



My chances are pretty good, seeing that my father has worked at the mill for thirty years.



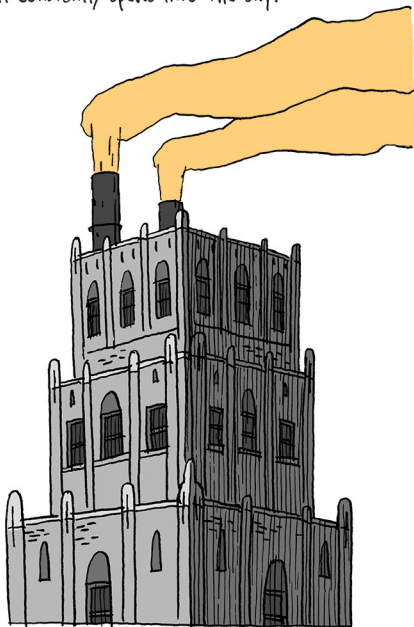
It goes well, except at the end when the manager says:



Located at the mouth of the Saint-Charles River, the Quebec City pulp and paper mill faces the old town.



You can't miss it, with the plumes of smoke it constantly spews into the sky.

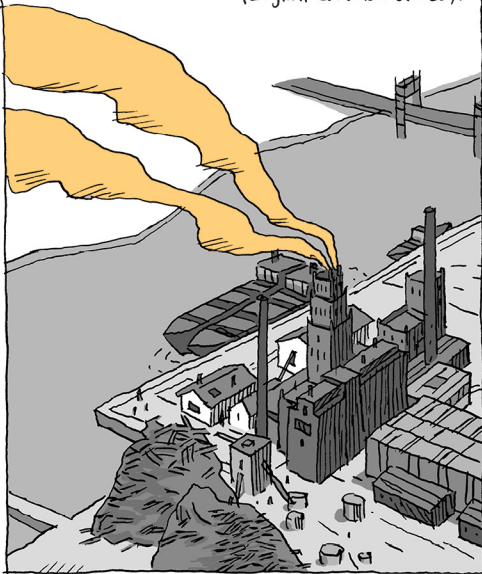


And even if you don't see it, you can smell its sulphur fumes when the wind blows the wrong way.





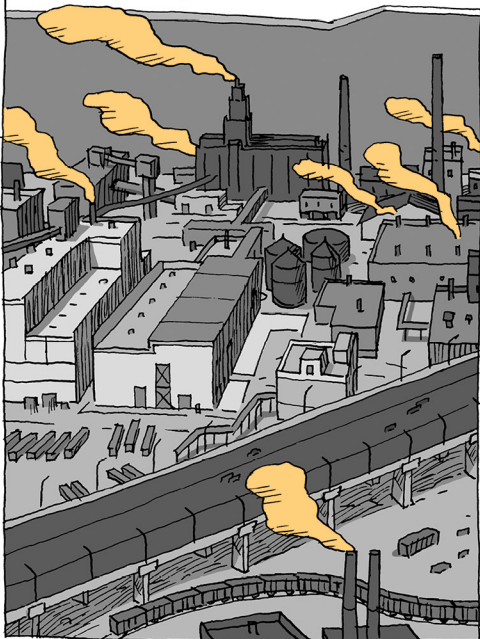
Founded in 1927, it was originally called the Anglo, short for Anglo-Canadian Pulp and Paper Mills (English-Canadian owned).



In 1975, it became the Reed, named after its new owner, Albert Edwin-Reed (British).



1988, Daishowa (Japanese).



2001, Stadacona Papers (American).



And since 2004, it's been White Birch (American).



The Anglo, the Reed, Daishowa: I'd heard my father use all these names, successively, when he'd talk about his work.

My father's place.



When I was your age...

But mostly, he called it "the shop."

It's always the same...

The guys at "the shop" want me out of there...

But the thing is...

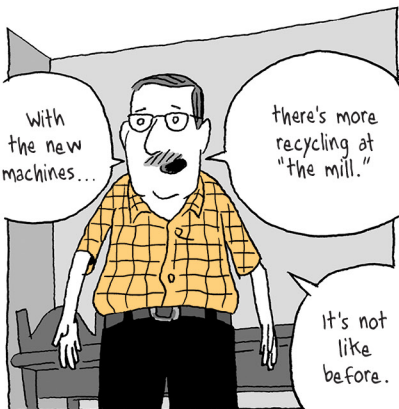


Or "the mill."

With the new machines...

there's more recycling at "the mill."

It's not like before.



Hello.

Where do the workers go in?

First day...



At the back!

Get goin'!

I wind up with two other guys my age watching a safety training video.



We separate. I go to the locker room to put on shorts and boots.



I proceed to the "machine room," where I'm handed off to a big guy, about thirty years old, who's going to train me.

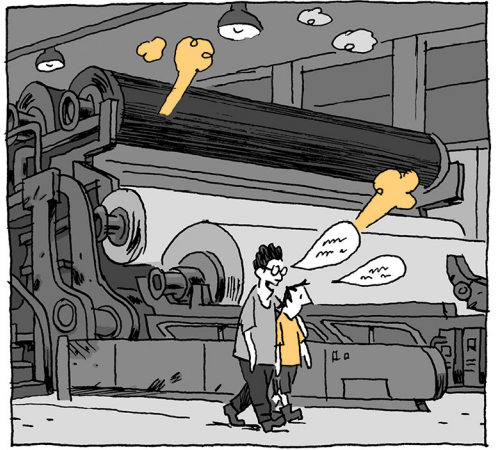


He's nice but a little too friendly for my liking.





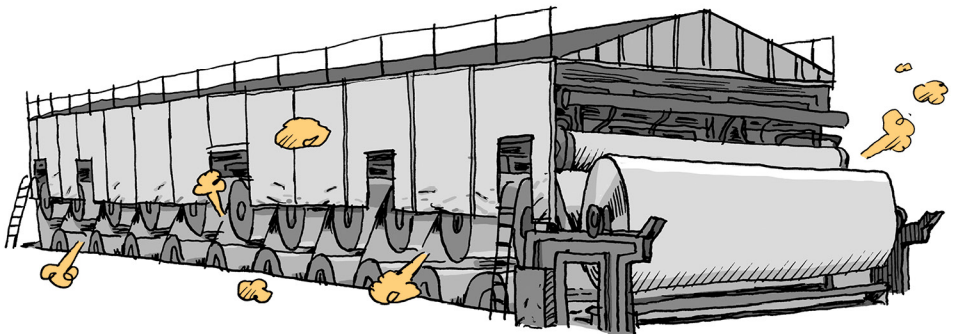
I'm going to be the "sixth hand" on one of the paper machines.



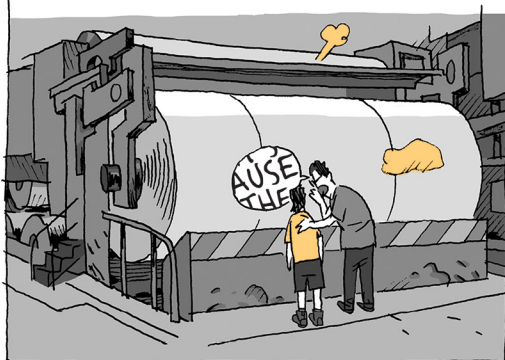
Four machines as big as locomotives operate night and day to churn out newsprint for customers like The New York Times.



Logs are made into pulp that gets crushed, dried, and rolled onto massive cylinders.



A second machine then rewinds the paper and cuts it into smaller rolls, according to the customers' needs.



You feel like you're in a sauna...



You have to yell to be heard.

And it's so loud you need to wear earplugs all the time.



I see a few old-timers with no protection.



I figure they must be completely deaf.



For the workers here on the shop floor, a workweek consists of four twelve-hour days.





The schedule was negotiated by the union. The workers preferred having long weekends.



So we're here for twelve hours, from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m.

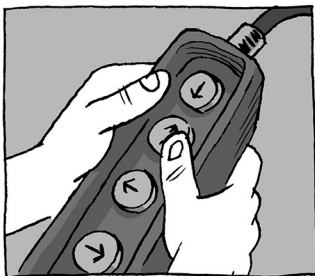
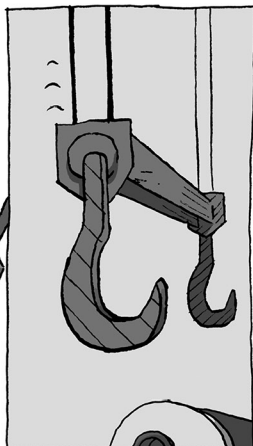


Only eleven more hours to go...

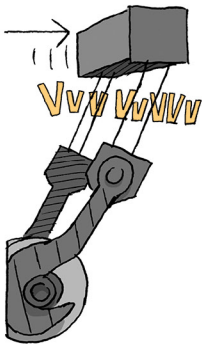
The first thing I learn is how to operate the overhead crane.



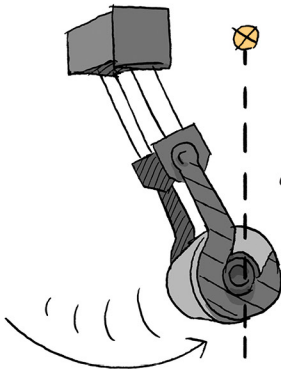
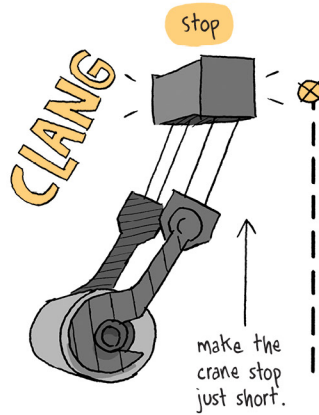
Okay, go!



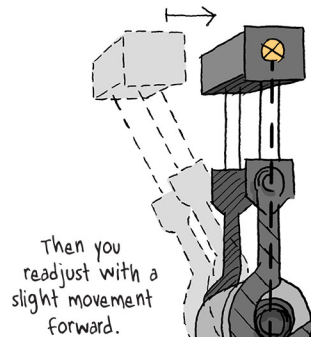
To move this kind of weight, you need to proceed in steps.



← For example, to bring the roll here...



Inertia causes the roll to swing.



Nailed it!

