

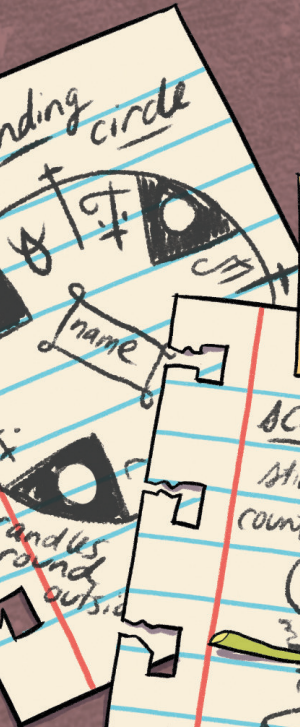
# THE MIDWINTER WITCH

MOLLY KNOX OSTERTAG

AUTHOR OF THE WITCH BOY AND THE HIDDEN WITCH

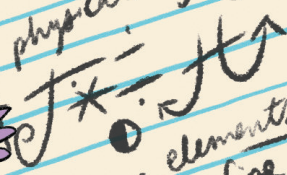
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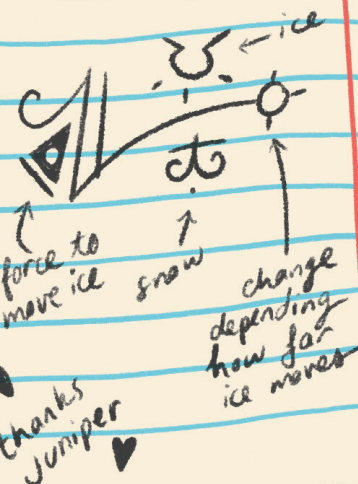
healing

physical injury:



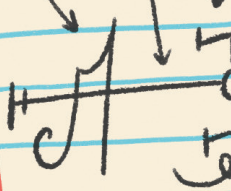
magical elements of:  
- fire  
- gro

ice shaping



call

keep force steady



stonecal







★ teach to Ariel! ★

who he?

me  
stonn

ling

Handwritten scribble on a yellow sticky note.

Handwritten scribbles on a piece of lined paper.

growing plants

add name of plant

vines

pear

apple

grape

blackberry

simple (last)  
binding (last)

name

containment  
(un)ten

Handwritten symbols and diagrams on lined paper.

for? she wants  
in this  
what  
supp  
the  
ii

Handwritten symbols and diagrams on lined paper.



For witch boys, shifter girls,  
and those who are in between.

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The way the tales  
tell it, magic is a  
wild force.



It is the province  
of spirits and demons, and  
they can use it as easily  
as we breathe.



It does not come  
as naturally to us, but a  
rare few human families  
can see magic.

Over many  
generations, we have  
learned to shape it.





Through runes  
and potions, spells and  
shifting, we put it to  
use for good.

To help and  
defend those without  
magic.



But magic  
is not ours, and it  
never was.

Uncontrolled, it  
can turn to darkness  
when wielded by human  
hands.





There is a  
reason we stay in  
close-knit families.

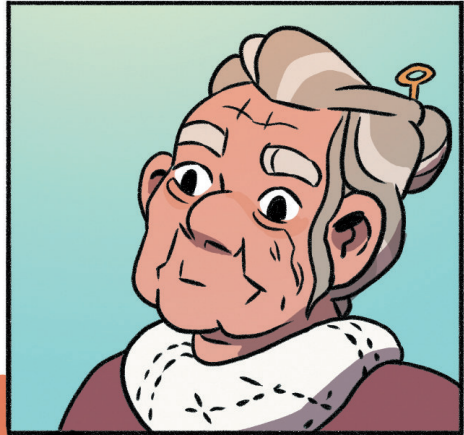
The safeguards  
must be passed down.

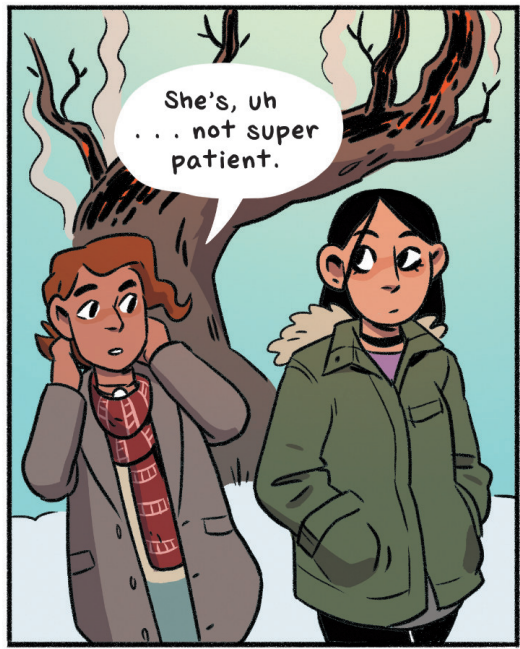
















What is this Festival thing, anyway?



Wait, did no one tell you? It's coming up in, like, a week!

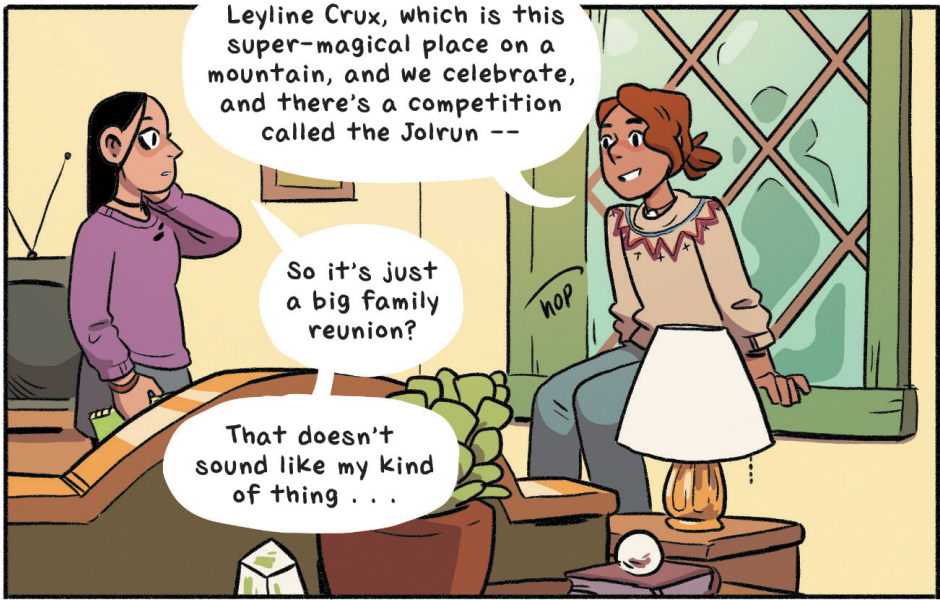


Okay, it's the coolest thing ever. Once a year during Midwinter, our whole family has a big gathering.



There's more of you?

Yeah, it's all our distant cousins and people who are related by marriage. There's so many of us.



We meet at the Leyline Crux, which is this super-magical place on a mountain, and we celebrate, and there's a competition called the Jolrun --

So it's just a big family reunion?

That doesn't sound like my kind of thing . . .

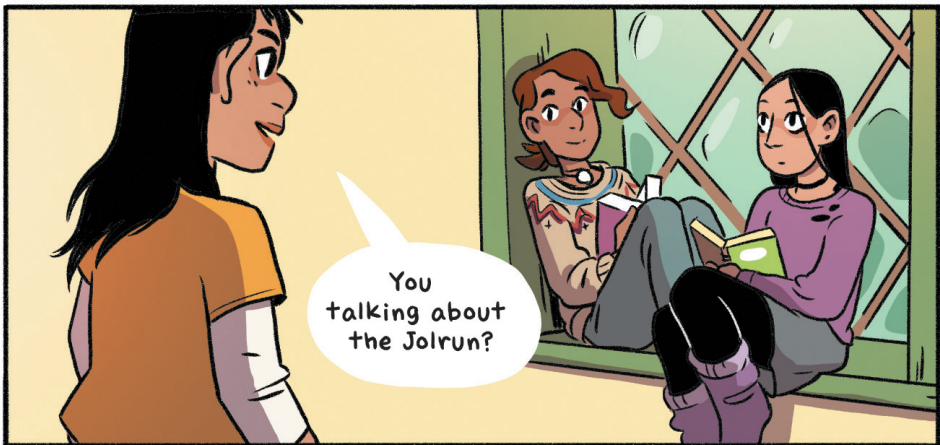


It's really fun, actually . . .

And the Jolrun is awesome.

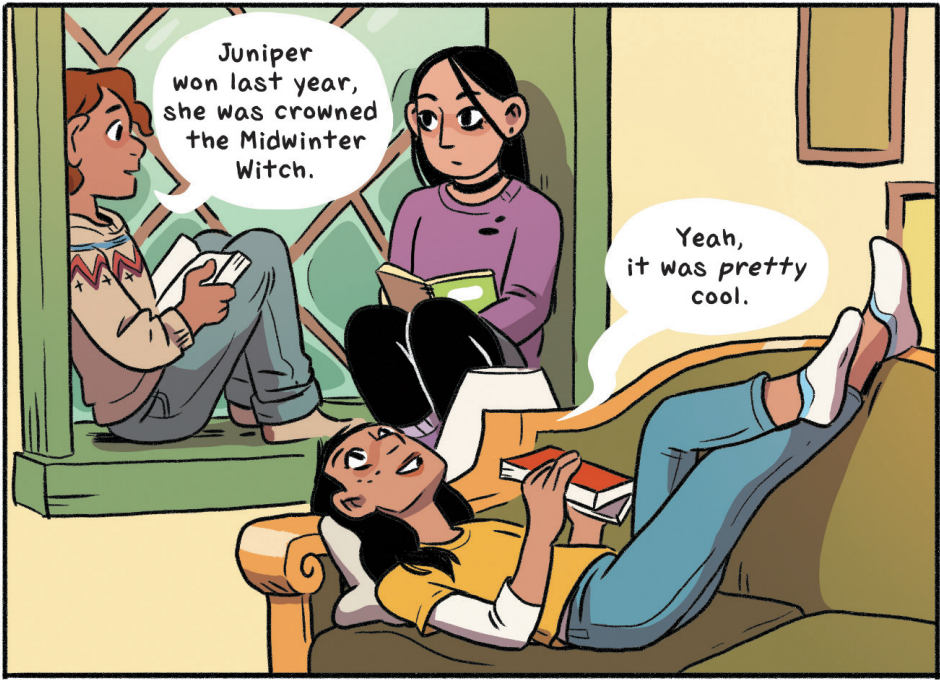


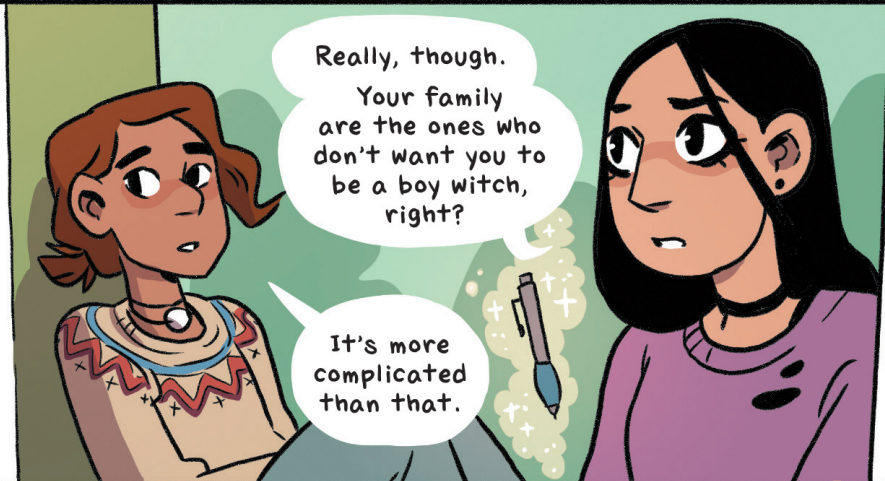
I never got to do it before because I couldn't shapeshift, but maybe this year --



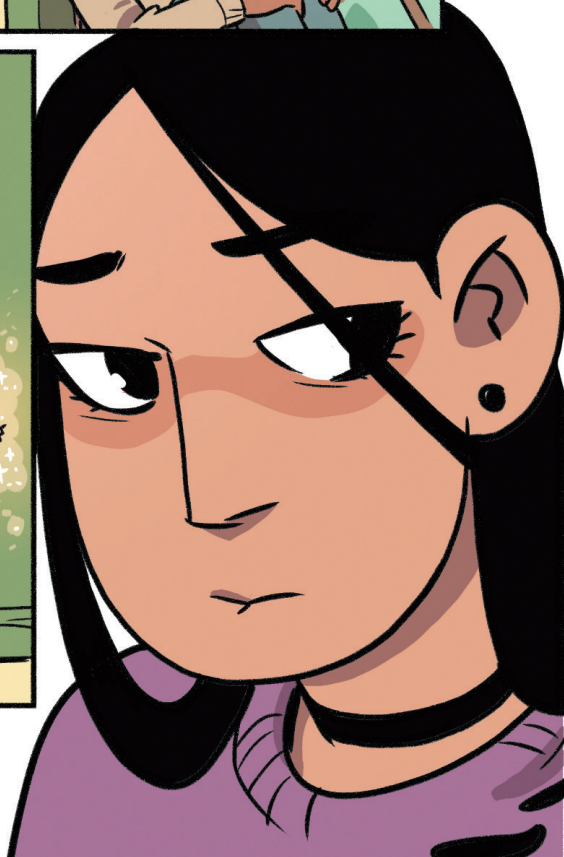
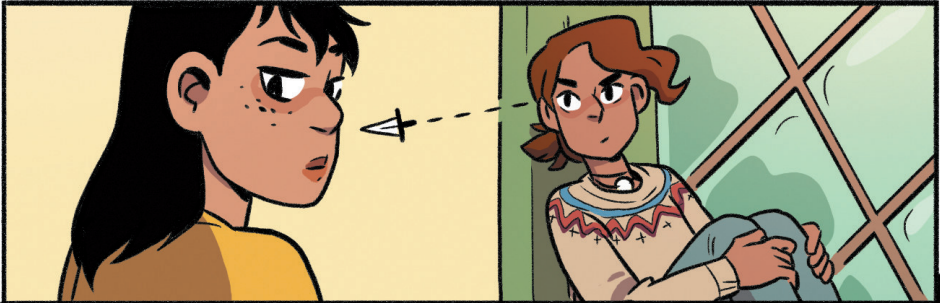
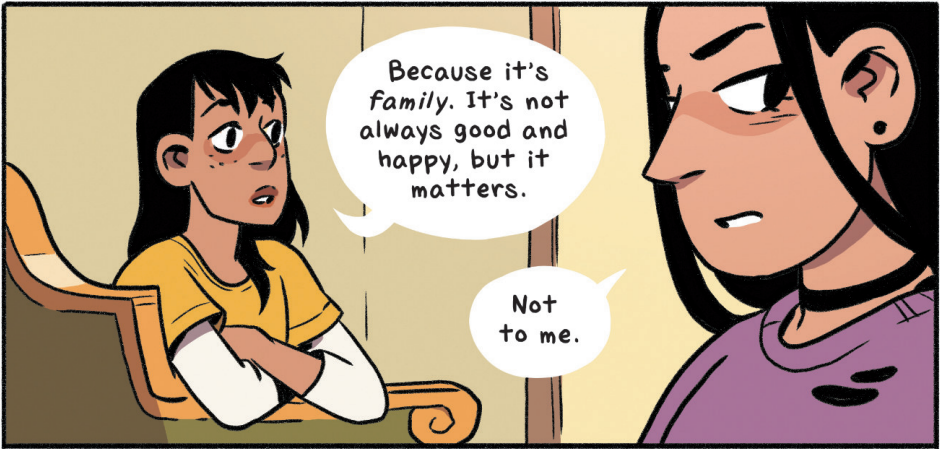
You talking about the Jolrun?

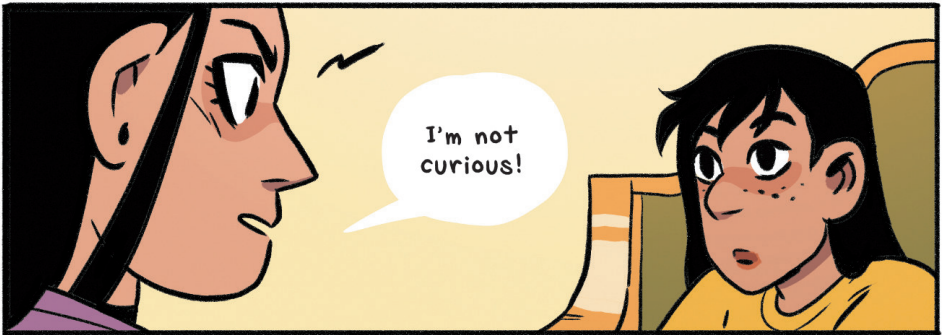




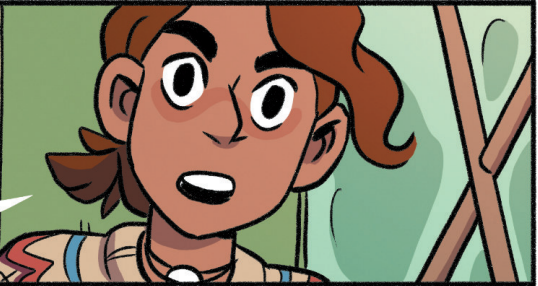






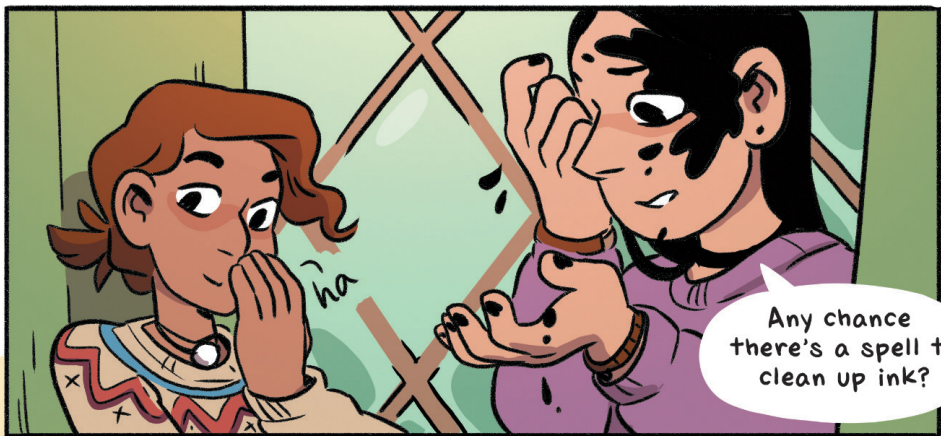








I said you were doing the spell wrong!



Any chance there's a spell to clean up ink?



Oh sure!

It's called paper towels. And soap.







Here we go, these ones taste like sour cream and onions. Two whole flavors!

Those chips are for people who hate having taste buds!

Ugh! Just get Cool Ranch.



Also we have to make pizza bagels, Aster and Sedge have never had them before.

And Ariel likes gummy worms.



Are their respective parents and guardians going to be upset that we're filling their children with junk food?

They don't have to know.











How was class today, Ariel?

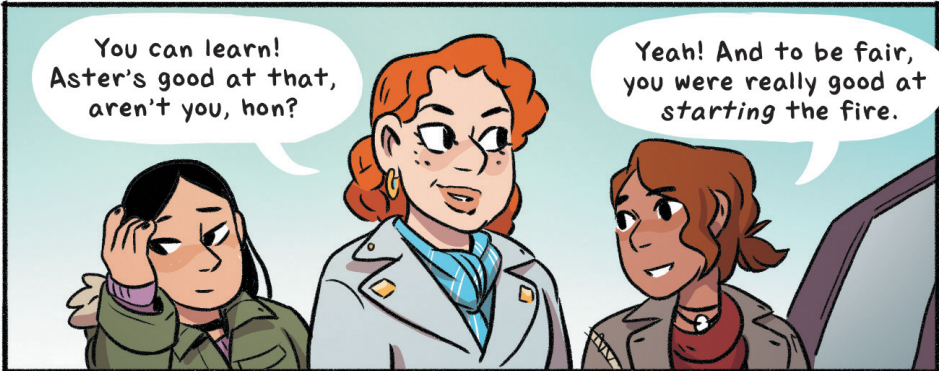


Um . . . did you hear about the tree?

Don't worry about the tree.



I guess I'm not very good at controlling my magic . . .

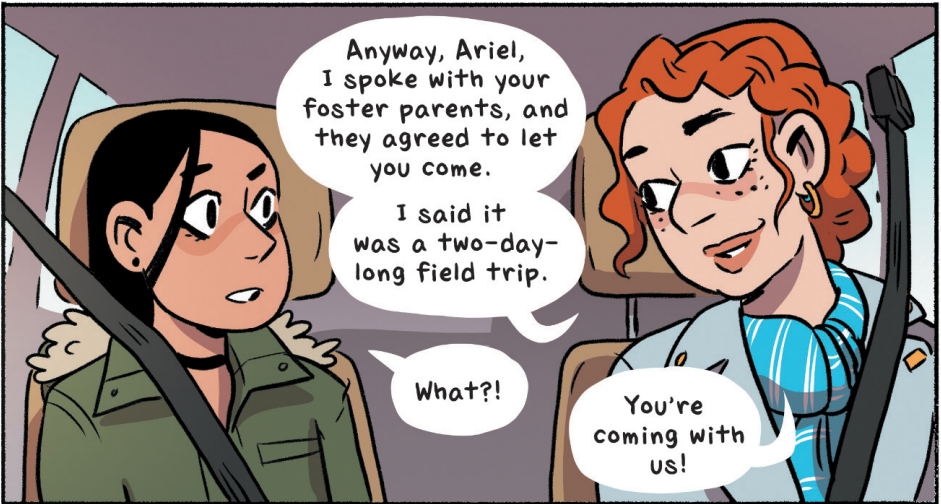


You can learn! Aster's good at that, aren't you, hon?

Yeah! And to be fair, you were really good at starting the fire.

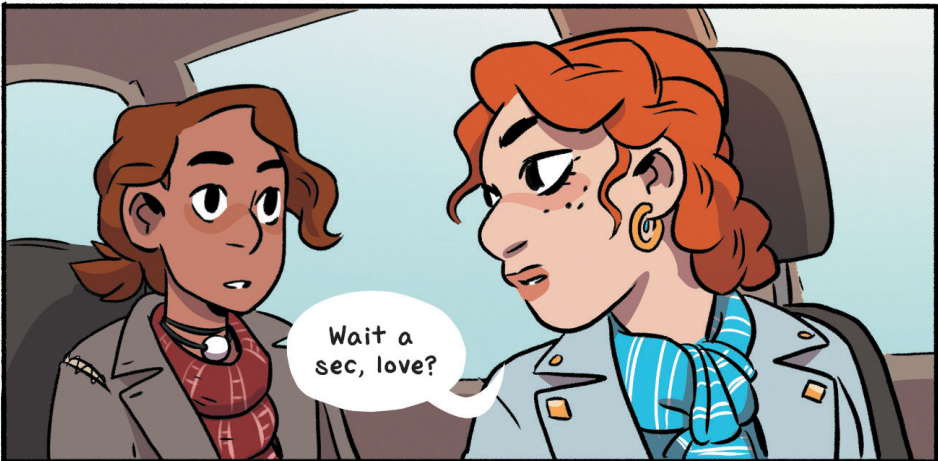
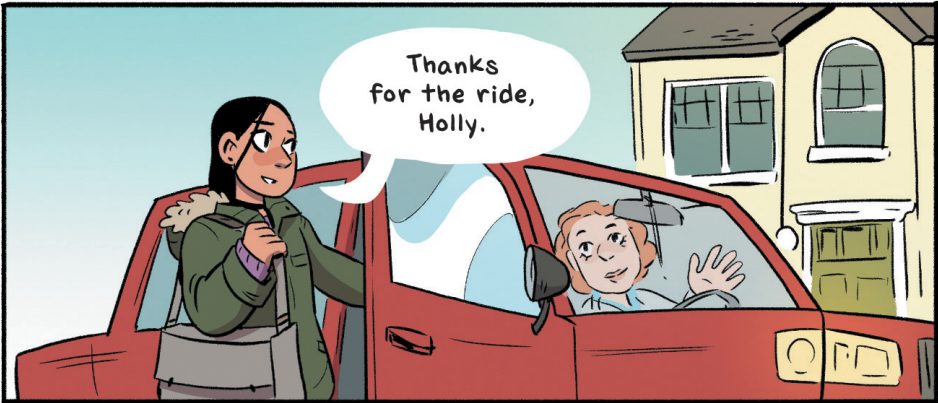


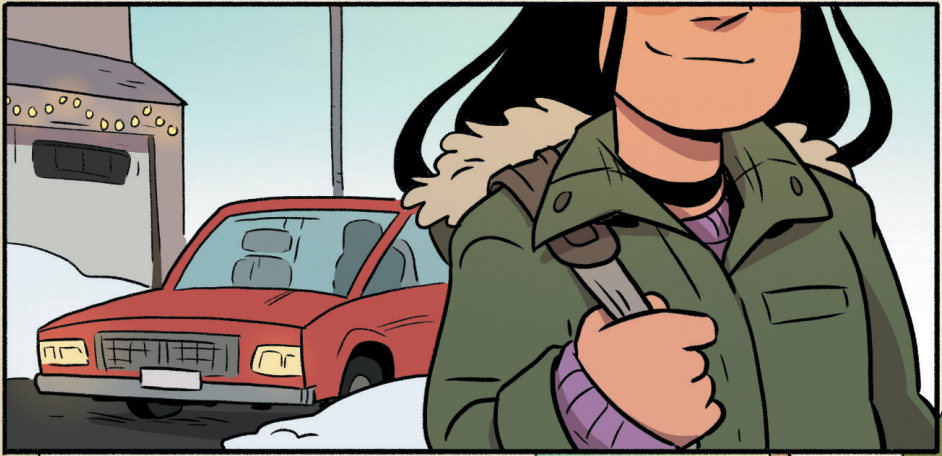










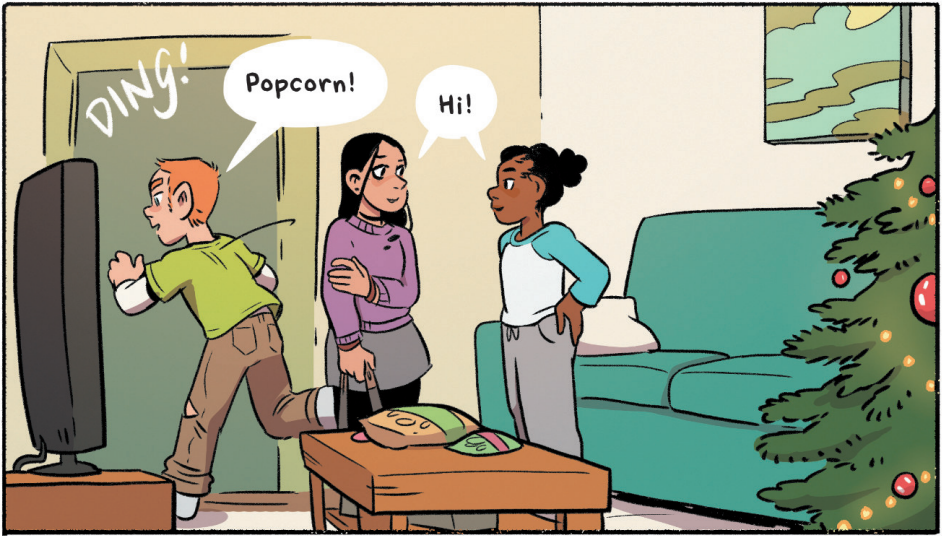


Everyone at school says it's so scary, it's impossible to finish . . .



I think we'll be okay.











I can't believe neither of you have had a sleepover before!



You're our first out-of-the-family friend!

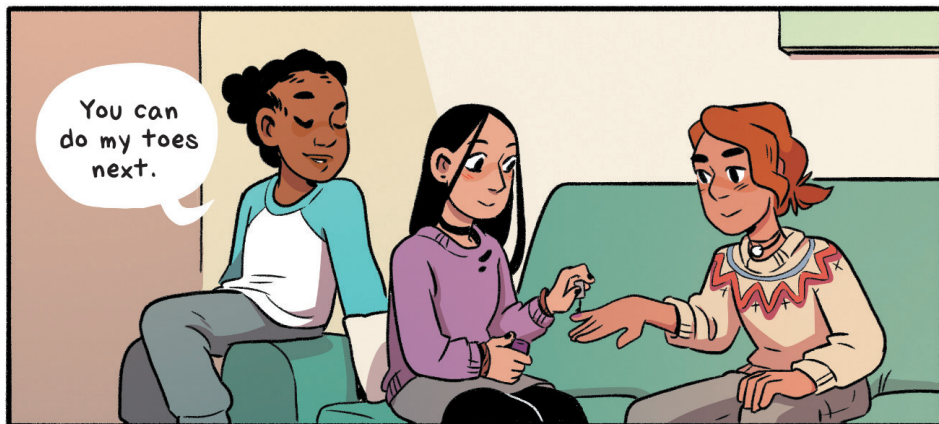
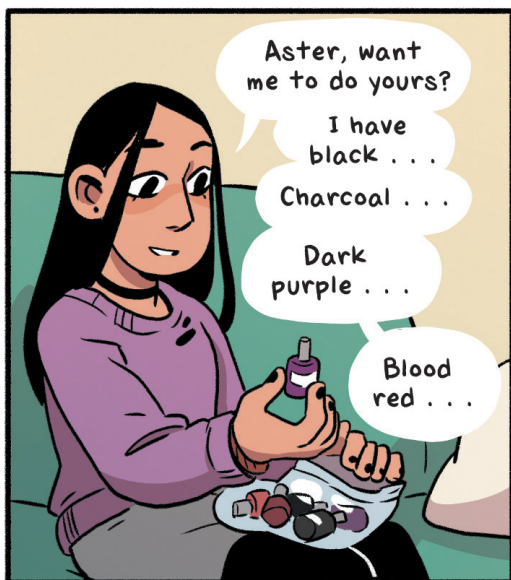
Yeah, what do we do?



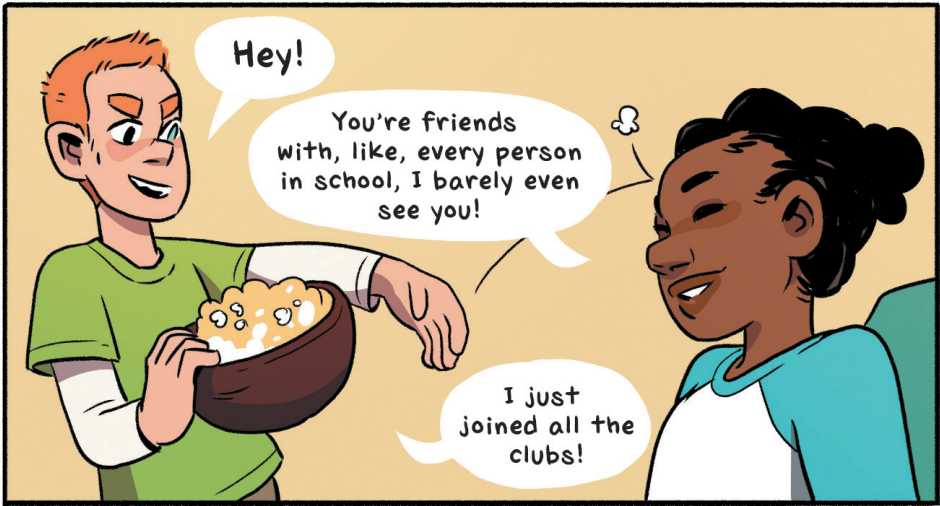
We eat junk food and lots of sugar so we don't get sleepy, and watch movies!

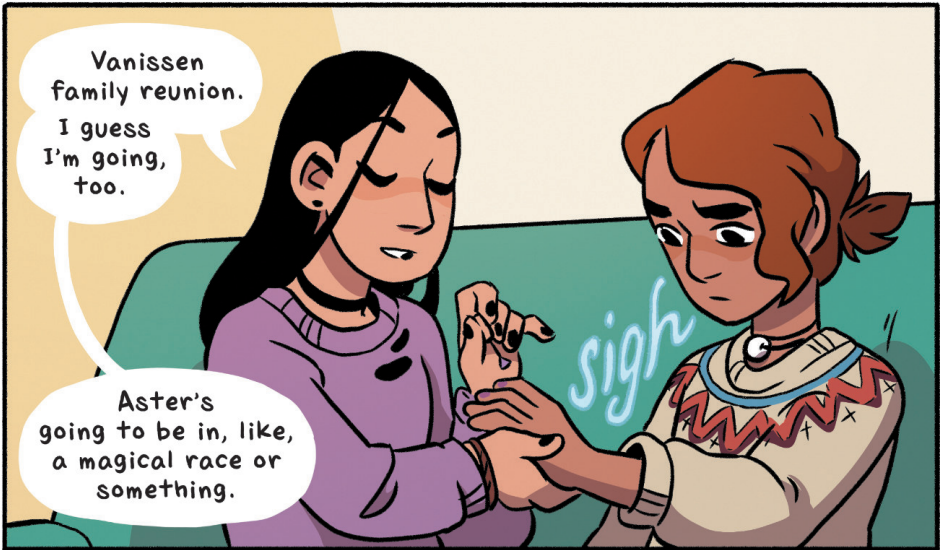


And I brought nail polish.









Vanissen family reunion. I guess I'm going, too.

Aster's going to be in, like, a magical race or something.



What's up, Aster?



It's called the Jolrun. And I'm not doing it.



My mom told me not to. Thinks people aren't ready to see a boy witch doing magic yet.