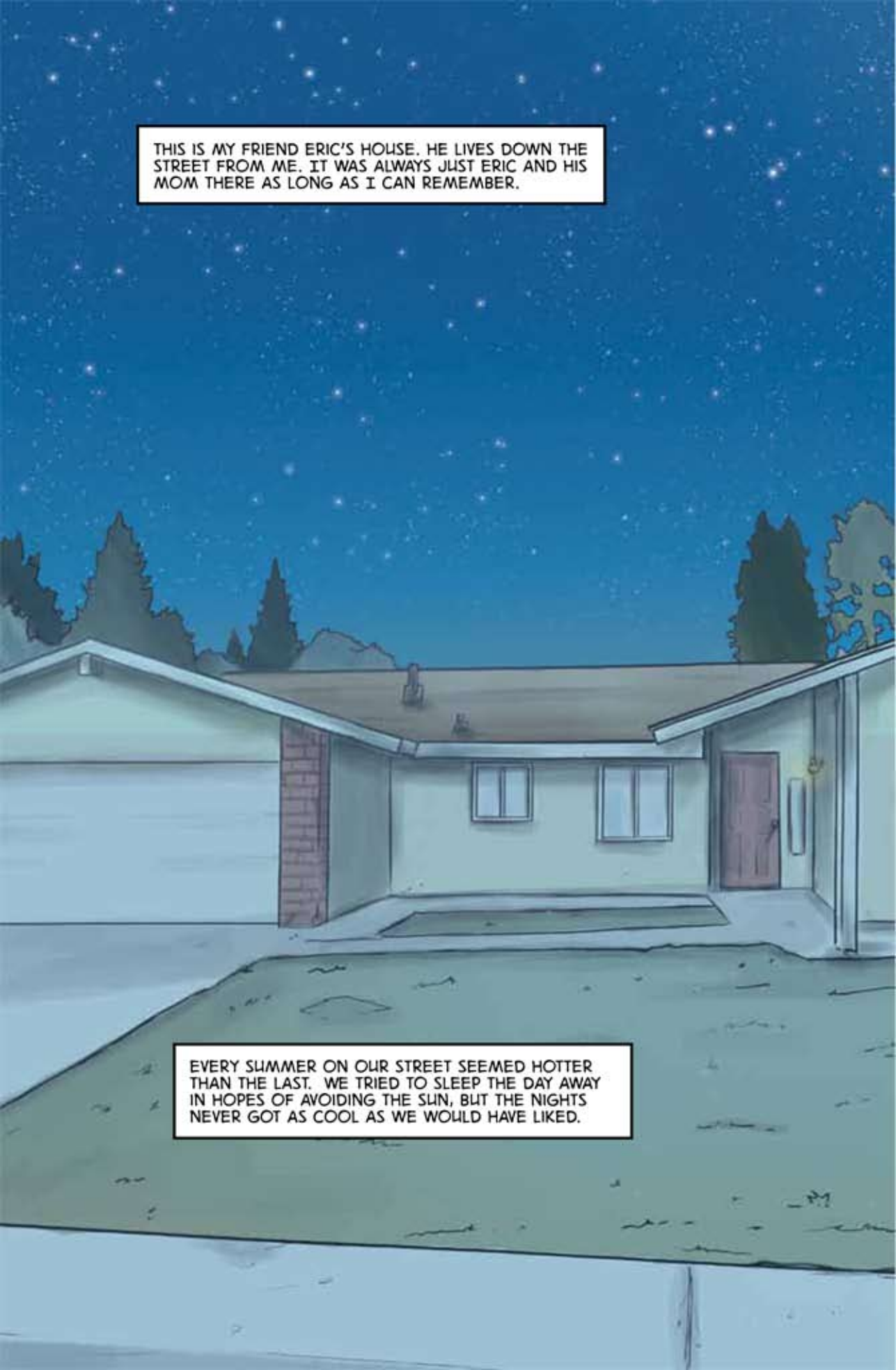


HOPE

2011/2012
FREE

HOPE



A night scene of a suburban house. The sky is a deep blue, filled with numerous small white stars. In the background, several dark green trees are silhouetted against the night sky. The house in the foreground is a single-story structure with a light-colored exterior and a brown roof. It features a two-car garage on the left, a central entrance with a reddish-brown door, and two windows. A concrete driveway leads to the garage, and a small lawn is visible in front of the house.

THIS IS MY FRIEND ERIC'S HOUSE. HE LIVES DOWN THE STREET FROM ME. IT WAS ALWAYS JUST ERIC AND HIS MOM THERE AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER.

EVERY SUMMER ON OUR STREET SEEMED HOTTER THAN THE LAST. WE TRIED TO SLEEP THE DAY AWAY IN HOPES OF AVOIDING THE SUN, BUT THE NIGHTS NEVER GOT AS COOL AS WE WOULD HAVE LIKED.

FROM ERIC'S ROOF THERE WAS A CLEAR VIEW OF THE ENTIRE NEIGHBORHOOD. WE STAYED UP AS LATE AS WE COULD, TALKING ABOUT WHATEVER.

WHEN THE METAL ROOF FINALLY STARTED TO COOL DOWN, WE KNEW IT WAS TIME TO GO TO SLEEP.



THIS SUMMER ERIC WAS ON HIS OWN. I HATED TO LEAVE HIM BY HIMSELF BUT I HAD A CHANCE TO GO TO THE COAST FOR TWO MONTHS, SO I TOOK IT.





WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS FOR SO LONG, WE'RE PRACTICALLY BROTHERS. I PROBABLY KNOW HIM BETTER THAN ANYBODY.



BUT I GUESS EVEN BROTHERS CAN MISS STUFF SOMETIMES, ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE NOT THERE TO SEE IT.

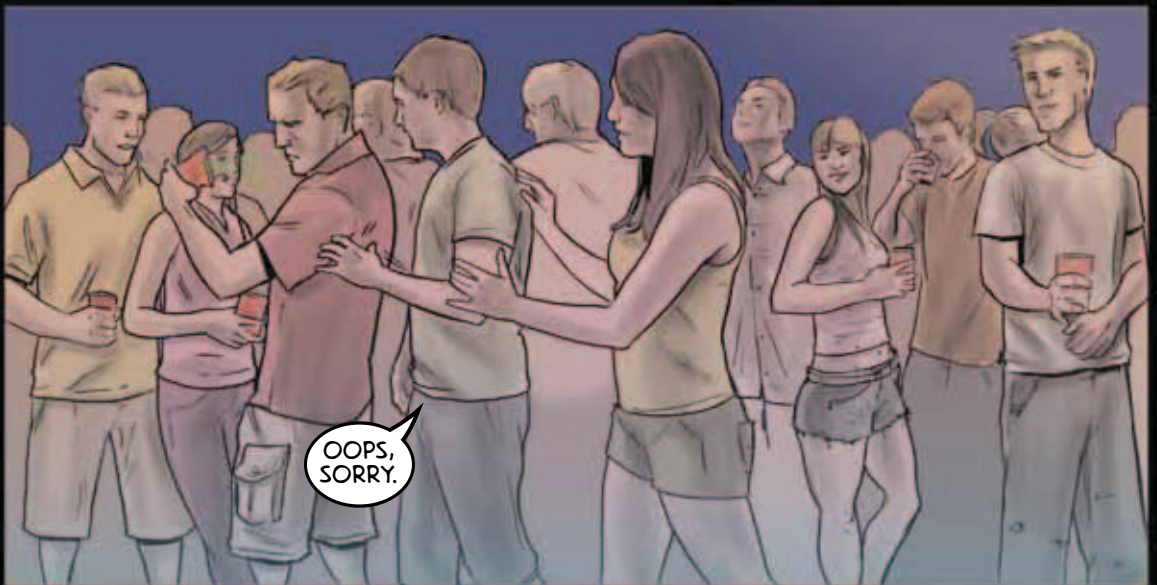
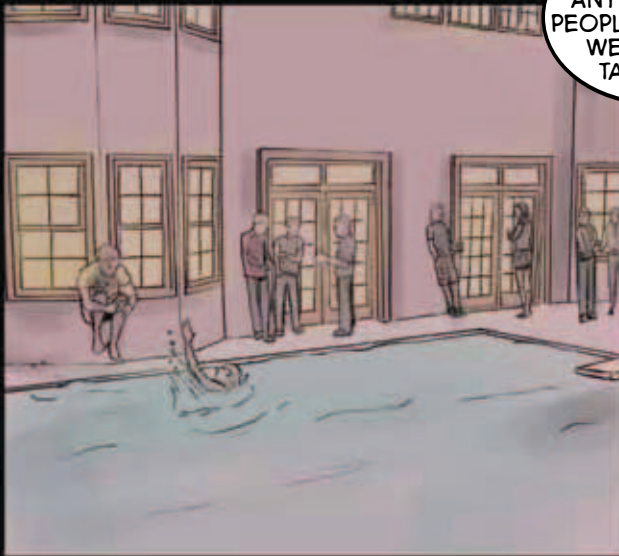


LIKE THE PARTY HE WENT TO WITH JORDAN A FEW MONTHS AGO.



WE DON'T KNOW ANY OF THESE PEOPLE, JORDAN. WE SHOULD TAKE OFF.

C'MON ERIC, JUST GIVE IT A FEW MINUTES. THERE'S NOTHING ELSE GOING ON



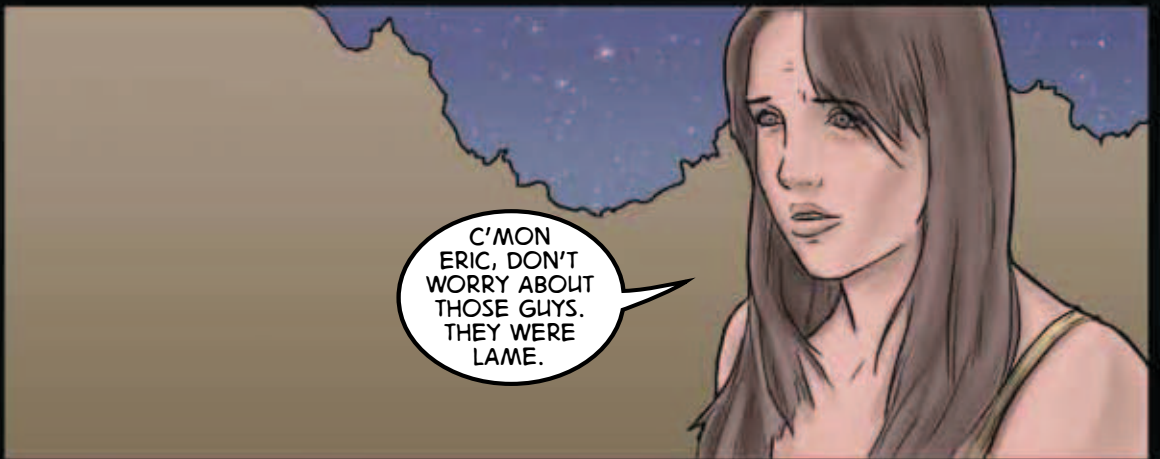
OOPS, SORRY.





ERIC!
WHERE ARE
YOU GOING?!

HOME
JORDAN,
HOME!



C'MON
ERIC, DON'T
WORRY ABOUT
THOSE GUYS.
THEY WERE
LAME.



IT'S NOT
JUST THEM
JORDAN, IT'S
EVERYONE!

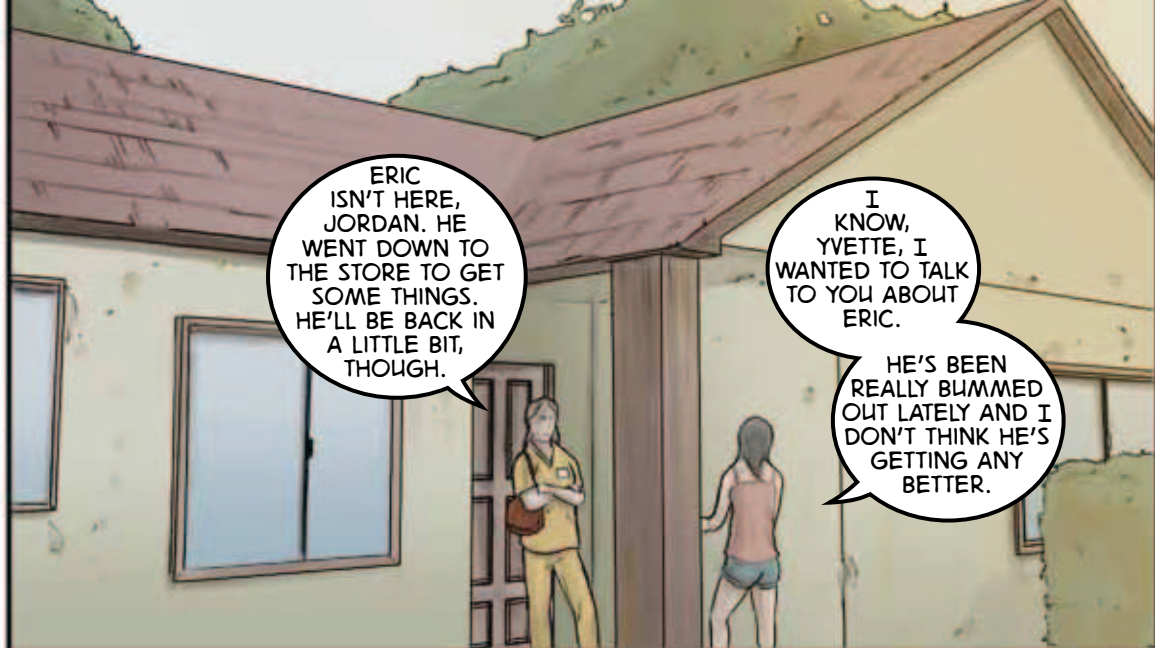
IF IT
WASN'T THEM
TONIGHT IT WOULD
HAVE BEEN
SOMEONE ELSE ON
SOME OTHER
NIGHT!

A man in a green t-shirt and shorts is walking away from the viewer down a street at night. The sky is dark blue with stars. A large, semi-transparent silhouette of a man's head and shoulders is superimposed on the sky, centered behind the man walking. The street is lined with trees and houses, and a street lamp is visible on the right.

HE NEVER TOLD ME ABOUT THAT NIGHT; I HAD TO HEAR IT FROM JORDAN. IT WAS THE LAST THING SOMEONE LIKE ERIC NEEDED.

I'M GOING HOME JORDAN.

AFTER THAT, IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR JORDAN TO GET HIM TO LEAVE THE HOUSE. ALMOST EVERY SINGLE NIGHT SHE SAW HIM SITTING ON HIS ROOF WHILE HIS MOM WORKED THE GRAVEYARD SHIFT AT THE HOSPITAL.



ERIC ISN'T HERE, JORDAN. HE WENT DOWN TO THE STORE TO GET SOME THINGS. HE'LL BE BACK IN A LITTLE BIT, THOUGH.

I KNOW, YVETTE, I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT ERIC. HE'S BEEN REALLY BUMMED OUT LATELY AND I DON'T THINK HE'S GETTING ANY BETTER.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN?! ERIC HAS BEEN FINE!

HE'S JUST RESTLESS SINCE IT'S SUMMER AND THERE'S NOT MUCH TO DO AROUND HERE.



NO, IT'S MORE THAN THAT. HE'S BEEN THIS WAY FOR MONTHS NOW! AND IT'S JUST GETTING WORSE.

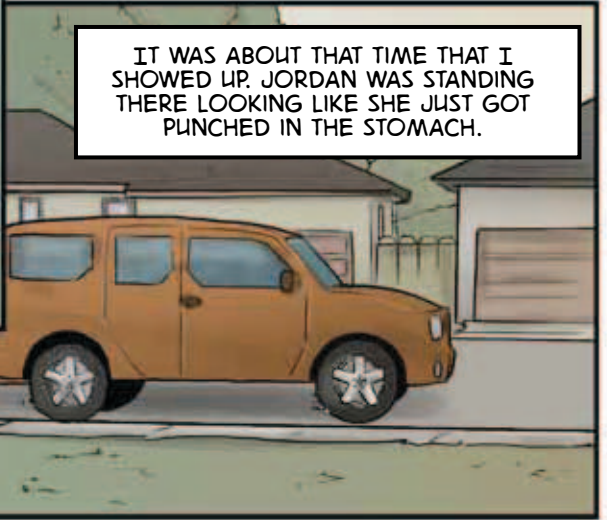


JORDAN, LOOK, I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS. I HAVE TO GET SOME SLEEP BEFORE MY SHIFT TONIGHT.

I'LL MAKE SURE AND GIVE HIM SOME CHORES TO KEEP HIM BUSY AROUND HERE. THANKS FOR STOPPING BY.



WELL THAT DIDN'T GO SO WELL....



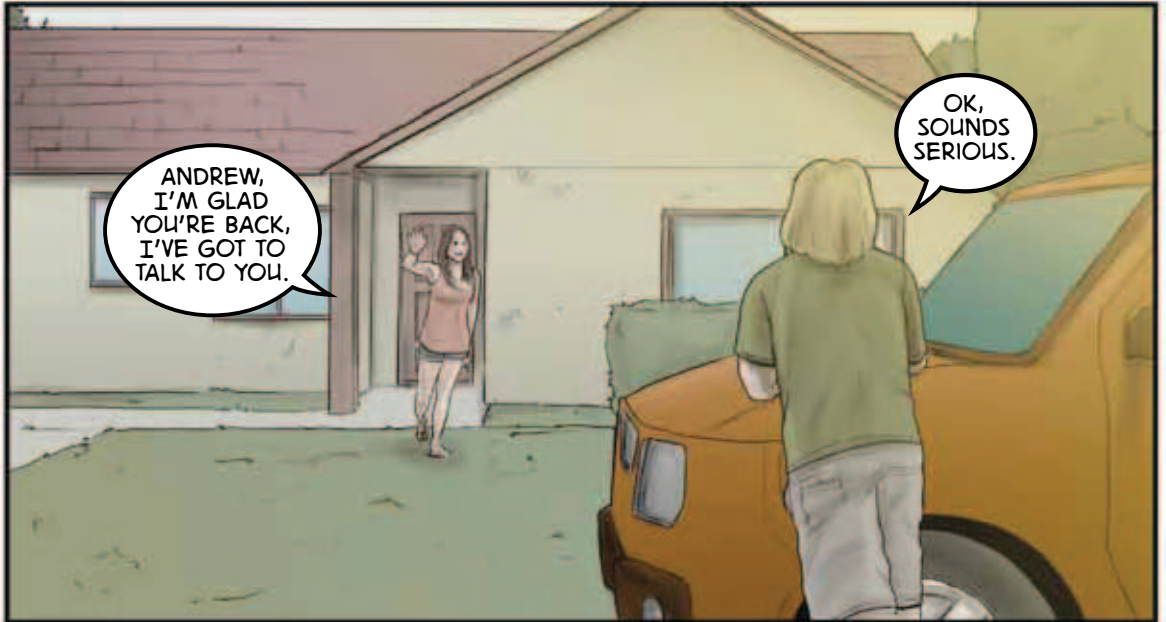
IT WAS ABOUT THAT TIME THAT I SHOWED UP. JORDAN WAS STANDING THERE LOOKING LIKE SHE JUST GOT PUNCHED IN THE STOMACH.



JORDAN, WHAT'S GOING ON?! WHERE'S ERIC?

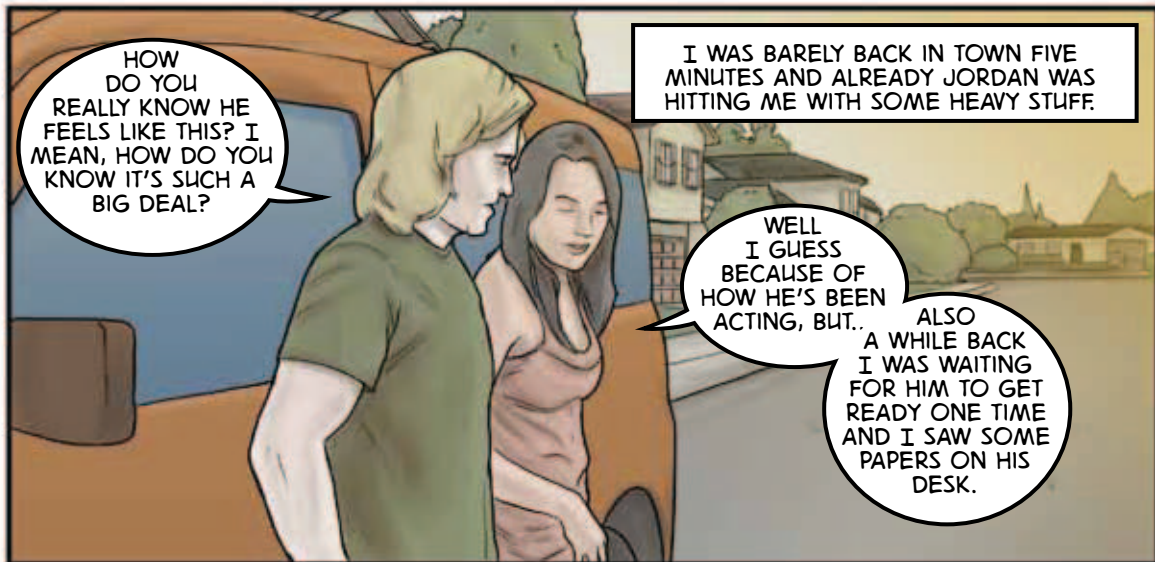


ANDREW!



ANDREW, I'M GLAD YOU'RE BACK, I'VE GOT TO TALK TO YOU.

OK, SOUNDS SERIOUS.



HOW DO YOU REALLY KNOW HE FEELS LIKE THIS? I MEAN, HOW DO YOU KNOW IT'S SUCH A BIG DEAL?

I WAS BARELY BACK IN TOWN FIVE MINUTES AND ALREADY JORDAN WAS HITTING ME WITH SOME HEAVY STUFF.

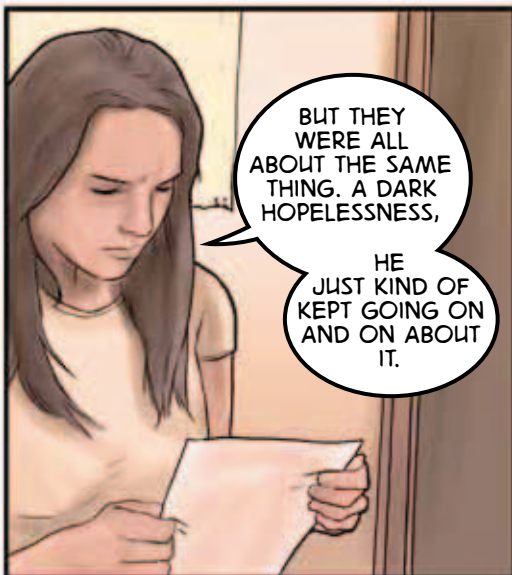
WELL I GUESS BECAUSE OF HOW HE'S BEEN ACTING, BUT...

ALSO A WHILE BACK I WAS WAITING FOR HIM TO GET READY ONE TIME AND I SAW SOME PAPERS ON HIS DESK.



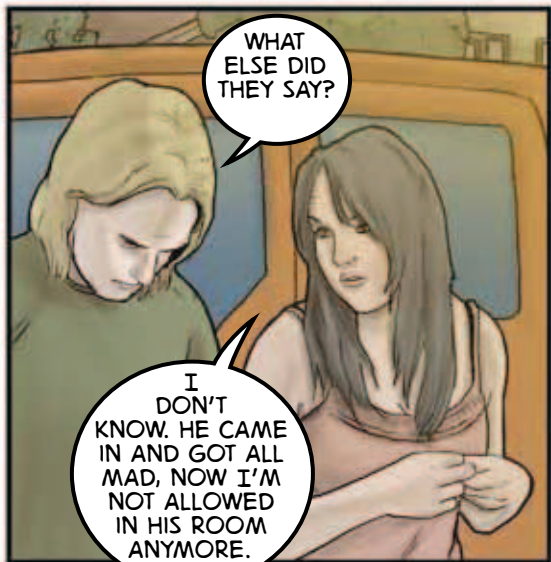
I WAS BORED SO I PICKED THEM UP, AND ANDREW, IT WAS SOME OF THE DARKEST SADDEST STUFF.

THEY WERE LETTERS TO NO ONE IN PARTICULAR.



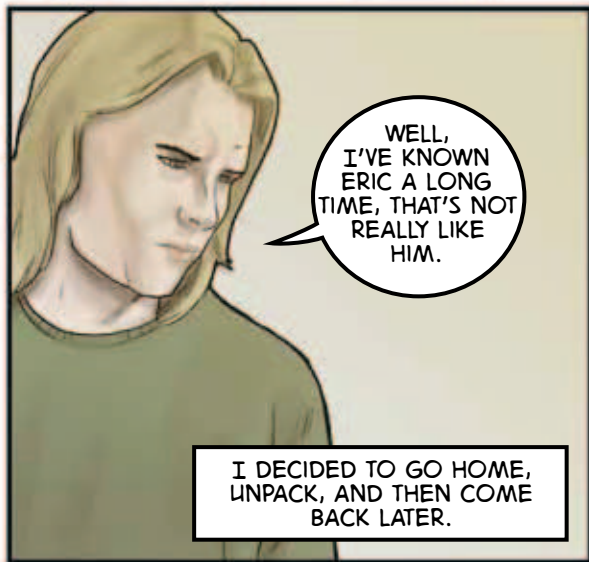
BUT THEY WERE ALL ABOUT THE SAME THING. A DARK HOPELESSNESS,

HE JUST KIND OF KEPT GOING ON AND ON ABOUT IT.



WHAT ELSE DID THEY SAY?

I DON'T KNOW. HE CAME IN AND GOT ALL MAD, NOW I'M NOT ALLOWED IN HIS ROOM ANYMORE.



WELL, I'VE KNOWN ERIC A LONG TIME, THAT'S NOT REALLY LIKE HIM.

I DECIDED TO GO HOME, UNPACK, AND THEN COME BACK LATER.

BUT REALLY IT WAS JUST TO BUY ME SOME TIME TO THINK OF WHAT TO SAY TO ERIC.





UMMM,
IT'S BEEN LIKE
MONTHS, AREN'T
YOU HAPPY TO
SEE ME?



YEAH
SURE, IT'S
JUST...NOT THE
BEST TIME, YOU
KNOW.

SO
YOU GOING
TO LET ME UP
OR WHAT?



ANDREW,
WHAT ARE
YOU DOING
HERE?



I
CAME TO
SEE YOU--I
CAME TO SEE
HOW YOU WERE
DOING.



AND WHERE WERE YOU ALL SUMMER? WHERE WERE YOU WHEN I NEEDED YOU?!

LOOK, I'M HERE NOW. TALK TO ME.

NO, WHAT'S THE POINT? THIS ISN'T JUST ABOUT YOU. IT'S ABOUT **EVERYBODY**.

I DON'T GET IT, WHAT DID EVERYBODY DO TO YOU?



IT DOESN'T MATTER, FORGET I SAID ANYTHING.

OF **COURSE** IT MATTERS, JUST TALK TO ME.



THAT'S JUST IT, ANDREW. WHY TALK ABOUT IT? WHAT'S THE POINT?

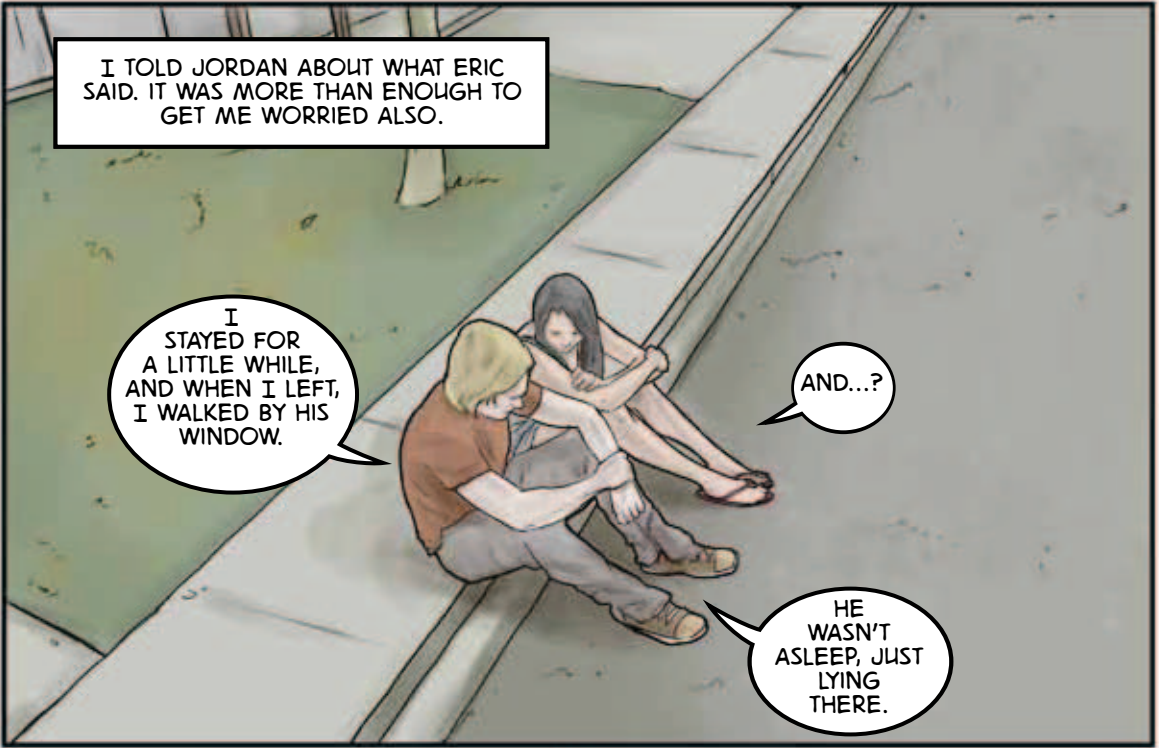


IT'S HOPELESS.



I'M GOING TO BED NOW. I'LL TALK TO YOU TOMORROW, ANDREW.

OK, I'LL BE HERE TOMORROW, MAN. I'LL BE HERE TOMORROW.



I TOLD JORDAN ABOUT WHAT ERIC SAID. IT WAS MORE THAN ENOUGH TO GET ME WORRIED ALSO.

I STAYED FOR A LITTLE WHILE, AND WHEN I LEFT, I WALKED BY HIS WINDOW.

AND...?

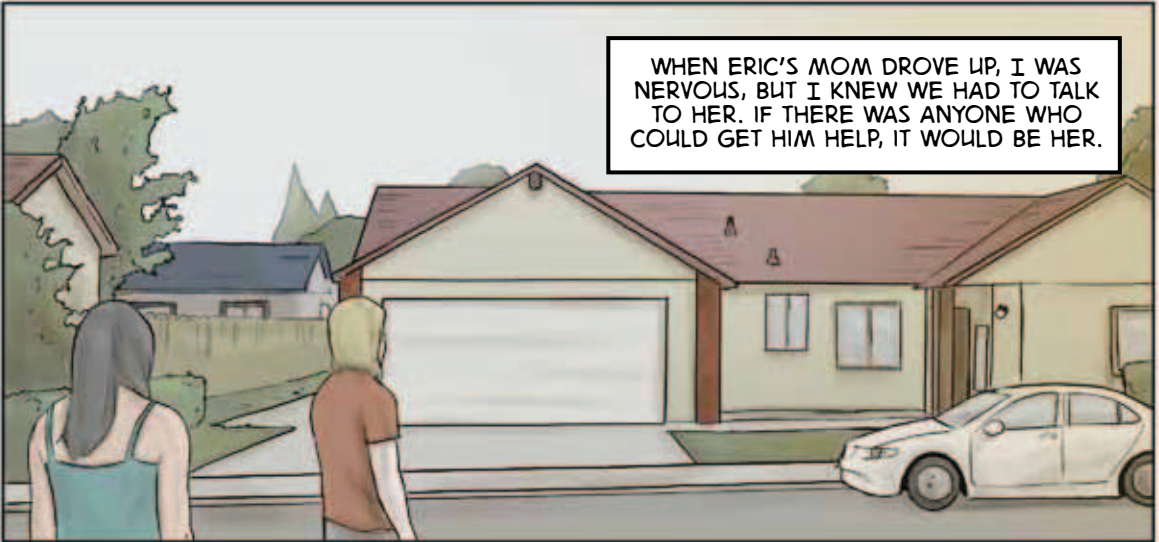
HE WASN'T ASLEEP, JUST LYING THERE.

WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

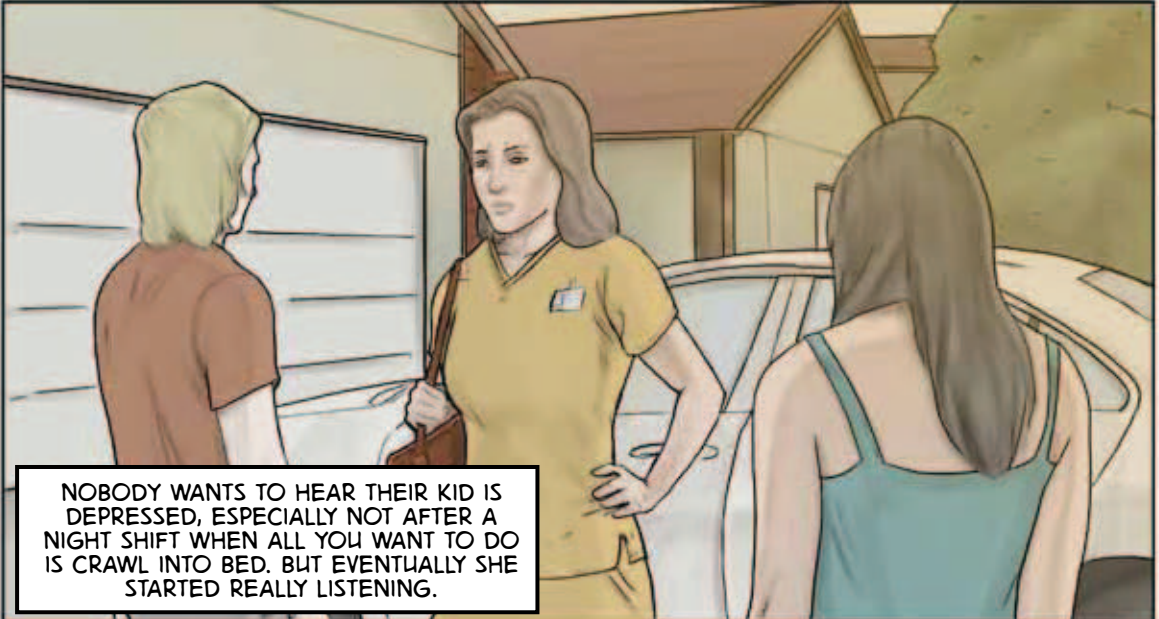
I SAY WE TRY TALKING TO YVETTE ONE MORE TIME. BOTH OF US.

AND WHAT IF SHE DOESN'T LISTEN TO US?

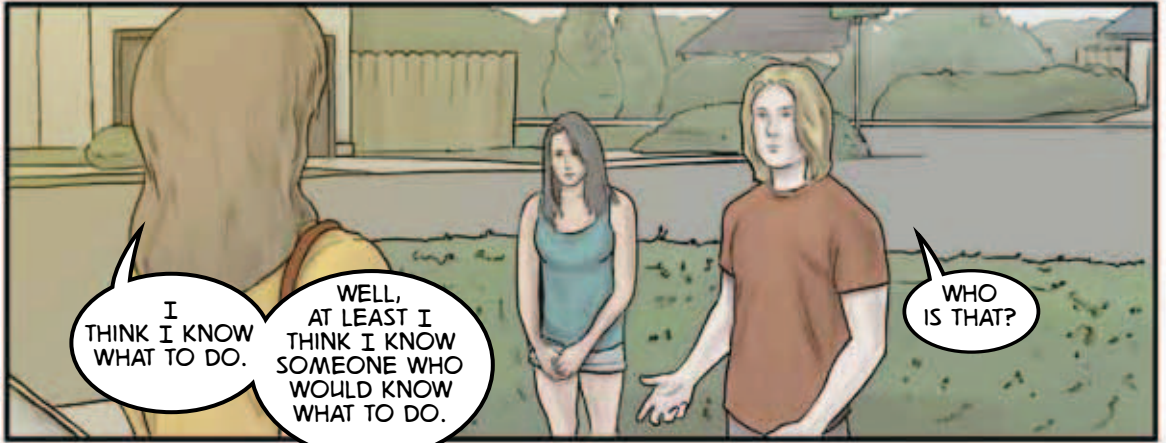
SHE HAS TO. WE'LL KEEP TALKING UNTIL SHE DOES.



WHEN ERIC'S MOM DROVE UP, I WAS NERVOUS, BUT I KNEW WE HAD TO TALK TO HER. IF THERE WAS ANYONE WHO COULD GET HIM HELP, IT WOULD BE HER.



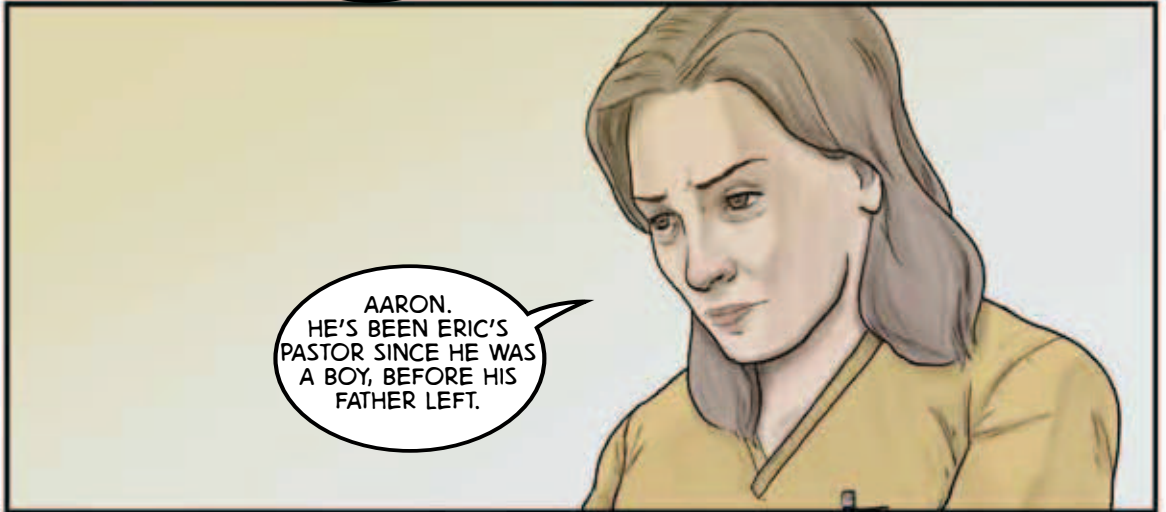
NOBODY WANTS TO HEAR THEIR KID IS DEPRESSED, ESPECIALLY NOT AFTER A NIGHT SHIFT WHEN ALL YOU WANT TO DO IS CRAWL INTO BED. BUT EVENTUALLY SHE STARTED REALLY LISTENING.



I
THINK I KNOW
WHAT TO DO.

WELL,
AT LEAST I
THINK I KNOW
SOMEONE WHO
WOULD KNOW
WHAT TO DO.

WHO
IS THAT?



AARON.
HE'S BEEN ERIC'S
PASTOR SINCE HE WAS
A BOY, BEFORE HIS
FATHER LEFT.



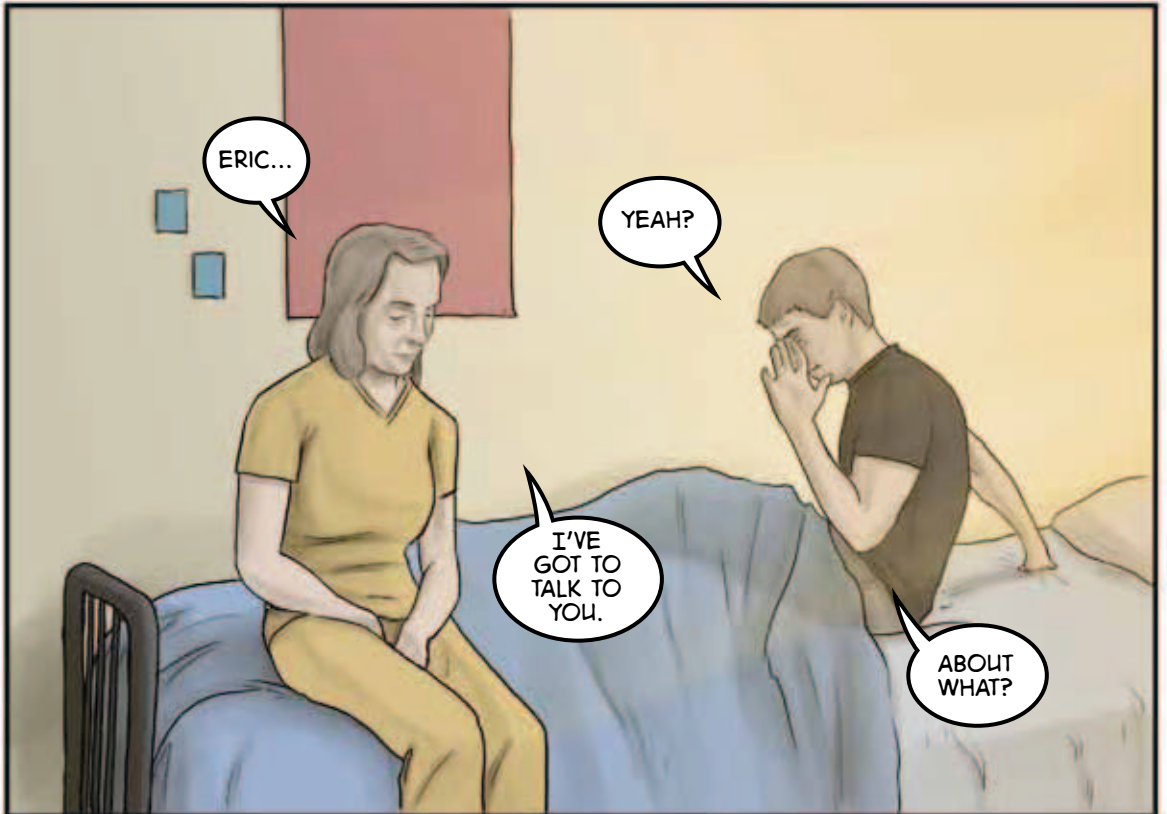
WE
HAVEN'T
BEEN BY TO SEE
HIM IN A WHILE,
BUT ERIC ALWAYS
TRUSTED HIM.

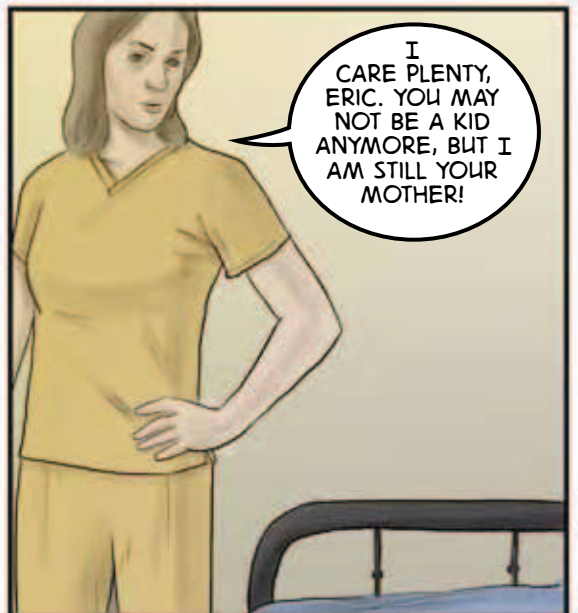
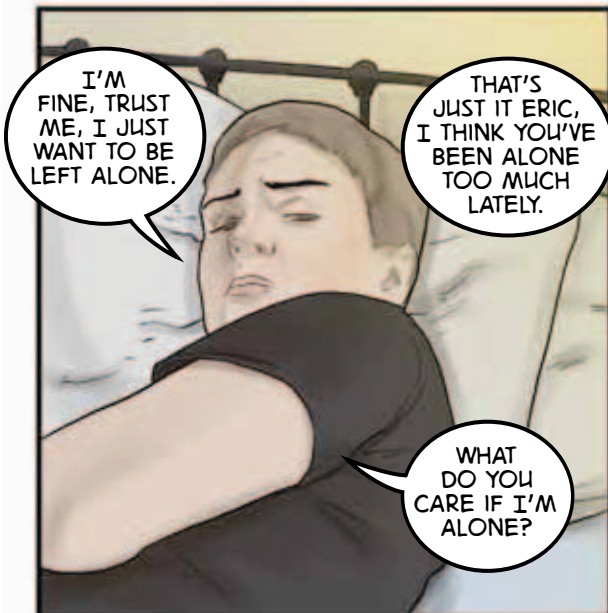
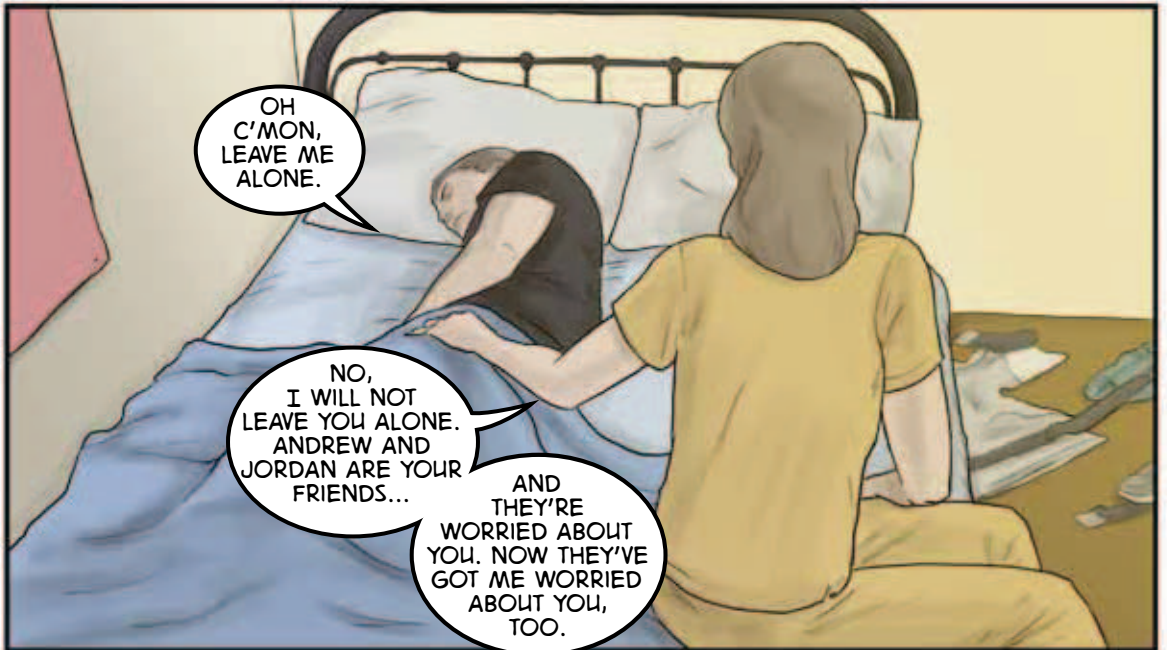
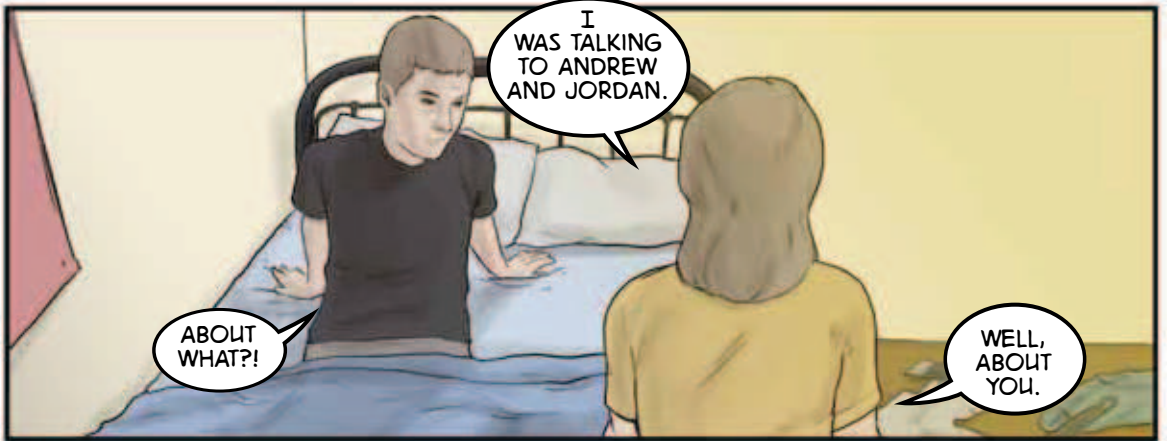


YEAH,
WHATEVER
IT TAKES.

WELL
IF YOU NEED
ANY HELP FROM
US, YOU KNOW
WE WOULD DO
ANYTHING.







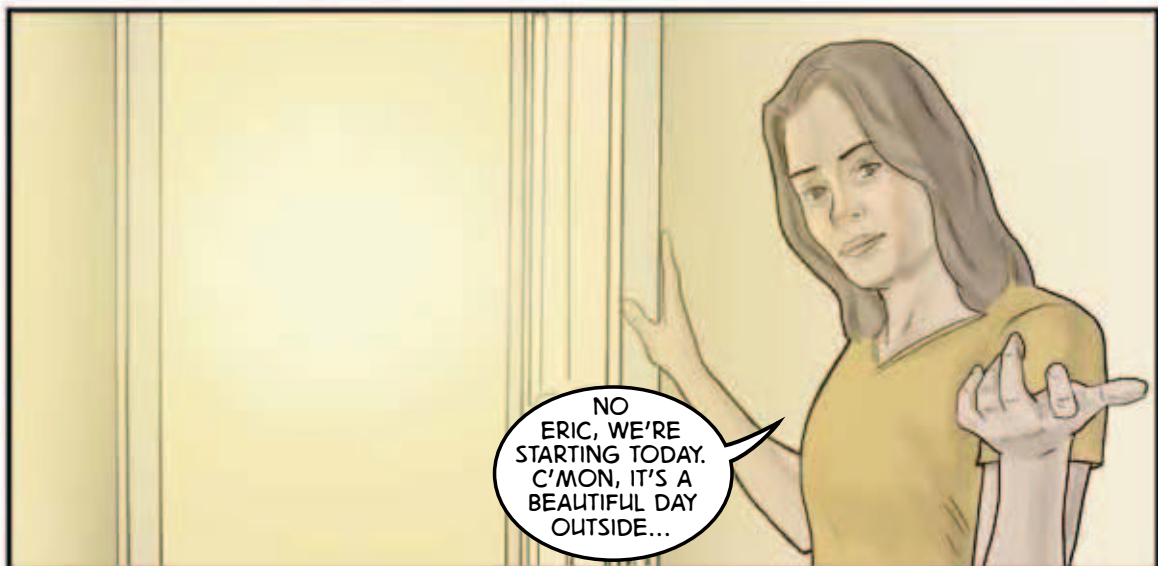
THEY WENT BACK AND FORTH...



ONE MINUTE THEY'D BOTH BE YELLING,
THE NEXT THEY WOULD BE CRYING.



THEY WEREN'T REALLY ARGUING SO
MUCH AS JUST SAYING THINGS THEY'D
ALWAYS WANTED TO SAY.





...AND
WE'RE
GOING TO GET
YOU SOME
HELP.

Art 2/11

Eric's story is not everyone's story. This is only one of the many ways depression can manifest. Untreated or unrecognized, depression can be fatal. Fortunately, help and effective treatment are available. Access to training and accurate information is essential to learning the signs and symptoms of suicide risk. Depression can be overcome. A life, like Eric's, can be saved.

Warning Signs of Suicide

- Threatening suicide or expressing a strong wish to die
- Talking or writing about wanting to die
- Looking for a way to kill oneself, seeking access to guns, medications, poisons, etc.
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no purpose
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious, agitated, or recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings

The more of these signs a person shows, the greater the risk. Warning signs are associated with suicide, but may not be what causes a suicide.

What to Do

If someone you know exhibits warning signs of suicide:

- Do not leave the person alone.
- Remove any firearms, alcohol, drugs or sharp objects that could be used in a suicide attempt.
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255.
- Take the person to an emergency room or seek help from a medical or mental health professional.
- If you believe they are at immediate risk, call emergency services by dialing 9-1-1, and ask that a "CIT" trained officer be dispatched if available.
- Show that you care.
- Listen without judgment.

A person at risk for suicidal behavior will most often exhibit warning signs. The mnemonic below was developed by internationally-renowned clinical researchers working with the American Association of Suicidology. For more information, please visit www.suicidology.org.

IS PATH WARM:

I Ideation

S Substance Abuse

P Purposelessness

A Anxiety

T Trapped

H Hopelessness

W Withdrawal

A Anger

R Recklessness

M Mood Change

NATIONAL
SUICIDE
PREVENTION
LIFELINE
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

RED NACIONAL
de
PREVENCIÓN
del
SUICIDIO
1-888-628-9454
prevenciondelsuicidio.org



Tulare & Kings Counties
SUICIDE PREVENTION
Task Force — www.sptf.org

This comic was made possible through funding provided by California's Mental Health Services Act, Tulare County HHSA, Department of Mental Health. This funding was made possible by California voters, and designation of funding for suicide prevention by concerned community members in Tulare County. In 2011, Kings County joined Tulare County to form a unified effort to prevent suicide in our communities.

The Tulare & Kings Counties Suicide Prevention Task Force (SPTF) functions as a multi-disciplinary collaborative, combining representatives from government, education, community-based service providers, and community members. Training, activities and education are provided throughout our community. Our endeavors increase awareness of the signs and symptoms of suicide risk, increase access to prevention and early intervention materials, enhance the ability of professionals in our community to provide effective treatment, and ultimately save the lives of those members of our community who are vulnerable and at risk for suicide.

A primary responsibility of the SPTF is the development of outreach and marketing endeavors to increase awareness that suicide is a public health problem that is preventable. The vision of this comic book was developed by the SPTF's coordinator, Noah Whitaker. The comic complements an array of unique outreach tools to the community.

Our work would not be possible without the dedication of numerous volunteers, community organizations, community volunteers, and the support of numerous local government officials including the administration of the Tulare County HHSA, the Tulare County Mental Health Board, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors, as well as the Kings County Behavioral Health Board, Kings County Behavioral Health, and the Kings County Board of Supervisors.

Product Coordinator - Noah Whitaker, MBA

Noah is a loving husband and proud father of two. He has had the honor of working at the Tulare County HHSA and as the SPTF's Coordinator since 2009. It is his sincere hope that this comic reach the hands of a person either struggling with thoughts of suicide, or someone near that person who is then able to get connected with the resources and information that will help to save a life.

Story and Art by Paul Roman Martinez

Paul was born and raised in the Central Valley. The opportunity to help people in Tulare County was an exciting opportunity and he is proud to be a part of this project. Paul now resides in Ventura, CA and spends his time working on his own comic: The Adventures of the 19XX. His work can be seen at www.kopetkai.com

Assistant Colorist – Will Fincher

Editor – Susanne Mendoza

Design and layout by Wagner Creative Group | www.wagnercreative.com

One of the most effective tools in saving a life is becoming educated to take action. These sources contain a wealth of information, including warning signs, intervention strategies, crisis hotlines, internet chat rooms, and links to more specific resources.

Tulare & Kings Counties Suicide Prevention Task Force (SPTF)

<http://www.sptf.org>

Hotlines

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

The Trevor Project - for LGBTQ youth

1-866-4-U-TREVOR (1-866-488-7386)

<http://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

Information & Additional Resources

American Association of Suicidology (AAS)

<http://www.suicidology.org/>

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)

<http://www.afsp.org/>

Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC)

<http://www.sprc.org/>

Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE)

<http://www.save.org/>

Survivors of Suicide

<http://www.survivorsofsuicide.com/>

Training

LivingWorks Education

<http://www.livingworks.net/>

QPR Institute

<http://www.qprinstitute.com/>

facebook

www.facebook.com/HOPE.SPTF

National Suicide
Prevention Lifeline



1-800-273-8255

Tulare & Kings Counties
Suicide Prevention Task Force



www.sptf.org



HOPE

Hope comes in many different forms.

Sometimes it's darkest just before the dawn, and sometimes it looks like dawn will never come. For every person who has ever felt sad and alone, for every person who has had a sense of overwhelming hopelessness, there is a story to be told. This is just one of those stories—about someone who had lost sight of the dawn, and how, in some cases, those around you can help you find it again.