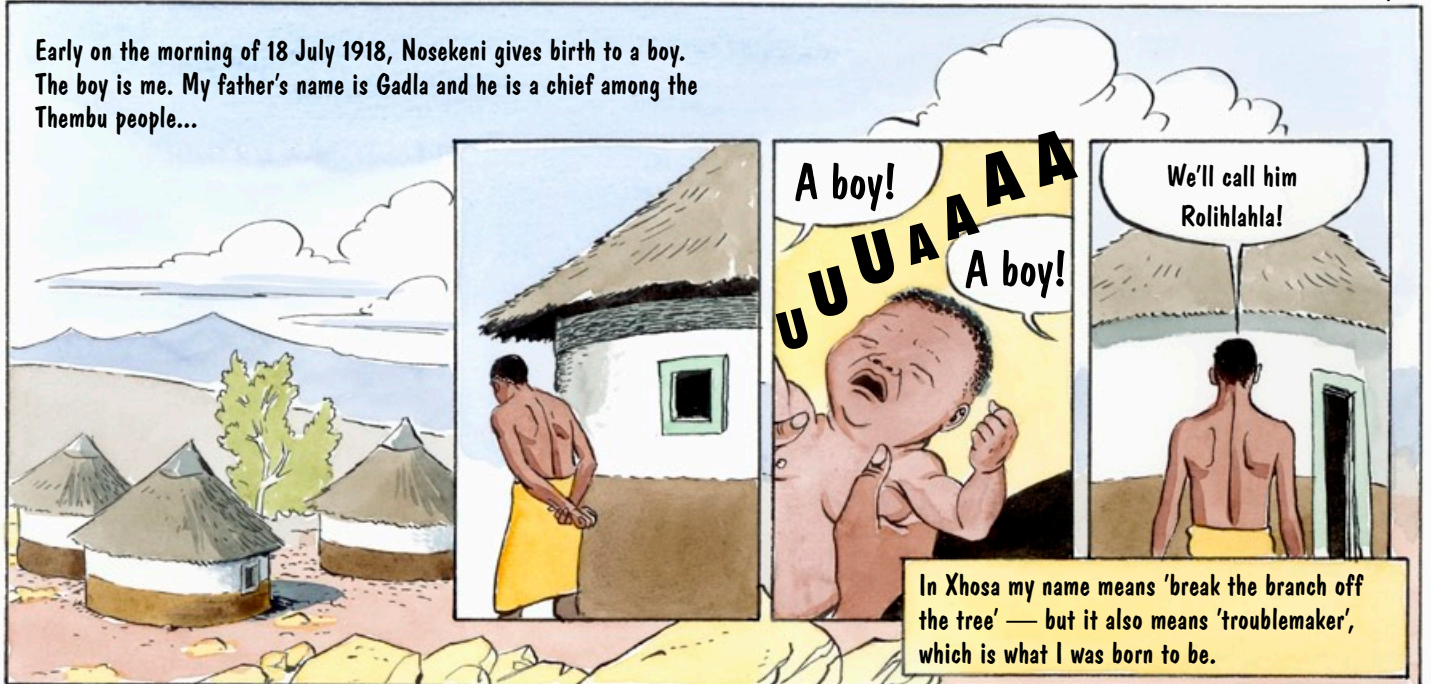


THE BLACK PIMPERNEL

Text:
Magnus Bergmar
& Marlene Winberg

Pictures:
Jan-Åke Winqvist

Early on the morning of 18 July 1918, Nosekeni gives birth to a boy. The boy is me. My father's name is Gadla and he is a chief among the Thembu people...

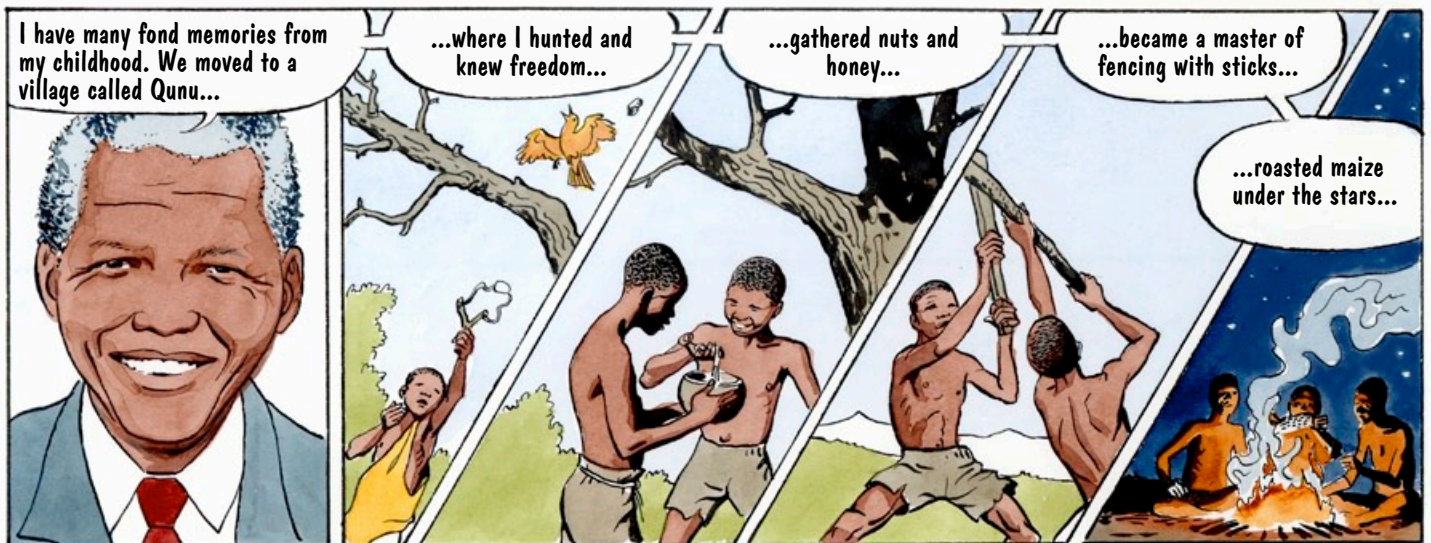


A boy!
UUUAAA
A boy!

We'll call him Rolihlahla!

In Xhosa my name means 'break the branch off the tree' — but it also means 'troublemaker', which is what I was born to be.

I have many fond memories from my childhood. We moved to a village called Qunu...



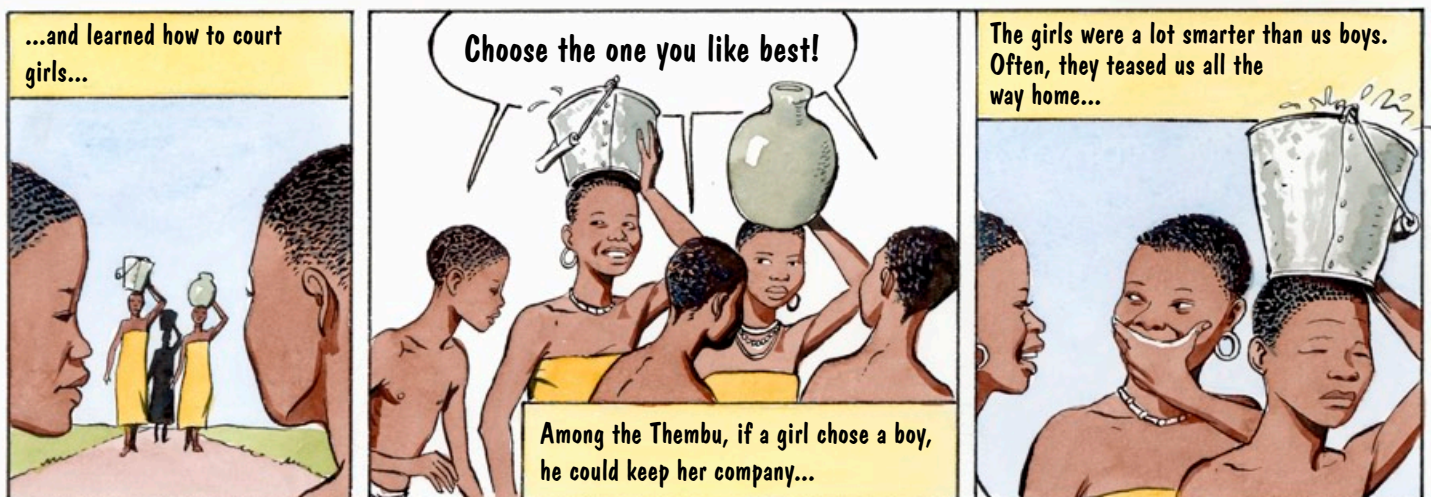
...where I hunted and knew freedom...

...gathered nuts and honey...

...became a master of fencing with sticks...

...roasted maize under the stars...

...and learned how to court girls...

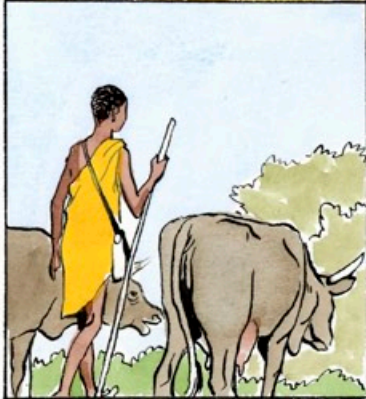


Choose the one you like best!

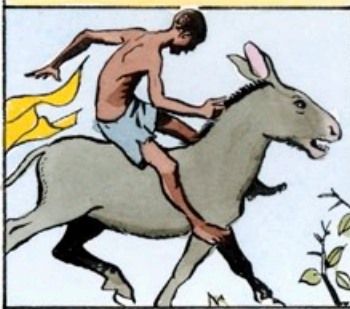
Among the Thembu, if a girl chose a boy, he could keep her company...

The girls were a lot smarter than us boys. Often, they teased us all the way home...

I tended cattle and learnt to ride calves...



But a donkey taught me a lesson. We took turns mounting it, and when it was my turn, the donkey bolted into a thorn-brake...



He dropped his head so I'd fall off, and I did when the thorns started cutting my face...



Everyone laughed at me, and I learnt how cruel and foolish it is to humiliate a loser...



My dad told us about war heroes, but my mother's stories taught me about being human. This story taught us the value of being helpful...



'Once a wanderer met an old woman. Her eyes were sore, and she asked him for help. But he turned his back on her...



Another man passed by, and the old woman asked him to bathe her eyes. He didn't like doing it, but he helped her...



Like a miracle, the scales fell from her eyes, and she turned into a lovely young woman. He married her and lived a good life.'



None of my siblings went to school, but one day when I was 7, dad took me aside...

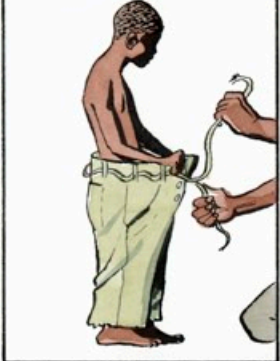


My son, you will begin school now. But you must have proper clothing.

Put these on!



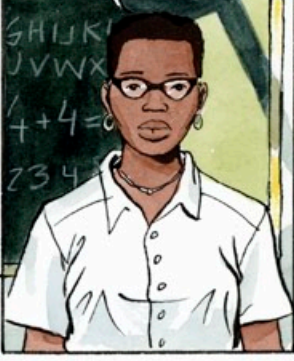
The pants were the right length, but the waist was huge!



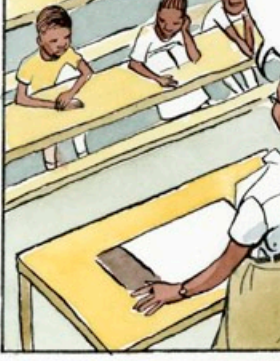
Since then, I was never as proud of any suit as I was of dad's cut-off pants.



Rolihlahla!



Yes, Miss Mdigane!



You must have an English name that you can use in school. You will be called 'Nelson'.

That's how I became 'Nelson' — because the whites wanted us to have English names...

When I was 16, it was time for me to become a man. We boys were taken to two huts by the river where we were to spend our last days as boys...



Before the ceremony, we had to do something daring. We decided to catch a pig...



Never has pork tasted better than it did that night...



I'm a man now!

My reward was two heifers and four sheep...



Here are our sons, young, strong and handsome, the flower of the Xhosa people, our pride and joy. We promise them a life as men, but the promise cannot be kept. Like all black South Africans, we are a conquered people, slaves in our own country. These men will cough out their lungs in the white man's gold mines, destroying their health so the whites can live like kings...



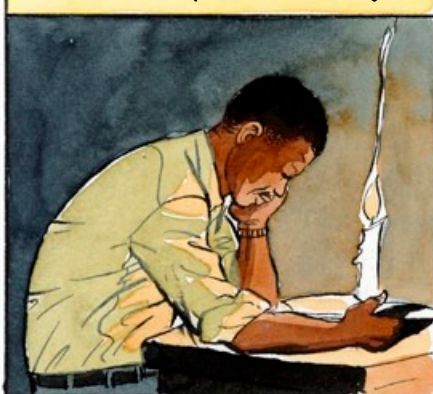
I was disturbed by the chief's words. I didn't want to hear anything that spoiled my great day. Because I'd never been on the other side of the river, I didn't really know what he meant. But I had an evil suspicion that he was right...



When I got to Johannesburg, I started to understand what the chief meant. There was one world for whites, one for us blacks, and laws kept us out of the white man's world. This was apartheid, separation of the races...



I worked in the day and studied at night...



Oliver Tambo and I opened a law firm to help blacks who were victims of the apartheid laws...



Apartheid makes a black man a criminal if he enters a door, or gets on a bus, or walks on a beach that is meant 'Only for whites'...



I joined the ANC, the African National Congress, which had fought for our rights since 1912...



Along with many others, I burned my pass in protest...



Mandela, you are banned!



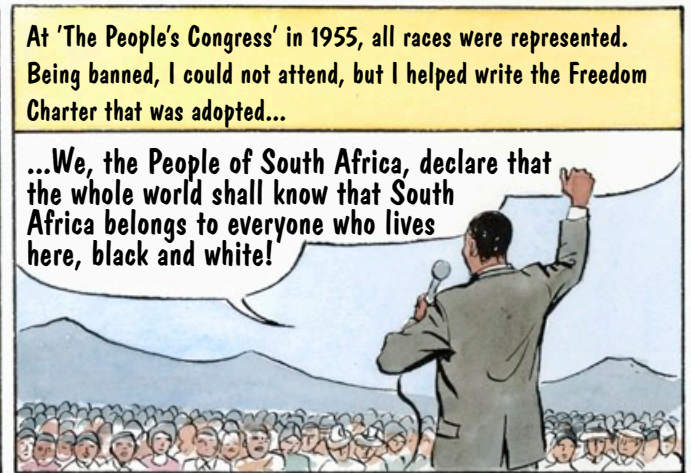
A banned person could only meet with one person at a time...

Mandela, your ban is extended by five years!



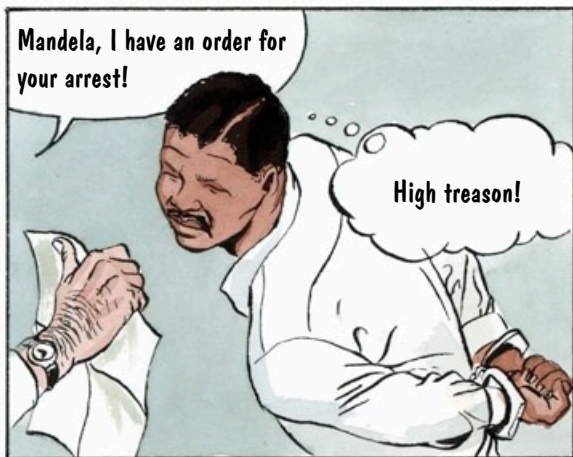
At 'The People's Congress' in 1955, all races were represented. Being banned, I could not attend, but I helped write the Freedom Charter that was adopted...

...We, the People of South Africa, declare that the whole world shall know that South Africa belongs to everyone who lives here, black and white!



Mandela, I have an order for your arrest!

High treason!



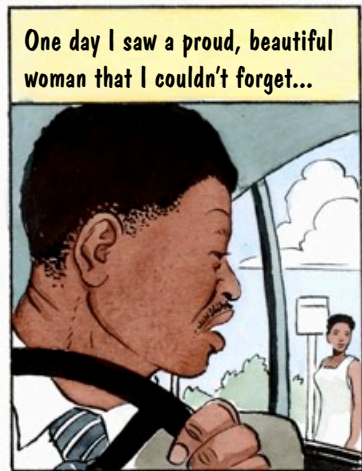
156 people were arrested along with me...

Almost all of the ANC's leaders were among them...

The trial takes over 4 years, and I am sometimes in prison, sometimes not, but always banned.



One day I saw a proud, beautiful woman that I couldn't forget...



It was my fate to meet her again...



Nelson, this is Winnie!



I must ask her out!

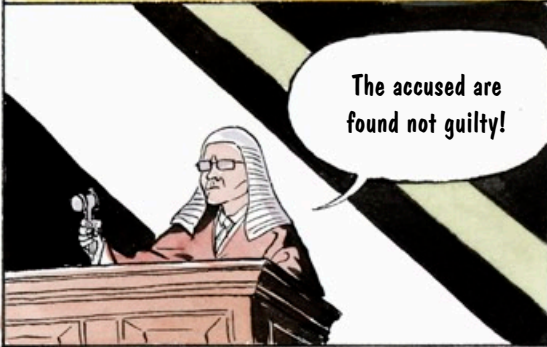


We got married while I was still under prosecution...

Winnie darling, you're marrying a man who's already married...to politics!

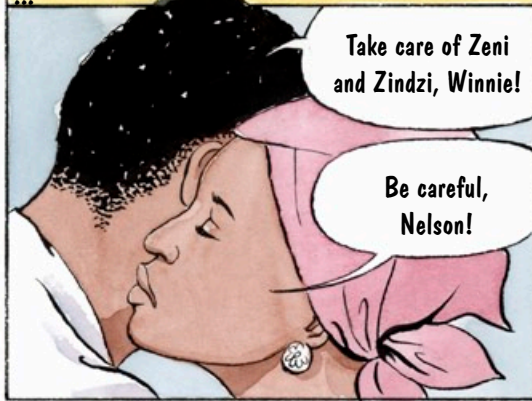


In March 1961, we were all acquitted of high treason. But I knew the government wouldn't let us off lightly...



The accused are found not guilty!

That same day, I made the decision to go underground...



Take care of Zeni and Zindzi, Winnie!

Be careful, Nelson!

I left Winnie alone with our two little girls...



And I became a night creature. While others slept, I drove to secret meetings all over the country...



We've been struggling non-violently for 50 years!



But the government's violence against us only grows... We must pay back in kind!

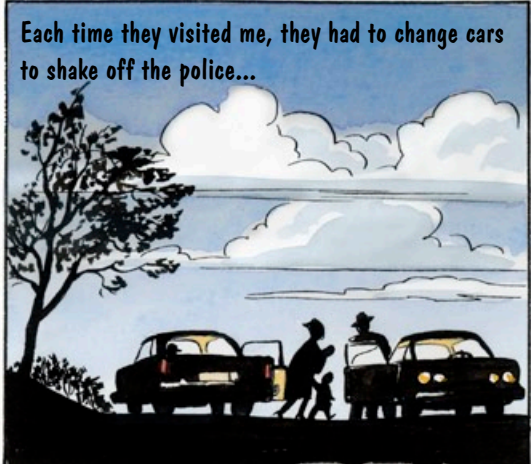
I wrote to the newspapers saying: I live like an exile in my own land, kept apart from my family. Side by side with you, my people, I shall fight this regime. What can YOU do? I've made my choice. The struggle for freedom is my life and I will keep it up until I die...



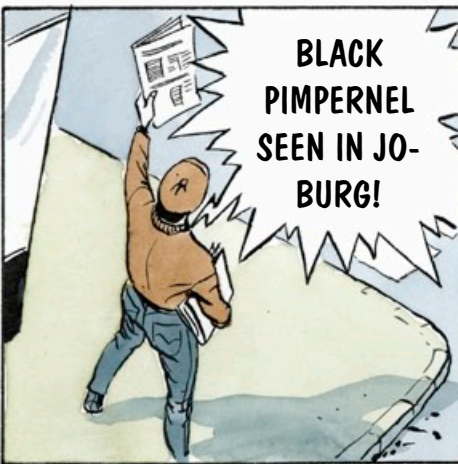
Often, I lived with whites. Every morning at dawn I got up and jogged for an hour. I spent the days in hiding, longing for Winnie and the kids...



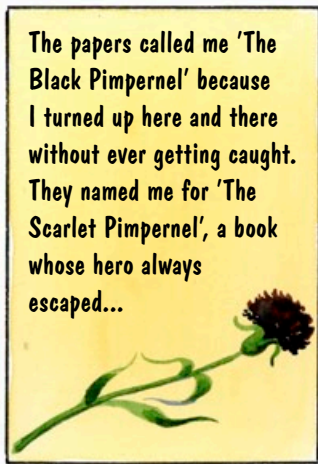
Today, we'll see your dad!



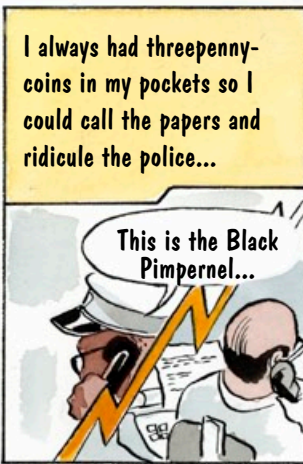
Each time they visited me, they had to change cars to shake off the police...



BLACK PIMPERNEL SEEN IN JO-BURG!



The papers called me 'The Black Pimpernel' because I turned up here and there without ever getting caught. They named me for 'The Scarlet Pimpernel', a book whose hero always escaped...



I always had threepenny-coins in my pockets so I could call the papers and ridicule the police...

This is the Black Pimpernel...



Once I saw a black security police walking towards me...

It's all over now...

But he gave me the ANC greeting...



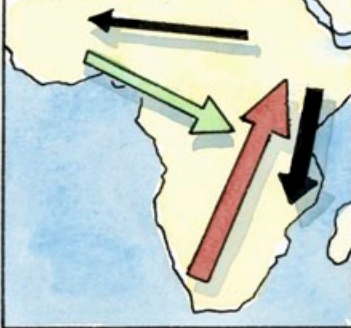
When I wasn't a chauffeur, I was a cook...



...or a gardener...

And according to my pass, I was 'David Motsamayi'.

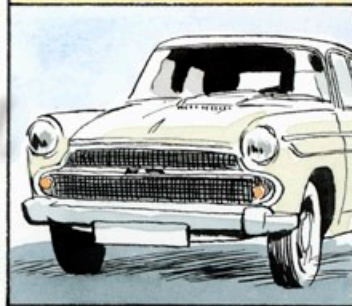
I travelled to many African countries to get support for our struggle...



Even before I came home again, the headlines were screaming:

**BLACK
PIMPERNEL
RETURNS!!!**

I'll never forget 5 August 1962... Cecil Williams and I were en route from Durban to Johannesburg...



We're being followed!



A car passed us and signalled us to stop...



17 months of freedom are about to come to an end!



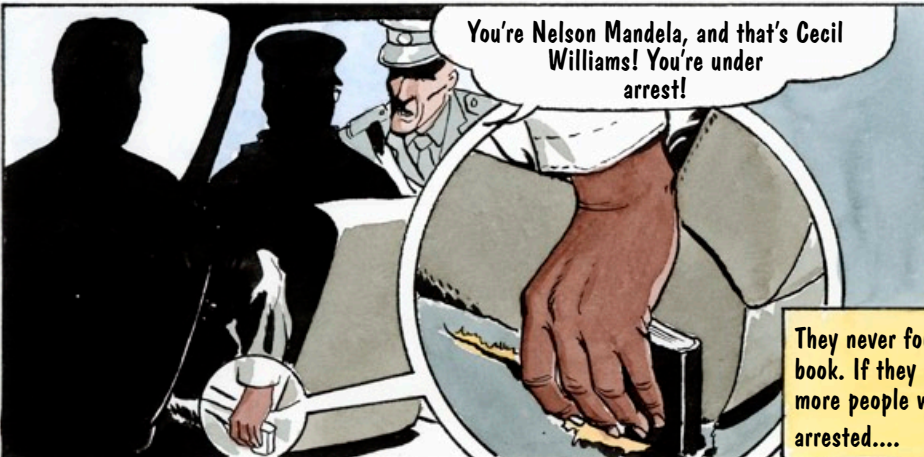
I'm Sargeant Vorster. Who are you?



David Motsamayi!

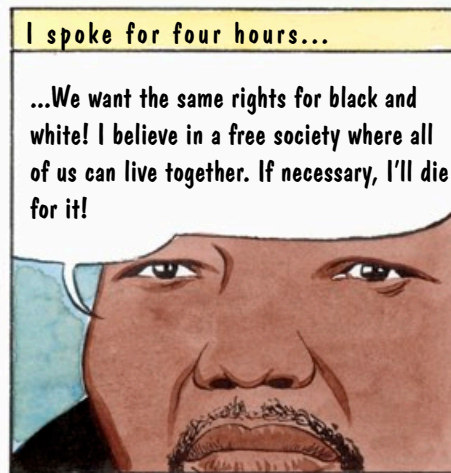
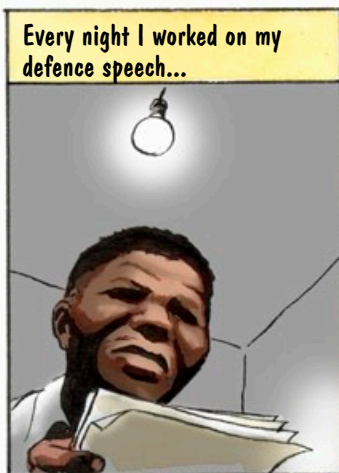
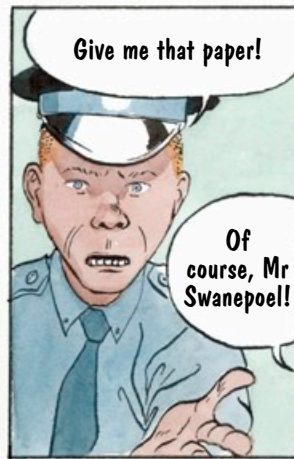
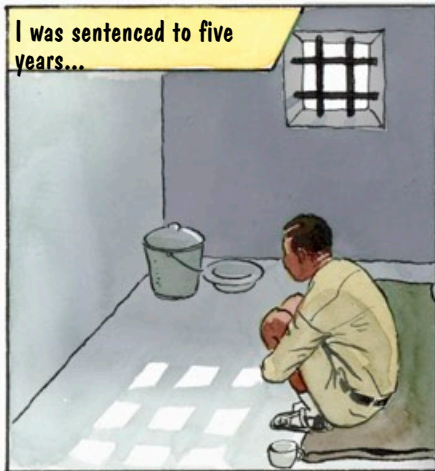


You're Nelson Mandela, and that's Cecil Williams! You're under arrest!



They never found my notebook. If they had, many more people would have been arrested....

**BLACK
PIMPERNEL
SEIZED!**



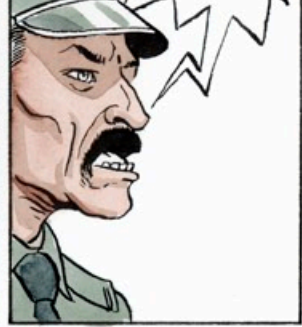
So we came to Robben Island, the prison from which no one has escaped alive...



This is the island...and you'll die here!



Take off your clothes!!



We got short pants, a thin sweater and jacket even though it was winter...



We must protest to get proper clothing!

Surely there can't have been tigers in Africa?



By day we worked the lime-stone quarry. We could discuss and learn while we worked...

But in some African languages there is a word for 'tiger'...



Twice a year we got to receive and send letters, but they couldn't exceed 500 words...



Both the letters we sent and those we got were censored...



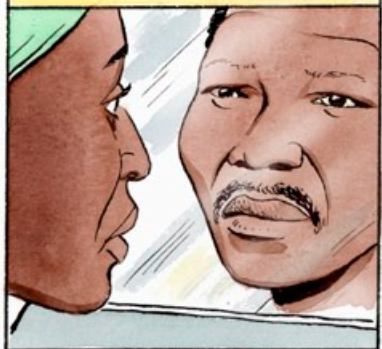
You'll be getting a visit in the morning.



Winnie and I talked via a microphone. I could barely see her through the cloudy glass...



It was dreadful not being able to touch her. If we talked about anything but the family, the visit would be ended...



How are Zeni and Zindzi? They're fine, they long for you.



In time, we created a secret language...

What about the church? Are the vicars delivering their sermons?*



TIME'S UP!

22 years would pass before I hugged Winnie again...

*The church was the ANC; the vicars, its leaders.

When Zindzi was 12, she sent a poem to me that ended like this:

My heart is aching,
I long for my father,
Long to see my father,
Or at least to hold his hand
And comfort him,
Or at least
To tell him
That he will return
one day.



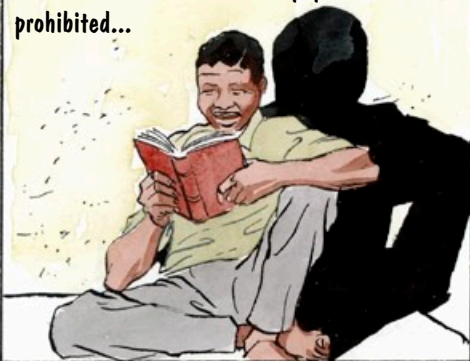
Winnie was often banned or imprisoned. In 1977, she and Zindzi were forcibly moved to Brandfort. Being banned, Winnie could only meet one person at a time...



When two of Winnie's friends came to visit, she was arrested because she met them both at the same time...



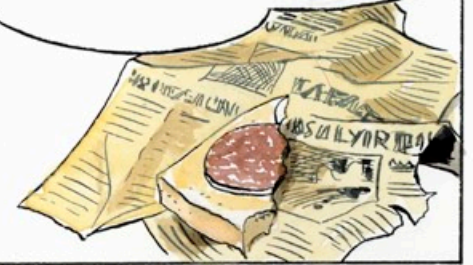
In prison, we could only read certain books. Other books and newspapers were prohibited...



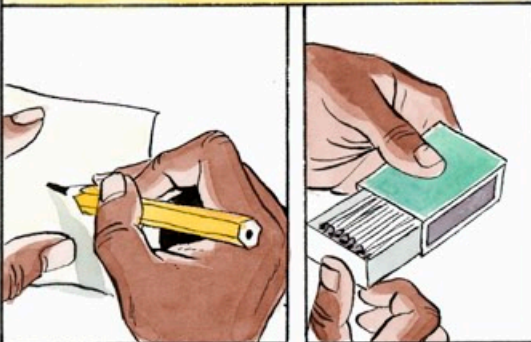
But we managed to get information in many other ways...



The guards' sandwiches were wrapped in newspaper, and sometimes we found pages. We tore out the important articles, copied them and sent the copies 'round.



We were forbidden to communicate with prisoners in other cell blocks, but we found ways to share news with them...



Double-bottomed matchboxes contained notes...



Mandela, I'll help you escape!



I'll give a sedative to the guard in the watchtower. You can have a key and I'll take you down to a boat...



The boat has diver's gear so you can swim into Cape Town. Then you'll be taken to an airstrip and flown out of the country.



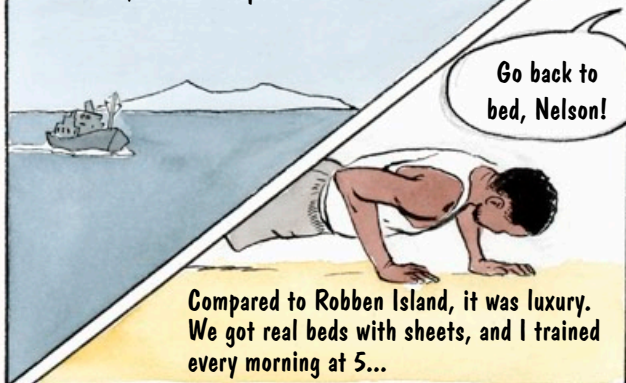
I wouldn't trust him!

You're right, Walter!



Later, we found out that the guard was an agent of the secret police. I was supposed to be killed while escaping...

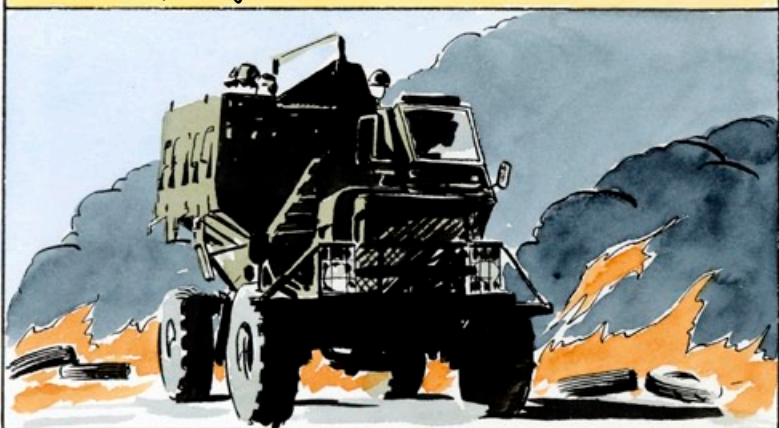
In 1982, I was moved, along with Walter, Raymond and Andrew, to another prison...



Go back to bed, Nelson!

Compared to Robben Island, it was luxury. We got real beds with sheets, and I trained every morning at 5...

But outside, the government's violence increased...



We knew we had support everywhere. Countries like Norway and Sweden never let us down...



Several times I was offered my freedom...



If you refrain from violence!

It's the government that must do that and put an end to apartheid! South Africa belongs to all its people, black and white!

In 1985, Zindzi read my first message to the people in 21 years...

I hunger for my freedom, but I care still more about yours. President Botha must rescind the ban on the ANC, free all political prisoners, abolish apartheid and let everyone vote...



I will not accept any conditions as long as I and you, my people, are not free. Your freedom and mine are one...

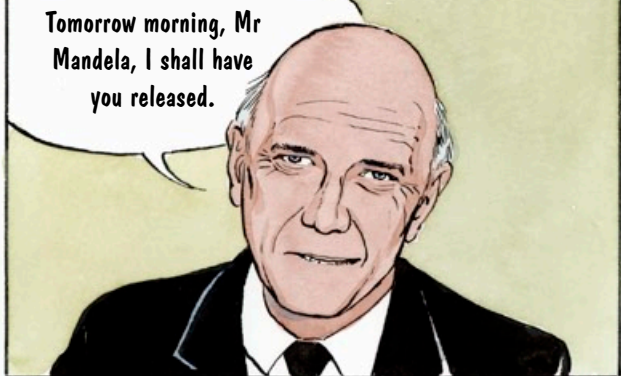


The government felt increasing pressure, and I met the new President, de Klerk, for talks...



The talks bore fruit...

Tomorrow morning, Mr Mandela, I shall have you released.



On 11 February 1990, after almost 28 years, or 10,000 days in prison, I was free...



**YOUR FREEDOM IS
OUR FREEDOM!**

In 1993, de Klerk and I shared the Nobel Peace Prize...



On 27 April 1994, 82 years after the ANC began the struggle, I and all the black people voted for the first time. Over 62% of all South Africans voted for the ANC, and I became president...



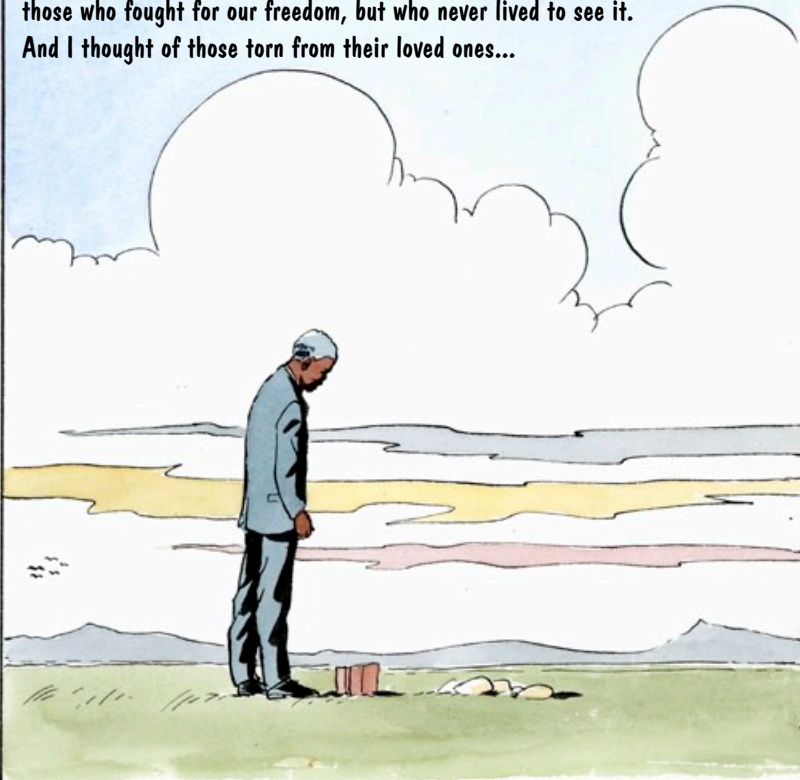
In my village...

**ROLIHLAHLA
MANDELA!
FREEDOM IS IN
YOUR HAND!**



When I was their age,
I knew nothing about
politics!

I couldn't be there when my mother was buried. I thought of all those who fought for our freedom, but who never lived to see it. And I thought of those torn from their loved ones...




**Never, ever again shall one man oppress
another in this beautiful country. Let freedom
reign! God bless Africa!**




By 1993, Winnie and I had parted...

Her life was more difficult than mine while I was in prison. I part from her with love.




The truth about the abuses under apartheid had to be told, but our Country's peoples had to be reconciled. Archbishop Desmond Tutu led the Truth Commission, which could give amnesty* if those who had committed acts of cruelty told the truth. ...



I had so longed to see my grandchildren, so I gave myself three tasks to do when I was free: To see to it that South Africa's people got their freedom, to visit my mother's grave, and to play with my grandchildren...

Hi, Dumani!



On Robben Island, children were forbidden to visit us. ...


Comrade Kathy* how I long to hear children's laughter!

Without children, the world is unreal.



I saw how apartheid had made life hard for so many children, so I set up Nelson Mandela Children's Fund. ...

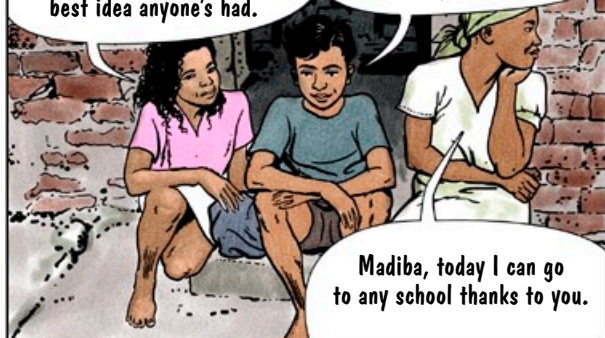
We must not live like fat cats while children are hungry. I donate a third of my presidential salary to my Children's Fund.



Madiba, you think of all the children without homes. Mandela Children's Fund is the best idea anyone's had.

You gave 27 years of your life, Madiba* so that I could have my life.

Madiba, today I can go to any school thanks to you.



In 1986, when Mozambique's president Samora Machel died in a plane crash, I sent a letter of condolence to Graça Machel from Robben Island...



Fate, and Graça's work for children brought us together. I was taken by her grace and her love of children. I called her a lot on the telephone...

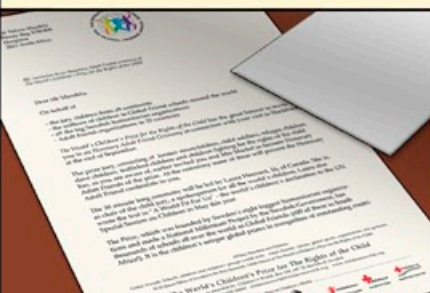


When I was 80, we got married...

I'm in love with a remarkable lady. I'm blooming like a flower. When I'm alone I'm weak.




The children on the jury of the World's Children's Prize invited me and Graça to be 'Honorary Adult Friends'...



June 2002.

I accept this!



Nelson Mandela is every child's hero. It is fantastic to have him as an Honorary Adult Friend.




HONORARY ADULT FRIEND
NELSON MANDELA
THE WORLD'S CHILDREN'S PRIZE
FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

*Amnesty – being pardoned, not being punished, * Kathy – Ahmed Kathrada, * Madiba – Many people in South Africa call Mandela 'Madiba'. It is the royal Themba family's clan name.