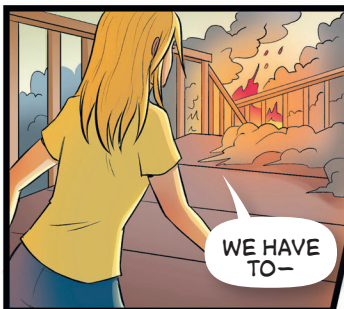
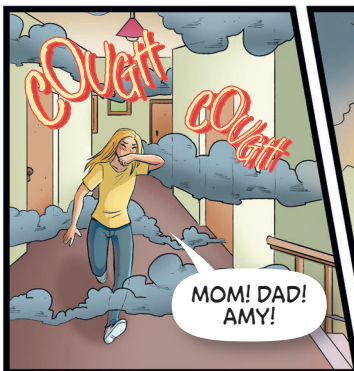
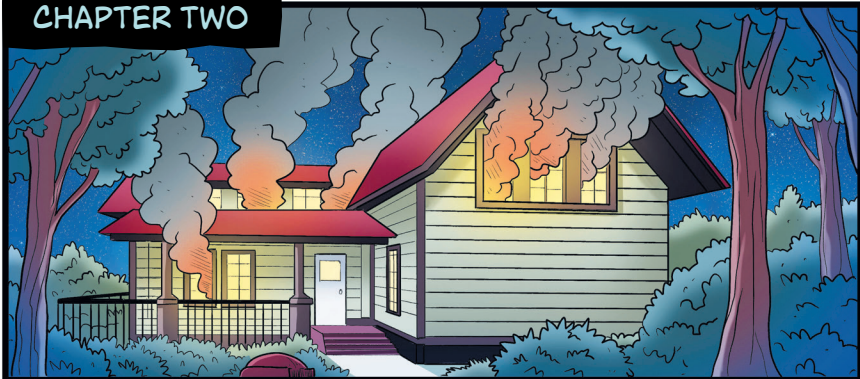
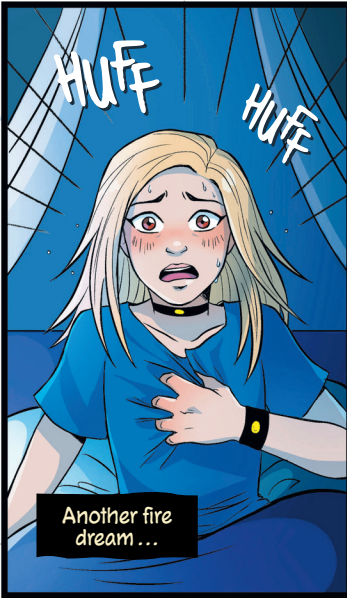


## CHAPTER TWO

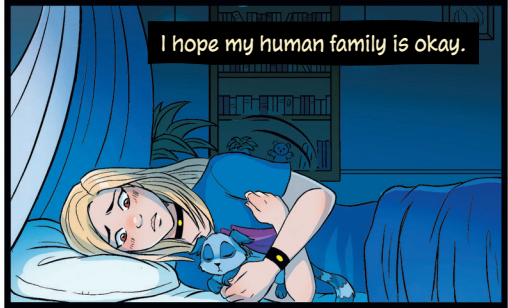




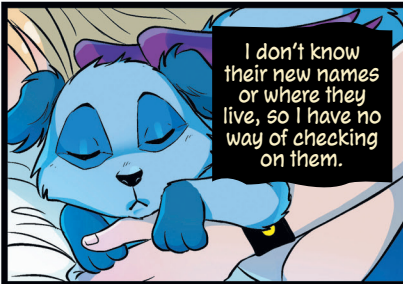
Another fire dream...



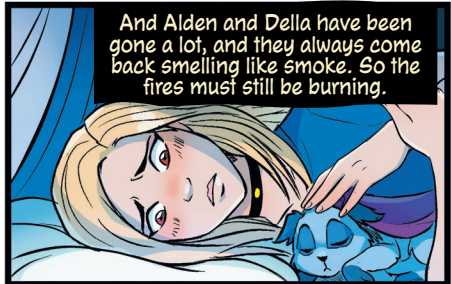
I've been having them every night since Alvar told me about the fires. I can't wait to go back to Foxfire tomorrow. School will keep me from worrying about this.



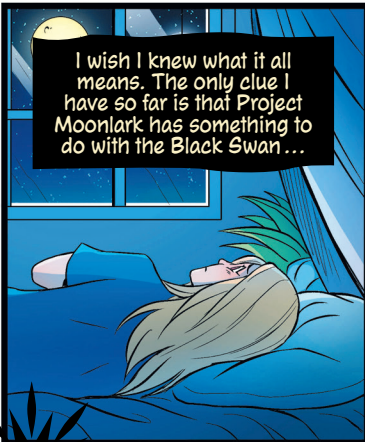
I hope my human family is okay.



I don't know their new names or where they live, so I have no way of checking on them.



And Alden and Della have been gone a lot, and they always come back smelling like smoke. So the fires must still be burning.



I wish I knew what it all means. The only clue I have so far is that Project Moonlark has something to do with the Black Swan...



...and they have to be behind the fires. But...why set fires around humans? What would that accomplish? Until I figure it out, I'll probably keep having nightmares.



FOXFIRE,  
THE NEXT  
DAY

Welcome  
back, prodigies!  
Congratulations  
to everyone who  
passed their  
midterms!

I hope you  
enjoyed your  
six-week vacation  
because it's time  
to get serious.

Anyone who  
got lower than  
eighty-five on their  
midterms needs  
to step it up or you  
will not pass  
your finals.

PLUCK

Your Mentors  
also tell me there are  
one hundred and nine  
Level Threes who  
haven't manifested  
abilities.

That means I need to bring my grades  
up in at least three of my sessions.

And more than  
*double* that of Level  
Twos, which is  
unacceptable.

Be prepared to be  
pushed much harder in  
ability detecting from  
now on.

GROAN

FAT

FAT

At least I don't have to worry about that.

*TELEPATHY  
SESSION, LATER  
THAT MORNING*

Today we are going  
to test your transmitting  
distance.

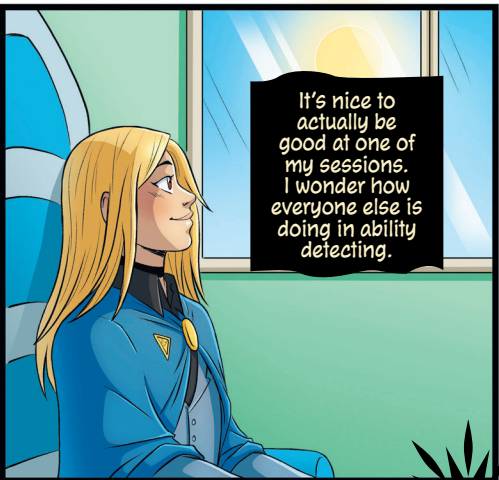
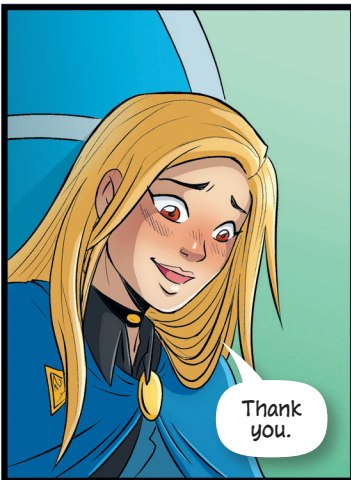
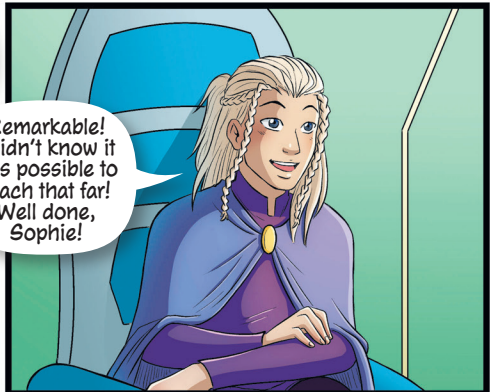
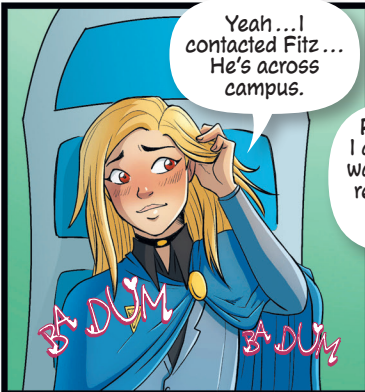
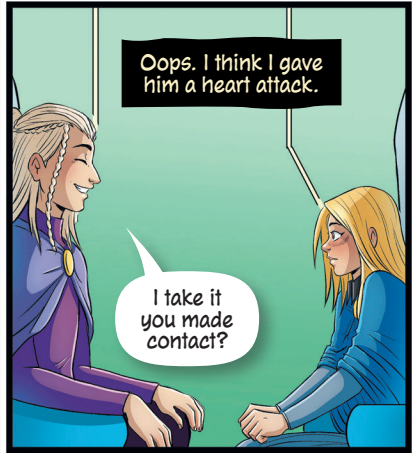
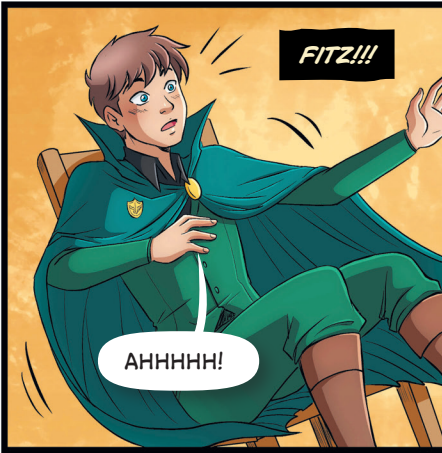
I want to see  
how far you can  
stretch your mind  
and send someone  
a message.

So close your eyes ...  
Search for someone far  
away. And connect.

A familiar mind  
would be easiest ...

I'll reach out to ...



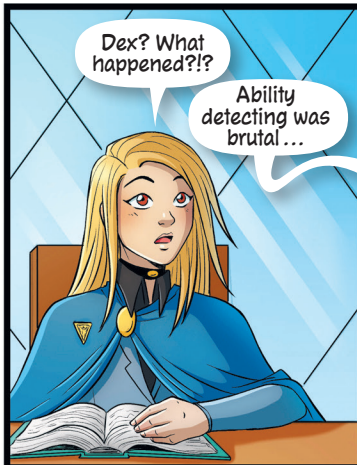


LATER, IN  
STUDY HALL



Dex? What happened?!!?

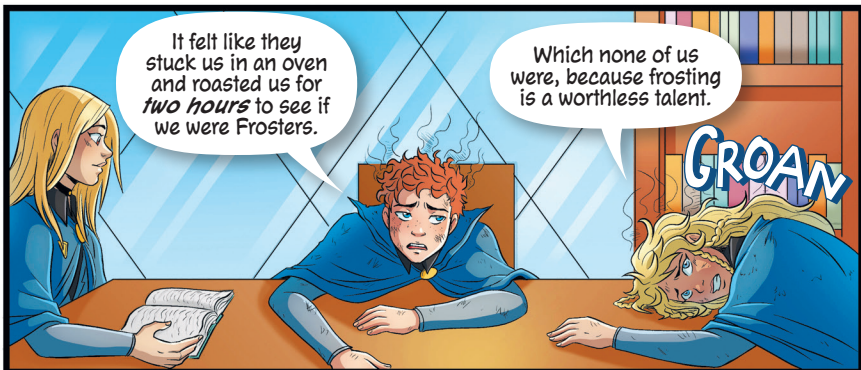
Ability  
detecting was  
brutal ...



It felt like they  
stuck us in an oven  
and roasted us for  
*two hours* to see if  
we were Frosters.

Which none of us  
were, because frosting  
is a worthless talent.

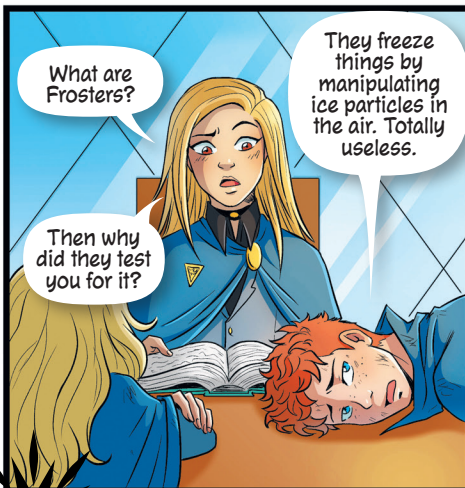
GROAN



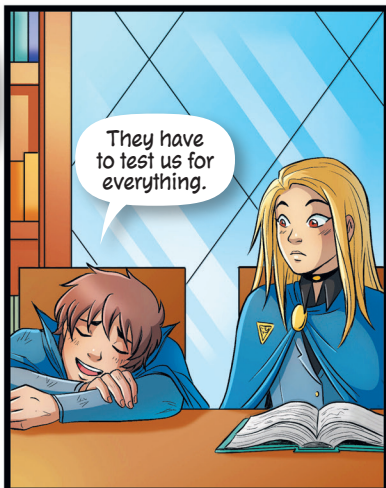
What are  
Frosters?

They freeze  
things by  
manipulating  
ice particles in  
the air. Totally  
useless.

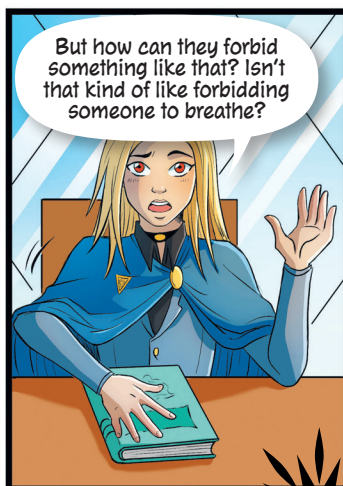
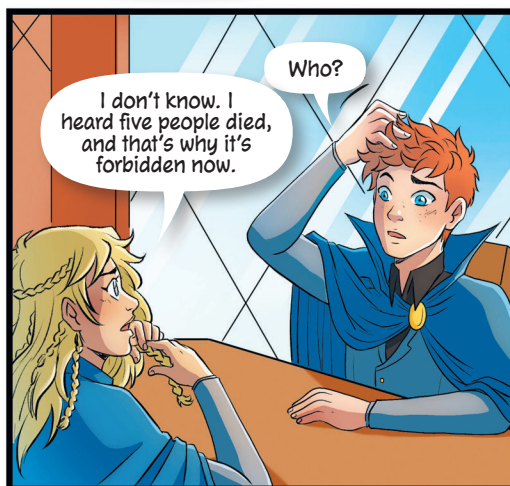
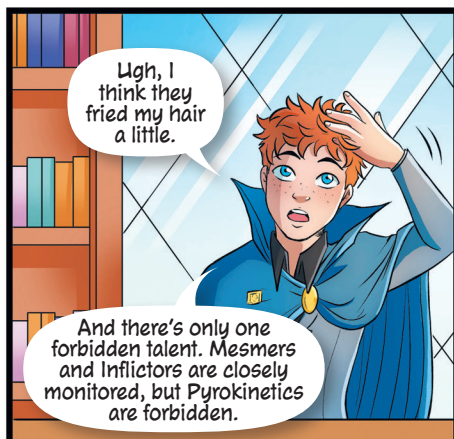
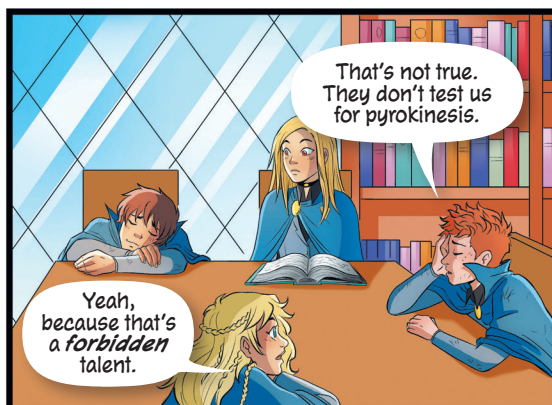
Then why  
did they test  
you for it?

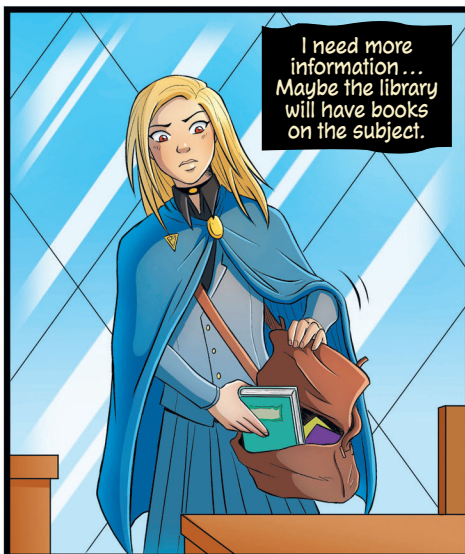
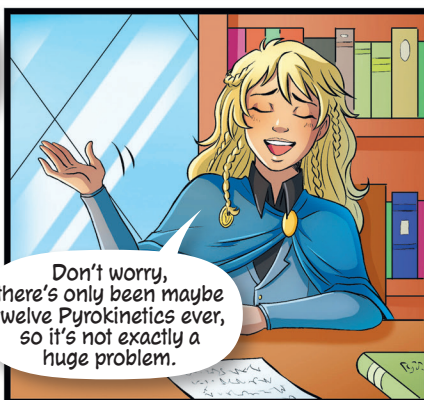
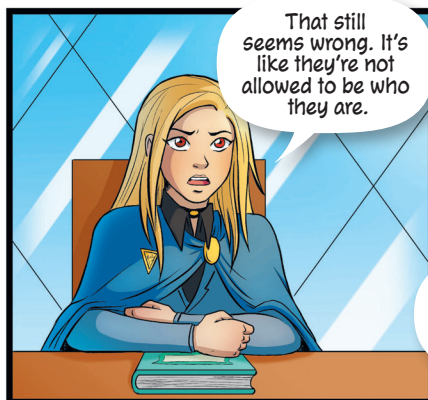


They have  
to test us for  
everything.

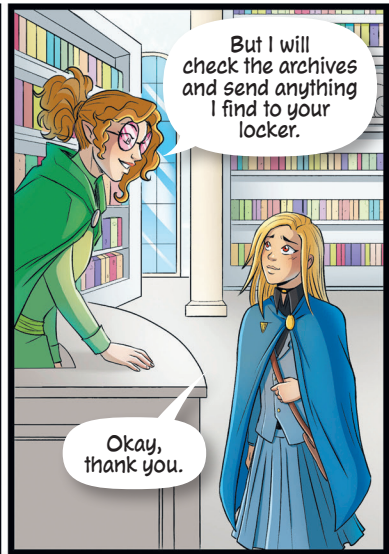
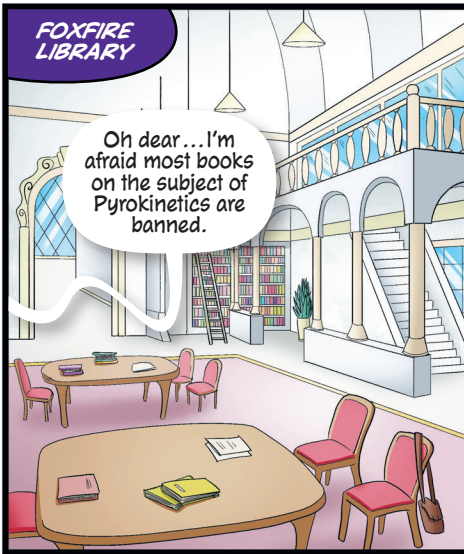












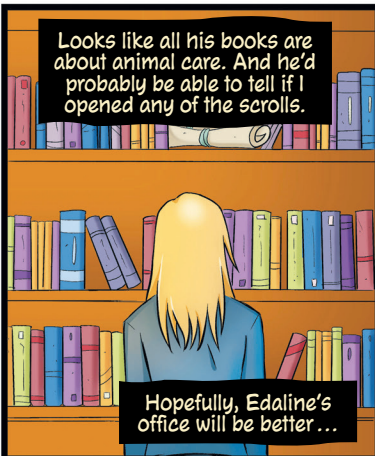
Grady and Edaline probably have bookshelves in their offices—and that seems like a way better place to hide banned books. I just don't know if I'm allowed to go in there, so I'll have to be quick.



I'll start with Grady's office first. Wow, what a mess!

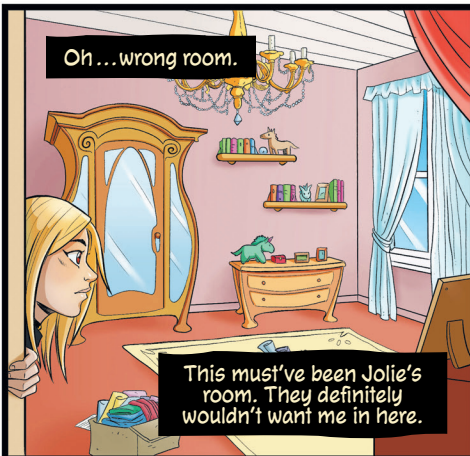


Looks like all his books are about animal care. And he'd probably be able to tell if I opened any of the scrolls.



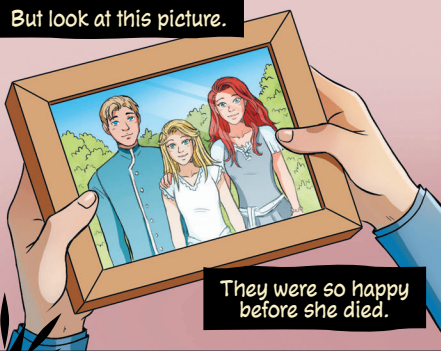
Hopefully, Edaline's office will be better...

Oh...wrong room.



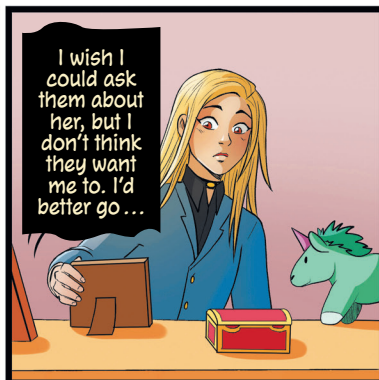
This must've been Jolie's room. They definitely wouldn't want me in here.

But look at this picture.



They were so happy before she died.

I wish I could ask them about her, but I don't think they want me to. I'd better go...

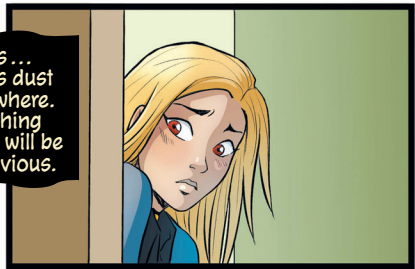






Ugh, Edaline's office is even messier than Grady's office. This time I can't even open the door.

Plus... there's dust everywhere. Anything I touch will be too obvious.



I'll have to find another way to track down books.

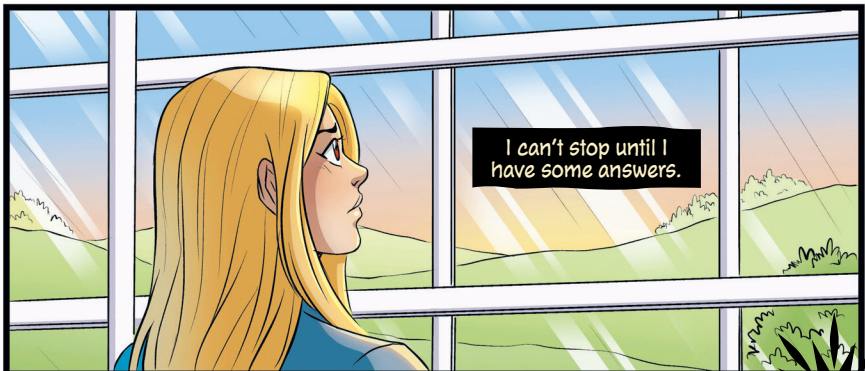
SIGH



Maybe Biana can let me look through the library at Everglen. But I'll have to come up with a good excuse in case Alden finds us in there.



I know it's risky to keep looking into this stuff, but I'm close to something. I can feel it.



I can't stop until I have some answers.