

"poignant and powerful . . . a work of art that is both *timely* and *timeless*."

—john jennings, artist of *kindred: a graphic novel adaptation*

displacement

kiku hughes





displacement



displacement

kiku hughes

:01

First Second
New York



IT WAS JUNE 2016 WHEN I FIRST
TRAVELED THROUGH TIME.



NO...



NO, TIME TRAVEL ISN'T
EXACTLY WHAT IT IS—

I'M TAKEN TO A
DIFFERENT PLACE TOO.



BESIDES, "TIME TRAVEL"
MAKES IT SOUND LIKE
I HAVE A CHOICE IN THE
MATTER, BUT I DON'T
THINK I DO.

EVERY TIME IT'S HAPPENED,
I'M TAKEN BY SURPRISE AND
AGAINST MY WILL.



AND NOW I'VE BEEN TRAPPED
IN THE PAST FOR OVER A YEAR.



I'M NOT SURE IF I'LL EVER BE
ABLE TO GO HOME AGAIN.

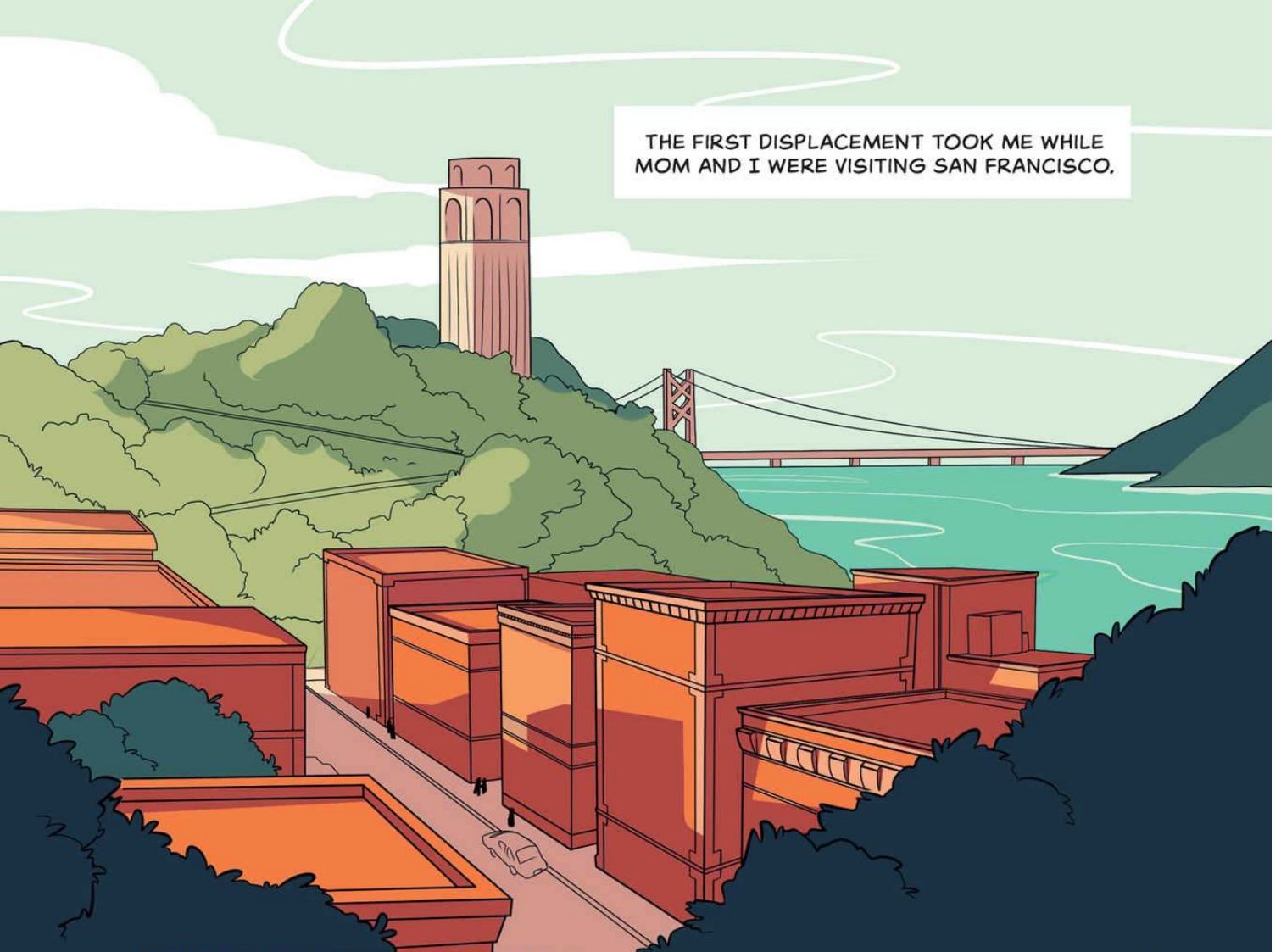
BUT I'LL START FROM
THE BEGINNING.

part I:
the west

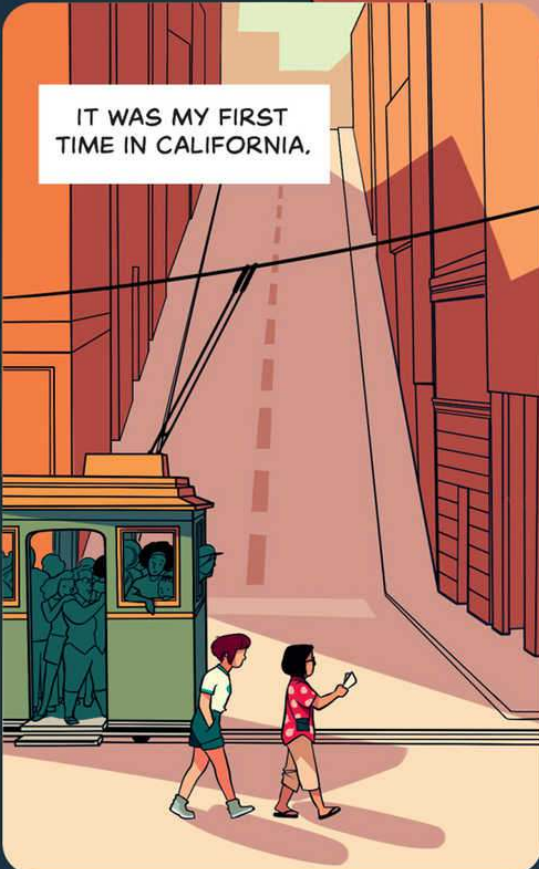


1

THE FIRST DISPLACEMENT TOOK ME WHILE
MOM AND I WERE VISITING SAN FRANCISCO.



IT WAS MY FIRST
TIME IN CALIFORNIA.



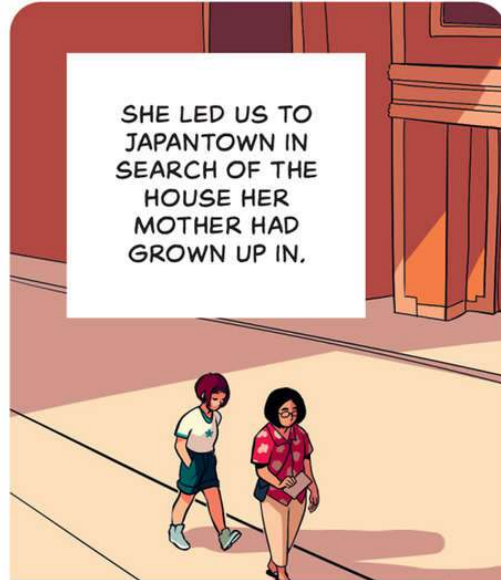
I WAS UNIMPRESSED.



BY THE LAST DAY OF OUR TRIP
I WAS READY TO GET HOME TO
SEATTLE, BUT MOM WANTED TO
SEE ONE MORE THING.



SHE LED US TO
JAPANTOWN IN
SEARCH OF THE
HOUSE HER
MOTHER HAD
GROWN UP IN.



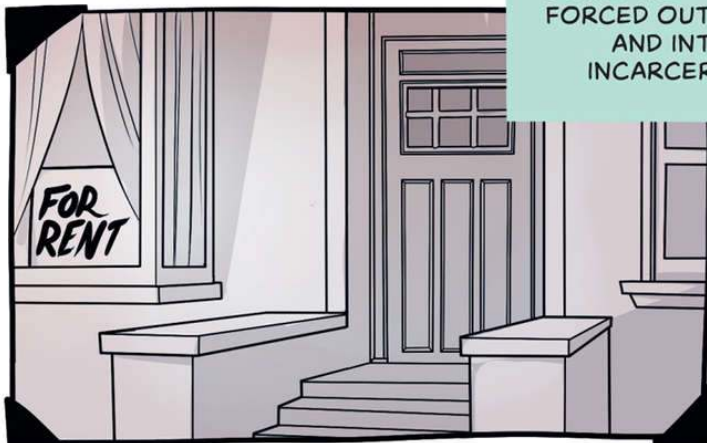
SHE'D NEVER SEEN IT IN
PERSON, BUT SHE'D HEARD
STORIES FROM HER MOTHER.

IT WAS ONE OF
THOSE CLASSIC
SAN FRANCISCO
ROW HOUSES,
DIVIDED FOR
SEVERAL FAMILIES
TO LIVE IN.



MY GRANDMOTHER AND
HER IMMIGRANT PARENTS
LIVED THERE UNTIL 1942...

WHEN THEY, ALONG WITH
120,000 OTHER PEOPLE OF
JAPANESE DESCENT UP AND
DOWN THE WEST COAST, WERE
FORCED OUT OF THEIR HOMES
AND INTO AMERICAN
INCARCERATION CAMPS.



THEY NEVER SAW
SAN FRANCISCO
AGAIN.



I THINK IT'S
DOWN THIS
NEXT BLOCK.



KIKU,
PLEASE STOP
SIGHING. WE'RE
ALMOST THERE.



MOM GOT THE ADDRESS FROM
AN OLD LETTER SENT TO HER
GRANDFATHER BACK IN 1935.

SAVE FOR THE ADDRESS,
IT WAS WRITTEN ENTIRELY
IN JAPANESE—A LANGUAGE
NOBODY IN OUR FAMILY
SPEAKS NOW.



701

622

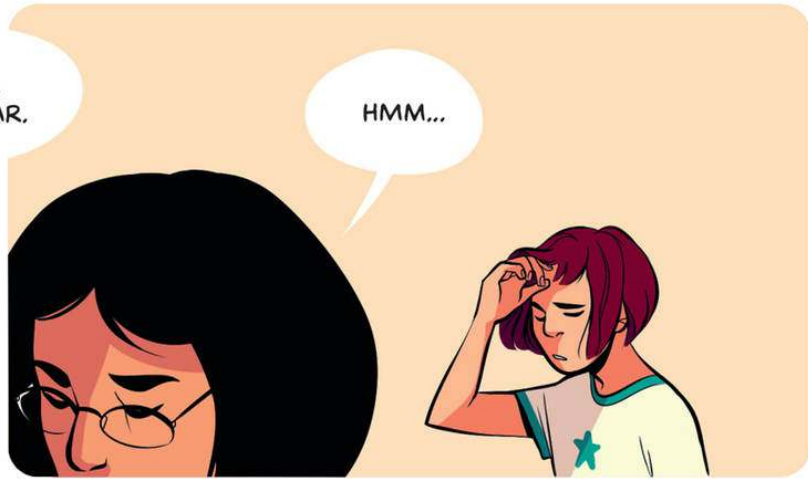
WE COULDN'T FIND THE HOUSE
ON ANY ONLINE MAPS, SO WE
WANDERED AROUND BUSH STREET
COUNTING NUMBERS DOWN.

409

386

I FELT OUT OF PLACE HERE, TAILING BEHIND
MOM AS WE LOOKED FOR EVIDENCE OF ANY
REAL CONNECTION TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD.







HERE.



OH,



IT GOT TORN DOWN?

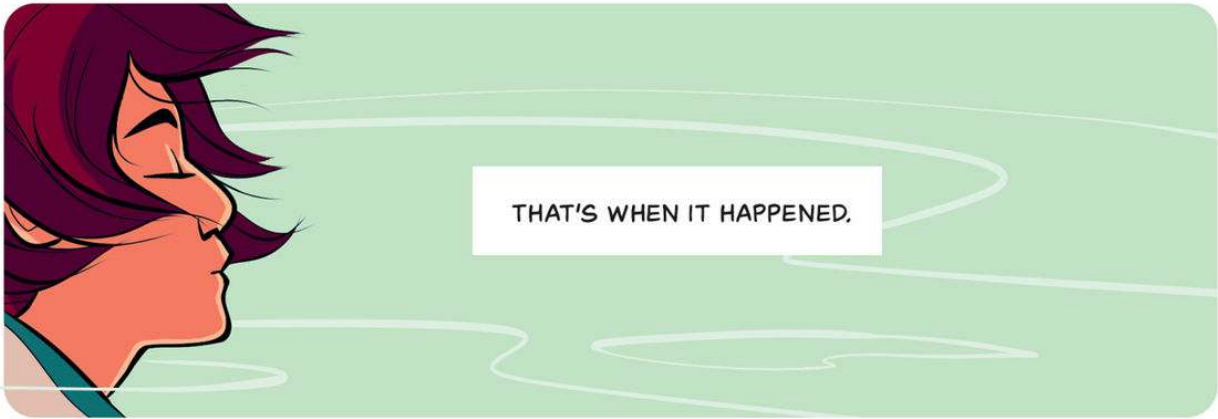
I GUESS SO.



WELL,...










AND WHEN I OPENED MY
EYES, ALL I COULD SEE
WAS A THICK FOG.



BUT WHEN IT CLEARED AT LAST...



I WAS SOMEWHERE
ENTIRELY DIFFERENT.



I WAS IN SHOCK.



HOW HAD I BEEN
TRANSPORTED TO
THIS THEATER?
WHERE WAS
THE MALL,
WHERE WAS
MY MOM?



I TRIED TO FISH
OUT MY PHONE
TO TEXT HER,



IN FACT, THIS
WASN'T EVEN
MY POCKET.



BUT TO MY HORROR,
IT WAS NO LONGER
IN MY POCKET.

I WAS
WEARING
A NEW AND
UNFAMILIAR
OUTFIT.

I TRIED TO STAY CALM
DESPITE MY CONFUSION. I
HAD TO FIND A PHONE, MOM
WOULD BE WORRYING.



BUT BEFORE I COULD
SNEAK OUTSIDE, THE
PERFORMANCE ENDED.

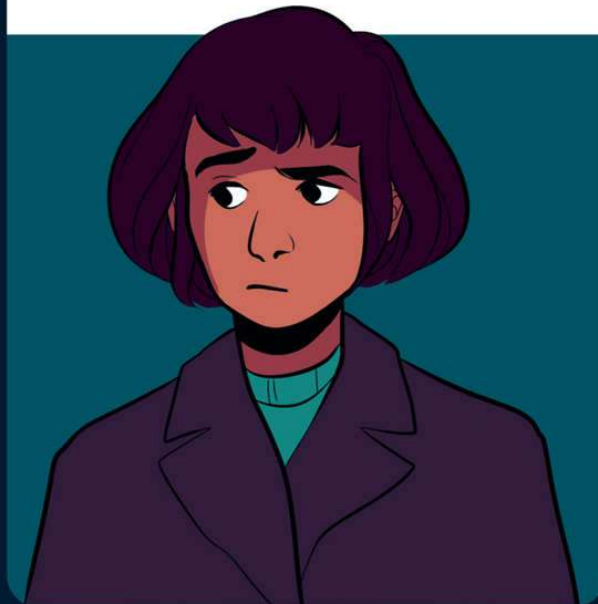


THANK YOU,
ERNESTINA TERANISHI!
WHAT A TALENT
SHE IS!



TERANISHI. I KNEW THAT NAME.

IT WAS ONE OF THE FEW THINGS I
KNEW ABOUT THE JAPANESE SIDE
OF MY FAMILY. MOM HAD TOLD ME
TERANISHI WAS A RARE LAST NAME.



ANOTHER THING I KNEW:
MY GRANDMOTHER HAD BEEN
A TALENTED VIOLINIST.





I FOLLOWED THE CROWD
OUT OF THE THEATER,
TRYING TO REMEMBER
WHAT MY GRANDMOTHER'S
FIRST NAME HAD BEEN.

IT SEEMED STRANGE
THAT I DIDN'T KNOW
THIS SIMPLE FACT.

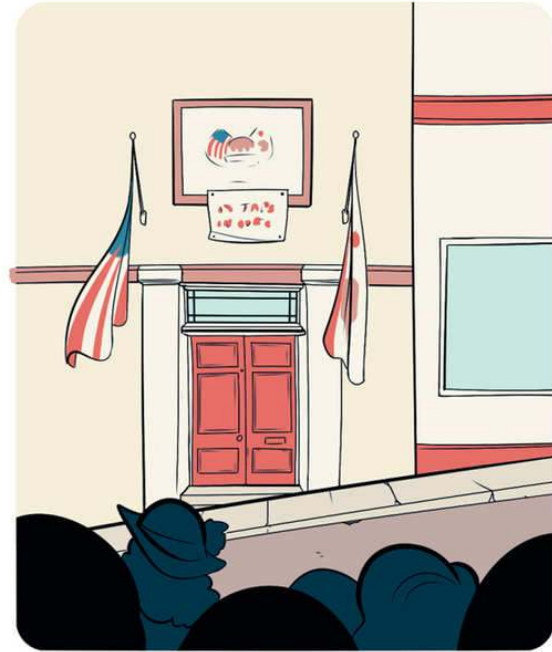


BUT AS I EMERGED
FROM THE THEATER,
MY THOUGHTS WERE
INTERRUPTED.



I WASN'T FAR FROM WHERE THE
MALL PLAZA SHOULD BE, BUT
SOMEHOW EVERYTHING HAD
CHANGED AS IF IT WERE AN
ENTIRELY DIFFERENT ERA.

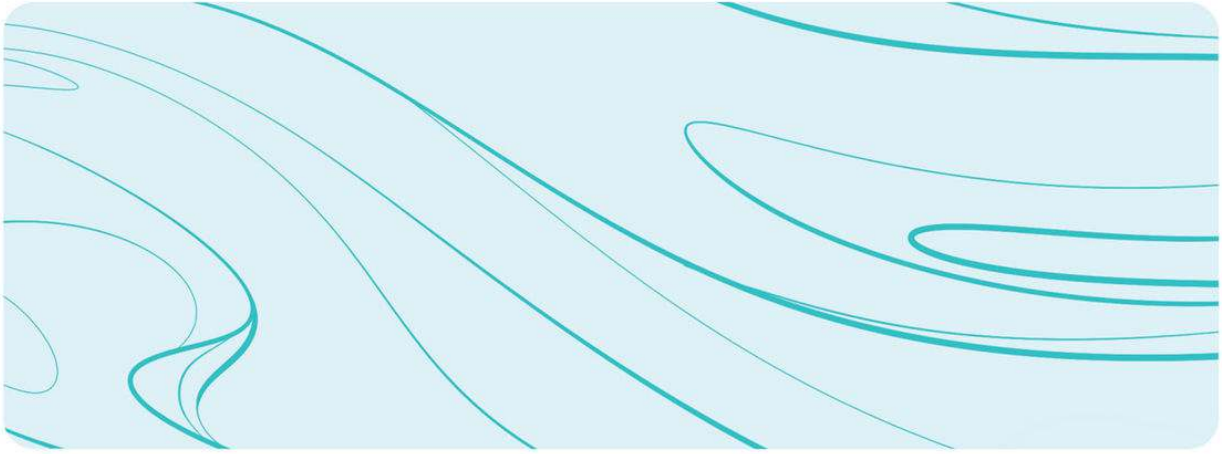




OF ALL THE SHOCKS TO MY
SYSTEM THAT AFTERNOON,
THAT SIGN WAS THE WORST.

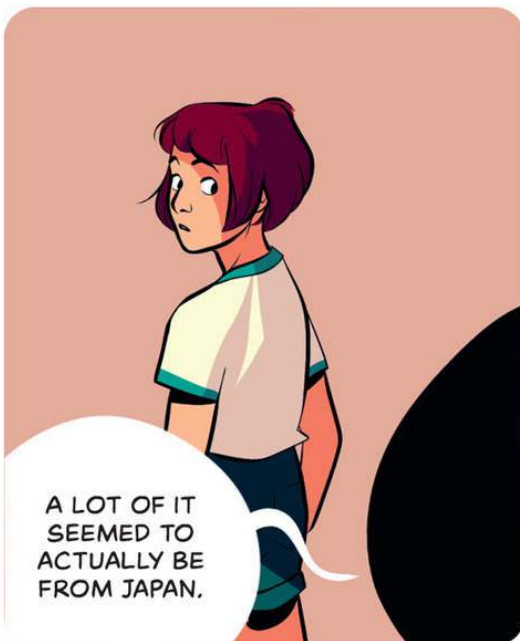


IT WAS THE LAST THING I
SAW BEFORE THE FOG
CAME BACK AGAIN.





WELL, THERE
WASN'T MUCH IN
THERE AFTER
ALL.



A LOT OF IT
SEEMED TO
ACTUALLY BE
FROM JAPAN.

I COULDN'T
READ HALF THE
PACKAGING.

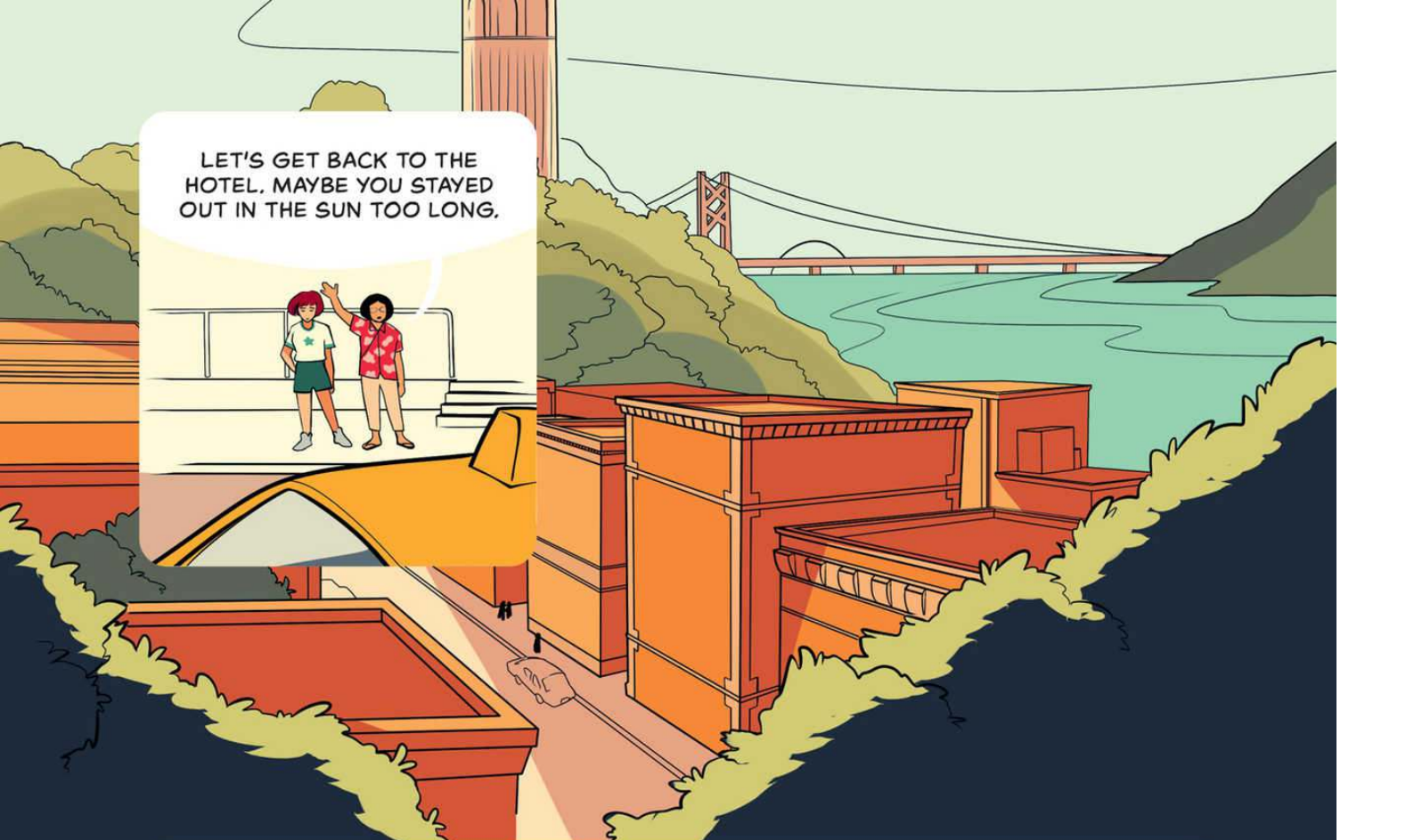


ARE YOU
FEELING OKAY?
YOU LOOK
PALE.



I—I THINK SO.



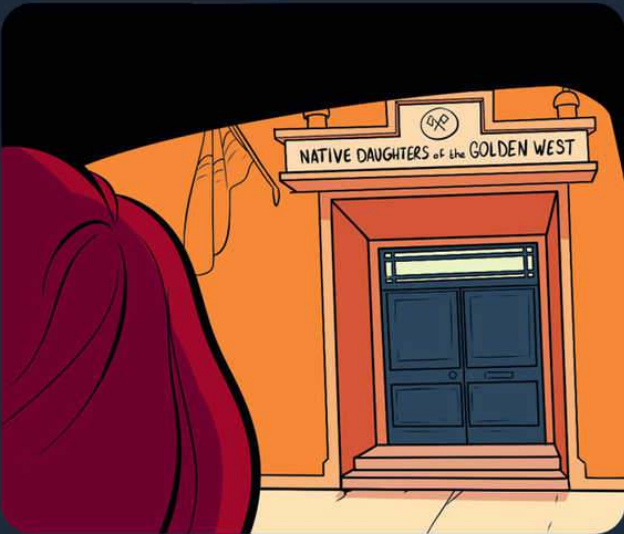


LET'S GET BACK TO THE
HOTEL. MAYBE YOU STAYED
OUT IN THE SUN TOO LONG.



I THOUGHT IT MUST
HAVE BEEN A DREAM.

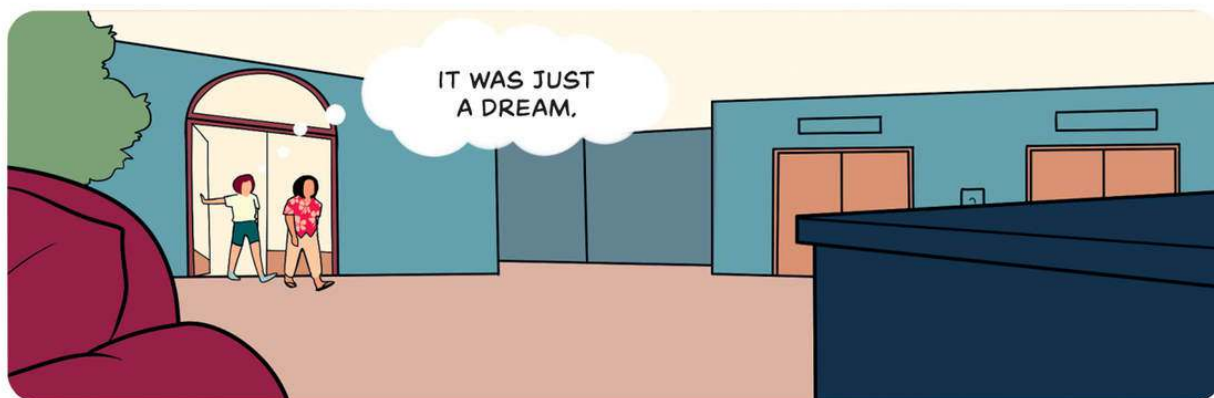
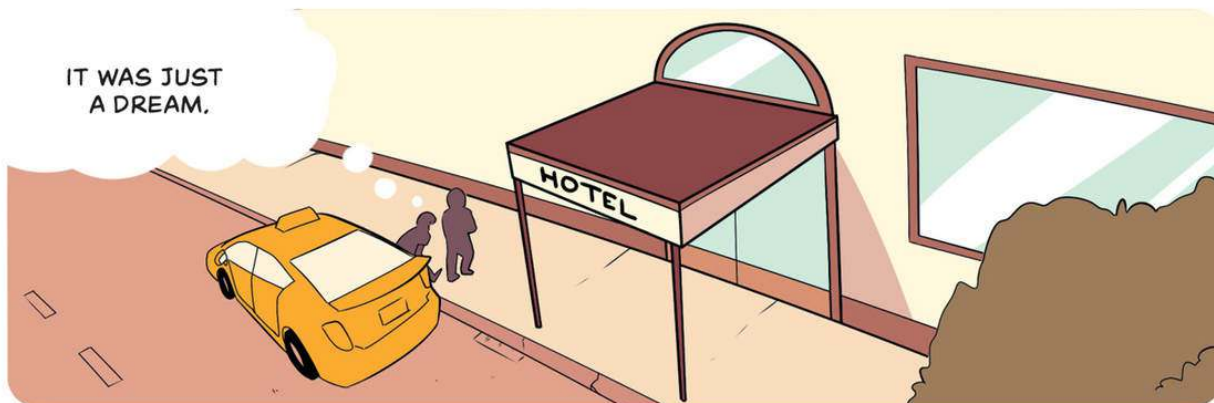
BUT IT HAD FELT
SO REAL...



NATIVE DAUGHTERS of the GOLDEN WEST







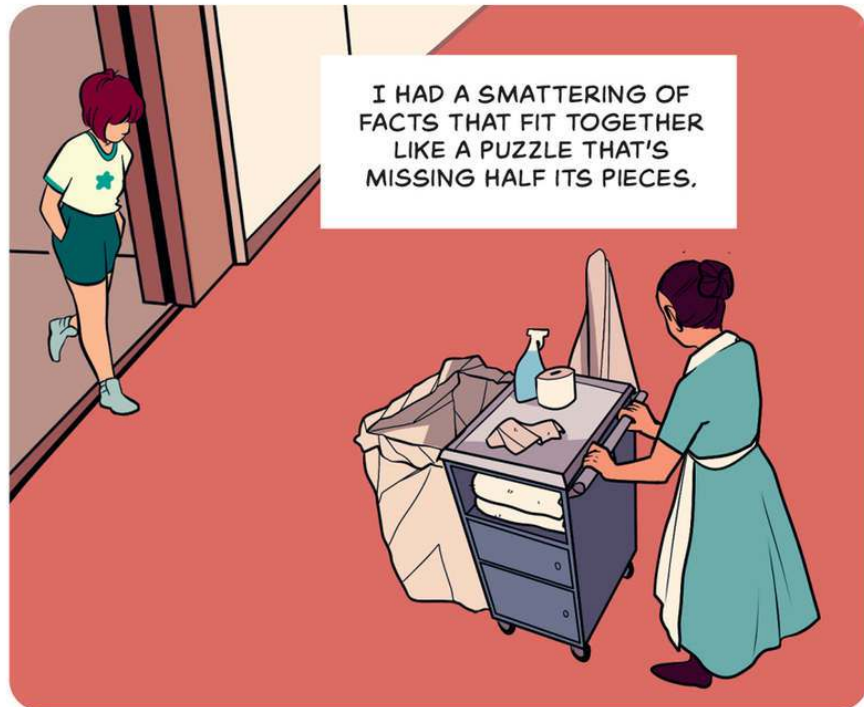
IT SEEMS ODD EVEN TO ME THAT I WOULDN'T
REALLY KNOW MY OWN GRANDMOTHER'S NAME.



MOM DOESN'T TALK
ABOUT HER OFTEN,
AND WHEN SHE DOES,
OF COURSE SHE
JUST CALLS HER
"MOM."



IT HADN'T
REALLY OCCURRED
TO ME UNTIL THEN
HOW LITTLE I
KNEW ABOUT MY
FAMILY HISTORY.



I HAD A SMATTERING OF
FACTS THAT FIT TOGETHER
LIKE A PUZZLE THAT'S
MISSING HALF ITS PIECES.



I KNEW MY
GREAT-GRANDPARENTS
HAD COME FROM JAPAN
AND WORKED AS SERVANTS
FOR WHITE HOUSEHOLDS.



I KNEW ERNESTINA
WAS THEIR ONLY CHILD.
THEY FOSTERED HER TALENT
FOR VIOLIN, BUT WERE ALL TAKEN
TO AN INCARCERATION CAMP
DURING WORLD WAR II.



AFTER THE WAR,
THEY MOVED TO
NEW YORK CITY SO
ERNESTINA COULD
ATTEND JULLIARD.

I DIDN'T KNOW HOW
THEY PAID FOR IT.



I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE
THEY WORKED IN NYC.

ALL I KNEW WAS THAT
MY MOM WAS ONLY NINETEEN
WHEN ERNESTINA DIED
OF LEUKEMIA.



SOON AFTER,
MOM LEFT THE
EAST COAST
BEHIND AND MADE
A NEW HOME
IN SEATTLE.

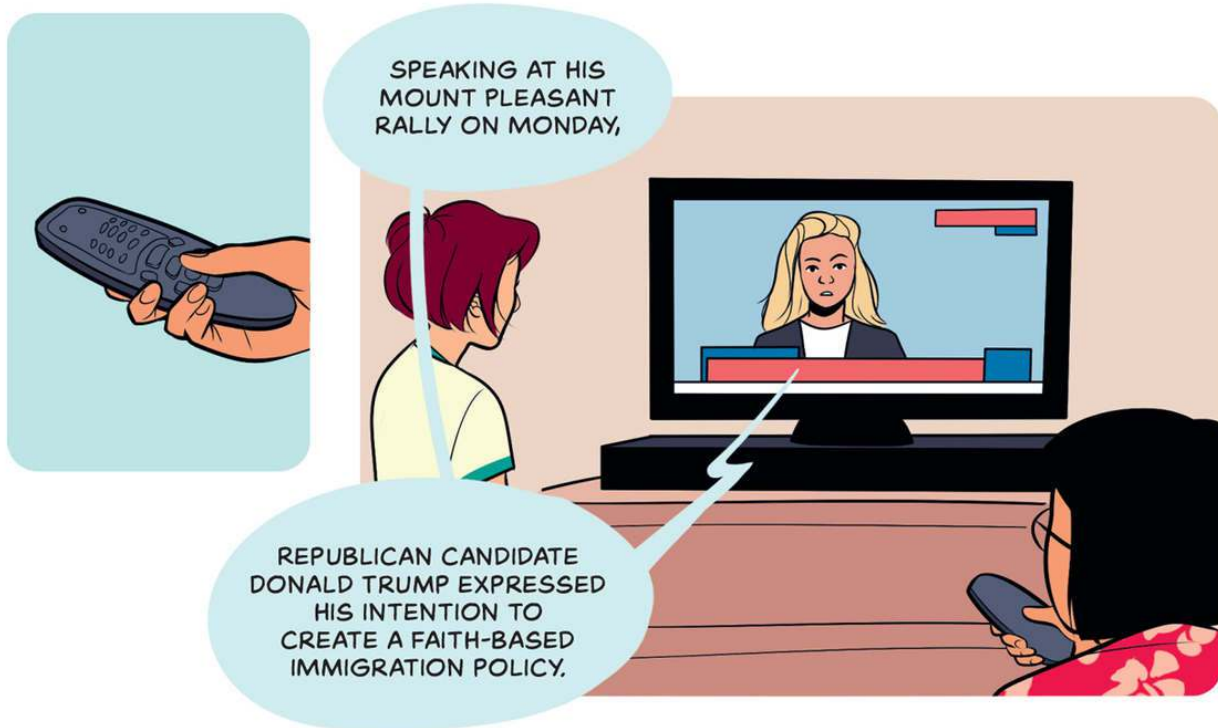


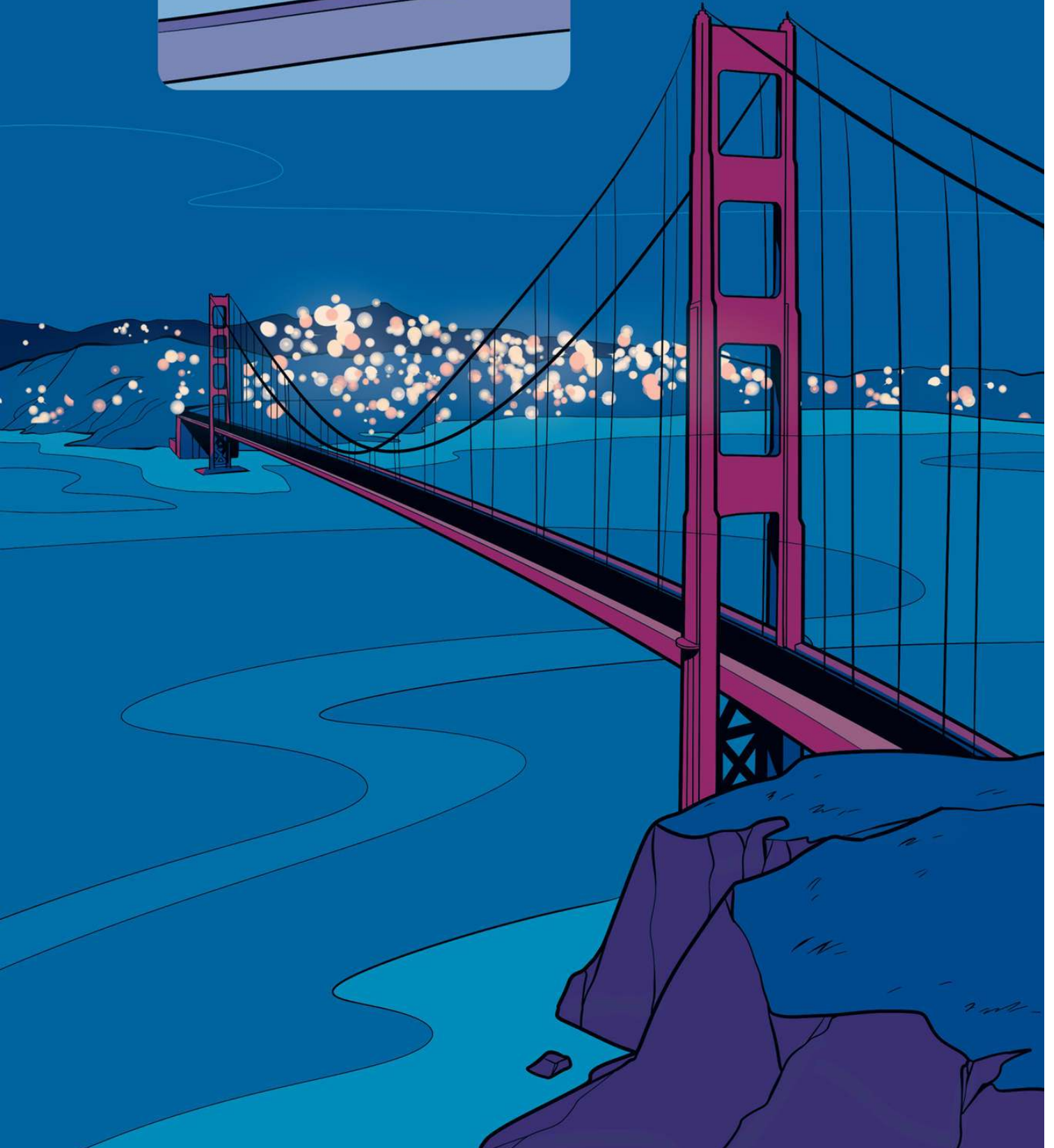
I HAD GROWN UP
KNOWING THESE
FACTS BUT HAD NEVER
REALIZED HOW LITTLE
IT REALLY TOLD ME
ABOUT MY OWN
FAMILY.



AND NOW I JUST
WANTED TO FIND THE
COURAGE TO ASK FOR
MORE INFORMATION.









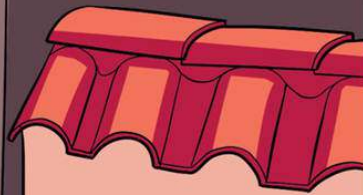
2

IT HAPPENED AGAIN THE
VERY NEXT MORNING.



THERE WAS AN
ARCHWAY ACROSS
THE STREET FROM
OUR HOTEL.

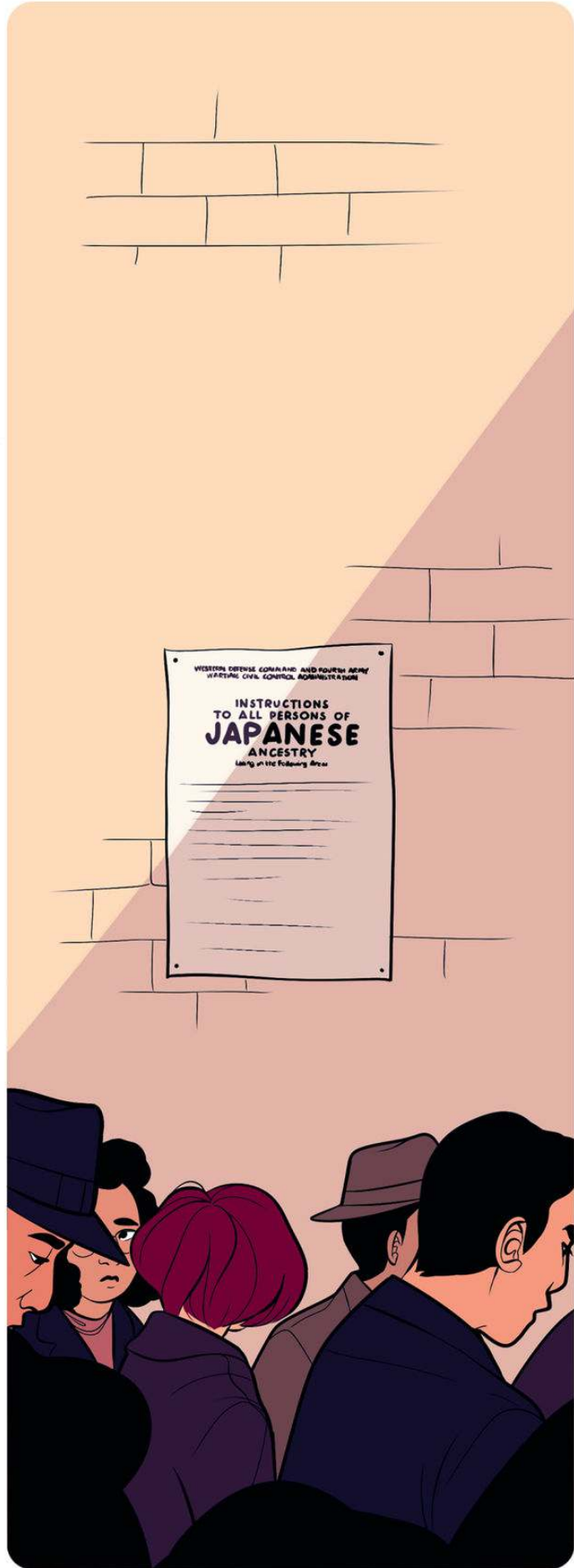
IT LOOKED OUT OF
PLACE SOMEHOW—
OLDER THAN
THE BUILDINGS
AROUND IT.

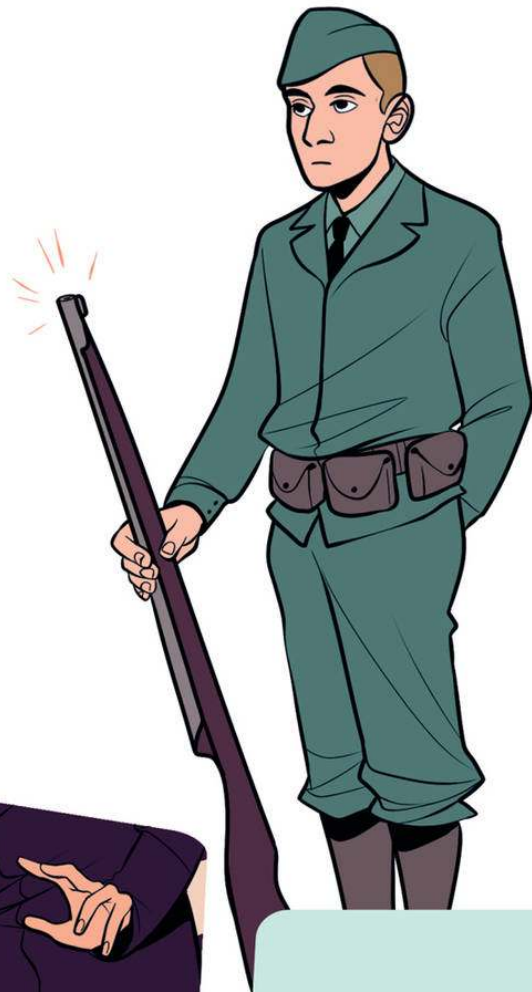


THE FOG CAME
AND I WAS DISPLACED
AGAIN.















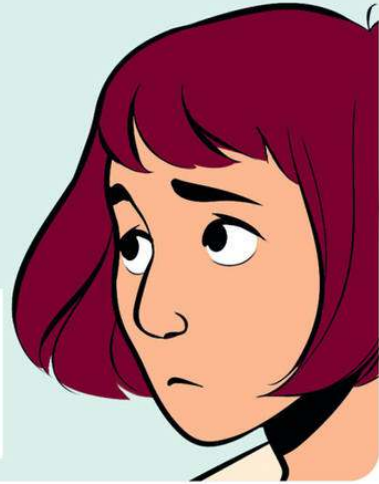
THE CUT FROM MY
FALL WAS REAL.



THE DISPLACEMENTS
WERE REAL.



AND THEY COULD
HAPPEN AGAIN—
THEY COULD HAPPEN
ANYTIME.

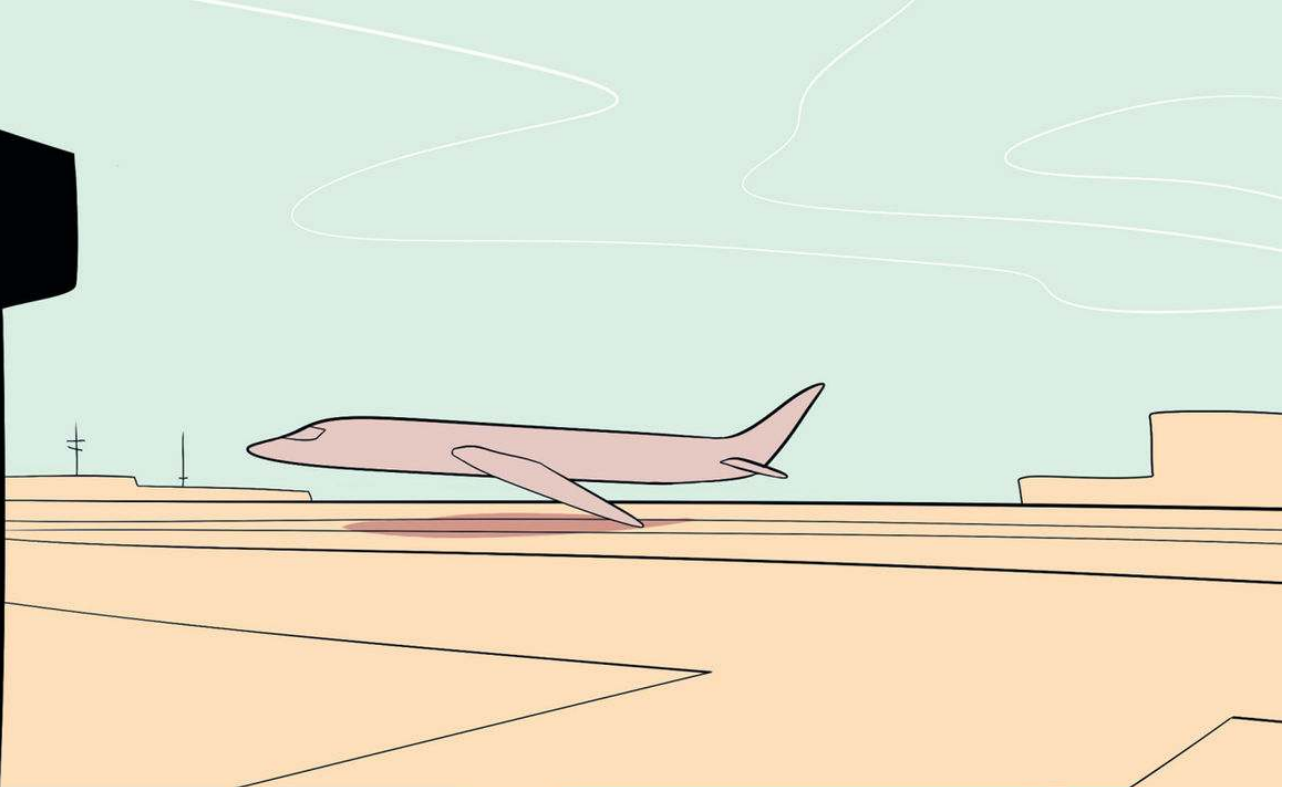


MY ONLY WARNING
WAS THE FOG.



BUT IT'S
ALWAYS FOGGY
IN SAN FRANCISCO.





I'M SO
READY TO
GO HOME.

MHM.



THAT WAS AN
UNDERSTATEMENT.
I NEEDED TO GET BACK
TO SEATTLE, TO A
NORMAL LIFE.

THE DISPLACEMENTS HAD
BEGUN IN SAN FRANCISCO,
SO I CONVINCED MYSELF THEY
COULD ONLY HAPPEN THERE.



AT HOME,
I'D BE SAFE.



BUT I COULDN'T
GET THE QUESTION
OUT OF MY MIND.



ARE YOU SURE
YOU'RE SUPPOSED
TO BE HERE?



I NEVER FELT
PARTICULARLY
JAPANESE.



I WAS ONLY HALF, AND WE
RARELY TOOK PART IN ANY
JAPANESE CULTURE.



DID I BELONG IN THAT
LINE WITH THOSE
JAPANESE AMERICAN
FAMILIES?



I HAD NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT IT BEFORE. I HAD ONLY LEARNED A LITTLE ABOUT THE CAMPS WHEN I WAS IN SCHOOL, AND MOST OF THAT WAS FOR MY OWN BOOK REPORTS.



I NEVER KNEW, UNTIL THAT DAY IN SFO AIRPORT, THAT ANYONE WITH ONE-SIXTEENTH JAPANESE ANCESTRY OR MORE WAS INCARCERATED.



SO I WOULD HAVE BEEN STANDING IN THAT LINE WITH MY MOM AND SISTER, NO MATTER HOW WHITE-PASSING WE WERE.

BUT THAT CERTAINLY DIDN'T MEAN WE BELONGED THERE.

NOBODY DID.





I COULDN'T IMAGINE MY
FAMILY BEING ARBITRARILY
ROUNDED UP LIKE THAT.



BUT I TOLD MYSELF IT
WAS ANCIENT HISTORY.



AND I WOULDN'T HAVE TO
WORRY ABOUT IT SOON.

part II:
the wastes



3






BACK HOME I TRIED TO
PUT THE SAN FRANCISCO
TRIP BEHIND ME.

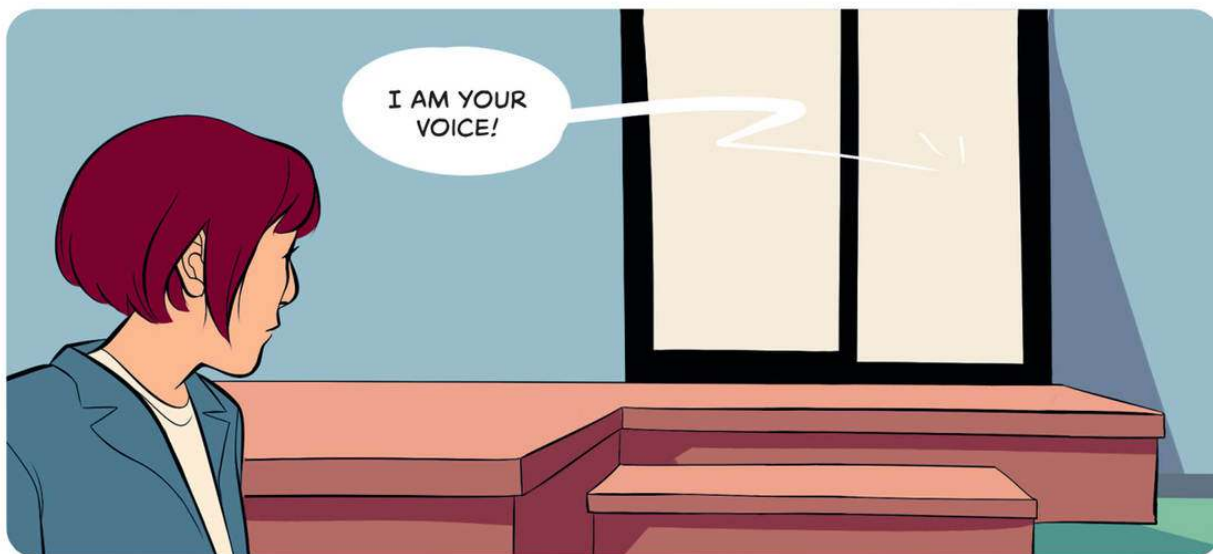


I THOUGHT I WOULD BE SAFE
FROM THE DISPLACEMENTS
HERE,



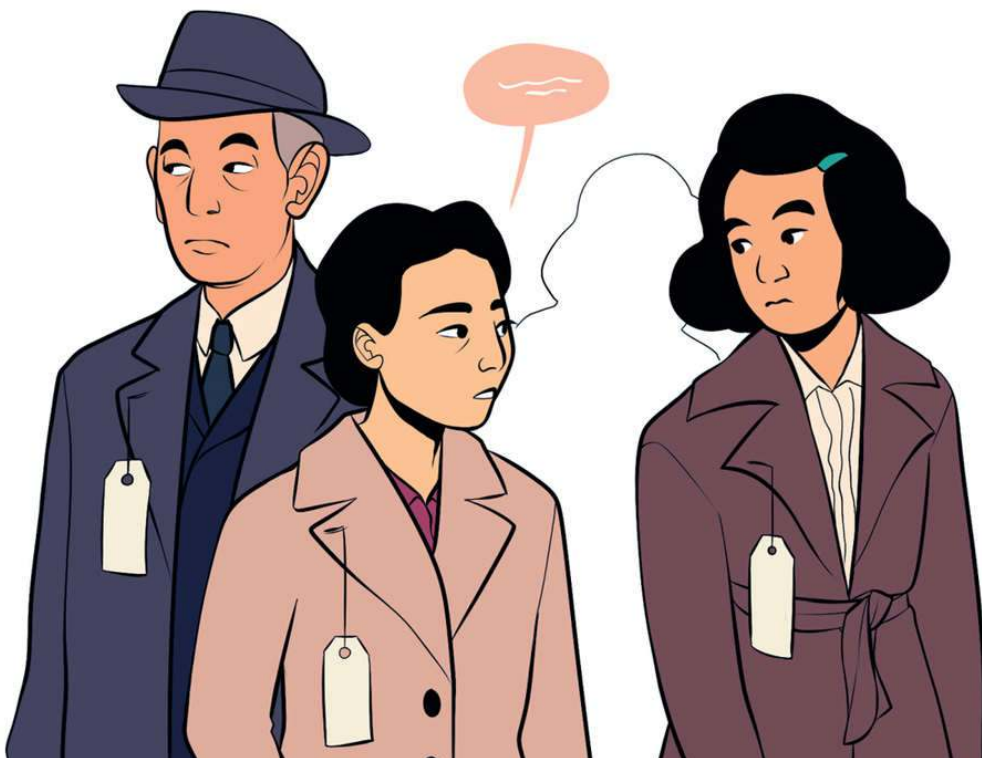
LIVE FROM THE REPUBLICAN
NATIONAL CONVENTION—

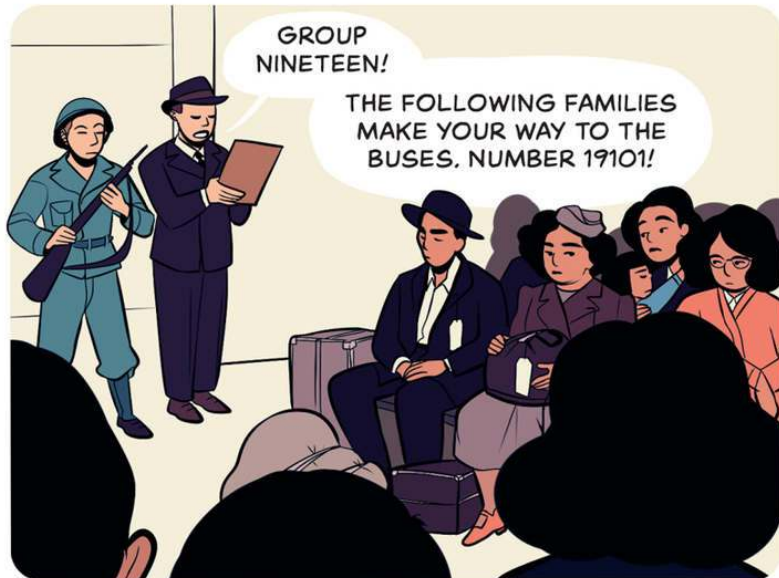
BUT SOME THINGS,
YOU CAN'T ESCAPE,



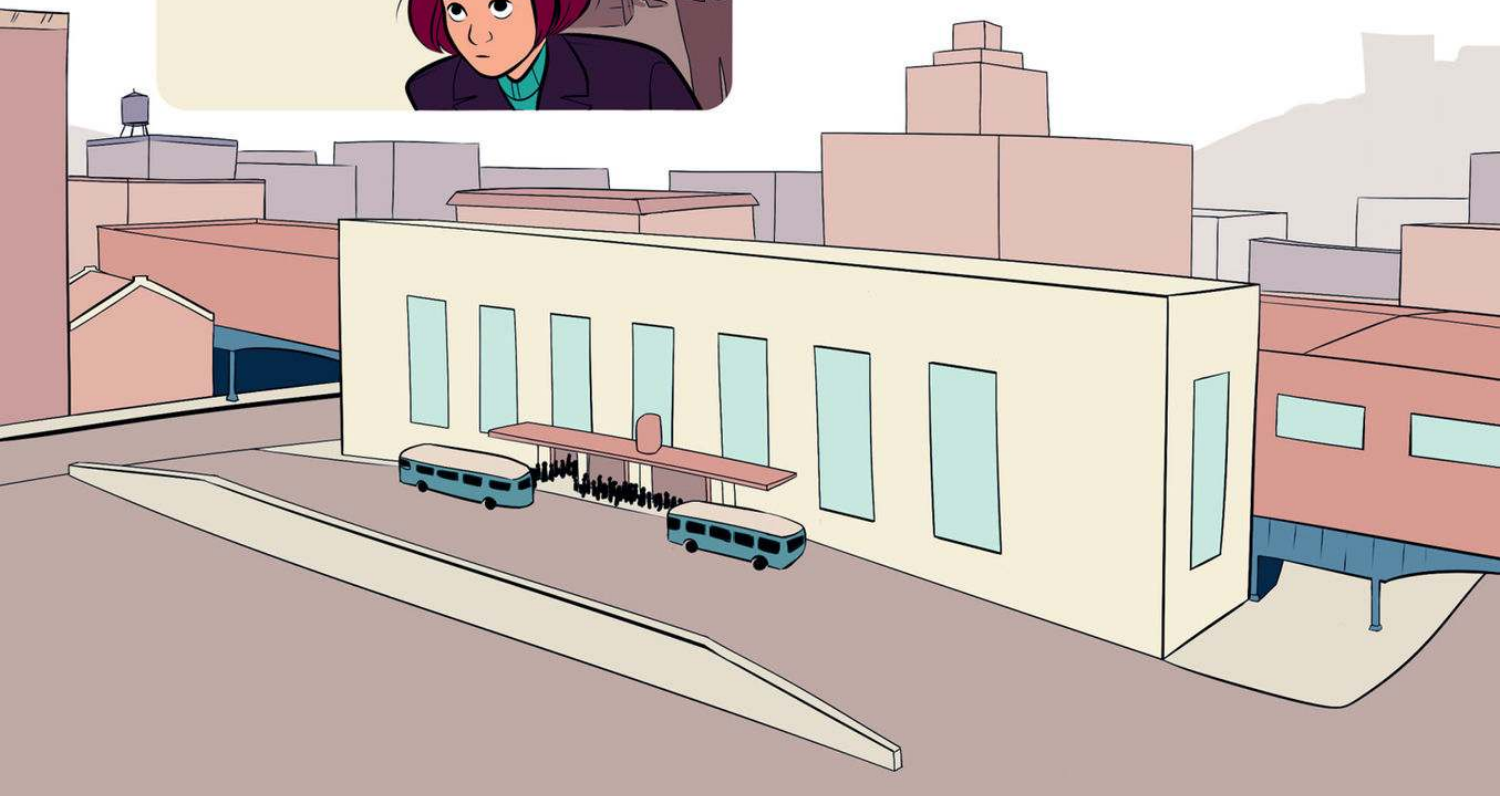


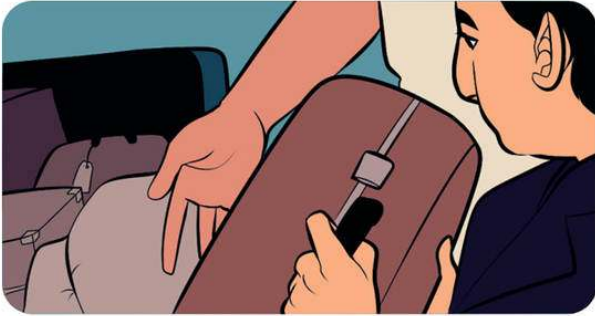


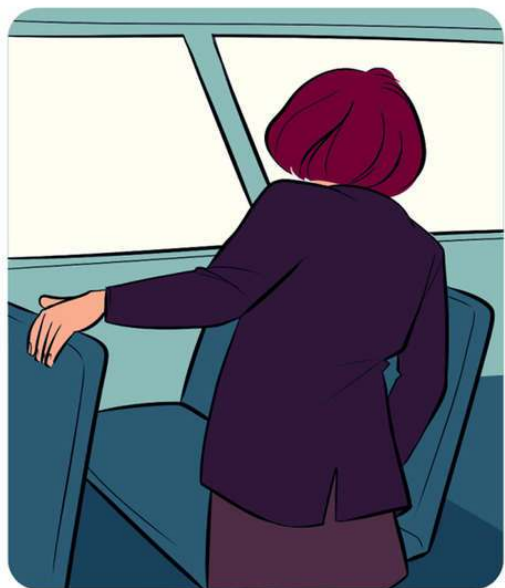






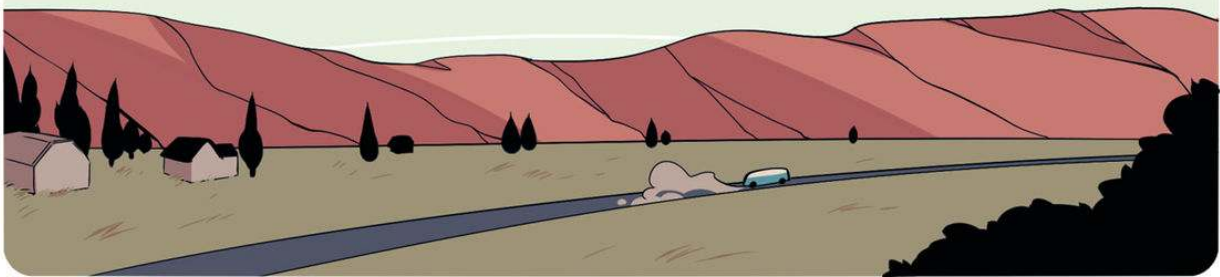








I WANTED TO TAKE COMFORT IN THE
KNOWLEDGE THAT THE DISPLACEMENTS
WERE ONLY TEMPORARY.

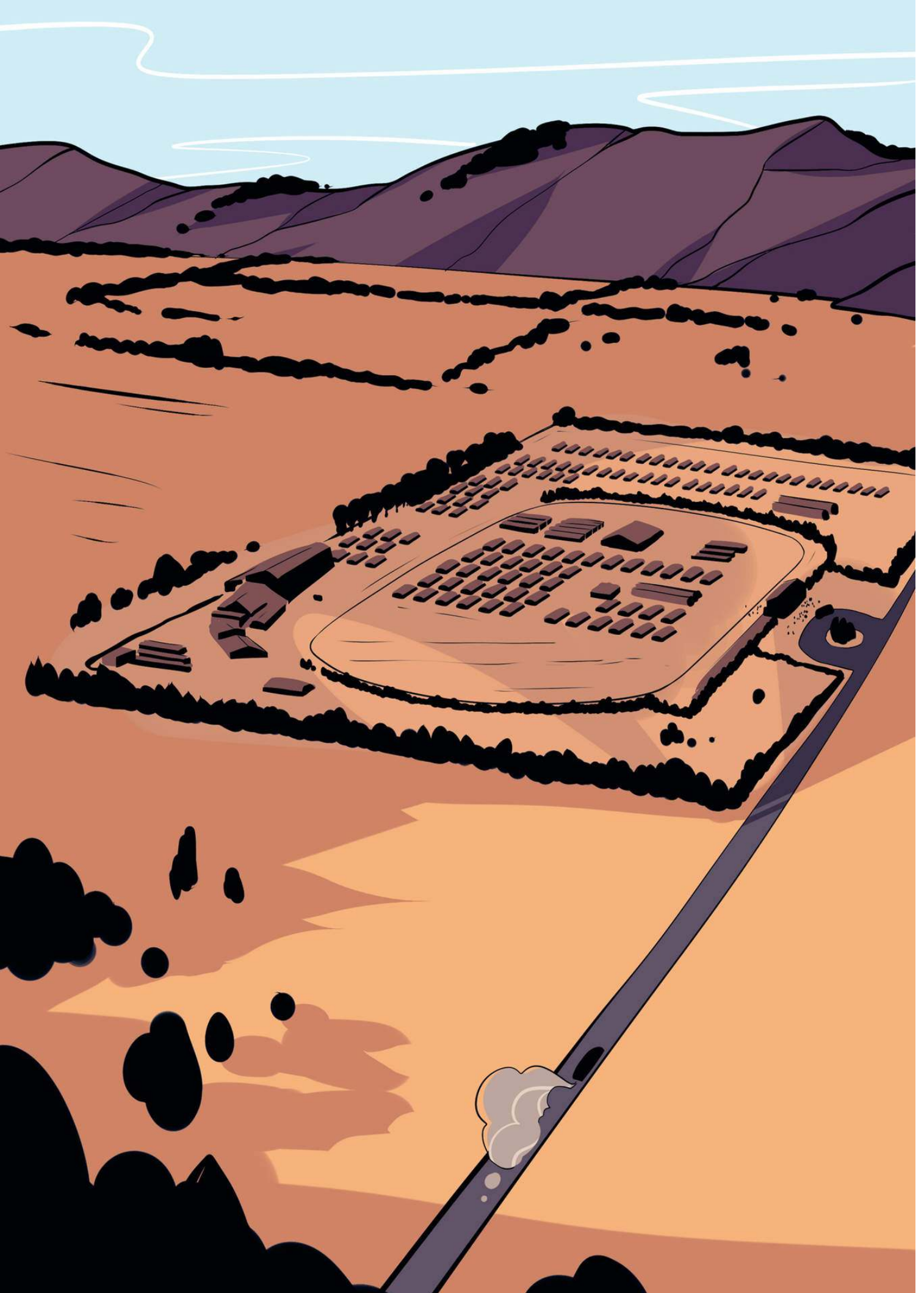


BUT I WAS TERRIFIED,
THEY HAD FOLLOWED ME
BACK TO SEATTLE.



WHAT IF THEY FOLLOWED ME
FOREVER?







WE'VE ARRIVED
AT TANFORAN
ASSEMBLY
CENTER!



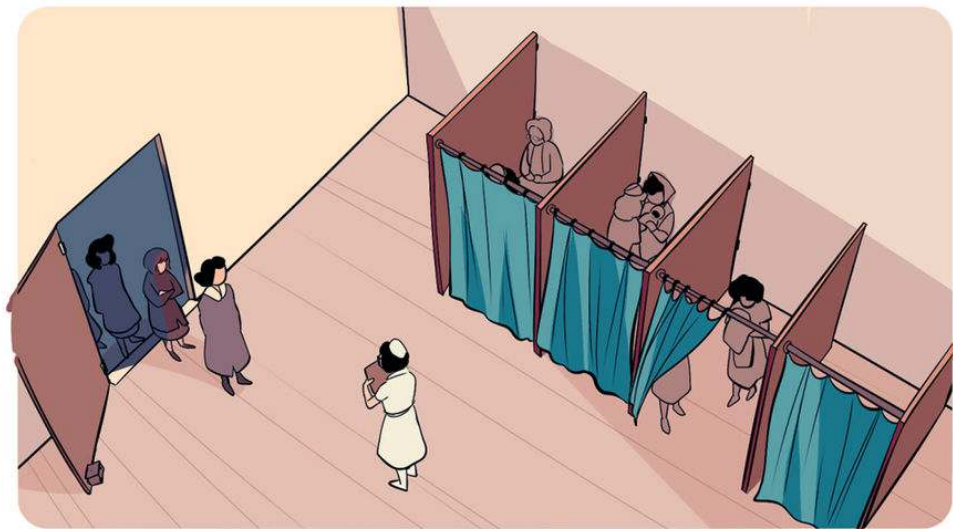


AS SOON AS I
EXITED THE BUS I WAS
HIT WITH THE STENCH OF
HORSE MANURE.

FAMILIES CROWDED
AROUND THE ENTRANCE
TO THE REPURPOSED
RACETRACK, SURROUNDED
BY ARMED GUARDS.

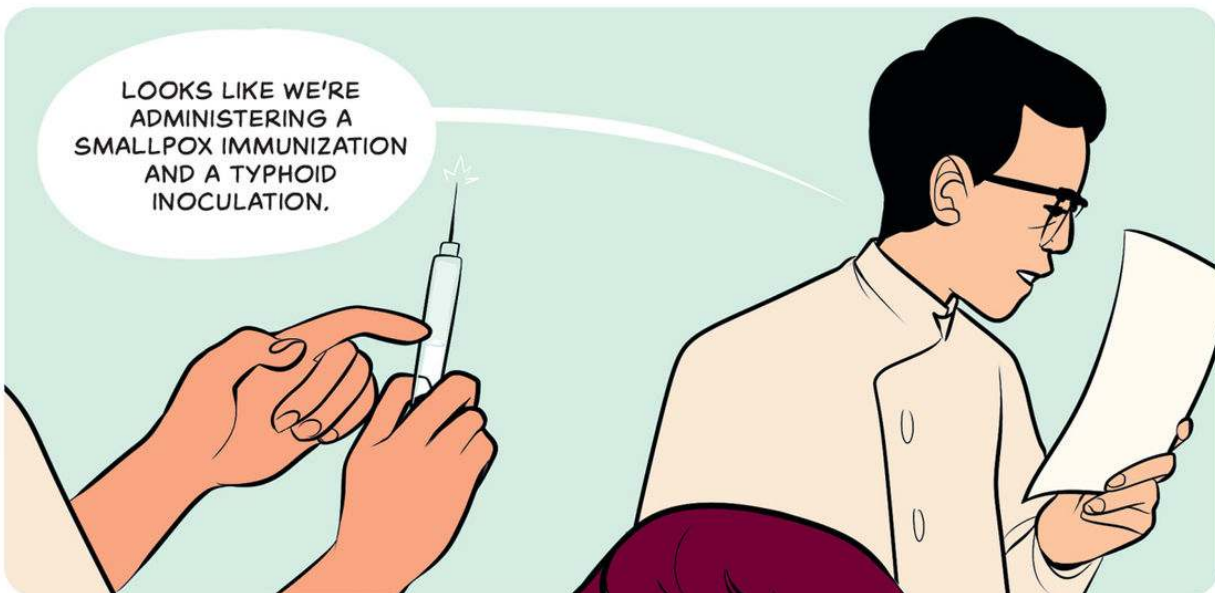
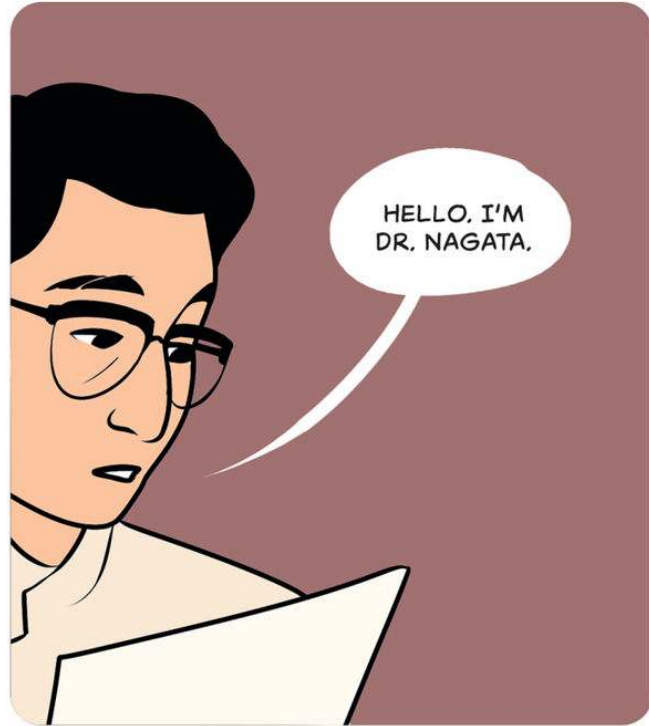














THERE,
ALL DONE.



PLEASE TAKE THIS
SLIP TO THE TABLES
OUTSIDE.

NEXT!

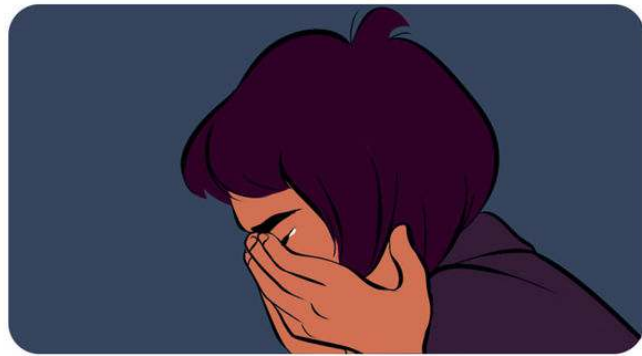












SHE WAS OLDER THAN THE FIRST TIME I'D SEEN HER, BUT SOMEHOW I RECOGNIZED HER. SHE WORE THE SAME BARRETTE.



I LISTENED TO HER SPEAKING TO HER PARENTS—MY GREAT-GRANDPARENTS—IN JAPANESE AS THEY MOVED INTO THE STALL NEXT TO MINE.

I COULD HEAR THEM THROUGH THE THIN WALLS.



馬小屋に泊まるのですか？夜寒くなりますよ。

I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND THEM BUT I COULD TELL BY THEIR TONE THEY WERE STRESSED.



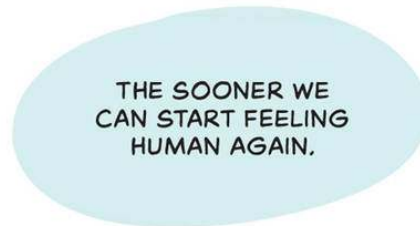
間に合わせるしかないな。

I KNEW NO JAPANESE, AND NEITHER DID MY MOM. BUT ERNESTINA SPOKE IT FLUENTLY. I WONDERED FOR THE FIRST TIME WHY SHE NEVER PASSED IT ON TO HER CHILDREN.









AIKO HELPED ME SURVIVE THOSE EARLY DAYS AT CAMP. THE UNCERTAINTY AND ENDLESS WAITING IN LINES.



SHE WAS NISEI, LIKE MY GRANDMOTHER, BUT SHE WAS SO DIFFERENT FROM EVERYTHING I KNEW ABOUT ERNESTINA.

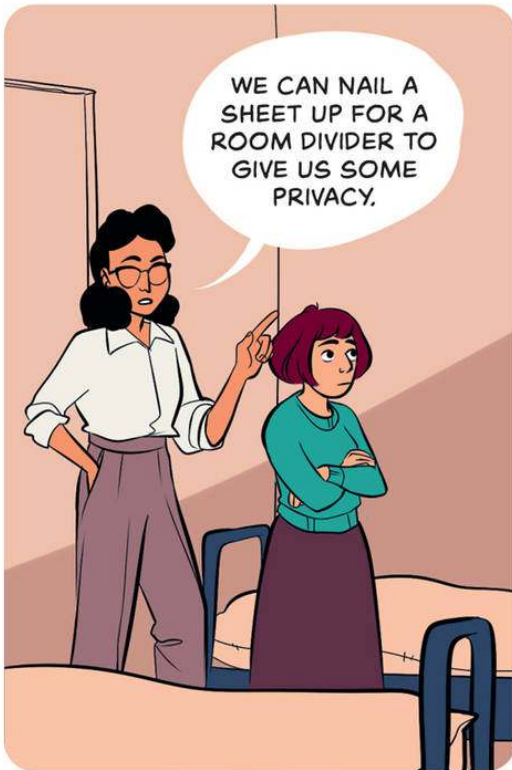


SHE WAS REBELLIOUS AND VOCAL ABOUT HER OPPOSITION TO INCARCERATION. I HAD GROWN UP THINKING THAT NOBODY RESISTED THE CAMPS, THAT THE NIKKEI COOPERATED QUIETLY.

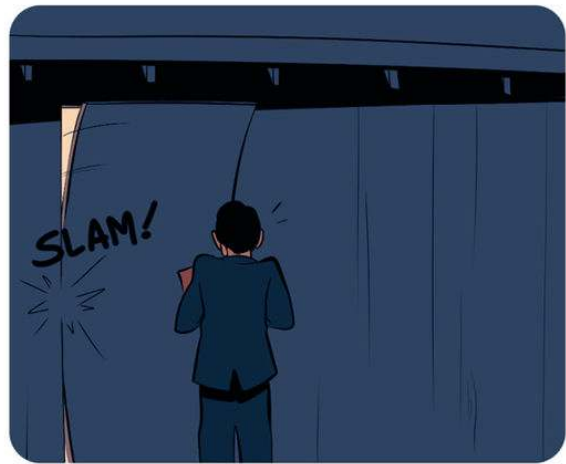


BUT AIKO WAS NEVER QUIET.











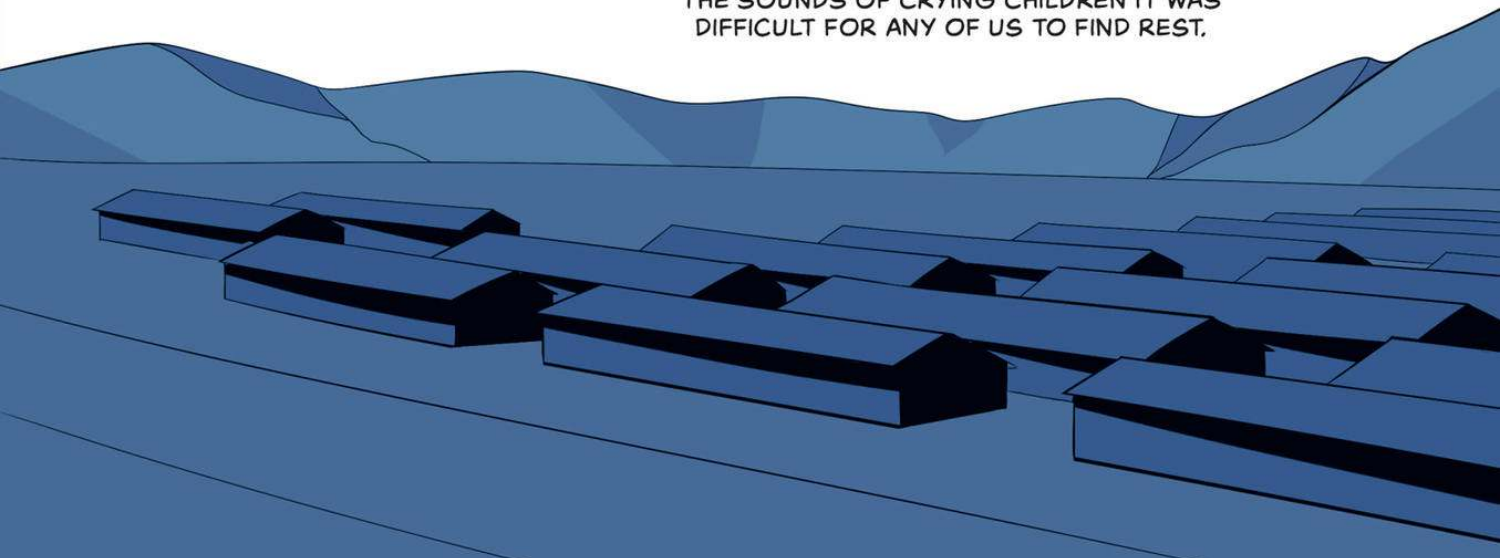
GOOD NIGHT,
KIKU,

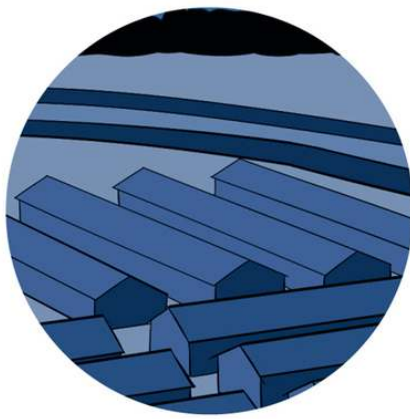
NIGHT.

THAT NIGHT ALL I COULD DO WAS
HOPE THAT WHEN I WOKE UP, I'D BE
BACK ON A WARM LAWN IN SEATTLE.

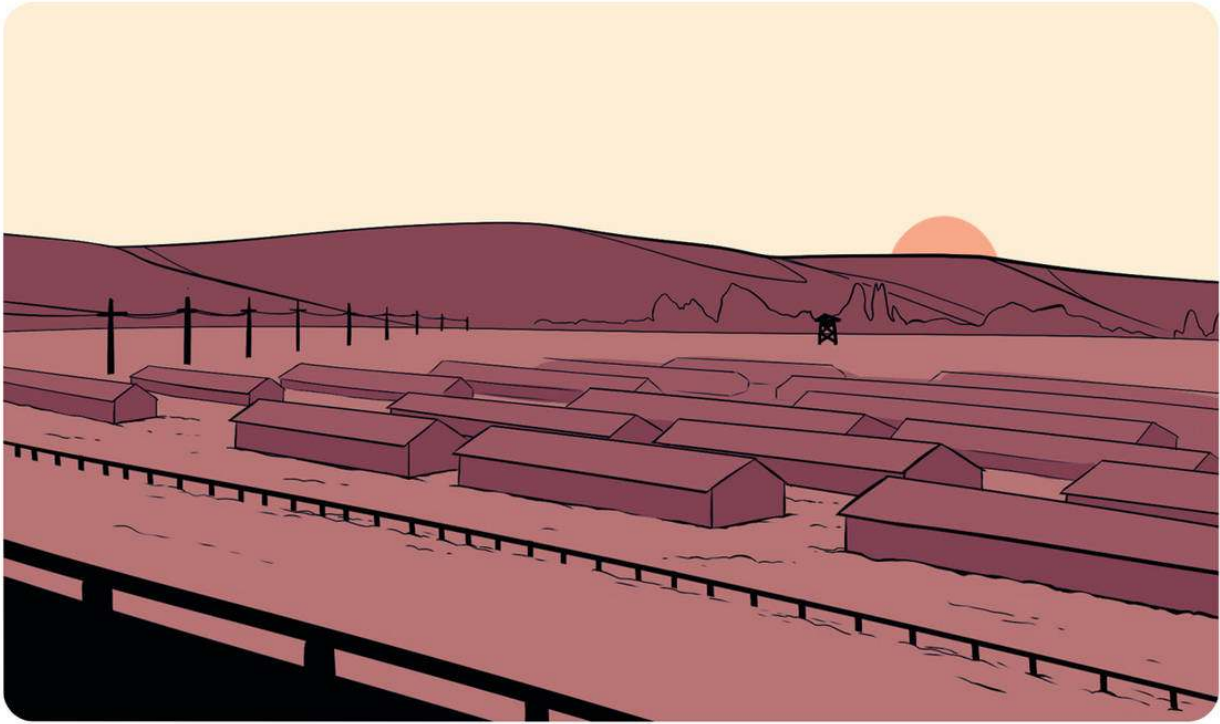


I COULD BARELY SLEEP. THE MESS HALL
DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH FOOD FOR SO MANY
PEOPLE, AND BETWEEN HUNGER PANGS AND
THE SOUNDS OF CRYING CHILDREN IT WAS
DIFFICULT FOR ANY OF US TO FIND REST.





4



WHEN I FOUND THAT I WAS STILL STUCK IN TANFORAN THE NEXT MORNING, I NEARLY SHUT DOWN COMPLETELY.



I WAS A ZOMBIE, UNABLE TO THINK AS THE SHOCK OF MY SITUATION OVERWHELMED ME.



ONLY AIKO GOT ME THROUGH.



SHE LED ME THROUGH THE MUDDY WALKWAYS TO THE OVERCROWDED MESS AND MADE SURE I ATE SOME OF THE UNAPPETIZING FOOD.



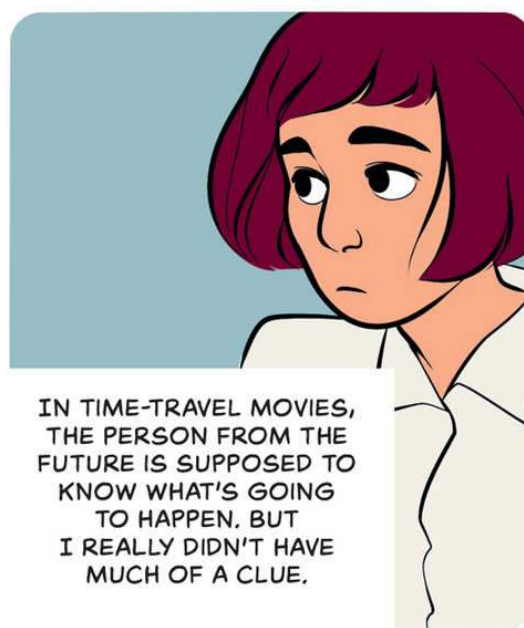


I DIDN'T HAVE THE PRESENCE OF MIND THEN TO REALIZE SHE WAS FEELING EVERYTHING I WAS TOO.



I WASN'T THE ONLY ONE WHO'D BEEN TAKEN FROM EVERYTHING I KNEW, WITH NO IDEA WHEN IT WOULD ALL END.







IN THOSE FIRST DAYS THE
BUSINESS OF FIXING UP OUR
LIVING QUARTERS KEPT ME
PREOCCUPIED.



THERE WAS PLENTY
TO GET DONE,



AND THE WORK EXHAUSTED
ME ENOUGH TO LET ME
SLEEP AT NIGHT.

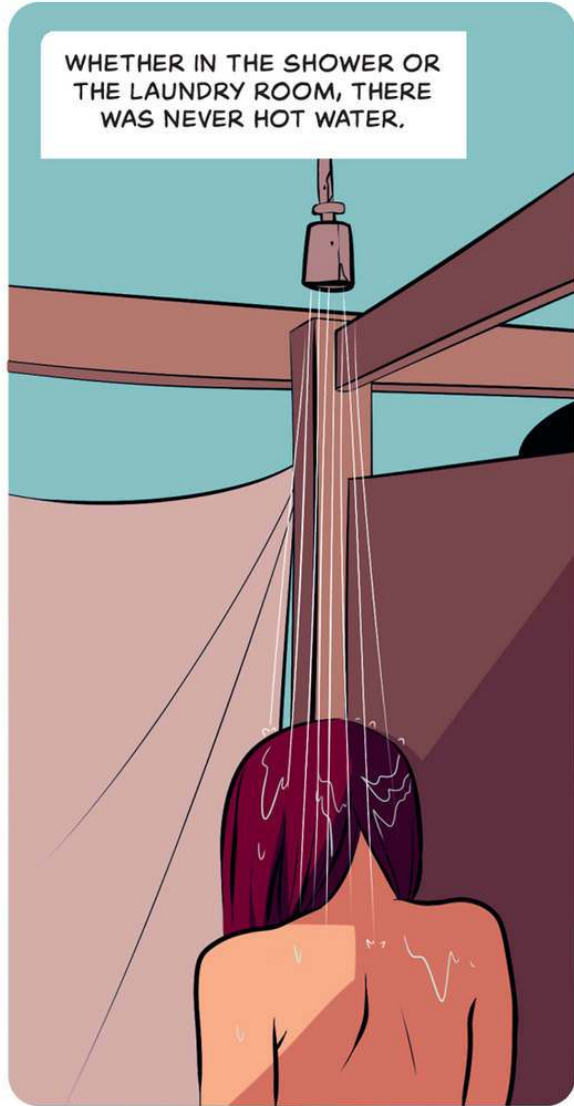


IT WAS OFTEN SIMPLE NECESSITIES THAT BROUGHT ME OUT OF ANY ILLUSION THAT THIS WAS NORMAL.

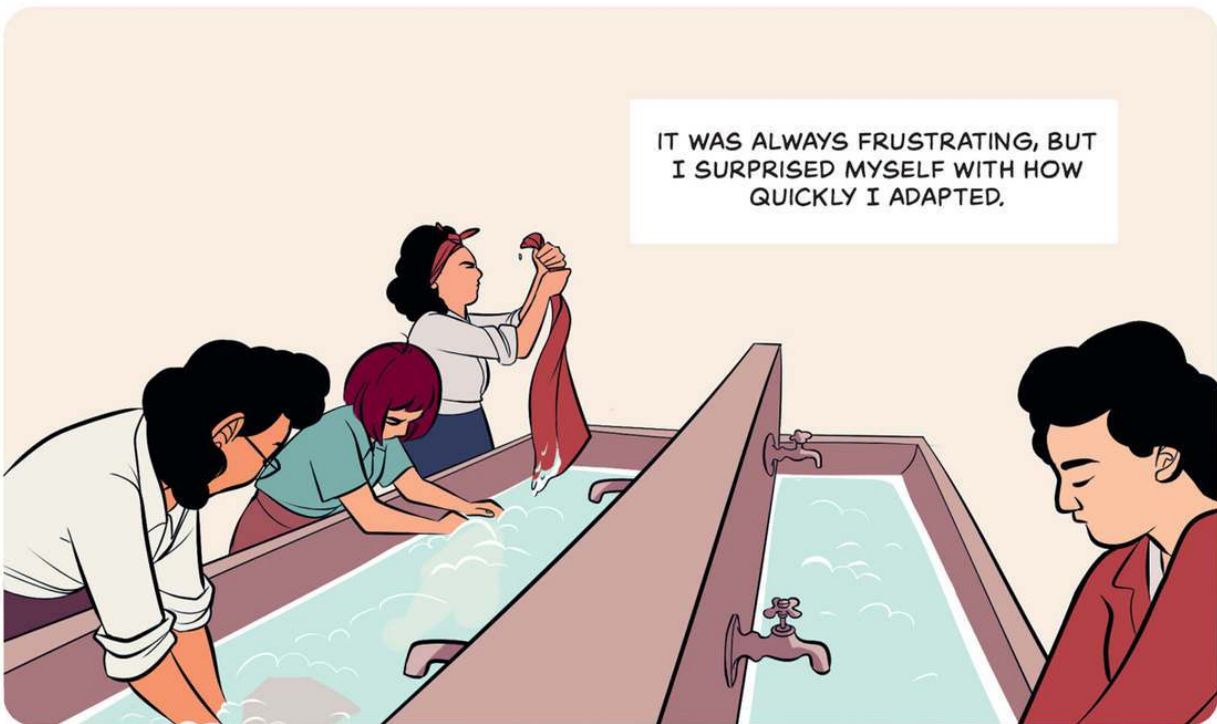


I HAD TO WORK UP THE MENTAL ENERGY JUST TO GO TO THE BATHROOM, WHERE THERE WAS NO PRIVACY. PEOPLE WERE OFTEN SICK FROM THE FOOD, WHICH ONLY MADE THINGS WORSE.

WHETHER IN THE SHOWER OR THE LAUNDRY ROOM, THERE WAS NEVER HOT WATER.

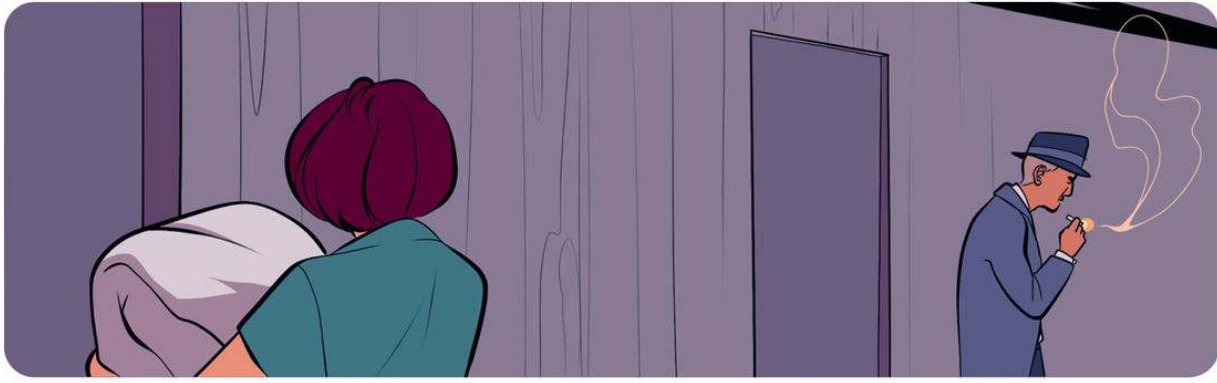


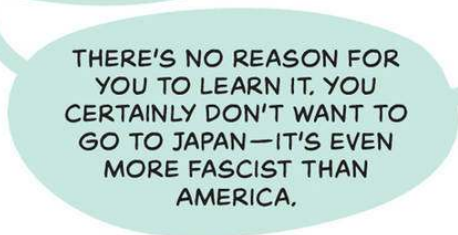
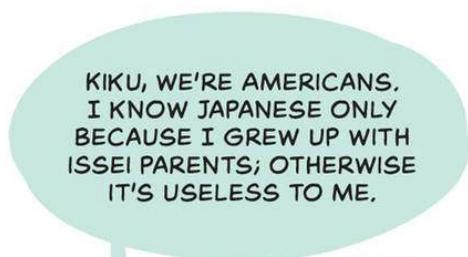
IT WAS ALWAYS FRUSTRATING, BUT I SURPRISED MYSELF WITH HOW QUICKLY I ADAPTED.







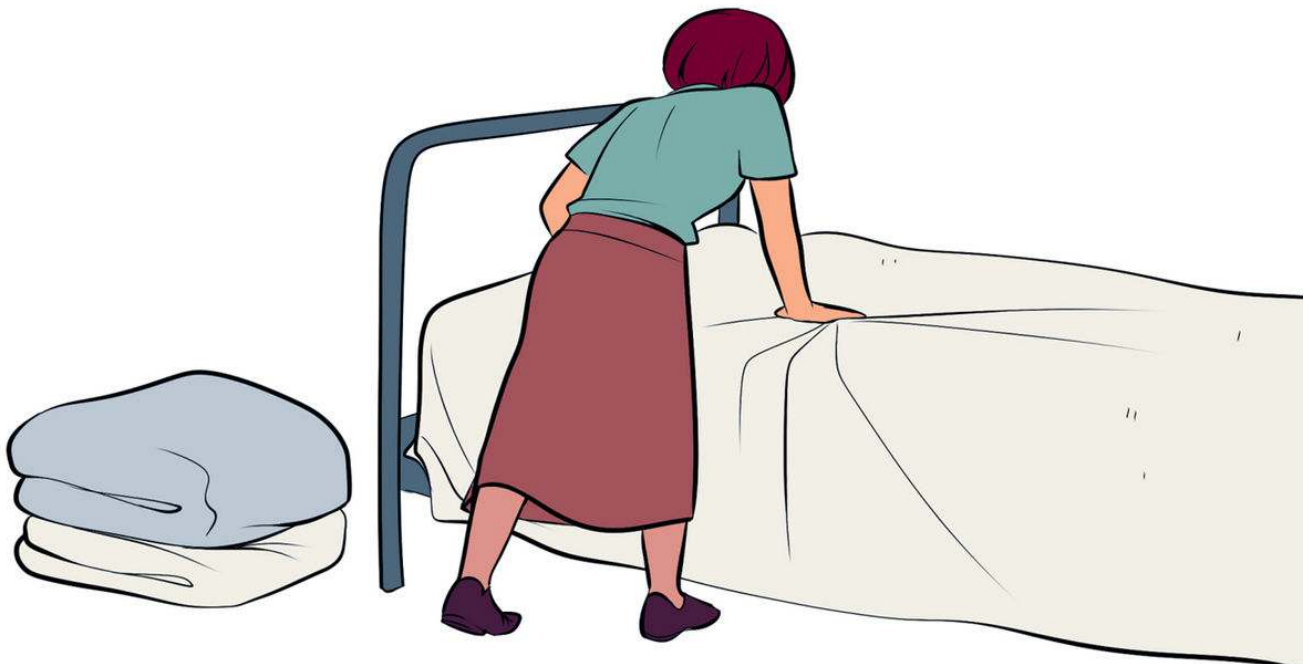


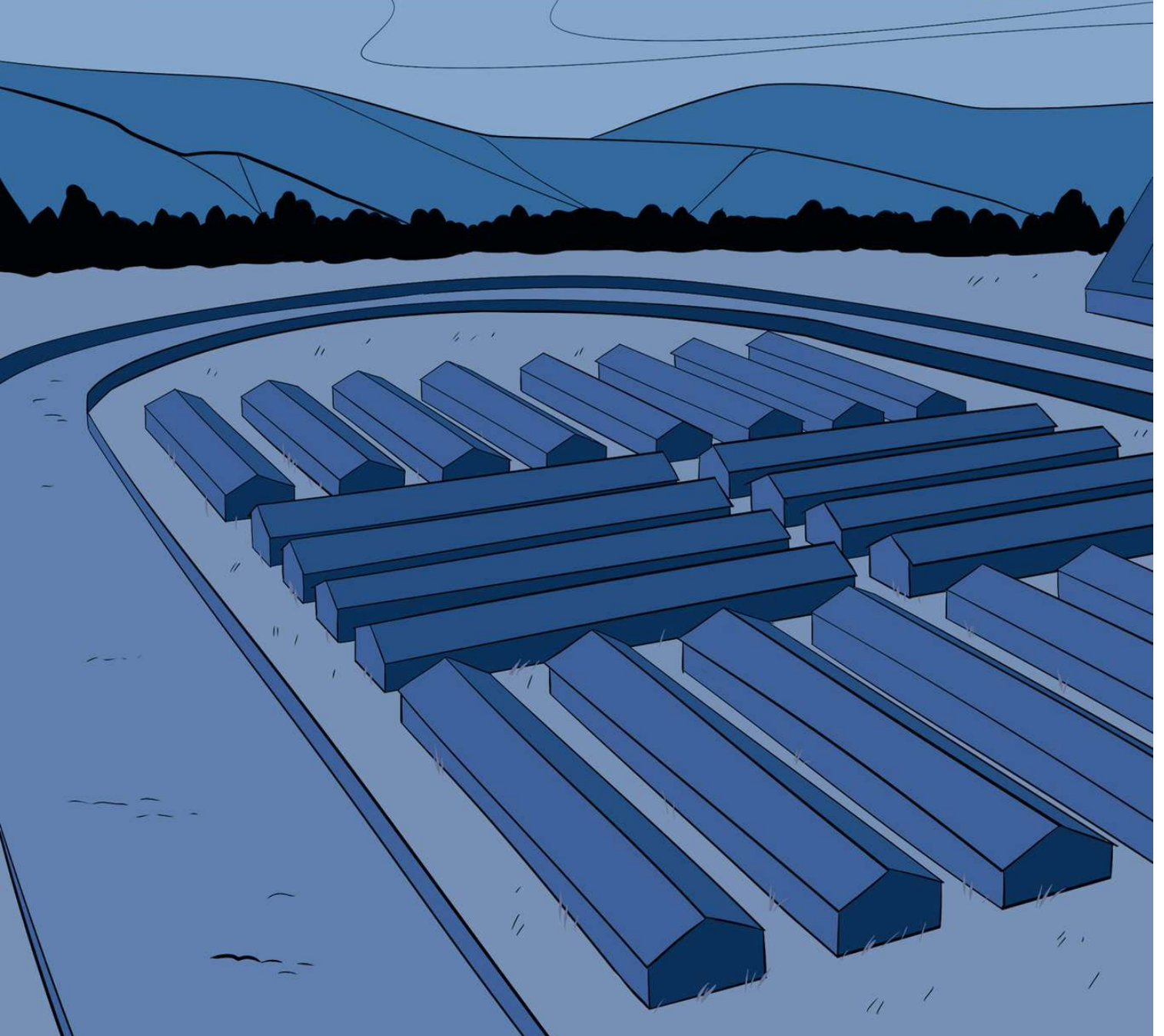


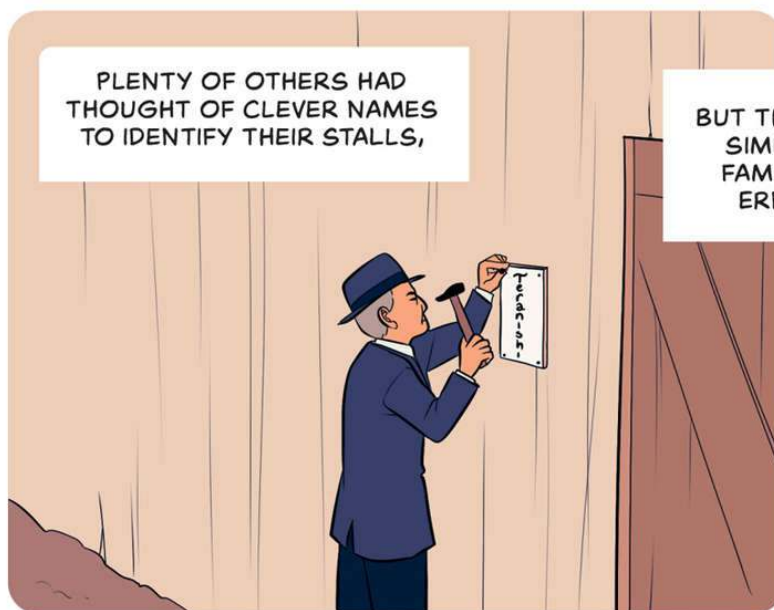
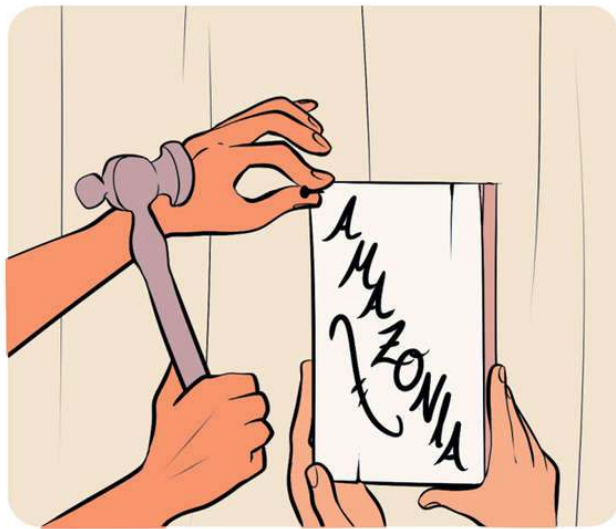
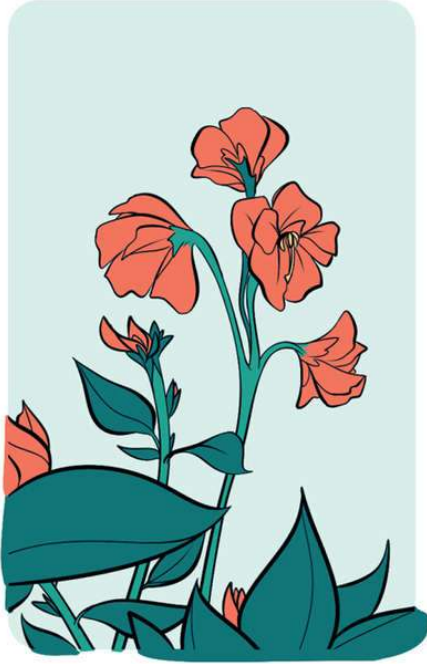


I HADN'T EXPECTED AIKO TO BE SO OPPOSED TO ALL THINGS JAPANESE, BECAUSE SHE WAS SO OUTSPOKEN AGAINST THE PREJUDICES WE WERE FACING FOR OUR HERITAGE, I EXPECTED HER TO BE MORE PASSIONATE ABOUT THAT HERITAGE.

BUT SEEING HOW SHE AND OTHER NISEI SHIED AWAY FROM THE ISSEI'S OUTDATED TRADITIONS MADE ME UNDERSTAND A LITTLE MORE JUST WHY THERE WAS ALMOST NO CONNECTION TO JAPAN LEFT BY THE TIME I WAS BORN.







BUT ALL OUR HARD WORK
COULDN'T COVER UP THE
UGLINESS OF OUR UNJUST
INCARCERATION.



THAT WAS MADE CLEAR
THE FIRST TIME I HAD TO
USE THE LATRINE IN THE
MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.







BUT EVEN AS I FELT HELPLESS,
OTHERS IN CAMP WERE
FIGHTING FOR THEIR RIGHTS.

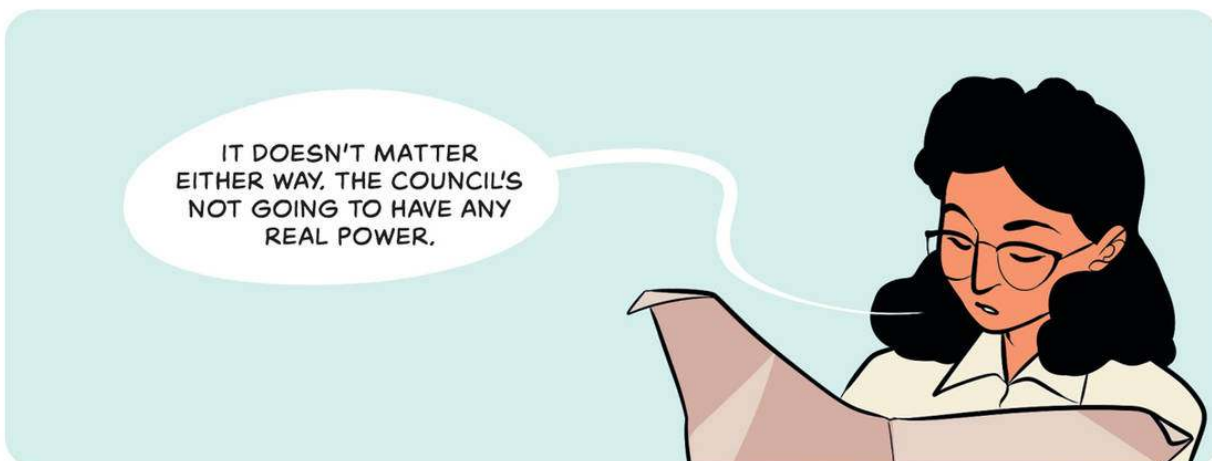
THE ADMINISTRATION GAVE US
ALMOST NO INFORMATION,
SO NIKKEI STARTED A
NEWSPAPER SO WE DIDN'T
HAVE TO RELY ON RUMORS.



ALL THE ARTICLES HAD TO BE
APPROVED BY THE CAUCASIAN
ADMINISTRATION BEFORE IT
COULD BE PRINTED, BUT THE
ILLUSION OF FREE PRESS WAS
STILL HEARTENING.



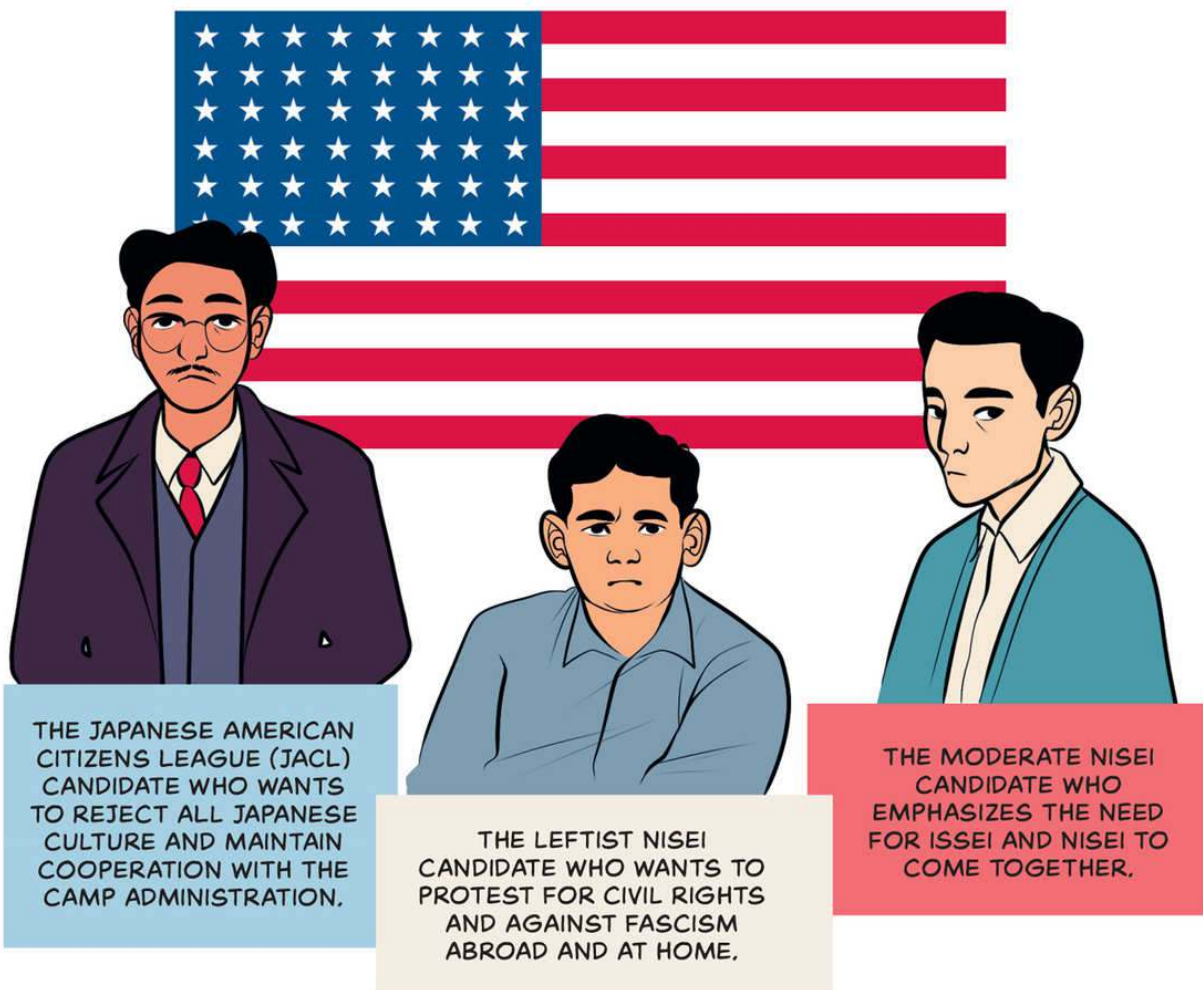
ALTHOUGH LIKE THE TOTALIZER, IT WASN'T WITHOUT ITS CENSORSHIP BY THE AUTHORITIES.





AIKO AND HER FRIENDS HELPED ME UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENT FACTIONS VYING TO BE THE VOICE OF THE ENTIRE JAPANESE AMERICAN POPULATION.



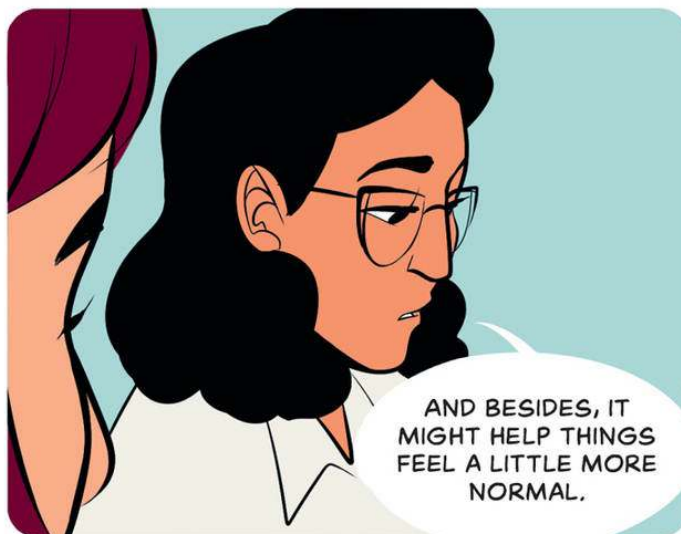


AND THEN THERE WERE THE ISSEI WHO DIDN'T FEEL LIKE ANY OF THESE CANDIDATES REPRESENTED THEM.

ISSEI WEREN'T ALLOWED TO RUN FOR OFFICE, BUT THEY WERE ALLOWED TO VOTE FOR THE FIRST TIME. THEY HAD BEEN DENIED U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND HAD NEVER BEEN ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN ELECTIONS BEFORE.











I WASN'T JUMPING FOR JOY AT
THE PROSPECT OF GOING TO
SCHOOL AGAIN.



BUT I WAS TEMPTED BY THE
POSSIBILITY THAT I WOULD BE IN
CLASS WITH MY GRANDMOTHER.



I HAD NOT YET WORKED UP THE
COURAGE TO SPEAK TO HER.
SOMETHING ALWAYS STOPPED ME
FROM INTRODUCING MYSELF TO
MY OWN FAMILY.



AS IF THEY WOULD
RECOGNIZE ME SOMEHOW,
OR SENSE MY ANXIETY. ALL I
WANTED WAS TO MEET MY
GRANDMOTHER AT LAST.

PERHAPS I HAD BEEN
PULLED BACK IN TIME TO
HELP HER IN SOME WAY.

BUT HOW COULD I HELP
HER WHEN I WAS JUST AS
TRAPPED AS SHE WAS?



I THOUGHT IF I COULD
JUST TALK WITH HER IT
WOULD BECOME CLEAR.



THERE HAD TO BE
SOME PURPOSE TO
MY DISPLACEMENT.

IT COULDN'T ALL
BE AS SENSELESS
AS IT SEEMED.



I DECIDED TO GO TO
CLASS, WHICH WAS TO
TAKE PLACE IN THE
EVENTS HALL.



EVERY GRADE WAS
CRAMMED INTO ONE
LARGE ROOM.



IT WAS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO HEAR THE
TEACHER, AND THE STUDENTS PASSING
THROUGH TO THEIR OWN AREAS WERE A
CONSTANT DISTRACTION.

THERE WERE NO BOOKS
OR PROPER DESKS, NO
SCHOOL SUPPLIES
WHATSOEVER.



AND ERNESTINA
WASN'T IN THE
TENTH-GRADE
CLASS WITH ME.
I SAW HER LATER
WITH THE SENIORS.



PST!



I HAVE SOME
EXTRA PAPER IF
YOU NEED IT!

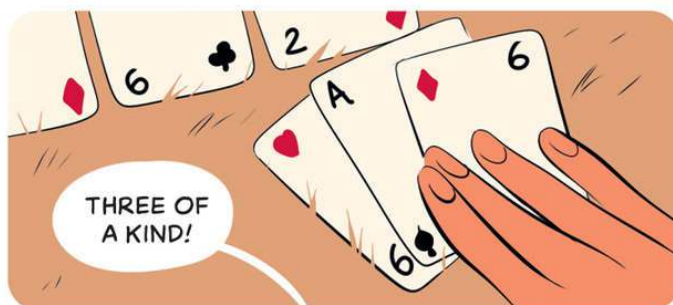


THANKS.

I PROBABLY WOULDN'T
HAVE KEPT GOING IF IT
WEREN'T FOR MAY IDE.



OTHER THAN AIKO, SHE
WAS MY FIRST REAL
FRIEND AT CAMP.



NO, DON'T FEEL BAD—
I'VE BEEN PLAYING
POKER WITH MY UNCLE
SINCE I WAS A KID.



BUT DO
PAY UP,
THOUGH.



OF COURSE GAMBLING
IS *NOT* ALLOWED, SO I
WOULD NEVER.



I CERTAINLY DIDN'T WIN A
BUCK FIFTY OFF JIMMY
HASEGAWA LAST SATURDAY.

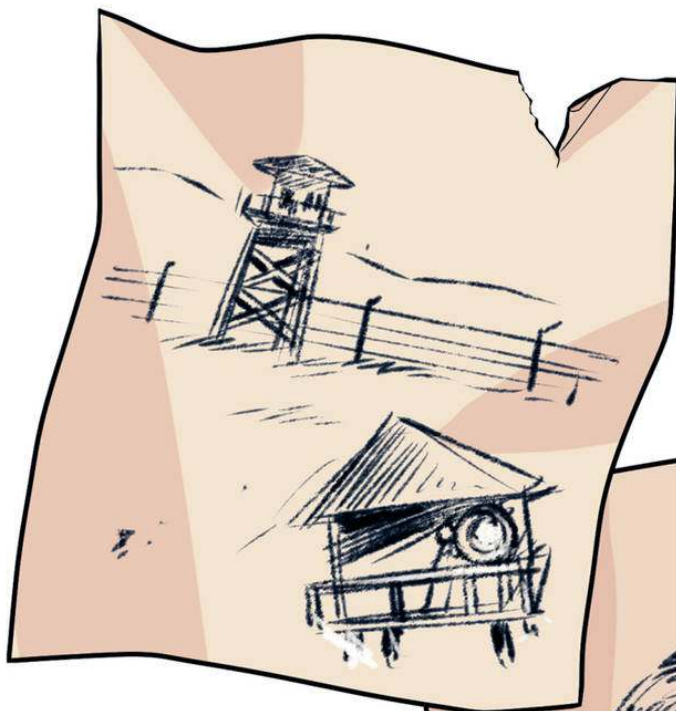
I'D STARTED TAKING
ART CLASSES AS WELL.
MY INSTRUCTOR, MINÉ
OKUBO, ENCOURAGED US
TO SKETCH WHAT WE SAW
AROUND CAMP.



NOBODY WAS ALLOWED TO
HAVE CAMERAS, SO THE
SKETCHES WERE MORE
IMPORTANT THAN JUST
PRACTICE. THEY WERE THE
ONLY RECORDS OF LIFE HERE.

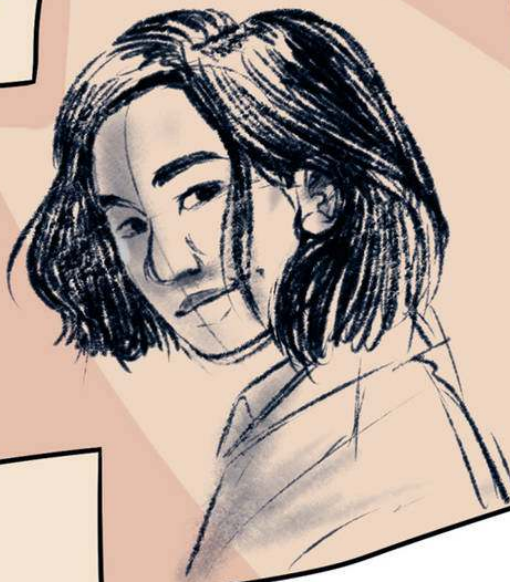


MOSTLY I JUST
DREW MAY,
THOUGH.



WITH CLASSES AND
FRIENDS, I FINALLY
FELL INTO A ROUTINE.

FOR THE FIRST TIME,
I WASN'T LYING IN BED
EACH NIGHT HOPING TO
BE BACK IN MY OWN
HOME WHEN I WOKE UP.



I HADN'T GIVEN UP ON THE
DREAM OF RETURNING,
BUT I WAS FRESHLY
DETERMINED TO MAKE
SOMETHING OF LIFE HERE.

PEOPLE IN CAMP CAME
TOGETHER TO MAKE
INCARCERATION MORE
BEARABLE.

THERE WERE EVEN
DANCES FOR THE HIGH
SCHOOL STUDENTS.



I'D NEVER BEEN TOO
INTERESTED IN DANCES BACK
AT MY OWN SCHOOL, BUT
HERE EVERY LITTLE BIT OF
CELEBRATION WAS WELCOME.





EACH OF US FOUGHT A DAILY
BATTLE TO HOLD CLOSE ALL
THAT WAS DEAR TO US.





5









RUMORS FLEW AFTER THE LATE-NIGHT INSPECTIONS. PEOPLE HAD HEARD ALL KINDS OF THINGS ABOUT THE VARIOUS CAMPS THAT WERE BEING HASTILY BUILT THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.



THERE'S ONE IN COLORADO, THAT'LL BE FREEZING!



I HEARD THERE'S ONE ALL THE WAY IN ARKANSAS. I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE ARKANSAS IS!



THEY SAY THAT THE ONE IN UTAH ISN'T EVEN FINISHED, IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE AWFUL THERE.



IT WAS ONE OF THE FEW TIMES I COULD PREDICT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN. I KNEW WE WOULD BE TAKEN TO UTAH, TO TOPAZ. I'D GROWN UP HEARING THAT NAME.



THE RUMORS INTENSIFIED AND EVERYONE BEGAN PACKING, THOUGH THE ADMINISTRATION HAD YET TO MAKE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS.

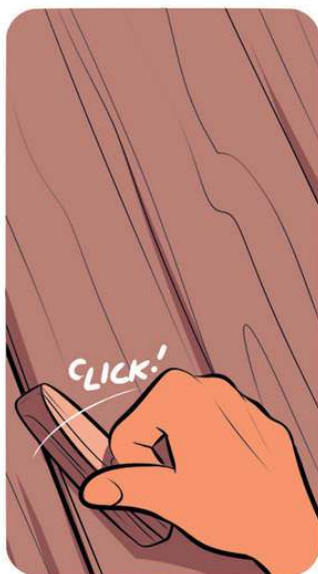


EVERY STEP OF THE INCARCERATION HAD BEEN RUSHED.

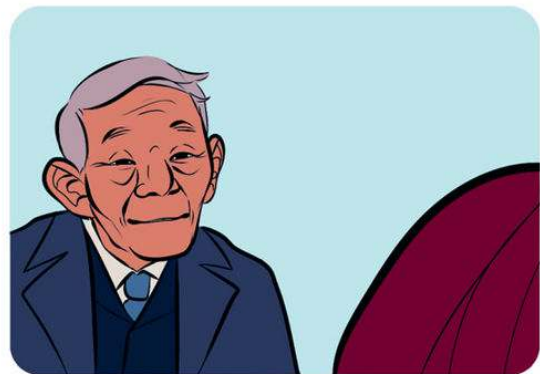


PEOPLE SEEMED TO BE USED TO HAVING THEIR LIVES UPROOTED WITHOUT MUCH NOTICE.





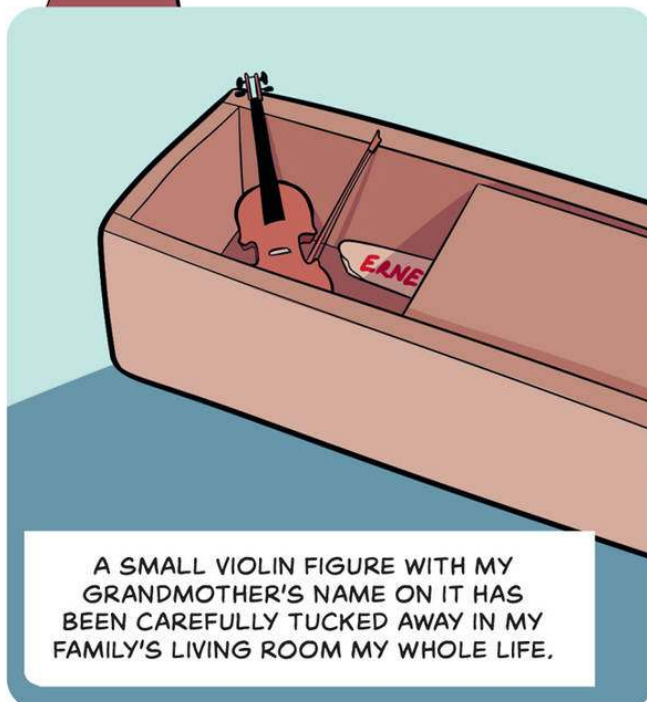




I WAS DEEPLY MOVED BY MR. MATSUZAWA'S GIFT. HE WAS A NEIGHBOR WHO WE HAD NEVER SPOKEN MUCH TO, SO I HAD NEVER EXPECTED IT.



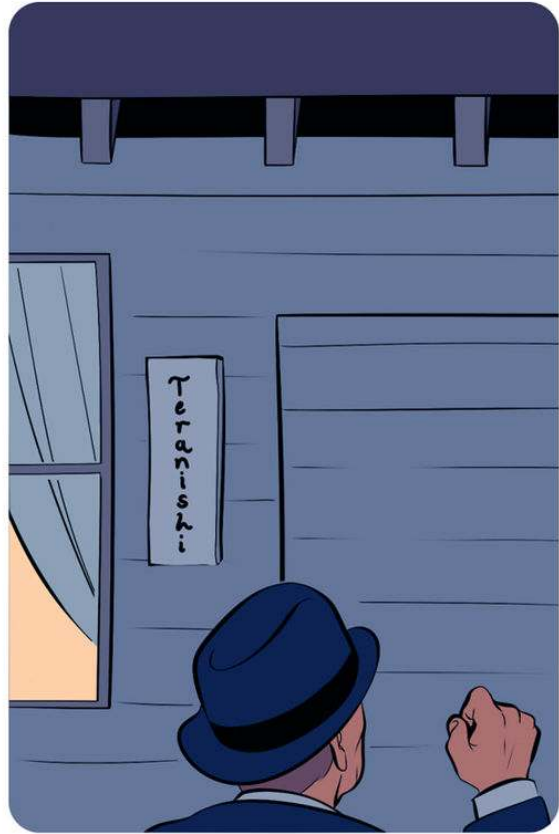
BUT IT MEANT EVEN MORE TO ME SINCE I'D SEEN ONE OF THE CARVINGS IN HIS BOX BEFORE.



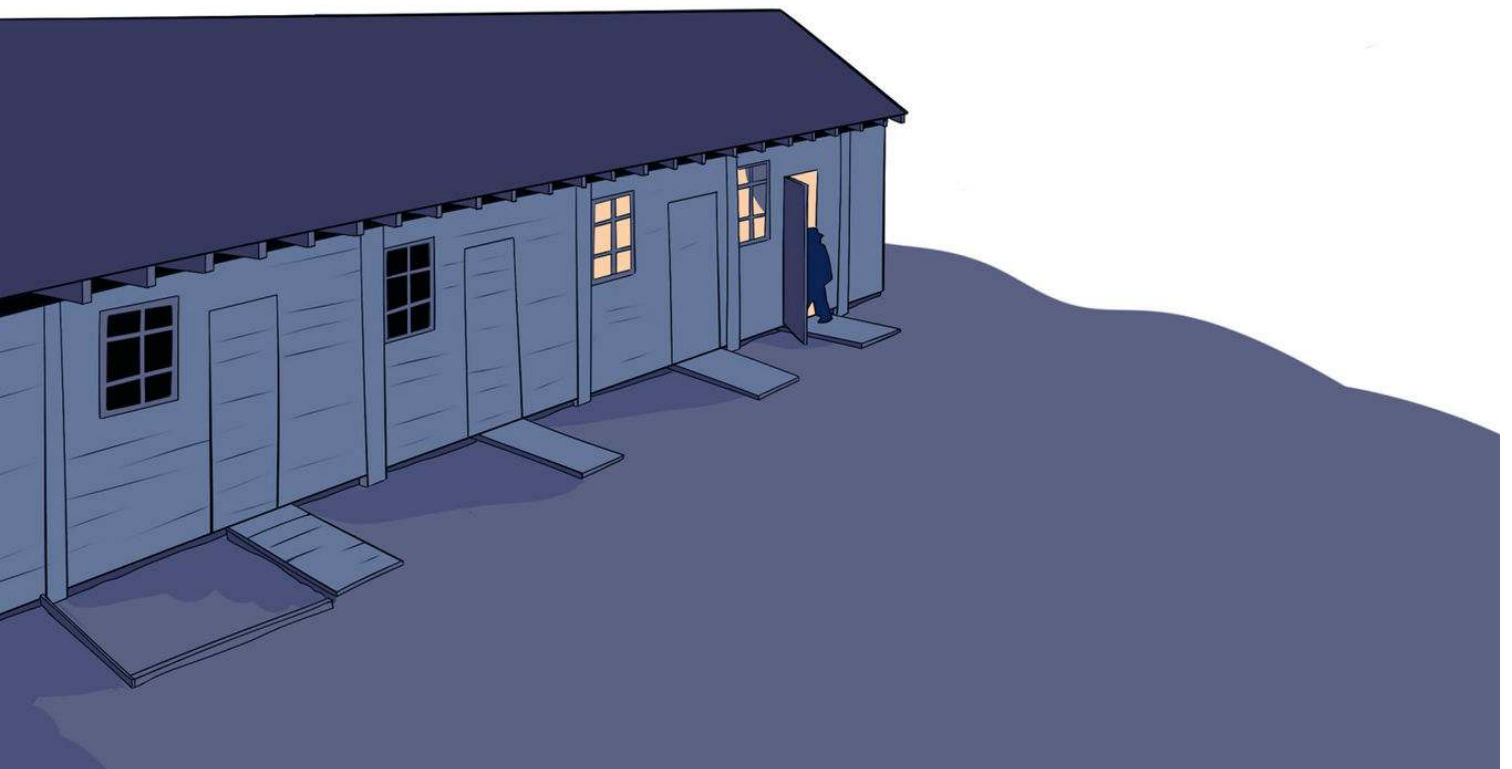
A SMALL VIOLIN FIGURE WITH MY GRANDMOTHER'S NAME ON IT HAS BEEN CAREFULLY TUCKED AWAY IN MY FAMILY'S LIVING ROOM MY WHOLE LIFE.

I FELT AN INTENSE CONNECTION TO MY GRANDMOTHER IN THAT MOMENT. WE WERE LINKED THROUGH THIS COMMUNITY, AND I HELD THE PROOF IN MY HAND.



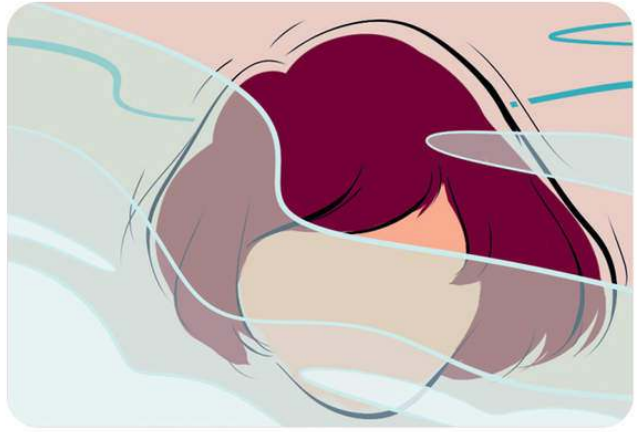


IT WAS A CLOSENESS I HAD NEVER FELT
BEFORE. SO MUCH OF OUR HISTORY HAD
BEEN OBSCURED BY SILENCE.

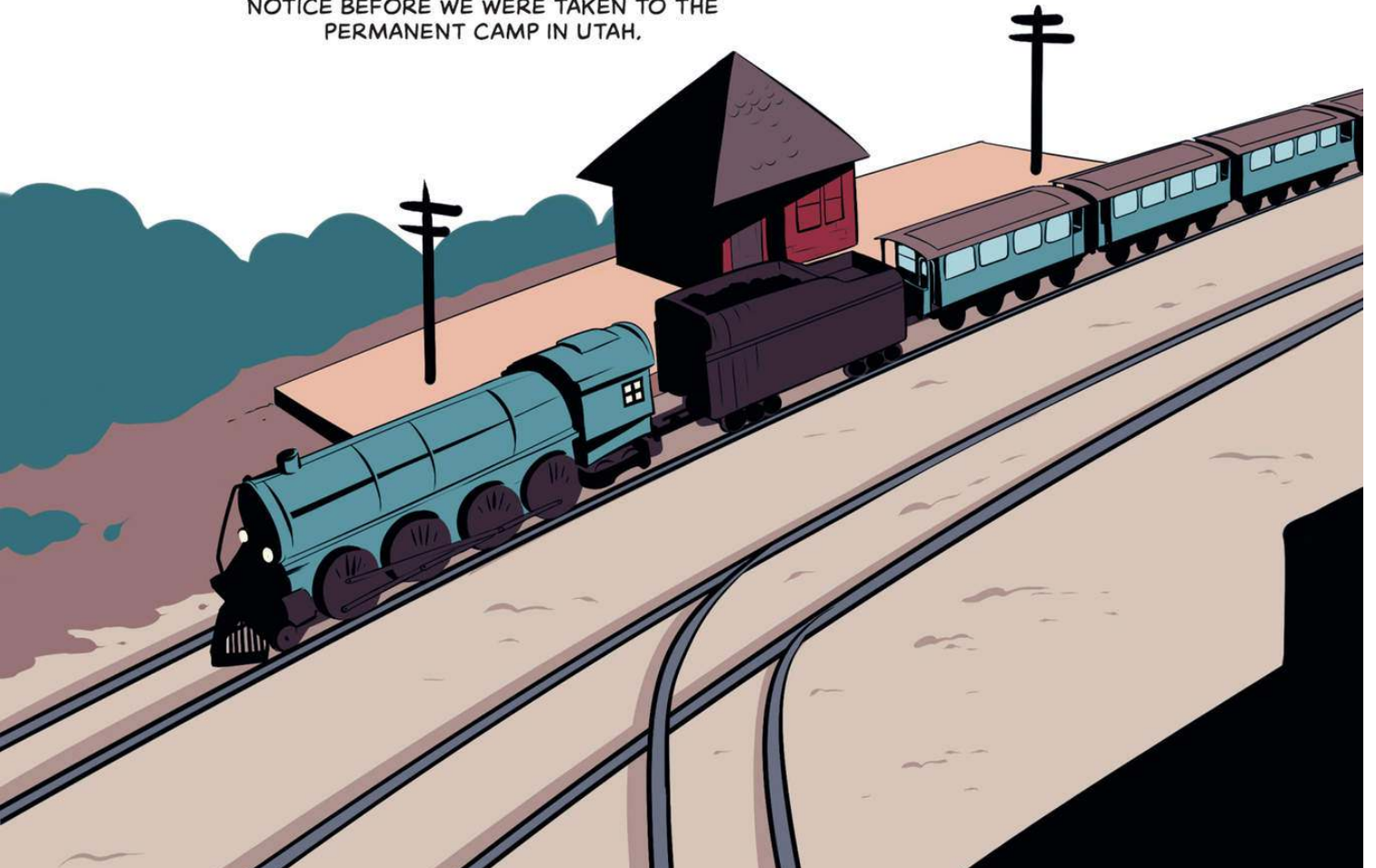




6



WE WERE ONLY GIVEN A COUPLE DAYS'
NOTICE BEFORE WE WERE TAKEN TO THE
PERMANENT CAMP IN UTAH.



I SAID GOODBYE
TO AIKO THE NIGHT
BEFORE I WAS SET TO
LEAVE. I ASKED IF SHE
THOUGHT WE COULD
BE HOUSED TOGETHER
AGAIN AT TOPAZ.



SHE SAID WE COULD
CERTAINLY TRY, BUT WE
BOTH KNEW IT WOULD
BE USELESS.



I WAS ALONE AGAIN.







BUT LIKE WITH EVERYTHING ELSE

I FELT HELPLESS TO RESIST IT.







IT TOOK TWO NIGHTS AND A DAY TO GET FROM CALIFORNIA TO DELTA, UTAH.



THERE WAS MOTION SICKNESS, RESTLESSNESS, CLAUSTROPHOBIA.



CHILDREN CRIED AND ADULTS COMPLAINED, OR ELSE STAYED EERILY QUIET.



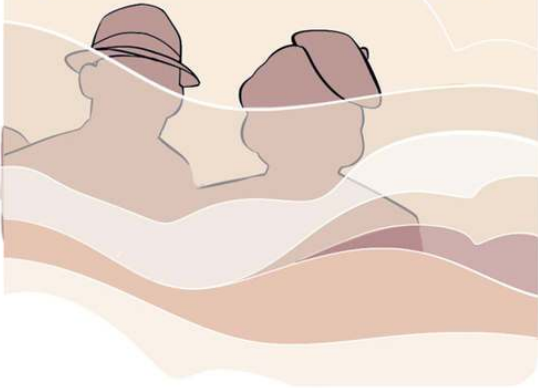
WHEN WE FINALLY REACHED
OUR DESTINATION,



WE EMERGED INTO A LANDSCAPE
LIKE NOTHING WE'D EVER SEEN.



IT WAS WIDE, FLAT, AND
BARREN. THE DUST COVERED
US IMMEDIATELY AND MADE IT
DIFFICULT TO BREATHE.



THE FEW TIMES MY
GREAT-GRANDMOTHER HAD
SPOKEN OF CAMP TO MY MOM,
SHE HAD APPARENTLY ALWAYS
MENTIONED THE DUST.



SO I IGNORED THE
FAINT FLICKER OF
HOPE AS A CLOUD
OF IT WAS BLOWN
OVER US.

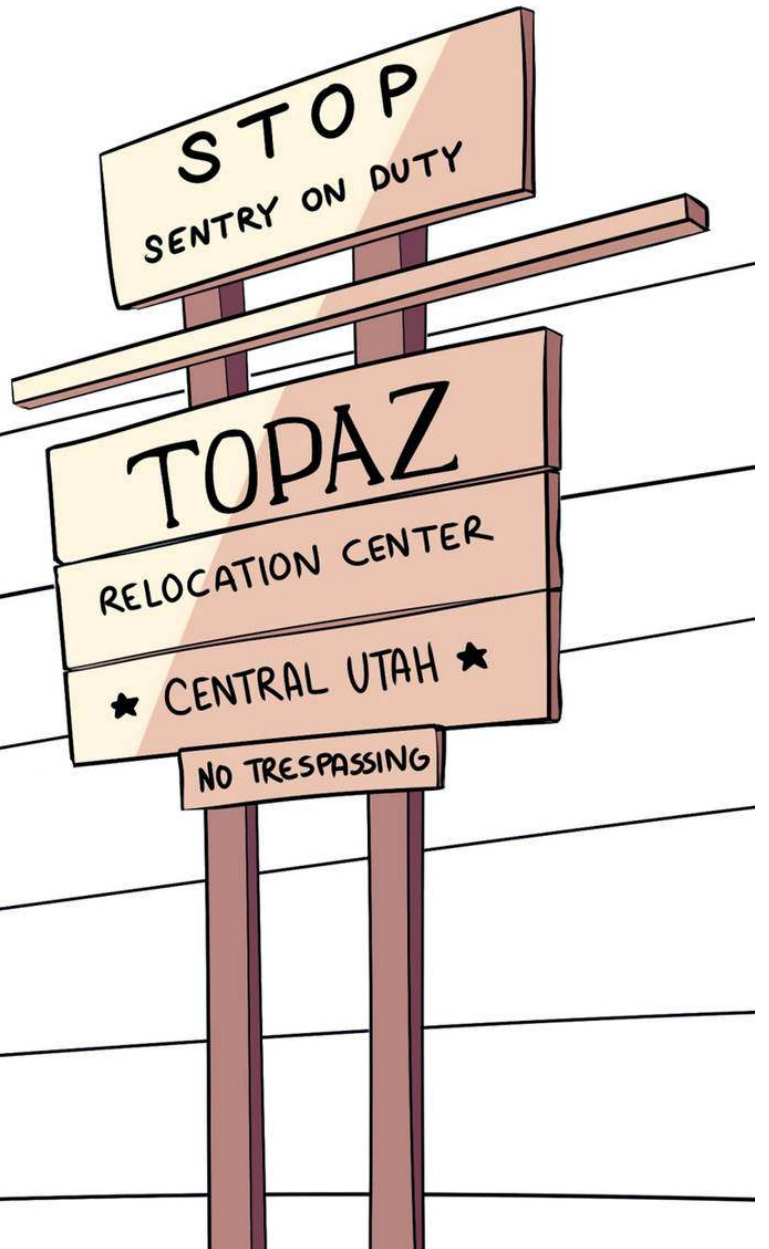


I KNEW I WASN'T
GOING HOME.



THIS WAS MY ONLY HOME NOW.







MORE STANDING
IN LINES.



MORE LISTENING FOR
MY NUMBER INSTEAD
OF MY NAME.



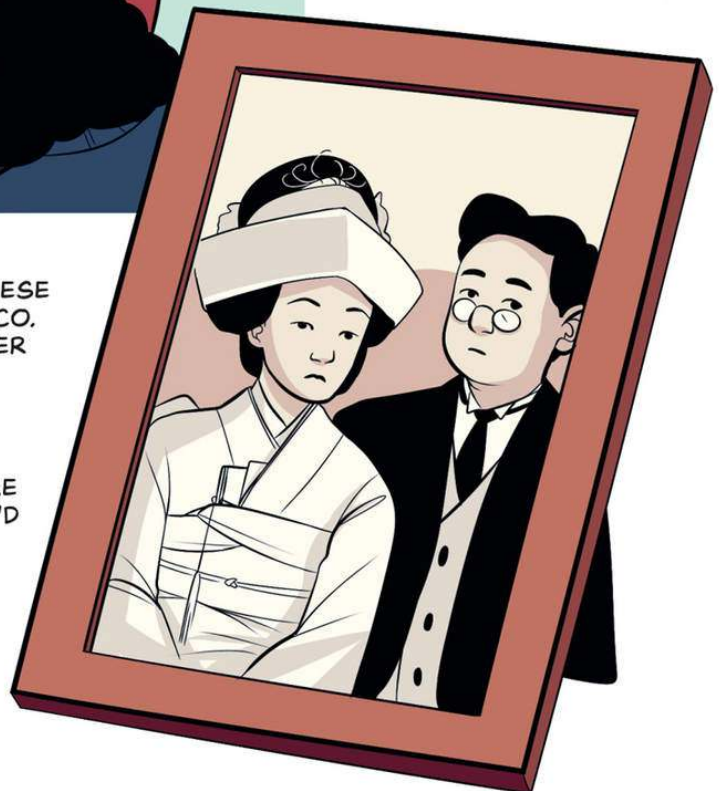
I WASN'T ALLOWED
TO REQUEST A ROOM
WITH AIKO.

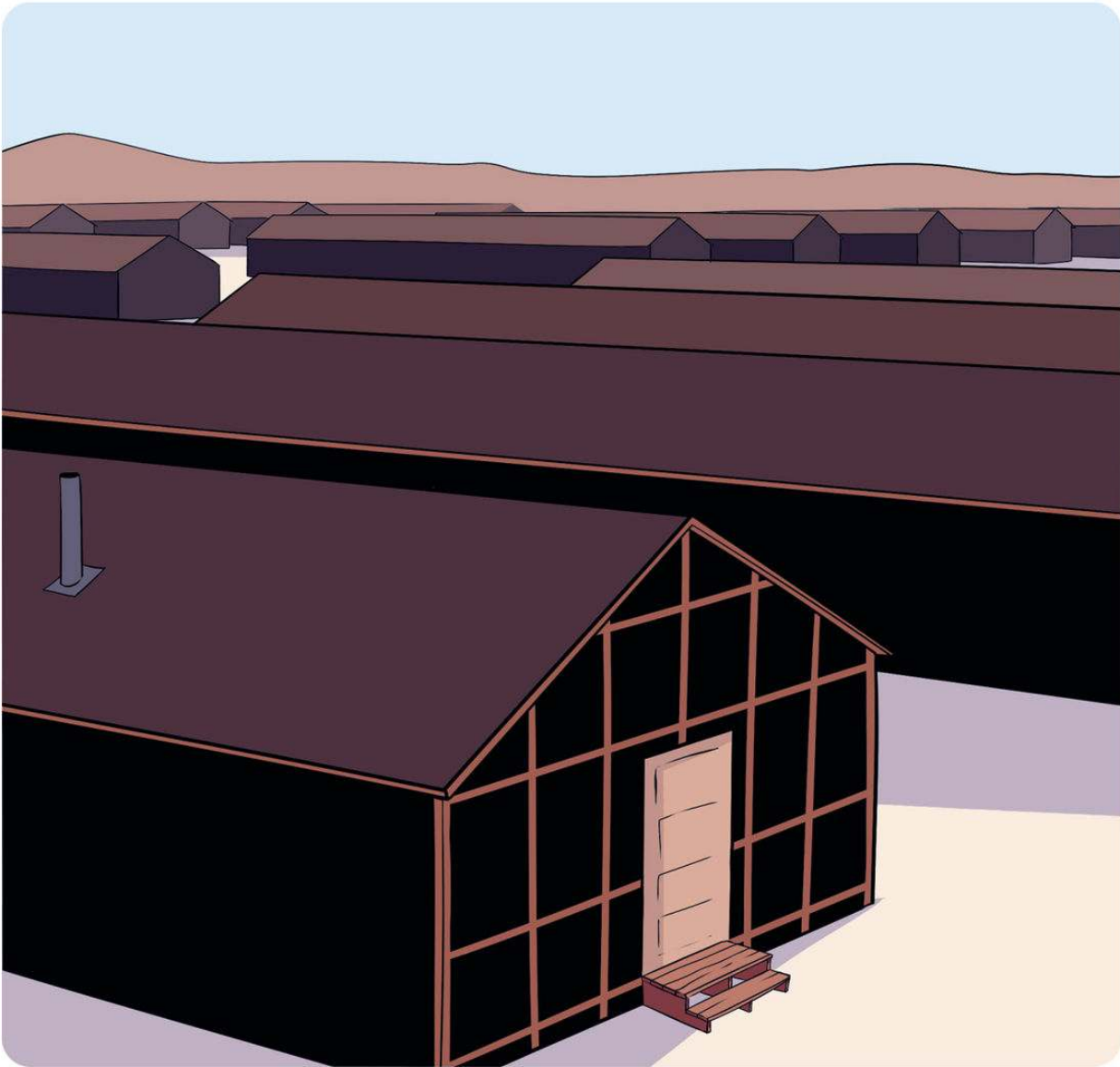




HARUKO'S HUSBAND HAD BEEN A JAPANESE LANGUAGE TEACHER IN SAN FRANCISCO. HE WAS ARRESTED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE BOMBING OF PEARL HARBOR.

THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHERE HE WAS NOW, OR IF THEY'D SEE HIM AGAIN.





SO MUCH
ABOUT TOPAZ WAS
DIFFERENT FROM
TANFORAN.

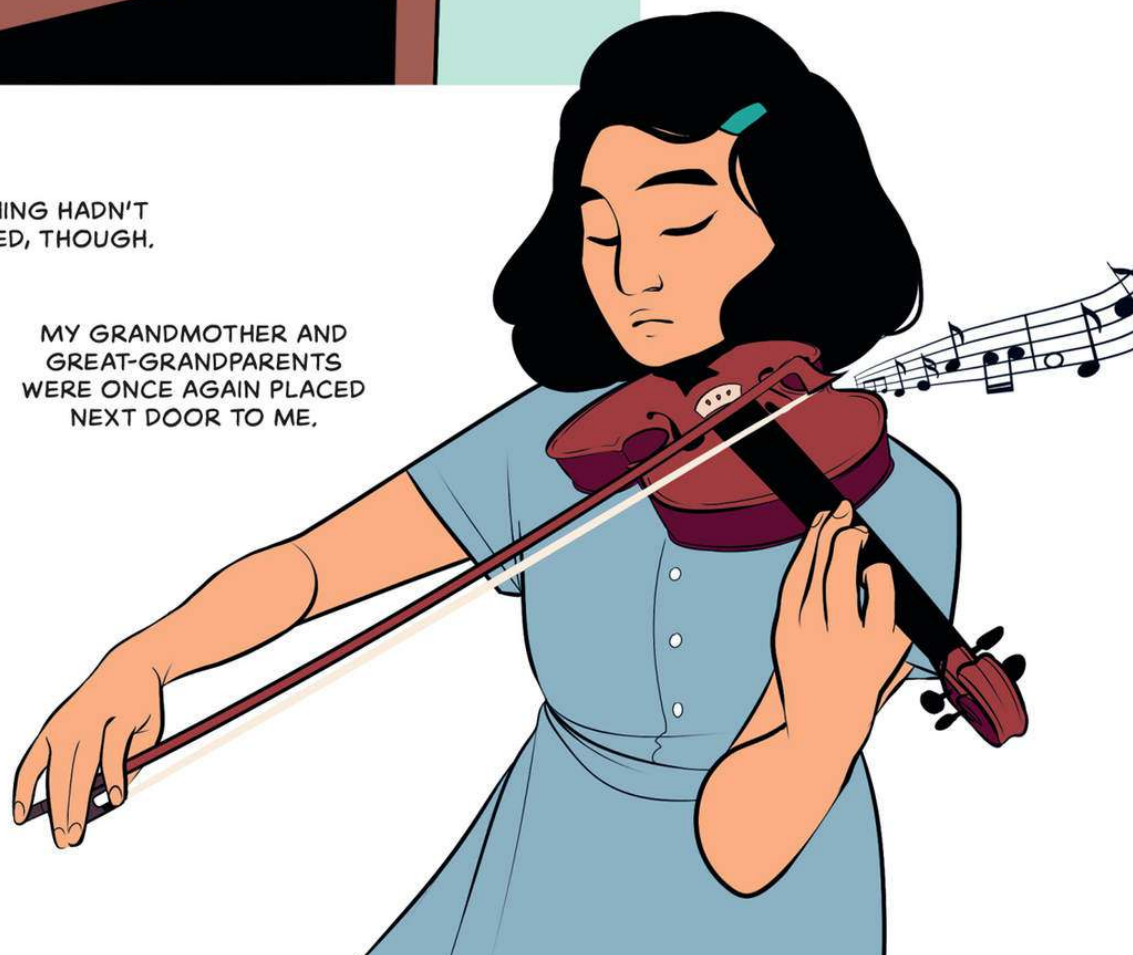


THERE WAS NOTHING
GREEN IN THE UTAH
DESERT, AND WHEN
WE ARRIVED IN FALL
IT WAS ALREADY
FREEZING AT NIGHT.

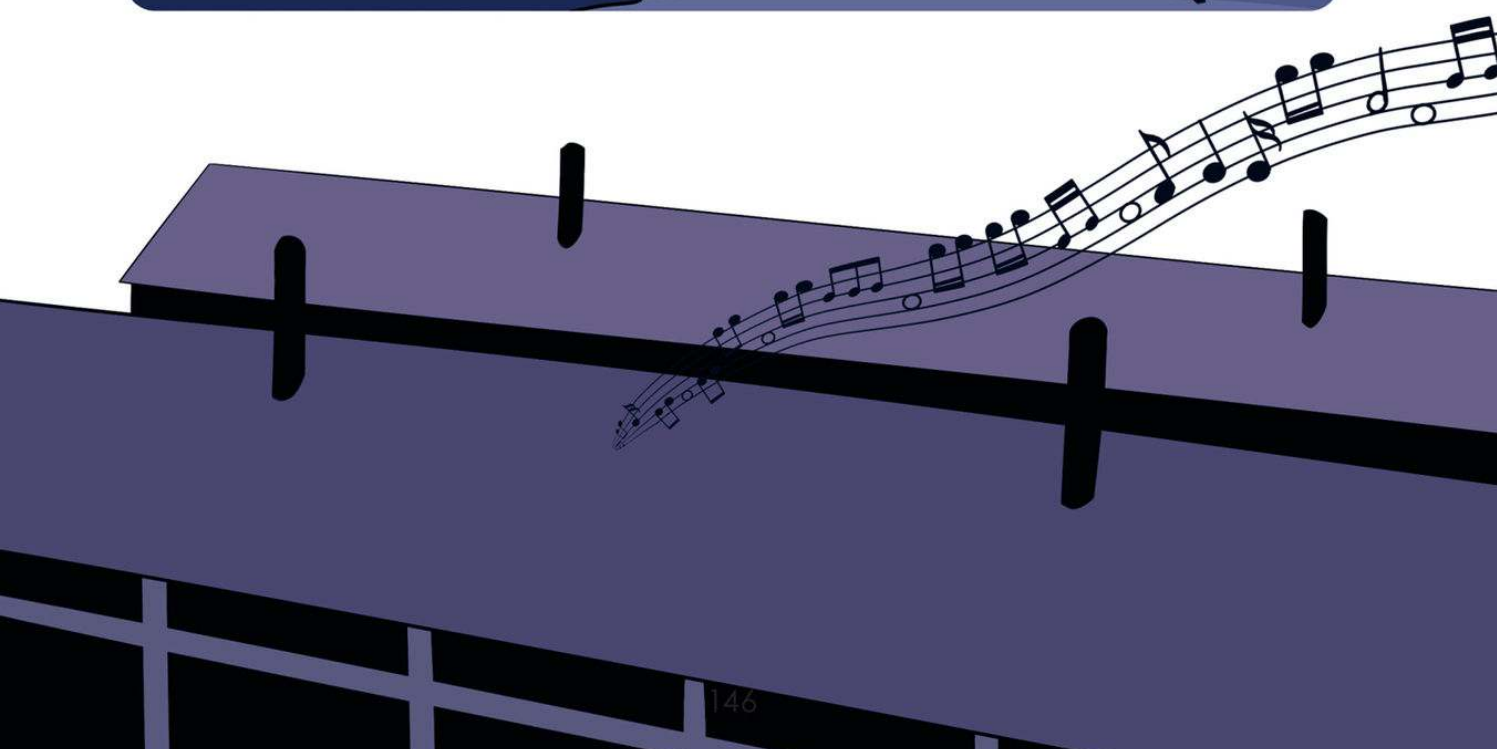
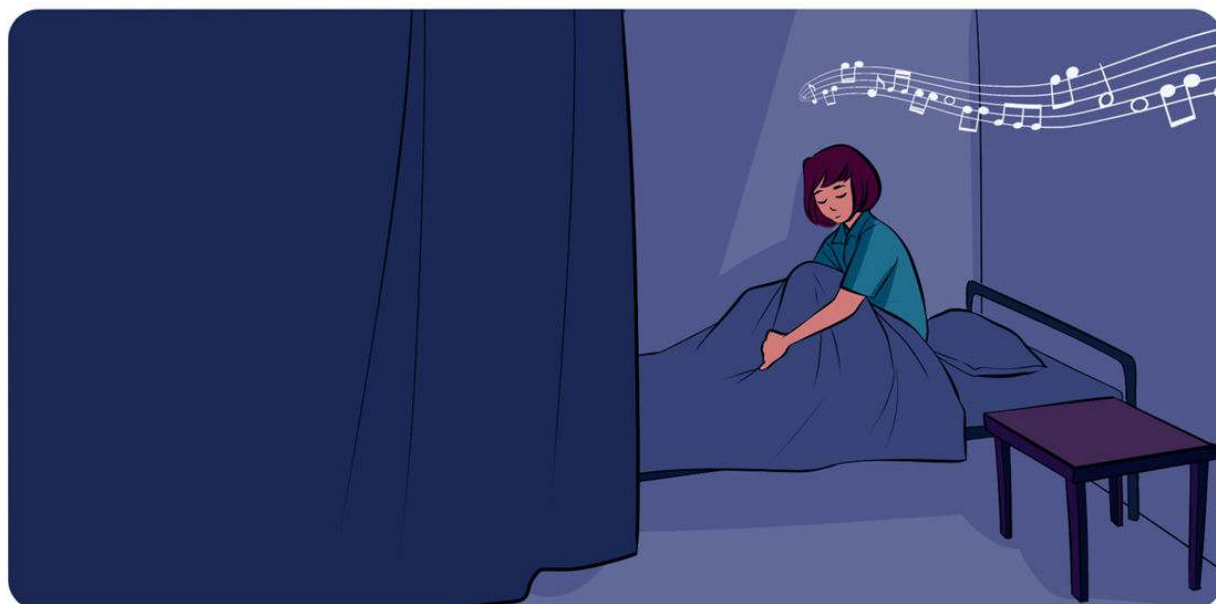


ONE THING HADN'T
CHANGED, THOUGH.

MY GRANDMOTHER AND
GREAT-GRANDPARENTS
WERE ONCE AGAIN PLACED
NEXT DOOR TO ME.



I HEARD ERNESTINA'S DAILY
VIOLIN PRACTICE THROUGH
THE THIN WALLS.





THE FOOD WAS STILL BAD, AND THE WATER, TAKEN FROM WELLS DUG INTO THE ALKALINE SOIL, WAS SALTY AND NEARLY UNDRINKABLE AT FIRST.



THE BUILDINGS HAD NO INSULATION AND IT WAS OBVIOUS THE CAMP WAS HASTILY BUILT, EVEN INCOMPLETE.



THE MILITARY-STYLE BARRACKS WERE IDENTICAL AND SET UP IN NEAT ROWS.



THE HARD-WON PEACE I'D
CARVED OUT AT TANFORAN
WAS GONE COMPLETELY.



NO MORE LATE-NIGHT
CHATS WITH AIKO, AND
NO CLASSES UNTIL THE
ROOMS COULD BE
INSULATED,



I SPENT MY DAYS WITH
MAY AT OUR BARRACKS
OR OCCASIONALLY
BRAVING THE COLD TO
EXPLORE THE STRANGE
LANDSCAPE OUTSIDE.



BUT MY OLD
ANXIETIES
PLAGUED ME.



THERE WAS TOO
MUCH UNCERTAINTY
AND FEAR IN THE AIR.







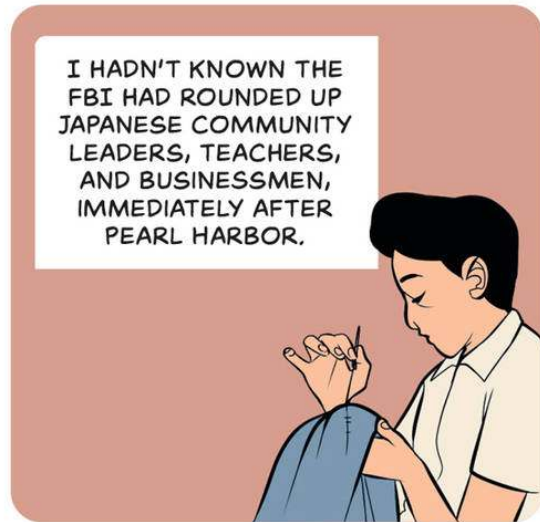




THE BARRACK
WAS IN LOW
SPIRITS.



I DIDN'T FEEL
CLOSE ENOUGH TO
THE YOSHIMOTOS
TO COMFORT THEM
OR OFFER ANY HELP.
I TRIED TO STAY
OUT OF THE WAY.



I HADN'T KNOWN THE
FBI HAD ROUNDED UP
JAPANESE COMMUNITY
LEADERS, TEACHERS,
AND BUSINESSMEN,
IMMEDIATELY AFTER
PEARL HARBOR.



I HAD NO IDEA WHAT HAD BEEN DONE
TO THOSE PRISONERS OR WHETHER
SACHIKO'S DAD WOULD BE OKAY.

BEING FROM THE FUTURE MEANT
VERY LITTLE WHEN MY EDUCATION
ON THE PAST WAS SO LIMITED.





ONCE THE BUILDINGS
HAD BEEN DECENTLY
WINTERIZED, SCHOOL
STARTED UP AGAIN.



SACHIKO AND I WERE
IN THE SAME GRADE,
ALONG WITH MAY.



WE WERE ALL GLAD TO HAVE OUR OWN
CLASSROOM THIS TIME, EVEN IF IT WAS
SPARSE AND STILL PRETTY COLD.

WE MADE FRIENDS WITH
GEORGE KIMURA AND
SEIJI SATO AS WELL.



I HAD A GROUP, ALMOST
LIKE I'D HAD BACK HOME.

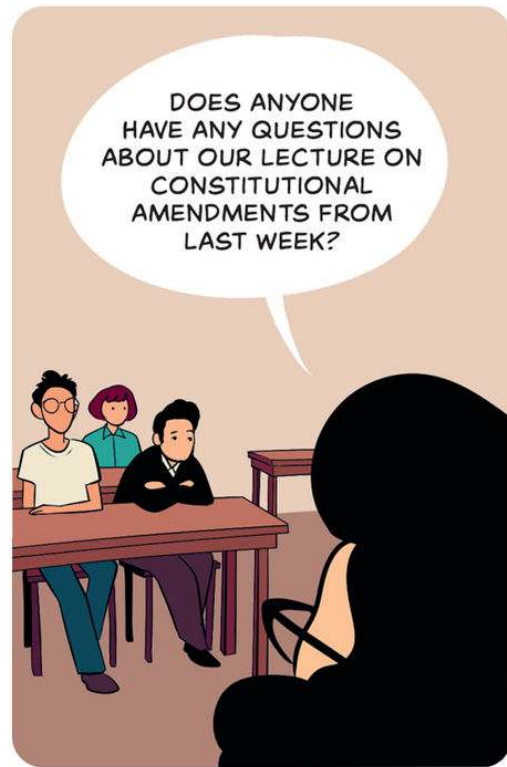


THE DIFFERENCE WAS THAT OUR
CONVERSATIONS TURNED FROM
HIGH SCHOOL GOSSIP TO
CAMP-WIDE RUMORS ABOUT
OUR UNCERTAIN FUTURES.



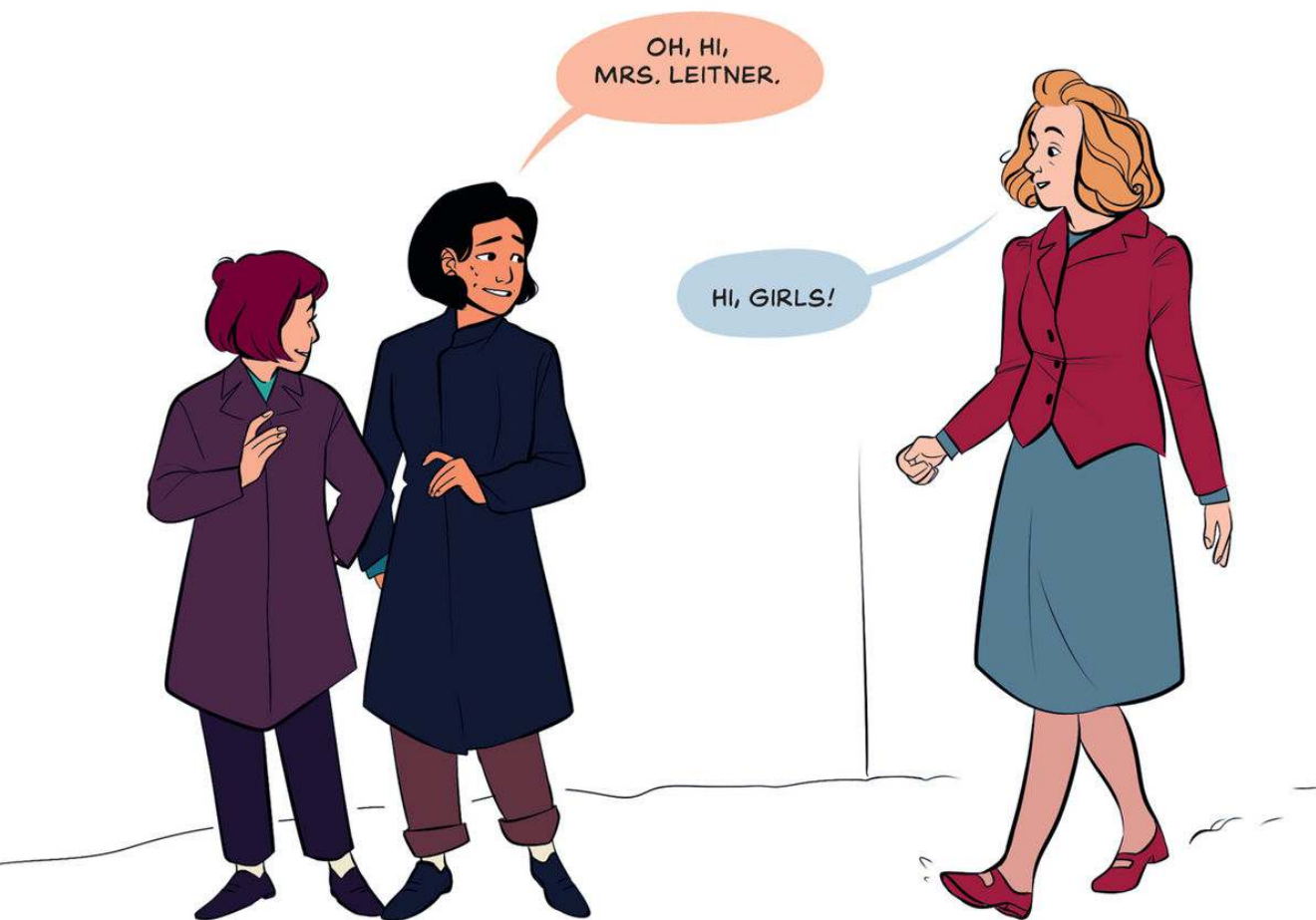
ALL RIGHT,
EVERYBODY,
QUIET DOWN
PLEASE.





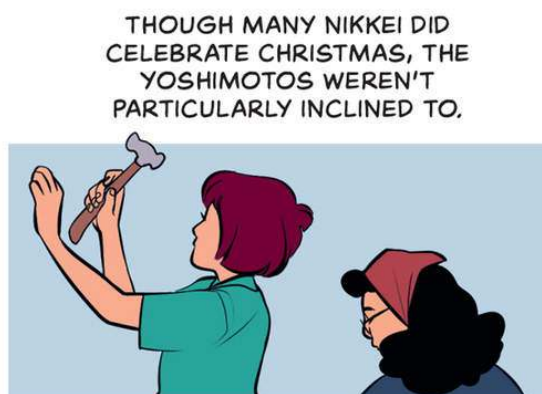
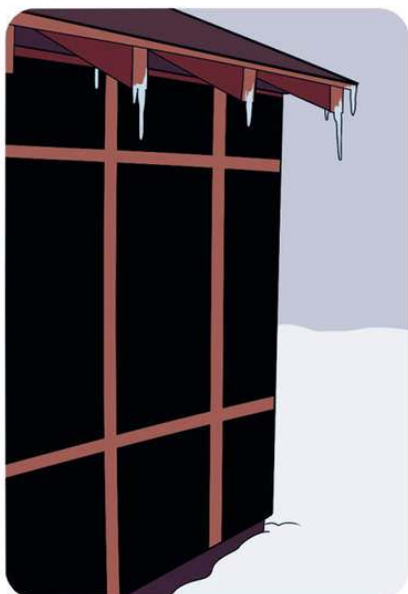












THEY WERE BUDDHISTS, AND BESIDES, THEY WEREN'T IN A CELEBRATORY MOOD.





THEY WERE
ALLOWED TO COME
AND BRING GIFTS
TO PEOPLE THEY'D
CONNECTED WITH
THROUGH THEIR
CHURCH.



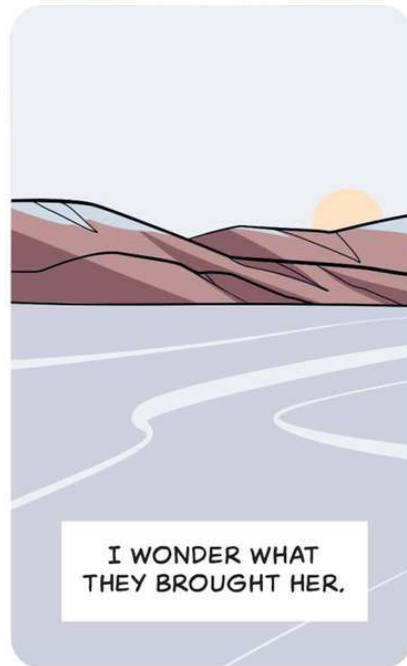
MY GRANDMOTHER
WAS ONE OF THE
BENEFICIARIES.



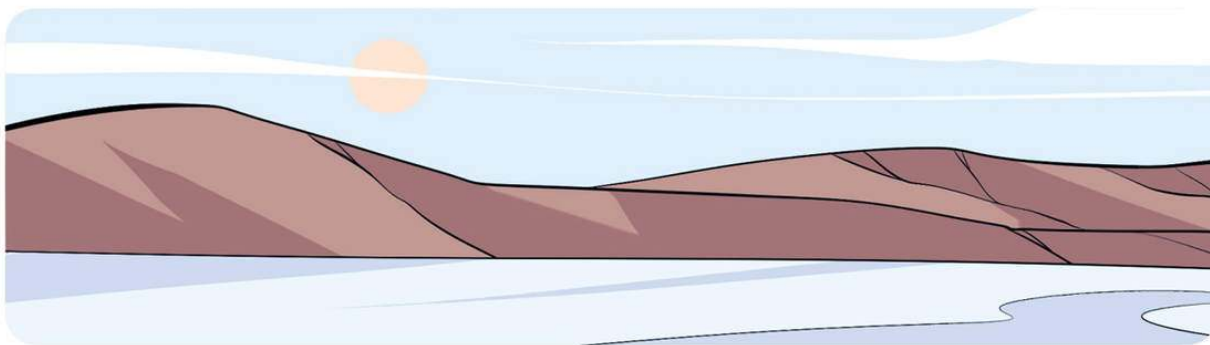
I REMEMBER MY MOM
SAYING ERNESTINA HAD
ALWAYS SPOKEN VERY
FONDLY OF THE QUAKERS'
GENEROSITY.



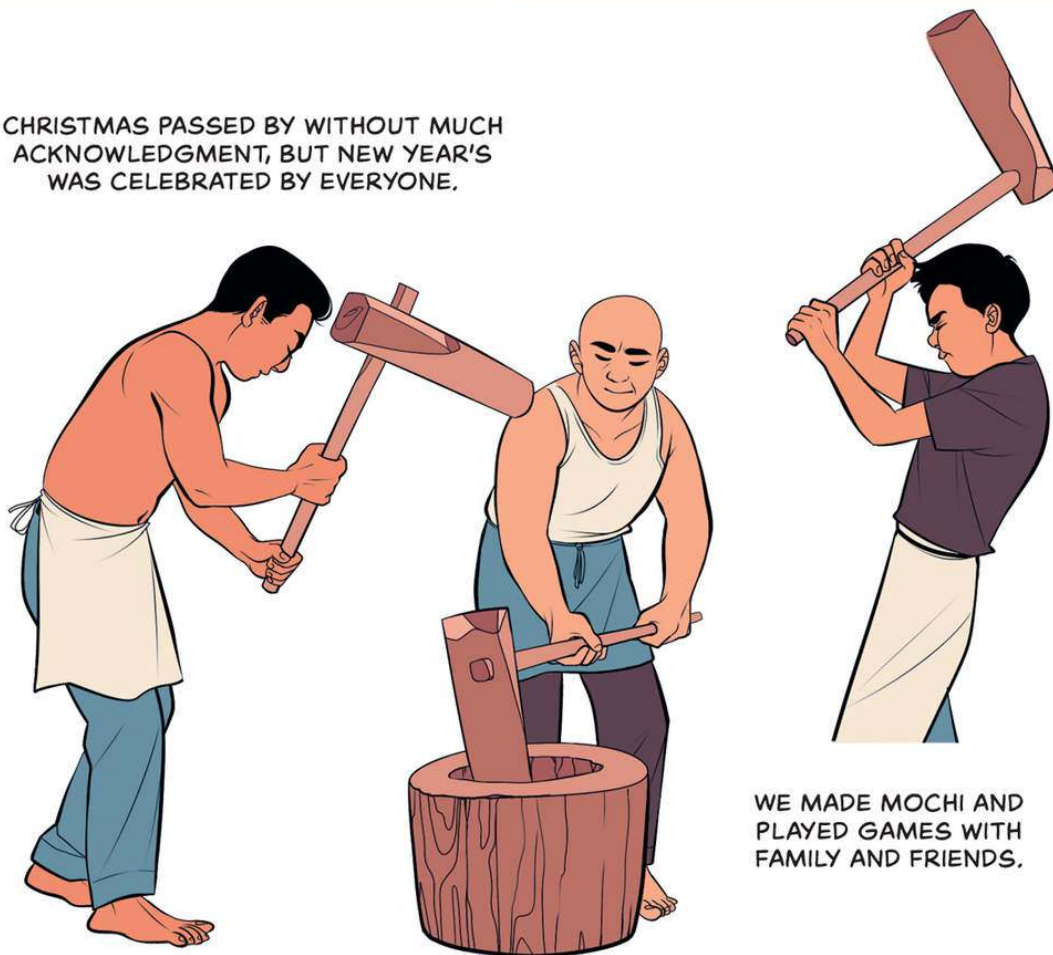
IT WAS GOOD TO SEE
HER SMILE. I WASN'T
SURE I HAD SEEN
THAT BEFORE.



I WONDER WHAT
THEY BROUGHT HER.



CHRISTMAS PASSED BY WITHOUT MUCH
ACKNOWLEDGMENT, BUT NEW YEAR'S
WAS CELEBRATED BY EVERYONE.



WE MADE MOCHI AND
PLAYED GAMES WITH
FAMILY AND FRIENDS.



IT WAS WONDERFUL, BUT IT
ALSO MADE ME HOMESICK.





BACK HOME, WE ALWAYS HAD
A BIG FAMILY PARTY ON
NEW YEAR'S DAY.

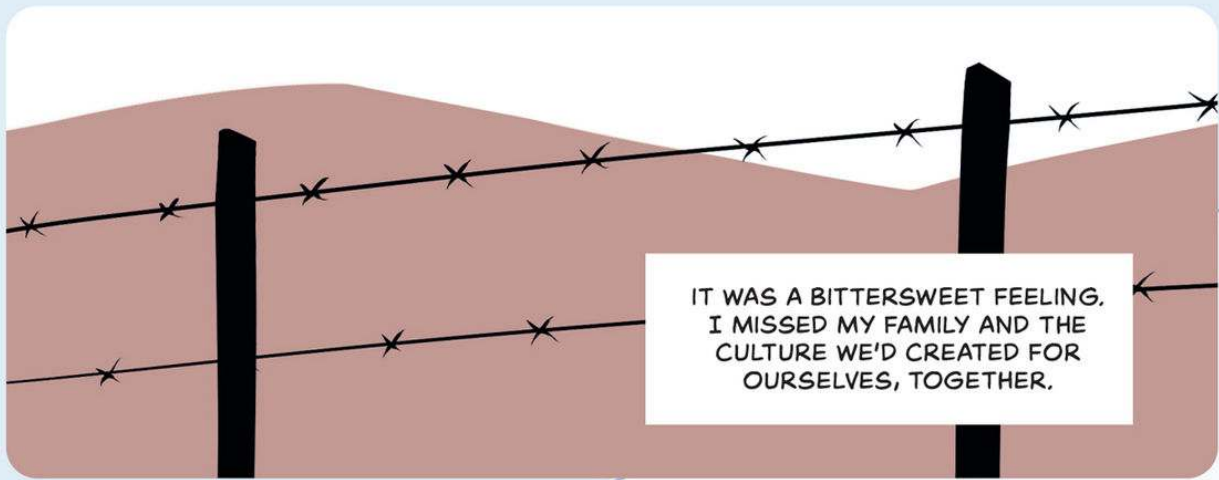
WE MADE TEMPURA, SUKIYAKI,
GYOZA, AND ALL KINDS OF
OTHER JAPANESE FOODS.

WE DIDN'T DO
TRADITIONAL JAPANESE
NEW YEAR'S THINGS,
BUT WE CELEBRATED A
VARIATION OF IT THAT
WAS MORE MEANINGFUL
TO ME NOW THAN EVER.



THOUGH WE FELT SO FAR FROM JAPANESE CULTURE,
THERE WERE SOME THINGS WE HAD LEFT. THEY
WERE ALTERED, BUT THEY WERE OURS, AND
INCARCERATION COULDN'T TAKE THEM AWAY.





IT WAS A BITTERSWEET FEELING.
I MISSED MY FAMILY AND THE
CULTURE WE'D CREATED FOR
OURSELVES, TOGETHER.

"A GENERAL
REGISTRATION AT
RELOCATION CENTERS OF
ALL EVACUEES WHO ARE
SEVENTEEN OR MORE
YEARS OF AGE WILL
START NEXT WEEK,

FOLLOWING THE
ANNOUNCEMENT LAST
THURSDAY THAT A COMBAT
UNIT OF AMERICAN CITIZENS
OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY WILL
BE FORMED FOR ACTIVE
SERVICE.



IT WAS REVEALED THAT THE
GOVERNMENT, SEEKING A
FEASIBLE SOLUTION TO THE
ACUTE WARTIME PROBLEM OF
THE JAPANESE AMERICAN
PEOPLE,



HAD DECIDED
TO DETERMINE
PRINCIPALLY BY
MEANS OF
QUESTIONNAIRES,
THE EXTENT OF THE
LOYALTY HELD BY
THE EVACUEES
TOWARDS THE
UNITED STATES."

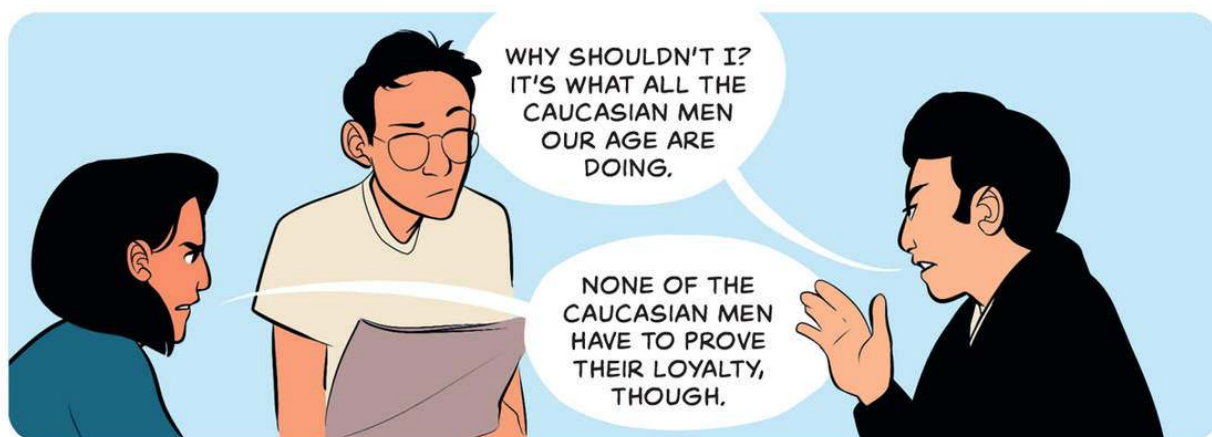


SO THEY LOCK US UP,
AND NOW THEY EXPECT
US TO VOLUNTEER TO
GET SHOT IN THE
PACIFIC?



ONLY IF YOU
CAN PROVE YOU'RE
LOYAL ENOUGH TO
GET SHOT.







THE LOYALTY QUESTIONNAIRES DIDN'T END WITH NISEI MEN ABLE TO ENLIST. SOON THEY WERE BEING ADMINISTERED TO EVERYONE AT CAMP WHO WAS SEVENTEEN OR OLDER.



THE CONCEPT OF A LOYALTY QUESTIONNAIRE WAS CONTROVERSIAL ENOUGH AROUND CAMP, BUT THE BIGGEST PROBLEM WAS WITH QUESTIONS 27 AND 28.

THESE TWO WERE THE SUBJECT OF COUNTLESS DEBATES, ARGUMENTS, AND SLEEPLESS NIGHTS AT TOPAZ.



27. Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?



MANY NISEI READING QUESTION 27 FELT THE SAME AS GEORGE AND MAY. THEY WERE UNWILLING TO ENLIST TO THE ARMY OF A GOVERNMENT THAT HAD UNJUSTLY IMPRISONED THEM.



28. Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any and all attacks by foreign and domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, or any other foreign government, power, or organization?



QUESTION 28 CAUSED DIFFERENT ANXIETIES. THE WORDING WAS SUCH THAT IT SEEMED TO IMPLY THAT NISEI HAD EVER *HAD* LOYALTY TO THE JAPANESE EMPIRE, WHICH THEY HAD NOT. MANY FEARED IT WAS A TRICK TO GET THEM TO ADMIT THEY HAD ONCE BEEN DISLOYAL.



FOR ISSEI, WHO HAD BEEN DENIED CITIZENSHIP BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, THEY WORRIED THEY WOULD BECOME STATELESS IF THEY RENOUNCED THEIR JAPANESE CITIZENSHIP. THEY WOULD HAVE NO LEGAL STATUS IN THE WORLD.



THE QUESTIONNAIRE CAUSED A DEEP RIFT IN CAMP. GOSSIP SPREAD ABOUT THE MEN WHO HAD ALREADY ANSWERED NO TO BOTH QUESTIONS.



I HAD HEARD ABOUT THESE "NO-NO BOYS" FROM MY MOM, BUT I'D NEVER KNOWN THE FULL CONTEXT OF THEIR DECISION. I'M NOT SURE MOM HAD EITHER.



I'D GROWN UP WITH THE IDEA THAT THE NO-NO BOYS WERE ALL TROUBLEMAKERS, YOUNG AND REBELLIOUS, IRRESPONSIBLE.



BUT THAT JUST WASN'T TRUE.



I CAME TO DEEPLY RESPECT THEIR RESISTANCE AND REFUSAL TO JUMP THROUGH THE HOOPS THEIR COUNTRY WAS DEMANDING OF THEM.

BUT I ALSO UNDERSTOOD THE
REASON PEOPLE RESPONDED
YES TO QUESTIONS 27 AND 28.

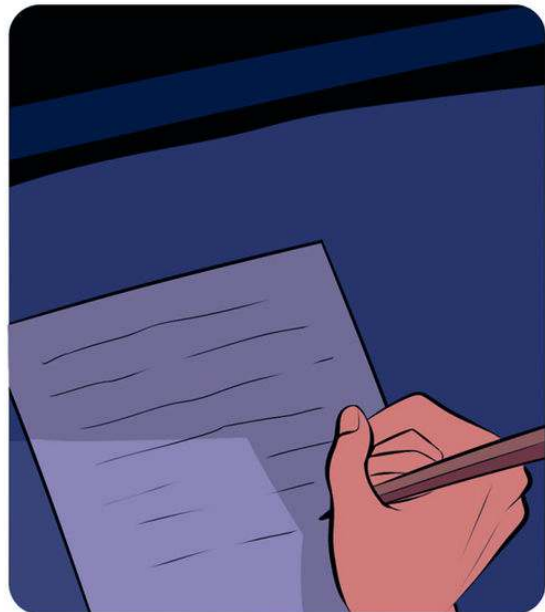


NOBODY KNEW THEN WHAT
THE CONSEQUENCES OF
RESISTANCE COULD BE.
THERE WAS FEAR AND AN
EVER-PRESENT DANGER.

AND I STILL DIDN'T KNOW HOW I WOULD
RESPOND. I HAD TURNED SEVENTEEN JUST AS
THE QUESTIONNAIRE WAS BEING ROLLED OUT,
SO I WAS PRESENTED WITH A CHOICE AS WELL.

I KNEW THE NO-NO BOYS WOULD BE
TAKEN TO A HIGH-SECURITY CAMP, AND
THE FEAR OF THAT WRESTLED WITH MY
DESIRE TO RESIST OUR INJUSTICE.

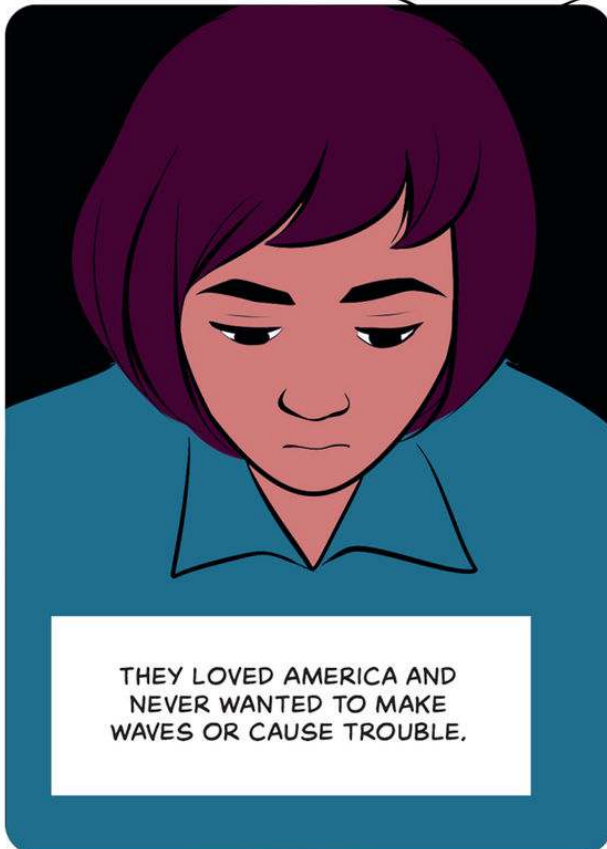




I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND THE WORDS, BUT THE TONE WAS HEATED.



I CAN'T KNOW WHAT MY GREAT-GRANDPARENTS RESPONDED, BUT I'M PRETTY SURE THEY WOULD HAVE ANSWERED YES.

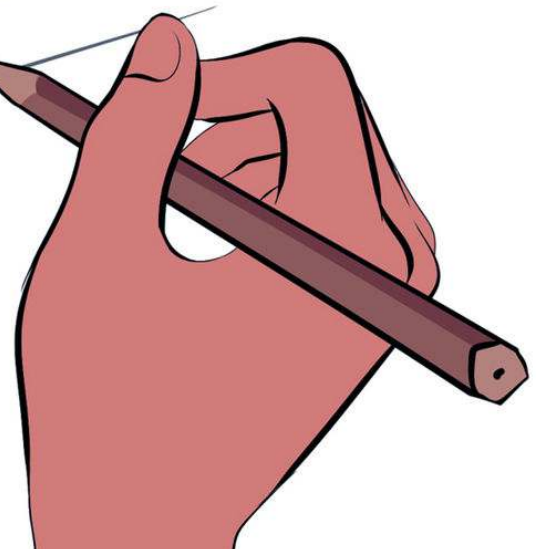


THEY LOVED AMERICA AND NEVER WANTED TO MAKE WAVES OR CAUSE TROUBLE.

AND I'M SURE, LIKE ME, THEY WERE SCARED.

27. Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?

yes



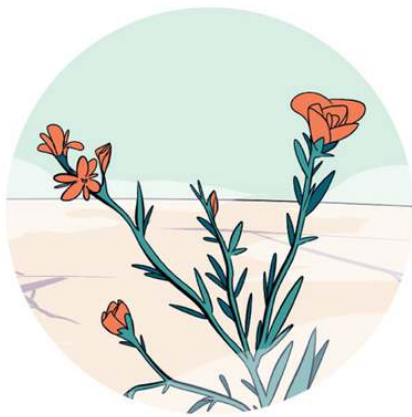


I DON'T BLAME THEM.



SO WHY DO I STILL FEEL GUILTY?

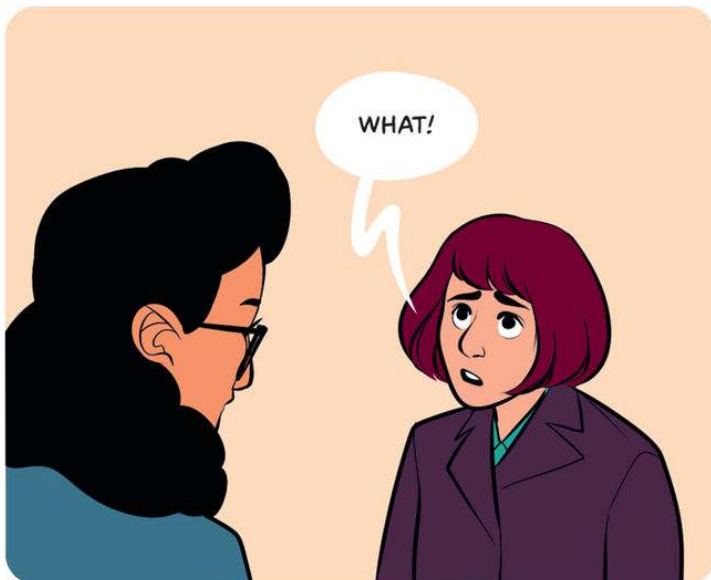


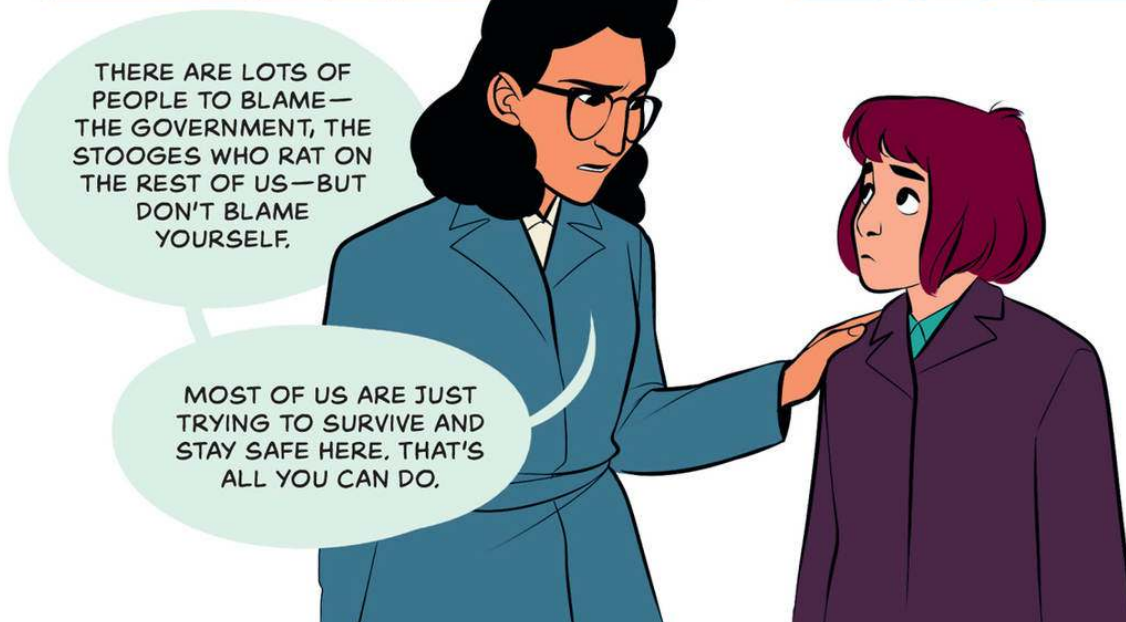


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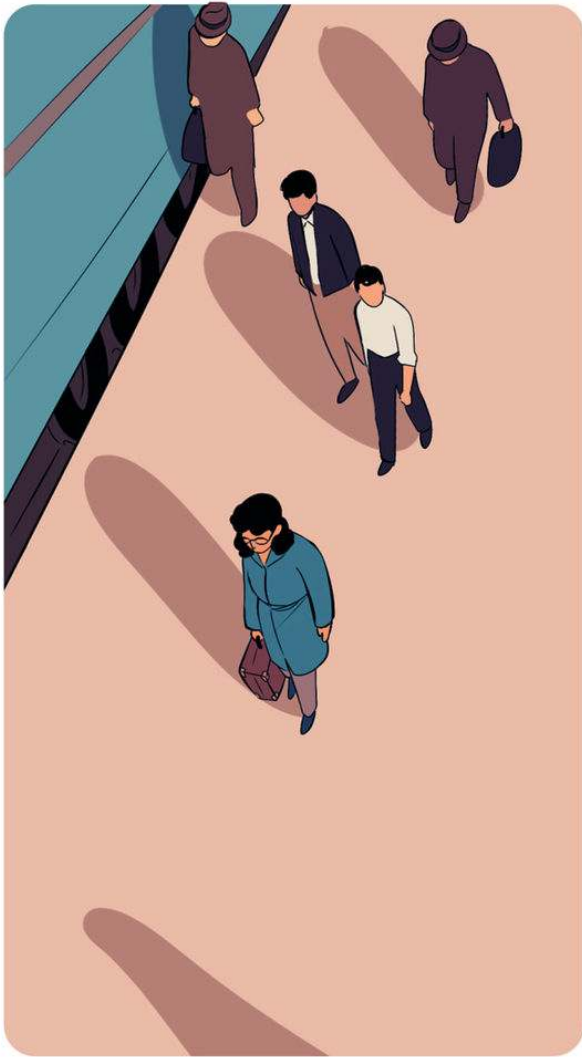




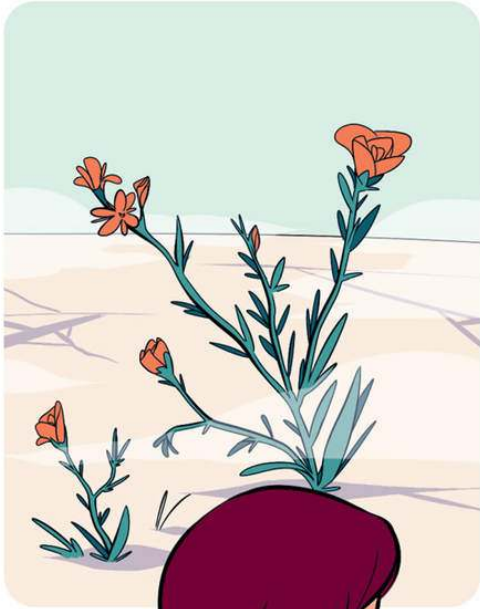




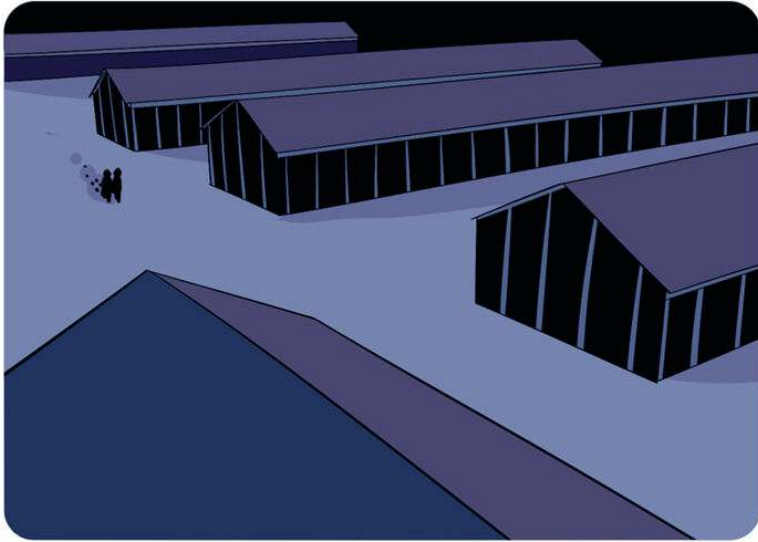


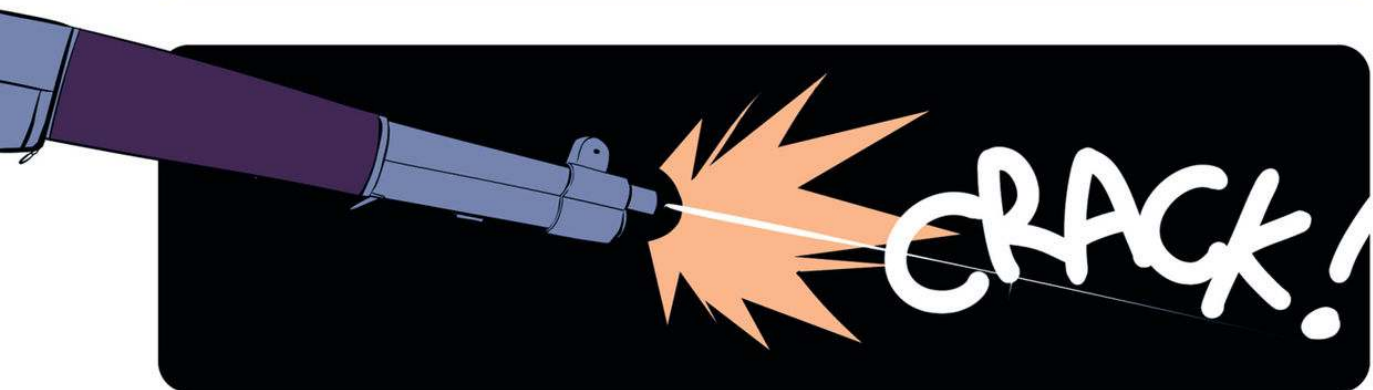
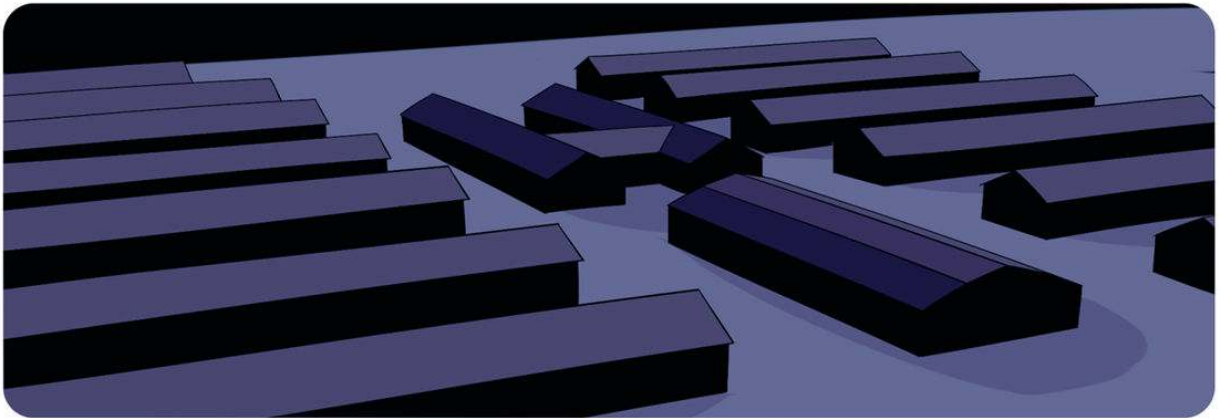


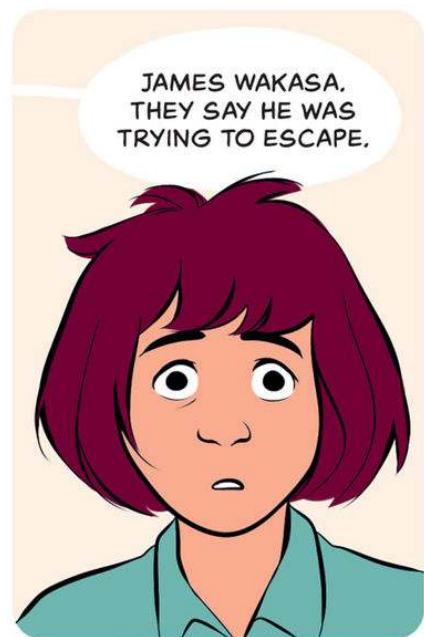
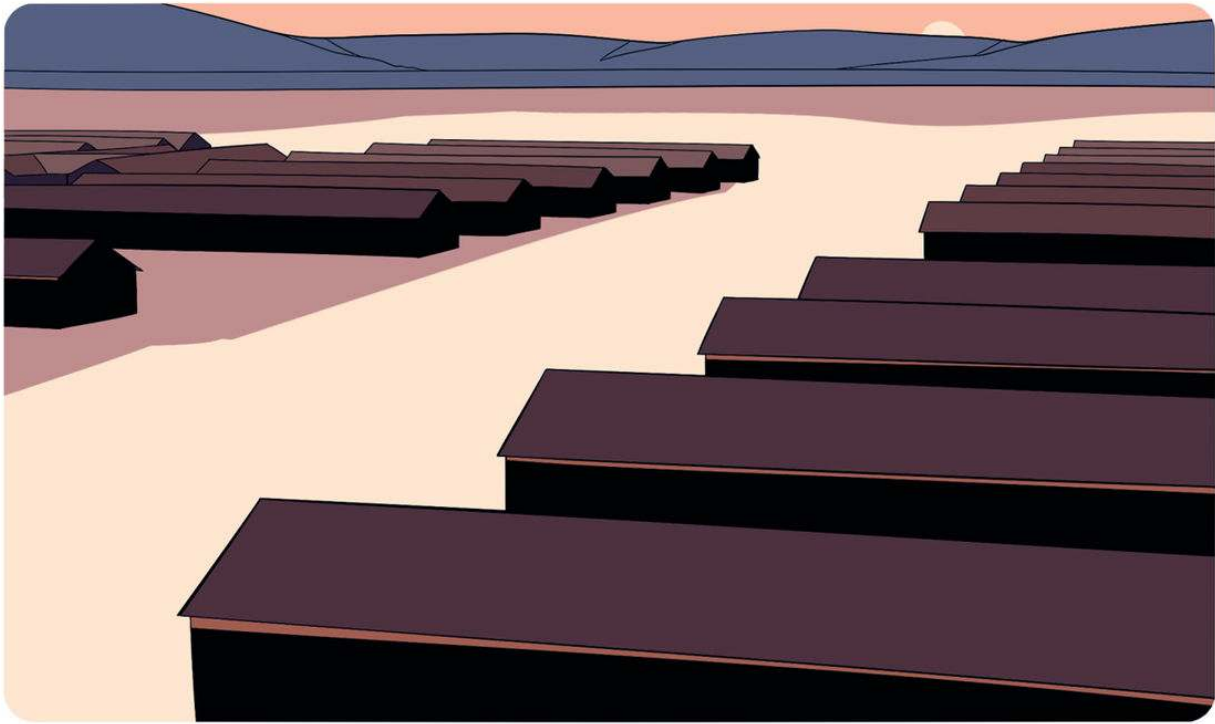






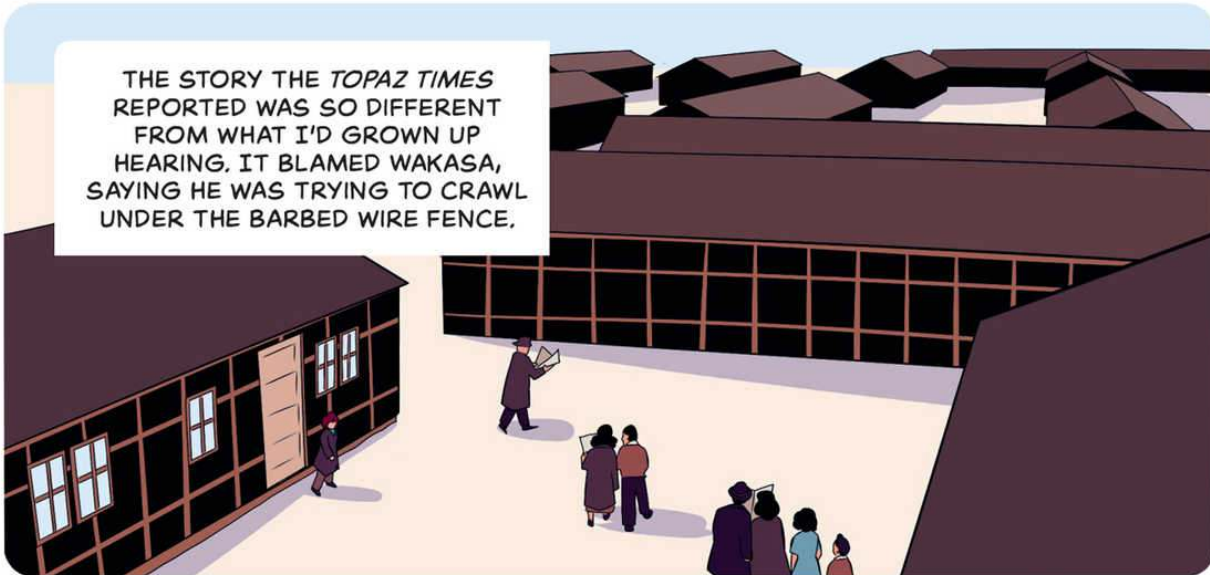








THE STORY THE *TOPAZ TIMES* REPORTED WAS SO DIFFERENT FROM WHAT I'D GROWN UP HEARING. IT BLAMED WAKASA, SAYING HE WAS TRYING TO CRAWL UNDER THE BARBED WIRE FENCE.



BUT I HEARD DOZENS OF RUMORS ABOUT WHAT HAD REALLY HAPPENED. NOBODY SEEMED TO BELIEVE THE *TIMES* OR THE ADMINISTRATION'S VERSION OF EVENTS. I QUESTIONED MY OWN FAMILY'S VERSION OF EVENTS IN LIGHT OF ALL THESE CONFLICTING STORIES.



I HEARD HE WAS JUST WALKING HIS DOG WHEN THEY SHOT HIM FROM BEHIND.

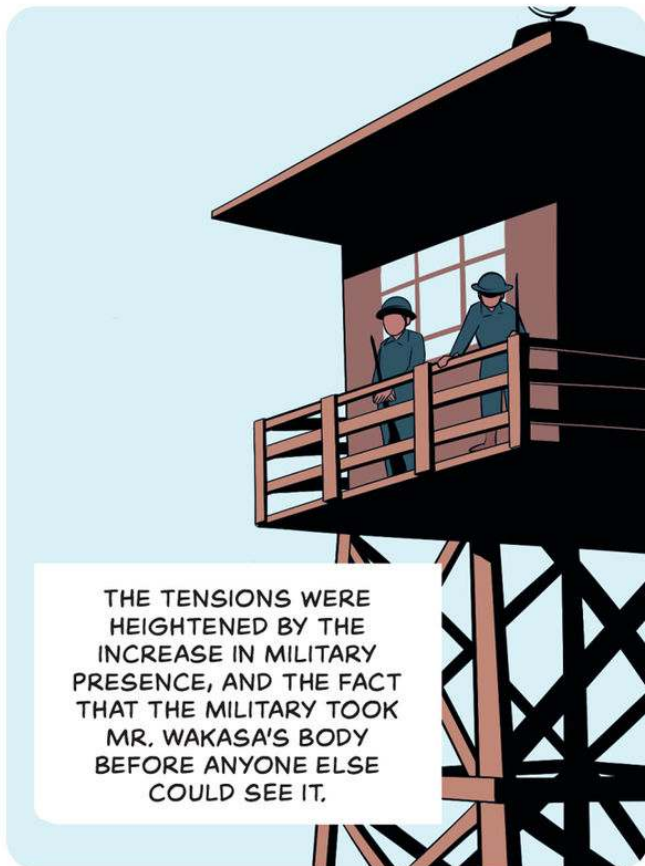


I HEARD HE DOESN'T EVEN HAVE A DOG, THOUGH. HE WAS ISSEI—MAYBE HE COULDN'T UNDERSTAND THE GUARDS—



SO WHAT IF HE DIDN'T HAVE A DOG...MAYBE HE WAS COLLECTING ARROWHEADS! HE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN TRYING TO ESCAPE. HE KNEW AS WELL AS ANY OF US THAT THERE'S NOWHERE TO GO OUT THERE.





THE TENSIONS WERE HEIGHTENED BY THE INCREASE IN MILITARY PRESENCE, AND THE FACT THAT THE MILITARY TOOK MR. WAKASA'S BODY BEFORE ANYONE ELSE COULD SEE IT.



THE SUBJECT OF THE RUMOR MILL CHANGED FROM WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO MR. WAKASA TO WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO SOMEONE ELSE NEXT.



WAS THIS JUST THE BEGINNING? WOULD THE GUNS THAT HAD ALWAYS BEEN POINTED AT US FINALLY BE USED?

WE'D ALL KNOWN THAT THE PUNISHMENT FOR TRYING TO ESCAPE COULD BE DEATH. BUT IF MR. WAKASA REALLY HADN'T BEEN TRYING TO ESCAPE AT ALL, WE COULD BE KILLED FOR ANYTHING.



NOTHING WAS HELPED BY THE
ADMINISTRATION'S ATTEMPTS TO
COVER UP THE SITUATION.



"THE ADMINISTRATION JOINS
WITH THE COMMUNITY IN THE
FEELING OF GENUINE SADNESS
AS A RESULT OF THIS TRAGIC
INCIDENT."

YEAH,
RIGHT.



JUST
READ IT.



"IT IS OUR SINCERE HOPE
THAT EVENTS SUCH AS THIS
WILL NOT OCCUR AGAIN
HERE AT TOPAZ."



TO THIS END, WE URGE EVERY
RESIDENT TO FAMILIARIZE HIMSELF
WITH THE RULES AND REGULATIONS.
SINCERELY, LORNE W. BELL, CHIEF
COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR."



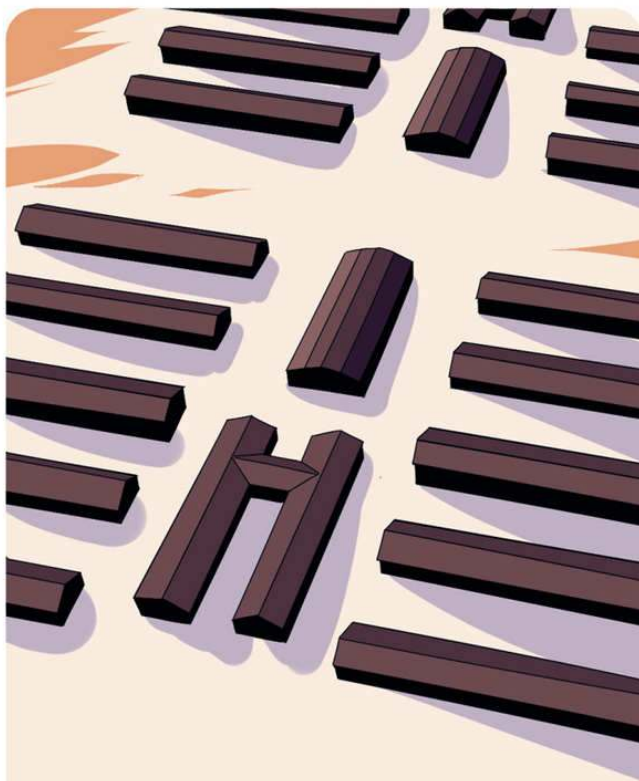
SO IT'S
WAKASA'S
FAULT THAT HE
GOT SHOT!
WHAT A BUNCH
OF CRAP.











THE NEXT DAY THE
WORK STOPPAGE BEGAN.



WE DIDN'T GO TO CLASS.
EMIKO DIDN'T GO TO WORK.



I'D HEARD OF THE SHOOTING, BUT I NEVER
KNEW THERE HAD BEEN PROTESTS AFTERWARD.
I WAS A PART OF A RESISTANCE THAT HAD
NEVER BEEN TAUGHT TO ME.

WAS ERNESTINA
STAYING
HOME TOO?
WERE MY GREAT-
GRANDPARENTS
PROTESTING? DID
THEY NEVER TELL
MY MOM THIS
STORY? DID THEY
THINK IT WAS
UNIMPORTANT?

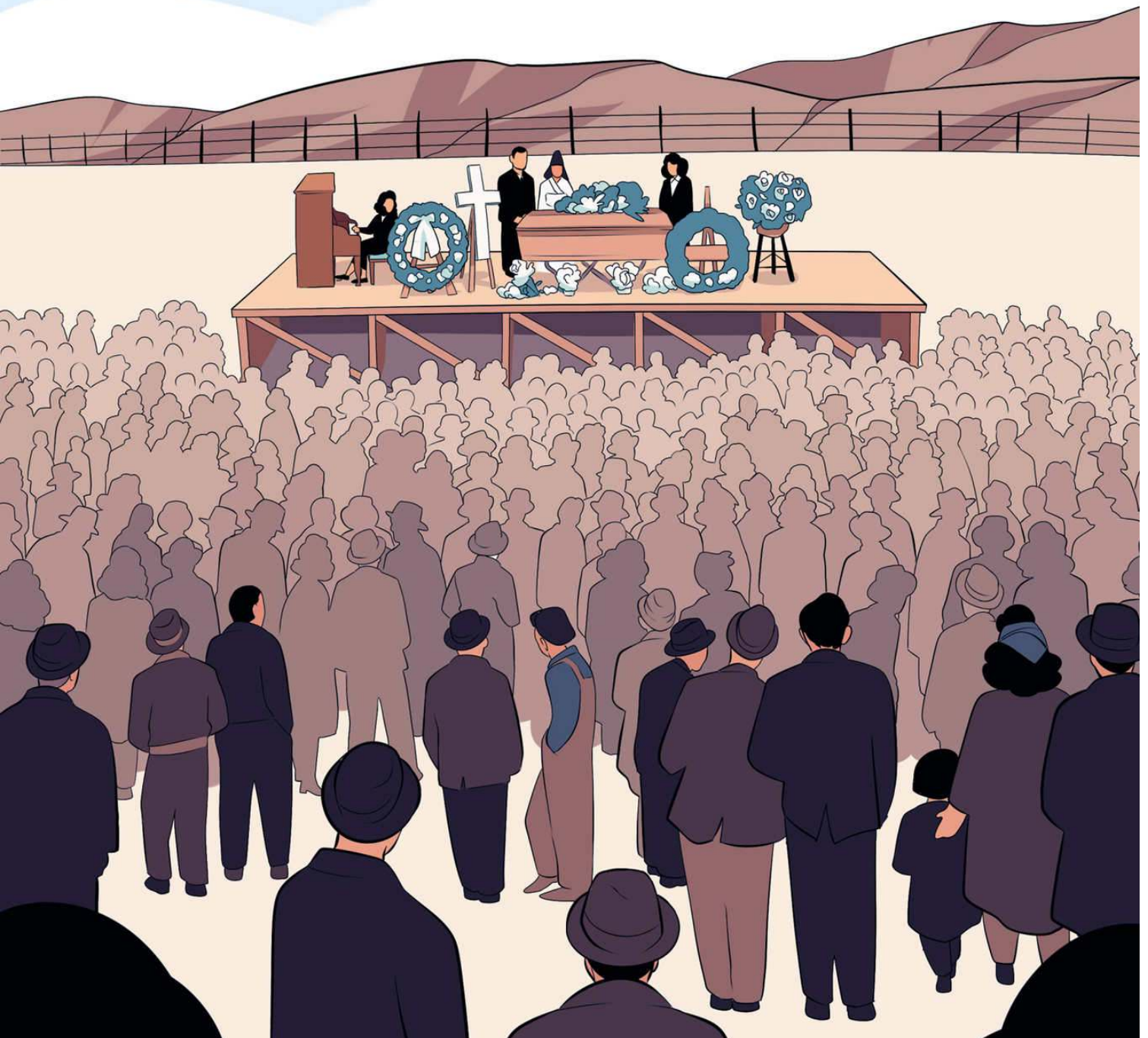


IT FELT IMMENSELY IMPORTANT TO
ME. NOW I KNEW THAT ALMOST
EVERY PERSON AT TOPAZ RESISTED
THEIR OPPRESSION IN SOME WAY.

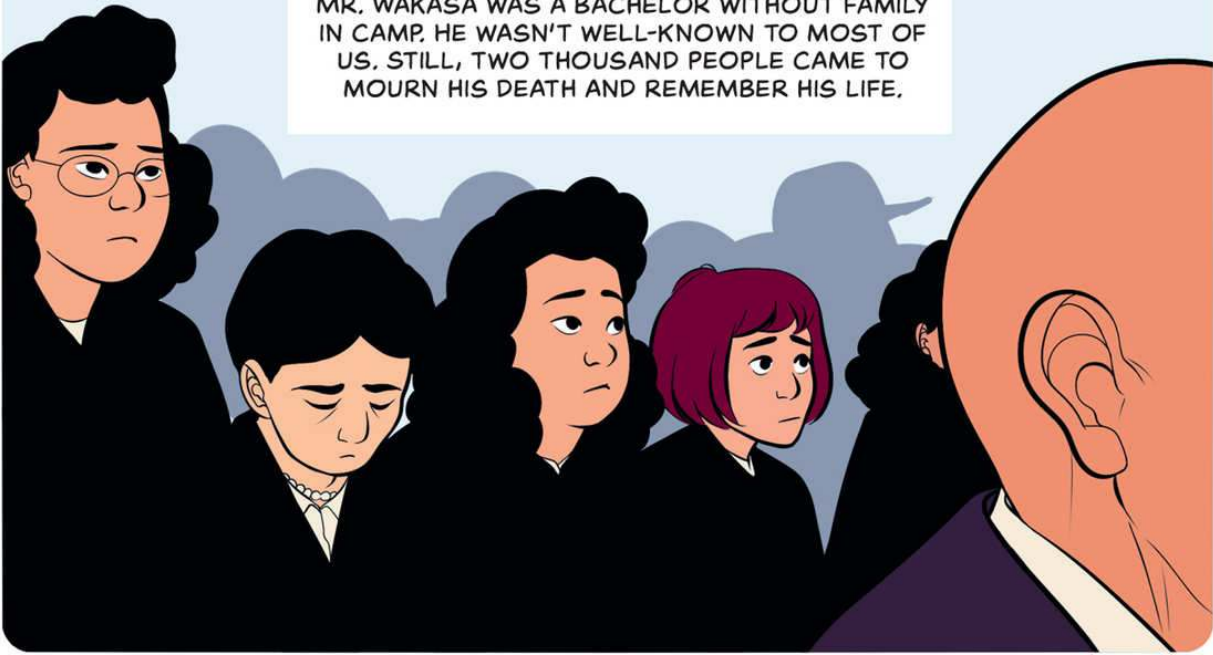
EVEN THE YOSHIMOTOS, WHO WERE
RIGHTFULLY WORRIED ABOUT THE
SAFETY OF THEIR FAMILY.

EVEN ME.

THE FUNERAL FOR JAMES HATSUAKI WAKASA WAS HELD ON APRIL 20, NINE DAYS AFTER HE WAS KILLED. IT WAS NOT PERMITTED TO BE IN THE EXACT SPOT OF HIS DEATH, BUT IT WAS NEARBY. WE COULD SEE THE BARBED WIRE FENCE HE WAS SUPPOSEDLY CLIMBING UNDER.



MR. WAKASA WAS A BACHELOR WITHOUT FAMILY IN CAMP. HE WASN'T WELL-KNOWN TO MOST OF US. STILL, TWO THOUSAND PEOPLE CAME TO MOURN HIS DEATH AND REMEMBER HIS LIFE.



THE TENSION THAT HAD DIVIDED CAMP SINCE THE BEGINNING, HEIGHTENED BY THE LOYALTY QUESTIONNAIRE MORE RECENTLY, SEEMED TO HAVE DISSIPATED FOR THE FUNERAL. WE WERE A COMMUNITY JOINED TOGETHER TO EXPRESS OUR LOSS AND OUR FRUSTRATION.



I'M NOT SURE WHY I CRIED.
I DIDN'T KNOW HIM.



BUT, I SUPPOSE, I NEVER KNEW MY
GRANDMOTHER, EITHER. I NEVER
KNEW MY GREAT-GRANDPARENTS,
OR ANY OF THE PEOPLE FROM CAMP
UNTIL THE DISPLACEMENT.



BUT THEIR EXPERIENCES, THEIR TRAUMAS,
STILL SHAPED ME IN WAYS I WAS ONLY JUST
BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND. THE MURDER OF
JAMES WAKASA HAD SUCH AN IMPACT ON MY
GRANDMOTHER THAT TWO GENERATIONS
LATER, IT WAS STILL HAUNTING OUR FAMILY,
OUR WHOLE NIKKEI COMMUNITY.



WE WERE STILL MOURNING HIM.



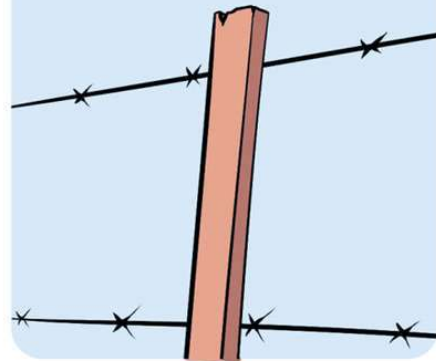
THE TRAUMA LASTED, BUT THIS
COMING TOGETHER, THIS FUNERAL,
HEALED SOME PART OF US.



IT STRUCK ME THAT THE
ADMINISTRATION'S ATTEMPTS
TO HUSH UP THE TRUTH OF THE
SHOOTING WAS EERILY SIMILAR
TO THE GOVERNMENT'S LATER
ATTEMPTS TO COVER UP THE
TRUTH OF THE CAMPS.



THEY CAN'T DENY IT
HAPPENED, BUT THEY
CAN HIDE THE FACTS AND
CLAIM THEY WERE ONLY
ACTING OUT OF DUTY.

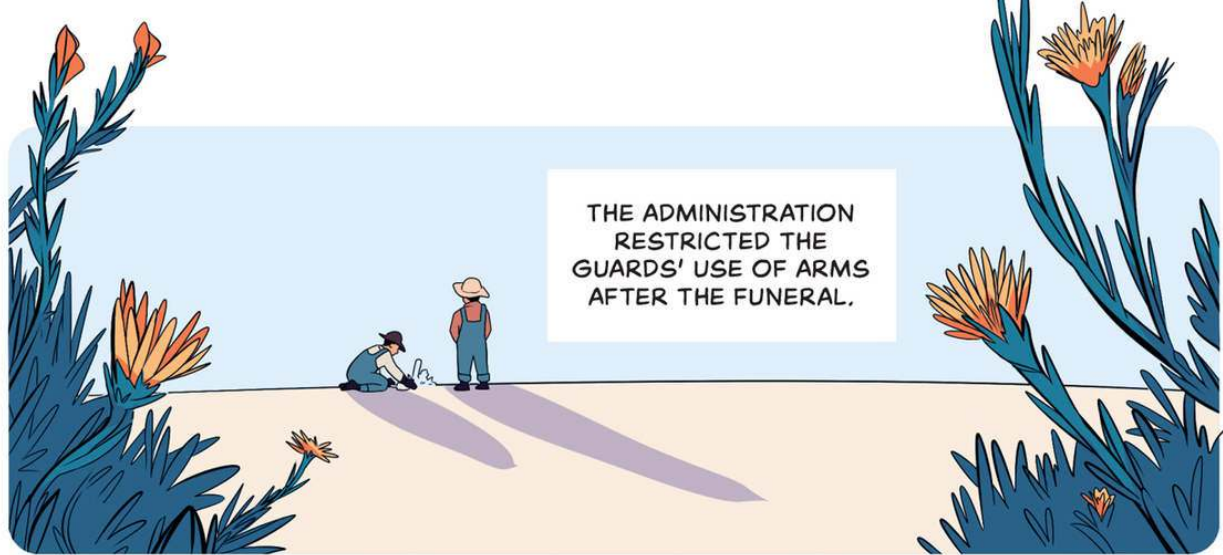


BUT WHEN A COMMUNITY COMES
TOGETHER TO DEMAND MORE,
WHEN WE DO NOT LET TRAUMA STAY
OBSURED BUT BRING IT UP TO THE
SURFACE AND REMEMBER IT
TOGETHER—



WE CAN MAKE SURE
IT IS NOT REPEATED.





THE ADMINISTRATION
RESTRICTED THE
GUARDS' USE OF ARMS
AFTER THE FUNERAL.



IT WAS A VICTORY,
THOUGH WE WOULD NOT
WIN EVERY BATTLE.



A MEMORIAL DEDICATED
TO MR. WAKASA, ERECTED
BY A GROUP OF NIKKEI
LANDSCAPERS

WAS QUICKLY
REMOVED BY THE
CAMP DIRECTOR.



A MEMORY IS TOO
POWERFUL A WEAPON.



8



LIKE AT TANFORAN, THE NIKKEI AT TOPAZ WORKED HARD TO TRANSFORM THE BARREN LANDSCAPE INTO SOMETHING MORE LIVABLE.

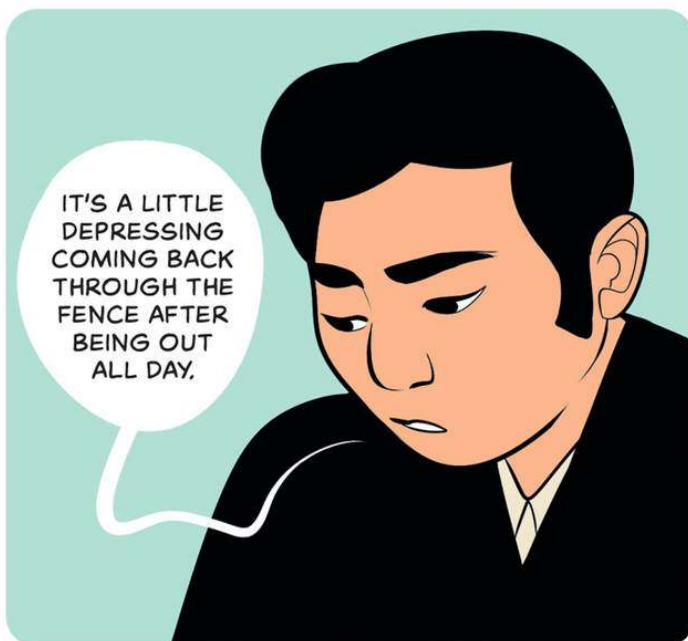


THE SOIL WAS BAD AND THE WEATHER WAS HARSH, BUT THERE WERE MANY SKILLED AND PASSIONATE GARDENERS AT CAMP.



THE ONCOMING SUMMER BROUGHT THE FRUITS OF THEIR LABOR.











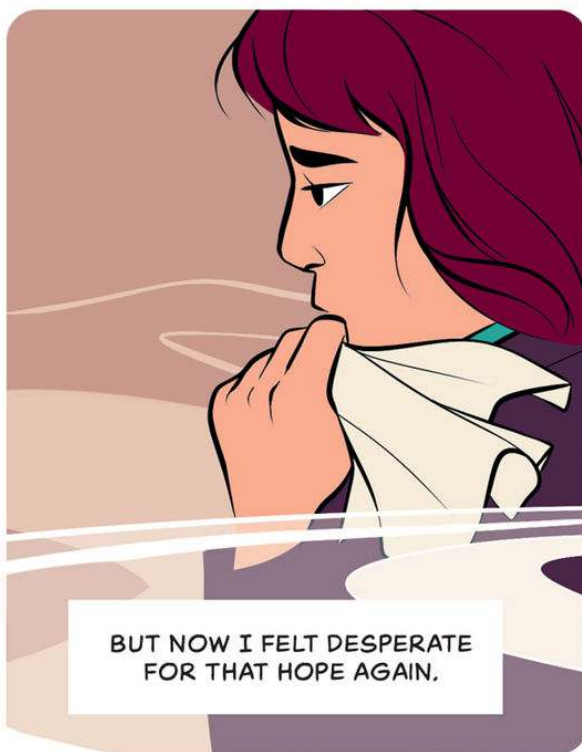
I HADN'T THOUGHT AT ALL ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF LEAVING CAMP, AND STILL BEING STUCK IN THE YEAR 1943. AS SCARY AS IT HAD BEEN WHEN THE DISPLACEMENT FIRST TOOK ME, IT WAS ALMOST AS SCARY TO THINK OF FACING THE UNFAMILIAR WORLD OUTSIDE.

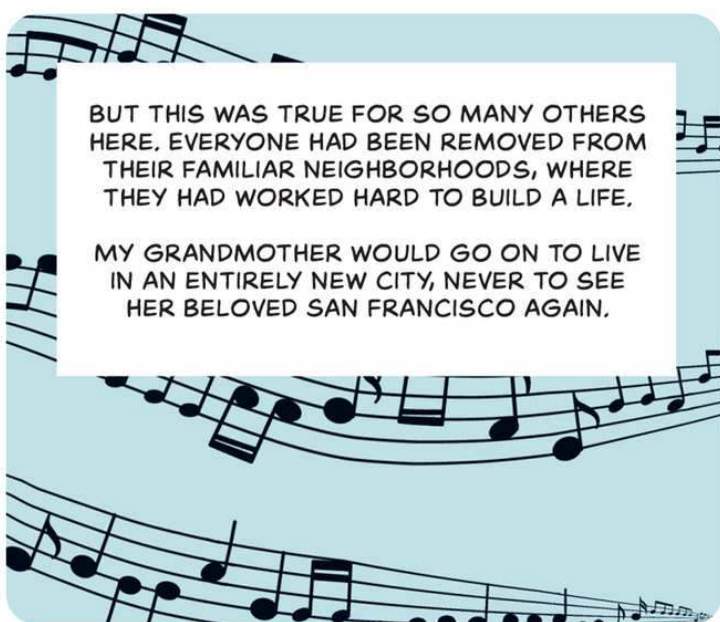


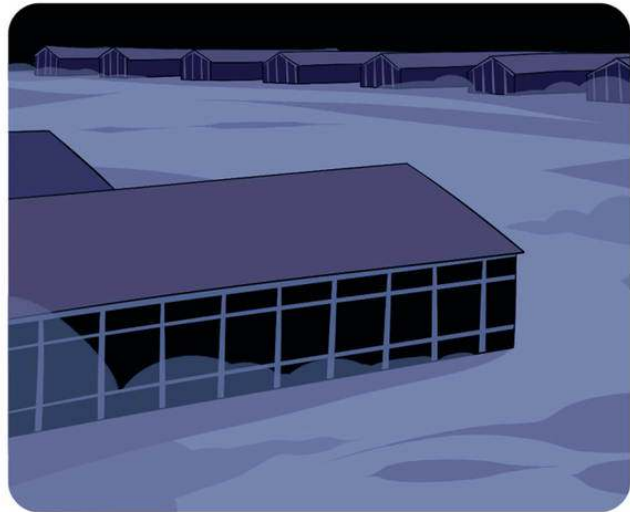
I HAD LONG SINCE GIVEN UP HOPE
THAT ONE OF THE MANY DUST
STORMS HERE WOULD TAKE ME
BACK TO MY TIME, TO MY HOME.



BUT NOW I FELT DESPERATE
FOR THAT HOPE AGAIN.







I'VE WRITTEN IT ALL DOWN,
THE FIRST DISPLACEMENT,
THE SECOND, AND THIS ONE,
WHICH MAY BE THE LAST.

MAYBE I'LL NEVER SEE
MY REAL HOME AGAIN.



MY FRIENDS ARE GOING
THEIR SEPARATE WAYS.
AIKO LEFT LONG AGO.

AND ERNESTINA, THE
GRANDMOTHER AND
NEIGHBOR I NEVER
SPOKE TO—




IS GRADUATING
FROM HIGH SCHOOL
TOMORROW.

THE PAPER SAYS SHE
WILL BE ATTENDING
JULLIARD THANKS TO
THE AMERICAN FRIENDS
SCHOLARSHIP.



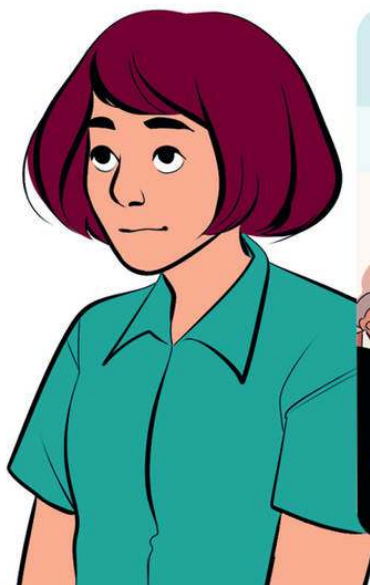
I DIDN'T KNOW SHE'D
BE LEAVING ALREADY.

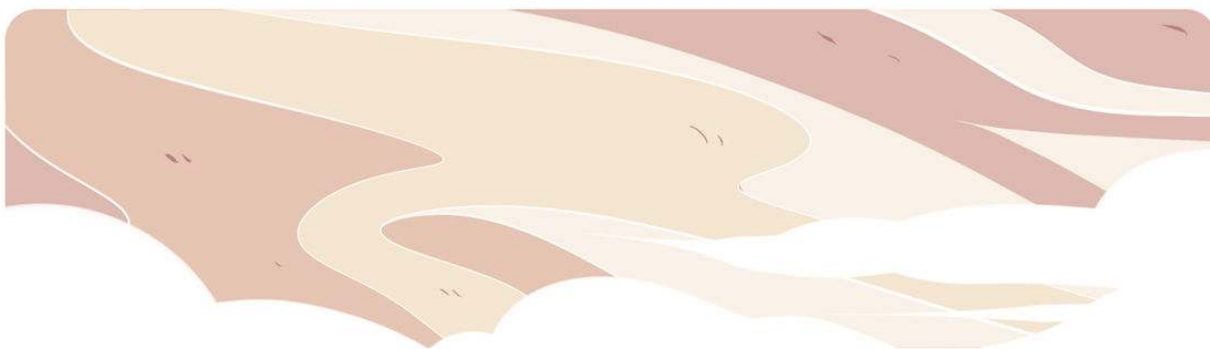


I HESITATED FOR SO LONG. I'VE NEVER HAD THE
COURAGE TO MEET HER. IF SHE LEAVES CAMP
BEFORE I FIND A WAY TO INTRODUCE MYSELF,
I'LL LIKELY NEVER HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE.









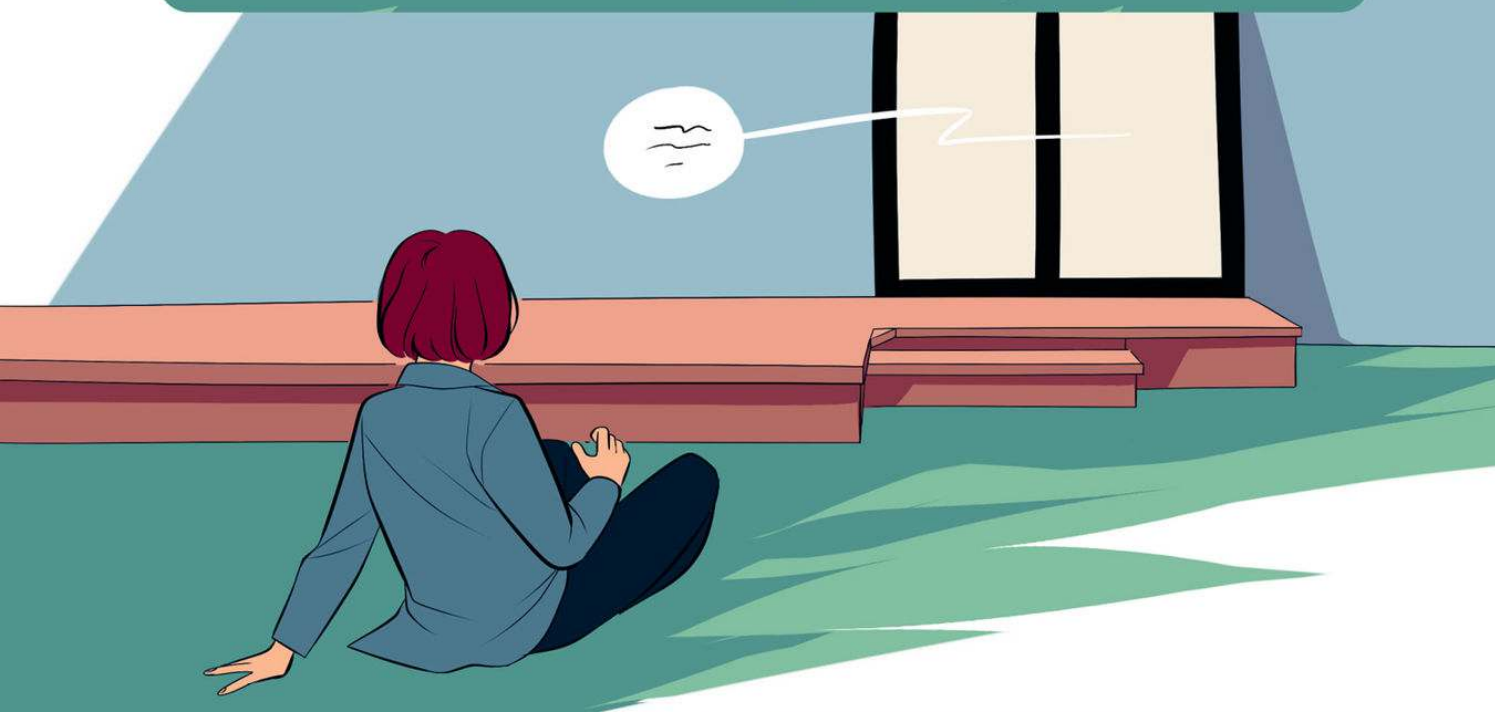


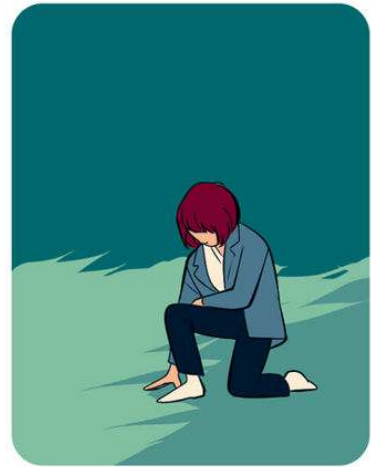


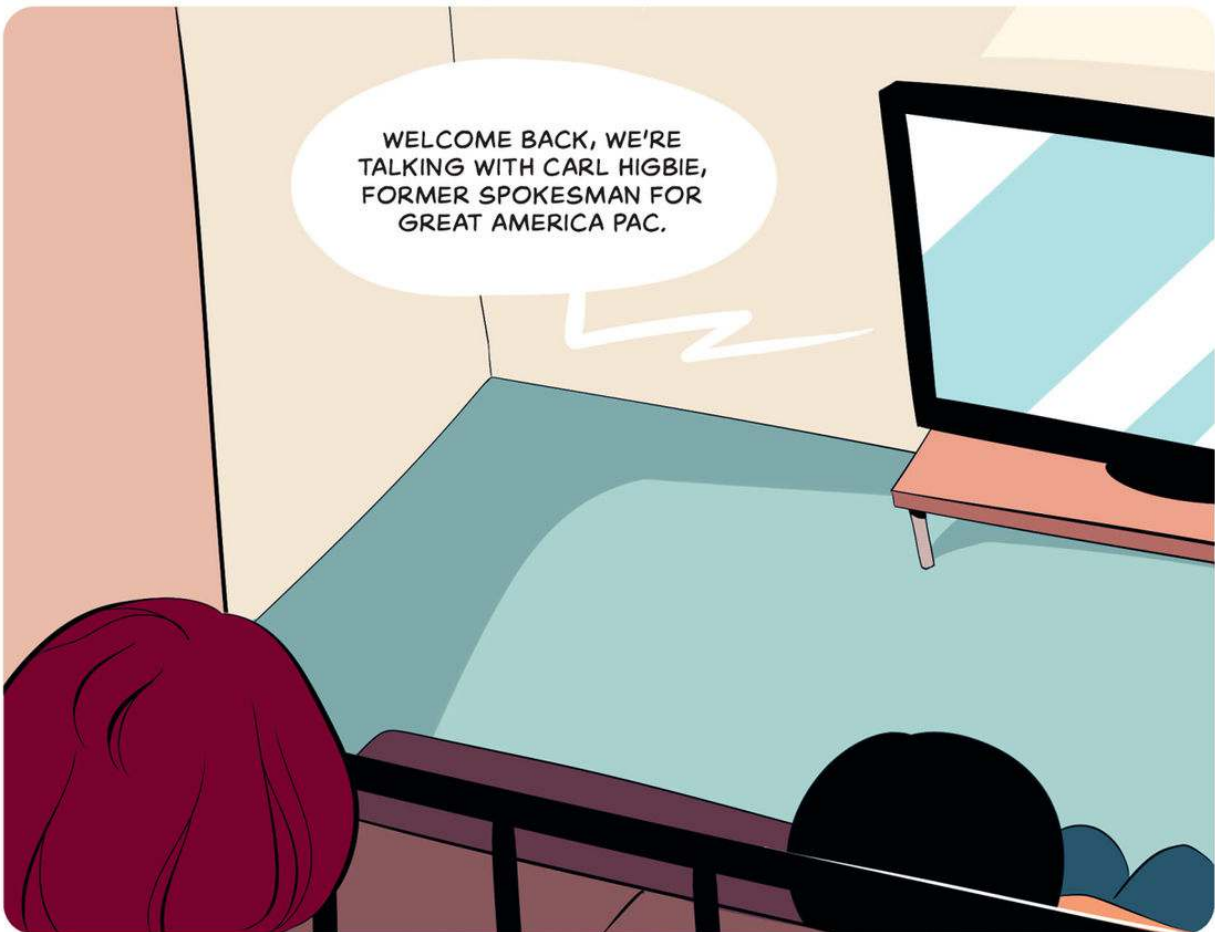
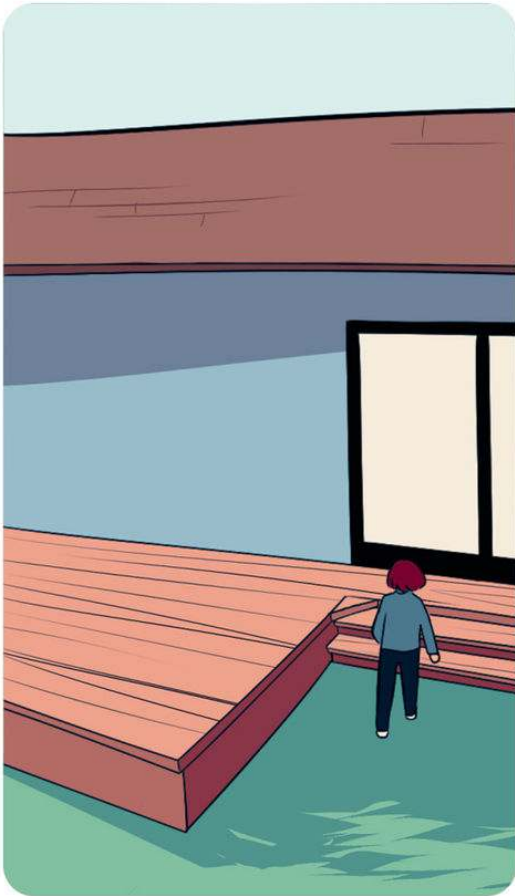
part III:
the east



9







TRUMP'S POLICY ADVISORS
ARE DISCUSSING DRAFTING A
PROPOSAL TO REINSTATE A
REGISTRY FOR IMMIGRANTS
FROM MUSLIM COUNTRIES.



YEAH, AND TO BE
PERFECTLY HONEST
IT IS LEGAL.

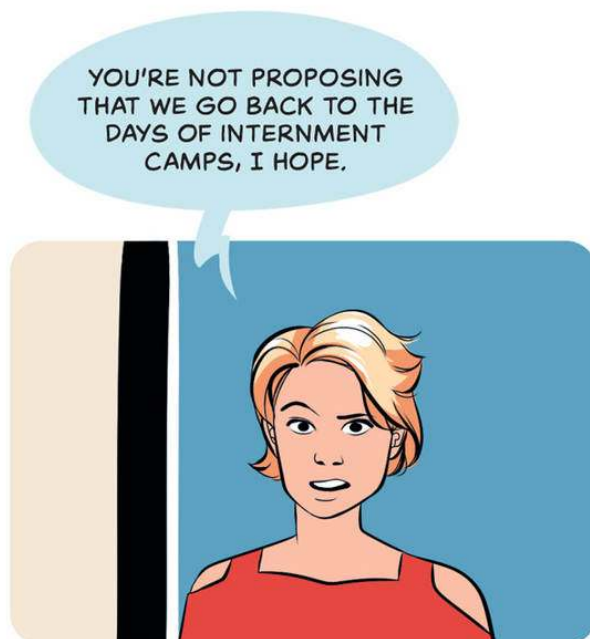


THEY SAY IT'LL HOLD
CONSTITUTIONAL
MUSTER.



I KNOW THE
ACLU IS GONNA
CHALLENGE IT,
BUT I THINK
IT'LL PASS.





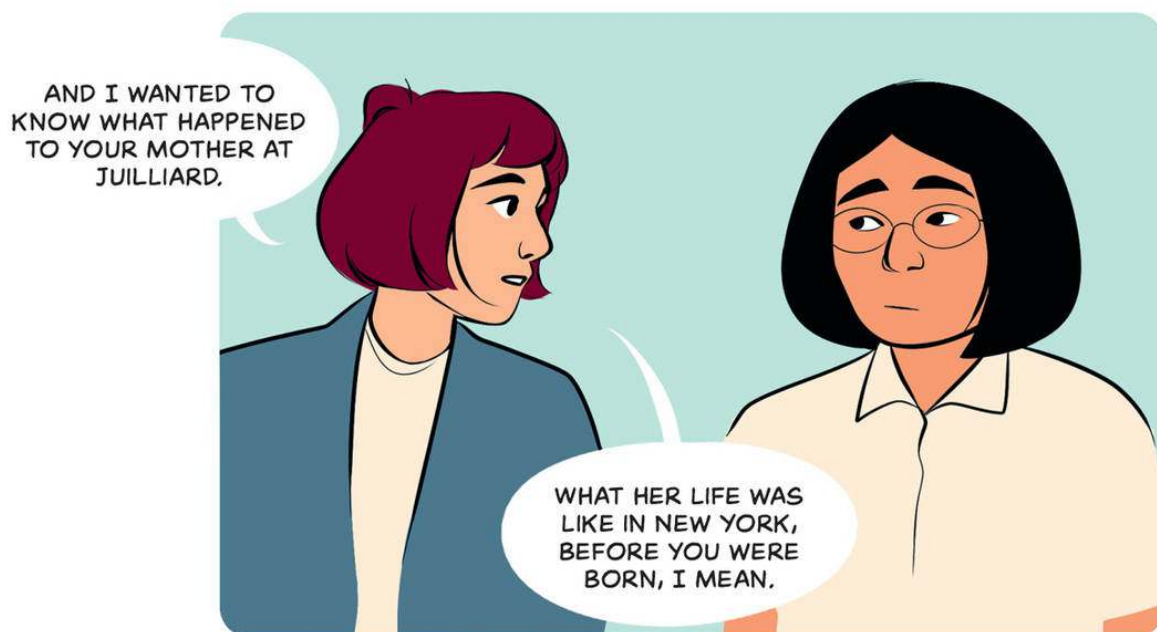


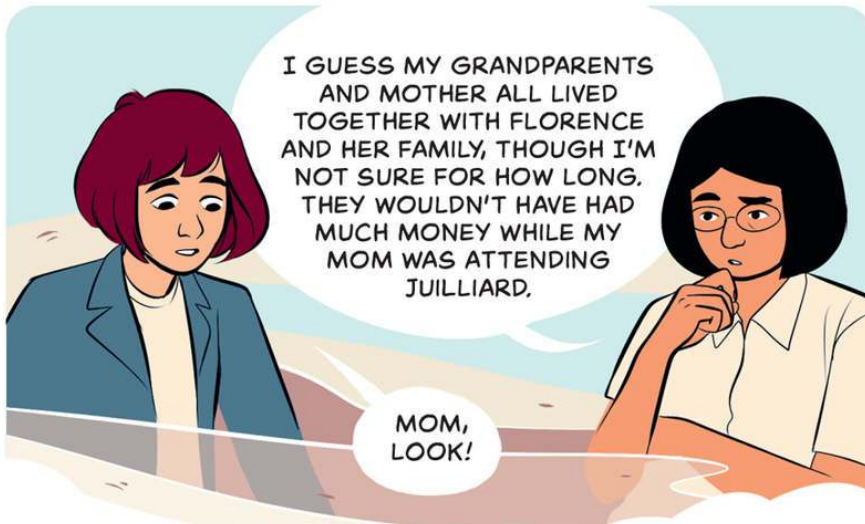


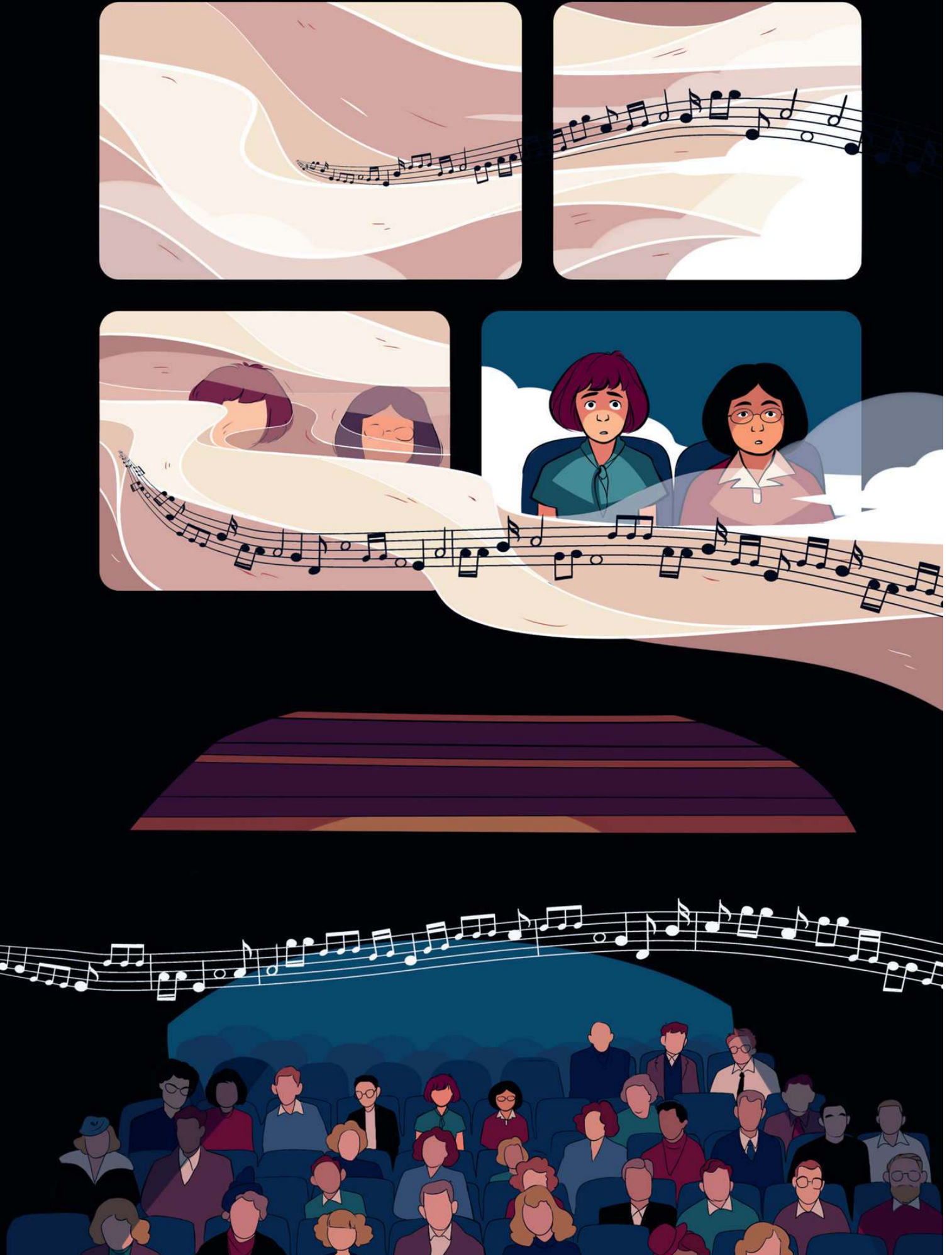




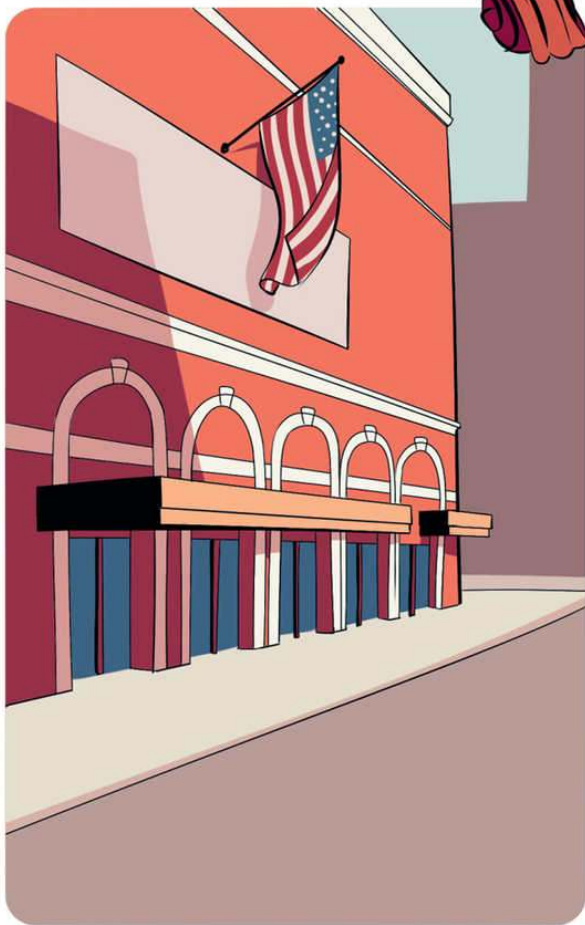




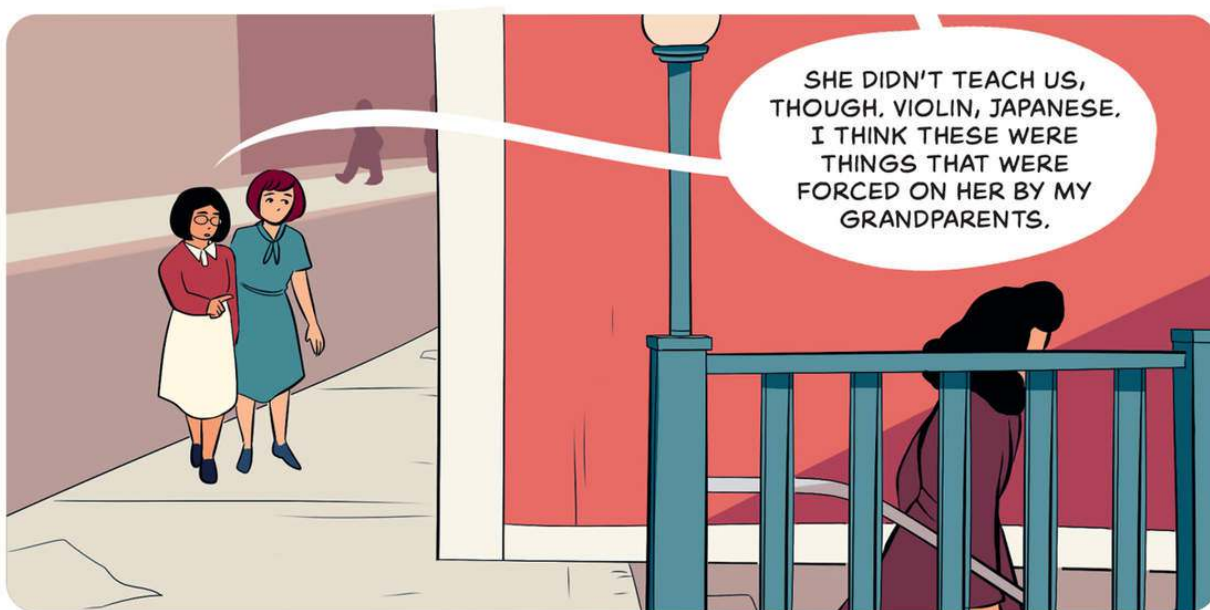






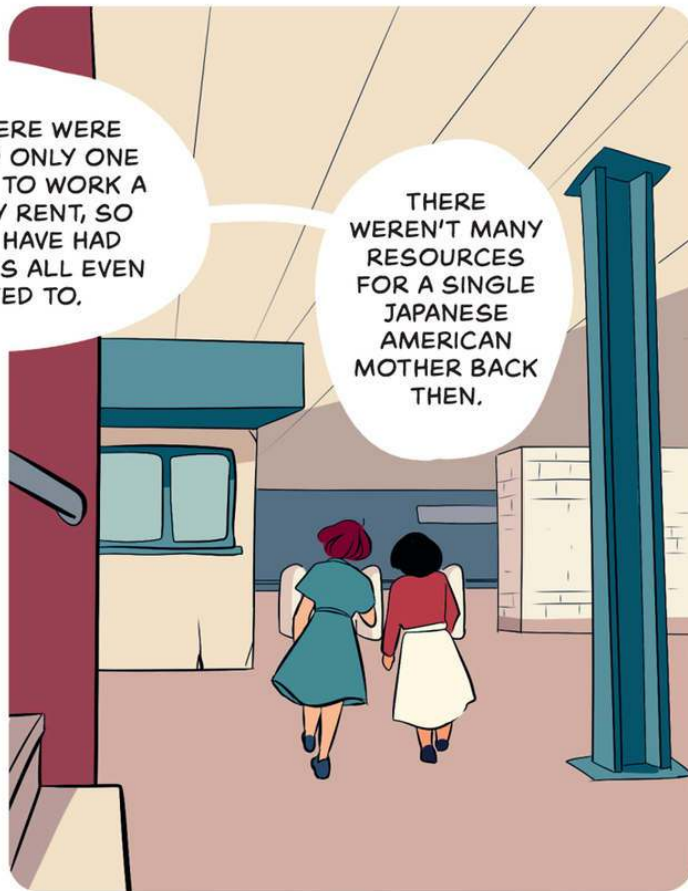








OF COURSE THERE WERE FOUR OF US AND ONLY ONE PARENT. SHE HAD TO WORK A LOT JUST TO PAY RENT, SO SHE WOULDN'T HAVE HAD TIME TO TEACH US ALL EVEN IF SHE WANTED TO.



THERE WEREN'T MANY RESOURCES FOR A SINGLE JAPANESE AMERICAN MOTHER BACK THEN.

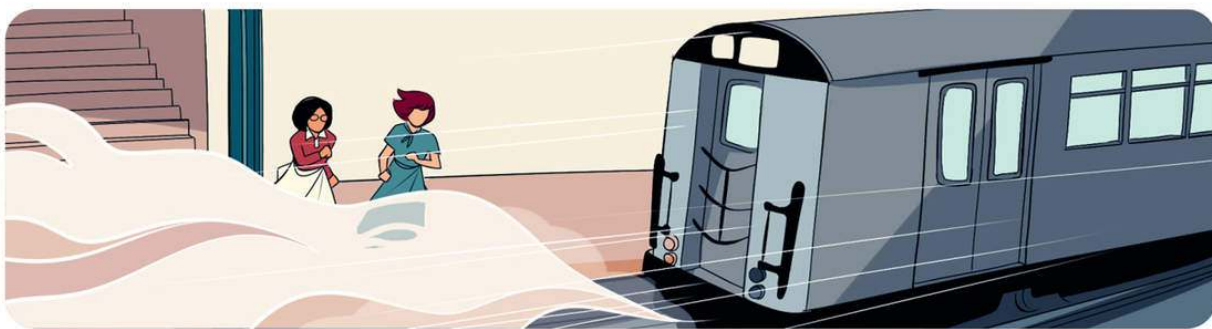


I DON'T SEE HER ANYMORE...

ME NEITHER.



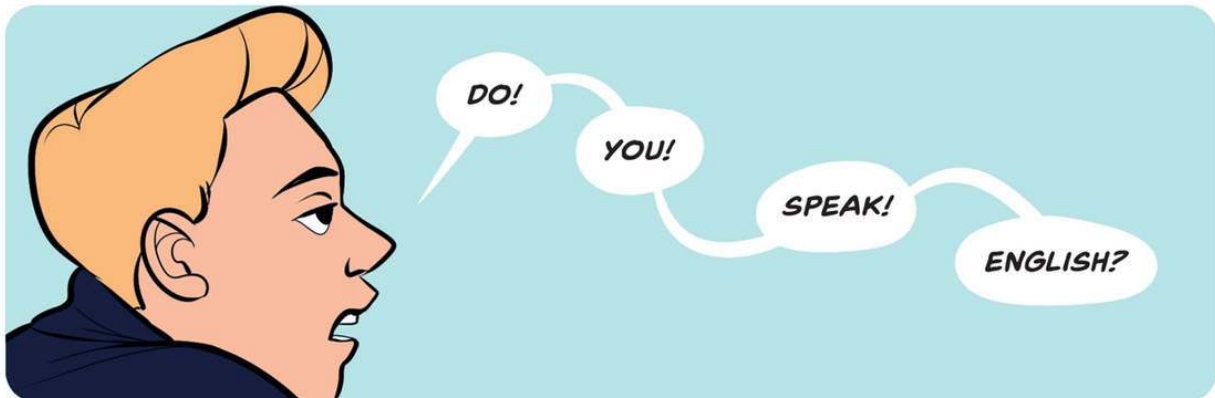
BUT SHE'D BE TAKING THE IND UP TO DYCKMAN STREET STATION IF SHE'S GOING TO OUR APARTMENT.



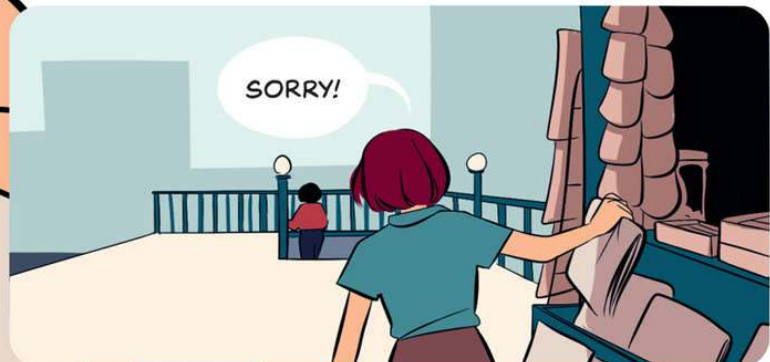
















OH YEAH, THAT WAS PART OF THE WHOLE "MODEL MINORITY" THING THAT STARTED IN THE '60S.



PEOPLE WERE ALWAYS SHOCKED TO FIND OUT I GREW UP IN THE PROJECTS.



I DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE CALLING ASIAN AMERICANS THE "MODEL MINORITY" ALL THE WAY BACK IN THE '60S.

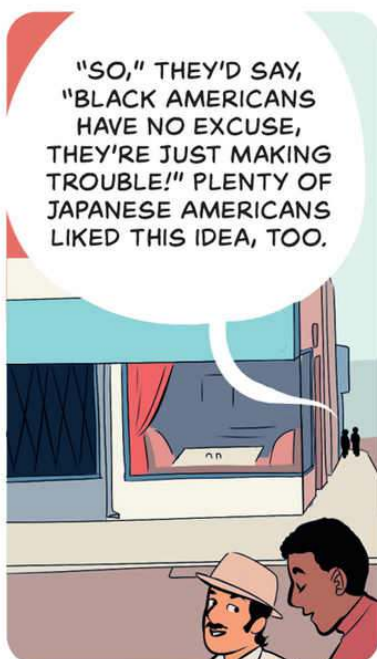
IT WAS ACTUALLY MADE UP TO USE AGAINST THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.



THEY POINTED AT THE "SUCCESSFUL" JAPANESE AMERICANS AND SAID "LOOK, WE LOCKED THEM UP AND THEY NEVER COMPLAINED, AND NOW THEY'RE ALL RICH!"



OF COURSE WE WEREN'T ALL RICH.



"SO," THEY'D SAY, "BLACK AMERICANS HAVE NO EXCUSE, THEY'RE JUST MAKING TROUBLE!" PLENTY OF JAPANESE AMERICANS LIKED THIS IDEA, TOO.



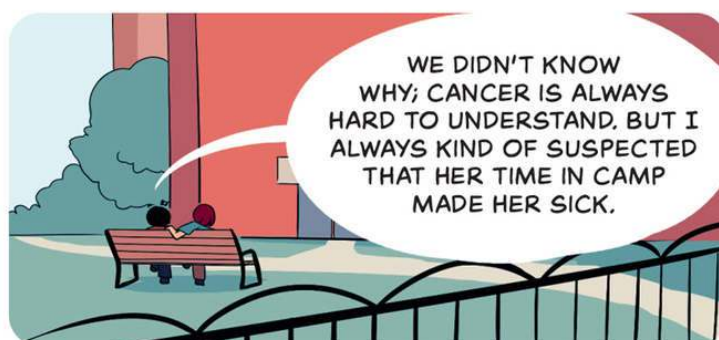
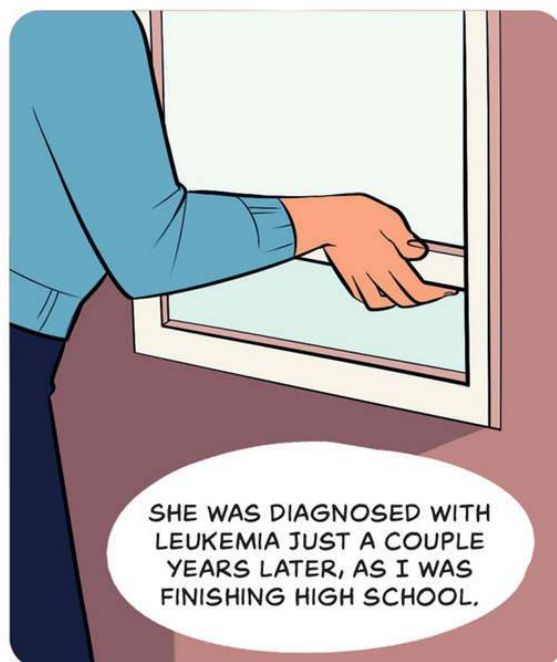
MAYBE THAT'S WHY SO FEW ISSEI AND NISEI TALKED ABOUT CAMP BACK THEN?

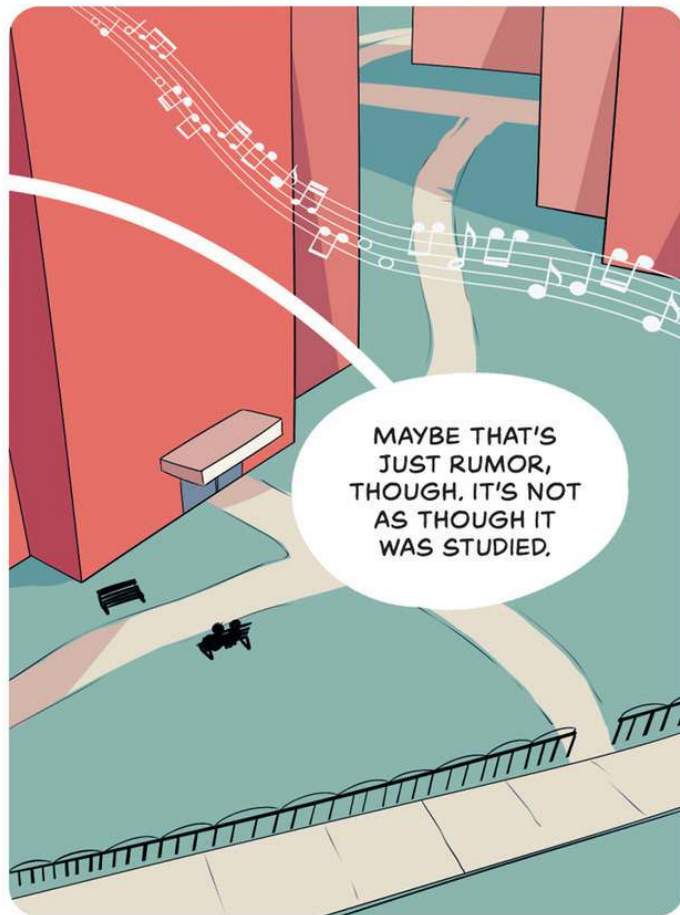
I SUSPECT THAT'S A PART OF IT.



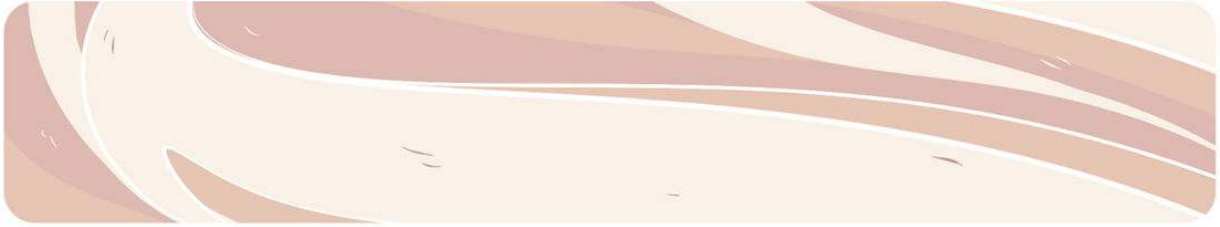
THEY WANTED TO BE SEEN AS THE "GOOD MINORITY," EVEN TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY WERE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN ANTIBLACK RACISM.











THIS IS THE
DAY WE LEFT
NEW YORK CITY.



AFTER MOM AND
GRANDMA DIED, I DROPPED
OUT OF SCHOOL AND
WE LEFT THE CITY.

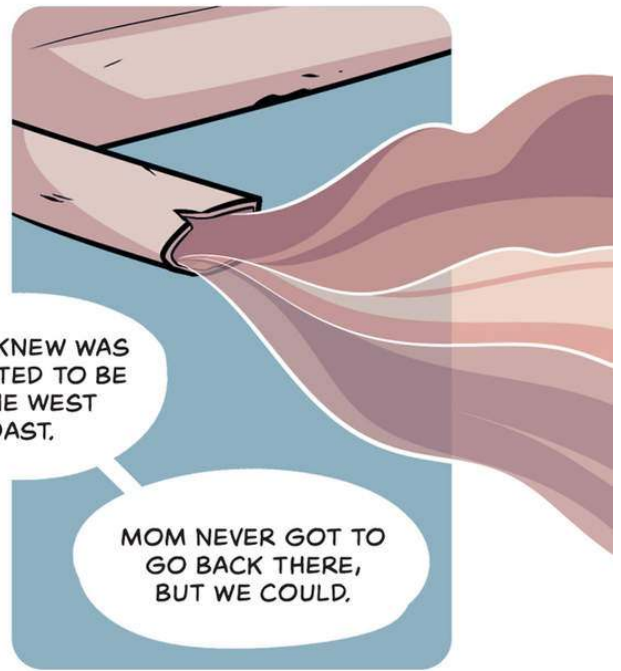


I NEVER FELT LIKE I BELONGED IN
NEW YORK, AND DEFINITELY NOT IN
NEW JERSEY. AND WE DIDN'T HAVE
ANYTHING TO KEEP US THERE
ANYMORE.



WE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WHERE
WE WERE GOING. WE HADN'T DECIDED
BETWEEN SAN FRANCISCO WHERE MOM
WAS BORN, OR SEATTLE WHERE WE
KNEW SOME PEOPLE ALREADY.





part IV:
home



10











MOM AND I STARTED DOING OUR OWN RESEARCH ON THE CAMPS. WE WENT TO LIBRARIES, GENEALOGY SITES, NEWSPAPER ARCHIVES.



WE FOUND MY GRANDMA'S YEARBOOK FROM TOPAZ HIGH SCHOOL. WE FOUND GOVERNMENT RECORDS OF WHEN SHE AND HER PARENTS ENTERED AND LEFT CAMP.

MOM BROUGHT OUT OLD FAMILY MEMENTOS THAT MY SISTER, MARIKO, AND I HAD NEVER SEEN. PHOTOS AND KNICKKNACKS.



INCLUDING...

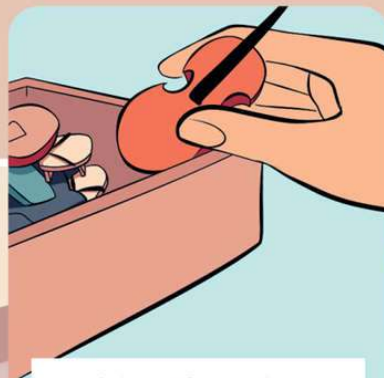


A VERY FAMILIAR CARVING.



MR. MATSUZAWA HAD GIVEN
A BEAUTIFUL CARVING TO
MY GRANDMOTHER OF
SOMETHING SHE WAS
PASSIONATE ABOUT.

THE DISPLACEMENT
HAD TRANSFERRED THE
FEELING OF GRATITUDE
AND CONNECTION SHE
MUST HAVE FELT AT
THAT MOMENT
TO ME.



SHE KEPT IT HER
WHOLE LIFE, AND NOW
IT WAS SAFE WITH US.



THERE ARE A LOT
OF LETTERS HERE,
TOO, BUT SOME
OF THEM ARE IN
JAPANESE SO I HAVE
NO IDEA WHAT
THEY SAY.







IT WASN'T JUST FAMILY HISTORY WE LEARNED ABOUT.



WE DOVE DEEP INTO RESEARCH ON THE CAMPS IN GENERAL, INCLUDING A GREAT DEAL OF DOCUMENTATION THAT HAD ONLY RECENTLY BEEN DECLASSIFIED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

I BECAME PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THE STORIES OF JAPANESE AMERICANS WHO ACTIVELY OPPOSED THE CAMPS, WHO FOUGHT THEIR INCARCERATION IN THE COURTS, AND WHO STOOD UP AGAINST BIGOTRY THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES.



PEOPLE LIKE...



MINÉ OKUBO



GORDON HIRABAYASHI



AIKO HERZIG-YOSHINAGA



INA SUGIHARA



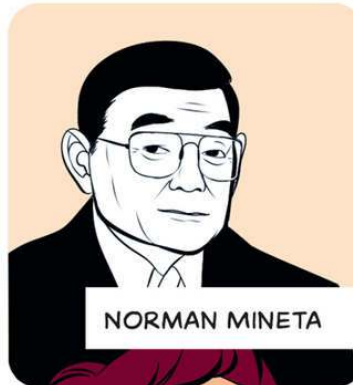
FRED KOREMATSU



YURI KOCHIYAMA



MITSUYE ENDO



NORMAN MINETA



AKI KUROSE

I WAS INSPIRED BY
THEIR BRAVERY AND THE
DETERMINATION THEY
HAD NOT TO LET HISTORY
BE REPEATED. IT WAS A
FIGHT I WANTED TO BE
A PART OF, TOO.



I HAD FELT HELPLESS DURING THE
DISPLACEMENT, BUT NOW I KNEW I
HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF BEING ABLE
TO PROTEST WITHOUT FEAR FOR MY
LIFE. THAT WAS NOT TRUE FOR
EVERYONE, SO I HAD A DUTY.



AND IT WAS A FIGHT THAT SEEMED MORE AND MORE NECESSARY EACH DAY.



IN AN EXECUTIVE ORDER THAT HE SAID WAS PART OF AN EXTREME VETTING PLAN TO KEEP OUT "RADICAL ISLAMIC TERRORISTS," MR. TRUMP ALSO ESTABLISHED A RELIGIOUS TEST FOR REFUGEES FROM MUSLIM NATIONS.

HE ORDERED THAT CHRISTIANS AND OTHERS FROM MINORITY RELIGIONS BE GRANTED PRIORITY OVER MUSLIMS.



CNN

WE DON'T WANT THEM HERE.

(STEPHEN MILLER, SENIOR ADVISOR TO TRUMP.)



OUR OPPONENTS, THE MEDIA, AND THE WHOLE WORLD WILL SOON SEE AS WE BEGIN TO TAKE FURTHER ACTIONS, THAT THE POWERS OF THE PRESIDENT TO PROTECT OUR COUNTRY ARE VERY SUBSTANTIAL AND WILL NOT BE QUESTIONED.

NONPROFIT NEWSROOM PROPUBLICA HAS RELEASED HEARTBREAKING AUDIO OF CHILDREN BEING HELD AT THE MEXICO-US BORDER, CRYING FOR THEIR PARENTS AS FAMILIES ARE TORN APART BY PRESIDENT TRUMP'S ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY.



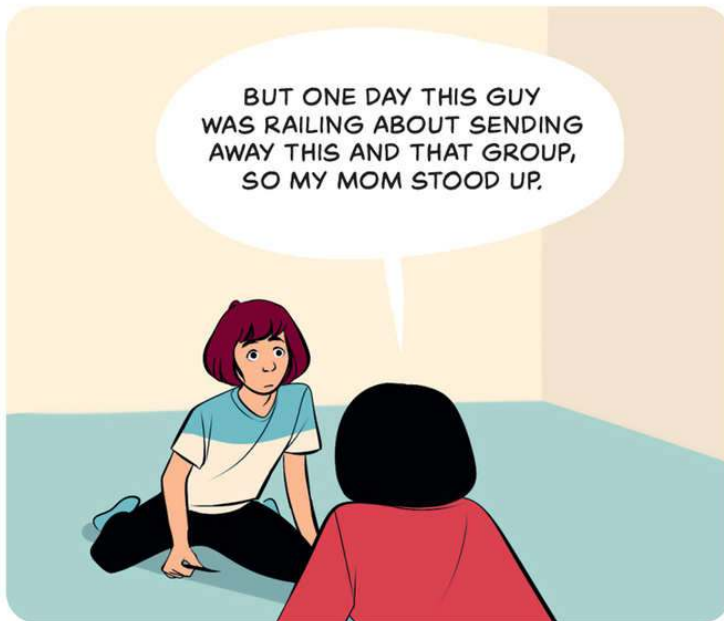
CHILDREN ARE BEING HELD IN DETENTION CENTERS WITH NO CLEAR TIME LINE FOR THEIR RELEASE OR REUNION WITH FAMILY.





AND I WAS SURPRISED WHEN MOM TOLD ME A STORY OF HER MOTHER SAYING THOSE SAME WORDS.








OUR CONNECTION TO THE PAST IS NOT LOST,
EVEN IF WE DON'T HAVE ALL THE DOCUMENTS,
EVEN IF WE NEVER LEARN THE DETAILS. THE
MEMORIES OF COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES STAY
WITH US AND CONTINUE TO AFFECT OUR LIVES.



An illustration of a protest scene. In the foreground, three people are visible: a person with dark curly hair and glasses, a person with black hair and glasses, and a person with red hair. They are holding signs. One sign says 'ABOLISH ICE' and another says 'THE COMMUNITIES'. In the background, a large crowd of people is visible, some holding signs. The sky is blue with white clouds. The overall style is a soft, painterly illustration.

THE PERSECUTION OF A MARGINALIZED GROUP OF PEOPLE IS NEVER JUST ONE ACT OF VIOLENCE—IT'S A CONDEMNATION OF GENERATIONS TO COME WHO LIVE WITH THE ONGOING CONSEQUENCES. WE MAY SUFFER FROM THESE TRAUMAS, BUT WE CAN ALSO USE THEM TO HELP OTHERS AND FIGHT FOR JUSTICE IN OUR OWN TIME,

MEMORIES ARE POWERFUL THINGS.



author's note

The events in this book are a mix of fact and fiction, history and memory. I knew early on that I could never tell this story in its entirety—there were too many missing pieces of information. I was never able to meet my grandmother and ask her about her time spent in Topaz, and like many survivors of camp she died having left many parts of her life unspoken. But it wasn't until I began researching in earnest that I realized how much I never knew about the camps. The more I learned, the more I understood that my grandmother's story never ended with her. The camps left scars on our whole community that were passed down through the Nikkei community and broke up their neighborhoods, and the lingering fear of appearing too effects in ways I hadn't ever examined. Japanese discouraged the passing on of language and culture. This loss left me confused and unsure of my footing in Japanese American spaces, but researching for this book helped me understand and reclaim my place in it. History and memory have tremendous power to heal us and give us the tools we need to know ourselves and navigate the world.

As history repeats itself, as racist hysteria is used to carry out human rights atrocities once again, those tools must be used to help the victims of our own government's actions. These stories are vital, but only if you use them to take action. I hope this one can demonstrate how long-lasting and wide-reaching the damage of community trauma can be, and how vital it is that we fight against those who would inflict it on our most vulnerable neighbors.



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glossary of terms

Incarceration camp: The term you are probably most familiar with in regard to Japanese American history is “internment camp,” and while that is still a common way of referring to them, there is debate about its accuracy. The reality is that “internment camp” is used by the government to pacify the real history of the camps. Some people prefer the more accurate term “American concentration camp,” but that can draw very inaccurate comparisons to the Nazi death camps in Europe. Therefore “incarceration camp,” while not a perfect description, is the term I’ve used in this book.

Generational terms:

Issei: first generation, people who emigrated from Japan

Nisei: second generation, the first generation born in the USA

Sansei: third generation

Yonsei: fourth generation

Nikkei: a general term for people of the Japanese diaspora

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