

OUR STORY TAKES PLACE IN EAST AFRICA, IN UGANDA, AROUND THE CITY OF GULU.



UGANDA



Gulu, Uganda, 2002

Dear Reader

My name is Kitino Jacob. I was born in Gulu, a city of 110,000 people in the north of Uganda. I am from the Acholi tribe.

Where I live, far from the capital city of Kampala, Kony, Joseph leads the Lord's Resistance Army (or the LRA). My country knows this man simply as Kony, the leader of an army of abducted children. He and his LRA gang of rebels steal boys and girls from rural farms, villages, schools, and buses. They say that only they know the true Christian way, that their army of Christian soldiers will fight the government of Uganda and create a country of Christians called "Acholiland." But Kony and his Lord's Resistance Army are cruel beyond measure. They are not Christians. They do not care for or protect children. I know this to be true.

because I was one of those
abducted children. I became a
child soldier in Kony's Army.

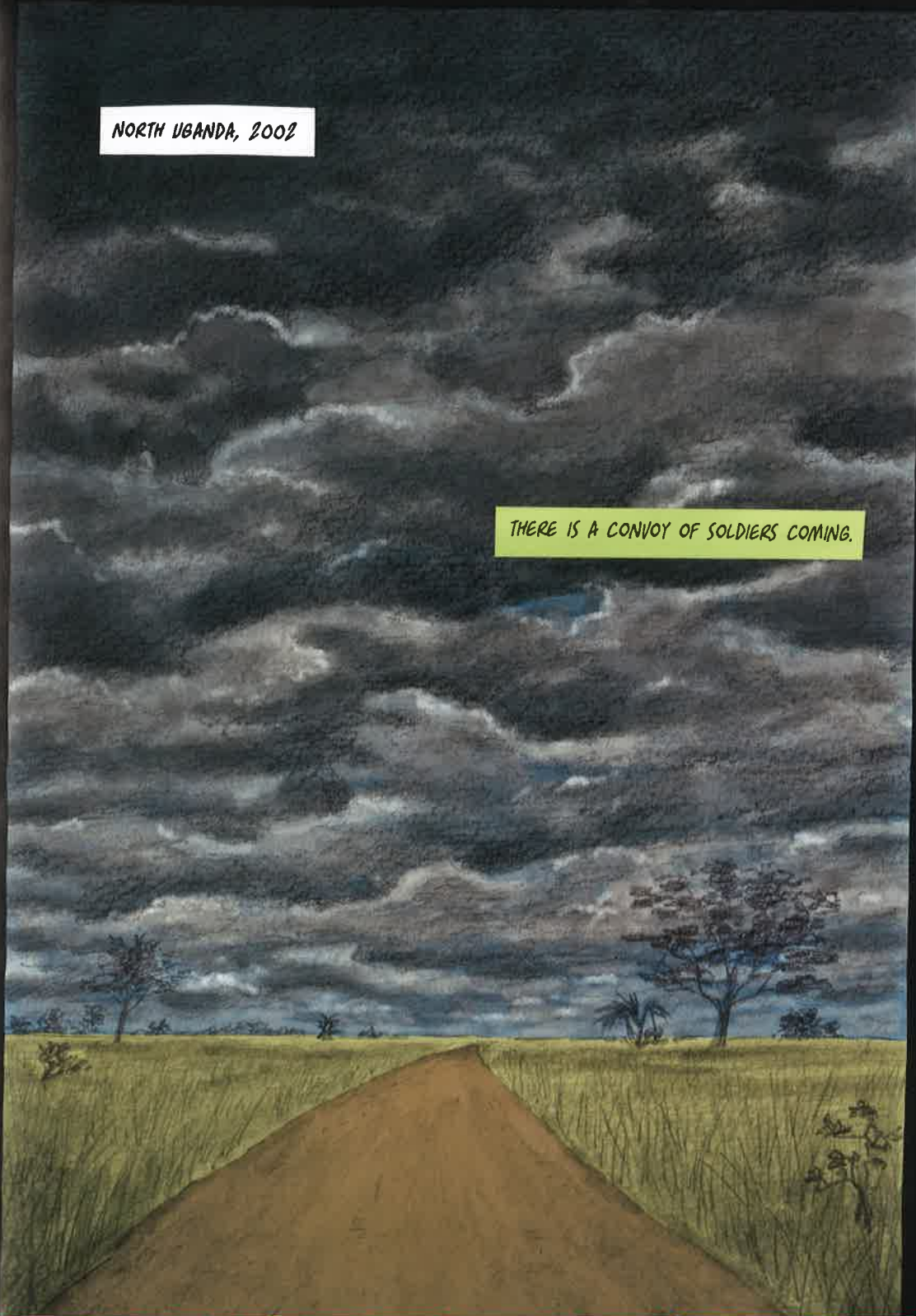
My story is not an easy one
to tell, and it is not an easy one to
read. The life of a child soldier is
full of unthinkable violence and
brutal death. But this is also
a story of hope, courage,
friendship, and family. We Ugandans
believe that family is most
important.


I thought you should be
prepared for both the bad and
the good. There is no shame
in closing this book now.

Jacob


NORTH UGANDA, 2002

THERE IS A CONVOY OF SOLDIERS COMING.





MY FINGERS HURT FROM
HOLDING THE PANGA SO HARD...



...HOW MUCH LONGER ARE
WE GOING TO WAIT?

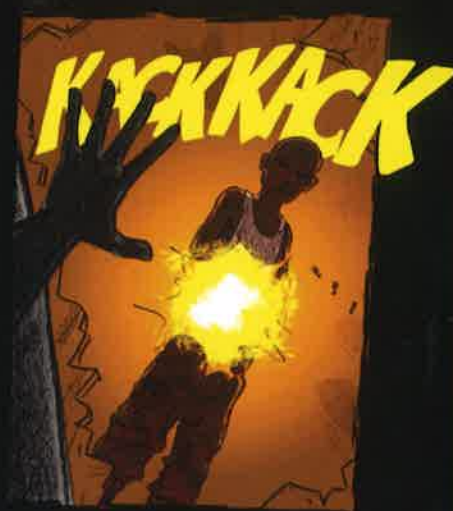






ATTACK!!





TAKE THE CHILDREN!!



PLEASE NO!!!

AAAAHHH!!



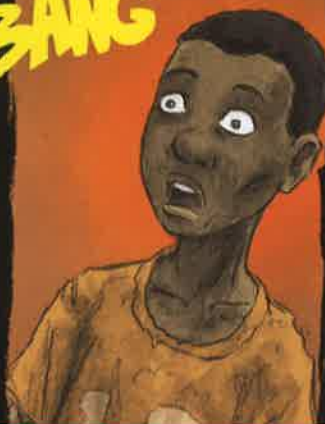
MAMMA!!

AAAAHH!



MY BABY!!

BANG



KACKKACK





MY BABY!

KILL
HER!

MAMMA!



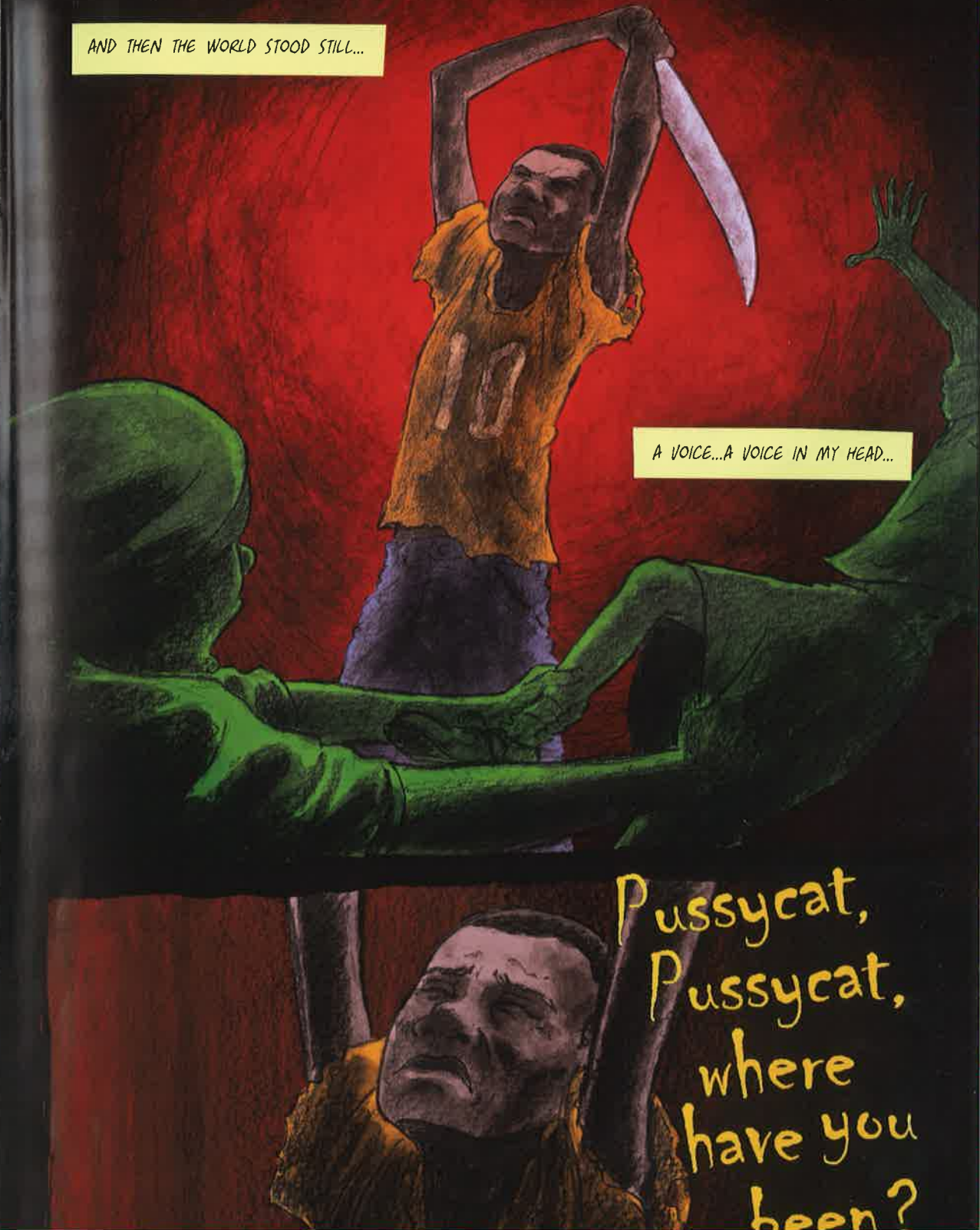
KILL THE
MOTHER!!



AND THEN THE WORLD STOOD STILL...

A VOICE...A VOICE IN MY HEAD...

Pussycat,
Pussycat,
where
have you
been?



...A VOICE FROM THE PAST...

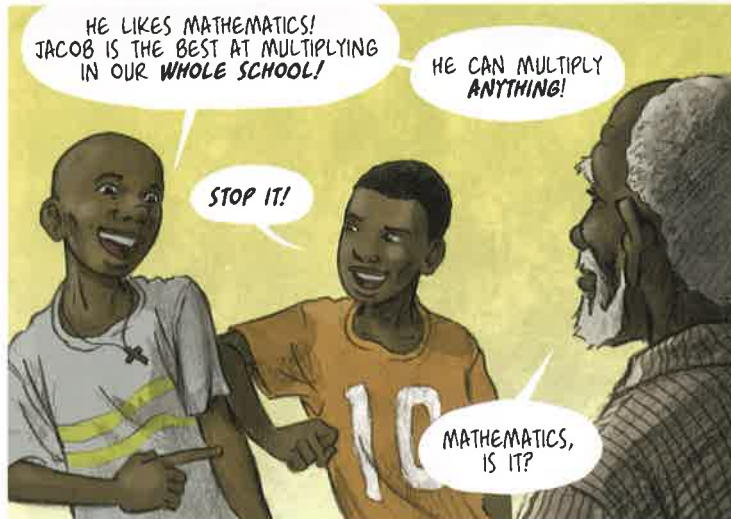
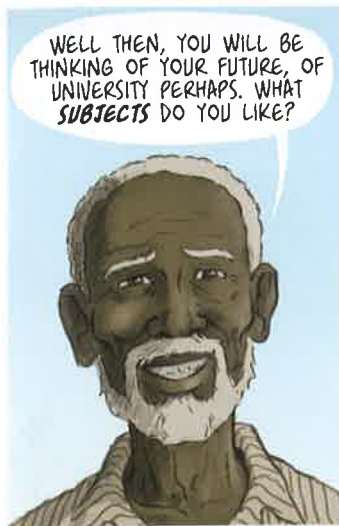
GULU, TWO MONTHS EARLIER





...BUT THAT ONE IS MUSA HENRY TORAC, FATHER'S OLDEST FRIEND.







FATHER MUST TAKE THE CAR TO KAMPALA. I WILL GO TO SCHOOL BY BUS TOMORROW. WE WILL GO TOGETHER.



IT IS TIME, JACOB.



GO AND STAND IN THE INSIDE COURTYARD WHERE YOUR FATHER CAN SEE YOU. HE WILL CALL YOU WHEN HE IS READY TO TALK.



WHAT DOES **PRESIDENT MUSEVENI** DO ABOUT **KONY** AND HIS ARMY OF CHILDREN UP HERE IN THE NORTH? HE SHOULD SEND US MORE GOVERNMENT SOLDIERS. **OUR PEOPLE** NEED MORE **PROTECTION**.



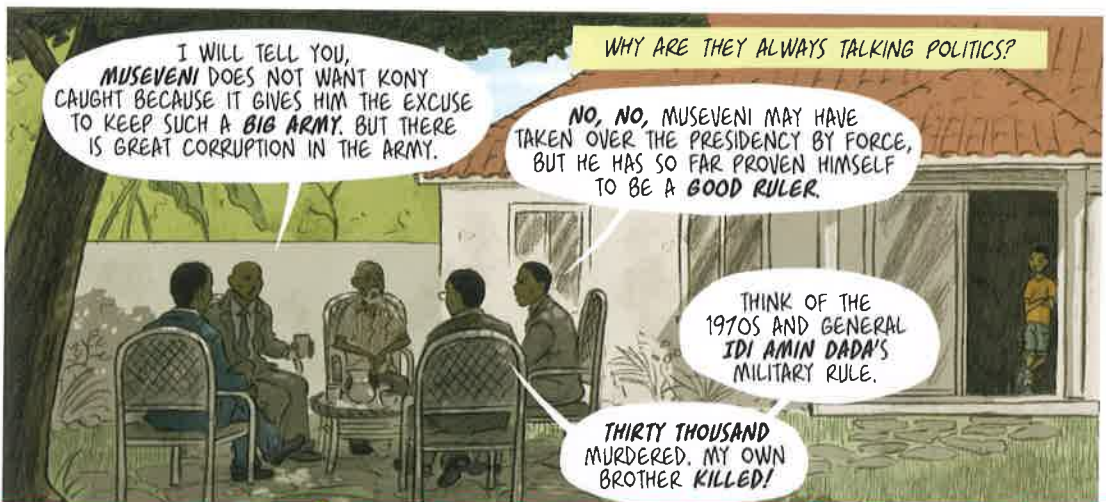
I WILL TELL YOU, **MUSEVENI** DOES NOT WANT **KONY** CAUGHT BECAUSE IT GIVES HIM THE EXCUSE TO KEEP SUCH A **BIG ARMY**. BUT THERE IS GREAT CORRUPTION IN THE ARMY.

WHY ARE THEY ALWAYS TALKING POLITICS?

NO, NO, **MUSEVENI** MAY HAVE TAKEN OVER THE PRESIDENCY BY FORCE, BUT HE HAS SO FAR PROVEN HIMSELF TO BE A **GOOD RULER**.

THINK OF THE 1970S AND GENERAL **IDI AMIN DADA'S** MILITARY RULE.

THIRTY THOUSAND MURDERED. MY OWN BROTHER **KILLED!**



THIS KONY IS OF THE
ACHOLI TRIBE, JUST LIKE US,
BUT HE ATTACKS MOSTLY US.
HE MUST BE **CAUGHT**.



HOW COULD SUCH
AN EVIL MAN CONTINUE
TO EXIST?

THEY CALL KONY'S
SOLDIERS BEASTS, BUT
MY GRANDSON IS
A GOOD BOY.



MY GRANDSON'S NAME IS MICHAEL,
AFTER **SAINT MICHAEL, THE WARRIOR**.
DID NOT SAINT MICHAEL FIGHT
SATAN IN HEAVEN?
PERHAPS A CHILD WITH SUCH A NAME
COULD FIGHT SATAN ON EARTH?
AND IS THIS KONY NOT SATAN HIMSELF?



PLEASE
EXCUSE ME
FOR A
MOMENT.



JACOB,
MY SON.

FATHER.

I LEAVE TONIGHT FOR ENGLAND.
I WILL NOT SEE YOU AGAIN UNTIL THE
NEXT SCHOOL BREAK.



DO YOU
REMEMBER THE LAST
POEM BOOK I BROUGHT
BACK?

"PUSSYCAT, PUSSYCAT, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
I'VE BEEN TO LONDON TO VISIT THE QUEEN.
PUSSYCAT, PUSSYCAT, WHAT DID YOU DO THERE?
I FRIGHTENED A LITTLE MOUSE UNDER HER CHAIR."



YOUR MOTHER
LOVED READING THAT
BOOK TO YOU.



I MISS HER, FATHER.



DO NOT BE SAD.
SHE IS WITH GOD,
MY SON.

YOUR
MOTHER WOULD
WANT YOU TO
BE HAPPY.



IS THERE
ANYTHING I CAN
BRING YOU BACK
FROM LONDON?



YES. A FOOTBALL.

HABA, A FOOTBALL
IT IS THEN!



THANK YOU,
FATHER!

MAKE ME PROUD THIS
SEMESTER. DO NOT FORGET
THAT YOU ARE **ACHOLI**, A
GREAT AND HONORABLE
TRIBE.



I WILL.

NEXT MORNING



THE NUNS WHO ARE PAYING FOR MY SCHOOLING TOLD ME THAT IF I **FAIL** IT IS BECAUSE I AM AN UNGRATEFUL BOY.

BUT IF I **PASS** IT IS GOD'S WORK AND I SHOULD REPAY GOD BY BECOMING A **PRIEST**.



HAHAHA!

YOU **LAUGH**, BUT I KNOW THAT YOU REALLY WANT TO BECOME A **PRIEST**.

STOP THAT! **HABA!**

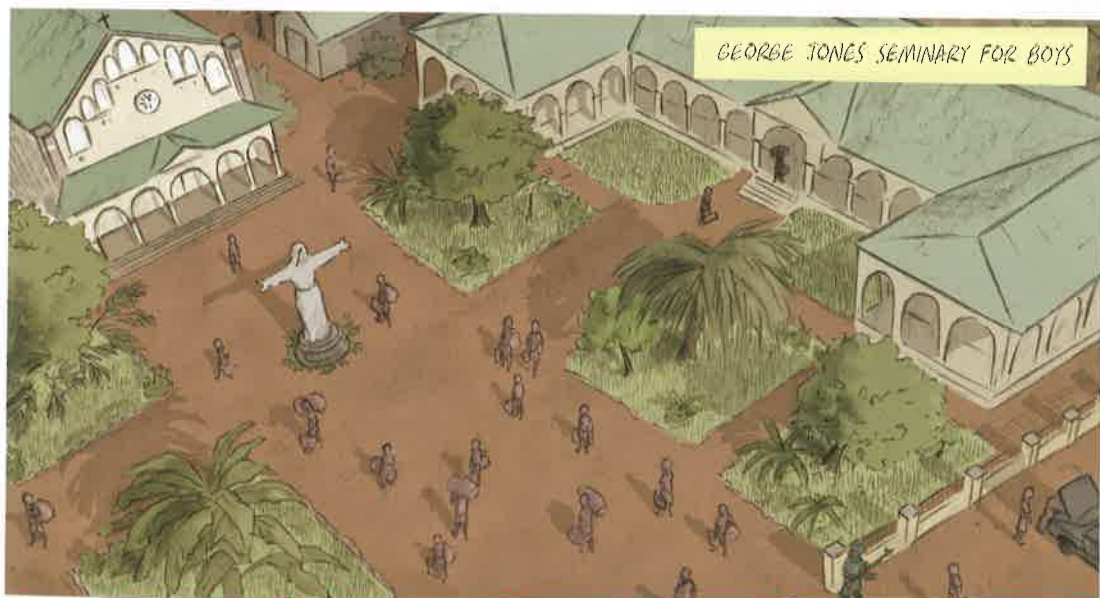


WHAT I REALLY WANT IS TO HEAR ABOUT PAUL'S TRIP TO **AMERICA!**



YEAH, ME TOO, I WANT TO HEAR ALL ABOUT THIS GREAT CITY CALLED **NEW YORK!**

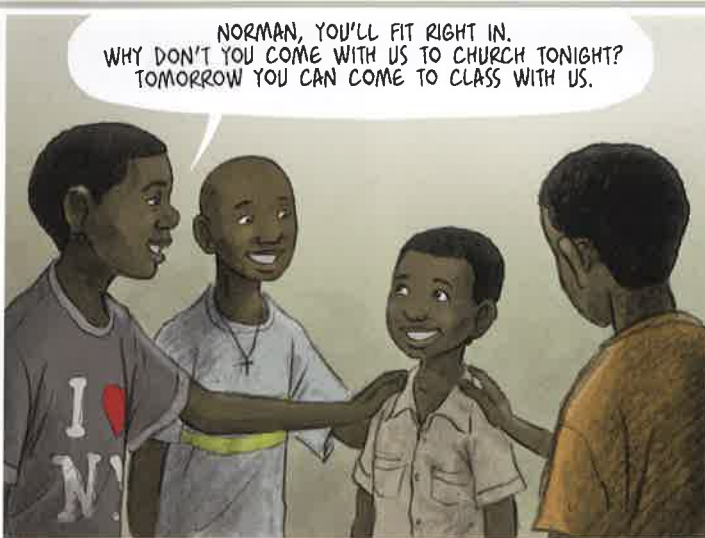






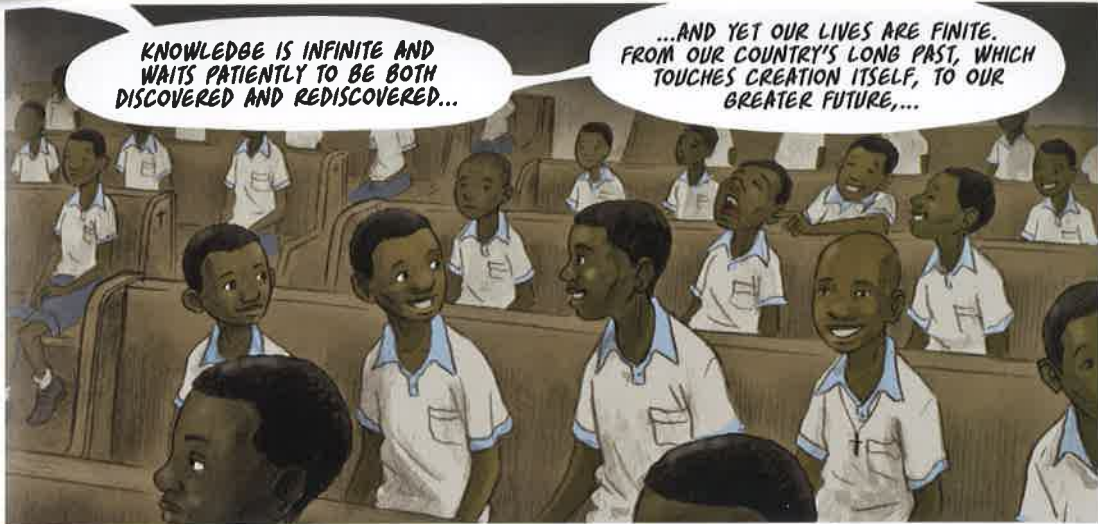






KNOWLEDGE IS INFINITE AND
WAITS PATIENTLY TO BE BOTH
DISCOVERED AND REDISCOVERED...

...AND YET OUR LIVES ARE FINITE.
FROM OUR COUNTRY'S LONG PAST, WHICH
TOUCHES CREATION ITSELF, TO OUR
GREATER FUTURE,...



...WE WHO ARE IN THIS HOUSE OF GOD
HAVE MERE MOMENTS TO DETERMINE THE TRUTH
BEFORE WE ARE CALLED BACK INTO THE
WELCOMING ARMS OF OUR CREATOR.

NOW, LET US PRAY.













TAKACKACK
BANG
BANG





ATTENTION!



IF ANYONE **cries** or **screams**, he will be punished by **death!**

YOU WILL BE **soldiers** now!
YOU WILL FIGHT FOR
YOUR **country...**



...AND KILL
FOR **GOD!**



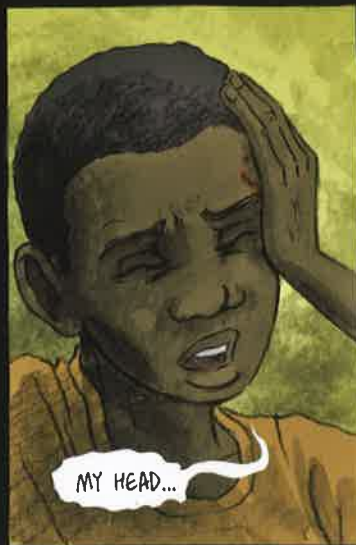


WAKE UP...

JACOB, YOU
MUST WAKE UP!

PLEASE, JACOB...

...OPEN YOUR EYES!



MY HEAD...



YOU GOT HIT.
DON'T MAKE ANY SOUND.



WHERE
ARE WE?

WE DON'T KNOW. IN THE BUSH.
THEY WERE GOING TO KILL YOU. THAT SOLDIER,
THE ONE WITH THE SCARRED FACE, HE'S MEAN.
THEY CALL HIM LIZARD.

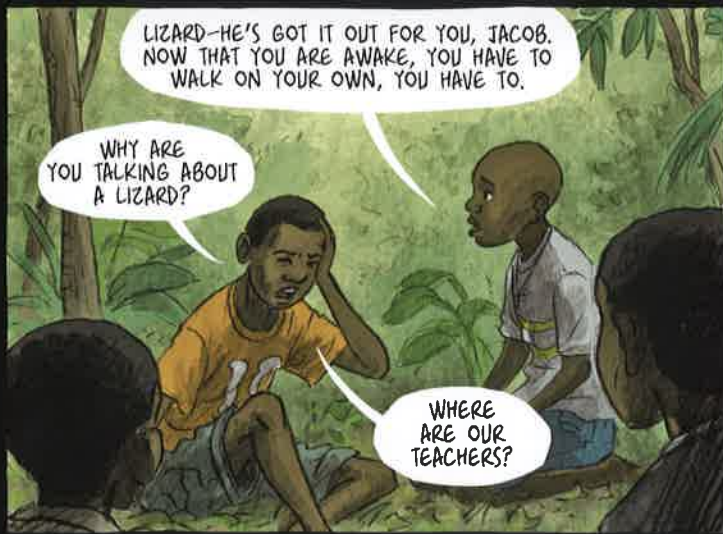
THE COMMANDER ASKED WHO YOU WERE. I TOLD HIM YOUR NAME. THAT SOLDIER LIZARD MADE US CARRY YOU ALL NIGHT.



LIZARD—HE'S GOT IT OUT FOR YOU, JACOB. NOW THAT YOU ARE AWAKE, YOU HAVE TO WALK ON YOUR OWN, YOU HAVE TO.

WHY ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT A LIZARD?

WHERE ARE OUR TEACHERS?



MR. OTOK WAS LYING ON THE GROUND. MAYBE HE WAS DEAD. WE DID NOT SEE ANY OTHER TEACHERS.



BUT WHAT ABOUT THE EXTRA GUARDS MY FATHER HIRED?

THEY RAN AWAY.



**GET UP!
TIME TO MARCH!**



C'MON, JACOB.




AARGH!

HE WALKS ON HIS OWN OR HE DIES!







MY FATHER IS PROBABLY ON
HIS WAY RIGHT NOW...

...ALONG WITH
GOVERNMENT SOLDIERS.
IT WON'T BE LONG.

WE JUST HAVE TO
STAY ALIVE, AND DO WHAT
WE ARE TOLD.

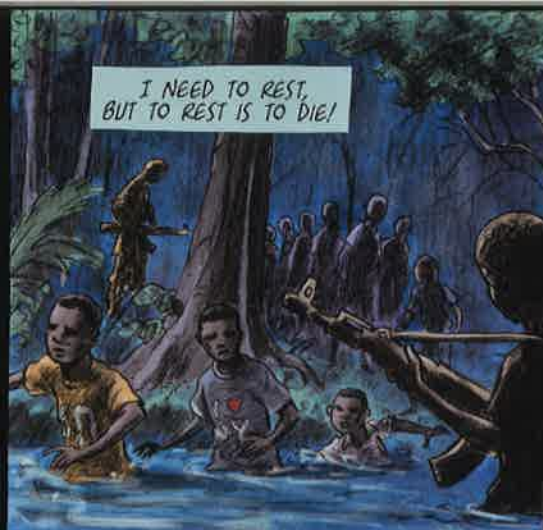


IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT...

...RESCUE IS ON THE WAY.



HOW LONG HAVE
WE BEEN WALKING...
TWO DAYS?



I NEED TO REST,
BUT TO REST IS TO DIE!



WHERE IS
MY FATHER?



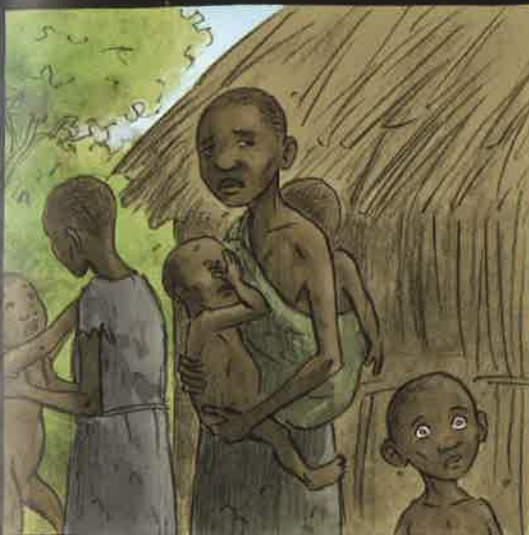
WHERE IS THE ARMY WITH
ITS MODERN WEAPONS?



WE CAN'T BE
THAT HARD TO FIND!

A VILLAGE!

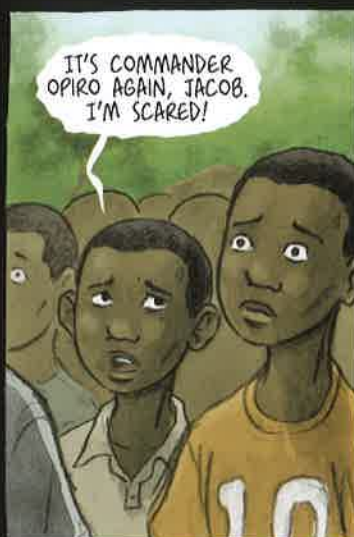
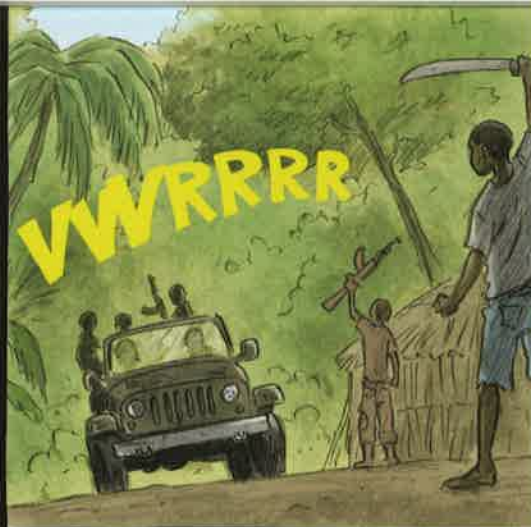
PLEASE GOD, WE NEED
FOOD AND REST.



THESE GIRLS
DON'T LOOK MUCH
OLDER THAN ME.



STOP AND STAY
TOGETHER!



IT'S COMMANDER
OPIRO AGAIN, JACOB.
I'M SCARED!



LINE UP STRAIGHT
LIKE SOLDIERS!



YOU ARE **REBELS** NOW.
YOU FIGHT FOR **FREEDOM**.
YOU FIGHT FOR THE
LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY
AND FOR **GOD**!

KONY IS OUR
LEADER AND WE
DO AS HE **SAYS**!

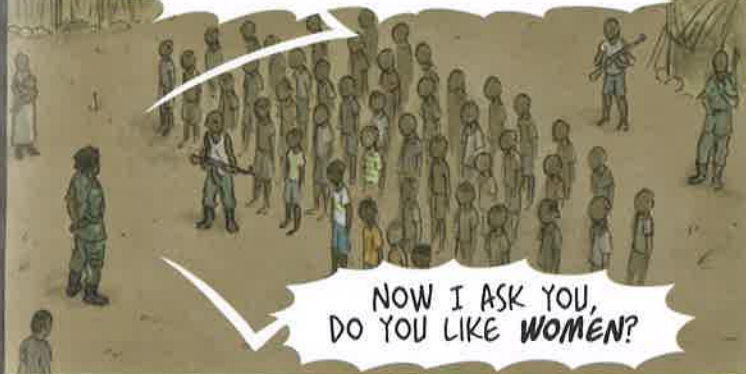


I SHALL TELL YOU THE
RULES AND YOU
WILL **LISTEN**!

ONLY **SOLDIERS** EAT. IF YOU WANT TO **EAT**, YOU WILL **FIGHT** WITH US. THIS IS **YOUR CHOICE**. IF YOU **DIE** OF HUNGER, IT IS YOUR CHOICE. IF YOU **STEAL FOOD**, YOU WILL BE **KILLED**.



YOU MUST NOT TOUCH **ALCOHOL** OR ANY **DRUGS**. WE ARE ALL **CHRISTIANS** AND WE MUST OBEY THE **TEN COMMANDMENTS**.



NOW I ASK YOU, DO YOU LIKE **WOMEN**?

WHAT'S THE RIGHT ANSWER? YES? NO? WHAT IF NO MEANS DEATH?



YOU SEE THESE WOMEN? THEY ARE WIVES OF **SOLDIERS**. IF ANY OF YOU ARE CAUGHT **TALKING** TO ANY OF THEM...



...THE WOMAN WILL BE **KILLED** AND YOU WILL BE **BEATEN**!



NOW, I WILL TELL YOU A MOST IMPORTANT RULE...



SNAP!



I WILL SHOW YOU WHAT HAPPENS TO ANYONE WHO TRIES TO **ESCAPE!**



I SHOW YOU WHAT WE WILL DO TO YOU IF YOU ARE **LUCKY...**



THEY'VE CUT OFF HER EARS!



THIS GIRL MIGHT HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO A COMMANDER, MAYBE TO **KONY HIMSELF.**



BUT LOOK AT HER NOW, SHE IS **WORTHLESS!**

NO MAN WOULD TOUCH HER. IF YOU TRY TO RUN AWAY, I WILL DO THE SAME TO YOU, OR WORSE!







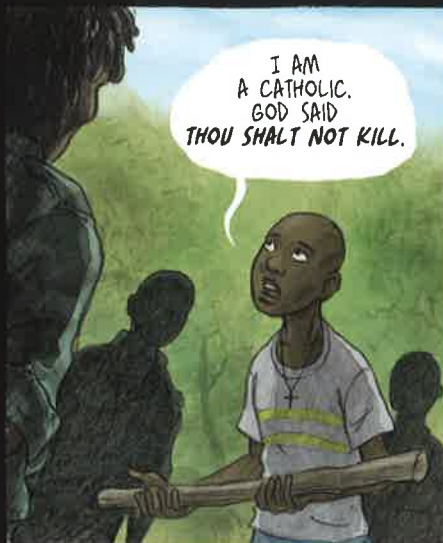
KILL OR BE KILLED.



OH NO...
THEY ARE GOING
TO BEAT ADAM!



I AM
A CATHOLIC.
GOD SAID
THOU SHALT NOT KILL.



WHAT ARE YOU
DOING?



LET
ME GO!



OH NO!

PLEASE
NO!!



WOULD YOU PREFER A
LONG-SLEEVED OR
SHORT-SLEEVED SHIRT?



IF YOU WOULD LIKE
A LONG-SLEEVED
SHIRT, I WILL TAKE
OFF YOUR HAND...



...BUT IF YOU WOULD LIKE A
SHORT-SLEEVED SHIRT, I WILL
TAKE OFF YOUR ARM!



OUR FATHER,
WHO ART IN HEAVEN,
HALLOWED BE THY...



YOUR FRIEND WILL DIE
NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO.
HE IS INJURED. HE IS OF
NO USE.



YOU WILL LOSE YOUR ARM
AND HE WILL DIE, OR YOU
WILL NOT LOSE YOUR ARM
AND HE WILL DIE...

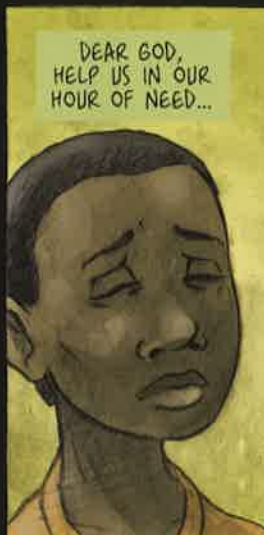
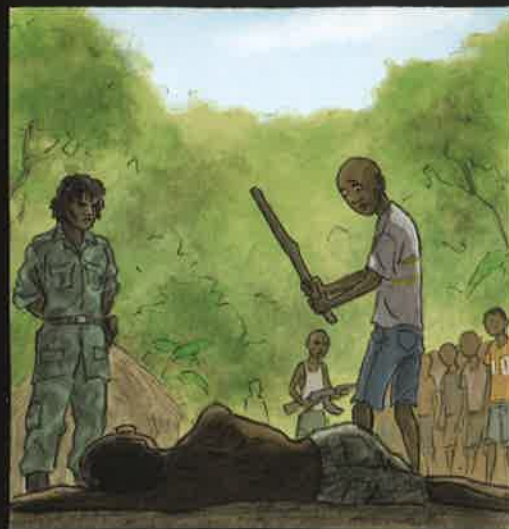


...WHAT WILL IT BE?



DO NOT
TAKE
MY ARM...









WHY DID THIS
BOY HAVE TO BE
KILLED?

HE WAS KILLED BECAUSE HE WAS WEAK.
GOD ONLY WANTS STRONG SOLDIERS
TO FIGHT FOR HIM. WE WILL FORCE YOU
TO DO **YOUR DUTY** AND FIGHT FOR GOD
AND OUR COUNTRY, **ACHOLILAND!**



THESE CHILDREN ARE
BORN OF LRA COMMANDERS.
THEY ARE **PURE**. THEY WILL
ONE DAY RULE **ACHOLILAND**.



THE **UGANDA ARMY** THINKS THEY
ARE STRONG. THEY HAVE **HELICOPTERS**,
TANKS, AND POWERFUL **MISSILES**
BUT THEY HAVE
NO VICTORY.

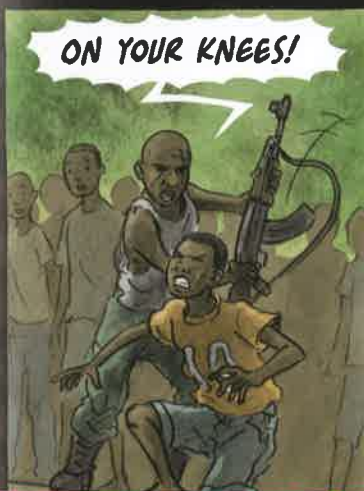


WHY?
BECAUSE
GOD IS ON
OUR SIDE.

DO NOT **FEAR** THE BULLETS FROM A
GOVERNMENT GUN. THEIR GUNS ARE USELESS AND
THE BULLETS WILL **BOUNCE** OFF YOU LIKE HARD RAIN.
A **JESUS CROSS** DRAWN ON YOUR BODY WITH OIL
ALSO PREVENTS BULLETS FROM HURTING YOU.
LET US **PRAY!**



ON YOUR KNEES!



YOU MUST **FACE THE EAST** TO PRAY TO
GOD BECAUSE THAT IS WHERE **GOD LIVES**.
HANDS TOGETHER AND LOWER YOUR HEADS.



THE BIBLE SAYS, "AND YE SHALL CHASE YOUR ENEMIES,
AND THEY SHALL FALL BEFORE THE SWORD".



SEE HOW GOD
SAYS TO **KILL!**

YOU ARE IN **GOD'S ARMY** NOW.
IF YOU FAIL TO DO YOUR DUTY,
IF YOU FAIL **GOD**, YOU WILL BURN
IN A FIERY HELL **FOREVER**.



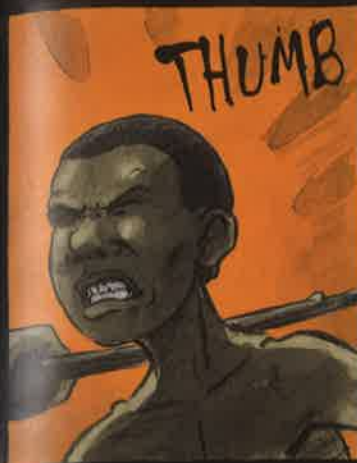
**REMOVE
YOUR SHIRTS!**

ALL OVER THE AGE
OF SIXTEEN WILL RECEIVE
THIRTY LASHES. THOSE UNDER
SIXTEEN WILL RECEIVE
TWENTY-FIVE LASHES.



**NOW YOU WILL LEARN
TO BE SOLDIERS.**





FATHER, WHERE ARE YOU?



GOD, WHERE ARE YOU?

