We now return to "The Science of Robotics!"

What have you got for us today, Burns?

I'm glad you asked.

My son, Sides, helped me create the ultimate security robot!

ROBO VISION

It scans for potential threats...

Agh! No! Ow!

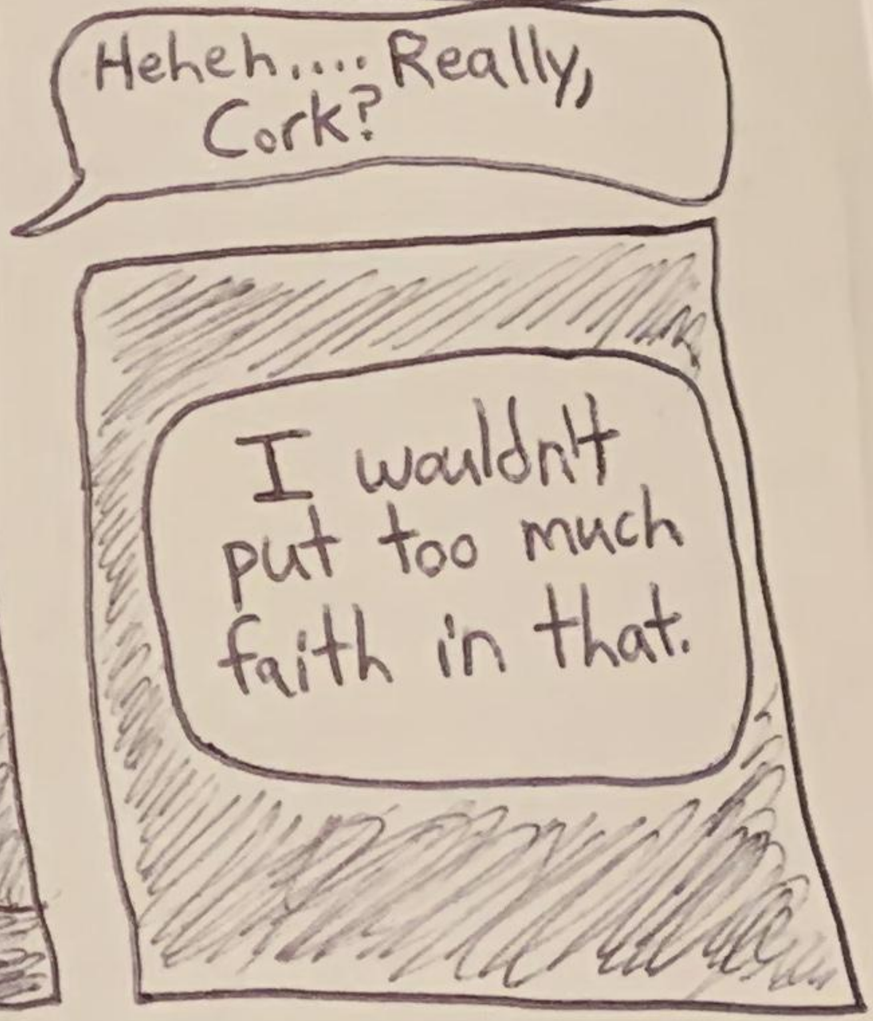
AND USES ITS OWN LEG AS A HAMMER TO SMASH ANY WOULD-BE CROOK!

Uh... is he okay?
I don't know. He was supposed to jump out of the way.

Wow....
...Should we call someone?

One day, I'll be just like them!

I'm gonna be a mechanic!


Heheh.... Really, Cork?
I wouldn't put too much faith in that.

Seven years later...
Cork!
Huh?
Cork! Wake up!
School!
Right- coming!
Aw, man. My hair is a mess.
JOSH
SNIP
BZZT
Perfect!
Fix it up, hairbots! *
* homemade razors and pair of scissors

Fixed my hair. You like?

You look the same as always, so no.

I like the one strap bag. Easy on the shoulders. Nice.

Thanks ... where's your stuff?

Don't worry about me! To save energy spent carrying books, I made this!

When I push the button on this remote, my school supplies will teleport into my arms!

Watch!

BLIP

HAAA HAAA HAAA

Wait, this is the sound effects remote.

BLIP

BOO!

Do you want to go back for your stuff?

Nah, it's only the first day. Guess showing off my mechanic skills can wait.

About your mechanic... stuff....

Hmm?

I think you should move on.

Huh?!

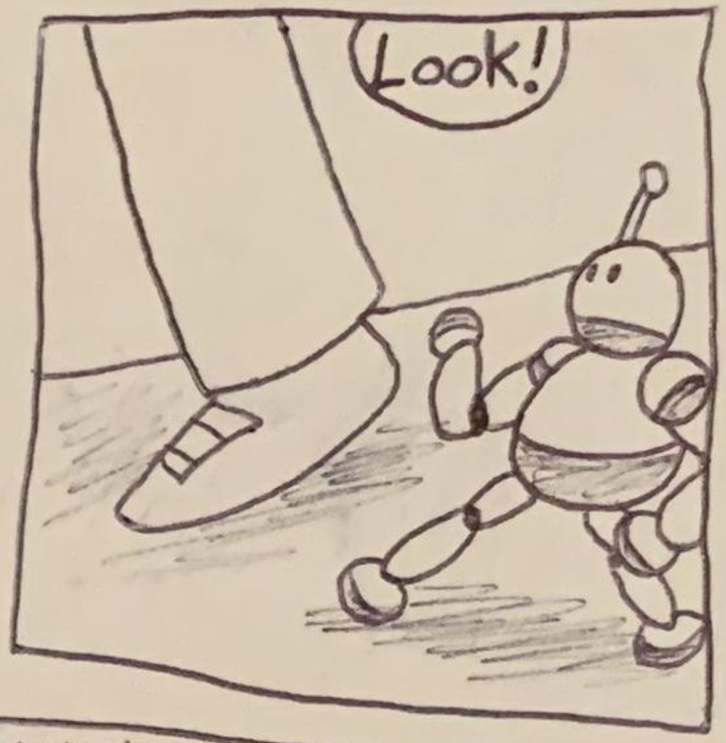
BUT BEING A MECHANIC IS WHAT I'M MEANT TO DO!

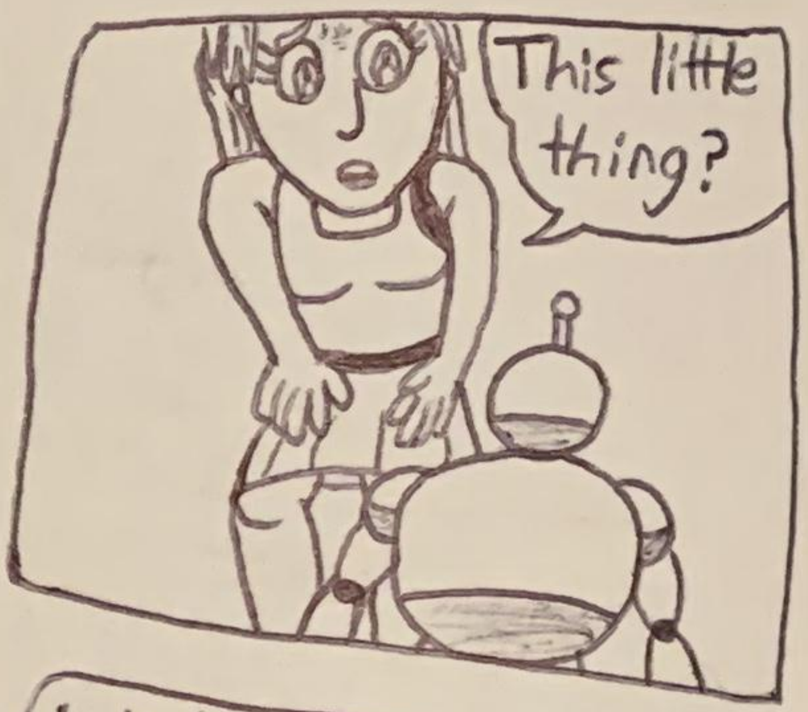
How would you know? You never try anything else!

You have no hobbies and you never make plans.

I'm your only friend, but you still never-
Hey!

Don't even start with that! I have a new friend!


Look!

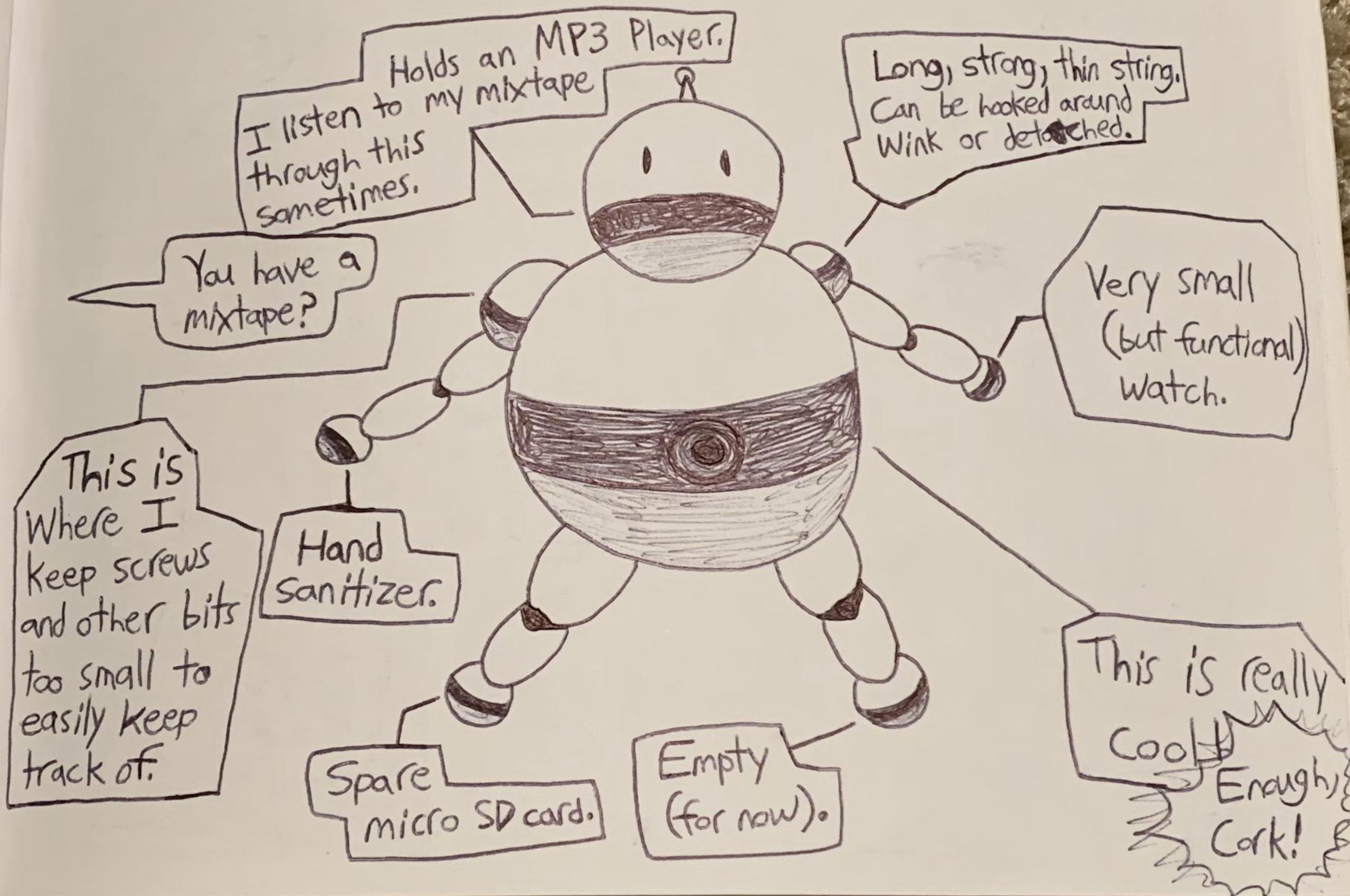

This little thing?

You made a friend?
Yep! His name is Wink!

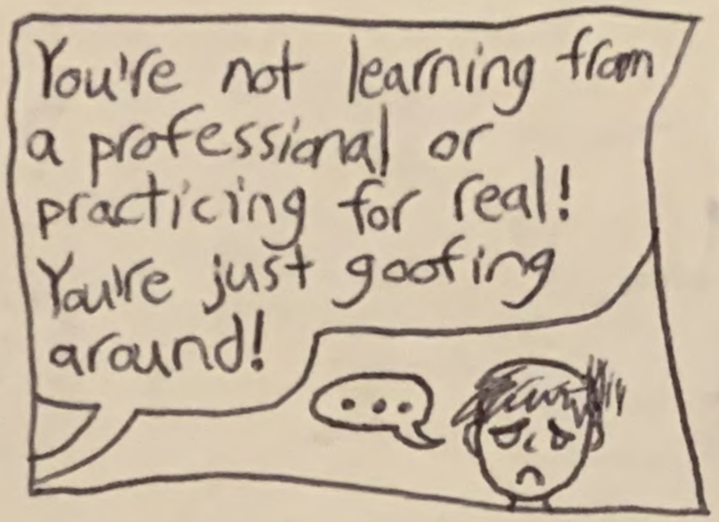
What, is my company not good enough?
That's not it.

Wink is just... really cool. Let me show you.

Every two-shaded part of him is actually a small container.



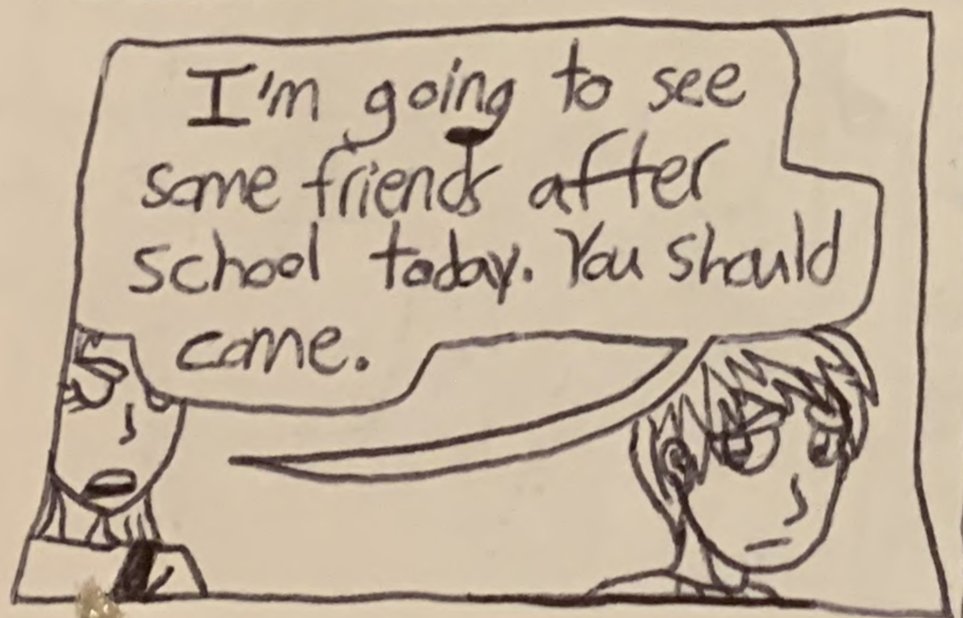
That thing just proves my point!

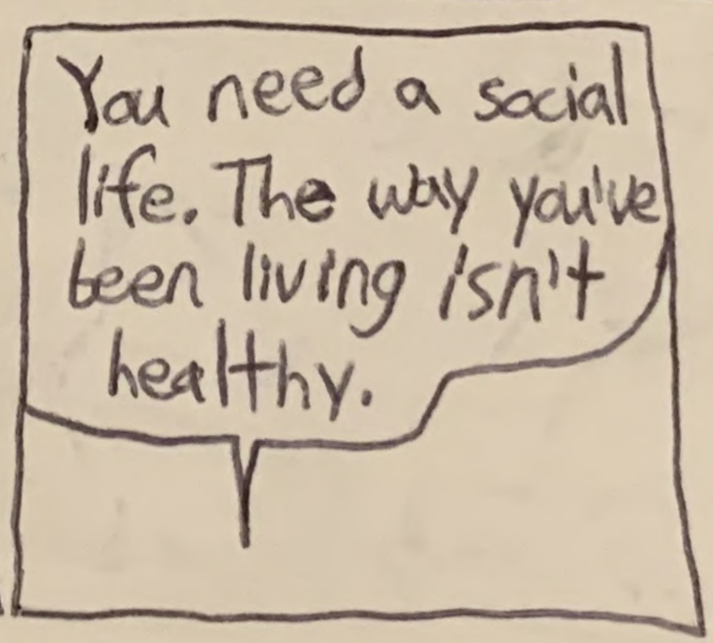

You're not learning from a professional or practicing for real! You're just goofing around!
...

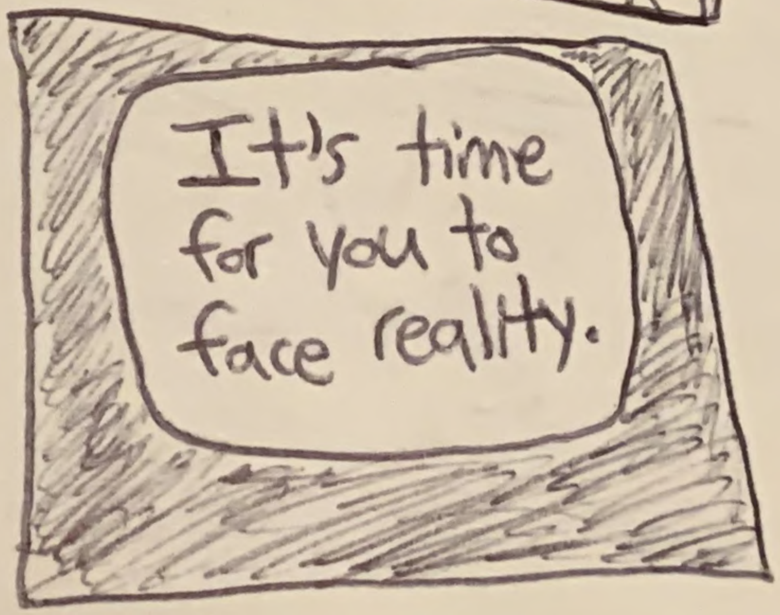
You need to let go, make real friends, and chase real goals.
BOING

...

Look, Cork. I'm just worried about you.


I'm going to see some friends after school today. You should come.


You need a social life. The way you've been living isn't healthy.


It's time for you to face reality.

After school...

What a wash of a day.

I couldn't focus at all in class.

I have no idea what I need for any of my classes.

Let's hope these friends Lila made can cheer me up.

BOING

Huh? What's up?

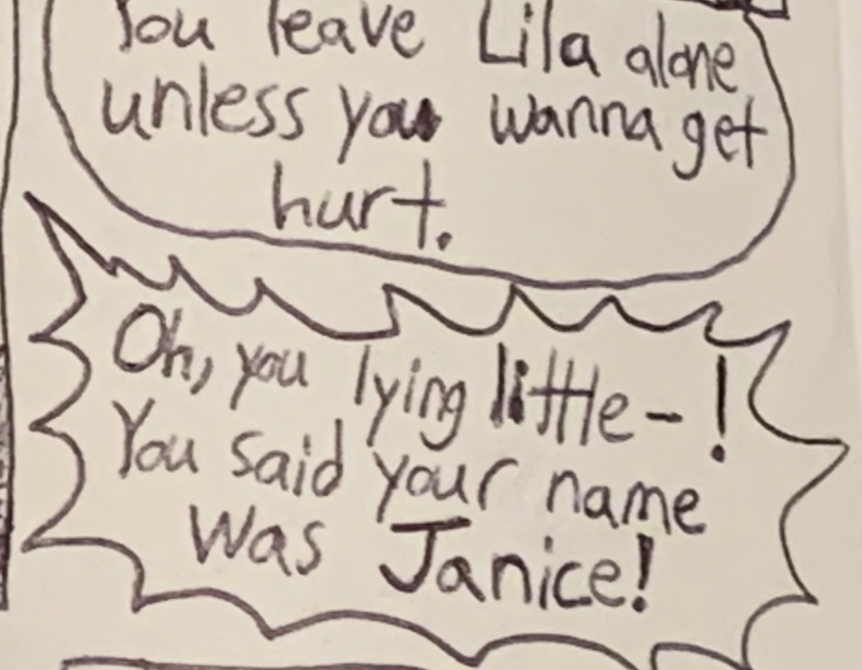
BOING

Wait!

Why are we going into that alley?!

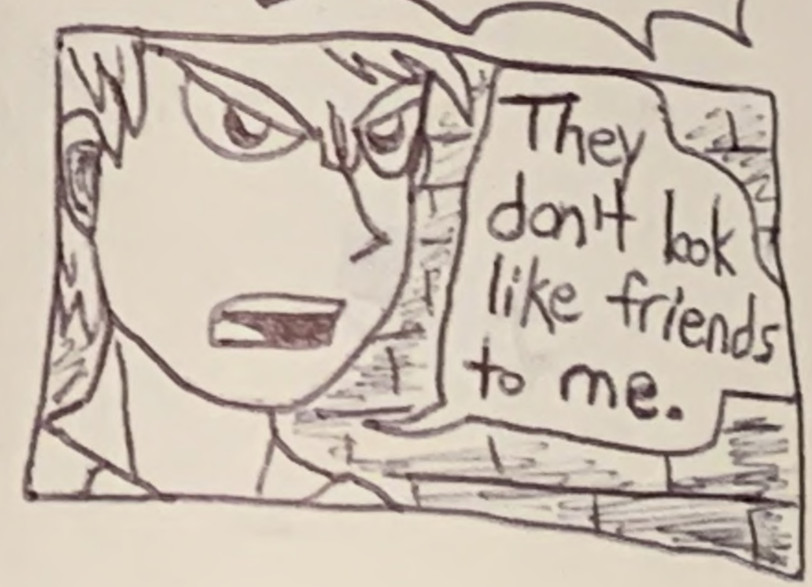
Now you listen here. We can either do this the easy way or the-
Hey!
?

Lila? Who's-


You leave Lila alone unless you wanna get hurt.
Oh, you lying little-! You said your name was Janice!

Hey Lila.
Hi, Cork.
Who are these guys?

These are my friends. I met them online.


They don't look like friends to me.

We may be the boys you met online, Janice-

Lila.

Shut up. But we are not your friends.

We're the Epic Gamer Squad!

Don't call us that!

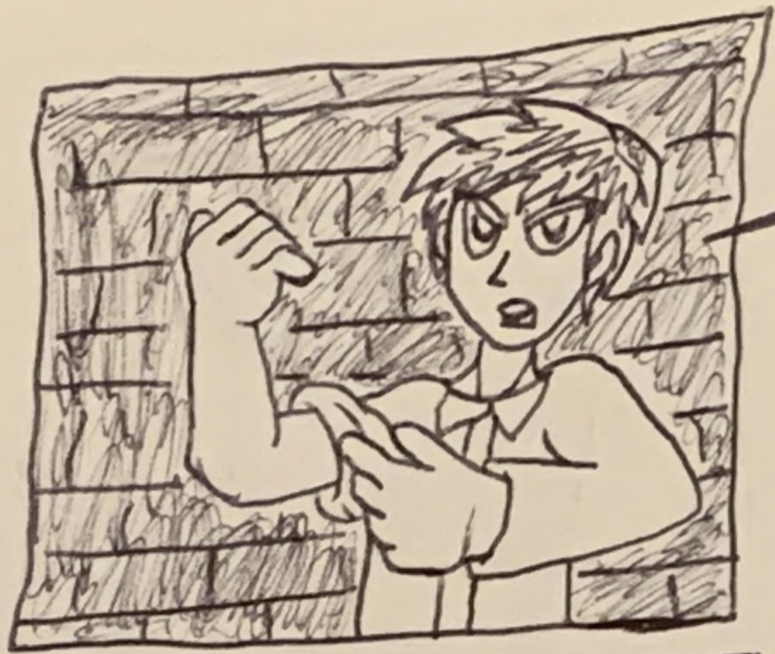
We're just looking for gullible freshmen to rob.

Well, you picked the wrong one. Cuz now you're up against me!

Cork, don't-

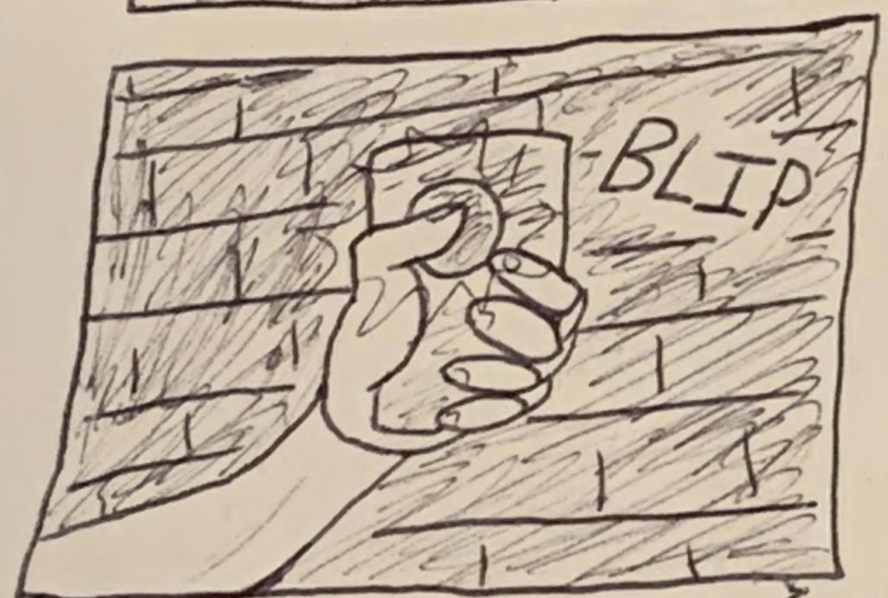
I am Cork Shrewd, soon-to-be world's #1 mechanic!

So like... you fix cars?



There's more to it than that. I'll show you.
Rolling up your sleeves won't scare me. You look dumb for wearing them on such a warm day.

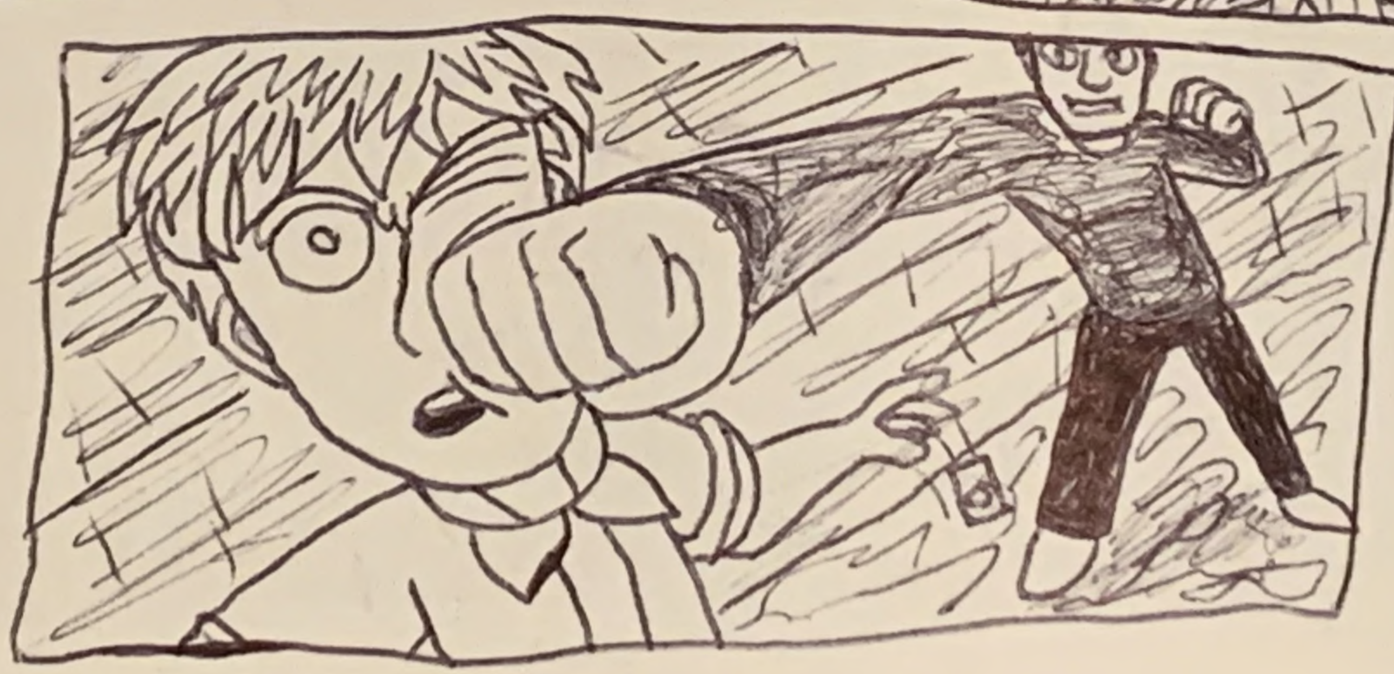
But aren't you-
Wearing long sleeves too? Yes. I realized as soon as I said it.


BLIP

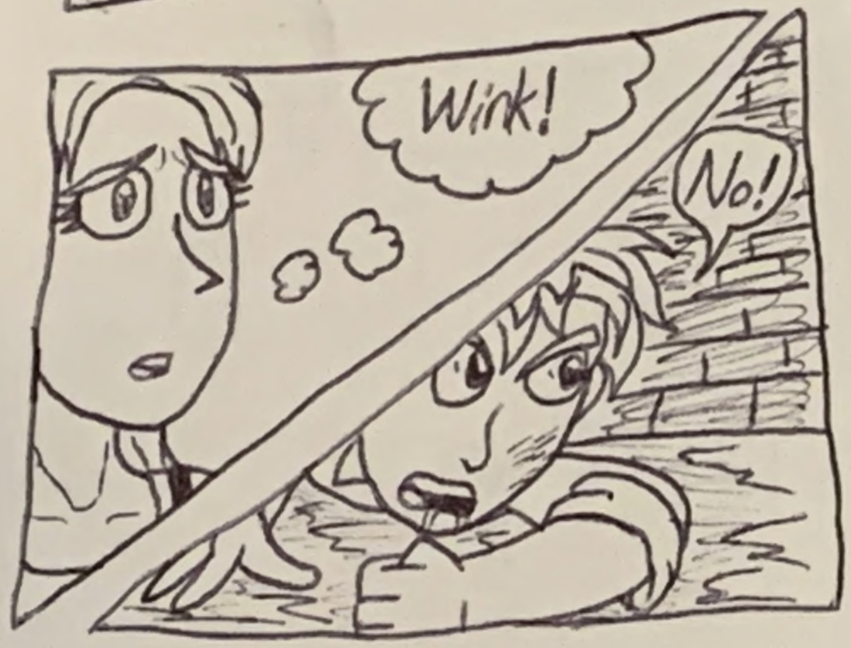
AAAAW!
Oh no. Wrong remote.

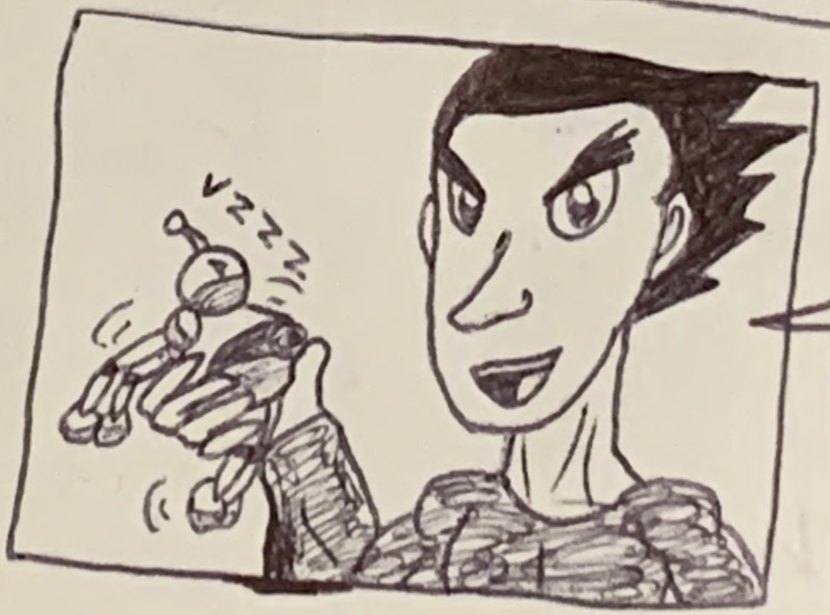
Look out, Cork!

Let's go, combat mode!



Ugh!
UGH!
There. He's down. Let's just rob the girl and go.
You heard him, Janice.
Lila.
Seriously, why did you lie about that?
I don't like telling strangers.
Yet you agreed to meet us in person and followed us into an alley.
Okay, now you're just victim blaming-
Huh?
BOING

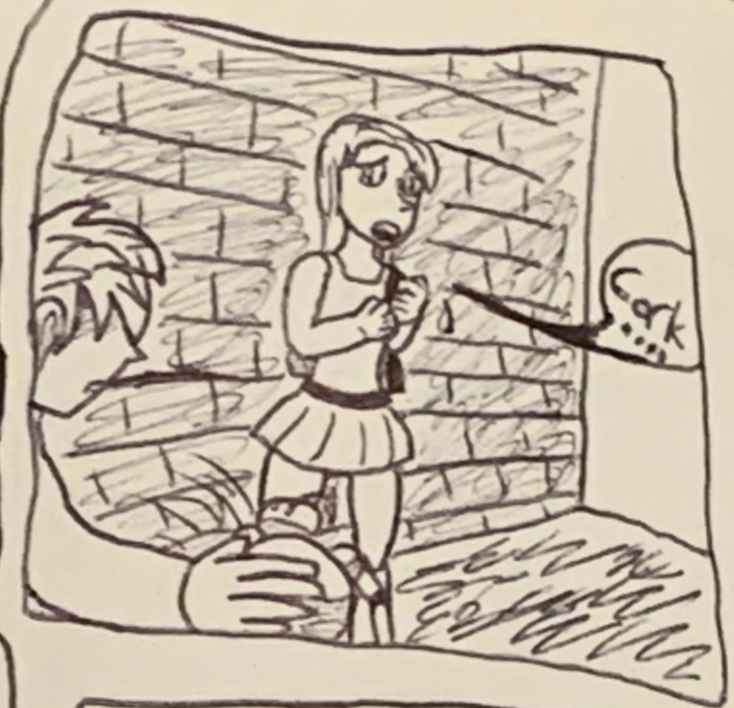




This is your best creation? Seems a little puny to me. I hope it sells well, but you haven't impressed me so far, so we'll see.

AAAAGH!
PFFFT
AAAAGH!!
Are you okay?
I'M DYING !!! AAOOW!
Let's get out of here!
Y-Yeah!
AAAA
...
AAAGH!
wiggle
wiggle

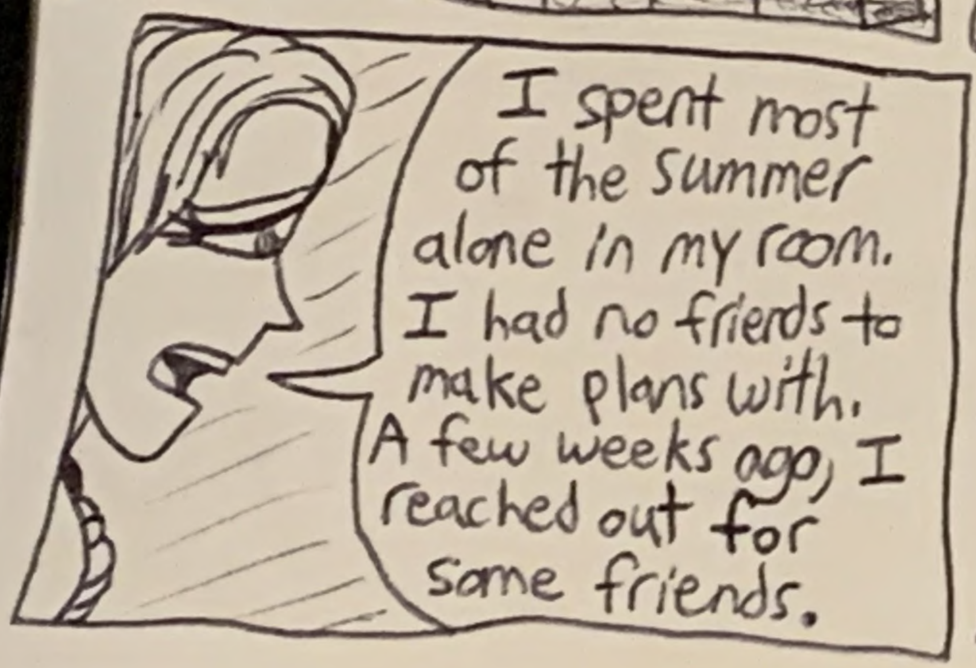
Thanks, Wink. Let's get you up, buddy.

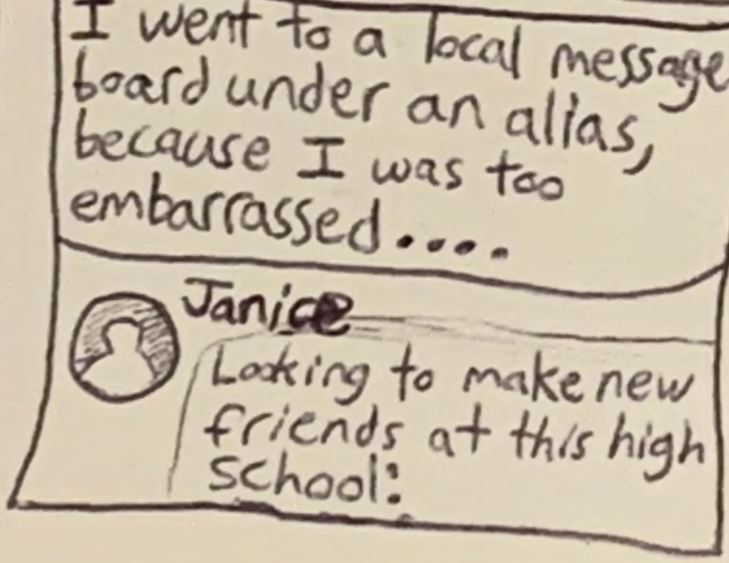

Cark...

Yeah?
Holy crap!

A few minutes later...
And you're sure you're okay?
I'm fine.

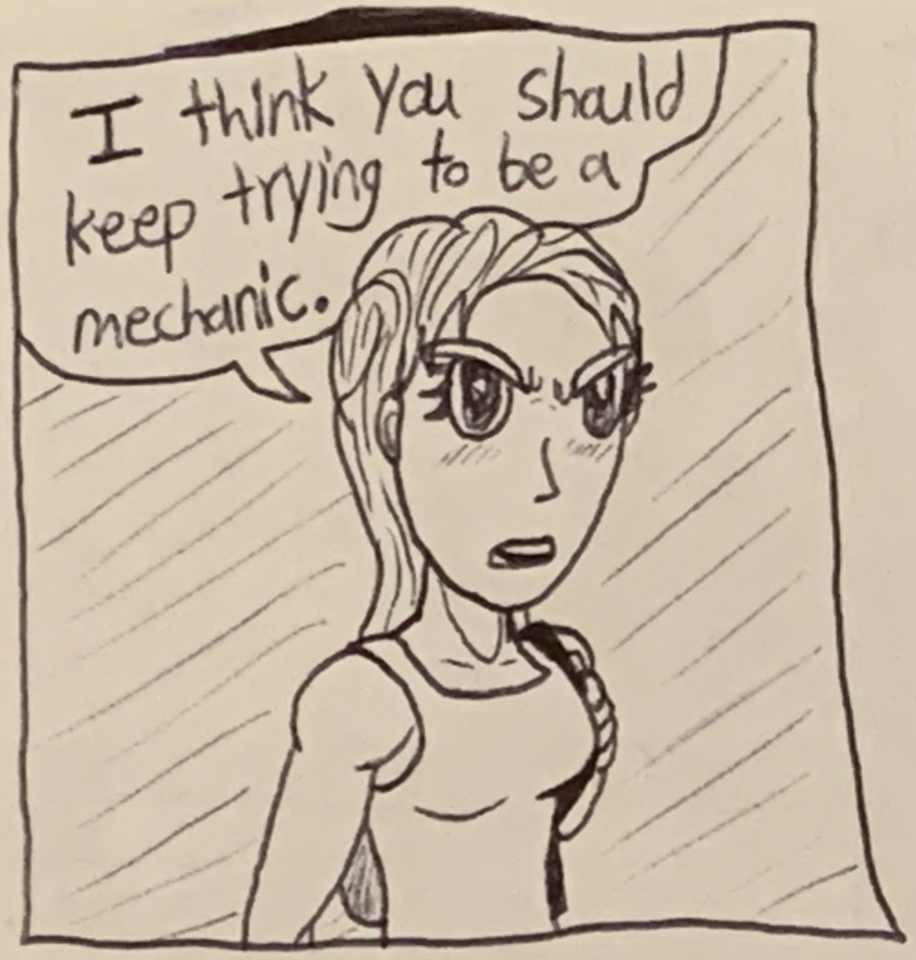
What were you thinking?
I... I was so lonely.

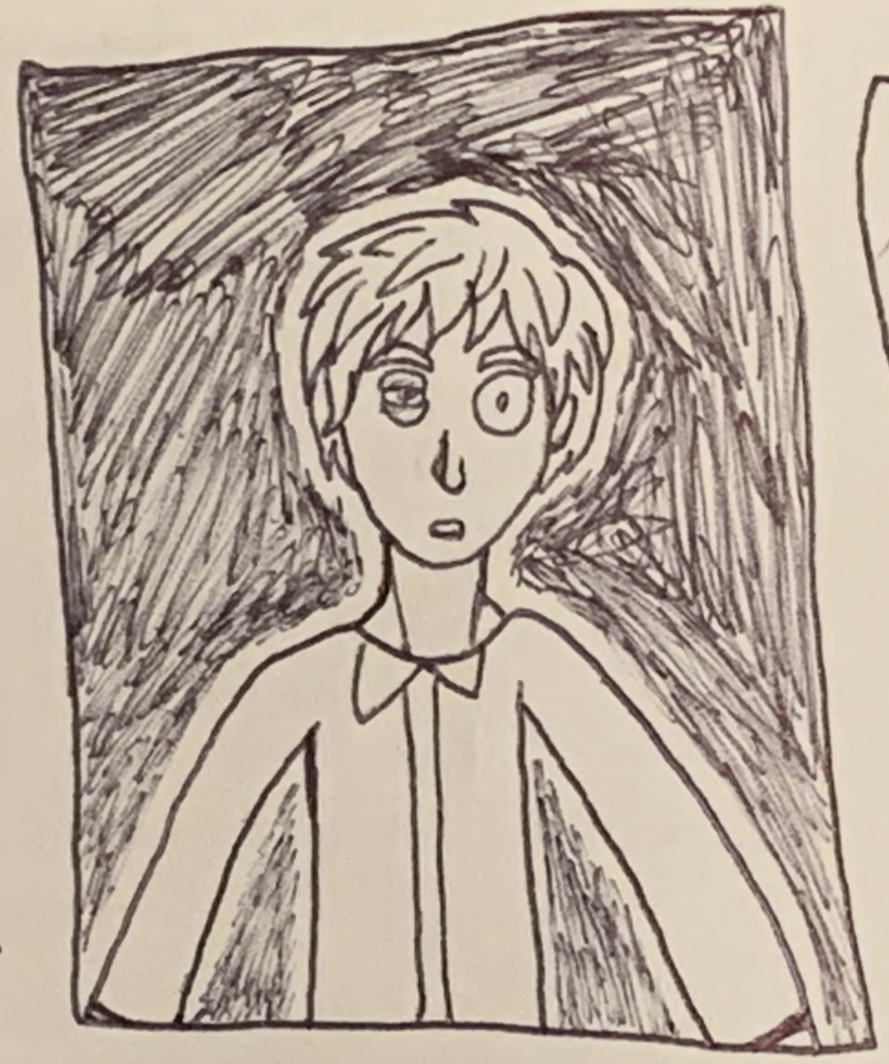

I spent most of the summer alone in my room. I had no friends to make plans with. A few weeks ago, I reached out for some friends.


I went to a local message board under an alias, because I was too embarrassed....
Janice
Looking to make new friends at this high school:

I mean, a girl begging for friends on line? It really doesn't get any more pathetic than that....

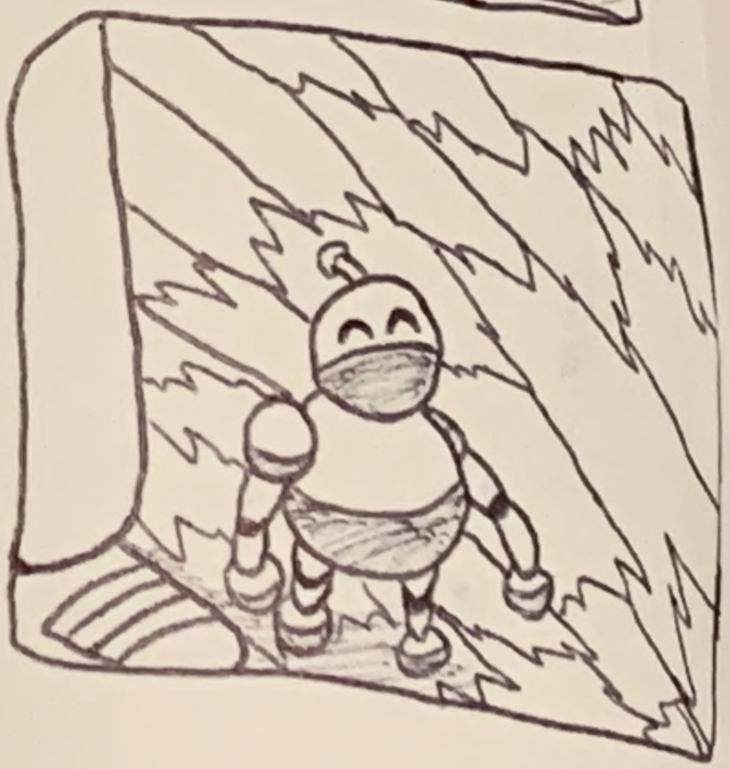
I have no idea what to say....
The board was only viewable by students. Those kids are seniors at our school. I trusted them.
SIGH
Well, you'll have me. I'm quitting being a mechanic, so I'll be free.
Cork, wait!
It's like you said. I need real goals.
Listen to me!
It was wrong of me to say that to you, and I am so sorry, Cork.
When I said that, I was frustrated that you were ignoring me to spend time on something I thought was pointless.
But if your little robot hadn't saved me, I would have lost my phone, my wallet, my keys....
I guess what I'm trying to say is I...


I think you should keep trying to be a mechanic.



Dramatic Tree

Thanks, Lila.



If I'm gonna keep trying to be a mechanic, then it's gonna be serious.

I'll find a pro and start working on bigger projects. I'll take it seriously from now on.

I'll make time for you, too. I promise.

Well, I'm home.

Get some rest, Cork.

Wait. I have a favor to ask of you.

Of course! You saved me, after all. What do you need? Money? Scrap metal?

I know you use lots of scrap metal to make your robots and stuff, so-

Could you not tell anyone what happened today?

WHAT?!

They tried to rob me! They hurt you! They have to be stopped!

Look, Wink and I will keep an eye on them, but if they're caught...

they'd likely talk about me. And if the police told my mom I was making robots-

robots armed with pepper spray, no less-

That was pepper spray?!

my dream of being a mechanic would be basically dead.

Because your mom would stop you?

No doubt.

SIGH

You idiot.

You better be one hell of a mechanic.

I will.

You can put faith in that.