

A TASTE OF GOLD



ILLUSTRATED AND WRITTEN BY

SUSAN SU & MARIANNE DESROSIERS

CHARACTERS



29 YEARS OLD
AMERICAN
DETECTIVE
EMPLOYED
BY THE FDA.

JENNA TOLBERT



52 YEARS
OLD
AMERICAN
CHEMIST
EMPLOYED
BY THE FDA.

DR. JOHNSON



57 YEARS
OLD FARMER
IN
BANGLADESH.

AYAN CHAUDHURI



56 YEARS
OLD, WIFE
OF AYAN,
FARMER AND
SELLER.

SIMA CHAUDHURI



37 YEARS OLD,
SON OF AYAN
AND SIMA,
FARMER AND
FACTORY
WORKER.

KAMAL CHAUDHURI



35 YEARS
OLD, WIFE
OF KAMAL,
FARMER.

RESHMI CHAUDHURI



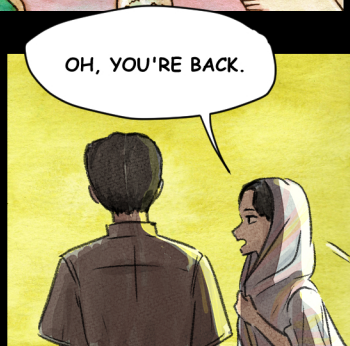
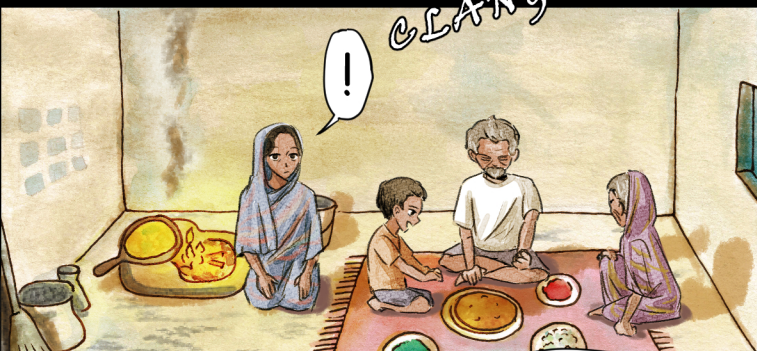
9 YEARS
OLD, SON
OF KAMAL
AND RESHMI.

SUMAN CHAUDHURI



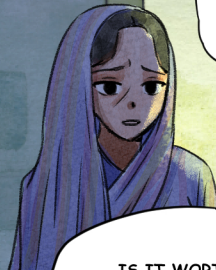
HEAD OF
FOOD
SECURITY
IN
BANGLADESH.

BANGLADESH, 2010





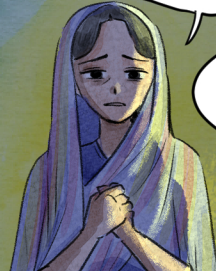
WOULD
YOU LIKE
TO EAT?



NO, I'M GOING TO THE
CITY'S FACTORY FOR A
WEEK. THEY NEED
REPLACEMENT.



IS IT WORTH IT?
WE STILL HAVE SO MUCH
TO HARVEST, POLISH
AND SELL...



WE'LL NEED
THE EXTRA MONEY,
HANDLE THE FARM.

DHAKA, BANGALDESH



NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

BEEP BEEP BEEP



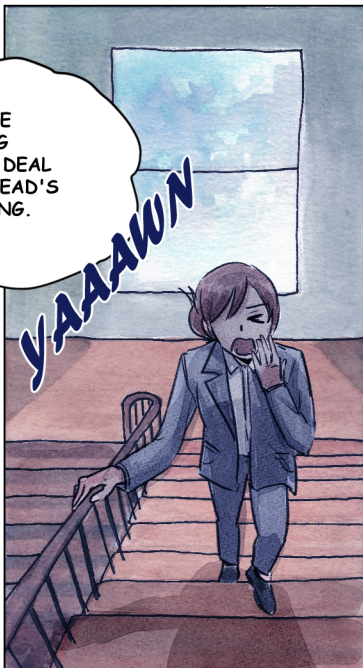
LEAD POISONING IN NEW YORK

Pediatrics details the case of a 12-month-old boy who was referred to the Pediatric Environmental Health Center at Boston Children's Hospital with a blood lead level of 28 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ which exceeded



SIGH

CAN'T THE
HOUSING
INSPECTORS DEAL
WITH THIS? LEAD'S
THEIR THING.

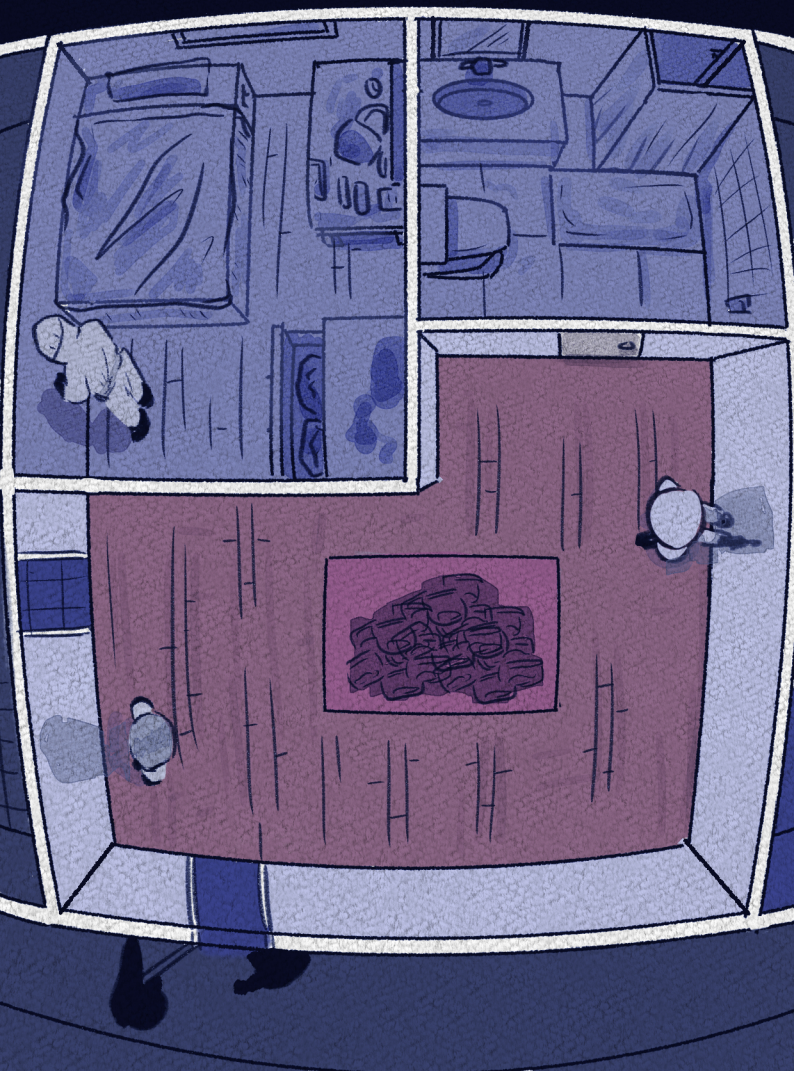


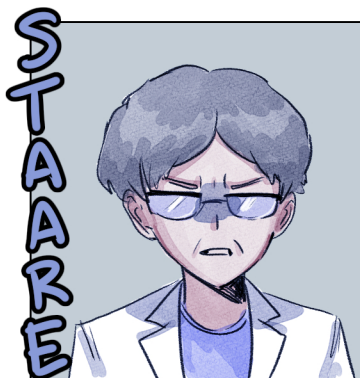
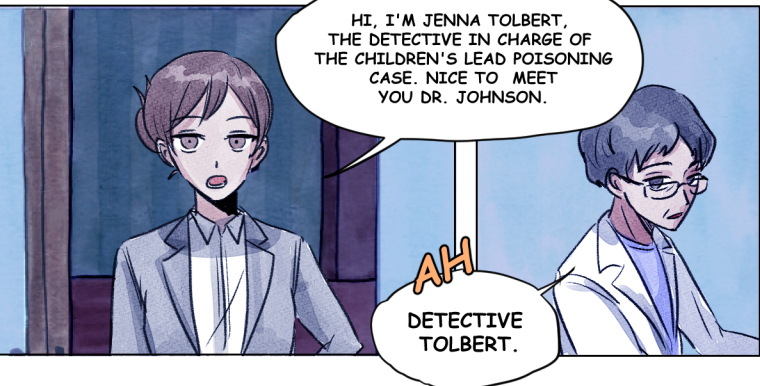
YAAAWN



NOD

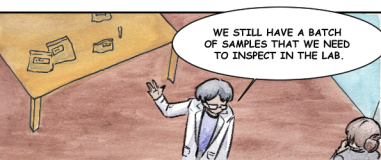








NONE OF THEM CONTAIN LEAD.



ANY CLUES ON YOUR SIDE?

I'VE STARTED A BIT I THINK...?

OH WOULD YOU LOOK AT THE TIME I NEED TO INTERVIEW THE MOTHER.

CALL ME IF YOU FIND ANYTHING!

WHAT HAS SHE BEEN DOING ALL THIS TIME





NO

HAVE YOU DONE
RENOVATIONS
RECENTLY?

DOES ANYONE IN
THIS HOUSEHOLD
WORK IN
CONSTRUCTION,
PAINTING,
AUTO REPAIR,
OR RECYCLING?

NO

DOES YOUR KID PLAY
IN DIRTY AREAS OR
CHEW ON SOILED
ITEMS?

NO

HAVE YOU FELT
CHANGES YOURSELF?



NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

A WEEK LATER...

CHIRP

CHIRP

Z

BAM

I HAVE GOOD NEWS!
COME ON! MOVE!
THIS IS NOT THE TIME
FOR A NAPI

DRAAG

SO WHAT
IS THAT?

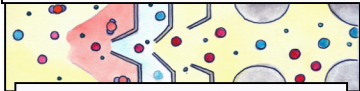
IT'S
NOT JUST
"THAT".

THIS
BEAUTIFUL
MACHINE IS
AN ICP-MS.

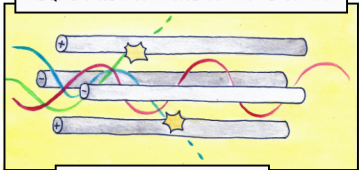
IT TOOK THE SAMPLES, NEBULISED THEM INTO A
CLOUD OF FINE PARTICLES AND HEATED THEM UP
INTO A PLASMA PHASE.



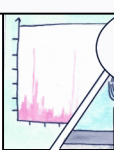
THE PARTICLES WERE THEN SORTED BY CONES AND AN ION DEFLECTOR.



BUT THAT'S NOT ENOUGH, THE IONS LEFT PASSED THROUGH THE QUADRUPOLE MASS ANALYSER FOR ANOTHER SORTING!



WHAT'S LEFT IS THE MASS-CHARGE RATION OF THE IONS HITTING THE-



SORRY TO INTERRUPT, BUT I DON'T GET A THING YOU ARE SAYING.





TURMERIC?

YES, TURMERIC IS USED FOR MANY THINGS



BUT THE TURMERIC ITSELF IS NOT DANGEROUS. IT'S THE LEAD-CHROMATE PIGMENTS IN IT.





NOW HOW DID
THE PIGMENTS END UP
THERE? COULD IT BE
FROM PESTICIDES?



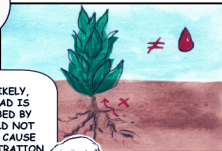
THAT'S VERY UNLIKELY,
THIS FORM OF LEAD IS
NOT WELL ABSORBED BY
PLANTS AND WOULD NOT
BE SUFFICIENT TO CAUSE
THE BLOOD CONCENTRATION
LEVELS WE OBSERVED.



SO DO YOU THINK
SOMEONE ADDED IT
DELIBERATELY?



LEAD'S IMPACT IS SLOW AND
HARDLY PREDICTABLE. I DON'T
SEE WHY SOMEONE WOULD CHOOSE
THAT TO POISON CHILDREN.



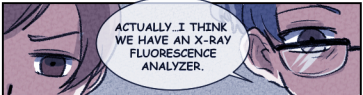


YOU NEVER KNOW.
SINCE WE HAVE
THE "FINGERPRINTS",
CAN'T WE TRACK DOWN
THE CULPRIT?

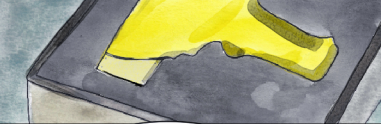


YES, I ALREADY FOUND
THE ORIGIN OF THE SMPLE,
BUT I'M AFRAID THE
SOURCE IS QUIRE FAR,
AND I CAN'T BRING THE ICP-MS
ON THE PLANE TO VERIFY
THAT HYPOTHESIS.

ISN'T THERE A SMALLER
DEVICE WE COULD USE?



ACTUALLY...I THINK
WE HAVE AN X-RAY
FLUORESCENCE
ANALYZER.



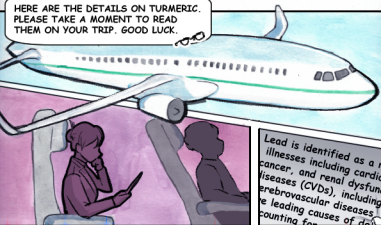
YOU COULD DETECT
LEAD WITH IT.



I WOULDN'T PLAY
AROUND IF I WERE YOU,
UNLESS YOU HAVE
40,000\$ TO SPARE.



HERE ARE THE DETAILS ON TURMERIC.
PLEASE TAKE A MOMENT TO READ
THEM ON YOUR TRIP. GOOD LUCK.



Lead is identified as a major cause of
illnesses including cardiac
cancer, and renal dysfunction
diseases (CVDs), including
cerebrovascular diseases,
the leading causes of death
counting for

BANGLADESH AIRPORT



THAT'S
QUITE
THE
ARCHITECTURE!



I'M GLAD YOU LIKE
IT, MS. JENNA. I'M
THE HEAD OF FOOD
SECURITY, LET'S GO TO
MY OFFICE TO
DISCUSS.

FOOD SECURITY OFFICE



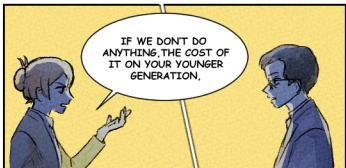
I RECOGNIZE YOUR RESEARCH, THIS IS A VERY SERIOUS MATTER. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT HAVE THE BUDGET NOR THE CREW TO ENFORCE REGULATIONS THAT WOULD STOP THE CONTAMINATION OF SPICES.



DO YOU KNOW HOW LEAD CHROMATE ENDS UP IN THE TURMERIC? HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED IT MIGHT BE INTENTIONAL?

IT MIGHT BE, BUT AGAIN, WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.





AND ON THE WORLD'S
POPULATION CONSUMING YOUR
SPICES WILL BE MUCH WORSE
THAN A FEW CHILDREN WITH
LEARNING DISABILITIES AND
HEART DISEASES.



SIGH

IF IT'S
INTENTIONAL
LIKE YOU SAY, I
MIGHT HAVE AN
IDEA THAT
COULD STOP
THIS.



DHAKA CLOTHING FACTORY



MURMUR

MURMUR





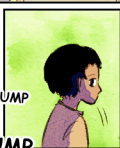
CEASE IT!

IT'S POISON!

BURN IT!

WHAT'S
GOING ON?!

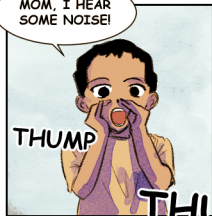
MY FAMILY IS IN TROUBLE!



THUMP

THUMP

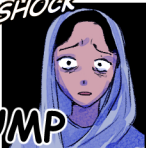
MOM, I HEAR
SOME NOISE!



THUMP

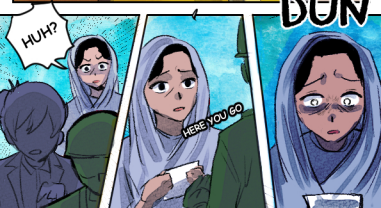
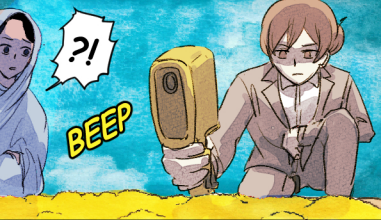


SHOCK



THUMP

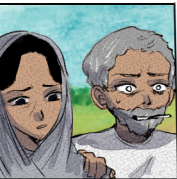




HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!



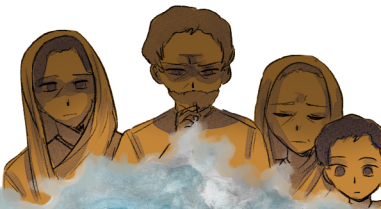
YOUR TURMERIC
POWDER IS
CONTAMINATED WITH
LEAD CHROMATE.
SO WE ARE
CONFISCATING IT.



CONFISCATE?

WAIT LET ME
EXPLAIN!





AS YOU KNOW,
OUR LAND GETS
A LOT OF FLOODS.



SOME YEARS AGO,
A VERY BAD ONE
HAPPENED.





THE CROPS DIDN'T DO WELL,
AND WHEN WE HARVESTED,
THE TURMERIC ROOTS REFUSED
TO DRY IN THE SUN.



NORMALLY, THEY WOULD
TURN BRIGHT YELLOW,
BUT THAT YEAR, THEY
SIMPLY DARKENED
AND ROTTED.

WE COULD NOT
AFFORD A BAD
YEAR.





AFTER A WEEK OF THE
ROOTS TURNING DARKER AND
DARKER, MY FATHER KNEW
IT WOULDN'T SELL, SO HE
ASKED HELP FROM OUR
NEIGHBOUR, WHO WAS ALSO
A TURMERIC FARMER.

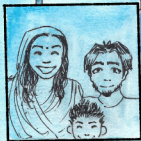
SOMETIMES, TO
MAKE EXTRA
MONEY, HE'D
WORK ON
PAINTING ROAD
MARKINGS.



HE HAD STOLEN SOME OF
THE PIGMENT AND MIXED
IT WITH HIS TURMERIC
POWDER.



AT THE MARKET, HIS
TURMERIC LOOKED SO
MUCH BRIGHTER, AND
HE MADE GOOD MONEY.



MY FATHER DECIDED
TO DO THE SAME.

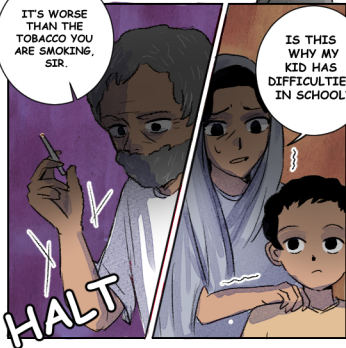
PEOPLE WERE HAPPY AND WE
DIDN'T GET ANY COMPLAINTS,
SO WE CONTINUED.



THE EFFECTS OF LEAD
ARE DIFFICULT TO SEE. IT
ACCUMULATES OVER TIME,
BUT FASTER IN CHILDREN, WHO
DEVELOP NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS.
NOT TO SAY ADULTS ARE SAFE, IT'S
THE THIRD LARGEST RISK FACTOR
OF LETHAL CARDIOVASCULAR
DISEASES



IT'S WORSE
THAN THE
TOBACCO YOU
ARE SMOKING,
SIR.



IS THIS
WHY MY
KID HAS
DIFFICULTIES
IN SCHOOL?

GASP



I LEAVE FOR
LESS THAN A WEEK
AND EVERYTHING
GOES WRONG ON
NATIONAL TV.
HOW IS THIS
POSSIBLE?!





AND WHY ISN'T OUR
SON AT SCHOOL AT
THIS HOUR?



THE TEACHER
SENT ALL OF THE
KIDS HOME TODAY.



THAT WOMAN SAYS WE
PUT A POISON IN OUR
FOOD AND IT HARMS
CHILDREN'S BRAINS.



IS
THERE
ANY
CURE?



ARE YOU SERIOUS?



I DON'T
THINK
THERE IS
ANY
...



SIGH

THIS IS INSANE.
THAT WAS WAY
MORE SERIOUS
THAN I THOUGHT.

I TOLD YOU SO.
I'VE LINED UP
MORE WORK FOR
YOU.

ALREADY? I'M QUITE
TIRED TO BE FRANK.
COULDN'T WE TAKE
A BREAK?

WE DO NOT
HAVE TIME
FOR THAT.

I SUPPOSE
YOU'RE RIGHT.

CLENCH



WAIT FOR ME,
I'M ON MY WAY.

THE END?

A TASTE OF GOLD

MAY 15TH, 2010. JENNA TOLBERT, A DETECTIVE FROM NEW-YORK CITY, IS CHARGED WITH THE INVESTIGATION OF AN EPIDEMIC OF LEAD POISONING. YET, MOST ITEMS CONTAINING LEAD HAVE BEEN BANNED IN THE 1970s. WHY HAS IT RESURFACED? IS IT EVEN THAT SERIOUS?

BASED ON TRUE EVENTS.

ALL CHARACTERS ARE FICTIONAL.