

I'm so mad at him. How could he think that I'd be involved in something like that?

Silja doesn't come back to shore.

Grandad shouts again.

He's angry so I inch away, back up to the house. Behind me I hear Silja cry up to Grandad.

"We're running away, both of us!" she yells.

It's fair enough, I think to myself, if she's angry. But does she have to assume that I'll always just do what she wants?

A little later, Silja creeps her way into my room.

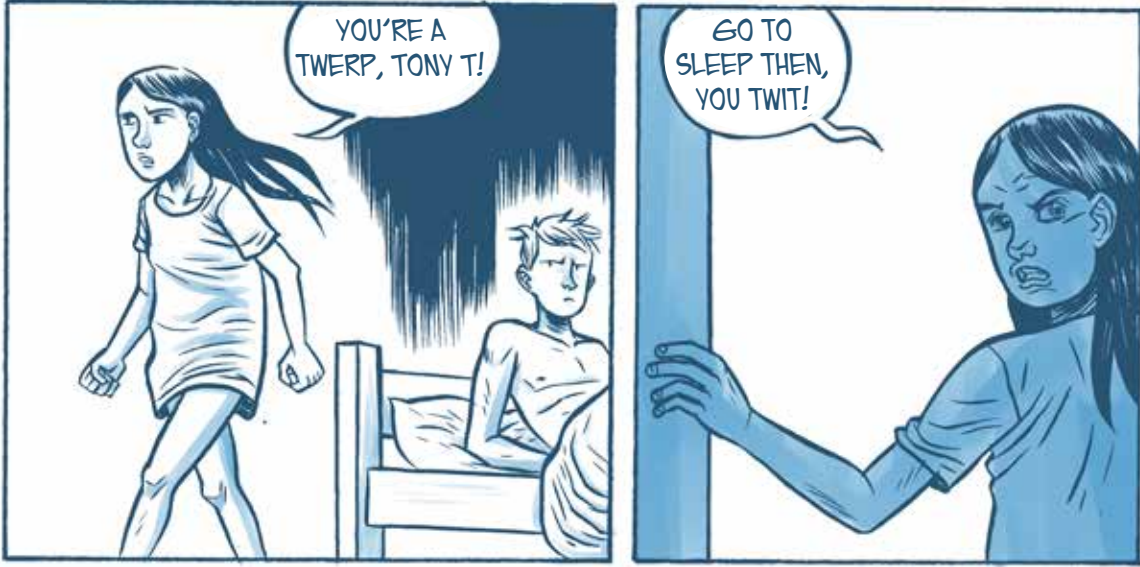
"Tony", she whispers.

I don't answer. She'll just think I'm asleep.

"Tony..."

She's not giving up.





I can't sleep for even a second. I'm so angry at Silja. And as soon as I think she's gone back to sleep, I creep out. Once again, I'm standing by the door into the attic.

I'm met by a faint, jittering noise. A noise that I didn't expect to hear.

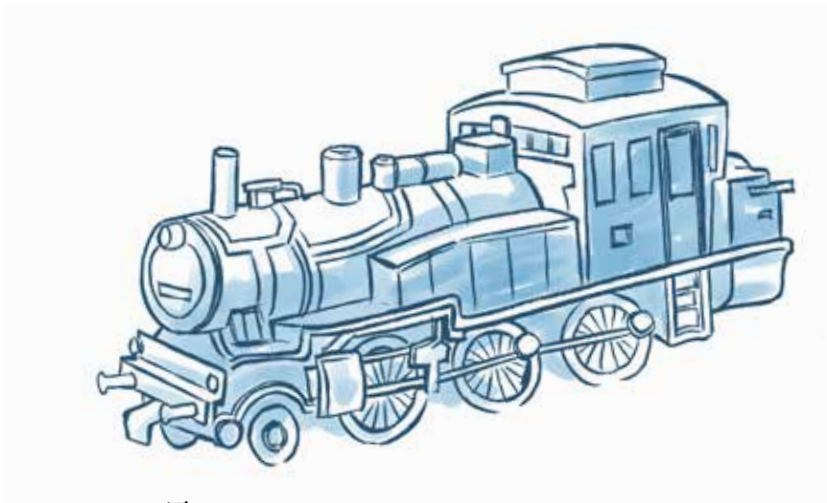
But I know what it is. It's coming from Grandad's train. His old electric train.

Is it running?

Is Silja in the attic and wreaking havoc with the train just because I didn't want to speak to her?

Silently, I open the door into the attic.





The train is running.

Its lights are twinkling. It's been a long time since I've seen the carriages moving. Dad's the only one who can ever be bothered to put the tracks together. He doesn't trust me. If he had seen Silja now he would have been furious.

The train swerves back round into the attic. With a quick flash, the small lights light up all the clutter inside. Carefully, I step over the train tracks.

"Silja?"

I don't need to wait for an answer. Arms are thrown over me. And hands cover my eyes - just like last time.

I can't see anything. I can only hear.

The train, still jittering along.

While Silja breathes in my ear.

I suddenly worry she might stick her tongue in my ear.

"Let go!" I cry.

She lets go. She throws herself over me with all of her weight. Her heart hammers against my back. Faster than mine, much faster.

Why is she so scared?

"Stop it, Silja," I say. "Let go!"

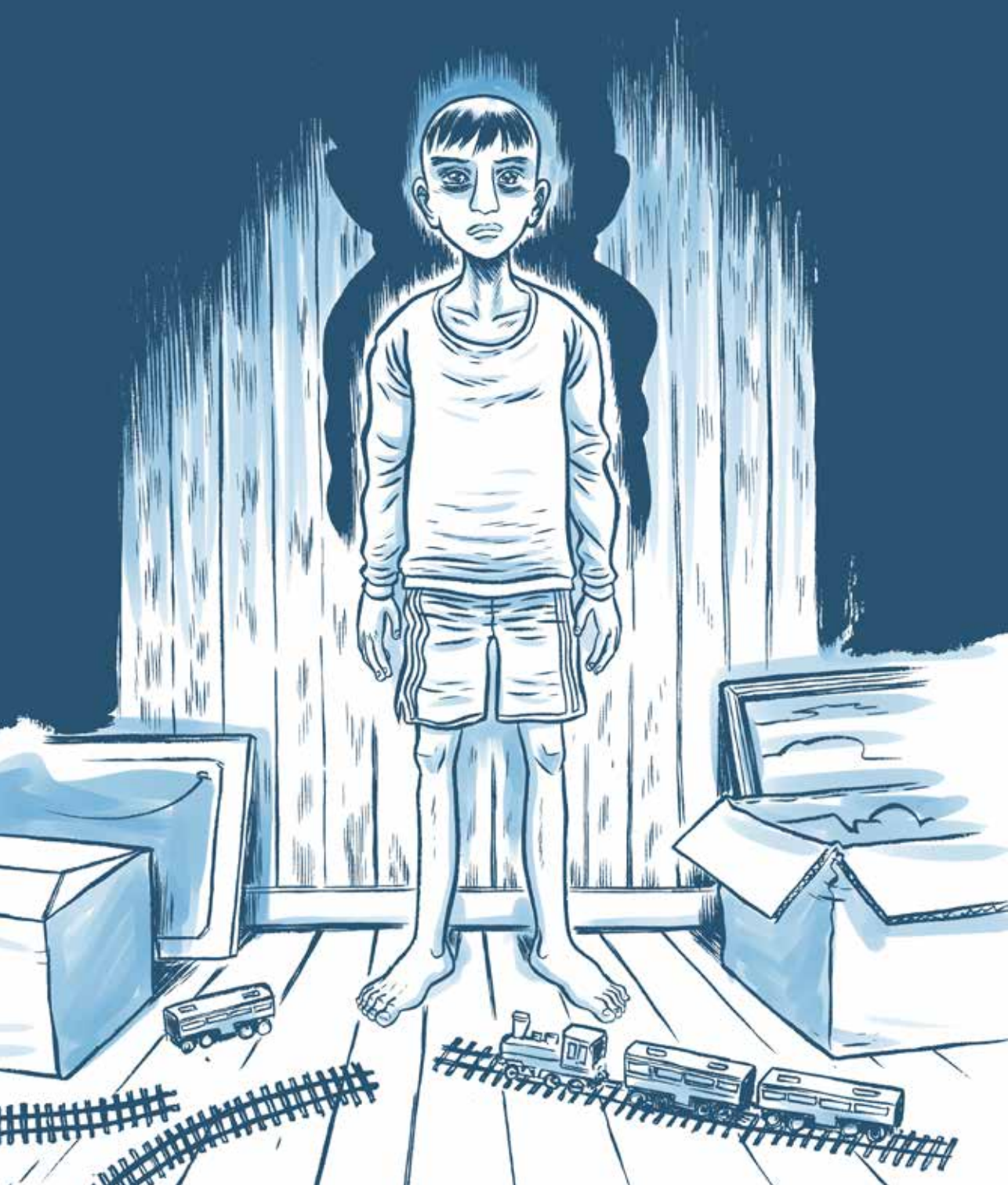
The train swerves away. It creaks a little. Then it begins its round again.

"If you let me go, I won't tell dad about the train. I promise," I squeal. "Please, Silja!"

But like always, Silja does the opposite of what I want her to. And now she's clinging on.

She grips even tighter than before.

Gingerly I put my hands over her fingers. I try to pry them away. We can't start fighting. We mustn't step on the train.



At that moment I realise: It's not Silja's fingers I'm holding.

The hands I'm holding are narrow. Like bone.

Suddenly they let me go. I can turn around and look. But it's not Silja I'm looking at!

The flashes from the locomotive reveal a boy. Thin, very thin. And his head close-shaven.

Was it a boy who licked my ear? I think to myself. But now I have to rethink everything about the police and Grandad. I have to rethink everything imaginable! Because this might be the boy that the police were looking for. He hasn't drowned. And mackerel haven't eaten him either.

"You're not dead?" I ask.

"Dead?" he replies.

The train flashes and jitters.

"You have to turn yourself in to the police." I tell him.

"The police?" the boy answers.

Then it hits me. This might not be a boy.

Maybe it's a girl standing before me?

The train swerves between us. And the boy, or the girl, picks up the carriages. The lights shine on her mouth.

A girl's mouth, I think.

A girl's lips.

The words tumble out of me. "You're a girl?"

He - or she - is staring at the open door.

He - or she - flicks their fringe. Their fringe is the only bit of hair that's long, the rest is all close-shaven.

*You are a girl! I realise. Perhaps you're not the one the police are looking for then, after all?*

The girl - now I'm certain it's a girl - wants to leave. She wants to leave the attic, and hurls the carriages away from her.

"Watch out, that's dad's train. He's really careful with it!" I tell her.

She puts the train back on its tracks. And I ask her again who she is. Because she can't just come into other people's houses and start living here. If she has a problem, she has to get help from the police!

"Ring the police. You ring them, Grandad is sick." I tell her. I hold my mobile out towards her.

Then she swipes my phone!!



She thrusts it behind her back.

Then she presses herself into the wall.

I have to reach my hands between the wall and her backside. I only want my mobile back.

She shoots her knee, hard, right into my crotch!

As my body reels from the pain, she topples me over and pins me down underneath her. I lie there, sprawled out, under a girl who is lighter, much lighter than Silja. And much, much stronger.

This girl has the weight of a bird and the strength of a bear!

I squirm around everywhere. Dad's traintracks fly all over the place. The girl realises and lets go straight away.

But before I can get to my feet, she's standing over me with a knife.

