

Barely Keeping it Together



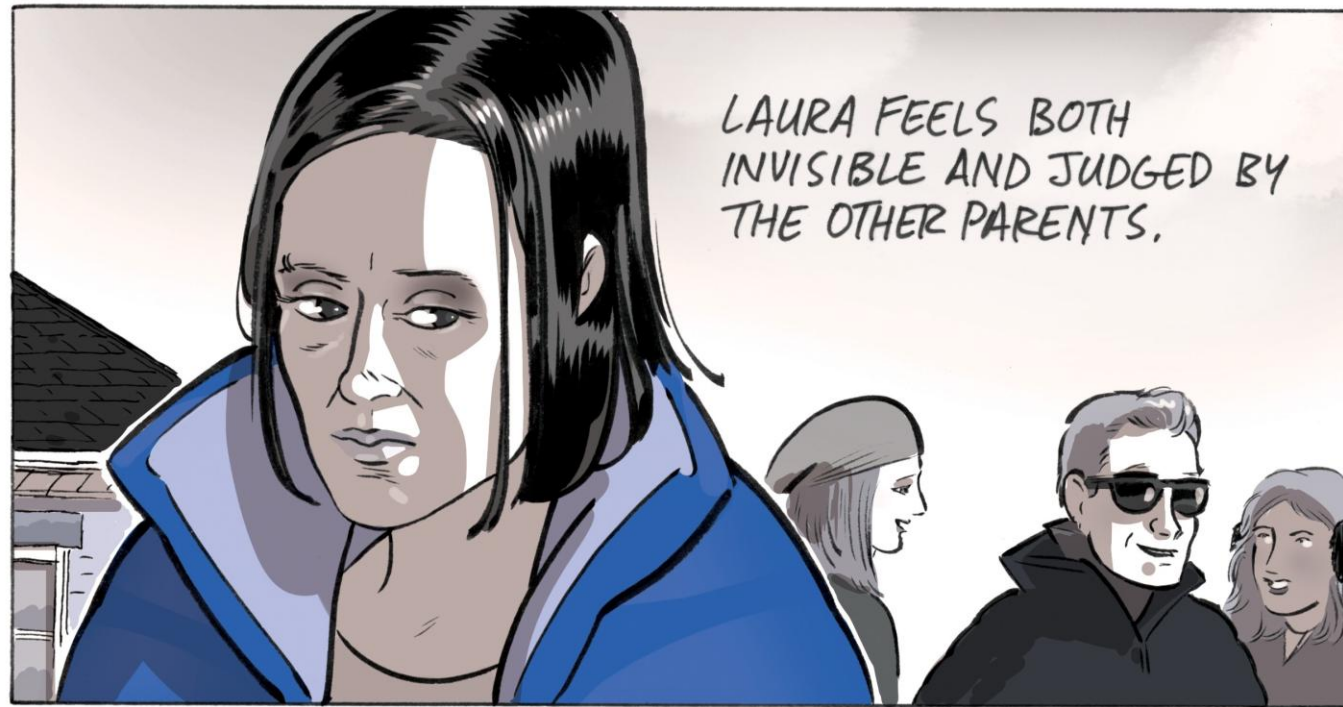
Sustainable Livelihoods Canada for the
Canadian Women's Foundation, 2024

LAURA WAITS TO PICK UP
HER KIDS FROM SCHOOL.

NORMALLY THEY GET
THEMSELVES HOME, BUT JERRY
HAS BEEN STIRRING IT UP LATELY.

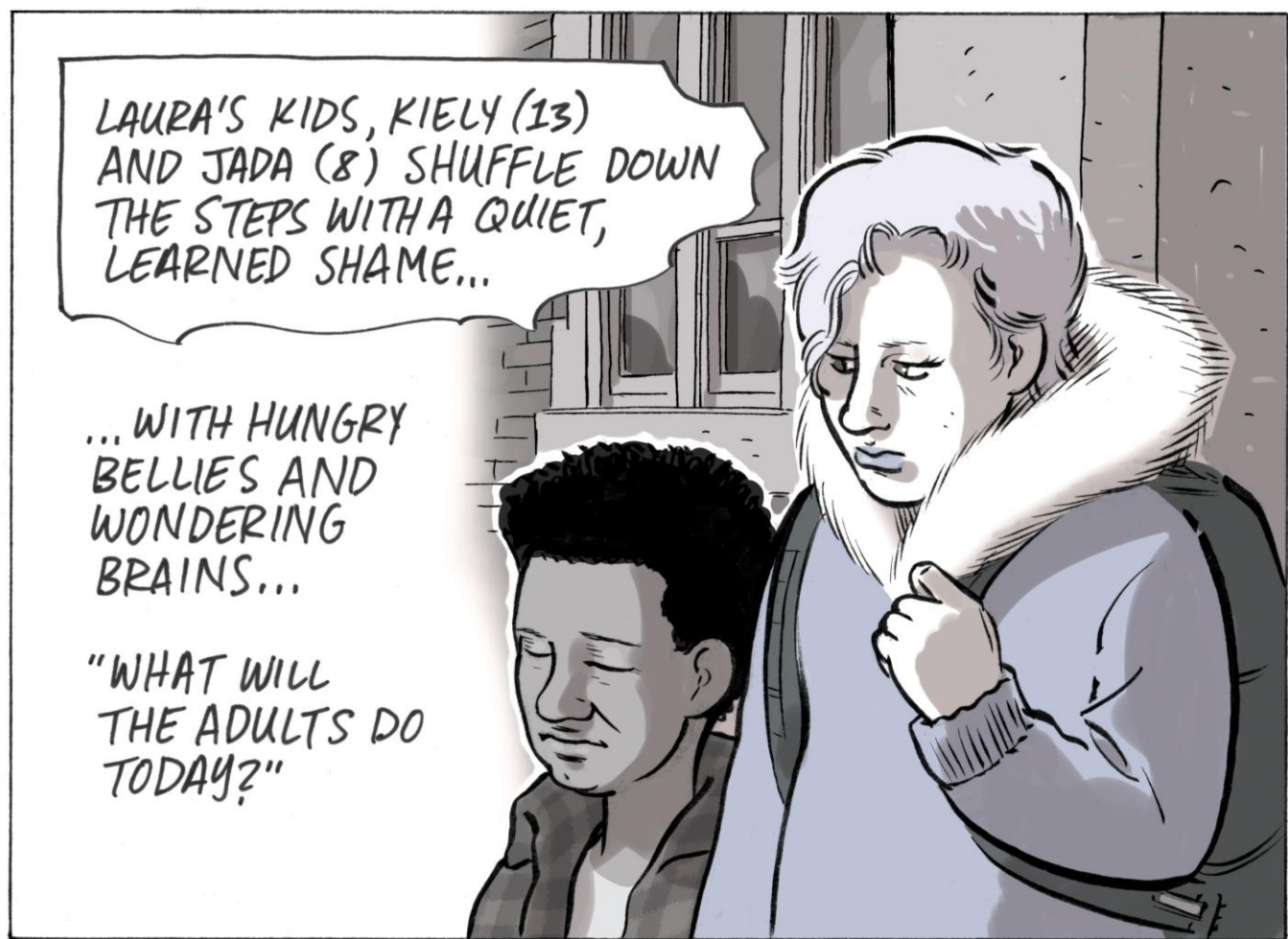
LAURA'S AFRAID HE MIGHT SHOW
UP HERE UNEXPECTEDLY.







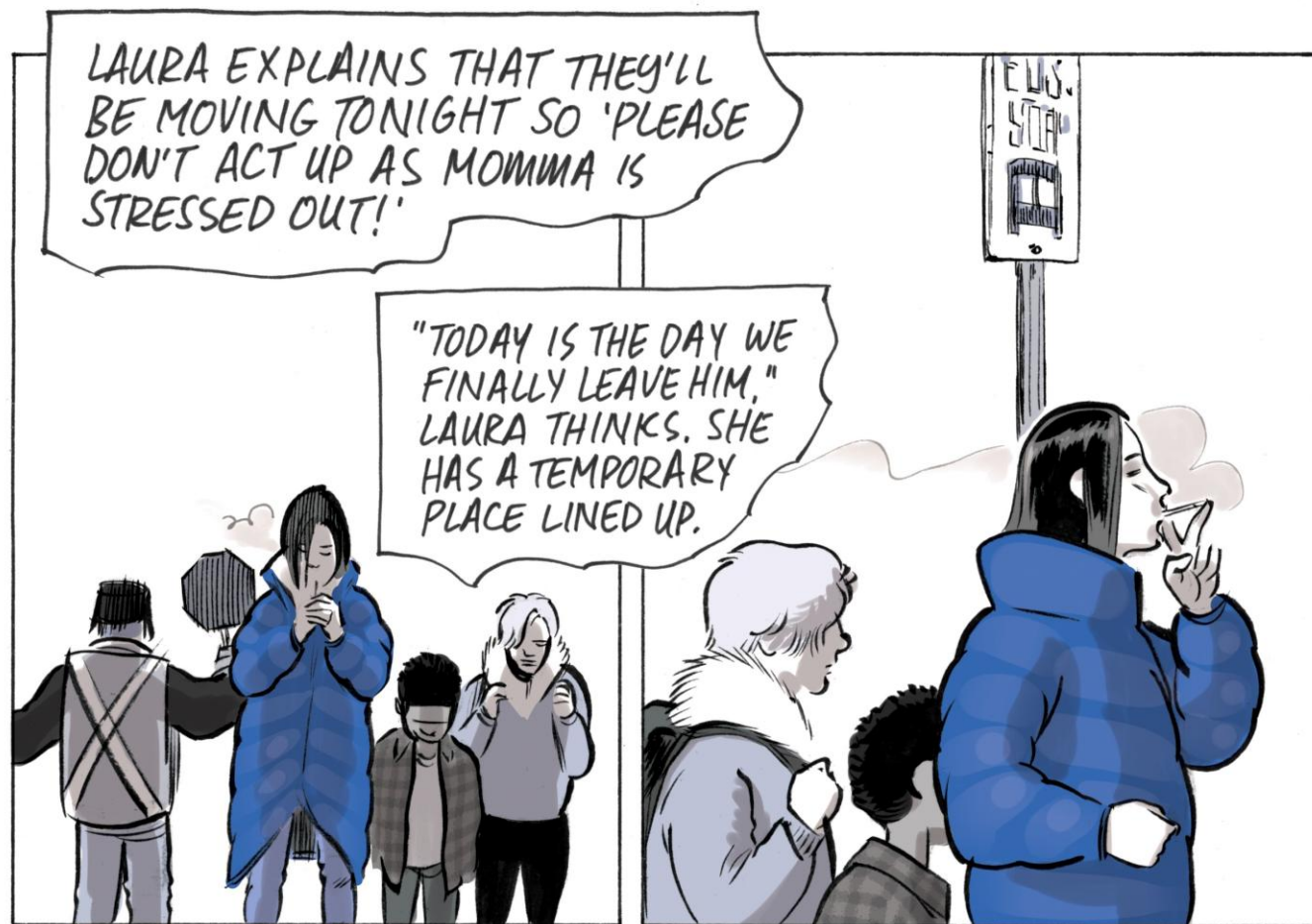
THERE ISN'T THE FAINTEST TRACE OF DOUBT THAT THE OTHER KIDS WILL BE LOOKED AFTER.



LAURA'S KIDS, KIELY (13) AND JADA (8) SHUFFLE DOWN THE STEPS WITH A QUIET, LEARNED SHAME...

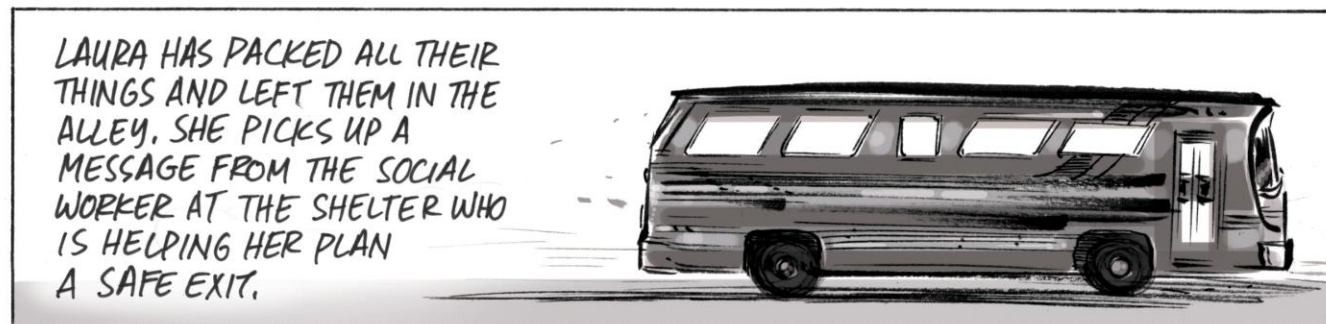
... WITH HUNGRY BELLIES AND WONDERING BRAINS...

"WHAT WILL THE ADULTS DO TODAY?"



LAURA EXPLAINS THAT THEY'LL BE MOVING TONIGHT SO 'PLEASE DON'T ACT UP AS MOMMA IS STRESSED OUT!'

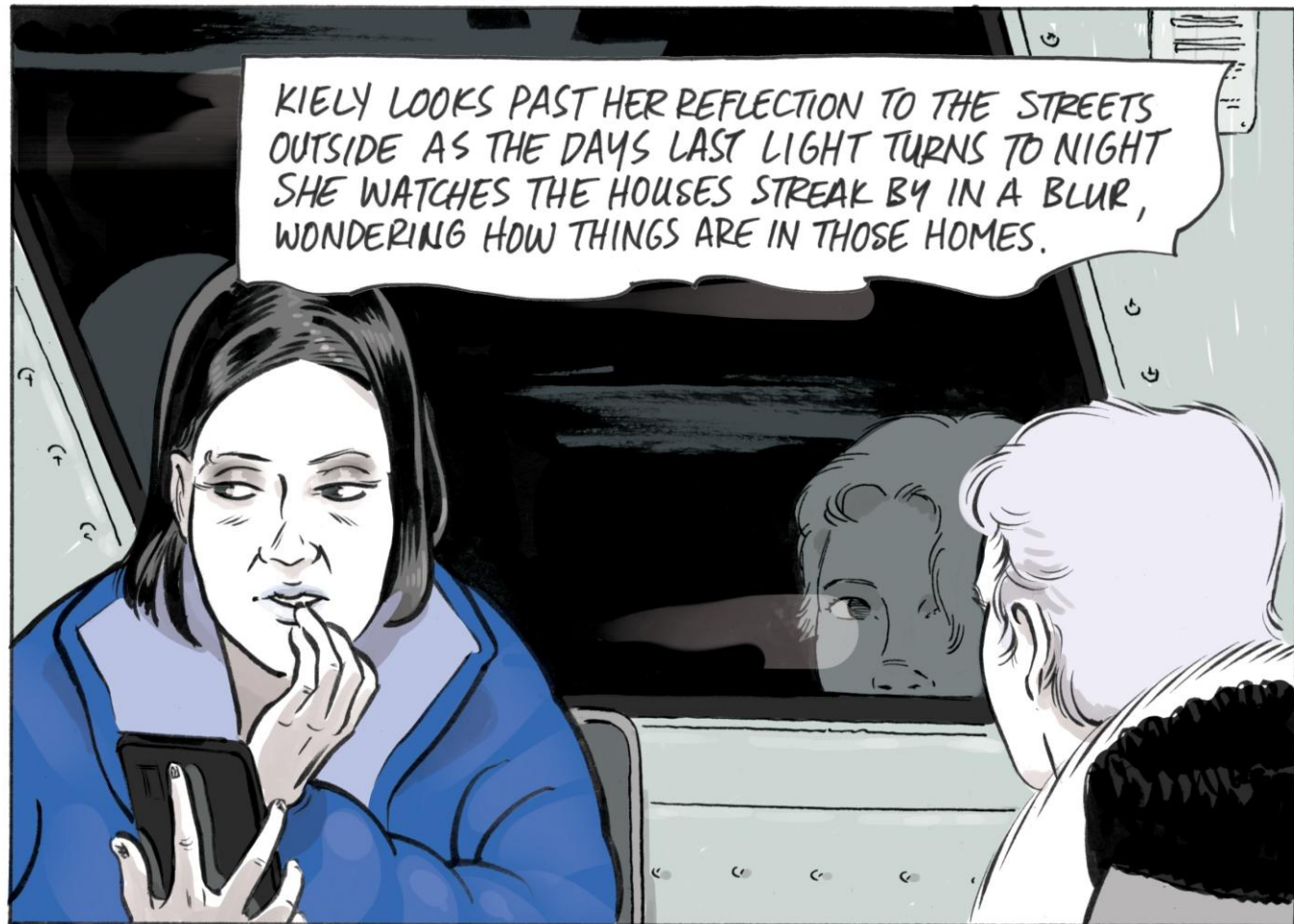
"TODAY IS THE DAY WE FINALLY LEAVE HIM," LAURA THINKS. SHE HAS A TEMPORARY PLACE LINED UP.



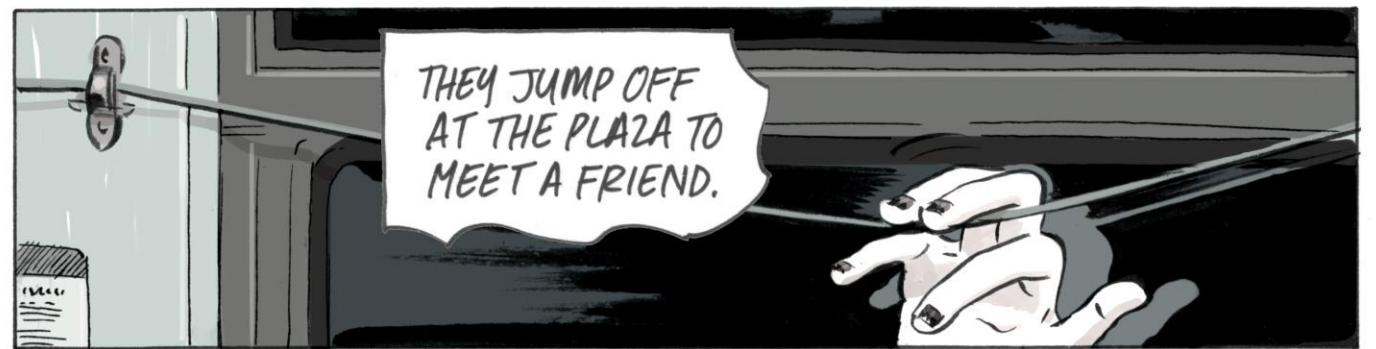
LAURA HAS PACKED ALL THEIR THINGS AND LEFT THEM IN THE ALLEY. SHE PICKS UP A MESSAGE FROM THE SOCIAL WORKER AT THE SHELTER WHO IS HELPING HER PLAN A SAFE EXIT.



FOR MONTHS, SHE'S BEEN LOOKING FOR A NEW PLACE FOR HER AND HER KIDS, SHE CAN'T FIND ANYTHING THAT SHE CAN AFFORD OR ANYONE WHO IS WILLING TO RENT TO HER, A 'SINGLE MOTHER'.

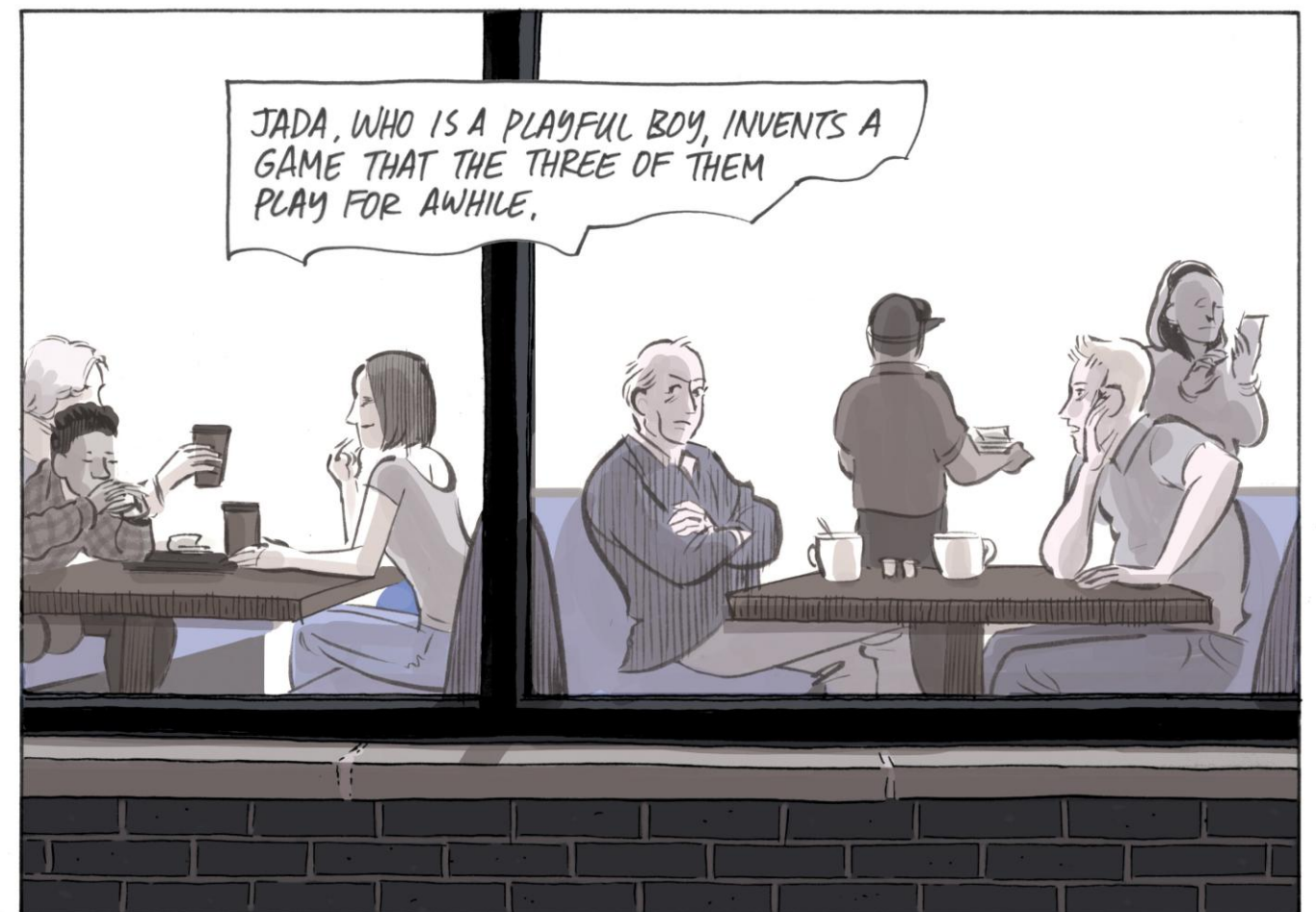
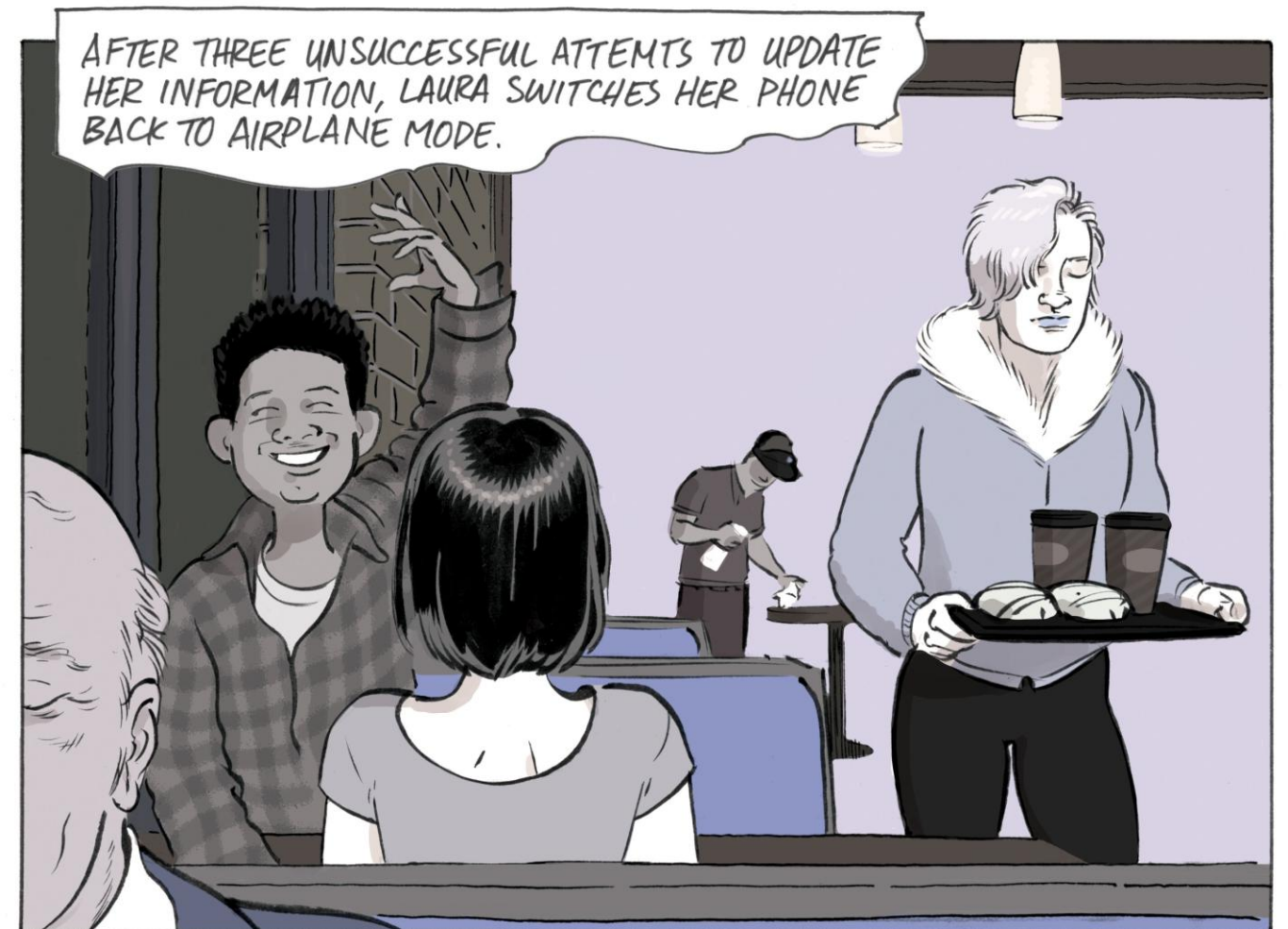


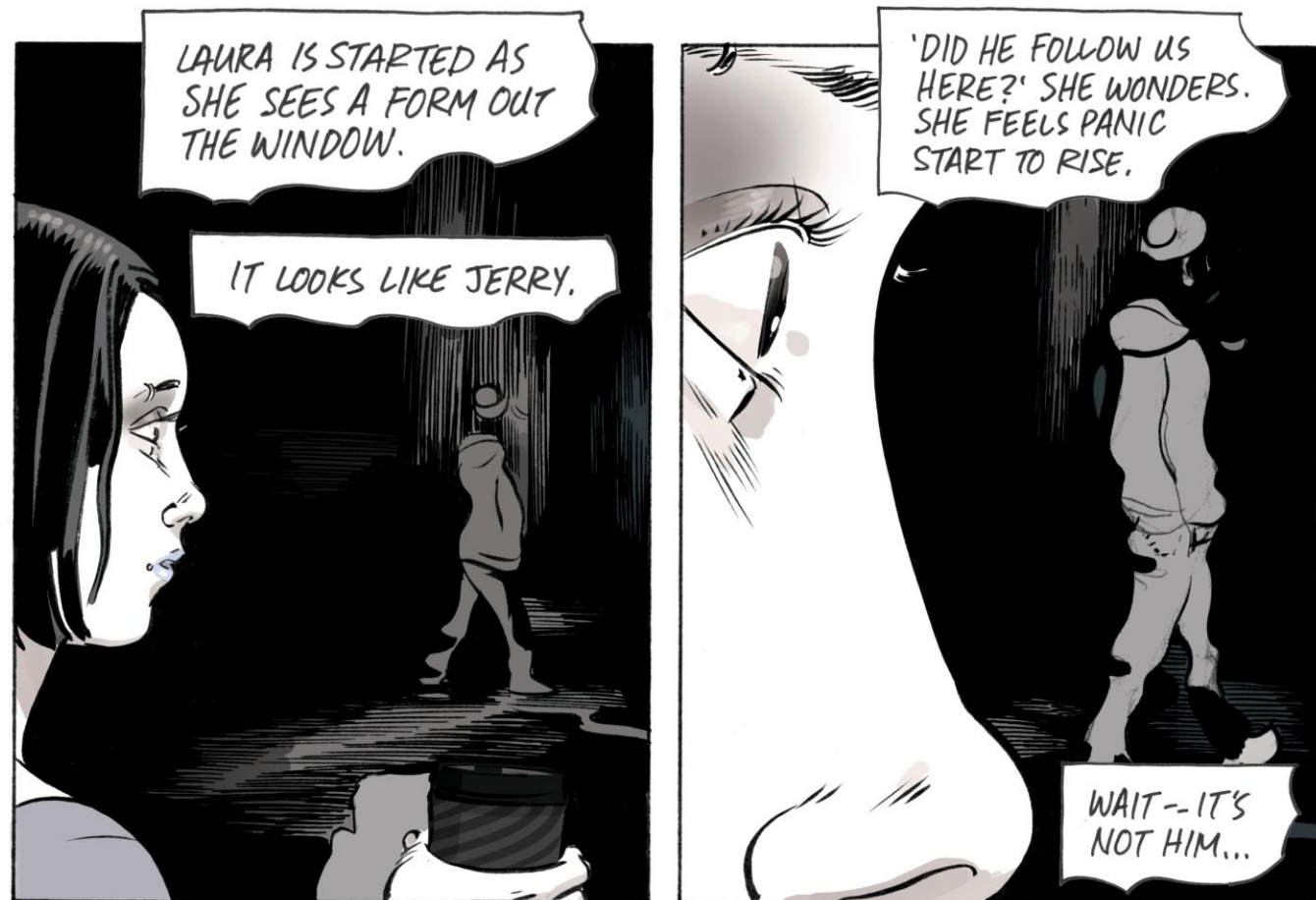
JADA WATCHES THE WATER DRIP OFF HIS BOOT AND COLLECT IN THE RUBBER GROOVES IN THE FLOOR.



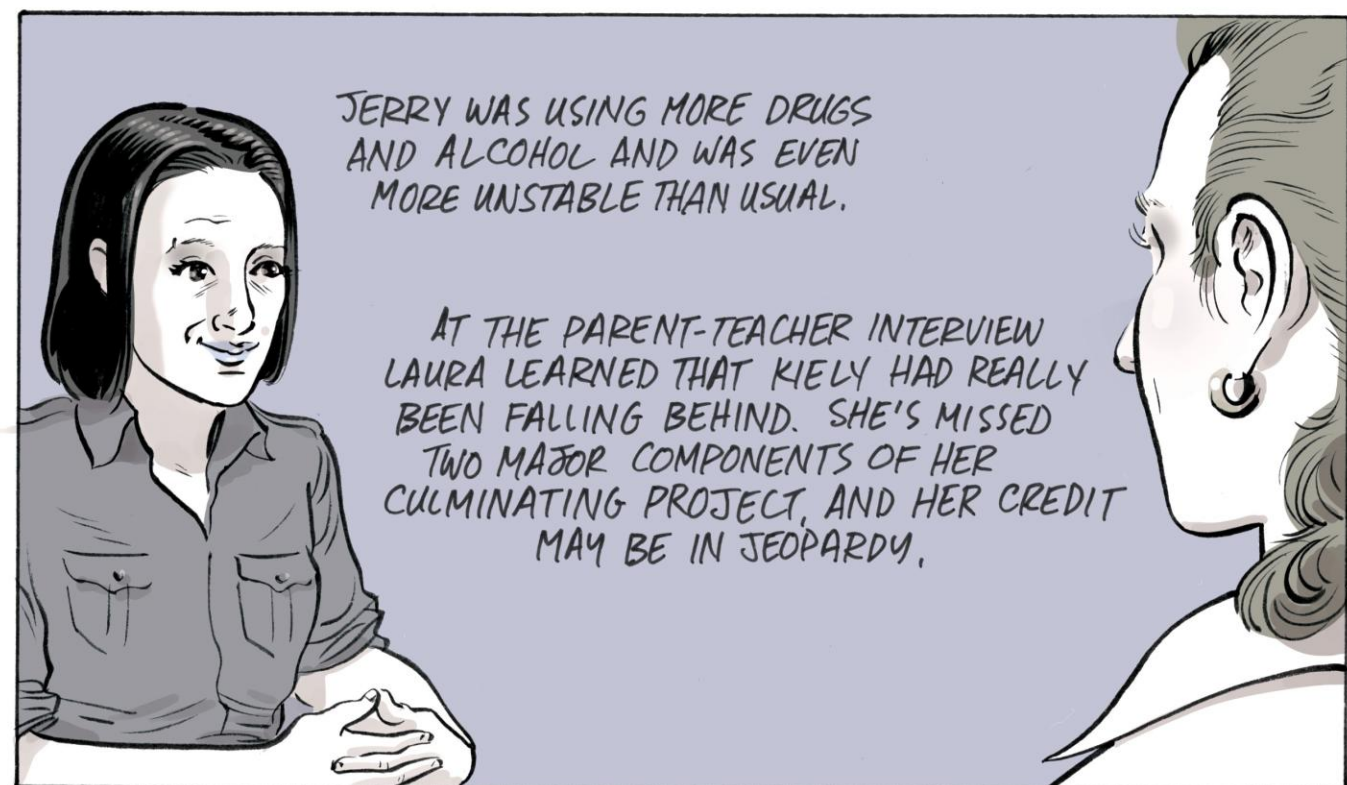


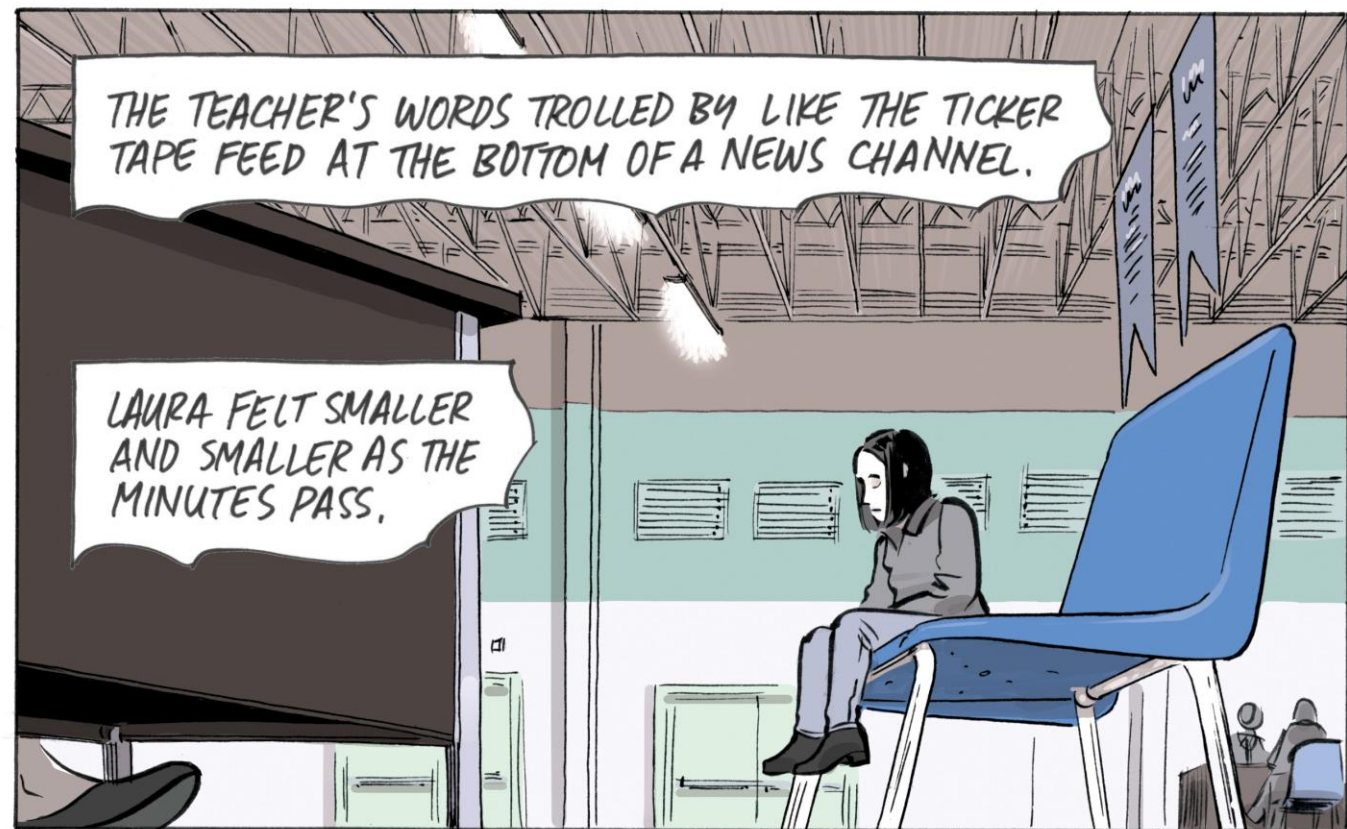
HER LAWYER'S EMAIL INCLUDES A REMINDER ABOUT THE BILL THAT SHE CANNOT PAY. SHE MAKES A BIT TOO MUCH TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR LEGAL AID. SHE'S WORKING ON FULL TIME CHILD CUSTODY.



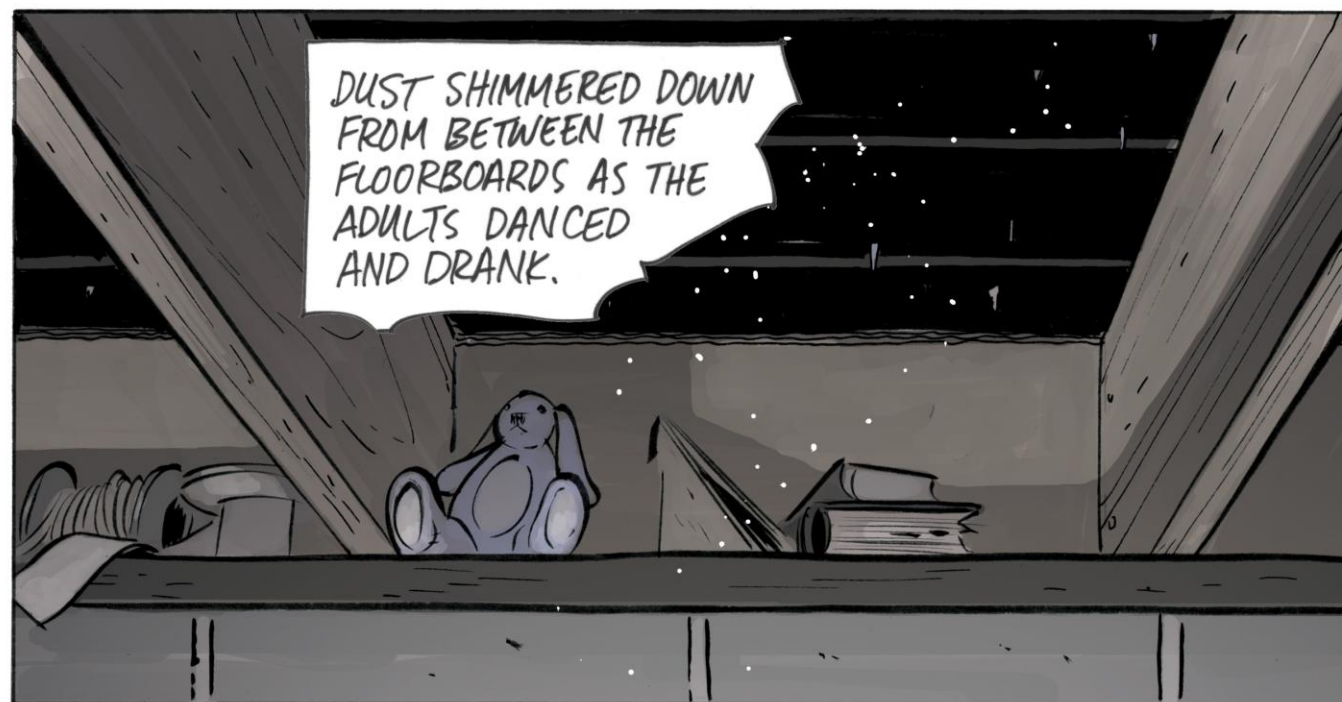


THE THOUGHT OF SEEING JERRY TAKES HER BACK TO THE MEMORY OF A PAST INCIDENT. LAURA LEFT THE KIDS WITH HIM SO SHE COULD DO THE PARENT-TEACHER INTERVIEW IN FIRST SEMESTER.





BACK AT THE HOUSE THE KIDS HID IN THE BASEMENT. JERRY INVITED SOME FRIENDS OVER AND THINGS HAD QUICKLY GOTTEN OUT OF HAND.





JERRY ESCALATED (BOOZE MIXED WITH COCAINE IS HIS BREAKING POINT) AND THE VOICES GOT LOUDER, AND THINGS STARTED TO GET OUT OF HAND.

THE NEIGHBORS CALLED THE POLICE. THEY ARRIVED AT THE SAME TIME THAT LAURA CAME HOME.



JERRY HAS PREVIOUS CRIMINAL CHARGES.



THE KIDS HEARD THEIR MUM'S VOICE IN THE DISPUTE AS THE BLUE AND RED POLICE LIGHTS FLOOD THE BASEMENT WINDOW.

LAURA TRIED HER BEST TO DIFFUSE THE PARTY AND DEFLECT ANOTHER POLICE INTERVENTION.



IF THE POLICE FILE ANOTHER REPORT, SHE'S IN DANGER OF LOSING HER KIDS TO CHILDREN'S AID. JERRY'S VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS HER AND THE CHILDREN IS ESCALATING.



LAURA SNAPS OUT OF HER MEMORY. IT'S TIME FOR HER AND THE KIDS TO LEAVE THE MALL AND HEAD TO PICK UP THEIR THINGS.

A LIGHT RAIN PEPPERS THE SCENE AS THEY CROSS THE TRACKS.

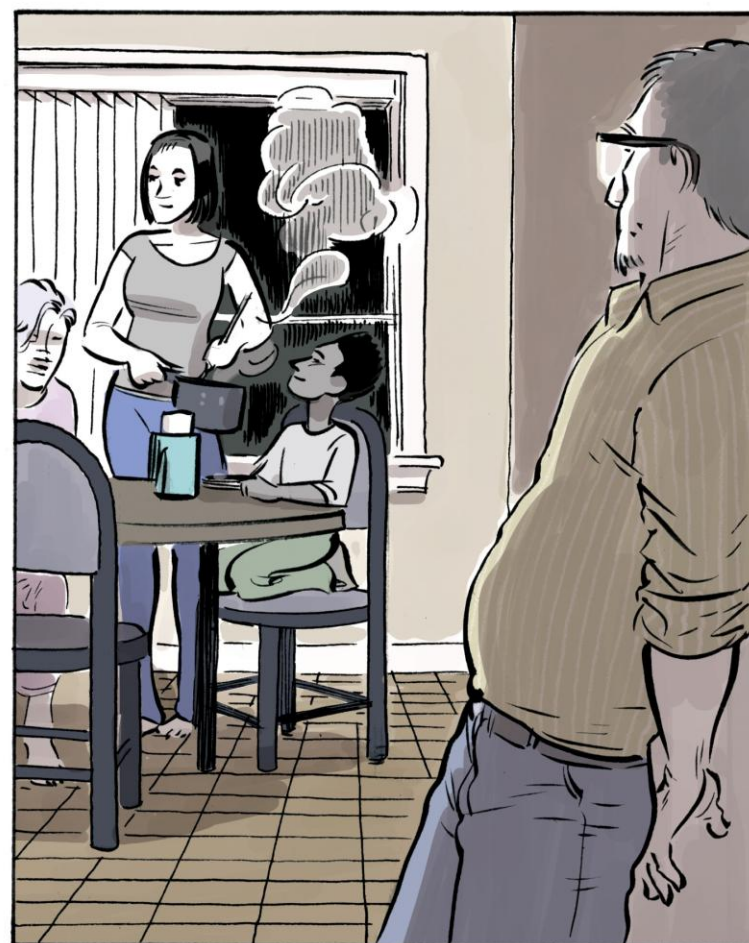


JADA IS USED TO THE UNCERTAINTY NOW AND GOES WITH FLOW. BUT KIELY IS FRIGHTENED-- SHE HAS A HARD TIME WITH CHANGES AND FEELS STRESSED ALL THE TIME.



THEY ALL WATCH THE DARKNESS SWALLOW UP THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AS THE TAXI TAKES THEM TO THEIR NEW PLACE. AND A NEW SCHOOL.

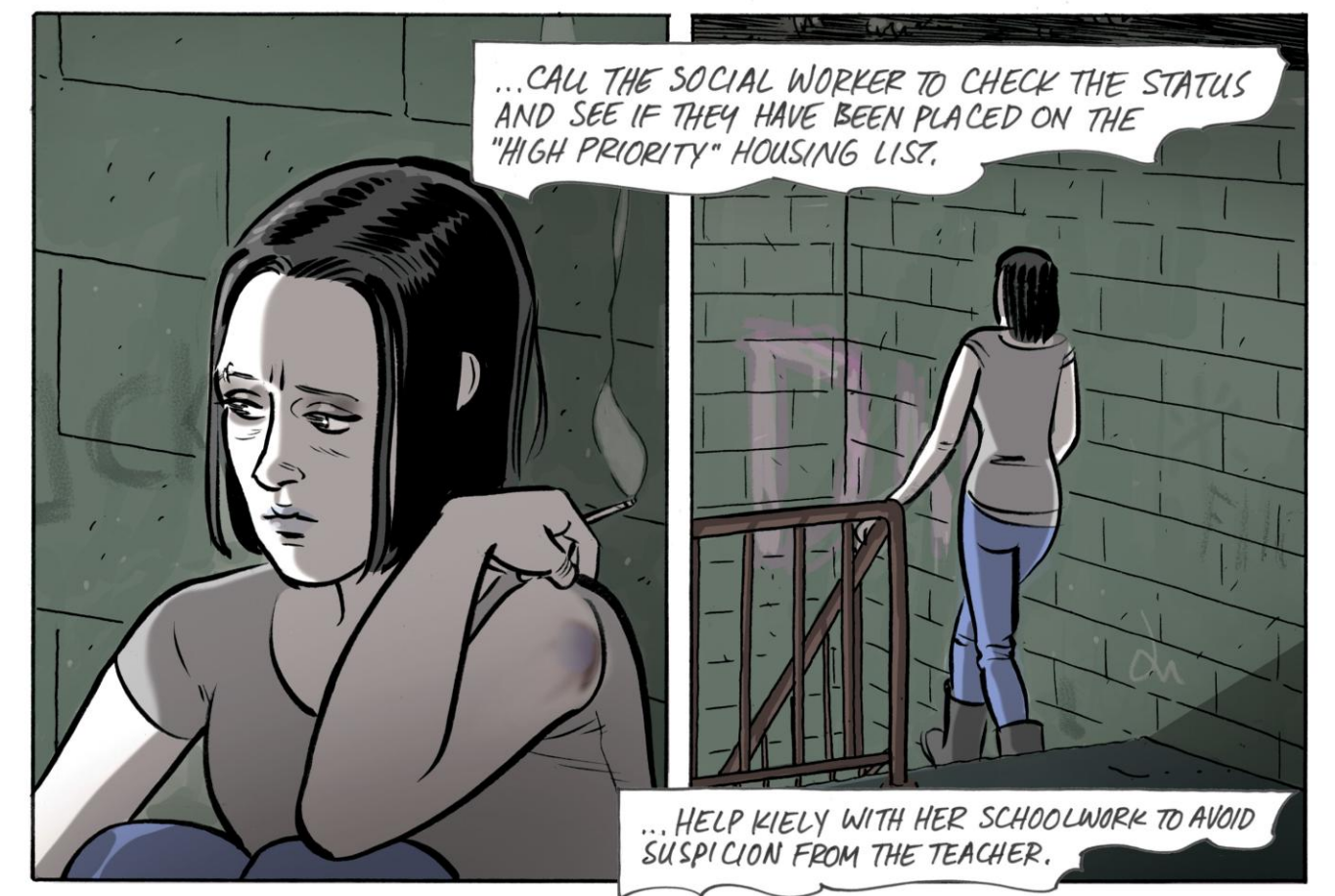


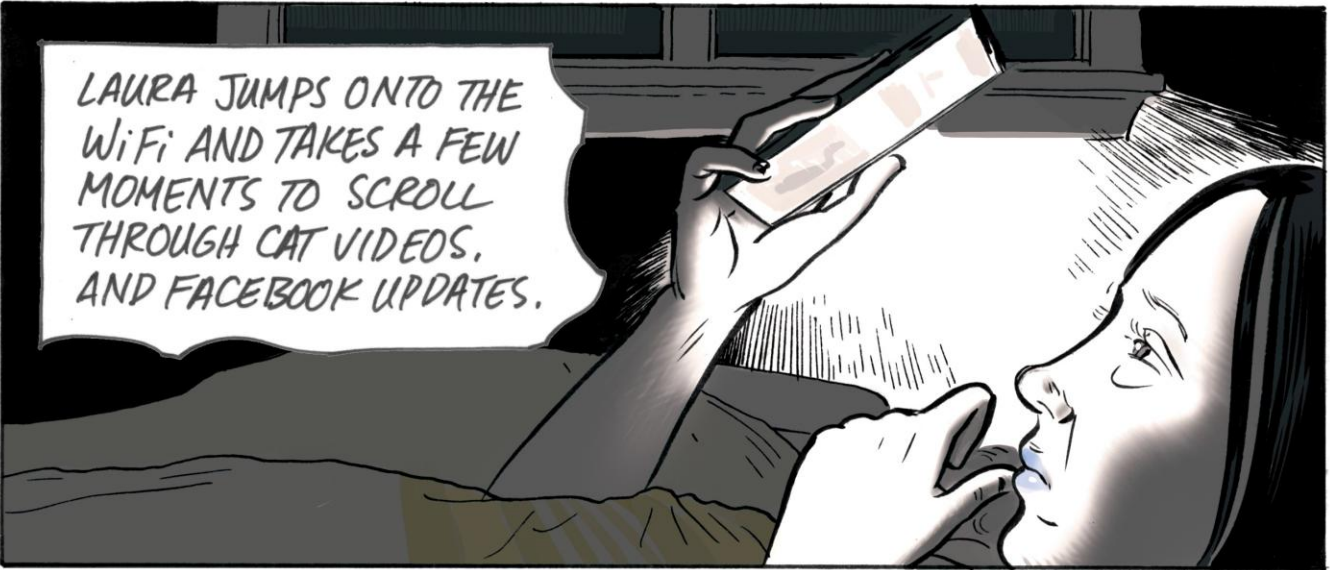


LAURA DISAPPEARS UP THE STAIRCASE TO GET AWAY FROM THE BEER. (ANDY ALWAYS SEEMS TO HAVE ONE GOING.)



REGISTER THE KIDS FROM A NEW SCHOOL SO THAT JERRY CAN'T FIND THEM





MEANWHILE SOMEWHERE ACROSS TOWN. JERRY HAS TRIANGULATED LAURA'S NEW FACEBOOK IDENTITY AND CAN SEE THAT SHE IS ONLINE.

