

CULTURE



kids write and most kids draw but they stop after a while; they grow out of it. We never really did."

While freelance art work continues to be part of Blas' and Davis' careers—including Blas' art work for cast members from *RuPaul's Drag Race* and both artists' work for *Hero* novelist Perry Moore and local author Marc Acito—*Briar Hollow* is their main focus right now. Blas and Davis launched a Kickstarter campaign in December, appealing for donations to go toward printing costs for the first half of Volume 1 as well as application fees and promotional materials needed for this April's Stumptown Comics Festival. With the initial goal of \$500 having been doubled as of press time, the comic's creators are now focusing on the direction their story will take in Volume 2, when one of the established characters comes out.

Briar Hollow is already anchored by the engaging coyness of main character Molly—a self-proclaimed gamer, comic book collector and cryptozoology enthusiast who's returning to college following a soul-searching semester off. The comic's cast pegs supporting antagonists in the form of annoying little brothers, sheepish coed confidantes and lots of gaming lingo. This is all groundwork, claim Blas and Davis, for a coming out story that will take the plot in a very different direction than Volume 1.

"Most kids growing up, you're not ready to come out right away, so why do that with our characters?" explains Davis.

"I didn't want to push the story forward for a reason that didn't feel honest," adds Blas. "But I really am excited to get to those story-lines because they're going to be a lot of fun to draw."

Blas' own coming out process seems a fit-

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-KIMBALL DAVIS

ting catalyst for *Briar Hollow's* plot.

"Growing up, it was really easy for me to come out because I had a gay older brother and a gay older sister," continues Davis. "So it wasn't hard. Terry came from a military family, so that was always a little scary. *Briar Hollow* is a lot of fun for me. It doesn't relate to my life now, but as a kid it definitely would have been my story for the time."

"For me, drawing—in *Briar Hollow* especially—is therapy," says Blas. "I can put experiences and things I've gone through into this comic without making it preachy. If it's all in my head and I don't really have another way to express what I'm going through, then the best thing for me is to make something of it, or turn it into something positive, like this book."

And that's exactly what Blas and Davis are striving for with *Briar Hollow*—a comic book for young, gay kids to be able to relate to. A gift for the gnerds.

"More than anything," relates Blas, "we want this to be a love letter to gay kids and teens and their allies, to give them something fun to escape into. Anyone who feels like an outcast needs somewhere to go to feel accepted. Hopefully *Briar Hollow* can be that place." ☐

For more information on *BRIAR HOLLOW*, Terry Blas and Kimball Davis, visit briarhollowcomic.com. For details on the upcoming *Stumptown Comics Fest*, visit stumptowncomics.com.

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