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OUR JOURNEY





SOMEWHERE IN NUNAVUT





HOW DID YOU MAKE OUT AT THE RIVER?



TEN GOOD-SIZED CHAR TODAY! MOM'S COOKING TWO AND SHE WANTS TO DRY THE REST.



THAT'S MY BOY!

CAN YOU GRAB THE JERRY CAN OUT OF THE BOAT... I DON'T SEEM TO HAVE MY STRENGTH BACK YET.

SURE, DAD.



OK. I THINK MOMS' GOT SUPPER READY.

RUN THAT UP TO THE CABIN AND FILL UP THE HONDA. I WILL BE UP AS SOON AS I TIE OFF THE BOAT.



20 MINUTES LATER

WHERE'S DAD?


ISN'T HE WITH YOU?

MAYBE HE'S NOT DONE WITH THE BOAT...I'LL GO GET HIM.




DAD, YOU OK?

OH, I'M FINE. JUST CAN'T CATCH MY BREATH...I'M TAKING A BREAK.



DAD YOU NEVER TAKE BREAKS. I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU. YOU'VE BEEN NOT FEELING WELL FOR A WEEK AND SEEMS LIKE YOU'RE GETTING WORSE.

I CAN'T SHAKE THIS COLD...THAT'S ALL. NO NEED TO WORRY. LET'S GET UP TO THE CABIN FOR SUPPER.




THAT COUGH OF YOURS SOUNDS WORSE.

THAT UUUJUQ WILL FIX ME UP IN NO TIME.

GET YOUR FATHER SOME WATER.



I'M FINE - JUST NEED A MINUTE.



YOU LOOK PALE SOLOMON. I THINK WE SHOULD PACK UP AND HEAD BACK TO TOWN TOMORROW.

LOOK GUYS, I WILL BE FINE! I JUST NEED A GOOD NIGHTS SLEEP - BESIDES WE...



I THINK MOM'S RIGHT... I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU LIKE THIS AND I'M WORRIED.



COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

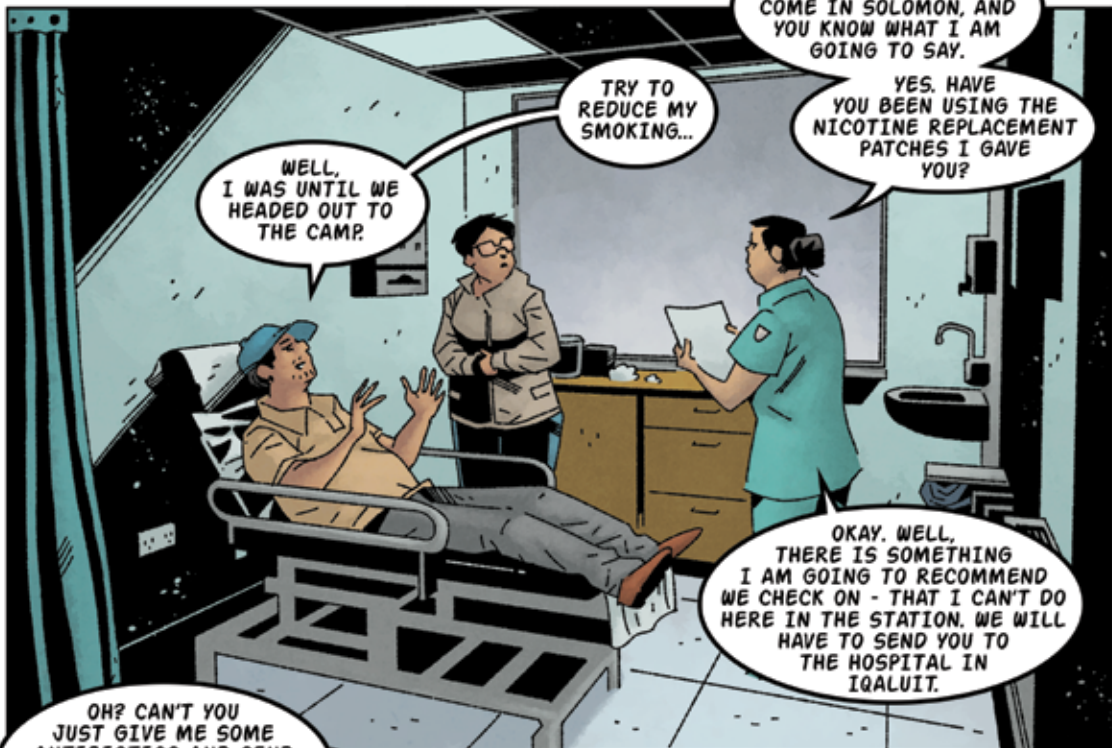


WELL, I THINK YOU WERE RIGHT TO COME IN SOLOMON, AND YOU KNOW WHAT I AM GOING TO SAY.

YES. HAVE YOU BEEN USING THE NICOTINE REPLACEMENT PATCHES I GAVE YOU?

TRY TO REDUCE MY SMOKING...

WELL, I WAS UNTIL WE HEADED OUT TO THE CAMP.



OKAY. WELL, THERE IS SOMETHING I AM GOING TO RECOMMEND WE CHECK ON - THAT I CAN'T DO HERE IN THE STATION. WE WILL HAVE TO SEND YOU TO THE HOSPITAL IN IQALUIT.

OH? CAN'T YOU JUST GIVE ME SOME ANTIBIOTICS AND SEND ME ON MY WAY? WE REALLY WANT TO GET BACK OUT TO THE CABIN.



I DON'T THINK THAT'S WISE, SOLOMON. WE REALLY NEED TO RULE OUT SOME THINGS AND THAT MEANS MORE SOPHISTICATED TESTS.



RULE OUT WHAT KIND OF THINGS?

WELL, THERE IS NO NEED TO WORRY JUST YET, AND WE ARE SIMPLY BEING CAUTIOUS. THE DOCTOR WHO LOOKED AT THE X-RAYS IN IQALUIT IS RECOMMENDING WE GET YOU DOWN THERE TO DO SOME MORE BLOOD WORK AND A CT SCAN OF YOUR CHEST.



IT'S JUST A COLD...HAD THE SAME THING LAST YEAR!

COULD VERY WELL BE, BUT LIKE I SAY- BETTER TO BE OVERCAUTIOUS.

I WILL REACH OUT TO THE MEDICAL TRAVEL TEAM, AND THEY WILL BE IN TOUCH ABOUT DATES. DO YOU TWO HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR ME?



HOW LONG WILL HE BE AWAY?

IF EVERYTHING GOES WELL IT SHOULD BE LESS THAN A WEEK AND YOU CAN ESCORT HIM DOWN, ELISAPEE.

OH... WELL I HAVE THE KIDS...



I THINK THIS IS ALL A BIT TOO FAST...WHY THE RUSH? I CAN'T LEAVE ELISAPEE WITH THE KIDS. CAN WE JUST DO THIS ANOTHER TIME?



NO, WE AREN'T GOING TO WAIT. BEN CAN GO WITH YOU. IT'S JUST A WEEK.

ALL WE HAD PLANNED WAS TO BE AT THE CABIN ANYWAY.

I AM NOT BACK AT WORK FOR ANOTHER TWO WEEKS. SO, IT WILL WORK OUT PERFECTLY.



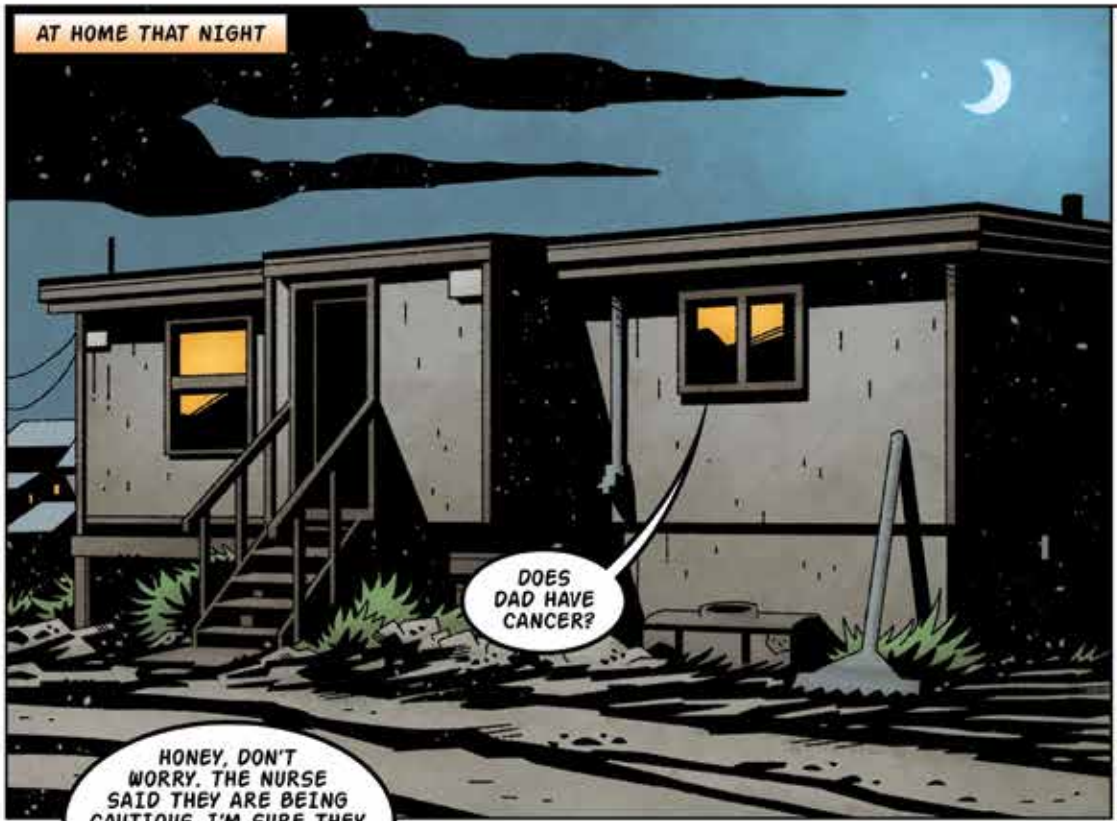
WELL, THIS IS A DECISION YOU NEED TO MAKE TOGETHER, BUT THE DOCTOR AND I HIGHLY RECOMMEND IT.



SEEMS MY WIFE HAS IT ALL ARRANGED AND AT THIS POINT I DON'T THINK ANYONE WILL BE ABLE TO TALK HER OUT OF IT.

OKAY. IT'S SETTLED THEN- AND SOLOMON...I'D LOVE IT IF YOU USED THE PATCHES.

AT HOME THAT NIGHT



DOES
DAD HAVE
CANCER?

HONEY, DON'T
WORRY. THE NURSE
SAID THEY ARE BEING
CAUTIOUS. I'M SURE THEY
WILL FIX HIM UP IN
NO TIME - HE'S A
STRONG MAN.



I KNOW, BUT
HE'S BEEN SMOKING
FOR SO LONG AND I'VE
BEEN READING ABOUT LUNG
CANCER SYMPTOMS AND DAD
HAS A LOT OF THEM. AND
DIDN'T GRANDPA
HAVE CANCER?



WE
SHOULDN'T JUMP
TO ANY CONCLUSIONS
SON. WHAT WE NEED
TO DO IS GET READY
FOR YOUR FLIGHT
ON SUNDAY.



YA, OKAY.
DIDN'T THE NURSE
SAY ANYTHING ABOUT
WHAT WAS
WRONG?



SHE COULD ONLY TELL US THAT HE NEEDS MORE TESTS... TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE.



SHE COULDN'T TELL US WHAT EXACTLY WAS WRONG.



SHE JUST KNOWS SOMETHING IS WRONG...?

YES, I SUPPOSE SO, BUT IT COULD BE ANY NUMBER OF THINGS.

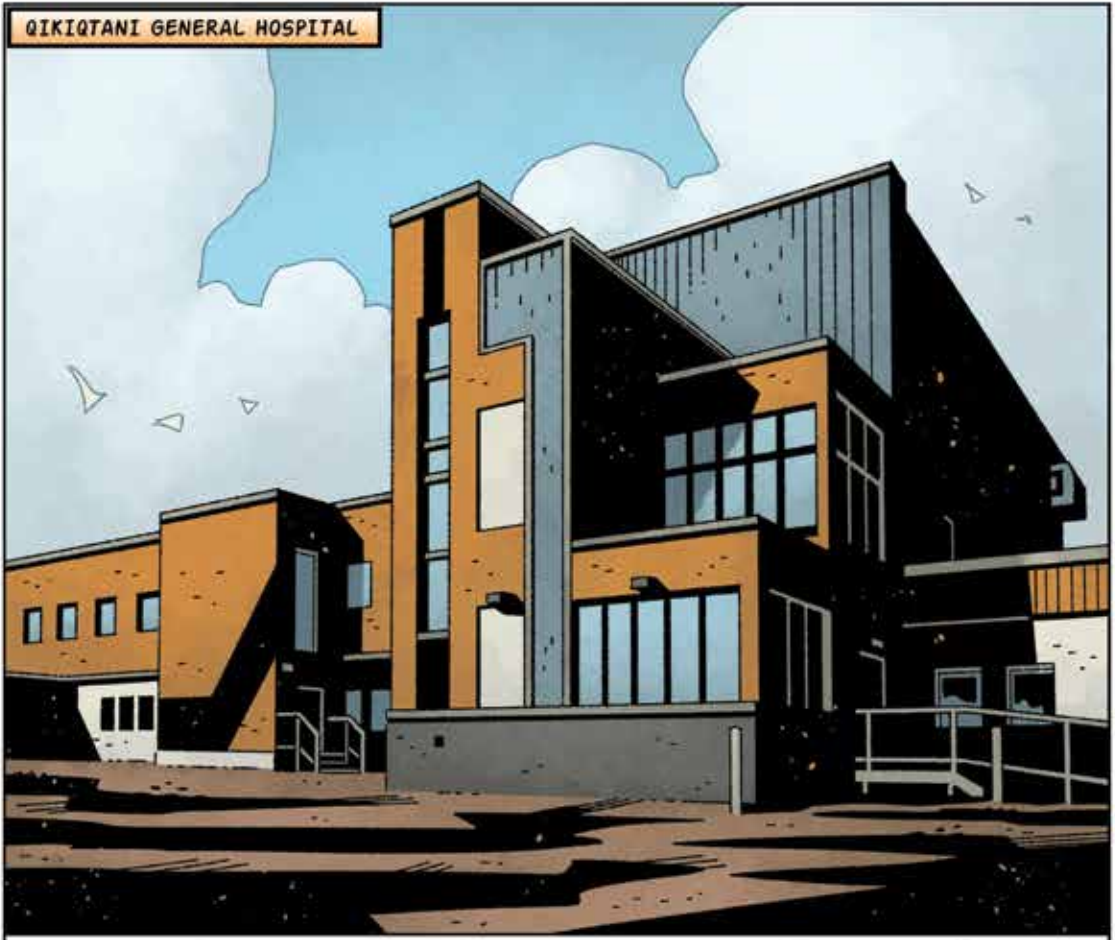
SO, DON'T WORRY, WE WILL KNOW MORE BY THE END OF NEXT WEEK.







QIKIQTANI GENERAL HOSPITAL



I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHY WE ARE HERE. I AM FEELING SO MUCH BETTER.

I CAN TELL YOU ARE FEELING BETTER DAD. YOU HAVE SOME COLOUR BACK.



MUST BE THE AIRLINE FOOD - IT REALLY AGREES WITH ME. HAHA. YOU GOING TO HANG OUT WITH YOUR COUSIN TONIGHT?

YA, WE ARE GOING TO TRY TO SEE A MOVIE TONIGHT. MAYBE A GAME OF POOL AT THE LEGION. YOU SHOULD COME...

I'M PROBABLY GOING TO STAY HERE AND CALL YOUR MOM AND THE KIDS - THERE'S ALSO A CANADIENS GAME ON TONIGHT.

I'LL HAVE SUPPER WITH YOU BEFORE I GO OUT.

PERFECT... I'M GOING TO RUN OUTSIDE FOR SOME FRESH AIR.

C'MON, DAD I THOUGHT YOU WERE USING THE PATCH.

FORGOT THEM AT THE BOARDING HOME!

SOLOMON INOOYA?



SORRY MY DAD JUST STEPPED OUT.

OKAY. JUST GIVE A KNOCK ON THE DOOR WHEN HE IS BACK, AND THE DOCTOR WILL SEE HIM.

WILL YOU NEED A TRANSLATOR?



NO, WE SHOULD BE OKAY. I CAN TRANSLATE IF MY DAD DOESN'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING...BUT HE'S PRETTY GOOD WITH ENGLISH.

DOCTORS OFFICE

SO, AS YOU KNOW SOLOMON, I REVIEWED YOUR X-RAYS THE NURSE SENT DOWN AND WE ARE WANTING TO GET A COUPLE OTHER TESTS DONE.

ONE IS A CT SCAN THAT WILL GIVE US A BETTER LOOK AT YOUR LUNGS AND THE TISSUES AROUND THEM. WE ARE ALSO GOING TO TAKE SOME BLOOD AND GET A SPUTUM SAMPLE.

WHAT'S SPUTUM?

IT'S THE STUFF YOU COUGH UP FROM YOUR THROAT OR THAT COMES UP WHEN YOU CLEAR YOUR THROAT.

OKAY, WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

WELL YOUR X-RAYS SHOW AN AREA OF TISSUE THAT WE WANT TO LOOK AT CLOSER.

I UNDERSTAND YOU HAVE BEEN A SMOKER FOR THE PAST 25 YEARS?

A PACK A DAY.

BECAUSE YOU ARE AT A HIGH RISK FOR CANCER, WE WILL WANT TO RULE THAT OUT AS A FIRST STEP.

THE CT SCAN GIVES US A MUCH CLOSER, MORE DETAILED LOOK AT THE CHEST, AND THE BLOOD AND SPUTUM TESTS CAN ALSO TELL US A BIT ABOUT WHAT IS GOING ON IN YOUR BODY.







IT'S STAGE 1 LUNG CANCER - BUT MOM THEY SAID IT DOESN'T LOOK VERY ESTABLISHED AND THE CANCER SEEMS TO BE IN ONE AREA...A SMALL TUMOUR...AND CAN BE REMOVED.

OH SOL... WHAT DO WE DO?

WELL, YOU DON'T WORRY FOR STARTERS. WE WERE ABLE TO GET A LAST MINUTE APPOINTMENT AND ARE GOING TO HEAD TO OTTAWA FOR AN MRI.

I FEEL GOOD THAT I KNOW WHAT THIS IS AND THERE IS GOING TO BE A PLAN... AND I CAN GET BACK UP TO YOU AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.



MOM THE DOCTOR SAID WE CAUGHT IT PRETTY EARLY. ITS ONLY IN ONE LUNG AND SMALL...

HE SAID AN MRI IN OTTAWA WILL SHOW MORE, BUT HE SAID IN HIS EXPERIENCE IT IS VERY TREATABLE.

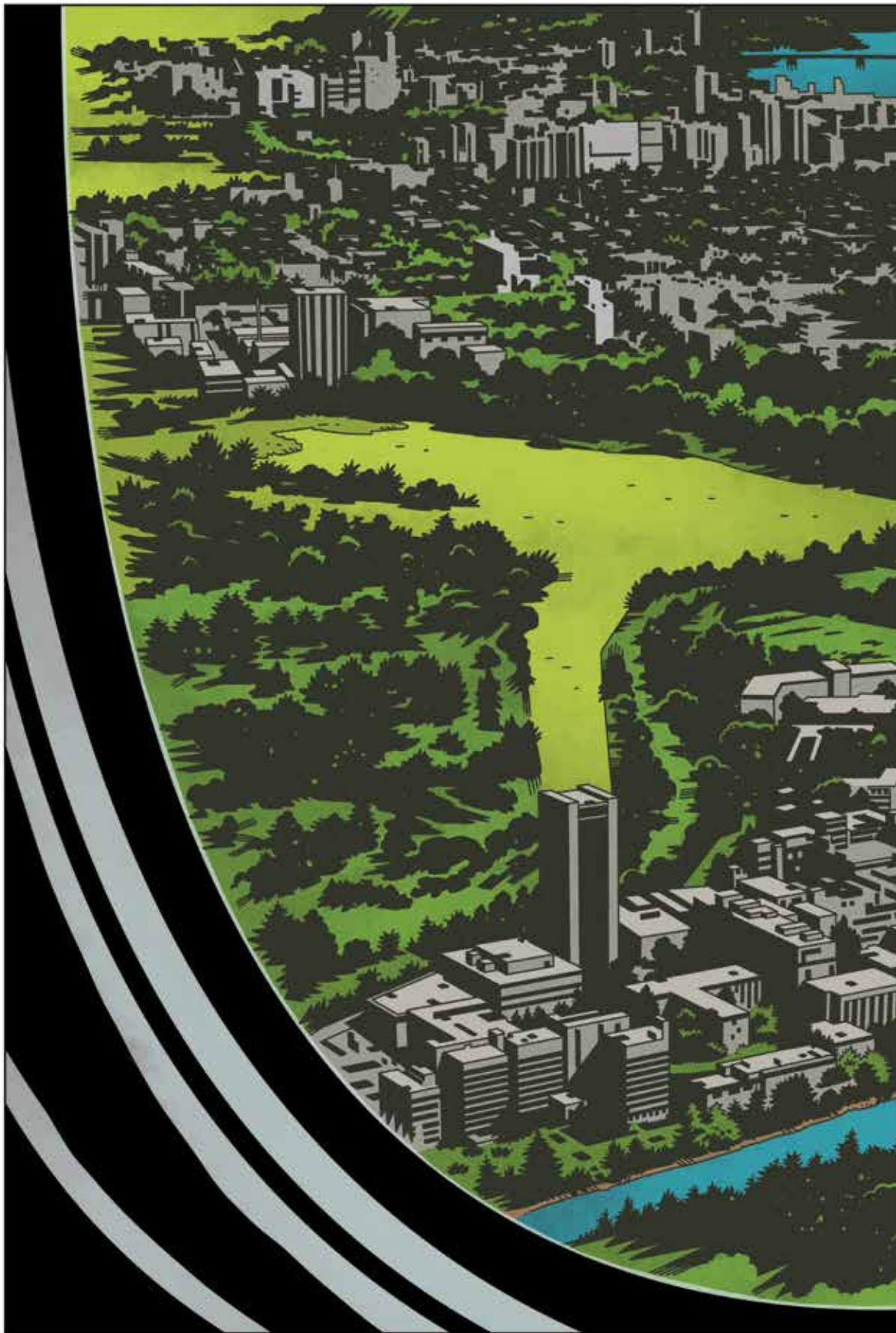


I WANT TO COME DOWN SOL... I WANT TO BE THERE WITH YOU...

I KNOW DEAR. I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO SEE YOU, BUT WE NEED YOU TO STAY THERE WITH THE KIDS FOR NOW. WE ARE LEAVING IN A COUPLE DAYS FOR OTTAWA.

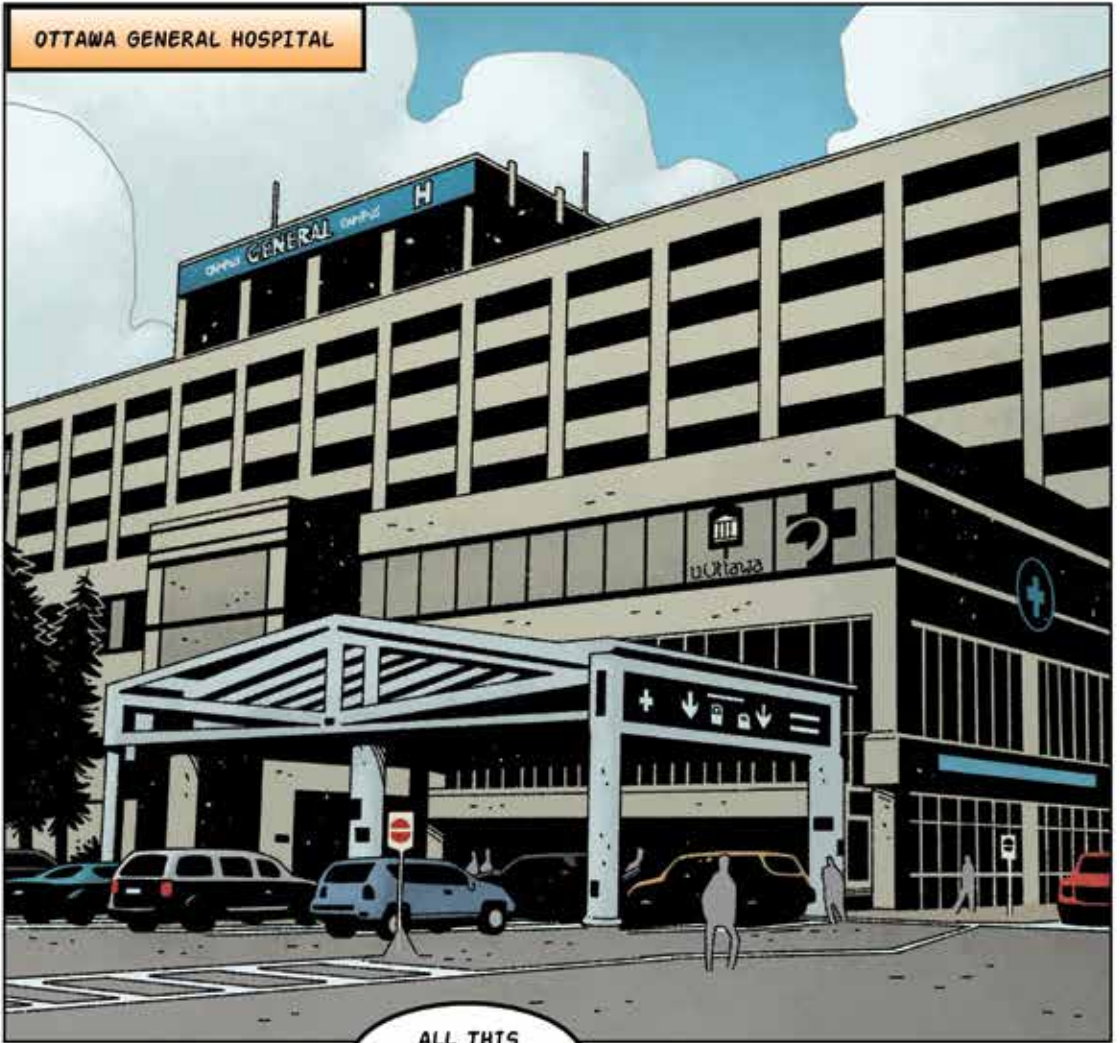
ONCE WE GET SETTLED, WE CAN MAKE A PLAN. I'VE GOT BEN HERE. HE HAS BEEN A BIG HELP.

BEN, YOU GIVE YOUR DAD A BIG HUG FOR ME. THE KIDS WANT TO TALK TO YOU BOTH. SOL - LET'S TALK WHEN YOU'RE DONE SAYING HI...





OTTAWA GENERAL HOSPITAL



ALL THIS
WAITING IS SO
FRUSTRATING...



MAYBE
I CAN FIND
A VENDING
MACHINE.





HEY IS THAT TUDJA ATAGIK? I FOLLOW HER ON INSTAGRAM. WHAT THE HECK IS SHE DOING HERE IN THE CANCER WARD?



YA, THAT IS HER. WHAT THE HECK... MAYBE I SHOULD SAY HI, BUT I DON'T REALLY KNOW HER IN PERSON, JUST FROM SOCIAL MEDIA...



TUDJA?

YA, HI...

HEY, SORRY I RECOGNIZED YOU FROM INSTAGRAM... WE FOLLOW EACH OTHER... I'M BEN.

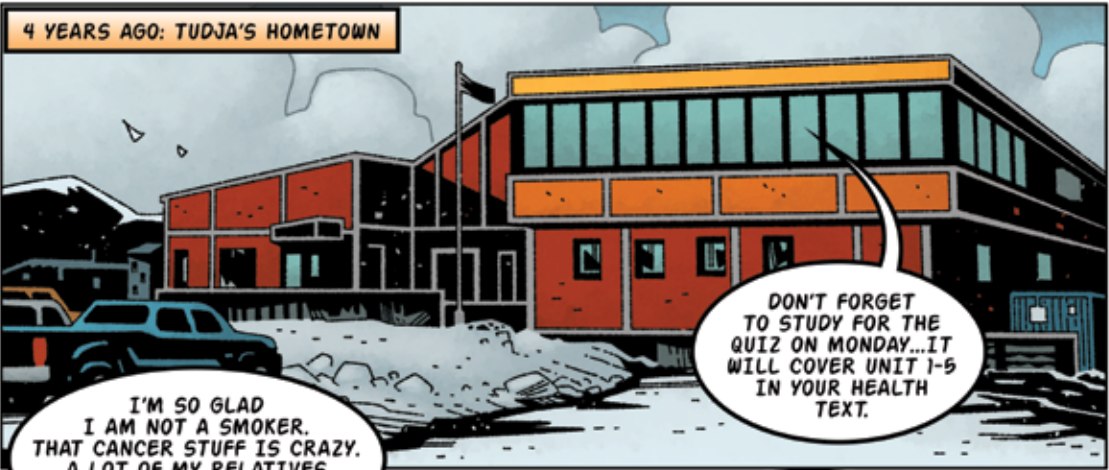


OH RIGHT BEN. HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I'M HERE ESCORTING MY DAD. WE JUST GOT HERE FROM IQUALUIT - FOR CANCER TREATMENT.



4 YEARS AGO: TUDJA'S HOMETOWN



DON'T FORGET TO STUDY FOR THE QUIZ ON MONDAY...IT WILL COVER UNIT 1-5 IN YOUR HEALTH TEXT.

I'M SO GLAD I AM NOT A SMOKER. THAT CANCER STUFF IS CRAZY. A LOT OF MY RELATIVES HAVE CANCER - OR DIED OF CANCER.

YA, IT SEEMS LIKE EVERYONE EVENTUALLY GETS CANCER - SO SCARY.

SMOKING RATES ARE SO HIGH IN THE NORTH - I THINK THAT IS A MAJOR CAUSE. I'M GLAD MY MOM QUIT BEFORE SHE HAD ME!

AND THAT HPV... WHAT THE HECK IS THAT? DIDN'T MRS. ANDREWS SAY THAT MOST CERVICAL CANCER STARTS WITH AN HPV INFECTION?


I DUNNO - BUT I AM GOING TO THE CLINIC THIS WEEKEND TO TALK TO THE DOCTOR ABOUT MY CRAZY PERIODS. I JUST CAN'T DO ANOTHER MONTH OF THAT PAIN.

THE CRAMPS ARE SO NUTS. I'M GOING TO ASK HER ABOUT SOME OF THIS STUFF.

THAT'S A GOOD IDEA.


AFTER THE CLINIC VISIT





NO I'M NOT HUNGRY.
HEY, REMEMBER WHEN SHE WAS
TALKING ABOUT FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS
AND HOW WHEN I AM OLDER I SHOULD BE
GETTING REGULAR CERVICAL
SCREENING TESTS?

YES.




WHEN
WAS YOUR LAST
TEST?

ACTUALLY,
I HAVE NEVER
HAD ONE!


WHAT?
YOU'RE 43
MOM!

I'M 43
BUT I FEEL 23!
HA! HA!



MOM, SERIOUSLY
YOU NEED TO HAVE
A TEST. DIDN'T GRANDMA
AND YOUR AUNT BOTH
HAVE CANCER?

YES, THEY
DID BUT I DON'T
FEEL BAD AT ALL.
I'M SURE I
AM FINE.



MOM...THE
DOCTOR SAID
IT'S SUPER IMPORTANT.
THE TEST CAN HELP
PREVENT CERVICAL
CANCER.

TUDJA -
THERE IS
NOTHING WRONG
WITH ME...AND I
DON'T LIKE
DOCTORS.

MOM, YOU
JUST SAID YOU LIKED
HER. WON'T IT BE GREAT
TO KNOW FOR CERTAIN
YOU ARE A HEALTHY
43...ER 23-YEAR-
OLD?

UGHHH! FINE...
I KNOW YOU ARE NOT
GOING TO DROP
THIS...

PRESENT DAY: BOARDING HOME

HEY... THANKS FOR COMING! I AM GETTING A LITTLE BIT STIR CRAZY.

HEY NO PROBLEM! HOW ARE YOU DOING?

PRETTY GOOD... THANKS. LOOKS LIKE I AM HEADING BACK UP ON MONDAY.

MY MOM MANAGED TO GET SOME TIME OFF WORK, AND MY AUNT IS GOING TO HELP WITH THE BOYS... MY DAD IS SUPER EXCITED TO SEE HER.

IT'LL BE GREAT FOR HIM TO HAVE HER HERE - NOT THAT YOU ARE TERRIBLE... YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

YA THE LAST TWO WEEKS I FEEL LIKE - USELESS. AND NOW THAT HIS CANCER IS ALSO IN HIS LYMPH NODES - IT'S NOT THE BEST NEWS.

THAT'S SO HARD. I REMEMBER WHEN WE FOUND OUT MY MOM HAD CANCER. I FELT LIKE I HAD SOMEHOW CAUSED IT - I WAS SO INSISTENT SHE NEEDED TO GET CHECKED.

WELL. THANK GOODNESS YOU DID THAT. YOU ACTUALLY PROBABLY SAVED HER LIFE.



THAT'S WHAT SHE KEEPS SAYING. I'M HER GOOD LUCK CHARM. SHE EVEN MAKES ME PICK THE LOTTO NUMBERS.
HA! HA!

THE DOCTORS KEEP SAYING THINGS LOOK GOOD FOR MY DAD - BUT HE HAS CANCER. HOW CAN THAT BE GOOD?

WELL, HE HAS A GOOD PROGNOSIS, MEANING THEY ARE CONFIDENT HE WILL HAVE A GOOD OUTCOME AND THEY ARE THE EXPERTS. THEY HAVE SEEN A LOT OF THIS.



YA...I WONDER IF WE CAUGHT IT EARLIER... WE KNEW HE WAS SICK FOR A WHILE, BUT WE NEVER PUSHED HIM HARD ENOUGH TO GO TO THE NURSING STATION.

WE WERE LUCKY WE WERE IN THE SOUTH - NO FLIGHTS, AND SCREENING IS MORE ACCESSIBLE HERE.

BUT YOU DID GET YOUR DAD LOOKED AT AND NOW HE IS BEING TREATED - AND LIKE YOU SAY THE DOCTORS ARE VERY OPTIMISTIC...SO IT IS GOOD NEWS.



YOU'RE A PRETTY POSITIVE PERSON. I'M GLAD YOU ARE HERE.

AND ON THAT NOTE - I HAVE A SUGGESTION.

WHAT? THAT'S A THING?

THE INDIGENOUS NAVIGATOR AT THE HOSPITAL IS TAKING A FEW PEOPLE DOWN TO THE PARK TOMORROW TO GET SOME FRESH AIR AND JUST BE OUTSIDE. DID YOU WANT TO COME?

YA, SHE'S GREAT. SHE DOES THAT AS MUCH AS SHE CAN, SO PEOPLE DON'T FEEL SO BOXED UP AT THE HOSPITAL OR AT THE BOARDING HOME.

WOULD BE NICE IF DAD COULD COME - BUT I DOUBT THE DOCTORS WOULD LET HIM OUT THIS SOON AFTER SURGERY.

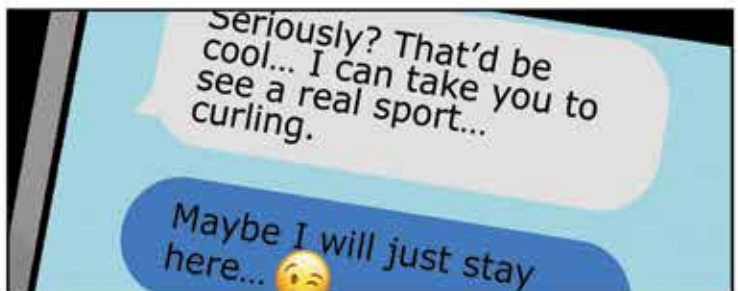
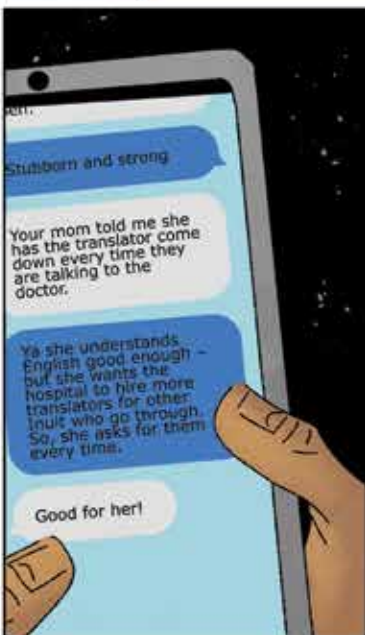
YA, PROBABLY TOO SOON FOR HIM - BUT THERE WILL BE OTHER CHANCES. I CAN PACK UP A BIT OF A LUNCH AND YOU CAN MEET MY MOM.

WOW THAT SOUNDS REALLY GOOD. ARE THERE A LOT OF BUGS AT THE PARK?

DON'T WORRY I WILL PROTECT YOU.



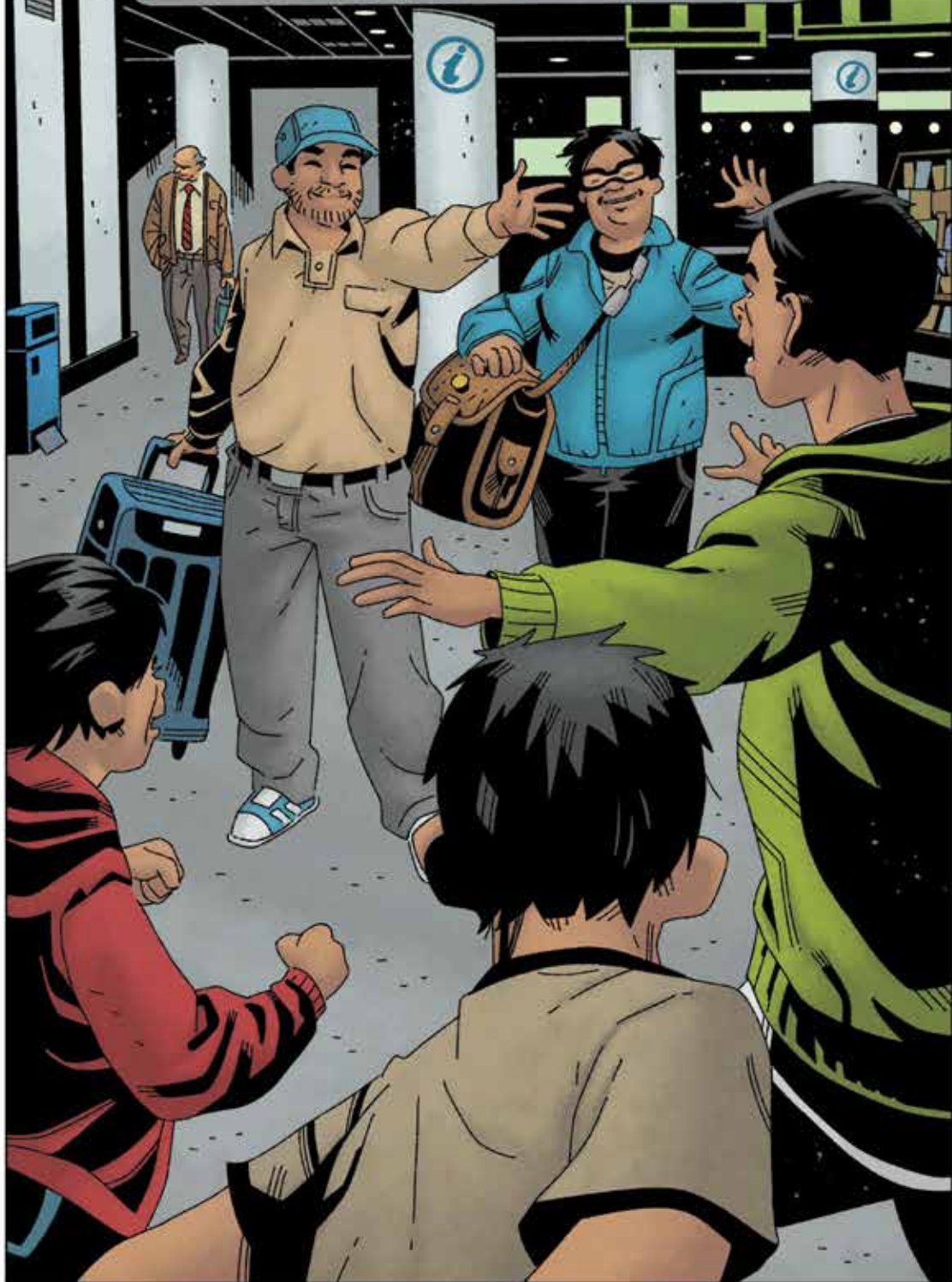
1 MONTH LATER



4 MONTHS LATER



ARRIVALS



“This book shares some of the realities of the cancer journey for Inuit and aims to provide education and awareness about cancer prevention, screening, treatment and survivorship.

As portrayed in the story, patients will meet many supportive people both in community and throughout the healthcare system. As a Nurse Navigator working in cancer care to support First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous patients, it is important for readers to know that you are not alone in your journey and that healthcare providers, like myself, are here to help you achieve your health goals.

Both historically and presently, Inuit have used the resources nature provides to prosper, to grow, to find comfort and to heal. Know that we see your resiliency and will continue to respect Inuit traditions throughout the cancer journey, working with you towards optimal wellness for you and your family.”

Carolyn Roberts

*First Nations, Inuit, Métis and
urban Indigenous Patient Nurse Navigator,
The Ottawa Hospital*



For more Inuit cancer resources please visit:

Inuusinni Aqqusaaqtara – My Journey,
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada:
pauktuutit.ca/health/cancer/

Taking Steps Together Cancer Toolkit for Urban Inuit in Ontario,
Tungasuvvingat Inuit:
tiontario.ca/programs/regional-cancer-care-program

**Recommended Resources for First Nations,
Inuit, Métis & Urban Indigenous Peoples,**
Indigenous Cancer Care Unit:
cancercareontario.ca/en/resources-first-nations-inuit-metis

Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario) supports health professionals, organizations and policy-makers with the most up-to-date cancer knowledge and tools to prevent cancer and deliver high-quality patient care.

Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario) actively engages people with cancer and their families in the design, delivery and evaluation of Ontario's cancer system, and works to improve the performance of Ontario's cancer system by driving quality, accountability, innovation and value.

This comic book was developed by Ontario Health (Indigenous Cancer Care Unit), which works to improve the cancer journey with and for First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous peoples.



Ontario Health
Cancer Care Ontario

If you have any questions, please email us at iccu@ontariohealth.ca

Need this information in an accessible format?

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