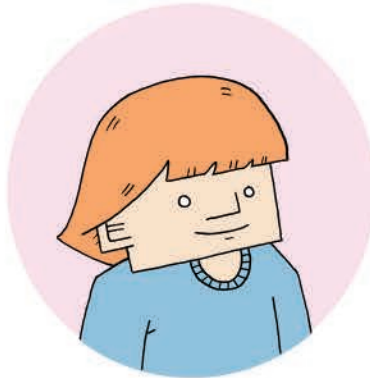
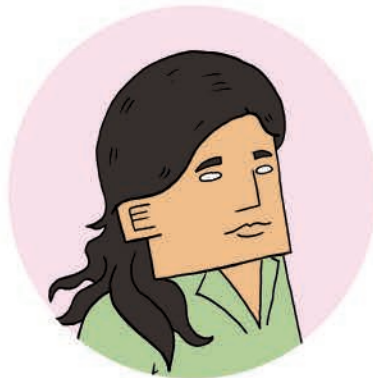
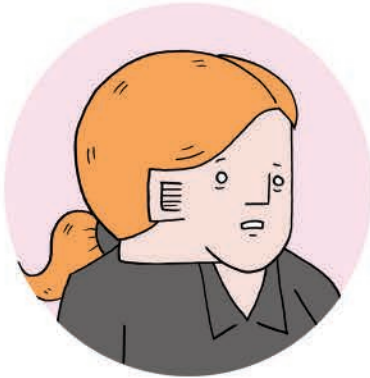


# GUMBALLS

BY: ERIN NATIONS





GUMBALLS #4 © 2017 Erin Nations.

Published by Top Shelf Productions, PO Box 1282, Marietta, GA 30061-1282, USA. Top Shelf Productions is an imprint of IDW Publishing, a division of Idea and Design Works, LLC. Offices: 2765 Truxtun Road, San Diego, CA 92106. Top Shelf Productions®, the Top Shelf logo, Idea and Design Works®, and the IDW logo are registered trademarks of Idea and Design Works, LLC. All Rights Reserved. With the exception of small excerpts of artwork used for review purposes, none of the contents of this publication may be reprinted without the permission of IDW Publishing. IDW Publishing does not read or accept unsolicited submissions of ideas, stories, or artwork.

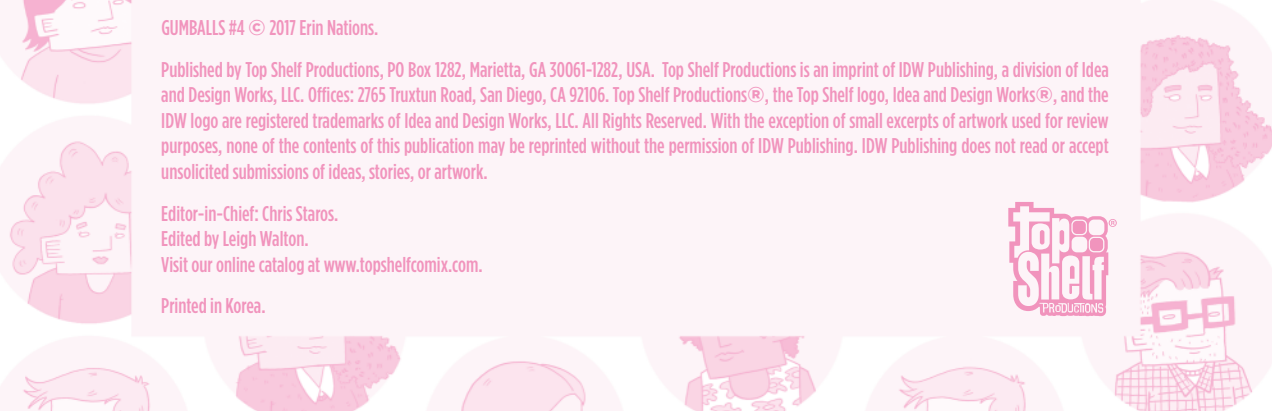
Editor-in-Chief: Chris Staros.

Edited by Leigh Walton.

Visit our online catalog at [www.topshelfcomix.com](http://www.topshelfcomix.com).

Printed in Korea.

Top Shelf  
PRODUCTIONS

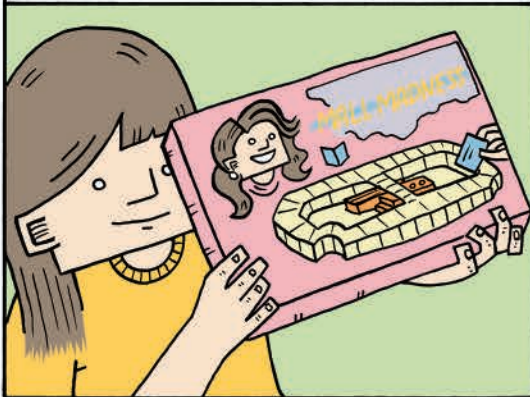


# THE POSSESSED BOARD GAME

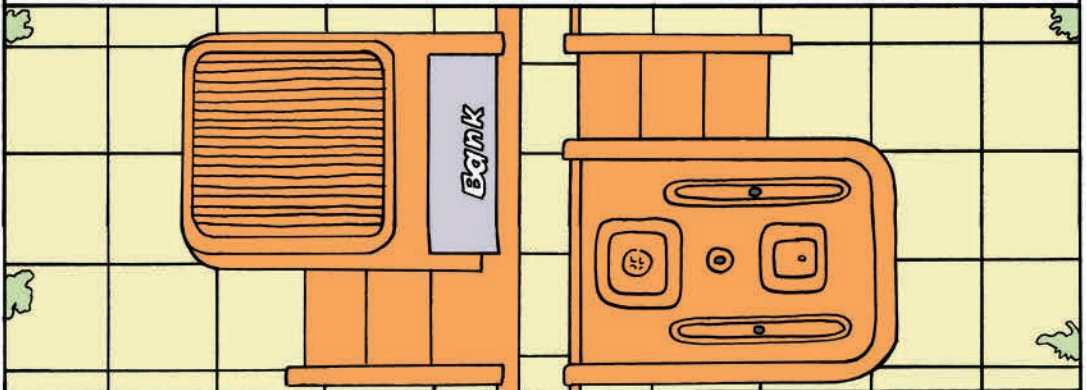


WHEN MY SISTERS AND I WERE KIDS, WE HAD A BOARD GAME CALLED MALL MADNESS. THE BOARD GAME WAS SET UP LIKE A TWO-STORY MALL, AND WE USED CREDIT CARDS TO BUY THINGS AT PLACES LIKE "SUNGLASSES!"

THE FIRST PLAYER TO BUY SIX ITEMS FROM THEIR SHOPPING LIST AND RETURN TO THE PARKING LOT WAS THE WINNER.



THE BEST PART ABOUT THE GAME WAS USING THE SPEAKER BOX—THIS LITTLE PLASTIC BOX, WITH A SPEAKER, SET IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BOARD. IT MADE ANNOUNCEMENTS LIKE, "SALE AT THE FASHION BOUTIQUE." THERE WAS ALSO A SLOT TO STICK A FAKE DEBIT CARD IF A PLAYER WANTED TO WITHDRAW SOME CASH FROM THE BANK. THERE WAS A SLOT FOR CREDIT CARDS ON THE OTHER SIDE.





SOMETIMES, DURING A PLAYER'S TURN, AN EAGER VOICE FROM THE BOX PIPED UP. IT TOLD THE PLAYER TO MEET A FRIEND AT THE PIZZA SHOP BECAUSE THEY WERE HUNGRY. OTHER TIMES THE BOX WAS SASSY.

YOUR ITEM COST FIVE DOLLARS MORE!

IT WAS DEMANDING.

GO TO THE RESTROOM!

IT WAS TERRIBLY INCONVENIENT.

BANK CLOSED.

EVEN THOUGH WE LOVED THE SPEAKER BOX, WE WERE CONVINCED IT WAS POSSESSED BY A DEMONIC ENTITY! THE GAME WOULD GO UNTOUCHED FOR WEEKS. THE BOARD WOULD BE FOLDED UP IN A BOX. ALL THE LITTLE PIECES AND COMPONENTS WOULD BE STORED IN THEIR PROPER PLACE. THEN, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, WHILE WE WERE TUCKED AWAY IN OUR BEDS, THE LITTLE BOX SPOKE TO US.

OOH! LONG LINE. TRY AGAIN LATER!

WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?

YOU HEARD IT TOO?

YEAH! IT CAME FROM THE LIVING ROOM.

I THINK IT WAS MALL MADNESS!

# IRRATIONAL FEARS

ONE WEEK ON TESTOSTERONE.

I WONDER WHEN I SHOULD COME OUT TO MY COWORKERS? I SHOULD PROBABLY TELL THEM BEFORE I START TO PHYSICALLY CHANGE AND MY VOICE DROPS.



3 MONTHS LATER.

WHERE ARE YOUR PEPPERS?

OVER THERE, IN FRONT OF HER.

IF I WANT THEM TO USE THE RIGHT PRONOUNS, I NEED TO COME OUT.



6 MONTHS LATER.



FUCK IT. I'M NOT OUT. PEOPLE CALL ME, "SHE/HER". PEOPLE SEE ME AS A GIRL. I MIGHT AS WELL PEE WHERE I FEEL COMFORTABLE.



IT DOESN'T BOTHER ME THAT I USE THE WOMEN'S RESTROOM. I DON'T CARE WHICH RESTROOM I USE. THE GENDER INSCRIBED ON THE DOOR, AND THE GENDER OF THE PEOPLE INSIDE THE ROOM, HAVE NO BEARING ON HOW I IDENTIFY. I JUST WANT TO USE A TOILET BEHIND CLOSED DOORS. I WANT TO USE A RESTROOM WHERE I WON'T BE CONFRONTED, STARED AT, HARASSED, OR ASSAULTED. I'LL USE ANY RESTROOM I FEEL SAFE AND COMFORTABLE IN. AS LONG AS PEOPLE ARE SEEING ME AS A GIRL, I WILL USE THE WOMEN'S RESTROOM BECAUSE IT MAKES ME FEEL COMFORTABLE AND SAFE. I'M PROBABLY AN ANOMALY IN THE TRANS COMMUNITY. I IMAGINE MOST DO NOT FEEL THE SAME WAY.





MANY TRANS PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE A CHOICE. THEY NEED TO USE THE RESTROOM THAT MATCHES THEIR GENDER IDENTITY BECAUSE IT'S ESSENTIAL TO THEIR MENTAL HEALTH. BEING FORCED TO USE A SPACE THAT IS DESIGNATED TO A GENDER THAT ONE DOES NOT IDENTIFY WITH MAY CAUSE DYSPHORIA AND STRESS.



TWO YEARS LATER.

I STILL HAVE NOT COME OUT AT WORK, AND I HAVE NEVER CORRECTED A COWORKER WHO HAS MISGENDERED ME. I DON'T HAVE TO. MIRACULOUSLY, BECAUSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA, WORD OF MOUTH, AND THE OBVIOUS PHYSICAL CHANGES, PEOPLE FIGURED IT OUT.



IT'S A PRIVILEGE TO EXPERIENCE SUCH A PHENOMENON. IT DOESN'T HAPPEN EVERYWHERE. MAYBE IT'S A SIGN THAT PEOPLE ARE CHANGING WITH THE TIMES. SIX YEARS AGO, AT A DIFFERENT STORE, ONE OF MY CO-WORKERS HAD A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE THAN MINE.

I TALKED TO MANAGEMENT AND THEY AGREE, I CAN USE THE WOMEN'S RESTROOM.

YEAH! YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO!

NOT EVERYONE HERE AGREES. SOME OF THE WOMEN HERE DO NOT WANT ME IN THERE. THEY HAVE BEEN VOCAL ABOUT IT.

THAT'S BULLSHIT!



I'M NOT SURE HOW MY CO-WORKERS FEEL ABOUT ME. SOME OF MY CO-WORKERS KNEW ME BEFORE MY TRANSITION, SO THEY KNOW I'M TRANS. A LOT OF CO-WORKERS ARE NEW AND THEY HAVE ONLY KNOWN ME AS A GUY. THEY MAY OR MAY NOT KNOW I'M TRANS. I ASSUME EVERYONE KNOWS I'M TRANS, BUT I CAN'T BE CERTAIN.

LOOKS LIKE THE COAST IS CLEAR.



I FEEL CONFLICTED ABOUT WHICH RESTROOM TO USE, SO I KEEP USING THE WOMEN'S BECAUSE IT STILL FEELS COMFORTABLE. HOWEVER, IT'S REALLY STRESSFUL.



