



Mevskie



FOREVER CHILDREN

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This book is not intended as a substitute for ASD or Asperger's syndrome alone. Forever Children was written from one individual's experience, living with the disorder and should not, by any means speak for the entire spectrum.

Despite the work being autobiographical, This is a work of fiction. Characters depicted (except Meryl) having any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental.

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"Now piss off, and enjoy the story."

FOREVER CHILDREN

TO ALL THE SOCIAL MISFITS, AND
WEIRD FUCKERS OUT THERE, THIS
ONE IS FOR YOU.

ALWAYS.

Menkie

FOREWORD

Forever Children is a Dissertation outcome conceived, written, and drawn by Meryl Keioskie within a period of lasting 7 months. Keioskie was officially diagnosed with *Autism Spectrum Disorder* under the DSM V in 2013. At the time of this work's concept, Keioskie had observed that there was a severe lack of ASD literature aimed towards Young Adults, specifically females diagnosed with ASD. Ultimately, the project was inspired by both personal, and altruistic motive, and Keioskie would like to thank whole-heartedly all of the support and as well as influences which make this work possible. *Forever Children* explores Keioskie's world, not being strictly defined by ASD as a disorder, but rather as a lens she uses to discern the world around her. The story delivers its message through a psychological, and sci-fi bent with mysterious characters, whom have access to the world of the subconscious. *Forever Children* is a story about accepting mental shame within ourselves, ultimately coming to the conclusion that disorders aside, we are all human.

A WORD FROM THE TØSSER AUTHOR...

It may have taken me 23 years... but I realize it now, forget school, comics were my education. Looking back at the anti-social ten year old little shit I was, I remember constantly nagging my parents to bring home more comics from the local library each week. It is for this reason, of course, as you'd expect that when I was finally granted the chance through honors to indulge in comics, I jumped at the opportunity with full force, paired off with pangs of anxiety. For me, this project was completely new territory, I had never formally made comics before, despite the yearning. Looking back at old scraps of paper from my research days, I saw the desire was always there: in the form of silly little piss around, dingy comics wedged between my notes. I gave it more thought, and it dawned

upon me that my intermittent pissing around was merely a process of thought for me. Those dingy comics didn't reach anyone else's eyes, and this is what makes this project very different. Never did I think I'd end up producing a very comic of my own, with the intention of it being read by others. Comics from my personal experience makes for a powerful tool of communication. A medium which can impact a reader greatly. Unfortunately, despite apparent improvements, comics and the artists behind them are still seen in a relatively poor light. Hopefully one day this will change and comics will be used to inform, as well as educate people on the same level as the boring arse textbook. I believe that learning best happens when we are stimulated by the content, so why the fuck not?

If you are offended by the foul language, and colloquial use of words found in this book, please kindly fuck off. ASD continues to be stigmatized by the constant coddling and protecting of people's 'feelings'. Real change can only be achieved through discussion and a good dose of humor. Life is a tragic a comedy and we're only here for a short time, after-all, nothing is sacred.

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AND THIS IS HOW IT STARTS

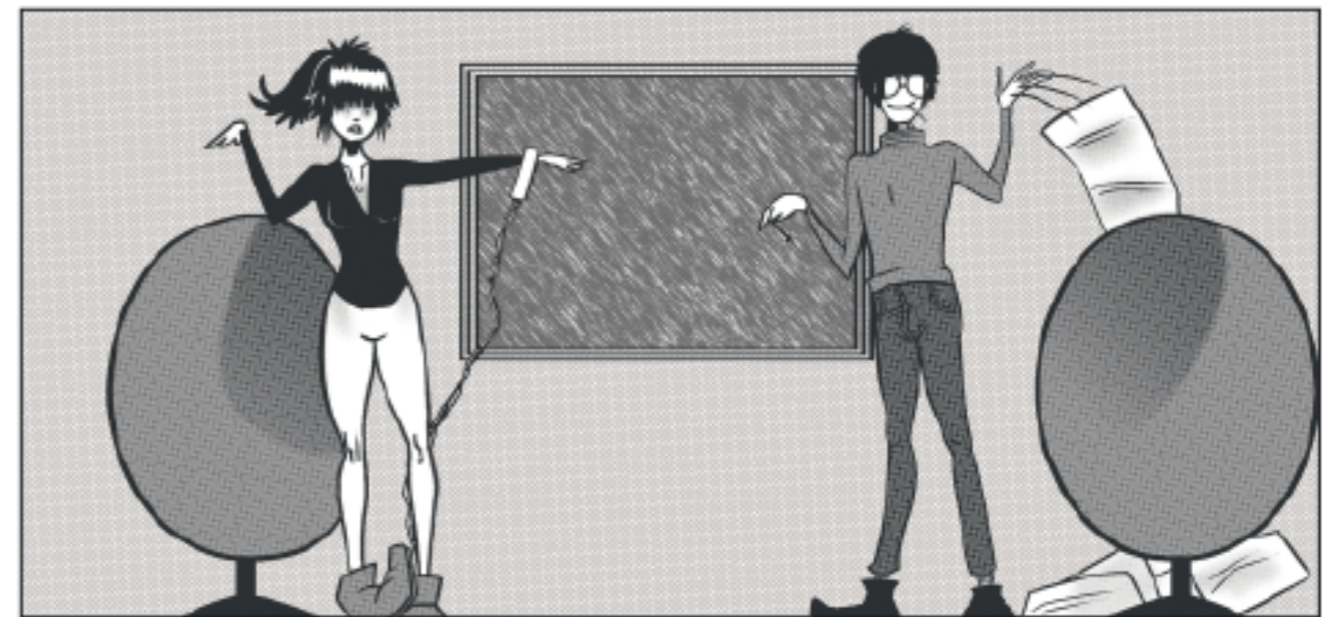
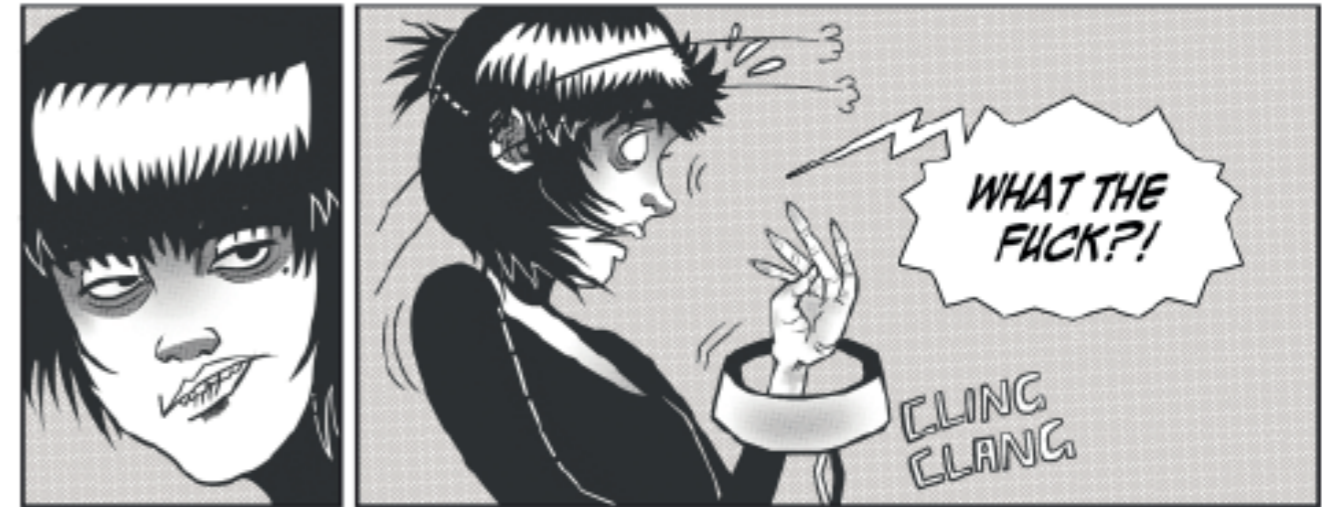
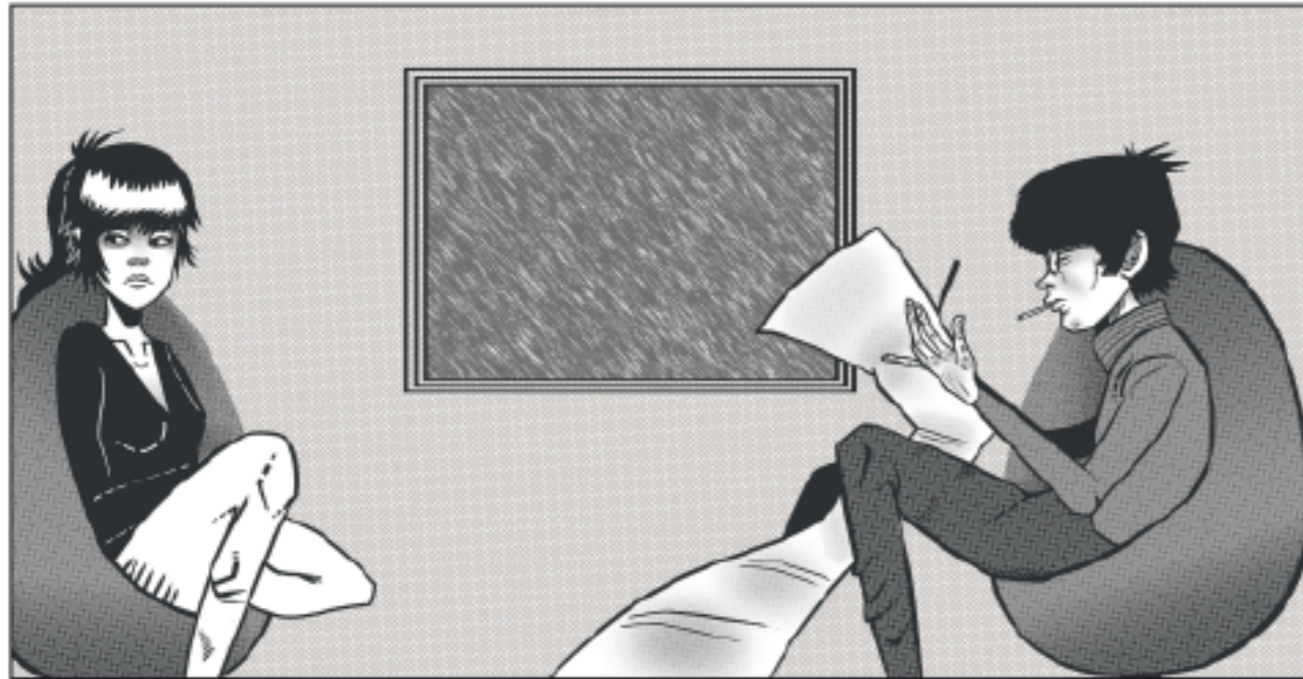
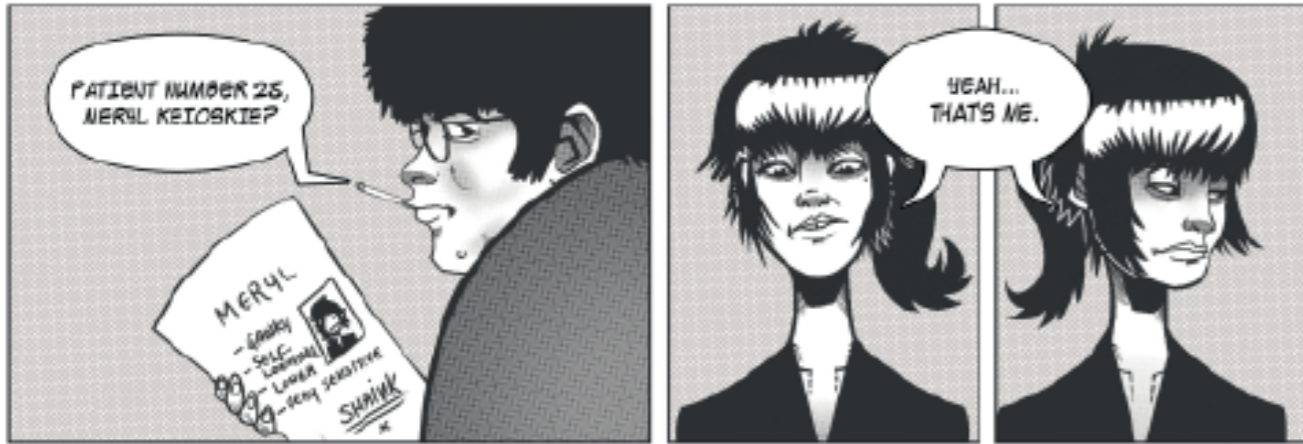
Here we are, starting this story. So I see you're finally here with us, and now we can finally get started. I'm Mick D'goose, and I'll be your guide. There really isn't much to mention about me, although... There is: my various exploits across numerous dimensions, my discoveries in mental exploration, my PHD in inter-dimensional studies, or the fact that I make a mean pot noodle.

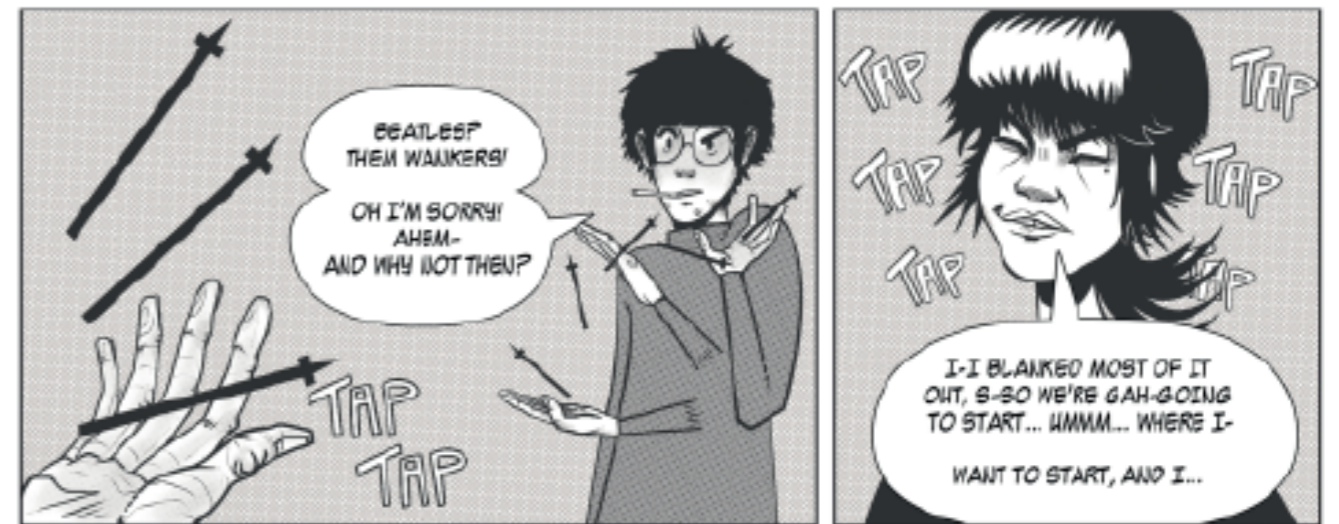
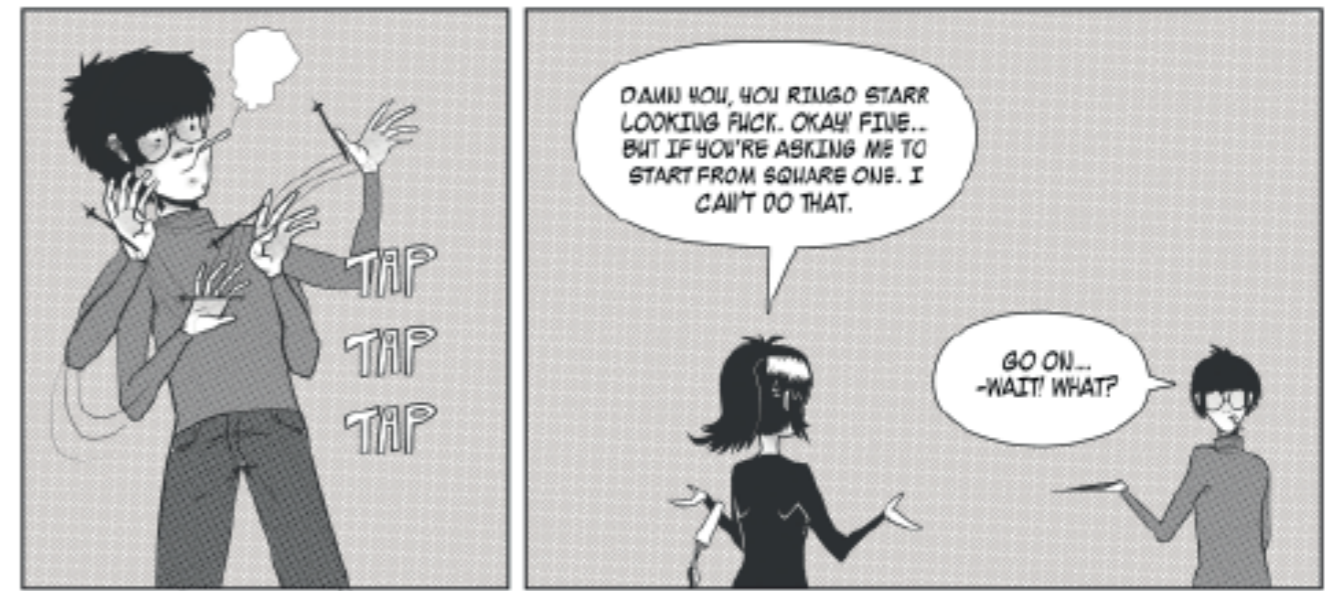
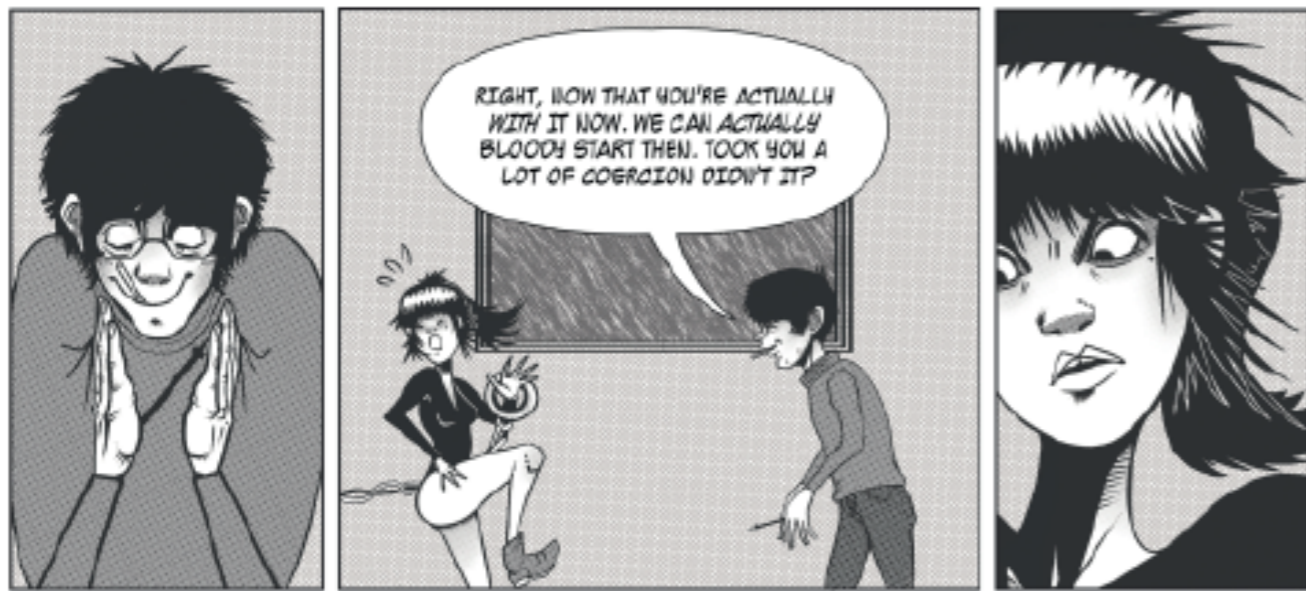
We'll save all of that for later, because the truth is, this isn't my story. It's about a 23-year old, human female by the name of Meryl Keioskie whom was diagnosed with *Autism Spectrum Disorder* on the presumably Mayan calendar human years of 2013. Is she perhaps significant in any way? No, my ocular implants don't pick up on anything particularly worthwhile. She possesses no special abilities, no super powers, no royal lineage, no remarkable biological factors, and is quite ordinary as far the eye can see- except there's one key difference! Her mind works in a very different way. If that's piqued your interest, then we can continue... It all began when me and one of my temporal assistants: Shrink received her call through the inter-dimensional ether. The call also pinged at my ocular sensual implants, which alerted me towards a rejection in the mental dimension, or rather, her mind. An interference of sorts which needed addressing, as it would threaten the equilibrium of chi within the ether, for you see, a mind can latch itself (sometimes unwillingly) to forces outside of primate comprehension. I suppose I could enlighten you... You see, I work in a very special frame of business, called: "*Mind your own business.*" So, it is with her message,

and my need to resolve my own best interests, Shrink and I set off... Space Van(tura) fueled, a pot of Earl Grey freshly brewed, an old box of records pinched from the Empire in Leicester Square, and a router set directly to your dimension. Dimension 0.23. Earth child, if you are confused, do not worry yourself. Further luminance can and will be acquired easily. After-all, let's not forget that you *do* have the power to turn the pages.

Go on, reader. We will meet again.

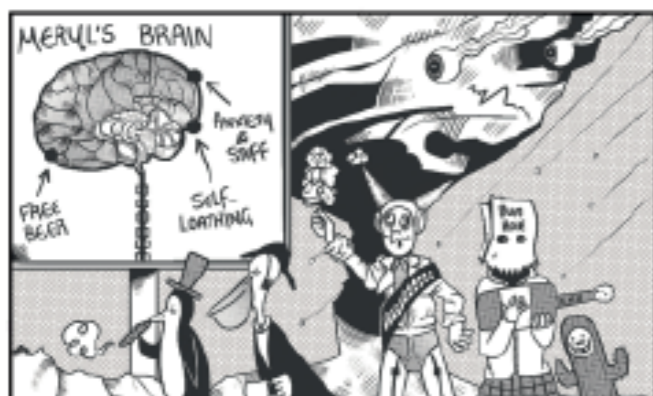








Life is a lot like a play for me... We the people are actors. The world a stage.



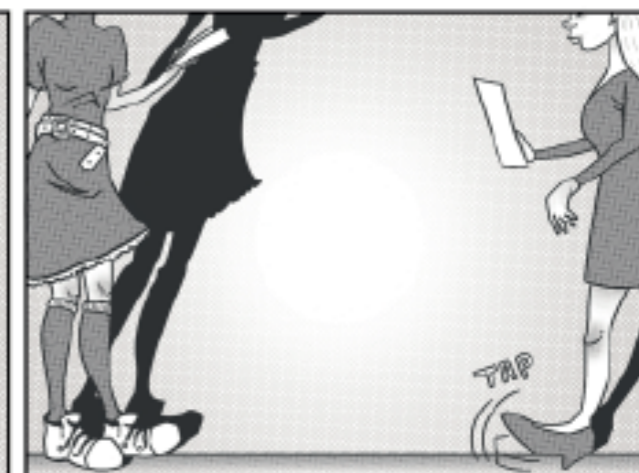
NO! You wanker... The set-up would be whatever you as an individual person would see reality to be. Look- that's not that point, we're getting off track here. Piss off so I can continue...



So, the other 'actors' in the play would be holding their scripts, reading them out with such unflinching smoothness. There'd be others stuttering there too of course, getting their words jumbled all jumbled from the stress of it all.



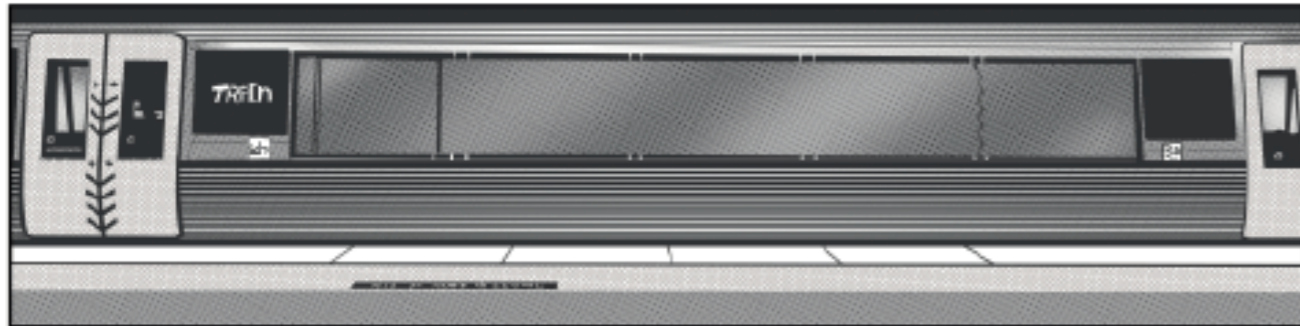
Then... there'd be those few whom had their scripts stamped onto their frontal lobes, like the lucky primates they are. And, of course among them is none other than an unimpressive case: Me.



And well, sometimes I can't read the metaphorical script in question. It's as if it's in another language.



Then, you have public transport.



What makes it especially terrible for me is that I can smell everyone and everything...



What they ate, what perfume they're wearing, bad body odour, and of course the occasional piss-stain hobo piece de resistance taint. Most people smell like they've been rolling around in: cigarette butts, regret, and Axe body spray.



Sure, everyone has their share of whiffing in those unforgettable delights at least once in their miserable lives, the difference here is that often... These people are at least a metre or more away from my nose.



Everything is a fucking puzzle box. Like the wig of an orange, tanned narcissist.



My retinas are roasted like snags in a microwave. Black-eyed blister in the sun.



My soul vibrates like a string, and it wants to escape my body desperately.



It's not just coordination, light, or noise which poses a challenge. There's also eye contact.



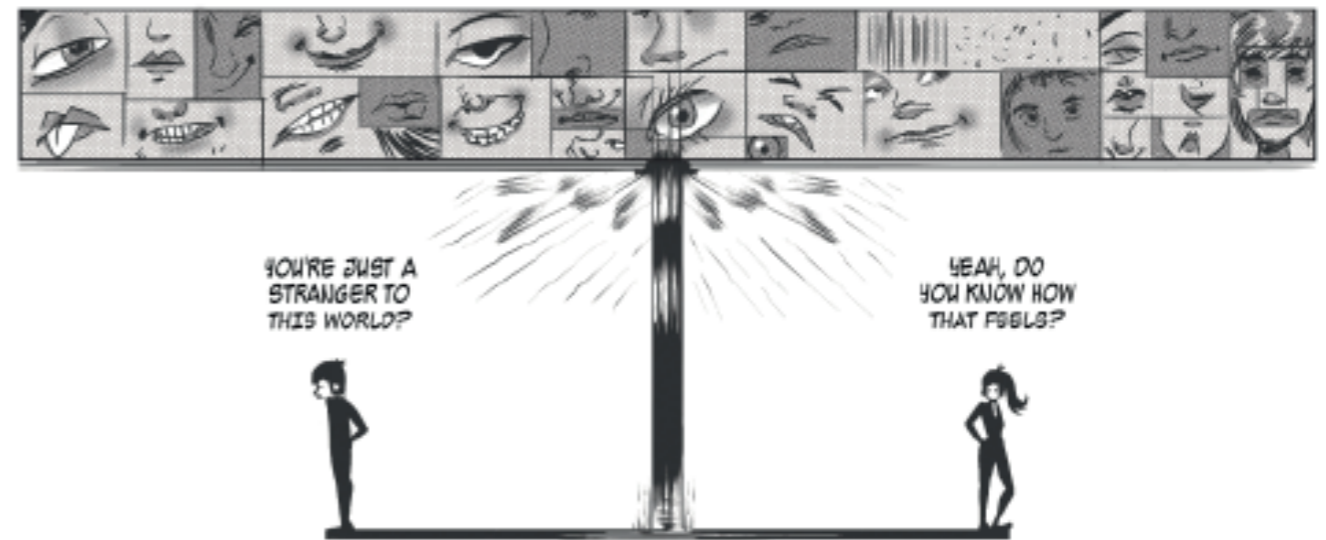
I tend to avoid eye contact for the main reason that there's just... way too much going on. For me, socializing is a lot like jumping through an impossible gauntlet, that's well impossible.



You can improve in it, but the thing with having my mind is that the facilities in socialization seem to decay a lot faster. If I'm not out there constantly kissing people's asses, or making pitiful small-talk pretending to care about their new toaster or whatever - poof! There goes my social skills.



It's not just individuals which pose a challenge for me. It's crowds. I have to keep my eyes off their faces, for the reason that each and every person out there has a unique face. That in-turn equals a unique mish-mash of code in need of deciphering. People confuse me, and it feels as if I'm reading off a personal guide that's far too rigid for this chaotic world.



THE DREAM MACHINE

Welcome back, dear reader. I see we are meeting again. So, what have we come to realize about our 23 year old, human female Meryl?

Her mind works in quite a different way, yes. Lights hurt, sounds hurt, her human meat tools refuse to listen (hands, for you lay people), other primates confuse her, and the world is all a stage.

Well, it seems during the tea break, I had realized that there was additional probing to be done. Earlier, if you were listening, I had mentioned a superfluous power known as the ether. If there is a rejection of old haunts within a mind then this chaotically wrecks havoc on the equilibrium of chi (energy). Sure, it may seem insignificant to a mere reader such as yourself, but inter-dimensional travelers and Mick D'goose's use this very ether as a means of dimensional hopping.

...Anyway, erase that thought from your minds. In this chapter, we will be exploring Meryl's issues with *Autism Spectrum Disorder* yet again, however we shall address the past. Exploring what role childhood had played with Meryl for this disorder.

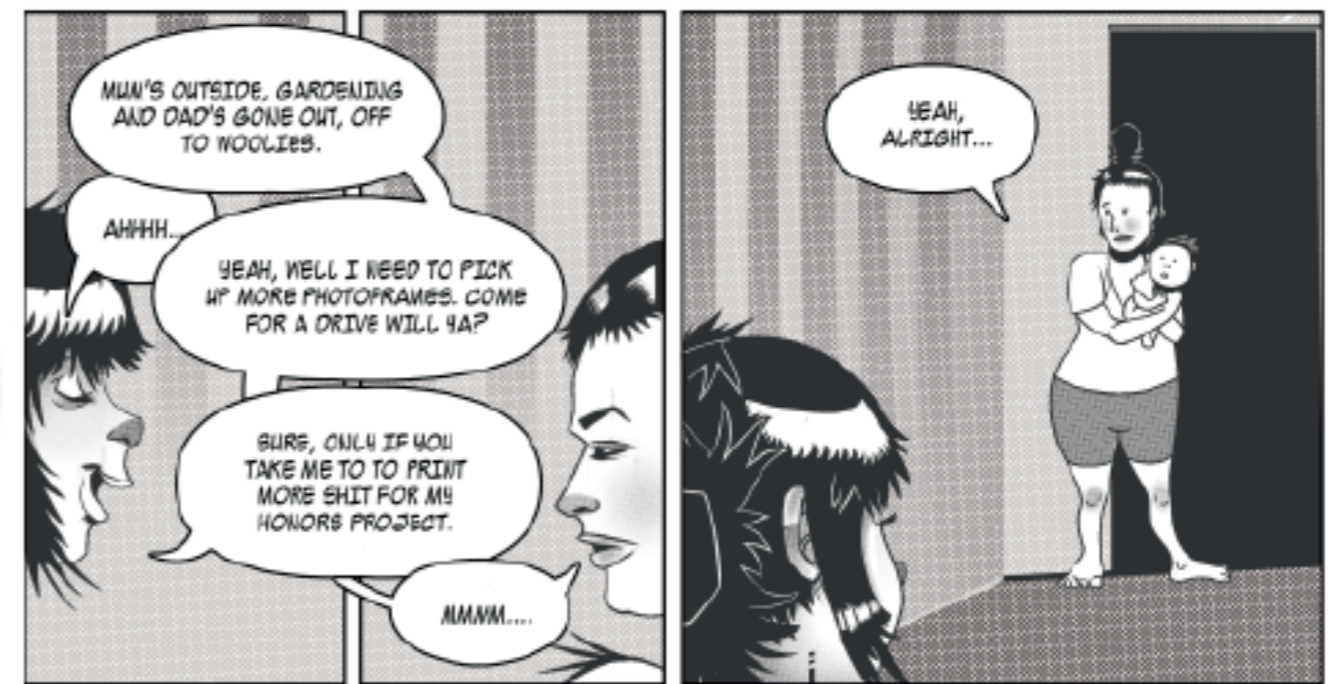
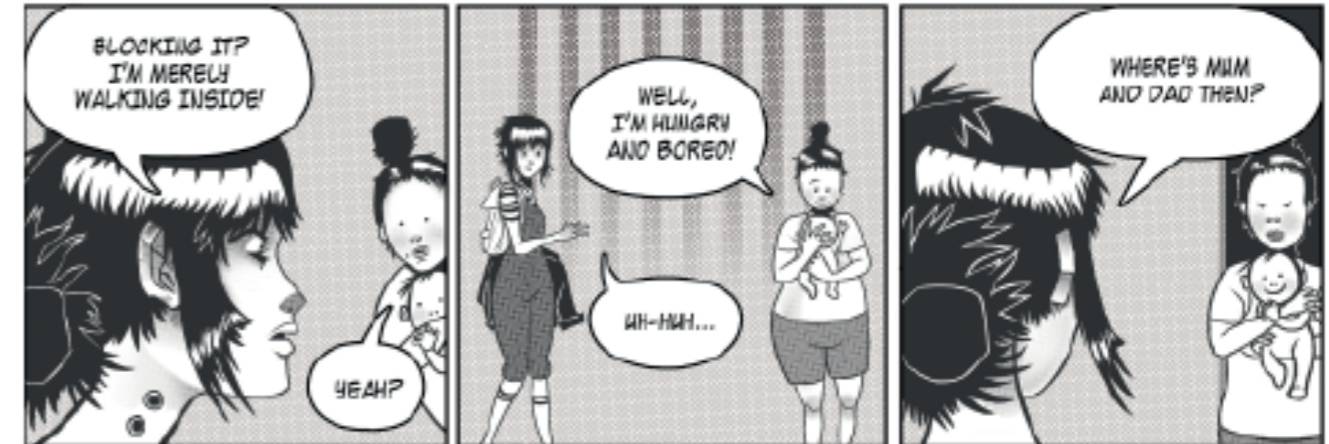
So, how will Shrink and I go about to cracking Meryl's brain open? Simple, through the use of one of my very own patents: *The Dream Machine*. A head-set which can blur the lines between both reality, and the very sea of dreams found in human coconuts. This allows us, the voyeur, a very intimate look inside a subject's mind. In this case, the subject in particular is Meryl. This device grants us access to her origins of rejection, past experiences, fears and memories of such

things. Although a stellar patent of mine, I must profess in saying... *The Dream Machine* is still in need of numerous testing. Many test subjects have reported positive results in renewed reality, as well as incidents of... existential dread as potential side effects. Essentially, yes, in the right mop-topped hands it could prove to be quite an enlightening tool for self-exploration. Oh, and if I may, reader, I would like to impart some wisdom onto you. Remember to think twice, always... for...

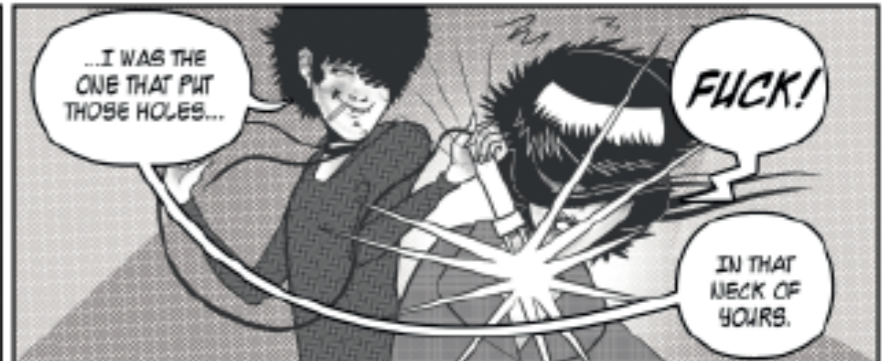
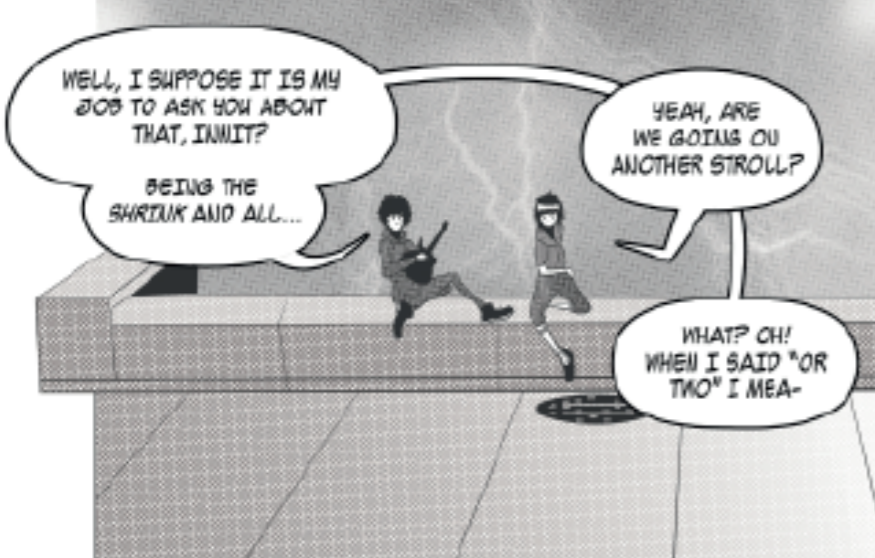


...things will never be what they always seem.

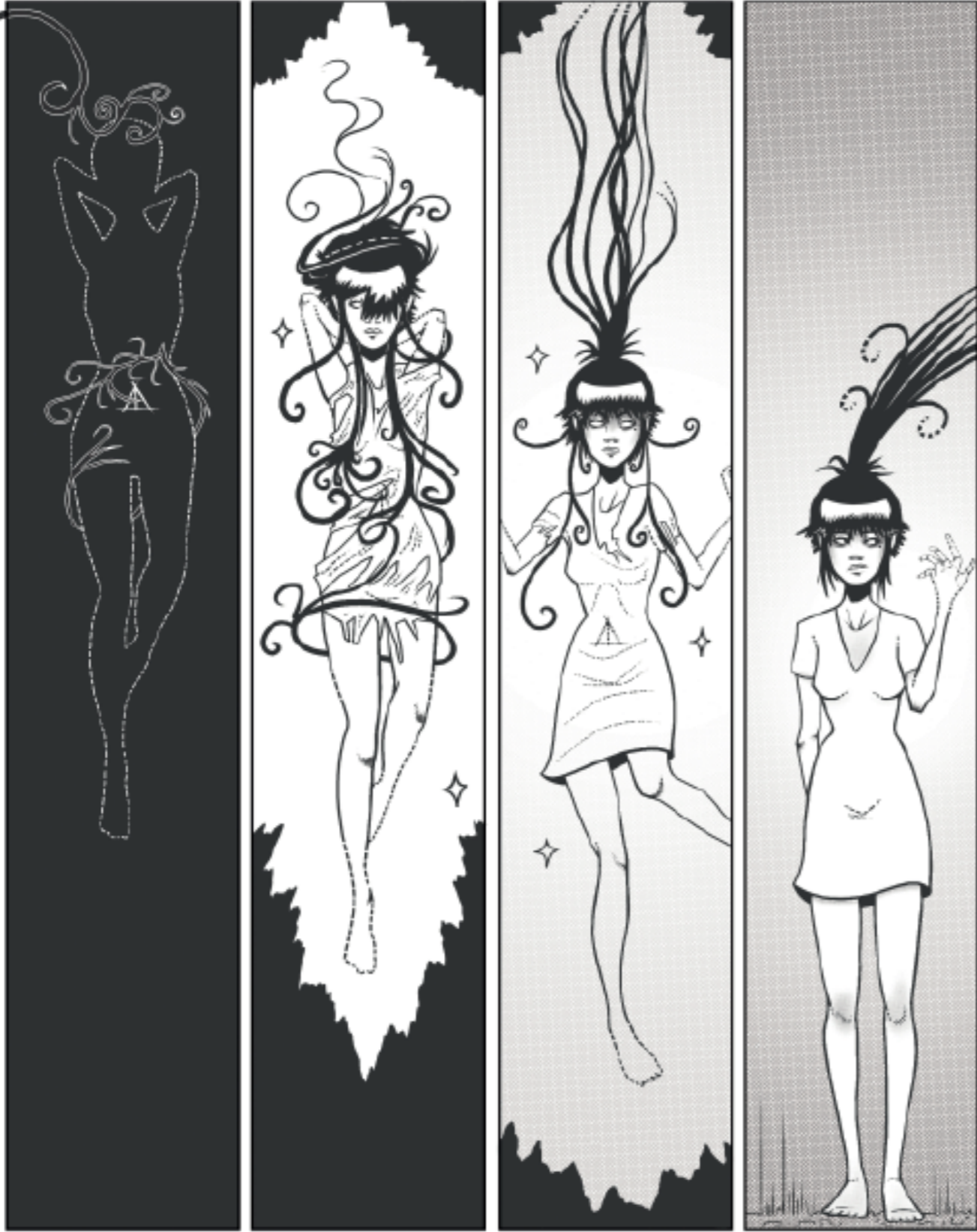








Shit, I'm asleep! The Dream Machine knocked me out...

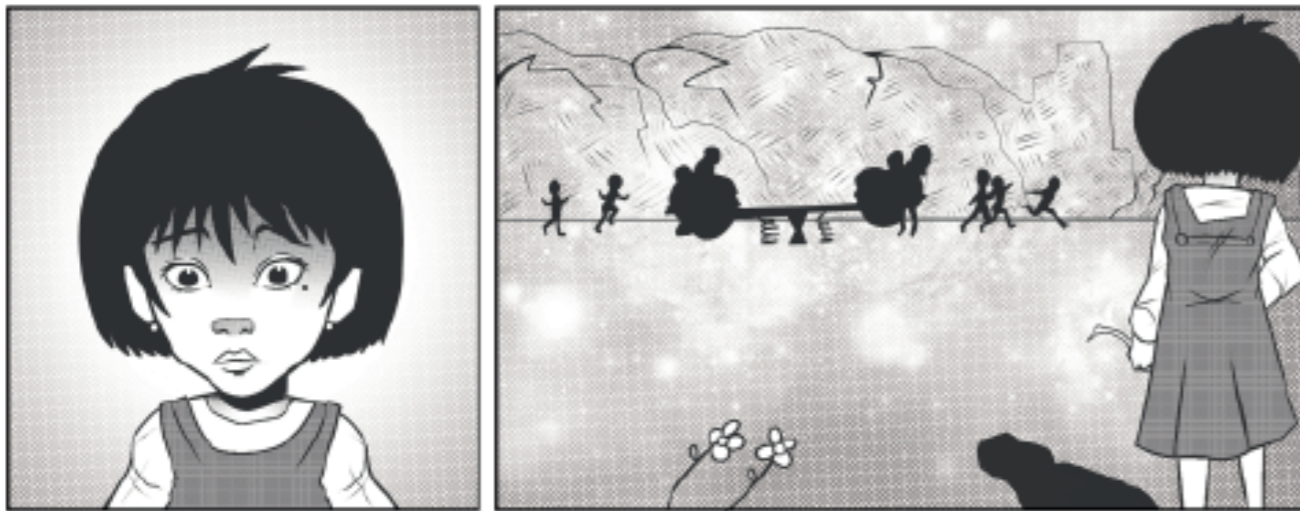


Fucking Shrink, argh! So... I must be inside my mind then?

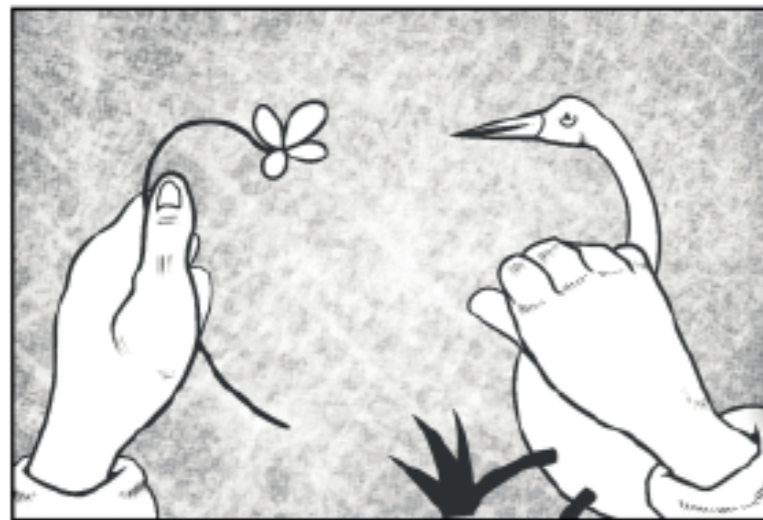


What a shit hole.

Hey, that's me! Past me, when I was three years old!



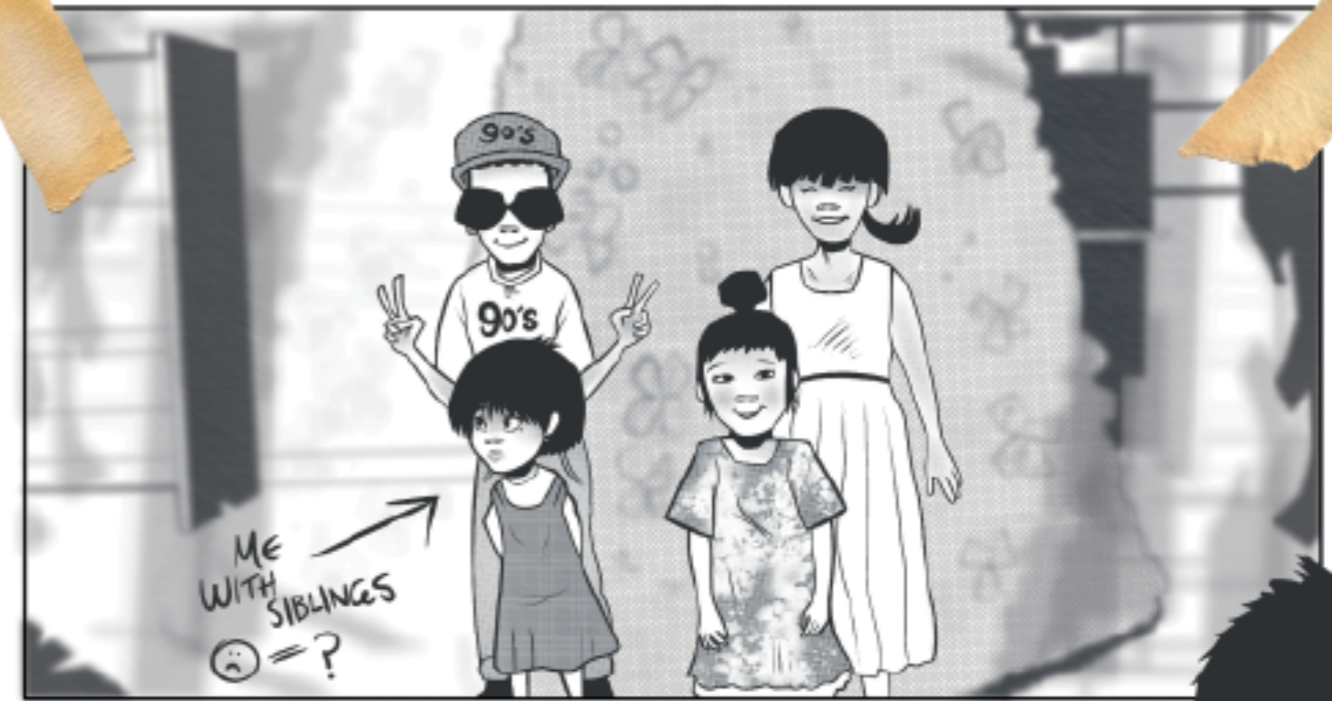
Oh hey! I'm starting to remember something. I recall, at the age of three, I was oblivious to other kids. I was completely absorbed in playing on my lonesome.



I wasn't interested in looking at their faces, and I couldn't really understand what their facial expressions meant. I could feel what they felt, absolutely, but as for understanding why. That was beyond me. I didn't even know what a smile meant...



I remember how I never smiled. I didn't understand why people did it in photographs. Even my siblings.



And although I spent a lot of my time alone, I wasn't a lonely kid. No, I never felt that way at all. For you see, I found distraction in other things, such as my toys and the world around me. My hours spent alone, away from the confusion of the world was what I loved most about my childhood, and that's still true today.



Shrink! Is that you? I knew you'd appear, eventually...



HELLO, THERE.

I REALLY DIG WHAT YOU'VE DONE WITH THE PLACE. TOP EFFORT, LOVE. IT'S NOT AS MESSY AS IT USUALLY IS. BUT THEN AGAIN, YOU'RE NOT THE ONE THAT LIVES HERE, HAHA! WELL DON'T STOP THERE, KEEP GOING WITH RAMBLING ON ABOUT YOUR PAST AND WHAT HAVE YOU...



THANK-YOU FOR JOINING ME ON THIS JOURNEY OF WITNESSING MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCES, OF LIVING WITH ASD

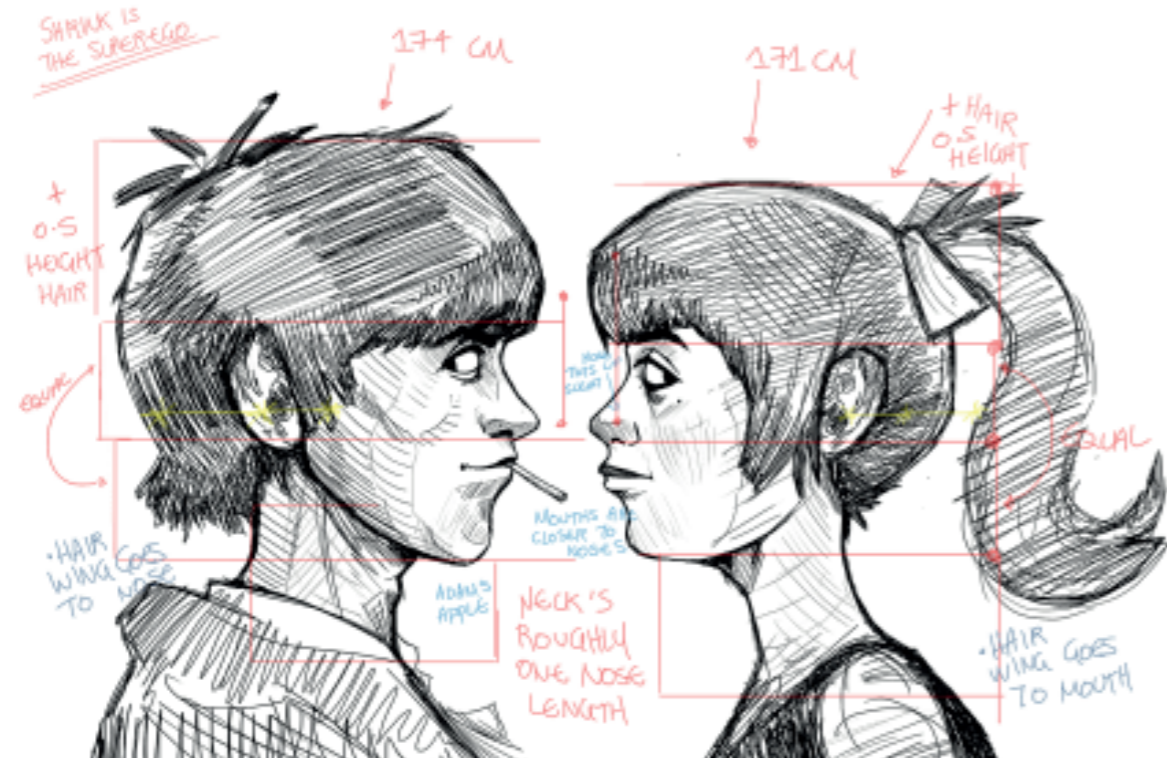
I HOPE I HAVE INSPIRED ANYONE WHO HAS DEALT WITH HARDSHIP, WHETHER THAT BE ASD OR ANY OTHER CONDITION.
 TO PREVAIL AND OVERCOME LIFE'S CHALLENGES.
 AFTER ALL, LET US REMEMBER...

...EVERYONE HAS A STORY TO TELL AND I HOPE YOU AGREE WITH ME, THAT COMICS ARE A GREAT WAY TO SHARE EXPERIENCES! ANYWAY,
 YOU'LL SEE ME AGAIN, WHEN I CAN BE ASSED IN MAKING ANOTHER COMIC OR TWO!



SKETCHBOOK
& SCRAPS

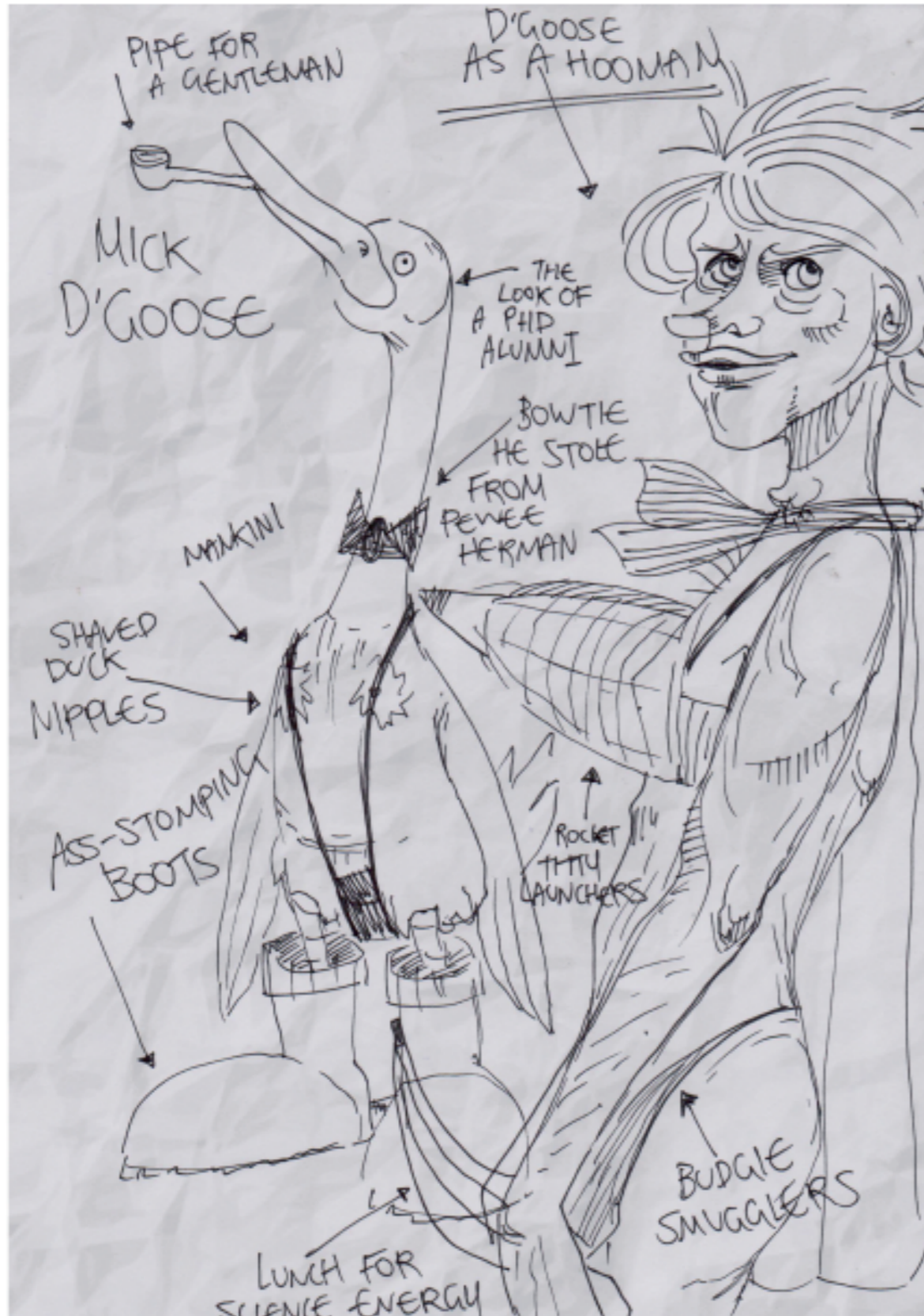
CHARACTER PLANNING



CHARACTER PLANNING

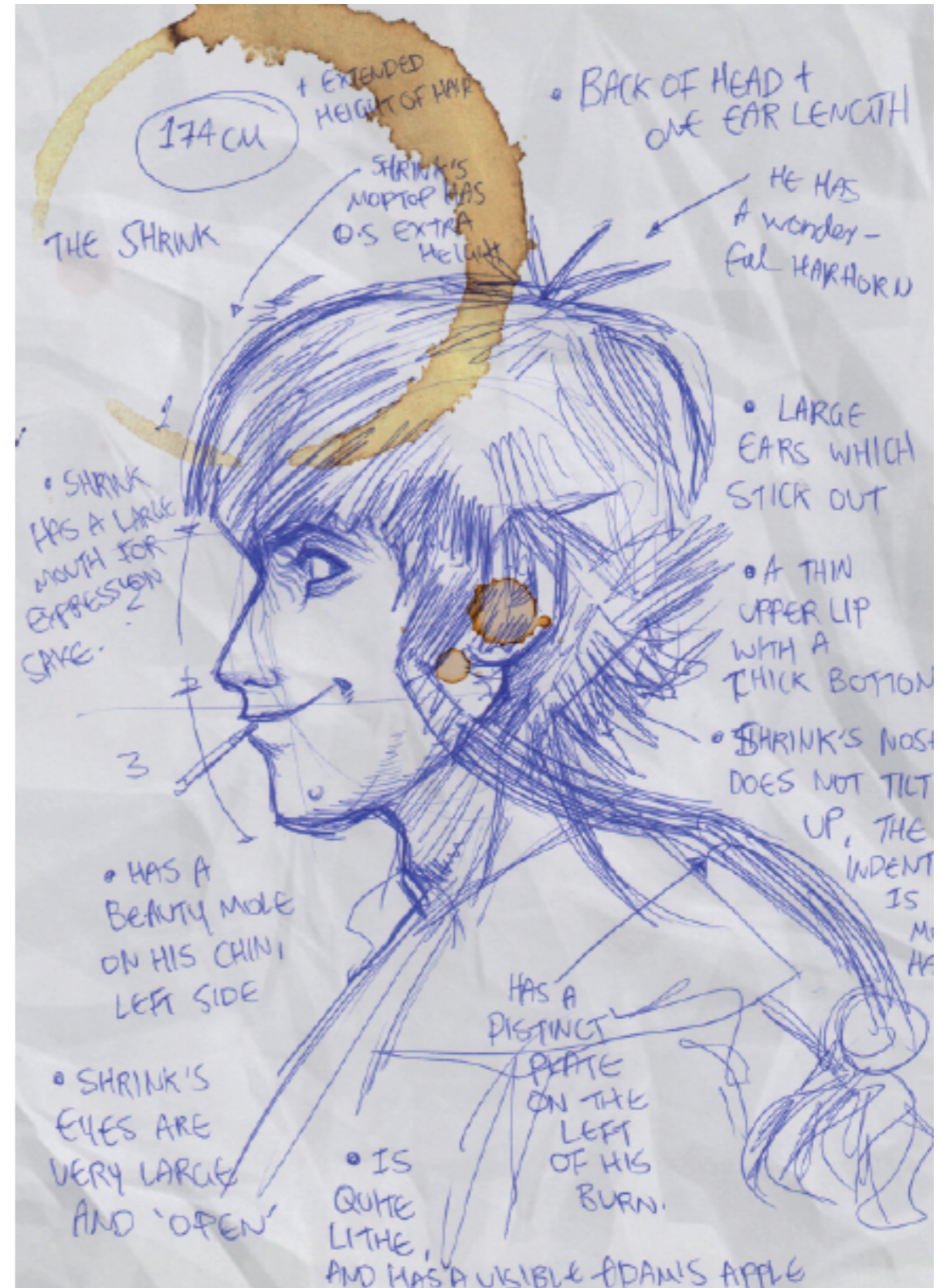


CONCEPT SKETCHES: PROTO-D'GOOSE



#46

CONCEPT SKETCHES: PROTO-SHRINK



#47

CONCEPT SPLASH-PAGES



#48

PHOTOGRAPHS REFERENCED



#49

2ND GRADE LETTER 1/2

21st November, 2001.

To whom it may concern,

Meryl Keioskie has been a Year 2 student in our class throughout 2001. With encouragement and support, she is producing average achievement in her work. While she is a co-operative and imaginative student with very good general knowledge, she was referred to the guidance officer because of concerns regarding her behaviour and social development. The guidance officer reported her results showed her of average intelligence.

The following behaviours have been observed throughout the year:-

- *difficulty creating social 'connections' in the room, joining working/social groups and particularly in the playground.
- *a very large personal space. If this space is invaded by other children, she becomes very agitated (will growl at the other children).
- *fixation on topics. While she has a wide general knowledge, it is often very difficult to steer her away from her interests to the topic at hand.
- *difficulty giving eye contact.
- *unusual gait in her walk, will often walk on her toes or in a jerky manner.
- *very often holds her hands with her fingers pointing in toward her chest, particularly when she feels uncomfortable or confronted.
- *'hides' from new people or people with whom she feels uncomfortable by ducking behind other people. When they move, she will run to stay hidden behind their backs.
- *large amount of fine and gross motor problems - handwriting, physical education
- *visual perception difficulties eg. tracing, tracking from the board to book.
- *difficulty with spatial organisation eg. setting out maths problems.
- *feels threatened and has difficulty if she has to express/discuss her emotions, even to write them in an activity.
- *enjoys talking to familiar adults and is very articulate but, earlier in the

2ND GRADE LETTER 2/2

2.

year, would have difficulty beginning the conversation and would stand in front of teachers until we initiated the conversation by asking questions about what she wanted.

- * will be unable to work if too much noise in the room.
- *will hide under the desk from a child sent to help her with her work.

Meryl's father reports seeing many of these behaviours/difficulties at home, but they appear to be much more accentuated in the classroom situation and, even more so, in the playground and in more unfamiliar circumstances such as specialist teacher lessons.

If you require any additional information, please contact me at the above address.

Many thanks,

RESOURCES

Below you will find a collection of suggested websites, literature, videos, and organizations. These resources offer support, guidance, and inspiration to those diagnosed with ASD, as well as those whom are curious finding out more about the disorder. A lot of the information is regionally based in Australia, as that is where the author is from. If you are interested in further pursuing information, consult your public library. Don't let this book speak for the entire disorder of ASD, as your knowledge is only limited to how much you the reader, are interested in the subject itself. Be curious, always. You human, you.

SUGGESTED WEBSITES

- <http://www.autismawareness.com.au>
Autism Awareness is Australia's leading voice for autism.
- <http://www.autismlaunchpad.org.au>
Resources for ASD individuals leaving school.
- <http://researchautism.net>
Working to identify and increase understanding about the best interventions for autistic people and their families.
- <http://www.tonyattwood.com.au>
Tony Attwood is well known for sharing his knowledge of Aspergers Syndrome.
- <http://www.mindsandhearts.net>
Minds & Hearts provides services and training specifically for Asperger's Syndrome and autism.
- <https://www.mydiffability.com.au>
"My Diffability Australia" is an online supplier of toys and resources for people with different abilities within Australia.
- <http://www.footprint.com.au>
Footprint books specializes in selling books associated with ASD.
- <https://www.griffith.edu.au/education/autism-centre-excellence>
The central focus of the Autism Centre of Excellence (ACE) is improvement in the quality of life of children and adults with autism. Griffith University is a university committed to undertaking cutting edge research to address educational needs.
- <http://www.templegrandin.com>
Dr. Grandin became a prominent author and speaker on both autism and animal behavior. Today she is a professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University.
- <http://education.qld.gov.au/asd-online-resource-kit/support/purchasing-resources.html>
Central hub, of QLD government which lists more suggested resources for those located in Australia QLD.
- <http://autismsciencefoundation.org>
The Autism Science Foundation's mission is to support autism research by providing funding and other assistance to scientists and organizations conducting, facilitating, publicizing and disseminating autism research.

SUGGESTED LITERATURE (ASD)

- **Tony Atwood:**
"The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome"
"Asperger's Diagnostic Assessment"
"CBT for Children and Adolescents with High-Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorders"
"Asperger's Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Professionals"
"Asperger's and Girls"
- **Glòria Durà-Vilà and Tamar Levi :**
"My Autism Book: A Child's Guide to Their Autism Spectrum Diagnosis"
- **Book by American Psychiatric Association:**
"Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition: DSM-5"
- **Cynthia Kim:**
"Nerdy, Shy, and Socially Inappropriate: A User Guide to an Asperger Life"
- **Sean Barron and Temple Grandin:**
"The Unwritten Rules of Social Relationships"

SUGGESTED WATCHING

- "We Thought You'd Never Ask: Voices of People with Autism"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKj9NDHo8bg>
- "Dr. Temple Grandin: "The Autistic Brain: Thinking Across the Spectrum I Talks at Google"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IA4tE3_2qml
- "Temple Grandin" 2010 · Drama/Biography [Film]
Biographic film about Temple Grandin.
- "Mary and Max" 2009 · Indie film/Drama [Film]
Two individuals forge an unlikely friendship through letters.
- "Atypical" 2017 - Comedy series (Netflix Original)
This heartfelt comedy follows Sam, a teenager on the autism spectrum, who has decided he is ready for romance.

COMICS WHICH INFLUENCED THIS PROJECT

- **Jamie Hewlett & Alan Martin - 2012:**
"The hole of Tank Girl"
- **Alejandro Jodorowsky & Moebius (Jean Giraud)- 1985-1995:**
"The Incal"
- **Nick Sousanis - 2016:**
"Unflattening"
- **Art Spiegelman - 1986:**
"Maus"

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS (ROLL THE CREDITS)

So how does one end a book? I've never been great at ending things. I don't believe there is an end to anything really, because I see things in a transformative manner. Experiences don't leave us entirely, rather we build upon them with new moments (Unless you suffer from a memory erasing malady of some sort, I apologize). This isn't the end of my journey, after all the year is 2017, and at this current moment, I am deliberating which future path to meander down. I intend to undergo a doctorate, wherein I can push this research to a higher more contributive level. Hopefully, when I read back on this page, I can be satisfied that my supposed future narrative has been played out to succession. If not, then c'est la vie. Now, as this is the acknowledgments section, we should get the proverbial ball rolling. This book is a product of sleepless nights, existential dread, rolling metaphorical boulders up hills, and one too many cigarettes with a dash of tea wedged between comforting vinyls spinning in the background. Oh, and also this book wouldn't be possible without the few that helped this (me) hack of an author along the way. Whatever role you lot played, you sure as hell gave my life the zest, laughter, drama, and meaning that made it actually worth carrying up the khyber, if you know what I'm saying. Nonetheless, let's dedicate this whole page to the people past my name, that actually matter.

Firstly, to Jamie C. Hewlett (AKA: Jay Weasel/Hewll). You may not know it, but you are perhaps the main reason I started to and continued to draw. So thank you. You tosser.

Thank-you Mike and Danny for your tremendous support through-out these seven months. Thanks Family, for always being around my gawky arse, as well as putting up with my erratic sleeping patterns. And more importantly, a shout-out to these influences I simply could not do without:

Terry Gilliam, Douglas Adams, Bill Murray, John Lennon, Kurt Vonnegut, David Hockney, Steve Dillon, Tanino Libertore, Keith Richards, The Rolling Stones, Johnny Marr, Jason Pierce, Sydd Barrett, Alfred Hitchcock, Michel Gondry, The Smiths, The Clash, Quentin Tarantino, The Undertones, Television personalities, Gorillaz, Damon Albarn, The Jam, Federico Fellini, Tracy J Butler, Satoshi Kon, Neil Gaiman, The Coen brothers (the good ones), Shaun Tan, MAD magazine, Mort Drucker, Seung Eun Kim, Wes Anderson, John Frusciante, Bernard Krigstein, Brendan McCarthy, Ronald Searle, Justin Roiland, Dan Harmon, Salvia Erik, John Kricfalusi, Tom Fowler, Mac Demarco, the color magenta and all it stands for, Terry Moore, Ralph Steadman, Hunter S. Thompson, Jack Keroauc, Every one of the Beatles, Brian Epstein, Slavoj Žižek, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Genndy Tartakovsky, Jonathan Jafari, Doug Walker, Salvador Dali, Mervyn Peake, George (Joji) Miller, Nicholas Cage, David Bowie, the color blue and all it stands for, Jean Giraud (Moebius), Charlie Kaufman, Zach Braff, embracing the absurd, Alejandro Jodorowsky, Raphael Bob-Waksberg, John Waters, David Lynch, all the sexy physicists out there, that fabulous Jarvis Cocker, the dude which hates everything, God Forbid, delicious stringy bean-pole musicians, melodica keyboards, rainy days, Pg fuckin' tea bags, 3D glasses, fairy lights, Alex James, discovering new music you actually like for the first time, synthesizer keyboards, ducks and geese, Penn & Teller, brogues, miniature plastic food items, Knee-socks, constructing massive graveyards on any Sims game, Rene Descartes, Noam Chomsky, Friedrich Nietzsche, G.I Gurdjieff, Ralph Bakshi, Gabriel García Márquez, Vince Gilligan, the pursuit of science, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and many more influences I've yet to discover/remember in this single sitting. Alright...

Thanks readers... you've been a great audience. Now fuck off.

REC



FOREVER
CHILDREN