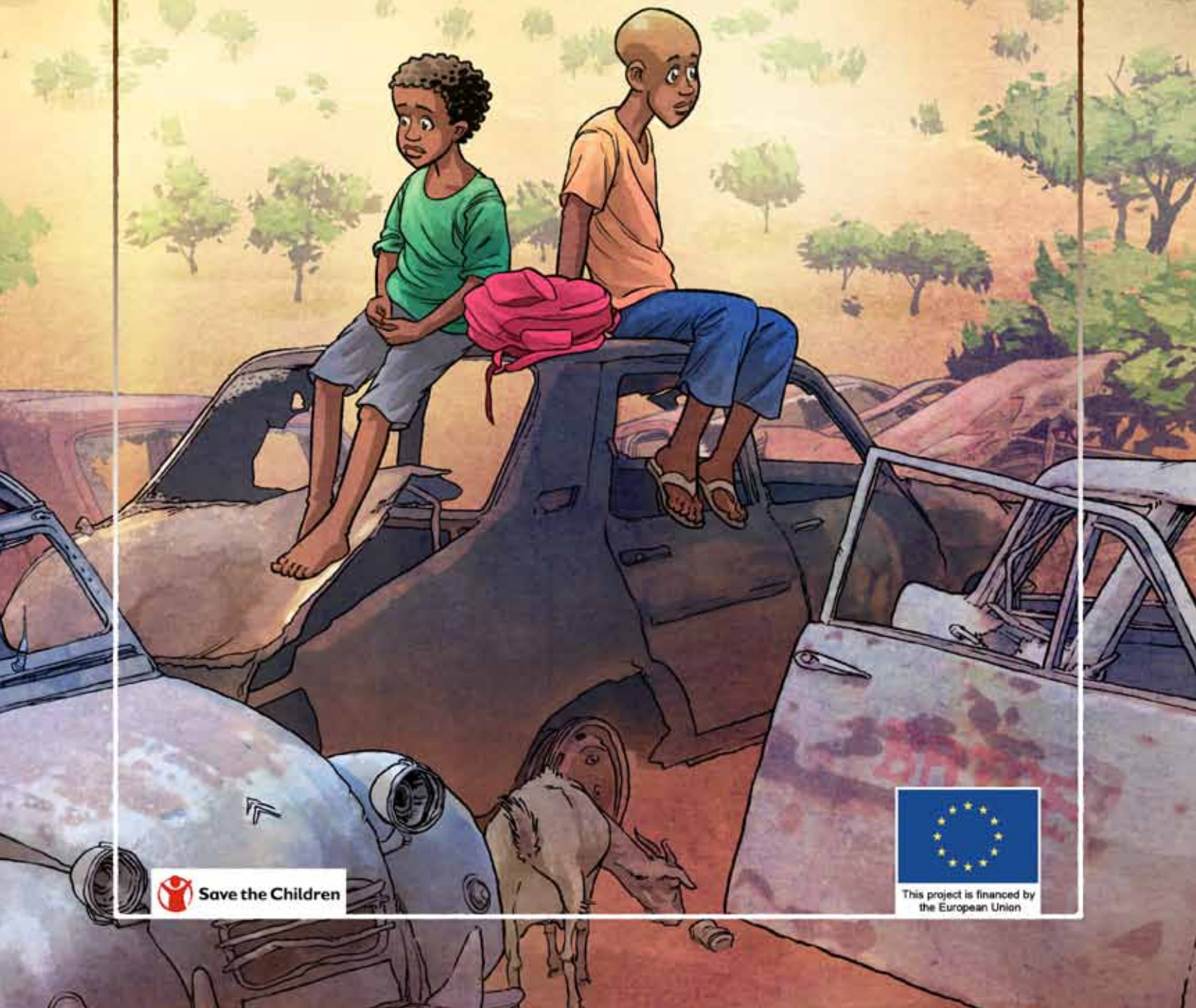
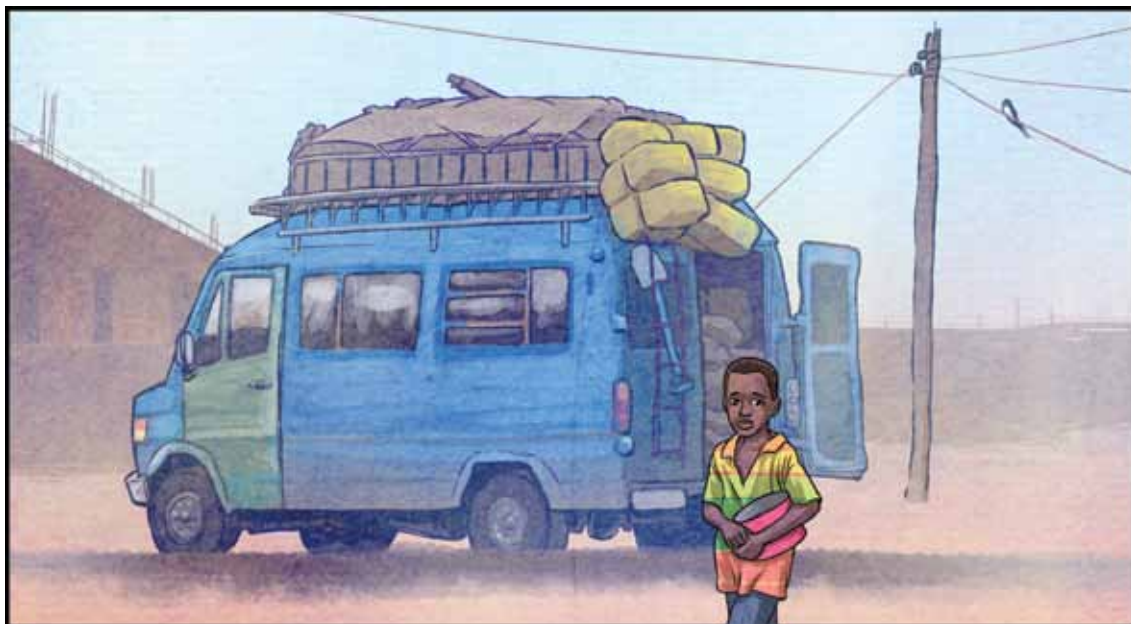


Brice Reignier

LITTLE STEPS IN THE SAND



LITTLE STEPS IN THE SAND



Text, drawings and colours
Brice Reignier

Comic book produced as part of the AFIA project funded by the European Union
Project implemented by Save the children



This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union.
Its contents are the sole responsibility of Save the Children and do not necessarily
reflect the views of the European Union

Foreword



The concern of migration and in particular the protection of children in mobility is one of the European Union's priorities. We work with origin and transit countries to address the root causes of irregular migration and/or forced displacement by strengthening the rule of law, creating educational and economic opportunities, improving governance and ensuring, in an effective and sustainable way, a protection of children in mobility in accordance with the International Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This comic is an original means of raising awareness produced by the AFIA project, an initiative supported by the European Union Emergency Trust Fund, which is implemented by Save the Children, one of the most experienced international child protection organisations in the region.

I salut and congratulate Save the Children for this implementation of the values, principles and priorities of European cooperation on migration management, and in particular the protection of children in mobility, through this publication.



Giacomo Durazzo
Ambassador of the European Union in Mauritania


Foreword



Over recent years, Mauritania demonstrated a high level of commitment and adherence to the international norms defining a legal framework protecting children on the move, through the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families as well as the main instruments against child trafficking and exploitation. However, the causes and the vulnerabilities linked to the movement of children remain generally unknown and these aspects are not fully integrated into the normative and strategic protection framework in Mauritania.


The AFIA project, financed by the European Union, and implemented by Save the Children, in close collaboration with the MASEF, civil society, state services, DPJE, brigade for minors and the police, has been taking concrete steps to ensure the protection of children on the move. The integration of children on the move in the national child protection system and the direct support provided to state and civil society protection centres are two instances of this work.

As to better understand the reasons of displacement and the protection risks encountered by children on the move, Save the Children conducted an anthropological study, collecting the life stories of 48 children on the move in 9 regions of Mauritania. Following this study, and thanks to the experience gained through direct work with children on the move, Save the Children created this comic book to give its readers food for thought and some reading keys to help them better grasp the phenomenon of children on the move, as well as their vulnerabilities in terms of abuse, exploitation and trafficking.



LET ME TELL YOU A STORY.


IT IS ABOUT THE PHENOMENON
KNOWN AS MIGRATION.



BIRDS ARE RENOWNED FOR THE ENORMOUS DISTANCES
THEY CAN TRAVEL. DRIVEN BY THE NEED TO SURVIVE, TO
FIND FOOD OR MORE FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS TO BEAR
THEIR YOUNG, THEY WILL OVER-COMING STAGGERING
ODDS ALONG THEIR JOURNEY.

THE EUROPEAN SWALLOW, FOR EXAMPLE, WHICH
MEASURES LESS THAN 20CM AND WEIGHS ABOUT 20
GRAMS CAN TRAVEL SOME 10 000 KILOMETRES IN ONE
SEASON. DEPARTING FROM EURASIA IN THE NORTHERN
HEMISPHERE IT FLIES ALL THE WAY TO THE TIP OF THE
CAPE PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA IN THE SOUTHERN
HEMISPHERE AND BACK AGAIN IN A SINGLE YEAR.

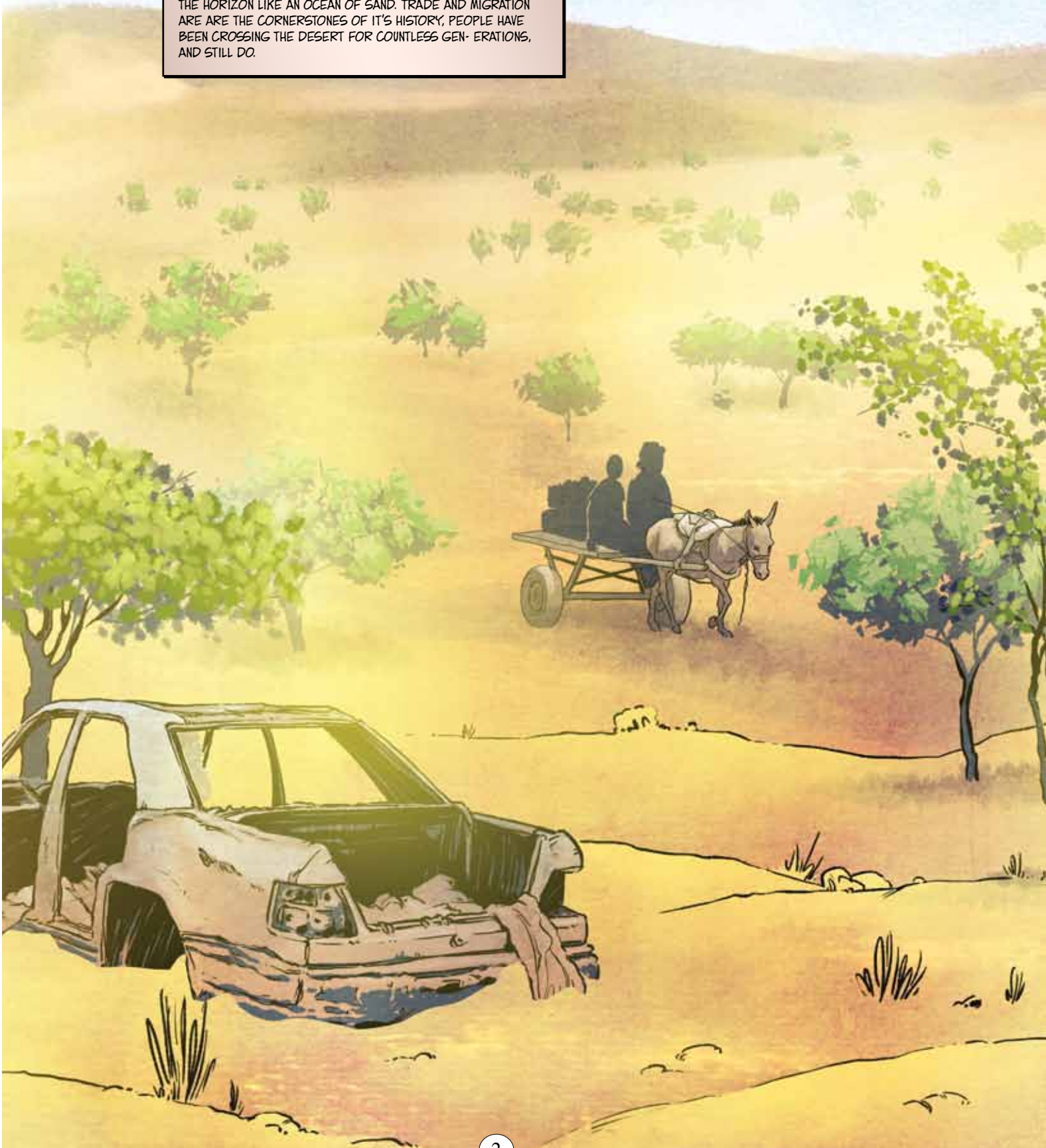
OF COURSE IT ISN'T ONLY BIRDS THAT MIGRATE, THINK
OF THE GREAT SERENGETI MIGRATION OF WILDEBEEST,
ANTELOPE AND SO MANY MORE ANIMALS OF ALL SHAPE
AND SIZE MOVING ACROSS THE AFRICAN CONTINENT.



HUMAN BEINGS ARE NO DIFFERENT, MOST
OF US ALSO CONSTANTLY LOOK FOR WAYS
TO IMPROVE OUR CONDITIONS. SINCE THE
DAWN OF TIME HAS OUR RACE BEEN IN
MOTION, TO THIS VERY DAY ...

MAURITANIA IS ALSO A PLACE WHERE HUMAN
MIGRATION CAN CLEARLY BE SEEN.

THE GREAT SAHARA DESERT MAKES UP AN ASTONISHING 90% OF
THIS VAST NORTH-WEST AFRICAN COUNTRY, IT STRETCHES ACROSS
THE HORIZON LIKE AN OCEAN OF SAND. TRADE AND MIGRATION
ARE ARE THE CORNERSTONES OF IT'S HISTORY, PEOPLE HAVE
BEEN CROSSING THE DESERT FOR COUNTLESS GEN- ERATIONS,
AND STILL DO.



THIS IS AMADOU, A BOY IN MOTION. HE HAS JUST TURNED 16 AND COMES FROM A SMALL VILLAGE NOT FAR FROM NÉMA IN THE COUNTRY'S SOUTH EASTERN CORNER. HIS MOTHER PASSED AWAY WHEN HE WAS VERY SMALL AND HIS AUNT HAS RAISED HIM EVER SINCE.



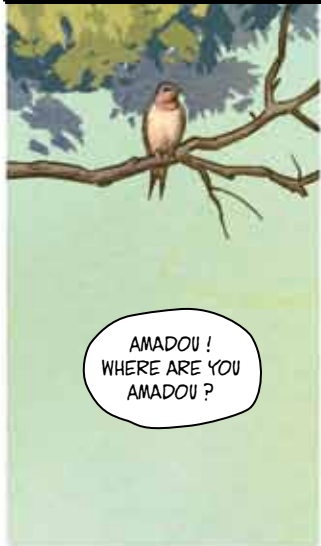
>PFFF !<
IT'S SO HOT TODAY !



THE BIRD HE SEES FLYING OVERHEAD
SYMBOLISES HIS NEW FREEDOM AND
WATCHING IT'S FLIGHT HIS MIND DRIFTS.



UNTIL RECENTLY AMADOU HAD BEEN GOING THROUGH LIFE AS USUAL.



AMADOU !
WHERE ARE YOU
AMADOU ?



HERE HE IS MOMMY !
HE IS FEEDING
THE GOATS !



AMADOU, COME
SIT HERE WITH ME,
WE MUST TALK.

WHAT IS IT AUNTY?
HAVE I DONE SOMETHING
WRONG ?



NO. YOU ARE A VERY GOOD BOY,
AMADOU. YOU ARE ALWAYS VERY HELPFUL AND
I LOVE YOU VERY MUCH. I'VE BEEN THINKING A LOT
ABOUT SOMETHING WE HAVE SPOKEN ABOUT.

DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU TOLD ME
THAT YOU WERE OLD ENOUGH TO JOIN YOUR
BROTHERS IN EUROPE ? WELL...
I THINK YOU ARE RIGHT...

DO YOU REALLY
THINK SO ?! BUT
YOU SAID--



I KNOW WHAT I SAID, BUT I WAS
JUST AFRAID. GROWING UP, YOU WERE
ALWAYS CLOSE TO YOUR UNCLE AND
WHEN HE LEFT, I THOUGHT...

I WAS WORRIED
THAT YOU WANTED TO
RUN AWAY TOO !



OH AUNTY, DON'T
THINK THAT !



I KNOW, AMADOU,
I KNOW. I UNDERSTAND HOW
MUCH YOU WANT TO SEE YOUR
BROTHERS AGAIN.



THEY WERE ALSO ABOUT YOUR AGE WHEN YOUR MOTHER DIED AND THEY CHOSE TO LEAVE TOGETHER BUT YOU WERE TOO YOUNG.

IT IS NORMAL THAT YOU SHOULD WANT TO GO TOO AND I WILL HELP YOU AS MUCH AS I CAN. I HAVE SPOKEN TO OLD MR MANGO AND HE HAS AGREED TO TAKE YOU WITH HIM ON HIS CART THE NEXT TIME HE GOES TO MARKET AT NÉMA.



HERE IS A BAG FOR YOU TO USE.

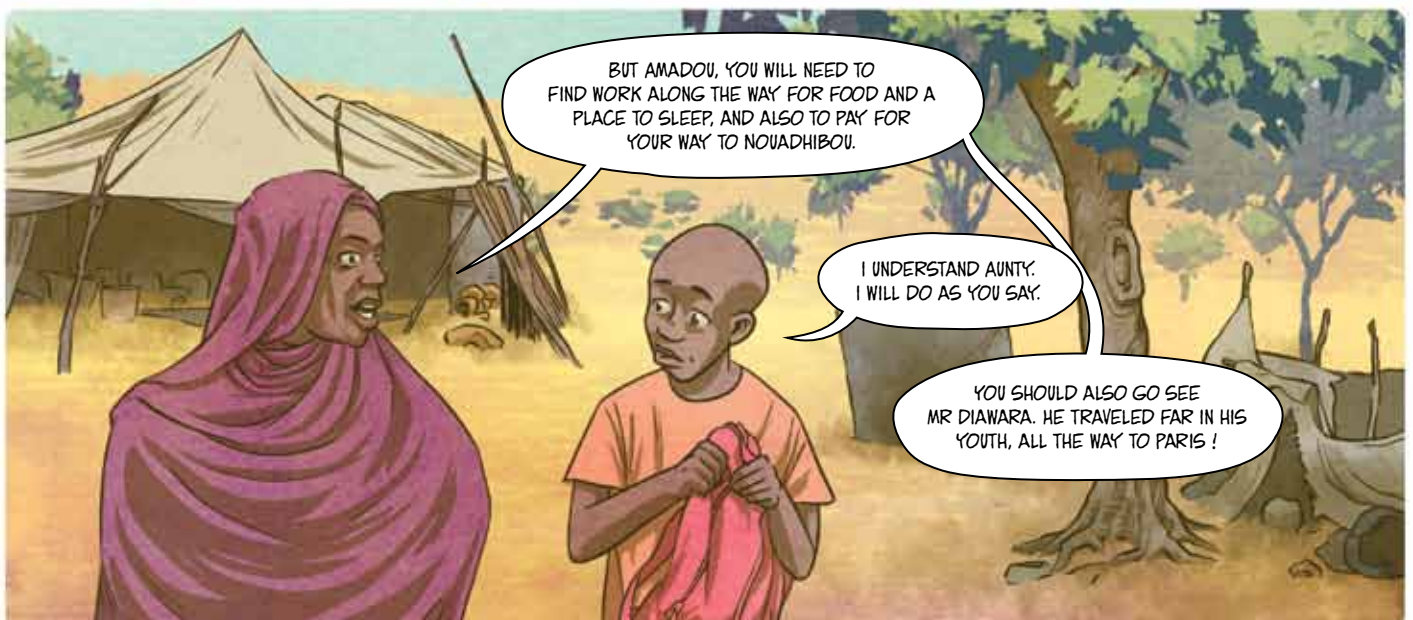
I HAVE PUT MONEY IN AN ENVELOPE TO PAY FOR YOUR WAY WHEN YOU GET TO THE BOAT, I HOPE IT WILL BE ENOUGH.



THERE ARE SOME OTHER THINGS IN THERE FOR YOU.



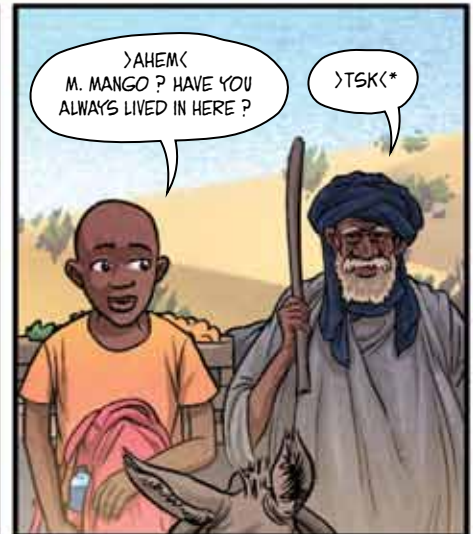
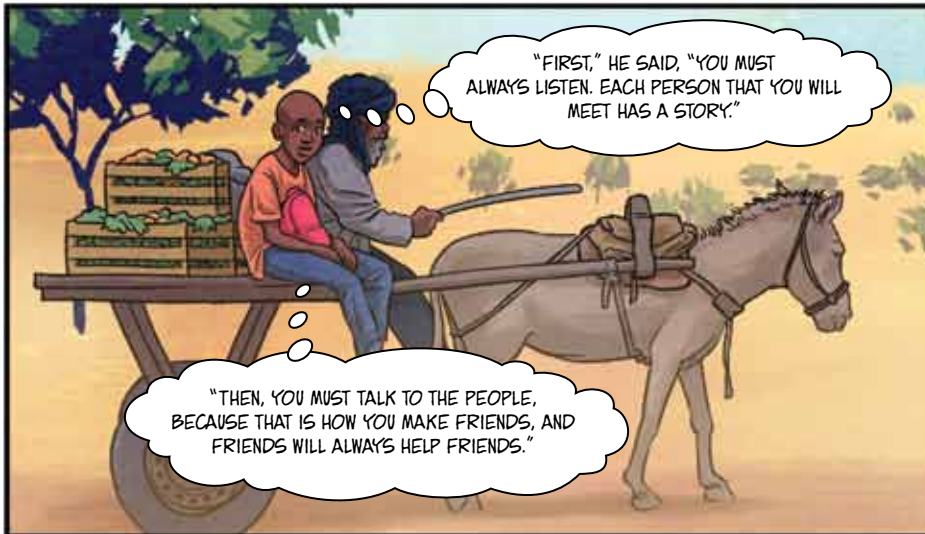
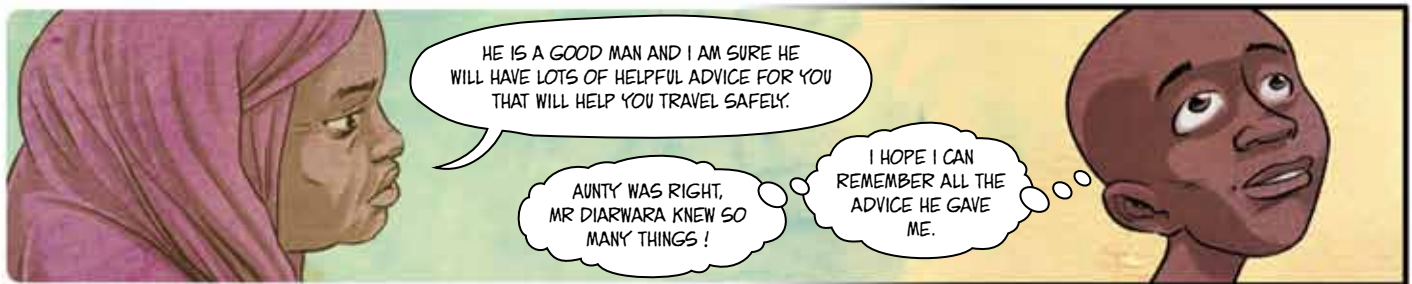
THANK YOU AUNTY !
THANK YOU SO MUCH !



BUT AMADOU, YOU WILL NEED TO FIND WORK ALONG THE WAY FOR FOOD AND A PLACE TO SLEEP, AND ALSO TO PAY FOR YOUR WAY TO NOUADHIBOU.

I UNDERSTAND AUNTY.
I WILL DO AS YOU SAY.

YOU SHOULD ALSO GO SEE MR DIAWARA. HE TRAVELED FAR IN HIS YOUTH, ALL THE WAY TO PARIS !



*(THE SOUND MAURITANIANS MAKE THAT MEANS "YES")



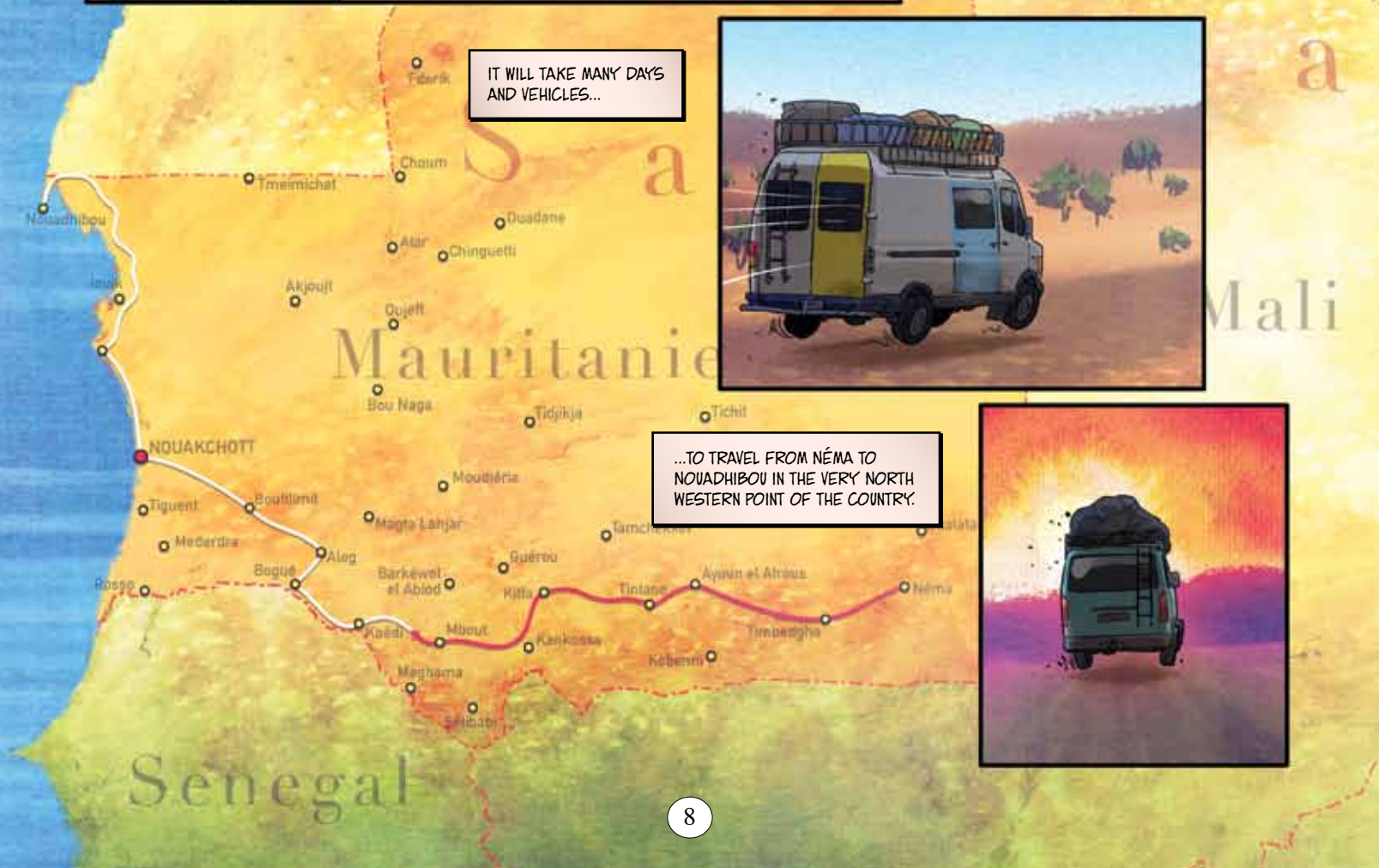
MY GRANDPARENTS
CAME FROM VERY FAR
AWAY. THEY RAN FROM
THE WAR.

THEY HAD NOTHING
WHEN THEY CAME HERE AND
HAD TO WORK HARD TO
MAKE A LIVING.

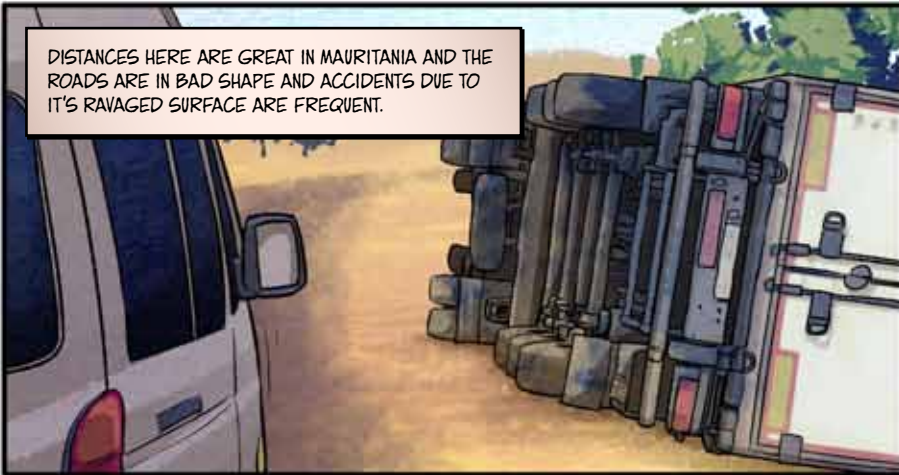


MY FAMILY HAS BEEN HERE FOR
THREE GENERATIONS, THINGS ARE GOOD
HERE AND ALLAH PROVIDES. WHY GO
LOOKING FOR TROUBLES ?





DISTANCES HERE ARE GREAT IN MAURITANIA AND THE ROADS ARE IN BAD SHAPE AND ACCIDENTS DUE TO IT'S RAVAGED SURFACE ARE FREQUENT.



ON THESE ROADS, EVEN THE MOST ABSURD SIGHTS SEEM COMPLETELY NORMAL.



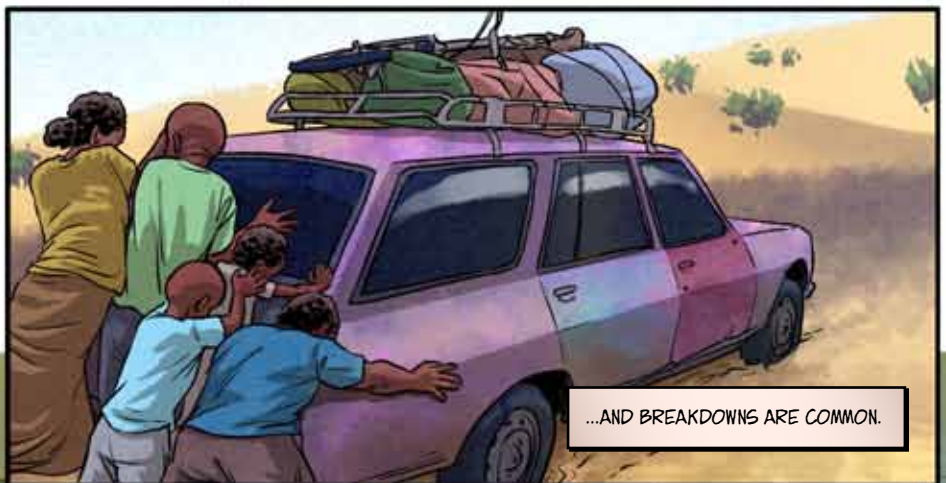
OH!



THE CARS AND TRUCKS THAT CRAWL LIKE BEETLES UNDER THE UNFORGIVING SUN HAVE BEEN MENDED SO MANY TIMES THAT THEY ARE VERY SLOW...

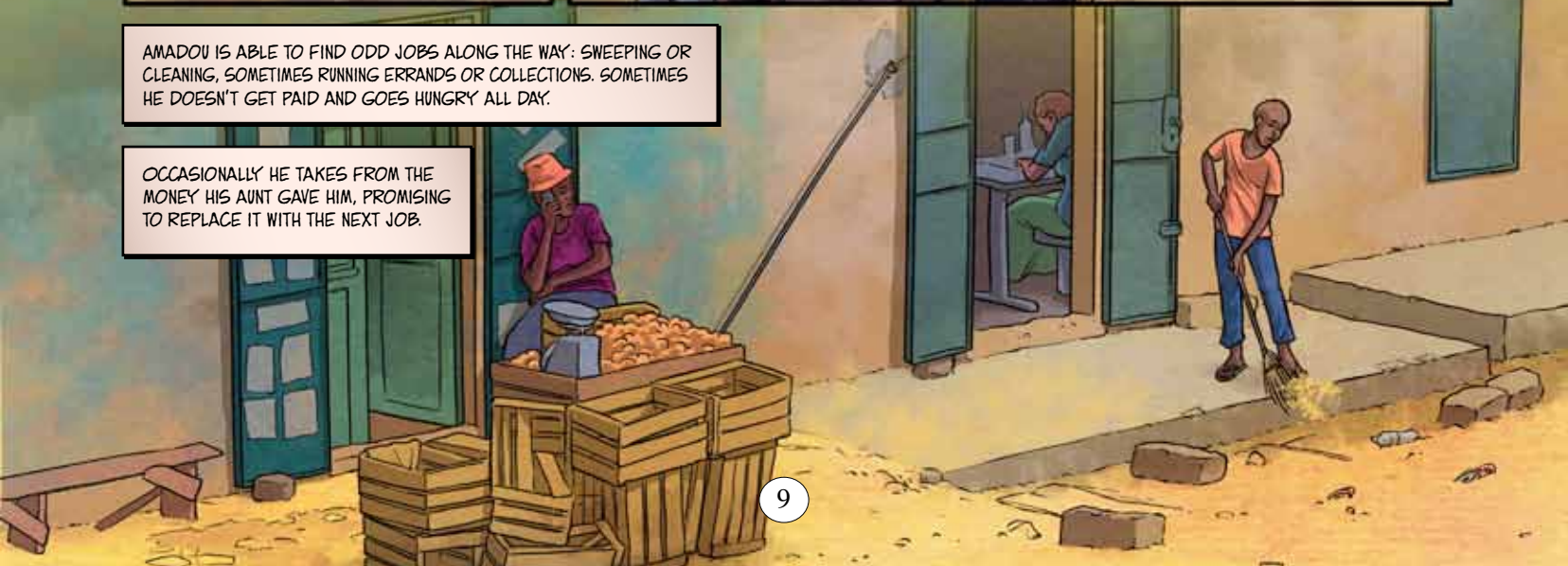


...AND BREAKDOWNS ARE COMMON.



AMADOU IS ABLE TO FIND ODD JOBS ALONG THE WAY: SWEEPING OR CLEANING, SOMETIMES RUNNING ERRANDS OR COLLECTIONS. SOMETIMES HE DOESN'T GET PAID AND GOES HUNGRY ALL DAY.

OCCASIONALLY HE TAKES FROM THE MONEY HIS AUNT GAVE HIM, PROMISING TO REPLACE IT WITH THE NEXT JOB.



WITH EACH NEW TOWN AND TRANSPORT COMES NEW FACES,
THEY COME FROM EVERY CORNER OF THE CONTINENT. AND
WITH THEM COME THEIR STORIES.

SOMETIMES HE CANNOT UNDERSTAND THEM BUT
THERE IS USUALLY SOMEONE AROUND WHO DOES
AND CAN TRANSLATE. HE IS AMAZED, HE HEARS
OF PLACES HE HAS NEVER HEARD OF BEFORE:
BENIN, TOGO, FRANCE, ZIMBABWE, JOHANNESBURG,
AUSTRALIA, CHINA...





HE NEVER IMAGINED
THE WORLD COULD
BE SO BIG !

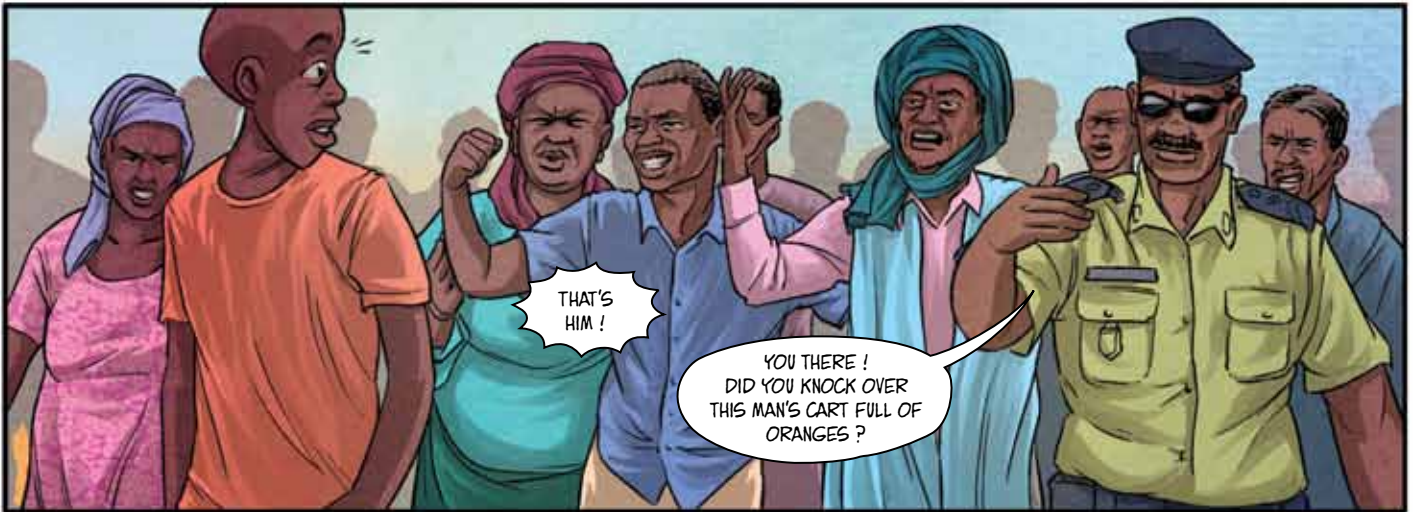


AND SO TIME PASSES, KILOMETRE
AFTER KILOMETRE.



IT IS LATE ONE AFTERNOON WHEN AMADOU ARRIVES IN KAËDI. HE HAS HEARD THAT FROM HERE YOU CAN SEE SENEGAL !





*(JUICE MADE FROM HIBISCUS.)



FORTUNE CHANGES QUICKLY FOR THOSE THAT ARE MOST VULNERABLE AND JUST LIKE THAT, AMADOU IS NOW LIKE SO MANY OTHER CHILDREN HERE. ALONE AND LEFT WITH NOTHING. NO-ONE WHO COULD HELP HIM KNOWS WHATS HAPPENED TO HIM OR WHERE HE IS.

HE'S STUCK. HE CAN NO LONGER MOVE FORWARD AND GOING BACK IS UNTHINKABLE, HIS AUNT GAVE HIM ALL THAT SHE COULD AND TO COME BACK SO SOON WITH NOTHING WOULD BE DEVASTATING. WHAT CAN HE DO ?

TOMORROW, I WILL HAVE TO FIND SOME WORK. I'LL TRY TO FIND THAT GIRL, SHE SEEMED NICE.

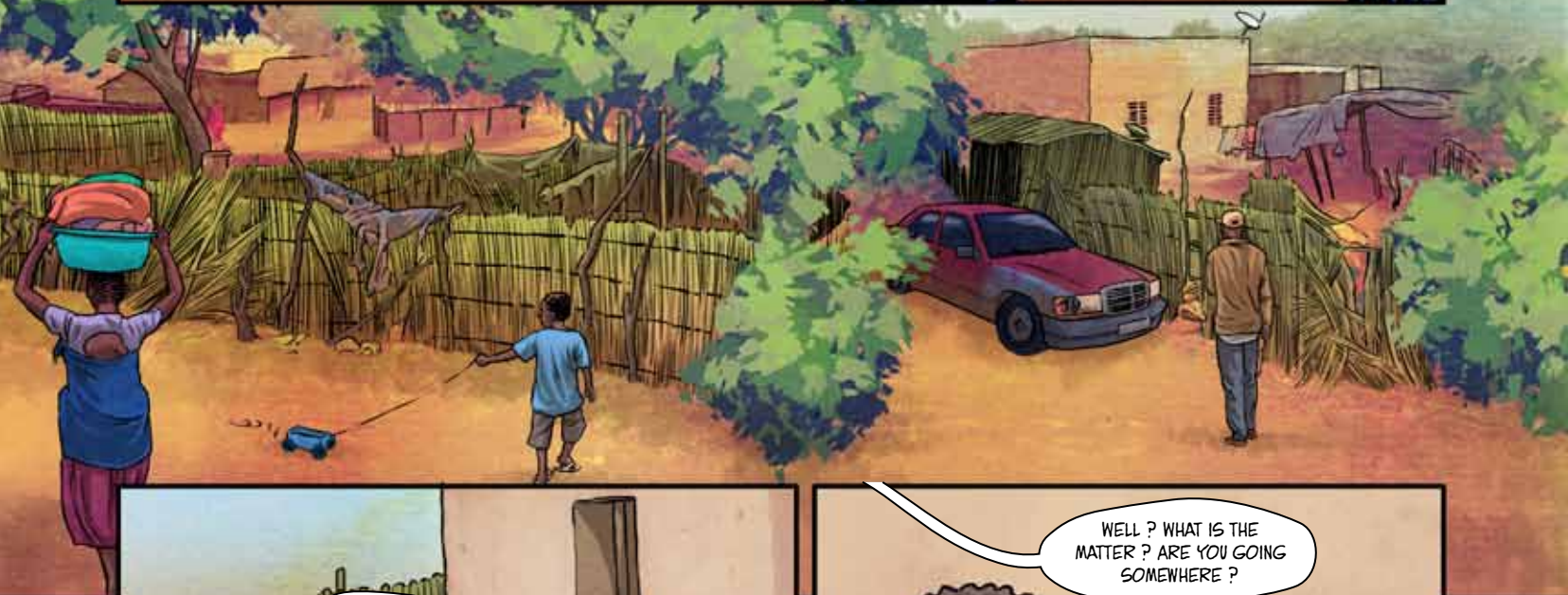
MAYBE I CAN HELP HER SELL HER BISSAP.

I WILL WORK HARD TO MAKE UP THE MONEY I LOST ! OH, HOW DID THIS HAPPEN ? I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE IT.

AND SO THE WHEEL TURNS.

LET ME NOW TAKE YOU TO ANOTHER PLACE AND ANOTHER TIME WHERE A DIFFERENT WHEEL TURNS. ANOTHER BOY IS ABOUT TO BE THRUST INTO MOTION.

CLACATA CLACATA CLACATA CLACATA CLACATA



HI DAOUD, ARE YOU OK ?

HI MOUSSA.



WELL ? WHAT IS THE MATTER ? ARE YOU GOING SOMEWHERE ?

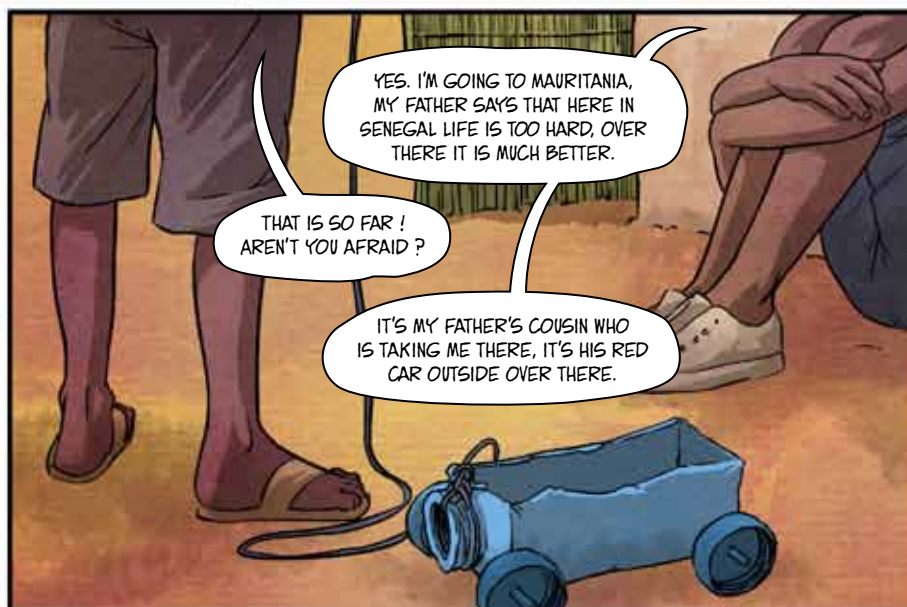
MY FATHER IS SENDING ME TO A MAHADRA*.

I DON'T WANT TO GO AWAY...



I WANT TO STAY IN SCHOOL BUT SINCE HE HAS NO JOB MY FATHER IS NOW TOO POOR TO AFFORD SCHOOL FOR ME.

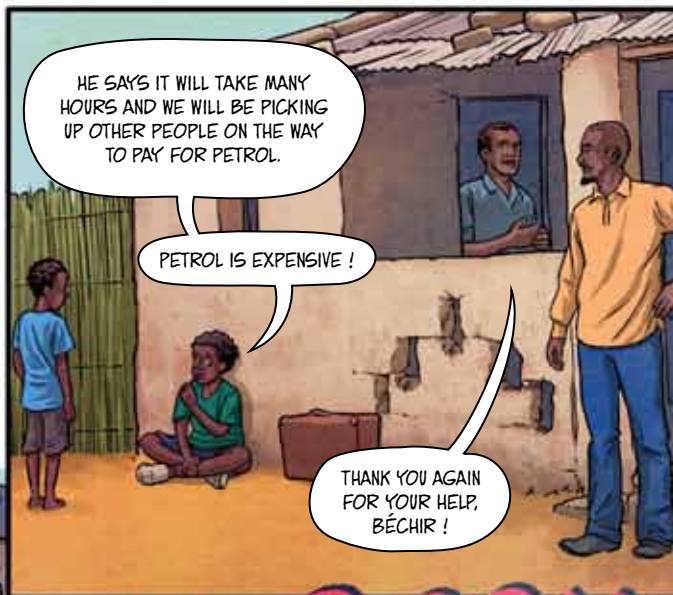
OH. AND WHERE IS IT ? IS IT FAR ?



YES. I'M GOING TO MAURITANIA, MY FATHER SAYS THAT HERE IN SENEGAL LIFE IS TOO HARD, OVER THERE IT IS MUCH BETTER.

THAT IS SO FAR ! AREN'T YOU AFRAID ?

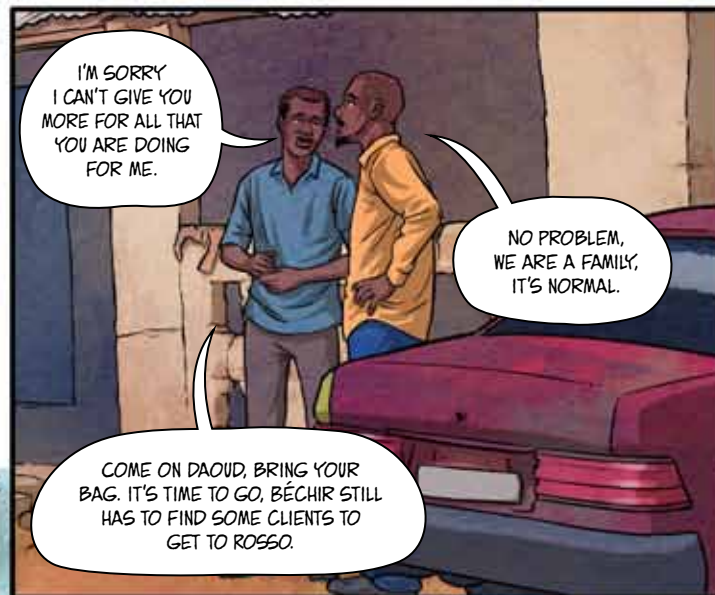
IT'S MY FATHER'S COUSIN WHO IS TAKING ME THERE, IT'S HIS RED CAR OUTSIDE OVER THERE.



HE SAYS IT WILL TAKE MANY HOURS AND WE WILL BE PICKING UP OTHER PEOPLE ON THE WAY TO PAY FOR PETROL.

PETROL IS EXPENSIVE !

THANK YOU AGAIN FOR YOUR HELP, BÉCHIR !



I'M SORRY I CAN'T GIVE YOU MORE FOR ALL THAT YOU ARE DOING FOR ME.

NO PROBLEM, WE ARE A FAMILY, IT'S NORMAL.

COME ON DAOUD, BRING YOUR BAG. IT'S TIME TO GO, BÉCHIR STILL HAS TO FIND SOME CLIENTS TO GET TO ROSSO.



DAOUD, WHAT'S THE MATTER ? YOU ARE NOT USUALLY THIS QUIET, WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND ?



I DON'T WANT TO GO, I WANT STAY IN SCHOOL...

BUT I CAN'T STAY EITHER, MY FATHER GETS MORE AND MORE ANGRY AND HE SCARES ME !

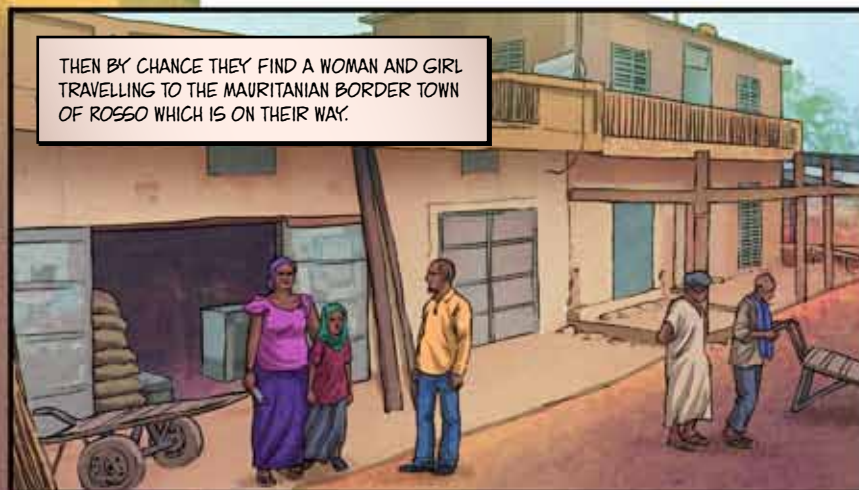


THESE ARE DIFFICULT TIMES FOR YOUR FATHER, HE'S LOOKING FOR WORK BUT HASN'T FOUND ANY NEARBY.

HE THINKS HE WILL HAVE TO GO FAR TO FIND AND IT WORRIES HIM.

OH. I DIDN'T KNOW.

BUT DON'T WORRY, THINGS WILL BE BETTER. IT'S LIKE YOU ARE NOW ON AN ADVENTURE. AND YOU ARE GOING TO KORANIC SCHOOL. IT'S A DIFFERENT KIND OF SCHOOL BUT YOU WILL STILL BE LEARNING.







Rosso
Senegal

Rosso
Mauritanie

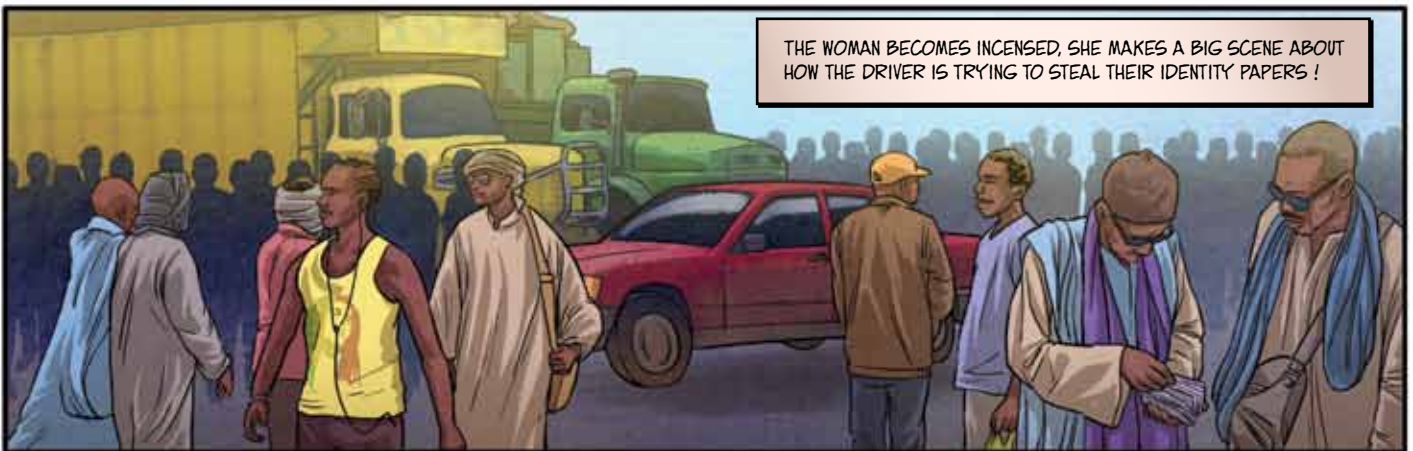
THEY ARRIVE AT LAST TO THE BORDER AND CROSS THE RIVER BY FERRY, ON THE OTHER SIDE IT IS CHAOS, IT'S NOISY, PEOPLE ARE SHOVING AND PUSHING TRYING TO GET THROUGH.



COUSIN BÉCHIR HAS FRIENDS HERE, FRIENDS THAT WORK FOR THE LOCAL POLICE AND CUSTOMS. THEY HAVE HELPED HIM MANY TIMES BEFORE TO FACILITATE THE COMPLICATED FORMALITIES OF THE CUSTOMS PROCESS.



HE OFFERS TO TAKE THE WOMAN AND GIRL'S PAPERS AS WELL. BUT-



THE WOMAN BECOMES INCENSED, SHE MAKES A BIG SCENE ABOUT HOW THE DRIVER IS TRYING TO STEAL THEIR IDENTITY PAPERS !



BUT
MADAM...
OUR PAPERS ?!
AND WHAT ELSE THEN ?

NO MADAM !
I ONLY MEAN TO HELP. IT CAN TAKE
MANY HOURS, YOU SEE, TO GO THROUGH
THE CUSTOMS IF YOU DON'T KNOW
WHO TO SPEAK TO.



I SEE WANT YOU
WANT TO DO ! YOU LIKE TO
HELP DEFENCELESS WOMEN
ONLY TO STEAL FROM
THEM !







ERR.. YES, I WAS JUST HELPING THIS POOR BOY, HE'S LOST.



HE'S LOST ! I'VE HEARD THIS STORY BEFORE.



WHERE ARE YOUR PARENTS ?!

DAOUUUUD !
WHERE ARE YOU DAOUD ?!



DAOUUUUD !

HEY !
>TSK< BÉCHIR !



MOHAMMED !
I'M LOOKING...



ARE YOU LOOKING FOR HIM ?

DAOUD ! I WAS SO WORRIED !

BÉCHIR !



YOU SHOULD BE MORE CAREFUL, BÉCHIR.

I KNOW. THERE WAS A CRAZY LADY SHOUTING AT ME, I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND.

BAH. WOMEN, RIGHT ?



MAYBE. MAYBE. STILL, IT'S VERY STRANGE.

ALMOST LIKE SHE WANTED TO ATTRACT A CROWD. BUT WHY ?



THEY ARE ONCE AGAIN ON THEIR WAY...



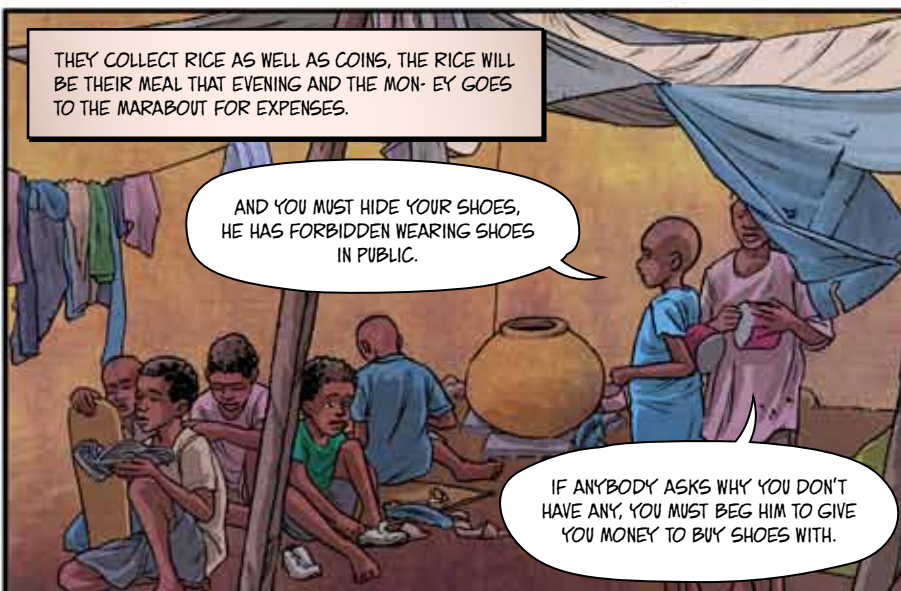
...AND ARRIVE AT LAST AT THE MAHADRA.



THE DAYS PASS, AT FIRST THINGS APPEAR TO BE FAIR, THE MARABOUT INSTRUCTS THE KORAN TO HIS BOYS, EACH HAS HIS OWN TABLET ON WHICH HE WILL COPY EACH VERSE OF THE HOLY BOOK UNTIL HE HAS MEMORISED IT.



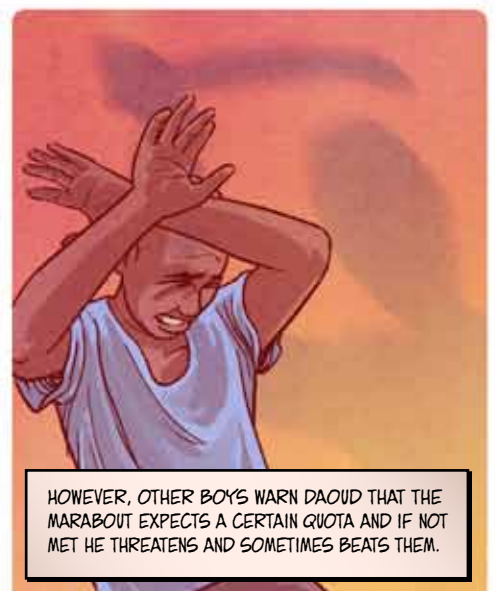
BUT EACH DAY THEY ARE SENT OUT INTO THE STREETS TO BEG, THIS IS HOW THEY CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS MEALS AND CLOTHING.



THEY COLLECT RICE AS WELL AS COINS, THE RICE WILL BE THEIR MEAL THAT EVENING AND THE MONEY GOES TO THE MARABOUT FOR EXPENSES.

AND YOU MUST HIDE YOUR SHOES, HE HAS FORBIDDEN WEARING SHOES IN PUBLIC.

IF ANYBODY ASKS WHY YOU DON'T HAVE ANY, YOU MUST BEG HIM TO GIVE YOU MONEY TO BUY SHOES WITH.



HOWEVER, OTHER BOYS WARN DAOUD THAT THE MARABOUT EXPECTS A CERTAIN QUOTA AND IF NOT MET HE THREATENS AND SOMETIMES BEATS THEM.

DAOUD IS SMALLER THAN MOST OF THE OTHER BOYS WHICH IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS BUT SOME OF THE OLDER BOYS ARE JEALOUS BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO COLLECT A LITTLE MORE MONEY THAN THEM.

IN FACT HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO COLLECT MORE THAN THE EXPECTED QUOTA AND HAS HIDDEN IT.

GIVE US YOUR MONEY, YOU CAN KEEP THE RICE !

SEE YOU LATER...

HAHAHA !

THE MARABOUT SCARES HIM AND HE DESPERATELY WANTS TO GO BACK HOME.

IF HE CAN COLLECT ENOUGH MONEY MAYBE HIS FATHER WILL ALLOW HIM TO CONTINUE WITH SCHOOL.

DAOUD !
THERE YOU ARE !

THE MARABOUT HAS FOUND THE MONEY YOU WERE HIDING, HE IS SO CROSS !

HE HAS BEEN SCREAMING AND LOOKING FOR YOU, SAYING YOU ARE A THIEF. IF YOU COME TO THE MAHADRA TONIGHT...

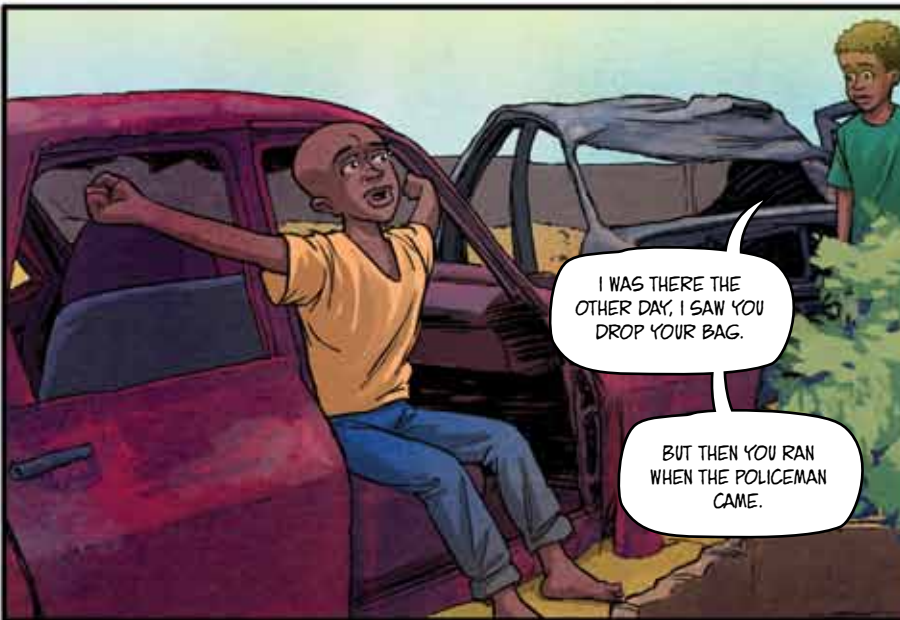
IN A PANIC, DAOUD RUNS AWAY.

FOR TWO DAYS NOW AMADOU HAS BEEN LIVING IN THE STREET, HE HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO FIND MUCH WORK AND EVERY NIGHT HE HAS GONE TO SLEEP HUNGRY.



WHA... ?
IS SOMEONE
THERE ?

HI.



I WAS THERE THE
OTHER DAY, I SAW YOU
DROP YOUR BAG.

BUT THEN YOU RAN
WHEN THE POLICEMAN
CAME.



MY BAG ? BUT
WHY DIDN'T YOU GIVE IT
BACK BEFORE ?

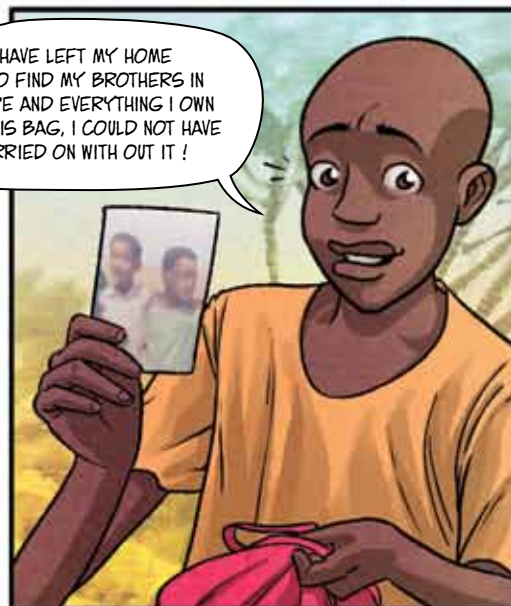



I- I WAS SO AFRAID OF THE
POLICEMEN, I AM FROM SENEGAL AND
I HAVE NO PAPERS. IF THE PO- LICE
CATCH ME IT WILL BE VERY BAD
AND... AND...




I STOLE IT... BUT THEN I
FELT SO BAD AND I CAME
BACK TO LOOK FOR YOU.







THE BOYS WALK TOGETHER AND SHARE THEIR STORIES, AMADOU BUYS THEM SOME BREAD AND GOAT KEBABS. THEY THEN SIT ON ROCKS NEXT TO THE RIVER WATCHING THE PIROGUES COME AND GO.




SOON I WILL BE ON A PIROGUE GOING BACK HOME.

AH?




THESE PEOPLE OVER THERE, THEY HELP PEOPLE ACROSS AND SOMETIMES THEY DO IT FOR FREE.



BUT WILL YOU BE OK ON YOUR OWN? YOU DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY...


I HAVE A LITTLE. THE DAY I RAN AWAY WAS A VERY GOOD DAY !



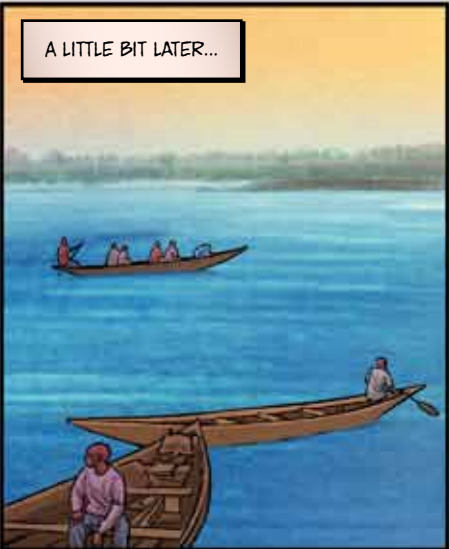
ITS BEEN THREE MONTHS SINCE MY FATHER SENT ME AWAY, I WANT TO GO HOME.



AND I AM NO LONGER AFRAID.



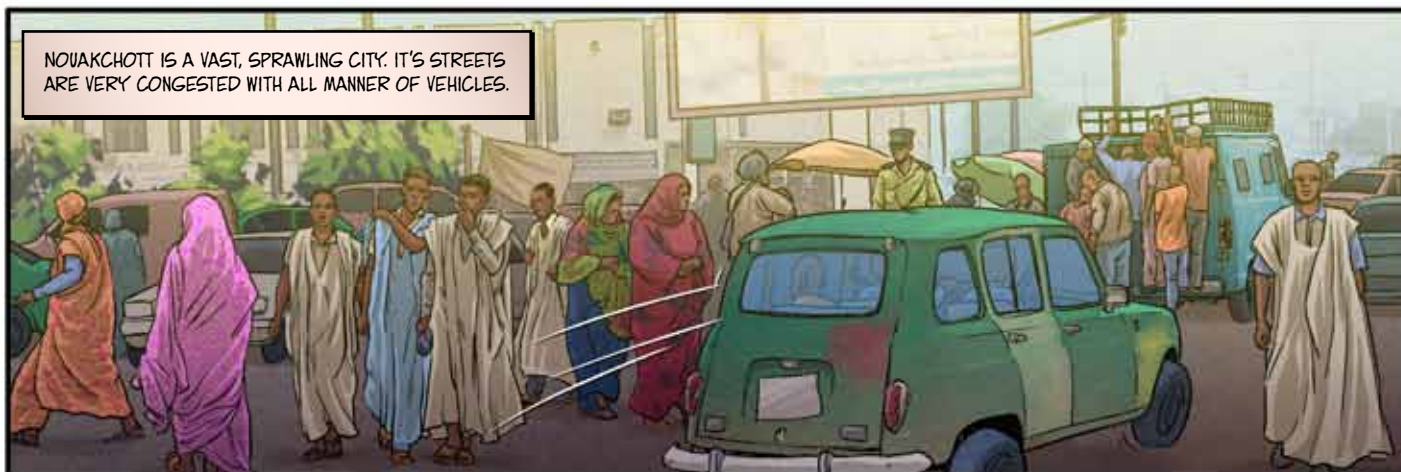
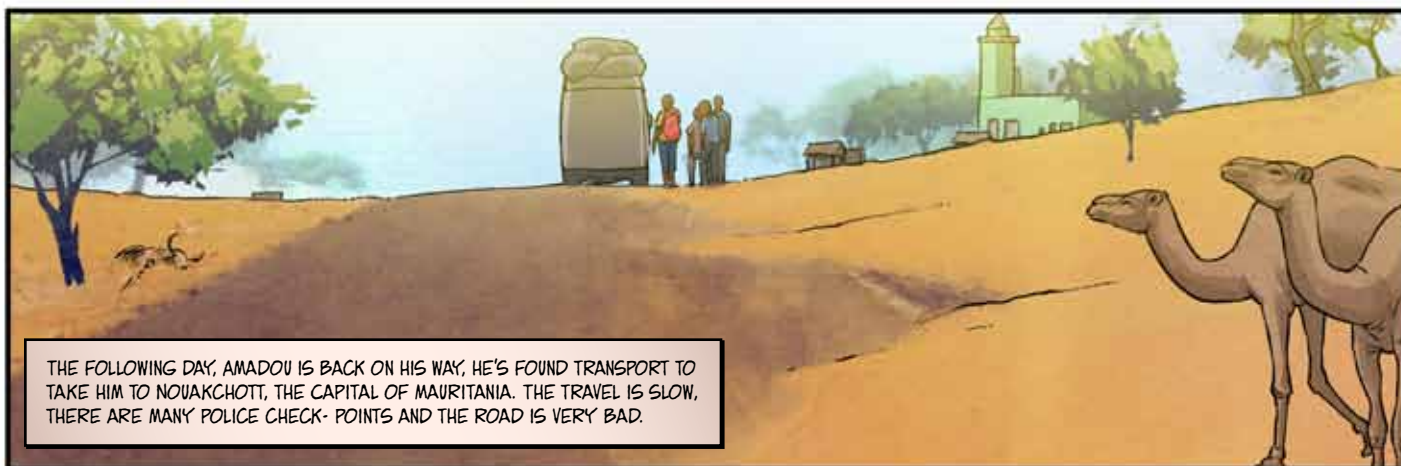
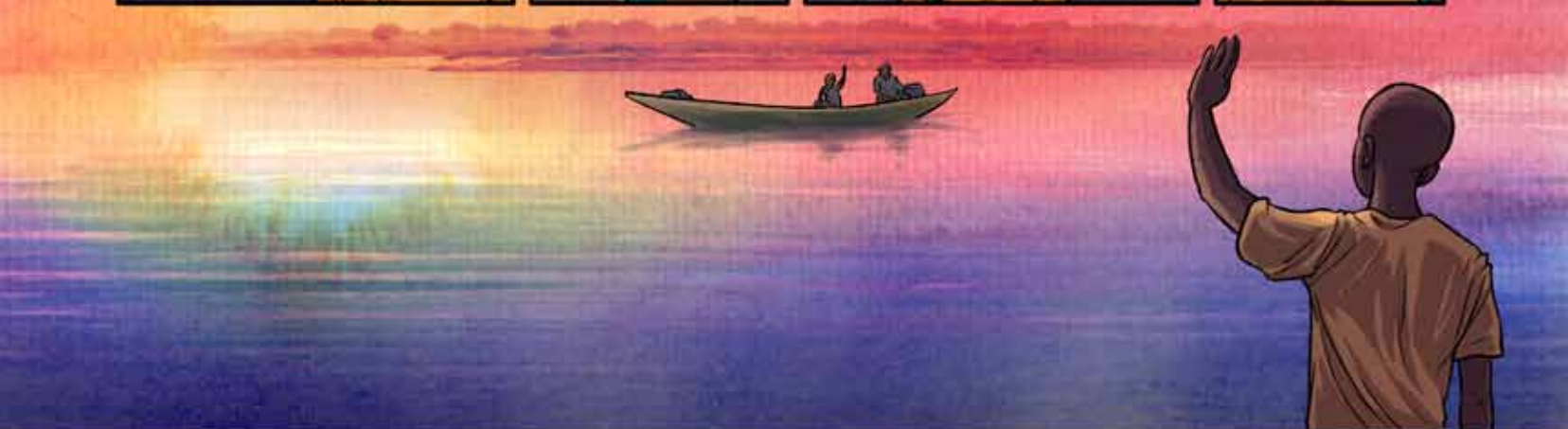
WAIT HERE, I'LL GET US SOMETHING TO DRINK.



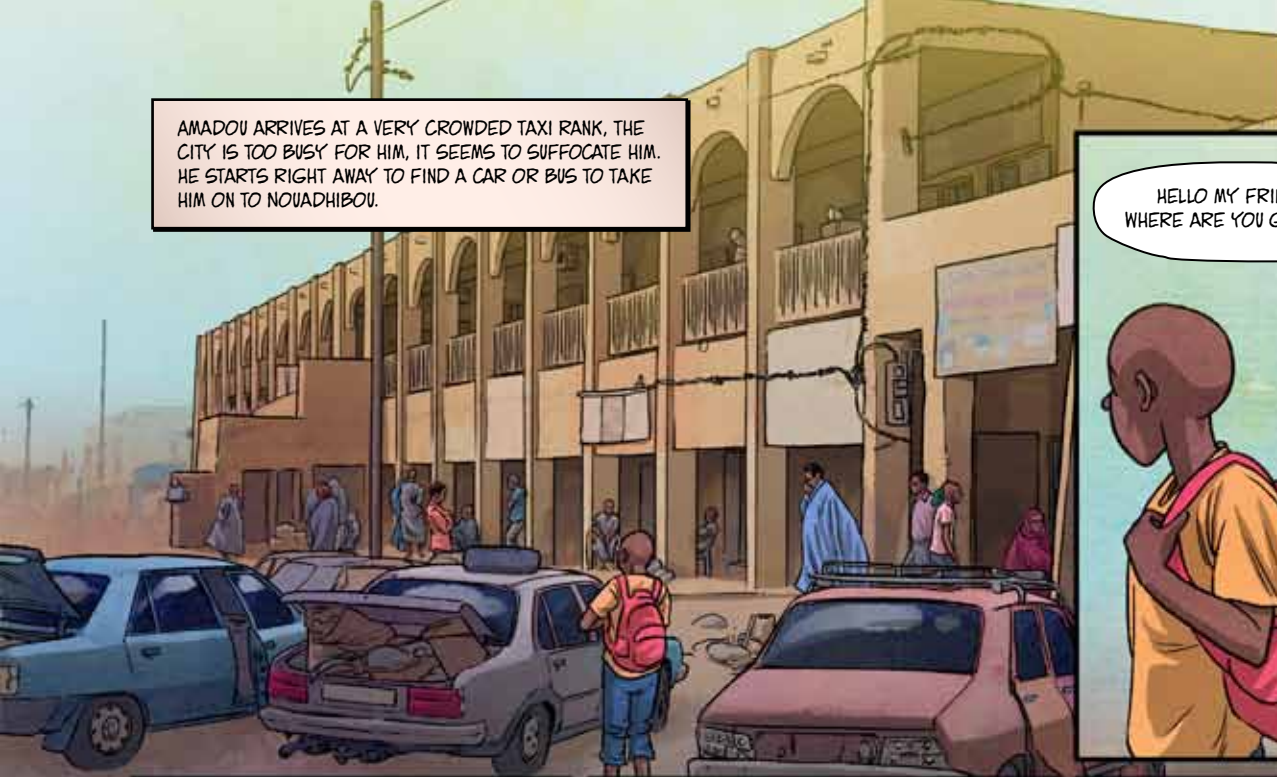
A LITTLE BIT LATER...



HERE. AND THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE TOO...



AMADOU ARRIVES AT A VERY CROWDED TAXI RANK, THE CITY IS TOO BUSY FOR HIM, IT SEEMS TO SUFFOCATE HIM. HE STARTS RIGHT AWAY TO FIND A CAR OR BUS TO TAKE HIM ON TO NOUADHIBOU.



HELLO MY FRIEND.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING ?



I'M LOOKING FOR A WAY TO GET TO
NOUADHIBOU, CAN YOU HELP ME ?

NOUADHIBOU ? OF COURSE,
NOTHING COULD BE EASIER !



TELL ME, MY FRIEND,
ARE YOU LOOKING TO GO
TO EUROPE ?

HOW DID
YOU KNOW ?



HAHAHA !
MY FRIEND, YOU ARE NOT THE FIRST
BROTHER TO GO TO NOUADHIBOU TO FIND
A BOAT TO GO TO EUROPE.



BUT YOU ARE IN LUCK, I KNOW
THE MAN YOU NEED TO SEE, I AM HIS
AGENT. HE CAN ARRANGE IT ALL FOR
YOU, NO PROBLEM !



THE MAN SEEMS A BIT SHIFTY, BUT
MAYBE EVERYONE SEEMS THAT WAY
HERE IN THE BIG CITY.

IN HERE,
MY FRIEND.





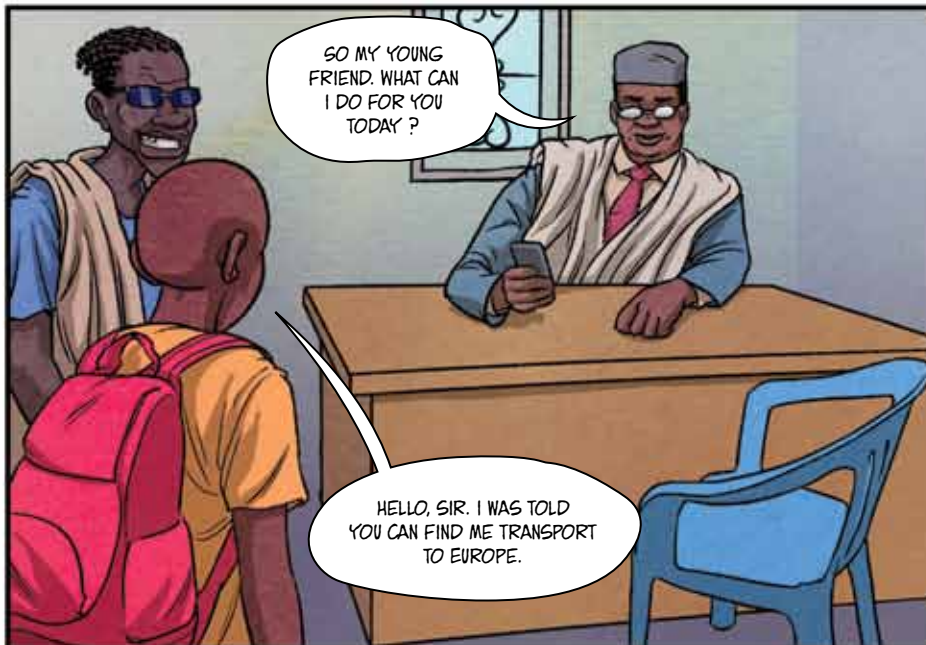
MR MALOFO IS A VERY BUSY MAN...



BUT I TOLD HIM YOU ARE MY FRIEND AND THAT HE MUST HELP YOU.



COME IN, MY FRIEND.



SO MY YOUNG FRIEND. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU TODAY ?

HELLO, SIR. I WAS TOLD YOU CAN FIND ME TRANSPORT TO EUROPE.



HAHAHA, MY BOY, EUROPE IS A VERY BIG PLACE. MANY COUNTRIES.

I CAN HELP YOU BUT YOU MUST TELL ME WHERE YOU WANT TO GO. WHAT COUNTRY ? WHICH CITY ?

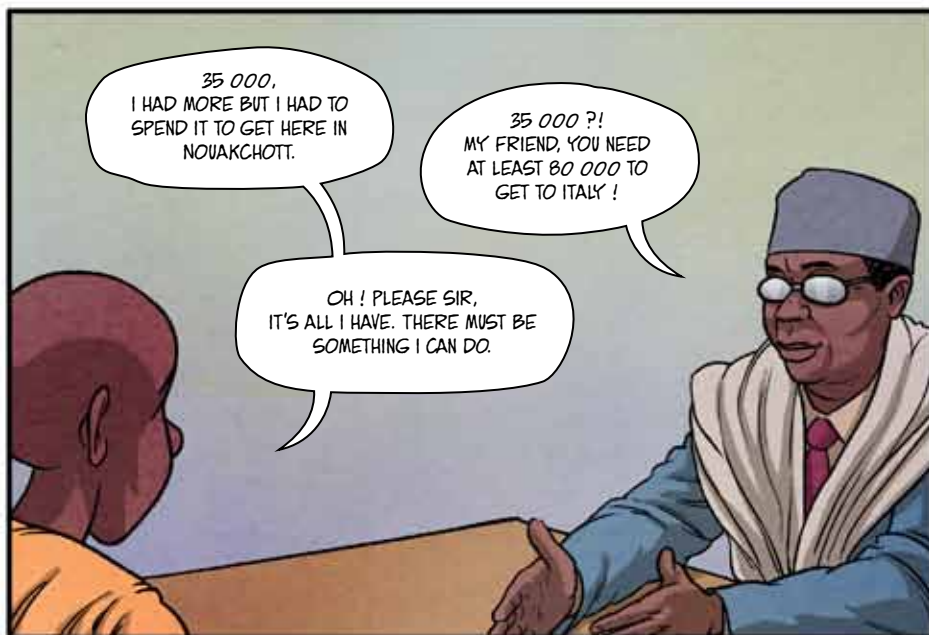


OH, SORRY SIR.

I WANT TO JOIN MY BROTHERS IN ITALY, THEY TOLD ME THEY LIVE IN A BIG CITY CALLED MILAN.



AH, ITALY ! YES, I KNOW IT. IT IS NO PROBLEM BUT IT IS EXPENSIVE TO GET THERE. TELL ME, DO YOU HAVE THE MONEY ?



35 000, I HAD MORE BUT I HAD TO SPEND IT TO GET HERE IN NOUAKCHOTT.

35 000 ?! MY FRIEND, YOU NEED AT LEAST 80 000 TO GET TO ITALY !

OH ! PLEASE SIR, IT'S ALL I HAVE. THERE MUST BE SOMETHING I CAN DO.



WHAT IS THE CHEAPEST WAY FOR ME TO GET TO NOUADHIBOU ?



THAT IS NOT THE PROBLEM. IT IS THE FERRY THAT IS EXPENSIVE, AND ITALY IS VERY FAR AWAY.

LISTEN, IF YOU GO TO SPAIN INSTEAD THEN IT IS ONLY 50 000 AND THEN YOUR BROTHERS CAN COME GET YOU THERE, NO PROBLEM.

BUT I DON'T HAVE 50 000, HAVE ONLY 35 000 !



WHAT CAN I DO ? PLEASE SIR !

OK OK. I KNOW MANY PEOPLE, I WILL FIND SOMEONE WHO CAN TAKE YOU.

I DO THIS FOR YOU, OK? BUT THERE ARE MANY THAT WANT TO CROSS AND DON'T HAVE ENOUGH SO I NEED TO PAY FOR YOU RIGHT NOW.



UNDERSTAND ? SO THAT I CAN SECURE YOUR PLACE ON THE BOAT I NEED CASH OR THE CAPTAIN WILL FIND ANOTHER PASSENGER.

THEN YOU COME BACK TOMORROW MORNING, FIRST THING, OK ? I WILL START TO CALL, I KNOW JUST THE PERSON.

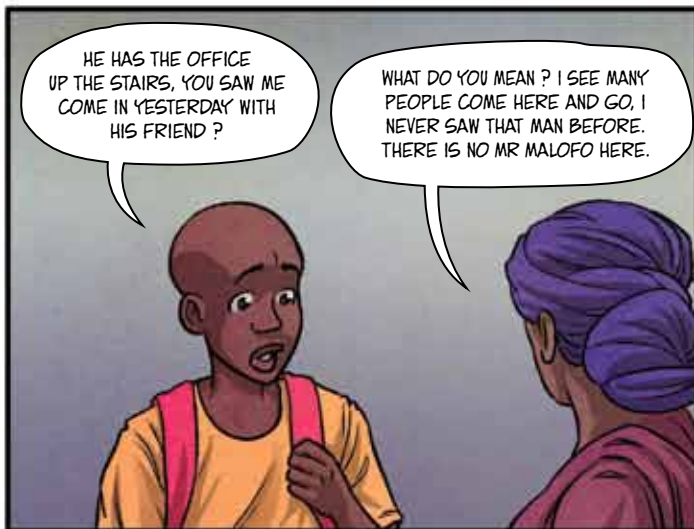
OH THANK YOU, SIR ! I'M SO HAPPY, THANK YOU !

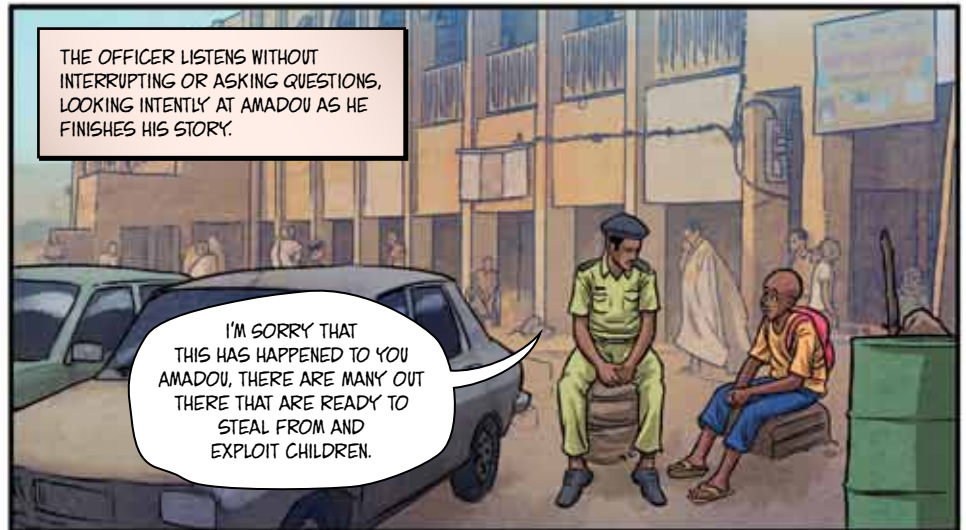
AMADOU ARRIVES BACK TO MR MALOFO'S OFFICE EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, HE KNOCKS AT THE DOOR AND IT SWINGS OPEN... THE ROOM IS EMPTY. HE GOES DOWN THE STAIRS TO SPEAK TO A WOMAN WHO SEEMS TO WORK THERE.



EXCUSE ME, DO YOU KNOW WHEN MR MALOFO WILL COME IN ?

MR MALOFO ?... WHO'S THAT ?







AND WHATEVER HAPPENED TO AÏCHA ?


AFTER THE DISPUTE AT THE ROSSO BORDER, THE WOMAN BROUGHT THE GIRL TO HER NEW EMPLOYER'S BIG HOUSE. ALL SEEMED WELL.

BUT AÏCHA THEN DISCOVERED THAT HER PAPERS HAD DISAPPEARED. THE WOMAN IMMEDIATELY BLAMED THE DRIVER, "YOU SEE? I WAS RIGHT ABOUT HIM, HE WAS NOTHING BUT A CRIMINAL !" SHE WOULD RETURN TO ROSSO, SHE SAID, AND PROMISED TO THE GIRL THAT SHE WOULD BRING HER PAPERS BACK TO HER.

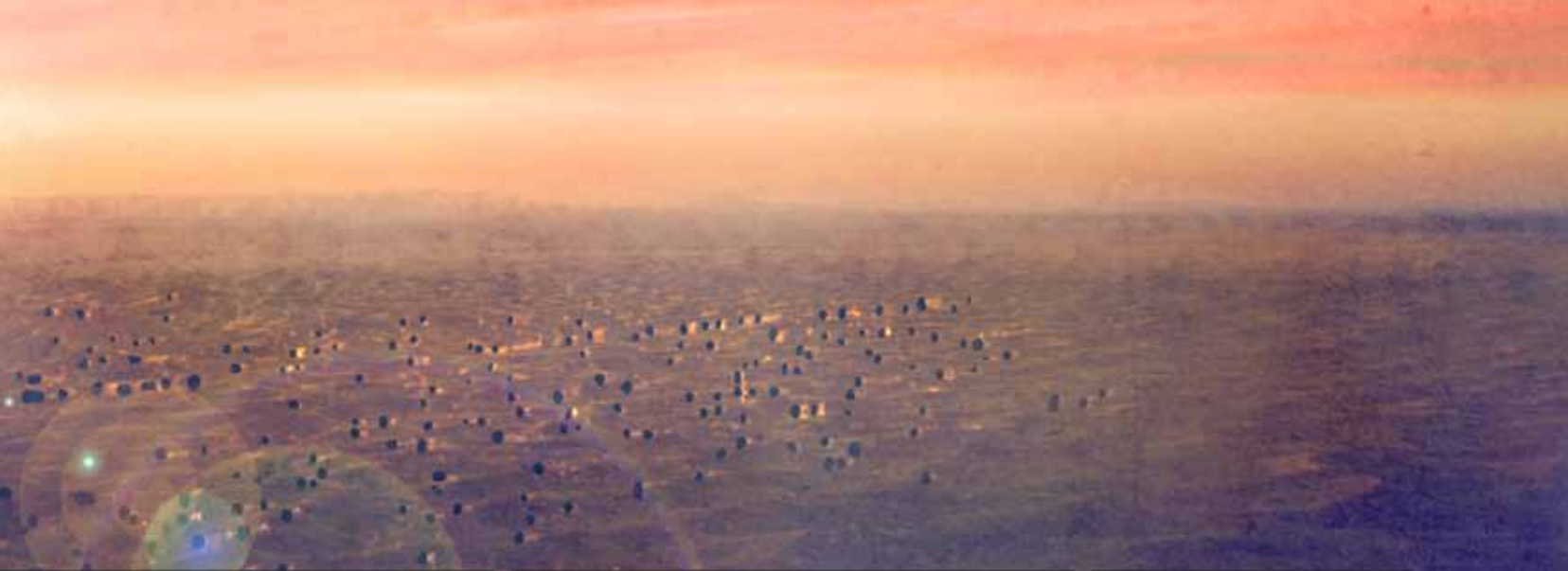


BUT SHE NEVER CAME BACK.

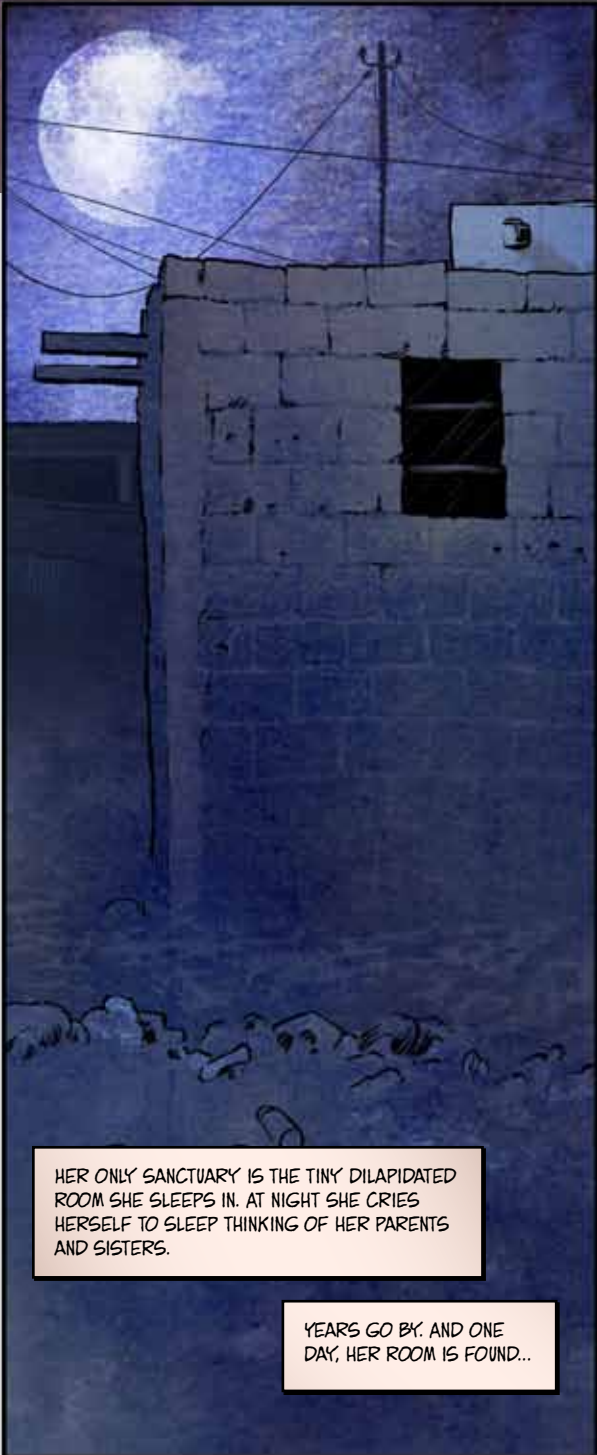
INSTEAD, LIKE SO MANY OTHER GIRLS LOOKING FOR WORK AND A BETTER LIFE, AÏCHA FOUND HERSELF VICTIM OF DOMESTIC SERVITUDE. HER LIFE WAS WORSE THAN BEFORE, SHE WORKED 18 HOURS A DAY WITHOUT A SALARY.



ALL ALONE SHE CLEANED THE BIG HOUSE AND DID ALL THE CHORES. THE MADAM WAS VERY CRUEL TO HER, USING ANY EXCUSE TO MAKE HER LIFE MISERABLE. WITHOUT HER PAPERS, WHAT COULD SHE DO ? SHE DIDN'T DARE LEAVE THE HOUSE, TOO AFRAID OF BEING ARRESTED AND EVEN TAKEN BACK TO THE BORDER.



WEEKS AND MONTHS
PASS BY LIKE SAND
IN THE WIND.



HER ONLY SANCTUARY IS THE TINY DILAPIDATED
ROOM SHE SLEEPS IN. AT NIGHT SHE CRIES
HERSELF TO SLEEP THINKING OF HER PARENTS
AND SISTERS.

YEARS GO BY. AND ONE
DAY, HER ROOM IS FOUND...



...EMPTY.

THE BRAVE GIRL ESCAPED HER BONDAGE
THINKING IT BETTER TO TRY MAKE A DECENT
LIFE SOMEWHERE ELSE THAN TO CONTINUE
BEING EXPLOITED THERE.

HELLO. WHAT'S
THE MATTER ?

OH MADAM, IT'S TERRIBLE !
I HAVE NOWHERE TO GO AND
NO WORK,
I DON'T EVEN HAVE ANY IDENTITY
PAPERS... I DON'T KNOW WHAT
TO DO !

WHAT A COINCIDENCE !
YOU SEE, I LOOK AFTER A VERY NICE
ELDERLY LADY WITHOUT FAMILY WHO
IS A FABRIC DYER. BUT MY LITTLE
GIRL IS GROWING UP SO FAST AND
KEEPS ME SO BUSY NOW... I NEED
HELP TO DO EVERYTHING.

HELP ?

YES. I'M NOT RICH BUT I CAN TEACH
YOU MANY THINGS, AND TOGETHER WE CAN
GET YOU SOME NEW IDENTITY PAPERS.
WHAT DO YOU THINK ?

YES ! I CAN HELP YOU !
I CAN LEARN VERY QUICKLY,
ANYTHING AT ALL, PLEASE
TEACH ME !

HAHAHA !

I CAN SEE YOU ARE EAGER !
COME WITH ME, YOU CAN HELP
ME CARRY MY BAG.

WHAT IS
YOUR NAME ?

AÏCHA.

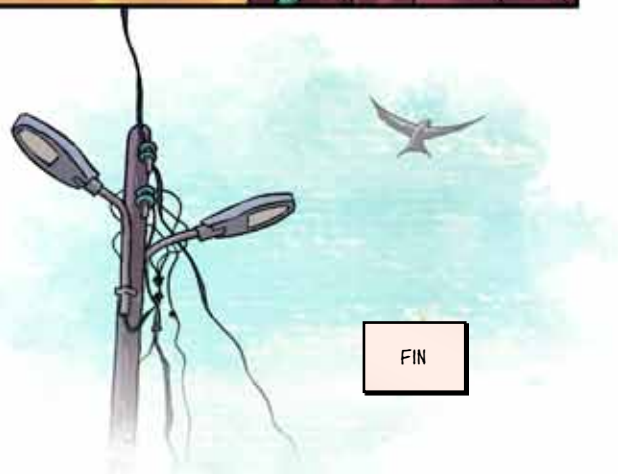
AND TELL ME AÏCHA, DO YOU
LIKE PRETTY DRESSES ?

OH YES !

FANTASTIC !

YOU SEE, I DO A
LOT OF DYEING, SO I WILL
TEACH YOU THAT FIRST.

THEY NOW RUN A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS TOGETHER MAKING AND SELLING GARMENTS TO CLIENTS.

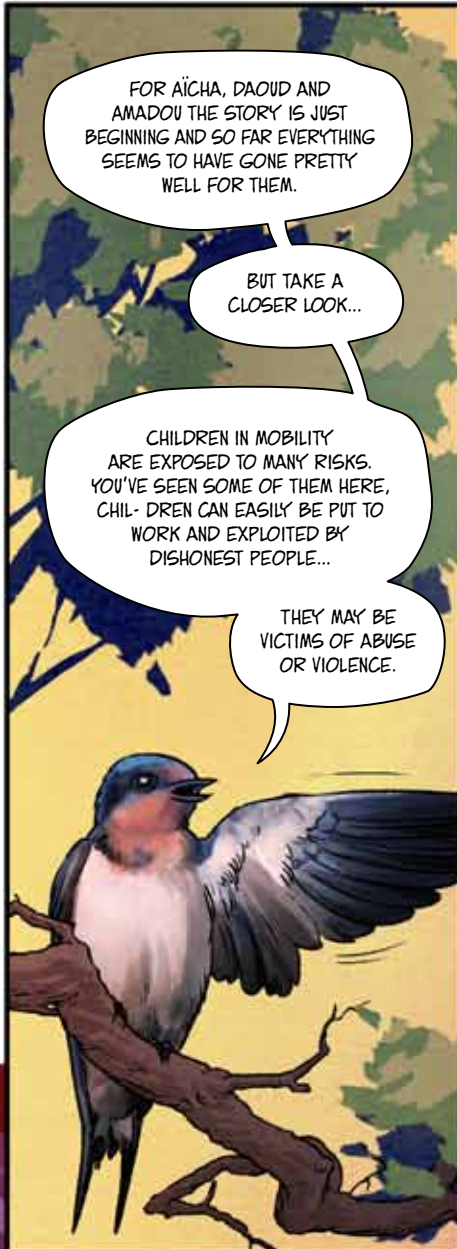




BUT IS IT REALLY THE END ?...



...NO, DEAR READER.



FOR AÏCHA, DAOUD AND AMADOU THE STORY IS JUST BEGINNING AND SO FAR EVERYTHING SEEMS TO HAVE GONE PRETTY WELL FOR THEM.

BUT TAKE A CLOSER LOOK...

CHILDREN IN MOBILITY ARE EXPOSED TO MANY RISKS. YOU'VE SEEN SOME OF THEM HERE, CHILDREN CAN EASILY BE PUT TO WORK AND EXPLOITED BY DISHONEST PEOPLE...

THEY MAY BE VICTIMS OF ABUSE OR VIOLENCE.



MANY NO LONGER HAVE IDENTITY DOCUMENTS, BECOME MORE VULNERABLE AND OFTEN COME INTO CONFLICT WITH THE LAW. THEY NO LONGER HAVE ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND BASIC HEALTH SERVICES AND ARE OFTEN AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP.

THE RISKS AND DANGERS ARE THEREFORE VERY NUMEROUS AND MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT !



THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN CONCERNS US ALL. TOGETHER, LET'S PROTECT CHILDREN IN MOBILITY THROUGHOUT THEIR JOURNEY.

