
[All ETDs from UAB](#)

[UAB Theses & Dissertations](#)

2006

Grits and Giggles: A Graphic Memoir

Carlee Slay
University Of Alabama At Birmingham

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/etd-collection>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Slay, Carlee, "Grits and Giggles: A Graphic Memoir" (2006). *All ETDs from UAB*. 642.
<https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/etd-collection/642>

This content has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of the UAB Digital Commons, and is provided as a free open access item. All inquiries regarding this item or the UAB Digital Commons should be directed to the [UAB Libraries Office of Scholarly Communication](#).

GRITS AND GIGGLES: A GRAPHIC MEMOIR

by

Carlee Slay

Kerry Madden-Lunsford, CHAIR

Anamaria Santiago

James Braziel

Kyle Grimes

A THESIS

Submitted to the graduate faculty of The University of Alabama at Birmingham,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

2006

GRITS AND GIGGLES: A GRAPHIC MEMOIR

Carlee Slay

MASTER'S OF ENGLISH, CREATIVE WRITING

ABSTRACT

When I was growing up, I was taught that the worst thing I could possibly do was date a black boy...by my peers, my community, and most of all my family. This moral teaching never did sit well with me, but soon I found myself giving in to their teachings and becoming a reflection of the environment I was raised in. However, as soon as I moved to college, I found that there were far more perspectives than that of those that I had been fed in the small town from which I came. And no longer was I a naïve child for initially wanting to resist the wrongful morals I had been taught.

Grits and Giggles is a creative nonfiction graphic novel centered in the theme of Southern comedy that explores the whimsical, fun side of life in the South while also highlighting some of its problematic areas. The book is divided into humorous stories told through the eyes of family members at the dinner table, and stories that explore the hatred that is often passed down through southern families like mine. The latter of which are told through the eyes of the protagonist, Caroline (i.e., myself). But although my family's teachings have been flawed, I have also been blessed with one of the most supportive and loving families in my community. While many stories that center around family tend to portray family members in either a positive or negative light, this memoir does both as a means of highlighting the complexity that comes with family, especially in a place like rural Alabama.

All names of characters and places have been changed to pseudonyms in order to protect the identities of the people involved as well as the authenticity of their stories.

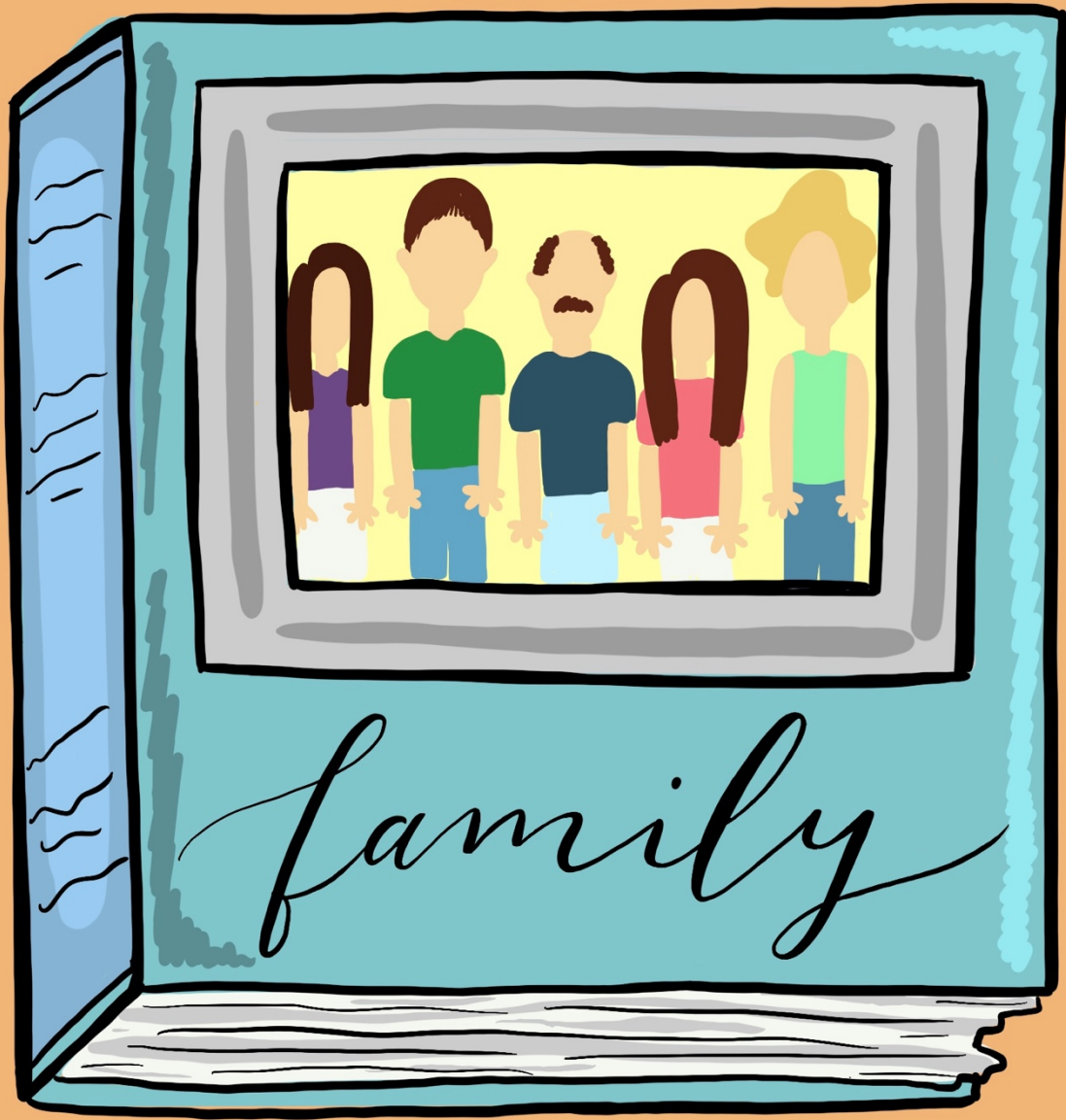
grits and giggles

a graphic memoir



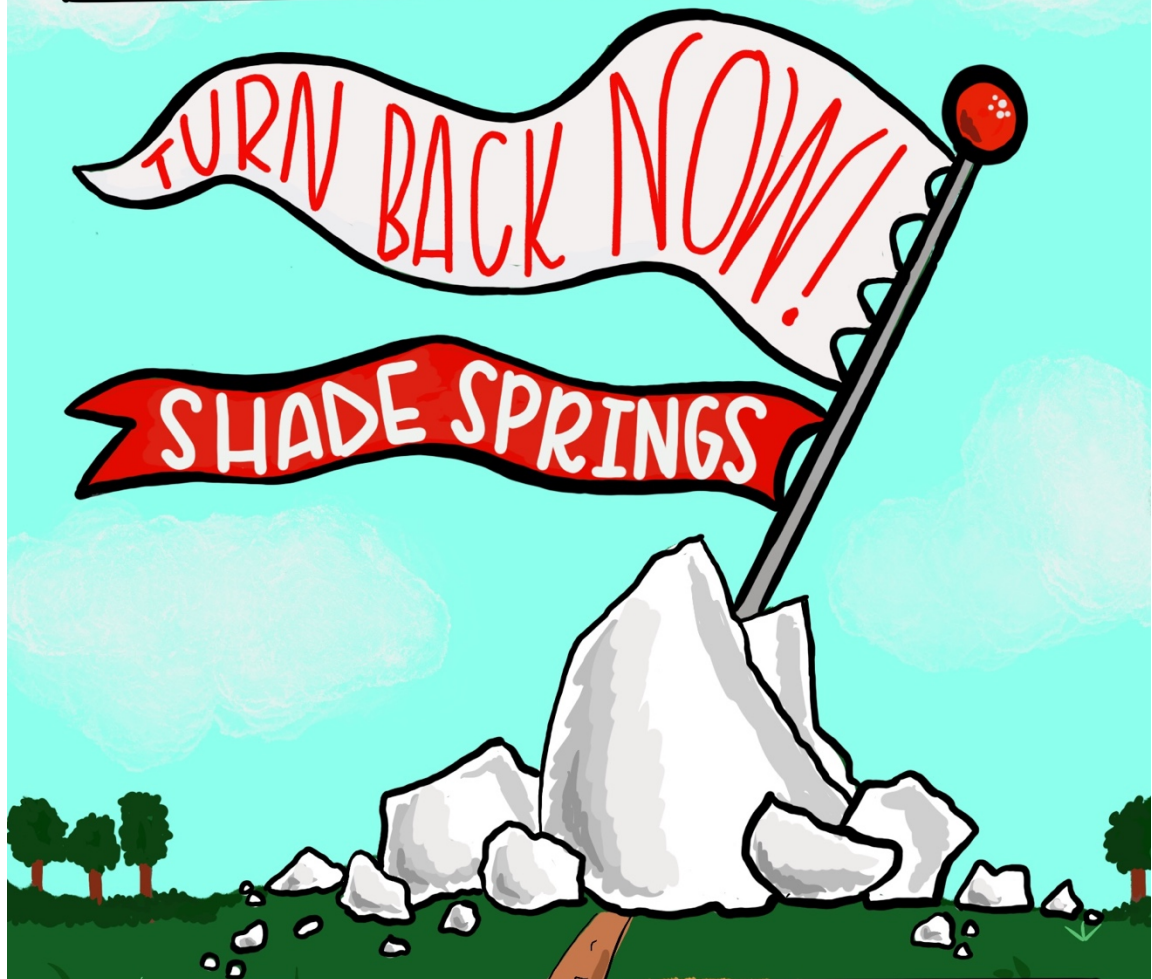
TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
ABSTRACT.....	2
CHAPTERS:	
INTRODUCTIONS.....	5
TABLE TALK: PART 1.....	14
THINGS I HAD TO LEARN AND UNLEARN	28
TABLE TALK: PART 2.....	47
HIGH SCHOOL	62
TABLE TALK: PART 3.....	74
NEW BEGINNINGS	87



introductions

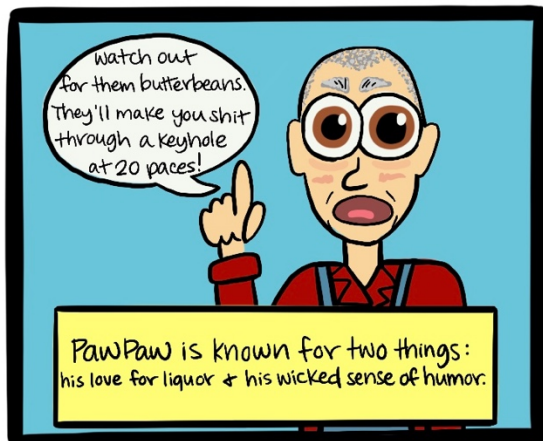
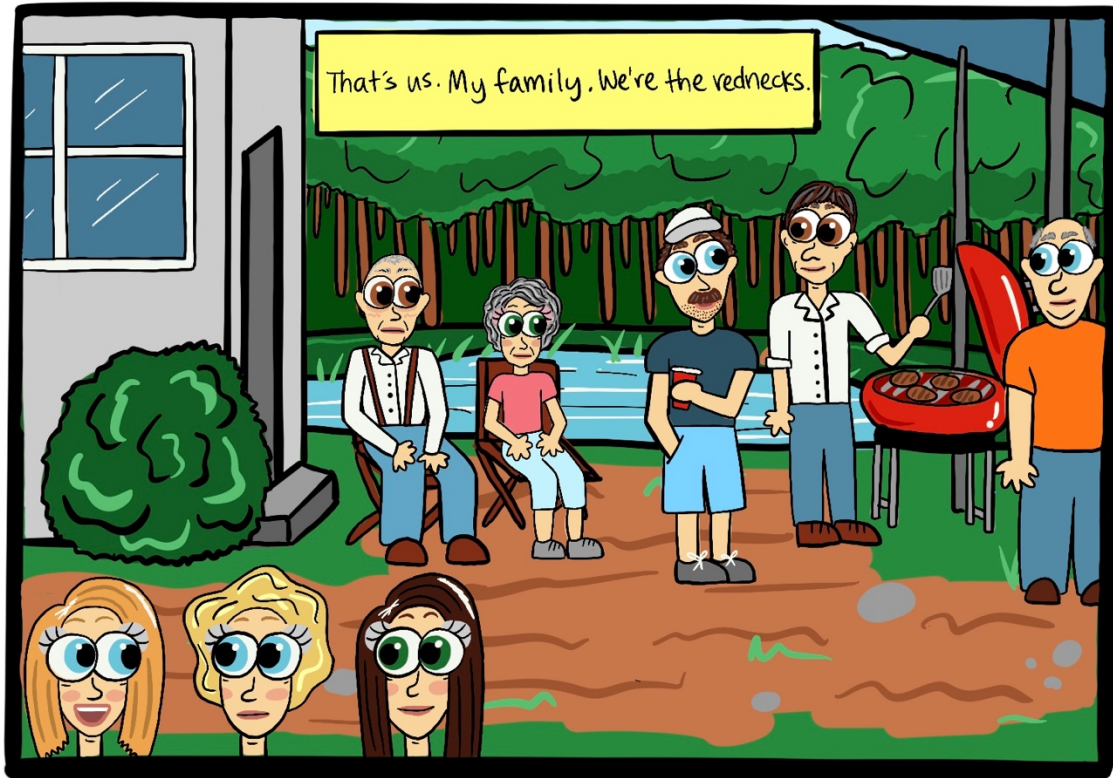
I was born in the small town of Shade Springs, Alabama, where most of my mother's family has lived for generations.

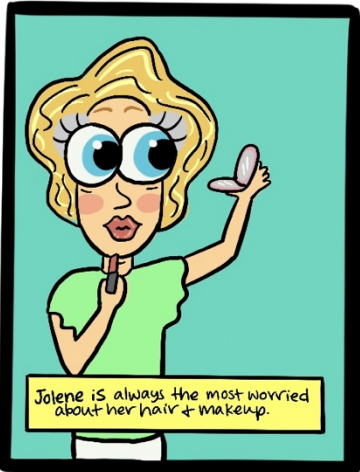
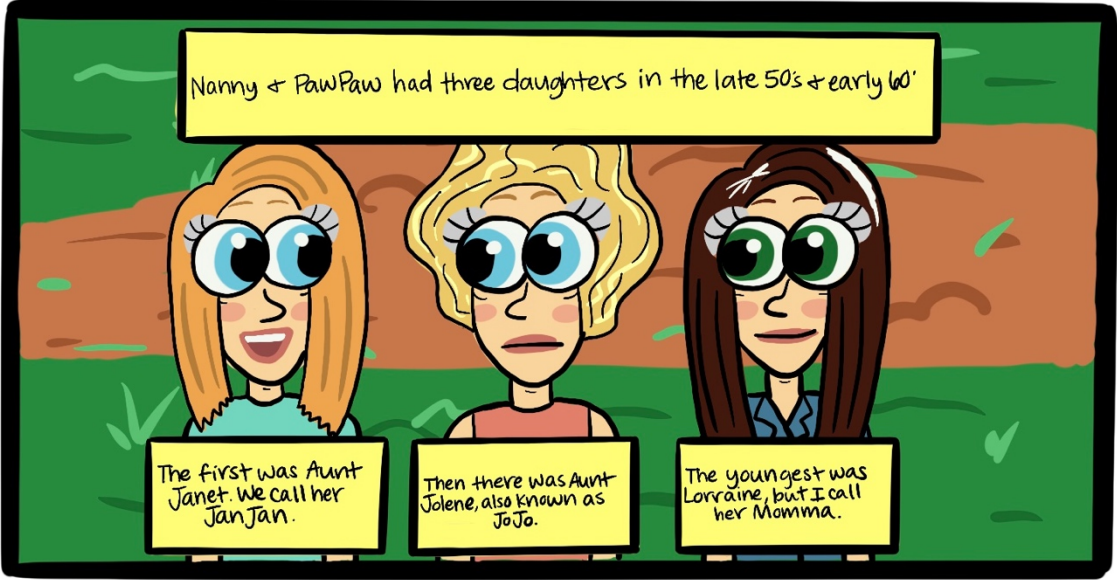


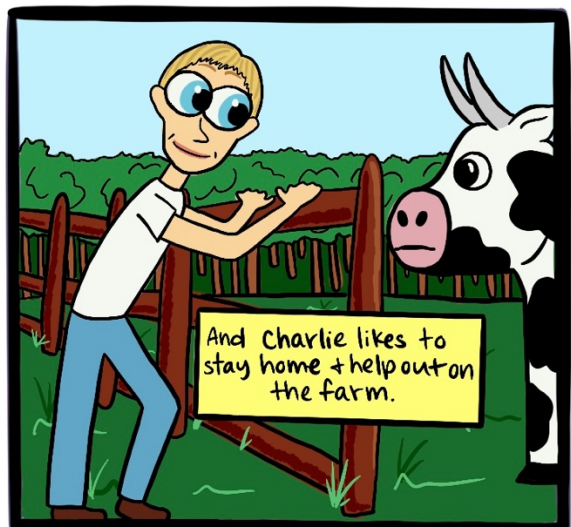
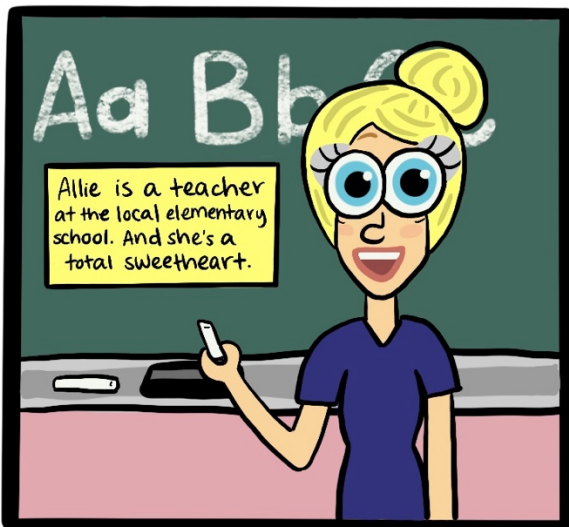
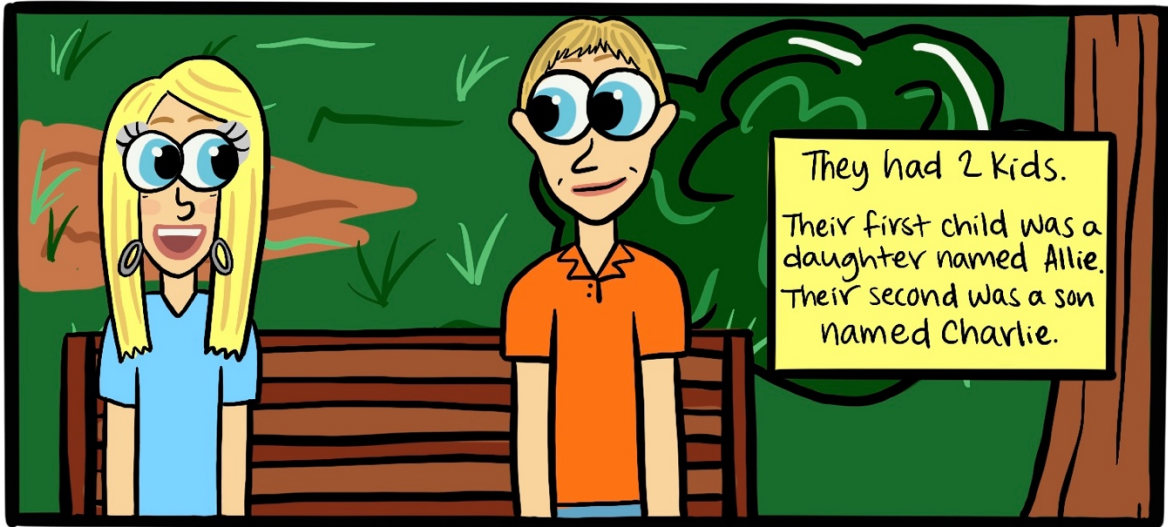
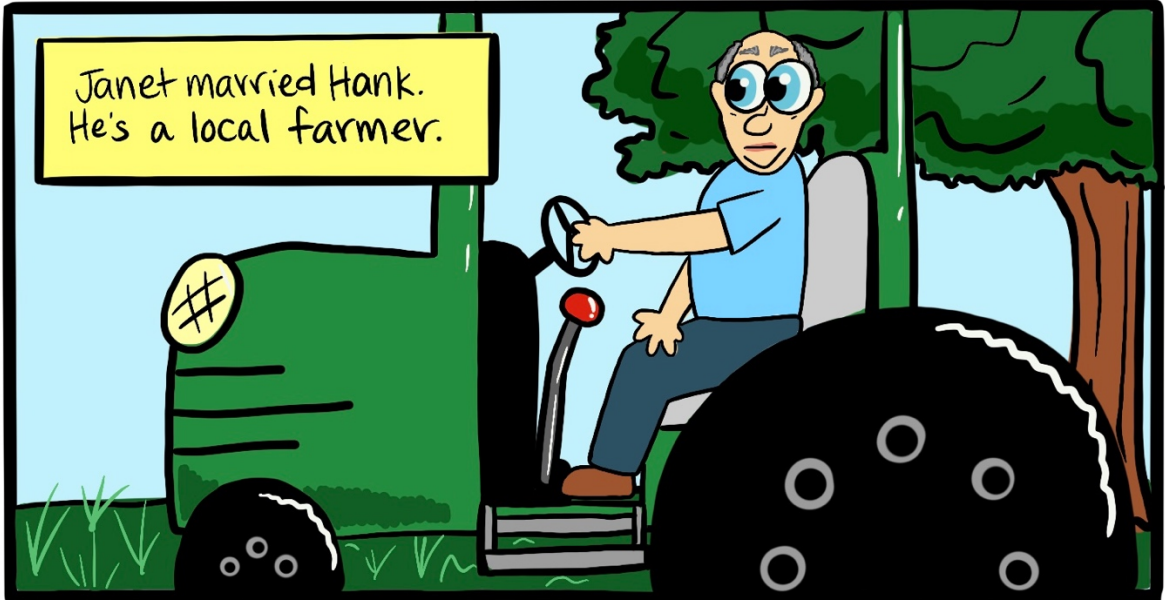
I knew everyone in town by the time I could walk, so there wasn't much outside socialization. In such a small town, everyone is always in your business, so don't even think about sharing a secret. Racism + homophobia run rampant, + the funnest thing to do is cat call women in the Walmart parking lot...
Needless to say, it wasn't my cup of tea.

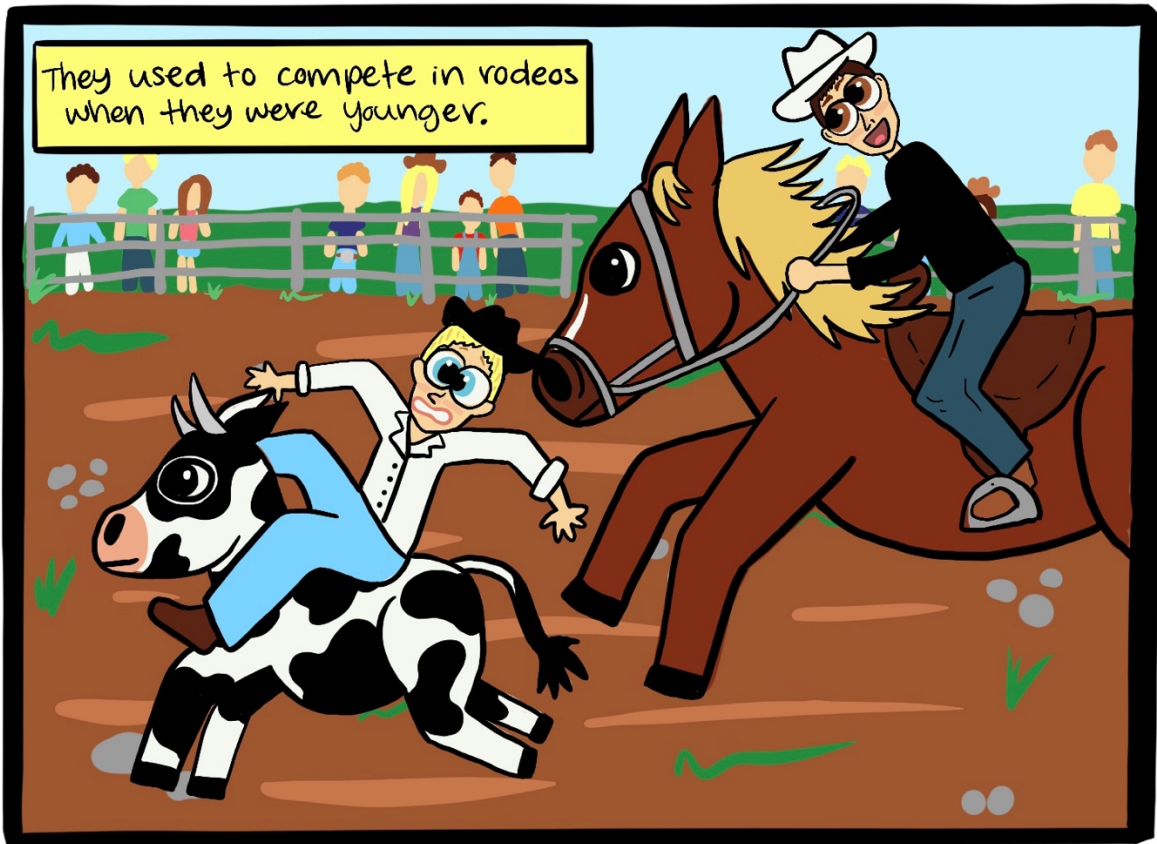
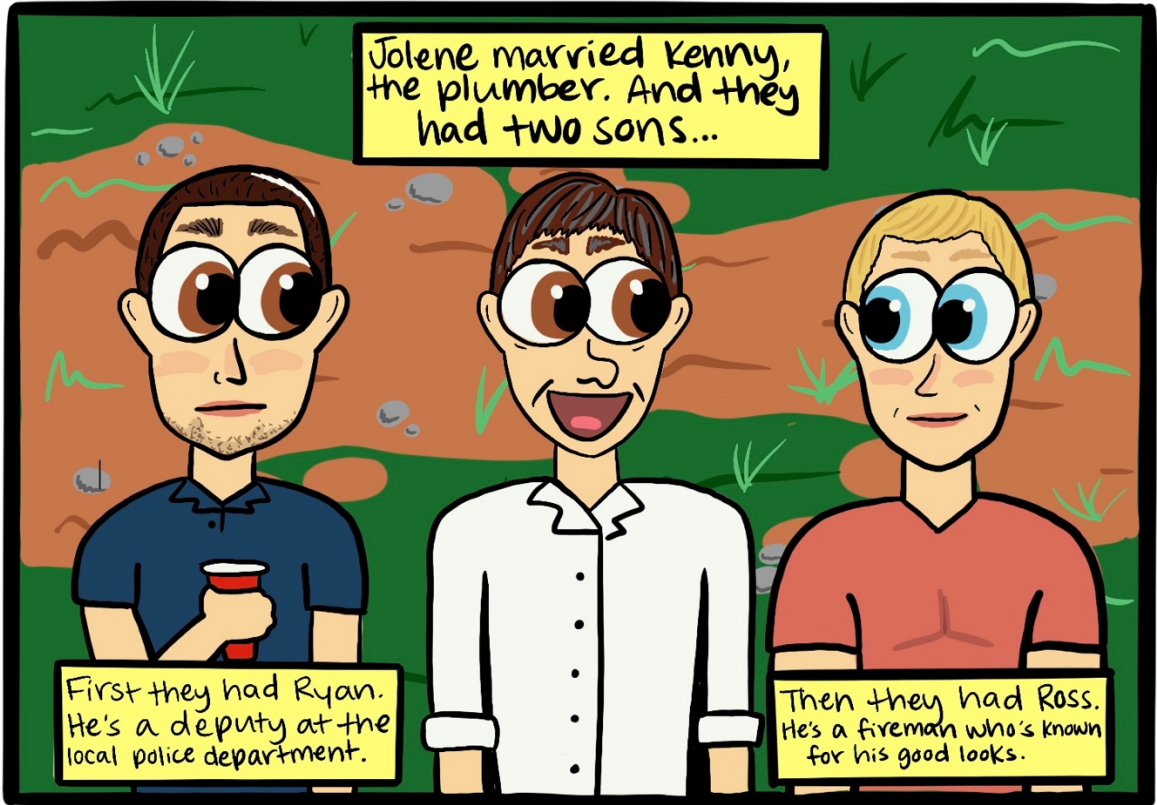


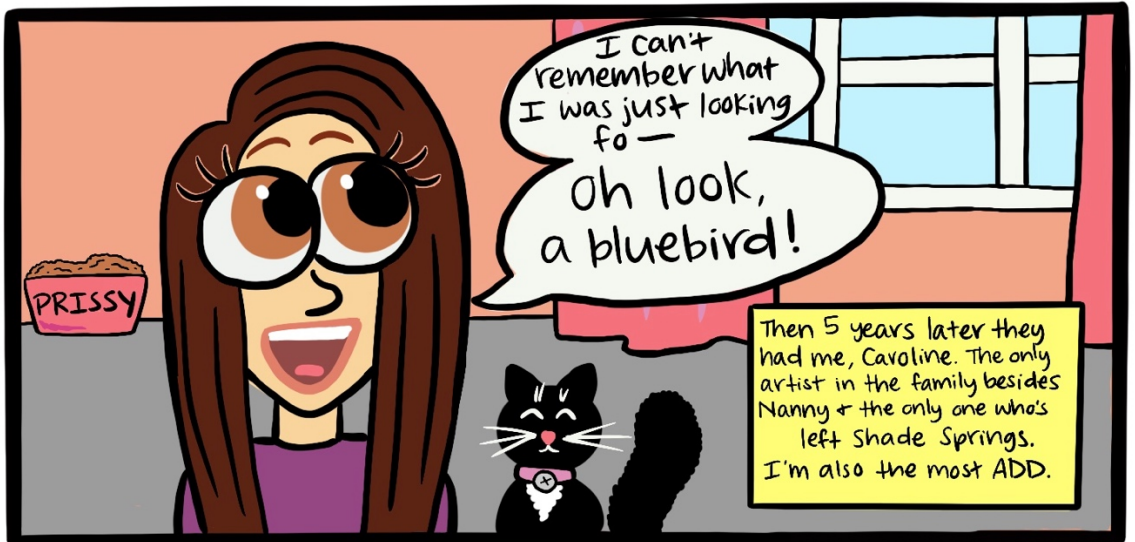
In a town where there isn't much to do besides wait for the rock-busters to return home from the local quarry, you tend to look to the town rednecks for entertainment...











And these
are our
Stories...

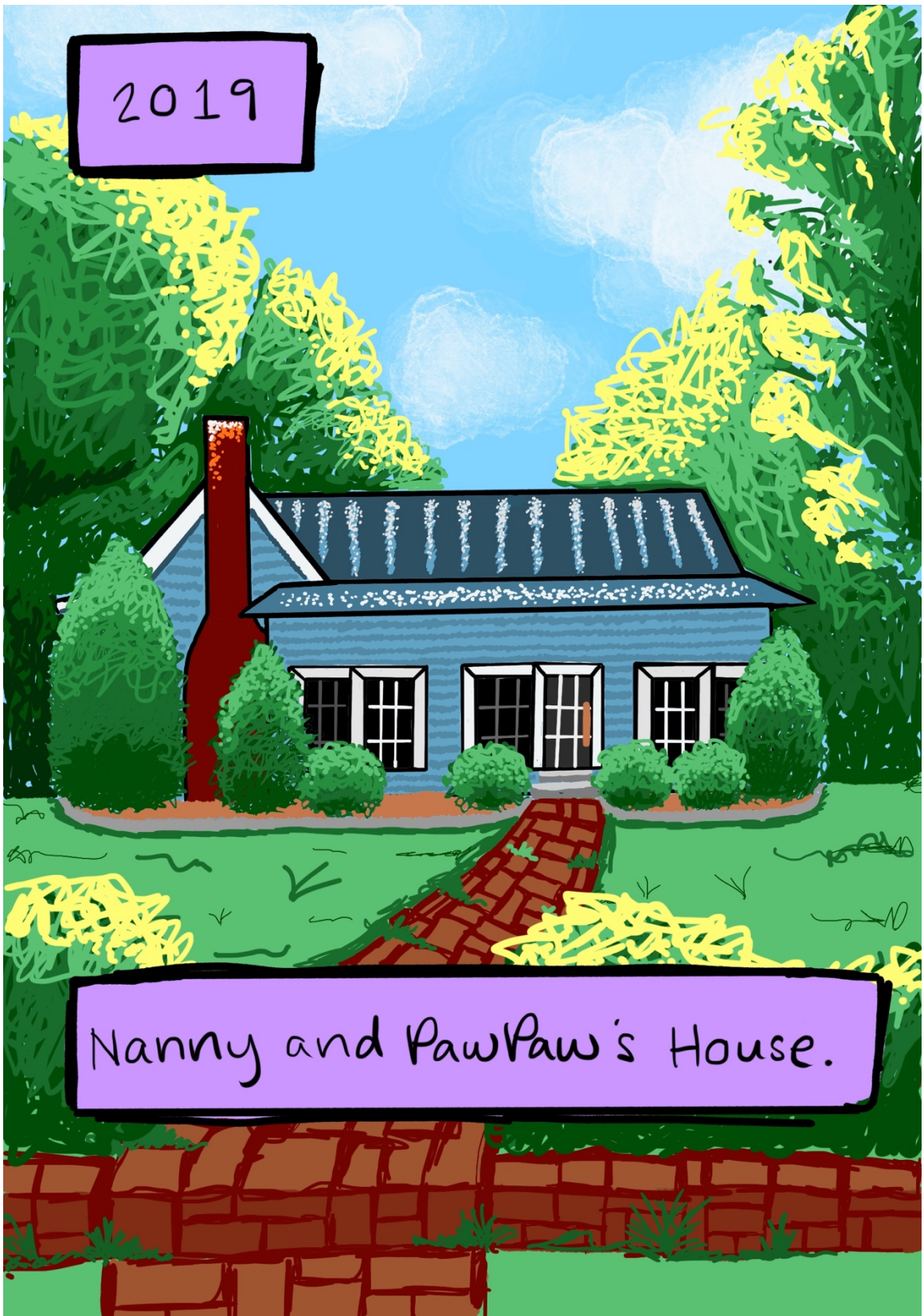
table



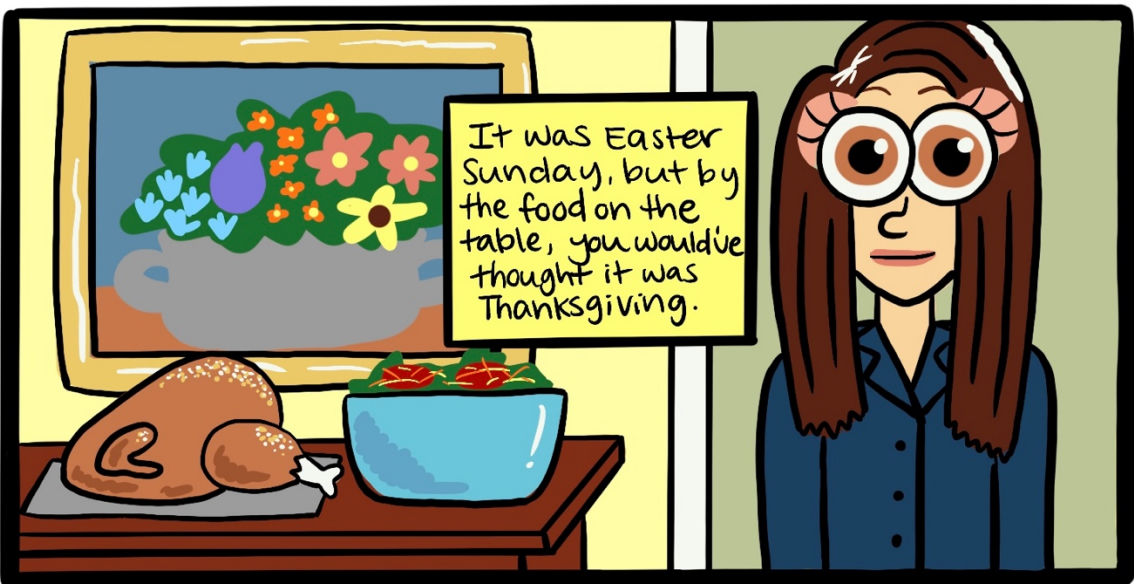
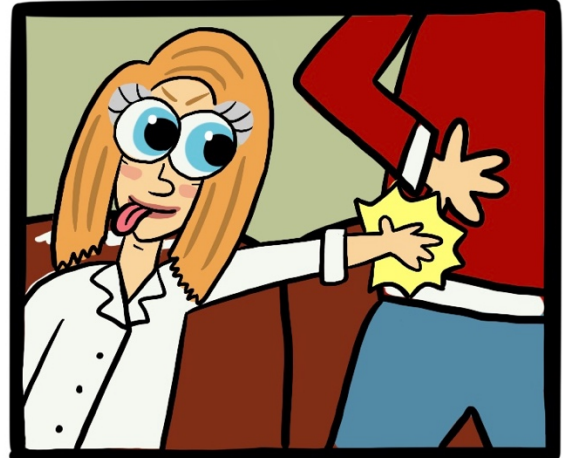
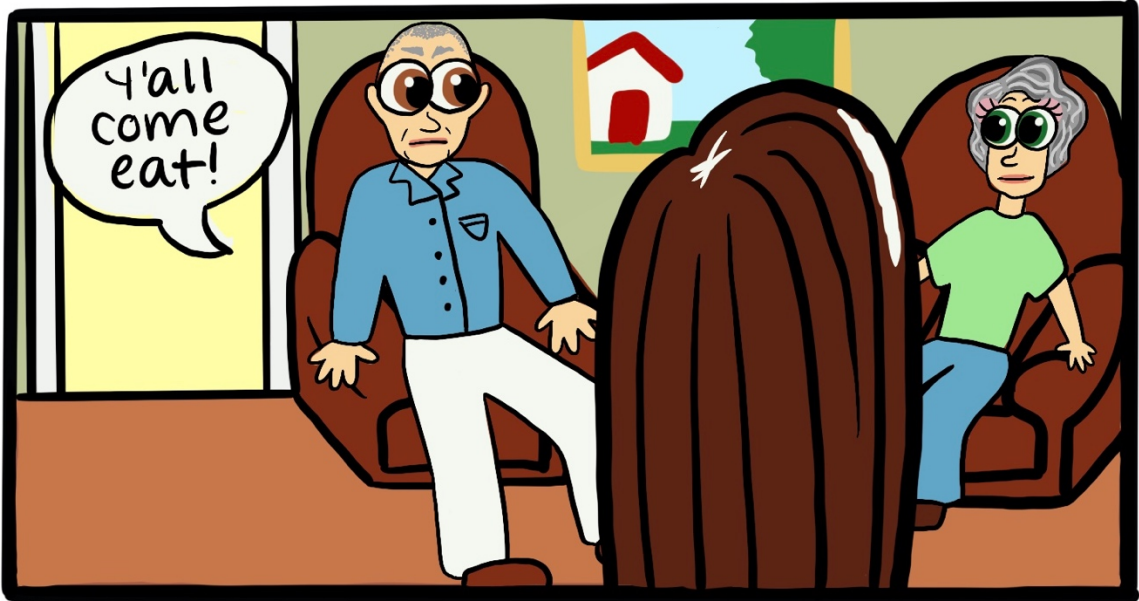
talk

part 1

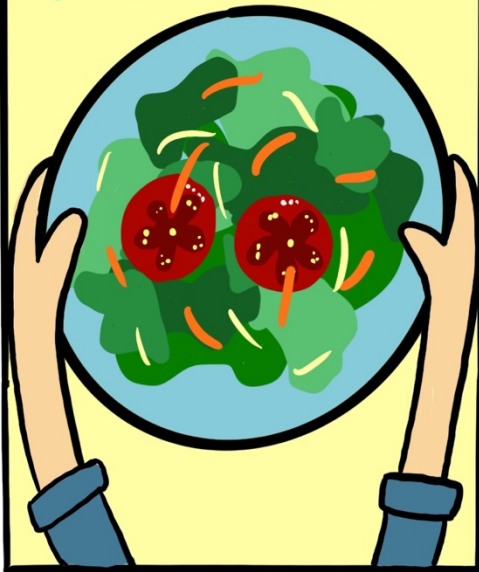
2019



Nanny and PawPaw's House.



Nanny is a Jehovah Witness, & so is Aunt Jolene. So we typically didn't go all out for holidays out of respect for them.



There were never any Easter decorations or holiday traditions, but the food was always worth the sacrifice, & the time spent with family.

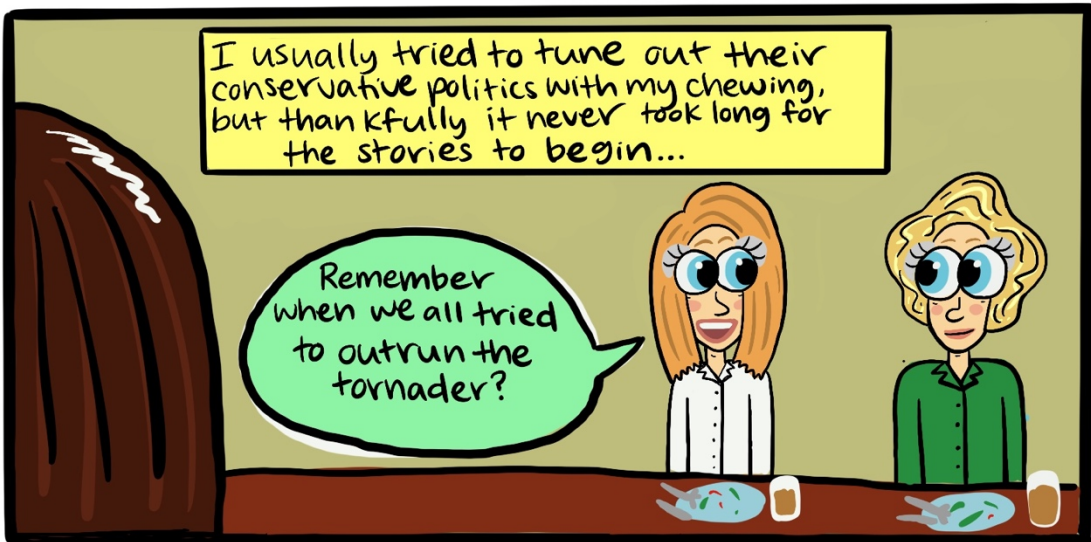


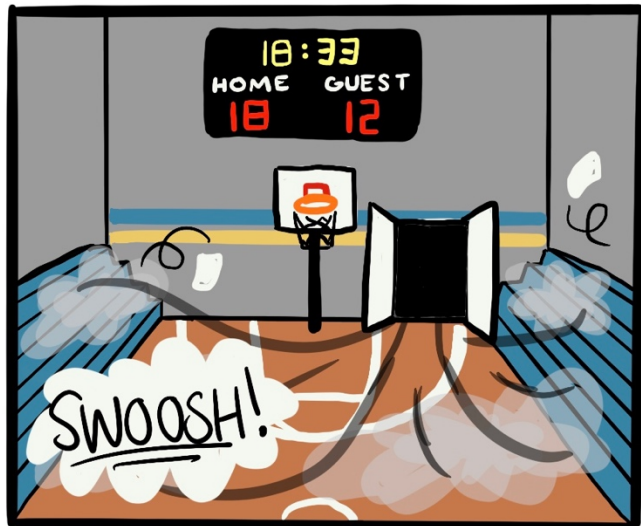
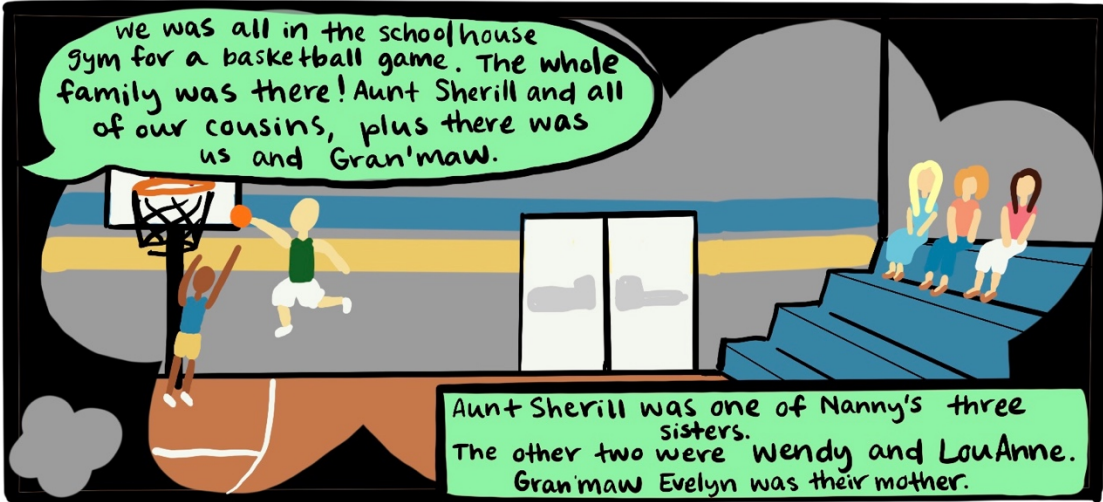
College had watered down my molasses-thick accent, but it still managed to resurface whenever I ventured home for the occasional visit...



I usually tried to tune out their conservative politics with my chewing, but thankfully it never took long for the stories to begin...

Remember when we all tried to outrun the tornader?





And we all tried to pile into one car!

This ain't gone work.

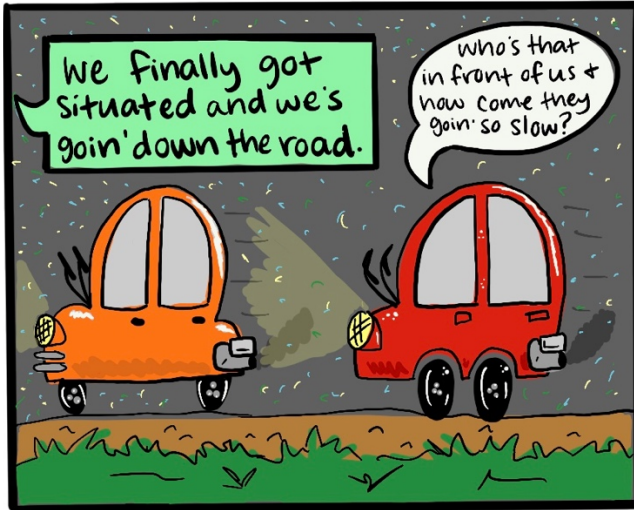
Some of us will have to get into the other car.

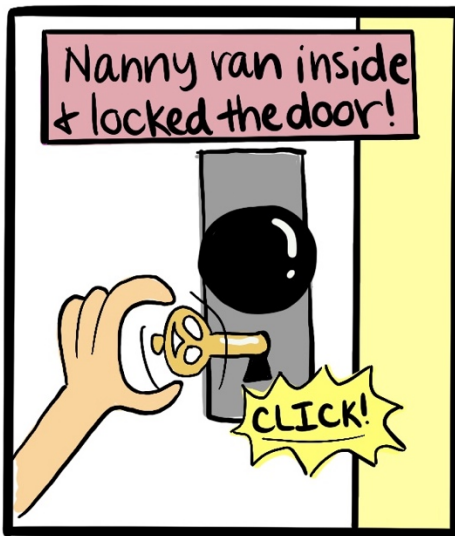
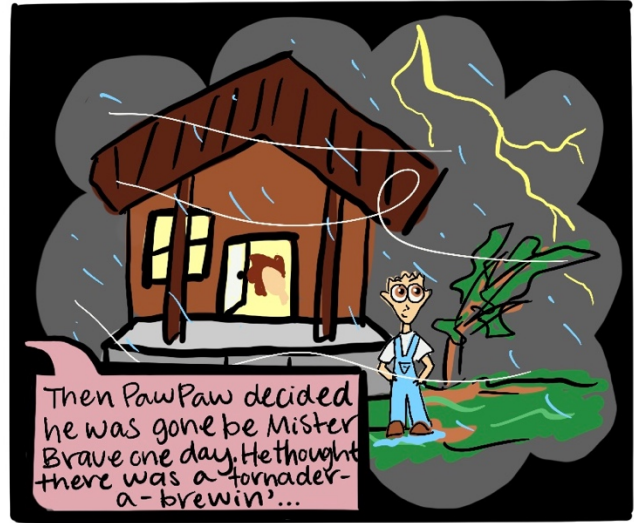


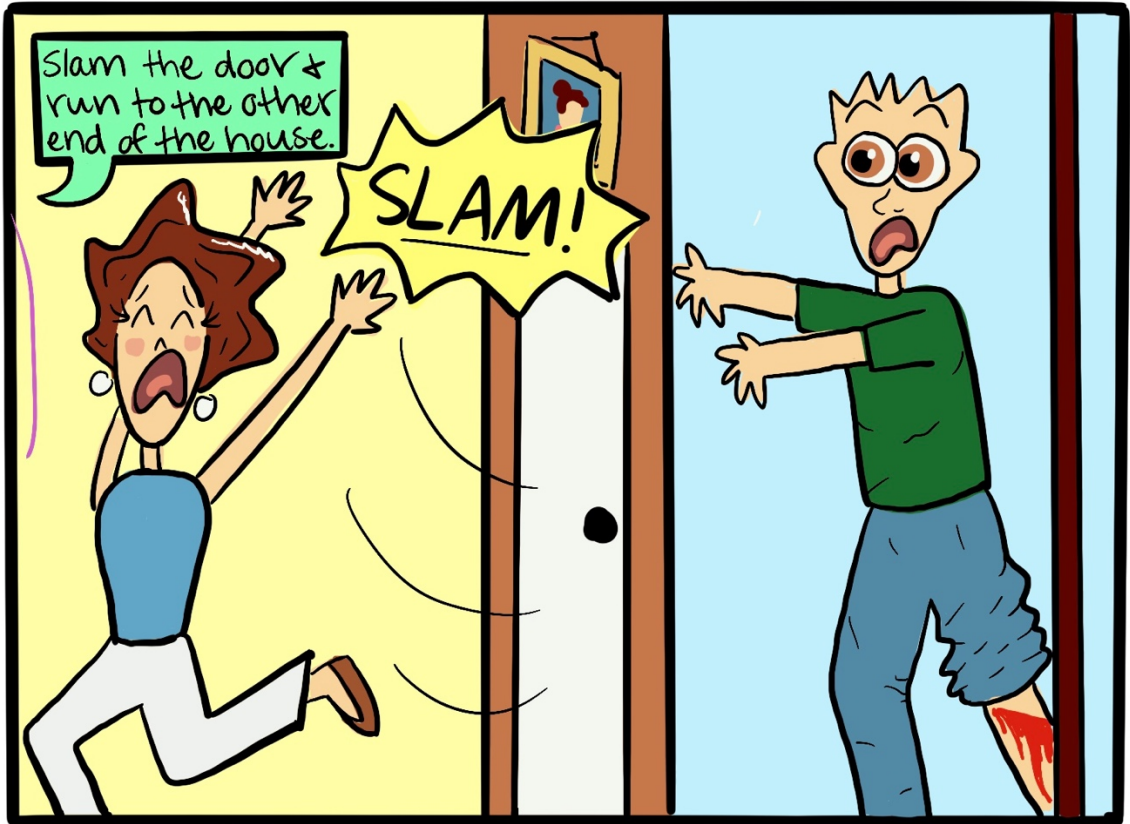


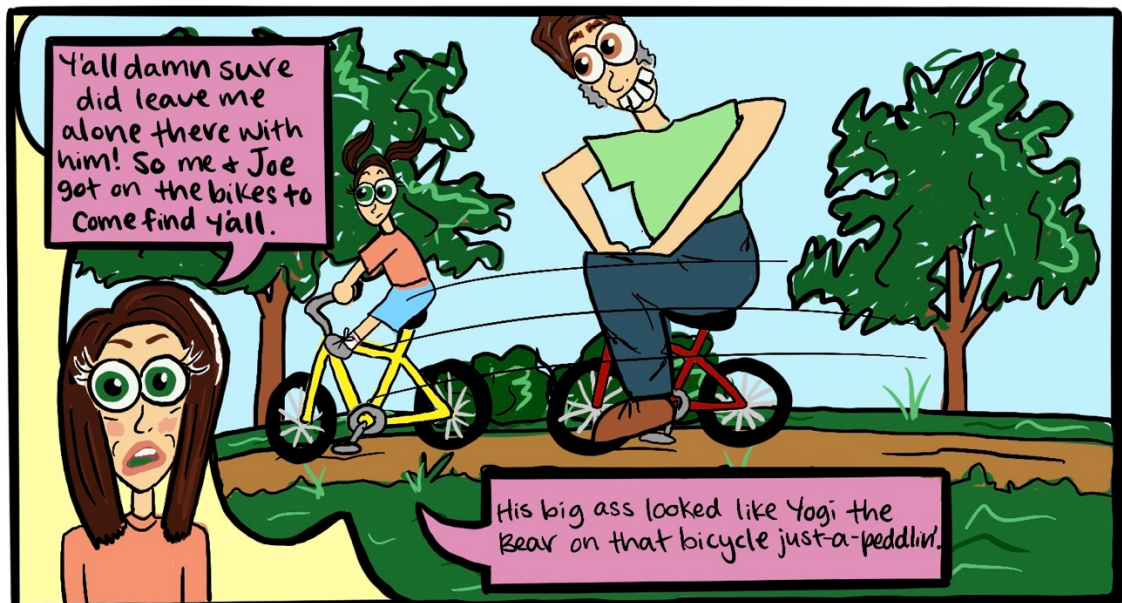
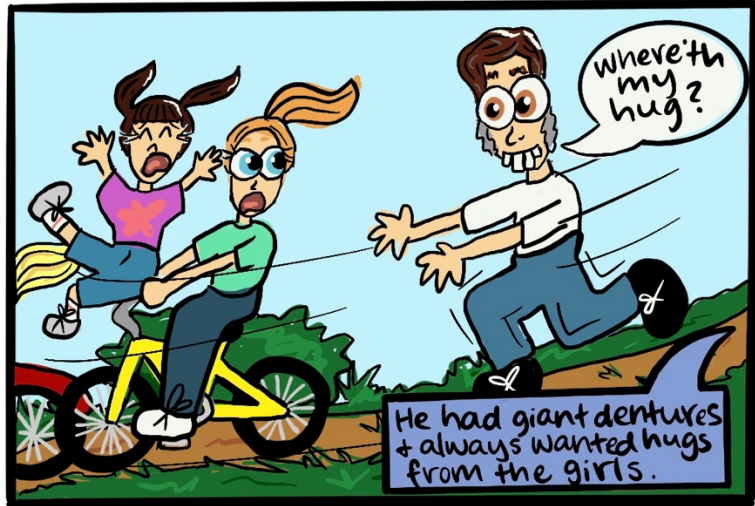
Then we all got out
- even the driver -
and crammed into
the second car!

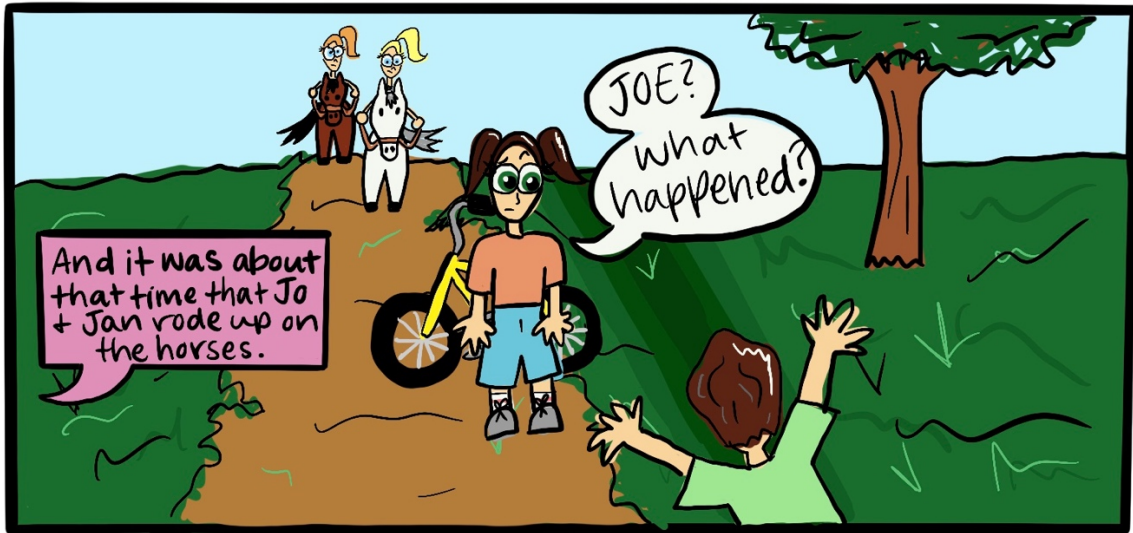
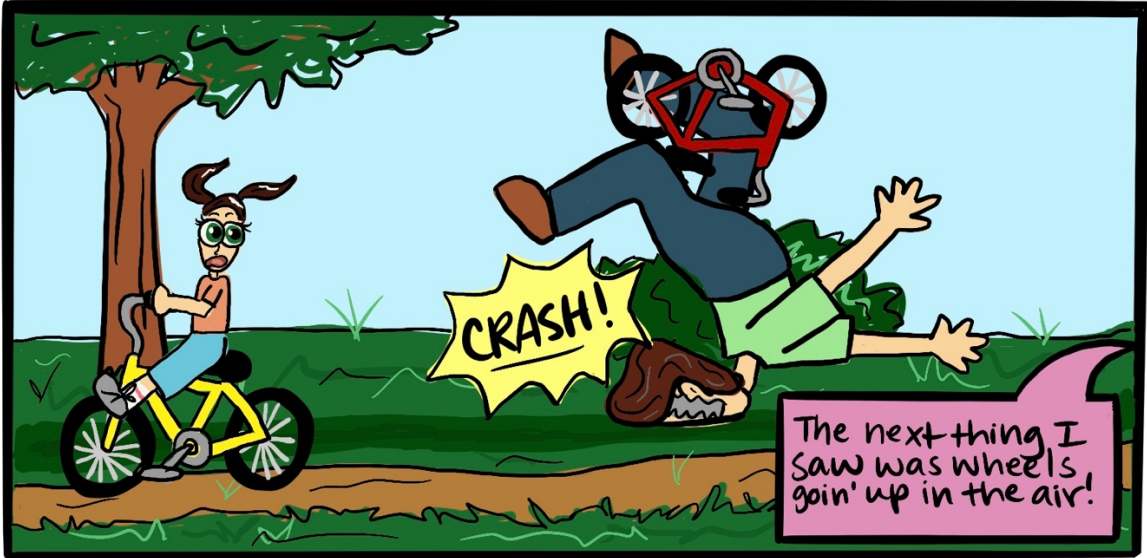


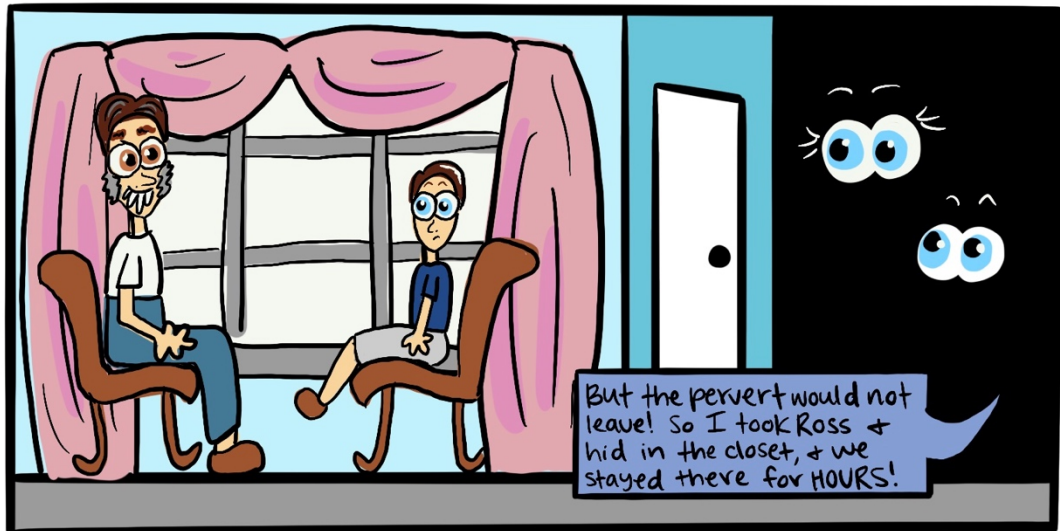
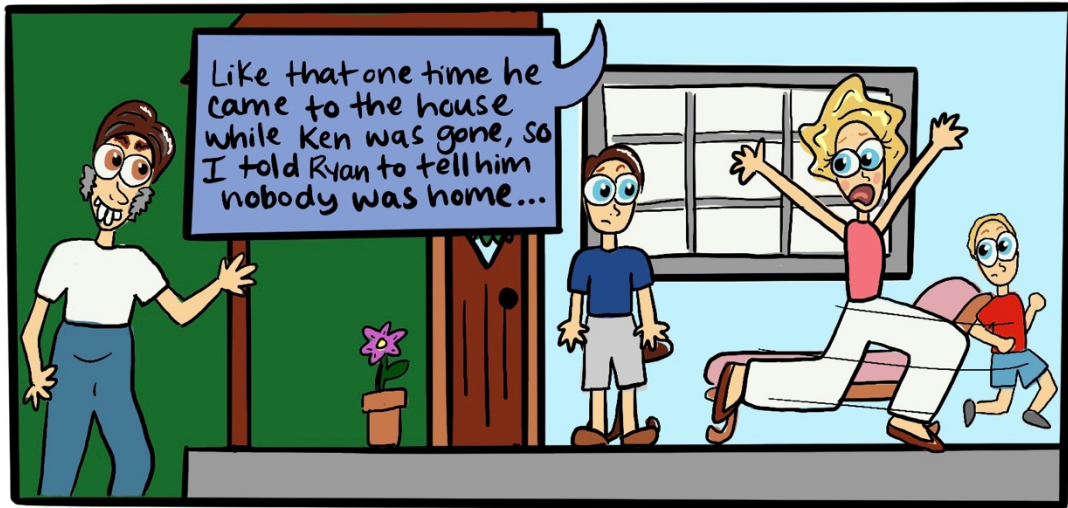
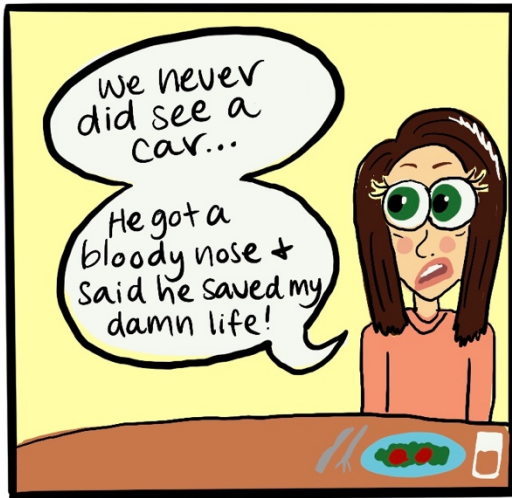










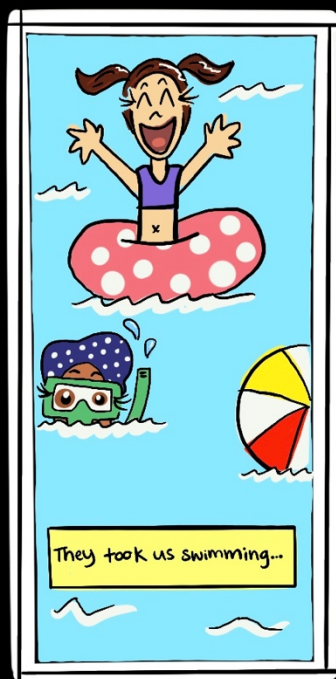
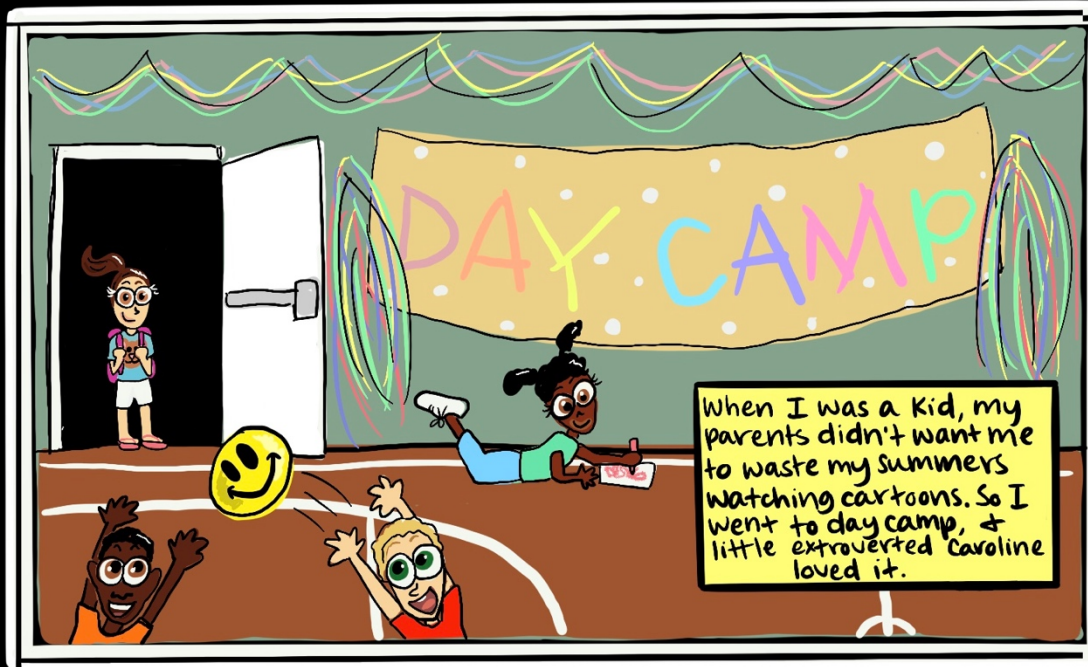




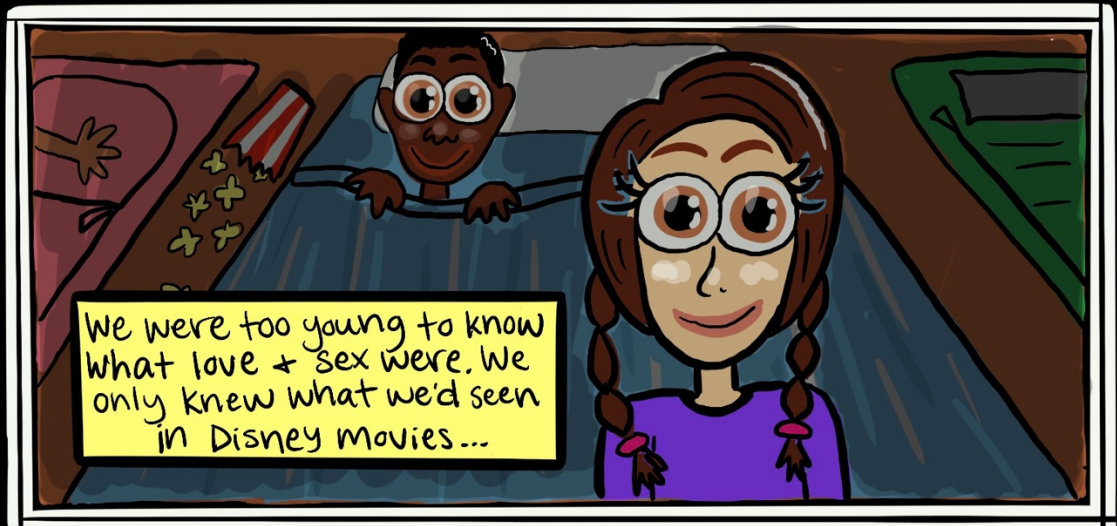
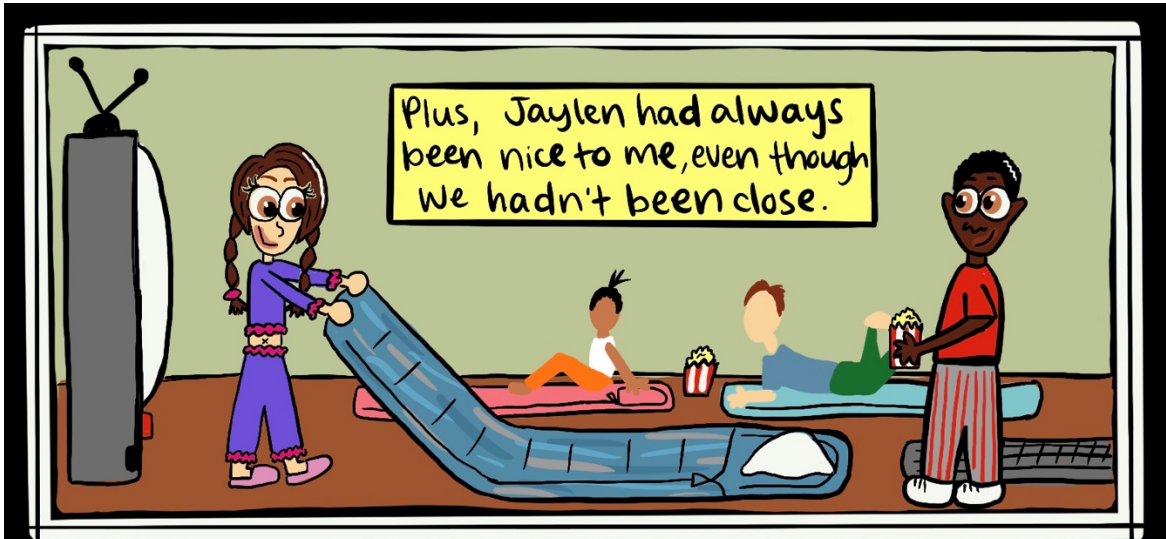
THINGS
I HAD TO
LEARN
AND
UNLEARN:

Day Camp

I got in trouble one day.
I was seven years old...

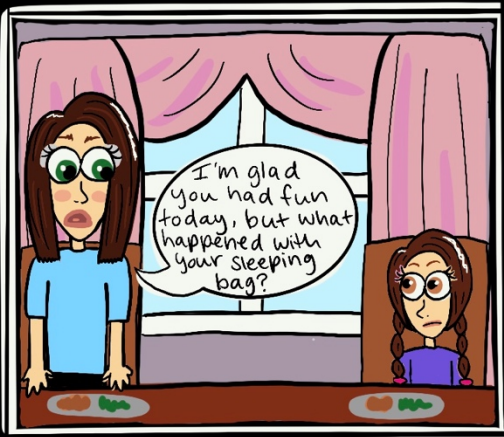




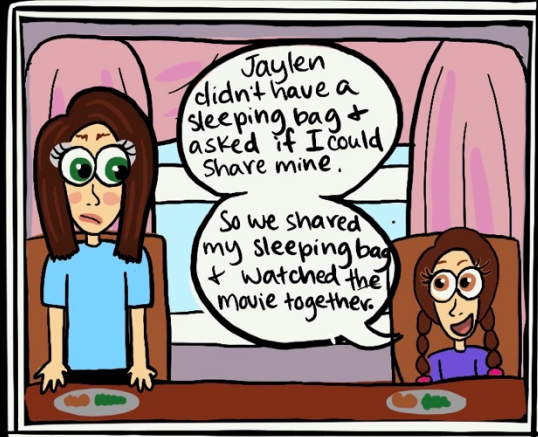




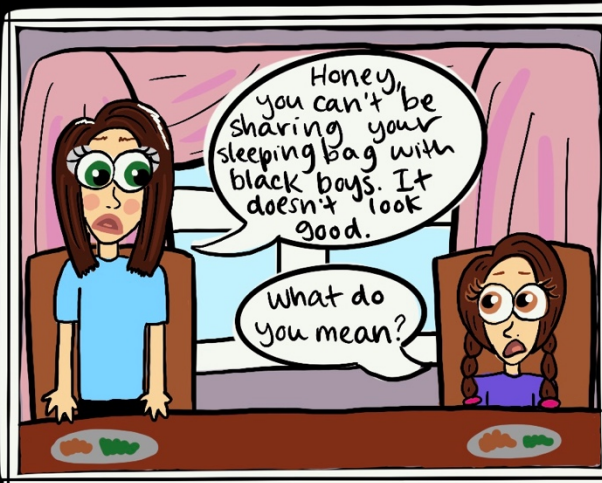
At least it felt great until I got home that day.



I'm glad you had fun today, but what happened with your sleeping bag?



Jaylen didn't have a sleeping bag + asked if I could share mine.
So we shared my sleeping bag + watched the movie together.

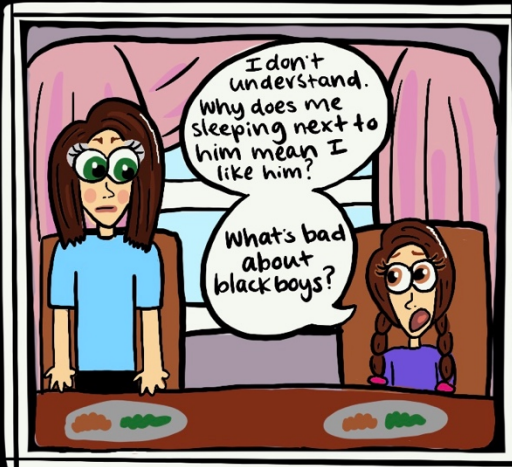


Honey, you can't be sharing your sleeping bag with black boys. It doesn't look good.

What do you mean?



You shouldn't be sharing your sleeping bag with boys anyway, but especially not black boys.



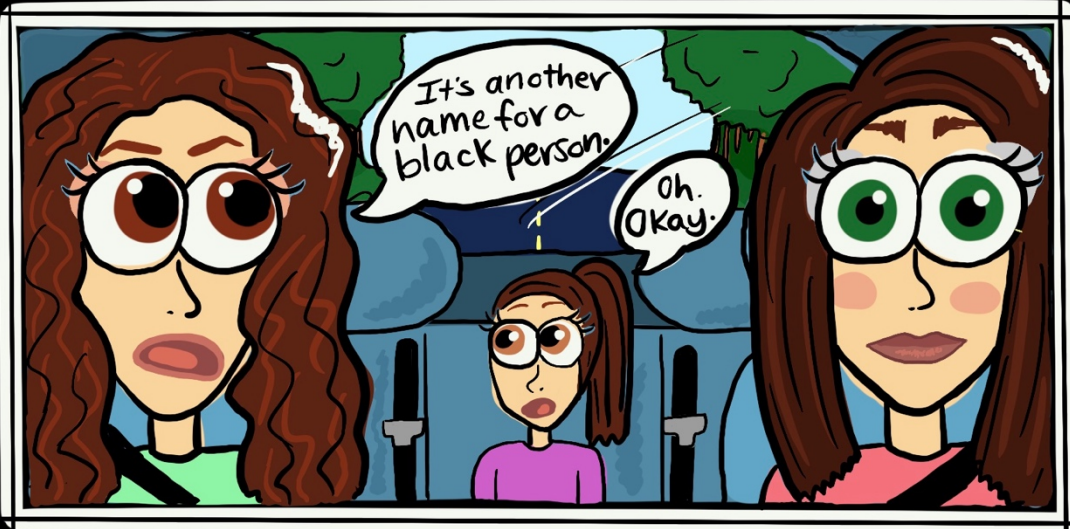
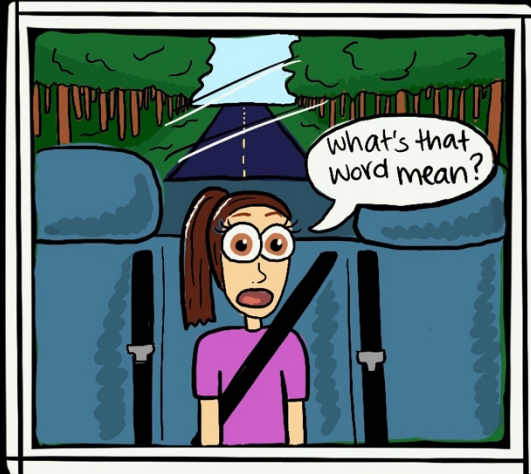
I got in trouble one day.
I was ten years old.

I was riding home with
Momma + Charlotte.
I don't remember where we
were coming from, but if I
had to guess I'd say Nanny's.



I was in my own
world, staring out
the window as always.
Country music twanged
through the radio —
Momma's favorite.





I don't remember what we had been talking about before...

N****R!

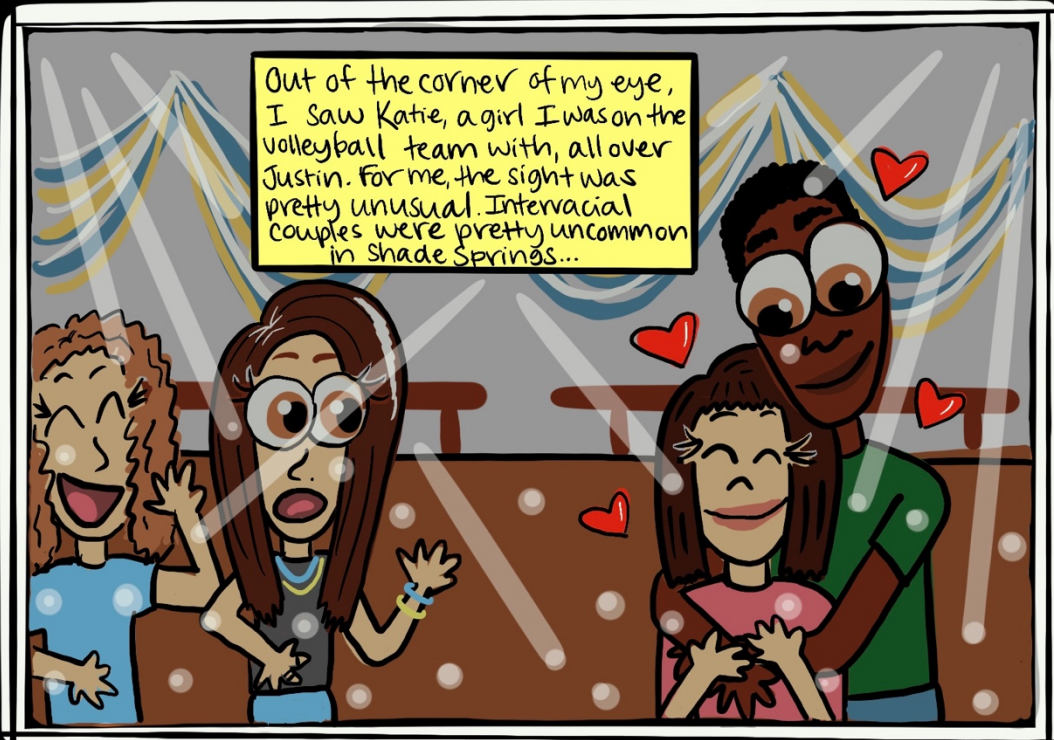




She got in trouble one day.
I was twelve years old.



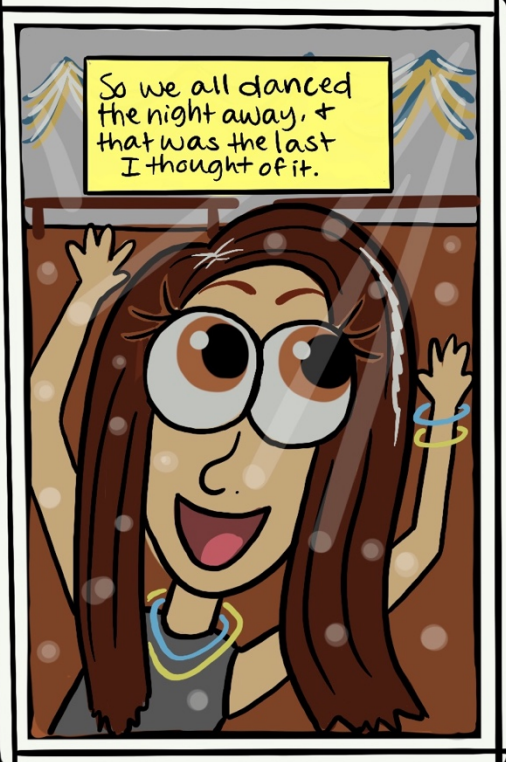
Being in middle school meant I could finally go to my school's homecoming dance, which was the most fun thing to happen at Shade Springs School. They always had it right after the football game, which meant everyone came in their school spirit t-shirts + jeans.



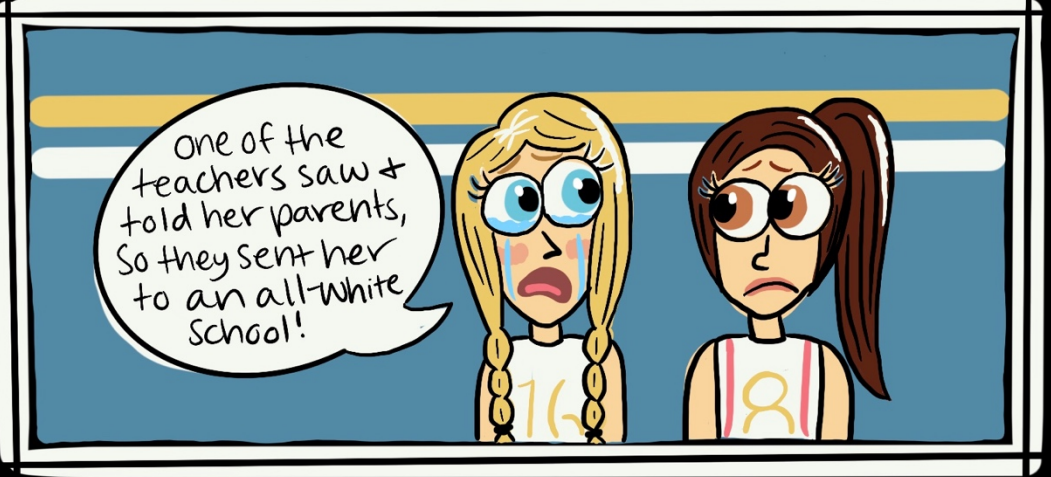
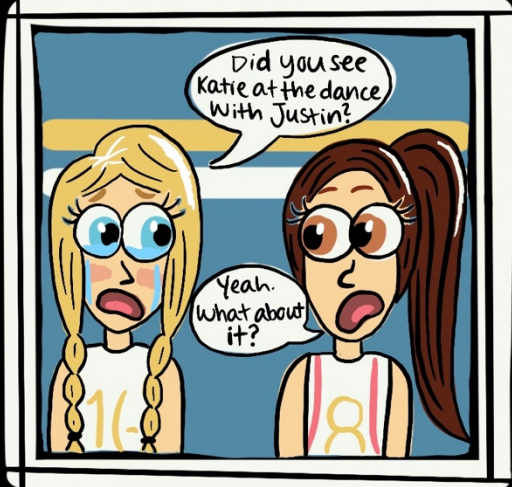
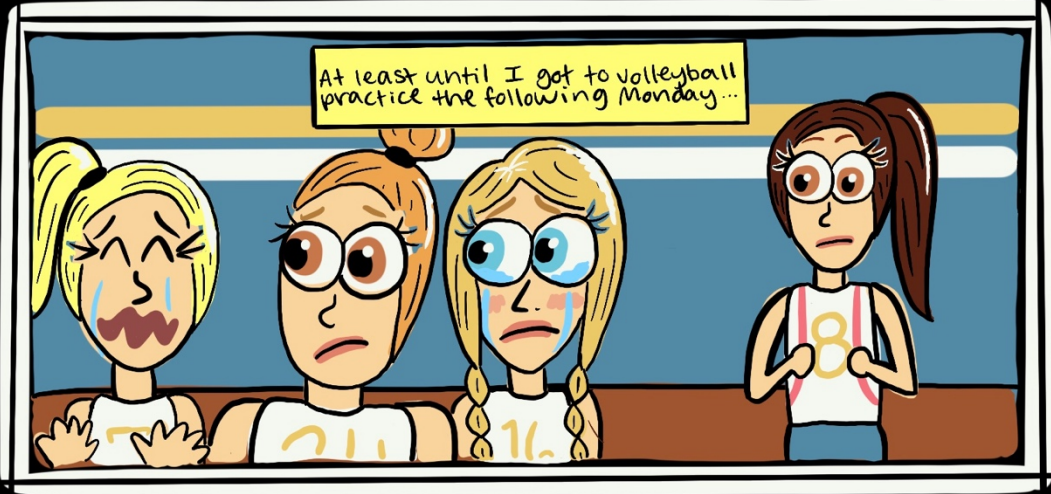
Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Katie, a girl I was on the volleyball team with, all over Justin. For me, the sight was pretty unusual. Interracial couples were pretty uncommon in Shade Springs...

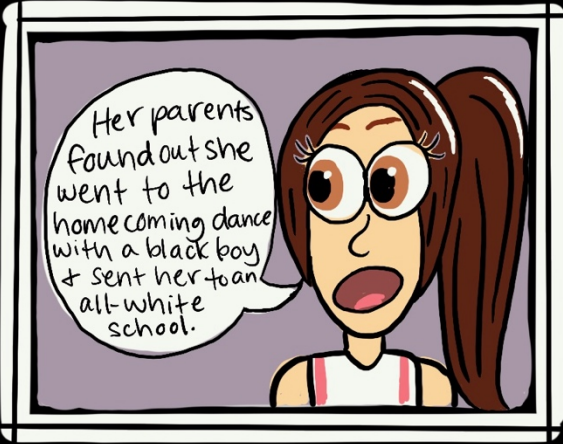


But once the shock went away, I realized how happy they were together...

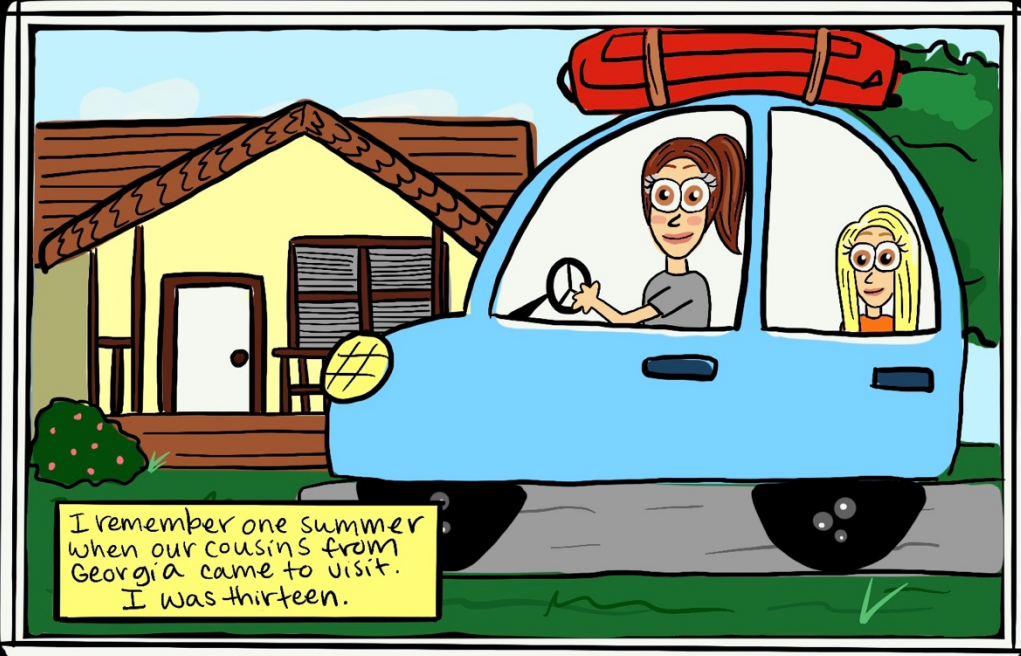


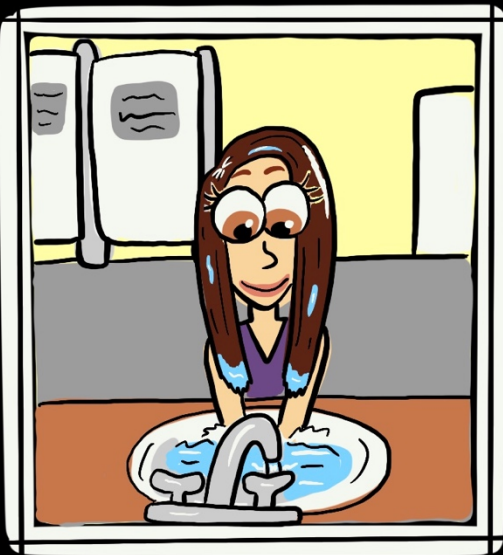
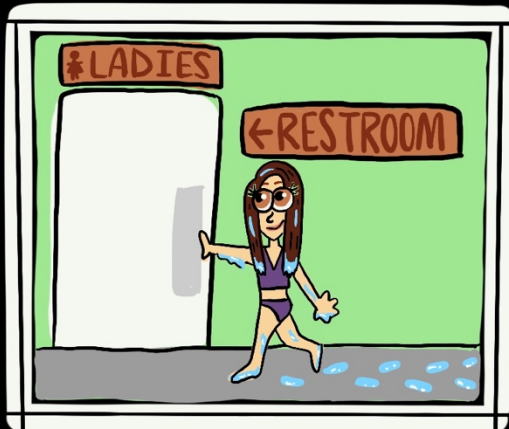
So we all danced the night away, & that was the last I thought of it.

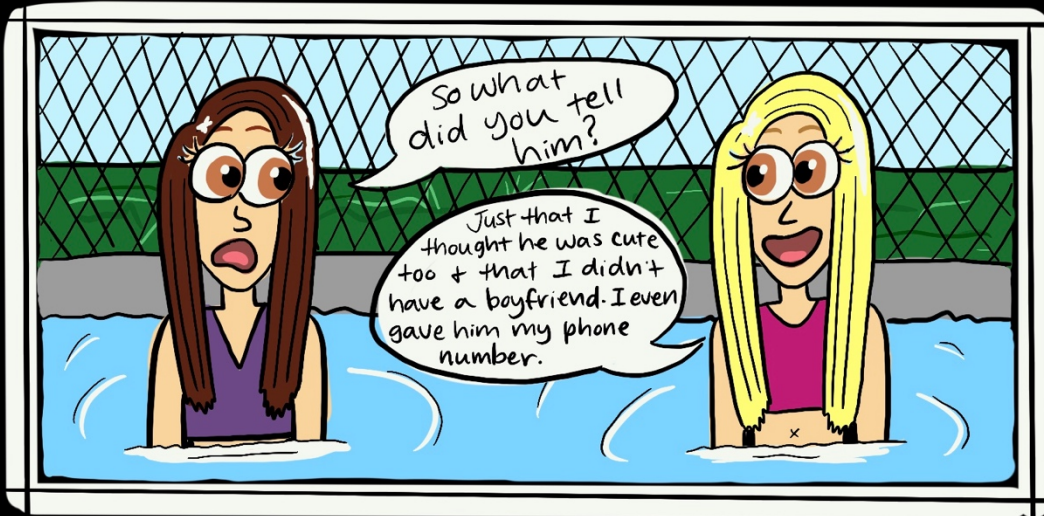
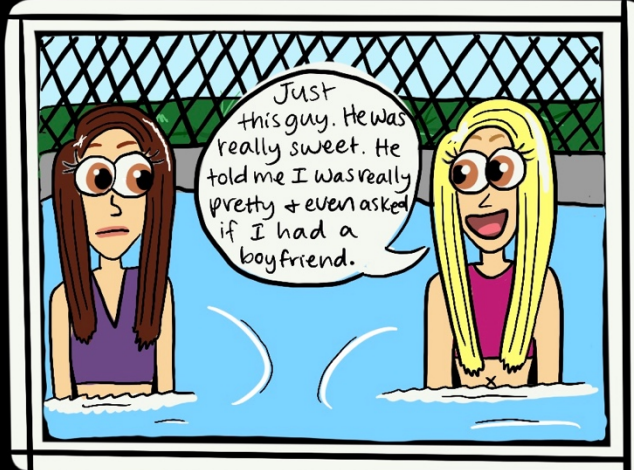
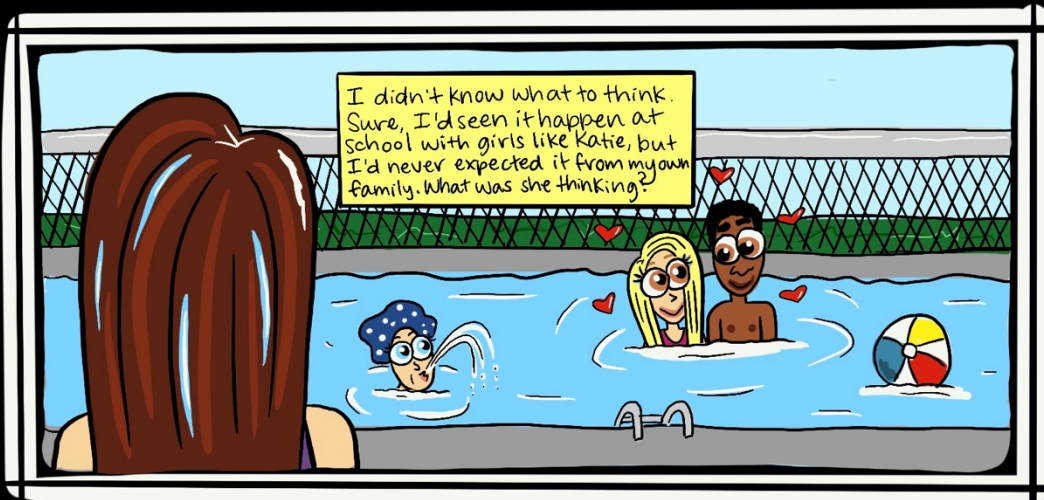




I gave in one day...











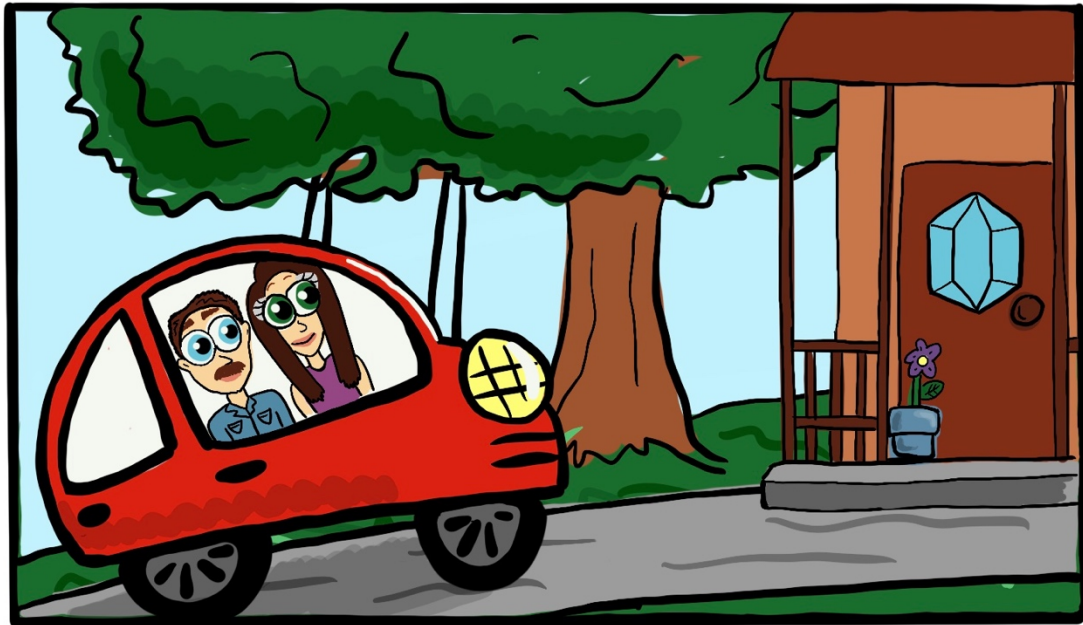
I never apologized to Ellie for my outburst, even though I should have. That was the first time anyone had ever called me a racist.

table



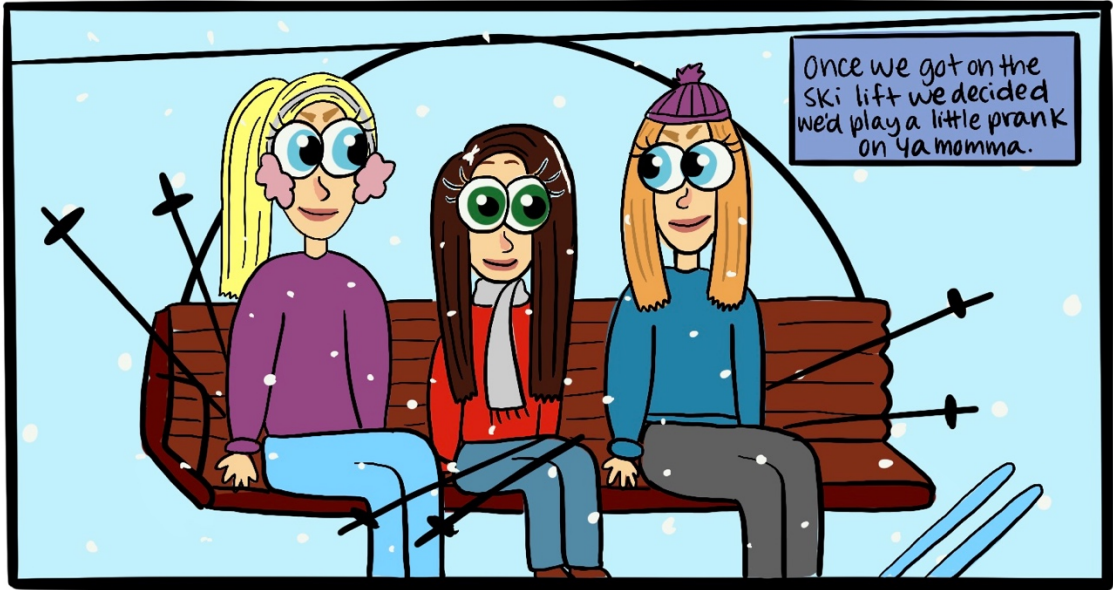
taik

Part 2

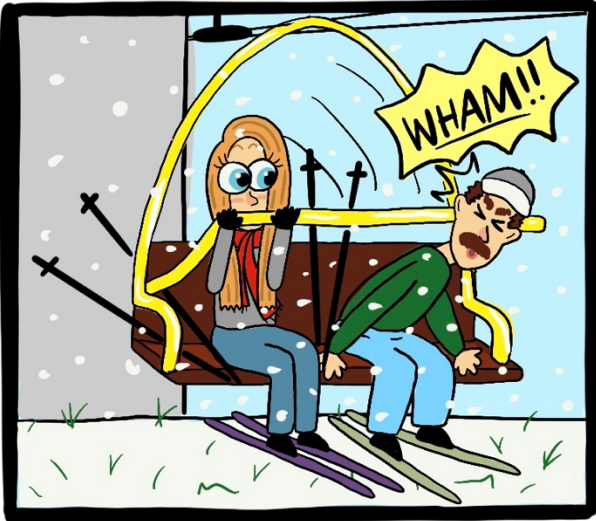


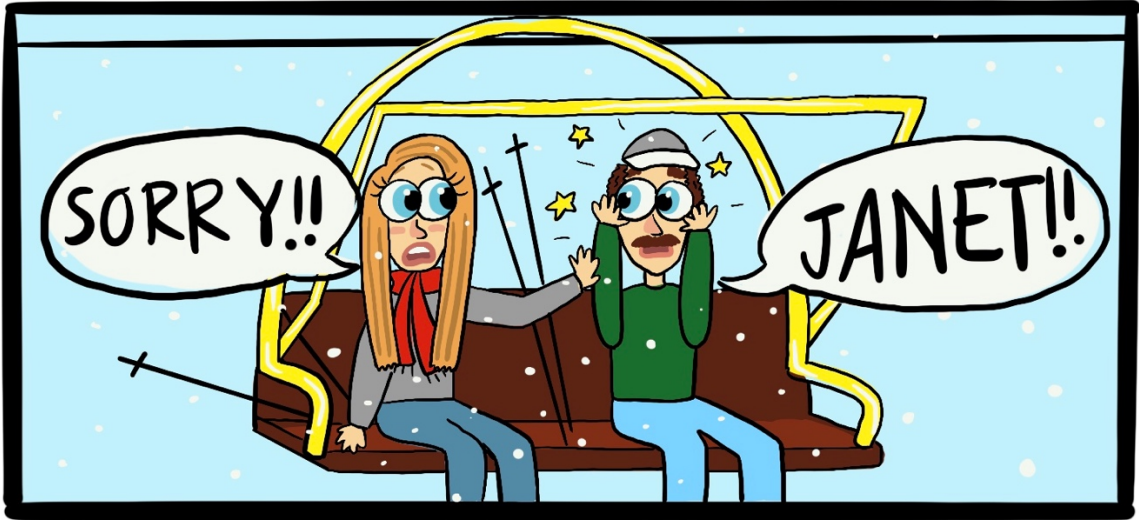




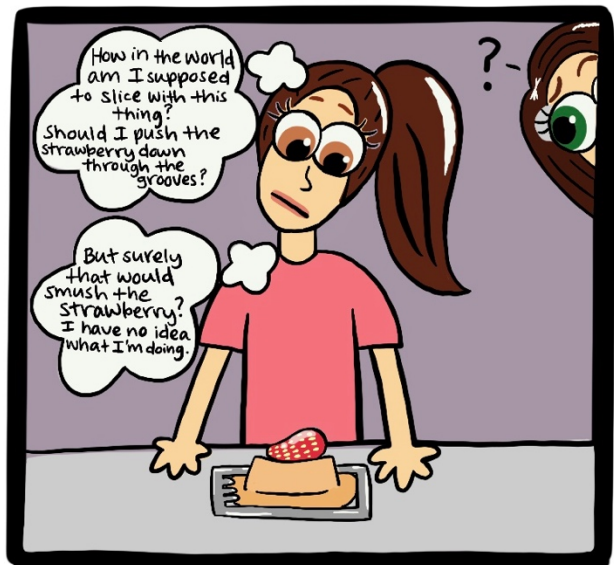
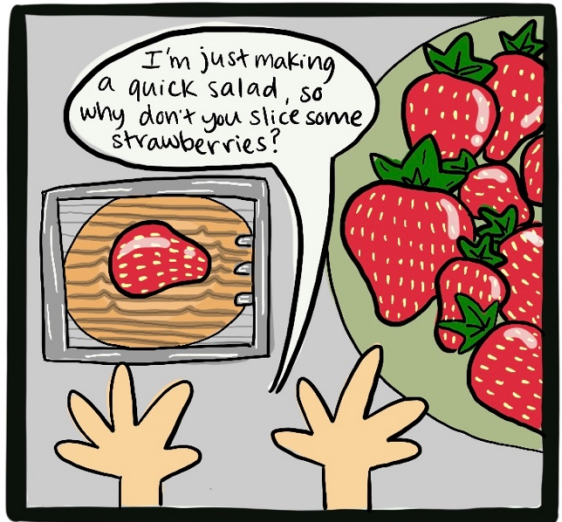


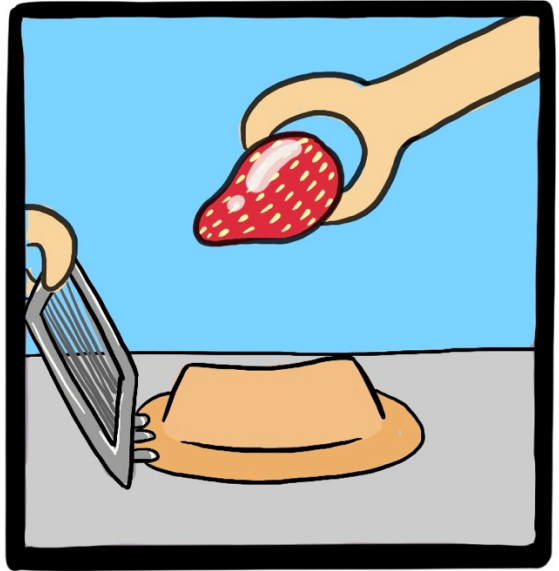
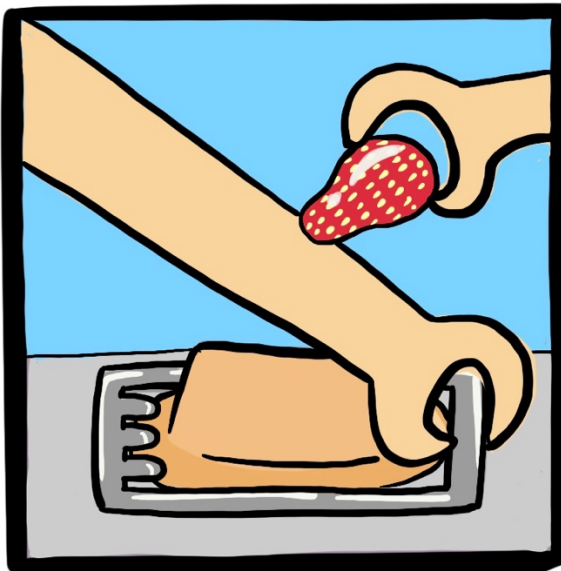
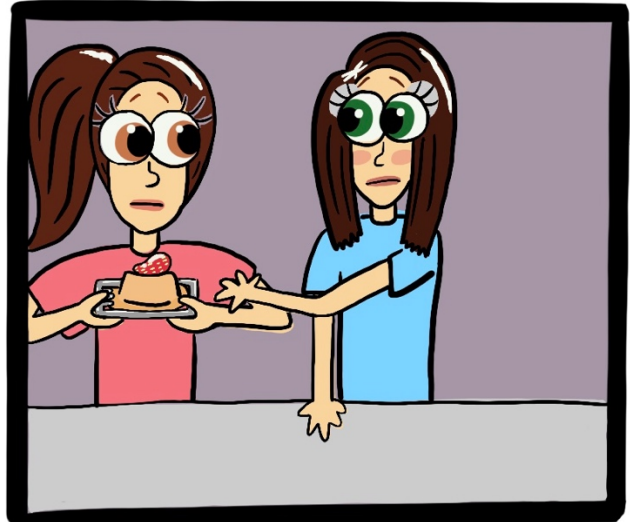
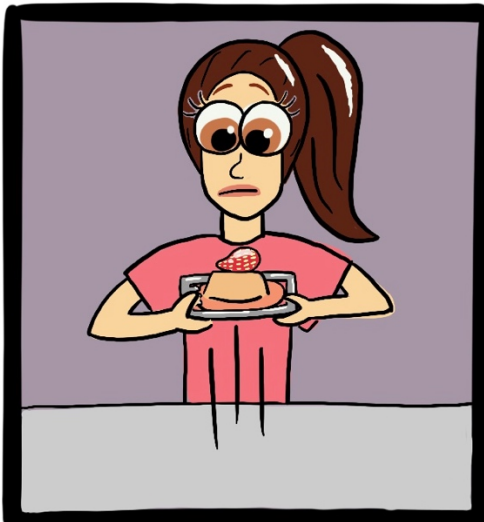
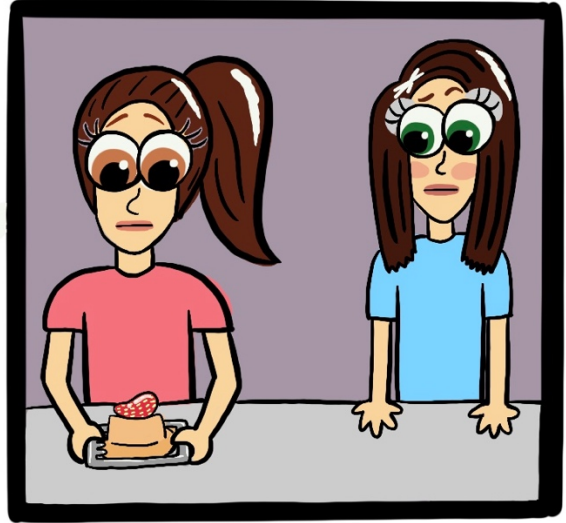
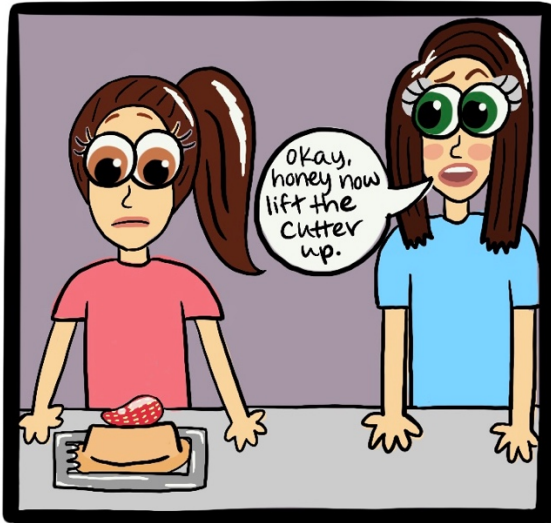


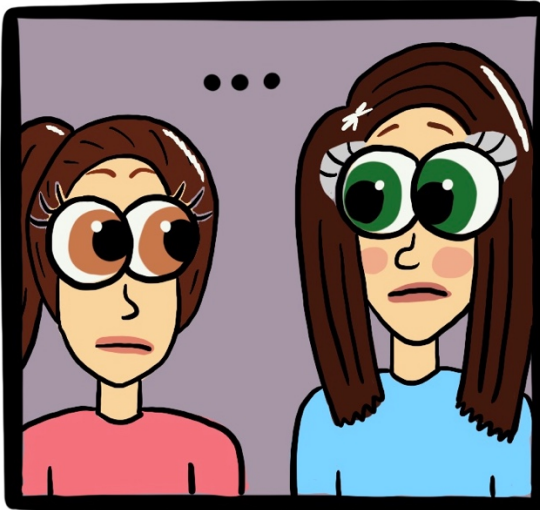
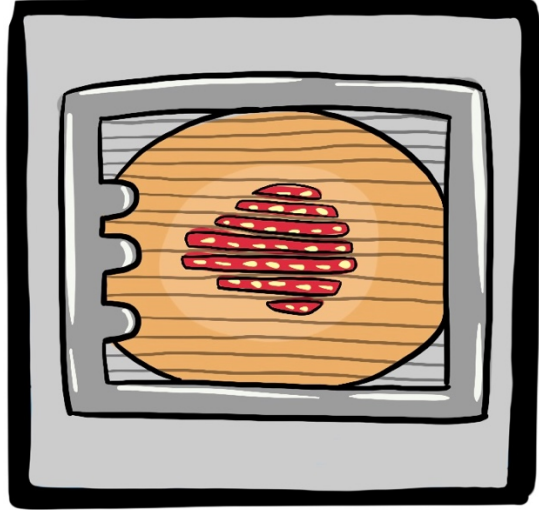
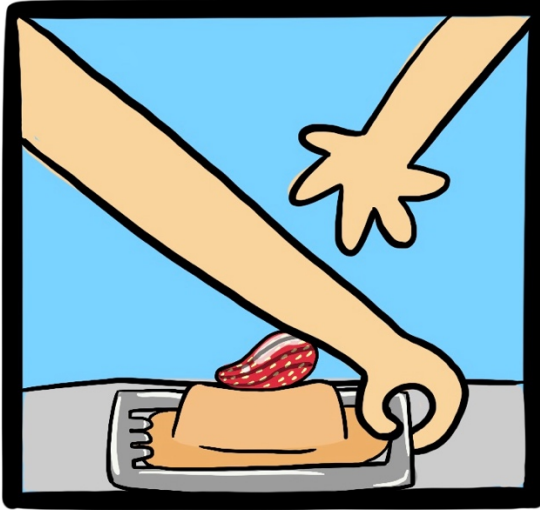


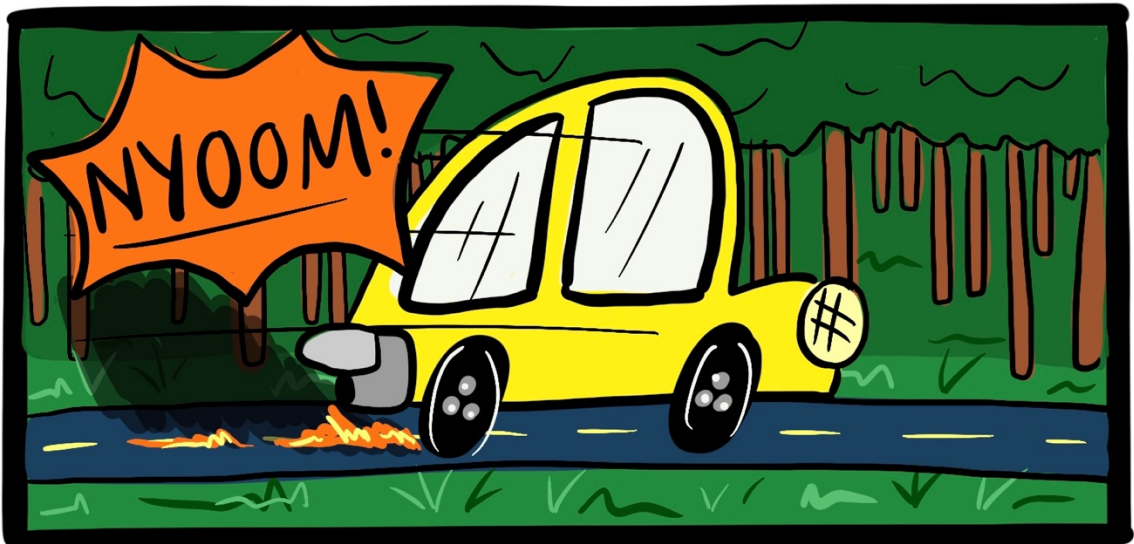
















TITLE PAGE: High School

PAGE 62

FULL PAGE SPLASH – Caroline joins her friends in the hallway at school. Cheerleaders and football players walk through the hallway laughing. Caroline jokes with her friends about the weekend.

PAGE 63

PANEL 1

A young version of Caroline is playing with another girl on an elementary school playground.

PANEL 2

The girl leaves her to go play with a group of prettier girls. Caroline is left looking sad and lonely.

CAPTION

I always struggled when it came to fitting in with the other kids...

PANEL 4

Middle-school aged Caroline is hanging out with a group of her friends at the lunch table.

GIRL

Let's ditch early and hang out outside before class.

CAROLINE (eating)

Wait for me, I'm almost done.

PAGE 64

PANEL 1

The girls all get up and leave, leaving Caroline by herself.

CAPTION

Being the black sheep of the friend group was sadly normal for me. I could never figure out why I wasn't important.

PANEL 2

Middle school Caroline hangs out with two girls in the hallway at school – one a very short girl, and the other very slim with curly hair.

CAPTION

But thankfully there were others like me, and pretty soon I became best friends with Allie and Rachel.

PANEL 3

Caroline is looking at her phone one day when she sees something on social media. Allie and Rachel are hanging out without including her.

CAPTION

But something was off.

PAGE 65

PANEL 1

After hanging out one day, Caroline and her parents drop Allie off at her parents' – a small trailer on cinder blocks with holes in the roof. A broken down car with wheels missing sits in the driveway, and stray dogs are everywhere.

CAPTION

I didn't realize what a great home life I had until I met Allie.

PANEL 2

Rachel sits in her parents' messy living room watching tv, bored. Clothes are piled everywhere along with dirty dishes. Roaches and mice scatter around the floor. The walls are cracked and molding.

RACHEL

Dad can I go to Caroli-

RACHEL'S DAD (from the other room)

NO WE'RE NOT TAKING YOU!

CAPTION

And Rachel's parents neglected her often.

PAGE 66

PANEL 1

High school Caroline hangs out with Allie and Rachel in the hallway.

CAPTION

Pretty soon they bonded over their circumstances...

PANEL 2

Caroline approaches her friends in class one day. They give her mean looks and walk away.

CAPTION

...and blamed me for their problems.

PANEL 3

Caroline is left watching them leave.

And once high school started, it became unbearable.

PAGE 67

PANEL 1

Caroline is walking by herself to class when a group of her former friends pass by giving her mean looks and muttering audibly...

GIRL #1

Freak.

GIRL #2

Weird ass.

PANEL 2

Caroline stands by herself in the hallway once everyone is gone.

CAPTION

I could never figure out what I'd done to make them hate me so much.

PAGE 68

PANEL 1

Caroline sits alone in her room. Sunlight streams through the windows.

CAPTION

It was the loneliest I'd ever been.

PANEL 2

Caroline sits alone in her room. This time it's dark outside.

CAPTION

I spent every day, night, and weekend in my room.

PANEL 3

Caroline sits alone on her parents' front porch swing. Leaves flutter in the breeze around her. Deddy's dog snoozes on the porch.

CAPTION

I never went to parties or to the movies with friends. I was never invited.

PAGE 69

PANEL 1

Momma comes to sit next to Caroline. She wraps a blanket around her shoulders and puts a comforting arm around her.

MOMMA

Wanna do something fun tonight?

PANEL 2

Caroline and her parents go to the movies. For once, Caroline has a smile on her face as they're waiting in line for popcorn.

CAPTION

When no one else wanted me around, it seemed like my family did.

PANEL 3

Caroline notices a group of girls her age waiting in line. She has a sad look on her face.

CAPTION

I would always see other kids my age hanging out with friends, and it reminded me of how badly I wanted to be accepted.

CAPTION

How lame was it to be the girl that had to go everywhere with her parents?

PAGE 70

PANEL 1

FULL PAGE SPLASH - Caroline sits between her parents as they wait for the movie to start. She leans her head on Momma's shoulder comfortingly. Deddy's cheeks are stuffed with popcorn.

MOMMA

We love you, darlin'.

CAROLINE

I love you too.

CAPTION

But I couldn't afford to be prideful. I was just grateful that someone at least cared about me, even if it was the two people that were expected to regardless.

PAGE 71

PANEL 1

One day, Caroline goes into the kitchen, opens their medicine cabinet, and looks inside at the stacks of pill bottles.

CAPTION

I never told them this, but I wanted to take my own life.

PANEL 2

Caroline pulls out a pill bottle and examines it.

CAPTION

Things were so bad at school. I felt as if I was just a burden on everyone around me.

PANEL 3

A thought cloud appears above Caroline: an image of her alone at a lunch table.

CAPTION

No one wanted anything to do with me, and I could never do anything right.

PAGE 72

PANEL 1

Caroline shakes the entire bottle of pills out into her palm.

CAPTION

Eventually I started asking myself “why am I even here?”

PANEL 2

Caroline stops. She looks out the window and sees her parents laughing on the porch.

CAPTION

But family was the only thing that stopped me.

PANEL 3

Caroline puts the pill bottle back.

PANEL 3

Caroline goes to join her parents on the porch instead.

CAPTION

They were the only people that made me feel loved and accepted at the worst point in my
life. I couldn't leave them with a dead child.

PAGE 73

FULL PAGE SPLASH – Caroline curls up with her parents on one of the porch swings.

The dog and cat come to sit with them as well.

CAPTION

They'll never know how much I really appreciate them, even if I don't always show it.

CAPTION

They saved my life.

PAGE 74

TITLE PAGE:

FULL PAGE SPLASH – An aerial view of a slice of cake on a dinner plate resting on a wooden table surrounded by a multitude of other desserts: banana pudding, carrot cake, cheesecake, etc.

CAPTION

Table Talk: Part 3

PAGE 75

PANEL 1

Caroline is working on a delicious looking piece of chocolate cake when Momma makes a comment next to her.

MOMMA

You've definitely had your share of moments. Remember the tiger tail a few years back?

PANEL 2

Caroline walks into Big Daddy's, the local diner back home, and makes her way to the bathroom.

MOMMA (CAPTION)

We was gettin' ready to go out on a family picnic on the back roads for the 4th of July.

We was all gonna meet at Big Daddy's for lunch beforehand, and you'd got there early and had to go to the bathroom.

PANEL 3

Caroline exits the bathroom drying her hands on her pants.

PANEL 4

As she's walking back to her table, a couple of middle aged men can be seen laughing at her in the background.

PAGE 76

PANEL 1

Caroline's parents pull up outside on Deddy's Polaris and come inside for lunch.

PANEL 2

After they eat, Deddy goes to pay while Momma stands up to go to the bathroom.

MOMMA

Caroline, you oughtta go use the bathroom before we leave. We'll prolly be gone for
hours.

CAROLINE

I went earlier. I really don't have to go now.

PANEL 3

Momma waves Caroline towards the restroom. Caroline gets up and follows her.

MOMMA

Alright, well at least bring a wad of toilet paper with you in case you have to go while
we're out.

CAROLINE

Momma, I promise I'm fine. I probably won't even need it.

PAGE 77

PANEL 1

Caroline turns to leave, and Momma's eyes go wide. She nearly doubles over laughing.

MOMMA

Caroline, come here!

PANEL 2

Momma turns Caroline around and reaches for the back of her pants. She pulls out a long line of toilet paper that's been sticking out.

PANEL 3

Momma and Caroline share a look.

PANEL 4

Momma and Caroline double over laughing.

PAGE 78

PANEL 1

Momma and Caroline stumble back into the dining area still laughing, and the two men from earlier are cracking up in their seats.

MAN #1

What'd y'all find that tiger tail she had hanging outta her breeches?

MAN #2

We wanted to tell you before you sat down earlier, but we didn't wanna embarrass you.

Then we heard y'all laughin' and couldn't stand it.

PANEL 2

Back at the table, everyone is cracking up over their desserts.

MOMMA

It was funny because I had just got through telling her she needed to bring some toilet paper with her, and she turned around and had some hanging from her breeches!

PANEL 3

Momma raises her fork as she continues to speak.

MOMMA

I don't think anybody can top Aunt Bonnie though.

JANET

Who?

CAROLINE

Deddy's sister. The one that ain't right in the head.

PAGE 79

PANEL 1

Momma continues to speak.

MOMMA

We was visitin' Bonnie's daughter Raven in Florida last summer, and she was tellin' us about one time when Bonnie and Rich (her husband) were stopping to see Kendra in Atlanta before coming down to Florida to see Raven and the grandkids.

PANEL 2

Raven, with pale skin, dark hair, and a slender frame, is in the kitchen on the phone.

RAVEN

Hey Momma, I was just callin' to see where y'all are at so I'll know when to start dinner.

PANEL 3

Rich and Bonnie are in the car driving through Georgia. Rich is driving while Bonnie is on the phone with Raven in the passenger seat. Bonnie's eyes are crossed in a ditzzy manner, and birds are flying in circles over her head.

BONNIE

Ohhh we're just on the road!

PAGE 80

PANEL 1

Raven wears a concerned look as she speaks into the phone.

RAVEN

Well I know that, but I need to know where you are.

PANEL 2

Rich mumbles something inaudibly. Bonnie chirps into the phone in a too-happy tone.

BONNIE

Your father's ready for his bacon!

PANEL 3

Raven wears an even more concerned expression.

RAVEN

What?

PANEL 4

Rich turns around wearing an irritated expression.

RICH

BONNIE! I SAID WE'RE ALMOST TO MACON!

PAGE 81

PANEL 1

Back at the table, everyone is laughing when Janet interrupts.

JANET

But that ain't nothin' like when PawPaw let 'em rip in the Walmart.

PANEL 2

PawPaw is walking through Walmart with his cane wearing a plaid shirt, jeans, boots, and a hat as usual.

PANEL 3

PawPaw's stomach starts rumbling, and he clutches it trying to calm it down.

JANET (CAPTION)

PawPaw was wandering through Walmart one day and felt like he had to poot.

PAGE 82

PANEL 1

PawPaw looks around and sees no one looking, so he starts walking around the store letting out silent gas clouds as he does.

JANET (CAPTION)

So he just decided he'd let em out slowly and quietly as he was walkin' around.

PANEL 2

PawPaw walks into the checkout line and notices a lady giving him a strange look.

JANET (CAPTION)

Until he got to the line and saw people givin' him funny looks. He couldn't figure out what he'd done.

PANEL 3

PawPaw gets home and pulls out his hearing aids. His eyes grow wide.

JANET (CAPTION)

Until he got home and realized his hearing aid batteries had died.

PAGE 83

PANEL 1

Jolene raises her fork.

JOLENE

It was a terrible odor, ‘member that?

MOMMA

Oh yes!

PANEL 2

Momma, Janet, Jolene, and Nanny are out doing some shopping at a local trade day.

Momma, Janet, and Jolene are waiting outside of the bathroom, and there is a long line going in.

MOMMA

We was out shopping at Tannehill’s Trade Day when we decided we was gone go to the bathroom. It smelled god awful inside, and there was a long line, so we went as quick as we could and was waitin’ on Nanny outside.

PAGE 84

PANEL 1

Nanny exits the bathroom and looks at the line of ladies waiting on their turn.

NANNY

‘Scuse me! I just want y’all to know there is a TERRIBLE ODOR in there, but it wasn’t
me!

PANEL 2

Everyone cracks up at the table.

MOMMA

You could not have possibly drawn more attention to yourself than you did then!

JOLENE

We all just died laughing.

PANEL 3

Janet picks her head up from her plate, chocolate cake crumbs coating the corners of her
mouth.

JANET

Y’all ‘member when Joe and his momma Lou Ellen came to stay with us, and she went to
sleep in Nanny’s bed?

PAGE 85

PANEL 1

Lou Ellen curls up in the bed, clubbed feet hanging out from underneath the covers, hands twisted up on her chest, lips scrunched, and eyes open – all while dead asleep.

JANET (CAPTION)

Nanny let her sleep in her and PawPaw's bed, and ain't none of us wanted to sleep with her 'cause she was club-footed and slept with her eyes open.

PANEL 2

PawPaw is out at the bar drinking with friends after a night shift at work.

PANEL 3

PawPaw pulls into the driveway later that same night. The lights are all off, and everyone is asleep.

PAGE 86

PANEL 1

FULL PAGE SPLASH – PawPaw walks into their bedroom, pulls back the blankets, and swats Lou Ellen on her rear end. Lou Ellen wakes up with a startled squeal.

PAWPAW

Scoot over biggun!

LOU ELLEN

WEEEEEEEE!

JANET (CAPTION)

But Nanny didn't tell PawPaw that she gave the bed to Lou Ellen, so he swatted her on the ass thinkin' she was Nanny!

TITLE PAGE: New Beginnings

SUBTITLE: Roommates

PAGE 87

PANEL 1

Caroline checks the mail and finds an acceptance letter from JSU. The envelope is red and carries the gamecock logo.

CAPTION

I had already applied for college, as I was desperate to leave town and start over, and I'd decided on Jacksonville State University. They'd given me the best scholarship, and it was an hour away from home.

PANEL 2

The panel looks over Caroline's shoulder as she is looking into a computer screen. A photo of a girl with dark hair and pale skin looks back.

CAPTION

After applying for housing, I'd taken a survey to see if their online system would pair me with a compatible roommate.

CAPTION

That's how I met Lucy, and we got along really well. We decided we wanted to room together, but we forgot to preference each other before roommates were assigned...

PAGE 88

PANEL 1

Caroline is sitting on the couch at home looking at her laptop while her parents watch TV.

The computer releases a “PING!” with a new update.

CAROLINE

It's from JSU! Roommate assignments were just posted.

PANEL 2

Momma and Deddy join Caroline on the couch to look at the screen.

MOMMA

Who'd you get? Let's see.

PANEL 3

The panel looks into the computer screen. A photo of a smiling black girl looks back at them.

CAROLINE

It says her name is Jasmine.

PAGE 89

PANEL 1

Caroline's parents share a concerned look.

DEDDY

Oh, no. We need to find you a new roommate.

PANEL 2

Caroline rolls her eyes as if she knew this was coming.

CAROLINE

It's really not that big of a deal. She could be a nice person.

MOMMA

It doesn't matter. They just live differently than we do...

PANEL 3

Caroline's parents continue chatting, but she tunes them out.

CAPTION

I knew this was coming as soon as they saw that I had been assigned a black roommate. I thought surely they'd get over it soon...

PAGE 90

PANEL 1

Caroline and her parents are talking in the kitchen. She's just come home from school.

CAPTION

But as the days passed, I soon realized how wrong I was.

DEDDY

Did you get your roommate changed yet?

PANEL 2

Caroline sits down at the table with a drink.

CAROLINE

No.

MOMMA

Well you need to get on that now.

PANEL 3

Caroline rolls her eyes again.

CAROLINE

You know they're not gonna let me change roommates just because my parents don't want me living with a black girl, right?

MOMMA

Well you said you were thinking about living with Lucy, right? Try contacting her again, and I'll see if they'll let you two room together.

PAGE 91

PANEL 1

Caroline's grandparents come to the house for a visit. They're all eating dinner in the living room together.

CAPTION

Soon the news of my "situation" had spread to the rest of the family...

PAWPAW

So when you gonna get a new roommate? We can't have you living with a black girl.

PANEL 2

Caroline awkwardly pushes her food around her plate.

CAROLINE

I'm not sure yet.

MOMMA

I'm getting it handled. You just talk to Lucy until then.

PANEL 3

Caroline looks to Momma as she speaks, somewhat exasperated.

CAROLINE

I just don't see what the big deal is. I can't even give this girl a chance?

MOMMA

It's good that you're trying to be nice, but that's a very naïve outlook.

PAGE 92

PANEL 1

Caroline sips her drink uncomfortably while Deddy speaks.

DEDDY

If you're living with a black girl, that means she'll bring black boys into your room.

DEDDY

And black boys looove knocking up a white girl. We ain't having it.

PANEL 2

Caroline gets up to take her plate to the kitchen, desperate to get out.

CAPTION

I felt bad for the girl, and I wanted to give her a chance. But it was clear that this was a
fight I wasn't about to win.

PANEL 3

Caroline sits on her computer that night messaging Lucy.

COMPUTER: CAROLINE

Still wanna room together?

COMPUTER: LUCY

Sure!

CAPTION

So I did what I had to do to shut them up, even if it wasn't the right thing.

SUBTITLE: College

PAGE 93

PANEL 1

Caroline and her parents pull up to a tiny building with a massive moving truck that's bigger than the building itself. Furniture, curtains, and rugs are spilling out the back.

CAPTION

August 2014

CAPTION

I had never been more excited for anything than when I moved off to college. I was finally getting to leave high school!

PANEL 2

Caroline walks upstairs to find her room and instead finds the hallway full of black people.

CAPTION

But after coming from a K-12 school that was 98% white...

PANEL 3

Caroline gets to her room and makes sure to lock the door behind her.

CAPTION

...there were some things I wasn't prepared for.

PAGE 94

PANEL 1

Caroline steps out of the hallway bathroom wrapped in a towel. Super loud music is playing from the rooms, and everyone is being obnoxious.

CAROLINE

I wish I could say that I willingly accepted this new environment and embraced all of our differences...

PANEL 2

Caroline and her roommate are trying to sleep when some of the girls come banging on their door in the middle of the night.

GIRLS

GET THE HELL UP!!

PANEL 3

Caroline is walking outside when a large fight breaks out in the parking lot. Some girls are on the front steps smoking cigarettes and laughing at the scene.

CAPTION

But when I moved there, it was as if everything I was taught growing up had been confirmed. They really were so much different from me. So loud. So inconsiderate. So violent...

PAGE 95

PANEL 1

Caroline and her roommate are watching TV. Police cars can be seen. A town is on fire.

CAPTION

That was the same year that Black Lives Matter began. The Ferguson riots were all over
TV.

PANEL 2

Caroline and her friends can be seen arguing in her room.

CAROLINE

Mike Brown was a THUG, and Trayvon Martin shouldn't have run from the cops! They

BOTH had it coming!

FRIEND

Actually Zimmerman wasn't a co-

CAROLINE

DID I STUTTER?

CAPTION

Suddenly my views became very narrow... And very judgmental...

PANEL 3

Caroline and her friends are walking to class when a group of black sorority girls walk
by.

CAROLINE (to her friends)

I don't get it. If our sororities were exclusively white, there would be an uproar. Why can
they get away with it?

CAROLINE

It's like you don't want to be segregated, but you segregate yourselves.

CAPTION

I didn't understand or respect different cultures. And pretty soon, I was the racist of the friend group.

SUBTITLE: Nina

PAGE 96

PANEL 1

Caroline approaches some of her friends. They ignore her.

CAPTION

A lot of the hate that I gave was reflected back towards me, and I lost some friends along
the way because of it.

PANEL 2

Caroline's roommate comes home with a new friend – a large black girl wearing
camouflage.

ROOMMATE

Caroline, this is Nina.

CAPTION

But it's the people who are kind to you that have the greatest impact.

PANEL 3

A picture of Caroline, Sarah (the roommate), and Nina riding around in Nina's F1-50.
Nina is singing to Luke Bryan at the top of her lungs, still wearing camouflage.

CAPTION

Nina was unlike any black girl I'd ever seen. She directly defied every stereotype that I'd
been taught to be true – even down to the pickup truck that she drove.

PAGE 97

PANEL 1

Caroline, Sarah, and Nina are having a sleepover in their dorm. Everyone is wearing pajamas and eating snacks.

CAPTION

We all got along great.

PANEL 2

Caroline and Nina are chatting in her room one day.

NINA

You know I don't understand your views, but I get where you're coming from.

NINA

My whole family doesn't like white people either, and they're constantly pushing their views on me. They don't want me dating white boys, but I have to do what makes me happy.

CAPTION

It was the first time I'd met someone who really understood me. Even though I made racist comments constantly, she was patient with me.

PAGE 98

PANEL 1

Caroline and Nina are walking to class together one day. The leaves are falling around them, and they are both in sweaters.

CAROLINE

You know, you're one of few people who's been very nice to me even after hearing the things I've had to say.

PANEL 2

Nina and Caroline stop at the bus stop.

NINA

That's because – even though I know some of the things you say aren't okay – you're not actively trying to hurt anyone.

PANEL 3

Caroline and Nina part ways to go into separate buildings.

NINA

Plus, I think everyone is capable of change. Sometimes all they need is a little kindness.