




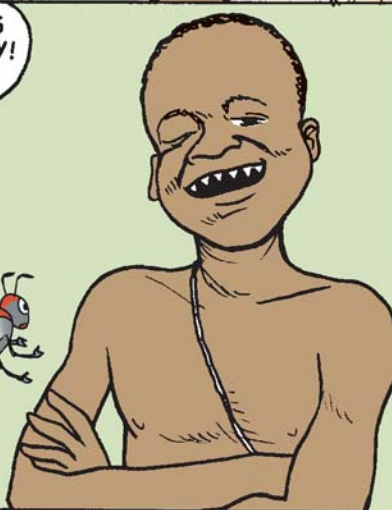
BOY,
IT'S HOT
HERE!



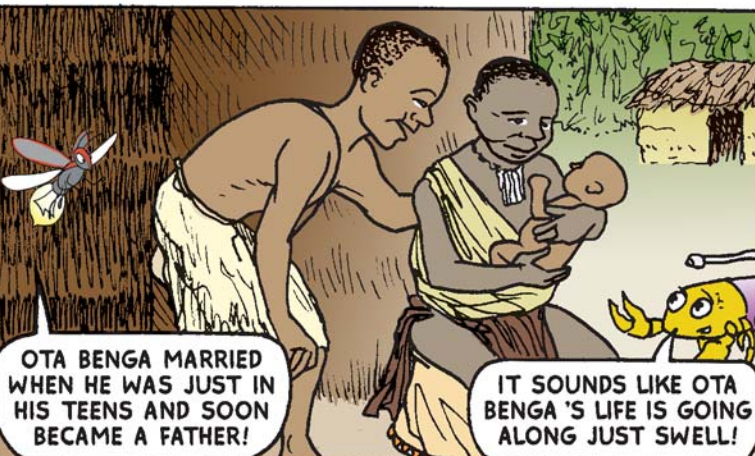
IT SURE IS SCORPY!
THAT 'S BECAUSE THE
CONGO IS LOCATED NEAR
THE EQUATORIAL RAIN
FOREST. THE PYGMIES WERE
HUNTER AND GATHERERS
AND IT IS HERE THAT OTA
BENGA LEARNED HOW TO
BE A VERY GOOD HUNTER!



LIGHTNING, OTA BENGA NEEDS
TO SEE A DENTIST RIGHT AWAY!
HIS TEETH LOOK STRANGE!

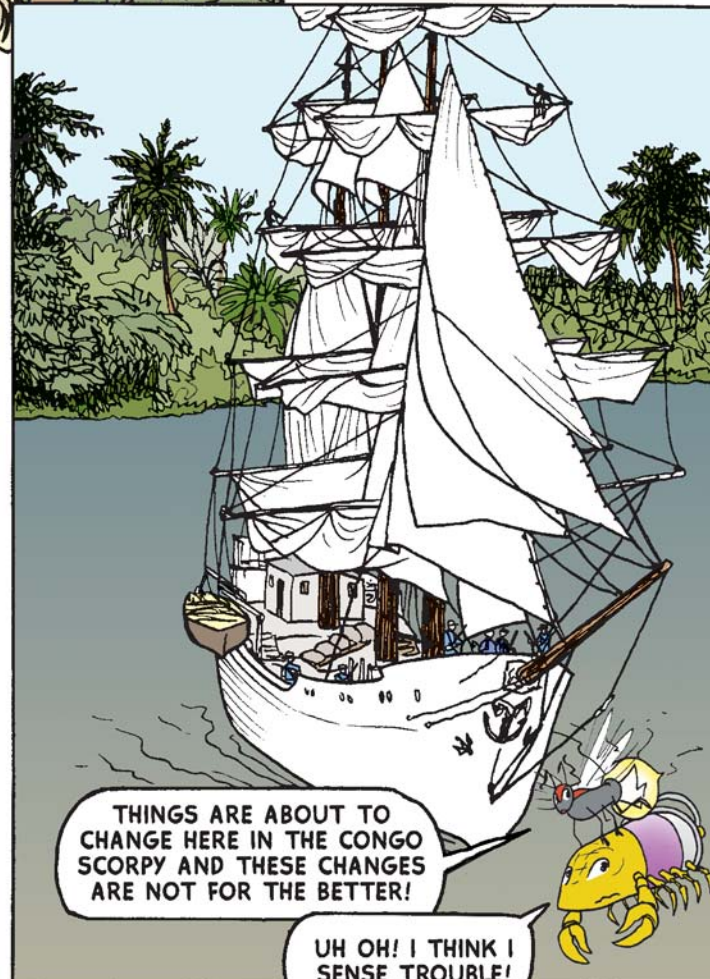


OTA BENGA 'S
FRONT TEETH WERE
FILED INTO POINTS
TO SHOW THAT HE
WAS A MAN. THIS
WAS A PYGMY
TRADITION.



OTA BENGA MARRIED
WHEN HE WAS JUST IN
HIS TEENS AND SOON
BECAME A FATHER!

IT SOUNDS LIKE OTA
BENGA 'S LIFE IS GOING
ALONG JUST SWELL!



THINGS ARE ABOUT TO
CHANGE HERE IN THE CONGO
SCORPY AND THESE CHANGES
ARE NOT FOR THE BETTER!



UH OH! I THINK I
SENSE TROUBLE!

BEFORE OTA BENGA WAS BORN, CENTRAL AFRICA WAS DOMINATED BY ARAB SLAVE TRADERS BASED ON THE ISLAND OF ZANZIBAR. THESE SLAVE TRADERS BROUGHT DESTRUCTION AND CHAOS TO THE LAND.

1800's
Africa

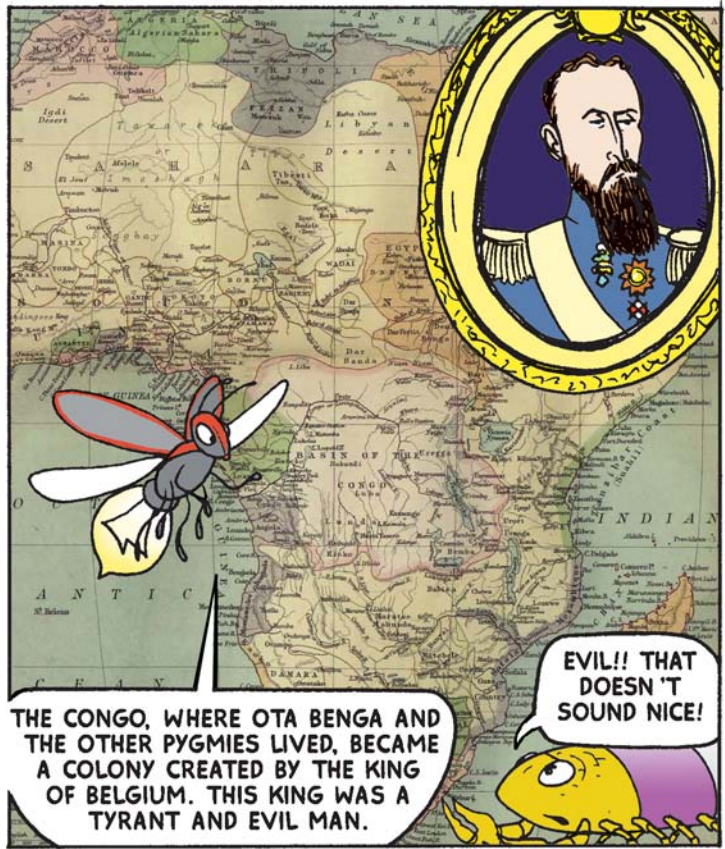
EQUATOR

Atlantic
Ocean

ZANZIBAR

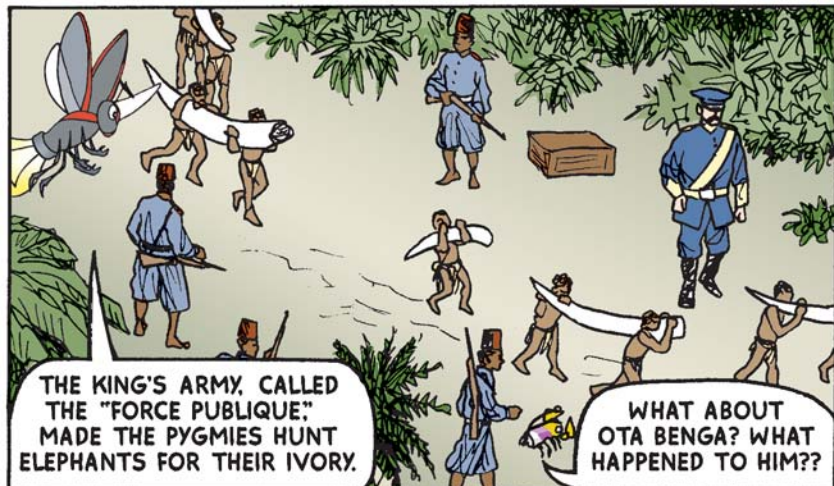
MOZAMBIQUE

I JUST KNEW
THINGS WERE
GOING TO
CHANGE!



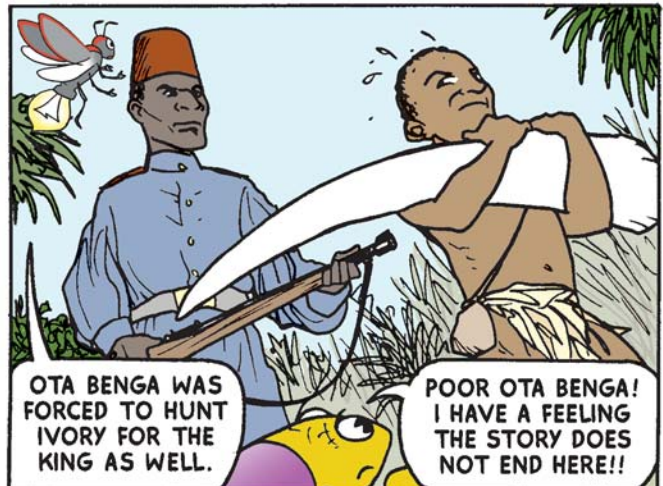
THE CONGO, WHERE OTA BENGA AND THE OTHER PYGMIES LIVED, BECAME A COLONY CREATED BY THE KING OF BELGIUM. THIS KING WAS A TYRANT AND EVIL MAN.

EVIL!! THAT
DOESN'T
SOUND NICE!



THE KING'S ARMY, CALLED THE "FORCE PUBLIQUE," MADE THE PYGMIES HUNT ELEPHANTS FOR THEIR IVORY.

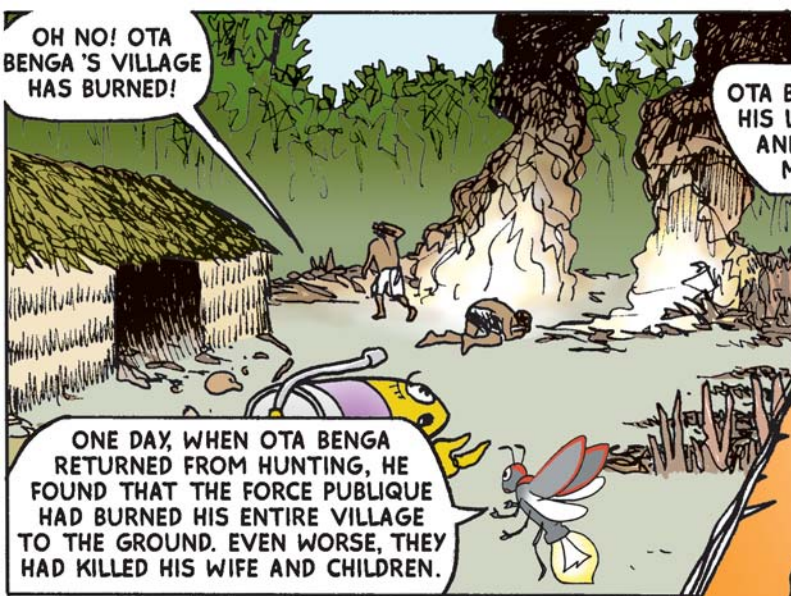
WHAT ABOUT
OTA BENGA? WHAT
HAPPENED TO HIM??



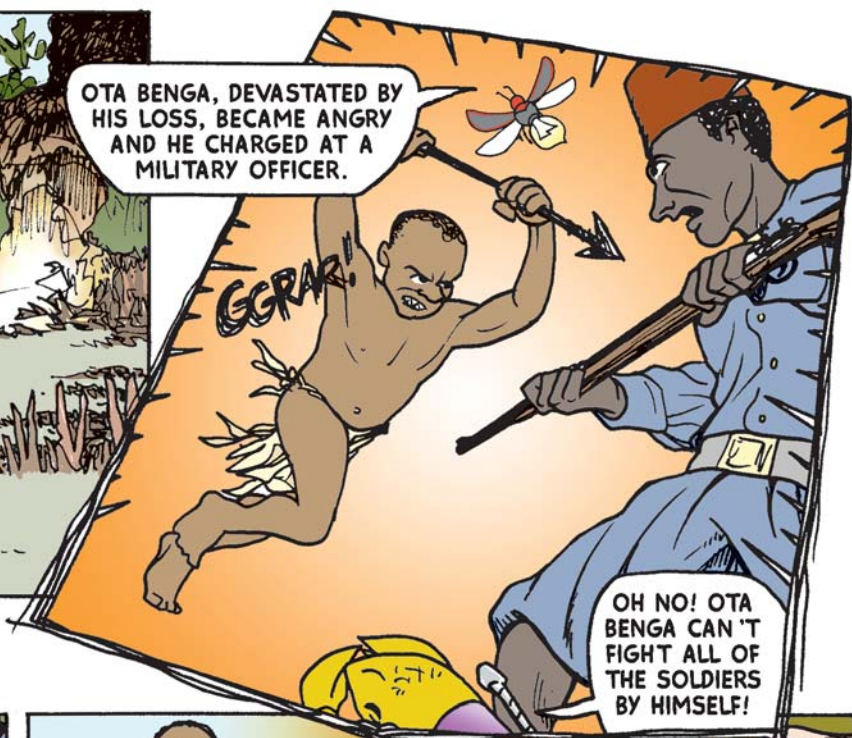
OTA BENGA WAS
FORCED TO HUNT
IVORY FOR THE
KING AS WELL.

POOR OTA BENGA!
I HAVE A FEELING
THE STORY DOES
NOT END HERE!!

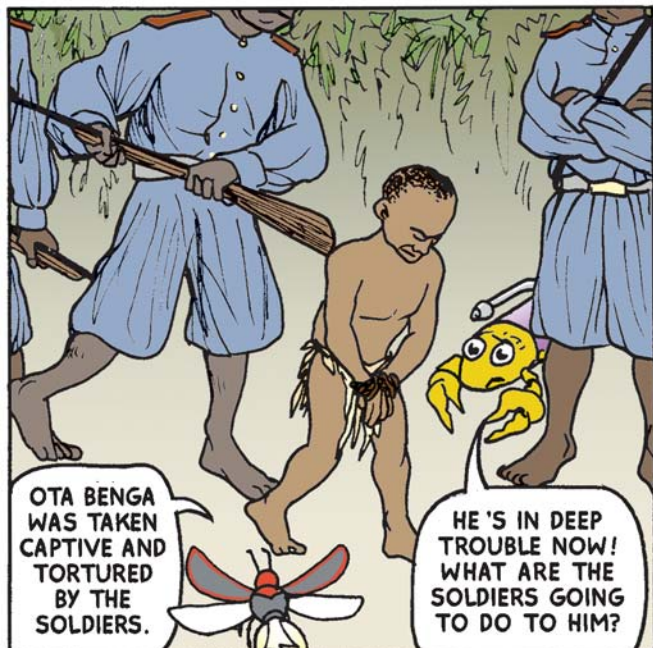
OH NO! OTA BENGA'S VILLAGE HAS BURNED!



OTA BENGA, DEVASTATED BY HIS LOSS, BECAME ANGRY AND HE CHARGED AT A MILITARY OFFICER.



OH NO! OTA BENGA CAN'T FIGHT ALL OF THE SOLDIERS BY HIMSELF!



OTA BENGA WAS TAKEN CAPTIVE AND TORTURED BY THE SOLDIERS.

HE'S IN DEEP TROUBLE NOW! WHAT ARE THE SOLDIERS GOING TO DO TO HIM?



THE SOLDIERS TOOK OTA BENGA TO THE SLAVE MARKET WHERE MANY OF THE PYGMY PEOPLE WERE SOLD INTO SLAVERY.

THAT'S NOT FAIR! WHAT A SAD THING TO HAPPEN TO OTA BENGA!

IN 1896, REVEREND SAMUEL PHILLIPS VERNER, AN AFRICAN AMERICAN MINISTER FROM NORTH CAROLINA, CAME TO THE CONGO AND HELPED ESTABLISH A MISSION. HE SPENT A YEAR PREACHING AND TEACHING THE PYGMIES.



I DON'T SEE OTA BENGA ANYWHERE!

REVEREND VERNER RETURNED TO AMERICA AND HEARD ABOUT A MAN THAT WAS ORGANIZING A DISPLAY OF DIFFERENT RACES OF PEOPLE FOR THE 1904 WORLD'S FAIR. REVEREND VERNER CONTACTED HIM AND OFFERED TO GO TO AFRICA AND BRING SOME PYGMIES TO THE FAIR.

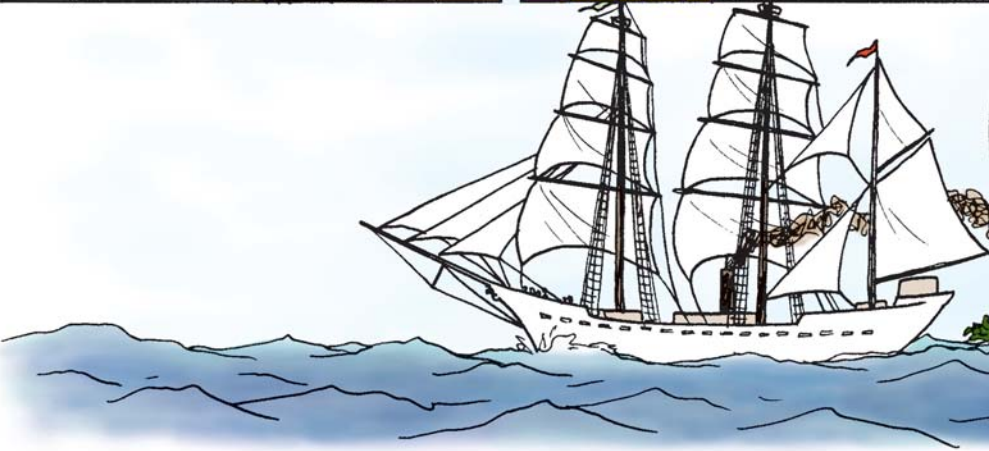


MAYBE THIS TIME HE WILL MEET OTA BENGA!



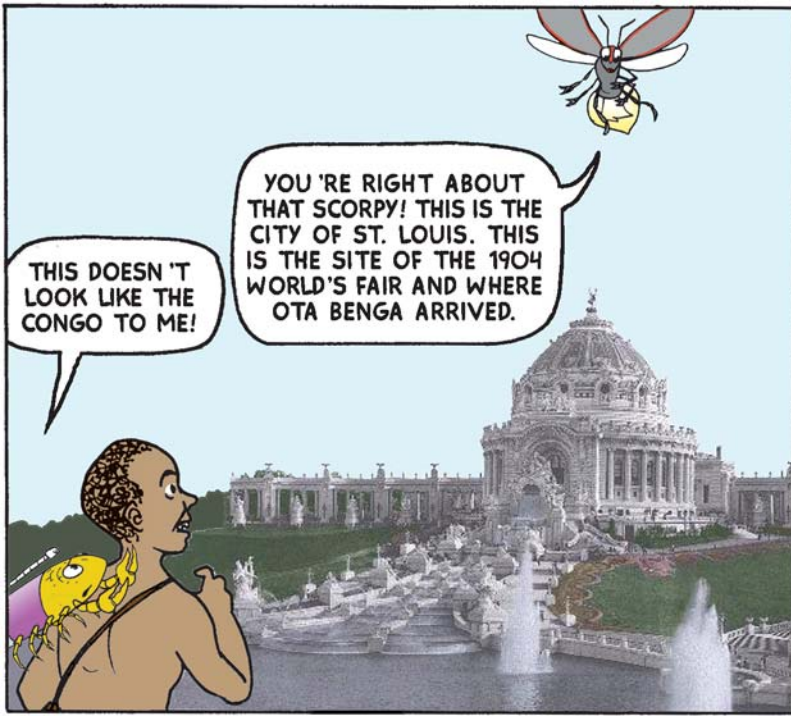
IN THE SLAVE MARKET, REVEREND VERNER FOUND OTA BENGA AND DECIDED TO PURCHASE HIM. HE PAID FOR HIM WITH SALT AND A LENGTH OF CLOTH.

I WONDER WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO OTA BENGA NEXT?



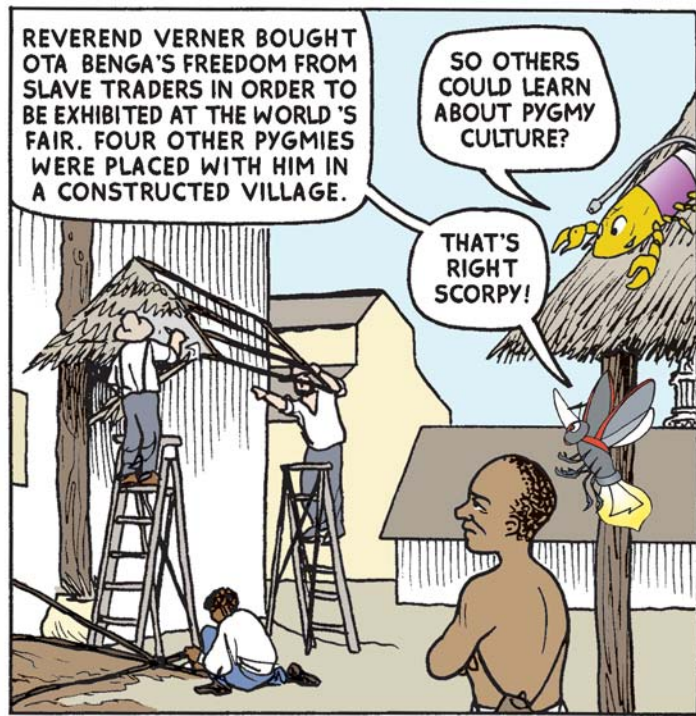
OTA BENGA LEFT AFRICA AND THE ONLY LIFE HE HAD KNOWN BEHIND. HE SAILED TO AMERICA AS A FREE MAN.

OTA BENGA IS FINALLY GETTING A CHANCE FOR A GOOD LIFE ... I HOPE!



THIS DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THE CONGO TO ME!

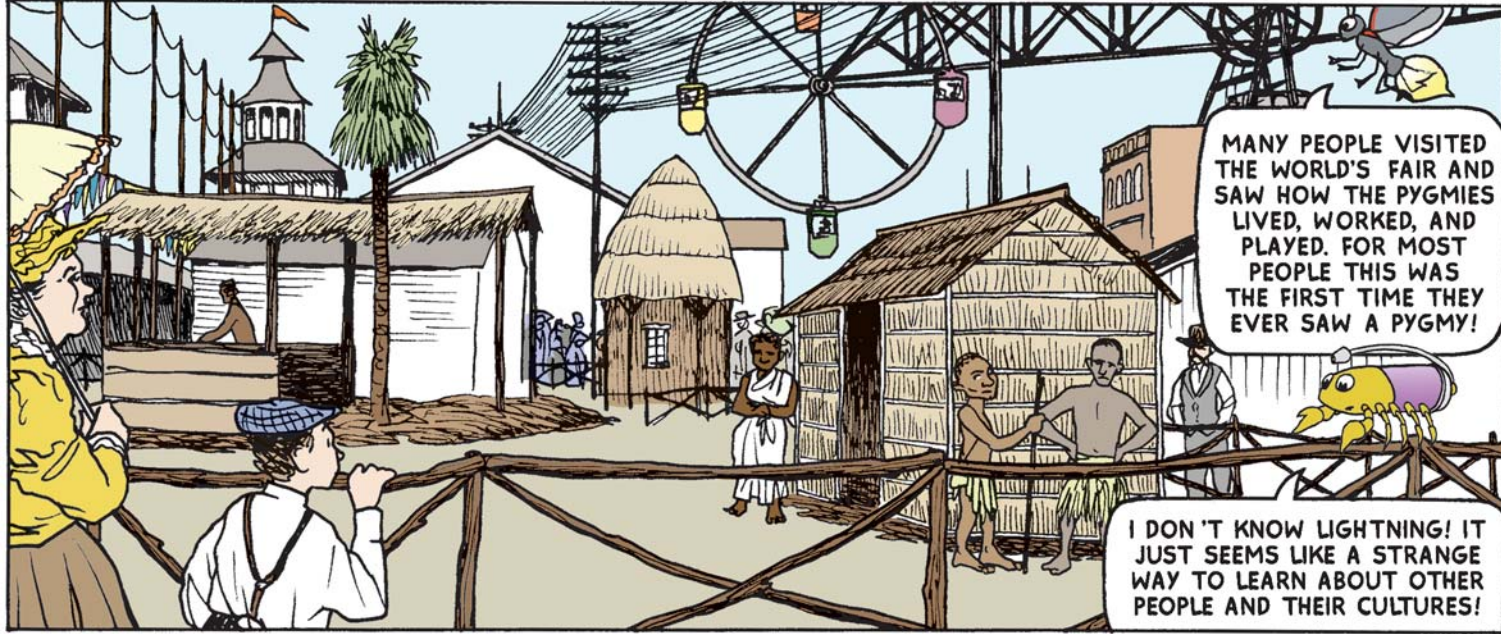
YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT THAT SCORPY! THIS IS THE CITY OF ST. LOUIS. THIS IS THE SITE OF THE 1904 WORLD'S FAIR AND WHERE OTA BENGA ARRIVED.



REVEREND VERNER BOUGHT OTA BENGA'S FREEDOM FROM SLAVE TRADERS IN ORDER TO BE EXHIBITED AT THE WORLD'S FAIR. FOUR OTHER PYGMIES WERE PLACED WITH HIM IN A CONSTRUCTED VILLAGE.

SO OTHERS COULD LEARN ABOUT PYGMY CULTURE?

THAT'S RIGHT SCORPY!



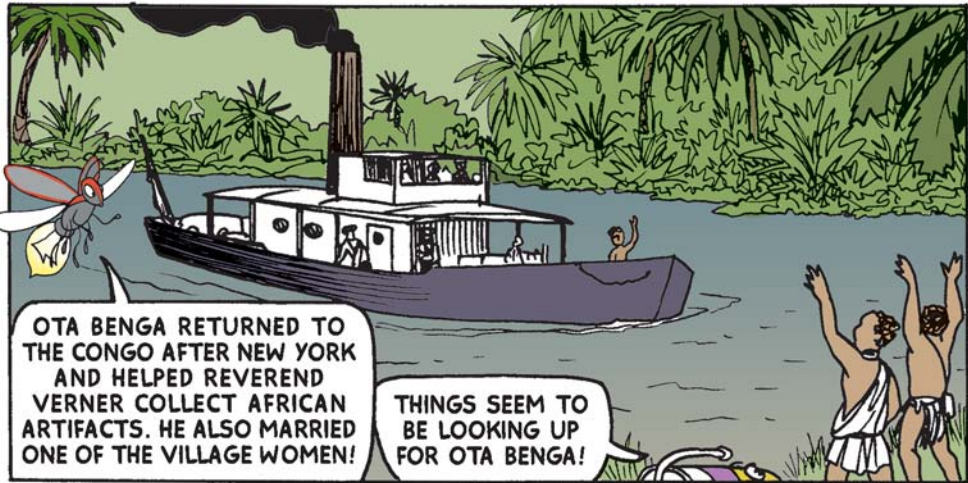
MANY PEOPLE VISITED THE WORLD'S FAIR AND SAW HOW THE PYGMIES LIVED, WORKED, AND PLAYED. FOR MOST PEOPLE THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THEY EVER SAW A PYGMY!

I DON'T KNOW LIGHTNING! IT JUST SEEMS LIKE A STRANGE WAY TO LEARN ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE AND THEIR CULTURES!



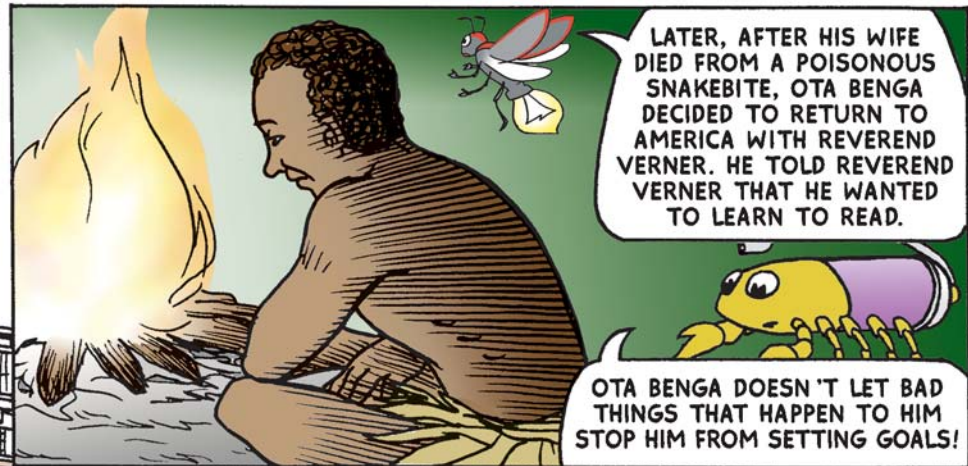
AFTER THE WORLD'S FAIR, THE PYGMIES RETURNED TO AFRICA BUT OTA BENGA STAYED WITH REVEREND VERNER AND VISITED NEW YORK CITY.

WOW! TALK ABOUT CULTURE SHOCK. FROM THE CONGO TO THE BIG APPLE!



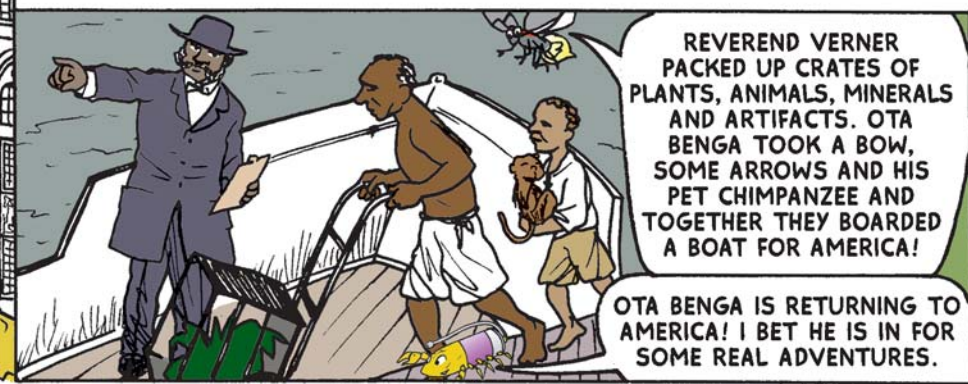
OTA BENGA RETURNED TO THE CONGO AFTER NEW YORK AND HELPED REVEREND VERNER COLLECT AFRICAN ARTIFACTS. HE ALSO MARRIED ONE OF THE VILLAGE WOMEN!

THINGS SEEM TO BE LOOKING UP FOR OTA BENGA!




LATER, AFTER HIS WIFE DIED FROM A POISONOUS SNAKEBITE, OTA BENGA DECIDED TO RETURN TO AMERICA WITH REVEREND VERNER. HE TOLD REVEREND VERNER THAT HE WANTED TO LEARN TO READ.

OTA BENGA DOESN'T LET BAD THINGS THAT HAPPEN TO HIM STOP HIM FROM SETTING GOALS!



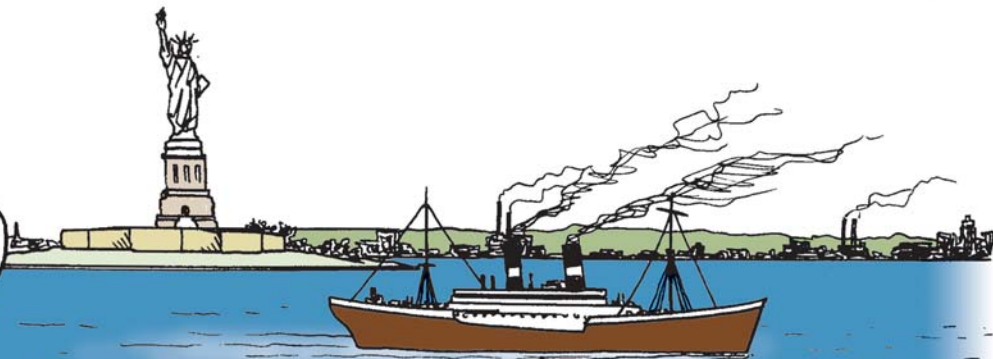
REVEREND VERNER PACKED UP CRATES OF PLANTS, ANIMALS, MINERALS AND ARTIFACTS. OTA BENGA TOOK A BOW, SOME ARROWS AND HIS PET CHIMPANZEE AND TOGETHER THEY BOARDED A BOAT FOR AMERICA!

OTA BENGA IS RETURNING TO AMERICA! I BET HE IS IN FOR SOME REAL ADVENTURES.



OTA BENGA
RETURNED TO
NEW YORK CITY IN
AUGUST, 1906!

I BET HE WAS
EXCITED ABOUT
LEARNING HOW
TO READ!



REVEREND VERNER
ARRANGED FOR OTA BENGA
TO STAY AT THE MUSEUM
OF NATURAL HISTORY IN NEW
YORK. OTA BENGA HAD FREE
REIN OF THE MUSEUM
BUILDING AND HE BEGAN
TO HELP THE GUARDS WITH
SECURITY OF THE BUILDING.




THAT'S
GREAT! OTA
BENGA HAS
A JOB!



UNFORTUNATELY, OTA BENGA'S JOB
DID NOT LAST LONG. WHEN IT ENDED
HE MOVED TO THE BRONX ZOO.



OTA BENGA SURE
HAD TO MOVE
AROUND A LOT!



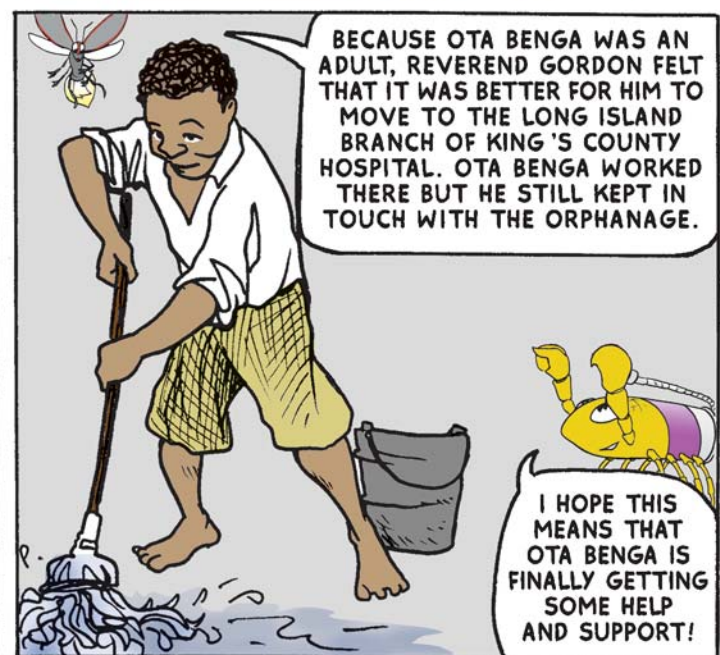
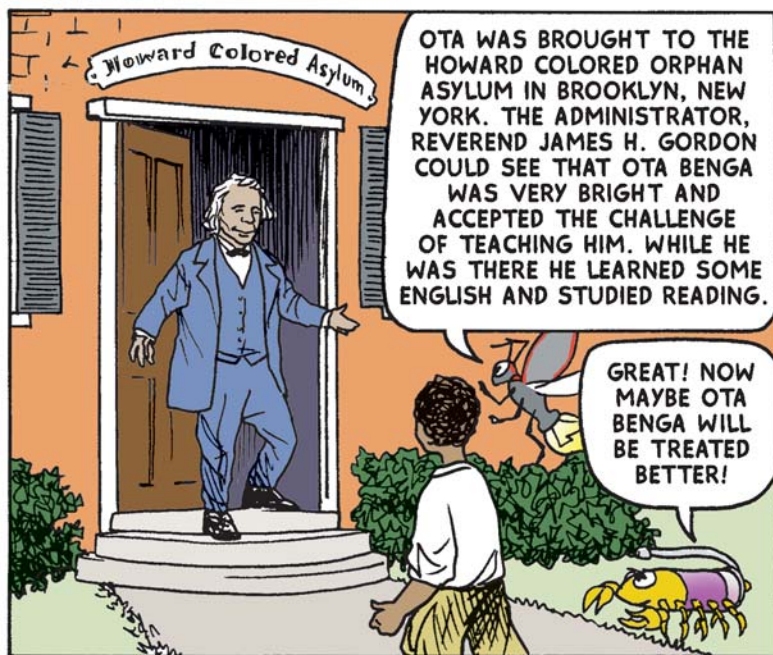
THE DIRECTOR OF THE ZOO
PLACED OTA BENGA IN THE
MONKEY CAGE. HE WAS VERY
POPULAR WITH THE ZOO'S
VISITORS. MANY OF THEM
LAUGHED AND GAWKED AT HIM!

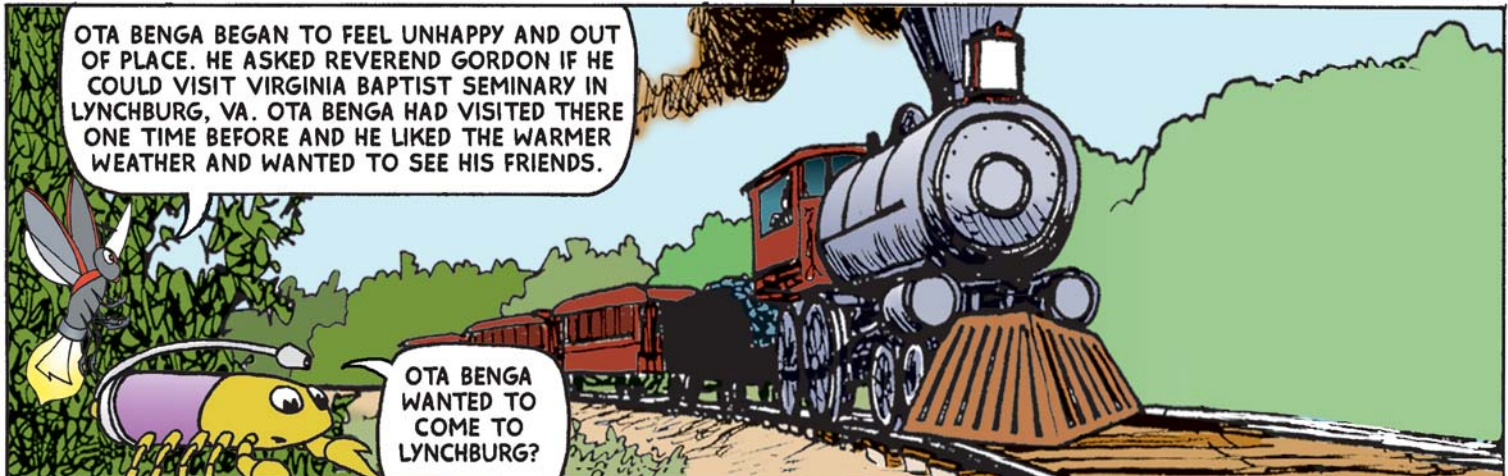


WAIT A MINUTE! OTA BENGA
IS NOT AN ANIMAL. HE IS A
HUMAN BEING! HE DOESN'T
BELONG IN A CAGE!!




A GROUP OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MINISTERS MET TO DISCUSS OTA BENGA. THEY ALL AGREED THAT IT WAS DISGUSTING THAT A HUMAN BEING SHOULD BE PUT ON DISPLAY LIKE AN ANIMAL. ONE OF THE MINISTERS INCLUDED REVEREND WILLIAM HENRY MOSES, A GRADUATE OF VIRGINIA BAPTIST SEMINARY IN LYNCHBURG! THESE MINISTERS WORKED AT GETTING OTA BENGA RELEASED FROM THE ZOO.







OTA BENGA BEGAN TO FEEL UNHAPPY AND OUT OF PLACE. HE ASKED REVEREND GORDON IF HE COULD VISIT VIRGINIA BAPTIST SEMINARY IN LYNCHBURG, VA. OTA BENGA HAD VISITED THERE ONE TIME BEFORE AND HE LIKED THE WARMER WEATHER AND WANTED TO SEE HIS FRIENDS.




OTA BENGA WANTED TO COME TO LYNCHBURG?




OTA BENGA ARRIVED IN LYNCHBURG IN JANUARY, 1910. HE STAYED WITH THE FAMILY OF SEMINARY PRESIDENT GREGORY WILLIS HAYES.



SO THAT'S HOW OTA BENGA GOT HIS LYNCHBURG CONNECTION!



OTA BENGA BEGAN TO TAKE CLASSES AT VIRGINIA BAPTIST SEMINARY. HE BEGAN TO USE HIS NEW READING SKILLS. AND FOR A WHILE HE SEEMED HAPPIER THAN EVER BEFORE!



THAT'S GOOD TO KNOW BUT I HAVE A FEELING THERE'S MORE TO THE STORY OF OTA BENGA!




OTA BENGA ENJOYED LEARNING AND ESPECIALLY LIKED USING HIS NEW FOUND READING SKILLS.



EVERYONE KNOWS THAT READING IS LOTS OF FUN EVEN OTA BENGA!



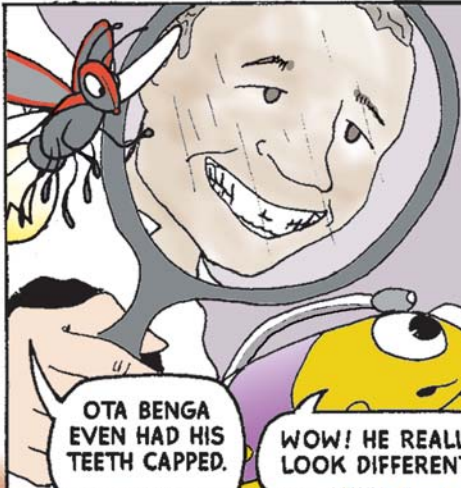
THE CAT CLIMBED UP THE TREE
AND SAT ON THE BRANCH.



WHILE HE LIVED IN LYNCHBURG, OTA BENGA BEGAN TO WEAR CLOTHING MORE LIKE OTHERS AROUND HIM. HE BEGAN TO WEAR TROUSERS, SHIRTS AND SHOES. HE BEGAN TO LOOK LESS LIKE A PYGMY AND MORE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE THAT HE SAW AROUND HIM IN LYNCHBURG!




I KINDA MISS THE OLD OTA BENGA!




OTA BENGA EVEN HAD HIS TEETH CAPPED.



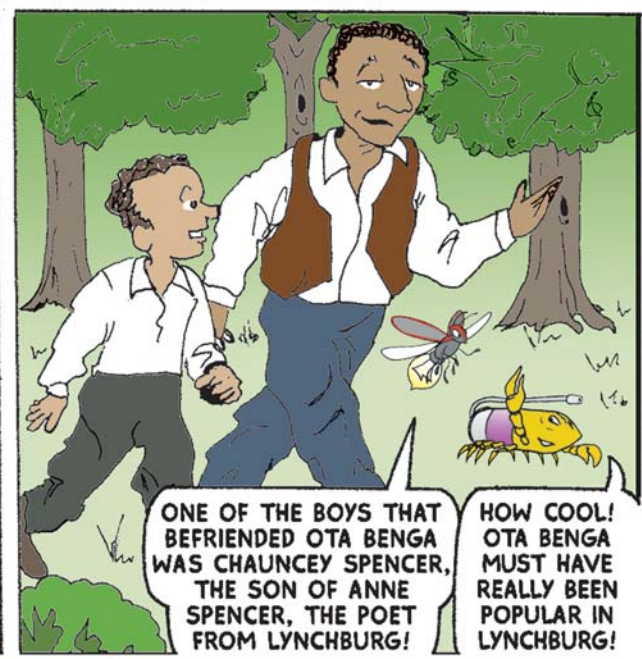
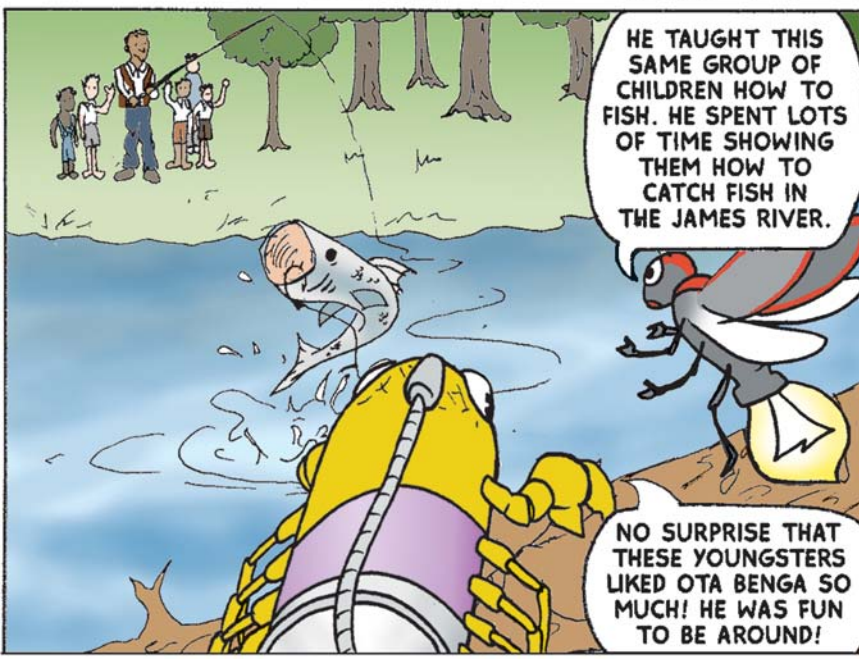
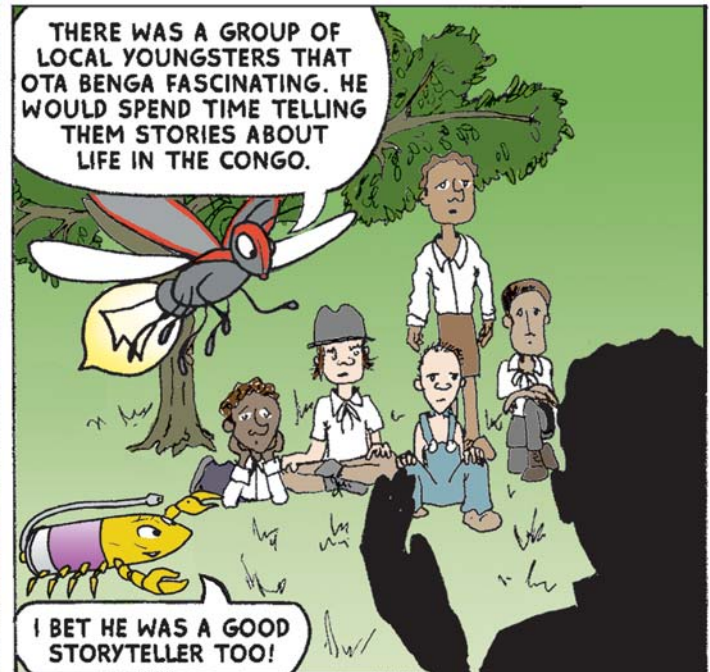
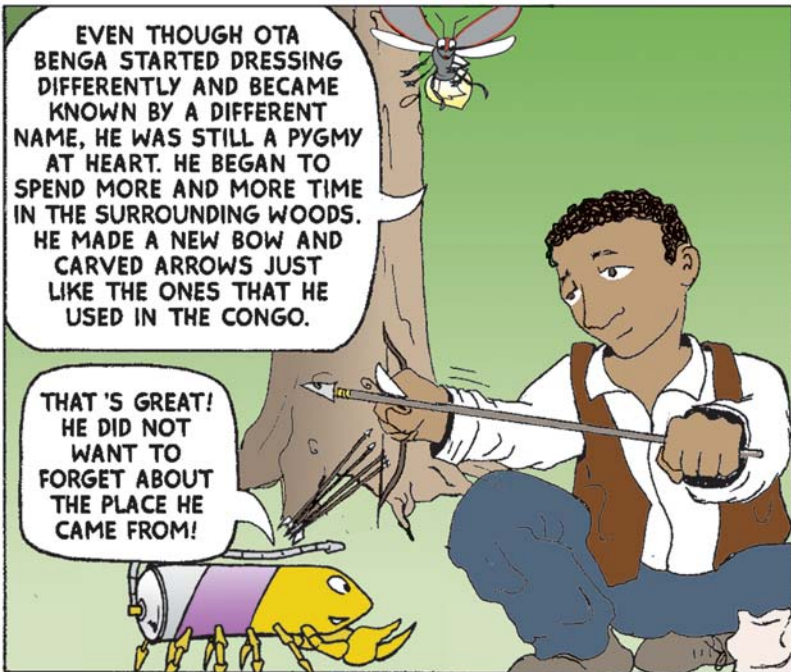
WOW! HE REALLY DOES LOOK DIFFERENT NOW!




HE STARTED WORKING AT A TOBACCO COMPANY IN LYNCHBURG AND HE ALSO DID ODD JOBS AROUND TOWN. HIS NAME WAS CHANGED. OTHER PEOPLE BEGAN TO CALL HIM "OTTO BINGO."



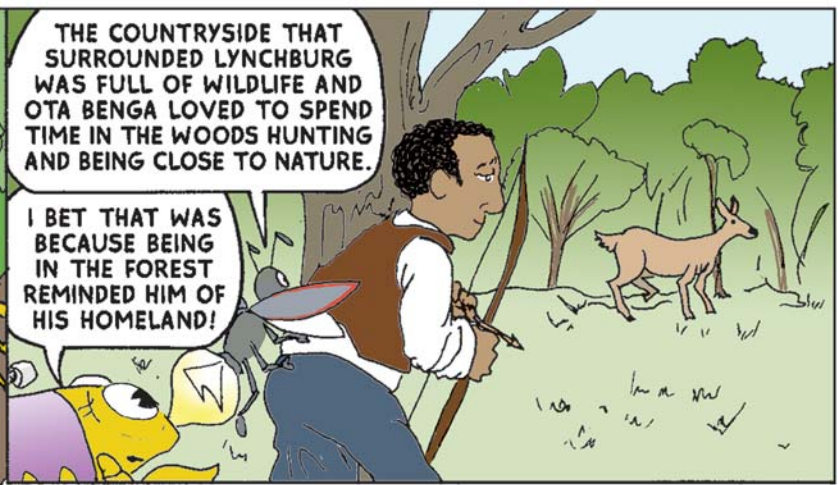
BECOMING WESTERNIZED CHANGED HIS WHOLE WAY OF LIFE, EVEN HIS NAME!





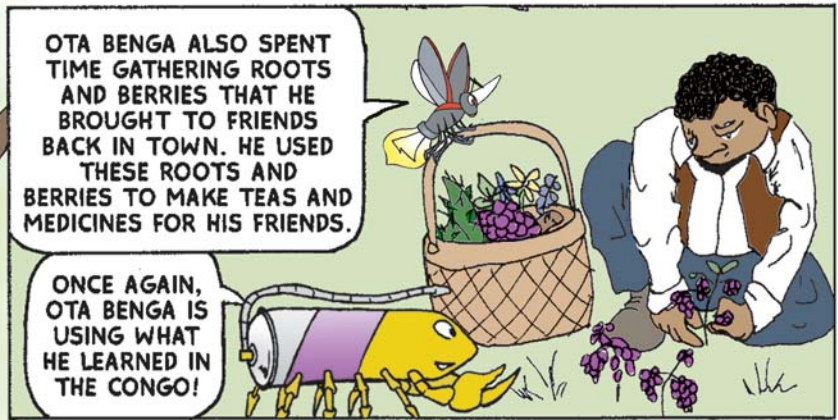
OTA BENGA TAUGHT MANY OF THE LOCAL YOUNGSTERS HOW TO GATHER WILD HONEY, JUST AS HE DID IN THE CONGO.

OTA BENGA MUST HAVE BEEN A GREAT TEACHER!




THE COUNTRYSIDE THAT SURROUNDED LYNCHBURG WAS FULL OF WILDLIFE AND OTA BENGA LOVED TO SPEND TIME IN THE WOODS HUNTING AND BEING CLOSE TO NATURE.

I BET THAT WAS BECAUSE BEING IN THE FOREST REMINDED HIM OF HIS HOMETLAND!



OTA BENGA ALSO SPENT TIME GATHERING ROOTS AND BERRIES THAT HE BROUGHT TO FRIENDS BACK IN TOWN. HE USED THESE ROOTS AND BERRIES TO MAKE TEAS AND MEDICINES FOR HIS FRIENDS.

ONCE AGAIN, OTA BENGA IS USING WHAT HE LEARNED IN THE CONGO!



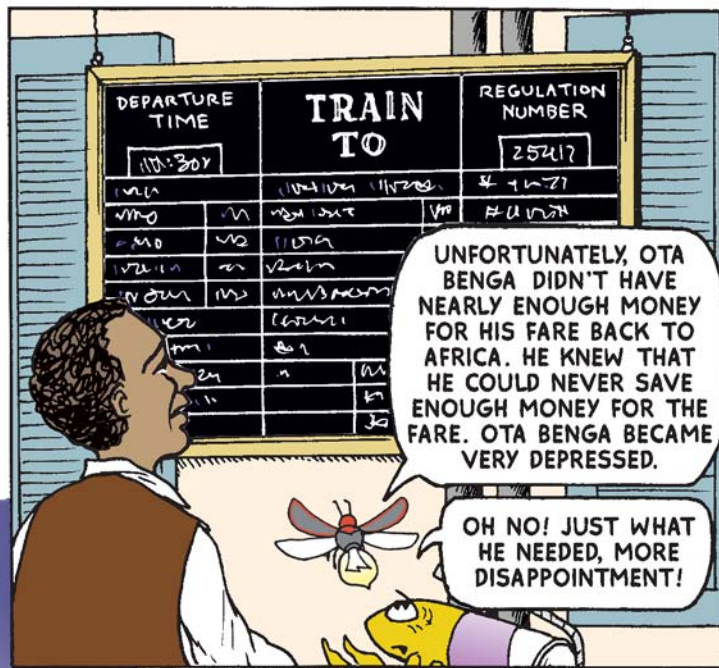
OTA BENGA ACTUALLY HAD A BETTER LIFE IN LYNCHBURG THAN IN ANY OTHER PLACE IN AMERICA HOWEVER; HE STILL MISSED HIS HOMETLAND AND LONGED TO RETURN.

IT SOUNDS LIKE HE WAS HOMESICK, POOR OTA BENGA!

OTA BENGA REALLY WANTED TO RETURN TO THE CONGO, SO HE BEGAN TO SAVE MONEY FOR HIS RETURN TRIP. HE WORKED VERY HARD TO SAVE ENOUGH MONEY FOR A TICKET.



GREAT, IT LOOKS LIKE OTA BENGA WILL FINALLY GET BACK HOME!



DEPARTURE TIME		TRAIN TO		REGULATION NUMBER	
11:30				25217	
11:45	11:45	11:45	11:45	4 12-21	
12:00	12:00	12:00	12:00	7 11-21	
12:15	12:15	12:15	12:15		
12:30	12:30	12:30	12:30		
12:45	12:45	12:45	12:45		
1:00	1:00	1:00	1:00		
1:15	1:15	1:15	1:15		
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1:45	1:45	1:45	1:45		
2:00	2:00	2:00	2:00		
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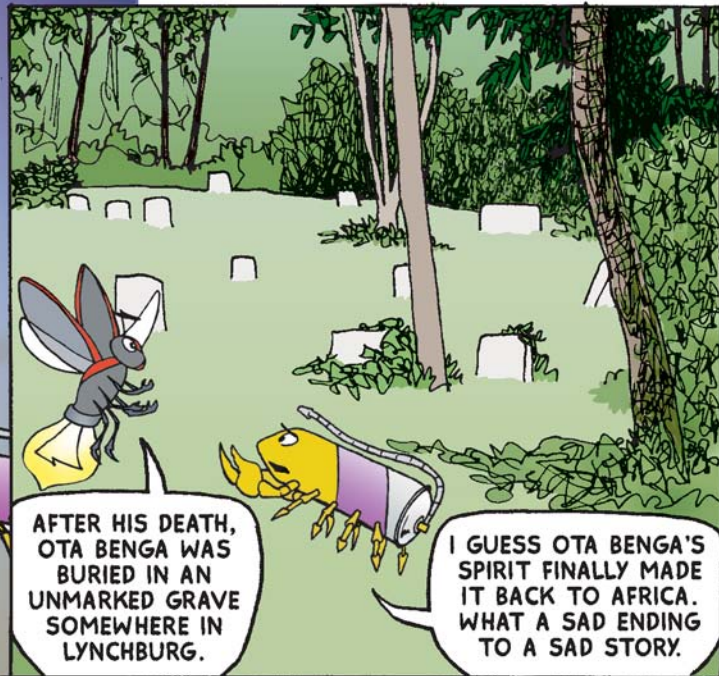
UNFORTUNATELY, OTA BENGA DIDN'T HAVE NEARLY ENOUGH MONEY FOR HIS FARE BACK TO AFRICA. HE KNEW THAT HE COULD NEVER SAVE ENOUGH MONEY FOR THE FARE. OTA BENGA BECAME VERY DEPRESSED.

OH NO! JUST WHAT HE NEEDED, MORE DISAPPOINTMENT!



OTA BENGA HAD FINALLY REACHED THE LOWEST POINT OF HIS LIFE AND FELT THAT HE COULD NOT DEAL WITH MORE DISAPPOINTMENT. ON MARCH 20, 1916, HE WENT INTO THE WOODS AND BUILT A FIRE. HE BROKE OFF ALL THE CAPS THAT HAD BEEN PLACED ON HIS TEETH AND HE DANCED AROUND A FIRE CHANTING SOME OF THE TRADITIONAL SONGS OF AFRICA. OTA BENGA THEN DID A VERY SAD THING. HE TOOK A GUN AND POINTED IT TOWARDS HIS HEART AND PULLED THE TRIGGER.

NO TELL ME HE DIDN'T DO THAT!!!!



AFTER HIS DEATH, OTA BENGA WAS BURIED IN AN UNMARKED GRAVE SOMEWHERE IN LYNCHBURG.

I GUESS OTA BENGA'S SPIRIT FINALLY MADE IT BACK TO AFRICA. WHAT A SAD ENDING TO A SAD STORY.

TODAY THE AFRICAN PYGMIES STILL LIVE ON THE CONTINENT OF AFRICA. THEY ARE FOUND ON MANY OF THE PROVINCES OR AREAS OF AFRICA.

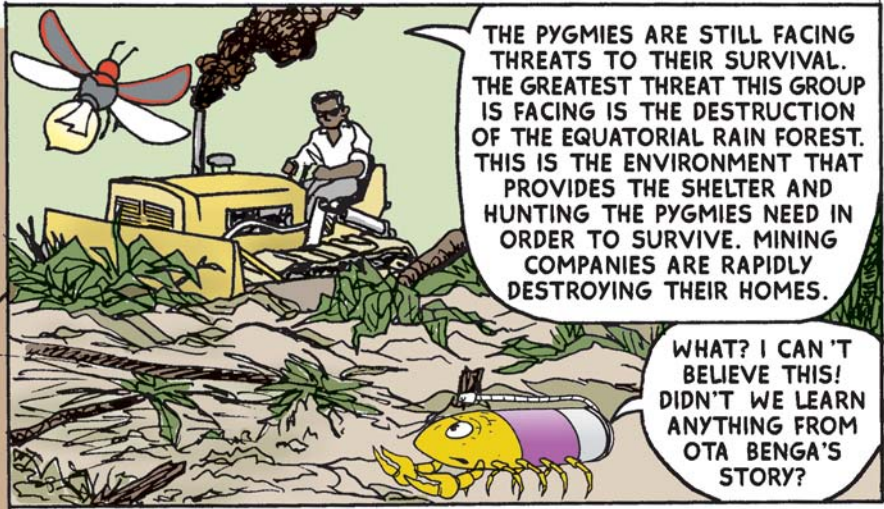


I HOPE THEY HAVE A BETTER LIFE THAT OTA BENGA DID!



Congo River

□ = PYGMY LIVING AREA



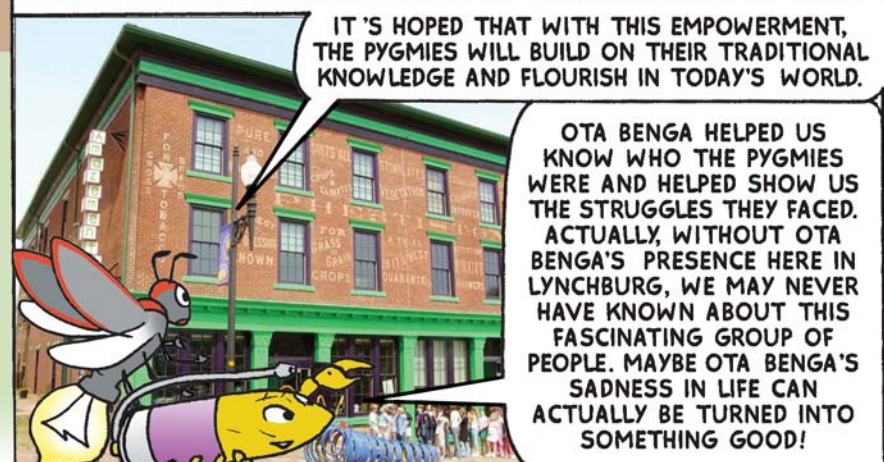
THE PYGMIES ARE STILL FACING THREATS TO THEIR SURVIVAL. THE GREATEST THREAT THIS GROUP IS FACING IS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE EQUATORIAL RAIN FOREST. THIS IS THE ENVIRONMENT THAT PROVIDES THE SHELTER AND HUNTING THE PYGMIES NEED IN ORDER TO SURVIVE. MINING COMPANIES ARE RAPIDLY DESTROYING THEIR HOMES.

WHAT? I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS! DIDN'T WE LEARN ANYTHING FROM OTA BENGA'S STORY?



THERE HAVE BEEN SOME EFFORTS MADE SCORPY. IN 2005, IT WAS PASSED INTO LAW THAT THE PYGMIES WOULD BE GUARANTEED THREE SEATS IN THE SENATE. THIS EFFORT HAS AT LEAST GIVEN THE PYGMIES A VOICE IN THEIR FUTURE.

THAT'S A GOOD THING! MAYBE SOME GOOD THINGS WILL HAPPEN YET.



IT'S HOPED THAT WITH THIS EMPOWERMENT, THE PYGMIES WILL BUILD ON THEIR TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND FLOURISH IN TODAY'S WORLD.

OTA BENGA HELPED US KNOW WHO THE PYGMIES WERE AND HELPED SHOW US THE STRUGGLES THEY FACED. ACTUALLY, WITHOUT OTA BENGA'S PRESENCE HERE IN LYNCHBURG, WE MAY NEVER HAVE KNOWN ABOUT THIS FASCINATING GROUP OF PEOPLE. MAYBE OTA BENGA'S SADNESS IN LIFE CAN ACTUALLY BE TURNED INTO SOMETHING GOOD!