

# Kimaya's Home



ROEQIN



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written and illustrated by

ROEQIN

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This project was inspired by Jeeja Ghosh who believes in the importance of independence and autonomy for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Her belief led to the need to explore laws and practice of legal guardianship for persons with disabilities. The book is an outcome of one such study that resulted from this effort.

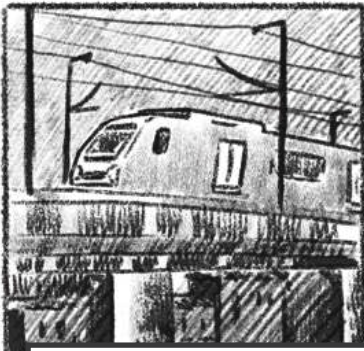


Every morning, Kimaya would water her plants. As the sun crept its way up from behind the skyscrapers, Kimaya would tend to her 14 plants, passing the watering can over each pot in turn.

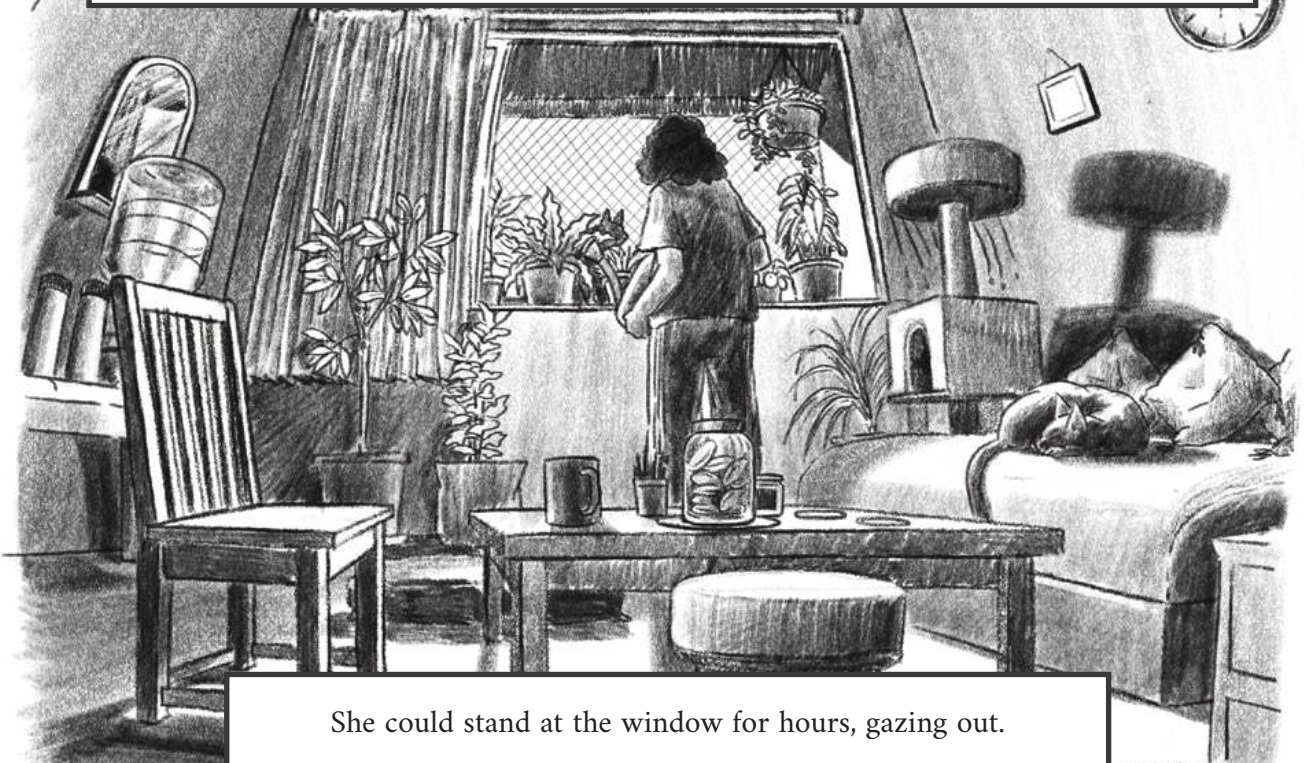
KAWWWWW KAAAA  
KAAAAA

On some days, her cats would make their way into the little extension outside her window to bask in the soft light of the morning. And for a brief spell, that narrow frame of concrete held all the essence of Kimaya's home.





From her perch she could see the bustling streets near the metro station. Every now and then she stopped to look down at the crowds of people unfurling across the roads and footpaths, the city rousing from its sleep to embrace another day.



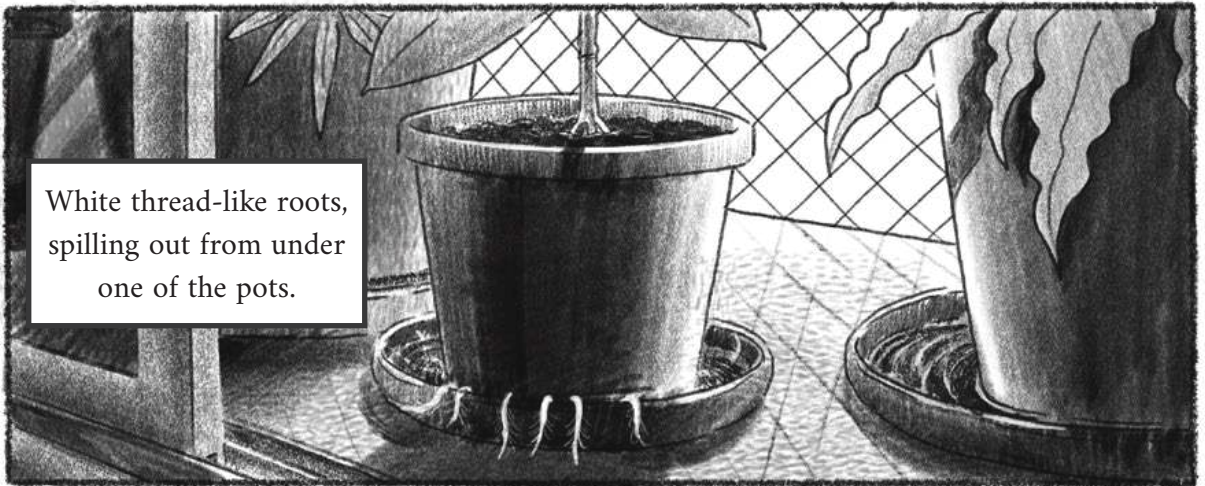
She could stand at the window for hours, gazing out.







On that specific morning, as her attention withdrew from the window and landed back on her plants, she noticed something.



Prodding at the soil to investigate, she worked out a diagnosis. There seemed to be only one remedy.





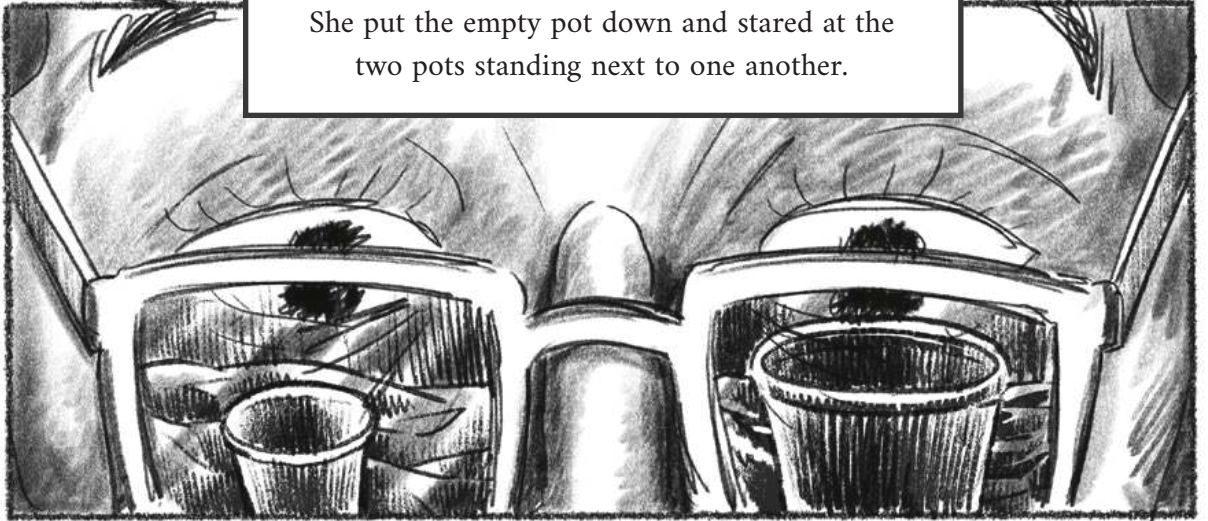


Spreading out a piece of tarpaulin she began to gently ease the plant out of the pot...

...And just as the ball of roots came free, she froze.

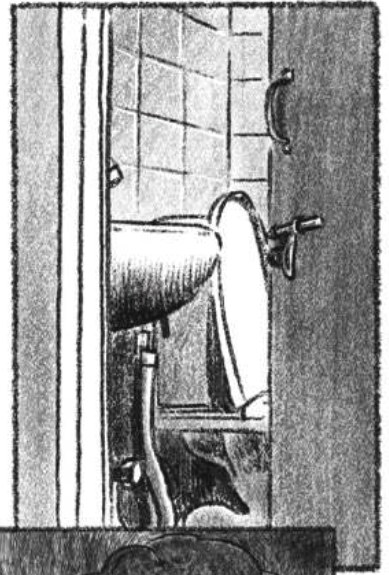


She put the empty pot down and stared at the two pots standing next to one another.

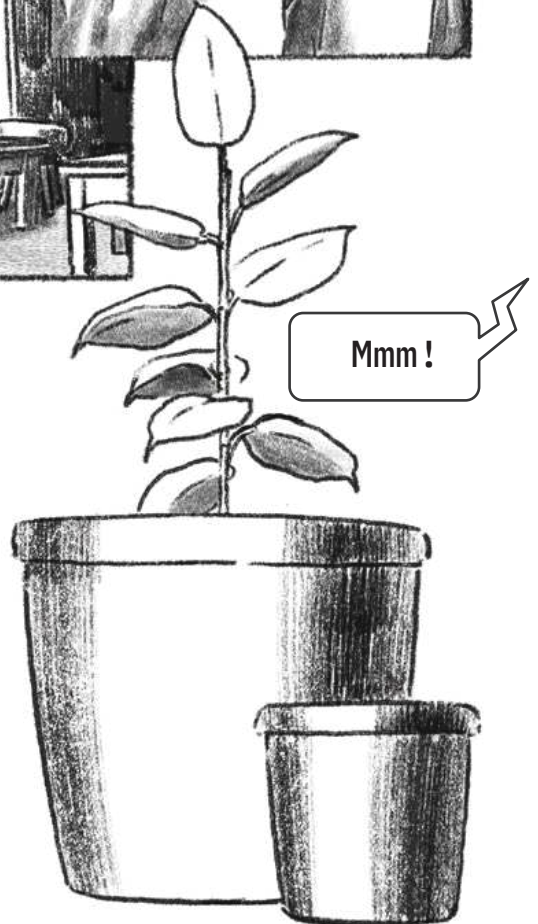




In a moment of clarity,  
an idea had been sown.



Kimaya looked at the plant in her hand, and realised what she wanted more than anything, at this point, was to be that plant. She wanted a bigger pot to let her roots spread out.





As the idea sat and swelled, germinated and took root, Kimaya could not keep it to herself. She had to tell her friends. They were the only ones who could help her realise it.

Sakku Maushi was the first to find out...







Veyi-Gooh!



Wah, Kimaya! That's wonderful news!



Do you know what kind of a place you are looking for?

No!

Cadhs-wihl-be-veyi-happy!

Yes! They have become so big, they both need more space now.



But Kimaya, how are we going to find this new place?



Have you spoken to Sagar?



Kimaya's younger brother, Sagar, would drop by to have lunch on Saturdays. On that day, she would take out his favourite sweet pickle from the cupboard, and Sakku Maushi would make hot chapatis, wrap them in cloth and keep them in the casserole.

This time, as they sat to eat, she told him what was on her mind.







Besides, you know how difficult it was to find this place.



Sagar looked up when he didn't hear a reply, and saw Kimaya rocking...



...back and forth.



...back and forth...

Her tempo, as he remembered it, had always been exactly 120 beats per minute, with the accuracy of a metronome. He watched her for a while as he chewed, awaiting a response, and then conceded with a gulp.



Okay, you know what?

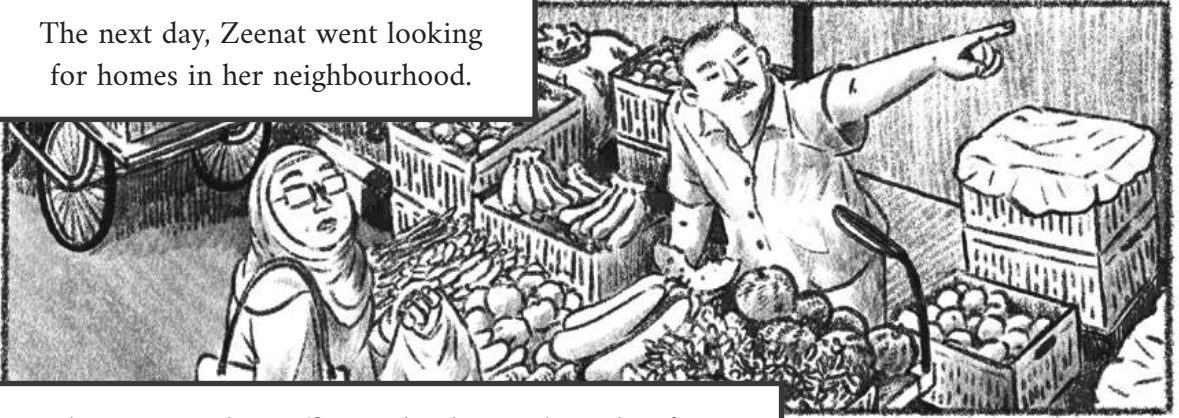
Let's see what we can find. Give me a week, I'll talk to the others.



But you have to tell Baba.



The next day, Zeenat went looking for homes in her neighbourhood.



She came to their office with a big smile on her face.



I found a place!  
It's very close to  
where I stay!

Kanha happened to bring up the subject with his parents.



Kimaya! thwo-houfses-  
giving-for-rent. Mummi-  
andh-Papa-toldh-me.





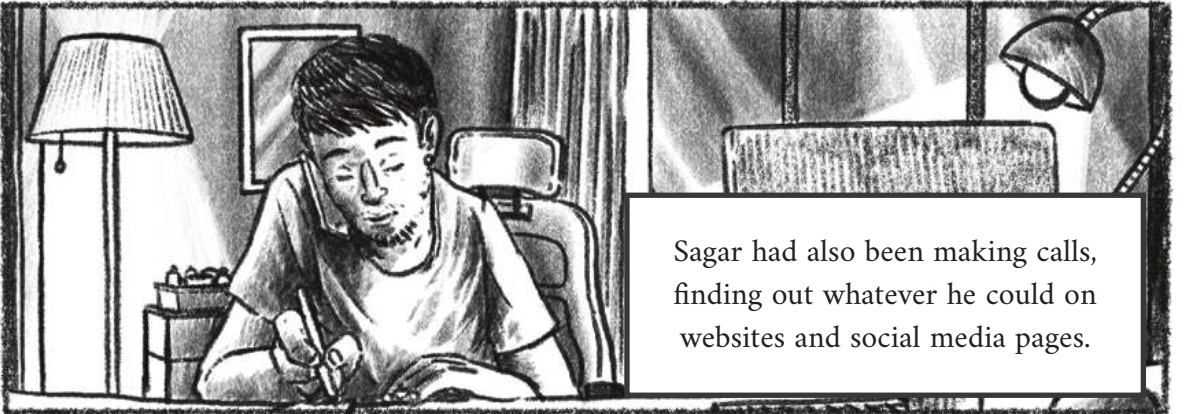
Sakku Maushi had been catching hold of every other Maushi employed in the neighbouring apartment buildings.

When she reached Kimaya's home the next day, she looked very pleased with herself.



Your Maushi has found a very nice place for you!

Wait till you see it!



Sagar had also been making calls, finding out whatever he could on websites and social media pages.

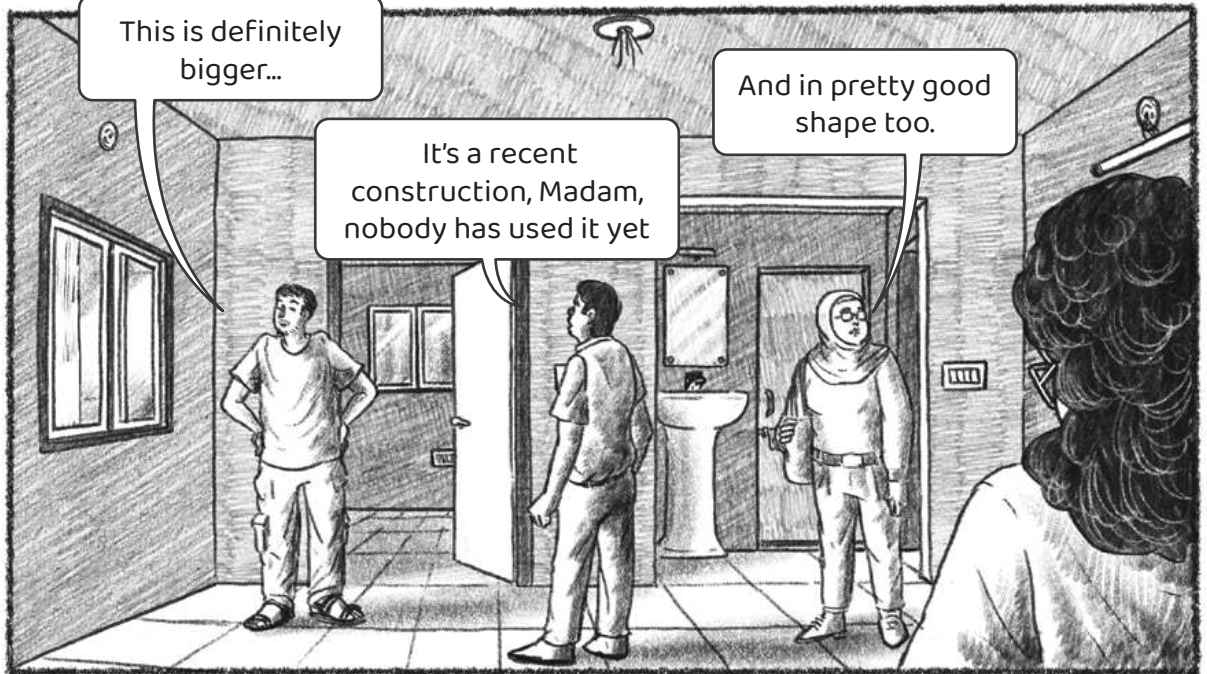
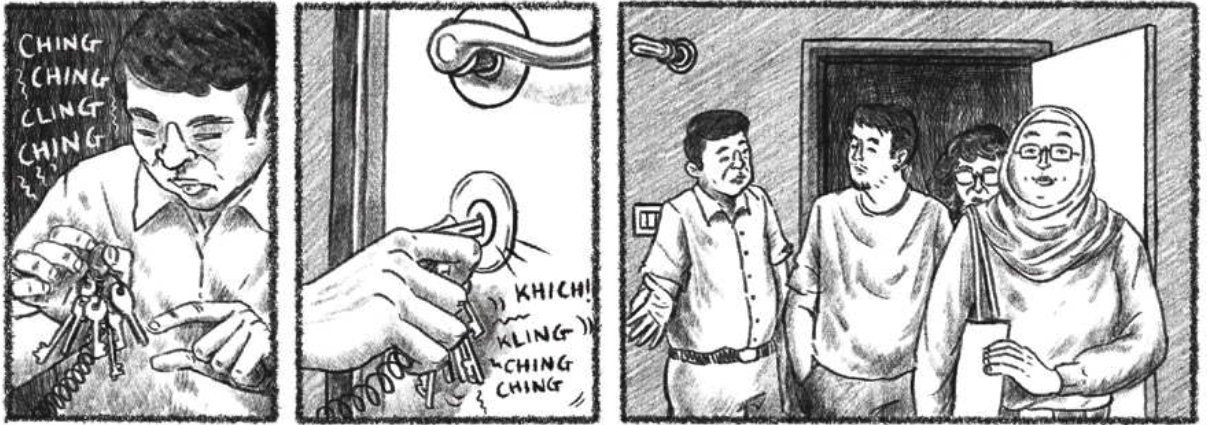
Within a week, they were all set.



Tomorrow, we go see!



On the day they went to see homes, Sagar, Kanha, Zeenat and Sakku Maushi accompanied Kimaya in two's and three's, each leading the way to their respective finds.



Mmmm

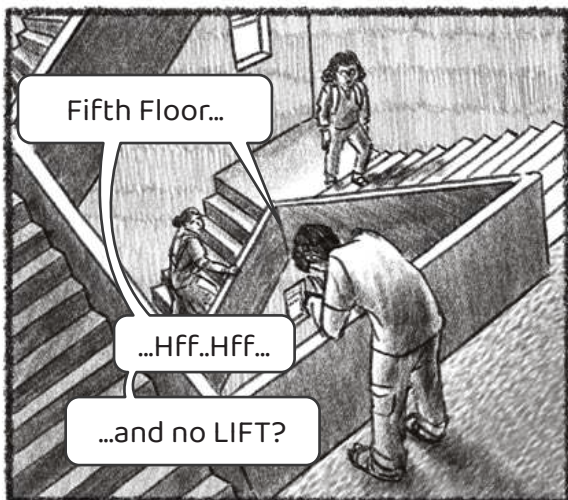
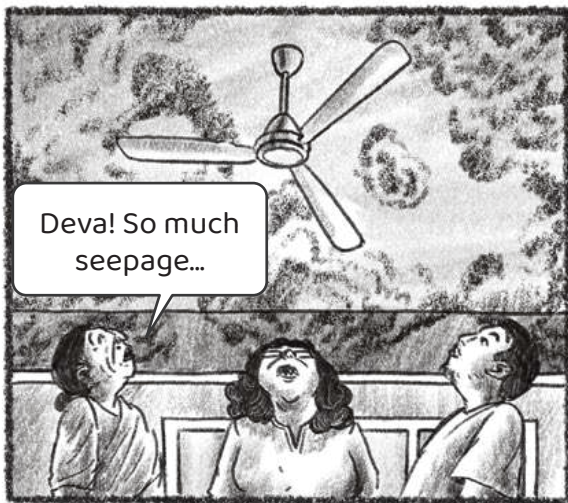
Kimaya?

I-Want-More-Windows!





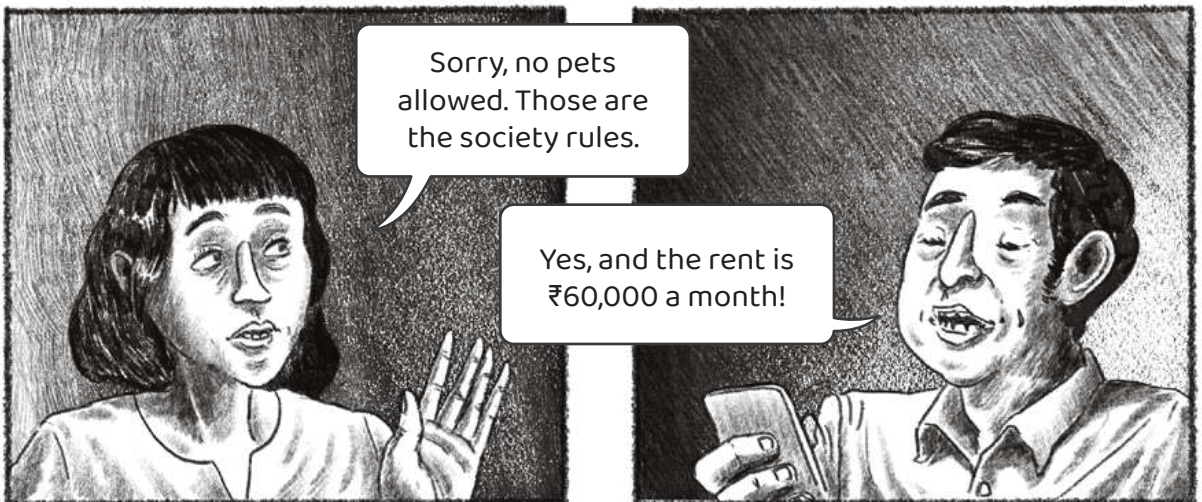
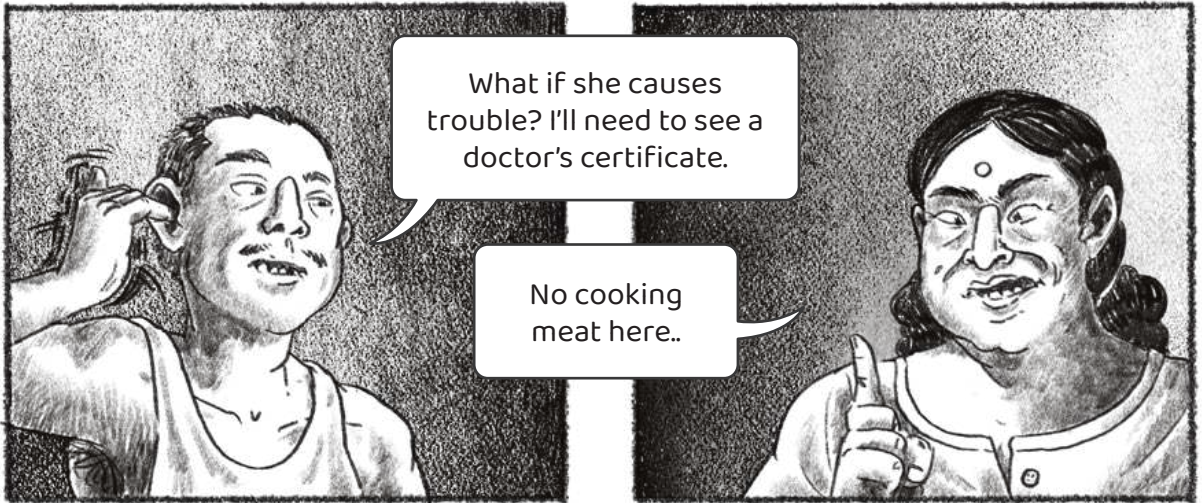
Kimaya did not hold back on her opinions. She knew what she wanted her home to look like. But even when a home seemed alright to her, it presented certain factors that did not please her companions.





But finding the homes was the easiest part.

The bigger hurdle came after that.

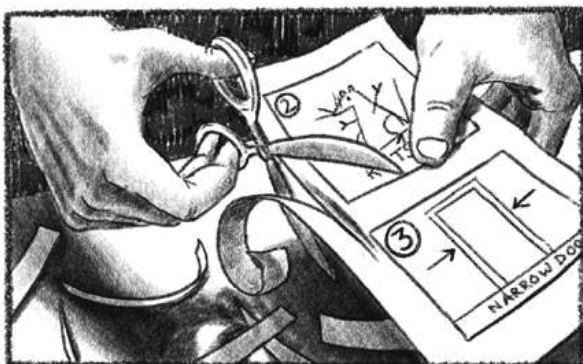




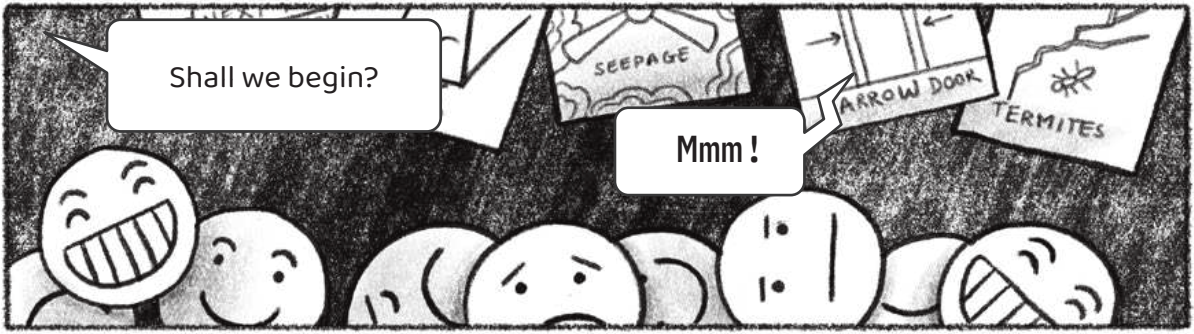


It was dark by the time they were done. They hailed an autorickshaw and made their way back to Kimaya's place. As Sagar, Zeenat and Kimaya sat in the dark recess of the passenger seat, the lights from cars and the overhead street lights passed over them, illuminating their faces intermittently.

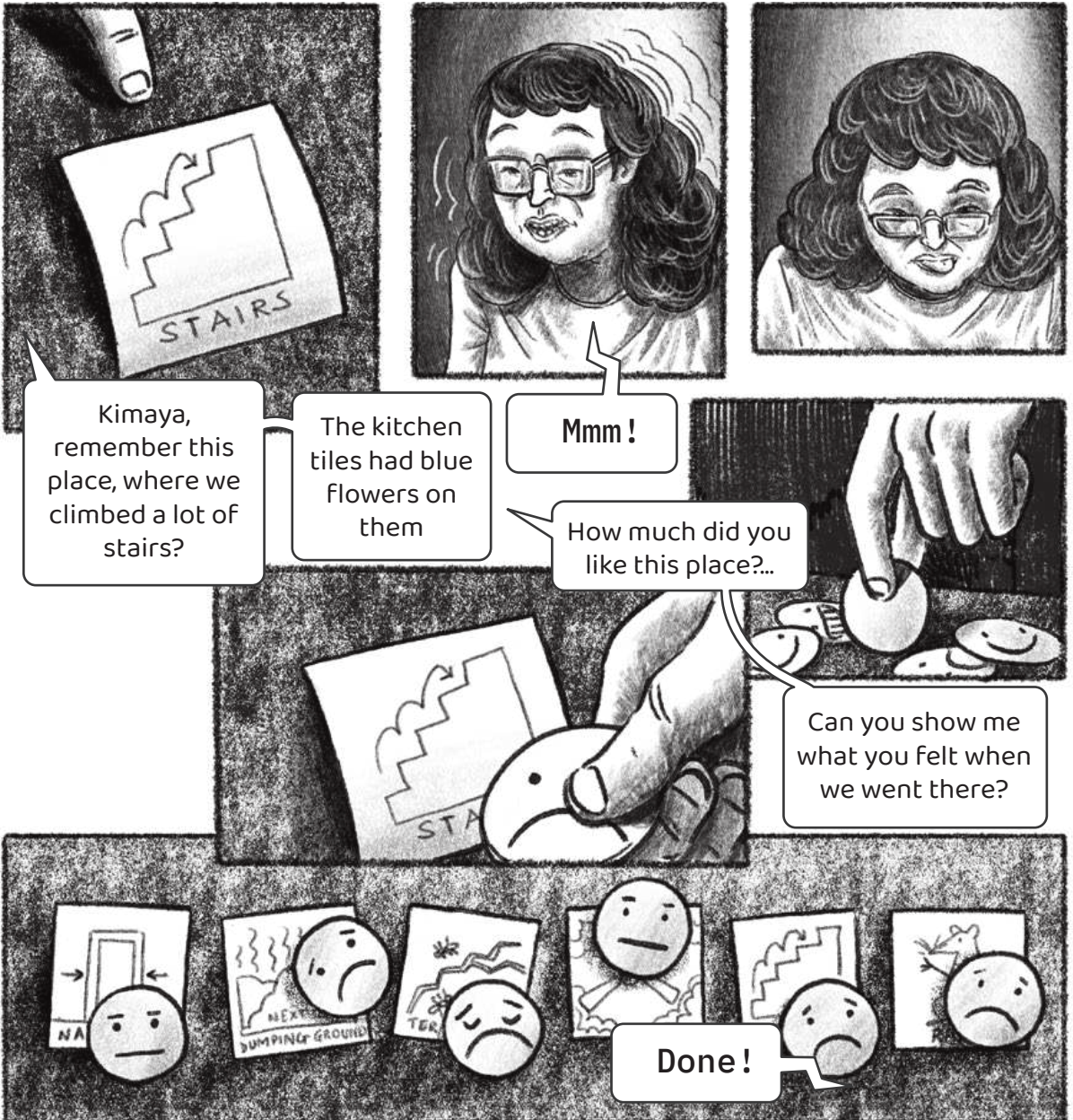
Disappointment lingered in the silence between them. But they did not say a word. Not until Kimaya had given her verdict.







Sagar was well versed with assisting Kimaya in arriving at a decision. He had been facilitating such negotiations for her ever since their childhood. He knew how to read her responses, even when they were not as clear to the rest. Kimaya played along eagerly.



Kimaya, remember this place, where we climbed a lot of stairs?

The kitchen tiles had blue flowers on them

Mmm!

How much did you like this place?..

Can you show me what you felt when we went there?

Done!

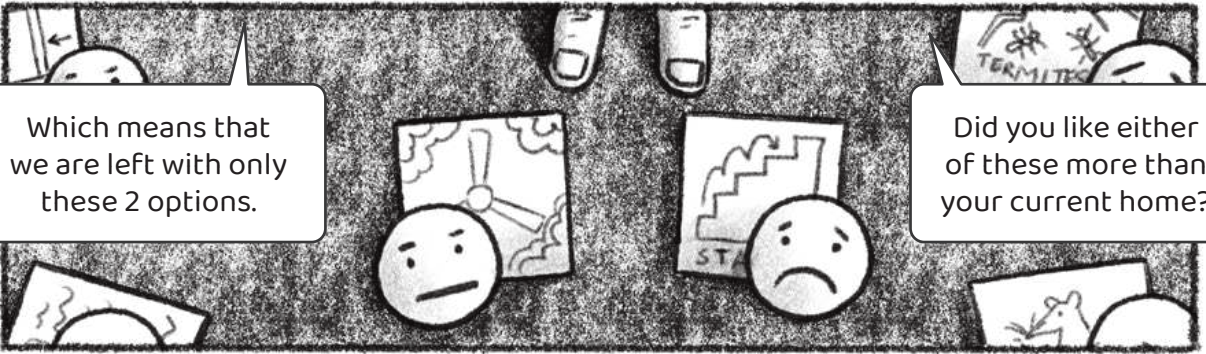




Achha, now we must remember that you might not be able to afford some of these options.



And if you want me to continue working for you, then it can't be too far from where I live.



Which means that we are left with only these 2 options.

Did you like either of these more than your current home?

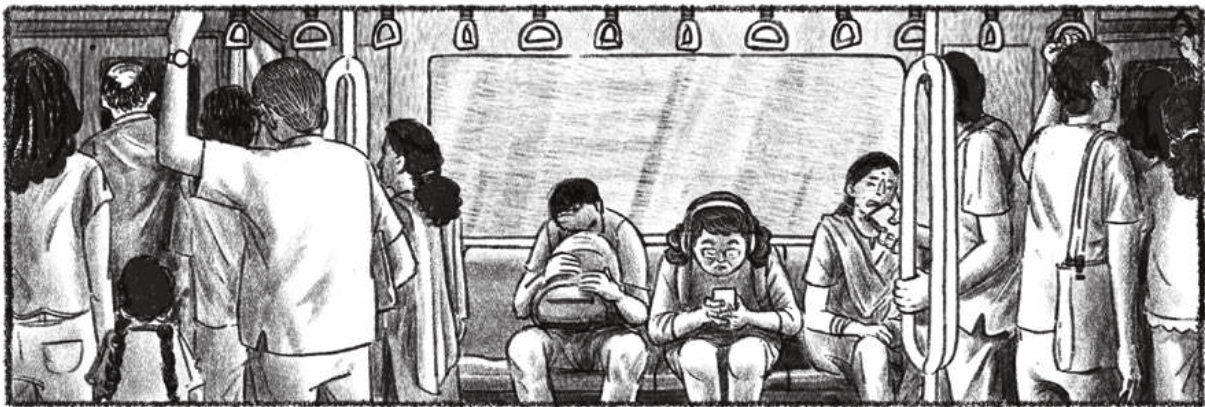
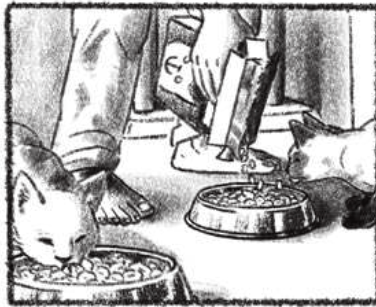
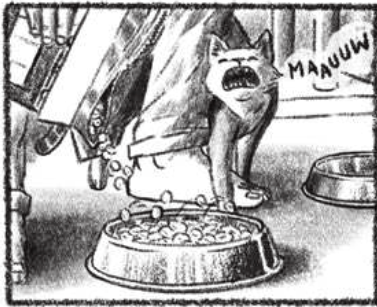


Now what?

Well, we continue searching...



A week passed. Daily routines were resumed.  
The initial enthusiasm had fizzled out with a tinge of dejection.







Haan, Kimu! How are you?



Baba-I-Am-Moving-To-A-Bigger-Home!



WHAT! WHEN? Why didn't you tell me sooner?





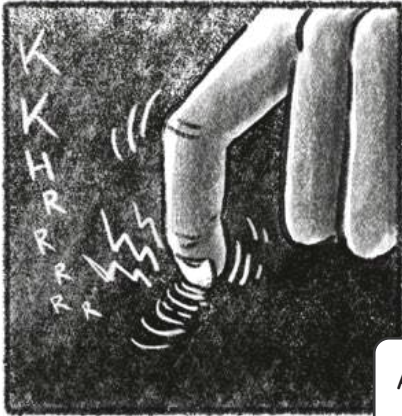
No-Baba.

Still-Looking.

Achha...

We-Saw-Some-Last-Week.

Have you found anything you liked?



No...

Hmm, you have to be patient...

And your friends? Are they helping you?



...



Yes! Sagar-Is-Also-Helping-Me.





Okay, good...



Why don't you both talk to me before taking such decisions?

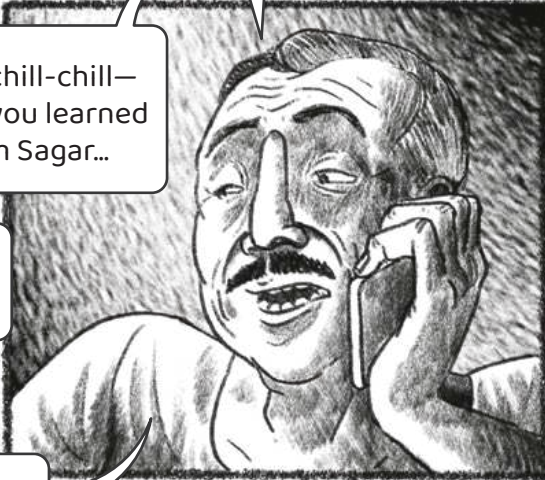
I can help, you know?



Chill-Baba!

HFFF!

All this chill-chill— I'm sure you learned it from Sagar...



Call me if you need anything, okay?

Mmmm!

Bye-Baba!

Bye-Bye, Kimu.

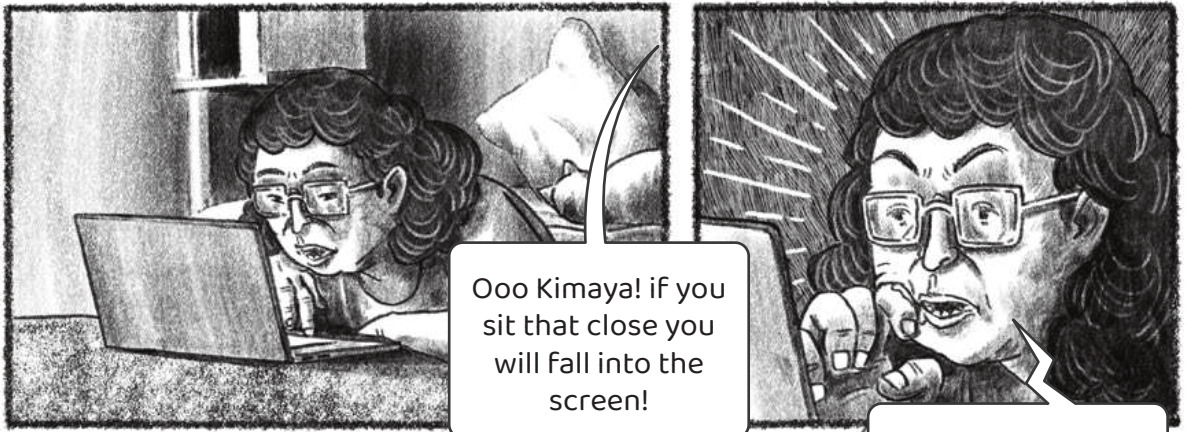


Should we have asked her to come back home?





Kimaya waited patiently, just as Baba had suggested. She knew that she won't be able to go find places herself, so she would check the internet and scour through online listings.



Ooo Kimaya! if you sit that close you will fall into the screen!

Mau-shi!



Arey Wah! This looks nice! Tell the others, we should all go see this place.

WRRRR!

**Kimaya**  
I found a house!  
Let us go see tomorrow. 9:30 AM







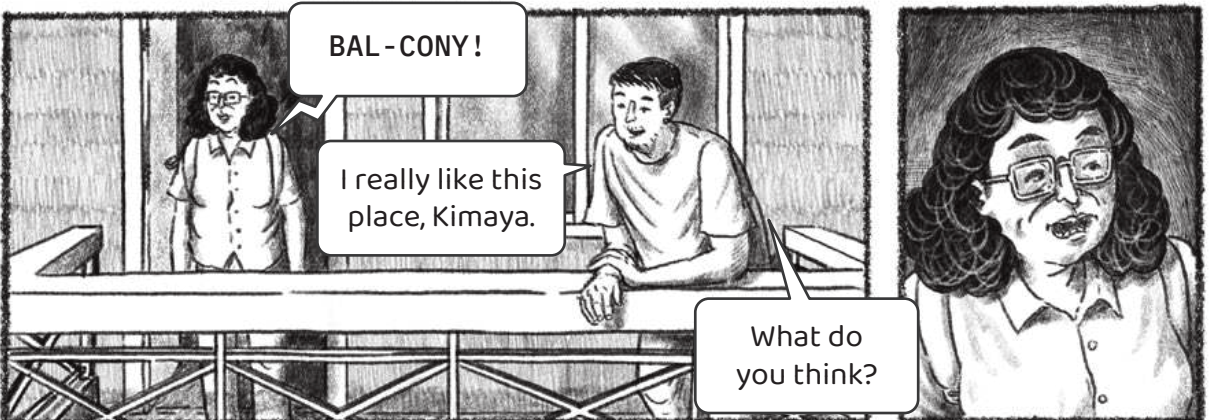
Haan, hello?  
You've reached?

I'm here.  
Look up.

Achha, saw you.  
We'll just be there.











So... which one of you is planning to rent the place?

Aunty, Kimaya will be renting it from you.



Hmm?



Okay... okay.

Who else will be sharing it with her? I'm assuming she won't be living alone...

Anthy, Kimahya lives alohne, wid thwo cadhs.







akhhh!  
ahemm



I'm sorry, but let me be frank.

With her... condition... can she live by herself?



Ma'am, Kimaya has been renting an apartment for the last 3 years.

She goes to work, she travels by herself, she can cook for herself.

She is just a little shy with new people.



Tai, I work at her place.

She knows how to look after her home. And if she rents this house I will continue working here too.

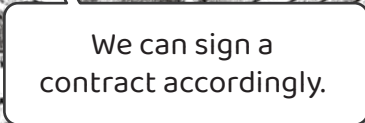
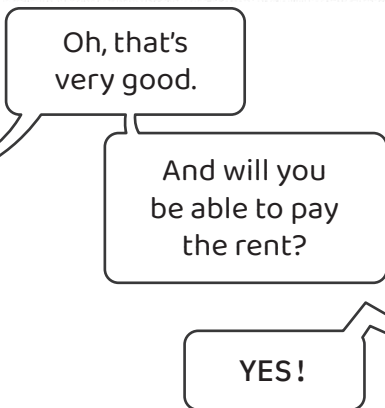
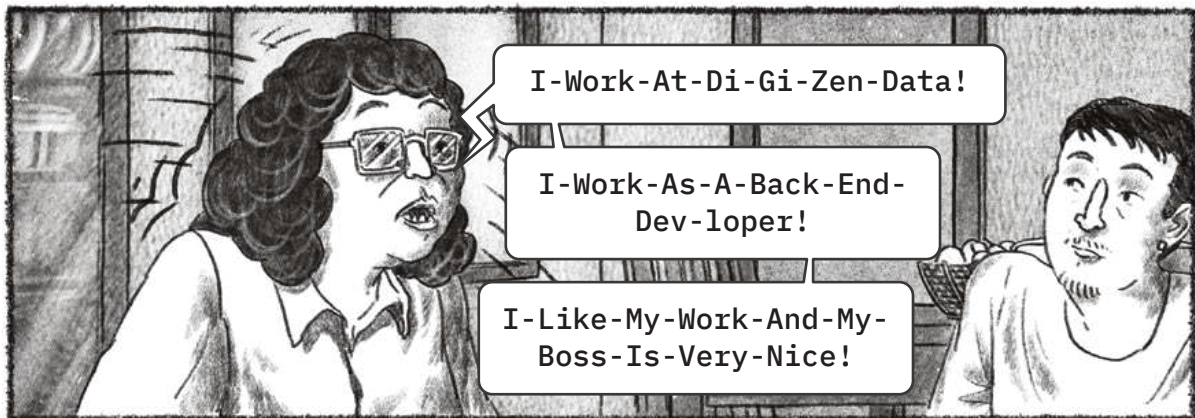


Hmmm

Kimaya, tell me, where do you work?

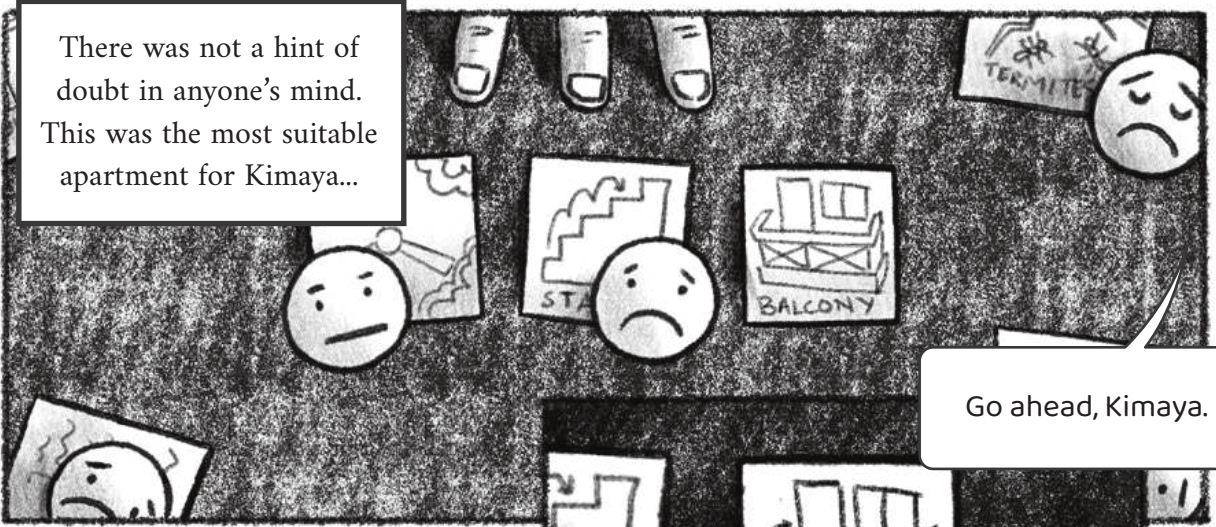






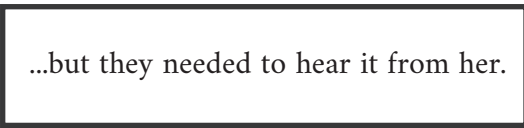


There was not a hint of doubt in anyone's mind. This was the most suitable apartment for Kimaya...



Go ahead, Kimaya.

...but they needed to hear it from her.



In Kimaya's mind, she could only think of that gorgeous balcony.

The decision had been made.

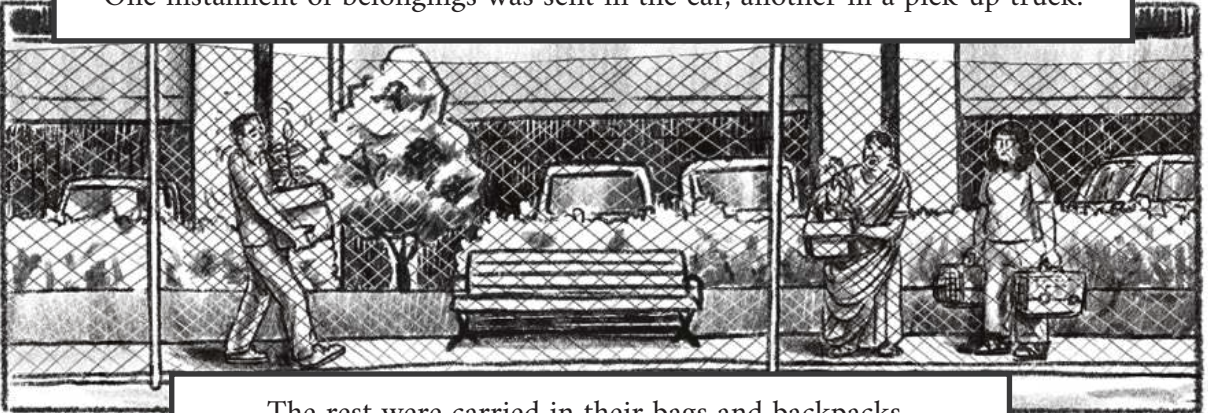


As the day of the move approached, all of Kimaya's belongings were packed. Sakku Maushi was surprised to find how much stuff she had accumulated in 3 years.

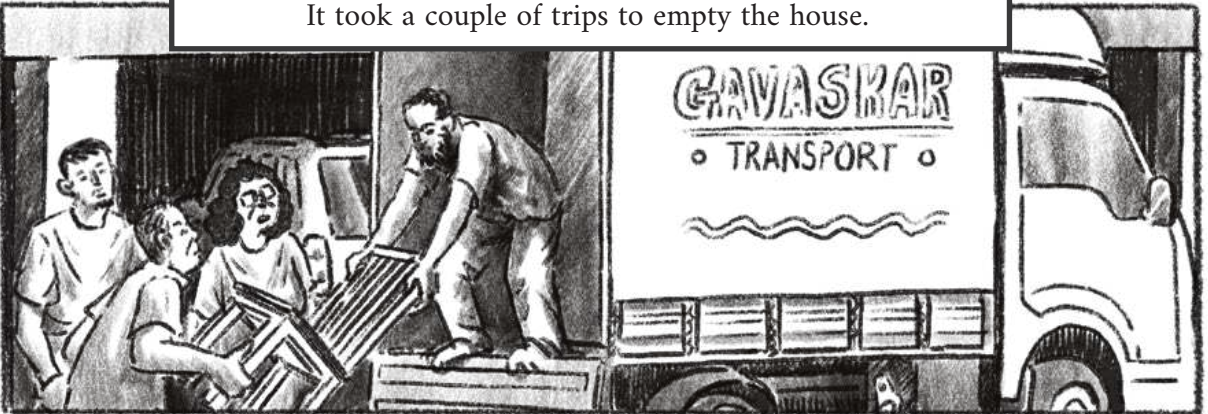




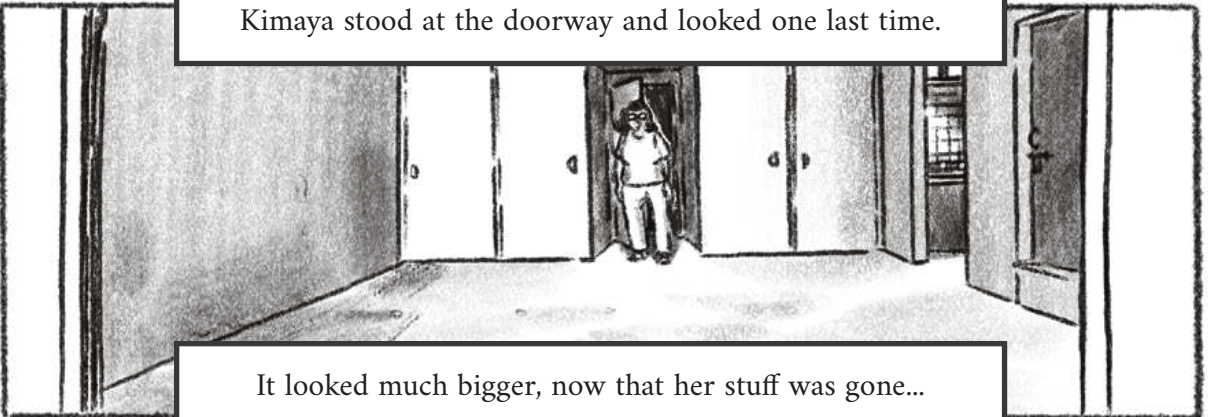
One instalment of belongings was sent in the car, another in a pick-up truck.



The rest were carried in their bags and backpacks.  
It took a couple of trips to empty the house.



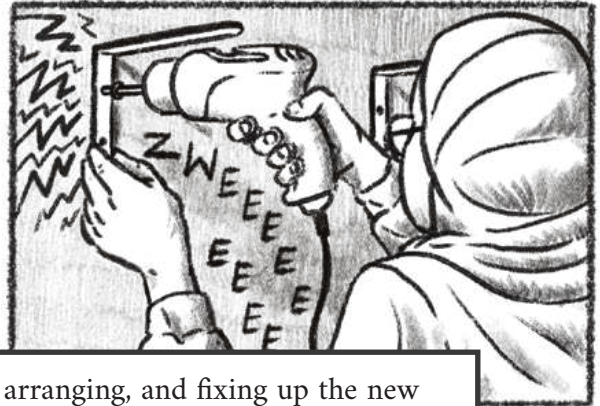
Kimaya stood at the doorway and looked one last time.



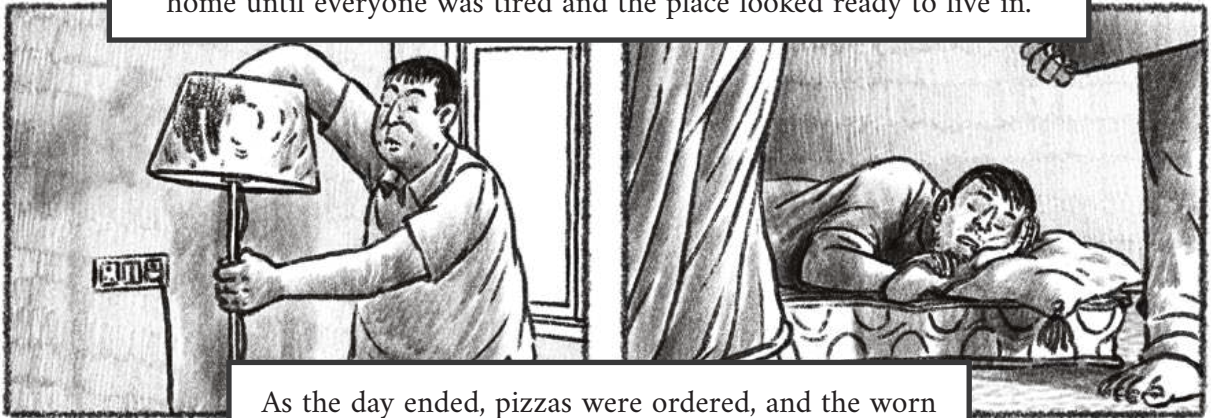
It looked much bigger, now that her stuff was gone...



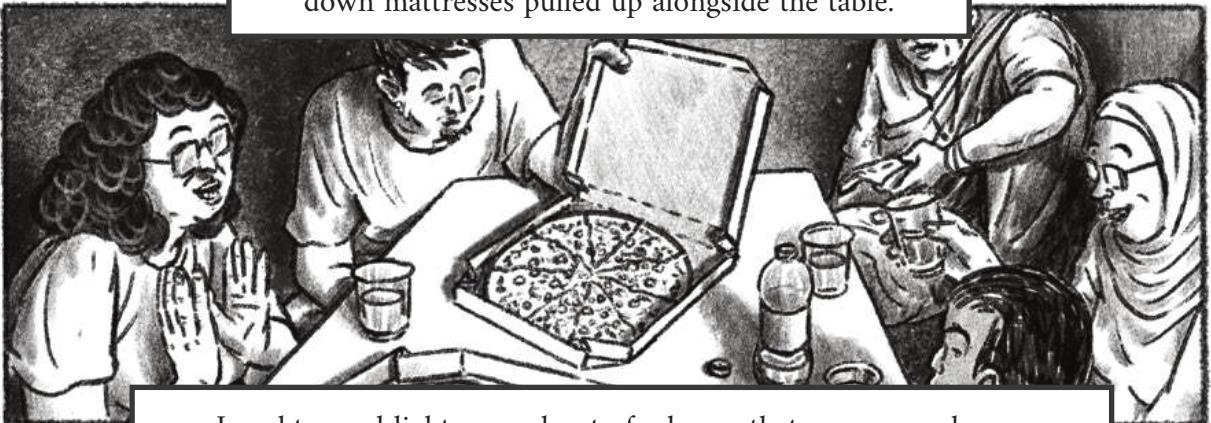
Everyone came by to help Kimaya settle in.



The entire day was spent cleaning, arranging, and fixing up the new home until everyone was tired and the place looked ready to live in.



As the day ended, pizzas were ordered, and the worn down mattresses pulled up alongside the table.



Laughter and light poured out of a house that was now a home.





The next morning, Kimaya opened her door, and walked out into the balcony with her watering can. Both the cats trotted out excitedly after her, meowing impatiently, eager to explore the new place.







HURRRRG  
HURRRRG

The sun was slowly making its way up over the skyscrapers,  
and as she inspected her plants, all of them seemed happy.  
No roots spilling out from under the pots;  
no leaves drooping, sulking away in wilt.



Not much had changed in her little concrete frame.  
But her world fit comfortably into this mould.  
And there was room for more.













## Postscript

Kimaya's home is, in all simplicity, a story of a woman seeking a home to rent. Any reader who has ever actively hunted for a home in a metropolitan city would relate to her struggle—in that, it unites readers along a shared sense of solidarity. But when we see Kimaya as a neurodiverse individual having to negotiate the same obstacles, challenges, and decisions as those who might consider themselves neurotypical, it separates the readers on the lines of lived experience. For some, it might seem puzzling, raising the question “Is it even possible?”. For others, acquainted with disability and neurodiversity, it might raise the question “How can this be made possible?”.

The catalyst for this story is a study conducted by Pacta and EnAble India, which explores legal guardianship practices for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) within the Indian context. Legal guardians act on behalf of the person with disability to make decisions and exercise their legal capacity, or the capacity to make legally binding decisions, as granted by the law. In doing so, the legal capacity of the individual is presumed to be reduced under the law, highlighting the fact that people with disabilities do not enjoy equal rights as those without disabilities.

Kimaya's story stands out as an exception instead of being the norm. The study found a lack of awareness about legal capacity amongst individuals with IDD and their families. The legal capacity of an individual is influenced by their decision-making capacity. People improve their decision making capacity by understanding risk, by confronting consequences, especially when it comes to finances,



relationships and health. When agency towards these decisions is substituted, it limits the development of decision-making capacity. According to the study, there isn't enough effort being taken to assist individuals with IDD to improve their decision-making capacity from an early age. Although the provision for legal guardianship is acknowledged and adopted to safeguard the individual's future, families of individuals with IDD are often not aware of the laws around guardianship and available alternatives to claiming complete legal guardianship.

More significantly, the aspect of nurture and care that motivates parents to make decisions for the child until a certain age pervades into adulthood for people with IDD, as parents still see their adult children as 'juveniles'. There is a fear that parents of individuals with IDD feel towards their children having to live independently and manage their own lives, a lack of confidence in the possibility of their children being able to integrate themselves into a society that seems to move faster with each passing decade.

A story about a character with IDD navigating life independently, asserting their autonomy, and finding support and community beyond their immediate family might appear to some readers as radical, wishful, or situated in the realm of fantasy. But that does not make the proposition impossible. Even today, it is possible for people with IDD to live a life of self-determination, without complete legal guardianship. Supported decision-making is one such guardianship practice that respects an individual's autonomy and provides them the agency to make decisions for themselves. Just as Sagar is shown to assist Kimaya through her decision-making process using icons and images, each individual might require a



different approach to supported decision-making. Even today, the concept of supported decision-making reveals gaps in our socio-legal infrastructure which makes it hard to achieve, but it also initiates a larger process of building a more inclusive society and a legal system that embraces neurodiversity.

Knowing the relevant laws that can make limited legal guardianship possible, one realises that it isn't impossible to achieve, but would require an immense effort of advocacy, education, and outreach to see any change in social practices. How can we nudge parents to allow their children to take risks? How can we encourage institutions working with people with disabilities to focus on decision-making, self-advocacy, and self-determination, making the individual capable of making and communicating their decisions effectively? The change we must advocate for moves far beyond just individual practice. When mindsets change, when spaces are made more inclusive, and when laws embrace diversity, an entire world of new possibilities is realised. Kimaya's home strives to bring more people into the conversation, make room for reflection, and give cause to action.

Pacta and Enable India are committed to take this study forward to build the discourse around legal capacity for people with IDD. Although the current study is limited to a certain socio-economic setting, the future efforts aim to study the mindsets and practices around legal guardianship across more varied socio-economic groups, providing a richer understanding of these trends in India. Along with this, they aim to develop workshops to build awareness on legal guardianship and self-determination for people with IDD.



**Roeqin** is an artist and arts-educator. His practice of sequential art offers him a method of active sense-making, a means to observe and connect the dots in the world around him. The process of building visual narratives brings him closer to the ecologies and societies that he inhabits. This approach inspires his work as an arts-educator, collaborating with children to perceive the ecosystem around them closely and interpreting their observations into comics. He is based in Ranikhet, Uttarakhand.

**Pacta** is a Bengaluru-based law firm and think tank exclusively focused on the social sector. Pacta provides legal services to NGOs, philanthropists, and educational institutions. Pacta also contributes to evidence generation through research across three main thematic - inclusion, technology, and philanthropy.

**EnAble India** is a not-for-profit organization established in 1999, dedicated to promoting economic independence and dignity for persons with disabilities (PwDs). Recognized as a pioneer in the employability and employment of PwDs, EnAble India addresses the needs of over 21 disabilities listed in the RPwD Act, 2016, and more. Over the past 24 years, we have positively impacted nearly 500,000 individuals, including PwDs and their families, across 35 states and union territories in India.







Kimaya lives in a tiny home in Mumbai, with 2 cats and 14 plants. She leads a happy life, with a wonderful set of friends, a support system she can rely on and a brother who visits her every week. Even her workplace is not too far from where she lives. But her home has become too small to contain her world, and finding a new home is never easy in Mumbai, especially for people like Kimaya.



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