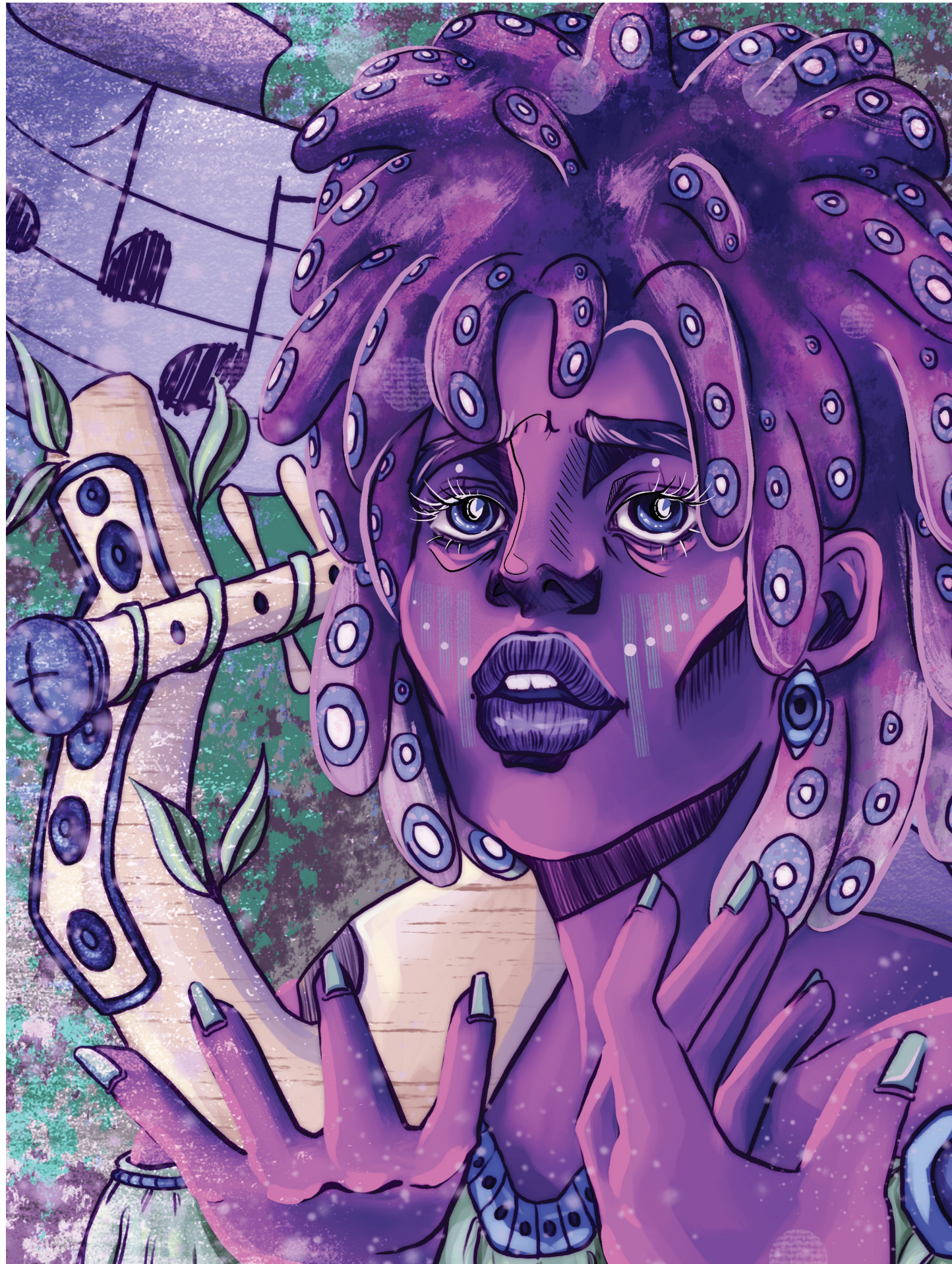




I didn't understand why you liked  
Juno so much.  
Not that it was a bad movie.  
But why THAT one?



You were Juno, right?  
That was the difference.  
I was me, me watching a movie.  
But you were the movie



In some ways your life is like a movie to me.  
Stories passed along about people I've never met  
and never will.

Fables and footsteps to learn from or follow in.

Forgive me if I misinterpret in my trying to understand.  
I take upon myself the position of Orpheus, passing along the  
tales of those who I don't know,  
instilling feelings which have only been described.

I have spent so long simply observing, but never recognizing you  
and your life.

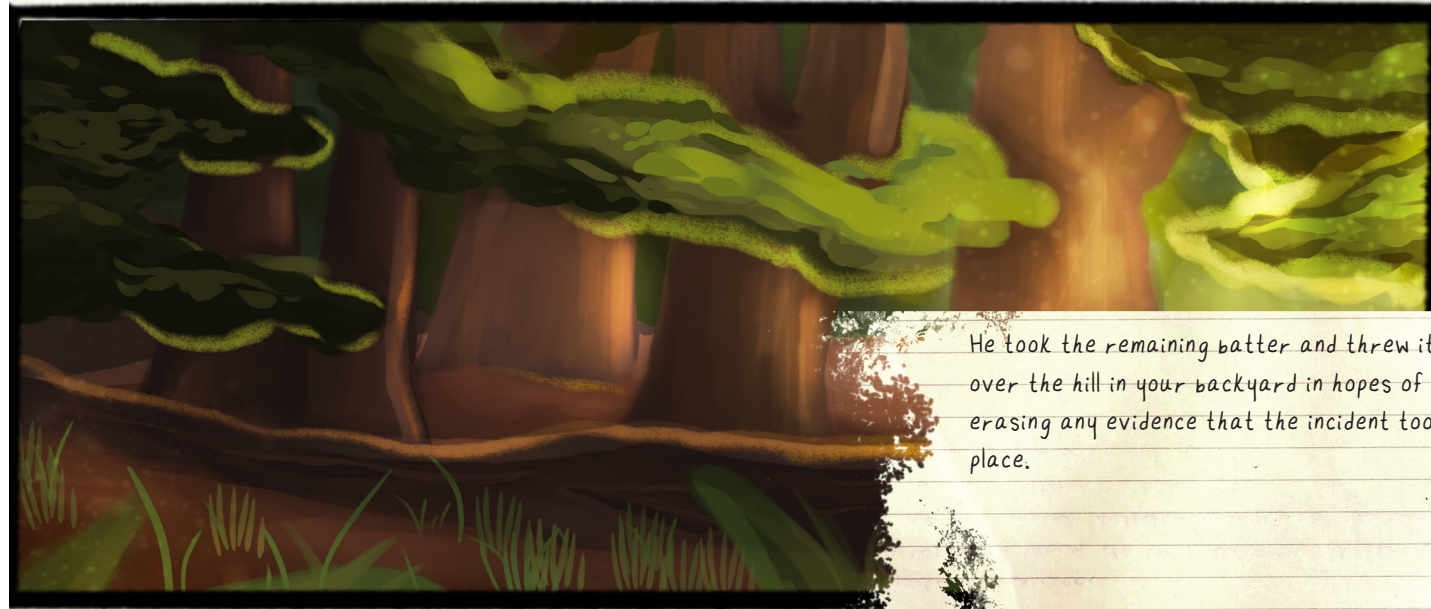
So here is my attempt to sort through the yarns of your past  
and weave together a story that will stand the testament of  
time.



He kept eating the cookie dough as he made it though, and soon enough so much was gone that he had to remove any evidence of the baking fiasco.



He took the remaining batter and threw it over the hill in your backyard in hopes of erasing any evidence that the incident took place.



Perdita came home though and with her mother sixth sense immediately saw the dough. She stormed in asking why there was just cookie dough littering the backyard.



Or there was the time where Samael stood up for you...



He confronted the girl who was bullying you. Brought her down and told you he would hold her while you got revenge.



A bit far for him to take things, but it was far more brotherly of an act than what you usually refer to him doing.

I don't know how to feel about Samael.  
If I had to guess I'd say that's because neither do you.

Hidden away in these tales is the truth.  
Isn't it always?  
The only way we address the upsets of the past is to  
acknowledge that we will not address the trauma, right?

...  
The threats,  
the bullying,  
the abuse,  
the addiction.

Something was wrong.  
You shouldn't have been around him.  
You shouldn't have been in that situation.  
Why did they let you be around him?  
Why did no one do anything?  
We'll kill ourselves asking why, searching for answers that will follow us  
to the grave, a haunting question to scare away future ponderings.

As much as I am upset for what you had to go through, my emotions are equally strung tight at what you never experienced at all. The absence of something...someone, can taste just as bitter. You never got a brother, you got the shadow of one. Its presence eliciting either fear or comfort dependent on factors outside your own control.

Samâel introduced you to Cessair, right? Growing up you all ran around together, a romantic cliché of getting with the brother's best friend. Unlike a cliché, however, life keeps going after the credits roll.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves, we haven't addressed the parents of the room: Perdita and Brennan.



# PART TWO: PERDITA



We both know I have a bias toward Perdita, but I have mixed feelings about her as your mother.

I know she was going through her own stuff, she is human after all...

Trapped in a marriage she didn't want.

Samael wrecking havoc.

Infidelity abound.

Isolated.

Alone.



PLEASE ...

But she left you.

I wondered why you didn't go with her? In comparison to Brennan she was so much nicer.

You talked about her making light rolls and cinnamon rolls for you and Samael.

Or reading books and passing along her love of it to you.

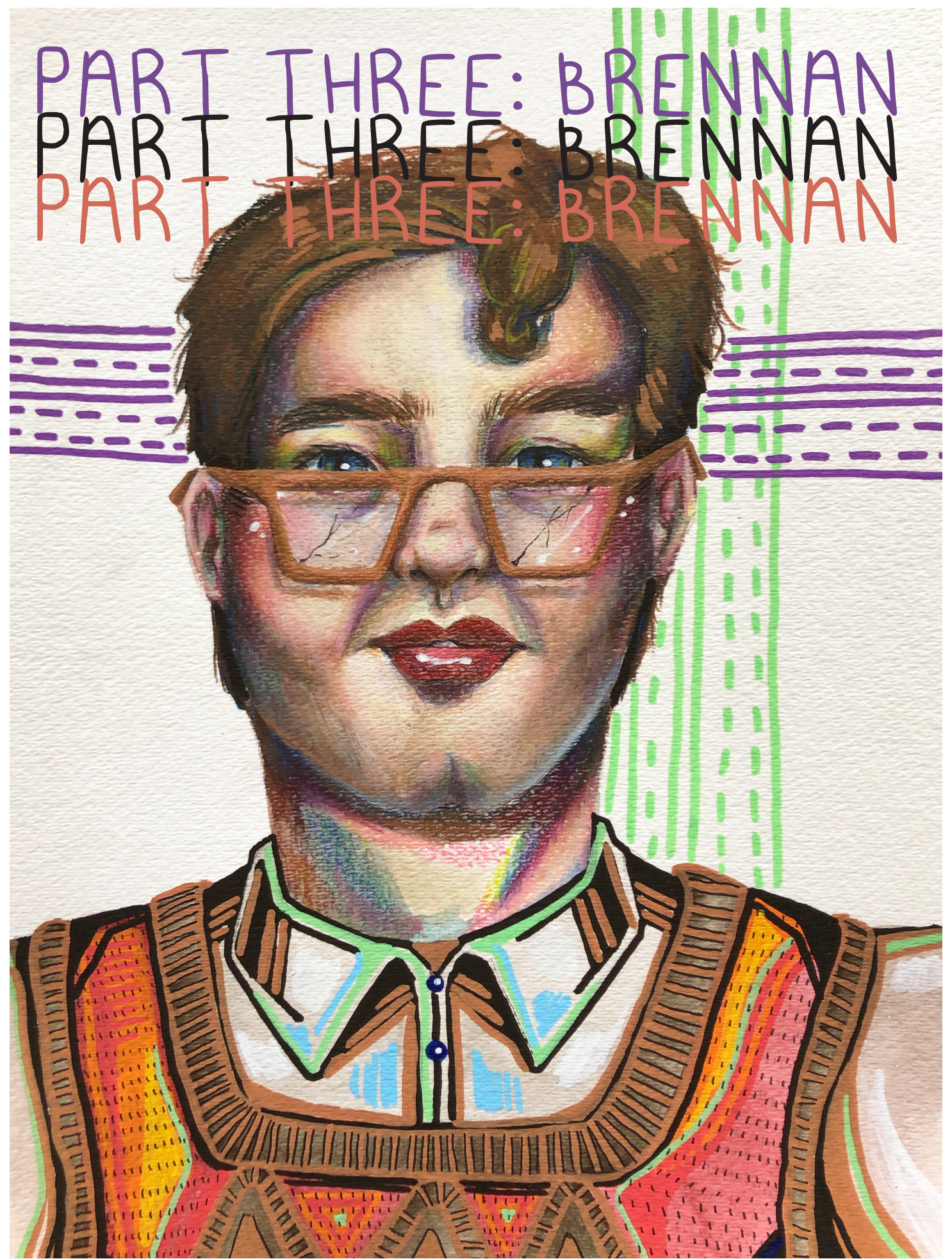
DONT GO



I know she offered to let you come with her.  
But it was your home. She made the choice  
to leave.  
Not you.  
You weren't ready.



"FADING"



I'm more conflicted about Brennan than I am about Perdita because of how much you loved him

Despite what he did.



We can understand why he was the way he was.  
Abuse and poverty in childhood.  
Nothing addressed as time went on.  
Left to simmer.

You told me the story, on day, when I commented on the sickening smell that made up burnt hair and flesh. He used to be a fireman.

The college burned down and they didn't make it out.

They hid in the closets. He dragged them out. The smell didn't leave for weeks.

It was enough to drive anyone to drink.





He just never stopped.



...until he wasn't.



You lost him to a bottle  
and never got him back.



For you, I try to remember him in the glimpses I got of him like that.  
I think we would have gotten along.  
Dont you?

## PART FOUR: CESSAIR



Perdita left, or maybe more aptly put was kicked out, but her heart left a while before then.

You mentioned that if she hadn't Cessair and the pregnancy would never have happened, because Perdita would never have let you have a boy alone in your room.

I don't like Cessair.

I know I know, you don't hate him and you've moved on and it's unfair that I feel this way since I've never even MET the man...

But he lured you into the idea you could fix him, but then he became another Brennan. A sweet beautiful person lost to the currents of life and dragging you down like an anchor.

I can't wish that it never happened, though, because you got MD, a diamond amongst the rubble.



So you were Juno.

But your story ended a little different.

I know you don't regret it but that doesn't make it fair. Most people experience the anticipatory dread of adulthood. That moment senior year of university where you're ready to graduate but afraid to take the true first steps into adulthood.

You didn't get that.



One day you woke up and were taking your finals on the living room floor. MD sleeping at your side.

Before that even, when Perdita left, you became the homemaker.  
Shopping      Cooking      Cleaning



you were what?

14?

You barely got a chance to rebel against your parents before you became one.

You were supposed to go to college

Brennan lost the money  
in a shady business deal

So you went to work.

Cessair was barely there.

People acted like you  
brought it upon yourself

A ridiculous notion.

Perdita left at some point, traveling  
around with her new beau.

I'm happy for her, but I wish  
she prioritized you.

I wish one person put you first  
like you did them.

The timeline gets a little fuzzy here again...but I remember Arizona. I didn't know Cessair was supposed to go with you. I'm glad he didn't. He would have sucked the life out of you. You drove across the country, just you and MD, in a truck without air conditioning and a hope for a better start.

It's hard to be alone.

We've had this conversation many times.

So you settle.



Anyone is better than no one, right?

You meet him.

I'm not going to talk about him because you  
refuse to.

You told me once, enough for me to hate the  
man, love his kids, and never ask about him  
again.





You're good at your jobs. You had a knack for detail and focus. You worked for Brennan since you were little answering phones and it shows.

You worked your ass off and still it was barely enough for the two of you.

You tell the story of the firetruck...

MD wanted a toy firetruck for christmas so bad and you were so determined to make that happen. You may be living off sliced deli meat, american cheese, and coca cola but you were sure as hell going to get him the firetruck.

And you did.

Only for him to play with an empty box all day instead.



You met MT at work. He was the kind of guy who was an asshole to everyone unless he liked you, then he was a sweet insanely smart and hilarious guy. I'm sensing a trend in the men in your life. He liked you.



He brought his own baggage though.

He was from another country and his family didn't like him marrying outside their ethnic background.



You got married against their wishes and were ostracized from the family tree.

I kinda like MT. Primarily for the story about him and P. P had been acting up and MT wouldn't stand for it. He confronted P saying he was from COUNTRY REDACTED and his family was in a big gang there and would fuck the guy up if he tried anything.

All lies but amazing nonetheless.



HEH HEH

I WILL MURDER YOU ❤️



You got glued back into the scrapbooks when you learned NT was on the way. That duo of you and MD was about to turn into a trio. You were welcomed with open arms and actually found a close friend and confidant in MT's mom.

But MT still didn't treat you the way you deserved.

Strip Clubs  
Laziness  
Refusal to Change

It adds up.

One day while you were gone at work, MD came home from school and a group of bullies followed him and beat him up in the front yard.

He fought back.

MT called him in and punished him for fighting.





## PART FIVE: LEAVING

I didn't like MT after I heard that story.

Eventually you left.

You asked MD if he wanted to stay in Arizona or go back to your hometown. He chose to leave, only regretting the decision the moment you reached your final destination.

It was too late.



MD started having issues. I won't go into that here. But it was a lot. I know you wish you did things differently, but it wasn't something people were taught how to deal with. It was messy, dangerous, dramatic. You weren't just making decisions for MD either, you had NT and eventually you had me.

You met SB when he installed flooring in your house. You had gone to high school together, but he was the year below you. It's the kind of meet cute story you don't hear very often in the age of dating apps.

SB was a complicated relationship. You managed to make it work. Not to say he didn't fuck up, who doesn't truly. He acknowledges it though, and that's a start. He proposed to you near Christmas. I believe it was Christmas Eve in particular, using a Santa Clause impersonator.

A hilariously awkward proposal so classically SB.



You had me soon after.  
Someone to dress up in frilly  
things and braid her hair.

5'9"

5'5"

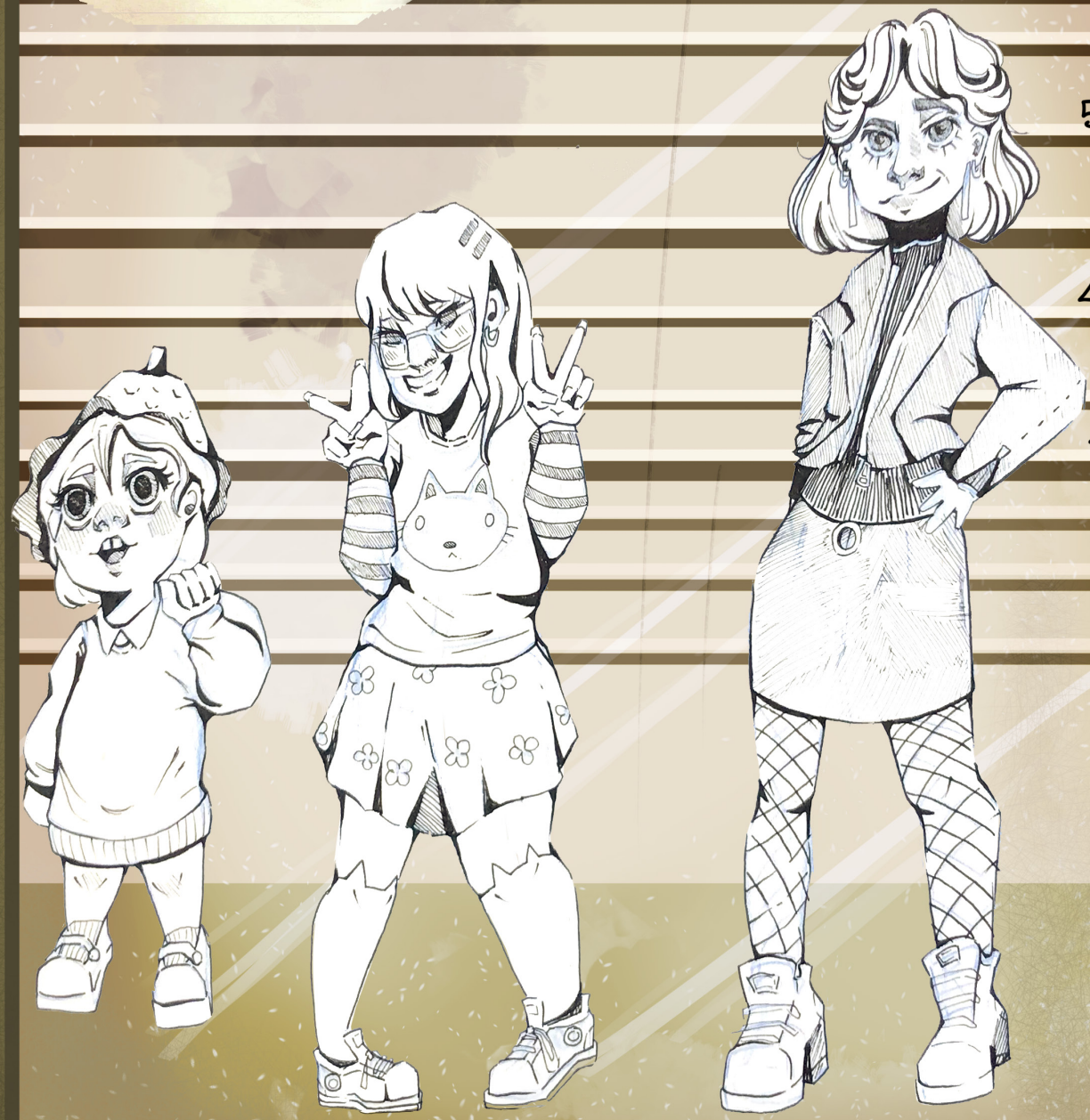
5'1"

4'9"

4'5"

3'8"

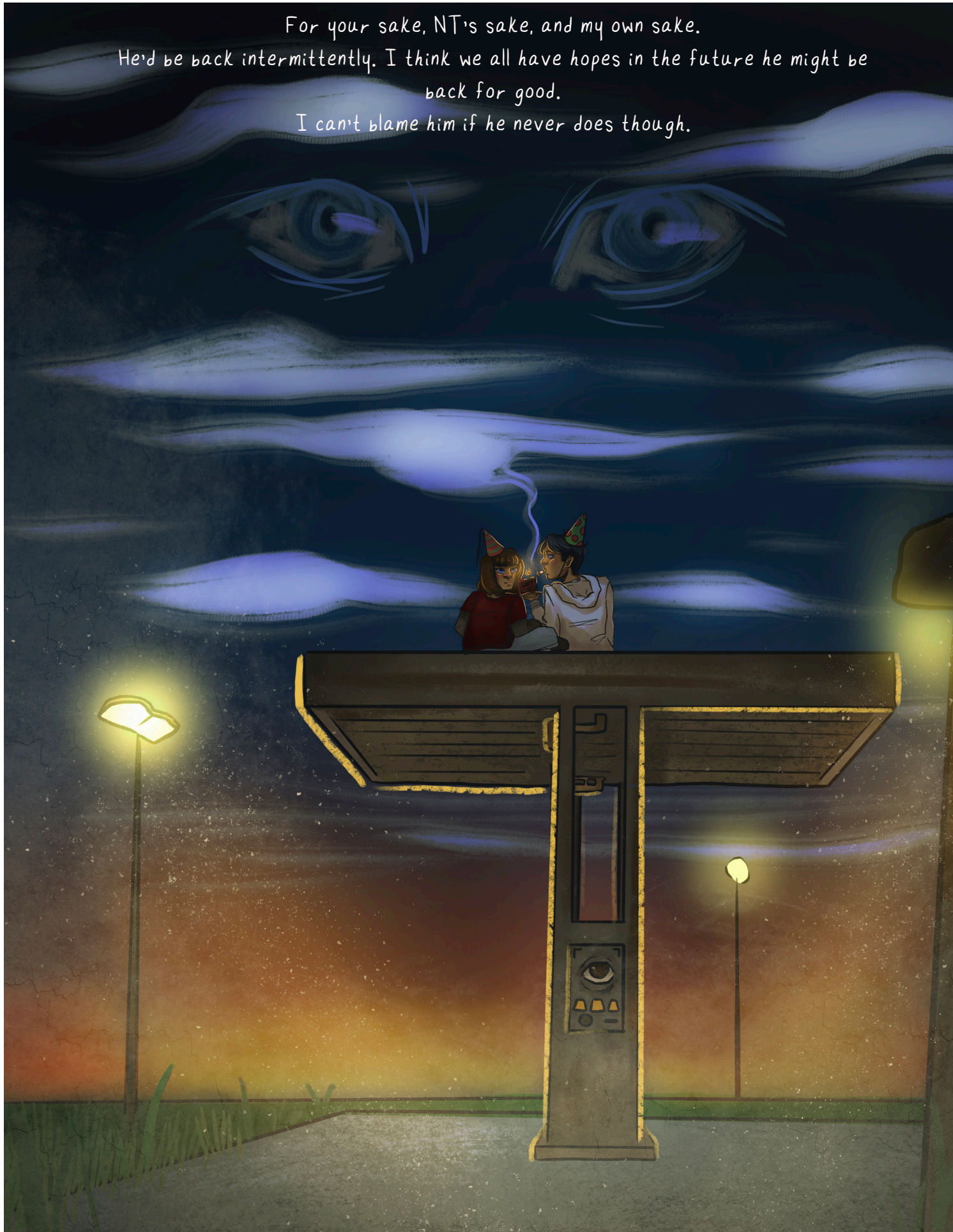
3'5"



MD left.

I wish he didn't.

For your sake, NT's sake, and my own sake.  
He'd be back intermittently. I think we all have hopes in the future he might be  
back for good.  
I can't blame him if he never does though.







We have a complicated relationship. For a while there wasn't a conversation we could have without us arguing. SB and NT say it's because we're too alike.

I wonder if you were scared  
I would leave like MD?



My mental health wasn't the best.

I was upset.

Empty.

Depressed.

NT was a golden child, genius academically, a pleasure to have in class, all state athlete, the whole gambit.

I never resented him for it, but anyone who saw the two of us together I did. It made me feel...

lesser.

Like they could see how inferior I was.

I applied that to you for a while.

Sometimes I still do.

I couldn't communicate my emotions and when I did you didn't understand. Misunderstandings and miscommunications boiled over. One weekend we blew up.

A ticking time bomb that finally hit zero.

I thought we would never recover. I was so scared.

And then things got bad.

I called you, and you came to me. Sat with me in the backseat and combed my hair. You held my hand and told me it would be

okay.

It was.



I remember when Brennan died. The coroner came to the door. We were terrified it was NT or SB.

It wasn't.

You cried. I remember something coming over me. A realization that you needed to be taken care of. You haven't been taken care of in so long. I know it isn't my job, and you would never want to impose that on me.

But that's the one thing that has stood out as I write this.

I'm about to leave, who will take care of me? Who will take care of you? Where do we turn when we can no longer rely on ourselves?



[roll credits]