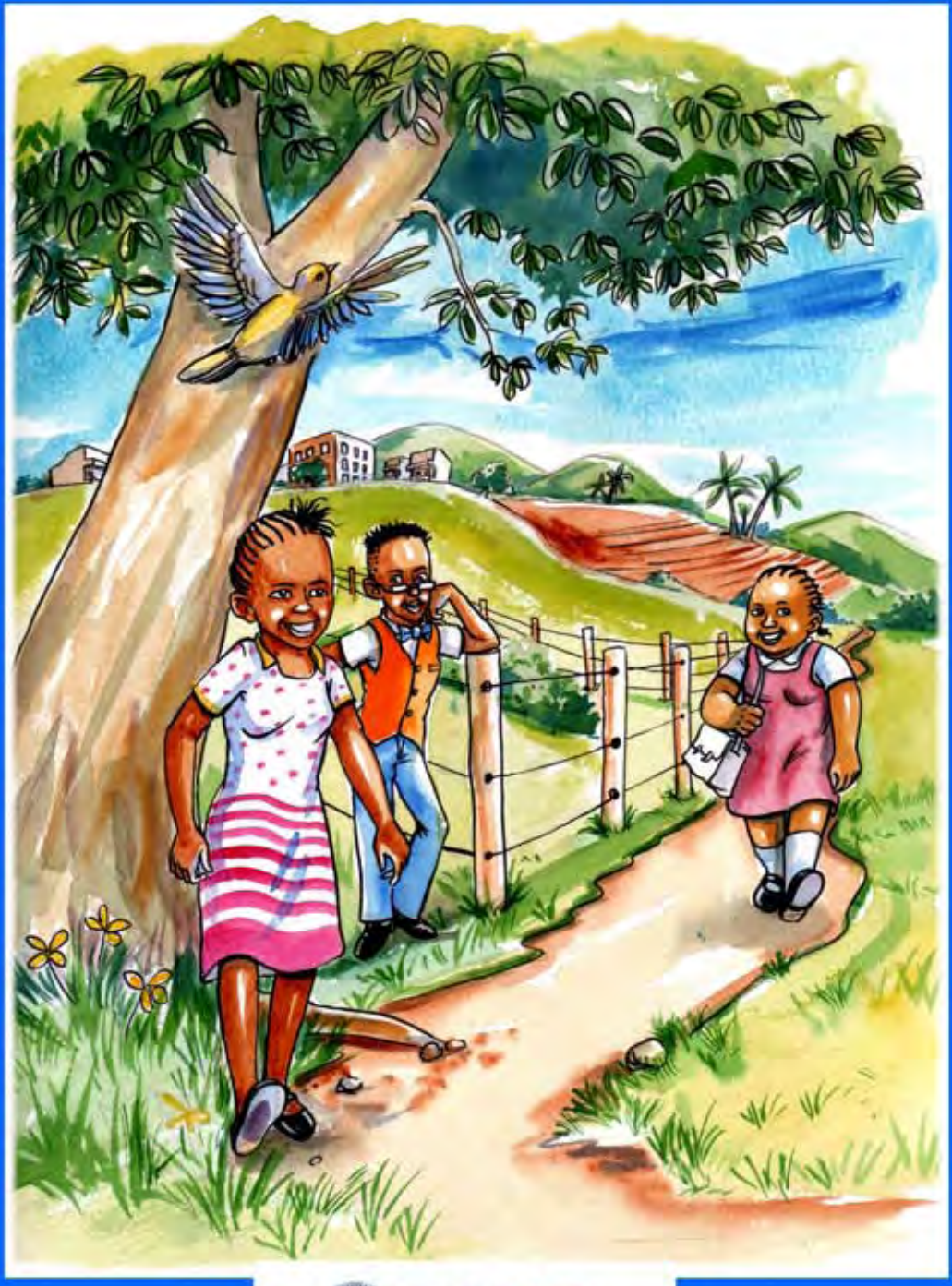
The Border

Vol. 1



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

This comic book is a collaboration between two projects: APHIA II Western and Scouting for Solutions.

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EARLY ONE MORNING AS SHANI WASHES CLOTHES...

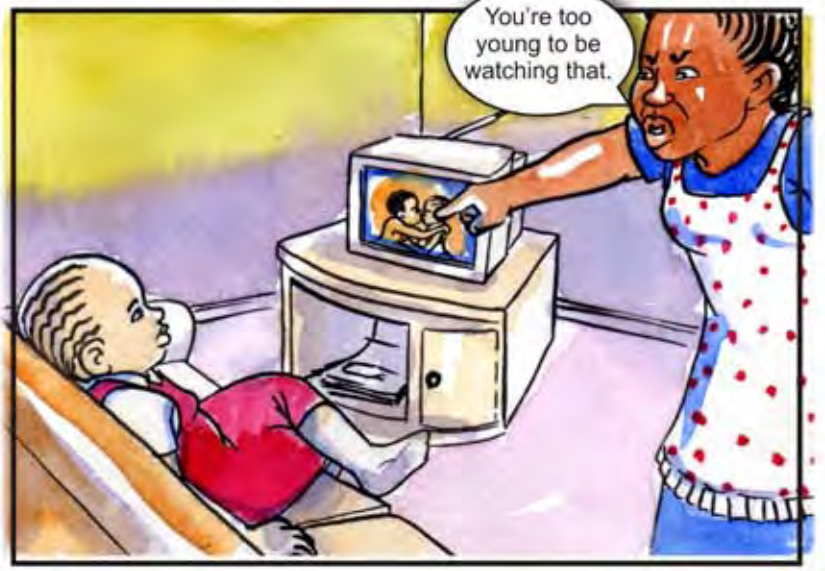
SHANI IS NOT THE ONLY ONE WITH PROBLEMS...

Mom expects me to do household chores before I do my homework.
By the way, are you going to enter the Talent Search?
What are you talking about?
They pick the best talent from here. The winners go to the national competitions which can lead to stardom and lots of money.
I'd have to ask my mother for permission. Then she would have to ask my Dad.
That's so boring! I can go anywhere I want whenever I want.
Lucky you. I wish my life was like yours.

MERCY MAY SEEM LUCKY BUT NOT EVERYTHING IN HER LIFE IS GOOD.

What about Dad?

Alone, again.

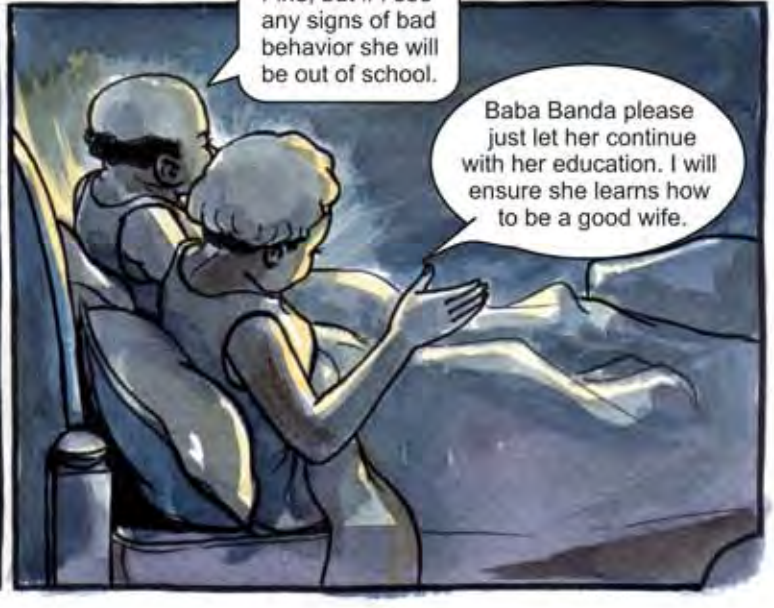

You're too young to be watching that.

Just mind your own business. I'll watch what I want!

Well supper is ready.
I don't feel like eating.

But.....
Just leave me alone!

MEANWHILE AMANDA AND BANDA'S PARENTS DISCUSS A PROBLEM ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN.



DAYS LATER...
Good morning Auntie.
Good morning Shani. We need to talk.
Shani, I fear we must make some changes. Starting today, you will have to work for your room, food and clothing.
You can't do that; this is my father's place.

Shhhh! Don't let your Uncle hear you. He has done without a lot to look after you and this land.
You've sold off the animals my father left. You've moved into my father's house and have me living in the servants' hut!
You're annoying me! Anyway I came to inform you that you shall only go to school when there is no work to be done here.
But Auntie that's not right. Let me go stay with grandmother instead.
We will decide what is right and what is wrong. No school and no going to your grandmother.
Let me go to school just for today, please. We have a scouts meeting.
I'm sorry, but you're needed here... besides this scouting takes up too much time.

IN THE MEAN TIME MERCY WRESTLES WITH HER BODY IMAGE.

NOT EVERYONE IN ABUSI GOES TO SCHOOL. MOTO MUST WORK FOR A LIVING.

Smells potent

The best pure alcohol. Be careful how you mix it.
Are you going to teach me my job now?

Pay up.
It's too much... you must be joking.

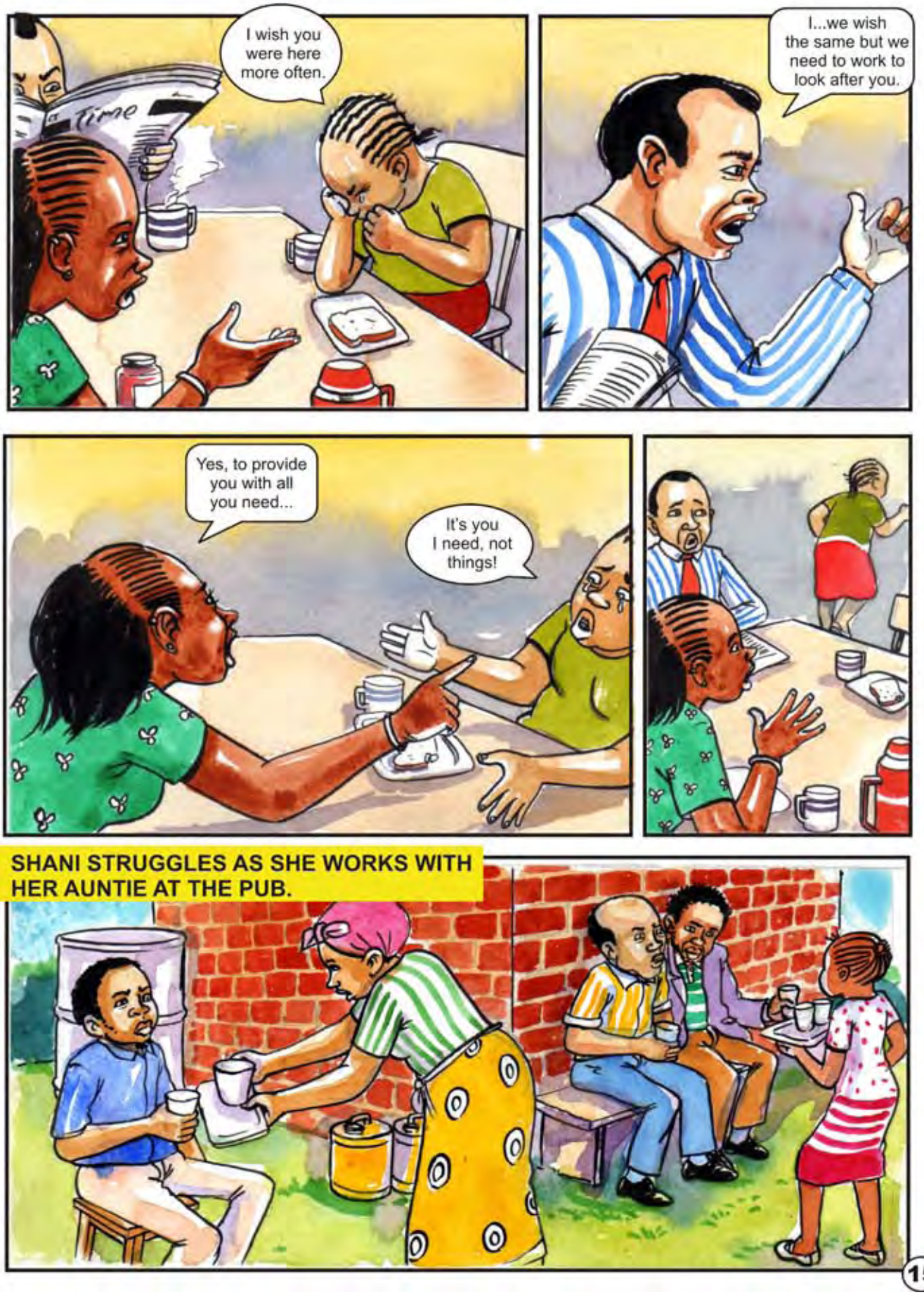
If it's expensive for me, it must be expensive for you.
One of these days I'm going to get myself another supplier.

Hey it's a free country. Do as you wish. For now, pay me.

Why isn't she at school?
That's none of your business! Take your money and leave.

BANDA AND AMANDA ARE TWINS BUT TREATED VERY DIFFERENTLY.

MEANWHILE AT MERCY'S HOME...


I wish you were here more often.
Time
I...we wish the same but we need to work to look after you.
Yes, to provide you with all you need...
It's you I need, not things!
SHANI STRUGGLES AS SHE WORKS WITH HER AUNTIE AT THE PUB.

Come on, what's the problem?

Nobody can just touch my body!
But why not?
It is wrong. You just can't touch me where you want.

Hey you, keep off her, she's underage.
Who made you the prefect here?

That's not important! I'll call the police.
And under which act will I be charged?

Behaving in a manner likely to annoy a virgin.

BANDA HAS A SECRET THAT HE DOES NOT WANT HIS PARENTS TO KNOW ABOUT.

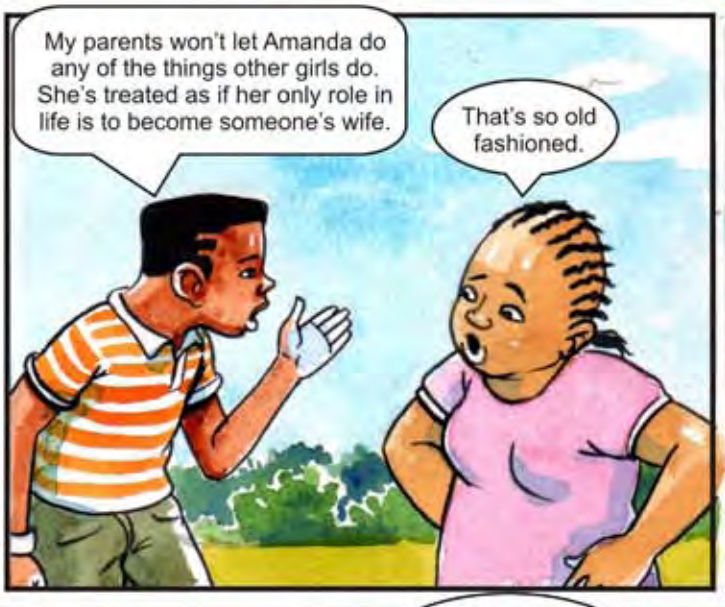
Banda's here, now we can start.
Sorry I'm late. I had to find an excuse to cut practice.
You shouldn't keep your music playing a secret. Sooner or later its going to come out.
Well, let's hope later... much later.
When it comes out they'll blame me for misleading you.
Not if they've heard our music!
You got that right. Okay, guys let's hit it.
One, two, one two, three, four...

You sing great. Want to practice with us?
Why not ? You guys sound pretty good.
THAT SAME AFTERNOON SHANI PRACTICES TYING KNOTS FOR HER SCOUTS BADGE.
Boom Boom Boo...
It's so loud...

AFTER BAND PRACTICE...

Me too. But my Dad would kill me if he knew I'm skipping soccer for music.
My parents probably wouldn't care.

You must be lucky having such modern parents.
I'm not so sure about that.


My parents won't let Amanda do any of the things other girls do. She's treated as if her only role in life is to become someone's wife.
That's so old fashioned.

I know, but what can I do?
By the way, are you going to enter the Talent Search?
I haven't decided yet. You?

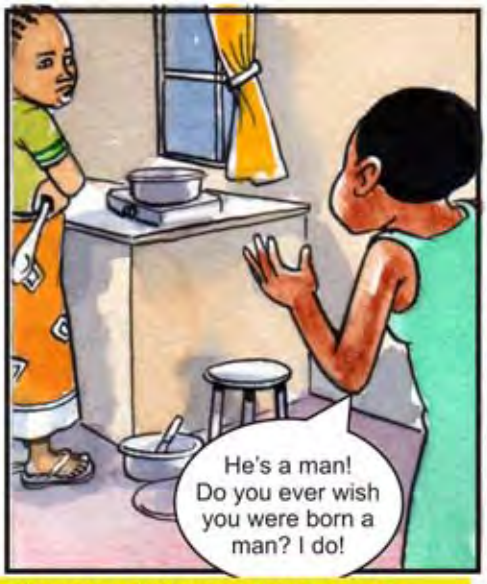
Of course. You should enter, you're very talented.
Thanks, so are you.

Thanks for walking me home and everything.
See you around.
Bye. Remind Amanda about the show. I hope your parents will let her join the fun.
Me too Bye.

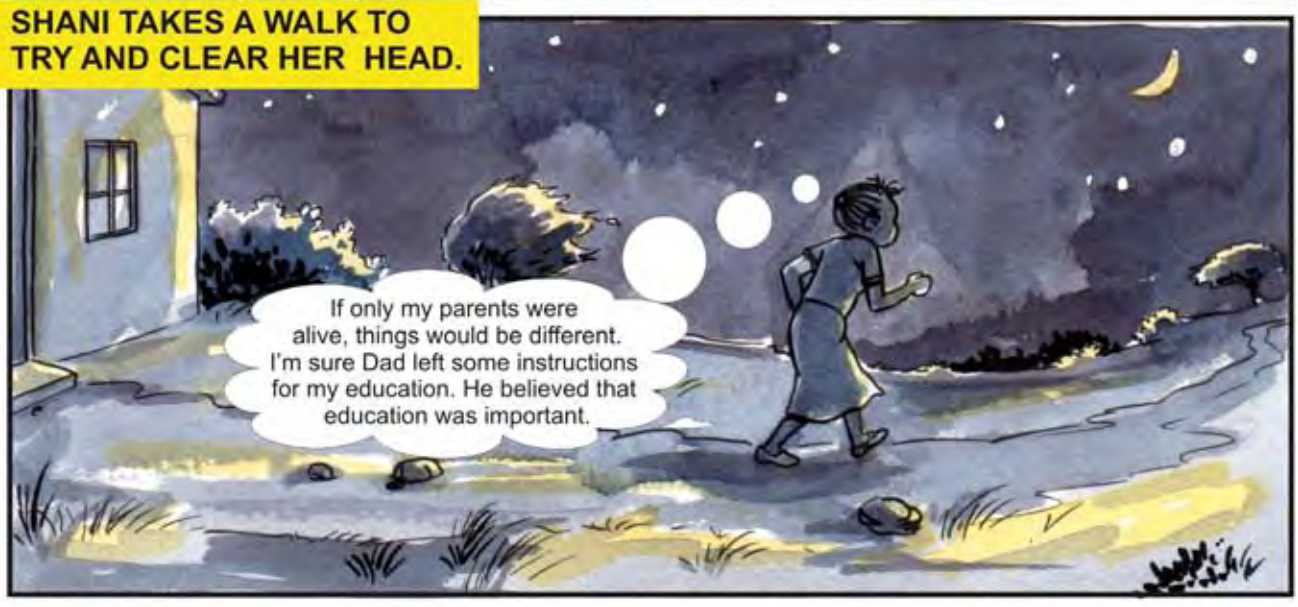
AMANDA AND HER MOTHER PREPARE DINNER.
Mom I'd really like to enter the Talent Search, can I?
And what is that?
A competition...

I see. And who told you about it?
Mercy, she's in our school. She invited me and....

I know her. She's not very well behaved.
But can I go?
I don't think so.
But Banda will be there.
I don't think your father would agree.
What about you? What do you think?
That is not the issue here!
Banda and I are twins. Why are we treated so differently?
It's because...



SHANI TAKES A WALK TO TRY AND CLEAR HER HEAD.



Ehh ....you won't even help a man in desperate need? Shani, hey what's up? Can I talk to you?
Not when you were following me in the bushes, Moto.

Why are you so stuck up? You're no longer the daughter of a rich man. You are an orphan. Accept it. You might have to talk to poor people like me now.
Do you have to be so mean?

Shani, wait Shani!

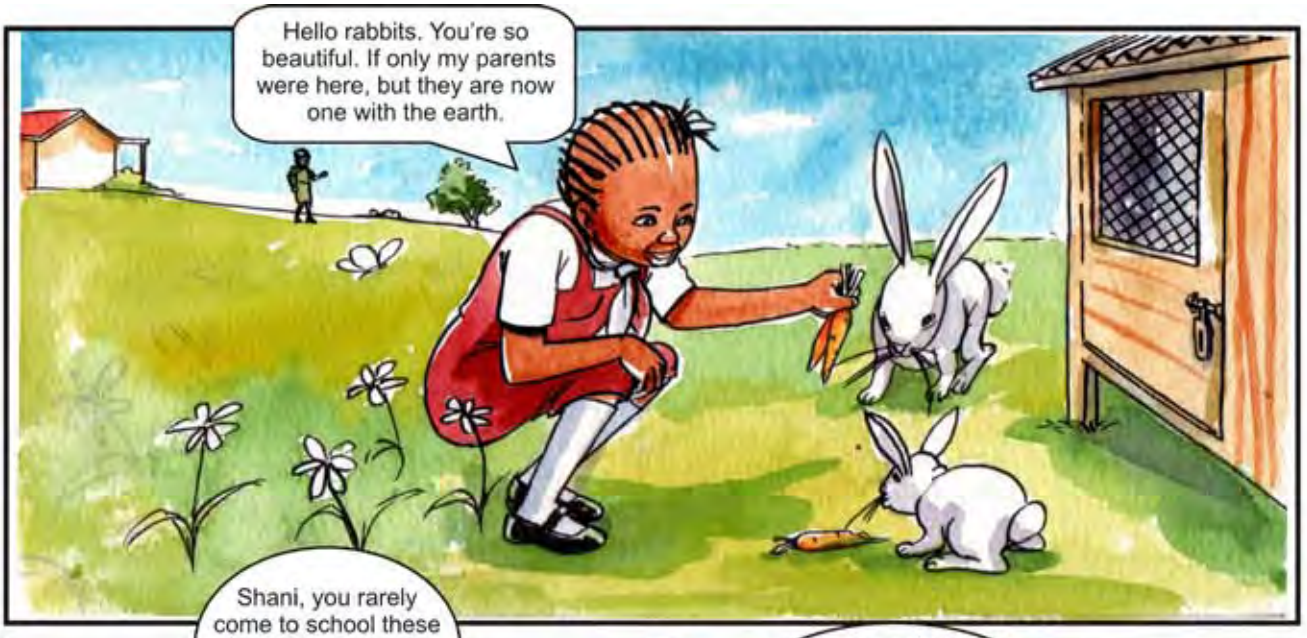
Shani it's me.
Uncle?
Yes. What are you doing running around at night?
I had taken a walk to cool off.
What is wrong?
I miss my parents so much.
I realize I can never replace your father, but I will always be here for you.
But why can't I continue going to school? I like it. I want to learn.
Hmm.... I can see how much it means to you. Okay, I'll look into it. I promise. Now let's go home.

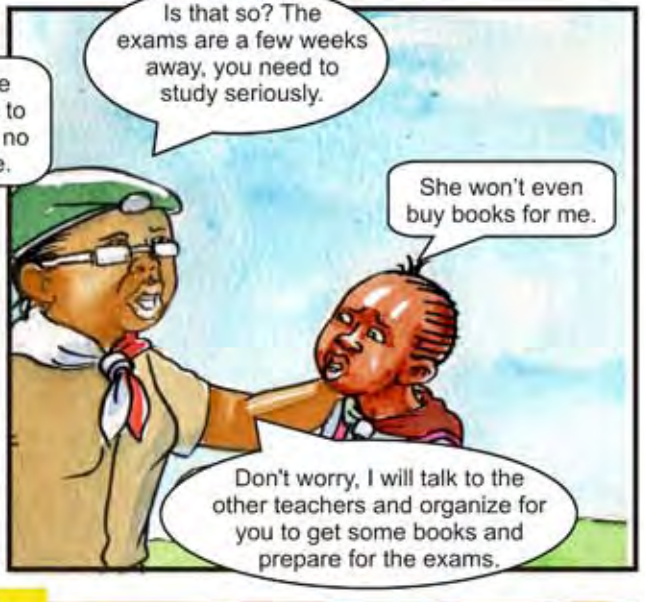
AMANDA AND BANDA ARE TRYING TO EXCHANGE FAVORS BUT A MAJOR PROBLEM CROPS UP.

THE NEXT DAY AT SCHOOL...

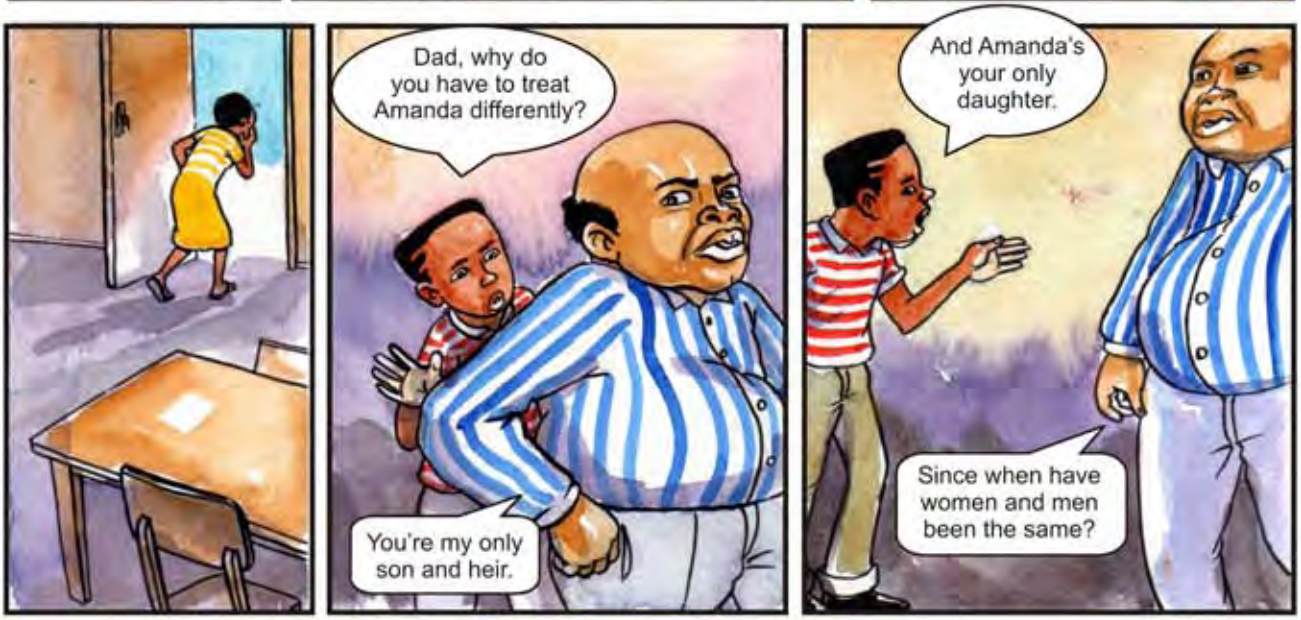
A basic education helps.
Eh, Amanda, you have to learn to relax, enjoy life a bit.
I enjoy what I do.
If you continue this way you'll end up being a miserable old spinster.
Maybe I want to be a spinster...and for your information not all spinsters are miserable.
Whatever!
Have you heard about Shani?
No I haven't seen her for awhile.
Her auntie won't let her come to school.
That's so bad. We should do something about it. So are you coming to the show?
I doubt it.
Why not? Your brother is going to be there.

SHANI CONTINUES TO ATTEND SCHOOL WHEN SHE CAN. AT LEAST THE SCOUT PROGRAM MAKES HER HAPPY.





BACK AT BANDA AND AMANDA'S HOUSE...



ON THE OTHER SIDE OF TOWN, MERCY CONTINUES TO STRUGGLE TO GET HER PARENTS ATTENTION.

Mom! It's urgent!
Okay Mercy, what is it?
I need some money.... for girls' things.
You make it sound like the world is coming to an end. Now I have to go. Be good.
Bye mom.
Good morning Mercy, how are you doing?
Not too good.
What's wrong?
Nothing. I need some money -. for girls' things. I just started having my period and...
Why didn't you ask your mother?
If you don't believe me you can go buy the stuff for me.

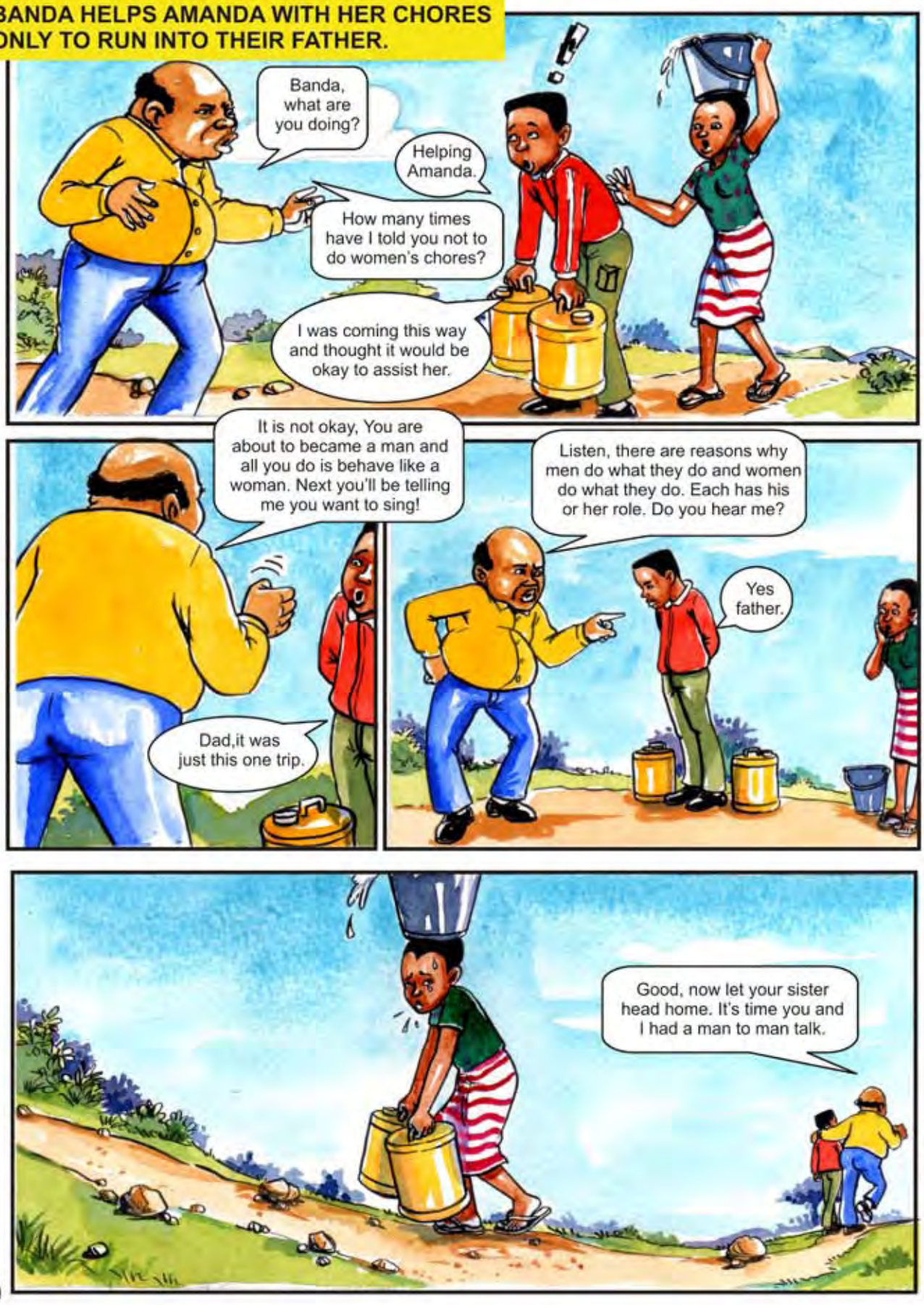
Ok here is some money. Is this enough?
Well....I need a bit more or I could give you the list of the things I need.

No need for that. Here is some more. Enjoy your weekend and be good.

Always Bye dad.

MOTO CROSSES PATH WITH SHANI AGAIN.

BANDA HELPS AMANDA WITH HER CHORES ONLY TO RUN INTO THEIR FATHER.



ON THE SAME DAY.

AMANDA DECIDES TO CONFRONT BANDA ON HIS SECRET.

THERE ARE BOOK SMARTS AND STREET SMART AS MOTO KNOWS.

MERCY'S DISHONESTY IS STARTING HER DOWN THE ROAD TO TROUBLE.

BANDA FACES THE MUSIC FOR HIS SECRET LATER THAT DAY.

I'm sorry.
Sorry? What is this noise you call music? And what were you doing with that girl?
We were just performing.
You call that performing! Go home.....now !
Dad, I enjoy playing music.
No son of mine is going to end up a musician and that's final!
SHANI IS ALSO HAVING A BAD DAY...
Why are you crying? That changes nothing.
Stevo, if my parents were still alive this would not be happening.

You're an orphan, accept it.
One of these days you'll all pay.
One of these days you won't have my parents to look after you.
You call this looking after me? I have become a slave in my own home.
Then you better look for somewhere to go, shouldn't you?
MOTO IS WASHING CLOTHES TOO, FOR HIS SICK BROTHER
Moto, I need to go back into the house now.

LATER THAT NIGHT IN AMANDA'S BEDROOM...

You should make an effort to do your own school work.
I'm not as bright as you are.
You could be..... if you studied hard enough.
I prefer to sing.
We make a good duet.
We sure do.
Why don't you join me for some practice after school?
You're still doing that? After Dad busted you?
A man's got to do what a man's got to do.
What about women? Are they just supposed to do what men want?
No, they shouldn't. But our traditions seem to say otherwise.
BUT BANDA HAS A LOT OF THINGS IN HIS MIND.
What does it mean to be a man? Disrespect women? Control the family? Make a lot of money? Can't a man sing? I want to be a man, to make my father proud; but I want to support my sister. She should be treated fairly like me.

THE BIG DAY OF THE TALENT SEARCH HAS FINALLY ARRIVED BUT DOES MOTO HAVE OTHER IDEAS?

AT THE ABUSI TALENT SEARCH

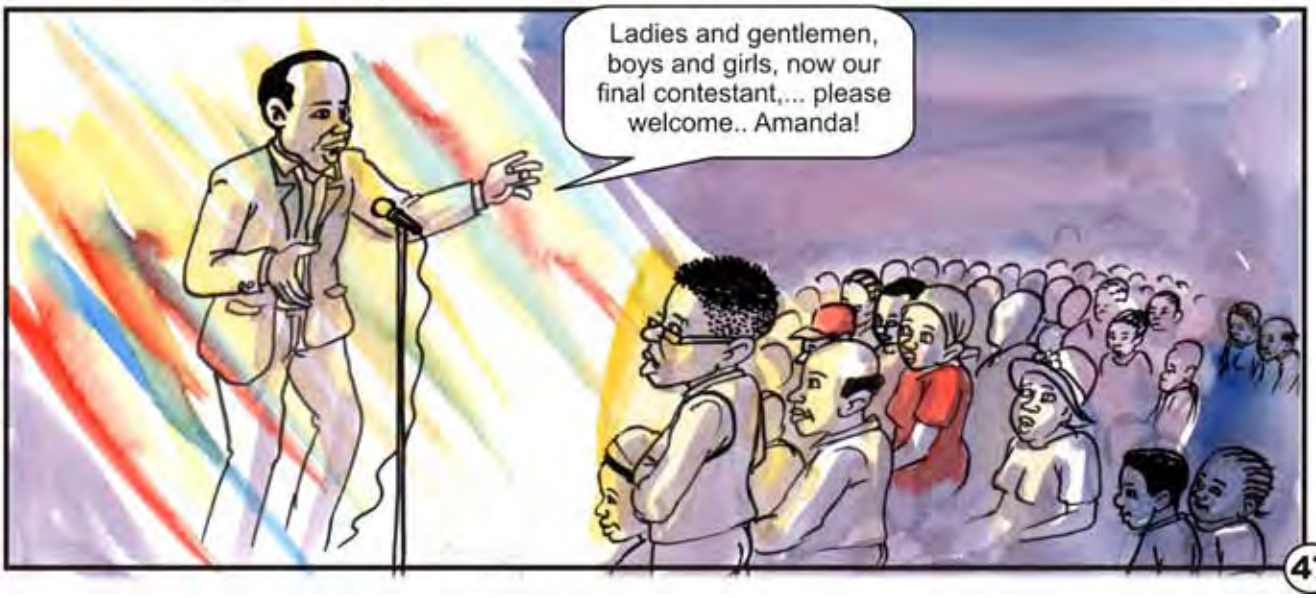
YE YE YE YE YE YE

Banda isn't bad. Maybe his playing in a band is not a bad thing.

I thought we were going somewhere private.
I told you we were going to have fun.

You call this fun? This is for kids. You need to grow up!
I am grown up. That's why I have fun that's not risky.

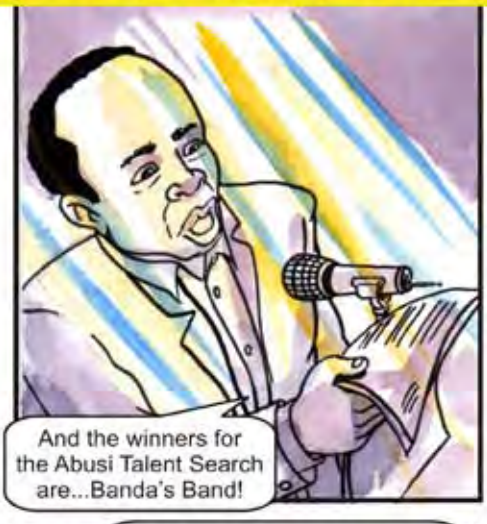
Well, then I'm off.
As you wish. I'll just stay here and enjoy the music.

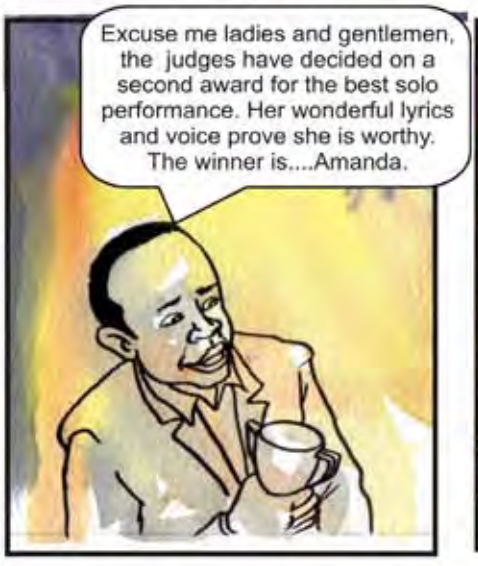

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, now our final contestant,... please welcome.. Amanda!

AS AMANDA SINGS ON, SHANI WISHES SHE COULD BE AT THE TALENT SEARCH, BUT HER AUNTIE HAS WORK FOR HER TO DO.

OUT
Where are you taking my parents?
They are under arrest for dealing in illicit brews.
What's going to happen to me.
You must have some relatives you can stay with.
What about me? I have my grandmother but she lives far away.
Then what are you doing here?
He is my uncle. My father and mother are dead.
I see .Do you have anywhere to stay?
Just here.
Sorry, we can't leave you here alone. We'll have to take you to the child welfare office.
For how long?
Until we have a responsible adult to look after you.

BACK AT THE TALENT SEARCH, THE EMCEE IS GIVING PRIZES.





DRAW YOUR OWN CARTOON STRIP!!

Using the spaces provided below, draw your own cartoon using the dialogue provided at the top of the first two columns. In the third column, put in your own words and a picture to conclude the story. You can discuss and collaborate with your friends in drawing the cartoon strip. Once you are finished, cut off your cartoon strip and send it to:

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Kampala, Uganda

Please be sure to indicate your name(s), age(s) and address very clearly below the cartoon strip. The most interesting cartoon could appear in a future issue of THE BORDER. It could be YOURS!

----------tear off and send----------

Alice is Worried: *'Oh, it is very late, it is raining and I do not have the money to get home before it is dark. What shall I do?*	**Suddenly, Ogopa the boda-boda arrives:** *'Young girl, it is late and you haven't gone home? This place is bad at night! Come with me to my house, and then I will give you a free ride home. What do you say?'*	**(Write here what you think Alice should say or do then draw below)**

Name(s).....

Age(s).....

Address.....

.....

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