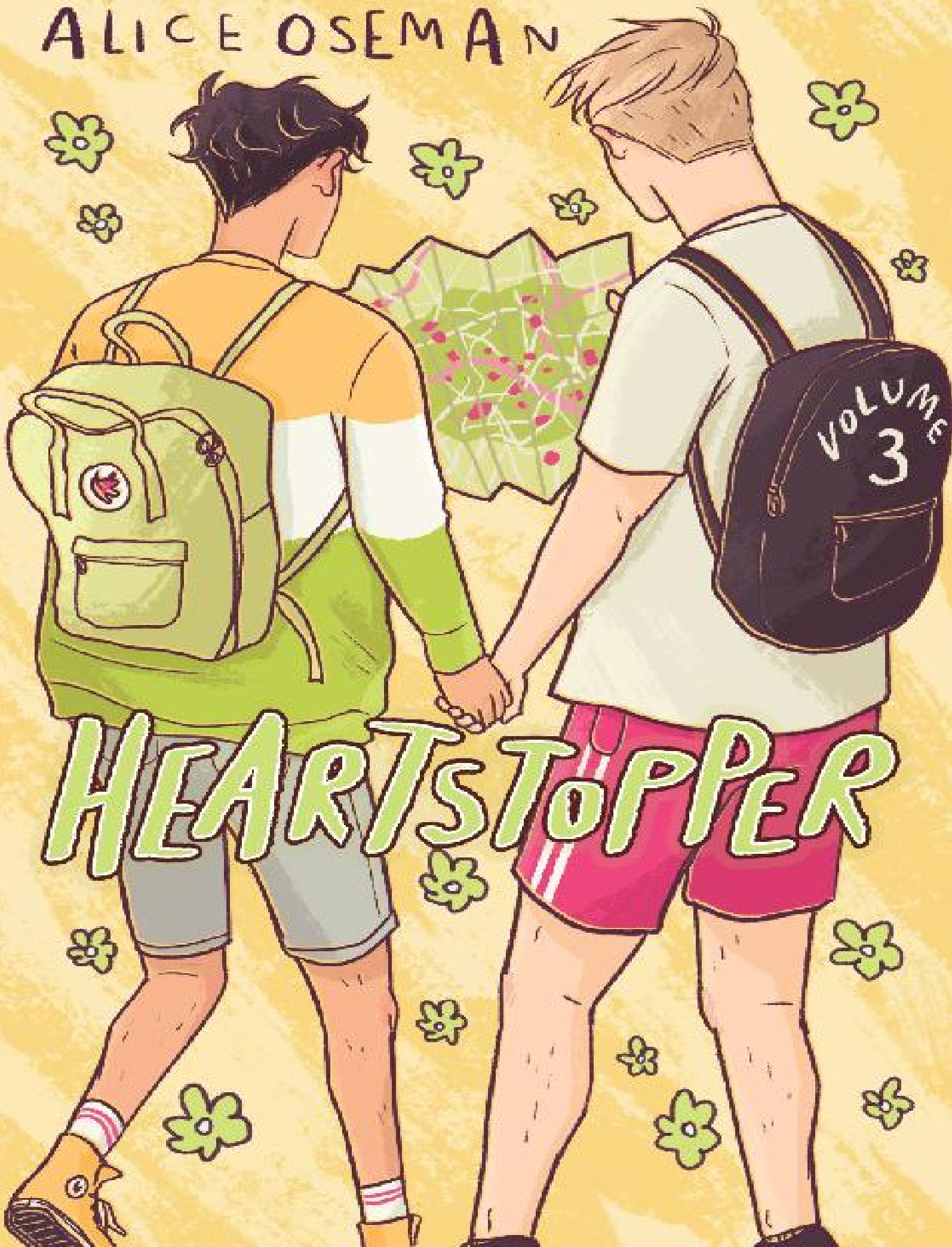


ALICE OSEMAN

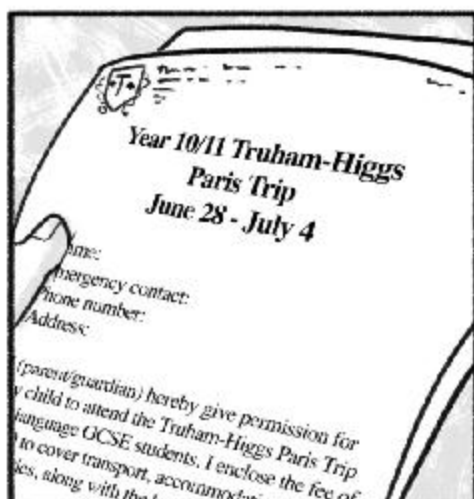


# HEARTSTOPPER



**4. OUT**





















3 DAYS EARLIER



AAH!

Nick!  
Is that y-

Guess what











Oh, Nick's definitely  
banned from sleepovers  
forever now.



WHAT!!



Yup. There will be no  
hanky panky in this  
house.



Please don't  
say 'hanky  
panky'.



Bedroom door open  
at all times!!



I've got to  
go, I have  
an exam



No hanky panky  
until you're  
married!!



Stop saying  
'hanky panky'



They were  
fine about it  
but I think  
you're banned  
from sleepovers

What!?

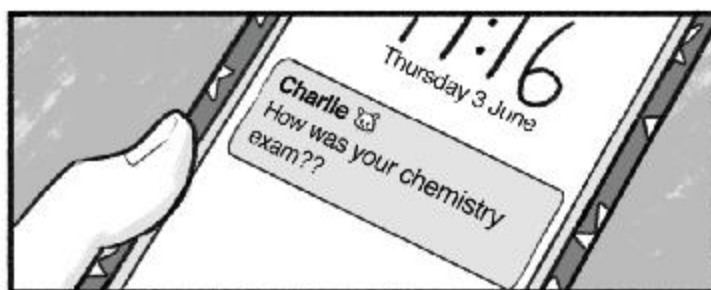








JUNE



Not too bad, but... not great 🙄  
Are you on study leave? Can  
you come round mine? I badly  
need hugs





I can't, I'm at a biology revision session 🙄 I also need hugs pls



Sneak out and come home with me 😊

Soz I love energy flow and plant growth more than you



I have some ideas for things we could do involving energy flow....

Asldfkjghkfjgh STOP



Nick!







Not even just at the cinema - we should have done it ages ago



And I know we should have been better when Harry was picking on Charlie. But we can promise we'll be better friends from now on.

Seriously.



And we really like Charlie! He's a nice guy and I don't want him to think we're like Harry.



We're on your side, Nick. We're your friends, if you still want us to be.













yeah



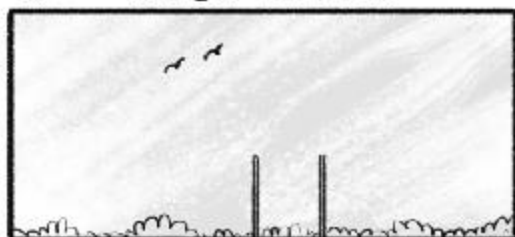
Uh- anyway,  
I've got to  
catch my  
bus! See  
you guys  
at rugby!





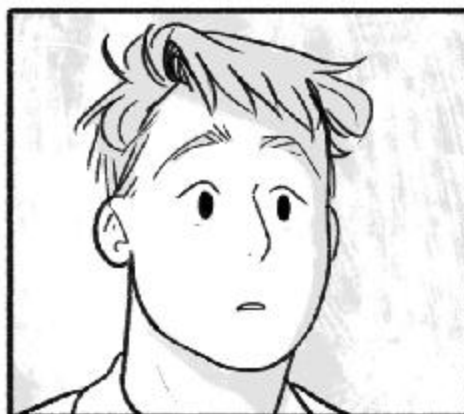


ONE WEEK LATER









Hey... when did you  
start feeling like that?



It doesn't  
matter! It's  
just exam  
stress!

I'm not  
saying you  
shouldn't  
come out!

Just... forget I  
said anything!!



Charlie...





You can  
talk to me  
about it...?

Can you just...  
kiss me  
again...







KISS



KISS



I can always  
do that

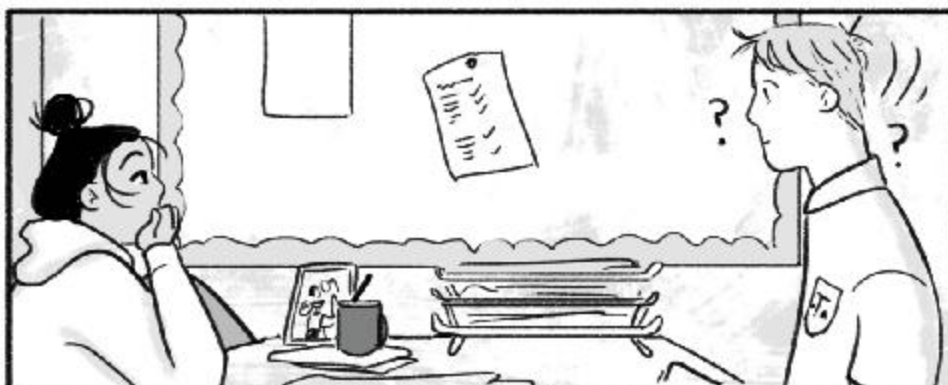














You're the heart and centre of this team, Nick. You have the talent to pursue rugby beyond school, if you want to.





I'm glad Charlie's settled into the team. I've been keeping an eye on him. I know he's been a target of some pretty severe bullying in the past.

If I hear you've done anything to hurt him, we'll be having words, all right?

Y-yeah- I mean- I wouldn't-



And if any of the other boys do or say anything spiteful to you or Charlie, you just come straight to me, okay?

I'll sort them out.

.. Yeah.  
Yeah,  
I will.

Thanks miss.



I met my wife  
playing university  
sport in the early  
noughties.



People gave  
us a lot  
of shit.



Things are  
a little better  
now, but...  
you never  
know.





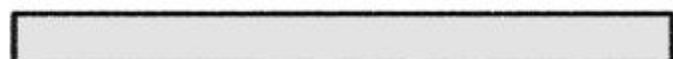












THE NEXT MORNING...

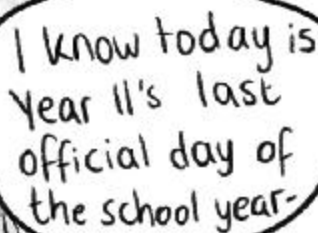


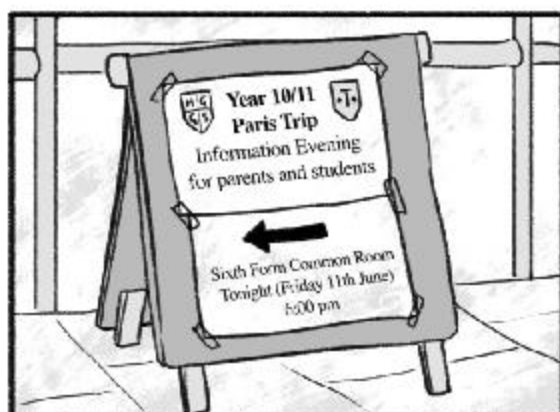


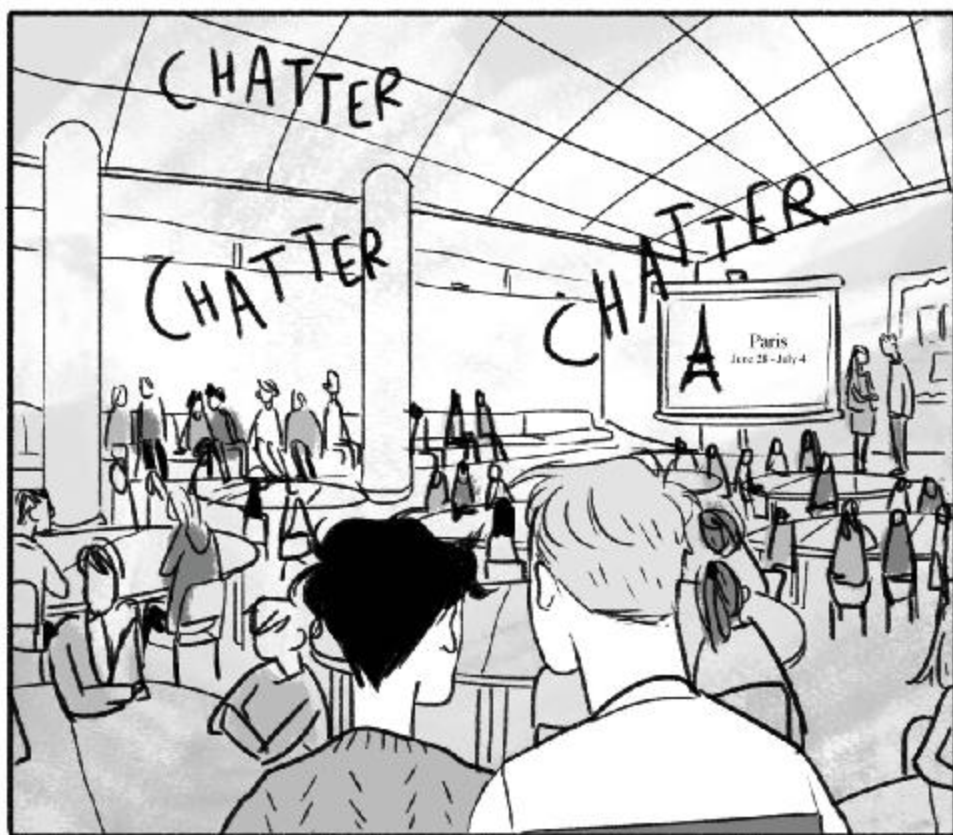
























Good evening, Year 10s and 11s of Truham and Higgs, and good evening parents!



We've got a lot of information to get through this evening.



My name is Mr. Ajayi! I teach art at Higgs.



And I'm Mr. Farouk. I teach physics at Truham.



We'll be supervising the Paris trip this year...







Now, we need one person from each group to come up to the front to write down your names.











Elle knows too. I think we worked it out when we all went bowling.



But—

Don't tell Tao yet.





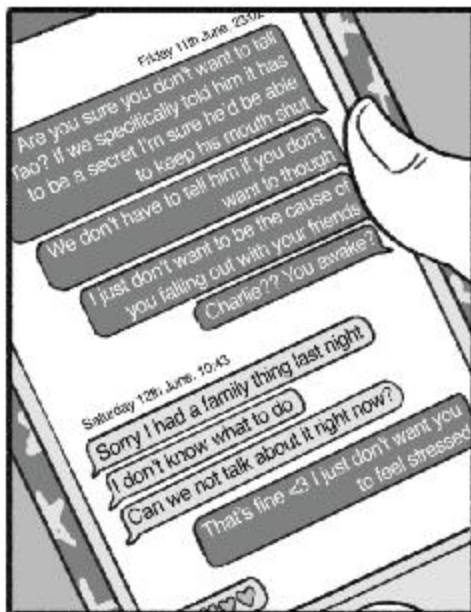


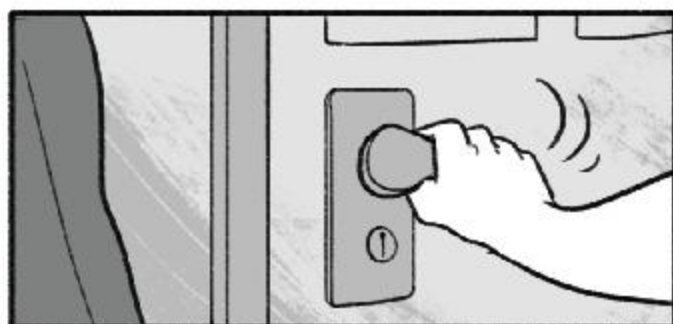


623













৮  
৯







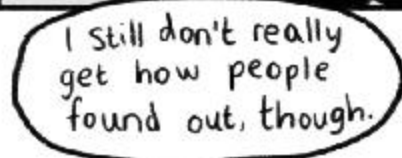
Hey,  
Char...



Mm?

Are you annoyed  
at Tao?







Exactly.



At the time, there weren't any other out gay kids in school, so it was the most exciting news of the week.

People either thought I was a novelty or I was just gross. It... it really surprised me how many people are still homophobic.



They'd tell me I was disgusting. Right to my face.





It got better after a few months and some sixth formers got the worst bullies to stop.

And then it was like everyone started waking up and realising that I was a real person with real feelings.



But the damage had already been done, I guess.



This is why you're stressed about us being out.





Yeah...  
The  
bullying...  
It was  
really  
bad,  
and...



I started to believe  
what they were  
saying.

It made me  
really hate  
myself.



So much  
that  
I...



I used  
to...  
um...









Do you  
still do  
that now?



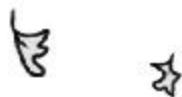
N-No!!  
I mean-  
hardly  
ever



Sorry

Hey, no  
apologising!

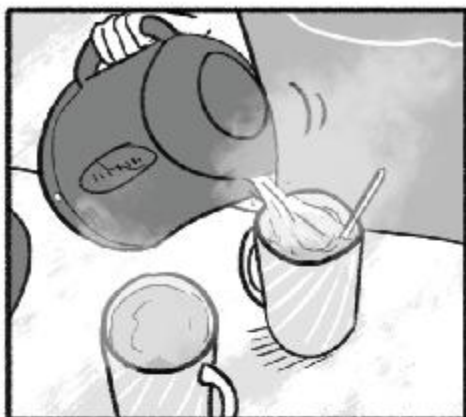


















I just wanted to meet the guy who turned my little brother gay















Nick...











23:18

Why is being out so complicated?





In books and films there's just one big coming out scene and then everything is fine haha



Real life isn't like that I guess



Are you awake?



652







SHIT sorry I meant to message you!!!

My brother's being a dick, he literally won't stop pestering me

Might be better if you don't come round here until he's back at uni





It was my fault for not telling him sooner tbh

No! You shouldn't have to tell him if you didn't want to



I guess he would have found out eventually one way or another. I should probably call my dad soon and tell him too

You don't have to! you can take your time!



I want him to know about you!! Plus I want to be the one to tell him, not David





I'm so sorry, this is all my fault



You shouldn't have to feel rushed or pressured by anybody



Charlie this is NOT your fault!!!!!!!

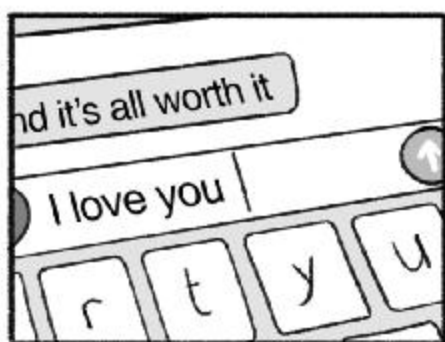
Coming out is HARD and COMPLICATED, right???

And it doesn't all happen at once! And it doesn't always go right! Sometimes it probably doesn't even happen at all!! Coming out to my mum was amazing but I never expected it to go super well with everyone!! And it's not YOUR fault! I just want people to know who I am and know that you're my boyfriend and I know that not everyone will like it but I'm ready for that. We're probably gonna have to come out hundreds more times in our lives!!

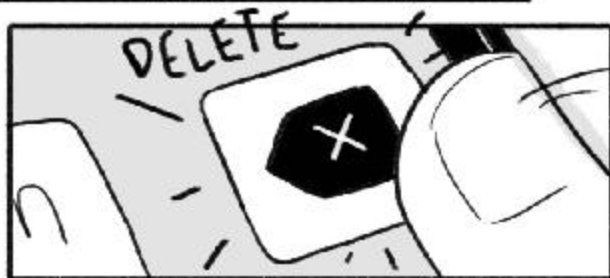


It might be shitty sometimes but I promise I'm okay

And it's all worth it























But we don't want or need to tell anyone about it. For now, anyway.



Because right now it's just our thing.



Aled... you could have told me...



I know. But this is my point.

This whole deal with you and Nick being out to people... I think you need to stop worrying about anyone else's feelings.





It was different for you because you were outed and you didn't have any control, but this time, you do.



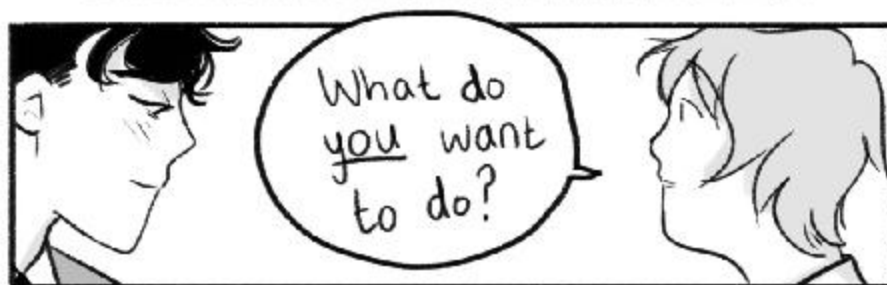
... you don't have to.

There's this idea that if you're not straight, you **HAVE** to tell all your family and friends immediately, like you owe it to them. But you don't. You don't have to do anything until you're ready.





This is about you and Nick.





I just...



I don't  
want what  
happened to  
me to  
happen to  
Nick



Anyway...  
tell me about  
this boy



Wha-  
no

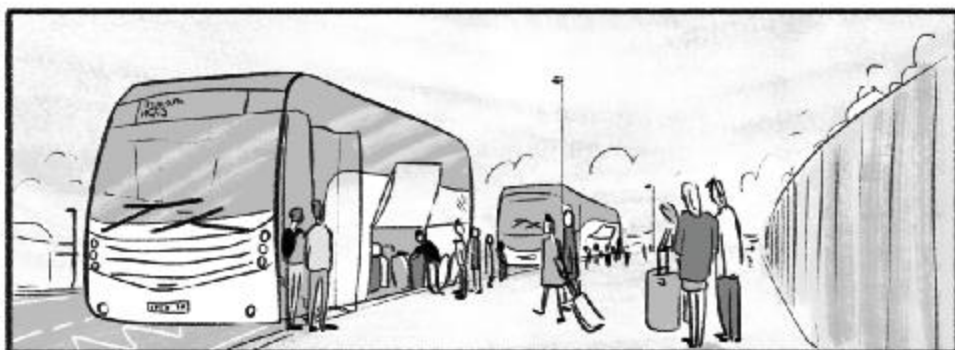


Come  
onnn...  
not even  
his name?



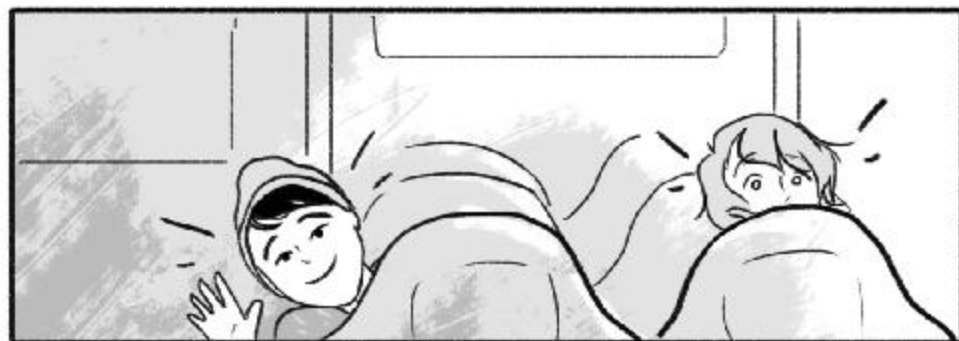
Um... it's  
Daniel...











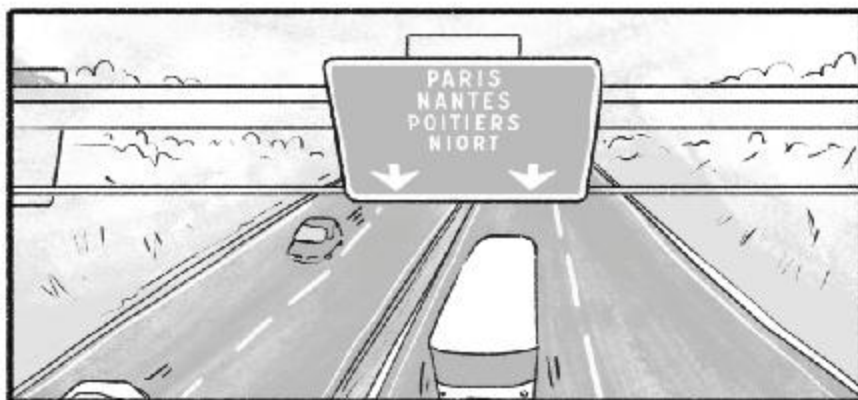




















677





Well I want the other bed, then!  
I hate getting woken up by the sun.



Um... I guess  
... I'll go  
with Tao  
and you go  
with Aled?



Yeah...





KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK



Aled? Is this your room? I still have your phone charger!



Oh!! Just coming!



WOAH your room is so small



Thanks for letting me use it!

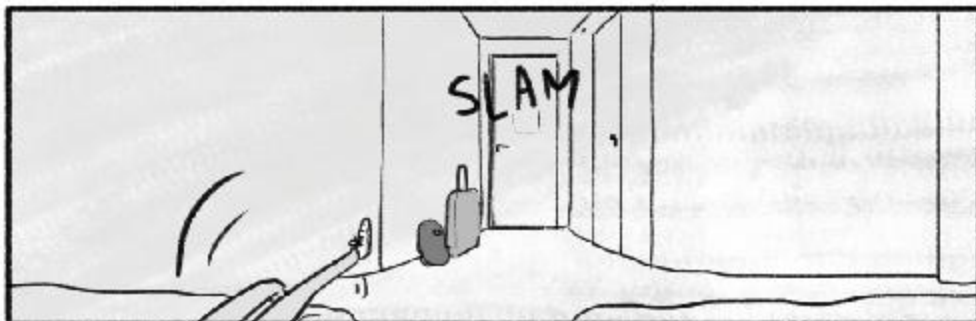
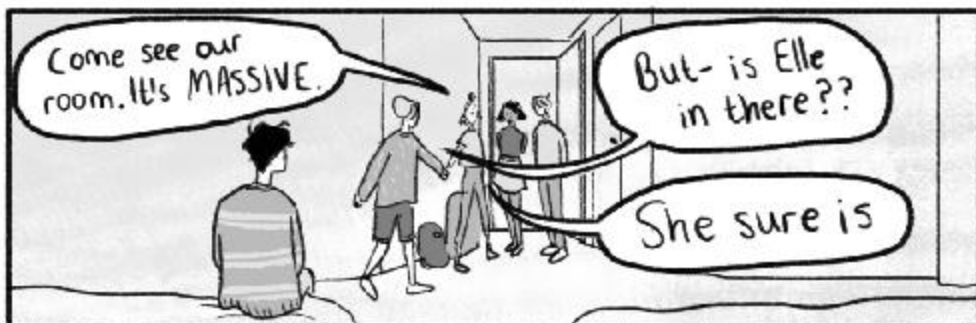


No prob!



Is Elle out there?? Tell me if Elle is out there!!





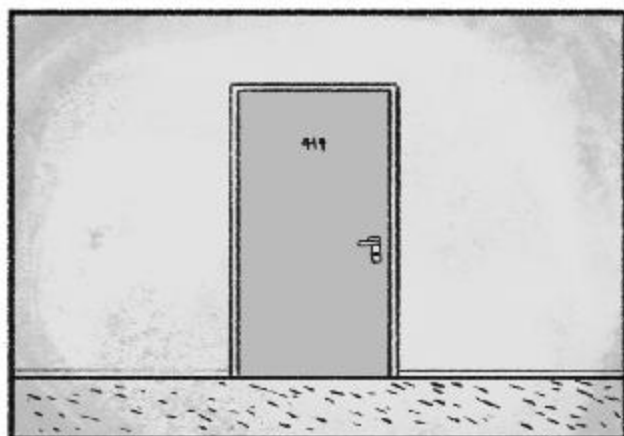
















Paris - Day 2



Are you guys awake yet?



It's nearly time to go for-



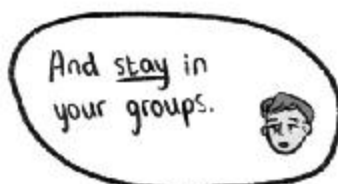




















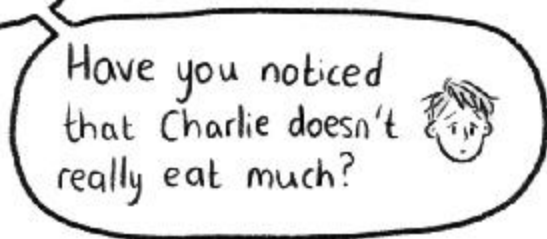
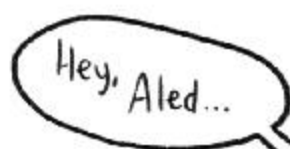
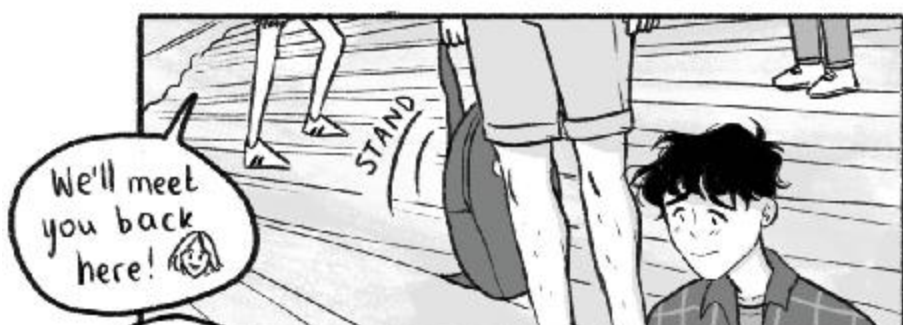














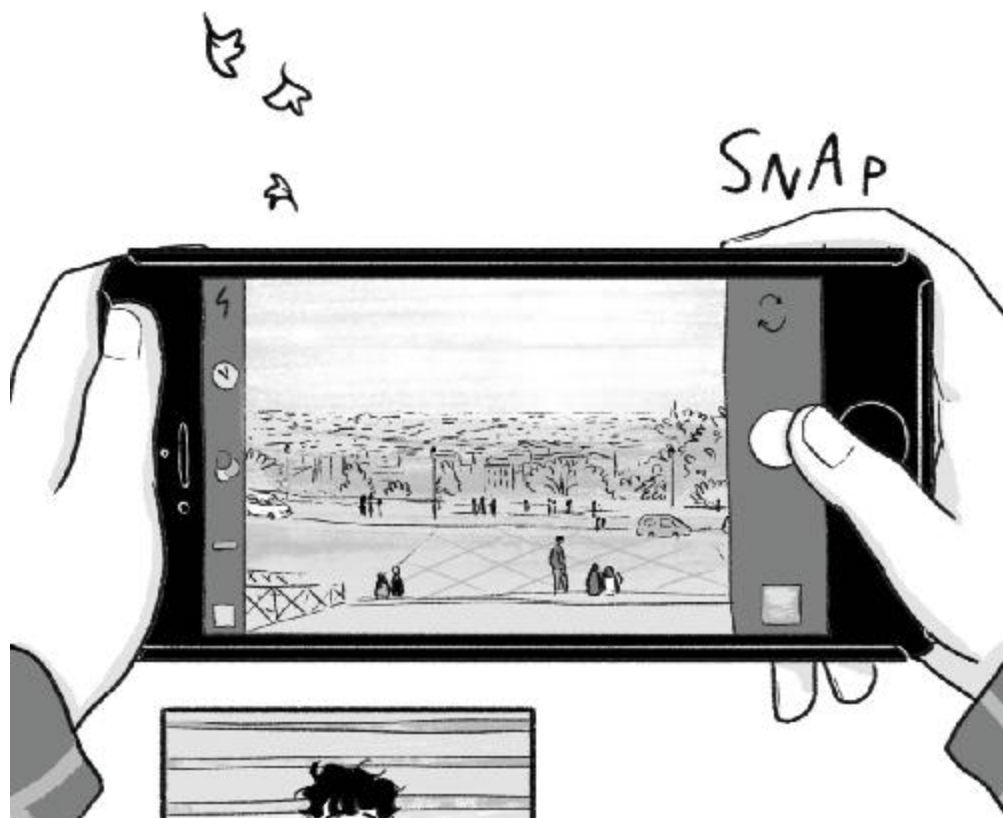






SINCE WHEN!?

Since... his birth?



So how are  
things with  
you and  
Nick?











Darcy was already out. We'd been dating for a while and most of our friends knew. But other people were starting to guess too.



At our school, 'lesbian' was used as an insult all the time. I probably even used it once or twice when I was younger.

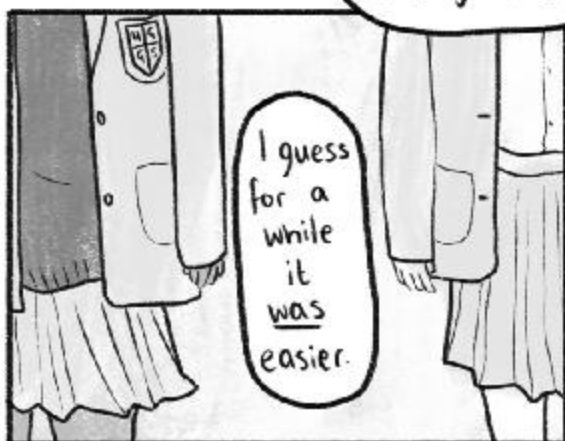


We were terrified.



It took me a long time  
to even feel comfortable  
calling myself a  
lesbian.

And for a while,  
we thought it'd be  
easier to pretend we  
were just friends.



I guess  
for a  
while  
it  
was  
easier.

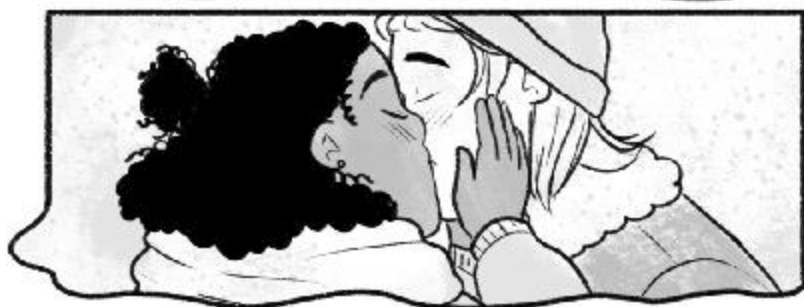
But, in time, we got more  
comfortable being us.

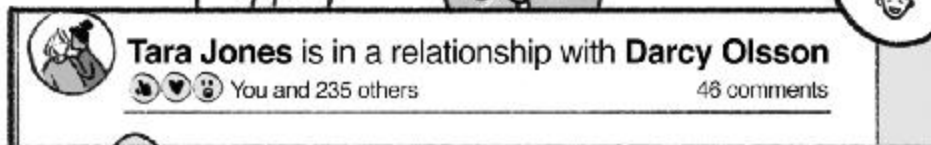


We reached the point where we knew that  
whatever people said or thought about us,  
we knew who we were



And we loved ourselves anyway.











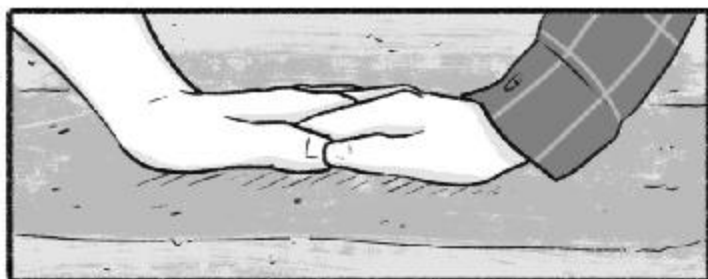
So, absolute disaster,  
Jonesy-











There they are!



Oh my God, d'you think anything happened?



I hope so, or Tao is gonna pine to death

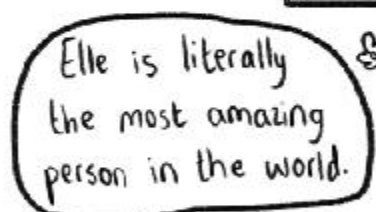


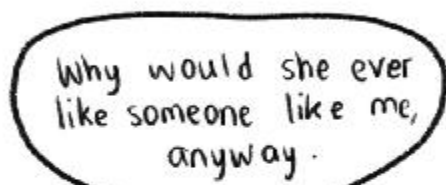


Hey Tao... how'd it go with Elle today?









120

















Now you HAVE  
to sleep in  
my bed



That would  
probably be  
a bad idea





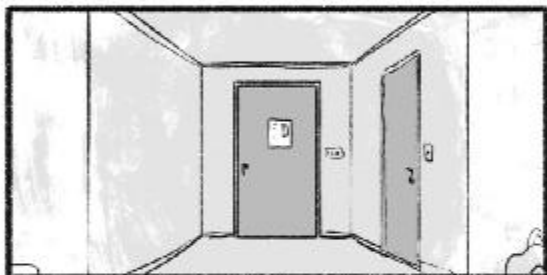




You really are  
obsessed with me



maybe  
a bit



Nick... we're gonna get  
caught. We should  
stop.





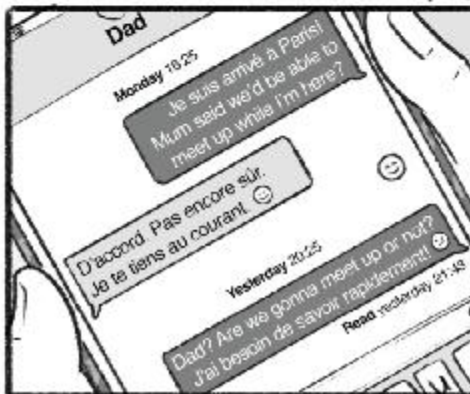
Paris - Day 3







733









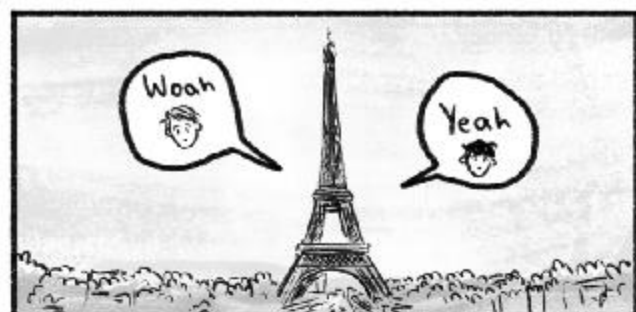










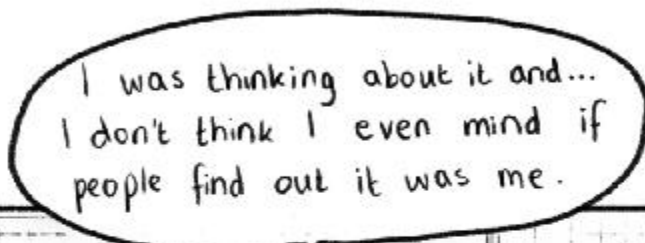






All right, lads.  
Fucking leave them alone.









Charlie!  
Get over here,  
I need a photo  
of me, you,  
and Aled!



I'll be  
back in  
a sec!

Haha okay

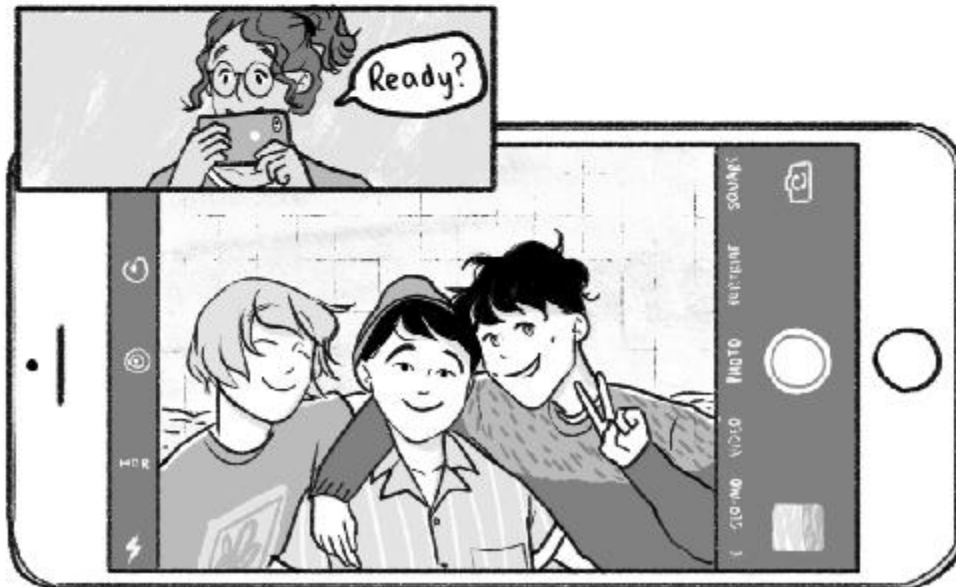


I need to get  
a photo of  
us three because  
we always  
forget





The person you are calling is unavailable. Please leave a message after—









Me and Nick  
are dating.



Dating... who?

Each other. We're dating each other.



I thought... I thought you liked him but he's straight.

Yeah, same, but... it turns out he's bi and... now we're going out.



Actually... it's been going on for a few months. We've been going out since April.















Paris - Day 4











I'm gonna  
pack you a  
croissant.



So if you  
get hungry  
later  
you'll  
have  
a snack!



















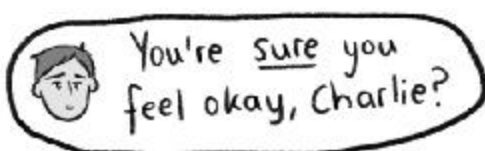












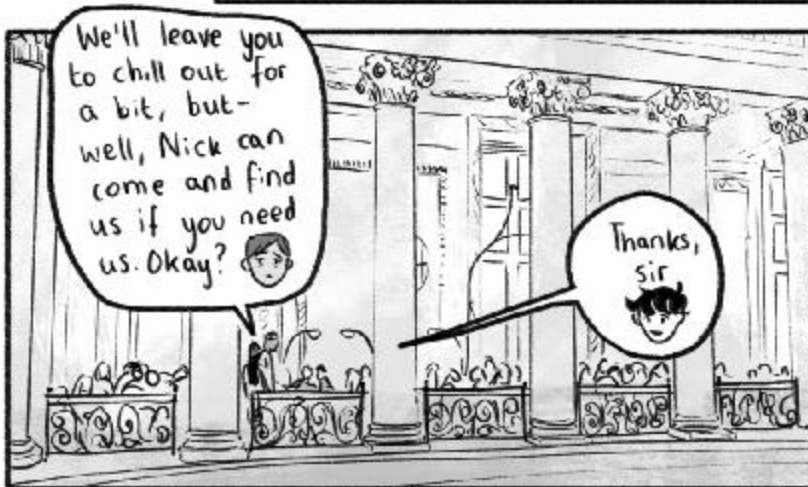


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There you go, Mr Spring!

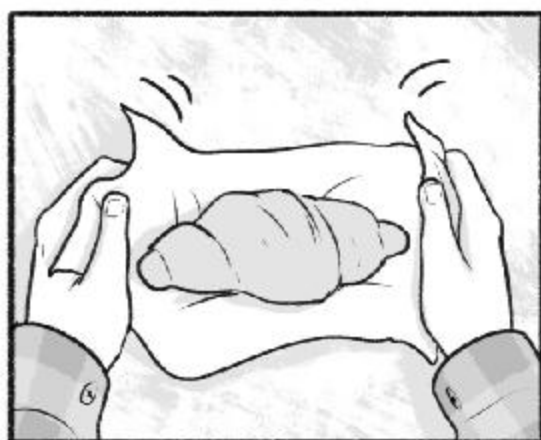
Get those in your belly!





I guess I thought you were just a picky eater, but... I mean, you've barely eaten anything this week and you just passed out and now I'm worried.





I know  
I don't  
...  
eat  
like  
normal  
people











780



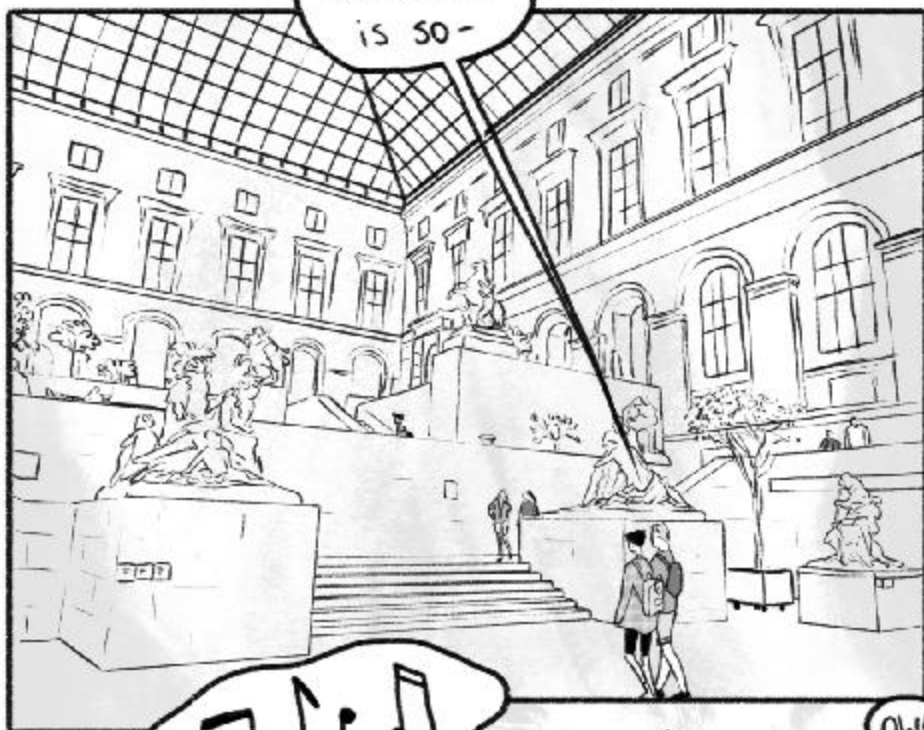




Let's go!



Wow, this is so -



Ah - that's my phone!!

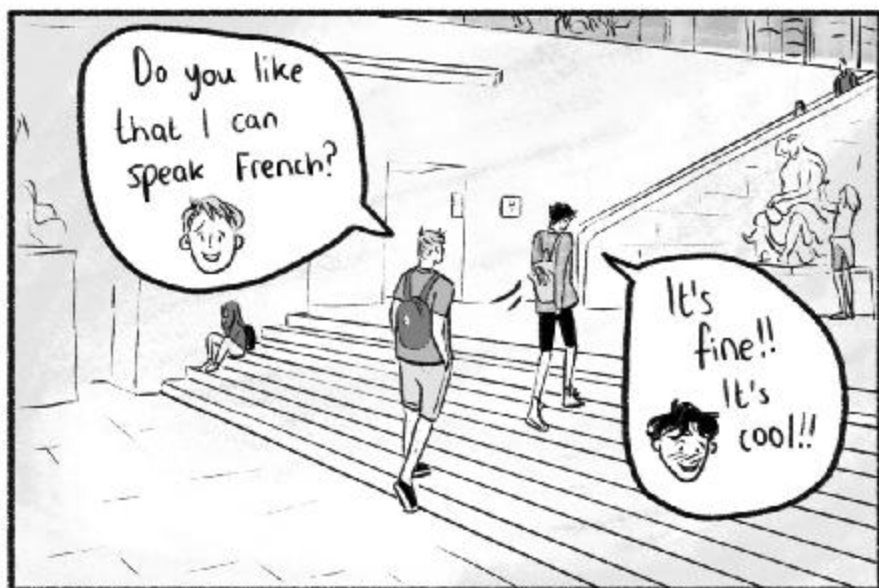










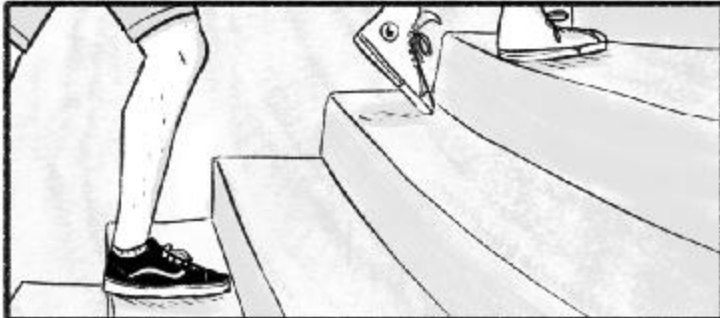






Anyway, what did your dad want? I can't believe I didn't know he was French!

Oh yeah! I wanted to try and meet up with him but he said he's too busy with work.







That sucks

Yeah. He's not  
the most  
reliable, but...

Look,  
that's  
him

He's still  
my dad,  
you know?  
I wanted  
to tell  
him about  
you. In  
person.





This has been stressing you out... You should have told me about it!

Yeah, I... I didn't want to make you worry.







A collection of hand-drawn sketches of leaves and the phrase "I love you" scattered across the page. The sketches are simple line drawings of various leaf shapes, some with veins. The phrase "I love you" is written in a casual, handwritten style. The elements are distributed across the page, with some appearing in clusters and others isolated.









I feel horrible about fucking up last year but I shouldn't pass that guilt onto you. I made a really stupid, idiotic mistake and you suffered really badly because of it.



I don't think I even understood how hard it must have been for you to come out to me.



So...



I will be a better friend and less of an idiot. I promise.











Paris - Day 5







← Did not think of that →



HALF AN HOUR LATER



My skin's a bit lighter than yours but this'll probs be fine

You could mix it with some of mine!

Yeah, that might work!







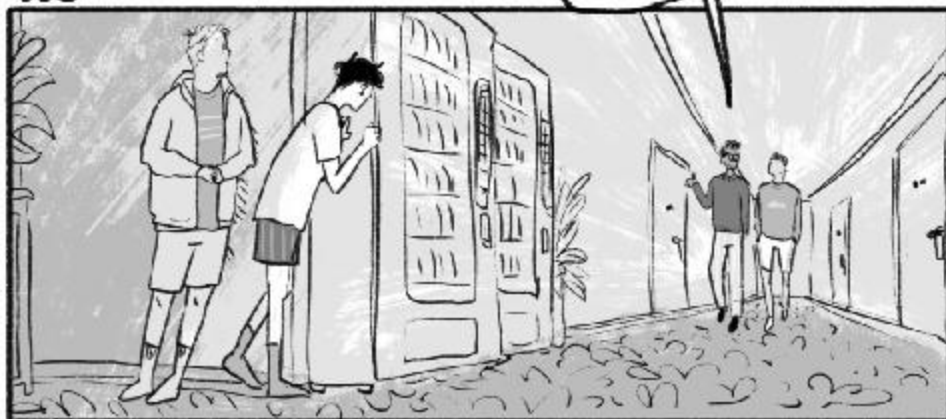






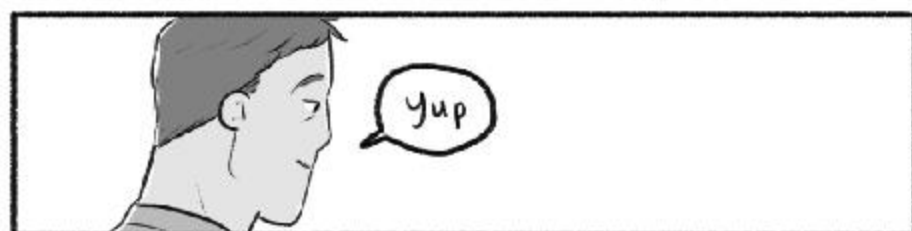
chatter chatter  
chatter chatter  
chatter

805















Paris - Day 6

Haaaappy Biiiiirthdaaaay ☑  
♪ tooooo yooooouuu!!



811







And it's Tara's birthday.  
So I know you might  
all want to have a  
little... party  
tonight in your  
rooms.

Well, we're not  
going to ban  
that, but  
please make  
sure that  
you're being  
safe and  
please keep  
the noise  
down, okay?



A  
party?



A  
PARTY!!



Yay!



You can  
buy snacks  
and drinks  
while we're  
out today,  
but—













Tara Jones + 39 others



Tara Jones

Casual party in my room from 9pm!!  
Room 317!! Everyone's welcome 😊  
and you can wear PJs!



Darcy Olsson

PLEASE BRING SNACKS IF YOU HAVE  
ANY. ESPECIALLY IF YOU HAVE PRINGLES

also I have vodka 🍷



Katie Lee

Yassss we'll be there!



Tom Jaeger

CAN'T WAIT



Alena Bulkhsh

omg darcy how did you get vodka



Darcy Olsson

i have my ways



Jared Lambe

YEEEEEE LET'S GET LIT

Charlie Spring

we'll be there!!!!!!



That night ...





You sure you don't mind me borrowing this?

As long as you don't steal it like the other three you've "borrowed". I actually quite like that one.

I didn't STEAL them!!



I- I just forgot to give them back!

















Teasing you is  
so fun! :)

I actually  
hate you.

Nah, you  
like me.



I really  
don't





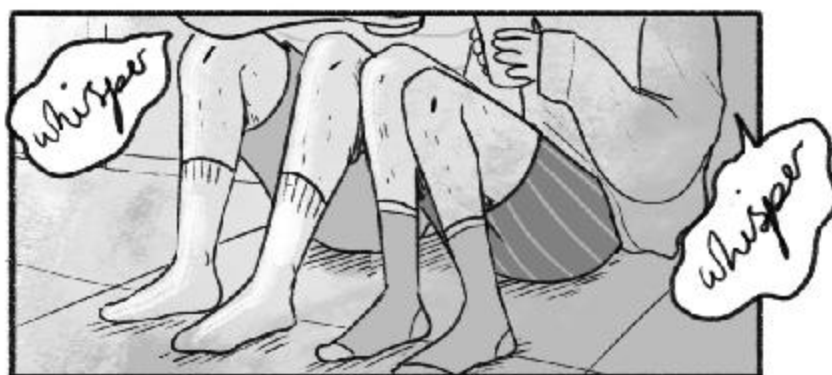
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Ahem.



Sorry to interrupt  
your very obvious  
flirting, BUT-













835





A little while later...



837















So  
Congrats  
on your incredibly  
difficult realisation  
that gay people  
actually do  
have feelings







TOUCH







THIS UPDATE MAY TRIGGER SOME PEOPLE. TO SEE A DESCRIPTION OF THE TRIGGERING MATERIAL, PLEASE SCROLL DOWN TO THE UPDATE NOTES. THANKS!

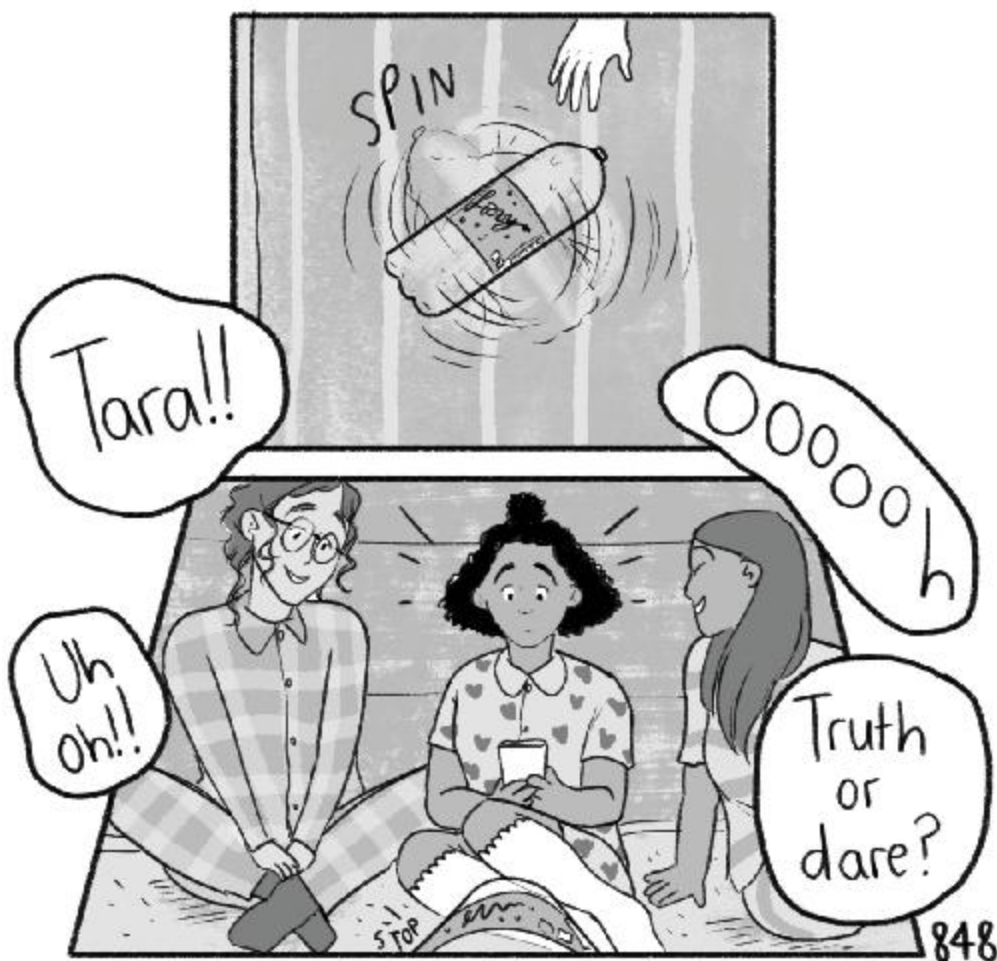


Ahem~♡



847













Obviously dare.



I dare  
you...  
to kiss  
James.



...

What!?!

I'm up for it!!  
Ha ha!!



You have  
to do it!!  
That's the  
dare!



Go ooon! It's  
just one  
little kiss!





853





Oh!! Um-  
okay, that's  
fine, I-

I didn't  
care  
anyway  
so...  
ha  
ha

Okay, but  
you have  
to do a  
truth  
instead



Fine!!



Who gave you the love bite?









SQUABBLE

SQUABBLE



SQUABBLE

I know  
who it was.









Do you want us to keep it a secret?





Ahem.

I hate to interrupt this very lovely moment, but-









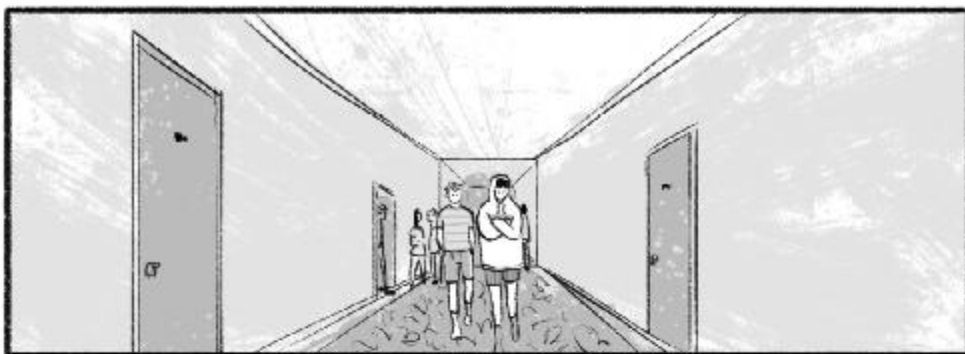
863

I WANT EVERYONE OUT EXCEPT TARA AND DARCY. EVERYONE ELSE GET BACK TO YOUR ROOMS NOW.

















I think...  
I'm okay  
with that.

Nervous, yeah,  
but...

I'm  
okay.



Are you  
feeling okay  
about it?



About us  
being  
out?

869

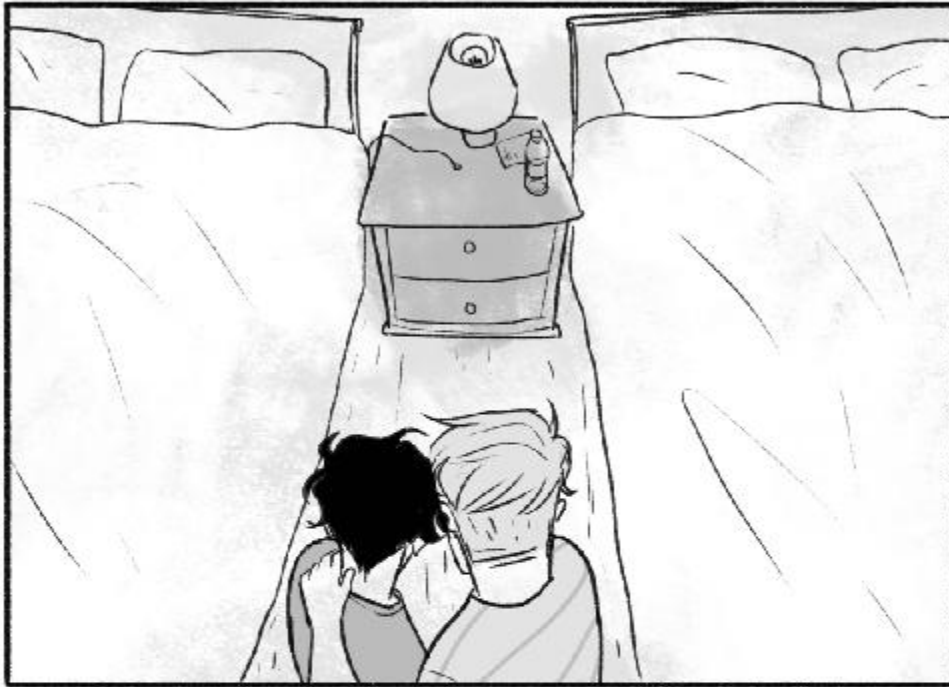


Um...  
I... I was  
scared.







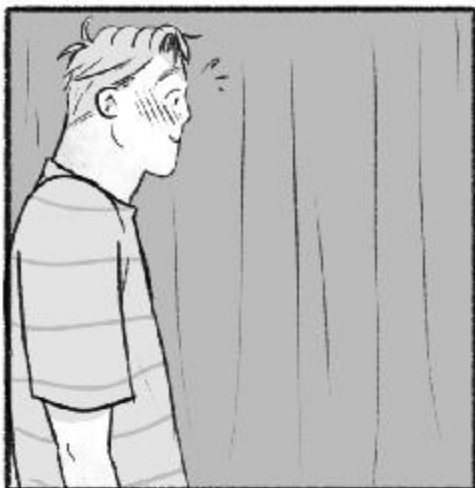




I could sleep in this bed with you?



Since we wanted to on Monday, but... then Tao was being Tao, and... yeah, haha



Well, you're gonna have to move over because that's my side!!

.....you're already claiming a side?























kiss



kiss



kiss







...That didn't sound very sure.



It's okay!!













Kissing's still good though, right?















giggle



giggle



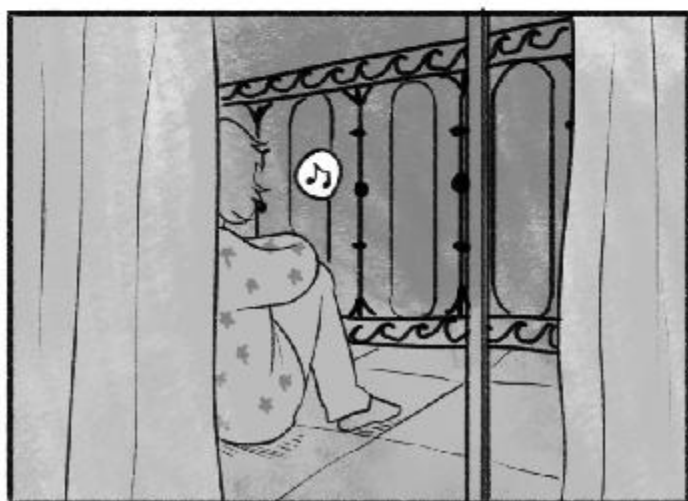
giggle



My stomach hurts!!

Stop it!!  
I can't stop  
laughing when  
you're laughing!!



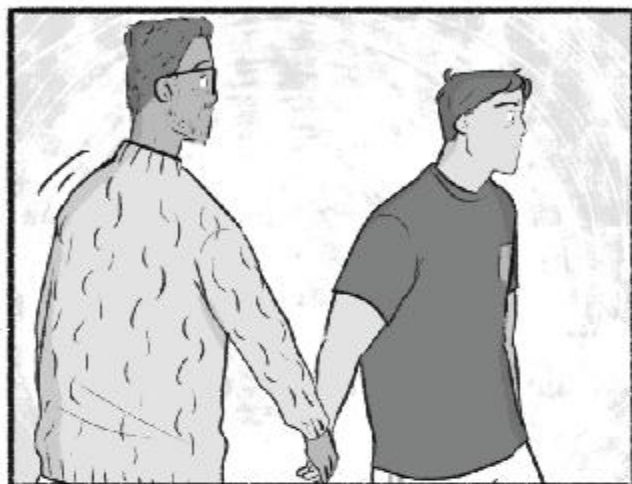




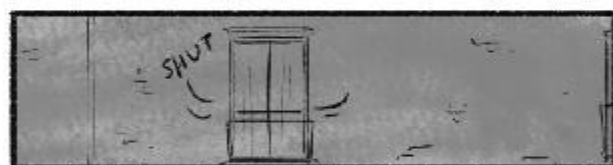










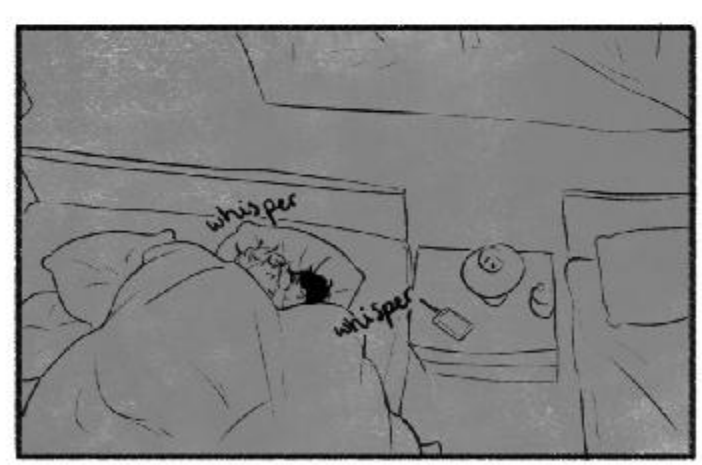






I wanna  
stay up  
all night

Same





Paris - Day 7

Come on.  
Onto the bus.  
We have a  
train to catch.





Ah,  
that's  
so cool!!



903



...I'm  
still sorry  
about that.









