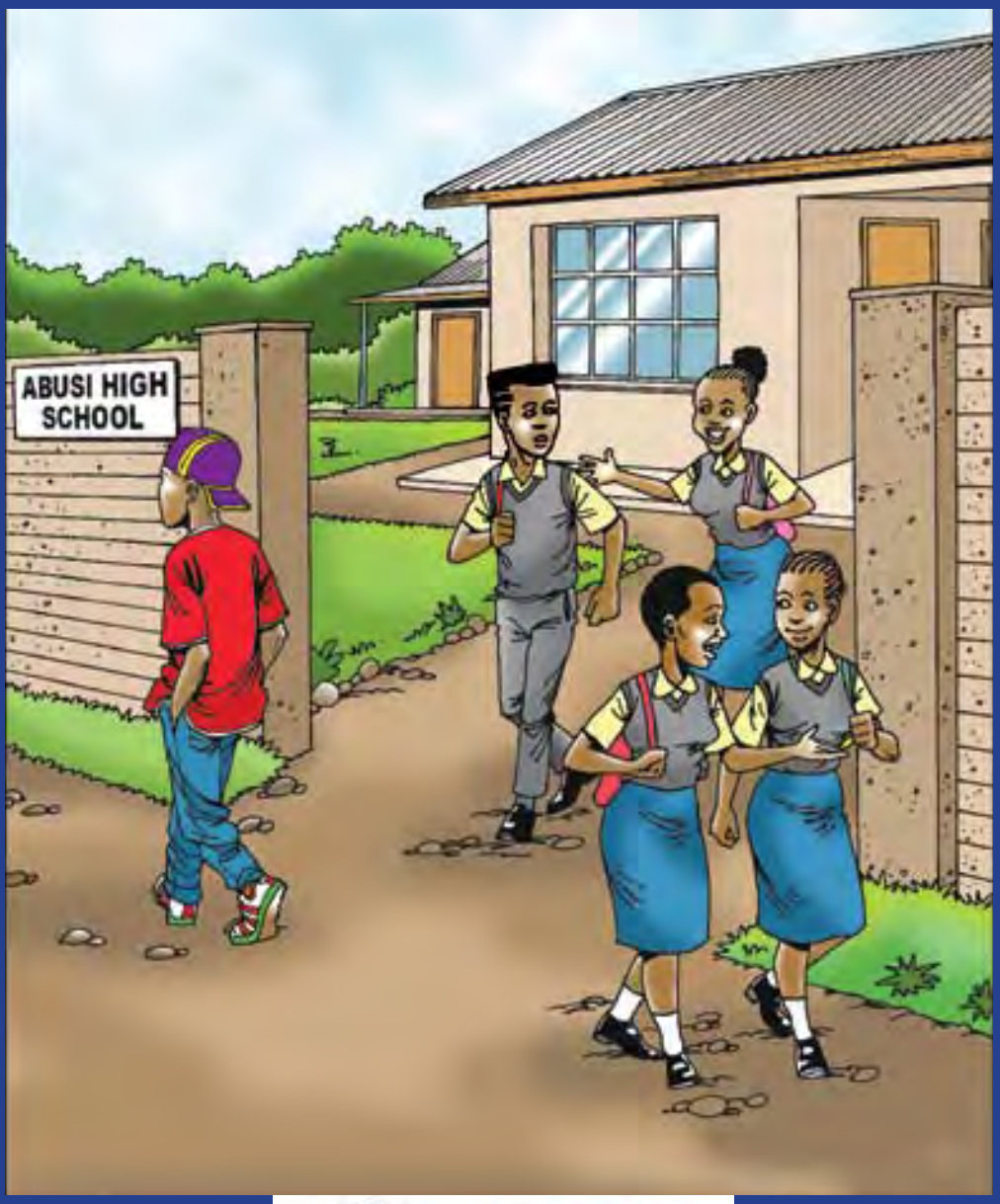
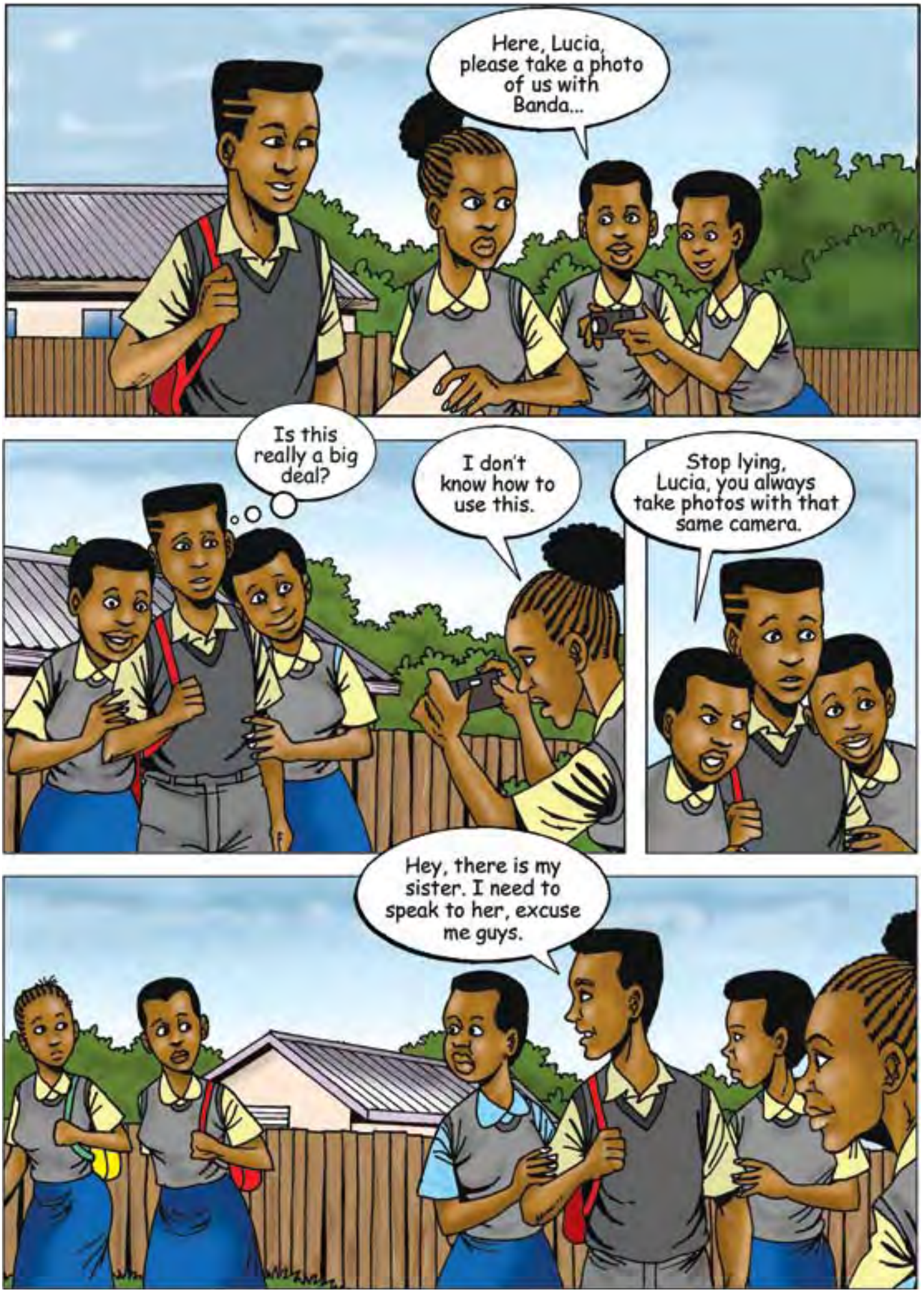
The Border

Vol. 3



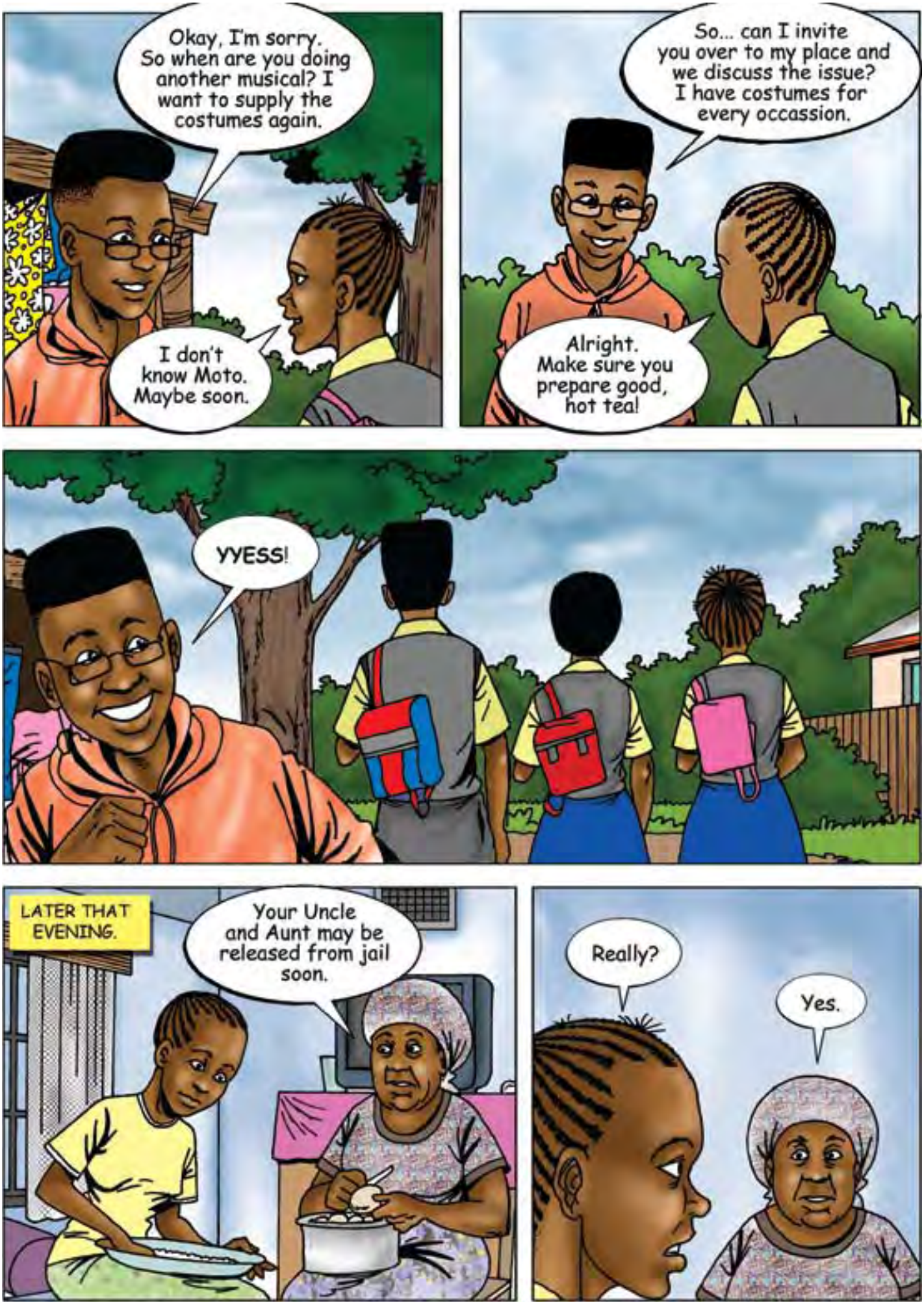
USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

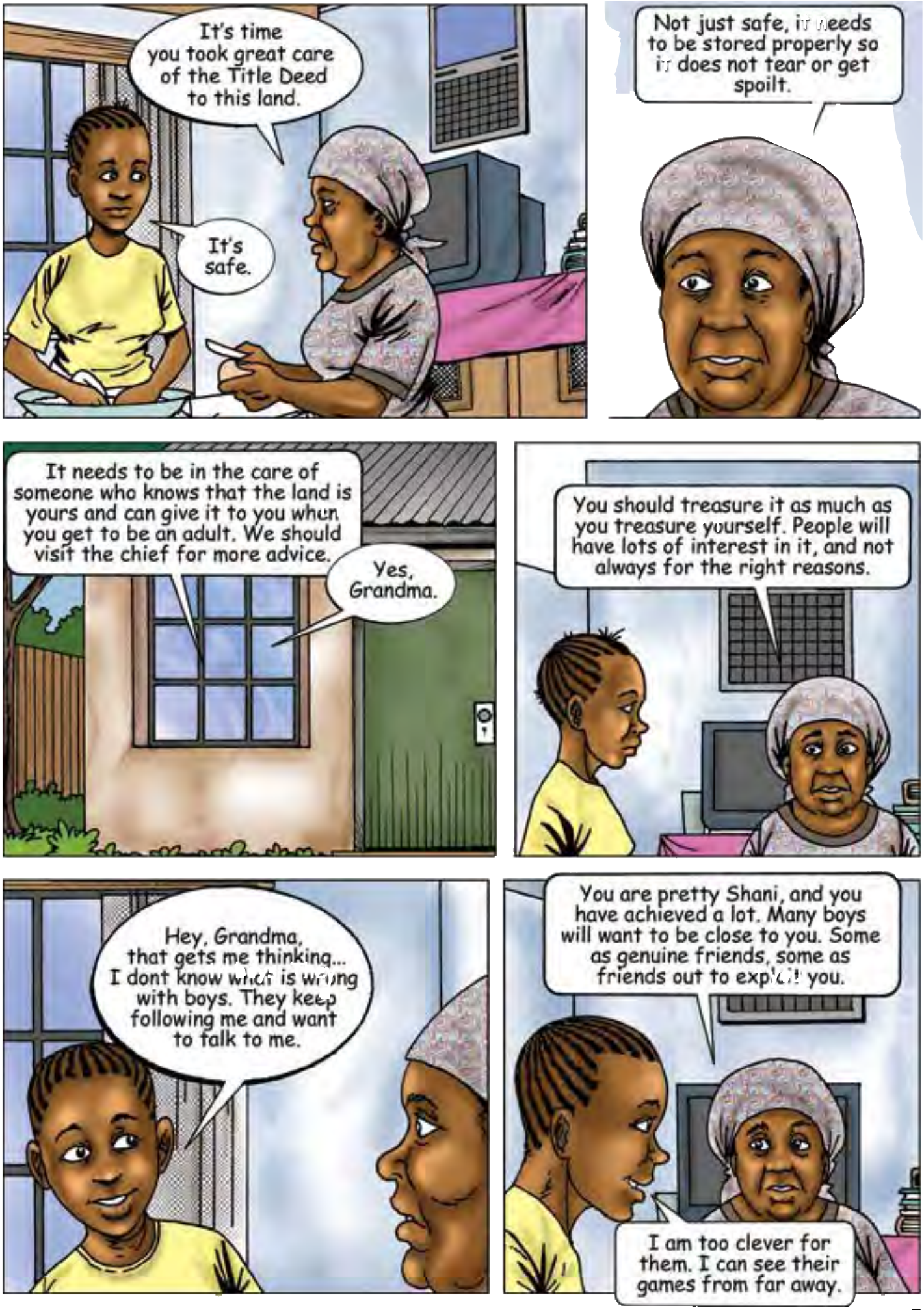

Here, Lucia, please take a photo of us with Banda...
Is this really a big deal?
I don't know how to use this.
Stop lying, Lucia, you always take photos with that same camera.
Hey, there is my sister. I need to speak to her, excuse me guys.

A FEW DAYS AFTER THE SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY MUSICAL THAT SHANI ORGANISED, BANDA IS WALKING HOME FROM SCHOOL.
BANDA, BANDA!
ABUSI TIMES
Banda! Did you see yourself in the newspaper?
Come on Lucia, it's just a newspaper.
Don't be modest. They say you're the next big thing in music.
ABUSI TIMES

BANDA BREAKS FREE AND RUNS TOWARDS AMANDA.
Why did you have to do that?
Banda is my boyfie, leave him alone!
We just wanted a photo.
Eh, So you can go bragging to everyone that he hugged you? Stay away from my guy!

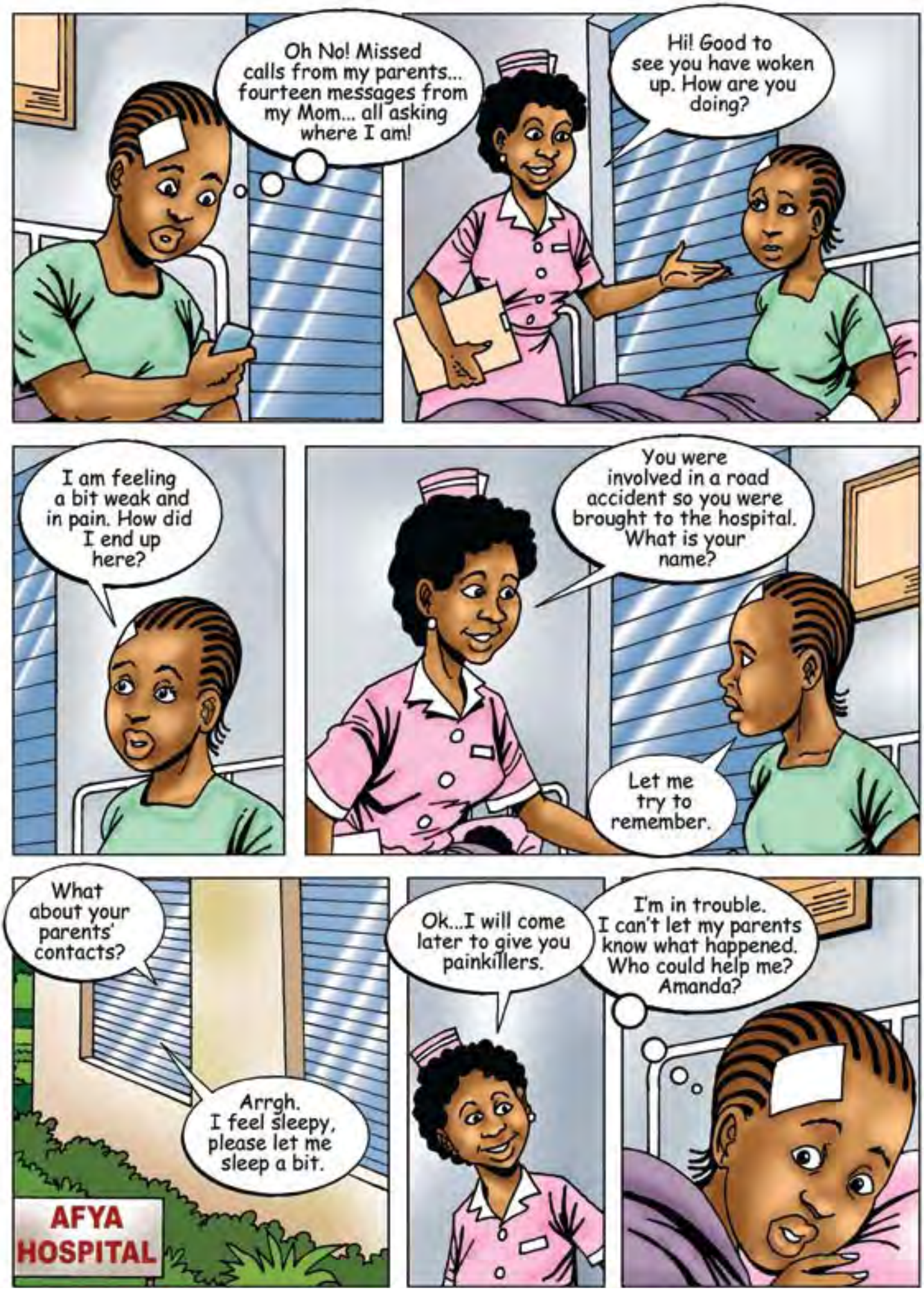
Hey... Amanda, wait for me.
Gosh! Everyone seems to think appearing in the newspaper is a big deal.
They are even writing love letters to Shani!
Hey, celebs! I see you are in the newspapers. " Young band with big future!"
Not you too, moto!
Well, now that you are famous, can I be the one dressing you in the latest fashions?
Moto, stop making fun of us!


Okay, I'm sorry. So when are you doing another musical? I want to supply the costumes again.
I don't know Moto. Maybe soon.
So... can I invite you over to my place and we discuss the issue? I have costumes for every occassion.
Alright. Make sure you prepare good, hot tea!
YYESS!
LATER THAT EVENING.
Your Uncle and Aunt may be released from jail soon.
Really?
Yes.


It's time you took great care of the Title Deed to this land.
It's safe.
Not just safe, it needs to be stored properly so it does not tear or get spoilt.
It needs to be in the care of someone who knows that the land is yours and can give it to you when you get to be an adult. We should visit the chief for more advice.
Yes, Grandma.
You should treasure it as much as you treasure yourself. People will have lots of interest in it, and not always for the right reasons.
Hey, Grandma, that gets me thinking... I dont know what is wrong with boys. They keep following me and want to talk to me.
You are pretty Shani, and you have achieved a lot. Many boys will want to be close to you. Some as genuine friends, some as friends out to exploit you.
I am too clever for them. I can see their games from far away.

They can get you pregnant, or give you a disease. Always make sure that when you are friends with boys it is a positive friendship that builds your life.
Thanks Grandma. You are so caring, and you always give me good advice.
STEVO HOWEVER CONTINUES WITH HIS BAD HABITS.
Stevo!
BUS STOP
Is there a problem?
Have you seen Mercy?
Why would you ask me?
The housegirl says you went to their house last evening and called her out. Since then she's been missing.
Well, I was going with her to the community musical last night but when we entered the gates, she disappeared.

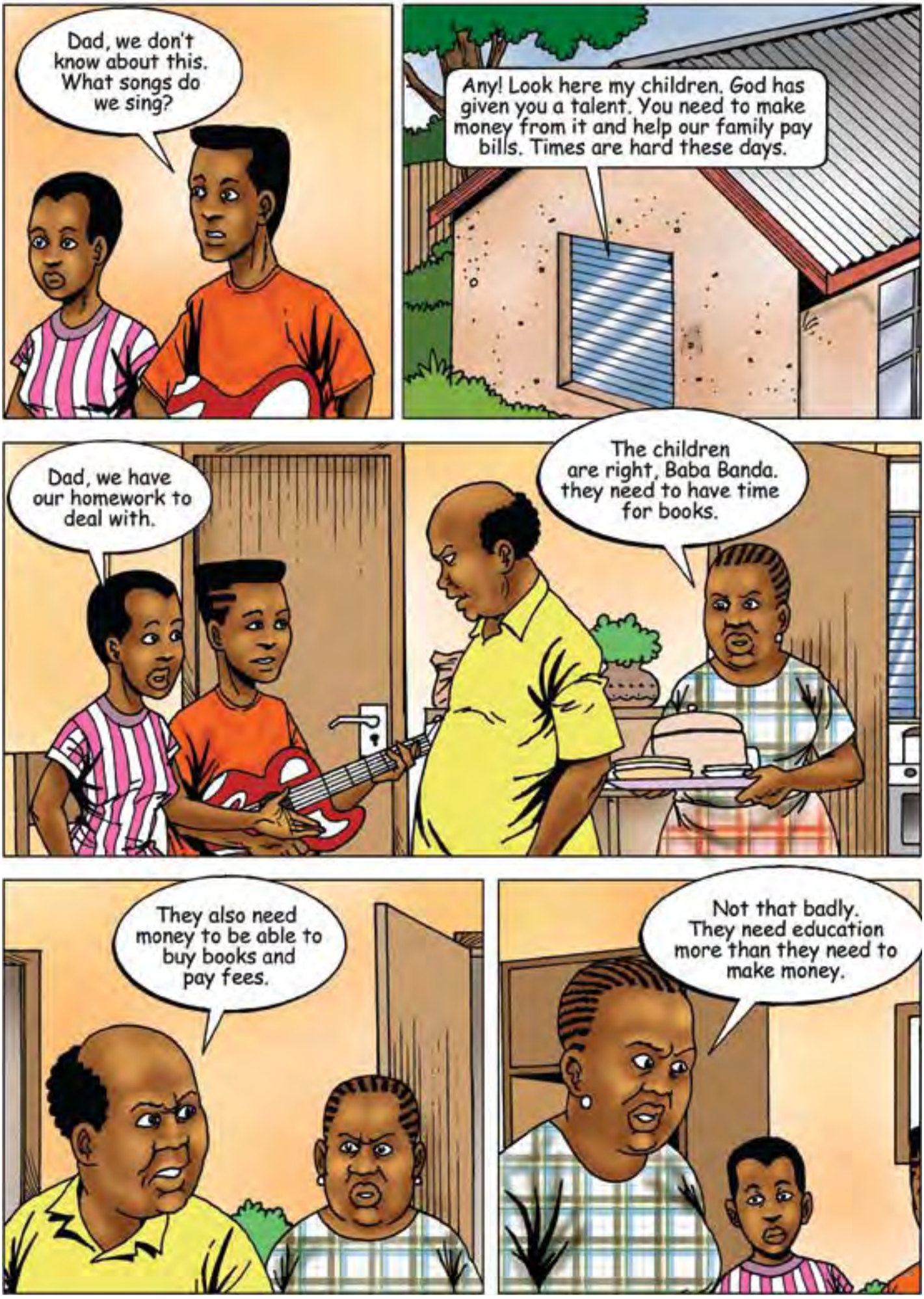
I need you to record a statement at the police station.
Gosh! Now I'm in trouble!
ONE HOUR LATER.
POLICE STATION
Hey, Manmann, where are you, maan?
Stevo, I'm in hospital... in town.
Hospital? Town?
MANMANN IS NOT THE ONLY ONE IN HOSPITAL.
GROAN
Where am I? Why am I here?


Oh No! Missed calls from my parents... fourteen messages from my Mom... all asking where I am!
Hi! Good to see you have woken up. How are you doing?
I am feeling a bit weak and in pain. How did I end up here?
You were involved in a road accident so you were brought to the hospital. What is your name?
Let me try to remember.
What about your parents' contacts?
Arrgh. I feel sleepy, please let me sleep a bit.
AFYA HOSPITAL
Ok...I will come later to give you painkillers.
I'm in trouble. I can't let my parents know what happened. Who could help me? Amanda?

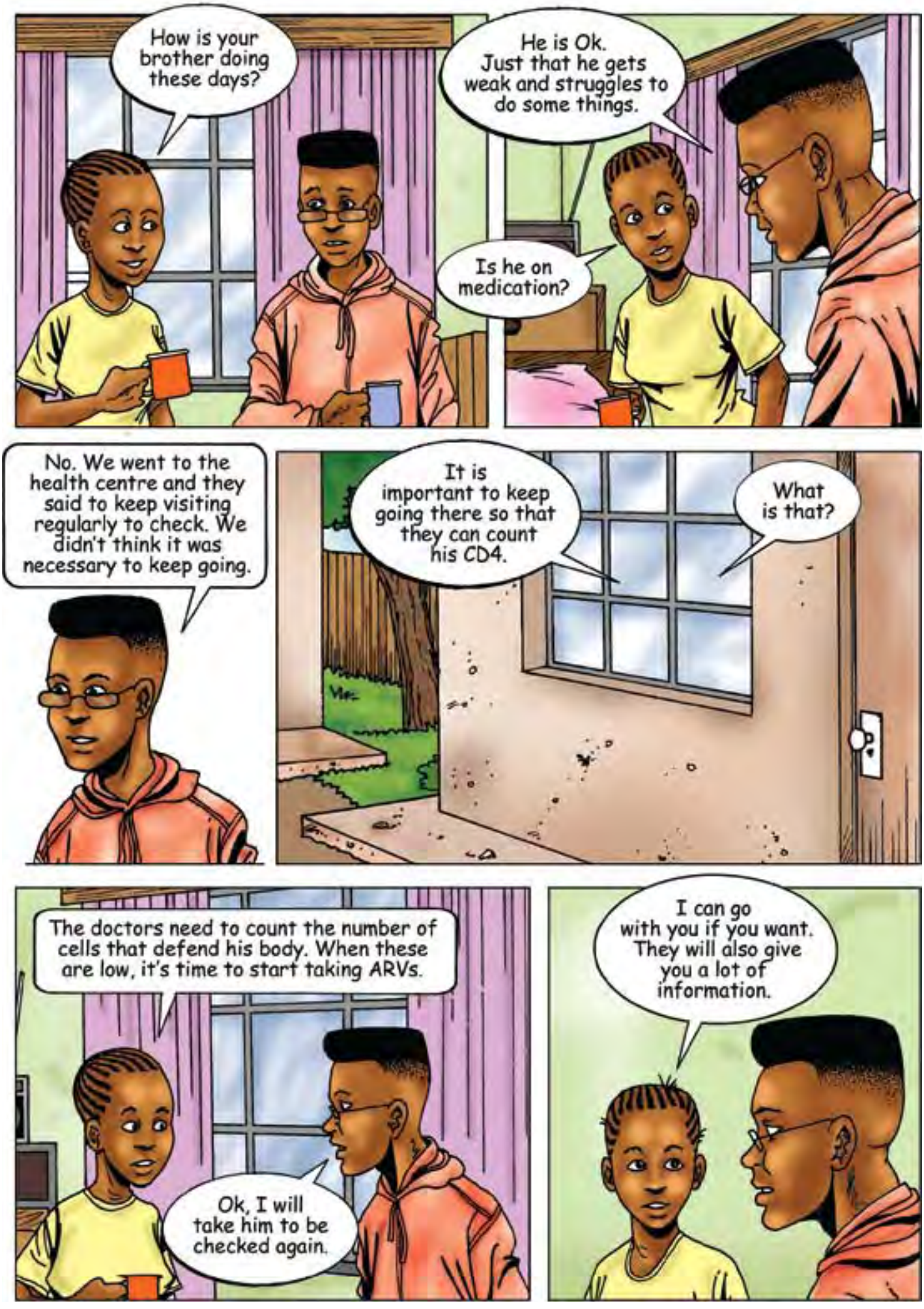
IN ANOTHER WARD.
What happened?
Maan, Mark was driving the matatu towards my house...
I was with Mercy beh nd She had passed out maan and we had to dr ve faster to my house before she came to
SCREECH
SCREECH
CRASH

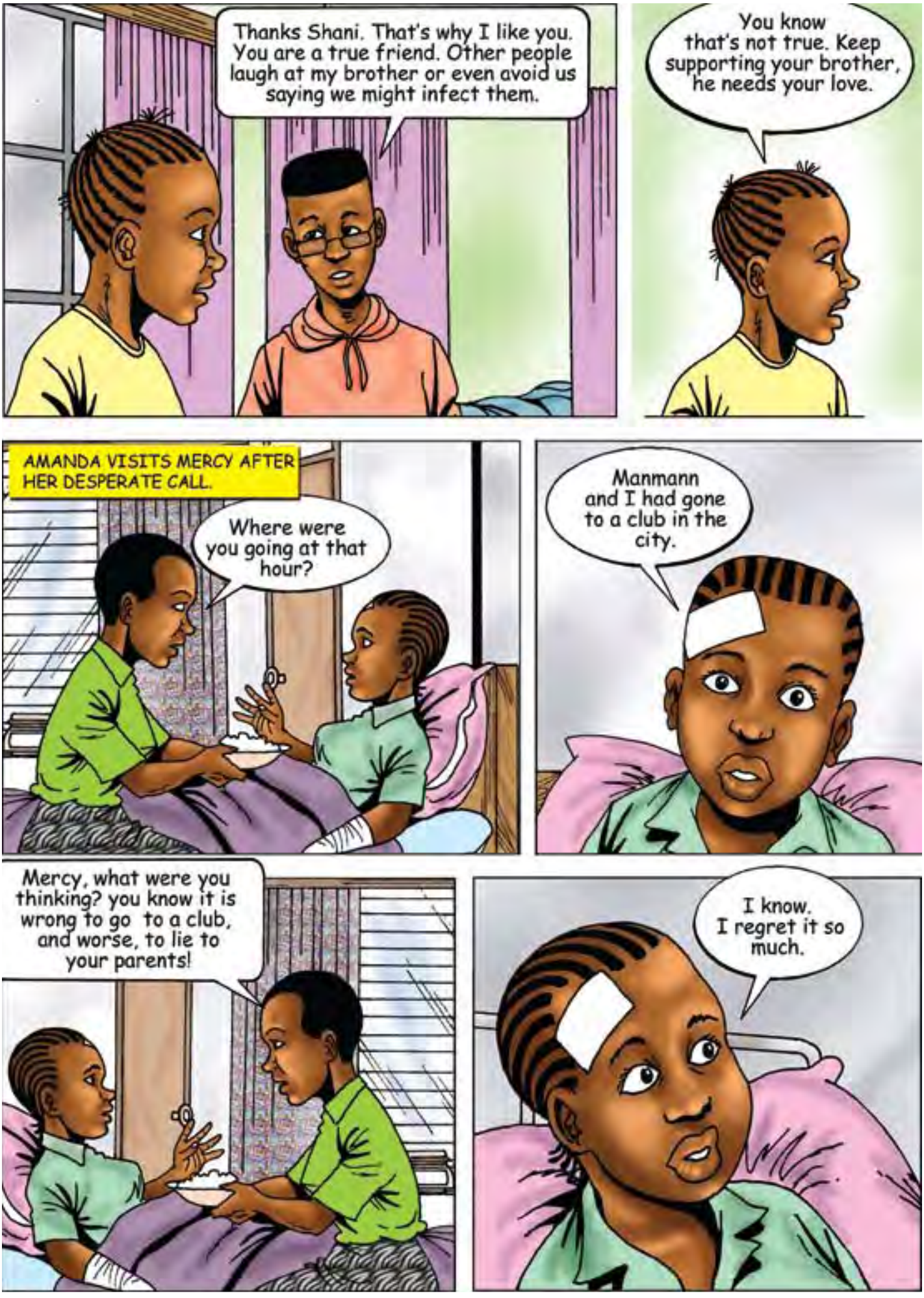
The next thing I knew, maan, I was here, in hospital. Have you heard from Mark?
No. Where is Mercy?
I don't know.
The police are looking for her.
The cops? I hope you didn't tell them anything.
No! I told them she went to the musical and then she disappeared.
Look, maan, I need to get out of hospital. You gotta help me, dude.
How?
When you visit me, come with some nice clad, you know, jeans, a sweatshirt with a hood and sneakers... then I can just walk outta here, maan!
Er...Ok, I'll see what I can do.

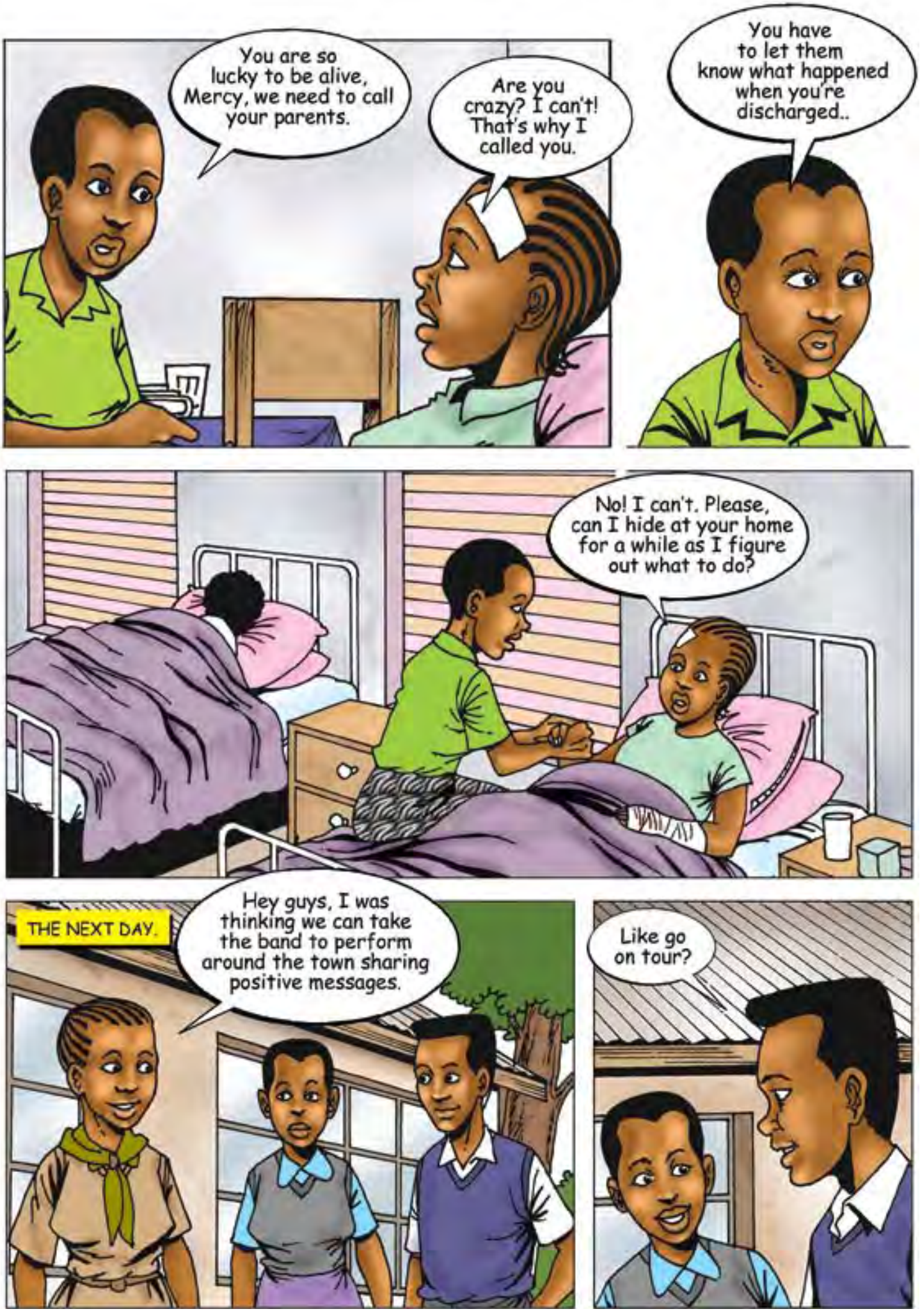
THAT EVENING...
That is great, Banda!
Thanks Dad.
I have booked you two to perform next Saturday at Barasa's wedding
But Dad, next Saturday we have a school trip to the National Park.
Don't worry about that Amanda... then Sunday you will perform at the church celebrations...

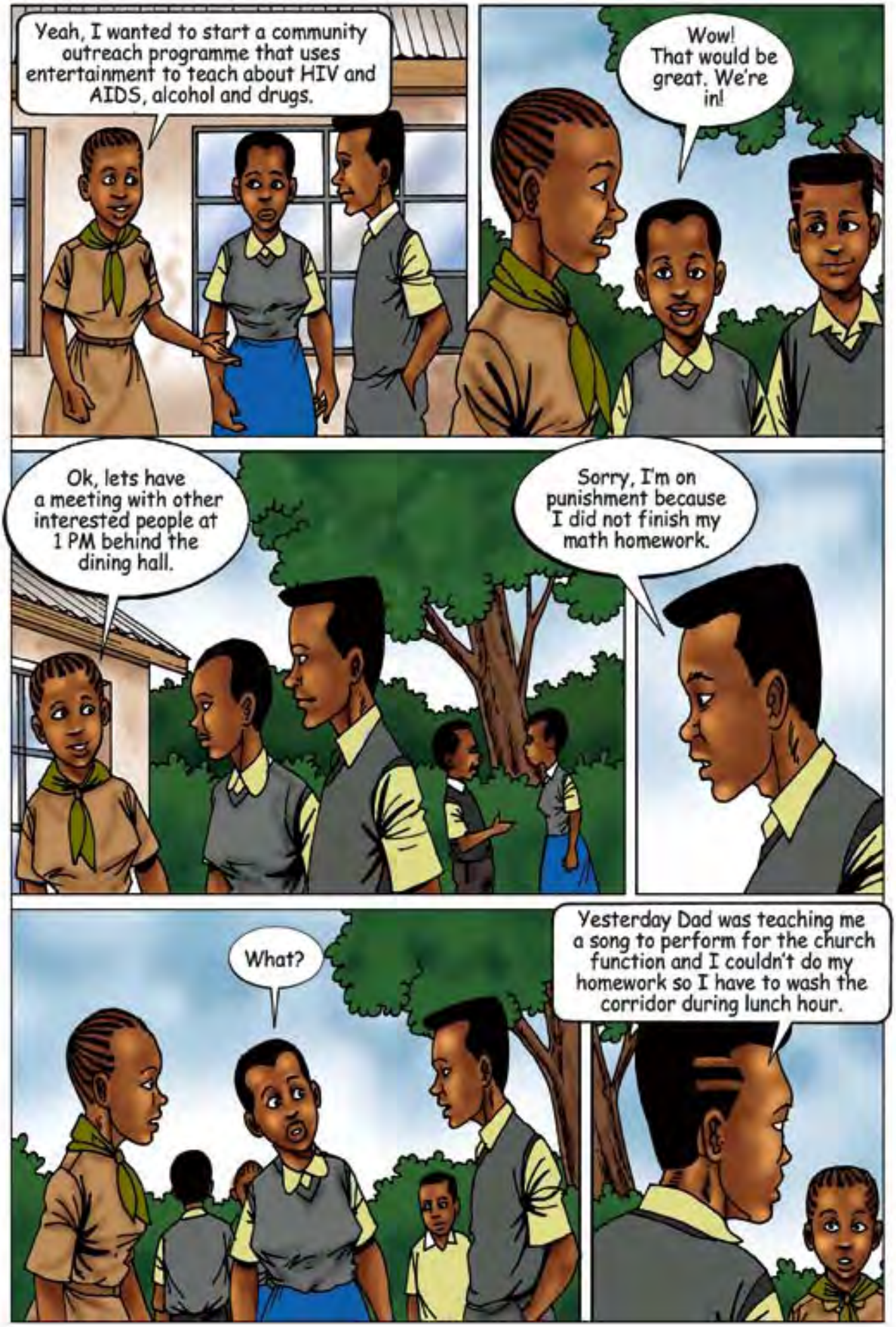

Dad, we don't know about this. What songs do we sing?
Any! Look here my children. God has given you a talent. You need to make money from it and help our family pay bills. Times are hard these days.
Dad, we have our homework to deal with.
The children are right, Baba Banda. they need to have time for books.
They also need money to be able to buy books and pay fees.
Not that badly. They need education more than they need to make money.

Someone switch on the lights!
They disconnected the power. The bill hasn't been paid.
What are you using electricity in this house for? Cooking elephant meat? I won't have it reconnected!
A FEW DAYS LATER SHANI VISITS MOTO.
Moto, is the water ready?
Yes it is, you can go shower now.
Hi Shani..
Hi Matata.

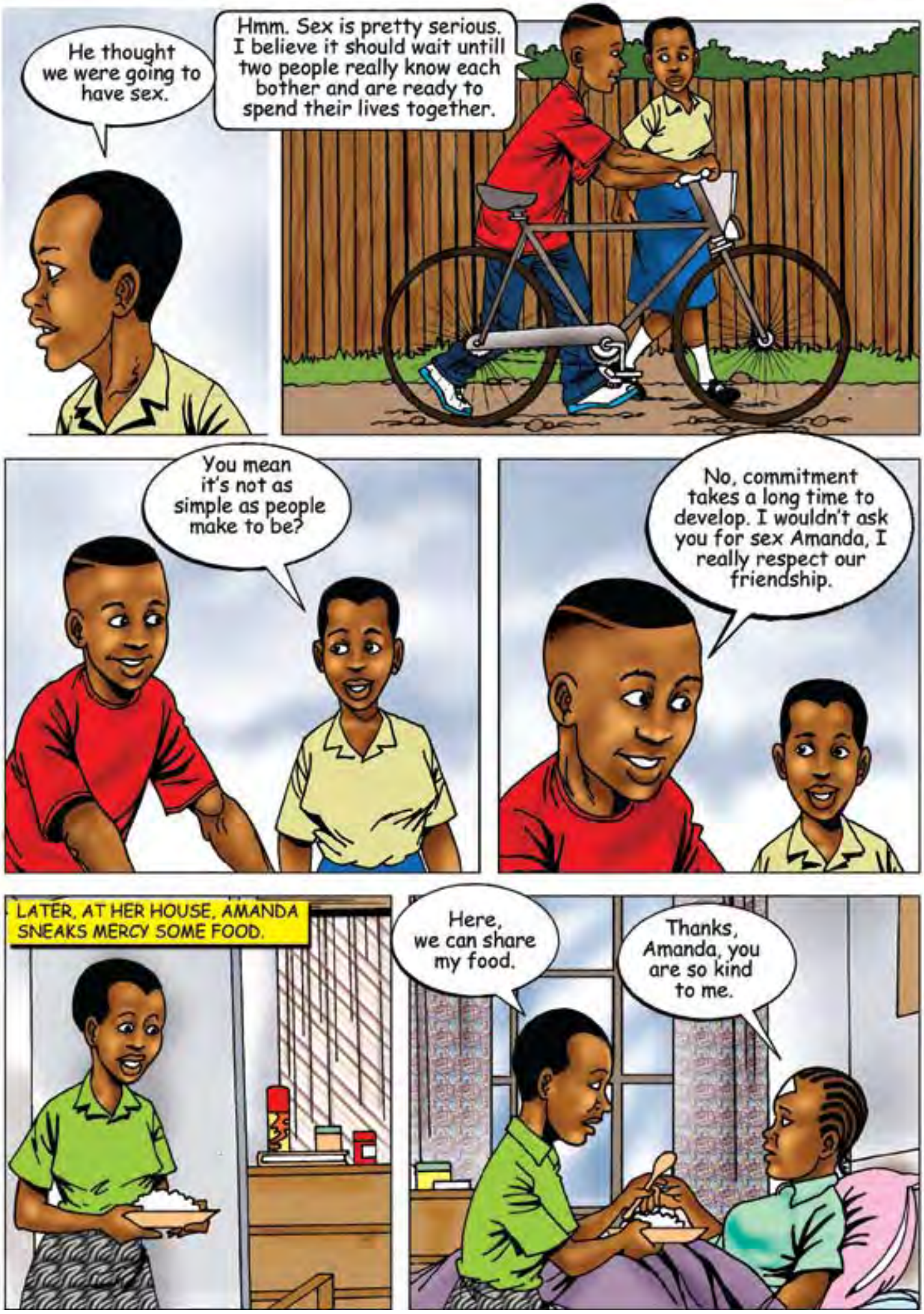

How is your brother doing these days?
He is Ok. Just that he gets weak and struggles to do some things.
Is he on medication?
No. We went to the health centre and they said to keep visiting regularly to check. We didn't think it was necessary to keep going.
It is important to keep going there so that they can count his CD4.
What is that?
The doctors need to count the number of cells that defend his body. When these are low, it's time to start taking ARVs.
Ok, I will take him to be checked again.
I can go with you if you want. They will also give you a lot of information.

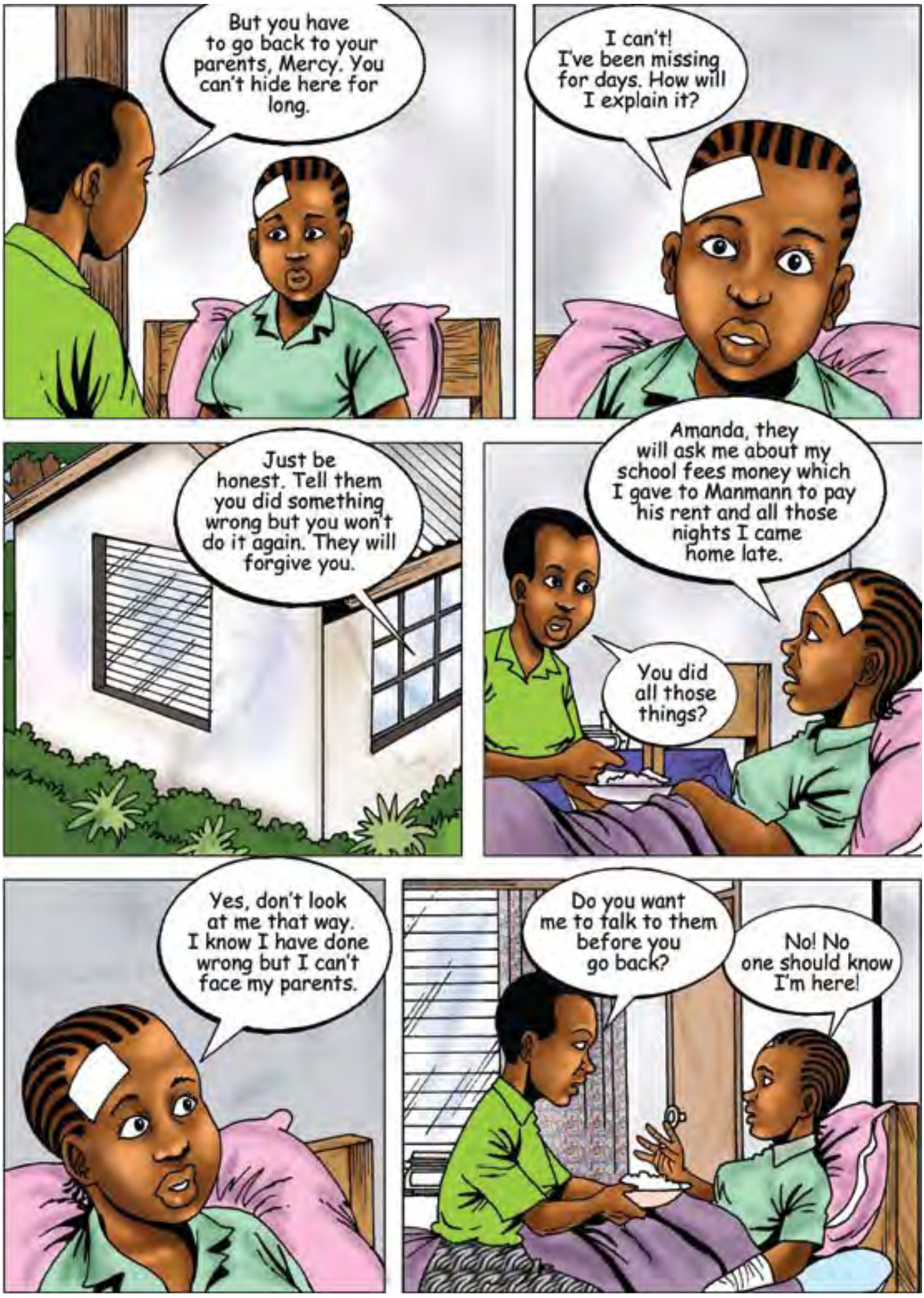

Thanks Shani. That's why I like you. You are a true friend. Other people laugh at my brother or even avoid us saying we might infect them.
You know that's not true. Keep supporting your brother, he needs your love.
AMANDA VISITS MERCY AFTER HER DESPERATE CALL.
Where were you going at that hour?
Manmann and I had gone to a club in the city.
Mercy, what were you thinking? you know it is wrong to go to a club, and worse, to lie to your parents!
I know. I regret it so much.

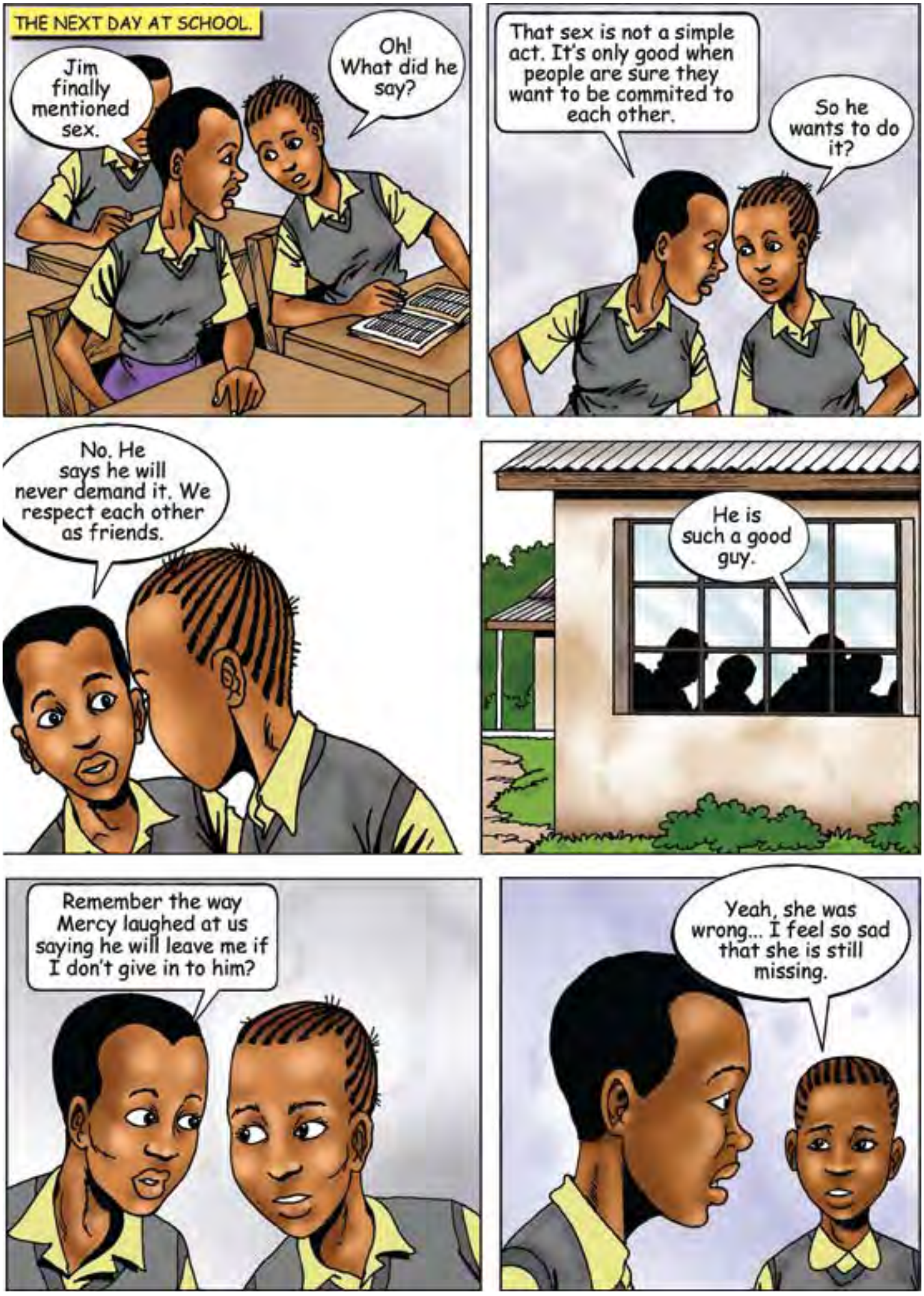

You are so lucky to be alive, Mercy, we need to call your parents.
Are you crazy? I can't! That's why I called you.
You have to let them know what happened when you're discharged..
No! I can't. Please, can I hide at your home for a while as I figure out what to do?
THE NEXT DAY.
Hey guys, I was thinking we can take the band to perform around the town sharing positive messages.
Like go on tour?

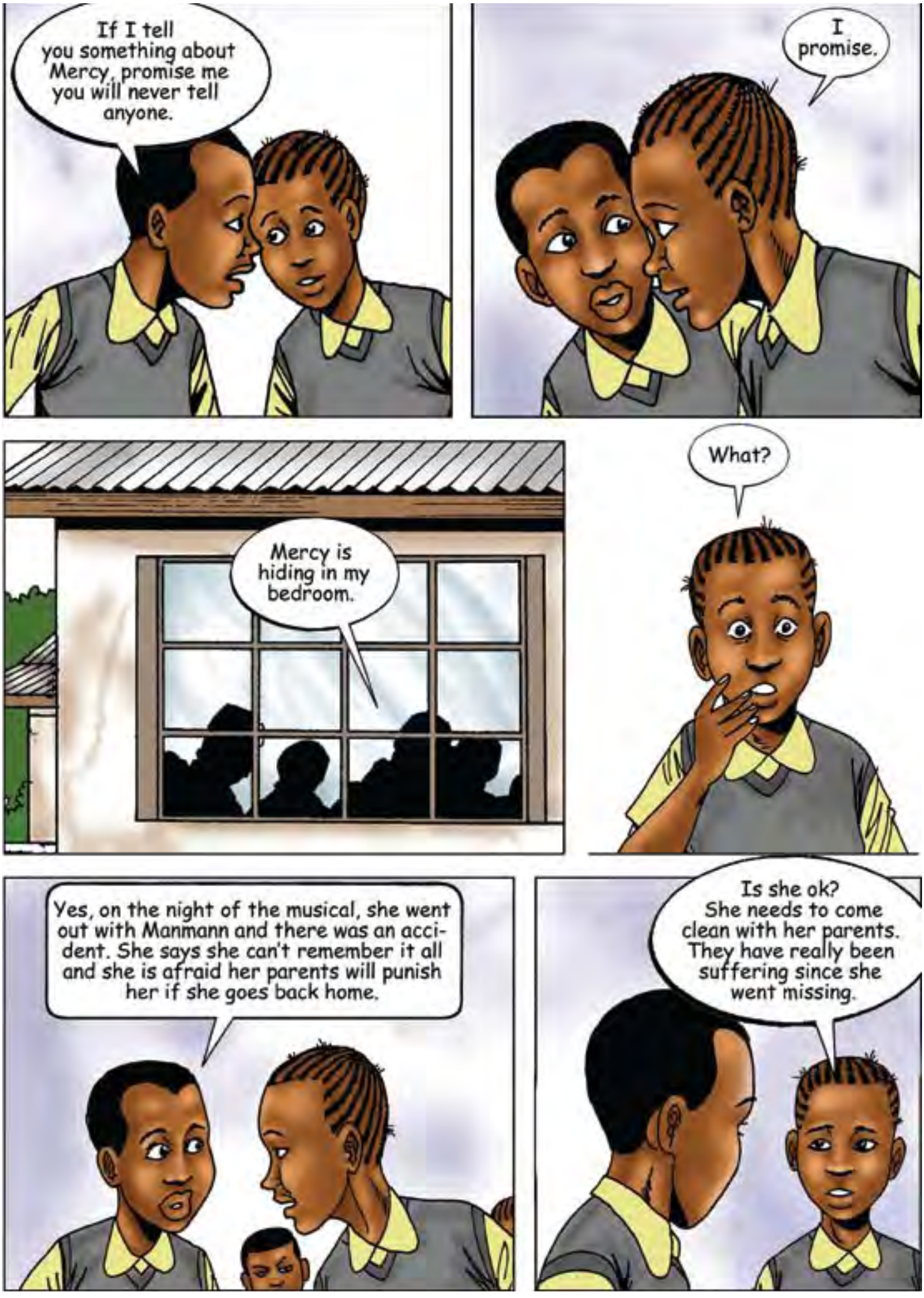

Yeah, I wanted to start a community outreach programme that uses entertainment to teach about HIV and AIDS, alcohol and drugs.
Wow! That would be great. We're in!
Ok, lets have a meeting with other interested people at 1 PM behind the dining hall.
Sorry, I'm on punishment because I did not finish my math homework.
What?
Yesterday Dad was teaching me a song to perform for the church function and I couldn't do my homework so I have to wash the corridor during lunch hour.

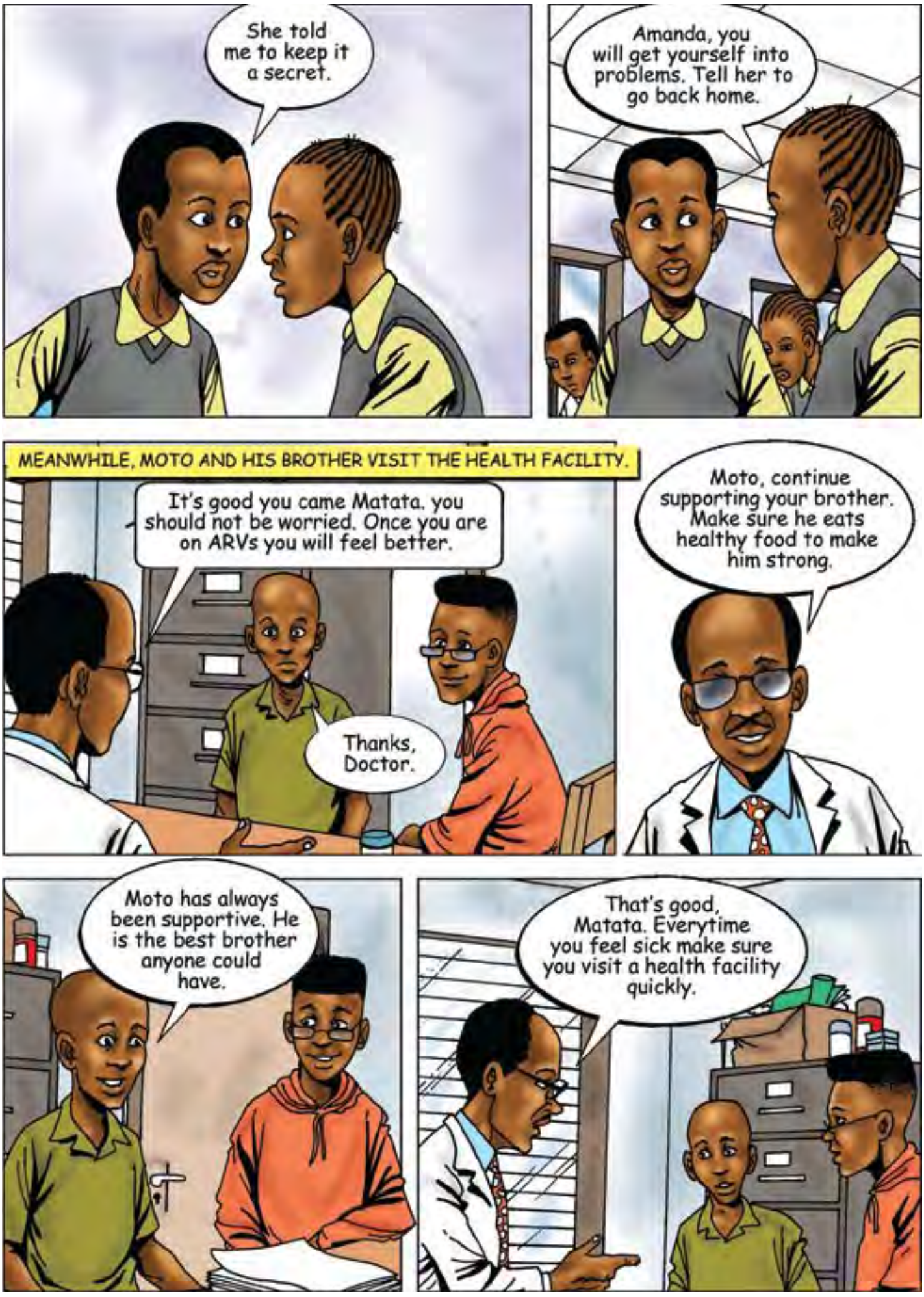
AFTER SCHOOL AMANDA WALKS HOME.
Amanda... I saw you in the papers!
Jim, not you too!
So, how is it? Being famous?
It's ok, but school is more important. We learnt about solar energy this week.
I have a few books on it. You can come borrow them.
Jim, you remember that day I was at your place and the dogs barked? Banda trailed me to your place.
Why? Did he think we were doing something naughty?


He thought we were going to have sex.
Hmm. Sex is pretty serious. I believe it should wait untill two people really know each bother and are ready to spend their lives together.
You mean it's not as simple as people make to be?
No, commitment takes a long time to develop. I wouldn't ask you for sex Amanda, I really respect our friendship.
LATER, AT HER HOUSE, AMANDA SNEAKS MERCY SOME FOOD.
Here, we can share my food.
Thanks, Amanda, you are so kind to me.


But you have to go back to your parents, Mercy. You can't hide here for long.
I can't! I've been missing for days. How will I explain it?
Just be honest. Tell them you did something wrong but you won't do it again. They will forgive you.
Amanda, they will ask me about my school fees money which I gave to Manmann to pay his rent and all those nights I came home late.
You did all those things?
Yes, don't look at me that way. I know I have done wrong but I can't face my parents.
Do you want me to talk to them before you go back?
No! No one should know I'm here!


THE NEXT DAY AT SCHOOL.
Jim finally mentioned sex.
Oh! What did he say?
That sex is not a simple act. It's only good when people are sure they want to be commited to each other.
So he wants to do it?
No. He says he will never demand it. We respect each other as friends.
He is such a good guy.
Remember the way Mercy laughed at us saying he will leave me if I don't give in to him?
Yeah, she was wrong... I feel so sad that she is still missing.


If I tell you something about Mercy, promise me you will never tell anyone.
I promise.
Mercy is hiding in my bedroom.
What?
Yes, on the night of the musical, she went out with Manmann and there was an accident. She says she can't remember it all and she is afraid her parents will punish her if she goes back home.
Is she ok? She needs to come clean with her parents. They have really been suffering since she went missing.


She told me to keep it a secret.
Amanda, you will get yourself into problems. Tell her to go back home.
MEANWHILE, MOTO AND HIS BROTHER VISIT THE HEALTH FACILITY.
It's good you came Matata. you should not be worried. Once you are on ARVs you will feel better.
Thanks, Doctor.
Moto, continue supporting your brother. Make sure he eats healthy food to make him strong.
Moto has always been supportive. He is the best brother anyone could have.
That's good, Matata. Everytime you feel sick make sure you visit a health facility quickly.

Why?
Well, it's just that your immune system is low. It can't fight off illnesses as well as it used to. You need to have immediate attention so that any sickness can be managed before it gets out of hand...
LATER THAT NIGHT.
Mark, how did you manage to...hic ... survive the...hic... accident?
ABUSI BAR
BOARDING & LODG G
I jumped out of the mat before it rolled and ran away as fast as I could.
You left us Mark, you aint a good man.
But I brought your clothes to the hospital and helped you escape.

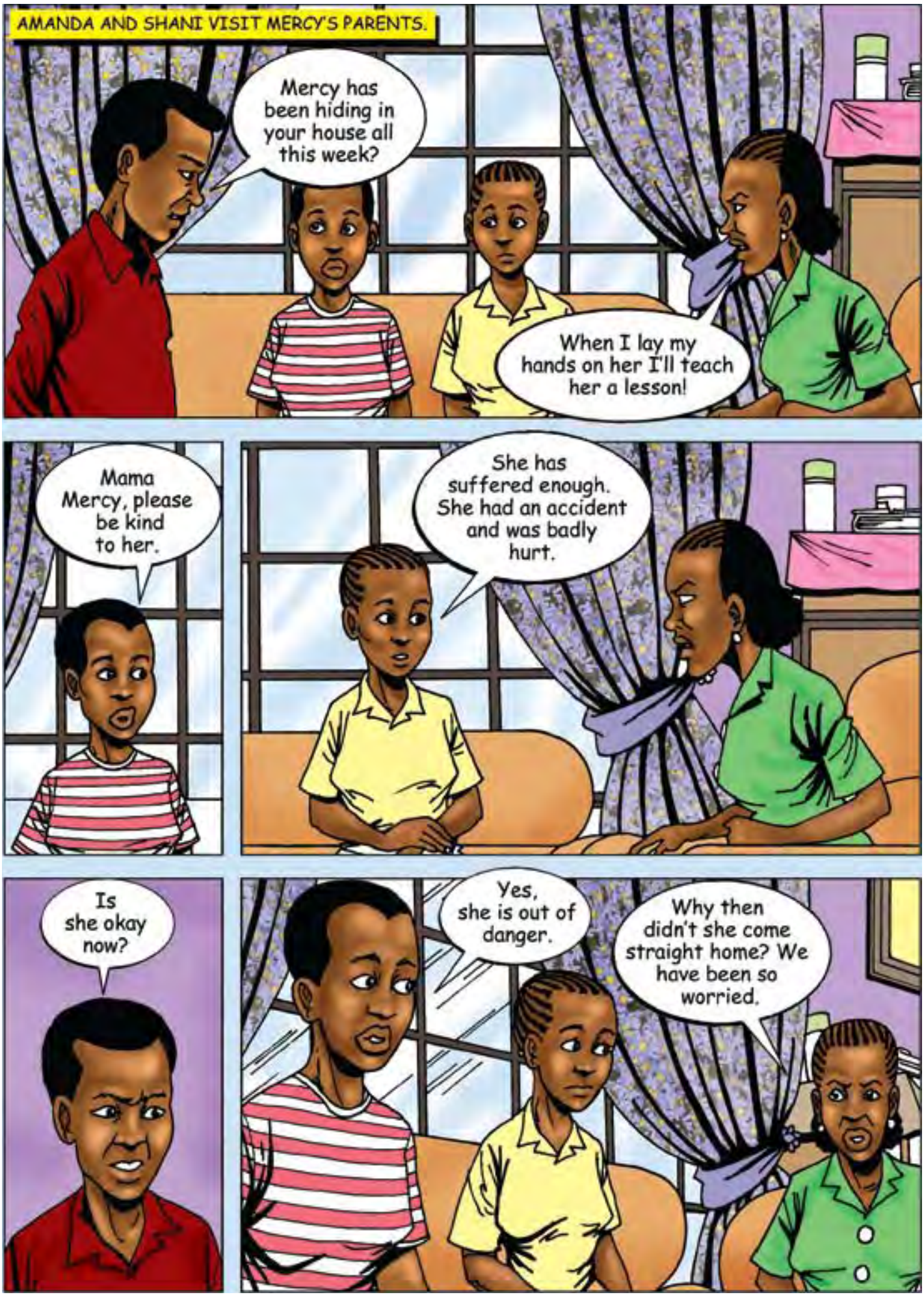
You... hic ...carried out your plan?
Yeah maa , a man's gott do what a ma 's gotta do
Hey Stevo, look at that chic... she's eyeing you.
No, n... not me.
Come on... don't be a coward, go get her. Or should I call her for you?
Hey Liz, Stevo here says you look great and wouldn't mind going for a night out with you.
He still looks like a baby.
I am the man.
Hey, come on...take her out, man.

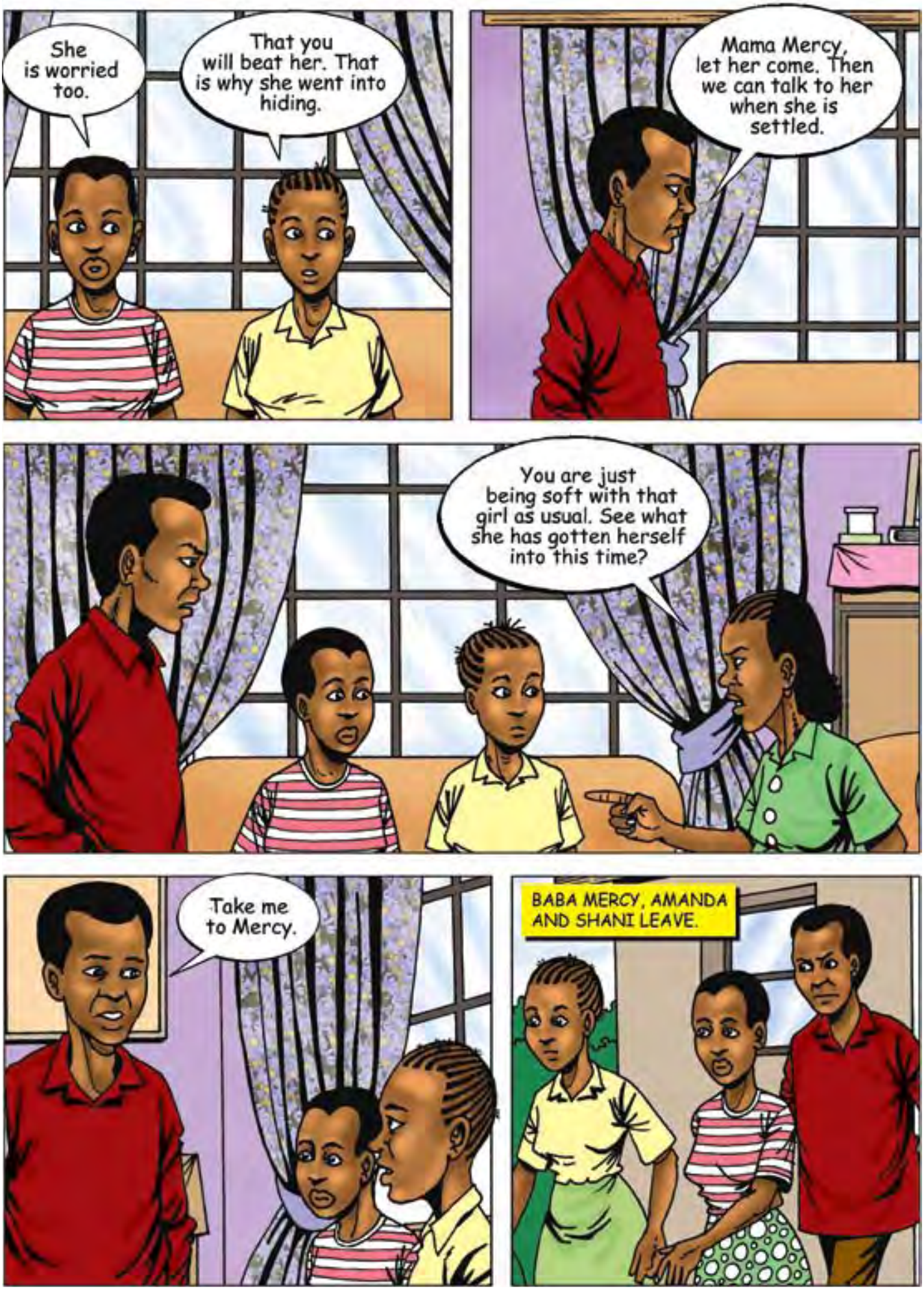
So, show me that you are a man.
Barman, bring ush three beersh each to the roomsh upshtairsh...
Make that five!
ROOMS
THE NEXT MORNING.
Yeah! I'm a man. I can now hang out with popular guys and chics too! But my head... it's really pounding.

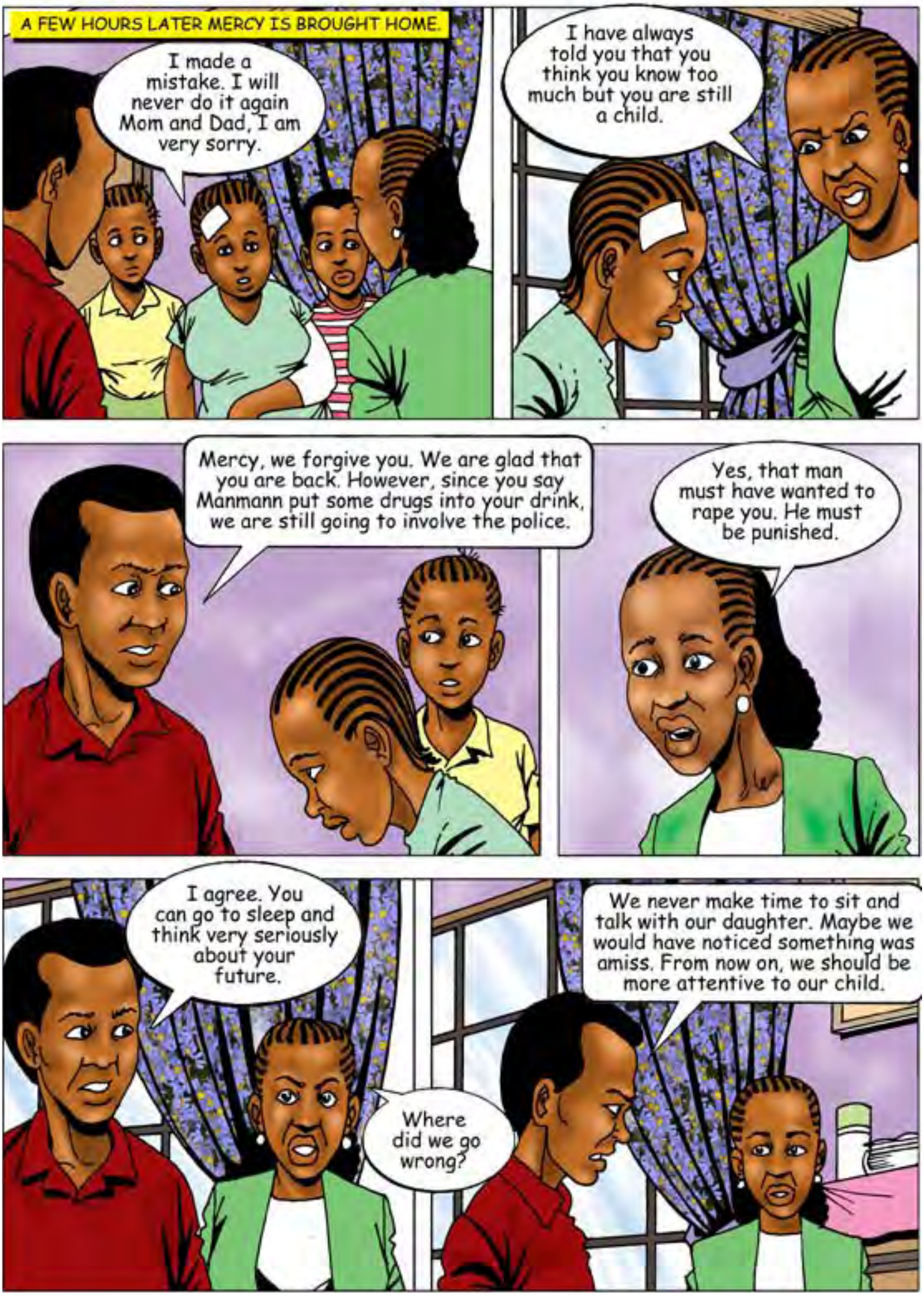
MEANWHILE, SHANI AND GRANDMA VISIT THE CHILDRENS DEPARTMENT OFFICES.
How can we ensure that no one can grab the land from Shani?
Did your parents leave a will before they died?
No.
In that case, all the children should have an equal share of your family's property.
I'm the only child.
And some people are saying since she is a girl she should not inherit it.
That's not true. Even girls can inherit land.
What can we do to make sure no one ever tries to take the land from Shani?
You have already done a good thing coming here. First we must identify a trustee recognized by the government. This trustee will hold the land until Shani is an adult.

LUCIA CONTINUES TO CHASE BANDA.
Now, the guitar has the following chords that you should hit.
It's too hard.
You are not trying hard enough.
It's coz of the way I feel when your hands touch my fingers. You are so like, you know, sexy.
Lucia, remember what I said last time.
But we are, like friends, now aren't we? We can have sex.
Lucia, yes we are friends but that doesn't mean we should have sex.
Are you afraid of doing it?
No.

But everyone is doing it.
That doesn't make it right.
Lucia, I like you but I don't want us to have sex.
Since I'm your girlfriend what else can we do?
We're only friends, Lucia.
Only friends?!
We can play music We can study together. We can hang our together.
Ok, I guess...
Well, I think that is what it means to be friends.

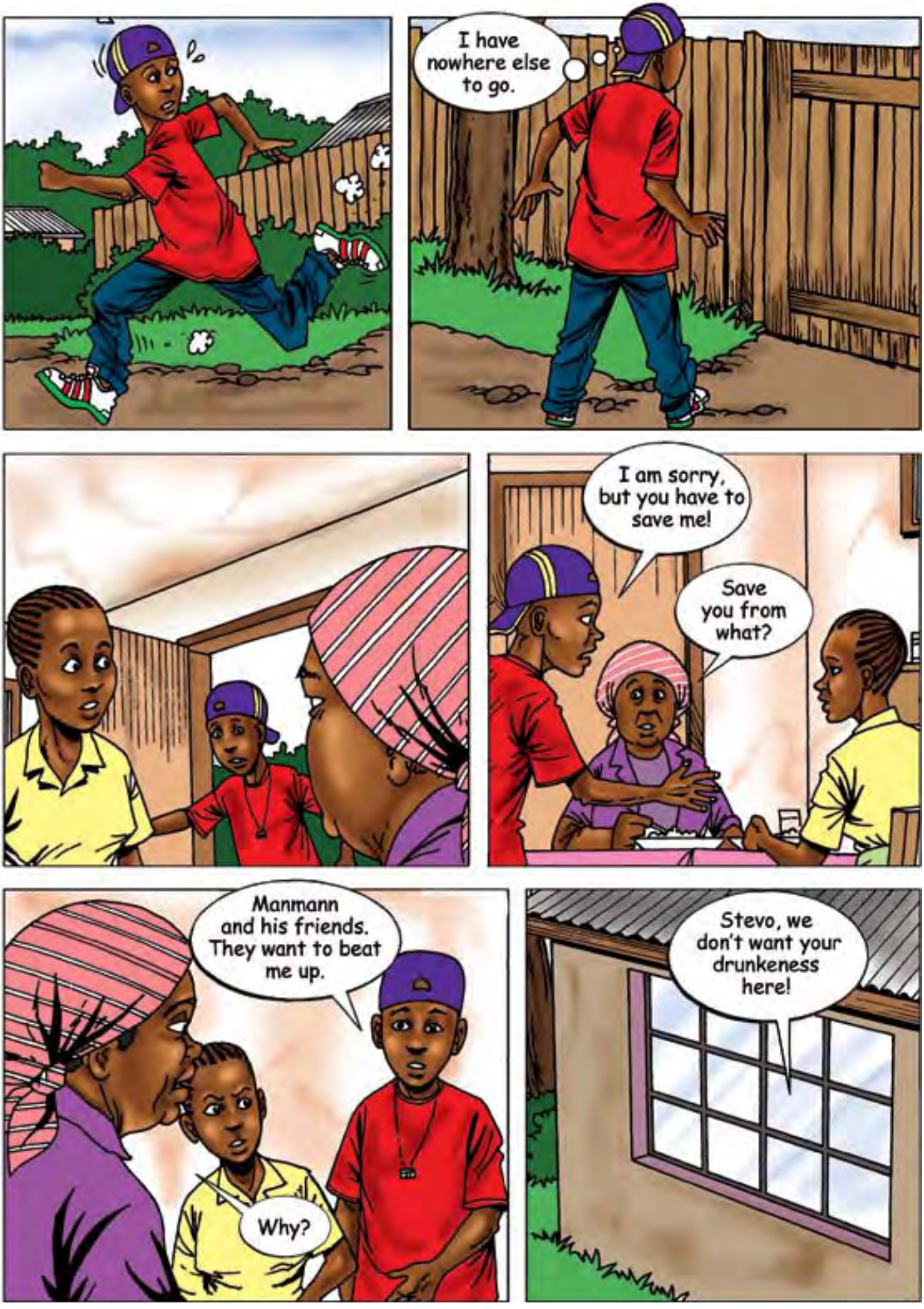

AMANDA AND SHANI VISIT MERCY'S PARENTS.
Mercy has been hiding in your house all this week?
When I lay my hands on her I'll teach her a lesson!
Mama Mercy, please be kind to her.
She has suffered enough. She had an accident and was badly hurt.
Is she okay now?
Yes, she is out of danger.
Why then didn't she come straight home? We have been so worried.


She is worried too.
That you will beat her. That is why she went into hiding.
Mama Mercy, let her come. Then we can talk to her when she is settled.
You are just being soft with that girl as usual. See what she has gotten herself into this time?
Take me to Mercy.
BABA MERCY, AMANDA AND SHANI LEAVE.

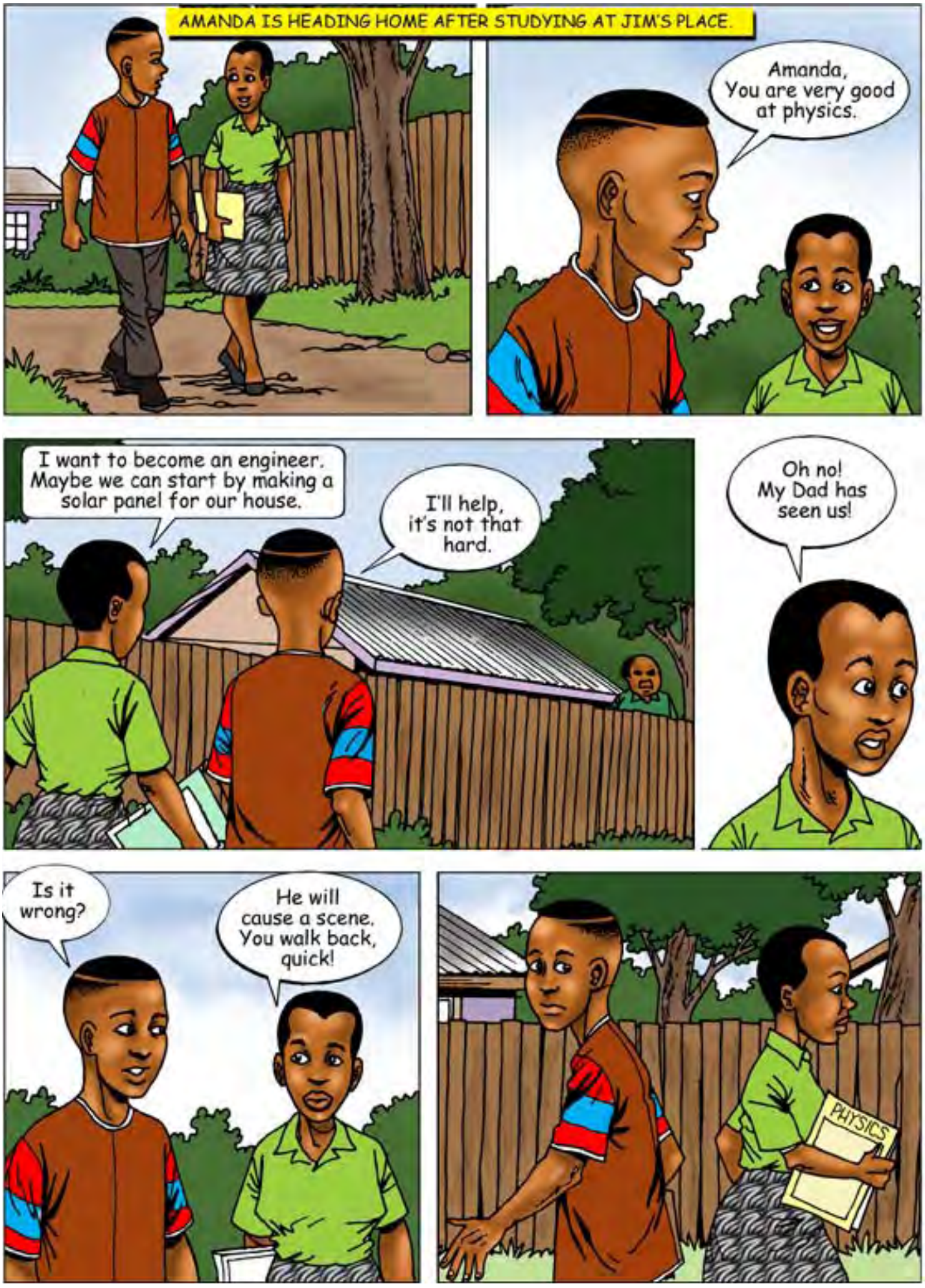

A FEW HOURS LATER MERCY IS BROUGHT HOME.
I made a mistake. I will never do it again Mom and Dad, I am very sorry.
I have always told you that you think you know too much but you are still a child.
Mercy, we forgive you. We are glad that you are back. However, since you say Manmann put some drugs into your drink, we are still going to involve the police.
Yes, that man must have wanted to rape you. He must be punished.
I agree. You can go to sleep and think very seriously about your future.
Where did we go wrong?
We never make time to sit and talk with our daughter. Maybe we would have noticed something was amiss. From now on, we should be more attentive to our child.

MEANWHILE, STEVO HAS HIS OWN PROBLEMS.
OUCH!
Mark, there's a sharp pain every time I try to pee.
When did it start?
The day before yesterday. it's really painful!
HAHAHAHA... You got the clap,man. You're really the man.
What is a clap?
You got burnt... I mean, you got a sexually transmitted infection. Why didn't you use a condom?
...I should have. Well... What should I do now?

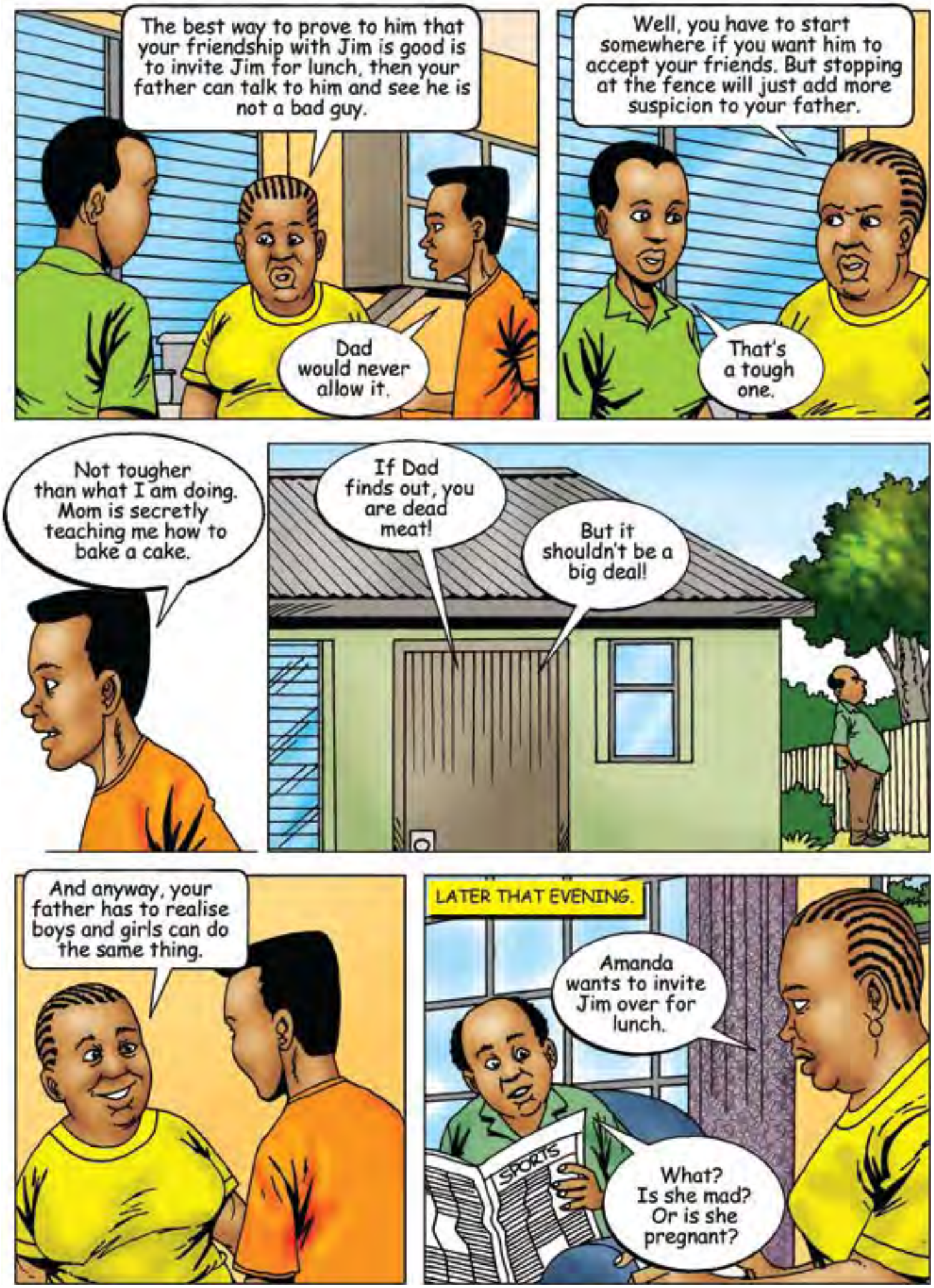
Don't worry, tomorrow I'll get some drugs from a friend.
MANMANN STORMS INTO THE BAR.
You, Stevo! I hear you told the police that I spiked Mercy's drink. Now they're looking for me!
Well, they asked me and... I had to tell the truth or they'd have put me in jail!
So you want me to go rot in jail? I'm going to kill you!

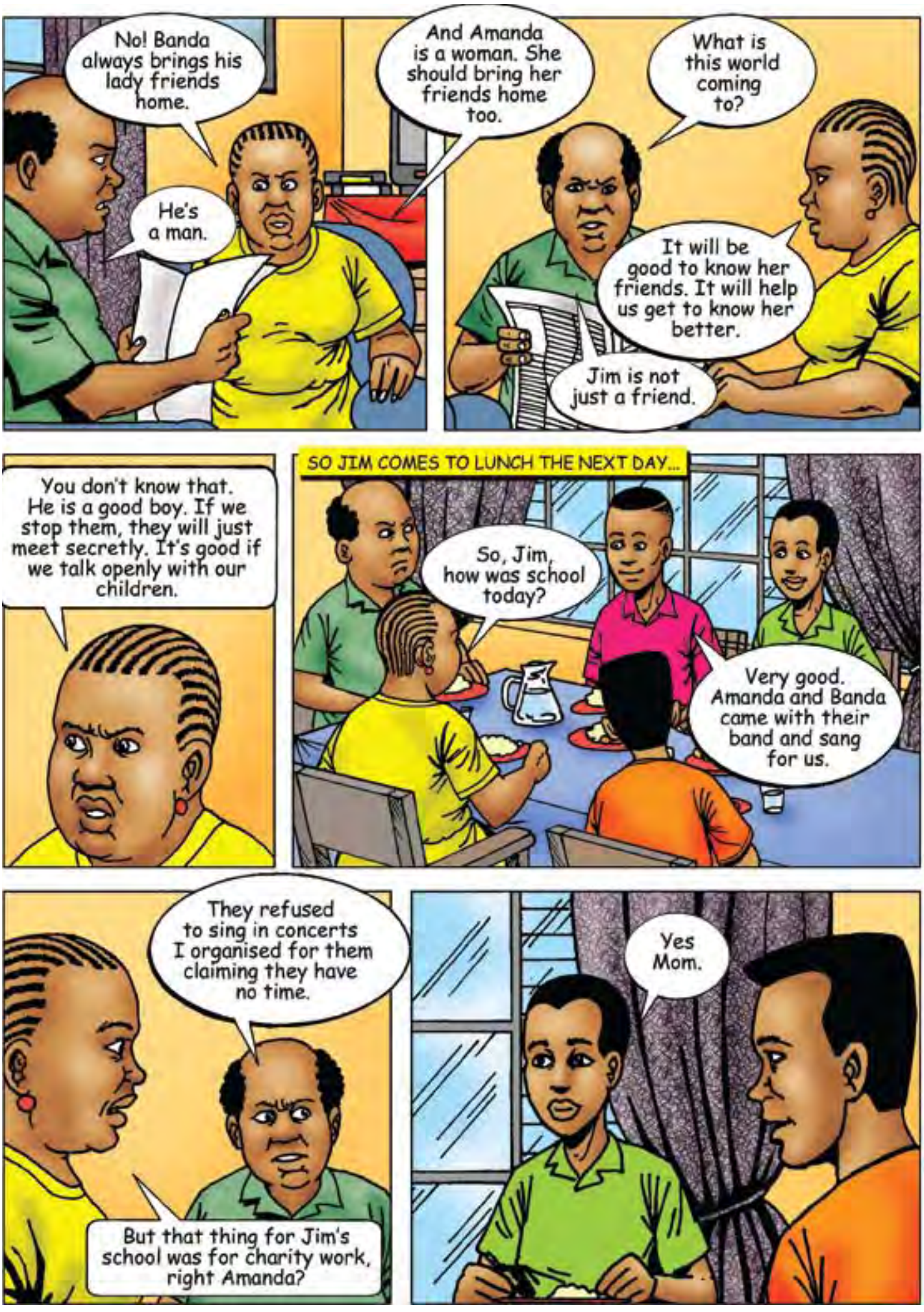

I have nowhere else to go.
I am sorry, but you have to save me!
Save you from what?
Manmann and his friends. They want to beat me up.
Why?
Stevo, we don't want your drunkeness here!

Shani, I know I have done wrong to both of you but please forgive me. I will never do it again. I have learnt my lesson.
Shani, listen to him. Why do your friends want to beat you up?
Manmann says I sold him out to the police.
Grandma, Stevo helped his fiends take Mercy out to drink and his friends tried to rape her.
I am sorry. Please, I have wronged you but I'm sorry.
Ok, your bedroom is still there for you. We never kicked you out. You are the one who left us. So sleep that alcohol away and then we can talk.
Grandma? Stevo abused you the last time he was here.
We have to learn to forgive, Shani, and give people a chance to change.


AMANDA IS HEADING HOME AFTER STUDYING AT JIM'S PLACE.
Amanda, You are very good at physics.
I want to become an engineer. Maybe we can start by making a solar panel for our house.
I'll help, it's not that hard.
Oh no! My Dad has seen us!
Is it wrong?
He will cause a scene. You walk back, quick!
PHYSICS

What are you doing with that boy?
We were studying.
Nonsense! You think you are mature enough to start walking with boys?
Dad, we were not doing aything wrong. He is just a friend.
From now on, no stepping out of this compound except to school and back. You think I was born yesterday?
Mom, why does Dad think Jim and I are doing bad things?
Calm down, Amanda, what is it?
Banda, didn't I tell you I was going to study at Jim's?
Yes Mom, she did.


The best way to prove to him that your friendship with Jim is good is to invite Jim for lunch, then your father can talk to him and see he is not a bad guy.
Dad would never allow it.
Well, you have to start somewhere if you want him to accept your friends. But stopping at the fence will just add more suspicion to your father.
That's a tough one.
Not tougher than what I am doing. Mom is secretly teaching me how to bake a cake.
If Dad finds out, you are dead meat!
But it shouldn't be a big deal!
And anyway, your father has to realise boys and girls can do the same thing.
LATER THAT EVENING.
Amanda wants to invite Jim over for lunch.
SPORTS
What? Is she mad? Or is she pregnant?

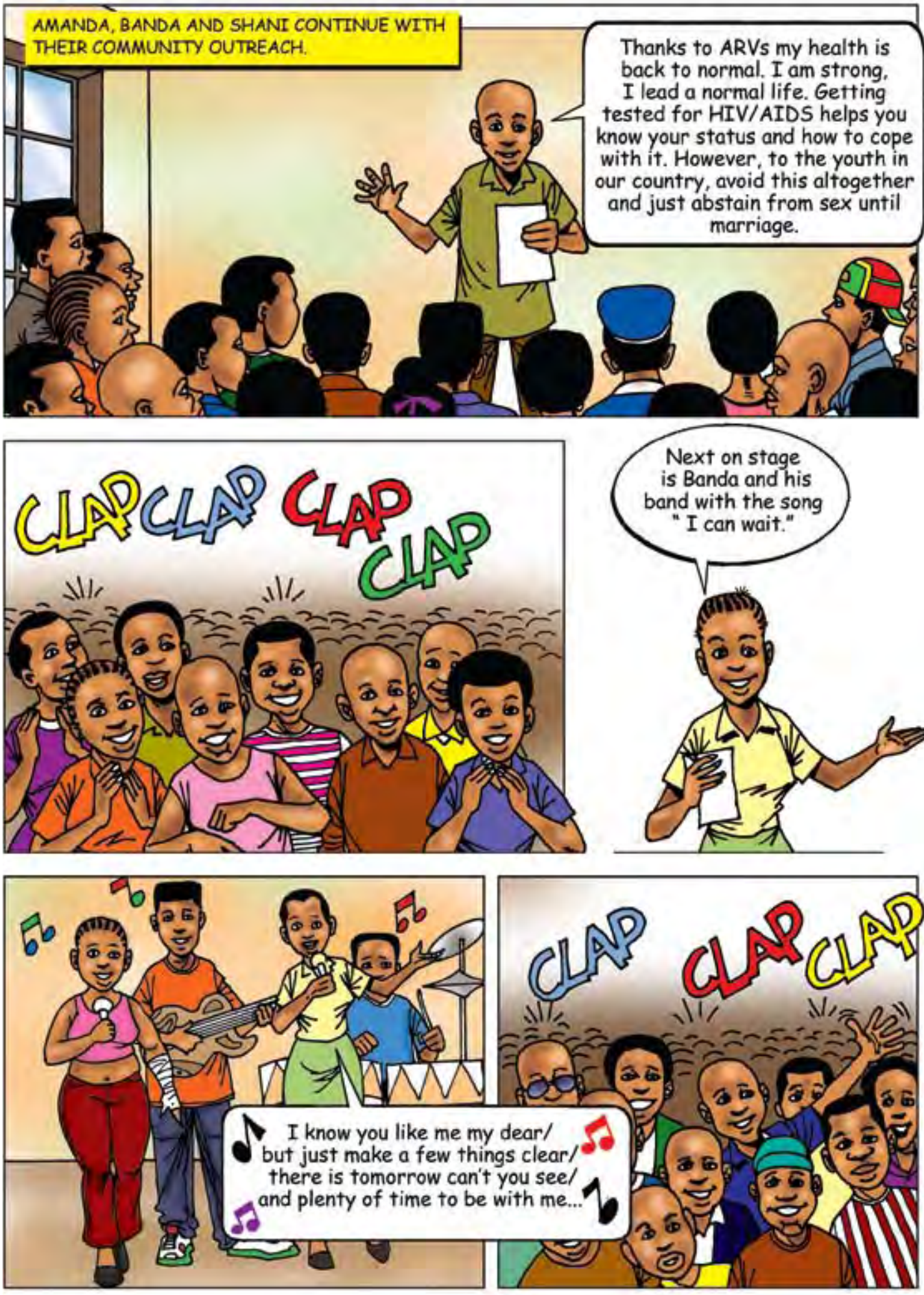

No! Banda always brings his lady friends home.
He's a man.
And Amanda is a woman. She should bring her friends home too.
What is this world coming to?
It will be good to know her friends. It will help us get to know her better.
Jim is not just a friend.
You don't know that. He is a good boy. If we stop them, they will just meet secretly. It's good if we talk openly with our children.
SO JIM COMES TO LUNCH THE NEXT DAY...
So, Jim, how was school today?
Very good. Amanda and Banda came with their band and sang for us.
They refused to sing in concerts I organised for them claiming they have no time.
But that thing for Jim's school was for charity work, right Amanda?
Yes Mom.

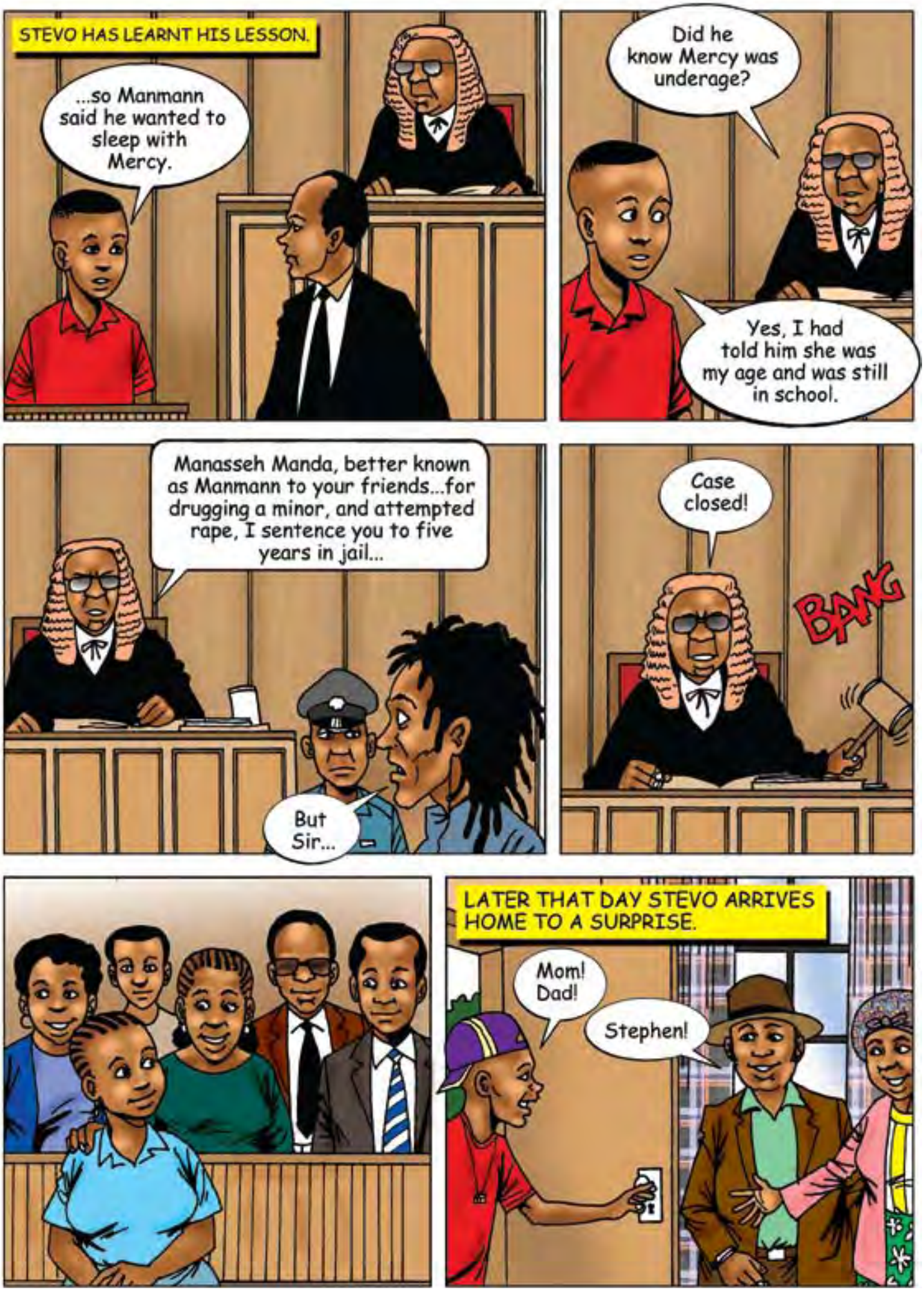
Shani is a great leader. I think she learns a lot from the scouting programme.
What would you like to be in the future, Jim?
An engineer. Like Amanda.
Baba Banda, you haven't eaten much...
I've had enough!
Did I say something wrong?
Don't mind him, he will come around. At least you have broken the ice.
A FEW WEEKS LATER.
How was school today?
Very good. I see you basket is coming along well.
Yes, by the way, some officers from the prison were here.
What did they say?
Your Uncle and Aunt will be released very soon.

Why? Their term isn't due.
They say your Uncle and Aunt are behaving well and seem reformed.
I don't want to see them! After everything they did to me...
That is what I wanted to talk to you about, Shani. Forgiveness.
They took all our property, forced me out of school and overworked me.
Yes, but now they have repented. You need to forgive people who have wronged you Shani.
It is so hard.
It is, but it is the right thing to do. Many people have wronged me in life, but when they say they are sorry, I forgive them and move on. It makes life happier.
MERCY IS GETTING HER LIFE TOGETHER.
How was school today, Mercy?
Oh, it was nice.
Anything new?
Yes, I joined Banda and Amanda's Band.
The band? Again?

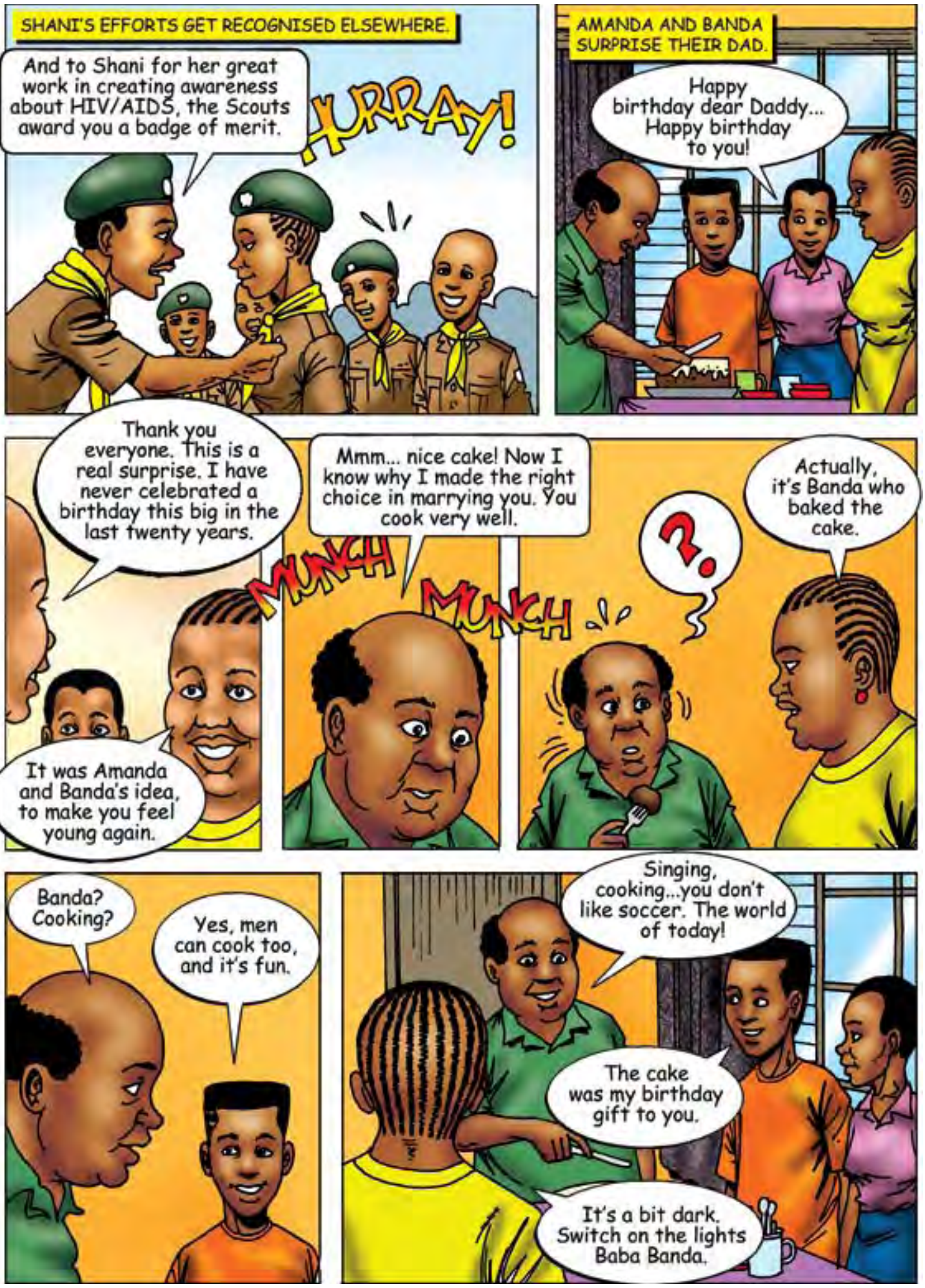
This time for real. We are going to schools singing about issues that affect young people like drugs, irresponsible sex and other stuff.
That's good. Do you need help with your homework?
Let me change, then you can tell me more about supply and demand curves.
That should be easy for your Dad. He's so business minded.
Don't forget Friday is the hearing against Manmann.
You need to go and testify in court against him.
I'm ready. Manmann has to be punished for what he tried to do.
You see? She has changed.
Yes, talking more freely with our child is really helpful.
STEVO IS BACK IN SCHOOL BUT TROUBLE FOLLOWS HIM.
Leave me alone.
Come on Stevo, you know we are buddies, and tight, maan.
What do you want from me?
You know Friday is my hearing, maan.

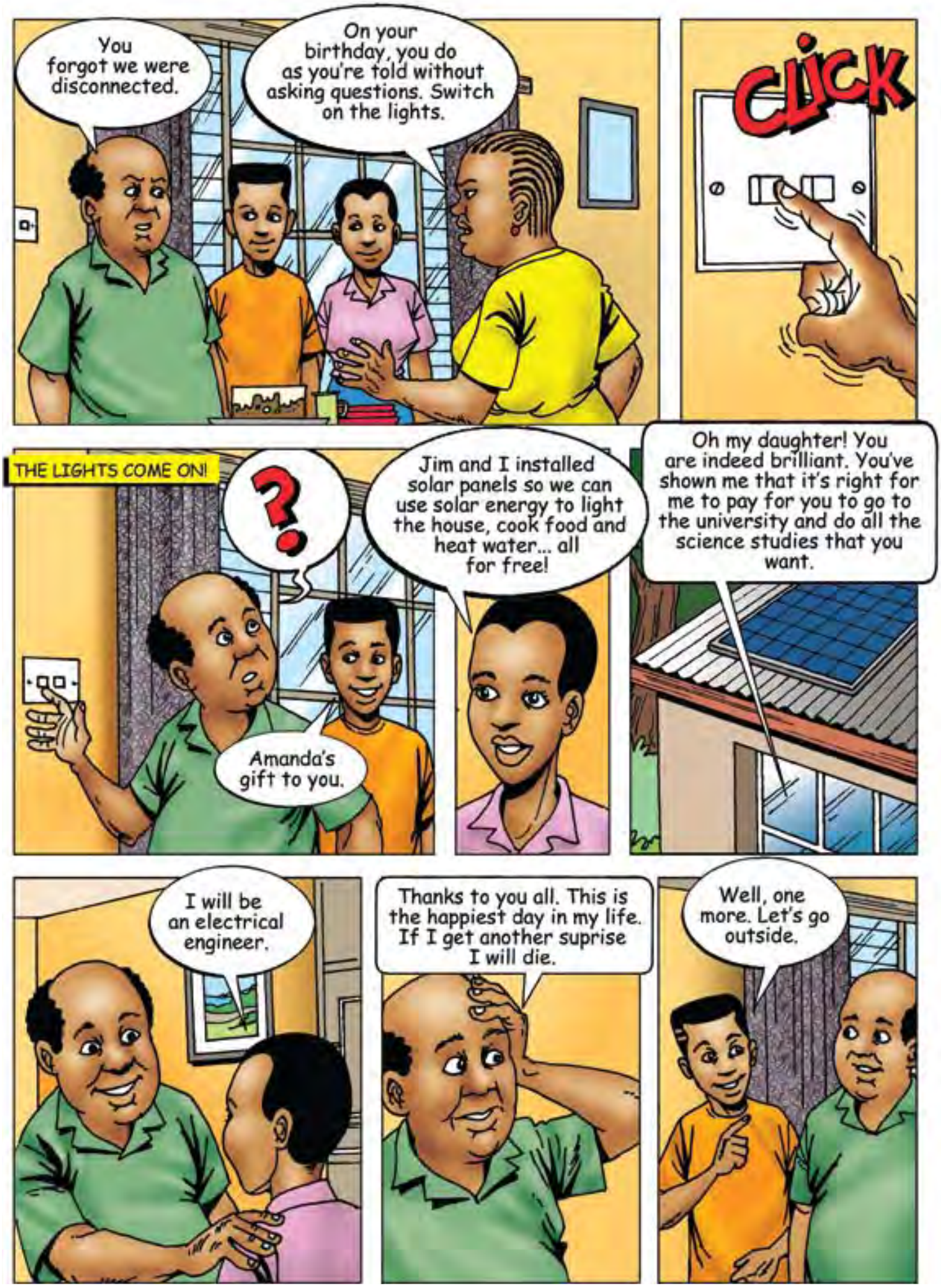
You gotta refuse to testify.
Because without your evidence the cops got nothing against me, maan.
We are brothers. We stick together.
But you threatened me the last time.
That was a joke, maan, aint it, Mark?
Yeah, Stevo, we your buddies. Don't go to court
Hmm? But what kind of friends are you? Ever since I met you I've been drinking smoking, sleeping with girls and getting STIs. You even made me cheat a real friend!
Cut the crap!
I am serious. I am no longer in your group! I had to go to hosi for treatment. Your medicine never cured me!
No one leaves our group. No one sells out members of our group!
If you testify on Friday you will regret it!

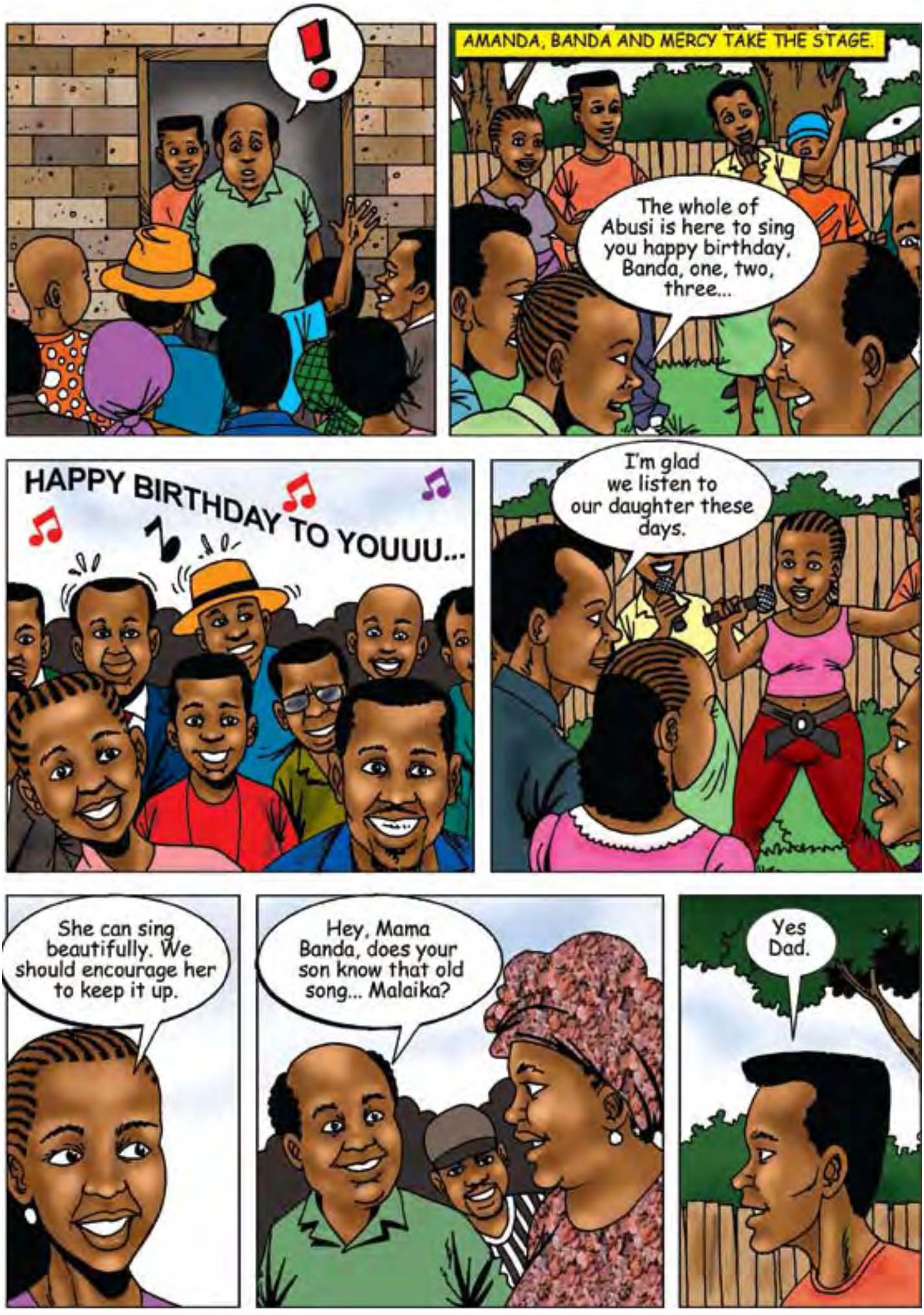

AMANDA, BANDA AND SHANI CONTINUE WITH THEIR COMMUNITY OUTREACH.
Thanks to ARVs my health is back to normal. I am strong, I lead a normal life. Getting tested for HIV/AIDS helps you know your status and how to cope with it. However, to the youth in our country, avoid this altogether and just abstain from sex until marriage.
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
Next on stage is Banda and his band with the song " I can wait."
I know you like me my dear/ but just make a few things clear/ there is tomorrow can't you see/ and plenty of time to be with me...
CLAP CLAP CLAP


STEVO HAS LEARNT HIS LESSON.
...so Manmann said he wanted to sleep with Mercy.
Did he know Mercy was underage?
Yes, I had told him she was my age and was still in school.
Manasseh Manda, better known as Manmann to your friends...for drugging a minor, and attempted rape, I sentence you to five years in jail...
But Sir...
Case closed!
BANG
LATER THAT DAY STEVO ARRIVES HOME TO A SURPRISE.
Mom! Dad!
Stephen!

I didn't expect you home soon.
We were released early for good behaviour.
That's such good news.
We have come to tell Shani we are sorry for all that we did to her.
It was wrong for us to try and steal your parents' property, Shani. We see that it's your rightful inheritance.
It's ok, I accept your apology.
The childrens' department finalised everything and made me the trustee to the property until Shani is able to take it over.
We shall go back to our piece of land, and start a new life. I hope we can remain good relatives with you, Shani.
Of course! Grandma said to forgive is the way to move forward.


SHANI'S EFFORTS GET RECOGNISED ELSEWHERE.
And to Shani for her great work in creating awareness about HIV/AIDS, the Scouts award you a badge of merit.
HURRAY!
AMANDA AND BANDA SURPRISE THEIR DAD.
Happy birthday dear Daddy... Happy birthday to you!
Thank you everyone. This is a real surprise. I have never celebrated a birthday this big in the last twenty years.
It was Amanda and Banda's idea, to make you feel young again.
Mmm... nice cake! Now I know why I made the right choice in marrying you. You cook very well.
MUNCH
MUNCH
?
Actually, it's Banda who baked the cake.
Banda? Cooking?
Yes, men can cook too, and it's fun.
Singing, cooking...you don't like soccer. The world of today!
The cake was my birthday gift to you.
It's a bit dark. Switch on the lights Baba Banda.


You forgot we were disconnected.
On your birthday, you do as you're told without asking questions. Switch on the lights.
CLICK
THE LIGHTS COME ON!
?
Amanda's gift to you.
Jim and I installed solar panels so we can use solar energy to light the house, cook food and heat water... all for free!
Oh my daughter! You are indeed brilliant. You've shown me that it's right for me to pay for you to go to the university and do all the science studies that you want.
I will be an electrical engineer.
Thanks to you all. This is the happiest day in my life. If I get another suprise I will die.
Well, one more. Let's go outside.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AMANDA, BANDA AND MERCY TAKE THE STAGE.
The whole of Abusi is here to sing you happy birthday, Banda, one, two, three...
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOUUU...
I'm glad we listen to our daughter these days.
She can sing beautifully. We should encourage her to keep it up.
Hey, Mama Banda, does your son know that old song... Malaika?
Yes Dad.

Malaika... nakupenda malaikaaa...
Mama Banda, come here, let us remember the way we used to dance.
THE END

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