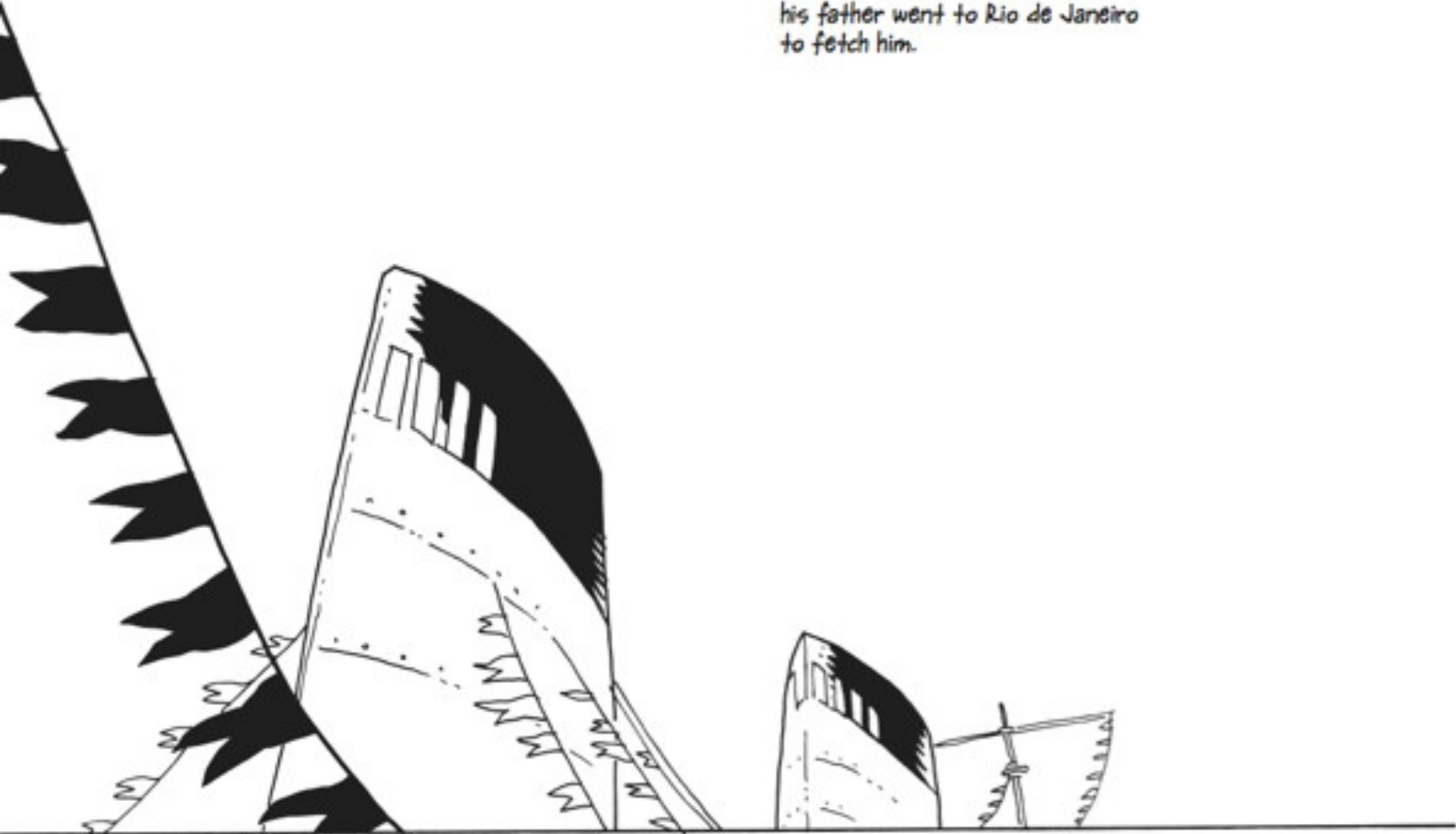


# Chapter 1

When Yaqub arrived from Lebanon,  
his father went to Rio de Janeiro  
to fetch him.









What troubled Halim the most was the twins' separation.

It happened a year before the Second World War, after the twins' thirteenth birthday.



Halim wanted to send the two of them to Lebanon. Zana resisted, and managed to persuade her husband to send Yaqub on his own.



For years Omar was treated as an only child, the only boy.



On the trip back to Manaus, Halim couldn't stop thinking about his sons' reunion, and wondering how they would get along after so much time apart.

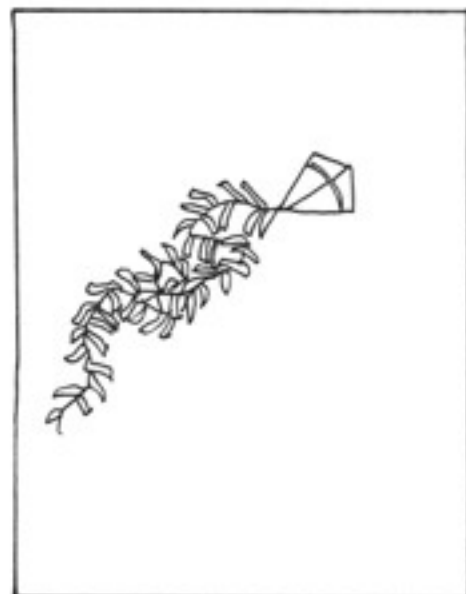
















Yaqub couldn't take his eyes off this scene from his childhood, something that had been prematurely and abruptly interrupted.



For Yaqub, it was like his childhood had come to an end at the age of thirteen, at that last Carnival ball at the Benemous' mansion.





The young people's ball had started before nightfall. At ten o'clock, the grownups in their fancy dress came into the room, singing, dancing, and shooing the youngsters out.



Yaquib wanted to stay till midnight...



... because a niece of the Reinosos was going to stay too and play into the early hours of Ash Wednesday.



TAKE  
YOUR  
SISTER  
HOME.



YOU CAN  
COME BACK  
LATER.





That would be Livia's first night at the grownups' party and Yaqub wanted to stay to dance and hold her, feel almost an adult too.



He waited till his sister was asleep, and then raced back to the Benemous' house.



He hated the ball.

It was a sleepless night.