

# Arrogant English Major



## EPISODE 1: ILLUMINATION

A MEMOIR WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY ANGELA R. COX



Arrogant English major  
Episode 1: Illumination  
A Memoir

March 13, 2012

Story and text:  
Angela R. Cox

Original art and layout:  
Angela R. Cox

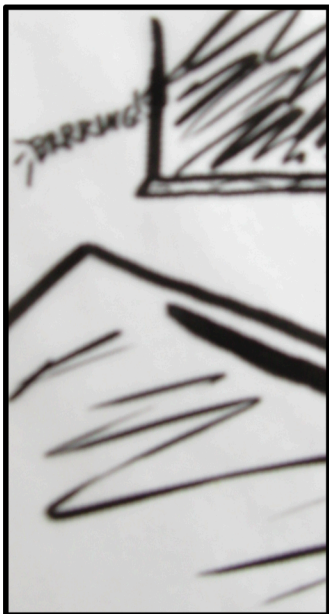
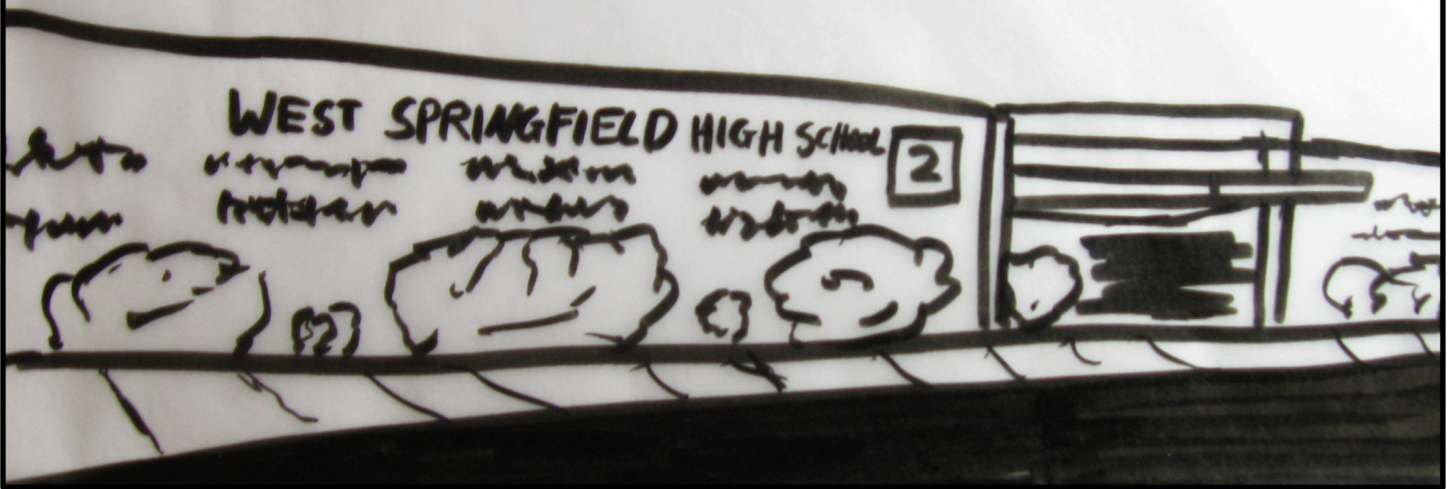
Additional illustrations borrowed from:  
Saint George and the Dragon  
Written by Margaret Hodges  
Illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman

Portrait of Mary Shelley (p. 4)  
By Richard Rothwell  
Image taken from Wikipedia Commons

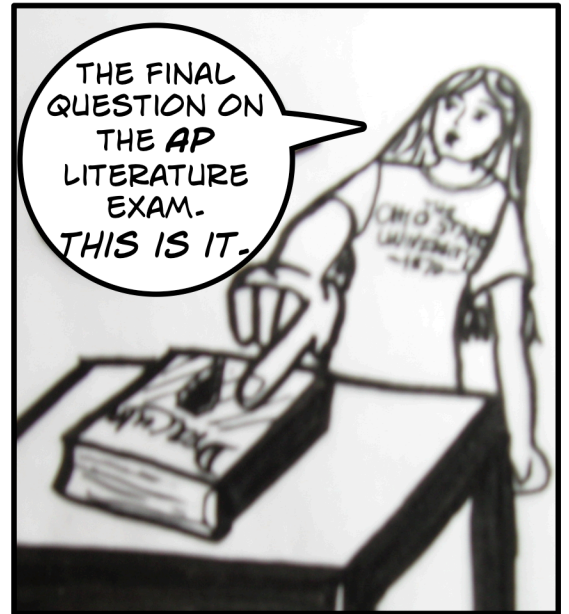
The narrative, characters, and scenarios contained herein represent the author's subjective memory; they are not intended to be accurate depictions of history. All opinions expressed herein are solely the author's.



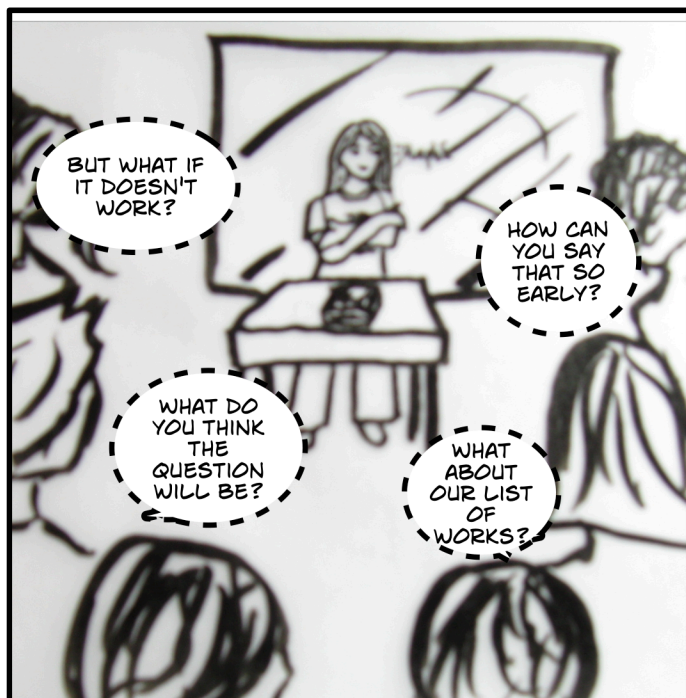
OF COURSE, I NEVER DID TRUST THE LITERARY CANON...



THIS.



THE FINAL QUESTION ON THE AP LITERATURE EXAM. THIS IS IT.



BUT WHAT IF IT DOESN'T WORK?

HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT SO EARLY?

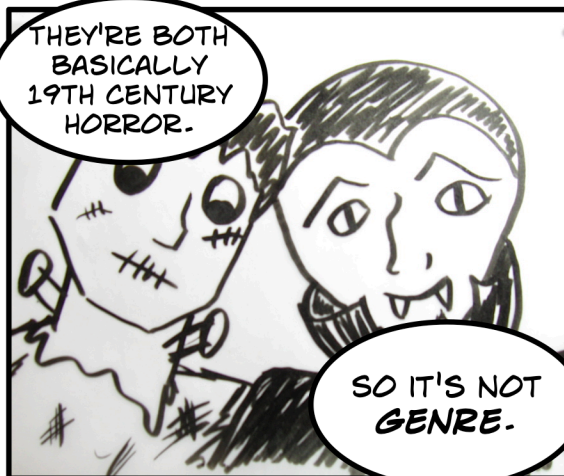
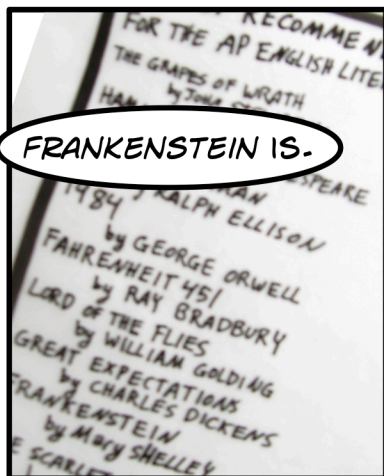
WHAT DO YOU THINK THE QUESTION WILL BE?

WHAT ABOUT OUR LIST OF WORKS?

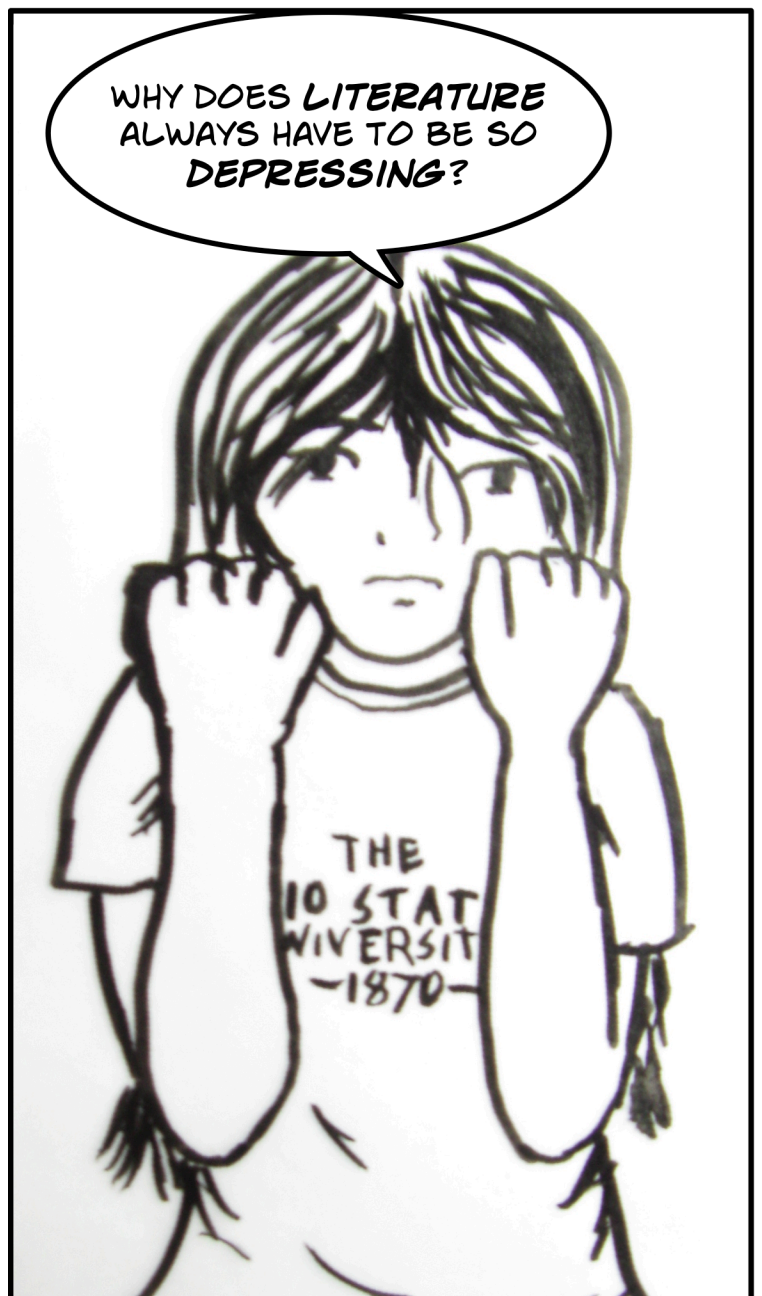
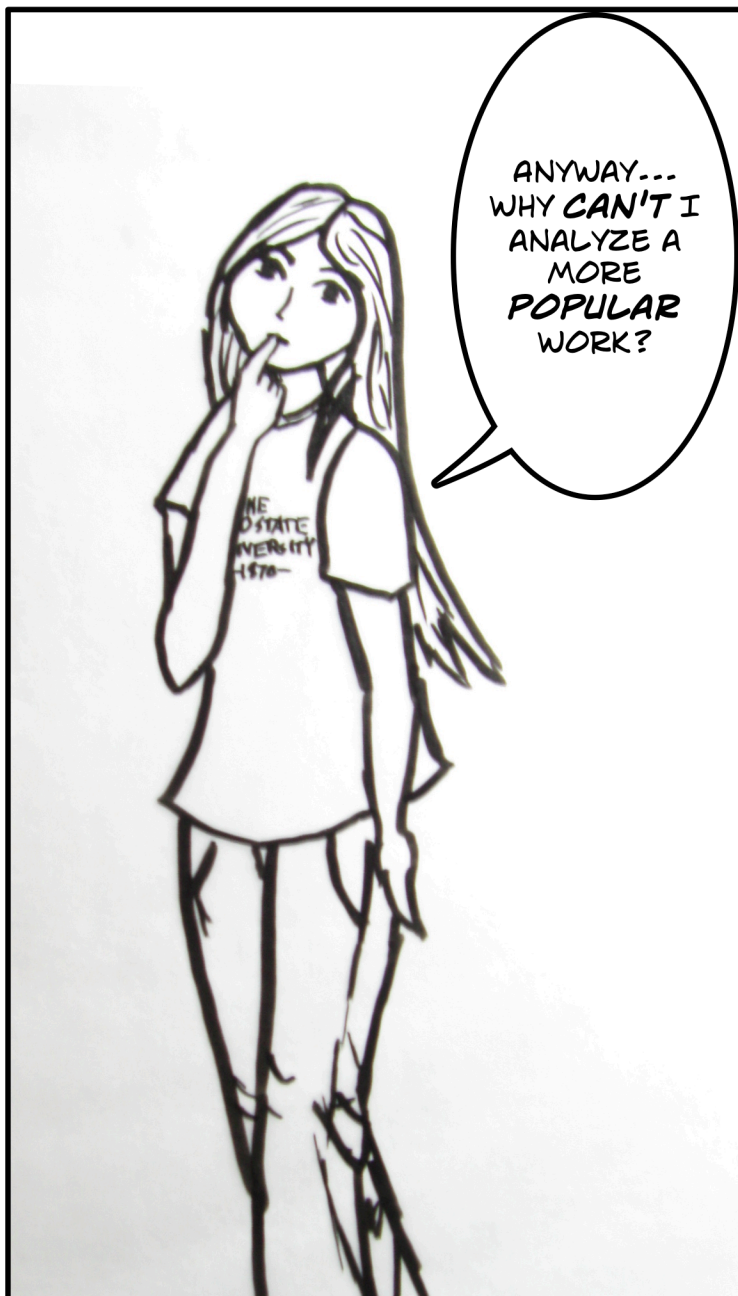
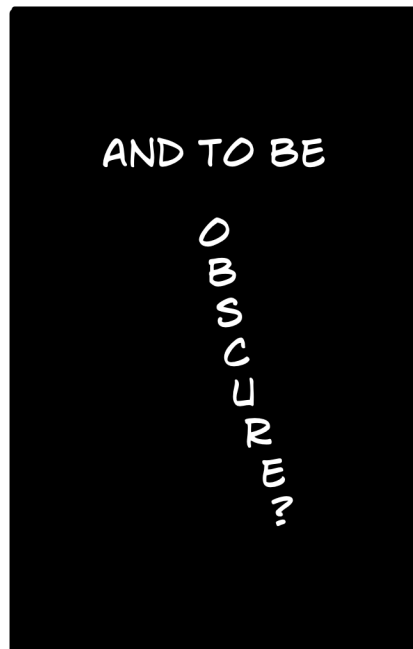


DOESN'T MATTER.











BUT THIS ISN'T THAT STORY.

This is the story of how

I, an arrogant

**English Major,**

learned that

**Literature**

doesn't need to be

**WORDS**

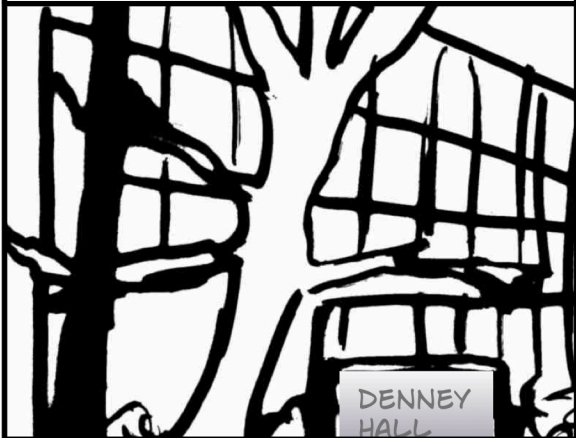


alone.





ENGLISH 201: PRE-19TH  
CENTURY BRITISH LITERATURE



(REQUIRED COURSE FOR  
ENGLISH MAJORS)

IT DOESN'T GET ANY MORE  
CANONICAL THAN *THIS*.



MY FIRST ASSIGNMENT WAS  
TO READ *BEOWULF*.



IN ONE NIGHT.





DON'T GET ME WRONG.  
I LOVED IT.



AND THE TEACHER WAS AWESOME!

LET'S SIT IN A  
CIRCLE TO  
DISCUSS THE  
READING!



BUT I NEVER FIT IN WITH MY CLASSMATES.  
EVERY DAY BEFORE CLASS, THEY DISCUSSED THE READINGS.

I ALWAYS  
LOVE READING  
HAMLET!

I JUST LOVE HOW DARK  
AND REALISTIC THE  
PSYCHOLOGY IS!

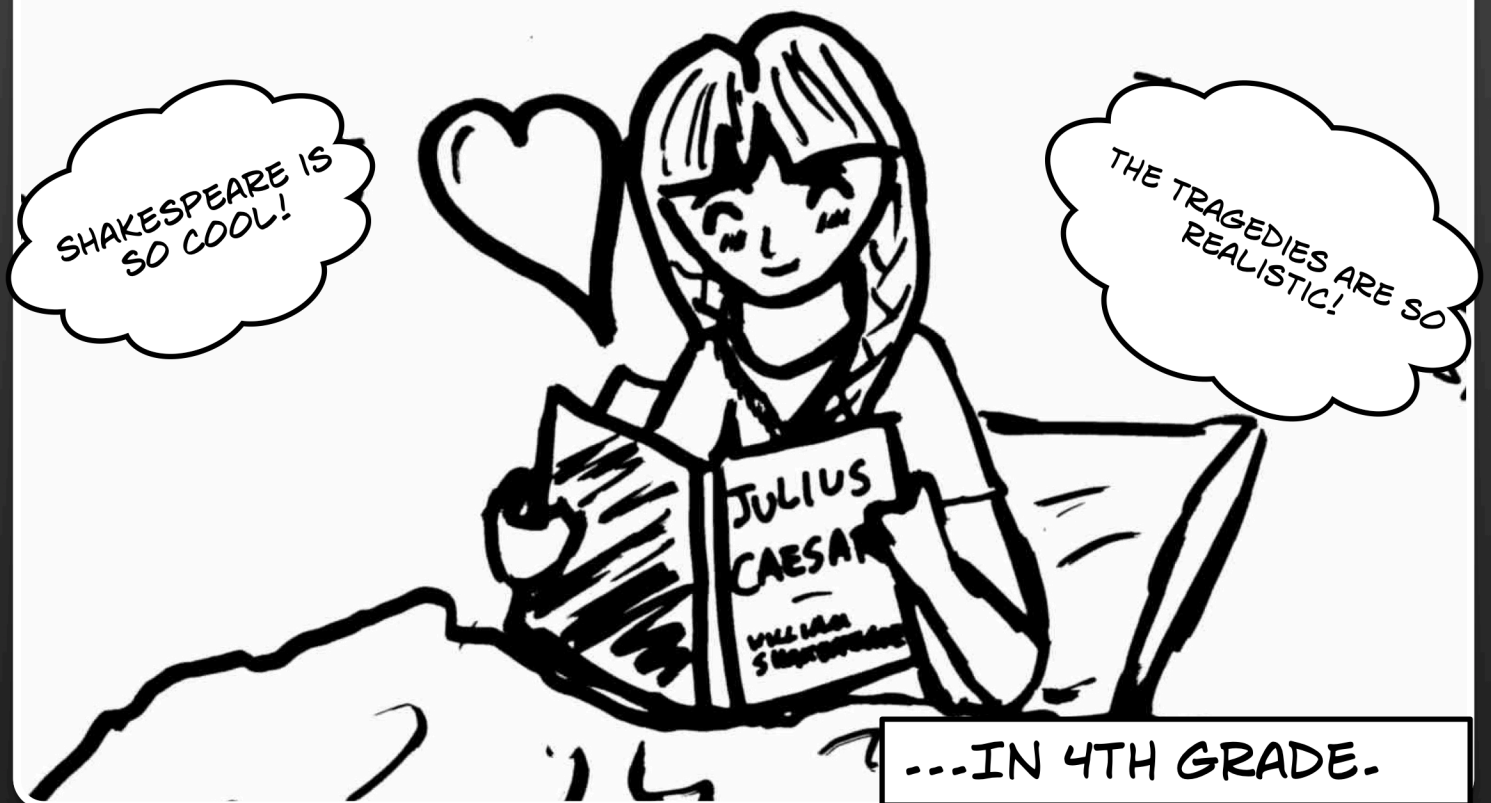
I KNOW! IT'S  
SO ANGSTY!

-HMPH!-  
AMATEURS.

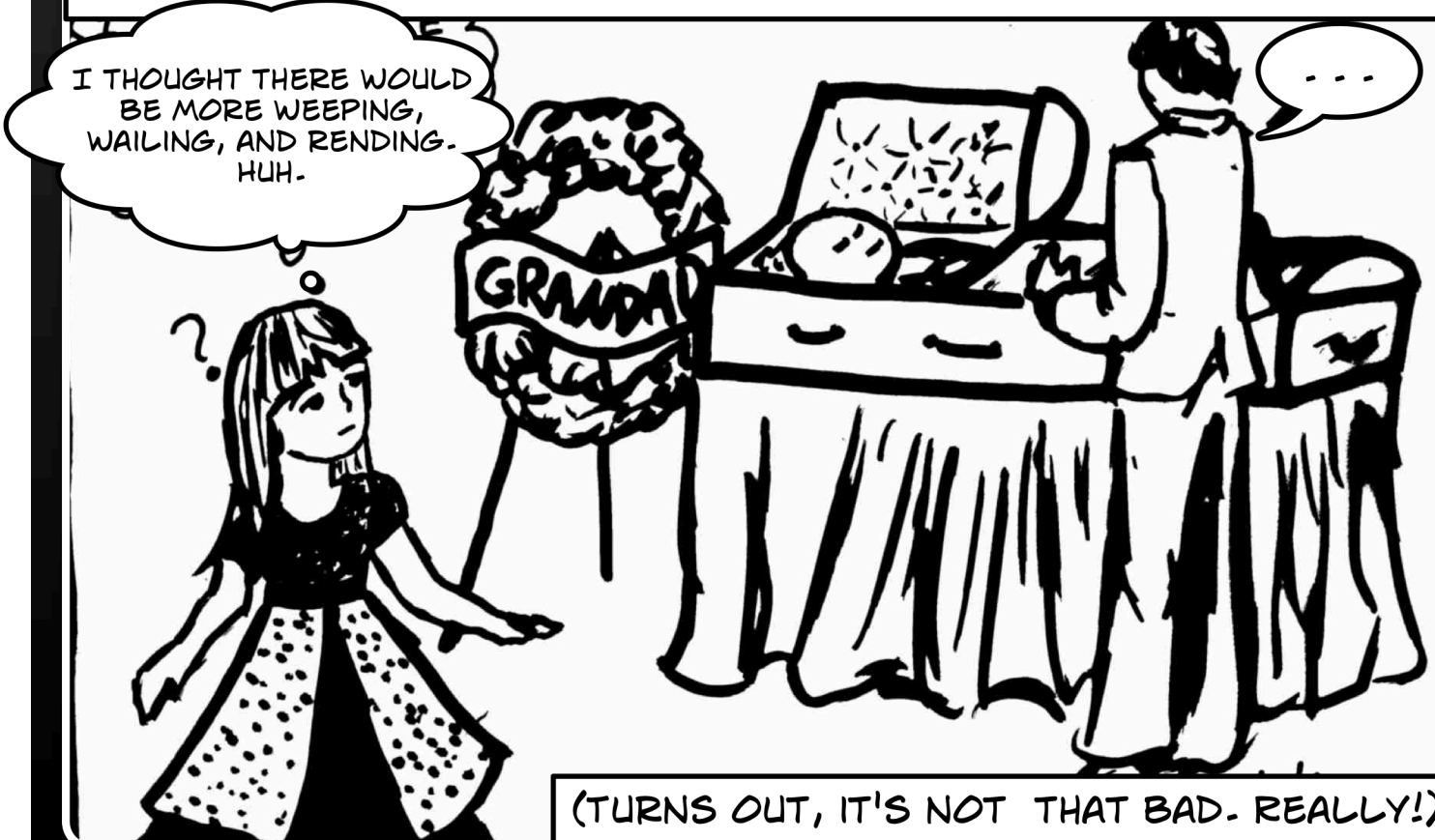




ONCE I THOUGHT LIKE THEM...



BUT THEN I LEARNED WHAT THE REAL WORLD IS REALLY LIKE.



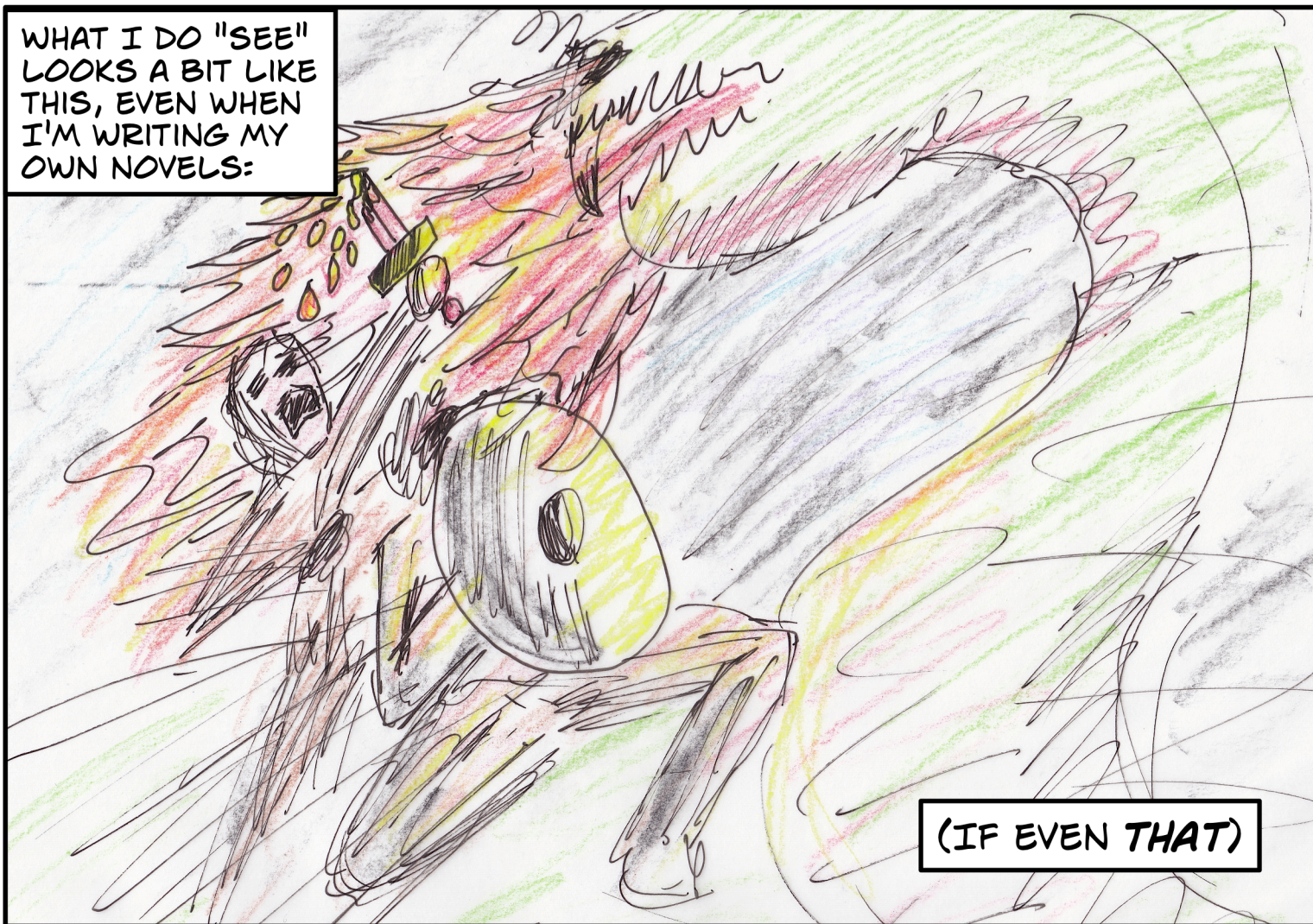


BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE  
THAT MARKED ME APART IN CLASS  
EVEN MORE...



...I DON'T REALLY "SEE  
THINGS" WHEN I READ.  
NEVER HAVE.

WHAT I DO "SEE"  
LOOKS A BIT LIKE  
THIS, EVEN WHEN  
I'M WRITING MY  
OWN NOVELS:



(IF EVEN THAT)



USUALLY WHAT I "SEE"  
IS A BIT MORE LIKE THIS:



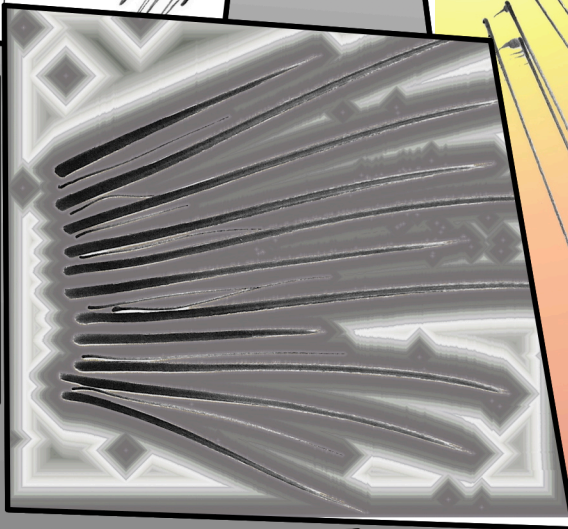
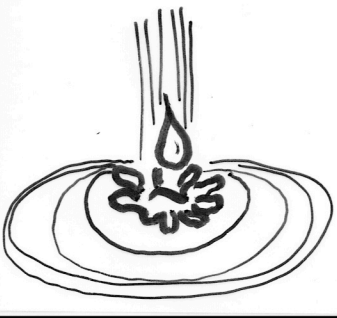
!!?

DIALOGUE  
DIALOGUE

EPIC SPEECH

BLAH  
BLAH  
BLAH

RRRIIPPP!



...SCHLEPP...

...YEAH.  
SOMETHING  
LIKE THAT.



SO NATURALLY...

...I JUST LOVED HOW I COULD SEE ALL THE ACTION! SO DETAILED!

YEAH! THAT WAS A GREAT READ!

...I COULDN'T SEE A THING...

WHAT?! WHY NOT? THE IMAGERY WAS PERFECT!

I NEVER SEE ANYTHING.

HUH? THEN HOW DO YOU READ!?

I HEAR.  
I FEEL.  
I JUST DON'T SEE.

OMG!  
THAT IS SO WEIRD!

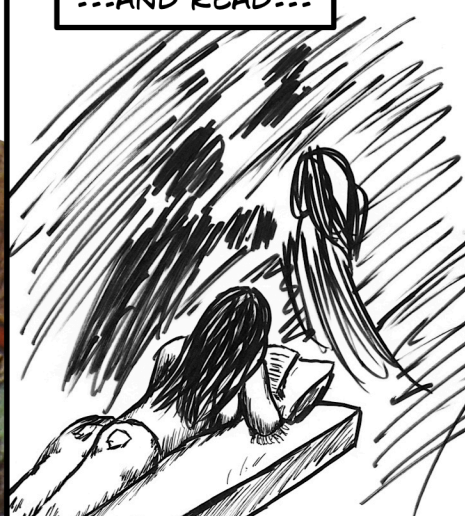
...I DIDN'T FIT IN.



AND SO WE READ...



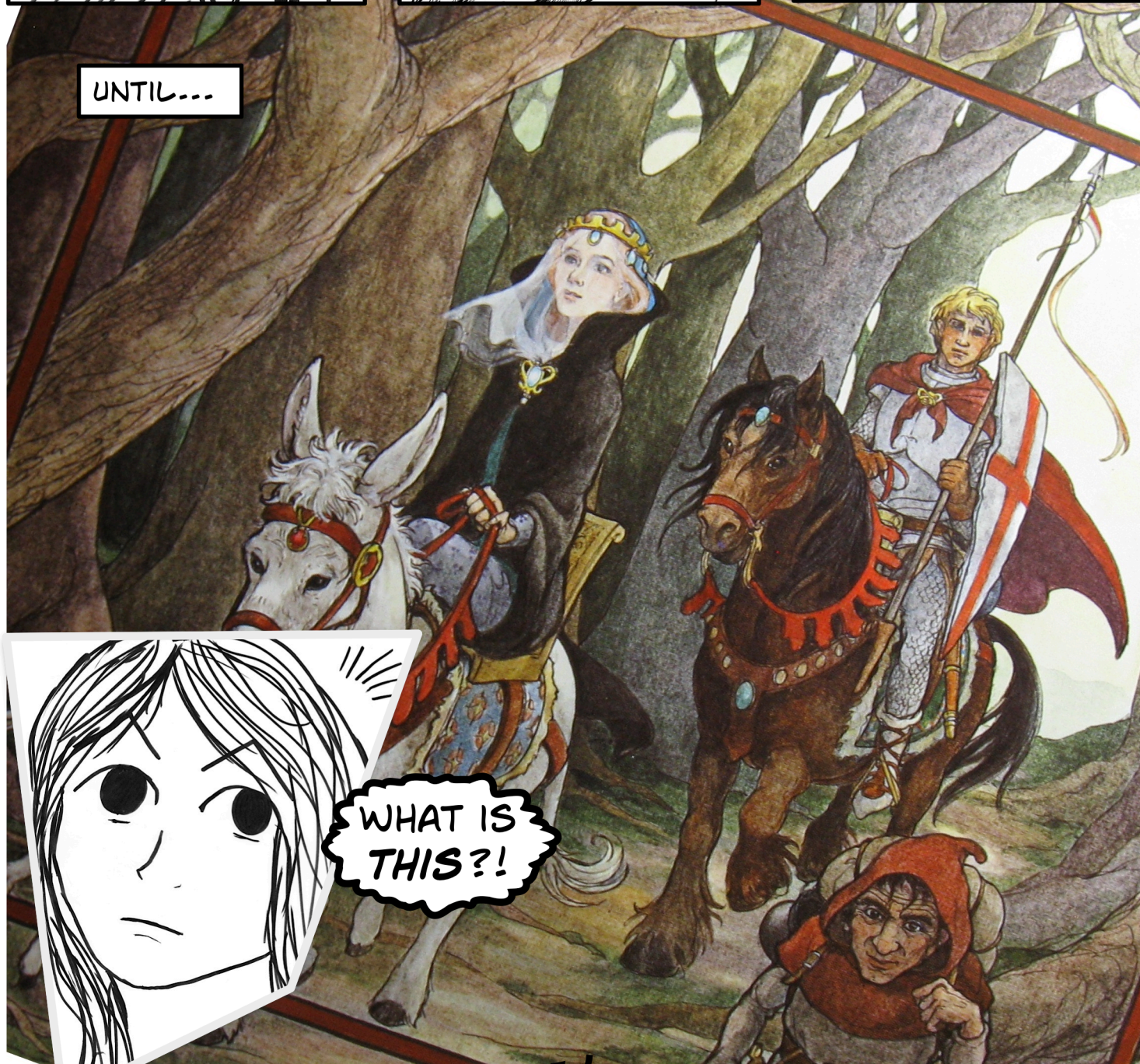
...AND READ...



...AND READ...



UNTIL....



WHAT IS THIS?!









I DID.



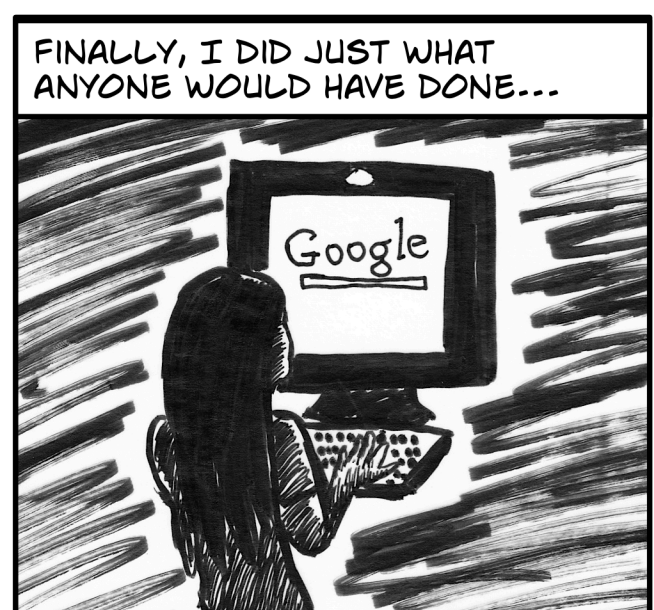
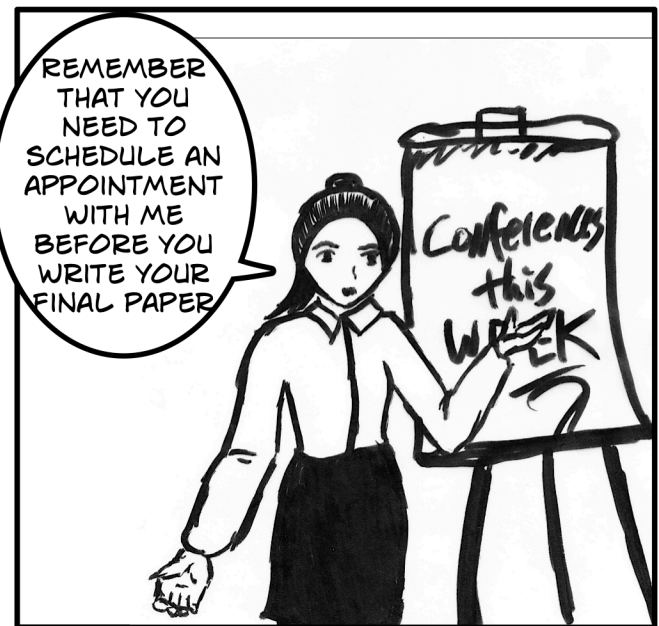
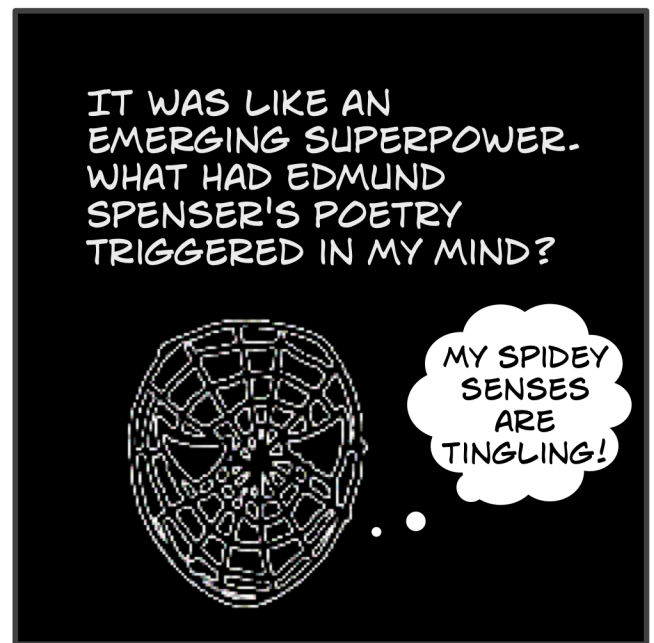
AND IN A VERY  
SPECIFIC ART  
STYLE.



IT WAS SOFT AND  
COLORFUL.  
AND IT HAD THESE  
REALLY COMPLICATED  
BORDERS, ALMOST LIKE  
CELTIC KNOTWORK.

...BUT IT ALL  
MADE SENSE.







WHEN I WAS LITTLE, THERE WAS  
THIS **BEAUTIFUL PICTURE BOOK.**

WHENEVER I WAS SAD, OR  
BORED, OR SCARED, I WOULD  
SIT IN THE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY...

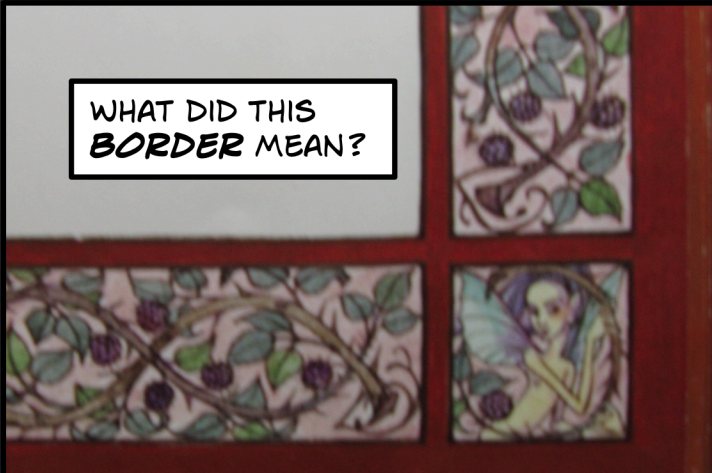


...AND JUST STARE AT  
THOSE PICTURES FOR  
HOURS, STUDYING  
**EVERY DETAIL.**

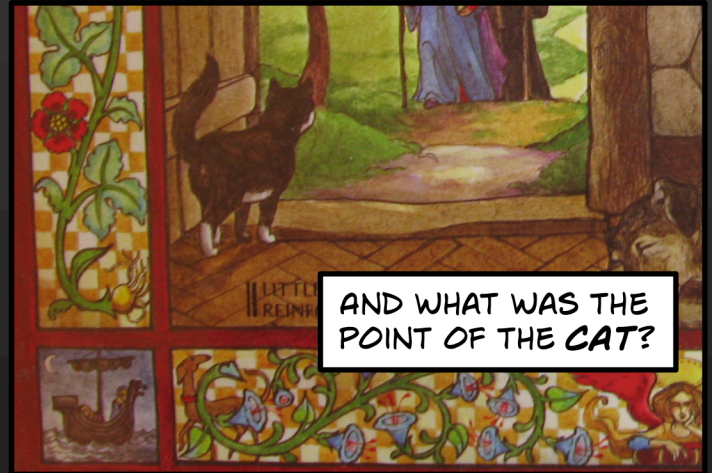




I WANTED TO  
UNDERSTAND  
**EVERY PART**  
OF IT.



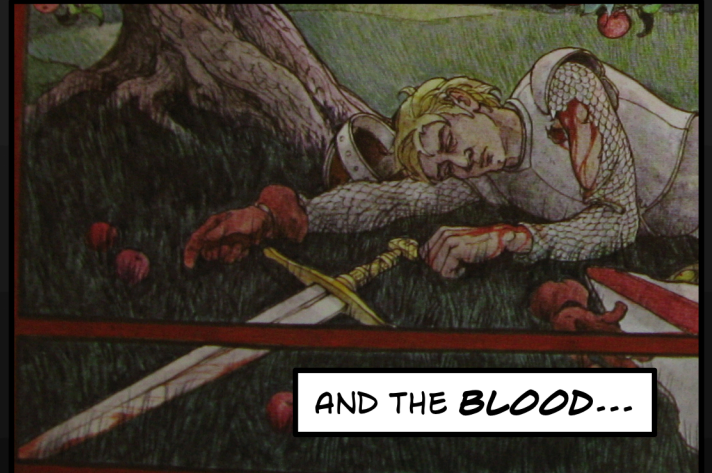
WHAT DID THIS  
**BORDER** MEAN?



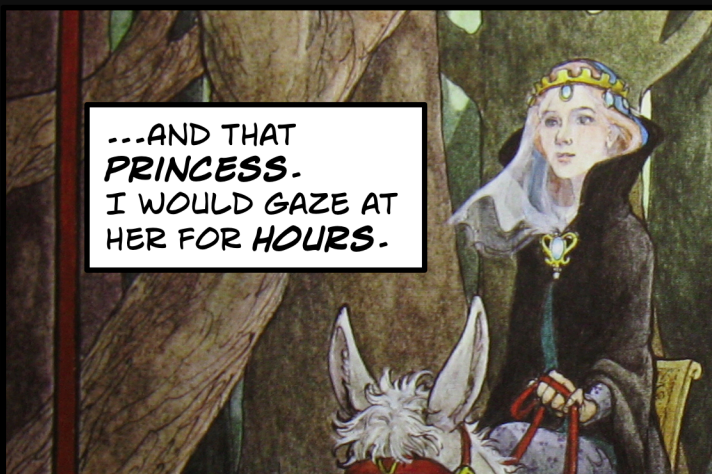
AND WHAT WAS THE  
POINT OF THE **CAT**?



AND WHO WAS **HE**?



AND THE **BLOOD**...



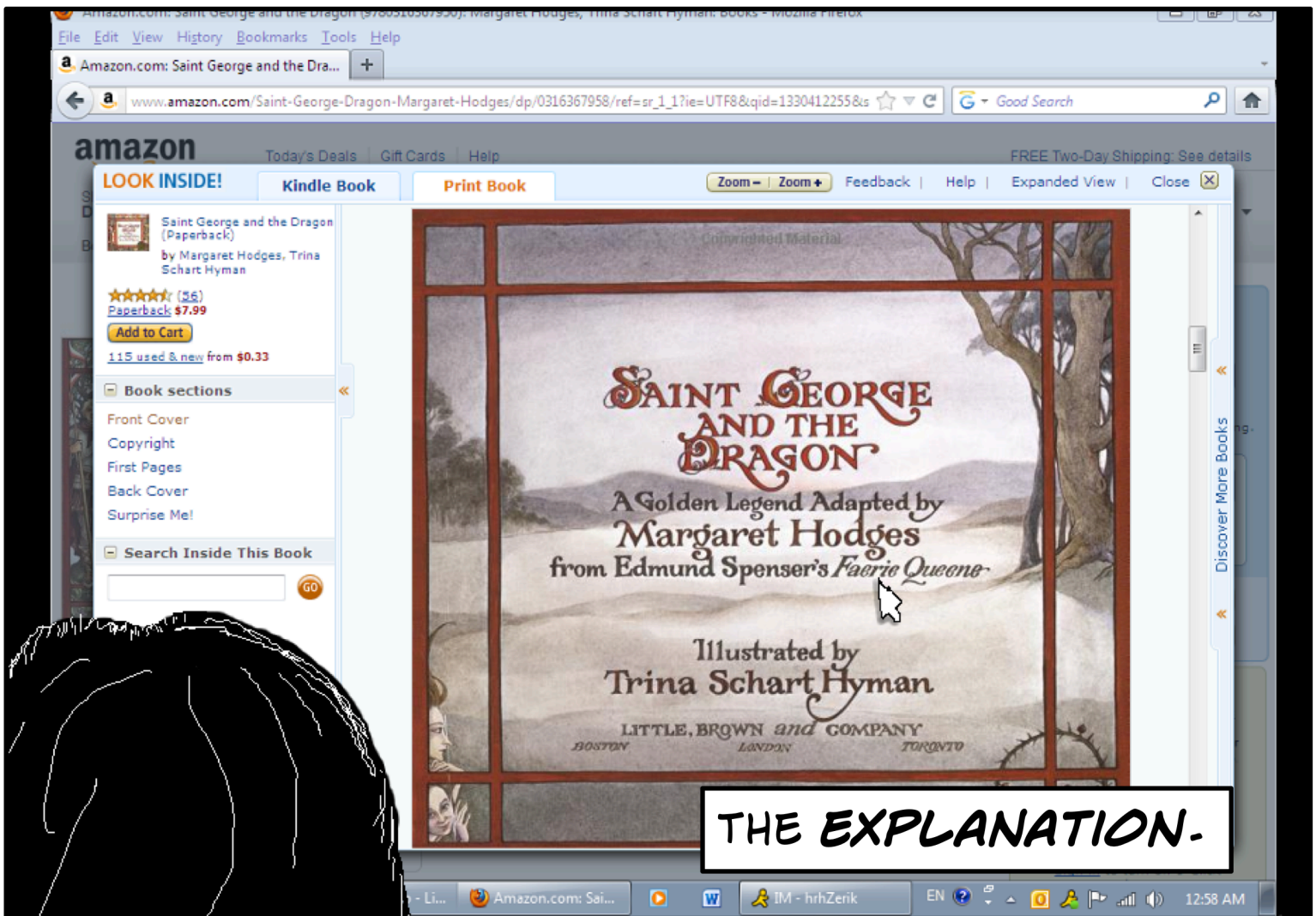
...AND THAT  
**PRINCESS**.  
I WOULD GAZE AT  
HER FOR **HOURS**.



...I WANTED TO BE HER.

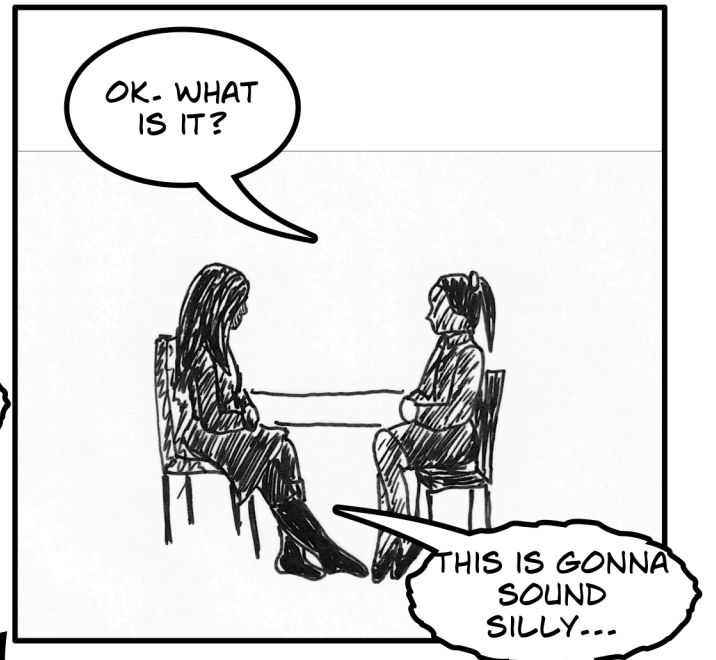
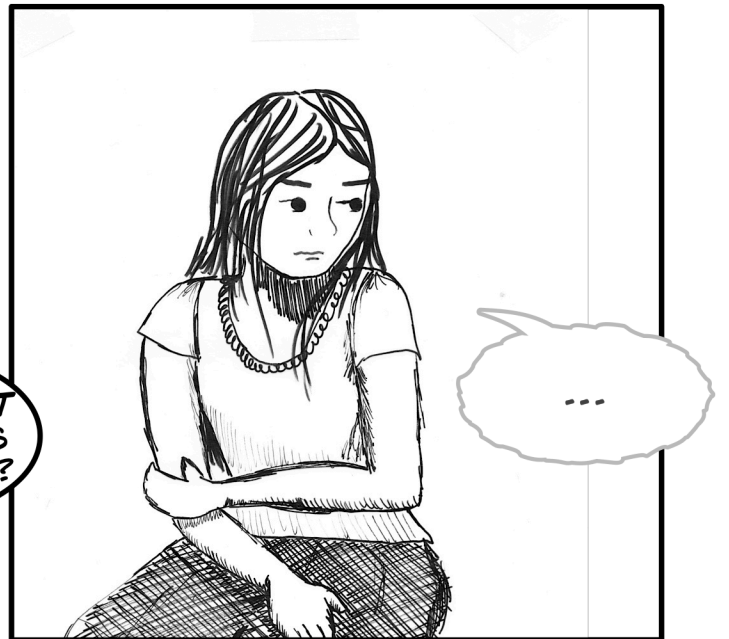
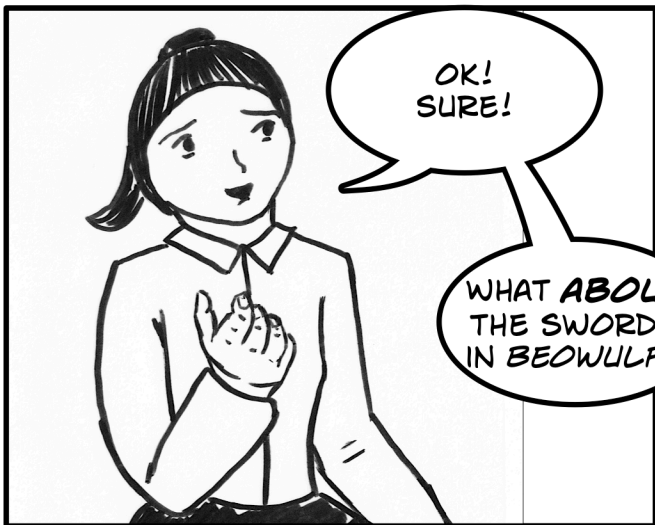
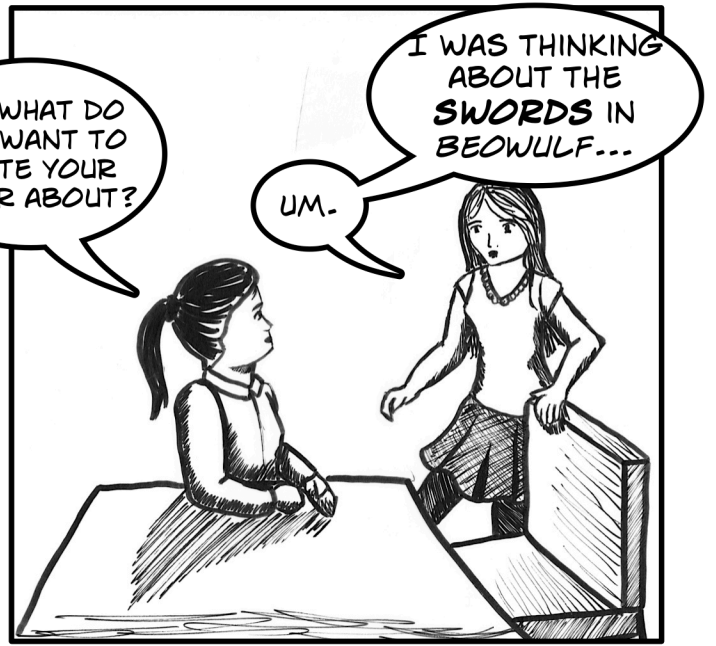


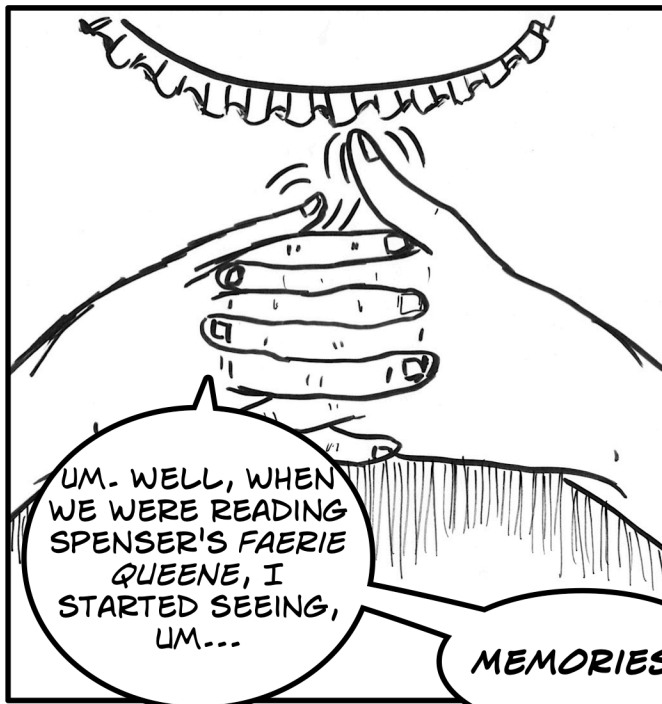
THEN, THERE IT WAS...



THE EXPLANATION.







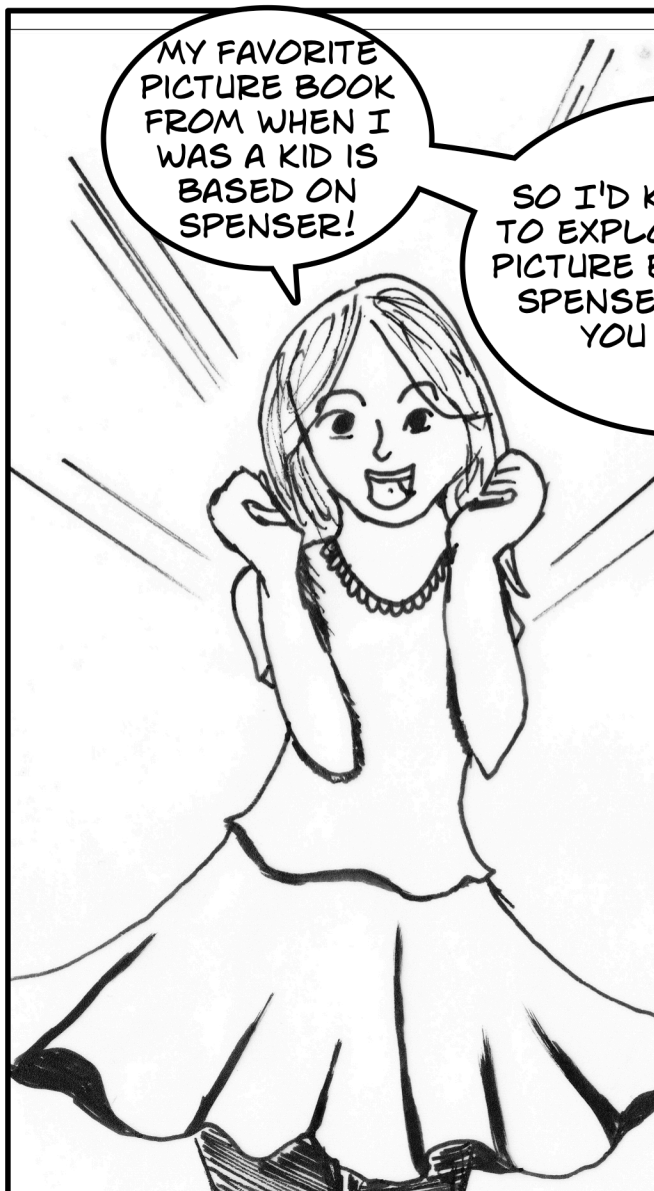
UM. WELL, WHEN  
WE WERE READING  
SPENSER'S FAERIE  
QUEENE, I  
STARTED SEEING,  
UM...

MEMORIES.



SO I DID A  
LITTLE  
REASEARCH...

...AND IT  
TURNS OUT...



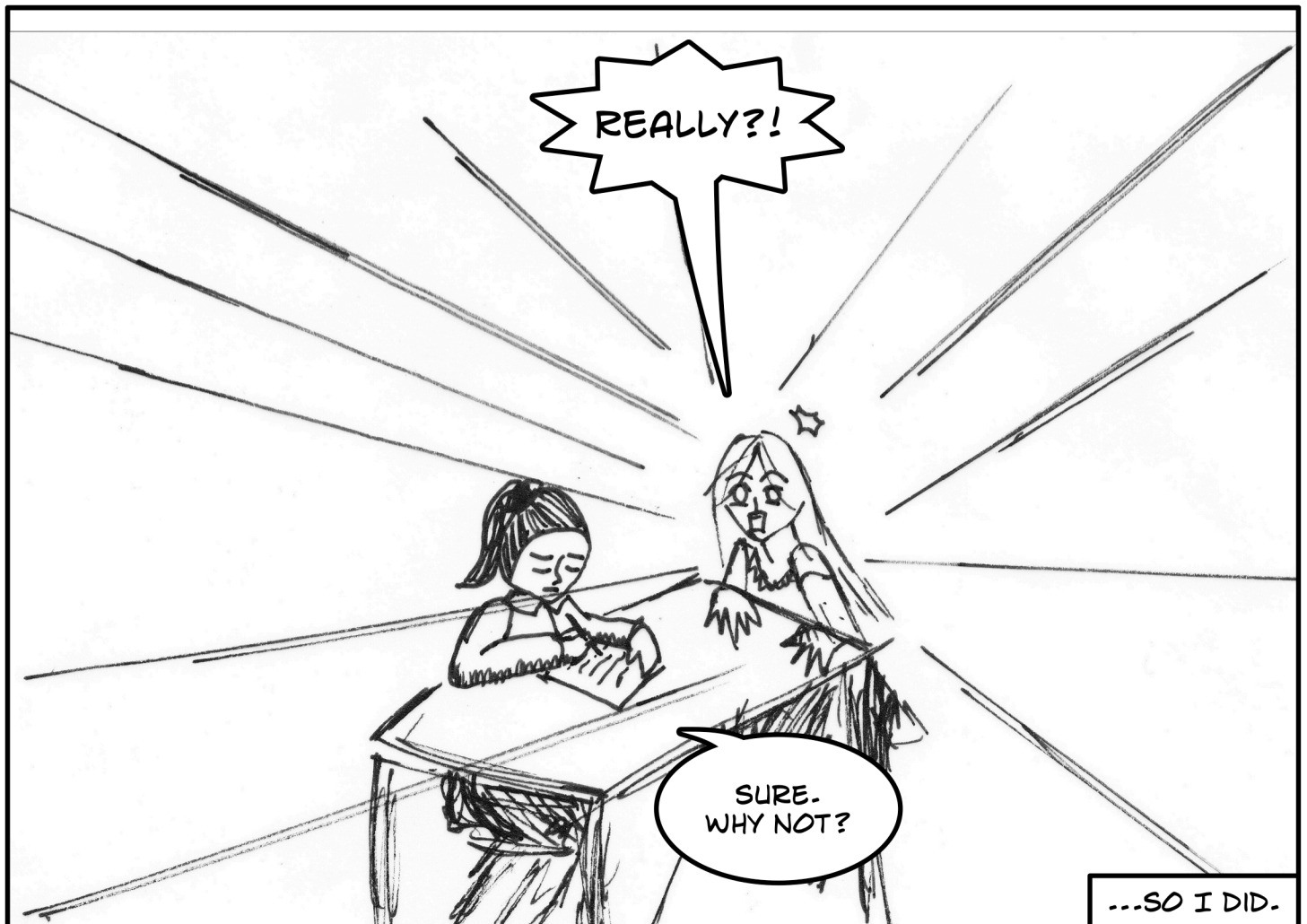
MY FAVORITE  
PICTURE BOOK  
FROM WHEN I  
WAS A KID IS  
BASED ON  
SPENSER!

SO I'D KIND OF LIKE  
TO EXPLORE HOW THE  
PICTURE BOOK ADAPTS  
SPENSER FOR KIDS,  
YOU KNOW?!



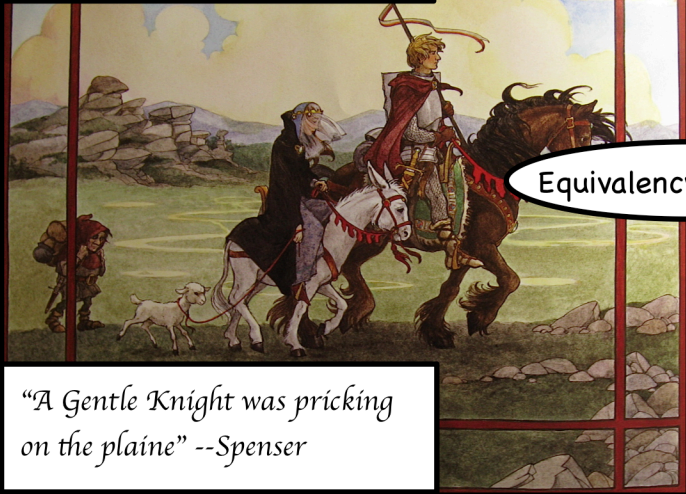
...BUT THAT  
DOESN'T  
SOUND VERY  
LITERARY,  
DOES IT?





# The Argument

"a noble knight was riding  
across a plain" --Hodges



"A Gentle Knight was pricking  
on the plaine" --Spenser

Equivalency of texts

"he was bound on a great  
adventure, sent by the  
Queen of the Fairies to  
try his young strength  
against a deadly enemy, a  
dragon grim and horrible"  
--Hodges



"Upon a great adventure he was bond,  
That greatest Gloriana to him gave...  
To prove his puissance in battell brave  
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne;  
Upon his foe, a dragon horrible and stearne"  
--Spenser

"In many respects, it is Hyman's illustrations,  
not Hodges's writing, that make this adaptation  
fit so neatly into the structure of the original  
text by Spenser"

--"Spenser in Adaptation and Various Audiences"  
March 2, 2006  
(My final paper for English 201)

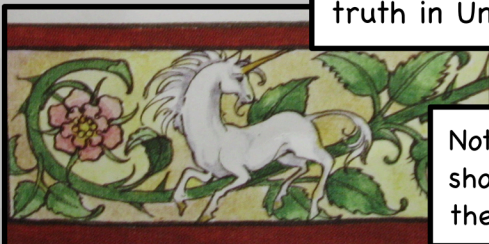
Tudor roses represent  
Spenser's allegory of  
the Faerie Queene as  
Queen Elizabeth I



These pictures show The Red  
Crosse Knight's commission in  
the Faerie Court



The unicorn  
represents  
purity and  
truth in Una



Note the buds: they  
show potential for  
the characters

The stag represents  
the knight's youth  
and eagerness to  
prove himself



(AND SO ON...)



SO I DECIDED TO TEST THESE BOUNDARIES,  
IF BOUNDARIES THEY REALLY WERE...

COULD I DO MY  
FINAL PAPER ON  
SOMETHING LESS...  
TRADITIONAL?

SURE!

...LIKE, SAY, A  
VIDEO GAME?

I DON'T SEE  
WHY NOT!

BUT, THAT QUARTER, I STUCK  
TO CHILDREN'S BOOKS.  
THE GAMES WOULD WAIT.

YOU SEE, THIS  
WORLD OF COLLEGE  
IS STRANGE...

MORRILL TOWER



...AND THE  
POSSIBILITIES  
ARE ENDLESS!