

ZEINA ABIRACHED

LE PIANO ORIENTAL.



casterman

LE PIANO ORIENTAL

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If you would like more information about this title, please contact Nolwenn Lebreton: nolwenn.lebret@casterman.com

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AFTER THE WAR, MY PARENTS TOOK US TO WEST BEIRUT,
FOR THE FIRST TIME.



FOR ME, THAT PART OF THE CITY HAD ALWAYS BEEN
"ON THE OTHER SIDE" OF THE LINE THAT HAD CUT THE CITY
IN TWO DURING THE FIFTEEN YEARS OF THE CIVIL WAR.

I'D NEVER SET FOOT THERE.



I WAS COMPLETELY LOST.



I FELT LIKE
A FOREIGNER
IN A FOREIGN
COUNTRY.

SO MUCH SO THAT I COULDN'T EVEN SPEAK FRENCH OR ARABIC ANY MORE.



I HAD TO SPEAK A FOREIGN LANGUAGE...



BUT THE ONLY FOREIGN LANGUAGE THAT I KNEW WAS ENGLISH,
THAT I'D ONLY JUST STARTED TO LEARN AT SCHOOL.



IT WAS RIDICULOUS.

AND THEN, LITTLE BY LITTLE,



AS I MADE THIS NEW LAND

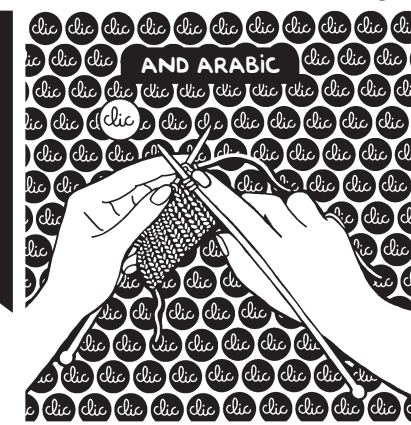
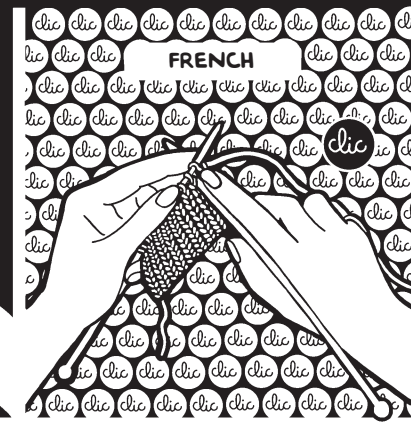


MY OWN

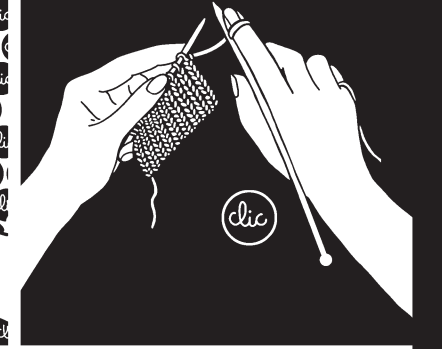


MY LANGUAGE CAME BACK.

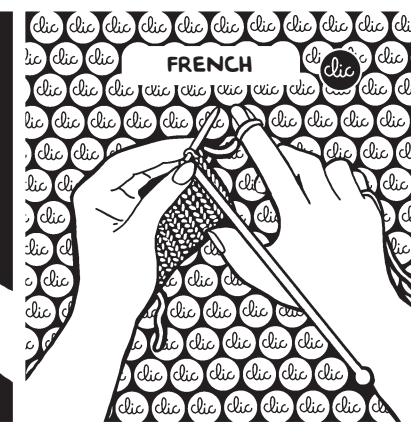
I REALIZED THAT



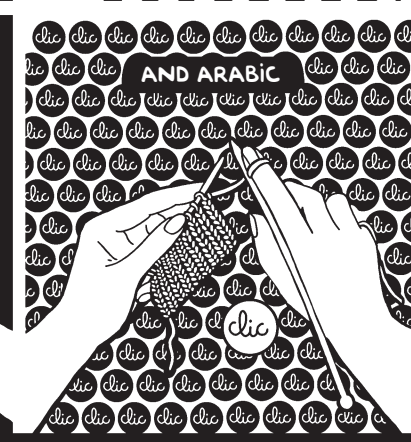
ARE INTERWOVEN IN ME



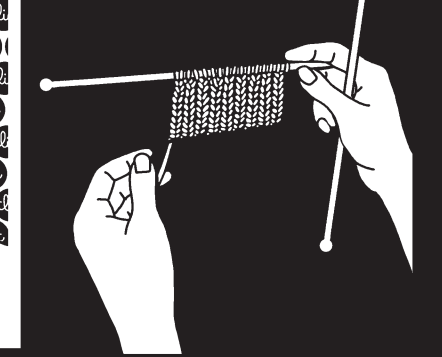
INEXTRICABLE,



clac



ARE MY LANGUAGE





THERE ARE

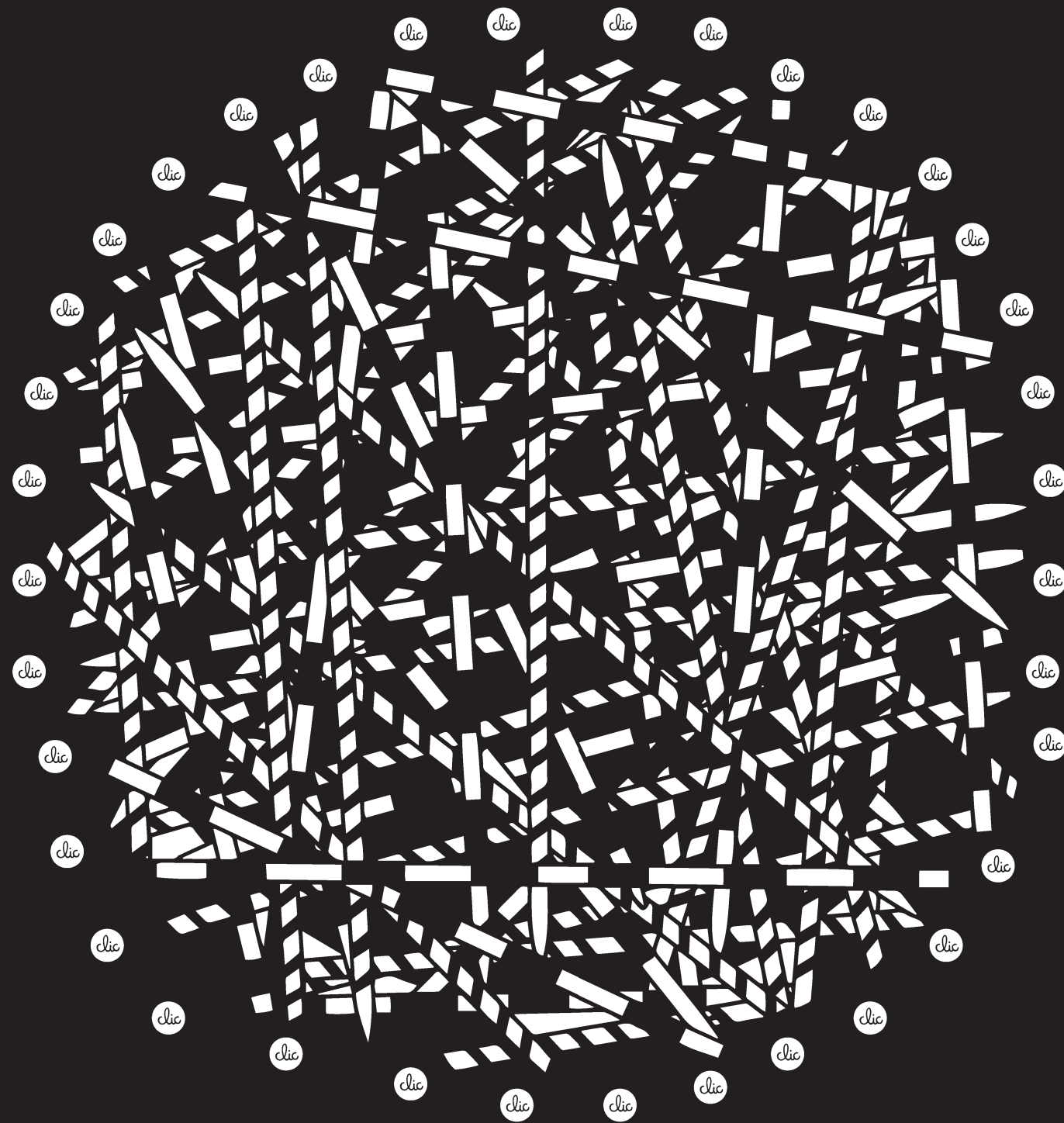
TWO SETS

OF MIKADO

OVERTURNED

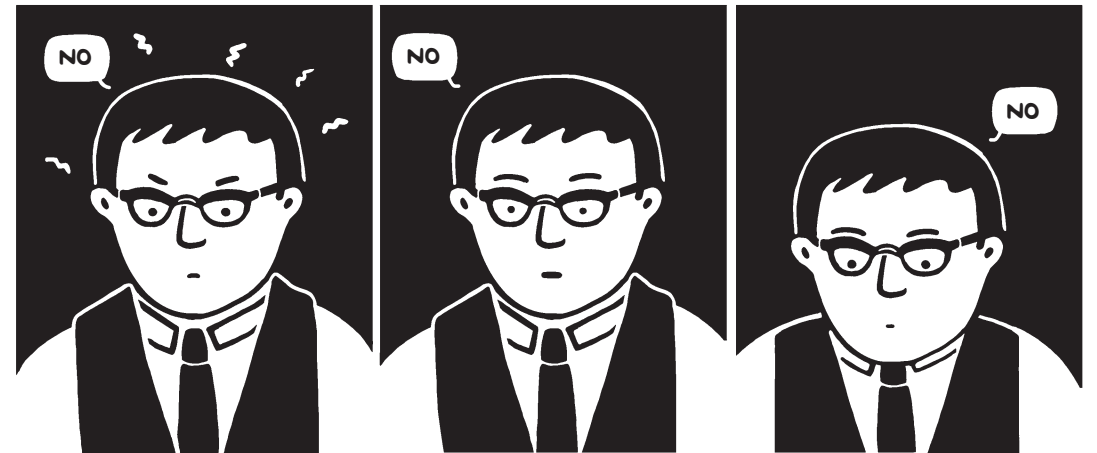
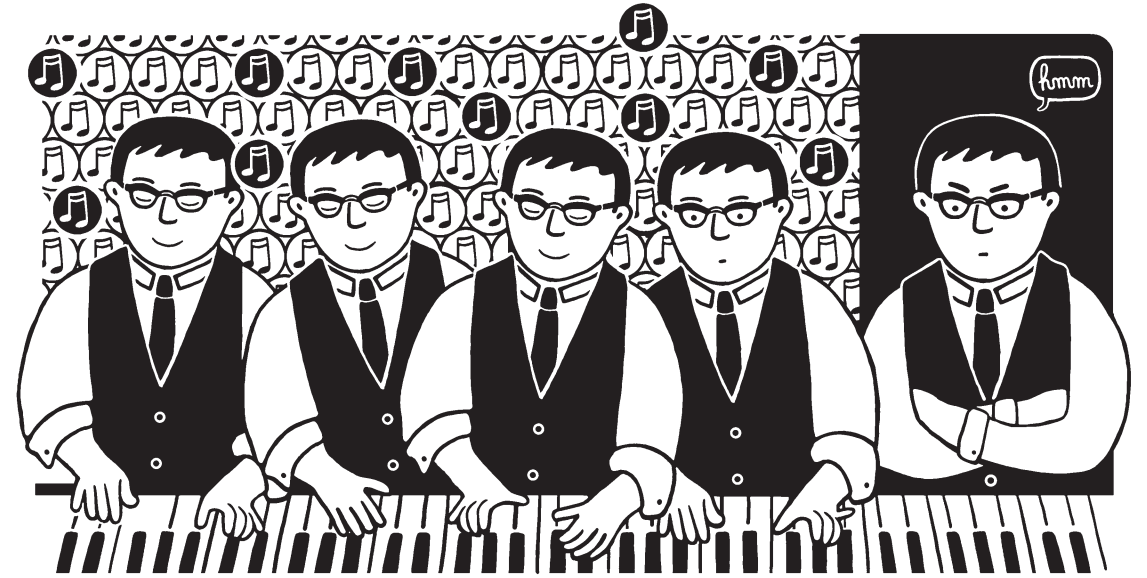
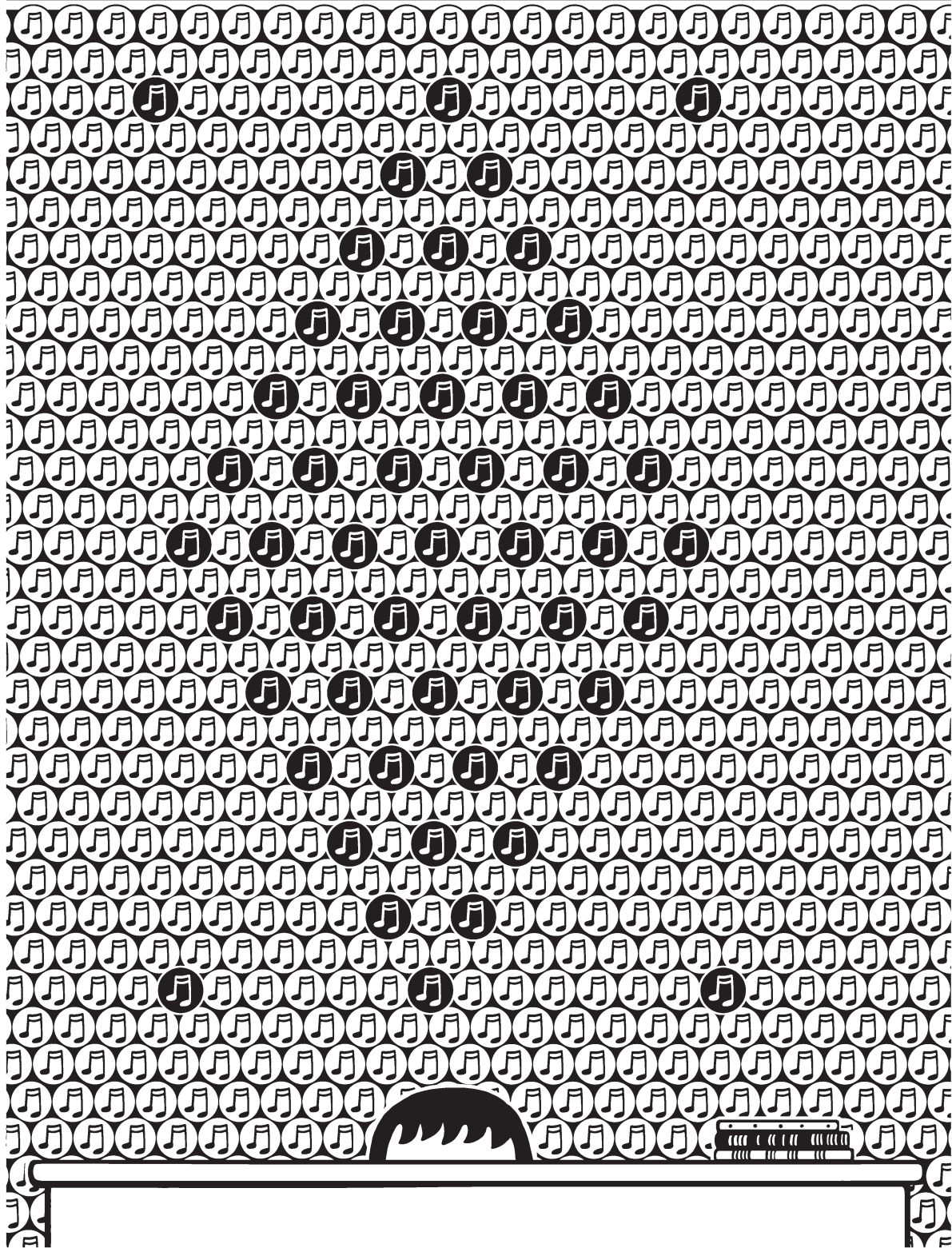
JUMBLED-UP

IN MY HEAD



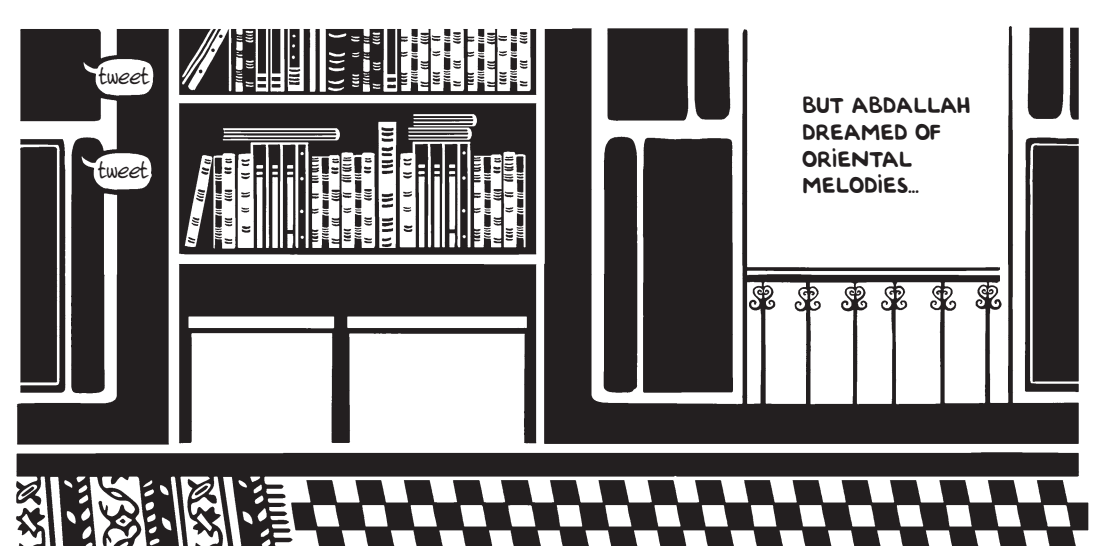
IT'S THE DNA OF MY MOTHER TONGUE.

ABDALLAH WAS PURSUING A DREAM..



...TO SUCCEED IN PLAYING THE MELODIES JOSTLING AROUND IN HIS HEAD, ON HIS PIANO.







HE SPENT HIS TIME



IN FRONT OF HIS PIANO,



BEHIND HIS PIANO,



SOMETIMES EVEN UNDER HIS PIANO,



BUT ABOVE ALL IN HIS PIANO.

FOR TEN YEARS
ABDALLAH
LOOKED
FOR A
MECHANICAL
SOLUTION



LET'S SEE

WELL,
ER

MY DEAR FRIEND

PHEW

... I'VE GOT MY
WORK CUT OUT!



HE DISMANTLED

THEN REASSEMBLED

HIS PIANO

TWELVE
TIMES

OW

TALK ABOUT A
HEADACHE!

TO MANAGE TO PLAY QUARTER TONES WITHOUT CHANGING THE APPEARANCE OF HIS PIANO.