



Kalpana's Cycle

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Level 2



"Why did they give *this* away?" Kalpana asked in wonder. She was looking at what Amma had brought home from work. A cycle as good as new! Amma shrugged. "The child got another one," she said.



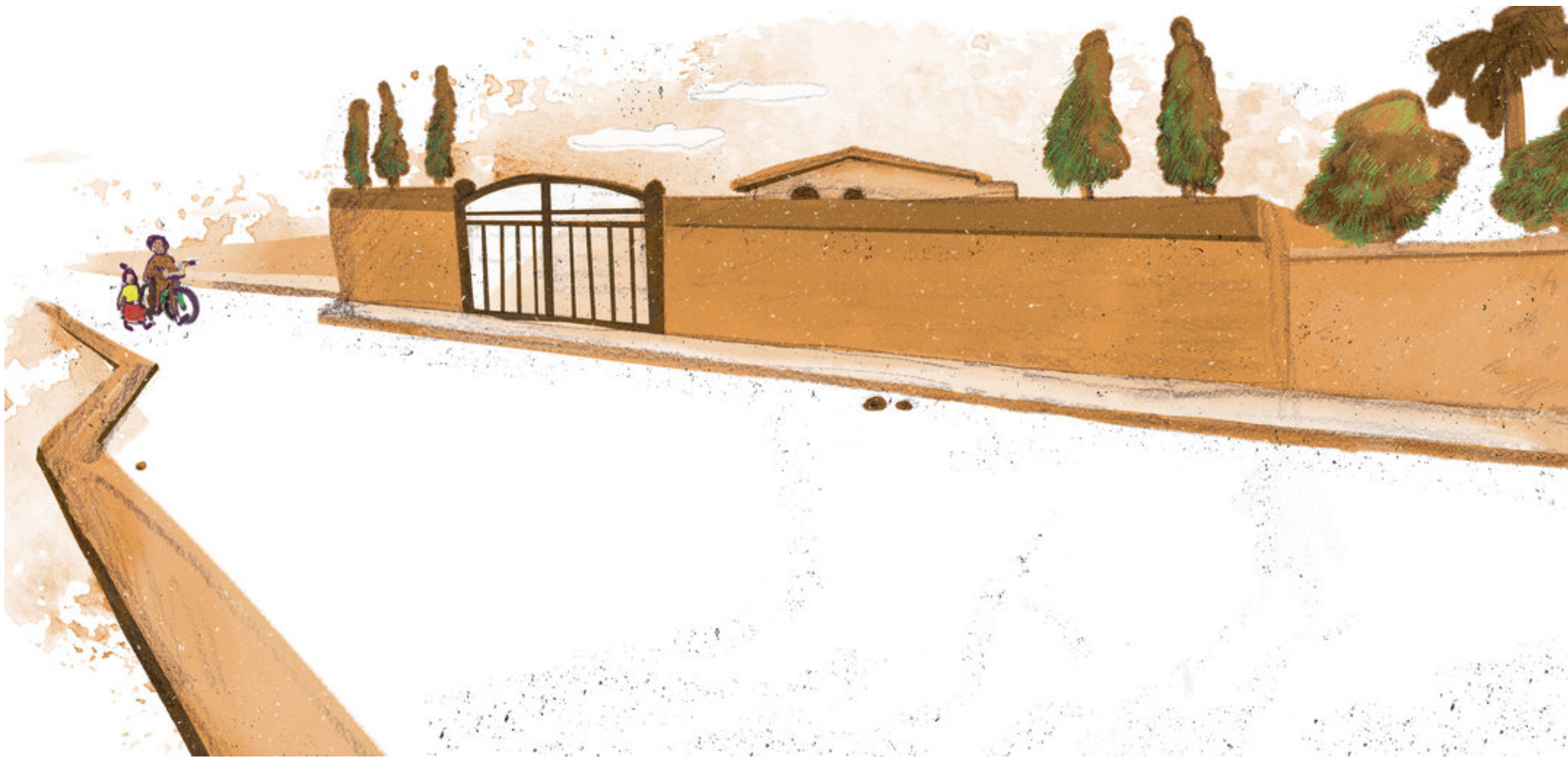
Kalpana climbed on the cycle.

DUMMMMMMMM!

She fell. Prabhu laughed.

"You can't balance on two wheels! You've to learn how to ride it," he said.

"Teach me," Kalpana begged him.



So every evening, after school, they went to the bungalow road.

There wasn't much traffic there. Only big houses with big dogs.



All the children from their area went to play there.

On the first day, Kalpana couldn't wait to start.

But...



DUMMMMMM!

Kalpana fell to the ground.

Her knees were on fire. She didn't want to cry.

But she did. Great, big sobs escaped from her mouth.

Her ears felt hot. She could hear the boys laughing.

Kalpana got up and ran home. She left the cycle where it was.

Prabhu would ride it back. He knew how to.
After he was done playing cricket with his friends.
After the sun had set.
After Appa was home from the mechanic shop.





"How did you tear your skirt?" asked Amma, when she saw Kalpana.

"I fell from the cycle," Kalpana said. Amma sighed.



Today was the seventh day of Kalpana's lessons.

And she still hadn't been able to do it. What was it that Prabhu had said?

She was too short for the cycle!

What did Prabhu know?

At night, Kalpana asked Amma for a glass of milk.
Her teacher had said that drinking milk would make children tall.
And Kalpana was the second tallest girl in II B already.





She wanted to become like Venus Williams.

Kalpana didn't know anything about tennis. But Prabhu had shown her a poster of Venus once.

"How strong she is!" Kalpana had said.

If Kalpana became so strong, nobody would bother her. Kalpana prayed before going to sleep. Something she did not do otherwise.



The next evening, she was sure she would ride the cycle. She was even wearing her lucky red hairclip.

"Push and just let me go," she told Prabhu. He did just that.

Kalpana closed her eyes and tried to find the pedals. The wind rushed in her ears. The cycle wobbled on the road and then...

DUMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM!

Kalpana fell. AGAIN.



This time, the pain was so bad, she couldn't breathe.
Nobody was laughing. Not even Manikandan, who was always so mean.

The doctor was very stern. Like her school principal. He told Kalpana that she'd bruised her leg badly.

"You've to take care of it till it heals," he said. He gave Amma a long list of medicines.

"No more cycling till the bruise goes off," Amma said. Kalpana nodded.

"You can still sit on the cycle though," said Prabhu.

"How?" asked Kalpana.



Appa showed her the cycle. It had a brand new pillion seat.
"We got it fixed when you were at the doctor's!" grinned Prabhu.

"But I will ride it myself soon," she said.
"Yes," said Prabhu. "You will."





Kalpana fell off the cycle but so what?

Everyone tells you to keep trying even if you don't succeed. Why?

Trying sometimes gives you results that you're not looking for. It teaches you something about yourself that you never knew. If Kalpana had learnt to ride the cycle on the very first day, she might have never known how determined a person she is! Her family might have never realised this about her too.

Maybe someday in the future, when Kalpana becomes tall and strong after drinking many cups of milk, she will think back to the day she fell from her cycle. Maybe it will happen when Kalpana has a difficult exam to write or is hiking up a mountain. Maybe it will happen when she is baking a cake or taking pictures of a tiger. And maybe Kalpana will make up her mind not to give up because she still remembers what she learned that day on her cycle.

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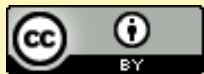


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Kalpana's Cycle

(English)

Kalpana is learning to cycle, but it isn't easy at all! She falls over and over again, even hurting herself. Does she finally learn to cycle? Does she give up? A heartwarming story about the importance of trying.

This is a Level 2 book for children who recognize familiar words and can read new words with help.



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