

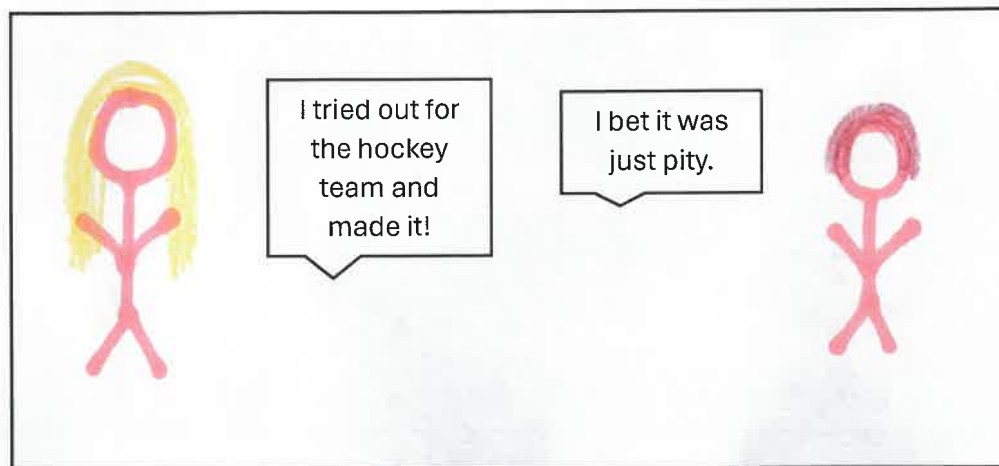
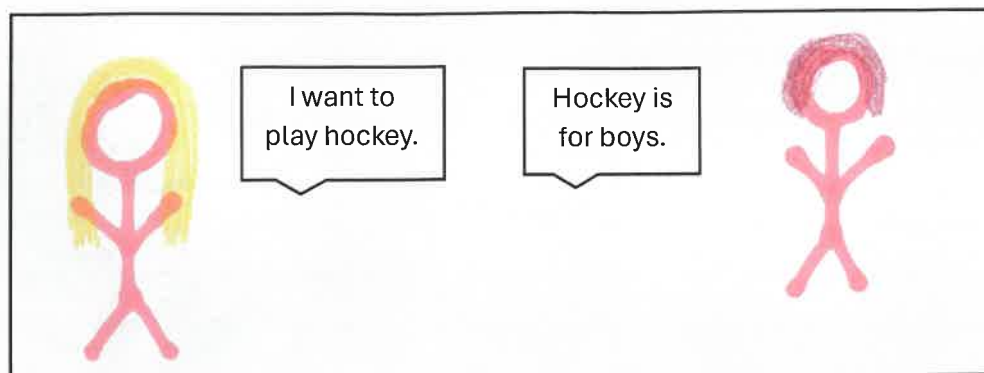
WOMEN

SPORTS &

BODIES

By Meghan and Kaytlin

Isabelle





My first hockey game was terrible, I didn't score or get an assist.

I told you. Girls cannot play hockey.



I feel like I need to prove myself.

There is nothing you could do to make me like you.



Well that really sucks.



You should just quit!

But I really love hockey.



Maybe I should just quit...

Willow



I think I
want to
join a swim
team!

Would
you join
a boys
or girls
team?



You can't
join a
girls
team, you
aren't a
real girl!



I'm so
excited
for tryouts
today!

Are you
sure you're
trying out
for the
right
team?



This is
so crazy.



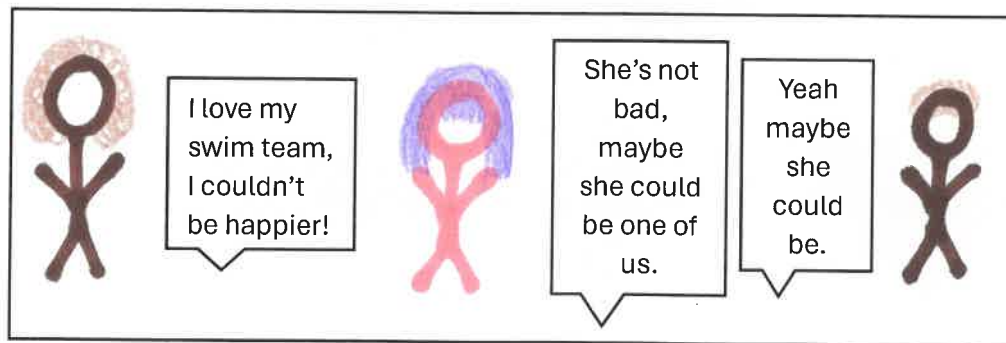
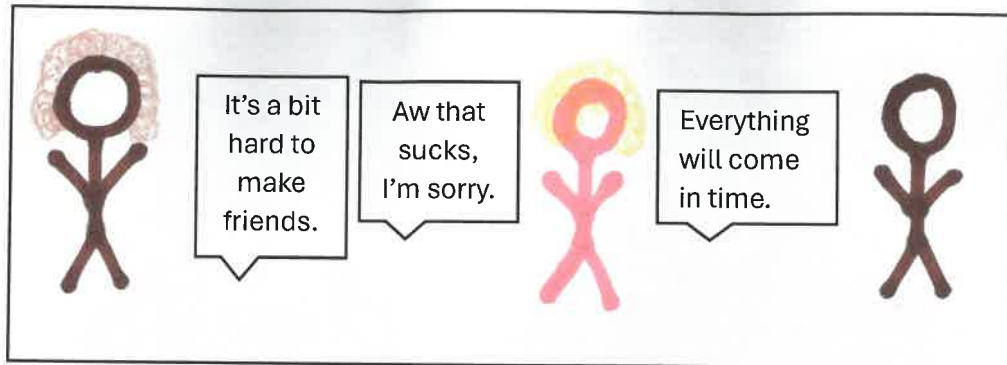
I made the
team! I
hope they
accept
me.

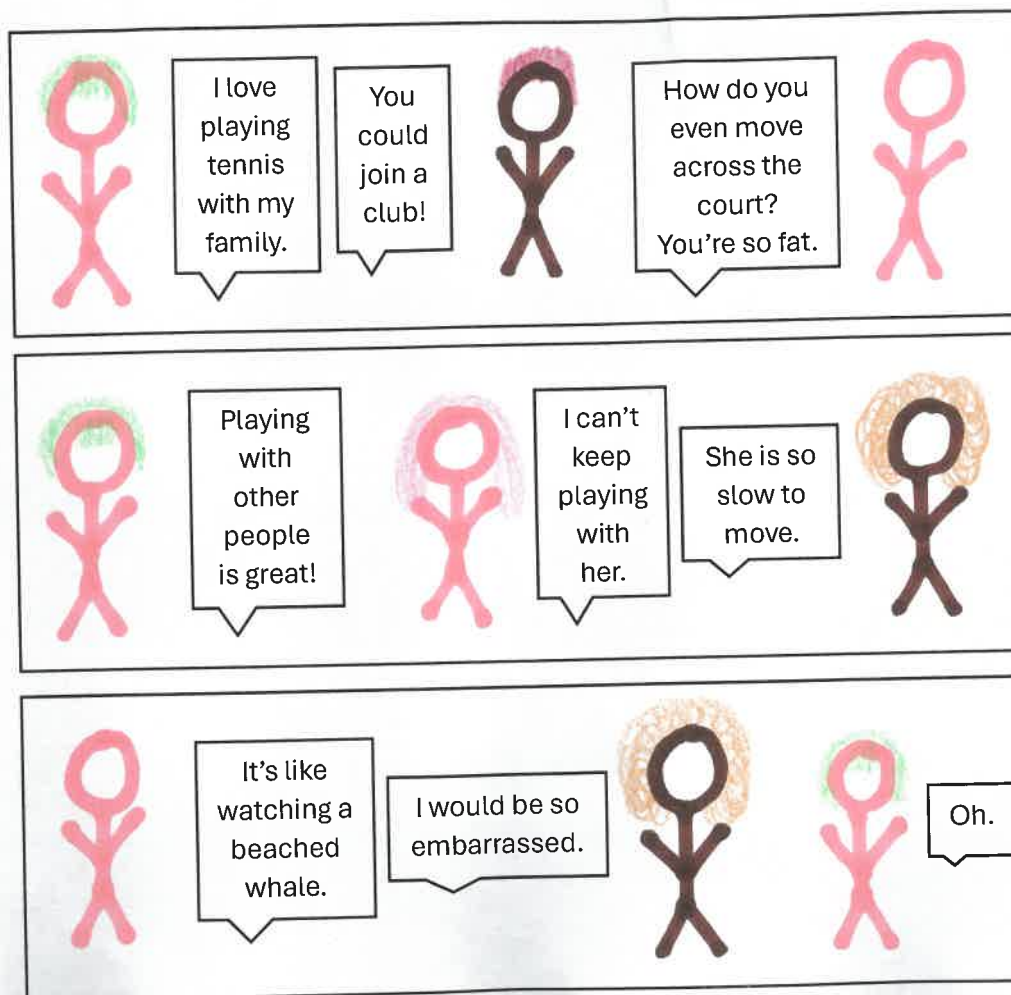
You won't
have many
friends and
you'll have to
work very
hard.

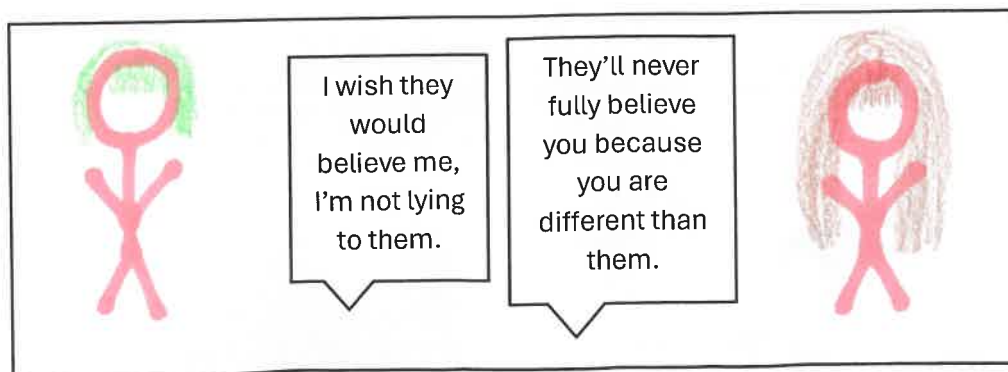
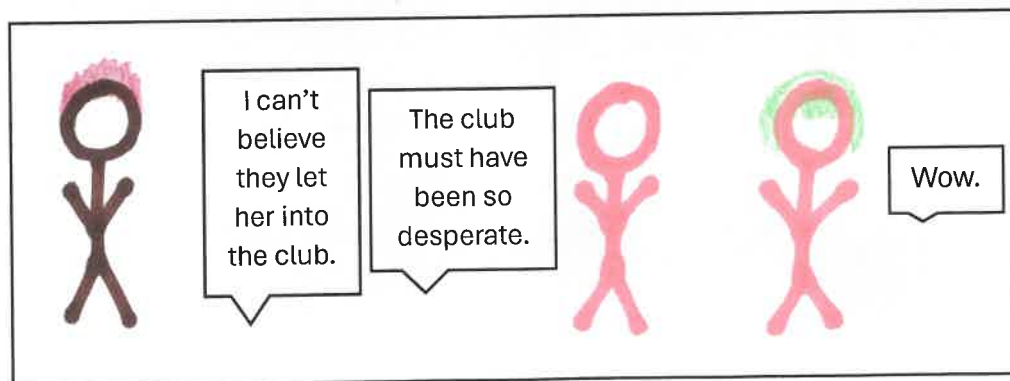


I kind of
feel bad
for her.





Vanessa



The Duet Between Dance and Bodies

By Meghan Potter

For most of my life, I was involved with musical theatre and dance. Before anyone argues with me, I'll say it once: dance **IS** a sport. I won't use this to explain my argument, but dance is just as valid as any other sport that comes to mind. I shouldn't have to say this, yet it shows another example of how our society puts anything with a feminine label lower in worth, but I digress. I devoted many years to dance, from electives in school to the two performing arts academies I attended. It was my whole world. I was convinced at twelve-years-old I'd grow up to be Broadway's next shining star---or on Vancouver's Broadway equivalent. Twelve-years-old was also when I first got access to social media, where my eyes opened to a side of the world I'd never noticed before. My rose-colored glasses grew foggy. I became self-conscious, self-aware. Performing was not the fantasy I created

in my head anymore. By the time I graduated in June of last year I knew it wasn't for me. How could I turn away from it? How could the very thing I loved with all my heart become tainted? That industry is cutthroat, I always knew that. But the judgement towards people's bodies, which was consuming my young mind and Instagram feed, was also prevalent in the world of dance. There was a certain 'look' that got people hired, and I didn't have it. The instructors always reminded us that in an audition how you looked trumped your talent---a thing us girls have been told outside of a dance context. I was never told in the middle of rehearsal, "*Meghan, I can see your lunch.*" That studio was like a second home to me. But even if no one ever let me know my stomach was noticeable, I still felt...worthless. Dancing requires flexibility. I'd grunt and grit my teeth, my legs unable to slide into a split. I'm tall, so I'd be put in the back or cast in male roles. I am not *protagonist pretty*; my casting type was old mothers or villains. My joy for costume fittings would quickly fade. As the seamstresses called out my measurements, I'd wince and calculate and wish I could blink and suddenly be thinner.

Sucked in, held my breath. It took them a week to find me a skirt for the classy *Holiday Inn* number we'd present at our Christmas recital. As the other girls twirled in their ingenue ensembles, I choked back a sob. "*We'll find you something, don't worry.*" Far from comforting. For a Year-End performance, my jazz class put us in sparkly, short dresses. The silver sequin sack they gave me was matched with a black underskirt. That no one else had. Another jazz routine featured rolled up bicycle shorts, a low-cut camisole, and an unbuttoned blouse slung on our shoulders. Businesswomen, but sassy. Sexy. Uncomfortable for me to watch now in the recording. That's another thing: girls got leotards and other skimpy, shimmering things, while the few boys got the same shirts and pants. Girls got strict rules for hair and makeup: tight bun with a center parted scalp and no bangs, red lips, dark eyes, clown-level blush. Boys got to be barefaced, and they would slick their hair back with gel. Us girls had to be identical dolls. It still made me feel like an imposter. An illusion, a reflection that I had never noticed in my mirror, but others wanted to see. The studio never did it on purpose; they never meant to make me see

my body as an ink spill, a bloated smudge on the pristine portrait of my castmates. I have cried over my passion as much as I have smiled. I picked apart my skin as I practiced my steps. Now that I am not in that environment, I am still insecure. That will not change, even if I tell myself that I am better than I used to be. I have traded the glaring spotlight for everyday stares. I am still on a stage, in front of a crowd. I am still performing for the praise of strangers. There will always be an audience, and I cannot hide behind a curtain.

Exhibit

By Meghan Potter

My skin itches all over,
a termite trail,
all sequined claws and silken fangs.
I don't dare to scratch
away the sensation, to slip
free from the chrysalis
before I am reborn,
the butterfly can't take flight just yet.

*Why waste the painstaking beauty
right before its debut?*

To soar on sky-high lashes and
even shorter skirts, swallowed
by the constricting tights, corseted
until I can taste my own
heartbeat.

*It always drum-pounds before a
performance, followed by the
crowd's roar.*

Who let lions into
the audience? To watch
us peacocks dance? To see
us strut around like fools?

Love us, please, our song cries.

We've put on this show just for you.

With feathers fluffed and a pouted beak,
I am a caged bird only let out to amuse,
to entertain.

I am the attraction behind the glass;
feel free to gawk, to judge,
to beg for more.