

SPARK



RISING FROM
THE ASHES

TWO YEARS EARLIER...



I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR MEDDLING IN MY AFFAIRS!

COME ON, BOYS!

'GAH'



WHAT?

STILL YOU PURSUE ME?



YOU WON'T GET AWAY FROM ME THAT EASILY, RECLUSE!



??

I GOT HER, BOSS!



WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH HER, RECLUSE?

THAT I LEAVE UP TO YOU, BRUISER. IT'S PAST TIME I MADE MY ESCAPE!



OKAY LADY, WHERE DO WE START?

DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BRUISER...



...BUT I THINK I'LL BEGIN WITH AN OLD FRIEND!



NOT THE HEAD CREEP BUT NOT TOO BAD FOR A NIGHT'S WORK.



unnh!

THAT HURT MORE THAN IT SHOULD HAVE!



WAY MORE!

THE NEXT DAY...

MOM!
GET UP
HERE!

NOT
TODAY, MY
LITTLE
FLAME.

BUT YOU
ALWAYS
CLIMB
TREES
WITH ME.

FOR AS
FAR BACK
AS I CAN
RECALL.

AMBER--
MAYBE WE
SHOULD GO,
SWEETY.

WHAT'S
WRONG?

I'M
SORRY
SWEET-
HEART.

I THINK, I NEED TO
SEE THE DOCTOR.

CAN YOU
HELP ME
WITH THIS
BLANKET?

"I'M SORRY WE COULDN'T DO MORE..."



"WHY DIDN'T YOU *SAVE HER*? THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING!"



"ASHES TO ASHES..."

"...DUST TO DUST."



LOVELY EULOGY REVEREND, THANKS SO MUCH.



I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GO ON.

A FEW MONTHS LATER...



REMEMBER WHAT SHE ALWAYS TOLD YOU?

I KNOW DAD, BUT SHE CAN'T TELL ME THAT NOW CAN SHE?

THERE'S JUST NOTHING THAT COULD...

IT ALL HAPPENED SO FAST--



THE POOR DEAR! LOSING HER MOTHER LIKE THAT!

YES, AND SO YOUNG TOO!

SHE MUST BE CRUSHED!



...SAVE HER, DADDY



THEY COULD HAVE SAVED HER.

BUT THEY DIDN'T.

THEY LET HER DIE!



I KNOW IT'S HARD. BELIEVE ME... I HURT TOO. YOU KNOW YOU CAN ALWAYS—



I DON'T NEED ANYBODY!

YOU MAY NOT FEEL LIKE YOU NEED ANYBODY, BUT YOU NEED TO EAT.



YOU DIDN'T EVEN TOUCH YOUR DINNER, AND BARELY NIBBLED AT YOUR BREAKFAST.

ARE YOU GETTING ANY SLEEP?

HOW CAN YOU THINK OF SLEEP?

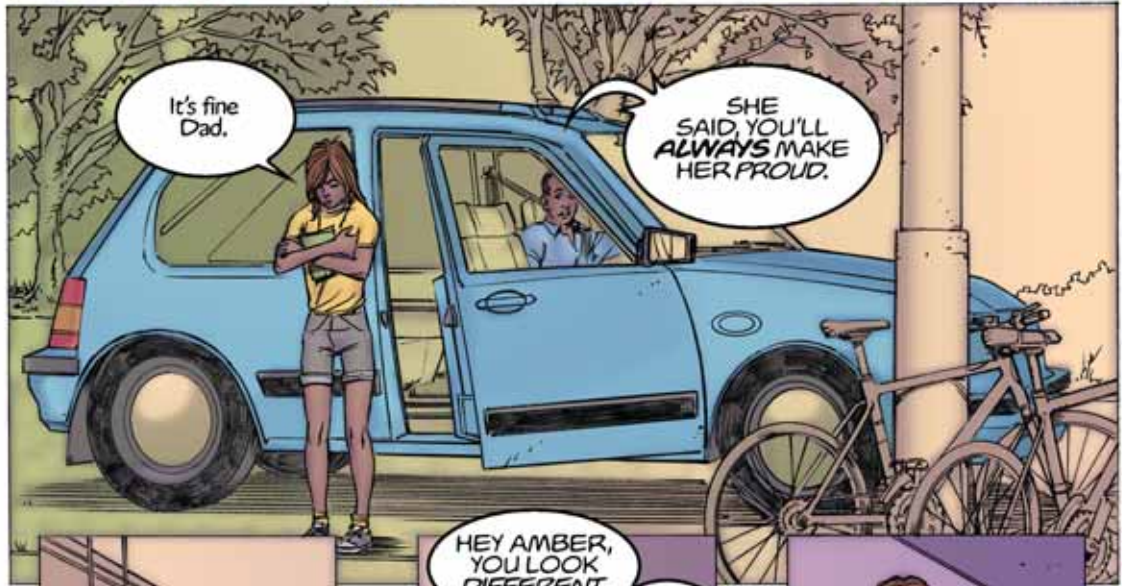
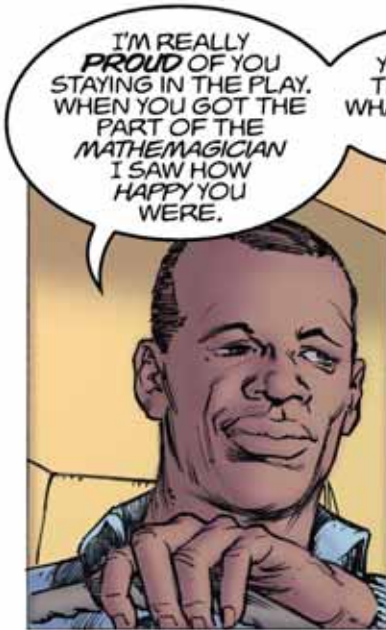


I'M SORRY, DADDY. I JUST...IT'S NOT IMPORTANT.

OF COURSE IT'S IMPORTANT. AND YOU DON'T NEED TO APOLOGIZE FOR ANYTHING. I'M JUST GLAD YOU'RE SO INVESTED IN THIS SCHOOL PLAY.



GUESS NOW'S NOT A GOOD TIME TO TELL HIM I'M QUITTING.





I CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS.

AT LEAST WHEN MOM WAS AROUND I HAD **SOME** HAPPINESS.

NOW, I JUST DON'T SEE A REASON TO GO ON.

I CAN'T STOP FEELING **THIS** WAY!



HI. THIS IS AMBER. BILLY GAVE ME YOUR NUMBER. HE SAID YOU CAN GET PILLS.



SURE. LET'S MEET UP.

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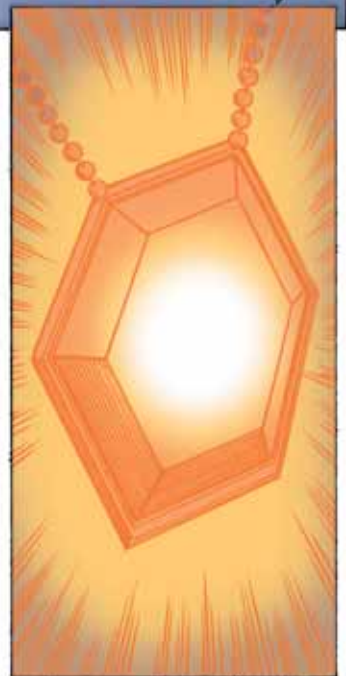
WHAT THE...?



...MY GRAND BABIES' PICTURES ARE IN THERE!



OH, GREAT! WHAT DO I DO NOW?!





YOU MUST USE THIS... TO FIGHT AGAINST... EVIL...

I... BELIEVE... IN YOU.



MOM!
OH MOM... I'LL MAKE YOU PROUD.



THOSE ARE THE ONLY COPIES I HAVE!

THAT AIN'T MY PROBLEM! SEE YOU AROUND "GRANNY"!



sigh

WHAT'S THE WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN?



AT LEAST I CAN GO OUT WITH A BANG...

USED TISSUES... ICK!

OLD CANDY...

PICTURES... CARDS...

EVER HEAR OF A SMART PHONE GRANDMA?

"THE CLOUD" MAYBE?



HEY-GREEEEEEEEEEEE!

GIVE THAT BACK!

HUH?

OR WHAT? YOU GONNA TELL YOUR MOMMY?



**HEY!
PUT ME
DOWN, YOU
BIG JERK!**

IF I
HAD TIME,
I'D GIVE YOU
A **BEATIN'**...

...BE GLAD
I'M ONLY
DOING
THIS!

'ULP!'

COWARD!

GO HOME
AND GRAB
A **SHOWER,
SWEETIE!**
HAHAHAHA!



**GREAT, NOT
ONLY DID
HE GET AWAY,
I'M STUCK IN
THE TRASH
AND MY PHONE
IS GONE.**

**EVEN WORSE,
I CAN'T GET
WHAT I
REALLY
NEEDED...**



**WHAT
HAPPENED
TO YOU?**

I don't
want to talk
about it...



YOU KNOW IT CAN'T HURT TO TALK TO **SOMEONE**.

IF YOU WON'T TALK TO **ME**, WOULD YOU...

DROP IT, DAD. I'M **NOT** SEEING A THERAPIST.



I'M **NOT** CRAZY.



OH BABY GIRL, IT'S NOT LIKE THAT.

WE'VE EXPERIENCED A **MAJOR** LOSS.

I THINK ABOUT HOW **TOUGH** THIS MUST BE FOR YOU... **ACCEPTING HELP** DOESN'T MAKE YOU **CRAZY**--

--IT MAKES YOU **SMART**.

TALKING ABOUT WHAT'S **BOTHERING** YOU CAN DO SO MUCH MORE THAN YOU'D EVER **IMAGINE**.

could it...



...COULD IT **STOP** BAD THINGS FROM HAPPENING?



TALKING TO A PROFESSIONAL ABOUT YOUR TROUBLES CAN'T GUARANTEE NOTHING BAD WILL **EVER** HAPPEN--

--BUT IT **SHOULD** HELP YOU FEEL BETTER...

...AND LEAD TO **BETTER** OUTCOMES.





WELL, HERE GOES NOTHING...



THERAPIST



SEVERAL MONTHS LATER...



OH! AMBER.

...



I THINK YOU LEFT THIS.

HUH?

WOULDN'T WANT YOU TO FORGET THIS.

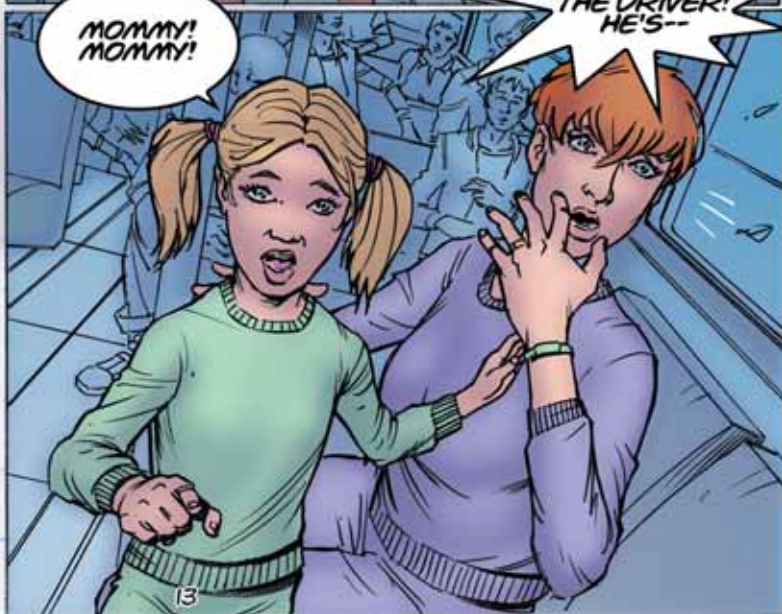
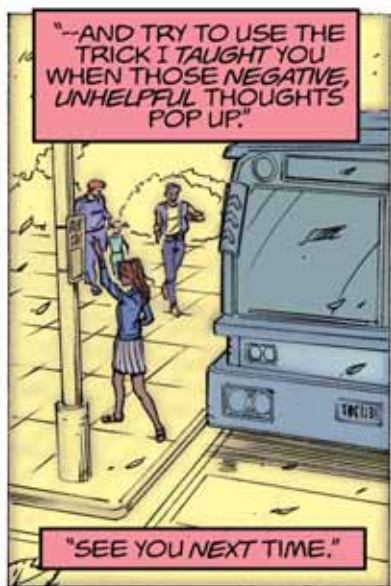


BEFORE YOU GO, I JUST WANT TO SAY HOW PROUD I AM OF YOU, AMBER.

THANKS.



I KNOW IT WASN'T EASY FOR YOU TO COME HERE.





"YOU GONNA TELL YOUR MOMMY?"



"...TELL YOUR MOMMY?"



NO!

"...USE THE TRICK... WHEN THOSE NEGATIVE, UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS POP UP."



HE'S SLUMPED OVER THE WHEEL!

OUTTA CONTROL!

SOMEBODY GRAB HIM!

BUS KEEPS SWERVING!

CAN'T REACH HIM!



NOW, SO LONG AS NO ONE SAW ME...

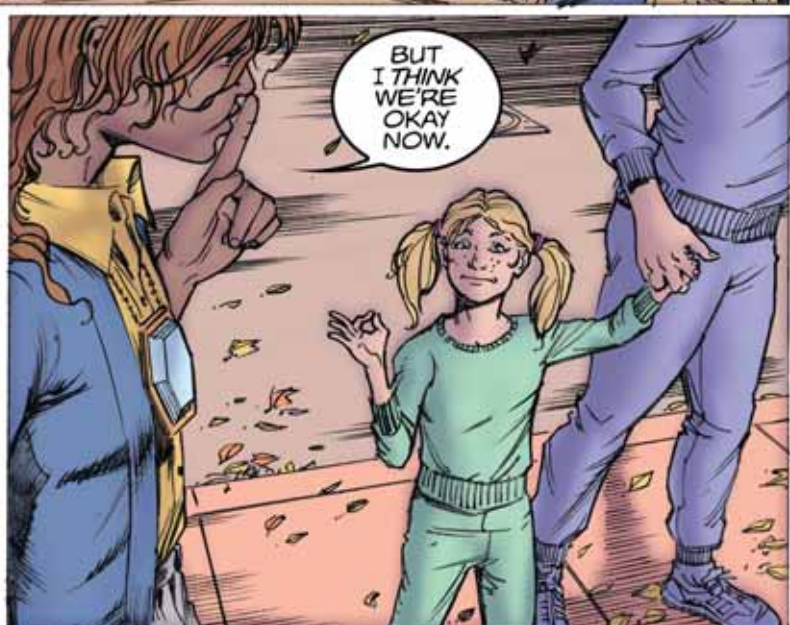
ER-- EXCUSE ME... MISS?



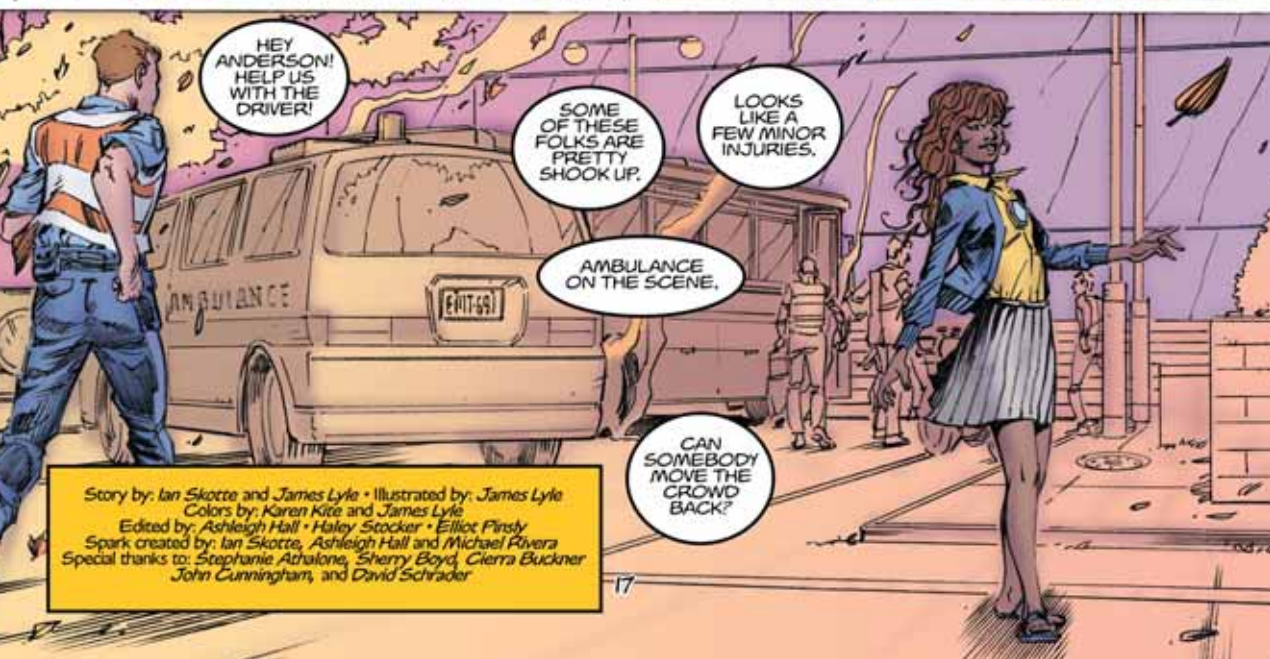
WERE YOU ON BOARD THAT BUS?

UM... YES OFFICER! I WAS.

IT WAS SOME RIDE!



BUT I THINK WE'RE OKAY NOW.



HEY ANDERSON! HELP US WITH THE DRIVER!

SOME OF THESE FOLKS ARE PRETTY SHOOK UP.

LOOKS LIKE A FEW MINOR INJURIES.

AMBULANCE ON THE SCENE.

CAN SOMEBODY MOVE THE CROWD BACK?

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...THE SCENE PLAYED OUT DURING RUSH HOUR TRAFFIC, ENDING IN A NEAR COLLISION IN THE DOWNTOWN SHOPPING DISTRICT!

WOW! THAT WAS AMAZING!

DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU WERE NEAR THAT AREA TODAY?

COULD HAVE BEEN YOU ON THAT BUS!

I'M SO GLAD YOU WERE IN A SAFE PLACE.

YOU KNOW WHAT, DAD?

I WAS IN A SAFE PLACE.

I'M SO GLAD YOU HELPED TALK ME INTO TRYING THERAPY.

I APPRECIATE YOU.

AND I'M PROUD OF YOU, SWEETIE!

WAIT--WHAT'S THIS?

...BREAKING NEWS, CELL PHONE CAMERA SHOWS THE MOMENTS BEFORE THE NEAR BUS CRASH...A YOUNG GIRL LEAPT INTO ACTION AND MANAGED TO SAVE THE DAY. AUTHORITIES AREN'T SURE WHO SHE IS, BUT THIS FAMILY WOULD NOT BE HERE IF NOT FOR HER HEROICS!

I WAS SO SCARED!

THEN THERE WAS THIS THING THAT HAPPENED...

IT WAS LIKE A, LIKE A-- SPARK FLEW IN!

WAIT A MINUTE...

SPARK? HMMM, I KIND OF LIKE THAT.

MEANWHILE...

ACROSS TOWN



MINE JUST HAPPENS TO BE FROM ONE OF THE NATION'S TOP MENTAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS!



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