

WHO INVITED YOU?

by

Lynn Ermann

Graphic Novel
ermann@mac.com

1R (right)

Panel 1: a screen on a stage in an auditorium with the tops of the heads of a few rows of audience members visible in front

On the screen: photograph of view from a hilltop into a valley with tiny smudge in the distance far off on the left

Off-panel speech bubble with stem going to lower right (to Dani): See there in the distance, that tiny patch of gray? Like a cloud.

Panel 2: slightly wider shot of the auditorium setting so that we see there is a table of panelists in silhouette near the screen and a woman turned around pointing at the screen

On the screen: a zoomed in version of the slide with the 'cloud' at the center; now we see it is comprised of black dots (a small swarm of something)

Dani: There. More would come, many more.

Panel 3: long panel: view from behind of a lanky girl with ponytail in jeans/parka standing on a rocky ledge and taking a photograph of the valley below with the setting easily identifiable as the one in the slide

Dani narration: Pilot Rock, Kentucky. March 11th, 2013.

Panel 4: closer on the girl, about twelve years old and African American, as she examines the image on her digital camera

Off-Panel speech bubble: Dani! Dani!

Dani narration: I was twelve.

Panel 5: wider shot as she's partway turned around to face a little boy, age seven, in the clearing near the end of trail behind her

Dani: Stop following me.

Dani narration: Sam was seven.

2L (left)

Panel 1: closer shot of Sam facing Dani

Sam: Daddy's waiting for you.

Panel 2: wide overhead shot of Dani and Sam walking down the hill

Dani: You just want ice cream.

Panel 3: car entering a town (and you can see Dani and Sam in back) and a view of a street with a stop sign, a church, a few two-story brick buildings with awnings and CLOSED signs on the windows; an ice cream shop

Dani narration: There were only a few shops on Main Street then.

Panel 4: Sam standing at tiny ice cream counter

Man behind counter (seen below neck): What'll it be?

Panel 5: boy considering

Dani O-P: Sam?

Sam: I'm thinking, Dani.

Panel 6: the family leaving the ice cream shop with father in rear, Dani holding Sam's hand and Sam holding his ice cream cone

3R

Panel 1: Sam with chocolate ice cream all over face; Dani looking down at him (note re his clothing: here and in above scene, he is dressed in a plaid short-sleeved shirt and he's swimming in corduroys bought two sizes too big to grow into)
Dani: Oh, Sam! You're making a mess.

Panel 2: She's kneeling and wiping chocolate off his face

Sam: Sorry, Dani

Panel 3: CU of his fist crunching cone and ice cream dripping down hand

CRUNCH

Dani: Sam!

Panel 4: CU of Sam's eyes opened extra wide

Panel 5: left vertical panel: father and Sam both looking up at the sky with surprised/alarmed expressions

ack, ackACKACKACKACKACKA, WHIRRRRRRRRR, SCREEECH

Panel 6: Dani looking over her shoulder up at the sky now with a shocked expression

ACK, ACK, ROOARRRR, WHIRRRRRRRRRRR

SPLAT,

SPLAT

4L

Panel 1: long vertical: dark shadow cast over them, her standing now, and entire block

of open-mouthed people looking up at the sky

Dani narration: Thousands. They blotted out the sun.

ACK, ACK, WHIRRRRRRRRR, RRRRRRRRR, SCREEECH

Panel 2: black vertical

ACK, ACK, WHIRRRRRRRRR, SCREEEEEEEECH

Panel 3: in background is the slide still 'zoomed in' on fuzzy black specks sort of out of focus; in foreground and in silhouette (adult) Dani in profile (recognizable but wears glasses now/hair in lower ponytail); in frame is the microphone and edge of table plus the shoulder of the individual next to Dani at the table

Dani: That was the beginning.

Panel 4: wider view of same auditorium setting: part of audience and entire table of panelists in view; Pilot Rock slide has been replaced by a slide on the screen that reads KSISR 2033: HOMECOMING and there is a shape around the words that looks sort of like a rabbit head (but is a bilby) like a 'shield' outline

At the panelist table are four seats but only three are occupied. Dani is closest to the screen; Next to her, silhouetted, is a tall man with very curly hair. The seat next to him is empty. There is a young man occupying in the last seat but he is also in shadow and he seems to be writing something on a piece of paper so his head is bent over.

Standing to the left of the screen is a woman with a chin-length bob who is a grown version of Jo (yet to be introduced). She's the moderator. Sitting behind her on a chair on the stage nearby in the background is little boy in a striped shirt.

Moderator (Jo): Thanks, Dani. Chris?

5R

Panel 1: tall man with the curly hair talking into microphone and seen from behind on stage with view of audience; can see banner at the back of a spacious auditorium reads 'WELCOME HOME'

Chris: I slept through the invasion.

Panel 2: (young) Chris (easily recognizable by hair) in bedroom under blankets with just top of head and crazy hair sticking out

Word bubble coming from off panel: Chris! Do not go back to sleep!

Panel 3: CU of the boy, age twelve, fair with dark curly hair coming out back door of the ranch house with a soccer ball under his arm

Chris narration: East Texas. April 4th, 2013. Twelve and a day.

Panel 4: CU of boy's face with expression like he remembered something

Panel 5: CU of boy coming out again with an open and overflowing book bag

Panel 6: CU of boy's face with eyes looking back and expression like he remembered something

Panel 7: boy coming back outside with notebook and stack of papers and he's holding it all in his arms and looking down/distracted

Panel 8: boy holding soccer ball between knees and sliding notebook into bag while all the papers fly everywhere; mother now visible standing in doorway and she's holding a textbook he's forgotten and watching him struggle to manage everything

Mom: Chris, honestly. Chris.

Chris: Sorry.

Panel 9: CU of Chris struggling to arrange everything

Mom O-P: Chris. Chris! Turn around.

6L

Panel 1: half page: long vertical: Chris and mother standing on the porch looking stunned (and he's dropped everything) and, in foreground, we see that the yard is filled with giant craters and churned up soil. It looks like an earth mover plowed through the grass during the night.

Chris narration: That was the beginning.

Panel 2: square-headed man in suit holding a clipboard

Insurance Adjuster: Do you have any enemies?

Panel 3: mother facing insurance adjuster with while Chris looks on from the porch
Mother: Not that I know of.

Panel 4: insurance adjuster looking down as if surveying damage

Insurance Adjuster (IA): You have no idea who could have done this?

7R

Panel 1: Chris's view from porch of mother talking to adjuster with damage visible again

IA: Ma'am, afraid you'll need a culprit if you want compensation.

Panel 2: insurance adjuster still writing

Mother: We're having my daughter's wedding reception here in ten days.

IA: I hope they don't return.

Panel 3: Chris and his mother in backyard smoothing ground with shovel
Chris narration: and they didn't

Panel 4: LS of Chris and mother rolling out the last piece of AstroTurf (and covered area is lumpy)
Chris narration: for another nine days

Panel 5: Chris's mother in ¾ shot; she's dressed in a formal suit and has a piece of AstroTurf in her hair and she's addressing a white-haired woman in a long-sleeved silk dress who is holding a glass of champagne
Mother: We had a few, um, unexpected visitors early this morning.

Panel 6: first guest looking down with a raised eyebrow
Guest: You don't say.

8L

Panel 1: LS of all the wedding guests in the destroyed backyard with an upturned tree and the AstroTurf shredded plus craters. The adults are on the left and they're kind of pretending that they aren't standing in a field that looks like it has been firebombed. The children, all in their nicest clothing, are throwing clods of dirt and AstroTurf at each other and are covered in mud. A clown, presumably the entertainment for the kids, is holding his shoe in his hand and scrubbing off mud.

In the background on the right we can see two boys holding bikes and standing there as if they have just stopped to survey the scene.

Panel 2: shot of the two boys holding bikes and talking to Chris; boys are dressed in shorts and striped T-shirts; Louie is short and red-haired with freckles and Josh is lanky and ethnically ambiguous

Louie: Nice craters!

Josh: Did a T-rex lose a bone?

Panel 3: Chris shrugging

Chris: Yeah. Yeah. I got it.

Panel 4: the three of them in a shot

Josh: Seriously, what happened?

Panel 5: Chris shrugging

Jo off panel: A mystery!

Panel 6: wider shot including girl with skateboard who is now standing next to the boys

Jo: I love mysteries.

Josh: Yeah. Who's going to solve it?

9R

Panel 1: all of them spread out studying the ground (and Josh is under a table while guests serve themselves punch)

Panel 2: CU of Jo peering at something on the ground

Jo: Chris, look at this.

Panel 3: child's foot stepping in that spot as he runs through

Panel 4: Jo looking up at Chris

Chris: Now we got nuthin.

Panel 5: next day: high angle view of house at dusk and now there are more craters and on all sides of the house and kids standing in front yard this time

Chris: As you can see, they returned.

Panel 6: Jo, Chris, and Louie looking at one crater

Louie: It's like they were desperate to find something, something hidden deep under the ground.

Chris: Right. They haven't found it so they keep digging.

10L

Panel 1: Louie, Chris, Josh, Jo seen from behind wearing backpacks and nearing school

Jo: We need a name for our club.

Chris: We're a club now?

Panel 2: view of group walking as seen from front and Louie with raised hand

Louie: How about the Department of Unexplained Messes?

Panel 3: in Chris's home and Louie is lifting T-shirt out of a box

Louie: Uh-oh.

Chris narration: I know. We didn't notice until Louie's Mom made the T-shirts.

Panel 4: Louie with apologetic expression as he holds up shirt that says 'DUM' while others look on

Josh: I'm not wearing that.

Panel 5: kids sitting in foldout chairs on porch at night and all wearing their T-shirts turned inside out so they read 'MUD'

11R

Panel 1: morning light/CU of Jo who is sitting with her knees folded to her chest and holding a cup of coffee while the other kids sleep in odd positions (head tilted back or slumped over)

Panel 2: Jo writing in notebook while Louie takes bowl of cereal from Chris's mother
Louie: Thank you, Mrs. Walsh

Jo: Now we know they won't come if we're watching. Adding that to the clues list.

Panel 3: Chris with spoon dipped in bowl of cereal
Chris: Sure. Shy.

Panel 4: Jo putting night vision camera on tree

Panel 6: night vision shot of trees

12L

Panel 1: a dozen green eyes in night vision shot

Panel 2: Louis, Jo, and Chris wide-eyed reaction shot
Jo: That's not human.

Panel 3: Louie closeup
Louie: Ohhhh, aliens!

Panel 4: Chris and Jo squinting
Chris: Are those dogs?
Jo: Don't think so.

Panel 5: pointing to wallows
Jo: I think this animal rolled around in there.

Panel 6: Jo crouching in backyard waving
Jo: I found a print.

13R

Panel 1: Jo on desktop in Chris's room with the others standing behind her
room description: blank walls (which will be full by the end of the story), papers strewn across floor, inside out jeans on a chair

Jo: Found a chart. North American animal tracks.

Chris narration: We looked at other charts too. No matches.

Panel 2: wide shot older man in a cowboy hat studying iPhone image while kids crowd around; can see that they standing outside a building with a sign that says Texas A&M Extension Agency

arrow: Jo's Uncle Mateo

Jo: Recognize it?

Mateo: Yes, I'm afraid.

Panel 3: Mateo standing in his office next to a giant easel covered by a cloth

Panel 4: his hand starting to pull off cloth

Panel 6: front view of kids sitting on foldout chairs in office and staring wide-eyed in horror

Louie: Will it eat us?

(next two pages (14L & 15R): head on first page and rest of wild pig on the second page; floating panels highlighting features)

14L

Panel 1: alarmingly close up/scary depiction of a drooling wild hog's head and open-mouth giant tusks/teeth

circled tusks and arrow: text: sharp as knives

arrow to tusks: can grow as long as seven inches

CU of snout dissected: bone for reinforcement so that it is like a shovel

arrow to nostrils: picks up scents from five to seven miles away and as far as three feet under the ground

15R

Panel 1: (rest of hog) bloated body of hog plus massive hind legs

caption on top right: Feral Hog, Wild Pig, Sos Scrufa, and sometimes Hogzilla

arrow to belly and text: can weigh over 400 pounds

front (raised) hoof circled

arrow and text: runs: 30 miles an hour

16L

Panel 1: farmer crouching next to a craters and corn stalks stripped bare

Farmer: They eat right down the rows.

Chris narration: Mateo took us to visit a farmer.

Panel: farmer standing in destroyed field while facing the DUM club kids and Uncle Mateo

Farmer: We plant a field and they come at night and get the kernels. Decimated 350 acres of my crops

Panel 2: closer view of Jo and Chris standing in the destroyed field with farmer

Jo: How many?

Farmer: There's no telling. Coulda been twenty. Coulda been one hundred.

Panel 3: 3/4 closer on Chris and Jo

Chris: If they like corn, why are they in my backyard?

Jo: and front yard

Panel 4: Uncle Mateo with farmer standing nearby

UM: They like everything. They're what you call opportunistic omnivores

Farmer: Garbage cans.

17R

Panel 1: Uncle M standing in Chris's backyard and holding out something in his palm

Chris narration: Grubs, maybe, Mateo said. Could be anything.

Panel 2: night shot in woods

Chris narration: Uncle Mateo said we couldn't match the tracks because the wild pigs are not from North America.

Panel 3: the wild pigs standing closer to camera

Chris narration: He called them invaders.

Panel 4: same photograph only now it is projected on the screen on the stage
0-P bubble from left (questioner): Dani?

18L

Panel 1: shot from outside home of Dani and Sam looking out a window at the sky
Dani narration: Within a few weeks, we knew their routine.

Panel 2: closer view of just Dani looking out the window
Dani narration: They'd leave in the morning and return at dusk.

Panel 3: horde of office workers running down steps of municipal building while clutching umbrellas
Dani narration: No one wanted to be caught outside after 5:30 pm.

Panel 4: Dani sitting on bench in playground (near slides and jungle gym; no kids are playing there)
Dani narration: But there's not much you can do when you have a little brother.

Panel 5: Dani's view of the kids playing: one pigtailed girl is standing like the Statue of Liberty on a platform that was probably for a water fountain at one time; five kids, including Sam, are running around yelling "My turn!" and "I want to be the statue!" and "No fair!"

19R

Panel 1: Dani looking up at the sky

Panel 2: Mother with folded umbrella pulling one of the screaming girls away from the group

Panel 3: Dani standing up now and yelling
Dani: Sam! Time to go!

Panel 4: mother walking by Dani holding hands of two of the children, including the one who was the statue
Mother: We take one trip to New York City...

Panel 5: Dani with exasperated expression standing in front of Sam who is standing like the Statue of Liberty and the last kid still there
Dani: Can you be the statue at home?
Sam: It doesn't count.

Panel 6: Dani looking at sky.

Dani: Not again.

20L & 21R: SPLASH

Panel: two page spread of Dani dragging Sam down a street past a municipal building while running from a frightening swarm of something black and winged but not identifiable as birds yet; Tippi Hedren look-a-like (with hair askew) is running down steps of municipal building behind her

22L

Panel 1: closer view of a few birds flying to and landing in trees and now it is clear that these are black birds

Panel 2: wider shot can see that the trees are maybe fifty feet from Dani's house

Panel 3: inside view of Dani looking through window while father, grandfather, and Sam sit at the dining room table behind her

Panel 4: Sam with mouth full and talking

Sam: Miss Jolly says they're aliens.

Panel 5: CU of father serving grandfather

Father: Mrs. Jolie. I think you mean invasive species.

Panel 6: Dani still looking out window

Dani: From Europe.

23R

Panel 1: scientific illustration of a starling on an easel and a teacher is standing beside it

Teacher: The Common Starling or European Starling

Dani narration: It didn't look scary at all. It was hard to believe I could hate this bird so much.

Panel 2: Dani's hands holding digital camera and photo visible on camera screen of tree filled with starlings (dark/ominous) and school desk visible behind camera

Dani narration: Their flocks can be as large as 1.5 million, our teacher told us.

Panel: zoomed in on one bird (grainy/shadowy)

Dani: She said they cause 800 million in damages a year in this country.

Panel 3: CU of locust-like cloud over entire field on farm (identifiable by red barn and grain silos)

Dani narration: Starling swarms swoop in and pick everything clean.

Panel 4: illustration of frightened looking owls

Dani narration: Starlings are bullies at the bird feeder.

Panel 5: illustration of baby blue jays on the ground looking up in terror

Dani narration: They push other birds out of their nests

Panel 6: CU of splatters of guano on pavement

Dani narration: They spread disease through their waste.

Panel 7: starling landing on the tree outside the classroom window

Teacher word bubble O-P: Any questions?

Panel 8: front view of class and all the kids are wearing masks and a few have feathers in their hair

word bubble over class: When will they go away?

Dani narration: That was the one question our teacher couldn't answer. She said starlings are non-migratory birds. They don't follow seasonal patterns. When would they leave? When they felt like it.

24L

Panel 1: Chris and his mother on porch looking at the backyard (all brown now); grim/exhausted expressions on face

Mother: sigh

Chris: sigh

Chris narration: Every day, a bigger mess...

Panel 2: CU profile view of Chris looking across yard with mother next to him also looking out

Chris: Dad's gonna come by with a trap. Next week.

Mother: Uh-huh.

Panel 3: Chris walking up steps of school with Jo and Louie; other kid running after them

Boy: Are you the DUM guys?

Chris narration: ...and soon there were more messes, other people's messes.

Panel 4: the three kids turning around with surprised expressions

Panel 5: Chris and the others looking down at something on the floor in the boy's room
Jo: The facts point to only one conclusion: Your brother is a slob.

Panel 6: another boy pointing to water on floor

Panel 8: Louie pointing out hole in roof above

Panel 9: another boy pointing at what looks like a pile of dirt

Boy: See. I sweep them away and they're back.

Jo: Maybe you should sweep more often.

Chris narration: That one, you'll see. We should have looked a little closer.

Panel 10: view from behind of club members walking home with shoulders slumped in defeat

Louie: Lame.

Jo: This is unfulfilling.

25R

Panel 1: Chris with a word bubble over his head depiction of super toothy wild boars inside the word bubble

Word bubble coming from outside frame: Did you say invaders??

Chris narration: Around that time, a funny thing started happening.

Panel 2: row of kids with word bubbles over heads and pictures of animals and plants (nutria; Nile monitor lizard; kudzu leaves; termite; sea lamprey)

Panel 3: close shot of shaggy-haired boy with bandaged nose; he is holding a skateboard under arm

Chris narration: People I didn't even know heard about my invaders and wanted to tell me their invader stories.

Panel 4: CU of kid talking

Skateboarder Kid: Truth is, I didn't break my nose while executing a Casper Disaster with a Coco Slide.

Panel 5: him in foreground with story unfolding in panel behind him; he's in a small boat

SK: I'll tell you about it. I was visiting my cousin in Indiana.

26L

Panel 1: CU of uncle starting engine

Panel 2: one fish jumps in the water

Panel 3: two fish in the air near boat

Panel 4: boat surrounded by fish jumping in all directions

Panel 5: close-up of boy's frightened eyes

Panel 6: fish flying at his face (eyes crossed)

CRACK

Panel 7: showing photo of invader on phone

Kid: Asian Carp. Invaders.

27R

Panel 1: skateboard kid talking; serious expression

Kid: Thanks for listening, dude.

Off panel bubble: Invaders???

Panel 2: kid standing to left of skateboarder kid is talking

Fishing Kid: I went fishing with my uncle last summer in Michigan.

Panel 3: CU of the boy sitting in boat reeling in fish

Panel 4: CU reaction shot of surprise

Panel 5: dangling fish that is riddled with holes

FK: This invader latches on like a vampire and sucks out the blood.

Google Image "sea lamprey" if you want to have nightmares for weeks.

Panel 7: super CU of Sea Lamprey on screen (emphasis on giant, toothy mouth)

Chris: AGGHH

Panel 8: CU of top of phone: Will you accept a FaceTime call from LA Cuz

28L

Panel 1: Chris's hand holding out phone and his screen is filled with giant, rodent-like beast with long whiskers and yellow chompers; word bubble stem stretches off side of page like it is coming from the other side of the camera

Louisiana Cousin talking: Look at those teeth. Orange! That's the iodine! Makes them super strong.

Panel 2: super close on the teeth and kind of from a low angle

LC: Let's get in close. See how they're hooked like a claw hammer. This wildlife ranger told me they yank the marsh grass out by the roots.

Panel 3: wider shot of Chris staring at screen in surprise

Panel 4: wider shot of multiple nutria chomping away on the grass

LC: You know nutria are eating machines. They can eat two and half pounds of vegetation a day. That's twenty five percent of their body weight. That's like a 140-pound human eating 35 pounds of food per day. Okay? 100 double-cheeseburgers!!

Panel 5: camera flipped so cousin visible now with more nutria behind him

LC: Nutria gnaw through miles of marshland. See they eat the roots that hold the soil together so it all comes apart and there's no land. Disappearing. You should see the before and after pictures. Invaders, from South America I think.

29R

Panel 1: LC crouching next to nutria and smiling

Panel 2: FaceTime call from LA Cuz

caption: two days later

Panel 3: Chris's shocked expression

Panel 4: CU of crawling insects

LC: Formosan termites! Invaders!

Panel 5: Chris looking at phone

Panel 6: FaceTime image on phone of cousin standing in front of a porch overgrown with kudzu

LC: Kudzu! From Japan! Grows a foot a day! Engulfs houses. Blocks plants from the sun. Look at Nano's back porch.

30L

Panel 1: pink house with palm trees in front

Chris narration: Then I go to visit my other cousin in Florida

Panel 2: Florida cousin and Chris hanging out in FC's room

Florida Cousin: We beat Texas and Louisiana, hands down, okay, no contest.

Panel 3: holds up a 'trading card' for Chris to see; there's a picture of a snail on the front

Chris: So what? A snail.

Panel 4: FC smirking

FC: No. A Giant African Land Snail. A snail the size of your palm. They grow up to eight inches long and, get this, they eat stucco off the side of houses.

Chris: Do not.

Panel 5: the two of them standing in the back yard looking at the side of the house

Chris: Wow

Panel 6: what they're seeing: giant snails climbing up the side of the house

Chris's speech bubble coming from off panel: Why stucco?

Panel 7: shot again of Chris and FC looking at wall

FC: Calcium, for the shells.

Chris: Cool.

31R

Panel 1: FC holds up lizard card

FC: Do you have a Tegu lizard?

Panel 2: holds up Cuban Tree Frog picture

FC: or this?

Panel 3: FC: FC raising eyebrow and holding up Nile Monitor card

FC: from South America

Panel 4: CU of Piranha card

Panel 5: cousin facing Chris and grinning maniacally while holding card

Chris: in Florida?

Panel 6: cousin looking at back of card:

FC: Found: West Palm Beach pond

Chris: A pond? How?

Panel 7: cousin shrugging

FC: It swam there?

Chris: From the Amazon?

32L

Panel 1: FC looking another card

FC: Oh man, and this. You don't have this one; you DON'T have this one.

Panel 2: cousin hiding it behind his back

FC: You'll see.

Panel 3: man in wide-brimmed hat and a short-sleeved button down shirt over which he is wearing an orange life vest

Herpetologist: Not a chance.

Panel 4: Chris turning to Florida cousin

Chris: Knew you were full of it, cuz.

Panel 5: wider shot and we see that the researcher and the two boys are wearing life jackets, leaning on water sticks, and are knee deep in water in a swamp

Herpetologist: I didn't say they aren't here just that you won't see them.

Panel 6: Herpetologist looks to side at a mystery animal (shadow) swimming by

Herpetologist: You'll see everything else.

(arrow to researcher: herpetologist who knew my cousin's friend's boyfriend's uncle or something)

Cousin: So how can you be so certain they're here?

Herpetologist: Hmm. Let's call that story The Mystery of the Missing Mammals.

Panel 7: rangers driving down road with headlights on at night

Chris narration: He said the rangers noticed it first. They didn't see the mammals by the reservoir or at all the usual places.

Panel: ranger stopping to look at a possum in the road

Chris narration: On roadkill runs, they found fewer and fewer possums, rabbits, and raccoons.

33R

Panel 1: Herpetologist talking

Herpetologist: Only no one made the connection.

Panel 2: backs of three people (dressed as rangers) leaning over something in the road (and blocking view)

2000

Chris narration: Hatchlings. Just two. Another clue.

Panel 3: more people gathered around something in the road
Bubble over one: 17 feet!

Chris narration: There were more discoveries.

Panel 4: image of academic paper: Severe mammal declines coincide with...
Chris narration: There was a road kill study citing the missing mammals as evidence.

Panel 5: CU talking head framing of herpetologist talking to kids
Herpetologist: We needed a direct link.

Panel 6: illustration of identical emoji-style rabbits + illustration of a tracking device

Panel 7: lower half of page: rabbits hopping off into the tall grass

arrow: 100 rabbits

caption: released in September of 2012

34L

Panel 1: center of the page (with panels around it): rangers and researchers crouching next to a giant snake with a distended stomach

Panel 2: CU of the snake

arrow: pythons ate 77 of the 100 rabbits

Chris narration: and we learned that they eat everything else

Panel 3: python with stomach open
inside, two vultures

Panel 4: long: inside of stomach view showing deer

Panel 5: image of python split open and alligator tail sticking out

35R

Panel 1-2: sequence showing how the python attacks and eats its prey
snake waits in brush behind unsuspecting deer; snake bites deer to hold it in place and squeezes (the air out); CU of giant jaws encasing a possum

Panel 3: two canoes paddling through Everglades (Chris and herpetologist in first and cousin with a ranger in second)

Chris narration: The herpetologist told us there is a complex ecosystem in the Everglades. He asked us to think about the chain of consequences. If the raccoons disappear, what happens to the animals that eat those raccoons? It wasn't all about a bunch of kooky animals, he said, but they sure were kooky.

Panel 4: dipping in an oar

Chris narration: Take the nutria, he said. They eat the roots that hold together the soil.

Panel 5: raising oar

Chris narration: The birds can't nest there. What happens to the animals like the muskrats that eat the birds?

Panel 6: wider shot of boat gliding along

Chris narration: What happens to the insects that are eaten by the birds?

Panel 7: Chris gazing off dreamily

Chris narration: He said everything is connected.

Panel 8: CU of Chris dipping hand in the water

speech bubble with stem coming from out of the frame: Do NOT put your hand in the water—if you want to keep it.

36L

Panel 1: same square-headed insurance adjuster (the one that investigated the damage at Chris's home) is peering at paint on outside of Dani's house while Dani, Sam, and father look on

Adjuster: See. We cover damage from some falling objects like, say, meteors.

Father: But you cover damage from wild animals, right?

Adjuster: Depends. Invasive species, that's complicated. It's like an infestation. It isn't a one-time incident.

Panel 2: CU Adjuster in kitchen while father stands in doorway

Adjuster: Looks like one nested inside the house.

Father: we chased it out

Panel 3: adjuster writing in notebook

Panel 4: adjuster looking at paper on wall

Adjuster: Stains. Guessing you'll want to replace that wallpaper?

Father: I don't know.

Panel 5: Adjuster leaning in close to look at wall

Panel 6: Adjuster writing

Adjuster: Flowered wallpaper. I'm a detail person.

37R

Panel 1: adjuster writing in notebook while father stands in doorway watching

Father: Yes. Wildflowers, Kentucky wildflowers. Lotte picked the pattern. This was her hometown.

Panel 2: over Dani's shoulder view from behind father who still standing in doorway of kitchen

Dani thought bubble: purple phacelia, sweet pea, goldenrod

Panel 3: Dani walking up path

Dani thought bubble: lady-slipper, wild geranium

Panel 4: climbing from one rock to another

Dani thought bubble: buttercup, butterweed

Panel 5: CU of her taking photograph of something on the side of the path

Panel 6: stepping up to rock

Dani thought bubble: pale violet, columbine

Panel 7: her hand parting branches

38L

Panel 1: view of white-haired man standing where Dani was standing in her opening scene

Panel 2: Dani's annoyed expression

Panel 2: her slightly closer view of old man who is facing the other direction and we see he's looking through binoculars

Dani thought bubble: Mad Merlo.

Panel 3: Dani watching

Dani narration: I couldn't figure out how he even climbed up there. He must have been 100 years old.

Panel 4: Mad Merlo with binoculars lowered and now he's looking at the sky (still seen from behind)

Dani narration: I'd heard he was a teacher once and there was this crazy story about him losing a kid on a field trip.

Panel 5: Merlo looking at his watch

Dani narration: All kids swore they'd traveled to Botswana. In one afternoon!

Panel 6: Merlo looking through binoculars again and we see that he's speaking to her without turning around

Merlo repeats: Danielle Wendell?

Panel 7: Dani grimacing

Dani: Yes, Mr. Merlo.

Panel 8: Mr. Merlo still isn't turning around but continues to speak to her

Merlo: It is beginning. Do you want to see?

Dani: Uh. No thank you.

Panel 9: Sam is behind Dani

Sam: I do!

Panel 10: turning Sam around

Dani: Let's go.

39R

Panel 1: Jo and Chris at a diner counter; pieces of apple pie and glasses of milk before them

Panel 2: CU of Jo and Chris turning to side as if they've just heard something at the end of the counter

Panel 3: three men in hunting gear at counter with bubble of wild pigs over their heads

Panel 4: Jo and Chris raising hands with a bubble of wild pigs over their heads

Panel 5: waitress with bubble over her head of a crazy ant

Panel 6: medium shot of Jo and Chris turning to waitress

Jo and Chris: Crazy ants?

Panel 7: waitress talking

Waitress: Yeah. That's the name. "Crazy" cause they're all speedy and run around in circles.

40L

Panel 1: Hunter at end of counter talking and waitress and Jo responding
Hunter: Crazy ants? The worst. Get inside electronics. Computers, circuit breakers, you name it.

Waitress: I heard they infested NASA's space center.

Panel 2: Exterminator in full safety gear who is now is sitting at the counter drawing on a napkin

Exterminator: Works like this.

Panel 3: pointing to drawing of one ant in electrical socket and ZZZZT

Exterminator: One ant goes in and gets fried.

Panel 4: pointing to other nearby ants he's just drawn

Exterminator: It releases a scent that draws all the other ants

Panel 5: crude drawing of fried ants

ZZZTTTTT

Exterminator: and they get fried

Panel 6: holding out napkin filled with ants

Exterminator and pretty soon

Panel 7: waitress pouring him a cup of coffee

Waitress: Crazy and stupid if you ask me.

41R

Panel 1: exterminator talking and Chris responding in thought bubble

Exterminator: Did you know that an exterminator discovered them? Tom Raspberry. The ants are called "raspberry crazy ants" after him.

Chris's thought bubble: gravestone carved with Ant Man depiction and epitaph: He knew crazy.

Panel 2: Waitress refilling Jo's milk

Waitress: I tell ya. Makes me miss the fire ants.

Panel 3: Jo with bubble over head of foot on anthill and ankles covered in swarming ants and red bites

Jo: Wow. The crazy ants must be really bad.

Chris narration: If you live in Texas, you've been bitten by fire ants. Burns. Turns out fire ants are invaders too. Also from South America.

Panel 4: image of fire ants on one side and crazy ants on other

Panel 5: man in white lab coat at other end of counter

Entomologist: People are more interested in what is going to happen to their iPhone instead of what is going to happen to insects outside the back door.

Chris narration: The entomologist said the crazy ant invasion was leading to decreases in insect and spider populations. He said anthropoids are the base of the food web.

Panel 6: CU of hunter with furrowed brow

Hunter: What's going to happen to my iPhone?

42L

Panel 1: man in a conservative suit now at counter next the entomologist

Man: You know, they've cost us a bundle and a half. We had an infestation at our Rockwall dealership. Thing is, it is easy to miss. Piles of fried ants just look like dirt.

Jo: Like dirt?

Panel 2: Jo and Chris following boy (from early DUM investigation) down the stairs again

Panel 3: circle of (flashlight) light on pile of 'dirt' in corner

Panel 4: Jo leans in close with flashlight

Panel 5: now can see ants and some are running in circles (blurry lines)

Jo: Yep. Crazy ants.

Panel 6: same boy running after Chris and Jo on the stairs again

Boy: But how do I get rid of them?

Chris: Good question.

Panel 7: Chris and his mother on porch looking at the destroyed backyard

Chris: He's not going to help us, is he?

Mother: Think we're on our own again. Sorry, kiddo.

Chris narration: That's when my friends came to the rescue, or tried.

43R

Panel 1: Jo talking to group

Jo: So maybe our club should just be about invaders.

Panel 2: Louie with palm to forehead in mock dismay

Louie: What? No leaks? No slobs?

Panel 3: Everyone laughing.

Panel 4: all of them talking

Josh: But what's our mission?

Jo: To fight invaders?

Louie: Cool! Kids Fight Invaders? KFI?

Chris: But how?

Panel 5: Louie shrugs

Louie: How hard can it be?

Panel 6: Jo turning to Chris

Jo: We'll start in Chris's backyard!

Chris: and front yard!

44L

Panel 1: CU of cannon (absurdly dramatic/low angle in Battleship Potemkin style)

BOOM, BOOM

Panel 2: CU from other side (same overly dramatic angle)

Panel 3: CU of white-haired couple dressed in knee-length rain ponchos as they activate the cannons

FLAP, FLAP, FLAP...

Woman: This is a BIRD BANGER! The sound is DEAFENING. It will scare them away for sure.

Panel 4: Dani looking on from sidewalk with dubious expression???

FLAP, FLAP, FLAP, FLAP...SCREECH, RRRRRR

Panel 5: birds flying off panel to right

Panel 6: elderly man out walking poodle points

Man: They're leaving!

Panel 7: birds arriving at destination, another tree

45R

Panel 1: wider shot and we see that they've moved only a few feet and are closer to Dani's house

Panel 2: Dani at dinner table
BOOM, BOOM, BOOM

Panel 3: Dani looks down at her dinner

Panel 4: feather in dinner
BOOM, BOOM, BOOM

Panel 5: grandfather coughs

Panel 6: grandfather wearing surgical mask and walking past Dani and father with suitcase

Dani: When will he be back?

Father: Ask the birds.

46L

Panel 1: CU of child drawing birds in sky

Panel 2: Dani looking over Sam's shoulder

Panel 3: she puts bowl of cereal next to him

Panel 4: Dani making a face

Dani: Now you're drawing them! Maybe you can draw some locusts while you're at it.

Panel 5: him picking a crayon and talking

Sam: Do you know why they're so many starvings?

Dani: Starlings. No idea.

Panel 6: Sam drawing a hawk next to the starlings

Sam: They stay together so the bigger birds won't eat them.

47R

Panel 1: his drawing

Sam: See. A mummation.

Dani: My little brother said it was like a dance, a bird dance.

Panel 2: Dani looking over Sam's shoulder

Dani: Who taught you that, Miss Jolie?
Sam: No. Mr. Merlo.

Panel 3: Dani crouching down next to Sam
Dani: Don't go up there alone, Sam.
Sam: But he's nice and he knows everything about birds, Dani. He says you have to think like a bird if you want to understand birds. He said birds don't think like us.

Panel 4: Dani watching him with her arms folded.

48L

Panel 1: Jo reading from "How To Build A Better Boar Trap"
Jo: No ninety-degree angles.

Panel 2: holding out book and showing picture of pigs climbing on top of each other to get out of the ninety-degree angle open trap
Jo: See. A pig pyramid.

Panel 3: Chris pulling wire around in a circle while Jo and Louis look on

Panel 4: Jo reading manual
Jo: Says here we'll have to test different baits

Panel 5: CU of corn in Jo's palm
arrow: corn, our first bait

Panel 6: Chris peering into trap
Chris: Guess they don't like corn.

Panel 7: Jo and Chris standing in front of a bowl on the kitchen counter
Mother looking over their shoulders: What is that? Smells horrible.
Jo: Catfish
Chris narration: and they didn't like catfish

Panel 8: Jo stirring contents in bowl while Chris's mother looks on
Mother: What's the special of the day, Jo?
Jo: Old fruit.

49R

Panel 1: Jo, Chris, and Louie peering at ground
Louie: Looks like they ate the old fruit bait with the side of grubs

Panel 2: Louie pointing to hoof prints
Louie: before jumping over the side of the trap

Panel 3: Jo reading the manual again
Jo: Right. We should have made it five feet tall.

Panel: pulling taller wire mesh in a circle
Panel 4: three of them gathered around empty trap with '????' over heads

Panel 5: Jo reading "Think Like A Pig"
Jo: Our scent might be putting them off.

Panel 6: square trap with sliding door
Chris narration: Louie's friend let us use a covered square trap.

Panel 7: Jo examining footprints
Jo: They stuck their heads just far enough inside, see, and backed out again.

50L

Panel 1: one confused boar in cage
off-panel word bubble: We got one!

Panel 2: Chris and Louie chest bumping in the air while Jo does a cartwheel

Panel 3: Mateo with hand on forehead looking at the trap with the one pig inside
Uncle M: You must trap them all at once.

Panel 4: one hog watching another hog entering cage
Chris narration: Mateo said pigs are smart. Their IQs are the same as chimpanzees.

Panel 5: hog standing before group of other hogs with pointer between teeth and pointing to a detailed diagram of the trap

Panel 6: Chris doodling a hog in armor while Jo lies on stomach reading a book and Louie reads off phone (and none of them look up while riffing on *Planet of the Apes*)
Chris: Hogs together strong.
Jo: I did not start this war but I will finish it.
Louie: You taught them to sign?

51R

Panel 1: night vision shots of the Boar Buster trap (pics available)

Chris: Farmer Jeff told us about this one trap. It is remote controlled so the invaders don't pick up your scent, right, but it costs \$6,000 dollars. I was excited to learn that our county had purchased two with a grant.

Panel 2: Chris holding up a piece in confusion

Chris: Says insert A into B...

Chris narration: It's our turn, finally, and we try to assemble it only nothing fits. The last guy who borrowed it bent it out of shape. We're on the waiting list for the other trap.

Panel 3: all the characters from before but now their hair is crazy and they all look stressed out and the animals are laughing in the thought bubbles

Chris narration: It seemed like no one knew how to manage the invaders. How could a bunch of kids do anything?

Panel 4: the crazy ant kid running up the stairs after Jo and Chris

Boy: You gotta help me. They're in my Xbox!

Panel 5: exterminator from the diner counter in full gear spraying boy's garage from can labeled 'your basic insecticide'

Panel 6: piles of ants in corner again

52L

Panel 1: (horizontal, like other two): Chris's cousin caught in stampede of absurdly varied assortment of hunters descending on swamp with all manner of tools and weapons and followed by gaggle of reporters carrying cameras

hunters: over 1,000

pythons caught: 106

pythons still at large: who the heck knows?

Chris: My cousin even went to the Python Challenge in the Everglades.

Panel 2: dogs in vests sniffing in grass

Chris narration: There were some cool pilot programs.

Panel 3: snake POV through grass of dogs

Chris: These bomb sniffing dogs can locate the snakes within five feet but, believe or not, that's not close enough.

53R

Panel 1: wider view of two white-bearded Indian men in baseball caps hacking through the blades of grass

Chris narration: The state of Florida hired two expert snake hunters from the Irula tribe in India.

Panel 2: hands touching shed snakeskin

Panel 3: hand pointing to droppings

Panel 4: wiping sweat from brow

Panel 5: tribesmen singing

arrow: singing prayer

Panel 6: snakeskin skin visible through the brush

Panel 7: one snake catcher wrangles the snake with bare hands

Chris narration: They caught 33 pythons in two months. Pretty impressive.

Panel 8: snake POV again through tall grass: feet of Irula walking away down road

Chris narration: Then they returned home to their village.

54L

Panel 1: researcher in the Everglades holding snake

arrow: Bob, researcher

Bob: People say there were five hundred caught in the past year. They say that's a lot of pythons, but you only detect one percent of pythons out there. So some people think five hundred, great! I think holy crap that's a lot of pythons still out there.

Panel 2: Bob collaring the snake

Bob: We just try to contain them as best we can.

Panel 3: Bob releasing collared snake

Chris narration: Bob and his team collar some pythons, Judas pythons, and try to use those to find the others.

Panel 4: Bob pointing to giant pile of eggs

Chris narration: The real problem is there's no way to keep up.

55R

Panel 1: night vision shot of sixty pigs

Panel 2: Chris, Jo, Josh, and Louie CU reaction shot: all of them looking stunned

Panel 3: farmer in the field nodding

Farmer: That's what gets you.

Panel 4: Uncle M talking

Uncle M: A sow, that's a female wild pig, can reach sexual maturity as young as six months. That female can have two litters of four to twelve piglets every year. Do the math.

Panel 5: first image of the invaders from months earlier

Chris narration: Remember how our invaders left for nearly two weeks after the first invasion? As best we could figure, they were littering. The first image we saw was of the mature sows because the piglets were too young to travel. Then we figure they must have had another litter...

56L

Panel 1: piles of crazy ants

Chris narration: That one is complicated. It involves the queens cloning themselves to create more offspring...

Panel 2: snail card

arrow: hermaphrodites, male and female sex organs

Panel 3: snails on side of house

word bubble: See ya later! I'm going to multiply

Panel 4: Chris on phone and looking defeated

other side of conversation: Is this KFI?

Chris: So I was in kind of a funk when Dani called.

Panel 5: wider shot of Chris on phone and now can see that there are papers all over the floor and an open book bag with papers spilling out

Chris narration: She said she saw the Facebook post and heard about it from her cousin. Word got around. She said she was desperate. Her neighbors were setting off cannons and launching firecrackers. Nothing was working. There had to be another way. She couldn't do it alone.

Panel 6: Chris talking on phone

Chris: Sorry. There's no club.

57R

Panel 1: Dani at kitchen table with stained wallpaper visible behind her. She's wearing a SIMMONS College of Kentucky sweatshirt and writing in notebook with her textbook open nearby.

Panel 2: She looks up and calls into other room

Dani: Dad's teaching tonight, Sam. Mac and cheese okay?

Panel 3: looking in other room for Sam

Dani: Sam?

Panel 4: front door open

Panel 5: Dani walking up path again

Panel 6: Dani parts bushes at top

Panel 7: sees Sam and Merlo looking into the distance with binoculars

Panel 8: Dani in clearing

Dani: Sam! Come here! We're going home.

off panel Sam: No! I want to stay.

58L

Panel 1: Merlo turned around offering his binoculars to Dani; we see Merlo's face for the first time; he is mostly covered by a thick scarf and he wears goggles but the part that is visible is very old and wrinkled and his skin is a sickly shade of mint green
Merlo: Just for a few minutes?

Panel 2: front view of Dani and Sam looking through binoculars; Merlo is off to their right watching

Dani narration: He told us to watch them gathering over our town. Then he asked

Merlo bubble: Do you want to follow the birds?

Panel 3: medium shot of Dani lowering her binoculars and glancing in Merlo's direction in confusion

Sam bubble: I want to follow the birds!

Panel 4: Sam looking up at her imploringly

Sam: Dani! Please!

Dani: Uh. Sure. We'll, uh, follow the birds.

Panel 5: Merlo smiling with eyes closed holding his arms in the air while Dani watches
Dani narration: Okay. I didn't know what the heck Merlo was talking about. I didn't expect what happened next.

59R

Panel 1: Dani looking through binoculars

Merlo word bubble: Keep your eyes on the birds. Watch the birds. Watch the birds.
Follow the birds.

Dani's thought bubble: Okaaaay

Panel 2: Dani and Sam from front with swirlies inside the binoculars
Merlo word bubble: Safe travels.

Panel 3: partial view of audience with stage off to right

O-P Chris: This is when Dani's story gets all woo-woo.

Panel 4: (still adult) Dani at table with panelists turning to Chris's direction in silhouette with audience behind

Dani: Yes, Chris, this is when my story gets all woo-woo.

Panel 5: front view of one section of audience and see there are a lot of kids wearing what look like rabbit ears and they're cheering; can see sign in background that says 2033: HOMECOMING!

Word bubbles: Woo-woo! Woo-woo!

60L

Panel 1: black

Voice: I see them. They're gathering.

Voice: Soon.

Dani narration: The accent, British, was the first clue.

Panel 2: Dani lowering binoculars to look

Panel 3: her POV: in front of her and facing in other direction: directly in front of her are two little girls with long blond braids wearing wool hats with pom-poms on top; a little to the side is a man in a wool overcoat and tweed cap, also seen from back; two women in puffy coats with hoods up next to him

Panel: Dani looking to side/down

Panel 4: Sam is there beside her and wide-eyed but not frightened

Panel 5: Dani looks down at her feet

Panel 6: tall heather at her feet

word bubble from woman to Dani's left: We come to the levels every year.

Panel 7: Dani looking in direction of speaker, woman to left in puffy coat and fisherman's cap

Dani: The levels?

61R

Panel 1: her over the shoulder POV of the (Somerset Levels) wetlands

Panel 2: man in a tweed cap turned around:

Man: I heard the best murmuration is in Brighton.

word bubble from somewhere behind Dani and Sam: I wish there were a way to bring them to our village...

Panel 3: woman to left

Woman: Is this your first time, dear?

word bubble from off panel to right: Its quite something.

Panel 4: Dani looking to right at speaker, a fifty-something man in a flak jacket bending over to secure his camera to a tripod

Dani narration: Of course I left my camera at home.

Panel 5: dots gathering in distance

Crowd: It's beginning.

Panel 6: Dani with eyes wide

Panel 7: CU and wider

62L: SPLASH of murmuration swirl of starlings across a page at sunset (repeat of murmuration shapes to show the progression of movement

63R: SPLASH continued and now the crowd is watching on the right side of the panel with their eyes wide (like they're watching fireworks or some other spectacle) as the starlings make a new succession of shapes

64L

Panel 1: wider shot of starlings dispersing in distance and crowd dispersing

Panel 2: closer shot of Sam, Dani, and the nearby photographer who is folding his tripod

Panel 3: Dani turns to him

Dani: So starlings are better behaved in your country?

Panel 4: photographer crouching to fold tripod and talking; in background, Sam looking at Dani as he sneaks away

Photographer: I suspect they're the same. The context is different.

Panel 5: Dani looking out across wetlands; in corner of frame, photographer continuing to pack up equipment; Sam is a blur of motion in the background

Photog: Maybe there are predators here to control the population? Could it be that the birds roost far from cities because of the availability and location of wetlands here?

Panel 6: photographer standing up straight now with bag over shoulder; far in background, Sam is running after a rabbit

Photog: This here is a nature preserve.

65R

Panel 1: photographer points at the ground

Photographer: Look. An invader.

Panel 2: Dani and photographer looking at a gray squirrel in front of them

Photographer: That's a North American gray squirrel from your country and an invader here.

Panel 3: he shows Dani a photograph on his digital camera

Photographer: a red squirrel, our native species

Dani: Cute. I like that little tuft on its head.

Panel 4: photographer explaining: Beatrix Potter agreed. Her Squirrel Nutkin is endangered because your squirrel competes with the little critter for resources.

Dani: Bullies.

Panel 5: photographer talking

Photographer: Yes, but the squirrels aren't good or bad. They're squirrels. Same with the birds. Is it an animal's fault if it takes what is available? What would happen if you brought a little child into a sweets shop and said Eat All You Want? A bellyache is what. Who's responsible?

Panel 6: Dani looks up with alarmed expression
Dani: Sam

66L

Panel 1: sees Sam far in the distance running in field after rabbit

Panel 2: Dani in field running into field to catch up with Sam

Panel 3: his running feet

Panel 4: her running feet

Panel 5: rabbit jumping into hole

Panel 6: Sam steps into hole

Panel 7: Dani steps into hole

Panel 8: black

67R

Panel 1: postman standing outside Chris's house looking warily at craters
Chris narration: The first delivery came about a week after that call with Dani.

Panel 2: overhead view of Chris lying on floor of exceptionally messy bedroom with a sock over his eyes; he looks disheveled and there are open books, notebooks, and loose leaf pages of handwritten notes all over floor
speech bubble of Mother calling from other room: Chris! You must see this!

Panel 3: Chris standing in doorway looking down at giant stack of letters and packages in the middle of the floor by the entrance; his mother is on her knees looking at them
Mother: What's KFI?

Panel 4: Jo (still in her overcoat with the hood up) is looking down at pile
Jo: Wow!

Panel 5: Chris on floor looking through pile
Chris: I can't believe you gave out my home address.
Jo: It was one Facebook post like six months ago.

Panel 6: Chris handing her a thick envelope
Chris: Yeah? Look at this one.

Panel 7: CU of Jo reading
Jo: From, oh, wow.
Chris speech bubble O-P: One post?! We're getting letters from second graders in the Serengeti.

68L

Panel 1: holding out sheaf of paper tied with twine
Jo: Wow. These letters are in... what do they speak in Kenya?
Mother speech bubble: Swahili

Panel 2: four kids standing over spread out pile of drawings by young children
Louis: What is that?
Jo: I think that's a lizard. See the eyes. Those are red eyes.
Chris: What's that supposed to be?
Josh: A dead cow?

Panel 3: Jo holding up picture and looking at it closely
Jo: What does it say under the picture?
Josh: Google translate it.

Panel 4: Chris on computer with drawing beside him on desk
Chris: translation, drumroll, is "they kill our cows"

Panel 5: Jo looking at drawing again
Jo: So these lizards kill cows...

Panel 6: Chris reading
Chris: ...and "destroy our plants"

Panel 7: Chris talking to Jo
Jo: isn't there anything under the picture of the lizard?
Louie: not in any of these

69R

Panel 1: Chris looking closely at the child's drawing
Chris: That word looks like TEXAS.

Panel 2: Jo taking drawing

Jo: You know, not everything is about you. You think they're talking about Texas in the Serengeti?

Panel 3: Jo looking

Jo: That says TEXAS.

Panel 4: Chris at computer with Jo reviewing another drawing

Chris: Okay. Google translating Dungusi kakati

Panel 5: CU of Chris looking at screen in disbelief

Chris: Cactus??

Panel 6: Mother looking at drawings now

Mother: That's a prickly pear cactus, the official Texas state plant

Chris: and an invader in Kenya...

Jo: The cattle swallow the prickles and die...

70L

Panel 1: child's drawing of an unidentified gathering being disrupted by an animal falling through the ceiling; animal looks like a giant rat and is midair with a hole above; someone in the front of the room is wearing a tall white hat and is facing the other direction and the gathered families are open-mouthed and some children seem to be laughing

Chris narration: and then there were the ones from Kyoto, Japan

Panel 2: Jo and Chris looking at drawing

Chris: What is that? A rat?

Jo: No idea.

Panel 3: Chris looking at sheaf of drawings

Chris: They're all the same story.

Panel 4: Jo watching screen

Jo: Translating... Of course! 'Rakun' is 'raccoon'

Panel 5: Jo typing again

Jo: I'm googling Japanese raccoon.

Panel 6: Chris and Jo looking

Jo: They're called raccoon dogs or 'tanuki' and are beloved in Japan

Chris: So they're native to Japan. They're not invasive species. Just pests.

Panel 7: Chris at laptop

Chris: I'll try Googling raccoon dog and invasive species.

Panel 8: Jo reading

Jo: Wait. So the Japanese raccoon dog is an invasive species in Sweden. Why are we getting letters from Japan of tanuki falling through a ceiling in some house?

Panel 9: Mother walking by

Mother: Lost in translation?

Panel 10: Jo putting drawings in a tray marked '??'

71R

Panel 1: LS of house with packages stacked on doorstep

Panel 2: Jo holding package and her POV of box with return address from RFA Australia

Panel 3: unwrapping elaborate packing materials

Panel 4: Jo showing contents to Chris

Chris: Chocolate bunnies?

Jo: No.

Panel 5: Louie and Josh peering in

Louie: Mice?

Josh: Looks more like a kangaroo crossed with a rabbit

Jo: Krabbits!

Panel 6: Jo looking at piece of paper in package

Jo: Here's something. The chocolate krabbits are from the Foundation for a Rabbit-Free Australia.

rabbit tracks between above panel and one below and twisting around and off the page

(animal tracks across and between sections through next section of story)

72L

Panel: black

THUMP

Panel: cloud of dust

coughing

Panel 1: closer shot of Dani starting to stand up/hands on knees

Panel 2: wider shot of her standing and facing away and her POV of field in distance/can see someone in a cowboy hat kind of silhouetted on hill

Panel 3: Dani running up hill

Panel 4: reaching rancher who is turned in other direction

Dani: Mister! Mister!

Panel 5: cattle hand turns around and it is a woman in her twenties with her hair pulled back

Panel 6: Dani surprised

Dani: Oh. Excuse me.

Panel 7: wider shot of Dani talking with her and holding her hand to show Sam's height
Dani narration: She hadn't seen a little boy.

Panel 8: closer shot of Dani talking with the jillaroo (female ranch hand/trainee)

Dani: Have you seen a rabbit? He was chasing a rabbit.

73R

Panel 1: Jillaroo laughing

J: Oh no. You don't want to ask that question around here.

Panel 2: Jillaroo pointing to holes in the ground; in distance see about a dozen rabbits
Jillaroo: Ugh. Invaders!

Dani narration: She pointed out the rabbit warrens, too many, she said, but still fewer than before. She said there was a time when the whole valley was carpeted with the invaders. They had it under control--for the moment.

Panel 3: Jillaroo and Dani walking across field shouting

SAM!

SAM!

Panel 4: flashlights on hill

Panel 5: circle of light on a fence

Panel 6: circle of light on ground and one yellow pebble-sized object

Panel 7: closer: one peanut M&M

Panel 8: Jillaroo shining light on ground: child's footsteps
J: probably followed the fence

74L

Panel 1: wide shot of Dani and the farmer walking along the fence

Panel 2: her view of footprints ahead

Panel 3: blur of rabbit midair

Panel 4: rabbit in path

Panel 5: blur of rabbit hopping away

Panel 6: Dani turns to farmer
Dani: How did they get here?
Farmer: Ha ha. Every Aussie can recite that story.

75R

Panel 1: jowly gentleman in riding gear standing in a dusty field
Dani narration: He told me there was this English gentleman stranded in the Australian outback. Thomas Austin was determined to maintain his posh lifestyle, you know, hunting and fishing and so forth.

Panel 2: hand writing and some pieces visible "My dearest nephew" and "The introduction of a few" and "could do little harm" and "might provide a touch of home"
Dani's narration: He wrote his nephew.

Panel 3: Austin releasing rabbits into field while another creature with large ears looks on from behind a rock

caption: 1859

arrow to rabbits: 24

Panel 4: hunting party (actual engraving available for reference)

date: 1867

arrow to Prince Alfred: reported killing 500 rabbits in one day

Panel 5: valley entirely carpeted with rabbits

Panel 6: farmer with speech bubble over his head and pictures of a fox, a horse, a carp

Dani narration: Rabbits weren't the only invaders introduced by Mr. Austin and his contemporaries. Austin belonged to a peculiar club called an Acclimatization Society. Its sole mission: introduce foreign species to Australia. With disastrous consequences.

76L

Panel 1: Chris and Jo at library; Chris is on some computer database and Jo is studying a piece of paper that looks like an illustration and there is a stack of unopened mail beside her

Chris: There was another invasion in Dani's town.

Panel 2: CU of Jo still studying paper

Jo: Yeah. There's like one every day.

Panel 3: Chris on computer

Chris: No. I mean like an old invasion. In 1974.

Panel 4: image of photo from article

Chris: "An invasion of millions of starlings has prompted officials to call for federal help for this Southern Kentucky community. Governor Wendell Ford has already declared a state of emergency..."

Panel 5: Jo still studying her paper

Jo: What did they do?

Chris: Dunno. I can't find anything else

Chris narration: Guess I felt guilty about flaking on Dani. Now that we were a club again, how could I not try to help her? There was only one problem.

Panel 6: both looking at respective research projects

Jo: Heard back from Dani?

Chris: Nope.

77R

Panel 1: Farmer and Dani walking

Farmer: You happen to be walking along the rabbit-proof fence. This fence is one of three that together stretch 3,256 miles. Started in 1901. Completed in 1908. Cost 300,000 pounds.

Panel 2: closer shot from behind of the two of them walking and talking

Farmer: My great-great grandfather was a boundary rider on this fence, Number 1 Fence. Maintained it, looked for holes. Reported to the Chief Rabbit Inspector.

Panel 3: CU of Dani with eyebrows raised and suppressing smile

Dani: That's a real title?

Farmer smiling

Farmer: Yep. Different times, I suppose.

Panel 4: wider shot of the two of them walking (from behind and turned towards each other)

Farmer: Can you believe that my great-great grandfather also rode a camel? A camel!

Dani: There are camels in Australia?

78L

Panel 1: illustration of famous photo (or variation on content) of camel being unloaded by crane from a ship while cameleers wait on the shore

Dani narration: He said they were brought here by the English colonists from their other colonies in India and Afghanistan. Not just the camels. The cameleers too!

Panel 2: illustration of photo of the Burke & Wills expedition with camels in background

Dani narration: Why? First for exploration. The English colonized Australia in the late 1700s but only the outer portions of the continent, whatever they could reach by horse and donkey.

Panel 3: illustration based on 1917 photo of camels carrying rails for the construction of a railway

arrow: carrying rails for construction of the Trans-Australia Railway

Dani narration: Later the Australians would even employ camels and cameleers in the building of the Trans-Australia Railway.

Panel 4: cars parked next to the rabbit-proof fence

Panel: other car images from the time

Farmer: Cars replaced the camels.

79R

Panel 1: Farmer and Dani in wider shot

Dani: What happened to the camels?

Farmer: Released.

Dani narration: He said Australia had the largest population in the world of wild camels. They were roaming the outback. In aboriginal territory.

Panel 2: walking along fence

Dani: And the cameleers? Where did they go?

Panel 3: walking along fence

Farmer: Back to their home countries. No choice. Immigration restrictions. 'White Australia Policy.'

Panel 4: long panel: wider shot from behind of them walking along the long fence in silence

80L

Panel 1: Jo is showing letter/drawing to Chris

Jo: This one's from a fourth grader in India.

Panel 2: panel one: Jo's finger pointing at illustration of lantana towering over smaller plants

arrow to invader and identified as 'Lantana'

Panel 3: panel two: lantana towering over same plants now shriveled/dead

Jo O-P: Lantana blocks the light from the other plants.

Panel 4: deer with X over it

O-P: The deer have nothing to eat and they die off.

Panel 5: pointing to tiger with thought bubble of deer with '?

Panel: tiger with X over it

O-P: The tigers can't eat the deer...

Panel 6: over shoulder of Chris and Jo looking at photo of Lantana (flowered plant) on screen

Jo: Okay. Native to South America. Introduced to India in 1807.

81R

Panel 1: at library: Chris is still reading stories off computer database while Jo studies another letter at table nearby; odd assortment of older people and school children doing work in same space

Chris: No way. There was an alien invasion in Dani's town.

Panel 2: Jo writing in notebook and not looking up

Jo: Yeah. I think we've established that.

Chris: No. Like this same town reported an alien invasion in 1955. Like little green men.

Panel 3: Jo looks up
Jo: Get outta here.

Panel 4: Jo looking over his shoulder
Chris: These were drawn by witnesses.
Panel: Chris pointing to page of drawings of a goblin-like creature drawn by witnesses
(in the Kelly-Hopkinsville incident)

Jo: Why would aliens want to visit a random farmhouse in Kentucky?
Off-panel bubble: To deliver a messenger who would SAVE HUMANITY FROM
DESTROYING ITSELF!

Panel 5: Louie pokes head up from behind stacks
Louie: Messing with ya. They just wanted to eat us!
Off-panel: SHHHHHHHHHHHHH

82L

Panel 1: Louie peering over Chris's shoulder while Chris writes in notebook at table in same setting as before; sense that an hour or so has passed just based on them looking a bit tired and disheveled
Louie: You sure are busy.
Chris: I'm writing a list of *solutions*.

Panel 2: Jo looking to side with surprised expression
Jo: Chris keeping a list? Whoah.

Panel 3: Chris reading from his list
Word bubble pictures of items: Fireworks; bird bangers; carbide exploders; firecrackers; cannons; shrieking bird distress calls over 300-watt loud speakers

O-P: SHUSSHHHHHHHHHH

Panel 4: over shoulder of Chris reading to himself with view of pictures from article
Chris narration: There was even a story about another town in Kentucky where firefighters tried spraying starlings with water so they would catch pneumonia. Trouble was the firemen couldn't get close enough to the starlings with the hoses. That was in 1964.

Panel 5: close shot on Chris reading off screen; Louie is doing something on his phone with one leg dangling over a club chair
Chris: Wow. You know starlings have been in our country a long time. Says here they were introduced in 1890.

Panel: Louie looking up with interest

Louie: Introduced? How?

Chris narration: Guess we'd never thought to ask. We would—*Tau*?

83R

Panel 1: audience in auditorium setting clapping and cheering 'TAU! TAU! TAU!'

O-P from panelist table: Tau! Tau! Tau!

Panel 2: stage again and the slide is 'KSRIS 2033: HOMECOMING' and a man with a beard is now standing behind the empty seat next to Chris who is halfway turned around to greet him; we also see Jo at the other side of the screen

Jo: Fan favorite. Our missing panelist has arrived. Of course, Tau had to travel the furthest to get here.

Panel 3: close view of a new slide with stage and a bit of the audience visible, a child's drawing of a brown creature with large teeth; off-panel Jo to left

O-P: We'll catch up. Can you start with your story? The first invasion?

Panel 4: silhouetted character at table with slide view off to side (corner of child's drawing of brown creatures with large teeth)

Tau: The first invasion? Well the invasion never ended for us. My first *animal* invasion?

84L

Panel 1: child's hand drawing a superhero (and focused on cape flying over head)

Tau narration: Don't know the year. I was a boy. Must've been about the age Sam was when I first met him.

Panel 2: child on stomach still drawing

Tau: It was the wet season, November I think, but there'd been no rain for some time.

Panel 3: wider view to reveal a few children tossing a football behind him in a dusty field

Tau narration: small town, Kaltukatjara or Docker River, depending on who draws the map

Panel 4: drawing 'POW, POW'

85R

Panel 1: Tau looking up and listening

RUMBLE, RUMBLE, ROOOOMMMMM (rumble sounds)

Panel 2: distance: what looks like smoke rising from behind his house

Panel 3: see him running in the direction of the house

Panel 4: peering over ledge

Panel 5: view of the ripped-up bathrooms and water spouting everywhere
(roar) rrrrrrrrrRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR

Panel 6: pushing open door

Panel 7: wide eyes

86L

Panel 1: long panel: entire frame filled with camels with giant teeth and mouths open
Tau narration: They came looking for water. The drought.

Panel 2: CU of camel drawing again

O-P shouting: My well!

Tau narration: They ripped apart bathrooms. Pulled pipes out of the walls. Smashed sinks, tiles, everything. They fell into our wells, and died there. How do you remove a 2,000 pound camel? You don't. You lose the well.

Panel 2: twentysomething version of Tau driving through desert (and car view of desert); he's wearing baseball cap and a safari type uniform

Tau narration: That day changed my life.

Panel 3: Tau pulling a gate around a well

arrow: to prevent the camels from falling in the well

Panel 4: long panel: driving again in the desert: view through window

Tau narration: We can't change the past. On 'Sorry Day' in Australia, the other invaders apologize for taking our children. Called the Stolen Generation. One of many past sins. They took our land, our livelihoods, our self-respect. We can't change the past. We recover what we can, create a future.

87R

Panel 1: lit branch

Panel 2: Tau's hand holding lit branch to grass

Panel: Tau standing in a field (in the outback) while fires burn behind him; He's wearing a ranger uniform (reference images available) and a baseball cap

Tau narration: We call it Right Way Fire. Controlled burning prevents fires from starting in the bush. This was part of our tradition when the land was ours the first time. Now it is ours again.

Panel 3: CU on flames

Panel 4: he lights another fire

Panel: wider shot of burning; Tau watches his back turned
word bubble: What are you doing?

Panel 5: Tau looks over his shoulder

Panel 6: Sam is standing there watching him

88L

Panel 1: Jo pointing to portrait of Eugene Shieffelen (identified under picture) in book
Jo: He did it.

Chris narration: In 1871, Eugene Shieffelen started a kind of club in New York City devoted to introducing "foreign varieties of the animal and vegetable kingdom as may be useful or interesting" to America. Of particular interest to Eugene were birds. Not just any birds. All the European birds mentioned in Shakespeare's plays. Really!

Panel 2: Eugene and his servants who have just arrived (footsteps in snow behind them) carrying heavy wood and wire bird cages containing starlings; the man is dressed in a fur-trimmed heavy topcoat and topcoat while the servants wear lighter attire; light snow coats the ground; obviously loud starling noises from below (and the servants carrying the noisy birds look totally at wit's end with their clothing askew and hair mussed as if from a struggle)

Chris narration: Scene of the Crime: Central Park, New York City, March 6, 1890.

Panel 3: map with starlings radiating out from NYC and growing in numbers in all directions

Chris narration: That day, Mr. Eugene Shieffelen released sixty imported starlings. He'd release forty more a year later. The starlings bred... and spread.

Panel 4: Jo and Chris reading off computer

Jo: ...estimated total number of starlings is

Chris: 150 million!!

89R

Panel 1: Chris and Jo looking out at the damage in Chris's yard

Jo: Do you think your invaders were introduced by a club?

Panel 2: Uncle M looking out the window at the damage with them

Uncle: No, but they were introduced by us, by humans. By someone you might recognize.

Panel 3: holding up phone picture of Christopher Columbus

Uncle: In 1492?

Chris: Columbus sailed the ocean blue.

Panel 4: holding up a map of his next expedition

Uncle: but do you know what he did in 1493?

Chris narration: It all began with Columbus who brought eight pigs to Cuba

Panel 6: uncle holding up illustration of Hernando de Soto with name underneath

Here's the true culprit.

Chris narration: but Mateo said Hernando de Soto was the true culprit

Panel 7: Map showing arrival point and journey arrow: boat arriving on shore in Tampa

Bay arrow: march from Florida to Mississippi

Arrow: Tampa Bay, May 18, 1593

90L

Panel 1: long view of the caravan from above the knees of the horses Caption: 622

men; 300 horses; 12 miles a day no more

Chris narration: It was a long journey.

Panel 1: POV of pigs on trail with giant horse's asses above them and the boots of the conquistadors

13 pigs

Word bubble: Governor says we keep pace with the pigs.

Panel 2: same POV with more pigs with many piglets in tow

Panel 3: same POV with more pigs and piglets

huge word bubble coming from all the piglets: Are we there yet?

Panel 4: same POV with even more pigs and piglets

Corn cobs being tossed from the horses

Horseman: No mas maizel! (all horsemen with backs turned and seen from low pig's eye view)

Horseman: Jamón!!!!!!

Panel 5: same shot this time with a horseman turning around to look at pigs with his eyes wide, his mouth watering, an ax in hand

Speech bubble coming from front of the line: NO! Let the swine multiply.

Chris narration: De Soto was unyielding.

Panel 6: more pigs still following behind troops

Speech bubble: No! Eat the dogs!

Panel 7: Pigs disguised in conquistador helmets weaving through the line

Chris narration: Some of the pigs escaped and became feral.

91R

Panel 1: Pigs running through Native American village

Panel 2: feverish baby in Native American woman's arms

Arrow: spread disease

Chris narration: to the dismay of the native populations

Panel 3:

Chris narration: In May of 1542, three years after beginning the expedition, De Soto died. He left behind

Panel 4: vertical panel view of the marching pigs

Chris narration cont: 700 pigs!

Panel 5: illustration of Texas with pigs scattered about the state

Chris narration: Settlers in Texas let their pigs roam freely. Some didn't return. Others escaped from fenced-in areas.

Panel 6: picture of Eurasian wild boar plus sign picture of domestic wild pigs

Chris narration: Game preserves imported Eurasian wild boars for hunting. Many escaped and bred with the free-ranging domestic wild pigs.

Panel 7: night vision shot from early and more wild pigs this time

92L

Panel 1: shot of farmer and Dani walking and dusk now with O-P honking
HONK, HONK

Panel 2: car pulled alongside farmer and Dani and niece shouting through open window

J: Get in! Found your brother! You'll never make it on foot.

Dani narration: Sam had walked to the closest town and boarded a bus of schoolchildren headed 500 km into the desert...

Panel 3: car on the road

Panel 4: rain hitting windshield

Panel 5: Dani in front seat/left and niece driving while farmer sits in back

Panel 6: Dani looking out her side window at road
SPLAT

Panel 7: giant toad on windshield of moving car in front of Dani

Panel 8: another one

93R

Panel 1: exterior of car driving along wet road with toads jumping around
speech bubble: Farmer: It was the 1930s and the cane beetle was destroying sugar crops in Queensland.

Panel 2: B&W depiction of swarm over farm

Panel 3: Reg Mungomery (based on photo) reading newspaper over tea

Dani narration: Reg the entomologist learned about a supposedly successful control experiment underway in Puerto Rico and Hawaii.

Panel 4: map showing Mariposa's path from Puerto Rico to Australia

Caption: June 3, 1935

Dani narration: He packed 102 toads in a suitcase. They'd breath through slots.

Panel 5: front view of suitcase filled with toads that are already hopping out
July 1, 1935

Panel 6: Dani's view through windshield of toads hopping out of the way on the road

94L

Panel 1: toads eating: toad eating a salamander; toad eating dog food; toad eating crickets; toad eating toad; toad eating mouse

Dani narration: The toads ate EVERYTHING, but...

Panel 2: toad looks at a beetle high on the top of a cane plant

Panel 3: jumps but not high enough to reach it

Panel 4: jumps again but can't reach it; arrow to leaf

Dani narration: The cane toads couldn't jump high enough to reach the beetles.

Panel 5: outside view of the car driving on dark road in Australia

Farmer: Want to know the worst invaders? Cats!

Dani: Escaped cats?

Panel 6: both in profile inside car

Farmer: Released

Dani: to eat the rabbits?

95R

Panel 1: Herpetologist in life jacket on FaceTime

H: How did they get here?

Panel 2: child of about five standing behind terrarium and peering in at something that is hidden by leaves; child is holding his mother's hand

Child: I want one.

Chris narration: He said it always starts the same way.

Panel 3: wider shot of mother standing over child and looking into a terrarium thought bubble over mother's head: It's little.

Panel 4: closer shot of the terrarium and now the baby snake is visible
arrow: Burmese Python

Panel 5: wider shot revealing setting, other terrariums and shelves of pet food, and pet store owner smirking behind child and mother
thought bubble: Wait to see what that looks like in six months.

96L

Panel 1: python full grown and barely fitting inside terrarium is poking head out and eyeing the family cat

Panel 2: mother tipping terrarium into in swampy area

Panel 3: python's tail seen as it disappears into the grass

Chris narration: He said eighty percent of the invaders in Florida are released pets. Even crazier, he told us this is happening all over the world.

Panel 4: the stack of '???' letters from children in Chris's room

97R

Panel 1: Chris holding up child's drawing of a peculiar blob in the trees outside an apartment building and a bird perched on a branch

Chris: Remember how we thought that kind of looked like a parakeet?

Panel 2: Chris at keyboard with Jo standing over him
try "pet parakeet" and "Spain"

Panel 3: Chris at keyboard with Jo standing over him
Jo: "Monk parakeets now seen as a plague... Wow."

Panel 4: leaning in close to read
Jo: Go back.

Panel 5: image on screen of a parakeet nest

Panel 6: Jo holding up child's drawing next to the screen

Jo: A nest! The released pet parakeets are building nests outside apartment buildings in Spain.

Chris: What are we supposed to do about it?

98L

Panel 1: Jo and Chris standing in front of the '?' pile and studying a child's drawing (but can't see their POV)

Jo: You think it was a pet?

Panel 2: hand pointing to characters

Japan Society curator: This says 'rakun' not 'tanuki.'

Chris: A curator at the Japan Society of Fort Worth told us that a 'Japanese raccoon' would be called a 'tanuki' even though it is part of the canine family. A 'rakun' is an American raccoon.

Panel 3: Rascal the Raccoon Disney poster outside theater

Chris narration: In 1969, Disney released a movie about a boy and his pet raccoon

Panel 4: smiling boy with raccoon on head

based on a memoir by Sterling North of Wisconsin.

Panel 5: CU of television with raccoon on screen and opening credits of the show

Araiguma Rasukaru

Chris narration: In 1977, a 52-part anime series based on the Disney movie aired on Japanese television.

99R

Panel 1: front view of Japanese boy and girl sitting cross-legged on the floor with big thinking bubble overhead: I want a raccoon!!!

Chris narration: We learned that Japan imported over a thousand raccoons from the United States during the height of the craze.

Panel 2: Japanese mother returns home to find the kitchen in disarray

Chris narration: And the raccoons behaved like raccoons

Panel 3: family releasing raccoons in the woods

Panel 4: open cage and multiple raccoons pouring out

Chris narration: Pet owners and sellers released their raccoons.

Panel 5: Japan society curator pointing to the illustration showing the outside of the structure

JSC: That's a temple.

100L

Panel 1: closer view of one interior illustration with marks on a column

Jo: Scratch marks?

Panel 2: images of the temples on screen

Chris narration: We'd learn that the temples had survived for hundreds of years in Kyoto.

Panel 3: raccoon eyes in dark

Now the American raccoons were crawling up the beams and sliding into the crawl spaces.

Panel 4: pointing to man with tall hat in illustration

JSC: That's a priest performing a Shinto rite

Panel 5: pointing to crowds on steps in one illustration

JSC: It might be New Year's because that's a big deal in Japan. The whole town turns out.

Panel 6: Jo and Chris looking at drawing

Jo: The raccoon fell through the ceiling in the middle of a ceremony!

101R

Panel 1: curator holding up book showing images of tanuki as 'spirit monster'

Chris narration: the tanuki, that would be the Japanese raccoon,

Panel 2: tanuki in cages being moved off boat

Chris narration: was imported to Sweden for fur production where it would be released and

become an invader

Panel 3: Chris labeling folder (there's a row of neat files on his desk and there are no papers on the floor); his mother is watching from the doorway and smiling

Panel 4: Chris looking at photographs

Chris: Just looking at the photos of Kyoto they sent us. The moss garden is, wow, I can't believe this place exists.

Panel 5: Jo looking over his shoulder

Jo: Wow.

102L

Panel 1: Dani standing next to jeep and looking in distance

Panel 2: LS of Tau writing in notebook while Sam points and talks

Panel 3: Sam still pointing at something as Dani runs towards him

Dani: Sam!

Panel 4: Sam looking up (unperturbed)

Panel 5: Dani hugging him

Panel 6: Dani holds his arms

Sam: Hi Dani. I'm helping Tau count the bilby burrows. He's a ranger. He takes care of his land.

Panel 7: Tau puts out his hand to Dani

Tau. He's been a great help. I'm with the indigenous ranger program.

103R

Panel 1: Sam takes her hand and looks up at her

Sam: Dani, come see the bilby! They call it a Maker

Tau: Close. Mankarr.

Panel 2: Sam standing next to burrow

Sam: That's a burrow. Did you know that a bilby can dig six feet into the ground? A Bilby carries its babies in a pocket just like a kangaroo.

Panel 3: Tau talking to Sam

Tau: and what's different about the bilby pouch?

Sam: It is turned around so dirt doesn't get inside when it is digging.

Panel 4: Tau smiling and commenting

Tau: Good student, that one.

Panel 5: Dani watching Sam and smiling as the boy continues to give his presentation with enthusiasm

Panel 6: Tau passing bilby to Sam

Panel 7: Sam holding a bilby

Sam: There used to be two kinds of bilbies. Now there is only one kind of Bilby and these are disappearing too.

Cats and foxes eat them. Rabbits steal their homes.

104L

Panel 1: board game box with words WHO INVITED YOU? on the cover; Chris, Jo, and Louie sitting nearby in a circle around a board and a tall stack of cards

Jo: Louie, your turn, pick a card.

Chris narration: We were starting to see a pattern.

Panel 2: Louie holding up something that looks like the 'trading card' shown by Chris's Florida Cousin; this one has a photograph of a nutria on the front; as on all the cards, the name of the animal is in block letters; card obscures the lower portion of Louie's face

O-P: *Who invited you?*

Panel 3: Louie reading back of card with view of others again

Louie: I was invited by, drats. *Human* introduction. This dude kept them in cages on his island and a flood washed the nutria away. That was in the 30s. Some furriers released them too.

Panel 4: Jo reading back of box

Jo: Okay. So that counts as two human introductions. Two spaces back for each. Plus two more because one introduction was intentional.

Panel 5: Chris holding up Kudzu card

Panel 6: Chris reading card to others in the circle

Chris: Introduced by a visiting Japanese delegation at an exposition in the 19th century. Later sold through mail order catalogues. A government agency promoted it to farmers. Let's see. A radio personality called it a miracle vine. Oh no. He started a club...

105R

Panel 1: Jo reading off box

Jo: That's four human introductions, all intentional, one club, one nutter. Move back fifteen spaces.

O-P: But I'm not even on the board yet!

Panel 2: Louie reading off 'sparrow' card

Louie: Sparrow, introduced in Brooklyn, New York by one Nicholas Pike. To eat inchworms. 1850s. *Before* the starlings? And, oh no, by a club too...

Panel 3: Jo holding up Sea Lamprey

O-P: Agghh

Jo: Sorry, Chris.

Panel 4: Jo reading back of card

Jo: introduced to Lake Erie from Lake Ontario through a canal. Human, unintentional, right? Like the rats and the ants?

Panel 5: Louie holding up STOAT card

Panel 6: Louie reading back

Louie: New Zealand, again. Introduced to eat the rabbits but it ate the birds. Wow. Including kiwis, the national bird.

Panel 7: kids sitting around the board and the stack of cards is nearly all gone

Chris: How does anyone win this game? We're only moving backwards.

Jo: Are there any cards left?

106L

Panel 1: both standing in front of teacher's desk in classroom and she's sitting before a giant map

Chris: ...but are ALL invasive species bad?

Teacher: You mean are there introduced species that don't become invaders?

Panel 2: teacher pointing to map and an illustration of the Columbian

Exchange (showing the exchange of fruits, vegetables, animals)

Teacher: Remember the Columbian Exchange?

Panel 3: Chris and Jo with teacher

Jo: Right. What's wrong with the potato and the tomato?

Teacher: Chris? Remember your presentation on your own family history?

Panel 4: Chris with three picture thought bubbles over head: thought bubble with picture of Irish farmers in field; thought bubble of holding up the potato and seeing blight; thought bubble of new immigrants on the ship

Chris narration: Ireland became a one crop country because the population was so poor. My ancestors were completely dependent upon the potato until it was wiped out by a blight caused by an invasive plant pathogen. One million people died. About as many left. That's how the Walshes came to America.

Panel 5: Chris and Jo with teacher again

Chris: So you're saying the dependency on the introduced potato was a problem too?

Teacher: Possibly. We can't know. Maybe the population would have faced starvation earlier without the potato. Plus there was an oppressive political system.

107R

Panel 1: Teacher holding up illustration of John Rolfe's Sea Venture (labeled)

Chris narration: She told us about the earthworm and how it was deposited on New World shores by accident.

Panel 2: image of earthworm in the soil

Chris narration: The earthworm changed the soil, aerated it, and this was one reason the colonists' crops thrived in the New World. That was good for the colonists. Was it good for the Native Americans? She said sometimes it is also a matter of perspective.

Panel 3: teacher leaning against desk between them and talking

Teacher: Populations move. Species move. Is there any land that is truly untouched? Didn't the Native Americans introduce species too? Yes.

Panel 4: long panel: teacher in corner pointing to map showing trains, planes, and ships

Teacher: What has changed? The pace. Over 50,000 merchant ships could be crossing oceans right now. These ships transport 10,000 invasive species a day just in their ballast water.

Panel 5: closer view of map with magnification mini-panels highlighting invasive species stowaways

Chris narration: She said other stowaways hitch rides in shipping containers, cargo holds, even on the clothing of plane passengers.

Panel 6: image of a plastic dock washed up on a shore with nearby plastic bottles arrow to circle min-panel showing mussels, crabs, barnacles, starfish

Chris narration: She told a story about a dock that washed up on a shore in Oregon. It was carrying over 4,000 pounds of marine life, Japanese marine life. The dock had been swept out to sea during a tsunami a year before. The dock was made of *plastic. Nonbiodegradable plastic.*

Panel 7: Chris looking at the map on his wall that is now crisscrossed with red string showing all the introductions.

Chris narration: Our teacher told us to remember that we share this planet with each other and with countless other species. That is a great responsibility.

108L

Panel 1: dust in desert

Panel 2: image of "Docker General Store"

Dani narration: We couldn't go home the way we had come. No Merlo.

Panel 3: on phone at counter

Dani: Dad?

other side of phone: Where are you?

Panel 4: CU of Dani grimacing

Dani narration: I was hoping we'd find out that we'd only been gone for two minutes like it is in the movies. Nope. They sent out search dogs.

Panel 5: Dani stirring soup at home

Dani narration: I was sure I'd be grounded for life but Dad let it go. He didn't say anything for weeks.

Panel 6: CU of father as he washes dishes nearby

Father: You know your Mom told me a story once about an interesting field trip.

Panel 7: CU of her surprised eyes looking sideways

Father: She was about Sam's age...

109R

Panel 1: front view of young man's hand doodling illustration of bilby in the corner of a page of typed notes covered in more doodles of bilbies

O-P: Sam?

Panel 2: 3/4 shot waist up at table of older Sam looking up with wry half smile

Panel 3: closer in on Sam

Sam (Speech Bubble): Oh. I get to speak? Wow. Should I talk about the starvings? Excuse me. Starlings.

Panel 4: view of entire table with all the grownup versions of the kids now visible and the audience visible; they are all laughing

Panel 5: Sam drawing with crayons while Dani talks to Jo and Chris on Facetime (laptop open on kitchen table)

Sam narration: I don't recall exactly how the plan came together.

Panel 6: Sam drawing bilby

O-P speech bubble: ...relocate them?

Panel 7: Sam still drawing

O-P bubble: ...like I read about this man who planted pine trees and they came...

Panel 8: Sam looking up

Sam: Plant baboo. A lady at the mummation said plant baboo and they come.

Panel 9: wider shot of Sam and Dani at the table with the open laptop

Dani: Bamboo?

From screen: Isn't that an invasive species?

110L

Panel 1: different angle and now see father at the stove facing Sam and Dani
Dani and Sam turned around to listen to the father who is now at the stove
Father: There's native bamboo. Called river cane. Ken-tucky. CANE-tuckee.

Panel 2: Chris and Chris's Louisiana cousin on Facetime with a crowd of men and women

Sam narration: Chris's cousin in Louisiana had a neighbor who was a researcher working on a cane restoration project in a river there. They were fighting, get this, the effects of invasive plant species. Soon we were connected to a whole community of river cane enthusiasts.

Panel 3: kids giving presentation: Dani holding up plan (can't see details) while Sam stands with arms outstretched like a bird

Sam narration: We still had to win over the town.

Panel 4: exhausted townspeople (all wearing masks and smocks) raise hands to vote for project

Sam narration: They would have agreed to anything by then.

Panel 5: (little) Sam's wide-eyed reaction

Sam: They're here!

Panel 6: wider view to reveal Chris and Dani standing next to him and looking

Panel 7: wider view to reveal that they're on Pilot Rock (facing in a different direction with the road visible) and Jo is a few feet behind

112L

Panel 8: high angle view of a snaking caravan of cars and trucks carrying bamboo

111R

Panel 1: Dani watching through window

Sam narration: One morning the starlings left

Panel 2: Dani and Sam looking through window in anticipation

Sam narration: and didn't return.

Panel 3: breathless townspeople on Pilot Rock as more flood behind them
Sam narration: We were sure they'd found their new home.

Panel 4: townspeople looking out into the valley
Sam narration: They hadn't.

Panel 5: looking out from Pilot Rock
Sam narration: We waited for them to return.

Panel 6: looking out the window
Two years passed. We heard about a starling invasion a few hours away.

Panel 7: looking out window
Sam narration: Another year passed, and another. We stopped looking.

112L

Panel 1: a taller and less babyish Sam knocking on a door
Sam narration: I was busy with the club.

Panel 2: Sam opening lid of box labeled KFI

Panel 3: lid open revealing chocolate bilbies
Sam narration: We started small. Selling chocolate bilbies to support the preserve.

Panel 4: stack of mail addressed to KFI
Sam narration: Answering letters.

Panel 5: neat binders labeled KFI lined up on a shelf in Chris's room; behind it is a map that is almost entirely covered in red yarn connections; wall filled with mementos, letters, class photos from kids all over the world
Sam narration: trying to pass along information from Chris's detailed database of researchers

113R

Panel 1: easel outside auditorium with this info listed:

*The First KFI Symposium 2017
Livestreamed*

Dr. Jonathan Webber, on training endangered quolls to develop a distaste for toads

Dr. Arne Witt, CABI, on solutions to the golden apple snail invasion

Dr. Daniel Simberloff, Invasives 101

Ngaanyatjarra Council, on the camel export business in aboriginal lands

Dr. Michael Wagner, on using sea lamprey repellent as a natural dam

‘Eat The Invader’ Case Study: How Jamaica Learned To Love Lionfish: Discussion

Ballast Water Management

The Kelly-Hopkinsville Encounter

Sam narration: We held our first symposium

Panel 2: long/wide panel across page: smaller auditorium; long table of panelists with audience in a semicircle around them

Speaker: There is a responsible way of euthanizing an animal.

Speaker: Killing is killing.

Speaker: If we don't control the population, other animals die. That's killing too in a way.

Speaker: I think the issue is these mass culls.

Speaker: Right. Kill as few animals as possible. Waste nothing.

Speaker (Tau): I see. Who's going to pay for that?

Sam narration: Our first annual debate too. Heated, I recall. These would never be easy conversations. Nor would we find easy solutions. We tried to hear each other out.

114L

Panel 1: grade school age kid cuddling capybara and looking up at three young people wearing KFI 2019 T-shirts and two have their hands on their hips like they're super heroes

speech bubble: Hey! What will that look like in six months? Do you know it could weigh as much as 145 pounds?

speech bubble: You'll have to feed it 6 to 8 pounds of grass a day

speech bubble: Visits to the vet may cost thousands of dollars.

Sam narration: Our kid intervention teams prevented a capybara invasion.

Panel 2: same three kids in the Everglades facing family about to release a giant Burmese python from a tank

Panel 3: kids handing the tank to Chris's cousin (recognizable maybe by a T-shirt) and they're all standing under an Invader World gate
Arrow: largest refuge for abandoned pets in the world

Panel 4: Chinese kids giving giant bouquet of goldenrods to the visiting delegation
Sam narration: Here are some snapshots from a Kentucky delegation's visit to Xian in China where they worked with local kids to find solutions to the goldenrod crisis.

115R

Panel 1: Sam talking to audience
Our ambassadors in China came here to show American kids the importance of managing the emerald ash borer. A short video clip.

Panel 2: red headed kid in front of a class of grade school children asks "So this beetle is eating these ash trees. What does that have to do with my life?"

Panel 3: Chinese ambassador at front of the classroom talking
Ambassador: Do you like baseball?
Bubble from class: Yes!

Panel 4: ambassador holding up bat
Ambassador: This Louisville Slugger was made from an ash tree.
Sam narration: Many of our graduates would go on to impressive careers in the sciences.

TBD 2020 and 2021 PANELS: Tau and Jo giving a presentation/interacting with activists at a real-life/late 2020 Climate Movement event plus related Sam narration; Dani in audience at the International Conference on Biodegradables of 2020; maybe panel reference to COVID-19 re aftermath and advocacy for increased regulation of exotic animal trade

Panel: Sign: on lamp post The Fifteenth KSISR
Sam narration: As you know, KFI became the rather unwieldy KSISR. That's Kids Sharing Invasive Species Resources. Now you're changing the name again to better fit the scope of your vision for the future.

116L

Panel 1: view of 'Main Street' sign and partial view of street: see Lantana Lawn Furniture, Inbeda Sushi; Choctaw Cane-Tuckee Baskets; Camel Creamery; Masai Red

Sam narration: Main Street has changed a little.

Panel 2: Shopkeeper with sign behind him reading Masai Red pointing to racks of
sweaters

scarves and hats made by the Masai tribe in Kenya

Shopkeeper: The cochineal used to control the invasive cactus also produces a red
dye when crushed.

Panel 3: woman with map looking at monument

Caption: Trail of Tears Park

Sam narration: With the new came interest in the old.

Panel 4: Louie's Luncheonette sign next to Masai Red store

Sam narration: Louie wanted his menu to reflect both our club's mission and the
region's history.

Panel 5: on chalkboard: Burgoo of the Day: Nutria!

Panel 6: Dani talking with a farmer (and the image looks similar to the ones of her
walking/talking with farmer in Australia)

Sam narration: Dani worked with a local farmer to supply the produce. She wanted to
stick to native crops which would be mixed with invaders shipped from all over the
world (on ice).

Panel 7: okra in Dani's palm

Sam narration: That's how my sister learned that okra, the most Southern of all
Southern vegetables, is not from the South at all. Like potatoes and tomatoes, it was
introduced as part of the Columbian Exchange. By a very different route.

117R

Panel 1: famous diagram of slave ship deck

Sam narration: Okra first traveled to America on slave ships. Their captors brought
foods native to Africa to sustain, barely, the 'cargo' on board.

Panel 2: Louie's hands chopping the okra in kitchen

Sam narration: Many slaves then kept the seeds and planted them creating their own
gardens. Slaves who worked in the kitchen often integrated the flavors of their home
country into dishes.

Panel 3: CU of goldenrod

Arrow: used for medicinal purposes

Sam narration: My ancestors also developed a singular knowledge of the native
horticulture, expertise that would help the enslaved survive and even escape captivity.

Panel 4: wider view of the 'freedom garden' (goldenrod next to other plants; pecan tree; pear tree; okra patch nearby); grown Sam is pointing to the okra patch and talking to group of about fifteen children; the top of a wooden sign is visible

Sam narration: Dani read about a special kind of garden that is a showcase of all these plants, native and introduced. A Freedom Garden. She replicated it here.

Panel 5: close-up of the wooden sign: LOTTE GARDENS

Panel 6: Sam talking to audience

Sam: For my part, I tried to bring back some of the businesses from my grandfather's day. Like this theater... Yes. *I see you.*

Panel 7: side view of Sam and see kids from Panel 4 in the front row of the theater waving

Sam: Shout out to my fifth graders in the front row...and I had other priorities.

118L

Panel 1: sign: Sam's Ice Cream & Sweets Shop

Sam narration: ...and I had other priorities.

Panel 2: little boy in bilby ears standing in front of an ice cream counter (and it is obviously the boy who was sitting on the stage during all the presentations)

O-P: He's thinking.

Panel 3: his POV of the flavors: left to right: vanilla; pistachio; chocolate; strawberry; gubinge; wojapi; malva

Panel 4: he looks to the other side

Panel 5: all the flavors, above plus sweet potato; Turkish Delight; baobing; guanabana;

Panel 6: above ma may; shao xiang cao; trifle; red bean; chocolate; vanilla; pistachio; strawberry

Panel 7: server holding giant bowl while family waits at counter

Server: The Globe coming up! One of everything feathers on top!

Panel 8: placing final 'feather' on bowl with filled with all kinds of ice cream
arrow to feather and words 'made of fine spun sugar'

Panel 9: little boy in bilby ears looking up to order

Boy: Chocolate.

119R

Panel 1: grown Sam talking to audience

Sam narration: Let me close by thanking you. Thank you to the new guard for asking us old-timers to share our stories.

Panel 2: audience and see WELCOME HOME sign

Sam narration: Thanks also to everyone on this stage for coming on such short notice. I am thrilled to see my big sister

Panel 3: see feet of woman in hiking boots walking along path

Sam narration: who's usually off scaling a mountain

Panel 4: full shot and see that it is grown Dani walking along path in woods

Sam narration: or absorbed in fieldwork somewhere out of cell range.

Panel 5: close view of Chris and Jo seen from front walking/talking with green leaves behind them

Sam narration: To Jo and Chris

Panel 6: wider view of the them walking and the boy from the stage is a few feet in front of them leading the way

Sam narration: who came all the way from Kyoto

Panel 7: the boy stepping up on a rock with help of Chris and Jo, his parents

Sam narration: with your youngest ambassador

120L

Panel 1: Tau at front of four teenagers seen from behind and he's pointing up the trail and turning back to say something to one of them

One in back is wearing a T-shirt that reads BUSH BANDS BASH KY 2031 and another one is wearing a shirt that reads BLUEGRASS BASH NT 2032

Sam narration: and I'm always delighted to see Tau, my mentor, onetime co-director, business partner, forever friend...

Panel 2: wider shot: long line of people climbing the trail to Pilot Rock and Dani is at the front; in background, someone in wheelchair going up a lift on the side; someone else helped over rock

Panel 3: more images of climbing from above so they're moving in direction of the viewer

Sam narration: all of us together again with you to honor our long-awaited guest.

Panel 5: CU of bamboo stalks covered in guano; in front, a signpost reads "Hotspur's Grove"

Sam narration: Returned, and only days before the anniversary of their first, well second, uh, appearance in our town.

Panel 6: more images of climbing

121R

Panel 1: vertical panel with people walking up to the top of the page; long line of diverse group of people climbing near top

Sam narration: Please join us

Panel 3: crowd looking into the distance

Chris and Jo side by side; Sam with Chris and Jo's son on his shoulders and Dani with her arm around Sam; on other side, Tau and Louie

Sam narration: on Pilot Rock.

Panel 4: bird POV of the people on the hill all looking up in amazement

122L & 123R

Panel 1: SPLASH: Starling POV from the middle of a murmuration with onlookers as specks in the distance

Experts Consulted:

Dr. Robert Reed, USGA re Burmese Pythons
Dr. Jacoby Carter, USGS re nutria
Dr. Peter Spencer, Murdoch University, re feral camels in Australia
Dr. Jonathan Webb, Shine Lab, the University of Sydney, re cane toads & toad sausage taste aversion training (endangered) quolls and re his former student's attempts to train bibles to fear feral cats
Dr. Arne Witt, of CABI in Kenya, for overview of invasive species issues in Africa and Southeast Asia (especially prickly pear cactus)
Dr. James Miller, retired, USDA Forest Service, re kudzu and privet
Dr. Joseph W. Love, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, re snakeheads
Dr. Mike Merchant, Texas A&M, entomologist/professor, re fire ants
Dr. Michael Wagner, Michigan State University, re lampreys and using lamprey repellants to build 'dams' (and limit use of pesticides)
Dr. Edward LeBrun, Brackenridge Field Laboratory in the Department of Integrative Biology at the University of Texas
Dr. Billy Higginbotham, Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension, re wild pigs
Dr. Chris Churchill, USGS, re zebra mussels
Dr. Kevin McGowan, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, starlings & sparrows
Jamie M Kass, CUNY, researching raccoons in Japan
Ralph Davis, extension agent in Texas regarding wild pig control and his earlier experiences with nutria (he grew up in Louisiana)
Barbara Rosenman, director, Oldham County Animal Control (that's LaGrange County, the setting of a major starling 'invasion')
Marcus Walker, Maryville Tennessee Animal Control re major starling invasion
Jeff Jacobs (in photograph), corn farmer, Rockwall County, TX re hogs

(in addition to significant secondary source research)



Lynn Ermann is a writer in New York City.