THE WORST SUMMER EVER

Written and illustrated by Matilda Ruta

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It was the first day
of the summer holidays...

I sat in the gynaecologist's waiting room and had my regrets

I regretted that I went to the party and that I had been drunk

I regretted that I had stayed and slept over at Jimmy's.
And that he had forced me to have sex with him.
Above all, I regretted what HE had done!

But also that I hadn't defended myself.

I should have bitten him, fought him or just left.

It wasn't a fun party anyway.

If I had known beforehand what would happen, I would never have gone there.

It can't be me already!
Anna
Yes.
What am I supposed to tell them?
You can come with me.

"Hello. I've been raped."

I can't say that, can I?

I don't even know if that's what happened.

"Hello. Someone had sex with me but I was asleep and didn't want to but he did it anyway..."

That's no better either.

I can't do it. I won't be able to talk about it.

Why do I have to sit here, just because he's an idiot?

I'm going to screw it up.

They'll think I'm a stupid bimbo who drinks and sleeps around.

I knew this would just get awkward
So I went home instead.
Hope no one saw me.
It would be really bad if word got out about what happened.

Now, my friends knew, but that was bad enough.
Yet, in some strange way, they seemed to think it was all quite intriguing.
BIBIDIBIPP! BIBIDIBIPP!
LISA
JIMMY IS A jerk U R 2 GOOD FOR HIM.
BIBIDI BIPP!
INBOX FULL DELETE?
10 UNREAD
LISA
DENISE
ANNA
ANNA
DENISE
ANNA
HEARD WHAT HAPPENED, THINKING ABOUT U!
It was like when a couple just broke up or got together.

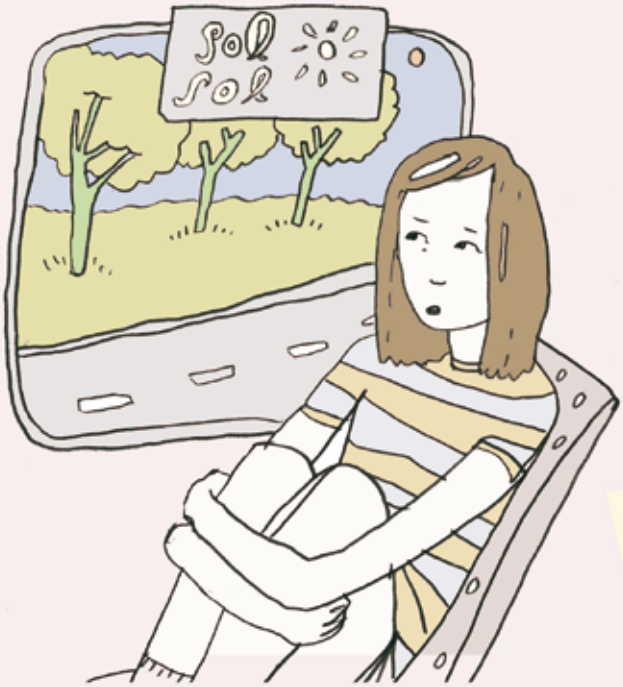
and nothing like what actually happened.
LISA
I NEVER THOUGHT THAT ABOUT JIMMY. SO SICK!
JENNIFER
DON'T GO TO THE POLICE
JIMMY IS A NICE GUY.
I couldn't handle any more arguments.
BIBIDIBIPP!
BIBIDIBIPP!
BIBIDIBIPPP!
i just wanted everything to be normal again

But no...
Hello!?
Hi. What are you doing? How are you feeling?
It's okay. I'm on my way home.
You want to do something tonight?
But what... aren't you... like...
What? A victim who ONLY gets to sit at home and be DEPRESSED?
or what?

I'm so stupid.
Why did I say that?
KLICK
After all, Denise was the last person I wanted to argue with right now.
BUSS 123
But I didn't want to be a victim.
I just wanted to pretend that nothing happened.

but maybe Denise was right.

Maybe I was feeling too normal.



If you have been raped, your life is supposed to be in ruins..

But I felt almost normal.

In the evening I called Denise.

What the hell does she think?

That I would have coffee with Jimmy's friends?

Even if I wanted everything to be normal, it really wasn't.

shit - shit - shit !

And now I was that raped girl again. Laying in bed at home, crying.

Maybe I was supposed to get self-destructive now? I tried shouting a bit, but that only felt weird.

She had told them!

What a bloody mess Sara!
yeah...
It was good to talk to Sara after all
you have to report him.
Have you been to the police? and the doctor?
No it's just too much.
But you have to go to the gynaecologist! What if you're pregnant?
I know..

I can come with you. I'll call them and make an appointment.
Okay.
But Denise, I don't want you to tell anyone else about this.
No I understand. Sorry.
I just want people to know what a bastard he is
And those that I have told are all on your side!
"On my side"? Like it was a game?

And all I could do was to play my part...

Kevin is really mad at Jimmy now.

Okay.

and recruit new team members.

What did simon say?

I don't know. He got quiet. I think he was shocked.

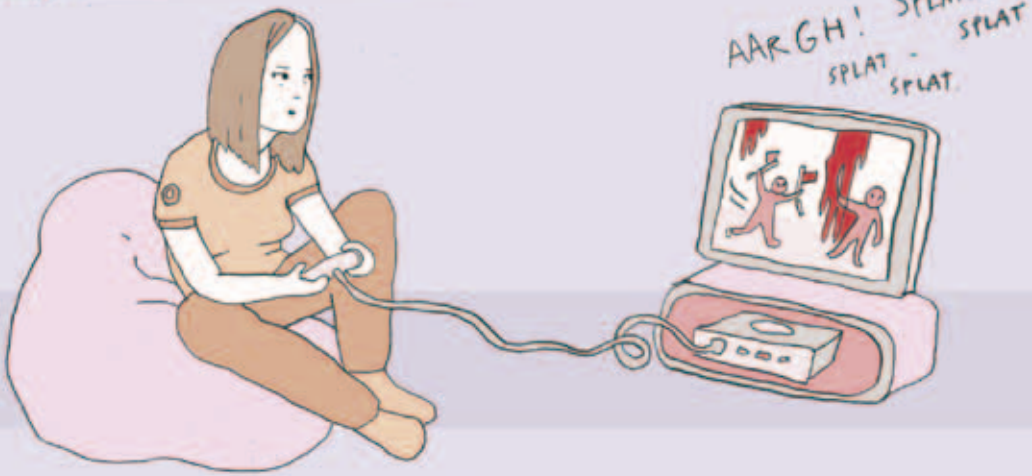
Have you told anyone else?

Just Anna and Lisa

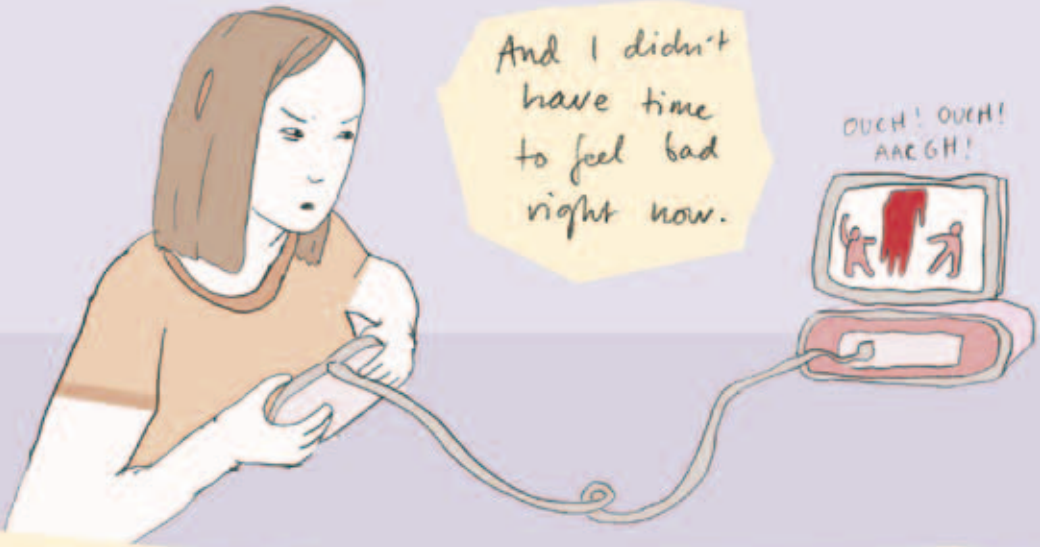
Yes I know, they texted me.

But please don't tell anyone else now!
Okay.
But you really have to report him to the police!
I'll see.
'' Report Jimmy to the police? As if he was a criminal? To accuse him of rape?
when the only thing he did was to have sex with me against my will...

After Denise had left I thought about if I should tell my parents or not.



But I would just start crying.



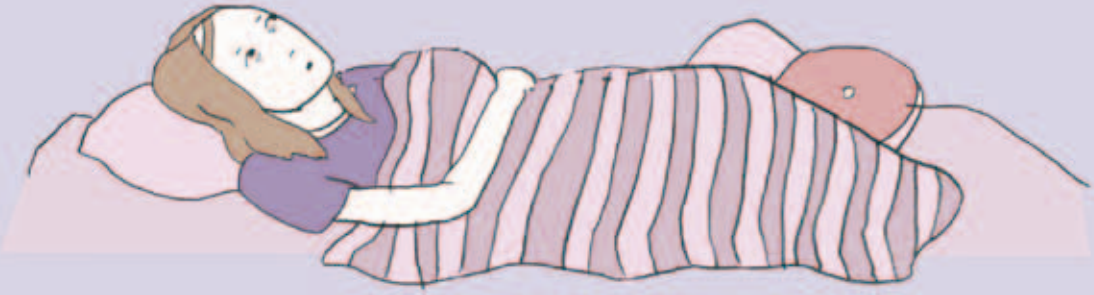
There were so many other things to think of.

Venereal diseases. Gossip. What if I was pregnant?
AAAARGH!
SPLAT - SPLAT
SPLAT
WHAT THE..!
DIE! DIE!
And what would happen in the fall when the term starts?
How are you feeling sara?
you look a bit pale?
I'M FINE!

What were people saying about me?

Did he regret it?

Was it really all that bad, what he did?



I'd think about anything as long as it kept me from thinking about what actually happened.

But it was there, so I didn't dare fall asleep

Because it came back to me in my dreams

The next day I went back to the gynaecologist with Denise. Now I sat in the waitingroom again.

I didn't know if I really wanted to. I had brooded over it all so much that I no longer knew what was right or what was wrong.

Hey, say something!
Sara?
yes.
All right. What brings you here?
Have you had unprotected sex?
Yes... I guess you could say that.

It felt like I was acting when I said it.

It was like I sat there and lied.

Because it was too weird to be true.

When did this happen?
last weekend.
We talked for a while about the party, and about what had happened.
So you were asleep when he did this?
I woke up.
Some of the questions were embarrasing
Do you know if he came?
What?

But then I realised that the reason she asked was that she took it seriously.

Talking to the doctor was a relief, but kind of scary as well

Because now that I had told her, there was no going back.

We usually advice people to make a report. Even if it's not certain that it can be proven in court that you have been raped.

But you have been subjected to an assault, and you might feel better if you report it.

She said that it wasn't my fault. I knew it already, but it was good to hear it from someone else.

But the risk that he might not be convicted troubled me.

Although a moment ago I didn't even want to report him

That I didn't feel like what he had done was terrible was one thing. But that others might think it was okay was very different.

The examination was not as bad as I had thought it would be.

I only had a couple bruises on my arms, wich she took pictures of.

After that a nurse took a blood sample and a urine sample

All this gathering of evidence felt strange.

But it was good to know that everything was documented.

So that I could report it later if I wanted to.

Okay, we are done for now. We will be testing for veneral disease and pregnancy.

I got an appointment for a return visit a week later.

And now I no longer felt unsure about if what Jimmy did was wrong or not.

She had asked what it would feel like if I were to meet Jimmy on the street.

I hadn't thought about that before, but now I kept seeing him out of the corner of my eye all the time.

What should I do if I met him?

Pretend like nothing happened?

Say hello?

If I reported him to the police, everyone would know what had happened.

But they probably would have found out anyway.

And if it was to go public, they might as well hear my version of it.

If he got away with it, he might do it again, to someone else.
After my second visit, I got an appointment to see a welfare officer.
I feel that ...
But I had nothing to say
I don't know.
It was as if my brain stopped working everytime I tried to think about it.

Now I knew all the reasoning by heart.

I know what he did was wrong.

But it didn't matter.

What happened doesn't define who I am

Because no matter how much I talked

I deserve a good life.

I still felt that a part of me was soiled.

And I have to move on with my life?"
But can you feel it? The things you talk about?
A few weeks went by. I tried other things but I couldn't stop thinking about what had happened

Because it made me angry
while I was going around feeling miserable,
his life probably went on as usual.
It really was the worst summer ever.
But I knew a time would come when I didn't feel this way any longer.

And some days were actually good.
Because now I knew that I had done what I could to feel better later on.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN FORCED TO HAVE SEX, IT'S GOOD TO HAVE SOMEONE TO TALK TO ABOUT IT. THE REACTIONS THAT FOLLOW FORCED SEX CAN BE VERY DIFFERENT FOR DIFFERENT PERSONS, BUT IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW THAT HELP IS AVAILABLE.

AS SOON AS YOU CAN, GET IN TOUCH WITH THE HEALTHCARE SERVICE TO GET TREATMENT AND RUN TESTS.

YOU ALWAYS HAVE THE RIGHT TO DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO GO THROUGH AN EXAMINATION OR NOT, AND WHAT TESTS SHOULD BE RUN.

TO BE ABLE TO GIVE YOU THE BEST POSSIBLE HELP
IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE EXAMINATION IS AS THOROUGH
AS POSSIBLE BUT LET THE PERSONNEL KNOW IF IT
FEELS DIFFICULT OR IF YOU FEEL AFRAID.

YOU FIRST GET TO DESCRIBE WHAT HAS HAPPENED. THEN THE
DOCTOR EXAMINES YOU TO SEE IF YOU HAVE ANY INJURIES
AND TAKE SAMPLES FOR DIFFERENT TESTS. THE SAMPLES
ARE USED TO CHECK IF YOU HAVE ANY VENERAL DISEASE,
AND TO SECURE EVIDENCE IN FORM OF SPERM, SALIVA OR BLOOD.

YOU ALSO GET TO LEAVE A URINE SAMPLE, AND A NURSE TAKES A BLOOD SAMPLE TO CHECK IF YOU HAVE AN INFECTION, IF YOU ARE PREGNANT, OR IF THERE ARE TRACES OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS.

SOME OF THE SAMPLES ARE ANALYSED BY THE HEALTHCARE SERVICE AND YOU GET THE RESULTS OF THESE TESTS AT YOUR RETURN VISIT.

IF YOU CHOOSE TO REPORT THE ASSAULT, THE POLICE WILL RETRIEVE THE SAMPLES IN ORDER TO SECURE EVIDENCE.

IF YOU CANNOT DECIDE WHETHER TO REPORT IT OR NOT, THE SAMPLES ARE KEPT SAFE FOR TWO YEARS.

ALL HEALTHCARE PERSONNEL ARE SUBJECT TO PROFESSIONAL SECRECY.

YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO CALL KVINNOFRIDSLINJEN, SWEDEN'S NATIONAL TELEPHONE HELPLINE FOR WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE. RELATIVES AND FRIENDS ARE ALSO WELCOME TO CALL US. WE ARE SOCIAL WORKERS AND NURSES USED TO DEALING WITH PEOPLE IN CRISIS. WE CAN ALSO GIVE YOU ADVICE ON WHERE YOU CAN GET HELP LOCALLY.

THE CALL IS FREE OF CHARGE AND WILL NOT APPEAR ON YOUR PHONE BILL.
WE ARE ALWAYS OPEN, 24 HOURS A DAY, ALL YEAR ROUND.
YOU CAN ONLY CALL KVINNOFRIDSLINJEN FROM SWEDEN.

KVINNOFRIDSLINJEN:
020-505050

WWW.KVINNOFRIDSLINJEN.SE

The worst summer ever is a stand-alone sequel to the booklet The first weekend in June.

The books are written and illustrated by Matilda Ruta in cooperation with The National Centre for Knowledge on Men's Violence Against Women at Uppsala University

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