



# On the Metro

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Level 3

"Get up, Zeba! We are going to see the Qutab Minar!"  
Abbu nudges me awake.

"Is Ammi coming too?" I ask.  
"Maybe she will join us later."  
"How are we going, Abbu?"  
"We'll take the Metro," he says.







A man in a suit and dark glasses is in a hurry to get to the platform.  
“Excuse me!” he says. “Excuse me!” And he bounds up the moving stairs.

We roll up, up, up on these stairs and I feel as though they might gobble me up. In our village, we don’t have stairs like these.



When the train arrives at the platform,  
I try to catch a glimpse of the driver.  
The shiny doors slide open. Whoosh! Whoosh!  
How do the doors know when to open and when to shut?  
Abbu and I enter the compartment. It is cold. Brrrr brrr.  
“The doors are closing,” says a voice.





The train is like a long, hollow, silver snake.  
Silver seats and silver pillars and silver rails to hold on to.  
A nani sitting across from us is fast asleep.  
Her head rests on the shoulder of a man reading a newspaper.  
He smiles and doesn't wake her up.  
The train begins to move.

"Abbu, look at that big glass building. It's so tall. The people going up and down and across inside it look like ants. Is the Qutab Minar taller than this?" I ask.

"I hope so!" Abbu laughs.

In the village, Param has the tallest house. It has five floors. But this looks much, much taller.

Beep. Beep. The doors are opening.







Is that a jungle, in the middle of the city?

It's just like the one near our village!

"Didn't you come here with your friends and teachers from school?" Abbu asks.

Yes, now I remember. My friends, teachers and I came here.

We brought slogans, banners and posters with us. We also sang songs.

"Save Earth, save trees, save me!" my poster read. A squirrel ate peanuts out of my palm.

Beep. Beep. The doors are opening.





Whoosh! Whoosh!

A group of girls enter. They giggle and chat. I think they are friends.

One has blue hair! And many earrings. She even has a ring on her pierced lower lip. One of them is carrying a guitar.

Beep. Beep. The doors are opening.





Whoosh! Whoosh!

Some more people get in.

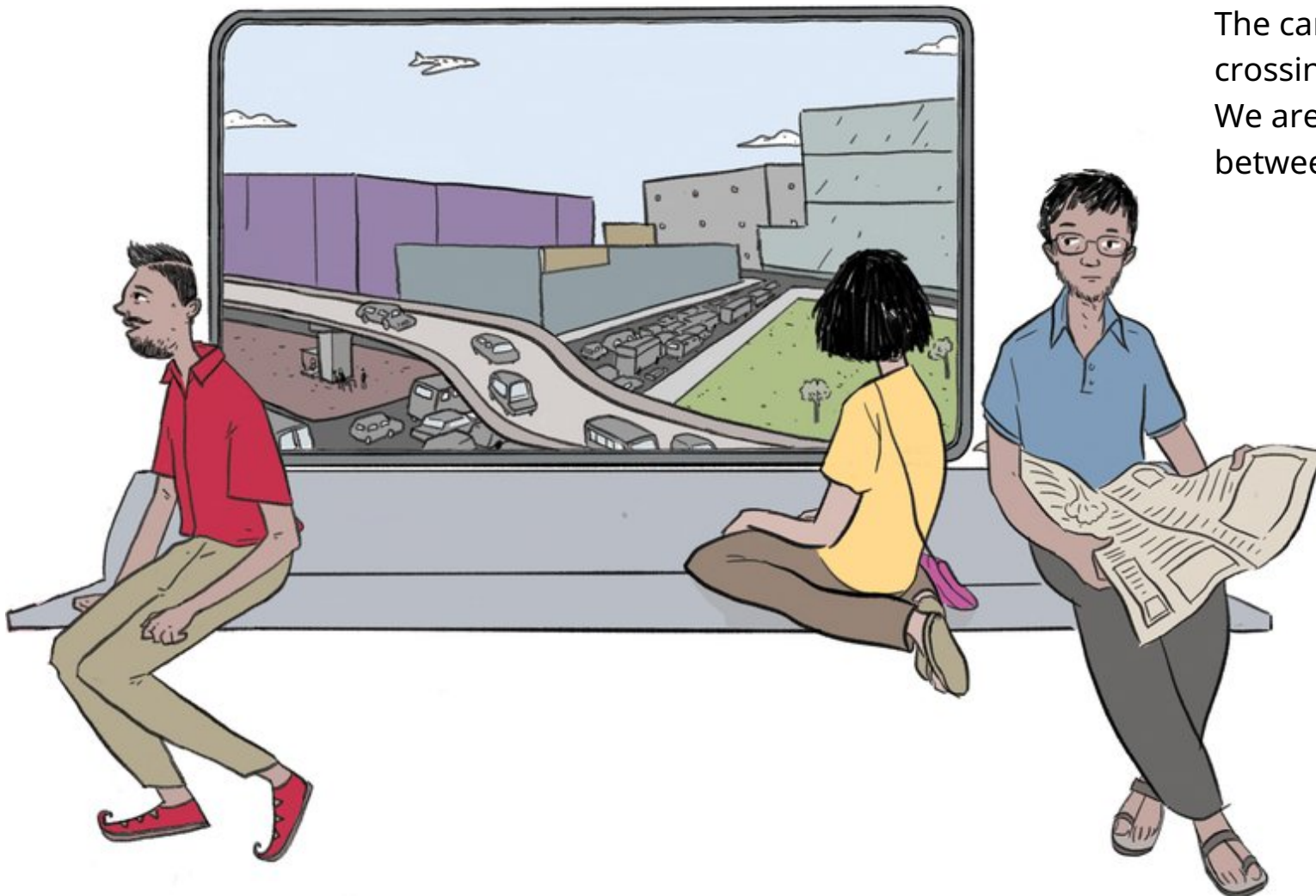
"Look at that!" A little boy points to a big, yellow palace zooming past. It looks grand. I wonder who lived there. Next time, I will take Abbu and Ammi to explore it.

Beep. Beep. The doors are opening.

Whoosh! Whoosh!

"Look, Abbu, the cars are not moving! There is a traffic jam."

"That's why we take the Metro, Zeba," Abbu replies. An aeroplane flies overhead.



The cars crawl below, on the criss-crossing flyovers.

We are zooming past, somewhere between the sky and the earth.





Whoosh! Whoosh!  
Some people get off but more get in.  
Everyone moves a little, shifts a little.  
Now there is just enough space for everyone.  
I hear so many voices, speaking in so many languages.  
A lady with a baby enters and there is nowhere for her to sit.  
Abbu offers her his seat.



Day abruptly turns to night. We are underground.  
I can see reflections in the glass.  
This looks like a secret tunnel with lots of pipes and  
wires along the walls.



A man who has been on the phone for a long time yells,  
“Hello? Helloooo? Hellooooo?”  
Has his phone stopped working?  
Beep. Beep. The doors are opening.





Whoosh! Whoosh! The lights blink.  
"I am going to the driver's cabin," I say. I get off  
and run.  
"Slow down!" Abbu exclaims, hurrying.



"Salaam aleikum, Ammi!"  
Ammi is in her spotless white uniform. And her white cap.  
"Walekum assalam, Zeba."

There are dozens of knobs and buttons. I wonder how Ammi remembers which ones to press.

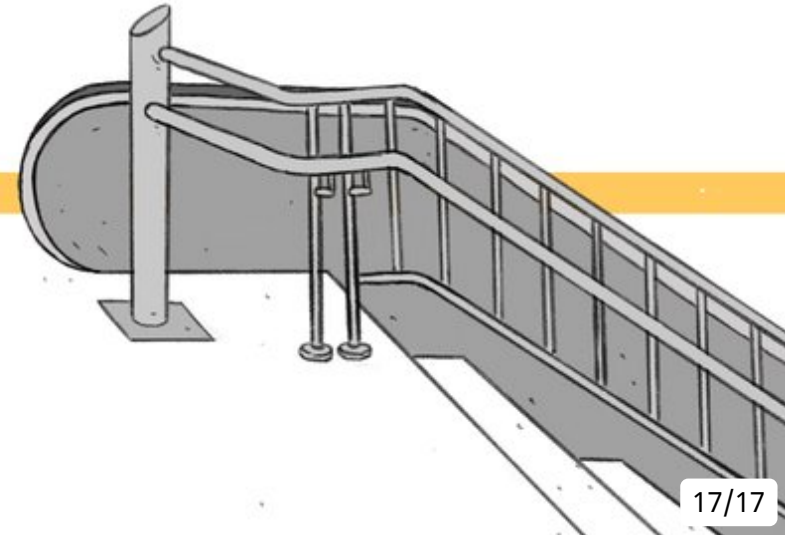
"Are you coming with us?" I ask her. She nods.  
She presses a button. The doors slide open and she gets out.

"Ammi, you drove so well. It was fast and smooth and there were no bumps, and you waited for everyone to get on before you went ahead."  
Ammi laughs and hugs me.

“When I grow up, I want to be just like you,” I tell her.

I hope the uniforms are silver and shiny by then. Just like the Metro!”

Then we walk to the Qutab Minar. Ammi, Abbu and I.





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# On the Metro

(English)

Zeba and her Abbu are off to see the Qutab Minar. They are taking the Metro. Hop on, and ride with them.

This is a Level 3 book for children who are ready to read on their own.



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