

I screwed up....

So my best friend recently came out as gay.
Shortly after that, he told me he loved me.
Even though I'm straight.

He said he understood that I was straight,
and that he wasn't expecting anything from me.
That the only thing that mattered to
him was that we stay friends.

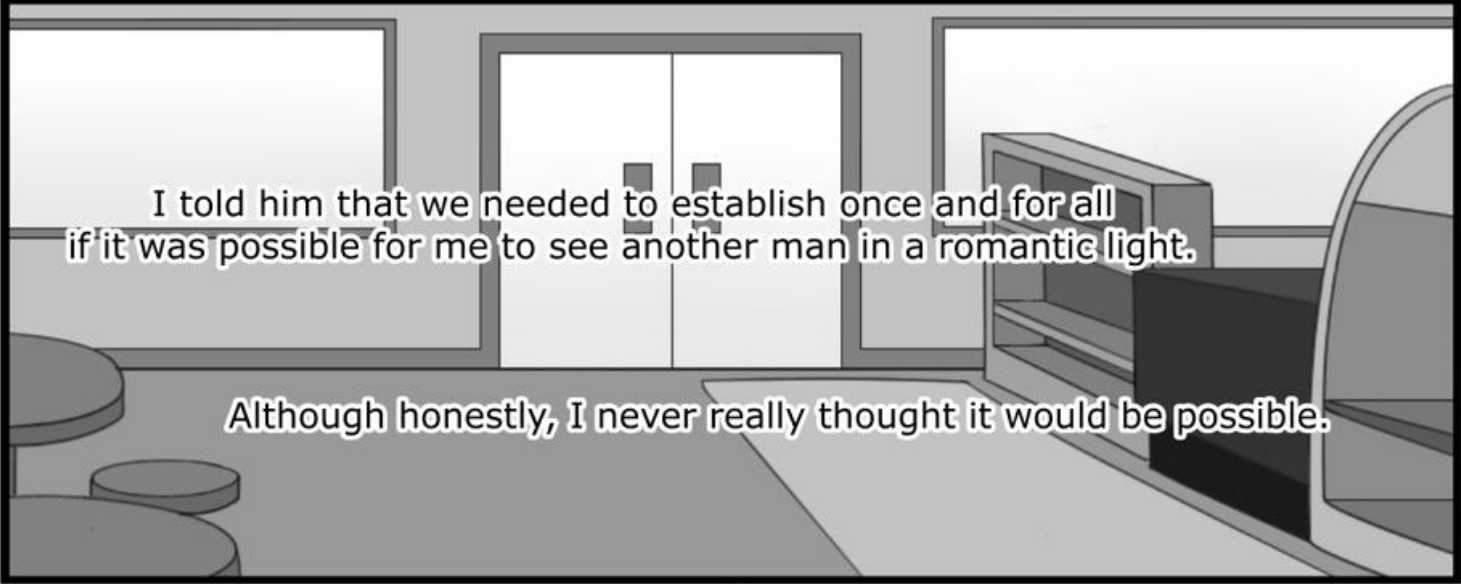
But, since we get along so well,
he was having a hard time letting go of those feelings.
So he wanted to separate until he was able to give them up.

We parted for a while, but... I was getting
frustrated. I hated being apart for so long!

It didn't seem like it was working the
way he thought it would. If anything, we were
becoming distant. I was scared. I was losing him...

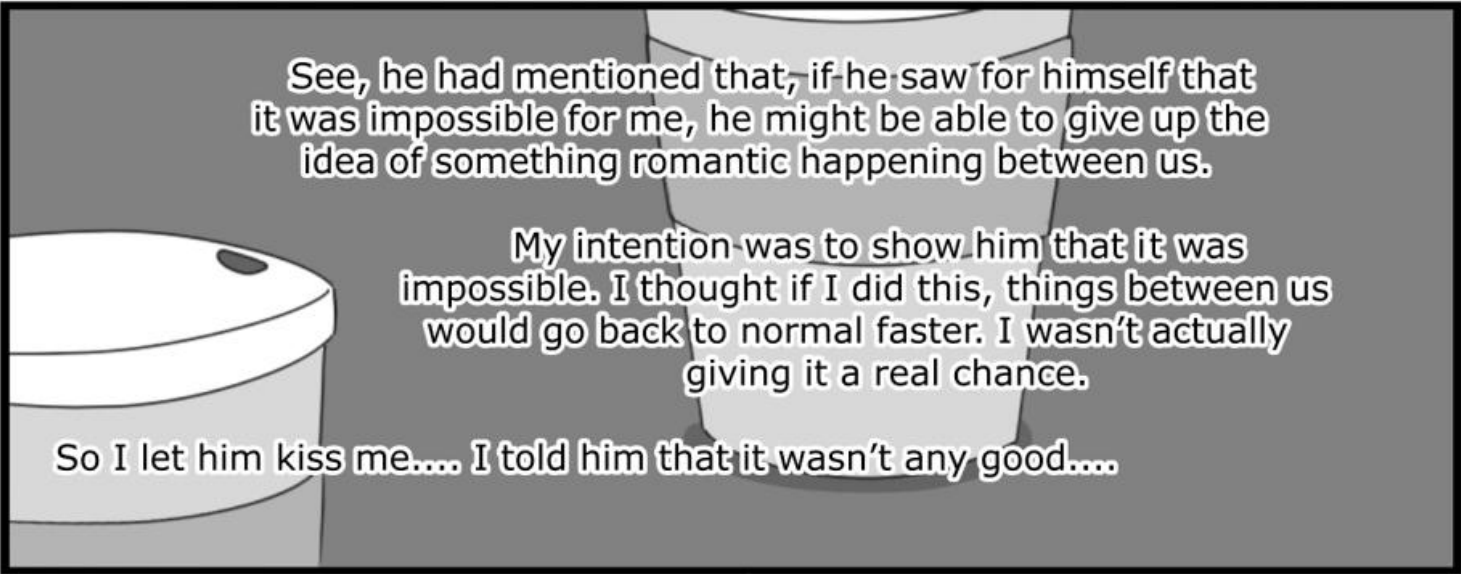
So I convinced him that we needed to try something else.

OPEN



I told him that we needed to establish once and for all if it was possible for me to see another man in a romantic light.

Although honestly, I never really thought it would be possible.



See, he had mentioned that, if he saw for himself that it was impossible for me, he might be able to give up the idea of something romantic happening between us.

My intention was to show him that it was impossible. I thought if I did this, things between us would go back to normal faster. I wasn't actually giving it a real chance.

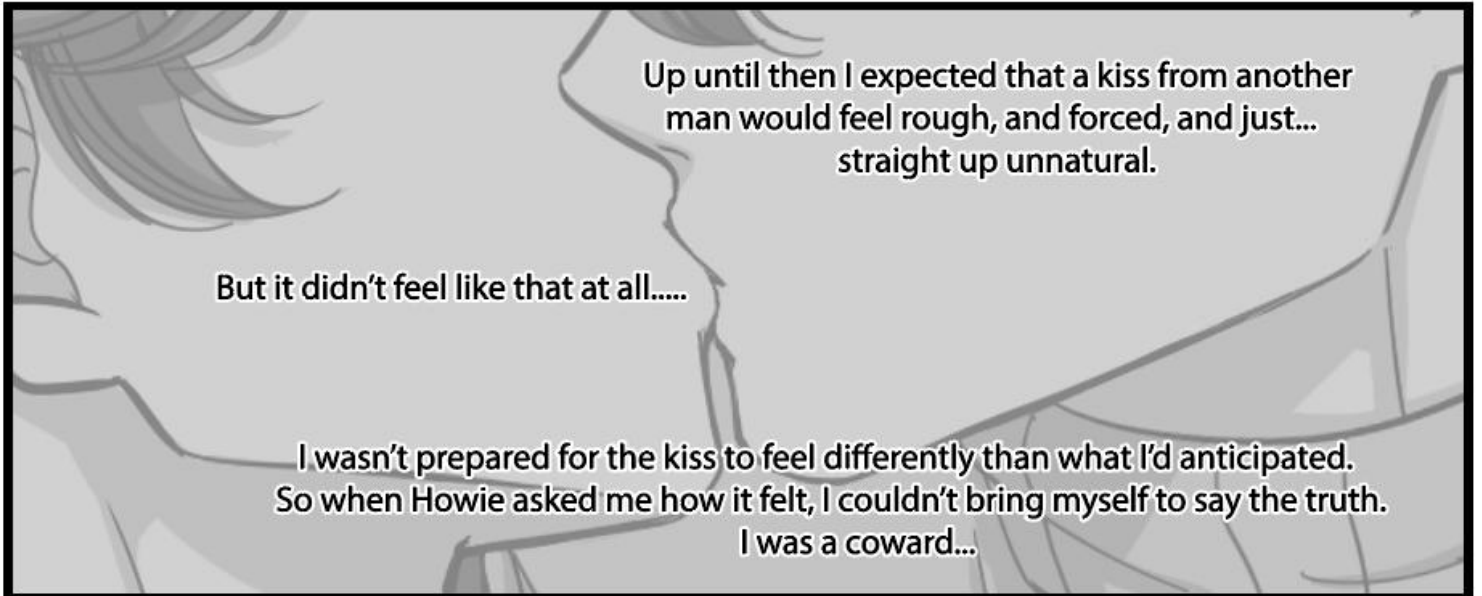
So I let him kiss me.... I told him that it wasn't any good....



But I lied.



I swear I never
meant to....



Up until then I expected that a kiss from another
man would feel rough, and forced, and just...
straight up unnatural.

But it didn't feel like that at all.....

I wasn't prepared for the kiss to feel differently than what I'd anticipated.
So when Howie asked me how it felt, I couldn't bring myself to say the truth.
I was a coward...



No....
I wasn't that high....

I smoke often enough.
I have a tolerance....



Well, I was also
high at the time!
Maybe that's all
it was...?

...Or maybe it's just that all kisses feel the same?
No matter who the kiss comes from.

I wouldn't really know. I've only ever kissed girls before.

Well, there was that one time Howie kissed me
when he was drunk... But I was drunk too, and I don't
remember how it felt...

....But what if it's not that?
What would that mean...?

That....

maybe it isn't....

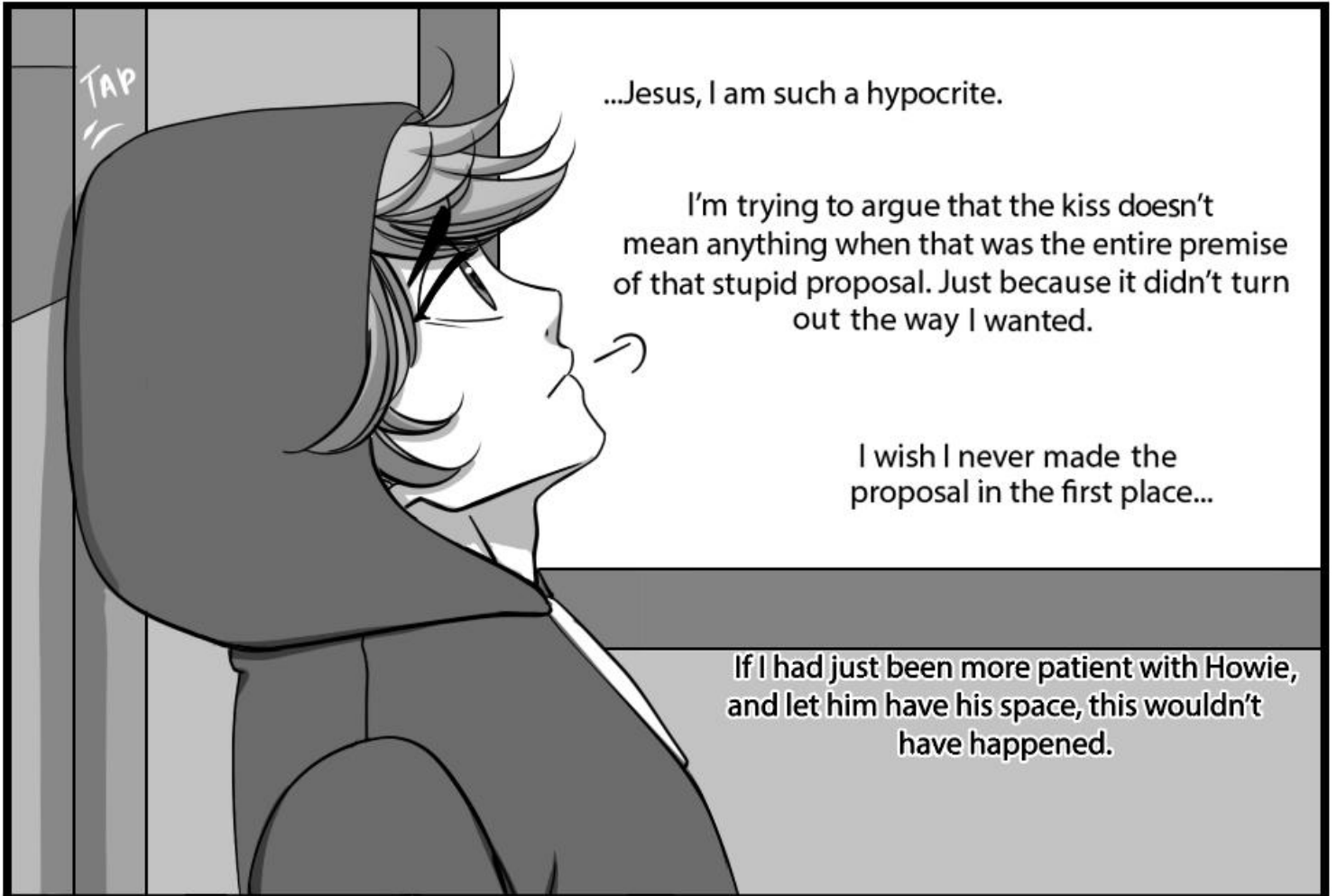
impossible.....?



No! There's no way!

I like girls! Always have!
I could never be with a man!

That kiss doesn't mean anything!




...Jesus, I am such a hypocrite.

I'm trying to argue that the kiss doesn't mean anything when that was the entire premise of that stupid proposal. Just because it didn't turn out the way I wanted.

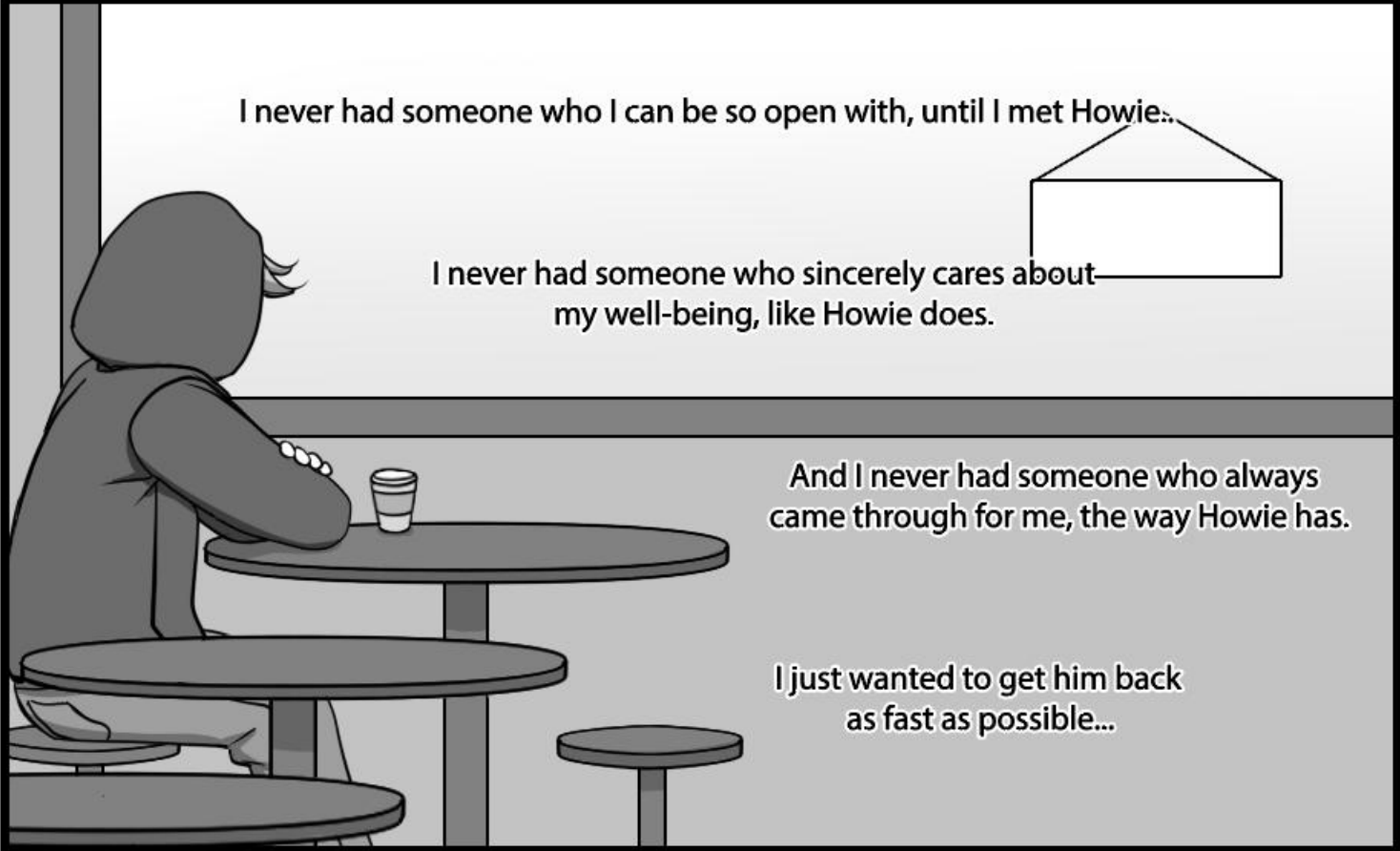
I wish I never made the proposal in the first place...

If I had just been more patient with Howie, and let him have his space, this wouldn't have happened.



It's just....

....I know how rare it is to find
a friend like Howie.



I never had someone who I can be so open with, until I met Howie..

I never had someone who sincerely cares about
my well-being, like Howie does.

And I never had someone who always
came through for me, the way Howie has.

I just wanted to get him back
as fast as possible...



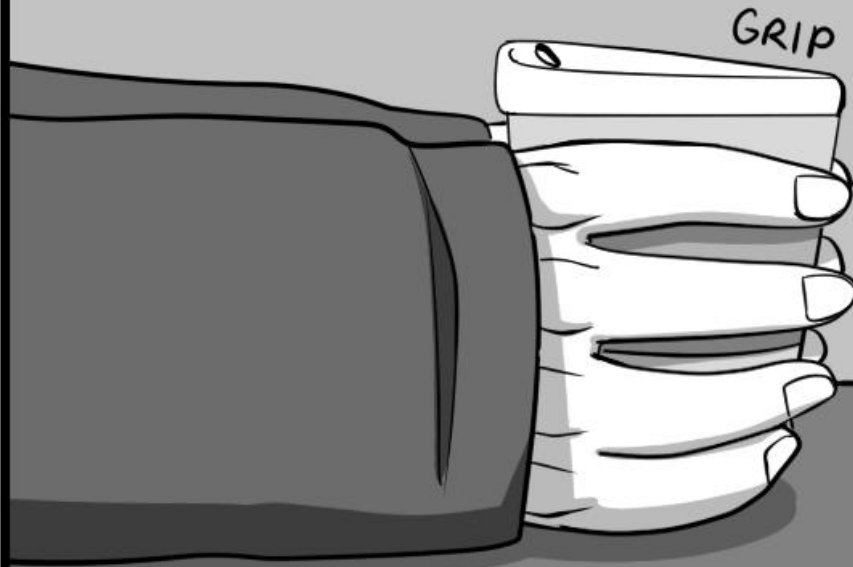
But now I've gone
and lied to him....

And I'm not being
fair to him....

Howie doesn't
deserve that...

But what would be the fair thing for me to do, then?
Since I never anticipated that things would turn out this way,
I guess I never really thought about what that would be.

If I expected for Howie to give up the idea of anything
romantic happening between us, if I hated his kiss....



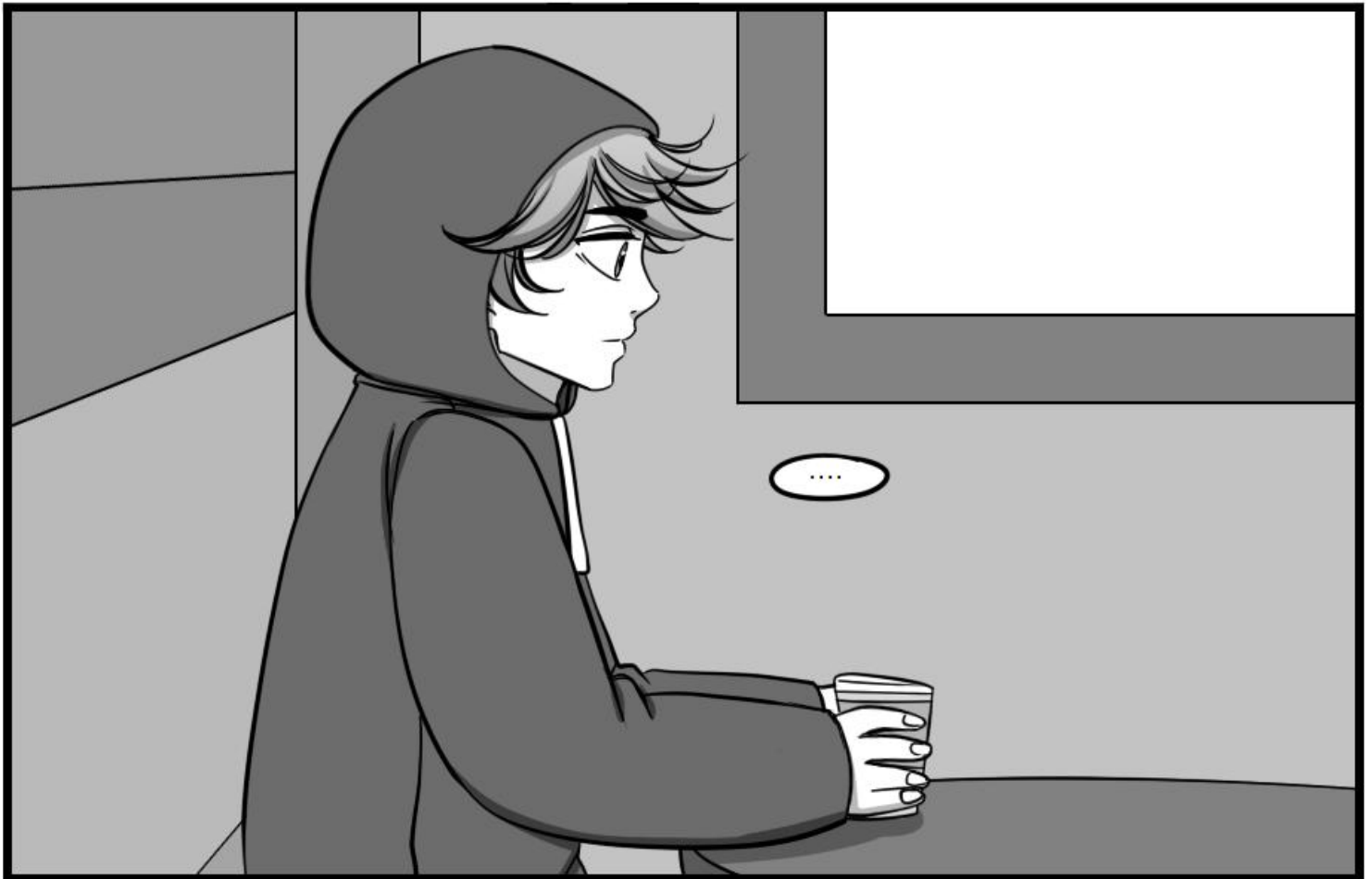
Then the fair thing for me to do
if I didn't hate it, would be....

....to be honest with
him, first of all....



And then...

...see if I can fall in
love with him...?



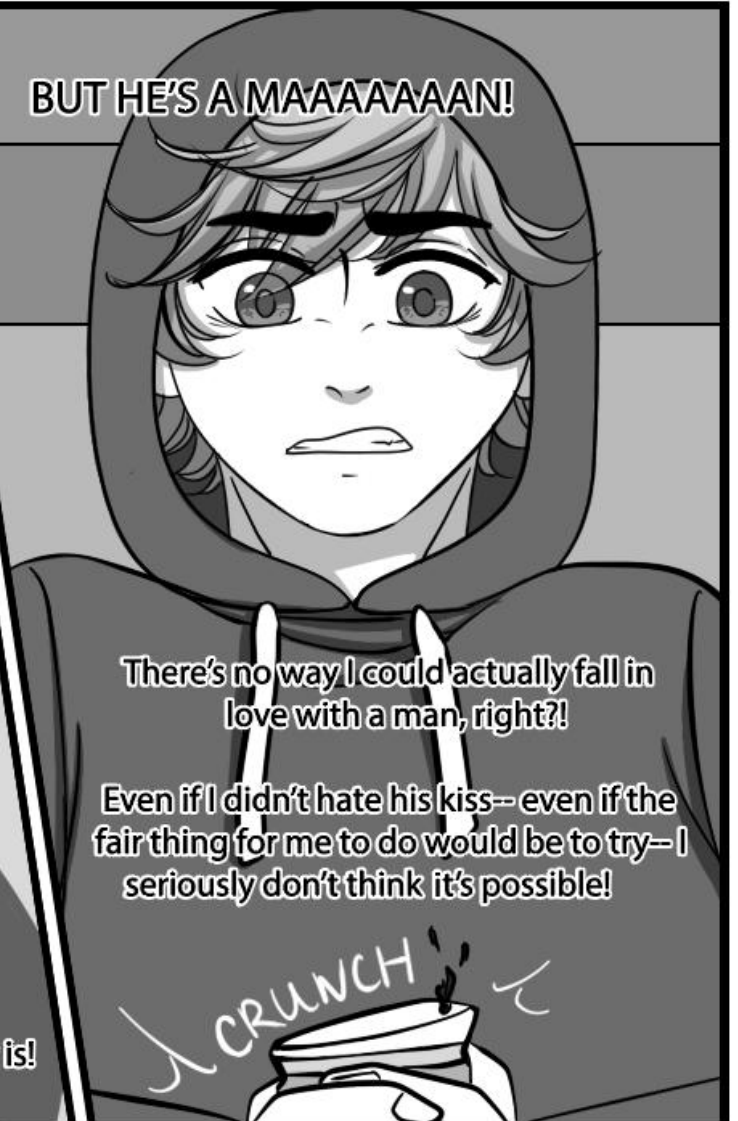
And to be honest, even if it WAS possible, I wouldn't want to!



I mean, what the hell would my family say? Or my friends?

What would it mean for my future?
If I got together with a man, it would make my life a whole lot more complicated than it already is!

BUT HE'S A MAAAAAAN!



There's no way I could actually fall in love with a man, right?!

Even if I didn't hate his kiss-- even if the fair thing for me to do would be to try-- I seriously don't think it's possible!

CRUNCH



Actually, it's a good thing that Howie doesn't know the truth. It doesn't matter if it's possible or not. I'm not trying to be with a man.

It's not like he'll realize I lied.

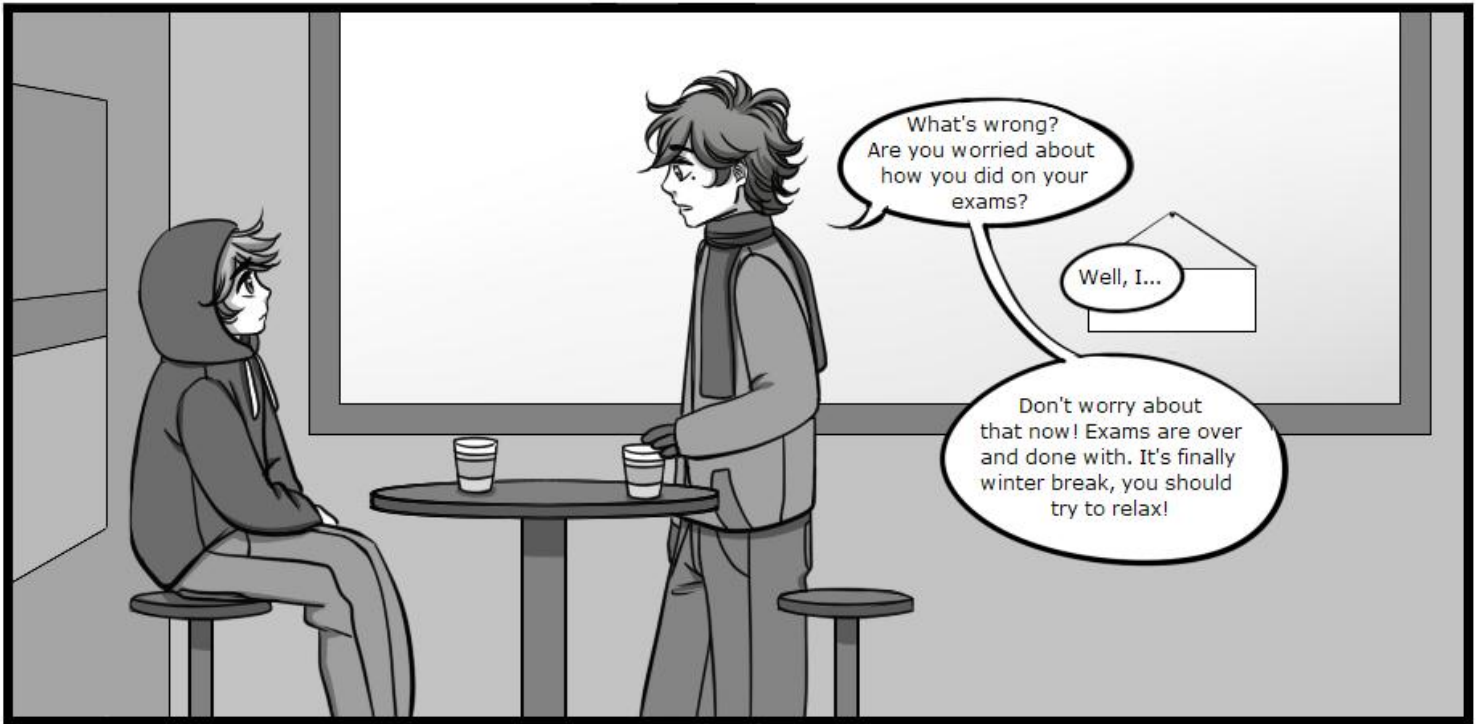
With this, he'll finally be able to forget his feelings for me and things between us will go back to normal.

It's better this way.



....BUT THE ONLY REASON HE PUT HIMSELF IN THAT POSITION WAS BECAUSE HE TRUSTED ME TO BE HONEST WITH HIM!!!





What's wrong?
Are you worried about
how you did on your
exams?

Well, I...

Don't worry about
that now! Exams are over
and done with. It's finally
winter break, you should
try to relax!



When are you going
home for break?

Not until this weekend...
My parents can't get me til then
cause of work.

Oh, same.



Blow

I'm happy you'll be
around! I was under the
impression that everyone else
was leaving campus today, and
that I'd be all by myself
for a few days.

Unless things changed?
Were Ben and Howie still
planning on leaving today?

O-oh, I don't know...
I haven't talked to them
in a few days...

Oh.





The rent is cheap, it's furnished, it's got a full kitchen and livingroom, and it houses four people.

Best of all it's only a five minute walk from campus.

How is this place still available? I thought all the good ones would be taken by now.

scroll

I actually spoke with the landlord already and he said that he did have takers, but last minute they didn't come through.

Wow, how lucky. The place looks great. I'm down if you're down.



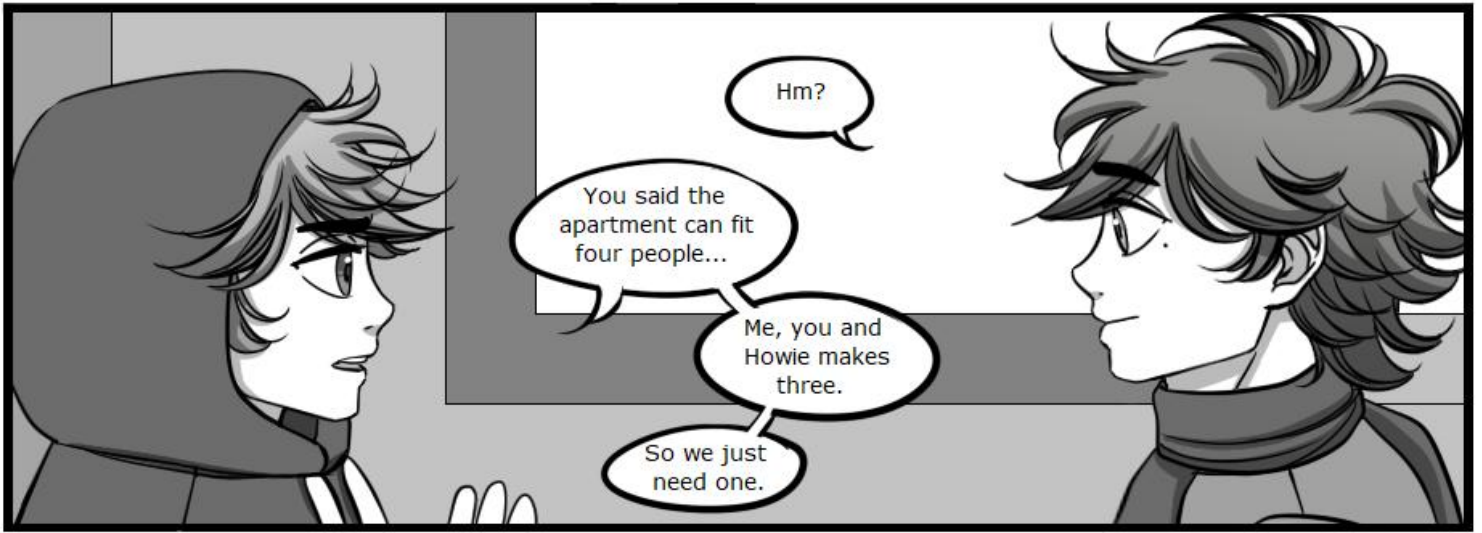
Yes! Awesome!

Well we just need one, right?

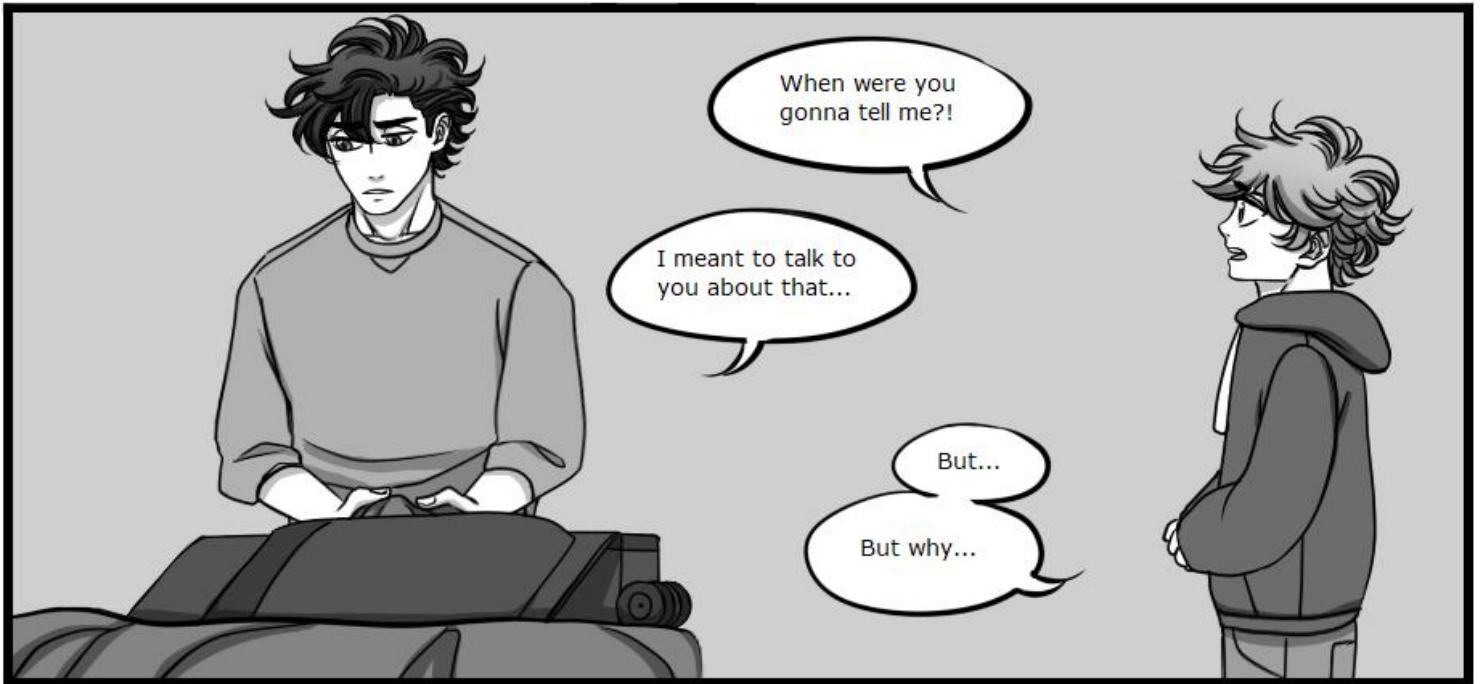
...

I'll give the landlord another call right away so we can meet him.

Then all you and I gotta do is find two more guys to share the place with us, and we're set.









...I'm still trying to figure it out.

Liam offered to let me move into his apartment...



...Are you kidding me?!









...Listen.



...



This isn't...just about me needing space to give up on you. I know that you can't love me.

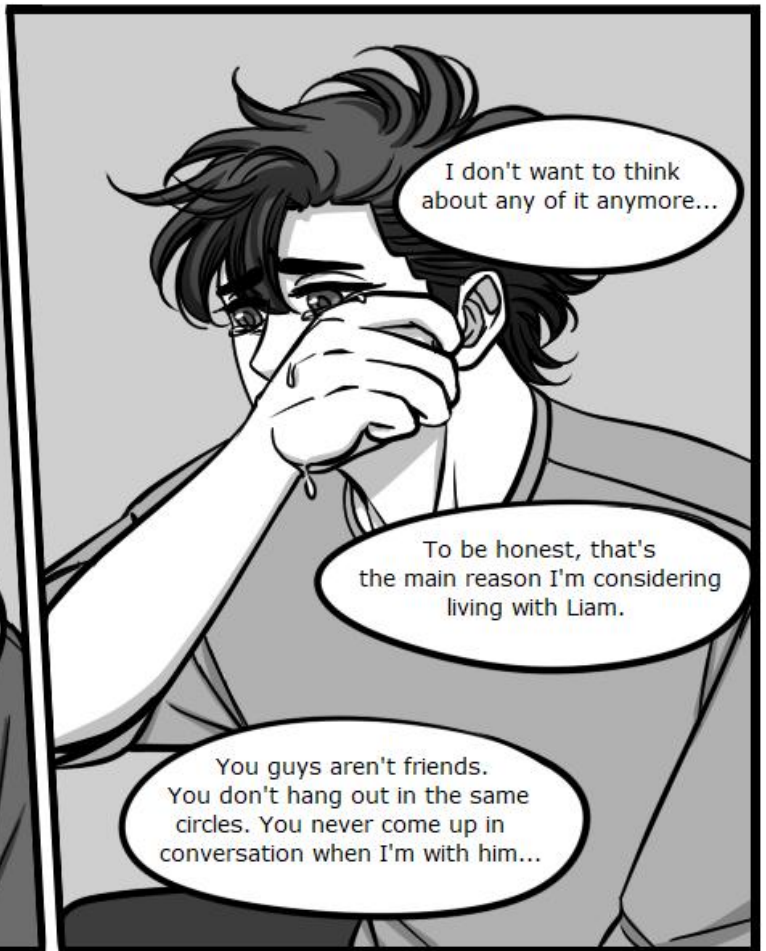
I get it already....

But now, when I look at you, it hurts.



I mean, I carried such strong feelings for you for so long, and it never amounted to anything....

And when I kissed you the other night, it was probably one of the worst experiences I ever had in my life.





...I gotta start taking better care of myself.

Which means that means I can't live with you, I can't be around you...

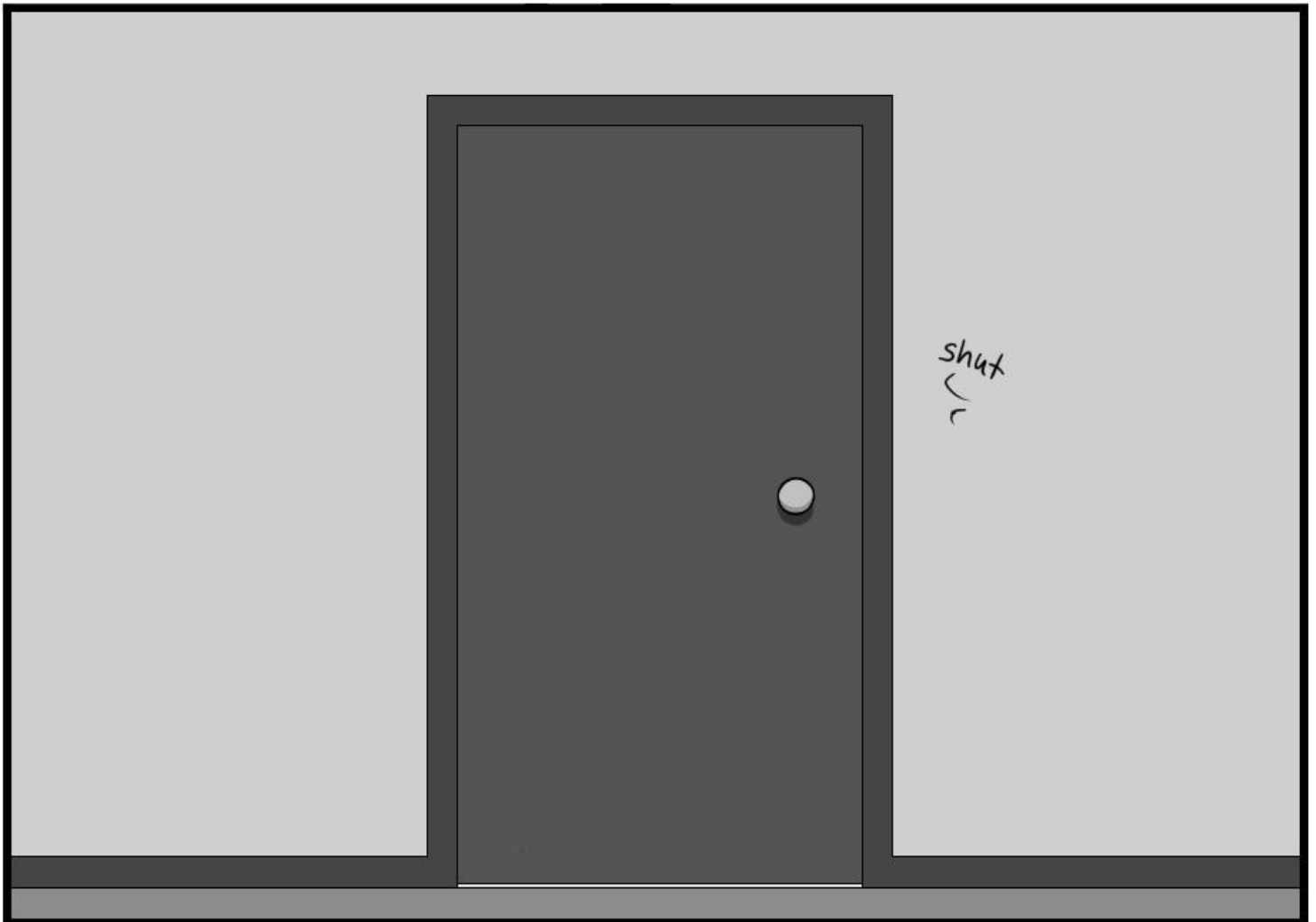
And I don't know for how long.

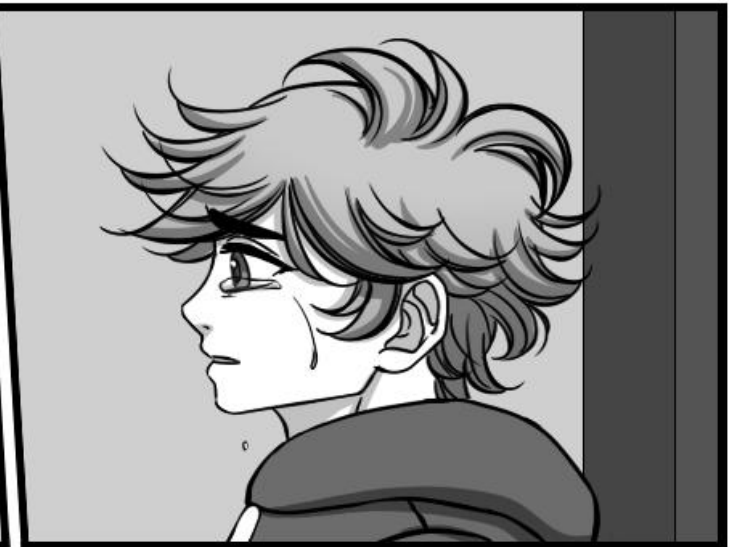


If you care about me at all...

...then I need you to respect that.







end of chapter eight