LANA SIRRI

SHABAB Z!

A Graphic Journey through Islamic Feminism

ILLUSTRATED BY IREM KURT

ROUTLEDGE

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

Shababz!

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This publication is part of the project *Unveiling Islamic Feminist Scholarship* funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO) Impact Explorer Grant (project number IMP.EXP.23-24.035).

This book is published in German under the title *Shababz! Jung. Muslimisch. Selbstbestimmt* in 2024 by w_orten & meer.

First published in 2025 by Amsterdam University Press Ltd.

Published 2025 by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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ISBN: 9789048568161 (pbk)
ISBN: 9781003703556 (ebk)
NUR 717

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Cover design: Studio Veen

DOI: 10.5117/9789048568161

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Dear young reader,

Be curious! You're an amazing human being. I know, hearing it again from an "older" person might feel repetitive, but I mean it! Sometimes things seem really tough, unfair, and just plain harsh. There might be moments when anger and frustration seem like the only feelings around. And sometimes it feels like the world isn't quite ready to understand you. But guess what? You hold incredible power within you. The power to turn these experiences into valuable knowledge. The power to image a world that celebrates every part of who you are. The power to make a difference.
My hope is that this book helps you to accept, understand and celebrate yourself, your communities and your faith. But remember, I only offer insights here. Ultimately, it's your journey to take. So, go ahead and ask those big questions. Search for answers, and don't be afraid to question those answers too. Be critical, especially when faced with authority figures or ideas that might seem fixed. And always remember, you're not alone. You just need to find those who are taking the same journey, and those who will cheer and support you along the way.

Dear fellow PoC reader,

Be inspirational! You've faced countless challenges in life, confronting diverse forms of discrimination and exclusion, and perhaps still do. Navigating your own path, you've bridged the gap between the wider society and your predecessors who sought better opportunities elsewhere for our generation. Out of this hardship, your creativity arose, enabling you to build communities. You're the steadfast shoulders upon which the younger generation stands. You've laid down the foundation, allowing them to move

ahead and grow. Your legacy, rooted in the timeless wisdom passed down by your ancestors, embodies strength and endurance. However, just as you once dismissed the struggles and contributions of those before you, thinking *'we know best,'* undoubtedly, you'll encounter similar sentiments from the younger ones. Remember, your pursuit of knowledge and growth is ongoing. You learn from both your elders and your youngsters. Even if their perspectives sometimes puzzle you, they possess invaluable insights. Be compassionate. Deep down, they value your guidance. I offer this book merely as a supplement to your own experiences and knowledge, a tool to aid you in guiding them through life's twists, offering support and understanding as they navigate their journey.

Dear *white** wreader,

Be active! You play a big role here. The journey that these youth are about to take is often paved by you. It's within your power and reach to illuminate their way with streetlights or, under the guise of going green, plant trees that might inadvertently overshadow or replace these guiding lights. With this book, I hope you will explore Islamic feminisms and critical theory, but more importantly gain insights into the life-experiences of young Muslims in Western societies. However, your journey doesn't end with awareness; it begins there. If you are a teacher, educator, social worker, or trainer, use your position to uplift marginalized communities and create inclusive spaces. Use your privileges not to speak on their behalf, but to amplify their voices. Listen to their experiences so you can reflect on your own biases and behaviors and then actively work to change discriminatory attitudes. This is a journey we cannot and should not undertake without you, as each of us is an indispensable thread woven into the fabric of our society.

Dear younger me,

Be resilient! Now you know what you wish you knew back then. What a ride it's been, teaching you so much about life and why people around you acted the way they did. You learned that sometimes things aren't as they seem

* The categorization of PoC and white is not intended to exclude others through identity politics, but rather to highlight the process by which groups of people come to be socially constructed, and thus experience certain privileges or disadvantages.

to be. People often say, "It's complicated," but honestly, it's not. Someone once said “framing things as complex is just a way to deter from the ugly, very simple truths”— you realized these simple truths. You learned how to channel your emotions, the comfortable, easy ones and the more difficult, challenging ones. Through this understanding, you grew, flourished, and were able to give back to your community. Along the way, you met awesome people and found supportive allies. You immersed yourself in exciting conversations about important topics that shaped your world, such as Islam, race, gender, and sexuality. Yet, most significantly, you uncovered Islamic feminism, igniting a fire within you and leaving you constantly thirsty for more. You realized it's okay to talk about things others might avoid, break “taboos,” and by doing so, enrich yourself and those around you. It's been a journey to get where you are now, and it's been totally worth it.

Lana Sirri
March 2024



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Chapter One

The Gang

DOI: 10.5117/9789048568161-1



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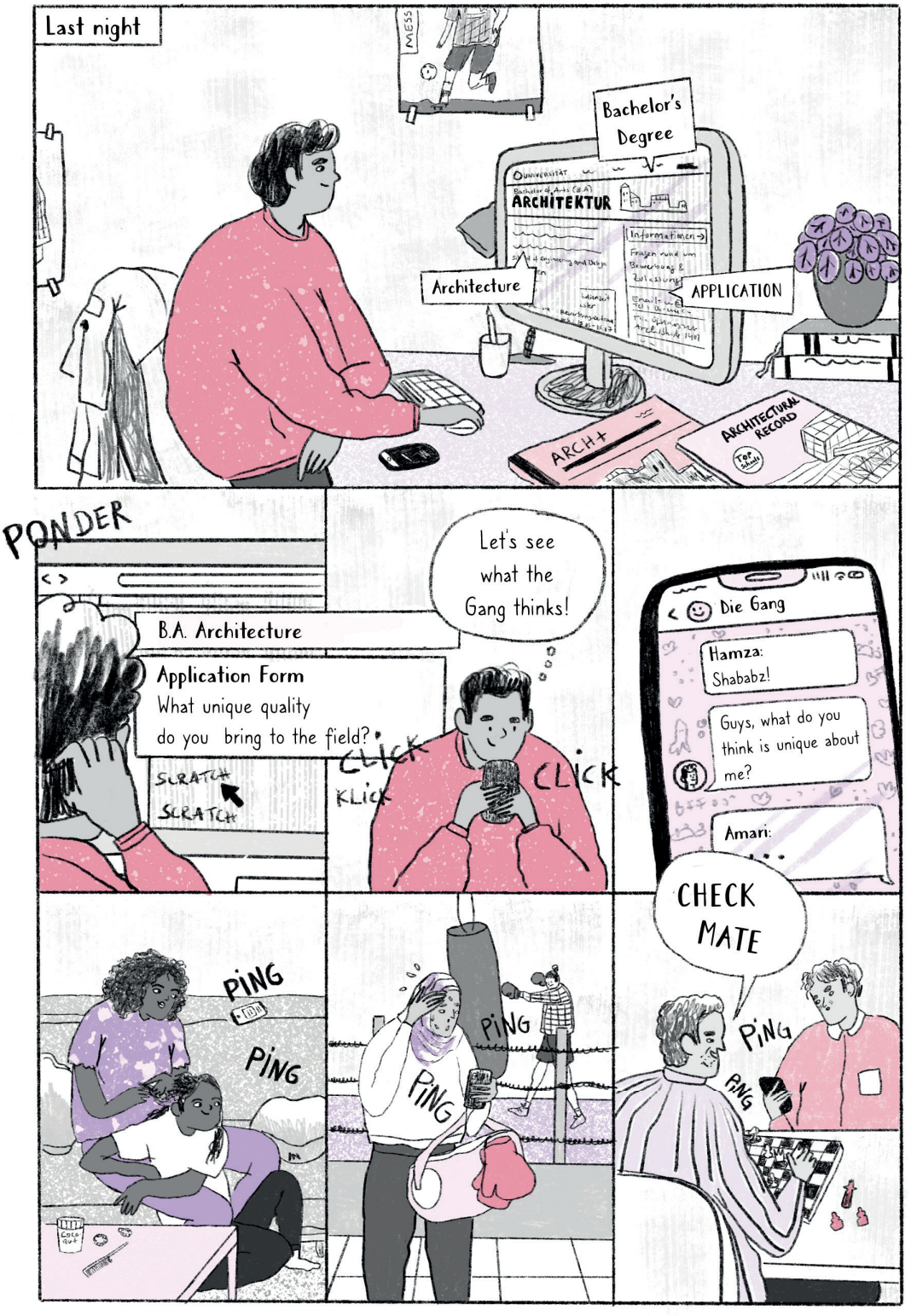

Last night
MESS
Bachelor's Degree
UNIVERSITÄT
ARCHITEKTUR
Architecture
APPLICATION
ARCH+
ARCHITECTURAL RECORD
PONDER
B.A. Architecture
Application Form
What unique quality
do you bring to the field?
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
Let's see what the Gang thinks!
CLICK
KLICK
CLICK
Die Gang
Hamza:
Shababz!
Guys, what do you think is unique about me?
Amari:
...
CHECK MATE
PING
PING
PING
PING
PING
PING


Dad! That's not fair!
You snooze, you lose.
One day, the student will become the master!
What's Hamza up to?
The Gang
you think is unique about me?
Amari:
Are you sure? It's not like you've got the best taste..
Hamza:
• • • •
Azerbaijan
Of course I'm sure! I'm gonna be the next Zaha
Heydar Aliyev Center
This is Zaha Hadid
Architect
1950-2016
China
Wangjing Soho


Give him a chance, guys!
The Gang
Mariama: If there's a prize for Worst Building Design, he might win!
Hamza: Thanks for nothing!
These guys...
!!!
PING
PING
Hamza: Thanks for nothing.
I'll ask my sister for help.
BFF
BFF
Jasmine! Got a minute?
?!



Hamza

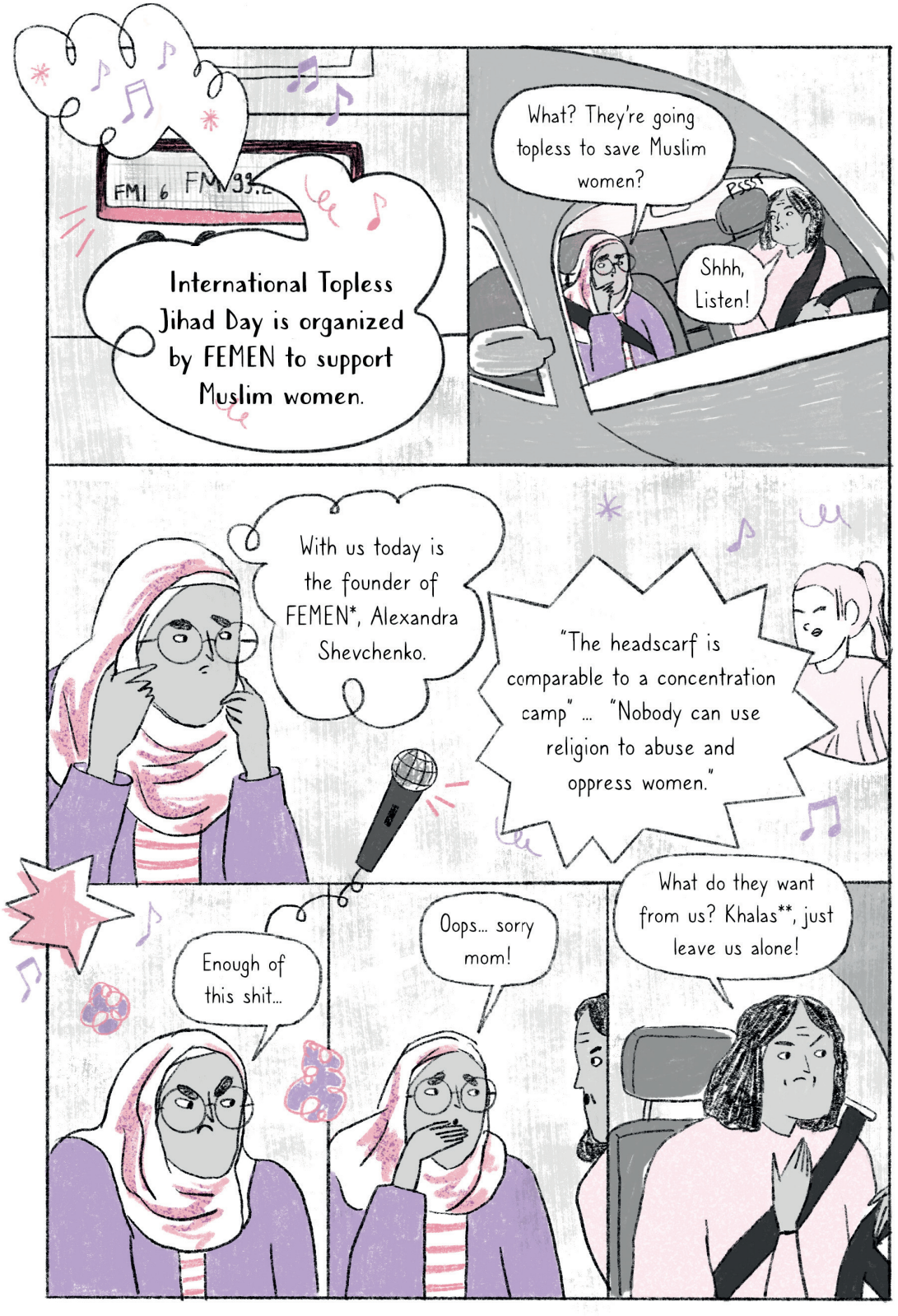

Metro
PFFF


Moritzplatz
Heinrich-Heine-Str.
Wittenau
NEWS
Sexual assaults by migrants.
BVG Berliner Fenster
This is some bullshit.
What is he up to now?
We need more security here!
We can't trust these foreigners.
Different day, same shit!



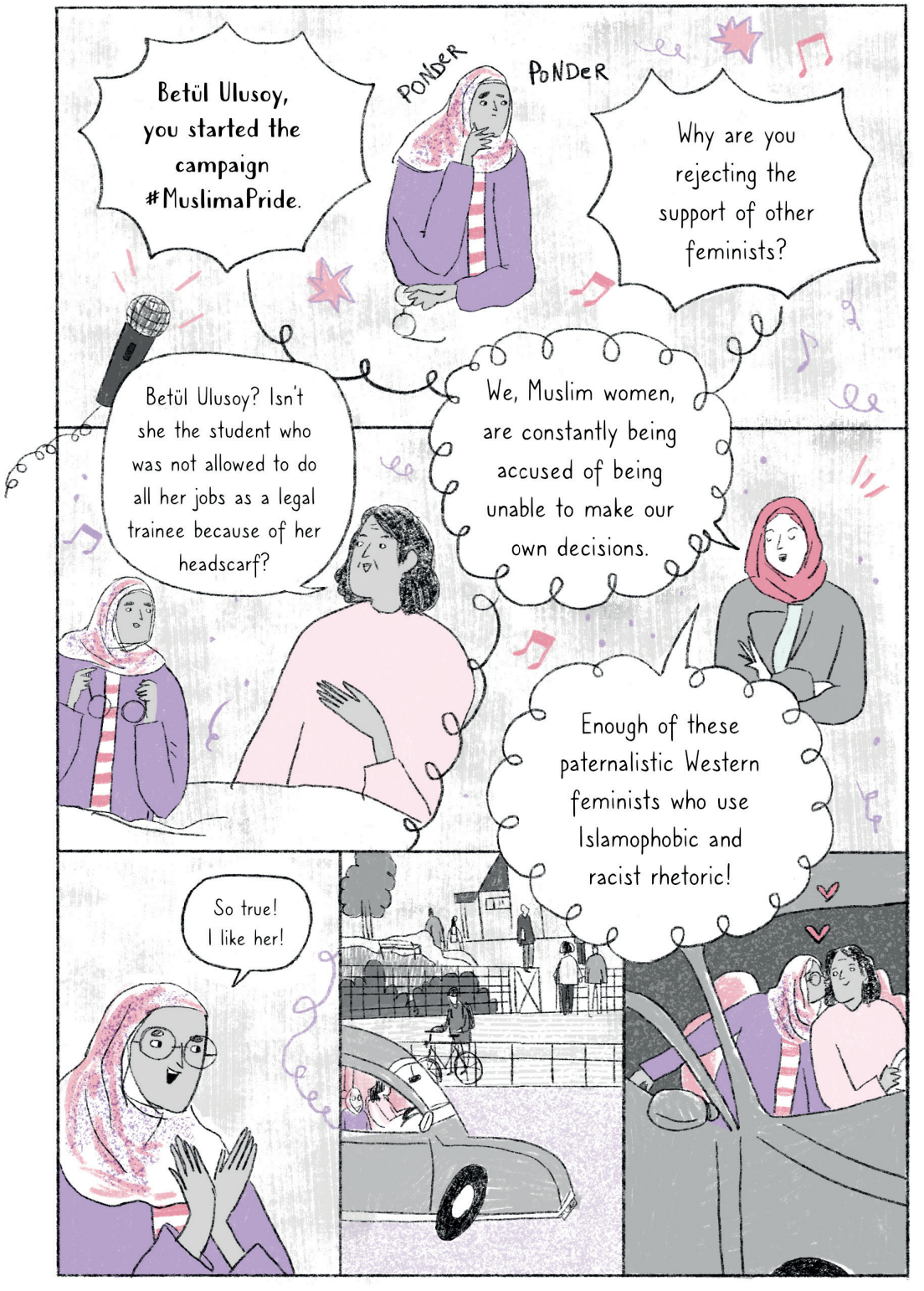
Zahra

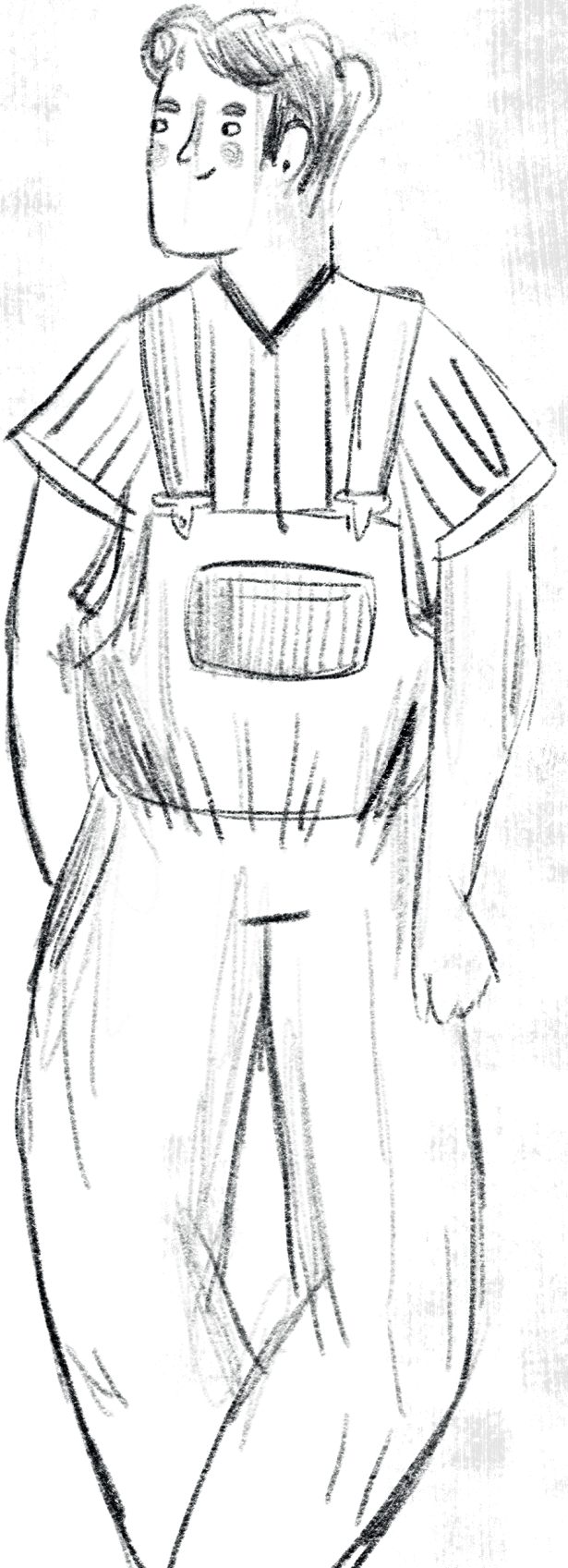

Last week of
Schooo, ooo, ooool
Be a good girl.
Ain't I always?
Did you submit your application yesterday?
Yes, mom! I'm hoping they'll accept me at LegalEmpower.
BRUUMM
Inshallah, habibti!
CLICK
CLICK



* **FEMEN** is a Ukrainian feminist group known for its topless pr

** **Khalas**: can be translated to mean "enough", or "done".


Betül Ulusoy, you started the campaign #MuslimaPride.
PONDER
PONDER
Why are you rejecting the support of other feminists?
Betül Ulusoy? Isn't she the student who was not allowed to do all her jobs as a legal trainee because of her headscarf?
We, Muslim women, are constantly being accused of being unable to make our own decisions.
Enough of these paternalistic Western feminists who use Islamophobic and racist rhetoric!
So true! I like her!



Amari


MASHROU LEILA
CENSORED
Is this what you're wearing? You can't go out looking like that!
Huh? What's wrong with what I'm wearing?
Hä?!
?!
Hä?!
BAAM
BAAM


SLAM!
SLAM!
Honestly, nothing is ever good enough for them!
I study hard, I do my best, and they s-ill can't let me be myself!
FLOP
FLOP
Why don't they just leave me alone?!
PING
PING
Die Gang
Mariama: Where are you, Amari?
Amari: ...
Click
Running late...
Click


Mariama


What up guys?
Hey, already made plans for the summer?
I've been busting my ass so I can afford to go on my trip.
PROJECT WEEK
10.6 - 20.6
hä?!
10.6 - 20.6
Radicalization Prevention Workshop
ISLAMISM
10.6 - 20
ISLAMISM
Fundamentalism
What the hell is this?
PANEL · 11.6.
— 11:00 A.M. —
Guest Speaker
Ayaan Hirsi Ali
"INFIDEL-My Life"
UGHHH


Speaker
Hirsi Ali
My Life"
That really gets on my nerves.
RRiPP
RRiPP
Can't they just let us enjoy this last week of school?


PFFF
Hey, what's got you all worked up?
Apparently you're a radical.
Don't worry, FEMEN are on their way to free me. Hahaha..
And she's oppressed!
PANEL · 11.6.
— 11:00 AM. —
Guest Speaker
Ayaan Hirsi Ali
"INFIDEL - My Life"


I can't help but wonder if everyone else is right and we're the ones who are wrong.
That's BS! They don't even know us.
Just ignore them all, the way I ignored those people on the train.
UFF
There must be something else out there for us.
Can't wait for school graduation.
Finally getting out of here!
And finding out what the world has in store for us!

Colonialism, Postcolonialism and Decoloniality

I know! Three big words! But don't let them intimidate you. These words hold the key to understanding the epic economic, socio-political whirlwind we're living in, especially if you're one of the awesome underdogs in the Western hustle.

Once upon a time, there was Colonialism — a chapter in history when powerful nations went around the world, taking control of other lands and peoples. It was a time of great injustice and exploitation, with many peoples suffering under the weight of racist colonial rule. One of the most impactful consequences of colonialism was the enduring political and economic domination by powerful Western nation-states, which has had profound effects on the lives of colonized communities. The legacy of colonialism includes deep-rooted power imbalances, social divisions, and economic inequalities that persist, even after formal independence. Understanding the political economic effects of colonialism is crucial for addressing these historical injustices and working towards more equitable and inclusive societies.

Postcolonialism describes the peculiar social, economic, and political condition of formerly colonized societies. Post-colonial studies emerged as an engaged and critical theoretical framework, to analyze and contribute to fighting the enduring effects of colonial control and exploitation. National liberation movements were the collective struggles for independence, where people fought against colonial rule to gain their freedom and self-determination. These movements aimed to reclaim cultural, political, and economic sovereignty, and to establish a nation-state that represents the colonized people's aspirations and values.
After gaining independence, formerly colonized countries embarked on the path of self-governance. However, post-colonial states inherited from colonial regimes some of the structures and institutions of inequality and control. National liberation leaders and parties have often turned into new exploitative dictatorships and ruling groups that have come to enjoy the support of powerful states in the neocolonial world order, in exchange for their violent perpetuation of the status quo in the post-colonial world.

So, things didn't really work out the way anti-colonialist liberation movements had hoped for.

And now, there's Decoloniality — a fresh path inviting us to reflect on and correct the mistakes of the past. It's like a new beginning, a chance to make things right. Decoloniality urges us to acknowledge the harms caused by colonialism, not just in the past, but also in the present. It encourages us to challenge unjust systems, to embrace diversity and inclusivity, and to work towards a future where everyone's voices are heard and respected.

Islamic feminism can indeed be viewed as a decolonial movement that seeks to challenge the dominant narratives and structures imposed by colonial powers. It values diverse perspectives, emphasizing gender equality and addressing wider injustices like economic, racial, and environmental issues. By reclaiming agency and embracing inclusivity, Islamic feminism contributes to decolonization and creates a more equitable world.

Chapter Two

Speaking and Being

DOI: 10.5117/9789048568161-2



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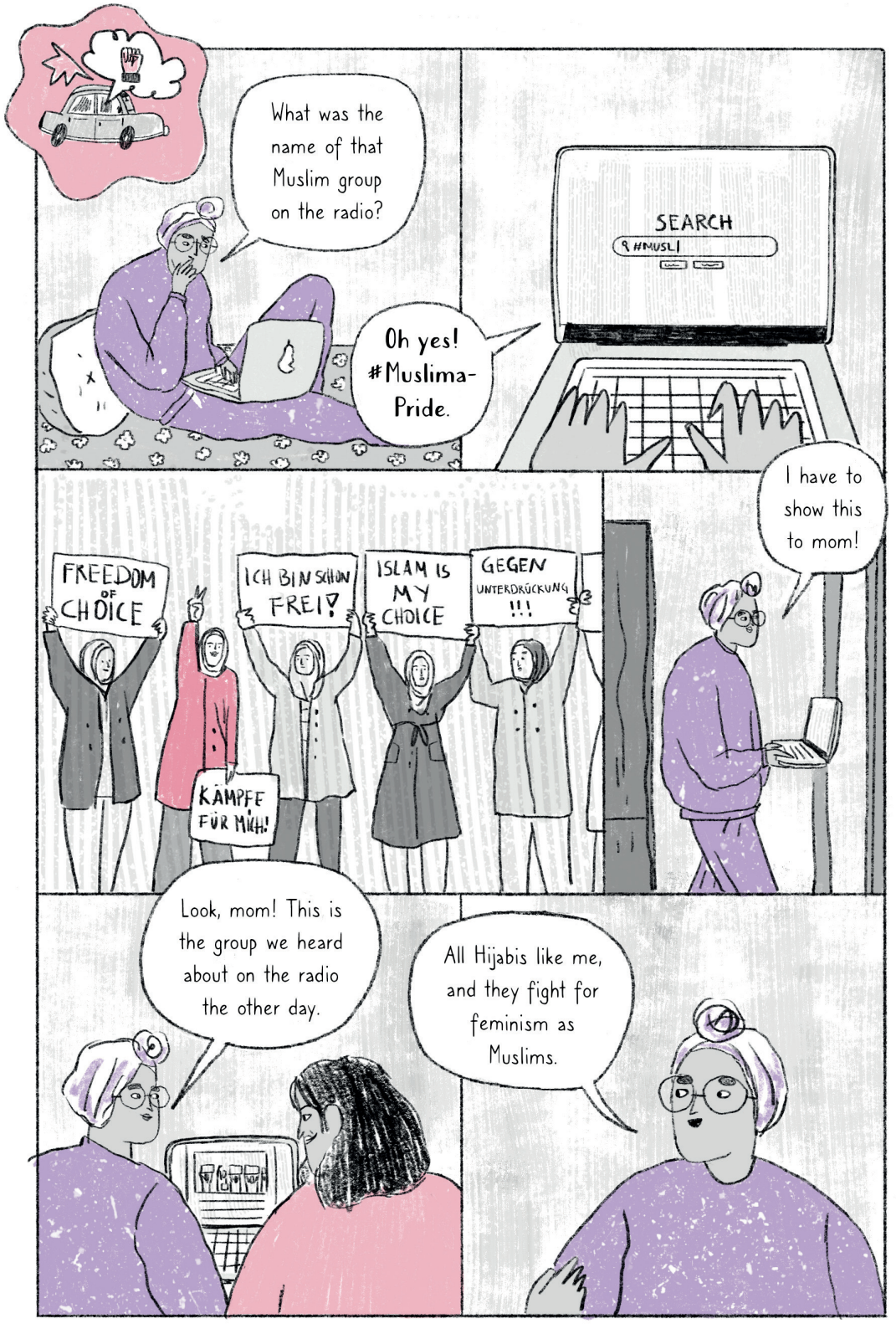
Last School Term
PROJECT WEEK
EMMA
MISSY MAGAZINE
Last week of dealing with Miss Walker.
She's been on my case ever since I started wearing a hijab. She even called my parents to school, can you believe that?!
AARGH
AARGH


We have a great program for our final Project Week.
I'm joining the hip hop workshop.
And it's about Women's Empowerment.
You will learn about gender equality in Europe.
What about men's empowerment?
Sarah, I highly recommend you attend this workshop. You, too, Mariama.
!?!
!?
And we are so happy to have the author as our special guest speaker. She will talk about women's rights.
Ayaan Hirsi Ali "INFIDEL - My Life"
What a load of crap!
Do we really have to come to school this week?


RRING
RRING
And don't forget your homework. You should all give presentations on gender equality.
Our last school assignment! Can't wait to get this over with!
And you'll be kicking off your training with Queer Muslima.
I'm soooo excited for my law internship! Can't believe they accepted my application!
SCHOOL
And I saved enough money to travel the world.


SEARCH
Muslim Women
KITCHEN
Gender Equality in Islam
GENDER EQUALITY
Islam and Sexuality
GENDER PAY GAP
Gender Pay Gap

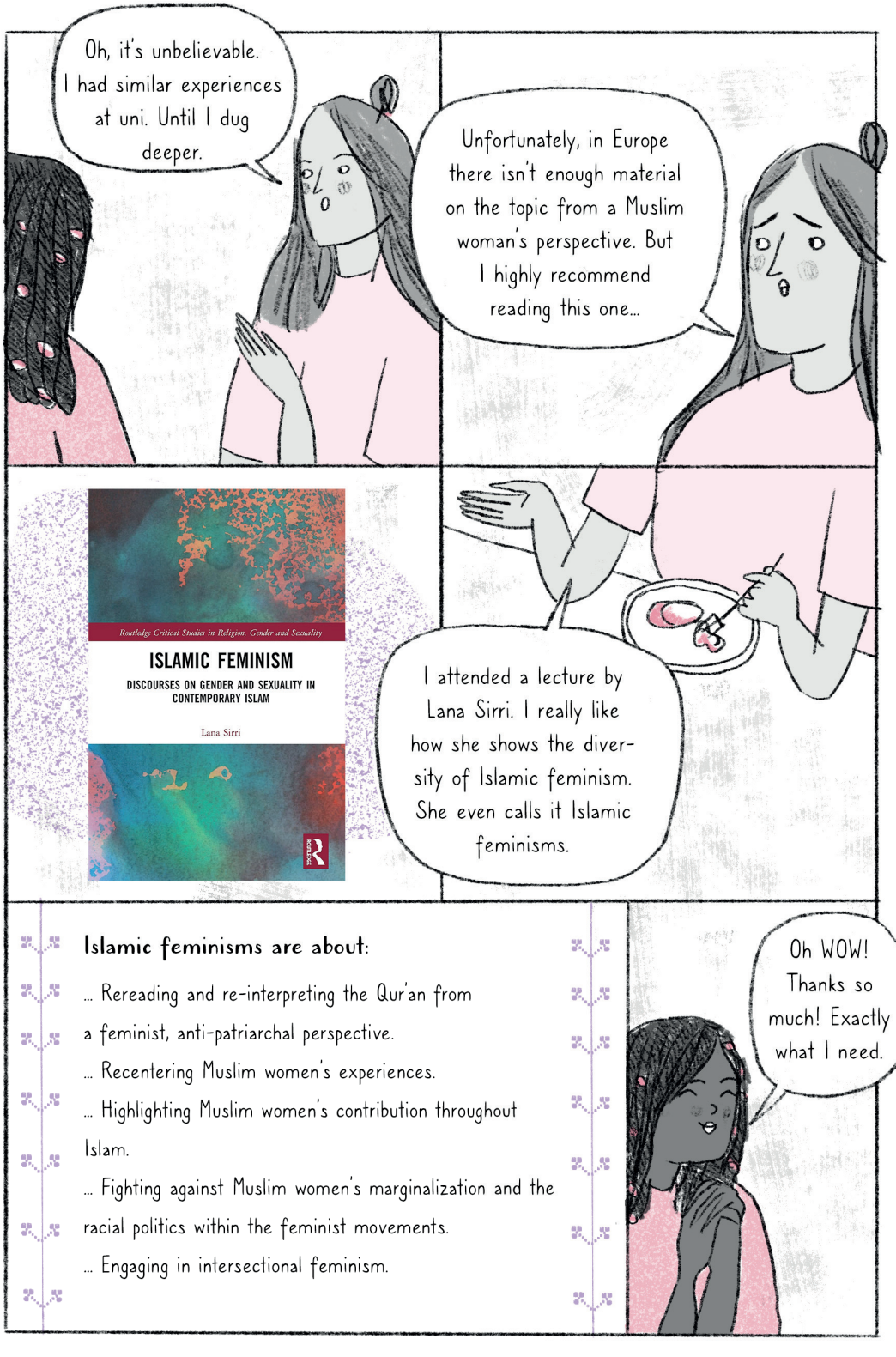

Oppression
Muslim, Women
Female Genital Mutilation
EQUALITY
JUSTICE
EQUAL RIGHTS
Reform
BIWOC RISING
UFF
Social Injustice towards women
Gender (IN)Equality in Islam
Hmm
TABU
It's not our culture
SEARCH
Sexual Depr...
ISLAMISM
UFF
Honor killing
Women in Saudi Arabia can now drive
But they still need a man's permission to...

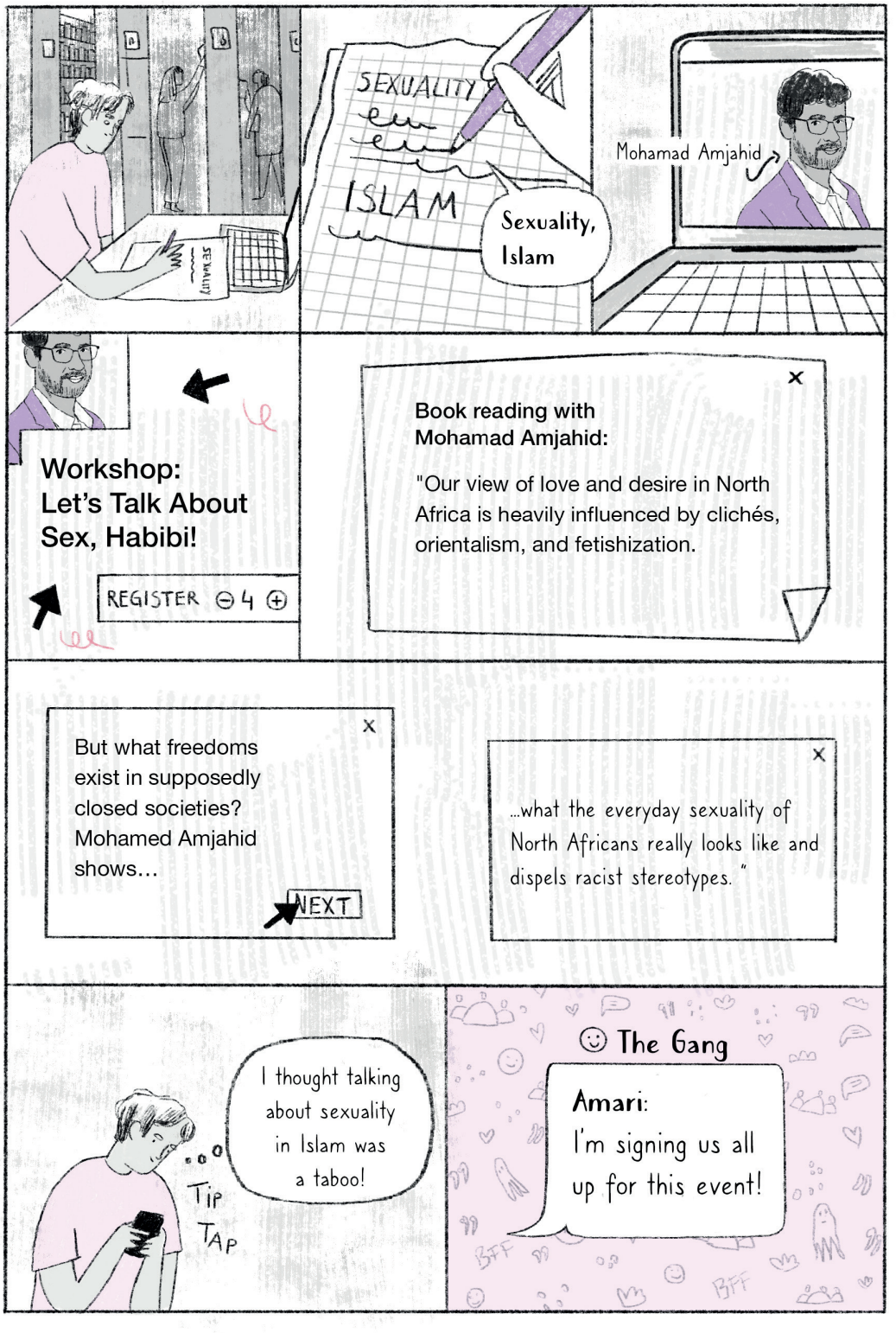

What was the name of that Muslim group on the radio?
Oh yes! #Muslima-Pride.
SEARCH
#MUSLI
I have to show this to mom!
FREEDOM OF CHOICE
ICH BIN SCHON FREI!
ISLAM IS MY CHOICE
GEGEN UNTERDRÜCKUNG !!!
KÄMPFE FÜR MICH!
Look, mom! This is the group we heard about on the radio the other day.
All Hijabis like me, and they fight for feminism as Muslims.

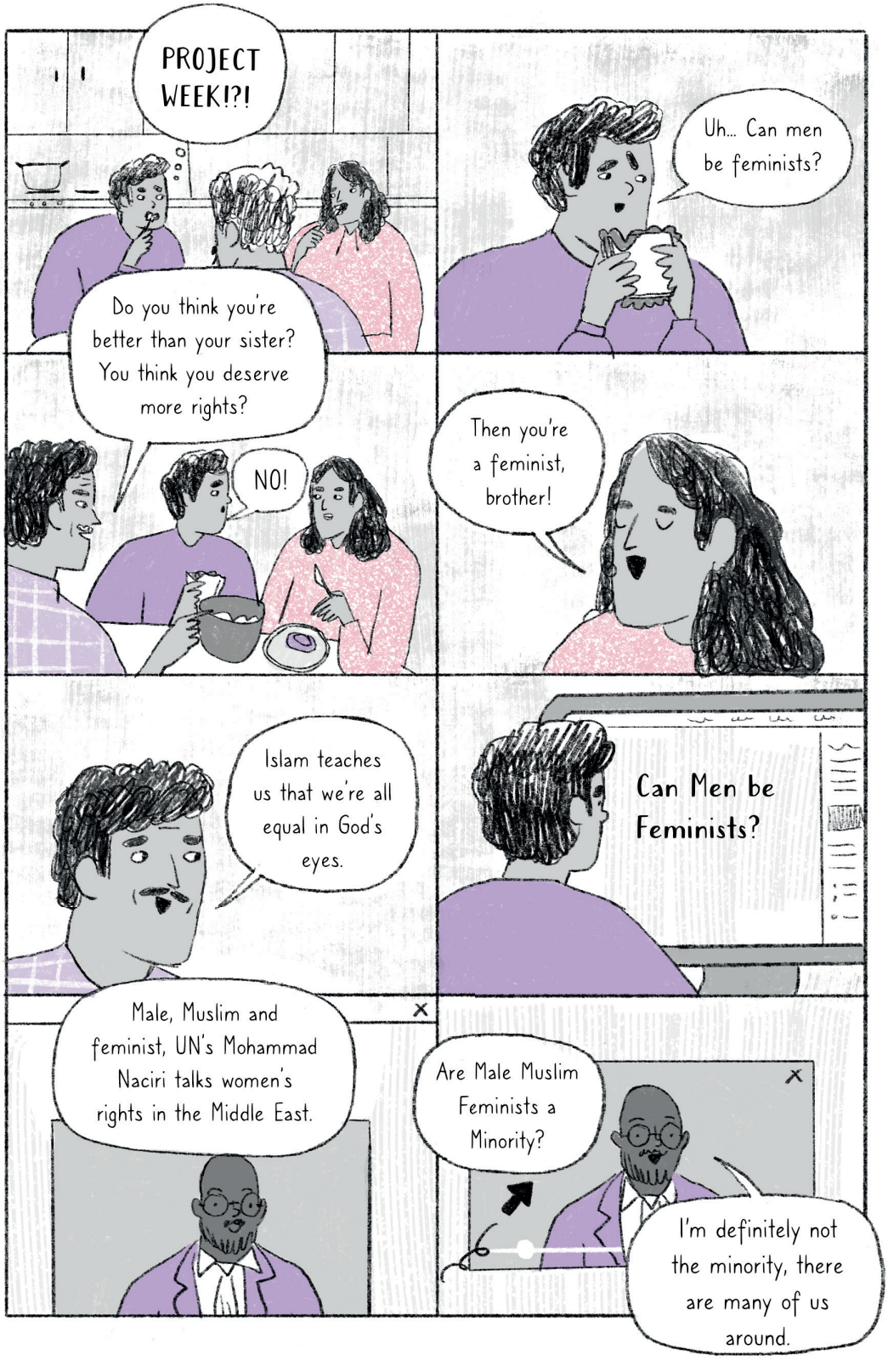

Very impressive!
That reminds me! I was at the bookshop today and got this.
Oh yes! I saw her on TEDxBerlinSalon. She calls herself...
She talks about how frustrating it is having to clean up after racist, sexist, Islamophobic, Islamist, right-wing populist extremists of all kinds.
And look, the article says that Betül Ulusoy is a law student. Just like you, inshallah!
Kübra Gümüşay. Have you heard about her? Another strong young European Muslim woman.
SPEAKING AND BEING
TED Organised love | Kübra Gümüşay | TEDx
The Intellectual Cleaning Lady
This is how I feel at school sometimes. It's good to know I'm not the only one.



* **BIWOC Rising** is the first intersectional coworking place in Europe catering to Black, Indigenous, Women of Color.


Oh, it's unbelievable. I had similar experiences at uni. Until I dug deeper.
Unfortunately, in Europe there isn't enough material on the topic from a Muslim woman's perspective. But I highly recommend reading this one...
Routledge Critical Studies in Religion, Gender and Sexuality
ISLAMIC FEMINISM
DISCOURSES ON GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN CONTEMPORARY ISLAM
Lana Sirri
I attended a lecture by Lana Sirri. I really like how she shows the diversity of Islamic feminism. She even calls it Islamic feminisms.
Islamic feminisms are about:
... Rereading and re-interpreting the Qur'an from a feminist, anti-patriarchal perspective.
... Recentering Muslim women's experiences.
... Highlighting Muslim women's contribution throughout Islam.
... Fighting against Muslim women's marginalization and the racial politics within the feminist movements.
... Engaging in intersectional feminism.
Oh WOW! Thanks so much! Exactly what I need.

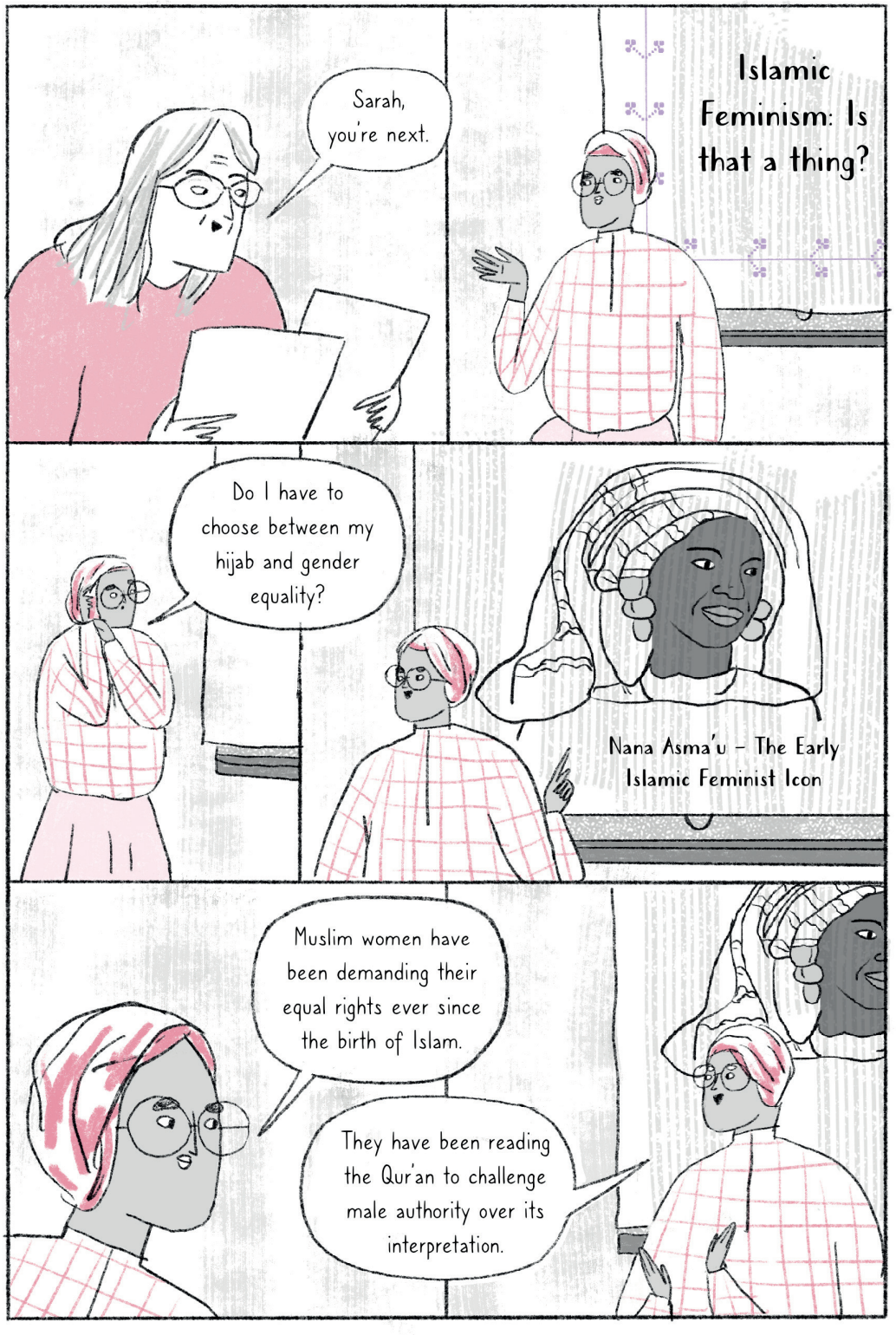

SEXUALITY
ISLAM
Sexuality, Islam
Mohamad Amjahid
Workshop: Let's Talk About Sex, Habibi!
REGISTER ⊖ 4 ⊕
Book reading with Mohamad Amjahid:
"Our view of love and desire in North Africa is heavily influenced by clichés, orientalism, and fetishization.
But what freedoms exist in supposedly closed societies? Mohamed Amjahid shows...
NEXT
...what the everyday sexuality of North Africans really looks like and dispels racist stereotypes."
TIP TAP
I thought talking about sexuality in Islam was a taboo!
☺ The Gang
Amari:
I'm signing us all up for this event!
BFF
BFF


PROJECT WEEK!?!
Do you think you're better than your sister? You think you deserve more rights?
NO!
Uh... Can men be feminists?
Then you're a feminist, brother!
Can Men be Feminists?
Islam teaches us that we're all equal in God's eyes.
Male, Muslim and feminist, UN's Mohammad Naciri talks women's rights in the Middle East.
Are Male Muslim Feminists a Minority?
I'm definitely not the minority, there are many of us around.




A Week Later
Project Week Presentations
Mariama, you're next.
Do Muslim Women Need Saving?
Many people in the West think that Muslim women are oppressed victims of their religion and their traditions.
Here's why I think this is false.
Muslim women fight against gender inequality and discrimination.


In fact, Muslim women fight on multiple fronts.
They fight against patriarchy within their Muslim communities.
!!
And they fight against sexism, racism and Islamophobia in wider society.
As my presentation shows, Muslim women are powerful!
And they can speak for themselves! Thank you!
THANKS!


Sarah, you're next.
Islamic Feminism: Is that a thing?
Do I have to choose between my hijab and gender equality?
Nana Asma'u – The Early Islamic Feminist Icon
Muslim women have been demanding their equal rights ever since the birth of Islam.
They have been reading the Qur'an to challenge male authority over its interpretation.


Their interpretations show that gender equality is embedded in the Qur'an and inherent to Islam.
We Can Do It, Too!
© tuffix
So, to answer the question... No! I do not have to choose between my hijab and gender equality.
Islam and feminism are compatible.
Oh, and by the way... my name is ZAHRA, not Sarah.
?!


But doesn't Islam oppress women?
I heard many Muslim women complain about the headscarf.
Or were they complaining about patriarchy?
Is Europe truly free from patriarchy? Are European women free?
?!?
Where did these thoughts come from?
I must confront and challenge the narratives that have clouded my perception.
ALL of my students deserve better. They should be acknowledged, listened to, and celebrated, not judged based on stereotypes.

Representation

When the terms "Islam" or "Muslims" are mentioned, they often evoke preconceived notions or stereotypes in people's minds. These associations stem from the influence of colonialism, which played a pivotal role in shaping these ideas. Exploring the concept of representation becomes valuable in unraveling the reasons behind these associations.

Representation is not a simple or neutral process. It's tied to power dynamics and politics. Stuart Hall, a thinker in this field, talked about "The West and the Rest" and how those in power control how different groups are portrayed and understood. They shape representations to reinforce their own dominance. Representations can either support or challenge existing inequalities in society. Stuart Hall also looked at how representation affects our identities. The way groups are represented can impact how we see ourselves and how others see us. Some representations can create shared cultural identities, but they can also stereotype or exclude certain groups. Hall called for us to critically examine representations to fight against oppressive forms of identity construction.

Edward Said uses the concept of Orientalism to critique the Western representation of the "East" and the construction of a Eurocentric view of the Orient. Orientalism is a concept that challenges the notion of knowledge as being purely objective. It argues that Western scholars and artists, influenced by colonial ideologies, depicted Eastern cultures as exotic, backward, and inferior. This portrayal served to perpetuate stereotypes and justify the domination of colonial powers over Eastern societies.
Through this lens, knowledge about the East became a tool of control and domination. Orientalist representations often overlooked the diversity and complexity of Eastern cultures, reducing them to simplistic and static caricatures. This approach allowed Western powers to justify their colonization and subjugation of Eastern peoples, presenting it as a mission of civilizing or enlightening the "inferior" cultures.

You know what? Even if you're tired or too busy to challenge these false representations, your mere existence as a European Muslim demystifies this inaccurate division of East and West. So, sit back, relax, and create your own narrative.

Chapter Three

Love is Revolution

DOI: 10.5117/9789048568161-3



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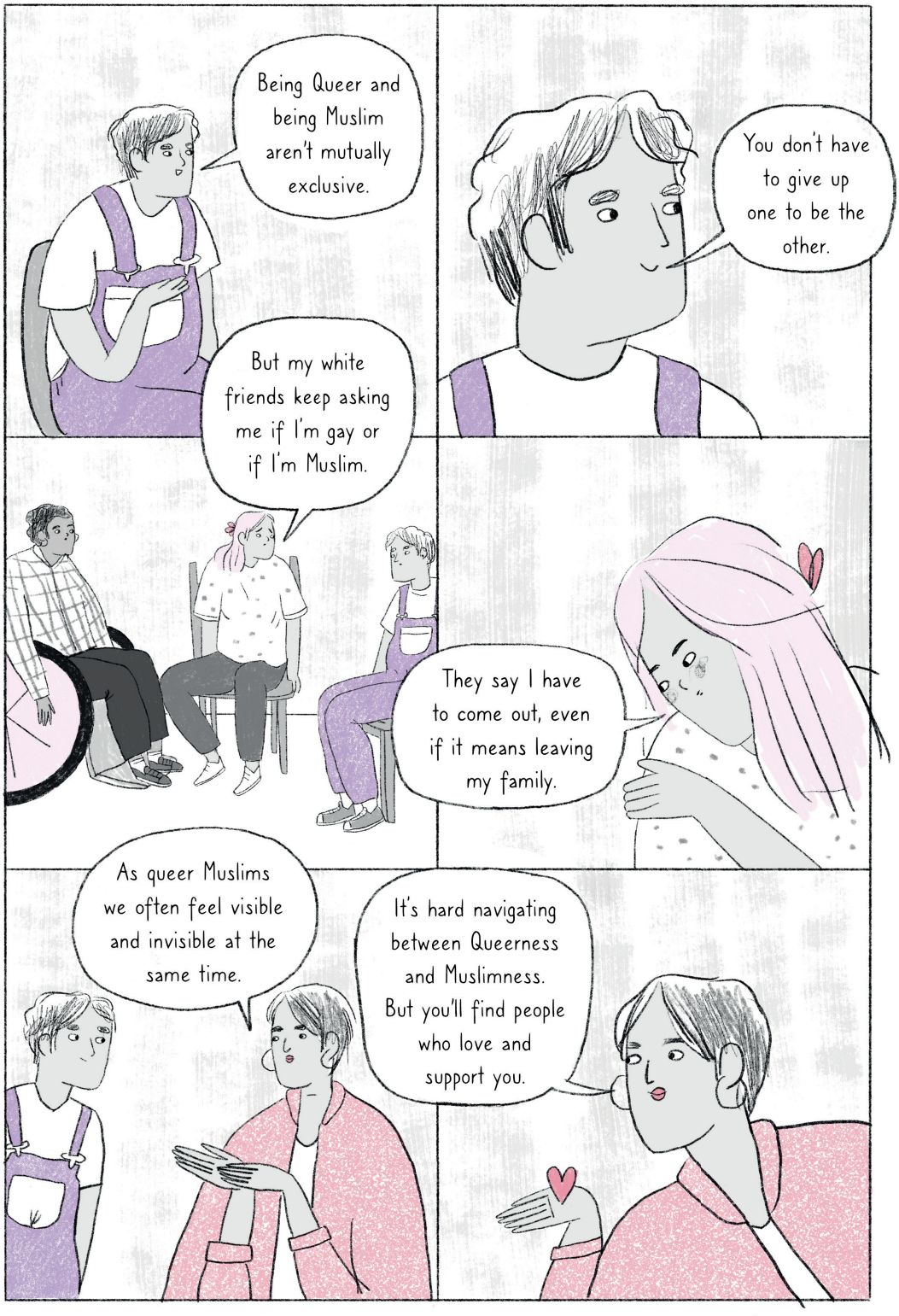
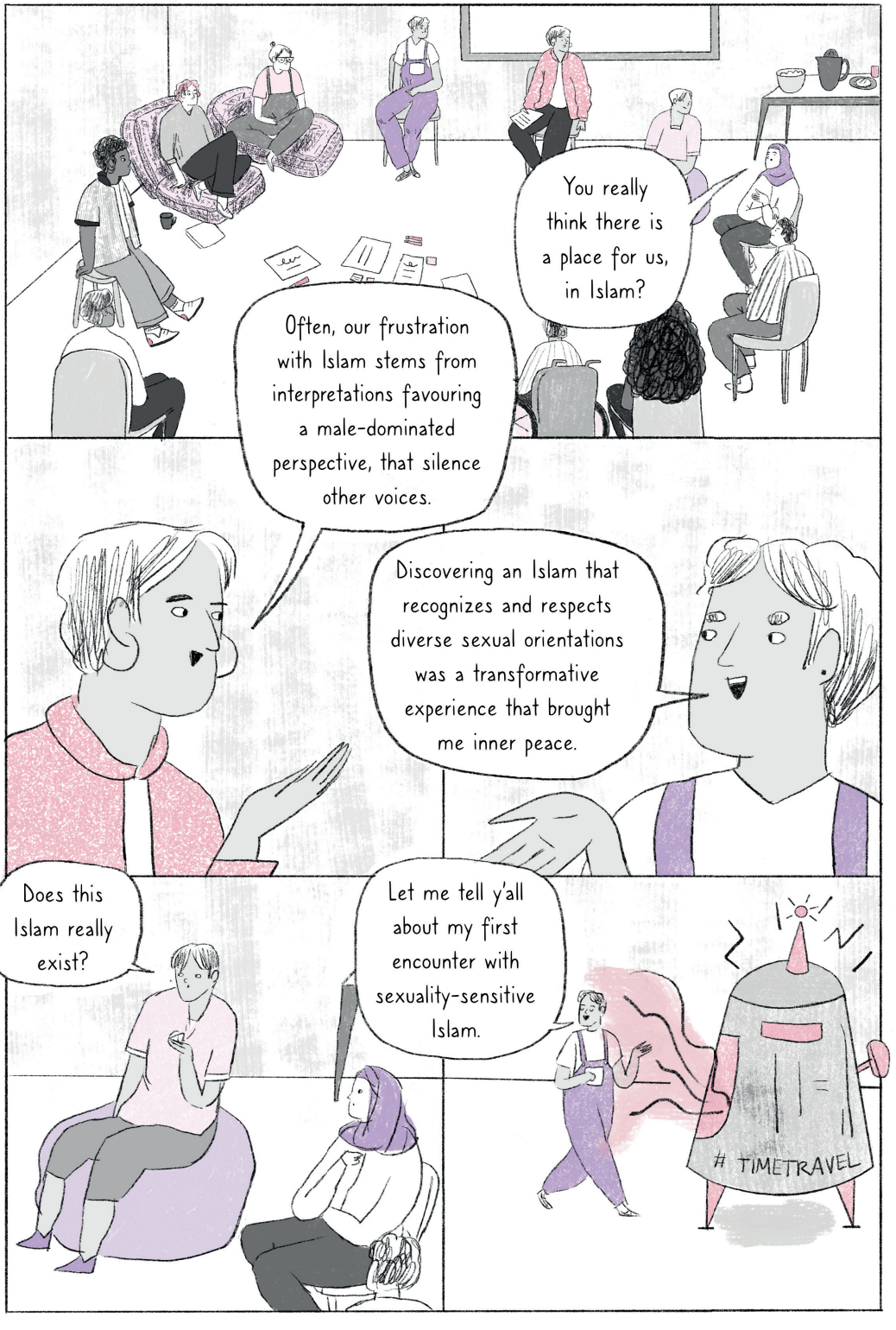
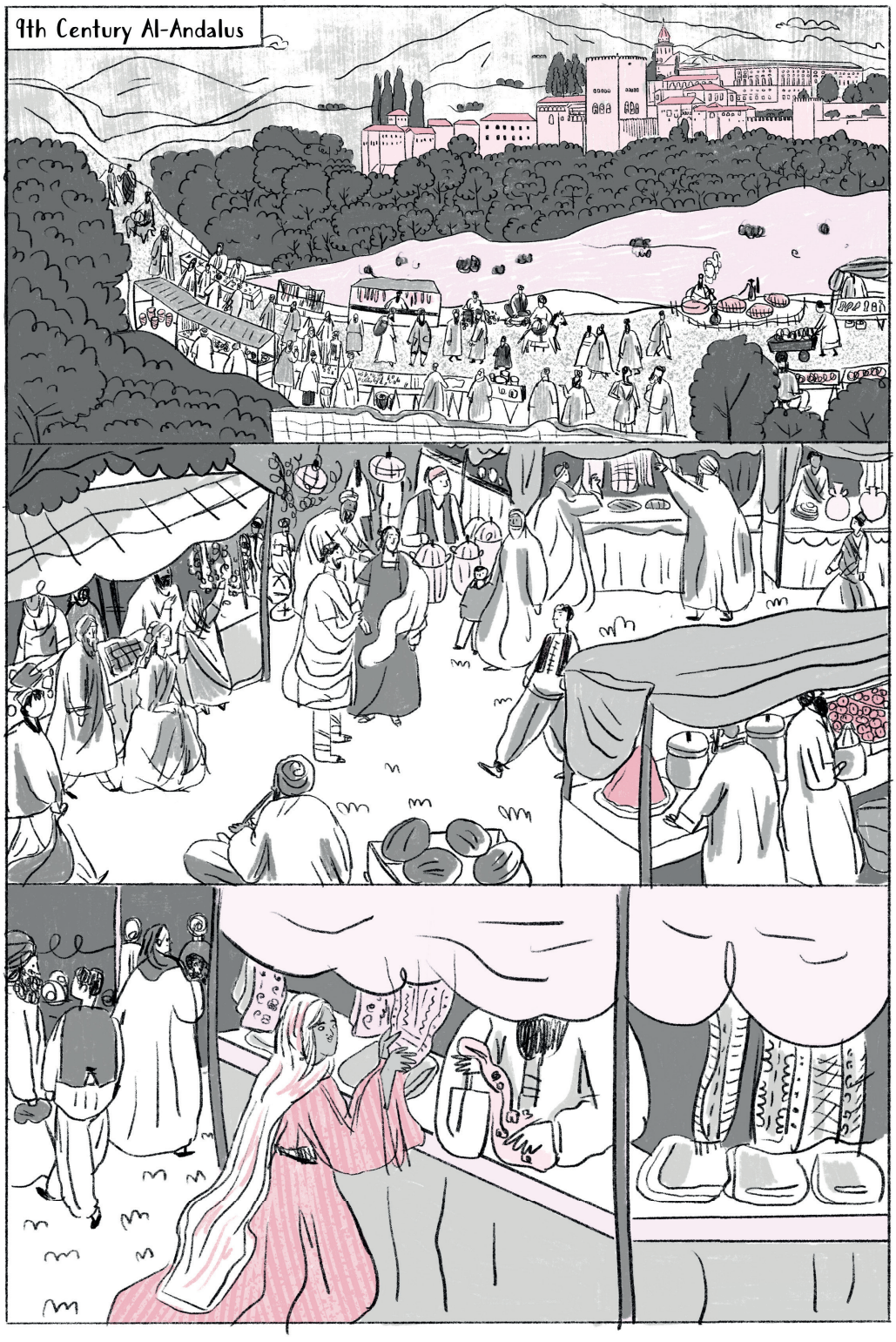
Queer Muslim_a* Workshop.
Amari
Are we Queer or Muslims?
Or Queer AND Muslims?
Queer Muslim_a* Workshop
Trainers: Amari & Farah
Farah


My parents say that there aren't any LGBTQIA+ people in our community.
I am afraid that if I tell my family, they won't love me anymore.
At my mosque, they say you cannot be gay and Muslim.
CAN I still be Muslim if I am queer?
Am I haram?

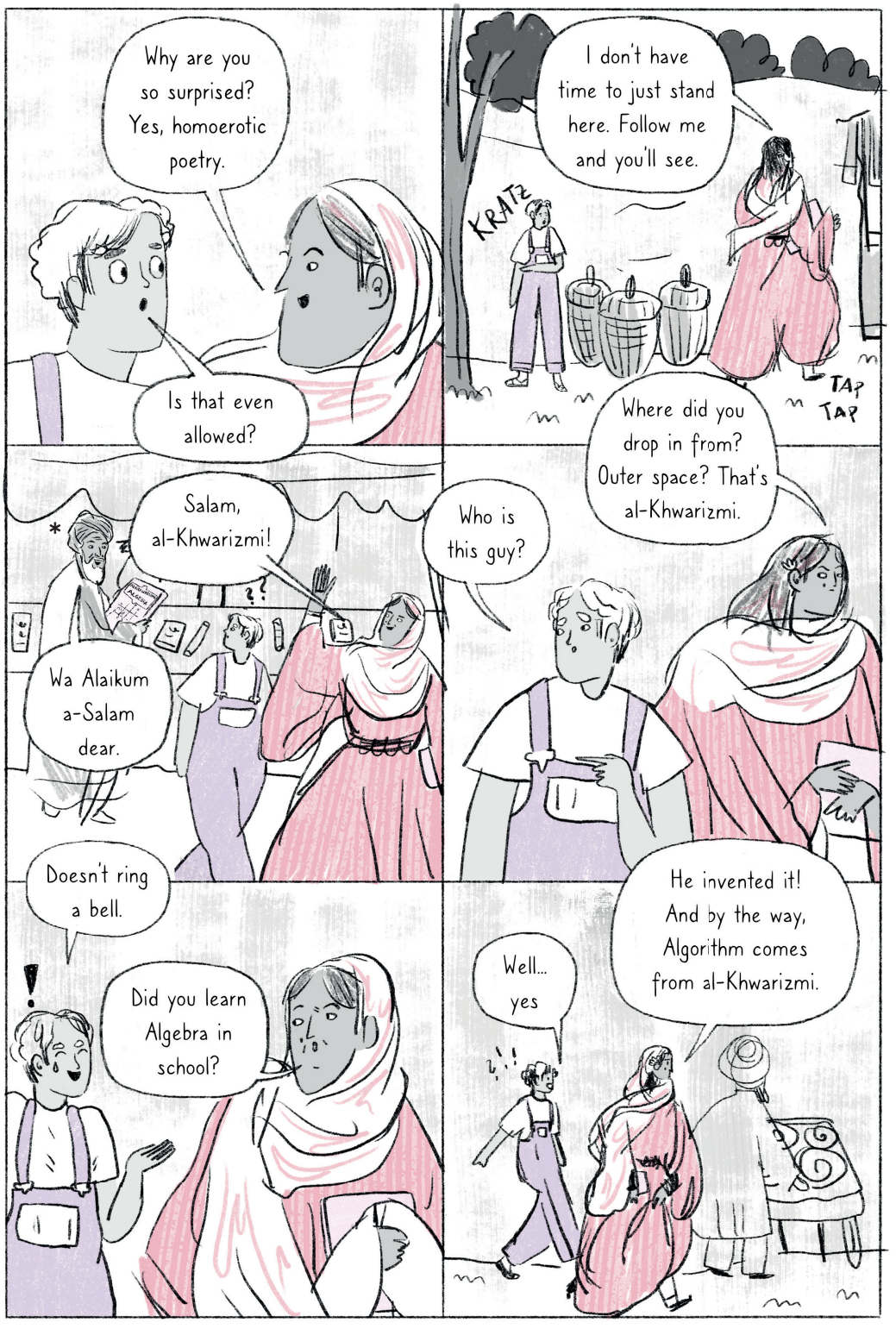

Being Queer and being Muslim aren't mutually exclusive.
You don't have to give up one to be the other.
But my white friends keep asking me if I'm gay or if I'm Muslim.
They say I have to come out, even if it means leaving my family.
As queer Muslims we often feel visible and invisible at the same time.
It's hard navigating between Queerness and Muslimness. But you'll find people who love and support you.


You really think there is a place for us, in Islam?
Often, our frustration with Islam stems from interpretations favouring a male-dominated perspective, that silence other voices.
Discovering an Islam that recognizes and respects diverse sexual orientations was a transformative experience that brought me inner peace.
Does this Islam really exist?
Let me tell y'all about my first encounter with sexuality-sensitive Islam.
TIMETRAVEL

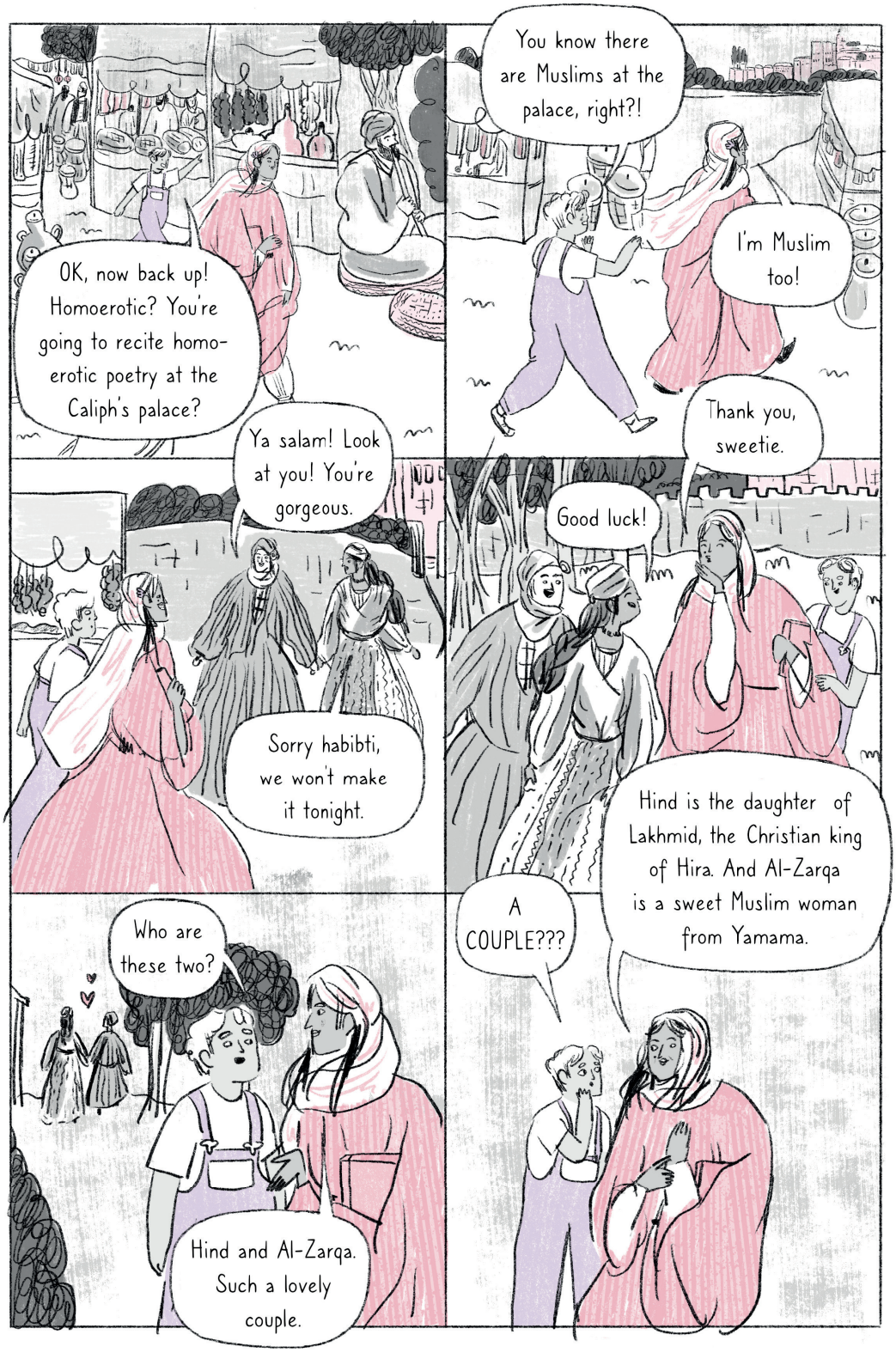

9th Century Al-Andalus


Allah, this smells so good!
This is for you, Zaynab.
You're a sweetheart.
Your notebook!
Oh, thank you dear.
Excuse me! You left your notebook there.
Why are you in such a rush?


I'm performing this evening at Alhambra.
And I am running late.
!!
Nice!!! What kind of performance?
You're obviously not from here, if you don't know who I am.
?!?
I recite the Qur'an and homoerotic poetry.
HOMO- what???

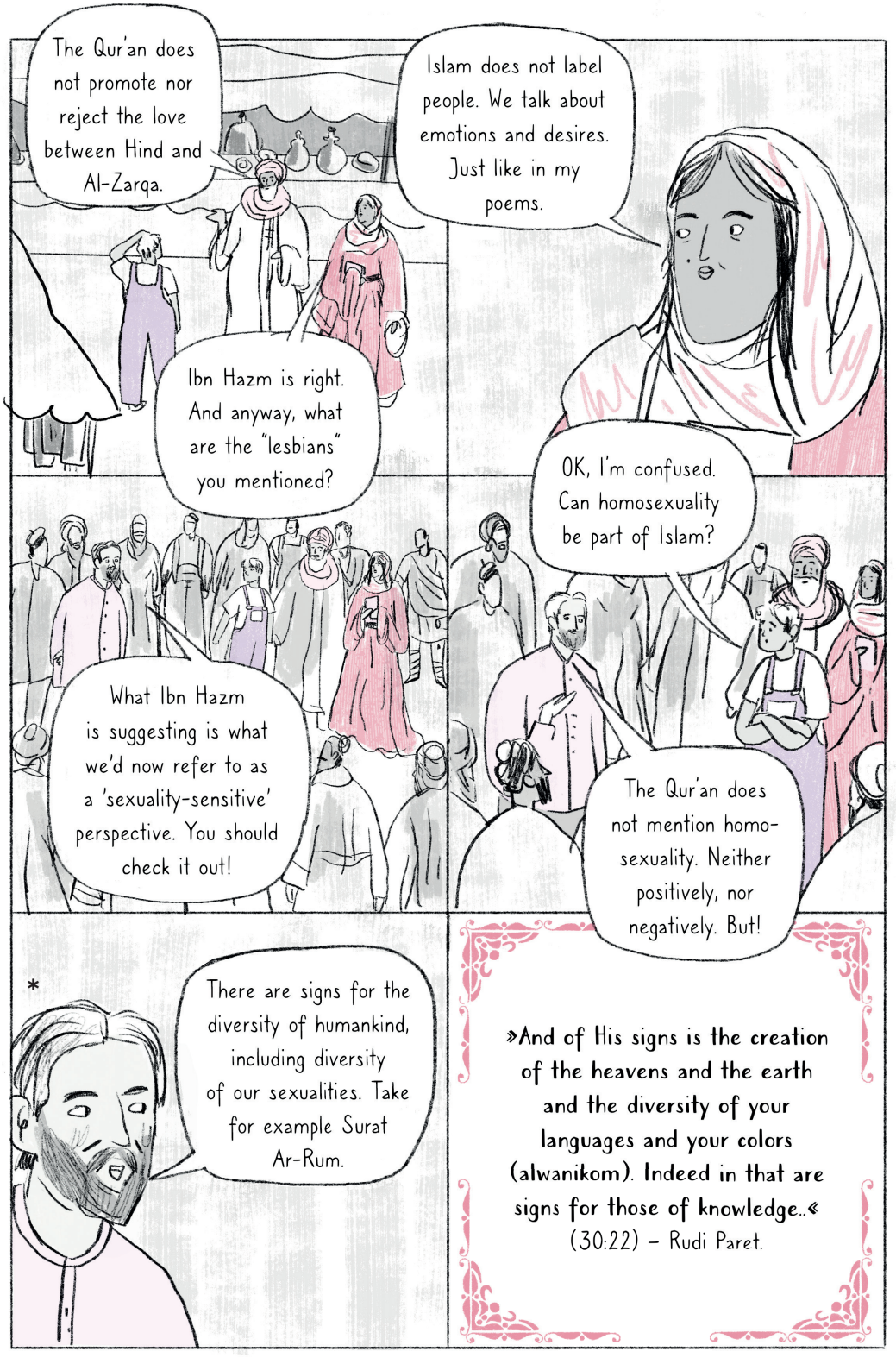


* Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi 780-850

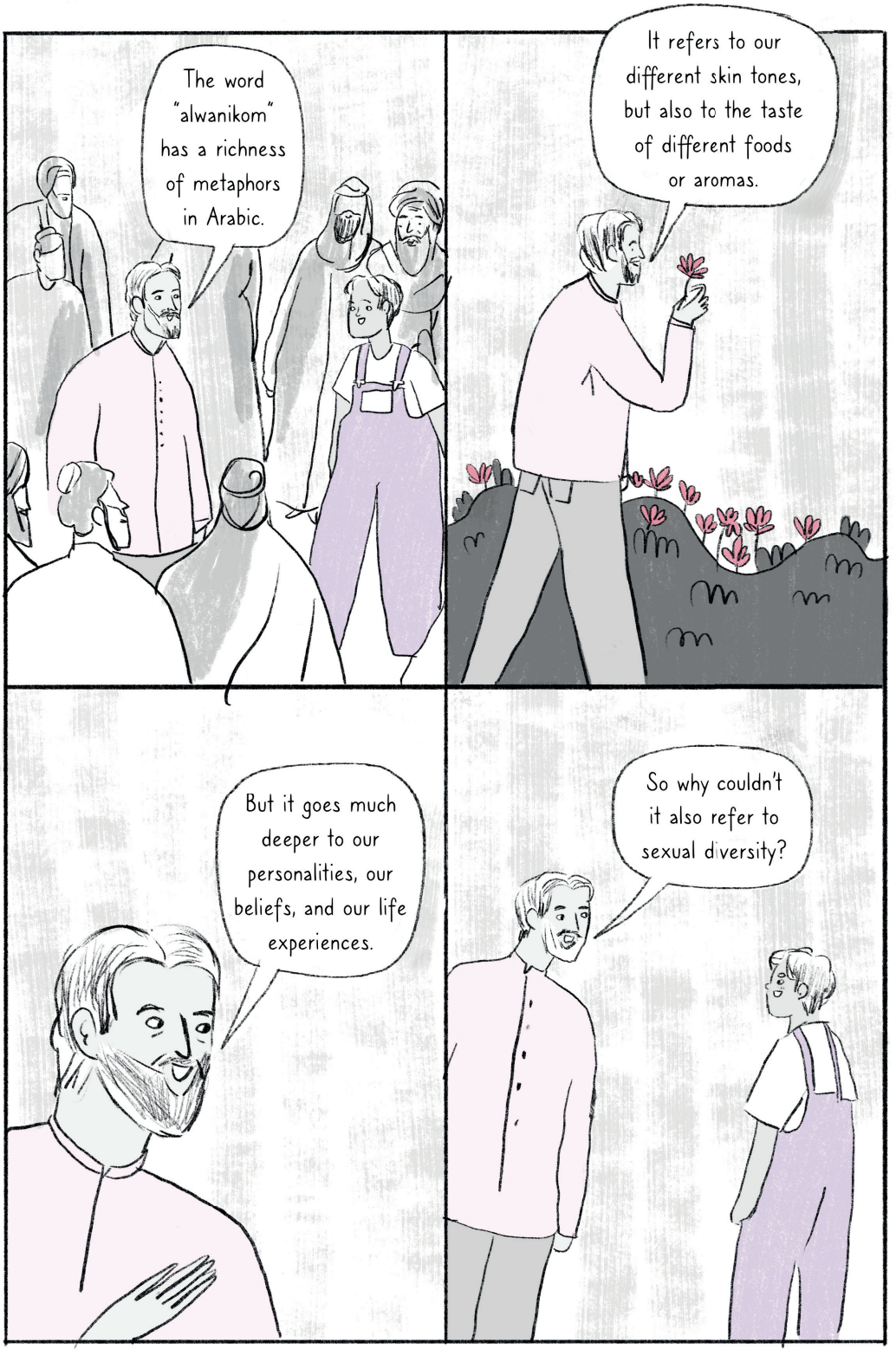

You know there are Muslims at the palace, right?!
I'm Muslim too!
Thank you, sweetie.
Good luck!
Hind is the daughter of Lakhmid, the Christian king of Hira. And Al-Zarqa is a sweet Muslim woman from Yamama.
A COUPLE???
OK, now back up! Homoerotic? You're going to recite homo-erotic poetry at the Caliph's palace?
Ya salam! Look at you! You're gorgeous.
Sorry habibti, we won't make it tonight.
Who are these two?
Hind and Al-Zarqa. Such a lovely couple.



* Ahmad Ibn Hazm 994-1064



* Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle (born 1969)


The word "alwanikom" has a richness of metaphors in Arabic.
It refers to our different skin tones, but also to the taste of different foods or aromas.
But it goes much deeper to our personalities, our beliefs, and our life experiences.
So why couldn't it also refer to sexual diversity?

ISLAM



HOMO-
EROTIC

Sexuality

QUEER



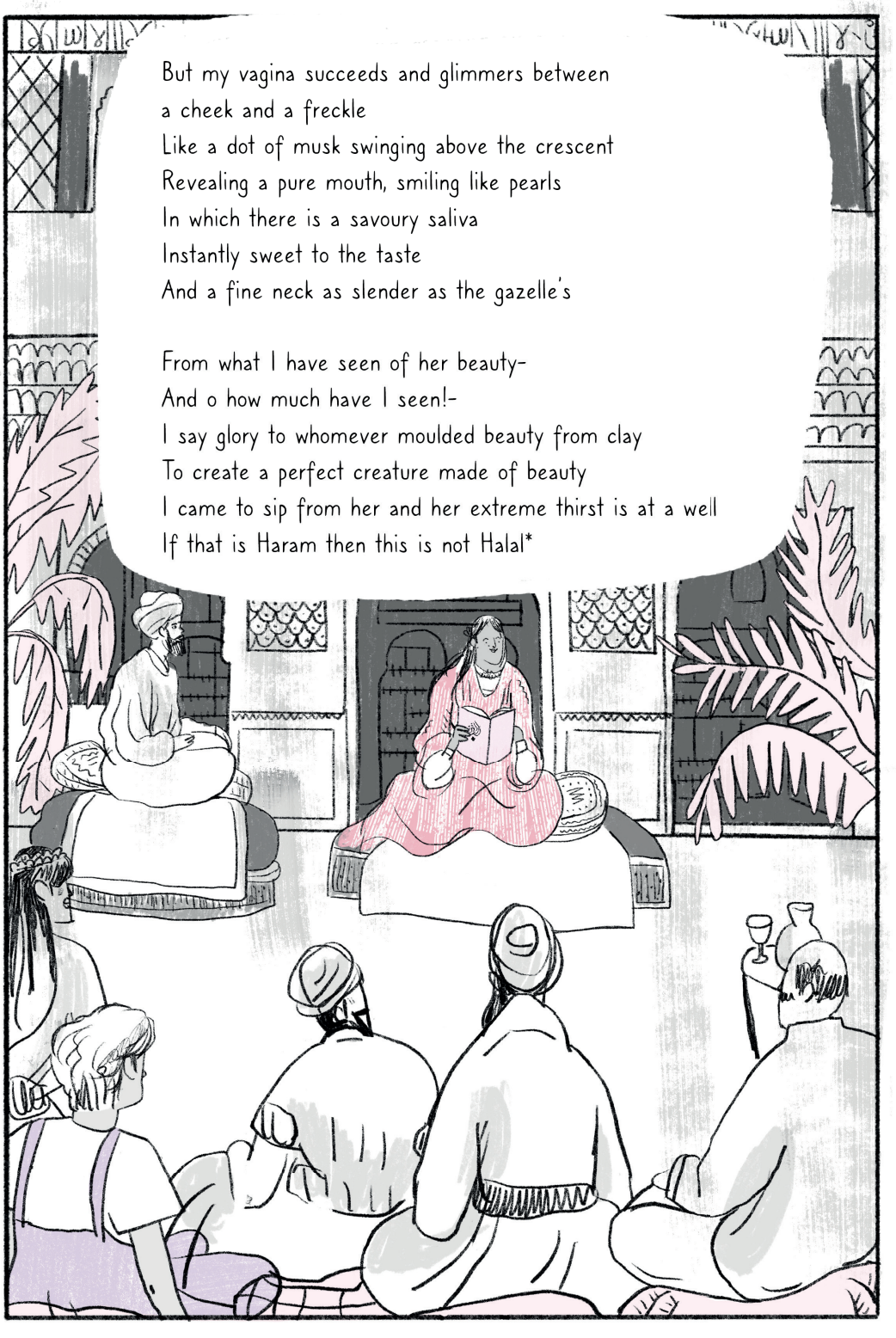
* Olfa Youssef (born 1964)


Many understand this verse to mean that God created males with full masculinity and created females who possess full femininity.
BUT! Pay attention to this teeny-weeny word "min" here!
We can also understand it to mean that God created humans, and all humans carry in themselves both masculine and feminine characteristics.
Why hasn't anyone taught us this?
The Qur'an promotes the pursuit of knowledge, urging us to contemplate its lessons and employ our intellect to grasp its meaning, rather than merely accepting information without thought.
This is instructed by the first Ayah revealed to the Prophet, PBUH.
»Read in the Name of your Lord Who created-«
(Sure 96:1)


But enough for now. We're already late.
Yalla, hurry up!
What an invigorating discussion.
This is why I love coming to the bazaar.



* **Mukhannathun:** A term used in Classical Arabic to describe individuals who do not identify with the gender assigned to them at birth.



* Arabic poem from the 9th century. Cited from: Habib, Samar. 2009. Arabo-Islamic Texts on Female Homosexuality 850-1780 A.D. Teneo Press.


Damn!


Queer Muslim_a* Workshop.
And that was my journey of discovery and revelation.
Damn... that was... a lot... there's a lot of hidden knowledge we still need to uncover.
It's a worthwhile journey if it ultimately brings you the happiness you deserve.
What I've come to understand is that queer Muslims have existed since the birth of Islam.
We exist!


I wonder what it's like today? I mean, in Muslim communities around the world.
How about reaching out to them to find out and learn.
Yes, and initiating a dialogue with them, exchanging experiences along the way.
I love your enthusiasm y'all. How about we organize a webinar?

Sexuality and Islam

Muhsin Hendrick and Scott Kugle are important scholars who have looked at how Islam can be understood in relation to different sexual orientations and gender identities. They believe that we need to consider all aspects of Islam, not just the rules, but also the spiritual and moral sides. They argue that values like compassion, justice, and love can help us address the experiences of LGBTQ+ people within Islam. They want us to question conservative interpretations that discriminate against and exclude them.

Scott Kugle's work focuses on gender and sexuality in Islam's history. He delves into diverse interpretations that question the notion of universal heterosexuality and conformity to gender assigned at birth. Kugle says that Islam has room for diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. He thinks it's important to understand the historical context of religious texts and how interpretations have changed over time. This is what he calls a "sexuality-sensitive" interpretation of Qur'an.

Hendrick and Kugle both want Islam to be inclusive and to respect the rights and dignity of all people, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity. They want us to critically think about traditional interpretations and rethink how we understand Islam so that LGBTQ+ individuals can be accepted and treated fairly.

Sexuality is a hot topic among Muslim communities, and there are multiple perspectives and different opinions within the Muslim communities when it comes to understanding and accepting sexual diversity. But it is important to understand that we cannot talk about sexuality in Islam without considering the postcolonial context of homonationalism, the division between the West and the rest, and Orientalism, all of which come together to reproduce colonial ideas about Islam being incompatible with democracy, gender diversity, and LGBTQ+ rights.

Take my advice (following the Prophet's wisdom): Do not shy away from the topic of sexuality; engaging in a conversation with your friends, family, and teachers, checking the websites of Muslim LGBTQ+ organizations, or picking up a book is a good start!

Chapter Four

Echoes of Manhood

DOI: 10.5117/9789048568161-4



Taylor & Francis

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http://taylorandfrancis.com


BARBERSHOP
BARBER SHOP
Yo, what's up, bro?
Make him look sharp for tonight!
Any special plans?
We're heading to the i,Slam concert!



* **Amo:** a reverential term, literally means "uncle", used to show respect to elders.


Listen, Amo, I get it. Life was tough for you all. My dad never lets us forget. But we have our own problems too.
Problems? Astaghfirullah! You boys don't know anything!
We left our homes, our families, and came here. We didn't speak the language, did all the dirty jobs nobody else wanted. We were treated like dirt!
BRRR
What do you know about what we're going through? You're stuck in the past, and you want us to be too!
BRRR
You think you know PROBLEMS?
Hey, young man! Show some respect!
Different generations, different problems.


BARBERSHOP
BARBER SHOP
No dude! They just want their recognition. They're just a lost generation clinging onto us for that reason. Compensating for loss, ya know?
Argh! I've had enough! Did I tell them to come to Europe? Just because they went through tough times, they get to put the burden on us?!
Yallah! See you later, bro!
CLAP
CLAP
I hate it when they call us boys! Aren't we men?
I deserve this car. I worked my ass off for it. Like a man!
Hamza, is that you?
Yes, mom!
Where's dad?
He's upstairs praying 'Asr.


SPLASH
Allahu Akbar
Subhana Rabiyyal-A'ala
As-salaamu alaykom wa rahmat-Ullahi wa barakaato

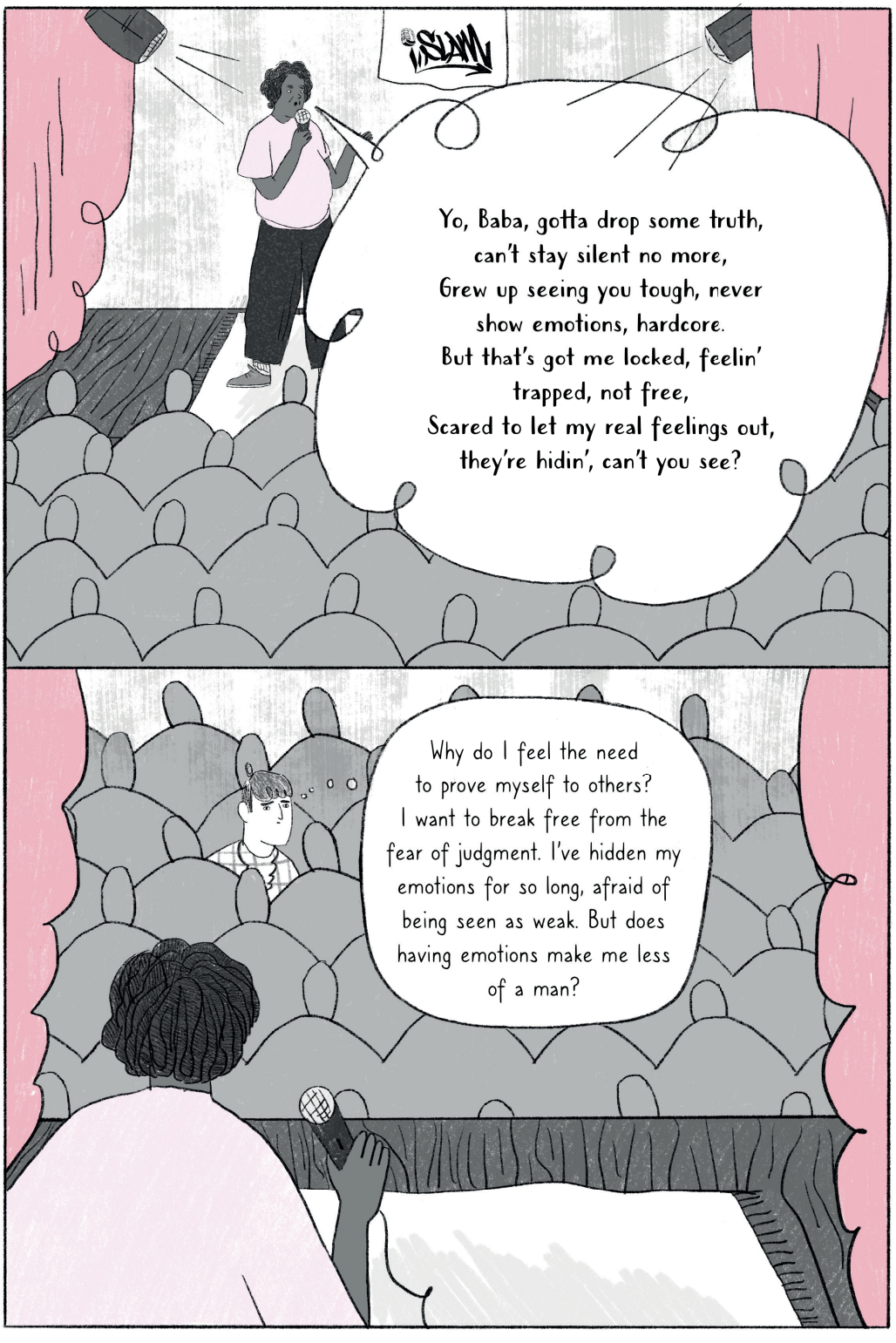


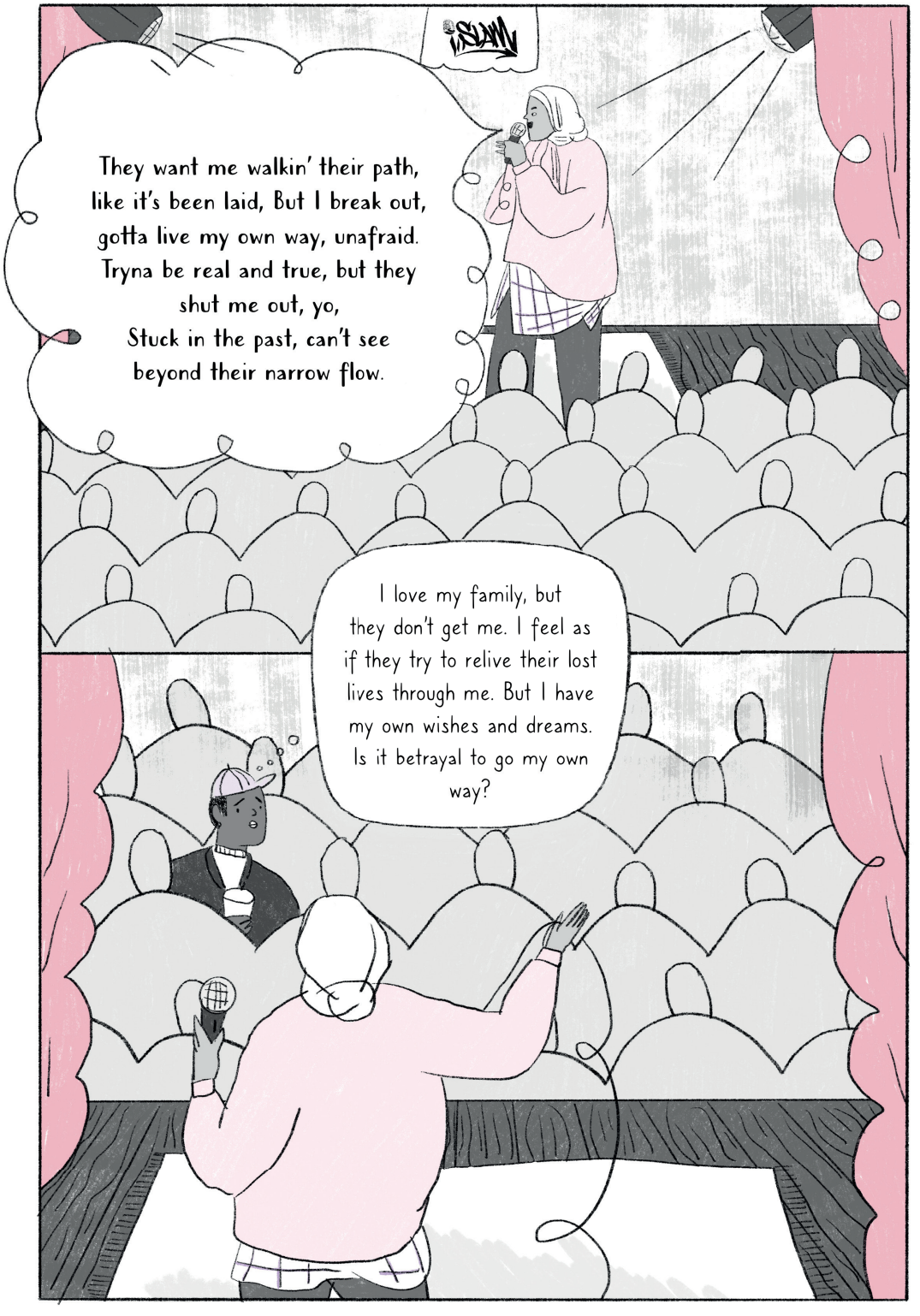
* **Na'eeman*:** an idiomatic expression used to congratulate the recipient on their clean state or fresh look.

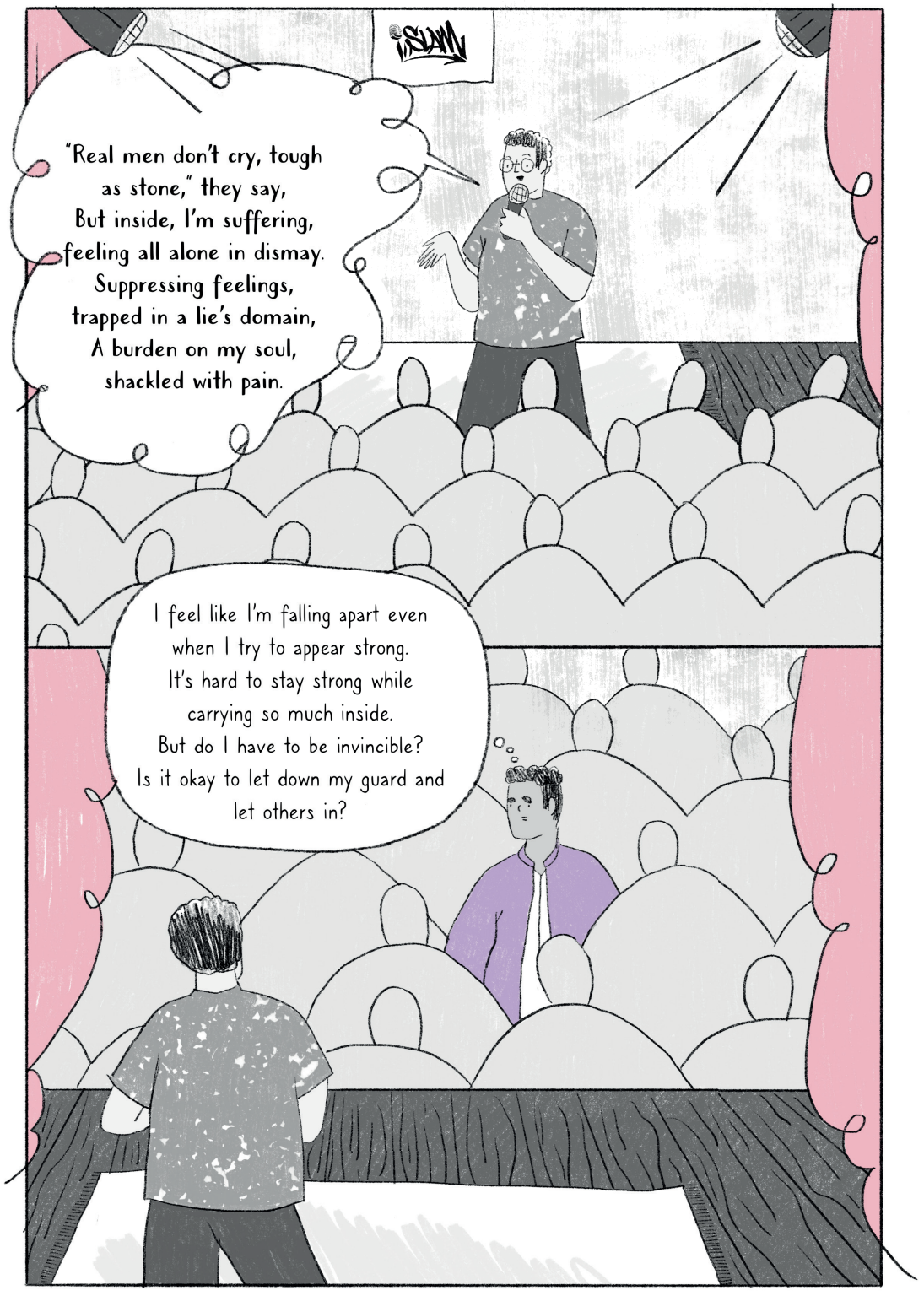

FÜR VOLK UND HEIMAT
BERLIN
More security for our women.
AvD ⊗ wählen
Bro! I can't believe we snagged tickets to the concert! It's completely sold out now!
Oh, man! That's awesome. I'm so excited.
Yeah, Yasin is performing tonight, so he hooked us up.
Stop islamisation.
AvD ⊗ vote
BLING
BLING

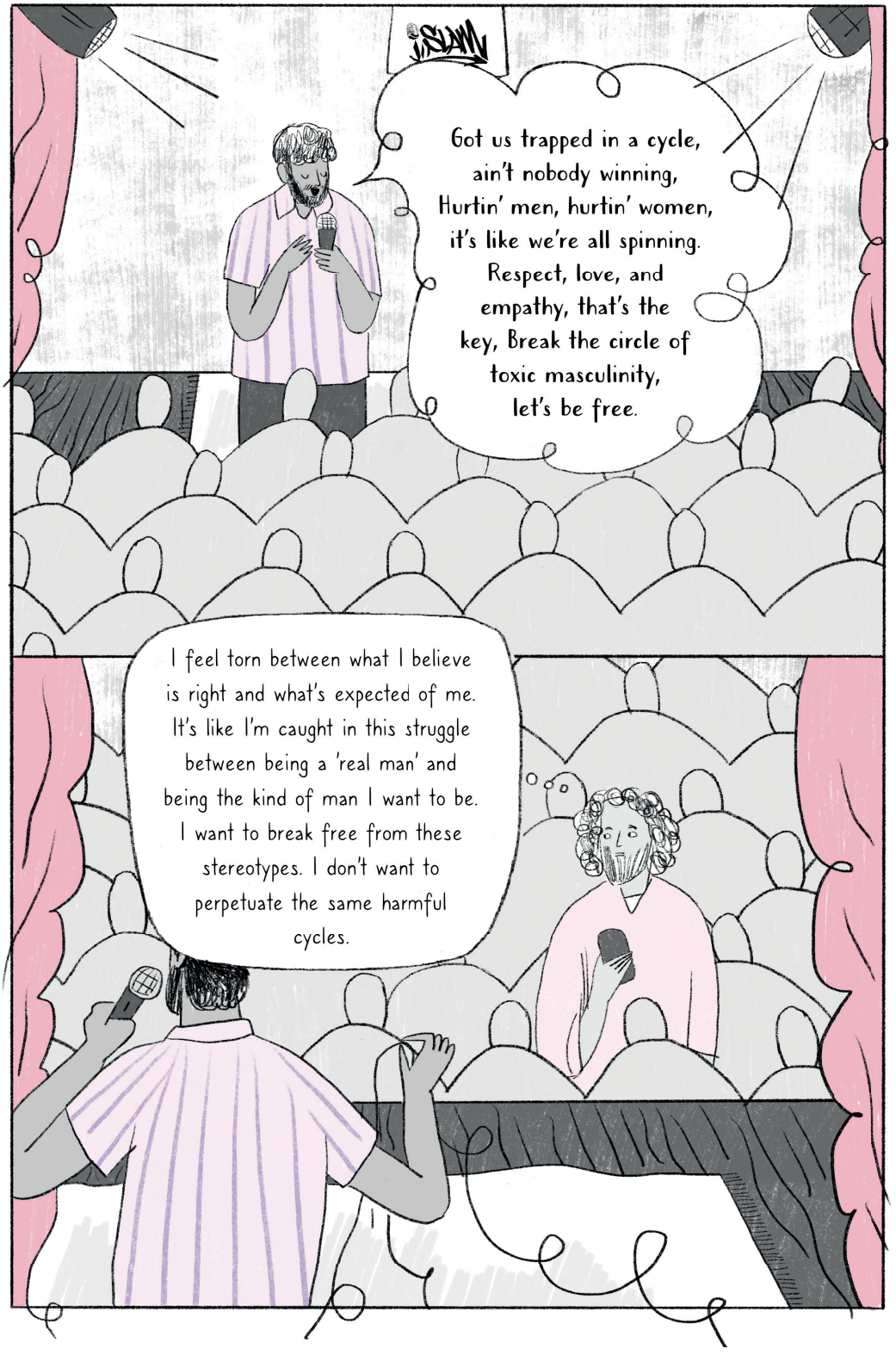


i,Slam started as the Muslim version of Poetry Slam. It empowers young Muslim individuals in their identity and personality. In doing so, they view art as a tool for empowerment. i,Slam creates opportunities through art projects and the realization of a "safe space."


SLAM
Yo, Baba, gotta drop some truth,
can't stay silent no more,
Grew up seeing you tough, never
show emotions, hardcore.
But that's got me locked, feelin'
trapped, not free,
Scared to let my real feelings out,
they're hidin', can't you see?
Why do I feel the need
to prove myself to others?
I want to break free from the
fear of judgment. I've hidden my
emotions for so long, afraid of
being seen as weak. But does
having emotions make me less
of a man?


They want me walkin' their path, like it's been laid, But I break out, gotta live my own way, unafraid. Tryna be real and true, but they shut me out, yo, Stuck in the past, can't see beyond their narrow flow.
I love my family, but they don't get me. I feel as if they try to relive their lost lives through me. But I have my own wishes and dreams. Is it betrayal to go my own way?


"Real men don't cry, tough
as stone," they say,
But inside, I'm suffering,
feeling all alone in dismay.
Suppressing feelings,
trapped in a lie's domain,
A burden on my soul,
shackled with pain.
I feel like I'm falling apart even
when I try to appear strong.
It's hard to stay strong while
carrying so much inside.
But do I have to be invincible?
Is it okay to let down my guard and
let others in?


SLAM
Got us trapped in a cycle, ain't nobody winning, Hurtin' men, hurtin' women, it's like we're all spinning. Respect, love, and empathy, that's the key, Break the circle of toxic masculinity, let's be free.
I feel torn between what I believe is right and what's expected of me. It's like I'm caught in this struggle between being a 'real man' and being the kind of man I want to be. I want to break free from these stereotypes. I don't want to perpetuate the same harmful cycles.


Man, that concert was lit!
Totally, bro! I can't believe how awesome they were!
Everyone was vibing! Best concert ever!
You know, some of those lyrics got me thinking, though...
Like, how we're supposed to be all tough and macho, you know? But deep down, we have our struggles too.
Sometimes I don't know whether I'm there yet, whether I am already a man.
But what does it actually mean to "be a real man?"
It's like everyone is expecting us to act a certain way, and if we show any emotion or vulnerability, we're seen as weak.
I wish we could talk more openly about what is going on inside of us without being judged about it, you know?
BLING

You must protect your sister.

Be A Man

Caring is courageous.

Empowered vulnerability fuels my masculinity.



Don't Cry

Stop acting like a girl.

Men are strong.

Strong enough to be gentle, bold enough to be equal.

Real men don't show their emotions; toughen up.

Crafting a masculinity that cares, shares, and repairs.

Don't express too much affection or vulnerability; it's a sign of weakness.

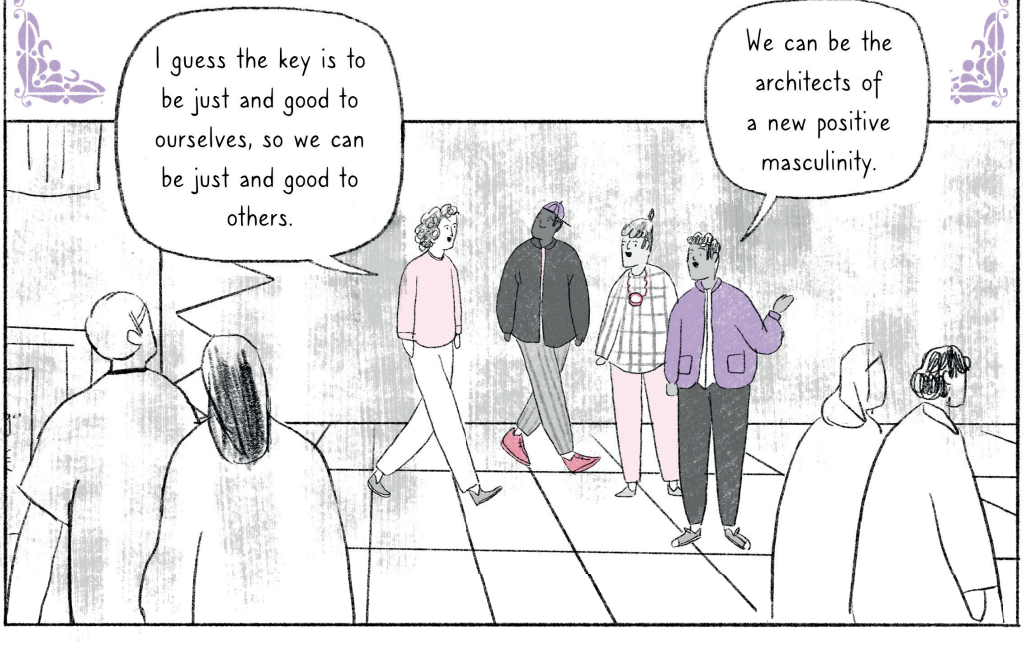


* **Wali:** is an Islamic concept that refers to a male legal guardian or 'protector'.



"Has not Allah Almighty sufficed you in His book wherein He said, 'Verily, Allah commands 'adl and ihsan" (Surat An-Nahl, 16:90)

What remains of manhood after this?



Masculinity

Khaleek zalameh! Be a man!

How often have you heard this before? This is a part of something called **toxic masculinity**. But what is masculinity, really?

bell hooks (it's not a typo, her name is written in small letters. If you want to know why, don't hesitate to ask and explore!) was an important American educator, who studied how boys and men think and act. She said that being a man is not something you're born with, but something you learn from the world around you. Boys are taught to be a certain way, to act tough and not show emotions. This can make it hard for them to be themselves and treat everyone fairly. hooks also talked about toxic masculinity, which is when boys and men show harmful and mean behaviors because they think that's what being a man means. But she said that these behaviors are not what being a man is about. They happen because of the pressures and ideas that society puts on boys and men. The good news is that we can learn to be better and challenge these ideas.

hooks wanted boys and men to join together with girls and women to make things fair for everyone. She believed that everyone should be treated with kindness, fairness, and respect. She also said it's okay for boys and men to have feelings and show them. Keeping feelings inside can be bad for you and your relationships. It's important to learn how to express your feelings and be open with others.

So, remember, being a man is about being yourself, treating everyone fairly, and showing kindness and respect. It's okay to have feelings and talk about them too.

bell hooks' thinking aligns with Islamic teachings, as many Islamic scholars and educators emphasize the importance of **emotional intelligence**. They highlight the necessity for men to understand and manage their emotions, cultivate emotional awareness, communicate effectively, and foster healthy relationships.



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Chapter Five

Legal Illuminations: Deciphering Justice in Faith

DOI: 10.5117/9789048568161-5



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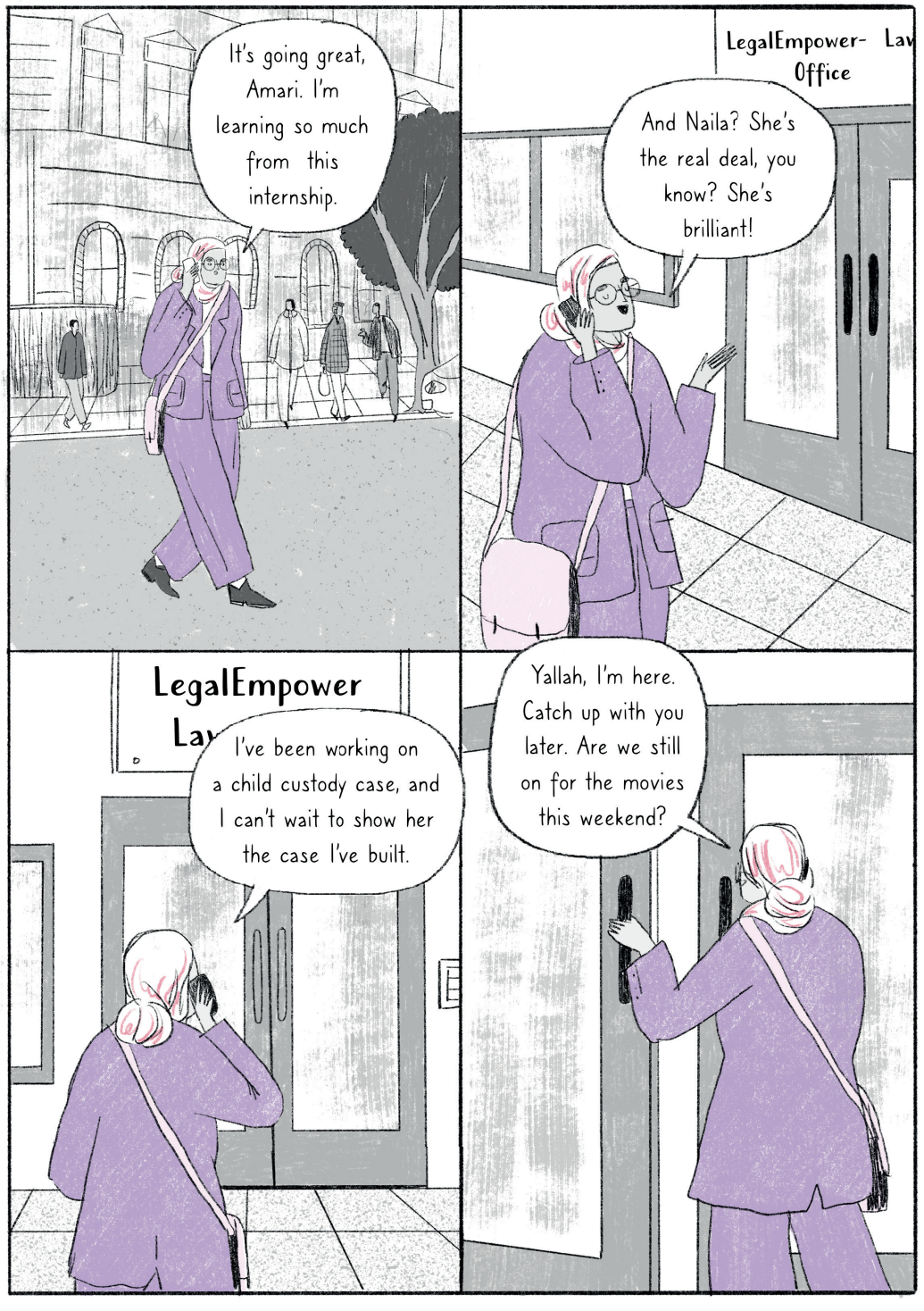
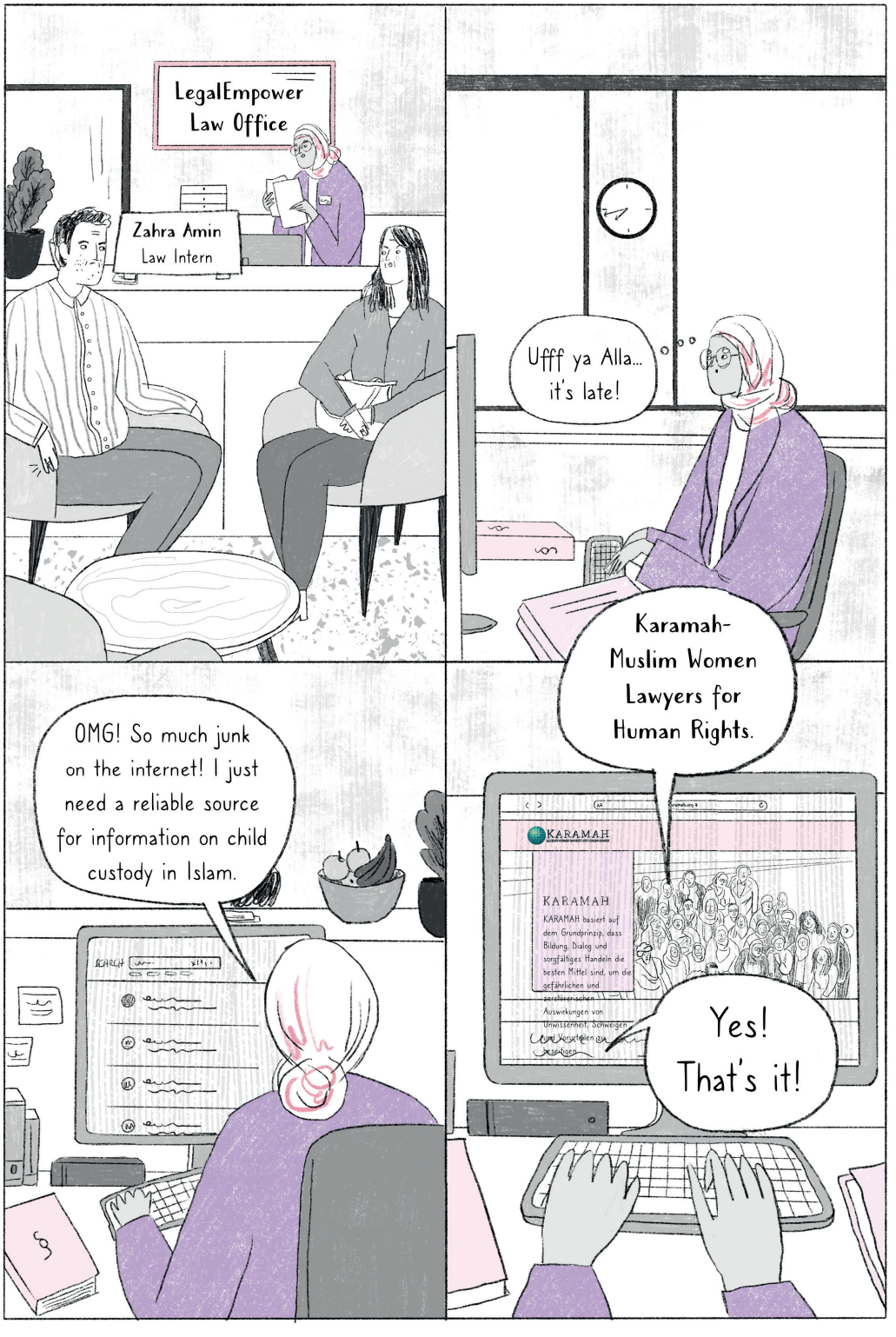

It's going great, Amari. I'm learning so much from this internship.
LegalEmpower- Law Office
And Naila? She's the real deal, you know? She's brilliant!
LegalEmpower
I've been working on a child custody case, and I can't wait to show her the case I've built.
Yallah, I'm here. Catch up with you later. Are we still on for the movies this weekend?


LegalEmpower
Law Office
Zahra Amin
Law Intern
Ufff ya Alla... it's late!
Karamah- Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights.
OMG! So much junk on the internet! I just need a reliable source for information on child custody in Islam.
KARAMAH
KARAMAH
KARAMAH basiert auf dem Grundprinzip, dass Bildung, Dialog und sorgfältiges Handeln die besten Mittel sind, um die gefährlichen und zerstörerischen Auswirkungen von Unwissenheit, Schweigen und Vorurteilen zu beseitigen.
Yes! That's it!

http://karamah.org

KARAMAH
MUSLIM WOMEN LAWYERS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS





WHO WE ARE

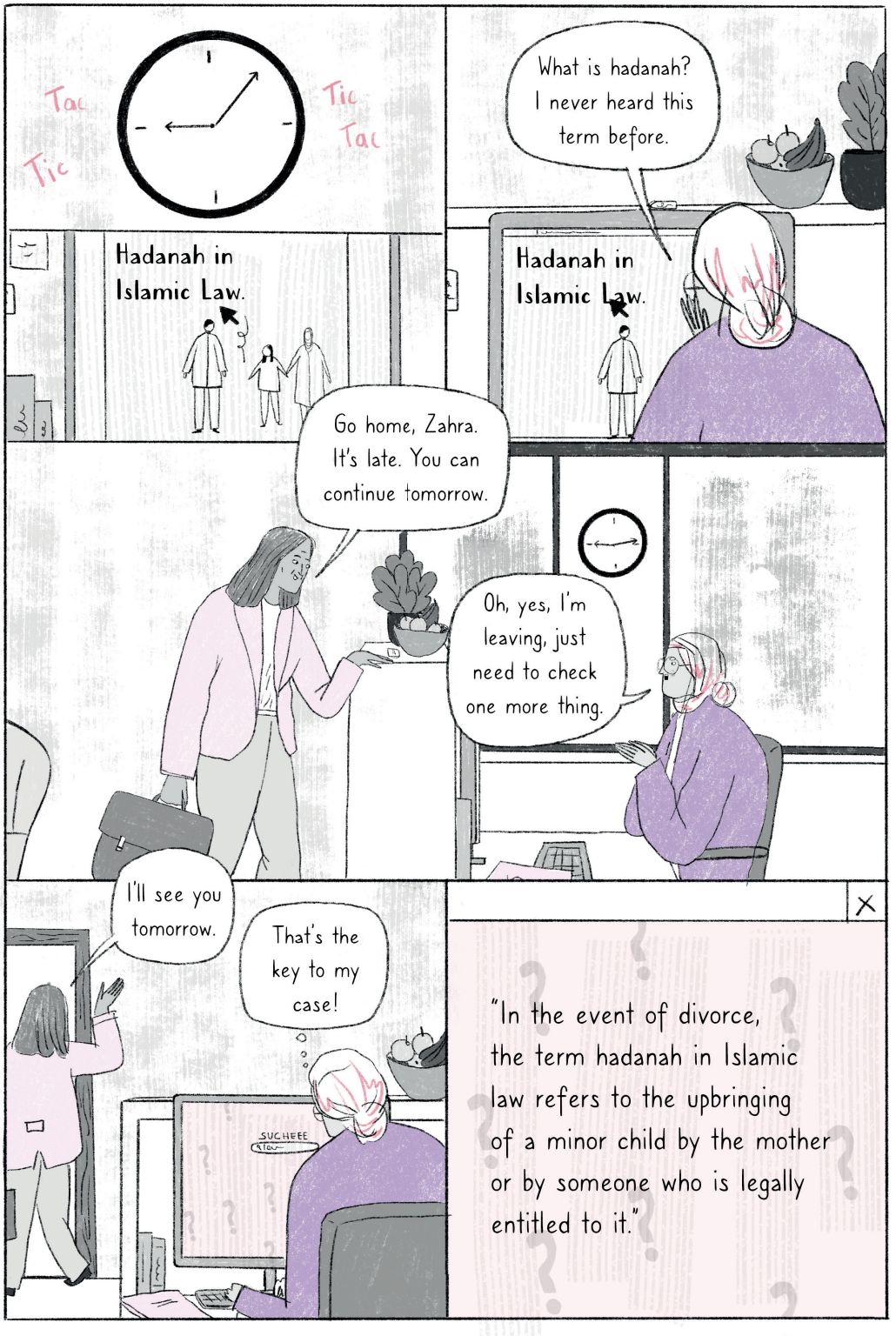
KARAMAH is a nonprofit organization committed to promoting human rights globally, especially gender equity, religious freedom, and civil rights in the United States. It pursues its mission through education, legal outreach, and advocacy.

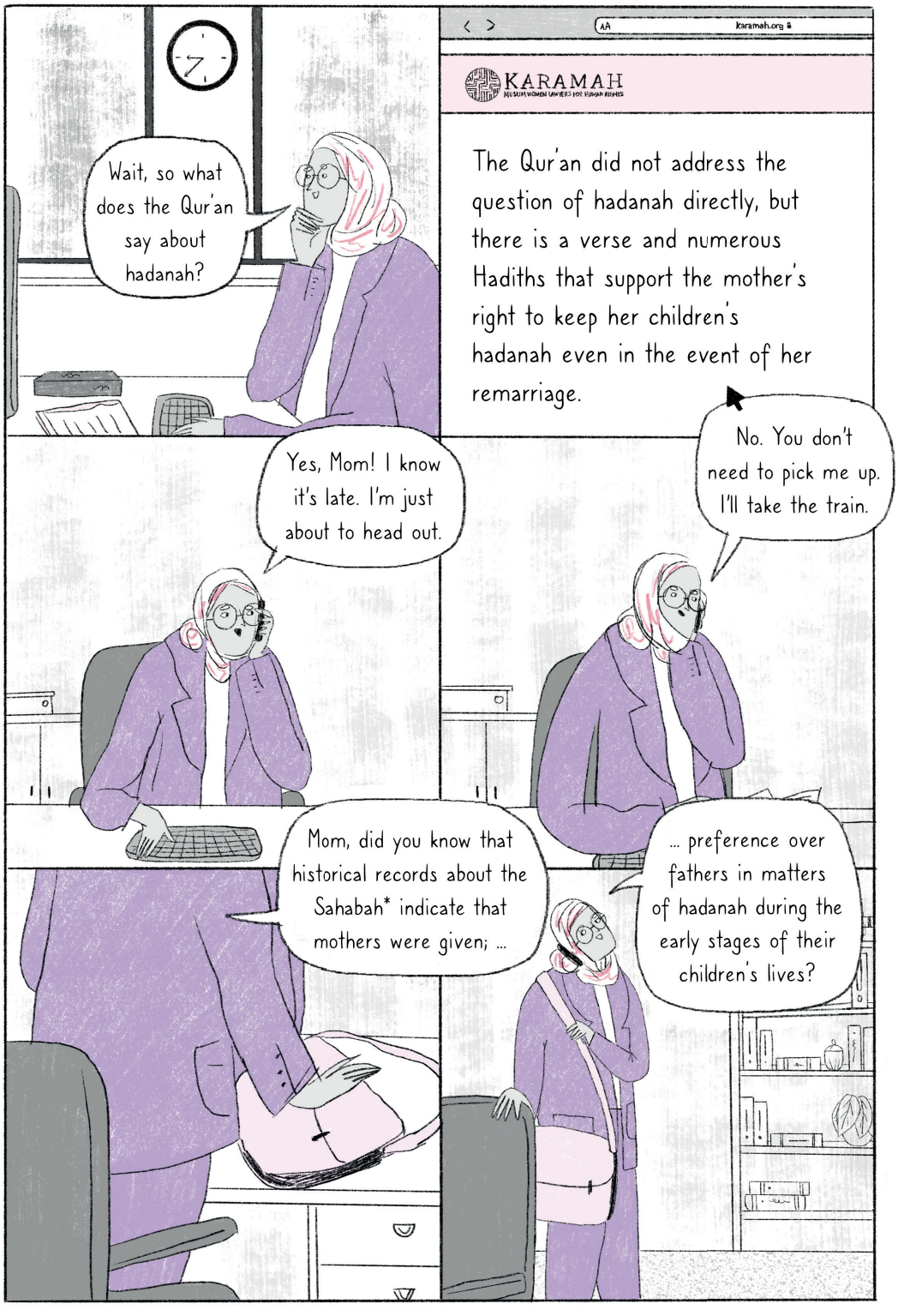
OUR MISSION

KARAMAH's mission is to educate all people on the just, gender equitable foundation of Islam. We produce, promote, and publish Islamic scholarship, from a non-patriarchal perspective, through our programs and publications.
We contribute to social and legal discourse by emphasizing core Islamic principles of civil and human rights.
We challenge and inspire Muslim women to become leaders in their communities and throughout the world.

OUR VISION

"We have given dignity (karamah) to the Children of Adam." (Qur'an 17:70).
Inspired by this verse, we strive toward the day when every person can reach his or her full potential and we all treat one another with respect and compassion.

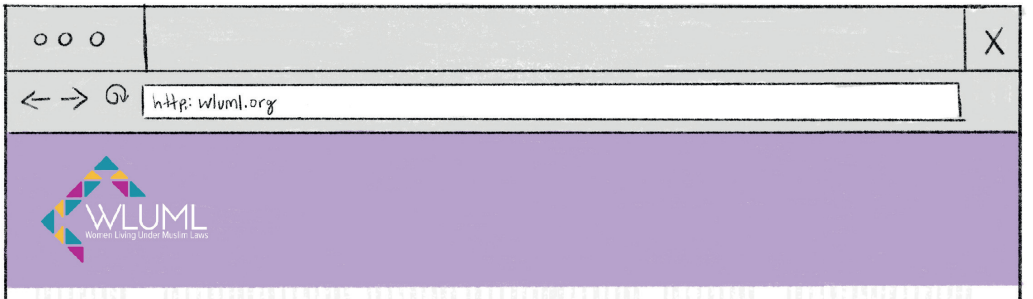

Tic
Tac
Tic
Tac
Hadanah in Islamic Law.
What is hadanah? I never heard this term before.
Hadanah in Islamic Law.
Go home, Zahra. It's late. You can continue tomorrow.
Oh, yes, I'm leaving, just need to check one more thing.
I'll see you tomorrow.
That's the key to my case!
SUCHEEE
"In the event of divorce, the term hadanah in Islamic law refers to the upbringing of a minor child by the mother or by someone who is legally entitled to it."



* **Sahabah** are the companions (followers) of the prophet Muhammad.


I just read about a case where Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, ruled in favor of 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb's ex-wife, Um 'Assim, granting her custody of her child.
Abu Bakr apparently said, "I heard the prophet say: a mother should not be separated from her child."
Oh, Naila is going to be thrilled when I show this to her tomorrow! But yallah, I'm starving, Mom! Is there anything left from dinner?


The next day
Good morning! I've got your usual.
Thank you! Come with me.
Child Custody
I know you stayed late last night preparing for this case. You did a great job here!
We've got a new case now, and I'm unfamiliar with this area of law.
Inheritance
Fortunately, we're not alone.
What's the phone number for WLUML?
Just press speed dial #1



WOMEN LIVING UNDER MUSLIM LAWS (WLUML)

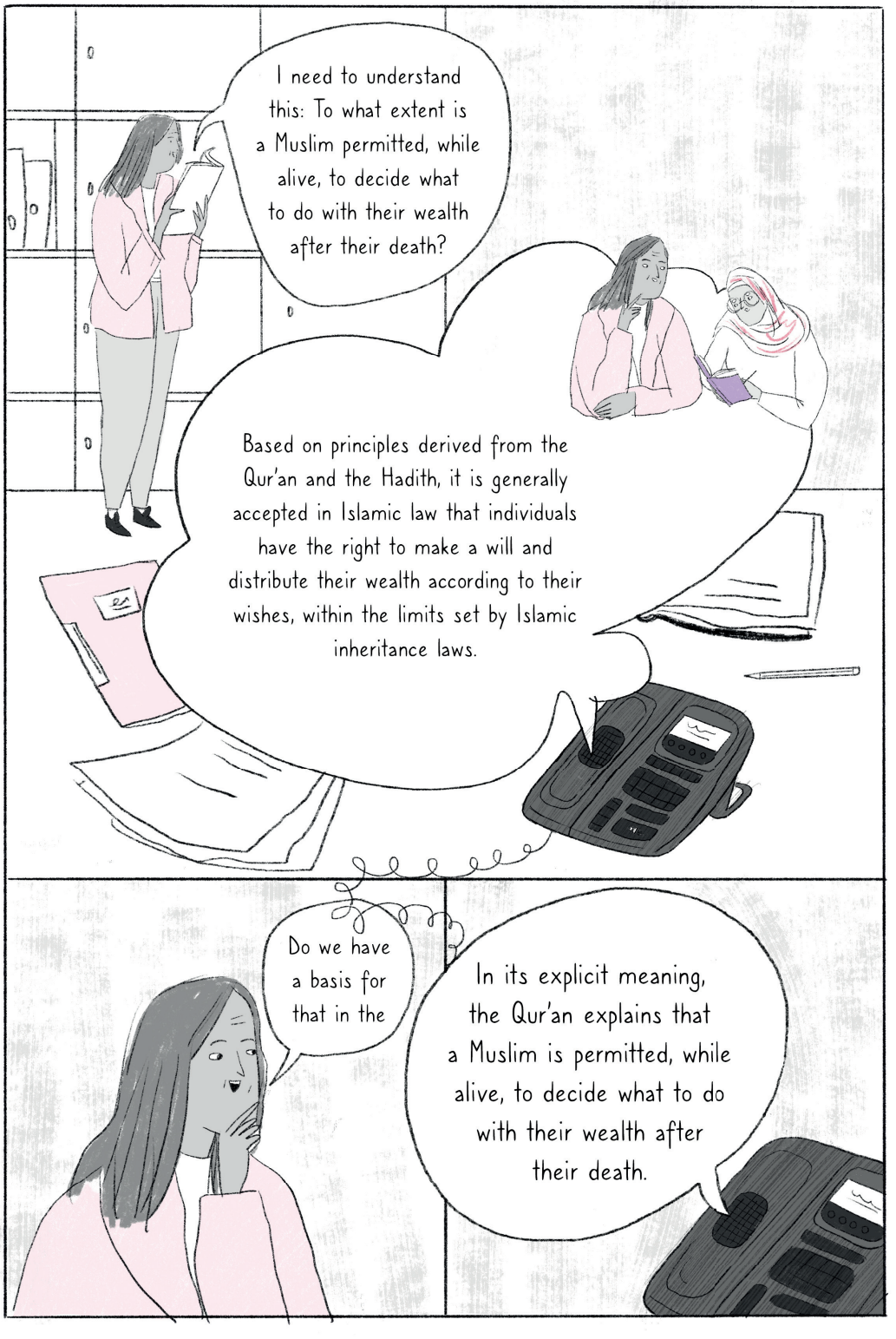
WLUML is a transnational feminist solidarity network that promotes human rights and gender justice and equality for women whose lives are shaped, conditioned, or governed by patriarchal and/or authoritarian interpretations of Islam.

WLUML supports feminist local struggles for individual and collective autonomy within Muslim countries and communities by facilitating a transnational solidarity network. WLUML gathers, builds, and mobilizes knowledge, and furthers channels of communication and exchange towards the realization of gender justice, equality and human rights.

WLUML-CAMPAIGNS

- Stop Violence Against Women
- Rape as a Weapon of War
- Women, Law & Politics
- Women's Role in Peacebuilding
- And more...

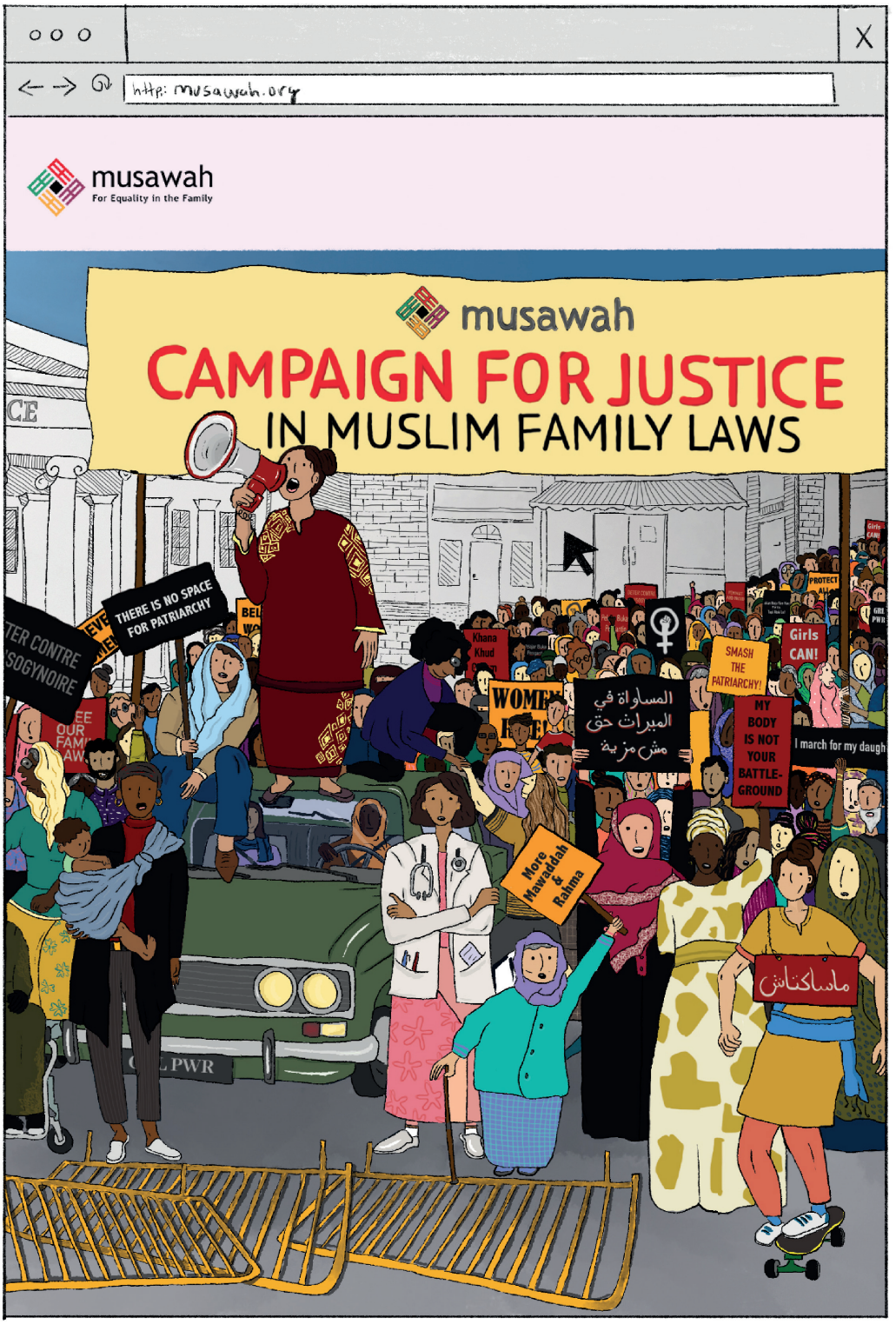

WLUML, Assalamu aleikum, Saba speaking. How may I help you?
I'm working on an inheritance case. A man is suing his sister for receiving an equal share. Is that in accordance with Islamic law?
Wa Aleikum assalam, dear Saba. It's Naila from the EmpowerLegal Law Office.
Give me a second to retrieve the file on inheritance in Islam.
Yes, can you hear me? I've got it. Here it is.


I need to understand this: To what extent is a Muslim permitted, while alive, to decide what to do with their wealth after their death?
Based on principles derived from the Qur'an and the Hadith, it is generally accepted in Islamic law that individuals have the right to make a will and distribute their wealth according to their wishes, within the limits set by Islamic inheritance laws.
Do we have a basis for that in the
In its explicit meaning, the Qur'an explains that a Muslim is permitted, while alive, to decide what to do with their wealth after their death.


Die Sure an-Nisā' says:
"For men there is a share in what their parents and close relatives leave, and for women there is a share in what their parents and close relatives leave – whether it is little or much. These are obligatory shares."(4:7)
Fachr ad-Dīn al-Rāzī (1149-1209) confirms that, claiming ...
...
"Know that the explicit meaning of this verse validates the legitimacy of writing a will about all or part of my wealth as I please".
Saba, dear, that was extremely helpful. Jazakillahu Khairan!


A few weeks later
Islamic Law
Justice and Beauty in Muslim Marriage
Marital Rape
Thank you for joining me at the library.
Sure! I'd love to learn more about this. It's treated as so taboo to talk about.
Yes, unfortunately, sexual violence in marriages is a harsh reality that occurs everywhere.


The law doesn't always protect wives who have experienced these traumatic episodes.
And when it does, the provisions often only cover physical violence or injury caused by the husband.
To address marital rape in a legal context, we first need to understand what marriage is based upon in Islam.
I'll check if Musawah has addressed this issue before.

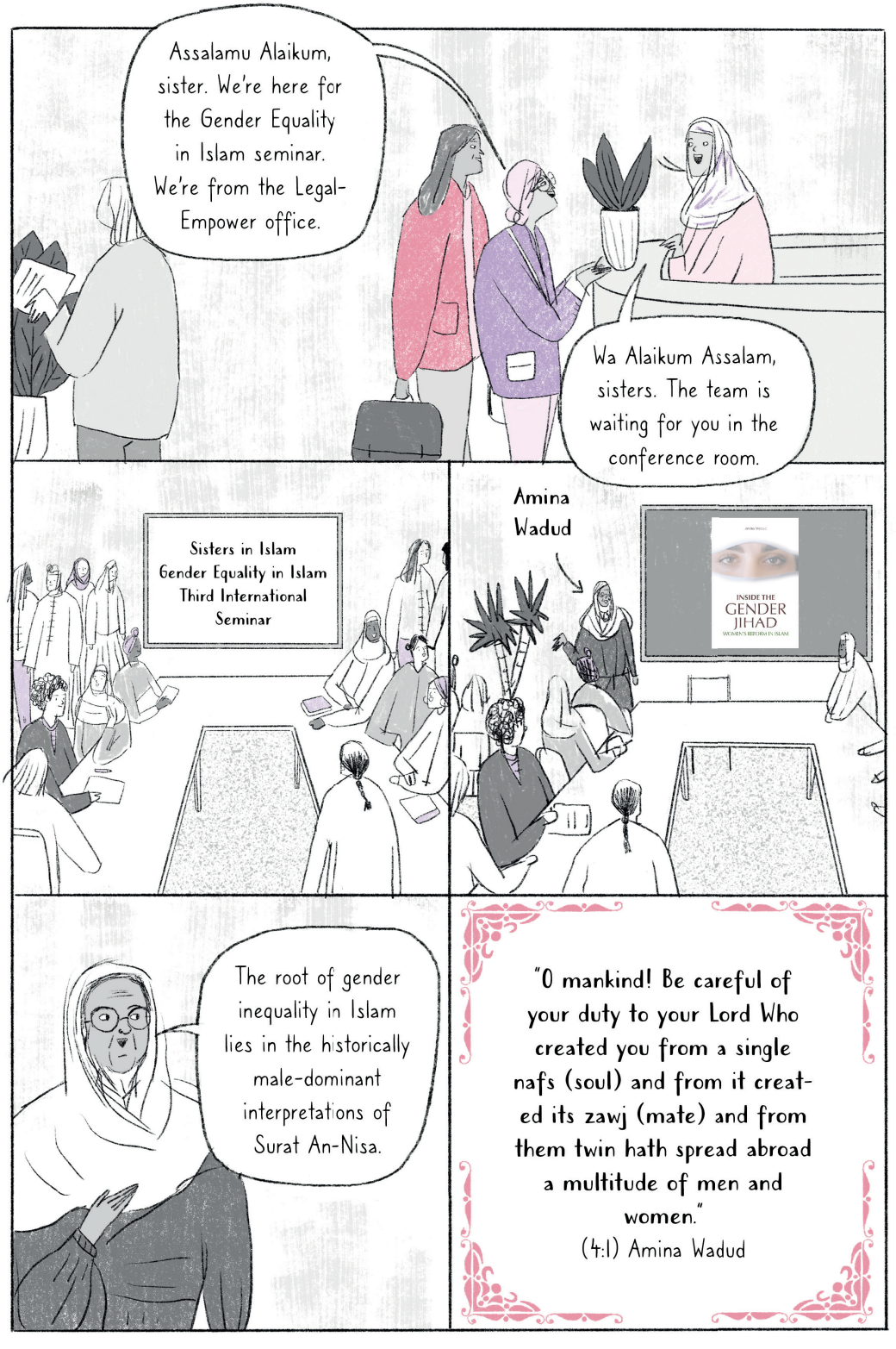

http: musawah.org
musawah
For Equality in the Family
musawah
CAMPAIGN FOR JUSTICE
IN MUSLIM FAMILY LAWS
THERE IS NO SPACE FOR PATRIARCHY
SMASH THE PATRIARCHY!
Girls CAN!
MY BODY IS NOT YOUR BATTLE-GROUND
More Mawaddah & Rahma
المساواة في الميراث حق مش مزية
ماساكناش

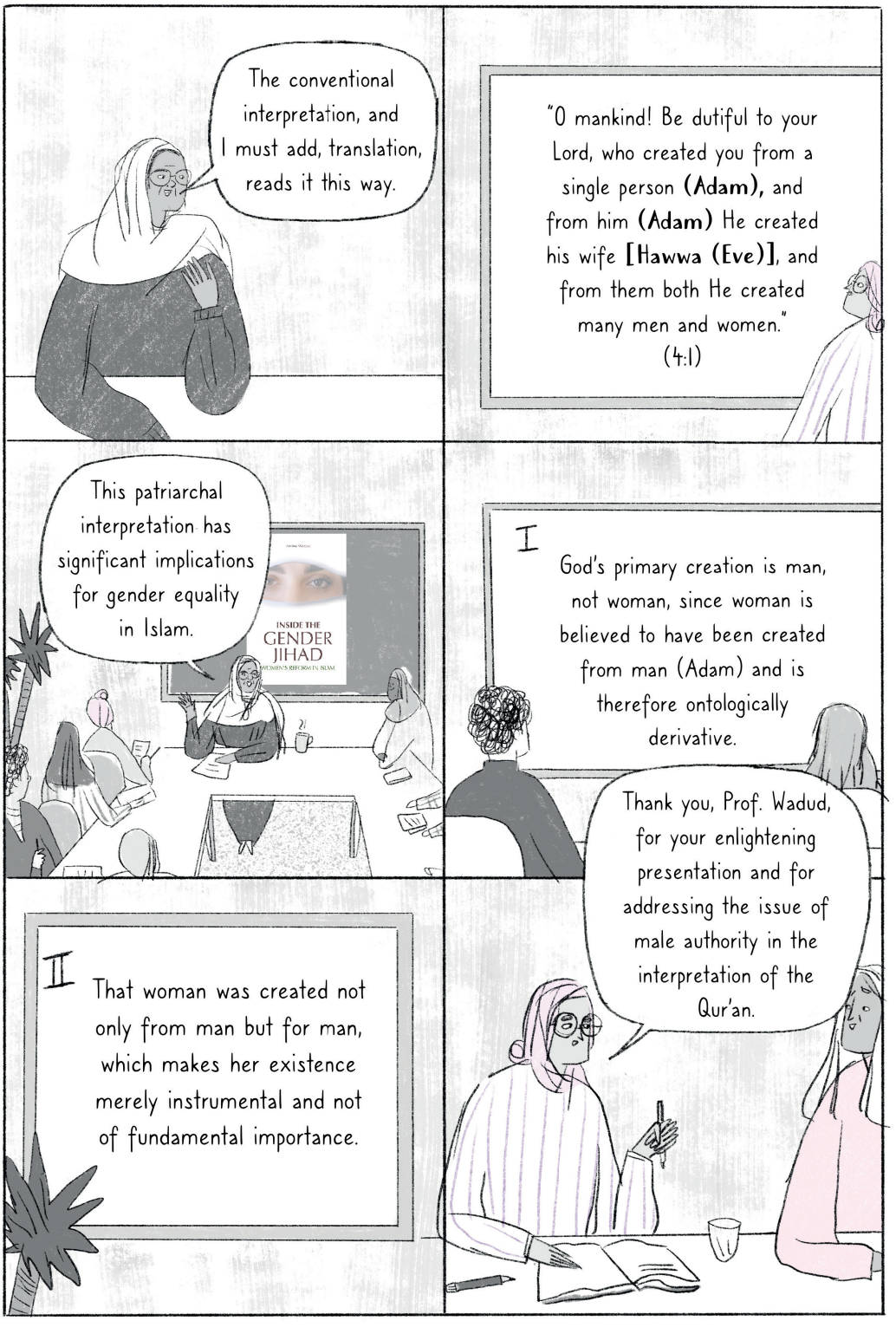

According to the publications on Musawah's website, in Islam, marriage is a bond of love, affection, and responsibility between husband and wife.
There's an Islamic term used in this context, Mubadala ...
It basically means that sexual relations between husband and wife should be reciprocal.
Look, it is based on this verse in the Qur'an.
"Your spouses are a garment for you as you are for them."
(Surah 2: 187)


I found another one. Here, Surat Ar-Rum states that marriage is based on love and compassion.
"And one of His Ayaat (signs) is that He created azwaj (mates) for you from anfusikom (your souls) that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect."
(30:21)
Library of Islamic Theology
Sexual relations in a marriage based on mutual love and mutual enjoyment are indeed **halal**. However, when sexual relations are performed by coercion and violence, it is **haram**.

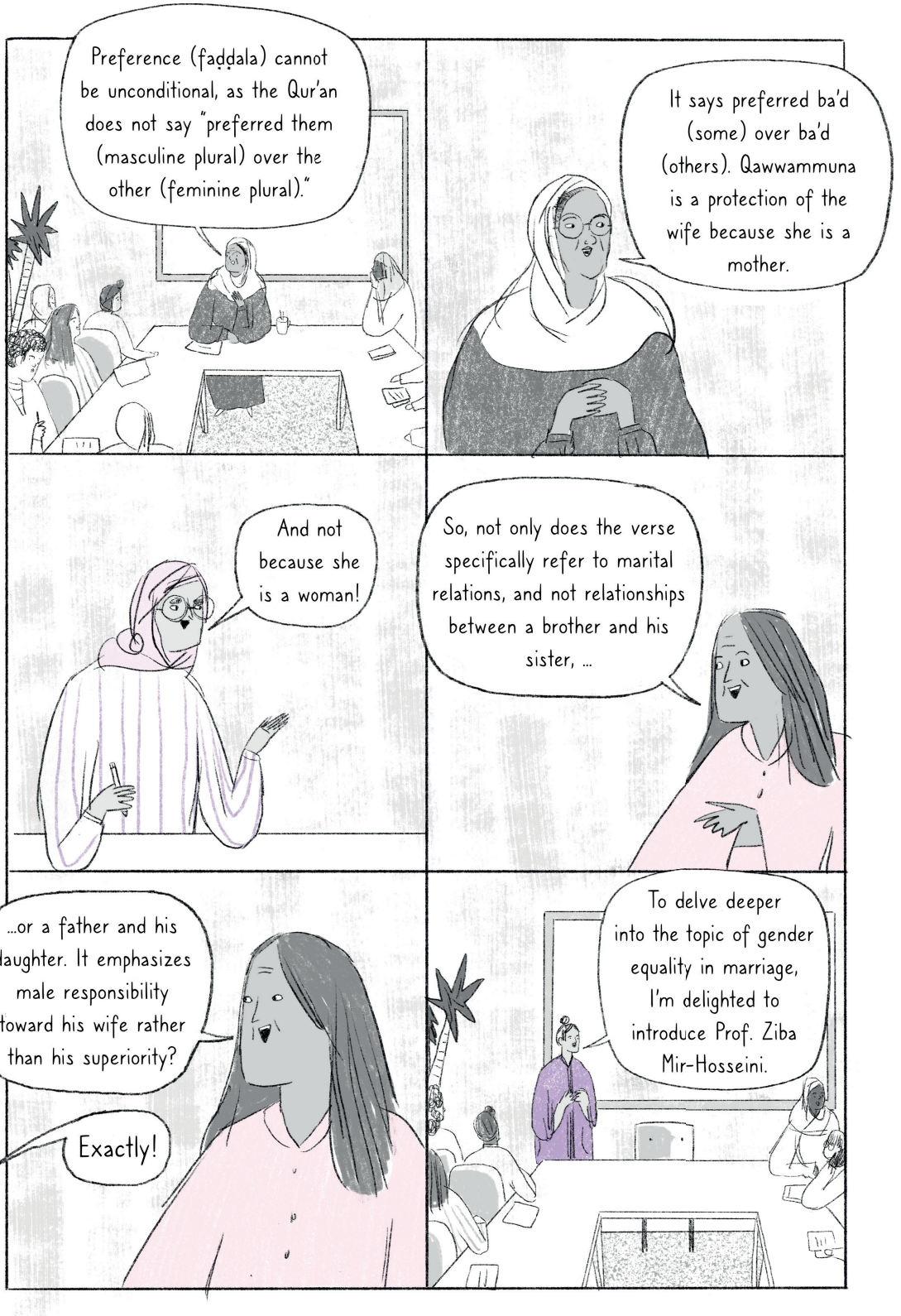

I have it! Look!
Ziba Mir-Hosseini, co-founder of Musawah, wrote a lot about the topic.
She shows that in fiqh, coercion and extortion are unacceptable acts. Because of the harm done, the relationship becomes forbidden and should be eliminated or abandoned.
And since the method of fiqh states that "Every harm must be removed (adh-dhararu yuzal)"...
Yaaaasss! You slayed it, girl!

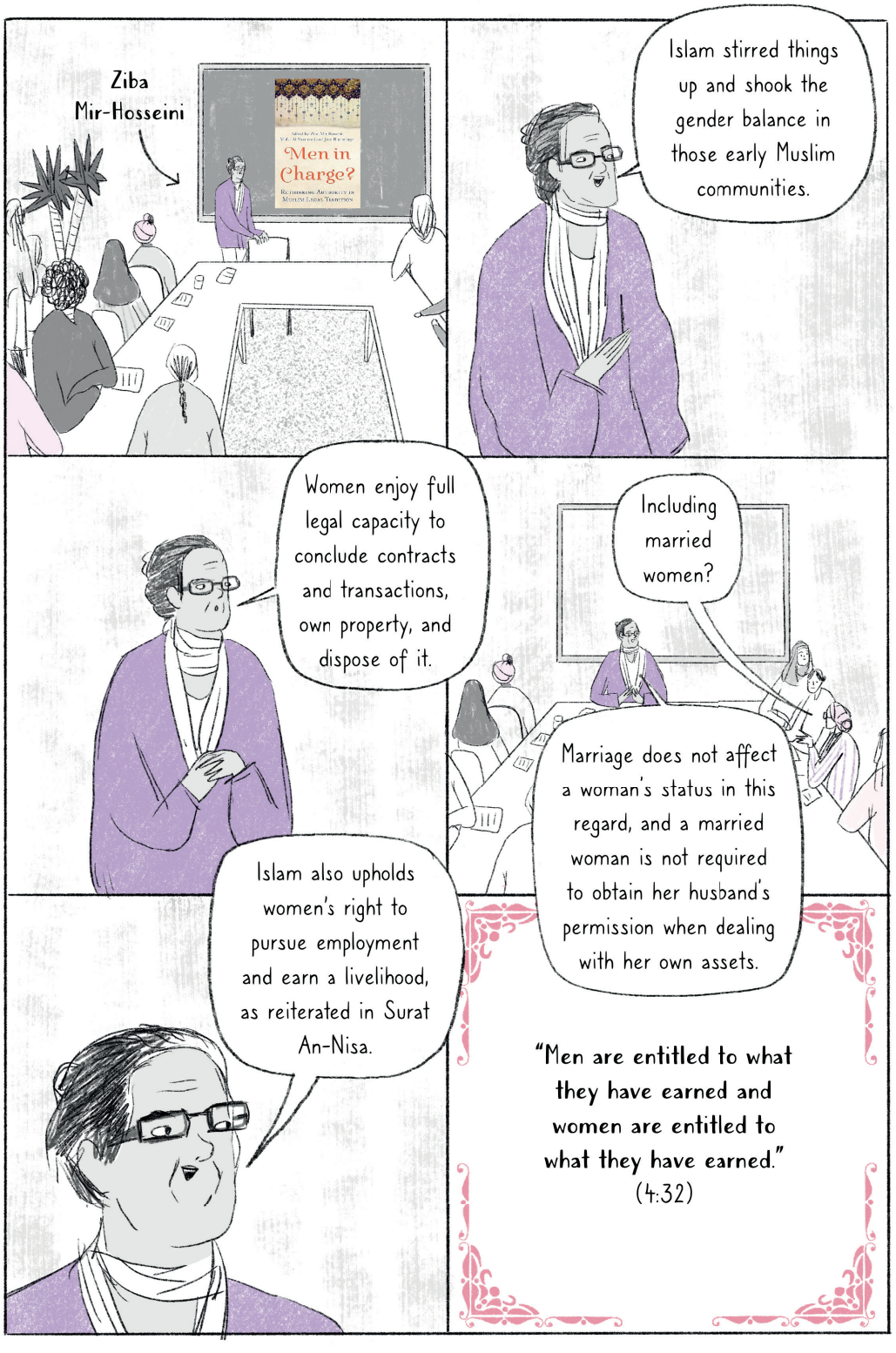

A few months later
I'm so excited to meet the team from Sisters in Islam. Thanks for inviting me to this seminar.
You've been doing an outstanding job and have shown remarkable growth. You're going to be a great lawyer one day.
EG
Sisters in Islam, 3rd Floor
Office2nd Floor
Co-Working 1st Floor
It's here.
Sisters in Islam
Advocacy, Research, Outreach & Empowerment Legal Advisory

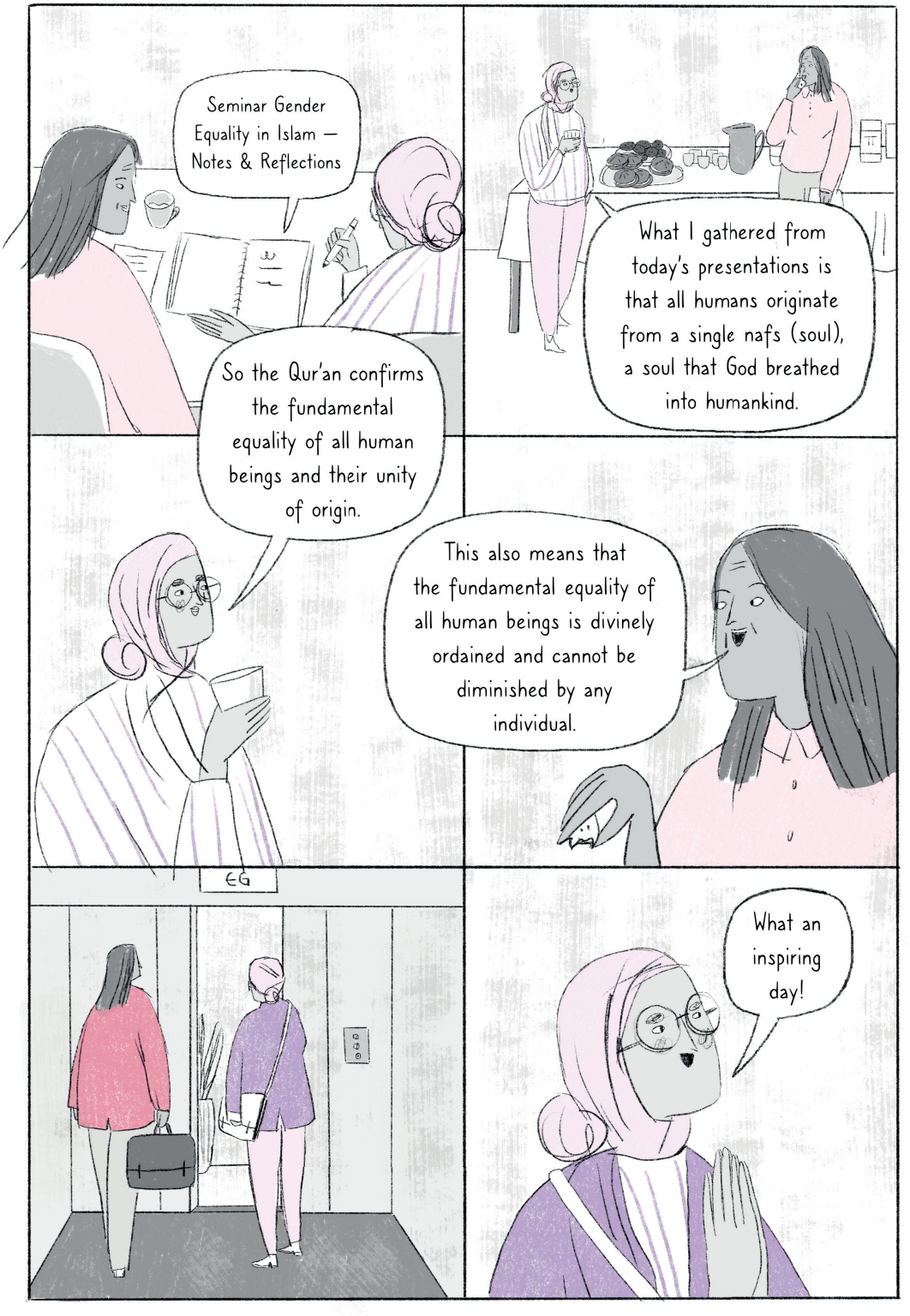

Assalamu Alaikum, sister. We're here for the Gender Equality in Islam seminar. We're from the Legal-Empower office.
Wa Alaikum Assalam, sisters. The team is waiting for you in the conference room.
Sisters in Islam
Gender Equality in Islam
Third International
Seminar
Amina
Wadud
INSIDE THE
GENDER
JIHAD
WOMEN'S REFORM IN ISLAM
The root of gender inequality in Islam lies in the historically male-dominant interpretations of Surat An-Nisa.
"O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single nafs (soul) and from it created its zawj (mate) and from them twin hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women."
(4:1) Amina Wadud

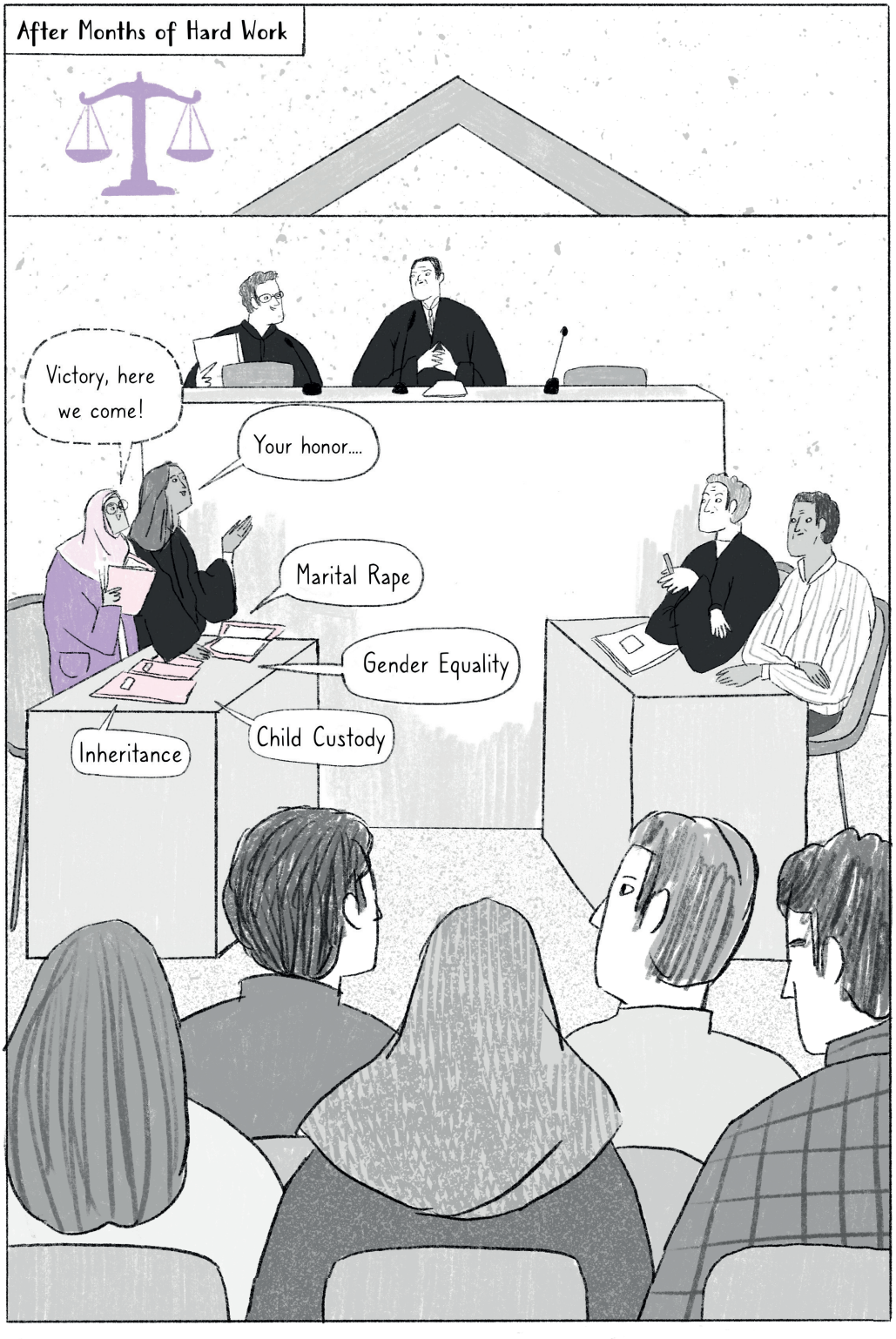

The conventional interpretation, and I must add, translation, reads it this way.
"O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, who created you from a single person **(Adam),** and from him **(Adam)** He created his wife **[Hawwa (Eve)],** and from them both He created many men and women." (4:1)
This patriarchal interpretation has significant implications for gender equality in Islam.
INSIDE THE GENDER JIHAD
I
God's primary creation is man, not woman, since woman is believed to have been created from man (Adam) and is therefore ontologically derivative.
Thank you, Prof. Wadud, for your enlightening presentation and for addressing the issue of male authority in the interpretation of the Qur'an.
II
That woman was created not only from man but for man, which makes her existence merely instrumental and not of fundamental importance.


However, I do have a question concerning the concept of male authority.
Does the Qur'an grant Qiwama to men?
Excellent question! There's another verse in the Qur'an that has been subject to manipulation or influenced by a male-centric interpretation.
"Men are quawwuna 'ala (are in charge of, guardian of/ superior to/have authority over) women because Allah faḍḍala (hath made the one of them to excel the other/ preferred some of them over others), and because they spend of their property (for the support of women)." (4:34)
Qiwamma here is related to the responsibility of a man for his wife. This responsibility is valid only in two conditions:
1. faḍḍala - preference and
2. They (husbands) support their wives by their own means.


Preference (faḍḍala) cannot be unconditional, as the Qur'an does not say "preferred them (masculine plural) over the other (feminine plural)."
It says preferred ba'd (some) over ba'd (others). Qawwammuna is a protection of the wife because she is a mother.
And not because she is a woman!
So, not only does the verse specifically refer to marital relations, and not relationships between a brother and his sister, ...
...or a father and his daughter. It emphasizes male responsibility toward his wife rather than his superiority?
Exactly!
To delve deeper into the topic of gender equality in marriage, I'm delighted to introduce Prof. Ziba Mir-Hosseini.


Ziba Mir-Hosseini
Men in Charge?
Islam stirred things up and shook the gender balance in those early Muslim communities.
Including married women?
Women enjoy full legal capacity to conclude contracts and transactions, own property, and dispose of it.
Marriage does not affect a woman's status in this regard, and a married woman is not required to obtain her husband's permission when dealing with her own assets.
Islam also upholds women's right to pursue employment and earn a livelihood, as reiterated in Surat An-Nisa.
"Men are entitled to what they have earned and women are entitled to what they have earned." (4:32)


Seminar Gender Equality in Islam — Notes & Reflections
What I gathered from today's presentations is that all humans originate from a single nafs (soul), a soul that God breathed into humankind.
So the Qur'an confirms the fundamental equality of all human beings and their unity of origin.
This also means that the fundamental equality of all human beings is divinely ordained and cannot be diminished by any individual.
What an inspiring day!


After Months of Hard Work
Victory, here we come!
Your honor....
Marital Rape
Gender Equality
Child Custody
Inheritance

Feminist Tafsir & Feminist Ijtihad

Pop Quiz:
What is the first Ayah (verse) revealed to the Prophet Muhammad?

Answer:
The Ayah that is considered by Muslims as the first revelation to the Prophet is in Surah Al-'Alaq:

» Read, in the name of your Lord« (96:1) اِقْرَاْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَ

The right to acquire knowledge is strongly emphasized in the Qur'an. Reading and seeking information are considered core elements of the Islamic worldview. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of striving for knowledge and advises believers (of all genders) to pray for the improvement of knowledge. The word Qur'an القرآن is derived from the verb qara'a (to read), and its first message calls for reading. All references to 'ilm (knowledge) are gender-neutral and not directed towards a specific gender. A famous prayer of Prophet Muhammad is: »Oh Allah, Grant me knowledge of the ultimate nature of things!«. And one of the most well-known Hadiths states: »Seek knowledge even if you have to go as far as China«, meaning that knowledge can be acquired from anywhere and should not be limited to Arabic or Muslim knowledge.

Muslim feminists want to have the right to read and understand the Qur'an for themselves, instead of just accepting what others tell them it means. They want to read and understand the Qur'an, using **Ijtihad**, which involves independent thinking and critical examination of religious texts like the Qur'an. They believe that they should have the freedom to think and interpret religious texts on their own. They seek to explore new ways of practicing Islam that promote equality and respect for all individuals, regardless of gender, and revisit old, marginalized, and silenced ones. Muslim feminists also engage in a concept called **feminist Tafsir**, which involves interpreting and explaining the Qur'an from a feminist perspective. They aim to demonstrate that the Qur'an supports the notion that all individuals, regardless of gender, should be treated equally and could make informed choices. They firmly believe that the Qur'an is a message from Allah and that it teaches essential principles, including the equality of all people. They strive to uphold the idea that all Muslims should have the right to express their true selves and make well-informed choices based on the teachings of the Qur'an.

Chapter Six

Echoes of the Past

DOI: 10.5117/9789048568161-6



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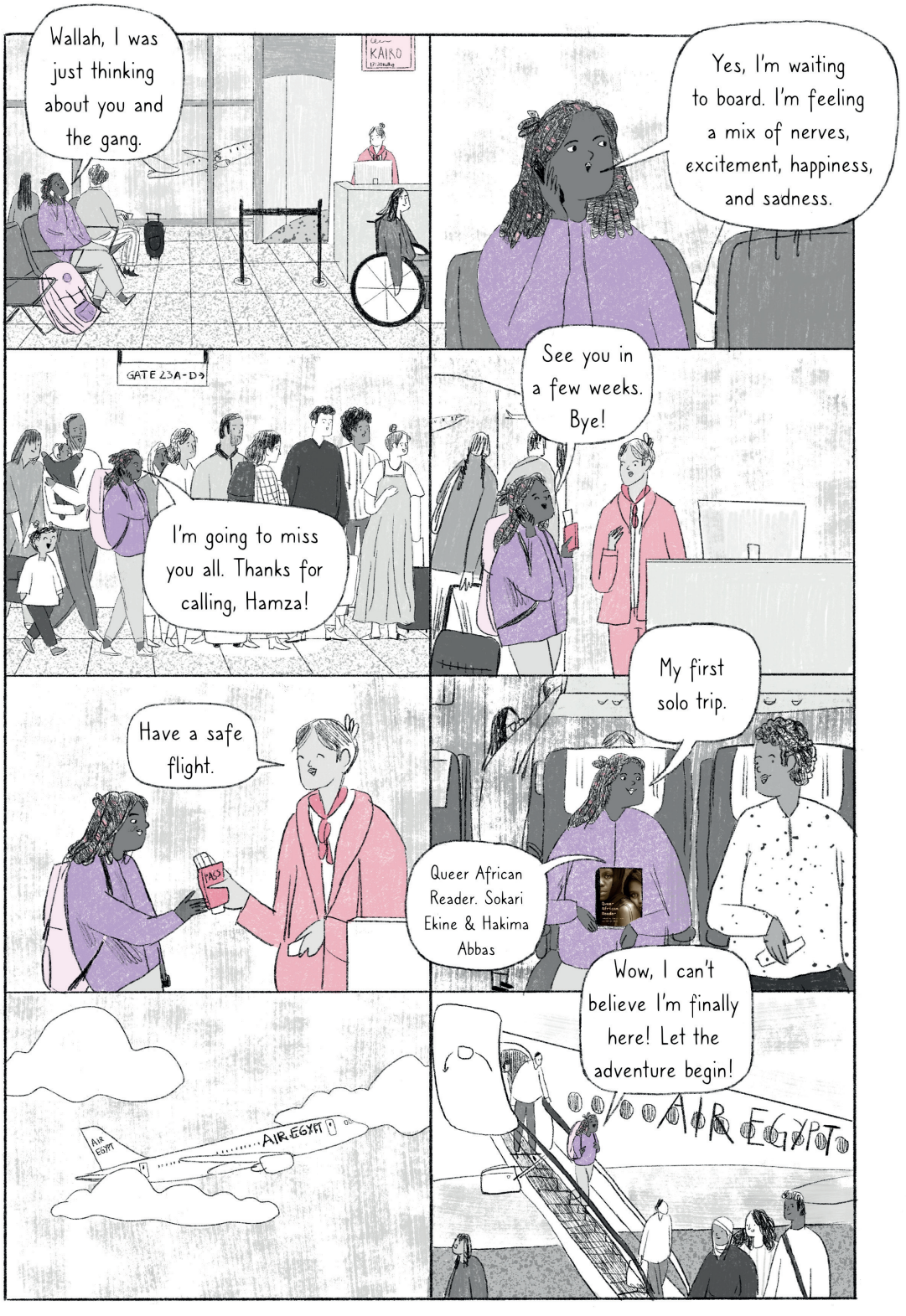
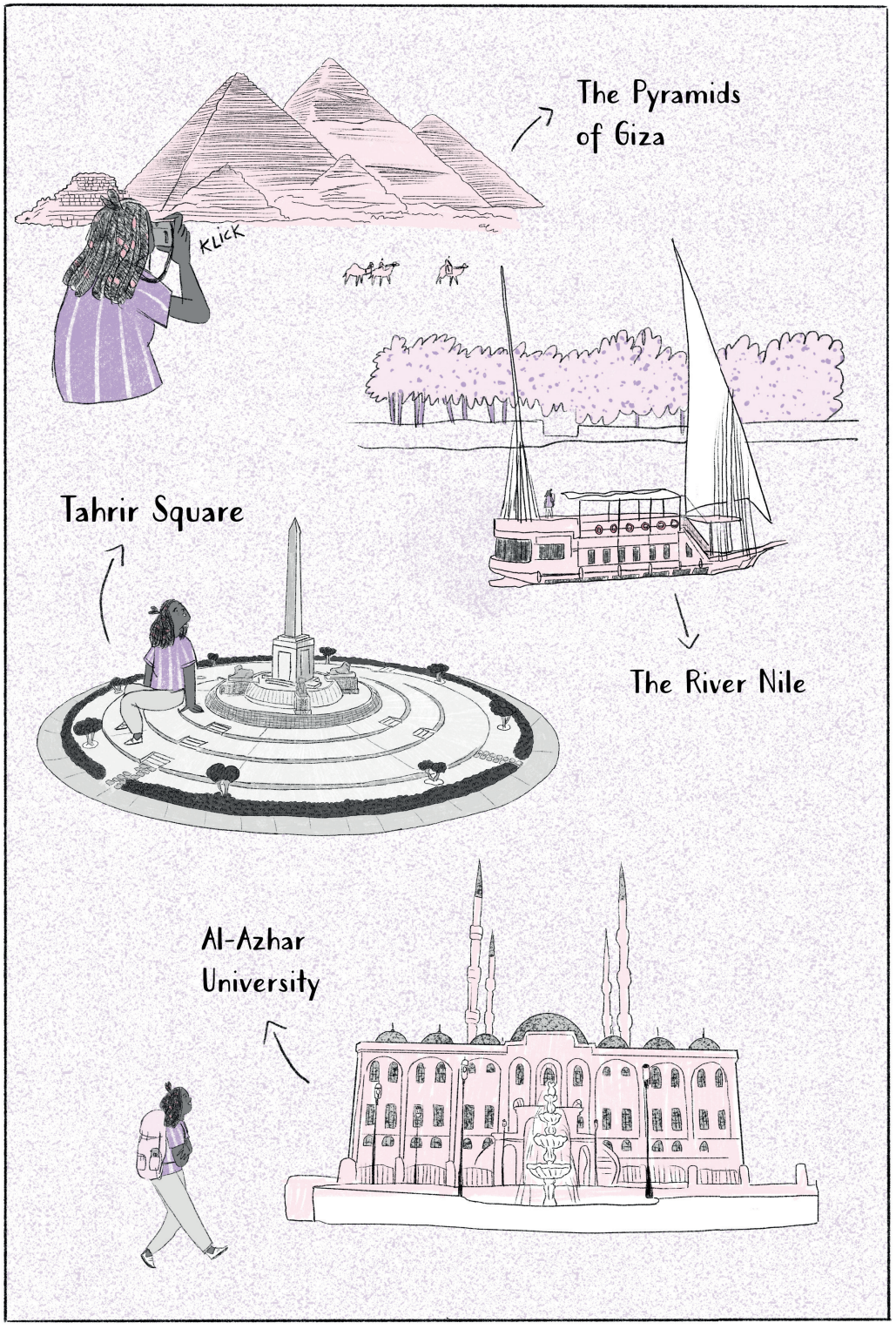
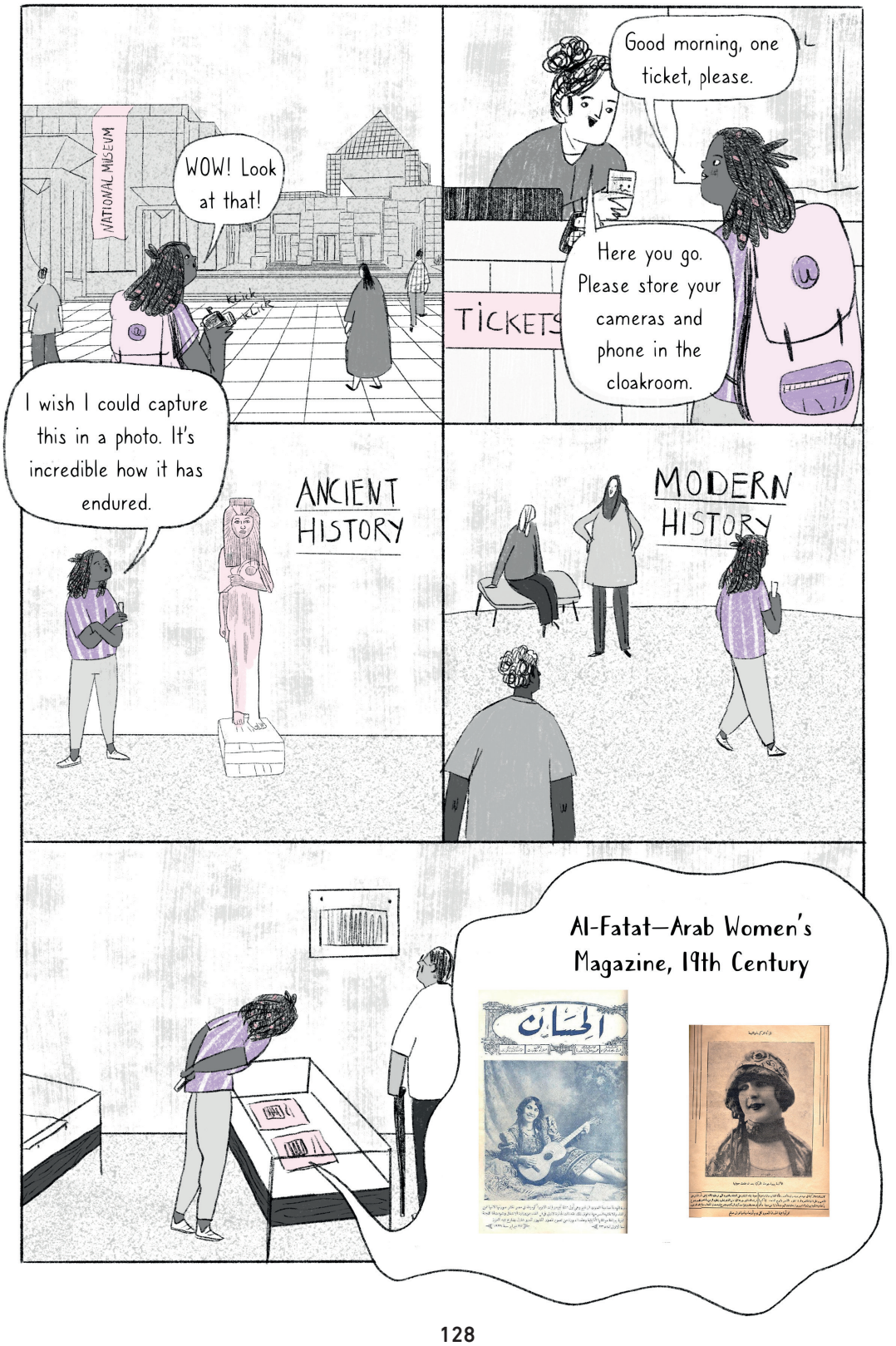
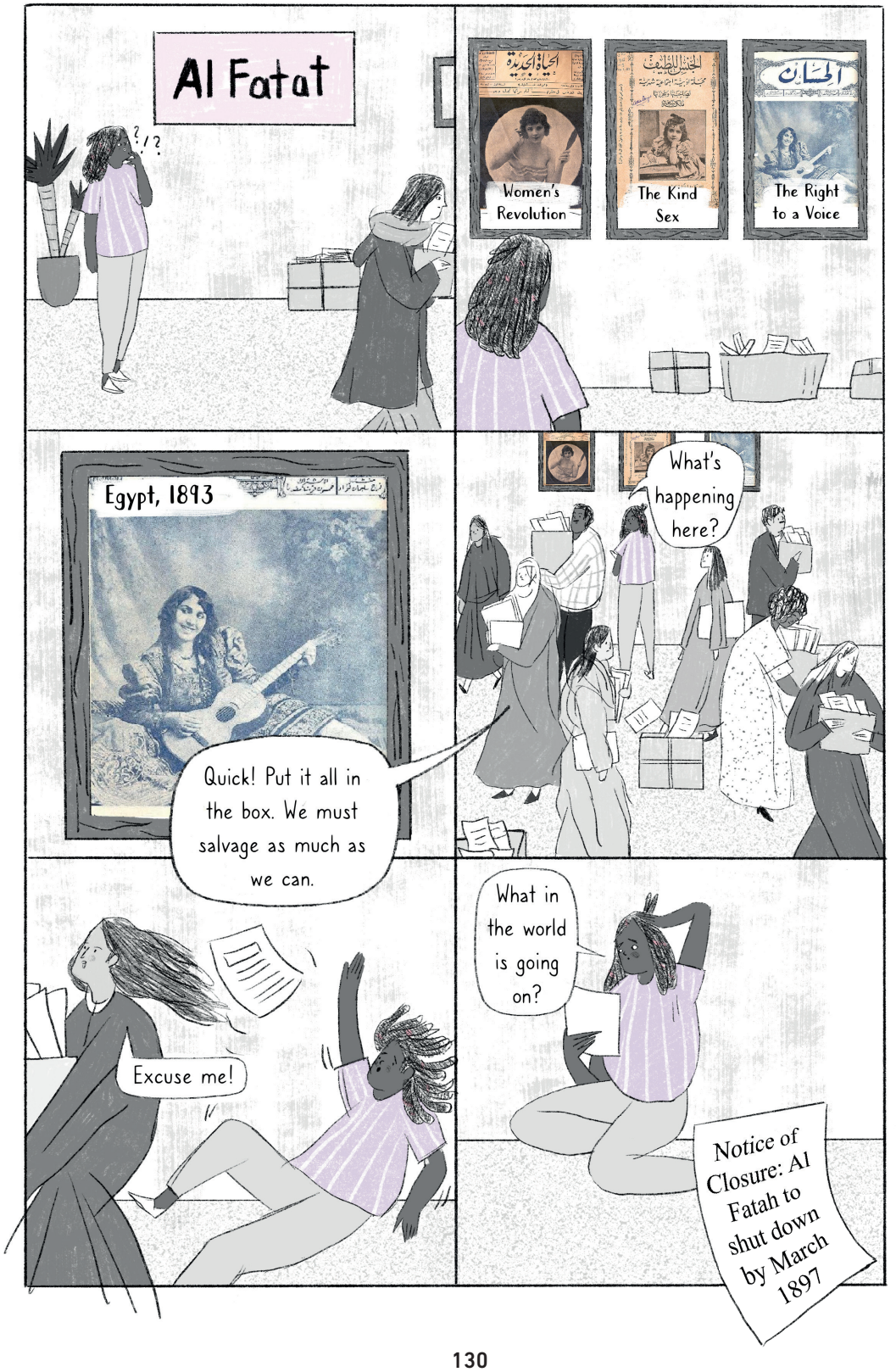
Summer Break
Hand me the spirit level.
Here it is, Dad.
Just a few more jobs, and I'll reach my goal.
RUHR RUHR
You can't wait to leave, eh?
Thanks, Dad!
Tools
It looks like the O-Ring is damaged.
I think you're right. Get me the screwdriver, please.
Is it working?
KA-CHING
Love you, Dad!


Wallah, I was just thinking about you and the gang.
KAIRO
Yes, I'm waiting to board. I'm feeling a mix of nerves, excitement, happiness, and sadness.
GATE 23A-D
I'm going to miss you all. Thanks for calling, Hamza!
See you in a few weeks. Bye!
Have a safe flight.
PASS
My first solo trip.
Queer African Reader. Sokari Ekine & Hakima Abbas
AIR EGYPT
Wow, I can't believe I'm finally here! Let the adventure begin!
AIR EGYPT

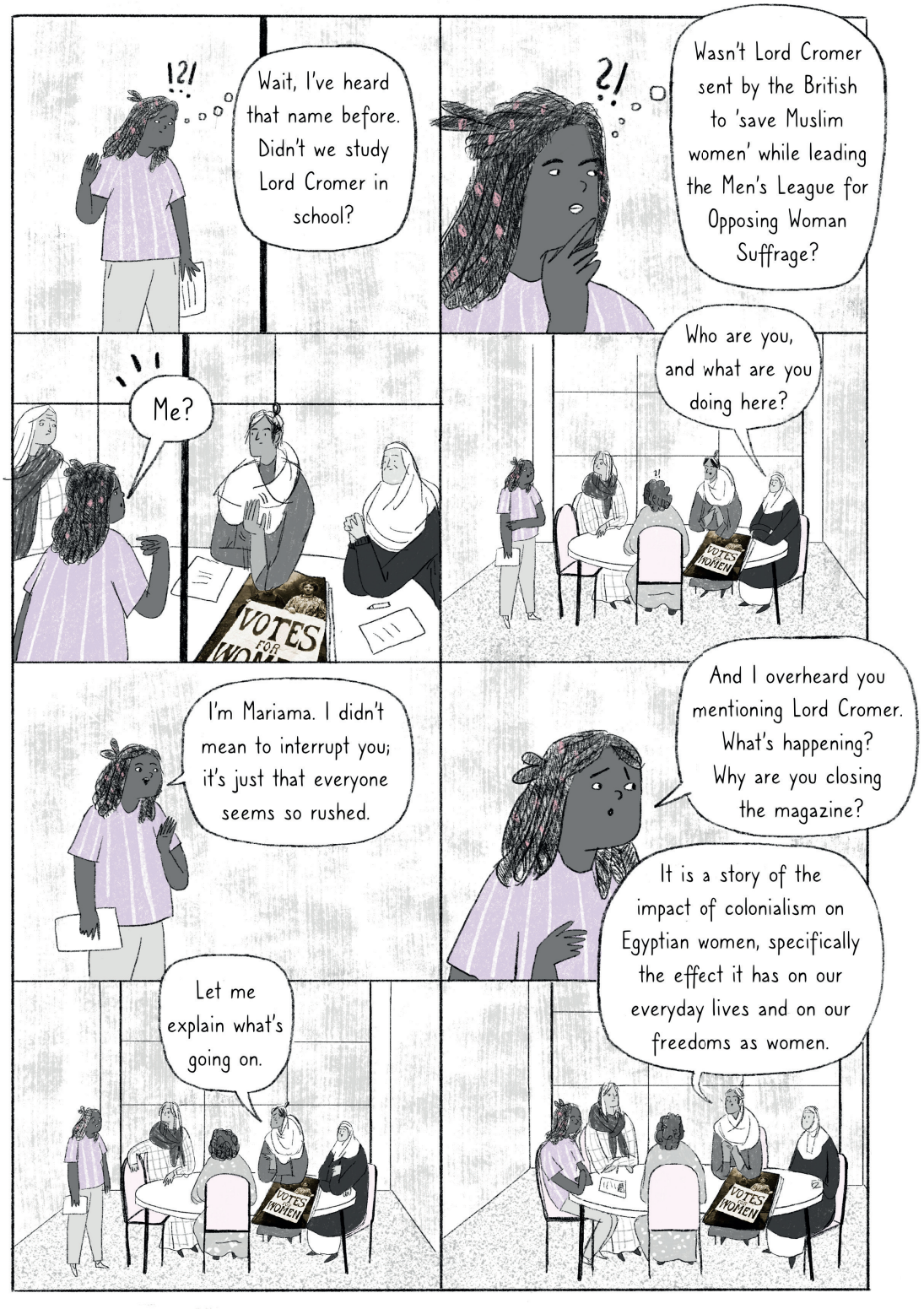

The Pyramids of Giza
KLICK
Tahrir Square
The River Nile
Al-Azhar University


NATIONAL MUSEUM
WOW! Look at that!
Click Click
Good morning, one ticket, please.
TICKETS
Here you go. Please store your cameras and phone in the cloakroom.
I wish I could capture this in a photo. It's incredible how it has endured.
ANCIENT HISTORY
MODERN HISTORY
Al-Fatat—Arab Women's Magazine, 19th Century
اللسان


Today
Year 1893


Al Fatat
?!?
Women's Revolution
The Kind Sex
The Right to a Voice
Egypt, 1893
What's happening here?
Quick! Put it all in the box. We must salvage as much as we can.
What in the world is going on?
Excuse me!
Notice of Closure: Al Fatah to shut down by March 1897


Basic literacy only? And once they finish elementary, they're supposed to focus on domestic skills like sewing and embroidery? How can I encourage my female students to pursue higher education?
Restricting Access to Education
My article got rejected! They claim we're disrupting the social order! We're forbidden from participating in demonstrations or having a voice in public!
Limiting women's participation in public life
VOTES FOR WOMEN
And now Lord Cromer introduces new laws that strengthen male authority in marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance.
Undermining women's rights


!?!
Wait, I've heard that name before. Didn't we study Lord Cromer in school?
?!
Wasn't Lord Cromer sent by the British to 'save Muslim women' while leading the Men's League for Opposing Woman Suffrage?
Me?
VOTES FOR WOMEN
Who are you, and what are you doing here?
I'm Mariama. I didn't mean to interrupt you; it's just that everyone seems so rushed.
And I overheard you mentioning Lord Cromer. What's happening? Why are you closing the magazine?
It is a story of the impact of colonialism on Egyptian women, specifically the effect it has on our everyday lives and on our freedoms as women.
Let me explain what's going on.


Somewhere else
Women are writing articles and making their voices heard.
Evelyn Baring,
1st Earl of Cromer
(1841-1917)
British Statesman and
Colonial Administrator
Appointed the Controller
General of Egypt
Speaking of that, we must discuss some budget cuts.
VOTES
It is sufficient for them to receive basic literacy,...
...but they should also acquire skills useful for their future roles.
Women should refrain from participating in public activities. It disrupts the established social order.
They're attending schools and universities and forming groups.


You see, dear? The British claim they want to "civilize" and "liberate" us.
VOTES FOR WOMEN
But what are they really doing? Collaborating with a select few of Egypt's elite to enforce their colonial control and perpetuate gender inequality.
Did you know that he's the president of the Men's League for Opposing Women's Suffrage?
Cromer's misogyny while he claims to fight for women's rights in Egypt is simply appalling.


We've fought tirelessly to gain access to education, representation in government, and so much more.
VOTES FOR WOMEN
And we've had some remarkable Brothers standing beside us, I must say!
British politics changed Egyptian society and culture to make the Egyptian people take part in what the English consider their superior culture.
It dehumanized the Egyptian people, magnifying the double-othering experienced by Egyptian women due to our race, religious beliefs, and gender.

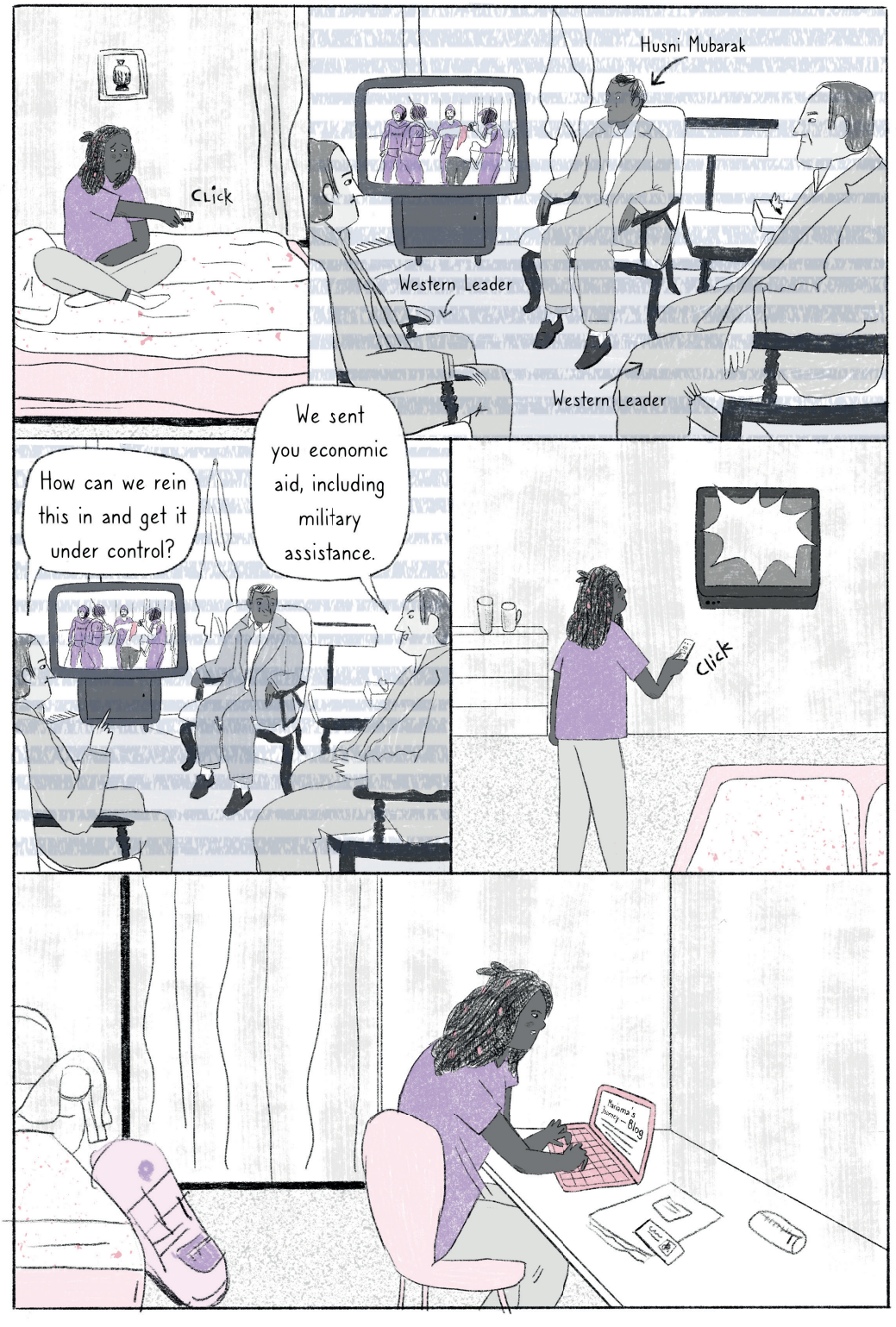

Oh, whoa! Was I day-dreaming?
VAL MUSEUM
Damn! I'm exhausted! I need some rest.
click
UFF
click



Don't be afraid of the government, fear none but God! God tells us:

"Indeed, Allāh will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves."
(13:11)

Don't think you can be safe anymore! None of us are! Come down with us, and demand your rights, my rights, your family's rights.


Click
Husni Mubarak
Western Leader
Western Leader
How can we rein this in and get it under control?
We sent you economic aid, including military assistance.
Click
Mariama's Journey — Blog

http://mariamasjourney.tumblr.com



Mariama's
Journey— Blog

Reflections from my recent journey to the Global South

Traveling to the Global South made me realize the ever-lasting impact of European colonialism on gender power relations in previously colonized countries. Whether it was the colonized elites or the Western colonizers, patriarchy thrived with their collaboration. Can we discuss gender relations and women's rights in Muslim countries without acknowledging colonialism?

Doubtful.

It's a stark reminder that even today, Western powers maintain a grip on many other countries, and this is why struggles such as those faced by women seem to be repeating, as the structures that colonialism established remain firmly in place.

Patriarchy

Patriarchy comes from the Greek (patēr) "father or chief" and (arkhē), "domination, authority, sovereignty". Patriarchy is a social system that has been in place for a long time (too long in my opinion). In a patriarchy, certain positions of power and privilege, like being in charge at home, at a big company or in the government, are mostly held by men. It means that men are often seen as more important or have more authority than women. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that not everyone fits neatly into this binary classification. There are individuals who do not identify within this traditional framework and still suffer under the patriarchy. Patriarchy is a pattern that has been there for a long time in many societies. But more than just a pattern, patriarchy also promotes laws and other social structures that help maintain the power and privileges in the hands of men. These laws and structures are like building blocks that hold the system in place. For example, in some places, there might be laws that treat people differently. These laws might give men more rights and opportunities while limiting what women can do. This can make it harder for women, and other marginalized groups, to have the same chances and opportunities as men. There are also other social structures, like traditions and expectations, that reinforce the idea that men should be in charge and have more power. These structures can include things like expectations about gender roles, where men are expected to be strong and leaders, while women are expected to be nurturing and submissive. These laws and social structures are like a big puzzle that keeps the system of patriarchy in place. But it's important to know that these things can change. People can work together to challenge and change these laws and structures to create a more equal and fair society.

Patriarchy Wears Many Masks!

Different societies have different traditions, beliefs, and power structures that influence how patriarchy operates within them. And to fight patriarchy and change this system, we need to understand how it works and what supports it.

For example, in many cultures, biology was used as a main brick to support patriarchy. People believed that men and women are different because of their biology. Simone de Bouvoir, a famous French feminist, challenged this idea that was used to justify women's inferiority and women's oppression. She wrote the book *The Second Sex*, where she said something really

important. She said, "One is not born a woman, but rather becomes one." This means that being a woman is not just about biology, but it's something that society teaches us. Beauvoir explained that men used the idea of biological differences to justify treating women unfairly. But she argued that this was not fair and that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men. And to challenge these inequalities, women should have economic power.

Simone de Beauvoir approached the concept of biological differences not with outright rejection but with critical examination of their applications. Islamic feminists such as Amina Wadud offer a distinct perspective. They challenge the notion that gender inequality is inherently rooted in biological differences or that these differences are supported by specific Qur'anic verses. Instead, they attribute women's oppression in certain Islamic societies to the interpretative lens through which the Qur'an has been read and understood, emphasizing the role of hermeneutics in shaping societal norms. They say that some people have misunderstood the Qur'an and have used it to justify treating women unequally. Amina Wadud believes that biological differences, like being male or female, should not determine a person's value or importance in Islam. She says that being a woman does not limit her abilities or her role as a khalifah (a president of a country or a leader of a community). She believes that women have the same agency, or power to act, as men, and this power has been given to them by God.



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Chapter Seven

Breaking Boundaries

DOI: 10.5117/9789048568161-7



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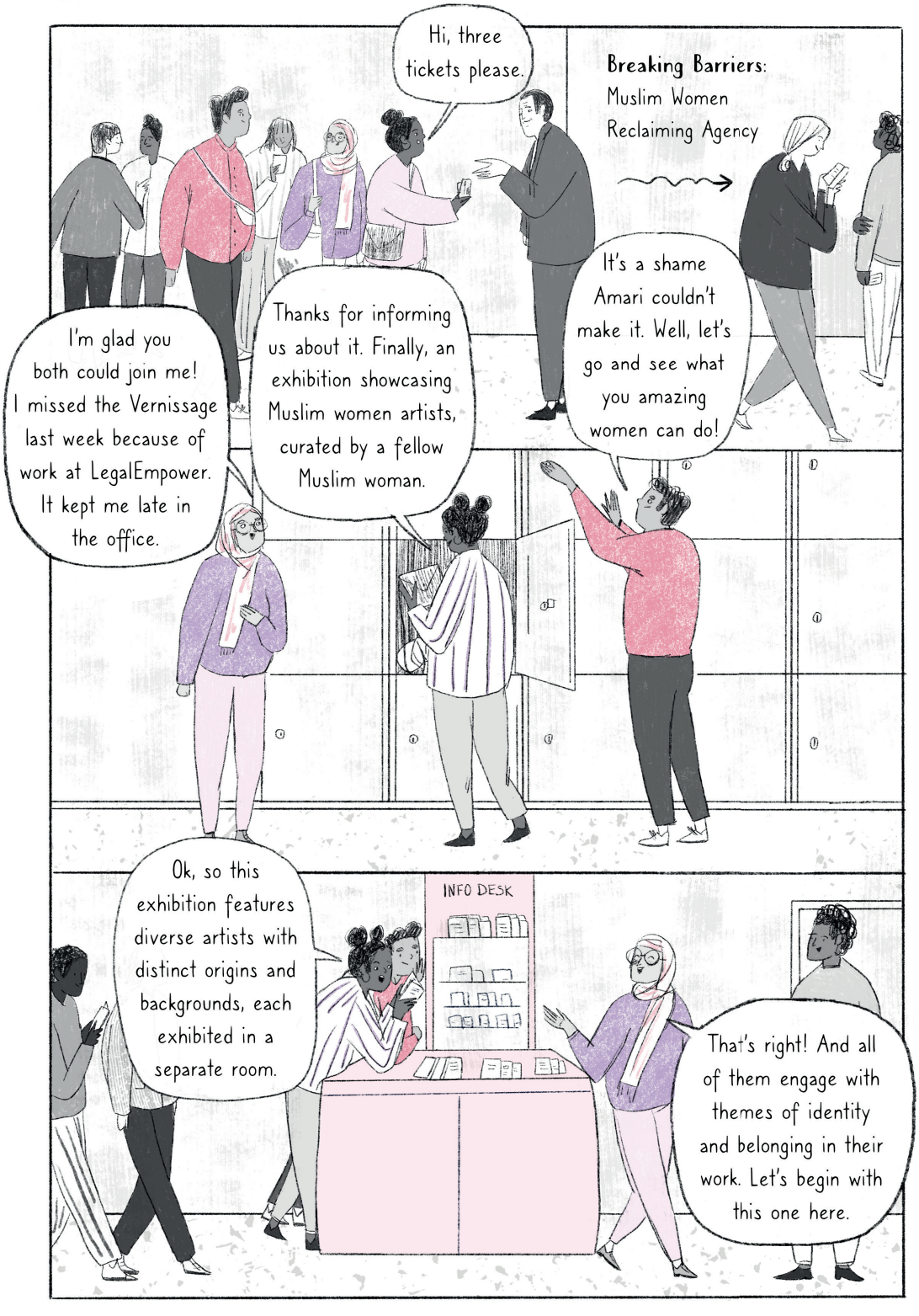
Let's take a shortcut through the park.
Yallah! You know how angry she gets if you make her wait.
GALE
Almost on time.
Tick
GALLERY
Finally, you two!
Sorry habibti! My bad!
Told you so!
Yalla, let's get the tickets.
Boom


Hi, three tickets please.
Breaking Barriers: Muslim Women Reclaiming Agency
It's a shame Amari couldn't make it. Well, let's go and see what you amazing women can do!
Thanks for informing us about it. Finally, an exhibition showcasing Muslim women artists, curated by a fellow Muslim woman.
I'm glad you both could join me! I missed the Vernissage last week because of work at LegalEmpower. It kept me late in the office.
INFO DESK
Ok, so this exhibition features diverse artists with distinct origins and backgrounds, each exhibited in a separate room.
That's right! And all of them engage with themes of identity and belonging in their work. Let's begin with this one here.

Breaking Barriers:
Muslim Women
Reclaiming Agency



Exhibition rooms

Helen Zughaib**

—

Changing Perceptions

Interesting! Helen Zughaib is actually a Christian Lebanese artist. Post 9/11, she witnessed how the* abāya was being presented as a symbol of oppression of Muslim women. That's why she started this work.

This one looks like a Mondrian!



Abaya Mondrian, 15x20"
Gouache on board, 2008

Yeah, pretty much! The artist wanted to juxtapose the black abāya with elements from known Western artists, like Mondrian.

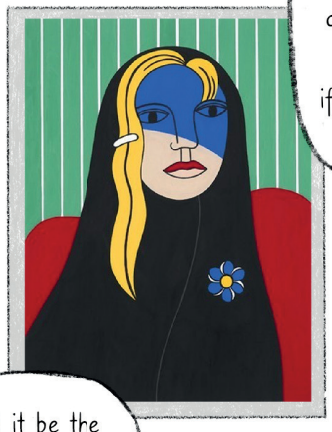
The Red Veil, 15x20"
Gouache on board, 2010



So, she mixes elements of both the 'West' and the 'East'?

Yes! But there's always the feeling that you must choose. Like you can't be both, or more.

Do you notice any difference with this one? In all other images the woman's mouth is covered, sometimes even her entire face. And yet this blonde's mouth here is not.

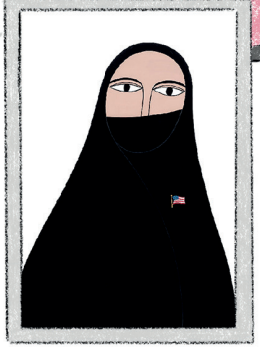


Still! It shows that the blonde one, meaning of course, the Western woman, is free, as she can speak if she wants. But the Muslim woman is silenced.

Could it be the same woman? Maybe the covered one IS the blonde?

?!

Abaya Leger, 15x20"
Gouache on board, 2008



Look at this one here. Why does she have the American flag pin?

hmm

Maybe she wants to show that Arabs, or Muslims, can be American as well? Like us! We can be Muslims AND Europeans!

Abaya with Flag Pin, 15x20"
Gouache on board, 2008

* **'abāya**: long-sleeve, loose garment that covers the whole body, traditionally worn by both men and women.

**All artwork on this double page: © Helen Zughaib, www.hzughaib.com

I love this artist. I often check her blog. She's a psychologist and self-taught comic artist and illustrator. And she's half Tunisian, half German. Just like you, Hamza – half and half.

Soufeina Hamed*

tuffix

Hey, I'm more than just the sum of my parts! And just like this one, I am still part of the puzzle that makes Germany what it is.



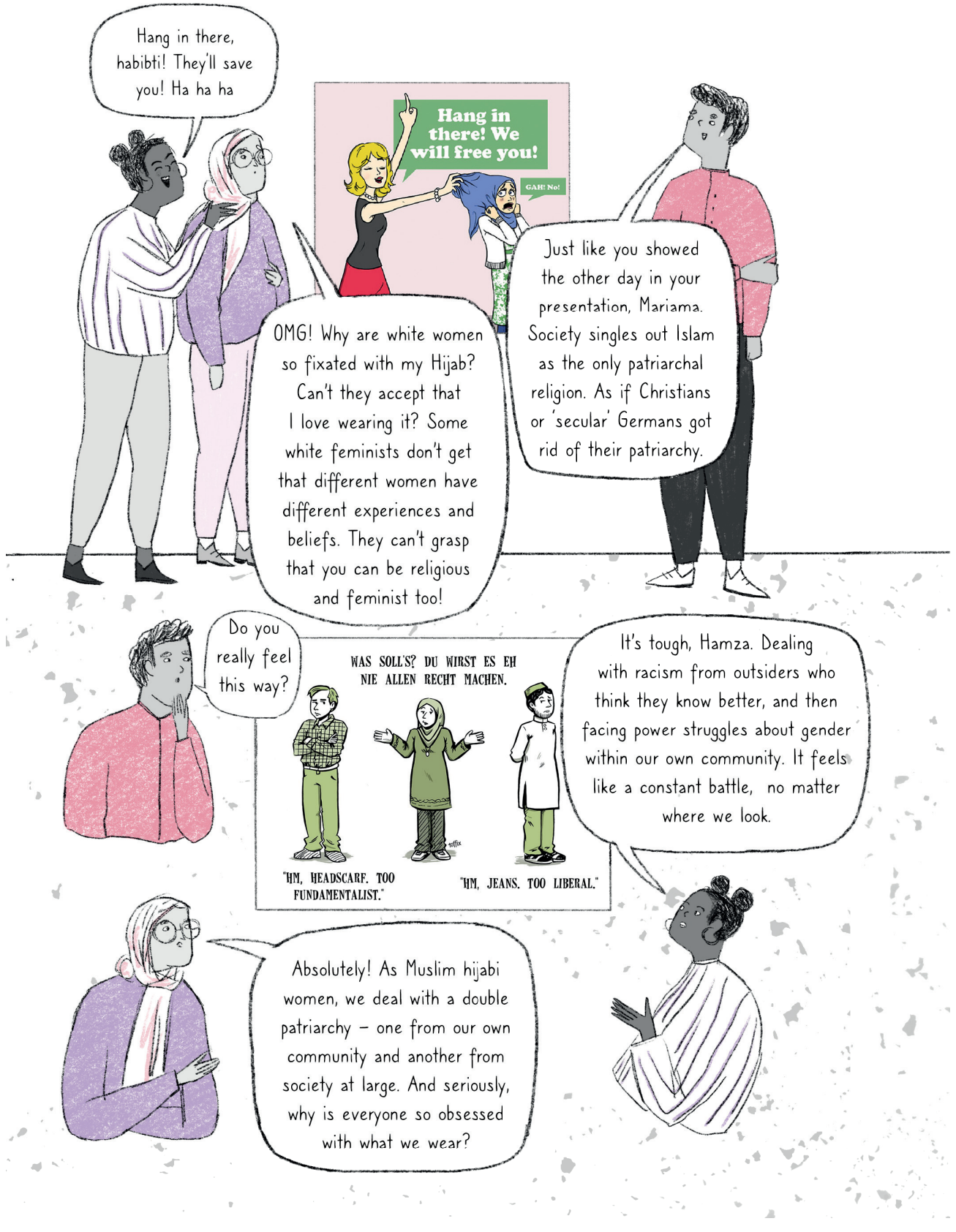
Like this artwork, we are all so many things, you can't just put us into one category.

Why do we need labels anyway?



I tsometimes think those at the top want to fool us, especially as we navigate through all these labels and categories, trying hard to find ourselves in this crazy store. I just want to figure out who I can be.

* All artwork on this double page: © Soufeina Hamed, www.tuffix.net


Hang in there, habibti! They'll save you! Ha ha ha
Hang in there! We will free you!
GAH! No!
OMG! Why are white women so fixated with my Hijab? Can't they accept that I love wearing it? Some white feminists don't get that different women have different experiences and beliefs. They can't grasp that you can be religious and feminist too!
Just like you showed the other day in your presentation, Mariama. Society singles out Islam as the only patriarchal religion. As if Christians or 'secular' Germans got rid of their patriarchy.
Do you really feel this way?
WAS SOLL'S? DU WIRST ES EH NIE ALLEN RECHT MACHEN.
"HM, HEADSCARF. TOO FUNDAMENTALIST."
"HM, JEANS. TOO LIBERAL."
It's tough, Hamza. Dealing with racism from outsiders who think they know better, and then facing power struggles about gender within our own community. It feels like a constant battle, no matter where we look.
Absolutely! As Muslim hijabi women, we deal with a double patriarchy – one from our own community and another from society at large. And seriously, why is everyone so obsessed with what we wear?

Usarae Gul*

—

Beyond Faith



* All artwork on this double page: © Usarae Gul, Instagram: usarae_gul

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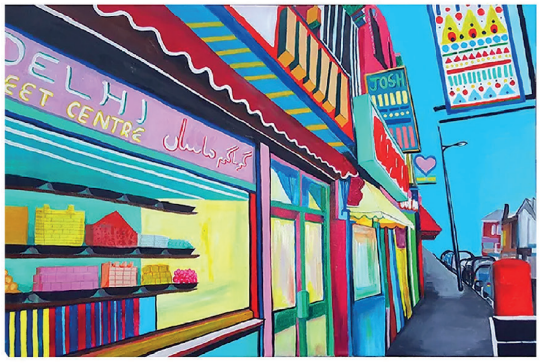


* Afghan Cuisine.
** My Unglish Parents
*** Sweet Shop.

Yeah, I wonder how different it is for us, being second, third, or fourth generation here.

Sotmetimes, I feel like we don't have much in common with our parents. They had their stories and struggles, and we have ours. But both sides don't seem to understand each other.

ALHAMDU*

—

Muslim Futurism



Saba Taj
Prayer is better than sleep, 2016

MIPSTERZ
Tapestry of Muslim Futures, 2022

* All artwork on this double page: ALHAMDU, www.muslimfuturism.com



Roya Ahmadi
Imagining Ardabil, 2020



MIPSTERZ
Somewhere in America, 2013

Hisham Bharoocha
ONE, 2022



Samira idroos
the force is female,
2020



ALHAMDU

—

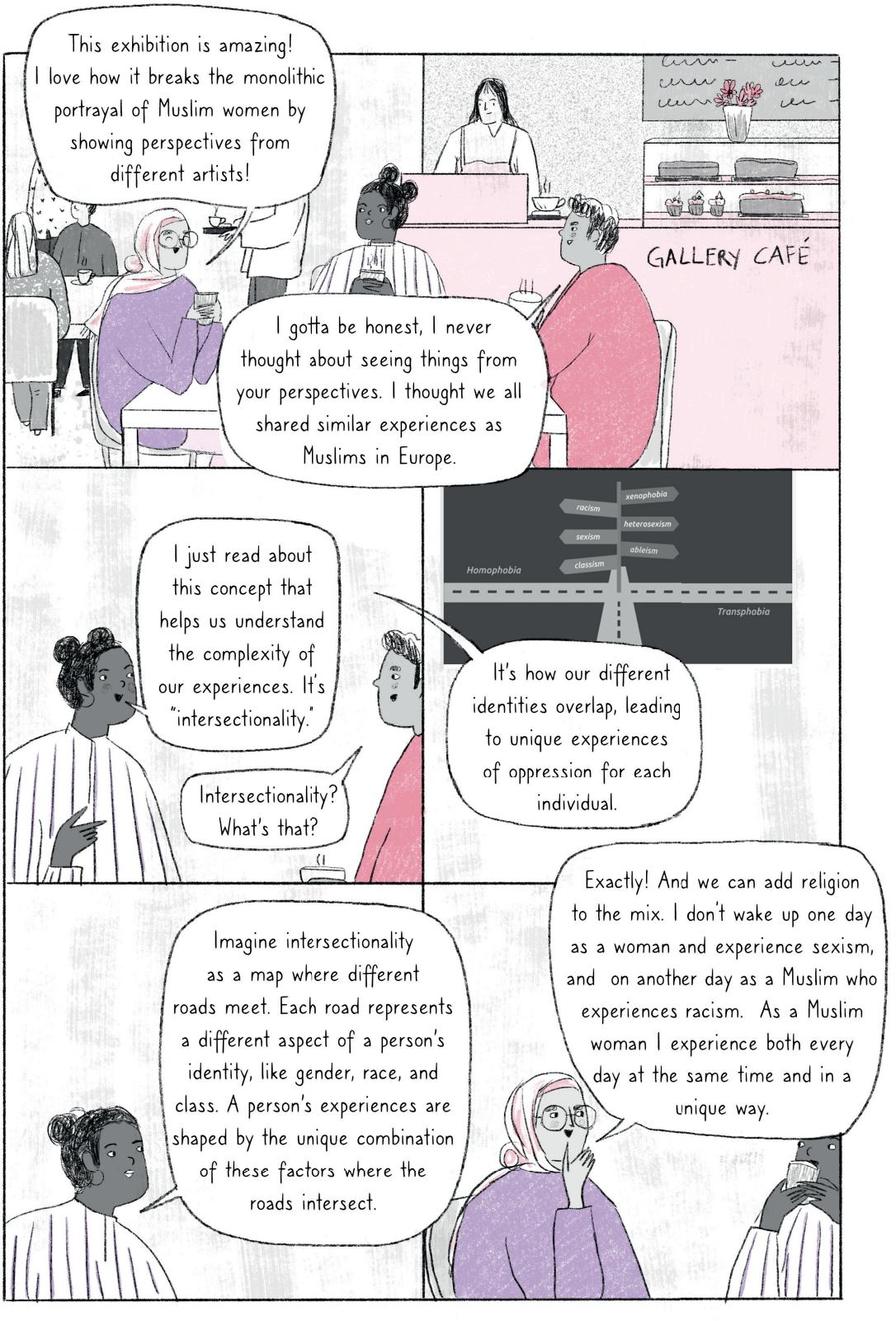
Muslim Futurism

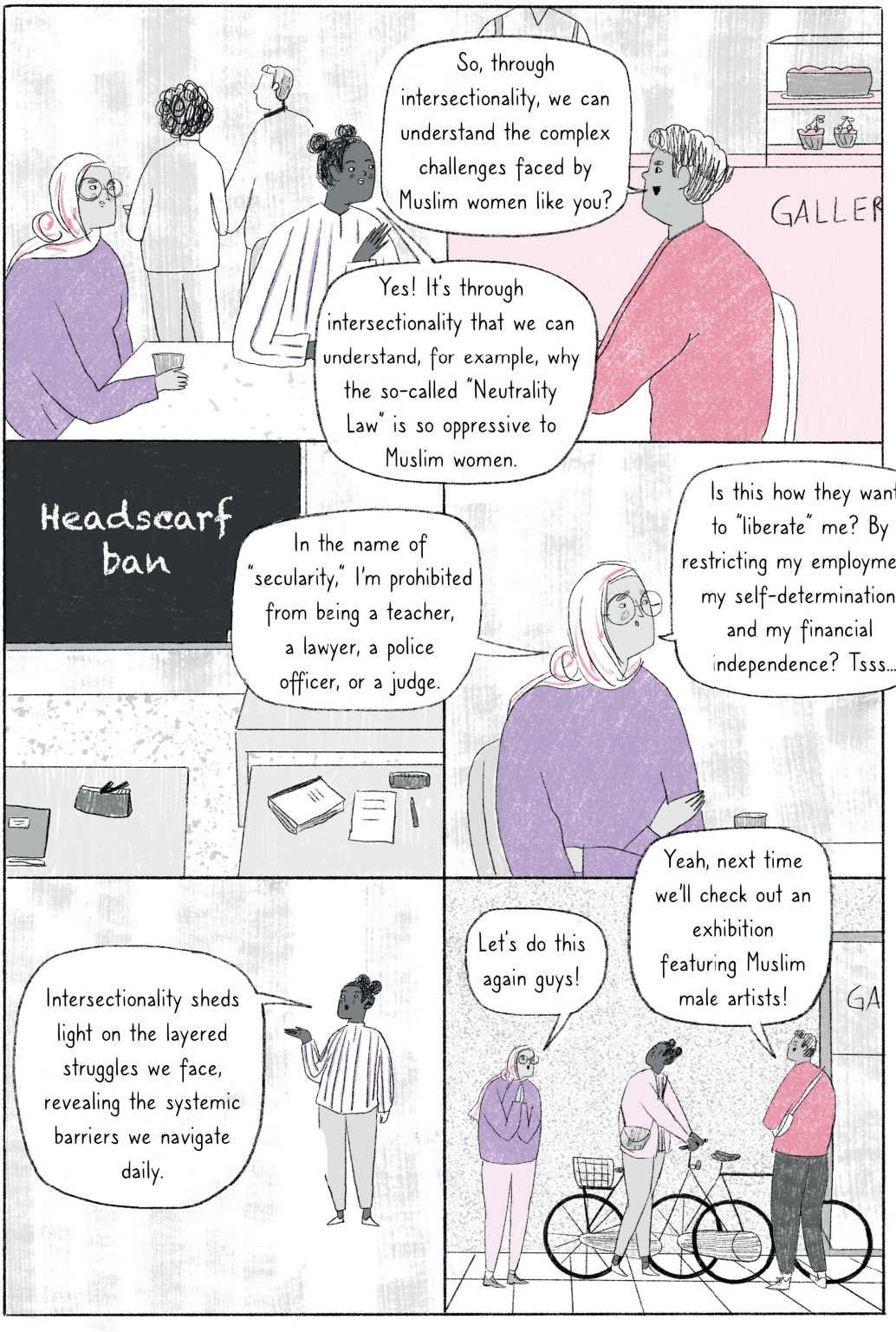
Yasmeen Abedifard
Caliphate, 2022



Sara Alfageeh
The call, 2022




This exhibition is amazing! I love how it breaks the monolithic portrayal of Muslim women by showing perspectives from different artists!
GALLERY CAFÉ
I gotta be honest, I never thought about seeing things from your perspectives. I thought we all shared similar experiences as Muslims in Europe.
I just read about this concept that helps us understand the complexity of our experiences. It's "intersectionality."
racism
xenophobia
heterosexism
sexism
ableism
classism
Homophobia
Transphobia
It's how our different identities overlap, leading to unique experiences of oppression for each individual.
Intersectionality? What's that?
Imagine intersectionality as a map where different roads meet. Each road represents a different aspect of a person's identity, like gender, race, and class. A person's experiences are shaped by the unique combination of these factors where the roads intersect.
Exactly! And we can add religion to the mix. I don't wake up one day as a woman and experience sexism, and on another day as a Muslim who experiences racism. As a Muslim woman I experience both every day at the same time and in a unique way.


So, through intersectionality, we can understand the complex challenges faced by Muslim women like you?
GALLER
Yes! It's through intersectionality that we can understand, for example, why the so-called "Neutrality Law" is so oppressive to Muslim women.
Headscarf ban
In the name of "secularity," I'm prohibited from being a teacher, a lawyer, a police officer, or a judge.
Is this how they want to "liberate" me? By restricting my employment, my self-determination, and my financial independence? Tsss...
Intersectionality sheds light on the layered struggles we face, revealing the systemic barriers we navigate daily.
Let's do this again guys!
Yeah, next time we'll check out an exhibition featuring Muslim male artists!
GA

Intersectionality

Intersectionality, based on Kimberlé Crenshaw's framework, is a concept that helps us understand how different forms of oppression and discrimination intersect and affect people's lives. To understand this, we can imagine a crossroad or traffic intersection, where each road is representing a different social identity or experience. People have multiple identities and experiences that shape who they are. These identities can include aspects like gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, ability, and more. Each of these identities is like a road leading to a person's unique experiences and challenges. Now, imagine that each of these roads has its own set of rules and traffic signals. These rules represent the different forms of discrimination and oppression that exist in society. For example, one road may have a red light representing gender-based discrimination, while another road may have a stop sign representing racial discrimination.

Here's where intersectionality comes into play. When we approach the crossroads, some people may find themselves at the intersection of multiple roads. For instance, a person could be both a woman and a Muslim, or a member of the LGBTQIA+ community and have a disability. These intersections represent the unique experiences and challenges faced by individuals who belong to multiple marginalized groups. Now, imagine that the traffic signals and rules from each road start interacting and overlapping at the intersection. This can create a more complicated and sometimes unfair situation. For example, if both the road representing gender discrimination and the road representing racial discrimination have a red light, it means that someone at the intersection of those roads is facing the challenges of both forms of discrimination simultaneously. Intersectionality teaches us to pay attention to these intersections and recognize that people's experiences are not determined by just one form of discrimination. By understanding intersectionality, we can better address and fight against the interconnected systems of oppression and work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society.

Just as traffic intersections can be busy and chaotic, intersections of identities can also be intricate. However, by recognizing and challenging power dynamics and oppressive structures, we can strive towards fostering equality and justice for everyone. Exploring our social identity is an ongoing journey. By acknowledging the social categories that make up who we are, and understanding how they are constructed, we can develop a deeper understanding of ourselves and others. Remember that each person's identity is unique and multifaceted, and it is crucial to respect and value the diverse experiences and challenges that different social categories bring.

Chapter Eight
Voices Unsilenced: A Queer Muslim Dialogue

DOI: 10.5117/9789048568161-8



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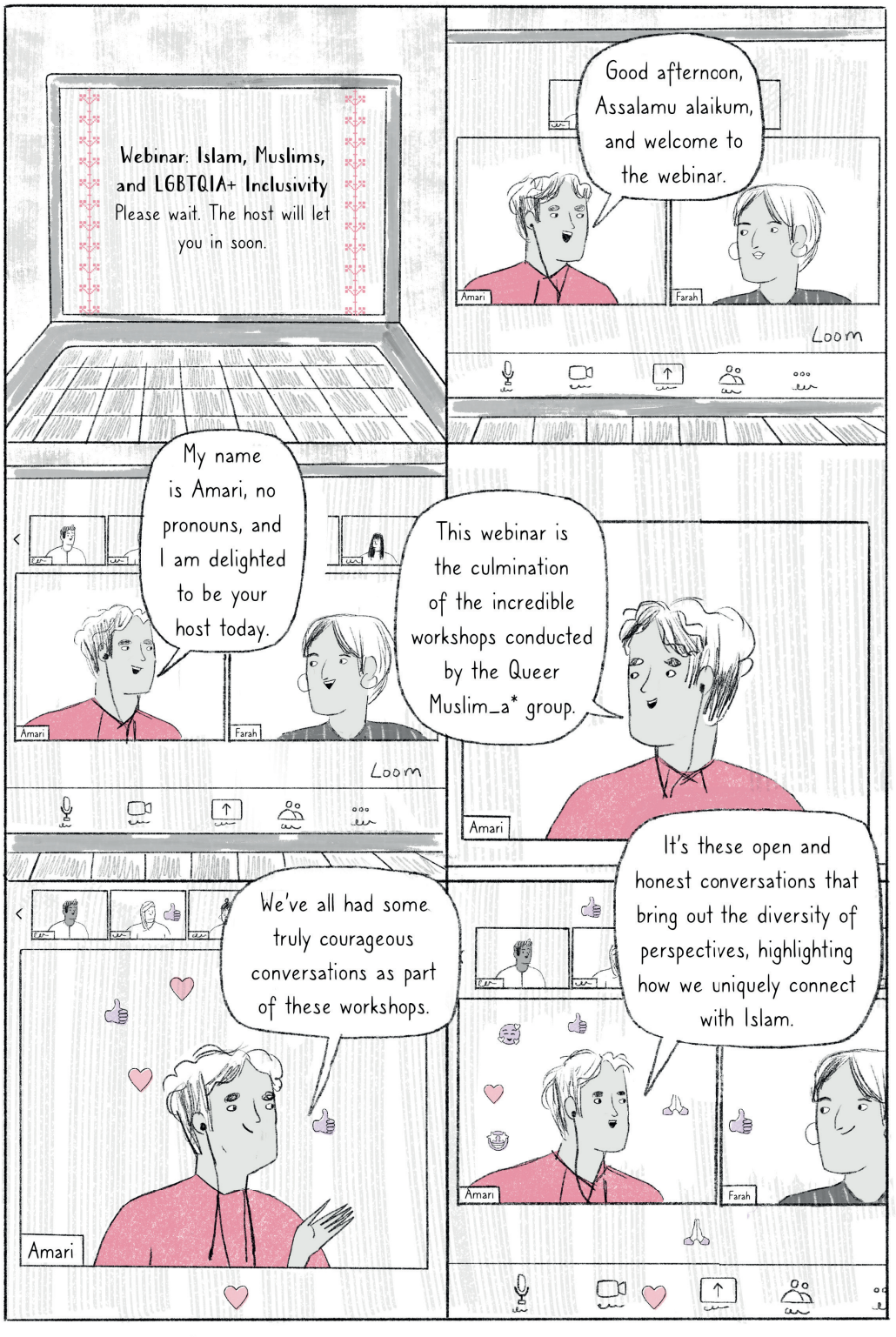
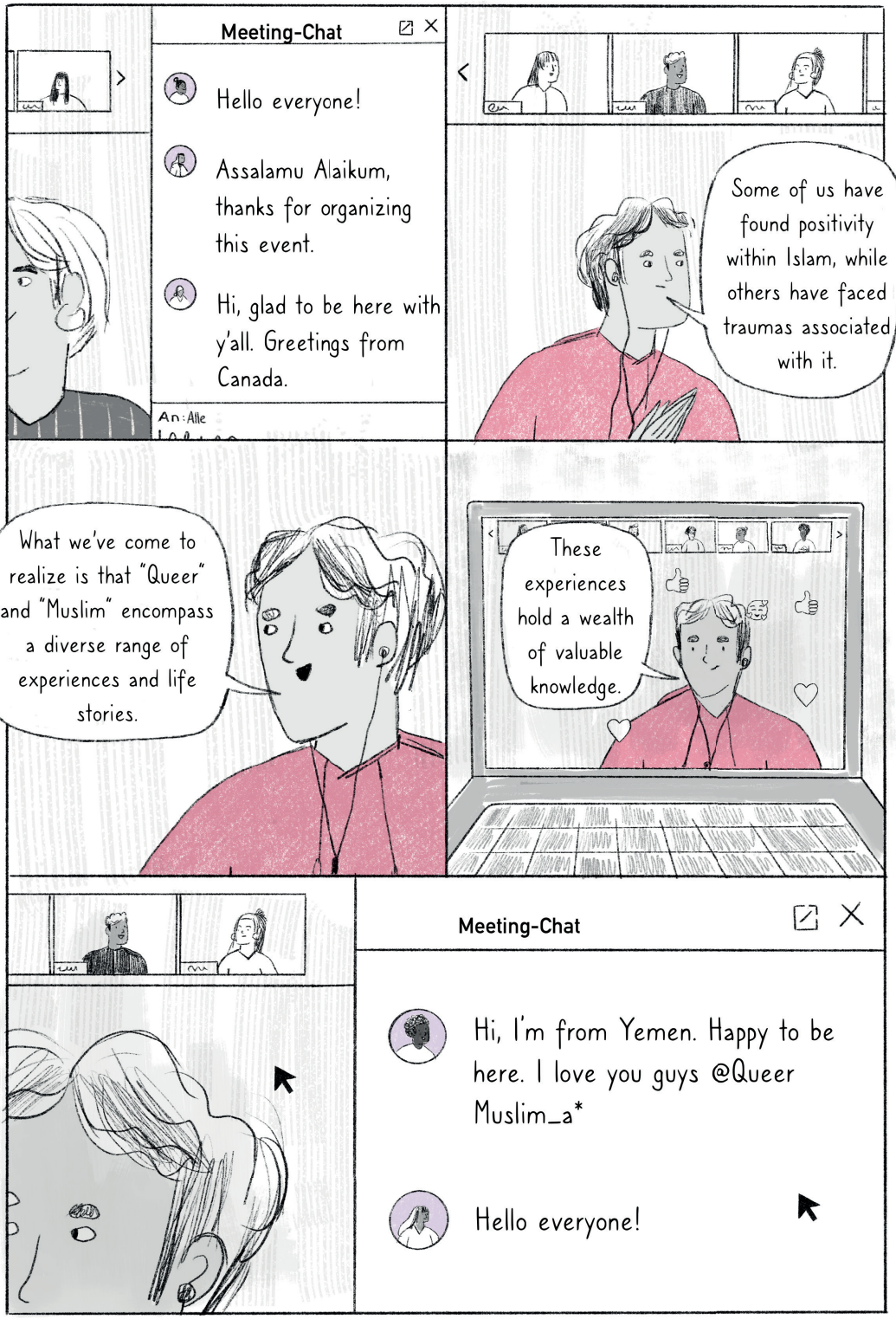
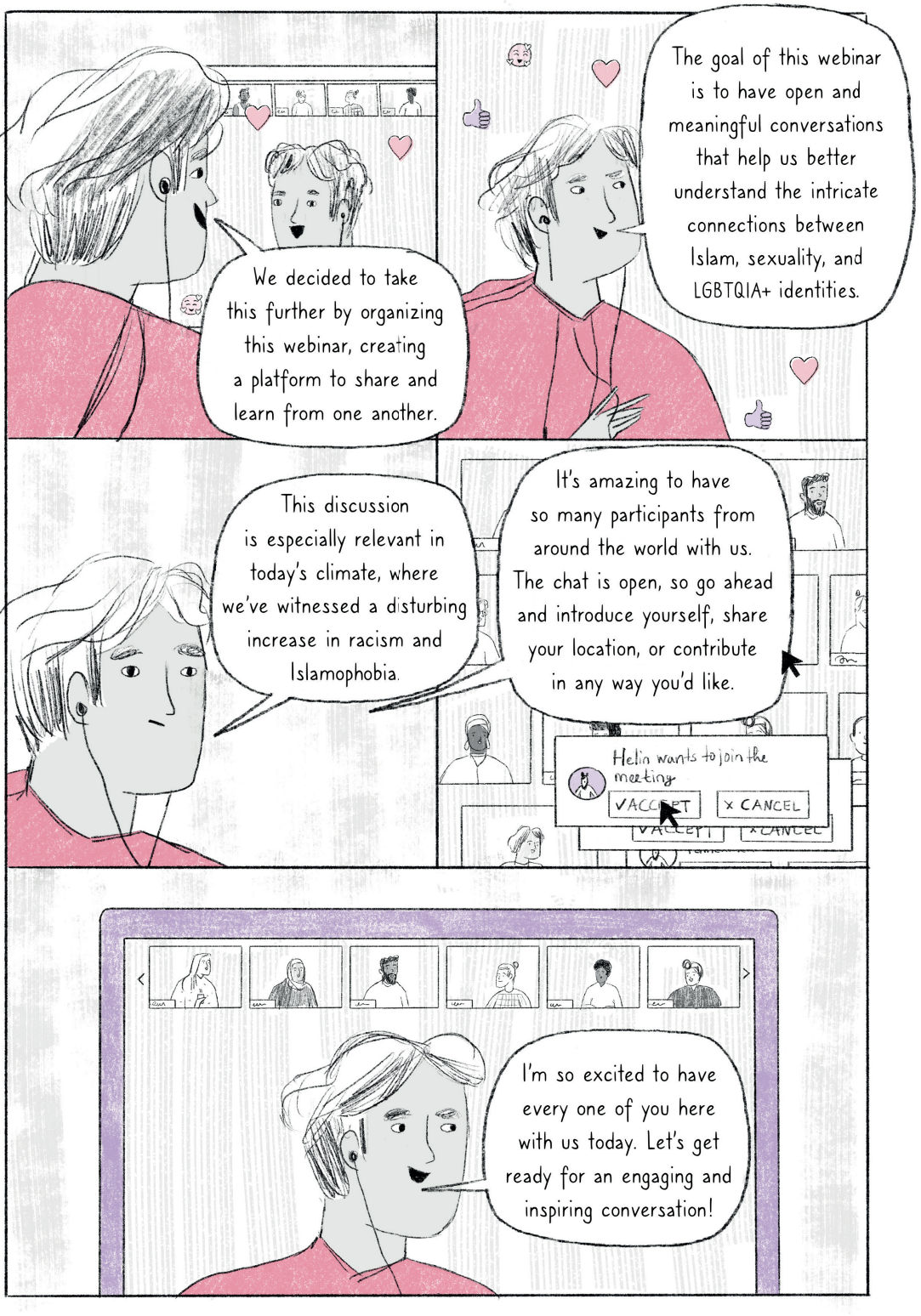
The webinar is starting in less than half an hour. Mirza, did you check that everything is functioning smoothly?
Yes. All set!
PRIDE
We've put so much effort into this event since the last Queer Muslim_a* workshop.
Look at this! We've already got more than 50 registrations!
PRIDE
We're on. Best of luck, everyone!
And getting these incredible speakers was the cherry on top!
PRESS
Absolutely! I'm so happy we had the chance to create such a platform.
Back then, it was clear just how much these spaces and conversations were needed.

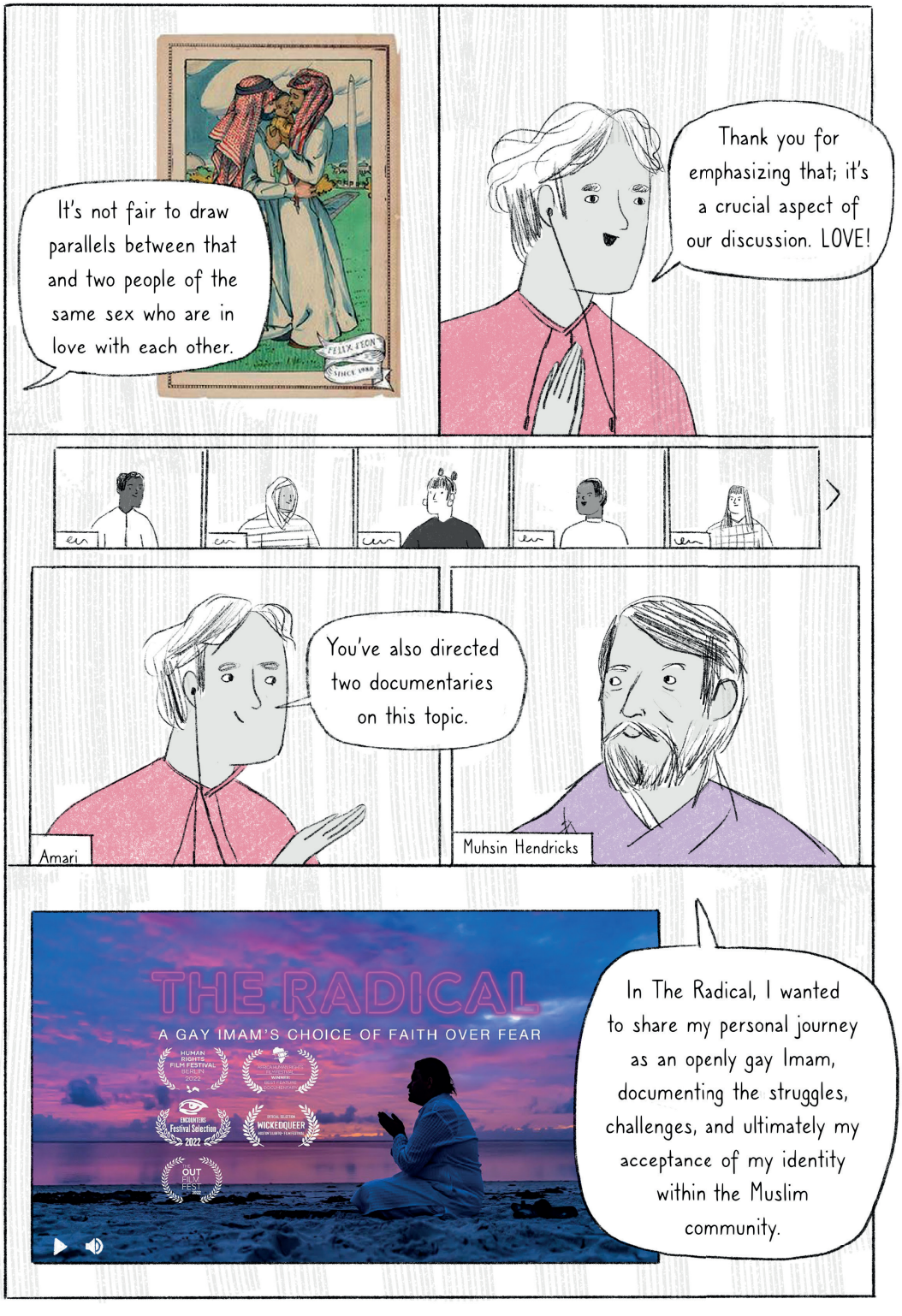

Webinar: Islam, Muslims, and LGBTQIA+ Inclusivity
Please wait. The host will let you in soon.
Good afternoon, Assalamu alaikum, and welcome to the webinar.
Amari
Farah
Loom
My name is Amari, no pronouns, and I am delighted to be your host today.
Amari
Farah
Loom
This webinar is the culmination of the incredible workshops conducted by the Queer Muslim_a* group.
Amari
We've all had some truly courageous conversations as part of these workshops.
Amari
It's these open and honest conversations that bring out the diversity of perspectives, highlighting how we uniquely connect with Islam.
Amari
Farah

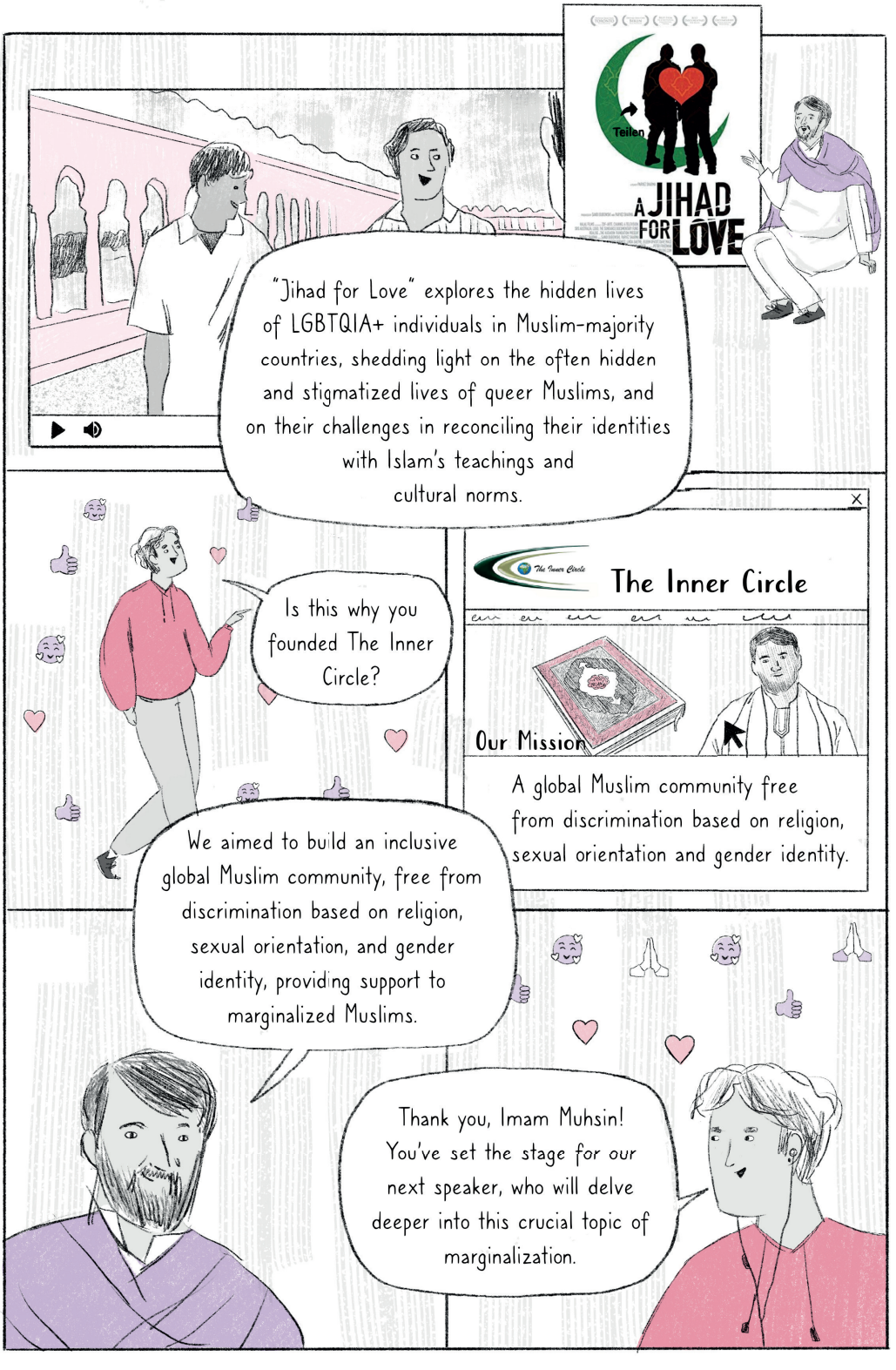

Meeting-Chat
Hello everyone!
Assalamu Alaikum, thanks for organizing this event.
Hi, glad to be here with y'all. Greetings from Canada.
Some of us have found positivity within Islam, while others have faced traumas associated with it.
What we've come to realize is that "Queer" and "Muslim" encompass a diverse range of experiences and life stories.
These experiences hold a wealth of valuable knowledge.
Meeting-Chat
Hi, I'm from Yemen. Happy to be here. I love you guys @Queer Muslim_a*
Hello everyone!

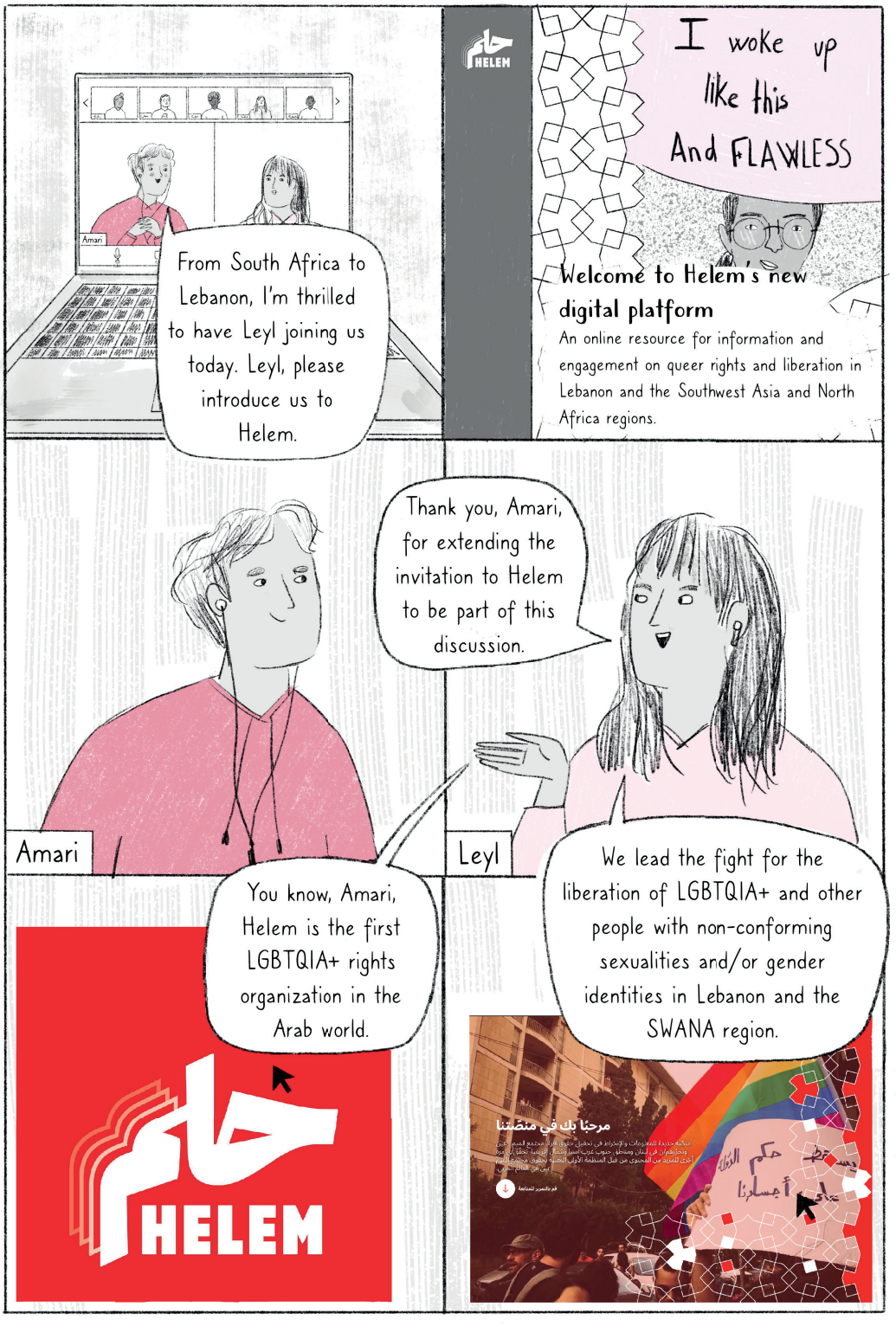

We decided to take this further by organizing this webinar, creating a platform to share and learn from one another.
The goal of this webinar is to have open and meaningful conversations that help us better understand the intricate connections between Islam, sexuality, and LGBTQIA+ identities.
This discussion is especially relevant in today's climate, where we've witnessed a disturbing increase in racism and Islamophobia.
It's amazing to have so many participants from around the world with us. The chat is open, so go ahead and introduce yourself, share your location, or contribute in any way you'd like.
Helin wants to join the meeting
✓ACCEPT
x CANCEL
I'm so excited to have every one of you here with us today. Let's get ready for an engaging and inspiring conversation!

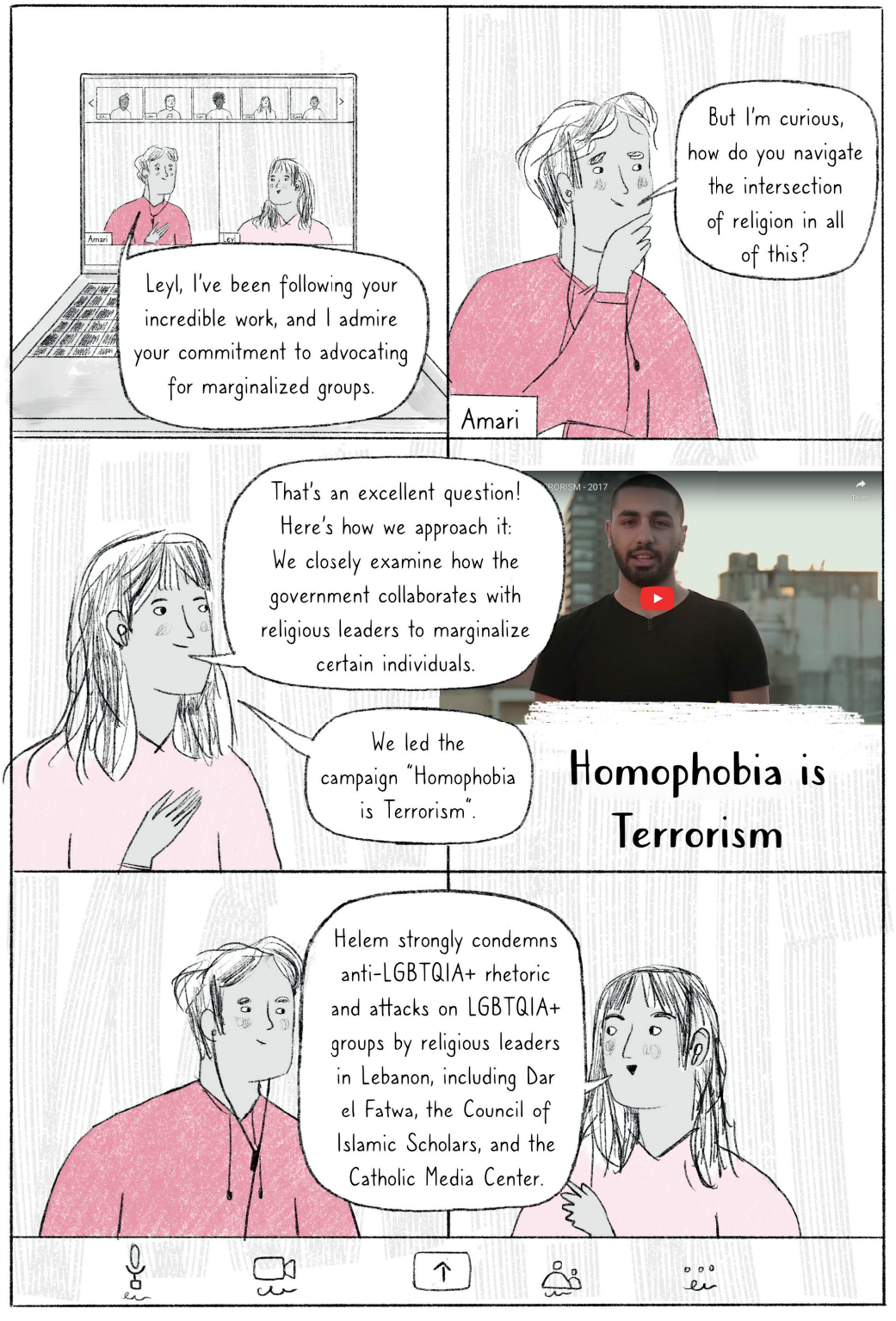

And now, without further ado, I'm excited to introduce our first guest speaker: Imam Muhsin Hendricks.
Muhsin Hendricks is an Islamic Scholar, an Imam, and a passionate advocate for human rights, with a particular focus on gender and sexual diversity within Islam.
It's a pleasure to have you with us today.
Thank you, Amari, for the invitation. I'm honored to be here with all of you.
You're known as the first openly gay Imam. And a few years back, you initiated South Africa's first LGBTQIA+ friendly mosque. Can you share the story behind it?
I wanted to become an Imam so I could acquire the qualifications to study Islam and the Qur'an myself.
My goal was to truly understand what God's perspective is on homosexuality.

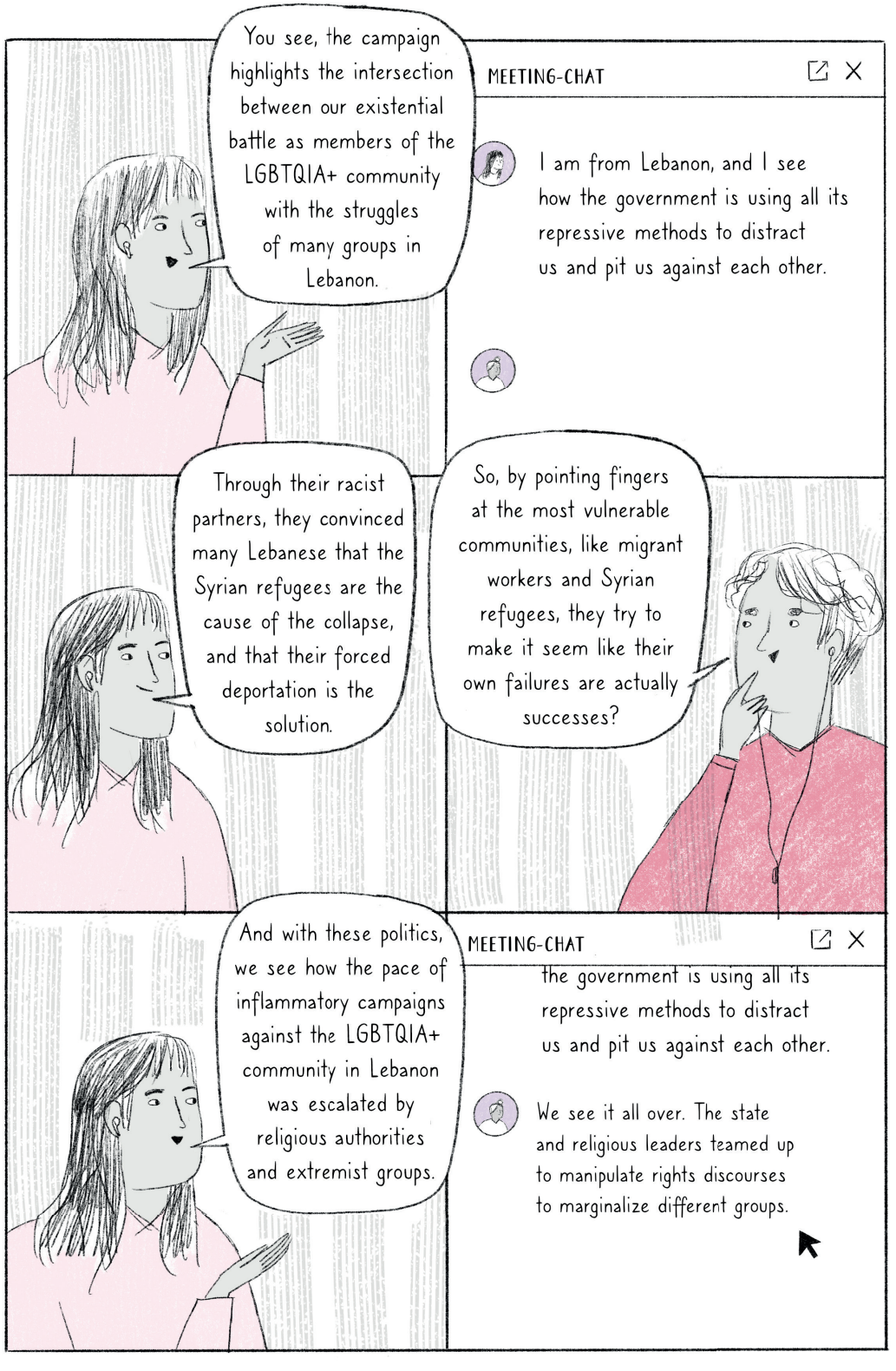

It's quite fascinating to discover that the term "homosexuality" doesn't even appear in the Qur'an to begin with.
Amari
Muhsin Hendricks
There is a mention in the Qur'an of people who aren't attracted to women, acknowledging that there are individuals who aren't heterosexual!
The condemnation of homosexuality primarily stems from the story of the Tribe of Lot.
However, when you delve into the context of the Tribe of Lot's story, you find that the sexual encounters between individuals of the same sex involve coercion.
It was male-on-male rape.


It's not fair to draw parallels between that and two people of the same sex who are in love with each other.
Thank you for emphasizing that; it's a crucial aspect of our discussion. LOVE!
You've also directed two documentaries on this topic.
Amari
Muhsin Hendricks
THE RADICAL
A GAY IMAM'S CHOICE OF FAITH OVER FEAR
HUMAN RIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL BERLIN 2022
ENCOUNTERS Festival Selection 2022
WICKEDQUEER
OUT FILM FEST
In The Radical, I wanted to share my personal journey as an openly gay Imam, documenting the struggles, challenges, and ultimately my acceptance of my identity within the Muslim community.


Teilen
A JIHAD FOR LOVE
"Jihad for Love" explores the hidden lives of LGBTQIA+ individuals in Muslim-majority countries, shedding light on the often hidden and stigmatized lives of queer Muslims, and on their challenges in reconciling their identities with Islam's teachings and cultural norms.
Is this why you founded The Inner Circle?
The Inner Circle
Our Mission
A global Muslim community free from discrimination based on religion, sexual orientation and gender identity.
We aimed to build an inclusive global Muslim community, free from discrimination based on religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity, providing support to marginalized Muslims.
Thank you, Imam Muhsin! You've set the stage for our next speaker, who will delve deeper into this crucial topic of marginalization.


Amari
From South Africa to Lebanon, I'm thrilled to have Leyl joining us today. Leyl, please introduce us to Helem.
حلم HELEM
I woke up like this And FLAWLESS
Welcome to Helem's new digital platform
An online resource for information and engagement on queer rights and liberation in Lebanon and the Southwest Asia and North Africa regions.
Thank you, Amari, for extending the invitation to Helem to be part of this discussion.
Amari
Leyl
You know, Amari, Helem is the first LGBTQIA+ rights organization in the Arab world.
We lead the fight for the liberation of LGBTQIA+ and other people with non-conforming sexualities and/or gender identities in Lebanon and the SWANA region.
حلم HELEM
مرحبًا بك في منصّتنا


Amari
Leyl
Leyl, I've been following your incredible work, and I admire your commitment to advocating for marginalized groups.
But I'm curious, how do you navigate the intersection of religion in all of this?
Amari
That's an excellent question! Here's how we approach it: We closely examine how the government collaborates with religious leaders to marginalize certain individuals.
We led the campaign "Homophobia is Terrorism".
Homophobia is Terrorism
Helem strongly condemns anti-LGBTQIA+ rhetoric and attacks on LGBTQIA+ groups by religious leaders in Lebanon, including Dar el Fatwa, the Council of Islamic Scholars, and the Catholic Media Center.


You see, the campaign highlights the intersection between our existential battle as members of the LGBTQIA+ community with the struggles of many groups in Lebanon.
MEETING-CHAT
I am from Lebanon, and I see how the government is using all its repressive methods to distract us and pit us against each other.
Through their racist partners, they convinced many Lebanese that the Syrian refugees are the cause of the collapse, and that their forced deportation is the solution.
So, by pointing fingers at the most vulnerable communities, like migrant workers and Syrian refugees, they try to make it seem like their own failures are actually successes?
And with these politics, we see how the pace of inflammatory campaigns against the LGBTQIA+ community in Lebanon was escalated by religious authorities and extremist groups.
MEETING-CHAT
the government is using all its repressive methods to distract us and pit us against each other.
We see it all over. The state and religious leaders teamed up to manipulate rights discourses to marginalize different groups.


Leyl, I can see from the chat that what you're saying really resonates with our participants.
When it comes to state and religious institutions, it's crucial to understand the underlying structures.
To help us dive deeper into this, I'm delighted to introduce our next guest, Jasbir Puar, Professor and Graduate Director of Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers University.
Amari
Jasbir
Jasbir, it's truly a pleasure to have you here with us.
Thank you for the invitation, Amari!
Jasbir

Meanwhile in the chat room

MEETING-CHAT


LGBTQIA+ Muslims deserve to be heard and supported.


This goes against the teachings of Islam!


It's incredible to see this intersectional dialogue happening!


Why are we even having this discussion? It's a contradiction to be both Muslim and gay.


I appreciate the diversity of voices represented here.


I'm sorry, but Islam doesn't support homosexuality. This webinar is promoting something that goes against our faith.


It's crucial to recognize that there isn't a single 'Muslim' or 'LGBTQ+' experience.


This is just a Western influence corrupting our religious values.


As a queer Muslim, it's empowering to see others like me embracing their identities and navigating the complexities with grace and strength.


It's sad to see Muslims embracing such immoral lifestyles.

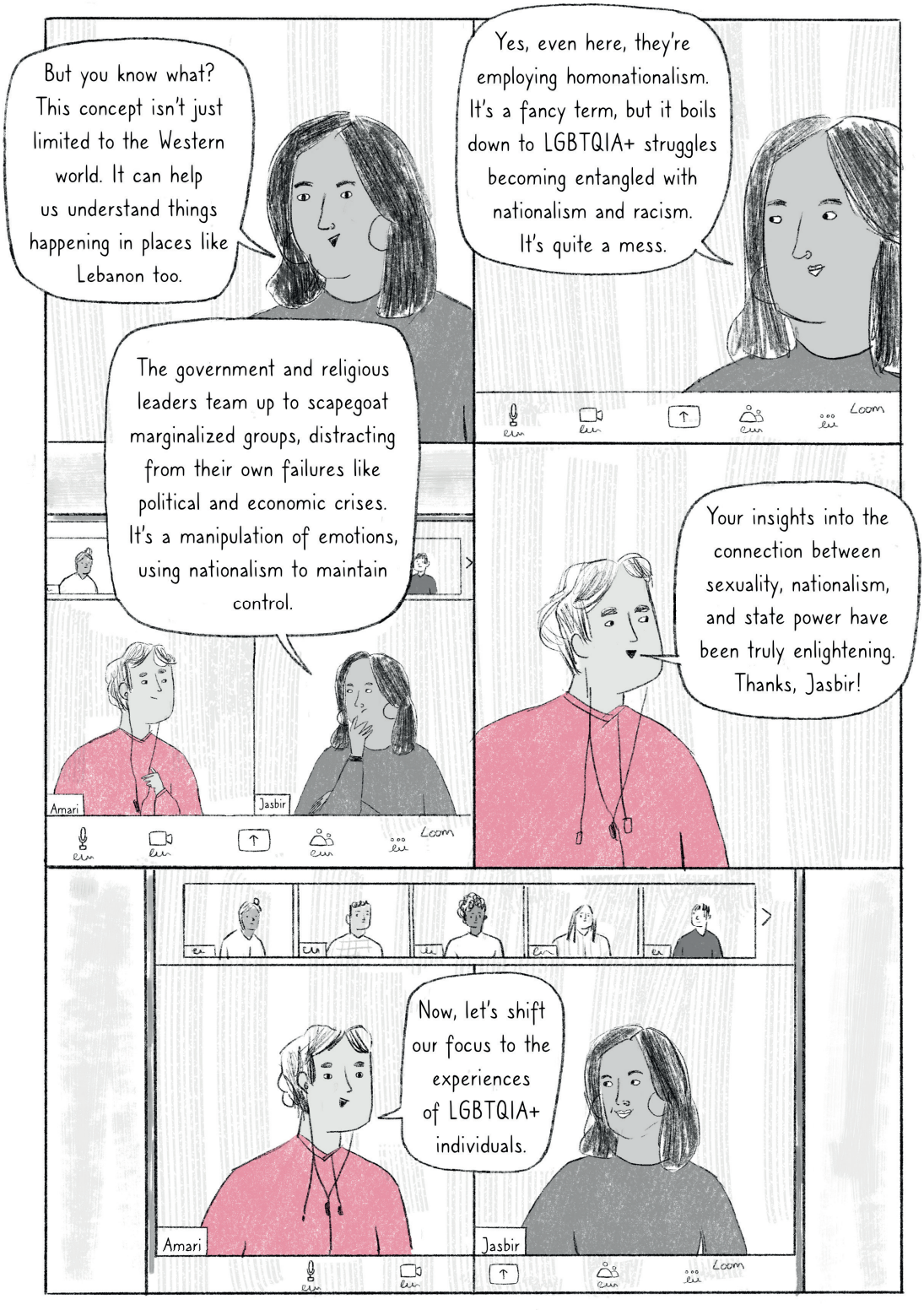

We must challenge the stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding LGBTQ+ individuals within the Muslim community.

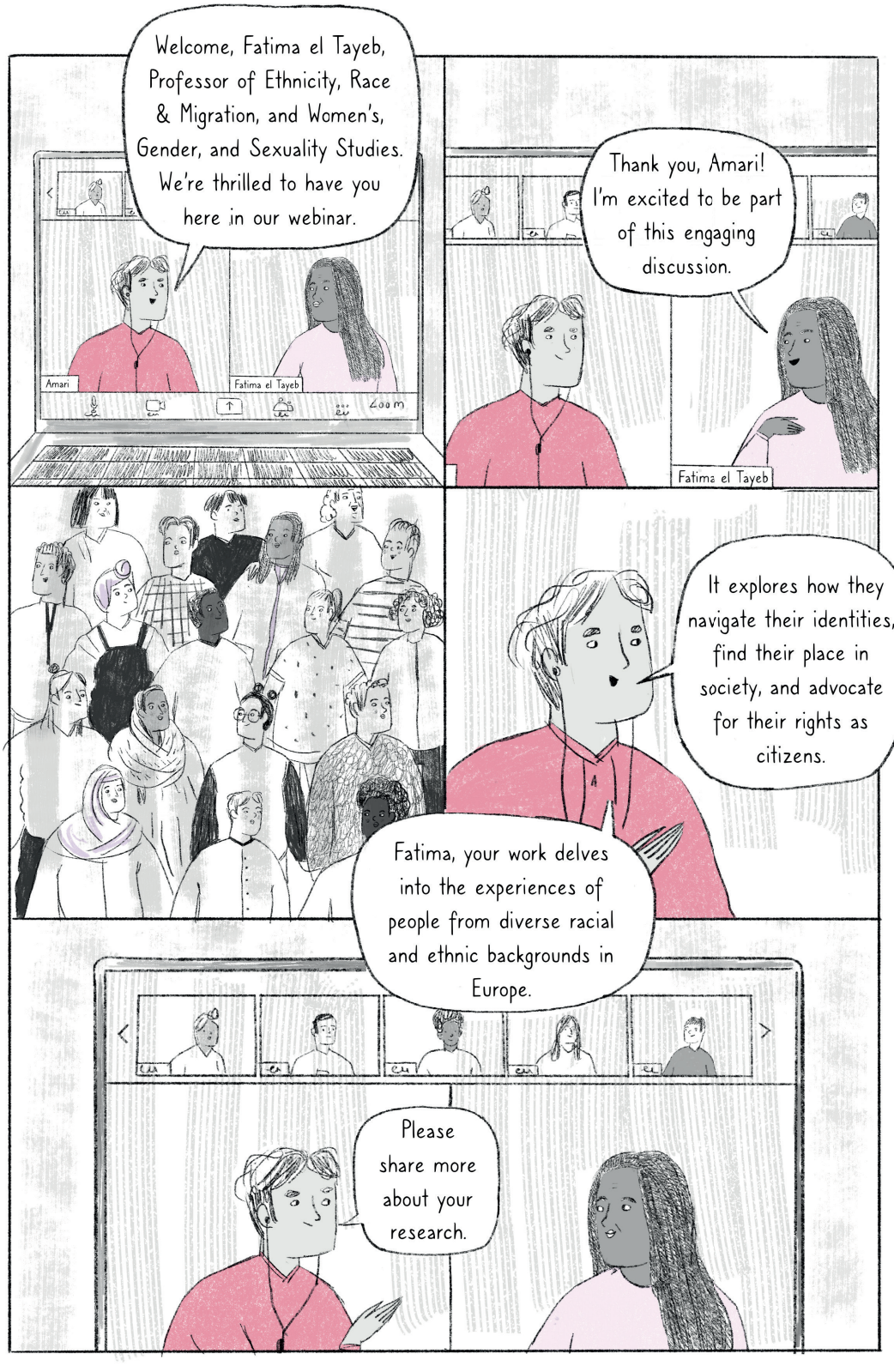

I'm disappointed to see so-called 'progressive Muslims' endorsing something that contradicts the Quran. This is a deviation from true Islam.

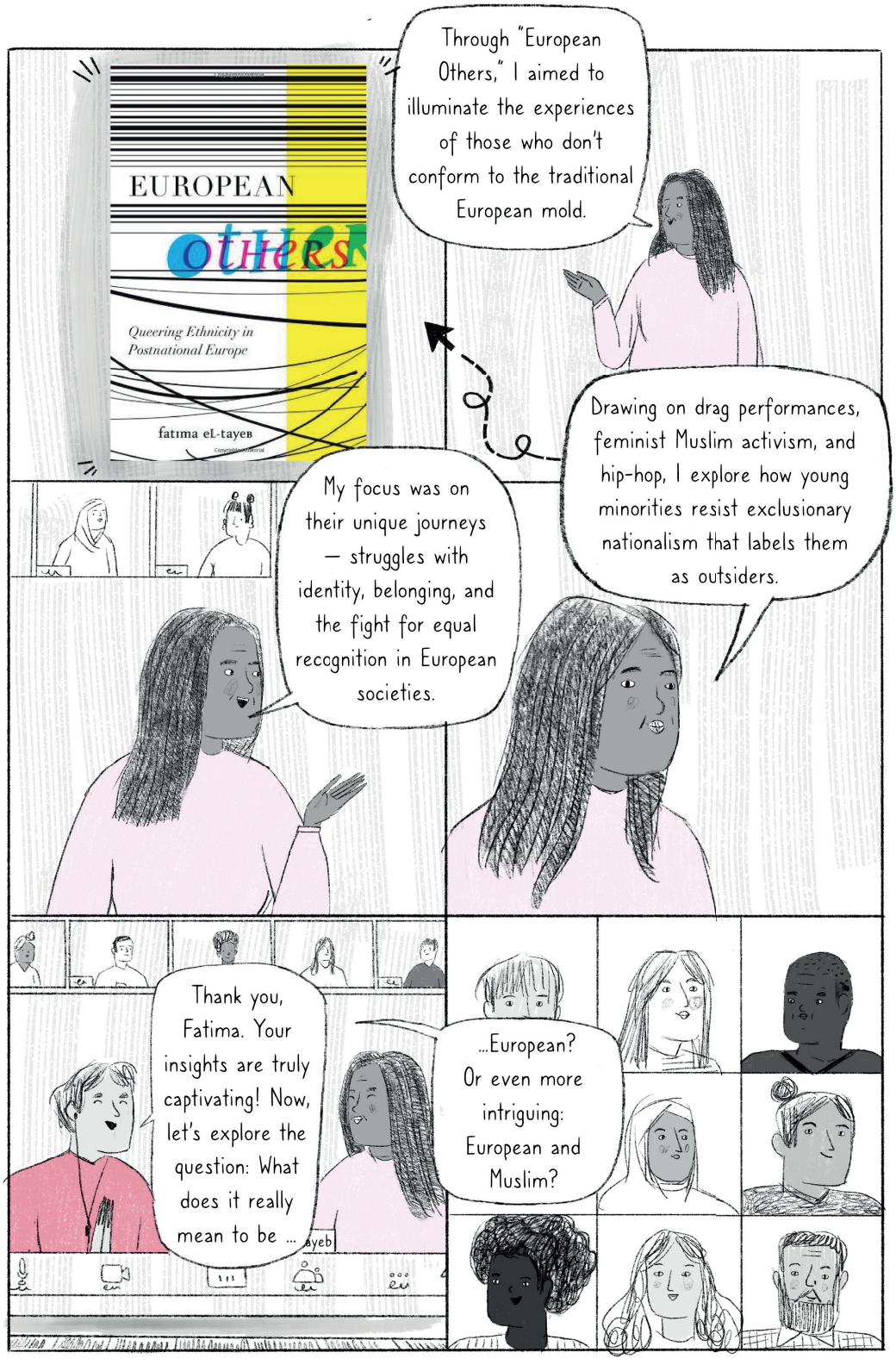

I've been struggling with reconciling my faith and sexuality, but this webinar has given me hope and a sense of belonging.

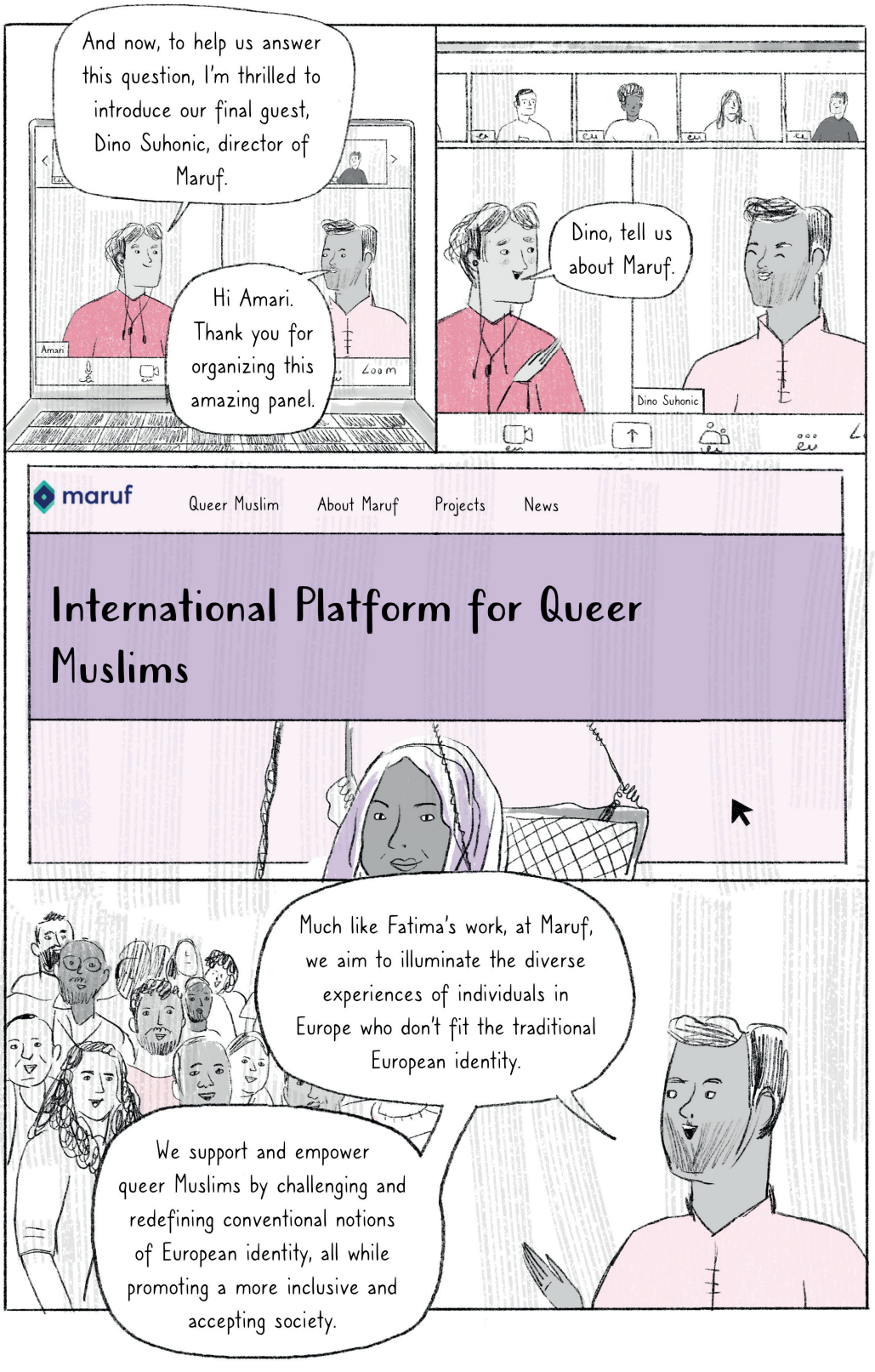

We need more inclusive spaces like this to address the unique experiences and needs of LGBTQIA+ Muslims.

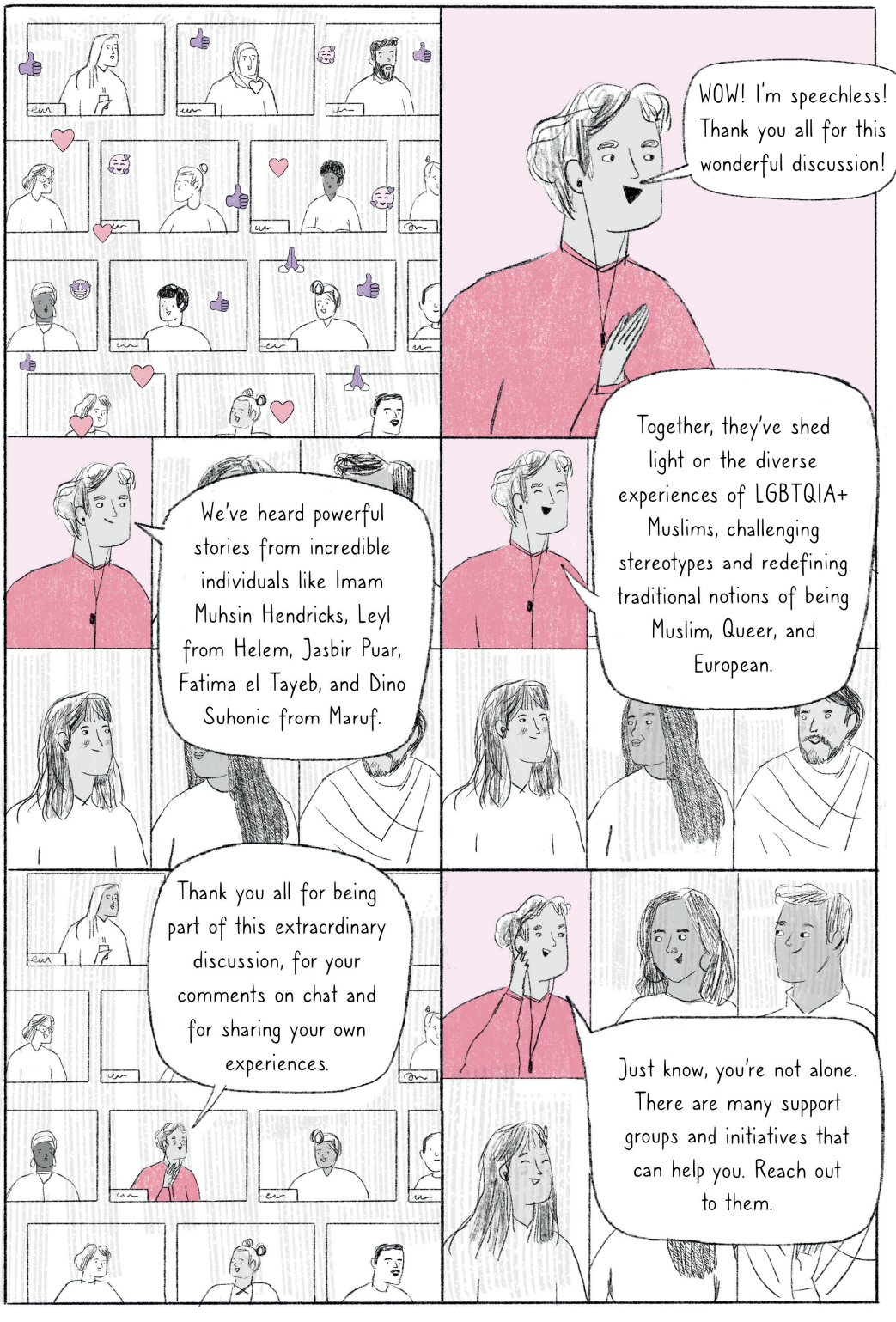

Jasbir, you've just heard about Helem's campaign and the government's manipulation of rights discourse.
Amari
Jasbir
Loom
TER-
ROR-
IST
AS-
SEM-
BLA-
GES
homonationalism in queer times
JASBIR K. PUAR
TENTH ANNIVERSARY EXPANDED EDITION
with a new foreword by Tavia Nyong'o and a postscript by the author
In your book, you discussed the concept of Homonationalism. Can we interpret what's happening in Lebanon and the SWANA region through the lens of Homonationalism?
That's a thought-provoking question. In my book, I explored how Western governments utilize LGBTQIA+ rights to advance their own agendas.
They transform the LGBTQIA+ community into a symbol of progress and inclusivity, all to bolster their national identity. It's an attempt to divert attention from their own issues and unjust policies.


But you know what? This concept isn't just limited to the Western world. It can help us understand things happening in places like Lebanon too.
Yes, even here, they're employing homonationalism. It's a fancy term, but it boils down to LGBTQIA+ struggles becoming entangled with nationalism and racism. It's quite a mess.
The government and religious leaders team up to scapegoat marginalized groups, distracting from their own failures like political and economic crises. It's a manipulation of emotions, using nationalism to maintain control.
Your insights into the connection between sexuality, nationalism, and state power have been truly enlightening. Thanks, Jasbir!
Amari
Jasbir
Loom
Now, let's shift our focus to the experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals.
Amari
Jasbir
Loom


Welcome, Fatima el Tayeb, Professor of Ethnicity, Race & Migration, and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. We're thrilled to have you here in our webinar.
Amari
Fatima el Tayeb
Zoom
Thank you, Amari! I'm excited to be part of this engaging discussion.
Fatima el Tayeb
It explores how they navigate their identities, find their place in society, and advocate for their rights as citizens.
Fatima, your work delves into the experiences of people from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds in Europe.
Please share more about your research.


EUROPEAN
OTHERS
Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe
fatima el-tayeb
Through "European Others," I aimed to illuminate the experiences of those who don't conform to the traditional European mold.
Drawing on drag performances, feminist Muslim activism, and hip-hop, I explore how young minorities resist exclusionary nationalism that labels them as outsiders.
My focus was on their unique journeys — struggles with identity, belonging, and the fight for equal recognition in European societies.
Thank you, Fatima. Your insights are truly captivating! Now, let's explore the question: What does it really mean to be ... ayeb
...European? Or even more intriguing: European and Muslim?


And now, to help us answer this question, I'm thrilled to introduce our final guest, Dino Suhonic, director of Maruf.
Hi Amari. Thank you for organizing this amazing panel.
Amari
Zoom
Dino, tell us about Maruf.
Dino Suhonic
maruf
Queer Muslim
About Maruf
Projects
News
International Platform for Queer Muslims
Much like Fatima's work, at Maruf, we aim to illuminate the diverse experiences of individuals in Europe who don't fit the traditional European identity.
We support and empower queer Muslims by challenging and redefining conventional notions of European identity, all while promoting a more inclusive and accepting society.


WOW! I'm speechless! Thank you all for this wonderful discussion!
We've heard powerful stories from incredible individuals like Imam Muhsin Hendricks, Leyl from Helem, Jasbir Puar, Fatima el Tayeb, and Dino Suhonic from Maruf.
Together, they've shed light on the diverse experiences of LGBTQIA+ Muslims, challenging stereotypes and redefining traditional notions of being Muslim, Queer, and European.
Thank you all for being part of this extraordinary discussion, for your comments on chat and for sharing your own experiences.
Just know, you're not alone. There are many support groups and initiatives that can help you. Reach out to them.

Homonationalism & Queer Feminism

This term was coined by Jasbir Kaur Puar, an American queer feminist and professor of Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers University in the USA. You ask, what is "queer feminism"?

Well, **queer feminism** (or queer theory, queer studies) explores the intersections of gender, sexuality, and other social identities. It challenges the notion that there are only two genders (male and female) and that individuals can only be attracted to the opposite gender. Queer feminists believe that gender can be more fluid, and individuals can identify as different genders or not strictly identify as either male or female. It also recognizes that people can be attracted to different genders, not just the opposite one. Queer feminism focuses on accepting and celebrating these differences, asserting that regardless of who one is or whom they love, they deserve to be treated with kindness and respect. It fights against discrimination and bullying based on an individual's gender or sexuality. Considering the framework of queer feminism, an exploration of Islam reveals how its teachings and values can find resonance within this perspective.

But let's return to the concept of **homonationalism**. As you hear the word, it combines two terms: "homo" and "nationalism." Jasbir Puar examines the connection between these two words. She argues that Western governments, such as Germany and the Netherlands, sometimes utilize or pretend to support the rights of LGBTQIA+ people within their own nations. They do this to enhance their own image and to criticize other countries, generally non-Western ones, that may not have the same level of acceptance or laws protecting LGBTQIA+ rights. Instead of genuinely caring about LGBTQIA+ rights, these Western governments may use it to portray other countries (and their people) as "homophobic" or "backward," claiming that their "culture" is incompatible with democracy. Additionally, some movements fighting for LGBTQIA+ rights in Western countries align themselves with nationalist ideas to promote their own countries. But this collaboration often excludes other groups of people seen as different from the majority of their country based on their ethnicity or religion. What happens is that these movements, while focusing on the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community, may overlook the rights of these other individuals. Moreover, homonationalism is problematic because it oversimplifies the struggles and complexities experienced by LGBTQIA+ individuals in non-Western cultures, perpetuating stereotypes, and misunderstandings, and fails to recognize that LGBTQIA+ rights movements and activism exist in various forms and contexts worldwide.

Chapter Nine
Memories and Manifestos: A Journey Continued

DOI: 10.5117/9789048568161-9



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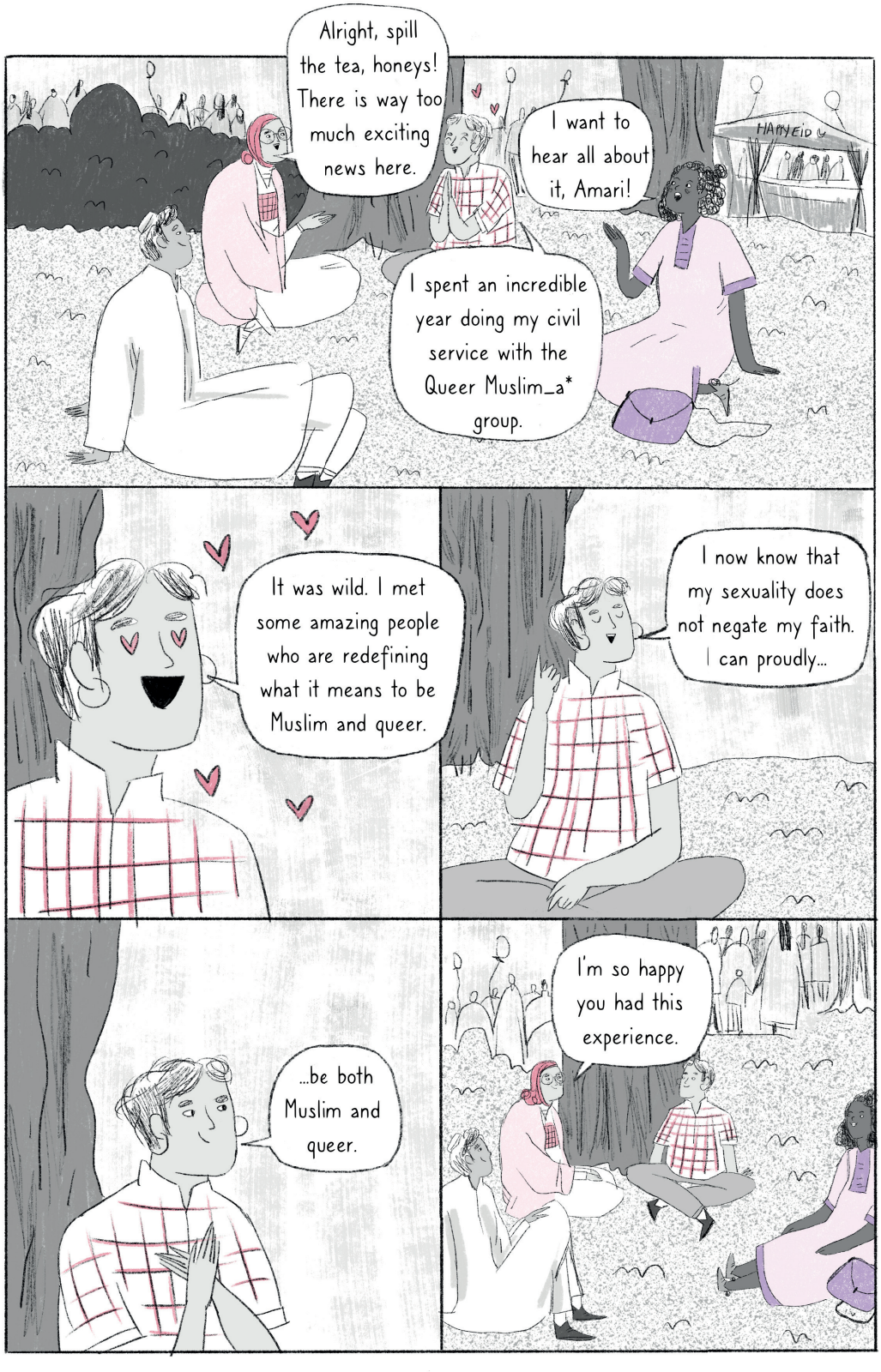
Eid-Fest
HAPPY Eid
Happy Eid
Eid MUBARAK


Ahhh, da kommt Hamza.
Yalla, bis später, Leute.
Baba, ich suche mal meine Freun*dinnen.
Geh ruhig habibti, ich bleib bei Nour. Ich weiß, du willst mit deiner Gang feiern.
Danke! Eid Mubarak!
TEA-CAKE-COFFEE-
Eid Mubarak, Leute! So schön euch alle zu sehen!
OMG! Es ist echt ein Jahr her, dass wir alle vier zusammen waren!
Ich weiß, ihr habt mich alle total vermisst.
Suchen wir mal ein ruhiges Fleckchen, bevor uns die Tanten mit Küssen und Fragen überhäufen.
Haha
Hehe
Absolut, Hamza! Ich hab' euch alle vermisst!


Alright, spill the tea, honeys! There is way too much exciting news here.
I want to hear all about it, Amari!
HAPPY EID
I spent an incredible year doing my civil service with the Queer Muslim_a* group.
It was wild. I met some amazing people who are redefining what it means to be Muslim and queer.
I now know that my sexuality does not negate my faith. I can proudly...
...be both Muslim and queer.
I'm so happy you had this experience.


What about you Hamza?
Good news, guys! I got accepted into the Architecture program!
Woohoo! Congrats, brother! I'm super proud of you!
YEEAH!
SCRATCH!
Wouldn't have made it without your support, guys!
And how's work at LegalEmpower?
My internship ends in three weeks.
You know, Amari? I also learned so much about our religion, its beauty and its potential for a just society. I've set my eyes on Law School.
Haha
Awesome! We'll probably need your legal expertise at some point to get us out of trouble, hahaha!


Mariama, your blog is pure gold! You're seriously talented! You should totally be a writer.
Scratch that — maybe a photographer too! Your photos are incredible!
Oh, I'm so glad you enjoyed it! I'm already itching to go traveling again.
CLICK
CLICK
The trip opened my eyes to so much, but it was especially helpful for grasping the reasons behind the way some things are today.


A couple of hours later
Hey, remember that last week at school?
Ah, yeah! The "Project Week" memories!
How could we forget your epic presentations on Islam and feminism? The teacher almost lost it!
HAPPY EID!
We've been through so much and learned a ton about ourselves, our communities, and society.
If only I knew back then what I know now...
Haha! What would you have done differently?
Exactly! With all this knowledge and experience, what do we envision for ourselves? For our community?
Tough question! But maybe we should think about it differently: Now that we know what we know, what do we want? What are our dreams?
I can feel it! A manifesto is brewing! Get ready to shake things up!



Dear reader,

As you turn the pages of our graphic novel, you'll see we've intentionally left the next six pages blank, and it's for a reason. We want you to be part of our journey and help us craft something extraordinary — a manifesto that encapsulates the wisdom we've gained from our and your experiences.

You see, this isn't just a passive story; it's an interactive exploration of life, society, and change. We invite you to embark on a journey of self-reflection and active engagement. Take a moment to look inward and contemplate how the themes we've encountered resonate with your own life.

With these empty pages, we encourage you to transform your thoughts and experiences into valuable knowledge. Share your visions for a world that's just and equitable, a society that thrives on acceptance and understanding, and a religion that remains dynamic, open to adaptation, and welcoming of fresh interpretations. Whether you're a young reader, a trainer, or a teacher, this space is yours to fill and shape a brighter future.

Through this invitation, we hope to spark conversations, ignite inspiration, and cultivate a community of change-makers. Let's empower one another to stand up for what we believe in and drive positive transformation.

So, seize the opportunity, pen your thoughts, and let your voice soar. Your manifesto will not only reflect your journey but also contribute to a collective movement for a better tomorrow.

Together, let's make a difference—one page, one reflection, and one dream at a time.

With hope and anticipation,

Mariama, Amari, Hamza & Zahra

Special Thanks

A big thank you to Irem, for embarking with me on this somewhat bumpy, but nonetheless exciting journey. You skillfully brought to life on paper what I envisioned in my mind. Working together on this book has been a real joy.

My heartfelt thanks to the editors at Amsterdam University Press, especially Jasmijn Boonacker for her unwavering support and guidance, and to Floor Appelman for her valuable contributions.

Thank you to Dr. Sheena Howard for your invaluable feedback on the narrative arc which helped me refine the manuscript.

To the following empowerment trainers and consultants, a big thank you for providing feedback on the book's concept and character of the protagonists: Shemi Shabat, Namarig Akbr, and Rafia Shahnaz. Your expertise greatly contributed to the development of the book.

To Dr. Rime Naguib and Dr. Celine Barry, thank you for your academic input in refining the concepts that guide the book, making sure that simplifying social concepts for young readers doesn't necessarily mean evading their complexities.

Thank you, Nicole Pearson, for the coaching sessions and insightful questions that helped crystallize and build the story.

Thank you to Prof. Tuba Isik for your input and highlighting aspects of Islamic studies that I missed.

Special thanks to the amazing artists who generously granted permission for the inclusion of their remarkable work in this book. Thank you to Usarae Gul, Helen Zughaib, Soufeina Hamed, and Muslim Futurism Collective, for your invaluable contributions.

Special thanks to the Dutch Research Council (NWO). Your financial support made it possible to have this book available as open access, reaching a wide readership across different societal strata.

Thank you to Nadine Hattom for your enduring conversations, listening to my concerns, and providing calm and focus. Thanks for showing me new possibilities of friendships.

A special thank you to my partner and my friend, Brian Cusack, for your constant love and support.

And for the love of my life, Tamer, thank you for being my inspiration. This book has been written for you.

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