


My New Shadow

SUMMER WAS GREAT. MY FRIENDS AND I WERE DOING WHAT WE THOUGHT EVERY GIRL IN THE WORLD OUR AGE WAS DOING. WORRY ABOUT OUR LOOKS, WORRYING ABOUT BOYS -

BOBBY JOHNSON
IS COMING TO THE
PARTY TOO?

NO WAY,
RACHEL.

- BUT ALSO HAVING AS MUCH
FUN AS WE COULD HAVE.




IT WAS AUGUST. OUR ANNUAL TRIP TO THE BEACH WAS ABOUT TO BEGIN. WHAT A GREAT WAY TO END THE SUMMER.

LITTLE DID I KNOW THAT MY WONDERFUL, CRAZY, FUN-FILLED LIFE WAS ABOUT TO TURN UGLY.




CAN WE STOP SOMEWHERE? I HAVE TO PEE AGAIN.

WE JUST STOPPED HALF AN HOUR AGO! GAWD!



WHEN I THINK BACK TO THAT SUMMER, I REMEMBER BEING DEAD TIRED, PEEING A LOT, AND THAT TERRIBLE UNENDING THIRST.



THEN SCHOOL STARTED. THE SECOND WEEK IN SCHOOL WE GOT OUR SPORTS PHYSICALS. I HATED GOING TO THE DOCTOR, ESPECIALLY WHEN THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG WITH ME.



SOMETHING WAS UP. MOM WAS ASKED TO COME TO SCHOOL. HOW EMBARRASSING!

AFTER THE SECOND BLOOD TEST, THEY TOLD ME I HAD DIABETES. **DIABETES!** HOW COULD THAT BE? WHAT WAS GOING ON?

MY NEW SHADOW

DAY 2 OF MY FABULOUS NEW LIFE. WE WERE ON OUR WAY TO A DIABETES CLINIC.

I GUESS I'M THE BIG DEAL AT THE CLINIC TODAY. THE WEIRD NEW KID WITH DIABETES.

RACHEL.

EVERYTHING FELT LIKE IT WAS MOVING IN SLOW MOTION. I WAS SCARED.

EVERYONE WAS SOOOOOO POLITE, BUT I COULD TELL MOM WAS NERVOUS.

I REMEMBER THINKING, "I WANT OUT OF HERE - NOW."

RACHEL MILLER.

THIS IS IT. DOWN THE WORM HOLE WE GO.



NEXT IN THE PARADE OF HAPPY HELPERS WAS THE "DIABETES EDUCATOR" WITH MORE INFO ABOUT HOW TO TAKE CARE OF MYSELF, THE SCARY STUFF THAT WOULD HAPPEN IF I DIDN'T, AND LOTS OF BIG WORDS ABOUT ...INSULIN.

YOU KNOW, BACK IN THE OLD DAYS, PEOPLE WITH DIABETES USED TO HAVE TO CHECK THEIR URINE TO SEE IF THEY HAD HIGH BLOOD SUGARS.

MANY PEOPLE USE AN INSULIN PEN TO TAKE THEIR INSULIN. PENS ARE EASY TO USE, BUT MAY BE EXPENSIVE.

OTHER PEOPLE USE A NEEDLE AND SYRINGE TO TAKE INSULIN. IT'S JUST AS GOOD AS A PEN AND COSTS A LOT LESS.

FOR NOW, I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO GIVE YOURSELF YOUR FIRST SHOT.

WE'LL USE STERILE WATER INSTEAD OF INSULIN.

I DON'T THINK IT HIT ME UNTIL THEN THAT I'D HAVE TO DO WHAT THE NURSE JUST DID FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

BUT, WHAT CHOICE DID I HAVE? LIKE IT OR NOT, I *HAD* TO GET MY NERVE UP AND LEARN TO DO THIS.

THE FUNNY THING WAS, I REMEMBER NOW THAT IT REALLY WASN'T THAT BIG A DEAL.

I GUESS FINDING OUT I COULD SUCCESSFULLY GIVE MYSELF A SHOT CALMED ME DOWN.

I KNEW THIS
WASN'T GOING
TO BE EASY.

I HAD A LOT TO LEARN - A
LOT OF STUFF I DIDN'T
WANT TO LEARN.

THIS REALLY
SUCKS. MY LIFE IS
GOING TO BE
UPSIDE DOWN
FOREVER. I
WANT MY LIFE TO
BE THE WAY IT
WAS LAST
SUMMER.

I DIDN'T
KNOW THEN
HOW EASY I
HAD IT.



AT FIRST I HAD WANTED TO GET
OUT OF THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE AS
SOON AS I COULD, BUT NOW I
WASN'T SO SURE.

NOW WHAT?

WHAT IF MY
FRIENDS
ACTED WEIRD
TOWARDS ME
NOW?

WOULD THEY FREAK OUT IF
THEY SAW ME CHECKING MY
BLOOD SUGAR? DO THIS. DO
THAT. BE CAREFUL... NO
THANKS. **I WANTED SOME
CANDY - NOW!**



IT WAS A RELIEF TO FINALLY
BE HOME FROM ALL OF THAT
DIABETES TRAINING AT THE
DOCTOR'S OFFICE. BUT I
FELT LIKE EVERYONE WAS
WATCHING ME AND TRYING TO
ACT LIKE THEY **WEREN'T**
WATCHING ME.



RACHEL, DID YOU TEST
YOUR BLOOD SUGAR
BEFORE YOU ATE THOSE
CRACKERS?

AND REMEMBER TO
CHECK THE NUMBER
OF CARBS ON THE
BOX?

OF COURSE
I DID, MOM.



...WHATEVER.



SO WAS THIS HOW IT WAS
GOING TO BE FROM NOW ON -
AN INTERROGATION EVERY
TIME I ATE SOMETHING?



RACHEL, DID YOU
CHECK YOUR BLOOD
SUGAR?

YES, MOM, I
CHECKED. HONEST.



DO YOU FEEL OK, RACHEL?

WELL...

...IT WAS 260.



260/ THAT'S WAY TOO HIGH!

WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SOMETHING?

SHOULD I CALL THE DOCTOR?



I KNEW YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE EATEN ALL THOSE CRACKERS.

I SHOULD HAVE STOPPED YOU SOONER.

WHILE EVERYONE ELSE STARTED EATING, MOM AND I FIGURED OUT HOW MUCH INSULIN TO TAKE TO LOWER MY BLOOD SUGAR AND HOW MUCH TO TAKE FOR THE MEAL.

LATER THAT NIGHT...



HONEY, GET UP. YOU HAVE TO CHECK YOUR BLOOD SUGAR.

WHAAA?

I THINK WE GOT YOUR INSULIN DOSE WRONG.

...AM I HAVING A NIGHTMARE? NO. THIS IS REALLY HAPPENING.



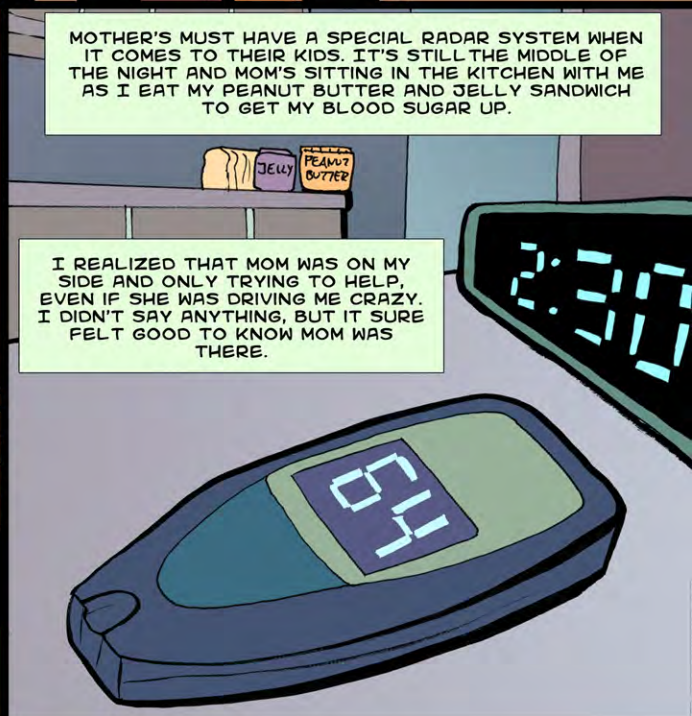
MOM, GET OUT OF HERE!
YOU'RE DRIVING
ME NUTS!



BUT THEN I
SAW MOM'S
FACE.
SOMEHOW, I
GOT IT. THIS
WAS HARD
FOR HER,
TOO.



JEEZ, MOM. I
WASN'T AWAKE.
OKAY. OKAY. I'LL
CHECK IT.



MOTHER'S MUST HAVE A SPECIAL RADAR SYSTEM WHEN
IT COMES TO THEIR KIDS. IT'S STILL THE MIDDLE OF
THE NIGHT AND MOM'S SITTING IN THE KITCHEN WITH
ME AS I EAT MY PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY SANDWICH
TO GET MY BLOOD SUGAR UP.

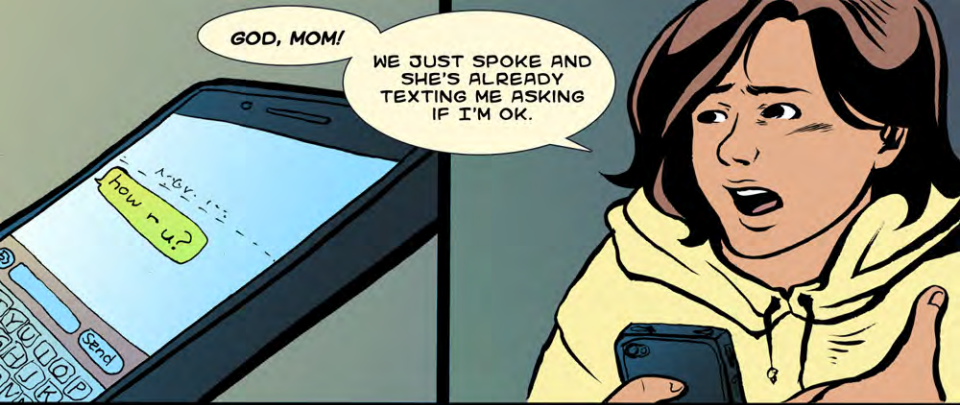
I REALIZED THAT MOM WAS ON MY
SIDE AND ONLY TRYING TO HELP,
EVEN IF SHE WAS DRIVING ME CRAZY.
I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING, BUT IT SURE
FELT GOOD TO KNOW MOM WAS
THERE.

IT'S SATURDAY
MORNING. MOM AND
I WERE GOING
OVER THE LIST OF
"DIABETES -
STUFF" I NEED TO
REMEMBER WHEN I
GO TO SCHOOL ON
MONDAY.



IT'S HOLLIE,

BUT I JUST
TALKED TO
HER!



A DAY OR TWO AGO I WOULD HAVE SAID, "I HATE THIS. I'M MISERABLE. I WANT THINGS THE WAY THEY WERE!" BUT I REALIZED I WAS FEELING OK.



LATER THAT DAY...

HEY EVA.

RACHEL. WHAT'S GOING ON???? HOLLIE SAYS YOU'RE REALLY SICK.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE - MONO OR SOMETHING?

OH, GODDD! I TOLD HOLLIE NOT TO TELL ANYONE AND SHE'S ALREADY CALLED EVA.

NO... I HAVE DIABETES. GREAT, HUH?

THAT'S WHEN YOU TAKE SHOTS, OR ELSE, RIGHT?

THERE'S A LITTLE MORE TO IT, EVA. BUT, I'M OK.

REALLY? ISN'T THAT REALLY BAD???

YOU AND HOLLIE ARE MY BEST FRIENDS, SO LET'S TALK AT SCHOOL.

O.K. BUT, CAN PEOPLE CATCH IT?

WHAT?
NO, EVA. I'LL EXPLAIN MORE ON MONDAY.

O.K.

AND EVA, **PLEASE** DON'T TELL ANYONE TILL WE TALK. OK? PEOPLE MIGHT GET WEIRD.

OK, RACHEL. GOOD LUCK. SEE YOU MONDAY.

WOW. I WONDER IF EVERYBODY IS GOING TO REACT LIKE EVA DID?

MONDAY MORNING:
IT'S BACK TO
SCHOOL TIME.
I MET WITH
MRS. GREENE,
THE GUIDANCE
COUNSELOR,
AND MS.
LOPEZ, THE
SCHOOL DISTRICT
NURSE.

IT'S GOING TO TAKE
YOU A WHILE TO LEARN
HOW TO HANDLE YOUR
DIABETES-CARE NEEDS
ALONG WITH YOUR
SCHOOL ACTIVITIES,
RACHEL.

SO, PLEASE COME
TO US WITH ANY
QUESTIONS ANY
TIME.

THANKS, MRS.
GREENE.

YOUR TEACHERS ARE
ALSO ALL SET TO HELP,
IF IT'S NECESSARY,
RACHEL.

YOU CAN CHECK YOUR
BLOOD SUGAR AND TAKE
INSULIN ANYTIME YOU
NEED TO DURING CLASS.

OR, YOU CAN LEAVE
THE ROOM.

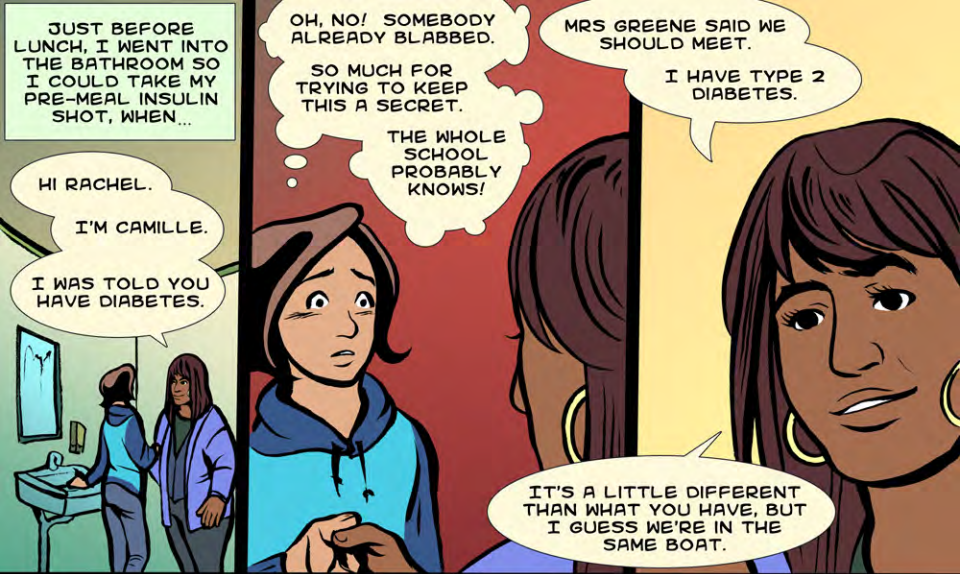
WE'LL LEAVE
THAT UP TO YOU.

OKAY. I
GUESS I HAVE
TO GET TO
CLASS.

I'LL PROBABLY CHECK
MY BLOOD SUGAR
BEFORE OR AFTER
CLASS. I THINK I'D
FEEL WEIRD DOING IT
DURING CLASS.

ALMOST NOON. NO
PROBLEMS. YEA.

I CAN SEE EVA
IS DYING TO
TALK TO ME!



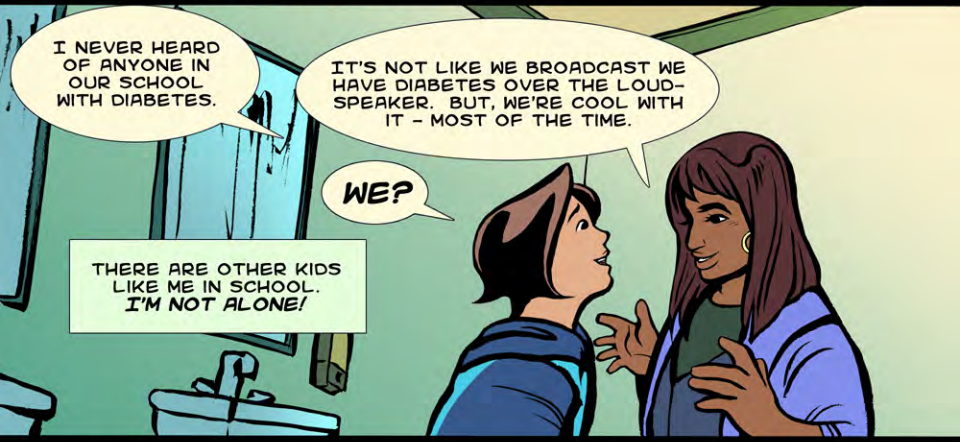
JUST BEFORE LUNCH, I WENT INTO THE BATHROOM SO I COULD TAKE MY PRE-MEAL INSULIN SHOT, WHEN...

OH, NO! SOMEBODY ALREADY BLABBED.
SO MUCH FOR TRYING TO KEEP THIS A SECRET.
THE WHOLE SCHOOL PROBABLY KNOWS!

MRS GREENE SAID WE SHOULD MEET.
I HAVE TYPE 2 DIABETES.

HI RACHEL.
I'M CAMILLE.
I WAS TOLD YOU HAVE DIABETES.

IT'S A LITTLE DIFFERENT THAN WHAT YOU HAVE, BUT I GUESS WE'RE IN THE SAME BOAT.



I NEVER HEARD OF ANYONE IN OUR SCHOOL WITH DIABETES.

IT'S NOT LIKE WE BROADCAST WE HAVE DIABETES OVER THE LOUD-SPEAKER. BUT, WE'RE COOL WITH IT - MOST OF THE TIME.

WE?

THERE ARE OTHER KIDS LIKE ME IN SCHOOL.
I'M NOT ALONE!



THE NEXT COUPLE OF DAYS PASSED WITHOUT MUCH HASSLE.

I KNEW EVA AND THE GANG HAD LOTS OF QUESTIONS, BUT THEY STAYED QUIET ABOUT "MY ISSUE."

THURSDAY WAS A DIFFERENT STORY. I WAS IN GYM CLASS WHEN THINGS GOT WEIRD.



WOAH!



SUDDENLY I FELT LIKE I WAS PASSING THROUGH A TUNNEL. MY FEET FELT HEAVY, LIKE I WAS WALKING THROUGH SYRUP. MY HANDS STARTED SHAKING. AND - WEIRD - MY LIPS WENT NUMB.



RACHEL, ARE YOU OKAY?

I SCREWED UP.

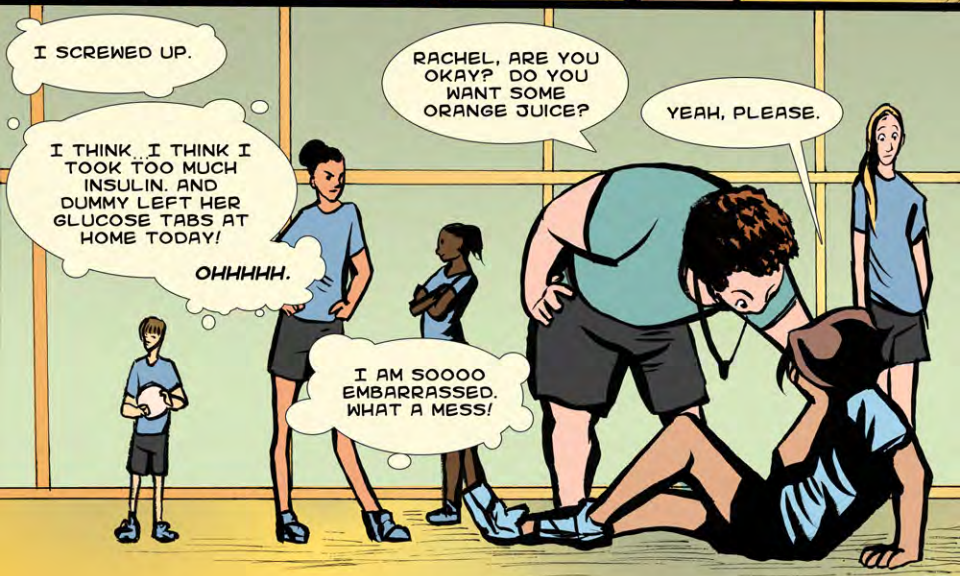
I THINK... I THINK I TOOK TOO MUCH INSULIN. AND DUMMY LEFT HER GLUCOSE TABS AT HOME TODAY!

OHMMMM.

RACHEL, ARE YOU OKAY? DO YOU WANT SOME ORANGE JUICE?

YEAH, PLEASE.

I AM SOOOO EMBARRASSED. WHAT A MESS!





LISA, RUN AND GET ME SOME OJ IN THE LOCKER ROOM FRIDGE.

I TOLD YOU SHE WAS SICK.

GEEZ.

THERE GOES THE GAME.

OK, GIRLS. BREAK IT UP.

LET'S GET BACK TO PRACTICE.

RACHEL AND I ARE GOING TO TAKE A BREAK.



YOU'RE GOING TO BE OKAY NOW, RACHEL.

JUST DON'T MOVE FOR A WHILE. AND I MEAN **DON'T MOVE**... TILL YOU FEEL A LOT BETTER.

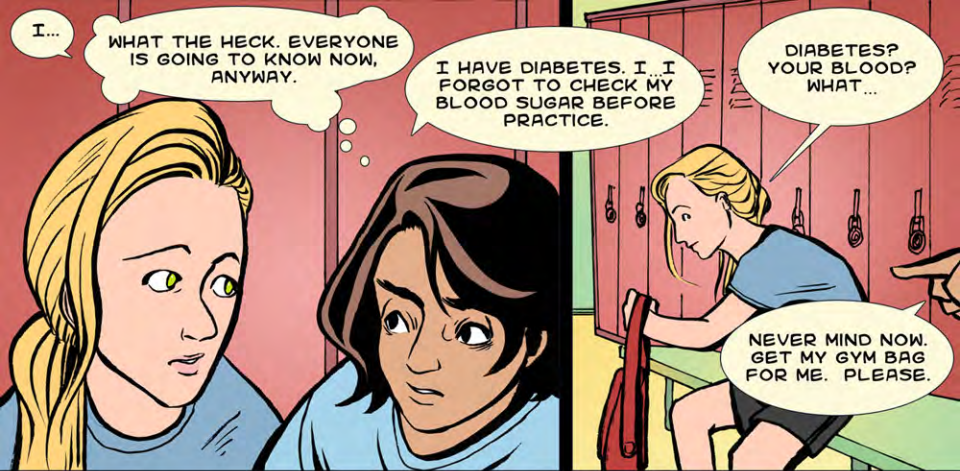


LISA, YOU STAY WITH RACHEL TILL I GET BACK.

GEE, RACHEL.

WHAT HAPPENED?

I WAS STUPID.



I...

WHAT THE HECK. EVERYONE IS GOING TO KNOW NOW, ANYWAY.

I HAVE DIABETES. I...I FORGOT TO CHECK MY BLOOD SUGAR BEFORE PRACTICE.

DIABETES? YOUR BLOOD? WHAT...

NEVER MIND NOW. GET MY GYM BAG FOR ME. PLEASE.



LISA'S IN FOR A SURPRISE. BUT WHAT CHOICE DO I HAVE?

I HAVE TO TEST MY BLOOD TO MAKE SURE I'M OKAY, LISA.



HAS IT BEEN ABOUT 15 MINUTES SINCE I DRANK THE JUICE?

I THINK SO.



RACHEL'S BLOOD SUGAR WAS STILL LOW, SO SHE FINISHED DRINKING THE JUICE. A FEW MINUTES LATER SHE CHECKED AGAIN AND HER NUMBERS WERE ALMOST NORMAL. SHE WAS FEELING MUCH BETTER.

HOW ARE WE DOIN', GIRLS?

I'M FINE NOW, MRS. MILLER.



WELL, LET'S
PLAY IT SAFE,
RACHEL.

NO MORE GYM
TODAY.

GO TAKE A
BREAK TILL
NEXT CLASS.

RACHEL THANKED LISA FOR
HER HELP AND WENT TO THE
CAFETERIA. SHE FELT MUCH
BETTER NOW, BUT SHE WAS MAD
AT HERSELF TOO.

WHOA, GIRL.
GET A GRIP.

IT WAS STUPID, BUT
YOU HANDLED IT.
GIVE YOURSELF A
BREAK.

GET OUT YOUR
BLOOD SUGAR
DIARY, MAKE SOME
NOTES SO YOU
REMEMBER, AND
MOVE ON.



BUT THEN...

HI, RACHEL. I
HEARD YOU WERE
A REAL SPAZ IN
GYM TODAY.

OH. SO MUCH
FOR PATTING
MYSELF ON THE
BACK.

HERE'S MS. BULLY
HERSELF TO RUIN
MY DAY.

HOW ABOUT
SOME CANDY,
RACHEL?

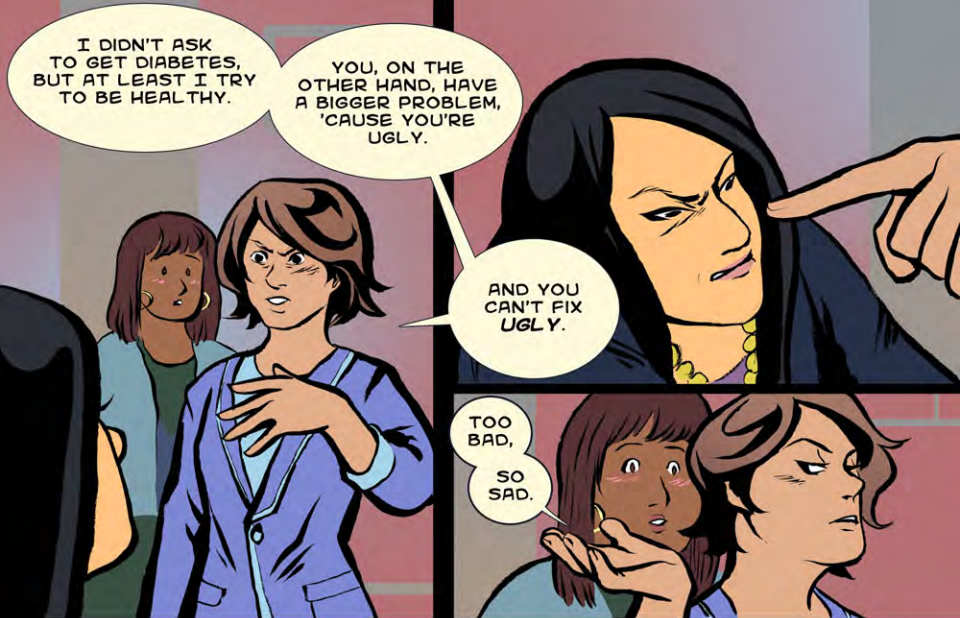
OH, WAIT, I
FORGOT. YOU'RE
NOT SUPPOSED TO
HAVE ANY
CANDY.
EVER.

TOO BAD.

SO SAD.

REALLY, LUCY?
IT SEEMS TO ME
THAT YOU COULD
DO WITHOUT A FEW
CANDY BARS
YOURSELF.





I DIDN'T ASK
TO GET DIABETES,
BUT AT LEAST I TRY
TO BE HEALTHY.

YOU, ON THE
OTHER HAND, HAVE
A BIGGER PROBLEM,
'CAUSE YOU'RE
UGLY.

AND YOU
CAN'T FIX
UGLY.

TOO
BAD,

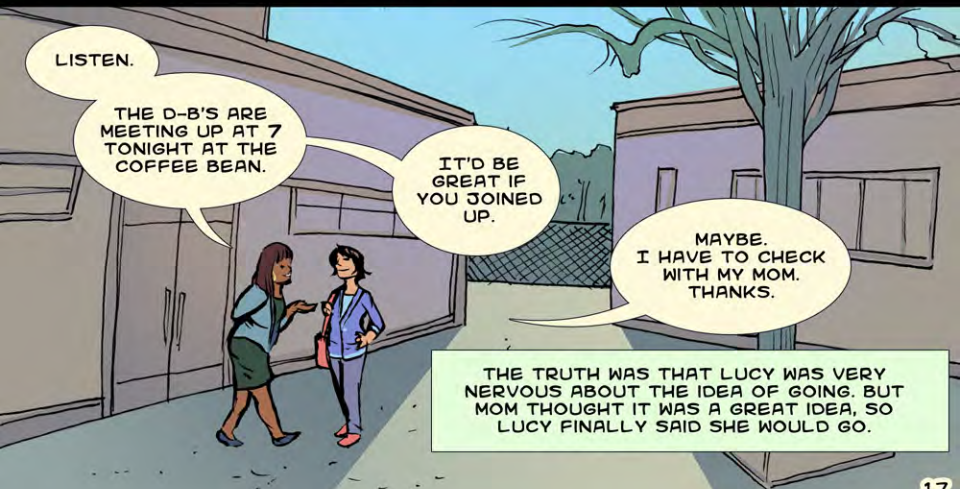
SO
SAD.



OUCH!
THAT WAS
AWESOME.

SHE HAD IT
COMING. I'VE
SEEN HER PICK
ON OTHER
KIDS.

I GUESS
SHE WAS THE
LAST STRAW.
TOO, AFTER WHAT
HAPPENED
TODAY.



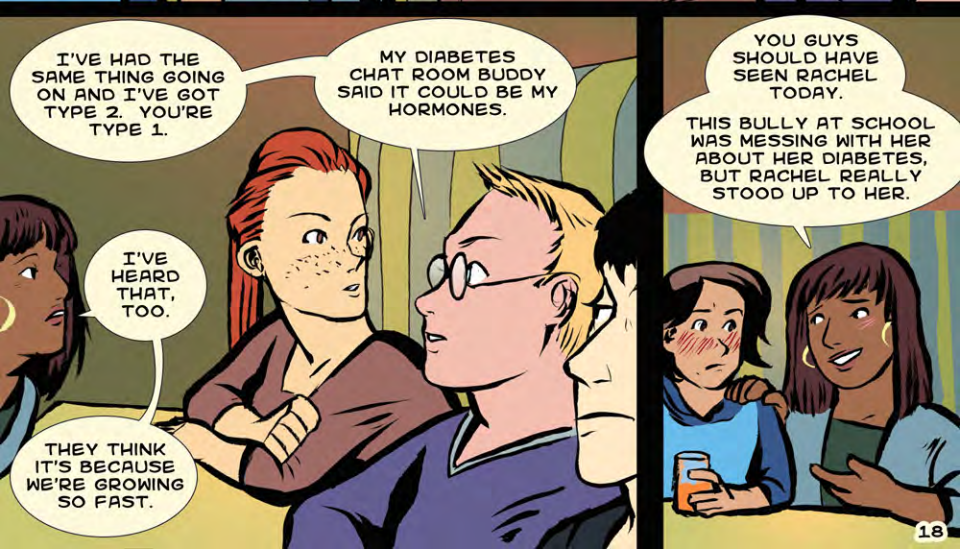
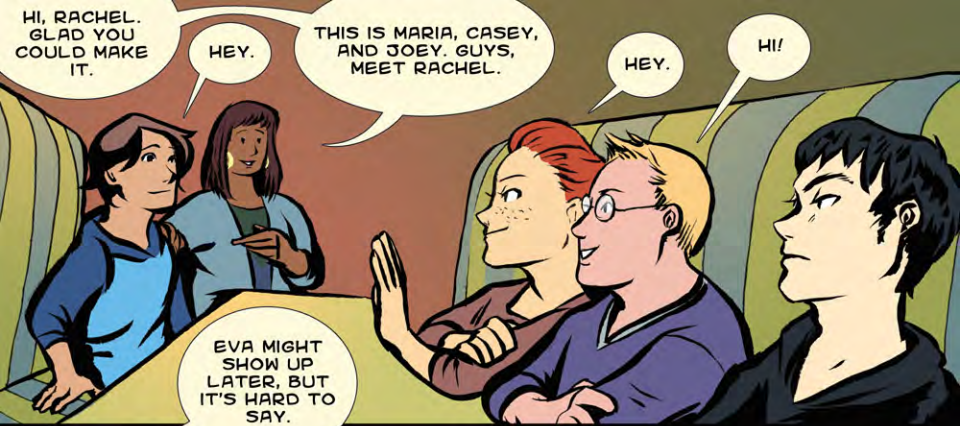
LISTEN.

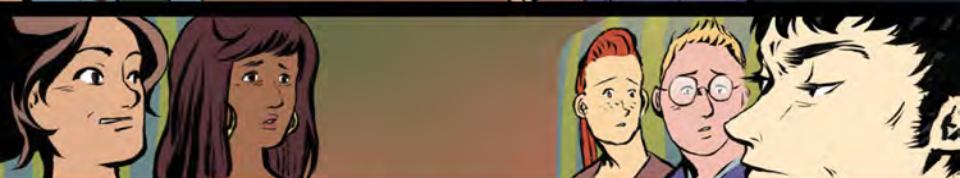
THE D-B'S ARE
MEETING UP AT 7
TONIGHT AT THE
COFFEE BEAN.

IT'D BE
GREAT IF
YOU JOINED
UP.

MAYBE.
I HAVE TO CHECK
WITH MY MOM.
THANKS.

THE TRUTH WAS THAT LUCY WAS VERY
NERVOUS ABOUT THE IDEA OF GOING. BUT
MOM THOUGHT IT WAS A GREAT IDEA, SO
LUCY FINALLY SAID SHE WOULD GO.





I REALIZED AS EVERYONE WAS TALKING THAT I WAS REALLY GLAD TO BE HERE AND NOT TO BE ALONE WITH MY DIABETES. THEY UNDERSTOOD WHAT I WAS GOING THROUGH. I WAS ALREADY SURE THEY WOULD HELP ME IF I ASKED AND BE THERE TO LISTEN (WELL, MAYBE NOT JOEY) IF I NEEDED TO VENT.

