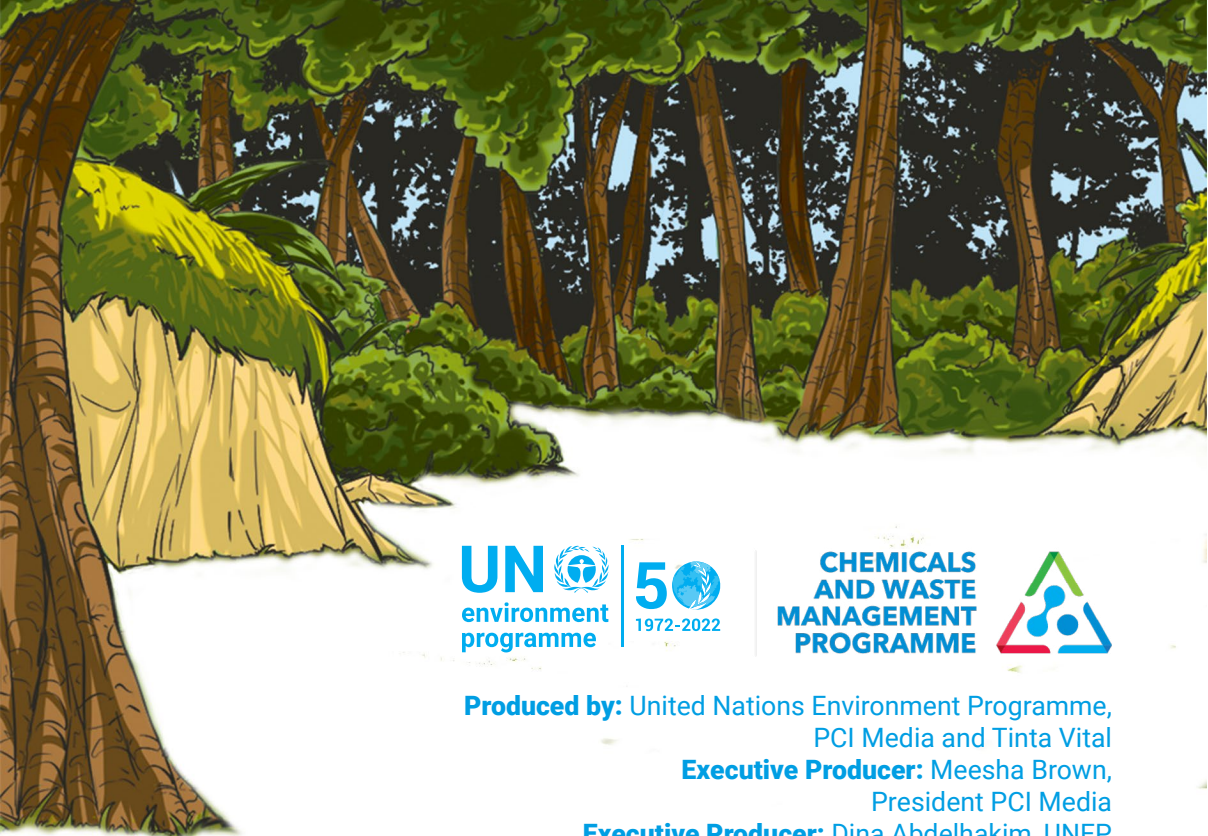


Keepers of the Land



the
curious case
of the
contaminated
river





CHEMICALS
AND WASTE
MANAGEMENT
PROGRAMME



Produced by: United Nations Environment Programme,
PCI Media and Tinta Vital

Executive Producer: Meesha Brown,
President PCI Media

Executive Producer: Dina Abdelhakim, UNEP

Executive Coordination: Marco Rodríguez
and Beatriz Padilla

Editorial Direction: Laura Talavera

Story Concept: PCI Media

Script: Diego Valenzuela

Art work: Saló

Technical support: Emilio Arias

Special thanks to: Brett S. Matulis,
Elizabeth Frank & Amanda Brown

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PARADISEVILLE.
June 2022.

This is Paradiseville, a place worth fighting for.

Almost everyone I know was born here and has lived their entire lives here.

We are a farming community. We grow everything we consume. We try to take care of our land as it has taken care of us.

But Paradiseville never needed taking care of as much as it did that summer.

This has to be one of my favorite spots around town.



Is it me or is it hotter than ever?

Summers have been getting hotter. Good thing we have the river.

Scary to think I might not be here next summer if I do go to college next year.



Yeah. You're gonna have to choose a college soon.

Even if I did, problem is I don't even know what I want to study there.

Then don't bother!

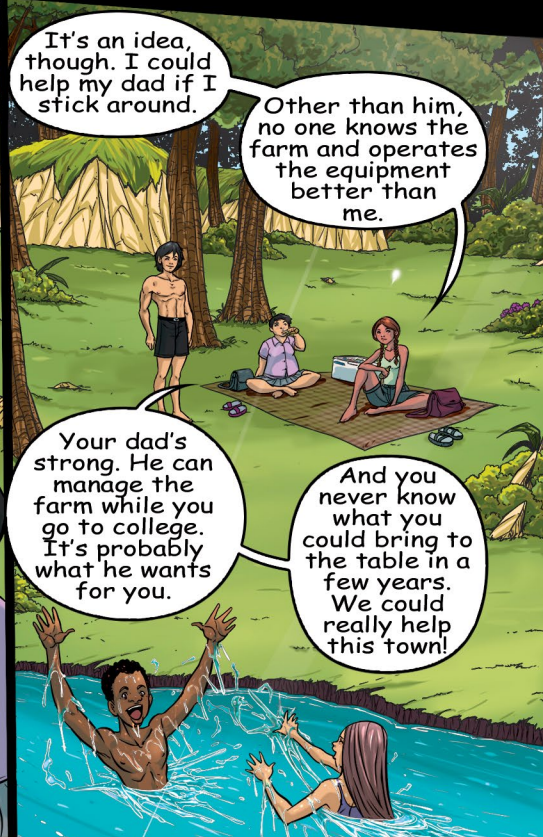


I stuck around to help with the farm and look at me: livin' large!

Working the tractor, helping harvest the crops is prime work for me.

Yeah, you're not cut out for college, Alex. Dad seems to agree.

I take that as a compliment!



It's an idea, though. I could help my dad if I stick around.

Other than him, no one knows the farm and operates the equipment better than me.

Your dad's strong. He can manage the farm while you go to college. It's probably what he wants for you.

And you never know what you could bring to the table in a few years. We could really help this town!



Hmm?
Who's that?



Dunno.
She's been here
the last couple of
days. A real killjoy...
Now if you'll
excuse me.

Alex told me
something about
her. She was here
two days ago too,
telling everyone
not to go in the
water.

What?
Why?



No clue.
Are you
coming?



Maybe
later.



The next day.



there is a high concentration of possible pollutants, including...



Excuse me. Hi.

Oh? Oh, hello! You were here yesterday with the other kids, right?

Yeah, sorry if we bothered you. It was our graduation ceremony. We came from...

Paradiseville High, yeah! We did the same when I graduated. Class of 2012. I used to love coming here.


Cool! So what happened? My friend said you were telling kids it's dangerous to go in the water. Sounds like a horror movie, should we be worried?

That's what I'm here to figure out. I work for a government agency testing the water for dangerous chemicals. Would you mind helping me?

No problem.

Have there been any weird illnesses lately? People you may know?

Hmmm, now that you mention it...




My dad's been feeling kinda woozy lately, which is rare for him.

He's worked at the farm since he was a kid.



And my friend Claudia had to bury her dog last month.


Something it drank apparently poisoned it, but they couldn't figure out how or why. It was young.



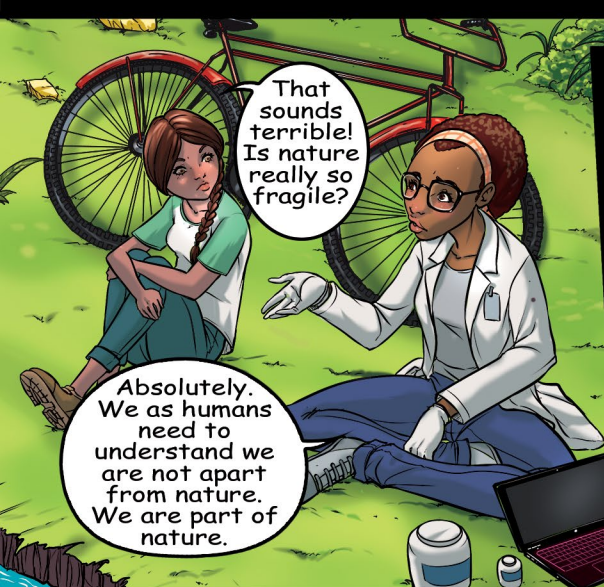
The things we do on land can impact the water, then the water can impact us on land. In this case, I suspect illegal and harmful pesticides have been introduced...



...into the farms' agricultural cycles...



Fish and bees are dying. People are getting sick. That's why I'm testing the water.



That sounds terrible! Is nature really so fragile?

Absolutely. We as humans need to understand we are not apart from nature. We are part of nature.



Is there anything I can do?

Well, take care of your dad.

If you know anything about a new pesticide being used in the farms, give me a call. If your dad's a farmer, he'll know for sure.



Cool, I will! I'm Nora, by the way.

Hanna. Nice to meet you. And thank you. You're the first one who's offered to help me.



Dad's been using the same brand of pesticide since forever, but I can't find it in here.



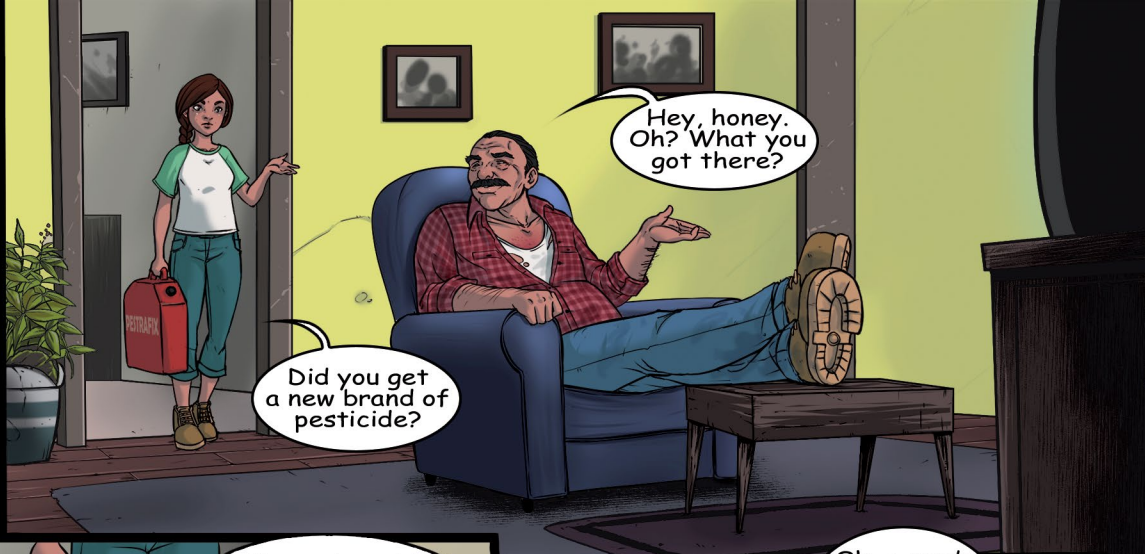
Huh? These are new. I bet this is what Hanna was talking about.

Hey, Hanna? Sorry to bother you but I did find some new pesticide in our farm.

It's called Pestrafix... Yes, I'll ask my dad about it...

Sure, I can bring you a sample tomorrow...

Bye.



Hey, honey. Oh? What you got there?

Did you get a new brand of pesticide?



Ah, yeah, got it about three months ago. It's much cheaper than the old stuff. And it works just as well. Maybe even better.

Where did you buy it?



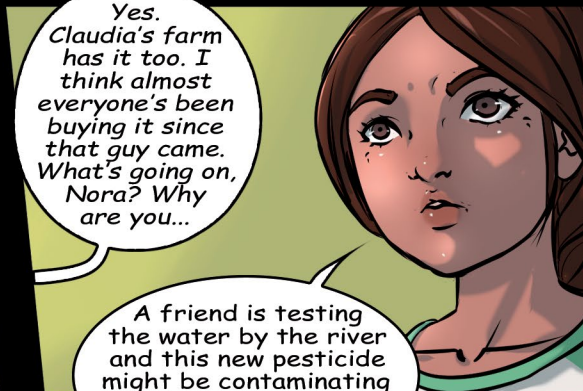
Oh, a man's been selling it downtown. What's all this about?

Dad, how long have you had that rash?



I don't know. Couple of months. No need to worry about it. I'm okay.

Is anyone else buying this stuff?

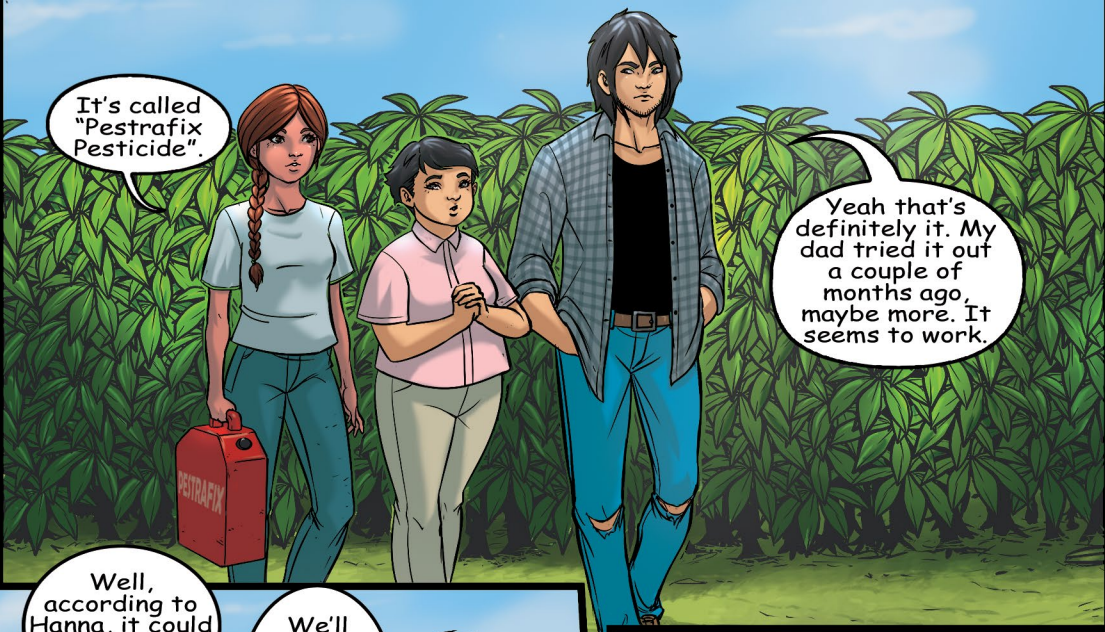


Yes. Claudia's farm has it too. I think almost everyone's been buying it since that guy came. What's going on, Nora? Why are you...

A friend is testing the water by the river and this new pesticide might be contaminating it. It's serious. Promise me you won't use it anymore.

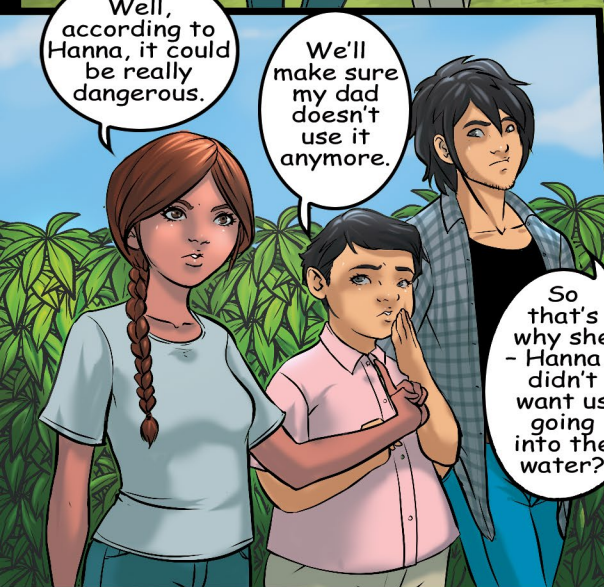


All right. I promise.



It's called "Pestrafix Pesticide".

Yeah that's definitely it. My dad tried it out a couple of months ago, maybe more. It seems to work.



Well, according to Hanna, it could be really dangerous.

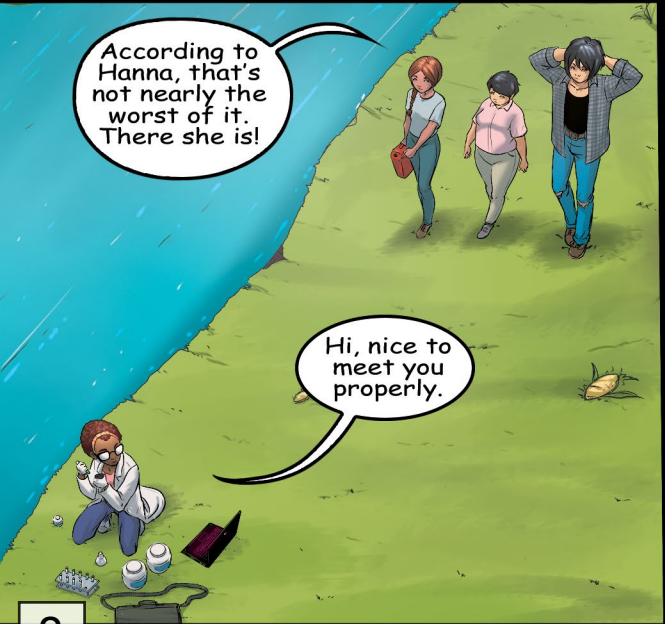
We'll make sure my dad doesn't use it anymore.

So that's why she - Hanna - didn't want us going into the water?



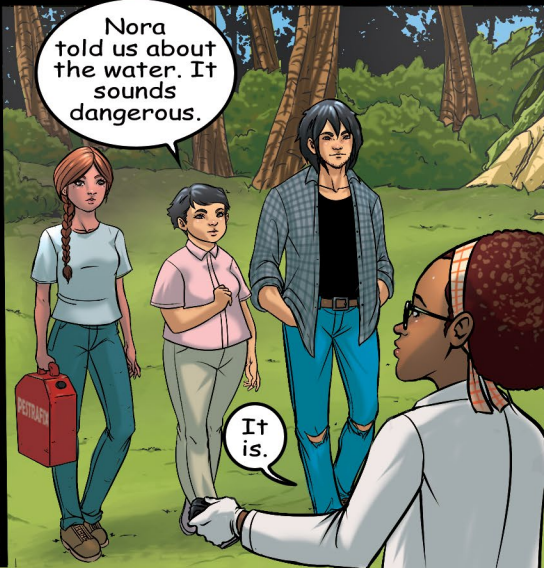
I guess that explains your rash.

And what happened to your dog.



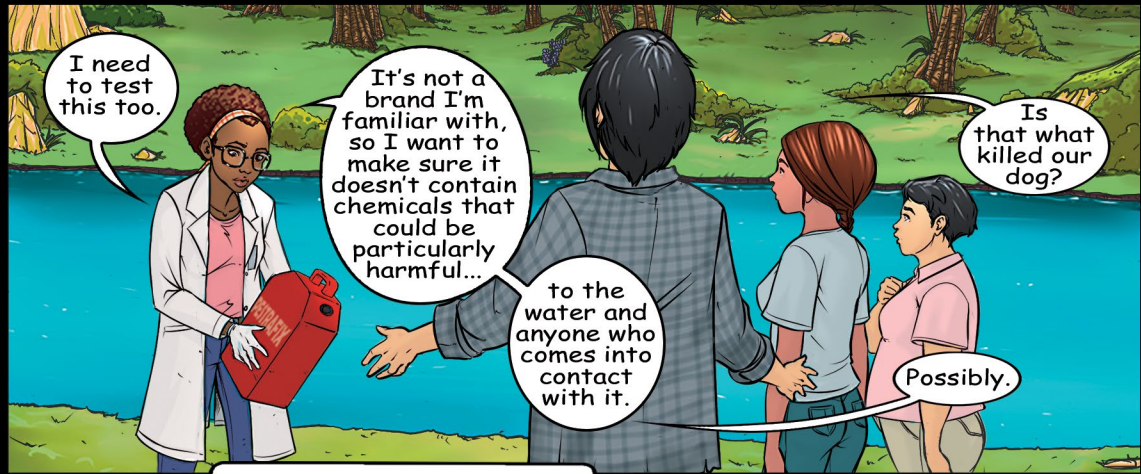
According to Hanna, that's not nearly the worst of it. There she is!

Hi, nice to meet you properly.



Nora told us about the water. It sounds dangerous.

It is.



I need to test this too.

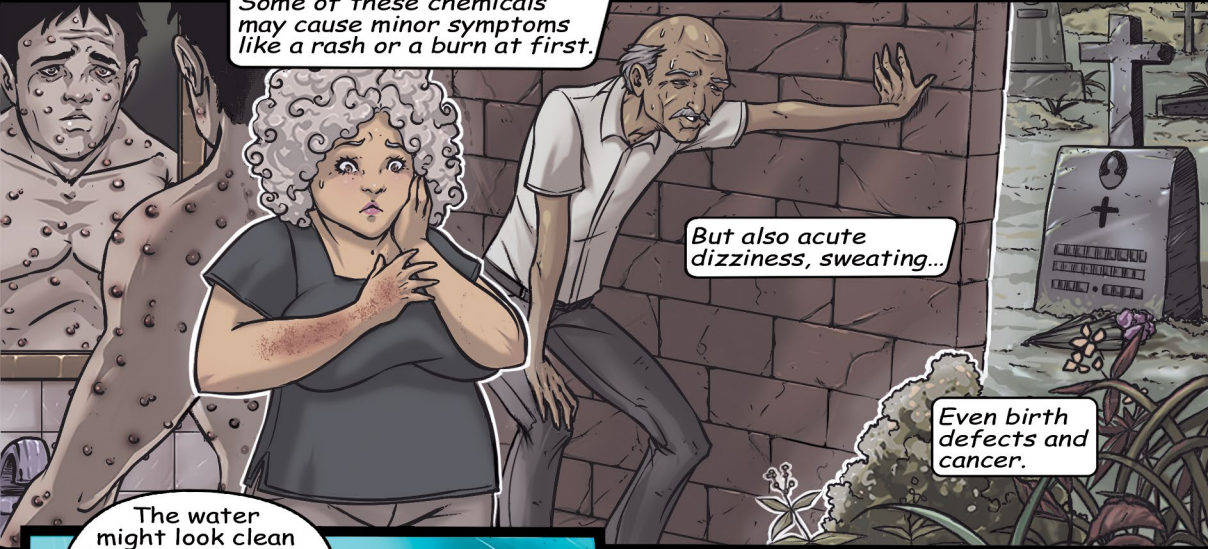
It's not a brand I'm familiar with, so I want to make sure it doesn't contain chemicals that could be particularly harmful...

to the water and anyone who comes into contact with it.

Is that what killed our dog?

Possibly.

Some of these chemicals may cause minor symptoms like a rash or a burn at first.



But also acute dizziness, sweating...

Even birth defects and cancer.

The water might look clean from here but I've found it contains lots of harmful and even illegal chemicals...

including compounds that could be used as illegal pesticides.

Why didn't you tell us!?

I tried!

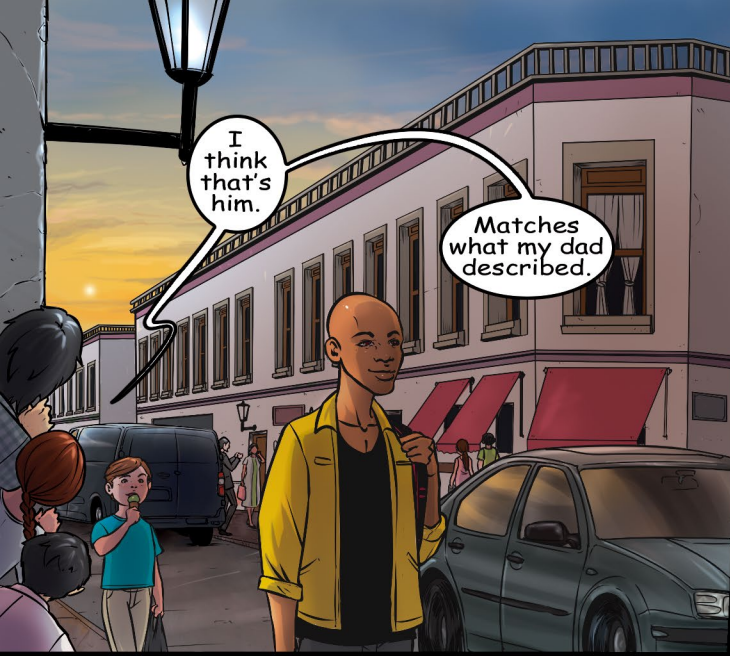
I found out most farms around here have been buying this pesticide from a man's van downtown.

That's very suspicious! I still need to run some tests but give me a few hours, but I have a feeling this is it. If we catch him, we could get the authorities involved and shut down his operation.

Let's get him!

Sounds fun. I'm in!

Sounds dangerous.



I think that's him.

Matches what my dad described.



Yeah that looks like a bad guy, all right.



Excuse me. We're...

Hello young man. You look like you could use some good, cheap, powerful pesticide.

That's what she tried to say.



Aren't you a little young to be buying pesticides?



What is that supposed to mean?!

It means I only do business with real farmers, not children.



Wow, what a jerk.

I think I have a plan.

Later that night.

Ah, my friend! Are you already out of Pestrafix? Good stuff, right?

Sure is!

Well, since you're my good friend...

I can get you your next batch of pesticides on a discount. You won't find this stuff in stores. Guaranteed!

Can't find it in stores, eh?

No, sir! Only in my van or my warehouse.

Gotcha!

You won't find this stuff in stores.

What's going on?

It's over for you!



That's what I call teamwork!

We did it!

So cool!

Well done! Handling dangerous chemicals is serious business.

This situation will help enforce laws and raise awareness in the community.

You have really changed things here today.

Great plan, Nora! You could have a future doing this!

This world needs more people who care, like you.

PARADISEVILLE.
July 2030.

This is Paradiseville, a
place worth fighting
for...

I was your
age! That's how
I realized I
wanted to learn
Biochemistry to
help protect it.

And I've been
working to take
care of this
beautiful place
ever since that
day.

Cool! So the
river is okay to
swim now?



The water, and
this town...

have never
been cleaner.



Just like Nora in Paradiseville, people around the world are hard at work to ensure a brighter, cleaner future for their communities.

The UNEP Special Programme, also known as the Chemicals and Waste Management Programme, is helping developing countries and countries with economies in transition to achieve this future. The Special Programme helps governments develop green, sustainable approaches to chemicals and waste management.

Join Nora and her friends. Use #HealthyPlanet and share your ideas to create a greener future with your community!

Apply for Funding

Support from the Special Programme is available for developing countries and countries with economies in transition, with priority given to those with least capacity. More information on how to submit an application to the Special Programme is available on our website

www.unep.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/special-programme

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Learn more about how UNEP is working across the globe to minimize the harmful effects of chemicals and waste on human health and the environment.

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