

LUNAR NEW YEAR LOVE STORY

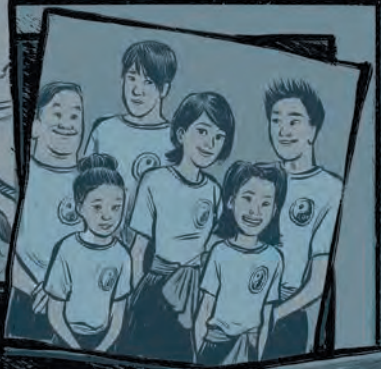


WRITTEN BY
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ART BY
LEUYEN PHAM

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First Second
New York





HE GAVE ME UNTIL NEXT
VALENTINE'S DAY.

ONE YEAR.



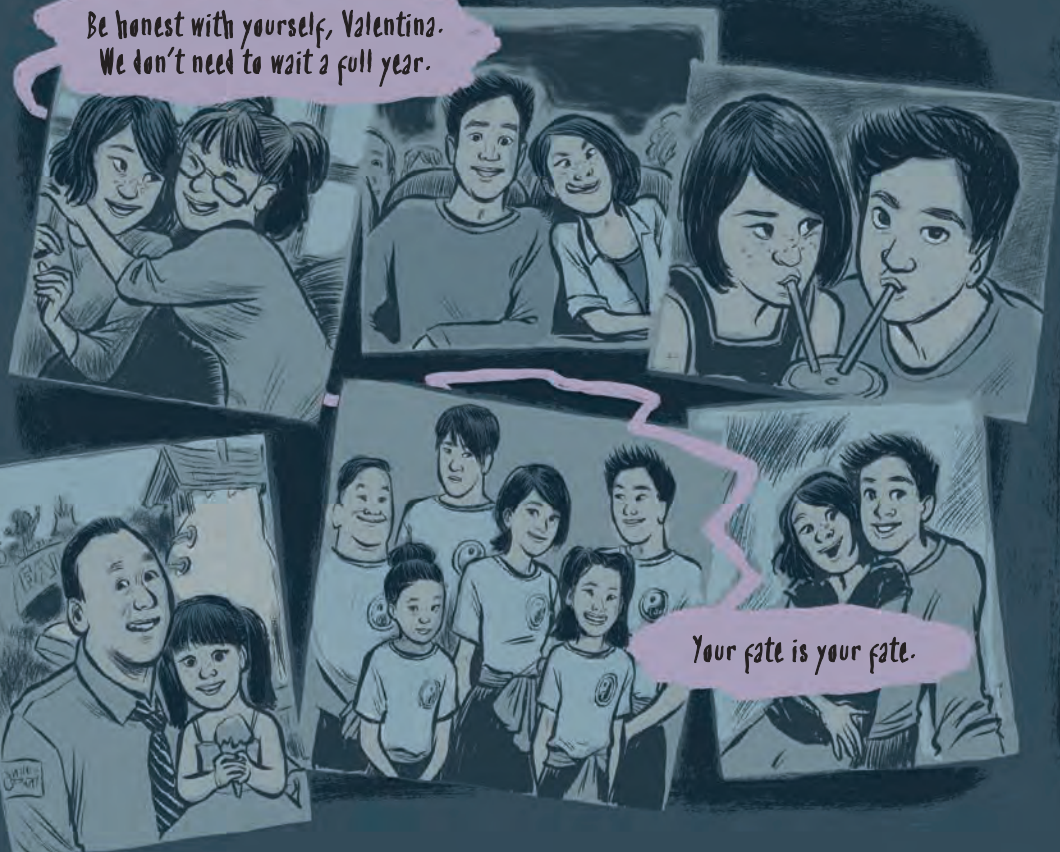
AND I'VE ALREADY
MESSED IT ALL UP.





Do those photographs convince you?

Be honest with yourself, Valentina.
We don't need to wait a full year.



Your fate is your fate.



True love simply isn't for you.



Give me your heart.

I DIDN'T ALWAYS HATE VALENTINE'S DAY.

IN FACT, WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, IT WAS MY FAVORITE DAY OF THE YEAR.



I'D ANTICIPATE IT THE WAY OTHER KIDS WOULD ANTICIPATE CHRISTMAS.



GREAT PRACTICE, GIRLS! SEE YOU NEXT WEEK!

CAN YOU BELIEVE IT'S ONLY FIVE DAYS AWAY?

WHAT'S ONLY FIVE DAYS AWAY?

VALENTINE'S DAY!

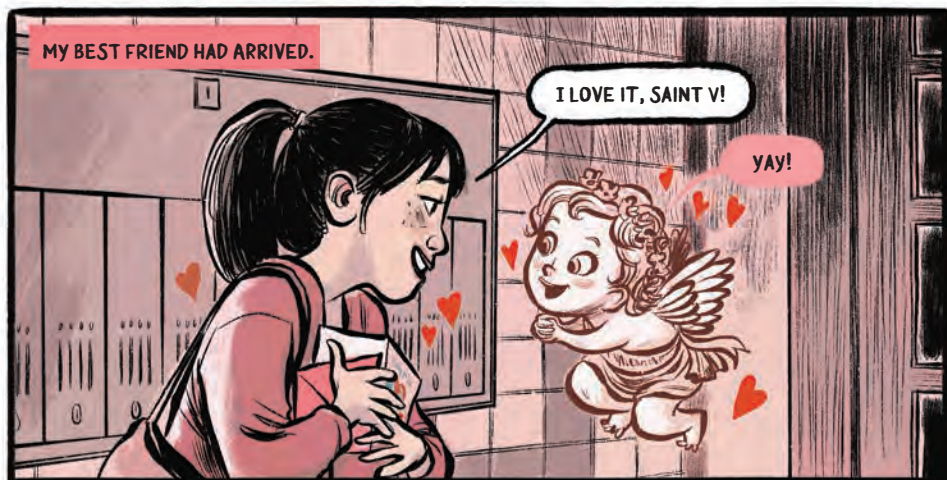


YOU'RE KINDA WEIRD, AREN'T YOU?

ONLY ABOUT VALENTINE'S DAY!







MY DAD CALLED SAINT V
MY IMAGINARY BEST
FRIEND, BUT WHATEVER.







WE SPENT HOURS MAKING
THOSE LITTLE PAPER CARDS.



AND ALL I FELT WAS JOY.





ON THE BIG DAY, I WOULD GET TO SCHOOL EXTRA EARLY.

THAT WAY, I HAD TIME TO WHISPER A BLESSING OVER EACH CARD AS I PLACED THEM INTO MY CLASSMATES' CUBBIES.



YOU ARE STRONGER THAN YOU THINK, LUPE!

I BELIEVE IN YOU, TIMMY!

YOUR FUTURE IS BRIGHT, GWEN! SO VERY BRIGHT!



LOOK! YOU MADE RYAN THOMPSON TEAR UP!

THEN AFTER SCHOOL, SAINT V
AND I WOULD DELIVER THE MOST
IMPORTANT VALENTINE OF ALL ...

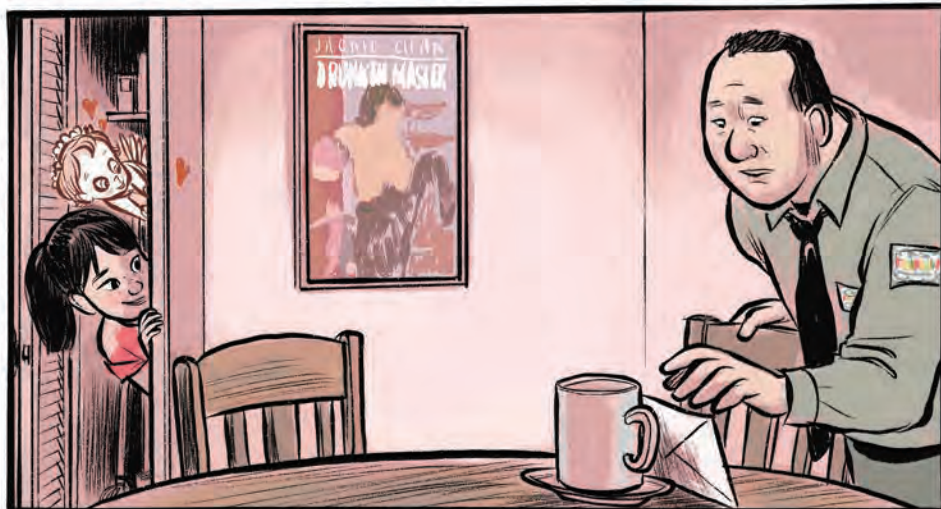


... THE VALENTINE FROM HEAVEN.

HE'S HOME!

QUICK, HIDE!

CLICK!





MY MOTHER DIED WHEN I WAS YOUNG, SO YOUNG THAT I DON'T REMEMBER HER AT ALL. AND I NEVER KNEW HOW SHE DIED BECAUSE MY DAD NEVER TALKED ABOUT IT. IT MUST BE TOO PAINFUL FOR HIM, I THOUGHT.

THEIRS MUST HAVE BEEN AN EPIC LOVE STORY, BECAUSE HE NEVER DATED ANYONE AGAIN ...

WHICH IS WHY SAINT V AND I USED OUR VALENTINES TO BRING HER WORDS FROM HEAVEN DOWN TO EARTH.

HOW ABOUT, "I MISS YOU EVERY DAY!"

ARE THERE DAYS IN HEAVEN?

SHOULDN'T YOU KNOW? YOU'RE AN ANGEL.

CUPID, NOT ANGEL. COMMON MISTAKE.



OUR VALENTINES MADE MY PARENTS' LOVE STORY SO EPIC, IT TRANSCENDED DEATH,



WHICH IS WHY I USED TO THINK THE NAME THEY GAVE ME WAS SO FITTING.









VALENTINE'S DAY
FRESHMAN YEAR

SURE, IT WAS A LITTLE WEIRD, BUT I KEPT MY TRADITION WITH SAINT V INTO MY FRESHMAN YEAR.

IT'S JUST ...

I'M FOURTEEN NOW.

SO WHAT?
YOU'RE TOO OLD
TO BELIEVE I'M
REAL ANYMORE?

NO! WELL ... I GUESS I DON'T
CARE IF YOU'RE REAL OR NOT.
I LIKE YOU REGARDLESS. SO
DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY
IF I IGNORE YOU WHILE SHE'S
HERE, OKAY?

DING DONG!

SHE'S HERE!

YAY.

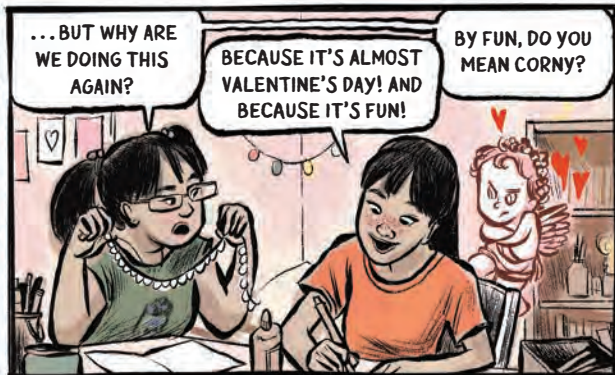
BERNICE!

HEY, VAL! WHERE'S YOUR OVEN?

I BROUGHT BROWNIE
TINS AND THIS COOL
RECIPE I FOUND ONLINE ...

OOOH! WHAT I'VE GOT PLANNED
IS WAY MORE FUN THAN BAKING.

I'M STILL
YOUR BEST
FRIEND,
RIGHT?





MAKING VALENTINES IS ONE THING. BUT THIS?

THIS IS, LIKE,
NEXT-LEVEL
CORNY!

I'M NOT GIVING ONE TO
EVERYBODY IN THE SCHOOL!
JUST OUR HOMEROOM!



IN CASE YOU DIDN'T NOTICE, WE'RE IN HIGH
SCHOOL. LITERALLY NOBODY DOES THIS ANYMORE!

OH, SO LOVE SUDDENLY STOPS
EXISTING IN HIGH SCHOOL?!

THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN
TRYING TO TELL YOU!

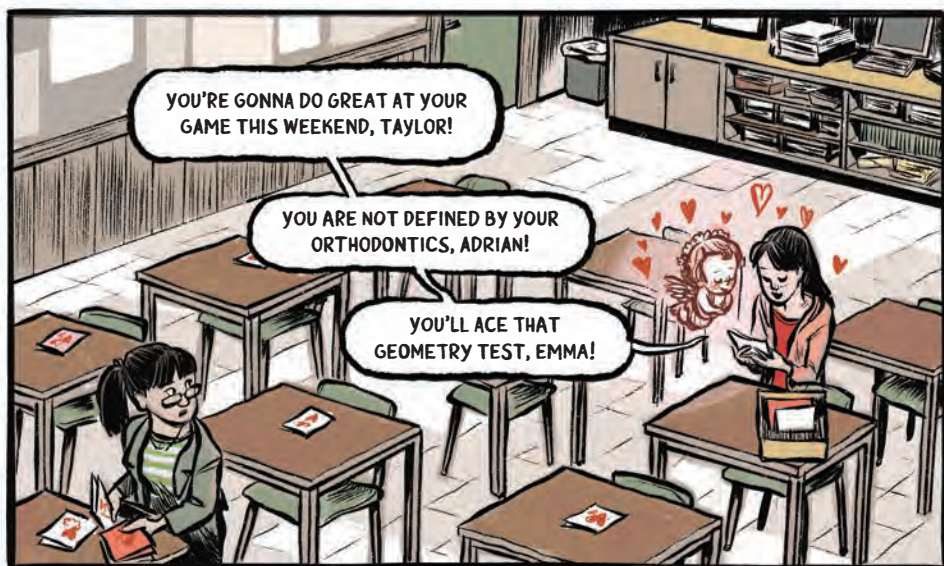
DON'T LISTEN TO HER,
VAL! BE STRONG! BE YOU!

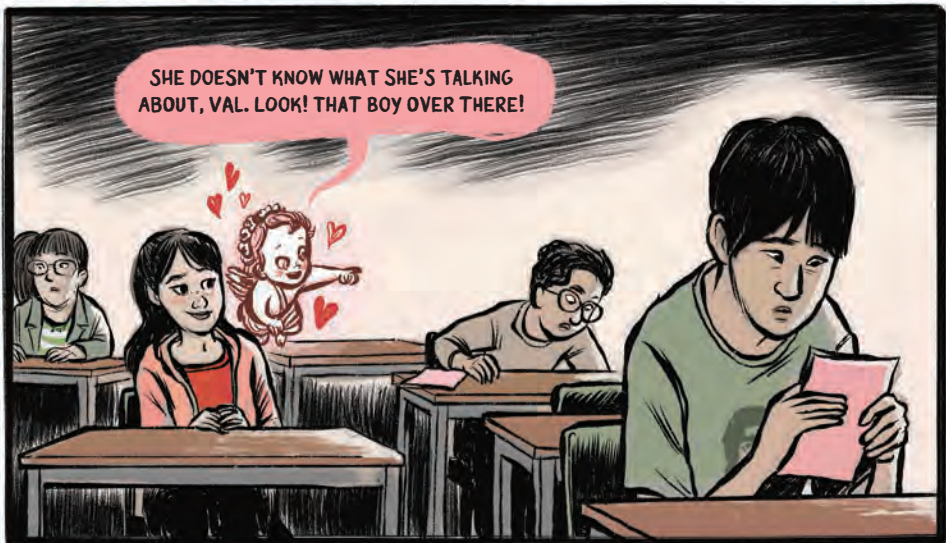
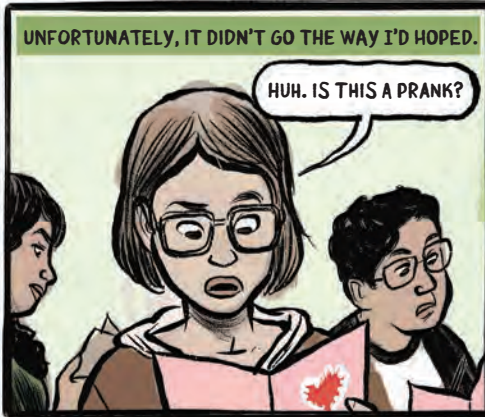


COME ON! HELP ME PASS THESE OUT
BEFORE EVERYBODY ELSE GETS HERE!

⌘SIGH⌘













SAINT V—



WHAT'S WRONG?

YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT BERNICE TO HELP YOU MAKE THE VALENTINE FROM HEAVEN?



WHAT? NO! I GOT THE IDEA FROM YOU, SILLY!



WHEN I GOT MY VERY FIRST VALENTINE FROM YOU WAY BACK IN KINDERGARTEN...



... I SAW YOUR WINGS AND YOUR SMILE, AND IT REMINDED ME OF HEAVEN.

OF MY MOM.



I CAN'T IMAGINE MAKING THE MOST IMPORTANT VALENTINE OF ALL WITH ANYONE ELSE, SAINT V!

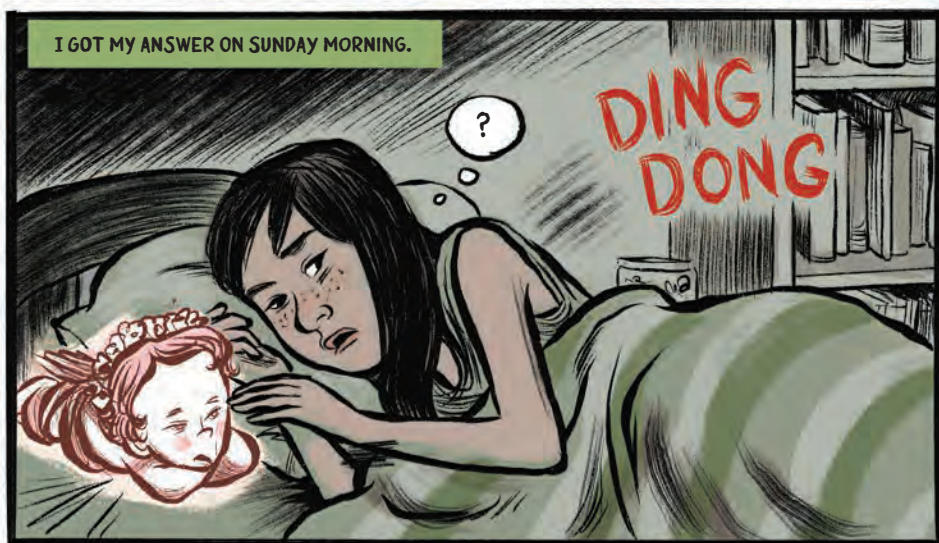
AW! YOU MEAN IT, VALENTINA?



COME ON, WE GOTTA HURRY! DAD'S GONNA BE HOME ANY MINUTE!

UNFORTUNATELY, THIS DIDN'T GO THE WAY I'D HOPED, EITHER.







BUT WHY YOU HAVE SO MANY FRECKLES? YOU IN THE SUN TOO MUCH! TST.



GOD GIVE EACH PERSON A CROSS TO CARRY, I GUESS.

GRANDMA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? DAD SAID YOU DIDN'T WANT TO SEE US ANYMORE!



GRANDMA MISSES YOU! SO MUCH! EVERY DAY! BUT I CAN'T COME SEE YOU. BECAUSE YOUR DADDY WON'T SAY SORRY TO ME!



NINE YEARS! IT'S TOO LONG TO NOT SEE YOU. YOUR DADDY'S SO STUBBORN!

YESTERDAY, HE FINALLY CALLS TO SAY SORRY. SO GRANDMA IS HERE NOW!



YOUR DADDY LET YOU WEAR SHOES INSIDE HOUSE? TST.



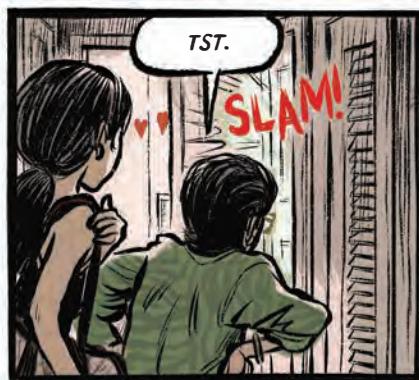
WHERE HE NOW?


STILL SLEEPING, I THINK?



ÐAT! COME SAY HI TO MOMMY!



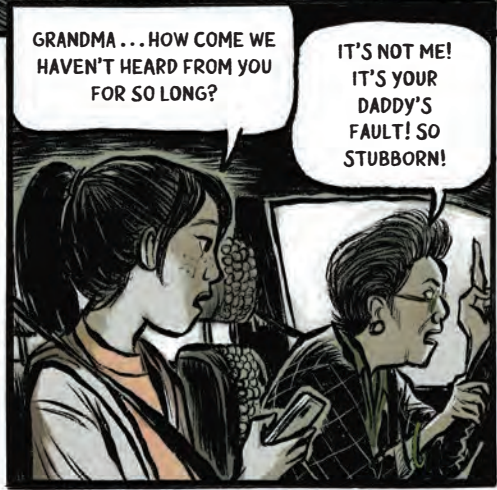




I LOOK FOR YOU ON THE FACEBOOK
SOMETIMES, VALENTINA. WHY YOU
NOT ON THE FACEBOOK?

NOBODY MY AGE REALLY
USES FACEBOOK.

THEN YOU PUT YOUR PHONE NUMBER
INTO MY PHONE NOW, SO I CALL YOU
SINCE YOU NOT ON THE FACEBOOK.




GRANDMA ... HOW COME WE
HAVEN'T HEARD FROM YOU
FOR SO LONG?

IT'S NOT ME!
IT'S YOUR
DADDY'S
FAULT! SO
STUBBORN!



I SAY TO YOUR DADDY WHAT HE DOING
IS WRONG, BUT HE WON'T LISTEN!

WAIT, WHAT WAS HE DOING WRO—



HE EVEN SAY TO ME, "BUTT OUT!" CAN
YOU BELIEVE?! WHAT KIND OF SON SAY
"BUTT" TO HIS MOTHER?! TST.

GRANDMA—

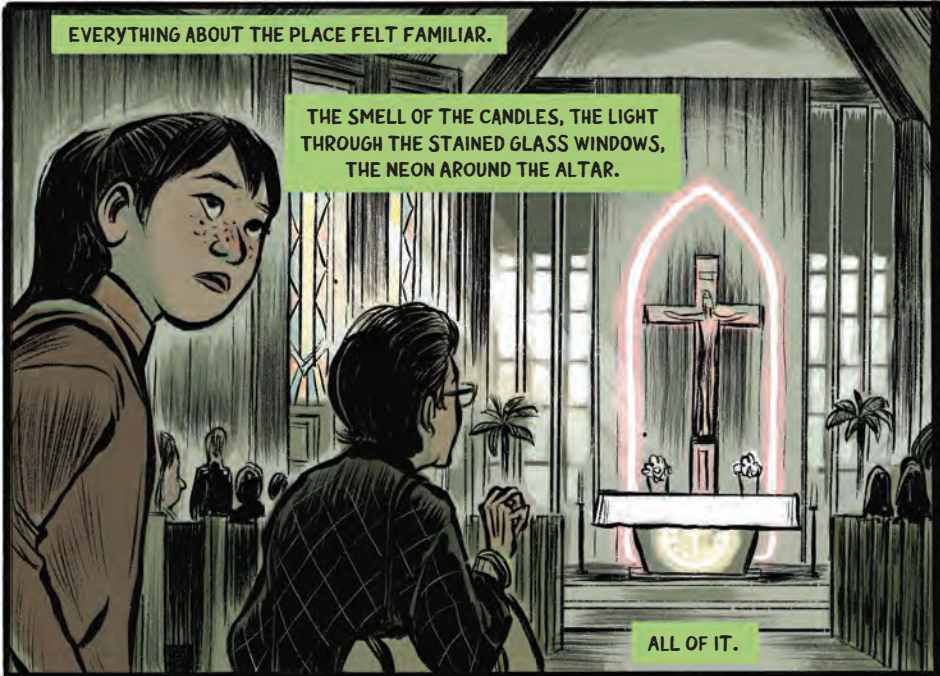


WE'RE HERE!



EVERYTHING ABOUT THE PLACE FELT FAMILIAR.

THE SMELL OF THE CANDLES, THE LIGHT
THROUGH THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS,
THE NEON AROUND THE ALTAR.



ALL OF IT.

GRANDMA ... HAVE I BEEN HERE BEFORE?

YOU, ME, AND YOUR DADDY
COME EVERY WEEK WHEN
YOU A BABY!



