

FASTER AHMED,
SHE'S IN A
LOT OF PAIN.

AH! IF ONLY
WE COULD HAVE
LEFT EARLIER...



IT'S TOO DANGEROUS AT NIGHT, AFIA...

NOW THAT IT'S DAYLIGHT, IT'S MUCH SAFER TO TRAVEL.



HANG ON, WE'LL BE IN KHOST SOON!



YOU KNOW, I CAME
HERE TO DELIVER MY
LAST BABY

WHEN IT
WASN'T
GOING WELL.



LUCKILY WE
MADE IT TO
THE HOSPITAL...

JUST IN
TIME!

THE NEXT DAY IT
RAINED AND WE
WERE STUCK IN
KHOST FOR TWO
DAYS!



DO YOU
REMEMBER
AHMED?

MHMM.
MHMM.

I HAD A
CHANCE TO
GET THE CAR
REPAIRED.



YOU'LL SEE,
THEY'LL TAKE
GOOD CARE OF
YOU.





HERE ARE YOUR
ADMISSION SLIPS,
DON'T LOSE THEM.

PLEASE FOLLOW MY
COLLEAGUE, SHE WILL
TAKE YOU TO THE
LABOUR ROOM FOR
HIGHER-RISK PATIENTS.

HERE SALMA, GIVE
ME YOUR BURKA.
YOU DON'T NEED
IT IN HERE.



PLEASE WAIT
HERE, THE
GYNAECOLOGIST
WILL COME SEE
YOU.



SALAAM !



SO LADIES,
WHAT'S THE
DIAGNOSIS?

BASED ON THE
SYMPTOMS, I'D SAY
PRE-ECLAMPSIA.
WE NEED TO INDUCE
LABOUR.



LET'S GIVE HER
OXYTOCIN* AND
MONITOR HER BLOOD
PRESSURE WHILE WE
WAIT UNTIL SHE'S
READY TO DELIVER?

EXACTLY,
FATIMA.
PERFECT!

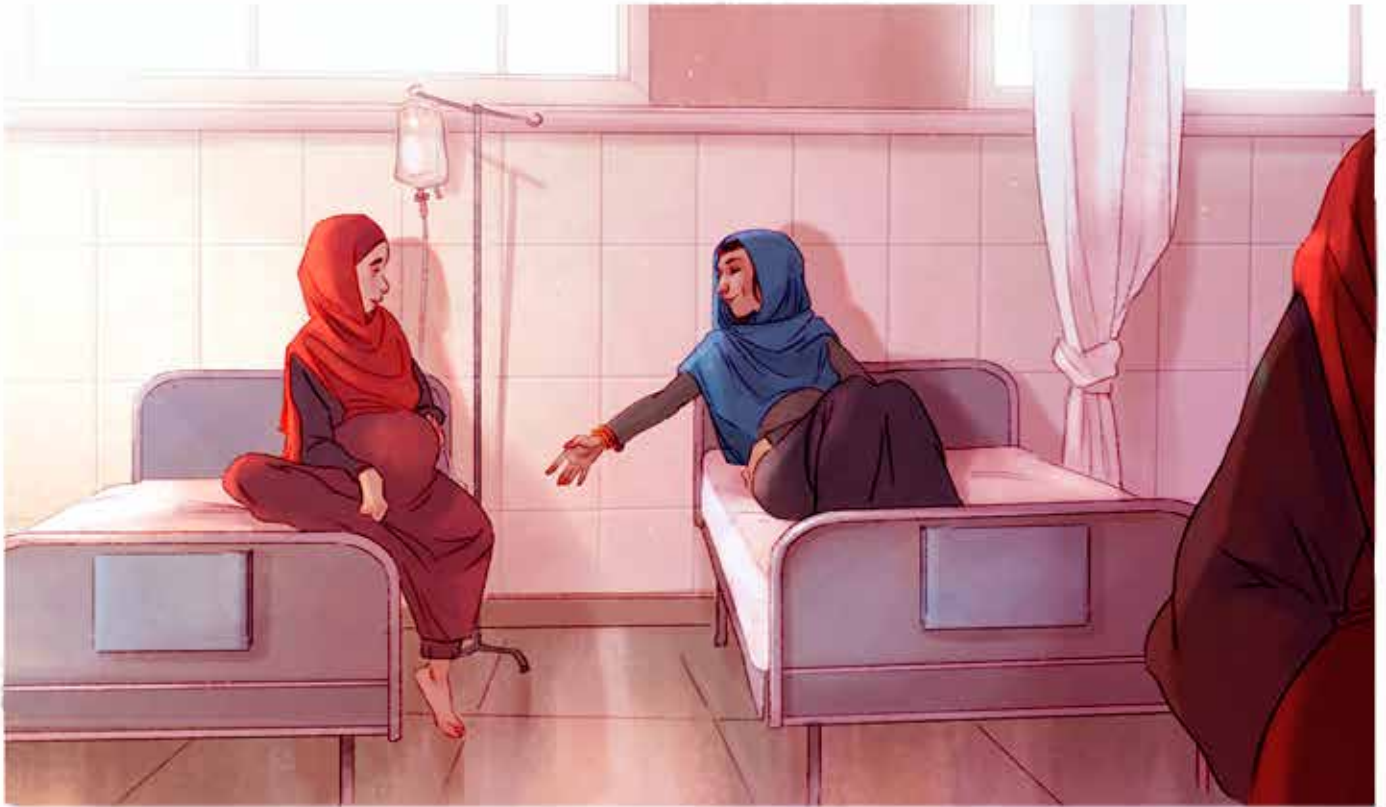
IF YOUR BABY
WEIGHS LESS THAN 2
KILOS, WE'LL HAVE TO
KEEP HIM IN THE
NEWBORN WARD FOR
A WHILE UNTIL HE CAN
GO HOME, OK?



DON'T WORRY, YOU'LL
BE ABLE TO STAY
HERE, HE'LL NEED
YOU AND YOUR MILK!

*DRUG USED TO PROVOKE LABOUR.







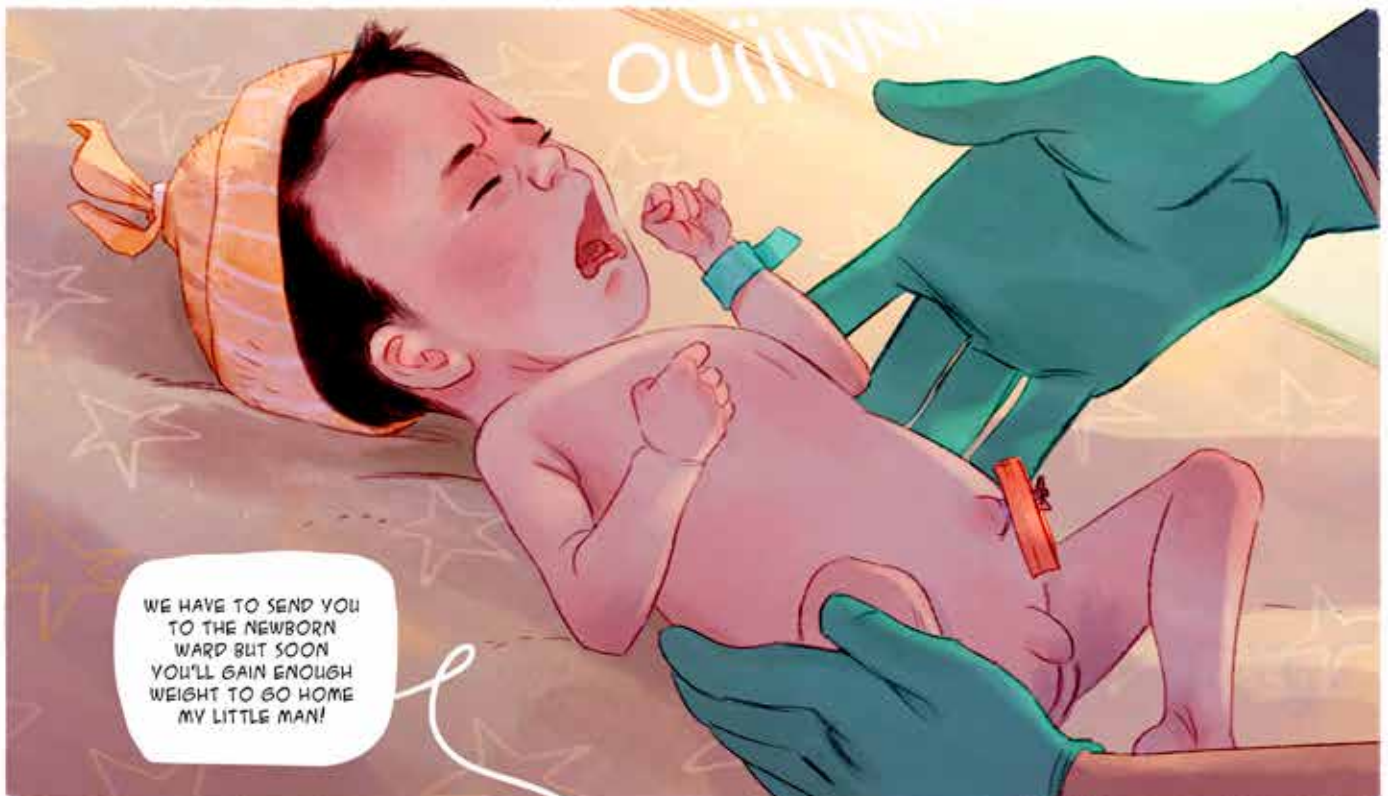




SHORTLY AFTER IN THE MEN'S WAITING AREA...







LATER IN THE RECOVERY ROOM...



YOUR SON IS OK SALMA. HE WILL GET STRONGER QUICKLY.

IN ANY CASE, WE'LL KEEP BOTH OF YOU HERE SO THAT YOU CAN RECOVER AND HE CAN GAIN SOME WEIGHT, AND WE'LL MONITOR YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE FOR ANOTHER 48 HOURS.



IT'S LATE GIULIA, YOU SHOULD COME EAT LUNCH.

I'M COMING!



SO LADIES, HOW WAS YOUR MORNING?

PUFF TOUGH.

A YOUNG WOMAN CAME IN BAD SHAPE, HER HEART RATE WAS REALLY HIGH, WITH HUGE CONTRACTIONS.

SHE'D BEEN GIVEN TOO MUCH OXYTOCIN* BEFORE SHE CAME HERE...

OH NO, ANOTHER ONE ...

*OXYTOCIN IS OFTEN INCORRECTLY USED IN AFGHANISTAN AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION, POSING HEALTH RISKS TO MOTHERS AND THEIR BABIES. WOMEN RECEIVING UNREGULATED LABOUR-INDUCING MEDICATION ARE MORE LIKELY TO SUFFER UTERINE RUPTURES, AND THEIR BABIES ARE AT GREATER RISK OF BIRTH ASPHYXIA AND STILLBIRTH.



YES...

IT WAS HER FIRST BABY. THE ULTRASOUND SHOWED A HYDROCEPHALIC LIFELESS BABY. THERE WAS NO WAY TO DELIVER VAGINALLY...

SO WE HAD TO PERFORM A C-SECTION TO GET HIM OUT, AND THEN...



...WE REALISED HER UTERUS HAD COMPLETELY RUPTURED THE BABY WAS IN HER ABDOMEN OUTSIDE.

OH NO ...



I WANTED TO FIX THE DAMAGE, BUT IT WAS A PUZZLE, EVERYTHING WAS MESSLED UP BY THE VIOLENT CONTRACTIONS...

WE HAD TO PERFORM A HYSTERECTOMY.

* A BUILD-UP OF FLUID IN THE CAVITIES DEEP WITHIN THE BRAIN

INTERNATIONAL TEAM'S HOUSE...



A HYSTERECTOMY!
AT THAT AGE!

LOSING HER FIRST
CHILD AND HER
UTERUS THE SAME
DAY...
POOR GIRL.

YES!
IT WOULD BE A
TERRIBLE ORDEAL FOR
ANY WOMAN, BUT
HERE, IT'S EVEN
TOUGHER.

OF COURSE...
CULTURALLY, SHE'S
EXPECTED TO HAVE A
LOT OF CHILDREN...

WHAT IS SHE
GOING TO DO
NOW? IT BREAKS
MY HEART.

AND WITHOUT THIS
EXCESSIVE DOSE, IT NEVER
WOULD HAVE HAPPENED!
WE COULDN'T HAVE SAVED
THE CHILD BUT AT LEAST
SHE WOULD HAVE HAD A
FUTURE!

IT'S SO
UNFAIR!

I KNOW
HEATHER, IT'S
TERRIBLE.



WHAT CAN WE DO,
APART FROM RAISING
FURTHER AWARENESS,
TO MAKE SURE IT
DOESN'T HAPPEN
AGAIN?



ACTUALLY JOYCE WENT TO
TRAIN THE MIDWIVES AT
THE PROVINCIAL HOSPITAL
AGAIN TODAY. BUT
EVERYTHING TAKES TIME.

YOU DID YOUR
BEST, HEATHER...

COME EAT WITH
US DARLING.



YUM, WHAT'S ON THE MENU TODAY NOOR?



SO WHAT'S HAPPENING IN KHOST THIS MORNING? WE NEED SOME GOOD NEWS AROUND HERE!

HOW DID THINGS GO AT THE PROVINCIAL HOSPITAL, JOYCE?



GREAT!

I WASN'T SURE I WOULD MAKE IT TODAY BECAUSE OF THE SECURITY SITUATION, BUT IN THE END WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY PROBLEMS ON THE WAY.

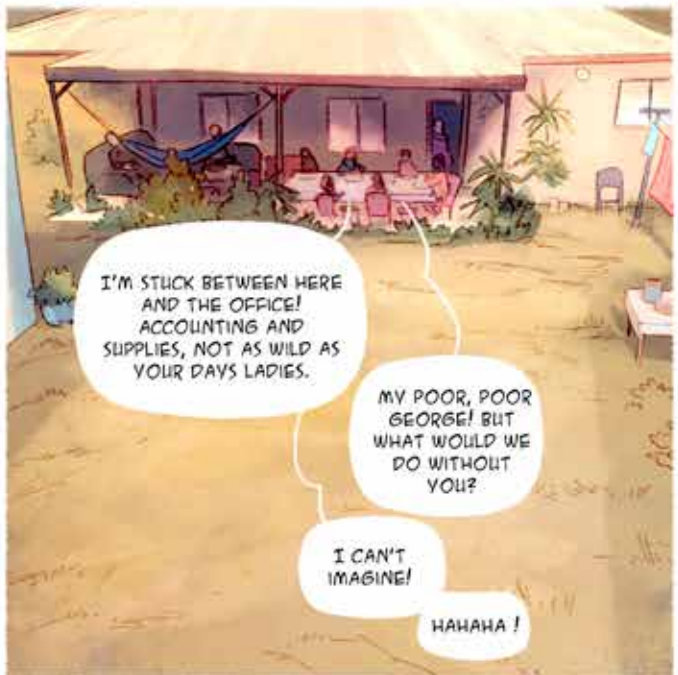
AND I'M HAPPY, SOME OF THEIR MIDWIVES WILL COME HERE FOR TRAINING NEXT WEEK!



SOMETIMES, I ENVY YOU JOYCE! MOVING AROUND IS RISKY, BUT AT LEAST YOU'RE NOT LOCKED UP IN THE COMPOUND FOR MONTHS LIKE US...



WHAT ABOUT ME?! AS A MAN I CAN'T EVEN GO INTO THE MATERNITY!



I'M STUCK BETWEEN HERE AND THE OFFICE! ACCOUNTING AND SUPPLIES, NOT AS WILD AS YOUR DAYS LADIES.

MY POOR, POOR GEORGE! BUT WHAT WOULD WE DO WITHOUT YOU?

I CAN'T IMAGINE!

HAHAHA!



I'M REALLY HAPPY BECAUSE MY TEAM HAS STARTED WORKING ON THE ROOF OF THE NEW BUILDING!

THE EXTENSION WORK IS WELL ON ITS WAY! MORE SPACE MEANS MORE ROOM BETWEEN BEDS AND LESS RISK OF INFECTION!

THAT'S GREAT!

PSHHT! THIS IS NOT FOR YOU, CAT!



AH, IT WILL BE AWESOME! SOMETIMES WE HAVE SEVERAL PATIENTS IN THE SAME BED...



I HAD SOME NEWS FROM KABUL, THE NEW PROJECT COORDINATOR WILL BE HERE NEXT WEEK!



AH COOL !

AND TONIGHT, IT'S THE WEEKEND, EVERYONE CAN REST!

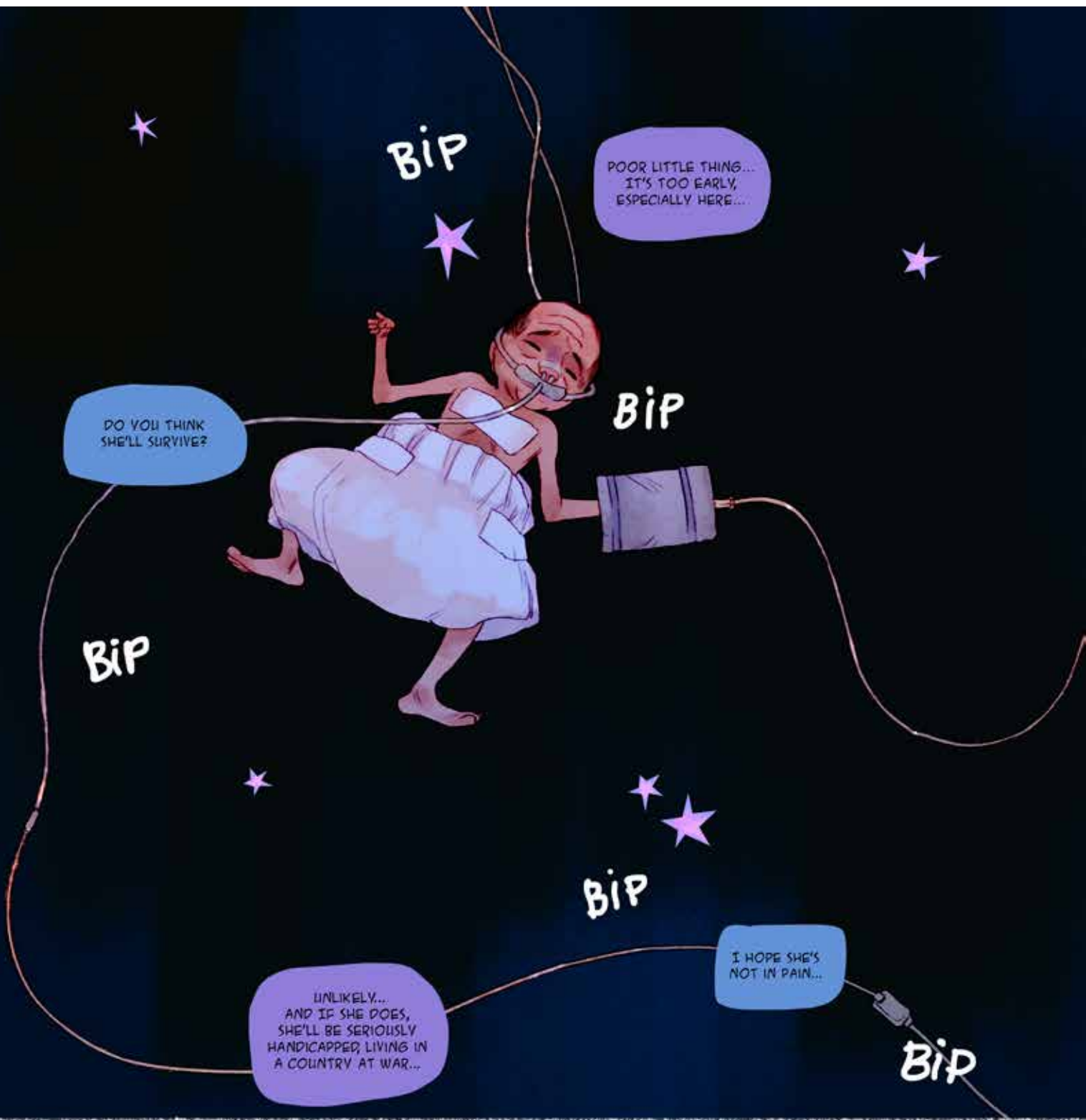
EVERYONE EXCEPT THOSE WHO ARE ON CALL!



*CELEBRATORY GUNSHOTS ARE OFTEN HEARD FROM WEDDINGS AND OTHER EVENTS







POOR LITTLE THING...
IT'S TOO EARLY,
ESPECIALLY HERE...

DO YOU THINK
SHE'LL SURVIVE?

UNLIKELY...
AND IF SHE DOES,
SHE'LL BE SERIOUSLY
HANDICAPPED, LIVING IN
A COUNTRY AT WAR...

I HOPE SHE'S
NOT IN PAIN...



ME TOO...





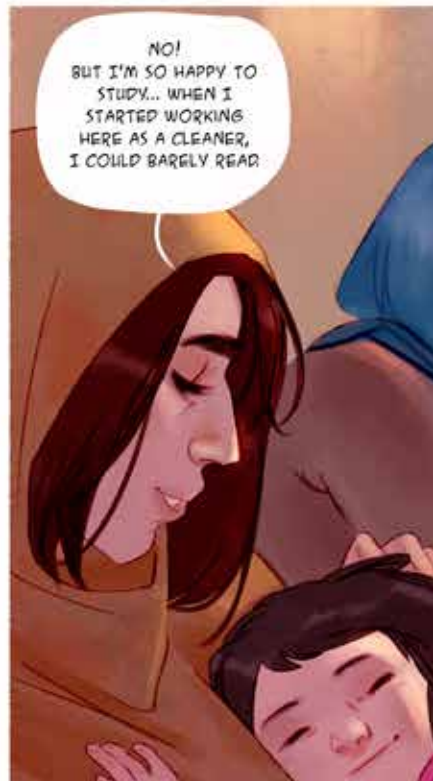
EVERYONE
HERE IS
FIGHTING.



LIFE'S ALWAYS
A STRUGGLE.



IN SOME PLACES
MORE THAN
OTHERS.





MEANWHILE...BACK TO SALMA AND ZOHAL...

Inpatient department

SO, DID YOU HAVE A NORMAL DELIVERY?

YES!
BUT WE HAVE TO STAY HERE FOR 48 HOURS BECAUSE THERE'S A RISK OF ECLAMPSIA.





YES. I'M GOING
TO NAME HER
HILA, IT MEANS
HOPE.



END