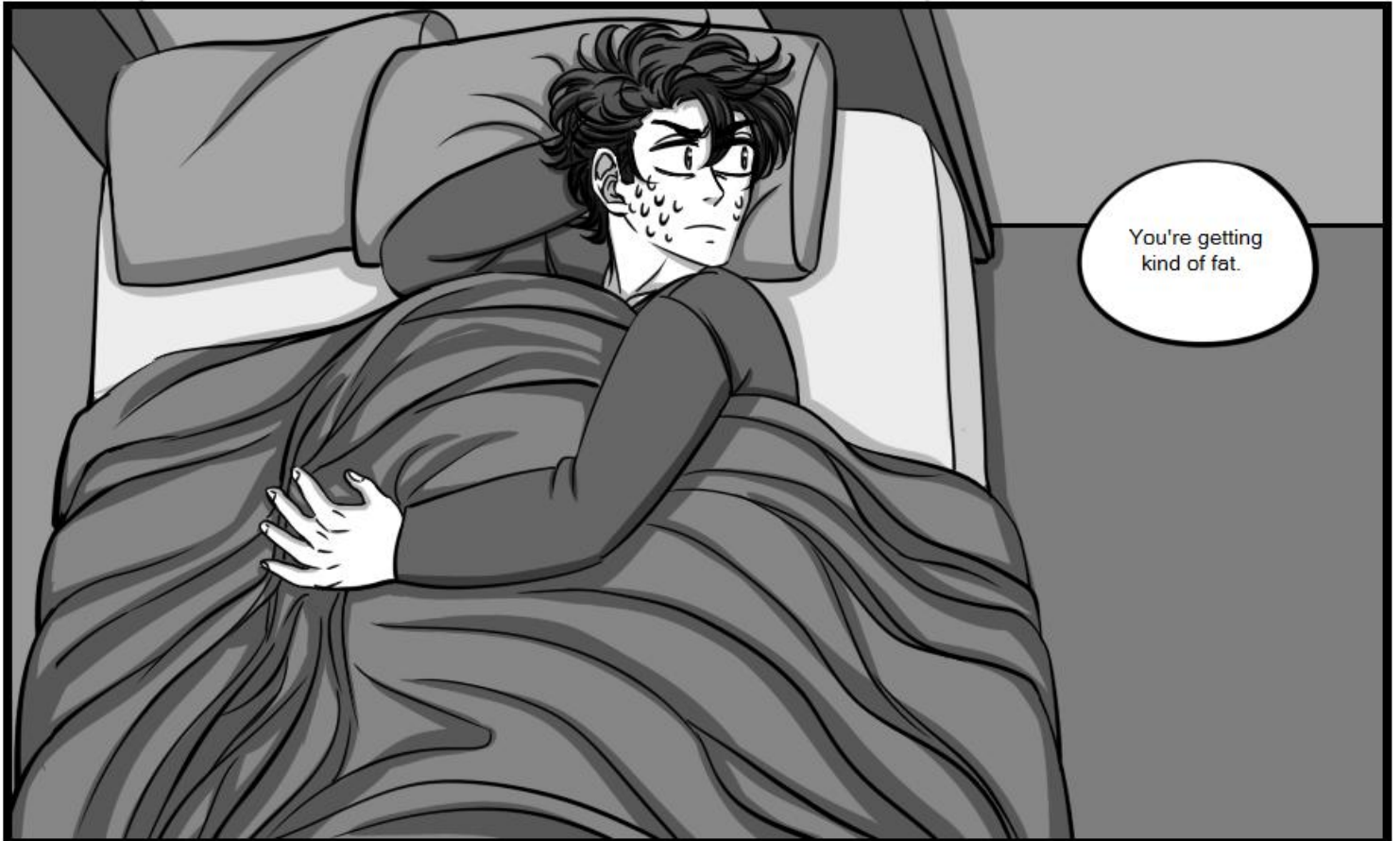




U-um.

Dude, no offense.

And sorry if it's uncomfortable that I'm pointing this out, but...



You're getting kind of fat.



It's just because I care.

Sorry man. But like I said--



...What have I done?!



U-um, hey Ben.
Listen, it's really late...

Why don't you try
going to bed? It'll help
you sober up.

If he goes to sleep I can
sneak Sooch out of here....



Jesus Christ.

...A-are
you okay?

No!

I'm sorry, I
panicked.. Do you
want to get out?

What?!

Listen, he's really
drunk... I don't think he'll
think anything of it...



.....I can't.

Okay, okay.
Hold on, I'll think
of something....



But if you're tired
you should go to bed.



I'm not tired.

O-oh. Well if you
try laying down you
might start to-

What?
Dude, you know
I have trouble sleeping
whenever I drink.



CLICK

Night babe.



OW.

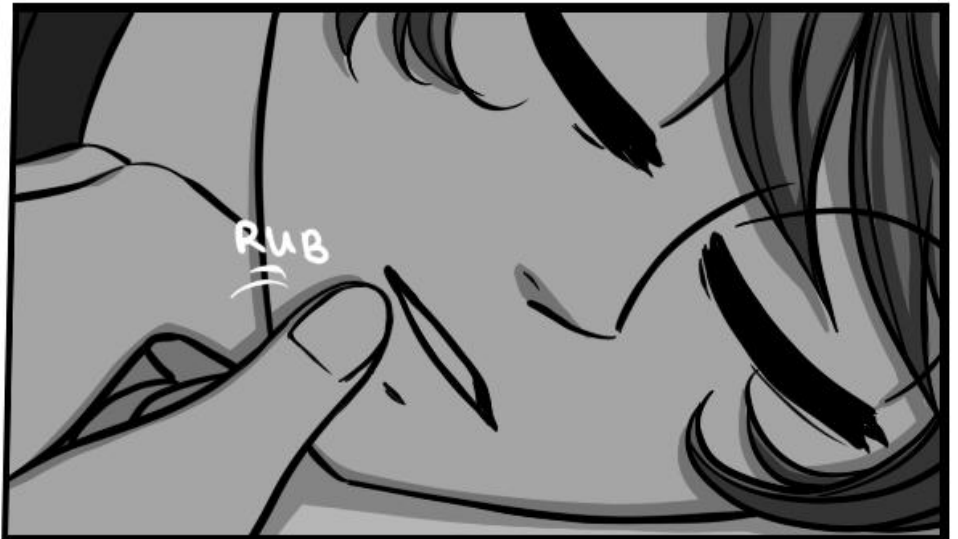
Bless you.











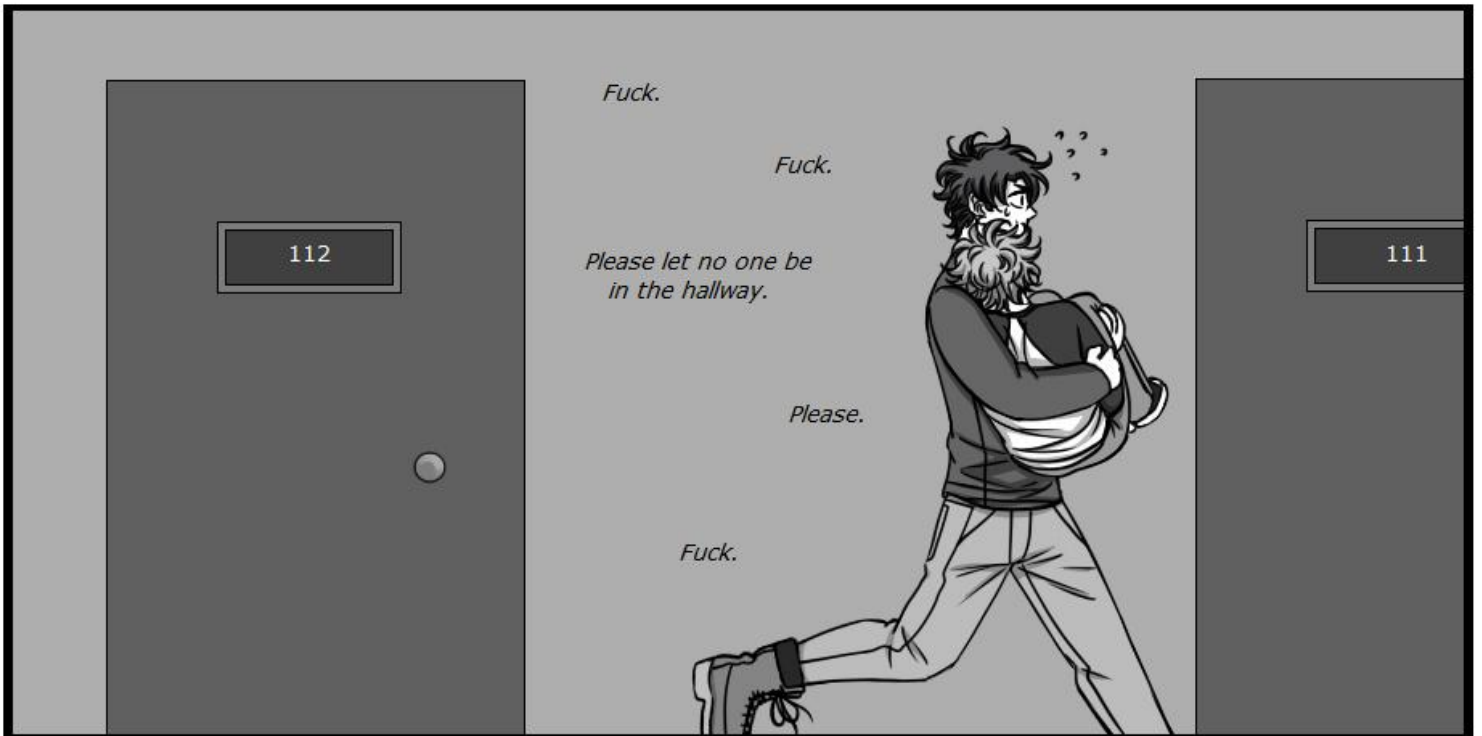


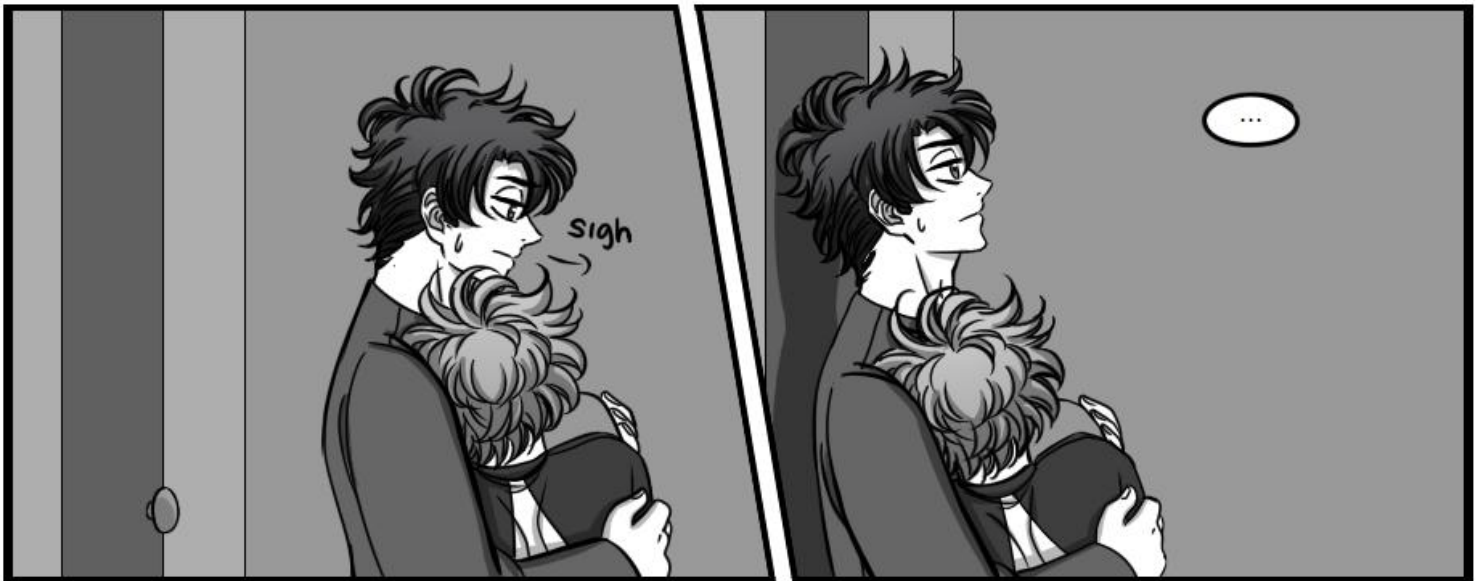


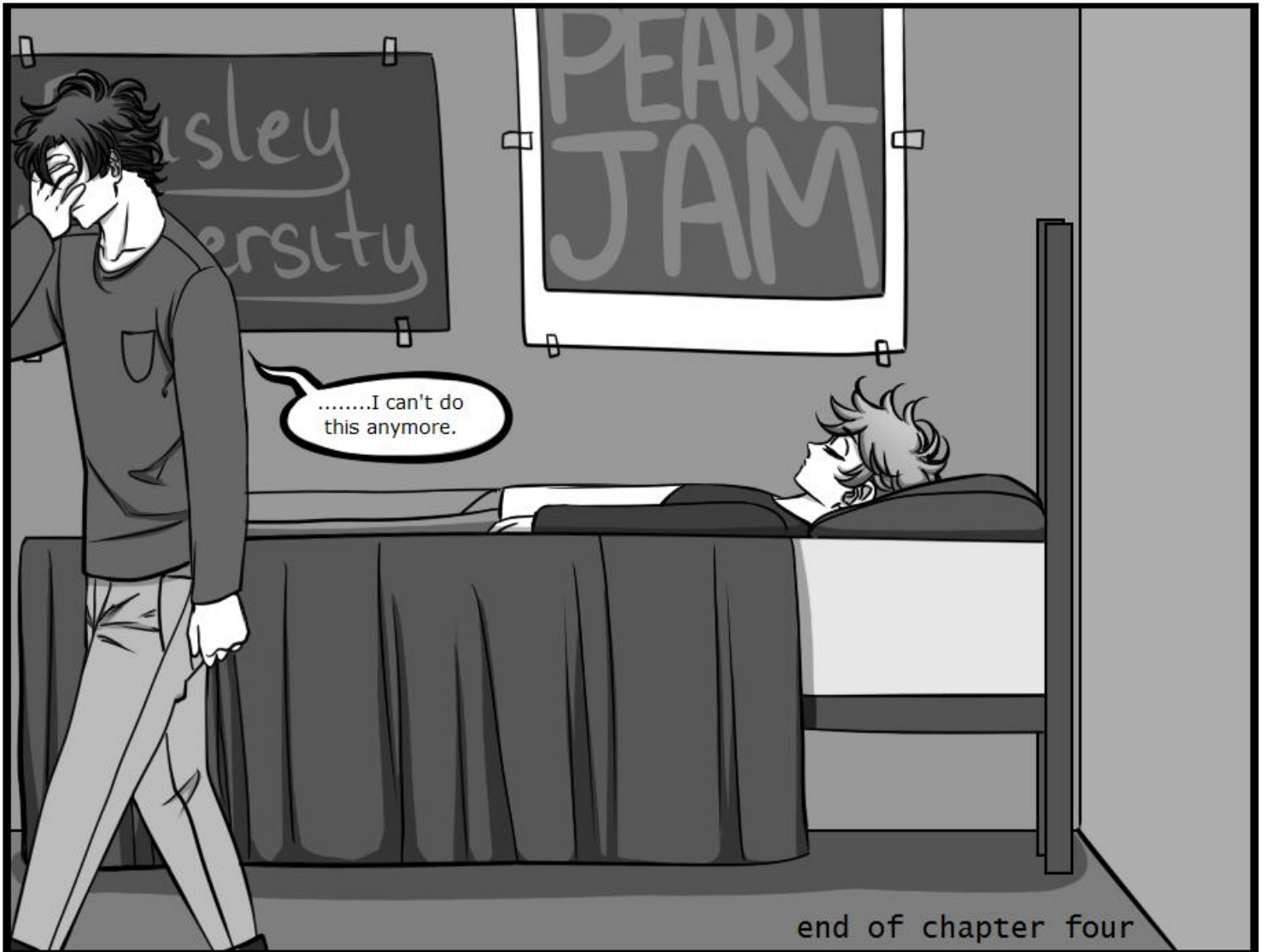












end of chapter four

