

RAINBOW ROWELL

#1 NEW YORK TIMES-BESTSELLING AUTHOR

PUMPKIN HEADS

GRAPHIC
A NOVEL

FAITH ERIN HICKS

AUTHOR OF FRIENDS WITH BOYS



HAUNTED HACIENDA

PUMPKIN BOMB STAND

KETTLE CORN KETTLE

TRAIN STATION

CHILI FRIES STAND

PONY GO ROUND

S'MORES PIT

PAPPY'S APPLES

PETTING ZOO

GRANDMA'S

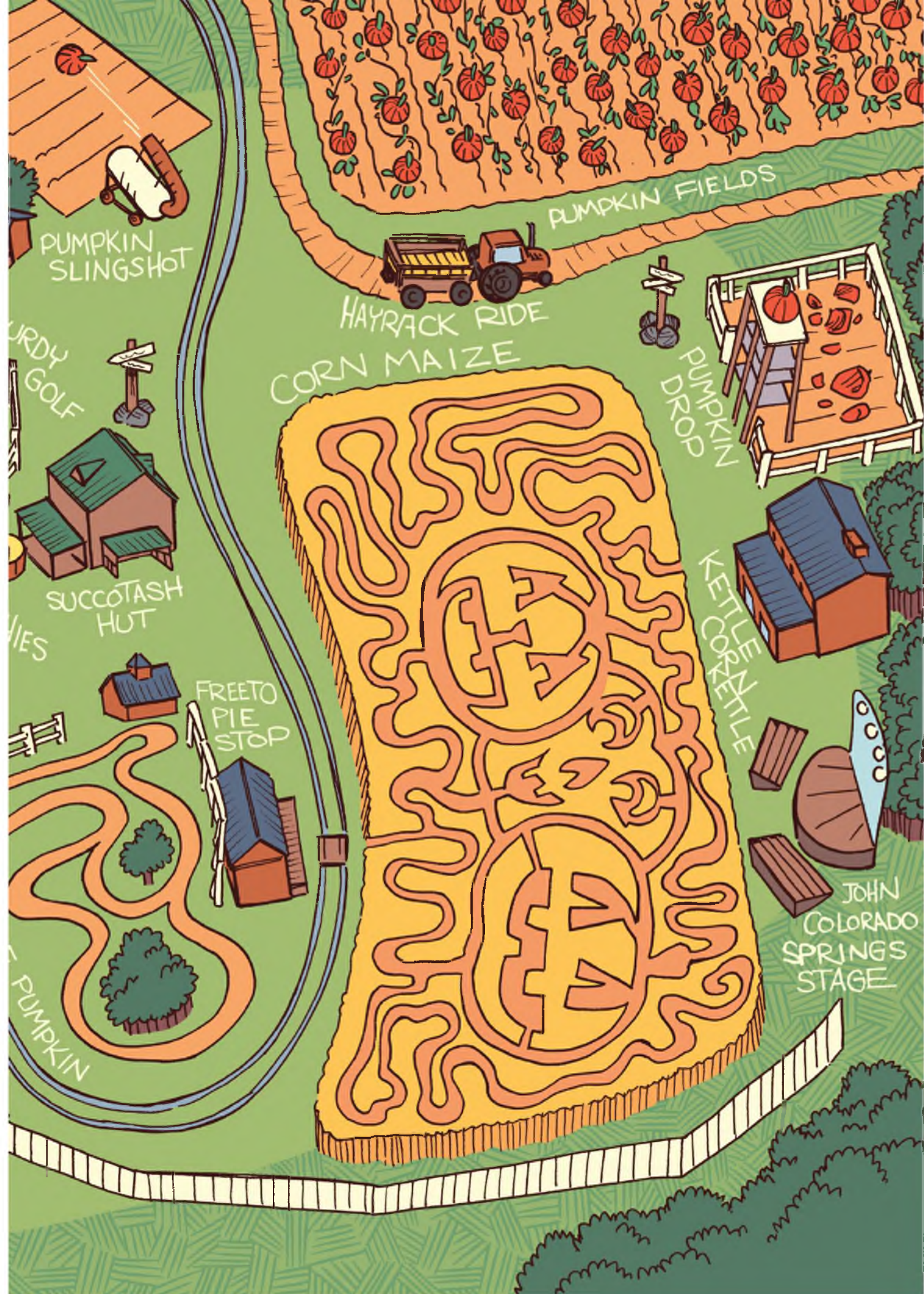
FUDGE SHOPPE

CHICKEN RACES

PIE PALACE

WELCOME ARCH

TOUR DE



PUMPKIN SLINGSHOT

PUMPKIN FIELDS

HAYRACK RIDE

CORN MAIZE

PUMPKIN POP

SUCCOTASH HUT

KETTLE CORN

FREETO PIE STOP

JOHN COLORADO SPRINGS STAGE

PUMPKIN

PUMPKIN HEADS





PUMPKIN HEADS

WRITTEN BY

RAINBOW ROWELL

ILLUSTRATED BY

FAITH ERIN HICKS

COLOR BY SARAH STERN

:01

First Second
NEW YORK

1

LAST NIGHT AT THE PATCH





DeKNOCK'S
WORLD FAMOUS PUMPKIN
PATCH & AUTUMN
JAMBOREE

HAPPY HALLOWEEN

IT'S ALL
HAPPENING
AT THE
PATCH!

99 out of 100
SCARECROWS
AGREE:
WE'RE THE
CORNIEST!

THIS MONTH'S MVPPPP! MOST VALUABLE PUMPKIN PATCH PERSON!

YEAR BEFORE
LAST!

SEPTEMBER



JOSIAH

OCTOBER



JOSIAH

LAST YEAR!

SEPTEMBER



MEREDITH

OCTOBER



JOSIAH

THIS YEAR!

SEPTEMBER




JOSIAH

OCTOBER





A vibrant illustration of a pumpkin patch. In the background, a white two-story house with a green roof is visible. The foreground is filled with pumpkins in wooden crates and baskets. Several people are engaged in various activities: a man in a red plaid shirt and blue overalls is talking to a woman in a green jacket; a man in a blue jacket is holding a white cloth; a woman in a pink jacket is running towards the right; and a man in a green jacket is holding a pumpkin. The scene is set against a backdrop of trees with autumn foliage.

Yeah? *When?*
We'll be away at
school for at
least the next
four pumpkin
patch seasons.

And it's not like
college sends
you home for
"Halloween Break."

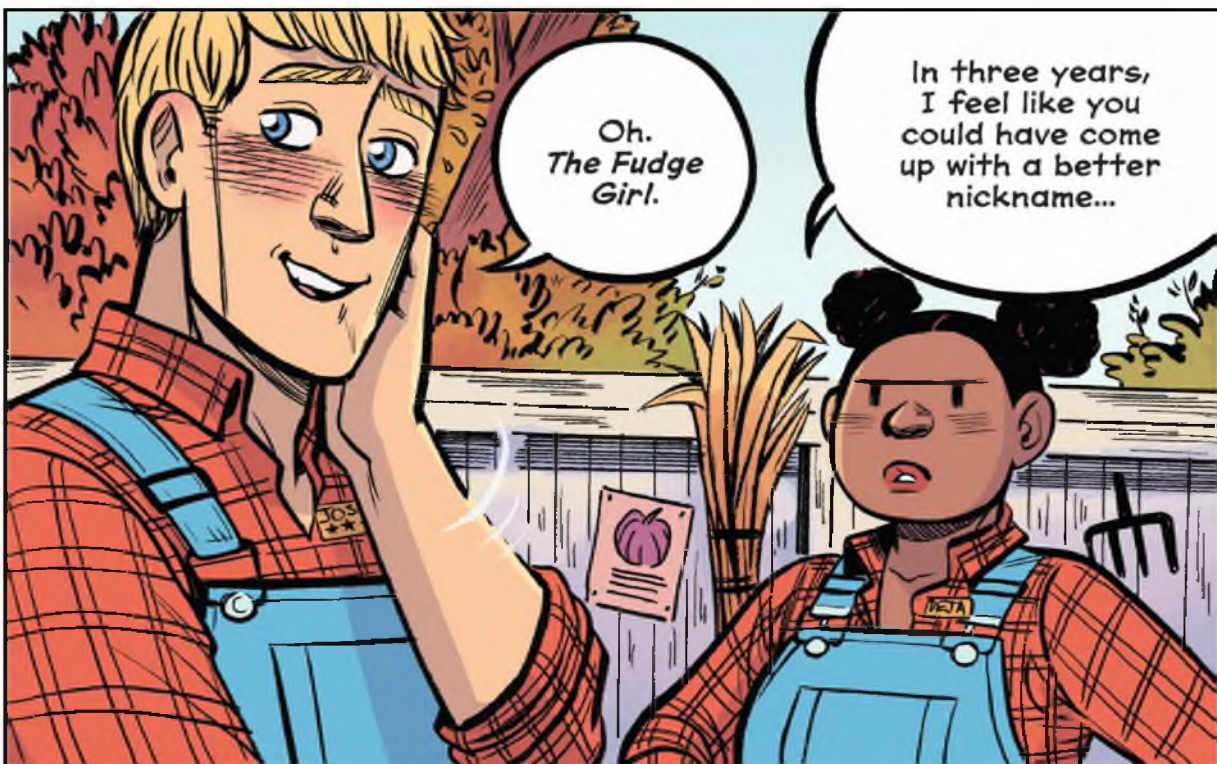
You can
come home for
the weekend—
the Patch will
still be here.

It won't
be the
same...

Which is
why we're
going to
make tonight
the best
Halloween
ever!

THE
REASON
FOR THE
SEASON







What are you talking about... Why are you making your unstoppable face?

You and I are working at the Pie Palace tonight. Jaden and Aidan traded shifts with us.

Is that allowed?

It's totally allowed!

But the Pie Palace is—

Right across from the Fudge Shoppe.

Deja... No...

Josiah Templeton, you are a timid little bunny rabbit who has spent three years hiding down in that Succotash Hut from any hope of romance.

I wouldn't say "hiding"—



Fortunately, bunny boy, your best friend is looking out for you—I'm not going to let you miss the last hayrack ride of the night.

Is that a metaphor?



It is. Tonight, on your dinner break, you are going to *talk* to that girl.

And she? Is going to see how cute and nice you are. You're going to *take your shot*.



I don't know—

Don't let me down, Josie. I had to give Jaden and Aidan twenty dollars and three free hot-dog coupons to trade shifts.

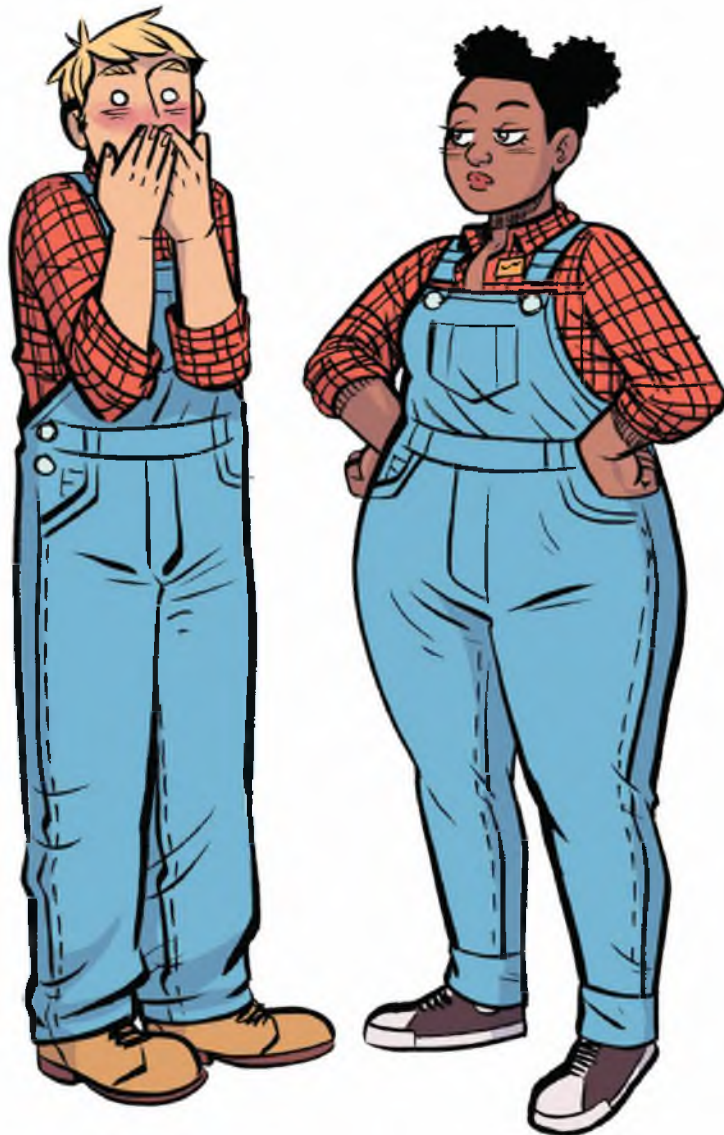


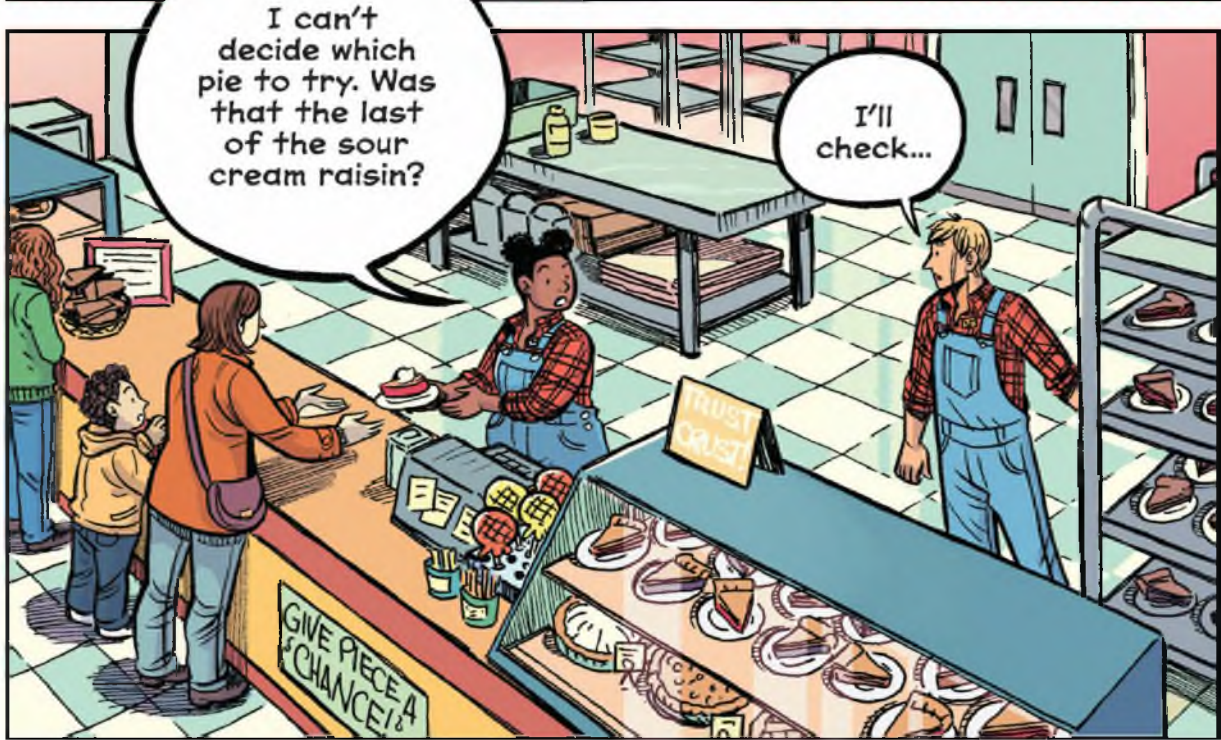
Did you tell them why?

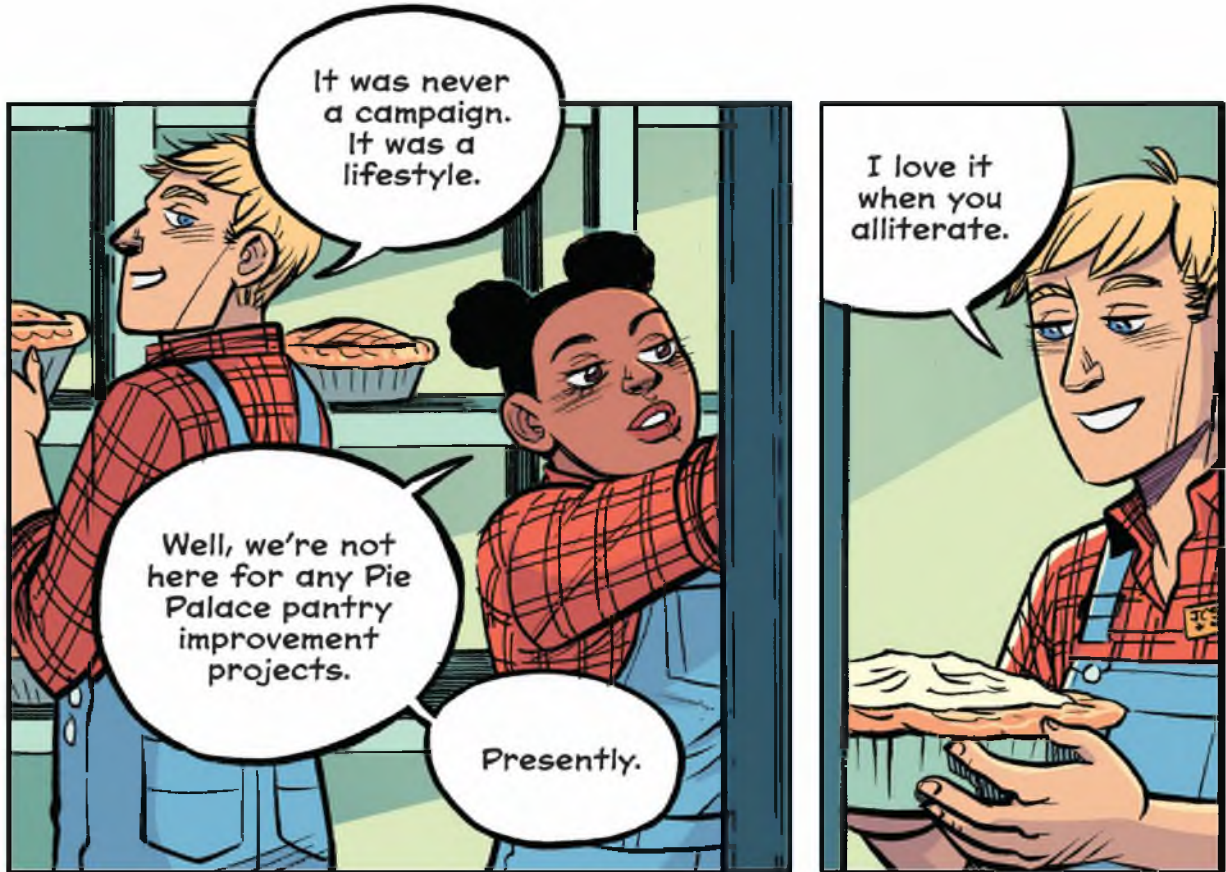
I told them I like pie. Which is true.

2

PANIC AT THE PIE PALACE











Right. Right.
Okay...

"It's nice to
meet you.
Marcy!"

"I think I've seen
you around. Don't
you sell okra
casserole on the
wrong side of the
miniature train
tracks?"



"Y-yes!"

And...

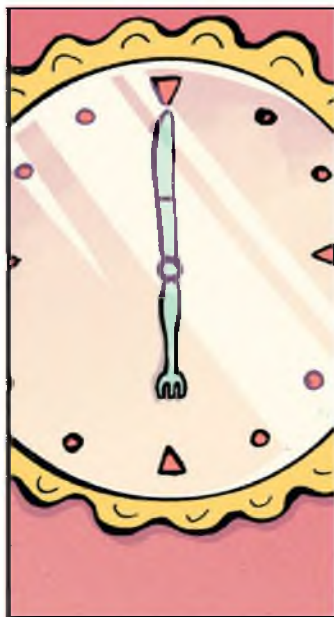


"ITALKALOTABOUT
YOURFACE!"



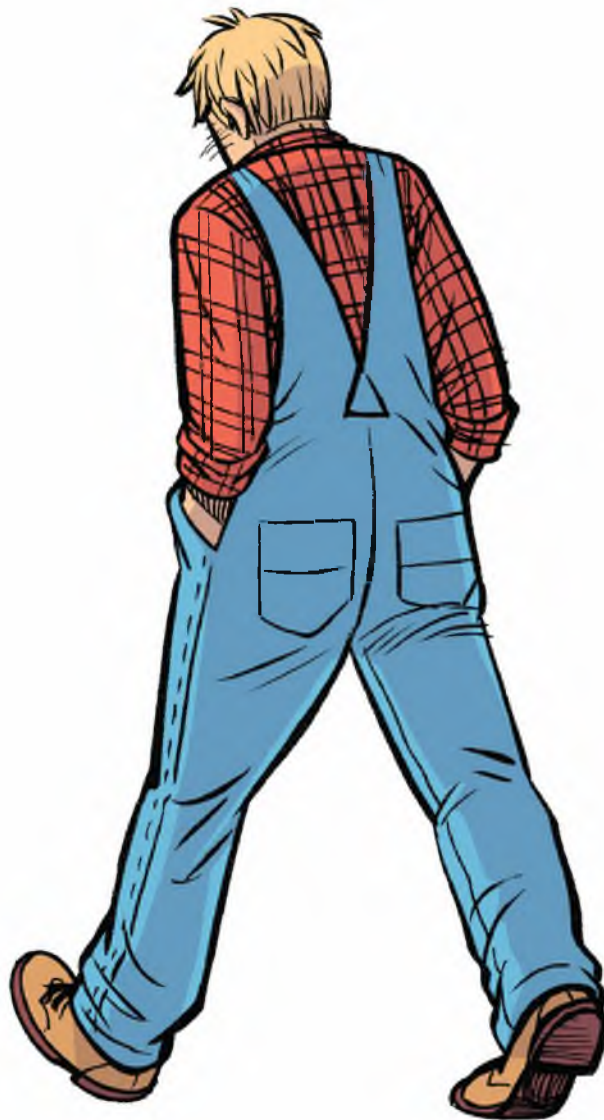






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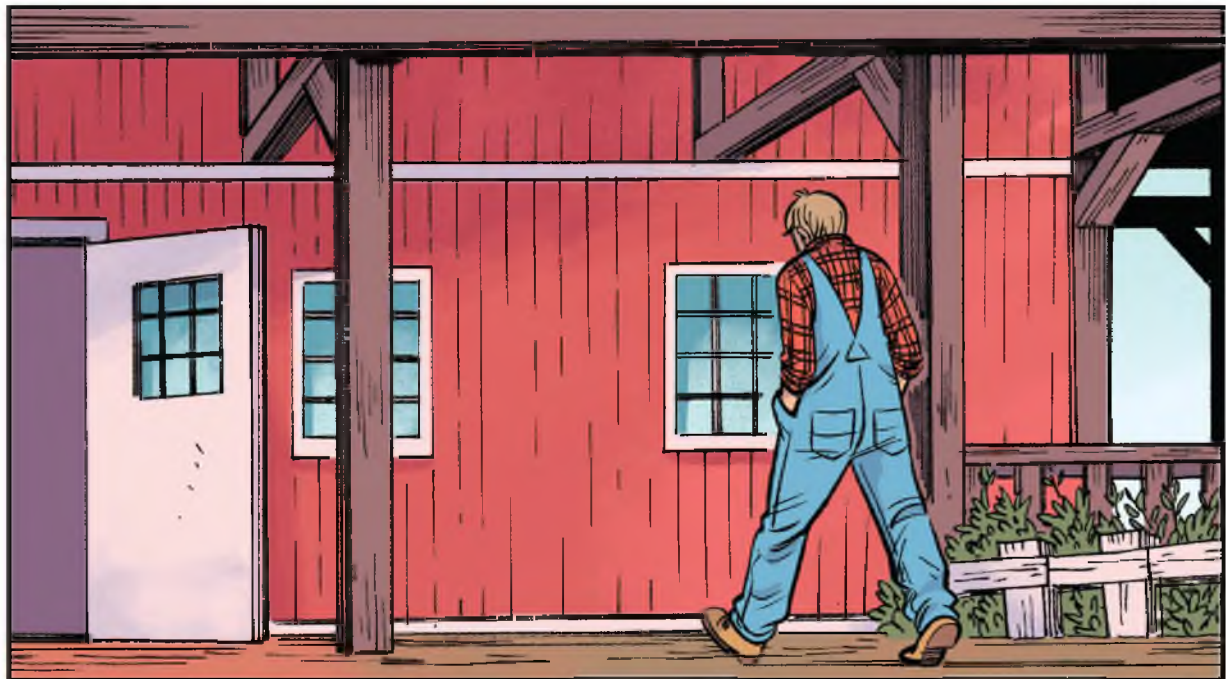
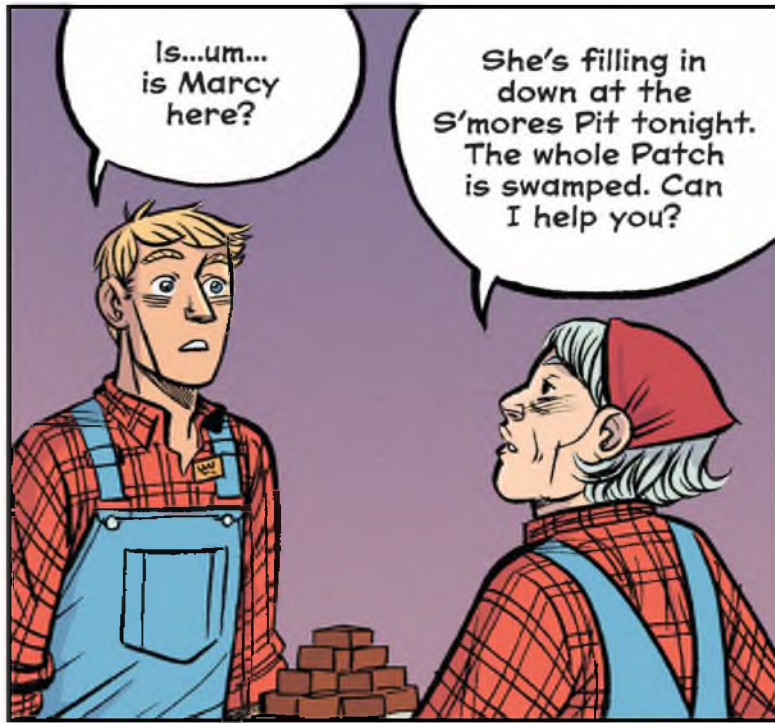
NEXT STOPPE:
FUDGE SHOPPE













She rejected you?

She wasn't there to reject me. She's working down at the S'mores Pit tonight.

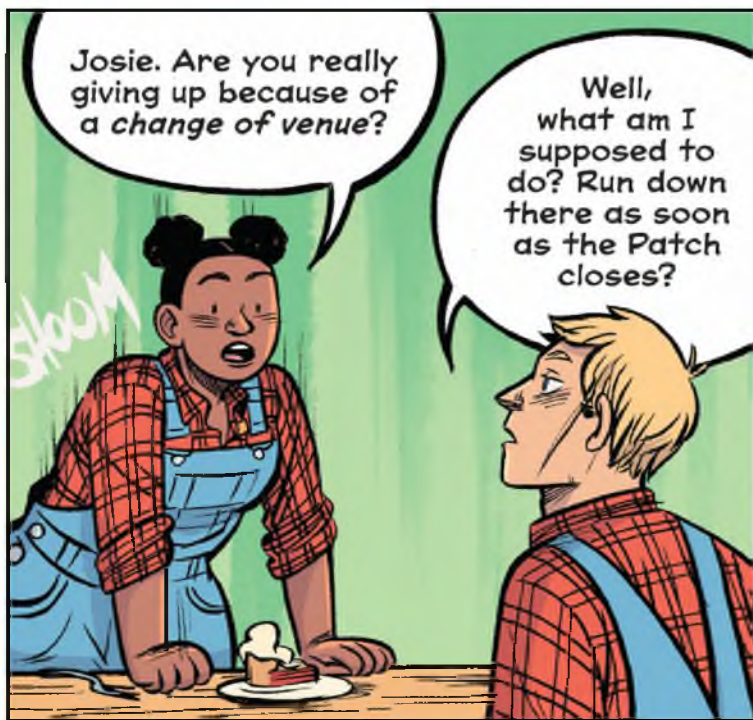


The S'mores Pit! How does this girl get all the best gigs...

WHUMP



Anyway. Thanks for trying.



Josie. Are you really giving up because of a change of venue?

Well, what am I supposed to do? Run down there as soon as the Patch closes?

WHUMP

BOOM



4

EX MARKS THE SPOT





It's kind of cool walking through the Patch like regular people.

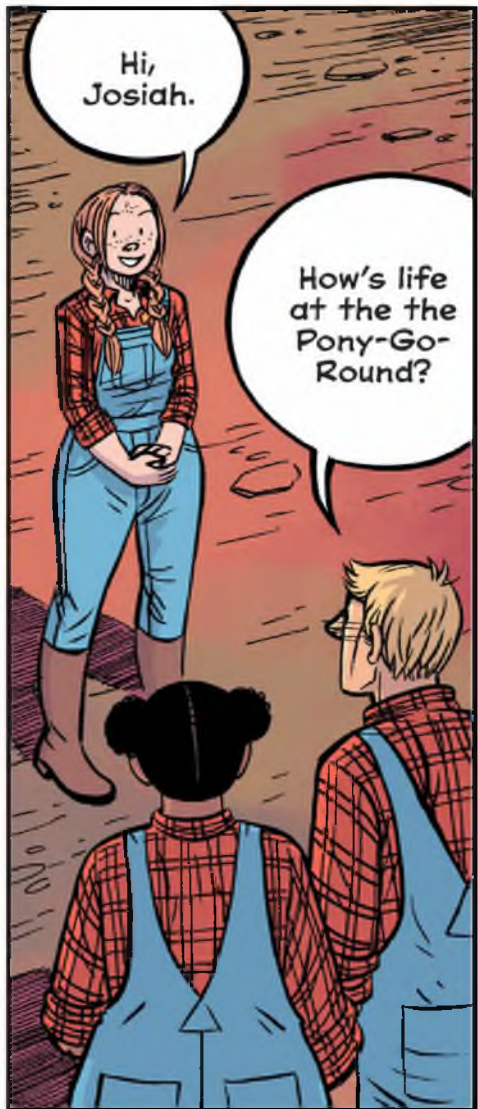
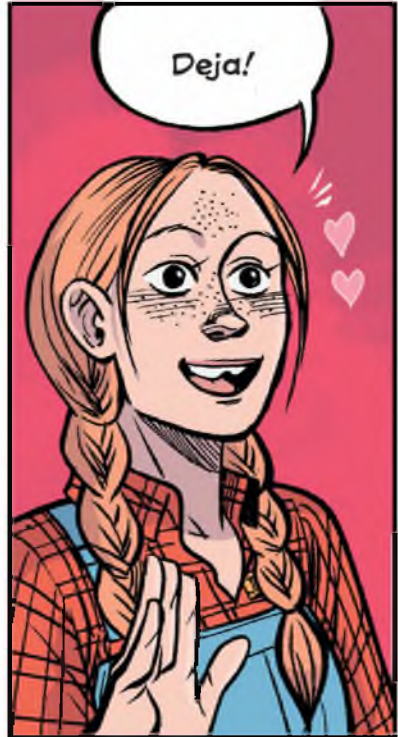


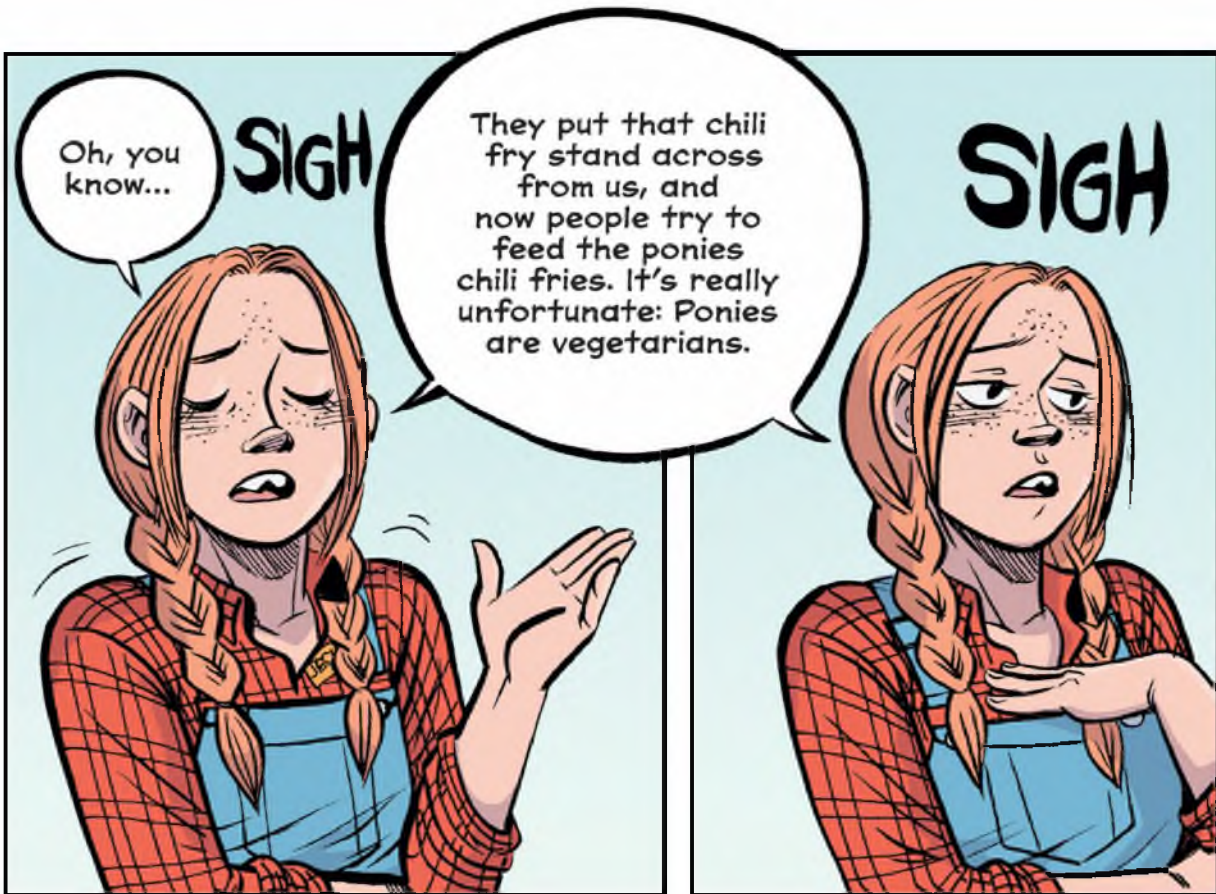
We always said we were going to come on our day off—

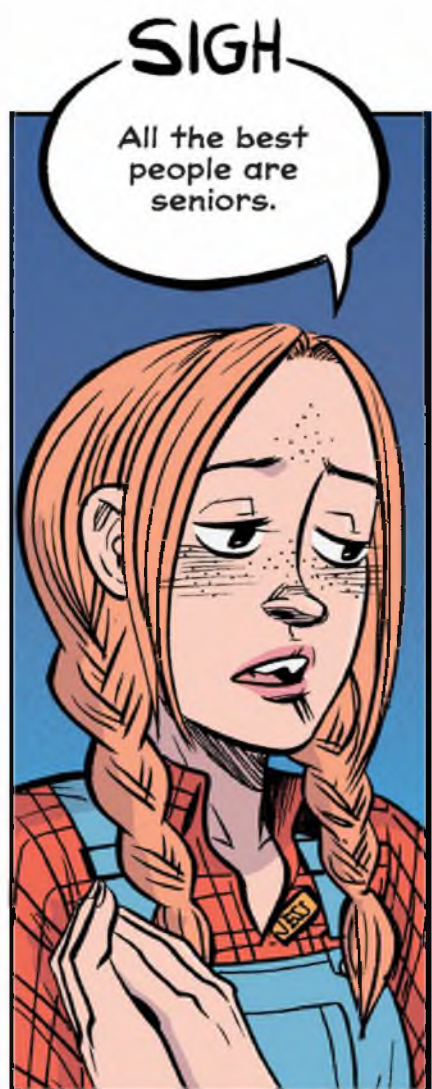
And we never did. Oh, Josie, look—caramel apples! We have to get one.

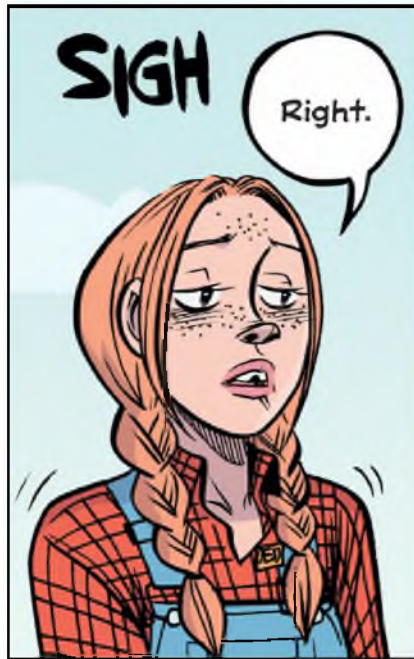


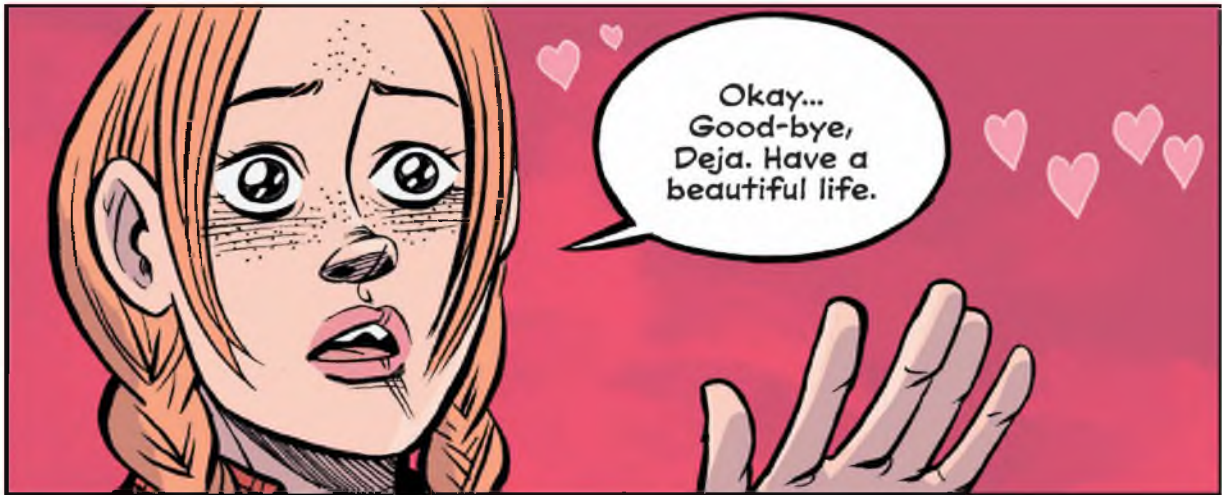












5

STOP, THIEF!



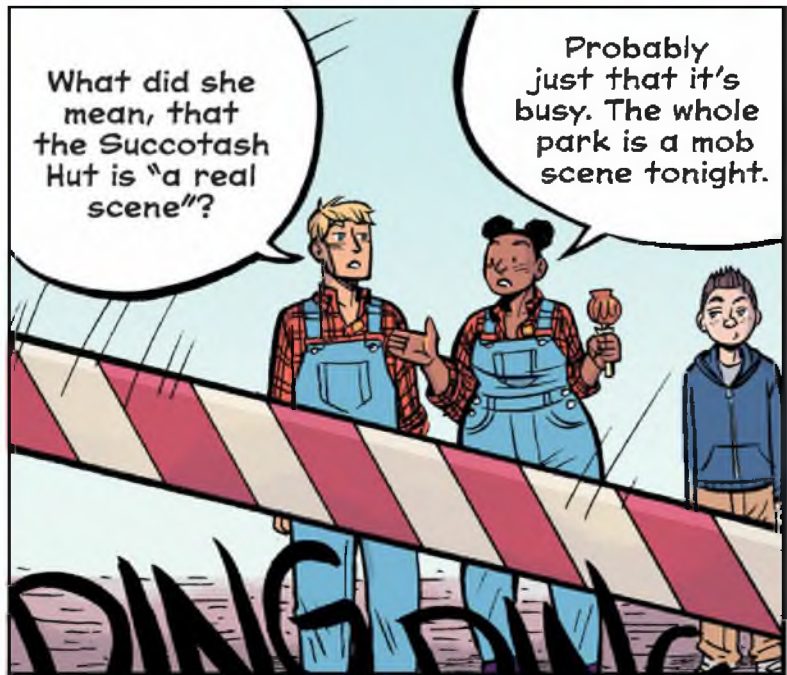


How did you date Jess? She's so...not smart.



She's plenty smart. She's just...more of a pony person than a people person.

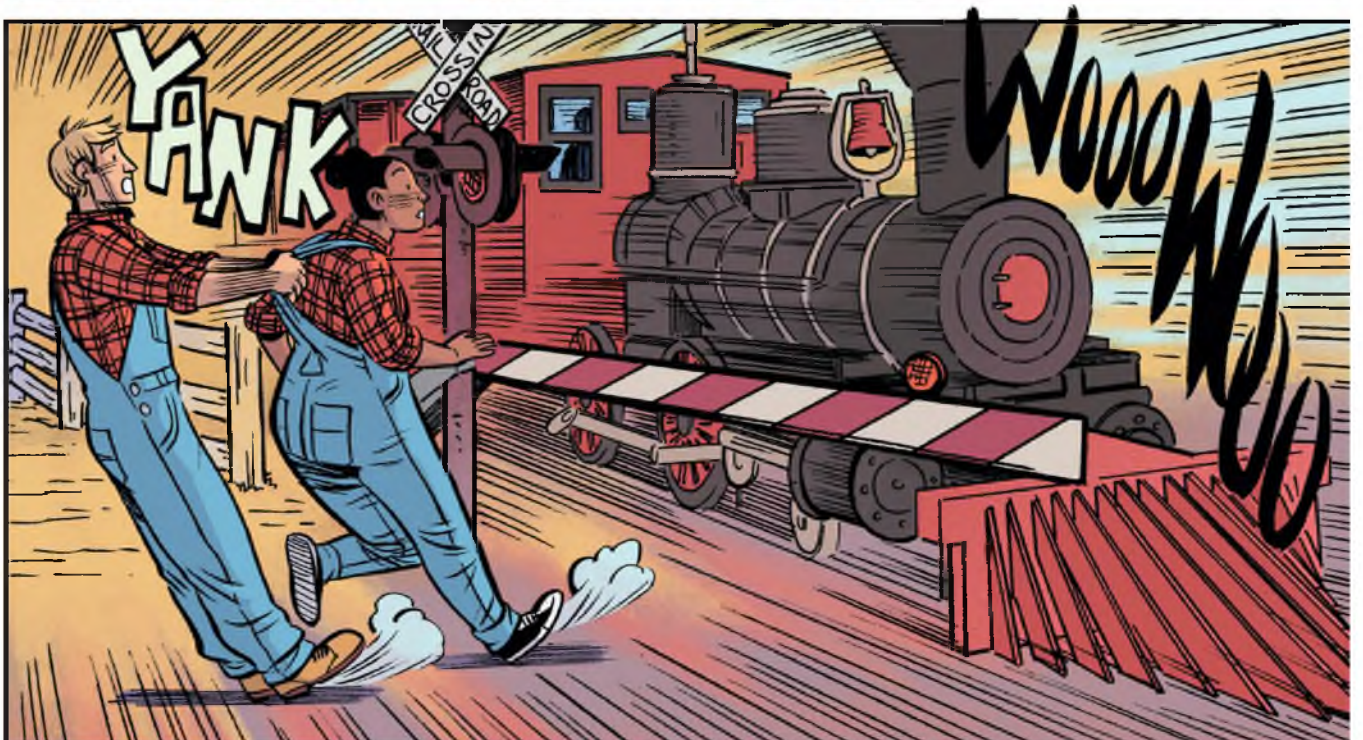
DING DING DING



What did she mean, that the Succotash Hut is "a real scene"?

Probably just that it's busy. The whole park is a mob scene tonight.

DING DING





I can't believe that kid stole my caramel apple!

I can't believe you tried to follow him onto the tracks!



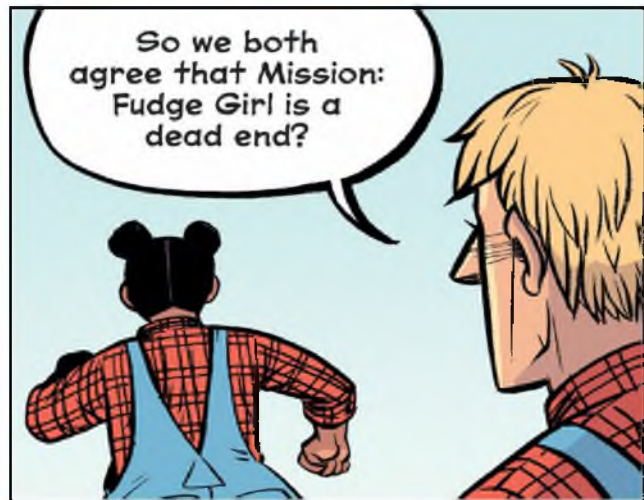
I'm going to END that little twerp.

PAT
PAT

Yeah you are.



But *first* I'm going to get another caramel apple.



So we both agree that Mission: Fudge Girl is a dead end?





Curse my self-sacrificing nature. Come on.



Thanks for saving my life, I guess.



The train was going pretty slow. I think you would have lived.

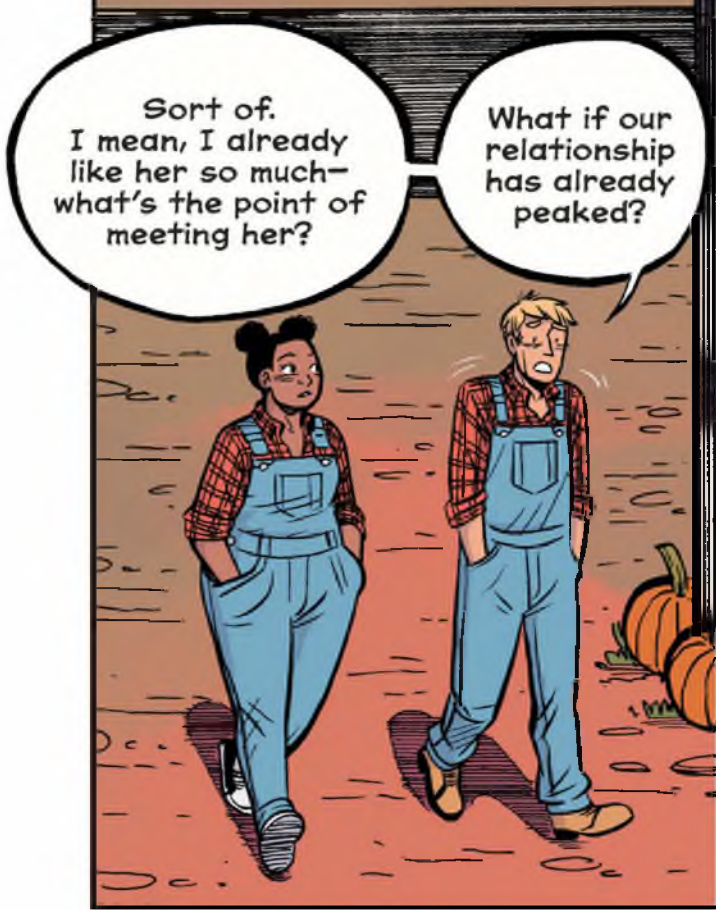
6

S'MORE PROBLEMS









Sort of. I mean, I already like her so much—what's the point of meeting her?

What if our relationship has already peaked?



You don't have a relationship.

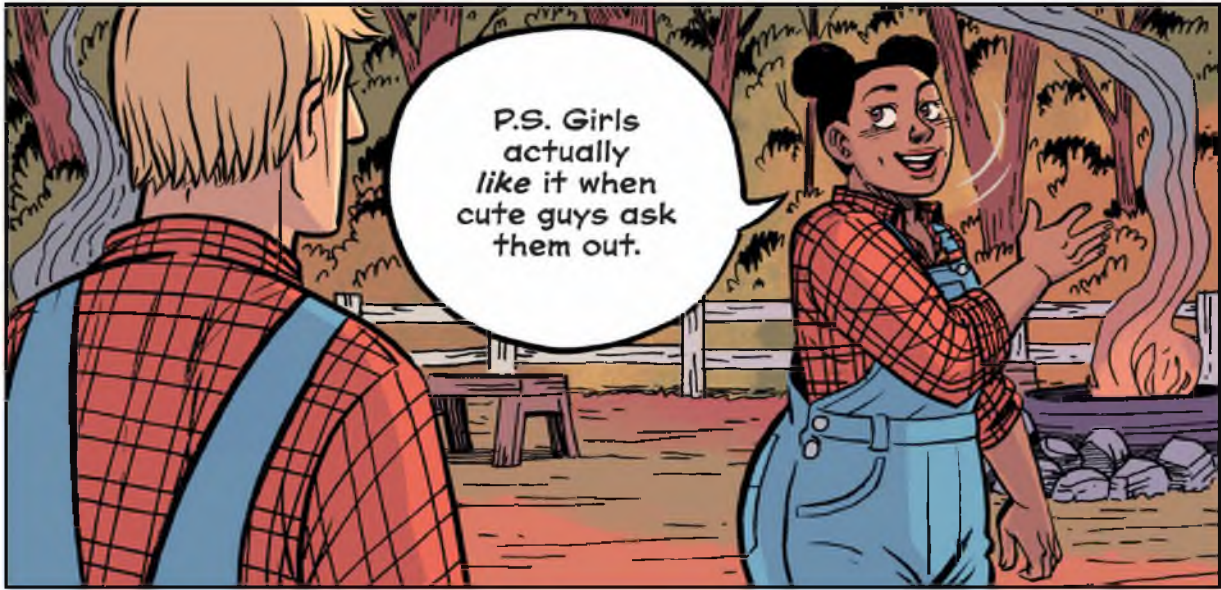
You're right. And my favorite part of our non-relationship is the fact that she's never rejected me.



You better make yourself a s'more right away. When she starts laughing at me, I'm going to want to make a quick retreat.



Good thinking, Josie.







It's not a sword, it's a marshmallow skewer!

KAK



Hey, is, um, Marcy down here tonight?



Why? Are you finally going to tell her about your little crush?

I wouldn't call it a little crush, Dave.



Well, you're out of luck. She went to get more marshmallows, and they ended up keeping her at the Kettle Corn Kettle. I guess it's a riot up there, too.

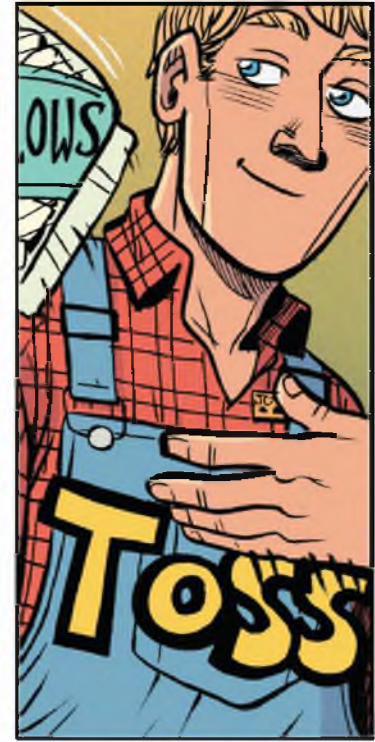
Did you hear what happened at the Petting Zoo? Somebody let out Buck!

They let out Buck?





You seem to be in a bit of a situation.



Toss



If you don't put your sticks down, I'll eat all these marshmallows myself!

Looks like you already did!







7

DEJA VU





So we follow Hot Fudge to the Kettle Corn Kettle— no big deal.

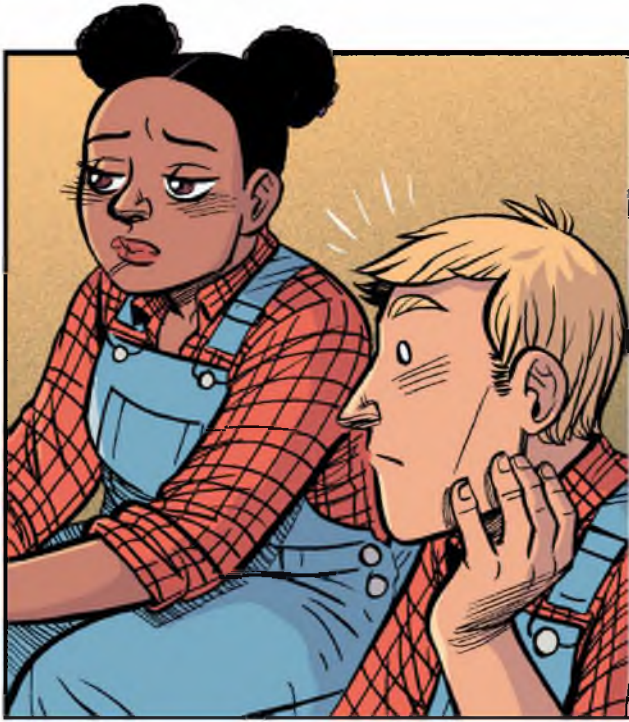
Nah. We're already late getting back to the Pie Palace. Just forget it. This was stupid, anyway.



Don't call my mission stupid!

This is how you always talk yourself out of things, Josie. There's nothing *stupid* about you liking a girl.



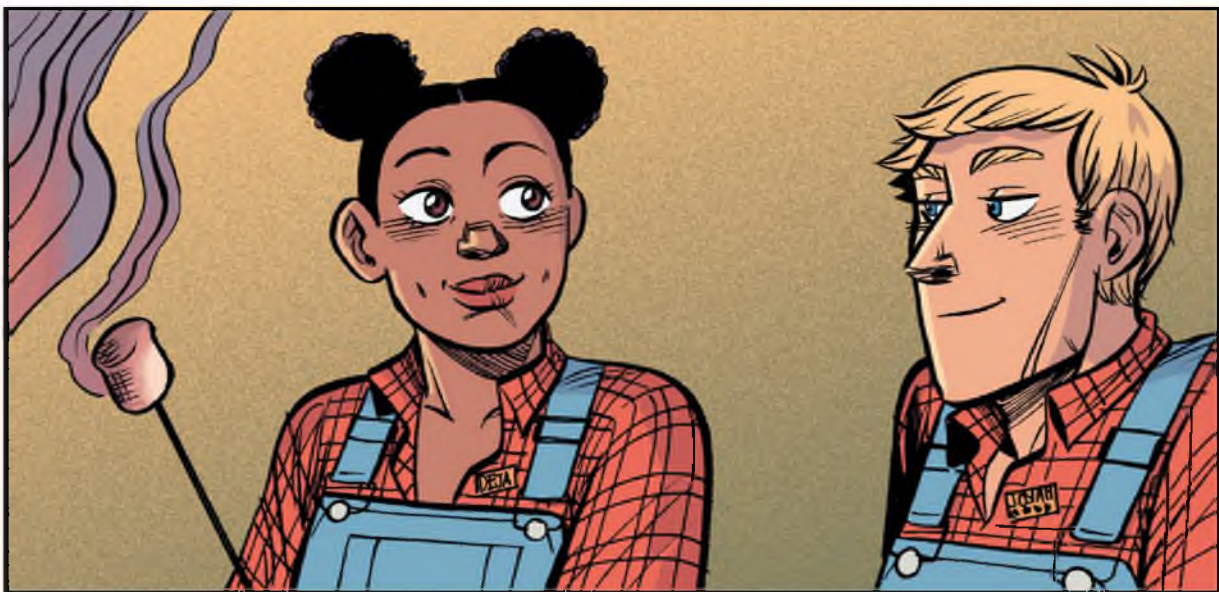








Two succotash legends were born that night.



Argh. That's also the first time I saw Fudge Girl. Though she was just "Pretty Pink Headband Girl" then...



Aarrgh.



Graham-cracker me.



What is it about that girl?

What do you mean?



What keeps so you so... I don't know, *enthralled* after all this time? You've never even talked to her.



I'm not sure. I saw her that night and something *clicked*-





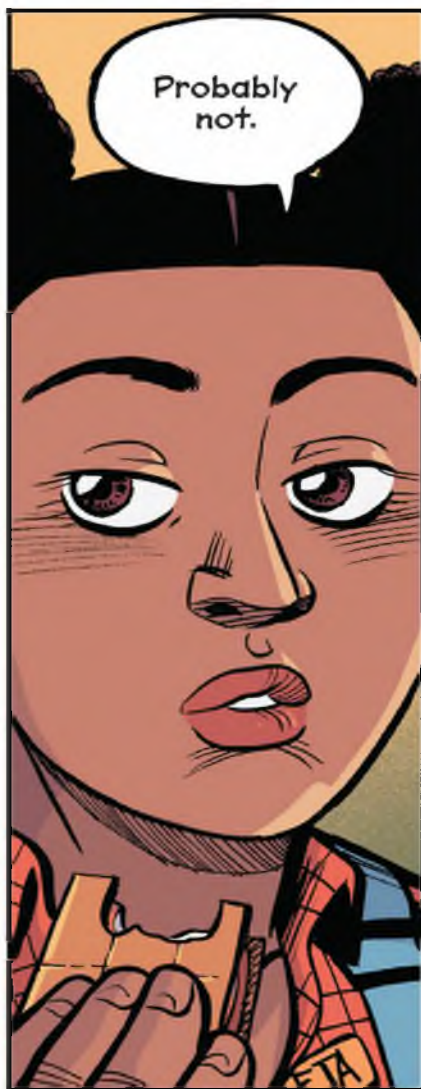
Josiah.

Yeah?



What would happen if we *didn't* go back to the Pie Palace?

Uh...we'd get in trouble?



Probably not.




Why wouldn't we go back?

Because we're on a *mission*.


I've decided that you're going to talk to Vanessa Fudgens tonight. And once I've set my mind on something, I won't be dissuaded.









Hey, can you guys help me through the after-dinner rush?




Sorry you missed Marcy, Josiah. Maybe you can talk to a girl in your next life.



I'm a girl, Dave.



All right. We go AWOL, and we find her.



Well, we already know where she is... but YES!



8

PSL
(PUMPKIN SPICE LIFE)

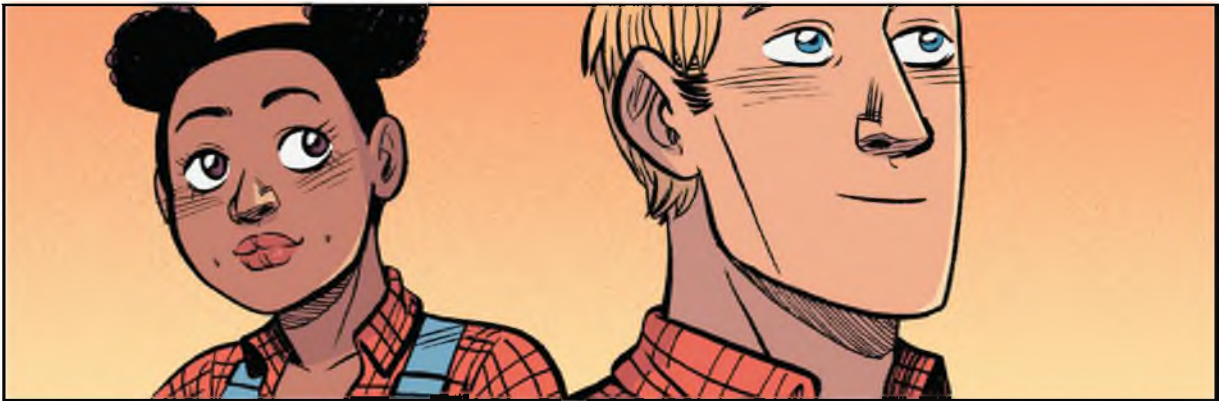






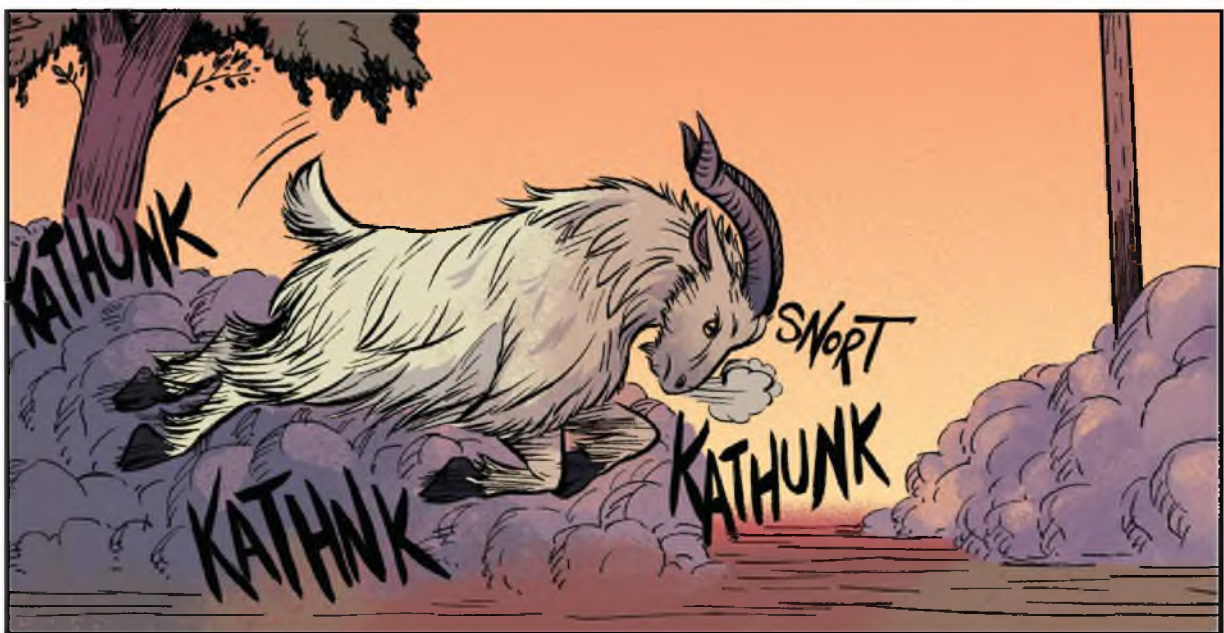


Like every autumn smell all at once.



Next year, at college, fall is going to smell so flat.

Aw, Josie, I'll send you a scented candle.



9

COOL, COOL, COOL

















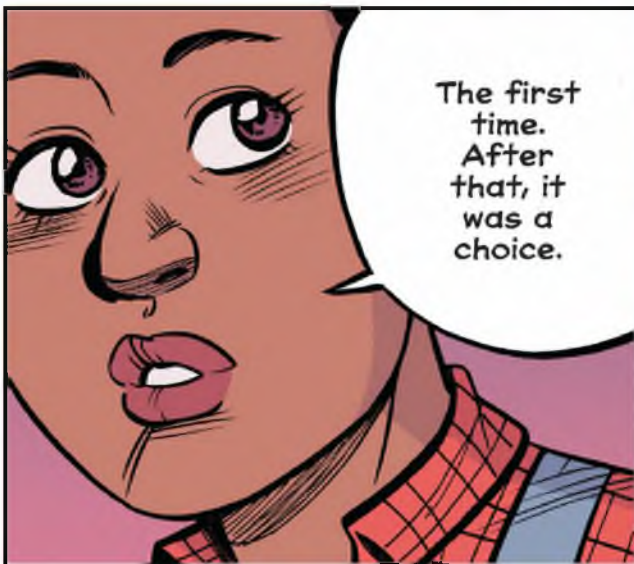














Because you choose it every year!

I didn't know we could move! *Deja*. We could have been working in the Haunted Hacienda.



Why would you want to work there? People puke in the Poltergeist Tunnel!

Besides, I thought you loved the Succotash Hut.

I do, I do. But I feel like I could have made a bigger impact in a higher profile attraction. The pedal cars!



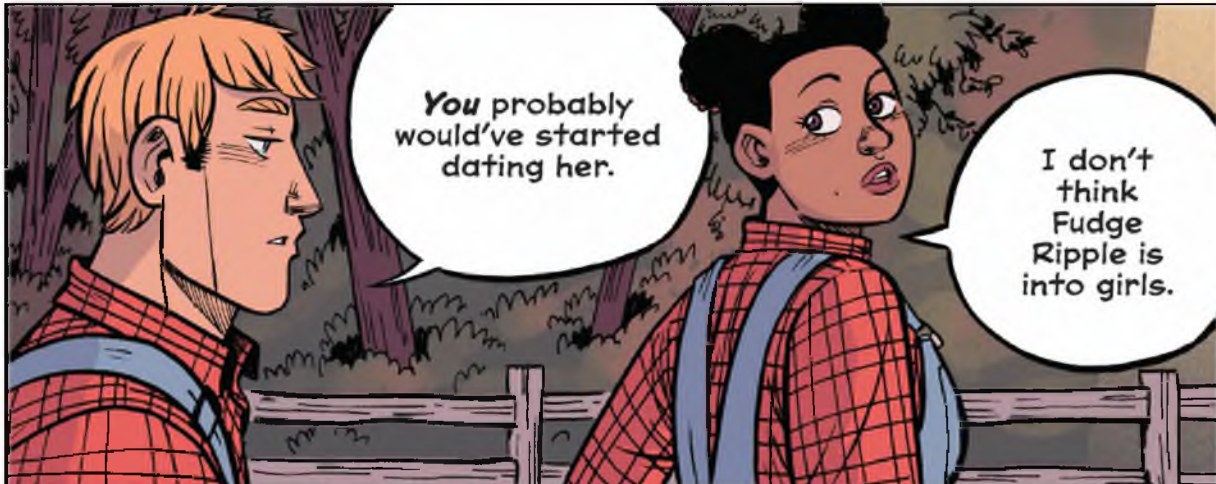
Only football players work the pedal cars. You have to be able to lift the cars if they tip over on someone.

Well, we could have been *someplace* other than the Succotash Hut. We could have been in the *Fudge Shoppe*.





That sounds miserable—three seasons of you working in the very same building as that girl and *still* not talking to her.



You probably would've started dating her.

I don't think Fudge Ripple is into girls.



She hasn't met you yet, has she.



10

SUCCOTASH-TROPHE















11

MAKE LIKE
A TREE
AND LEAF











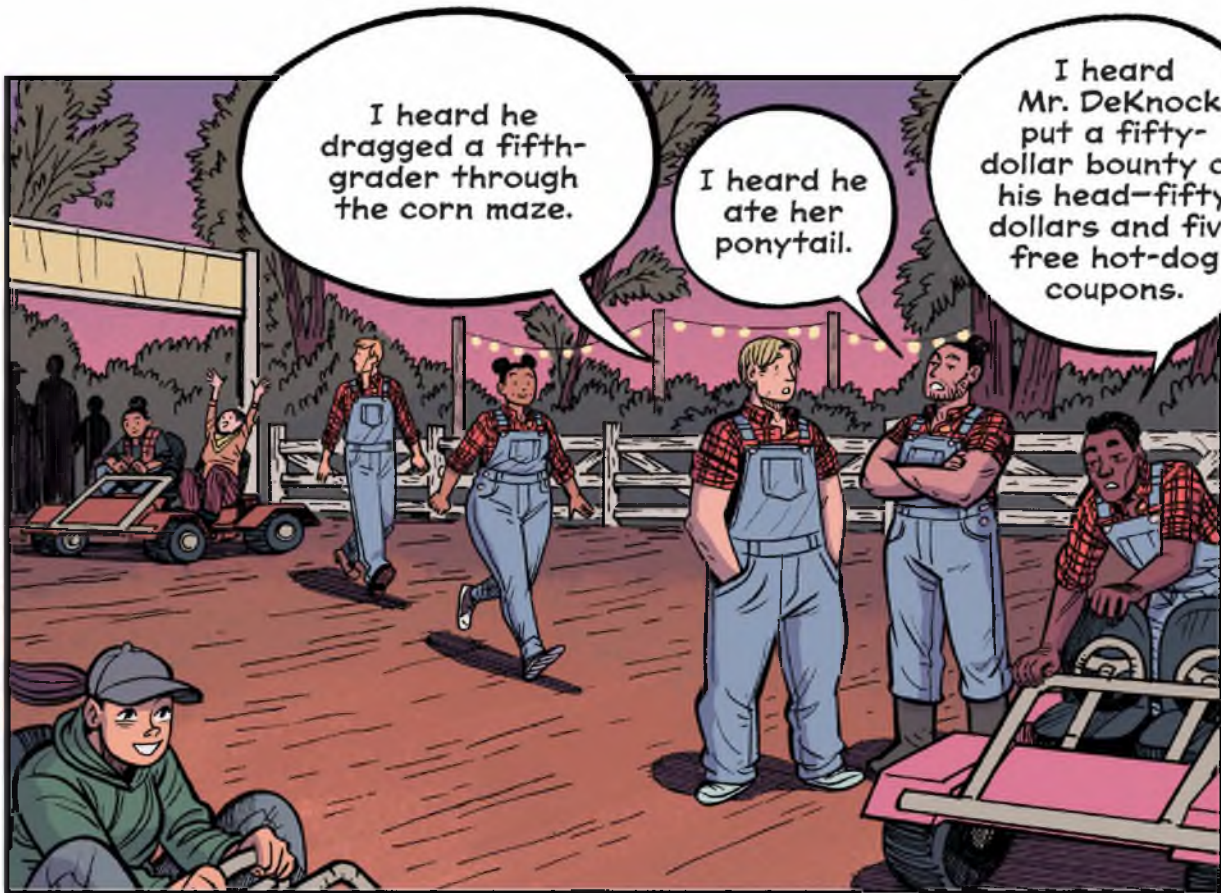


12

TOUR DE PUMPKIN







I heard he dragged a fifth-grader through the corn maze.

I heard he ate her ponytail.

I heard Mr. DeKnock put a fifty-dollar bounty on his head—fifty dollars and five free hot-dog coupons.



Wanted. Dead or alive.

I'm pretty sure they want Buck alive—he's just a goat.

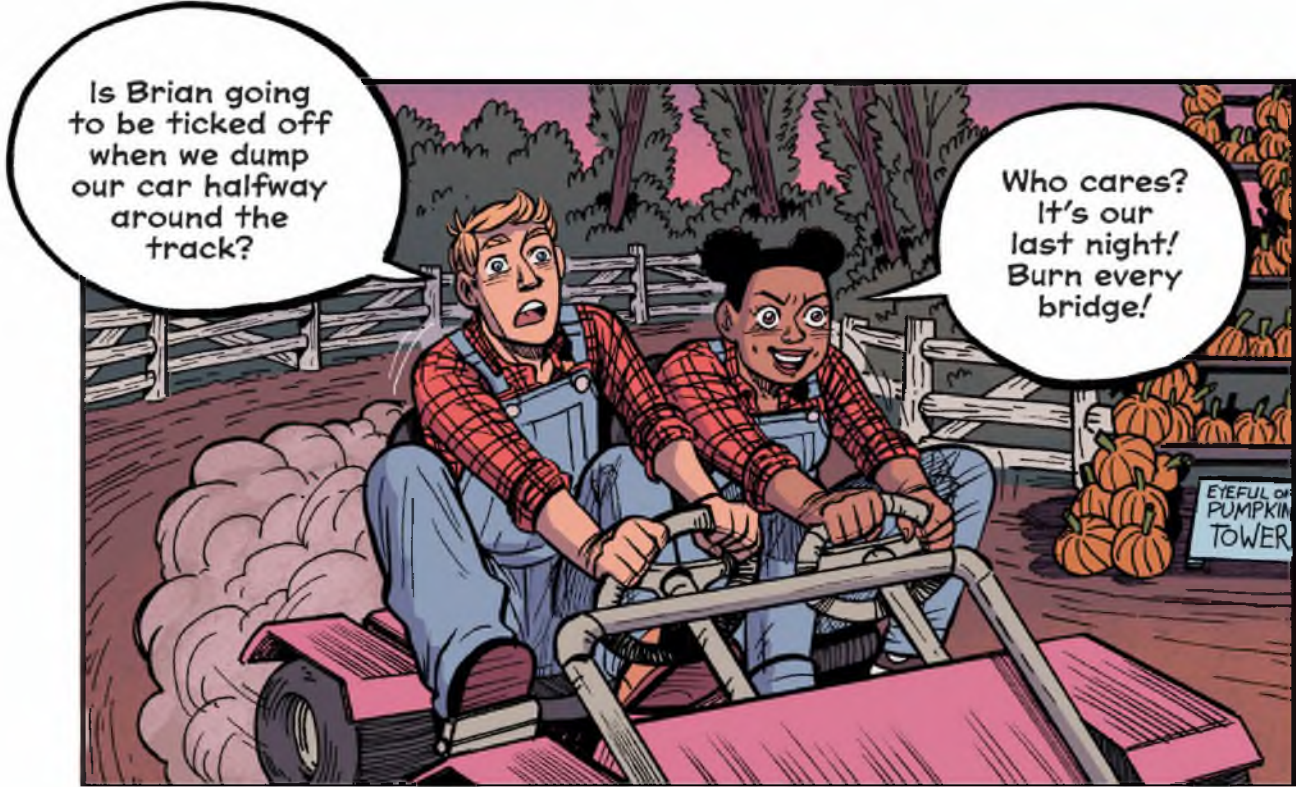


Hey, Deja.

Brian, my friend! Can Josie and I cut the line? It's our last night.



Be my guest...



Is Brian going to be ticked off when we dump our car halfway around the track?

Who cares? It's our last night! Burn every bridge!



I'd rather not *burn* anything...



There he is! That little skunk!

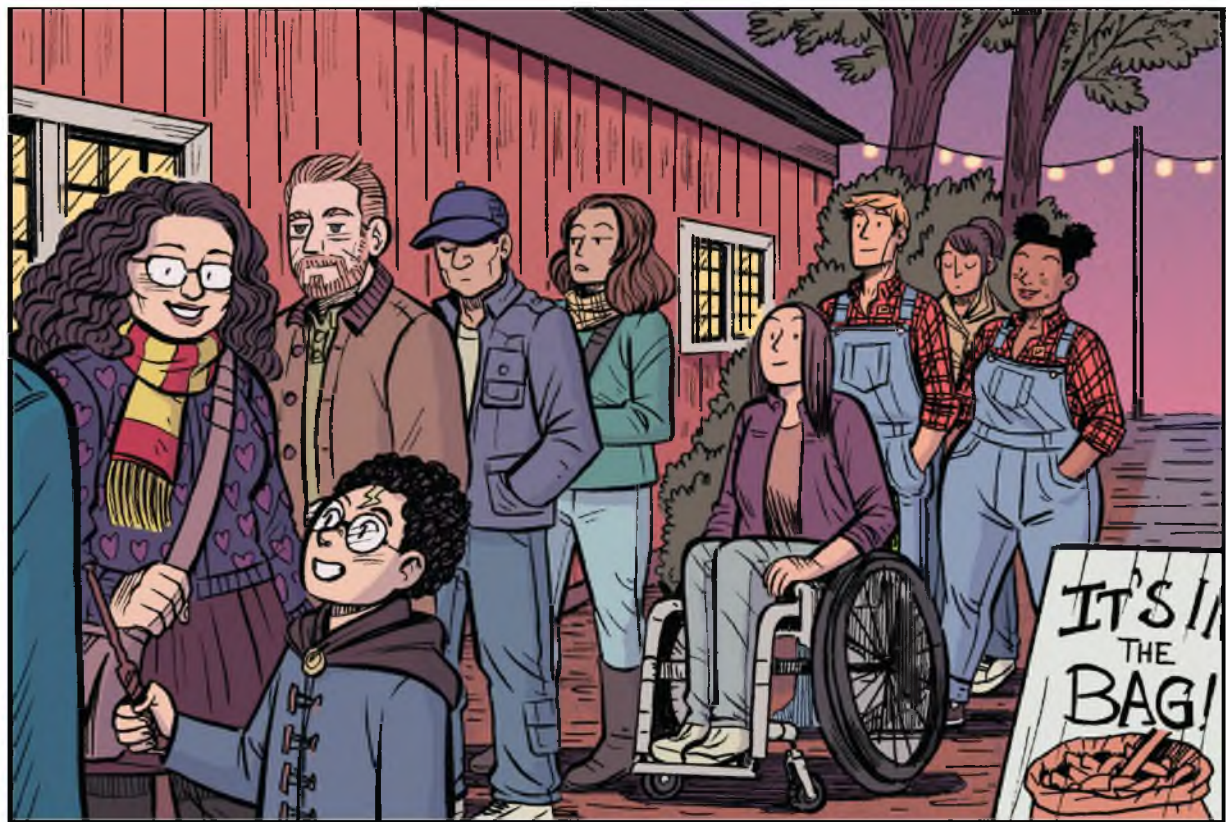
I'm getting my caramel apple back - even if I have to drag it back from hell!











13

CHEESY COME,
CHEESY GO



















14

MAIZED AND CONFUSED







You guys on break?

Yep! Thought we'd take a stroll through the maze.



I'm headed back to Mission Control.

Gotta dead walkie.



Better take care of that.

Thank you, I will. You going to Jenny's later?



No.

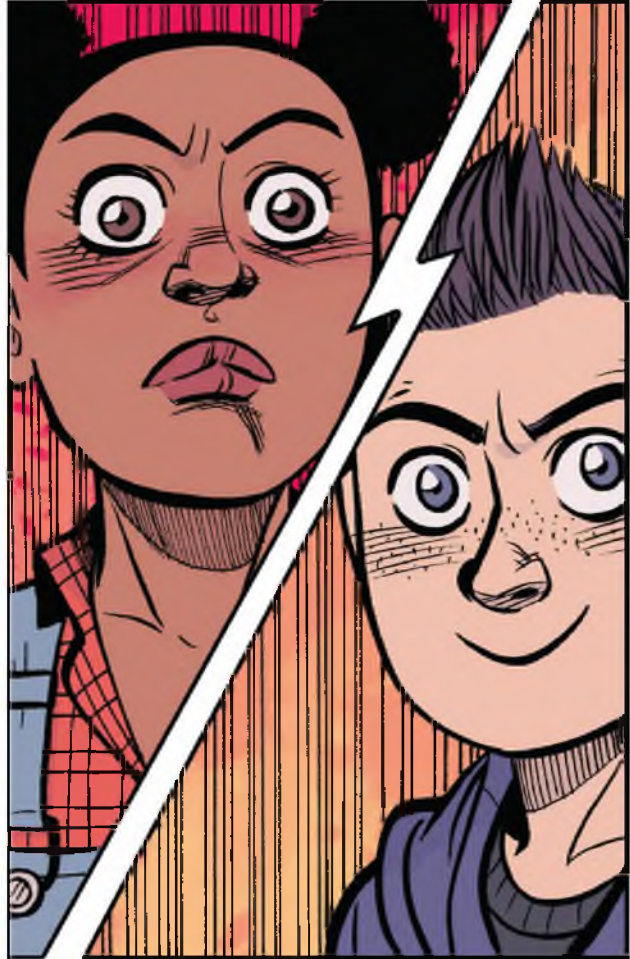
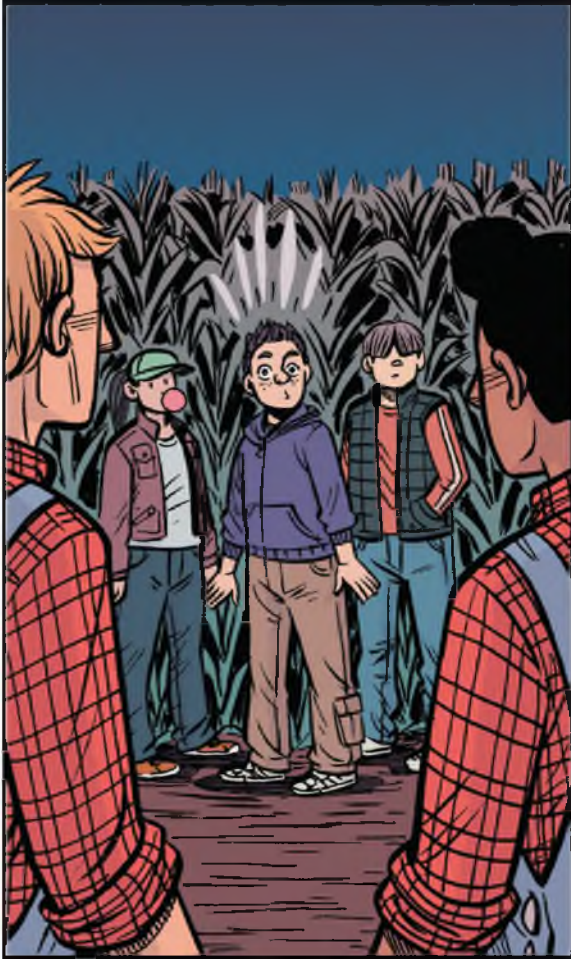
Maybe...





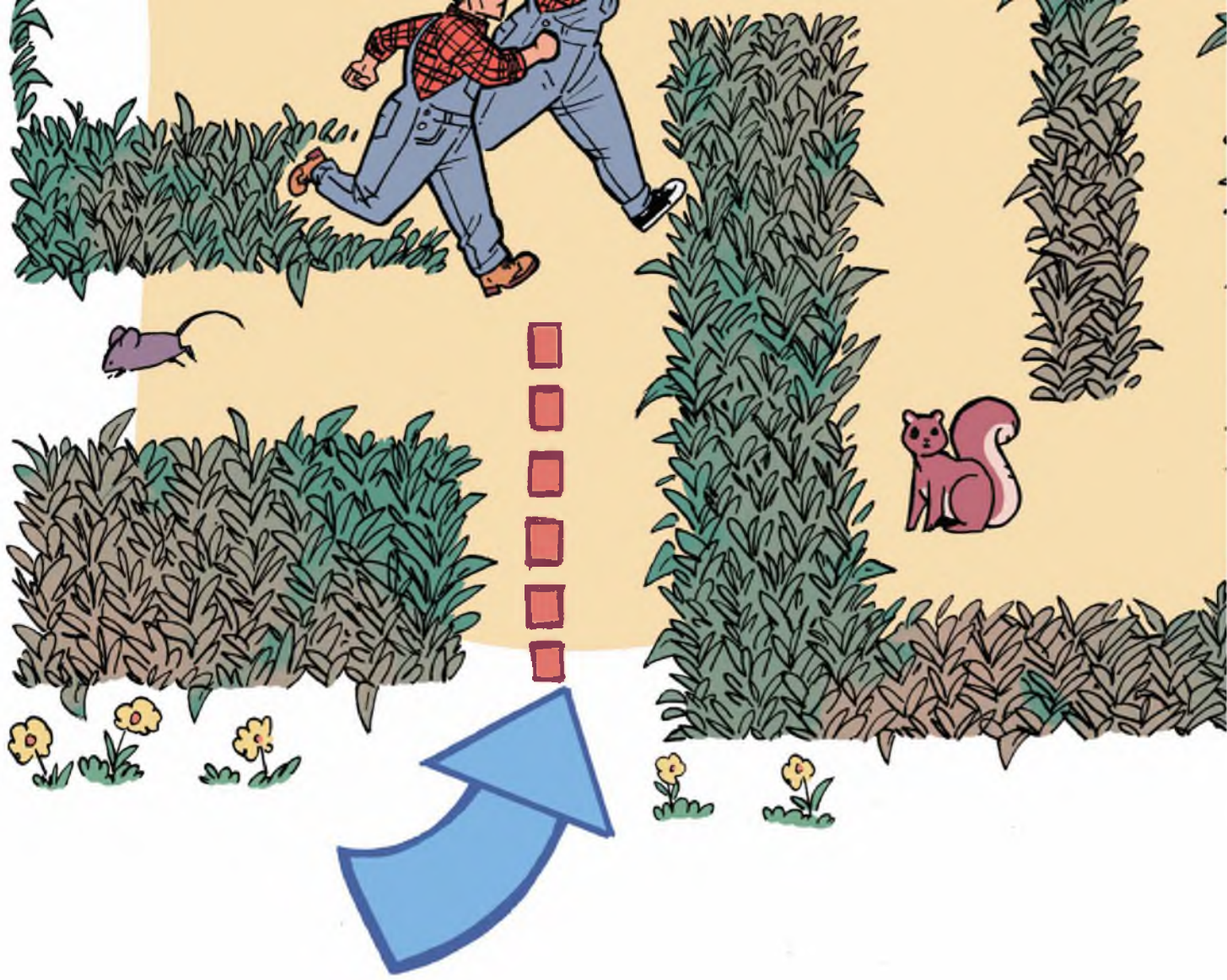






















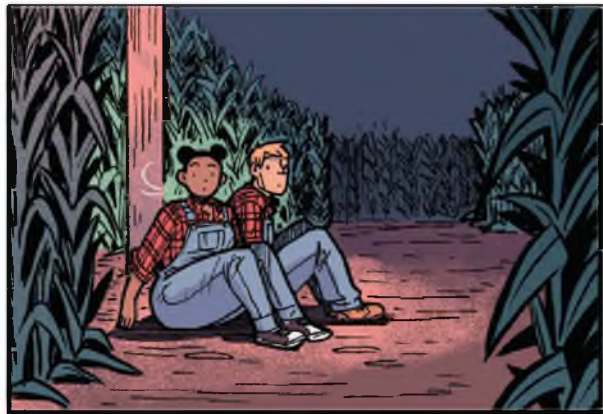












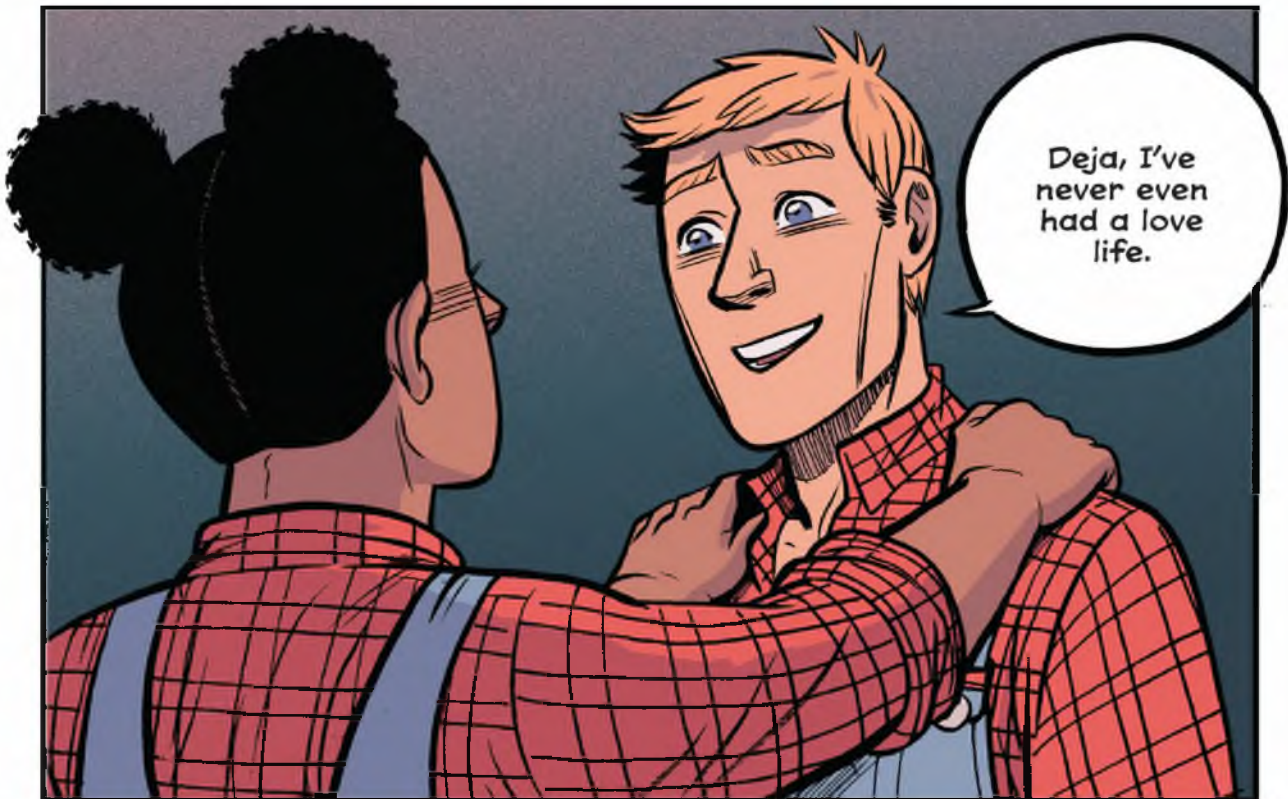


There you go *again*, Josie.

It's not *fate* that brings people together. It's *people!*



You keep acting like you have no control over your love life!



Deja, I've never even had a love life.







I don't know what you have against fate. Fate brought us together. You and me.

I brought us together. I sat down next to you.



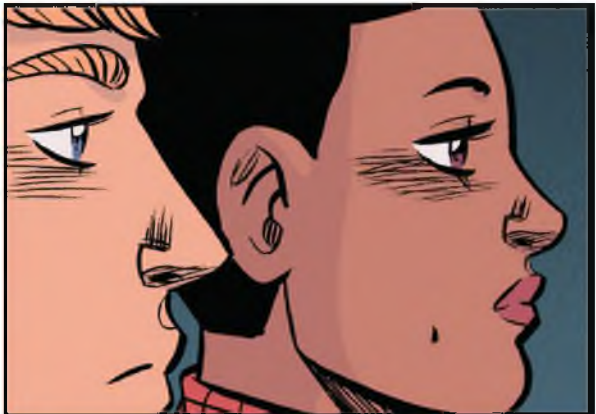
But fate brought us to the Patch...

No, our individual needs and desires brought us to the Patch. I needed a job, and you love decorative gourds.





No,
I mean-
I can't help it.



While that's
very sweet,
Josie, it isn't
actually true...



You choose to be my
friend every day that
you show up. And I
choose to be yours.

That makes it
sound like work!
I'd rather think
we were meant to
be friends.



But if I felt the same way that you do, we never would have met!



I would have waited for fate to deliver a friend to me instead of sitting down next to you.



Maybe—stick with me here—maybe *that's* why we were meant to be friends.

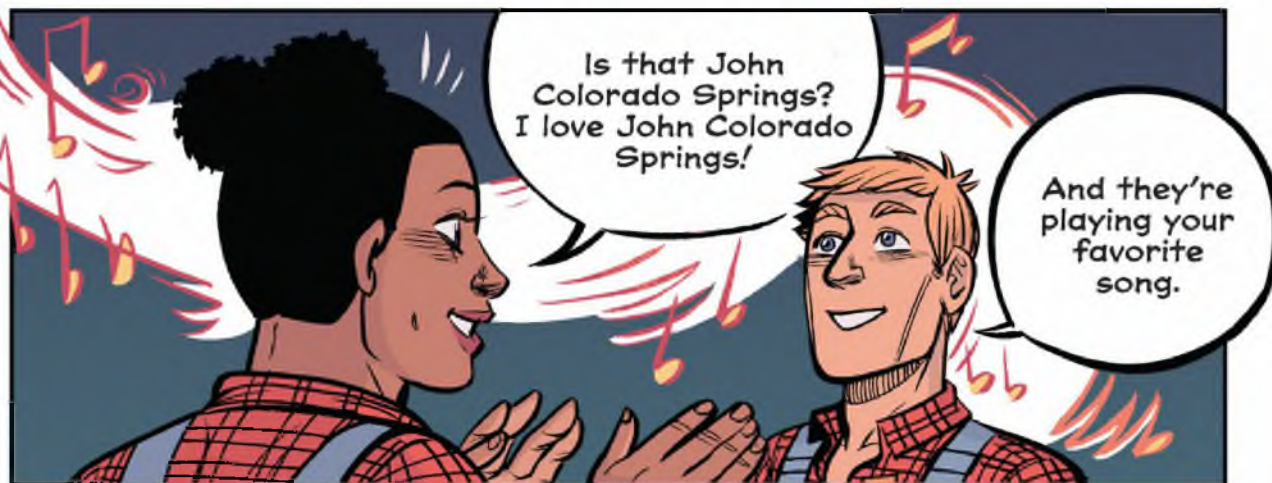
I was *meant* to meet someone who would take the initiative.



Oh, so you were destined to meet somebody who would do all the work?

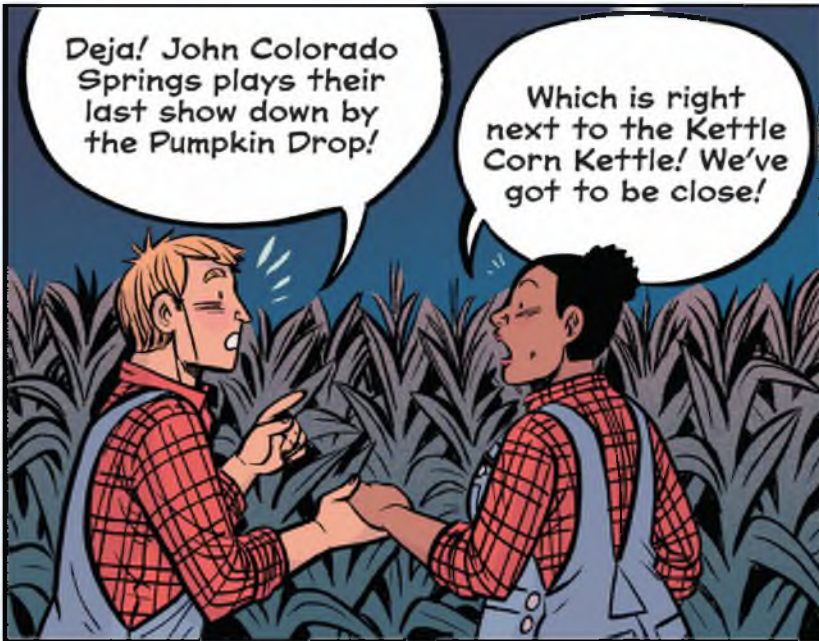
Says the girl who lets me make the succotash.











Josiah Templeton!
You're cheating!



We weren't in here for the challenge!



But this damages the maze!

The maze gets steamrolled tomorrow!



We're going to get corn lice!

You're making that up!

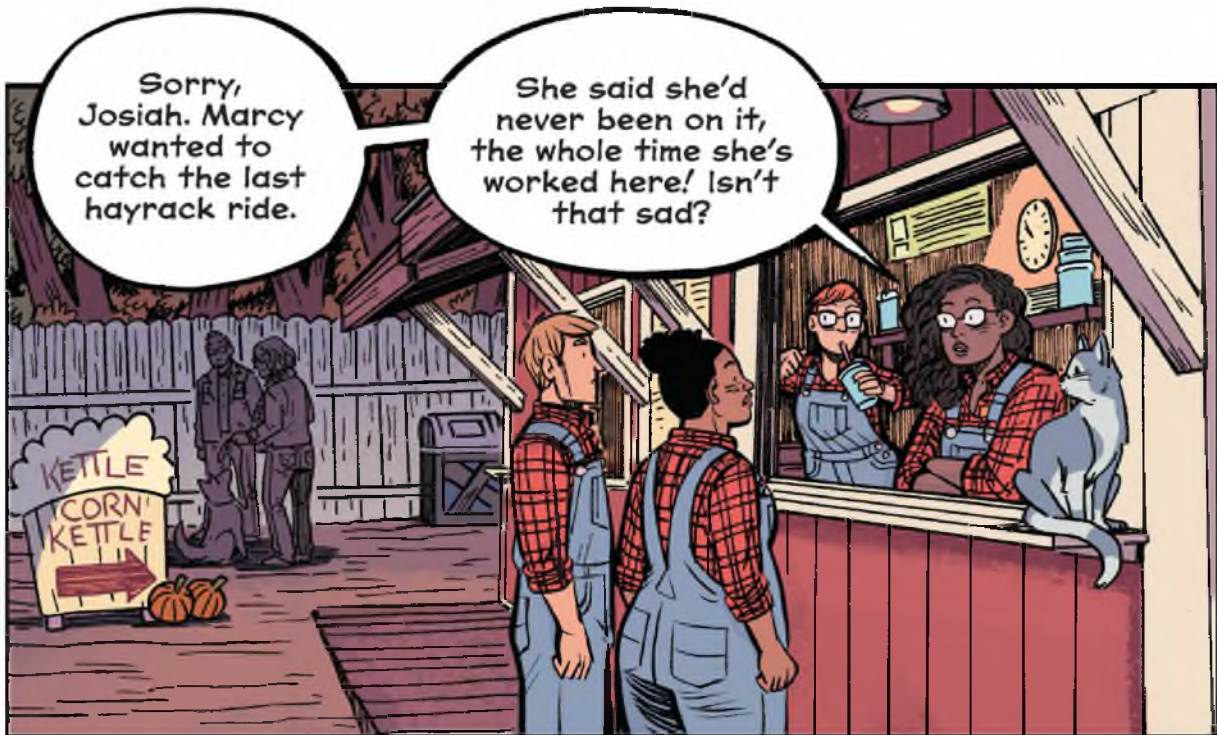




15

LAST CHANCE,
JOSIE





Sorry, Josiah. Marcy wanted to catch the last hayrack ride.

She said she'd never been on it, the whole time she's worked here! Isn't that sad?



Yeah.

Sad.



WHEW

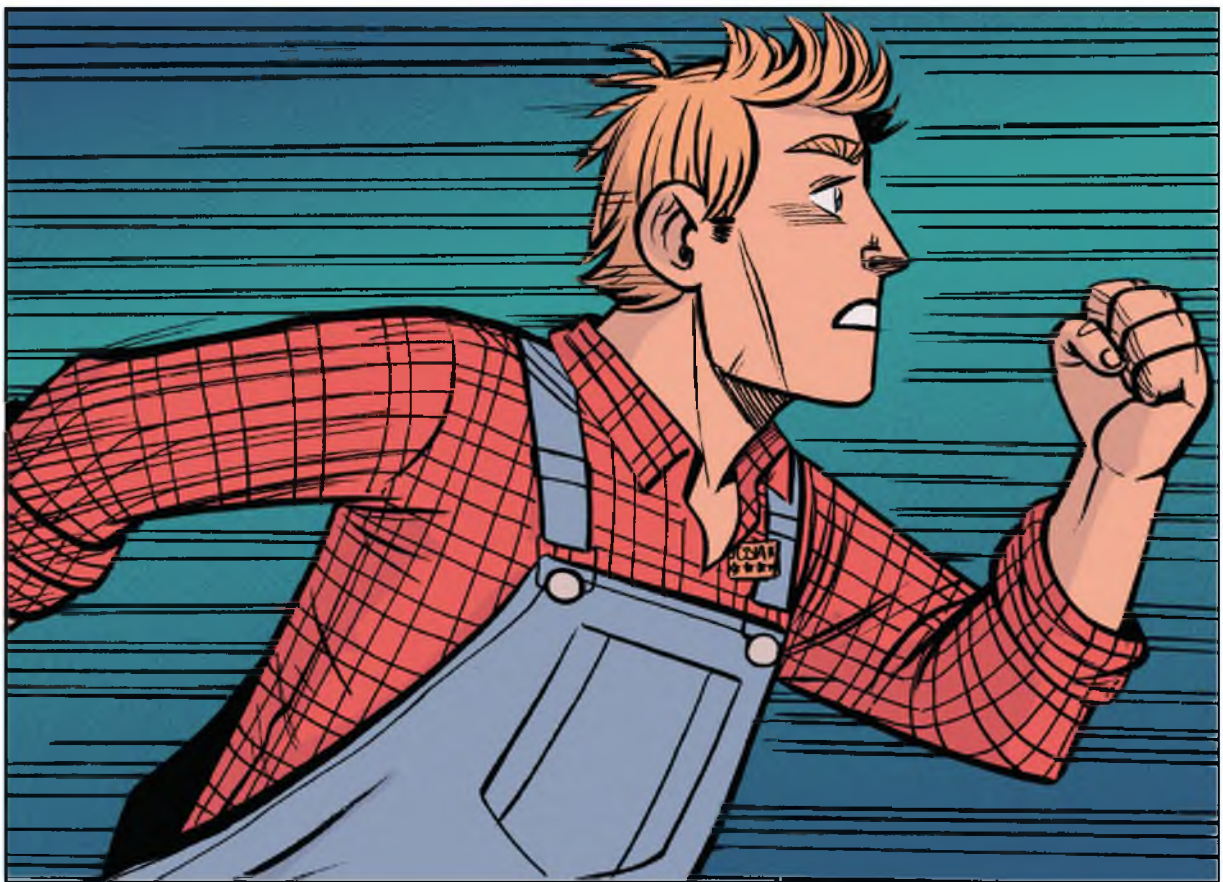


Well...thanks, for trying to help me.

What? This isn't over. We know where she is. Go! Now! You can still make it!















16

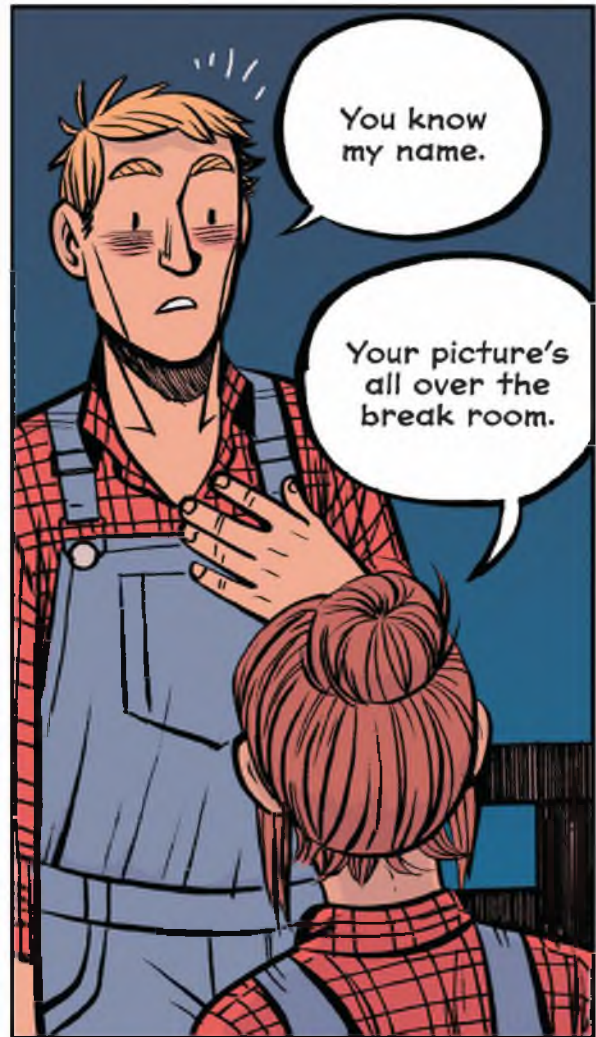
CARPE
HAYRACK!















It's fine.



I guess I'm just bummed because it's my last night at the Patch and—



Me, too. I'm going to miss working here so much!

Oh God, that's not what I meant—I hate this place.



You do?

Yes. It's always cold. And dirty—this is basically a dirt-rack ride.



And everything's so lame and tacky.

The signs. The scarecrows, these stupid overalls...



I guess you could call it tacky. Or...you could call it charming and authentic.



Authentically gross. I won't get the smell of fudge out of my hair until December.

Who doesn't like the smell of fudge...





They're the only reason I work here. We're all going to different colleges next year...



We were supposed to ride the hayrack together tonight, on our dinner break—but then I got sent all over the place.



I didn't even get to spend my last night here with the people I really care about.



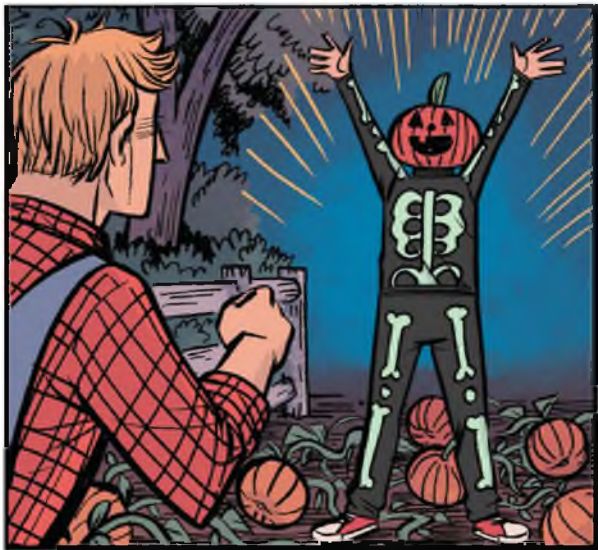




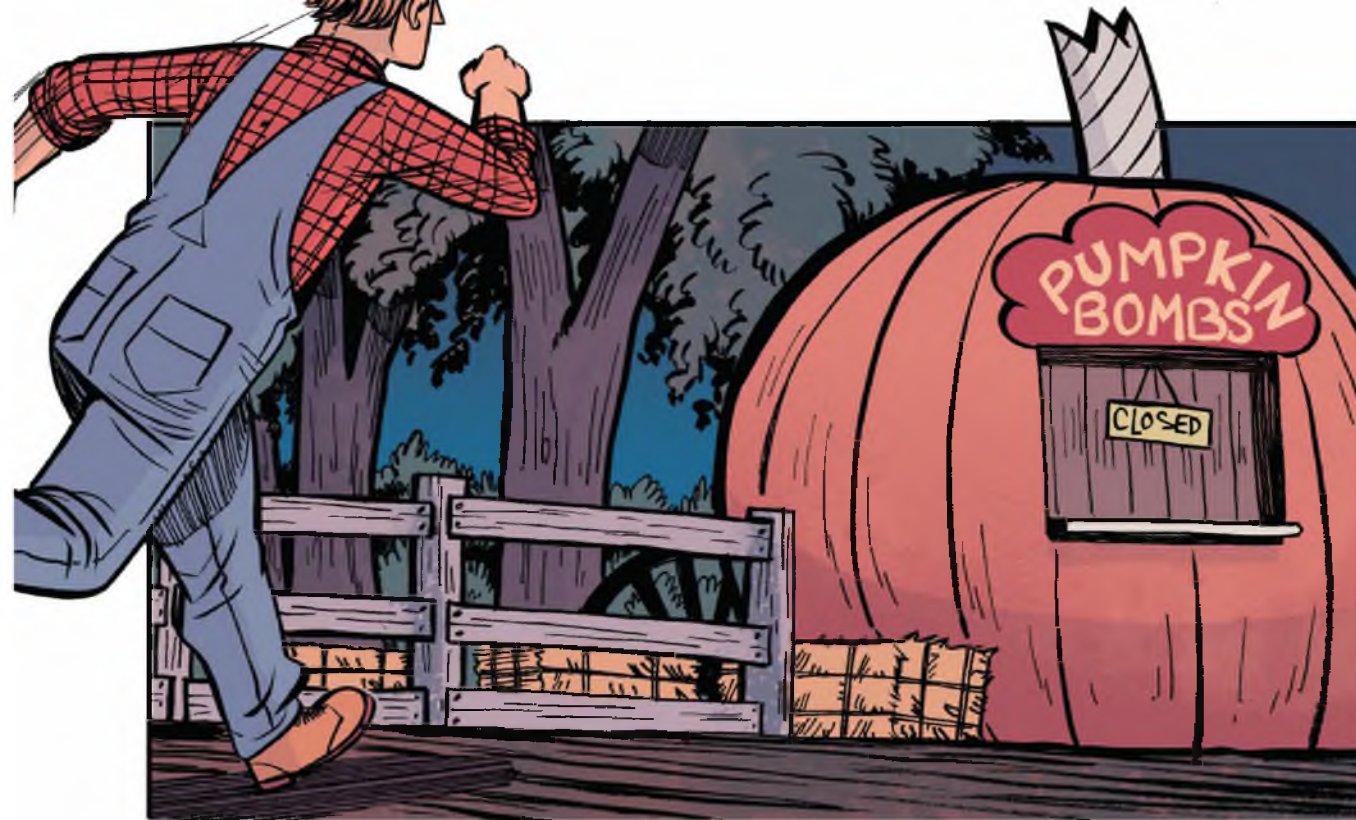
17

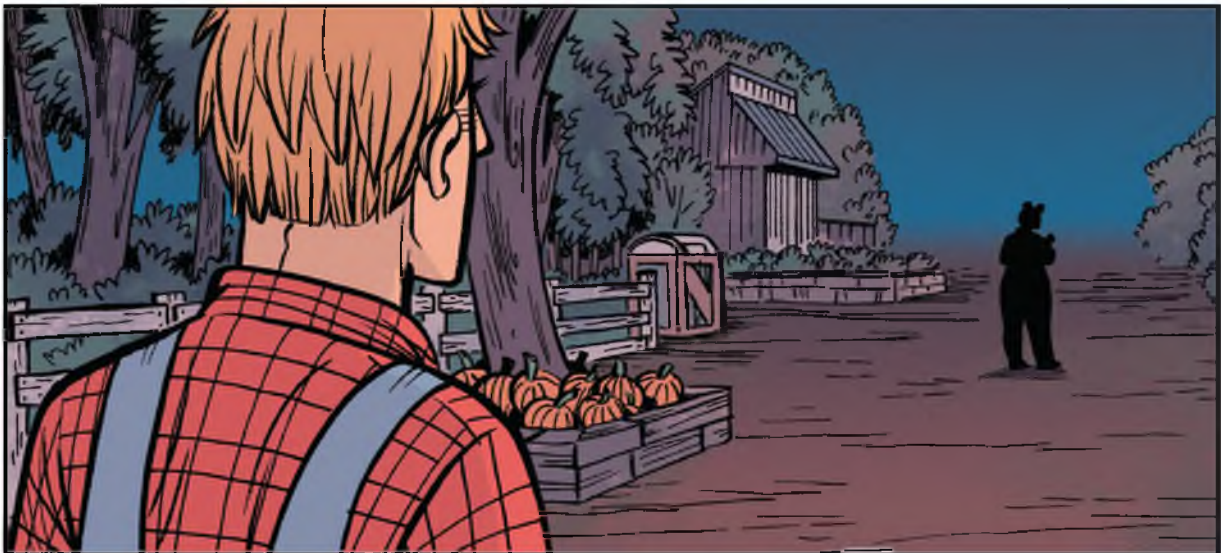
PUMPKIN BOMB



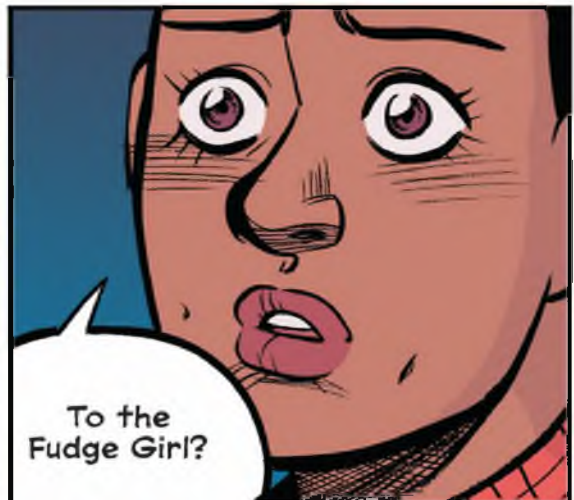




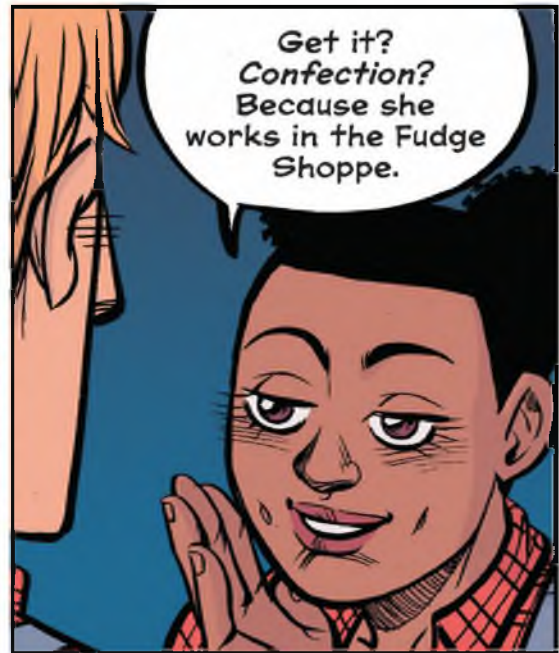


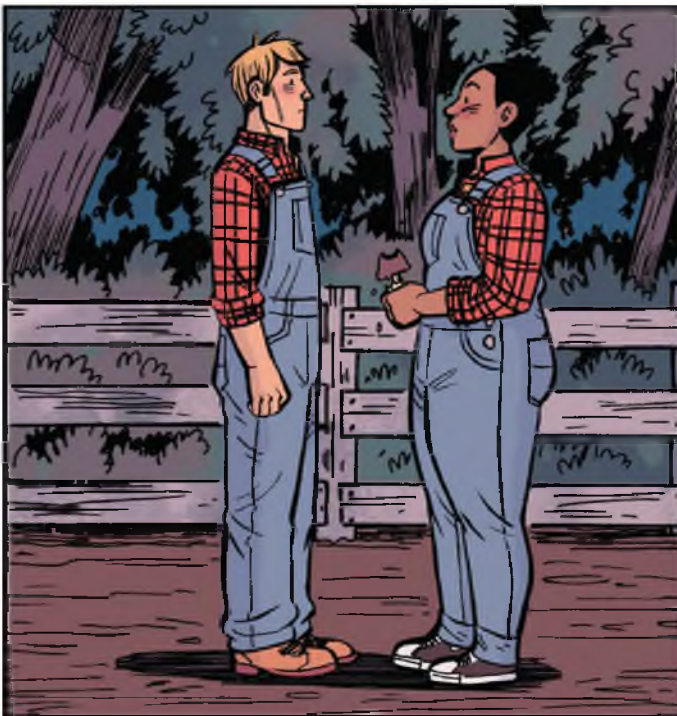














Deja.
I don't want
October to be
over. Because
October means
you.

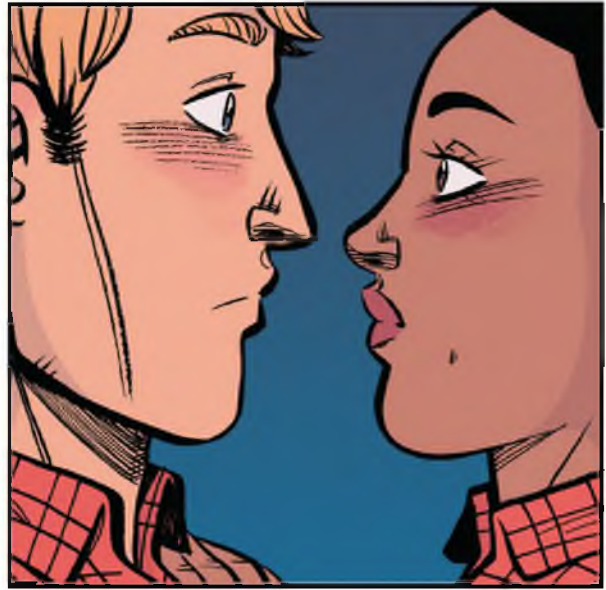


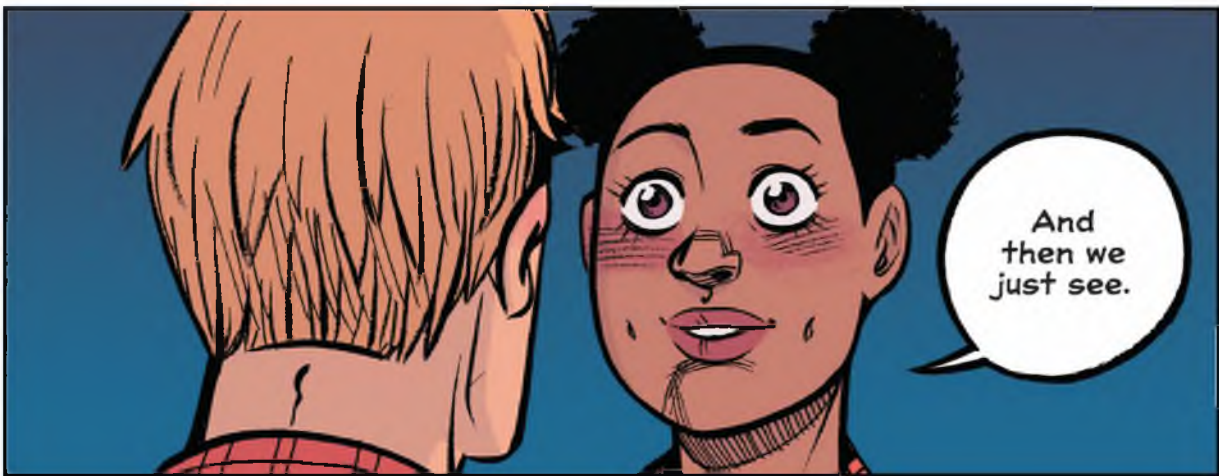






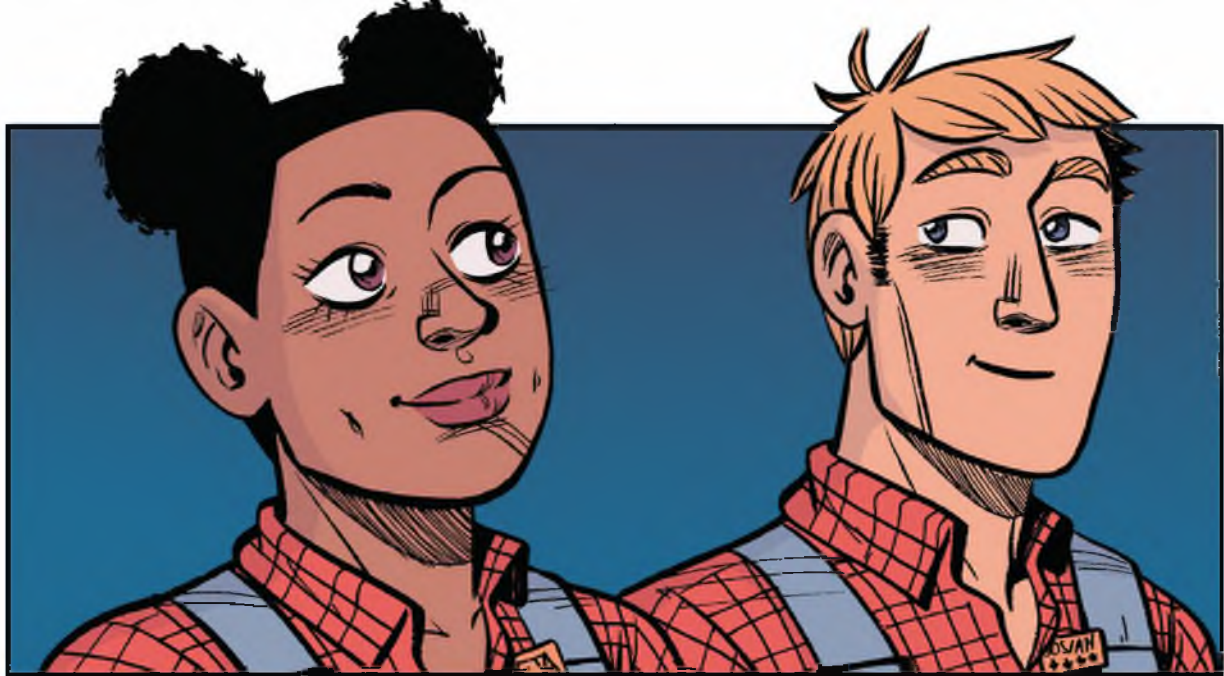


















RAINBOW ROWELL

AND FAITH ERIN HICKS
IN CONVERSATION

Rainbow: Faith! I'm trying to remember when we first met. I think it was on Twitter, after I read your book with Prudence Shen, *Nothing Could Possibly Go Wrong*. We bonded over our love for *Star Trek: Enterprise*.

Faith: Yes, I remember that! It was pretty soon after San Diego Comic-Con, way back in 2013. I'd been a guest of the show (which was a magical experience) and I'd read your book *Eleanor & Park* on the flight from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to San Diego. I remember literally weeping over this book as I read it, which was actually the second time you'd made me cry. I'd read *Fangirl* earlier in the year and cried over that book, as well. I remember geeking out over your books on Twitter, and someone tweeted my fangirling at you and then eventually we started talking about Star Trek, the great icebreaker. I also remember getting up my courage to send you my graphic novel *Friends with Boys*, which I'd both written and drawn, and you were very kind about it. I really appreciated that.

Rainbow: ❤️❤️❤️

So that's my memory of how we first met, but I'm trying to remember how you met with First Second. I think because you published *First Second* and I saw that you were a British author and approached me to suggest that you and I work together,

and that immediately seemed like a good fit. I could see a lot of resonance between the types of stories that we both like to tell. All your books are very character driven and expressive, and you're especially good at capturing moments, I think. I felt like I could write a story that would feel like both of

Faith: The magic of the internet, haha. Just on a side note; I remember the story you originally pitched, and it was fascinating, but I also remember it had a lot of animals in it. I remember thinking, *Oh no, now I have to learn how to draw all these different animals!*

Pumpkinheads has a few animals (one in particular who plays a prominent role), but not nearly as many as your original story. So I was a bit relieved you changed your mind about what stories you wanted to write for a while too. Drawing animals! I was really sick at the time, and the other scripts I worked on reflected that; they were very heavy and blue, and I felt very heavy when I was working on them. I kept stalling out. Eventually, I decided that I needed to put my brain in a light and joyful place.

I had been hoarding this pumpkin patch setting for a few years. Like, I knew I wanted to do *something* with kids who work at a pumpkin patch. I broke the emergency glass on that idea, and there was a part at the end where I totally teared up. And then drawing that scene was super emotional for me, as well! I don't normally think of myself as the kind of person who gets emotional over comic scripts, so having this reaction, I knew *Pumpkinheads* was special. I immediately sat down and did some rough sketches of Deja and Josiah. I was so eager to get them out of

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my head and on paper. It's funny looking back at those sketches now because the characters ended up looking so different in the book, but those awkward, early drawings are part of the development process. As characters they just leapt on the page at me. I immediately clicked with both of them. We'd agreed to work together before we had anything locked down—what if this script hadn't connected with you at all? *What if you hated pumpkins, Faith?*

Now that I've worked with a few other comic artists, I've noticed how I write differently depending on the artist, and depending on how well I know the artist. I was glad that I was familiar with your work, because it meant I could write with a lot of trust and confidence. I knew you'd bring so much chemistry to those to write the script because you basically gave me a screenplay with dialogue, action, and emotional beats—but I got to do my own paneling and pacing for the comic. It's personally what I prefer, as I have Strong Opinions on paneling in comics, and how best to draw emotion out of the story. So that was something I really appreciated about collaborating with you on this story. You trusted me to do my thing. (Which you did!)

Rainbow: But I did beg you to come to Omaha to visit my favorite pumpkin patch.

Faith: That was a really important trip for me. I don't think I'd have been able to draw the Patch as well as I did without that visit. I got to see the pumpkin patch as a real, lived-in place, full of people and delicious food. was very important for you to try Frito pie!



Faith: The Frito pie was very confusing for me at first! I have family in the States, but they're in the south, so I'm not familiar with Nebraska traditions. I was expecting this pie with, like, chips on top of it? And Frito pie is definitely not that. It's cheese and chips and other stuff in this little bag and you eat it with a fork. I remember asking, "When does it turn into pie?" Very confusing for the Canadian!

Rainbow: I think that trip really put us on the same page. We got to walk in Josiah and Deja's footsteps. Also, the script is set in an idealized, fictional pumpkin patch—like the Disneyland of pumpkin patches. So it helped to be in a similar environment and deciding, "Like this!" or "Not like this!" That's also where we had our first conversation about how important color would be in the book.

Thank you for making the trip. I owe you a trip to Canada. ❤️



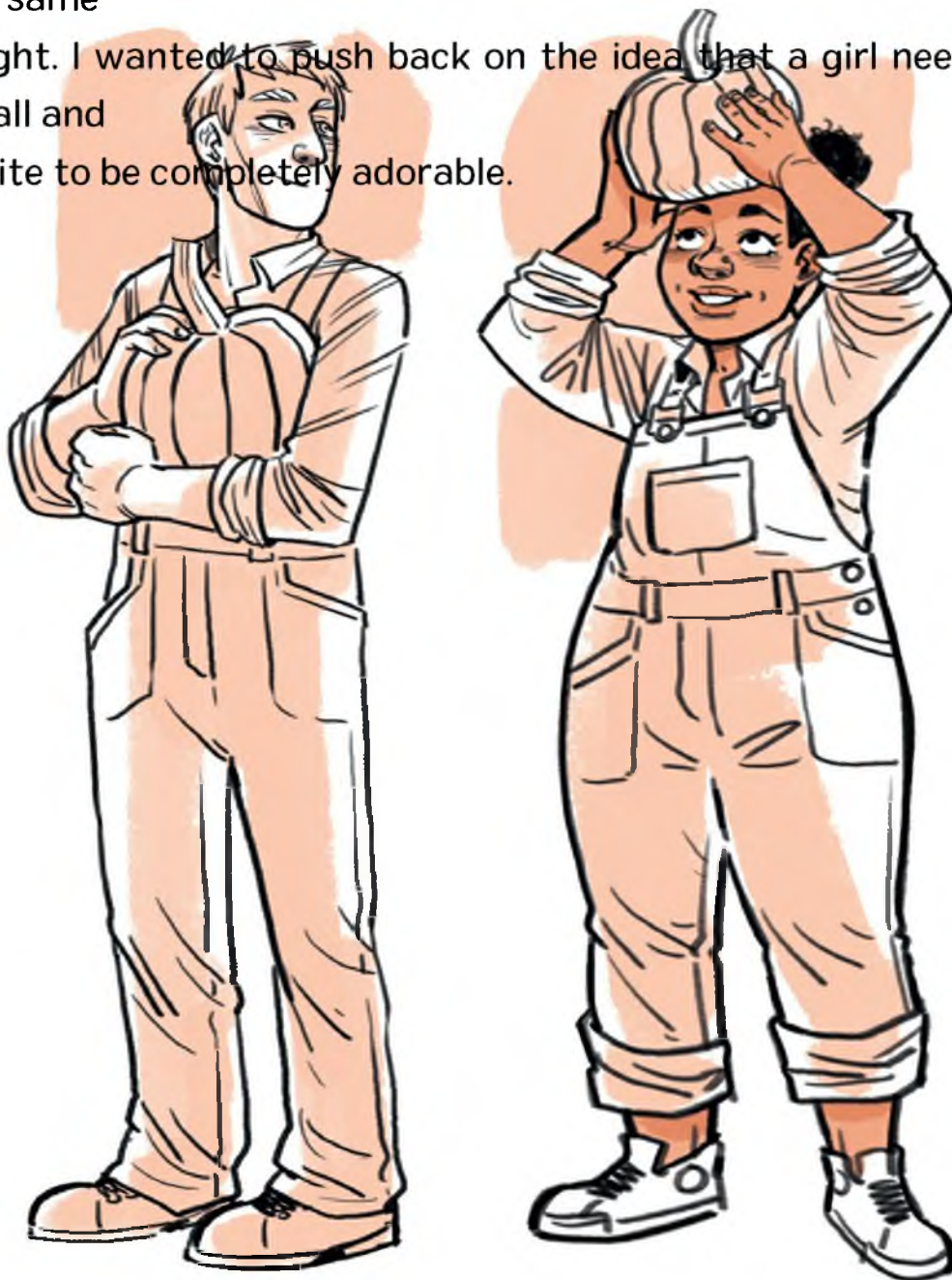
EARLY *PUMPKINHEADS* SKETCHES

Faith: These are the very first sketches of Deja and Josiah. They look so different here! We decided that they looked much too young in these early sketches, so I went back to the drawing board.



Rainbow: Look at these cuties! My script described Josiah as looking like Paul McCartney, and you can really see Faith trying that here. (I always think of Paul McCartney as having such a kind, gentle face!) Deja was

Rainbow: The main thing we talked about at this stage was making Josie and Deja look a little older. And I really wanted them to be close to the same height. I wanted to push back on the idea that a girl needs to be small and petite to be completely adorable.



Faith: I think of the character design process as a journey you go on with the characters: In the beginning you're trying to get to know them, who they are, and how best to draw them so their personalities comes through visually. And by time you've drawn the last page in their graphic

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Faith and I would like to thank...

Everyone who helped us bring this book to life (and made the process an unusually joyful one!):

The biggest, shiniest thank-you to my best friend, Danielle Henderson, for inspiring all of Deja's most luminous moments.

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The pumpkin patch in this book is fictional, but Omaha really does have the best pumpkin patches in the world (Faith can attest to this!), and I sincerely hope you get to visit one someday.



RAINBOW ROWELL is the award-winning, No. 1 *New York Times*-bestselling author of *Eleanor & Park*, *Carry On*, *Wayward Son*, and more. She made her comics debut as the writer of Marvel's monthly *Runaways* series. *Pumpkinheads* is her first graphic novel. Rainbow lives and writes in Omaha, Nebraska, home of the world's best pumpkin patches. rainbowrowell.com

FAITH ERIN HICKS is a writer and artist living in Vancouver, British Columbia. Her previous works include the Nameless City trilogy, *Friends with Boys*, *The Last of Us: American Dreams* (with Neil Druckmann), *Nothing Can Possibly Go Wrong* (with Prudence Shen), the Eisner Award-winning *The Adventures of Superhero Girl*, and the young adult novel *Comics Will Break Your Heart*. She can be found online at faitherinhicks.com.

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New York

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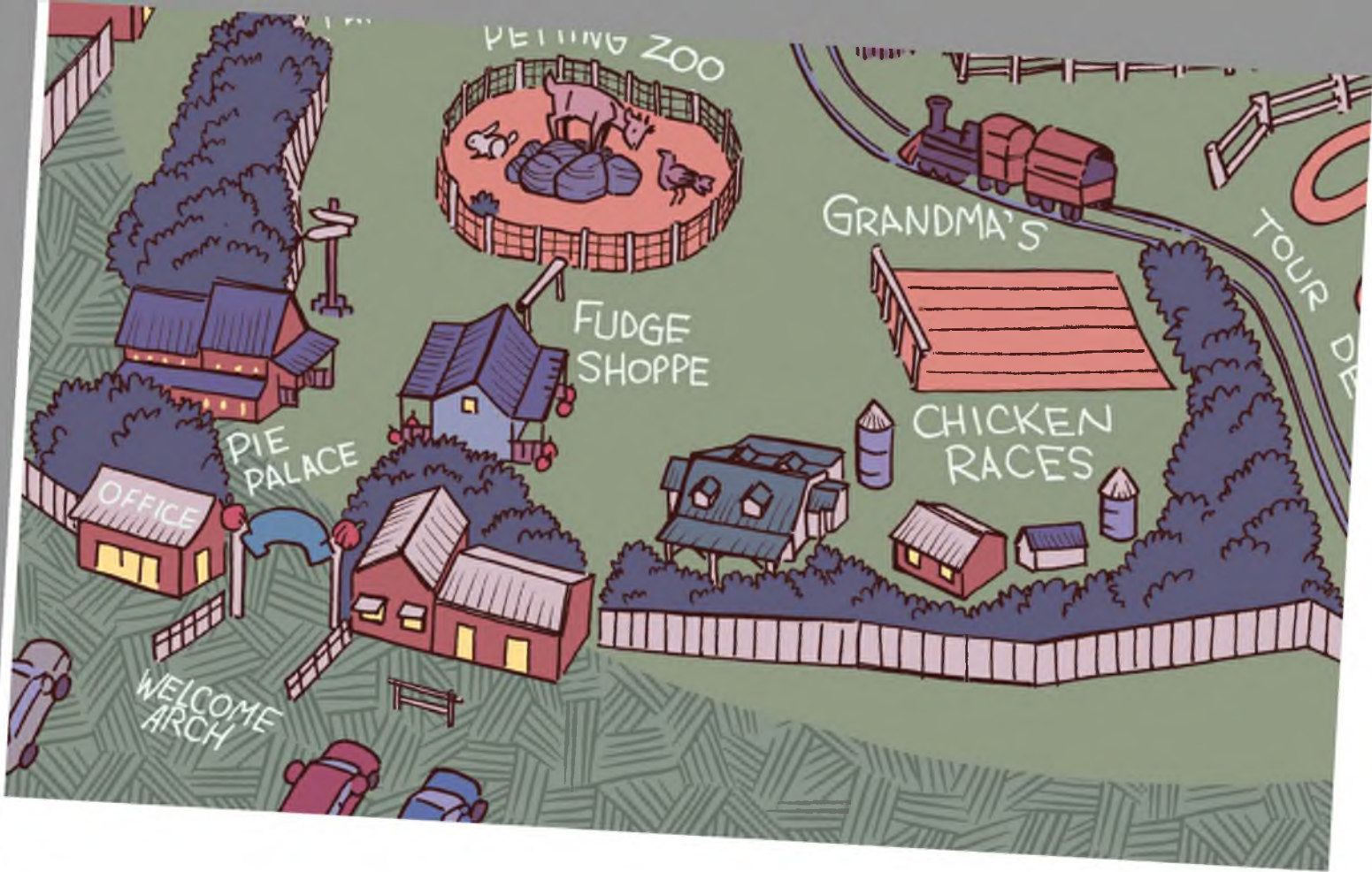


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PETTING ZOO

GRANDMA'S

TOUR DE

FUDGE SHOPPE

CHICKEN RACES

PIE PALACE

OFFICE

WELCOME ARCH

HAUNTED
HACIENDA

PUMPKIN
BOMB STAND

KETTLE CORN
KETTLE

TRAIN
STATION

CHILI FRIES
STAND

S'MORES PIT

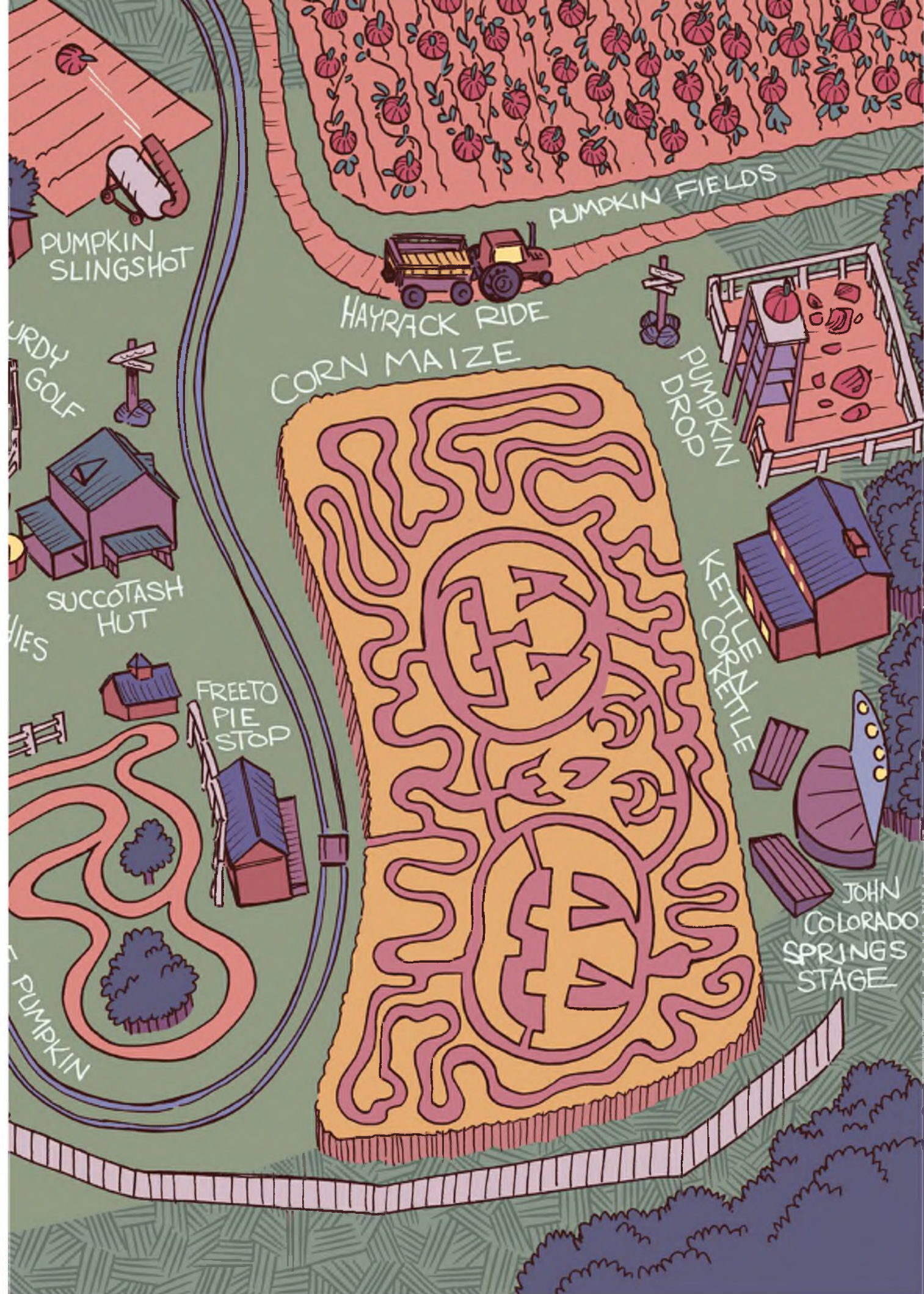
PONY GO ROUND

DADDY'S APPLES

BETTING

SLUSH





PUMPKIN SLINGSHOT

PUMPKIN FIELDS

HAYRACK RIDE

CORN MAIZE

PUMPKIN DROP

SUCCOTASH HUT

KETTLE CORN

FREETO PIE STOP

JOHN COLORADO SPRINGS STAGE

PUMPKIN

“*Pumpkinheads* perfectly captures that feeling of the last night that’s the start of the rest of your life.”

—**MARIKO TAMAKI,**

Printz Honor-winning cocreator of *This One Summer*
and *Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up with Me*

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—**BUSTLE**

“Dreamy.”

—**ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY**



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