

What I really wanted was to make people laugh, but I was always so worried I'd get in trouble.



So I tried to be good like the other girls, with their perfect handwriting.



I had a keepsake box, and in it I kept a plastic diamond that seemed magical.



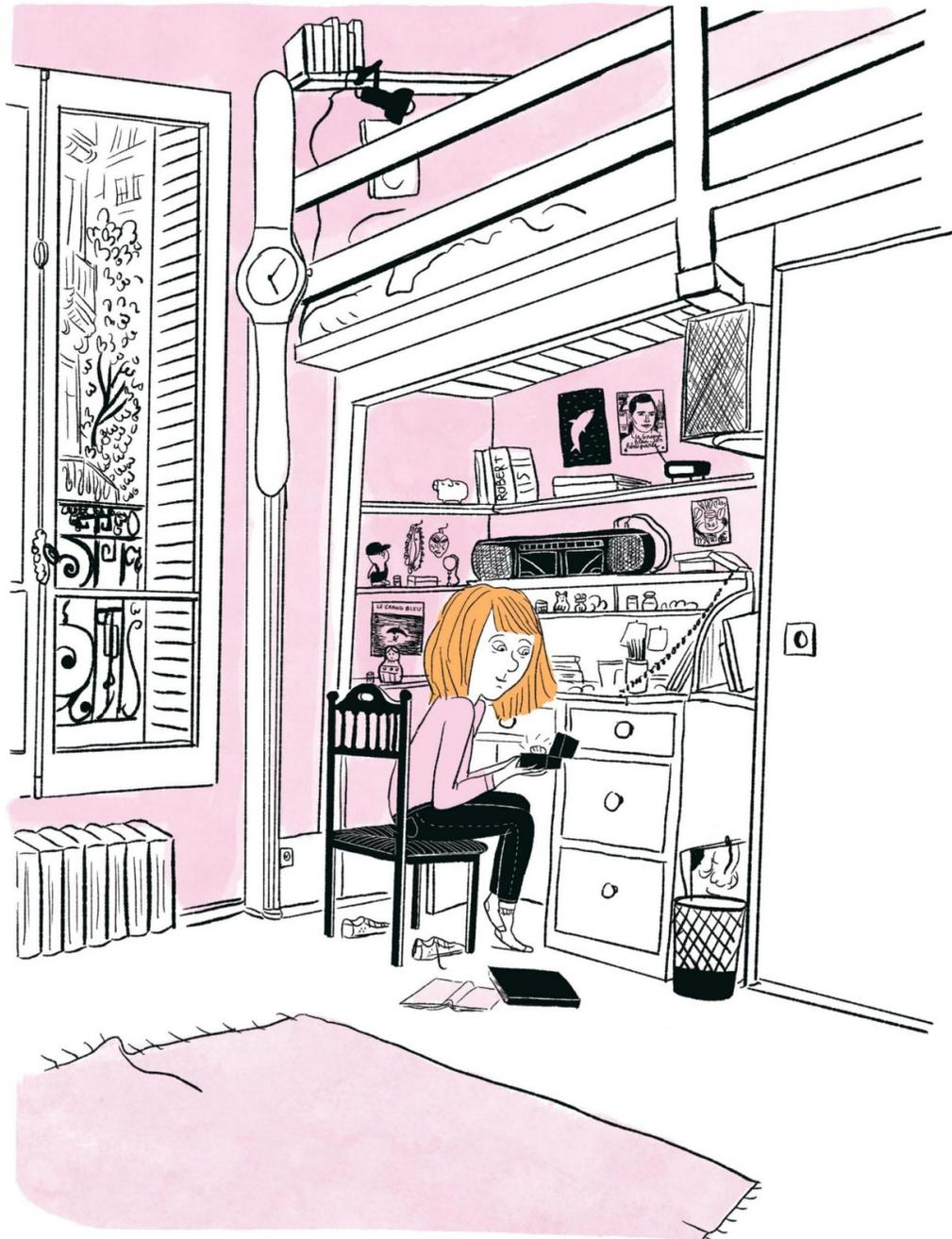
Before every spelling test, I'd stare at it and focus as hard as I could, hoping for the power of good grades.



I was determined to finally achieve academic greatness this year. I was super motivated.



*I'd be an overachiever, and all my teachers would love me.*



My sister and I knew the TV line-up by heart. First there was MacGyver at 6:30, followed by *Who's the Boss?* at 8.

We loved that show. If we had to miss an episode, we'd record it.



My sister did her homework in front of the TV.



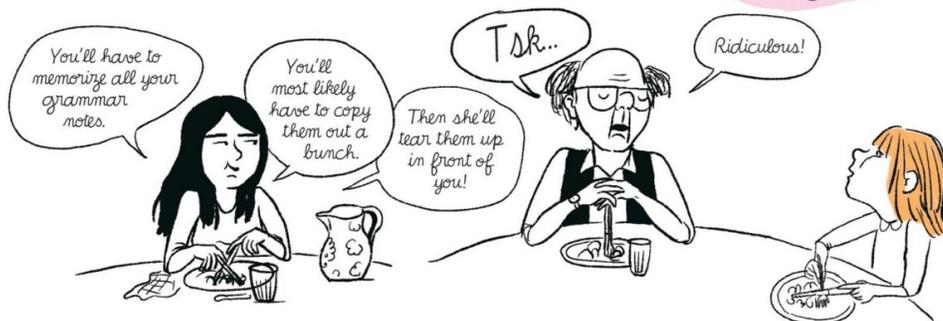
We were fans of Tony Micelli.

Our parents generally got home late.

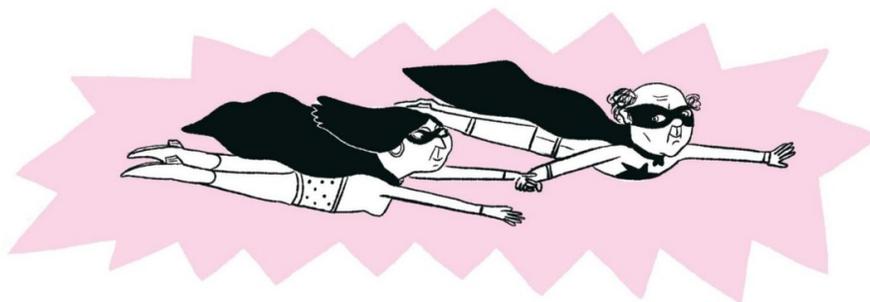


My mother, who had been listening to people all day, was usually seized with an irrepresible urge to talk.





My parents were sort of super-therapists. They created safe spaces for people to talk--people struggling with learning disabilities, people with mental illnesses, people who were grieving or depressed, and more. Anyone who needed someone to listen.



They were in great demand.

