

THE WOMEN WHO SURVIVED THE TURKEY PURGE



WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY
FERIDE SARIBAS

A GRAPHIC NOVEL



ORIGINAL



THIS STARTED NEARLY TWO YEARS AGO. SINCE THEN, ERDOGAN TRIES TO GET US OUT OF HIS WAY TO AN ANARCHIC TURKEY. THE PURGE SEEMED TO BE ALL PLANNED AHEAD AND, THE BALLOON BURSTED ON JULY 15TH: THE SO-CALLED COUP ATTEMPT.

OLD TURKEY NO LONGER EXISTS. THIS TURKEY IS NEW TURKEY!

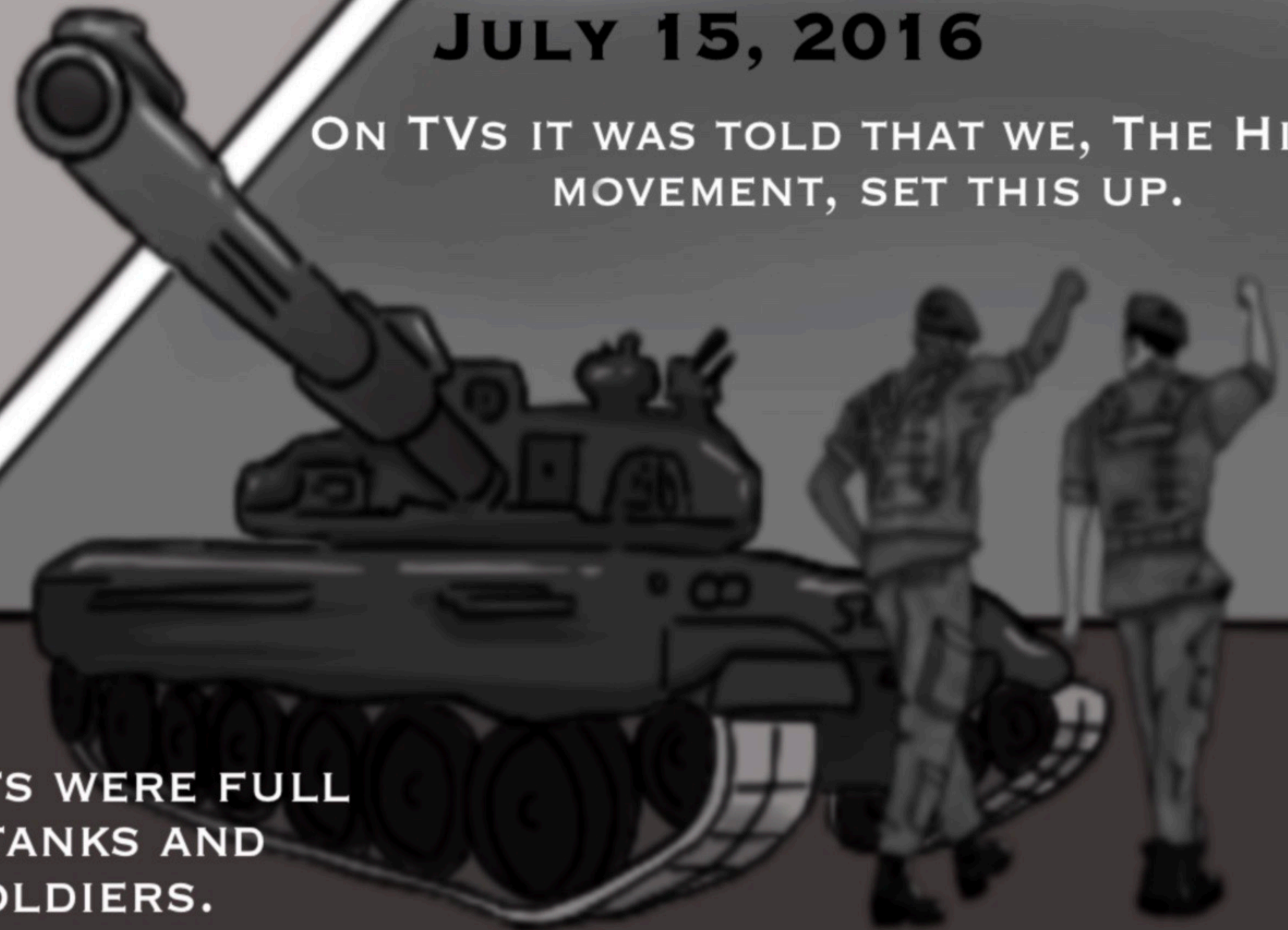


EVERYONE WAS LOOKING FOR SOMEONE TO BLAME.

THEY DID IT!

JULY 15, 2016

ON TV'S IT WAS TOLD THAT WE, THE HIZMET MOVEMENT, SET THIS UP.



STREETS WERE FULL OF TANKS AND SOLDIERS.

WE ARE NOW THE SCAPEGOAT OF DICTATOR ERDOGAN'S REGIME

LABELED AS "F..Ö"



THEY CALLED US TERRORISTS!



WE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG WE JUST TRIED TO MAKE THIS WORLD A BETTER PLACE!



ALL WE DID WAS THAT:

WE CARED FOR OTHERS WE LOVED OTHERS

WE GOT TIRED TO MAKE OTHERS LIVE IN A BEAUTIFUL WORLD!



AND NOW WHAT WE GET IN RETURN ARE



HANDCUFFS

THEY ARRESTED THOUSANDS OF INNOCENT PEOPLE. THEY ARRESTED SICK PEOPLE, OLD PEOPLE, PREGNANT WOMEN, DADS, HUSBANDS, WIVES AND MOMS, EVEN BABIES. TURKEY WAS NO LONGER A PLACE TO LIVE FOR US.



AUGUST 18, 2016 - ATATÜRK AIRPORT



SINCE MY HUSBAND WAS THE PRINCIPAL OF ONE OF THE HIZMET AFFILIATED SCHOOLS, HIS NAME WAS ON THE LIST. WE TALKED ABOUT WHAT WE SHOULD DO. I SAID: "YOU HAVE TO GO, AT LEAST WE'LL KNOW THAT YOU ARE SAFE EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE FAR AWAY FROM US. HE DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING. HE STARTED CRYING. IT WAS VERY RARE THAT I'VE SEEN HIM CRY. HE IS A VERY STRONG HUSBAND AND, DAD. I HUGGED HIM, HOLDING MY TEARS UP. I DIDN'T KNOW IF I WOULD BE ABLE TO HUG HIM LIKE THIS EVER AGAIN. THE NEXT DAY WE WENT TO THE AIRPORT. NOBODY FROM OUR FAMILY CAME TO SAY GOODBYE, IT WAS JUST ME, OUR SON, MY LOVE AND HIS YOUNGEST BROTHER. WE HUGGED AND KISSED EACH OTHER AS WE KNEW THAT WE WERE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO FOR A LONG TIME.

IT WAS NOW JUST TWO US: ME AND A SON THAT REMINDS ME OF HIS FATHER



WHEN WE GOT HOME AHMET, MY SON, LOOKED RIGHT INTO MY EYES AND SAID: "DON'T WORRY ANNE! I AM ALWAYS HERE WITH YOU AND WE'LL SEE DAD SOON."

HE SLEPT IN HIS DAD'S SIDE OF OUR BED EVERY NIGHT, HUGGING HIS CLOTHES.



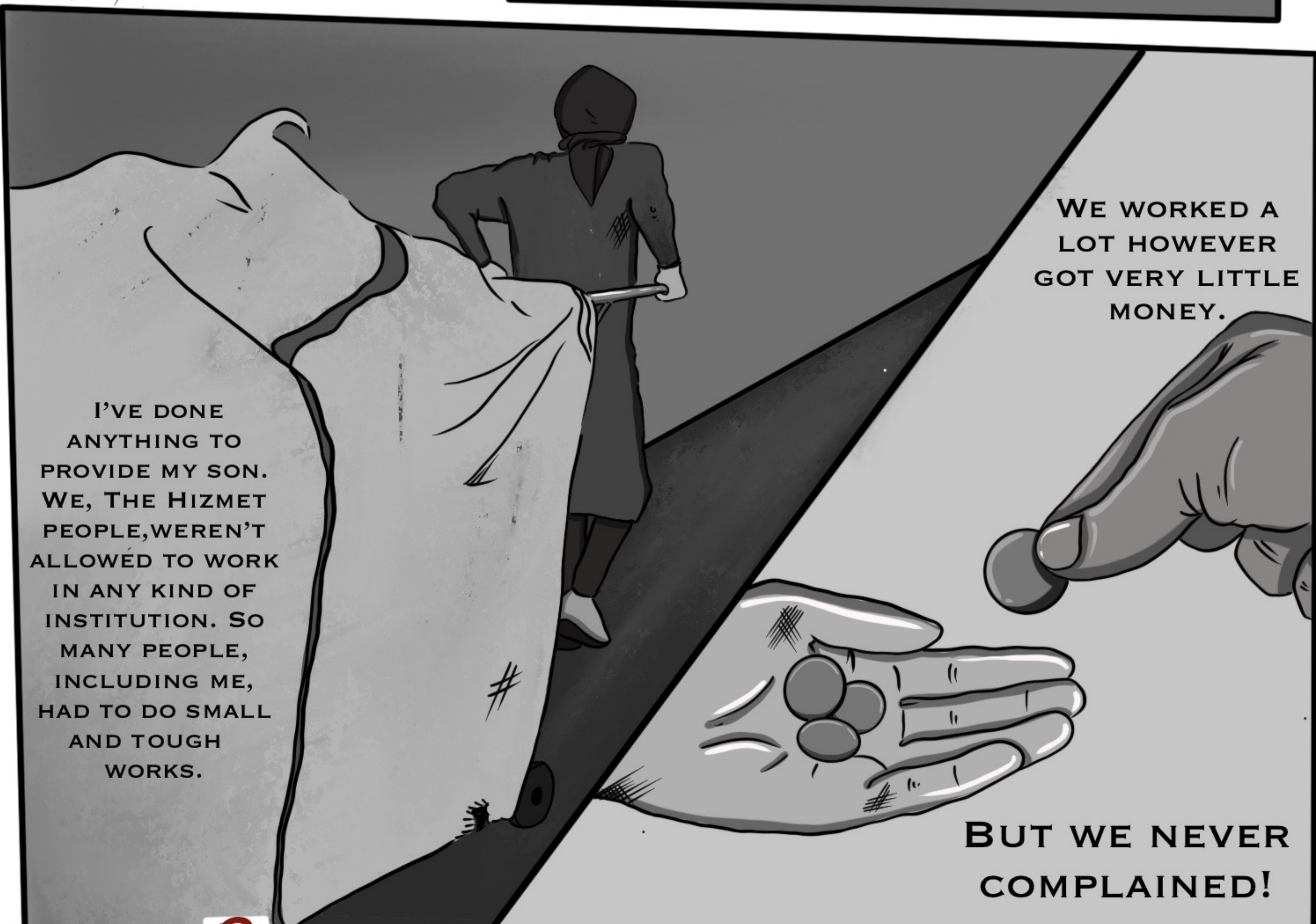
IT WASN'T EASY TO LIVE IN THE "NEW TURKEY". MY SON WAS CONSTANTLY GETTING BULLIED IN SCHOOL. BECAUSE HE CAME FROM HIZMET SCHOOLS.

HE WAS CALLED A "TERRORIST" IN HIS SCHOOL.



I'VE DONE ANYTHING TO PROVIDE MY SON. WE, THE HIZMET PEOPLE, WEREN'T ALLOWED TO WORK IN ANY KIND OF INSTITUTION. SO MANY PEOPLE, INCLUDING ME, HAD TO DO SMALL AND TOUGH WORKS.

WE WORKED A LOT HOWEVER GOT VERY LITTLE MONEY.



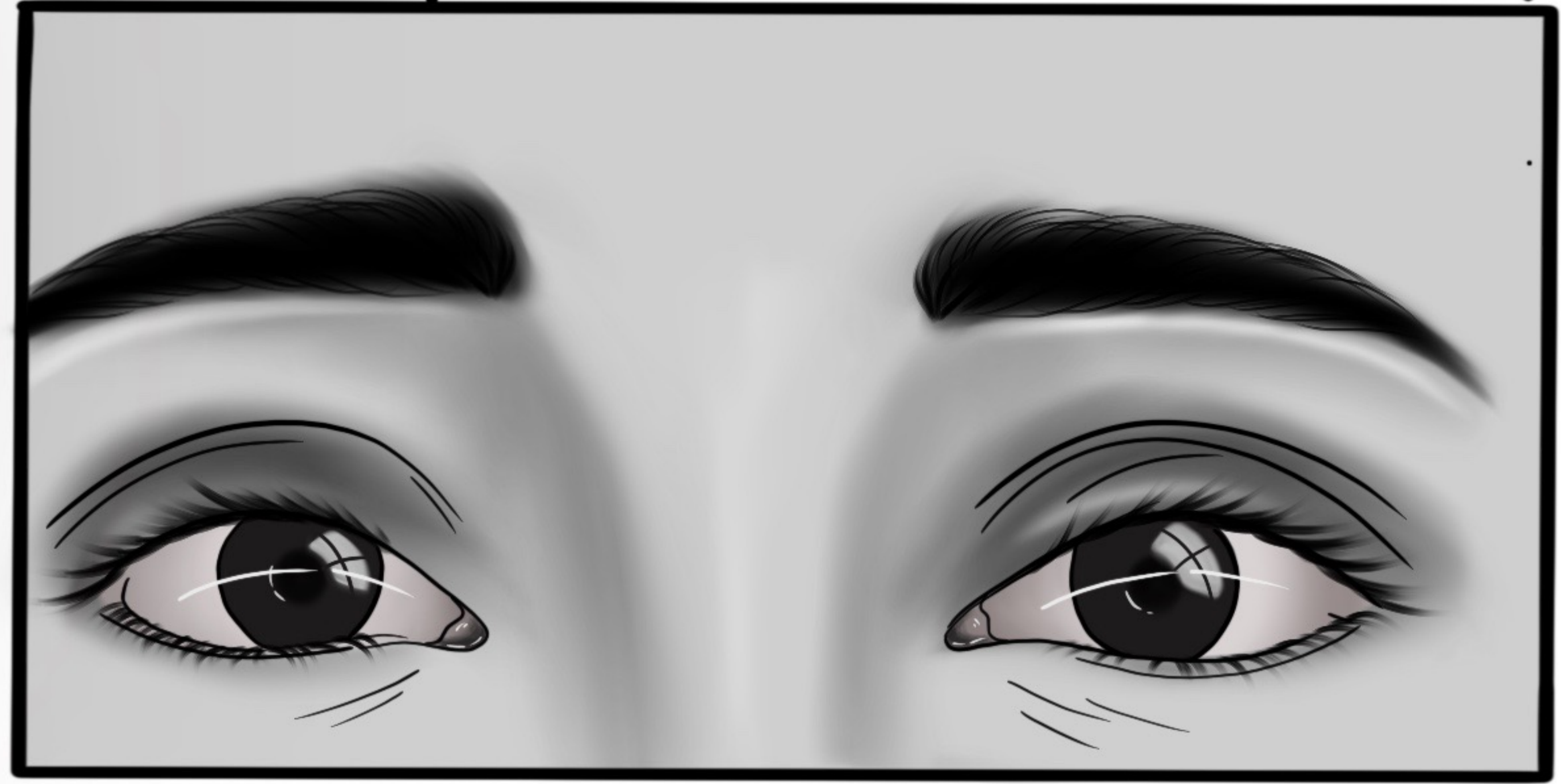
BUT WE NEVER COMPLAINED!

ONE DAY MY FRIEND TOLD ME THAT SHE SAW A POLICE CAR IN FRONT OF MY HOUSE WHEN I WAS OUT WORKING.

SHE SAID THAT THEY LOOKED TO SEE IF I WAS HOME!



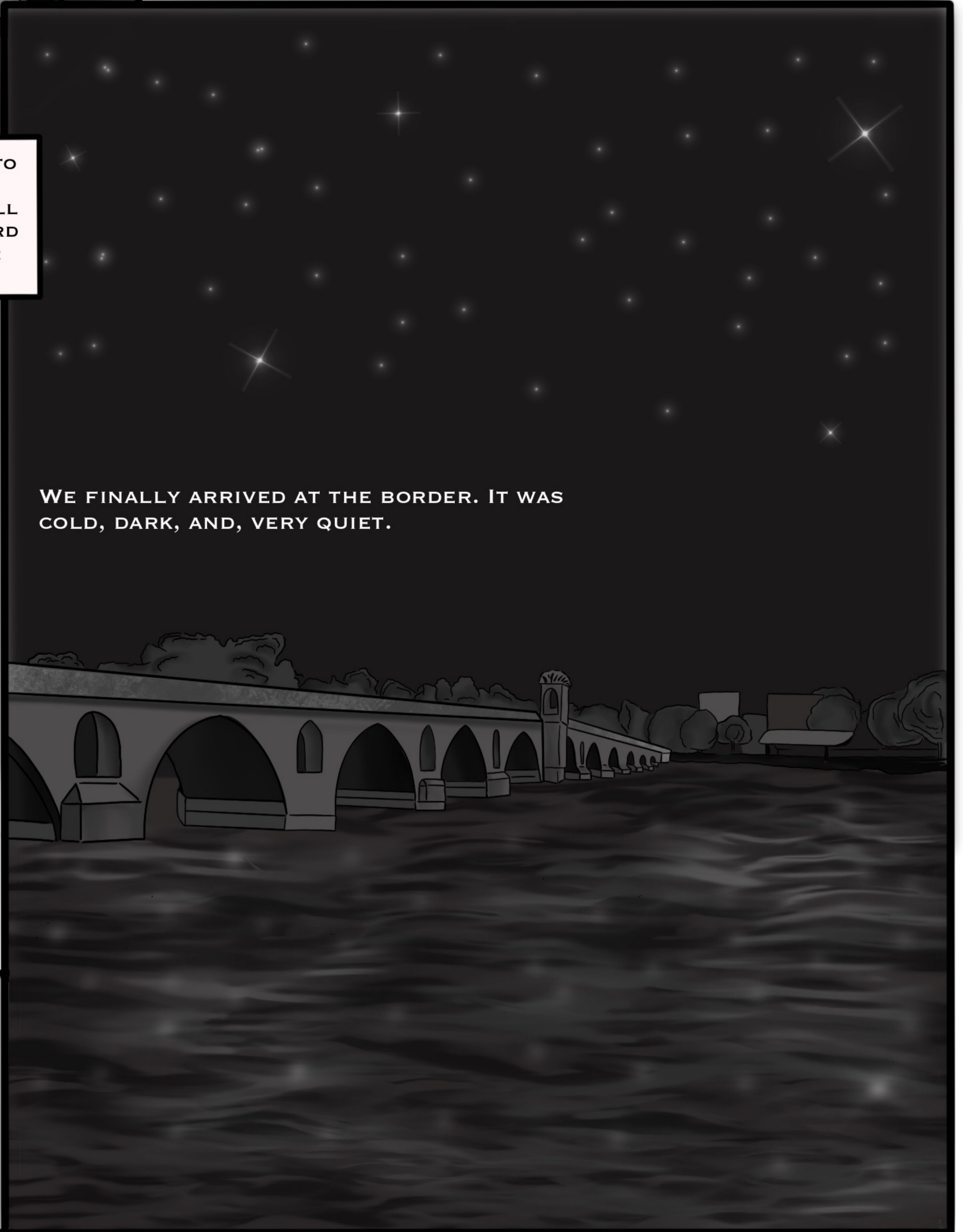
THIS WAS IT. WE HAD TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY, HOWEVER IF WE TRIED TO GET OUT LEGALLY THEY WOULD ARREST ME! SO WE HAD TO DO IT ALL SECRETLY.



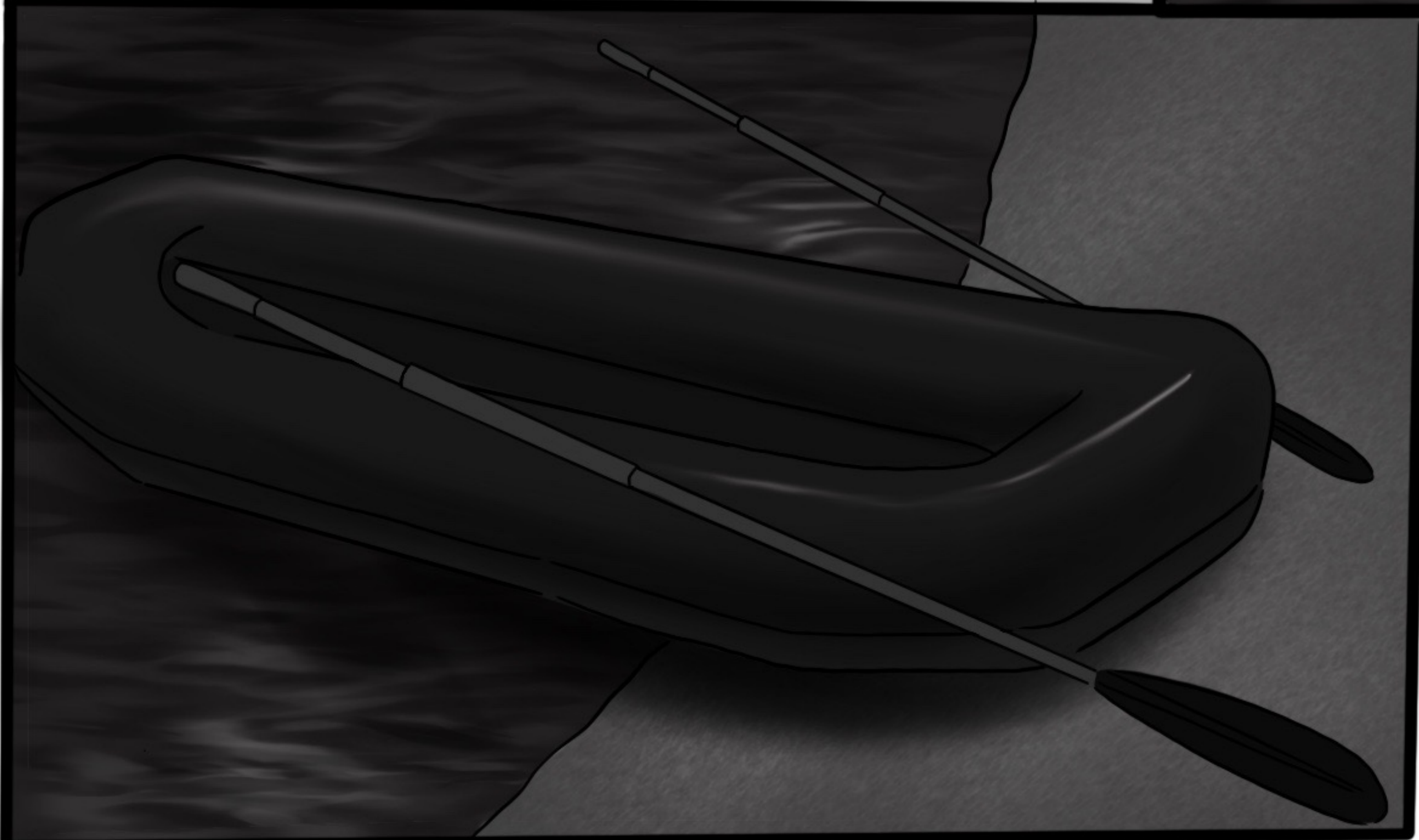
WE BOUGHT AN INFLATABLE BOAT TO GET US TO THE GREECE-TURKEY BORDER. AS SOON AS THE DARK FELL DOWN WE STARTED WALKING TOWARD THE SHORE. WE KEPT WALKING FOR NEARLY 5 HOURS.



WE FINALLY ARRIVED AT THE BORDER. IT WAS COLD, DARK, AND, VERY QUIET.



I DIDN'T KNOW HOW WE WERE GOING TO MAKE IT TO THE BORDER BUT NO MATTER WHAT I HAD TO SAVE MY SON FROM THIS HARSH LIFE. OUR PLAN WAS THAT WHEN WE GET TO THE GREECE-TURKISH BORDER, WE WOULD SEEK ASYLUM. NOW, THE FIRST STEP WAS TO GET TO GREECE. I PRAYED TO ALLAH AND STARTED TO ROW.



AFTER WE WERE HELD IN THE BORDER PROTECTION OFFICE FOR A WEEK, THEY DIRECTED US TO ONE OF THE REFUGEE CAMPS IN GREECE.



THE CAMP WAS VERY CROWDED. THERE WERE PEOPLE MOSTLY FROM THE MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES, SUCH AS SYRIA, PAKISTAN, IRAN, AND IRAQ. THERE WAS ONE THING THAT WAS COMMON AMONGST US: WE WERE ALL OPPRESSED BACK IN OUR COUNTRIES.

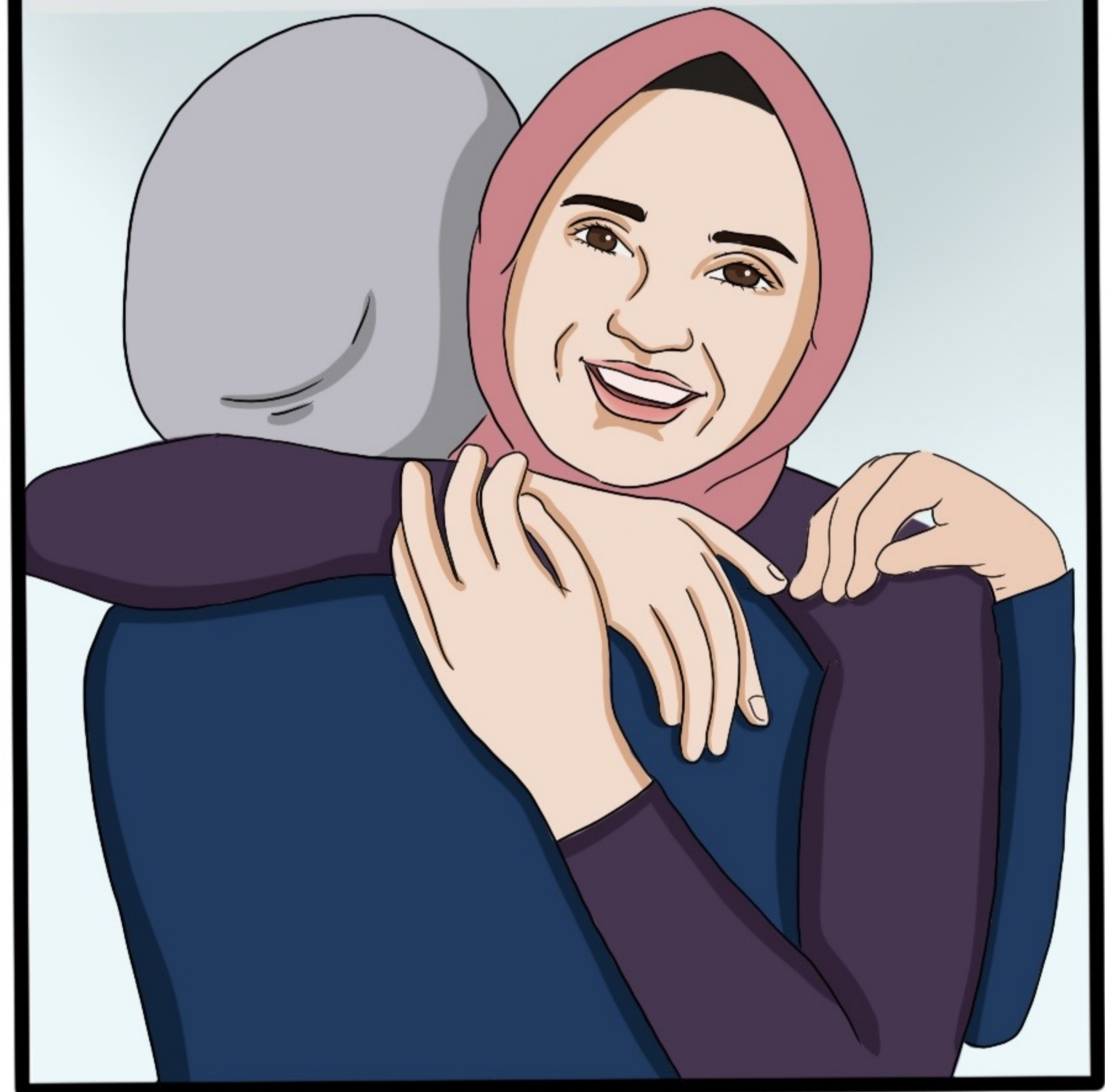
IT LOOKED LIKE EVERYONE WAS VERY POLITE, HOWEVER I WAS A LITTLE WORRIED ABOUT LIVING IN SUCH PLACE WITHOUT MY HUSBAND NEAR US.



WHILE I WAS LOOKING FOR THE TENT WE WERE ASSIGNED TO, I SAW A WOMAN WHO LOOKED FAMILIAR FAR AWAY. AS I CAME CLOSER I HEARD HER SPEAK TURKISH WITH HER CHILDREN. THEN I REALIZED THAT SHE WAS ALSO LIVING IN THE TENT THAT WE WERE ASSIGNED TO.



HER NAME WAS ESRA. SHE HAD 4 KIDS, ZEYNEP, ALI, ÖMER, AND DAMLA. HER HUSBAND WAS IN PRISON BACK IN TURKEY



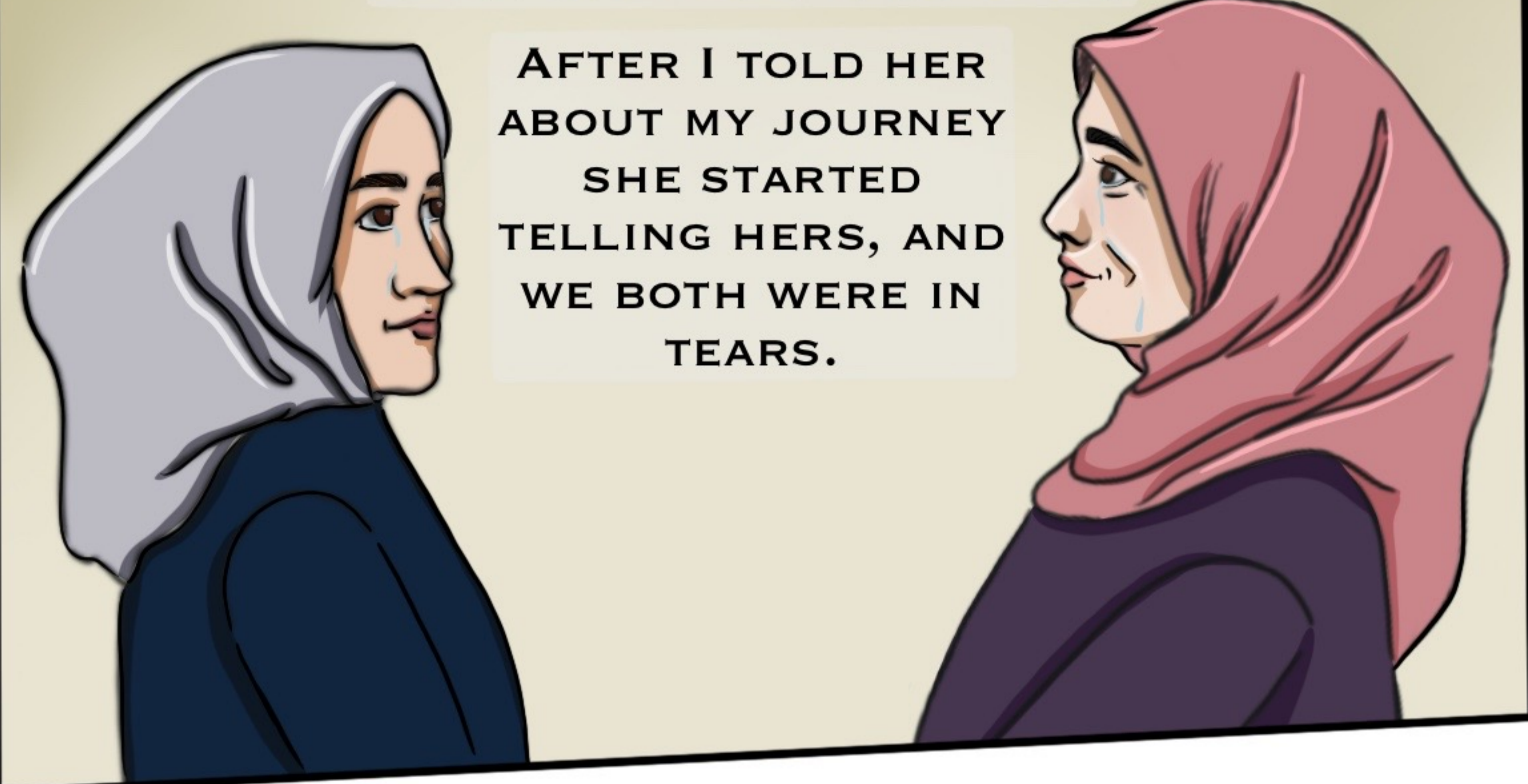
THIS WAS WHAT THE INSIDE OF A TENT LOOKED LIKE, OR BETTER TO SAY "OUR NEXT HOME". WE DIDN'T KNOW THEN, THAT WE WERE ABOUT TO SPEND SOME TIME OF OUR LIVES THERE. EVEN THOUGH THE TENT WAS COLD, OUR WARM HEARTS WERE ENOUGH TO WARM EACH OTHER.





WE PREPARED THE DINNER AND STARTED EATING. THERE WASN'T MUCH, HOWEVER, WE WERE VERY THANKFUL THAT WE HAD SOMETHING TO EAT.

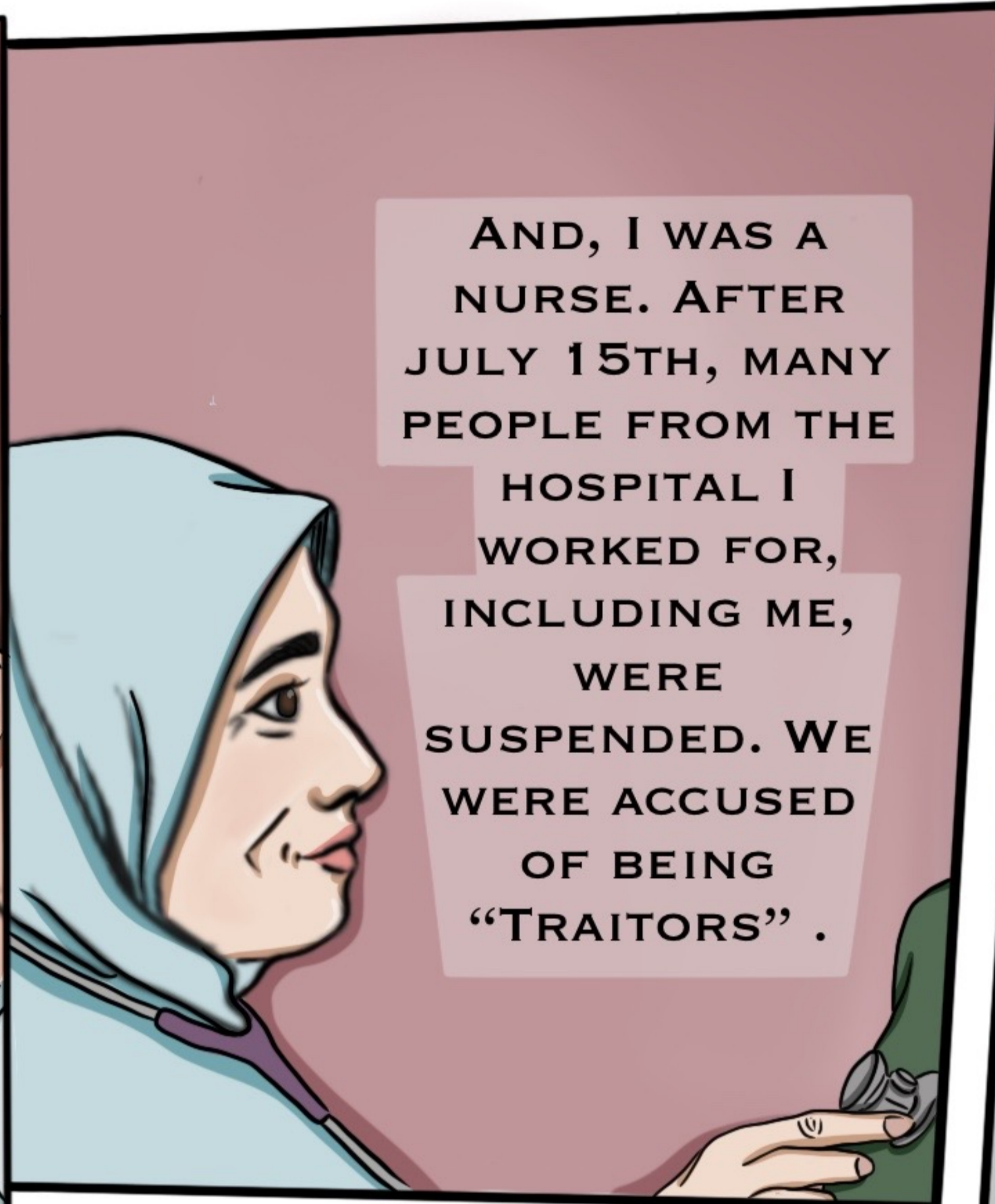
AFTER THE DINNER ESRA AND I DOVE INTO CHAT. SHE ASKED ME ABOUT MY STORY AND I ASKED HER ABOUT HERS. WE BOTH KNEW THAT WHAT WE HAVE GONE THROUGH WAS HARSH, HOWEVER WE SURVIVED IT AND WE STILL CONTINUE TO SURVIVE.



AFTER I TOLD HER ABOUT MY JOURNEY SHE STARTED TELLING HERS, AND WE BOTH WERE IN TEARS.



"MY HUSBAND WAS THE MANAGER OF ONE OF THE BANK ASYA DEPARTMENTS. AS YOU KNOW THE GOVERNMENT DIDN'T LIKE BANK ASYA SINCE IT WAS A HIZMET-AFFILIATED INSTITUTION.



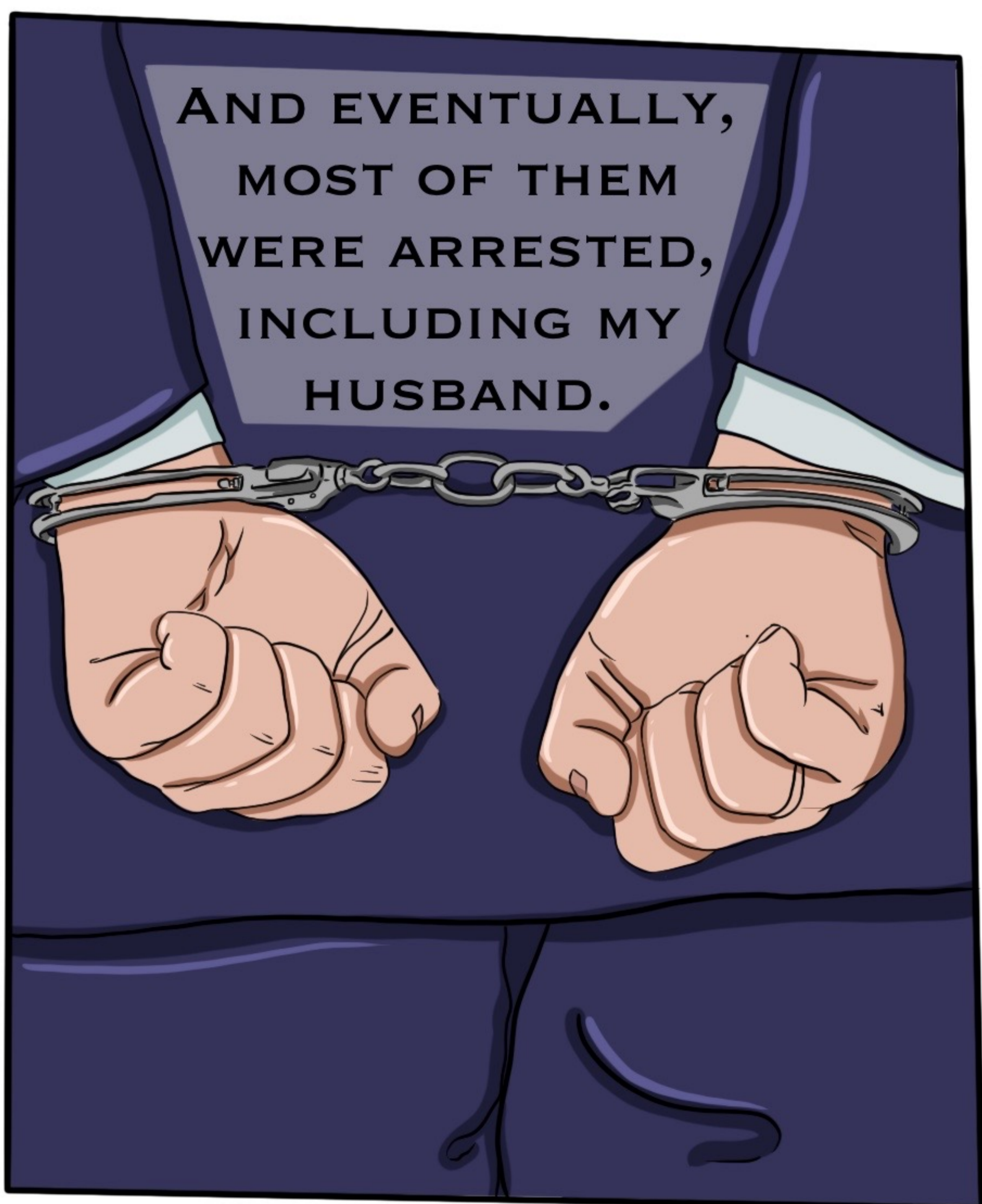
AND, I WAS A NURSE. AFTER JULY 15TH, MANY PEOPLE FROM THE HOSPITAL I WORKED FOR, INCLUDING ME, WERE SUSPENDED. WE WERE ACCUSED OF BEING "TRAITORS".

PEOPLE CALLED US "TERRORISTS"



AFTER JULY 15TH, BANK ASYA WAS SHUT DOWN BY THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT.

AND AS A RESULT, HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE WERE SUSPENDED.



AND EVENTUALLY, MOST OF THEM WERE ARRESTED, INCLUDING MY HUSBAND.



BILAL WAS MY EVERYTHING, WE GOT OVER EVERYTHING TOGETHER. AND NOW, I WAS LEFT ALL ALONE WITH MY 4 CHILDREN.

IT TOOK ME A WEEK TO BECOME THAT "STRONG MOM" MY CHILDREN NEEDED; A WHOLE WEEK FULL OF TEARS!

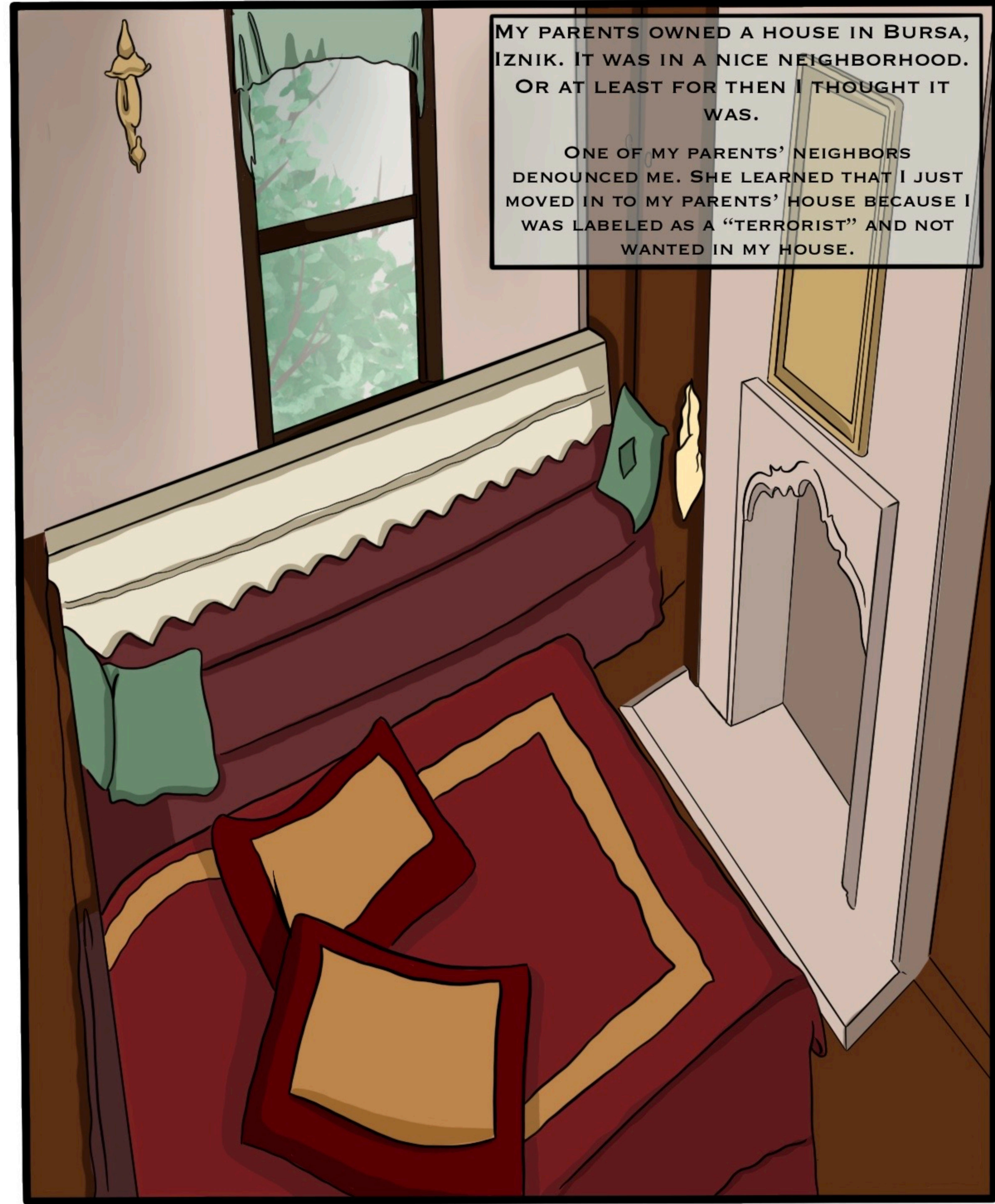


EVENTUALLY, OUR LANDLORD THREW US OUT OF OUR HOUSE. HIS REASON WAS THAT THERE WAS NO PLACE FOR "TERRORISTS" IN HIS HOUSE.

WE HAD TO MOVE OUT TO MY PARENTS' HOUSE IN BURSA. IT WAS 2 MONTHS SINCE MY HUSBAND, BILAL, HAD BEEN ARRESTED. I DIDN'T TELL MY PARENTS ABOUT THIS UNTIL WE MOVED INTO THEIR HOUSE. MY MOM WAS A LITTLE ANGRY WITH ME FOR HIDING THAT FACT FROM THEM, BUT SHE UNDERSTOOD MY INTENTION. KIDS WERE SO HAPPY THAT THEY SAW THEIR GRANDPARENTS. AFTER TWO MONTHS, I FINALLY SAW THEM SMILE. ZEYNEP, ALI, AND DAMLA STARTED GOING TO BURSA MIDDLE SCHOOL.

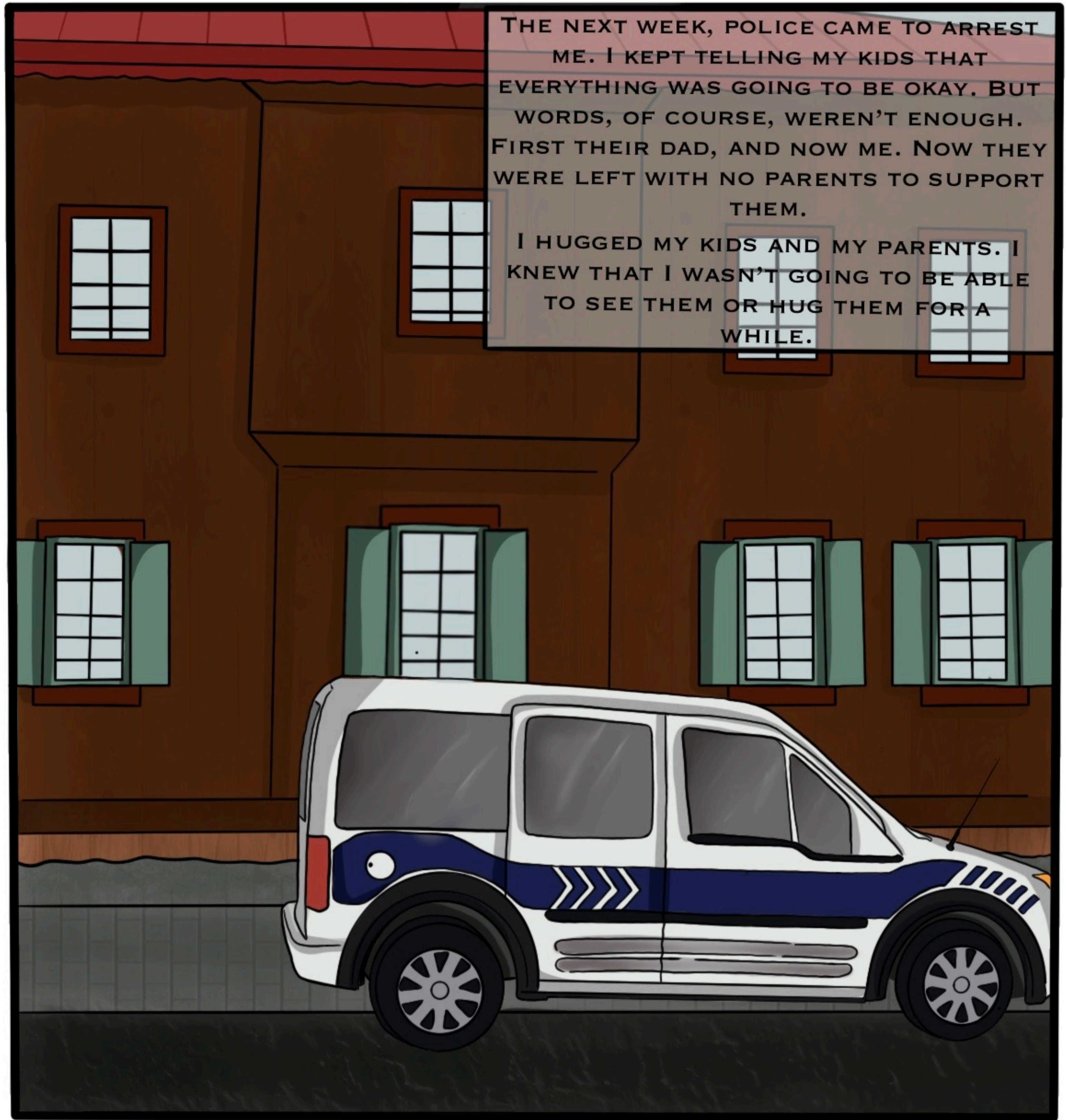


AFTER A WEEK, MY CHILDREN STARTED GETTING ASSAULTED BY BOTH THE SCHOOL STAFF AND THEIR PEERS.



MY PARENTS OWNED A HOUSE IN BURSA, IZNIK. IT WAS IN A NICE NEIGHBORHOOD. OR AT LEAST FOR THEN I THOUGHT IT WAS.

ONE OF MY PARENTS' NEIGHBORS DENOUNCED ME. SHE LEARNED THAT I JUST MOVED IN TO MY PARENTS' HOUSE BECAUSE I WAS LABELED AS A "TERRORIST" AND NOT WANTED IN MY HOUSE.



THE NEXT WEEK, POLICE CAME TO ARREST ME. I KEPT TELLING MY KIDS THAT EVERYTHING WAS GOING TO BE OKAY. BUT WORDS, OF COURSE, WEREN'T ENOUGH. FIRST THEIR DAD, AND NOW ME. NOW THEY WERE LEFT WITH NO PARENTS TO SUPPORT THEM.

I HUGGED MY KIDS AND MY PARENTS. I KNEW THAT I WASN'T GOING TO BE ABLE TO SEE THEM OR HUG THEM FOR A WHILE.



T.C
ADALET BAKANLIĞI
A H TİPİ KAPALI CEZA İNFAZ
KURUMU MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ



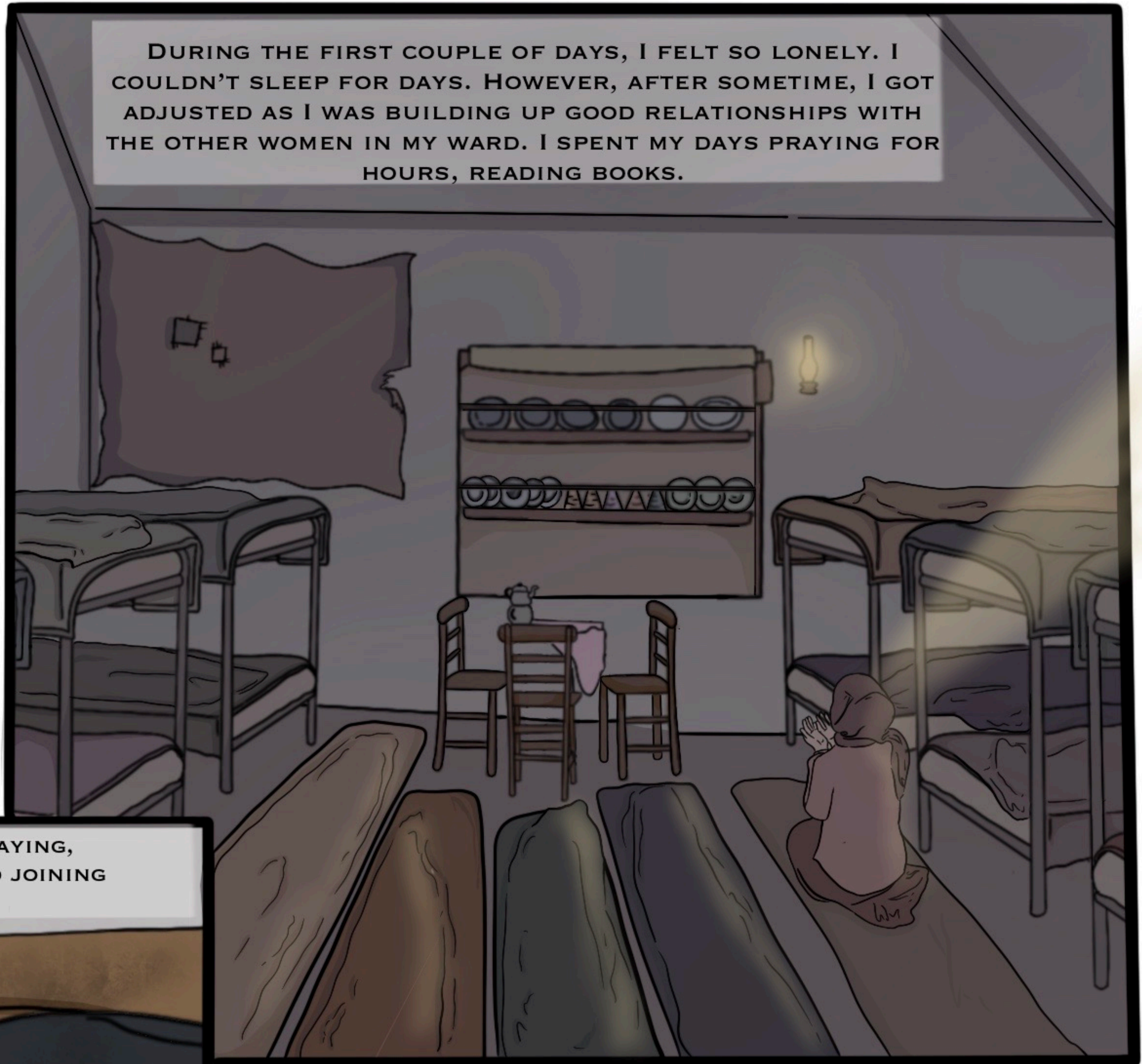
AFTER BEING HELD IN CUSTODY FOR 3 DAYS, THEY BROUGHT ME TO BURSA CLOSED CRIMINAL EXECUTION INSTITUTION.



THE WARD I WAS PUT INTO HAD 16 WOMEN IN IT. I MET ALL OF THEM ONE BY ONE, ASKED THEM ABOUT WHY THEY WERE HERE. ALL OF THEM WERE THERE FOR AT LEAST A YEAR NOT BECAUSE THEY COMMITTED A REAL CRIME OR WENT AGAINST THE LAW. HOWEVER, THEY WERE ALL NICE WOMEN. WHEN THEY ASKED ME THE REASON WHY I WAS THERE, I SAID THAT I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WHY I WAS THERE. ONE DAY I WOKE UP AND LABELED AS A "TERRORIST" JUST BECAUSE I WAS A PART OF A MOVEMENT THAT CONNECTS THE WORLD WITH BEAUTY. I, ALONG WITH THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE, WAS STIGMATIZED AS A "TRAITOR".



DURING THE FIRST COUPLE OF DAYS, I FELT SO LONELY. I COULDN'T SLEEP FOR DAYS. HOWEVER, AFTER SOMETIME, I GOT ADJUSTED AS I WAS BUILDING UP GOOD RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE OTHER WOMEN IN MY WARD. I SPENT MY DAYS PRAYING FOR HOURS, READING BOOKS.



AS A RESULT OF OTHERS SEEING ME PRAYING, READING QURAN, AND ETC., THEY STARTED JOINING ME.

WE WOULD READ SECTIONS FROM BOOKS AND DISCUSS THEM, WE WOULD PERFORM OUR DAILY PRAYERS TOGETHER. SO OUR DAYS WERE VERY PRODUCTIVE.



I WAS RELEASED AT THE END OF MY 10TH MONTH. I WAS, OF COURSE, EXTREMELY HAPPY THAT I FINALLY GOT TO SEE MY KIDS. BUT, AT THE SAME TIME, I COULDN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT MY FRIENDS WHO WERE LEFT BACK IN JAIL.



THAT NIGHT, MY DAD CALLED ME OVER TO HAVE A WORD. HE TOLD ME THAT I HAD TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. HE KNEW THAT IT WAS A VERY HARD THING TO DO WITHOUT MY HUSBAND. BUT, I KNEW THAT TURKEY, RIGHT NOW, WASN'T THE PLACE I WANTED MY KIDS TO BE IN. I WANTED THEM TO LIVE A FREE LIFE, WHERE THEY CAN STATE THEIR OPINIONS AND NOT GET PENALIZED. I WANTED THEM TO RECEIVE A GOOD EDUCATION, WHERE THEY DON'T GET DISCRIMINATED BECAUSE OF THEIR BACKGROUNDS. I WANTED ALL THE BEAUTIFUL THINGS FOR THEM. AND I HAD TO LISTEN TO MY DAD IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE MY DREAMS FOR MY KIDS.

AFTER 2 WEEKS, WE WENT TO VISIT MY HUSBAND - WHICH WE WERE ALLOWED TO DO ONCE A MONTH. I TOLD HIM ABOUT MY THOUGHTS ABOUT LEAVING THE COUNTRY. BUT WHEN HE SAW THAT SCARED FACE ON ME HE PUT A KISS ON MY CHEEKS, HE HUGGED ME AND SAID: "WE'LL BE OKEY. ALLAH IS WATCHING US. HE IS THE ONE TO PROTECT YOU, ME, AND OUR KIDS, AND EVERYONE ELSE. DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME. I'LL CALL YOU EVERY MONTH. YOU ARE THE STRONGEST WOMAN I'VE KNOWN IN MY LIFE OTHER THAN MY MOM."

MY DAD AND MY BABY, ÖMER, CAME TO PICK ME UP FROM THE PRISON.



WHEN I HUGGED MY SON, I FELT CURED. I, ONCE AGAIN, REALIZED THAT I HAD TO BE A STRONG WOMAN AND DO EVERYTHING I COULD TO BE SUPPORTIVE FOR MY KIDS.

AS WE WERE LEAVING, I HUGGED HIM VERY HARD. HE PUT INTO MY HANDS THE HANDKERCHIEF I GAVE HIM IN OUR FIRST ANNIVERSARY AND SAID: "ALLAH'A EMANET. I LOVE YOU"



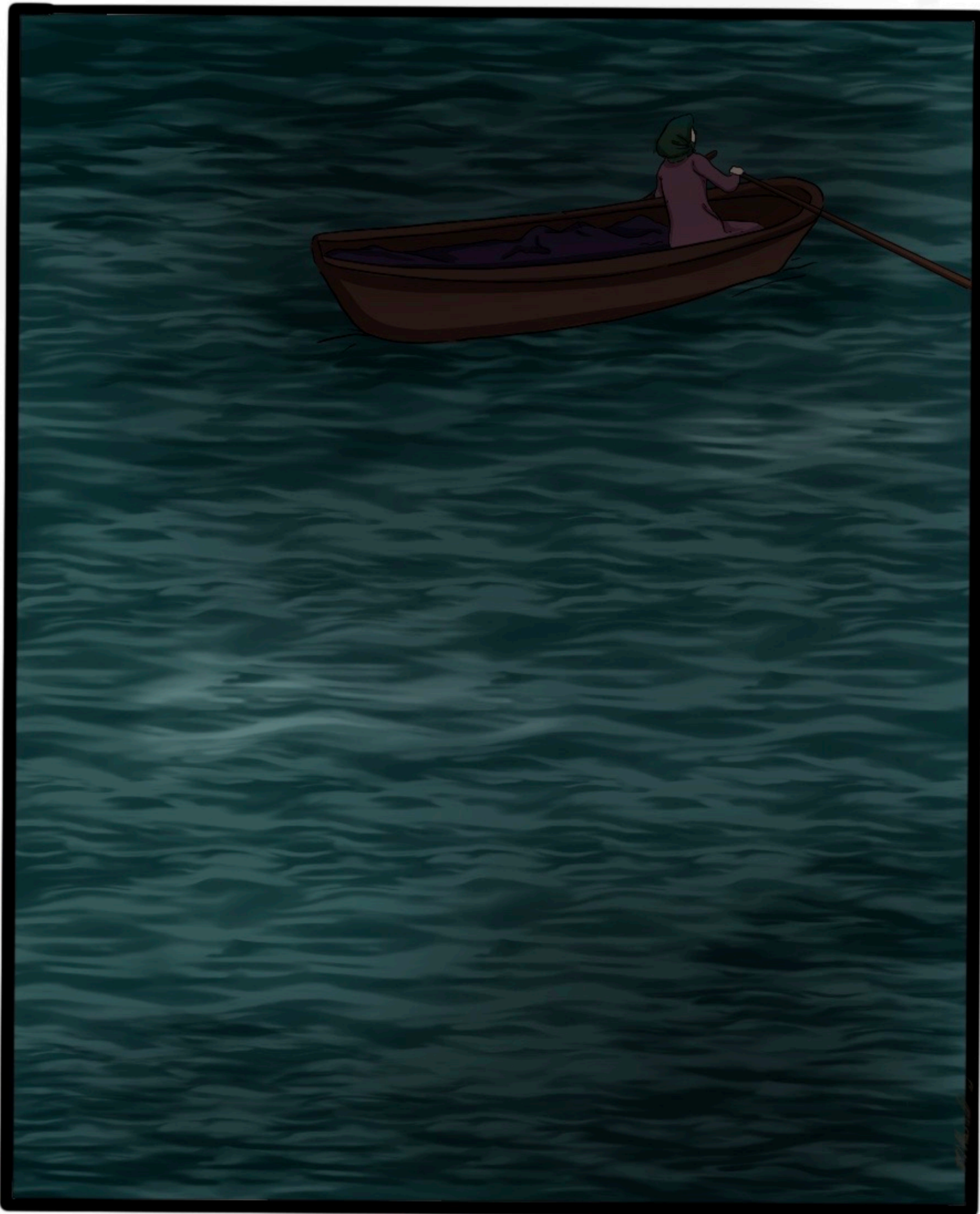
WE TOOK THE EARLIEST BUS TO EDIRNE, SUBAŞI. WE WERE PLANNING ON CROSSING THE MARITSA RIVER TO GET TO GREECE BECAUSE THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY. IF THE TURKISH AUTHORITIES SAW ME IN THE BORDER, THEY WOULD ARREST ME.



WE WALKED FOR APPROXIMATELY 11 KILOMETERS FROM THE BUS STATION UNTIL WE REACHED THE MARITSA RIVER. IT WAS 11:24 P.M. WHEN WE REACHED THERE. IT WAS PRETTY DARK AND COLD THAT THE KIDS WERE GETTING A LITTLE SCARED. I HAD BOUGHT A SECOND HAND WOODEN BOAT. IT WASN'T THE BEST, BUT IT WAS ENOUGH TO GET US ACROSS THE RIVER. I HID THE KIDS UNDER A BLANKET SO THAT NO ONE COULD SEE. I STARTED ROWING. IT TOOK US NEARLY AN HOUR TO GET THROUGH THE RIVER BECAUSE IT WAS VERY MUDDY AND ROWING WAS PRETTY DIFFICULT.



I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE TO GO. WE WALKED UNTIL WE SAW THE HIGHWAY AND SAT THERE. WE HAD QUICK SNACKS TO FEED OURSELVES FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS. WHILE WE WERE SITTING THERE, 3 POLICE OFFICERS CAME TOWARDS US. THEY WERE SPEAKING IN GREEK SO I DIDN'T CATCH A WORD THEY WERE SAYING. I TRIED TO SAY WHY WE WERE THERE IN ENGLISH BUT APPARENTLY THEY DIDN'T UNDERSTAND MUCH ENGLISH. SO, THEY TOOK US WITH THEM TO THE BORDER PROTECTION INSTITUTION. THEY QUESTIONED ME WHILE I WAS THERE FOR 2 DAYS. WHEN THEY UNDERSTOOD OUR SITUATION, THEY DIRECTED US TO A REFUGEE CAMP.

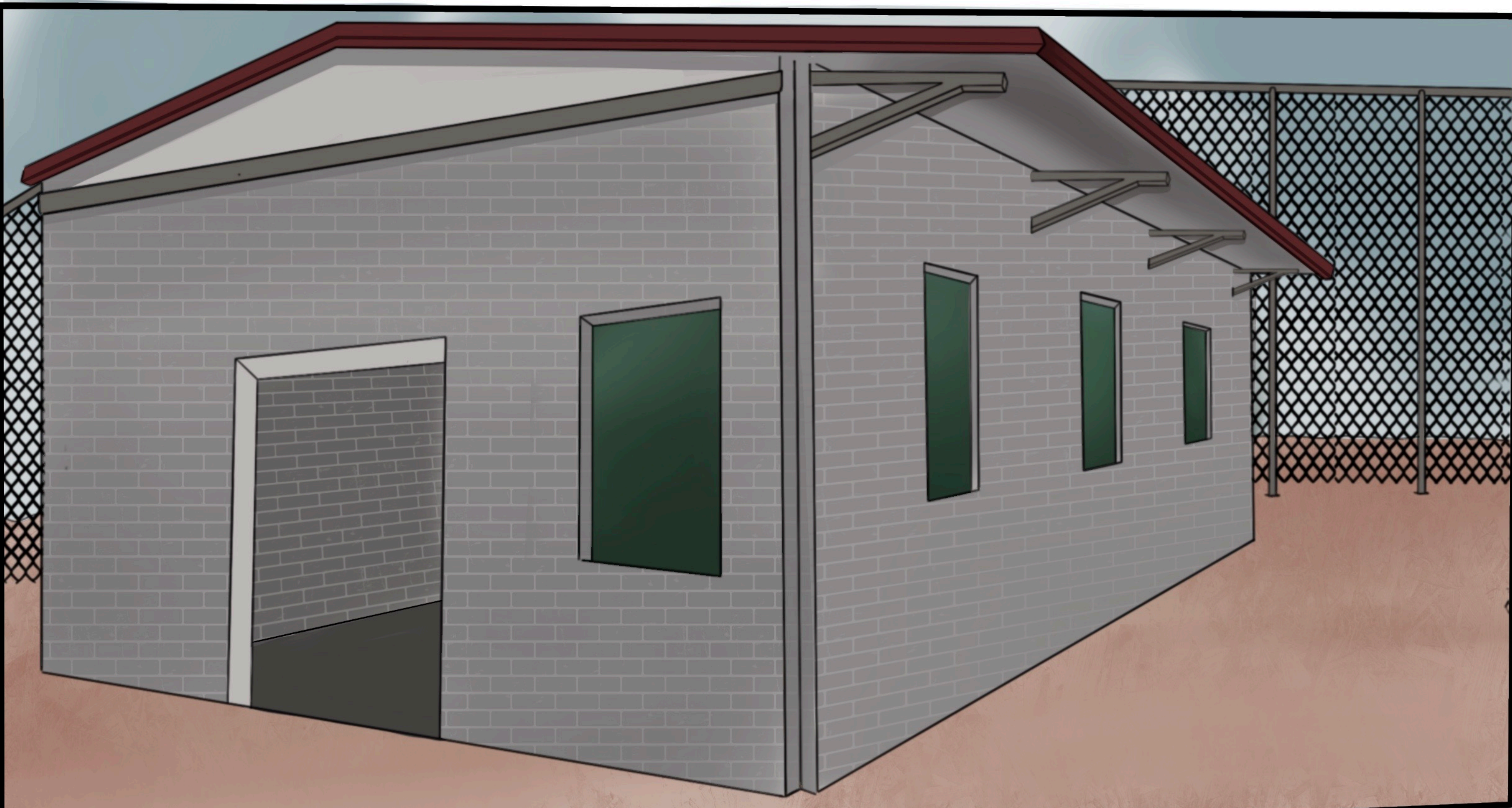


JUST LIKE YOU AND YOUR SON, WE WENT THROUGH THE SAME REGISTRATION PROCESS. I KNOW THAT THE CONDITIONS AREN'T THE BEST, HOWEVER, WE ARE VERY FORTUNATE THAT WE CAME ALL THE WAY TO HERE. AND WE SHOULD KEEP DOING WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING: BEING STRONG MOTHERS, WIVES AND WOMEN. DESPITE THE OPPRESSIONS OF TYRANTS, WE WILL CONTINUE MOVING FORWARD WITHOUT COLLAPSING. WE WILL NOT LET THEM ACHIEVE WHAT THEY WANT TO. AND THIS IS HOME FOR NOW. WE SHALL LIVE AND BE THANKFUL FOR WHAT WE HAVE. ALLAH WILL HOPEFULLY BLESS US WITH BETTER DAYS.

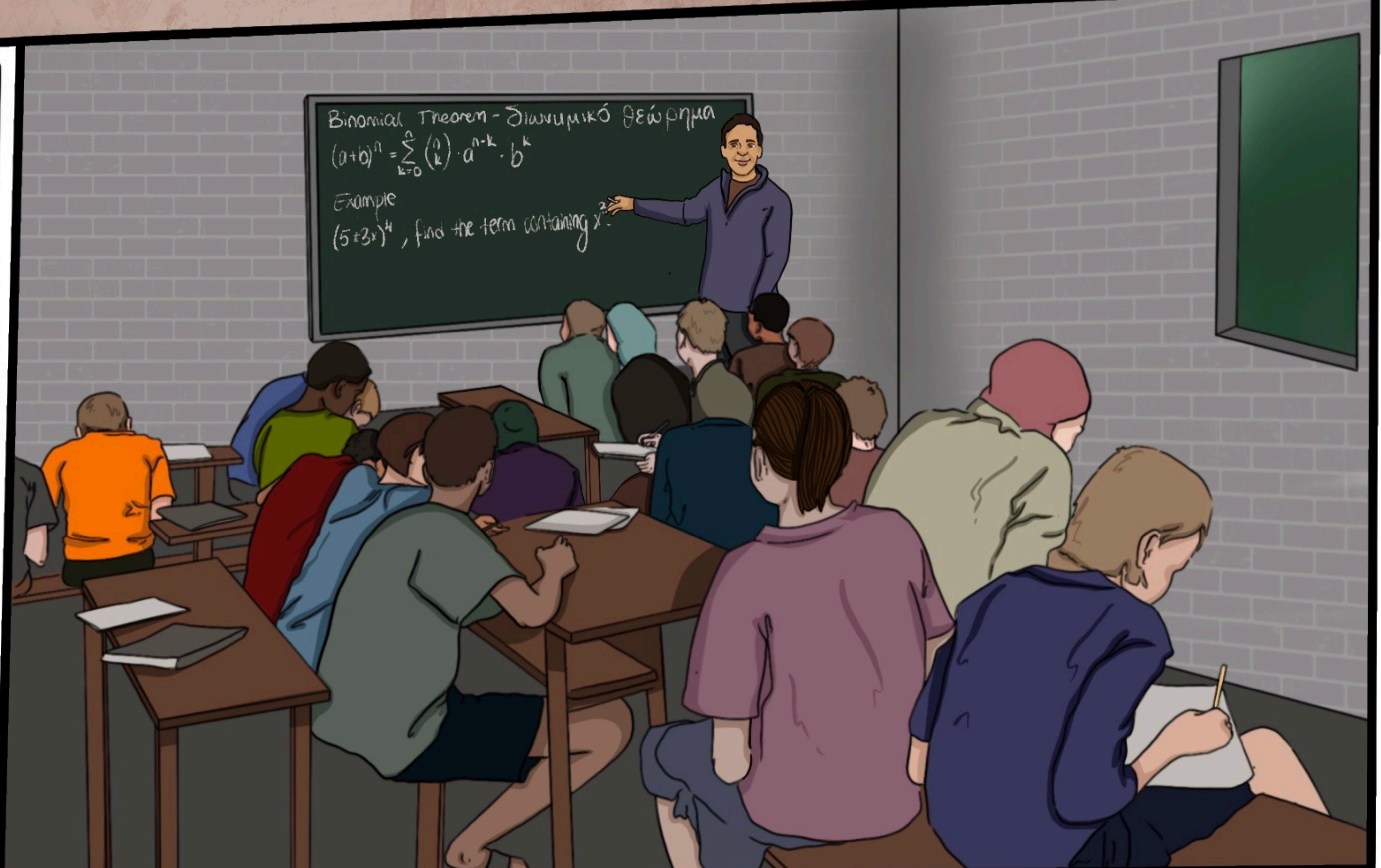


WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER.





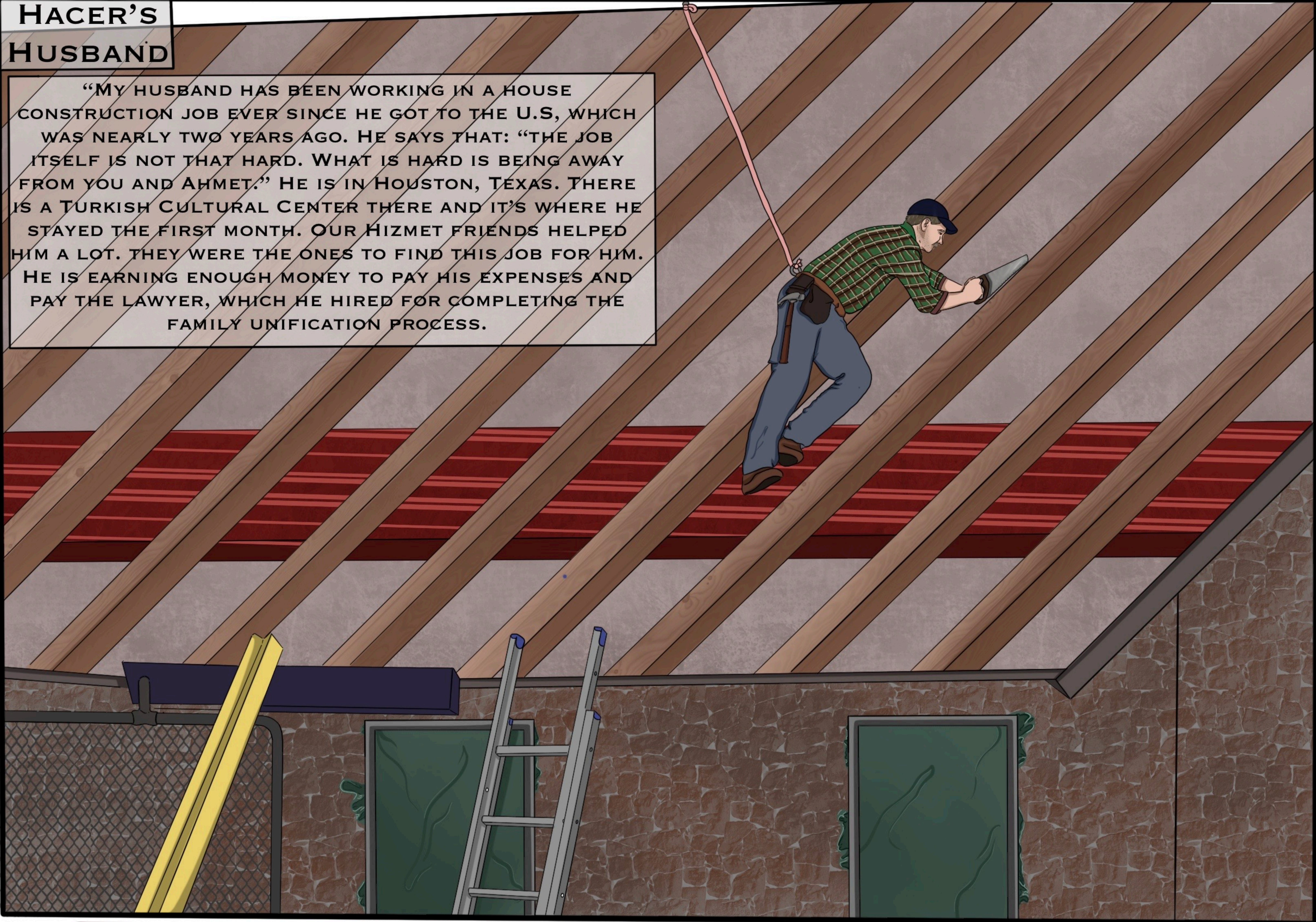
CHILDREN WEREN'T FORGOTTEN AT THE CAMP. THERE WAS SCHOOL FOUR DAYS A WEEK FOR CHILDREN AGING BETWEEN 6 AND 18. THE SCHOOL BUILDING WAS FAIRLY NEW, OF COURSE WASN'T THAT BIG THOUGH, ENOUGH TO LET NEARLY 50 CHILDREN GET EDUCATED. THERE WERE 3 CLASSROOMS IN TOTAL: ONE FOR KINDERGARTEN AND ELEMENTARY; ONE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL AND ONE FOR HIGH SCHOOL. THEY COVERED THE CORE COURSES, AND MOSTLY IN A MORE BASIC WAY.



CHILDREN WERE KEPT BUSY WITH THINGS LIKE THIS TO BRIGHTEN THE DARK ATMOSPHERE OF THE CAMP. OFTEN TIMES THE KIDS WOULD COME HOME SMILING, EXCITED TO TELL US WHAT HAPPENED THAT DAY AT SCHOOL. THE TEACHERS WERE VERY KIND AND THEY DID EVERYTHING THEY COULD DO TO LET CHILDREN FEEL MORE LIKE THEY WERE HOME. AND LET'S TALK ABOUT ALI'S FAVORITE: CUPCAKE DAYS. ONCE A WEEK TEACHERS WOULD GO AROUND THE CAMP TO GIVE OUT CUPCAKES TO CHILDREN. AND YOU KNOW, KIDS KNOW HOW TO BE HAPPY EVEN FROM SIMPLE THINGS.

HACER'S HUSBAND

"MY HUSBAND HAS BEEN WORKING IN A HOUSE CONSTRUCTION JOB EVER SINCE HE GOT TO THE U.S, WHICH WAS NEARLY TWO YEARS AGO. HE SAYS THAT: "THE JOB ITSELF IS NOT THAT HARD. WHAT IS HARD IS BEING AWAY FROM YOU AND AHMET." HE IS IN HOUSTON, TEXAS. THERE IS A TURKISH CULTURAL CENTER THERE AND IT'S WHERE HE STAYED THE FIRST MONTH. OUR HIZMET FRIENDS HELPED HIM A LOT. THEY WERE THE ONES TO FIND THIS JOB FOR HIM. HE IS EARNING ENOUGH MONEY TO PAY HIS EXPENSES AND PAY THE LAWYER, WHICH HE HIRED FOR COMPLETING THE FAMILY UNIFICATION PROCESS.



ESRA'S HUSBAND

"MY HUSBAND WAS PUT IN A 3-PERSON WARD IN BALIKESIR PRISON, ALONG WITH 7 OTHER MEN. WHENEVER I CALLED HIM HE WOULD TELL ME: "PRAY FOR US ESRA. I AM DOING WELL BUT THERE ARE SICK ONES AMONGST US. WE ARE PRAYING EVERY HOUR OF THE DAY."





ABOUT THE AUTHOR
I AM FERIDE SARIBAS. I AM A SENIOR AT BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL. I HAVE BEEN LIVING IN NEW HAMPSHIRE, THE US WITH MY FAMILY FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS NOW. THE REASON WHY WE HAD TO LEAVE OUR COUNTRY, TURKEY, WAS BECAUSE OF ERDOGAN'S TYRANNY REGIME. I CONSIDER MYSELF AND MY FAMILY AS THE LUCKY ONES, SINCE WE ARE SAFE AND FREE. HOWEVER, THIS DOESN'T MEAN THAT WE FORGET ABOUT OUR HIZMET SISTERS AND BROTHERS. I DECIDED TO CREATE THIS GRAPHIC NOVEL TO DEPICT HOW THOUSANDS OF INNOCENT PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND GENDERS BECAME VICTIMS OF A CRACKED JUDICIAL SYSTEM. I HOPE THIS ARTWORK WILL GIVE A VOICE TO THE SILENCE PEOPLE IN TURKEY.

June 8th, 2019

We are strong women. We are like snowdrops. We manage to grow in the most difficult circumstances. We stay strong for our kids, our husbands, our families and friends. This is our story, and we are the heroes of it...

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

AFTER THE ALLEGED COUP ATTEMPT OF JULY 15, 2016, THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE LOST THEIR JOBS AND WERE SUBJECTED TO COURT TRIALS AND PROCEEDINGS ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEY WERE HIZMET MOVEMENT FOLLOWERS. HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE, WHO DO NOT HAVE A HOPE TO SURVIVE IN THIS GRUELING ATMOSPHERE IN TURKEY, ARE STRIVING TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY ILLEGALLY BY VENTURING INTO THE RISK OF CROSSING THE BORDER AND FACING DEATH IN ORDER TO LIVE FREELY. THERE WERE PEOPLE WHO DROWNED IN THIS DIFFICULT AND HARSH JOURNEY. ADVOCATES OF SILENCED TURKEY (AST), AS A NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION THAT RUNS ITS ACTIVITIES ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS, HAS MADE IT A MISSION TO CHAMPION THE RIGHTS OF SILENCED TURKEY UNTIL UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE ARE ESTABLISHED AND SUSTAINED AS THE UTMOST PRIORITIES OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY.