

# THE SURVIVORS

THE  
SURVIVORS  
GULAG



# THE SURVIVORS. GULAG

**Graphic novels**

**Memories of mass  
repression victims**

**A project of the GULAG History Museum**

**GULAG  
History  
Museum**

**MEMORY  
FUND**

## GULAG History Museum

**This museum** is one of the memorial museums dedicated to the history of a system of corrective-labor camps in the USSR.

The new permanent exhibition describes the fates of people who suffered this tragedy. An interactive map of camps shows the scale and geography of the GULAG camps. VR offers visitors the chance to look inside the preserved camp infrastructure.

Employees of the Museum recorded extensive video interviews with victims of repression and their relatives. This project, called **“My GULAG”** is available online at [mygulag.ru](http://mygulag.ru)

Address: **1-y Samotchny pereulok, 9/1, Moscow 127473**

Reception office: **+7 495 621-73-10**

Tour booking: **+7 495 681-88-82**

[info@gmig.ru](mailto:info@gmig.ru)

[gmig.ru](http://gmig.ru)

## MEMORY FUND

**The Fund** was established in 2016 in the framework of the State Policy Concept for Perpetuating the Memory of the Victims of Political Repression approved by the Government of the Russian Federation on August 15, 2015.

The Fund accumulates donations for the support of awareness-building and educational programs, scientific research and measures to perpetuate the memory of the victims of repression.

As the first project, the Fund built a national monument to the victims of mass repression — the “Wall of Grief.”

[memoryfund.ru](http://memoryfund.ru)



**THE SURVIVORS** — memories of victims of mass repression in the form of graphic novels. This project builds awareness of tragic events in the history of Russia among the youth, enabling them to feel the pain and horror of those unjust times so that everyone could see how important it is to prevent this from happening again.

The protagonists of these graphic novels are the people whose stories are told through the new permanent exhibition of the GULAG History Museum. Their memories were illustrated by four illustrators.

This project was developed by the GULAG History Museum in cooperation with the BBDO Moscow creative agency and launched with support from the Memory Fund and the funds gathered at Planeta.ru crowdfunding platform.

GULAG is an acronym for the

# Chief Administration of Corrective-Labor Camps and Colonies

## The GULAG stands for

1. a part of the state mechanism, a government-bureaucratic institution.
2. a principle of confinement area organization, a “huge country” with its own customs, moral code, specific socioeconomic relations and even a judicial and legal system.

Officially, **the GULAG** existed for

**27 years**

1929

1956

A network of labor camps for people convicted of domestic crimes, felons and political prisoners that started to develop in the USSR in 1929 and over the 1930s.

Deprived of freedom, rights and adequate living conditions, gaunt convicts were forced to reclaim hard-to-reach lands, fell timber, mine coal and gold, build railways, canals, power stations and even towns.

For more than 20 years of the GULAG existence, approximately twenty million people passed through the GULAG prisons and camps. Every 1 out of 10 prisoners remained there forever.

Over time, the word “GULAG”, which initially stood for the Chief Administration of Camps, became an ominous symbol of lawlessness, life on the verge of death, backbreaking labor and deprivation of human rights.

# My dear Inna...

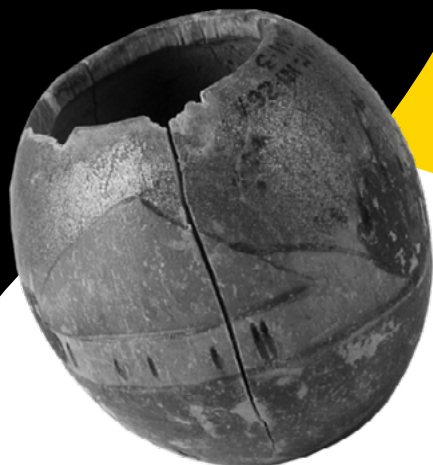
**Boris Zhelezovsky**

**1901**

Grodno

**1943**

Knyazhpogost  
(Komi Republic)



Fought for the Red Army during the Civil War. Took part in the Battle of Crimea. Transferred to the reserve for health reasons.

Completed accounting classes, worked at the Apakov tram depot, from 1935 — accountant at the sales department of the Krasny Oktyabr confectionery factory.

Arrested in 1938. Sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment for “anti-Soviet activism.”

Worked at the camp as accountant. Frequently exchanged letters with his daughter trying to take part in her upbringing.

Died in 1943 at the Ust-Vym camp of cachexia.

His daughter Inna became a doctor and worked in healthcare for more than 40 years.

A jar for lollipops, the Krasny Oktyabr factory.

From the presents of Boris Zhelezovsky to his daughter Inna.

Illustrator  
**Konstantin Chirkov**



An interview with  
[Inna Zhelezovskaya](#)

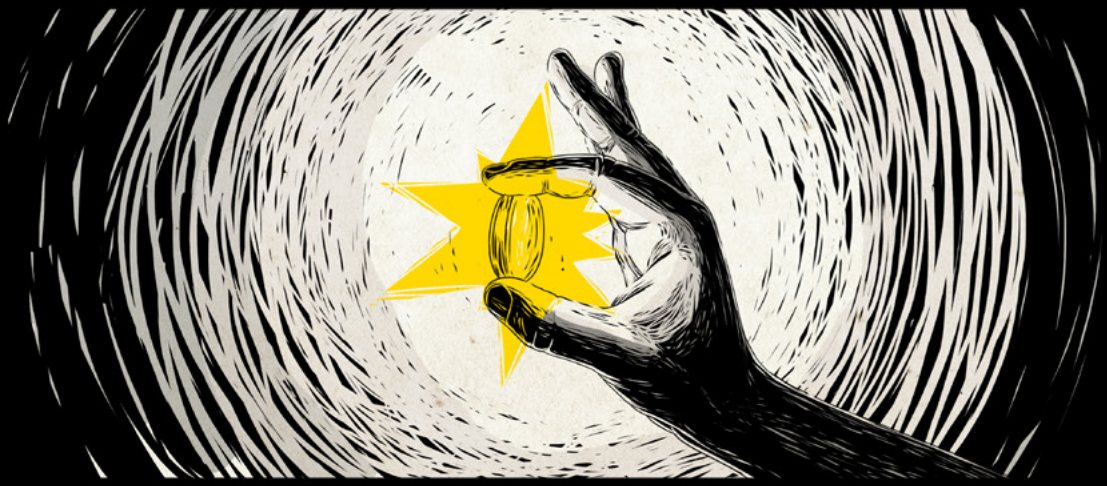




My dad worked at the Krasny Oktyabr confectionery factory.



I still have a jar for lollipops that he brought from work to me and MUM.



This jar  
is like  
a portal to  
the past.  
To the  
time  
when  
dad was  
with us.





Feels like I hear  
dad's voice again.



I remember him making a dress for me and staying in another  
room with mum waiting for me.



Dad told me "Don't spin, little fidget!" all the time. He would take  
My Measures and laugh kindly. "Watch out for the needle!"







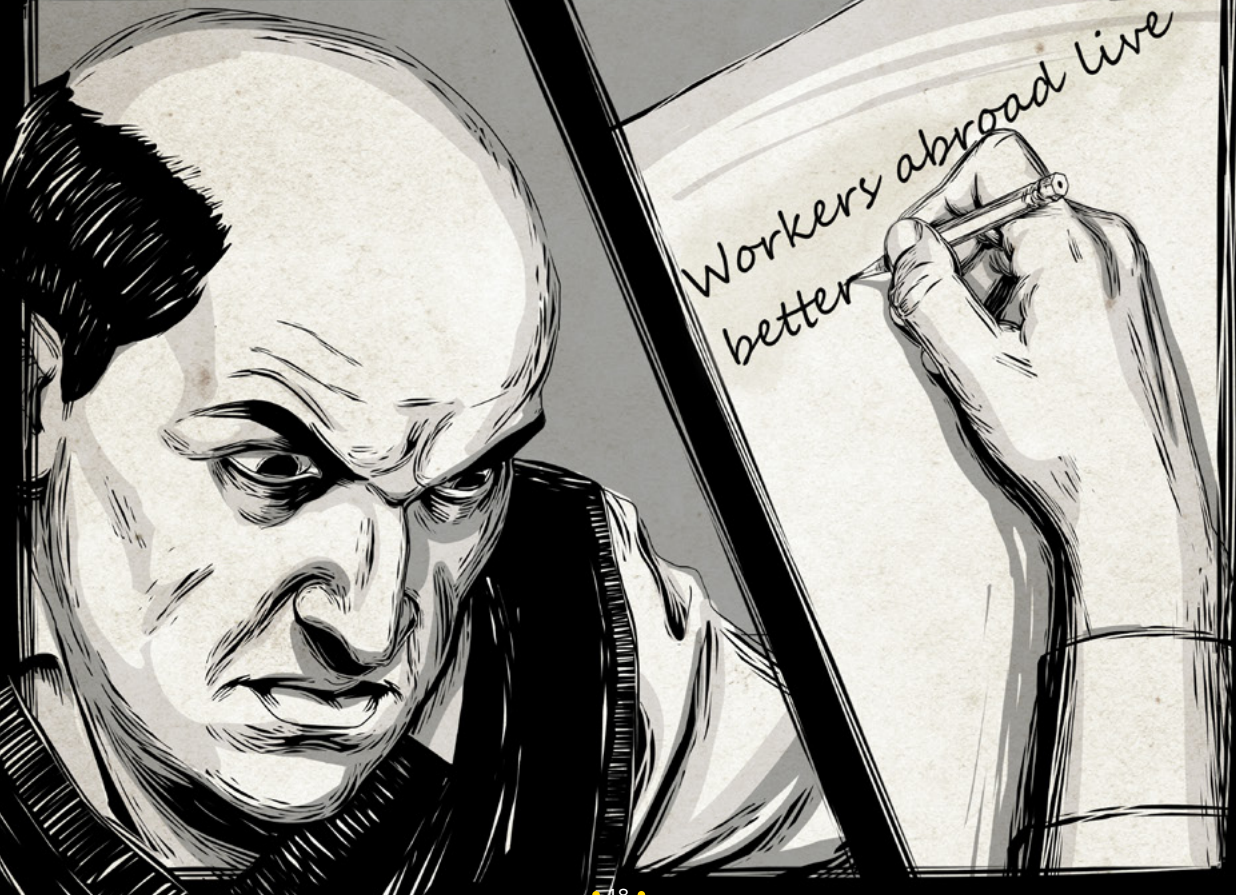
Him and mum used to sing together a lot. Mum would play the piano and he would start his favorite song: "Girls, pray tell your friend that I can't sleep nights and dream of her..."



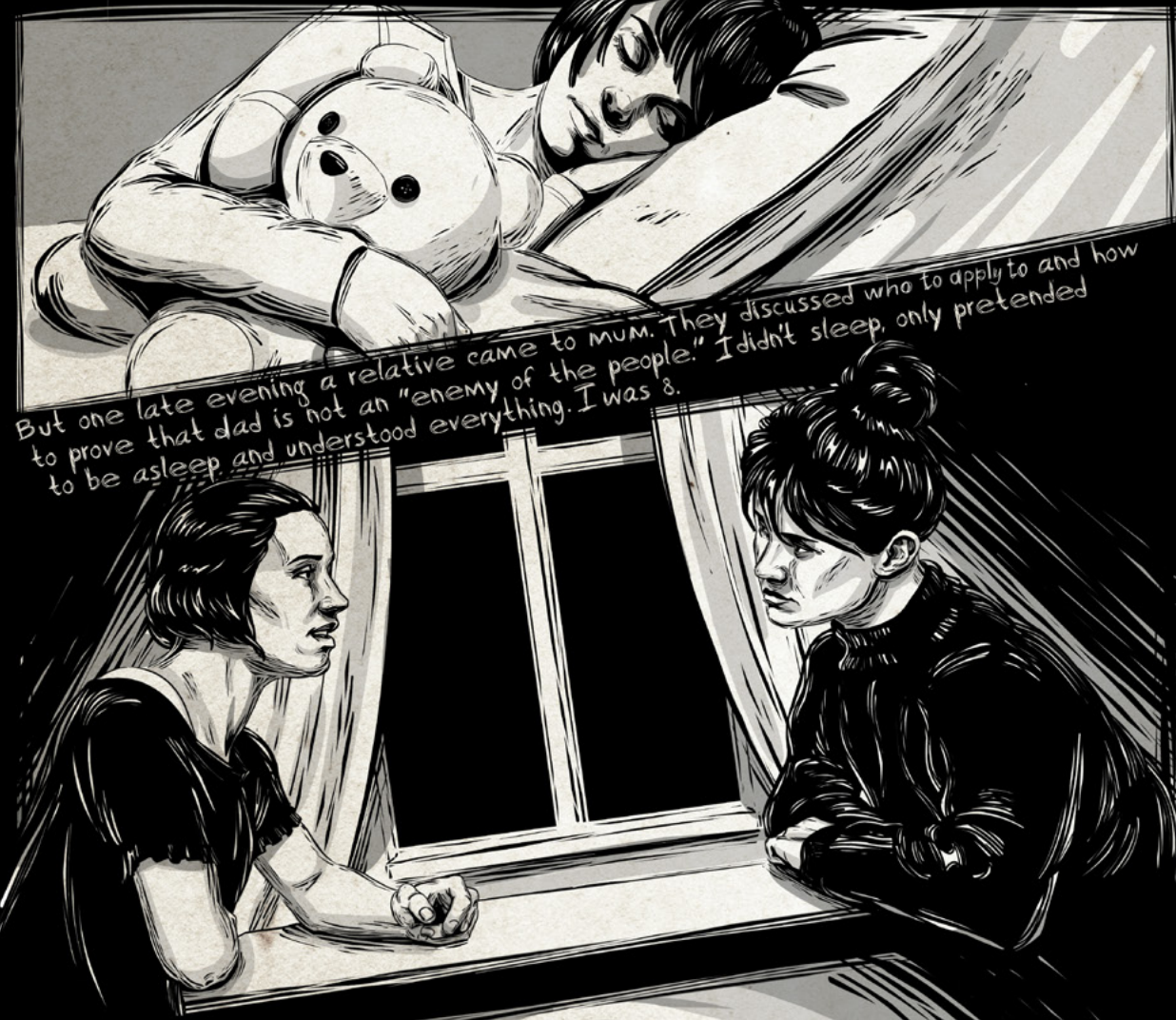
Mum used to scold him for his sharp tongue. At work, dad always stood against those managers whom he considered dishonest.



One day he even said that „workers abroad live better than here.“ This is why he was reported to the authorities.



They arrested dad in the night, when I was sleeping. In the morning mum told me that dad went on a business trip.



But one late evening a relative came to mum. They discussed who to apply to and how to prove that dad is not an "enemy of the people." I didn't sleep, only pretended to be asleep and understood everything. I was 8.





I'm carrying yours with your mum's,  
and they are always with me.  
Write to me how you study and if I can  
write to you in cursive.

Kiss you strongly

Your DADDY

November 5, 1938

Dad wrote to me from the camp. When I was reading those letters, I visualized him the way I remembered him: as a sturdy and strong man.

At first, dad would write in block letters and very legibly, so I could read by myself.



Then he started writing to me like to an adult, sent me assignments and reminded me to do physical exercises.

new  
after the holidays,  
Read old classics: Pushkin,  
Gogol, Turgener, Nekrasov.  
Send me your photo.  
Kiss you strongly  
your daddy

Shortly before  
his death dad  
was robbed, and  
he wrote to us:

Little Inna, don't worry and  
don't be afraid! Believe me,  
the worst thing for me is losing  
your and mum's photos.







of your husband and must do this.  
 Your husband Boris died on the first  
 of April at 8 o'clock in the evening.  
 He died of his heart disease.  
 Throughout his last three days he  
 already had no



Dad always cared and worried about me and MUM,  
 tried to guard us from everything.



Dad, I will become a doctor to cure people!





**More than  
20000000  
people**

**perished of hunger and disease  
at camps, penal colonies and prisons  
throughout the years of existence  
of the GULAG.**

# Remain human

**Elena Markova**  
**1923**  
Kyiv



Finished school in Krasnoarmeysk (now Pokrovsk, Ukraine) in 1941. The city was occupied by the Germans shortly after that.

In 1943, helped wounded Soviet soldiers during the first attempt to liberate Krasnoarmeysk. When the city was retaken by the Germans, she started working at the employment service and helped forge documents for encircled Red Army soldiers.

Arrested as a Nazi accomplice after the ultimate liberation of the city.

Sentenced to 15 years of penal labor and sent to the Vorkuta camp in 1944.

Completely rehabilitated in 1960. Later became a prominent expert in cybernetics.

One of the textbooks Elena Markova used to study at the camp having become a nurse in 1951 after having worked at a mine.

Provided by the Memorial Research Information Center.

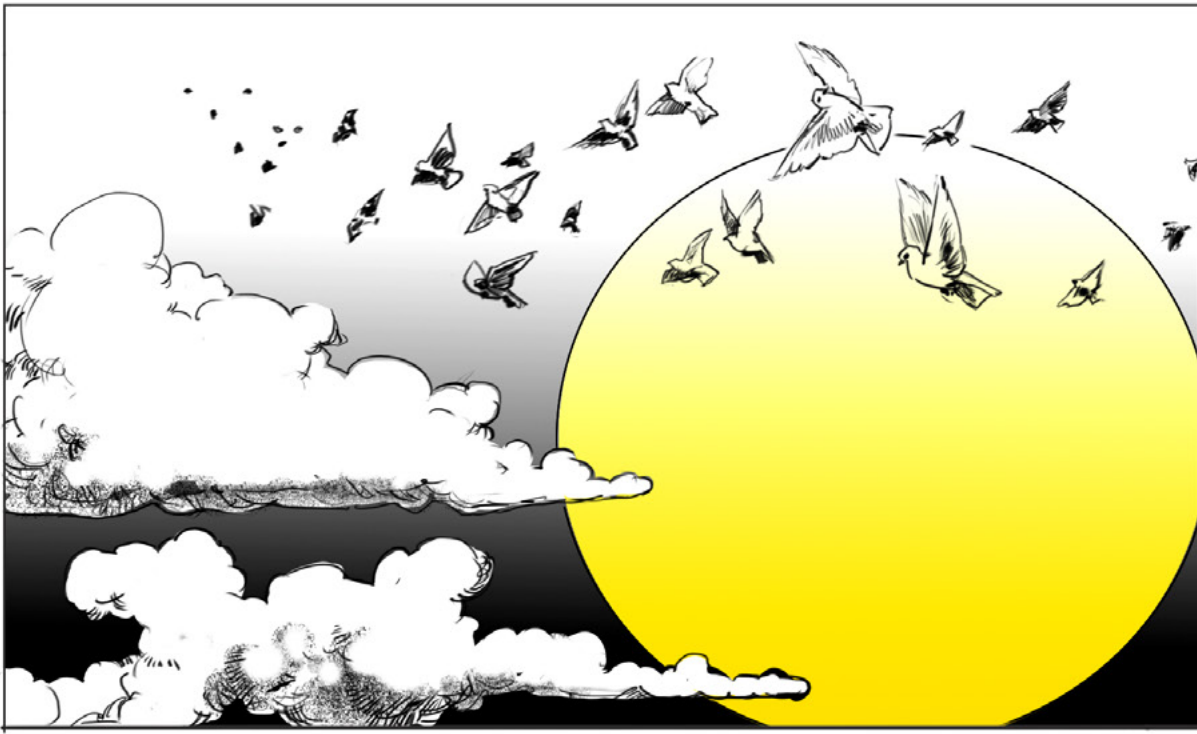
Illustrator  
**Dmitry Osetrov**



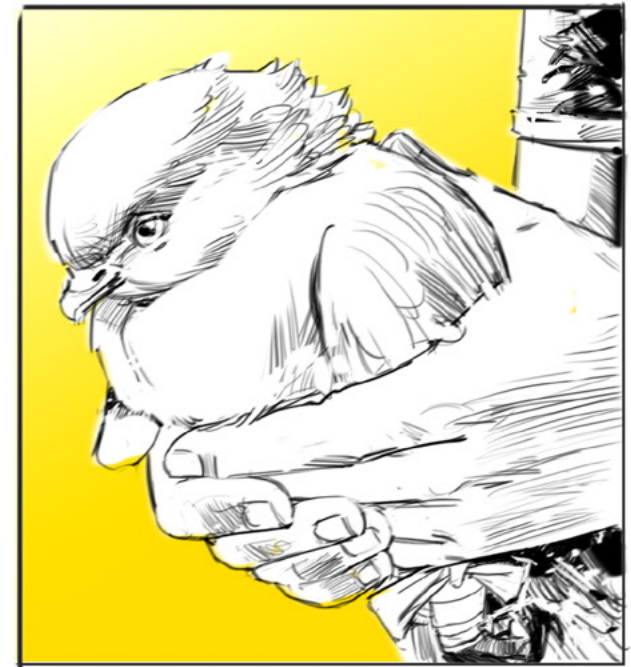
[An interview with Elena Markova](#)

Winter of 1943. Hospital workers asked me to join the German public employment service and get identity documents for Red Army soldiers in hiding.





I managed to get documents and save everyone.



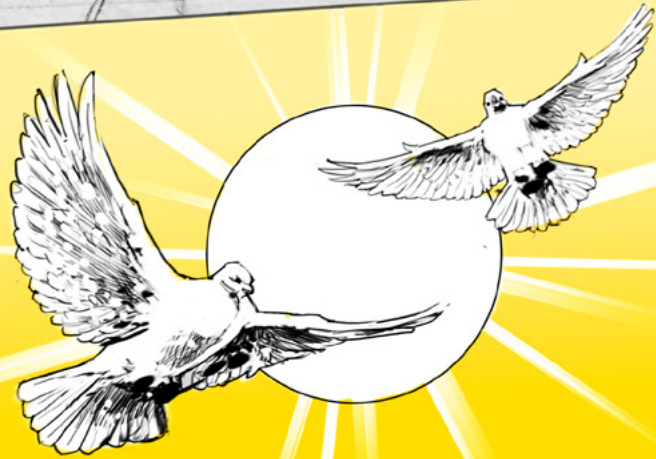


When the city was liberated, I was sentenced to 15 years of penal labor for collaborating with the Germans.



In response to her plea for help, my mum got a letter from the hospital's chief officer.

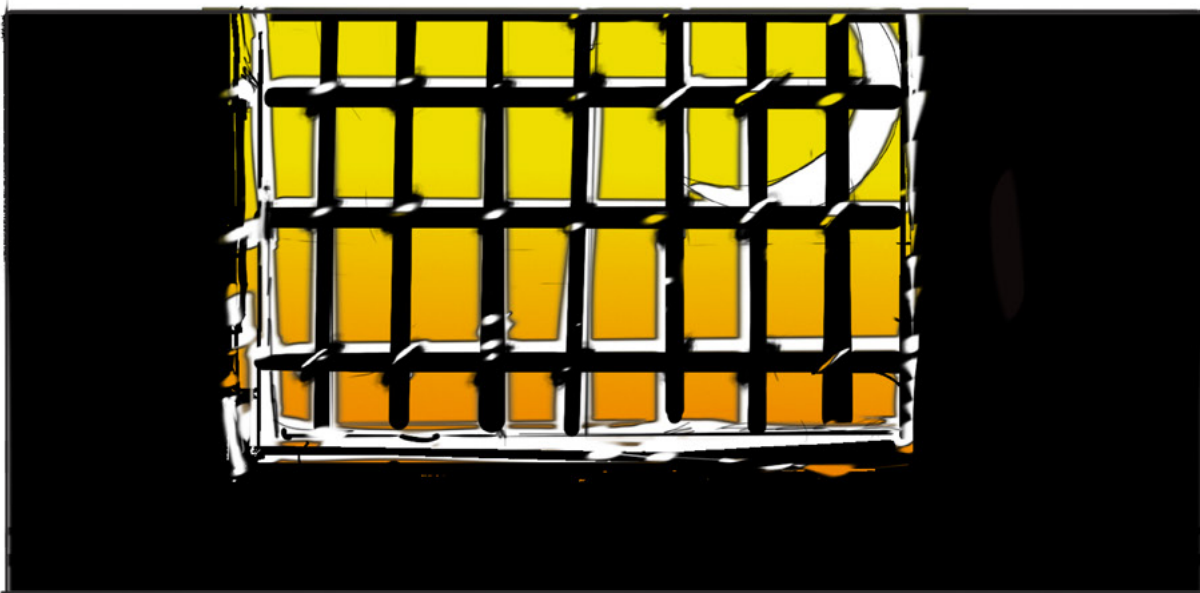
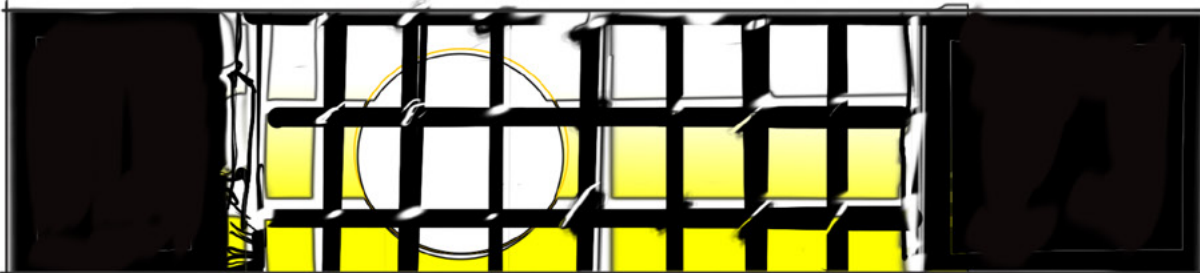
Здравствуйте! уважаемая В.М.  
очень рад, что получили от Вас  
сегодня письмо. Благодарю.  
Правда, очень жаль, что Лена  
попала в нехорошее помещение,  
из которого в данное время ей



мне забвент от ее честности  
в работе, где она несомненно  
проявит себя, ведь она талант-  
ливая, энергичная, осведомлен-  
ная, которую она доверяла, ей  
будет непривлема.

Своей жизнью отвечает обя-  
зан и Леночки спасибо за  
внимание, благодарю.





They didn't allow me to see mum before being transported to the North.



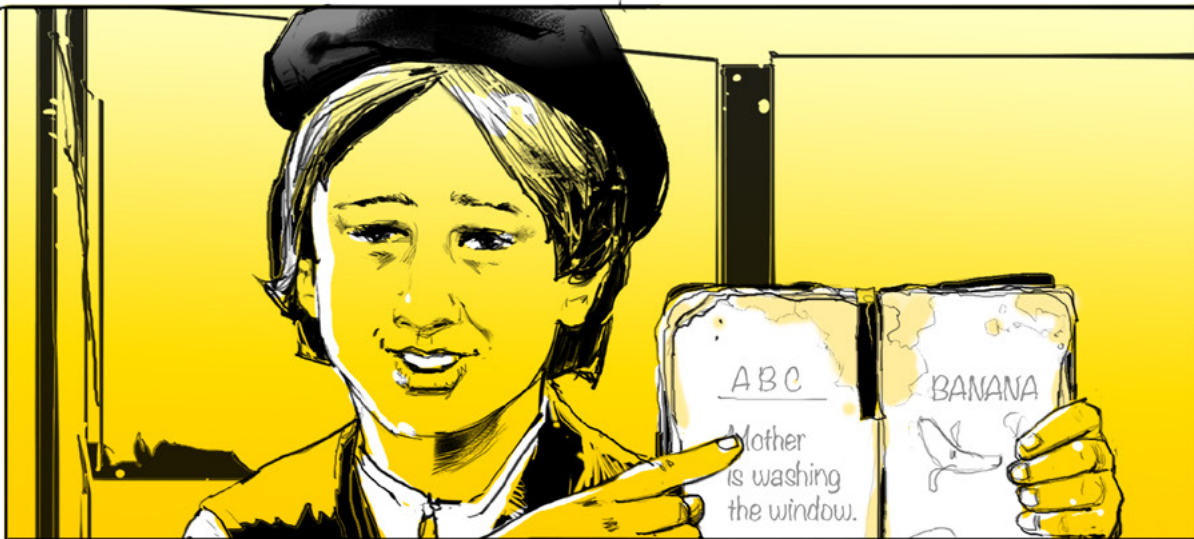
I ended up in the penal department of the Vorkuta camp to do backbreaking work in coal mines. I tried to resist becoming a dull soulless creature.







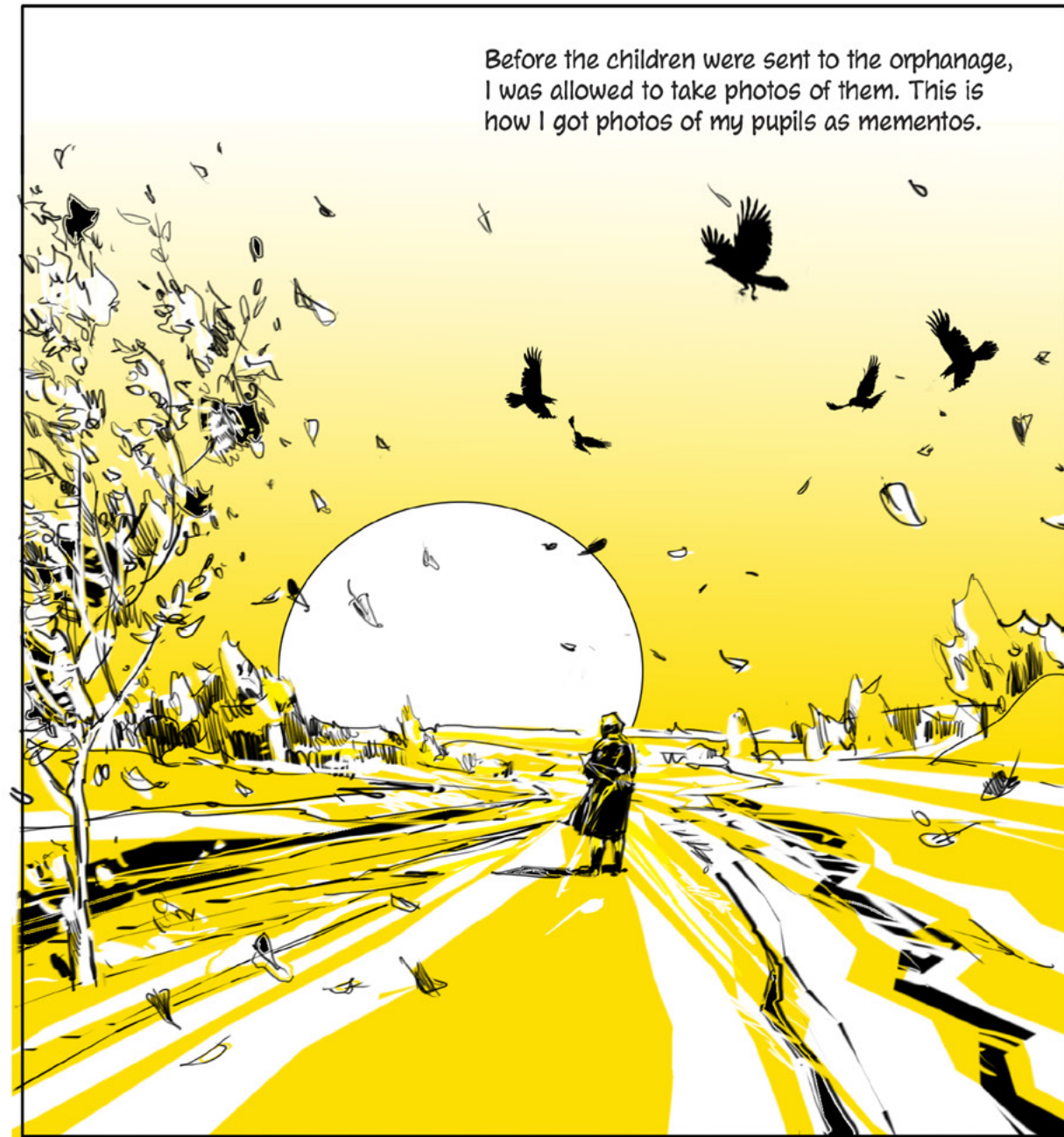
The camp authorities were utterly puzzled that the imprisoned women would resolve to give birth. When the number of little prisoners had increased, they had to allocate barracks for them, and I became an educator.



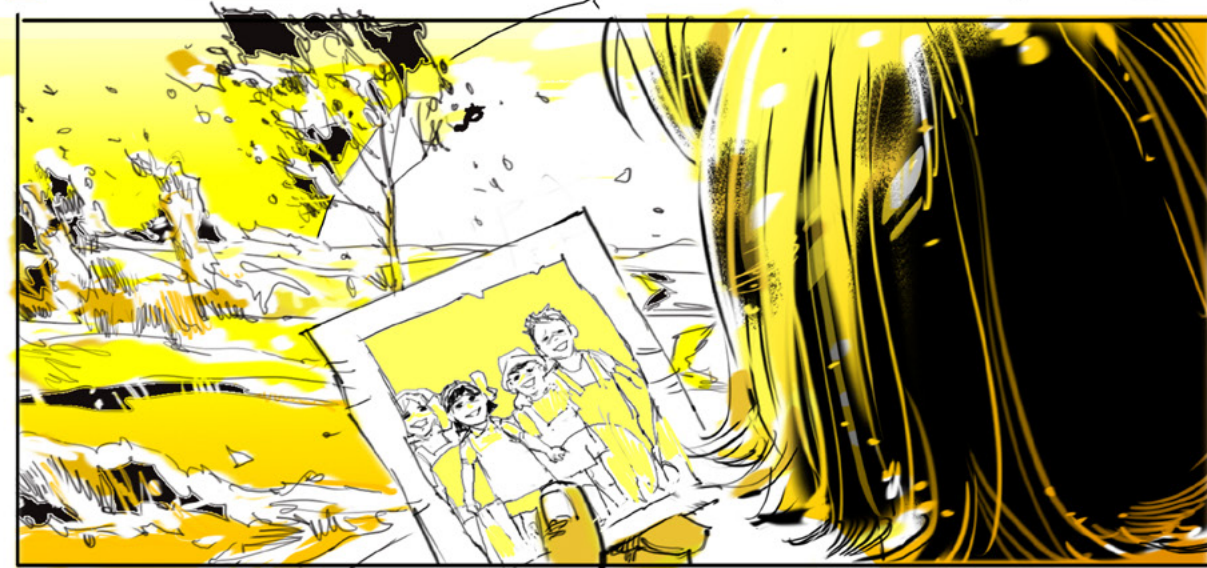
I wrote to my mum, and she sent me kids' books. By reading them, the children stepped over the barbed wire in their mind's eye.





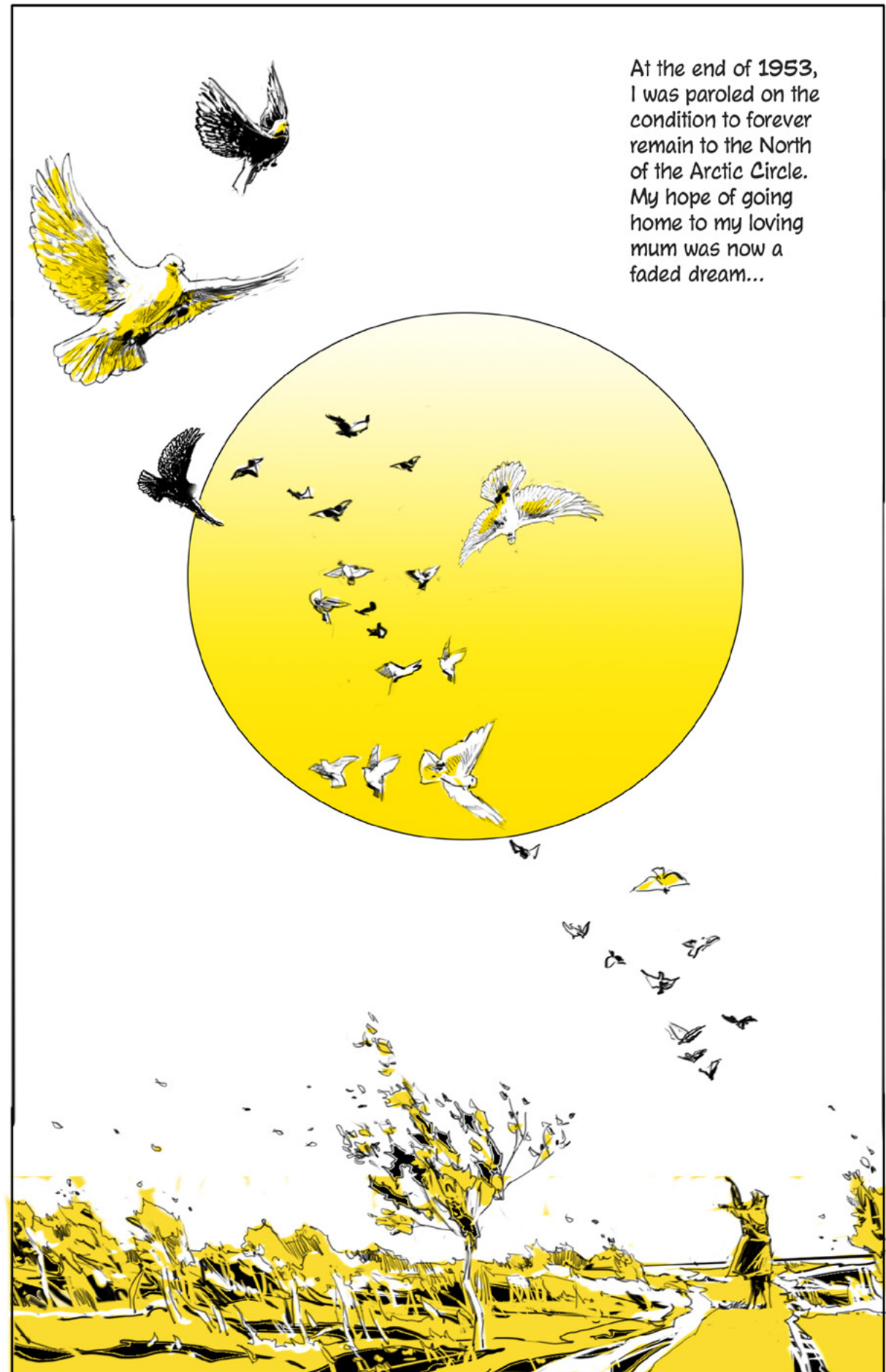
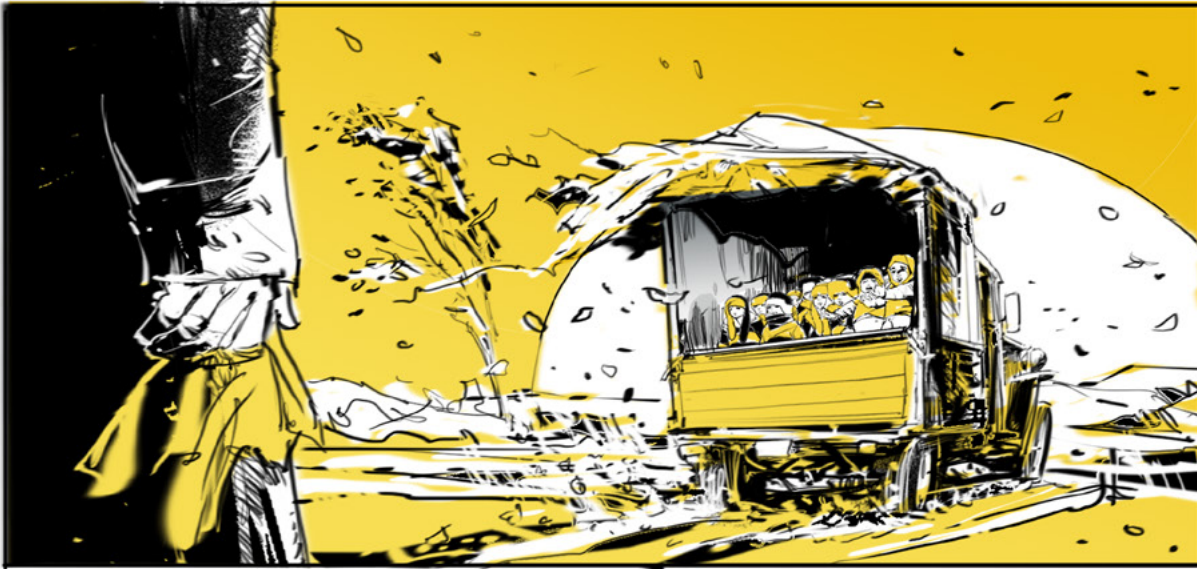


Before the children were sent to the orphanage, I was allowed to take photos of them. This is how I got photos of my pupils as mementos.





When they lined the kids up to take them out of the camp, the mothers rushed to them, screaming. The guards had to tear the children away and take them out in their arms.



At the end of 1953, I was paroled on the condition to forever remain to the North of the Arctic Circle. My hope of going home to my loving mum was now a faded dream...



When I finally met my relatives after 17 years of separation, mum gave me the sheets with my poems illegally ferried from the camp.



Plunged in the dark,  
We were looking for a ray of light  
To stay afloat  
And remain human  
Despite the loss of heart!



**Approximately  
339 000  
people**

**were sentenced to penal labor for treason.**

**Only 15% of them actually took part in Nazi atrocities or served in counter-insurgency squads in any capacity.**

**More than  
280 000 people  
were punished  
undeservingly.**

# My dad, Panteleimon Kazarinov

## Panteleimon Kazarinov

**1885**

Irkutsk

**1937**

Sandarmokh area  
(Republic of Karelia)



Expelled from a theological seminary in 1905 for "revolutionary sentiments."

Graduated from the law school of the Saint Petersburg University in 1911.

After the Civil War, left the public service and committed himself to exploring Siberia. Oversaw the creation of the Siberian Soviet Encyclopedia in 1927–1933.

In 1933, sentenced for "preparation to separation of Siberia." Sent to the Solovetsky Special Designation Camp.

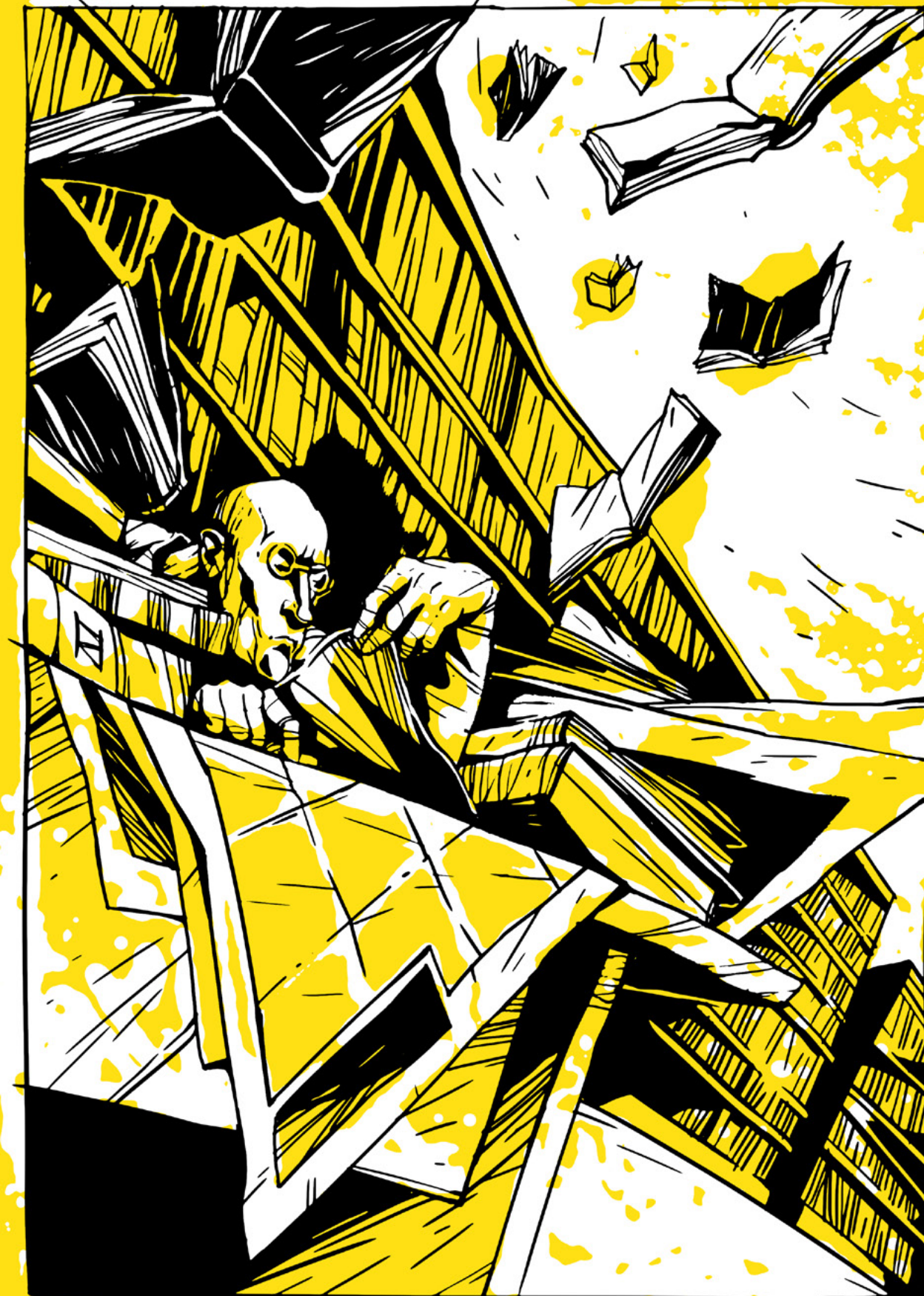
Executed by a firing squad in 1937.

His son Vladimir would later become a geologist and make a significant contribution to the discovery of oil and gas fields in Siberia.

A paperweight made by Panteleimon Kazarinov.

Provided by the Novosibirsk Regional Research Library.

Illustrator  
**Sofiya Elovikova**  
Pic-o-Matic



My father, Panteleimon Kazarinov, was Chairman of the Siberian Geographical Society and Professor at the Irkutsk University. Prior to the arrest, he was completely engrossed in publishing the Siberian Soviet Encyclopedia.



Christmas used to be a special day. Thanks to dad's efforts and skills, it remains one of the brightest memories of my childhood.

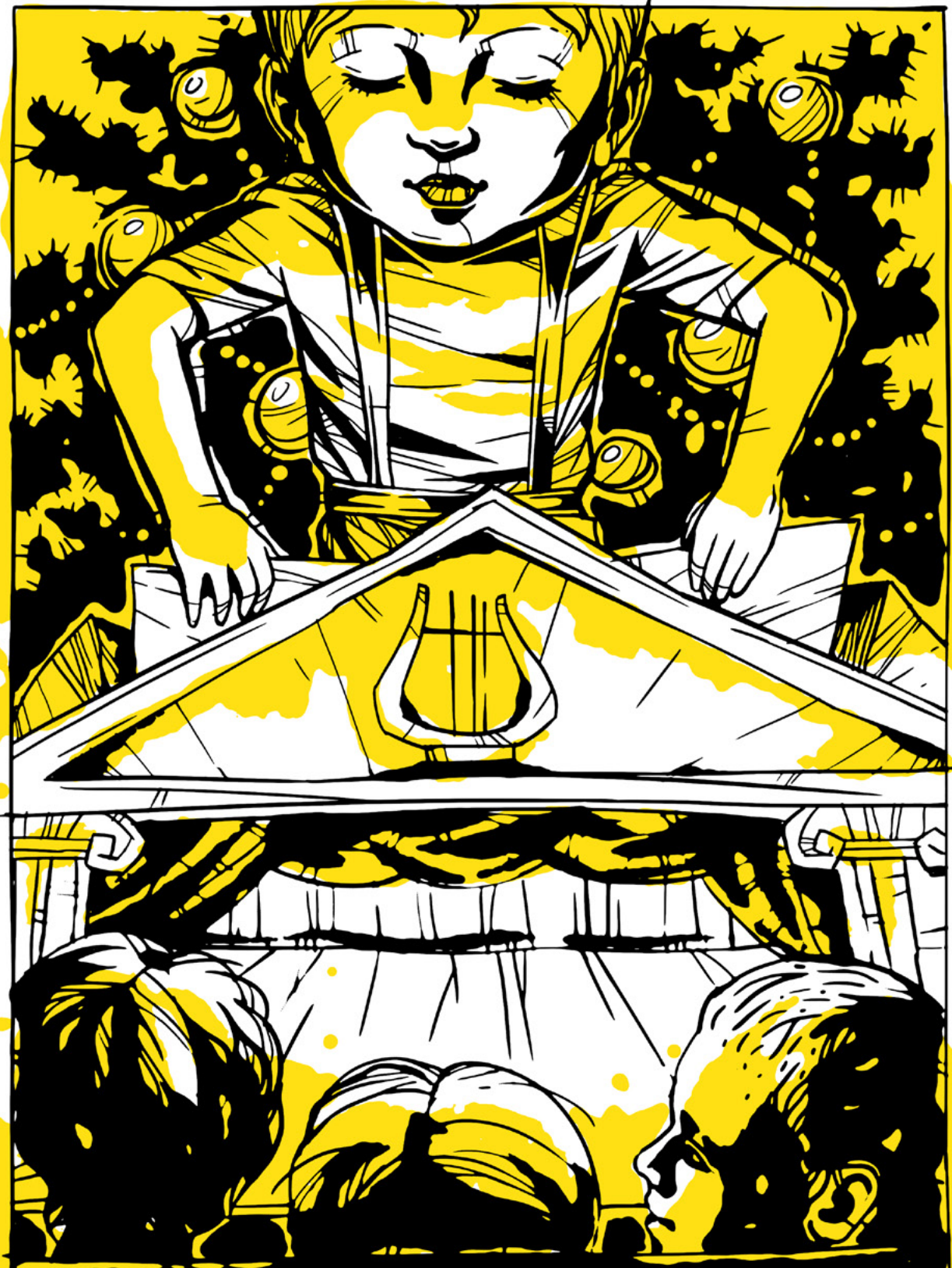
Dad drew well and made most of the presents for us by himself.



Once Zhenya and me got Medieval-style armour — swords, helmets, shields.



The most memorable present was a toy theater that dad made for us. It was a box with an open top, and its walls were held together with strings. The front wall was taller and ornamented: there was a triangle at the top supported by pillars on the sides. In the middle there was a sliding curtain.



I also got a clipped-out typographic panorama — Ivan Susaniin and the Poles in the forest. You could install the panorama into the theater and then draw the curtain to show it. I was so proud when I would draw my theater's curtain in front of the guys next door.



Soon after Christmas dad was arrested. They kept searching our home from eight in the evening till seven in the morning.



Dad's table and bookcase were tightly filled with papers and books, and it took the officers a lot of time to search through it. All the while dad and mum remained sitting on the black Viennese couch.

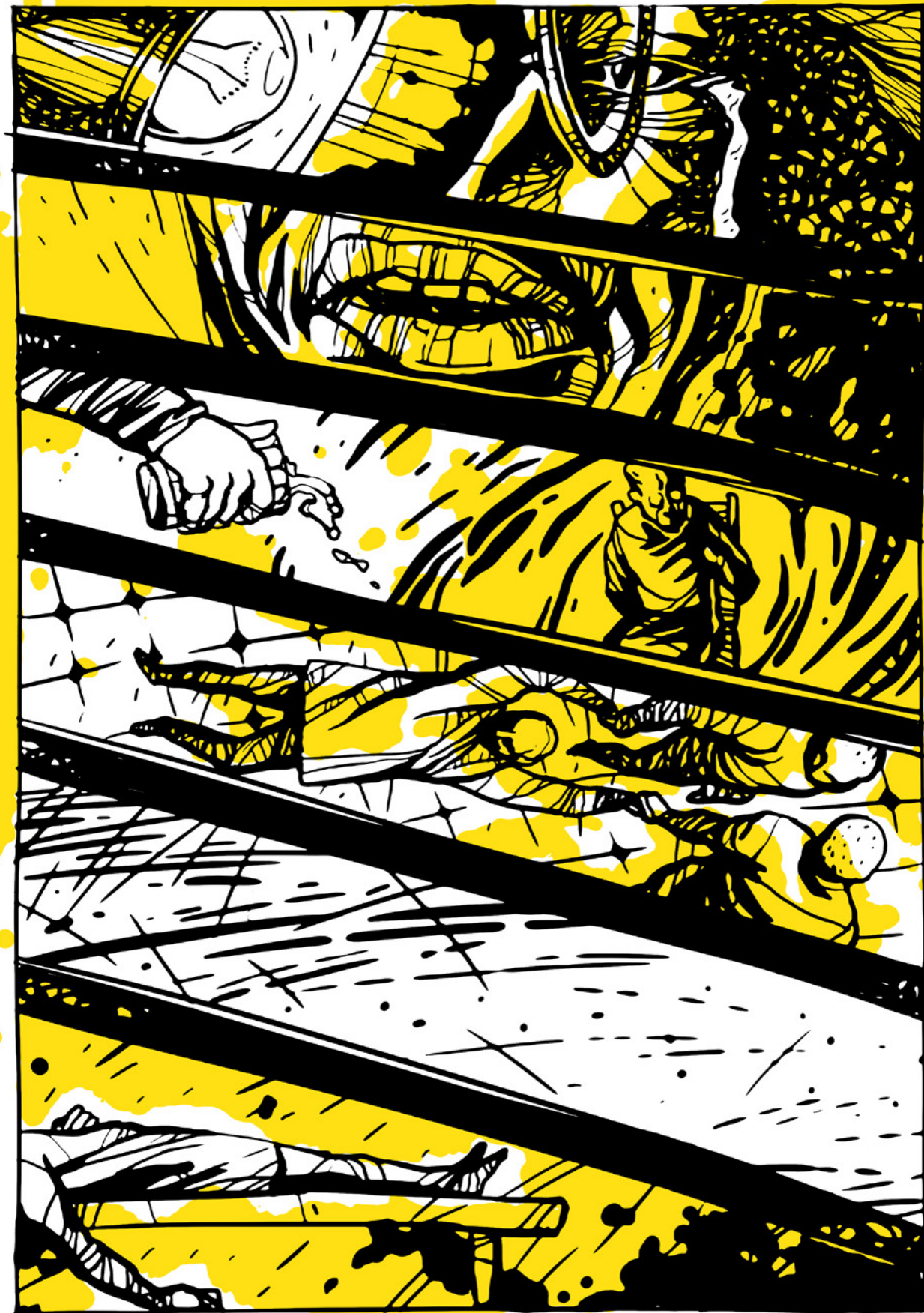


They showed dad an arrest warrant.

Mum, who was silently standing by the door until then, clutched a curtain and passed out, falling onto the floor with the curtain rod. At the corner of the house I saw an ominous car with bars in a small window. It was known as a "black crow."



We got a portrait of dad from the prison. It was drawn with a pencil on a sheet of reddish wrapping paper by A. Voshchakin, a prominent impressionist, one of the institutors of the "New Siberia" artist society. He was finishing his life journey in the same basement cell.

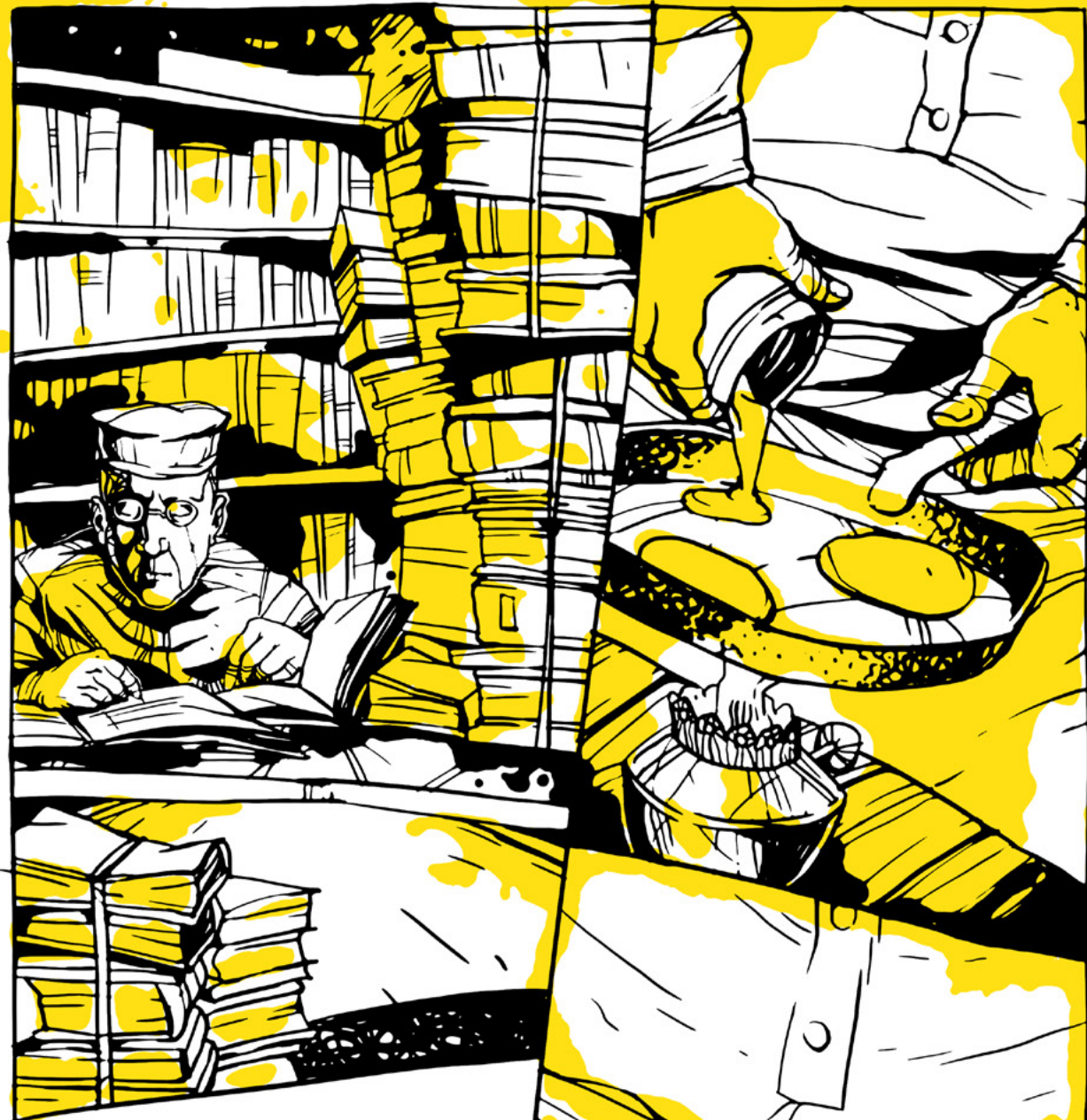


Dad was beaten numerous times. He suffered sleep deprivation, tortures of thirst, light and, apparently, much worse. He could barely mention torture even to mother.



Dad was accused of preparation of an armed coup and sent to the Solovetsky Camp. Solovki was a frightening word for the intelligentsia at the time.

Cardiac problems helped dad evade common labor, and he was assigned to the Solovetsky Camp library.



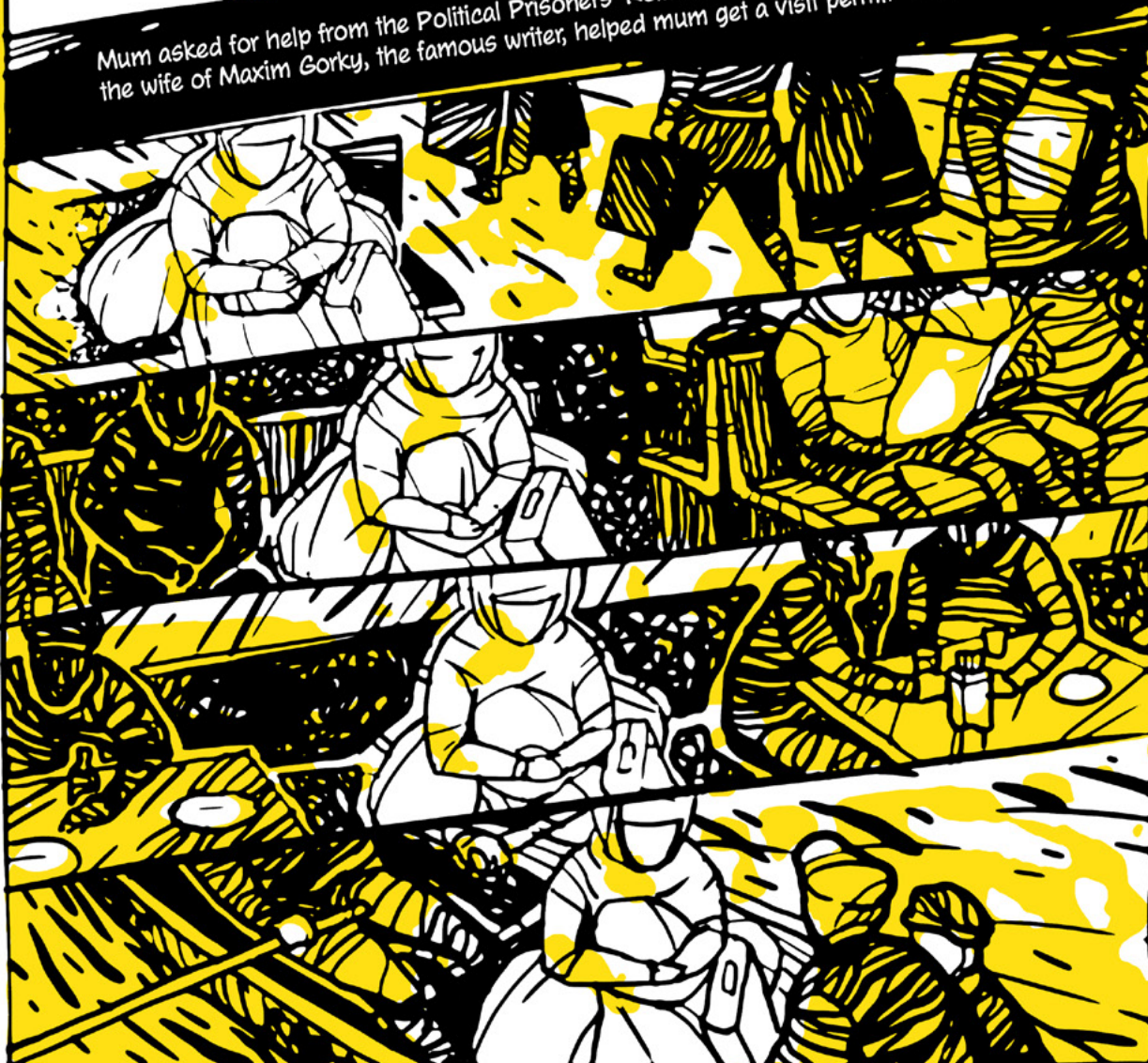
Panteleimon Konstantinovich would write details of every book into an inventory log and assign them a code and number.

Sometimes Kazarinov would bake thick pancakes on a kerosene heater and treat everyone. A pancake each.

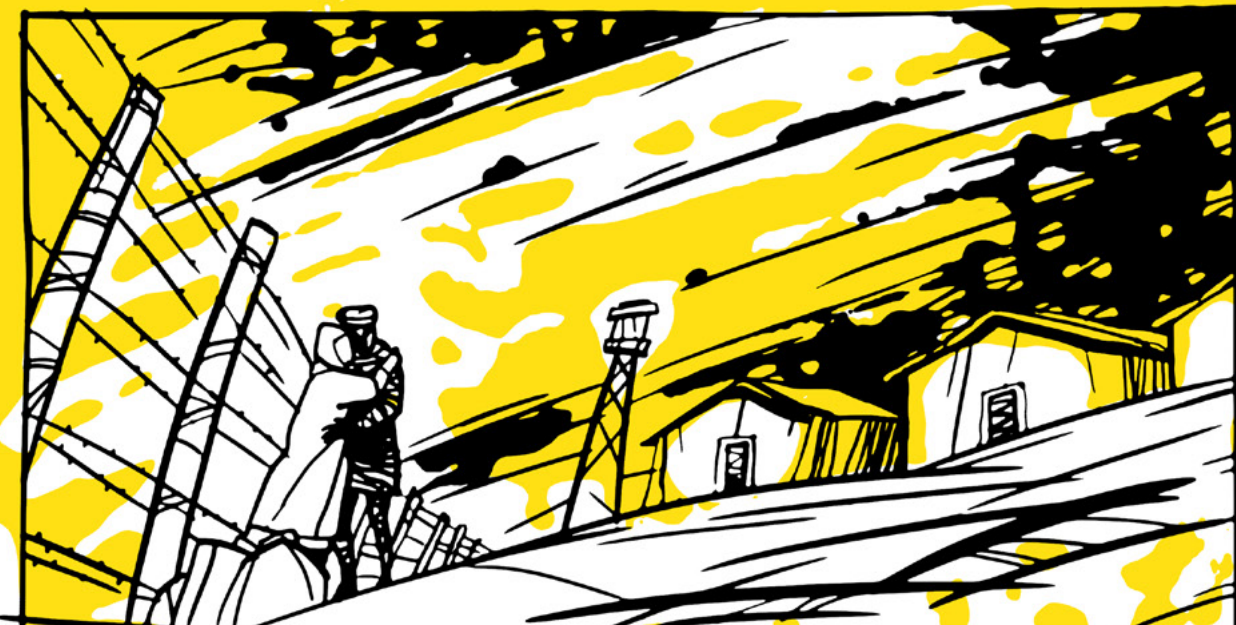




Mum asked for help from the Political Prisoners' Relief. Catherine Peshkova, the wife of Maxim Gorky, the famous writer, helped mum get a visit permit "as an exception."



When mum arrived at the Solovki camp, she was held there for 5 days while the officials were making inquiries about her. They thought she was an adventurer, because it was unbelievably hard to get a visit permit there.

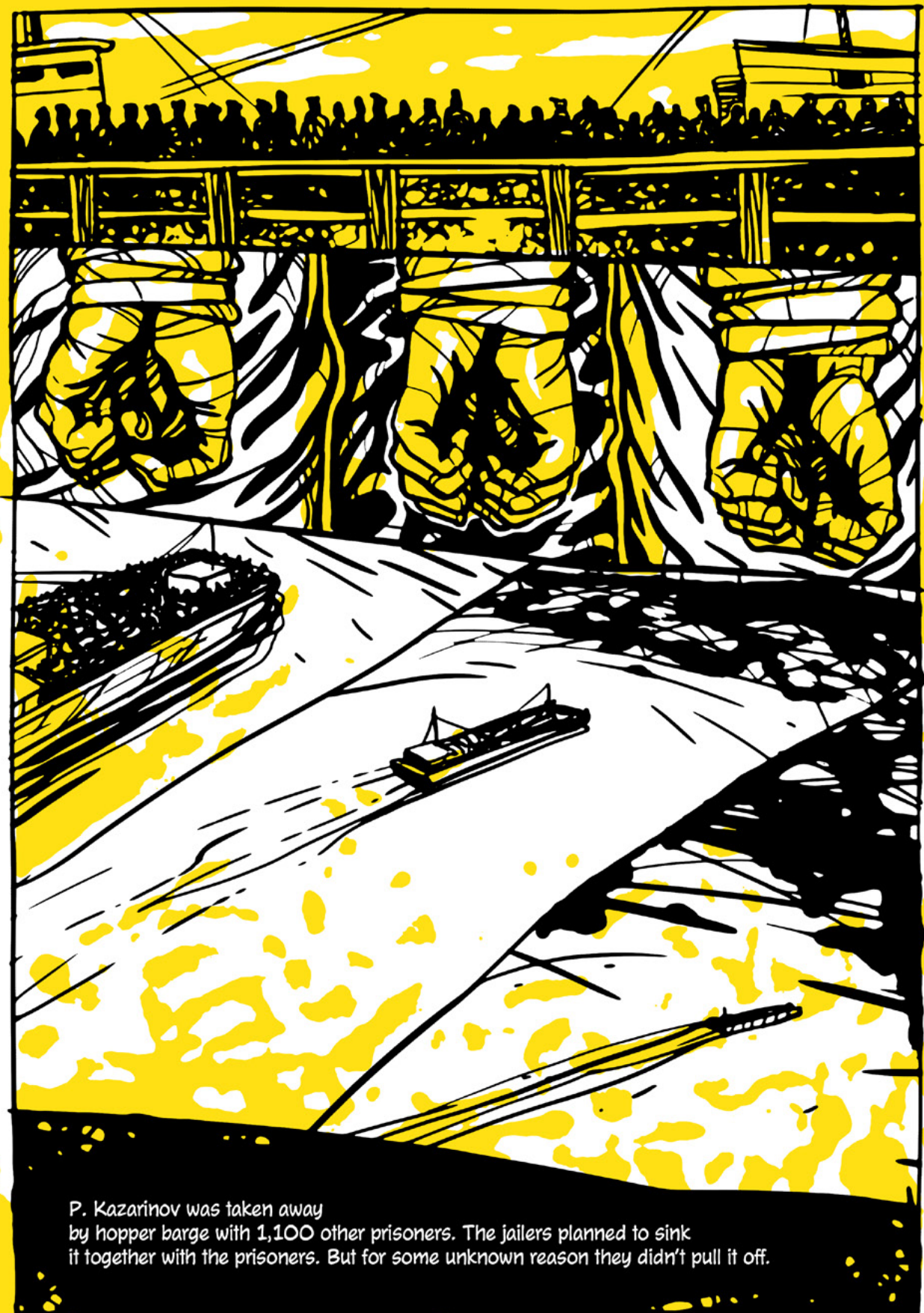


The parents lived together in a prison cell on the Popov Island for 10 days. Mum remembered the day they parted like this, "I would come back many times and kiss him again, and he was standing there so dull, watching me go."



The room was a prison cell with bars in the window, dirt floor and one plank bed. Behind a partition made of thin planks with finger-sized holes there was the warden's office, so every word could be heard.

One year after the visit dad was removed from the position in the library. The medical examination showed that he was not fit for physical labor, so they made him a night watchman.



P. Kazarinov was taken away by hopper barge with 1,100 other prisoners. The jailers planned to sink it together with the prisoners. But for some unknown reason they didn't pull it off.



As per a ruling of the special troika of the Administration of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, P. Kazarinov was executed by a firing squad on October 26, 1937 in the Sandarmokh area, Medvezhyegorsky District, Karelian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.



"Following the review of the criminal case of Panteleimon Konstantinovich Kazarinov by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the Soviet Union on July 29, 1958, P. Kazarinov was rehabilitated."

**1118**  
**people**

**were sentenced to execution  
by a firing squad  
in the Soviet Union**

**throughout  
1936.**

**1111**  
**prisoners**

**of the Solovetsky Special Designation  
Camp were executed in the Sandarmokh  
area (Karelia) by a firing squad**

**within a week —  
from October 27 to November 4  
in 1937, during the Great Terror.**

# To see parents

**Yuliya Pashaeva**

**1936**

Staraya Barda  
(Altay Territory)



Born to an accountant and a village teacher. Her parents were executed by a firing squad during the Great Terror.

In 1938, two-year-old Yuliya, her elder sisters and their brother were taken to different orphanages. The family reunited after the war with the help from the Red Cross.

In late 1950s, Yuliya Pashaeva graduated from a sewing school and later became a fur clothes designer.

Met her future husband — a stage director — during the study.

She worked in her profession all her life and retired in late 2000s. Now she helps in raising grandchildren.

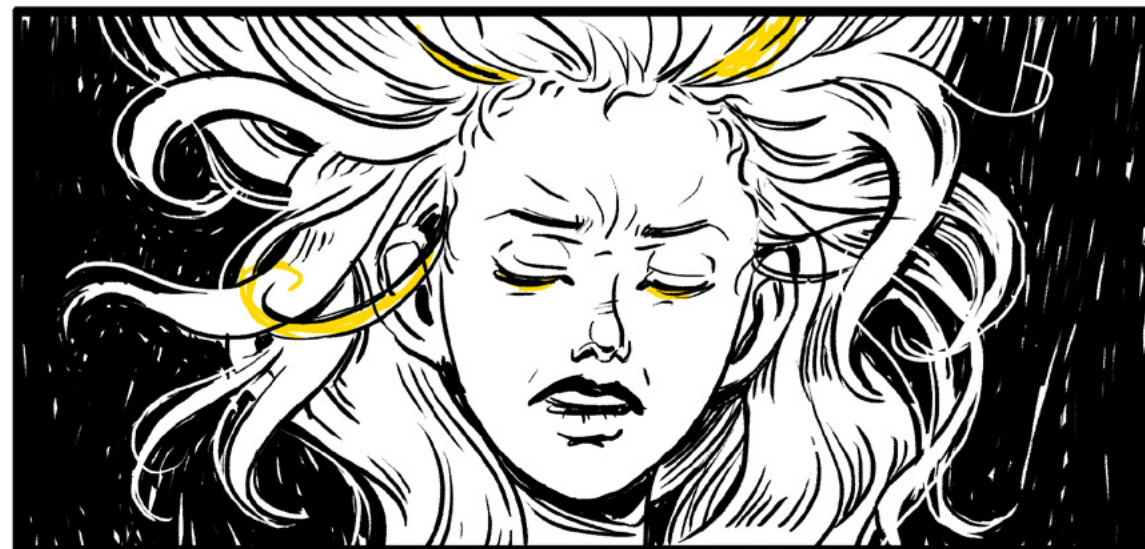
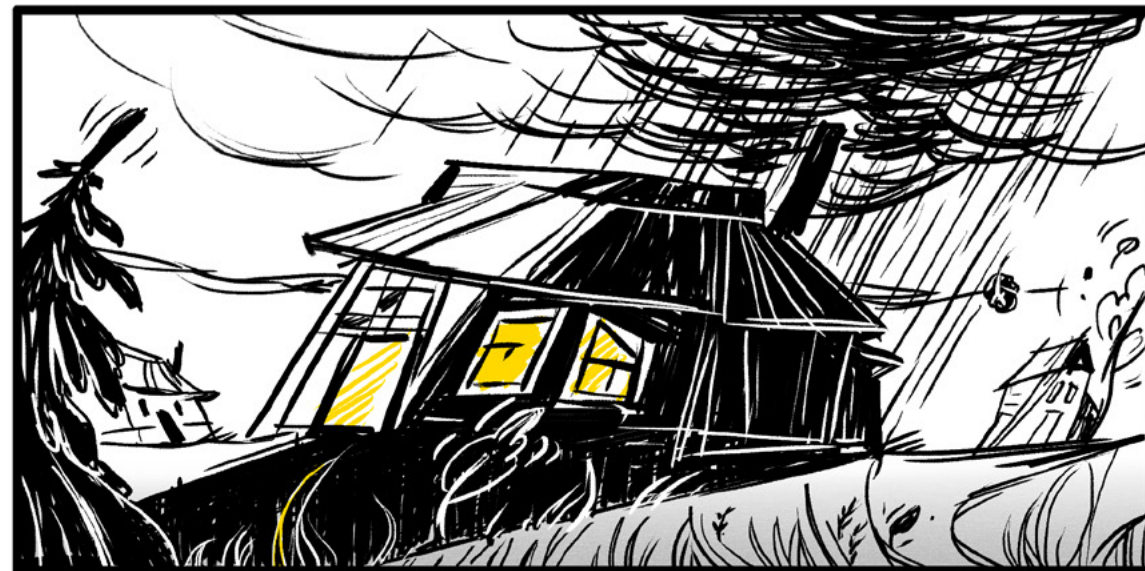
Still very upset that she does not remember how her parents looked like. No photographs of the family have remained. Death penalty cases do not contain any photographs either.

The house in the village of Staraya Barda (1960s) where Yuliya Pashaeva had lived with her parents until they were arrested.

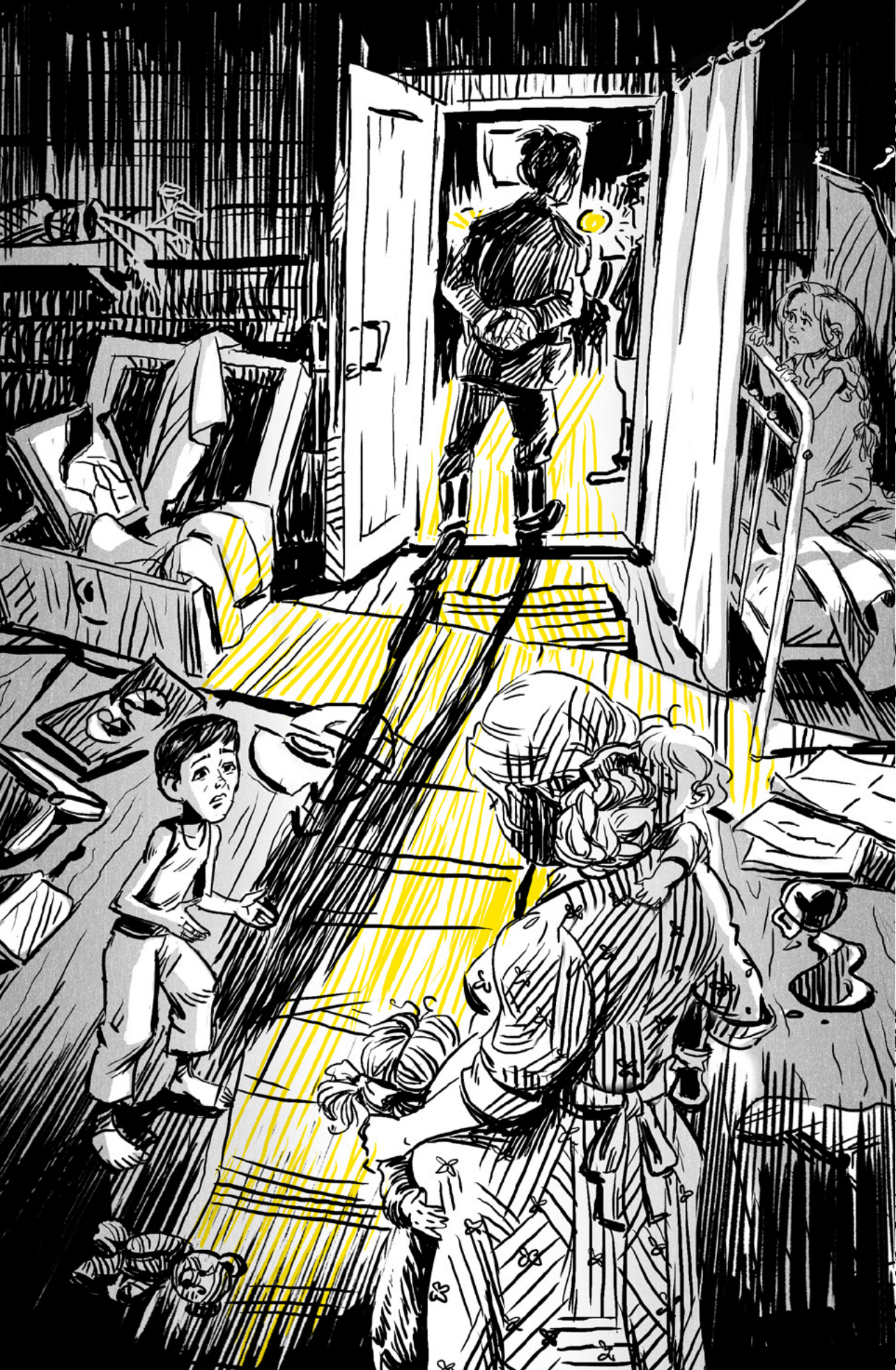
Illustrator  
**Anastasiya Danilova**  
Pic-o-Matic



An interview with  
[Yuliya Pashaeva](#)







***I'm innocent!!!***

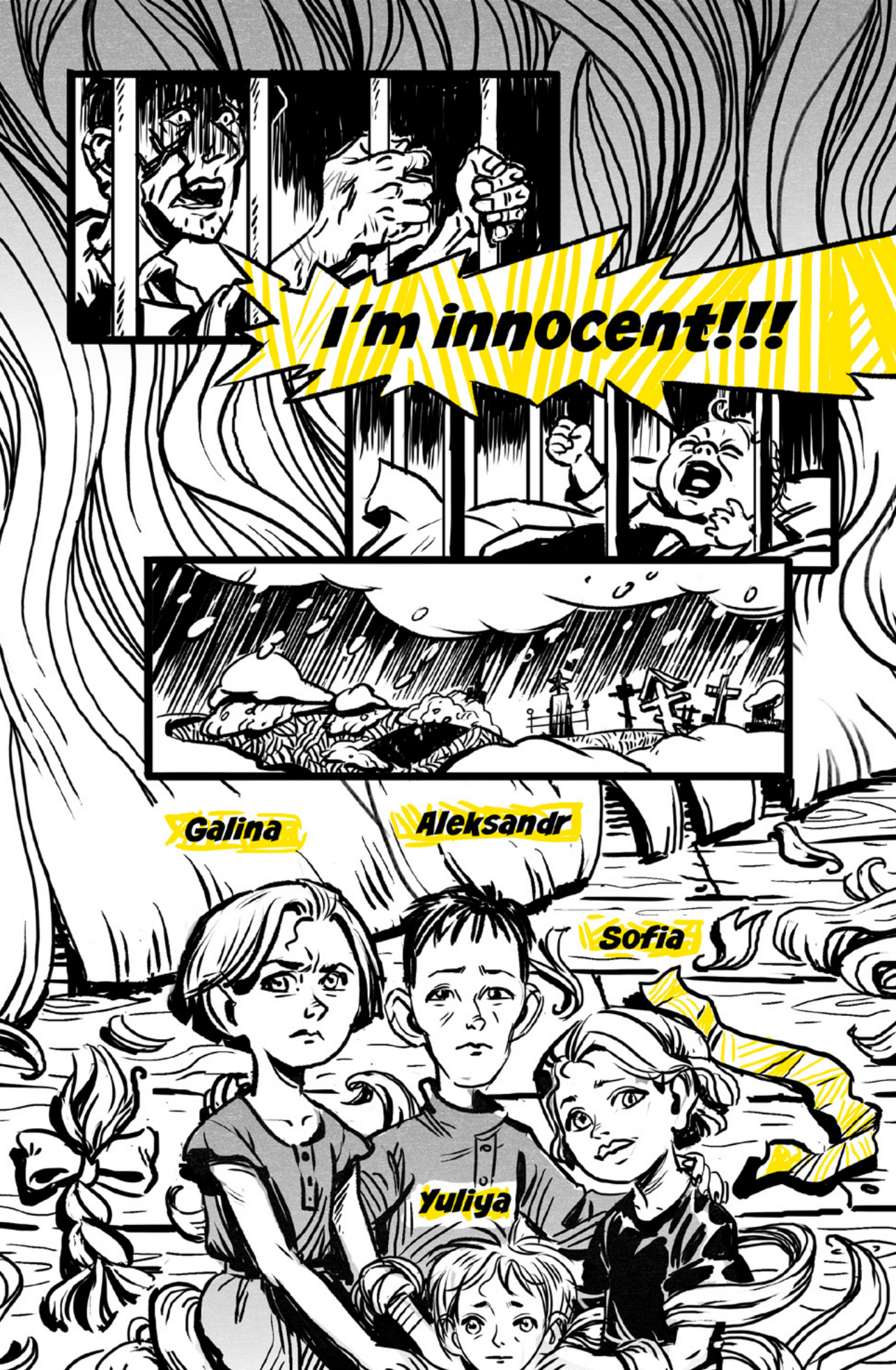


**Galina**

**Aleksandr**

**Sofia**

**Yuliga**





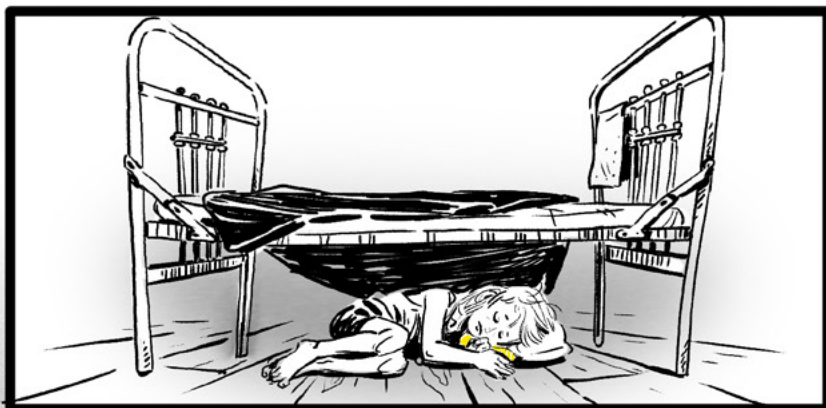
Dad was executed in 1937, mum was pregnant then. As soon as she had given birth, she was arrested and sentenced to execution by a firing squad. And there were five of us orphans left.

The newborn baby died two weeks later. Four of us were taken to a clearing station and transferred all around the Soviet Union. Apparently, so that we wouldn't know each other.

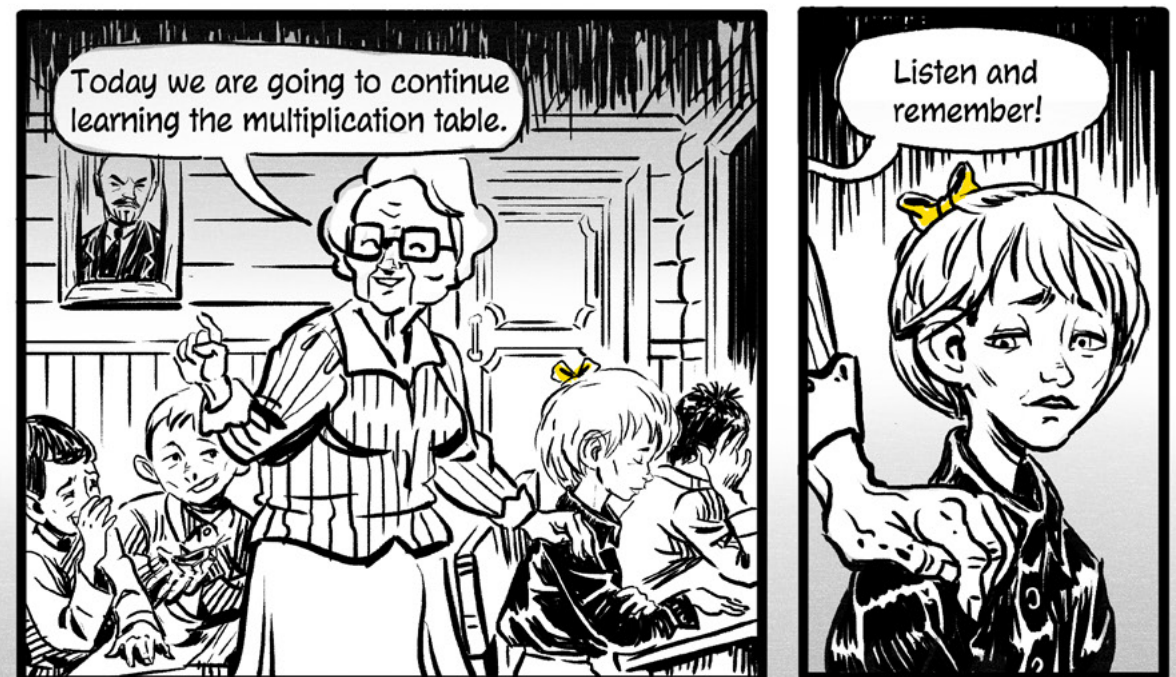


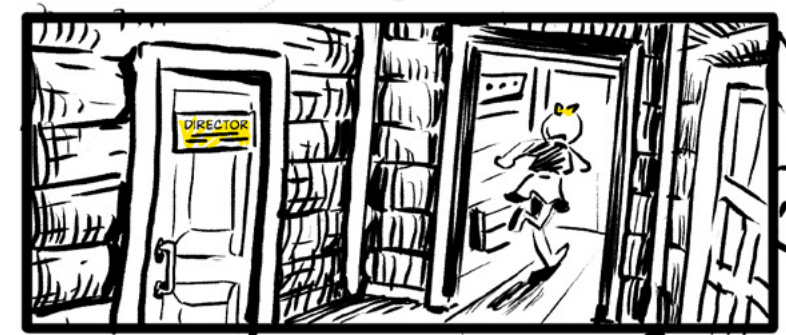
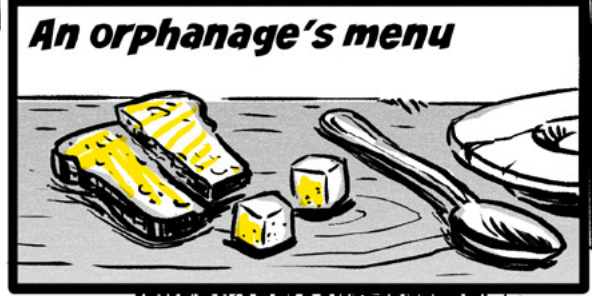
We studied at the orphanage, but didn't ever have pencils, workbooks, or books.

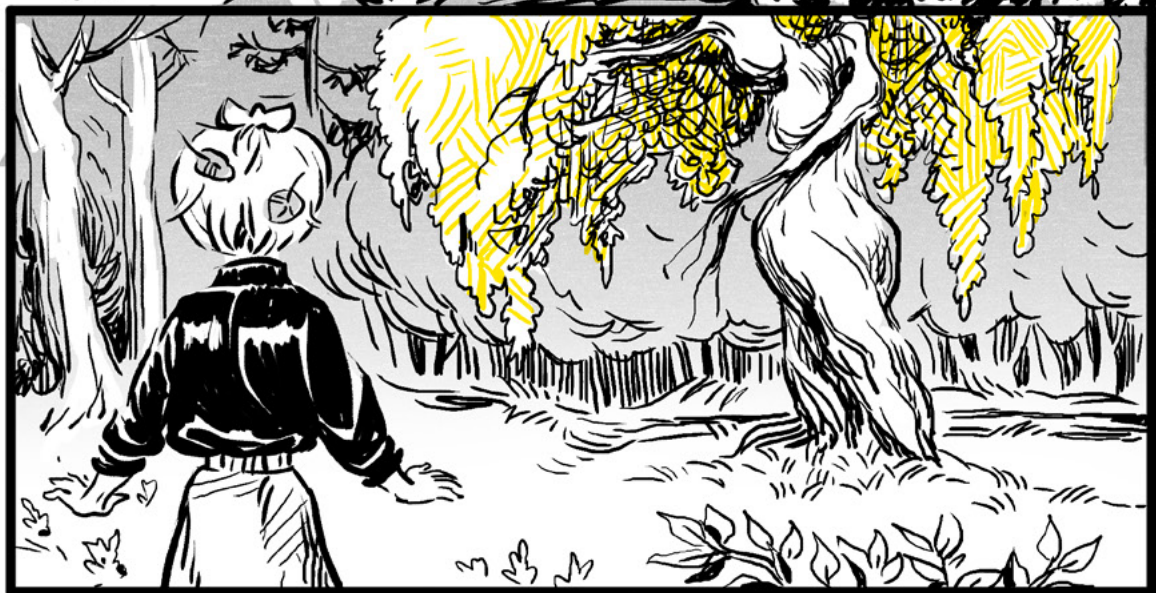
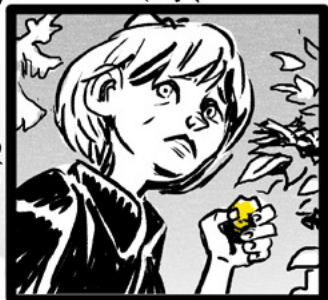
Neither had I any toys. All I had until I turned sixteen was a bow. A teacher gave it to me for the New Year.



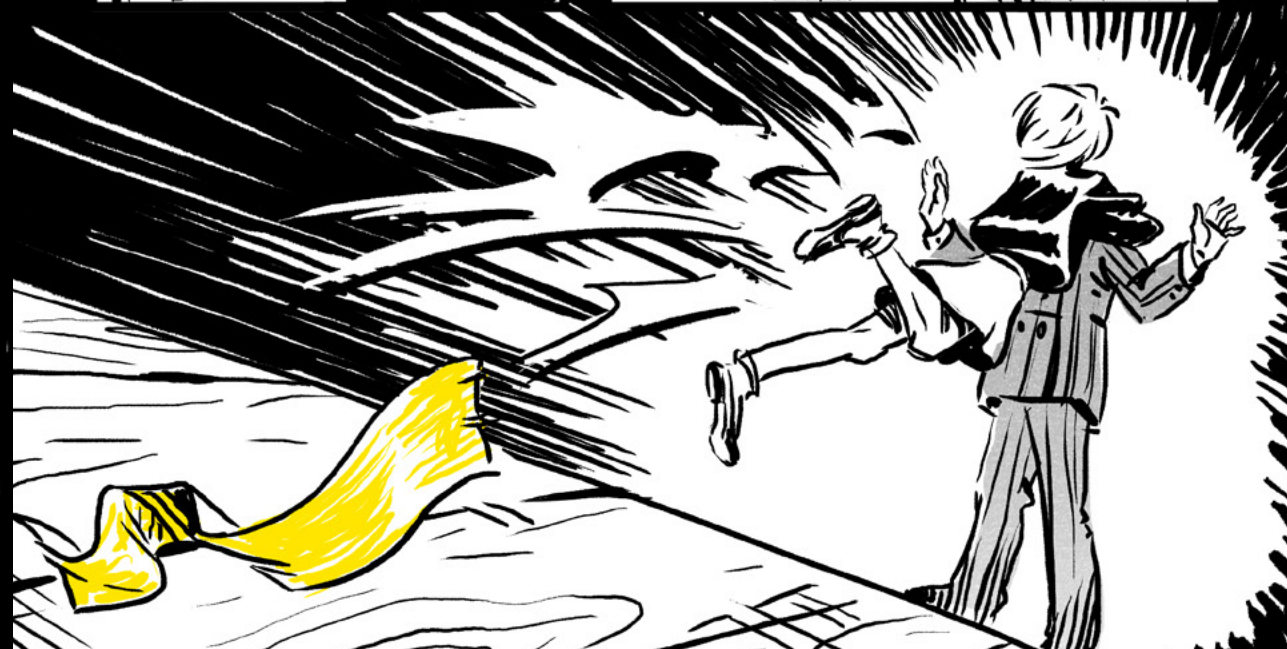
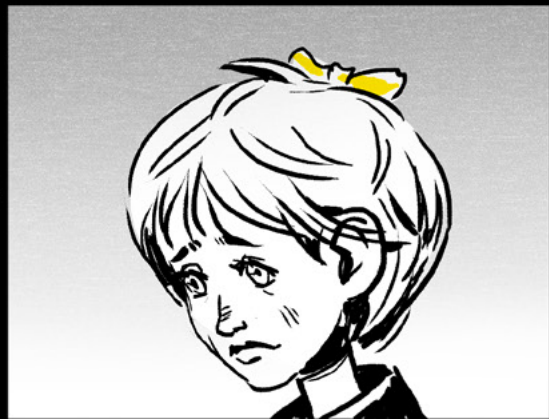
### Orphanage 1941-1945







After classes we would have lunch and then run through the taiga like savages to find food: berries and roots.



**Armavir, somewhere after 1953**





After the war I lived with our brother in Armavir.

I stayed in an orphanage in Ukraine.

Served as radio operator at the frontline, then married.



And who are our parents?



Dad was a Pole, worked as accountant, used to put on a clean shirt every day. Arrested in 1937.



Mum was a stern one. She studied at a girls' boarding school in Biysk. She used to bake baskets of pies for the school.

*Would be great to see them in photos...*



No materials



Access denied



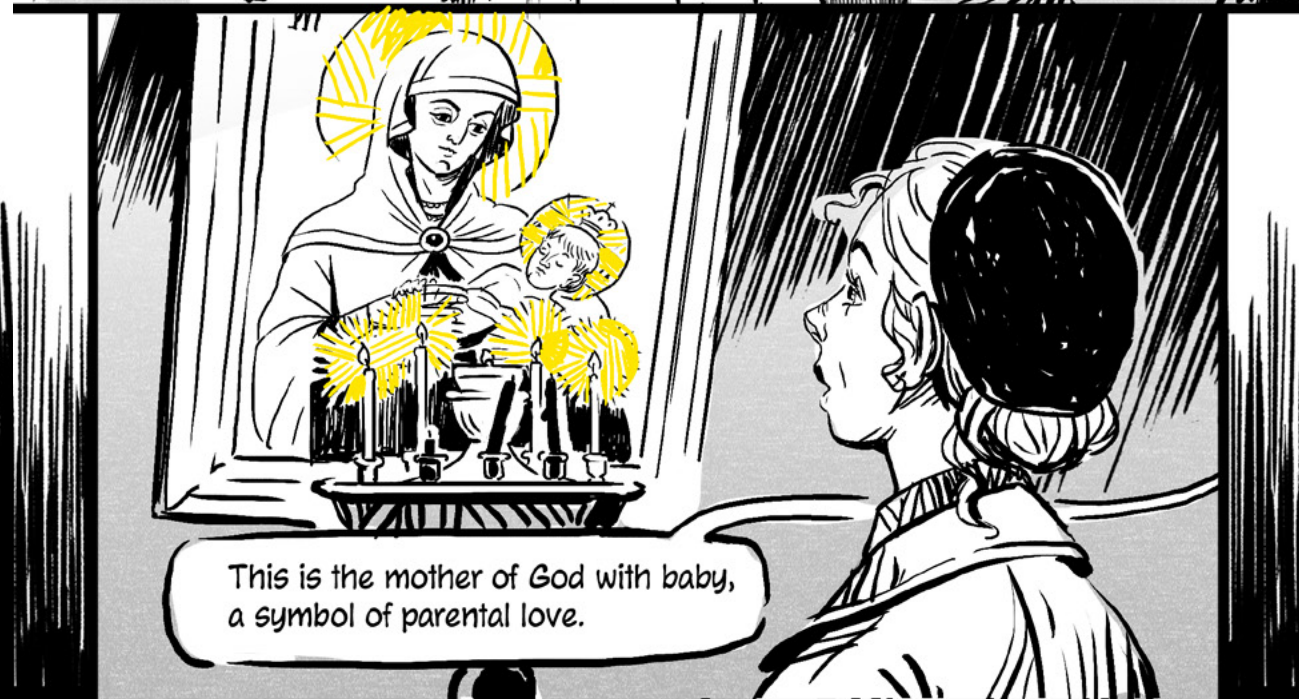
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Nan, who's that?

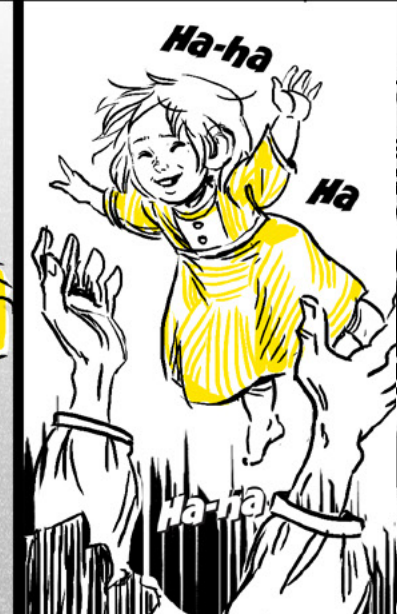
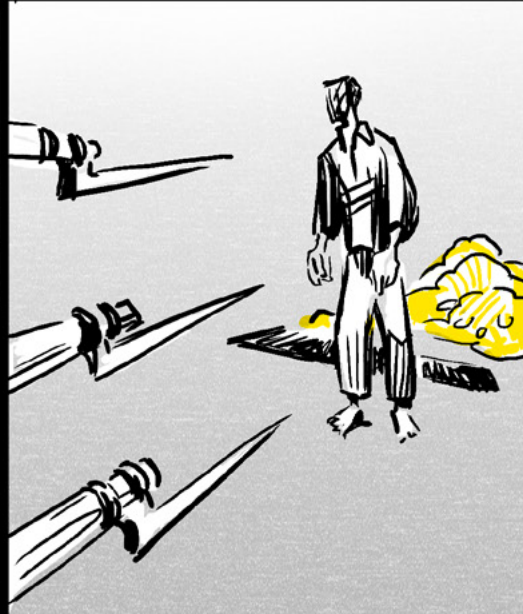
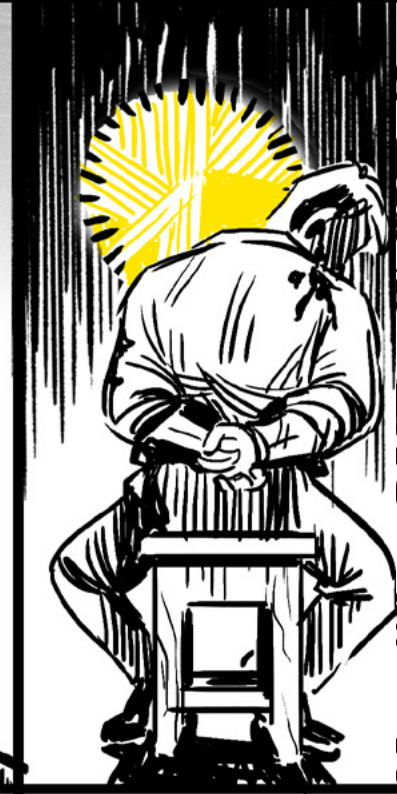
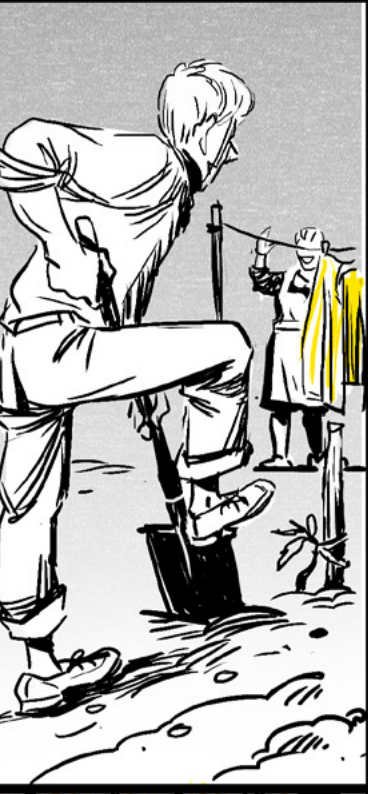
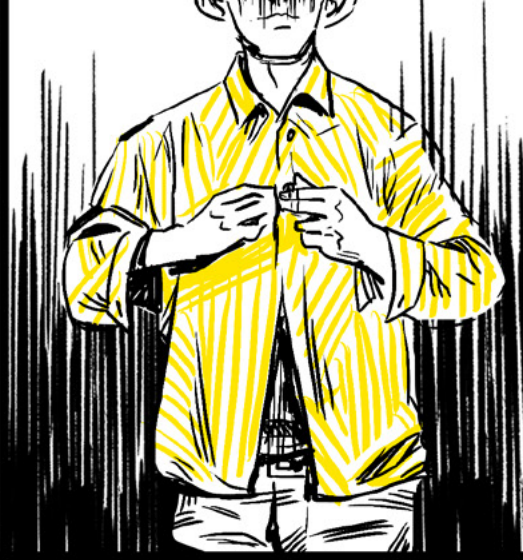
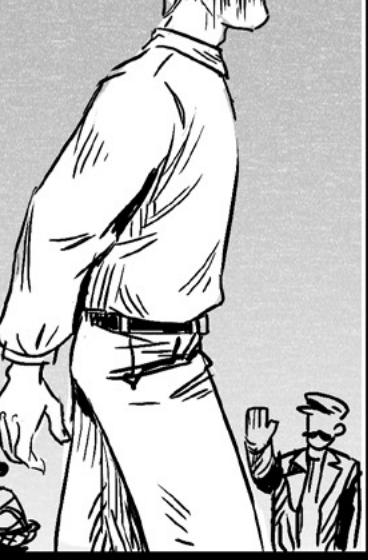
That's Saint Nicholas with a vita.

And that?



This is the mother of God with baby, a symbol of parental love.

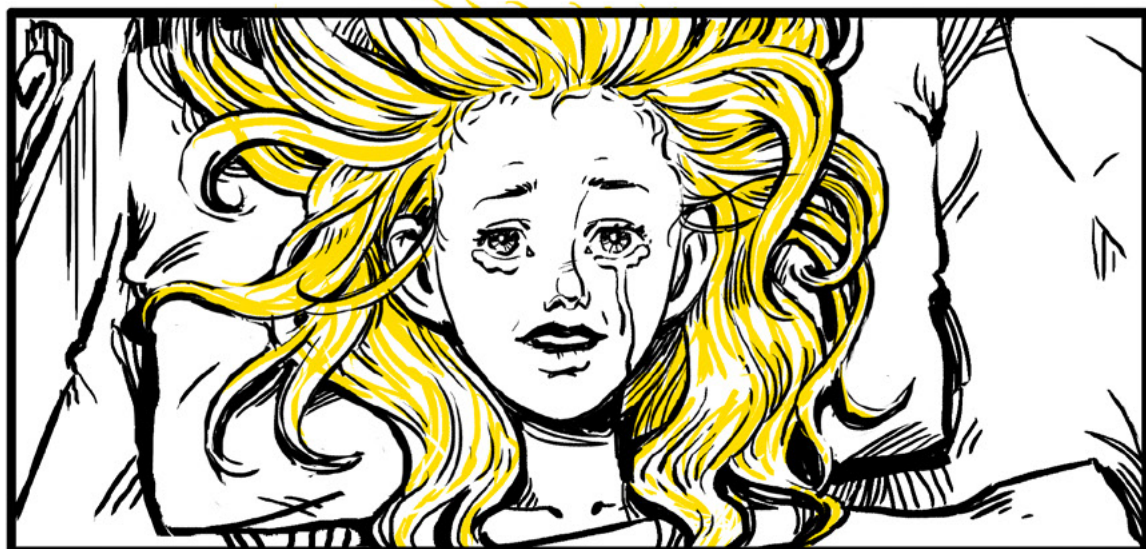




*I still don't know how my mum and dad looked like.*

*Perhaps that's why I never see them in my dreams.*





As per the Order of the People's  
Commissariat for Internal Affairs  
"On Arresting Wives of Traitors",

**18 000**

wives of "enemies of the people"  
were imprisoned from August 1937  
to October 1938.

**More than  
25 000**

**children were sent to orphanages.**

# Political repression

## 20 000 000 people

passed through camps, penal colonies and prisons over 27 years of existence of the GULAG.

## 5 000 000 people

were repressed for political reasons.

## War and frontline

1941 ————— 1945

## 1 200 000 convicts

fought in penal battalions.

## Mortality

1930 ————— 1956

## 2 000 000 people

died imprisoned in the GULAG.

## Rehabilitation

1956 —————

1930 —————

1956

## Forced settlements and exile

1930 —————

1956

## 6 000 000 people,

representatives of **61 nationalities**, suffered forced displacement.

## Great Terror

1937 —————

1938

## 700 000 people

executed by firing squad during the Great Terror.

## 6 600 000 people

rehabilitated and recognized as victims of political repression.

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The punctuation and orthography of original letters have been retained.

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### Project contributors

Director of the GULAG History Museum,  
Head of the Memory Fund  
**Roman Romanov**

Deputy Director for Development  
of the Museum  
**Anna Stadinchuk**

Deputy Fund Manager  
**Irina Neustroeva**

Scriptwriter  
**Timur Bulgakov**

Graphic Designer  
**Daria Vinokurova**

Publishing Program Manager  
**Svetlana Pukhova**

Publishing Program Coordinator  
**Elena Solozobova**

Academic Adviser  
**Tatiana Polyanskaya**

Coordinator  
**Nina Mikheeva**

Proofreader  
**Dmitry Bashmakov**  
**Evgeniya Nesterova**

Creative Managing Director  
BBDO Moscow  
**Nikolay Megvelidze**

Creative Director  
**Sergei Kozhevnikov**

Novel Illustrators  
**Konstantin Chirkov**  
**Dmitry Osetrov**  
**Anastasiya Danilova**  
**Sofiya Elovikova**

Cover Illustrators  
**Eldar Selimov**  
**Kira Afonina**

Art Director  
**Anastasiya Kharitonova**

Copywriter  
**Olga Lakhnova**

Manager  
**Aleksandra Spiridonova**

Translator  
Simwell Translation Services  
**Sultan Gasanov**

**GULAG  
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