

BREAKS

A love story... but a bit broken



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EMMA VIECELI ~ MALIN RYDÉN

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Cover coloured by Christina Strain



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BREAKS

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Keep up with Breaks, every Monday: www.breakscomic.com

To Pud, Elle and the DAH posse.x

- Emma

To Aleph and CJ for making me a better writer.
To Elle and the DAH crew for sparking these shenanigans.

- Malin

SCHOOL RIVALS. EVERYONE HAS ONE, RIGHT?
NO? WELL, **CORTLAND HUNT** HAS BEEN A THORN
IN MY SIDE SINCE HE TRANSFERRED HERE THREE
YEARS AGO...



HE'S AS CHILDISH AS ME,



AS DEVILS AS ME...



THOUGH, IF CERTAIN RUMOURS ARE
TO BE BELIEVED, HE'S NOT NEARLY
AS MUCH FUN AS ME.



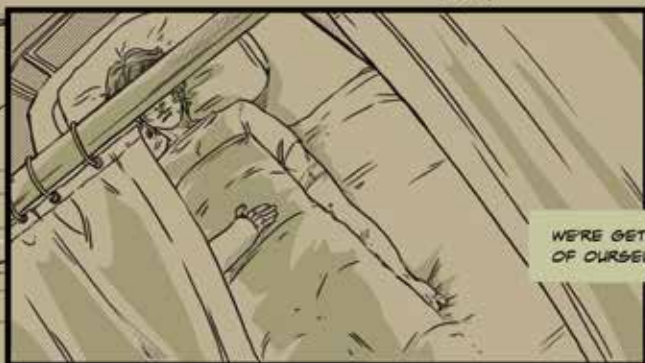
CHILDISH PRANKS, TESTING EACH OTHER'S LIMITS.

I'D LIKE TO SAY THAT, OVER THE YEARS, OUR
RELATIONSHIP HAS EVOLVED A LITTLE; MATURED...





...MAYBE I SHOULD BACK UP.



WE'RE GETTING AHEAD
OF OURSELVES.

LET'S GO BACK TWO MONTHS.

IT ALL STARTS, AS SO MUCH
DOES, WITH *CORTLAND*...

WHAT THE HELL
AM I DOING?

YOU'RE GOING TO
SOCIALISE. YOU'RE GOING TO
BE HUMAN. YOU'RE GOING TO
BE CHARMING AND YOU'RE
GOING TO KISS GIRLS.

OH, GREAT SENSE!
TEACH ME THE
WAYS OF SOCIAL
GRACES, PLEASE.

THIS ISN'T
ABOUT ME.

YOU NEED TO
GET OUT OF YOUR
ROOM BEFORE YOU
FORGET WHAT THE
OUTSIDE WORLD
LOOKS LIKE.

IT LOOKS
LIKE SCHOOL.

YOU KNOW
WHAT I MEAN.

YOU'RE NOT MY
DAD, HARVEY!
STOP TALKING AS
IF YOU WERE.

AND I DON'T REMEMBER
YOU STICKING YOUR
NOSE OUT OF YOUR
ROOM WHEN -

SKREEECH!



JESUS,
HARV!

DONT. YOU.
DARE.

IF YOU'RE EVEN
THINKING OF
COMPARING A FEW
SCRAPS AT
SCHOOL TO...



JUST,
DONT.



...



I JUST DONT
WANT TO GO TO A
STUPID SCHOOL DANCE,
THAT'S ALL



LOOK, I KNOW WE'RE
NOT THE MOST NORMAL
FAMILY, BUT I'M TRYING,
CORT. I REALLY AM.

AND IF YOU
WANT TO TALK
ABOUT WHAT'S GOING
ON AT SCHOOL...

HARVEY...YOU'RE
NOT MY DAD. YOU'RE
MY BROTHER.

AND THAT'S
ENOUGH.



YOU SURE
YOU WANT TO WALK
THE REST OF THE
WAY? I COULD DROP
YOU CLOSER.

NAH, IT'S OKAY.
UNLIKE THIS SUIT
YOU LOANED ME. HOW
DO I LOOK?

LIKE ME,
I GUESS.

THAT BAD?

EH! UP AND
GO ENJOY
YOURSELF.

















WHAT THE
FUCK,
TANNER?!

OH, MAN.
DID I DO
THAT?

WHAT THE...
ARE YOU
PISSED?

SPLASH

SORRY, MAN.
I THINK THAT
PUNCH HAS JUST
HIT ME!

THIS THING
WAS EXPENSIVE!
YOU WANT ANOTHER
PUNCH TO HIT YOU?

DON'T.

WHAT?
YOU THINK
SPENCER CAN
TAKE ME?

YOU
KNOW I
DON'T.

LEAVE IT.

SOBER UP,
TANNER, AND
GROW A BLOODY
LIVER.

YESSIR!


THINGS AS
THEY ARE? YOUR
GETTING INVOLVED
WOULD PROBABLY
NOT HAVE HELPED
ME ALL THAT
MUCH.

WHO SAID
ANYTHING ABOUT
HELPING YOU?

SCREW THIS.
I'M DONE HERE.







AWW, WHERE
YOU OFF TO,
COURTNEY?

IT'S NOT
MIDNIGHT
YET.

FUCK OFF,
SPENCE

ARE YOU
THAT SCARED
OF ME THAT
YOU'RE RUNNING
AWAY FROM
THE DANCE?

AREN'T THERE
SOME MINIONS BACK
THERE QUEUING FOR
A CHANCE TO KISS
YOUR ARSE?

GO TEND TO
YOUR FLOCK OR
SOMETHING, AND
LEAVE ME THE
HELL ALONE.

I SAID
PISS OFF.

YOU THINK YOU'RE
CLEVER? THINK YOU'RE
A TOUGH GUY? I'VE
BROKEN PEOPLE LIKE
YOU BEFORE, HUNT.

YOU KNOW...
I HEARD THIS
RUMOUR...



...THAT YOU
TRANSFERRED HERE
WITH A CRIMINAL
RECORD.
**ASSAULT OR
SOMETHING?**



I DON'T
BELIEVE IT.

PRETTY SURE
IT'S BOLLOCKS.



SCREW THIS.

HAVEN'T I
TOLD YOU
DON'T
WALK AWAY
FROM ME!



IT **HAS** TO BE
BOLLOCKS.

THERE'S NO
WAY A WEAK-ASS
FAG LIKE YOU
COULD HURT
SHIT.



YOU'RE SCARED
OF ME, HUNT.
JUST LIKE
EVERYONE.

YOU HAVE TO
LEARN SOME
RESPECT IF YOU
WANT ME OFF
YOUR BACK.









THE FACT IS, HE DIDN'T, AND HE WAS TERRIFYING IN THAT MOMENT.

BUT HE HAD CROSSED A LINE THAT EVERYONE BUT HIM UNDERSTOOD, IT SEEMED. YOU JUST DIDN'T MESS WITH SPENCE. BECAUSE SPENCE...



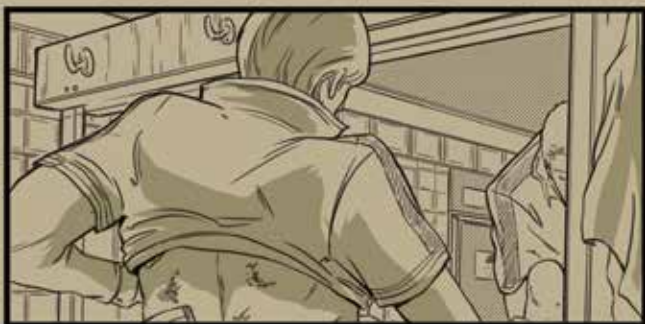
LATER.
HUNT.

...HE NEVER PLAYED FAIR.



ISSUE 2

OKAY! I
WANT TO SEE
YOU ALL ON THE
TRACK IN SIX
MINUTES!



I DIDN'T THINK
COURTNEY HAD
FUCKED HIM UP
THAT BAD.

LIKE SPENCE
WOULD WANT
ANYONE TO
KNOW.



I'M PRETTY SURE
THE BLACK EYE IS
NEW THOUGH.

I GUESS HIS DAD DIDN'T
APPRECIATE ANOTHER
CALL FROM SCHOOL.



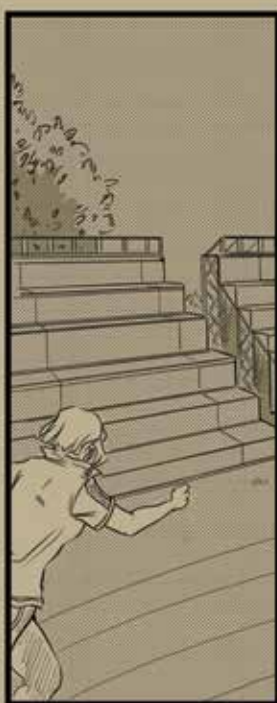
SPENCE DOES.
THAT'S THE ONLY
THING THAT COUNTS.



YEAH. CAN'T BELIEVE
HUNT DOBBED. PRICK.

WAIT...YOU THINK
HUNT REPORTED
SPENCER?









I THOUGHT YOU UNDERSTOOD ABOUT KEEPING YOUR HEAD DOWN!



SIX MORE MONTHS, CORTLAND. IS IT SO HARD?



YOU WERE THE ONE WHO WANTED ME TO GO TO THE PARTY.

THIS IS MY FAULT NOW!

NO, BUT...



PLEASE TELL ME YOU UNDERSTAND HOW IMPORTANT THIS IS!



OF COURSE I UNDERSTAND! THIS MEANS MORE TO ME THAN ANYONE!

BUT HE'S IN MY FACE ALL THE TIME AND...



NO, YOU'RE RIGHT. I'LL JUST STAY OUT OF HIS WAY AND NO ONE WILL DO ANYTHING THEY REGRET.

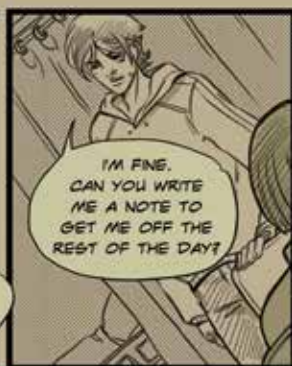


EASY AS PIE.



LIKE HELL IT IS.

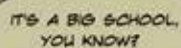




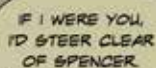




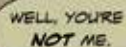




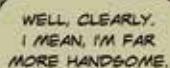
IT'S A BIG SCHOOL,
YOU KNOW?



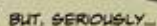
IF I WERE YOU,
I'D STEER CLEAR
OF SPENCER.



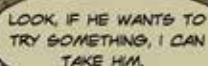
WELL, YOU'RE
NOT ME.



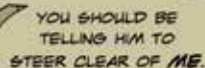
WELL, CLEARLY.
I MEAN, I'M FAR
MORE HANDSOME.



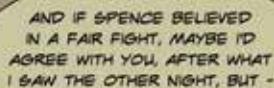
...
BUT, SERIOUSLY...



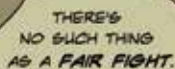
LOOK, IF HE WANTS TO
TRY SOMETHING, I CAN
TAKE HIM.



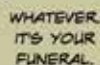
YOU SHOULD BE
TELLING HIM TO
STEER CLEAR OF ME.



AND IF SPENCE BELIEVED
IN A FAIR FIGHT, MAYBE I'D
AGREE WITH YOU, AFTER WHAT
I SAW THE OTHER NIGHT, BUT -

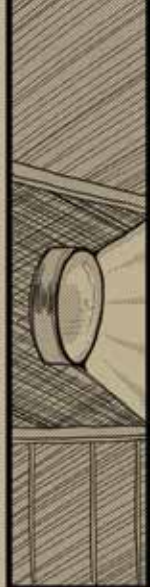


THERE'S
NO SUCH THING
AS A FAIR FIGHT.



WHATEVER
IT'S YOUR
FUNERAL.





SPENCE: DONT COMPLAIN. U GET 2 WATCH FILMS 4 FUN

MILLZ: AND CRIT THEM :{

MILLZ: HAVE 2 WATCH THIS NEW FRENCH ONE
FOR NEXT WEEK. SUBTITLES :{

SPENCE: WE CAN WATCH TOGETHER 2NITE?

MILLZ: U HATE FRENCH! LOL. I'LL DRAG AN ALONG THIS W/E













NO. DON'T YOU DARE USE ME TO COVER WITH YOUR MUM, IAN.







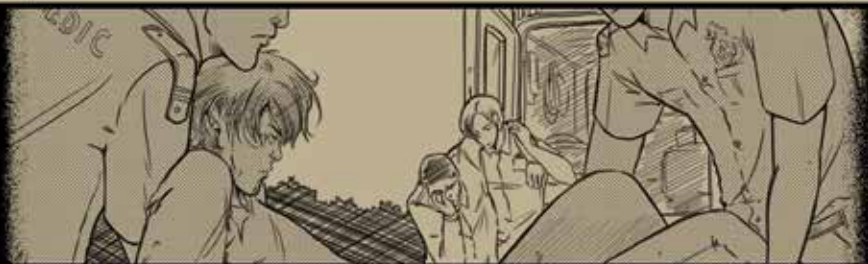






ISSUE 3







I'M HERE TO
VISIT A FRIEND.
HUNT, FIRST NAME,
CORTLAND?

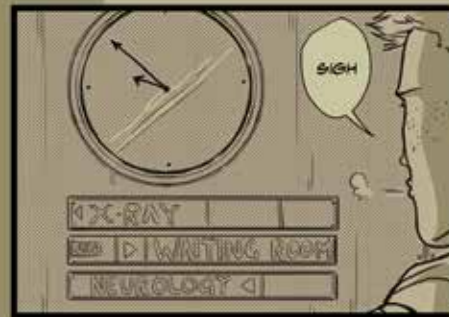


HE'S IN
NEUROLOGY,
BED 211.

BUT VISITING HOURS
DON'T START UNTIL
ELEVEN AM.



THANKS.
I'LL WAIT.











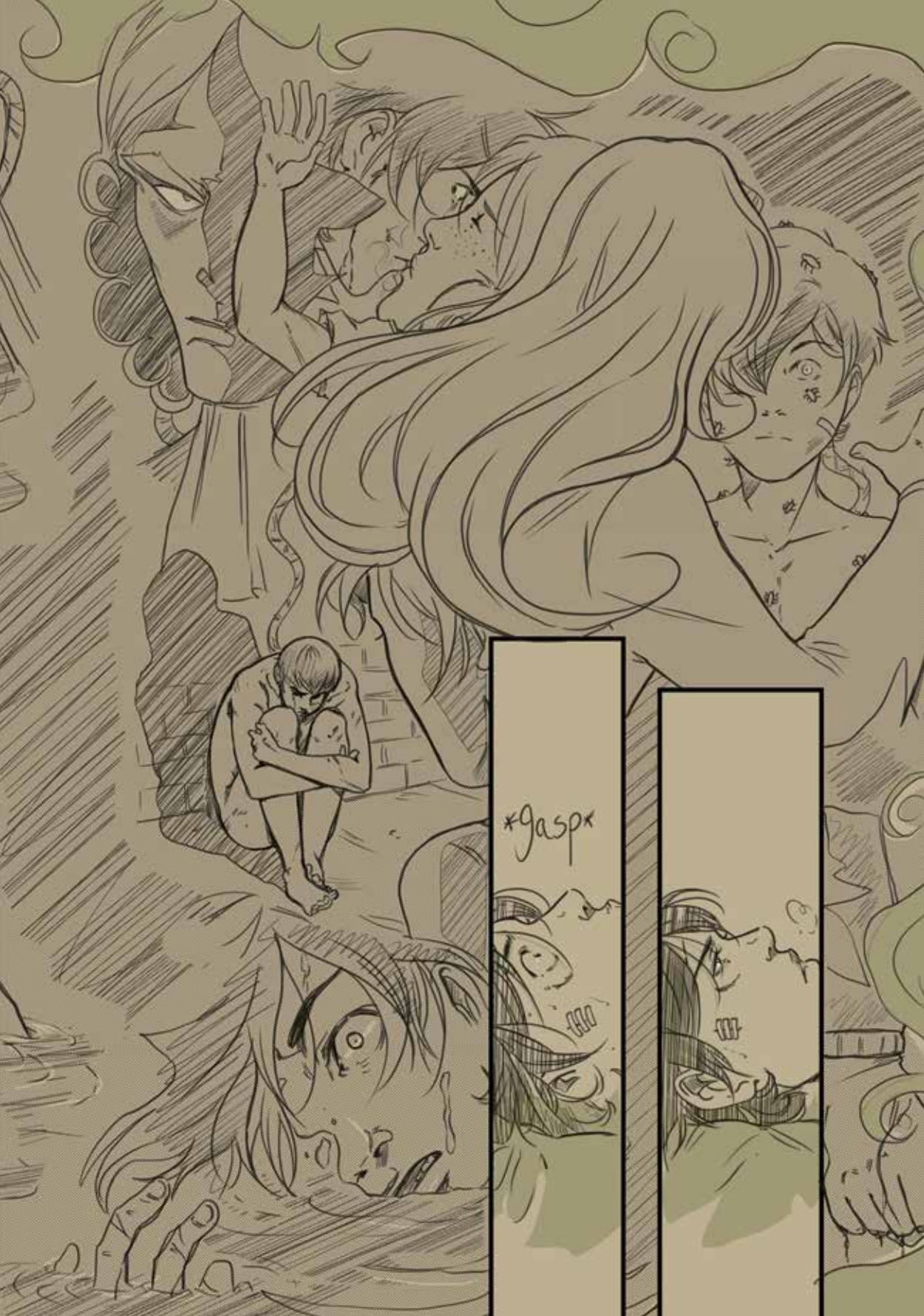






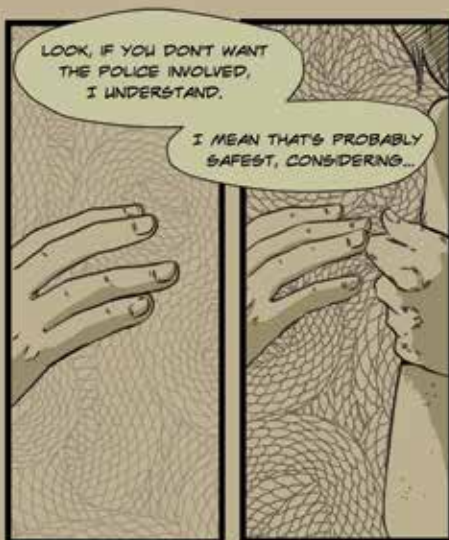






gasp





WHATEVER,
WHEN CAN I GET
OUT OF HERE?

THEY'RE JUST GOING
TO DO ANOTHER CHECKUP
FIRST. THEN YOU'RE FREE
TO LEAVE.

GOOD.



I DON'T WANT IT.
WE'RE JUST GOING
TO THE **CAR**, RIGHT?

YES, WE JUST
HAVE TO PICK UP YOUR
PRESCRIPTION FIRST.

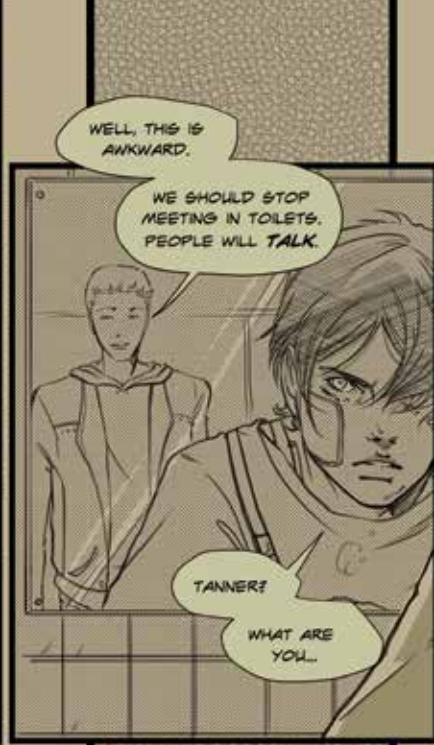




GET A HOLD
OF YOURSELF,
IDIOT...



STOP SHAKING
BREATHE.
STOP SHAKING.



WELL, THIS IS
AWKWARD.

WE SHOULD STOP
MEETING IN TOILETS.
PEOPLE WILL TALK.

TANNER?

WHAT ARE
YOU...

YOU KNOW,
YOU LOOK
LIKE SHIT.



AND YOU'RE
THE LAST
PERSON I-



WOAH.
CORT-



HEY!









OH, I DOUBT
IT. *MY* FRIEND
PROBABLY WOULDN'T
APPRECIATE *ANY* KIND
OF CONCERN. HE'S A
BIT OF A DICK.

SO...YOU REMEMBER
BREAKING MIKE'S
JAW, HUH. MUCH ELSE?

...THE TASTE OF
MUD AND GRASS.
THEN...NOT A LOT.

YOU WERE
RIGHT, OKAY?
I *DID* UNDERESTIMATE
SPENCER...

I UNDERESTIMATED
JUST HOW *SPINELESS*
HE AND HIS DRONES
ARE, AND IF HE
THINKS I'M-

F--

CORT--

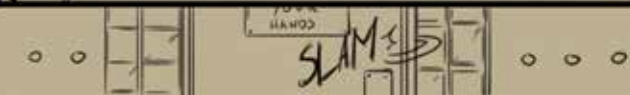
GET OFF
OF ME, DON'T
FUCKING
TOUCH ME!

OKAY, OKAY.
JUST DON'T
PASS OUT OR
ANYTHING, OKAY?

FUCK YOU.
WOULD YOU
JUST...

I GET IT.
YOU DON'T *NEED* MY
HELP. HELL, I'M PROBABLY
THE *LAST* PERSON YOU
WANT HERE RIGHT NOW,







ISSUE 4



CHEER UP.
IT'S BEEN A *WEEK*.
JUST ONE MORE
TO GO.



THINK OF IT LIKE
BUNKING THAT NOBODY
CAN NAIL YOU FOR.

BESIDES, I BRING
YOU HOMEWORK. IT'S LIKE
BACK WHEN YOU HAD
CHICKEN POX.

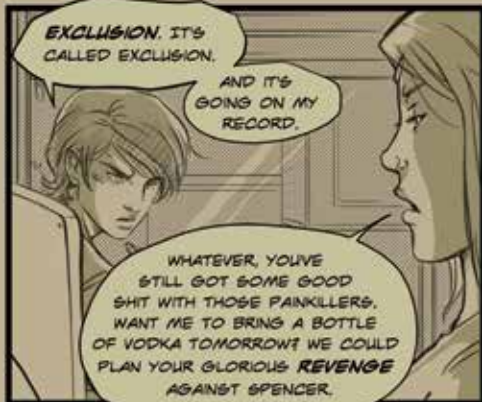


SURE.

EXCEPT FOR THE
USE OF MY ARM.
IT'S IDENTICAL.



LIGHTEN UP. SO, YOU'RE
HOME SICK...IT'S NOT LIKE
SCHOOL'S *THAT* GREAT.



EXCLUSION. IT'S
CALLED EXCLUSION.

AND IT'S
GOING ON MY
RECORD.

WHATEVER, YOU'VE
STILL GOT SOME GOOD
SHIT WITH THOSE PAINKILLERS.
WANT ME TO BRING A BOTTLE
OF VODKA TOMORROW? WE COULD
PLAN YOUR *GLORIOUS REVENGE*
AGAINST SPENCER.



CORTLAND!
DINNER!

AFTER ALL, YOU AND I
BOTH KNOW THAT NOBODY
ELSE IS GONNA FIGHT OUR
BATTLES FOR US.







SLAM



DON'T I
KNOW IT...



THIS WON'T
END WELL, MY
OLD FRIEND.



SEKKKROCH

I THINK EVERYTHING
IS IN ORDER HERE.

I SEE NO REASON
WHY CORTLAND SHOULDN'T
RETURN TO SCHOOL ON
MONDAY. UNLESS YOU HAVE
ANYTHING MORE TO ADD?

NO.

IF YOU REMEMBER
WHO ATTACKED YOU,
DON'T HESITATE TO CALL
ME, RIGHT?

THE SAME GOES IF
YOU FEEL **UNSAFE**
AT SCHOOL.

YOU KNOW, FINAL EXAMS
MAY BE JUST NEXT TERM, BUT
I'M SURE THAT SOMETHING COULD
BE ARRANGED IF YOU FEEL THE
LEAST BIT **UNSURE** ABOUT
GOING BACK.

WE COULD TRANSFER
YOU TO ANOTHER SCHOOL
IF NEEDED.

I TOLD YOU.
I DON'T WANT
TO TRANSFER.

I'M FINE.

SO YOU KEEP
ASSURING ME.



IT'S NOT TOO LATE, CORTLAND. IF THIS HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH PROBLEMS AT SCHOOL, MAYBE YOU *SHOULD* THINK ABOUT A TRANSFER.

HARVEY, I'M NOT *YOU*. I NEED TO HANDLE THIS *MY OWN WAY*.

JUST *SHOW* ME, CORTLAND. SHOW ME THAT YOU'RE WORTH THE EFFORT WE'VE MADE.

I *KNOW* WHAT I'M DOING, HARVEY.

BREATHE.

DON'T FUCK THIS UP.

MORNING.



NO TWO
WAYS ABOUT IT,
YOU'RE SCREWED.

FUCK YOU,
TANNER.



THEY **REALLY**
DIDN'T THINK
HE'D SHOW UP?

CLEARLY NOT PAYING
ENOUGH ATTENTION
TO SCHOOL GOSSIP.

CORTLAND HAS
A HISTORY.

YOU KNOW
SPENCE, HE'S NOT
USED TO PEOPLE
NOT BENDING OVER
FOR HIM.

NO SHIT.

I CAN'T
BELIEVE THEY
BROKE THE GUY'S
BLOODY ARM.



I'M GLAD
HE CAME BACK
THOUGH. I'VE MISSED
HIM IN CLASS.



I'M SURPRISED YOU
EVEN **NOTICED**
HIM IN CLASSES.

HE'S SO
QUIET.

UNLESS HE'S
MOUTHING OFF
AT ME...

HE DOESN'T
NEED TO TALK
MUCH. HE'S A MAN
OF MYSTERY...

BESIDES, HE'S
TOTALLY HOT.



HE'S **WHAT**
NOW...?

HOW WOULD
I KNOW?

AND WHERE
THE HELL DID
THAT COME
FROM?

JUST STATING
THE FACTS.







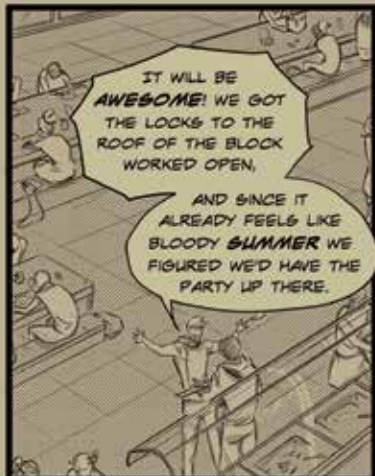




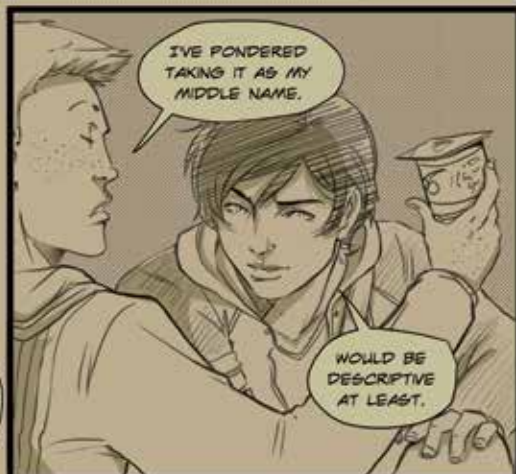












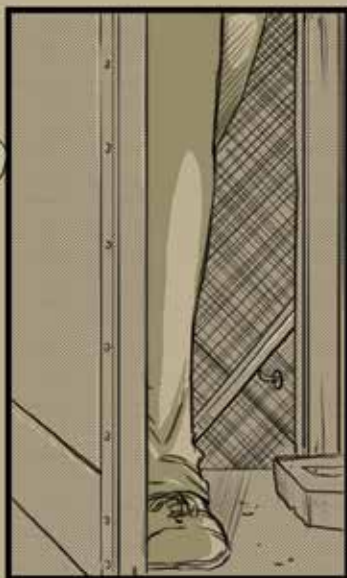
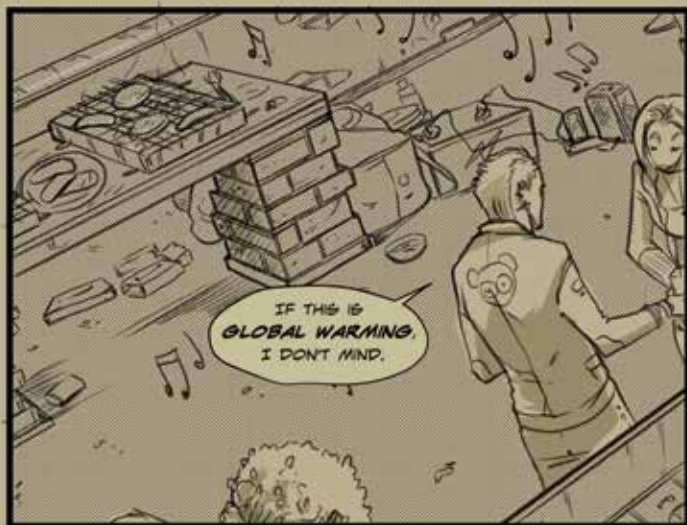
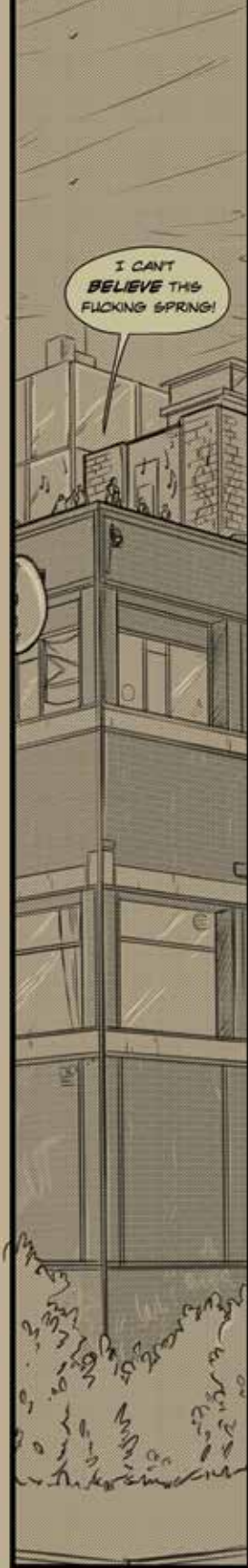






ISSUE 5







HUNTS DIDNT
KNOW YOU WERE
COMING, DUDE



UH, YEAH.
TANNER INVITED ME.
IS IT OKAY?

TANNER
INVITED YOU,
HUH?



I BROUGHT
BEER...



WELL WHY
DIDNT YOU SAY
SO, MAN?

APPARENTLY
BEER IS THE
PASSWORD.



HEY TANNER!
YOUR DATE
IS HERE!



SOOOO...



SUN, ALCOHOL
AND PAINKILLERS.
SHALL I GET MY
CATCHING GLOVES
READY?

FUNNY.

LOOK, ABOUT
THE HOSPITAL...

...WHAT HAPPENED
IN THE BATHROOM...



I DIDN'T WANT
ANYONE SEEING
ME LIKE THAT. I WISH
YOU **HADN'T**, BUT...
WELL, THANKS FOR
KEEPING IT TO
YOURSELF.

YOU DON'T
EVEN NEED TO
MENTION IT.

HOSPITAL NEVER
HAPPENED, OKAY?



SO, I'M A TENNER
RICHER 'CAUSE
OF YOU.
MILLY DIDN'T
THINK YOU'D
TURN UP.

YOU BET ON
WHETHER I'D
COME?



WELL, JUST
A LITTLE BIT...

WE DO THAT
SOMETIMES. IT'S
JUST A THING WE HAVE.
I MEAN, NOT ON YOU
SPECIFICALLY...



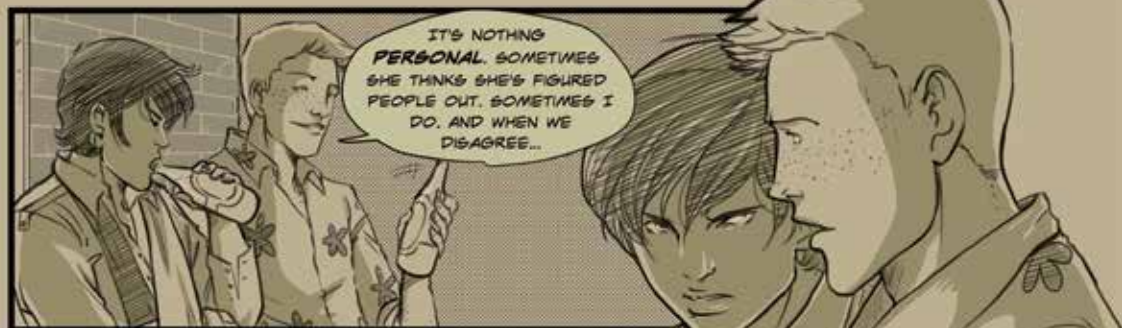
A SMALL BET ON
WHETHER **RENNIE** IS
GONNA SMACK SOMEONE.
OR **SPENCE** LOSE HIS SHIT
AGAIN. OR WHO **DAVE'S**
GONNA DATE NEXT.



HUH... THIS
IS WEIRD.

I AM
SOUNDING
LIKE SUCH AN
ARSE.

NO SHIT,
SHERLOCK.











YOU'RE SUCH
A DICK, TANNER.

I CHOOSE
TO TAKE
THAT AS A
COMPLIMENT.

YOU WOULD.



YOU KNOW
WHETHER MILLY'S
GONNA DO HER SET
NEXT WEEKEND?

WHAT AM I,
HER **MANAGER**?



NO, HER
BOYFRIEND.
SUPPOSEDLY.



WHAT'S **THAT**
SUPPOSED TO
MEAN?



JUST THAT
SHE'S NOT BEEN
LOOKING SO HAPPY
LATELY.

IS THIS SOME
SORT OF GIRL
TELEPATHY I'M
NOT IN ONE?

FACE IT TANNER,
YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY
MR SMOOTH WHEN
IT COMES TO THE
LADIES.

WHATEVER.
I NEED MORE
BOOZE.















YOU'RE NOT
THE ONLY ONE.

IAN FELT *SO*
SHITTY ABOUT YOU
ENDING UP IN
THE HOSPITAL.

WHY SHOULD
HE CARE? HE DIDN'T
THROW THE PUNCHES.

Living' on a Prayer!

I GUESS...

BUT HE ***WAS***
RIGHT THERE, AND HE
DIDN'T STEP IN TO ***STOP***
THEM EITHER.

...HE WAS THERE?

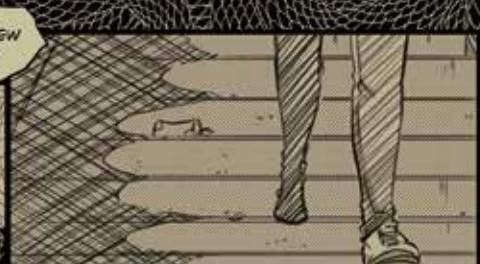








SCREW
IT!



CORTLAND!
WAIT!

HEAR ME
OUT, OKAY?



LET ME
PAST,
NOW.

NO! I'M
NOT LETTING
YOU WALK AWAY
LIKE THIS.

JESUS, YOU
DON'T EVEN KNOW
ME! BACK THE
FUCK OFF, I'M
WARNING YOU!



YOU'RE RIGHT!
I **DON'T** KNOW
YOU! BUT MAYBE
I WANT TO...

I MESSED UP,
OKAY? I DO THAT
A LOT. BUT I DO
WANT YOU HERE...

CLENCH

BECAUSE I'VE
BEEN SO MESSED
UP ABOUT A LOT OF
THINGS. AND MAYBE I
STILL AM. AND MAYBE
I'M DRUNK BUT...

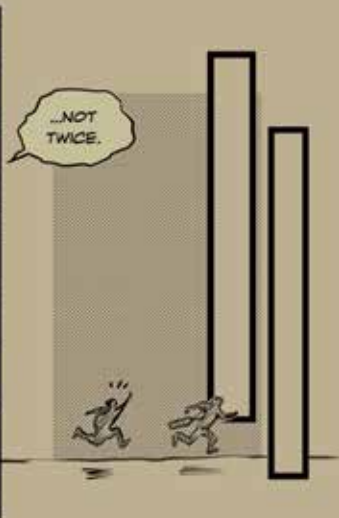








ISSUE 6



I JUST...

I DON'T KNOW
WHAT TO DO
ANY MORE...

HARVEY,
CALM DOWN,
SWEETIE.

YOU'RE DOING
FINE.

AM I?

HE BROKE HIS
ARM. HE **REFUSES**
TO TALK TO ME.

I MEAN,
WHAT IF...

WHAT IF
WHAT?

WHAT IF
THEY...

WHAT
IF WHAT HAPPENED
TO YOU HAPPENED
TO HIM?

16 15
18 **19** 20
21 22 23 24 25

...YEAH

HARVEY,
BABY...

IT DIDN'T.

HE GOT
HURT. HE'LL
HEAL.

I KNOW,
I KNOW, YOU'RE
RIGHT.

JESUS, CONNIE
THIS ATTACK HAS
JUST BROUGHT IT
ALL BACK, AND THE
TIMING IS...

L
A
M







THE PERFECT
SET-UP FOR
A JOKE, AND
NO ONE TO TELL
IT TO...



YOU ARE
NOT
GAY.

WHY CAN'T YOU
GET THAT INTO
YOUR THICK AND
PIMPLED HEAD?



DON'T HOG
THE BATHROOM,
ARSEHOLE!

SOME OF US
HAVE PLACES TO
BE TONIGHT!



YOU'RE FIFTEEN.

YOU'RE NOT
ALLOWED TO
HAVE MORE FUN
THAN ME.



JUST BECAUSE
YOU'RE NOT HAVING
FUN ANYMORE,
DOESN'T MEAN
I HAVE TO SUFFER.

THAT'S THE
BABY SISTER'S
LOT IN LIFE.

SUCK IT UP.

YOU ARE
SUCH AN
ARSE.



YEAH, I
REALLY AM.







NOT ENTIRELY
RANDOM,
BUT, I MEAN...

LOOK, THIS
WASNT A SETUP.
YOU HAVE TO KNOW
THAT. I SWEAR, I
WASNT MAKING
FUN OF YOU.

WHAT AM I
SUPPOSED TO
TAKE FROM
THAT?

YOU CREEPED
ON ME AT THE
HOSPITAL BECAUSE
YOU WANTED TO?

I WASNT
CREEPING!

I JUST-

-JUST FELT
LIKE KISSING
SOMEONE WHO
WAS UNCONSCIOUS
AT THE TIME..?

WHO COULDN'T
SAY NO?

HEY, I KISSED
YOU WHEN YOU
WERE CONSCIOUS
TOO, AND -

ALRIGHT, YOU
PUNCHED ME THAT
TIME AND...SHIT, THIS
IS GOING GREAT.

WHY?

HUH?
WHY WHAT?

WHY DID
YOU KISS ME?

LI MIGHT
HAVE BEEN THINKING
ABOUT DOING THAT
FOR A WHILE NOW.

SO, WHAT?
ARE
YOU GAYS?

NO!

I MEAN...
HAVE A
GIRLFRIEND!



THE POINT IS THAT
I KISSED YOU
BECAUSE I WAS
WONDERING HOW
IT WOULD FEEL.

NOT BECAUSE
YOU'RE ANOTHER
BOY, BUT BECAUSE
YOU'RE YOU.

AND...IT
FELT GOOD.

AND I CAN'T
PRETEND I
DON'T WANT
TO DO IT
AGAIN.

...PICK

LOOK, I KNOW
I'M TOO SCREWED
TO GET OUT OF
A BEATING HERE, SO
I MAY AS WELL
BE HONEST.

YOU ASKED ME
WHY.

WELL...THAT'S
WHY.

NO JOKE. NO
LAUGHS. I
WANTED TO.

NOW, GET THIS
OVER WITH SO THAT
I CAN CRAWL OFF
AND DIE QUIETLY,
OKAY?

I'M SORRY FOR
SCREWING THINGS
UP, AND FOR NOT
ASKING FIRST...BUT
I'M NOT SORRY I
KISSED YOU.

CREAK

...?







HEY.

HEY.

DANGEROUS,
HUI? THERE WAS
A TIME SHE
LIKED ME.

SHE'LL COME
AROUND.

IT'S BEEN
THREE YEARS.



WELL,
THIS IS
WHERE
THE FUN
HAPPENED.

YOU READY
FOR THIS?



HEY...
YOU OKAY?

L
YEAH.



I'M FINE,
THAT'S JUST
IT.

HUI?



I'M FINE, BUT I
SEEM TO FLICK UP
OTHER PEOPLE'S
LIVES, DON'T I?

HARVEY, MY
MUM...TANNER.

YOU...WAIT.

TANNER?



...SMARTEST
DEA, TANNER.

YEAH, WELL.
SMART IDEAS
AND ME HAVE
PARTED WAYS,
LATELY.

HUH?

FUCKING MORBID
MEETING **HERE**.

WHAT?
FEELING
GUILTY?

THAT WOULD
BE A FIRST.

FUCK YOU,
TANNER.

NO, FUCK
YOU, SPENCE.

I'M OUT. I'M
NOT DOING THIS
ANY MORE.

WHAT?!

AND YOU
NEED TO BACK
DOWN AND STAY
THE HELL AWAY
FROM
CORTLAND.

I KNOW YOU'RE
STILL THINKING
OF WAYS TO
GET EVEN.

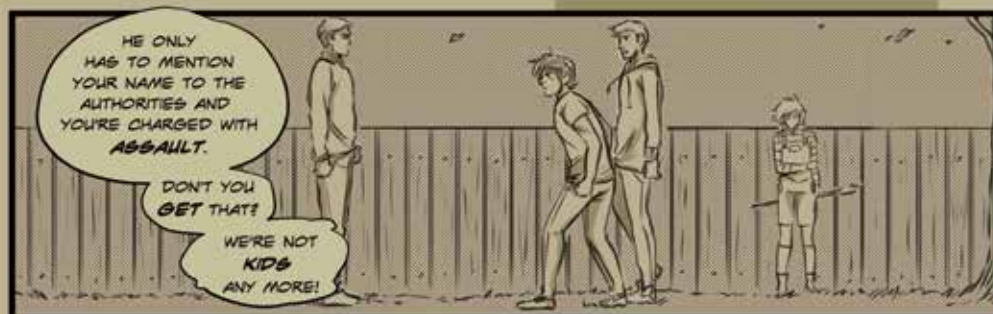
SINCE WHEN
DO YOU THINK
YOU CAN TELL ME
WHAT TO DO?

SINCE YOU
STARTED GOING
AFTER MY
FRIENDS.

HE'S YOUR
FRIEND NOW?











SO, NOW I KNOW
WHY BEATING UP
A CAR WAS WORTH
BONUS POINTS IN
STREET FIGHTER.

IT LOOKS
EXHAUSTING IN
REAL LIFE...













BREAKS

END OF ARC ONE.

The following, generous patrons have been supporting my work with \$5+ monthly donations on my Patreon campaign. From \$5-\$50, these guys are **BREAKS legends!**
<https://www.patreon.com/emmavieceli>
(as of May, 2017)

Ariana Osborne (whose contribution was so generous that she features in the comic as one of Dave's party guests!)

Benedict Durbin

Stephen Hamilton

Anna Tif Sikorska

Anu Harvey (one of the original DAH crew!)

Micaela B

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Toria

Allycat99

Ben Templesmith

HE Cavanagh

R J Tysoe

Paul Cornell

Katy

Becky Cloonan

Kieron Gillen

Unevendays

They help make this comic happen and I am so, so grateful to them. And to those backing me for \$1 and \$3 too - all of my patrons are heroes to me!

Thank you.

Emma xx

The Man of Words

Alasdair Stuart

MARCH 31, 2016

Interview: Malin Rydén and Emma Vieceli for Breaks

Breaks is one of the best comics being published in English right now. A web serial, it follows the complex, funny, occasionally violent knots that a group of teenagers tie themselves into. At the center of each of those knots is Cortland and Ian. Not quite friends, not quite enemies but connected in ways at least one of them isn't really prepared to look in the eyes, their relationship and how it deepens is the engine that drives the book and one of the smartest, best realized romances you'll find.

Breaks is celebrating its 2nd year and I had the pleasure of chatting to creators Malin Rydén, and Emma Vieceli as well as...some other...people you'll meet in a later post about it. But first up, Malin and Emma.

So, first off, introduce yourselves, and what you do.

I'm Malin , queer swedish author and one half of the writing duo of Breaks. My main task is to break down our original book and transform it into a workable comics script.

Hi, I'm Emma Vieceli. I'm the other half of the writing duo of Breaks. I take Malin's amazing breakdown scripts of our book, make any minor tweaks in my edit pass, and make the comic from them.

How did you meet?

Malin: A few years back I wanted to get better at writing in the English language. Since I am originally a horror writer, I also felt that I was a bit weak in the dialogue/romance/action department. As I had recently been playing Dragon Age II and really connected to the way dialogue was handled there, I decided to have a go at writing fanfic for it. This way I would get an immediate connection to readers and see what worked/didn't worked. Being an author is a lonely job, but it turned out that writing fanfic made it decidedly less so.

In order to see what other successful writers did, I also started reading a lot, which is how I first encountered Emma. I had no idea she was a successful artist since all of this was done more or less anonymously, I only knew that her writing struck a chord with me. What can I say, I am a sucker for dark drama. We started talking, and one thing led to another and here we are...

Emma: Malin claims she wanted to get better at dialogue and emotion, but that's what drew me to her writing when I first encountered it. As she says, we were readers of each others' writing online, completely anonymously, so I had no idea that she was a published horror writer. I didn't even know she was Swedish – her English was THAT GOOD.

We occasionally commented on each others' stories, but – again – all under handles, never with our real names. So the initial attraction really was all about the writing. We wouldn't actually meet in person until years later. And, in fact, we've only ever met up in real life maybe three times now; which seems bonkers.

How did the project come about?

Malin: Do you want to field this one Emma? You are after all the key player here.

Emma: Pass the buck, why don't you? :p hug

So – after finding each others' writing, we had got talking with a small group of writers online. Most wrote fanfic already, but were keen to take things further. I was between projects at the time and in need of some creative motivation, so when the group suggested we try opening a scenario into which we could all bring a character we'd written, but didn't have a plan for...it seemed a good idea to try. It was totally pressure-free and still anonymous. So a great chance for me to create without drawing and without work pressure. I brought to the group a character called Cortland. I'd had a vague story idea in my head for a while, but wasn't intending to go anywhere with it really. He was a perfect fit for a collaborative writing project. I'd never done anything like it before, preferring to control my own stories, and so I was a bit rubbish at first; just writing my own sections solo. but Malin (who's name I still didn't know then) pretty much dragged me into some collaboration when her character – a lad called Ian Tanner

– started interacting with Cortland’s story. That was it. Cortland started making friends (and enemies) in the group and it got addictive. Each writer would write a paragraph or two in third person, leave it, and when they came back, another writer would have picked it up and added to the scene. The nature of it means that personal stories were often derailed and had curveballs thrown at them.

And Malin and Ian threw the biggest curveball ever at Cortland. Suddenly his story went from being just the dark drama that I’d thought out, and into a very unexpected romance. And it WORKED. SO. WELL. It completed the story.

Well, eventually, after Malin and I had sort of broken off a bit and ended up writing a novel’s worth of this story with no communication outside of it at all, we unmasked. I told her I was a comic artist and that I thought we should make a comic of this. She told me she was a Swedish writer and loved comics.

It was awesome.

Why go digital for something like this?

Malin: For the same reasons I started writing fanfic I think. Reader feedback and connection. Since this is the first thing we have done together, we can’t really trust everyone to know what they are getting into. This way they can read the story, and later, buy the nice, lavish print volumes. Yes, the first one is not that far off now...

Emma: Yep. As Malin says – the feedback on a story like this is so key. It’s such a real story. But also, practically speaking, I can only work on Breaks in my spare time around my work contracts. Releasing a page a week online has really given me constant targets and motivation to keep working. Longform projects are hard to keep motivation for when you’re not sharing them; especially when we didn’t want to print issues, but save up printing for the compiled book. Web format is perfect. And I think we’ll see more projects like this. I’m about to start art duties on DC’s Supergirl, which is running as digital into trade. Obviously, Malin and I have done it for free – which is maybe crazy – but I do believe in the model.

What does that do to your workflow? And how far ahead is Breaks created?

Malin: There are three answers to that question. The first one is that Breaks is already done. We have written the book after all, and though it is changing a lot in its transition to a comic, we already know where the characters will go and the broad strokes of what will happen.

The second answer is the script. That goes in spurts. Volume One (issue 1-6) is already written and drawn (we are approaching the end of issue 5 online). Volume Two (issue 7-12) is planned and plotted, and I am currently writing issue 9. I try to stay at least a full issue ahead of Emma, so she has time to think about her changes to the script.

Emma: ...And the third part of the answer is the pages themselves. I've been working hard to keep a safe buffer of around twenty pages in hand. It's utterly necessary for me, as my job means that there will be times I'm on deadline and can't think about Breaks. We've not missed an update in two years and I'm very proud of that ^_^ As we write this, I just finished drawing out arc one. I can't wait to dive into arc two.

How did the comic change from planning to the page?

Malin: It's changed a lot from the book, that's for sure. Some characters have been removed entirely, others have been fused together and turned out more interesting as a result. When we plan the outline, we often have to skip entire story arcs just because we don't have space to fit them in. I am still sad the snowstorm arc had to go, but we could salvage the best beats from it and use it to fill in other bits of the story.

Adding to that, when I write the script from the outline, I often find that I have to add scenes that didn't exist in the book at all, just to make things flow smoother. Or, well, sometimes just because I want to see Emma draw them... Once the script is done on my end, I send it off to Emma, and she's got free hands to do whatever she wants with it.

Emma: *nod nod* And Malin's scripts are just brilliant! I may know the story – but the nuance and moments she adds in the adaptation are always so exciting to read. I'll sometimes throw an extra back at her when I come to doing the pages. We both like to surprise each other with little scene or dialogue additions here and there. It keeps the story fresh and alive ^_^

Is it changing as it's going on?

Malin: Yes, it is. Not the major story, but some character beats are starting to change as we get used to this new version of the surrounding cast. And small changes escalate as the story goes on.

Emma: Yeah. I think Cortland has changed a fair bit since the book. Often, he and Ian were occupying a similar space as characters in the novel; which seems hard to believe now. The balance is much better now. As we spend longer with the characters, we learn better how they think.

I love the way you've structured it. Not just the flash forward at the start and the flashbacks to Cort's past but the moments of quiet and stillness. Do you approach the big emotional beats differently?

Malin: Well, I try to think of pages and reveals. Each page is a pair in the future printed book, and they have to work together. I also like cliffhangers, which I suppose our online readers will have noticed by now. But as for the emotional beats, I like poetry. And poetry is all about explosions and stillness. I try to think of the script as music, and vary the intensity of it all. I always did love that when I wrote books, but I had underestimated how it would feel writing with someone who could transform these feelings to the page. Emma is wonderful when it comes to that. Her sense of pacing on the page, the way she structures panels, the way she plays with light and dark and background texture is nothing short of glorious.

Emma: Gawsh. Malin's ability to scene shift at just the right moment is amazing. I'm constantly amazed at the way she'll insert a new scene into the mix that takes the emotional line exactly where it needs to be. And it helps that we're both in the

heads of these characters so much. I can see through dialogue she's written to see exactly what she means in what's not said, you know?

It's a dramatic story and it has a lot more drama to come. But the drama means nothing without the quiet in between. We always knew we wanted to take our time with this story and give it the pacing it deserved. We're so glad it works for readers!

Likewise, for a book that's intensely violent in spots, there's real tenderness, in both sense of the word, to the relationships. You buy absolutely that these teenagers are locked together in the pressure cooker of school and doing what they can. Is there a relationship that surprised you? Or a character who's elbowed their way to the front?

Malin: We haven't seen much of it yet, but I always was so amused at how Ian and Irena worked together. I really, REALLY hope we will have time to get the pony in there somewhere, because I am still cracking up just thinking about it.

Emma: Man, I'm so glad to hear all that comes across. Yay! And oh yessss! Irena and Ian are hilarious together and I can't wait to get to more of their connection. As for the extra connection Cortland will be making... that's going to come as a surprise, I think. I've also been amazed at how enjoyable Amilah has been in the comic version. She's the brains of the group, I think, and readers have really responded well to her. I take it as a great sign that, for all that readers want Ian and Cortland to be happy, they also feel bad for Amilah. She's amazing and far from a throwaway plot device. We care about Ian's choice because we care about her.

Do you have a favorite character?

Malin: Well, if I exclude Ian and Cortland (who are favorites by default because why would we write about them otherwise) I have to say that my favorite character has not shown up yet. So I can't name them. But of the ones that we have seen so far, Amilah is very close to my heart.

Emma: And I'll even it up and go for Irena. Obviously the boys are the key to it all, but I love Irena's character, and I think she'll resonate with a few readers in her own way as we go on.

Now we've had what could only be described as The Moment, where does the series go from here?

Malin: Well, things are certainly out on the open now, but that doesn't mean that they will be any easier to deal with. What it will mean is that we can start devoting time to the 'real' plot of the story, because in Volume Two we are about to start digging deep into Cortland's sordid past, and there's a few surprise curveballs from Ian's direction that I don't think people will see coming...

Emma: cackles oh yessss, precious, yessss. Ahem Yes. The course of love won't run smoothly for these two, but their relationship will become a rock they cling to when other aspects of their lives become the harder things to deal with.

What else are you working on at the moment?

Malin: Currently on the top of my list of projects other than Breaks, is an online choose your own adventure game with the working title 'Fallen Hero'. Programming is a fun break from writing at times. Book wise, the main project is still 'Crap Dad', and I have no idea how I will ever manage to settle on a serious title for that one, because it just sums it up so perfectly. And one day, Emma, we should really finish off 'The Grey', but it's sadly been pushed to the side since we started working on Breaks.

Emma: We really need to finish The Grey, yes! There are always so many projects and never enough time. I've just come off of the Eighth Doctor mini series with George Mann for Titan comics, and will be spending some time with writer Sterling Gates on DC's Supergirl series very soon. Exciting times! I'll also be

returning to Alex Rider's world for Walker Books, with Scorpia having just been released recently. But Breaks is the underlying project throughout it all. Arc two is going to ramp up the stakes and we can't wait to share.

Thank you so much to both Malin and Emma for taking the time to talk to me. We'll have more Breaks content later this week but before then, go and read the comic, it's great.

The Man of Words

Alasdair Stuart

APRIL 6, 2016

Interview: The Cast of *Breaks*

Last week, I interviewed Malin Rydén and Emma Vieceli, the creators of one of my favorite comics, *Breaks*. It's a fantastically untidy, sweet, realistic take on the unparalleled horrors of adolescent love and if you've not read it yet you should because it's great. And free.

This week I'm doing something a little different; interviewing the characters. I sent across specific questions for Cortland and Ian and general questions for the group. Their answers are below. So, if you're already a reader, get ready for a little extra insight into *Breaks*. If not, buckle up. These kids don't pull any punches. Or at least so the rumours go...

Cortland, you moved here three years ago? How are you finding it?

Okay, I guess. I don't know. This place has got better media labs than my old school, but the sports clubs are a bit lame. I'll be out of here soon, so no point caring too much about it.

Where did you transfer in from?

...

Another school. It didn't have a sixth form, so we came here.

We don't need to talk about my background.

What was your first week like?

Pretty much what I'd expected. Lessons. Teachers. Other sixth-formers thinking they rule the place. I didn't mind the work, I just wished I could do it at home.

How easy did you find fitting in?

-Snort-

Oh, yeah, the school board and my social worker made that really easy for me. Like, I'm sure every new student has meetings with the head master and their social worker on school property just to make sure they're not going to cause any trouble, you know. That didn't set any of the students off making up reasons they were sure I was here. So, yeah – it was really easy, thanks.

Do they still think of you as the new kid?

I don't really care what they think of me as. They're always going to think of you as something, aren't they. I guess, at first, they thought Irena and me were interesting. Then they got bored and started making shit up that was more interesting than we were. I think, by now, I'm not a new kid any more. It's been years. I think I preferred being thought of as the new kid than whatever they think I am now though. The more I try and ignore them all, the more I'm apparently trying to hide things or stir things up with fucking Kyle Spencer, who's a dick, by the way. That or some of the girls seem to think I need hugs or something.

I think there's, like, one person who I can have a laugh with who's not Irena. He's a dick too, but at least he doesn't look like he thinks I'm going to do something crazy any minute.

Is there anything you'd change about your first days here if you could?

I wouldn't have left my locker unlocked so that some twat could put a frog in it. I guess it was funny, in a way. And it was a better thing for people to talk about than my 'mysterious past' and all that. But still, it was sort of gross.

I did put a dead frog (not the same one) in his bag the next week though, so – you know – it's all fair. Actually, you know what? I wouldn't change that. The chain of dickery that frog-gate kicked off is one of the only things keeping me sane in this shithole.

Now, over to Ian.

Ian, you're one of the big men on campus here. Why do you think that is?

I am? Really? Wow. Or, well, I mean that's obvious, ennit? It's all about who you know. And I know everyone. Or maybe everybody knows me. Still, it's not as easy now as it was back when we were kids. I mean like real kids, that whole hair-pulling, booger-eating stage before you realize girls are a thing. Not that I ate any boogers. Much. It was a dare, alright? Once it's a dare all bets are off. You just can't back down from things like that, you know? If people think you're crazy, they treat you differently. At least they used to. Growing up sucks sometimes.

You have quite the reputation as a trickster. Is it deserved?

On the record I'd like to say no, but I'd be lying. Trickster is such a loaded term though, I prefer mastermind. That way I get a better suit and a cat to pet. And henchmen.

If it was, and we're talking hypothetically here of course, what would you be proudest of?

Hypothetically it might be getting sent home for having measles way back when we had a substitute teacher. Managed to talk her into believing that my freckles were contagious. Well, that and setting up the mother of all food fights in the cafeteria. That got me sent home too, but not in the good way. Also, tuna juice in gym shoes really does attract cats.

And are there any tricks, again, hypothetical, you might regret?

Can't tell you that, or Cortland will know I did them. Besides, I regret nothing. Regret is for chumps.

Rumour is you're a budding track star. What made you take it up?

Always been running everywhere. Sitting still is hard, you know? Used to do rugby before everybody put on like fifty pounds come puberty. I mean seriously, how come I still got noodle arms? No fucking fair. Besides, running away is a good life skill to have. And don't listen to rumours, I'm not that good, okay? And I don't take it seriously. Life is too short to take anything seriously.

How did you and Spencer meet?

His dad and my dad used to hang out, so we got shoved together a lot of the time. I mean it weren't just us, there was a whole bunch of us. It was easier back then I think, I liked coming up with things to do, and he never backed down from anything. And my b... never mind. It's a long bloody time ago.

Well that's our leads, and they make quite a pair don't they? Now, a little conversation with the rest of the cast:

So what's your first memory of school?

Irena: Oh god. There was this girl at the front gate who was totally eyeing us up as we approached. She totally ignored me, of course, went in for Cort with an 'I don't recognise you, you must be new' fluttery-eye approach, and he said 'We've been in your class for two years. Rude.' and we walked off and I flipped her the bird and that was our first conversation at our new school. It was pretty awesome and suitable.

Amilah: The thing that sticks in my mind is being pushed into the dirt and being shouted at for being a bloody paki. Kids are bastards. Or do you mean this one in particular? In that case, less pushing and more muttering. People have a hard time handling that I know what I'm about and I'm brilliant at it. But I already knew a lot of people starting here, so I could care less what the rest of them thought.

Spencer: The less I think about school, the better. It's just there, you know? A fact of life.

How's the social scene here?

Irena: I sometimes go for coffee with some people from my art course. Some of them even ask about Poland rather than treat me like I'm here to steal their jobs and eat their babies. That's about the extent. I've heard that there are some proper club nights sometimes, but Cort and me don't exactly get invited to where the cool kids go. But we've never much needed a social scene.

Amilah: Not London, I can tell you that. It's got some interesting people, but everything's so small. So local. Everyone just goes around pretending that things are cooler than they really are, hoping that one day they can just get the hell out of here. At least they should. I won't lie, if there's any form of social scene here, it's because I worked damn hard at making one.

Spencer: Same as everywhere I suppose. Some people think they are cool. Some people think they are violent. Some people think they are fun. Get a few beers in them and they're all the same.

How easily did you make friends when you got here?

Irena: I'm a social butterfly. Everyone loves me. I'm just swimming in friend requests.

Amilah: I don't think it was easy. My mum moved here from London when she divorced dad, I think I was about eight at the time, and the school I ended up in was pretty white. I think I was too angry to try to make friends back then, but I got them anyway so there you go. These days I have the friends I need, I suppose you could call me popular? Or laugh at me and say I got the friends I deserve.

Spencer: People have always wanted to be my friend. Just don't trust most of them. Most of them just want to feel important. Be on the winning team.

What do you plan to do when you leave?

Irena: Celebrate. I'm going to run through the streets and throw confetti. Cort and I have plans to travel europe once he's...well, when we have time. After that? Something arty. I'm an artistic soul.

Amilah: Finally take the fight with mom and give music a go. She wants me to go to uni and get that business degree, but I'm eighteen now and she can't tell me what to do anymore. My Dad knows some cool people in London.

Spencer: Honestly, I have no idea. Leaving school feels unreal, we've been here forever. Not even sure I know what an adult is supposed to be like, they don't teach you that in class.

Is there one piece of advice you'd give teenagers starting here today?

Irena: Just try to enjoy it. Don't try and grow up too soon. Not all of us get that choice, mind you. Some people are fighting off real life at every turn. If everyone could just focus on not growing up and enjoying their cocoon-state, school would be better.

Amilah: Figure out what you want to do, and how to do it. Nobody's gonna keep giving you homework or a required reading list forever. Make your own lists. Life's not gonna care if you don't grow the fuck up, but you should.

Spencer: Keep your head down, or be prepared to fight not to be stepped on. Don't go making any cheques you can't cash.

Thanks to Cortland, Ian, Irena, Amilah and Spencer for taking the time to chat to me. And massive thanks to Malin and Emma for both setting up the interview and such a great series.

EMMA VIECELI • MALIN RYDEN

BREAKS

A love story...but a bit broken.



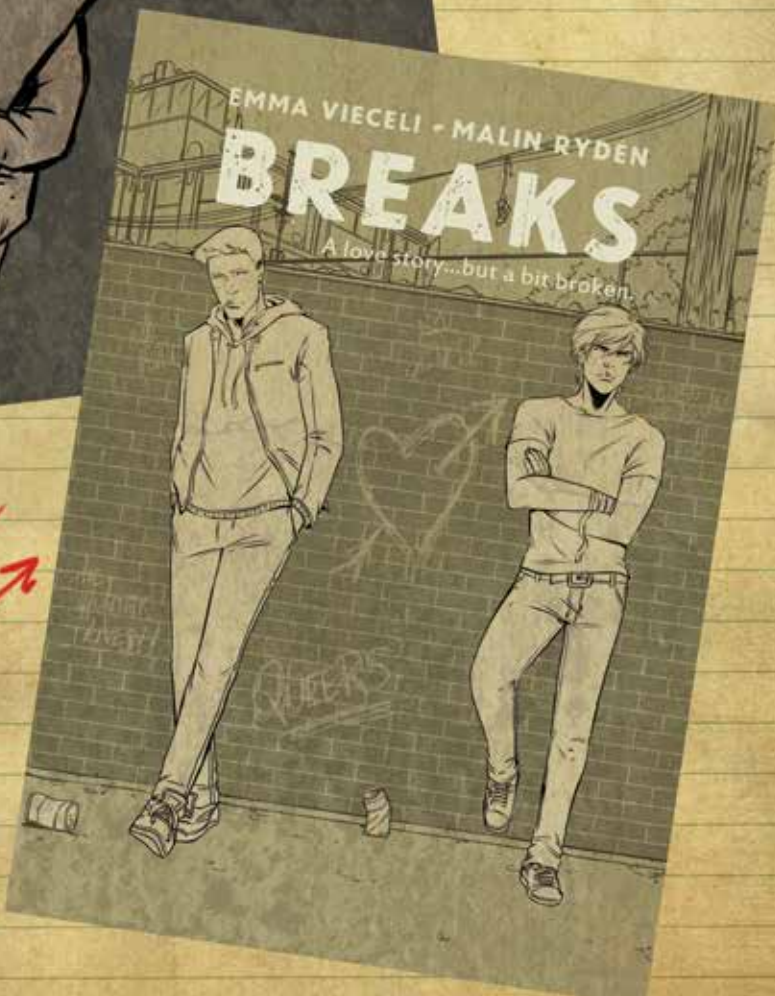
Queers ARE
HARD! (with a sad face)

Original
poor
idea!
←

EMMA VIECELI • MALIN RYDEN

BREAKS

A love story...but a bit broken.



but this
worked better →

♥ Christina for
Colas!

2013

First online
leaker image!



BREAKS

VIECELI · RYDEN



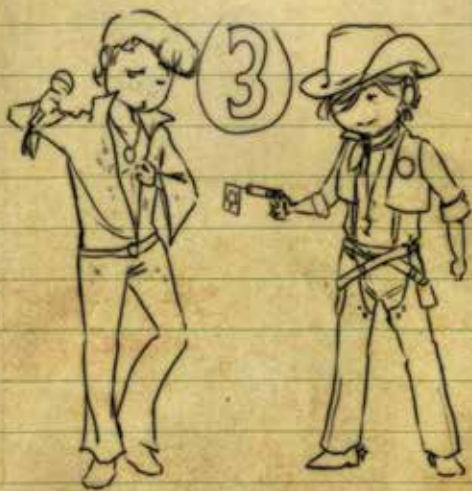
(Bleeding Cool
CB2
for a while
were fab + paired
this!)



2014!

Ian + Cort's
dress-up
adventures!! ♥

(you betcha we
want to bring
this scene into
the comic version!)



DAH! ♥
(you know who
you are!)

2014



Festive Wishes

FESTIVE
IMAGE!

2013

Original
Lineup

— BREAKS —



harvey

anne

cortland

ian

amilah

spencer

↑ Anne became
Irena in the comic
version!



SELFIE KLIK!



Ian's goofy face!



laughing at own
joke



trying to look hot
in mirror



seeing into another
dimension

*Tumblr
character - mere
which made me
giggle!
(kisses, pussykraken!)*



miming to "i wont
say i'm in love"



buying hardcore gay
porn in newsagent



haven't pissed in
over 24 hours



explaining favourite
show to someone who
doesn't care



just woke up from
symbolic nightmare



underwater

*I wish
I'd done one
for lan too!
d'ion!*



about to pass out
from blood loss



stepping on upturned
plug



uncomfortably close
to stranger in queue



eating macaroni



senpai noticed them



best impersonation
of second-favourite
animal



crying single tear

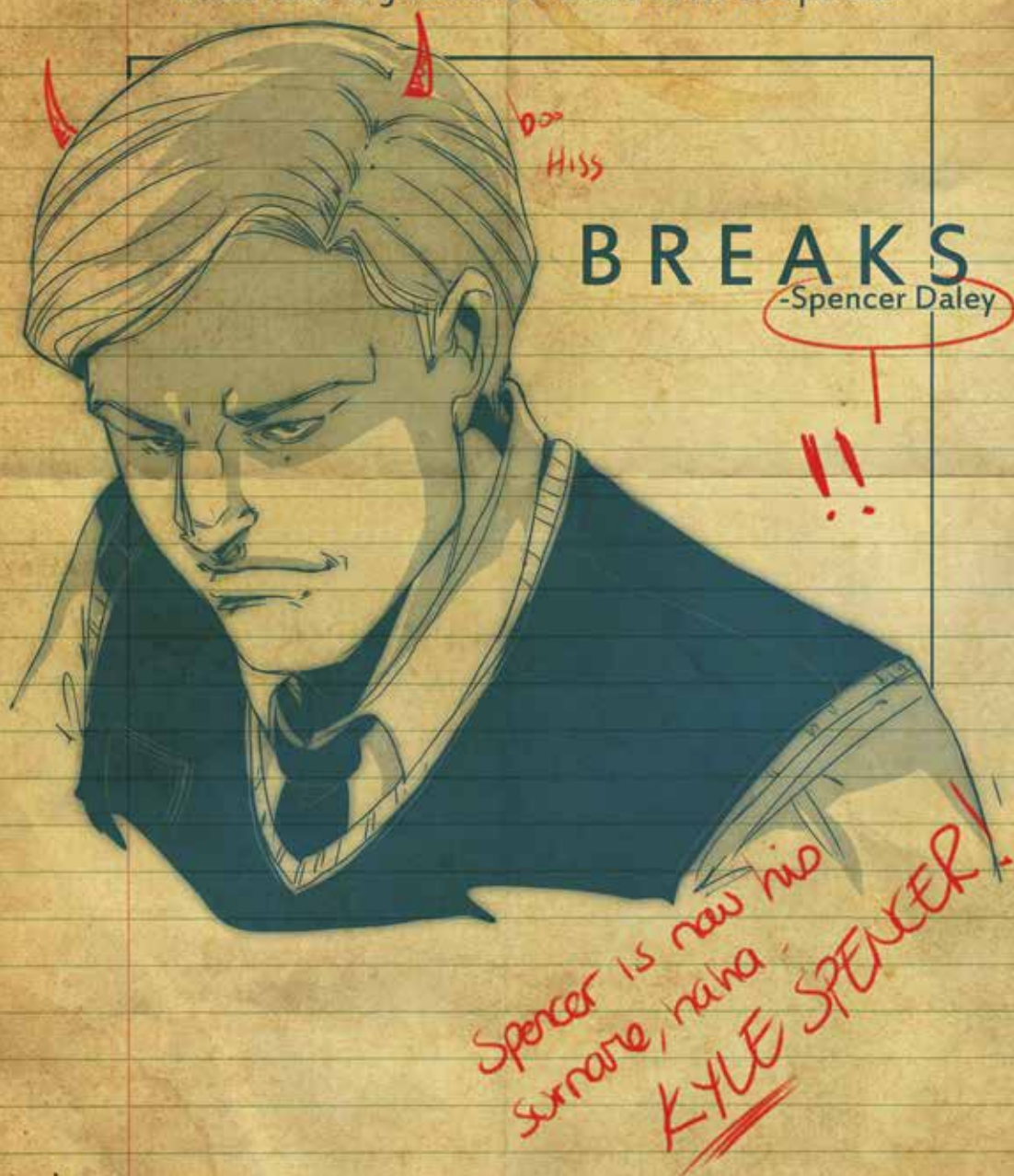
*↑
lan
20*



THE
HUNTER
LIVES!

2013 Character profiles

"Their careful balance had been disturbed. Eventually, something would have to give... and it would never be Spence."



So many unfinished drawings!



ISSUE SIX

Page one

Panel one

Focus on Cortland's now castless arm as he is looking at it, slightly skinnier and a bit hairy. We are just seeing the arm as he holds it up towards the sky.

Panel two

Pulling back a bit, we can now see that Cortland is looking at the arm, flexing it a little. He is on the street, together with Irena.

Panel three

Irena is holding up her backpack like one of those pads you use to hit things.

Irena: Come on, try it out!

Panel four

Cortland shakes his head a little.

Cortland: Not going to break it again on your books.

Irena: It is true, [get a name of a textbook or author] has brought down lesser men.

Panel five

Irena shrugs back into her backpack.

Irena: But you should get it back in shape. You know what Dibs said when you cracked it when we fell off the roof. You have to keep it strong.

Cortland: Anyone ever told you that you're a bloody mother hen?

Panel six

Irena cracks her knuckles with a wide grin.

Irena: Not twice...

Panel seven

Maybe a wide but small panel of Cortland running for his life pursued by Irena.

Page two

Panel one

Cortland's and Harvey's flat. Harvey is walking around the living room, on the phone.

Harvey: I just don't know what to do anymore.

Panel two

Cut to the other person on the line, it is the school nurse (she needs a name), but in her civilian clothes.

Nurse: Calm down sweetie, you are doing fine.

Harvey (from the phone): Am I?

Panel three

Harvey is going and straightening up some magazines that's on the table.

Harvey: He broke his arm. He refuses to talk to me. What if...

Nurse (on the phone): What if?

Panel four

Harvey is standing stock still, holding a magazine limply in his hand, not even seeing the room. In front of him is a wall almanac with a date circled in red. In tiny letters it's written "Cortland's birthday".

Harvey: What if they...

Panel five

Back to the nurse, looking worried.

Nurse: What if what happened to you happened to him, you mean?

Harvey (from the phone): yes

Nurse: You know there was no indication of that

Panel six

Harvey on the phone still, there is a sound from the hallway when the door slams open.

Harvey: I know, but I can't stop thinking...

Hallway: SLAM

Page three

Panel one

Cortland is storming into the flat with his bag, still with his shoes on, passing Harvey without a glance.

Harvey: Hey?

Panel two

Harvey is looking towards the now open door to Cortland's room.

Nurse (on phone): Is he home?

Harvey: Yes. I got to go.

Panel three

Cortland has dropped the bag on the bed. Harvey is in the doorway.

Harvey: Please don't wear your shoes in here.

Cortland: Whatever.

Cortland: You love to clean so what's the problem?

Harvey: that's not...

Panel four

Cortland shoves past Harvey and heads for the door.

Harvey: Are you going out again?

Cortland: Got some business I need to take care of.

Panel five

Harvey is following Cortland towards the door

Harvey: With Irena?

Cortland: None of your fucking business.

Harvey: I wish you would just...

Panel six

Cortland literally slams the door in Harvey's face.

Harvey: ... talk to me.

Page four

Panel one

A similar closeup and shape of the panel like the one on Cortland's arm on page 1. But this time it is half a face in the mirror, Ian leaning really close to check out what might be a pimple.

Panel two

We now pull out so we can see that it is Ian standing in his bathroom checking himself out. He's fresh from the shower.

Ian (muttering to himself): Crap. Maybe it will blend in with the freckles.

Panel three

Ian is brushing his hair, smiling a little to himself. Maybe we can see a reflection of the kiss in the mirror if you think it would look cool.

Panel four

Ian has caught sight of himself looking happy as he picks up a tube of gel.

Ian (talking to the mirror): What the hell are you smiling at? You're not the one who ruined your life you smug bastard?

Panel five

Ian has unscrewed the tube, but is gesturing angrily with it at his own reflection.

Ian (talking to the mirror): How drunk were you? Why did you think it was a good idea to kiss him?

Panel six

Small panel. A bit of gel is squirted out and hits the mirror, dribbling down Ian's reflection's cheek. It looks a bit like cum.

Panel seven

Small panel of Ian's face cracking up in a tiny smile despite himself.

Page five

Panel one

Ian is wiping the gel off the mirror almost tenderly.

Ian: Typical. The perfect setup for a joke and nobody to tell it to.

Ian (smaller bubble): Not that I would anyway.

Panel two

Ian leans heavily on the sink, looking his own reflection in the eyes.

Ian: You are NOT gay. Why can't you get that into your thick and pimpled head?

Panel three

A voice is heard from outside the door, causing Ian to jump.

Sunny: Don't hog the bathroom, asshole, some of us have places to be tonight.

Panel four

Ian rubs gel into his hair.

Ian: You're fifteen, you're not allowed to have more fun than me.

Sunny: Just because you're not having fun anymore doesn't mean I have to suffer.

Panel five

Ian fixes his hair, talking to the door.

Ian: That's the baby sister's lot in life. Suck it up.

Sunny: You are such an arse!

Panel six

Ian pauses a moment, looking at his own reflection.

Ian (small bubble, to himself): Yeah. I really am.

Page six

Panel one

Ian and Sunny is standing just outside the bathroom. Sunny is tall for a girl, and looks annoyed and on the way in.

Sunny: I swear if you've been stinking up the place I'm gonna...

Ian: Hey, Sunny...

Panel two

Sunny has stopped but she isn't turning around. The siblings are standing back to back in the hallway.

Sunny: What?

Ian: Am I really such an asshole?

Panel three

Sunny has turned around now, smirking a little.

Sunny: On a scale of Jesus to dad?

Panel four

Closeup of Sunny looking insufferably smug.

Sunny: Don't start cutting up your shirts for wings any time soon.

Ian: I'm serious.

Panel five

Sunny rolls her eyes.

Sunny: What do you want me to say? You're my brother. And you're... less of an arse than you could be.

Ian: Gee, thanks.

Panel six

Sunny is looking curious now, arms crossed.

Sunny: So what have you done now and how much do I get if I don't tell mom?

Ian: It's not like that.

Page seven

Panel one

Ian is looking really embarrassed, looking anywhere but Sunny.

Ian: It's just that I think I really fucked somebody over that I didn't mean to hurt.

Sunny: Is this why Milly has not been over lately?

Panel two

Ian is blushing a little, and trying not to let it show.

Ian: No, we just had a fight, that happens. This is something else.

Ian: (small bubble) Someone else.

Panel three

Sunny's eyebrows are up now, she's looking super curious. Ian however, hesitates.

Ian: Forget it.

Panel four

Ian is stomping off towards the kitchen, followed by Sunny.

Sunny: You can't stop now, it was just getting good!

Ian: I am not doing this to amuse you.

Sunny: Too bad, because you're succeeding.

Panel five

Sunny rolls her eyes and jumps up to sit on the kitchen table.

Sunny: But seriously, don't be such a drama queen all the time. If you messed up, go and fix it.

Ian: Just like that?

Panel six

Ian pulls out a soda from the fridge to hide his embarrassment. Sunny grins widely.

Sunny: Or run away and join the circus, what do I care? They always need clowns.

Panel seven

A tiny panel of Ian exhaling in frustration.

Ian (tiny bubble): And freaks...

Page eight

Panel one

Ian is on his way down the stairs, holding a pack of cigarettes in his hand. He is about to go outside for a smoke.

Panel two

Ian is pausing on the steps outside, an unlit cigarette between his lips, eyes widening in surprise.

Panel three

We now see what Ian has spotted, which is Cortland sitting and waiting outside.

Ian: Oh.

Panel four

Ian is quickly trying to hide the cigarette, switching into his usual smirking self.

Ian: Hi?

Cortland: Haven't seen you at school.

Panel five

Ian is scratching his neck, looking a bit sheepish. Cortland is looking very deadpan and super serious.

Ian: That's very perceptive. I've been dodging you like hell.

Cortland: Understandable considering the clusterfuck you dropped on me.

Panel six

Ian is still looking like he's considering to just leg it.

Ian: Ah, yeah, well, about that. Sorry. It wasn't really something I had planned.

Cortland: Really? The mastermind doing something completely random for once?

Page nine

Panel one

Ian's jaw twitches a little and he looks determined. Cortland looks pretty damn threatening.

Ian: Not random. I... look, this wasn't a setup. I swear. I wasn't making fun of you.
Cortland: So you creaped on me at the hospital because you wanted to.

Panel two

Ian is looking very defensive, like he wants to run, but this time Cortland has cornered him.

Ian: I wasn't creeping. I just...
Cortland: Felt like kissing someone unconscious that couldn't punch you for it?

Panel three

Ian: I kissed you when you were conscious too. And you didn't... or, well, admittedly you did punch me for it.
Cortland: Why?

Panel four

Ian looks taken back by the question, rubbing his stomach a bit.

Ian: Why what?
Cortland: Why did you kiss me?
Ian: I...

Panel five

Ian is blushing hard now, looking everywhere but Cortland.

Ian: I... might have been thinking about doing that for a while now.
Cortland: Are you gay, or what?

Panel six

If it was possible, Ian is blushing even harder.

Ian: No! I mean... I do have a girlfriend.

Page ten

Panel one

Cortland is still looking like he is expecting a fight, Ian gestures back towards the door.

Ian: Look... are we doing this right here in the street. Do you want to come in?

Tiny panel two

Cortland's completely deadpan face.

Ian: I guess that was a stupid question.

Panel three

Ian starts to walk across the road instead, to a small parking lot or alley. Cortland follows.

Panel four

They are in a reasonably private if very dingy location now. Ian kicks a can that's on the ground.

Ian: Christ, there is no way that I can avoid coming off as the bad guy in this, is there?

Cortland: Pretty sure you're right there.

Panel five

Ian is talking, all fidgety, Cortland is all controlled with clenched fists. They have arrived near a swingset now. It looks pretty rickety.

Ian: I mean I have a girlfriend. Or at least I think so, she kind of hates my arse right now, not because I told her that I cheated on her, but because I am an inattentive asshole.

Panel six

Ian is starting to count things off on his fingers.

Ian: I totally creeped on you in the hospital. I ninja-kissed you in the stairwell. And then there was the time fat Julie thought you had asked her out, and..

Cortland: That was you?

Page eleven

Panel one

Cortland has lost a bit of his cool at that, eyes wide in surprise. Ian is looking a bit sheepish. He keeps fiddling with things.

Ian: I can imitate handwriting pretty good. But that's not the point.

Cortland: Then what is?

Panel two

Ian is looking straight at Cortland, taking a deep breath. Cortland is looking guarded.

Ian: The point is that I kissed you because I have been wondering how it would feel. And it felt pretty good.

Cortland: Fuck...

Panel three

Cortland is running a hand through his hair, looking like this was an answer he had not expected.

Ian: And I wouldn't mind doing it again.

Panel four

Cortland looks like he might be having a panic attack, Ian keeps talking. He's not looking at Cortland anymore.

Ian: Look, I know I'm too screwed now to get out of a beating, so I may as well be honest. You asked me why, well...that's why. I wanted to, okay?

Panel five

Ian has balled up his fists and turned around now, looking like he's bracing for impact. Cortland is looking blank.

Ian: Now, just get it over with so that I can crawl off and die quietly, okay? I'm sorry for screwing things up, and for not asking first but I'm not sorry I kissed you.

Panel six

A tiny panel of Cortland's fists clenching. Almost a creaking sound.

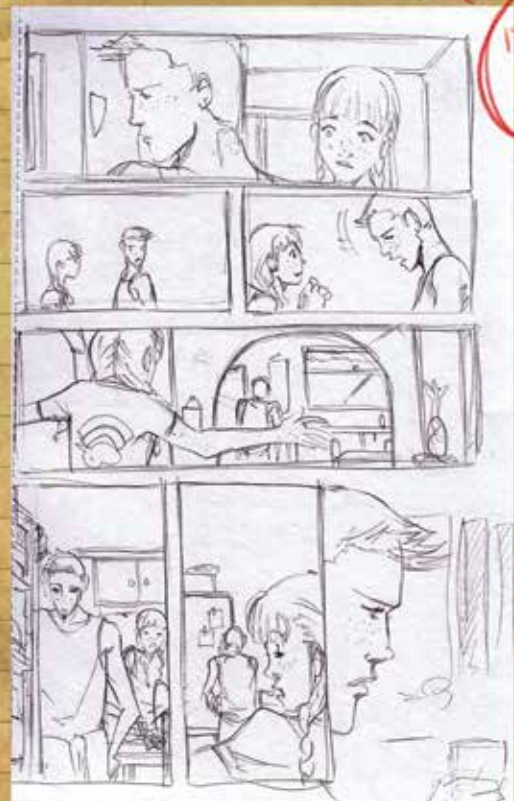
Panel seven

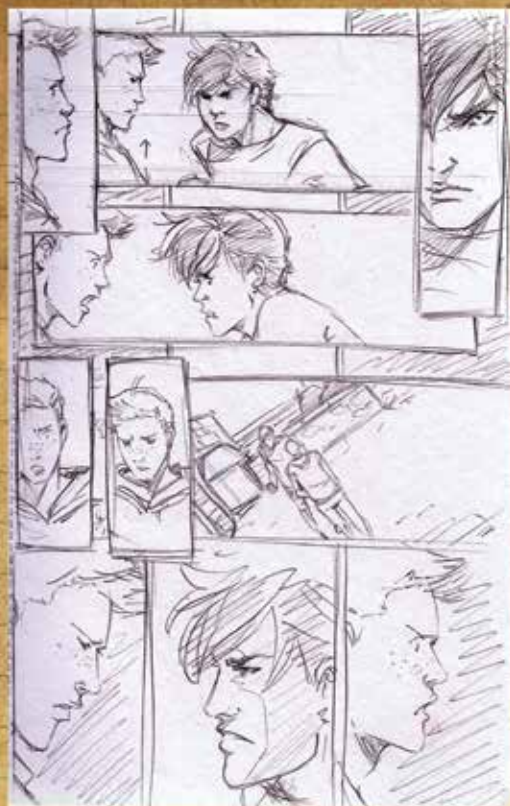
Cortland is instead turning around and walking away.





Ennais
rungs
6





Emma's
rough
Issue 6

Emma then scans
these in and inks,
tones, shades and letters,
all in clip studio.
↑ Art
Software
Crown

Comics are
a labour of
love!

Georgeous Gift Art
from Friends ♥

← Hayden Scott Boren (dockey)
instagram: dockydrains



Laura Watton
(pinkapplejani) →
www.biomechacortic.com



← Naniieoim
.tumblr

何家敏



← laa!!

More gorgeous
Nanliebur art!
(we are so lucky!)



Arts: [nanuebirthbd.tumblr](https://nanuebirthbd.tumblr.com)



awww!



D'auuww



BREAKS



Celebrating 50
Patreon backers
May 2014
♥



"I love you, Patrons!" - Enna

BREAKS



* le gusp *

... All to
Core



This is a section from the original, prose version. You'll spot a few changes. For starters, the boys were in different years at school, originally! This is set a fair few months ahead of where we are in the comic. The boys are more secure in their relationship, some secrets have been shared...hopefully nothing spoilerific.” Emma & Malin x

The park was chilly, but winter was slowly losing the fight.

Skies were grey above wet ground, but the trees seemed to be waiting eagerly for the sun to return. Some were budding already, Cortland noted. Seemed early in the year, but then the weather had been so erratic recently; which suited his moods just fine.

As he got closer to the small playground in the centre of the park, Cortland spied the back of a familiar, gangly figure slotted into one of the swings and a smile found him at the sight. Bright red hair seemed a welcome contrast to the day's greys and browns. Hinges creaked a little as Ian pushed the swing back and forth with long legs, his arms hooked around the chains that held the small seat in place, and Cortland couldn't help but feel like so much of his life was now wrapped up in the boy on the swing that it was almost frightening.

He sometimes wished he was still a kid, back when swings had been an adventure; going high into the sky until the chains slackened, wondering if he could ever get to the point of going all the way around. He never did. He remembered swinging and then jumping, mid-swing, to see who could get the furthest. Him or Anne. She had won sometimes, at other times he had; on one memorable occasion breaking his little toe as he misjudged a landing. But, maybe not everything had been simpler back then. Hadn't they once crammed a kid into one of the tire-swings so that he got stuck, then pushed him higher and higher as he squealed in terror?

Cortland couldn't remember why now, even when he tried. Maybe he hadn't needed a reason. Maybe the kid had been a nerd. Or just whiney. Cortland had been a bad kid back then, desperate to prove that he was as tough as his dad, Samson Hunt, the boxer. Shaking his head, dispelling thoughts of dead fathers and past misdeeds, he snuck closer to the swinging runner, looking disproportionally tall on the child's swing. Quiet, breath held, boots so soft in

the wet sand. And then the pounce; reaching for the seat beneath Ian's bum and pulling it back as far as he could before letting it go and watching the boy swing.

"Christ, Cortland!" Ian cursed, clinging to the swing to keep himself from falling off. "You could have given me a bloody heart attack! I can just see the headlines: promising young athlete drops dead from sudden heart failure after vicious swing attack." He dug his heels in, slowing the swing, leaning backwards so he could look up at the offender, balancing precariously on the narrow seat.

Cortland laughed at the sight of the flailing athlete, digging his hands into his pockets as he cooed, "Maybe I can buy you an ice cream later on, if you're good."

"Was that revenge for the icy shower?" Ian asked, eyebrows shooting up in a suggestive leer. "If so, might I remind you that the shower was followed by ridiculously hot sex. Also, you nearly scare me half to death and all you have to offer is ice cream? You, Mr Hunt, are a terrible cheapskate of a boyfriend. And by the way... what's all this 'if I'm good' crap? I've never been good. Bribes or not."

"You're telling me. You certainly weren't good last night." Cortland figured the place was empty enough and risked leaning forwards to place a small upside-down kiss on the runner's mouth. "But I figure I owe you a lot of ice creams for it."

And again he was struck by the normality. No one came running over to accuse them of being perverts or weird. They were just two people sharing a small kiss and he loved that they could. One day, maybe they wouldn't have to hide it anywhere at all, but for now, nearly deserted little parks would have to do. Kiss shared, prejudices given the finger, Cortland finally settled onto the swing next to Ian's. His knees weren't quite as high as the athlete's, but he still felt far too big for the thing. One pair of creaking chains became two as he started to move, a melody of sorts. Disjointed. Improvised. Like so much of their lives.

"I haven't even begun to get revenge for that shower, Mr Tanner. But, damn... yeah. The bit after it..." Cortland cleared his throat as he glanced at Ian. They shared a mutual blush before seeming to, at the same time, decide that the mud just below the swings was very interesting and warranted a longer look.

“I have come to the conclusion that I need to keep you drunk all the time now...” Ian swung back and forth with renewed vigor, breaking the silence. “Maybe alcoholism won’t be such a bad thing if it has such wonderful consequences. Maybe if we never sober up we won’t have to deal with the horrible hangover part.”

Cortland chuckled a little at the lame joke and shifted position, standing on the swing’s seat now and using his body to move it backwards and forwards. From being taken over a kitchen table to playing on the swings. He really was caught between child and adult.

“So...you said you had something to tell me? You wanna talk now or keep plotting to turn me into a lush?”

“There’s a track and field meet next week.” Ian kept shifting his weight back and forth, swinging slowly as he spoke. “It’s indoors this time of the year which I don’t like ‘cause running on those tracks is all sorts of weird. But if I do well, I have a good shot at getting a sponsor and getting out of this shithole. Looking at the lineup I think I could win this. I really could. But... Not sure if I want to.” He kept swinging, shaking his head, grip tightening around the chains. “You know what I mean, I hope. I just... you’re important to me. And you’ll still be stuck here another year.”

Cortland’s swing slowed and finally stopped as Ian started talking about the meet. By the time the runner had reached the end of what he had to say, Cortland was left hanging on the chains, leaning his head against one of them and just staring blankly ahead. So much had been happening recently. So many twists and turns...he’d almost managed to forget that the school year was winding to its own conclusion. That Ian’s time at the school would end this year. That Cortland’s wouldn’t.

He had expected Ian to accept that Cortland might have to go to jail for what he’d done. Wasn’t it hypocritical then to resent the athlete his own going away? And not for something negative, but for something amazing; a future? And yet, here was Ian sounding unsure. And here was Cortland, trying to understand, and his conclusions made him step quietly from the swing, crouching on the wet sand opposite where Ian was gently swinging. He put his hands on bony knees and

stopped that movement, his face serious as he looked up into the other boy's eyes.

"Hey. You're not seriously considering not going, right?" Cortland tried not to let the smaller voice show. The selfish one. The one that wanted to keep Ian here. The one that knew he'd go mad without him. "Ian, you're...you deserve this. If you get it, you...you have to take it."

His words may have been betrayed just slightly by the choke in his voice, but he recovered it fast; smiling and squeezing Ian's thigh reassuringly. Playing the part that he knew he should. Suspecting that Ian may be able to see right through it, but trying all the same. He couldn't think about losing Ian. He couldn't stand the thought of the runner not being here. But worse was the idea that he might give up a chance of happiness and success because of Cortland. Enough lives had been left in limbo because of him. Some part of him was slowly becoming aware that Anne and Jerome would have to face the same hurdles this year. He felt the pain in his chest at the thought of Ian leaving and it was hard not to realise that Annie must have been feeling the same way.

"It's not about what people deserve, and you know it." Ian placed his hands on Cortland's, leaning forward slightly. "I will go, and I will bloody win because..." He sighed a little, eyes downcast. "This running thing. It's just mine, you know? Something that's not family related. I can do this and I can get out of here. Away from everything before things truly turn to shit. And besides, I've started to like winning." He admitted the last with a soft little smirk. "I think you know what I'm talking about."

"Winning is good. I know what you mean." Cortland watched Ian's face change, heard his voice talk in circles, felt those hands tighten on his own. It was like watching someone have an argument with themselves, and he felt hopelessly torn. Torn between the him that wanted to encourage and let Ian go, and the him that wanted to cling and ask him to give it all up, put his future on hold and stay. He knew which one he had to be. He knew it. And even when Ian spoke of getting out of town, even as Cortland felt the stab of those words, he tried to smile.

"My dad is getting set up for an interview." Ian said, out of the blue. Maybe the meet had not been the real issue here, a stubbed toe compared to a dagger in the back. "A parole hearing I mean. Or whatever it's called. He might be getting out

soon. For good. Sort of. Until he screws up. If he screws up”

Cortland found it hard to keep the smile at the mention of Cail and his potential release. Fuck. Maybe it would be for the best if Ian really did win that meet. If he was gone, would Cail and the Tanners have any reason to threaten Cortland any more? Then again, if Ian was gone, would they have any reason to keep him around at all? But did that really matter in the end? Wasn't the important thing here that if Ian was gone...then he was out? Safe. Away from his possibly gangster father. Away from Cortland. And that last thought broke him a little, his smile crumbling into something pained before he reached for a mask again, determined for once not to fuck something up for someone he cared about.

Ian took a deep breath, not noticing Cortland's slip. Instead he confessed,

“I'm not sure how to feel about him being out. He's my dad. And a crook. And maybe things would be easier in a different town, but I don't want to leave you.” There was heat in his voice now, curdling into anger and frustration. “It's not fair that you're a year below me. I was a bloody wreck after a week when you were at camp, not sure how you lasted two when I was gone last term. Christ, just going to sleep without you at night bloody hurts. I love you, that's the only thing that is supposed to matter.”

“I could quit school.” The words tumbled out as if Cortland's heart had spoken them before consulting with his brain. The mask was stretched thin. He could feel something odd happening in his eyes at those words...tears forming that weren't of frustration or sadness. He felt sad at the thought of Ian leaving, but what he was reacting to now? What was stinging at his tear ducts and making his jaw tremble? It wasn't sadness. But it was powerful. “I could quit school and come with you...I could...” He lowered his face again, practically hiding it in Ian's shoulder as his hands clutched the runner's upper arms. This was stupid. Getting upset wasn't going to help anyone. Getting upset wouldn't give Ian the strength he needed to leave.

Ian slid off of the swing, sinking to his knees in the cold sand in front of the other boy, pulling Cortland close, into a tight hug. “We'll just...” he started, half a mumble into auburn hair. “We'll see what happens, okay? It's not happened yet. I might fail, I only have the third personal best, I might trip and break a leg... we

shouldn't worry beforehand. This is stupid." There were sniffles there behind the words, hidden in auburn hair.

"Right. Long way off. Stupid to worry." Cortland had been taken by surprise at Ian's embrace; right there on the ground in a children's park. But not so much that he tried to escape it. Because, shit, he wanted it. Needed it. Wanted the reassurance of time that Ian was offering. And so he mumbled into the other boy's chest, his own arms circling Ian's waist as he nodded. "Fuck, I love you too...I love you and it's just a year. You won't fail, and it's just a year."

"Let's just focus on the present, okay?" Ian seemed eager to leave this minefield behind, to put off making decisions for just another day. As if he had realised how it might have sounded, he added, "I just... I just want you to know I'm never abandoning you, you know? You've got me for the duration."

For the duration. That still didn't change the fact that it was a year they were talking about. A year. A whole year. But, Ian was right and they were ahead of themselves, and what would have happened had their roles been reversed? Considering his own actions, Cortland suspected he would have pushed. Pushed Ian away until Cortland's own guilt was alleviated by knowing that the other person didn't really care any more. That was how he'd always worked. Build those walls, make sure no one gave a shit because, that way, you weren't hurting them. Make sure you didn't care too much for anyone else because, that way, they couldn't hurt you.

As his mind raced, he squeezed the body in his arms tighter. Ian had changed Cortland, it was truer every day. But he wouldn't go back to old ways now. He couldn't shut Ian away, cut him off as if he didn't matter just to cushion his own heart against what might come. If Ian had the chance to escape and go on to greater things, Cortland would let him go. Until then, he was holding on tight.

There was a cough above them, and a mother and her child were stood there, dressed for winter playground fun. The kid wiped his nose, hiding a little nervously behind his mother. The woman looked down her nose at the boys, an expression of pure disgust on her face. And, as Cortland gripped Ian tighter, defensively, she said,

“You’re in the way of the swings.”

Cortland couldn’t stop the laughter. It was all too much, their problems had come full circle now, two boys trying to deal with being what they knew they weren’t supposed to be. It was almost a relief. “Come on.” He pulled Ian to his feet. “I’ll buy you that ice cream.”

Ian let Cortland pull him to his feet, grinning a little at the mother as he remarked, “Oh, well, that’s fair I suppose. We were indeed in the way of the swings. As long as you don’t disapprove of the rampantly gay kissing.”

It was such a typical Ian Tanner move that Cortland really should have seen it coming, the way Ian wrapped an arm around him, tilting him back so that he could deliver the most deeply passionate of showy kisses. Then Ian dropped his voice into a loud stage whisper, one hand still keeping hold of Cortland’s.

“Because you know,” the runner said, one finger raised in warning. “One day your kid might grow up to be one of us and you would have to get that stick out of your arse.”

And with those words he grabbed Cortland’s hand and ran for it.

