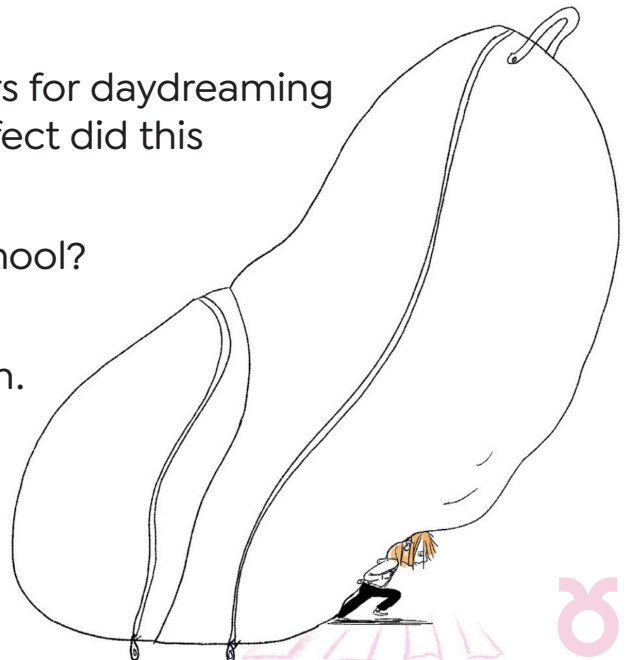


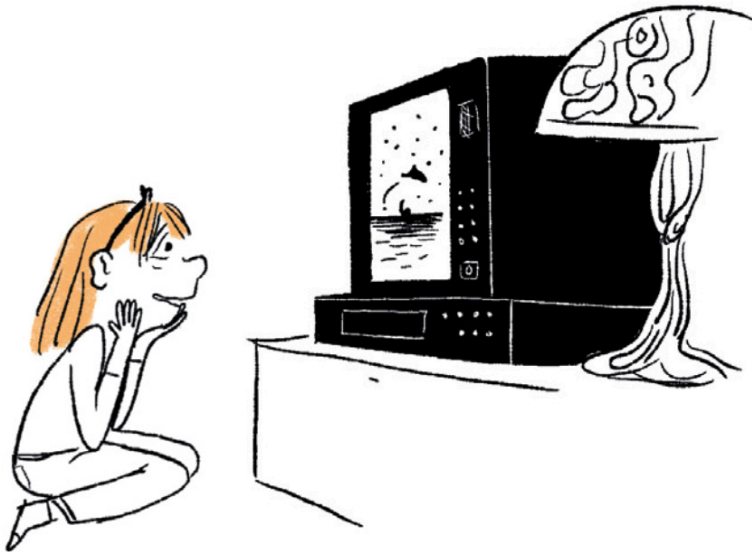
Nowhere Girl

Discussion Questions

Content Warning: mentions of verbal harassment, addiction, school phobia

1. Magali's favorite band is the Beatles. What was your favorite band or musician in middle school?
2. Do you associate any memories with this band? Bonus: has a band, musician, or song ever made you feel emotional?
3. Do you remember your first day of middle school? Were you nervous? Take turns discussing everything you remember about this experience—the feelings you had, your classmates, and teachers.
4. How did you adjust to the transition from elementary to middle school?
5. What was your relationship to academic success at this age?
6. As Magali enters middle school, her primary goal is to be an over achiever, and for all her teachers to love her. Did you have any goals at the start of middle school?
7. Magali is often chastised by her teachers for daydreaming or failing to answer a question. What effect did this have on her?
8. Have you ever gotten into trouble at school? Explain.
9. Think back to your time in the classroom. Were you loud or quiet? Did you raise your hand a lot, or not at all? Did you daydream a lot? Take turns sharing.
10. As the year progresses, Magali begins to associate a feeling of dread with





going to school. Have you ever felt this way? Why or why not? Explain.

11. To cope with this dread, Magali watches a lot of TV, describing it as “coming down from a drug” when it comes time to turn it off. Can you relate to this? Why or why not?

12. Do you use screen time to cope? Explain.

13. When you are feeling dread, discomfort, sadness or fear—what are your coping mechanisms?
14. What are your favorite outlets to release stress, sadness, or discomfort?
15. Did you have any obsessions growing up? Describe them.
16. What is your relationship with your imagination?
17. In what ways does your imagination allow you to express yourself?
18. Magali begins to experience stomach aches when it comes time to leave for school. Eventually, she faints. Using the context of the story building up to this moment, can you infer why this may have happened?
19. What does mental health mean to you?
20. Magali’s education at times had a negative impact on her mental health. Can you relate to this experience? Why or why not?
21. Have your studies at school ever impacted your mental health negatively? Explain!
22. What are some ways that you care for your mental health? Remember that it looks different for everyone.
23. The Beatles become a security blanket for Magali. Did you have any “security blankets” when you were younger?



24. Magali develops a school phobia. A phobia is defined by a persistent and excessive fear of an object or situation. Have you ever had a phobia of anything?
25. After taking time away from school, Magali feels isolated. Have you ever felt isolated?
26. Have you ever been afraid of other people? It's OK to feel this way: don't be ashamed. Discuss with others only if you wish to or feel safe enough. Fifteen million (7%) of American adults have Social Anxiety Disorder [1]. More than 75% of people experience their first symptoms during their childhood or early teenage years.
27. Do you identify with any communities? Why or why not? Describe how they have helped you.
28. What does Magali learn about herself?
29. Are there any resources that you wish were available to you in school? Why?
30. Did you learn any lessons in school? How did they help you grow?

Resources:

www.TheTrevorProject.org provides 24/7 crisis support services to LGBTQ young people

If you or someone you know is in emotional distress or suicidal crisis, get support by contacting the Crisis Text Line by texting HOME to 741741.

