







And there you are



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Ronaldo del Carmen





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Now it feels like a secret. It's not and it's not all that astonishing, ask any four-year-old about making up a person or a world: it's rather child's play. When I decided to make up the character of Nina it felt as common an endeavor as a walk down your neighborhood. But time happens and I thought a lot about what she'd do and why. I also had to keep notes. So I jotted them down in hurried scratches and drew incoherent panels. After years and a smattering of books I am surrounded by all the trimmings of what amounts to a real person. This is a curious thing.

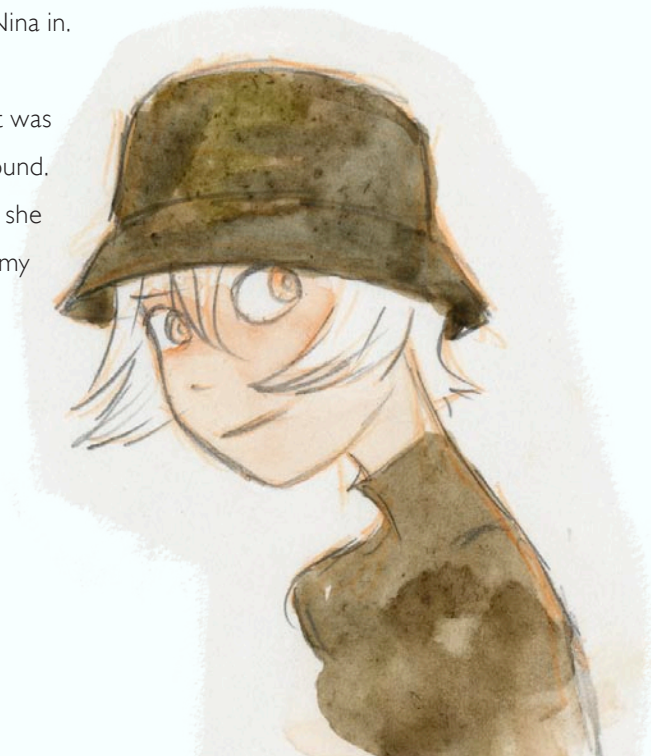


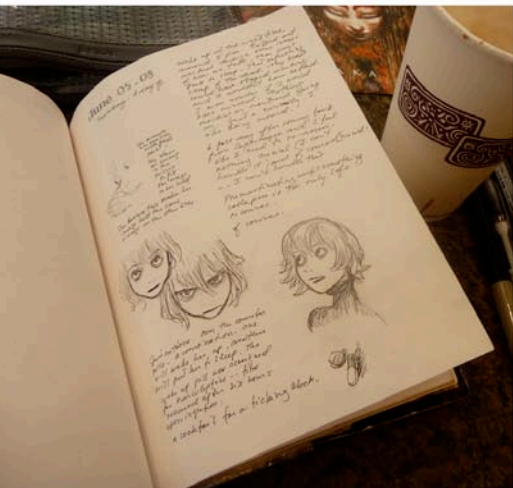
This is the laboratory. Nothing dramatic. Drawings of coffee cups, other patrons and such. Half thoughts of where Nina might go and what happens there.

I moved to the Bay Area chasing a dream of working for the best animation studio in the world. It was grand but it wasn't easy and the challenges tested me. My refuge was coffee. I sat in the coffee shop off of Piedmont Avenue called *Peets*. I would squirrel some time there just to draw and write on my journals.

As I was putting together this book you are now holding I had a moment of clarity about these journals—I had not really kept one until I started to make the book, *Paper Biscuit*, to house Nina in.

I always thought it was the other way around. So, as it turns out she is responsible for my journal habit.



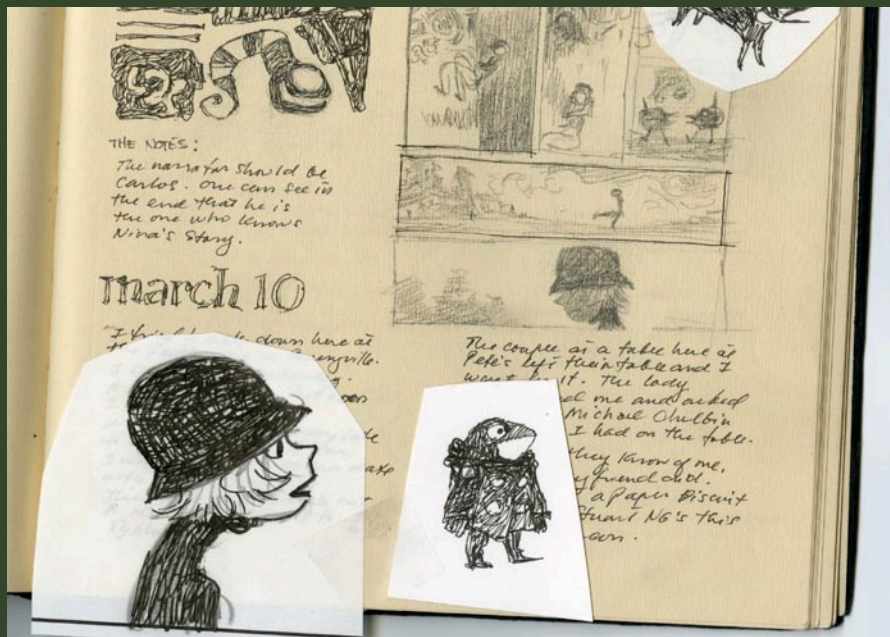


I planned for her to be perplexed about her confusing life. Walking around her dreams and be awake upsets her no end. I should know, I suffer from the same sleep disorder. One minute she's at home waiting for the time to get on a bus to a job interview and the next she's trapped in her dream realm again.



I draw people from my vantage point at the coffee house. I see a lot of people walking to their jobs or taking family errands and such.

Naturally Nina walks the same street.



I write stuff down and years later I re-read it and be thoroughly surprised, "I don't remember that happening at all?!" Journals are also a great folder for little drawings, fragments of ideas and notions. Never know where it leads.





Having Nina there to draw has been such a relief. I have something I can draw that I can explore any time. Like having a model handy.