



One sec,  
I just noticed  
some sort of  
lump on my  
chest.

Where  
is it?



I don't know.  
Above my  
breast?

Hm, does  
it hurt?

No...

Just to be safe,  
I'm going upstairs  
to show my mom.

Keep me  
posted,  
okay?

I'll call  
you back.  
Love you.  
Bye.

*My mind immediately went there.*

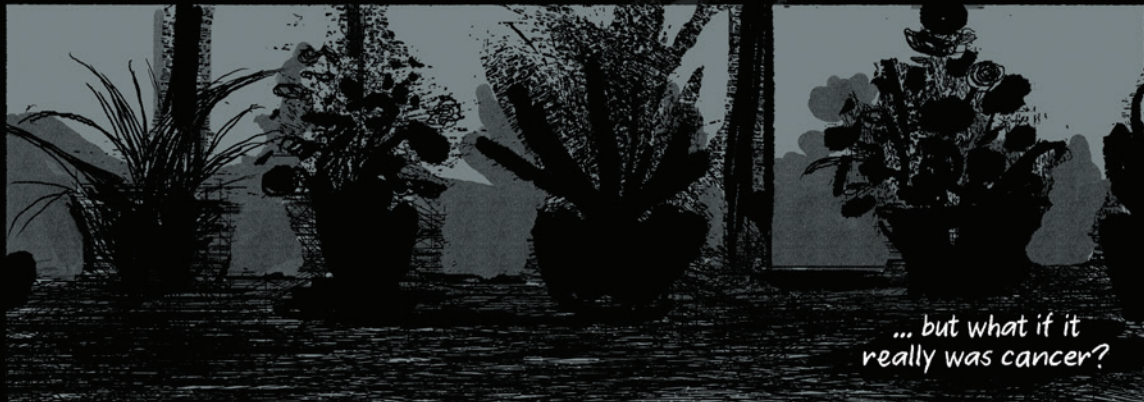
*Cancer.*



*I'd seen enough ads  
about self-exams.*



*I told myself that I was  
overreacting. I was 25.  
It was far more likely  
to be something benign.*



*... but what if it  
really was cancer?*

I wondered what  
I'd look like  
without boobs.

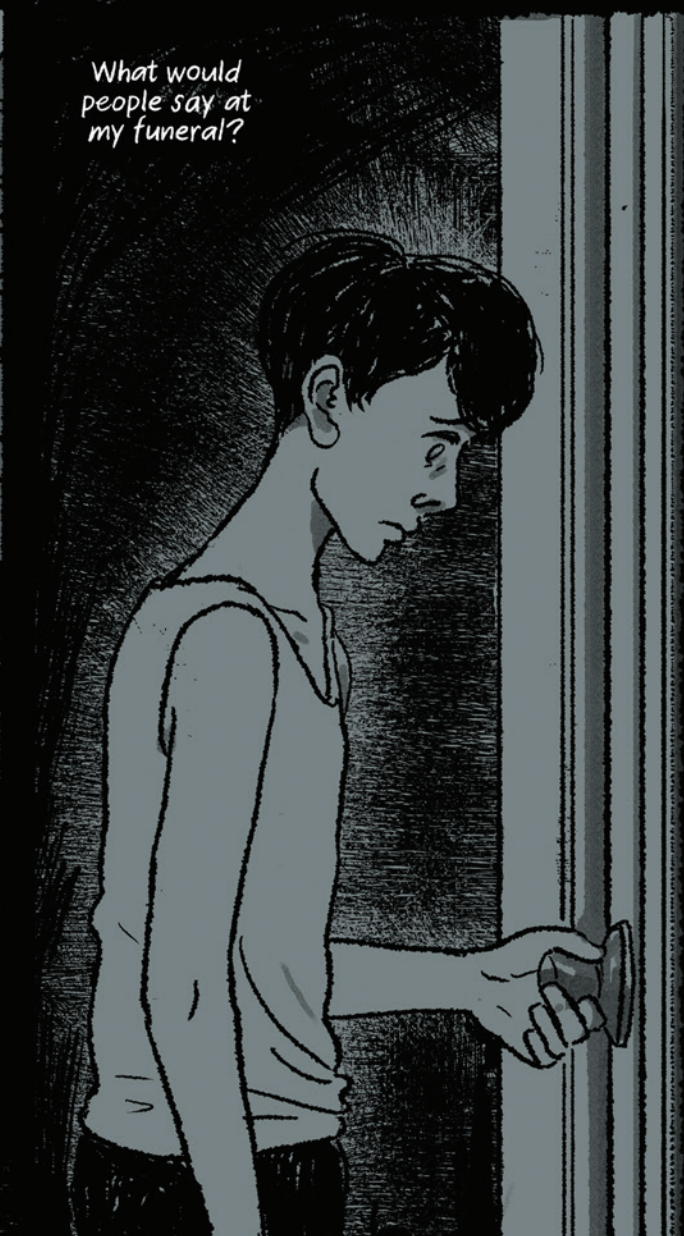
Without hair.



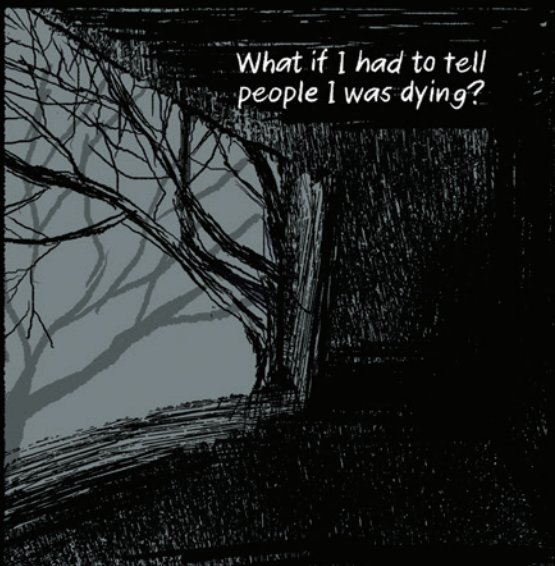
Would I keep  
working?



What would  
people say at  
my funeral?



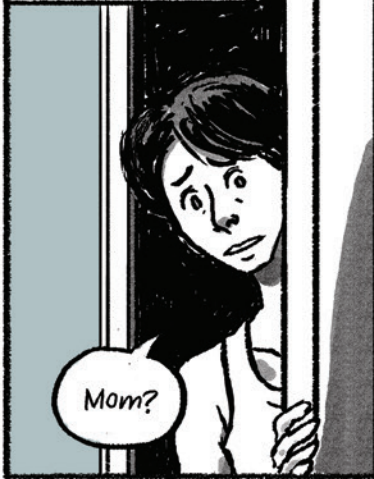
What if I had to tell  
people I was dying?



# THE DIAGNOSIS



It was about 3 cm.  
Hard, Mobile.



Mom?

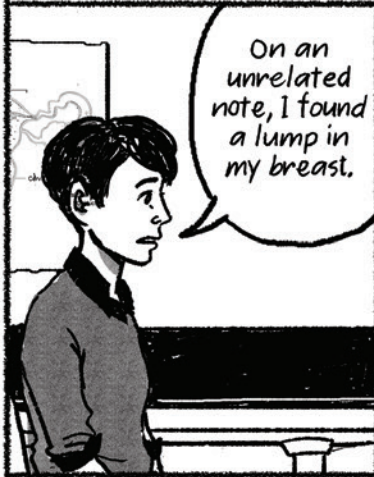
I hoped my mom wouldn't feel anything unusual.



You better get that looked at, Mouse.

It's fine.

I didn't want to, but my mom pushed me to bring up the lump at my already scheduled gynecology appointment the next day.



On an unrelated note, I found a lump in my breast.



We have specialities. I don't do breasts. But don't worry, there's a 99.9% chance it's nothing.



Well, should I get a referral?



Nope, just see your family doctor.

Two days later, I begrudgingly went to see my family doctor.



Mmhmm. I'll refer you to the breast clinic.

It's nothing to worry about, she's not the specialist.

The specialist wanted to run tests. First came a small needle to get a sense of what was inside. Apparently, it wasn't good. Two weeks later, I received the biopsy results—they were consistent with cancer. The only way to confirm the diagnosis was with a lumpectomy\* and further analysis by the lab.



Waiting for surgery was stressful. I wanted the tumour out.



Hi, I'm Dr. McLean's patient. My lump feels bigger. Can I have my surgery now?



Everything was moving both too fast and too slow.

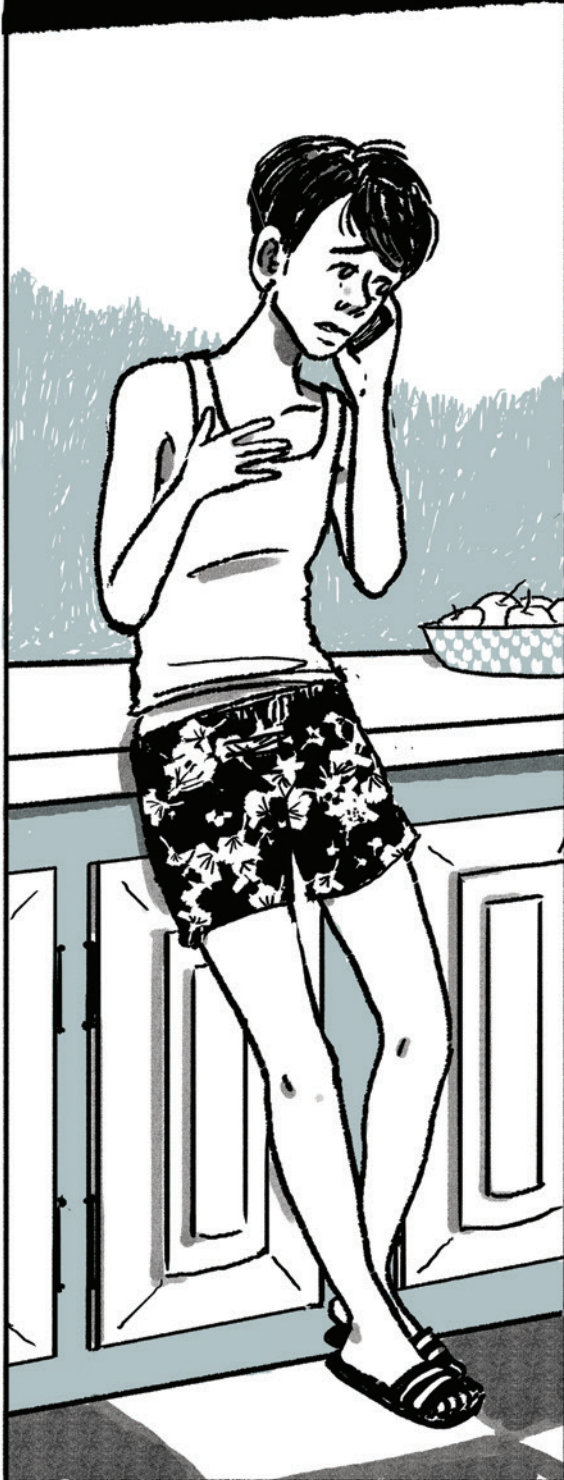
I found another lump. Can I come in for an urgent appointment?



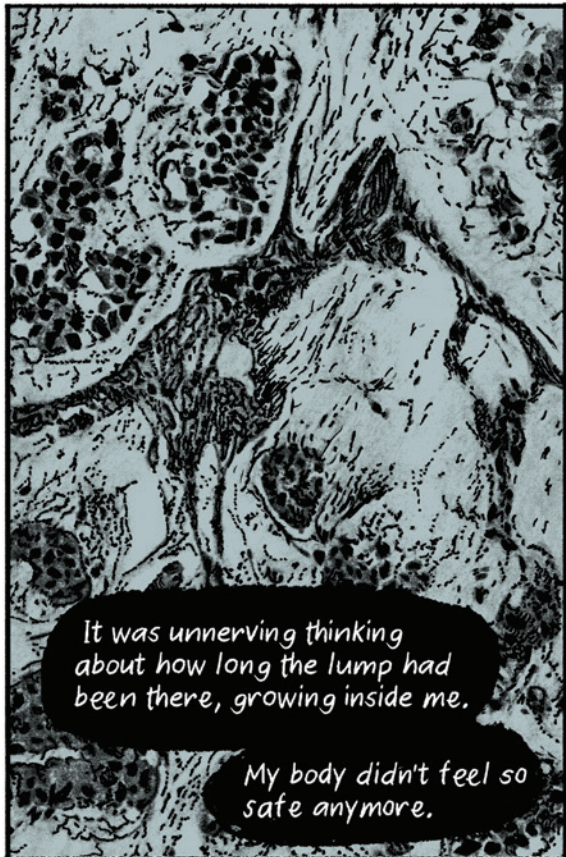
\*A surgical removal of cancerous breast tissue (a.k.a. breast-conserving surgery).

Additional follow-ups confirmed the lump's growth was bruising from the biopsy and that the second lump was benign.

But it was still scary.



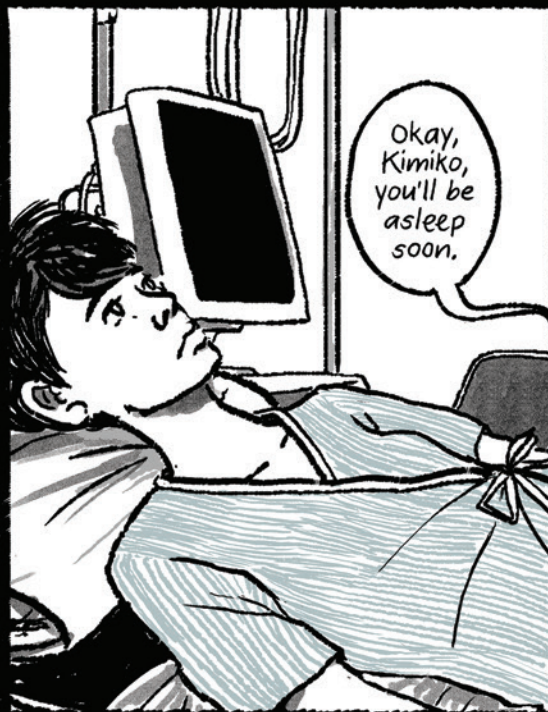
As I waited for surgery, I kept feeling the lump, noticing any changes.



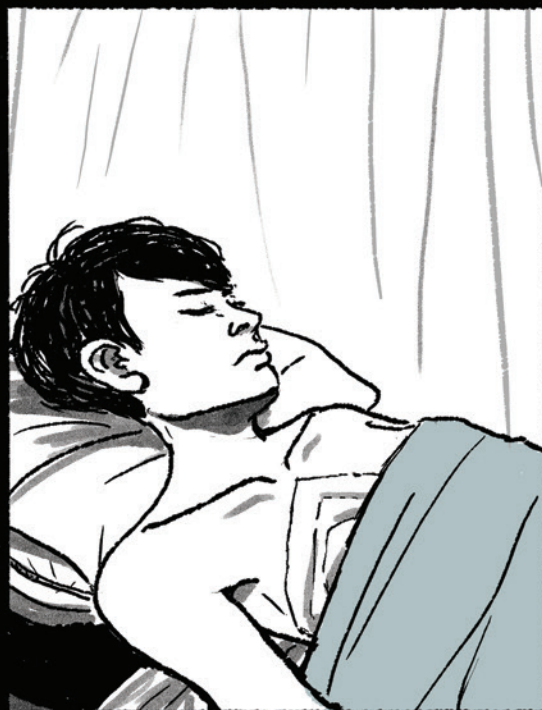
It was unnerving thinking about how long the lump had been there, growing inside me.

My body didn't feel so safe anymore.

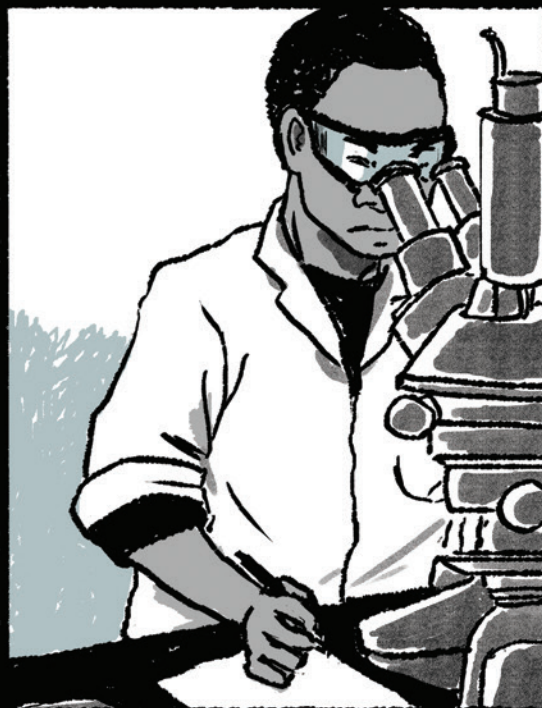
The surgery date stayed as planned.



Saint Patrick's Day.

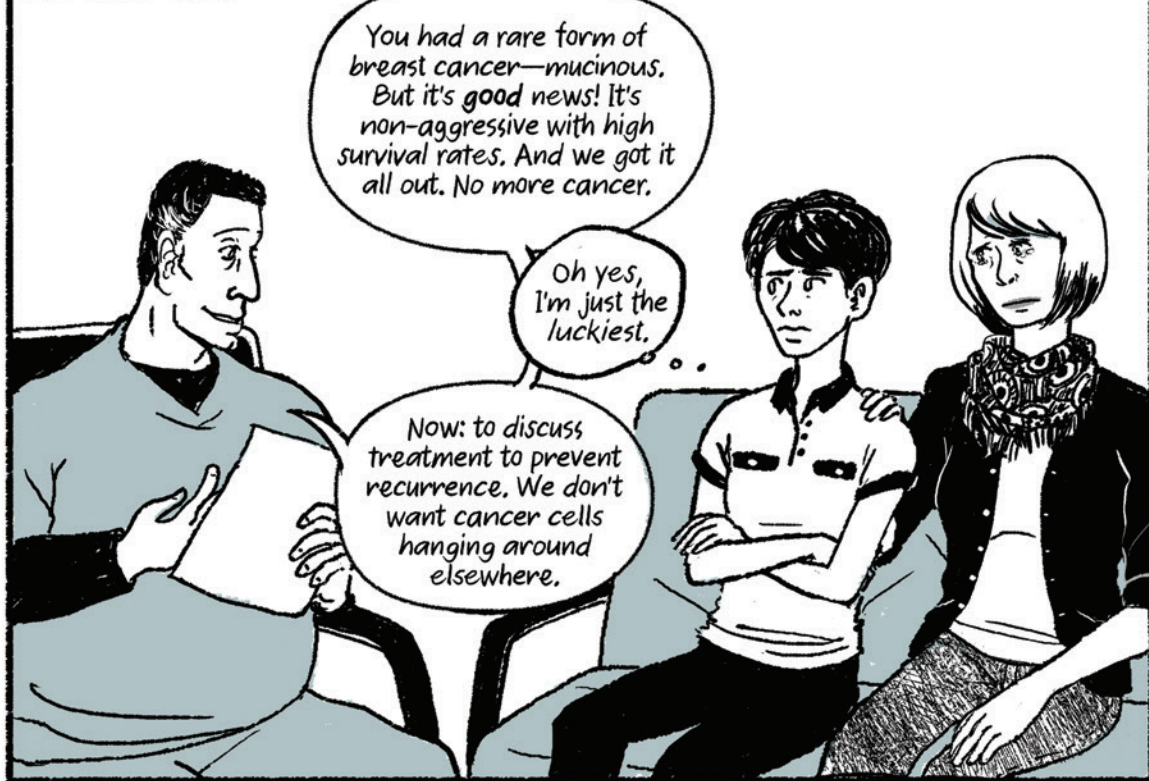


I remember the nurse's leprechaun brooch.





To get through the waiting, I told myself not to worry until I had a reason to worry. But then the results came.



I didn't know how to feel. I had expected cancer, but it confused me to have it confirmed at the same time I learned the cancer was gone.

