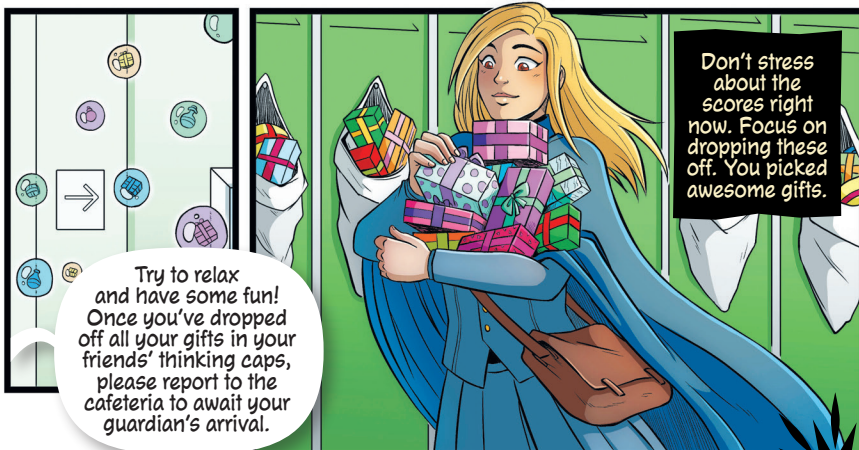
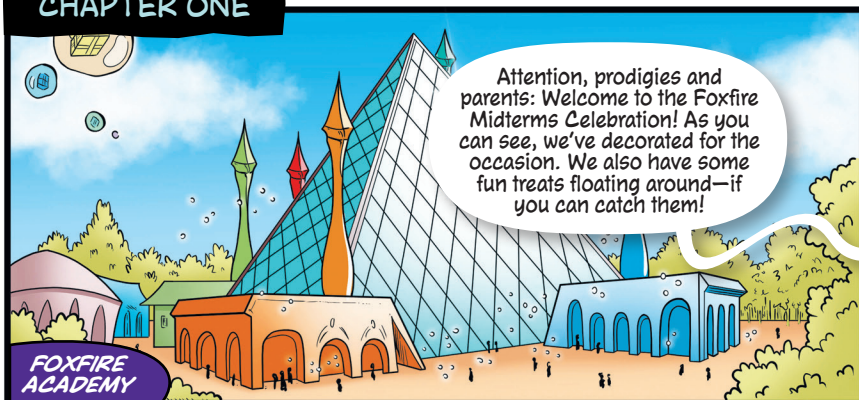
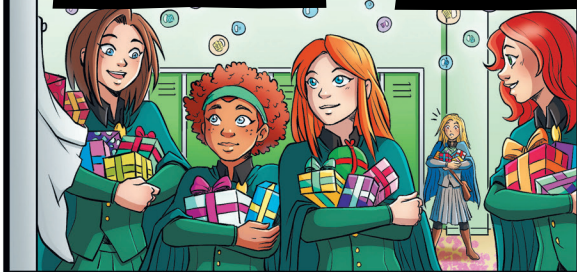


## CHAPTER ONE

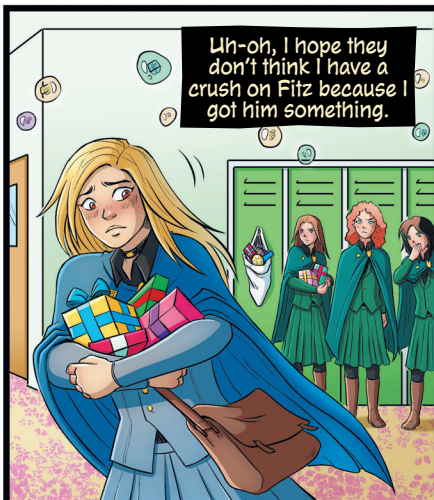


Wow, looks like everyone brought presents for Fitz.

I hope he likes the little Albertosaurus I got him. It makes me think of the day we met.



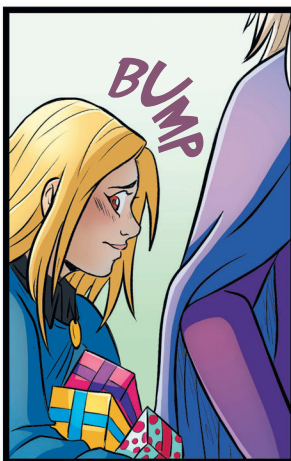
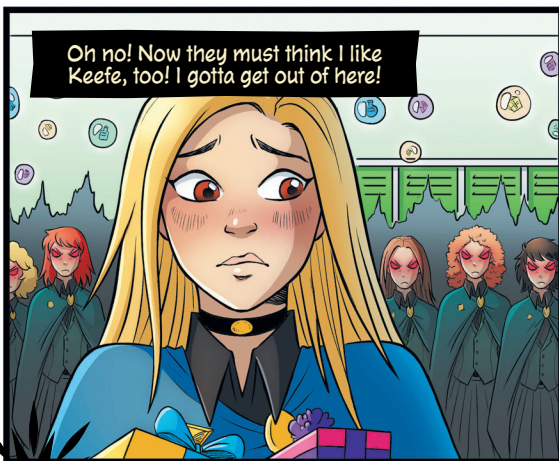
Uh-oh, I hope they don't think I have a crush on Fitz because I got him something.



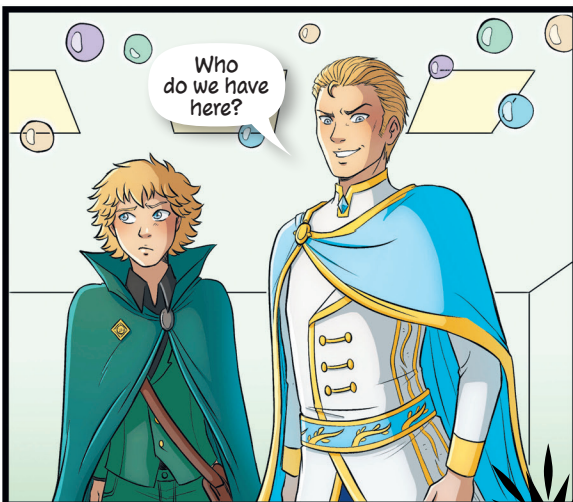
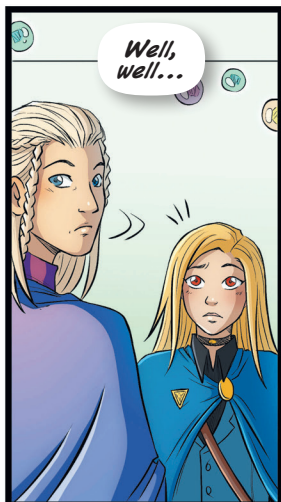
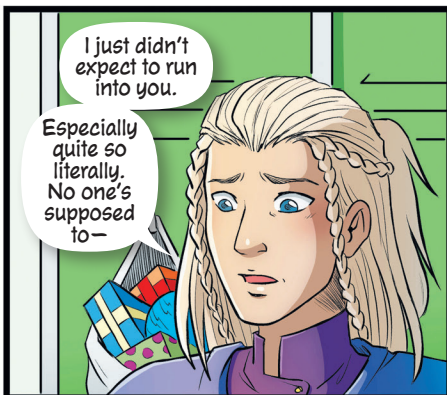
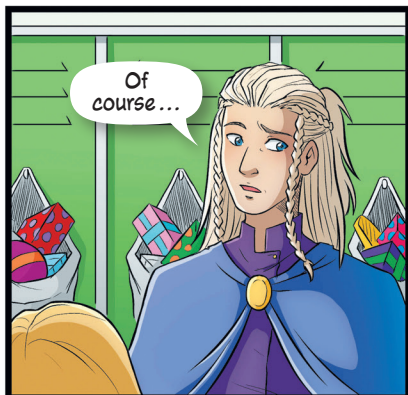
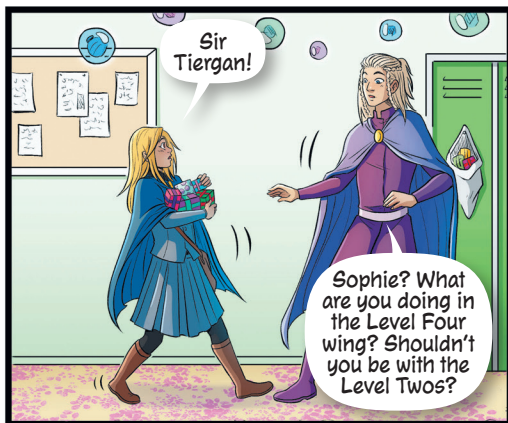
I mean, he's really cute, but ... Why am I thinking about this? Remember, you're also here to deliver Keefe's gift.

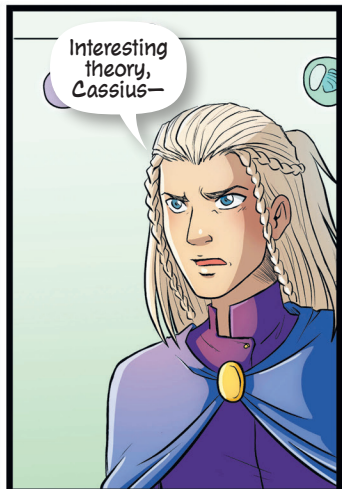
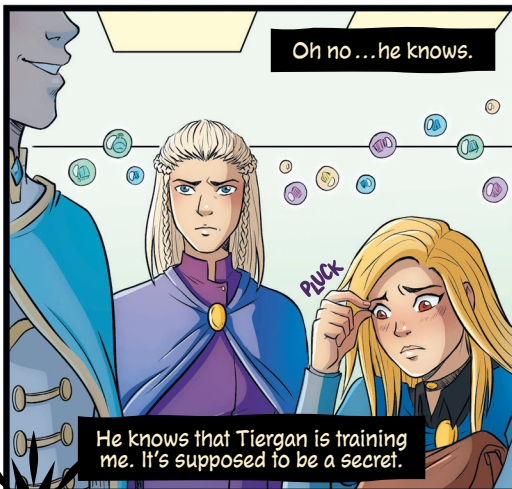
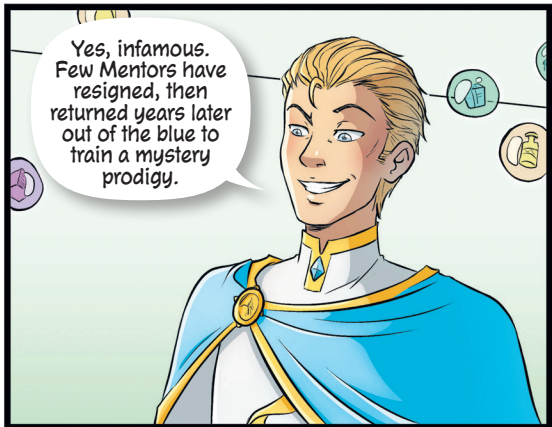
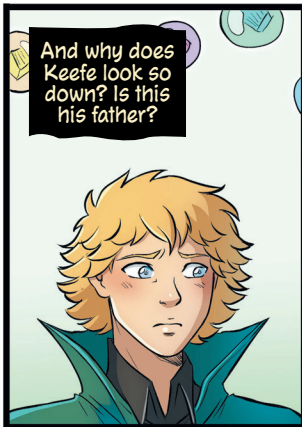
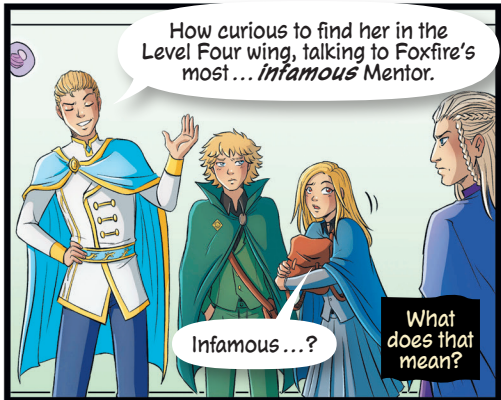


Oh no! Now they must think I like Keefe, too! I gotta get out of here!

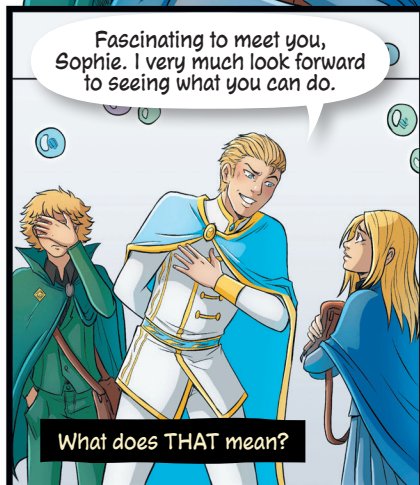
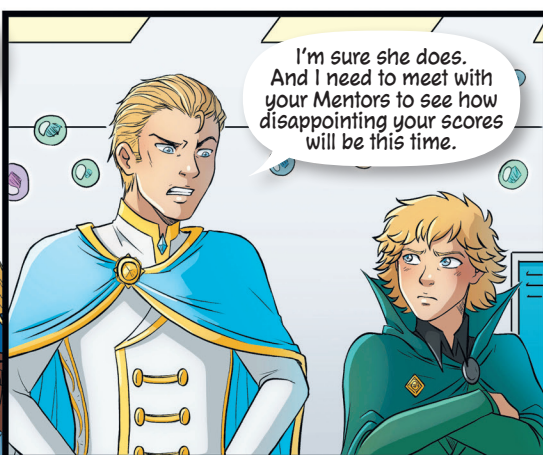
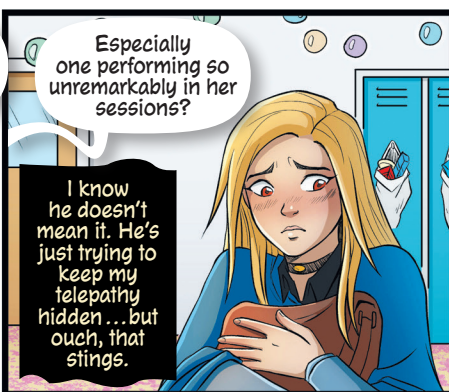
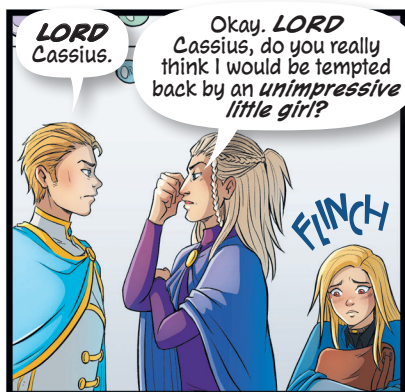


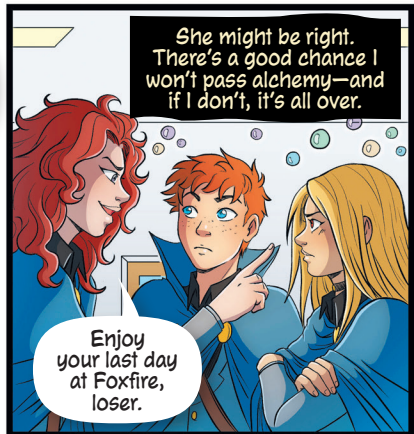
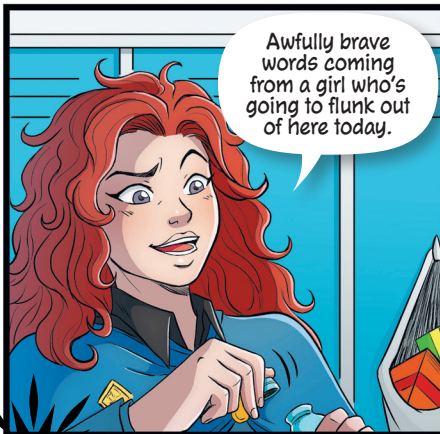
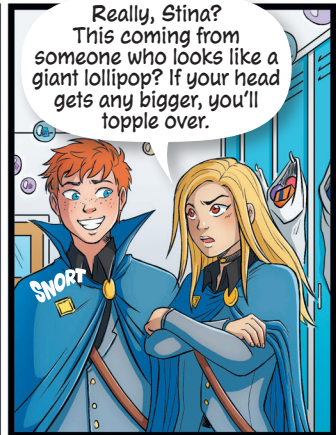
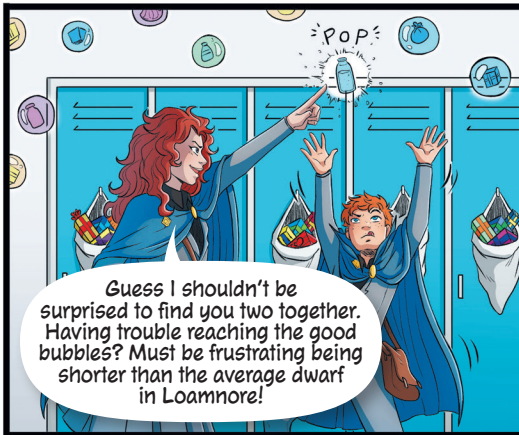
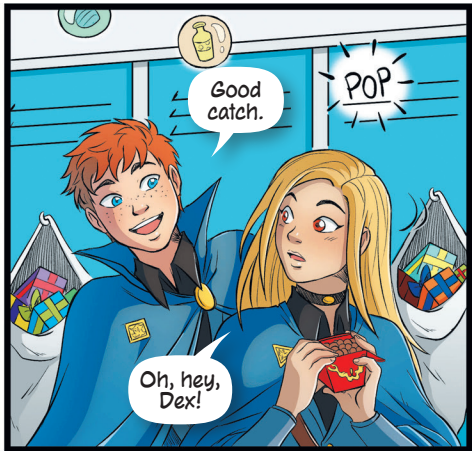




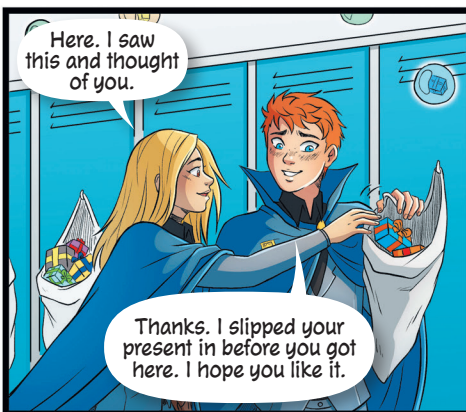
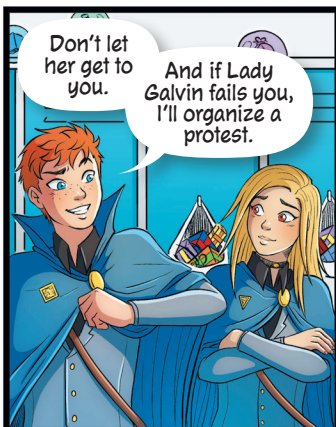


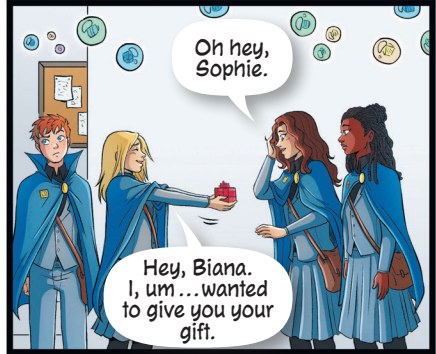
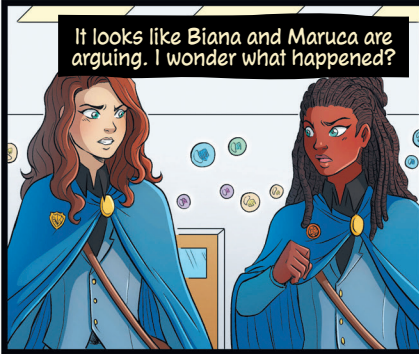
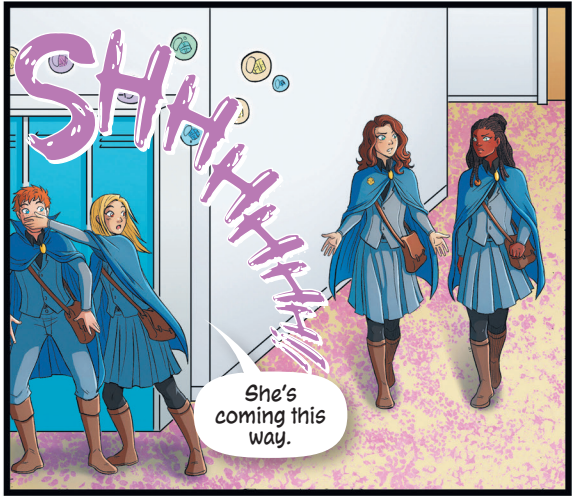




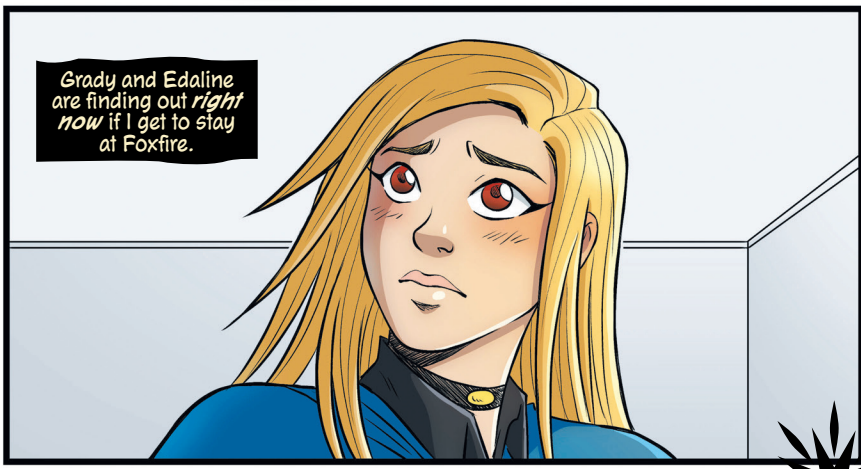
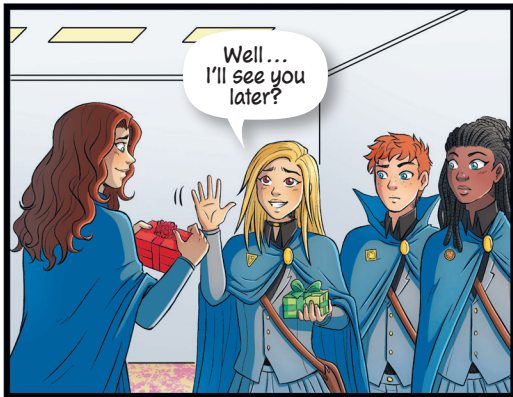












FOXFIRE CAFETERIA

Everyone looks so happy. Isn't anyone as nervous as I am?

Relax, Sophie, it's going to be fine!

Aw, don't be so hard on yourself, Foster. Clearly you need a distraction. Let's see what your long list of admirers gave you, shall we?

Easy for you to say. You're amazing at alchemy.

Ooh, a note! "Dear Sophie, I really enjoyed our dance, and hope we can do it again sometime. LOOOOOOOOVE, Valin."

WHAT?!?! NOOO—this is SO embarrassing!

Who's Valin?

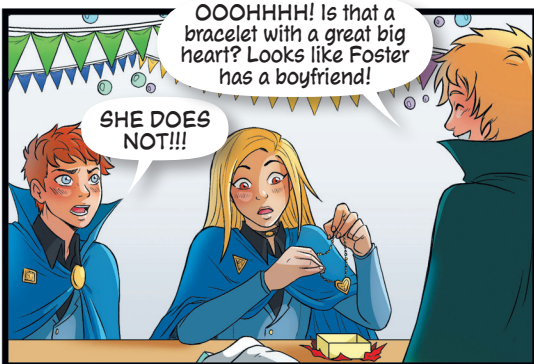
Vice president of the Sophie Foster Fan Club. Don't worry, I'm the president, so I'll take care of her.

I wish I could crawl into a hole and hide forever ...





Go on.  
Open it. Let's  
see what Valin  
gave you.



OOOHHHH! Is that a  
bracelet with a great big  
heart? Looks like Foster  
has a boyfriend!

SHE DOES  
NOT!!!



You don't,  
right?

Nope, nope, nope, nope.

SHAKE

SHAKE

SNORT

I'm just  
teasing.  
Sheesh.



That was  
interesting ...

What?

Pretty sure I don't have to read Keefe's  
mind to know what he's going to claim he  
just felt when he touched Dex's shoulder.  
Better change the subject, quick!

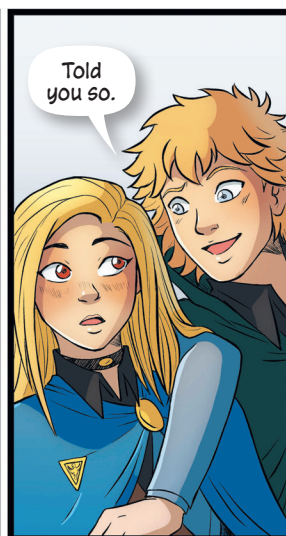
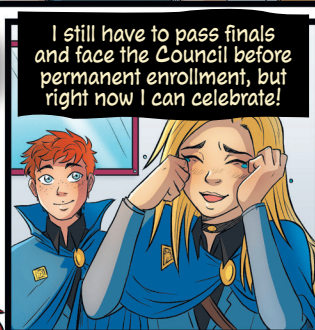
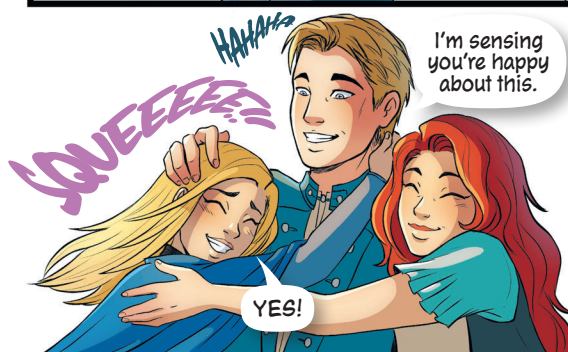
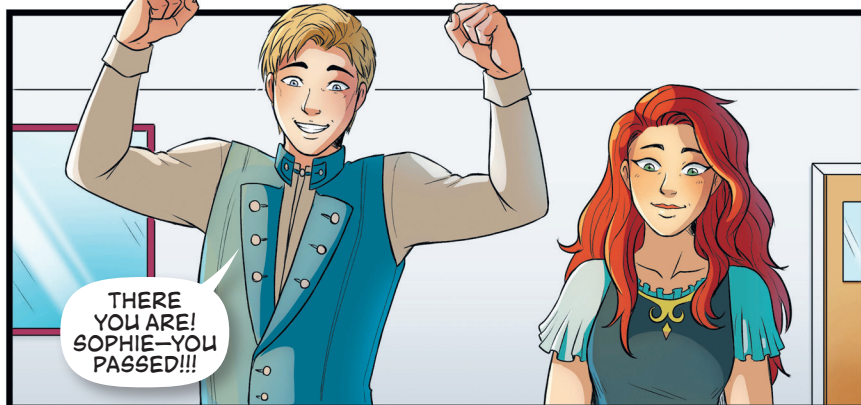


Dex!  
Which one is  
your gift?

This one.  
Sorry, we  
didn't have any  
ribbon.



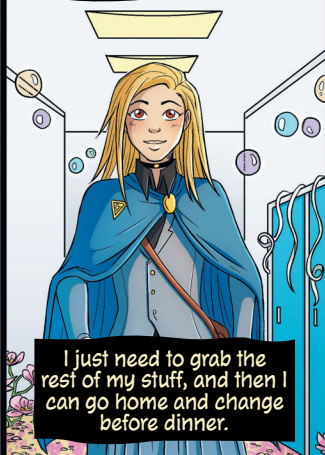




A LITTLE WHILE  
LATER...



I can't believe I passed!  
Even alchemy!



I just need to grab the  
rest of my stuff, and then I  
can go home and change  
before dinner.



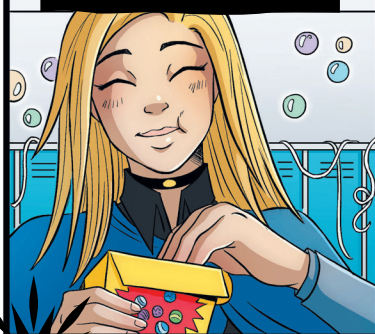
Oh! Keefe's gift!



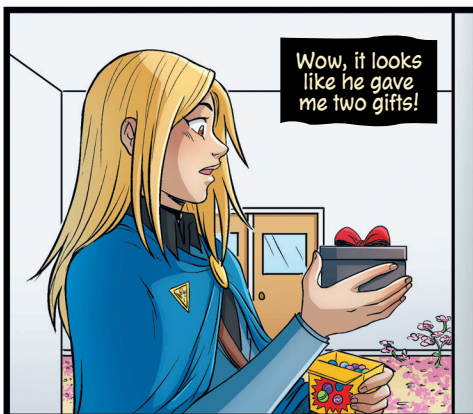
For the Mysterious  
Miss F. If you don't relax,  
this candy will always taste  
bitter—so snap out of it!  
And try to stay out of  
detention!

—K

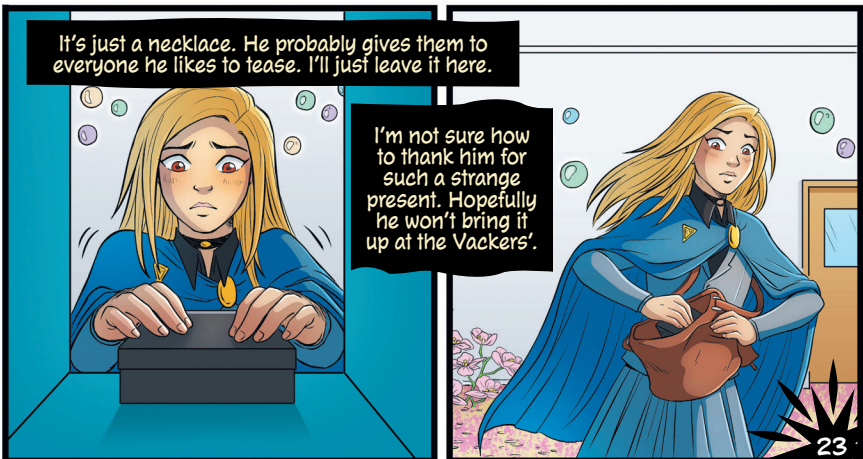
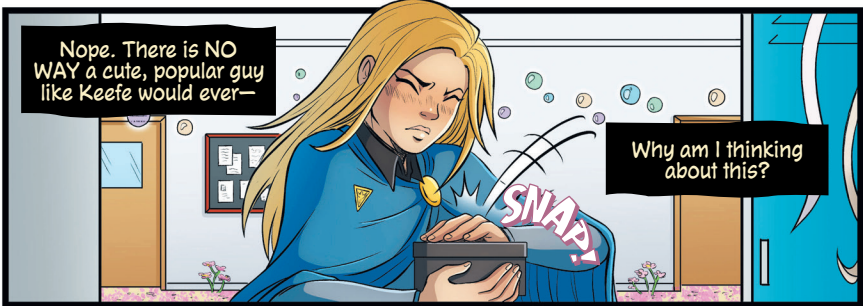
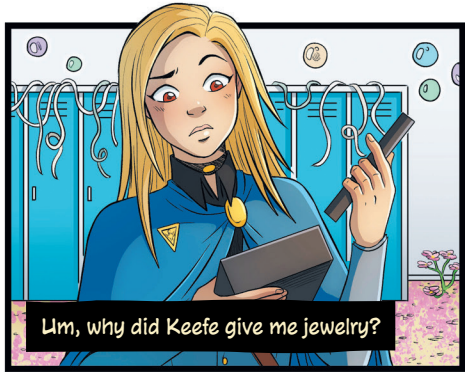
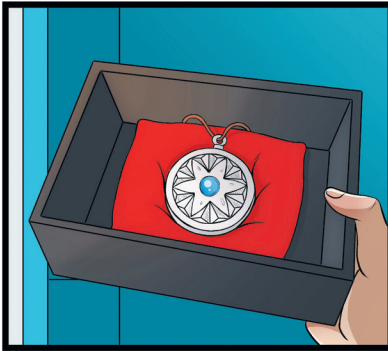
Yum! Tastes like sugarplums!  
Thanks, Keefe!



Wow, it looks  
like he gave  
me two gifts!







EVERGLEN, LATER  
THAT NIGHT

Whoa. That is a  
huge pile of crush cuffs  
you've got there, Fitzy!  
How many is that? I  
think it might be a  
new record!

Um...  
what are crush  
cuffs?

Wristbands with your  
crush's name embroidered on  
them. People like to give them  
out to try to find out if their  
crush likes them back.

Can we  
please not talk  
about this?

Fitz gets A LOT  
of them every year...  
SO annoying.

Yeah...

Okay, let's  
put the crush  
cuffs away. It's  
time to eat.

Me too! It's  
always more  
fun when the  
Mysterious Miss  
F is here!

I'm so glad  
you could come  
over tonight.

I hope you  
know you're  
welcome  
any—



# SLAM

