

Fan Anthology Volume: Whaaaa?!

ORIGINAL STORY BY KATA KANE



Fan Anthology Volume: Whaaaa?!

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Back in the early 2000s, I read Altar Girl religiously - pun totally intended. I also hung out on the message boards attached to the comic and made friends with a lot of the regulars, Kata included. In my brain, I still call her "Kata D," though now I know she's Kata K. And just a couple weeks ago, as of the time I write this, I saw the first photo of her first child appear on my Facebook feed.

It's been a long time since the comic's original run. I was in high school, and I was doing a web comic myself, inspired in no small part by Kata and Altar Girl. Not long after that, I would go to art school and stop drawing pretty much altogether after graduation. But before that, I would submit two guest strips to run on the Altar Girl web site for times when Kata couldn't update. One was basically just a reason to use a Simpson joke as a punchline. The other was a strip about Ashley's key opening her chastity belt, which was hilarious to my then 15 year old brain. But hey, at least I'd come up with that joke all by myself, right?

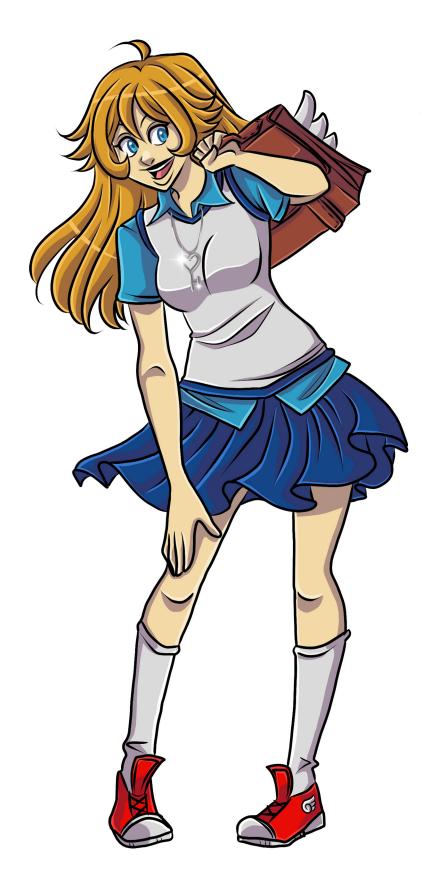
Ashley and Kata have been a part of my life for over fifteen years and there was no way I wasn't submitting something to this anthology. But since I'm not really an artist these days, it took me a while to actually do what I knew I should. With a little over a week left before the deadline, I sat myself down and redrew the "chastity belt" comic. It had come up when I expressed interest in the anthology - Kata remembered it! And right there and then I knew I had to brush off my tablet and try again.

So please forgive me for being out of practice - I haven't drawn much in quite some time - but here is the original comic and the new version, with a slightly updated punchline and artwork. Not unlike two versions of the Altar Girl comic, there are little tweaks here and there. Noah, for instance, looks pretty different these days, huh? Ashley, about the same. I still haven't bothered to learn how to do backgrounds and my humor is still dubious. But I like to think the spirit is very much the same.

Good luck in everything you do, Kata. And thanks for the memories. - Michelle cacupid.tumblr.com



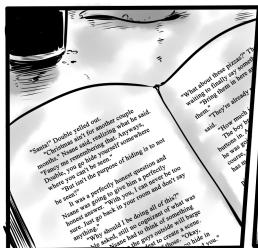




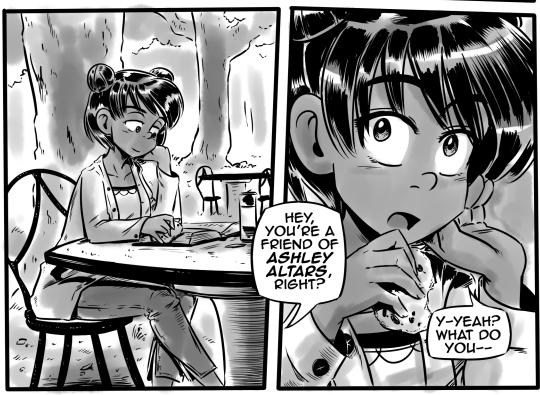
CHAPTER ?: "THE GIRL OF THE BROWN HAIR"

JO BENEFIELD









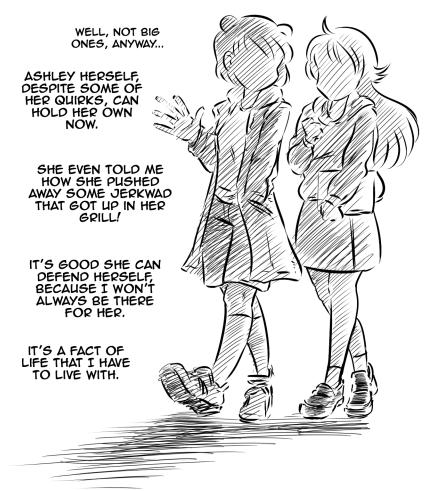








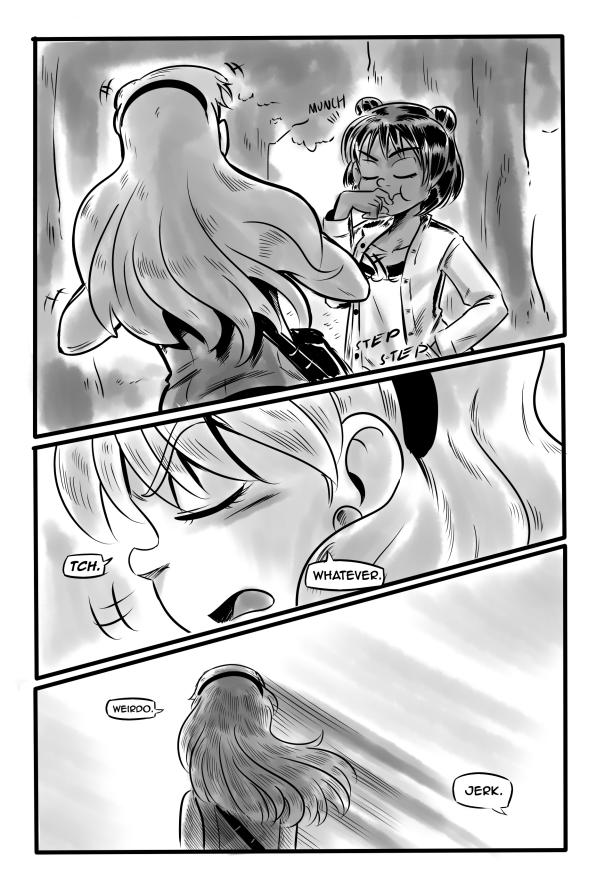
I HAVEN'T GOTTEN INTO ANY FIGHTS SINCE THEN.



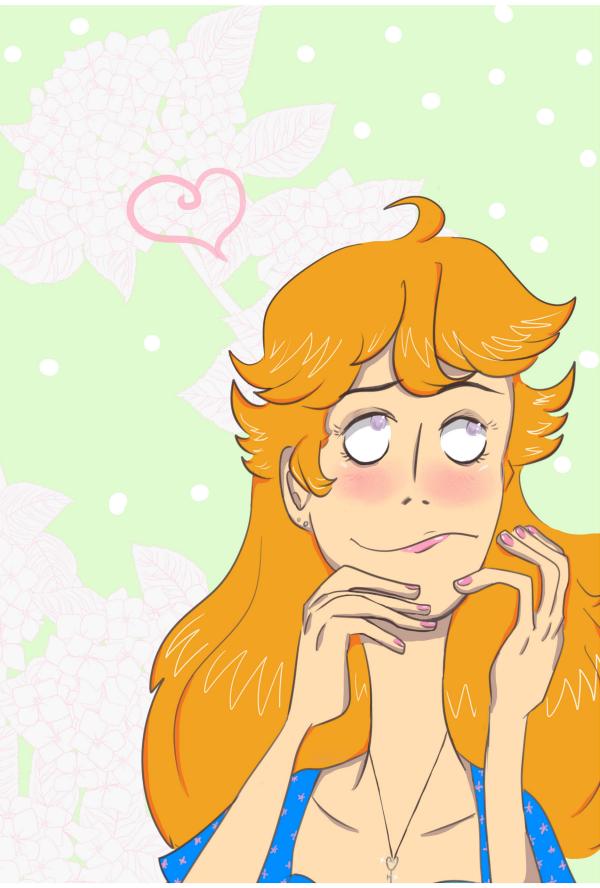














## Theme Song

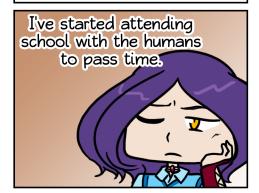








## Bored









## Nope.









## Reminder

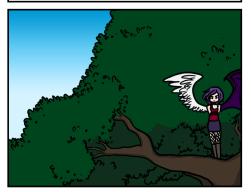








## New Plan









## Fantasy









## Just Fine









## Negotiation









## Fair Trade









## Next Time...











#### Take On Me

An Altar Girl fanfic
By @LantisArmstrong
<a href="https://youtube.com/thriftingtonpost">https://youtube.com/thriftingtonpost</a>
<a href="https://soundcloud.com/lantisarmstrong">https://soundcloud.com/lantisarmstrong</a>

https://twitter.com/LantisArmstrong

Spring is truly the most wondrous time of the year. The world comes alive again, leaves painting themselves across the trees and a spectrum of flowers blooming up to herald the life and fertility of the soil with their aroma coating the air, reminding everyone of all the best moments of their past. Reminding everyone that the cycle of nature never ends with death.

More important than all that, it meant that school would be out soon! Maybe not soon enough, final exams weren't even on anyone's radar yet.

Take for instance a young couple enjoying their lunch by the fountain in the courtyard of Saint Tail Academy, a private Catholic school in a town by the same name. While they both felt the downward slope of the mountain of a school year they'd been enduring, they were more concerned with idle chitchat than the grim specter of exams just around the corner.

"Jess, your -"

He spoke too late, and the largest slice of turkey fell free from her sandwich and onto the stone walkway at her feet. Jessica looked down in horror, knowing the sandwich she held in her hand had shrunk three sizes, like an inverse Grinch's heart, due to gravity's cruel attack on it.

"Warn me faster next time, Chris!" Jessica mock-yelled at him.

Jessica went to pick the stray meat up, but thought better of it and let it stay there for whatever animals might be interested later. She slid down the fountain to distance herself from any possible connection of ownership, should someone walk by and see it. No use people knowing she was a litterbug. Chris slid with her so they'd stay close.

"You're always saying you want to make the leap to vegan," Chris pointed out. "Maybe this is a sign?"

"But, turkey is so good," Jessica protested.

This is me, this is my life, Jessica thought, in a moment of quiet introspection while eating the rest of her sandwich before tragedy could strike again. Simple, peaceful. I attend the academy in Saint Tail with my boyfriend of two years, Chris. I live in the dorms while school's in session, and live with my mom when it's out for the summer. I'm a sophomore dating a senior, which makes me pretty cool in some peers' eyes, not that I care about that kind of thing.

...did I just introduce myself?

"Do you ever think about what you'll be doing after graduation?" Chris asked,

his tone switching over to such an uncharacteristically serious one so quickly that it nearly gave Jessica whiplash.

"What?" she tried to ask, but her mouth was full so it came out garbled.

Of course they'd talked about what they'd do lots of times – though now that she thought about it, there was never much talk about the specifics. He was big into art, so he figured he'd do something with that, and she'd always said she was up for whatever.

A dark cloud seemed to hang over Chris's head as he leaned forward onto his legs, looking down at nothing in particular. Something was on his mind that he'd been

brooding over how to say for awhile now, and he still wasn't sure how to say it.

Jessica attempted to give a concerned look, but her efforts were undermined by a mouth full of turkey sandwich.

"You know, when I was much younger, I used to turn to my grandpa for advice," Chris began, "he passed away awhile back, but I wish he was still around for this. He'd always know just what to say. Have you ever had someone like that in your life? It's someone you can't live without, and you don't know how to handle yourself once they're gone."

Jessica finally finished eating.

"You've never mentioned him before. Did you ever figure out how to handle yourself without him?"

"Yes, I did," Chris said, then turned to Jessica, a smile cracking through the grimness on his face when he looked at her, "I met you."

She shook her head slightly as she turned away from him. She didn't want him to know how touched she felt by his truly sappy line.

If he's been gone awhile, Chris can't still be that broken up by it. But I don't want to say that out loud and sound like a jerk!

"But that's not what I'm thinking about," Chris confirmed, "do you remember that art college we were talking about the other night?"

Jessica was confused for a moment before it came back to her. She gave an involuntary snort of laughter, much to her embarrassment, as she recalled the conversation. He'd snuck into her dorm after hours, and the two of them entertained themselves by mocking a brochure of the college he'd found.

"Yes! The students there just look so pompous and full of themselves," Jessica said, suppressing a giggle fit she could feel coming on.

"Right, that place," Chris said, "They just accepted me."

"Oh, they wish they could have you," Jessica rolled her eyes. Then she saw how serious he looked. "Wait, you're kidding, right? They didn't really – I mean, you're not seriously thinking about going there?"

"I am, in the fall!" Chris's excitement bled through his tact.

"No, you can't, we talked about this, Chris!" Jessica felt her palms grow

sweaty. "You're going to attend a local college so I can still see you during the two years I have left here!"

"They have teachers there that have actually worked in the art world, their students regularly have their work put up in fancy exhibits. You know that's always been my dream."

"Your dream doesn't involve me, then?" Chris flinched at that, it really stung him.

"Jess, it's just two years; I'm thinking about the rest of our lives!" Chris insisted. She shook her head, "No, no no no, you're thinking about the rest of your life.

Two years might as well be forever, I can't let you leave me for that long!" "I am thinking about us; you were always on board with me pursuing a life as a professional artist, and this is my best chance to do that. You're the reason I'm doing this, you gave me the confidence to think I could succeed!" Two years. Two years of her life, left utterly alone. She didn't have any other real friends around here because from almost day 1 of her freshman year she'd met him and ended up spending all her time with him, to the neglect of every other student on campus.

She was already spending the quiet alone time in her dorm thinking about how hard next year would be on her if she saw him around less often, couldn't have lunch with him, and now she's hearing that he won't be around at all? "Well, I hope it does go very well for you," Jessica got up, nearly stumbling, but steadying herself quick enough that it was possible he didn't notice. "But leave me out of whatever life you're planning."

"Jess, wait, it's not like that!"

He got up and reached out for her shoulder, and she jerked away from him and shouted:

"Don't touch me! We're finished!"

As Jessica stormed off, Chris's shock quickly mixed with embarrassment when he realized a lot of other students were staring at him now. Some of them were giving him dirty looks, as what little they'd seen definitely made him look like the bad guy. Guilt

then joined the party when he realized that he may well be the bad guy. A series of angry, fragmented thoughts, most of them explicit, clouded Jessica's vision. She just wanted to get back to her room and scream into her pillow. But her fog of anger was abruptly parted by an aging and large-faced sarcastic smirk abruptly blocking her path.

"Where do you think you're going, little miss?"

It was Mrs. Grant, her first period science teacher. The two of them had gotten off on the wrong foot, and she'd had it out for Jessica ever since.

"Uh," Jessica couldn't quite find her voice – she was snapped back to reality so abruptly.

"This doesn't seem to be the direction of the main hall, it seems to be the direction of the dorms," Mrs. Grant said, accusingly, as though she'd just caught Jessica

committing a crime.

and a good actor at the same time.

"I just want to go back to my room," Jessica found her voice.

"That ain't where class is being held! I don't know what class you have right now, but I'm pretty sure nap time ain't on the curriculum. Now get going!" Mrs. Grant pointed over towards the front entrance of the academy. In shocked disbelief, Jessica turned and headed back towards the building. She only realized after she'd begun to walk away that she could have feigned sick to get past Mrs. Grant; though it was entirely possible that lady wouldn't have cared if she was sick. Besides, it's hard to be completely destroyed inside

At least I have Mr. Jefferson's class now, and he's not a complete condescending jerk, Jessica thought sarcastically.

This was going to be miserable. She could feel it in her bones.

At her desk, she took out the history text book from the backpack she'd been lugging around and opened it to a random page. She rested her head on her hand and stared down at the book blankly, hoping that if she tuned out the world around her hard enough it would forget she existed. She was too out of it to even feel self-conscious about what a miserable expression she wore. "Good day, class," Mr. Jefferson said, walking into the room a typical five minutes late, cup of coffee in hand. "Today we'll be discussing the economics of farmers in the mid-19th century. I trust everyone's read up on Jevon's development of marginal

utility with respect to his equimarginal principle, so that we may have a lively discussion of the matter!"

Worried groans passed over the room, much to Mr. Jefferson's amusement. He glanced around for the perfect person to call on, and of course his eyes would lock onto Jessica straight away.

"Jessica! Would you like to start the discussion by giving us a brief explanation of what influenced Jevon's ideas?" Mr. Jefferson asked.

She didn't even hear him. He'd lost her at the word Good. Jessica had already sunk into her own Silent Hill-inspired hell, trying to imagine what her life would be like without Chris. She saw herself walking down a foggy, empty street; formless aberrations crawling and clicking just outside of her line of sight. Asking herself, over and over, why he would choose to leave her. To abandon her.

Is there anything I could have done to stop this? What if I'd seen it coming? He must have brought the brochure over that one time to gauge how accepting I'd be. I never would have imagined he'd be into a place like that! Do I just not know him as well as I thought I did?

A shadow passed over her, except this was a literal shadow.

A faint yelp escaped her voice from surprise, and her face jolted upright to meet the gaze of Mr. Jefferson who was now standing over her. Amused laughs could be heard coming from a couple students in the classroom.

Mr. Jefferson was looking down at her expectantly. She had no idea what he'd asked, if he did ask her anything. She chose to remain silent.

"Welcome back to our reality, Jessica," Mr. Jefferson said after a long pause. "I

don't mean to intrude, but are you feeling okay?"

She couldn't tell if he was sincerely concerned for her or not. Perhaps this was the closest he was capable of getting to human emotions? She didn't want to talk right now, for fear of what she might say, but he didn't look like he'd be satisfied with a nod.

"I'm not feeling very well," Jessica said.

"You don't look sick. I'm guessing there's some kind of teen drama afoot," Mr. Jefferson correctly guessed. "Jessica, you should know better than to bring outside problems inside the classroom, okay? You need to learn to compartmentalize. When you get out of here and into the real world do you think your boss will ever accept, 'sorry I'm not working, I feel sad today' as an excuse? No, you'd be fired. Do you understand me?"

Okay – now Jessica was feeling self-conscious. The way he'd laid it all out like that, it almost seemed like he was attempting to have a heart-to-heart, albeit in the meanest possible way; but he was doing it in public! She clinched her teeth as she gave a nod in response. Like before, Mr. Jefferson was not satisfied with this.

"I'm willing to bet you didn't read the assigned chapter either, am I correct?" Mr. Jefferson asked. She nodded again. "There, you see? This isn't a one-time deal, Jessica. It's a systemic problem; a pattern is emerging! You need to separate yourself from whatever's dragging you down so that you can focus on your academics! Finals are just around the corner, and they're very important to your future!"

"I understand," Jessica said, hoping he'd buzz off and leave her alone.

What she didn't know was that he was, in fact, genuinely trying to be helpful. He was just terrible at it. But when he saw her fists clinching up, he found himself sighing dismissively, thinking he'd failed to get through to her.

"Just, you have to grow up, Jessica," Mr. Jefferson said.

Jessica's nostrils flared at that. She thought she'd been doing a very good job of not reacting with anger, not giving in and causing an outburst in class, and here her teacher was just not satisfied with that.

"Is this really the best time to be talking about this?" Jessica asked.

"Of course not, but you're the one interrupting class," Mr. Jefferson scoffed, and then at last went back to his lectern to continue the lesson.

Jessica had a nervous eye twitch. She so badly wanted to yell that he was the one interrupting class, but knew there was nothing more immature than arguing over who started what. She decided to take the high road and let it end with that.

After what felt like the longest class period of her life, Jessica quickly made her way back through Saint Tail Academy's halls, wanting to get out of there and just go for a walk. Her dorm was out since she didn't want to risk running into Mrs. Grant again, and there's no way she could endure another class today.

She was so busy watching out for Chris, wanting to make sure she didn't run into him between classes, that she absentmindedly ran into another student.

"Oh, sorry," Jessica muttered. "Wait, I know you, Ashley, right?"

"Yes," Ashley replied, rubbing the shoulder Jessica had just collided with. "Hey, I

don't mean to intrude, but I heard that you and Chris broke up."

Jessica flinched, "Don't tell me, the whole school knows already, don't they?" "You know how gossip works," Ashley shrugged. "Say, um, I just wanted to say,

if you need someone to talk to about it, I'm willing to listen."

For a brief moment, Jessica's frantic desire to escape dissipated. Now that she thought about it, Ashley was probably the closest person to a friend she had around here, besides Chris. They weren't close or anything, but they'd spoken from time to time. Really, the only reason she recalled Ashley's name was because she'd always been fond of that name.

"Thanks, but no," Jessica said. "Well, maybe later. I don't know. I still need time to clear my head."

Ashley nodded, understanding. Then Jessica at last made her escape from the school grounds.

Not headed anywhere in particular, Jessica found herself passing by Memorial Park. Her pace slowed, and then she opted to head over to a large tree growing at the edge of the park, next to the highway. She'd been told once how old that tree was; while

she couldn't recall the exact years anymore, she knew it was older than her grandparents. She leaned her back against it and just closed her eyes, wanting to shut out the world and collect her thoughts.

Shortly after her nerves began to calm, they flared up again, but for an entirely different reason. She got the distinct feeling she was being creeped on, and peeked her eyes open to glance around. Sure enough, an elderly man sitting on a nearby bench was looking over at her. She frowned, and then he gave an abrupt smile and wave as though he'd just recognized her.

"Jessica! Hey Jessica! Come over here a minute, won'tcha?" he called out.

Her eyes went wide in surprise.

He knows my name?

She'd never seen him before, but she had to admit he seemed harmless enough, sitting there in his wool coat and tacky plaid pants with a walking cane propped on the bench next to him.

She hesitated for a moment, and then pushed off the tree to walk across the grass over to the bench.

"Have a seat, young lady, have a seat!" he welcomed her. Something about his eyes seemed so familiar to her.

"Do I know you?"

"Can't say you do! But I've heard so much about you from my grandson. Oh, he can't shut up about you! With your bouncy blonde hair and big eyes. Yep, you look just like he described!"

She continued to stand, not accepting the seat. "Who's your grandson?" "Chris! Your boyfriend!"

She was confused and angered at the same time. "I thought you were dead." "I get that a lot!"

Jessica finally accepted the seat. Strangely, she found his presence comforting. Very strange, considering this guy was a liar. Maybe Chris had lied about his grandpa dying, but that's a bit too macabre for him; so it was more likely this old man had deceived him. She decided not to ask about it.

"I've been wanting to meet you for awhile, but Cherry is so hard to slip away from. You know how it goes!" the old man said.

Ah, Jessica thought, so he ran away from Chris's grandmother for another woman. And at his age, shame on him!

"Of course, she's not half the handful Sera is!" he cackled to himself, "If she caught me sneaking off then I'd never hear the end of it!"

There's two women? You perverted old man!

"Anyway, about the whole boyfriend thing," Jessica said, "we're not together anymore."

"What?" the old guy gasped, genuinely shocked. "No, he couldn't have dumped you! That boy's wild about you!"

She shook her head, "No, he's not. And I dumped him. He doesn't care about me at all. First chance he gets to leave me and he takes it – he's moving out of state to some fancy-pants college in the fall!"

"That art college he's always going on about? He got in? Well, good for him!" He was happy for a moment, then brought down again by her expression.

"Say, miss, maybe it's not my place to play cupid in your life, but I promise you he loves you more than you can realize. But it's been his dream since he was real young to be a professional artist! But he'd never go to that school if he had to choose between you and it. Trust me, he's probably withdrawing from it as we speak. Don't make him do that, don't make him choose."

"He is not..." Jessica began to say, but saw the sincerity in the old man's eyes.

He was dead serious, as though he could see something she couldn't. "Really, he'd do that? But, that's making me choose between being without him for two years and..."

"And being without him forever?" the old man finished her thought. "Come on, you know what you really want. Not saying what that is, but I think we both know. Actually, here, let me give you something."

Jessica hadn't noticed before, but he was wearing a necklace with a key-shaped trinket on it. He took it off and handed it to her.

"What's this?"

"It's always brought me luck," he said. "Maybe it'll do the same for you? Oh, here comes Chris now! He always comes here when he has a lot on his mind to talk to himself. Not in a crazy way, just... okay, maybe a little crazy."

"What?" Jessica panicked. She jumped up from the bench and looked over to see

Chris walking down the sidewalk. He was facing the ground and hadn't seen her yet.

As she began to walk over to him, she didn't notice the old man disappearing into vapor behind her. She was still holding the necklace, she hadn't put it on yet, but now she was clutching it tight.

The distance between them closed, and she froze in place.

No, I don't need this in my life, I don't need him! Jessica argued with herself.

I'm moving on with my life!

Then... why are my feet frozen to the ground?

I'm stronger from this experience!

Then why do your legs quiver so weakly?

This will not consume me!

And your stomach is too queasy to consume anything at all.

No, of course I don't need anyone, but...

"You're the reason I'm doing this, you gave me the confidence to think I could succeed!"

...Am I being selfish? Does he need me?

Chris finally looked up, staring her right in the eyes. His jaw gaped at the realization of who he was looking at.

"Jessica, I-I wasn't following you, I just..." he began to babble.

"Christopher Jacob Altars! Do you think you can just show up and I'll take you back that easy?"

Jessica couldn't believe how angry she sounded. She broke eye contact with him and began walking back towards the school.

After a long moment of hesitation, he followed after her.











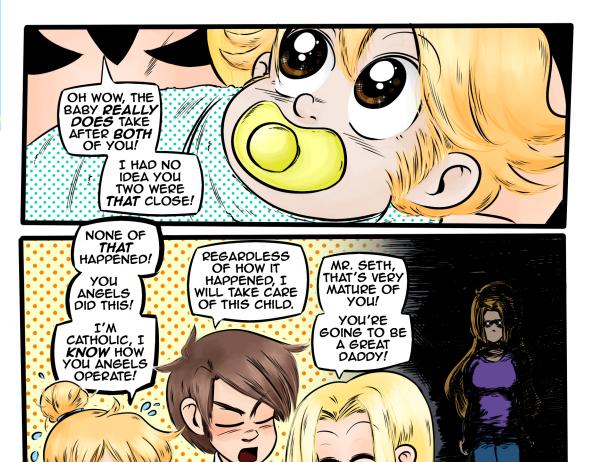


## Altan Girl immagulate conception

ASHLEY ALTARS IS A TYPICAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL GIRL... MEANING SHE KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT CONTRACEPTION! ASHLEY'S GOT TO DEAL WITH DIAPERS, SLEEP DEPRIVATION, AND TRYING TO FIND OUT WHO THE FATHER IS. LIFE IS TOUGH FOR THE ALTAR GIRL!



If we've learned anything in the course of working on this anthology, it's that fan theories can sprout from any little thing -- including a joke...





Thank you to our contributors and everyone reading this fan anthology; and to Kata, for creating Altar Girl!

# PROFESSOR VESPA DOESN'T WANT TO CLEAN HER BIKE, SO SHE USES SOME OF HER STUDENTS AT ST. TAIL ACADEMY TO CLEAN IT FOR HER... UNWILLINGLY DURING DETENTION!

...TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, HER KEYS KEEP GOING MISSING AND SHE'S DARN SURE IT'S ONE OF HER STUDENTS - PROBABLY HER ASSISTANT - PLAYING A PRANK ON HER AND IF SHE EVER CATCHES HIM DOING THIS, HE'S DEAD MEAT!

NOAH RAVAN HAS BEEN HER ASSISTANT FOR REASONS NOBODY KNOWS, BUT HE'S A JERK WHO WON'T MISS A CHANCE TO BE RUDE TO ASHLEY ALTARS. NOAH AND ASHLEY ARE AT ODDS WITH EACH OTHER, BUT VESPA HAS TO DEAL WITH STANDING ALL DAY, GRADING EXAMS, AND JUST TRYING TO CATCH A BREAK FROM HER OWN REPUTATION...

#### LIFE IS TOUGH FOR THE ART HISTORY PROFESSOR!



"OME I WOULD LOVE TO BE IN HER CLASS!"

SOME MALE STUDENT

"SHE'S A GOOD PROFESSOR, I THINK, BUT WHENEVER SHE BRINGS UP PETER PAUL RUBENS SHE NEVER BRINGS UP HIS BEING A DIPLOMAT FOR THE SPANISH HAPSBURGS DURING THE 1620S, AFTER THE END OF THE TWELVE YEARS' TRUCE AND THAT'S A SHAME."

PEDANTIC WORLD HISTORY PROFESSOR

FOLLOW PROFESSOR VESPA ONLINE!