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THE TOWER

by

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The following individuals certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for acceptance, a thesis/dissertation entitled:

The Tower

Submitted by Marian Churchland in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing.

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Abstract

This thesis is a script for a graphic novel. It includes a visual draft in the form of rough thumbnails, as well as sample pages demonstrating the completed work. The story is a family drama that takes place in Vancouver, British Columbia. It focuses on Molly, an anxious, highly introverted baker whose carefully constructed status quo is endangered by her sister's divorce.

My primary aim is to explore the condition and effects of maladaptive daydreaming. Molly spends the majority of her time in an extensive internal fantasy world. The fantasy reflects emotions and experiences that Molly is unable to express or process in her everyday life, and though this helps her in many ways, it also hinders her, particularly during periods of stress when instead of facing her problems directly, she retreats to the stasis of her internal world. The goal of this work is not to show the protagonist improving her life by overcoming the condition. Rather, I wish to explore the condition in a neutral way, as it intersects with shame and anxiety and equally joy.

Another subject I explore is change, or the destructive effects that significant change, whether positive or negative, can have on an individual's life and on their larger family dynamic. The main source of change in this story is Molly's sister's divorce and infidelity, through which I examine the muddy borders of personal responsibility within relationships. Another source of change is a sudden breach in Molly's home and job security, as it becomes necessary for her to find new housing and a new source of income.

The bond between the sisters, Molly and Alice, sits at the core of this work. Without this relationship, Molly would not face any of the above challenges, nor would she have the motivation and propulsion to move through them.

Lay Summary

The Tower is a graphic novel about a baker, Molly, who struggles to cope with day-to-day life and spends most of her time in an internal fantasy world of her own creation. There she steps into the role of Ystril, a powerful wizard whom nothing and no one can harm. Molly's balance of work and escapism is ruptured when her sister and business partner, Alice, divorces her husband and sets out to change her own life, forcing Molly, for better or worse, to change with her.

Preface

I am the sole contributor to the design, research, writing, and illustration of this thesis project.

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Thank you to my parents and my sister for their support. Thank you to Claire for being my partner in escapism since we were teenagers, and to Charles for occasionally dragging me out into the world.

Dedication

For Claire.

The Tower

By Marian Churchland

Part One

Pages 02 and 03

Two Page Spread: A map of an island named "Ad Era". Featured landmarks include "Lantern", a village under construction, as well as the site of an older village now underwater (annotated as "destroyed in the floods of AE114"). A shack labelled "Ystril's home" sits in the ruins of a greater structure. The style of this map is a little crude and messy, with notes scrawled all over it - it's not the work of a professional cartographer. In one corner, a compass shows the cardinal directions, but instead of North/East/South/West it reads Eye/Ear/Hand/Mouth.

Page 04

Panel 01: A shot of a car (an old 90's Toyota) parked beside a nice house on an attractive, leafy residential street.

Panel 02: A little closer to the house, light is pooling out from a curtained window.

NICK (off panel): You might not think so, but it's still a seller's market.

Panel 03: A shot of an indoor hallway, focusing on the contents of a side table. The table displays a selection of knick knacks and family photos. Prominent amongst them is a photo of two people (we'll soon recognize them as Molly and Alice - note that Molly has much shorter hair, here, and is holding up a model building). Beside that sits a wedding photo (Alice and Nick's).

NICK (off panel from another room): Houses on the west side are going down, for sure, but a condo like the one you're living in?

Page 05

Panel 01: Mid-long shot a table set for three. Nick (a man around 40) and Molly (an androgynous looking person in her late 20's) are seated and appear to have finished dinner. Nick is at the head of the table with Molly on one side and the third (currently empty) spot across from him.

NICK: I could put that on the MLS and have multiple offers overnight.

Panel 02: A close of up of Molly looking slightly alarmed.

NICK: Oh, not that I would! Unless you wanted to leave.

Panel 03: A shot of Nick attempting friendly reassurance. We can see Molly's face in the foreground at the edge of the panel.

NICK: I mean, Alice and I are very happy to have you there.

Panel 04: A mid shot of the two of them sitting at the table, enduring an awkward pause.

Panel 05: A close up of the dirty plates left over from their recent dinner.

NICK (off panel): Anyway, what have you been up to?

Page 06

Panel 01: Molly shrinks away from this question. She's looking off the side, not making eye contact. Nick's head is visible in the foreground.

MOLLY: Just work, I guess.

NICK: I keep saying we should invite you to dinner more often.

Panel 02: Alice walks back into the room. Her arms are visible in the foreground, carrying a tray with tea or coffee. Nick and Molly are seated in front of her.

NICK: Right, Alice?

Panel 03: A shot of Alice (a woman in her early thirties) from the front. She's just starting to place the tray back down on the table between Nick and Molly

ALICE: Sorry?

NICK: I was saying we should invite Molly over more.

Panel 04: A close up of Molly with Alice's arm reaching into the panel to place a cup of tea in front of her.

ALICE (off panel): I do. Nearly every week.

Panel 05: A shot of all of them at the table. Alice is tucking herself back into her spot.

MOLLY: Um, it's a long drive... I have to get up early, you know?

NICK: I suppose that's true.

Page 07

Panel 01: A close up of Alice looking amused. She's affectionate, but she sees through Molly's excuses.

ALICE (arch): Right... As if you aren't late most of the time, anyway.

Panel 02: A shot of all three over Nick's shoulder. Molly blushes, well admonished. Alice looks annoyed by Nick's interjection.

NICK (to Alice): Hey, now!

Panel 03: A close up of Nick. He's wearing a patronizing but very sincere expression. He's looking at Molly, whose head we can see from behind in the foreground.

NICK (To Molly): Here's some advice, though. Every morning I get up and I tell myself, "I'm going to sell a house, today."

Panel 04: A mid shot of all three, still angled towards Nick. Nick finishes his speech with an encouraging "finger gun" gesture.

NICK: You need to believe in yourself.

Panel 05: Close up of Alice looking irritated.

ALICE: That's not... I think it's a little more complicated than that.

Panel 06: Close up of Nick a little from behind, with Molly as a visible observer. Nick is oblivious to Alice's irritation. He thinks he's delivering solid wisdom.

NICK: It works for everything. Just try it.

Panel 07: An even mid shot of all three at the table. Molly seated between the others. Alice's ringing phone cuts off the very end of Nick's speech.

MOLLY (uncomfortable): Yeah. Speaking of work, I guess I should head home.

ALICE: OK, Moll.

NICK: Are you sure we can't--

Page 08

Panel 01: Alice looks down at her phone, a little embarrassed but also immediately absorbed and distracted.

ALICE: Sorry... um... I guess I'd better take this.

Panel 02: A shot of all three with Alice in the foreground and Nick looking curious and a little worried in the back.

ALICE: Nick, you do mind walking Molly out?

Panel 03: A close up of Alice's hands swiping across her phone to answer the call. Nick's expression is one of forced solicitude.

NICK: Sure thing.

Panel 04: Nick follows Molly out of the room. Behind them we can see Alice holding the phone to her ear. We can hear a little of her conversation trailing off. The words in the speech bubble are small, as if Alice is keeping her voice low.

ALICE: Hi, it's a bit late...

Panel 05: Nick and Molly stand in the hallway by the front door. Molly shrugs her jacket on. Nick is quiet - clearly still distracted by Alice's sudden exit, looking back down the hall behind him.

Panel 06: A long shot of Molly opening the door about to leave. Nick is behind her, facing her once again, his posture a bit deflated.

Page 09

Panel 01: Molly has just passed through the threshold into the dark, and is looking back over her shoulder at Nick who is standing in the doorway, visibly trying to perk himself back up.

NICK: Hey, remember what I said.

Panel 02: Close up of Molly over Nick's shoulder. She gives him an awkward wave.

MOLLY: Yeah. Night.

NICK: Night.

Panel 03: Long shot of Molly walking out through the dark front yard.

Panel 04: Long shot of Molly standing in front of her parked car, opening the door.

Panel 05: She climbs in the front seat.

Page 10

Panel 01: Now seated, Molly is still for a moment.

Panel 02: Close up of Molly pulling her glasses off her face.

Panel 03: Close up of Molly's hands cleaning her glasses.

Panel 04: very close shot of Molly's face. She pauses a moment to squint out into the night. This is one of the only moments we see Molly without her glasses, but her expression is as difficult to read as ever.

Panel 05: A shot of the dark street through the car window.

Panel 06: Molly puts the glasses back on.

Panel 07: A close up of Molly's hand turning the keys in the ignition.

Panel 08: A close up of the car's back wheel as it begins to drive forward.

Page 11

Full page: A long shot of the car driving away down dark street.

Page 12

Panel 01: A very long shot of a tiny figure standing on a small, slender ocean craft - like a rimmed paddle board or a low rowboat. The boat appears to require no propulsion but moves through the water between rocks and little jutting islands by some unseen magic.

Panel 02: Closing in, we see that the figure is dressed in long robes and a wizard's pointed hat.

Panel 03 The figure looks up to the sky, catching sight of something.

Page 13

Panel 01: A view of the sky, where a winged creature is wheeling around in the clouds. At first it appears to be small - just a bird.

Panel 02: As it circles lower, we see that it is in fact an enormous monster, like a swan and a greyhound and a sphynx all mashed together.

Panel 03: It lands with a great buffet of wings that throws waves against nearby rocks and sets the wizard's boat bobbing and their robes flapping.

Panel 04: The monster perches on the largest rock and looms over the wizard, engulfing them in its long shadow.

ELL: Why do you trespass in my realm?

YSTRIL: Greetings, Ell, mighty God of the Hand!

Page 14

Panel 01: The wizard bows with a flourish. Despite their precarious position, they appear completely at ease - even a little arrogant.

YSTRIL: I come with a request. And an offer.

Panel 02: The god appears to digest this for a moment. It wears a mask over its face, and its expressions are difficult to read.

Panel 03: A close up of the god's face.

ELL: You grow too bold, Ystril.

Panel 04: Ystril tilts their head in acknowledgement: a small repeat of their bow.

YSTRIL: I am but your humble servant.

Panel 05: A mid shot of both figures - Ystril looking upward, and Ell arching their neck downward.

ELL: Speak, then.

YSTRIL: My request is a small one, mighty Ell.

Page 15

Panel 01: A shot of Ystril's face a little from above, as they continue to address the god.

YSTRIL: For years, you have helped me to defend my island from the wild ocean that surrounds it. Grant me one more season of fair weather over Ad Era.

Panel 02: Ell casts their head up in a gesture of boredom.

ELL: I tire of deflecting your storms, wizard. Go home.

Panel 03: With the flourish of somebody laying down a trump card, Ystril draws something out of their cloak and shows it to the god.

YSTRIL: I have, of course, brought gifts.

Panel 04: A close up of the object. It is a small orb covered in glowing runes.

YSTRIL: Treasures worthy of a god...

Panel 05: Ell eyes the shiny object with interest but doesn't appear entirely hooked.

YSTRIL (off panel): And more to come if you will grant me my request.

Panel 06: Just as Ell is about to answer, a repetitive ringing sound interrupts the narrative. Big, rude sound effects blot out the characters' dialogue.

Page 16

Panel 01: We snap back into reality to find Molly sitting amidst significant clutter with a paintbrush in one hand and a tiny figurine in the other. The phone is still ringing.

Panel 02: A shot of Molly's hands scrambling to find her phone.

Panel 03: She finds it, and we see the screen lit up with a call. The caller is "Alice". If the time is visible on the phone, it's well past midnight.

Panel 04: Close up of Molly as she puts the phone to her ear.

Molly (apparently surprised by the call): Sister?

Phone: visual buzzing (words we can't overhear).

Panel 05: Zoom back to a mid-shot of Molly, still talking.

Molly: Wow... wow, are you serious?

Phone: Terse buzz.

Molly: Oh my god...

Panel 06: A shot of Molly's messy floor. It's covered in miniature figures and craft supplies.

Phone (off panel): Buzz.

Molly (off panel): Jesus. Sister, I'm so--

Phone (interrupting, off panel): Buzzing.

Molly (off panel): Yeah, of course, I'll be right down.

Page 17

Panel 01: Molly throws her coat on. We have a chance to see the chaos of her apartment, which is cluttered with art materials and books. The characters from the earlier narrative are now just little figurines standing still in the foreground, perched on a white stool or table, looking odd and awkward.

Panel 02: A close up of Molly pulling a dirty sneaker over her foot.

Panel 03: Molly leaves her apartment, shutting the door behind her.

Panel 04: A long shot of a city block from the outside, centered on a cafe. The cafe is named "Cafe Llama", with a decaled window and a logo of a long-booted cartoon llama. It's a small storefront in an old three or four story building, sandwiched between other shops (a record store, and one of those grimy, faded computer stores that's always closed and probably a front for something else). The block as a whole looks a little seedy and run down - though some of the businesses (including the cafe and the record store) suggest creeping gentrification. It's very late, and the streets are empty. All the windows are dark.

Page 18

Panel 01: A closer shot of the cafe front. The closed sign is visible on the door as we zoom inside.

Panel 02: A close up of the blackboard where the coffee and pastry selections are listed, plus a little slice of the wall beside hand where notes and photos and postcards are pinned up.

Panel 03: A close up of a dripping tap.

Panel 04: Inside the dark bakery, Molly is sitting at a table beside her sister. Alice is hunched over, wretched, and Molly is trying to comfort her (perhaps a tiny bit stiffly. On the one hand, Molly is very familiar with her sister, but on the other hand, real human connection is not her strong suit).

Note that while Molly is rather bedraggled, like somebody who slouched down from her apartment at 1am, Alice is neatly put together despite everything. Throughout these scenes, despite the contents of their conversations, Alice tends to have upright posture, while Molly's is shrinking and anxious and awkward.

Page 19

Panel 01: Alice sits up at last, wiping her eyes.

ALICE: Fuck... I can't believe I actually broke up with him...

Panel 02: A shot of both Molly and Alice, angled so that Molly's face is in view.

MOLLY: Umm. What happened?

Panel 03: Back to Alice's face. She hesitates a moment before answering.

Panel 04: A closer zoom on Alice, though we can still see a section of Molly's profile.

ALICE: Nick found out I was having an affair.

ALICE: He looked at my phone and saw my texts.

Panel 05: A mid shot of Alice and Molly seated at the table. The cafe is very dark.

MOLLY: You were having an *affair*?

ALICE: I know...

MOLLY: Sister...

ALICE: I know, I know!

Panel 06: Zoom out to a longer shot of the sisters. The speech balloon is at the very bottom of the page, leaving some blank space to indicate pause and reaction.

ALICE: I never thought I'd be that person.

Page 20

Panel 01: A shot showing only the sisters' hands. Alice's hands are interlocked tightly, tense and still. Molly's hands are making a wringing or knuckle-kneading motion.

MOLLY (off panel): Wow.

Panel 02: Close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: Um... do you want to tell me about it?

Panel 03: Alice is leaning her head against her hand, overcome with sadness.

ALICE: The affair?

Panel 04: A shot of both sisters. Molly waits for Alice to speak.

Panel 05: A large shot of the front desk area, with the empty pastry case and the till.

ALICE (off panel): Ughhh.

ALICE (off panel): I met a guy... I resisted it for a while... god, I'm such a cliché!

ALICE (off panel): Honestly, I didn't think Nick would care.

Panel 06: A close up of Molly's face. She looks confused - like this is news to her.

ALICE (off panel): I didn't think he could possibly care about anything I did.

Panel 07: A shot of both sisters. Alice gestures, trying to make Molly understand, but Molly still looks perplexed - almost skeptical. Since the revelation of the affair, Molly's attitude has undergone a subtle shift - a lessening of sympathy towards Alice - which is now visibly clicking into place. The change is

minute, but it's there.

ALICE: All he talks about is his job. It's like... I was irrelevant to his life.

Page 21

Panel 01: A shot of both sisters, angled on Alice over Molly's shoulder. Alice puts her hands in her hair - a gesture of frustration.

MOLLY: Really?

ALICE: In the ways that mattered, yes!

Panel 2: A shot of both sisters seated at their table in profile.

ALICE (shrugging, exhausted): I don't know how else to explain it.

Panel 01: A shot of the cafe window, with its logo in reverse (from the inside).

MOLLY (off panel): Who did you...

ALICE (off panel): It doesn't matter, Moll. I ended it.

Panel 02: A narrow shot of the sisters at the table, almost in silhouette.

Panel 03: Close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: What will you do now?

Panel 04: Close up of Alice's face.

ALICE: Find my own place, I guess.

Panel 05: Shot of Molly's face over Alice's shoulder.

MOLLY (reluctant): Do you want to stay with me?

Page 22

Panel 01: Alice looks up at Molly with a sardonic, "you can't be serious" expression.

MOLLY: ...What?

Panel 02: Alice rubs her forehead, squinting a little - classic headache pose. The brief moment of amusement is passing back into misery.

ALICE: Nothing, never mind. I already called mom.

MOLLY: OK, that's good.

Panel 03: A shot of both of them at the table. Alice leans back and stares up numbly into space.

ALICE: I broke up with my husband. I broke up... with my husband?

Panel 04: A longer shot of the whole dark room, and the sisters seated in the middle.

MOLLY: Do you want to take tomorrow off?

ALICE: No.

MOLLY: OK.

Page 23

Panel 01: A shot of the same street in daylight. If we can see the cafe window, its sign is now flipped to "Open".

Panel 02: A fist and forearm drive a wet ball of dough down with a thwump.

Panel 03: Molly is kneading bread in the bakery kitchen, dressed in her baker gear (old t-shirt and an apron).

Panel 04: Shot over Molly's shoulder of Alice leaning into the room, parting the swinging doors that separate the kitchen from the cafe. Her expression shows that she's stressed and underslept, but she's neat and well dressed as always.

ALICE (irritable): People are asking for sandwiches. Is the bread ready?

MOLLY (ruffled): Not even close, it still needs a second rise!

Panel 05: Close up of Alice's face.

ALICE: Leave it and go buy a loaf from the market.

Panel 06: Close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: What? No way!!

Panel 07: Alice has already turned back into the cafe - we see the doors closing behind her, and Molly through them.

MOLLY: Tell them it's just muffins for now!

Page 24

Panel 01: Molly follows Alice and peeks her head through the doors (she doesn't like crossing this threshold). In the foreground, Alice interrupts her conversation with a customer to respond to Molly.

MOLLY: I have things in the oven, I can't go...

ALICE (sharp): Fine!

Panel 02: Molly returns to the back. We catch a brief glimpse of the cafe front, where the customer standing at the counter is clearly uncomfortable with this breach in the facade.

ALICE: I'm sorry about that. We've had some, ahh, technical issues in the kitchen.

Panel 03: We see Molly emerge through the doors, back in her domain. As the doors fall closed behind her, the tail end of Alice's conversation is still audible.

ALICE (off panel): Can I offer you a muffin instead?

Panel 04: Molly gives her dough a few more thumps.

Panel 05: A close up of her rounding it off into loaves.

Panel 06: A shot of her putting the loaves into the oven.

Page 25

Panel 01: Close up of Molly's hands as she dusts them off.

Panel 02: She looks up at the clock on the wall (maybe one of those cat clocks. Something silly and a little mocking under the circumstances).

Panel 03: Close up of the clock face. It's only about 10:30am.

Panel 04: Molly's shoulders slump.

Panel 05: Alice blows through the doors. She's staring down at her phone in a state of contained distress.

ALICE: Molly, it's Nick. Can you take the front?

Panel 06: Alice looks at her sister, frustrated and miserable. Molly hesitates a beat before responding.

MOLLY: Yeah, of course.

ALICE: I'm really sorry. It's just... today, I can't not...

Panel 07: Molly takes off her net or head rag but leaves her apron on. As she's passing through the doors, Alice's voice is still audible.

ALICE (off panel): Hi, Nick.

Panel 08: Molly, stiff and uncomfortable, moves in and stands behind the cafe counter. The cafe is relatively quiet, and only a few people occupy tables.

The cafe is small - almost tiny - the kind of business that two people could conceivably run alone. The counter takes up the back of the space, across from the entry. It has baked goods displayed in somewhat makeshift looking stands (sparse, right now), and a blackboard on the wall with handwritten coffee selections and sandwiches. Behind the counter are one or two espresso machines, and a standard coffee drip.

The people currently occupying the tables include the customer who wanted a sandwich - now scrolling through his phone, with a muffin at his elbow - and a mother trying to coax a fussy toddler to eat bits of pastry. As well, we see a young woman sitting alone, making notes and drawings in a sketchbook.

Page 26

Panel 01: A close up shot of Molly regarding the scene.

Panel 02: Molly's attention catches on the woman drawing in her sketchbook.

Panel 03: Very close shot of Molly as she starts (presumably) with recognition. Not only is Molly surprised, but she is very obviously blushing - this is something more than generic social angst.

Panel 04: Very close shot of the woman. She's facing away from Molly, absorbed in her own business. She's well dressed and coiffed and gives off an air of cool.

Panel 05: Molly shrinks back as far as she can behind the partial cover of the pastry case, but she continues to study the woman, still blushing, terrified but fixated.

Panel 06: Behind Molly, Alice comes back through the swinging doors. She's visibly pulling herself back together, forcing her posture upright.

Page 27

Panel 01: Alice resumes her place at the counter. She appears stern with her determination to keep her emotions in check.

ALICE: Thanks, Moll.

MOLLY (voice low): Are you OK? Do you want a break?

Panel 02: Molly is already slinking back towards the kitchen, anticipating this response.

ALICE: I'm fine. Go make bread.

Panels 03 and 04: With evident relief, Molly flees. Once the doors close behind her, she exhales.

Panel 05: A close up of the cat clock, ticking the day away.

Page 28

Panel 01(borderless): A drawn map (in the same style as the first two pages) with doodles in the corners and a dotted line leading from a southern island (with a little drawing of Ell beside it) to the tip of a central island, Ad Era. Along the dotted line, there is a small drawing of Ystril standing in their skiff. The dotted line stops at a point on the island which is occupied by a small village called "Lantern".

Panel 02 (borderless): Transitioning from map to world, Ystril steps from their boat to a dock.

Panel 03 (borderless): They walk into a village, which consists of a few stone and thatch huts.

Page 29

Panel 01: As Ystril passes, villagers nod or tip their hats or pull their forelocks. A few of them add "Red Wizard" or "Good evening, Red Wizard". Ystril maintains a wizardly (which is to say slightly condescending) air.

Panel 02: As Ystril passes by one particular hut, a pair of gnarled hands throw its shutters open, and a voice calls out.

GRONIA: Stay a moment, Ystril.

Panel 03: Ystril sees a craggy old woman (with one blind eye) leaning out of the casement. They stop and give the woman a small bow. Their manner is arch - not quite mocking.

YSTRIL: Gronia.

Page 30

Panel 01: Close up of Gronia leaning out her window.

GRONIA: I don't suppose your blathering accomplished much.

Panel 02: Ystril tugs or smooths down their robe, miffed and defensive, trying to maintain an air of superiority.

YSTRIL: I made a compelling offer. We'll see what comes of it.

YSTRIL: Eil has never failed to grant me aid.

Panel 03: Gronia shakes her head, disappointed - almost sad.

GRONIA: The gods are fickle, and the novelty of your offer has worn thin.

Panel 04: Ystril glowers, but Gronia pays them no heed.

GRONIA (off panel): They won't waste their strength to help you.

GRONIA (off panel): Come inside.

Panel 05: Gronia retreats and slams the shutters behind her.

Panel 06: Ystril gathers their dignity and follows through the front door. They pass a wooden sign hanging from the house. The sign is painted with a stylized eye and reads (maybe in a fantasy language) "One-Eyed Gronia's".

Panel 07: We see Ystril enter, silhouetted against the bright doorway.

Page 31

Panel 01: The inside of Gronia's house is smoky and full of witchy oddments. Bundles of dried herbs hang from the rafters, and the shelves are full of dark, stoppered bottles and animal skulls. A large cauldron bubbles over the hearth. On the floor, a big, shaggy old dog doesn't shift from his position, but thumps his tail a few times in greeting. Gronia has walked to a wooden counter and is now clearing a space in the general clutter.

Panel 02: Close up of Ystril's hand. They pat the dog's head as they pass through the room.

Panel 03: Gronia stands beside a broad, shallow bowl, and gestures for Ystril to approach. She's holding (perhaps midway through opening) a large stoppered glass bottle.

GRONIA: Here.

Panel 04: Gronia pours the bottle's contents over the bowl, throwing up a plump mushroom of smoke.

Panel 05: A shot of Ystril's face through a haze of smoke. They are looking down into the bowl, and their expression is hesitant.

GRONIA (off panel): What do you see?

Panel 06: The water in the bowl seems troubled - it resolves into shapes that faintly suggest grasping hands.

Page 32

Panel 01: Zoom back out to show Ystril turned towards Gronia.

YSTRIL: I see nothing.

Panel 02: Close up of Gronia's face. Her expression is grave.

GRONIA: You see time catching up with you, wizard.

Panel 03: A shot of Ystril over Gronia's shoulder. Ystril looks uncomfortable.

GRONIA: You fear a storm? Well. The storm is coming.

Panel 04: Extreme close up of Gronia's face.

GRONIA: You may slow the wind. You may still the water's surface - no matter. Its depths convulse. Its hunger will grow, and grow, and devour this land.

Panel 05: Abruptly, a massive, dense shadow crosses over the witch and the wizard, and they freeze beneath it.

Page 33

Panel 01: Back in the real world, Molly is reaching into the open-roofed hut.

Panel 02: Her hand plucks out the tiny Gronia figurine.

Panel 03: Molly holds the figurine up to her face. She has startled herself with this turn in the story - it got away from her, for a moment. She regards the figurine, frowning.

Panel 04: Gingerly, she returns Gronia to the house.

Panel 05: Ystril looks up from the bowl with an unconcerned, slightly arch expression. Something to suggest that their wizardly confidence has been restored, and then some).

YSTRIL: Tut tut! So melodramatic!

Page 34

Panel 01: Gronia continues to regard Ystril through the smoke of her scrying. Her grave expression remains fixed.

GRONIA: This is not something you can master, Ystril.

Panel 02: Ystril starts walking towards the door of the hut.

GRONIA: Face it. Let it come.

Panel 03: Ystril pauses in the doorway, looking back towards Gronia who still stands in the foreground beside the bowl. Ystril tips their hat in the pretense of a polite farewell.

YSTRIL: Don't scowl at me like that, Gronia! I'm off to my home - good evening.

Panel 04: walks out of the house and away.

Panel 05: A longer shot of Ystril walking beyond the village. The late afternoon has turned to dusk, and the wizard is reduced to a silhouette as they approach the rocky channel that separates the larger village island from the smaller island. The sun has left a fading red line on the horizon. A flock of birds or bats crosses the sky in a strange, whirling shape.

Page 35

Panel 01: A close up of Ystril's feet hopping between stepping stones. They must traverse these, to move between land masses.

Panel 02: Just as their foot hits the shore of their island, a little tendril of ocean (suggesting the shape of a grasping hand) splashes up against Ystril's ankle.

Panel 03: They trip as they land.

Panel 04: A close up shot of Ystril's expression in the dim light, and they are not confident. They are afraid.

Panels 05 and 06: They turn and continue up the path towards (pulling back) their looming wizard's tower.

Page 36

Panels 01 and 02: Pulling back further, the world dissolves, and we see the massive project of this island occupying almost the entirety of Molly's living room. It's dark, and she is not there.

Page 37

Panel 01: Long shot of a row of apartments in the back of an old two story building. Their doors open to the outside. It's early morning.

Panel 02: Molly is just stepping out of her apartment and locking the door behind her.

Panel 03: Molly descends a flight of stairs.

Panels 04 and 05: Then she turns and walks through a narrow alley and around to the front of the building where the bakery is located.

Panel 06: Just before Molly enters the bakery, she notices a car parked immediately in front. It's an unremarkable new-ish sedan.

Page 38

Panel 01: We see the car from Molly's POV, and its flanks are decaled with Nick's toothy, handsome face, and his full name, "Nick Armstrong," followed by a real estate logo and number.

Panel 02: Close up of Molly.

MOLLY (under her breath): Shit.

Panel 03 Switching perspectives to inside the bakery, we see Molly hesitating at the threshold. Nick and Alice are in the foreground, arguing.

NICK: Can't we just talk to someone?

ALICE: Oh, NOW you have time to talk. I begged you for YEARS!

NICK: You're staying with him, aren't you? Is he here?

ALICE: I told you, I broke it off.

Panel 04: Close up of Nick not quite yelling.

NICK: Then I don't understand why--

Panel 05: Close up of Alice definitely on the verge of yelling.

ALICE: Yeah, because you never fucking tried to understand!

Panel 06: Nick is gesticulating, trying to make his point. Alice looks very frustrated.

NICK: I worked hard for you! I got you the house. Right? And the... *(gesturing at his surroundings)* the god damn bakery.

ALICE: That's not what...

ALICE: Arghh!

Page 39

Panel 01: Alice snaps at Nick.

ALICE: We were like two dead people!

Panel 02: Nick is devastated by this remark. His anger deflates and his shoulders slump.

NICK: Jesus, Alice.

Panel 03: Before Alice has a chance to respond, they both notice Molly in the doorway.

Panel 04: Close up of Molly, currently feeling like the most awkward human on earth.

MOLLY: Sorry... should I start the bread, or...

Panel 05: Nick stares at Molly - deer in headlights - embarrassed to be caught in the raw. Alice looks a little off to the side, regretful but still angry.

Panel 06: A slight zoom out of Panel 5, with Molly now visible in the foreground.

ALICE: Yeah, Moll. Go get started.

NICK (tiny, diminutive speech bubble): Hey, Molly...

Panel 07: Molly crosses the room (an excruciating corridor of stress), giving Nick a halfhearted wave as if some part of her believes she can make the situation normal.

Page 40

Panel 01: As she passes through the doors, we can see Alice and Nick behind her, finishing their conversation in tense whispers.

Panel 02: Molly ties her apron on.

Panel 03: She starts pulling ingredients together.

Panel 04: Alice enters through the doors.

Panel 05: Alice sits down on a stool and leans forward, miserable. Molly turns around to face her sister, wiping her hands off on her apron. The space is small enough that the sisters are already, essentially, beside each other.

ALICE: I have bad news.

Panel 06: A shot of Alice over Molly's shoulder. She looks spent.

ALICE: Nick says he won't give us a break on the rent anymore.

ALICE: Which is fair enough.

Panel 07: A shot of Molly's baking supplies laid out on her table.

MOLLY (off panel): Oh shit. Can we afford that?

ALICE (off panel): Not really.

Page 41

Panel 01: Alice tilts her head up to look at Molly. She's already shaking off the effects of the argument and returning to her usual decisive, no-nonsense attitude.

ALICE: You know what this means, Moll.

MOLLY: Um...

ALICE: We have to run this place like a real business.

Panel 02: Alice is stern. This is one thing she can actually cope with.

ALICE: Every penny counts, OK?

MOLLY: Right. Yes.

ALICE: No more waking up late.

Panel 03: A shot of Molly as she considers all this.

Panel 04: Molly looks at Alice, very earnest and intent, but Alice is distracted by a tapping noise in the distance.

MOLLY: What about my apartment? Will he let me keep it?

ALICE: I don't know. He didn't say.

SOUND FX: Tap Tap Tap

Panel 05: Alice heads through the doors to investigate the noise. Molly remains in place for a moment, thoughtful (or stunned).

ALICE: Is it seven already?

Panel 06: We see Molly's hands gripping the counter as she leans against it. They are tense.

Panel 07: Molly cracks the doors open to call out to Alice:

MOLLY: Hey, sister...

Page 42

Panel 01: We see over Molly's shoulder that Alice is already opening the front door for a customer.

ALICE: Morning, Mrs Jang! Sorry about that!

Panel 02: Molly lets the partition fall closed. We overhear a little more of the conversation behind her, before it shuts.

ALICE: Usual cappuccino?

Panel 03: Zoom out to leave Molly standing at her baking counter, staring blankly at the ingredients before her.

Page 43

Panel 01: We see a store called "Tactics Games and Hobbies" tucked into an unremarkable strip mall. Molly's car (an old, rusty Toyota, recognizable from the first scene) is parked in front of it.

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's hand picking up a bottle of paint.

Panel 03: Inside the store we see Molly browsing - looking closely at the paint she just selected. In the background, the cashier, Barb (middle aged, deep-deep nerd, fairly androgynous), is finishing up with a customer.

Panel 04: Barb waves to Molly.

BARB: Hey, Moll! Come check this out.

Panel 05: Molly approaches the counter and Barb stoops behind it in search of something.

BARB: One sec...

Page 44

Panel 01: Barb hoists a big model building on to the counter. It is a miniature medieval tower, perfectly constructed.

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's face as she investigates the object. She appears impressed.

MOLLY: Wow.

Panel 03: Zoom out a little, as both Molly and Barb admire the tower.

BARB: Gorgeous, right? Some Belgian company - I saw them at Essen Spiel, and couldn't help ordering one for the store.

MOLLY: Is that real stone?

BARB: Nope. Looks like it, though.

Panel 04: A close up of Barb's fingers finding a seam in the tower and parting it with a visible click.

BARB: You haven't even seen the best part...

Panel 05: She draws the model open to reveal a two-sided cutaway with multiple floors made of wood, and tiny staircases joining them.

Page 45

Panel 01: Now Molly is truly awestruck. Something inside her cracks at the sight of this perfect wizard's home.

Panel 02: A close up of the tower's interior.

Panel 03: A mid shot of Molly processing her options, for a moment.

Panel 04: Then the compulsion wins, and she asks Barb:

MOLLY: How much is it?

Panel 05: Close up of Barb.

BARB: Oh, no, I got it for the window display! It's too expensive to stock.

Panel 06: Molly isn't really listening. She's poring over the tower's little details.

MOLLY: I'll buy it. Tell me how much.

Panel 07: Barb shrugs nervously, chuckling a little. She picks up an old-fashioned calculator and types in some numbers.

BARB (small, half-hearted bubble): Ha ha...

Panel 08: Then she shows its screen to Molly. We can't see the amount, but we see Molly look at it and absorb it seriously.

Page 46

Panel 01: Molly faces Barb across the counter, the tower between them.

MOLLY: OK... Yeah. I think I can manage that.

BARB: Come on, that's crazy. Most people don't pay that much for rent.

Panel 02: Molly fumbles out her wallet.

Panel 03: She starts piling bills on the counter - twenties, mostly, and a few fives.

Panel 04: She starts sorting through her change. On the counter we see a sad pile of bills and a few loonies and quarters.

Panel 05: In the foreground, Barb is shaking her head - this is clearly hopeless. She looks pained by how far from the mark this is. She's almost apologetic. Across from her, Molly is still crunching numbers.

MOLLY: I think I have three hundred more in a box at home.

MOLLY: Maybe I could start with that, and...

BARB: Sorry, Moll. You know I can't extend credit.

Panel 06: Zoom out a little. Molly looks dejected. Barb is making an "oh well" gesture with her arms.

MOLLY: Yeah. Shit.

BARB: Ha ha... well. Probably for the best, right?

Page 47

Panel 01: Close up of Molly. She wants that tower.

MOLLY: Yeah. Yeah, I guess.

Panel 02: Molly collects her change from the countertop.

Panel 03: Molly hitches her bag a little higher on her shoulder and backs away, still looking at the tower.

BARB: See you around, Moll.

MOLLY: See you around.

Panel 04: A long shot of the strip mall with the sky darkening to evening.

Panel 05: A darker sky over treetops.

Page 48

Panel 01: A shot of the outside of Molly's apartment. The windows are lit up from within.

Panel 02: A close up of hands counting bills.

Panel 03: Molly is slumped forward in a defeated posture. We can tell from her expression that whatever she counted wasn't even close to enough.

MOLLY (tiny bubble): Hfff.

Panel 04: Molly leans forward to interact with the models in front of her.

Panel 05: She reaches out an arm to pick a little piece of glue or tape from a building (Ystril's current home). Compared to the Belgian masterwork, it now looks very makeshift indeed.

Page 49

Panel 01: Molly picks up the Ystril figurine,

Panel 02: Then she lowers them into a little boat.

Panel 03: She nudges the boat around in a sad imitation of propelling it through water.

Panel 04: Zoom out to Molly slouched, bored and restless, amongst her toys. There's no immersion, tonight. The fantasy isn't accessible.

Page 50

Panel 01: A shot of the sun rising over building tops and trees. The peaceful picture is somewhat ruined by the sounds of a ringing phone.

Panel 02: Molly is asleep. Her bed is a single mattress on the floor, pushed to one side to make room for a desk and shelves (which are full of books and craft supplies, etc.) Conventionally speaking, her bedroom is her entire living space, since nearly every square inch of the main room is taken up by Ad Era.

Beside the bed, Molly's phone keeps ringing.

Panel 03: Molly fumbles for the phone. The display, once again, reads "Alice".

Panel 04: Molly picks up the phone, smearing a hand across her face in exhaustion.

MOLLY: Mrrgmmfff.

The phone buzzes a few times, to indicate Alice speaking on the other end.

MOLLY: Yup, I'm getting up.

Short buzz.

MOLLY: Yeah, see you soon.

Panel 05: Molly beeps the phone off.

Panel 06: She slumps out of bed and starts grabbing at articles of clothing (strewn about at random).

Page 51

Panel 01: A long shot of Molly opening the cafe door from the outside.

Panel 02: Molly shuffles into the back room looking bedraggled and underslept. Alice is sitting in a little desk area tucked at the edge of the kitchen, hunched over a ledger book with a laptop open in front of her.

MOLLY: Morning.

ALICE (distracted by her numbers): Mmhmm.

Panel 03: Molly starts making bread.

MOLLY: Sorry, I know I'm a little late.

Panel 04: Alice remains absorbed in her numbers but pauses long enough to respond to her sister.

ALICE: Hmm? Oh, that's OK. Maybe you need an earlier wake-up call.

Panel 05: Alice leans forward with a sigh. She looks exhausted and sad. Her head is clearly still in the math.

Panel 06: Close up of Alice as she turns, at last, to Molly.

ALICE: It's been a shit few weeks. I'm sorry you're stuck in the middle of it.

Page 52

Panel 01: Shot of Molly. She appears touched by Alice's vulnerability.

Panel 02: Molly stops her baking prep, wipes her hands, and approaches her sister.

MOLLY (vaguely gesturing to the ledger book): Um. Can I help with any of that stuff?

Panel 03: Alice reaches for her sister's hand and smiles up at her. She looks grateful for the offer, but also just a little amused.

ALICE: No, don't worry about it. I know you hate all the paperwork.

Panel 04: Molly returns Alice's gesture with a little, spontaneous hug. Alice hugs her back.

Panel 05: Alice reaches for her bag, and fishes around for a moment.

ALICE: We'll get through this. Oh, speaking of which...

Panel 06: Close up of Alice's hand holding out a credit card and a Costco card.

ALICE: I've cancelled a few of our suppliers - we can't afford your fancy Italian flour anymore.

Panel 07: Molly holds the cards up to her face, surprised.

ALICE (off panel): Take the card and buy what you need at Costco until we find something better.

MOLLY: OK.

Page 53

Panel 01: A long shot of Molly standing by Alice. Molly's posture makes her acceptance of the card appear tentative. Alice is already turning back to her paperwork, satisfied.

ALICE: Bring me the receipts!

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's face, as she hesitates to ask her next question.

Panel 03: Molly hovers behind Alice.

MOLLY: Hey, sister.

ALICE (head in her paperwork, half paying attention): Yup?

Panel 04: Alice swivels back around to face Molly.

MOLLY: I just was wondering, um... when do we get our next pay cheque?

Panel 05: Close up of Alice

ALICE: Same as usual, another two weeks. But we're both taking a pay cut this month, Moll, I'm sorry.

Panel 06: A close up of Molly's hand hanging by the side of her apron, holding the cards.

ALICE (off panel): You'll have enough for rent and basics.

MOLLY (off panel): Right. OK.

Panel 07: Molly returns to the kitchen area, looking back at her sister as she does so. The tension has returned to her posture.

Panel 08: A close up of Molly as she tucks the card into her wallet.

Panel 09: An extreme close up of the card sliding into the wallet.

Page 54

Panel 01: Close up of Molly's hand as it flicks on a light switch.

Panel 02: Close up of Molly's sneaker shod feet kicking a door closed behind her.

Panel 03: Molly is back in her apartment, carrying an enormous box.

Panel 04: Not even taking her shoes or jacket off, she squats down in front of Ad Era where Ystril's current home stands, carefully placing the box beside her.

Panel 05: Close up of Molly's hand as she plucks Ystril's old home off the island.

Panel 06: Close up of her arms as she lifts the perfectly constructed Belgian tower out of its box.

Page 55

Panel 01: Molly places the new tower where the old structure once stood. It is very large.

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's thumb as it digs into the tower's seam to click the mechanism.

Panel 03: Molly bisects the tower.

Panel 04: A close up of her face as she sighs with pleasure - more relaxed and happy and emotive than we've seen her yet.

Page 56

Note: The fantasy scenes have looser panel boundaries as a rule, but this scene has no visible panel delineations.

Full Page: Ystril and Gronia are standing in the foreground overlooking a landscape in which villagers carrying parcels or burdens of furniture form a line that winds towards Ystril's new tower, which stands

shining on the horizon. Above the tower's crenellations, a giant orb of light floats as if magnetically held aloft, beaming distinct, even cartoonish rays in every direction.

Page 57

Panel 01: Shot of Ystril standing beside Gronia. Ystril points at the tower, full of bluster and confidence. Gronia appears reserved.

YSTRIL: There, Gronia! See what I've accomplished!

Panel 02: A closer shot of them both. Gronia is now looking at Ystril with a skeptical expression, though Ystril continues to gaze forward.

YSTRIL: This new tower is the seat of my magic. It's powerful enough to protect all of Ad Era. No storm will pass within a mile of our shores.

Page 58

Panel 01: A longer shot of Gronia and Ystril standing together. The tower's rays are so bright, they efface the background, leaving the figures surrounded by blank white space.

GRONIA: You're a fool.

YSTRIL (absorbed by the spectacle off panel): Look, fresh bookshelves! Custom-fitted! Ahh, that old carpenter is too kind.

Panel 02: Close up of them both. Gronia shakes her head. She knows this isn't right.

GRONIA: The ocean won't forget the one who bound it.

Panel 03: A very long shot. Gronia, beside Ystril, turns into a crow.

Page 59

Full Page: Gronia flies away, leaving Ystril alone on the blank white paper, watching nothing.

Part Two

Pages 60 and 61

Double Page Spread: A second map of Ad Era in a similar style to the map from Part 1. This version is dominated by the new tower, drawn disproportionately large and emanating visible rays of magic. There's a clear radius around the edge of the map where the water is rendered in rough, squiggly waves on the outside, and calm blue on the inside. Like the previous map, this one has a few sketchy annotations, mostly focusing on the new tower as a beacon of safety.

Page 62

Panel 01: A long shot of the outside of the bakery. The trees that were full and lush in the previous scenes are now turning and starting to shed.

Panel 02: A long shot of the outside of Molly's apartment.

Panel 03: A shot of telephone wires and sky.

Page 63

Panel 01: An establishing shot of a new, unfamiliar apartment building. Molly is carrying a box through the front (perspective allowing). Molly's car and a moving van or U-Haul are parked on the street in front.

Panel 02: Molly is carrying a heavy box up a flight of stairs.

Panel 03: She hefts the box through a doorway into an apartment.

Panel 04: A long shot that shows Molly walking through the door. Her mother, Edith (a woman in her early 60's), has seen her enter and is flapping towards her. Molly's dad, Ron (a man in his late 60's), is tucked into the space beneath the sink, doing something with the plumbing. The apartment contains several other boxes not yet unpacked, a few cans of paint suggesting it's been recently repainted, and a few pieces of furniture. Even in the chaos of moving, it's brighter and tidier and more socially presentable than Molly's space.

Panel 05: Edith fusses over Molly as she lowers the box to the ground.

EDITH: Oh, be careful! You'll strain yourself!

Page 64

Panel 01: In the foreground, Molly opens the box. Behind her, Alice follows Molly into the room, carrying a big plant. Edith fusses over Alice in turn.

EDITH: Let me take that!

ALICE: I'm fine, mom! Anyway, we're almost done.

Panel 02: A shot of the box's contents. It's packed with books and tapes and a stack of framed photographs including the one of Alice and Molly that we saw in the very first scene.

Panel 03: A close up of Molly picking up the photograph to look at it.

Panel 04: A mid shot of the apartment. Edith comes up beside Molly to look. She regards the photo with motherly bias. In the background, Alice is placing the plant on the floor. Molly, still looking at the photo, appears uncomfortable.

EDITH: What a lovely photo of you both!

ALICE (from a little ways away): Which one?

EDITH: From Molly's college show - is that right, dear?

Page 65

Panel 01: A close up of Molly's hand putting the photo back on its pile.

Panel 02: A shot of the whole room. Ron exits the undersink and gets up, arching the strain out of his back. Alice and Edith turn towards him, and in the background, Molly wanders off to stand by the window.

RON: Plumbing's all fixed. Landlord should pay *you* rent. Hehehe.

ALICE: Thanks for the help, dad.

Panel 03: Molly stands in the foreground, looking out a window. Behind her, the family continues to converse. We might see a few colorful lines, as if in the window's reflection, not quite cohering into shapes but as a visual hint of fantasy world.

EDITH: Oh, lamby! Are you sure you'll be OK all alone?

ALICE: Mom!

Panel 04: A shot focusing on Alice and Edith.

EDITH: You can stay with us, you know, for as long as you want.

ALICE: I'll be fine. Molly lives alone.

Panel 05: A close up of Molly's head from the back. It's hard to tell if she's overhearing the conversation or not.

ALICE (off panel): Right, Moll?

Page 66

Panel 01: A close up of Alice and Edith. Edith lowers her voice, as if that tempers the touchy subject - the text in her speech bubble is shrunken.

EDITH: And is *he*... is Nick letting her keep her place?

ALICE: I think so, yeah.

Panel 02: A shot of Alice and Edith over Molly's shoulder. They both have turned towards Molly, addressing her directly.

ALICE: He hasn't phoned you about it, has he?

EDITH: You can always stay with us, too, goosey.

Panel 03: A close up of Molly's head from behind. She isn't paying any attention. A whole scene is playing out before her, with Ystril walking through an orchard of fantastical trees.

Panel 04: Similar shot, but now Molly is turning towards the speaker. The window is now just a window.

ALICE (off panel): Moll!

Panel 05: Alice looks at her sister, concerned, but her family continues to bicker behind her.

RON: Let's go out to dinner! I'll buy you each a pirate pack.

EDITH: They don't give those to adults, Ron!

RON: Sure they do.

EDITH: They don't...

Panel 06: Molly, having reached her limit, breaks into the conversation.

MOLLY: I'm tired. I think I'll head home.

EDITH: Oh, goosey...

Page 67

Panel 01: A shot of Alice and Molly. Molly is moving away from the window.

MOLLY: Unless you need more help?

ALICE: No, I'm fine. Thanks for pitching in.

Panel 02: Now that Molly's given herself permission to leave, she's desperate to get out. She blows through the room towards the door.

MOLLY (rushed, barely polite): Bye mom, bye dad.

Panel 03: Alice leans out the door to address Molly, who is already a ways down the hall.

ALICE: See you tomorrow.

MOLLY: Yup!

Panel 04: A close up of Molly's hand on the banister as she speeds down the stairs.

Panel 05: A shot of Molly exiting the building.

Panel 06: A shot of Molly opening the door of her parked car.

Page 68

Panel 01: Molly is in the driver's seat. She takes a moment to exhale - intense relief.

Panel 02: A close up of her hand turning the ignition.

Panel 03: A close up of her sneakered foot pressing down on the gas pedal.

Panel 04: A shot of the car pulling out on to the road.

Panel 05: A long shot of the car driving down the street, but the traffic and buildings are superseded by fantasy imagery (the same tableau as the one we saw earlier in the scene). Molly is heading home to Ad Era, and it's reaching out to pull her in.

Page 69

Panel 01: A narrow sliver of midday sky.

Panel 02: A shot of Molly's apartment from the outside.

Panel 03: An extreme close up of Molly's hand placing a tiny book in a tiny bookshelf using a pair of tweezers.

Panel 04: A close up of Molly crouched beside Ystril's tower, fitting it out with its final touches.

Panel 05: A zoomed out version of the same shot to show Molly's apartment.

Page 70

Panel 01: A close up of Molly's face as she looks over her shoulder, startled to hear a knock at her door.

Panel 02: Molly freezes like an animal waiting for a predator to pass out of range. She has already reflexively snapped the tower shut.

Panel 03: The knock repeats.

Panel 04: Molly sneaks towards her door.

Panel 05: A close up of Molly's socked feet. She's stepping very carefully so her approach is inaudible.

Panel 06: She peers through the viewer.

Panel 07: Through the fisheye lense of the viewer stands Alice interacting with her phone.

Panel 08: Molly looks back, away from the door. Off panel, a phone starts ringing.

Panel 09: Molly opens the door, and Alice looks up from her phone and smiles.

Page 71

Panel 01: Molly is still a little worried and wary.

MOLLY: It's... it's Monday, right?

Panel 02: Alice is affectionately exasperated.

ALICE: Oh, Moll. Yes, of course it's Monday.

Panel 03: Molly backs away from the door to let Alice in.

Panel 04: Alice leads the way as they walk into the "living room".

ALICE: I was in the shop doing admin, so I thought I'd come visit.

Panel 05: Alice turns back to look at Molly.

ALICE: You left my place in a hurry yesterday.

MOLLY: Yeah. I had to go home and, um, get stuff done.

Panel 06: A shot that encompasses the whole room. Alice stands and takes in the scope of Molly's Ad Era project. She's in awe.

ALICE: Wow... it's so much bigger than last time I was here. Did you always have this much space?

MOLLY: I got rid of the table.

Page 72

Panel 01: Alice is still looking around. Molly stands a little behind her.

MOLLY: And the couch.

Panel 02: A shot from the knee down of Alice stepping towards the miniatures. We see a little bit of tower in the foreground.

Panel 03: A more distinct shot of the tower.

Panel 04: An extreme close up of Molly's face. Her guilt is apparent - she's uncomfortable having her sister here, so close to the secret.

Panel 05: Alice picks up a prominent, larger figure - one of the gods. Behind her, Molly has her arms crossed in a pose of suppressed anxiety.

ALICE: Tell me about the world!

Panel 06: Some of Molly's anxiety recedes, as she automatically slips into excitement about the characters. She becomes more animated and gestural, and less passive.

MOLLY: That's Uonn, God of the Eye. Eye is North, in this setting, so-

Page 73

Panel 01: Close up of Molly's hand as she sets the Uuon figure down on an island.

MOLLY (off panel): She lives here, on this island.

ALICE (off panel): I like a lady-god. Is she powerful?

Panel 02: A shot of Molly and Alice standing side by side. Alice is still looking around in wonder

MOLLY: Yes, but more like a sphynx. Inscrutable and full of riddles.

ALICE: Amazing. It's all amazing.

Panel 03: A close up of the sisters' faces.

What about the big island in the middle?

MOLLY: That's Ad Era.

Panel 04: A shot of their heads from behind. Alice is still surveying the miniatures.

ALICE: Where your wizard lives, right?

MOLLY: Ystril.

Panel 05: An extreme close up of Molly's face in sudden distress.

ALICE (off panel): God, look at that tower!

Panel 06: Alice leaning forward, admiring the tower. Behind her we see Molly from the shoulders down. Her posture is tense.

Page 74

Panel 01: A close up of the village in miniature.

ALICE (off panel): It's so detailed! I remember when we were kids, and you'd set up all your plastic animals. You'd use a blue t-shirt for the lake, and the old green carpet for the meadow...

Panel 02: Alice is gesturing at the models but looking at Molly.

ALICE: This stuff must be expensive, but I guess you make most of it yourself.

Panel 03: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY (still red, recovering): Yeah. Yeah, that's true. Most of it.

Panel 04: Alice has picked up a figure and is holding it. Turning it around in her hands to inspect it.

ALICE (earnest): You're so good.

Panel 05: A little silence falls between the sisters. Alice is still holding the figure, but she's gone unfocused, thinking of something else now. Her head is in the foreground, and Molly stands behind her, still tense and uncertain.

Panel 06: A shot of the back of Alice's head.

Panel 07: Alice is still holding the figure in the foreground. She's turning back towards Molly.

MOLLY: Um. How have you been doing?

Page 75

Panel 01: A close up of Alice placing the figurine back down.

Panel 02: A shot of Alice a little from behind. Her posture is correct and precise as always, but her stiffness suggests carefully controlled grief.

ALICE: It's been hard.

Panel 03: Alice stands up such that she and Molly are now level.

ALICE: I know I ended it poorly, with Nick. But I'm trying to handle things right going forward, you know?

Panel 04: Alice looks at Molly and smiles faintly - an attempt to reassure her.

ALICE: Getting my own place has helped a lot.

Panel 05: A close up of Molly's face.

ALICE (off panel): And you've been really great, too, Moll.

Panel 06: Alice reaches out to grasp Molly's arm.

ALICE: You've been there for me this whole time. Thank you.

Panel 07: Alice hitches her bag up her shoulder. She seems to collect back into her usual, businesslike self.

ALICE: Anyway, I'd better get back.

MOLLY: OK, sister.

Panel 08: A close up of Alice's face.

ALICE: I'm like a month behind on paperwork, and one of our suppliers won't answer my calls.

Page 76

Panel 01: Alice starts walking away from Molly, towards the exit.

ALICE: You know how much I hate being disorganized!

MOLLY: Yeah.

Panel 02: Alice waves back to Molly as she approaches the door.

ALICE: See you tomorrow.

MOLLY: Yeah, see you tomorrow.

Panel 03: A close up of Alice's hand on the doorknob as she closes it behind her.

ALICE (off panel): Don't be late!

Panel 04: A shot of Molly standing in her apartment, still looking down the hall to the door that just closed behind her sister.

Panel 04: Molly sits back down in front of the tower. She's looking over her shoulder as if to confirm that she's no longer under scrutiny.

Panel 05: A close up of Molly's hands clicking the tower back open.

Page 77

Panel 01: A shot of sunlight through early autumn trees.

Panel 02: A shot of the bakery's door and window, with the sign flipped to "Open".

Panel 03: Molly opens an oven to a waft of steam.

Panel 04: She pulls out a tray laden with several beautiful loaves of bread.

Panel 05: A close up of the loaves being tipped out on to a cooling rack.

Page 78

Panel 01: Molly stands in front of the counter and pulls her oven mitts off her hands.

Panel 02: From the same counter, she picks up a tin of muffins.

Panel 03: Holding the muffins, she elbows her way through the kitchen doors.

Panel 04: A close up of Molly's face looking suddenly wary.

Panel 05: A shot of the cafe. Alice is at the counter talking with Eugene (a handsome man about Molly's age).

Panel 06: A closer shot of Alice and Eugene. They're speaking in low tones (small speech bubbles with barely legible words). Eugene's expression is open, full of earnest entreaty. Alice's posture is more withdrawn, and her eyes are downcast, but she looks as if she's affected by whatever he's saying.

EUGENE (low): Are you sure?

Page 79

Panel 01: Alice and Eugene look up to notice Molly.

Panel 02: A shot of Molly standing in the doorway holding the tray of muffins, with Alice and Eugene's heads in the foreground.

EUGENE: Hey, Molly.

MOLLY (wary): Hey.

Panel 03: Alice and Eugene return their attention to each other. Molly is unloading her muffins, but still watching them with evident interest.

ALICE (small speech bubble, almost a whisper): I don't know.

Panel 04: The conversation is interrupted by Eugene's friend, Ivan (a man in his mid-twenties), who has opened the front door to lean into the cafe.

IVAN: Eugene! We gotta open!

Panel 05: Eugene ignores Ivan for the moment and addresses Alice.

EUGENE: Think about it for a bit.

IVAN: Bro, come on!

Panel 06: Eugene hurries off to relieve Ivan. Alice watches him, and Molly, in the foreground, watches them both.

Page 80

Panel 01: Alice has returned to her spot behind the counter and is busying herself with cleaning the espresso machine. Molly watches her from her spot beside the door. She's unloaded all her muffins, but she doesn't return to the bakery. The cafe, for the moment, is empty of customers.

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: Since when are you friends with the record store boys?

Panel 03: A close up of Alice still absorbed in cleaning the machines.

ALICE: Eugene's a nice guy.

Panel 04: Alice looks around at Molly who is still by the door holding her empty tray.

MOLLY: It looked like he was being kind of pushy.

Panel 05: Close up of Alice. She looks at Molly with a "what the fuck do you know about it" expression. Mingled irritation and amusement, with a touch of melancholy.

ALICE: He wasn't being pushy.

Panel 06: Sufficiently admonished, Molly tucks her tray under her arm, and moves towards the bakery doors.

Panel 07: A close up of Alice's arm as she reaches out to stop Molly.

ALICE: Hey.

Page 81

Panel 01: A shot of Alice and Molly

ALICE: How are you doing, these days?

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY (confused): I'm fine.

Panel 03: A shot of Alice and Molly. Alice's expression has shifted to concern.

ALICE: You seem kind of distracted - I know things are crazy, right now. I haven't been a great sister...

MOLLY: No, you're good. It's all fine.

Panel 04: A close up of Alice's face. Even as she's answering her sister, her attention is visibly being pulled towards the door.

ALICE: OK...

Panel 05: Both the sisters turn towards the door to see a young woman enter - the same cool, well dressed girl that Molly took note of in the first bakery scene.

Panel 06: A close up of the girl's face. She's looking off to the side, and hasn't attended to the sisters, yet.

Panel 07: A close up of Molly's face reacting with the same blushing embarrassment that she demonstrated in the earlier scene.

Page 82

Panel 01: Like a loosed spring, Molly turns right around and walks towards the kitchen, keeping her head low as if this will make her less conspicuous.

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's head. Before she can flee, a voice calls from behind and halts her in her tracks.

RUBY (off panel): Molly!

Panel 03: A shot of the back of Ruby's head, with Molly in front of her. Molly, utterly awkward, has turned back around. Her greeting is stiff and stumbling.

RUBY: Holy shit, is that you?

MOLLY: Wow, hey... hey, how's it going?

Panel 04: A close up of Ruby's face.

RUBY: Hey!! I'm pretty good!

Panel 05: A close up of Molly's face.

RUBY (off panel): How's life been treating you?

MOLLY: Um, good. Fine.

Panel 06: A wider shot of the cafe. Molly introduces the girl to Alice, as if glad to foist the burden of conversation on to somebody else. Alice smiles, friendly and at ease.

MOLLY: This is Ruby. We went to art school together.

Page 83

Panel 01: Ruby addresses Alice but is looking back towards Molly.

RUBY: Oh man, let me tell you, Molly was the coolest, weirdest kid.

ALICE (affectionate, also looking at Molly): That sounds accurate.

Panel 02: Close up of Ruby.

RUBY: She did these... I don't even know how to describe them... these crazy dollhouse installations.

Panel 03: Ruby looks back towards Molly.

RUBY: That teacher was a real jerk about it, you remember that guy? What was his name?

Panel 04: Close up of Molly. She looks particularly embarrassed and deflated by this reference.

MOLLY: Uhh. You mean Professor McDermott.

Panel 05: A shot of Ruby still looking at Molly. She either doesn't notice Molly's awkwardness or is determined to push past it.

RUBY: Yeah, we all hated him.

Panel 06: A close up of Molly's hand gripping her empty tray.

Panel 07: A wide shot of the whole cafe. Molly is leaning back towards the door - she clearly wants to flee.

RUBY: Hey, I really missed you after you left. Let's get coffee, sometime. Catch up and stuff.

Page 84

Panel 01: Molly, sensing an approaching "goodbye", starts to back up.

MOLLY: Yeah, totally.

Panel 02: Ruby pulls out her phone.

RUBY (earnest): For real, though. What's your number?

Panel 03: A close up of Molly's hand braced on the door, ready to open it.

MOLLY (off panel): Um...

Panel 04: Ruby has her hand poised over the phone screen and is looking at Molly expectantly.

Panel 05: A close up of Molly's face. She's blushing and miserable.

MOLLY: Seven seven eight, two six four, six four five seven.

Panel 06: A close up of Ruby's finger tapping her phone.

RUBY (off panel): Cool.

Panel 07: A medium shot of everyone standing around. Ruby puts her phone away. Molly clutches the empty tray to her chest and leans further into the doorway.

MOLLY: I'd better get back...

RUBY: Of course! Sorry to interrupt your work day!

Panel 08: In the foreground, Molly retreats into the bakery. Ruby is still visible in the shot.

RUBY: I'm really glad I ran into you, though.

MOLLY: Yeah, nice seeing you.

Panel 09: Molly finally makes it through the doors. Alice and Ruby are still audible behind her.

ALICE (off panel): Can I get you anything?

RUBY: Thanks, a coffee would be great.

Page 85

Panel 01: A close up of Molly. She's raised her hand to her head, finally able to visibly express her anxiety.

RUBY (off panel): And ohh, the muffins look good, maybe one of those.

Panel 02: Molly hunches over her baking counter in a universal pose of "Agghhh that was so fucking stressful".

Panel 03: A close up shot of Molly's apron pocket. It emits a muffled beep/vibration.

Panel 04: Molly pulls out her phone. It displays a new text from a new number:

604 816 8766: "It's Ruby!"

Panel 05: A close up of Molly's face.

Panel 06: A close up of Molly's hand placing the phone face down on the counter.

Panel 07: A shot of Molly leaning against the counter, her phone a little ways away.

Page 86

Panel 01: Molly looks back towards her phone as it buzzes a second time.

MOLLY: Fucking hell...

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's hand swiping the phone back on.

Panel 03: Molly looks at her phone, confused.

Panel 04: A close up of the phone, which displays the following message:

Nick Armstrong: Hi Molly. I hope you're well. This is a message to give you three months' notice to vacate your rental apartment. I'm planning to sell the suite, so I'd also like to arrange times for open house viewings. Please message me back, so I know you've received this. Thanks.

Panel 05: An extreme close up of Molly's face. She stares at the phone for a moment in utter horror.

Panel 04: Molly looks over her shoulder towards the door (through which Alice is working).

Panel 05: She looks back down at her phone, clicking it off.

Panel 06: A close up of Molly's hands opening a drawer and dropping the phone inside.

Panel 07: A close up of Molly's hand shutting the drawer.

Panel 08: A shot from behind of Molly leaning against the counter. Her posture shows defeat and exhaustion.

Page 87

Panel 01: Ystril is sitting snug in their new tower, reading an enormous tome of wizardry. They have a steaming mug of tea and a dainty little snack beside them. The tower has been furnished in loving and

obsessive detail.

Panel 02: A close up of the same shot to underline Ystril's extreme self-satisfaction.

Page 88

A shot of the tower (though still in cutaway). All of this coziness is abruptly shattered by a ringing shout of "YSTRIL" - in runic-looking lettering that fills the sky. The shout includes four individual "YSTRILS" in overlapping lines, to indicate four voices.

Panel 02: Ystril stands up at the sound of their own name.

Panel 03: They snatch their cloak and staff out of the air.

Panel 04: They descend the spiraling stairs of their tower at a pace that falls just short of anxious.

YSTRIL: What could they possibly want?

Panel 05: A shot of Ystril leaving their tower.

Panel 06: A shot of Ystril's feet hopping over the line of stepping stones (with some reminder that beneath the ocean lurks an unnamed threat).

Panel 07: A long shot of Ystril winding up the path towards the village.

Page 89

Panel 01: As Ystril walks by Gronia's place, she sticks her head out her casement just as she did in the earlier scene.

GRONIA: What sort of trouble are you in now, Ystril, that all four of the gods have summoned you by name?

Panel 02: Ystril pauses and turns to look at Gronia.

YSTRIL (annoyed): How am I to know, Gronia? I suppose they'll tell me when I get there.

Panel 03: Gronia turns into a crow and flies out her window.

Panel 04: Crow-Gronia keeps pace with Ystril as they hurry towards their moored boat.

GRONIA: It can't be good. And it woke me up from my nap, besides.

Panel 05: A close up of Ystril's feet stepping into their little boat.

Panel 06: Gronia manages to find purchase on the wizard's shoulder just in time to avoid being left behind.

Panel 07: A shot of the boat scudding along at top speed, leaving the dock behind.

GRONIA: At least you know not to keep them waiting...

Page 90

Panel 01: A very long shot of Ystril's boat travelling over the water. The ocean is preternaturally still throughout this scene, and the boat cuts a distinct line.

Panel 02: The boat slows down a little as it enters a reef of jutting rocks.

Panel 03: Beyond the prow, in the distance, four large rocks jut out of the water to make a rough circle. Atop each rock stands a monstrous creature - one of which is Ell.

Panel 04: Having drifted into the circle of rocks, Ystril's boat sits lightly on the quiet water, surrounded by the gods who now form a ring around the wizard.

Page 91

Panel 01: Ystril bows low. The four gods stand visible before them.

YSTRIL: Uuon of the Eye, Ivelt of the Ear, Ell of the Hand, and Lios of the Mouth.

Panel 02: A close up of Ystril as they complete their bow.

YSTRIL: I greet you all most cordially.

Panel 03: A close up of Lios, the most intimidating-looking of the four. He appears disgusted by this lukewarm, almost taunting, introduction.

LIOS: They GREET us, do they? Feh!

Panel 04: A shot of all the gods in conference. Ystril is a tiny creature below them.

L IOS: Mortals used to prostrate themselves before us in fear of their lives. They never would have dared approach without a barge full of gifts and the smoking blood of many oxen.

I VELT: Wizards are insolent creatures. I don't know why Ell stoops to barter with them.

Panel 05: A close up of Ell.

ELL (slightly arch): We have summoned you, Ystril, because the oceans have grown still. No wind will stir them.

Panel 05: A close up of Ystril. Gronia, perched on their shoulder, appears alarmed by their speech.

YSTRIL: Pardon me, mighty god of the Hand, but that sounds like a streak of fair weather.

Page 92

Panel 01: A close up of Ell. Their neck ruff fluffs up in indignation.

Panel 02: Gronia looks a ruffled, too, as she admonishes Ystril.

GRONIA: Be careful, you fool!

Panel 03: A shot of Ell looming over Ystril.

ELL: You used to visit me every season, to request that I shelter your island from the storms.

Panel 04: A shot of Ystril looking up at Ell.

YSTRIL: Indeed, you have always been generous. But Ad Era prospers, now - I have no need of such aid.

Panel 05: The last god, Uuon, stirs herself to speak. She casts a shadow over Ystril's boat.

UUON: You have a new tower, wizard.

Panel 06: Ystril bends forward in a pretense of humility.

YSTRIL: God of the Eye, I'm flattered! My humble home is well below your notice, surely...

Page 93

Panel 01: A shot of Uuon.

UUON: I admit, there is one thing I cannot solve. How did you build it so quickly?

Panel 02: A close up of Ystril. They are struggling to keep up their casual facade.

Panel 03: A close up of Uuon's eerie, masked, one-eyed face.

UUON: The sun set on a ruin and rose on a tower.

Panel 04: Ystril tries to be dismissive, but they are clearly uncomfortable.

YSTRIL: That is the nature of wizardry, wise Uuon.

Panel 05: An extreme close up of Uuon's face.

UUON: What did it cost?

Panel 06: Ystril performs a shiny little illusion spell, creating lights or shapes in the air above them.

YSTRIL: My magic flows freely...

Panel 07: A mid shot of Uuon.

UUON: There is always a cost.

Panel 08: A very long shot of all the gods perched on their rocks.

Page 94

Panel 01: Ystril makes an impatient gesture.

YSTRIL: Indeed! Well.

YSTRIL: I hope I've convinced you all that nothing's amiss, in which case I'll take my leave.

Panel 02: A close up of Uuon's face.

UUON: Beware your arrogance, mortal. Do not tamper with powers beyond your understanding.

Panel 03: Ystril bows once again. Their posture is correct, but their expression is one of contained irritation.

YSTRIL: May I go?

Panel 04: All the gods look down at the wizard.

UUON: You may, for now.

ELL: We release you, Ystril.

Panel 05: A very long shot of Ystril sailing away, leaving the shrinking shapes of the gods behind them.

LIOS (to the others): I still think we should have eaten them and scattered their bones as a warning.

Page 95

Panel 01: A long shot of Ystril still sailing. The rocks are now specks in the distance behind them.

Panel 02: A mid shot of the boat with a large cutaway of ocean below. The water is full of grasping arms and hands that can't quite break the calm surface. It's a watery underworld from which its inhabitants want out.

Page 96

Panel 01: Gronia launches off of Ystril's shoulder.

Panel 02: She transforms from a bird back into an old woman standing in the boat.

Panel 03: A close up of Gronia's face.

GRONIA: You can't keep it up.

Panel 04: A close up of Ystril's face.

YSTRIL: I haven't a clue what you mean.

Panel 05: An extreme close up of Gronia's face.

GRONIA: It grows worse, the longer you evade it.

Panel 06: Ystril makes a gesture of dismissal and frustration.

YSTRIL: Nothing's amiss, Gronia! Leave me alone!

Panel 07: A close up of the hands beneath the water.

Panel 08: A close up of Gronia's face looking down towards them.

GRONIA: It's almost too late.

Panel 09: For a second time, the abrupt shadow of Molly's hand overcasts the scene, switching us back into reality.

Page 97

Panel 01: A close up of Molly's hand plucking up the tiny Gronia figurine.

Panel 02: Molly pulls the lid off a nearby box with one hand and sticks Gronia inside it with the other.

Panel 03: A close up of Molly's hand shutting the box. It is made of translucent plastic, and we can faintly see Gronia's shape within it.

Panel 04: A close up of Molly's hand more gently picking up the Ystril figurine.

Panel 05: Molly gently nudges a bit of dust off the figurine with a small cloth.

Panel 06: She blows on it carefully.

Panel 07: Molly places Ystril back inside their tower.

Panel 08: In the fantasy world, Ystril settles back into their library chair, re-opens their magical tome, and exhales with relief.

Panel 09: A closer shot of Ystril. The dainty pastry is still fresh. The mug is still steaming.

Page 98

Panel 01: An extreme close up of Ystril's book, and their hand holding the cup - almost dissolving into abstract lines.

Panel 02: A long shot of the bakery block.

Panel 03: A close up of Molly's hand pushing the front door open from the outside.

Panel 04: Inside the bakery, Alice is making coffee for a customer. Molly blasts through the door in a state of extreme dishevelment.

Panel 05: Alice sees Molly as she hurries in and heads towards the kitchen. Alice speaks as if responding to a question, but she's looking at Molly as she does so.

ALICE: Muffins in half an hour.

ALICE: Is that about right?

MOLLY: Yeah! Sorry! Half an hour!

Page 99

Panel 01: A shot of Molly rushing through the doors.

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's hand grabbing her apron.

Panel 03: Molly fumbles the apron on, midway through tying it at the back.

Panel 04: A close up of Molly's face as she notices something a little to the side.

Panel 05: A shot of Alice's little business desk. It bears its usual array of notebooks and laptop and coffee mug, but it also has a pamphlet on it.

Panel 06: A close up of the pamphlet shows that it advertises an MBA program from a local university.

Panel 07: Molly looks back over her shoulder as if caught in an illicit act.

Panel 08: Alice is leaning most of the way through the doors. She almost-closes them behind her, very discreet.

ALICE: What happened? I had to call about six times before you picked up.

Page 100

Panel 01: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY (flustered): I slept through it. I'll catch up, I promise.

Panel 02: Alice seems more amused than angry.

ALICE: Mr Pritchard came in fifteen minutes ago. He told me this was the worst cafe on the East Side.

MOLLY: God, I'm sorry.

Panel 03: A close up of Alice's face.

ALICE: That's OK, now I have leverage. Can I leave an hour early? Do you mind closing this afternoon?

Panel 04: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: Sure. Why?

Panel 05: Alice is tentative, but clearly pleased with herself.

ALICE: I have a date.

Panel 06: A shot of Alice and Molly. Molly appears irritated.

MOLLY: You and Nick *just* broke up!

Panel 07: A close up of Alice's face. She's hurt.

Panel 08: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: Sorry, yeah, fine.

Panel 09: A shot of the two sisters. Alice still has her hand on the door to keep it propped open, but she's standing as far into the back room as she can.

ALICE: It's been two months, Moll.

MOLLY: Whatever. Yes.

Page 101

Panel 01: A shot of Alice and Molly. Alice is looking back towards the cafe - still absorbed in the conversation but not wanting to abandon her post.

ALICE: Plus, I need something to distract me. Nick wants to meet tomorrow morning.

MOLLY (freaked out): Why? What about?

Panel 02: A close up of Alice peering back through the door.

ALICE: Divorce papers, probably.

Panel 03: Alice returns her attention to Molly and notices her anxiety.

Panel 04: A shot of Molly and Alice.

ALICE: What's up with you?

MOLLY: Nothing, I'm fine.

Panel 05: Alice returns through the doors to deal with the customer.

Panel 06: Molly finishes tying her apron.

Panel 07: A close up of her hands as she hefts a bag of flour.

Page 102

Panel 01: A close up of flour being poured into a mixing bowl.

Panel 02: As Molly pours, she casts a sideways glance at the pamphlet across the room.

Panel 03: A closer shot of the table from Molly's perspective.

Panel 04: Molly rubs her hand across her face and sniffs. We can't see her expression behind her glasses.

Panel 05: A long shot of the bakery room, with Molly standing at the counter. She doggedly gets on with making muffins.

Page 103

Panel 01: A shot of Tactics Games and Hobbies from the outside.

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's hands dumping an armful of craft and modeling supplies on to a surface in front of her.

Panel 03: A shot of Molly and Barb standing across from each other at the store register. Barb has begun ringing up the items. Molly is looking at her phone.

BARB: Big project, huh!

MOLLY: Mm-hmm.

Panel 04: Molly interrupts Barb's scanning to show her the phone screen.

MOLLY: Hey, do you think you could order this for me?

Panel 05: Regarding Molly with some amount of wariness, Barb takes the phone, adjusting her reading glasses in preparation to look at it.

Page 104

Panel 01: The phone screen shows a Belgian website with an image of another high-quality model (a big, sturdy cog ship).

BARB (off panel): Look, I know this stuff is addictive, OK?

Panel 02: A shot of Molly and Barb. Barb gestures to the store around her as she hands the phone back to Molly.

BARB: It's not like I do this for the money! But the price of these models...

Panel 03: A close up of Molly's face looking both pleading and determined.

BARB (off panel): I mean, aren't you a baker or something?

MOLLY: I'm good for it.

Panel 04: A shot of Barb over Molly's shoulder. Barb is miserable. She clearly feels uncomfortable, but much like in the previous scene, she hates saying no to anyone.

MOLLY: Please...

Panel 05: A shot from behind Molly of the two of them standing at the counter. Barb takes a notepad and starts jotting down the name and item code of the model.

BARB: I'll call the distributor and see.

MOLLY: Yes! Thank you!

Panel 06: A close up of Molly's face looking triumphant.

BARB (off panel): And the shipping costs a fortune, just so you know.

MOLLY: That's fine.

Panel 07: Barb returns to ringing up the regular items. She eyes Molly sideways, as if worried that she'll spring another unreasonable demand.

Page 105

A long shot of the store. Barb tries to return to their normal banter, but it's forced.

BARB: Trying out the new foam, eh? I hear it's good.

MOLLY: Yeah, I hope so.

Panel 02: A shot of Molly's car driving down the bakery block.

Panel 03: Molly's car pulls into a parking spot a little ways down the street, one or two stores past the bakery.

Panel 04: A shot of the car headlights on.

Panel 05: A shot of the car headlights off.

Panel 06: Molly sits in the driver's seat. She doesn't get out but reaches into her jacket pocket.

Panel 07: a close up of the phone still showing the model she asked Barb to order.

Page 106

Panel 01: A close up of Molly's face in the dark, faintly lit by the phone's light. She looks pleased.

Panel 02: Molly's finger on the phone screen, flicking the website window away.

Panel 03: Another close up of Molly's face, the pleasure falling away from her expression.

Panel 04: A shot of the phone's text screen. The text from Nick is still at the top, now with several "unread" notifications. The text from Ruby is also near the top. (Alice and her mother are the only other people who text her).

Panel 05: She clicks on the Nick text.

Panel 06: We see a cascade of texts, starting with the message from the previous scene:

Nick Armstrong: Hi Molly. I hope you're well. This is a message to give you three months' notice to vacate your rental apartment. I'm planning to sell the suite, so I'd also like to arrange times for open house viewings. Please message me back, so I know you've received this. Thanks.

Nick Armstrong: Hi Molly. Please text me back to confirm you've received this.

Nick Armstrong: I'm hoping to start showing the suite on Thursday the 12th. Let me know if this works for you.

Nick Armstrong: Hi Molly - please respond asap. I hope you're doing well - and Alice, too.

Panel 07: Molly stuffs her phone back in her pocket.

Panel 08: A close up of her hand grabbing the plastic bags full of new supplies from the passenger seat.

Panel 09: A shot of Molly abruptly turning her head, suddenly noticing something outside her driver's side window.

Page 107

Panel 01: A shot from behind Molly that shows Alice exiting the record shop with the handsome young man, Eugene.

Panel 02: Alice and Eugene turn towards each other. They appear to be having a serious conversation.

Panel 03: They kiss.

Panel 04: And then they embrace - it looks very intense and romantic. More like a secret rendezvous than a "date".

Panel 05: a shot of Molly ducked low, trying to keep her head below the window to avoid being caught.

Panel 06: A close up of her face. She appears shaken. She doesn't like whatever she just saw.

Page 108

Panel 01: A close up of Molly's hands washing a mixing bowl in the bakery sink.

Panel 02: Molly is standing over the sink, wringing out the washing cloth. She appears visibly moody.

Panel 03: Molly wipes down the counter beside the sink.

Panel 04: She looks back over her shoulder, glaring.

Panel 05: A shot of the bakery doors through which Alice is presumably working.

Panel 06: A close up of Molly's face as she leans back into her work. She appears irritated.

Panel 07: A close up of Molly's hand scrubbing the counter.

Panel 08: A close up of the cloth leaving a wet trail on the counter.

Page 109

Panel 01: Molly looks behind her and a little up, towards the wall on the other side of the room.

Panel 02: A shot of the clock. It indicates closing time (just past four).

Panel 03: Molly strides towards the swinging doors, tossing her rag behind her.

Panel 04: A close up of Molly's face peering through the doors. On the public side, Molly's huffiness deflates back into shyness.

Panel 05: Alice is saying goodbye to a customer - seeing them out as they leave. They're at the tail end of a conversation, laughing together about something.

CUSTOMER: That's SO true...

ALICE: Haha! Well, good luck on the exam!

CUSTOMER (waving goodbye): Yeah, I'll need it! Thanks!

Panel 06: A close up of Alice's hand flipping the "Open" sign to "Closed".

Panel 07: Alice returns to her spot behind the counter, where she's looking through a stack of mail. Molly eyes her, as she picks up the remaining pastries from the case.

Page 110

Panel 01: A shot of Alice peering at envelopes.

ALICE: Hey, do you feel like going out for dinner in a bit?

Panel 02: Molly, huffiness hidden behind a fear of confrontation, moves to retreat back into the kitchen. Her response is sullen.

MOLLY: I dunno.

Panel 03: Molly is now on the other side of the kitchen doors.

ALICE (off panel): I haven't had pizza in a while. Maybe that place on Main Street...

Panel 04: A close up of Molly tipping the old pastries into a tupperware.

Panel 05: A close up of Molly's hands closing the tupperware lid.

Panel 06: A shot of Molly bending down to put the tupperware away in a lower cupboard.

Panel 07: A shot of Molly standing up, paused between tasks.

Panel 08: A shot of Molly slightly turning her head in response to hearing her name. Something about the tone freezes her in place.

ALICE (off panel): Molly...

Page 111

Panel 01: Alice emerges through the kitchen doors, brandishing the contents of one of her envelopes: a credit card bill.

ALICE: What the hell is this...

Panel 02: A close up of Alice's hand as she places - not to say slams - the bill on the table in front of Molly.

ALICE (off panel): Tactics Games and Hobbies...

Panel 03: A shot of the sisters facing off across the counter with the bill between them. Alice is leaning forward, aggressive, and Molly is still frozen upright.

ALICE: This can't be right. Tell me this number is a mistake!

Panel 04: A close up of Alice's irate, almost disbelieving face.

Panel 05: A close up of Molly's shocked, miserable face.

Panel 06: A shot of the two sisters.

MOLLY: I'll pay it back... I was going to tell you to take it out of my salary.

Page 112

Panel 01: A closer shot of Alice's face. For a moment, she's too livid to respond.

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's face. Even she knows that her rationale is pathetic.

MOLLY: It's sort of the same thing...

Panel 03: A shot of the sisters. Alice is shaking her hands in the air to illustrate her exasperation.

ALICE: Oh my fucking god, Molly! That's not how this works!

Panel 04: A shot of both sisters' heads across from each other. Molly's expression turns ugly as she snaps from shock and embarrassment to bitterness.

MOLLY: At least I'm not fucking around with the record store guy.

Panel 05: A longer shot of the bakery. A brief, shocked pause as both of them absorb Molly's sudden and hugely uncharacteristic lash-out.

Page 113

Panel 01: A close up of Alice's face.

ALICE (defensive despite herself): What does that have to do with anything?

Panel 02: A shot of Molly over Alice's shoulder.

MOLLY: Was he the affair?

ALICE: Why does it matter? Why do you care?

Panel 03: A shot of both sisters.

MOLLY: I thought you wanted to "handle it right".

ALICE: Yeah, but it's been two months!

Panel 04: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: That's nothing! You were with Nick for NINE years!

Panel 05: A shot of both sisters. Molly throws her hands up in a gesture of frustration.

ALICE: Yeah, but I told you-

MOLLY (interrupting her): You can't just suddenly change everything!

Panel 06: A close up shot of Alice's hand grabbing the bill off the table.

Panel 07: A shot of Alice waving the bill at Molly.

ALICE: Can we talk about how I'm trying to keep our business afloat, and you spent over one grand on a TOY?

Page 114

Panel 01: A shot of Molly yelling.

MOLLY: Well maybe if you hadn't slept with Eugene, then Nick wouldn't have-

Panel 02: A shot of Alice flushed with emotion.

ALICE: Wouldn't have what!?

Panel 03: A shot of both sisters. Molly is sullen.

ALICE: Wouldn't have taken away your free ride?

Panel 04: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: I think you were a jerk.

Panel 05: A close up of Alice's face.

ALICE (reflexive): Shut the fuck up. You don't know anything about it.

Panel 06: A shot of the sisters standing across from each other, silent.

Panel 07: Another shot of them both. Molly hasn't shifted, but Alice is gesturing - almost pointing - at Molly.

ALICE: I mean, I made ONE mistake... I've been dealing with your shit for YEARS!

ALICE: I do everything for you!

MOLLY: I never asked you to...

Page 115

Panel 01: A shot of the sisters' heads. Alice looks like she's on the verge of tears. Molly remains sullen and silent.

ALICE: Wow, Molly.

Panel 02: Alice starts to cry. For a moment she tries to hold it in.

Panel 03: Then she can't anymore. She rubs her face and sniffs. Angry, frustrated tears,

Panel 04: Alice turns to her little desk and starts stuffing things in her bag. Closer to the foreground, Molly is still standing with her arms crossed, hunched forward.

ALICE: OK, well...

Panel 05: Alice walks through the kitchen doors towards the front.

ALICE: See you next week, I guess.

Panel 06: A shot of Molly through the closing doors, still standing in the same spot.

Panel 07: A panel of black space. The doors have closed.

Page 116

Panel 01: A shot of the ocean churning with greedy, grasping arms.

Panel 02: A very long shot to show the water rising over Ad Era. Storm clouds are pouring out rain, and the wind is whipping the waves into peaks and troughs. The village is almost completely engulfed. Ystril's tower, too, is disappearing. The orb that floats above it is dimmed by the weather.

Panel 03: A long shot of Ystril on the roof of the tower, shrinking away from the water as it hungers towards them.

Panel 04: A closer shot of the same. The water rises higher with each panel.

Page 117

Panel 01: Ystril yells towards the sky, desperate.

YSTRIL: Ell of the Hand, I beseech your aid!

Panel 02: Nobody answers, and Ystril continues to yell.

YSTRIL: Uuon! Ivelt! Lios!

Panel 03: A watery hand reaches out and tugs at Ystril's red cloak.

YSTRIL: Hear me, please!

Panel 04: A few pieces of detritus float along the surface of the water, and Ystril sees their small boat slide by.

Panel 05: They leap on to it just as the water reaches the top of the tower.

Panel 06: Ystril has just made it on to their boat when a bolt of lightning cracks down from the sky and splits the glowing orb of light that hung above the tower.

Page 118

Panel 01: A shot of the water's surface. It has risen past the crenellations, and the tower is now a dark shape beneath the surface. Without the glowing orb, the world is abruptly very dark.

Panel 02: A shot of Ystril sitting stunned in their boat.

Panel 03: A close up of Ystril's face looking down towards the water, utterly terrified.

Panel 04: The inhabitants of the ocean are no longer anonymous, and sometimes a distinct face bubbles up. We see Gronia's shade, sightless and expressionless, grasping blindly amongst the others.

Panel 05: A long shot of Ystril in their boat. Reaching hands continue to harry Ystril from beneath the water.

Panel 06: A longer version of the same shot. At last they are alone on the dark, unbroken ocean. Nothing and no one else has survived the flood.

Page 119

Full page: An almost completely dark page. A darker shadowy shape abstractly suggests the submerged tower.

Part Three

Page 120 and 121

A third map of Ad Era. This one is a picture of destruction. The ocean now covers everything, but we see a dark shadow beneath it where the island now lies engulfed. Unlike the other two maps, this one is relatively text and annotation-free.

Page 122

Full Page: A very long shot of Molly's neighborhood. The sky takes up most of the page.

Page 123

Panel 01: Molly's car is parked in front of Tactics Games and Hobbies.

Panel 02: A long shot of the store's interior. Molly is standing at the checkout desk. She's brought the tower in a box - though obviously not its original box.

Page 124

Panel 01: Molly is showing the tower to Barb, who looks stressed and (finally) openly frustrated with Molly.

MOLLY: Everything's intact.

Panel 02: Barb is not impressed. She's looking at Molly over her reading glasses, her mouth a thin line.

BARB: I see you've done some custom work on the inside.

Panel 03: A close up of Molly looking pleading and desperate.

MOLLY: Yeah. I thought... maybe it would look cool if you used it for a window display. That's what you originally wanted to do, right?

Panel 04: A shot of Barb and Molly facing each other across the counter. Barb is quiet, thinking, but she doesn't appear to be swayed by Molly's suggestion.

MOLLY: I could set it up for you... I made a bunch of furniture for it.

Panel 05: A slightly longer shot of the same. Molly's posture deflates even further at Barb's speech.

BARB: What about the other model you ordered? They've already shipped it... I'm guessing you can't pay for that, now, either.

Page 125

Panel 01: A close up of Molly's face. She is well admonished. Her silence is confirmation.

Panel 02: A close up of the tower awkwardly jutting from its makeshift box.

BARB (off panel): I don't have a lot of leeway with this business, Molly. I can't afford to take returns on requests like these...

Panel 03: A shot of Barb and Molly.

MOLLY: I know... I know, I'm really sorry.

BARB: I'll figure out what to do with the other one, but you'll have to take this back home.

Panel 04: A shot of the store's outside window with the sun reflecting off of it.

Page 126

Panel 01: A shot of early autumn trees in a strong wind. The sky is overcast.

Panel 02: Molly is sitting on a park bench, holding the box with the tower awkwardly jutting out of it. She's staring off into the middle distance, clearly not knowing what to do with herself now that her last desperate resort has failed.

Page 127

Panel 01: A close up of the box in Molly's lap, with the tower visible. She's holding it slackly, in contrast to her earlier attachment and excitement.

Panel 02: A close up of Molly looking upward.

Panel 03: The wind is blowing leaves through the air.

Panel 04: Molly turns her head at the sound of a voice coming from her right.

VOICE: Molly... hi, is that you?

Panel 05: It's Nick, Alice's husband. He has approached the bench and now hovers awkwardly nearby.

NICK: I just knocked on your door, but you weren't home.

Page 128

Panel 01: A close up of Nick's face.

NICK: Can I sit?

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's face. She retains a little of her deer in headlights quality, but her misery has temporarily eroded her social anxiety.

MOLLY: Sure.

Panel 03: Nick sits down next to Molly.

NICK: Did you get my texts? About the apartment?

Panel 04: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: Yeah.

Panel 05: Molly then remembers that she hasn't responded to any of them. She turns her head slightly towards Nick but seems to lack the capacity to care.

MOLLY: Sorry.

NICK: Oh, OK. Well.

Panel 06: A shot of Molly and Nick.

NICK: I was hoping to deal with that soon. I'd like to set up an open house next weekend.

Panel 07: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY (defeated): Sure.

Page 129

Panel 01: A long shot of Molly and Nick sitting on the bench. They spend a moment in silence. The park is lovely and sunny. The wind is whipping up the trees.

Panel 02: A close up of Nick's face.

NICK: I forgot the suite was right beside a park. I should add that to the listing.

Panel 03: A shot of Nick and Molly seated on the bench. Nick's question only makes Molly more miserable.

NICK: How's Alice?

MOLLY: Um...

MOLLY: She's good, I guess.

Panel 04: A close up of Nick's face.

NICK: I don't mean to put you in a weird position. I hope she's doing well.

Panel 05: Nick watches Molly out of the corner of his eye. He's hoping that Molly will take the bait and tell him a little more.

Panel 06: Then he gives up. He pulls out his phone and spends a moment scrolling through it.

Page 130

Panel 01: Molly studies Nick out of the corner of her eye, now. He looks deflated.

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: Uh... how have YOU been?

Panel 03: Nick looks up from his phone, surprised by the question.

Panel 04: A close up of Nick's face.

NICK: Oh well, you know. I can stay up and watch TV as late as I want.

Panel 05: A shot of Molly and Nick. Nick looks so stricken, Molly can't help but feel sympathy.

Panel 06: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: All that stuff really sucked.

Panel 07: A close up of Nick's face.

NICK: Yeah... it did.

Panel 08: Nick gives Molly a pained, lopsided smile - genuinely grateful for the acknowledgement.

Page 131

Panel 01: Nick stands up, looking back down at his phone.

NICK: Well.

NICK: I should get going. I have a client waiting on an offer.

Panel 02: Nick flashes his horrid Real Estate Car Decal grin.

NICK: They're trying to low-ball us - in this market! Can you believe it?

Panel 03: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: Yeah, wow.

Panel 04: A shot of Nick and Molly.

NICK: Anyway. I'll be in touch about the apartment.

Panel 05: A shot of Nick walking away from the bench, waving back towards Molly.

NICK: Take Care, Molly.

MOLLY: Bye.

Panel 06: A long shot of the bench in the park. Molly once again sits alone.

Page 132

Panel 01: A shot of Molly's apartment from the outside at night.

Panel 02: Molly is sitting on her floor surrounded by her models, but she's not engaged with them. The tower - now an emblem of shame - is a little off to the side, still in a box. The lights are off, or nearly off - it looks as if Molly sat down before the sun set and hasn't moved since.

Panel 03: A closer shot of Molly sitting lost in thought.

Panel 04: A close up of Molly's face.

Page 133

Panel 01: A close up of Molly's phone placed face down on the ground.

Panel 02: The same shot with Molly's hand reaching down to pick the phone up.

Panel 03: Molly flicks on the phone.

Panel 04: The phone's face shows Alice's name in the contacts, with the "call" button ready to press. Molly's fingers hover over the screen.

Panel 05: A close up of Molly's face.

Panel 06: Her finger pushes the phone, but not to make the call. She closes the window.

Panel 07: A shot of Molly slumping forward, miserable.

Panel 08: A shot of the lower half of Molly's body in her cross-legged position. The islands of Ad Era are vague shapes in the foreground. It's either too dark to see details, or all the details have been removed. Molly's hand resting near the ground is still holding the phone.

Panel 09: A close up of Molly's face looking downward.

Panel 10: Molly tentatively taps her phone back on. Now the screen shows Ruby's text, which still reads:

604 816 8766: "It's Ruby!"

Panel 11: A close up of Molly's hands which have shifted to hold the phone in message-typing mode.

Panel 12: A shot of Molly sitting in the dark room. Sound effects indicate that she's tapping out a message.

Page 134

Panel 01: A shot of Molly's apartment window from the outside. It's faintly lit, now. The tapping sound effects continue.

Panel 02: A shot of a moody, cloudy daytime sky.

Panel 03: An outside shot of an unfamiliar cafe on an unfamiliar street.

Page 135

Panel 01: Molly and Ruby are sitting across from each other in the cafe- it's strange for Molly, and maybe strange for the reader, too - to be in this new but essentially similar space. Molly's reaction to the novelty is obvious - she's looking around with some mixture of interest and wariness.

Panel 02: A shot of Molly and Ruby at their table. Ruby seems amused.

RUBY: You don't get out of your own shop much, do you?

Panel 03: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: No, not really.

Panel 04: A close up of Ruby's face.

RUBY: I have to admit, I didn't think you'd ever return my text.

Panel 05: A shot of Molly and Ruby. Molly looks embarrassed.

MOLLY: Yeah. Um. I guess I can't blame you for that.

RUBY: I'm not sure if they'd invented the word "ghosting", back then...

Page 136

Panel 01: A small panel of Molly in extreme close-up, blushing furiously.

Panel 02: A shot of Molly and Ruby. Ruby is very much at ease, and amused with her own little moment of pique. She continues before Molly has a chance to stammer anything out.

RUBY (laughing): Haha - no need to respond - that was low! It was ages ago, anyway - we were still kids.

Panel 03: A close up of Molly's face. Strangely enough, this moment of awkward realness relaxes her. She releases a little of her anxiety.

MOLLY: I'm sorry that I never called you back. I've wanted to apologize... but yeah.

Panel 04: A close up of Ruby's face.

RUBY: I get it. You were having a rough time.

Panel 05: A shot of Molly and Ruby facing each other across the table.

RUBY: I wish you'd stayed at school, though.

RUBY: That professor really was a jerk, tearing you down like he did.

Panel 06: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: Yeah... I mean... I don't think he was wrong, though.

Panel 07: A close up of Molly's face. She looks up at Ruby, startled.

RUBY (off panel): Molly!

Page 137

Panel 01: A shot of Ruby over Molly's shoulder. Ruby's expression is dead serious.

Ruby: He was definitely wrong.

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's face. She looks thoughtful, for once, instead of miserable.

Panel 03: A shot of Molly and Ruby.

RUBY: So, baking is your thing, now? No more dollhouses?

MOLLY: No, I still do the um... yeah, the dollhouses.

Panel 04: A close up of Ruby's face.

RUBY: I'm glad. I always thought you might be the one person in our class who went on to be a famous eccentric artist.

Panel 05: Molly looks down at her coffee.

MOLLY: Nope.

Panel 06: She looks up again. A shot of Molly over Ruby's shoulder.

MOLLY: What about you?

Page 138

Panel 01: Ruby leans back in her chair and gazes out the window. Her expression is pleasantly wry. Just the right amount of good-natured self-deprecation.

RUBY: I'm a "graphic designer", now. Mostly user interfaces for apps, but it sounds artsy, right? At least my parents think I'm putting the BFA to good use.

Panel 02: A close up of Ruby's hand tapping the little notebook sitting in front of her.

RUBY: I still draw on my days off.

Panel 03: A close up of Molly's face. She looks crestfallen.

RUBY (off panel): My partner gets on my case if I let it slide.

Panel 04: A shot of Molly over Ruby's shoulder. She looks downward, trying to hide or control her sense of deflation.

Panel 05: A shot of Molly and Ruby sitting at the table. The table's contents are visible. Molly has a mug of coffee. Ruby has a cup of tea (with a tea bag trailing out of it). Ruby has her notebook in front of her.

RUBY: Was that your sister in the cafe with you?

MOLLY: Yeah.

RUBY: I thought you looked similar. That's hard, working with family...

Page 139

Panel 01: A close up of Molly's hands tearing up an empty pack of sugar.

MOLLY (off panel): Yeah, it is.

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: Actually, it's been a mess lately.

Panel 03: A close up of Ruby's face. She looks genuinely interested and concerned.

RUBY: How so?

Panel 04: A slightly pulled out shot of Molly and Ruby across from each other, in partial silhouette against the window beside them.

MOLLY: She... my sister broke up with her husband, who leases the place out to us.

MOLLY: He owns the whole building - my apartment, too.

Panel 05: Hearing how this sounds, when she says it out loud, Molly hastens to add (looking a little guilty and self-aware as she does so):

MOLLY: Um. Not that she should have stayed with him because of my apartment, obviously.

Panel 06: A close up of Ruby's face. She looks thoughtful. It's hard to tell if she sympathizes with Molly or not.

RUBY: Sounds like it's been a shitty few months for your sister.

Panel 07: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: Yeah, it has.

Page 140

Panel 01: A shot of Molly and Ruby.

MOLLY: We just had a huge fight about it. I should call her, but...

RUBY: Call her to apologize? Or to get an apology?

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: To apologize.

Panel 03: A close up of Molly's face (slightly zoomed out from the last shot).

MOLLY: But I'm still kind of mad at her.

Panel 04: A shot of Ruby with Molly's profile visible in the foreground.

RUBY: Because she's your sister.

MOLLY: Yeah, exactly.

RUBY: Which is also why you need to apologize.

Panel 05: A shot of Molly and Ruby. Ruby is laughing outright.

MOLLY: I can't really ghost her, can I...

RUBY: Hah!

Page 141

Panel 01: A close up of Ruby's face.

RUBY: Yeah, I think you should cut that out as a rule.

Panel 02: An extreme close up of Molly's face. She looks chagrined, but also a little pleased.

Panel 03: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: Can I look at your drawings?

Panel 03: A shot of Ruby over Molly's shoulder. Ruby smiles and hands the book over.

RUBY: Sure.

Panel 04: A longer shot of the two sitting in the cafe. Molly is starting to flip through the notebook.

Page 142

Panel 01: A shot of the regular cafe front (Cafe Llama).

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's hands as she lays ingredients over a slice of bread.

Page 143

Panel 01: Molly is in the back of the bakery putting together a sandwich.

Panel 02: A shot over Alice's shoulder as she opens the door. She doesn't cross the threshold. Her manner is very neutral and reserved. Molly is visible in the opening.

ALICE: Pickled onion sandwich?

Panel 03: Molly passes over the food. Her manner is ingratulatory by contrast, but Alice remains cold and professional.

MOLLY: Here.

Panel 04: A close up of Alice's face as she turns away and exits back through the doors. Her expression is blank. Molly peers after her.

ALICE. Thanks.

Panel 05: Molly watches the doors close.

Panel 06: Then she slumps against the counter.

Page 144

Panel 01: Molly leans against the counter in a bored, defeated posture. She looks at the ingredients before her (including a big sack of bulk flour - notably not fancy and Italian).

Panel 02: Molly stands up straighter and looks over to the desk area of the kitchen.

Panel 03: A close up of Molly's hand browsing the spines of several baking books.

Panel 04: Having chosen one from the selection, she flips through it.

Panel 05: A close up of the book's contents. It shows a recipe for beautiful, delicate pastries, far fancier than whatever she regularly makes for the cafe.

Panel 06: Molly looks over her shoulder towards the closed doors.

Panel 07: A shot of Molly standing back at the counter holding the book and picking up the nearby bag of flour.

Page 145

Panel 01: A close up of an egg cracking open.

Panel 02: A close up of a whisk stirring the contents of a bowl.

Panel 03: In the foreground, Molly is carefully pouring vanilla into a teaspoon. In the background, Alice is poking her head through the doors.

ALICE: I'm heading home. Are you going to clean and lock up?

Panel 04: Molly looks back over her shoulder. Alice is already retreating.

MOLLY: Yeah. For sure.

ALICE: Fine. See you on Tuesday.

Panel 05: Molly resumes her baking. She pours the spoonful of vanilla into the bowl.

Panel 06: A close up of batter being poured into a square tray.

Page 146

Panel 01: A shot of Molly pulling a tray of out of the oven. Several other things are still baking.

Panel 02: A close up of a knife cutting through a thin slab of sponge.

Panel 03: A close up of Molly as she obsessively applies lines of icing to tiny stacked cakes. Her posture and focus are similar to moments in the past when she was working with her miniatures.

Panel 03: A close up of the cakes and the trailing line of icing.

Panel 04: A close up of Molly's finger lowering a tiny decoration on to a cake's surface.

Panel 05: A shot of the finished cakes lined up in even rows. Beside them is a row of different, similarly small delicate pastries.

Page 147

Panel 01: A shot of Molly standing over her finished pastries. A pile of dirty bowls sits off to the side. If the clock is visible on the wall behind her, it shows the time as 4:30am.

Panel 02: A close up of her face as she takes her glasses off and wipes the exhaustion from her eyes.

Panel 03: A close up of her hand lifting one of the pastries from its place.

Panel 04: A shot of Molly taking a tentative bite.

Panel 05: A close up of Molly's face as she chews. She appears pleased.

MOLLY: Mnmhmh!

Panel 06: A long shot of the kitchen.

Page 148

Panel 01: A long shot of the outside of Alice's new apartment (from the beginning of Part II).

Panel 02: Molly stands in the hallway outside of Alice's door. She's holding a large box. Her clothing is perhaps a little less disheveled than usual - as if she's making a particular effort.

Panel 03: A close up of Molly's face. She hesitates, nervous.

Panel 04: A close up of her hand knocking at the door.

Panel 05: Alice opens the door. She's clearly surprised to see her sister.

Page 149

Panel 01: A shot over Molly's shoulder of Alice standing in the doorway. Her expression isn't welcoming.

ALICE: Molly... what are you doing here?

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: Hey sister. Can I come in?

Panel 03: A close up of Alice's face. She thaws just a touch.

Panel 04: A shot of Alice and Molly. Alice has backed up a little, indicating that Molly should enter.

ALICE: Sure.

Panel 05: Alice holds the door open for Molly, eyeing the box but not asking about it.

Panel 06: Alice leads Molly into the apartment.

ALICE: I don't think you've seen the place since I moved.

ALICE: Take your shoes off, please.

Page 150

Panel 01: A close up of Molly pulling her shoes off.

Panel 02: Molly follows Alice inside. Alice's apartment is lovely - tastefully decorated with a good balance of minimalism and coziness.

MOLLY (sincere): It looks really good.

ALICE: Thanks.

Panel 03: Alice has led Molly to her little kitchen table, and now turns around to face her. Alice hasn't thawed completely. She offers no comment but waits for Molly to explain herself.

Panel 04: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: Sister, I'm really sorry.

Panel 05: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: I'm sorry that I bought the expensive model, especially without talking to you about it.

MOLLY: And, um.

Panel 06: A shot of Alice over Molly's shoulder. Alice is upset by the memory, but we can see, now, that she's as much upset with herself as she is with Molly.

MOLLY: I'm sorry I said that other thing, about how you shouldn't have had the affair.

Page 151

Panel 01: A shot of Molly and Alice.

ALICE: Well... I probably shouldn't have.

MOLLY: But I said it in a stupid way.

Panel 02: A close up of Alice's face. She looks sad and thoughtful.

Panel 03: Alice is more open now. She's relieved that she has a chance to be honest. She gestures to her kitchen table.

ALICE: Here, sit down. Do you want some coffee?

Panel 04: A close up of Molly placing the box down on the table.

Panel 05: Molly sits down.

Panel 06: Alice fills a kettle with water in the foreground. Molly is visible in the background.

Page 152

Panel 01: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY: Um.

MOLLY: I guess I was jealous.

Panel 02: Alice turns around from her kettle-filling, surprised. She looks extremely skeptical.

ALICE: Of Eugene!?

Panel 03: Molly appears embarrassed and jumps to correct her.

MOLLY: No!! I mean... I was jealous that you did what you wanted.

Panel 04: Alice walks back to the table.

MOLLY: Or that you knew how to... or something.

ALICE: I wish I'd done what I wanted in a nicer way...

Panel 05: A close up of Alice's face.

ALICE: Nick's not a bad person. He deserved a more graceful ending.

Panel 06: Alice reaches out to Molly, truly willing to forgive her now.

ALICE: But I understand what you mean.

ALICE: Thanks, Moll.

Page 153

Panel 01: A shot of Molly and Alice. Molly looks a little ashamed at the return to the following topic, but mostly relieved by how the visit is going so far.

ALICE: We'll figure out how to deal with that model toy, too.

MOLLY: Yeah.

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's hands untying the string that holds her box together.

MOLLY: Um.

Panel 03: A close up as Molly opens it to reveal a selection of the delicate pastries she made the previous night.

MOLLY: Here. I made these for you.

Panel 04: A shot of Molly and Alice

MOLLY: I thought maybe we could expand our range... you know, to help us get more business...

Panel 05: A close up of Alice's face. She's touched and impressed, but also looks a little sad.

ALICE: Oh!

Page 154

Panel 01: Before Alice can say more, the Kettle starts screaming behind her.

ALICE: Sorry, one sec!

Panel 02: In the foreground, Alice pours steaming water into cups. In the background, Molly is nervous as she waits.

Panel 03: A shot of Molly's anxious face as Alice returns.

Panel 04: A shot of Molly and Alice. Alice is sitting back down in her chair, looking at the pastries on the table in front of her. Her admiration is clearly earnest, but she also seems a little hesitant - she doesn't dig right in.

ALICE: Oh, Moll, they're so beautiful.

Panel 05: A close up of Molly's face. She is frozen. She knows what's coming.

ALICE: But that's another thing we need to talk about.

Panel 06: A close up of Alice's face.

ALICE: I've been looking over everything, and I don't see how we can keep going. We'll lose more and more money until we're forced to close.

Panel 07: A shot of Molly and Alice.

ALICE: A place like ours... we can't do it without a benefactor. I mean, you were right in a way. We needed Nick.

Page 155

Panel 01: A long shot of the sisters through the apartment window.

ALICE: I'm thinking about going back to school and getting an MBA. Then maybe I'll learn enough to set us up properly...

Panel 02: A shot of Alice over Molly's shoulder. Molly's head is bowed forward.

ALICE: Moll?

Panel 03: A close up of Molly's face.

MOLLY (devastated): Yeah. Yeah, that makes sense.

Panel 04: A shot of the sisters at the table. Alice stands up.

ALICE: I'll get the coffee.

Panel 05: A close up of Molly's hands resting on the table in front of her. They're balled into fists.

Page 156

Panel 01: A close up of Molly's face as the shock gives way to upset.

Panel 02: She takes her glasses off to wipe tears from her eyes.

Panel 03: Then she hastily returns them to her face when Alice comes back with two steaming mugs.

Panel 04: A shot of Molly and Alice. Molly is still trying to hide her crying, though it's futile. Alice can see it plainly. Molly sniffs surreptitiously.

ALICE: I'm sorry. I'm really sad about it, too.

Panel 05: A close up of two steaming mugs of coffee.

Page 157

Panel 01: A shot of Molly over Alice's shoulder.

MOLLY: Yeah.

MOLLY: I guess I saw it coming, though.

Panel 02: A close up as Alice reaches an arm out across the table to grasp Molly's hand.

ALICE: I know this is hard, Moll.

Panel 03: A close up of Alice's head with Molly's head visible in the extreme foreground.

ALICE: But it's good. I promise it'll be good.

Panel 04: A shot of Molly over Alice's shoulder. Molly sniffs and wipes her face.

Panel 05: Alice moves to pick up one of the delicate pastries in front of her.

ALICE: Can I try one of these?

Page 158

Panel 01: A close up of Molly's face. She sniffs *one last time and turns her attention to the pastries.*

MOLLY (rallying herself): Right, of course.

Panel 02: A close up of Alice's hand picking up a little cake, and Molly's hand pointing to it.

MOLLY (off panel): That one's a miniature opera cake. Um, layers of almond sponge and coffee buttercream and chocolate.

Panel 03: Alice bites into the pastry and chews.

ALICE: It's fucking amazing.

Panel 04: Alice points at another.

ALICE: Ohh, what's that one?

MOLLY: Hmm. Custard tart with rhubarb compote and raspberry.

Panel 05: A long shot of the apartment. Molly is leaning forward on the table, now, engaged with Alice's delight in her creations. Alice has her head tilted back in obvious pleasure.

ALICE (around a mouthful): Fuck! That's so good.

Page 159

Panel 01: A very long shot of the room through the window. Alice and Molly are vague shapes.

Panel 02: An extreme long shot of Alice's neighborhood. Clouds scud through the sky.

Page 160

Panel 01: A very long shot of Ystril's boat sliding through a world of ocean. It doesn't look bleak like it did in the previous scene. The sky is strikingly beautiful - full of color and movement, and dotted with stars - suspended, for the moment, in a picturesque twilight.

Panel 02: Ystril approaches the same reef of rocks that we saw at the very beginning of the story.

Page 161

Panel 01: Ystril looks upward into the air.

Panel 02: For a second time, we watch the winged creature Ell circle around.

Panel 03: Ell descends to land in front of the wizard.

Panel 04: A shot of Ystril in their boat, and Ell on their rock, facing each other.

Page 162

Panel 01: A medium shot of Ell staring down at Ystril.

ELL: Well, wizard. I see that you survived.

Panel 02: Ystril looks around them, as if their definition of "survival" might be a little different.

YSTRIL: Yes.

Panel 03: Ystril then looks down at the ocean.

Panel 04: A close up of the ocean's surface. The shades beneath it are neutral, now - still there, but no longer grasping and hungry. They sway lightly, more or less absorbed in their own existence-as-water.

YSTRIL (off panel): But Ad Era is gone.

Page 163

Panel 01: A shot of Ell looming over Ystril.

ELL: There will always be storms to pry away the things you hold too tightly.

Panel 02: A close up of Ell's face.

ELL: Better to let go.

Panel 03: ELL launches back into the air.

Panel 04: They fly away, leaving Ystril alone on the water.

Page 164

Panel 01: Ystril watches Ell's form recede, letting the wind kick up their hair and flutter their robes.

Panel 02: A close up of Ystril's face. They look back down to the ocean.

Panel 03: The surface of the ocean, over the boat's edge.

Panel 04: A close up of the water. Gronia's shade emerges from the mass.

Panel 05: Ystril appears relieved to see her.

Panel 06: They bend down and reach into the water.

Panel 07: A close up of Ystril's hand reaching down into the water.

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Panel 01: Ystril hoists Gronia - magically enlivened as she passes through the barrier - out and up into the boat.

Panel 02: Gronia stands and shakes the water from her dress. She spits and coughs a little, but in the way of dreams and magical worlds-in-head, is more or less totally fine.

Panel 03: A close up of Gronia's face.

GRONIA: So! What now?

Panel 04: A shot of Ystril and Gronia standing in the boat, facing each other.

YSTRIL: I have nothing left, Gronia.

GRONIA: You made a real mess of things, Ystril, but you've come out the other side and that's something.

Page 166

Panel 01: A close up of Ystril's face.

YSTRIL: I liked Ad Era. I don't want another island.

YSTRIL: I don't want to let go.

Panel 02: A shot of Ystril over Gronia's shoulder. Ystril is surprised by her response.

GRONIA: Then don't!

Panel 03: A close up of Gronia and Ystril's feet standing in the boat. Below them, the sea is dark.

GRONIA (off panel): Ad Era's still down there. It might even surface someday - the sea is fickle, after all.

Panel 04: A close up of Gronia's face.

GRONIA: The question is, what are you going to do now?

Panel 05: A close up of Ystril's face.

YSTRIL: I don't know.

Panel 06: Gronia turns into a crow and flies impatient circles around Ystril's head.

GRONIA: Well, I've been gone for weeks. I want some toast and a nap!

Page 167

Panel 01: A close up of Ystril and the crow. Ystril seems miffed - almost offended - by Gronia's mundane demands. As if hunger and dramatic post-cataclysmic landscapes are not compatible.

YSTRIL: Gronia, this is a solemn moment. have some respect...

GRONIA: I find that respect goes very well with breakfast.

Panel 02: Gronia lands on Ystril's shoulder.

YSTRIL: Where on this plane of existence are we going to get toast?

GRONIA: We'll never find out if we stand here like a couple of wet lumps!

Panel 03: A close up of Gronia-as-crow, now firmly settled on Ystril's shoulder.

GRONIA: Try the Nymphwood, a ways Eyeward. Maybe Queen Vrreldith made it through the storm.

Panel 04: A long shot of the boat cuttings through the water. The speech bubbles grow smaller, too, as we withdraw from the fantasy.

YSTRIL: Ah, The Court of Braided Boughs! It's been ages since my last visit.

Panel 05: The boat sails further away.

YSTRIL: Vrreldith's always had a soft spot for me, you know...

Page 168

Panel 01: A great, wide shot of sea and sky. Ystril is now a tiny dot on the water.

Panel 02: A shot of the stars in the sky.

Panel 03: A close up of a few stars such that they make bright, jagged abstract shapes.

Page 169

Panel 01: A residential block lined with box-like "Vancouver Special" houses.

Panel 02: A shot of the inside of Molly's childhood bedroom focusing on a wall full of old posters and a dresser cluttered with knick knacks from her teenage years and lopsided papier-mâché creatures and other things.

Panel 03: A full shot of the room. Molly is sitting on the floor in front of a box. Other boxes are piled around her, implying that she's just moved in. Bright afternoon light is pouring in through a window.

Page 170

Panel 01: A close up of Molly's face. She appears to be thinking very hard about something, or maybe bracing herself for a task.

Panel 02: A close up of Molly's hands opening the box that sits in front of her.

Panel 03: She plucks little Ystril out, and looks at it, smiling slightly.

Panel 04: A close up of Molly's hand setting the figure on the floor. Gronia is there, too.

Panel 05: A close up of Molly's face peering into the box. She looks apprehensive.

Panel 06: A close up of Molly's hands pulling the beautiful tower out of the box.

Panel 07: Molly holds the tower aloft, about halfway out of the box.

Page 171

Panel 01: A close up of Molly's face turning towards the sound of a voice shouting from somewhere outside the room.

EDITH (off panel): Goosey, do you want some dinner?

Panel 02: Molly yells back towards the doorway.

MOLLY: Maybe a bit later!

Panel 03: Molly sighs.

Panel 04: A close up of Molly's arms and hands closing the box's lid flaps over the tower.

Panel 05: Molly sits beside the box, with her arm resting on its top.

Panel 06: She looks around the room, curious.

Panel 07: A shot of random childhood junk.

Panel 08: She looks in a different direction.

Panel 09: A shot of a dragon head on a stick leaned against the frame of a closet.

Panel 10: A close up of Molly's lower legs as she stands up.

Page 172

Panel 01: A shot of Molly standing up, zeroed in on the closet a few steps away.

Panel 02: A shot of Molly opening the closet. She looks intense, as if she expects to find something.

Panel 03: A close up of Molly's hand landing on a lumpy mass.

Panel 04: She pulls out a big, rough landmass that's covered in trees, a few of which fall off under her rough handling.

Panel 05: She plomps the big structure down on the floor.

Panel 06: A close up of her face as she regards it with apparent satisfaction.

Panel 07: Then she pulls her phone out and snaps a picture of it.

Page 173

Panel 01: Molly starts typing something on her phone but is interrupted by her mother once again yelling from outside her room.

EDITH (off panel) Are you sure, Goosey? It's getting cold!

Panel 02: A shot of Molly yelling back.

MOLLY (yelling): Yeah, mom! Thanks!

Panel 03: Molly resumes typing on her phone, and we see that she's sending a text to Ruby, attaching the picture she just took.

Molly (to Ruby in phone caption): New project!

Panel 04: Text sent, Molly flops down on her bed.

Panel 05: She leans back on her pillow. She looks contented.

Panel 06: Molly's phone starts to ring. The caller is Alice.

Panel 07: Molly sits up partway and answers the phone.

MOLLY: Hi, sister.

The phone buzzes at length.

Page 174

Panel 01: A close up of Molly talking on the phone.

MOLLY: Yeah, I got the links, but I can't move until I get a job, and I don't think...

More buzzing.

Panel 02: Molly hikes herself up to more of a sitting position.

MOLLY: Whatever, come on.

MOLLY: No way are they going to hire me.

Panel 03: A longer shot of Molly on her bed, talking.

More buzzing.

MOLLY: Ugh, but sister...

Panel 04: A shot from outside the room's window.

Buzzing.

MOLLY: Ok, fine, I guess.

Panel 05: A shot of the house.

Page 175

Full page: A shot of the neighborhood with the sky taking up four fifths of the page.

Appendices

Appendix A: Finished Pages



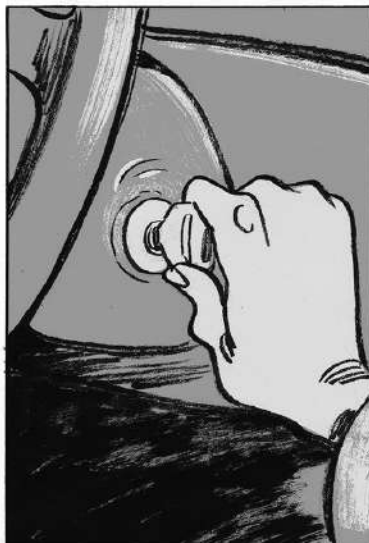
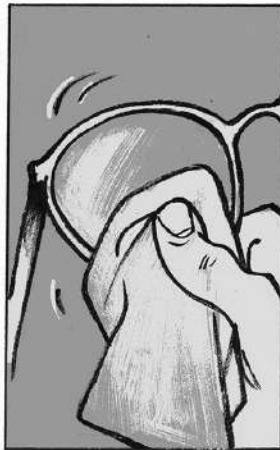


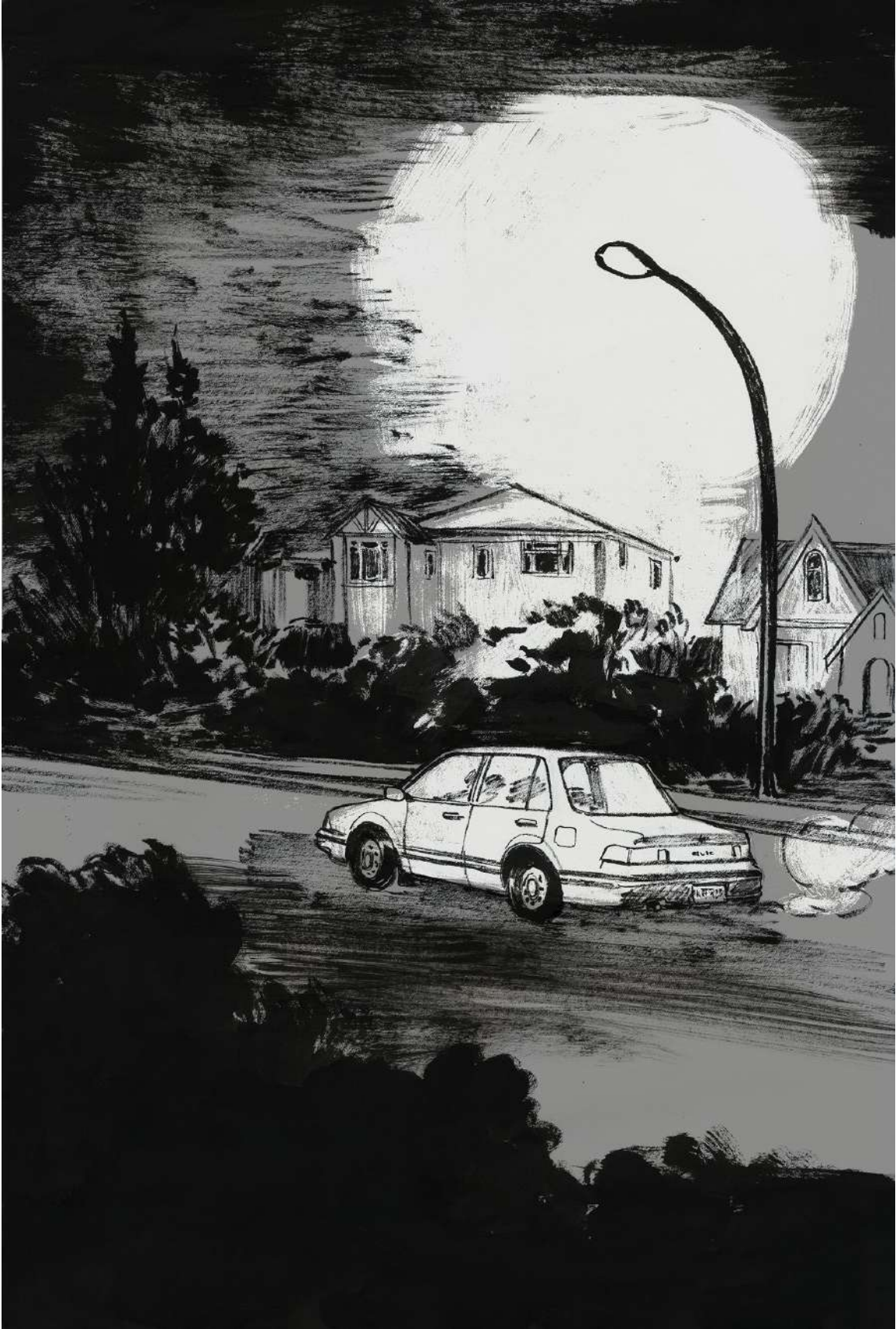












Appendix B: Thumbnails

