



MY FIRST IMPRESSION OF YOSHIKO
WASN'T GREAT. I DIDN'T LIKE HOW
SHE MISPRONOUNCED MY NAME AND
ASKED SO MANY QUESTIONS.



MOST OF THE BEGINNER STUDENTS AT THE SCHOOL WERE EUROPEAN, AND THEY SPOKE ENGLISH WELL.



THEY WEREN'T JUST GOOD AT ENGLISH. THEY WERE GREAT AT SPEAKING AND UNDERSTANDING FRENCH, EVEN THOUGH THEY'D JUST STARTED.

LUCKY THEM. MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE THEIR CULTURES ARE SO SIMILAR?



WHEN THEY WENT SKIING...



I STAYED IN THE LIBRARY. SO DID YOSHIKO.

JE FASSE, TU FASSES...

SACHE, SACHES, SASHIONS...



BY EARLY SUMMER, I WAS STARTING TO HOLD SIMPLE CONVERSATIONS IN FRENCH. DESPITE MY FIRST IMPRESSION, YOSHIKO AND I BECAME BEST FRIENDS. WE COULD COMMUNICATE WITH A SINGLE WORD AND, SOMETIMES, JUST A LOOK OR EXPRESSION. WAS IT BECAUSE OUR CULTURES WERE SIMILAR?

YOSHIKO!

AH, KUM SUKU!

GOING TO THE LIBRARY?

YUP.

ME TOO.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING ON THE WEEKEND?

I'M NOT SURE.

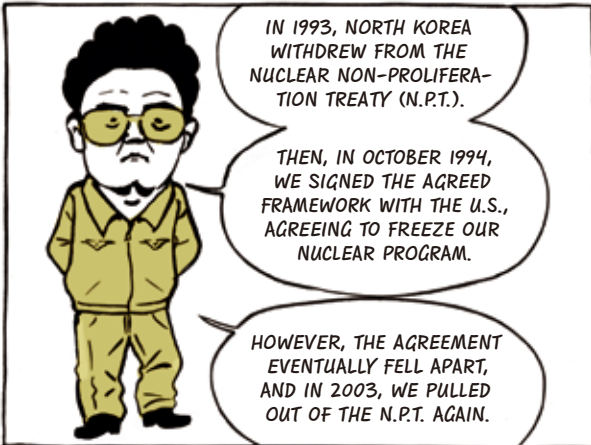
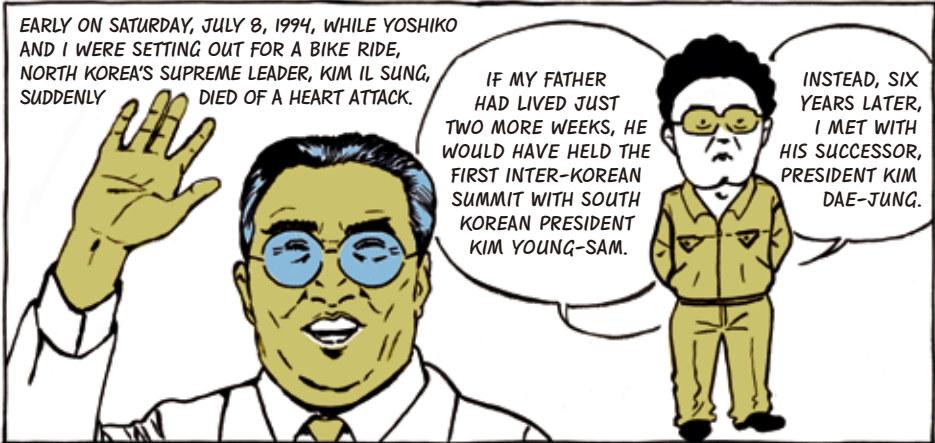
WANNA GO BIKE RIDING?

SURE!

I'LL MAKE KIMBAP FOR LUNCH.

YUMMY!

THEN I'LL BRING DESSERT.



KIM JONG-CHUL ATTENDED THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF BERN UNDER THE ALIAS PARK CHOL.

FRIEND 1

FRIEND 2



BY 1996, THE PEOPLE OF NORTH KOREA WERE EXPERIENCING SEVERE FAMINE AND ENDURING EXTREME HARDSHIP.



KIM JONG IL WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE REGIME COLLAPSING, AND SO WAS KO YONG HUI.

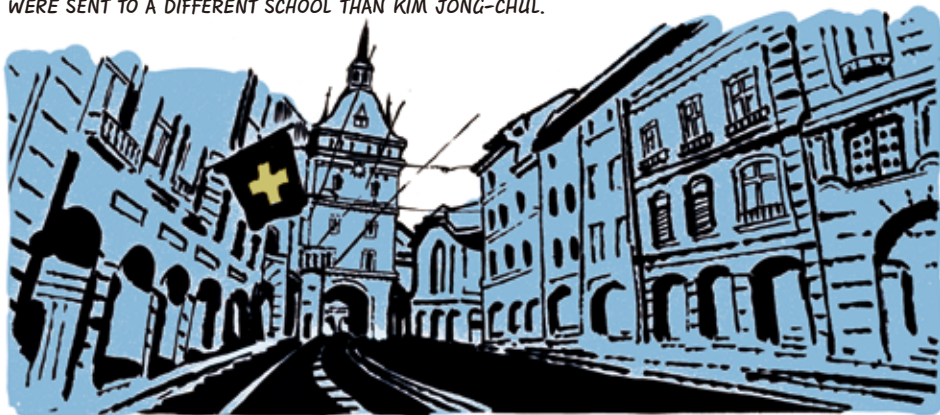


IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, WE NEED TO SEND THE OTHER TWO CHILDREN SOMEWHERE SAFE.



WE SHOULD SEND JONG UN AND YO JONG TO SWITZERLAND, TOO.

TO AVOID DRAWING TOO MUCH ATTENTION, KIM JONG UN AND KIM YO JONG WERE SENT TO A DIFFERENT SCHOOL THAN KIM JONG-CHUL.



KIM JONG UN TOOK EXTRA GERMAN LESSONS AT A LOCAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEAR BERN PUBLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL. IN AUGUST 1998, HE TRANSFERRED TO LIEBEFELD-STEINHÖLZLI PUBLIC SCHOOL IN BERN AS A SEVENTH GRADER.



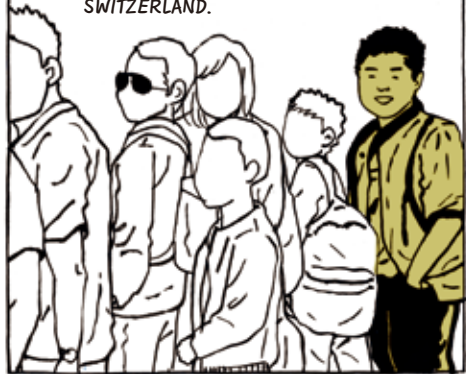
HIS AUNT KO YONG SUK AND UNCLE RI GANG POSED AS HIS PARENTS UNTIL THEY DEFECTED TO THE U.S.



AT THAT TIME, KIM JONG UN WENT BY THE ALIAS PAK UN...



AND CLAIMED HIS FATHER WAS A DRIVER FOR THE NORTH KOREAN EMBASSY IN SWITZERLAND.



THE HOUSE WHERE
KIM JONG UN, HIS
SISTER KIM YO JONG,
AND THEIR AUNT AND
UNCLE ARE BELIEVED
TO HAVE LIVED WAS
PURCHASED BY THE
NORTH KOREAN
EMBASSY.



IT WAS A THREE-STORY
BRICK TOWNHOUSE
ABOUT 350 METERS
FROM THE SCHOOL.

KIM JONG-CHUL'S SCHOOL, THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF BERN (I.S.B.), WAS LOCATED IN THE MURI BEI BERN AREA, CLOSE TO THE NORTH KOREAN EMBASSY.



KIM JONG-CHUL ALWAYS HAD BODYGUARDS AND WENT TO SCHOOL IN A MERCEDES-BENZ.



HOWEVER, KIM JONG UN ENJOYED MORE FREEDOM AT HIS SCHOOL IN KÖNIZ, WITH NO BODYGUARDS AROUND.



KIM JONG UN'S CLOSE FRIEND, JM,
FROM HIS SWISS SCHOOL DAYS.

I HAD NO IDEA HE WAS
KIM JONG IL'S SON.

WE GOT PRETTY CLOSE.

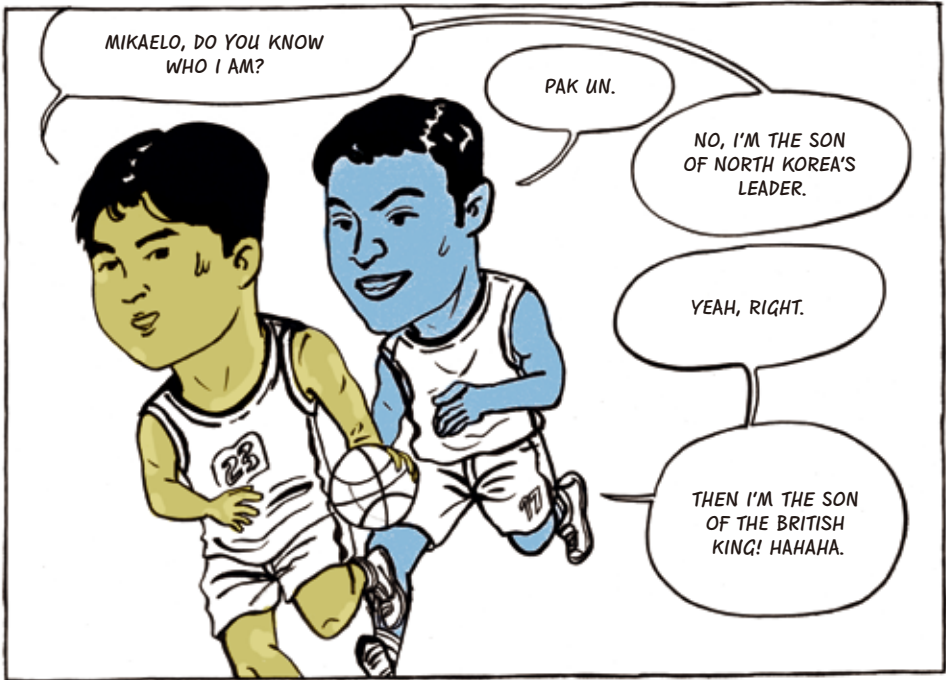
HE WAS QUIET AND DIDN'T INTERACT
MUCH WITH THE OTHER KIDS, BUT HE
WAS REALLY INTO SPORTS, MOVIES,
AND COMPUTERS.

HE LIKED
BASKETBALL
ESPECIALLY.

HE DIDN'T PARTY OR
GO CLUBBING, BUT WE
SOMETIMES TALKED
ABOUT GIRLS.

FROM A CNN PHONE IN-
TERVIEW ON SEPTEMBER 29,
2010 (KOREAN TIME).





IN 2012 AND AGAIN IN 2013, AFTER KIM JONG UN CAME TO POWER, JM WAS INVITED TO NORTH KOREA, AND THEY WERE ABLE TO MEET AGAIN.



YOSHIKO, MY FRIEND FROM CHAMBERY, WAS ALSO A "GOOD GUY."



LATER, I LEARNED THROUGH A JAPANESE FRIEND OF HERS THAT YOSHIKO WAS THE DAUGHTER OF A FAMOUS YAKUZA BOSS IN KOBE.



YOSHIKO HAD TOLD ME SHE WORKED AT A RECORD STORE IN OSAKA.



WAS IT A LIE?



WAS HER REAL NAME EVEN YOSHIKO?



YEAH, LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH.



YOSHIKO LEFT FOR AMERICA INSTEAD.



AFTER THAT, I NEVER SAW HER AGAIN.



YOSHIKO,
OGENKI DESUKA?
(おげんきですか。)*



*A FAMOUS LINE FROM
SHUNJI IWA'S 1995
MOVIE LOVE LETTER.