



YOUR STORY MATTERS

2025



REVITALED REINTEGRATION SERVICES

YOUR STORY MATTERS (2025)

Complied, lettered and edited by
Kelvin (Nyeusi-Mawazo) Gumbs of
Black Sun Comics - blacksuncomics.com



JASMYNE'S STATEMENT

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the second edition of Your Story Matters: a compilation of creative, courageous, and purely imaginative comics from racialized youth across Durham Region. This cohort showed up and showed out. In just three short weeks, these young storytellers brought loads of talent, bold ideas, and serious heart. They pushed boundaries, took risks, and turned their lived experiences, dreams, and wildest ideas into stories that leap off the page. Watching it all come together was nothing short of magic.

This edition features a little bit of everything: thought-provoking stories about navigating real-life challenges, and others that are funny, lighthearted, and full of surprises. Our pages are as diverse and enriching as the youth we worked with, each one bringing something beautifully unique to the table.

What's been especially moving with this program is the feedback we received from our first edition from parents, community members, and even youth who saw themselves reflected in these stories. People laughed, felt proud, and above all, felt seen. That's the power of storytelling. And I hope this collection brings you the same kind of joy and connection.

To our youth authors: thank you for trusting this space, sharing your voice, and reminding us that youth stories really do matter. Now go ahead and dive in. We can't wait for you to meet this year's storytellers. Happy reading!

With gratitude and excitement,

Jasmyne Julien

Founder, Revitalized Reintegration Services



FUNDER STATEMENT

8 80 Cities and the Ontario Community Changemakers program were thrilled to support Jasmyne and her team on Your Story Matters, a beautiful storytelling project for young people to come together and create their own personal comic stories. We are incredibly proud of their creativity and hope this inspires others to share their own stories in meaningful and unique ways!



BALSAM FOUNDATION

1

BASSIE

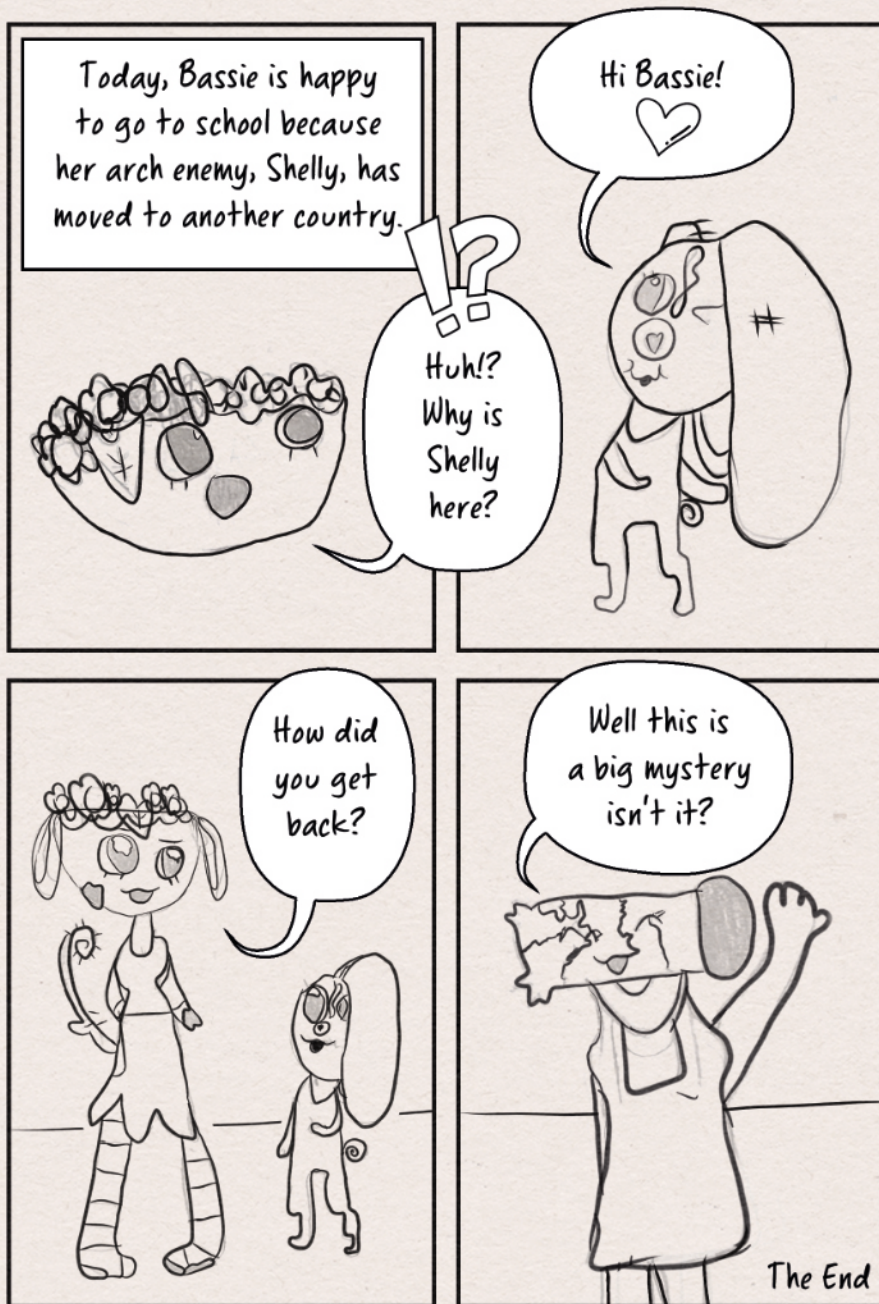
By Andraya

Artist Biography

Andraya

(Age 9)

Andraya loves to draw and brings her ideas to life on paper. She wants to become an animator and create exciting stories through art.



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2

HOOPS

By Daniel

Artist Biography

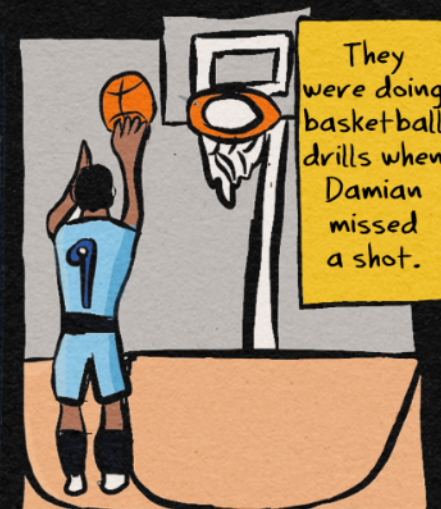
Daniel

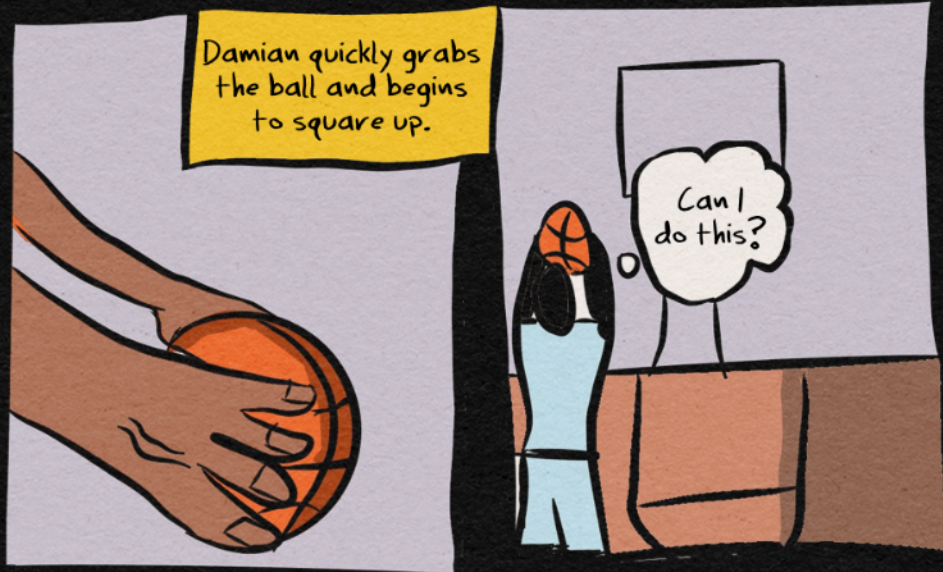
(Age 10)

Daniel loves basketball and practices every chance he gets. His goal is to play in the NBA and inspire others through the game he loves.



Now it's the championship and the Tigers are down by 2 points with ten seconds left.





3

THE DOGSCAPE

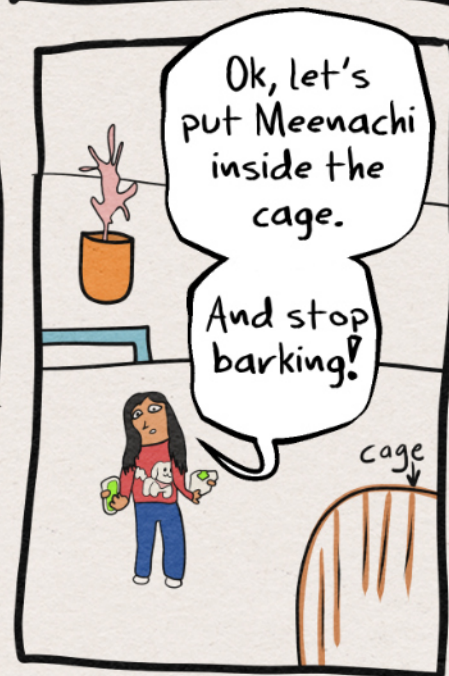
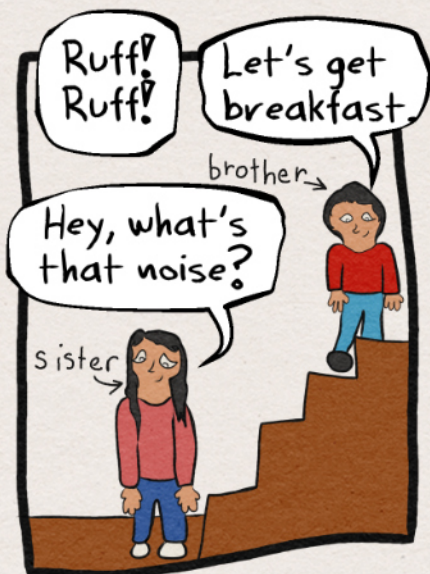
By Thurga

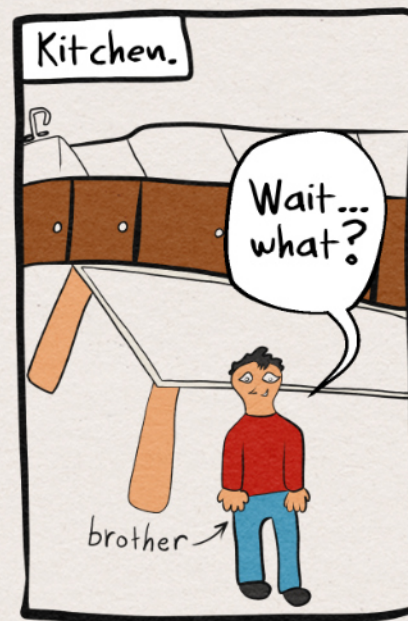
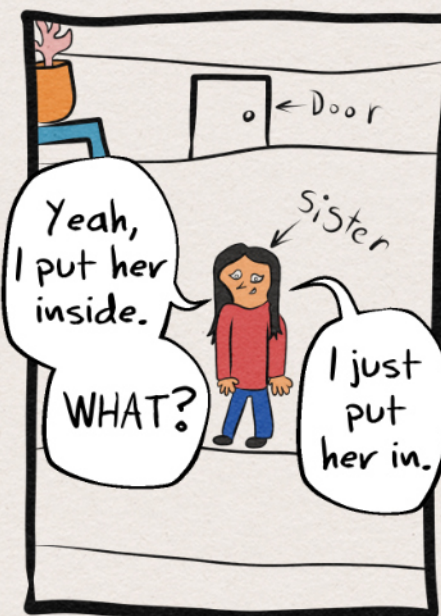
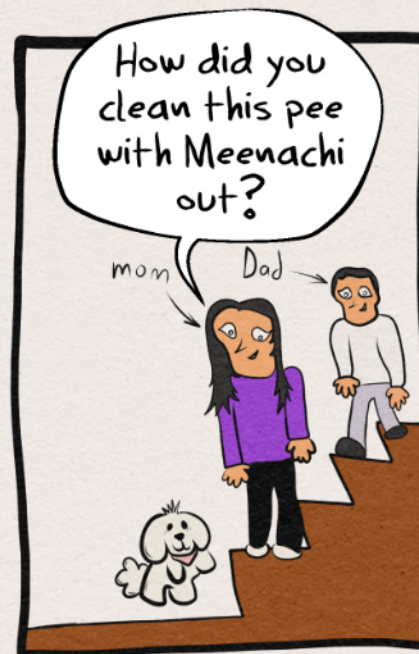
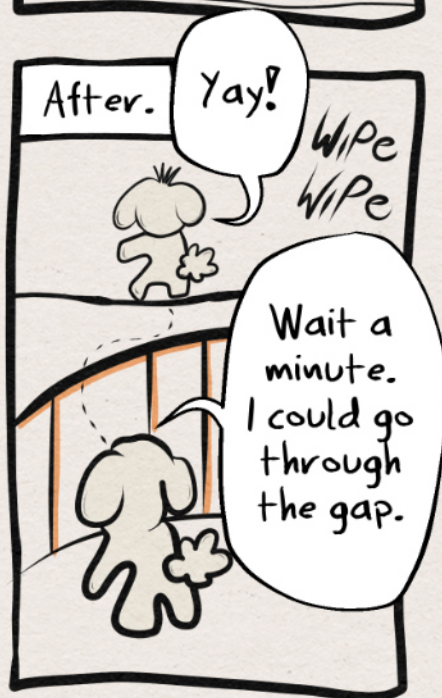
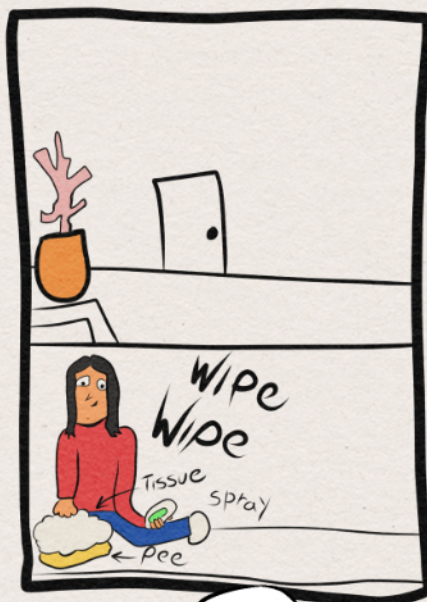
Artist Biography

Thurga

(Age 09)

Thurga loves getting lost in books. She hopes to become a doctor and help others feel better with care and compassion.





4

ZACK & THE BULLY

By Isaiah

Artist Biography

Isaiah

(Age 12)

Isaiah enjoys playing sports and staying active. He wants to become both an author and a comic illustrator so he can bring stories to life through words and pictures

One day, Isaiah is walking during recess....



...when he sees Chucky bullying his brother.

Zack!



Zack, are you ok?

Yeah, I'm fine.



We gotta' find out how to stop the bullying.

Yeah!



Hey! Stop bullying my brother!



I'm outta' here!

Woah!

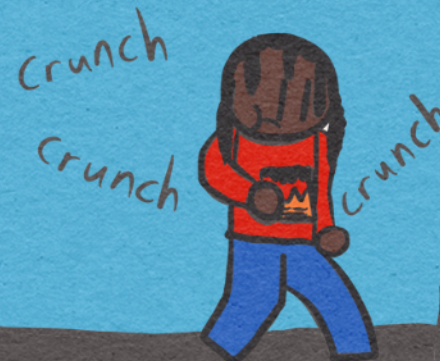


I have an idea!

Let's hear it.



The next day, at school.





5

BLUE CHEESE

By Niara

Artist Biography

Niara

(Age 12)

Niara enjoys building with LEGO and using her imagination. She dreams of becoming an interior designer and turning ideas into inspiring spaces.

Kiara goes to the restaurant with her Mom and brother. They sit by the juke box.



The waiter comes and takes their orders. Kiara gets wings with blue cheese.



The manager threatens to kick her out if she doesn't stop screaming.



The Mom apologizes and asks if there's chocolate ice cream.



She tastes her wings and blue cheese and jumps up screaming.



Her brother thinks she's being dramatic and calls her names.



The chocolate ice cream comes and she calms down and apologizes.



The manager says he understands. It's not the first Blue Cheese Karen he's met.



6

ATTACK OF THE CITY

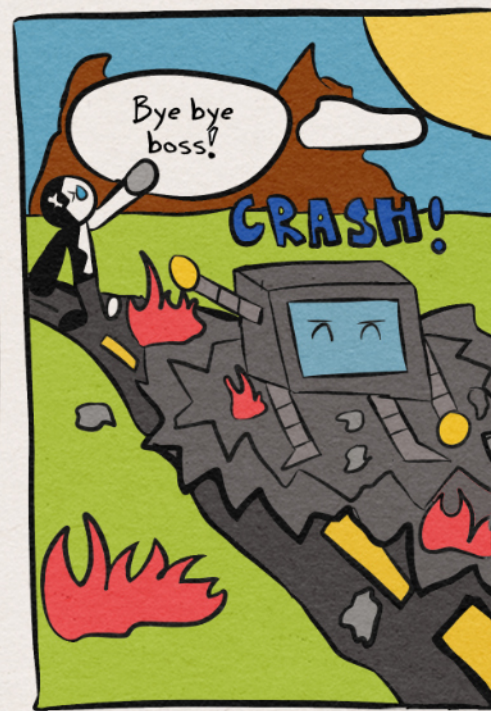
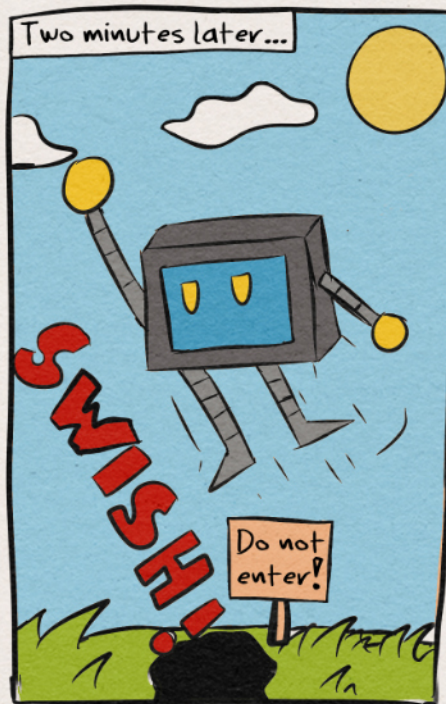
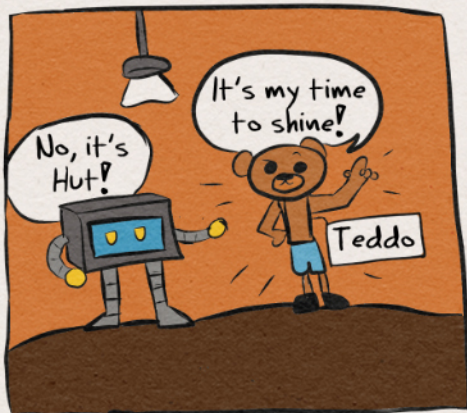
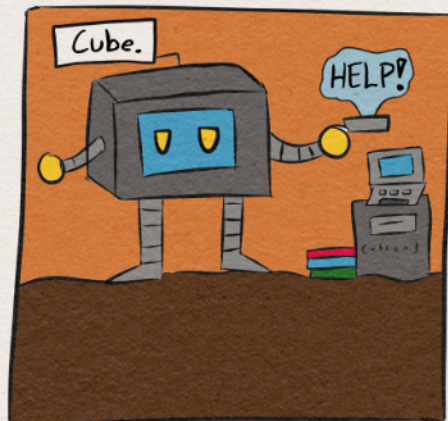
By Vishwa

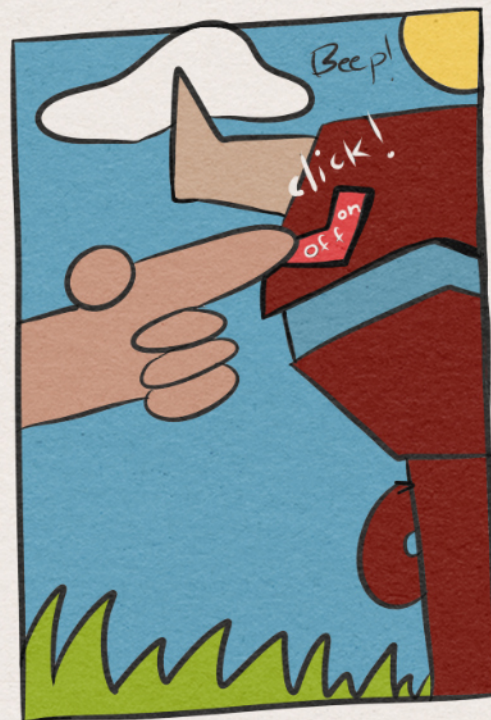
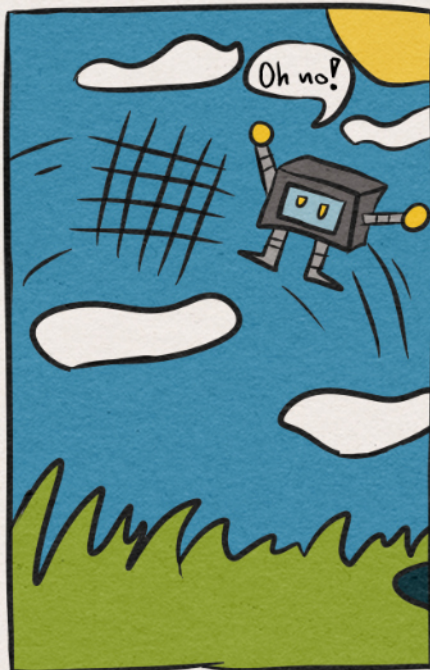
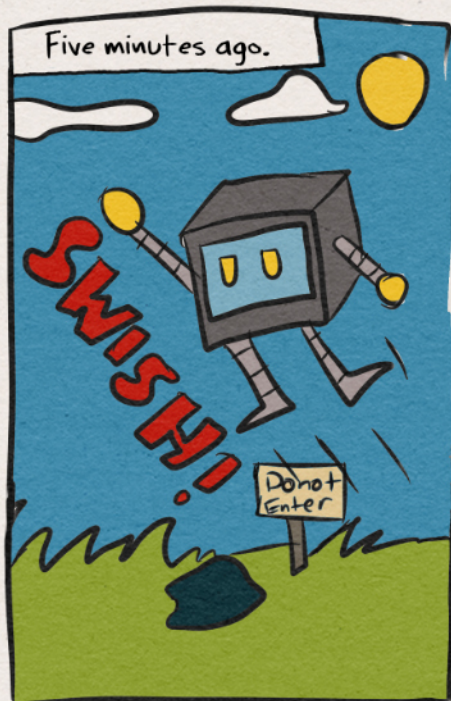
Artist Biography

Vishwa

(Age 12)

Vishwa is a gamer at heart. He dreams of being a YouTuber and a pilot, soaring both through the skies and online adventures.







SPEAK

By Tasia

Artist Biography

Tasia

(Age 13)

Tasia loves playing volleyball and cooking up delicious meals. One day, she hopes to build a career in cosmetology and help others feel confident and beautiful.

Peggy's first day of school.

I'm so excited,
yet so nervous.



Peggy's sits in her first class.

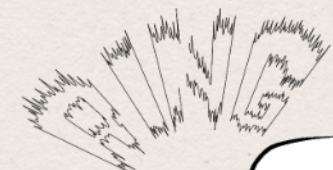
What's with
her hair?

I know,
right!
It looks
like a
bush.



Peggy waits anxiously
for the bell to ring.

I can't
believe they
would say
something
like that.



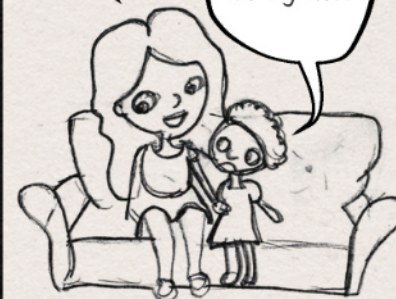
Finally!

Peggy gets home running
to her room sobbing.



Hey sis.
What's
wrong?

It's just
that people in
my class were
making fun
of my hair.



I'm so sorry to hear that.
Tomorrow you go to school
and tell them everyone
should not have to look
the same to get along.

Ok, thank
you Lahn.



On the next day of school
Peggy confronts them.

Hey guys, i just wanted
to say I heard what you said
yesterday and just because my
hair is different doesn't mean
you have to make fun.

I'm really
sorry.

Yeah,
me too.

I shouldn't
have said
that.





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8

THE RIVALRY REBOUND

By Jeremiah

Biography

Jeremiah

(Age 11)

Jeremiah enjoys drawing, playing basketball, being outside, and gaming on Roblox. He dreams of becoming an artist and sharing his creativity with the world.



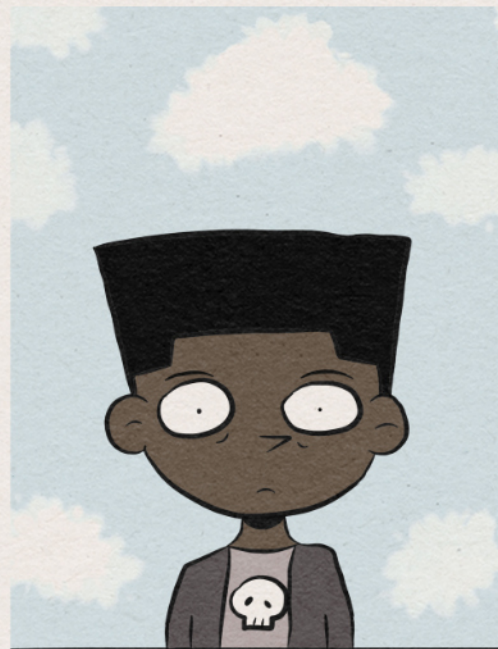
Now I need
to wait.



He he he!



Wham!





THANKS FOR READING.
WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED
ALL THE STORIES.



REVITALED
REINTEGRATION
SERVICES