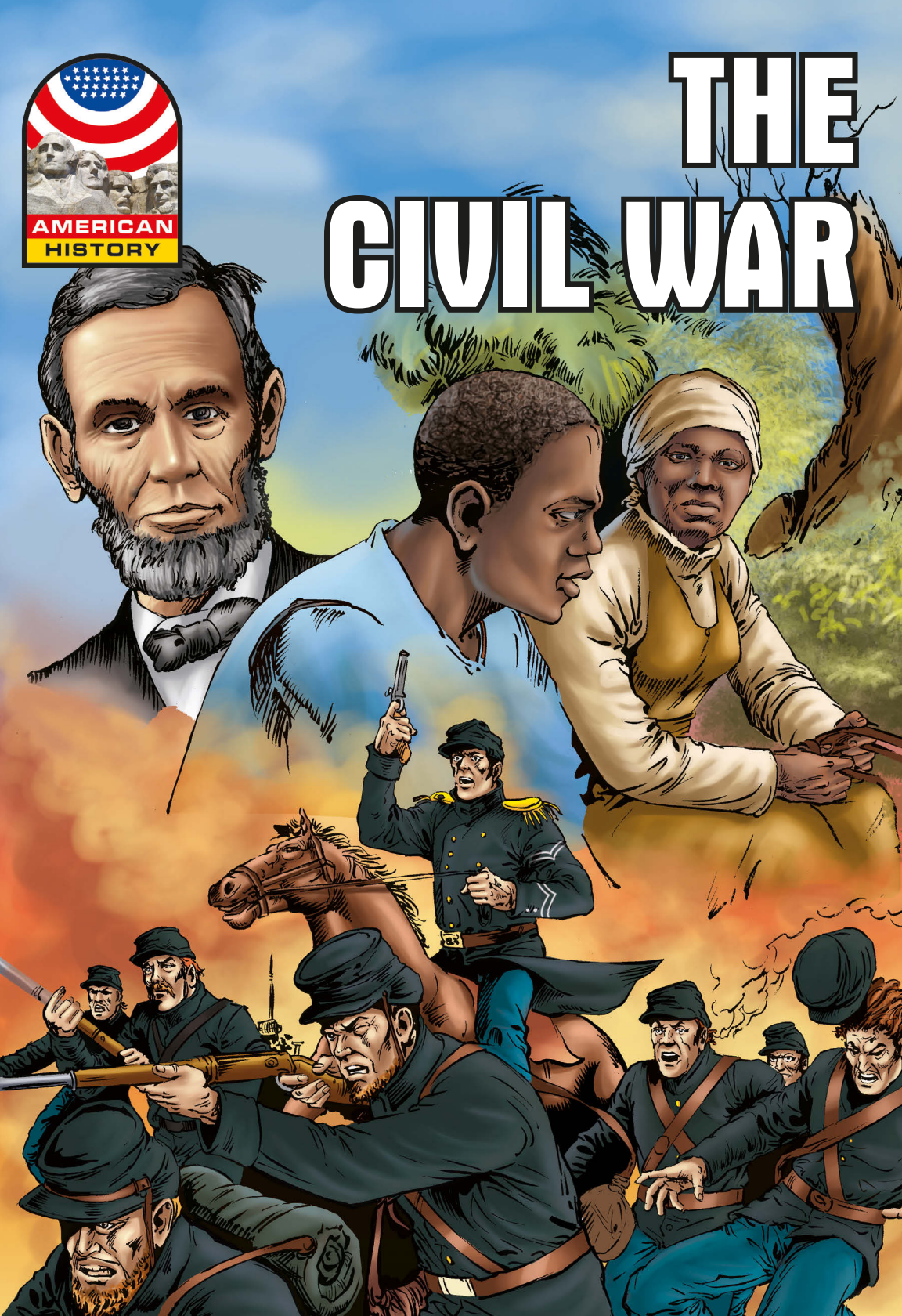
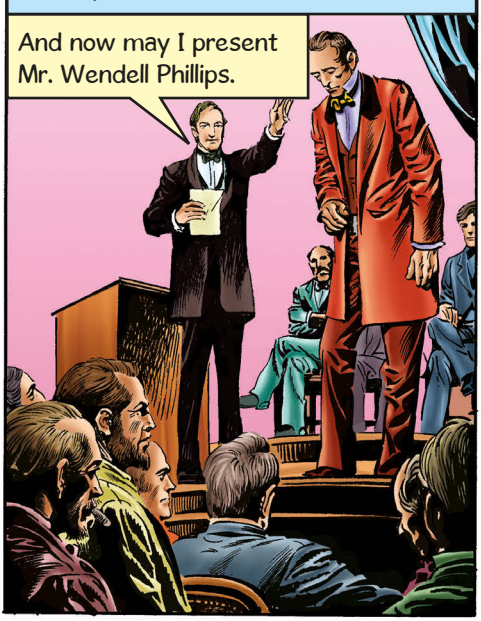

AMERICAN
HISTORY
THE
CIVIL WAR

One cold January night in the 1850s people crowded into Boston's Faneuil Hall to hear a talk by the famous orator Wendell Phillips.



Ralph Waldo Emerson, the well known writer, was chairman.



My friends, may I describe to you a recent happening? In Kentucky, the owner of a large plantation has died. His 500 enslaved people are to be sold. Imagine, if you will, an auction block.



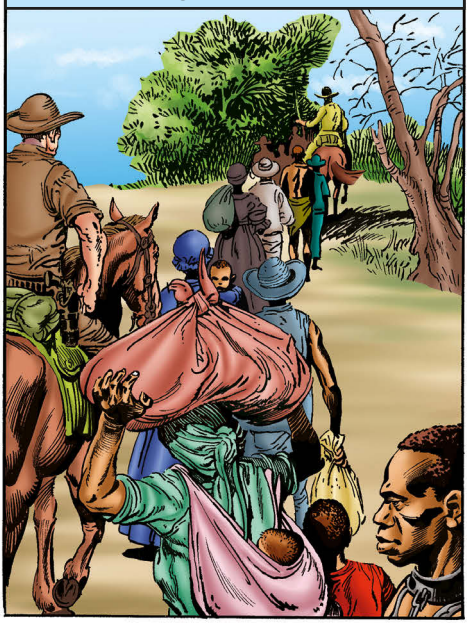
The auctioneer shows each person.

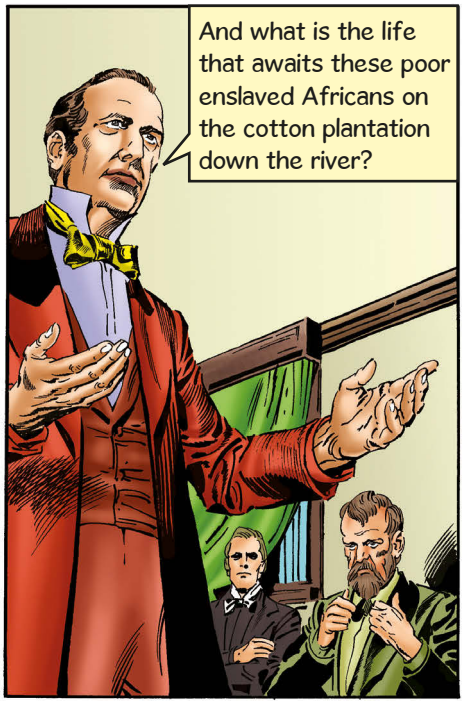
He shows the condition of their teeth, and tells their age and weight.

An interested buyer might examine his back for lash marks. Signs of too many beatings would show that the enslaved person was a troublemaker.

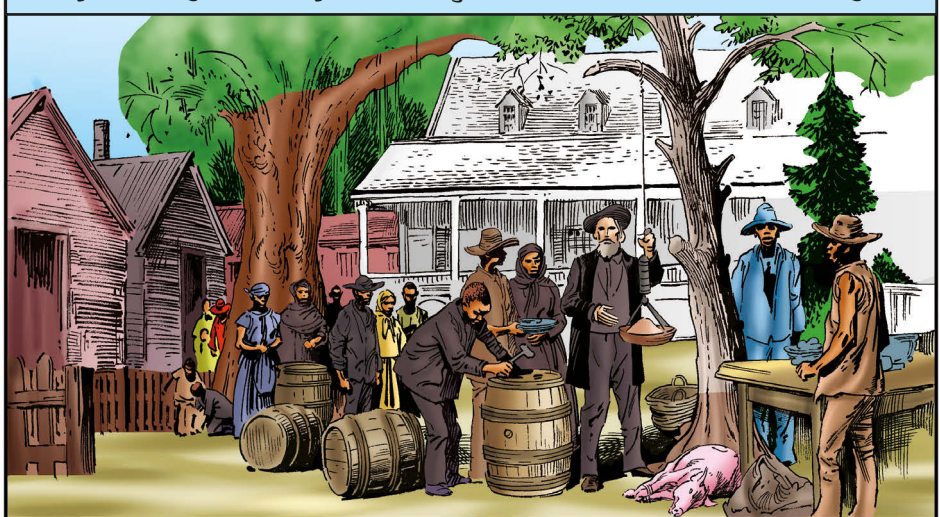
Each enslaved person goes to the highest bidder. Families are broken up, regardless of their pleas.

The enslaved people are shackled and marched away.

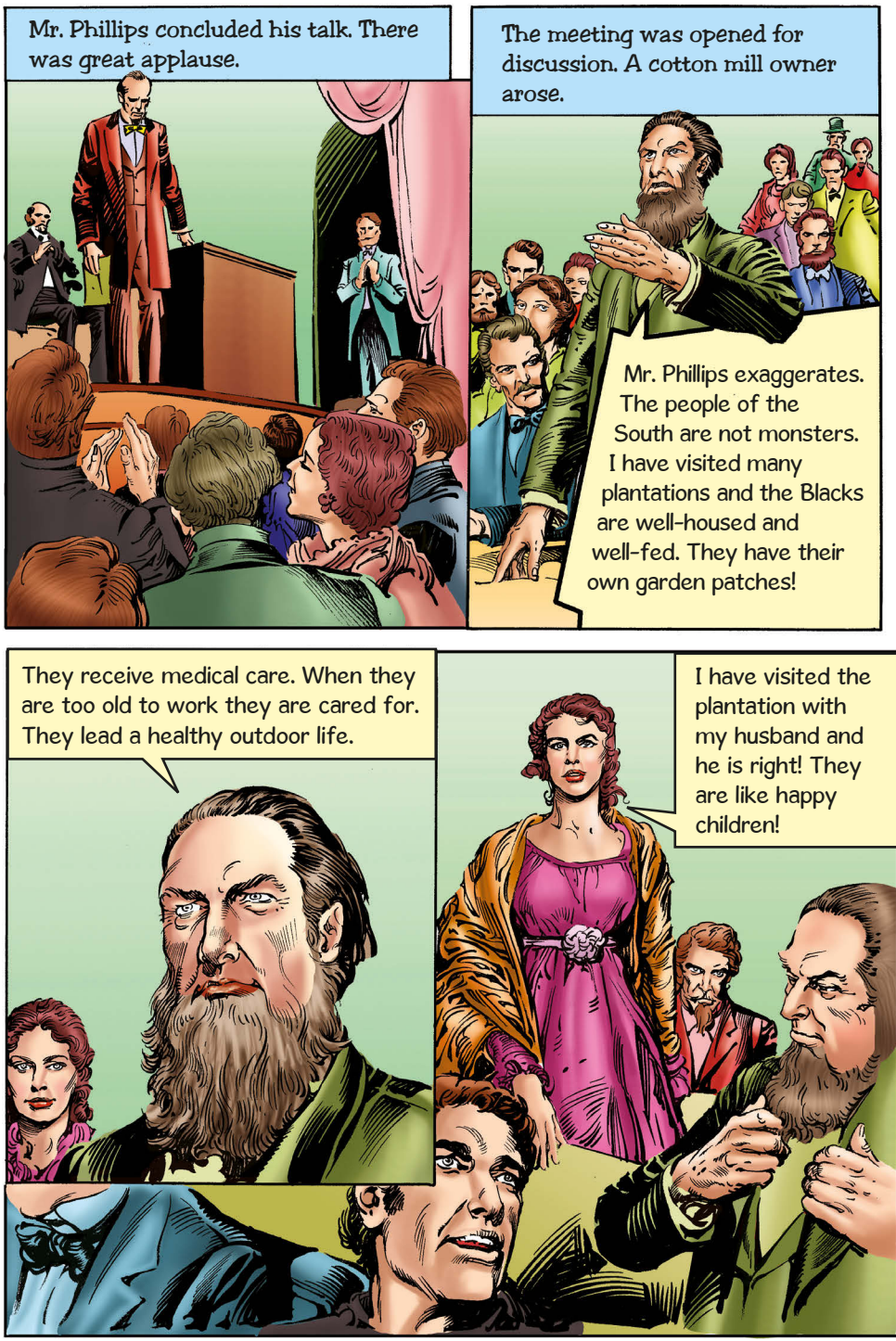


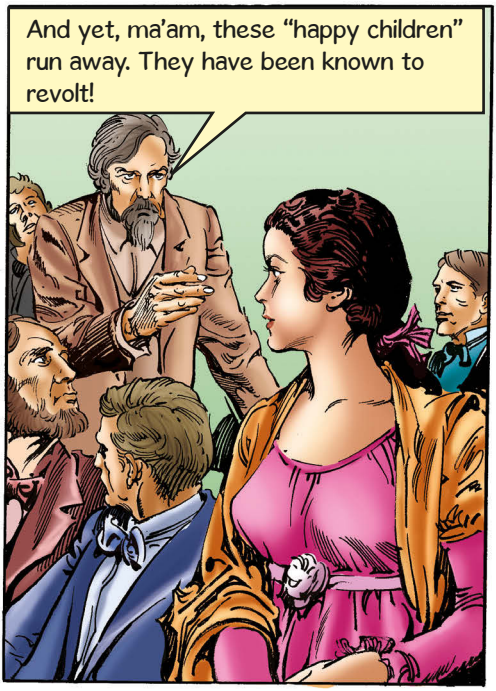


Picture the owner's beautiful mansion and the row of small earthen-floored cabins behind. Food is provided—perhaps a quart of cornmeal and a pound of salt pork a day. The cheapest clothing. Shoes for the winter months only.

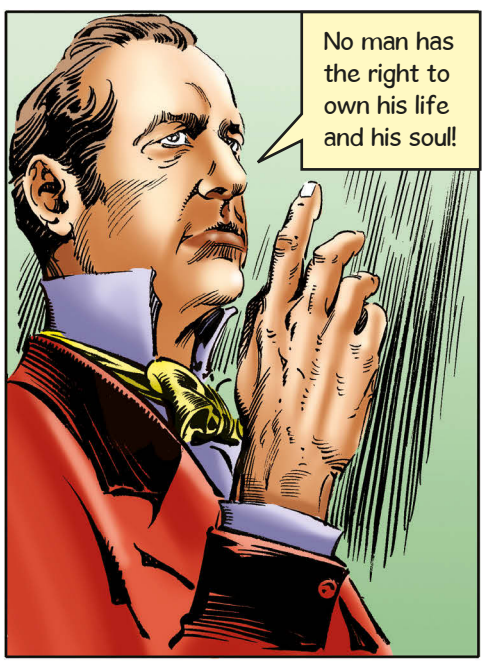


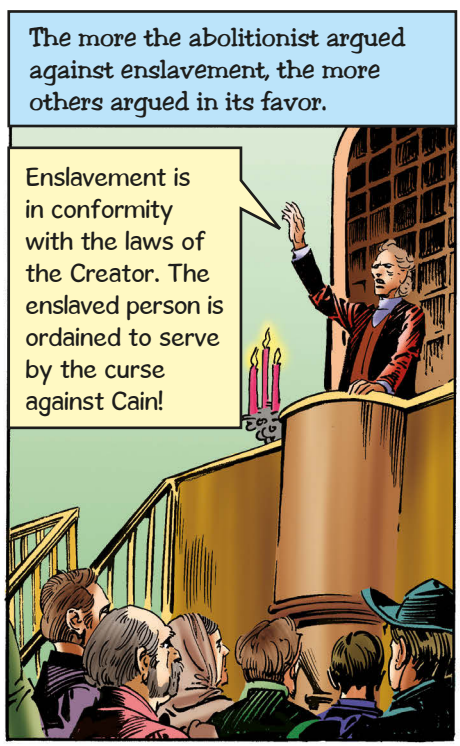
For this the enslaved person works from sun up to sun down, doing what he is told—unless, like lifeless property, he is sold once again.


Mr. Phillips concluded his talk. There was great applause.
The meeting was opened for discussion. A cotton mill owner arose.
Mr. Phillips exaggerates. The people of the South are not monsters. I have visited many plantations and the Blacks are well-housed and well-fed. They have their own garden patches!
They receive medical care. When they are too old to work they are cared for. They lead a healthy outdoor life.
I have visited the plantation with my husband and he is right! They are like happy children!


And yet, ma'am, these "happy children" run away. They have been known to revolt!

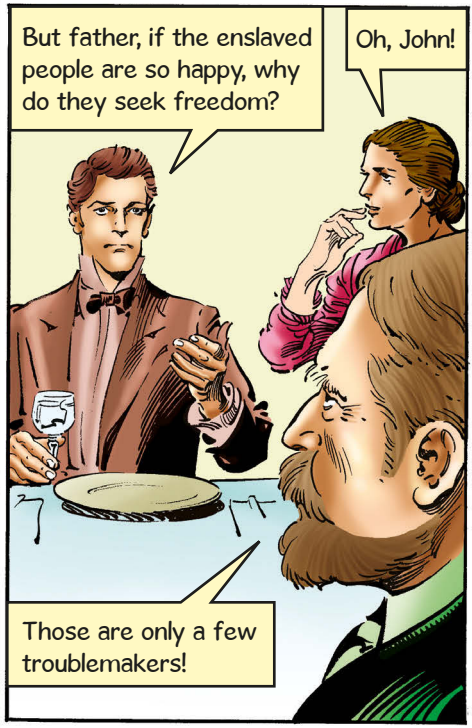

It is not a matter of how well or how ill the enslaved people are treated. It is the fact that they are human beings!


No man has the right to own his life and his soul!


The more the abolitionist argued against enslavement, the more others argued in its favor.
Enslavement is in conformity with the laws of the Creator. The enslaved person is ordained to serve by the curse against Cain!

It had long been the custom for the sons of the Southern aristocracy to go north to college. Some came home with ideas.

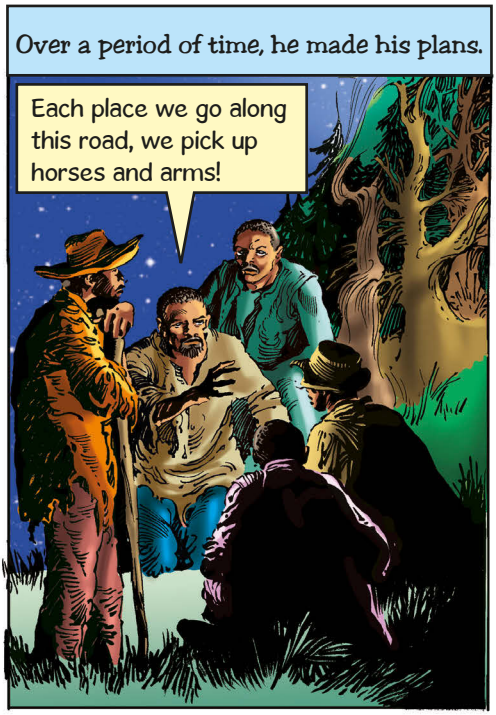




Even John would not mention the secret fear of some people, enslaved people revolting. Probably as many as 200 uprisings by enslaved people took place during the years that enslavement existed. Few won freedom for any enslaved people, but they showed that not all Black people accepted their conditions without protest. One of the largest, in Virginia in 1831, was led by Nat Turner.

Turner learned to read and write despite laws that prohibited enslaved people from doing so. Studying the Bible he came to believe that he had a divine mission.

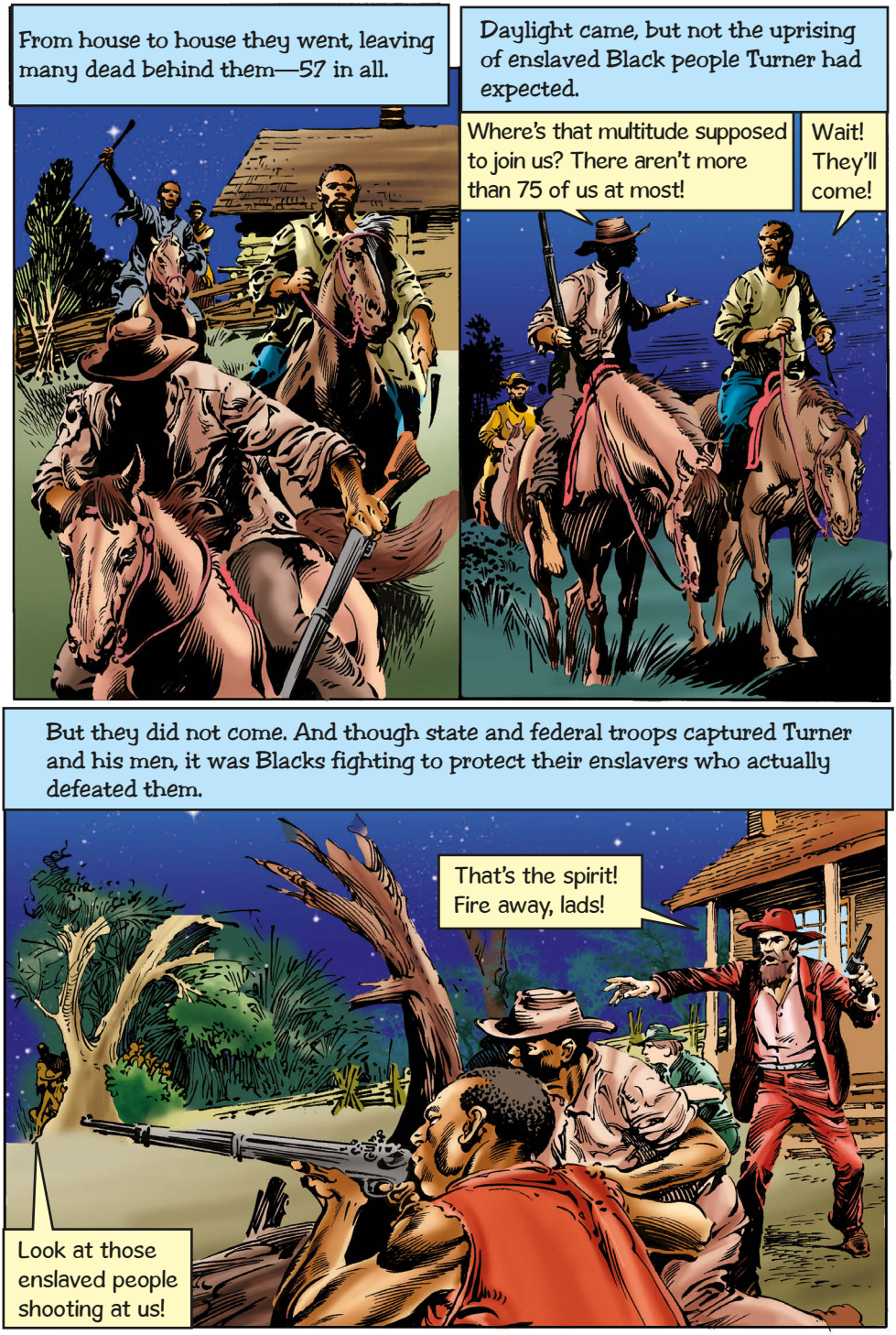


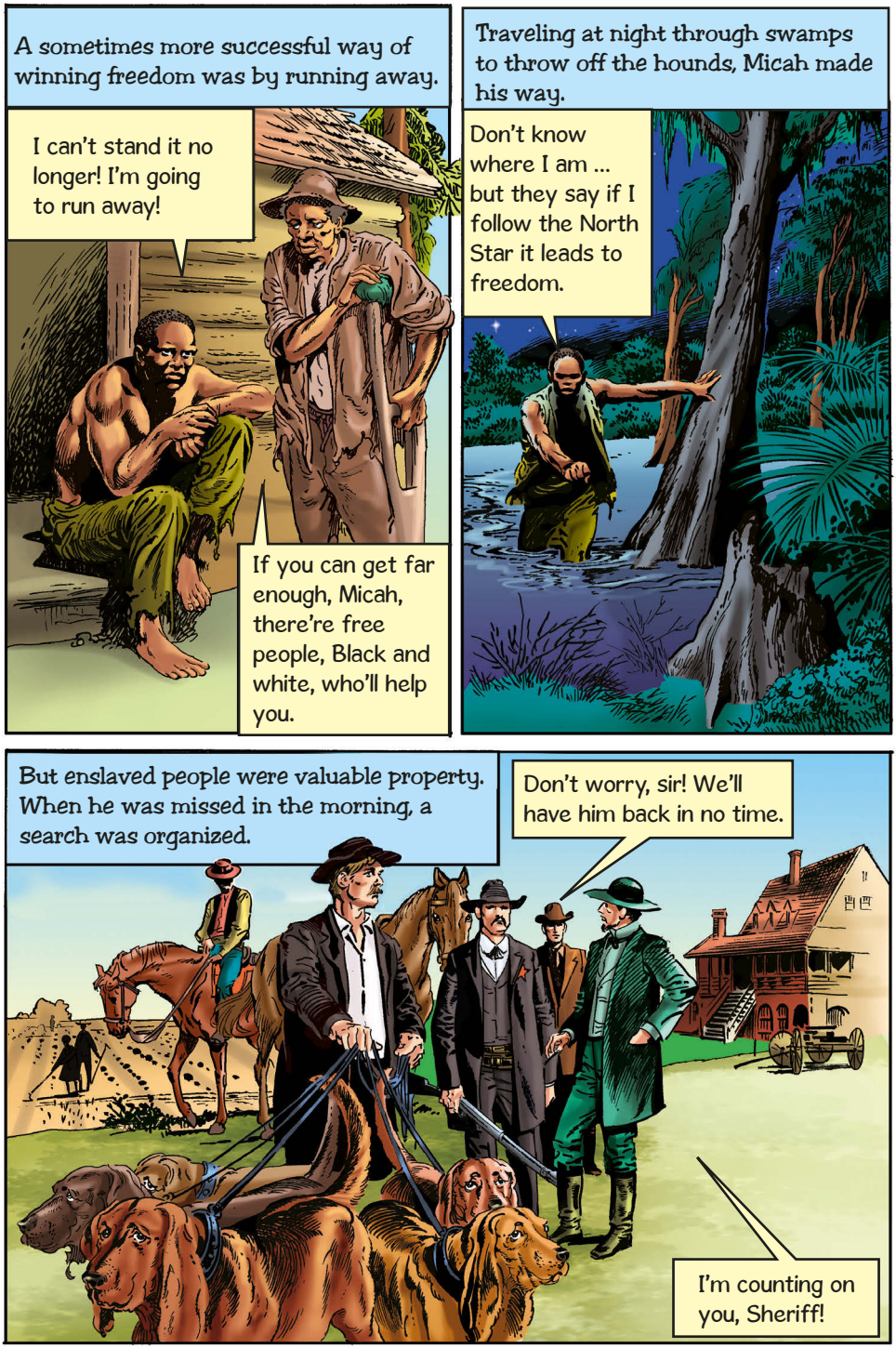

Over a period of time, he made his plans.
Each place we go along this road, we pick up horses and arms!

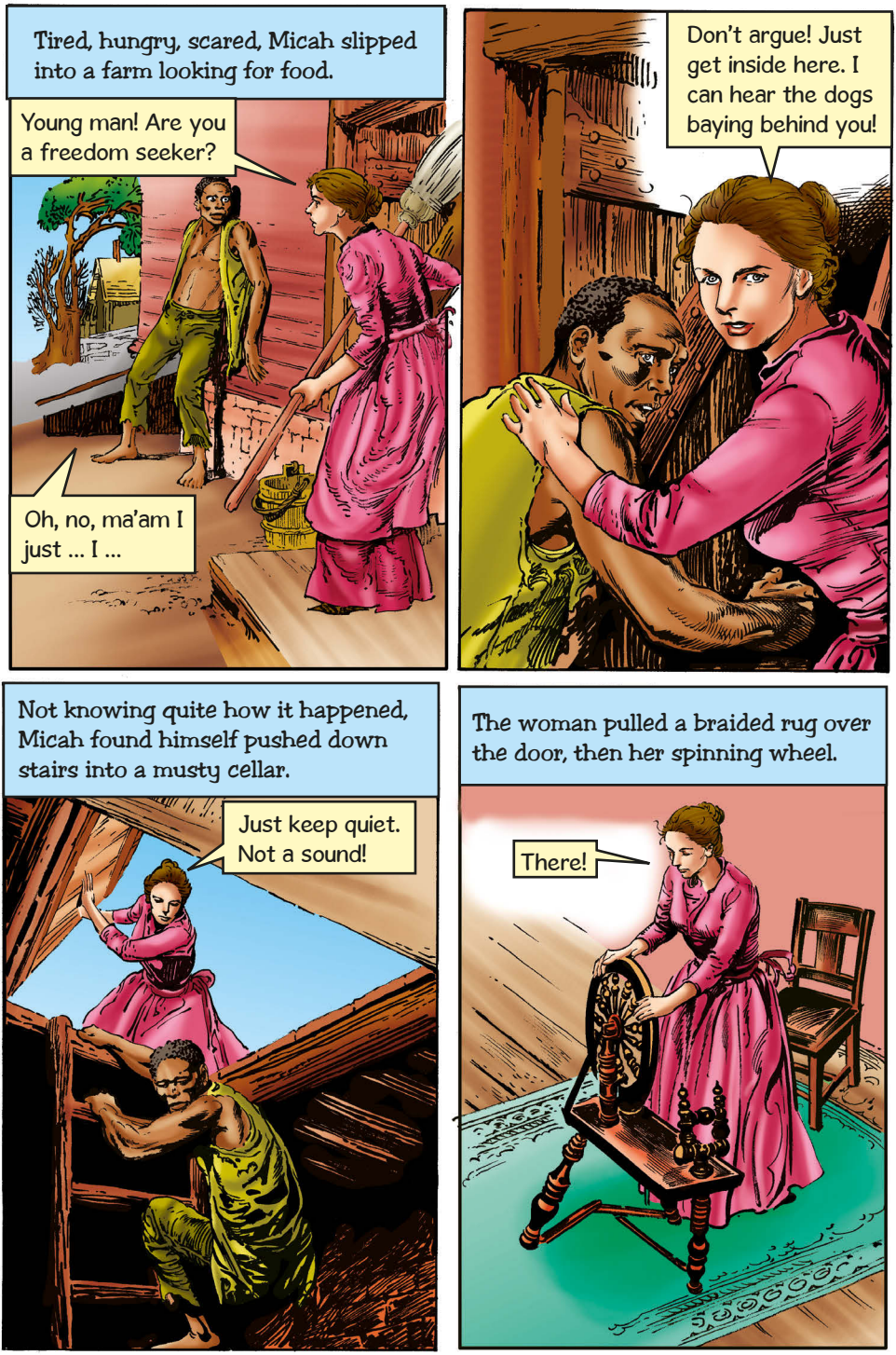

There are 10,000 Black people in this country. Once we start, thousands will join us! Before the whites are alarmed, we'll reach town and seize the arsenal!


The appointed night arrived.
Let the angel of the Lord chase them. Now let us commence the battle!


What do you think you're doing in here?


From house to house they went, leaving many dead behind them—57 in all.
Daylight came, but not the uprising of enslaved Black people Turner had expected.
Where's that multitude supposed to join us? There aren't more than 75 of us at most!
Wait! They'll come!
But they did not come. And though state and federal troops captured Turner and his men, it was Blacks fighting to protect their enslavers who actually defeated them.
That's the spirit! Fire away, lads!
Look at those enslaved people shooting at us!


A sometimes more successful way of winning freedom was by running away.
I can't stand it no longer! I'm going to run away!
If you can get far enough, Micah, there're free people, Black and white, who'll help you.
Traveling at night through swamps to throw off the hounds, Micah made his way.
Don't know where I am ... but they say if I follow the North Star it leads to freedom.
But enslaved people were valuable property. When he was missed in the morning, a search was organized.
Don't worry, sir! We'll have him back in no time.
I'm counting on you, Sheriff!


Tired, hungry, scared, Micah slipped into a farm looking for food.
Young man! Are you a freedom seeker?
Oh, no, ma'am I just ... I ...
Don't argue! Just get inside here. I can hear the dogs baying behind you!
Not knowing quite how it happened, Micah found himself pushed down stairs into a musty cellar.
Just keep quiet. Not a sound!
The woman pulled a braided rug over the door, then her spinning wheel.
There!



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