





Well, I can understand how you feel.

Things weren't easy for me when I was your age either.

When we were put into the orphanage the other girls wouldn't hold hands with me.

I had warts... and I guess they thought I was contagious.

My brothers had to stay in another dorm, so I felt alone.

I had a picture in my mind of her as a kid but it was only a vague tapestry of thoughts.

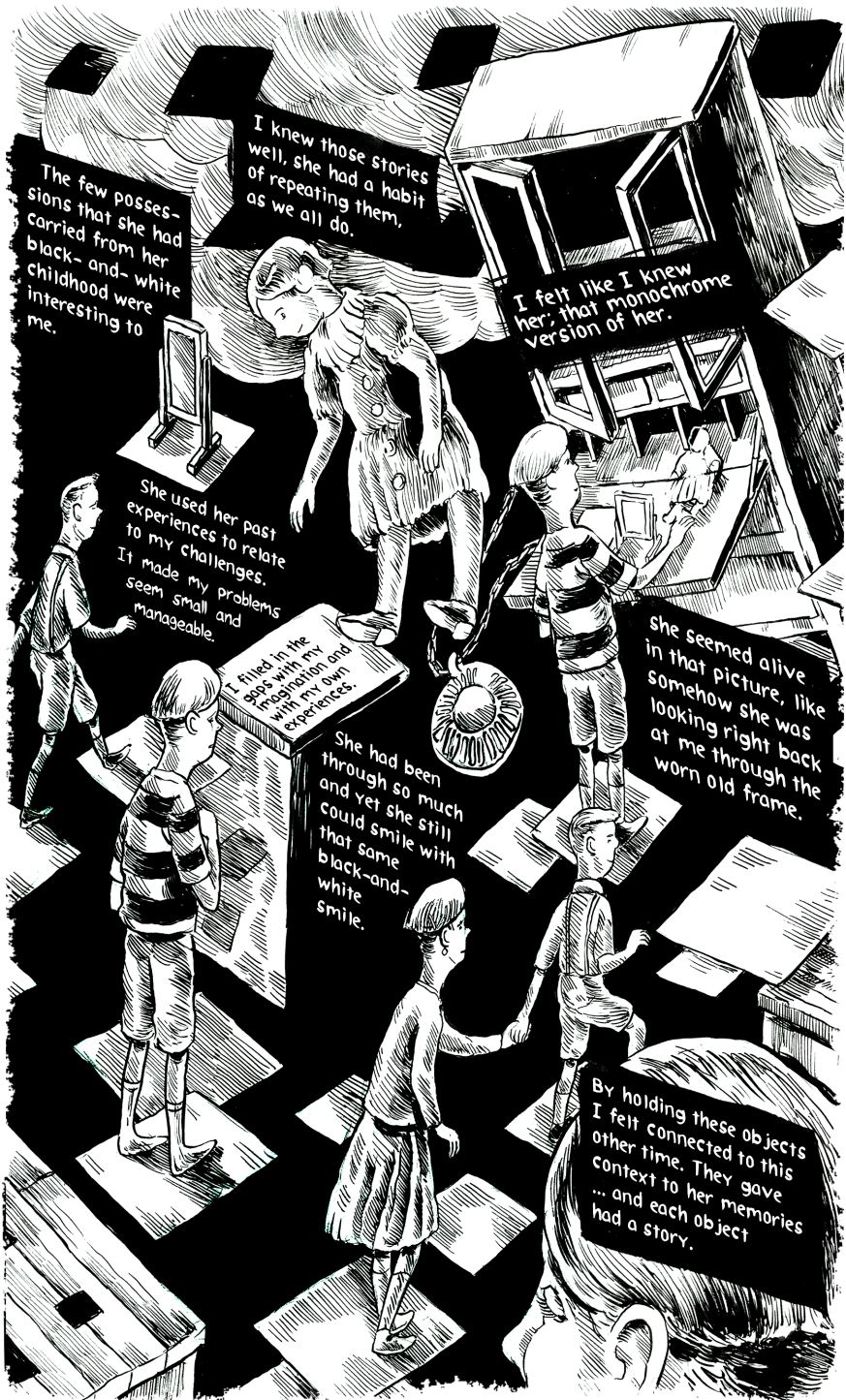
I enjoyed her stories, they painted themselves into my mind with clarity.

It can be pretty hard to be a kid.

Can I show you something?

But we had come from different worlds.







Neat, huh?

yeah.

She had grown up faster than she could have imagined. What things that remained were a few small shelf. Each was a reminder of something important to her...

...papers, pictures, people, places.

She kept them close.

...to look at later, in memories.

Or in dreams.









In some distant
corridor I heard
her run.

TAP TAP TAP TAP

?

Her small feet
were softly hitting
the cobblestones.

The sound reminded
me of the kids in
my school running
and playing tag
behind the fences.

So I gave chase...

I'm lost!

Hey!

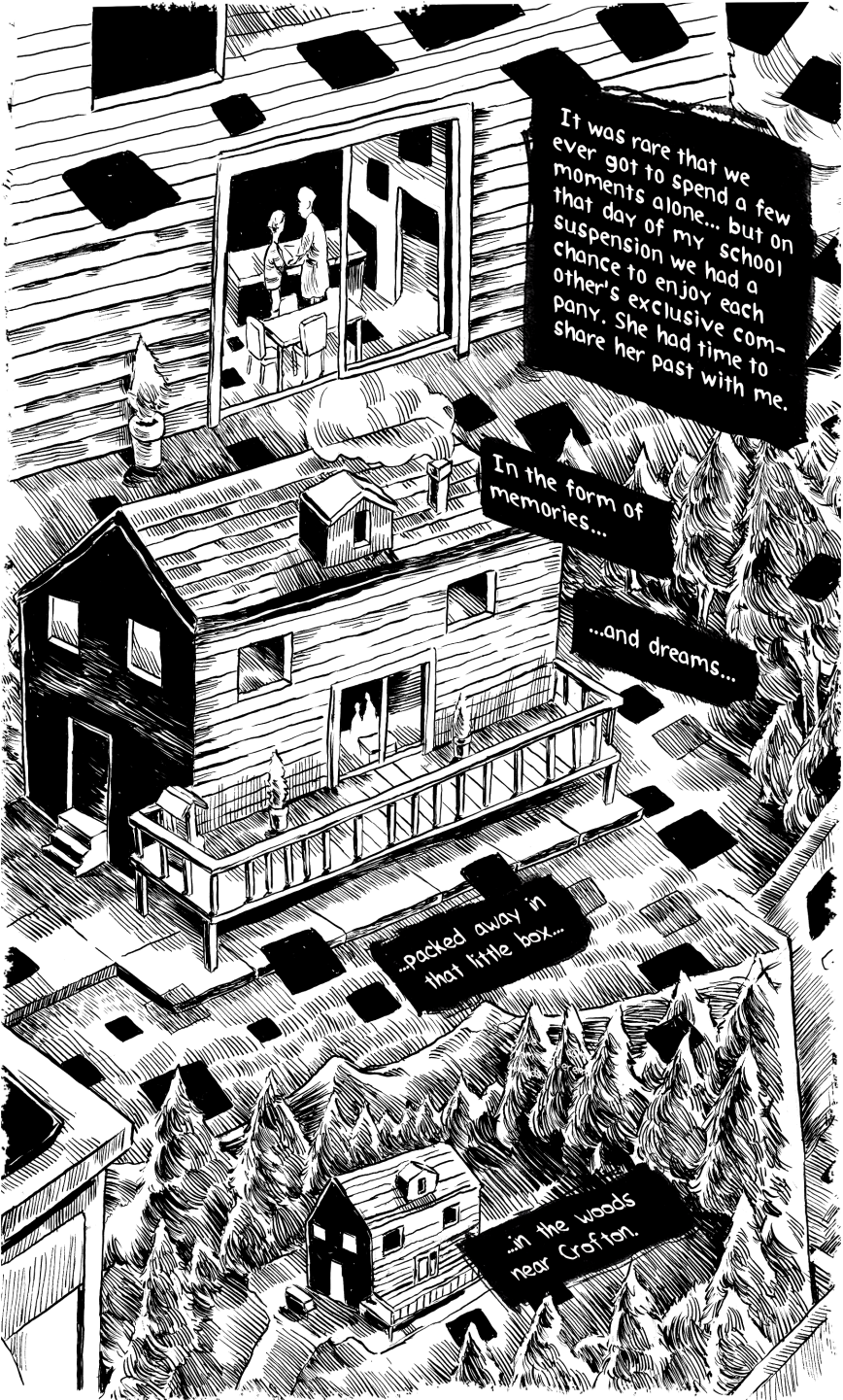
Do you know
what this place
is?!

Somehow it felt
familiar, as
though I had
seen it before.

And it wasn't
quite real, more
like an illustra-
tion from a book
or a set for a
theatre play.







It was rare that we ever got to spend a few moments alone... but on that day of my school suspension we had a chance to enjoy each other's exclusive company. She had time to share her past with me.

In the form of memories...

...and dreams...

...packed away in that little box...

...in the woods near Crofton.