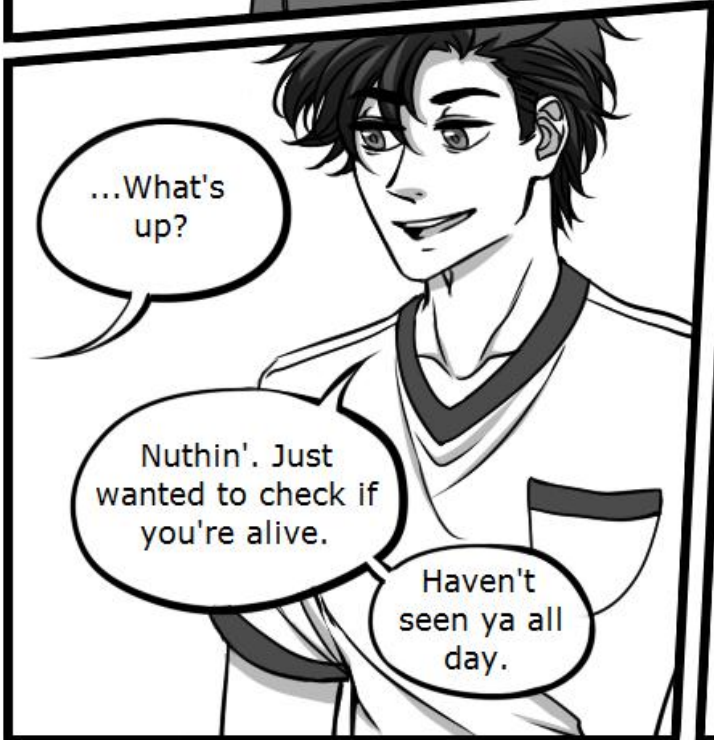


Knock
Knock
Knock

Door's
open.





Last night
was crazy!

So worth it,
though.



I ran into
Steph in the
hall on the
way here.

She said I
was so messed
up you had to *carry*
me back home
last night?

Did you
seriously?!

Yeah, last
night was...

...really crazy.

Why is he
acting like nothing
happened...?



Yeah....

.....You don't
remember?



Nope, I blacked out.

Like, I had no idea how I even got back here until I talked to Steph.

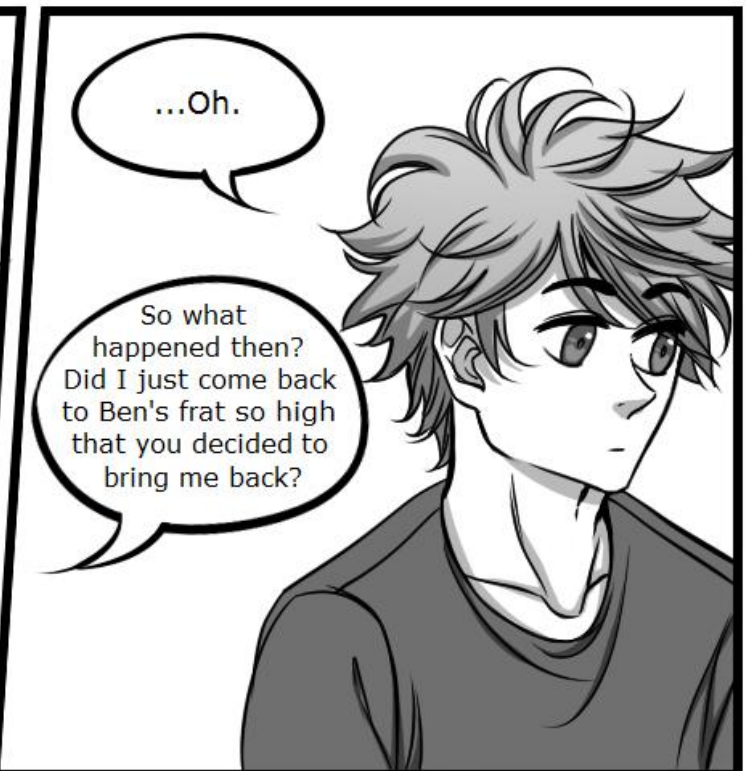
The last thing I remember is going to Liam's and then, nothing.



What? No. You never even made it back to the frat!

I didn't?!

No! You-- Oh my god. Steph didn't tell you?



...Oh.

So what happened then? Did I just come back to Ben's frat so high that you decided to bring me back?



Haha Hahaha Haha

What the hell?!

And we figured out you'd been there tripping out for like, at least an hour.

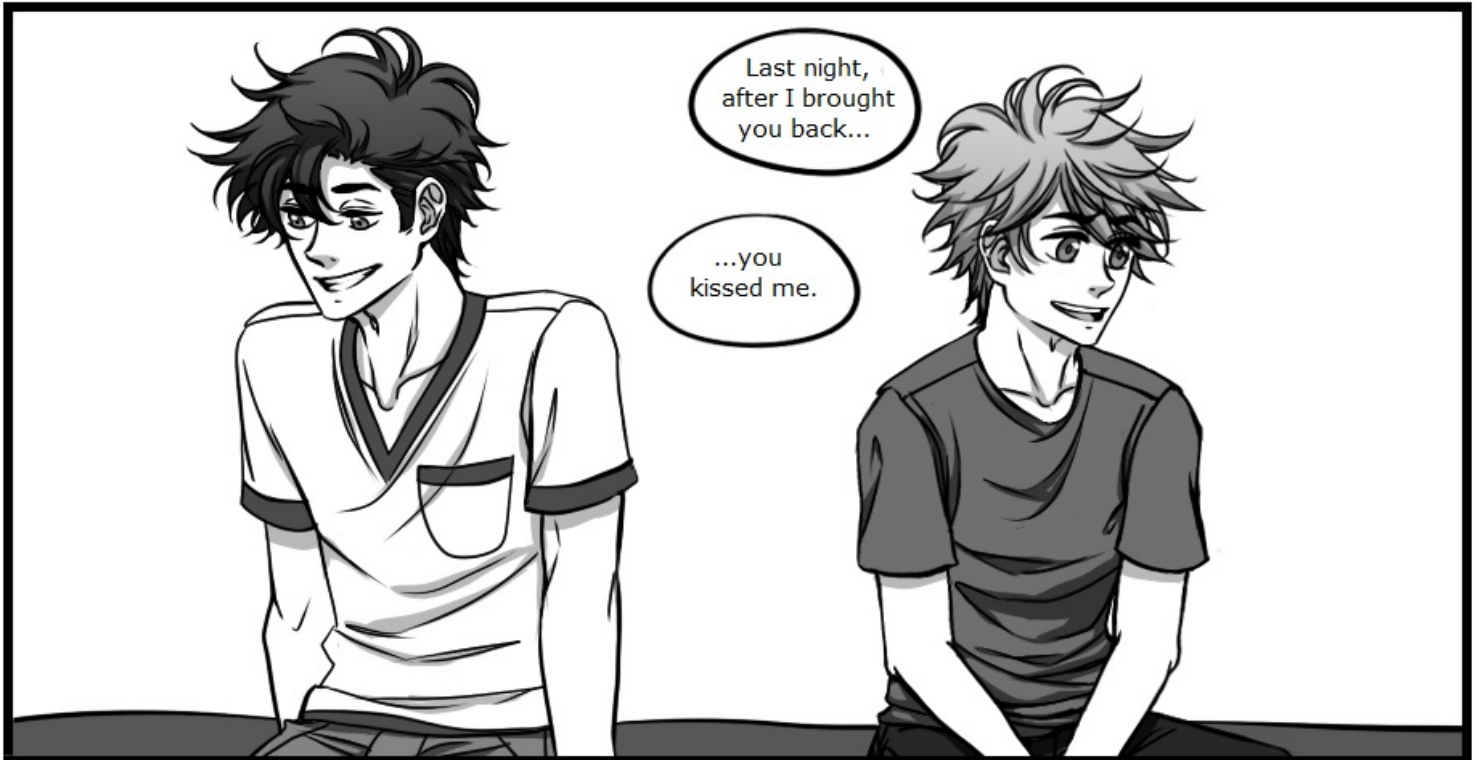
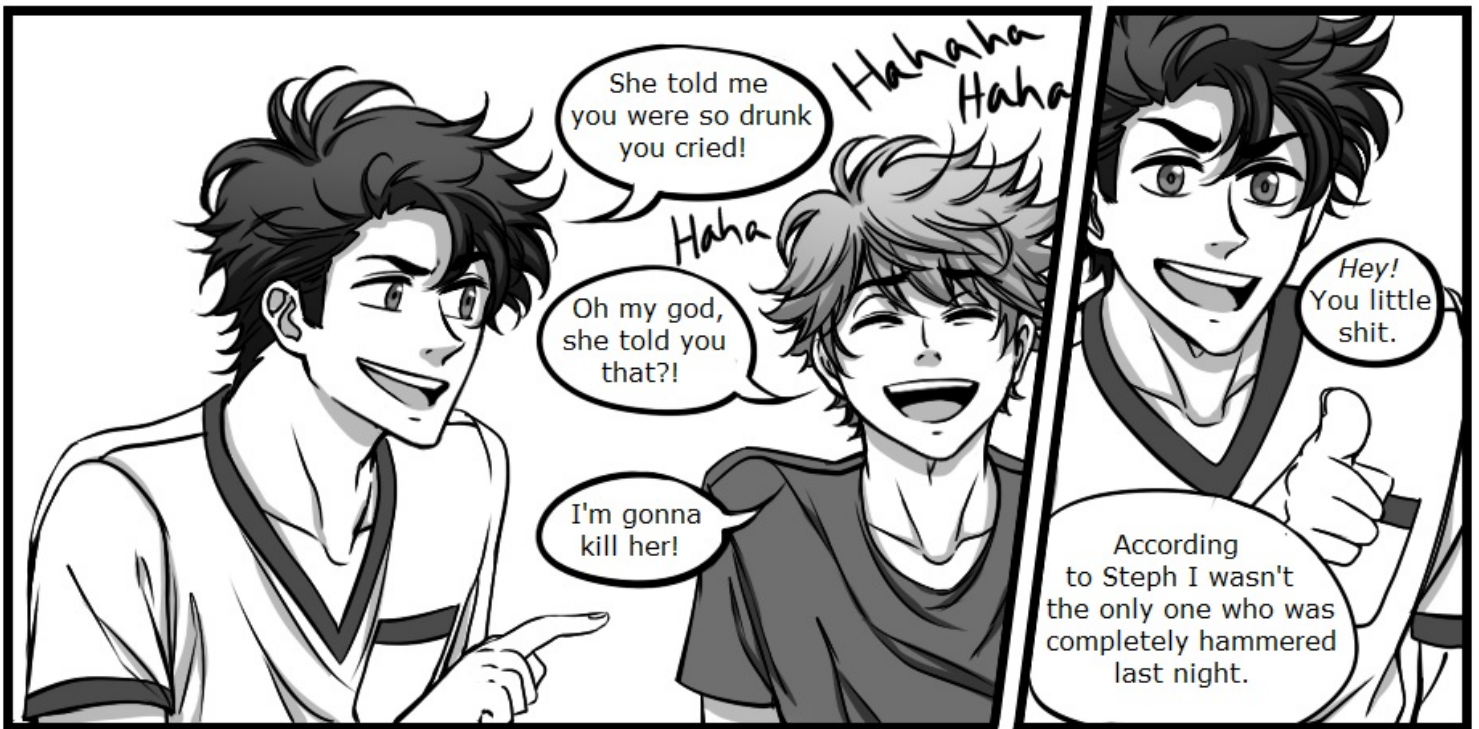
With this dumb ass expression on your face.

We found you on the side of the street, stoned out of your goddamn mind.

Are you serious?!

And when I asked you how high you were you just said "Yes". You were so fucked up, it was amazing.

So embarrassing.





YOU WERE REALLY
FUCKED UP AND SHIT
HAPPENS I'M NOT MAD
OR ANYTHING

B-B-B-BUT I
MEAN IT'S COOL
MAN IT WAS AN
ACCIDENT

I shouldn't have said
anything I should not have
FUCKING said anything.





No, stop,
Howie--

Come on,
look at me.

Wait.. You're
telling me I--

I *kissed* you?!



It's really not a
big deal. I didn't mean
to embarrass you.

I wouldn't have said
anything if I knew it would
make you upset.

It just somehow felt
like it would have been
weirder if I kept a secret,
you know?

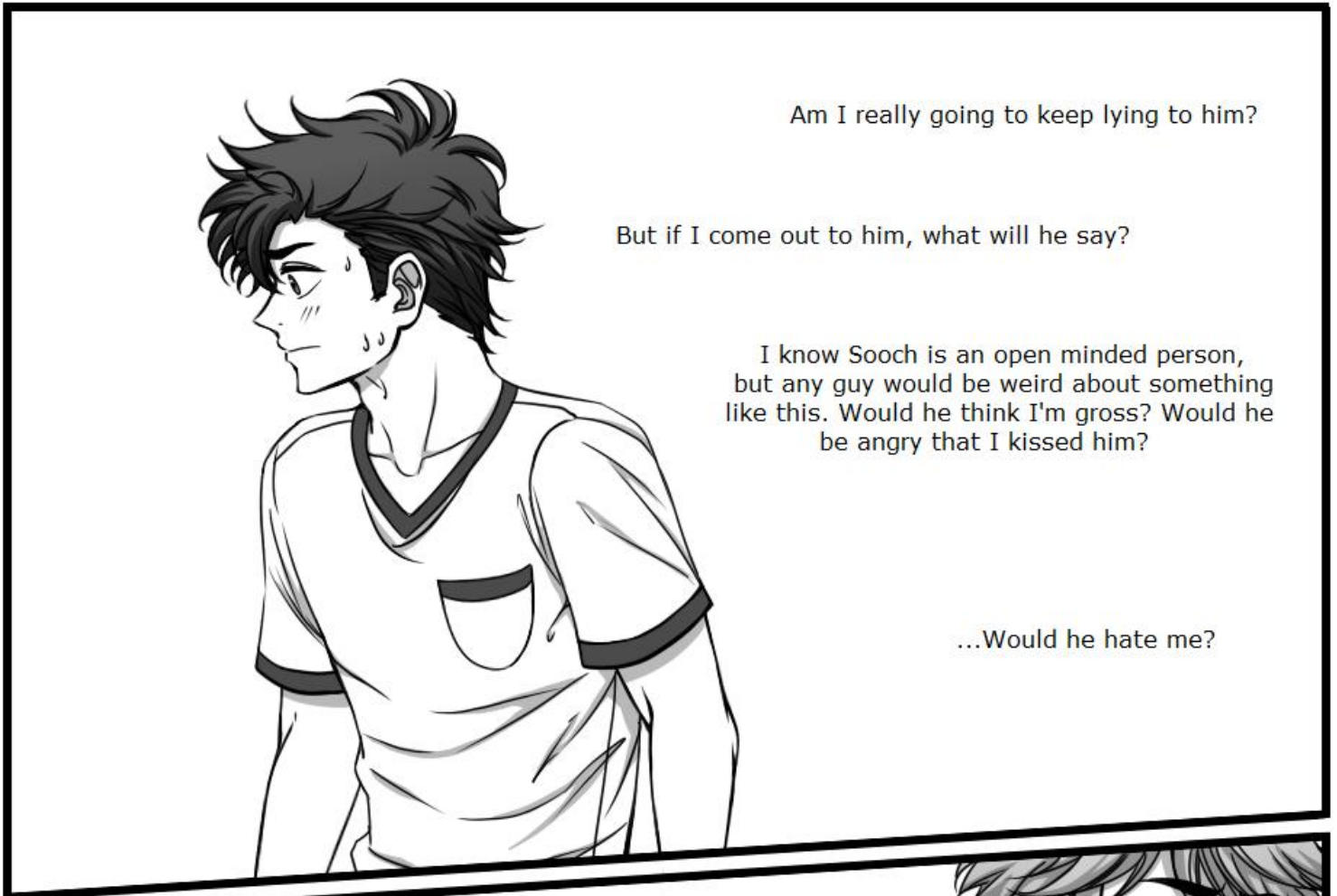
You were just
really, really drunk.



Y-yeah...

Drunk.....

.....No. What am I saying?



Am I really going to keep lying to him?

But if I come out to him, what will he say?

I know Sooch is an open minded person, but any guy would be weird about something like this. Would he think I'm gross? Would he be angry that I kissed him?

...Would he hate me?



I just... I'm not ready to tell him.

But he's going to find out eventually.

And after last night, I can't keep pretending like everything is normal anymore. I can't just lie to him again, and then all of a sudden tell him the truth later on down the road.

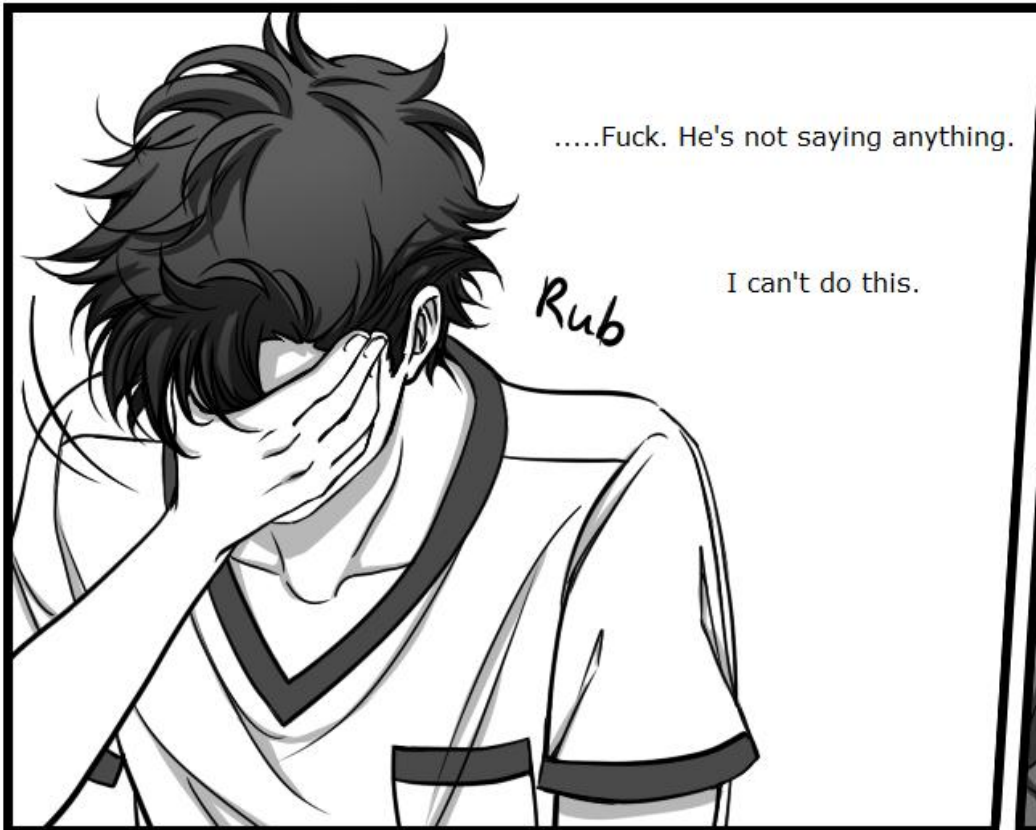
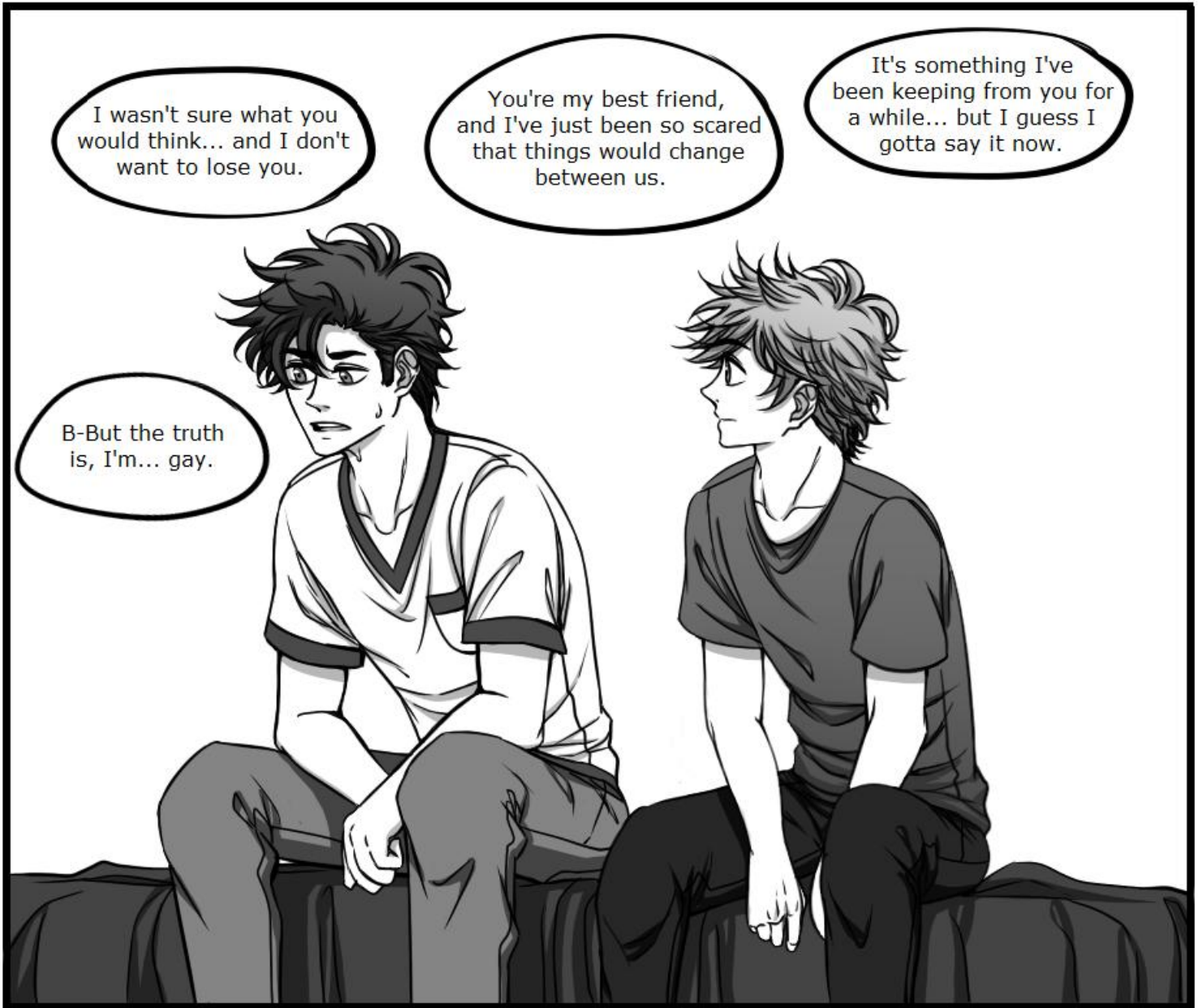


A-Actually, Sooch...

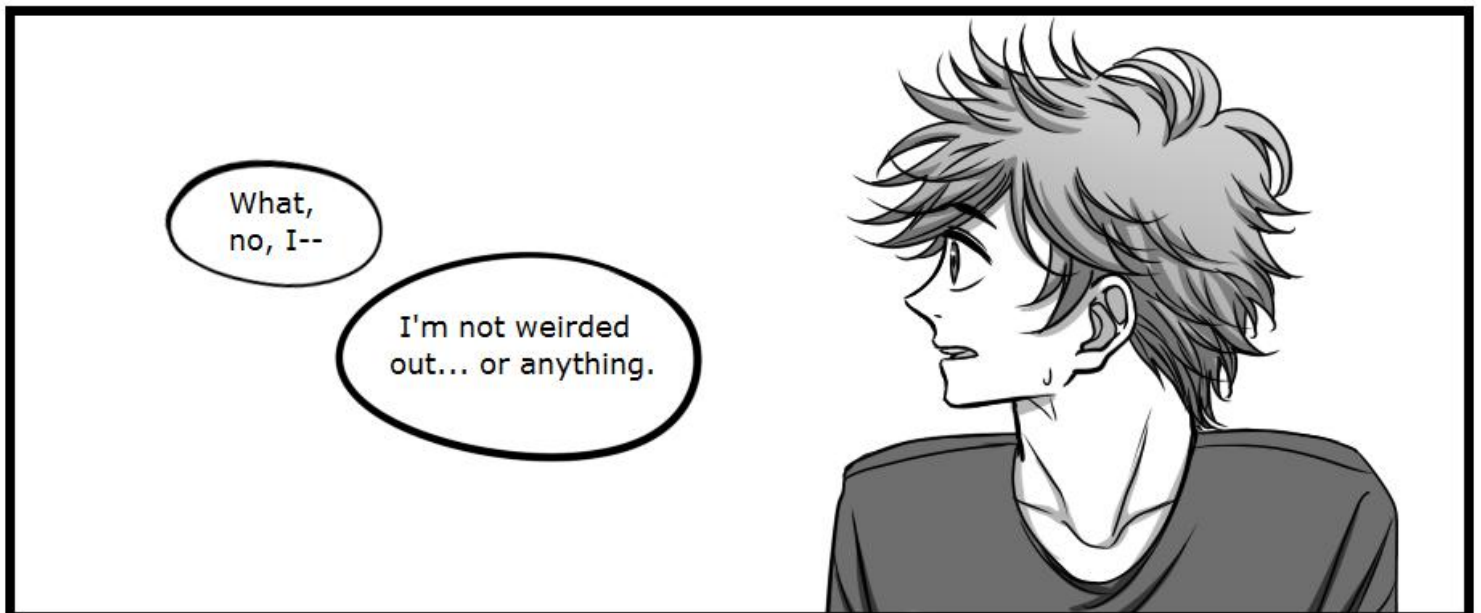
There's something I need to tell you...



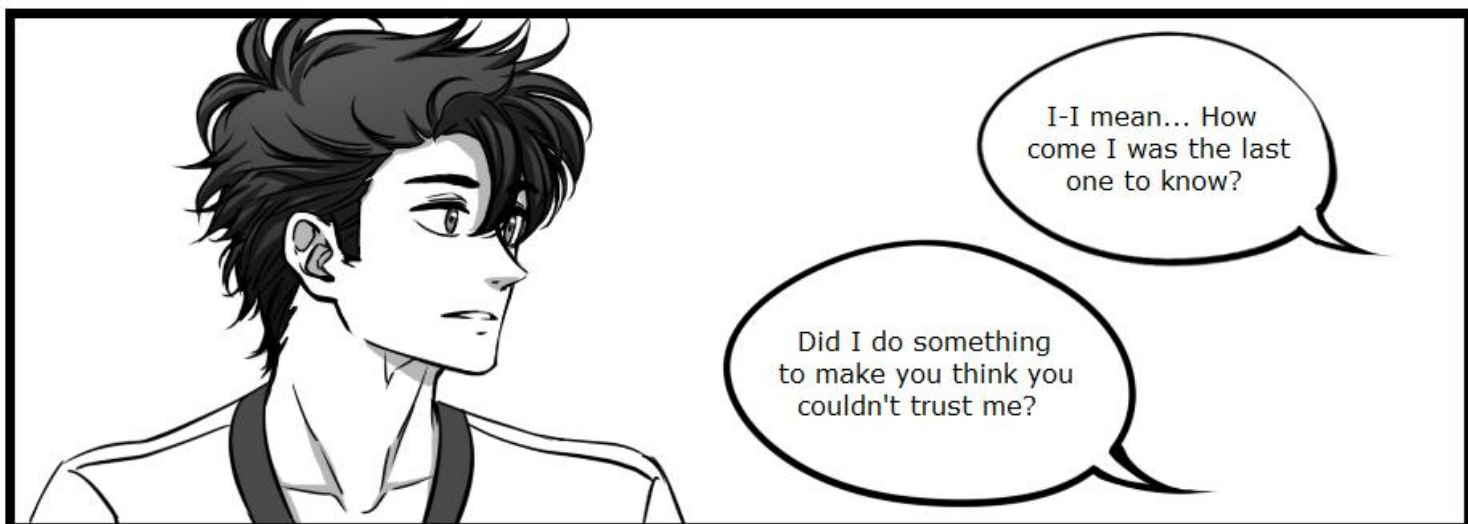
If I'm ever gonna tell him the truth.... it's gotta be now.

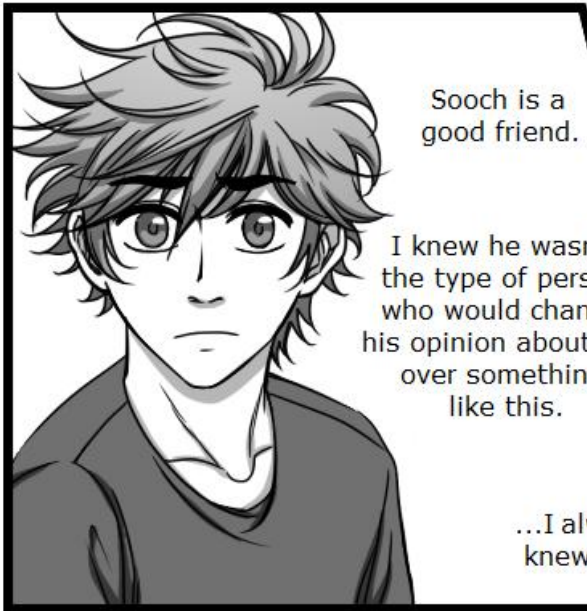








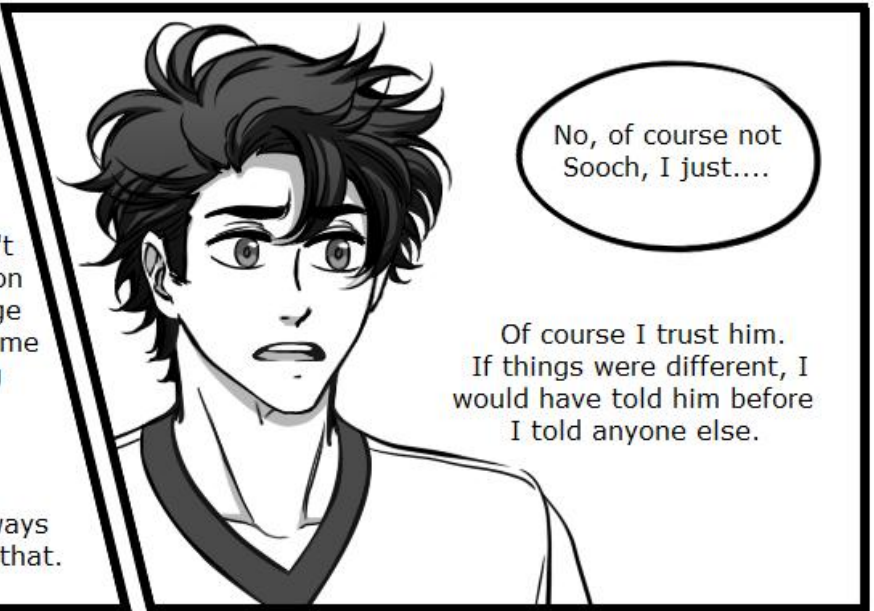




Sooch is a good friend.

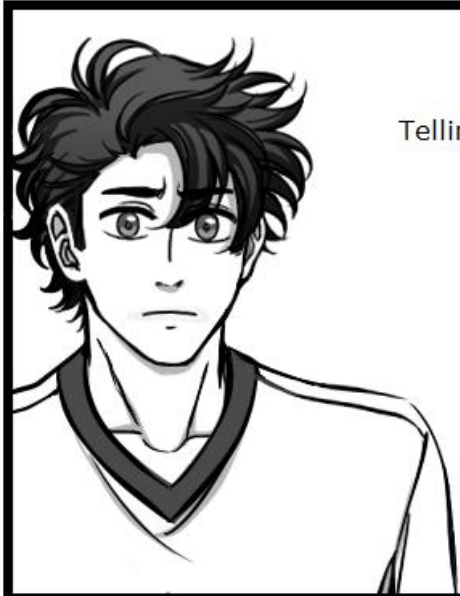
I knew he wasn't the type of person who would change his opinion about me over something like this.

...I always knew that.



No, of course not Sooch, I just....

Of course I trust him. If things were different, I would have told him before I told anyone else.

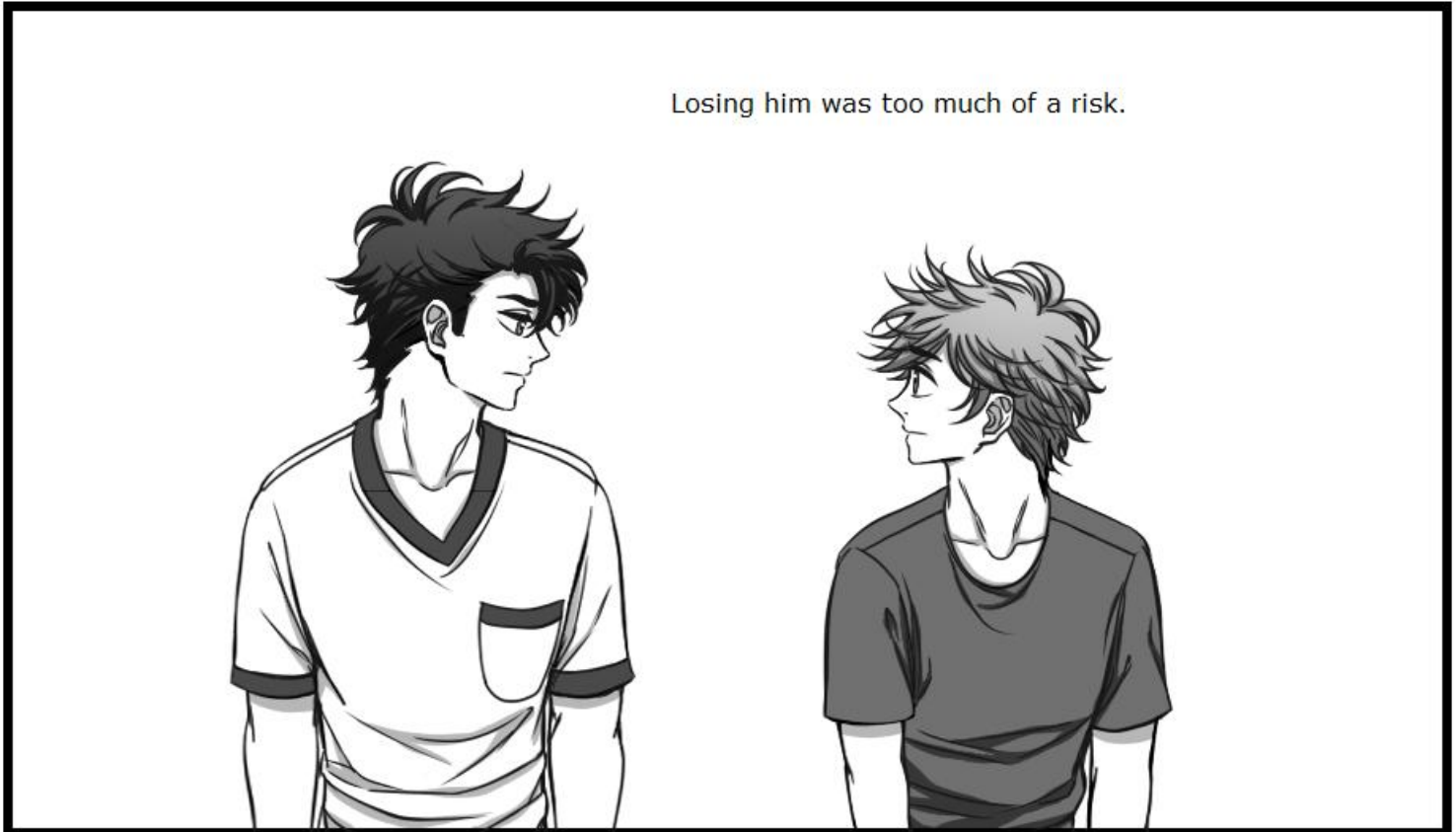


....But still, I couldn't tell him.

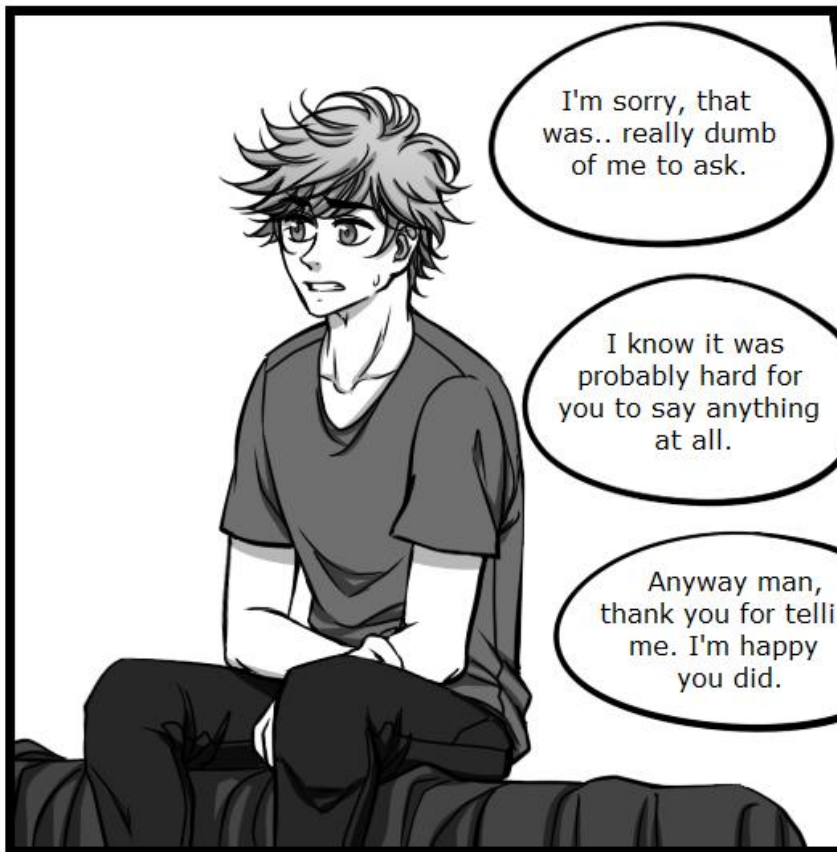
Telling him I was gay was... too risky. For a lot of reasons.

Even though I was pretty sure he wouldn't leave me over this, the possibility that he *might* still existed. And I wasn't about to take that chance.

If I lost Molly, Steph, or even Ben because of it, that would be one thing. But if I ever lost Sooch.... that would be something else entirely.



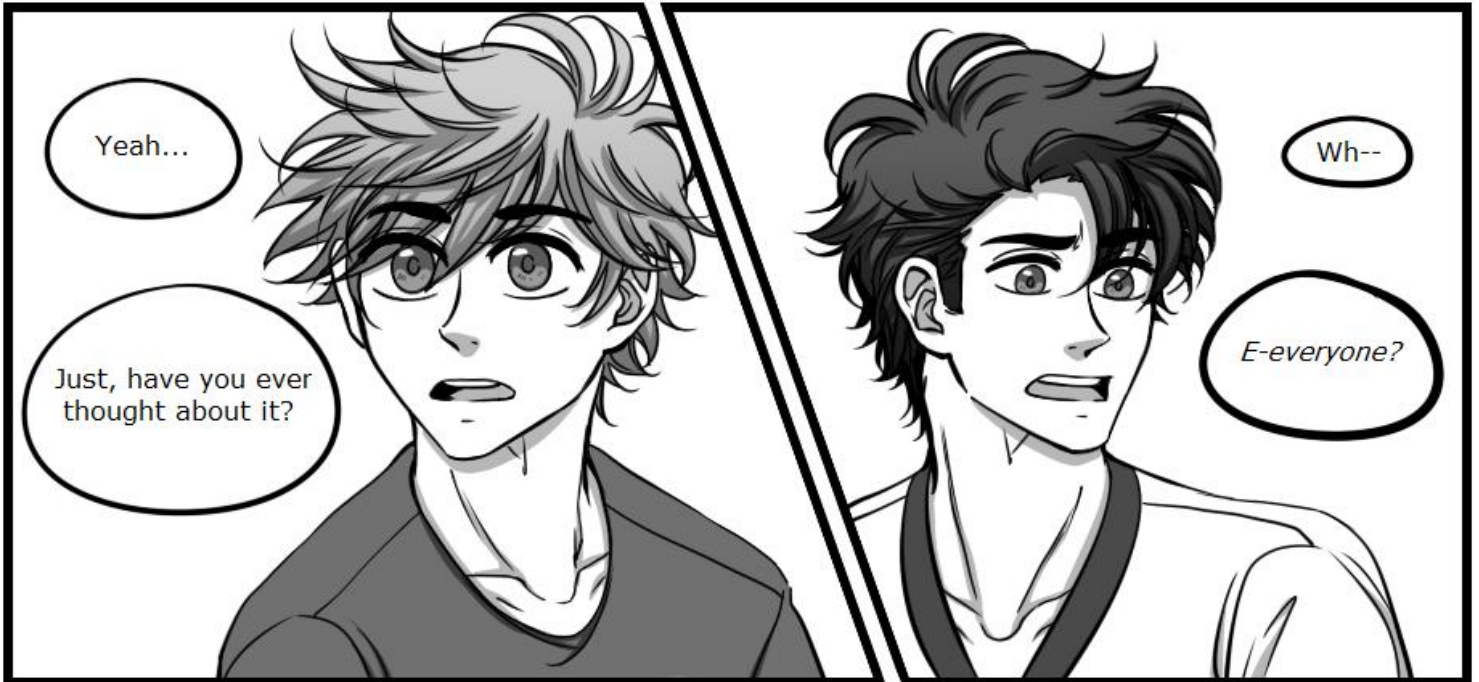
Losing him was too much of a risk.





..Have you ever considered coming out?

Like, to everyone?



Yeah...

Just, have you ever thought about it?

Wh--

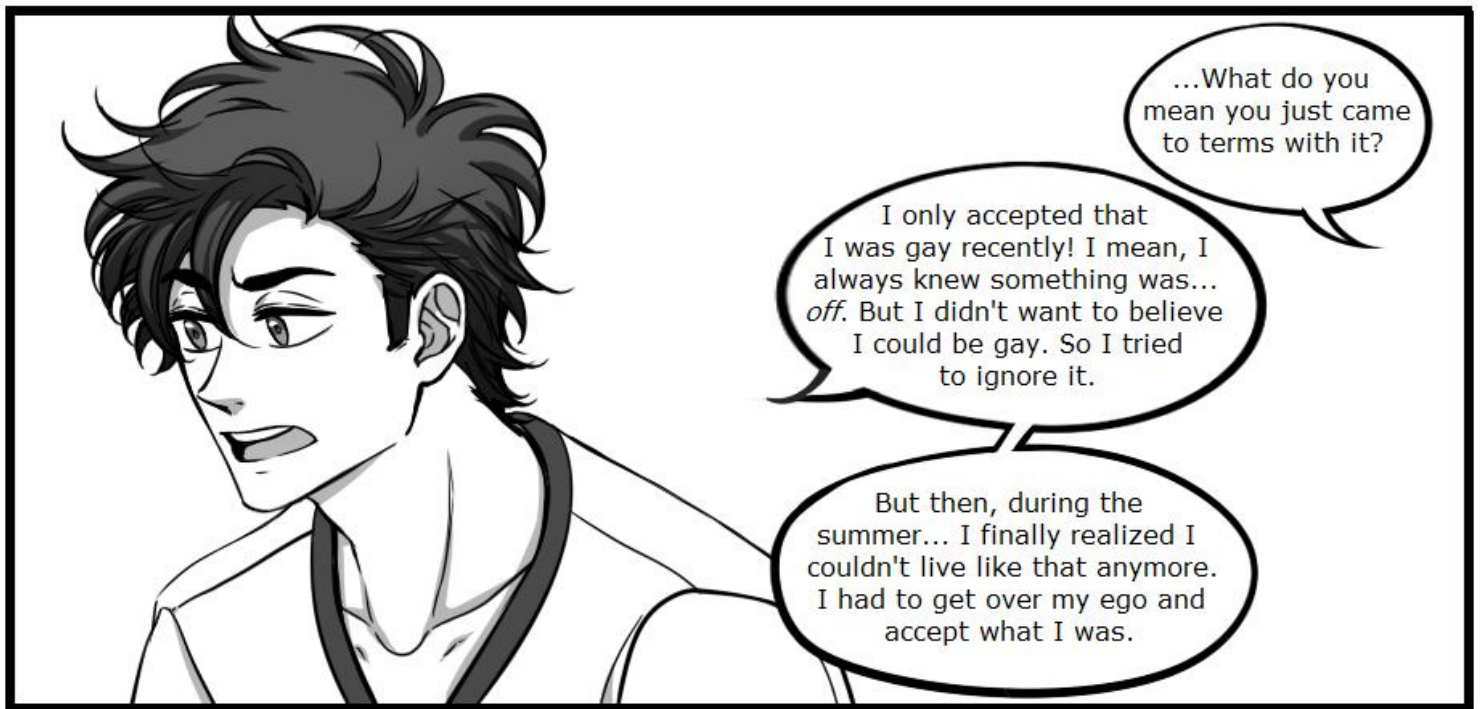
E-everyone?



I mean, I just barely came to terms with it myself.... Why are you asking?

Oh.. god, Sooch, I don't know. Not really, I guess.

Are you... trying to say that I should?



...What do you mean you just came to terms with it?

I only accepted that I was gay recently! I mean, I always knew something was... *off*. But I didn't want to believe I could be gay. So I tried to ignore it.

But then, during the summer... I finally realized I couldn't live like that anymore. I had to get over my ego and accept what I was.



I thought you meant you always knew, and that you'd been hiding it.

I'm sorry... I misunderstood you.

I mean, we used to talk about girls together.... And I know you hooked up with a lot of girls in the past.

I thought that you'd been... consciously trying to be someone you weren't. And I didn't like the thought of that.

...Oh.



B-but anyway, I'm not *saying* you should do anything. But if you ask me what I *think*...

I think that you shouldn't be afraid to be yourself. Not saying you need to make a public announcement, or anything. I just don't want you to think you need to hide...

And I want you to know that whatever you decide to do, I'll support you. And I...

And, well,.....
Ah, *shit*.....





..Ben and I were going to get lunch soon.

Wanna come?



....I think I'm gonna go, but, uh..



Yeah, definitely. I never made it to breakfast.

Neither did we. We'll come get you when we're going.

Okay.

105

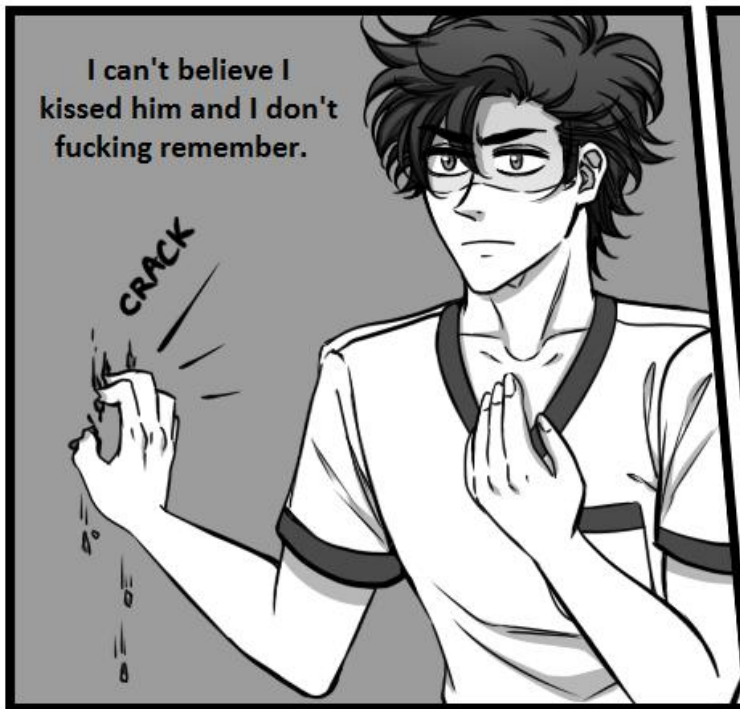
CLICK



.....My heart.

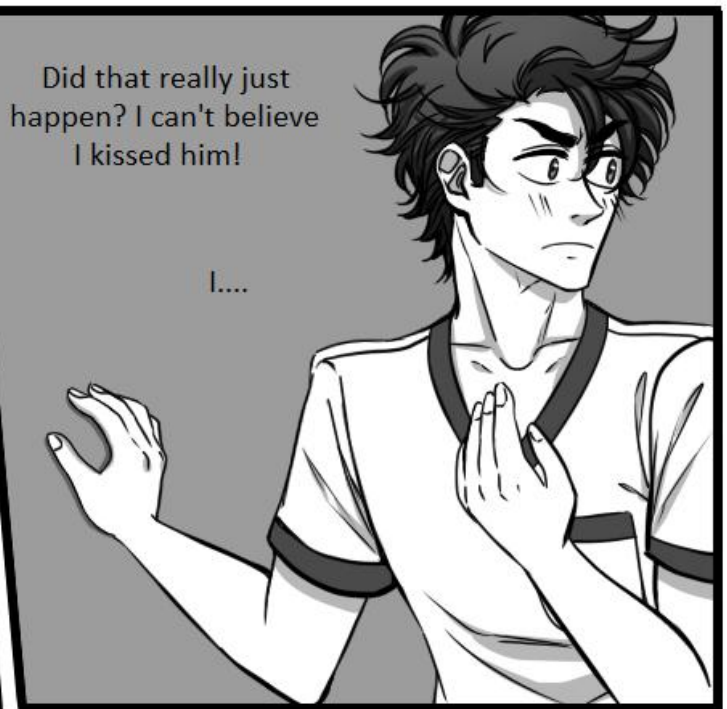
10





I can't believe I
kissed him and I don't
fucking remember.

CRACK



Did that really just
happen? I can't believe
I kissed him!

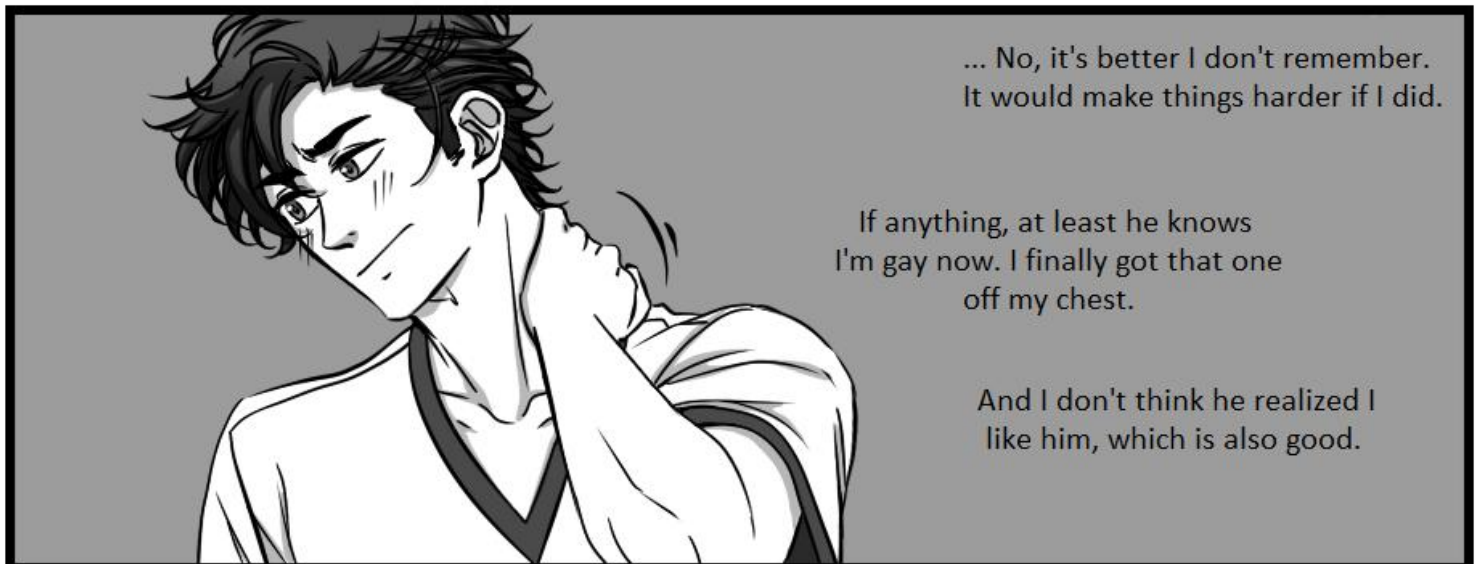
I....



You gotta be joking

Something like
that will never
happen again...

...



... No, it's better I don't remember.
It would make things harder if I did.

If anything, at least he knows
I'm gay now. I finally got that one
off my chest.

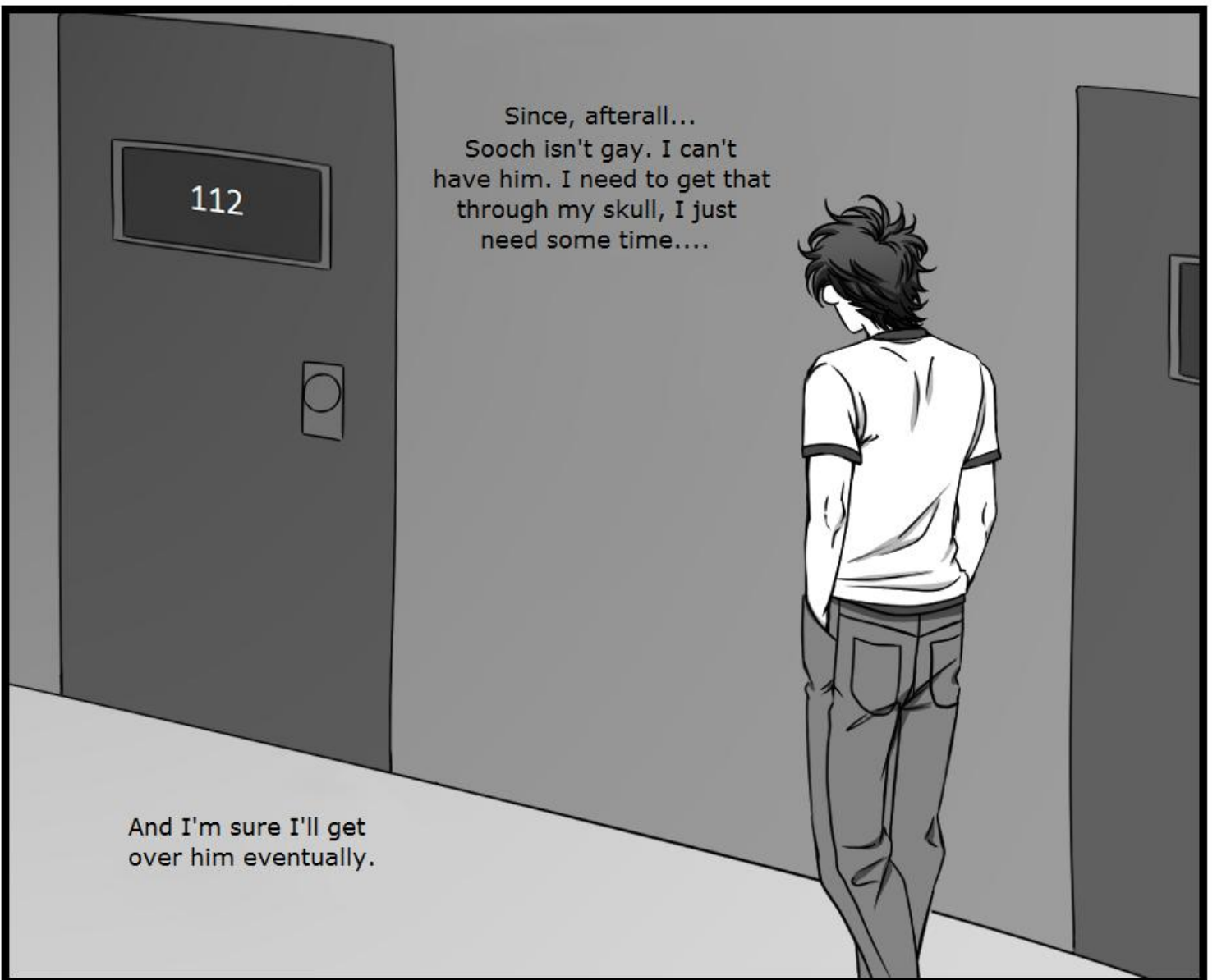
And I don't think he realized I
like him, which is also good.



This is the best outcome I could have asked for, actually. I mean...

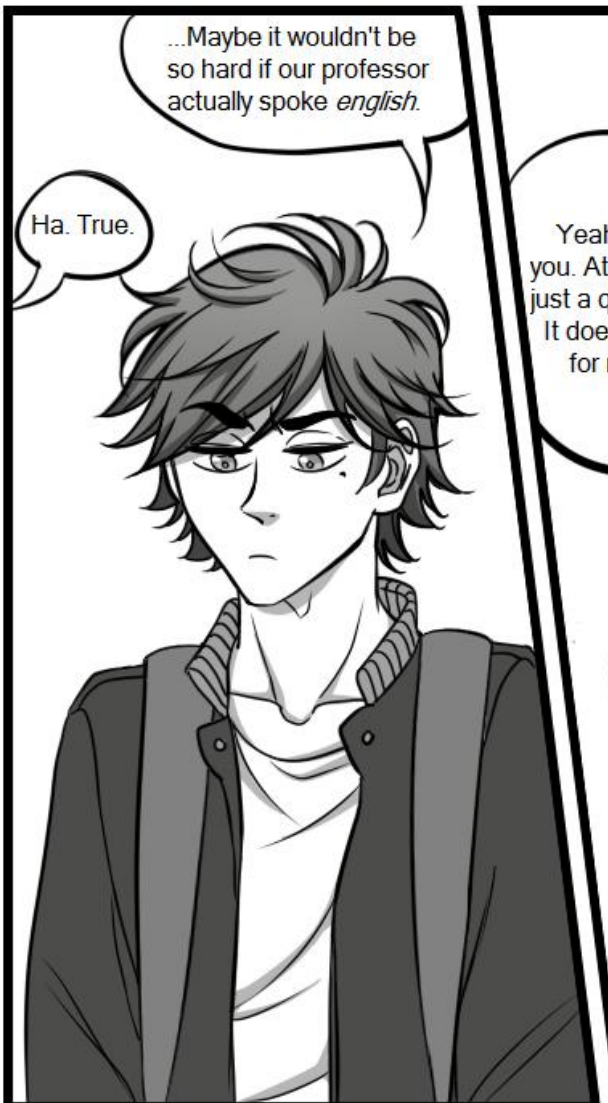
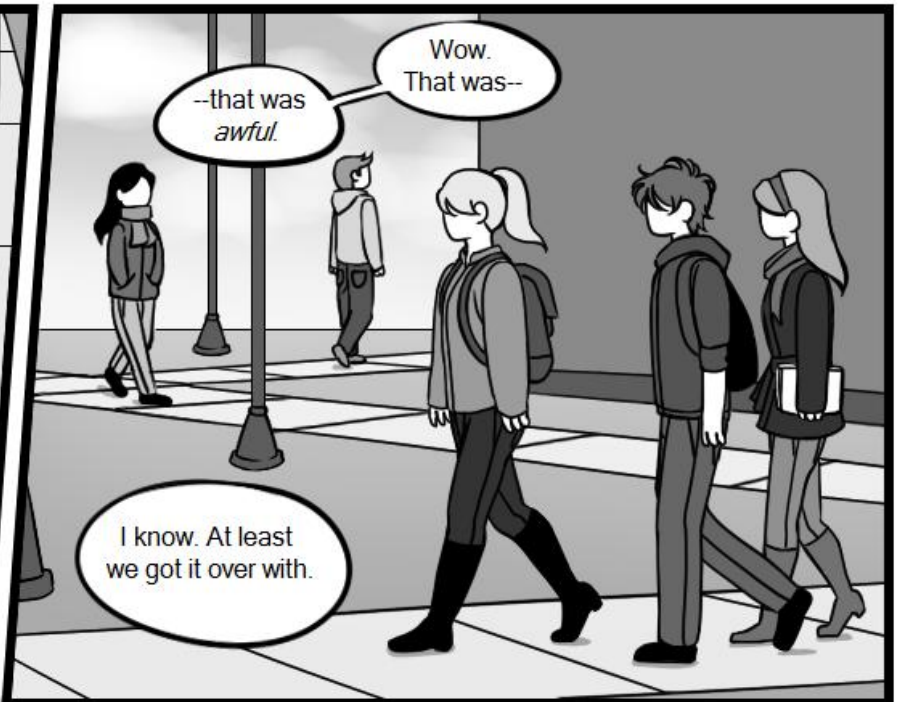
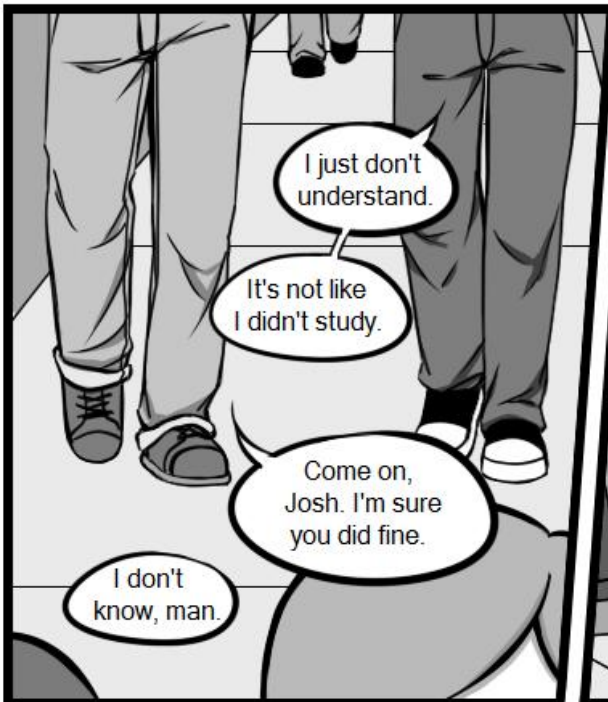
What happened was crazy, but I'm glad he knows I'm gay now. I'm glad I don't have to hide that side of myself from him anymore. But...

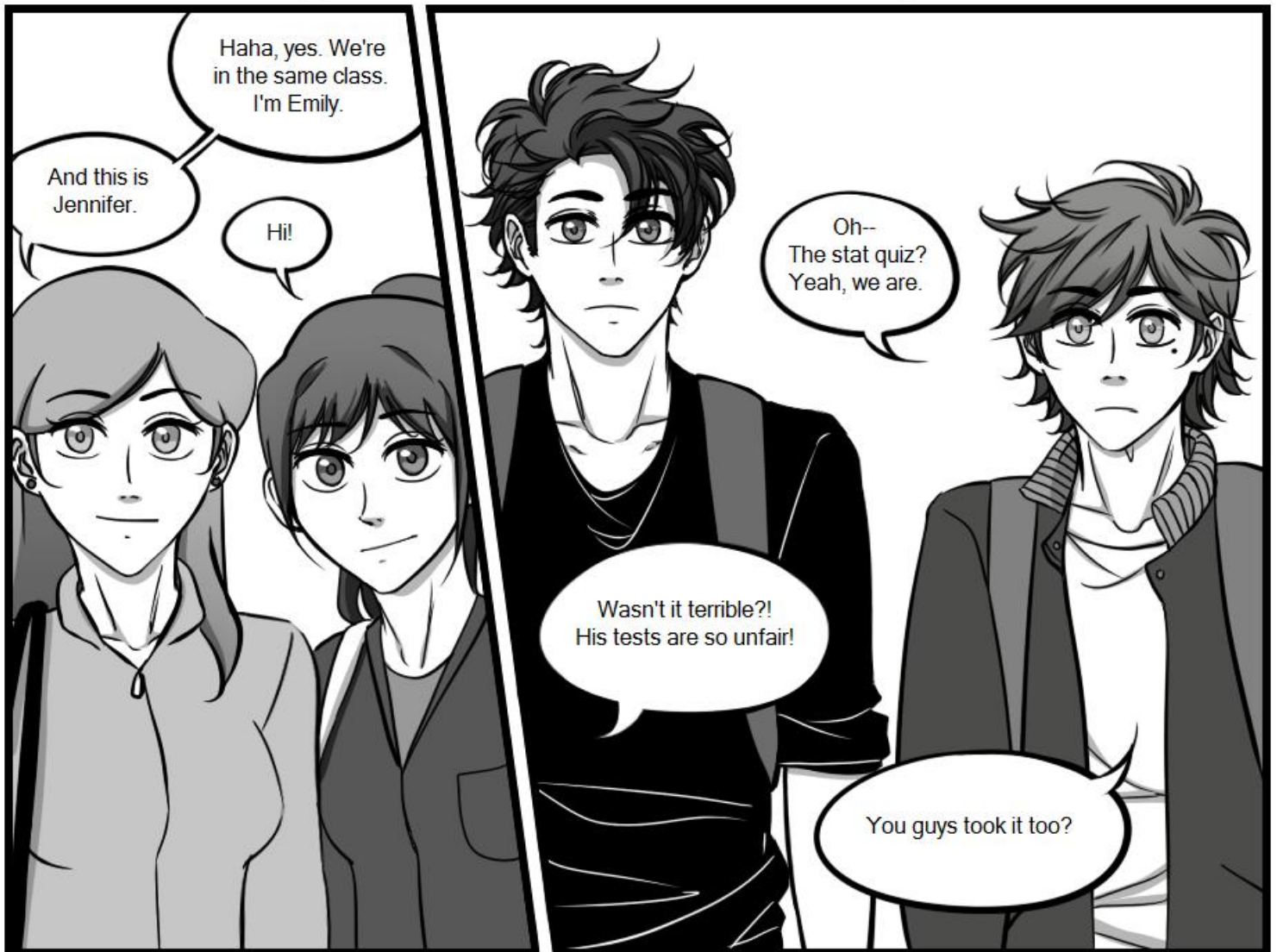
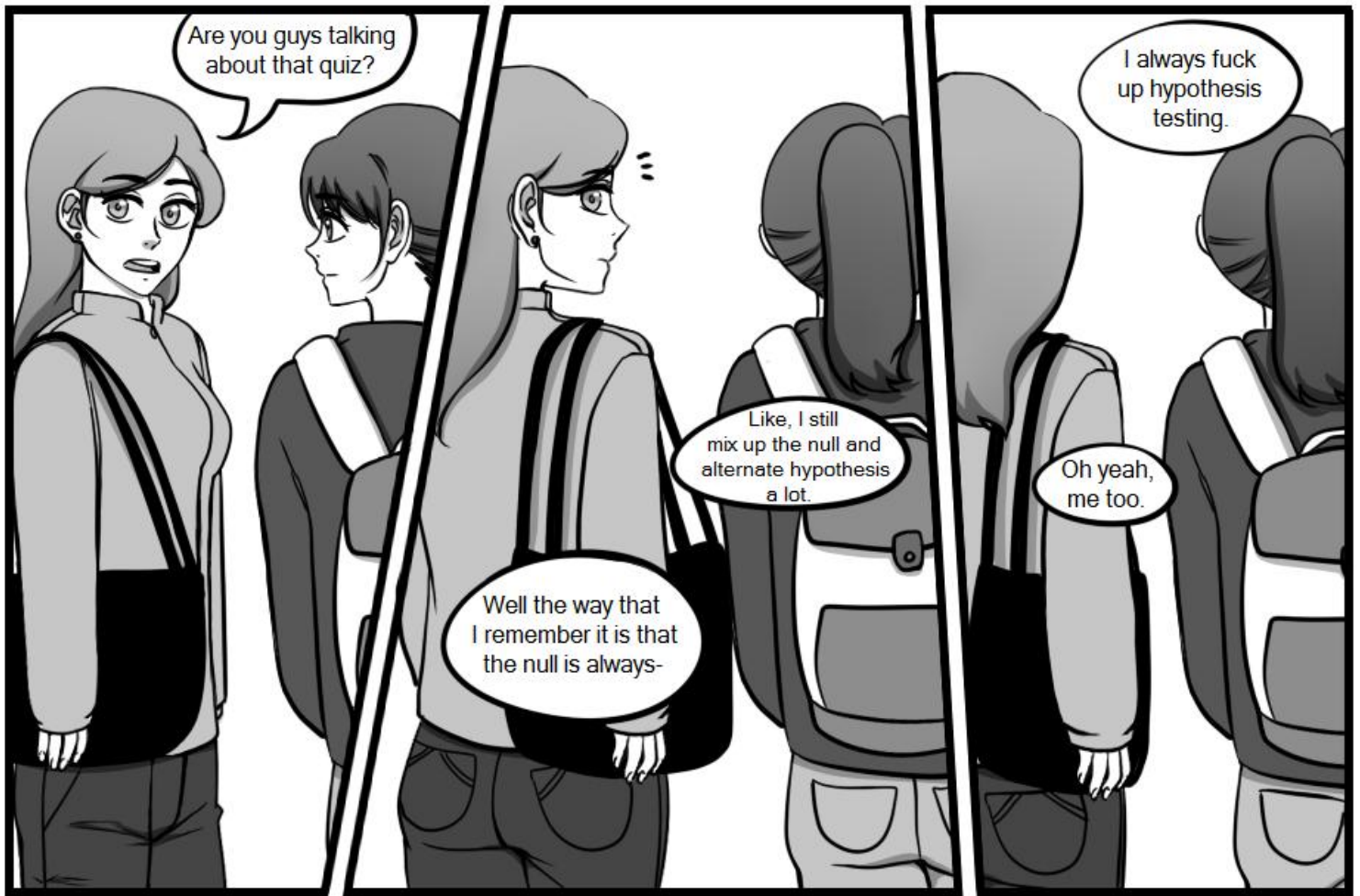
...I can never tell him that I like him.

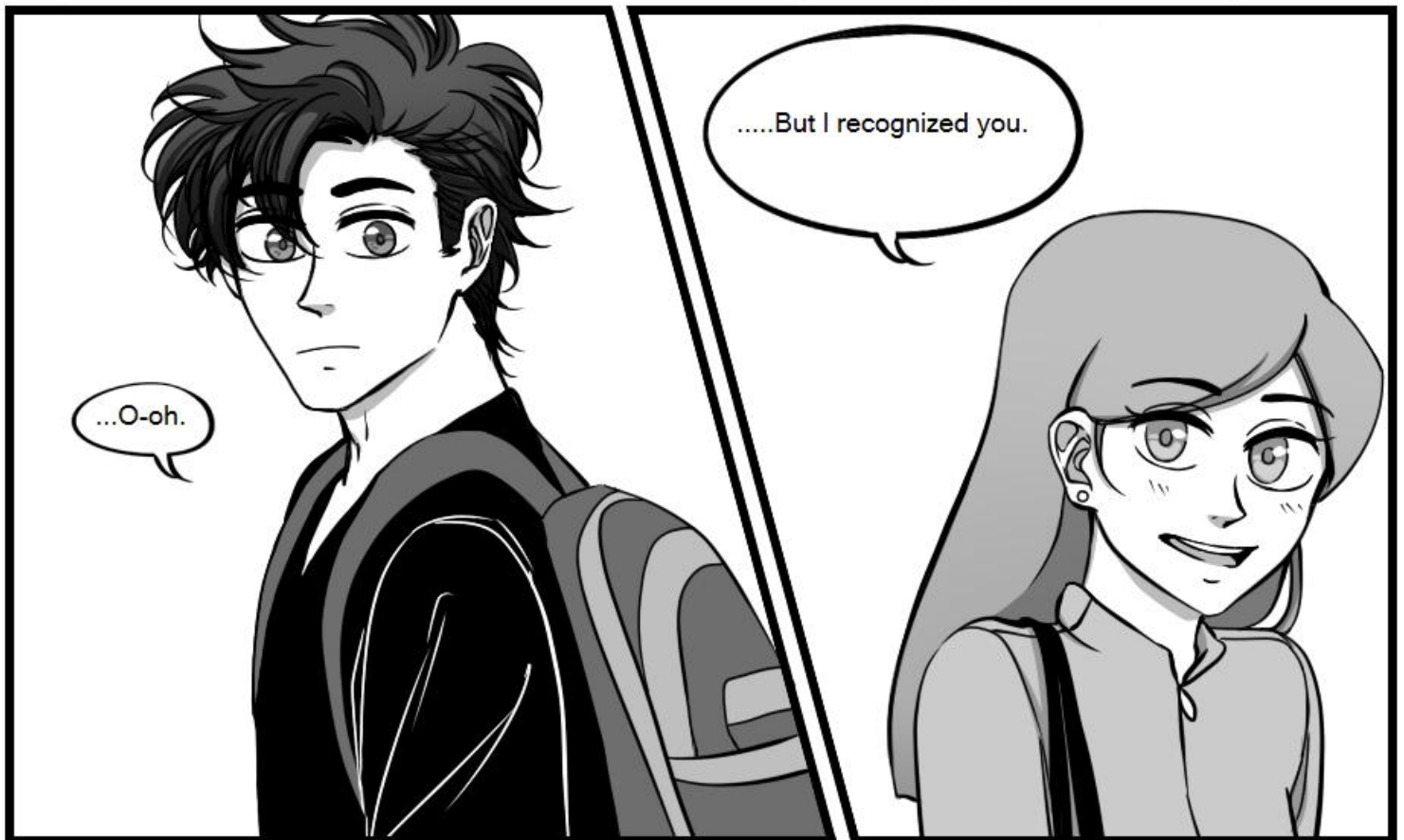
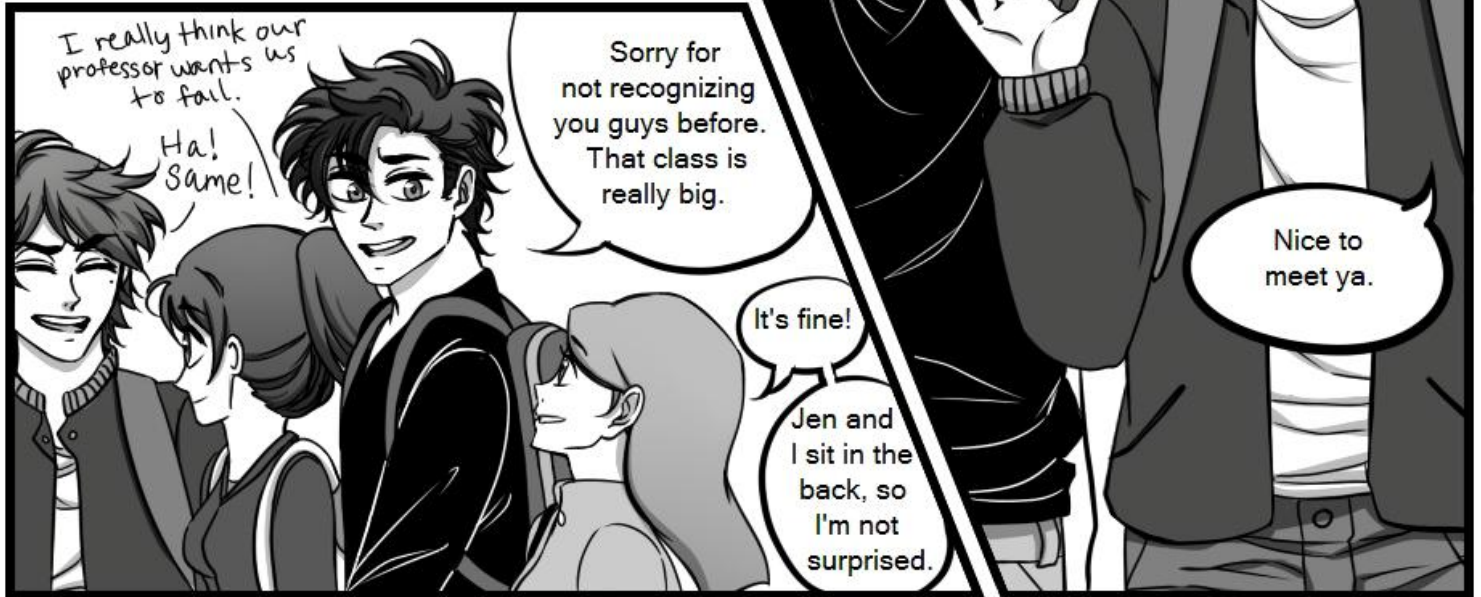
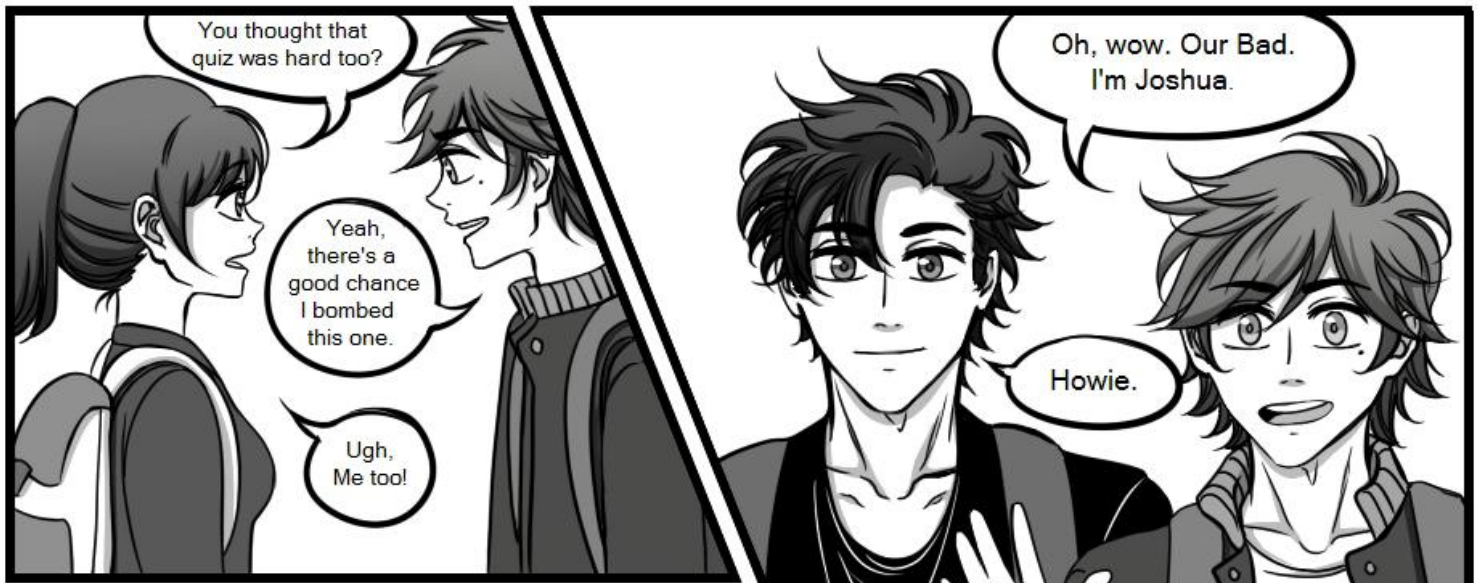


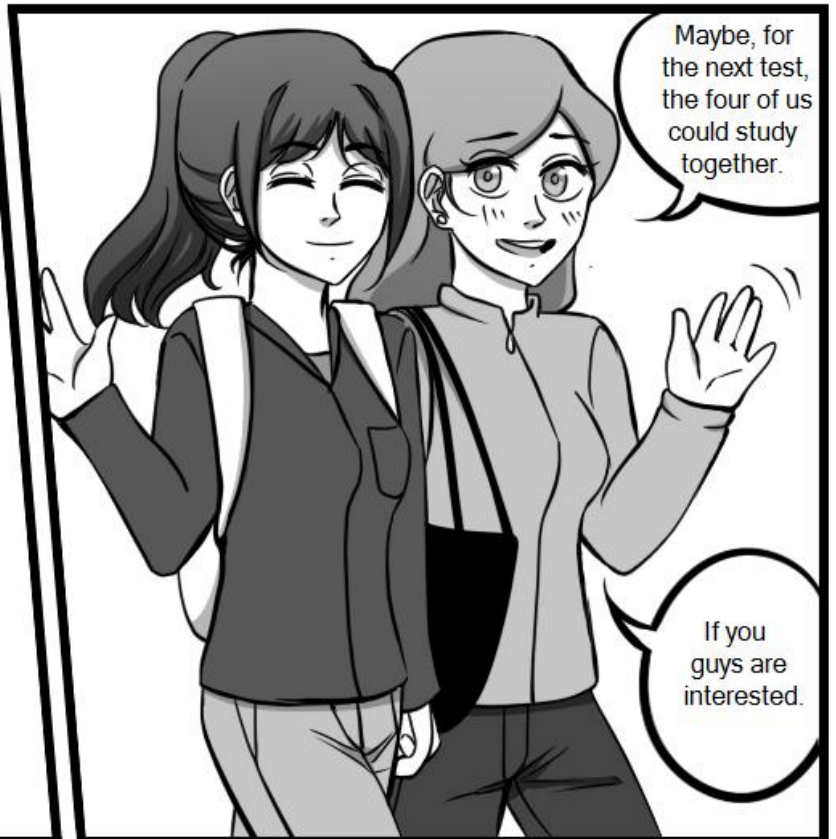
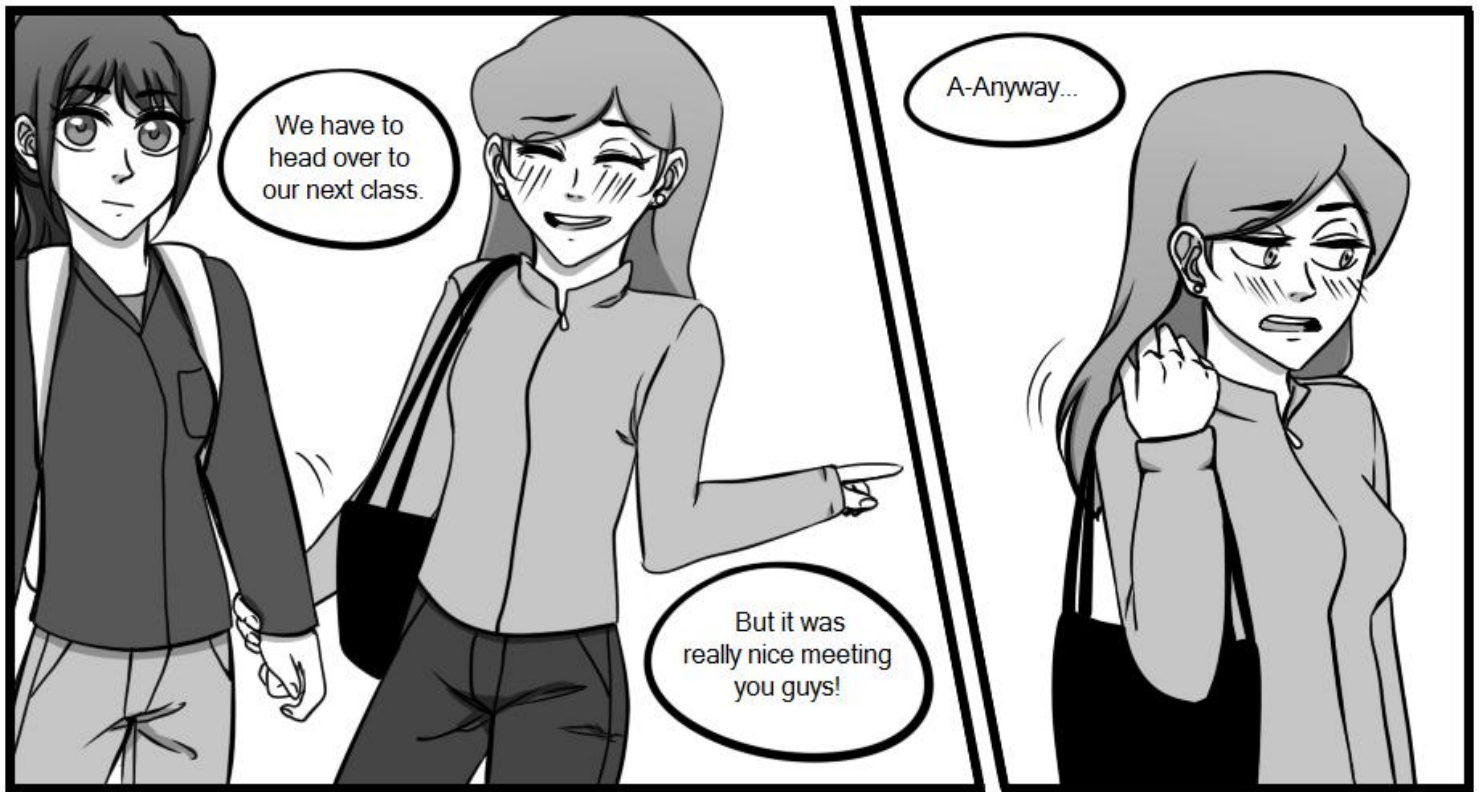
Since, after all...
Sooch isn't gay. I can't have him. I need to get that through my skull, I just need some time....

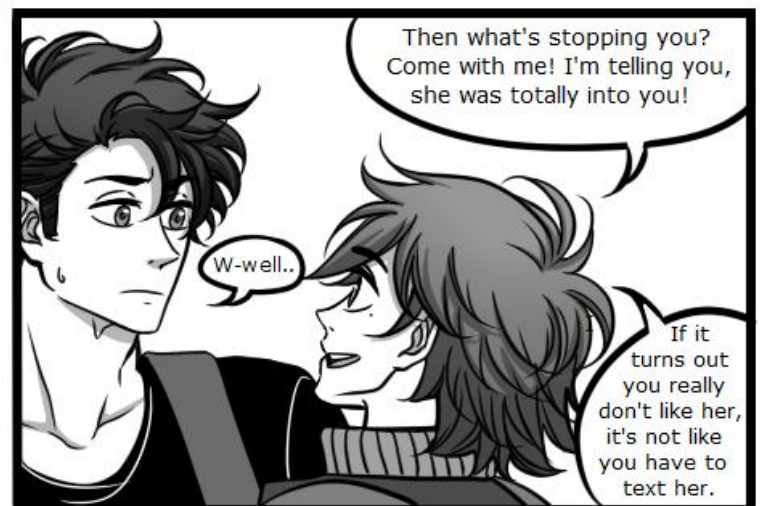
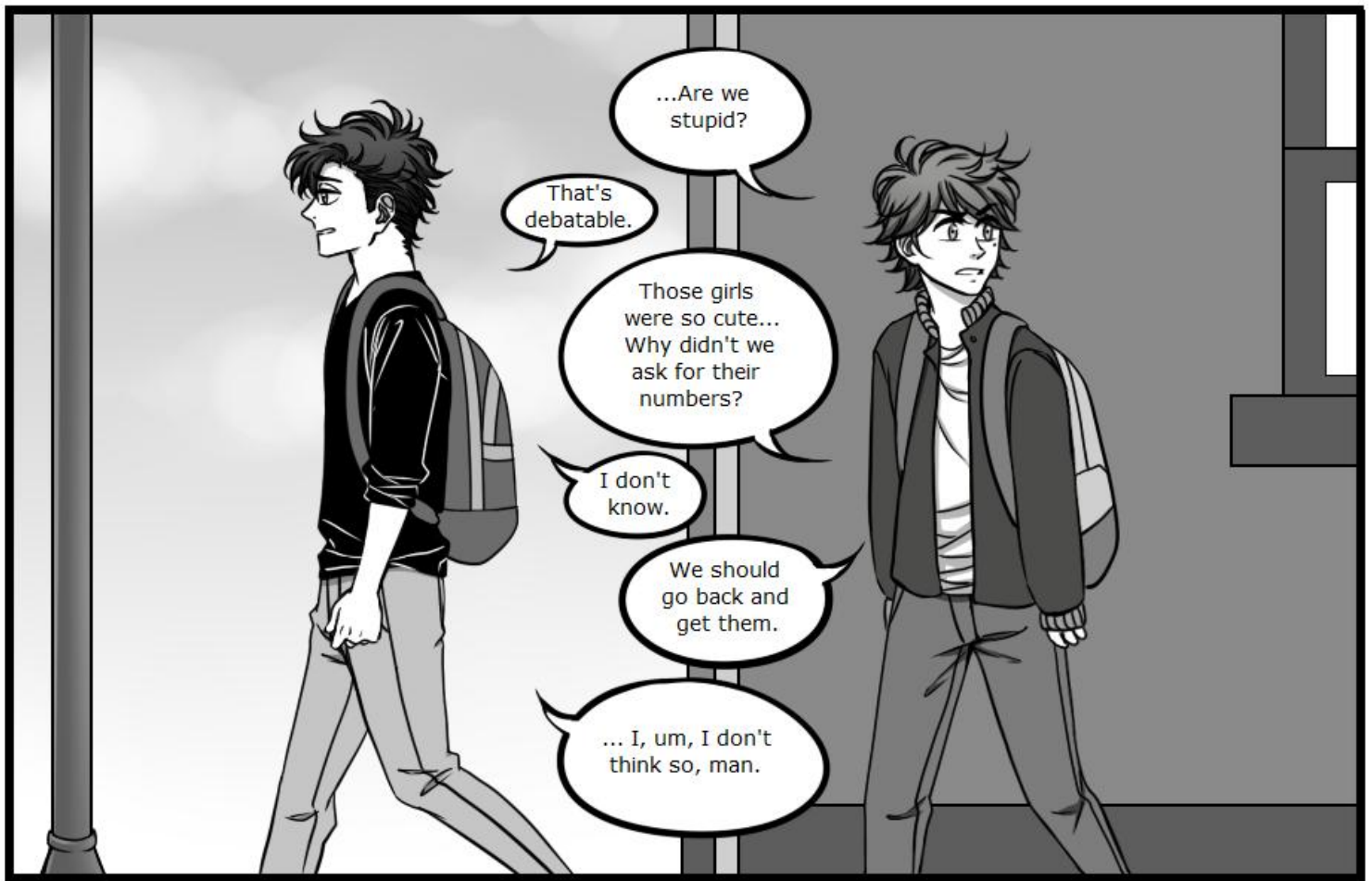
And I'm sure I'll get over him eventually.









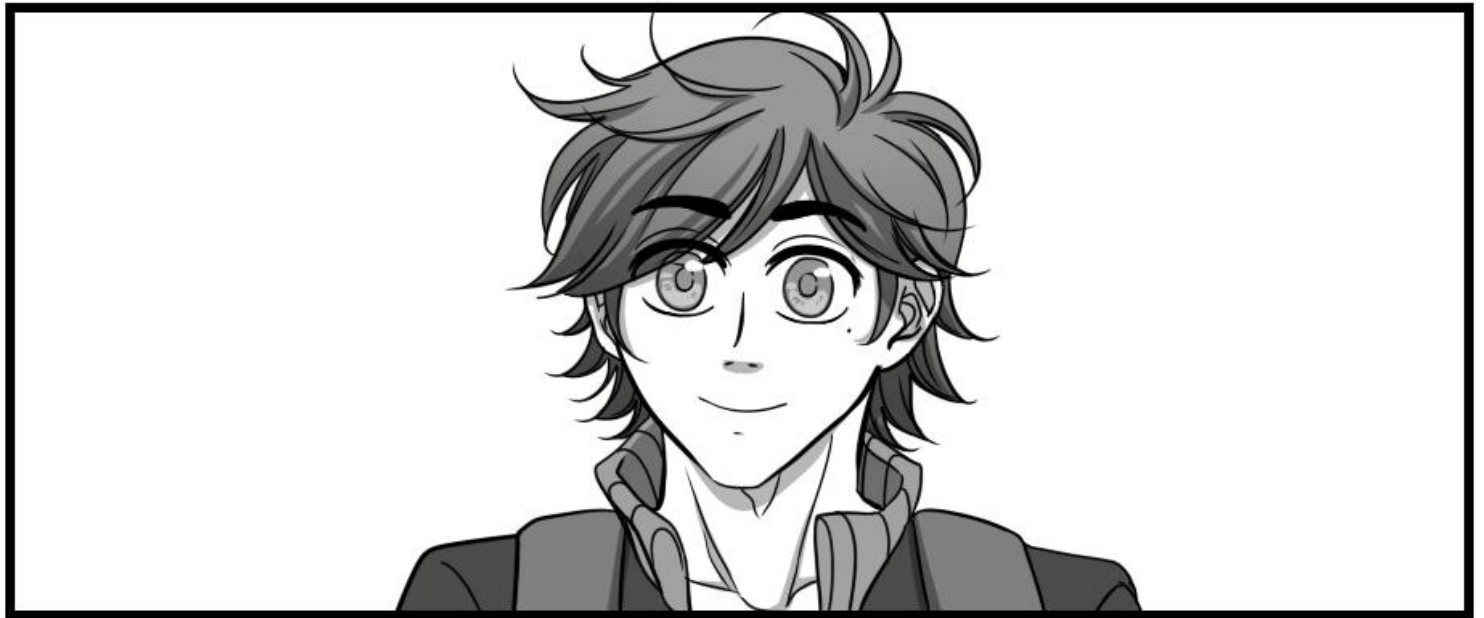




"I don't want you to think you need to hide."









...Alright.

Guess that's a pretty legit excuse for not wanting that girl's number, haha.

...Y-yeah?



...Sooch was right. That wasn't so hard.

...Yeah.



Yeah, man, of course. That kind of thing doesn't matter to me. We're pals, right?



It feels good.

Okay so like, you're gay now. But I don't see why you can't be my wingman still.

Haha no.

end of chapter three