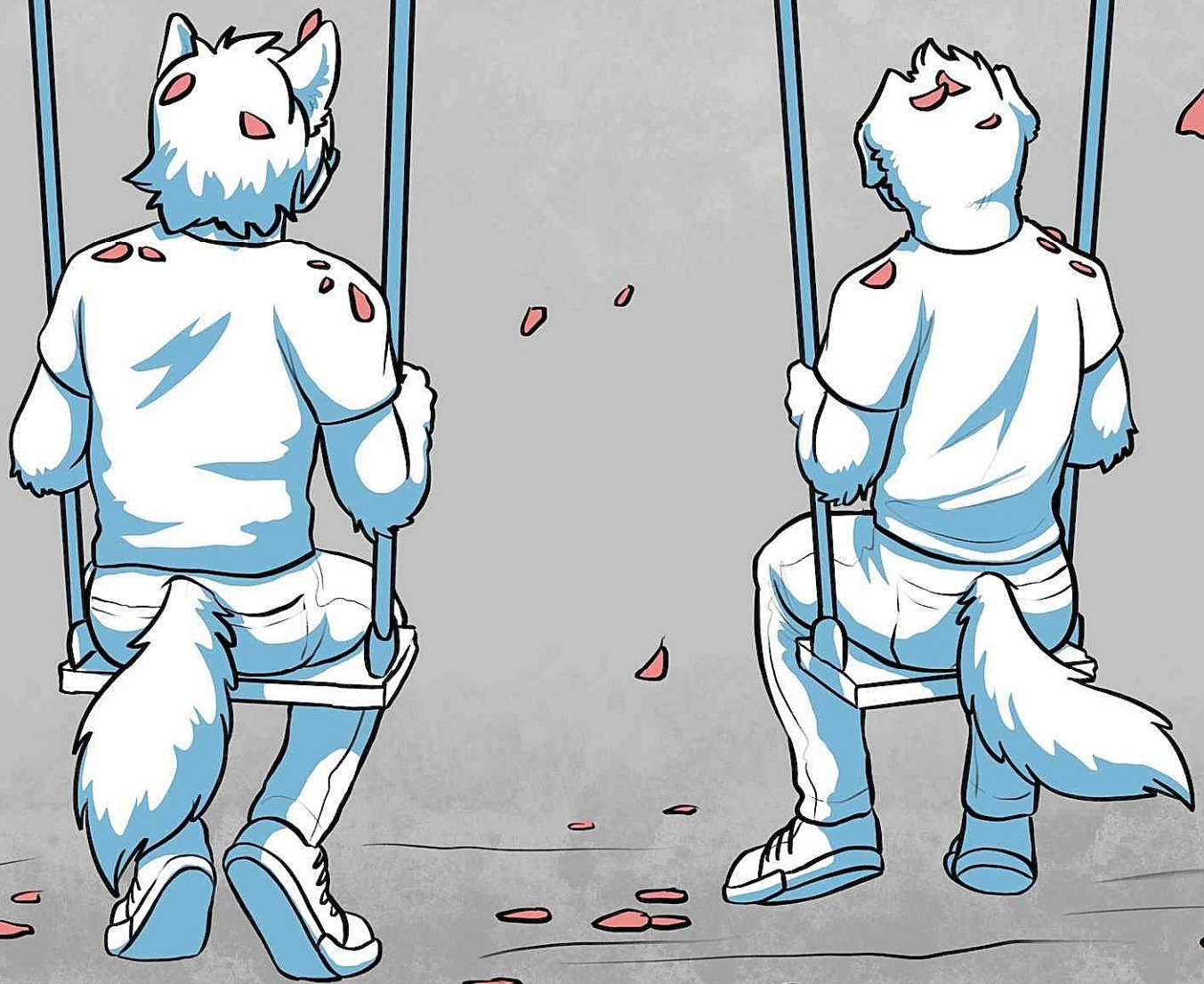



WINTER BLOSSOMS



BY JACKALOO



Dear Dad,

I know you're dead and
can't really read this,
but I'm supposed to write to
you for some therapy shit.

Two years ago, you died.
It was a Thursday.
A half day at school.



I wish I never found you like that.

It was really gross and... it fuckin' freaked me out for like a year.

I had nightmares all the time.

But you know what? I'm glad you're dead. You're worth more dead than alive. At least I get to go to school, which you said we couldn't afford, liar, and none of us have to hear your stupid screaming shit anymore about your job or pinched nerves or whatever.

Mom's letting me transfer to the university with some of your money, but she's moving back to Grandma's.



So I get to stay in the dorms if I wanna finish school here. Bet you love that, don't you?

So if you're watching over me or something, I hope you get to see every second of your son getting further than you ever will. Rest in fucking pieces.







Dude, it's been ages! I'd thought you'd go to some bigger fancier school.

Well, I tried texting you, but--

Yeah, yeah, later on that. But dude! Who else is here??

Well gosh, I-I dunno who you hang out with anymore! Heheh-

Yeah, I've been a little off the grid, whatever. This is pretty fuckin' cool though!

I know, right? Maybe we could hang out and catch up sometime!

I mean, yeah! If you'll be around, I guess.



Oh! Speaking of, you know what the best part is? I'm your new RA! I help keep the place in order and you can come to me with any questions!

This is gonna be so great!



Psh! You? Walkin' around like a little boss around here?



HA!



This is gonna be awesome. You ain't gonna do shit! With you as the biggest authority in the halls, it's gonna be a fuckin' free-for-all.



I'm a...really good RA, actually.

No matter who I'm dealing with...



I'm so psyched. I'm finally outta the house and all I have to worry about is you.

This is true freedom, maaaaan~

It's time to fuckin' rage!



I'm serious, Coop! Just because we're... we-

Oh I'm sure-

Just because I-

Uh-huh? Yeah?

Just... Did you read the handbook? Probably not.

Stuff like no drugs, loud noises after ten o'clock at night, don't start any fights...

Rules, rules. Heheh-

Look, there's a lot. Just read it, okay? So you don't get kicked out or anything?



Or what, you're gonna come punish me?

You know you'd love it.



Aw, quit obsessing, Dee. I'm just joking around!

You won't catch me doing aaaaanything to break the "rules". Promise...



Ahem, A-Alright...



Anyway, the whole point of me really coming here was to invite you to this thing. It's just a little party thing for the new transfers to get to know the staff and ask uh... questions and stuff...

Oh yeah?

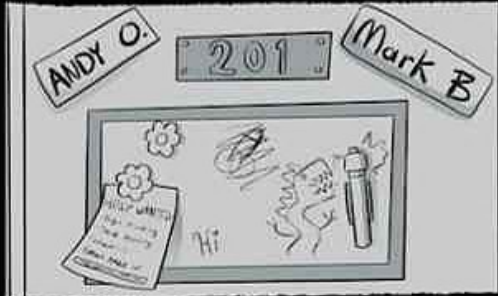
I'll be there, and there will be free food.

Say no more, amigo. I'm fuckin' there.

Gah, alright, this needs to go here, and this...

Wait, shit, no! I forgot the-

Dangit, I'm too distracted!



Maybe I should ask him to help me put stuff together for the event and talk to him there. Is that weird?

Nooooo no no no. It's totally weird.

I just-I need... Tape.

Maybe I should text him?



I mean, he acted like nothing was wrong? But still, should I trust him?

And an answer. Or like... some clarity? It's just so bizarre...



But what do I even say??

"Oh durr why did you suddenly stop talking to meee? Cause, like, that really hurt my feelings or whatever!"

Absolutely **not**! That sounds so selfish! I mean, what if he was just super depressed after his dad went?



I tried to be there for you, I did!

I should just... Ugh, I...



This **FUCKING**- Oh!

You could just call me, you know! Heh~

Gee, Talking to yourself again? Could hear you even with my music on.



Eheheh... Maybe. Th-Thanks... You're welcome! How's it goin'?





I'm fine, I promise.

Seriously, how are you so tall? This is a crime.

I ate all my vegetables when I was a kid!

Ah-ha, is that so?

That's what I tell the kids at camp!



Oh, that's right! You're a counselor now at that old place we used to go...

Uh-huh! Wait, "we"?

Oh, sorry, I mean, me and my- This guy, Cooper. He's a new transfer here, but I've known him basically forever. He moved in today down the hall, actually.

Ah, I see. That who you were ranting about?

Yeah, sorry about that.

S'Okay! Anything I can do?

No, I don't- Actually, *maybe!* Are you going to the BBQ on Friday?

Wasn't planning to, but I can!

Will you? I don't really know why, just... Maybe I could use the support.

And free food if you go!

'Kay!



Thank you, I just- *BZZ!* *BZZ!*

Ah, damn.

I'm sorry, I'll get back to you. RA meeting to go to.



Okeydokey!

Making pasta tonight!

You always make pasta, you carb fiend.

Mm!



Okay, yeah. I'll see you for dinner.

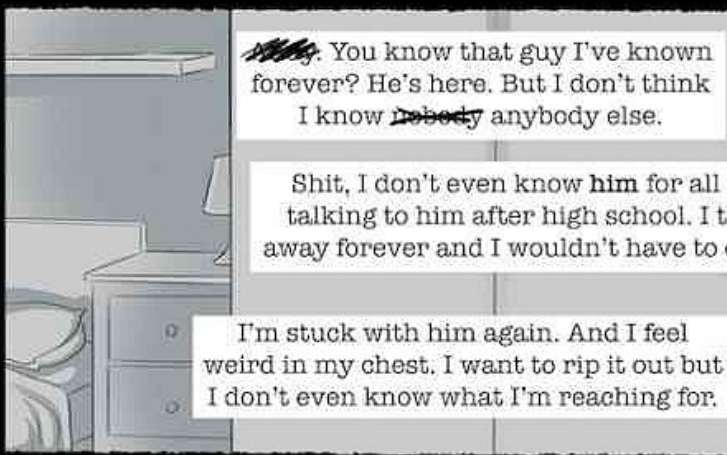
Bye!



Dear Dad,



This is my uh... second time writing to you. Last time was a couple weeks ago. I'm finally moved into the dorms.



~~Shit~~. You know that guy I've known forever? He's here. But I don't think I know ~~anybody~~ anybody else.

Shit, I don't even know him for all that's matter. I stopped talking to him after high school. I thought he would just go away forever and I wouldn't have to deal with ~~he~~ him anymore.

I'm stuck with him again. And I feel weird in my chest. I want to rip it out but I don't even know what I'm reaching for.



I don't think I'm doing this right. I think I was supposed to talk about ~~the~~ past and get some kind of like "closure" from it after your death. But I keep writing what's happening to me now.

You're dead. Mom's gone. Allie and Gwen are gone. Where does that leave ~~me~~ *me*?





Hey u busy tonight?

No, I'm done for the day :3

What's up?

theres a roommate party thing in my room tonight

U wanna cum?

*COME

fuck

Haha, sure! What time?

7

Okay, I'll be there! ^^

ok cool

Thanks for the invite... not very many do ^^"

KNOCK!

KNOCK!

KNOCK!



Eyy! Welcome to the partayyy-



Cooper E

FRANK@

yyyoH! Uh! Hey uh...

Hi!

What- H-How's it going? Everything alright?

Good, thanks!



I brought chips! Sorry I didn't have any dip though.



Wow, cool man, cool! Hang on, juuust one second. I left some dirty laundry out and I'd hate to have you see it! Heheh!

Ah, okay..?



Yo! Who invited the narc?

What?

The RA is here!

Which one?

Andy?

The little nerdy one!

Ah, shit.

Is it Andy?



Chill out, man, if it's Andy, I invited him.

You what?!

Dude! Why would you invite the RA of our hall to our drinking party?! That shit's not allowed in here! How'd you not know that?

Alright, alright! Just hang on, let me go talk to him.

We're dead.

Nah, lemme just talk to him. Uh... put the booze away, just in case though.





Hurry up!
Put those in the uh, cabinet.
No, like, the one under the sink.
Ugh!



Okayokay! I got it, just, like, act like you were expecting him and be happy and whatever.
What?
Oh god...



Oh, hey! I brought chips?
You alright?



Shush! Listen to me, I have something important to tell you.



Wha?? Ah, okay?? Is it what-
Shh!
You're really close...



I was trying to surprise you with a little party, but I messed up! I brought in alcohol before I read the rules! I'm real sorry, I just wanted us to have a good time! It isn't much, but still!



You really did that for me?
Yeah, buddy! So, maybe for just one night, can we forget about the rules?
Well, I... it's only a little, right?
And it'll be gone by morning! Whadda you say?



Look who's here!
Hi guys! Thanks for getting together! Just- let's promise to keep this night to ourselves, okay?
Yeah! Welcome in!
Hi Andy!
Heyyy now it's a party!
Good to see ya!

HOURS LATER

Never have I ever...

Driven drunk!

Wow, no fingers down? Impressive!

I would hope so! Okay, never have I ever...

... Had a random hookup online.

Crap, I thought I would have more of you with that one!

Alright, alright, lemme think...

Never have I ever...

HURRY UP!

Kissed a man before!

What?! NO!

Yes!!

You asshole, that's not how you're supposed to play!

Too late, I took my turn!

You're just trying to get the ladies out, admit it!

Haha! I don't know what you're talking about!

It's because you're about to lose, you sore loser baby!

Oh my god. You know what? Andy, take an extra turn! You've been demolishing everyone with your never's.

NO!

Yes! You brought this upon yourself. I summon Andy!

What an accusation!

Doesn't that make me the most awesome then?

I think yes!

And you accuse ME of cheating!

You're getting what you deserve! Go Andy!

Ah, okay. Let's see, never have I ever...

Hold up!!

Did you put your finger down for kissing a man?!

Oh, you noticed that?

W-When? Where?!

It was nothing, really! It's fine!

Fine?! Did you like it?!

HAAAA!

HAAAA!

Bahaha! Andy! I think ya'boy's a little jealous!

OOOOH-



What?? No! Don't be ridiculous.

Heh, you sure about that?

I'm not!



A-ha! You're not sure??

Wh- NO! That's not what I-

Oh my god, that's adorable.

Oooh, he's jealous!

I-It's not like that!

Dude, that reminds me! Remember our super-straight friend Trevor? He's had a boyfriend for like five months now aha!

Haha! No way!!

Ha! Like the old saying, "even spaghetti's straight til you heat it up a little!"



Ha! See? He's blushing!

Aw, you guys should just break the tension and kiss!

Shut up!!

Aww, Coopers!

Haha! Relax man, it's just a joke!

OOH!



OH YEAH! Do it!

Hey, let's just play the next round!

Guys, can we please-



I'M NOT FUCKING JEALOUS!!!



O-Okay man, we won't joke about that...

Yeah, just... relax, or somethin'...

PANT
PANT
PANT



I'm going for a walk.

Now?

Dude, wait, c'mon!

Yeah, we didn't mean it!



Well, there goes that poster-board. I was gonna use it too...

Okay, guys, I think party's over. Let's, uh... call it a night.

Yeah, I think we're done here.

Probably for the best.

Smooth, Frank, you pissed off your psycho roommate and now he's gonna kill you.

Naw, man, we just... we should just wait right? Should somebody go after him?

Ah, yeah. I mean no. Let's give him a few minutes...

I'm not gonna wait around to see what the hell happens either.

FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER



Thanks for staying to help.

Yeah, well, it's not like I've never cleaned up after him before.



I take it you two got history? Is he your ex or something?

Well, no. Sort of. Maybe not an ex boyfriend, but an ex something...

He always been a little hot-headed?

Not like this. This was... new. Then again, how the hell should I know? This is the first time we've hung out in like two years...



So then... do we just leave him be until he comes back?

I guess.

He's probably just stumbling around kicking rocks and...

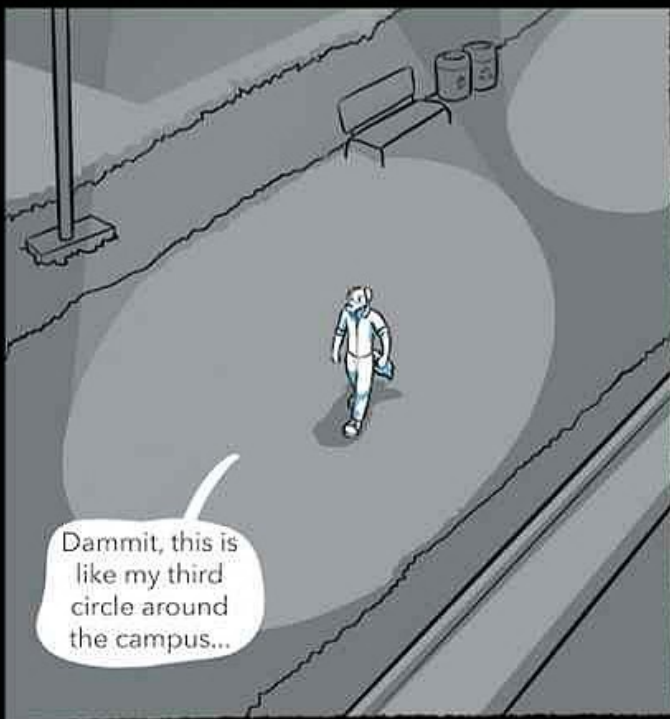
making... noise.



The campus police! That idiot-if they find him walking around after hours and drunk--

I'm sorry, I have to--

No, no! Go, dude. Uh, godspeed?



Dammit, this is like my third circle around the campus...



What if he's not here because he already got caught? Shit...



Okay, okay, get it together... I just gotta think like Cooper.

Think like Cooper...



Ooh, I'm Cooper! I like beef jerky and weed!

Boy, oh boy! I used to laugh at stupid things to cover up my discomfort, but those days are over!

Now I'm older, drunk, and angry! What sets me off anymore? Who knows!?

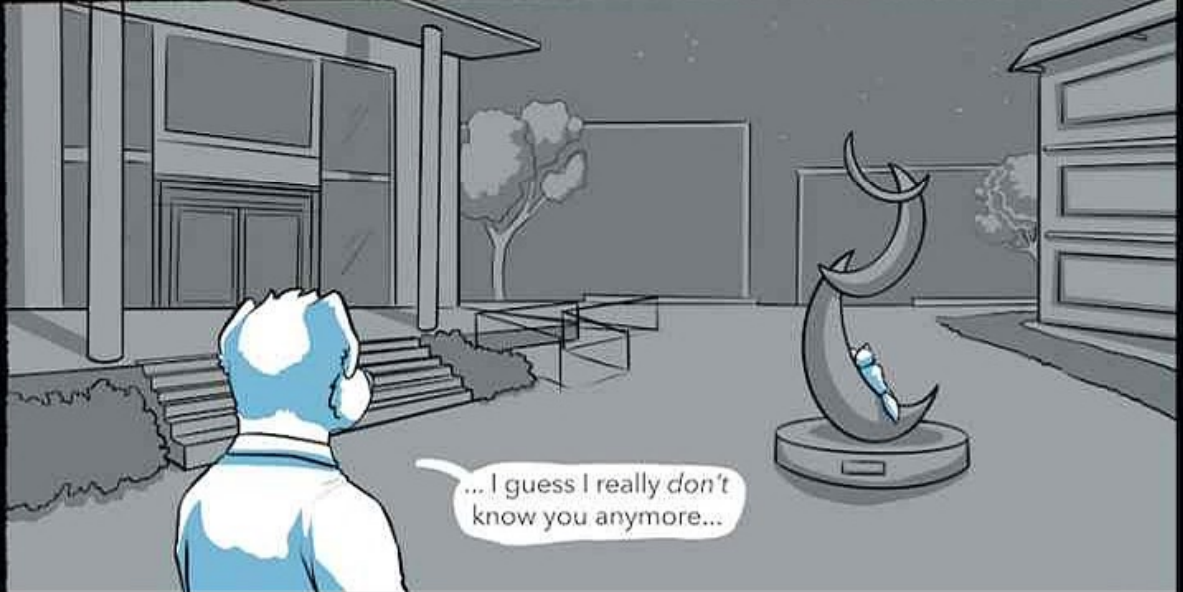


Forget Andy, or inviting him to hang out or how he feels or anything!

Boo-hoo, I'm just gonna go kick some rocks, break some more things to show how tough I am,



and--!!



... I guess I really don't know you anymore...



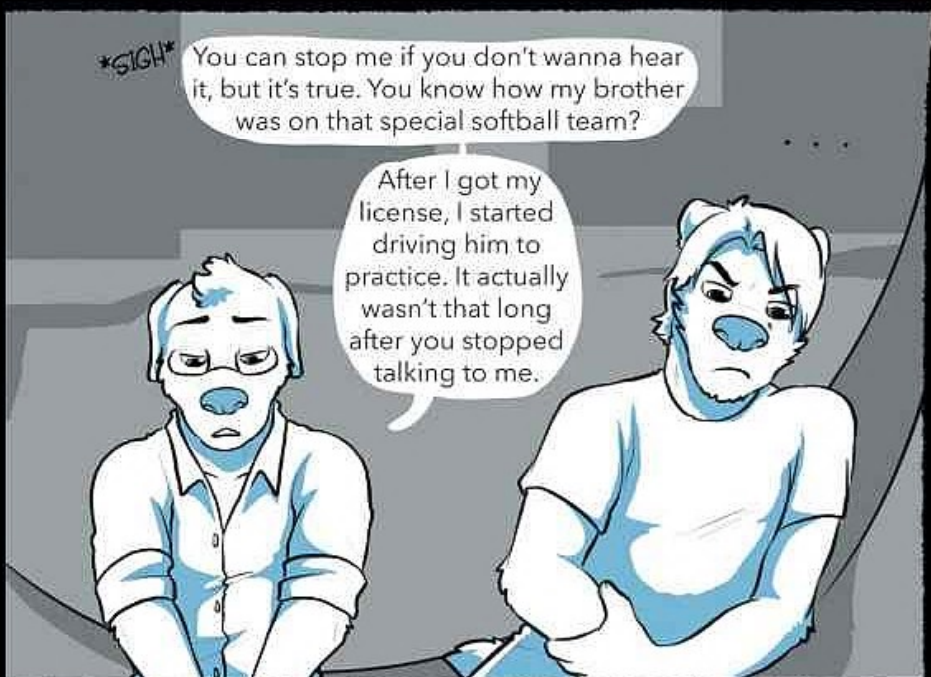
Hey, it's just me. Everybody left so you can come back, but if you wanna sit for a minute, that's okay too...

... Can I sit with you?

Mm.



...



SIGH

You can stop me if you don't wanna hear it, but it's true. You know how my brother was on that special softball team?

After I got my license, I started driving him to practice. It actually wasn't that long after you stopped talking to me.



Anyway, that's where I met Jeff.

I was 17. He was 38.



He had a kid on the team too. Sometimes I would stay and watch practice and he would sit by me and we would talk a lot.

He was always so nice to me. Always smiling and so handsome and successful... I thought he was really cool. Someone like that wanting to be around me felt...

Um, one day, I was dropping off my brother to hang out with his son, and he invited me in to show off his newly renovated office.

He shut the door behind him and kissed me. At the time, I was really surprised. I mean, he had a wife and everything, and I was just this short nerdy kid...



... But I froze up! I was... it was nice, but I got scared because I felt like I was gonna get in trouble, like I was a little kid or something!

He must have seen it in me too, because then he escorted me out and never spoke to me again.



He avoided me at practice and stopped inviting my brother over... I felt awful.

I don't know what I could have done different... and that was nothing compared to how I felt after. Did that make me gay? Am I bi?



Ugh. I don't know... I've never told anyone that story... Please don't tell anyone.

I won't, I won't... I'm, uh... Sorry. About that.



It's okay. I won't tell anyone about tonight either.



Promise?

Yeah.

... Okay.



Uhh hey! 'Scuze me! You guys know it's way past curfew?

Shit.

Campus police!



Stay there! You guys got your student ID's on you?

Ah, sorry!! We were just-

Shut up!

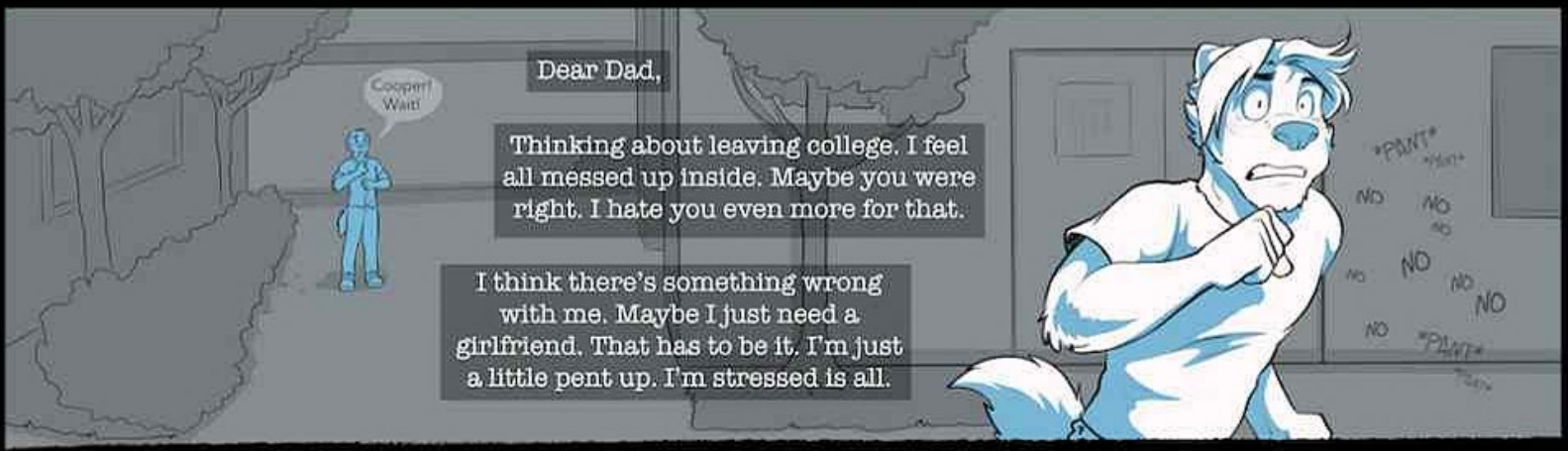
We- what??

Shut the fuck up and run!









Dear Dad,

Thinking about leaving college. I feel all messed up inside. Maybe you were right. I hate you even more for that.

I think there's something wrong with me. Maybe I just need a girlfriend. That has to be it. I'm just a little pent up. I'm stressed is all.



I don't wanna tell you why, but I'm sorry.

THE NEXT MORNING

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.



Mmgh...

Ow, fuck...

My head...

Morning! Didn't hear you come in last night. I was pretty knocked out.

Mmmwhuh?



Oh, uh, hey...

Hope I didn't wake you with my rustling. I'm about to head out.

You're not hungover at all?

Nah, I'm a pretty big heavyweight.

Whole place is yours today! I'll be back around eight or so.

Oh, okay, cool...



Er, listen, about last night, uh...

No worries, man, no worries! I don't even remember half of last night, heheh!

Oh, huh... Cool then.

Anyways, got any plans today?



Not that I-

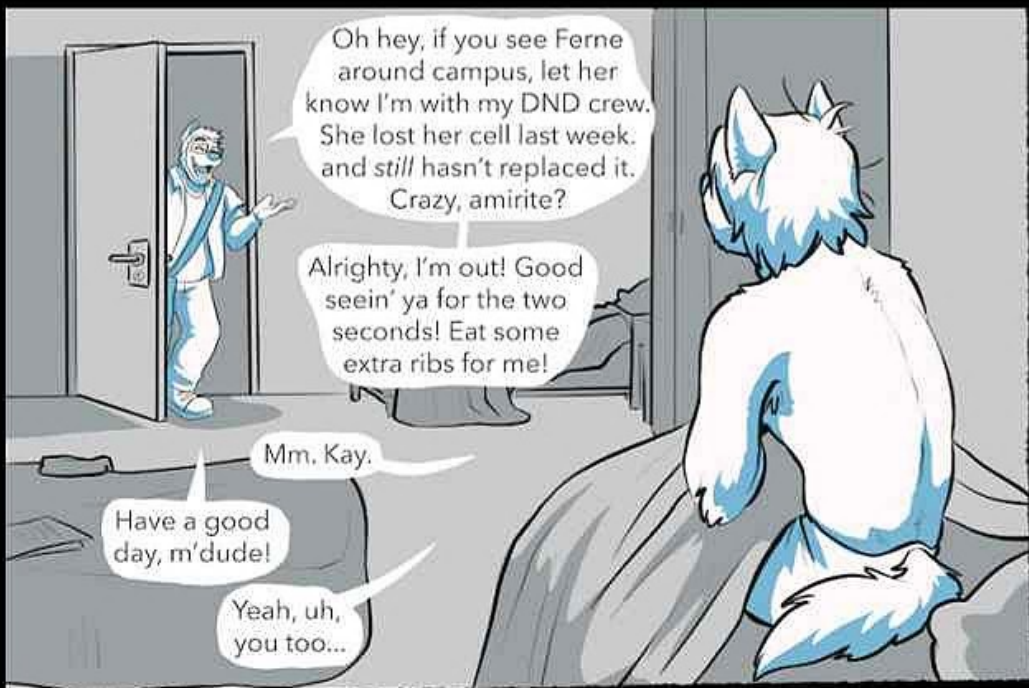
Wait, shit!

That stupid barbeque thing is today, right?!

For transfers?

Yeah!

Yessir!



Oh hey, if you see Ferne around campus, let her know I'm with my DND crew. She lost her cell last week and still hasn't replaced it. Crazy, amirite?

Alrighty, I'm out! Good seein' ya for the two seconds! Eat some extra ribs for me!

Mm. Kay.

Have a good day, m'dude!

Yeah, uh, you too...



Mmh... whole place to myself...

And the thing isn't till... noon...

I'll probably... just... go back... to...



BA-DUM!



OH HELL NO!

FUCK THAT SHIT I AIN'T GOING!



Not going!

I don't even like- That's not true, I fuckin' love barbeque.

But still! NOT. GOING.



It was just a natural reaction on top of a warm body! I just have a lot of testosterone! I just-

HAAA~

It's not my fault! I just need to get some ass! Tits and ass!

CUM GOD DAMN YOU!



Hrrmph..

GRUMBLE
GRUMBLE

I'm fine.



KNOCK!
KNOCK!



GAP **KNOCK!** **KNOCK!**

... Dee?



Huh? Oh!

Hey dude!
Crazy night,
huh?



Yeah I guess. Um, Frank's
not here. He went to-

Yeah, no, his
dumb roleplay
thing, I know.

Oh.

I'm just
here to get
my good
earbuds
back.

Frank never
returned
them, not
surprising...



Also, you know you
didn't have to
answer the door,
right? Not that I'm
complaining.

Ah! Yeah,
I uh.. eheh, I
dunno why
I... answered.



So... you mind if I come
in and have a look?



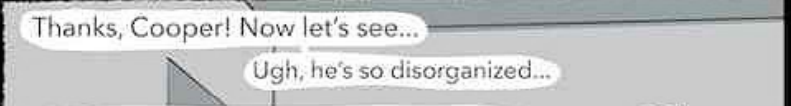
Huh?

For the earbuds! I'm sure they're just
in one of his drawers or something.

Uh, yeah
that's cool!
You... want
me to get
changed
first?

It's chill, it's not
like I've never
seen a guy's
body before.
Unless you're
opposed...?

N-Nah, I'm
fine with it.



Thanks, Cooper! Now let's see...

Ugh, he's so disorganized...



Do you want me to just wait here or...?

No no, you're fine! Do
whatever you want...

They
should be
here...

Hmm...

Any
luck?

You live here,
maybe you
know better
than me!



What do you
think? You wanna
come help me?



Ah...
Yeah...

I'll come...
help.



MEANWHILE

So instead if a ten-k run, we had to cut it short at like seven-k! 'Course, I could have gone on by myself, but instead we all got milkshakes and watched the game at Henson's. Guess I'll have to make up for it tomorrow!

Mm, cool.

Hope you don't mind, but I ate all the leftover pasta. You came home so late I figured you'd already eaten! Don't worry, I'll make some more this weekend.

Cool.

Anyway, that was my day. How'd the rest of yours go?

10:37
Hey, reminder that the BBQ is at noon in South Quad. See you there! ^.^

12:26
Sleeping in? Better hurry, food's running out! :o

12:55
... Hello?

Hey, Mark?

Mhm?

I got kind of a weird question...

Have you ever heard of "gay chicken"?

If you wanted to play with someone, what are like, the rules and stuff?

Huh?? Wha- I mean, yeah I have heard of it! It's just a goofy prank game where bros do gay things to each other til one of 'em can't take it and loses.

D-Did you wanna play?

I mean, I've seen my teammates play it, and it looks fun! But nobody tries to kiss me.

Maybe because I'm too tall for them to reach! Ahaha~

I'd kiss a bro though, I don't care! Guess I'd be good at it!

Or would that make me bad at it? Who knows?!

So it is a thing...

Thanks for the info, Mark. I think I have a better idea of what I'm up against here.

I'll see you at home. Thanks for coming to the thing.

A FEW DAYS LATER

Haven't seen you since the party, man. How'd the rest of that go?

Heh, I was so sloshed dude, I don't remember anything about last night.

You don't? Man, you got a little crazy, to be honest.

Ah, yeah, I can be a bit of an angry drunk. I'm sure it was over nothing!



Actually, you got pretty pissed at--

Oh hey guys! What's up?

Fuck.

Eyy Andy!



Oh hey, Andy. Thanks again for not ratting out our little get together.

Of course! Let's just not make a habit of it, right?

So what happened after you guys left the dorm?

NOTHING! Nothing happened, right Dee?

I thought you said you didn't remember.

Actually, when I followed Cooper, I learned some very interesting things about him!



Er, what?

Uh- Yeah Dee, what are you talking about?

Haha! What, you didn't tell them anything? You guys are in for a laugh!

I'll kill you.



Last chance, Coop! Remember anything yet?

What the fuck do you think you're doing?

Fine then, I'll tell them!





Here's the thing. Cooper and I go way back, and we've always had a thing for...

Don't.



...messing with each other. Anyways, in his drunken stupor, he decided to challenge me to some gay chicken! He thinks he's the reigning champ or something. Now, normally I'd take the high road and just let him be, but I think it would be more fun to teach him a lesson and finish what he started...



GAH!

SO GAME ON!



HEY!!

That's what you get!!



Um. What just happened?

Ha! Have fun in class!

HAHAHA!!

Run, Andy!!

Y-YEAH YOU BETTER RUN, YOU LITTLE BITCH! I'LL FIND YOU!!

That was super weird. I've never even seen Andy run, let alone pants someone.



Jeeze, good luck with that challenge! You must have really got him good to warrant that kind of retaliation.

Eheheh! Y-yeah! That- I remember now! I did a... gay chicken because I was so drunk.

Er... Okay. That was a little extra though. Didn't need to see that.

Tell me about it!

Little idiot damn near whipped my whole cock out-



I get it that you guys are just having fun, but don't get too wild or you're gonna get in trouble. Especially Andy, since he's an RA and all.



You're right.

Wouldn't want him to get into too much trouble, would we?

WEEKS LATER

Uh oh. Check this out.

The campus still an active battleground for World War Gay?

Yup.

Ugh, again?

This is getting so annoying. Cooper seems like such a dumb douche, and Andy just plays along with it. Someone should complain.

Are either of them actually gay?

Andy probably, but definitely not Cooper.

Why not him?

It's some petty revenge bullshit that Andy started, according to Coop.

Besides, he fucks too hard to be gay anyway.

Ferne! Are you serious? You're cheating on Frank?

Technically, no, I'm not. We're in an open relationship. I told him from day one tht he can take it or leave it, and he took it.

Frank's gonna kick his ass if he finds out!

Ha, Frank? No. That lazy marshmallow can barely even top me before he gets outta breath and asks me to ride him.

Yeah, his roommate...?

Still though, not gonna go telling Frank and risk starting shit. Not like he ever asks anyway. And Cooper isn't gonna say anything either because, duh, roommate.

Doesn't their stupid game drive you crazy though? It's such a turnoff. Totally high school...

All I know is he's trying to get Andy to lose his RA job by pushing his buttons til he steps out of line. I figure the shit will stop once he reaches his goal, which is undoubtedly soon since it's starting to piss everyone off.

That's... you don't see that as fucked up? Sabotage?

Maybe, but I'm not getting involved. I'm just trying to get that good dick before graduation!

If Andy loses to Cooper's taunting, that's on him.



Hey, it's not fair if you sneak up like that, you know!

Oops! What'r you gonna do about it??

Nothing, fortunately for you. I'm busy.

Never too busy for some gay chicken, m'lad.



I don't have time for your neediness. I have an important meeting soon with the Building Coordinator.

That so?



Yeah! It's crucial to my RA stuff. Just you wait though!



After that, your ass is toast-er, grass.

That's pretty homo of you to say.

Yeah, well, you would know.



That's right, walk away, puppy!

Oh, shut up already. Seriously, I gotta go!

Sure has been fun...



Oh, hey!

Heyo. I finished my thing so I'm just stopping in to eat before my meeting.

Oh, uh- Do you have a minute?

I mean, kind of, only if it's quick?



Wait, tonight is the bigger meeting, right?

Yeah, this is the one to get the art show bigger funding. I got a lot of student's hopes hanging on my pitch.

Oh, gee. Good luck with that.

Thanks. What did you wanna talk about now?



Acutally, I think it's best if I wait til you get back from your meeting. Don't wanna harsh your vibes or...

Uh... Andy?

Hello?

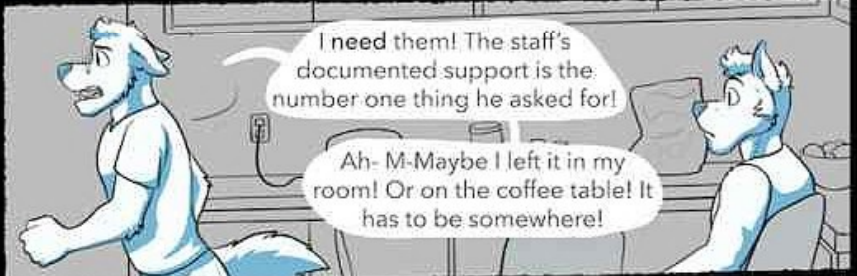
Sorry, wait- my weeky report isn't here. Is it? Wait, wait.



It's not here! What the hell?

Er, can't you just print a new one?

It had all the art department's and the Dean's signatures!! I don't have time to go back and get them all again!



I need them! The staff's documented support is the number one thing he asked for!

Ah- M-Maybe I left it in my room! Or on the coffee table! It has to be somewhere!



NO! I can't find it anywhere! Shit, shit, shit-

Hey! Would someone take it?

Huh?!

Somebody like Cooper?



Cooper? What makes you think-

... Holy shit you might be right.



That idiot! Ohh, if he has it, he's really done it now!

I've been planning this event for weeks! This meeting is so important-

STOMP
STOMP



WAIT!

COF!

Sorry.

Don't go yet! What if it's a trap?

HRAPH?



What are you talking about?

He's trying to get you fired, man!

Your report is probably in ashes by now, or worse! Just tell the coordinator the truth!



Oh come on, he's a dumbass but he wouldn't do that to me! He just doesn't know how important those papers are. You're being paranoid.

I'm not though! I heard it!

From who? Him?

Well, no, but it's really going around, even from his own friends!

Ugh, look, I know he and I have been getting a little crazy and I'll try to tone it down, but why can't you just be happy for me?



Happy for what? Are you dating him??

Maybe? It's complicated, alright?

Does he know that?

W-We haven't really talked about it yet, but-

Andy, wake up! He doesn't want you, he wants you to fail.



Hey! You don't know him like I do! I know all he's been through! I understand him! I-

Dude, stop!

You keep going along with whatever he likes to do and you always make excuses for him!



He's not some misunderstood anime character, he's just a jerk, and everybody around here can see it except for you. Why do you do that to yourself?



Don't you realize you're too good for him? I'm just saying you deserve better!

Someone who respects you, supports you, someone who could be right under your nose but you don't even realize it-



Screw you.



SLAM!

212

Cooper E

FRANKIE @



Ahh!



Yo! Fuck yeah.

FERNE:
Hey your building is locked! If you want the other half of this blunt you better meet me down here ;P



Cooper! I know you took my paper so give it up!

You better open this door in two seconds! I'm in a hurry and need that stuff for-



Ah! Unlocked?



Er... Hello? Anybody in here?



Cooper?
Frank? I'm
coming in!

Weird... Oh well,
now's my chance
to grab my stuff!



Ah ha! Perfect.
Then I can go!



Hm?

What's
this?



Oh...

Oh, Coop...



Hey...

This...



Ah!
Shit!
Shit!

Haha! Yeah,
it's like *uhh*
uhh



It was so lame, I had
to sleep in the living
room for a month!

That's crazy, haha!



Stupid stupid stupid!! Why did I hide?! This makes me look way worse! I'm an idiot!!

What the hell do I do now?! I didn't bring my phone! I'm gonna be late for my meeting! Not to mention this total violation of privacy--



What the...

AH!
AH!

OH
YEAH~



Fuck, I love your ass!

AHH! Harder Daddy!



GASP



Cooper... and Ferne?!

No no no no no no no.....

This isn't happening. This isn't happening...

I-I thought...

**20
MINUTES
LATER**



KCHK!

Hey!

Did you hear something??

Was that Frank? Is he gonna be pissed? Are you sure this is--

Yes, yes, it's fine! Now shut up and finish me.



How long has it been?! Gah, doesn't matter. Gotta try!

Please, don't let this nightmare be for nothing!

Gotta try and make it anyway!

HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH



Get it together!
No one saw!
It never happened.



It never happened!

No one can ever know.



30 MINUTES LATER

Great! I believe that's everything.

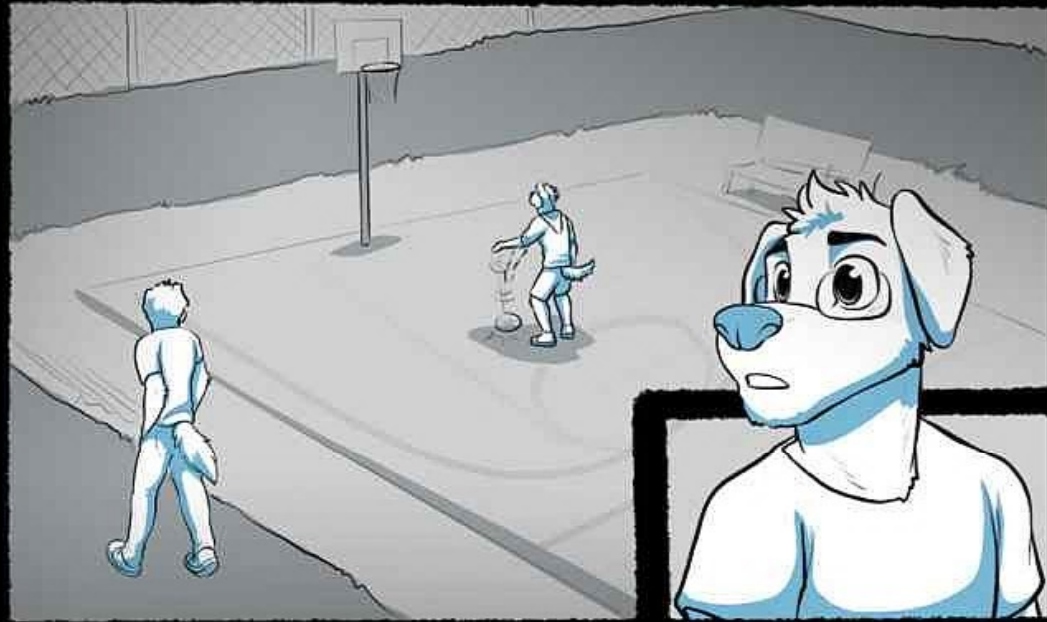
Okay. Again, I am so sorry for being so late, I had an emergency and I-I couldn't-

I already told you, it's alright, Andy. You've kept a perfect record til now, so I'm sure it was out of your control. Til next week then!

Okay, thank you...

Now what...?

Oww, stress headache...



Oh. Hey...

Hey.

Can we talk for a second?

Sure.



... I just wanted to say I'm sorry.

It's okay. How'd everything go?

...You were right. I mean, I got my papers back, but... You were right about him taking my things to mess me up. Sorry I didn't... believe you...

I'm sorry. Is there anything I can do?

I don't think so.





SOME WEEKS LATER...

CRASH

You agreed to this, Frank!

Yeah to like casual strangers! But *this*?! My roommate of all people?!

CRASH

212

Cooper E

FRANK Q

Quit breaking your own shit, stupid!

CRASH

And you, I trusted you, you fucking hound!

Dude, I'm sorry! She said it was fine!

I don't give a fuck what she said! Get the hell outta here!

Whatever, Frank! I was ready to leave your fat ass anyway!

Ah, fuck you, you fucking slut!

Let's just go! Quit it!

And don't bother coming back tonight, Coop!

What a way to start summer, huh? Well, you can stay with me if you want for now.

Nah, I'm just gonna sleep on my cousin's couch til I rent a place.

Sorry for... getting you caught up in this.

It's alright, I was ready to dip from the dorm life anyway. Too many rules.

That's fine. I'm just sorry you're stuck for what, another year? At least I'm getting out of here by the end of the semester.



Anyway, you should be fine to go back home once Frank cools off, the hypocrite... he's terrible at holding grudges.



Hey. Can you meet me at the park? It's important.

Alright. Hey, I'll catch you later, Fer. I gotta go do a thing.



BITCH!
Been a while, whaddaya want?!



HEY- OW OW STOP OWWW!!



So! What's up? Let's get a move on, 'cause I gotta hurry up and pack.

Pack? Are you going somewhere?

Yup. Gonna move outta the dorms!

I'm over it, ya know? Just gonna rent a place and drive to school.



Seems like everyone is moving lately...

What'd you say?



Nothing... Anyway, I wanted to meet you here so I could... give something back to you.



The hell's this?

A lil' poem?



Dear Dad,
I know you
can't read,
ya



WHAT THE FUCK, DUDE?! THESE ARE PRIVATE!

I didn't MEAN to take them! I accidentally took it when I went to your dorm to get my RA papers back that you stole! So it's your fault!

FRANK LET YOU GO THROUGH MY SHIT??



NO! Your door was unlocked and... n-nobody was there!

PANT

PANT



Look, I had to write those gay-ass letters to complete some bullshit therapy homework, alright!?

I just made a bunch of shit up and wrote what I thought they wanted to hear so they'd leave me alone! So-so just forget everything you read!

I gotta go. Later!



Hey-Wait!!



I'm sorry I didn't try harder when your dad died! I'm sorry that... I took it so personally. I thought that was it for us, but then seeing you here at school, it was like fate brought us back together, don't you think??

No, that's stupid! I don't believe in that kinda crap.

Well... then what now? Do we just hate each other or something?

No! Just- ugh... we've known each other forever, so it's not like I wanna be enemies or whatever the fuck.



So... let's just call it a truce and get back to our shitty little lives and just be regular friends and stuff, alright? Back to normal?

Don't you want that?



Yeah, I... I do wanna get back to normal too.

Just... answer me one more thing.

That night, you
kissed me-

NO.

Just tell me why!

I don't know, I was fucking drunk
and you looked like you wanted it!
It's over, okay?! Put it outta your
mind already! It meant nothing!

Okay, okay! Just... just
don't lead me on then!
Tell the truth so I know
for sure from now on!



How do you
really feel about
me, Cooper?

Tell
me!



You're one of
my best friends,
Dee. That much
is true...



And I will never kiss you again.



Okay.

At least...

... now I know.



I'm on the road now
an' hope it lasts!

The path behind was sad,
but now I'm feelin' glad!

Now I sayyyyy~



You won't be
breakin' my stride!

I can't be slowed
down, oh nooo!



I'm gonna keep
on moooovin'!

CLICK

Hmm hm hm, doo do
doot doot dooo~



Hey, Unc!

There he is! Good
to see ya, Marky!

Yeah,
same!

Ya got
everything in
one drive?

Yeah, I did. Thanks again for
letting me stay with you for a
while. This is gonna be a great
summer together!

Heck, I'm always glad to have ya 'round! Who else is gonna dust the top of the shelves for me?

Heh, glad I'm good for something. Whaddaya got going on today?

Well, I was hopin' we could get some ol' junk over to the yard and make more space for ya. Think y'can lift some stuff?

No problem! When's lunch?

I sure hope soon! Let's get a move on.

You got it.



**TO BE
CONTINUED**
in The Internship Series