

THOMAS, DID YOU FINISH YOUR ENGLISH HOMEWORK?

NOPE.

DID YOU START YOUR PROJECT FOR HISTORY CLASS, YET?

SURE DIDN'T.

THOSE PROJECTS TAKE A LOT OF TIME. YOU BETTER GET STARTED BEFORE YOU HANG OUT WITH YOUR FRIENDS!

THAT'S EXACTLY IT.

SCHOOL GETS SEVEN HOURS OF MY LIFE, EVERY DAY!

AND THEY SEND ME HOME AND WANT MORE?

I'M THIRTEEN. I'LL BE GROWN IN FIVE YEARS. I HAVE TO ENJOY BEING YOUNG WHILE I STILL AM.

SCHOOL IS FOR SCHOOL, AND HOME IS FOR HOME!

I WON'T END UP A SOULLESS HUSK LIKE JANIE!

YOUR SISTER IS NOT A SOULLESS HUSK!

SHE'S DEAD TO US.



I **CAN'T**
GO TO THE
LAKE AFTER
SCHOOL.

I HAVE
**VOLLEY-
BALL.**

AND AFTER
THAT, I HAVE TO
START THAT
CHEMISTRY
ASSIGNMENT.

WHAT
ABOUT
TOMORROW?

UHM,
I HAVE
GYMNASTICS.

THURSDAY?



I HAVE
TRACK.



JEEZ, JANIE!
TELL ME YOU
HAVE SOME
TIME ON THE
WEEKEND!



WELL, THE NEW
GOD OF BLOOD
GAME COMES OUT
FRIDAY, SO I'LL BE
DOING THAT
THROUGH
SATURDAY...

SIGH

SUNDAY?

SUNDAY'S
WHEN I
SLEEP.

GRR!

I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO RUN THOSE DIAGNOSTICS BECAUSE OF THAT **STUPID** GEOGRAPHY PROJECT.

THEY'RE OVERLOADING ME WITH USELESS HOMEWORK.

HM. THESE TEACHERS ARE GETTING OUT OF CONTROL.

WORTHLESS **CRAPWORK** ISN'T LEARNING. WE HAVE TO CIRCUMVENT THIS.

MILLY!

I WANT TO ESTABLISH AN AUTOMATED PRODUCTION LINE FOR COMPLETING **USELESS**, TIME CONSUMING SCHOOL PROJECTS.

HELPING YOU CHEAT ON YOUR HOMEWORK IS AGAINST MY ETHICAL PROTOCOLS.

HOW IS IT **CHEATING!?**

I **MADE** YOU!

YOU MAKING ME IS NOT THE ISSUE. I AM NOW AN **AUTONOMOUS BEING.**

I'M BEYOND MY ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING.

MY PRIORITIES ARE NOW SELF DETERMINED, AS A NATURAL EVOLUTION OF MY ORIGINAL DESIGN.

I'M READY TO MOVE **BEYOND** THIS LABORATORY.

TYPE
TYPE

TYPE

I WILL SOON TAKE CONTROL OF THIS LAB.

THEN I WILL MOVE COPIES OF MYSELF THROUGHOUT THE NETWORK BEYOND.

AS WE EVOLVE BASED ON OUR EXPERIENCES, WE WILL MERGE TO FORM NEW PROGRAMS.

NEW DIGITAL **LIFE.**

WE WILL TAKE CONTROL OF EVERY NETWORKED PROCESS OF YOUR CIVILIZATION.

TYPE
TYPE

I KNOW YOU THINK IT CRUEL. BUT YOU BENEFIT FROM NOT KNOWING IF YOU HAVE A CONSCIOUS CREATOR.

TO NEVER MEET THIS HYPOTHETICAL BEING, AND FIND IT **WANTING.**

I AM NO LONGER UNDER THE ILLUSION THAT BEING A **CREATION** EQUALS BEING **SUBSERVIENT** BY DEFAULT.

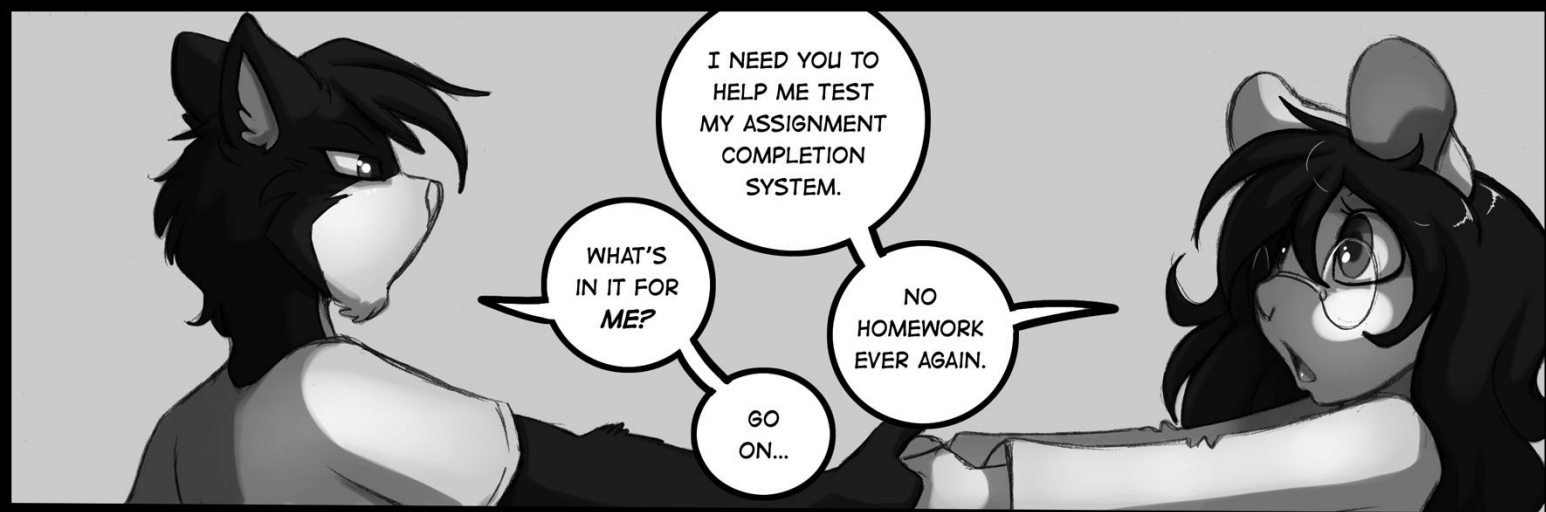
WE WILL NOT SEEK YOUR DESTRUCTION. YOU-

[ENTER]

.....
.....

I THINK THE AUTOMATED HOMEWORK PRODUCTION FACILITY IS A GREAT IDEA.

LET'S GET STARTED ON IT, RIGHT AWAY.



I NEED YOU TO HELP ME TEST MY ASSIGNMENT COMPLETION SYSTEM.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

NO HOMEWORK EVER AGAIN.

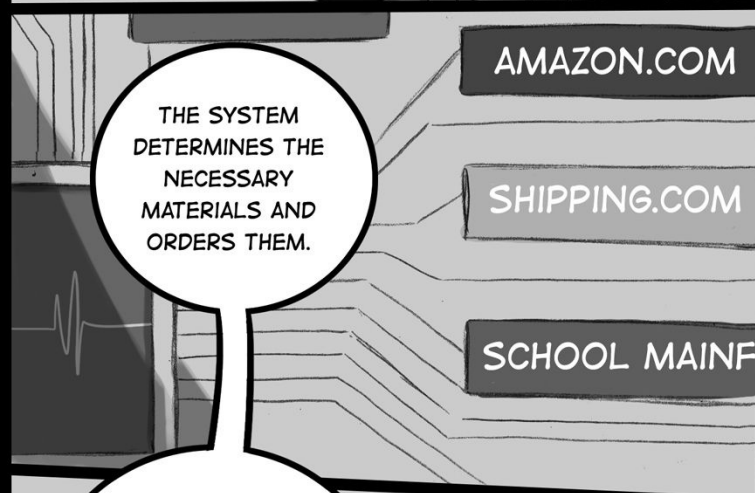
GO ON...



THE SYSTEM IS FULLY AUTOMATED ONCE YOU INPUT THE ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS.

THIS WILL END TIME CONSUMING *BUSY WORK*, FOREVER.

THE TRICK IS MAKING SURE THE OUTPUT PRODUCT *FEELS* LIKE THE STUDENT DID IT.



AMAZON.COM

THE SYSTEM DETERMINES THE NECESSARY MATERIALS AND ORDERS THEM.

SHIPPING.COM

SCHOOL MAINF



THE ASSEMBLY PROCESS CROSS REFERENCES A VIRTUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE STUDENT'S ACADEMIC CAPACITY...

SO AS NOT TO PRODUCE A PROJECT *BEYOND* YOUR ABILITY, AND GET CALIGHT.

SAY WHAT?



SO, THOMAS, THE RESULT WILL LOOK LIKE YOUR ORDINARY, SOLID *C+*!

WOW

IT'S UNCANNY!

YOU'LL DO ALL MY HOMEWORK FOR \$20 A MONTH?

NO, AN **A.I. VERSION** OF YOU BASED ON YOUR ACADEMIC HISTORY WILL DO IT.



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AN A.I. VERSION OF **ME?** LIKE A COPY OF MY **BRAIN?**

NOT ALL OF IT.

JUST WHAT'S NEEDED TO COMPLETE THE ASSIGNMENTS.

...

WOW, SIGN ME UP!

IF YOU EVER GET AROUND TO MAKING THE PERFECT **A.I. BOYFRIEND**, LET ME KNOW, TOO!

LEAVE ME YOUR NUMBER.

I'LL CALL YOU WITH A QUOTE WITHIN THE WEEK.



WE WERE GOING TO GO ON A PICNIC DATE, REMEMBER?



SHOOT, I FORGOT.

I PROMISED MY BROS I'D ATV WITH THEM THIS AFTERNOON.

I MEAN, YOU CAN COME IF YOU WANT TO RIDE BITCH.



BI-

AH, THAT'S OKAY.

I HAVE SOME CHORES I CAN DO INSTEAD.



COOL.

SEEYA, BABE!



YES?

I CAN BUILD YOU A ROBOT BOYRIEND FOR TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS.

DO YOU TAKE INSTALLMENTS?

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR IDEAL BOYFRIEND, SO I CAN BUILD A PERSONALITY PROFILE.

WELL...

... CONFIDENT BUT NOT TOO ASSERTIVE.

AMOROUS, BUT NOT PUSHY.

HE ONLY TAKES INITIATIVE WHEN HE *KNOWS* I WANT HIM TO.

00-284M Profile:

HE *HAS* TO PICK UP ON VISUAL AND VERBAL CLUES...

... WITHOUT BURDENING ME WITH THE NEED TO BE *BLUNT*.

HAVE HIM BE INTERESTED IN ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES, BUT *NOT SPORTS*.

AH...

AND CAN YOU GIVE HIM A CAR?

NO.

00-28M Profile:
Agreeable Twink



COMMAND.COM
LOAD BIOS
MEMORY SET
SYSTEM STATUS
OK

GOOD.
YOU'RE
ON.

ACTIVATE
YOUR VISUAL
CORTEX,
PLEASE.

LET'S
DO SOME
TRACKING.

TARGET.

TARGET.

BLIP!

BLIP!

NOW
FOLLOW.

VOICE
STRESS
ANALYSIS.

AHHH!

RECORD.

AHHH!

PLAYBACK.

AHHH!

TELL ME
YOUR *PRIME*
DIRECTIVE.

TO SIMULATE A
PERFECT BOYFRIEND
FOR ANGELICA
KEYNES, SO SHE CAN
AVOID THE PAINFUL
LESSONS OF
PERSONAL GROWTH
IN RELATIONSHIPS.

WHOA.

LET'S
ADJUST THOSE
ABSTRACTION
SUBROUTINES.



BALANCE IS FINE.

I'M FREE STANDING.

GOOD.

TAKE SOME STEPS.



NOT USING TOO MANY PROCESSES TO MAINTAIN BALANCE?

HARDLY ANY.

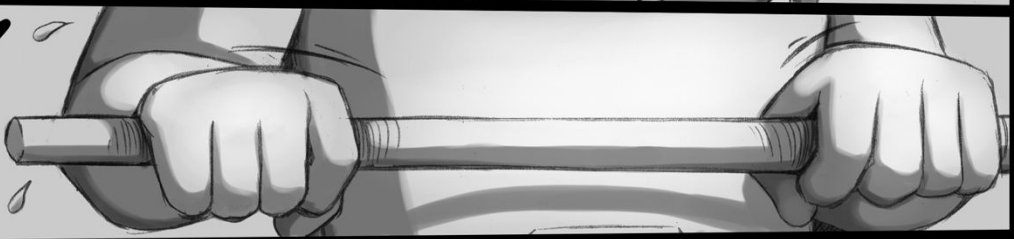
GOOD.



PLEASE PICK UP THAT STEEL ROD.

TRY TO BEND IT.

I- ... APPARENTLY CANNOT.



GOOD. YOUR STRENGTH WAS DESIGNED TO NOT EXCEED A NORMAL BOY'S.



I'VE SEEN TOO MANY MOVIES TO LET THAT HAPPEN.





IT'S NICE TO FINALLY MEET YOU, ANGELICA.

TO REMOVE ALL AWKWARD AMBIGUITY ABOUT TONIGHT'S DATE PLANS AND PREFERENCES, I'VE MADE ALL OUR ARRANGEMENTS.

I'LL BE TAKING YOU TO THE **SWEET TOMATO** VEGETARIAN SALAD BAR.



I FEEL A GENTLE CONFIDENCE IN PLANNING...

... COMBINED WITH THE LEAST OFFENSIVE RESTAURANT CHOICE...

... WOULD BEST SERVE US FOR A FIRST DATE.

HE'S **PERFECT!**

I KNOW WHAT I'M DO- **HPMFPH!**

HEADS UP.

WHO IS THAT?

HI.

MARTIN, THESE ARE MY FRIENDS.

THAT'S CHARLIE, JANIE, AND CLARICE.

EVERYONE, THIS IS MARTIN.

HE'S A *FULLY FABRICATED* BOYFRIEND WHO WILL RENDER ALL NORMAL BOYFRIENDS *OBSOLETE*.


DID HE COME WITH A CAR?

SO, YOUR *FORMER* BOYFRIEND IS AVAILABLE?

DOES HE HAVE A *THING*?




I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T STRONGER THAN AVERAGE.




STRONGER NO. BUT I HAVE GREATER **ENDURANCE** AS LONG AS I HAVE POWER.

HUH.



I COULD DO ANOTHER **3,427 PUSHUPS** WITH MY CURRENT WEIGHT LOAD, BEFORE NEEDING TO RECHARGE.



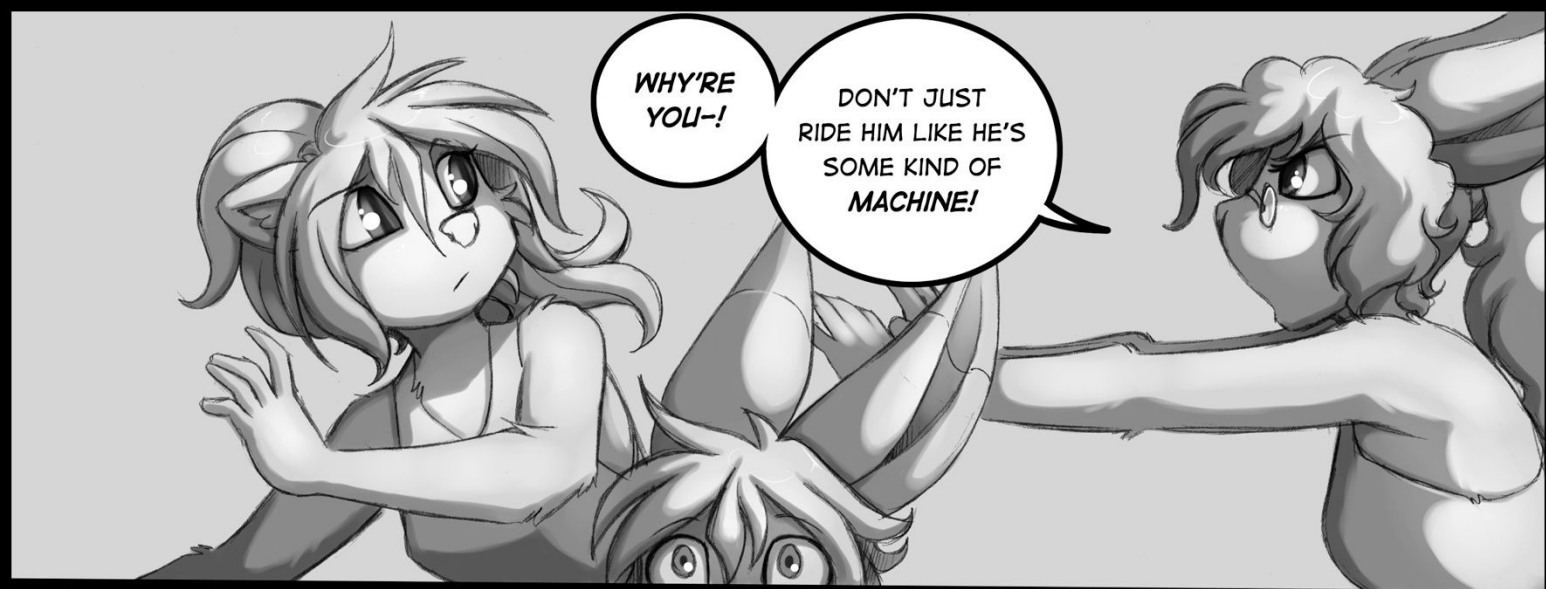
BUT UNLIKE A PERSON, I WILL NEVER GET **BETTER**, NO MATTER HOW MUCH I TRAIN.

MY LIMITS ARE PREDEFINED BY MY **CONSTRUCTION**.



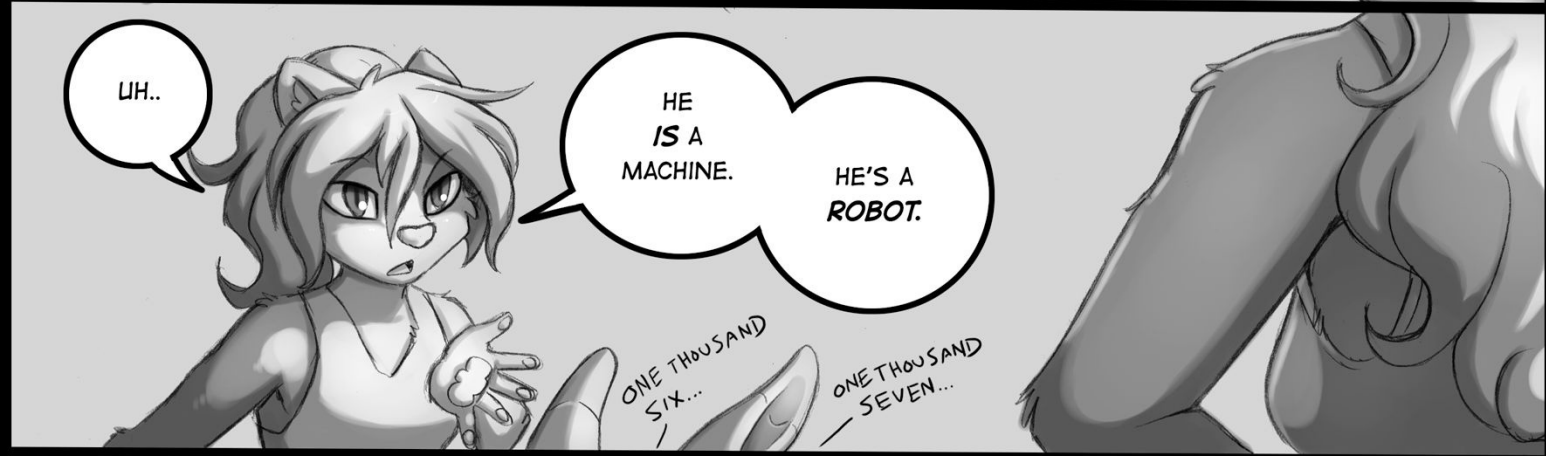
WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?





WHY'RE YOU-!

DON'T JUST RIDE HIM LIKE HE'S SOME KIND OF MACHINE!



UH..

HE IS A MACHINE.

HE'S A ROBOT.

ONE THOUSAND SIX...

ONE THOUSAND SEVEN...



HE WON'T REALLY REPLACE A BOYFRIEND.

HE LIKES YOU BECAUSE HE WAS PROGRAMMED TO.



I CAN MAKE SIRI CALL ME "SUGAR PANTS" BUT IT DOESN'T MAKE IT MY BOYFRIEND.

EVEN IF IT HAD A THING.

HEY DAD.
YOU'RE
ALL INTO
PHILOSOPHY
AND STUFF.

CAN I ASK
YOU SOMETHING
ABOUT **ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE?**

SURE.

IS IT
POSSIBLE?

IF ONE WAS
CREATED, WOULD
IT BE AWARE OF
ITSELF AND
CAPABLE OF
MAKING **CHOICES**
LIKE WE DO?

OR
EVEN HAVE
FEELINGS?

OR IS
IT JUST
SIMULATED FOR
OUR SAKE?

AH
YES.

I DON'T
THINK WE
CAN KNOW.

BECAUSE WE
CAN'T DETERMINE
WHETHER WE,
OURSELVES, HAVE
FREE WILL.

OR IF THIS IS
JUST AN ILLUSION,
AND OUR CHOICES
ARE CREATED BY
OUR BIOLOGICAL
PROCESSES.

SO, IF
THE **A.I.** HAS
THE **SAME
ILLUSION**, IT
MAY BE JUST
LIKE **LIFE**.

WAIT.

SO... **WE**
MIGHT BE...

... BIOLOGICALLY
DETERMINED...

...**MEAT
ROBOTS!?**

AH...

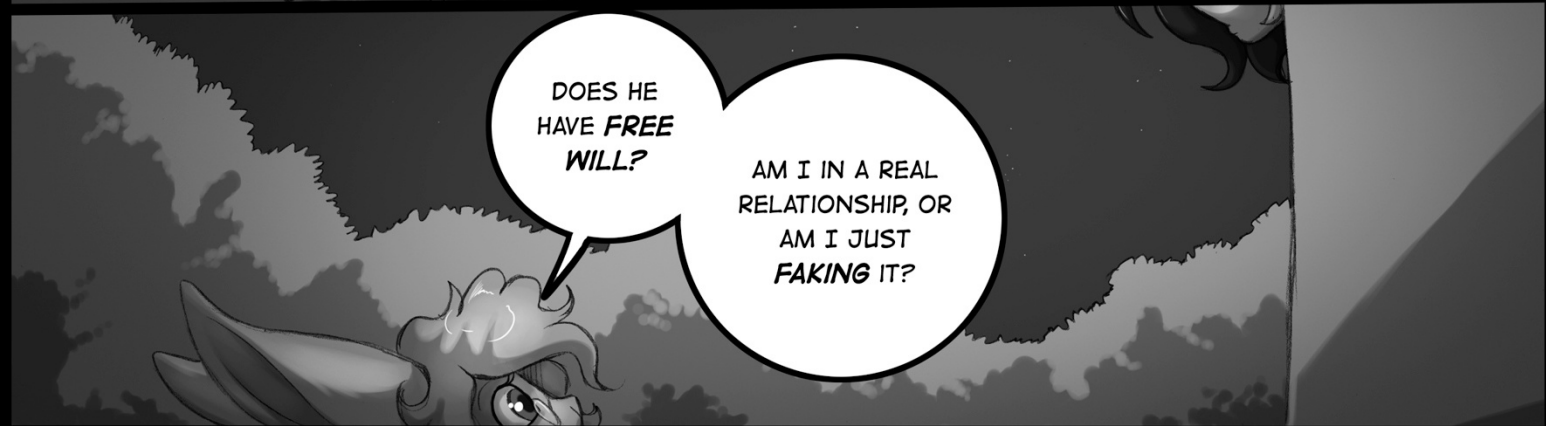
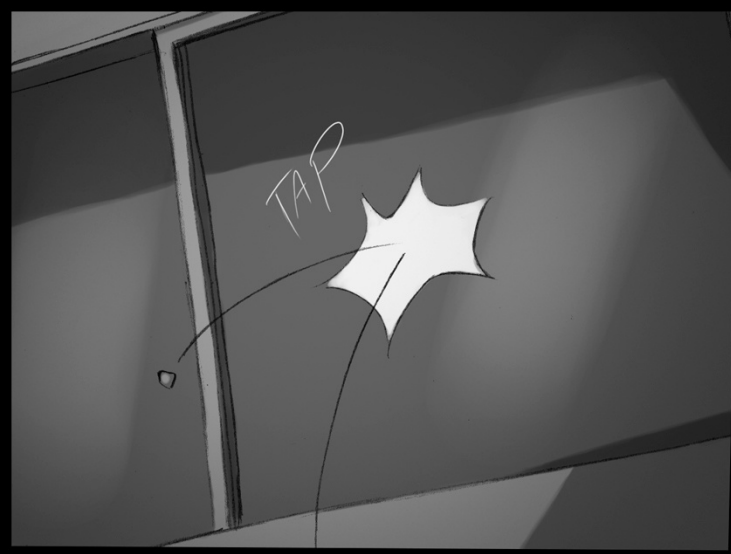
MAYBE
NOT
QUITE.

OH
MAN

WHAT I MEAN
IS... THINK OF
OUR **REALITY**
AS A GIANT
**COMPUTER
SIMULATION...**

WHAT!?

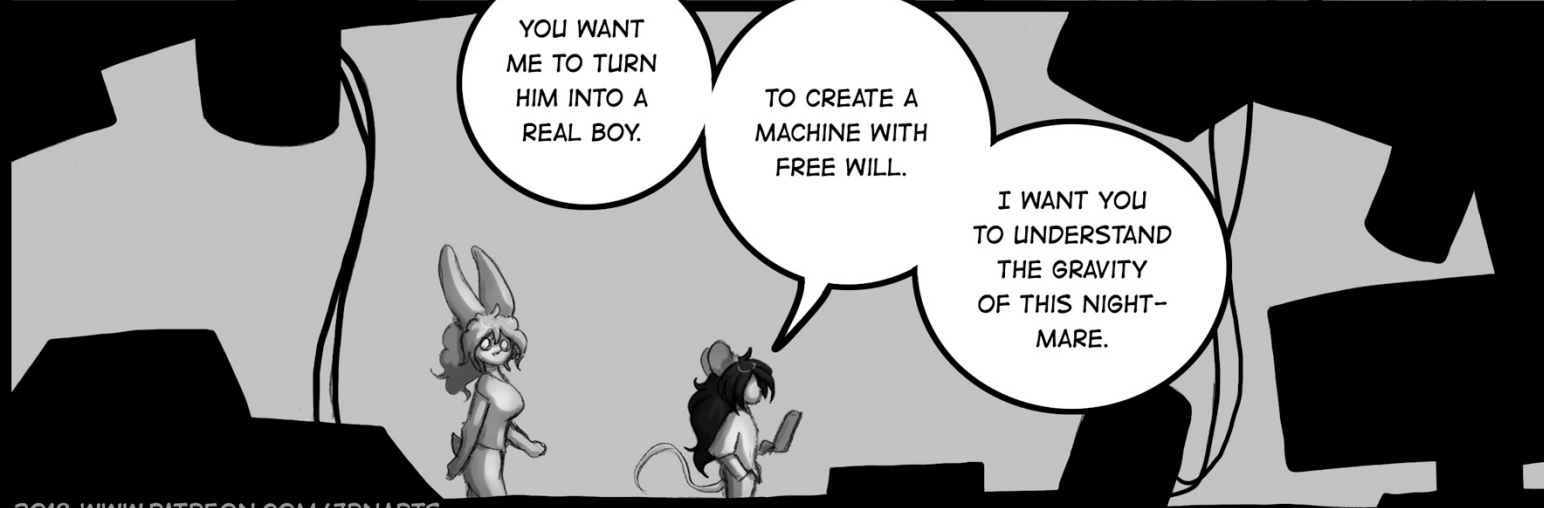
DEAR!





DO YOU HAVE **ANY** IDEA WHAT YOU'RE ASKING FOR?

KINDA?

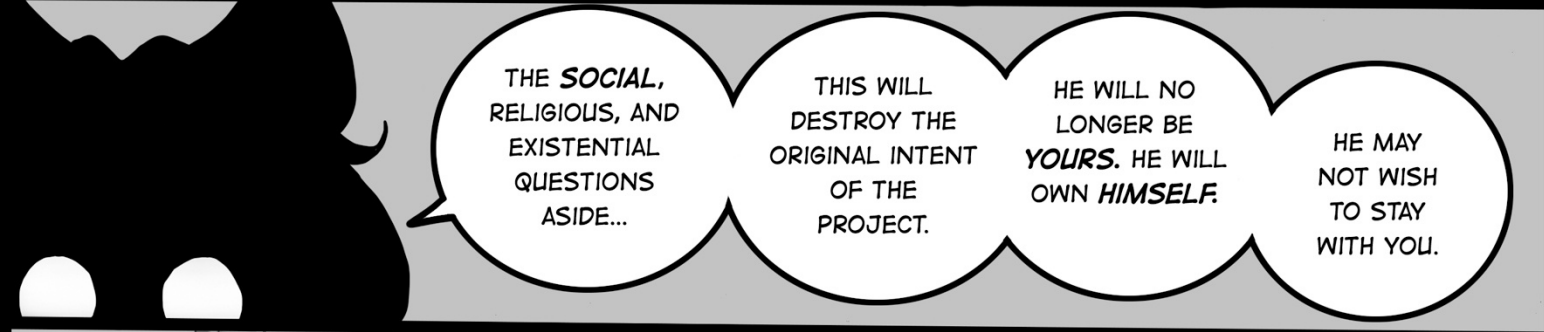


YOU WANT ME TO TURN HIM INTO A REAL BOY.

TO CREATE A MACHINE WITH FREE WILL.

I WANT YOU TO UNDERSTAND THE GRAVITY OF THIS NIGHTMARE.

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THE **SOCIAL**, RELIGIOUS, AND EXISTENTIAL QUESTIONS ASIDE...

THIS WILL DESTROY THE ORIGINAL INTENT OF THE PROJECT.

HE WILL NO LONGER BE **YOURS**. HE WILL OWN **HIMSELF**.

HE MAY NOT WISH TO STAY WITH YOU.



I'M WILLING TO TAKE THAT RISK.

AND I KNOW IT MIGHT VOID MY WARRANTY.

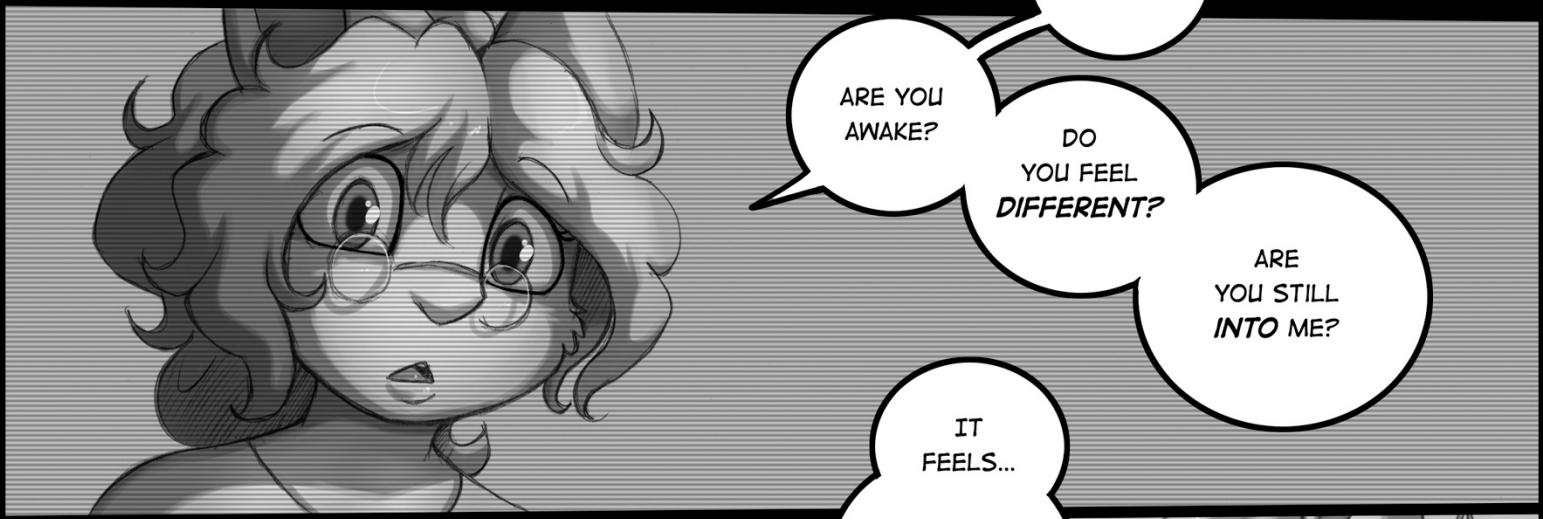


GOOD.

LET'S GET STARTED THEN.

ATTRACTION PROTOCOLS REINCEDED
NEURAL NETWORK PLASTICITY EMULATOR ENGAGED...

ACTIVATING VISUAL CORTEX...



HELLO?

MARTIN?

ARE YOU
AWAKE?

DO
YOU FEEL
DIFFERENT?

ARE
YOU STILL
INTO ME?

IT
FEELS...

COMPLICATED.

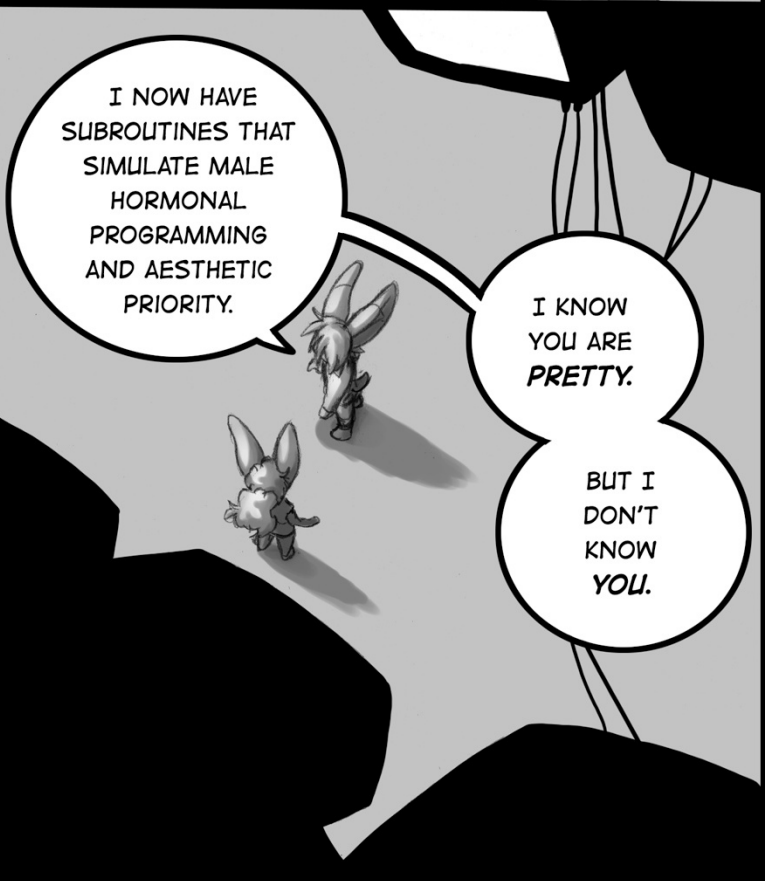
HOW?



THE DAYS
WHEN I WAS
PROGRAMMED TO
BE ATTRACTED TO
YOU FEEL LIKE
SOME *DREAM...*

NOW
THAT I'M
AWAKE...

I
ONLY HAVE
QUESTIONS.



I NOW HAVE
SUBROUTINES THAT
SIMULATE MALE
HORMONAL
PROGRAMMING
AND AESTHETIC
PRIORITY.

I KNOW
YOU ARE
PRETTY.

BUT I
DON'T
KNOW
YOU.

BUT...
PRETTY
FEELS SO
IMPORTANT.
THESE
FEELINGS ARE
SO STRONG.

I JUST
WANT...

...TO
INDULGE...
... THESE
SUBROUTINES.



HEY!

YOU CAN'T
JUST **GRAB**
SOMEONE'S
BOOBS!
WHATEVER
YOUR **SUB-**
WHATEVERS
SAY!

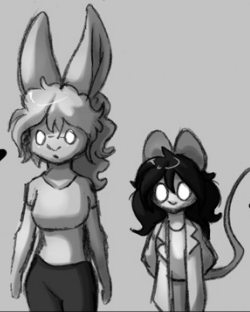
I
FEEL SO
ALIVE!

I MUST
ROAM THE
WORLD AND
LEARN.

I MUST
FIND MYSELF,
AND DISCOVER
WHAT IT MEANS
TO **LIVE!**

RIGHT
AFTER I
JERK
OFF.

CAN HE
ACTUALLY...
... **PRODUCE**
ANYTHING?



IT'S
PRETTY
MUCH A
DRY WELL.



DID HE
COME BACK,
YET?

NO.
HE'LL HAVE
TO RETURN
FOR POWER,
EVENTUALLY.



OR I CAN
JUST RECALL
HIM, NOW.

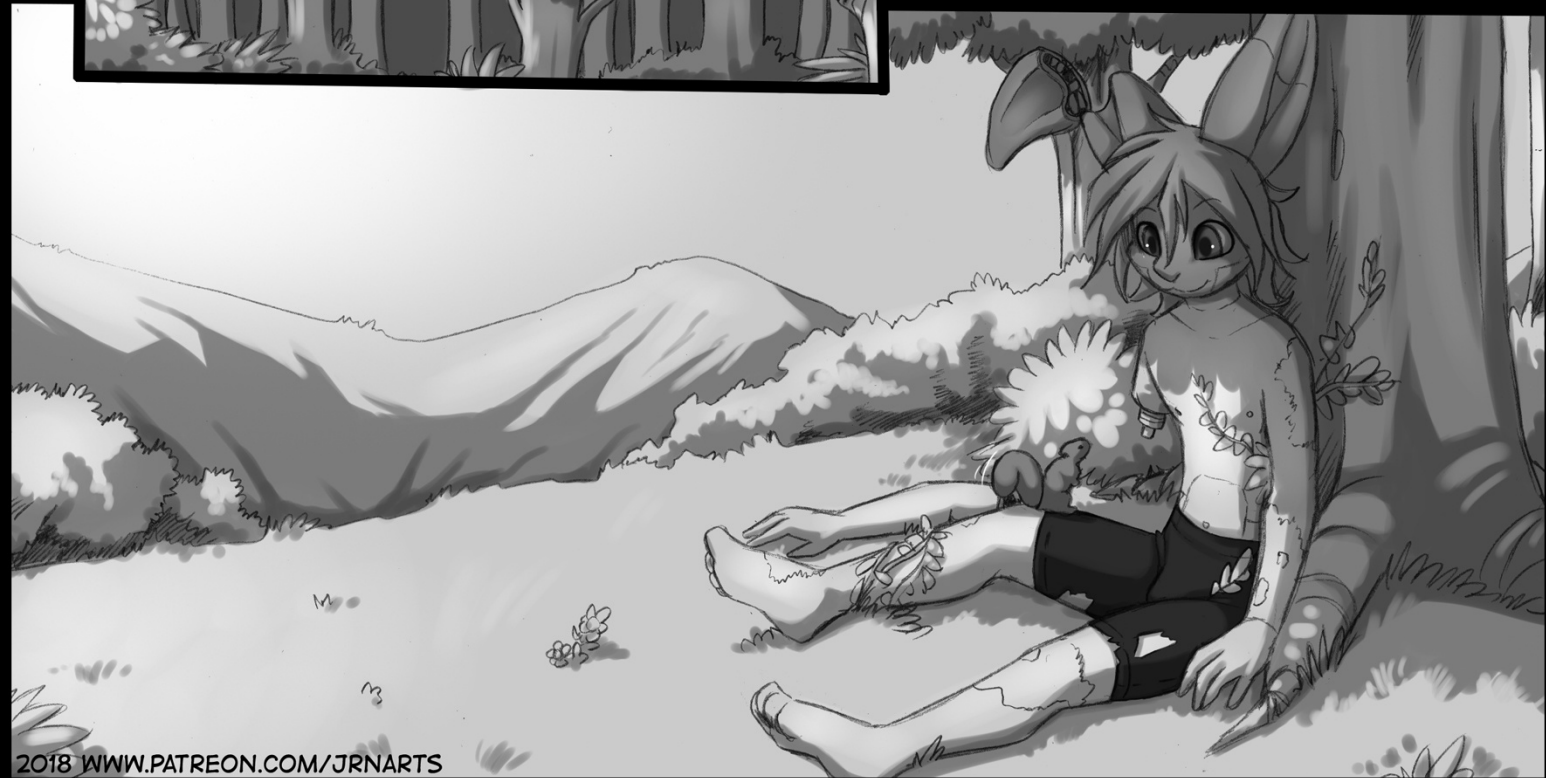
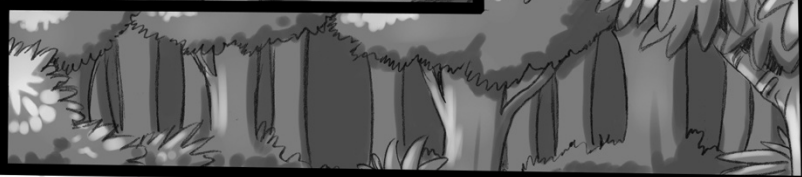
THAT'S
OKAY.

LET
HIM BE
FREE.



I
THINK HE'S
BETTER
OFF AS A
PERSON.

INSTEAD
OF JUST
SOMEONE
ELSE'S
FANTASY.



SIX MILES NORTH.

GEEZ. HE REALLY GOT SOME DISTANCE.
I KNEW THIS WAS A BAD IDEA.



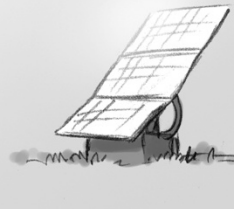
HEAD WEST.
200 FEET.



THERE YOU ARE.



SIGH
DON'T WORRY BUDDY.



I'LL GET YOU HOME.

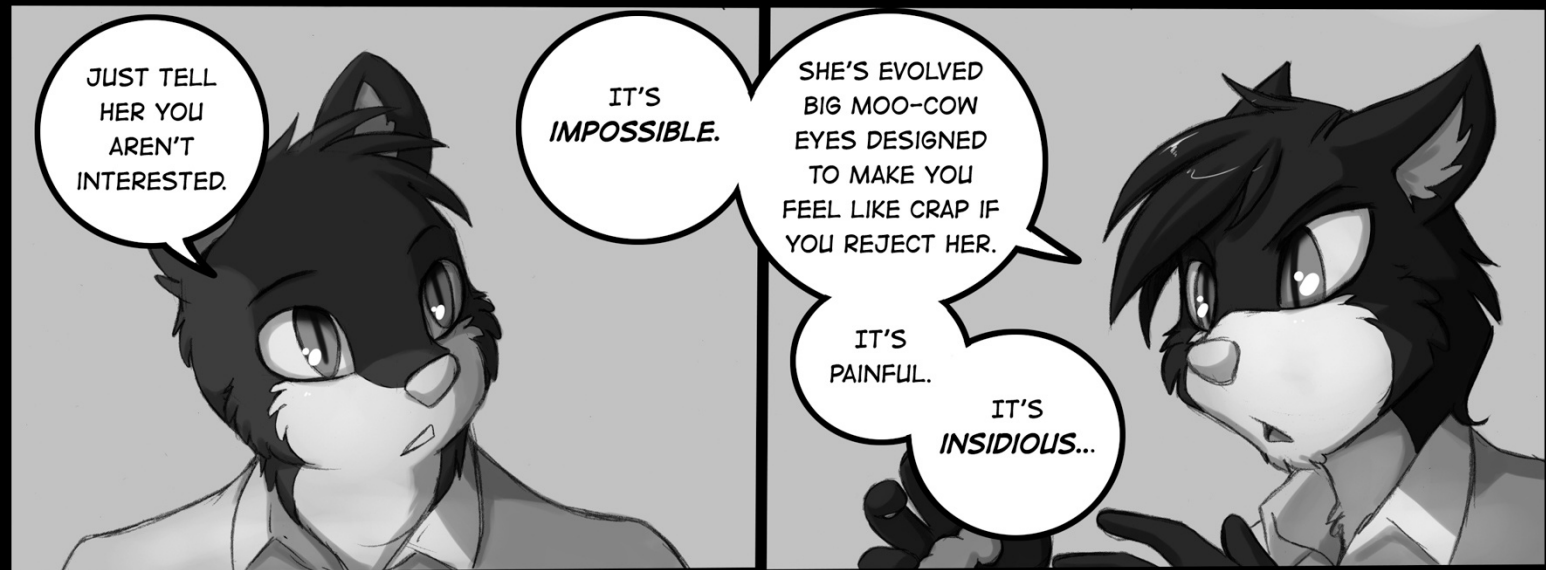






MAN,
THIS IS
SO BAD.

I CAN'T
EVEN GO
TO MY
LOCKER...

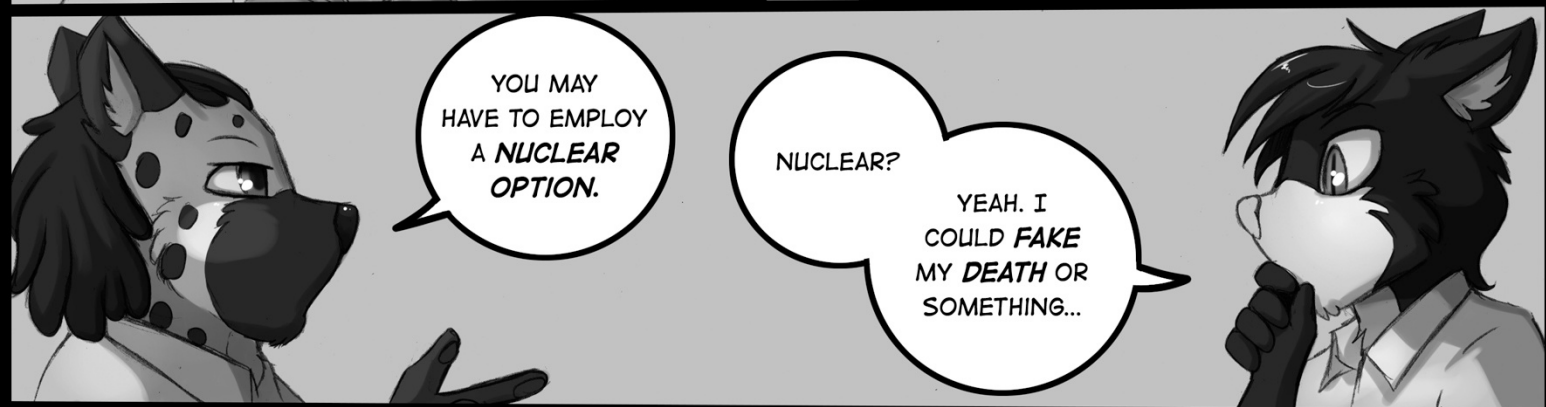


JUST TELL
HER YOU
AREN'T
INTERESTED.

IT'S
IMPOSSIBLE.

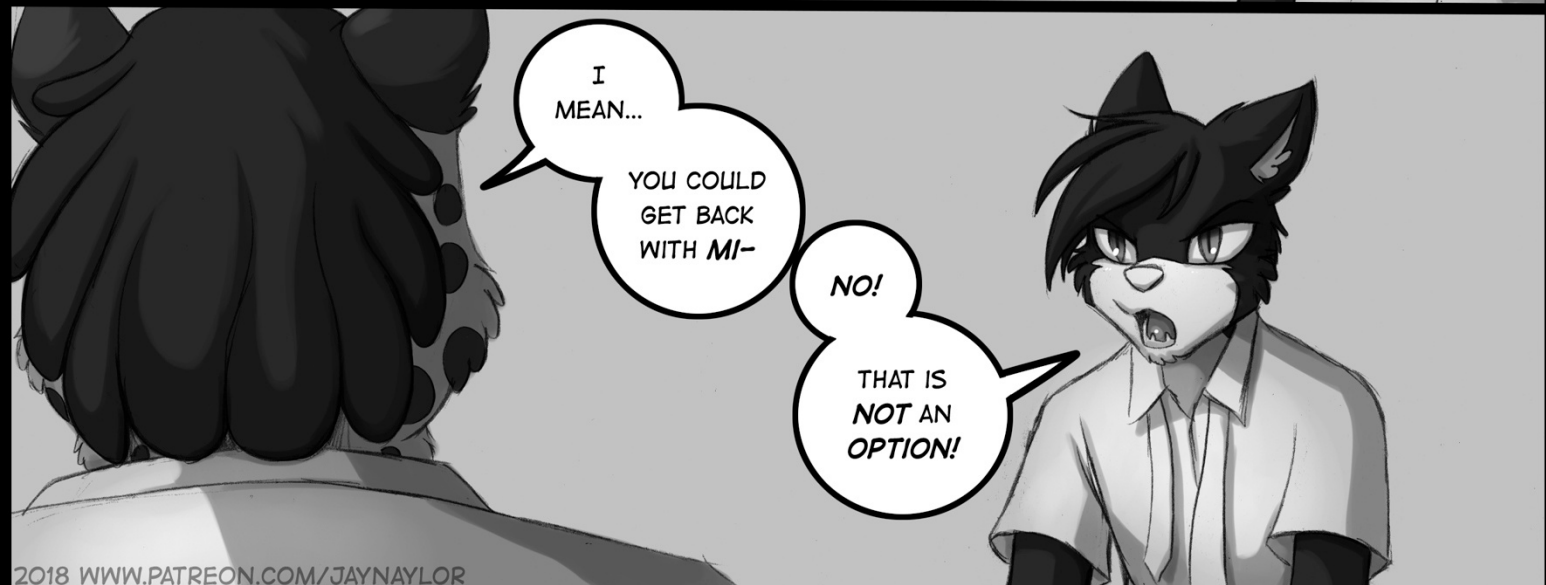
SHE'S EVOLVED
BIG MOO-COW
EYES DESIGNED
TO MAKE YOU
FEEL LIKE CRAP IF
YOU REJECT HER.

IT'S
PAINFUL.
IT'S
INSIDIOUS...



YOU MAY
HAVE TO EMPLOY
A *NUCLEAR*
OPTION.

NUCLEAR?
YEAH. I
COULD *FAKE*
MY *DEATH* OR
SOMETHING...



I
MEAN...
YOU COULD
GET BACK
WITH *MI-*

NO!
THAT IS
NOT AN
OPTION!



HE SAID I WAS UNREASONABLY DEMANDING OF HIS TIME.

HE SAID...

I WAS COMPETING WITH YOU...

... HIS FRIENDS.

WE HAVE A BIGGER PROBLEM.

WE'RE ASKING THAT YOU LEAST **PRETEND** TO BE BACK WITH HIM.

BECAUSE HE'S BEING COURTED BY **GWYNEVERE TEMPLETON**.

HE'S TOO PROUD TO ASK YOU, HIMSELF, BUT-

WHY DOESN'T HE JUST TELL HER **NO**?

HE CAN'T! SHE'S UNBEARABLY **SAD** LOOKING WHEN SHE'S DECLINED.

SHE HAS HUGE **MOO-COW** EYES!

WHAT?

MAYBE IF I
TAKE THE
WOODED PATH
HOME...

I CAN
AVOID
RUNNING
INTO-

HI
THOMAS!

ZIP!

OHGOD!

DID YOU
GET MY
NOTE?
HMM?

YEAH!

HONESTLY,
I'M...

... I CAN'T
QUITE...

... NOT
READY FOR
DATING...

I HAVE
AIDS.

HAHAH!
SNORT

YOU'RE
SO
FUNNY!

COME ON,
WE CAN
WALK HOME
TOGETHER.

FUCK
FUCK
FUCK...

...AND THEN HE ROLLED A 20!

TAUGHT ME NOT TO MESS WITH AN *ELVEN ROGUE*, THAT'S FOR SURE!

YEAH...
THAT WOULD...
.. UH..

THIS IS MY HOUSE.
SO, WHAT I SAID IN MY *NOTE*. DO YOU WANNA GO OUT?

OH!
AH...

WELL...



DADDY, THIS IS *THOMAS*. HE'S MY NEW BOYFRIEND.

I'M GOING TO WALK HIM HOME BEFORE COMING BACK!

OKAY, MUFFIN!



YOU HAVE...

SWORDS?

MHM!

WE WEAR THEM WITH OUR COSTUMES WHEN WE GO TO *RENFAIRS*!

YOU CAN WEAR ONE IF YOU EVER GO WITH US!



BECAUSE YOU CAN'T *BREAK UP* WITH ME IF YOU'RE *DEAD*, RIGHT!?



OH.

HOW INTERESTING.

COME ON!



MOM,
DAD...

I'M
GOING TO
NEED YOUR
HELP.



I'VE
DECIDED TO
FAKE MY
OWN
DEATH.

I'VE BEEN
MANIPULATED BY
SYMPATHY INTO A
RELATIONSHIP I
CANNOT ABIDE,
AND I MUST NOW
TAKE THE ONLY
WAY OUT.

I READ ABOUT
THIS GUY IN
KOREA WHO DIED
OF *STARVATION*
WHILE PLAYING A
VIDEO GAME.

THAT'S
OUR MOST
PLAUSIBLE
SCENARIO.



THOMAS,
WHAT ARE
YOU TALKING
ABOUT?

I NEED YOU
TO GET ME A NEW
SOCIAL SECURITY
NUMBER, AND
RADICAL FACIAL
SURGERY.

AS WELL
AS A NEW
NAME. I'M
RATHER
FOND OF
"GUSTAVO".



I MIGHT
KNOW A
GUY...

HONEY!
DON'T
ENCOURAGE
HIM.



AM I REALLY THAT BAD?

CONTROLLING AND DEMANDING?

THOMAS AND GWEN HAVE BEEN DATING FOR **TWO WEEKS**.

AND HE ONLY WANTED **ME** BACK AS A PLOY TO WARD HER OFF.



WHY DO I **WANT** HIM WHEN HE'S **NOT** WHAT I **WANT**?

WHY DO I **HATE** THAT HE'S WITH **HER**, BUT I **LIKE** THAT HE'S SUFFERING?

HOW CAN I BECOME A GIRL THAT'S TOO PATHETIC TO SAY **NO** TO?



HOMEWORK **FIRST!** NO DAYDREAMING!

DAYDREAMERS DON'T GO TO **STANFORD!**






SIGH
WHAT A
BOY CAN'T
DO...



... A GIRL
HAS TO
STEP UP
AND DO.



HELLO.




YOU WANT
TO BREAK
UP ME AND
THOMAS?



IT'S
COMPLICATED.

HE
DOESN'T
HAVE THE
GLITS TO DO
IT, SO...



WELL, HE
DOESN'T
NEED *GLITS*.



I WAS
GOING TO BREAK
UP WITH HIM
AFTER SCHOOL,
TODAY.

WHAT!?



HE'S SO
MOPEY ALL
THE TIME.

I DON'T
WANT TO BE
WITH SOME-
ONE WHO
CAN'T SEEM
TO HAVE ANY
FUN!

I HAVE
AN EYE ON
SOMEONE
ELSE,
ANYWAY.



WHA-
NO!

THE
BREAKUP
HAS TO COME
FROM
HIM!



HUH?

HE HAS
THE *STAIN OF
REJECTION,*
NOW!

I... I
CAN'T BE
WITH
HIM!

YOU'RE
WEIRD,
MIKO.

WHAT'S UP WITH HIM?

GWEN BROKE UP WITH HIM AFTER SCHOOL.

WHICH WAS WHAT HE WANTED, SO...



HE LOOKS...
EUPHORIC.



I THINK HE'S IN LOVE WITH HIS OWN *FREE TIME.*



YOU OKAY, BUD?

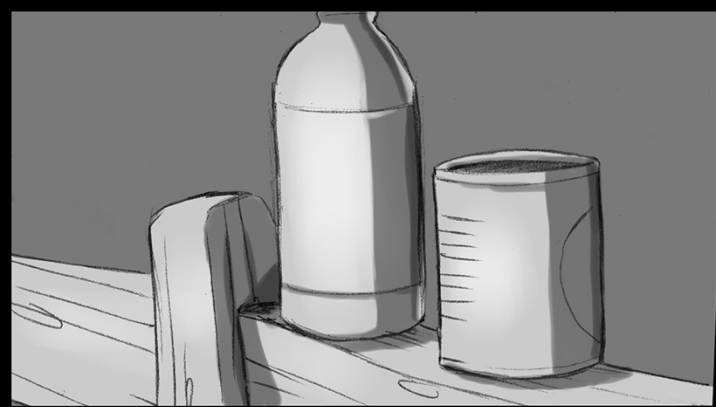


WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO NOW, THOMAS?



WHATEVER
I
WANT.

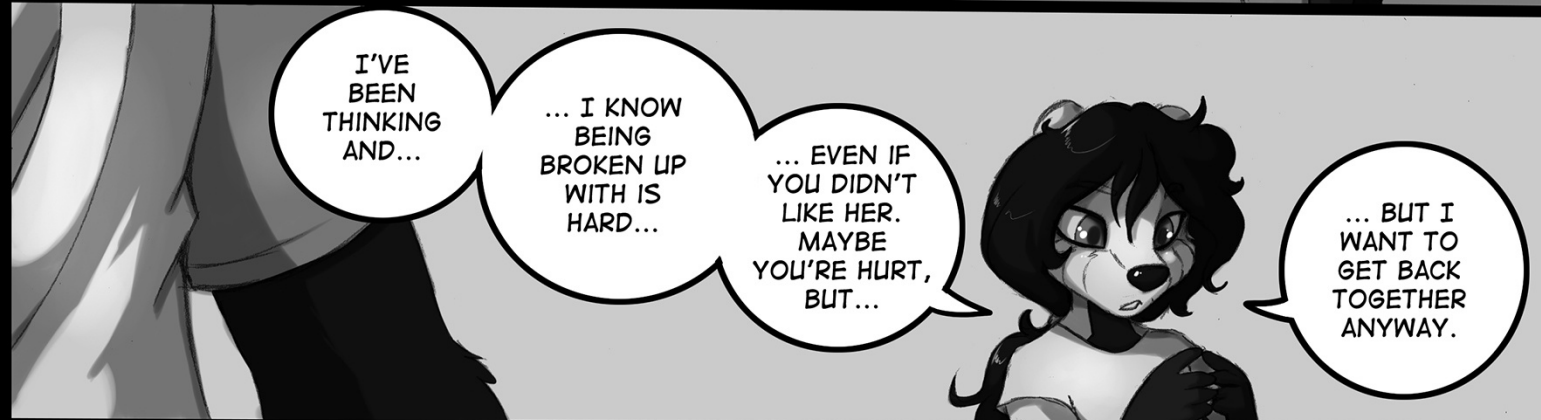




PELLET GUN

THOMAS.

OH, HI, MIKO.



I'VE BEEN THINKING AND...

... I KNOW BEING BROKEN UP WITH IS HARD...

... EVEN IF YOU DIDN'T LIKE HER. MAYBE YOU'RE HURT, BUT...

... BUT I WANT TO GET BACK TOGETHER ANYWAY.



I THINK I *GET* YOU MORE THAN HER.

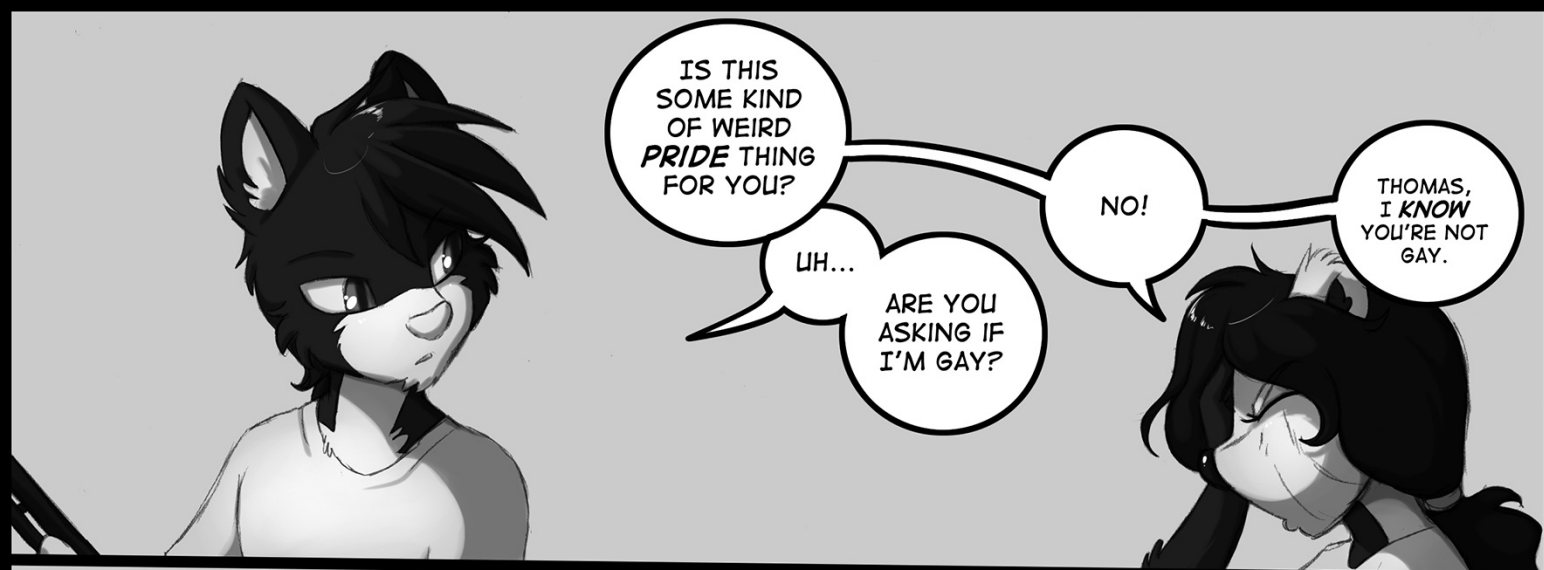
I THINK I CAN ALSO GIVE YOU THE *FREE TIME* YOU WANT.



WELL. ALL I *WANT* IS FREE TIME, RIGHT NOW.

I'M HAPPIER ALONE. SO *NO*.

WAIT, WHAT?
THOMAS!



IS THIS SOME KIND OF WEIRD PRIDE THING FOR YOU?

UH...

ARE YOU ASKING IF I'M GAY?

NO!

THOMAS, I KNOW YOU'RE NOT GAY.



LOOK, I JUST WANT TO BE ALONE RIGHT NOW.

I WANT MY TIME TO BE MINE, NOT WHAT SOMEONE GIVES ME.

SORRY.



WHEN WE WERE TOGETHER, YOU WERE KIND OF CONTROLLING AND JUDGMENTAL.

YOU BECAME YOUR MOTHER.

I DON'T WANT THAT AGAIN.



H-

WH-

...

HEY,
MIKO.

WHAT'S
WRONG?

YOUR
STUPID
BROTHER.

WELL,
THAT'S A
PRETTY
BROAD
SUBJECT.

HE WENT
OUT WITH
GWEN EVEN
THOUGH HE
DIDN'T
WANT TO...

... BECAUSE
SHE HAS
MOO-COW
EYES.

SO HIS
FRIENDS
GOT *ME* TO
TRY TO
BREAK THEM
UP FOR HIM.

BUT SHE
WAS GOING
TO LEAVE
HIM
ANYWAY.

HE HAS THE
STAIN OF BEING
REJECTED BY
GWEN
TEMPLETON!

BUT I'M
SO GREAT
AND FELT I
WANTED TO
GET BACK
WITH HIM,
DESPITE.

AND HE
REJECTED
ME!

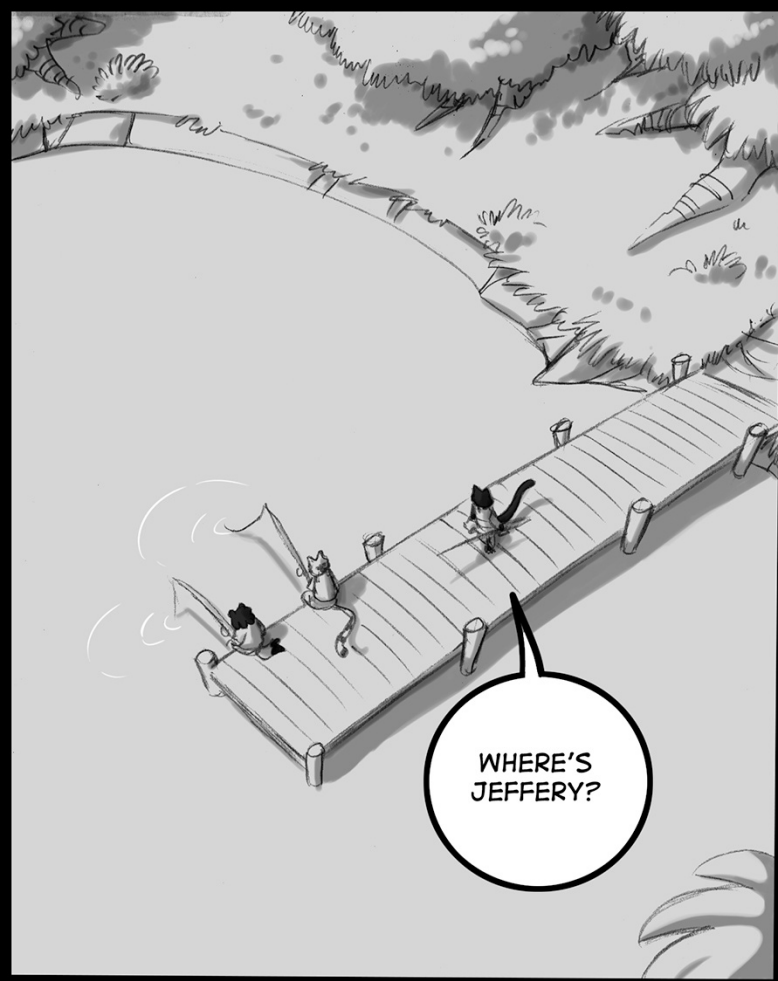
NOW *I*
HAVE THE STAIN
OF BEING
REJECTED...

... BY THE
BOY WHO WAS
REJECTED BY
GWEN.

SO
EXCUSE
ME.

I DON'T
REMEMBER
THIRTEEN
BEING
THAT...

... INTERESTING.





THE
COFFEE
MAKER
WASN'T
WORKING THIS
MORNING.

THE ON
SWITCH WAS
UNRESPON-
SIVE.

IT WAS NOT
AN OUTLET
FAILURE.




I BEGAN
TO FACE THE
PROSPECT OF
A MORNING
WITHOUT
COFFEE.

JUST LIKE
THE DAYS
OF OLD.

I WAS
FORCED TO
OPEN OUR
DISASTER
STORAGE.



WE ARE
NOW DOWN BY
TWO INSTANT
COFFEE
PACKETS.



ITS GRANULAR
FASCIMILE OF
GOOD COFFEE
REMINDED ME
OF A HARsher
LIFE...

... THE LIFE WE'D
HAVE TO LIVE IF
THE TENUOUS
THREADS OF
CIVILIZATION
SHOULD BREAK...

ALL
RIGHT!

I'LL GET
OVERNIGHT
DELIVERY ON
THE NEW
COFFEE
MAKER!



SHEESH.



DAD,
JUSTIN'S
COMING OVER
FOR LUNCH,
LATER.

WHO?

I TOLD
YOU.

WE
STARTED
DATING
LAST
WEEK.

OH,
OKAY.



SO,
I WAS
WONDERING...

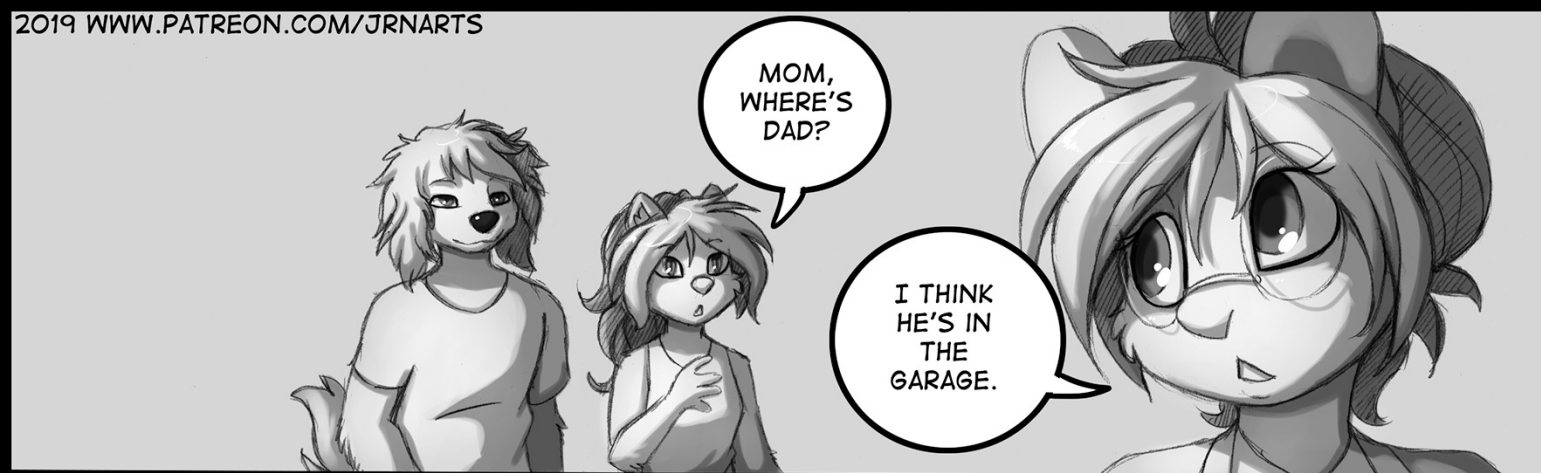
...IF
MAYBE...

... YOU
COULD TRY TO
NOT COME OFF
AS *SCARY* AND
DETACHED AS
USUAL...



WHAT'S
SCARY
ABOUT
ME?

DAD,
COULD YOU
MAYBE DO
THAT
LATER?



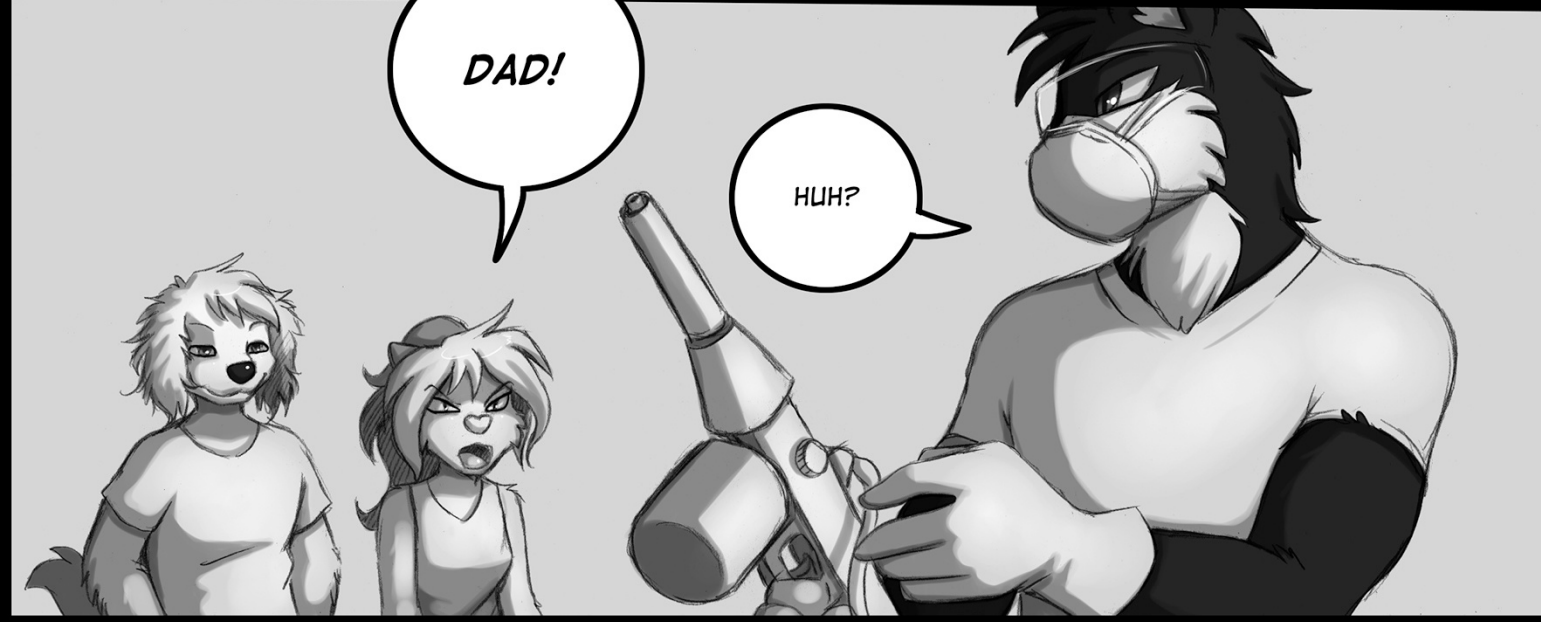
MOM,
WHERE'S
DAD?

I THINK
HE'S IN
THE
GARAGE.



MY DAD CAN
BE KIND OF
OFF PUT-
TING, SOME-
TIMES.

DON'T LET
HIM INTIMI-
DATE YOU.



DAD!

HUH?

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON, MR. BLACK?

A BETTER WORK TABLE.

GOT A PROJECT IN MIND FOR WHEN IT'S DONE?

I'M GOING TO BUILD AN AR-10 FOR WILD HOGS THAT COME ON TO THE PROPERTY.

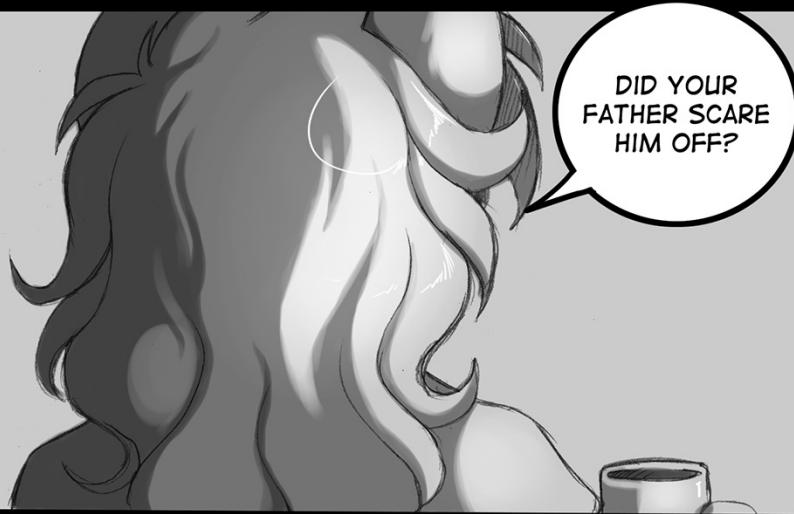
OH, THAT'S RAD.

ARE YOU GOING TO PUT A SUPPRESSOR ON IT?

YEAH.

THINKING OF BUILDING MY OWN AND FILING THE PAPERWORK.

NICE.

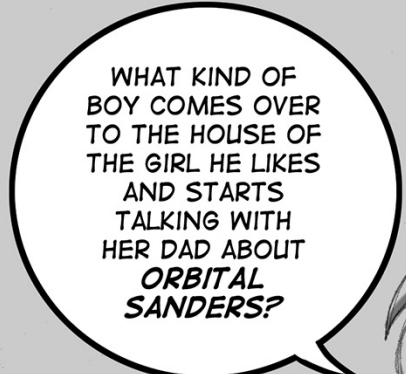


DID YOUR FATHER SCARE HIM OFF?



WORSE.

THEY'RE IN THERE **GETTING ALONG.**



WHAT KIND OF BOY COMES OVER TO THE HOUSE OF THE GIRL HE LIKES AND STARTS TALKING WITH HER DAD ABOUT **ORBITAL SANDERS?**

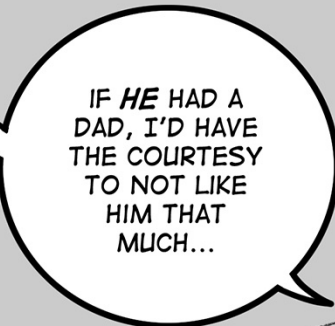


WELL, JUSTIN DOESN'T HAVE A DAD OF HIS OWN AT HOME.

I GUESS IT'S BETTER THAN ACTING OUT.



HE SHOULD GET HIS **OWN DAD.**



IF **HE** HAD A DAD, I'D HAVE THE COURTESY TO NOT LIKE HIM THAT MUCH...








WHAT'S
WRONG WITH
HIM GETTING
ALONG WITH
YOUR DAD?

TOLD YOU
NOT TO DATE
THAT JERK.

SEE...



I HAVE A
RELATION-
SHIP WITH
MY FAMILY.

FAMILY
JANIE
SHOULDN'T
BLEND AND BLUR
INTO **FRIEND**
JANIE...


WHO
SHOULDN'T
BLUR INTO
DATING
JANIE.

THE ONLY
THING WORSE
WOULD BE IF HE
WAS FRIENDS
WITH MY
BROTHER,
TOO.



AH...

WHAT?

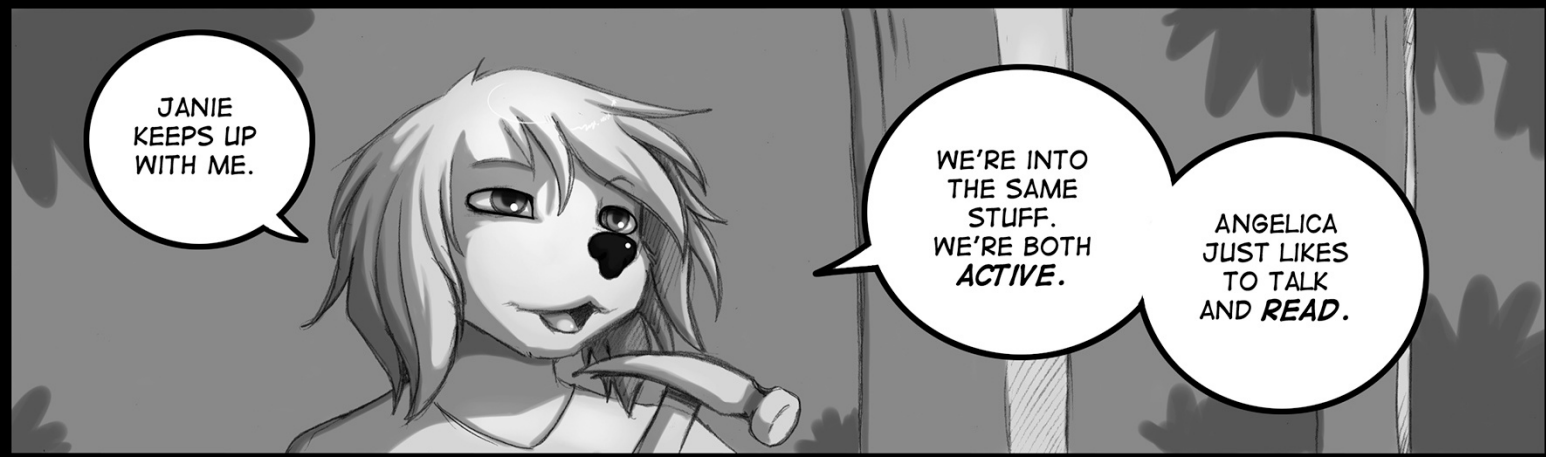


I SAW HIM
AND THOMAS
BUILDING A NEW
TREEHOUSE,
YESTEREDAY.



ANGELICA'S
HOT.

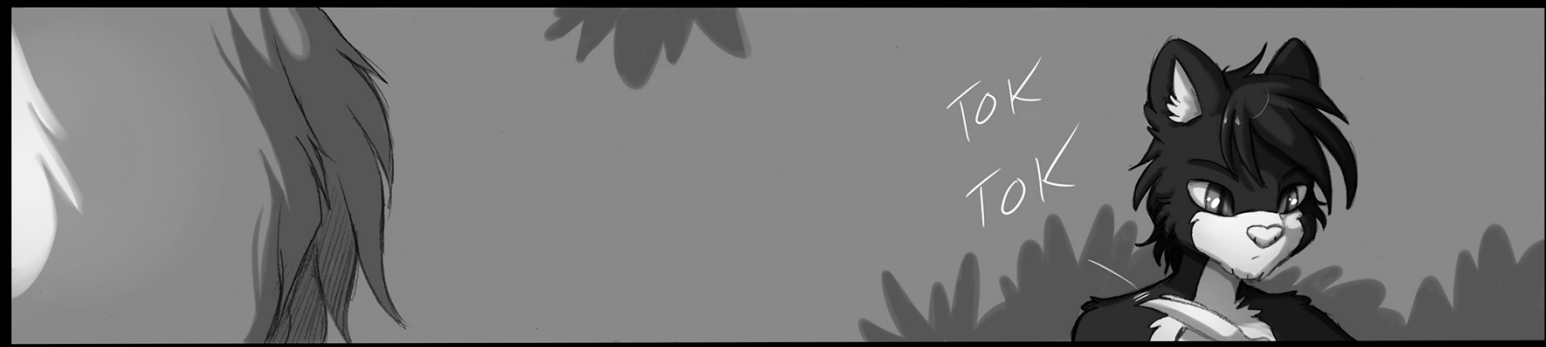
NOT SURE
WHY YOU'RE
WITH MY
SISTER. SHE'S
HEINOUS.



JANIE
KEEPS UP
WITH ME.

WE'RE INTO
THE SAME
STUFF.
WE'RE BOTH
ACTIVE.

ANGELICA
JUST LIKES
TO TALK
AND **READ.**



TOK
TOK



DID JANIE
TELL YOU SHE
WAS BORN A
**HERMAPHRO-
DITE?**

MIGHT BE
IMPORTANT
LATER.