

FIRE STARTERS

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FIRE STARTERS

STORY BY JEN STORM
ILLUSTRATIONS BY SCOTT B. HENDERSON
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The logo for Highwater Press features a stylized, cursive lowercase 'h' that flows into a wavy line, resembling a wave or a stylized letter 'w'. Below this graphic, the words 'HIGHWATER' and 'PRESS' are stacked in a clean, uppercase, sans-serif font.

HIGHWATER
PRESS

For River James Storm. You are my world and everything I do I do for you. You gave me gifts of patience, growth, laughter, sweetness, all with a love I never fathomed possible. You're the reason I fight for the future now, and I want you to know how much you influence and amaze me every single day.

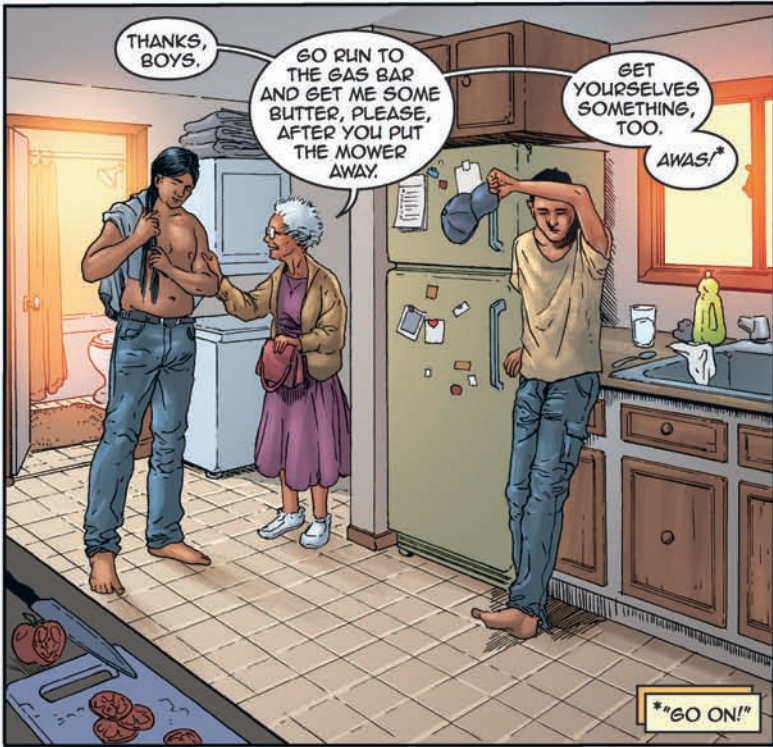
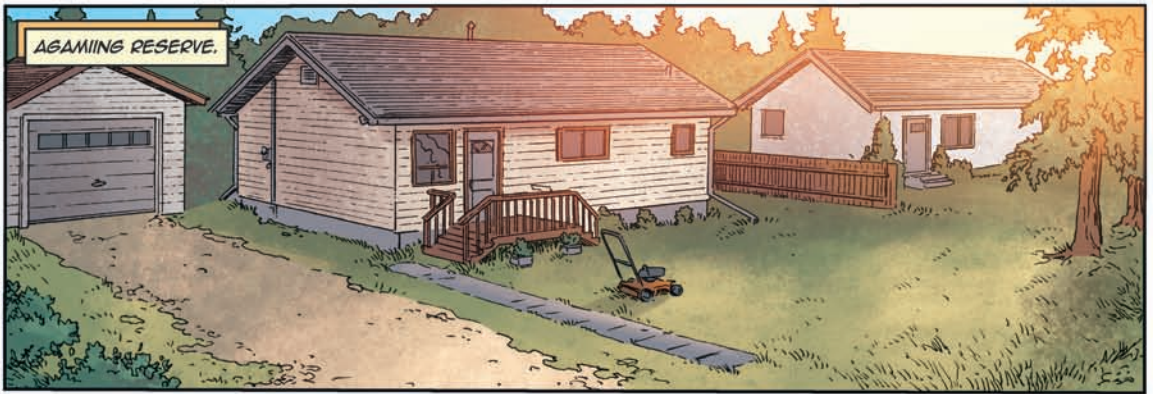
— J.S.

For Caleb and Bentleigh.

— S.B.H.

For Madelyn and Michelle.

— D.Y.





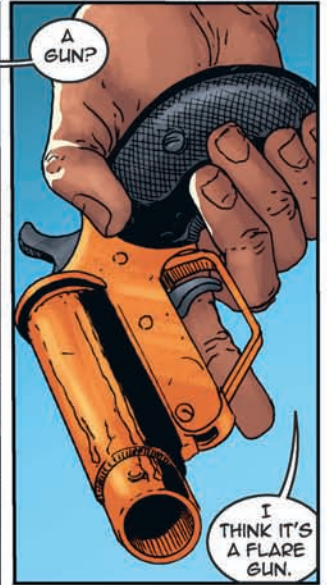
EH!
LET'S
GO!

HURRY
UP!

LET'S GO
HALFERS ON A
BIG BAG OF
DORITOS!

NO,
YOU PIG,
YOU'LL EAT
ALL MY HALF
AGAIN.

WHAT'S
THAT?



A
GUN?

I
THINK IT'S
A FLARE
GUN.



LET'S
SHOOT
IT!

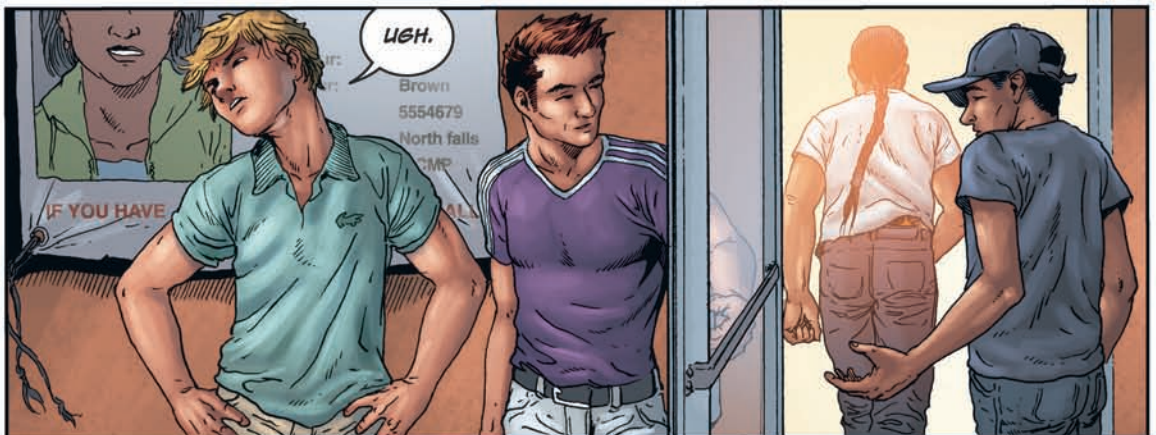
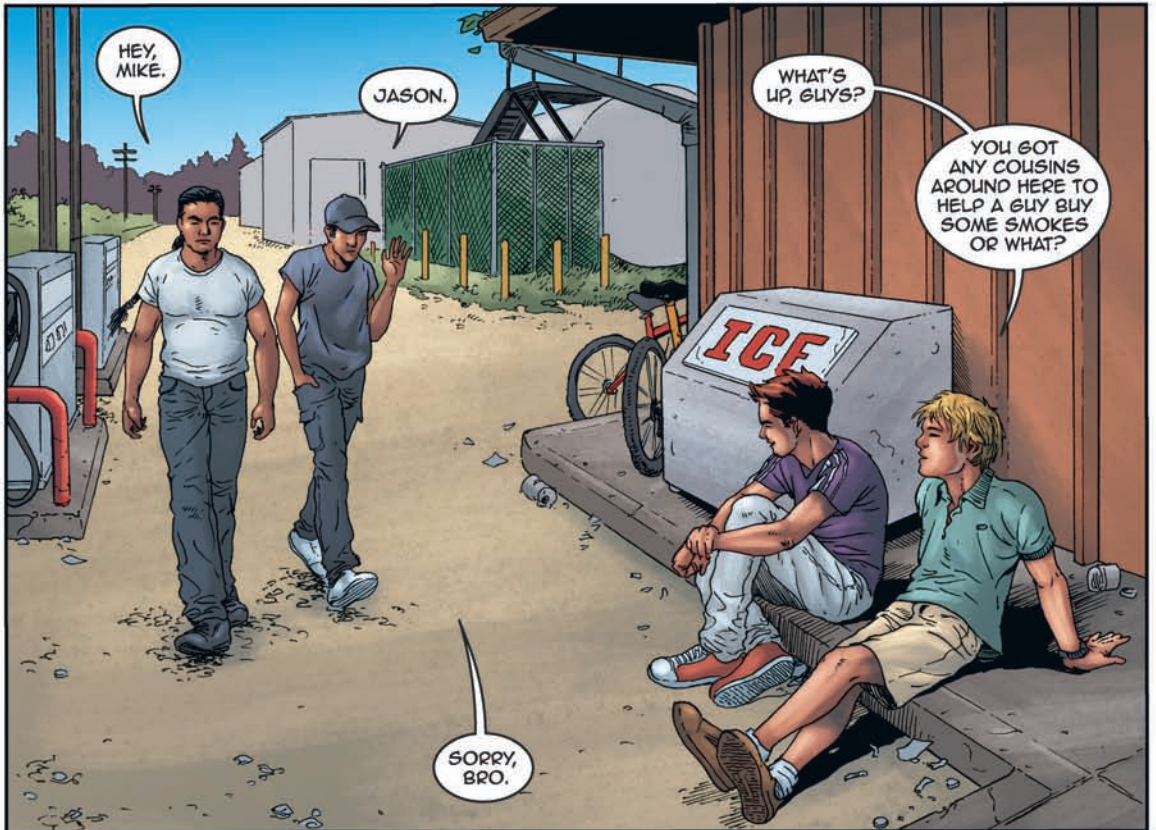
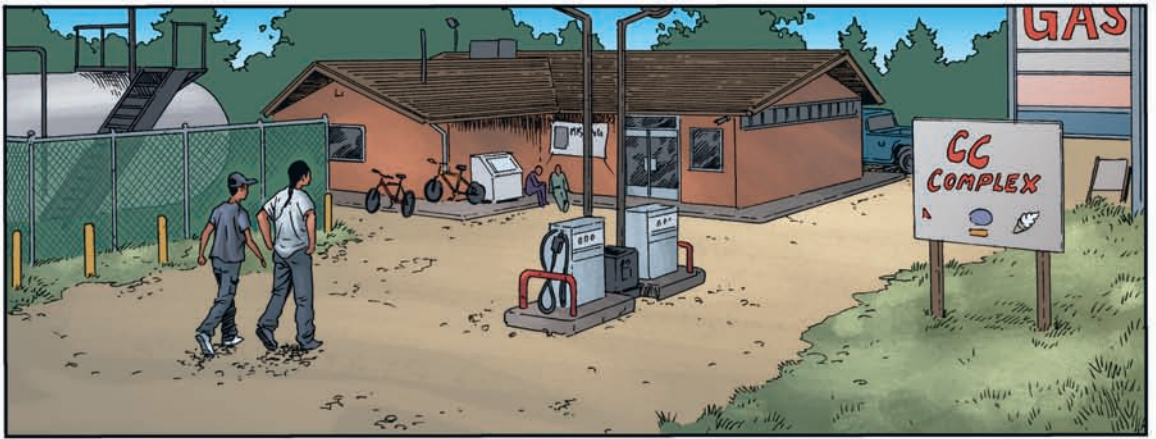
NO
WAY!

WHAT IF
IT'S A REAL
GUN?

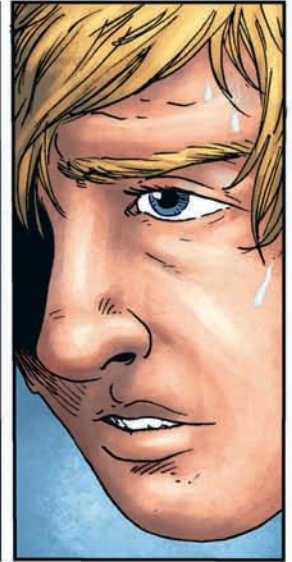
LET'S
JUST ASK
GRANDMA.

WELL, NO--
SHE'LL TAKE IT
AWAY FROM US. LET'S
JUST TAKE IT TO THE
DUMP, SHOOT AT
TARGETS.











HE'S GOING TO DO SOMETHING DUMB.

LET HIM.



MAYBE WE SHOULD INVITE HIM WITH US TO THE DUMP. HE WON'T BE ANGRY ANYMORE AND MAYBE AT SCHOOL HE'LL INVITE US TO HANG OUT AT LUNCH OR SOMETHING...

...LIKE TO WHERE CRYSTAL SITS.

AND DO WHAT?

LET HER WATCH YOU EAT FOUR SANDWICHES AND LISTEN TO YOU TALK ABOUT SKYRIM?



TSSSSS, NOT EVEN!

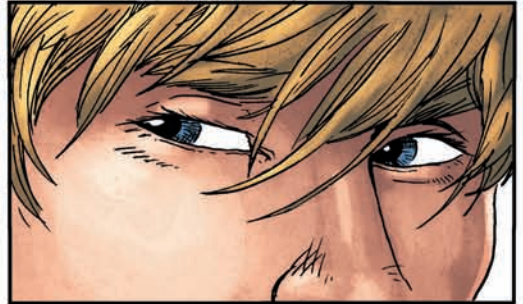
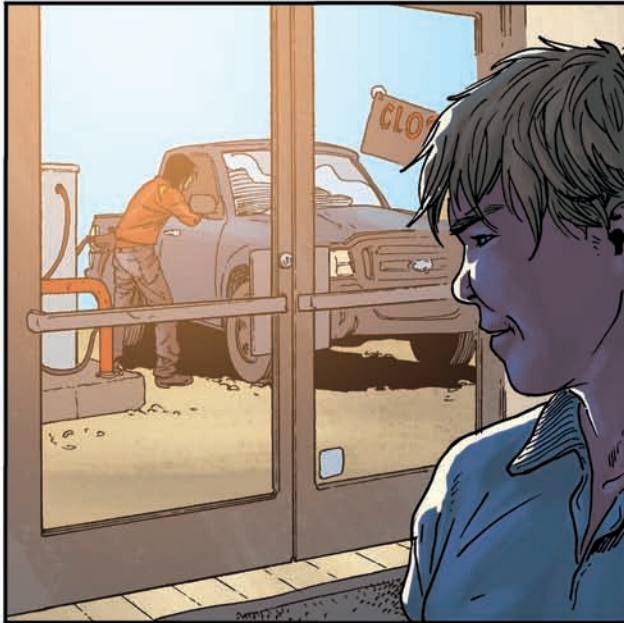
I'D LET HER TALK AND I'D JUST LISTEN TO HER.

I'M NOT STUPID.

HA! SAYS THE GUY THAT CAN'T EVEN HANDLE RUNNING INTO A GIRL ON XBOX LIVE...

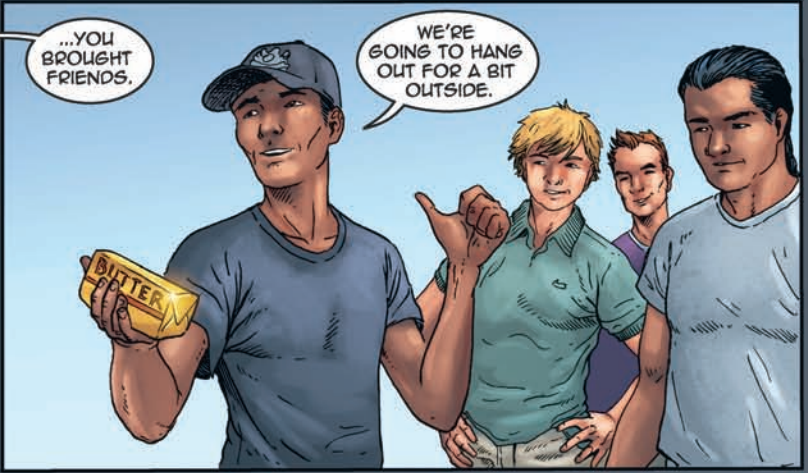
WHATEVER!

KAY FINE. LET'S GO THEN.





OH...



...YOU BROUGHT FRIENDS.

WE'RE GOING TO HANG OUT FOR A BIT OUTSIDE.



ALRIGHT...



...AWAS THEN.



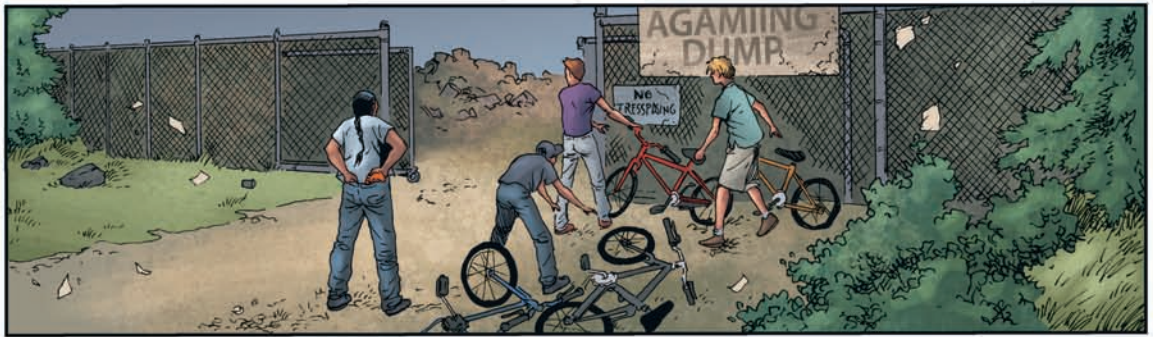
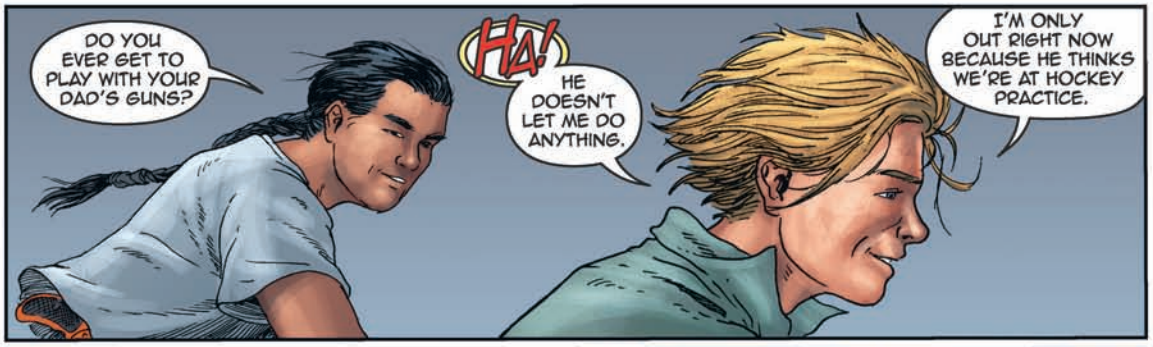
WHERE DID YOU FIND THAT ANYWAY?

IN MY GRANDMA'S GARAGE.

IT WAS OUR UNCLE'S BEFORE HE DIED.

IT'S REALLY OLD--

--IT MIGHT NOT EVEN WORK.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Completing *Fire Starters* was not easy and I had many who helped me along the way.

First, I would like to thank my father Kirk, my mother Kali, and my stepdad Darren. Without your help and cheerleading, I wouldn't have been a writer to begin with, and without your grand-parenting, I wouldn't have ever found the time to write this story.

Next, I want to thank my family in Couchiching First Nation and Fort Frances, Ontario whose influence resonates in every step I take in this life. I love you all so much.

I want to thank Scott Henderson for giving life to the images in my head. Your vibrant scenes and attention to detail made my story so much stronger and more than I ever thought it could be. I will never be able to thank you enough for your time and dedication to make *Fire Starters* what it is.

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I don't know how to thank my partner Niigaan except to say, you are the best. You work too much but I love you anyways. K'zaagin.

For all Anishinaabe and especially the young ones – keep moving, growing, and living. You inspire me.

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Looking for a little mischief after discovering an old flare gun, Ron and Ben find themselves in trouble when the local gas bar on Agamiing Reserve goes up in flames, and they are wrongly accused of arson by the sheriff's son. As the investigation goes forward, community attitudes are revealed, and the truth slowly comes to light.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jen Storm is Ojibway from the Couchiching First Nation in Northwestern Ontario. Born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Jennifer completed *Deadly Loyalties*, her first novel, at age fourteen. *Fire Starters* is Jen's first graphic novel.



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Scott Henderson is author/illustrator of the sci-fi/fantasy comic, *The Chronicles of Era* and has illustrated select titles in the Canadian Air Force's For Valour series and Tales From Big Spirit series; the graphic novel series *7 Generations*; *Betty: The Helen Betty Osborne Story* and Eisner-award nominee, *A Blanket of Butterflies*. In 2016, he was the recipient of the C4 Central Canada Comic Con Storyteller Award.



ABOUT THE COLOUR ARTIST

Since 1998, Donovan Yaciuk has done colouring work on books published by Marvel, DC and Dark Horse comics, honing his craft as a part of the legendary, now-defunct Digital Chameleon colouring studio. Donovan holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours) from the University of Manitoba. He lives in Winnipeg, MB Canada, with his wife and daughter.