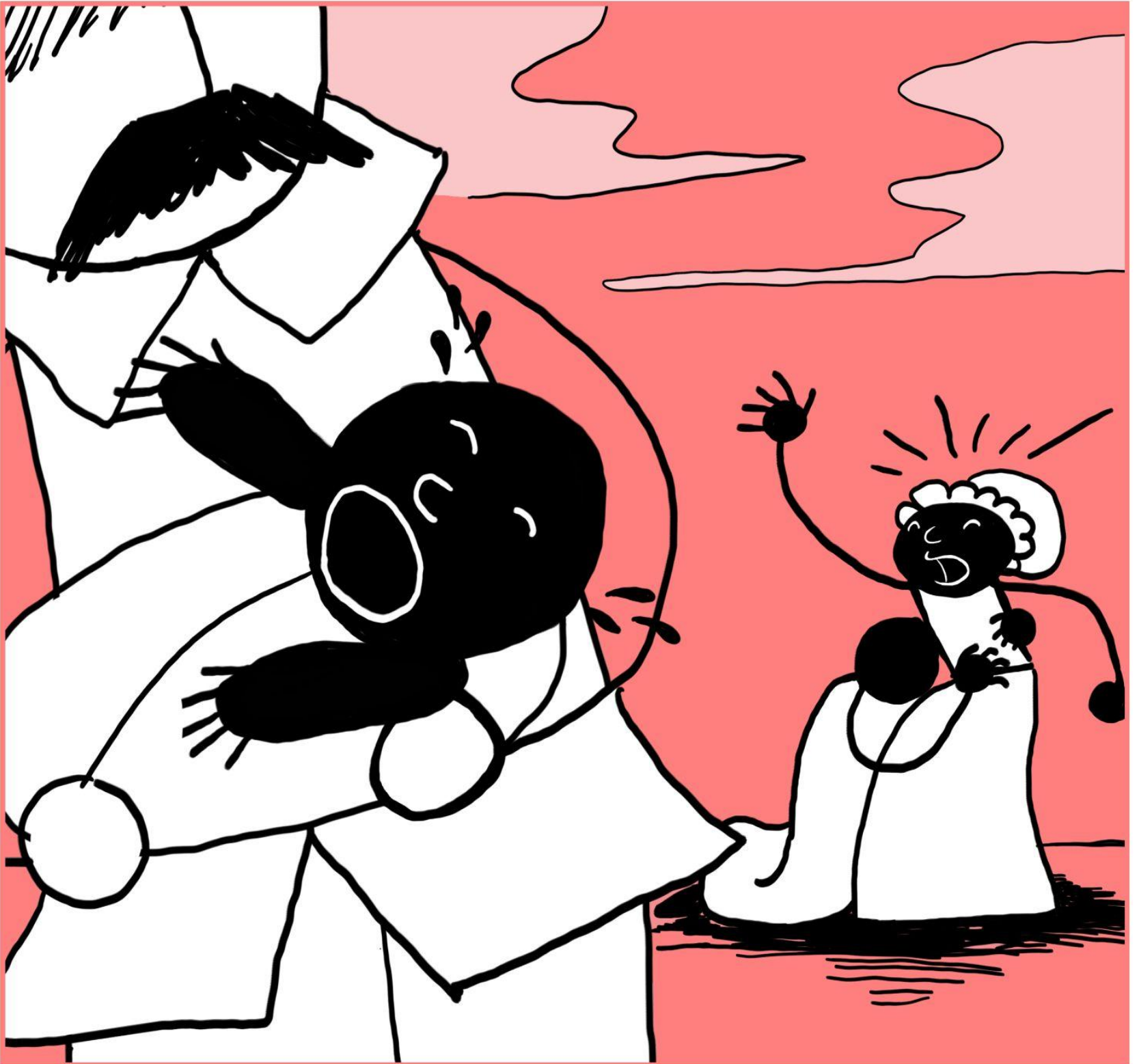


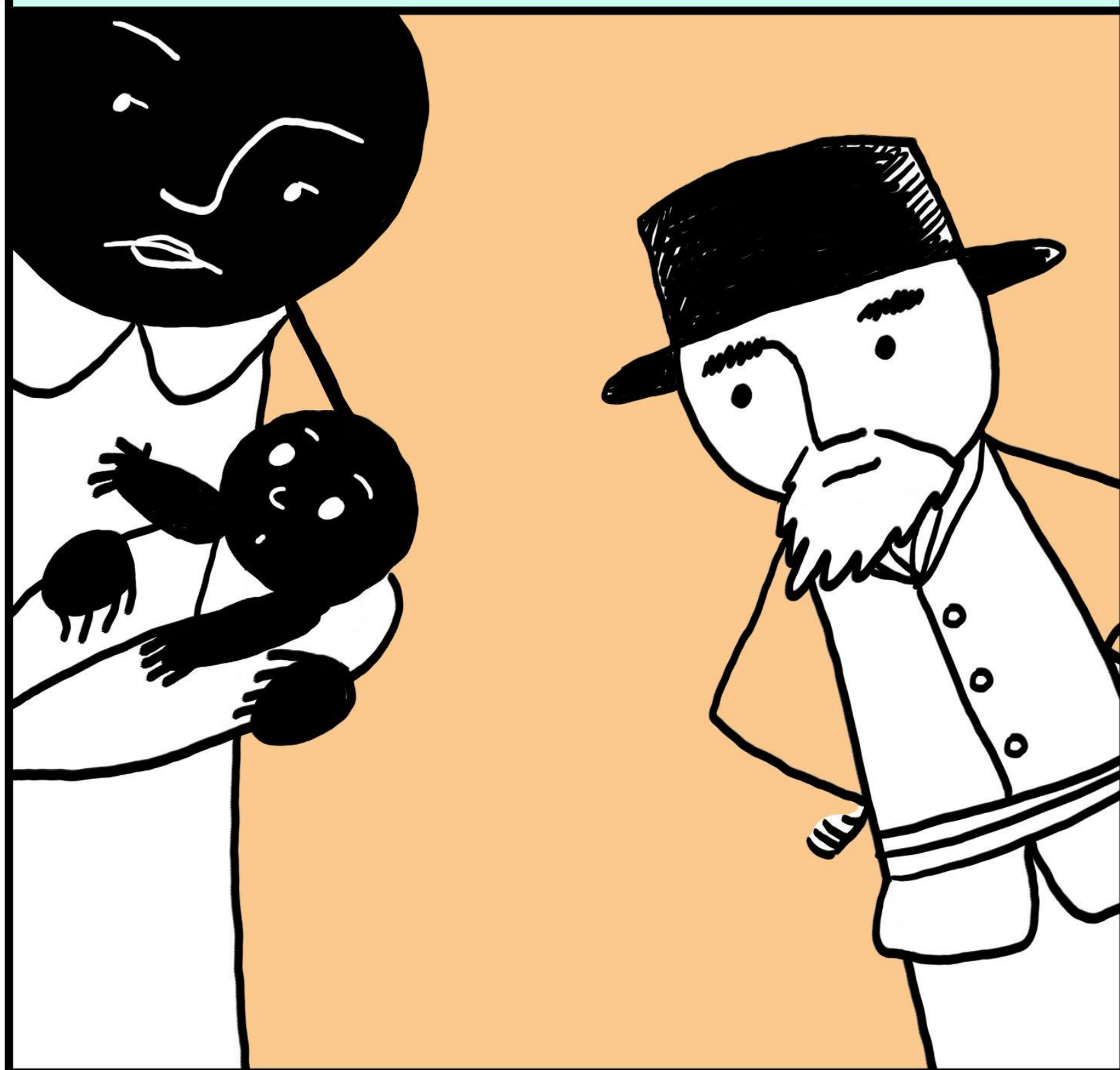
# HOW A SLAVE WON HER FREEDOM!

Written & Illustrated by Desire Grover

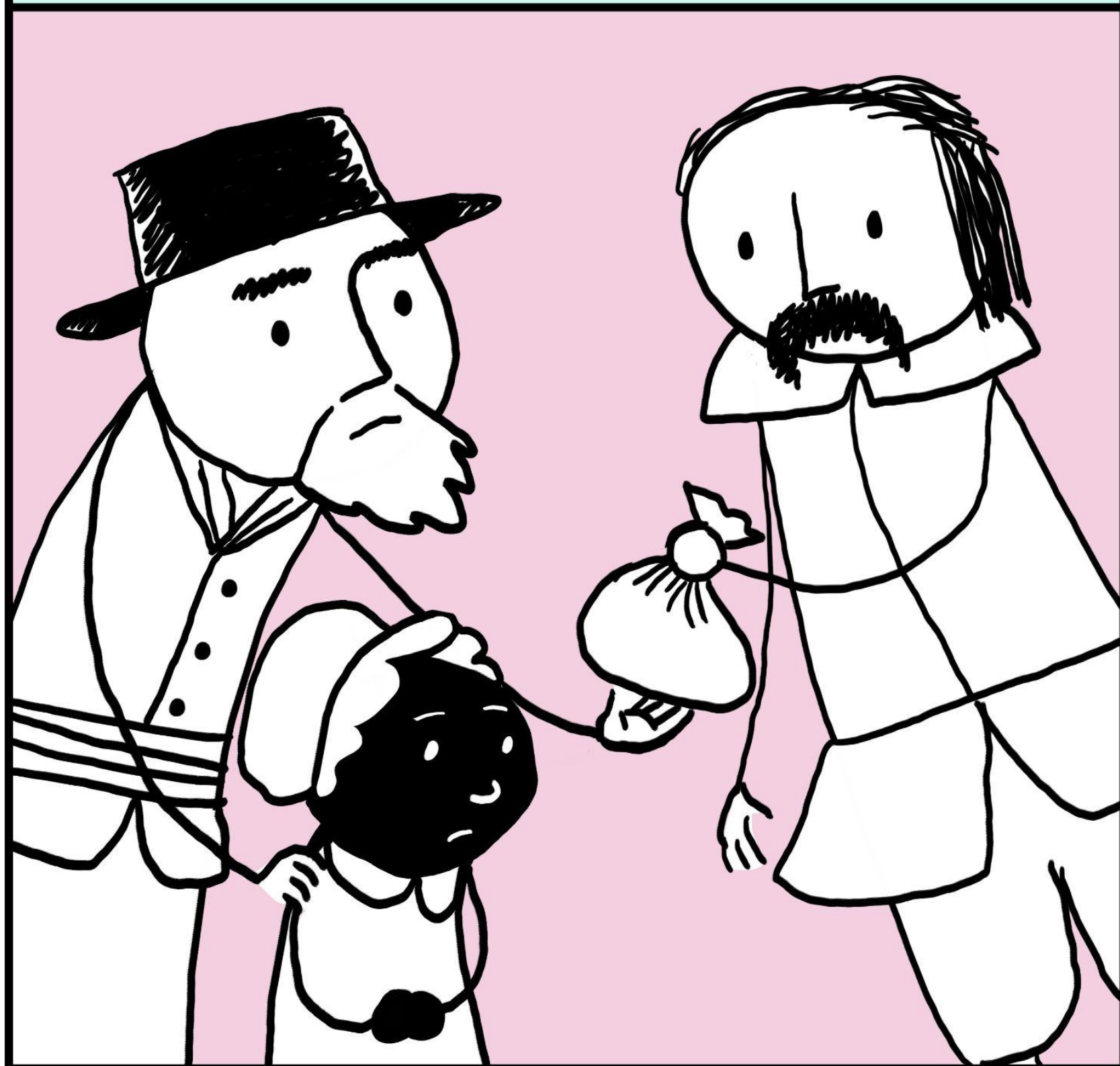


ELIZABETH KEY 1630-1665

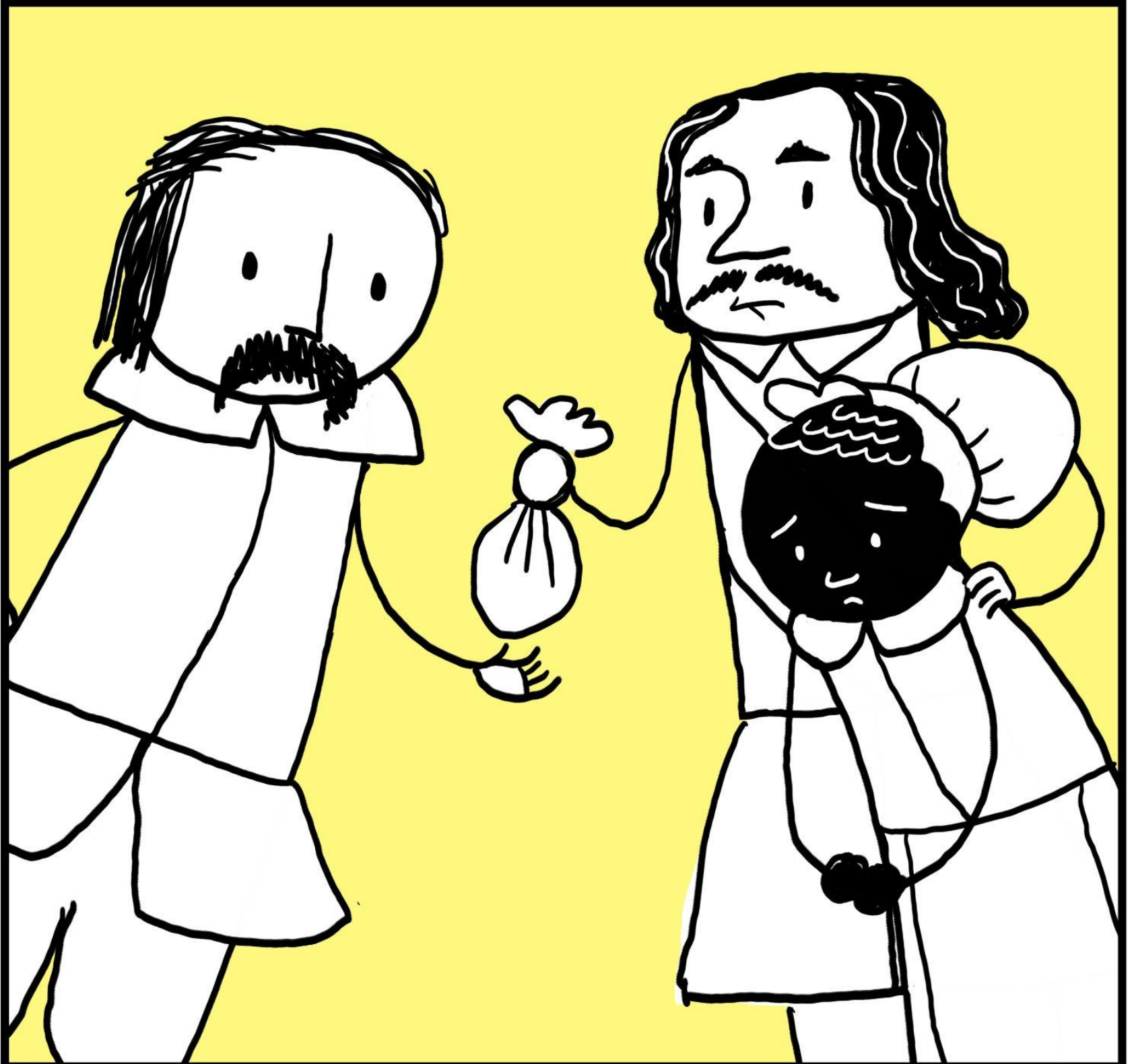
ELIZABETH KEY WAS BORN IN THE 1630s. SHE WAS THE DAUGHTER OF AN ENGLISH PLANTER NAMED **THOMAS KEY** AND AN ENSLAVED AFRICAN WOMAN. ALTHOUGH ELIZABETH WAS PLACED UNDER INDENTURED SERVITUDE, **HER FATHER HAD HER BAPTIZED** AND ARRANGED FOR HER TO BE SET FREE AT THE AGE OF 15.



AT AGE SIX, HER FATHER **SOLD** HER TO A WEALTHY PLANTATION OWNER NAMED HUMPHREY HIGGINSON. SHE WAS TO BE AN **INDENTURED SERVANT** FOR NINE YEARS AND THEN BE **SET FREE**.



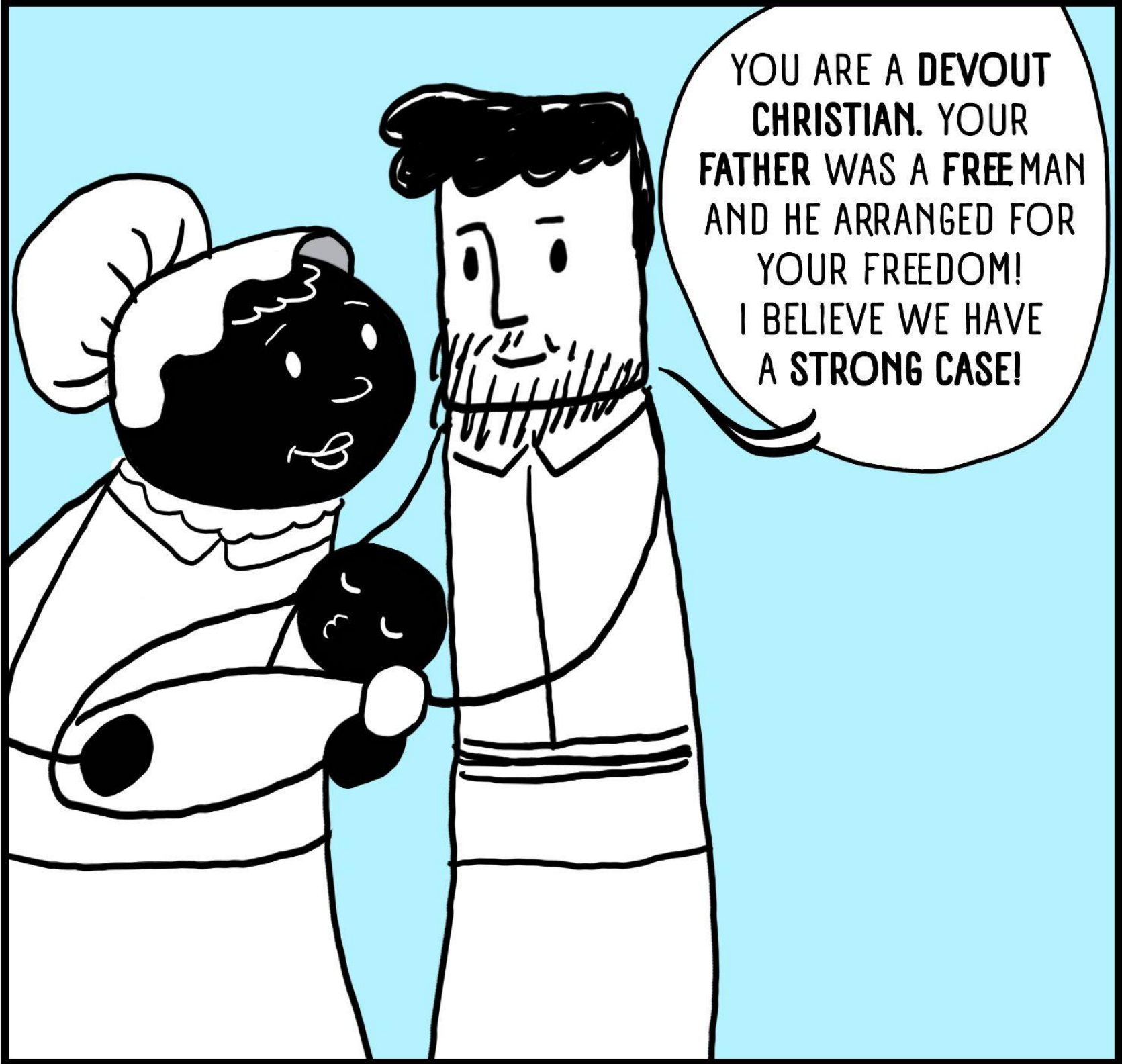
SOME YEARS LATER, NOT WANTING TO TAKE HER WITH HIM TO ENGLAND, HIGGINSON WOULD SELL ELIZABETH TO COL. JOHN MOTTRAM., AN ENGLISH SETTLER. SHE WAS 10 YEARS OLD.



WHILE UNDER MOTTRAM'S OWNERSHIP SHE WOULD MEET A YOUNG INDENTURED SERVANT NAMED **WILLIAM GRINSTEAD**. HE WAS A VALUED SERVANT OF MOTTRAM'S BECAUSE HE HAD LEGAL KNOWLEDGE AND WAS USED AS A **LAWYER**. WILLIAM AND ELIZABETH WOULD FALL IN LOVE AND **HAVE A SON**.



ELIZABETH WANTED TO BE FREE AS HER FATHER HAD PROMISED. HAVING **SERVED FOUR YEARS LONGER** THAN HER INDENTURED SERVITUDE ALLOWED, SHE FILED A **"FREEDOM SUIT"** IN THE COURTS! WILLIAM BECAME HER LAWYER AND HELPED HER **FIGHT HER CASE**.



YOU ARE A **DEVOUT CHRISTIAN**. YOUR **FATHER WAS A FREEMAN** AND HE ARRANGED FOR YOUR FREEDOM! I BELIEVE WE HAVE A **STRONG CASE!**

HER CASE WOULD BE THE FIRST OF ITS KIND. SHE WAS THE  
**FIRST "NEGRO" SLAVE** TO SUE FOR HER FREEDOM AND ONE  
OF THE **FIRST TO WIN!**



THERE WERE TWO KEY THINGS THAT MADE HER CASE SUCCESSFUL. NUMBER ONE, **HER FATHER WAS A FREE MAN** SO AS HIS DAUGHTER SHE WAS TO BE FREE. NUMBER TWO, SHE WAS A **BAPTIZED CHRISTIAN** AND AT THE TIME OF HER CASE IT WAS ILLEGAL TO ENSLAVE A CHRISTIAN.



ELIZABETH WOULD WIN HER FREEDOM!

THIS COURT HEREBY  
GRANTS ELIZABETH KEY  
HER FREEDOM!



THE NEWS OF HER WINNING FREEDOM CAUSED AN UPROAR AMONG **SLAVE OWNERS**. ESPECIALLY AMONG THOSE WHO HAD FATHERED "ILLEGITIMATE" CHILDREN WITH THEIR SLAVES. IN RESPONSE, THERE WAS A PUSH TO CHANGE THE LAW KNOWN AS "**PARTUS SEQUITUR PARTEM**" WHICH ESTABLISHED THAT A PERSON'S LEGAL (SOCIAL) STATUS WAS DETERMINED BY THEIR FATHER.

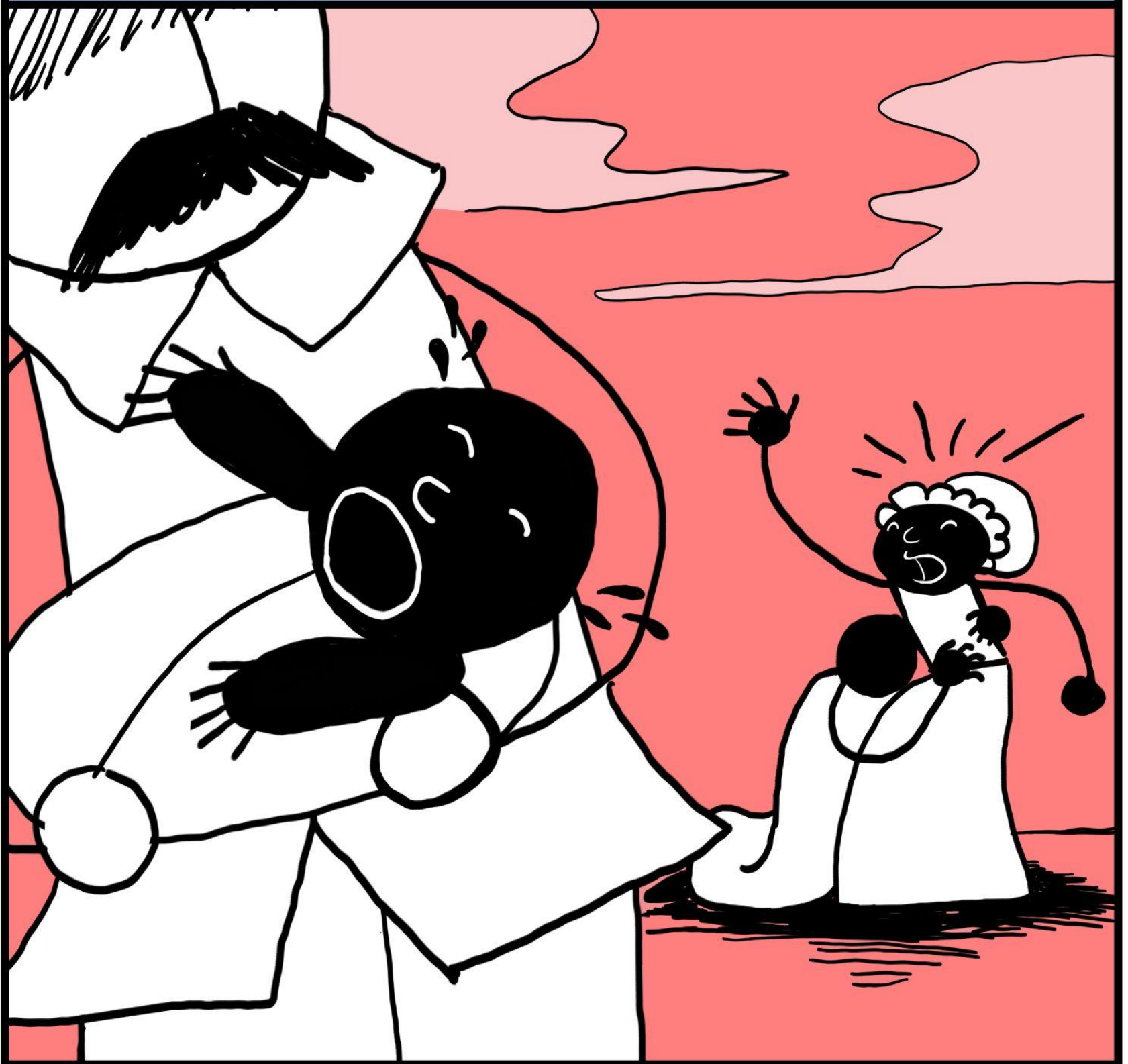


IN 1662, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY CHANGED THE LAW OF SOCIAL STATUS TO **"PARTUS SEQUITUR VENTREM."** MEANING, FROM THAT POINT ON, A CHILD'S STATUS WOULD BE DETERMINED BY THE MOTHER INSTEAD OF THE FATHER.



"THEREAFTER, AT THE TIME OF THEIR BIRTH, THE CHILDREN OF WHITE MALE VIRGINIANS AND ENSLAVED FEMALES, LEGALLY BECAME SOMEBODY'S SLAVE PROPERTY FOR LIFE."\*

THIS WOULD BE ONE OF THE EARLIEST STEPS IN MAKING PERPETUAL CHATTEL SLAVERY A FIXED LAW OF THE COLONIES.



## Resources:

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