

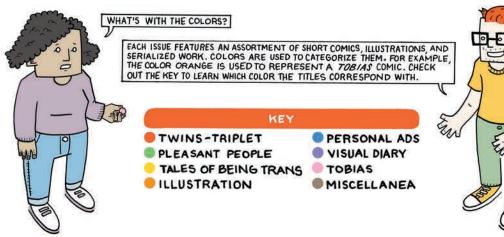
GUMBALLS

BY: ERIN NATIONS



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QUESTIONS FOLLOW YOU

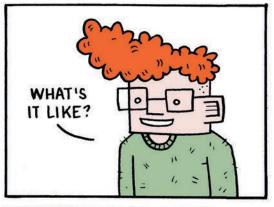
WHEN YOU'RE A TRIPLET, QUESTIONS FOLLOW YOU WHEREVER YOU GO. THESE ARE THE MOST COMMON.



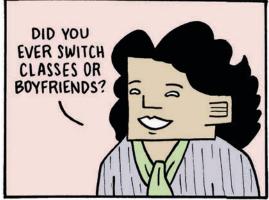












VOODOO DOLL ONE







I LOOK FORWARD TO MY TEACHERS SPENDING AN ENTIRE CLASS PERIOD GOING OVER THE SYLLABUS BECAUSE WE DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING AND THEY RARELY ASSIGN HOMEWORK.





IN MY SPANISH CLASS, WE HAD TO PARTNER UP, BUT THERE IS AN ODD NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN MY CLASSROOM, SO MY PARTNER WAS MRS. ALVAREZ, THE TEACHER.





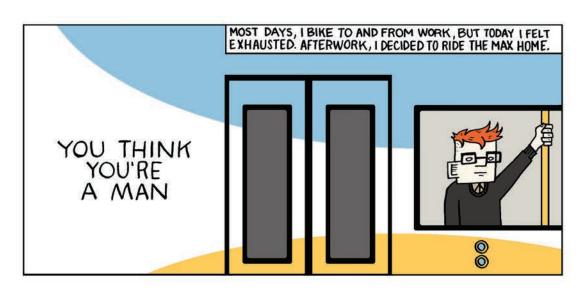


















I ALMOST REACTED, BUT I KNEW MY WORDS WOULD NOT HAVE STOPPED HER. SHE WAS LOOKING TO PICK A FIGHT. SHE WANTED TO GET A RISE OUT OF ME, SO I REFUSED TO GIVE IN. I KEPT SILENT.



SHE MOVED IN. I COULD FEEL HER HOVERING OVER MY SHOULDER. SHE TOOK A STEP FORWARD SO SHE COULD GET A BETTER LOOK AT ME.









DALE



SOMETIMES, THE PEOPLE READIN' THESE THINGS DON'T CARE ABOUT THE PERSON'S INSIDES. THEY JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER. I KNOW I'M KINDA SMALL, AND MY VOICE ISN'T AS DEEP AS THE GUYS IN THE SHOP, BUT I'M A GOOD PERSON. I'M KIND AND CARING, I TREAT WOMEN WITH RESPECT. I'M A GOOD LISTENER. I'M LOYAL ... I'VE BEEN TOLD I'M NOT ALLOWED TO FIGHT IN A WAR BECAUSE THEY TELL ME I SHOULD WEAR A DRESS AND RAISE YOUNG ONES INSTEAD. I KNOW MY FACE IS NOT ROUGH, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I'M NOT TOUGH. I KEEP A 'BLADE IN MY BACK POCKET, BUT I DON'T USE IT TO START ANY TROUBLE ... I ENJOY READING, MOSTLY STEINBECK. AFTER THE SUN SETS, I LIKE TO SIT IN MY ARMCHAIR AND WATCH TV, OR I SIP OLD CROW WHILE I LISTEN TO RECORDS. I'M A PRETTY GOOD COOK. I LIKE DRIVIN' MY BIKE ON BACK ROADS. I LONG FOR A PRETTY GIRL, IN A PRETTY DRESS, TO SIT BEHIND ME AND WRAP HER ARMS, TIGHTLY, AROUND MY WAIST. I'M JUST LOOKING FOR A WOMAN WHO WILL LOVE ME FOR WHO I AM. IN RETURN , I WILL DO THE SAME. IMAGINE, ME AND YOU ON MY BIKE, GLIDING FOREVER, WITH THE WIND RACIN' THROUGH OUR HAIR. WE'LL STOP AT EVERY DIVE BAR ALONG THE WAY. WE'LL PLAY POOL AND YOU'LL BEAT ME. ON THE JUKEBOX, YOU'LL PICK THAT SONG BY JIMMY REED. "HONEST I DO, "AND WE'LL BE THE ONLY TWO ON THE DANCE FLOOR. WE'LL FEEL SAFE IN EACH OTHER'S ARMS. SOME OF THE GUYS WILL FEEL INSECURE WHEN THEY SEE US DANCIN' THAT CLOSE TOGETHER. WHEN THEY SEE YOUR CHERRY RED LIPSTICK STAINED ON MY CHEEK. THEY'LL SAY "OUR KIND" AIN'T WELCOME THERE. WE'LL LAUGH AT THEIR FOOLISHNESS AND RUN AWAY. WE'LL START A LIFE SOME WHERE FAR AWAY ...