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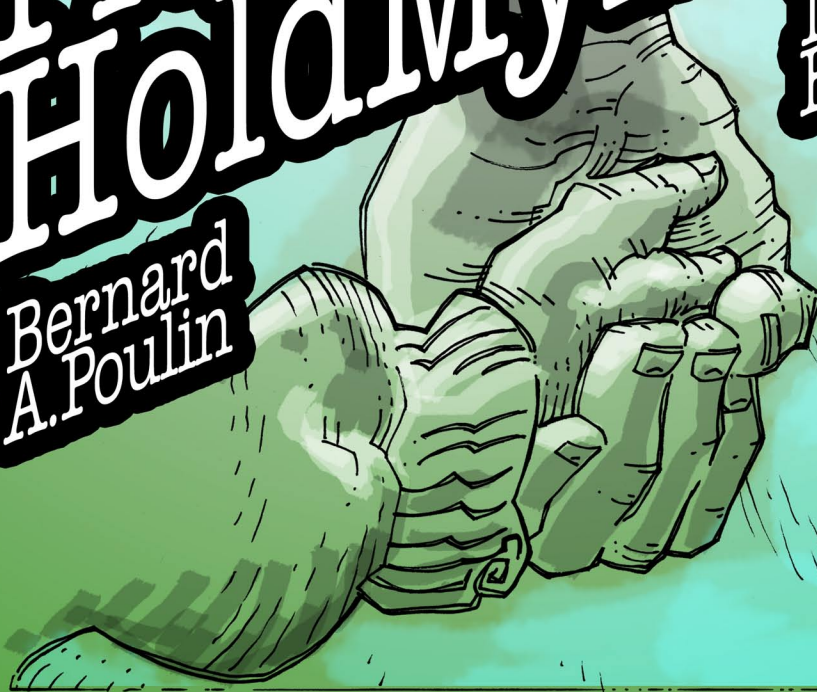
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Please Daddy, Hold My Hand

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Please Daddy, Hold My Hand

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PORTRAIT OF JEAN-CLAUDE BERGERON PAINTED BY BERNARD A. POULIN
PHOTOGRAPH BY MARTIN CHARBONNEAU
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INTRODUCTION

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME THE HAND HAS TAKEN US BEYOND OURSELVES. IT HAS PLAYED A UNIQUE ROLE IN THE RAPPORT BETWEEN HUMANS. IT GREETES. IT RECOGNIZES, ASSISTS, COMFORTS AND REASSURES. IT CARESSES, PRAYS, BLESSES, GIVES, TEACHES AND LEADS THE WAY. A VERITABLE EXTENSION OF THE HEART ITSELF, THE HAND IS THE PRIVILEGED LINK IN THE ART OF EMOTIONAL COMMUNICATION. WITHOUT FANFARE, IT IS SILENT - A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNSAID.

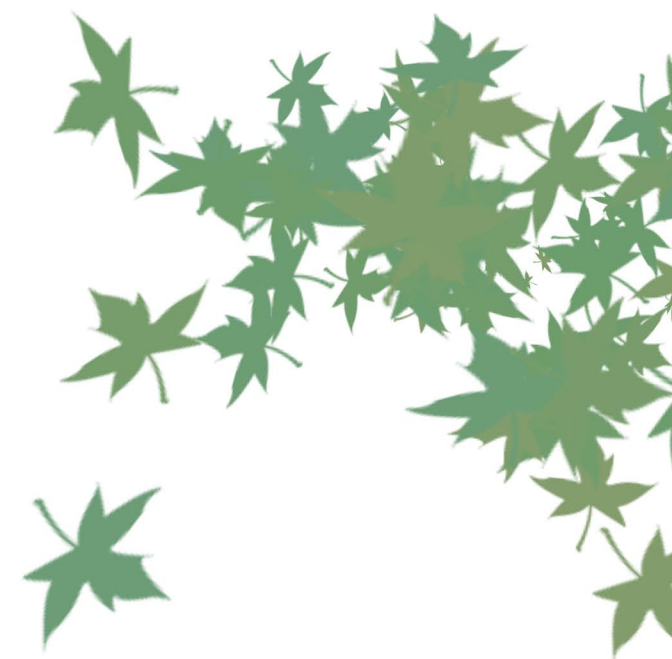
THE HAND IN THE BERNARD POULIN, DOMINIC BERCIER STORY *PLEASE DADDY HOLD MY HAND* SPEAKS OF THE RITE OF PASSAGE AS EXPERIENCED AND SHARED BY ONE GENERATION AND ANOTHER.

INTERESTINGLY THE PROFFERED HAND DESCRIBED IN THIS STORY IS REMINISCENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE AUTHOR AND THE ILLUSTRATOR. POULIN AND BERCIER MET SEVERAL YEARS AGO AT THE *CENTRE D'EXCELLENCE ARTISTIQUE DE LA SALLE*. THE FORMER WAS A PROFESSIONAL VISUAL ARTIST, THE LATTER A STUDENT. FROM THAT TIME FORWARD, THE AUTHOR HAS BEEN MENTOR TO THE YOUNGER ILLUSTRATOR.

IN ESSENCE, *PLEASE DADDY HOLD MY HAND* IS A WONDROUS INTER-GENERATIONAL COLLABORATION. AND, FOR THE BENEFIT OF US ALL, LET'S HOPE IT IS NOT THE LAST SUCH PROJECT BETWEEN POULIN AND BERCIER.

JEAN-CLAUDE BERGERON
FOUNDER & FIRST COORDINATOR
CENTRE D'EXCELLENCE ARTISTIQUE DE LA SALLE

Please Daddy,
Hold My Hand

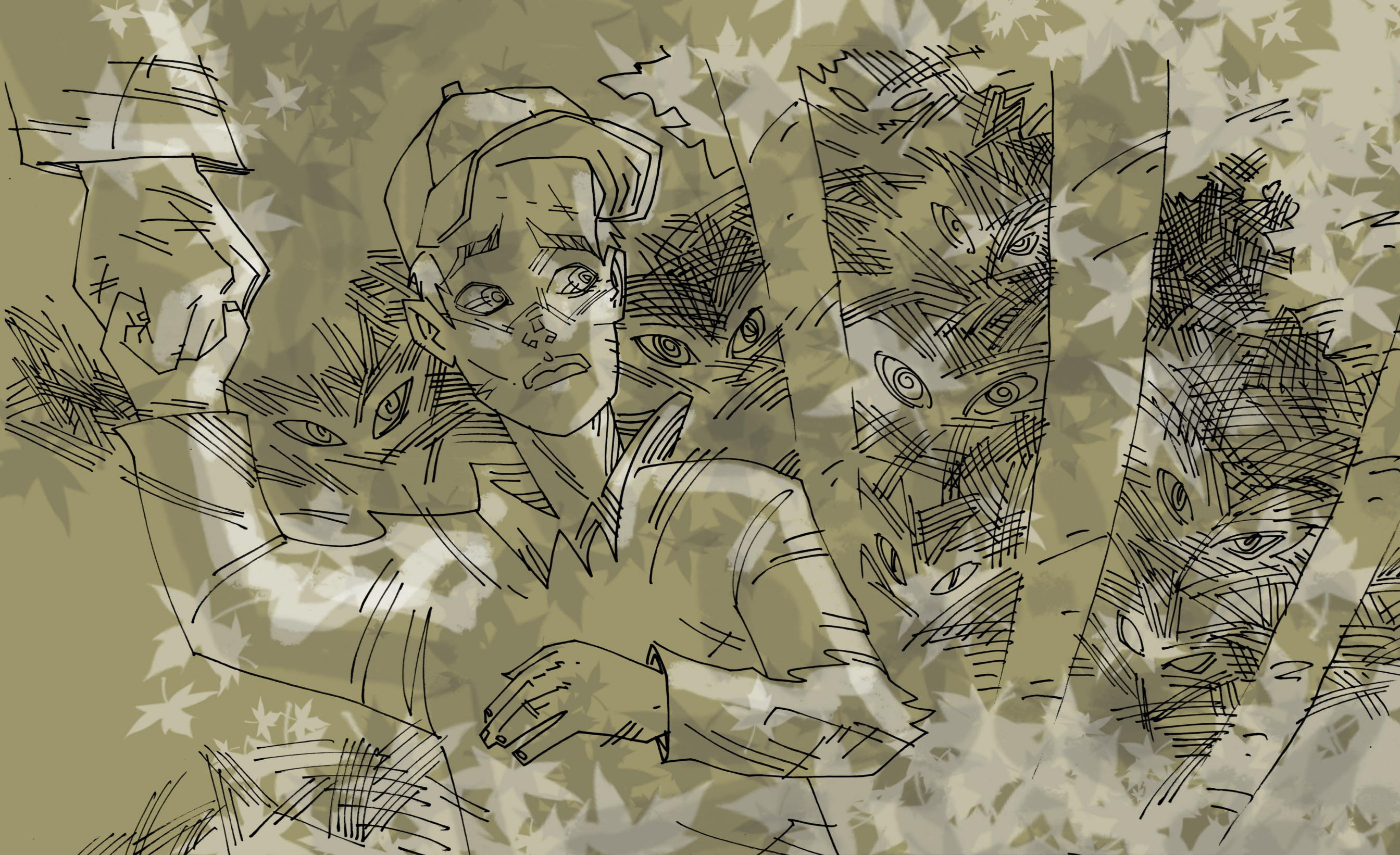




I AM FIVE YEARS OLD
AND AS DADDY AND I WALK THROUGH
THE DEEP DARK FOREST IN THE PARK,
WOLVES AND TIGERS AND MONSTERS AND THINGS
MOVE ABOUT IN THE BUSHES ALONG THE WAY.

BUT THEY DON'T
BOTHER US WHEN I SAY :

HOLD MY HAND,
DADDY... PLEASE, DADDY...
HOLD MY HAND.

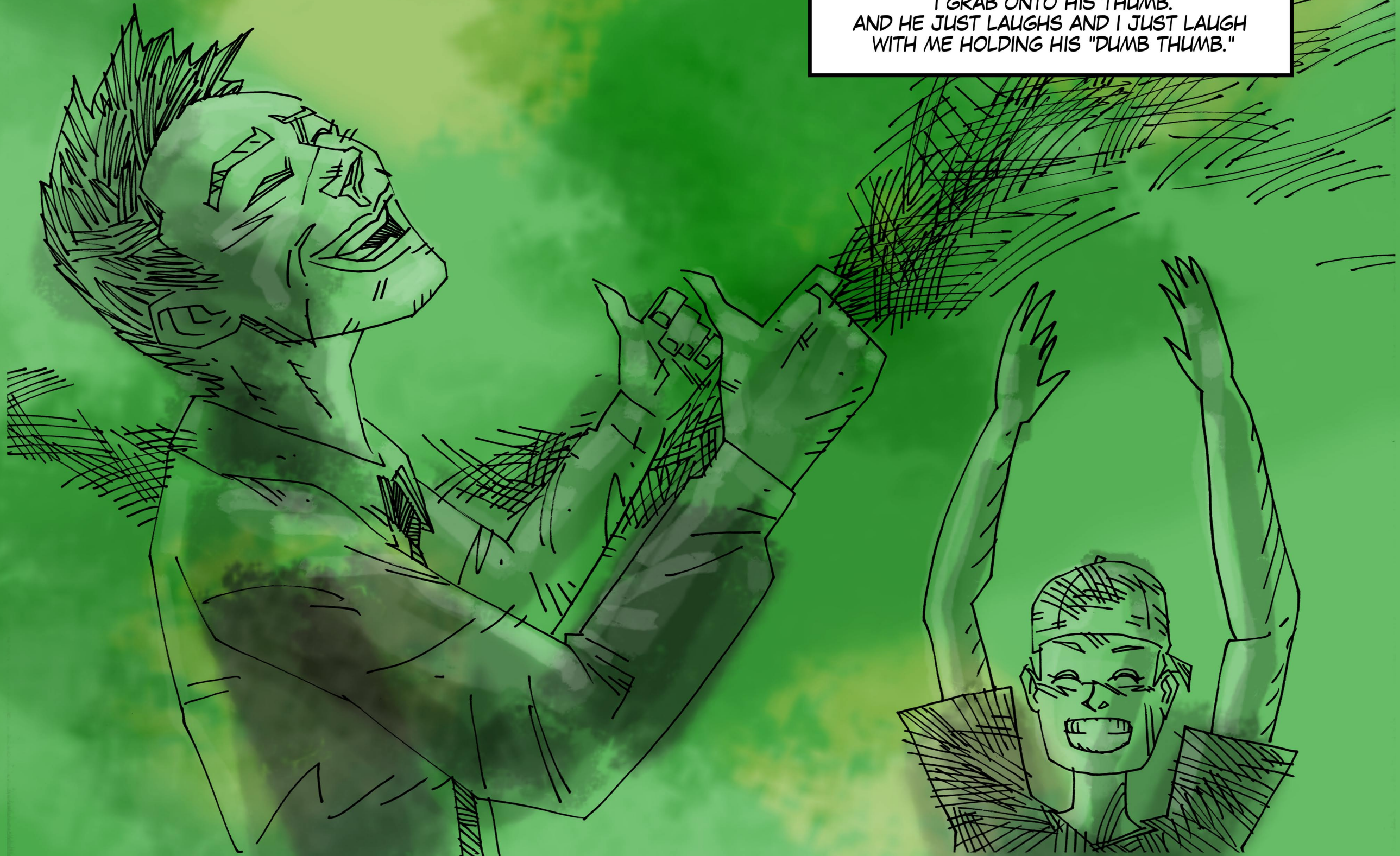


TOGETHER, LIKE THIS,
MONSTERS NEVER EVER BOTHER US
BECAUSE DADDY, YOU SEE,
NEVER LET'S GO OF MY HAND.
AND I NEVER LET GO OF HIS.



I AM SEVEN YEARS OLD, NOW,
AND NOT AFRAID ANYMORE.
BUT I STILL HOLD MY DADDY'S HAND.
AND HE HOLDS MINE.
JUST BECAUSE I WANT TO.
JUST BECAUSE HE WANTS TO.

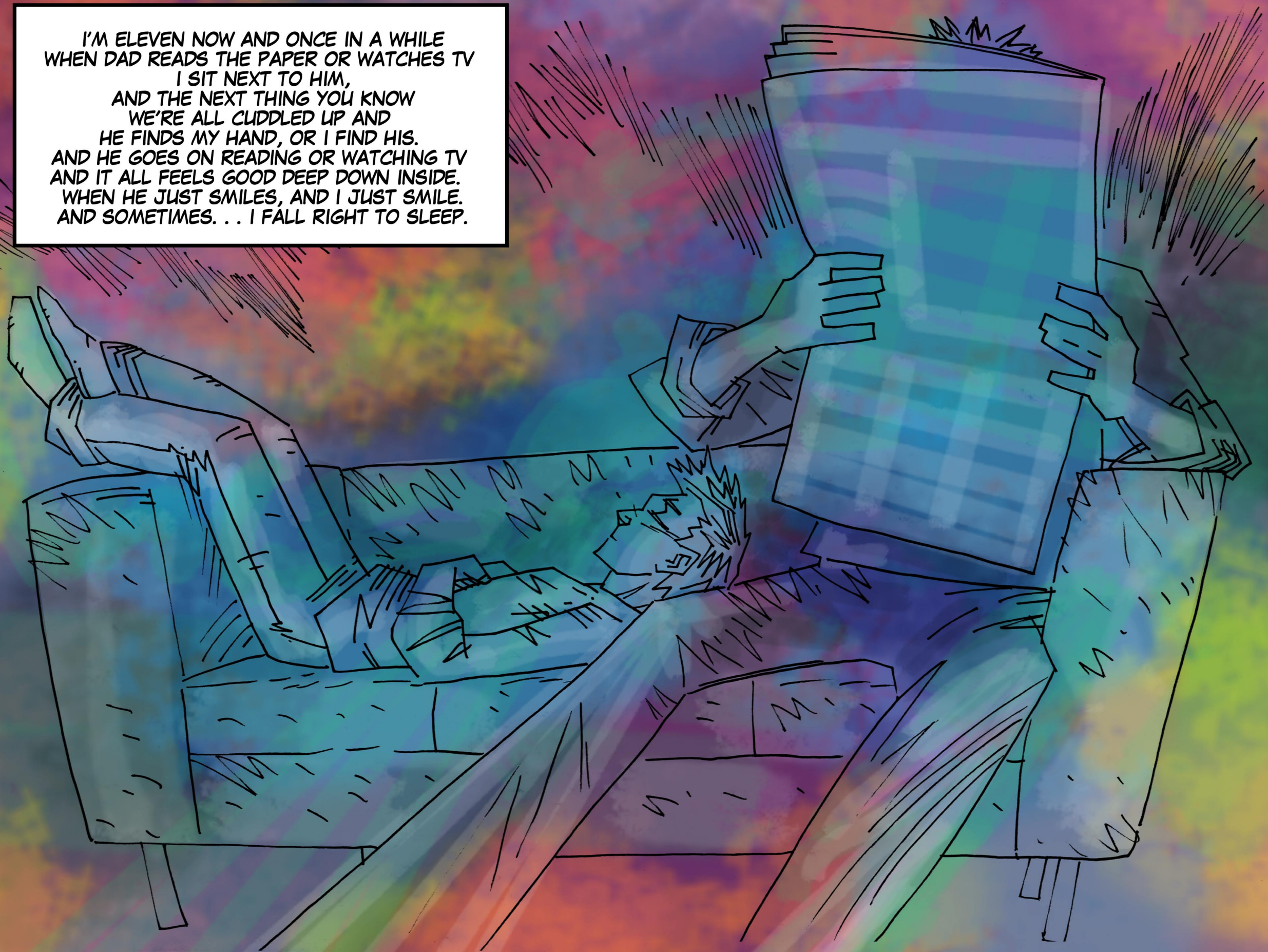
SOMETIMES, DADDY ONLY HOLDS ONE FINGER.
SOMETIMES, HE HOLDS THEM ALL.
SOMETIMES, I HOLD JUST ONE OF HIS
AND WHEN I FEEL SILLY
AND I WANT TO MAKE MY DADDY LAUGH,
I GRAB ONTO HIS THUMB.
AND HE JUST LAUGHS AND I JUST LAUGH
WITH ME HOLDING HIS "DUMB THUMB."




I AM NOW NINE YEARS OLD
AND DADDY AND I DON'T HOLD HANDS MUCH ANYMORE.
JUST NOW AND THEN WHEN
ALL BY ITSELF MY HAND SLIPS INTO HIS
OR HIS INTO MINE DURING OUR WALK TOGETHER.
AND SOMETIMES HE DOESN'T TALK
AND SOMETIMES I DO AND SOMETIMES DON'T.
BUT MOST OF THE TIME HE JUST SMILES
AND I JUST SMILE TOO
AS WE WALK OUR LONG WALKS TOGETHER.




I'M ELEVEN NOW AND ONCE IN A WHILE
WHEN DAD READS THE PAPER OR WATCHES TV
I SIT NEXT TO HIM,
AND THE NEXT THING YOU KNOW
WE'RE ALL CUDDLED UP AND
HE FINDS MY HAND, OR I FIND HIS.
AND HE GOES ON READING OR WATCHING TV
AND IT ALL FEELS GOOD DEEP DOWN INSIDE.
WHEN HE JUST SMILES, AND I JUST SMILE.
AND SOMETIMES. . . I FALL RIGHT TO SLEEP.



A hand-drawn illustration of a large, brown hand holding a smaller, yellow hand. The background is a vibrant, abstract pattern of blue, red, and purple. The hand holding the smaller hand is positioned on the left, with the fingers wrapped around it. The smaller hand is on the right, with its fingers slightly curled. The overall style is simple and expressive, with bold outlines and flat colors.

BUT NOW THAT I'M THIRTEEN
AND SOMETIMES WIN AWARDS
OR GET A GOOD GRADE IN SCHOOL
OR HELP OUR NEIGHBOUR
WHO HAS TROUBLE WALKING
OR... JUST BECAUSE,
DAD TAKES MY HAND AND
ALMOST LIKE WHEN I WAS LITTLE...
HE HOLDS IT FOR A WHILE
BETWEEN HIS OWN TWO BIG HANDS
AND THEN SAYS :

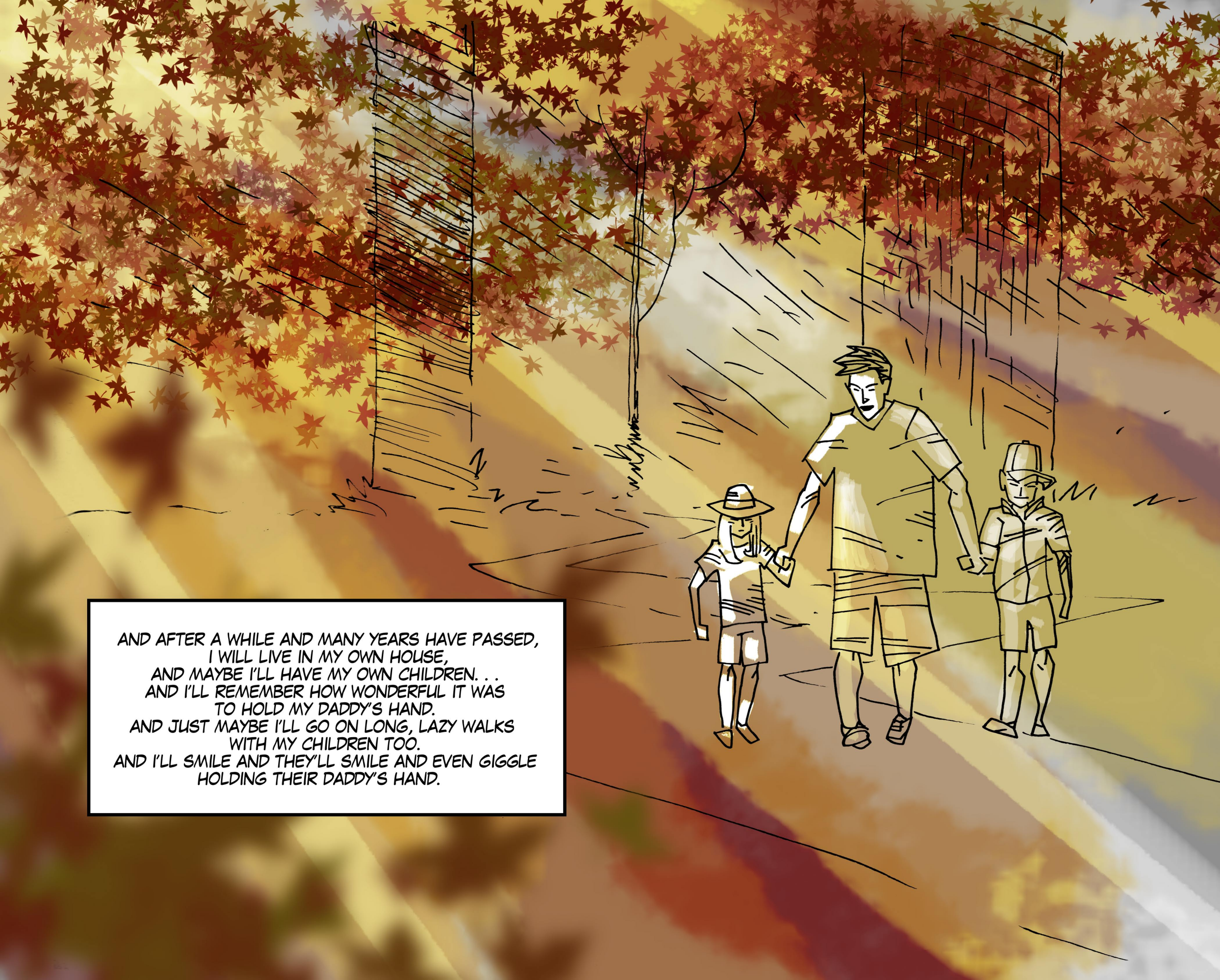
"THAT DESERVES
A SHAKE, MY FRIEND."

A stylized illustration featuring two characters. On the left, a man is depicted wearing a bright yellow hooded sweatshirt. He has a thoughtful expression, with his hand near his chin. On the right, a smaller figure of a man in a suit and tie is shown, looking towards the man in the hoodie. The background is a mix of purple and blue washes with some black scribbled lines. A white rectangular box with a black border is positioned in the upper right quadrant, containing text.

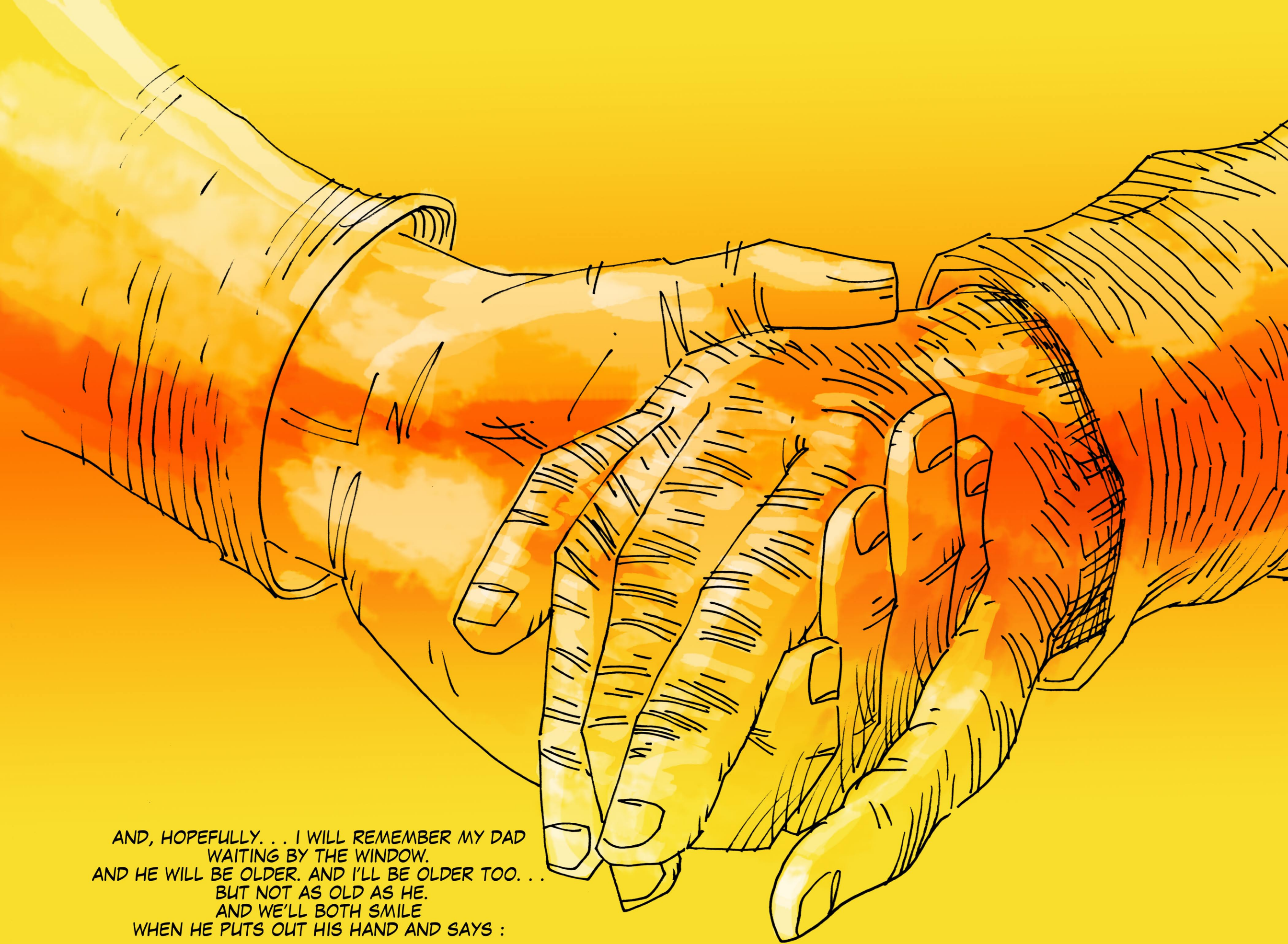
WHEN I'M A LOT OLDER,
I'LL SOMETIMES FORGET
ABOUT WHEN I LIKED TO HOLD MY DAD'S HAND.
TEENAGERS ARE LIKE THAT. . .
THEY TRY HARD TO FORGET ABOUT THINGS
THEY ONCE REALLY LIKED TO DO.
THEY WANT TO BE "COOL".
THAT MEANS PRETENDING TO BE ALL GROWNUP.
BUT STILL, I'LL REMEMBER. . . SOMETIMES.

WHEN I'M REALLY BIG. . . WHEN I GRADUATE
OR GET A DRIVER'S LICENCE
OR FIND MY FIRST JOB. . .
I'LL KNOW DAD WON'T HAVE FORGOTTEN
THAT WE LIKED TO HOLD HANDS.
HE'LL LOOK AT ME AND I'LL LOOK AT HIM
AND WE'LL BOTH KNOW
THAT HE'LL SHAKE MY HAND INSTEAD. . .
IN THAT GROWNUP WAY OF HOLDING HANDS.





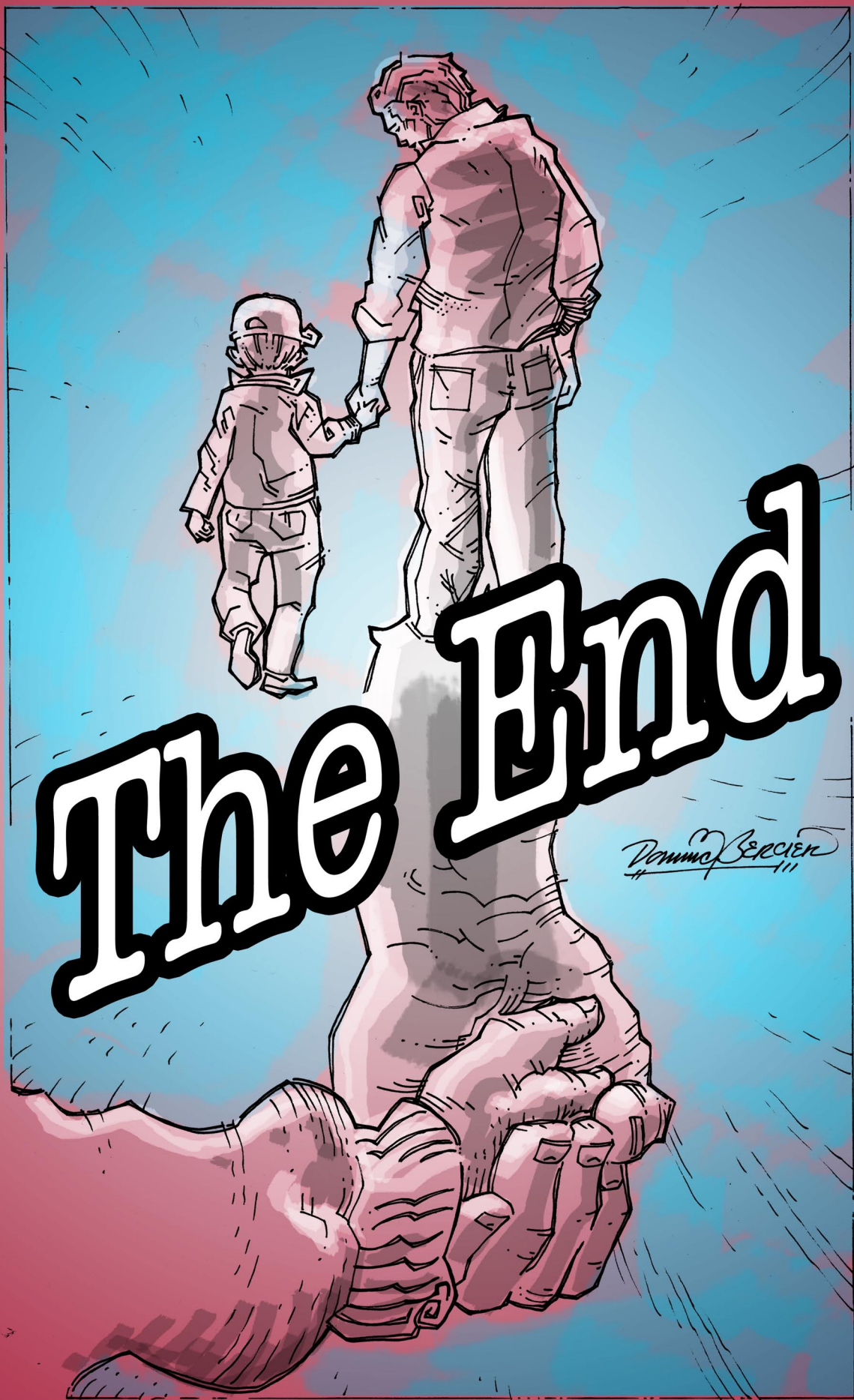
AND AFTER A WHILE AND MANY YEARS HAVE PASSED,
I WILL LIVE IN MY OWN HOUSE,
AND MAYBE I'LL HAVE MY OWN CHILDREN. . .
AND I'LL REMEMBER HOW WONDERFUL IT WAS
TO HOLD MY DADDY'S HAND.
AND JUST MAYBE I'LL GO ON LONG, LAZY WALKS
WITH MY CHILDREN TOO.
AND I'LL SMILE AND THEY'LL SMILE AND EVEN GIGGLE
HOLDING THEIR DADDY'S HAND.



AND, HOPEFULLY. . . I WILL REMEMBER MY DAD
WAITING BY THE WINDOW.
AND HE WILL BE OLDER. AND I'LL BE OLDER TOO. . .
BUT NOT AS OLD AS HE.
AND WE'LL BOTH SMILE
WHEN HE PUTS OUT HIS HAND AND SAYS :

"HOLD MY HAND, SON...
PLEASE SON, HOLD MY HAND."





The End

Domino Bercier III