

I Will Never Fall
into a Dead Sea
Again



HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG

PALESTINE AND JORDAN

Published by the Heinrich Böll Foundation - Palestine and Jordan

Written by:
Faris Sbaaneh

Artwork created by:
Mohammad Sabaaneh

Project Coordinator and Production Manager:
Dana Abu Lail

Translator:
Areej Daibas



This graphic novel is available under the conditions of a Creative Commons license "Attribution- NonCommercial- ShareAlike 4.0 International" (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0): <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

You are free to **Share** — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format, and **Adapt** — remix, transform, and build upon the material under the following conditions:

-**Attribution** — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

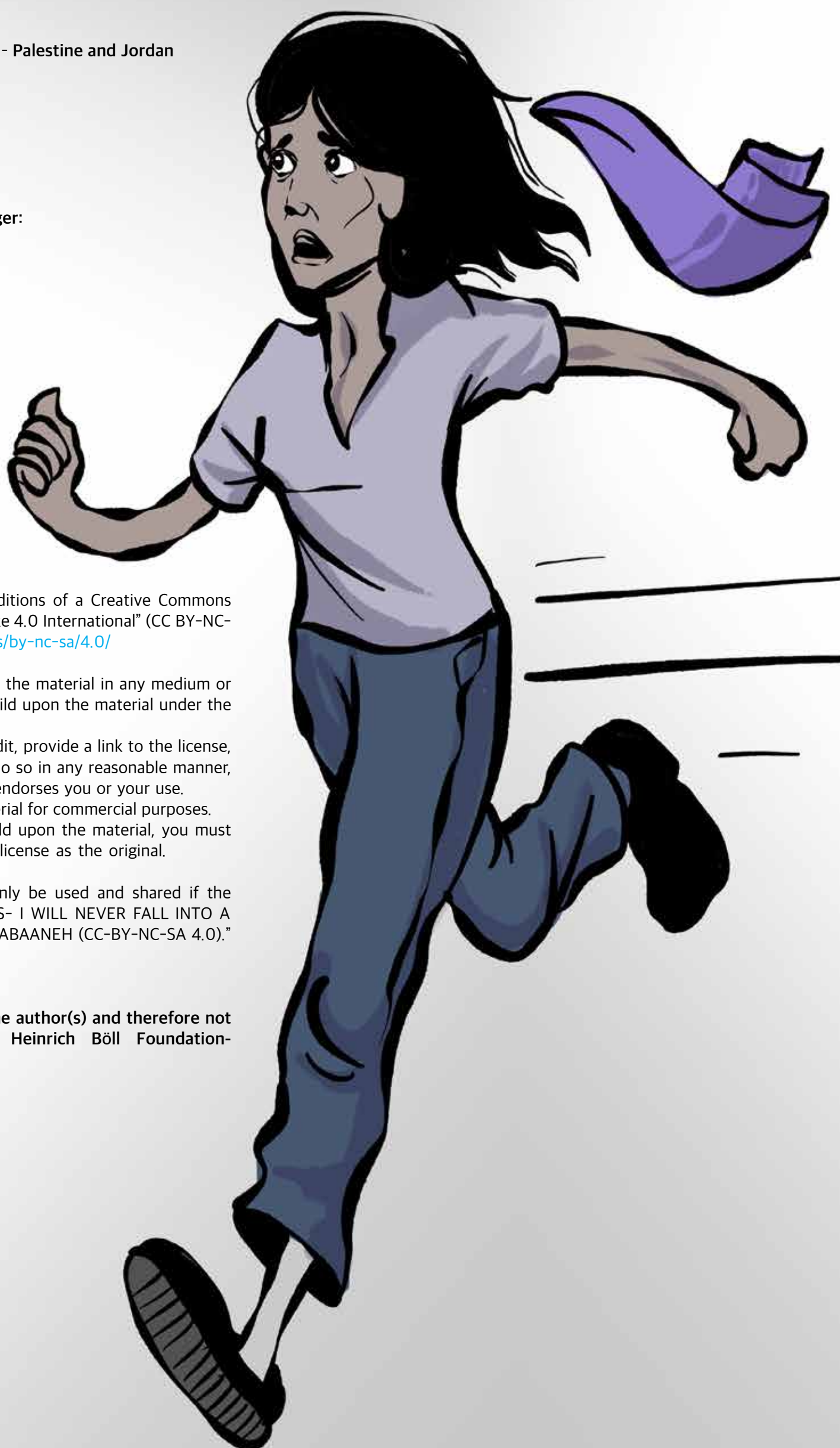
-**NonCommercial** — You may not use the material for commercial purposes.

-**ShareAlike** — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.

Individual illustrations from this novel may only be used and shared if the following attribution is placed next to it: "HBS- I WILL NEVER FALL INTO A DEAD SEA AGAIN | FARIS AND MOHAMMAD SABAANEH (CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0)."

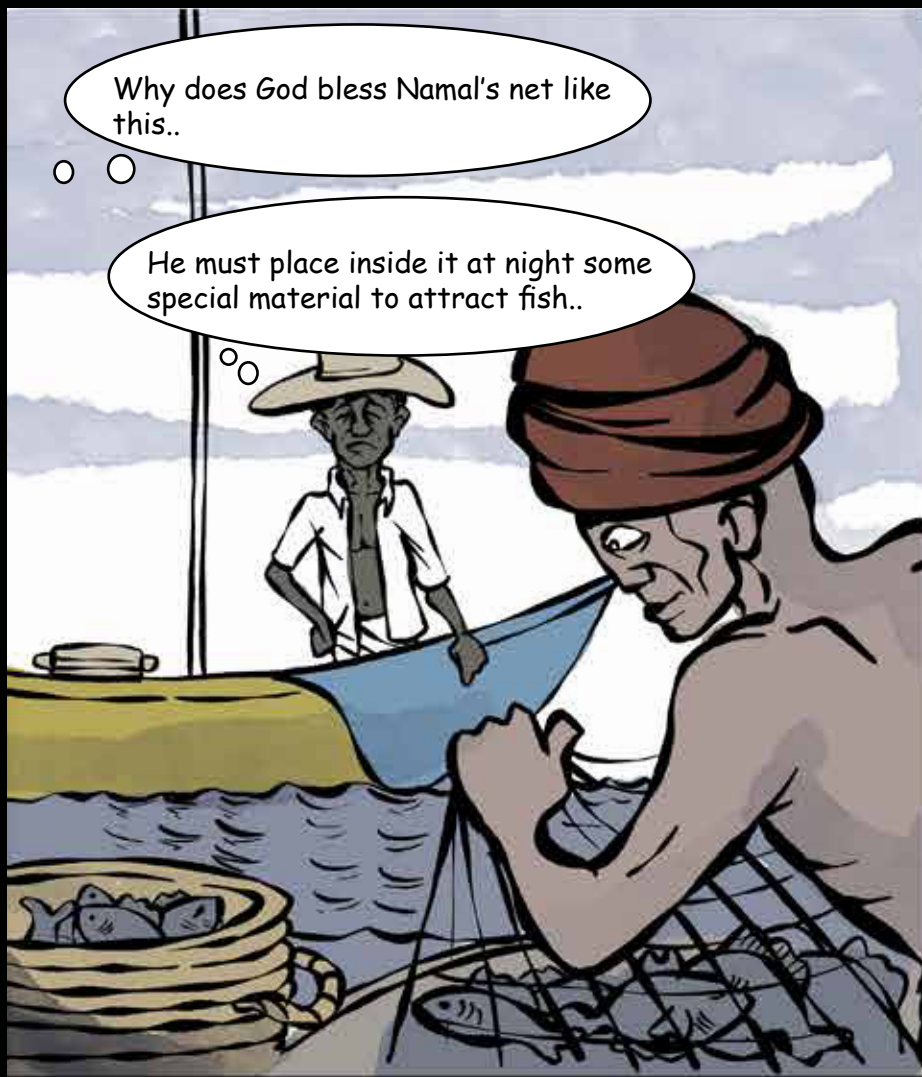
"The views expressed herein are those of the author(s) and therefore not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Heinrich Böll Foundation- Palestine and Jordan."

October 2021



Namal Rabiera, a fisherman in his fifties, throws his net amid the other fishermen's nets into the vast sea





Why does God bless Namal's net like this..

He must place inside it at night some special material to attract fish..



My granddaughter Paula is five years old. She looks like an angel when I walk in and find her sleeping in the morning

But my friend, you are forgetting yourself. It is your right to marry following the passing of your wife

My daughter and my granddaughter have no one but me. I want nothing from life other than to always be capable of providing for them until the little one grows up and goes to university





.... Every time my net becomes full with fish, I become more certain that God loves me for the sake of the little girl

.. you work too hard, Dad, and I want to help you



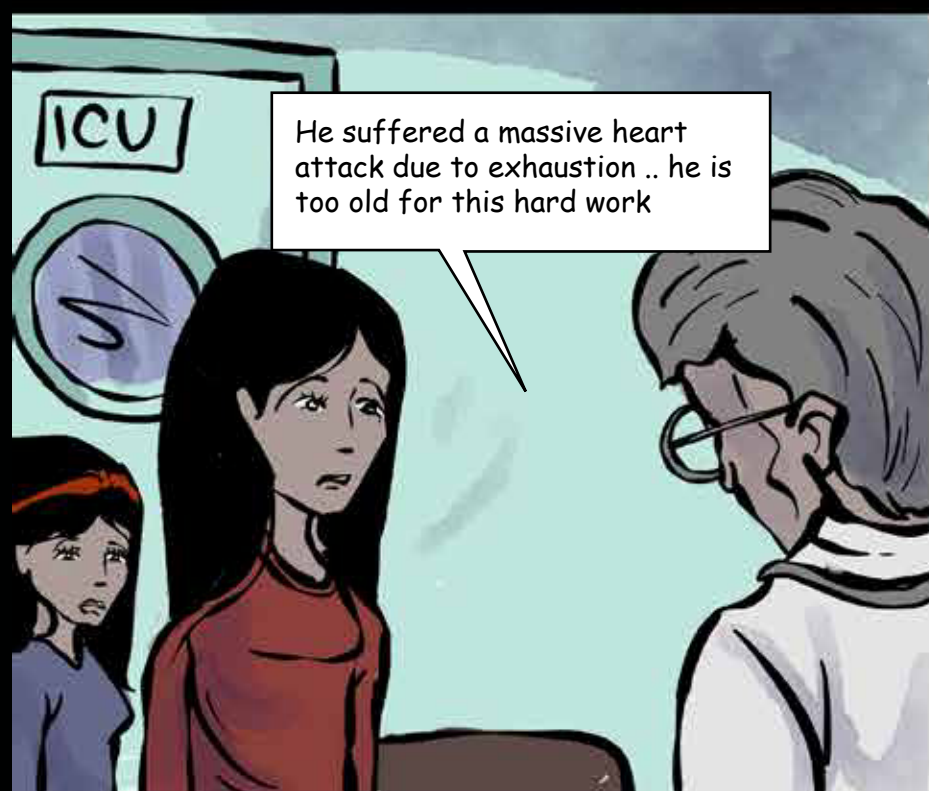
I do not want to see you work for anyone. I will get you the bakery shop you want. This is all I wish for right now..



12 years later



Your dad felt tired suddenly. He fell off his boat so we took him to the hospital



He suffered a massive heart attack due to exhaustion .. he is too old for this hard work

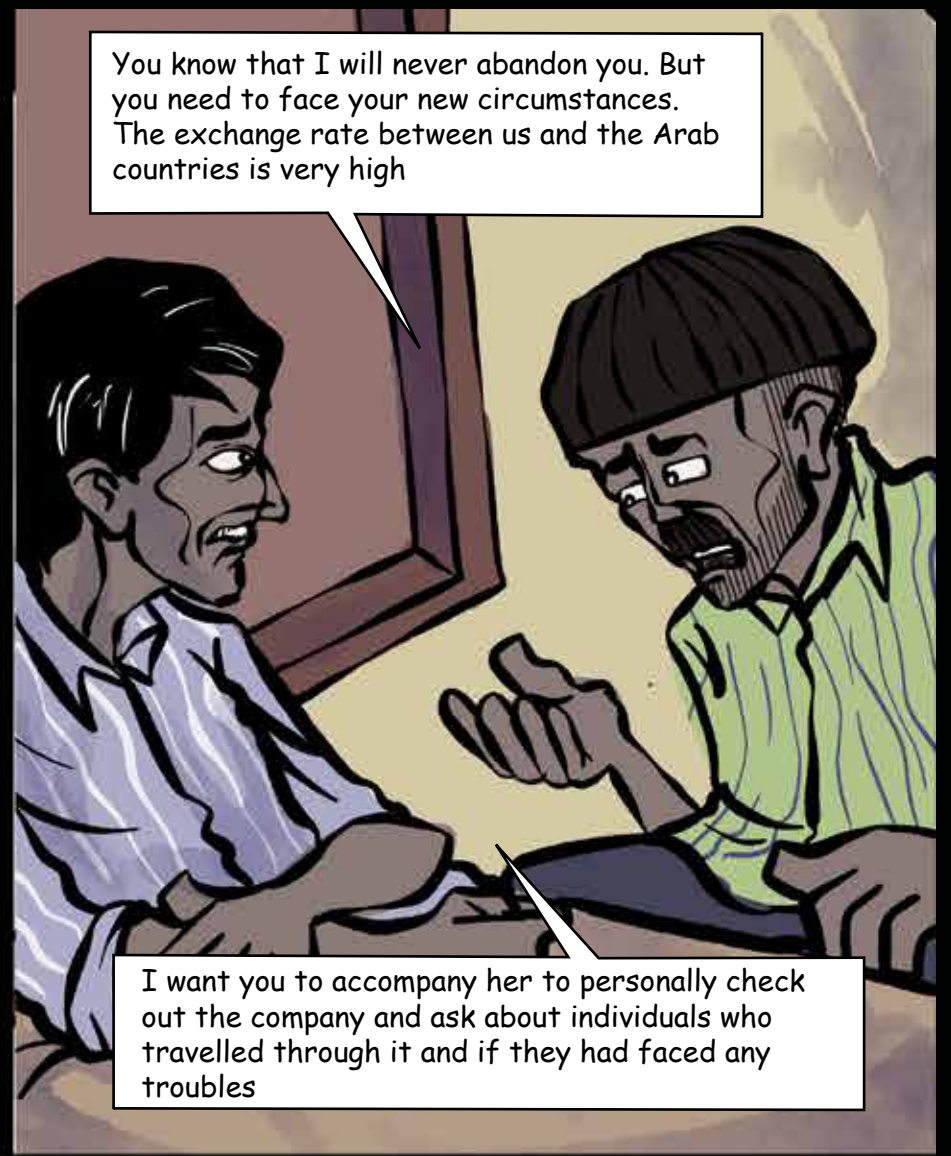


When I fell into the sea, I was afraid that I will not see you again my little one





I got an excellent opportunity through one of the employment agencies for 300 dinars per month . I want you to convince your friend to accept the idea of me leaving



You know that I will never abandon you. But you need to face your new circumstances. The exchange rate between us and the Arab countries is very high

I want you to accompany her to personally check out the company and ask about individuals who travelled through it and if they had faced any troubles



I promise you to remain the girl that you have raised. I am strong, Dad, and I can handle the responsibility







The new villa is big. My husband reached out to an office that brings in-house helpers. I learned my house helper's name is Bella



You should pay attention to thefts. Don't leave money or jewelry in plain sight until you are able to test her conduct

On the contrary, keep money in plain sight and watch how she behaves! So that you know her true nature



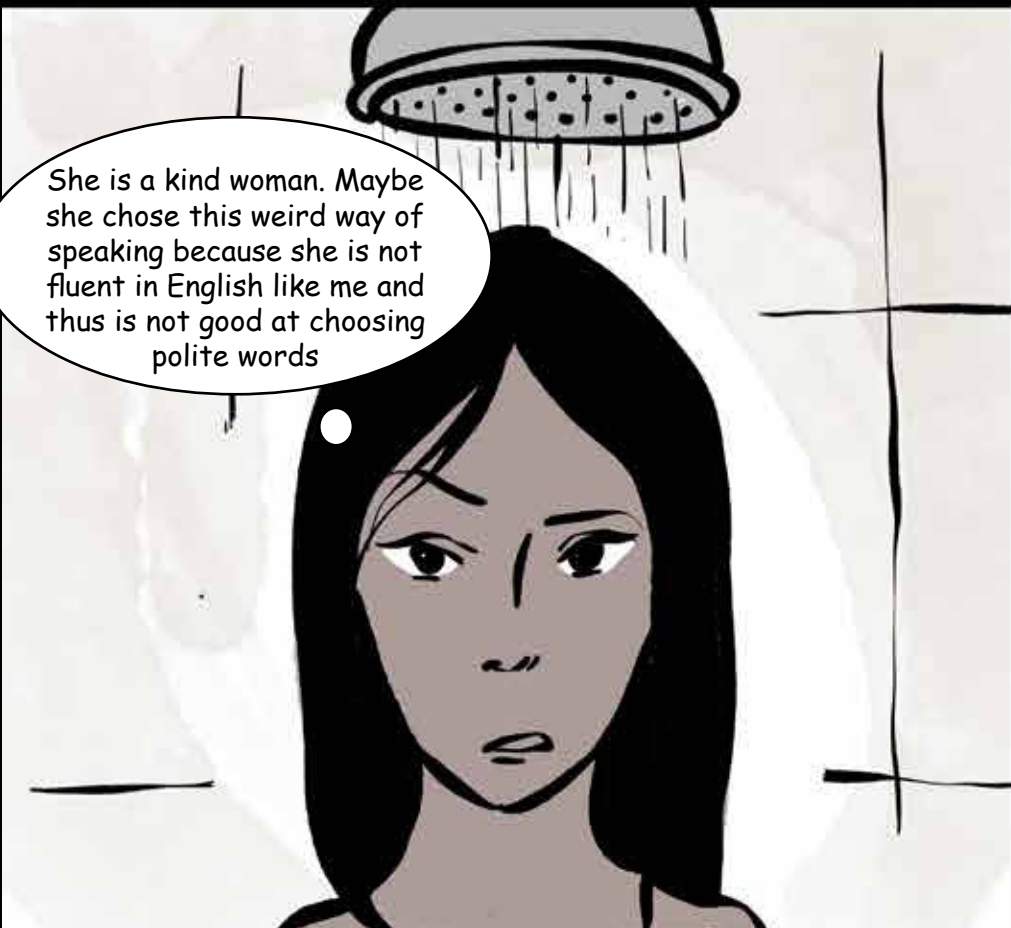
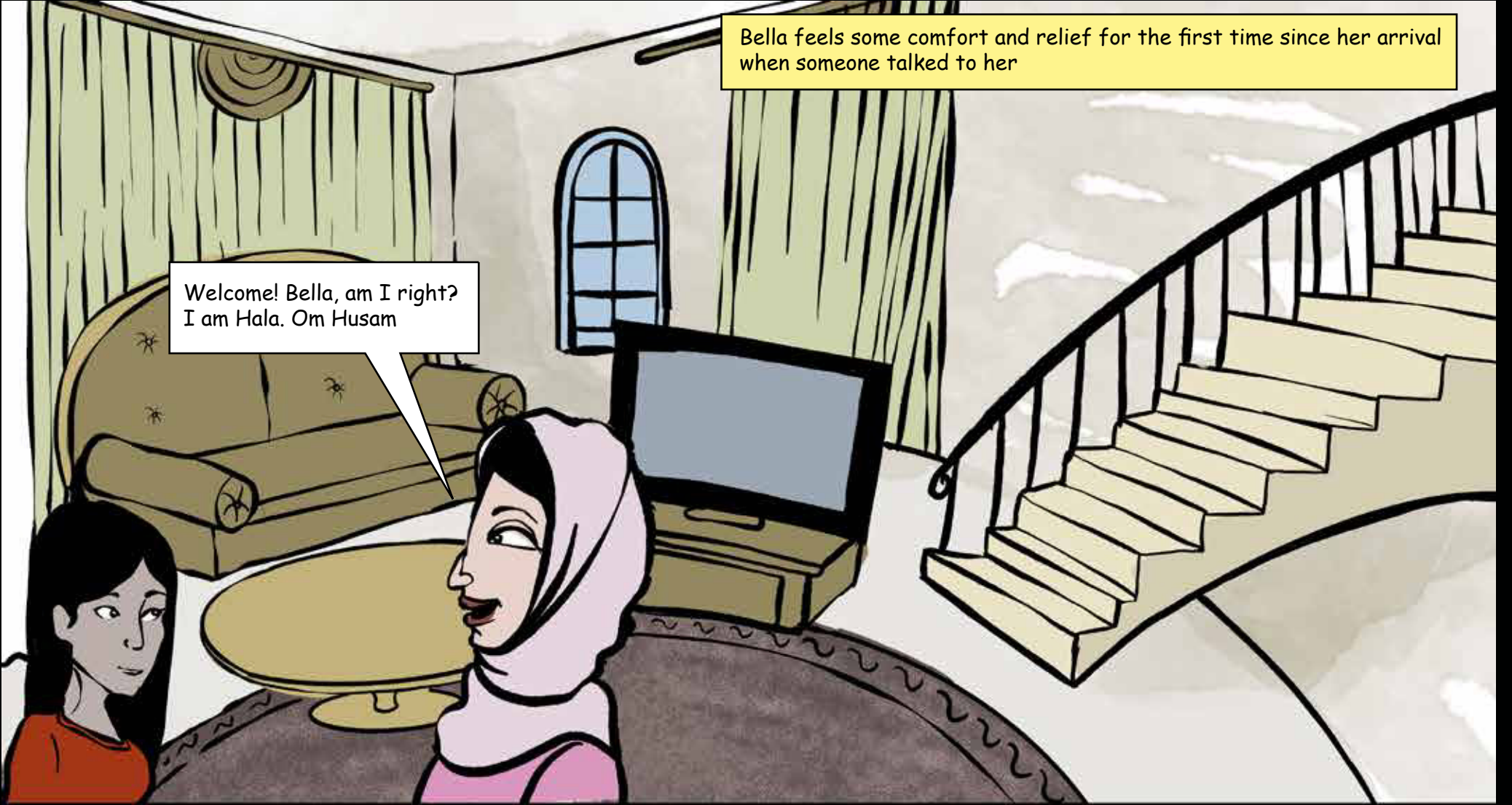
Try to check if she has body odor, check her personal hygiene and cleanliness before you give her a bedroom. These people live in dirty neighborhoods. They live above swamps and among insects. They worship weird objectives. Maybe she deals with magic and sorcery

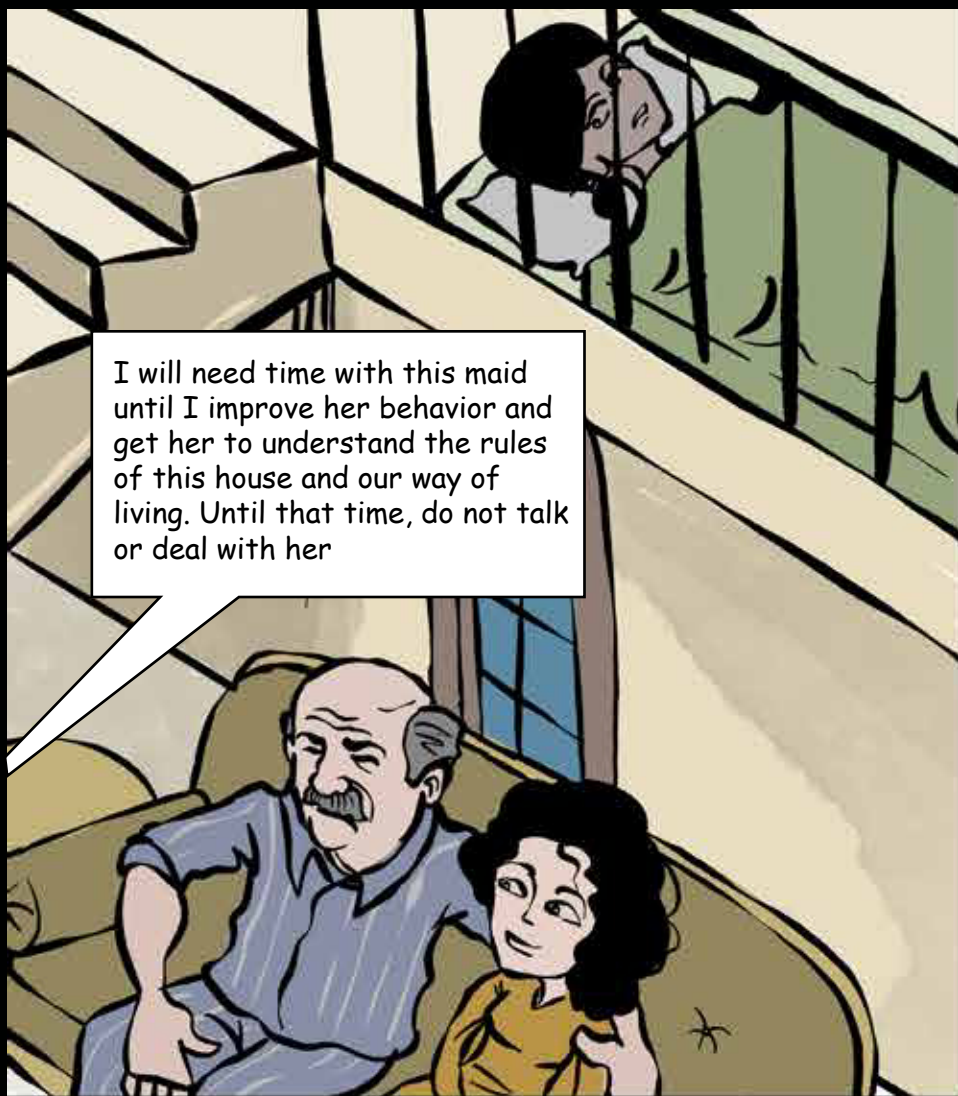


I am concerned about the new maid. I am not sure about her cleanliness, her integrity, or her faith. I will test her in the beginning until I feel reassured about her



Bella feels some comfort and relief for the first time since her arrival when someone talked to her





I will need time with this maid until I improve her behavior and get her to understand the rules of this house and our way of living. Until that time, do not talk or deal with her



Can I use the phone please?

Little.. not too much



Hello.. I am fine and I work with a very good family. I don't want to stay long on the phone, it seems phone calls are expensive. I will buy a Jordanian number with an internet access package at the end of the month.. Be well!



It is not possible that after travelling and being away that her phone call lasts one minute only. I am sure she doesn't have a family. Maybe she spoke with someone else and agreed with him about something..

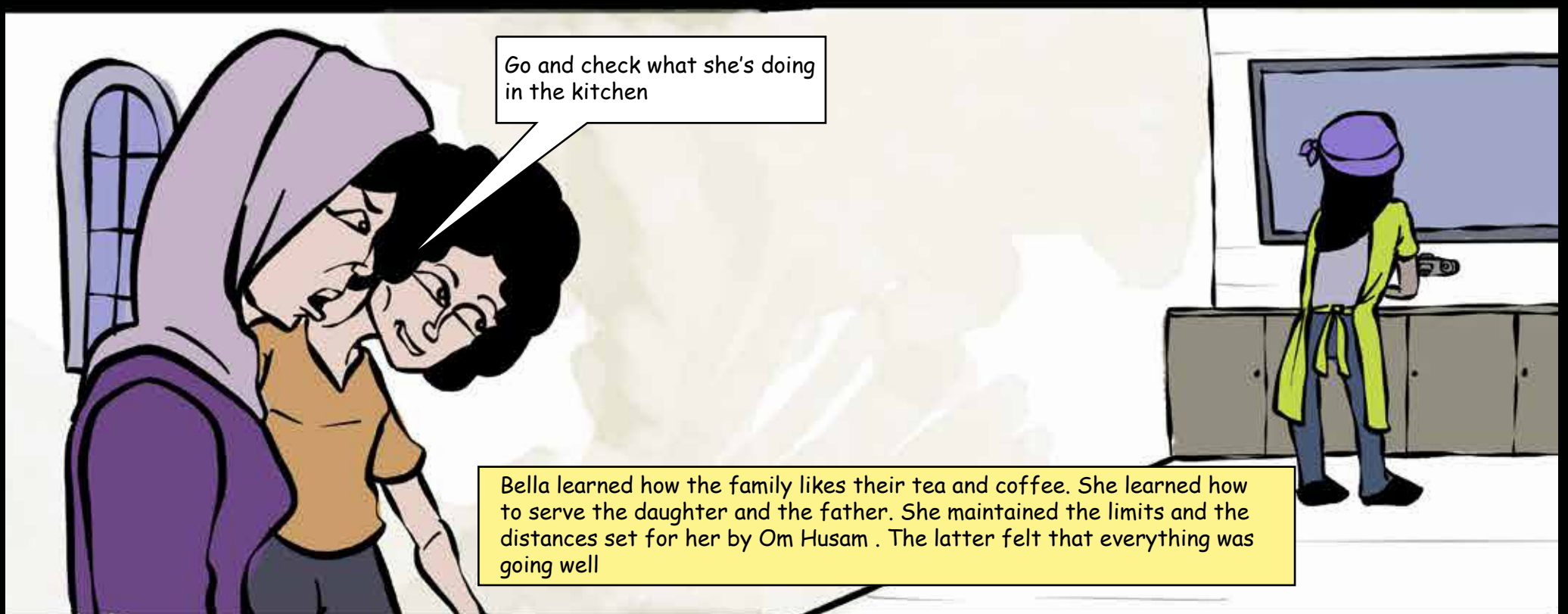


That is normal and natural, this is my first day at work and in a new country. I will definitely succeed and win her trust



Why is all of this happening to me? Should I ask the lady of the house about it since she is the only one who talks to me? Or should I wait a bit

The family members ignore Bella. They walk past her, skeptical, without a word or even a hello

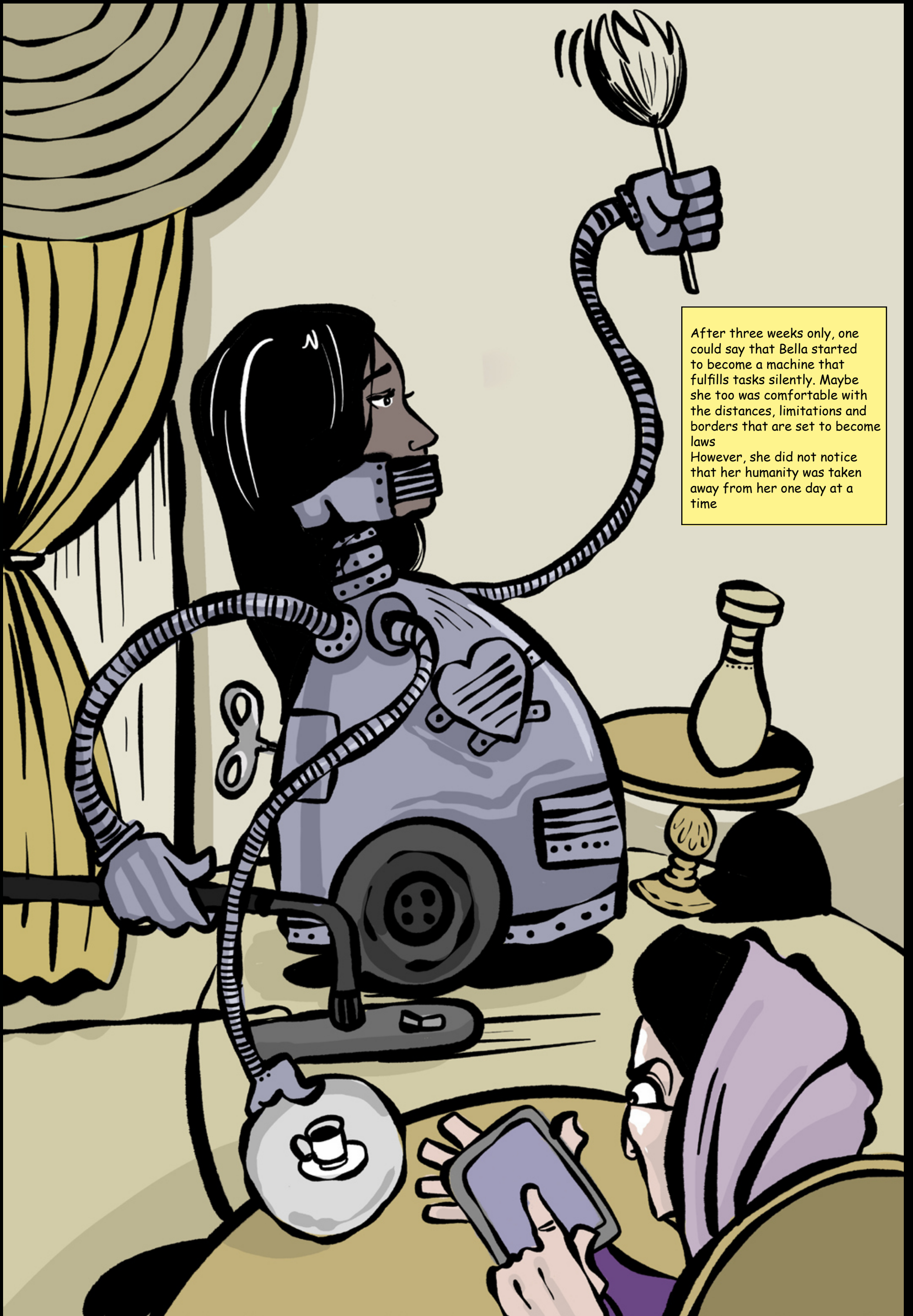


Go and check what she's doing in the kitchen

Bella learned how the family likes their tea and coffee. She learned how to serve the daughter and the father. She maintained the limits and the distances set for her by Om Husam . The latter felt that everything was going well



I will bring my wife a maid every two months to keep her busy. How comfortable it is to have her preoccupied with the maid and her stories



After three weeks only, one could say that Bella started to become a machine that fulfills tasks silently. Maybe she too was comfortable with the distances, limitations and borders that are set to become laws. However, she did not notice that her humanity was taken away from her one day at a time.





Om Husam had made up her mind and issued her verdict about Bella. Unaware of what she was doing, her hand moved towards Bella's face swiftly, and she slapped her hard, shouting and screaming at her: get the money you little thief



Her hands felt paralyzed, her eyes were fixed in their place in panic, wanting only for one thing at that moment, to die, nothing other than death

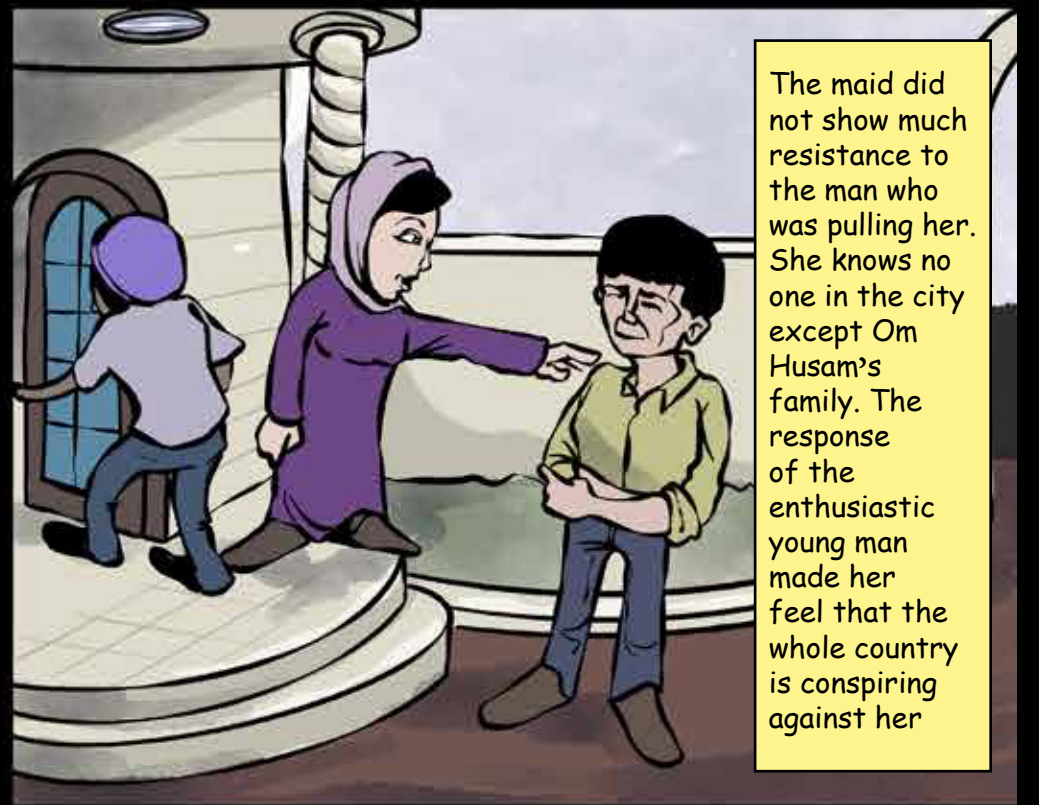




Come back Bella.. I want to talk to you



Thief.. catch the thief



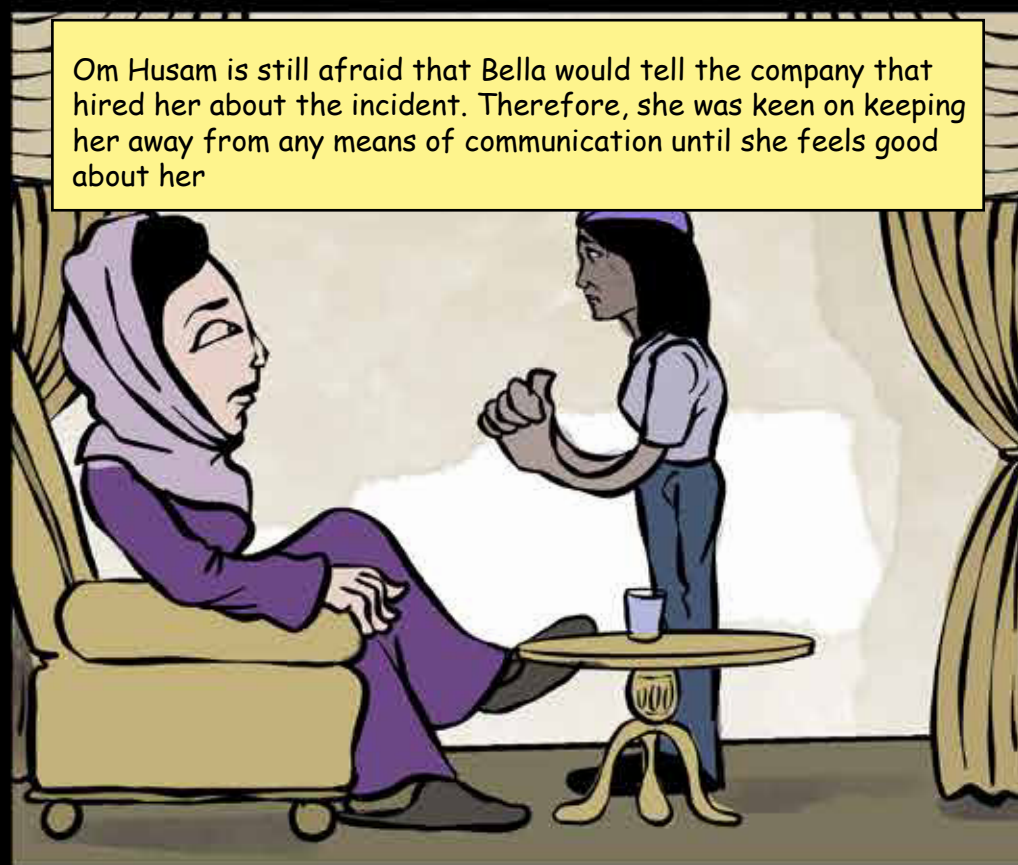
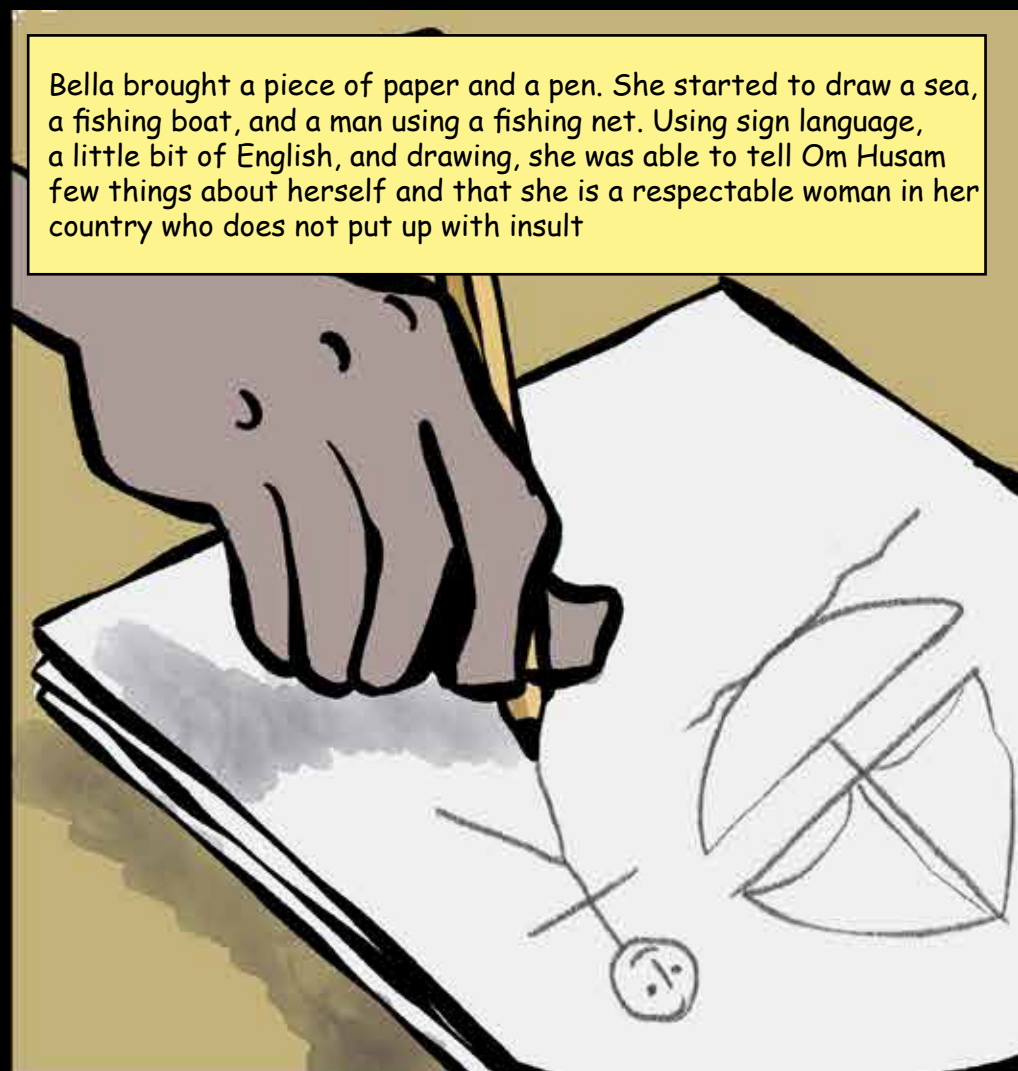
The maid did not show much resistance to the man who was pulling her. She knows no one in the city except Om Husam's family. The response of the enthusiastic young man made her feel that the whole country is conspiring against her



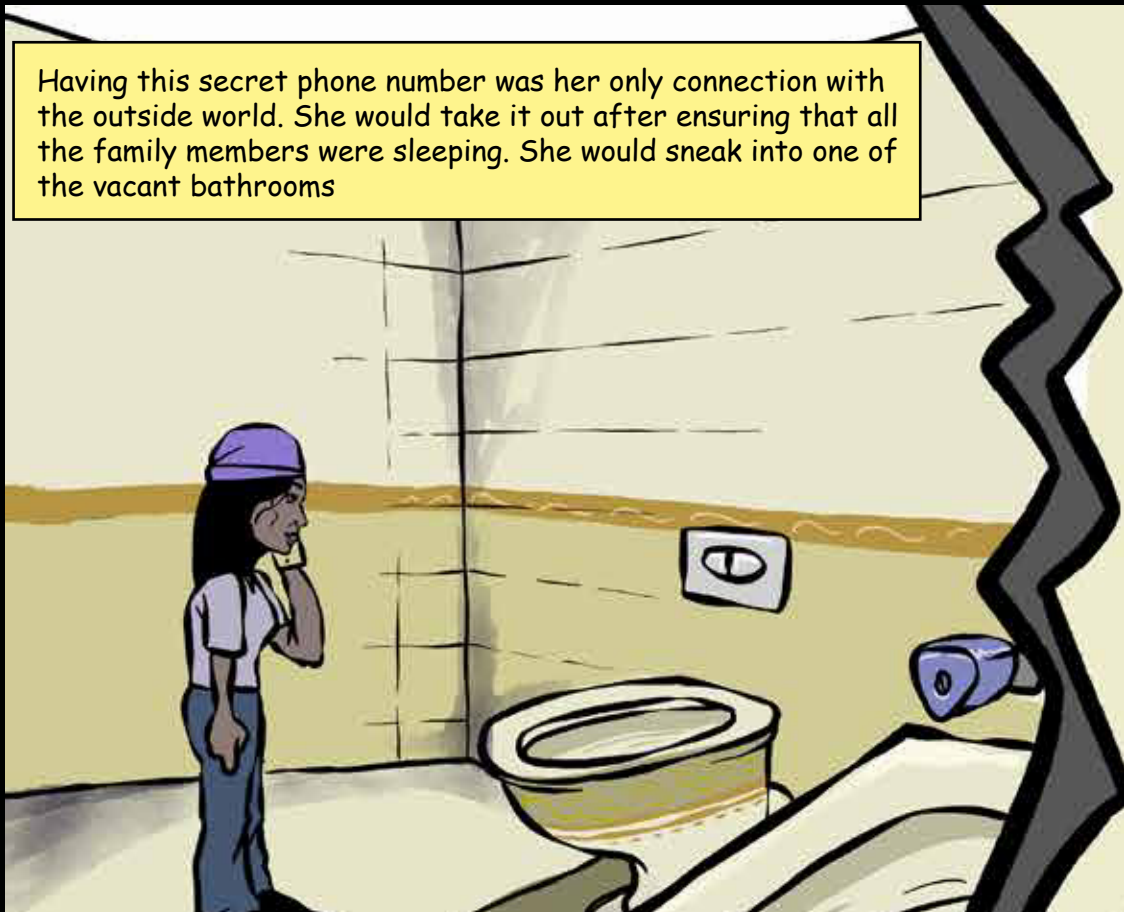
I will not run away before getting my salary and knowing where I am heading



I should not have hit her. I will fix the situation without letting my husband know about it



Having this secret phone number was her only connection with the outside world. She would take it out after ensuring that all the family members were sleeping. She would sneak into one of the vacant bathrooms



It has been almost two weeks that Bella stopped asking for a mobile, why?



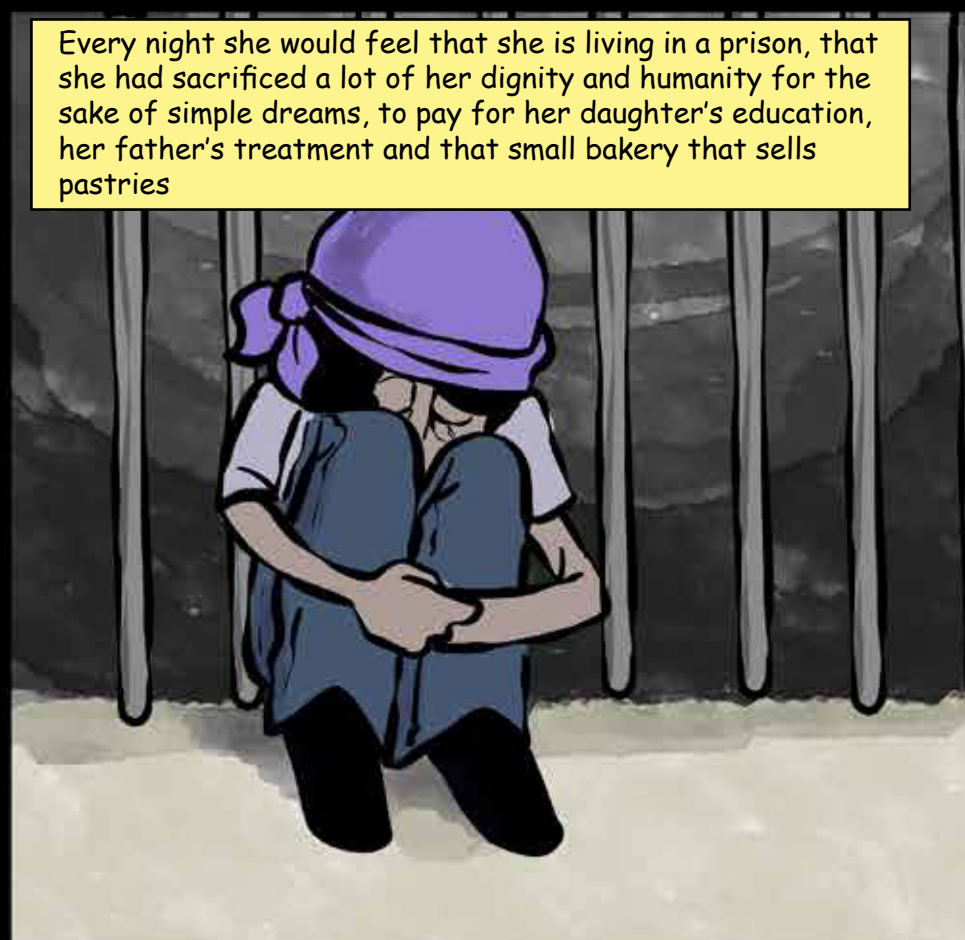
Through sites for immigrant workers in Jordan, Bella started to talk to helpers, getting their numbers. Gradually, she started to look for an escape plan, until she found one of the brokers who employ immigrant workers in the Jordan Valley farms in return for what they considered a reasonable wage



your money with me.. you want anything tell me



Every night she would feel that she is living in a prison, that she had sacrificed a lot of her dignity and humanity for the sake of simple dreams, to pay for her daughter's education, her father's treatment and that small bakery that sells pastries





Bella thought that this was a one-time opportunity to run away



She went to the cupboard where Om Husam kept the money

She took 300 dinars



When they reached the destination of their visit, Bella took advantage as they were busy greeting and speaking, and snuck outside

She had written down the address of one of the girls she used to talk to over the phone before it was confiscated



Nasha was able to help Bella get to the broker. She called him to ask about getting to his area in the Jordan Valley



For a whole year, Bella worked without a single day off

...
Tomorrow is my birthday

The air outside is very heavy, I'll go up to the roof of this building..

Oh my God!! What is this water surface? Is it possible that I am hallucinating? Is it a mirage or what?

A sea.. that is a sea.. sea

Taken by the allure of daydreaming and a frantic nostalgic feeling pulling her toward the water, she forgot about her employer and everything about her bitter reality. She ran and ran without stopping. She ran for a long time, until the salty humid air started to fill her lungs







The Criminal court sentenced Halah Mohammad Mahmoud (known as Om Husam) to seven years of temporary hard labor and a fine of 5000 dinars in accordance with the provisions of article 9, paragraph c/2 of the Law Against Human Trafficking number 10 of 2021.





I Will Never Fall into a Dead Sea Again!



Scan to visit our Web Dossier on
Labor Migration in Jordan and the Region

