

But.... I thought you wanted me to do it....

But it's completely understandable that you're too tired to do any sort of extra work. From what you've told me about your professor, I think he'll understand.



I mean.... sure I did. I was excited for you.

It sounded like a good opportunity.

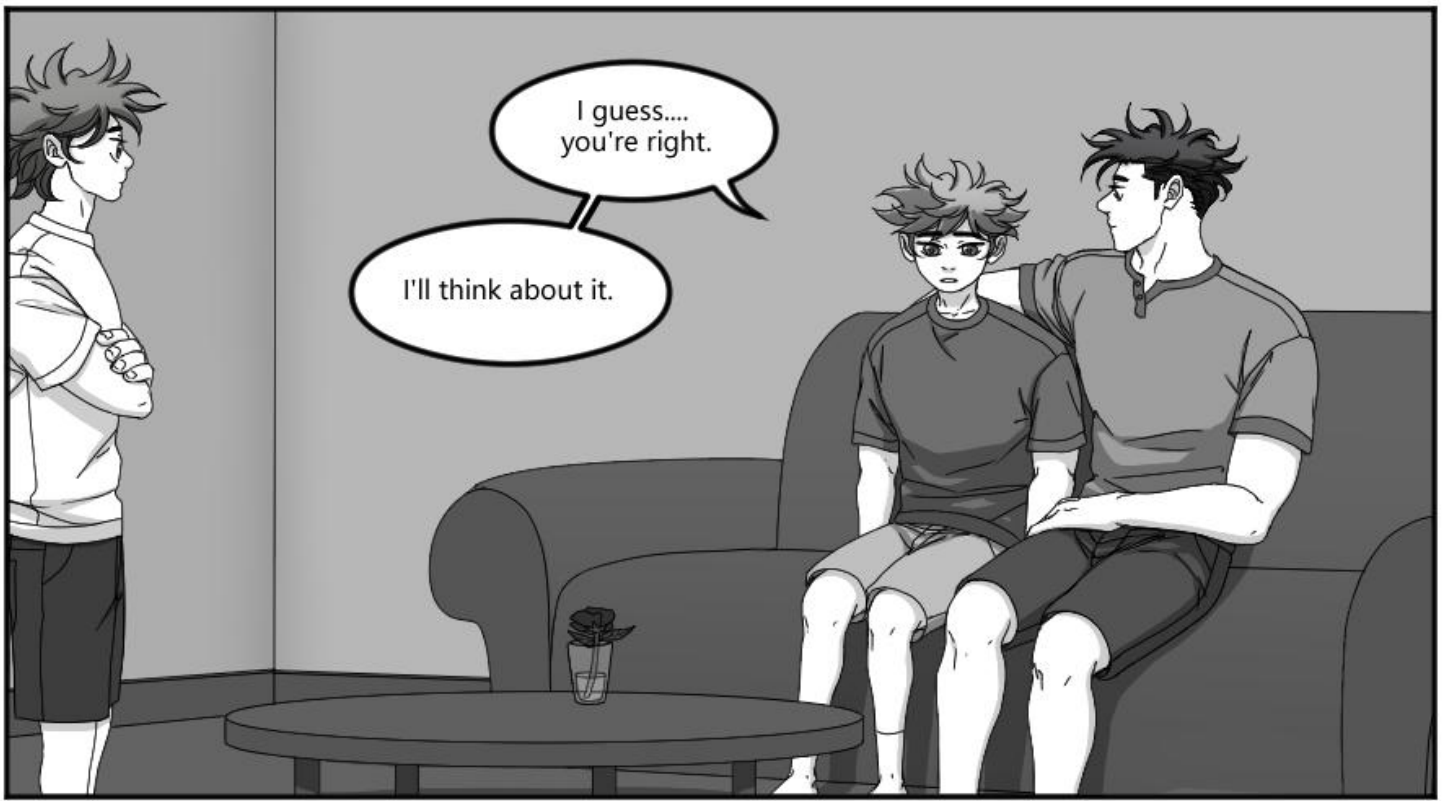
And I thought it was awesome that you were picked to participate.

But not if it's gonna stress you out.



If you don't want to do it anymore, it's okay.

Or, you know. They have these showcases every year. You can do one later on, if you still want to. When you're in a better place.





I also wanted to do it because
I've been trying so hard to be better.

If I don't do it, it
feels like I'm giving up.



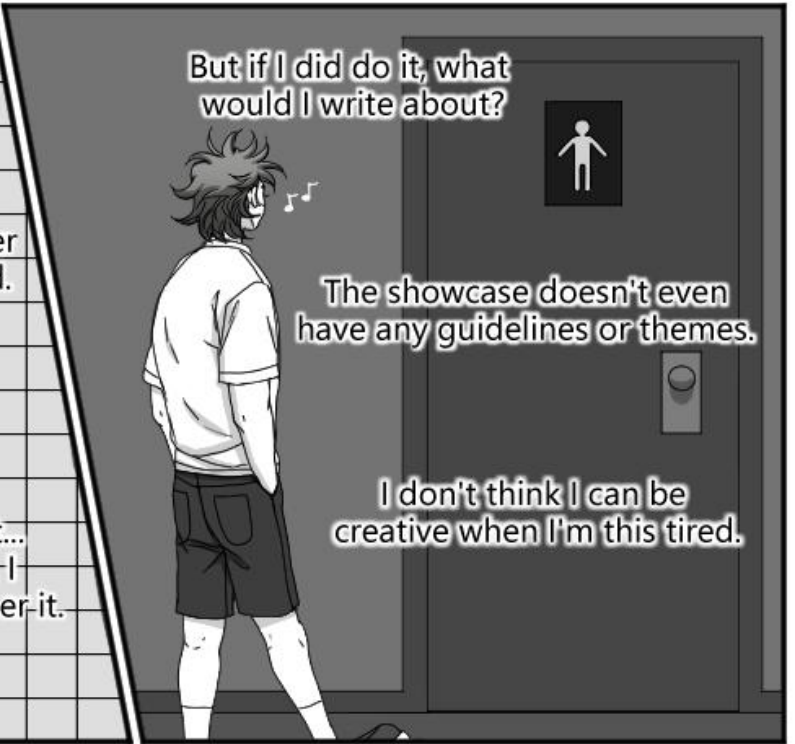
And... I know that it's stupid,
but Howie was so excited about it.
I want him to be proud of me.



I guess...
I'll think it over
this weekend.

If I think of something,
I'll email my professor back.

And if I don't...
I'll drop out. I
won't stress over it.

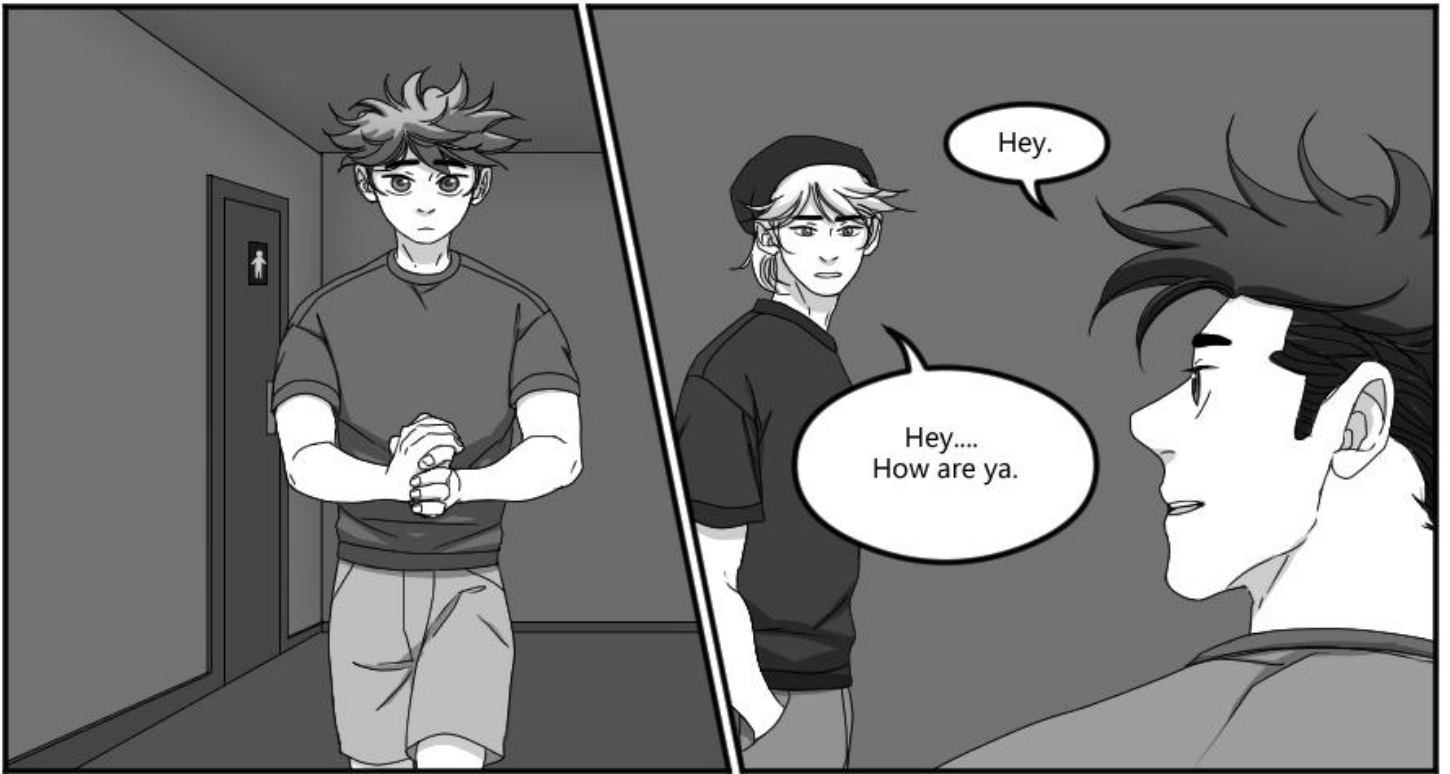


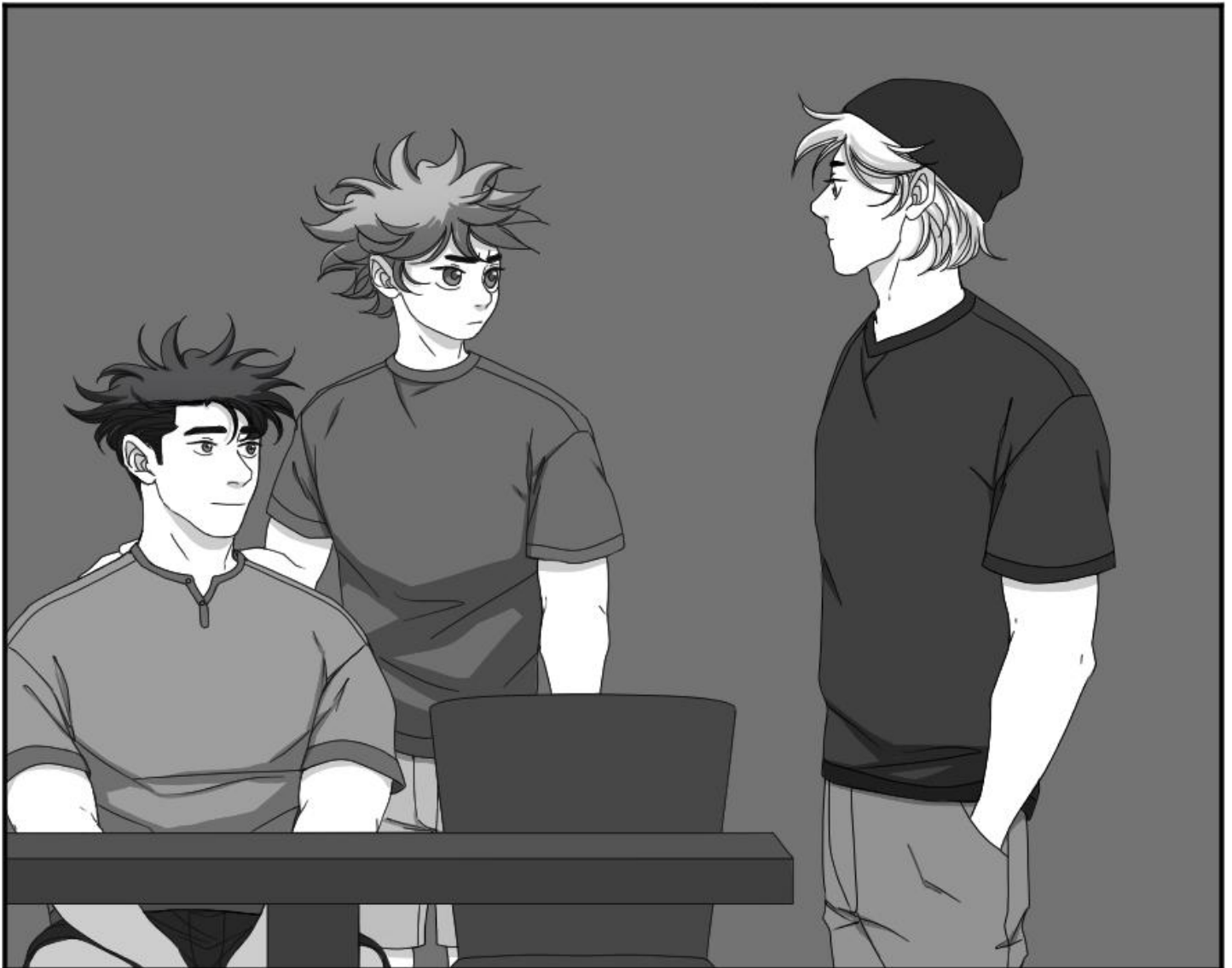
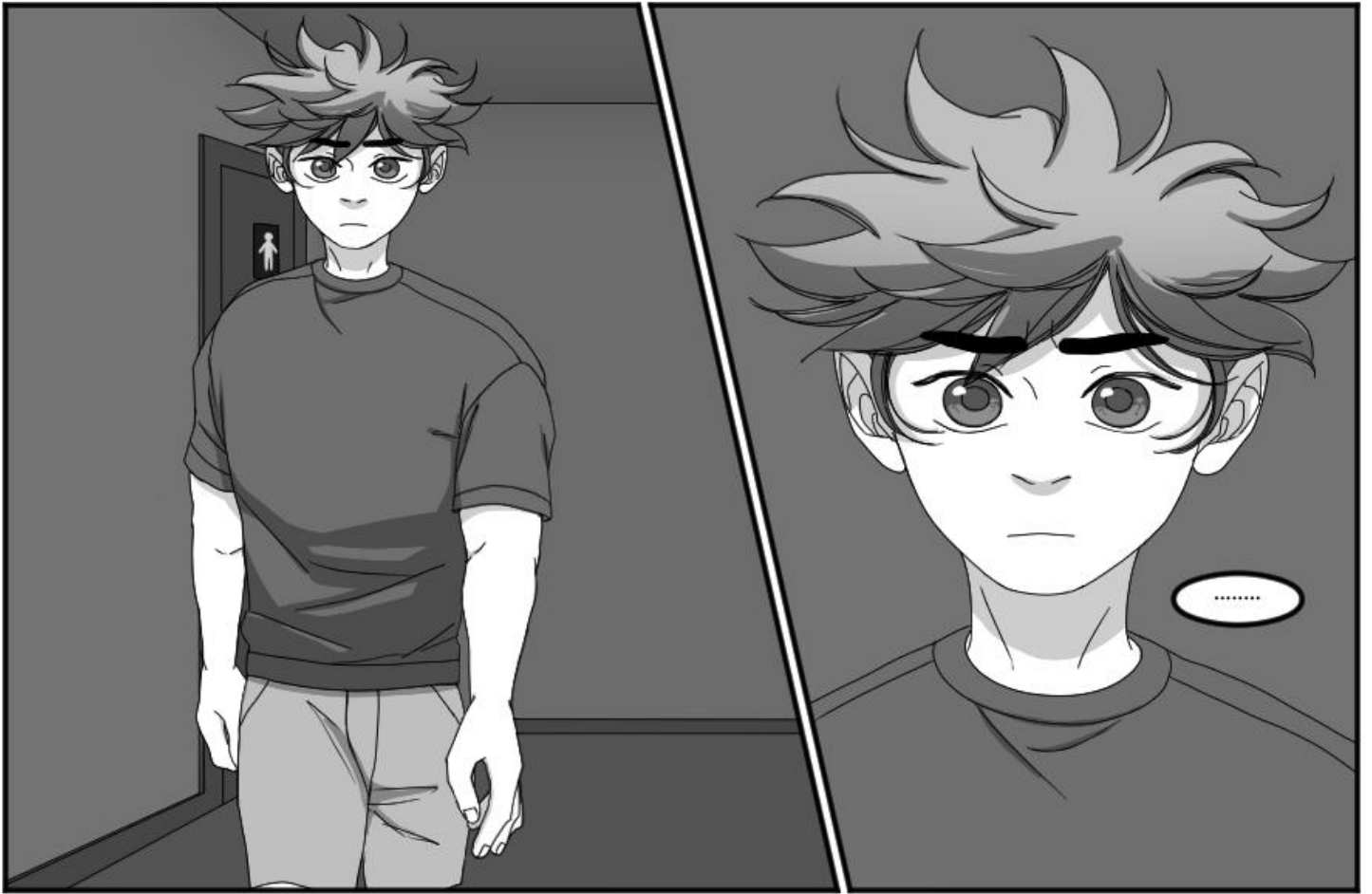
But if I did do it, what
would I write about?

The showcase doesn't even
have any guidelines or themes.

I don't think I can be
creative when I'm this tired.













.....

Just asking....

I don't understand Liam.

How are things with you and Liam these days?

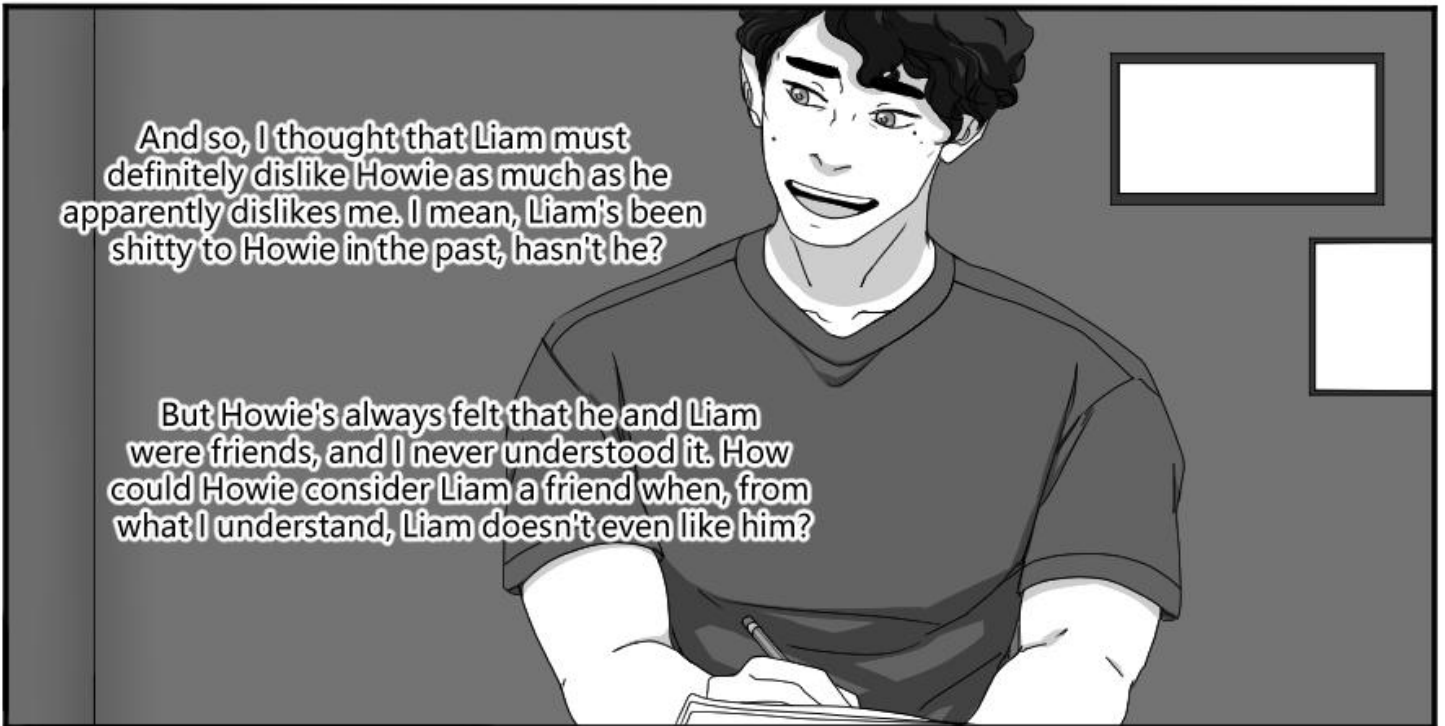
Fine, I guess. I see him around every so often. Why?



He dislikes me.

He tried to pick a fight with me that one time, saying all sorts of awful, homophobic things.

I figured that it was because he somehow knew that something was going on between Howie and me, and was apparently offended by it.



And so, I thought that Liam must definitely dislike Howie as much as he apparently dislikes me. I mean, Liam's been shitty to Howie in the past, hasn't he?

But Howie's always felt that he and Liam were friends, and I never understood it. How could Howie consider Liam a friend when, from what I understand, Liam doesn't even like him?



But.... you don't bother to make friendly conversation with someone you dislike, like Liam just did.

Does that mean that Liam just dislikes me?

Can I get you any drinks while you wait?











You sure? We're celebrating, remember?

Yeah, I'm sure. I drank a little too much yesterday.

If we're insisting on celebrating, then what I really want to do to celebrate is get back home and finally spend time with Howie, without any stress or worry or anything else getting in the way.



I'll have another.

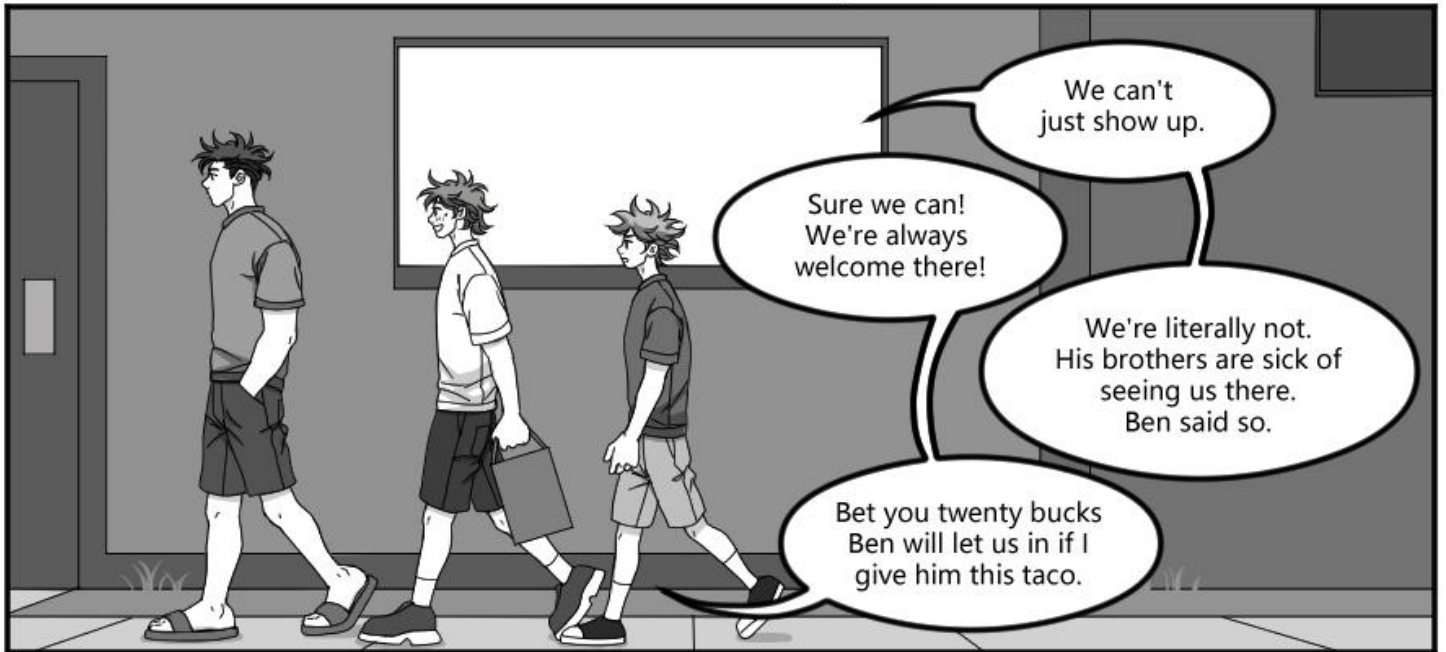
And that includes alcohol.



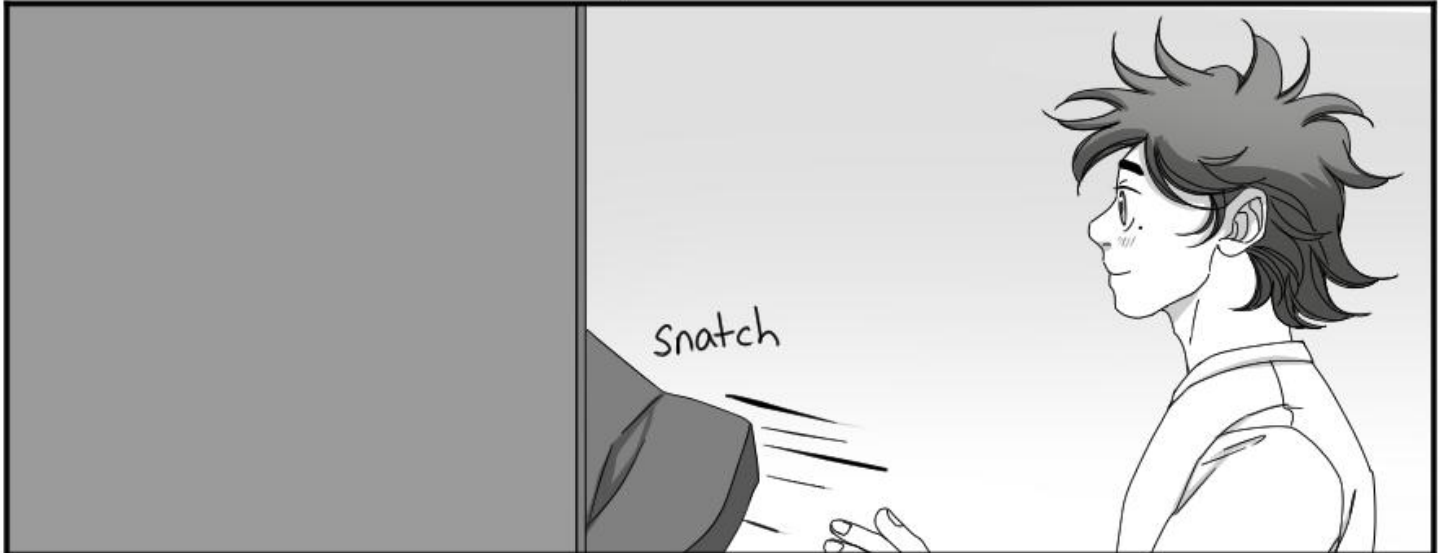
Man, I'm so full.

That place was so good.

I know! I order take out from them all the time.





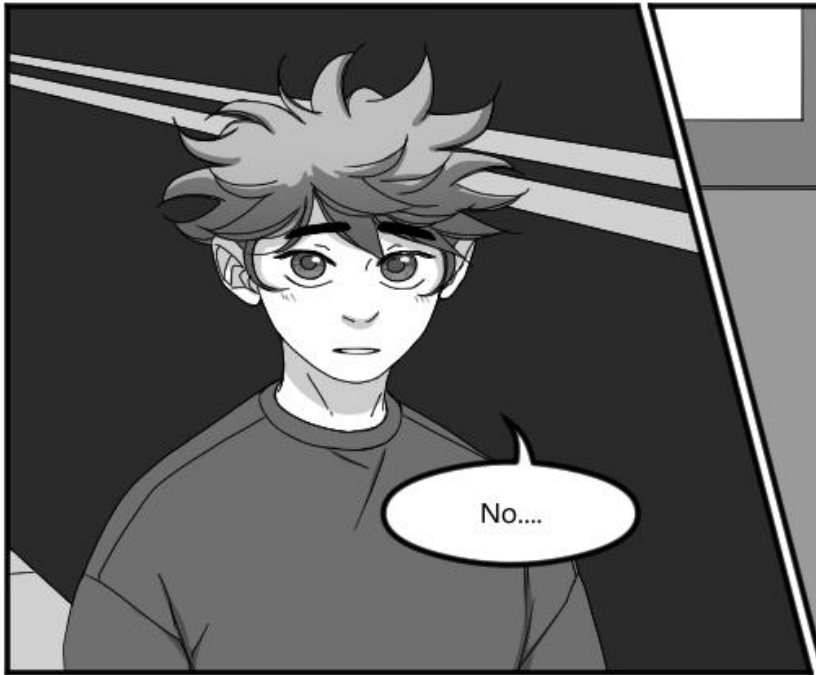




I think I might just take Sooch back and have a quiet night in.

I'm not really feeling that great...

Why don't you go ahead.



No....



U-unless.... you think you want to stay after all?



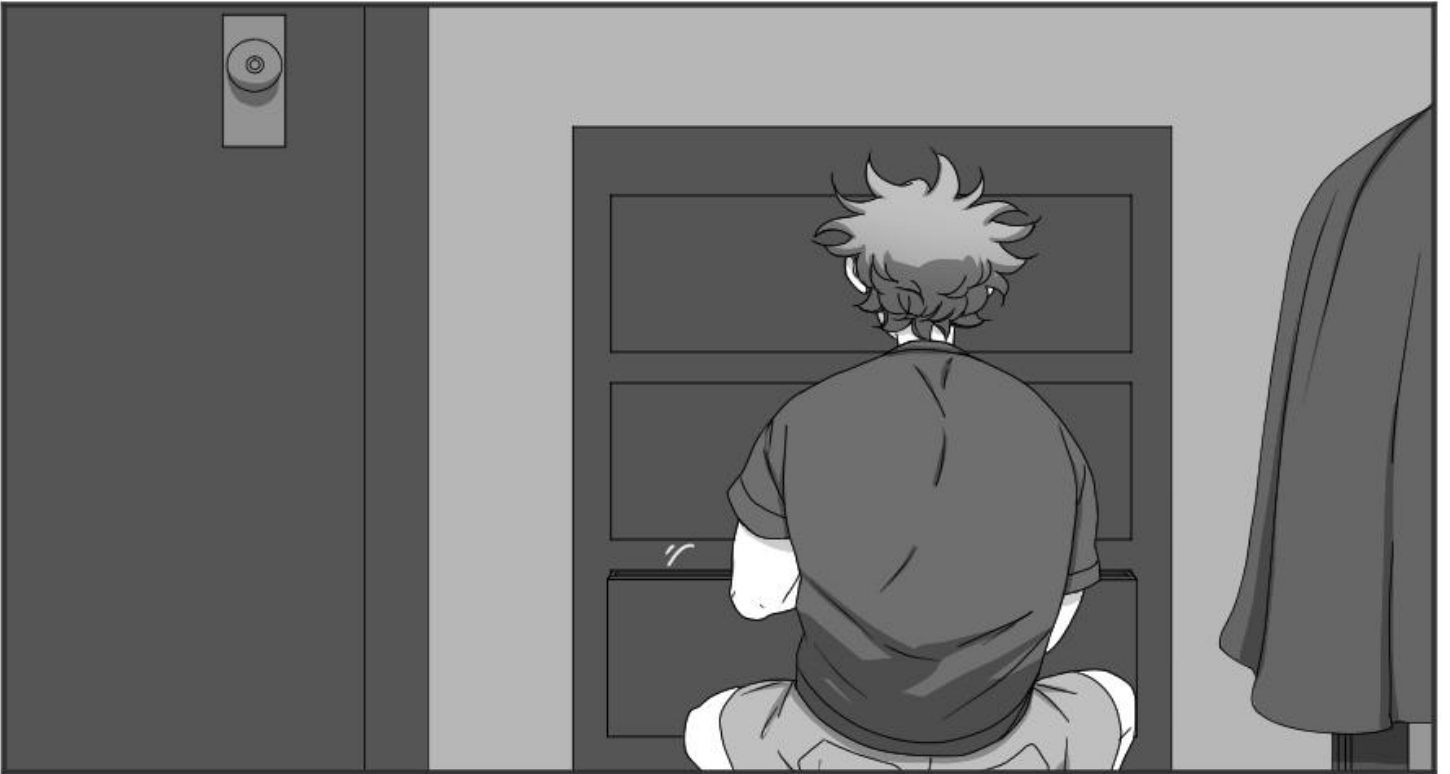
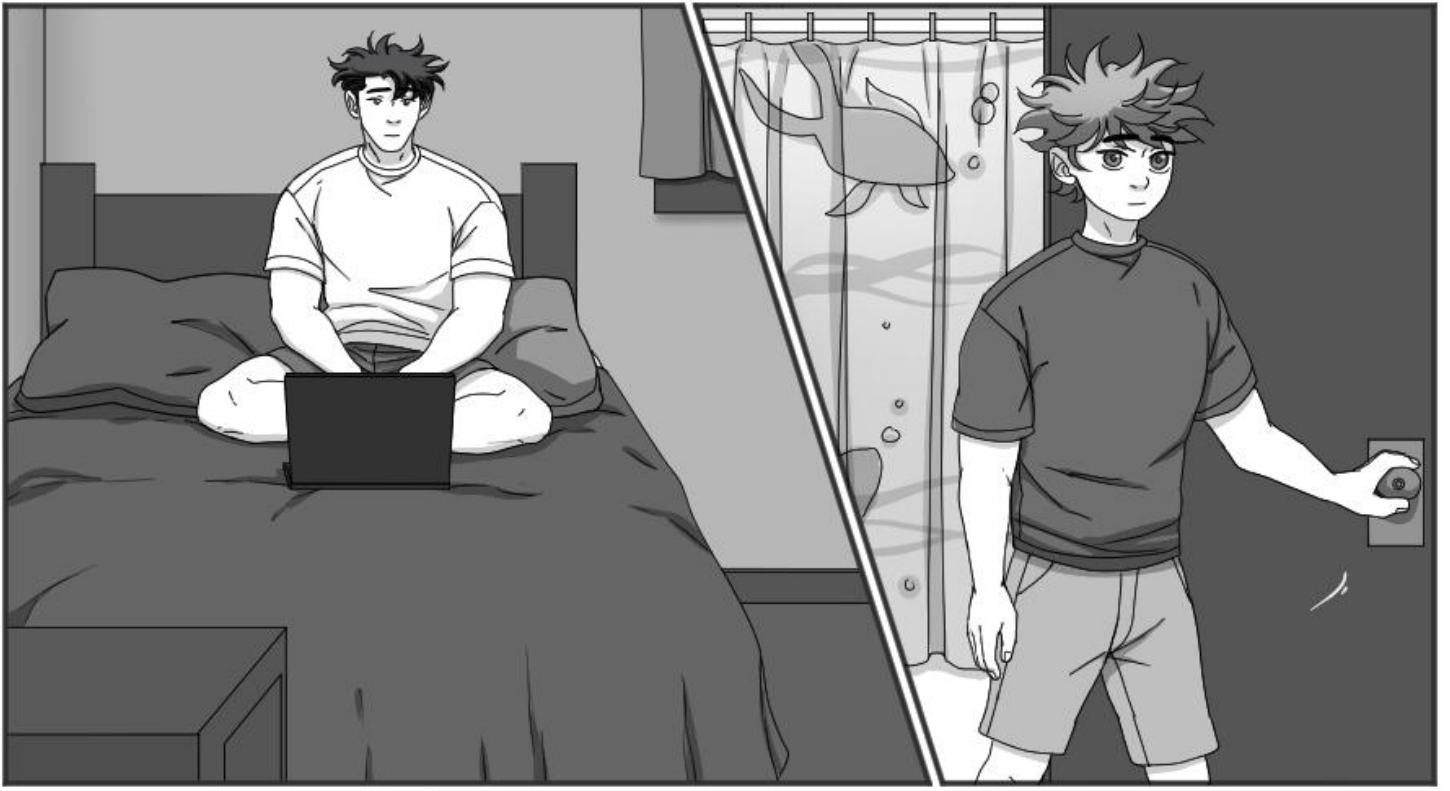
But.... Really??

Yeah, sorry.





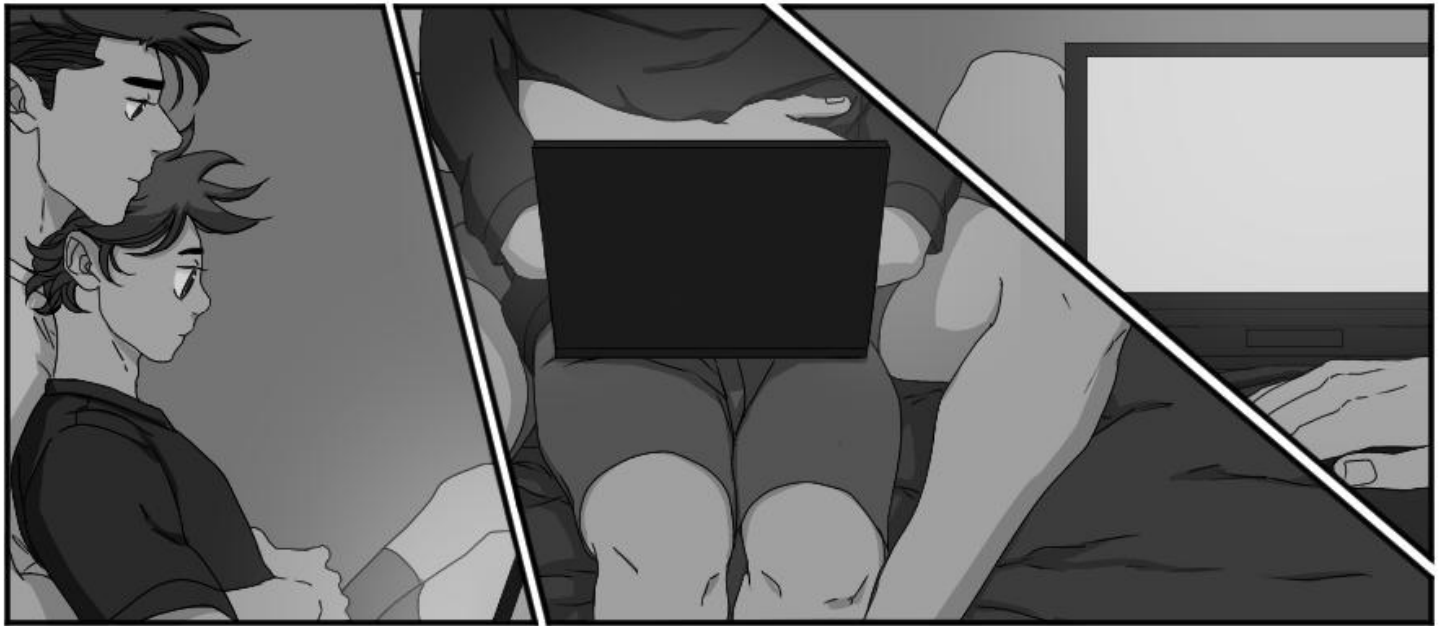


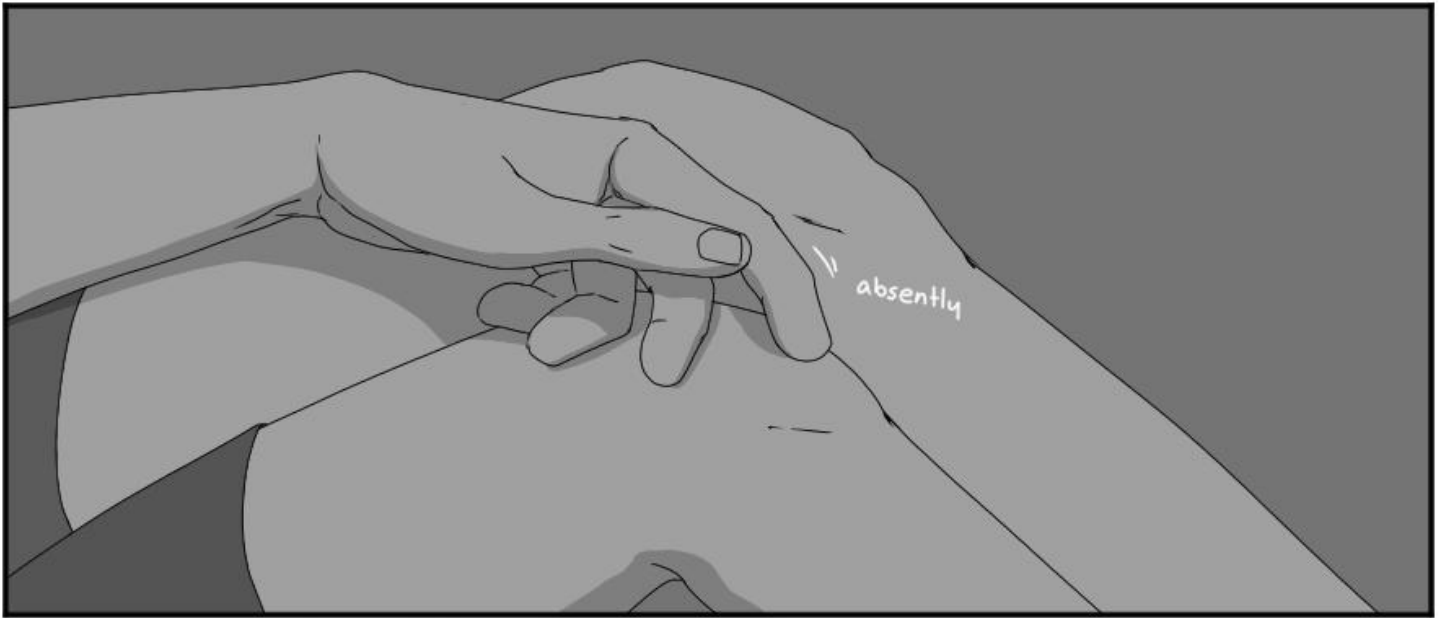


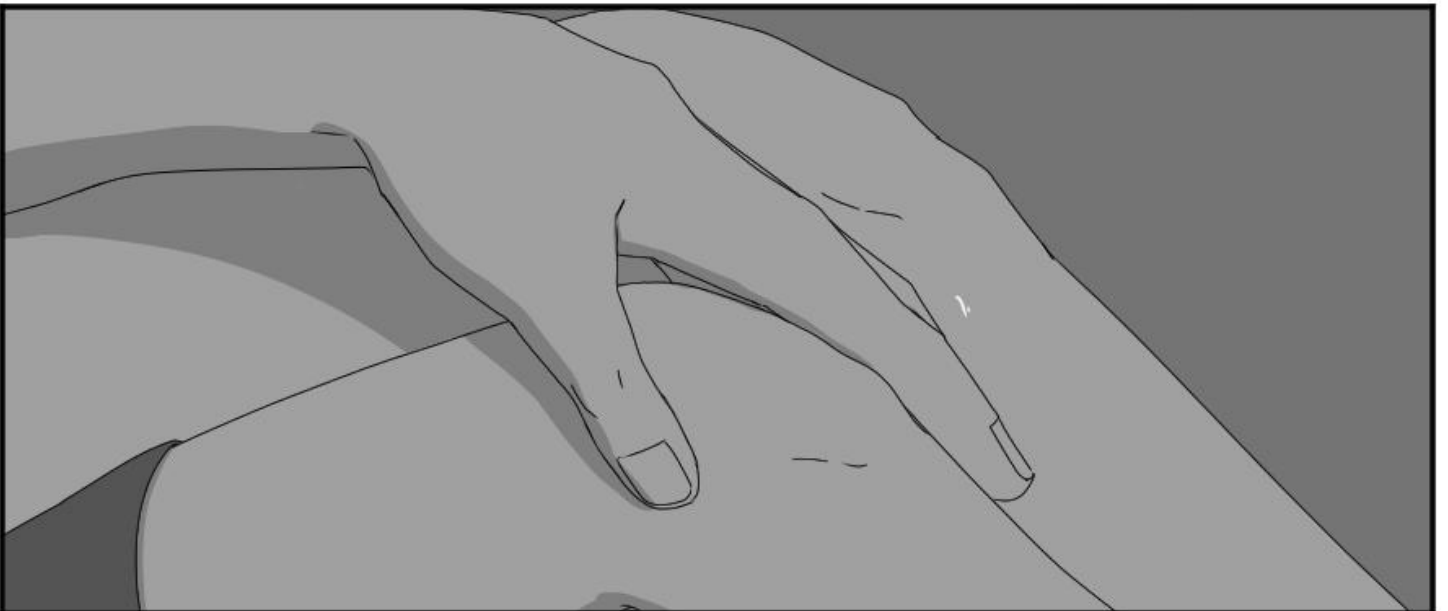
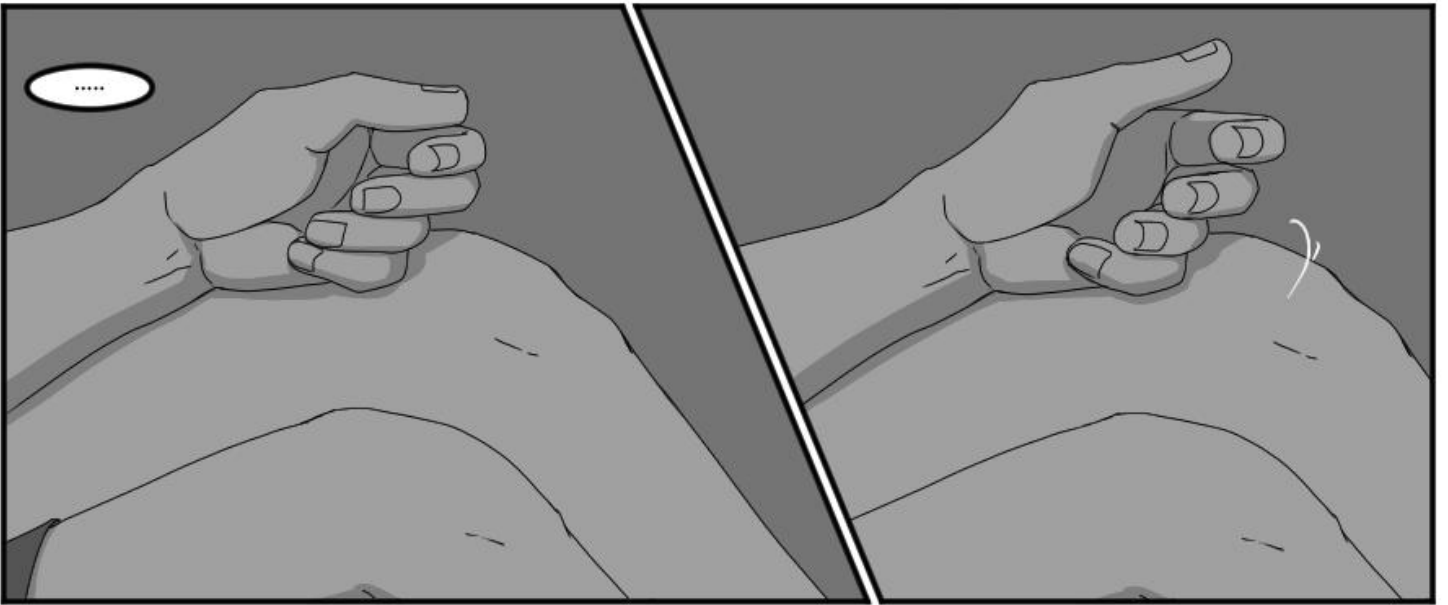




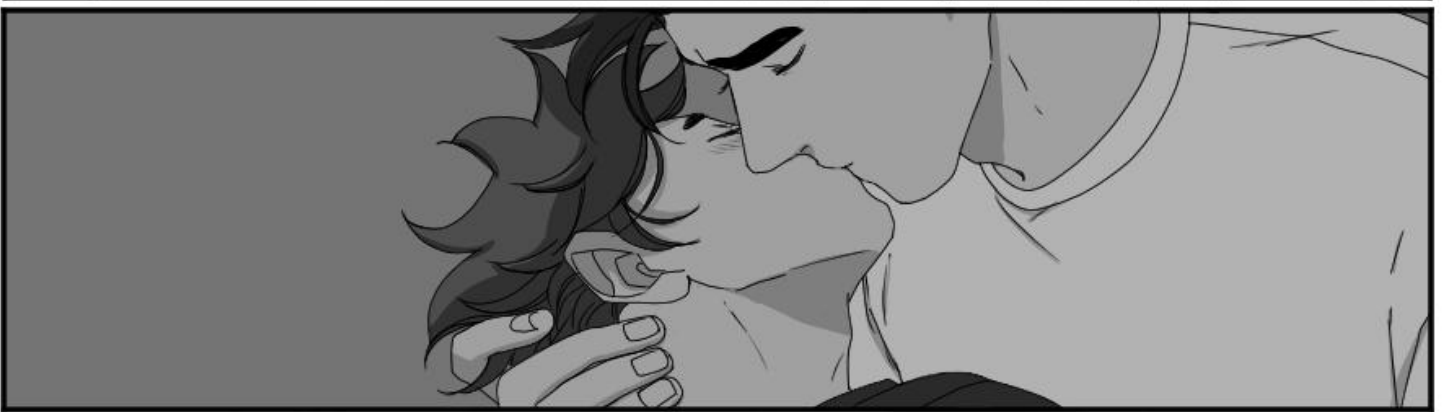
















Yeah. I want you to promise me something.

...A rule?

...Do you think we can make a rule?

If you ever feel uncomfortable, or if you don't want to do something...
Or if you change your mind about something...

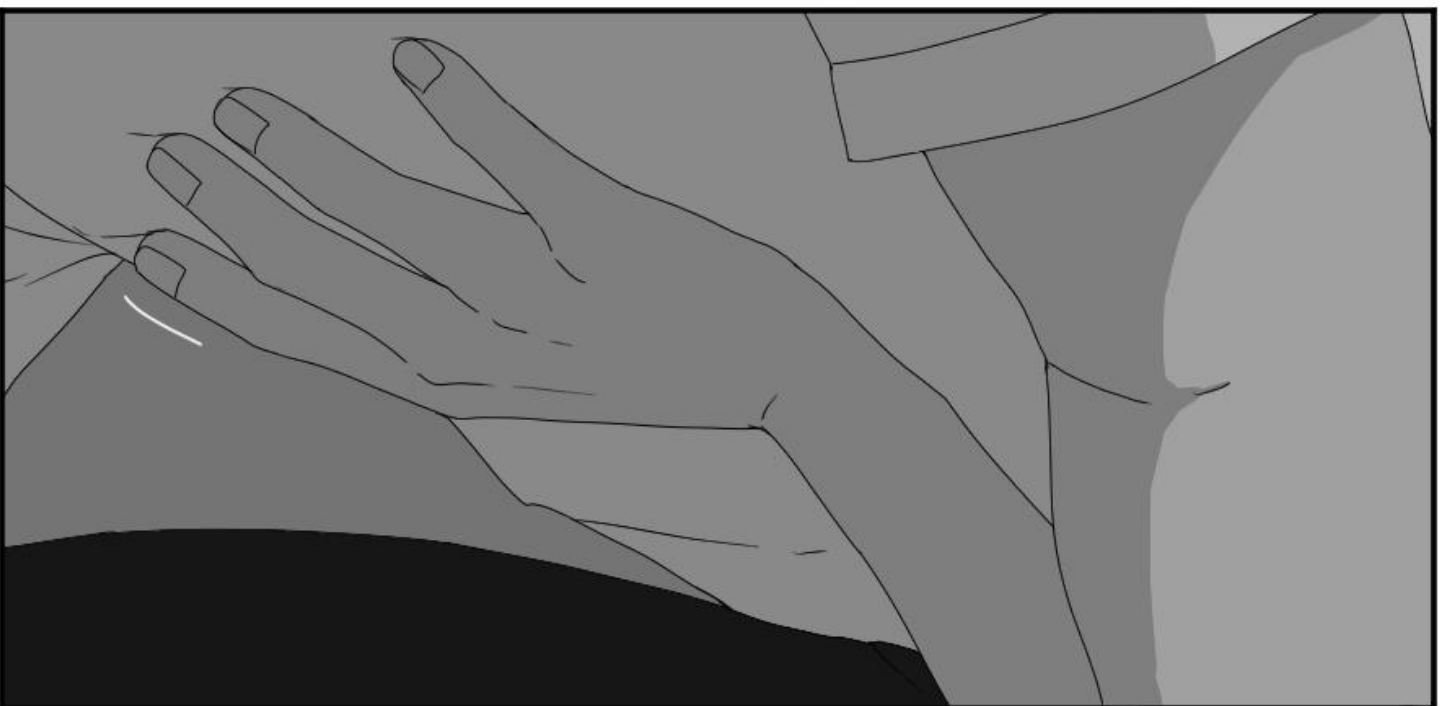
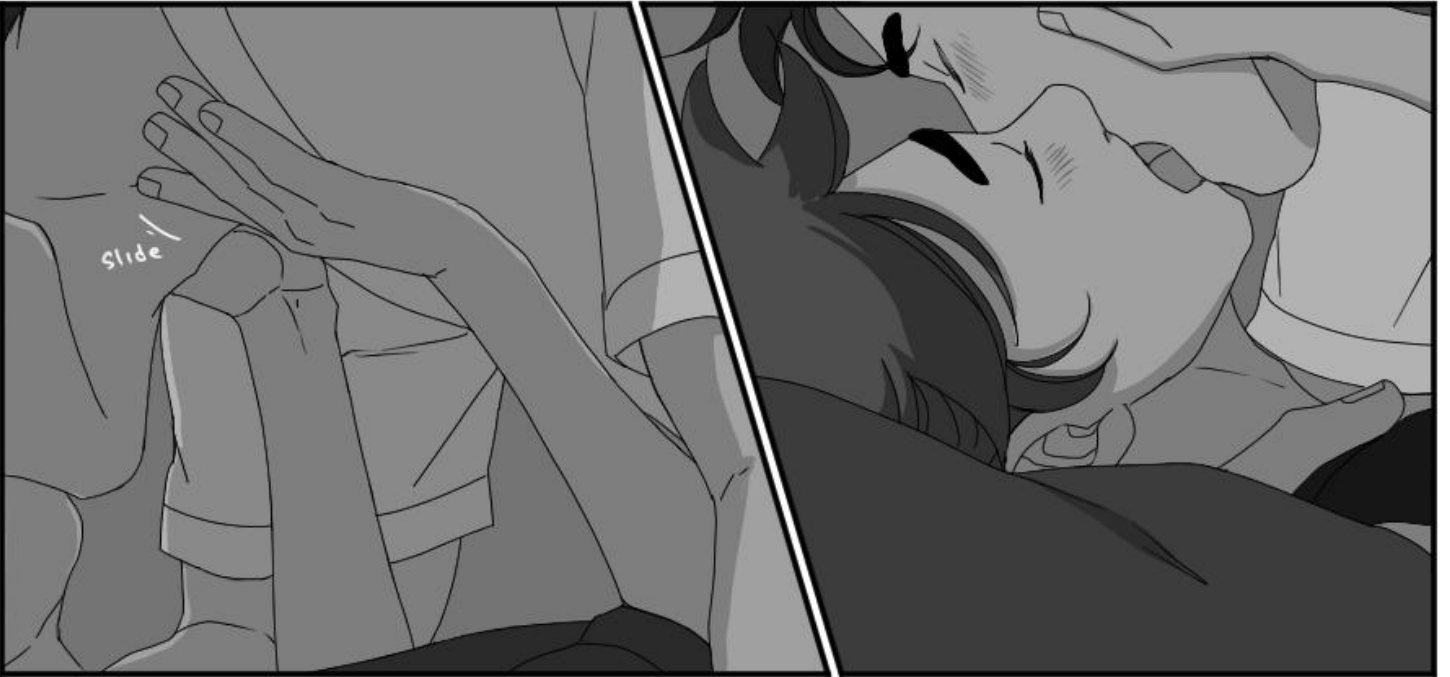
I want you to promise me that you'll tell me. Always tell me. I'll never be mad, or disappointed.

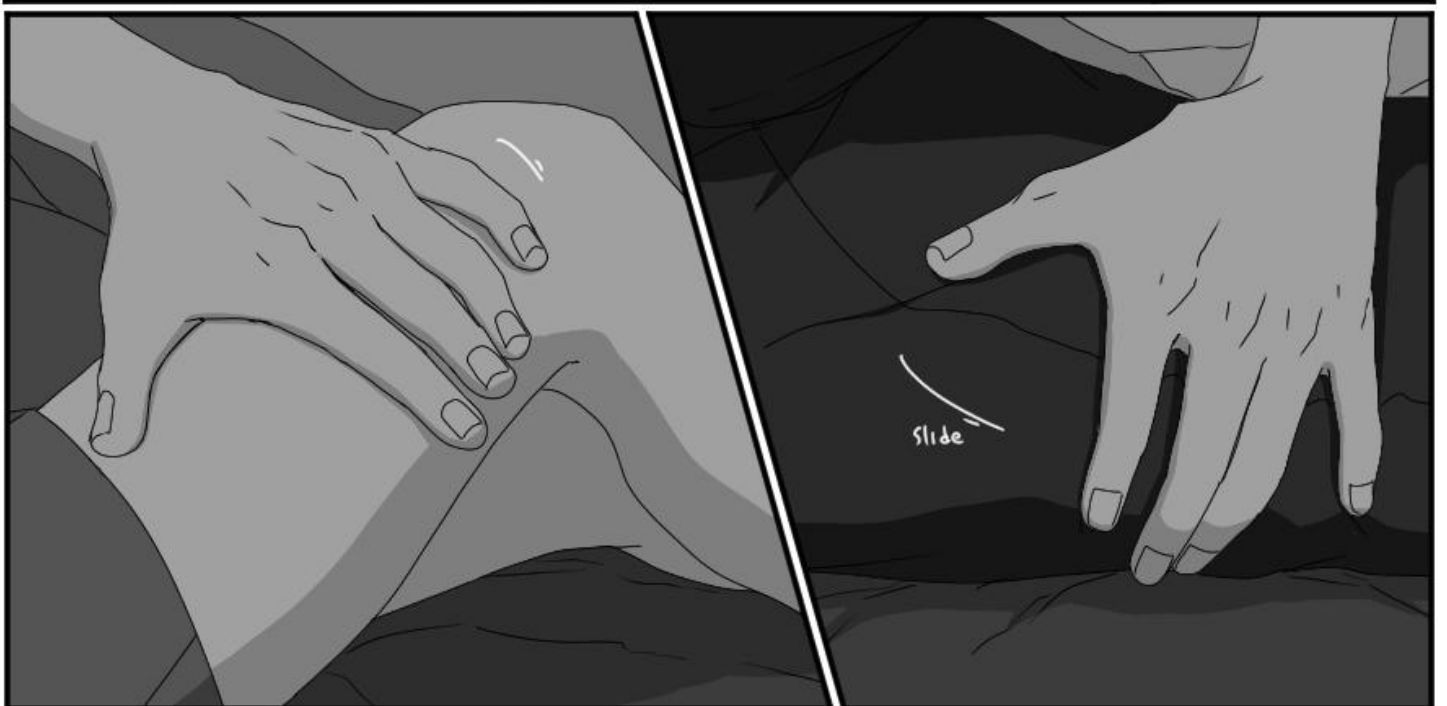
It would just make me feel better knowing that you'll tell me....

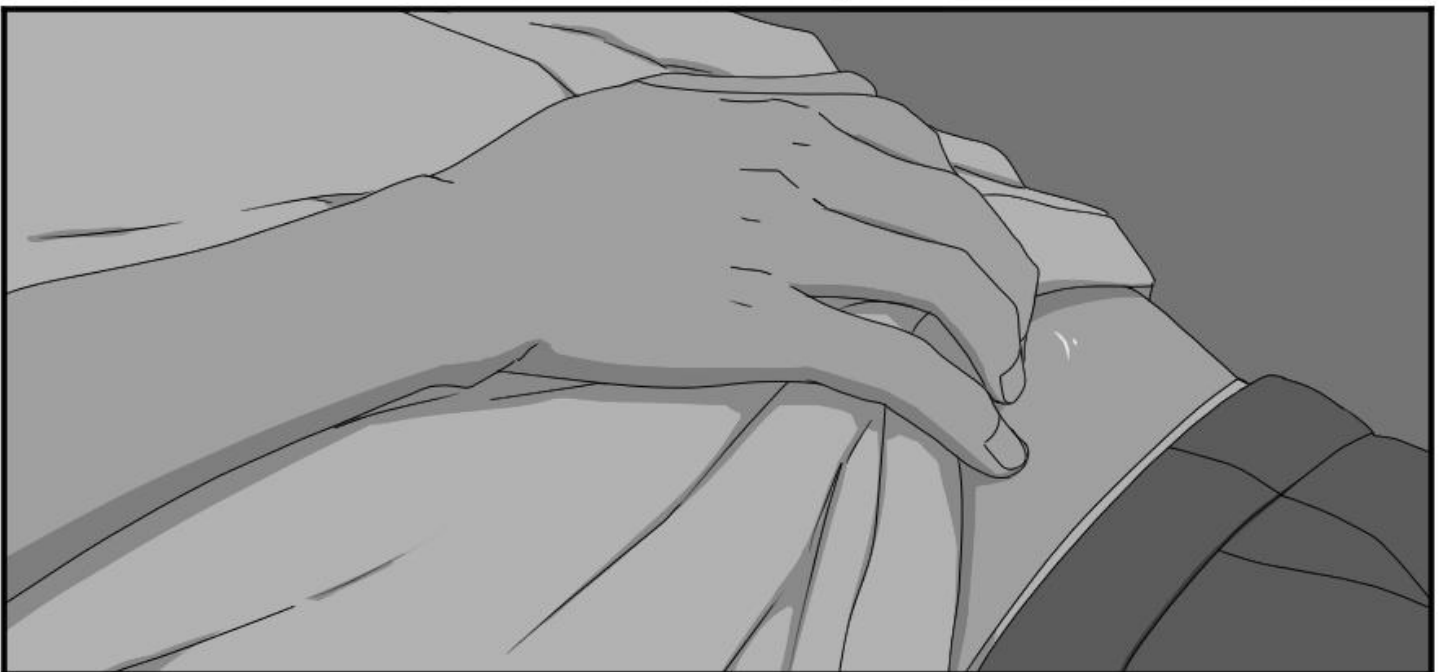
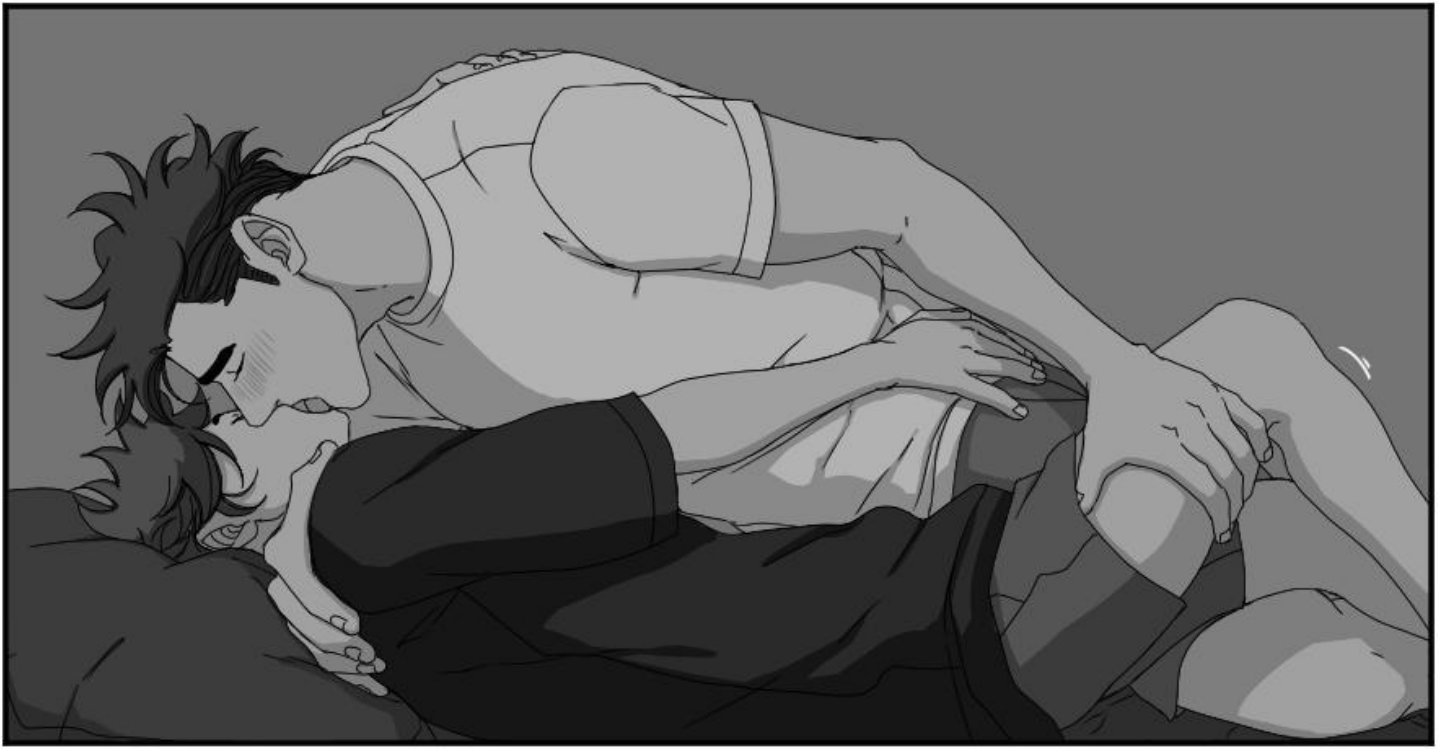




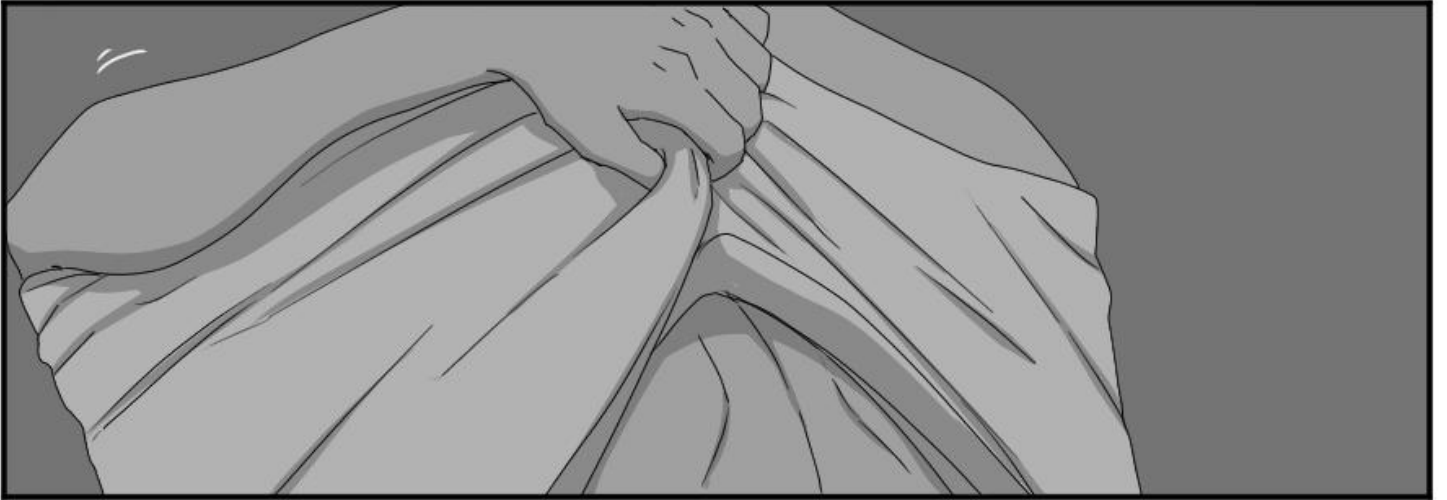
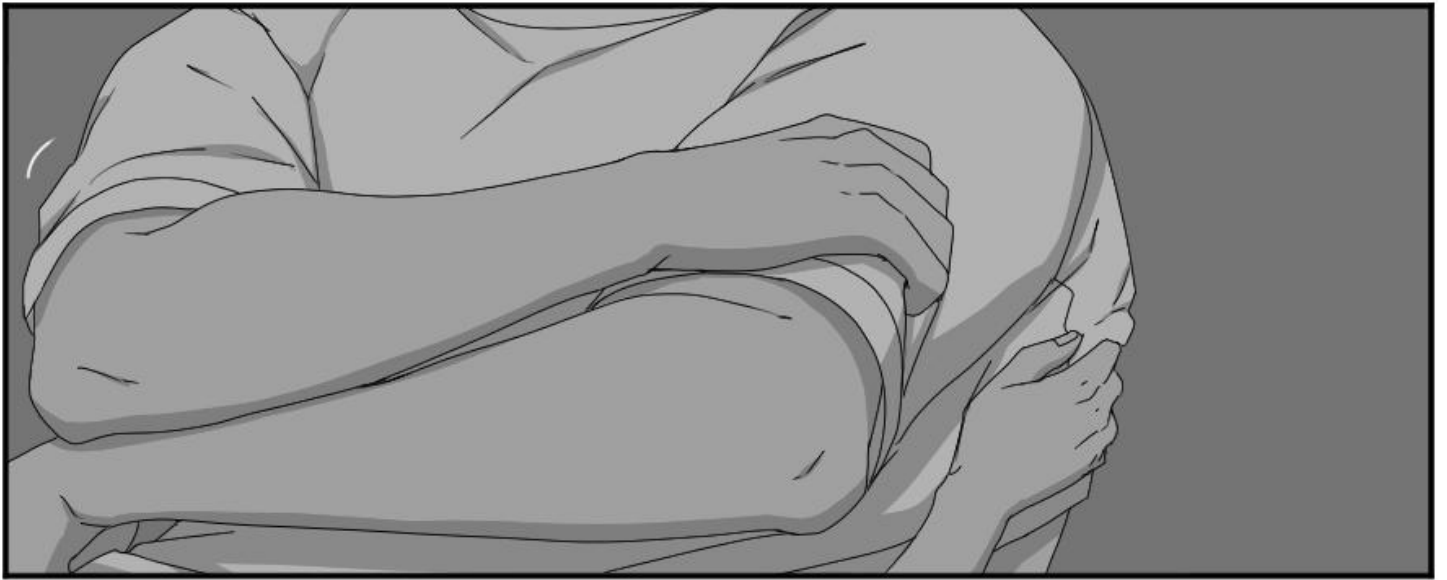










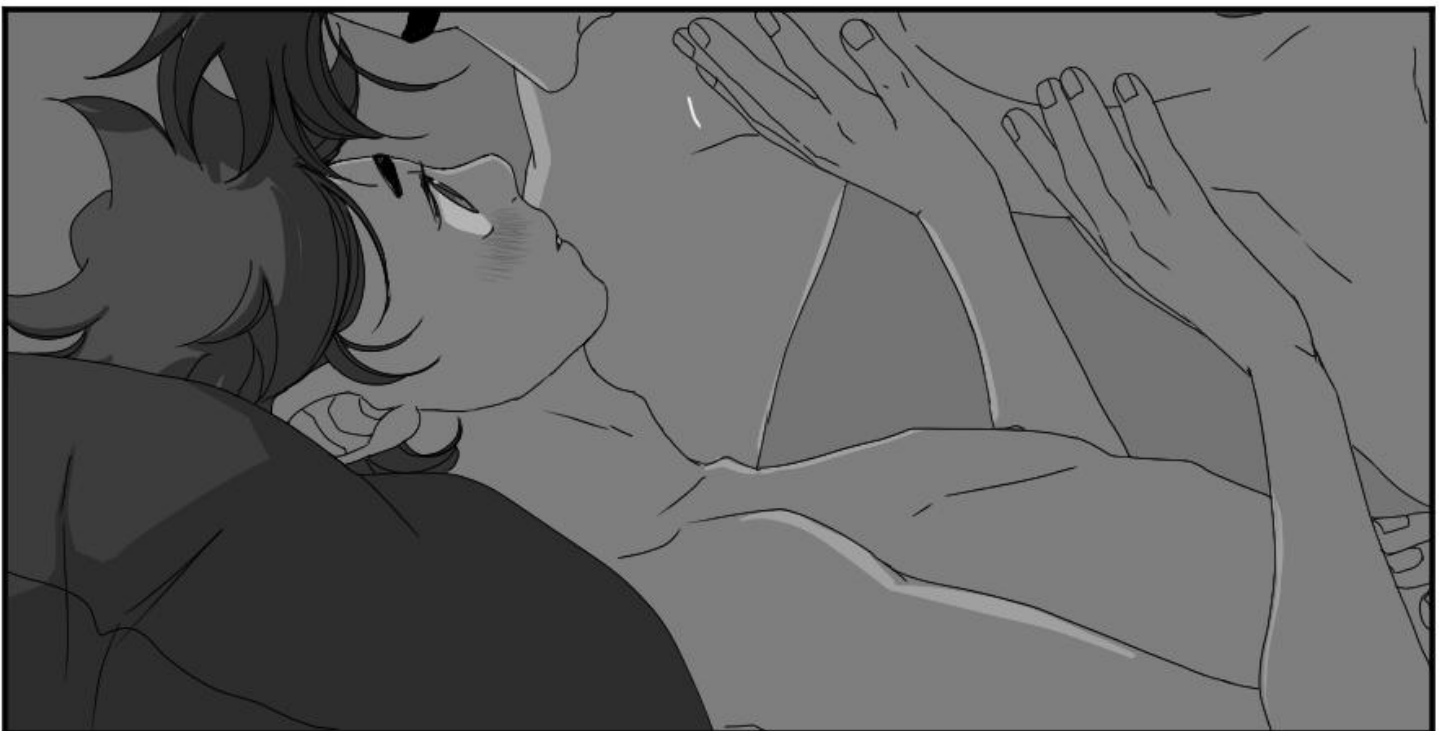
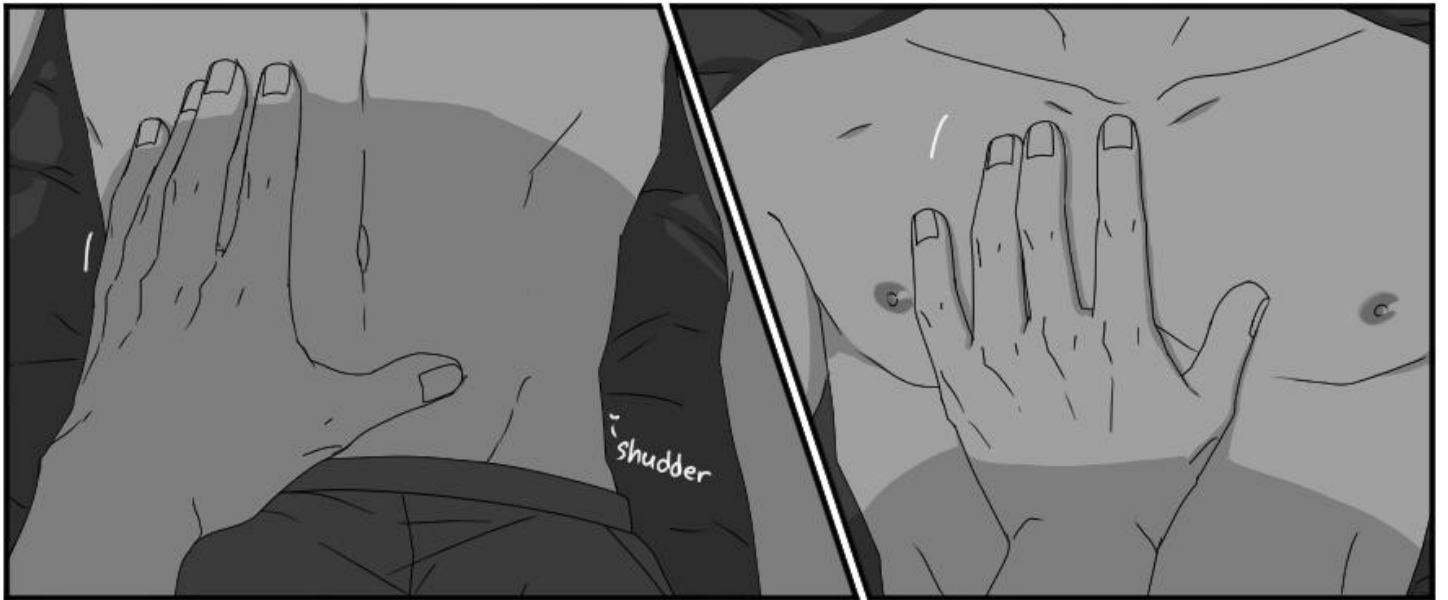




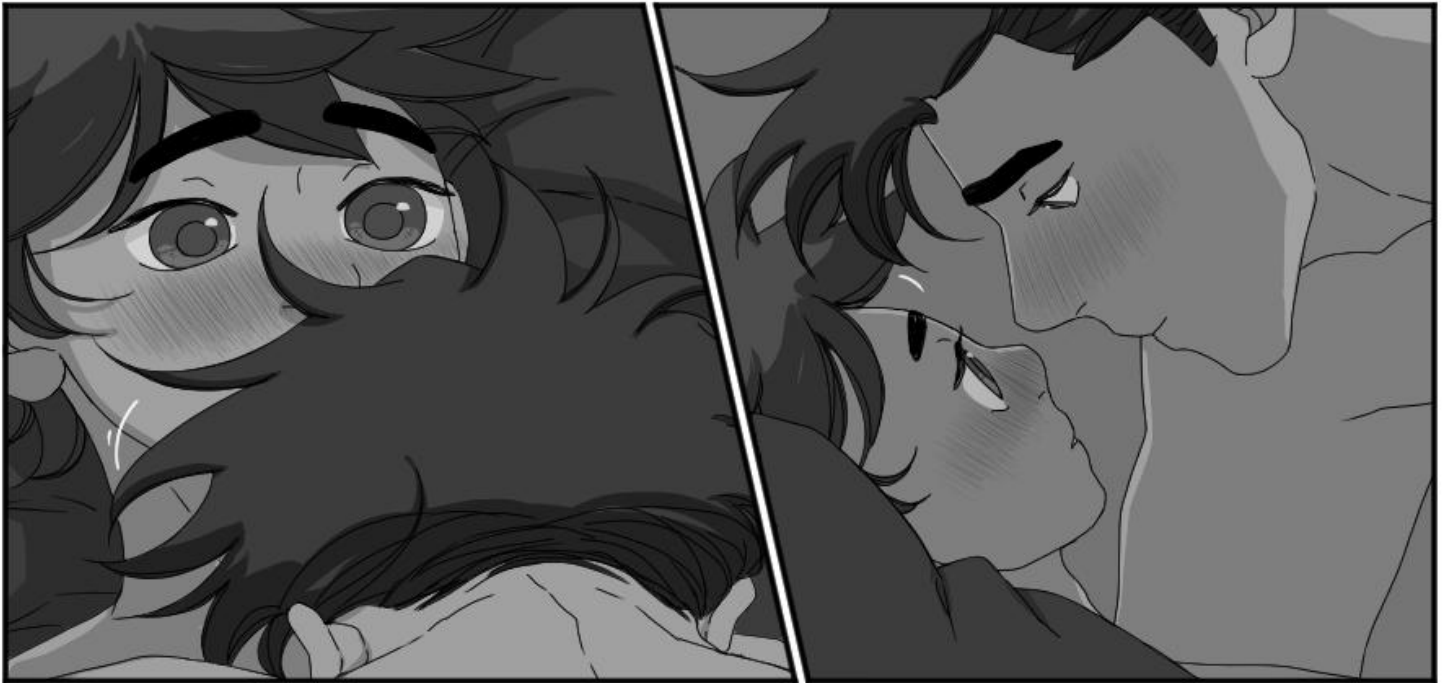


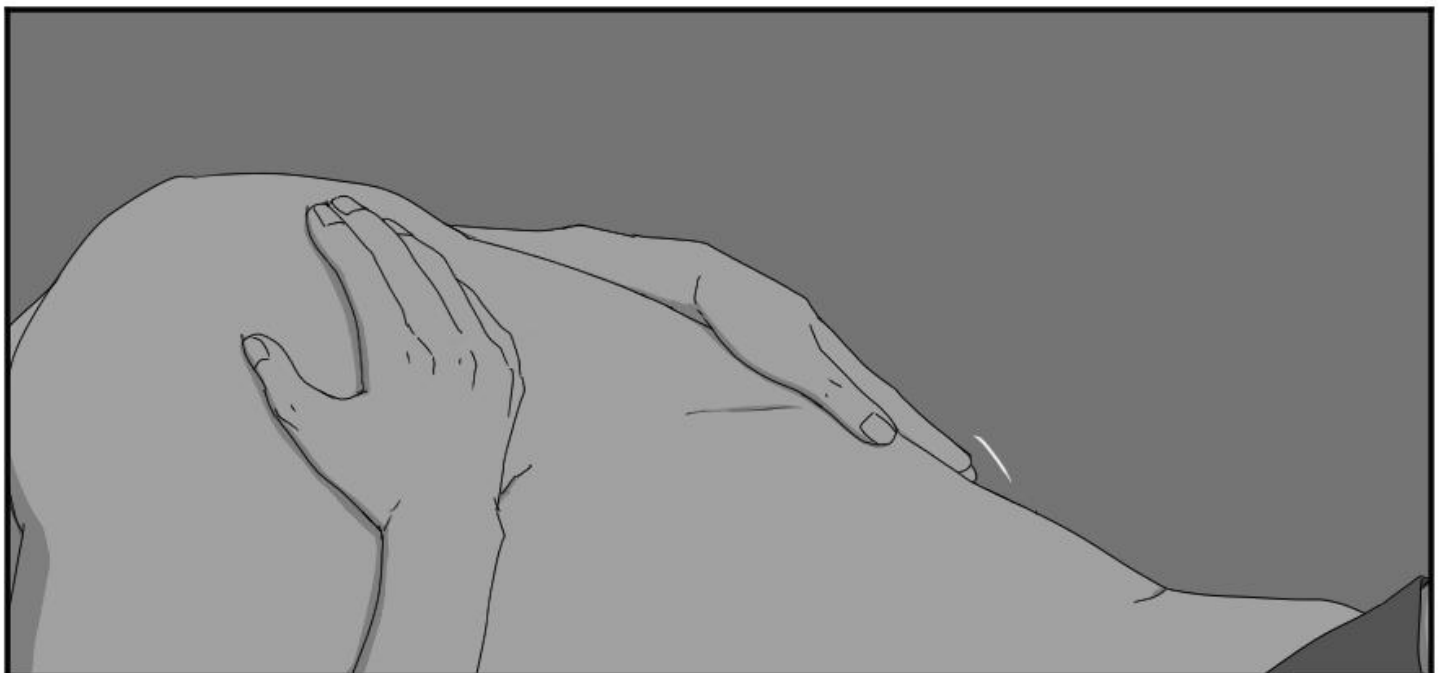
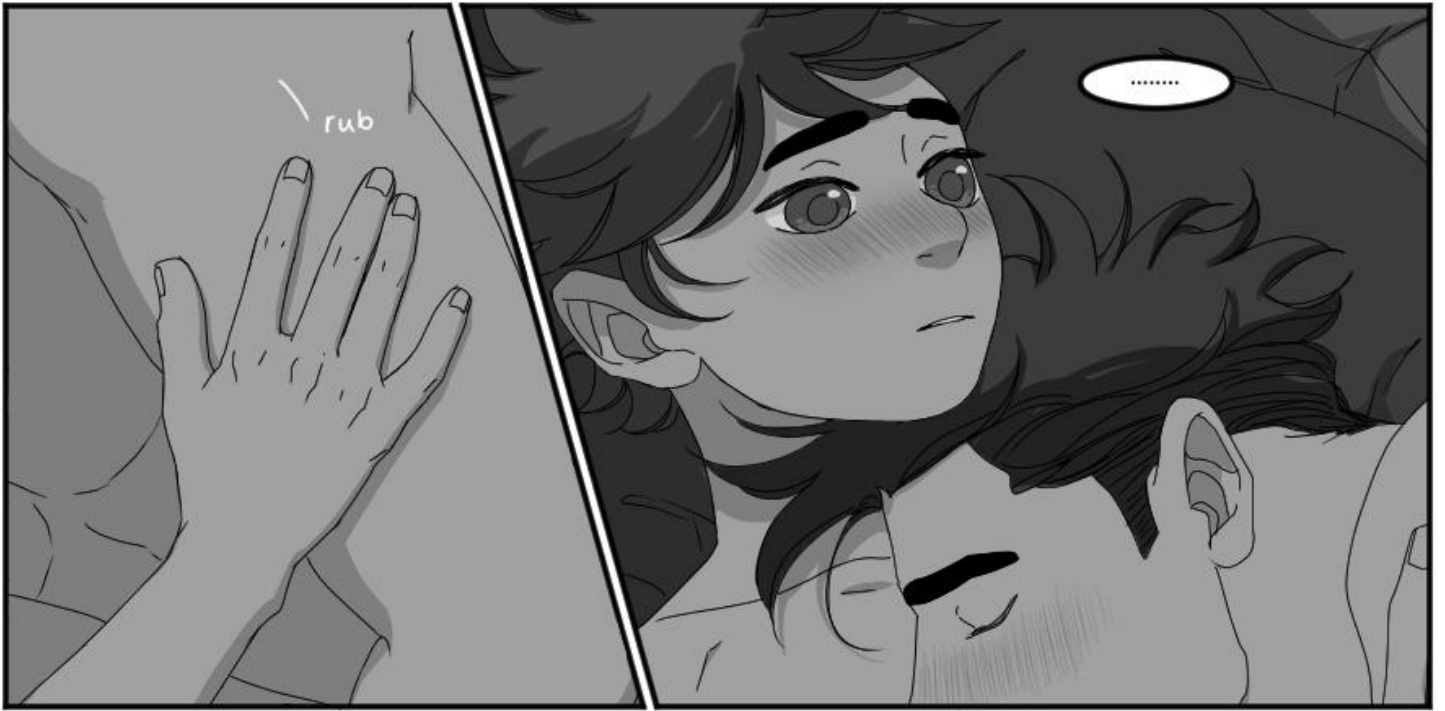




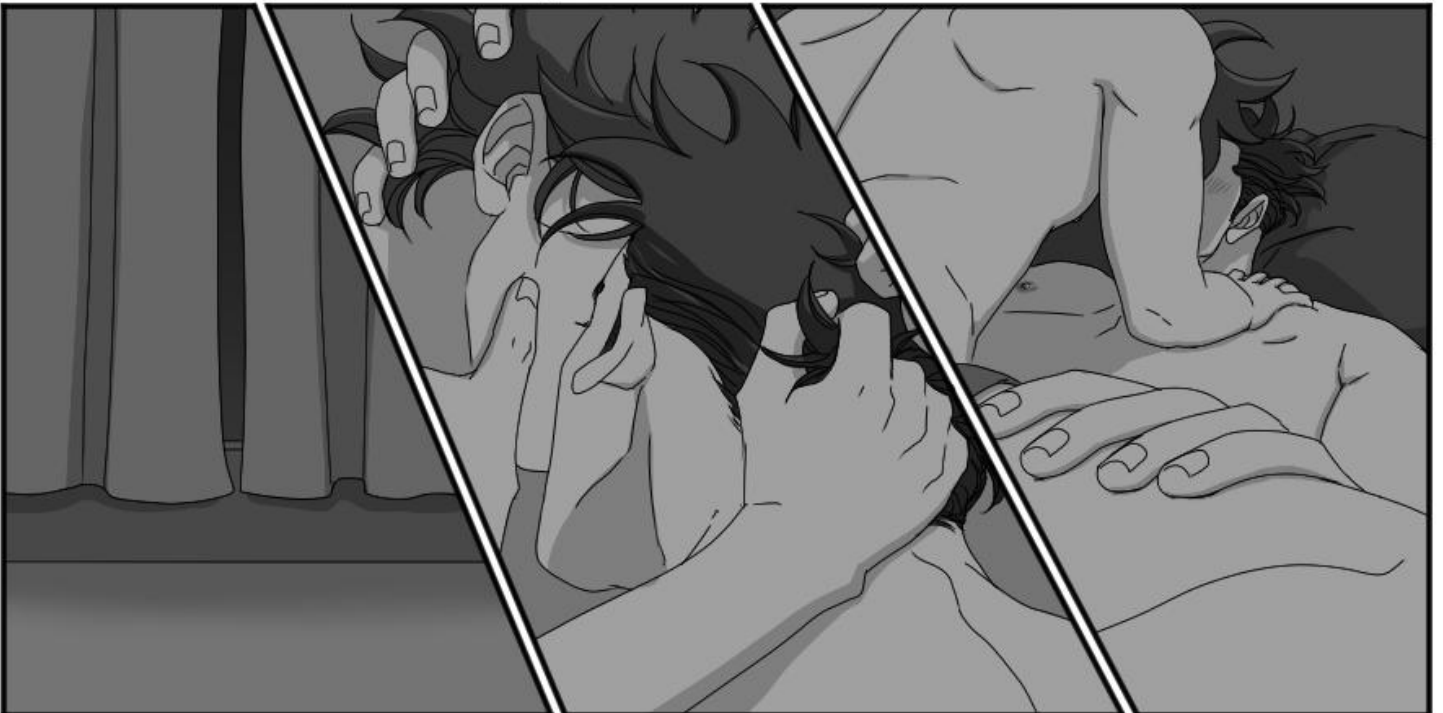














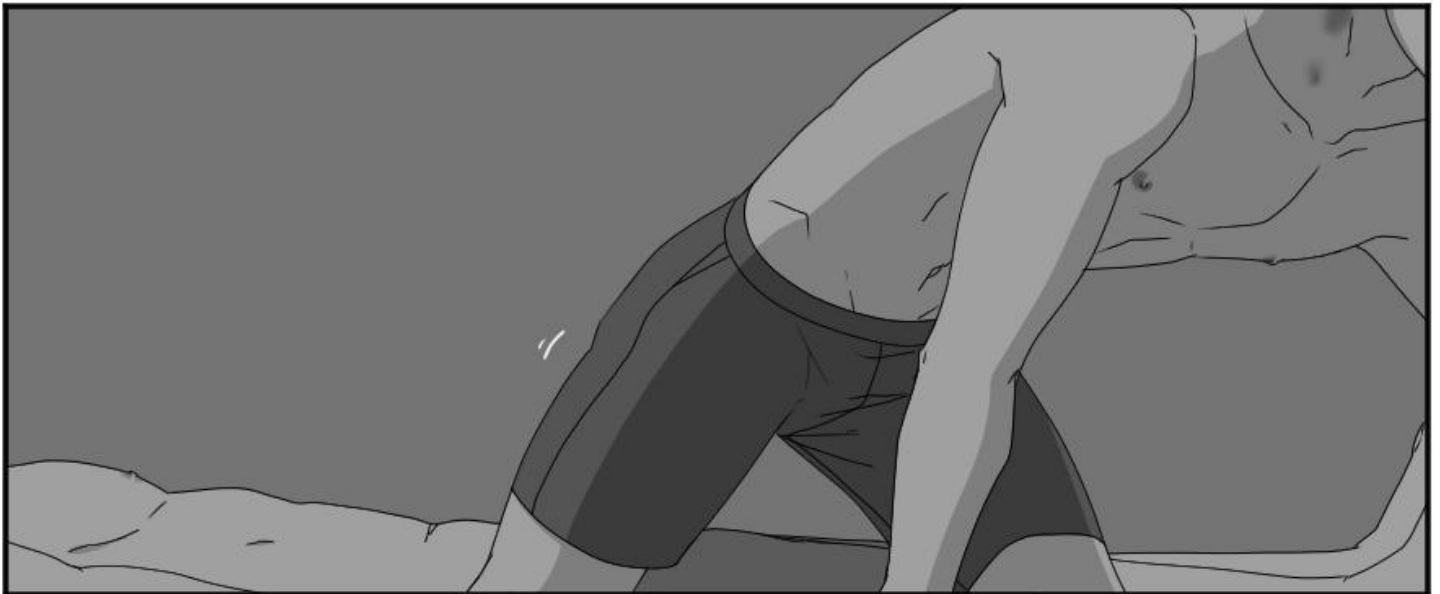


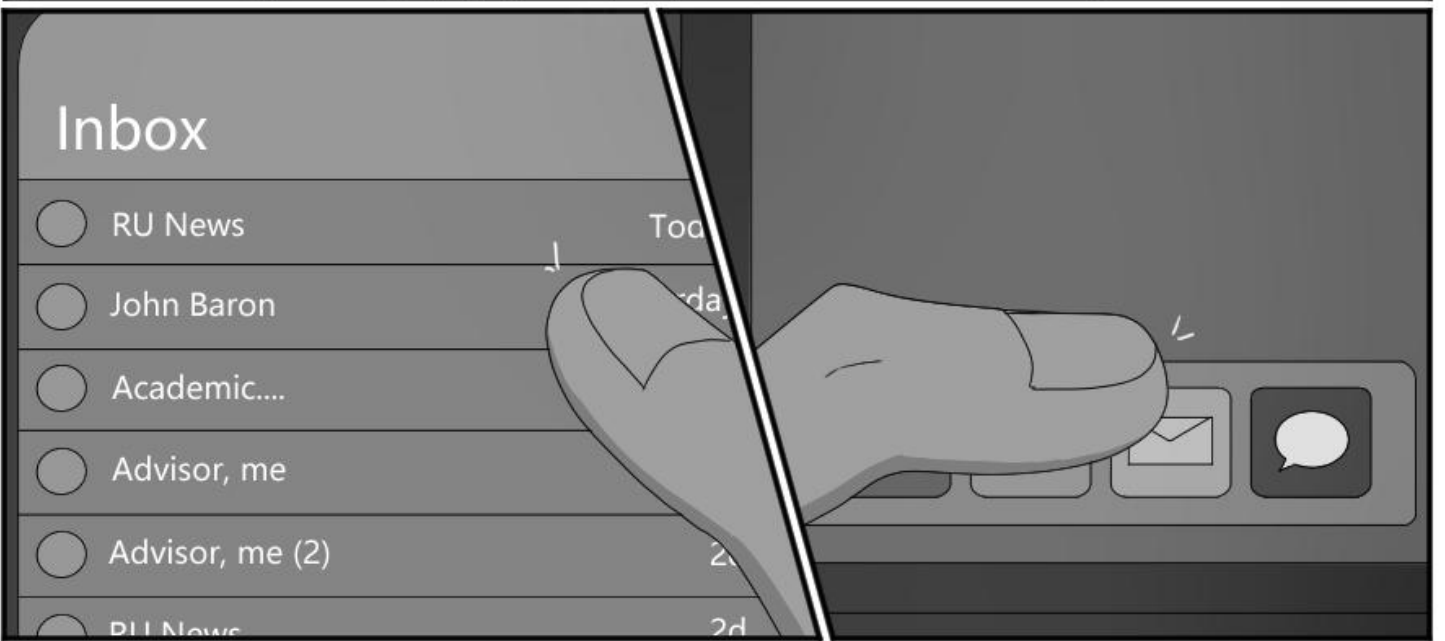












end of chapter nineteen