

JOONAS SILDRE

BETWEEN  
TWO  
SOUNDS



ARVO PÄRT'S  
JOURNEY TO HIS  
MUSICAL LANGUAGE

TRANSLATED BY ADAM CULLEN

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# BETWEEN TWO SOUNDS

ARVO PÄRT'S  
JOURNEY TO HIS  
MUSICAL LANGUAGE

TRANSLATED FROM THE ESTONIAN  
BY ADAM CULLEN

Plough

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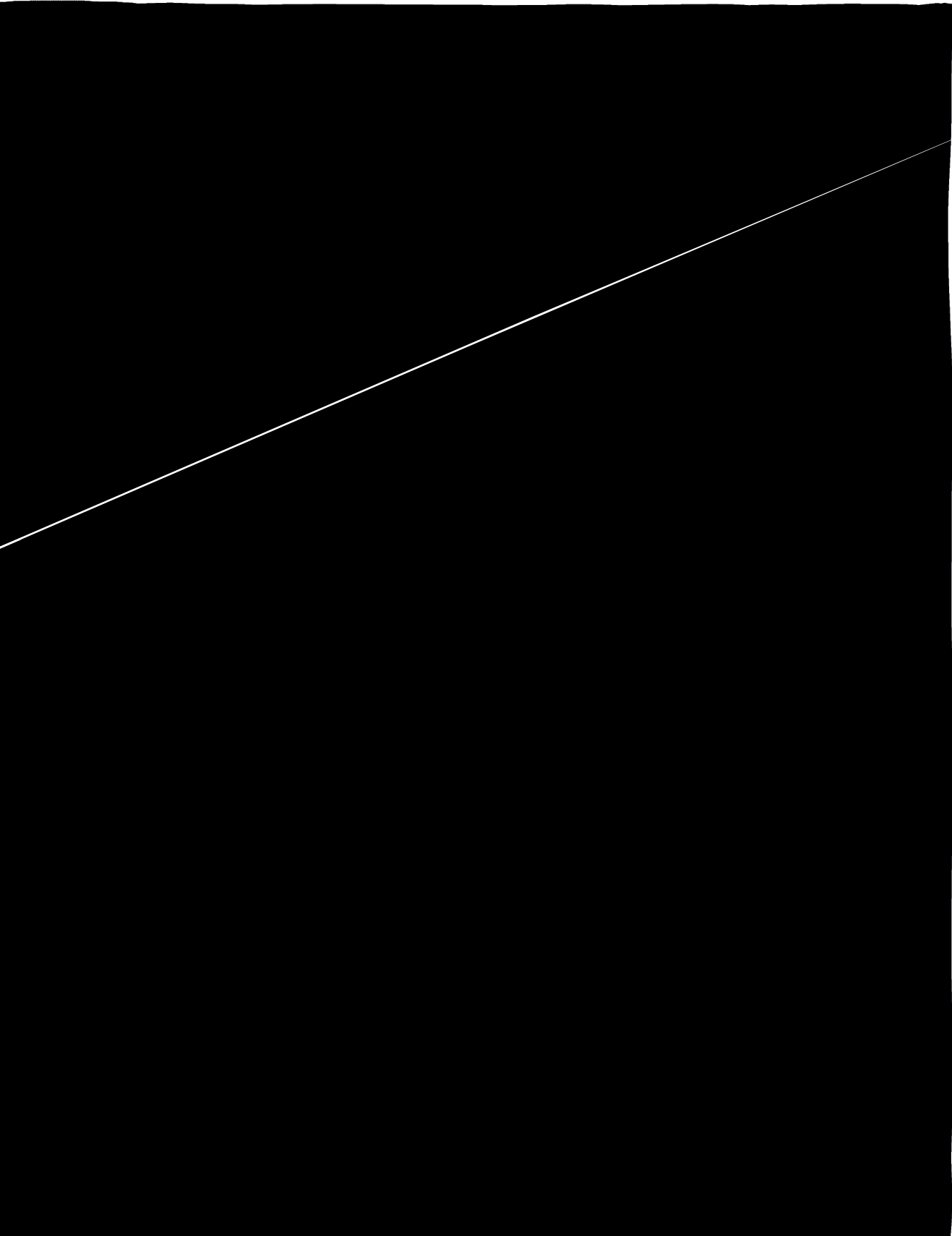
# PROLOGUE

THOUSANDS  
OF PAGES  
OF NOTES.

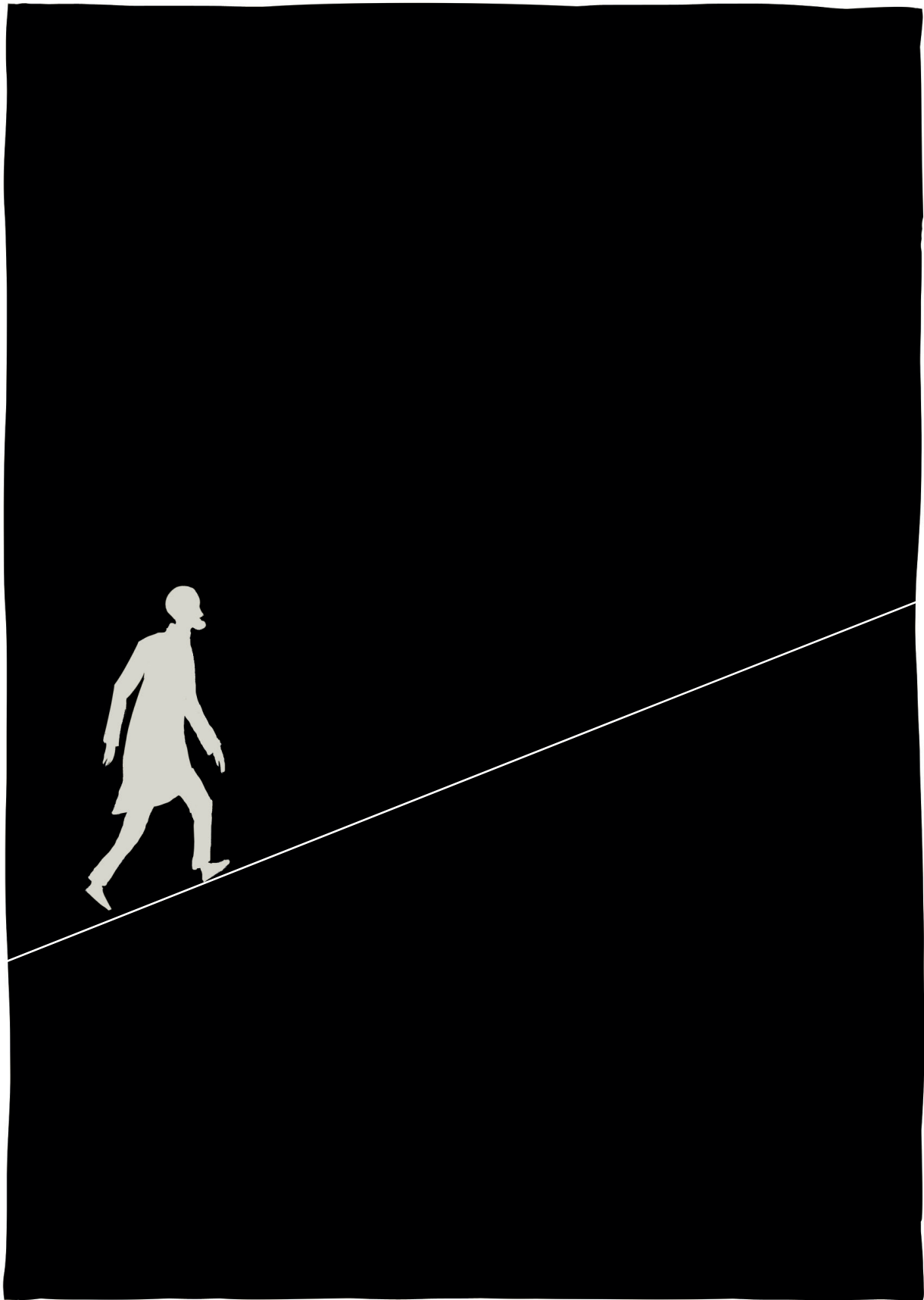
MERE  
EXERCISES,  
SEARCHING ...



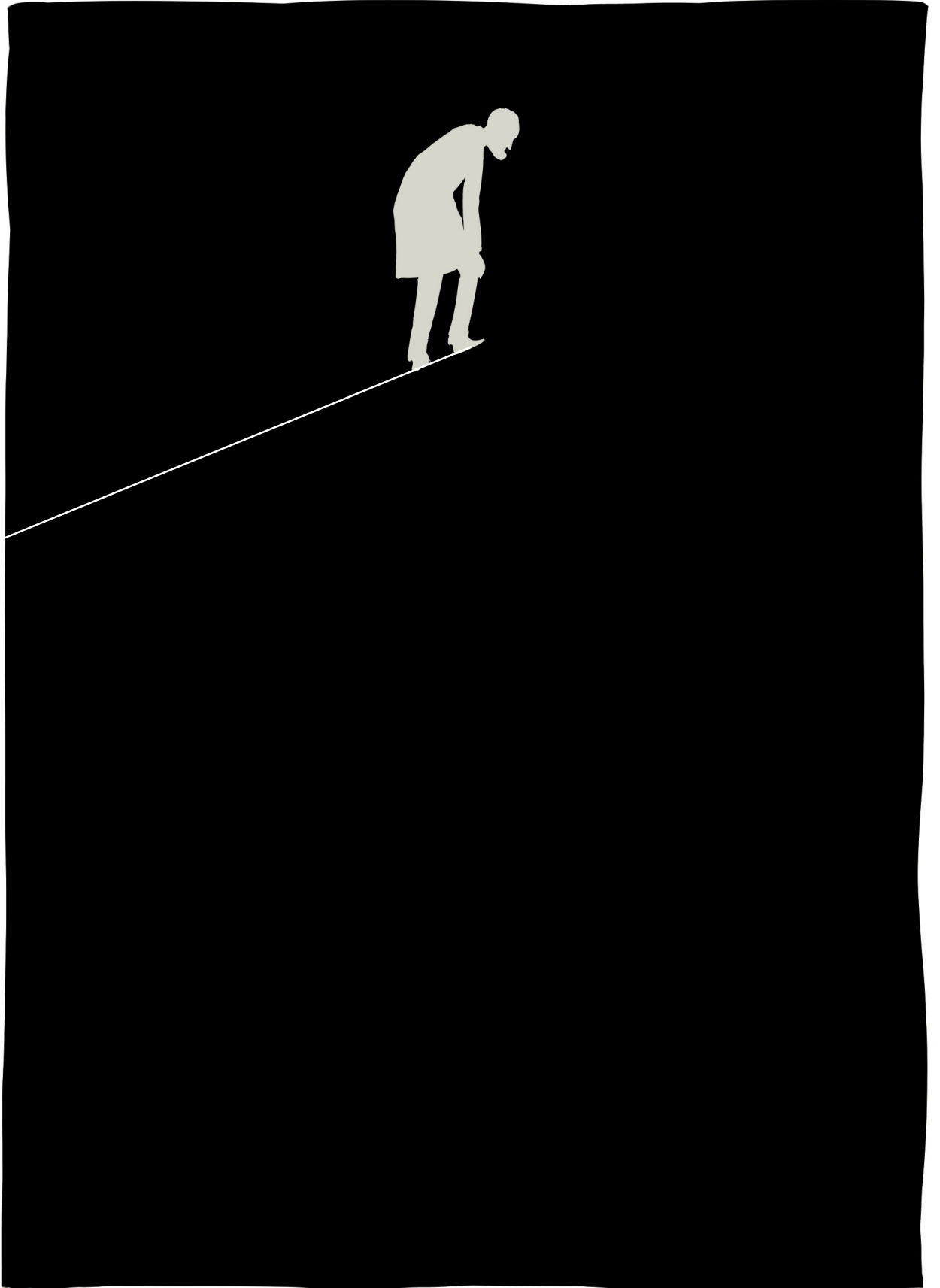
IT SEEMS  
THIS ROAD  
TO GOLGOTHA  
WILL LAST  
AN ETERNITY.



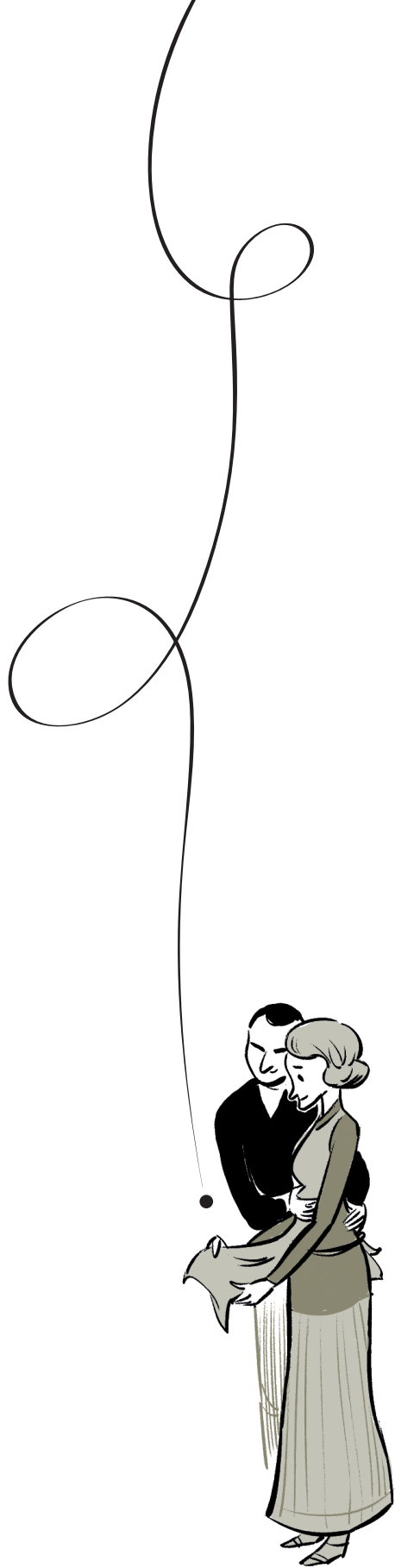




**This is a preview. Get the entire book here.**



**This is a preview. Get the entire book here.**



1935

**This is a preview. Get the entire book here.**

MAJESTIC,  
BY THE FOUNTAIN,



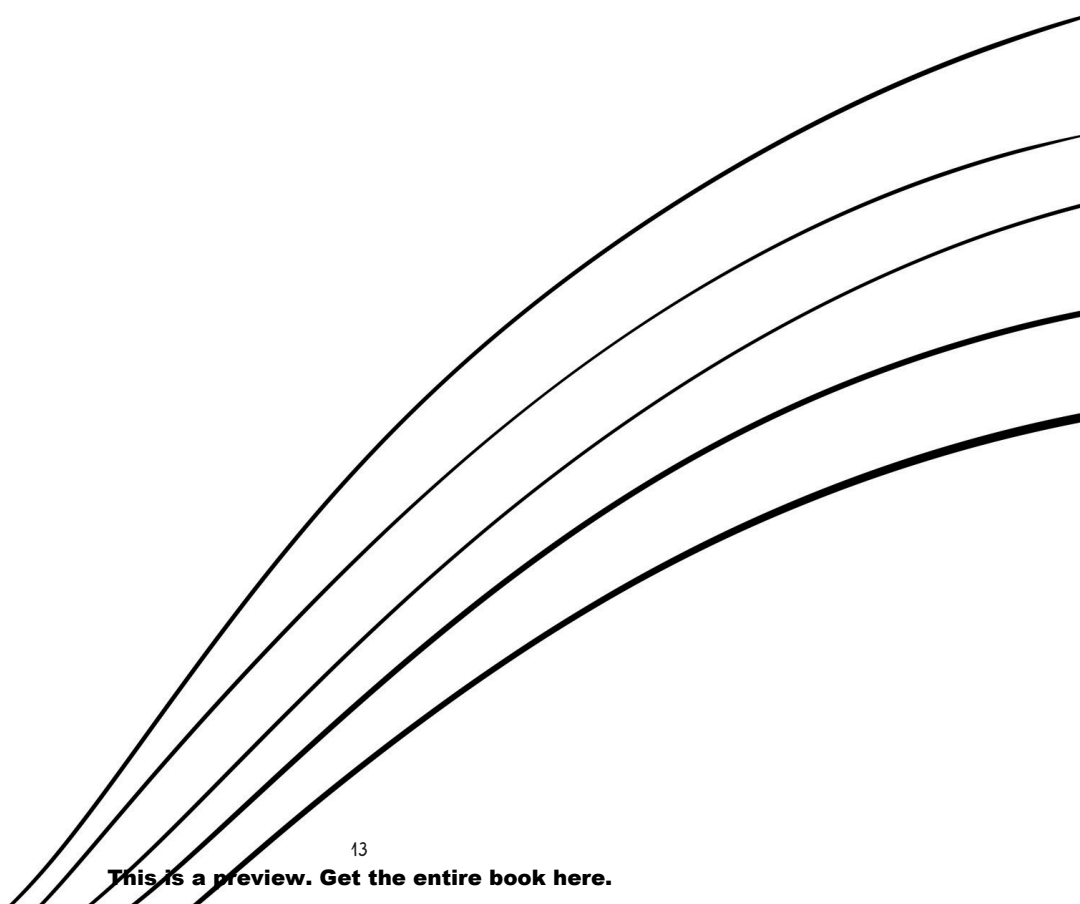
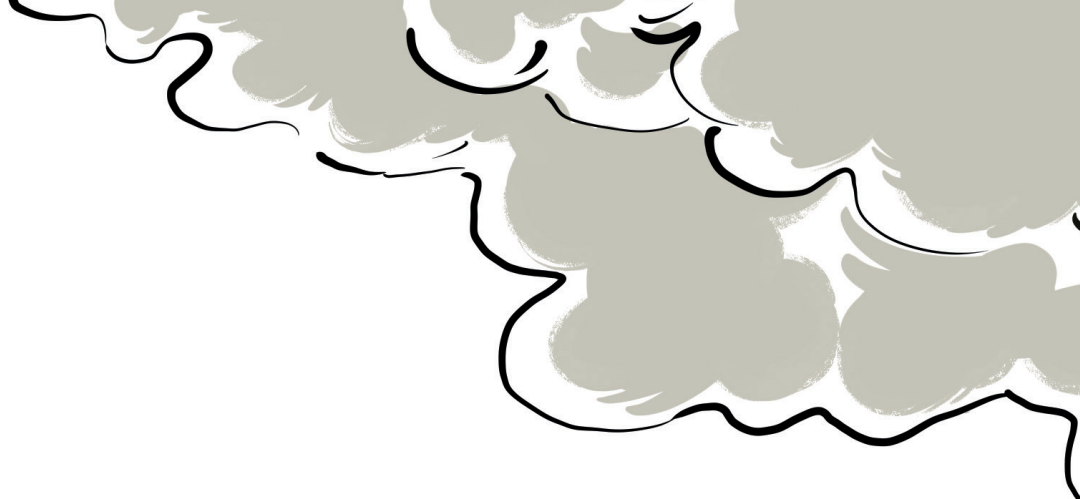
THERE STANDS  
A LINDEN TREE ...

OFTTIMES, BENEATH  
ITS SHADOWS



I DREAMED MY  
SWEETEST DREAMS.

**This is a preview. Get the entire book here.**





ARE YOU, BY CHANCE, AWARE OF HOW BEAUTIFULLY ARVO SINGS WHEN HE'S HOME ALONE?

WHENEVER YOU'RE AWAY, HE STARTS TO SING, AND HE SINGS TILL YOU COME BACK.



... A PROUD POSTBOY ONCE RODE DOWN THE ROAD; FROM TOWN TO TOWN, CITY TO CITY, EVER DID HIS PATH LEAD ...



ARVO! I HAD NO IDEA YOU LOVED TO SING!



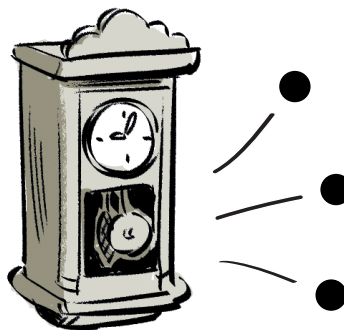
PLEASE, SING FOR MUMMY, TOO!



I WAS BO-ORN A GYP-SY ...



HA-HA! MY LITTLE ARVO, HAVE YOU MEMORIZED ALL THE SONGS I'VE SUNG TO YOU?



ASSAMALLA, NEAR RAKVERE. ARVO IS AT HIS GRANDPARENTS' HOUSE AWAITING HIS MOTHER AND STEPFATHER.

1939



SHE'LL BE HERE SOON, ARVO DEAR! YESTERDAY WAS SATURDAY, AND NOW THAT MOMMY HAS A JOB, SHE LIKES TO REST A LITTLE ON THE WEEKENDS.



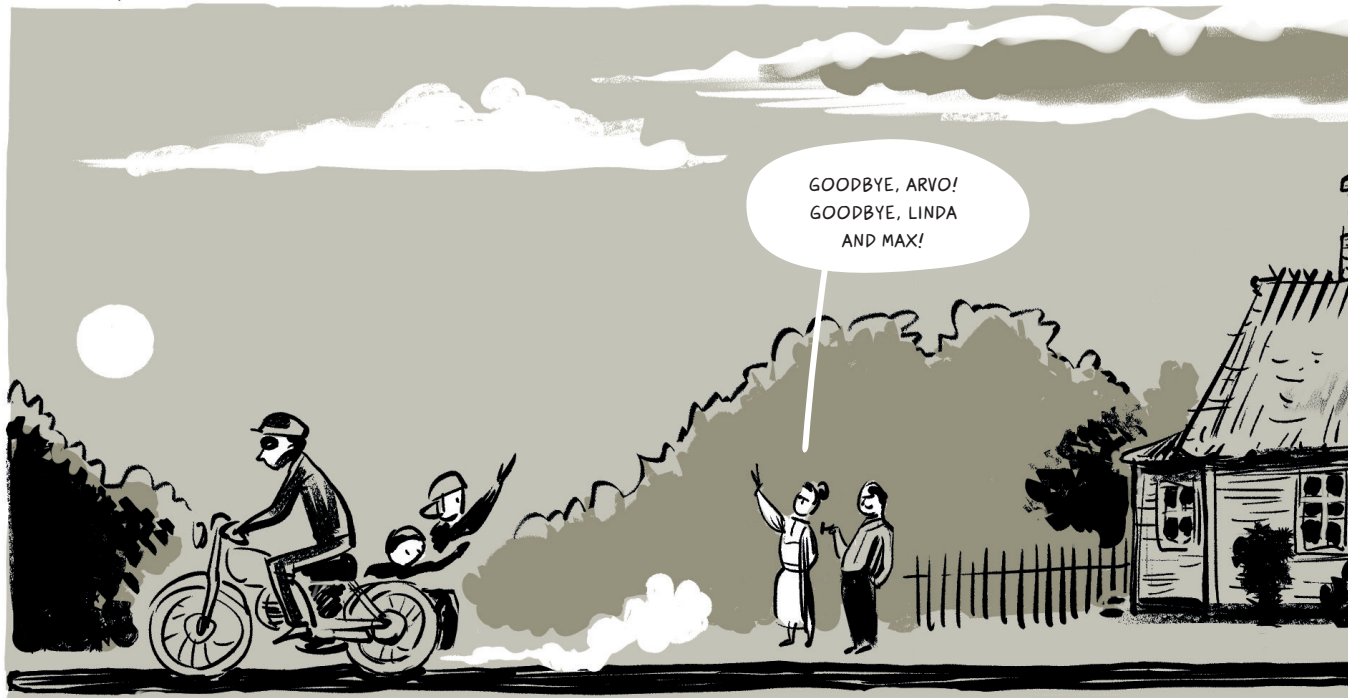
IT WAS VERY NICE OF YOU TO ASK YOUR KINDERGARTEN TEACHER TO GIVE MOMMY A JOB. SHE WAS VERY MOVED BY THAT.



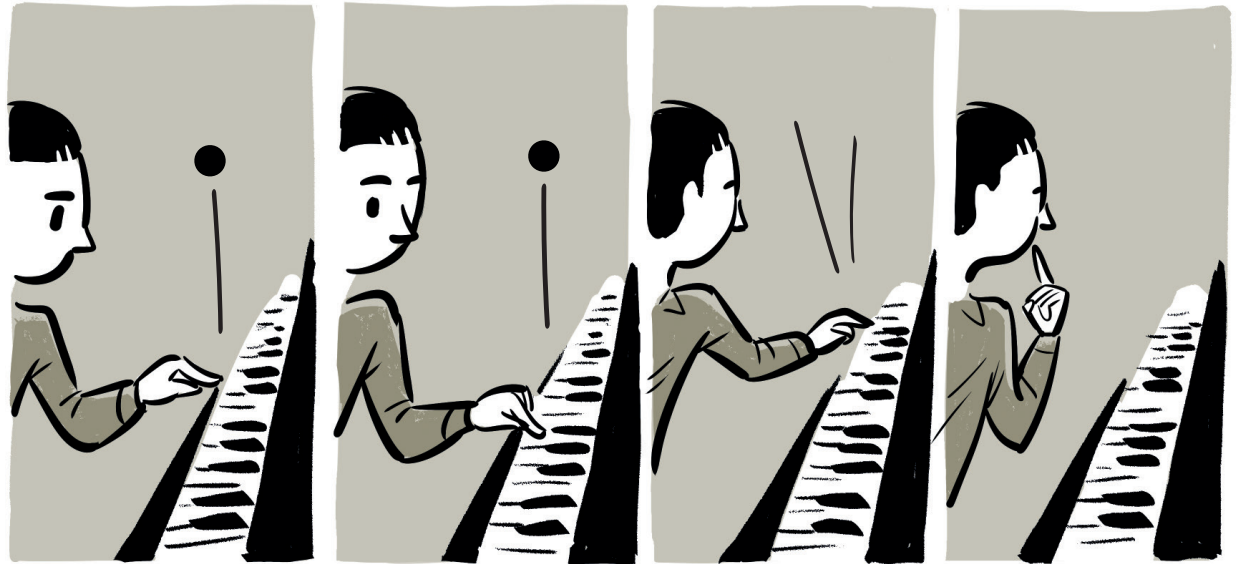
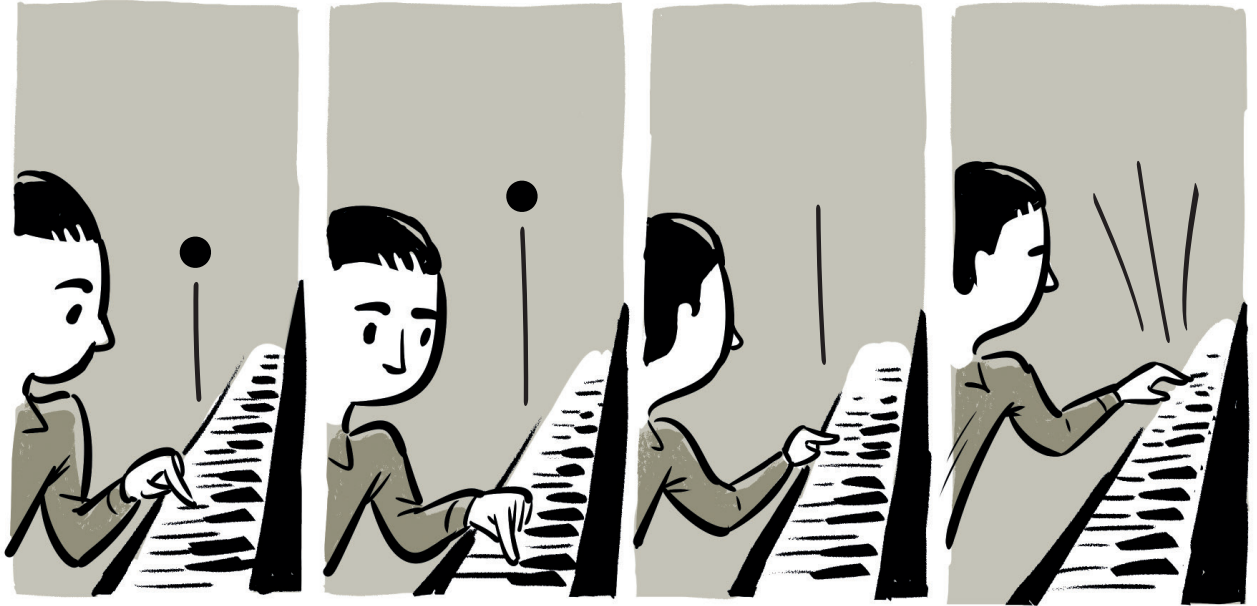
BUT TODAY IS SUNDAY, AND THAT MEANS IT'S TIME TO READ A LITTLE MORE FROM THE BIBLE. I'LL READ YOU A STORY WHERE A MOM IS WAITING A CHILD, INSTEAD!











SOME OF THE KEYS DON'T WORK. YOU HAVE TO SING THOSE NOTES ... HA-HA!

THIS PIANO IS OF A GRAND OLD AGE, BUT IT STILL WORKS. MY BROTHER BROUGHT IT FROM ST. PETERSBURG.

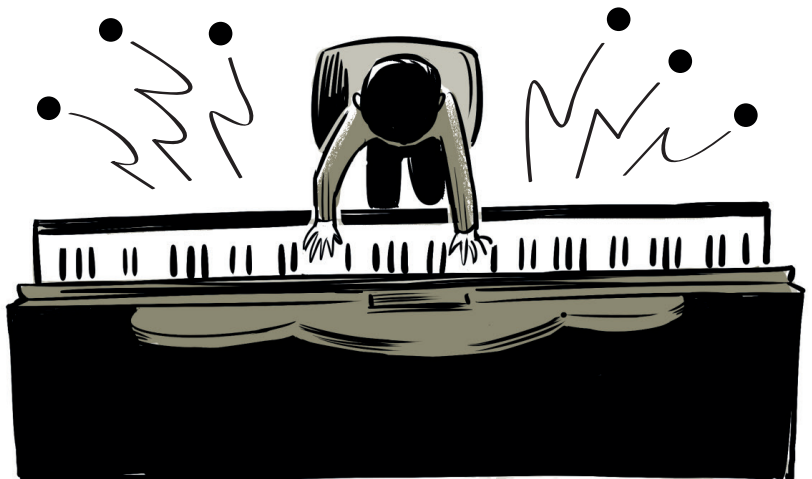
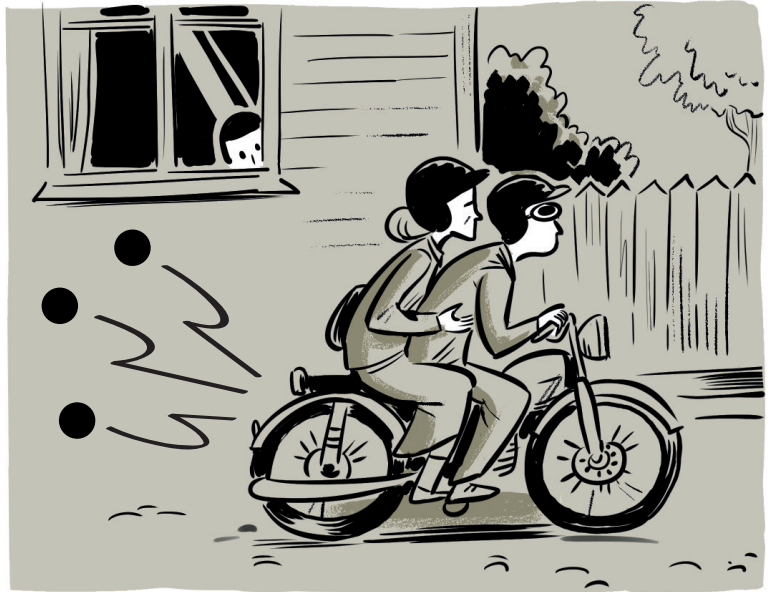


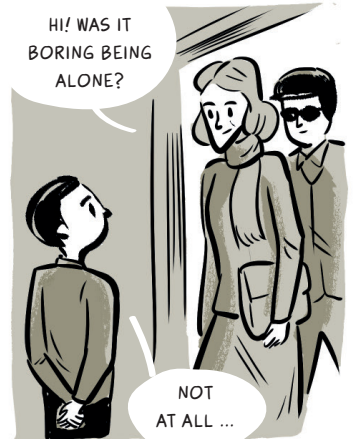
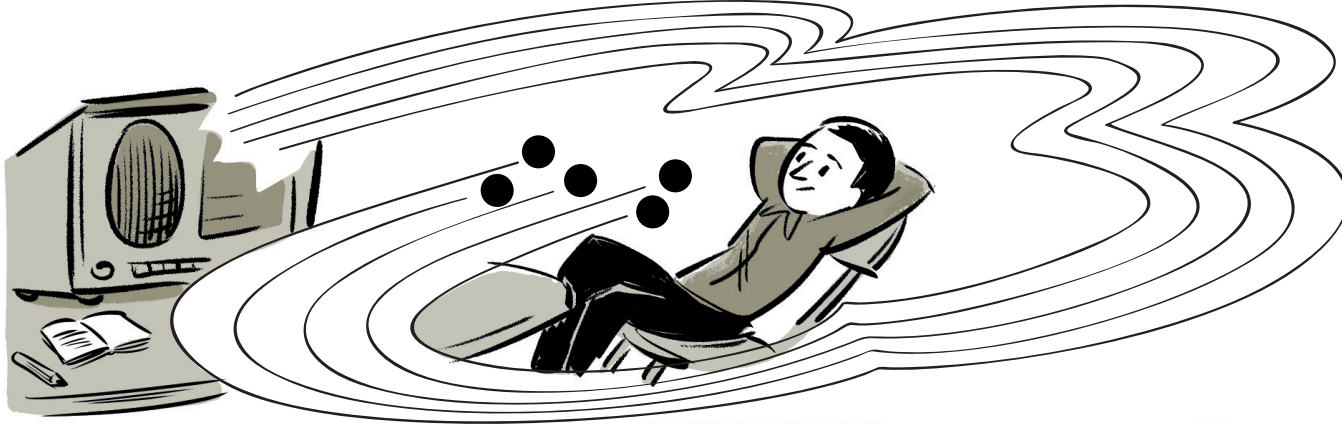
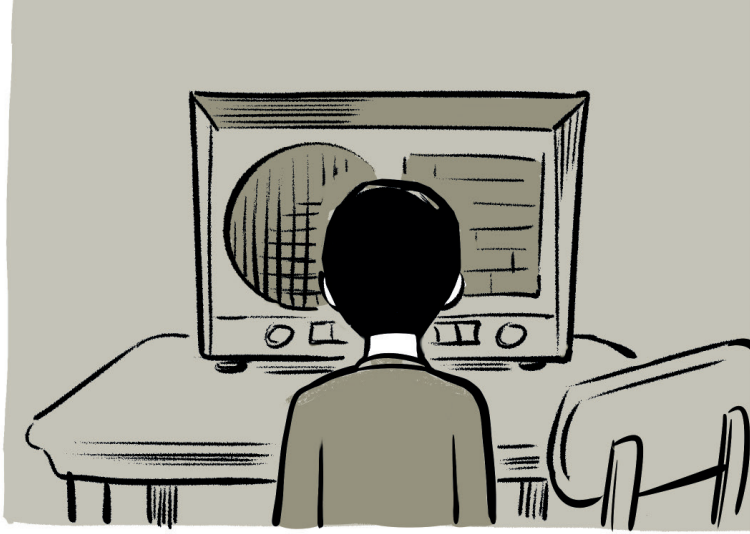
IF YOU'D LIKE TO LEARN TO PLAY, YOU MUST START COMING HERE EVERY DAY TO PRACTICE.



GREAT!

OPPORTUNITIES TO BE ALONE IN SUCH A PACKED HOUSE ARE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN.





1944



THE RUSSIANS BOMBED HALF OF TALLINN TO SMITHEREENS! THERE WEREN'T EVEN ANY GERMAN TROOPS THERE! IT'S A PURPOSEFUL EXTERMINATION OF THE ESTONIAN PEOPLE!

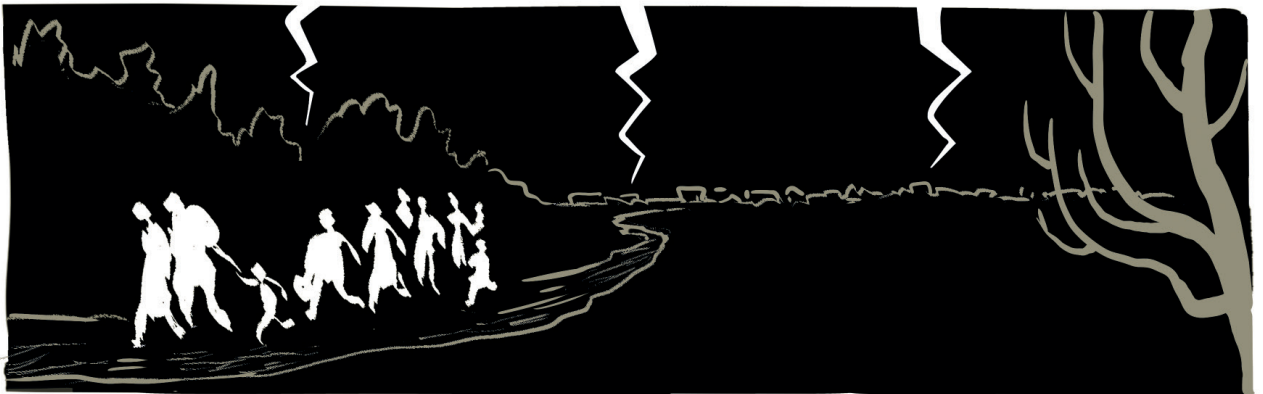
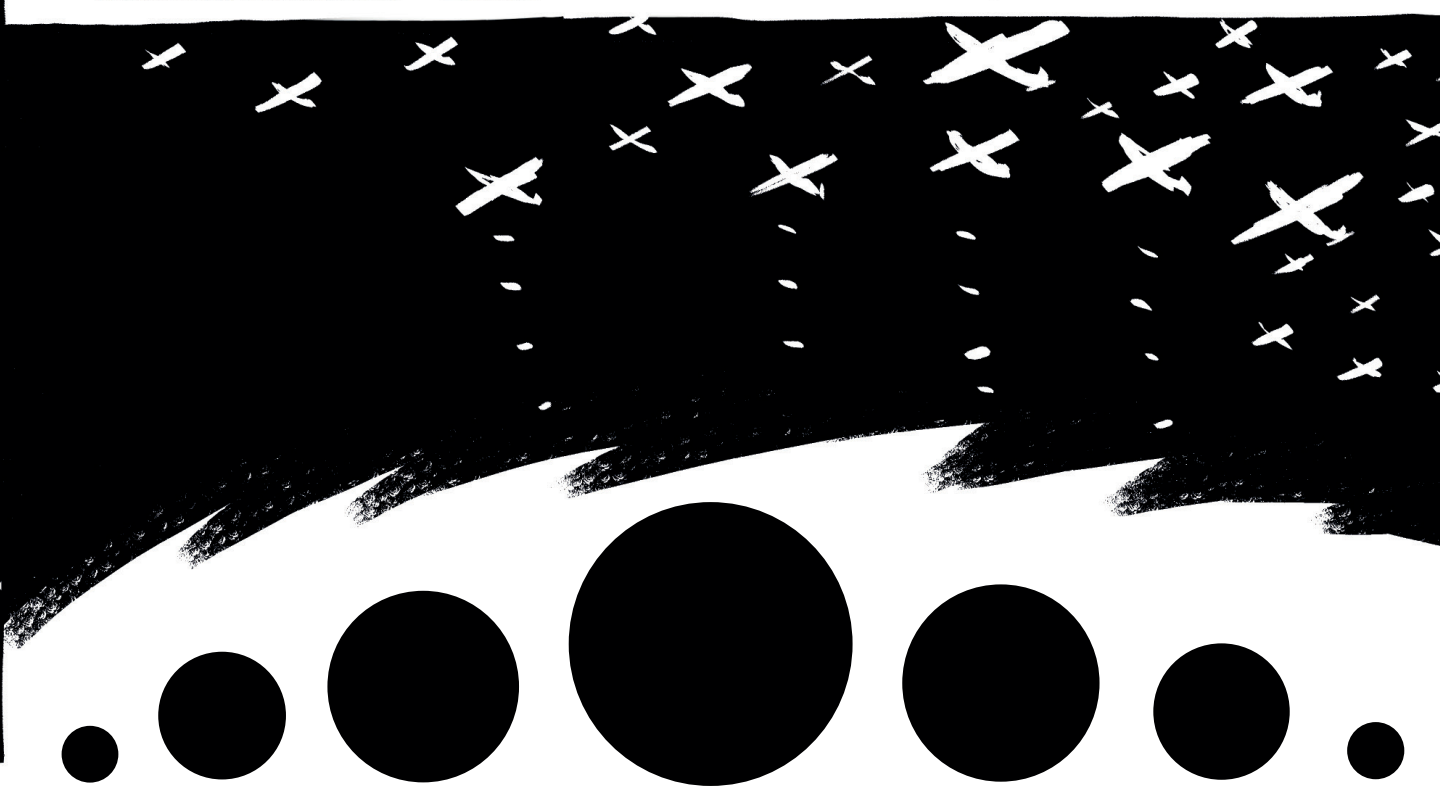
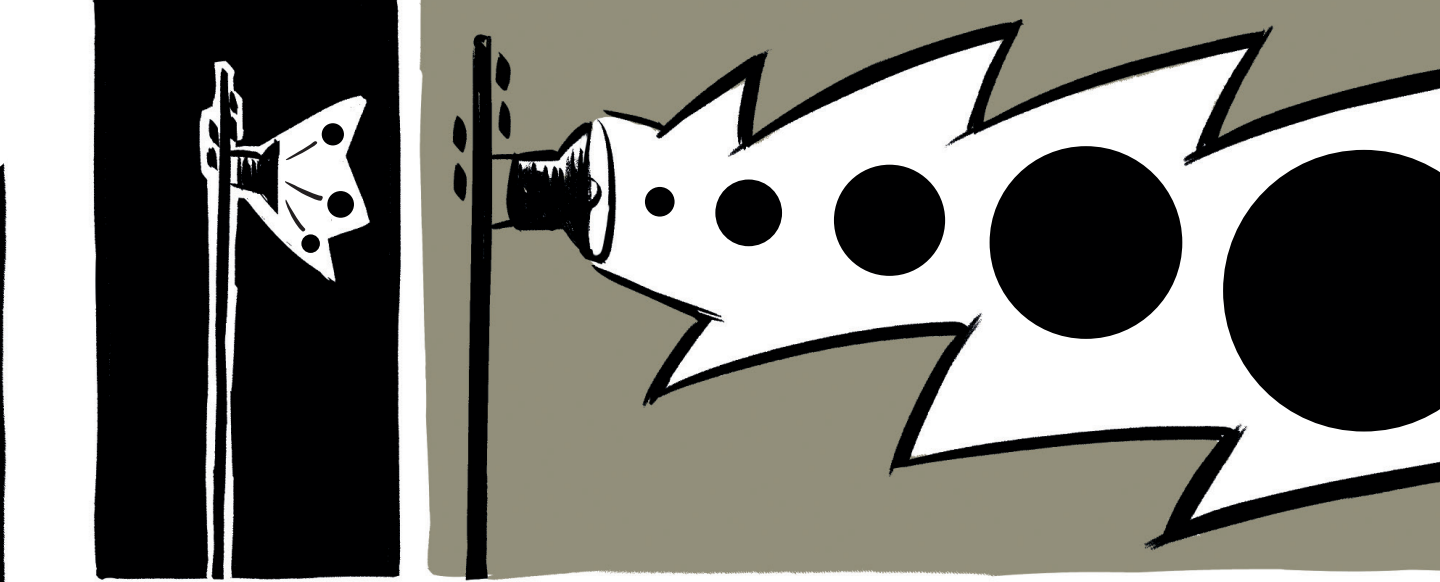
IT'S REVENGE FOR RESISTING THEM OUTSIDE NARVA! WE DON'T WANT TO BE AN ESTONIAN SSR, BUT THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA – WITHOUT THE RUSSIANS OR THE GERMANS!

WE'RE A BORDER COUNTRY BETWEEN EAST AND WEST. SOON, HALF OF US WILL BE WITH THE RUSSKIES AND THE REST IN CAHOOTS WITH THE NAZIS!

THERE'LL BE CIVIL WAR – AND OVER WHAT? NOT AN INDEPENDENT ESTONIAN STATE, IN ANY CASE!

RAKVERE'S MARKET SQUARE. THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM ...





ONE WEEK LATER, BACK IN RAKVERE. THE KUHMBERGS' HOUSE, WHERE ARVO LIVED, WAS UNTOUCHED BY THE BOMBING.



THOUGH RUSSIAN SOLDIERS DID COME A'LOOTING ...





1945



ARVO! THERE'S GOOD NEWS IN THE PAPER – A CHILDREN'S MUSIC SCHOOL IS TO OPEN IN RAKVERE.

I ENROLLED YOU. WE DO HAVE OUR OWN PIANO AT HOME ...

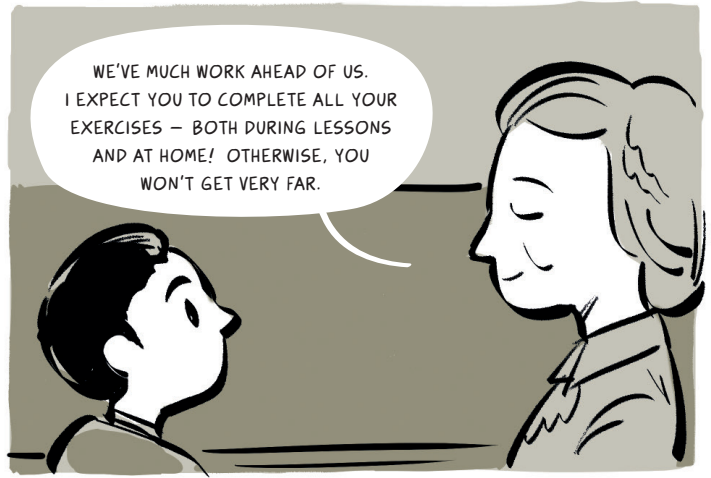
THE SCHOOL, WHICH WAS STARTED BY ENTHUSIASTS, DOESN'T HAVE ITS OWN SPACE YET.



YOU CAN'T MAKE A LIVING OFF PLAYING MUSIC, BUT THE SKILL WILL COME IN HANDY.



MY NAME IS ILLE MARTIN. WE'RE GOING TO START STUDYING PIANO TOGETHER HERE, AT MY HOME.



WE'VE MUCH WORK AHEAD OF US. I EXPECT YOU TO COMPLETE ALL YOUR EXERCISES – BOTH DURING LESSONS AND AT HOME! OTHERWISE, YOU WON'T GET VERY FAR.

MISS MARTIN IS AN OLD-FASHIONED WOMAN WHO HAS LITTLE EXPERIENCE WITH CHILDREN.



EVEN SO, THEY SOON FIND A COMMON LANGUAGE.

1947



WHAT A GOOD JOB - YOU PRACTICE AND PRACTICE ALL THE TIME!

HOWEVER, HIS TEACHER IS WORRIED ...



ARVO!  
YOU'RE IN TROUBLE NOW!

MISS MARTIN SAYS YOU HAVEN'T BEEN PRACTICING AT ALL LATELY.



I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE PLAYING AT HOME, BUT IT CERTAINLY ISN'T YOUR HOMEWORK!



FROM NOW ON, YOU'LL MAKE AN X NEXT TO EVERY EXERCISE YOU FINISH. I'M GOING TO CHECK.

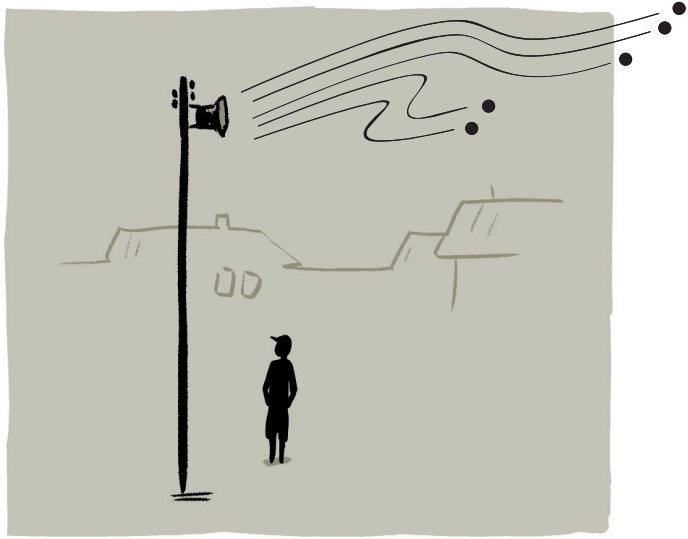
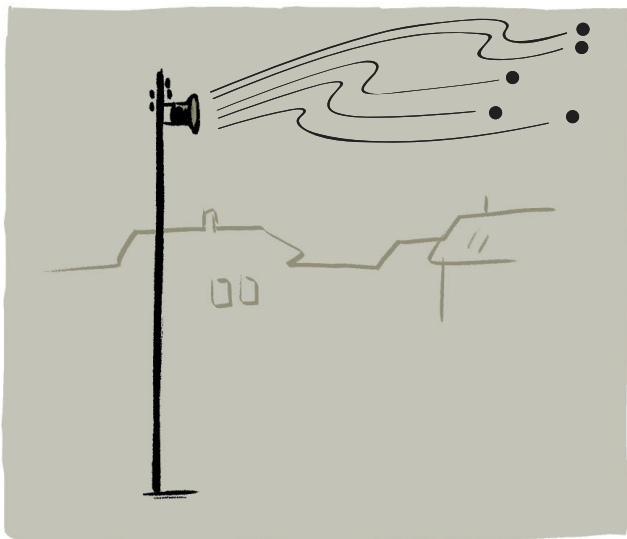
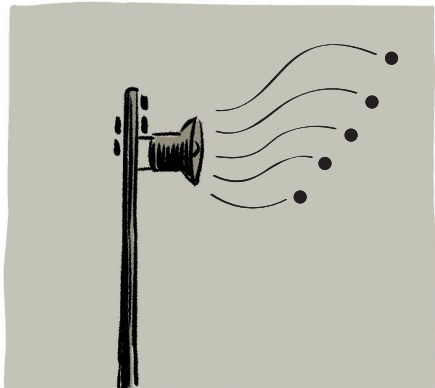
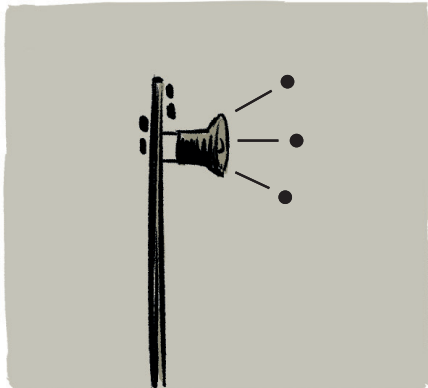
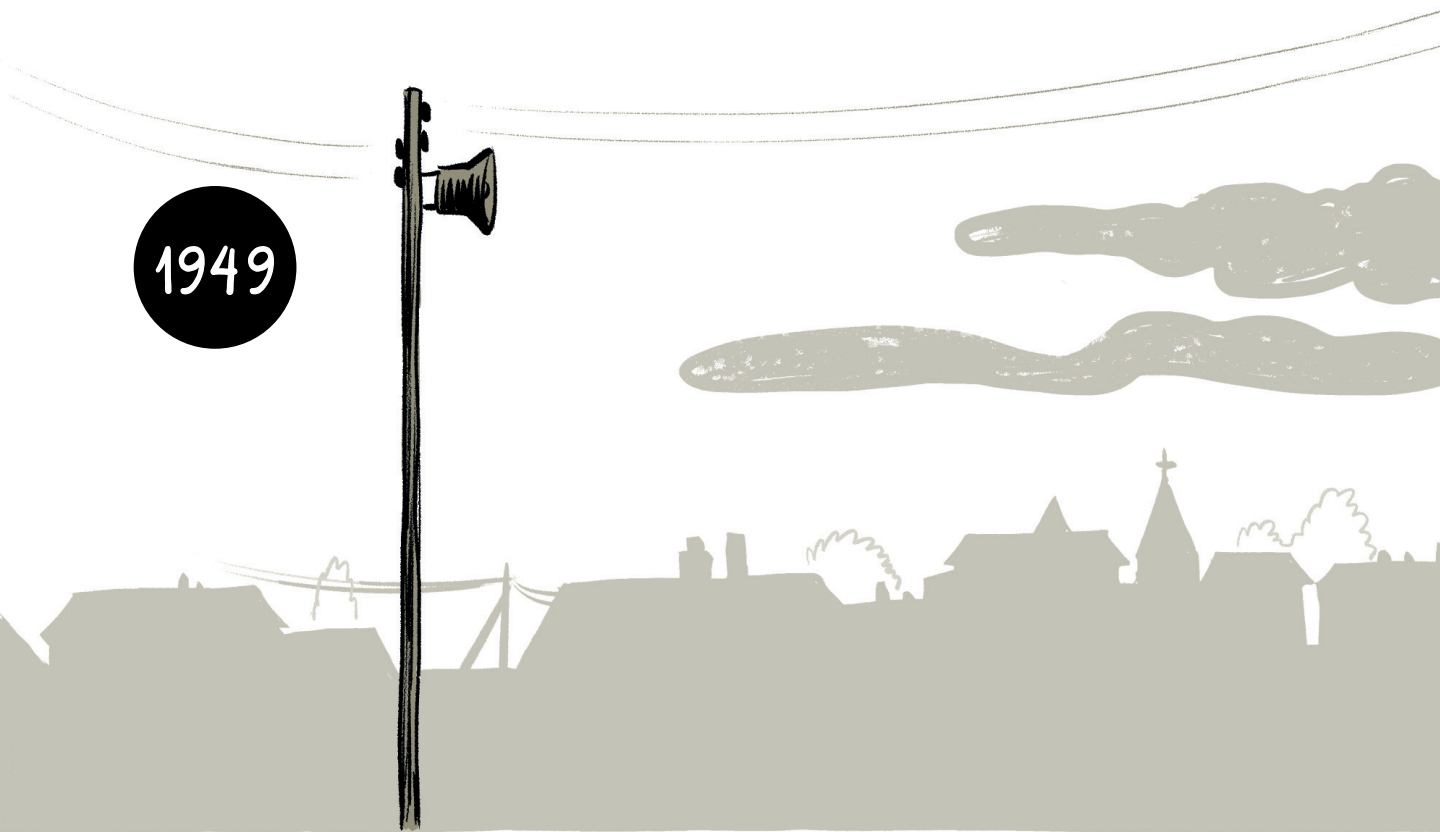


AND WHEN YOUR HOMEWORK IS COMPLETE, YOU'LL GET A NUT AS A REWARD!

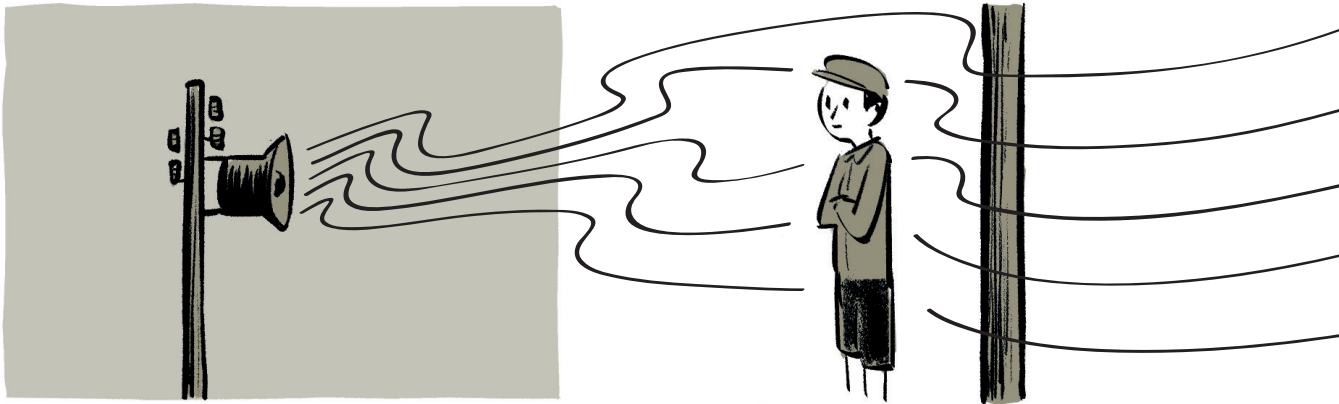


BUT MISS MARTIN GIVES ME A PIECE OF CHOCOLATE FOR PLAYING WELL!

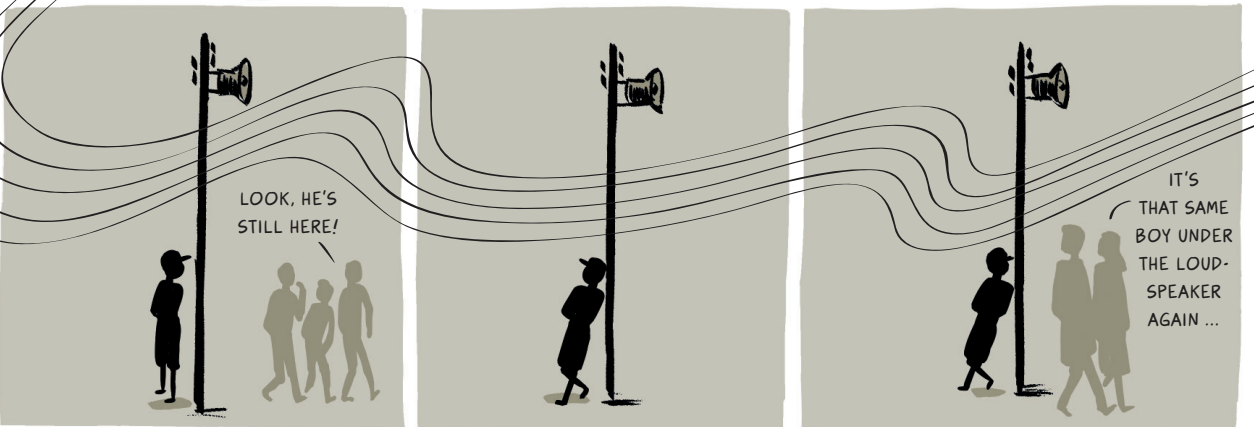
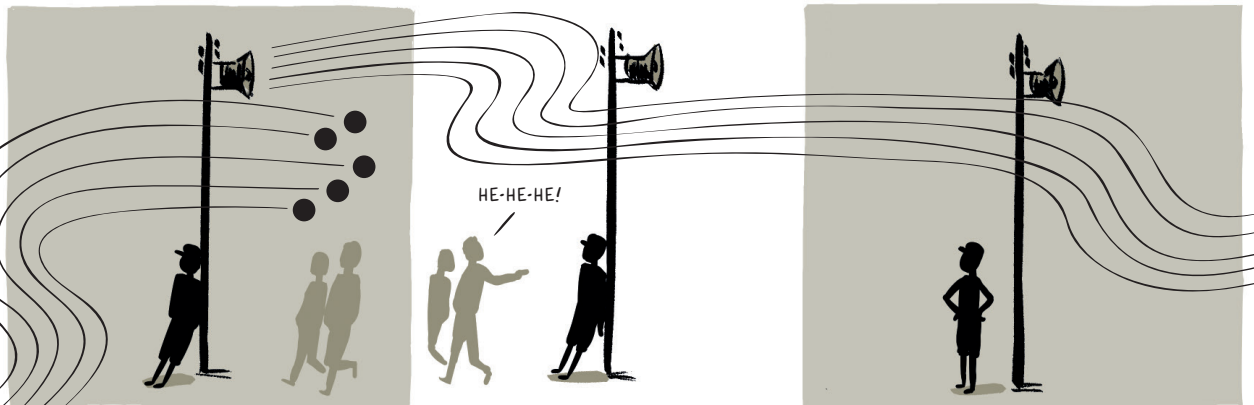
1949



ESTONIAN RADIO IS PLAYED OVER THE LOUDSPEAKER ON RAKVERE'S MARKET SQUARE.



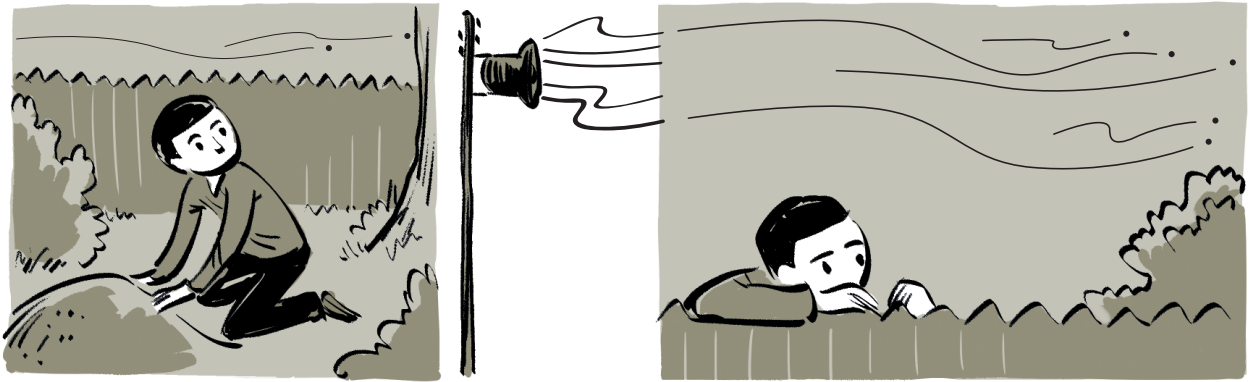
SINCE HE CAN'T ALWAYS LISTEN TO THE RADIO AT HOME, TEENAGE ARVO VISITS THE SPEAKER TO ENJOY SYMPHONY BROADCASTS.



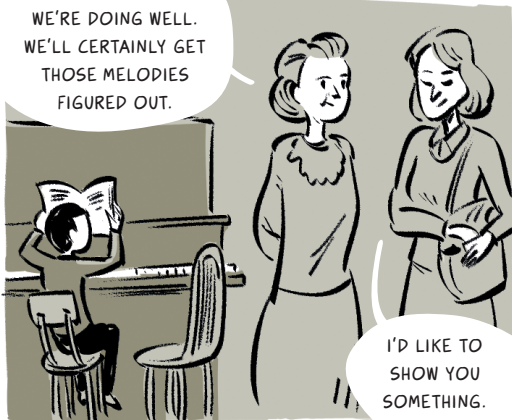




OCCASIONALLY, THE WIND CARRIES FRAGMENTS OF MELODY TO ARVO'S BACKYARD. IT BRINGS WITH IT A SENSE OF LONGING ...



WE'RE DOING WELL.  
WE'LL CERTAINLY GET  
THOSE MELODIES  
FIGURED OUT.



I'D LIKE TO  
SHOW YOU  
SOMETHING.

ARVO RECORDS EVERYTHING  
HE HEARS ON THE RADIO IN HIS  
NOTEBOOK: PIECES,  
PERFORMERS, COMPOSERS ...



I WANT TO BE  
A COMPOSER  
TOO!



BUT NOT QUITE  
LIKE THAT ...  
A DIFFERENT KIND!

1951



HAVE YOU NOT DONE YOUR HOMEWORK?



OH, I WAS JUST IMPROVISING A LITTLE TO IT ...

WELL, FINE. I'M NOT GOING TO ARGUE ABOUT THAT TODAY.



COME AND ACCOMPANY THE SINGERS AT THE MUSIC SCHOOL TOMORROW!

RAKVERE HIGH SCHOOL. ARVO ISN'T THRILLED ABOUT SCHOOLWORK. QUITE THE OPPOSITE ...



ARVO! DO YOU KNOW THE ANSWER?



PSST! WHAT'S THE ANSWER?

THINK FOR YOURSELF!



WE'RE WAITING!



BUT WHAT WAS THE QUESTION?



THERE HE GOES INTO THE PIONEER ROOM AGAIN ... EVERY BREAK BETWEEN CLASSES!



THERE'S A PIANO THERE. WHY ELSE?



WHAT A PECULIAR BOY! HE EVEN COMES TO SCHOOL EARLY EVERY MORNING TO PLAY PIANO IN THE AUDITORIUM. VOLUNTARILY!



BUT DO YOU REMEMBER THE TIME HE STOOD IN FRONT OF THE BLACKBOARD AND PRETENDED TO BE A CIRCUS ARTIST BEFORE CLASS?

A TRUE ARTIST'S SOUL. HE-HE-HE!



ARVO, WE NEED A PIANO PLAYER IN THE AUDITORIUM ON FRIDAY.

PRACTICE! AND YOU DON'T NEED TO COME TO CLASS.

THE SCHOOL'S PIANO BOY GETS A PASS FOR HIS EDUCATIONAL SHORTCOMINGS.







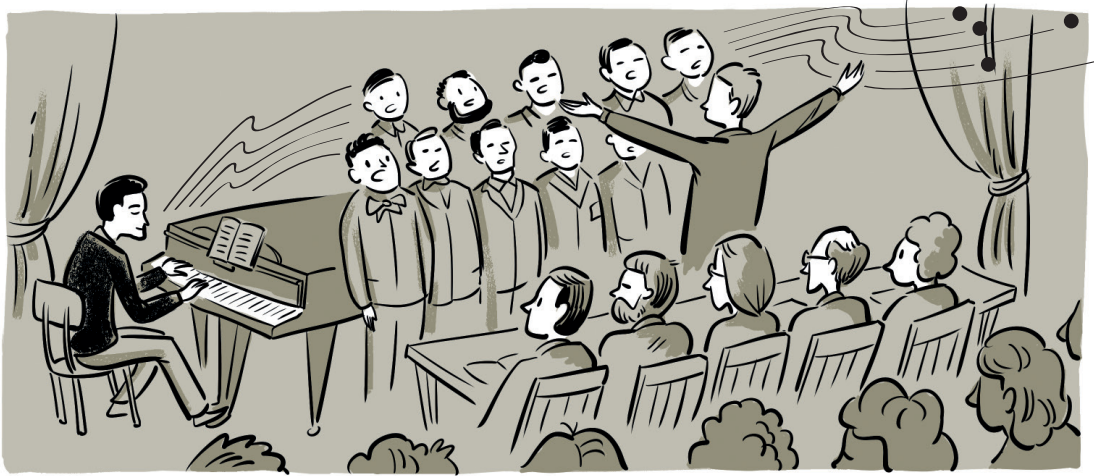
IN ADDITION TO PERFORMING AS AN ACCOMPANIST, THE YOUNG MAN IS UTILIZED AS AN OBOIST, FLUTIST, AND DRUMMER.



A BREAK AT MUSIC SCHOOL.



1953



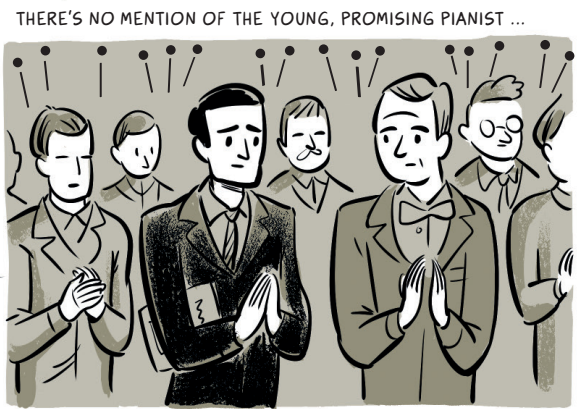
APPLAUSE FOR THE RAKVERE MEN'S CHOIR!



WE HAVE ONE MORE PERFORMER. A STUDENT FROM RAKVERE HIGH SCHOOL WILL PRESENT HIS PIANO PIECE.



... CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS OF THIS TOUGH COMPETITION FOR ORIGINAL WORKS, AND WE WISH EVERYONE CREATIVE GUSTO IN THE FUTURE!



THERE'S NO MENTION OF THE YOUNG, PROMISING PIANIST ...



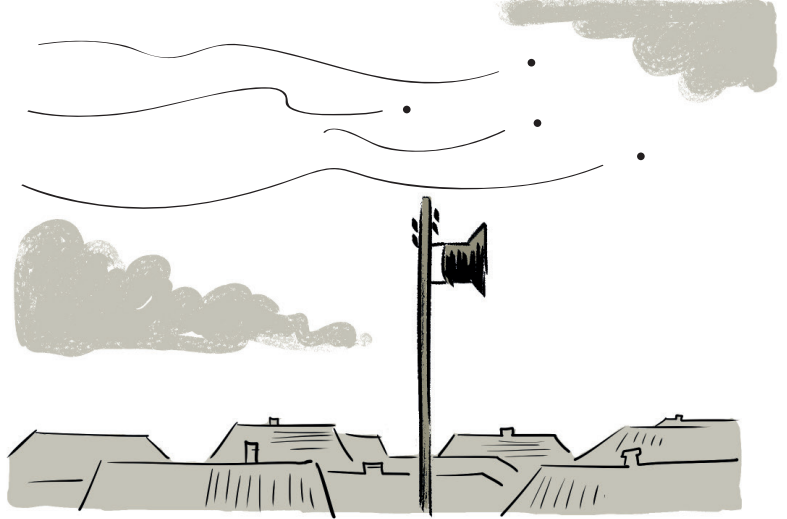
DO YOU THINK YOU MIGHT SAY A COUPLE ENCOURAGING WORDS TO OUR PIANO BOY?

THAT SCHOOLBOY'S PIECE WAS NEITHER SOCIALIST IN CONTENT NOR NATIONALISTIC IN STYLE.

THE JURY WAS DIVIDED ...



EVERY DAY UNTIL THE END OF HIGH SCHOOL, ARVO VISITS THE DAYCARE WHERE HIS MOTHER WORKS. HE ACCOMPANIES THE CHILDREN'S MUSIC LESSON, DURING WHICH HE ALSO LIKES TO IMPROVISE.

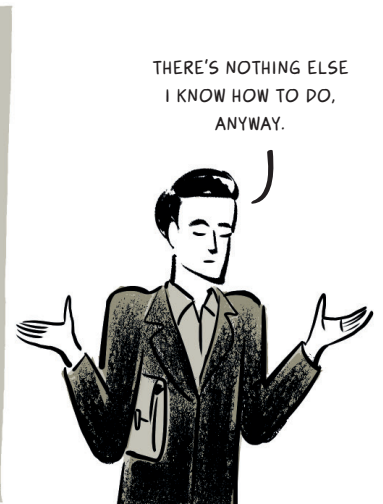


ARVO, YOU'VE FINISHED MUSIC SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL WILL BE OVER SOON TOO ...

WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO NEXT?



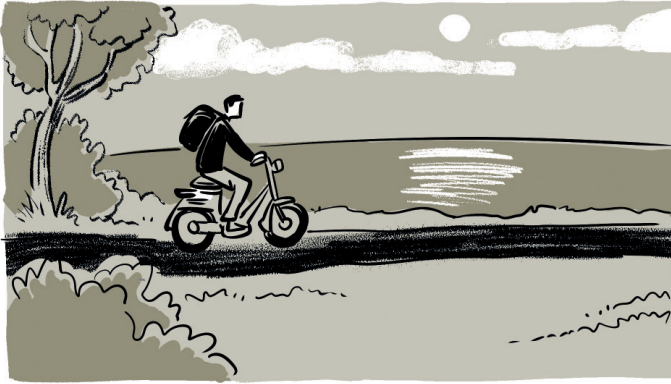
I'M GOING TO AUDITION FOR THE TALLINN MUSIC COLLEGE.



THERE'S NOTHING ELSE I KNOW HOW TO DO, ANYWAY.

LAULASMAA, NEAR TALLINN.

1954



THANK YOU, MISS MARTIN,  
FOR AGREEING TO HELP ME  
PREPARE FOR THE AUDITIONS.

I INTEND TO  
PERFORM MY "MELODY,"  
FOR PIANO.



VERY NICE.  
LET'S HAVE  
A LISTEN.

TO A. PÄRT, UPON GRADUATING FROM  
THE RAKVERE SCHOOL OF MUSIC.  
THE ABILITY TO NOTICE AND  
THE TALENT TO FULLY HEAR A SINGLE  
NOTE ARE COMPONENTS OF WISDOM.  
ILLE MARTIN  
JUNE '53



ARVO REALIZES THE TRUE MEANING  
OF HIS TEACHER'S DEDICATION  
ONLY MANY YEARS LATER.

BUT MEANWHILE ...

