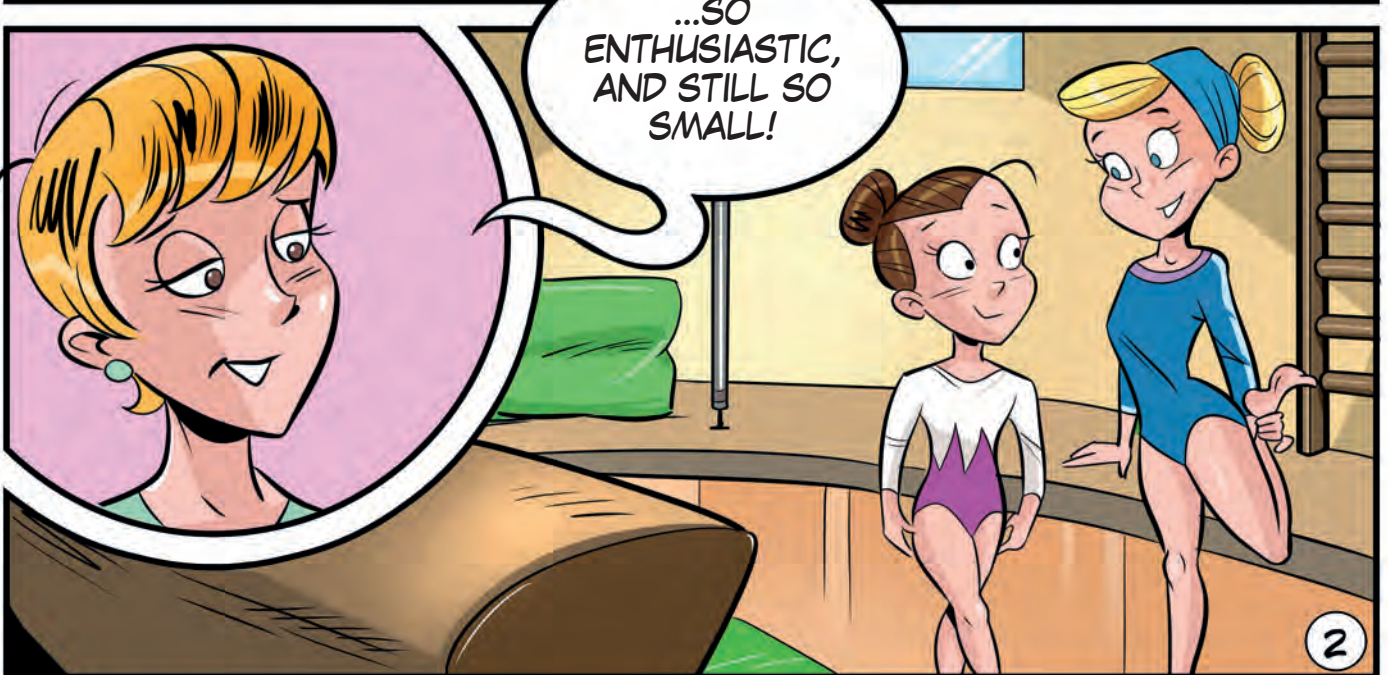
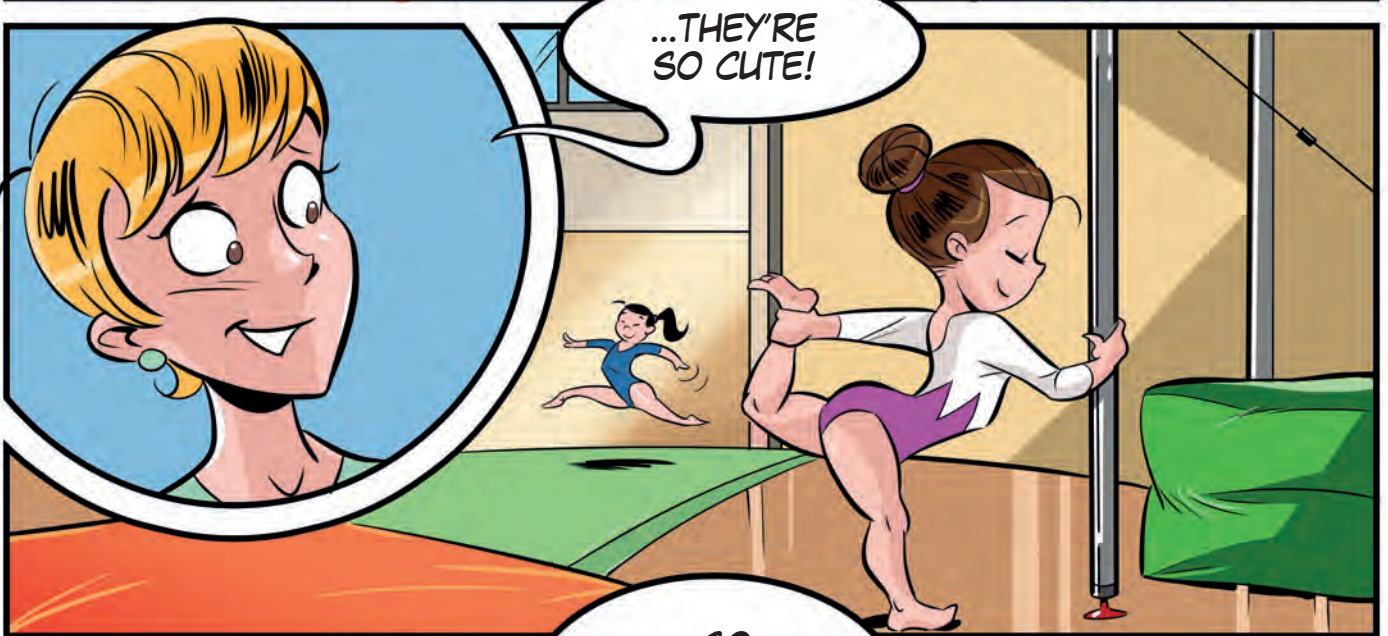
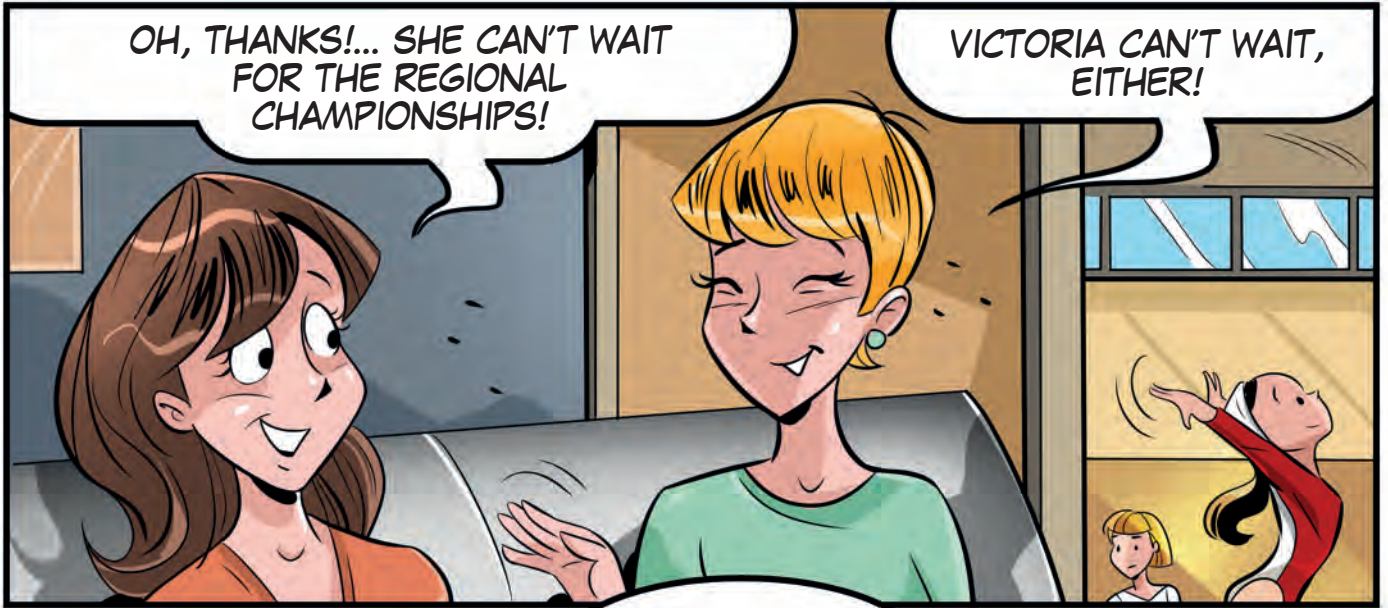


LITTLE WOMEN







TOO SMALL...
EMMA IS TOO
SMALL!

OH... SOPHIA...
I DIDN'T MEAN...



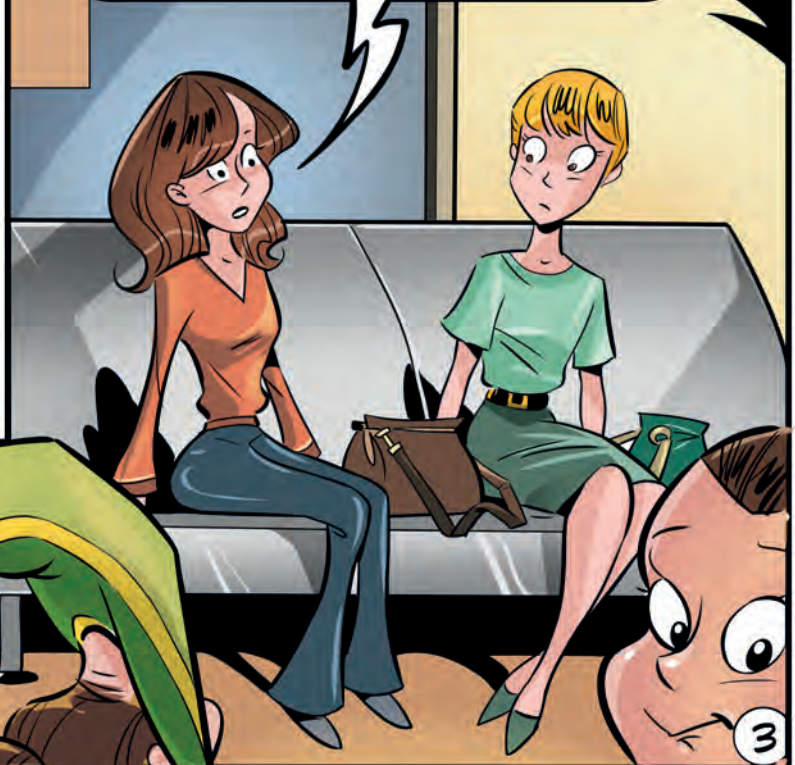
I WAS TALKING ABOUT
AGE, NOT HEIGHT!

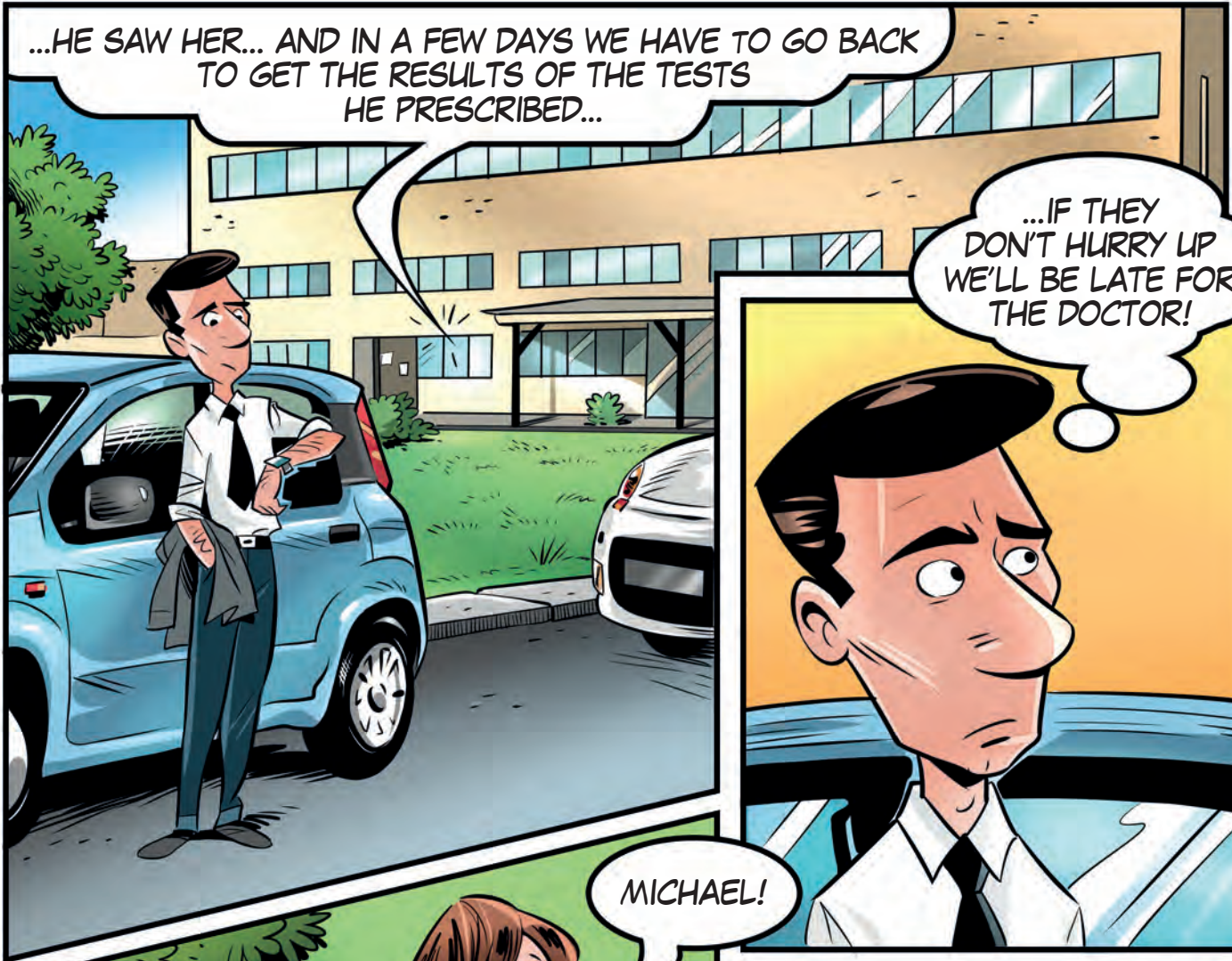
I KNOW...
I KNOW!

...I'M WORRIED ABOUT
HER GROWTH!



...THE DOCTOR ADVISED US
TO SEE A PEDIATRIC ENDOCRINOLOGIST
ABOUT IT... SO WE DID!



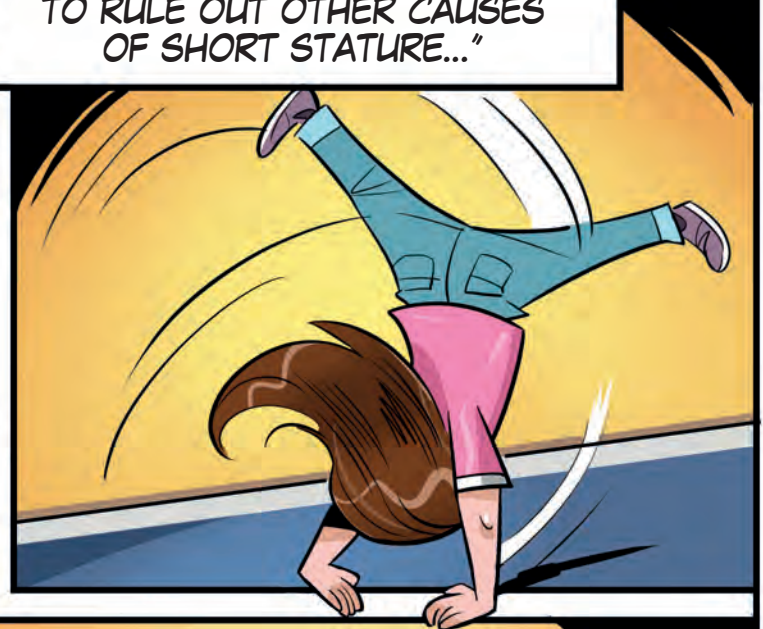


...THE TESTS WE DID SHOW THERE IS NO HORMONE DEFICIENCY OR METABOLIC ALTERATION!

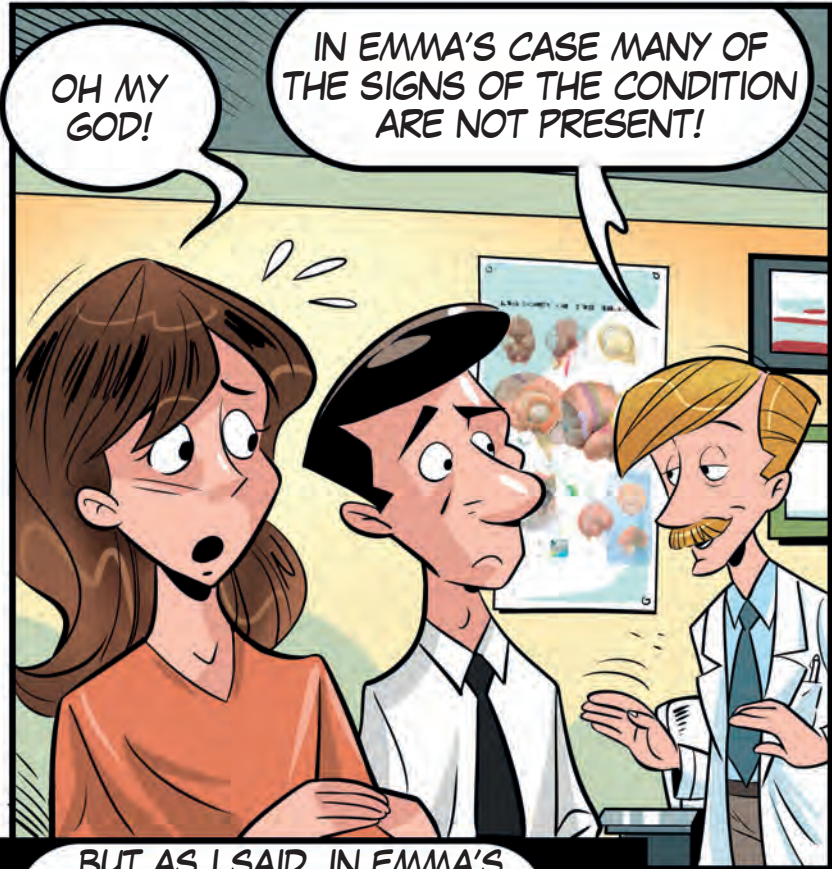


"BUT SINCE EMMA IS GROWING SO SLOWLY, AND SINCE AMNIOCENTESIS WAS NOT CARRIED OUT DURING PREGNANCY..."

"...WE ALSO CARRIED OUT A CHROMOSOME TEST TO RULE OUT OTHER CAUSES OF SHORT STATURE..."



"...THE TESTS SHOW THAT AN X-CHROMOSOME IS MISSING! THIS CONDITION IS KNOWN AS TURNER SYNDROME!"

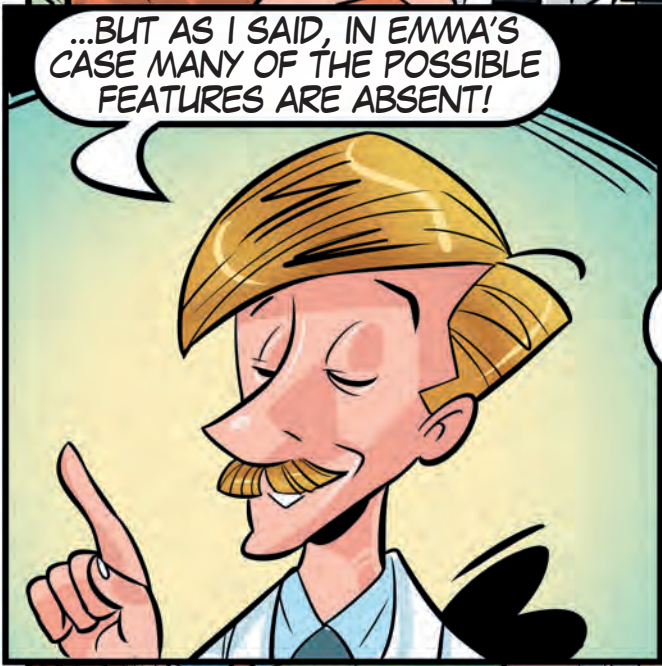


OH MY GOD!

IN EMMA'S CASE MANY OF THE SIGNS OF THE CONDITION ARE NOT PRESENT!

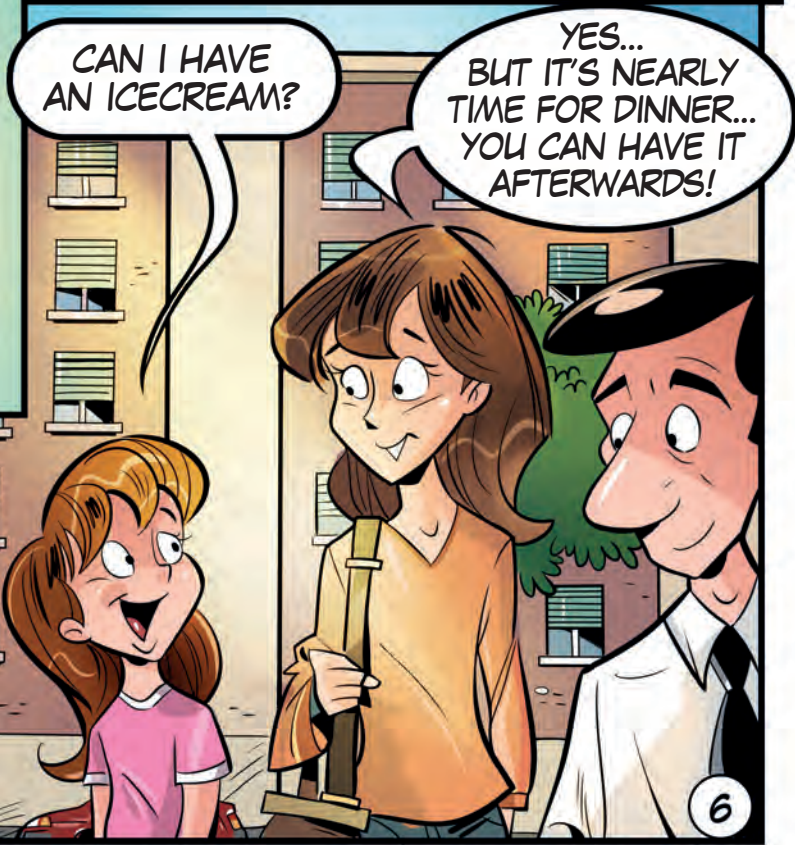


...TURNER SYNDROME ONLY AFFECTS WOMEN AND CAN DIFFER DRAMATICALLY FROM ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER...



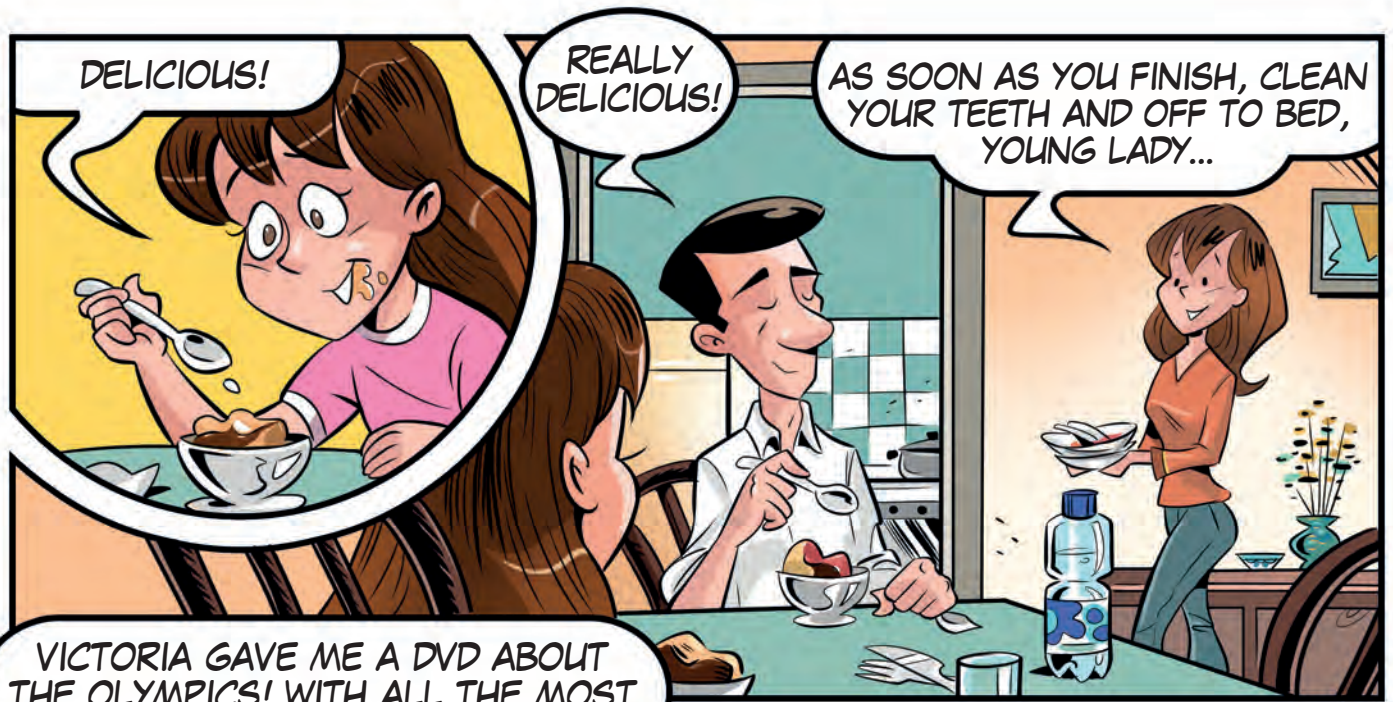
...BUT AS I SAID, IN EMMA'S CASE MANY OF THE POSSIBLE FEATURES ARE ABSENT!

"...WE'LL HAVE TO DO MORE TESTS TO CHECK HER HEART AND KIDNEY FUNCTION, AND THEN WE'LL DECIDE WHAT TO DO..."



CAN I HAVE AN ICECREAM?

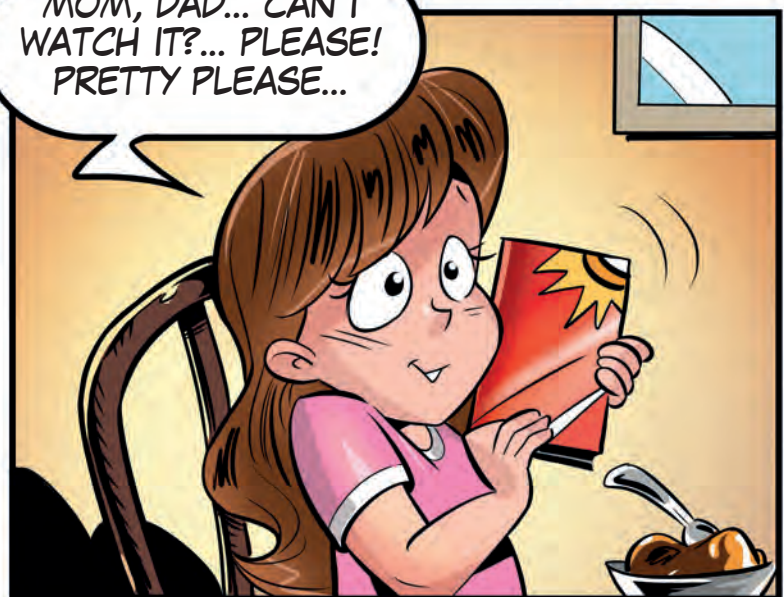
YES... BUT IT'S NEARLY TIME FOR DINNER... YOU CAN HAVE IT AFTERWARDS!

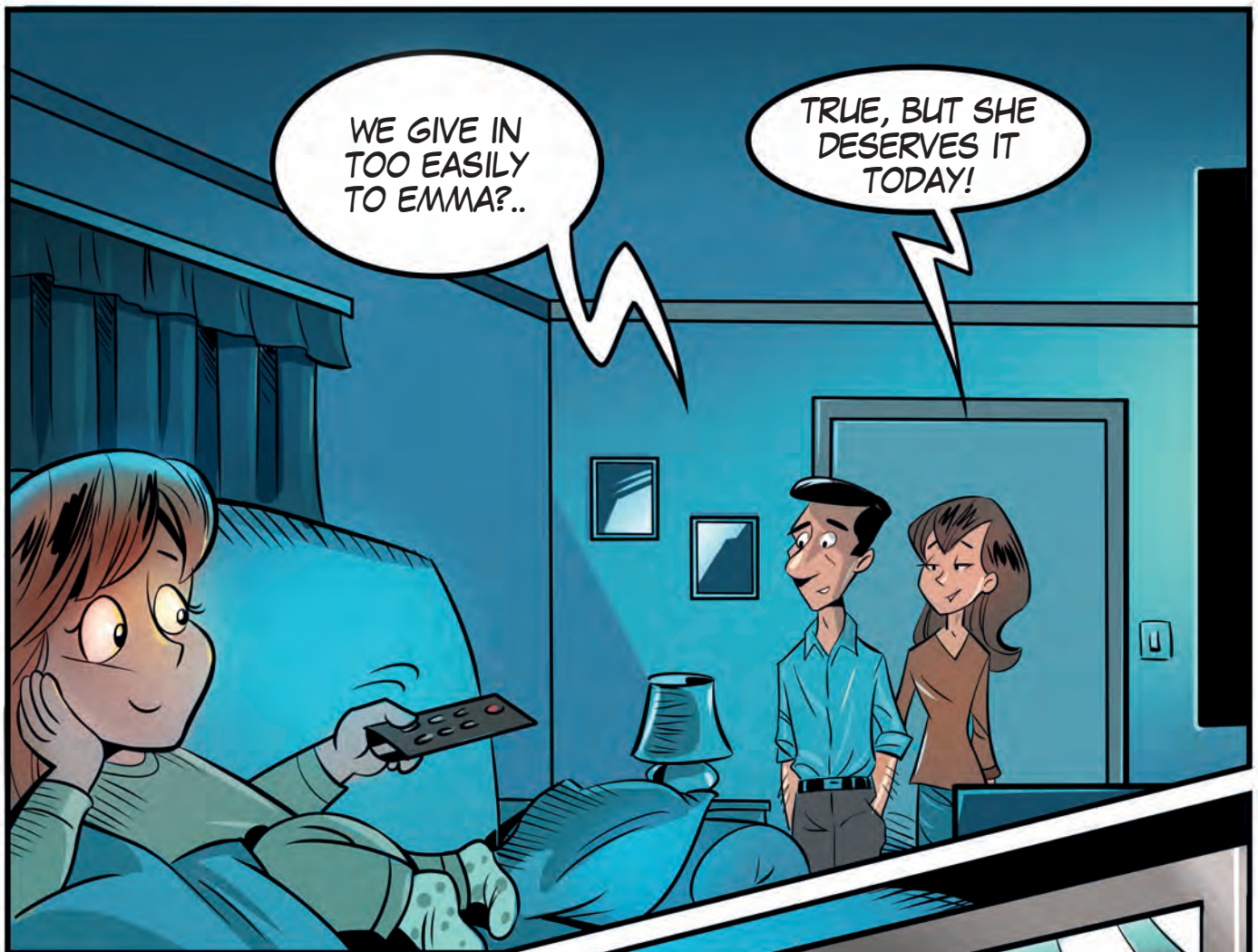


VICTORIA GAVE ME A DVD ABOUT THE OLYMPICS! WITH ALL THE MOST FAMOUS WOMEN GYMNASTS!



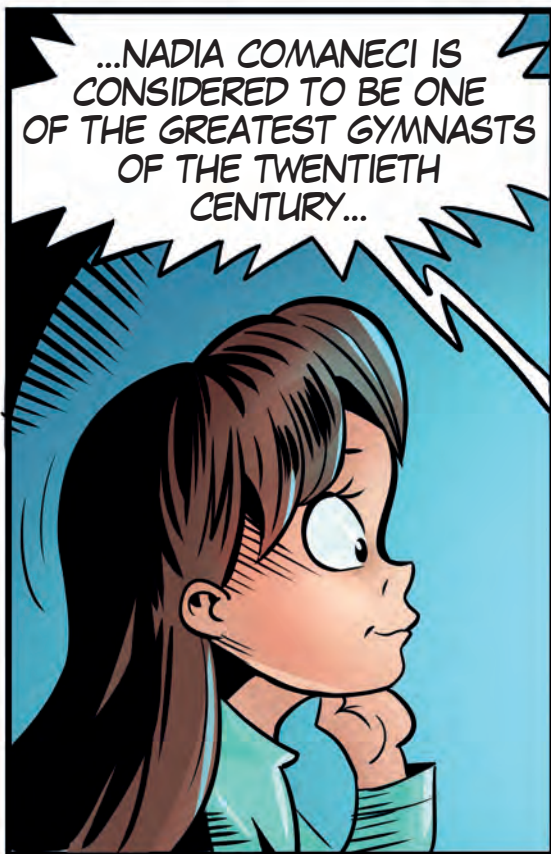
MOM, DAD... CAN I WATCH IT?... PLEASE! PRETTY PLEASE...





WE GIVE IN TOO EASILY TO EMMA?..

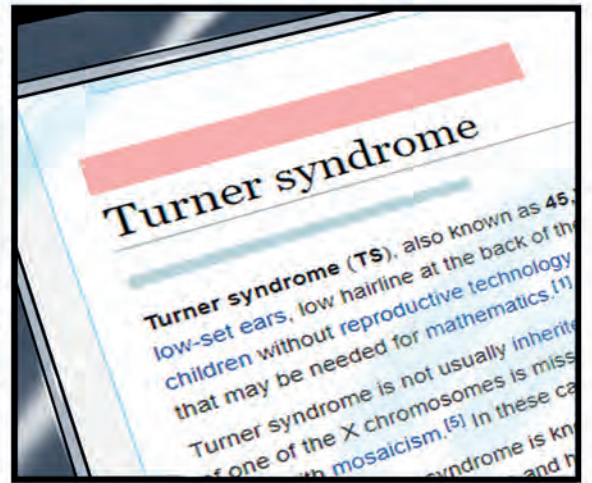
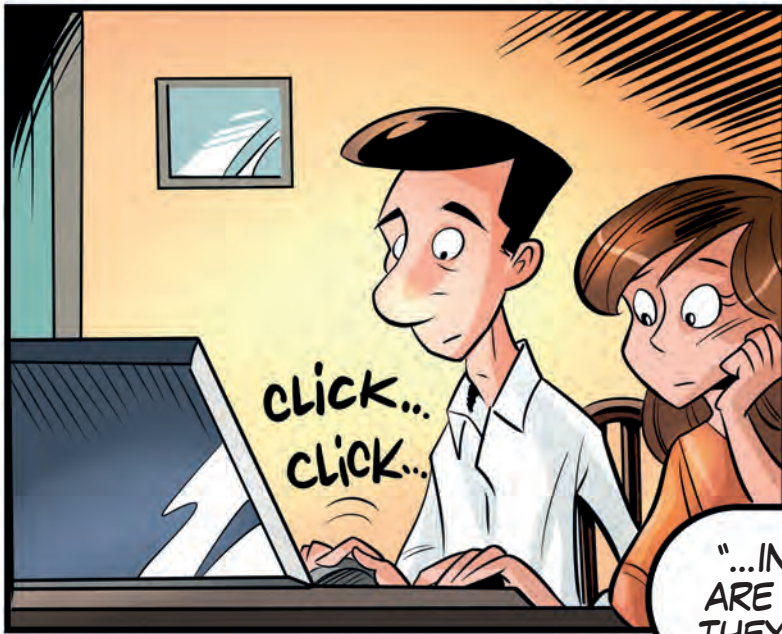
TRUE, BUT SHE DESERVES IT TODAY!



...NADIA COMANECI IS CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE GREATEST GYMNASTS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY...



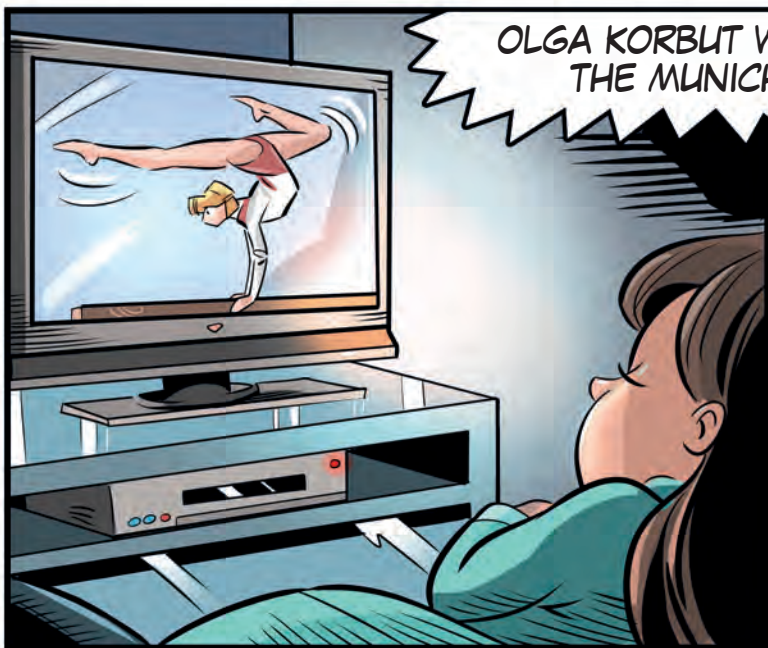
HERE SHE IS WITH THE THREE GOLD MEDALS SHE WON AT THE MONTREAL OLYMPICS!



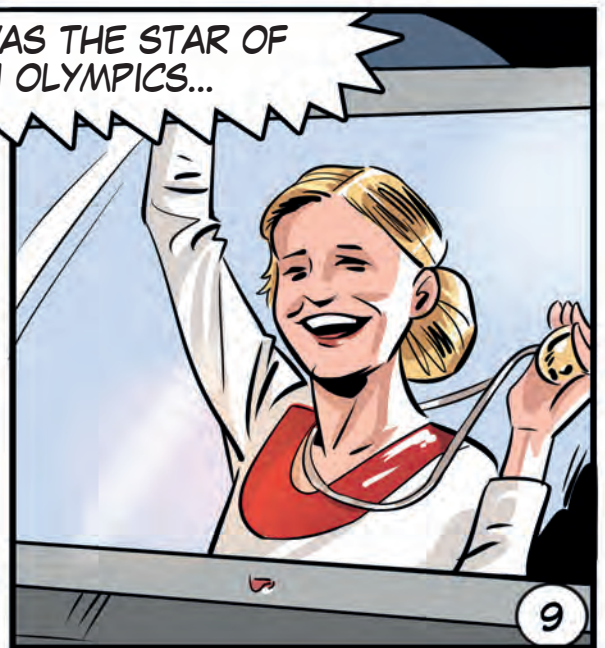
"...IN SOME CASES, THE SYMPTOMS ARE LESS EVIDENT, AND SOMETIMES THEY ARE NOT EVEN ALL PRESENT..."

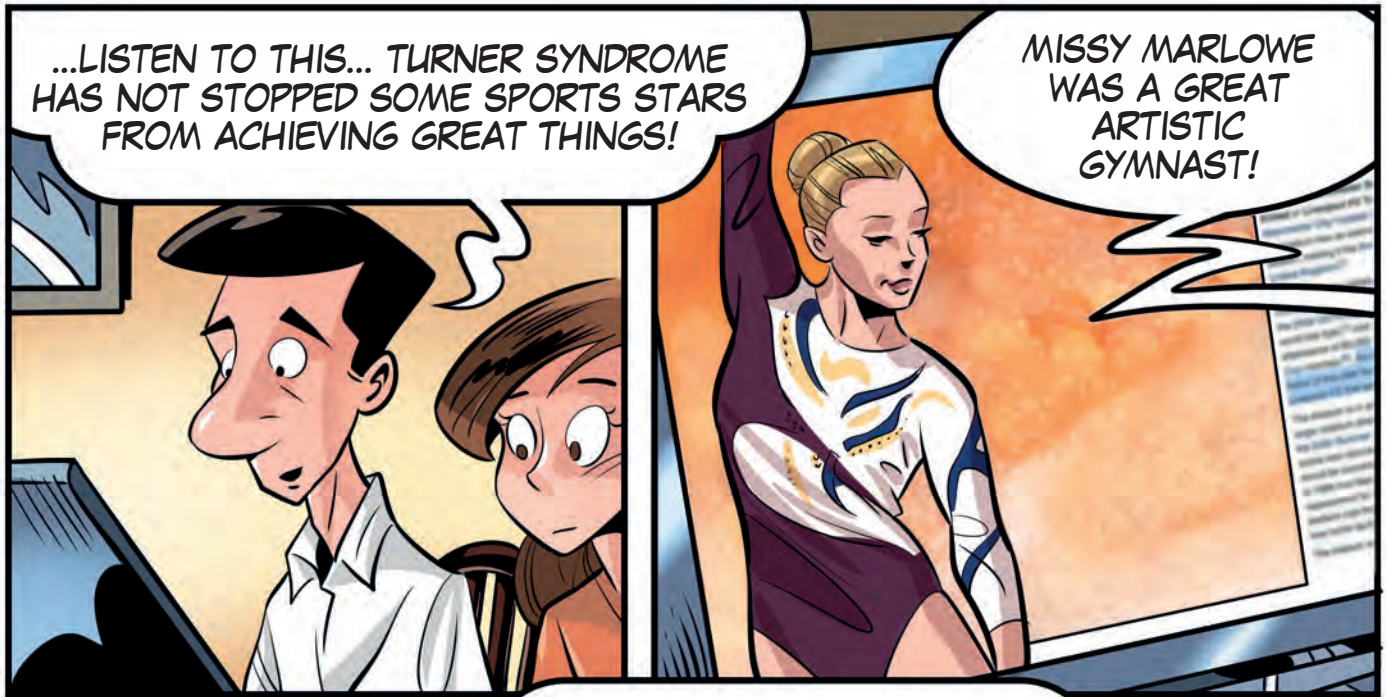


...LET'S HOPE FOR THE BEST!



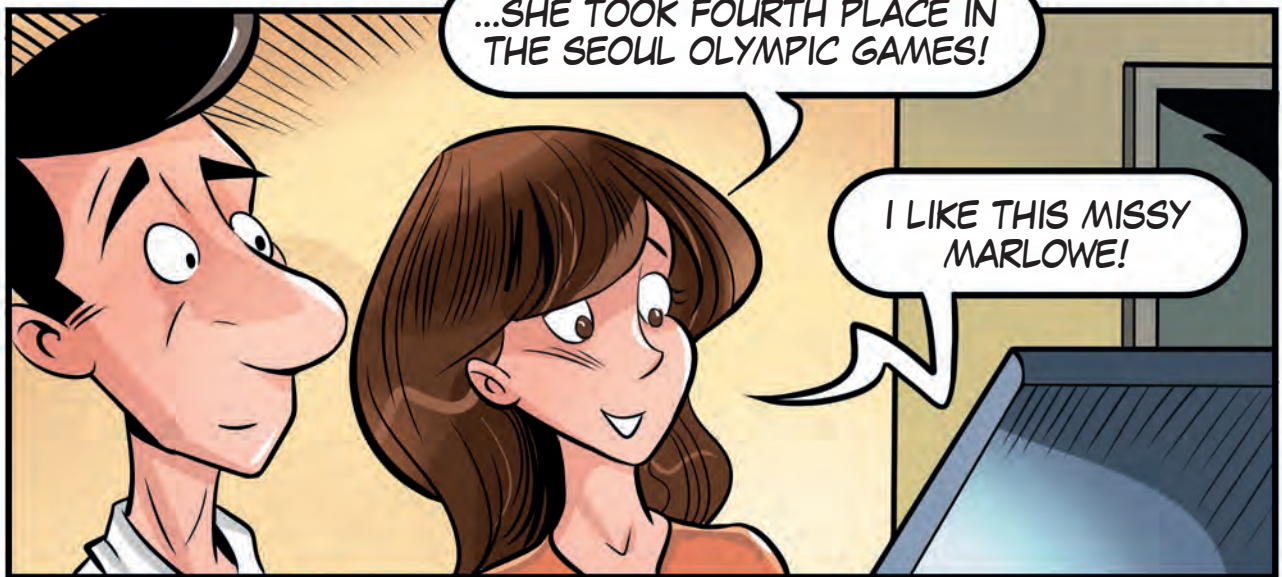
OLGA KOR BUT WAS THE STAR OF THE MUNICH OLYMPICS...





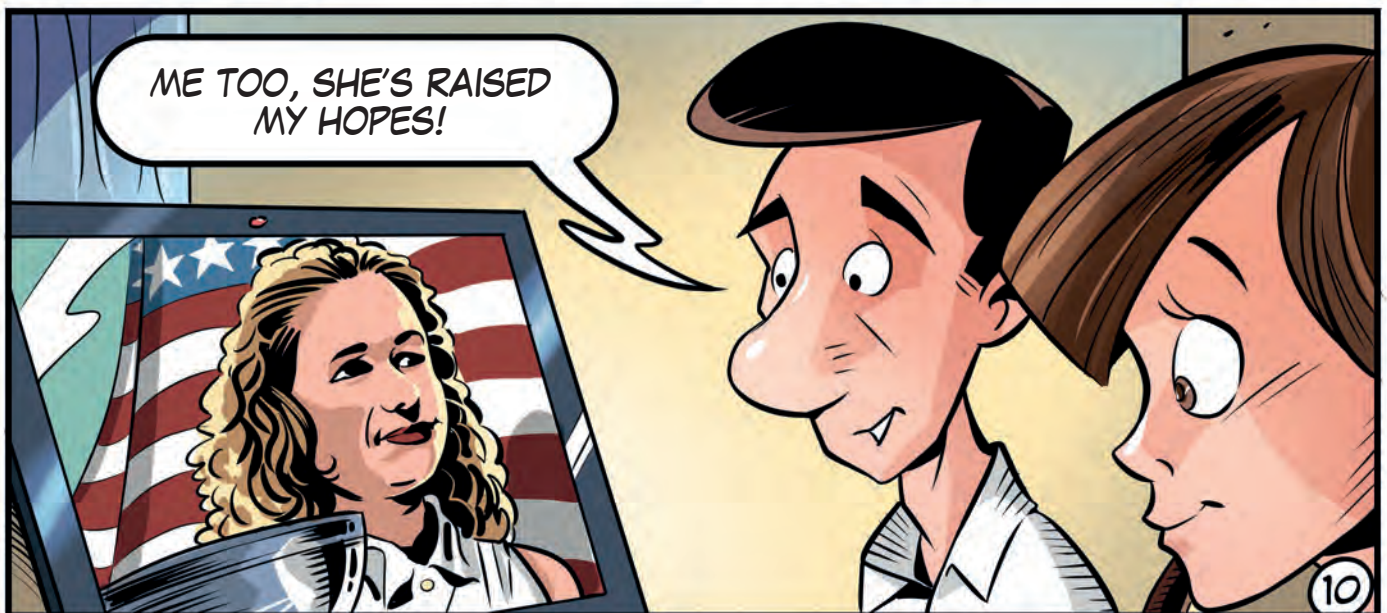
...LISTEN TO THIS... TURNER SYNDROME HAS NOT STOPPED SOME SPORTS STARS FROM ACHIEVING GREAT THINGS!

MISSY MARLOWE WAS A GREAT ARTISTIC GYMNAST!



...SHE TOOK FOURTH PLACE IN THE SEOUL OLYMPIC GAMES!

I LIKE THIS MISSY MARLOWE!



ME TOO, SHE'S RAISED MY HOPES!

A FEW DAYS LATER...

MICHAEL AND I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE PEDIATRIC ENDOCRINOLOGIST TO GET THE RESULTS OF EMMA'S TESTS... CAN I ASK YOU A FAVOUR?...

OF COURSE YOU CAN.

I DON'T WANT HER TO MISS TRAINING TODAY... THE REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS ARE GETTING CLOSER...

NO PROBLEM! I'LL TAKE THE GIRLS TO THE GYM!

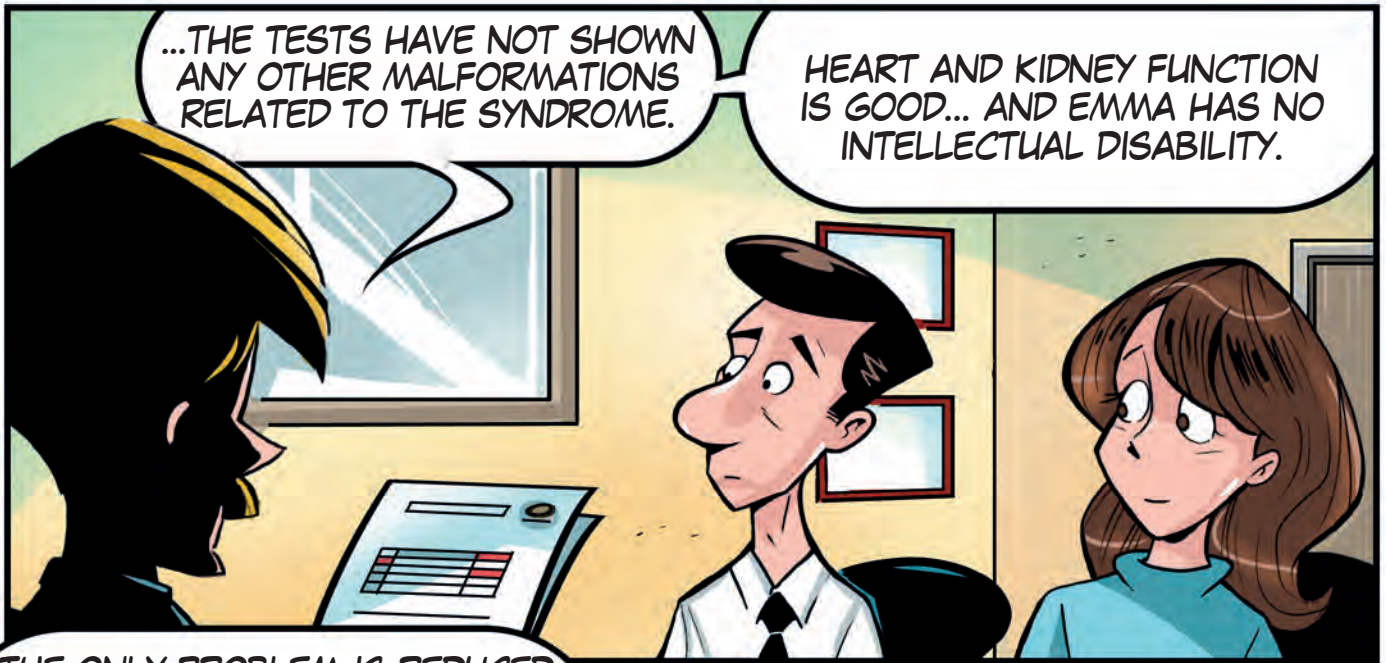
SEE YOU LATER, HONEY!

NOT LONG NOW TO THE CHAMPIONSHIPS... ARE YOU GETTING NERVOUS?

NO!

WELL... A BIT!

QUITE A LOT, ACTUALLY!



...THE TESTS HAVE NOT SHOWN ANY OTHER MALFORMATIONS RELATED TO THE SYNDROME.

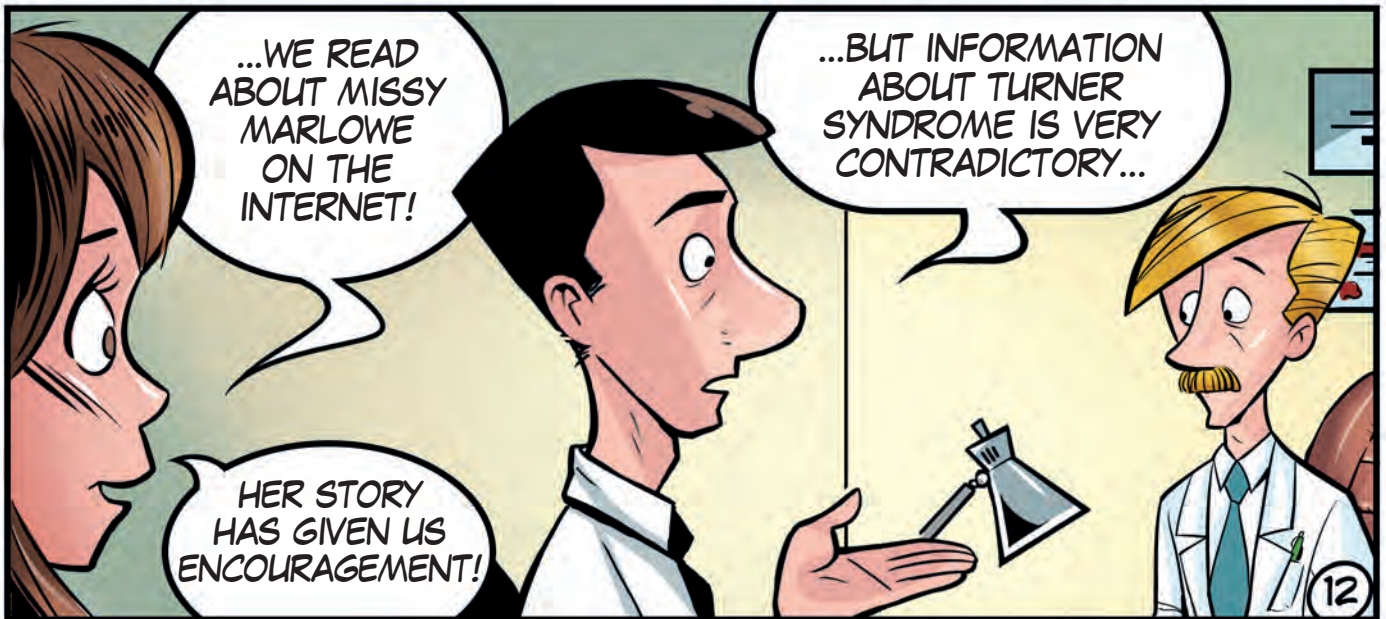
HEART AND KIDNEY FUNCTION IS GOOD... AND EMMA HAS NO INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY.

THE ONLY PROBLEM IS REDUCED GROWTH. SHE'S GROWING AT A REGULAR SPEED, BUT WITH A LOW PERCENTILE!

PREDICTED HEIGHT IS MUCH LOWER THAN MIDPARENTAL TARGET HEIGHT...



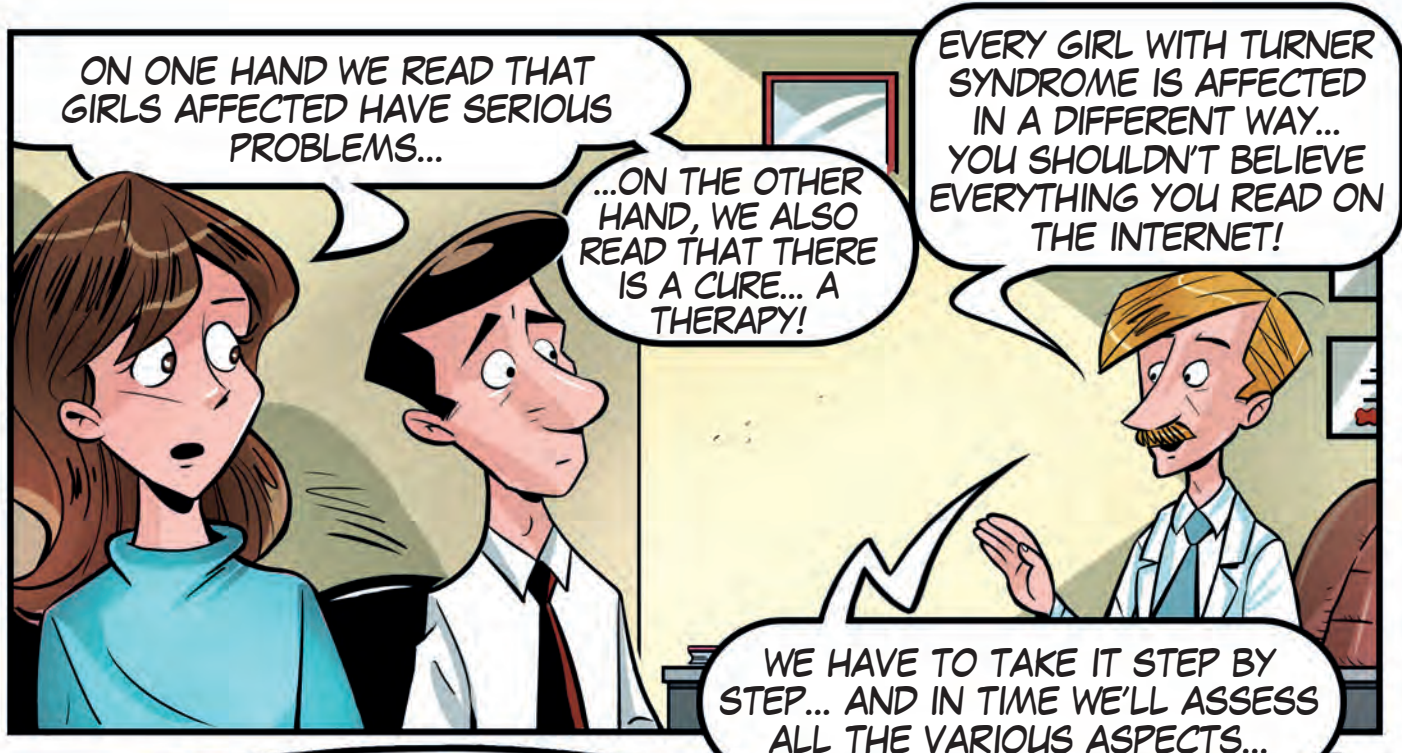
...LUCKILY EMMA LOVES GYMNASTICS, AND HEIGHT IN GYMNASTICS IS NOT ESSENTIAL!...



...WE READ ABOUT MISSY MARLOWE ON THE INTERNET!

HER STORY HAS GIVEN US ENCOURAGEMENT!

...BUT INFORMATION ABOUT TURNER SYNDROME IS VERY CONTRADICTIONARY...



ON ONE HAND WE READ THAT GIRLS AFFECTED HAVE SERIOUS PROBLEMS...

...ON THE OTHER HAND, WE ALSO READ THAT THERE IS A CURE... A THERAPY!

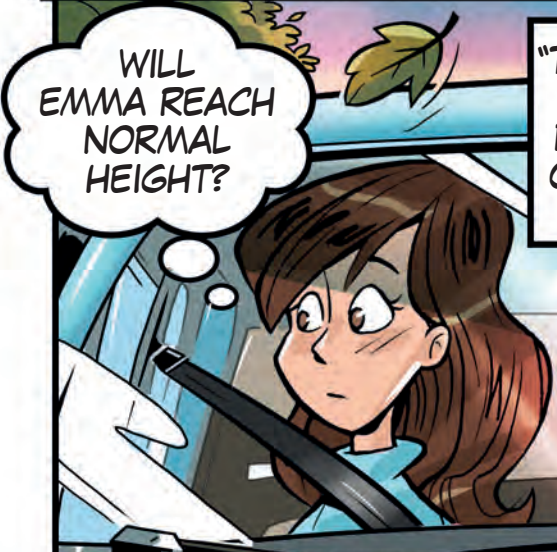
EVERY GIRL WITH TURNER SYNDROME IS AFFECTED IN A DIFFERENT WAY... YOU SHOULDN'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU READ ON THE INTERNET!

WE HAVE TO TAKE IT STEP BY STEP... AND IN TIME WE'LL ASSESS ALL THE VARIOUS ASPECTS...

AS FAR AS GROWTH IS CONCERNED, ALL THE GUIDELINES AGREE THAT THE THERAPY SHOULD BEGIN AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE, OR WHEN THERE IS A DEVIATION FROM THE GROWTH CURVE!



ON THE WAY HOME, THEIR MINDS ARE FULL OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS...



WILL EMMA REACH NORMAL HEIGHT?

"THE SOONER WE START THE THERAPY, THE BETTER THE CHANCES OF CATCHING UP OVER THE YEARS..."



HOW LONG WILL THE THERAPY LAST?

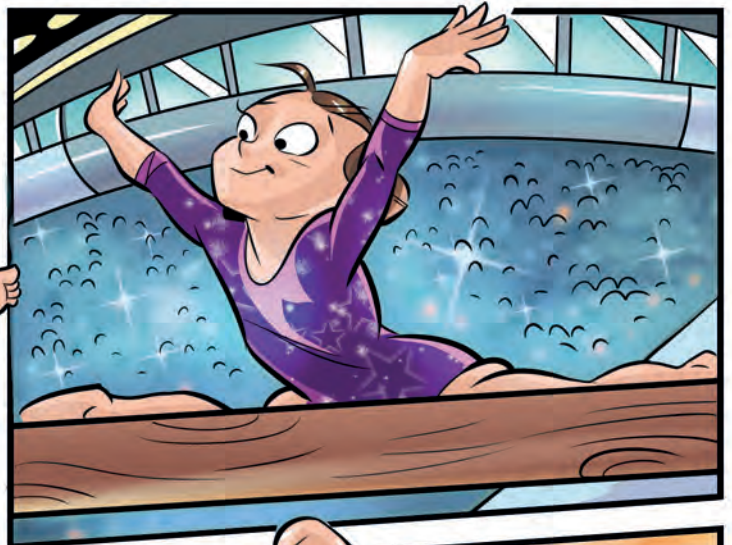
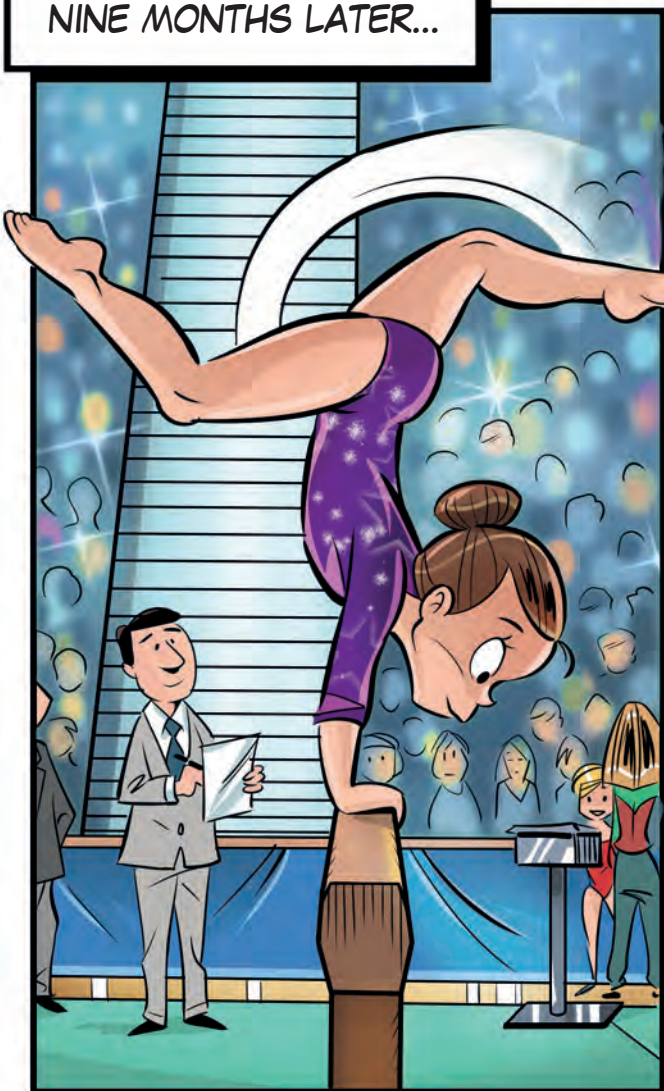
"AT THE MOMENT WE THINK IT SHOULD ONLY CONTINUE UNTIL GROWTH IN STATURE COMES TO AN END..."

IS THERE NOTHING THAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT THE DEFICIT?

"AT THE MOMENT, CONSIDERING EMMA'S AGE, THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO. IN DUE COURSE WE'LL RE-ASSESS HER CASE... THERE ARE THERAPIES TO INDUCE PUBERTY AND TO CONTROL ANY DEFICIT!"



NINE MONTHS LATER...



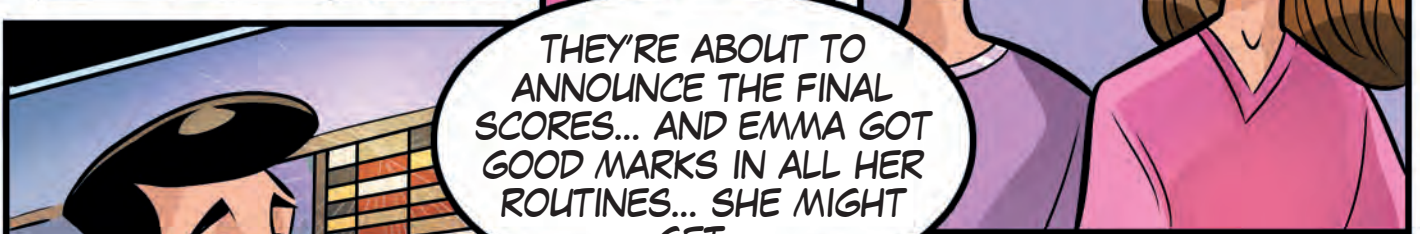
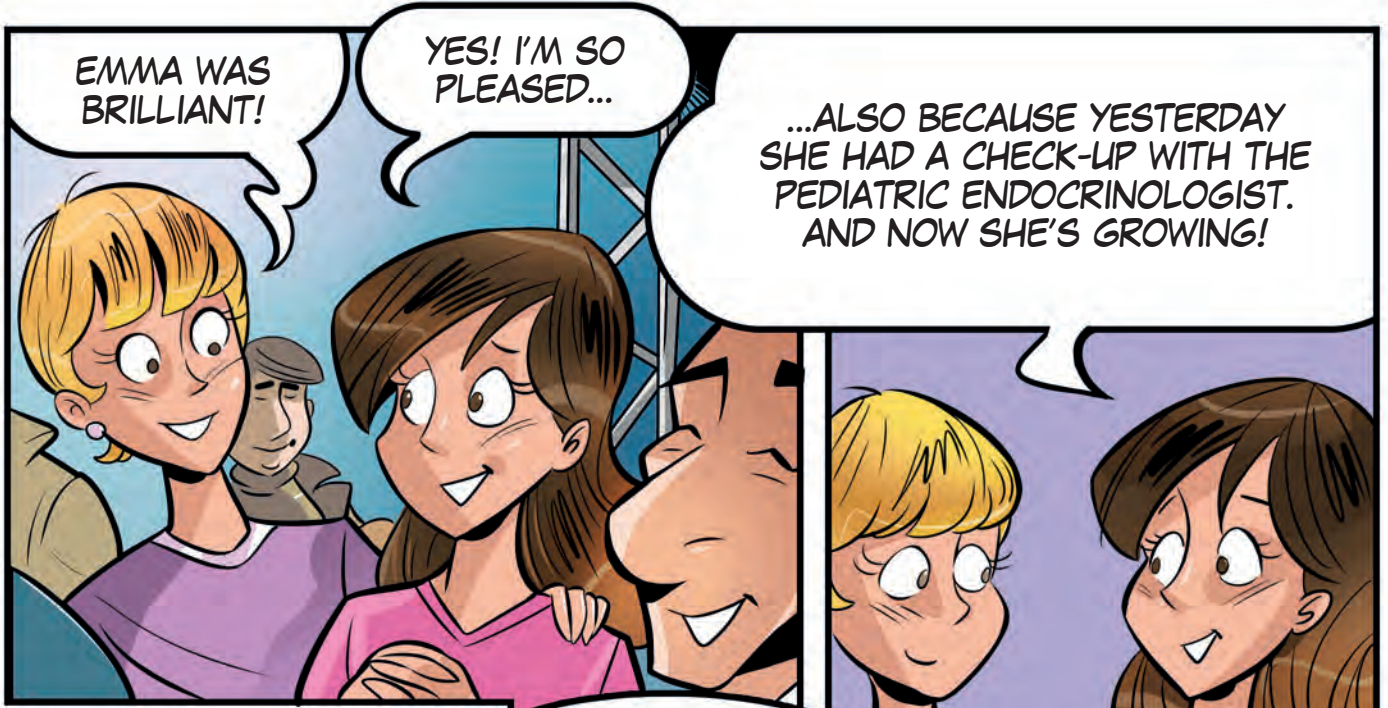


SPORTS HALL, NATIONAL GYMNASTICS CHAMPIONSHIPS!

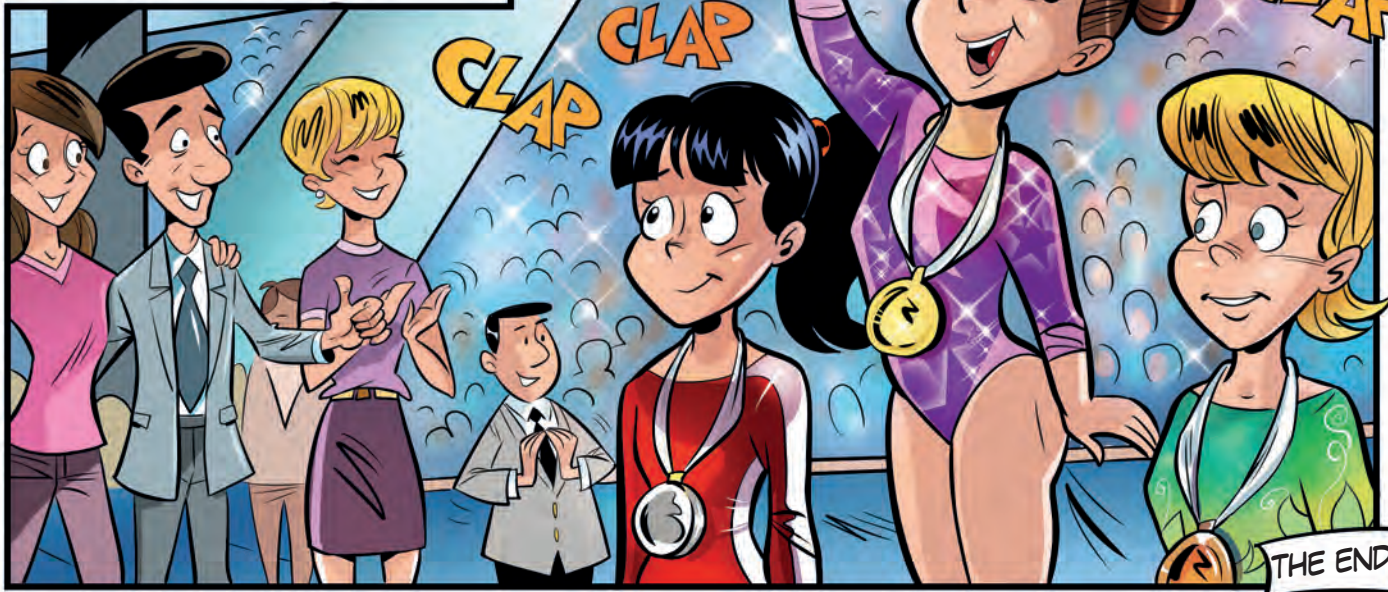
CLAP CLAP CLAP
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

GREAT JOB!





...THE GOLD MEDAL!



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OSPEDALE PEDIATRICO BAMBINO GESÙ, ROME
CREATED BY SCUOLA ROMANA DEI FUMETTI

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