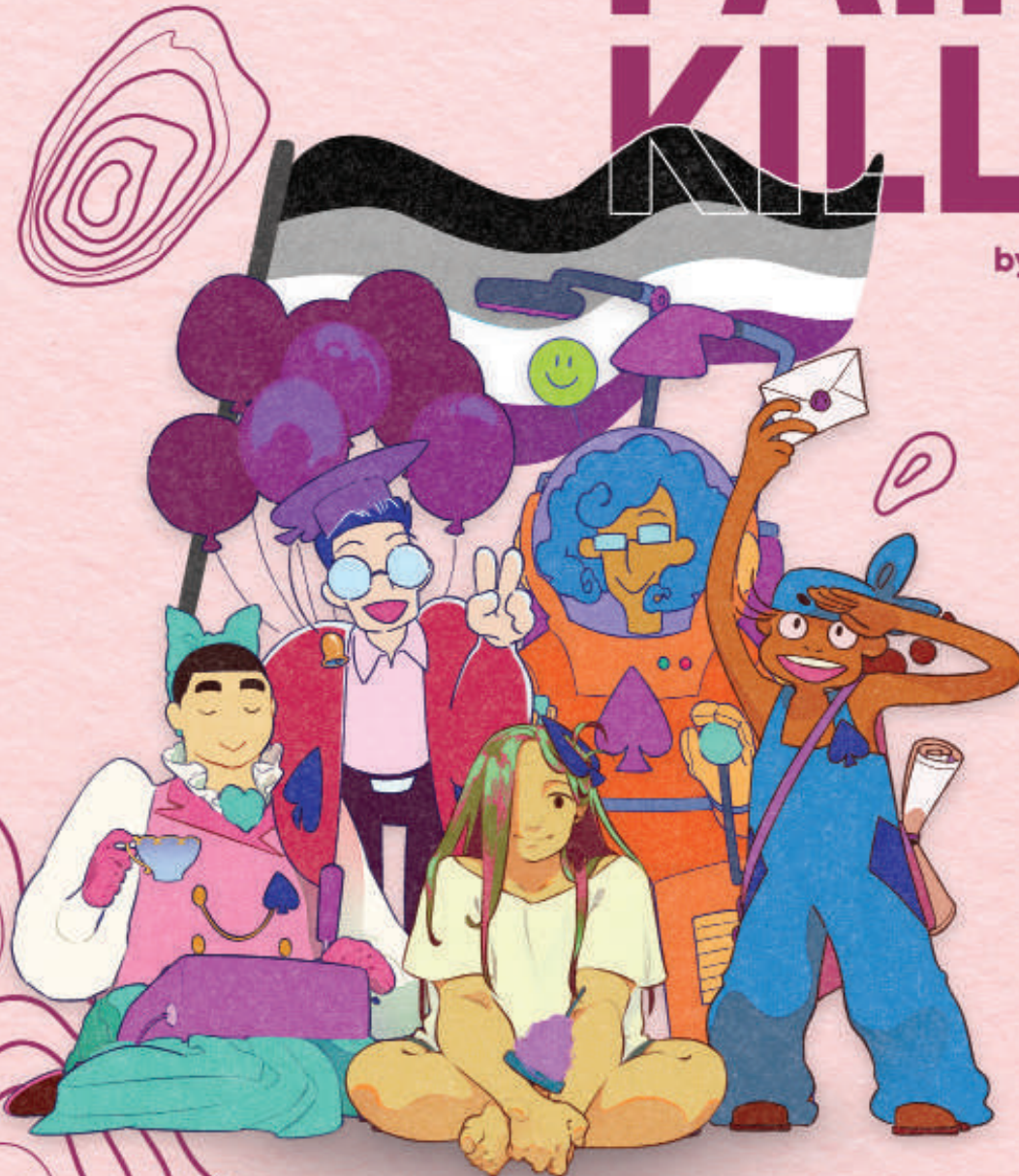




COMIC

PAIN-KILLER.

by Asexual in VIETNAM





ABOUT PAINKILLER

The comic series “Painkiller” consists of five short stories offering suggestions on how people on the asexual spectrum can explain their sexual orientation labels. Each installment depicts relatable and sometimes awkward moments that members of the community often face when talking to friends about their orientation, along with clever “tips” for handling such situations. Like a dose of “painkiller,” the project hopes to ease the headaches that asexual-spectrum individuals experience when explaining themselves, while also fostering understanding among their friends.

This comic was made by...



Asexual in Vietnam (AIV), founded in 2013, works to connect, raise visibility, and celebrate the asexual community in Vietnam. Misconceptions about queer and asexual people remain widespread, often causing anxiety and fear. AIV is committed to spreading knowledge, sharing struggles, and supporting the community. Our mission is to challenge stereotypes, affirm gender and sexual diversity, and provide information about both global queer issues and Vietnam's local context. Alongside online efforts, AIV is planning practical initiatives to strengthen its role as a bridge between the community, supporters, and broader society.

English version in collaboration with...



The RMIT Queer and Alliances Club (RQAC) is a student-led organization dedicated to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for individuals of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and backgrounds. The club provides a safe space where members are encouraged to embrace their authentic selves without fear of judgment or exclusion. Beyond offering a sense of belonging, RQAC functions as a community in which students can build meaningful friendships, exchange experiences, and receive emotional and social support.



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Chapter 1:

**UNTAN-
GLING
THE
THREADS**






Lately, I've felt really exhausted
when telling my friends that I'm
Asexual.




When along
with the
moments
of opening
up, of
explanations...


are questions that seem to
want to expose and deny me,



"You just
haven't met
the right
person"



"You're
joking,
right?"



Or indifference and
ignorance..



These reactions leave me feeling tangled up. I feel guilty for not being able to explain things properly, and I grow more and more distant from my friends.

There are times when I wonder if I should keep opening up and sharing about myself?

In those moments, I try to remind myself of the first time I dared to tell my best friend about the Asexual spectrum.

When I was at my most confused and worried, instead of interrogating me, they were willing to listen.






They were always there to help me feel less lonely as an Asexual. A safe emotional support besides my family, which I cannot live without.



Sometimes, they've even helped bring me closer to the community, because they have seen and accepted me for who I am.



That understanding
has been the
motivation for me
to keep talking
about myself, and
to find friends who
are willing to listen.

So, what about you? What
makes you want to keep
opening up and explaining
Asexuality to your friends?

Chapter 2:

CIRCLE

OF

RELA

TION

SHIPS



After coming out, I feel a sense of responsibility to be a guru on asexuality.

I never hesitate to tell my close friends, my college friends, or even strangers I just met about Asexuality.


I want my friends to know a lot about asexuality, so I look for 1000 different ways to explain it to make it easier for them to understand.



But sometimes I
put myself in an
uncomfortable
position, having to
answer hundreds
of questions
about sex.

And the guilt of
not being able
to make them
understand
dragged me
down even
further.



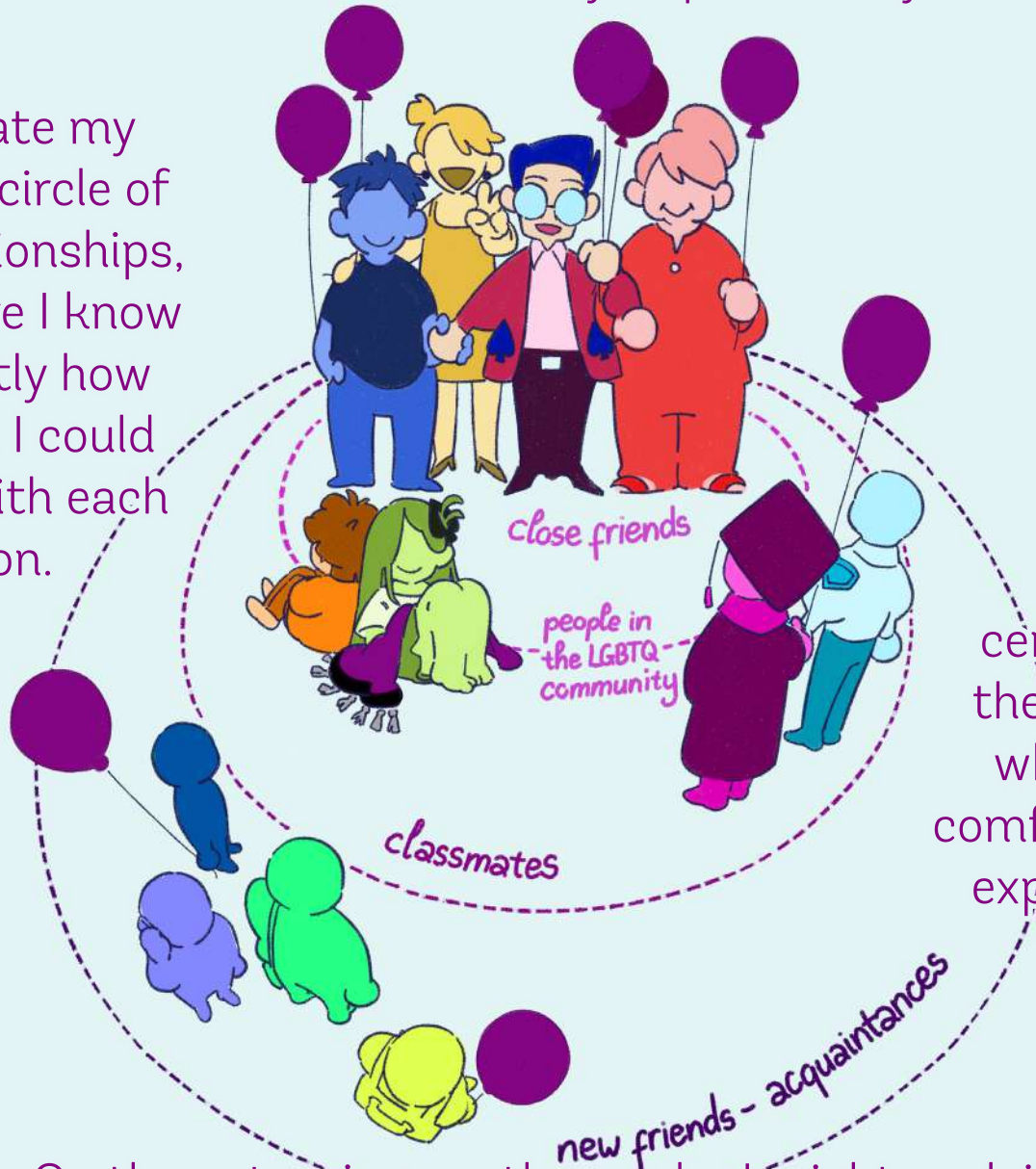


But wait...
I do not have the
RESPONSIBILITY
to explain.

It is a very simple thing,
but I **have** forgotten.


I need to set a boundary to protect myself.

I create my own circle of relationships, where I know exactly how open I could be with each person.



At the center are the people who I feel comfortable explaining.

On the outer ring are those who I might explain or not, depending on the context.



Does the person in front of me make me feel safe?

Do they listen to me?
Will explaining be effective in this situation?

I will also ask myself:
How much energy am I having right now to explain?

So, what does your circle of relationships look like?



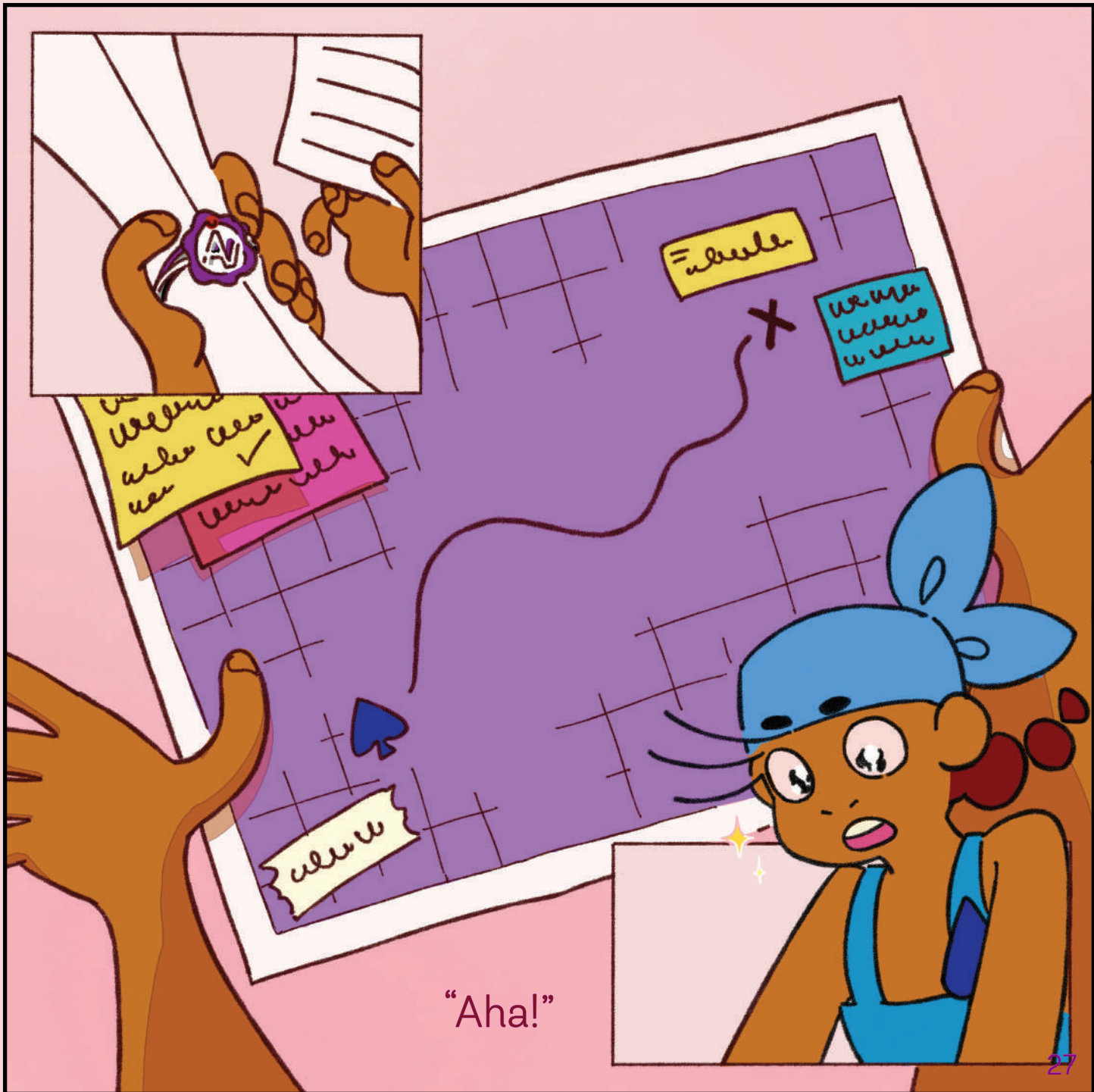
Chapter 3:

**PRE-
PARING
YOUR-
SELF**





You need to understand yourself
before others can understand you.



"Aha!"



"Sexual attraction is...?"

"Sexual desire is...?"

"The Asexual spectrum...?"



Don't rush! I'll explain it to you little by little!



Sometimes things
don't work out,
don't give up, keep
pushing forward!



Can you share with me how you explain Asexuality?



Chapter 4:

MAKE

ACE

MAKE

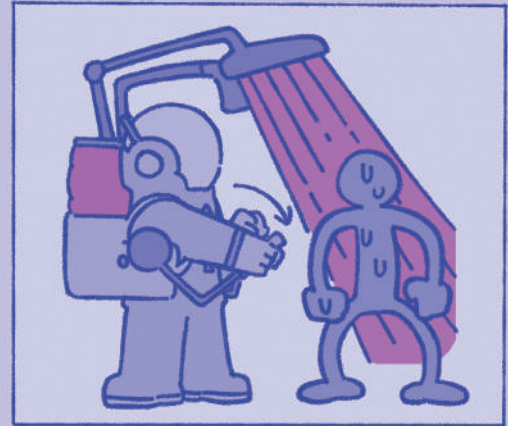
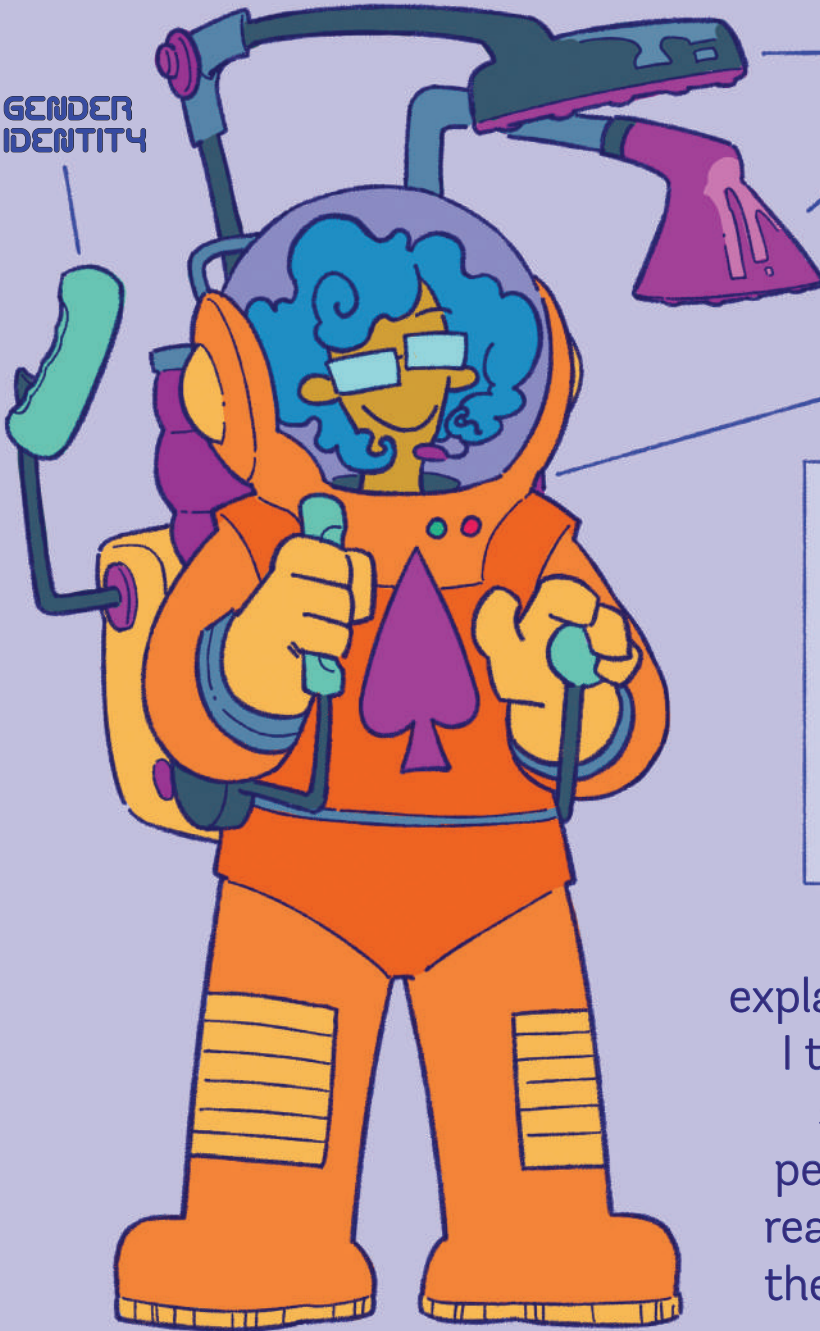
SENSE



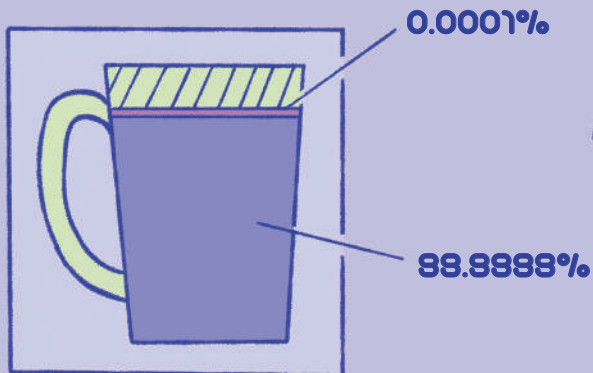
GENDER
IDENTITY

ASEXUALITY
HAVING LITTLE TO NO
SEXUAL ATTRACTION

ORIENTATION



Back then, when I tried explaining the Ace spectrum, I thought I had to be super scientifically accurate so people would trust me and really “get” both myself and the community I represent.



SATURATION FAILED



After a few tries, people would just react with: “Why is this so complicated?”, “So how’s that different from being straight?”

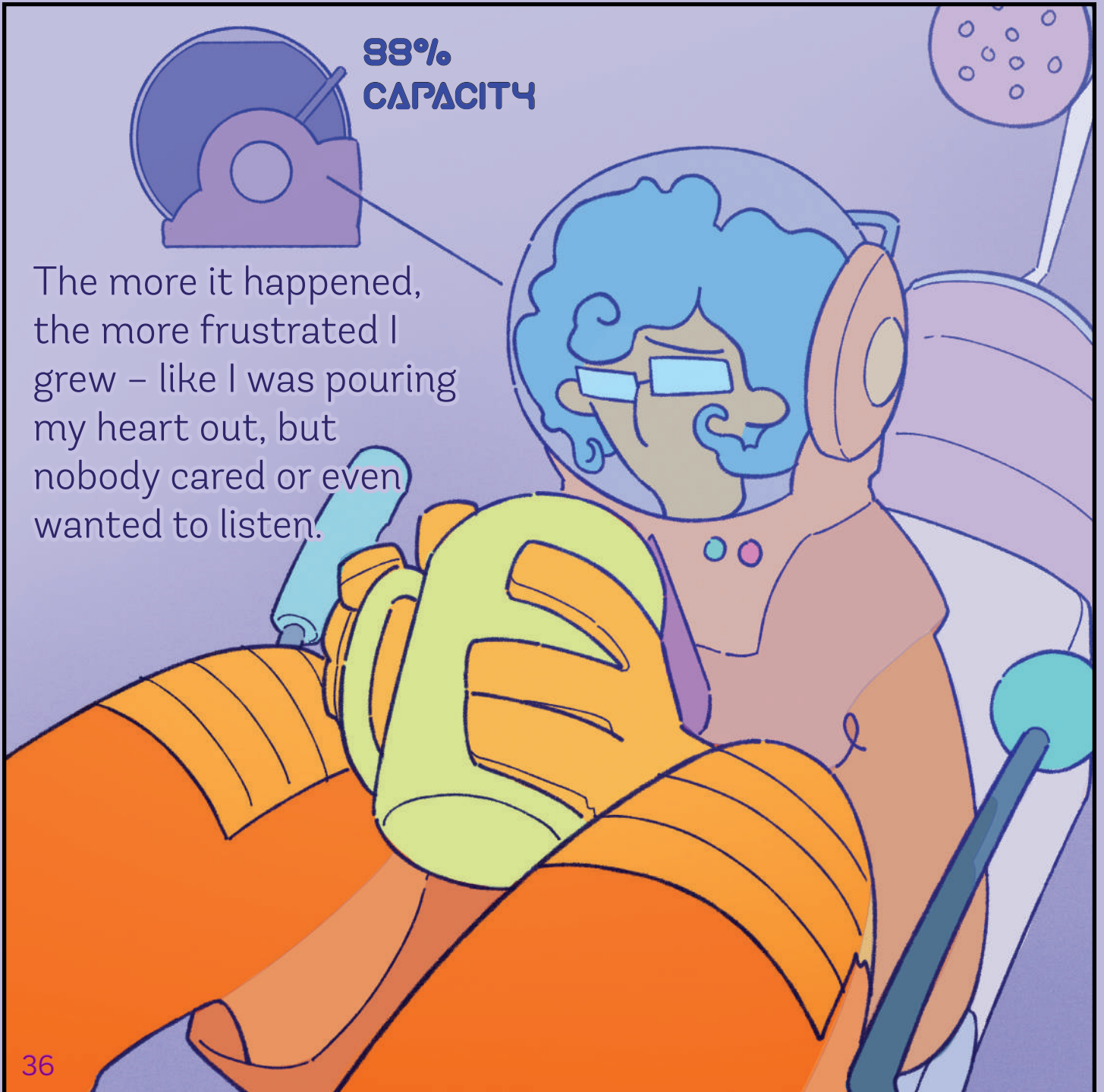


Everything I said just seemed to slide right past them, leaving nothing behind.

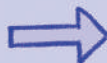
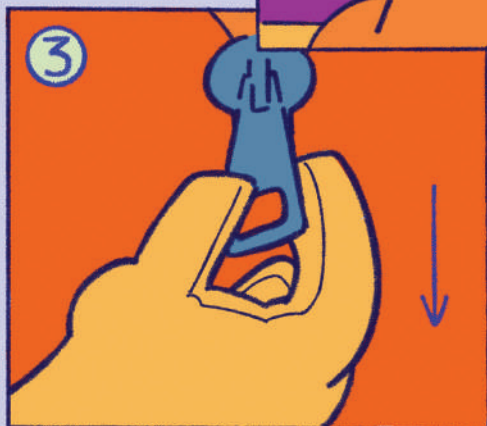
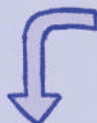
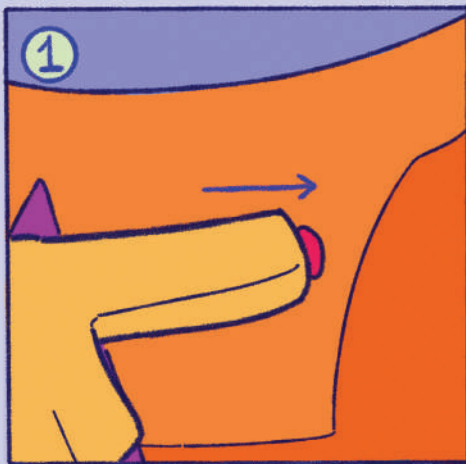


**88%
CAPACITY**

The more it happened,
the more frustrated I
grew – like I was pouring
my heart out, but
nobody cared or even
wanted to listen.



By paying attention to what people actually cared about, I realized the easiest way to connect was by using stories and my own experiences, things that hit on an emotional level.



It's really just this:-predict the kinds of questions people will ask, and prep your answers ahead of time.

Then, just share a story that makes sense for the moment, in a way your friend will get.

The most important thing is trusting your own experiences.

Don't apologize for them. Don't be ashamed of them.

So, what's your way of explaining Asexuality?



Chapter 5:

SEEK-

ING

OUT

ALLIES





How is being Asexual different from being apathetic?

Can you explain it more clearly?

I really want to explain my experience so people can understand me. But with the way things have been going, I'm feeling exhausted...

I still have one
more way!

Pop!



Let's go find allies!



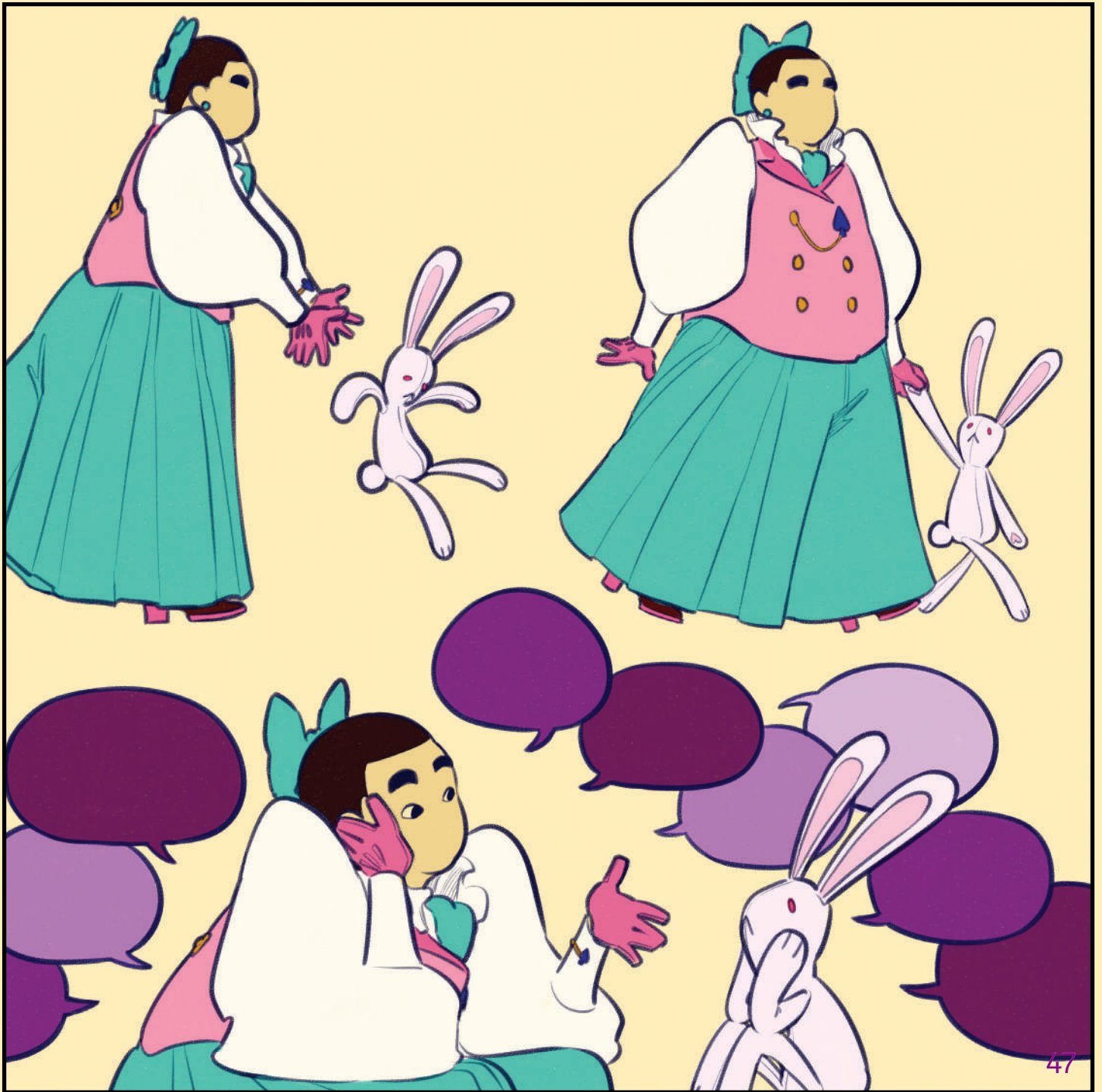


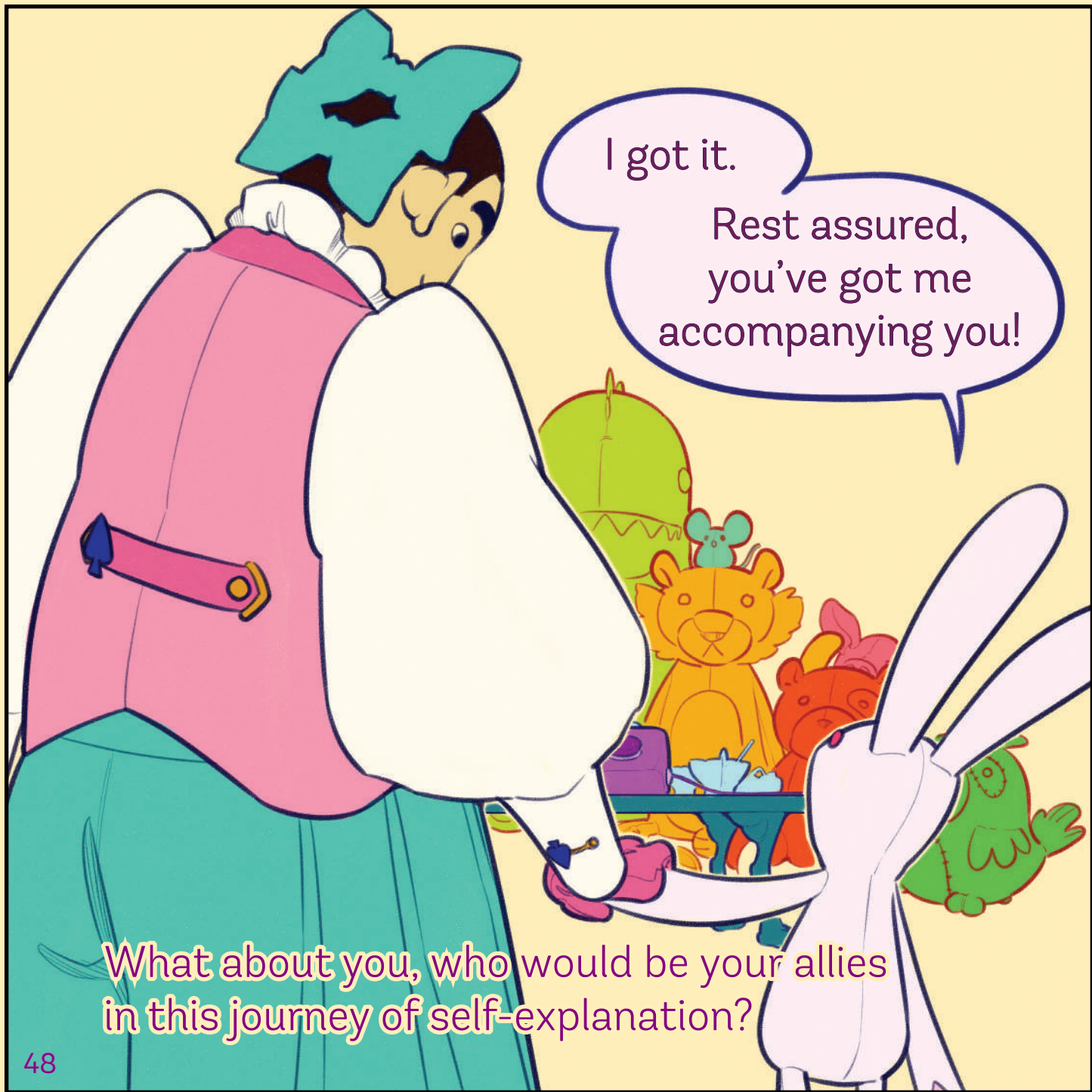
Characteristics that make this person a great ally in explaining:

- Engaging with contents regarding the Asexual spectrum on their personal profile (or social media)
- Always listen attentively when I tell my stories
- Always empathize with my experiences being an Asexual

Give us just a sec!







I got it.

Rest assured,
you've got me
accompanying you!

What about you, who would be your allies
in this journey of self-explanation?

CREDITS

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