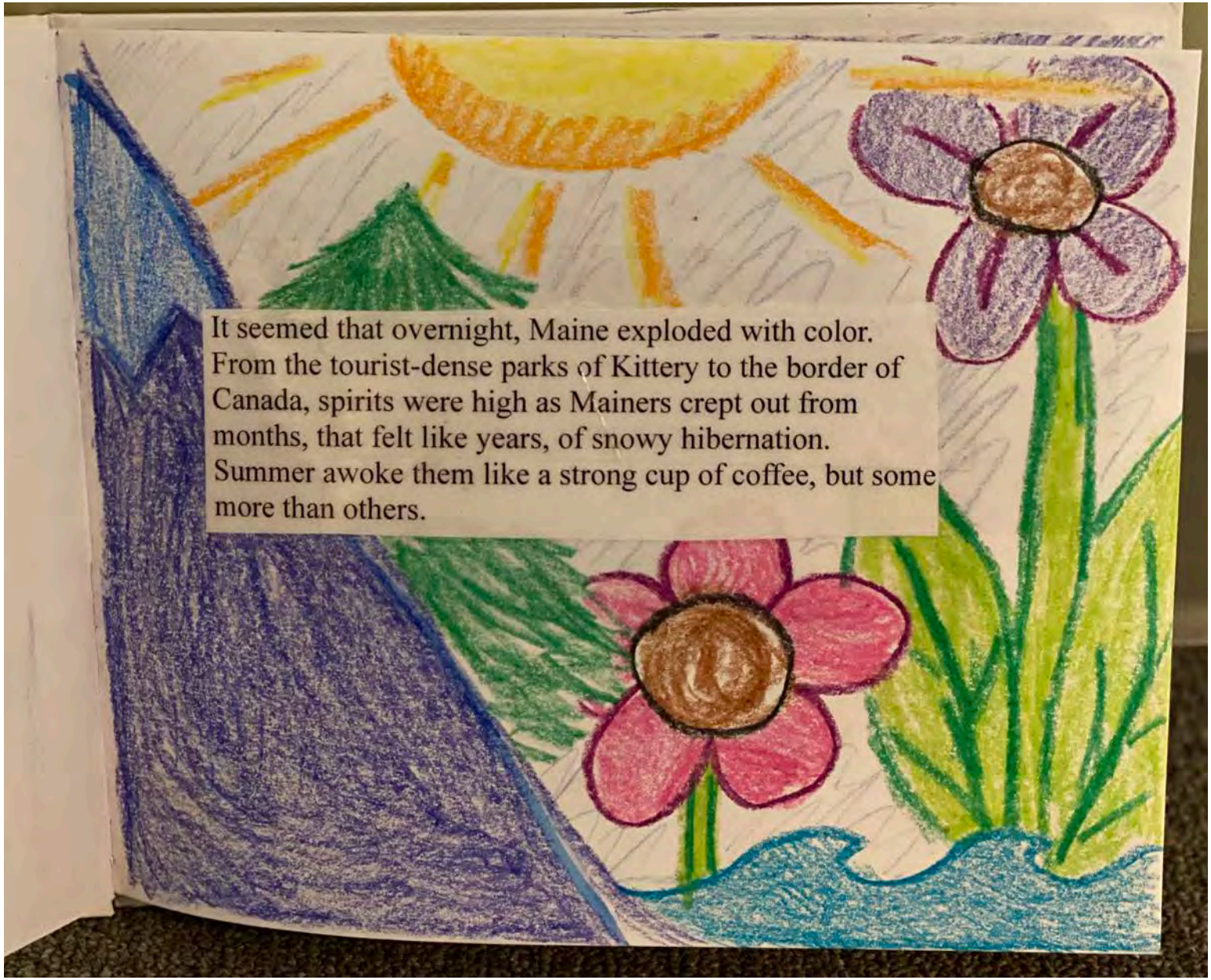
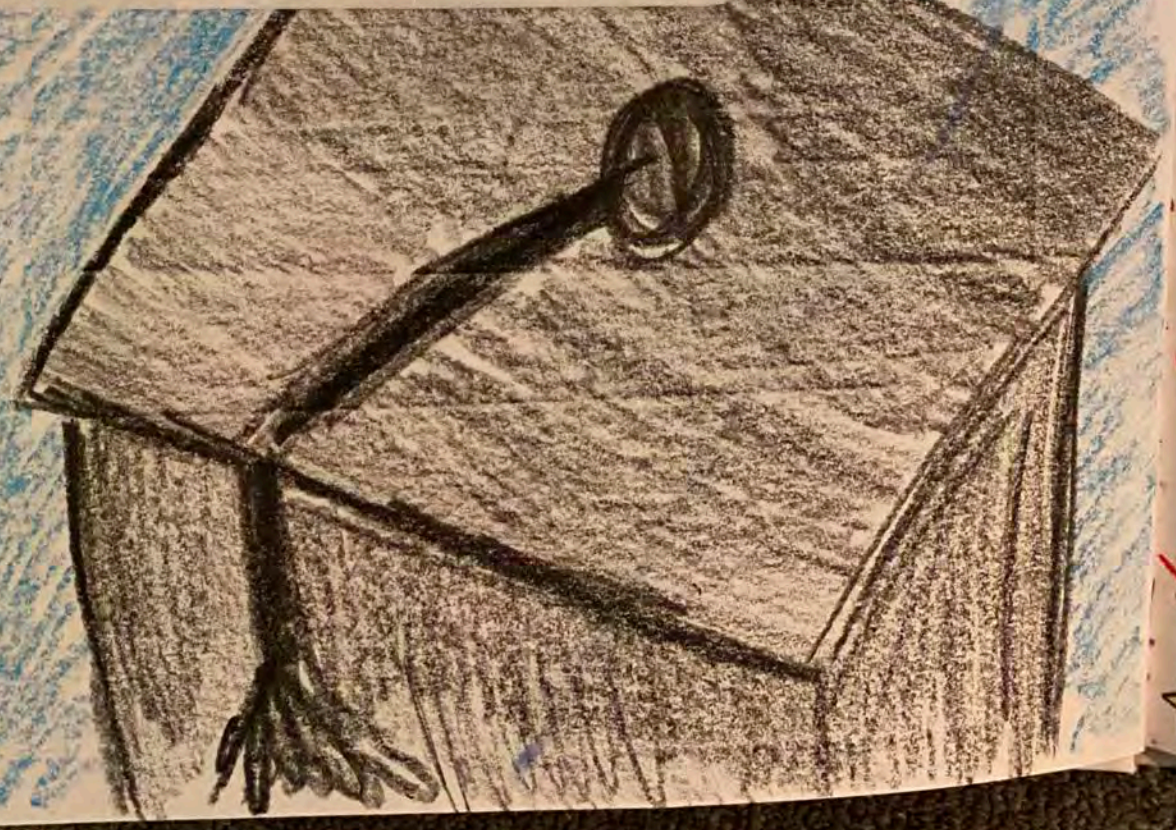
ARRIVE ALIVE

By Josephine Ek

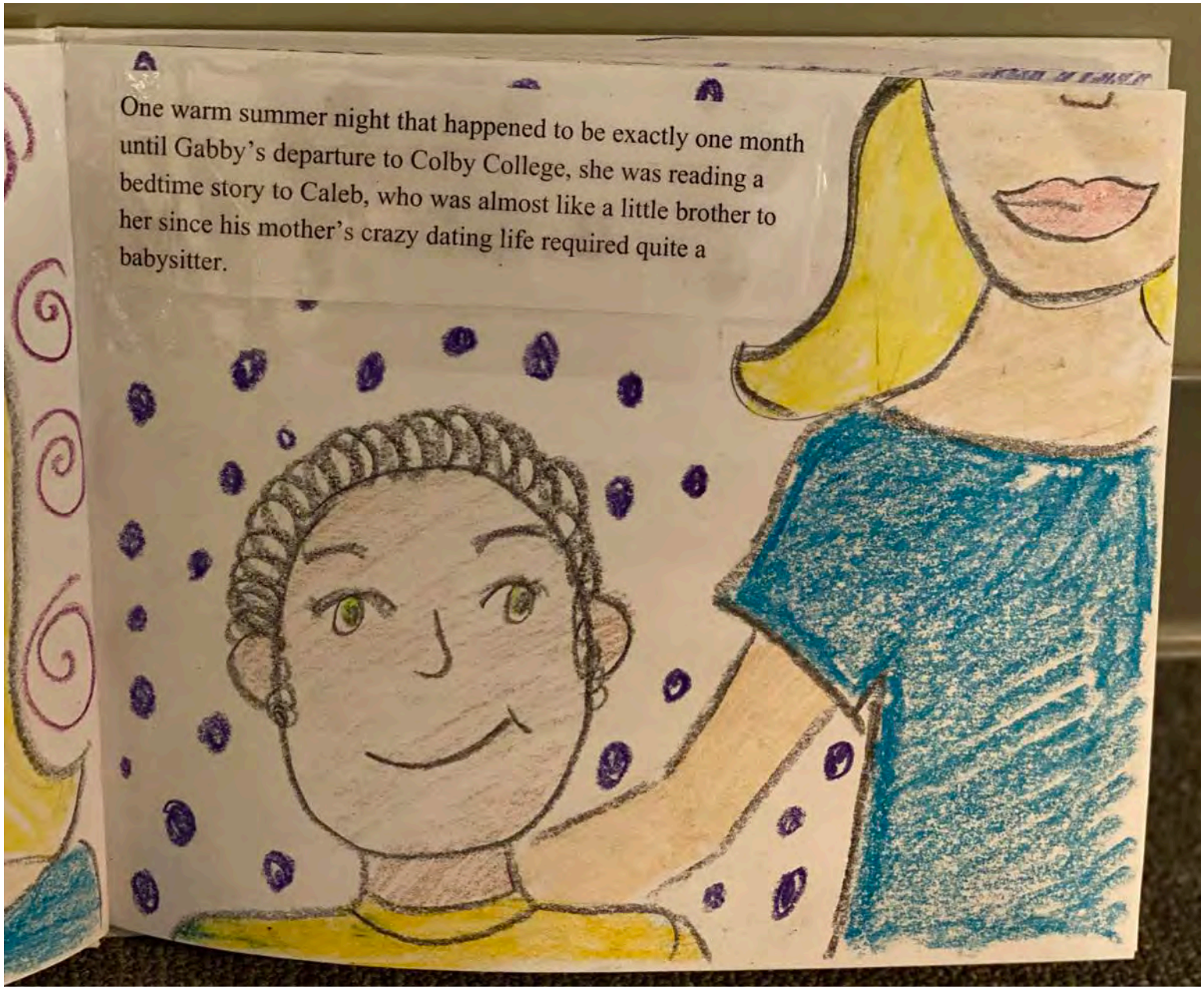


It seemed that overnight, Maine exploded with color. From the tourist-dense parks of Kittery to the border of Canada, spirits were high as Mainers crept out from months, that felt like years, of snowy hibernation. Summer awoke them like a strong cup of coffee, but some more than others.

In a small town, as graduation grew closer, the senior class of 2020 did as well. The cliques faded and burned bridges were rebuilt. The last day of high school sparked something in this class, a feeling that just couldn't be expressed in words— the feeling of being at the top of the rollercoaster ready to drop, but with their entire lives in front of them.



Gabriella, or Gabby to her friends, spent most of her Friday nights throughout high school watching movies, and when she wasn't re-watching "The Princess Bride" for the 100th time, she would be found babysitting a few blocks away from her loving home.


One warm summer night that happened to be exactly one month until Gabby's departure to Colby College, she was reading a bedtime story to Caleb, who was almost like a little brother to her since his mother's crazy dating life required quite a babysitter.

"Gabby, do you have a Prince Charming like Cinderella?"

"Caleb, you know I don't! Stop teasing you are sooooo annoying! It was funny when you were like five but you're almost at the double digits now!"

"I'm telling my mom you called me annoying"

"Caleb she's probably going to agree with me"

"Okay Gabby, have you at least gone to any fancy balls before?"

"A ball! In this town, no, definitely not!"

"Well how about a cool party? With fancy drinks and…"

"Caleb, how do you know about cool parties?"

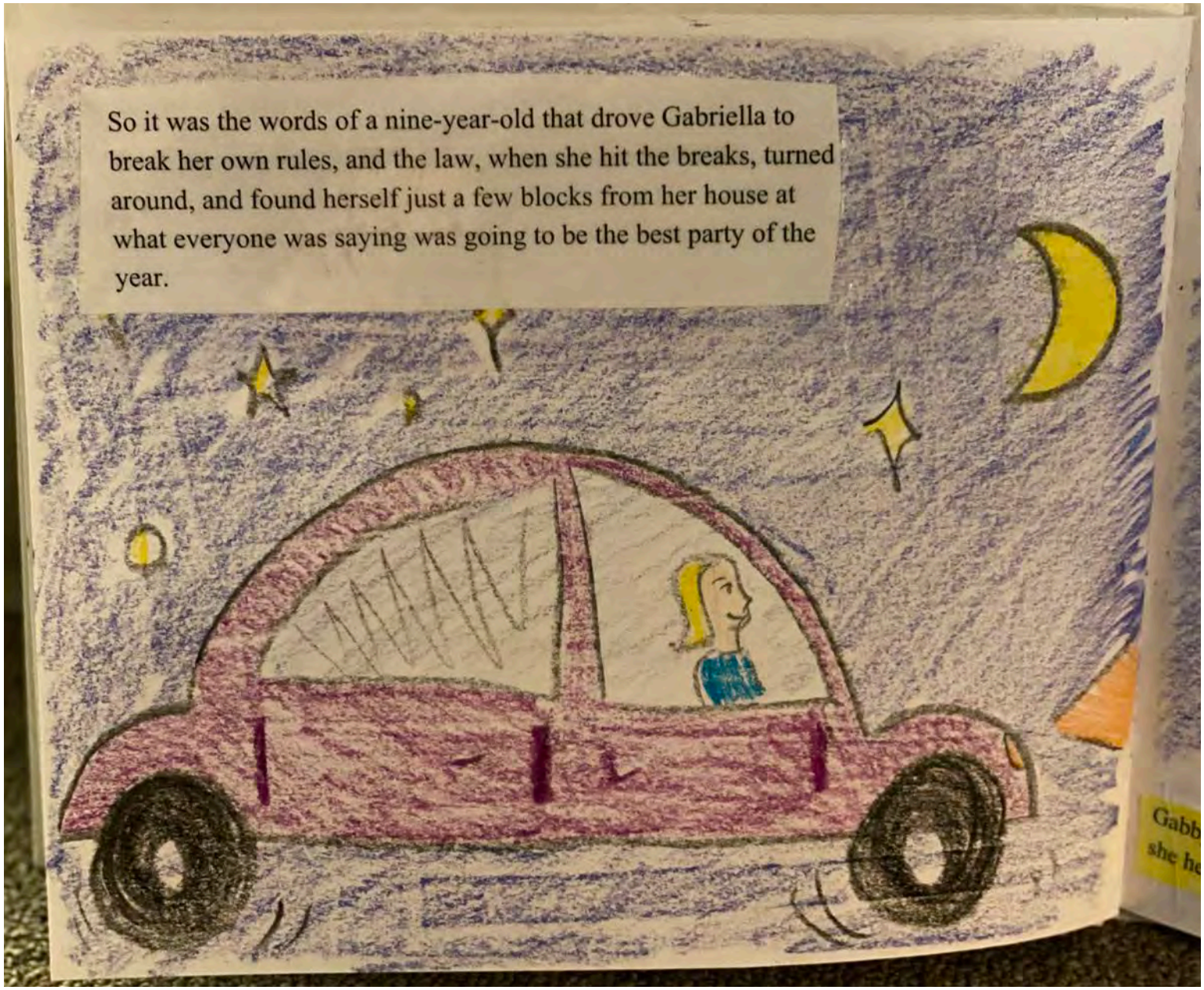
"Mom let me watch a PG-13 movie, but, Gabby have you been to one?"

"No Caleb, I haven't but its time to go to sleep! You need to deliver newspapers at 5 am, that's only in like 7 hours"

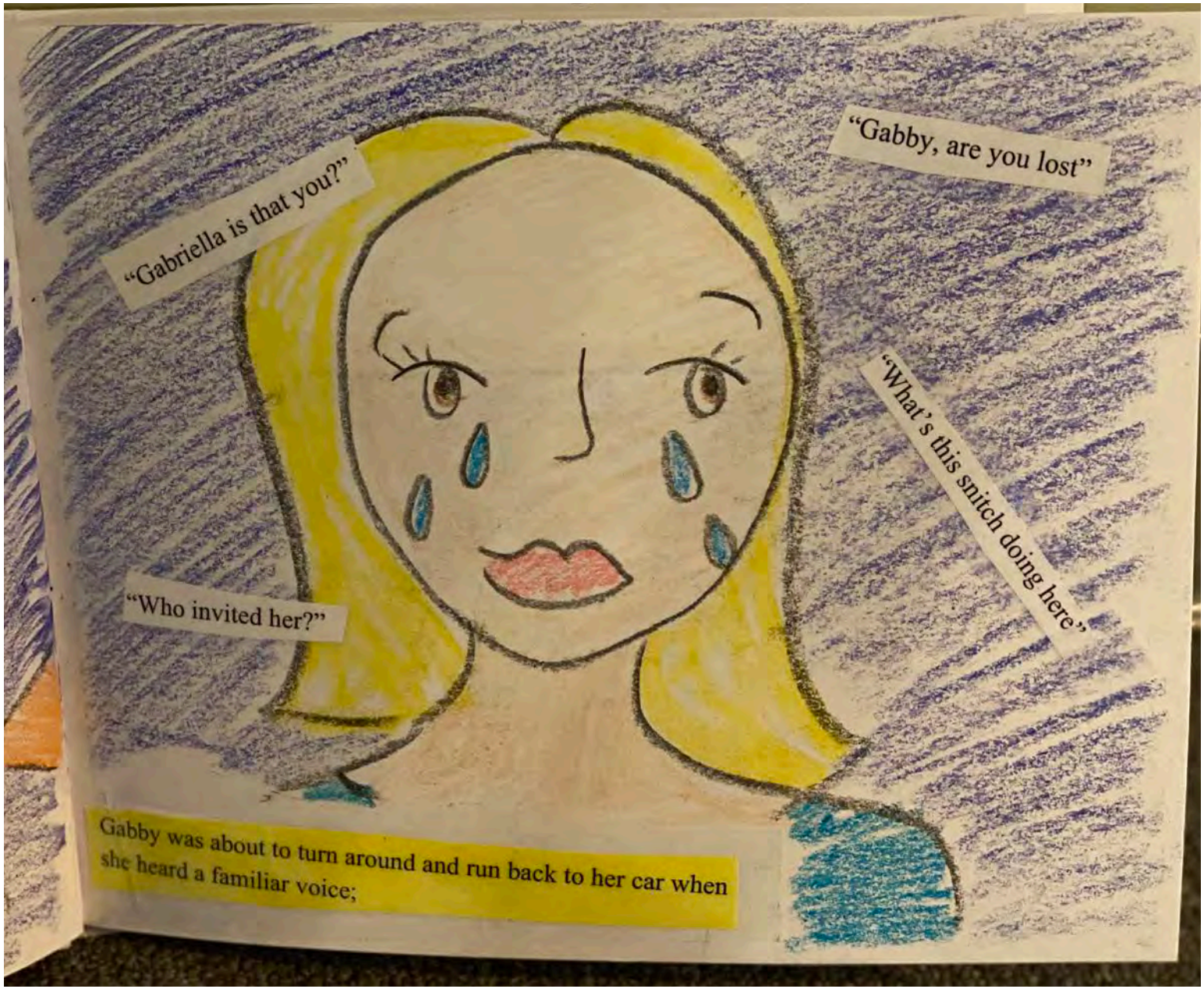
"Okay, Gabby… goodnight"

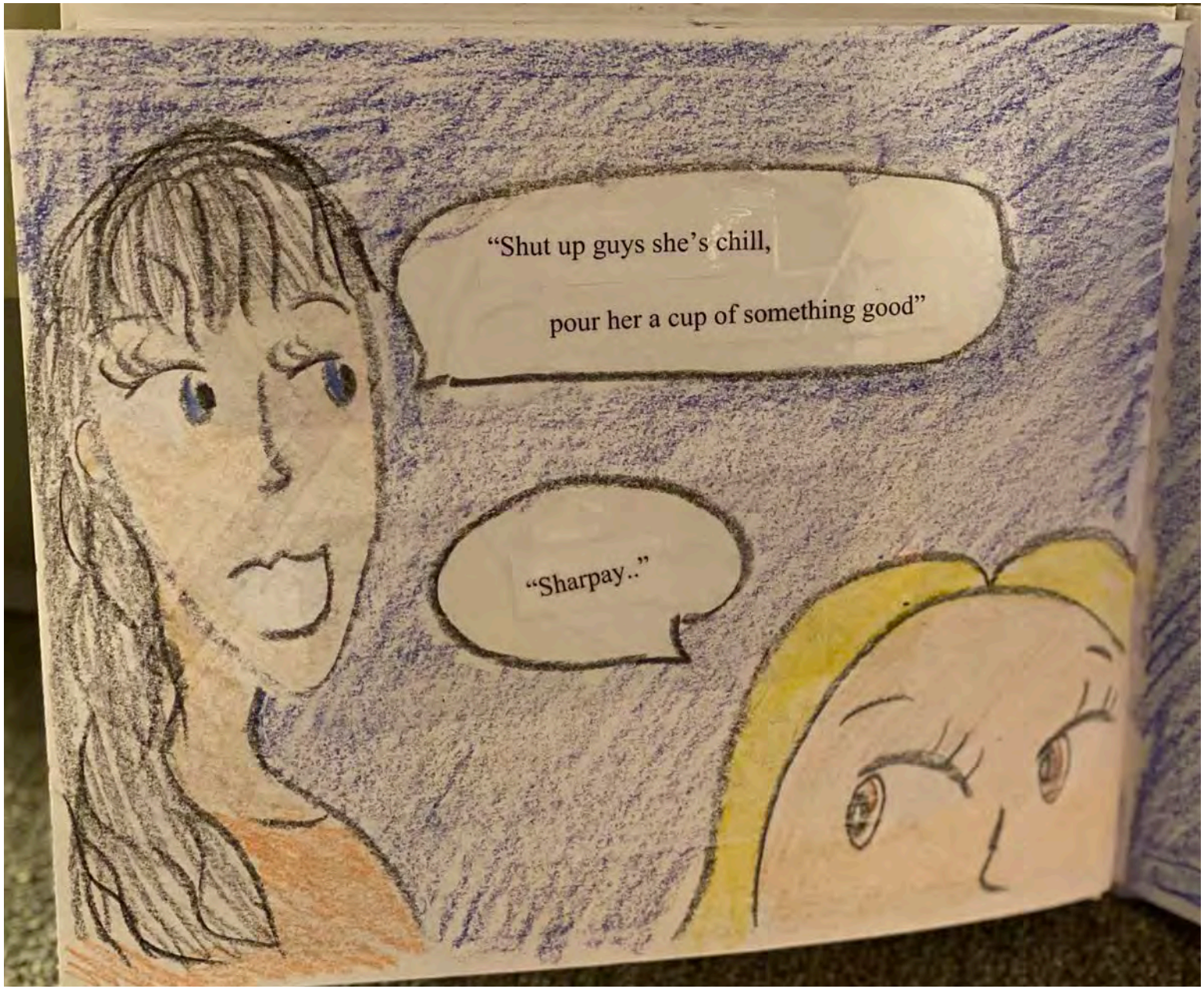
She left Caleb's house with a lot on her mind that night…

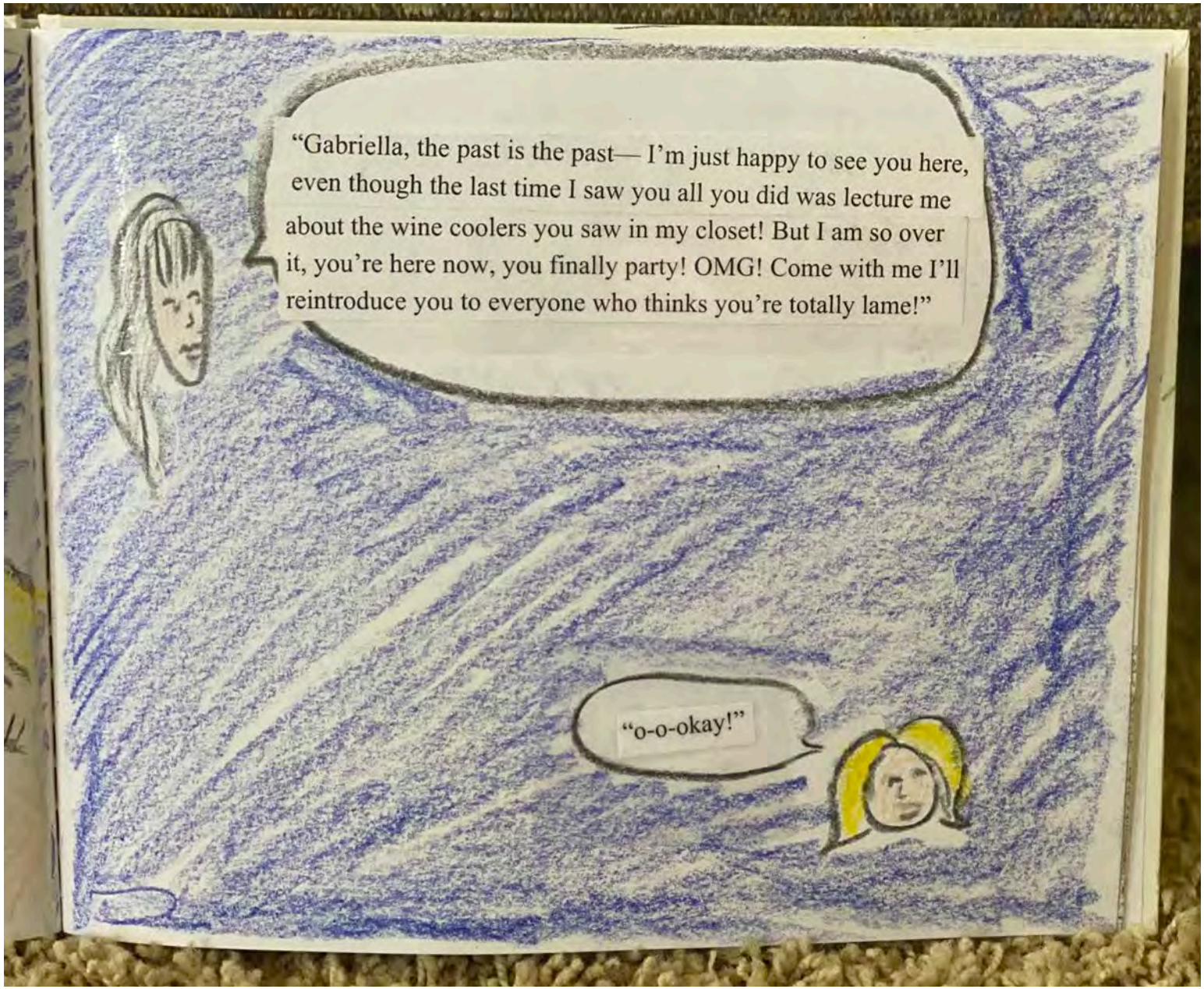
How does a nine-year-old know more about parties than me! I am double his age, a legal adult! I mean I have had a birthday party every year... one with balloons and cake— I had a glass of champagne on vacation with my grandparents. I mean, I am totally ready for college! Those frat parties won't know what hit them! But ew. I would never go to one of those. But I guess it is strange I'm 18 and I haven't even gotten tipsy before. My friends all go to parties or sneak a bottle of Malibu into the sleepovers they have.. the ones I'm not invited to...

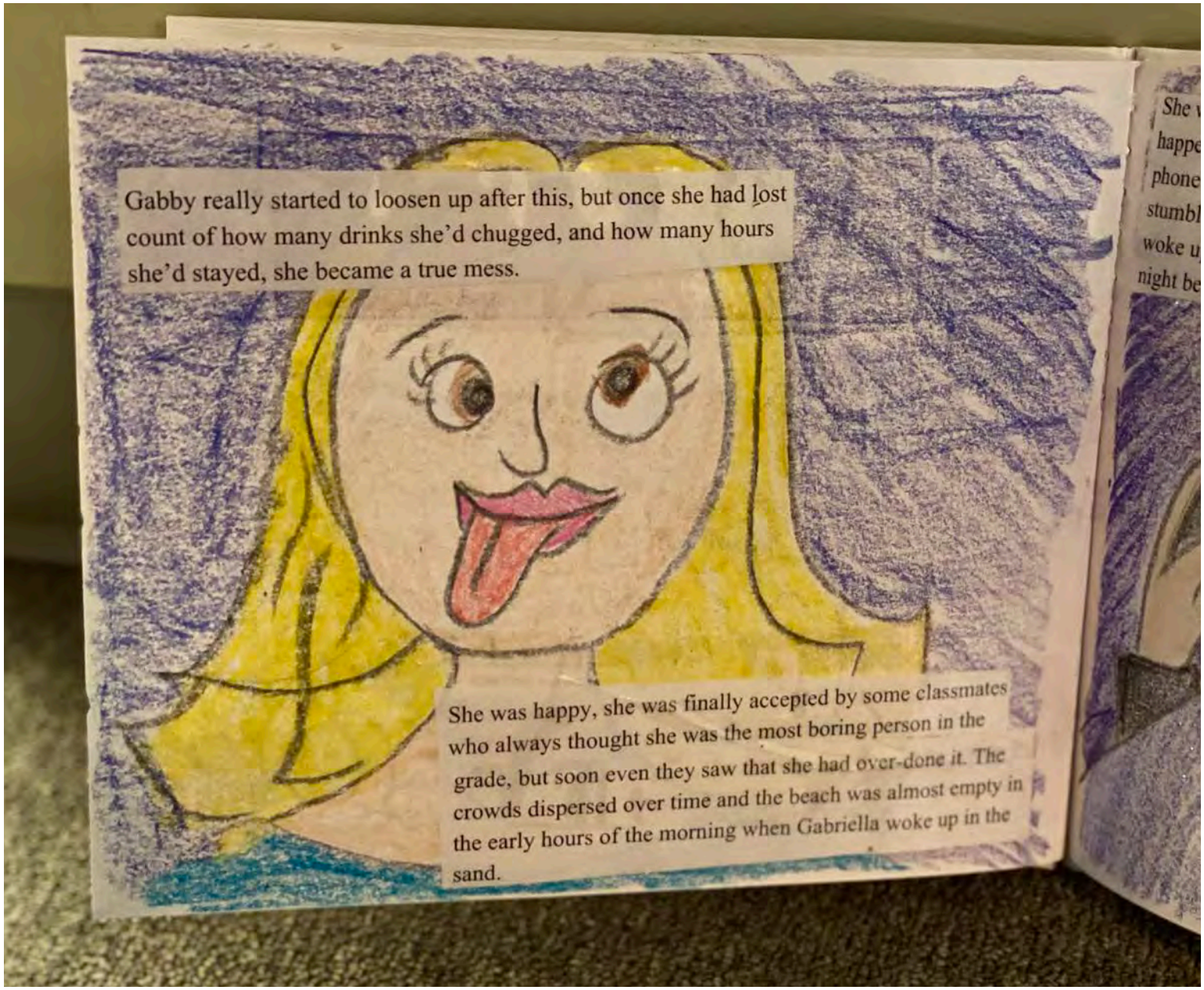


So it was the words of a nine-year-old that drove Gabriella to break her own rules, and the law, when she hit the breaks, turned around, and found herself just a few blocks from her house at what everyone was saying was going to be the best party of the year.


"Gabriella is that you?"
"Gabby, are you lost"
"What's this snitch doing here"
"Who invited her?"
Gabby was about to turn around and run back to her car when she heard a familiar voice;


"Shut up guys she's chill,
pour her a cup of something good"
"Sharpay.."


"Gabriella, the past is the past— I'm just happy to see you here, even though the last time I saw you all you did was lecture me about the wine coolers you saw in my closet! But I am so over it, you're here now, you finally party! OMG! Come with me I'll reintroduce you to everyone who thinks you're totally lame!"
"o-o-okay!"


Gabby really started to loosen up after this, but once she had lost count of how many drinks she'd chugged, and how many hours she'd stayed, she became a true mess.
She was happy, she was finally accepted by some classmates who always thought she was the most boring person in the grade, but soon even they saw that she had over-done it. The crowds dispersed over time and the beach was almost empty in the early hours of the morning when Gabriella woke up in the sand.

She was still drunk, she didn't remember much of what happened just a few hours before. Gabby looked down at her phone and saw it was almost 6 in the morning. She panicked and stumbled to her car so she could get home before her parents woke up. For all they knew, she had babysat until 11 pm, the night before and was safely asleep in her bedroom.

She started driving, the sun began to rise but besides that, the world around her was still dark. She was definitely not safe to drive since her under-age veins were still pumping with a severe amount of alcohol. She did not consider it at the time, mostly because she was still intoxicated and not thinking right, but also he desperation to stay out of trouble kept her going.

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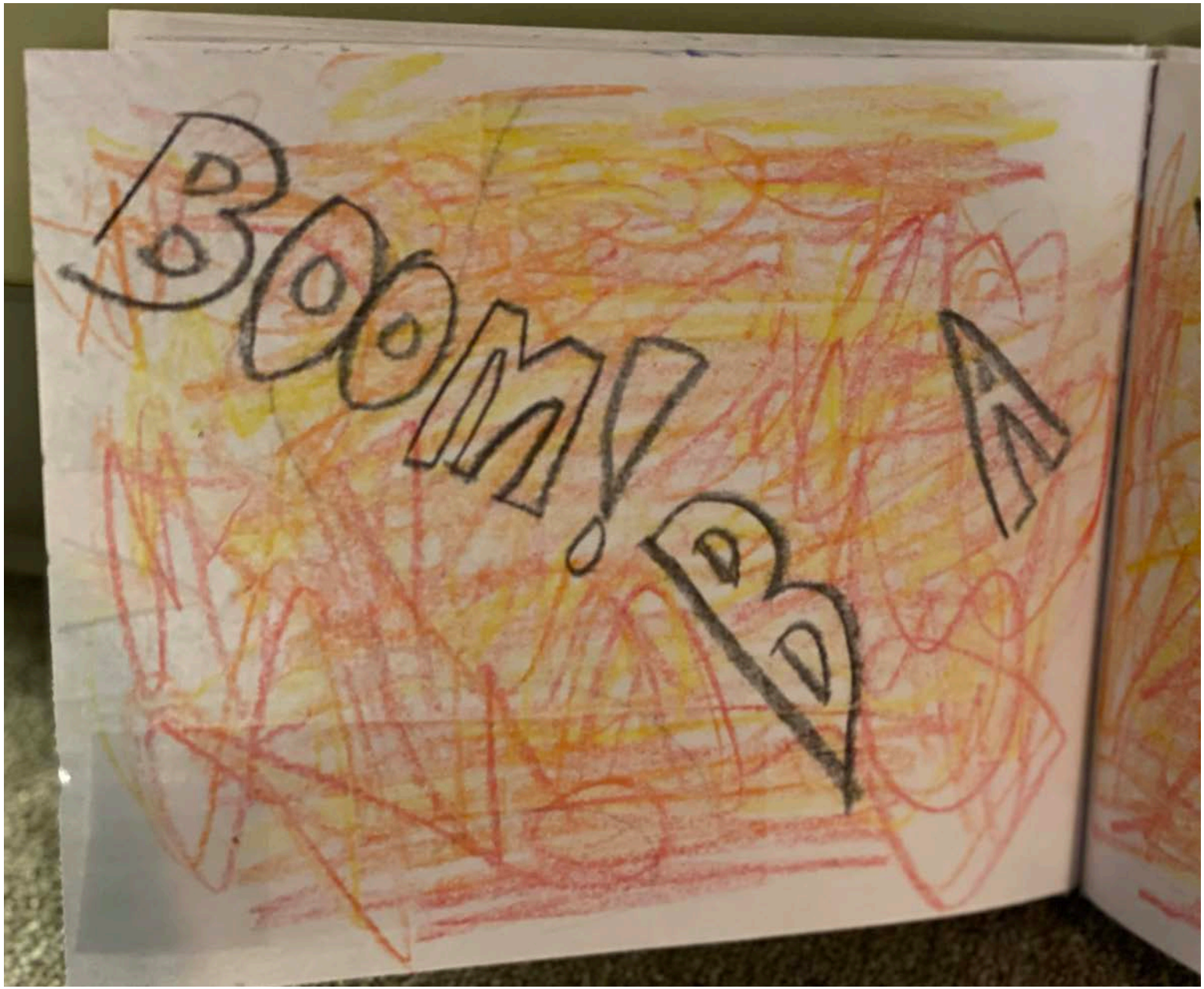
BOOM!
BA

NO
CRASH

August 3rd, 2020

Caleb Smith was killed early in the morning yesterday by a drunk driver. Caleb was only nine years of age and put a smile on the face of everyone he came across. He was killed while delivering newspapers. We wish he was still with us today, loving life and working hard but his time with us was cut short. Rest in peace Caleb, the community will miss you.

The drunk driver, 18-year-old Gabriella Jones, is in a coma at the hospital and is under arrest for the murder of Caleb Smith.

ARRIVE ALIVE...

so that other people can too.