Who is Ali?

Ali is a teenager who lives in the ancient Middle East! Although he is blind, he doesn’t let his disability stop him from studying hard at school or helping his father on their farm. Every year, Ali leads their sheep through the mountains and desert to the town market. But, one year, the journey takes an unexpected twist! Find out how Ali uses his abilities to help his community!

Who is the Genie?

The Genie is over 700 years old. She uses her magic powers to help Ali and his friends - because everyone needs a little help from time to time. Luckily, nowadays, we don’t need Genies or magic! Computers, smartphones and other technology can all be used to make life easier for people like Ali and his friends.

What are the SDGs?

The SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) are a list of 17 things that the United Nations wants to do by the year 2030, like protect the environment and make sure that everyone has access to food, health and education. In this comic book, Ali and the Genie work on two things:

- They make sure everyone is treated equally.
- They help make towns safer and easier for people to get around, including people with disabilities.
A LONG TIME AGO IN THE MIDDLE EAST...

My name is Ali, I’m 14 years old and I’d like to tell you a story about making my town a better place to live in.

I come from a family of farmers.

My father raises sheep. They give us milk and wool.

Every summer, when I don’t have school, I lead the sheep to the nearest town...

Welcome to: Town
Population: Small

This is so embarrassing.

Where my auntie makes their wool into coats and blankets.

Don’t look at me, I’m hideous.
What you may not have noticed is that I’m blind.

My father was too old to walk all the way to town...

And my brother too young... so I came up with a system to do it myself.

I put bells on the sheep so I can hear where they are.

This way, silly!

Forgive me, I know not what I do.

And markers along the road to town so I don’t get lost.

It’s a long way to town but I love our sheep and, year after year, we get there without any trouble.
One day...

That's the fifth marker. We must be halfway there now.

What's going on?

Baa!

Where are you all going? Come back!

Rumble rumble

Oof!

Ouch

Ahh!

My father told me about these things called 'earthquakes'. Just my luck that it should happen today!

He told me you should:

Drop

Cover your head

And hold on.

But there's nothing to hold on to!

Baa!
OK, everyone, it’s over now.

Seven... eight... stay still!... nine... ten. Good, everyone’s alright.

Oof!

Ouch!

I don’t suppose any of you know the way to the town?

The hills are very warm during the day but at night it becomes terribly cold.

At least you’re warm in all that wool.

Not again! Father did say that the ground continued to shake for days after!
Watch out! Take three steps to your left, boy!

What on earth is wrong with you, just standing there like that?

Nothing's wrong with me! I just can't see, that's all.

Thanks for your help, though.

I'm all pleased to...

Hey! There's no need for games. Where are you?

I am here...

But I am not like you. I am a genie, a creature of smoke.

Sure you are. Well, genie, are you going to grant me my three wishes? I need to get these sheep to town or the people won't have any wool.

Before the earth cracked in this way, I had been asleep for 700 years. I don't know where your town is.

I know where it is. I just need help getting there. You must know it! There are giant halls carved out of rock...

And a secret path so narrow that almost no sunlight can enter!

Ah!

You mean the valley between the crooked mountains!

This way!

Hmm... And beautiful statues...
Everyone stay calm! Leave your homes and gather in the main square! Gather in the main square.

We are so very glad to see you! A lot of these people have lost their belongings. We need wool for blankets.

Look! It’s the shepherd boy!

But how on earth did you get here?

I had some help.

This is my genie.

Your genie?

King!

I’m sure she’ll hear the announcement and be along shortly.

She’s deaf! That boy can ring his bell as much as he likes, she won’t hear it!

Are you thinking what I’m thinking?

I still can’t find my daughter Aisha.
GO TO THE TOWN SQUARE

I DON’T KNOW HOW TO THANK YOU!

DON’T MENTION IT.

YOU KNOW, HAVING A GENIE IS GREAT, BUT THERE ARE PLENTY OF THINGS WE COULD CHANGE TO MAKE THE TOWN BETTER. SINCE WE HAVE TO REBUILD IT ANYWAY, WHY NOT BUILD IT BACK BETTER FOR EVERYONE?
First off, we made sure that information was given to all the townspeople telling them what to do in case of future emergencies.

Of course there was a lot of damage and we made sure everyone knew how to avoid dangerous areas.

Those steps were impossible for some people to climb so we put in ramps to help everybody get around.
I told the King all about the systems I use to do my job and he was so impressed that he wanted to know what he could do to make his town more accessible for people like me and Aisha.

We rebuilt the library and made sure that there were books in it that everyone could read.

Those are just a few easy solutions that can make cities and towns more accessible for everyone! Nowadays, you don't even need a genie, you can use technology. Ask people with disabilities what they need and let's find solutions together!
GOAL 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES
Reduce Inequality within and among countries

GOAL 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

To find out more, go to:

comicsunitingnations.org

This comic book is also available in Audio Format at http://www.comicsunitingnations.org