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March 2017/2000 copies

Paper: 100 gsm Maplitho & 220 gsm Paperboard (Cover)

Developed with financial support from Parag Initiative of Tata Trusts.

ISBN: 978-93-85236-19-8

Price: ₹ 70.00

Published by: Eklavya

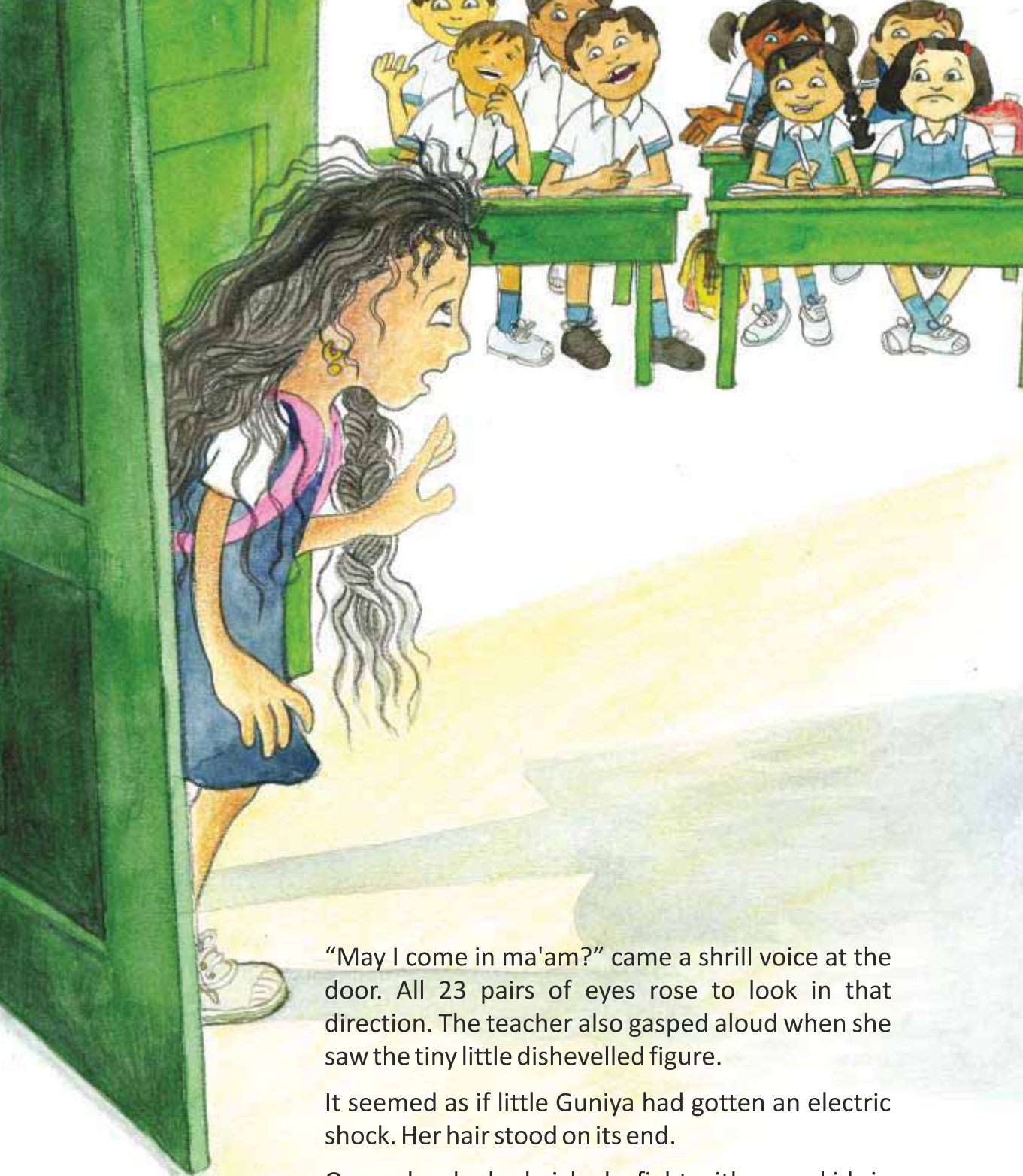
E-10, Shankar Nagar BDA Colony,  
Shivaji Nagar, Bhopal - 462 016 (MP)  
Phone: +91 755 255 0976, 267 1017  
[www.eklavya.in/books@eklavya.in](http://www.eklavya.in/books@eklavya.in)

Printed at: RK Secuprint Pvt Ltd, Bhopal, Phone: +91 755 268 7589

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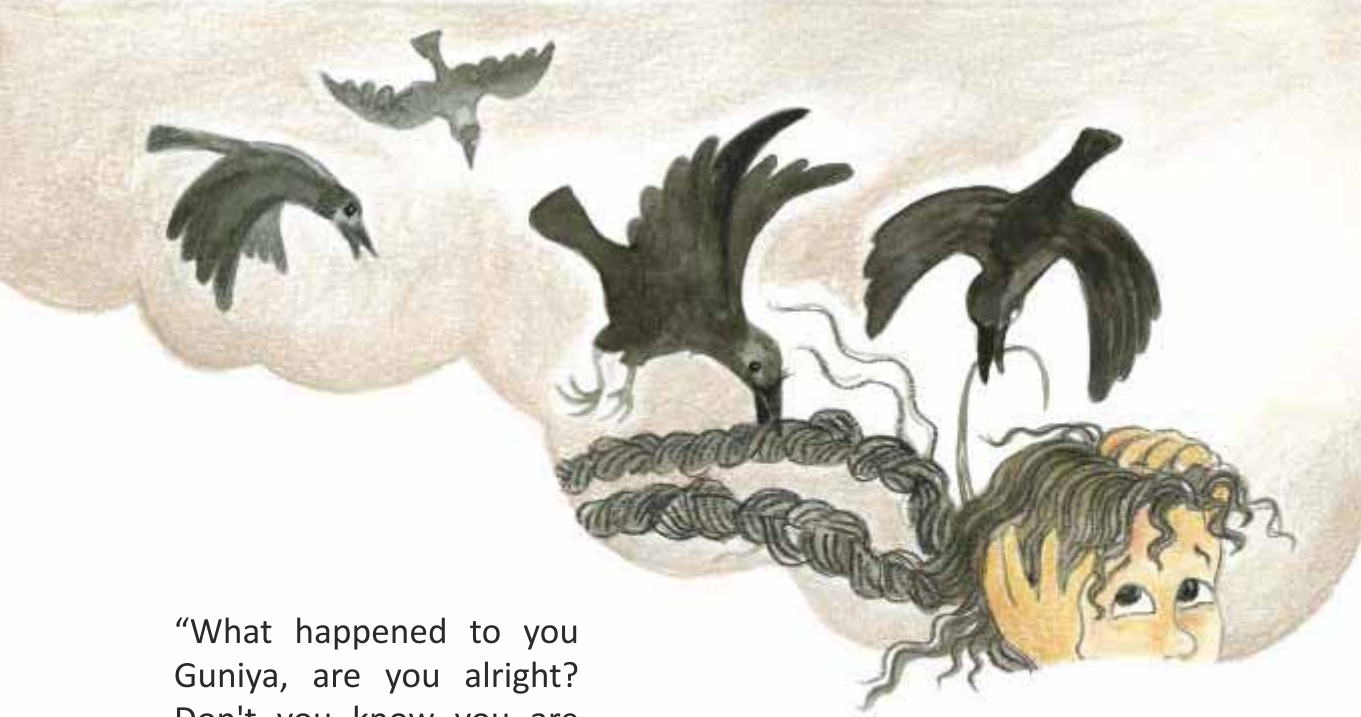




“May I come in ma'am?” came a shrill voice at the door. All 23 pairs of eyes rose to look in that direction. The teacher also gasped aloud when she saw the tiny little dishevelled figure.

It seemed as if little Guniya had gotten an electric shock. Her hair stood on its end.

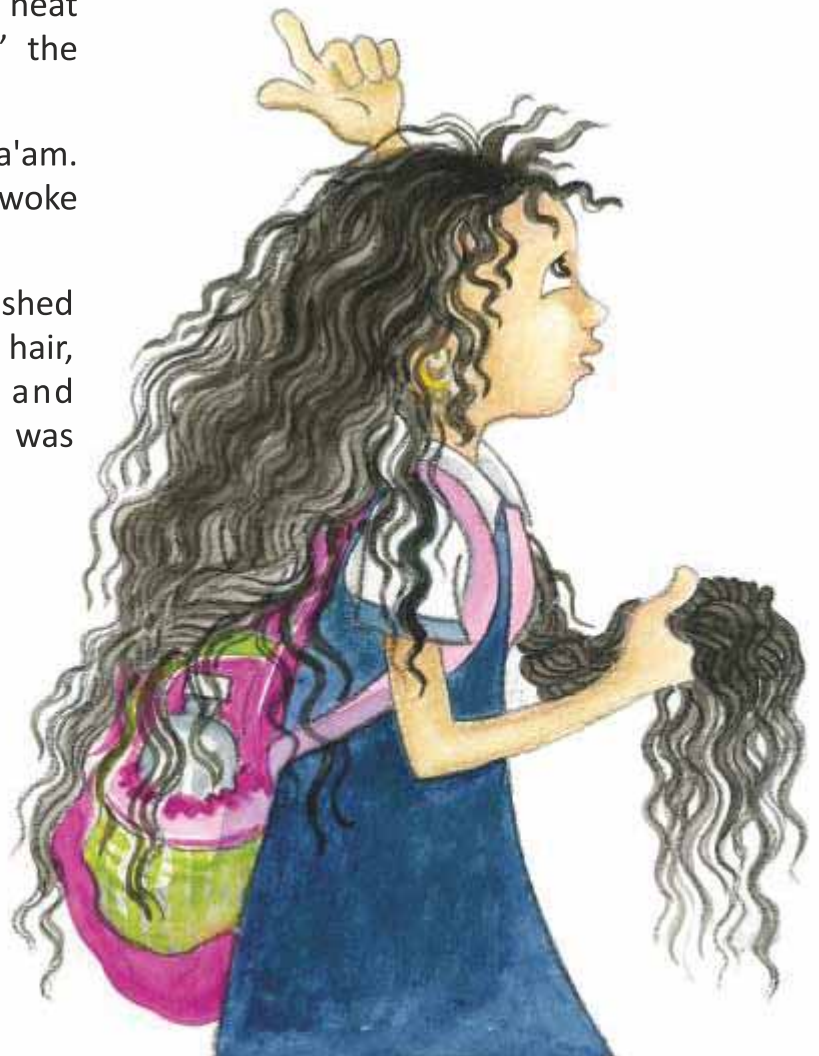
Or maybe she had picked a fight with some kids in the gully who had yanked her hair out of her plaits.



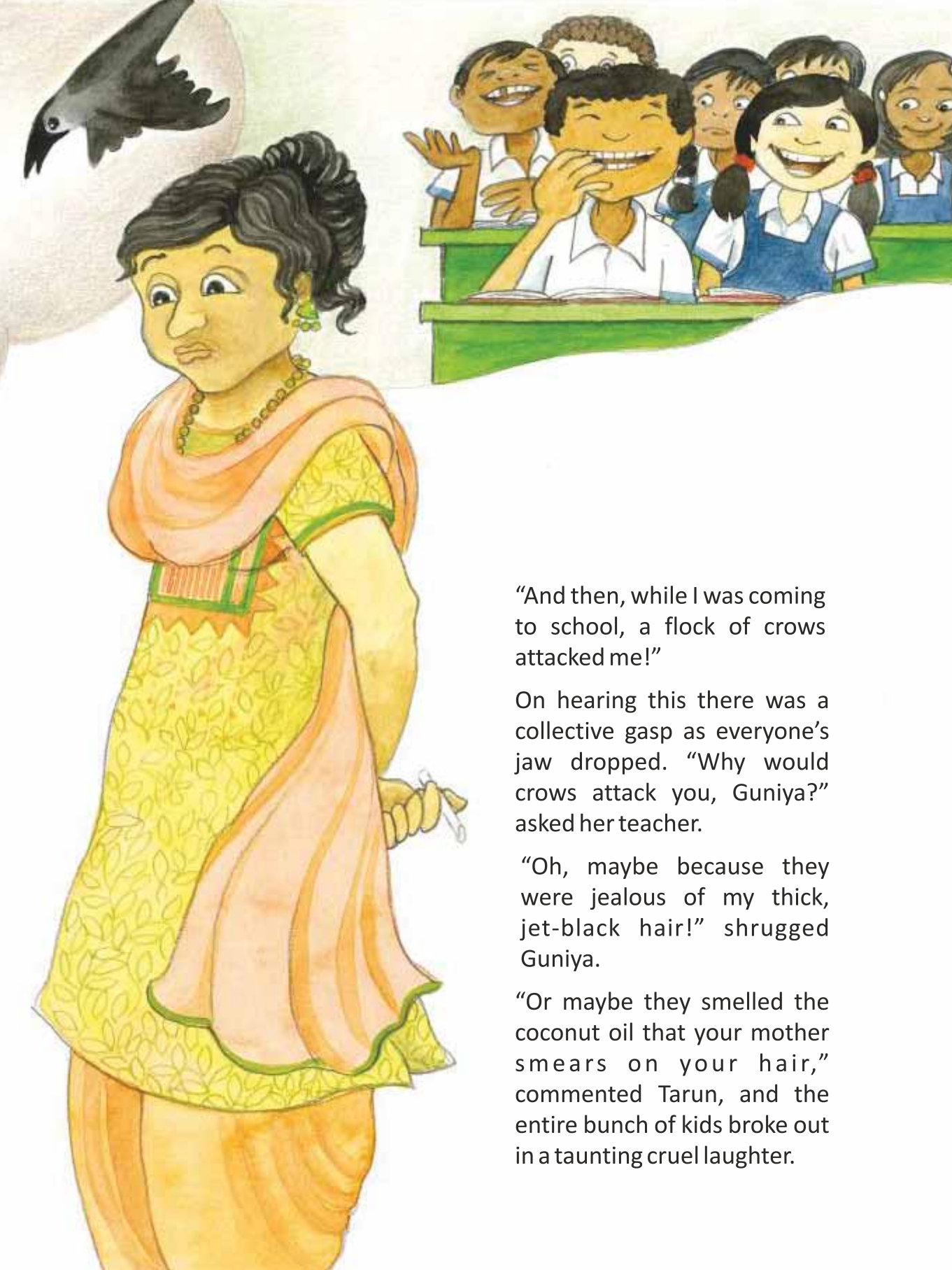
“What happened to you Guniya, are you alright? Don't you know you are supposed to come all neat and tidy to school?” the teacher asked.

“Oh I did just that ma'am. In fact, my mother woke me up before sunrise.

“She oiled my hair, washed my hair, dried my hair, brushed my hair and plaited my hair, till I was almost late for school.





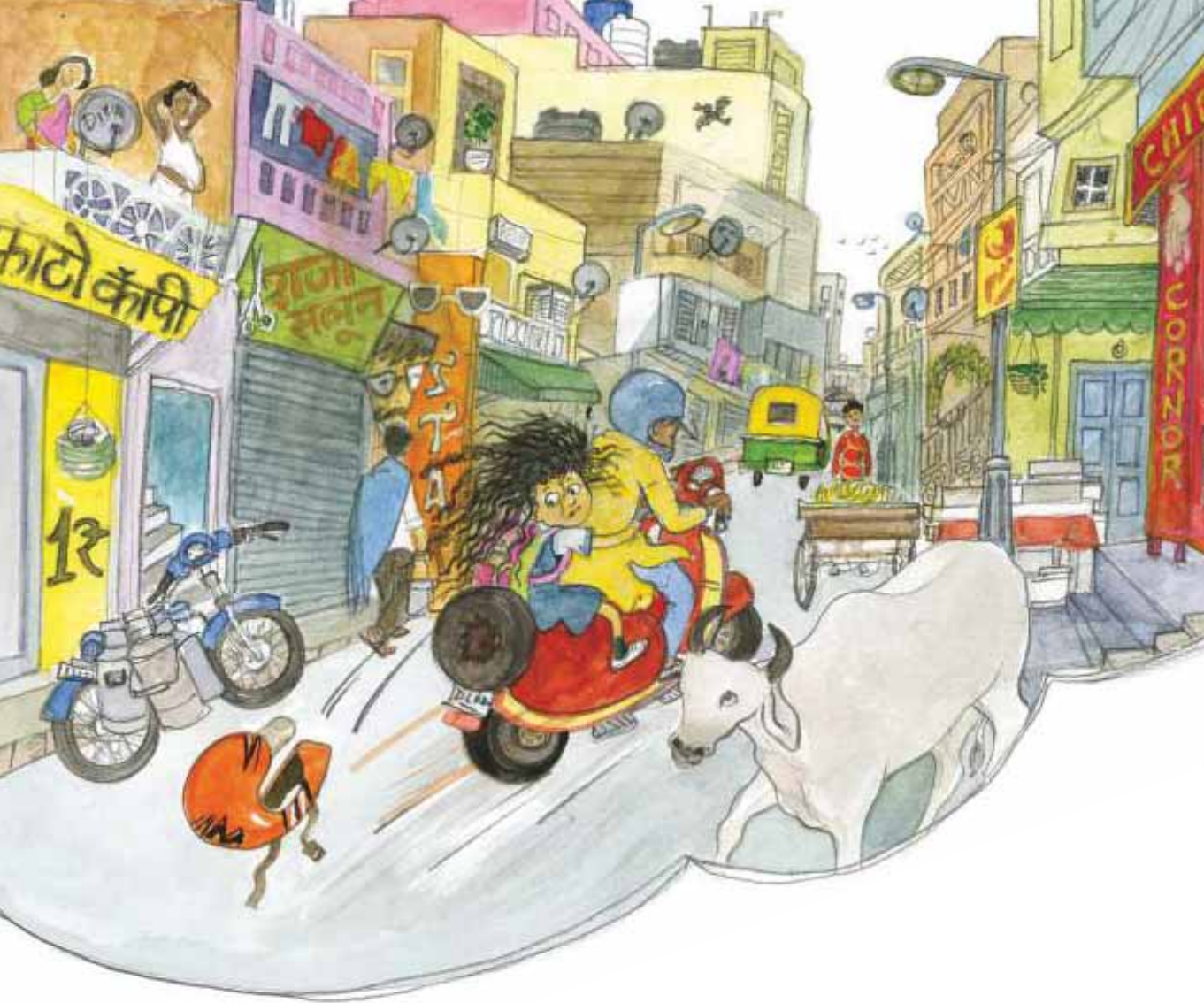


“And then, while I was coming to school, a flock of crows attacked me!”

On hearing this there was a collective gasp as everyone’s jaw dropped. “Why would crows attack you, Guniya?” asked her teacher.

“Oh, maybe because they were jealous of my thick, jet-black hair!” shrugged Guniya.

“Or maybe they smelled the coconut oil that your mother smears on your hair,” commented Tarun, and the entire bunch of kids broke out in a taunting cruel laughter.



The next day Guniya reached school late, again looking messy. Strands of her hair were flying around. There was more hair out of her two plaits than in them!

“What happened to your hair today, Guniya? Now don't tell me pigeons attacked you!” said her teacher.

“No no, not at all ma'am! Today I was very careful and wore my father's helmet to protect my hair from the birds. But who knew that there was a storm waiting to pounce on me as soon as I stepped out. The wind almost blew me away!

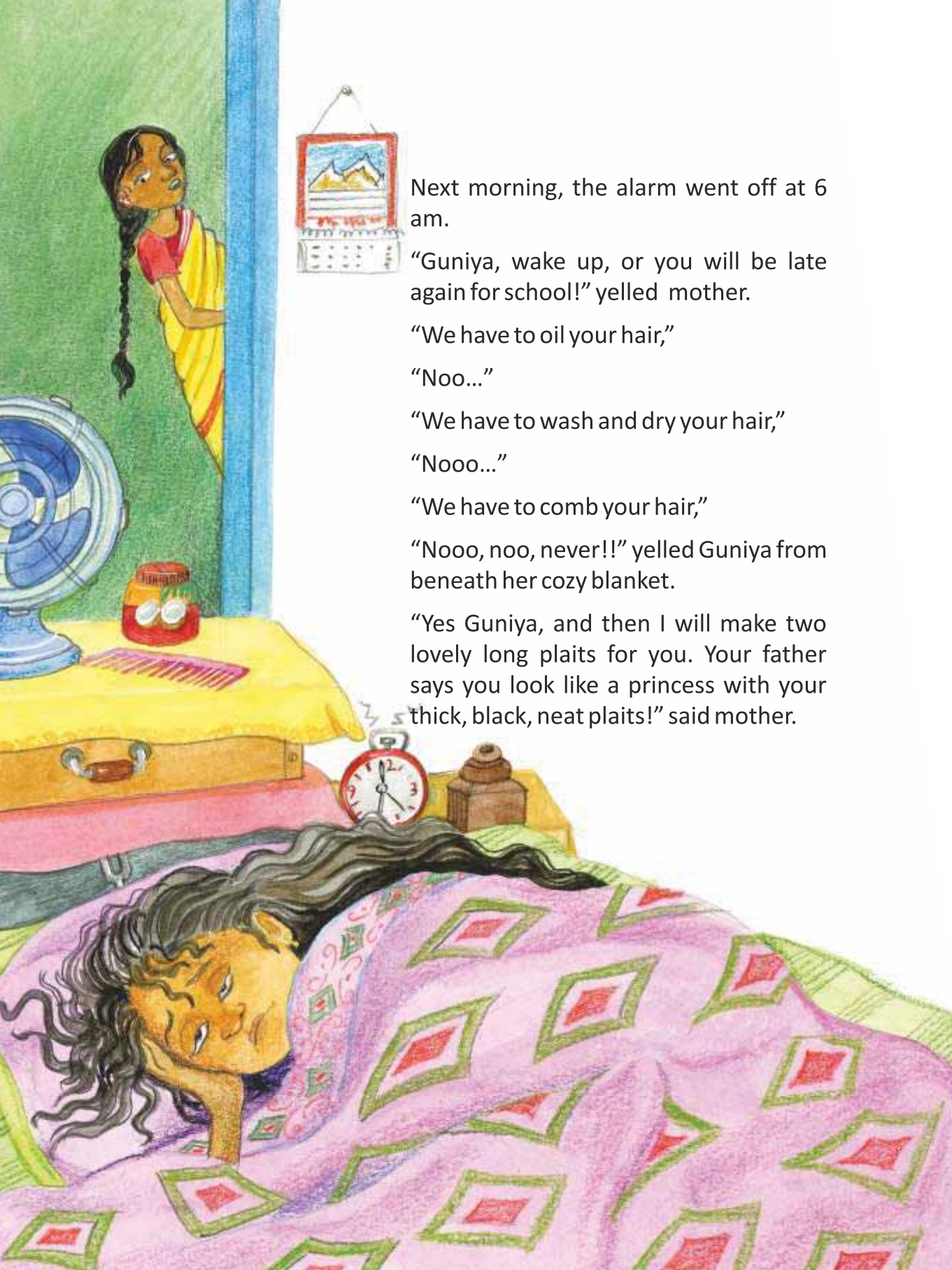




"My helmet flew off! I just held on to my father. The wind almost took my hair away with it. I am lucky to reach school safely."

"But you live just 20 minutes away from the school and it has been a bright, sunny, warm morning Guniya..." said her teacher with a raised brow.





Next morning, the alarm went off at 6 am.

“Guniya, wake up, or you will be late again for school!” yelled mother.

“We have to oil your hair,”

“Noo...”

“We have to wash and dry your hair,”

“Nooo...”

“We have to comb your hair,”

“Nooo, noo, never!!” yelled Guniya from beneath her cozy blanket.

“Yes Guniya, and then I will make two lovely long plaits for you. Your father says you look like a princess with your thick, black, neat plaits!” said mother.





“Who wants to be a princess who never gets to sleep enough, is always late for school, can't scratch her itchy hair, whose plaits are pulled by other children and whose hair oil makes her friends run away from her? I don't want to look like a princess. I hate my hair!” grumbled Guniya.

“Today we have a scarecrow costume day mummy, so I need not do my hair,” Guniya tried to find a way out. But mummy would not listen to any excuse.





And so, like every day, Guniya scratched her head on her way to school. She did not like her hair. It made her feel hot, itchy and sweaty. It did not let her sleep for as long as she wanted to. More than that, she detested the coconut oil her mother used on her hair every day. So she loosened her plaits and scratched all the way to school till she looked like a scarecrow. And the other children would think that she had been struck by lightning!



But today, she was ready again with another story to tell her teacher. So, what story do you think Guniya cooked up today?





Guniya was afraid that she might run out of stories some day and so she had to come up with a permanent plan to deal with her hair problems.

How about plastering it up with mehendi? She had seen her mother apply mehendi, and then all her hair stuck together and it seemed like she had become bald.

Or maybe she could try her father's cap. Anything to stop her hair from being tied up so tightly, and save her time for more important things like sleeping and playing.



Just then Boka, the tailor's son, came whizzing in yelling, "Chutakiya, Chutakiya," at the top of his lungs and snapping a pair of dangerous-looking scissors.

"Don't call me Chutakiya," snarled Guniya.

"Ohh that's what you are!" said Boka teasingly! "If you don't like being called by this name, why don't you cut off your plaits? Till you have them, that's what I will call you!!"



Guniya's eyes lit up. Yes! She had found the solution to her problem.

She asked Boka, "Why don't you cut them for me? Use your scissors for some good."

Boka could not believe what he had just heard but he did not want to lose such an opportunity either. "But uncle will get very angry if he gets to know that I cut your hair," said Boka.

Guniya said, "Don't worry, no one will ever know how my long hair got short."





They rushed to her room and Boka held one of her plaits and lifted the sharp glistening scissors, and SNAP it went! With one hard blow, half of Guniya's plait fell to the floor. Guniya had never felt happier before. Just when Boka reached out for the other plait, there was a loud knock on the door.

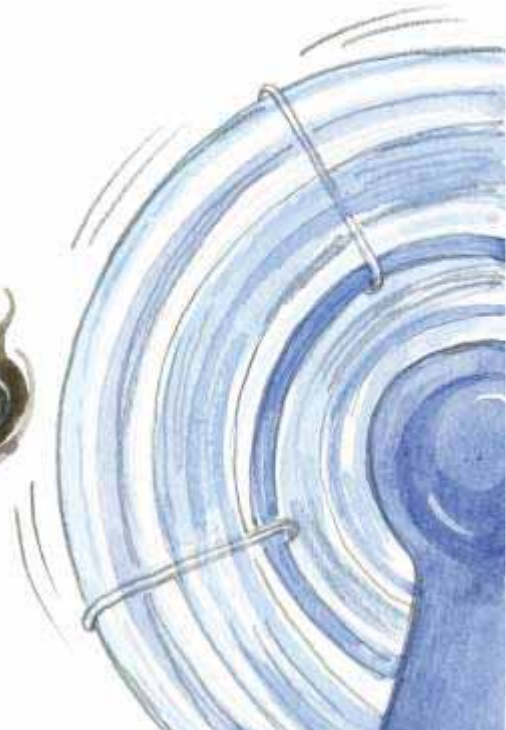


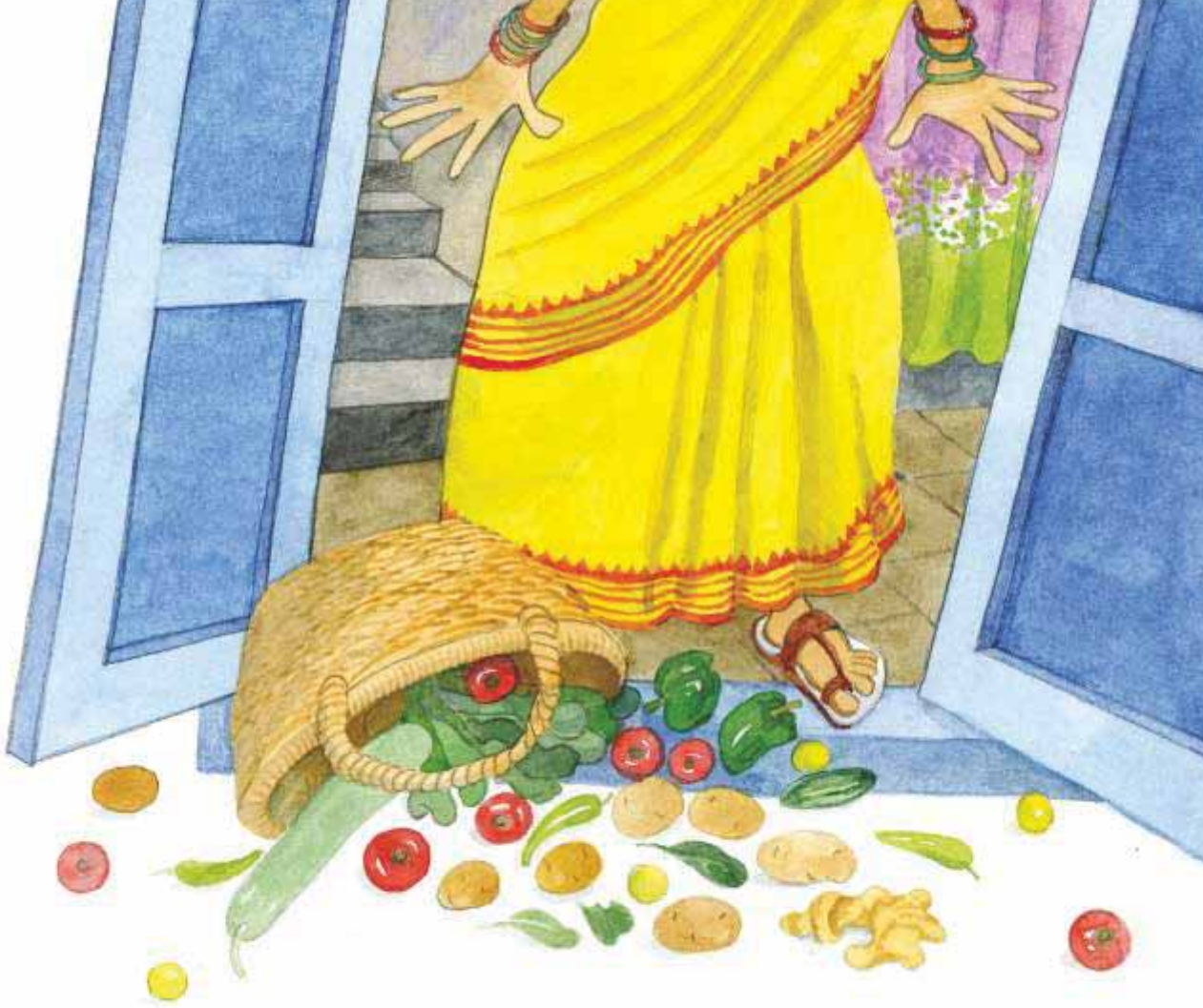




Both their eyes widened with fear because they knew it must be Guniya's mother. Boka fled by the back door running as fast as his short legs could carry him.

The knocking grew louder and finally Guniya went and opened the door.





Mother's eyes almost popped out when she saw Guniya. Who was this standing before her?! One plait was cut off while the other was still long. Even before her mother could say a word, Guniya started telling her what had just happened.

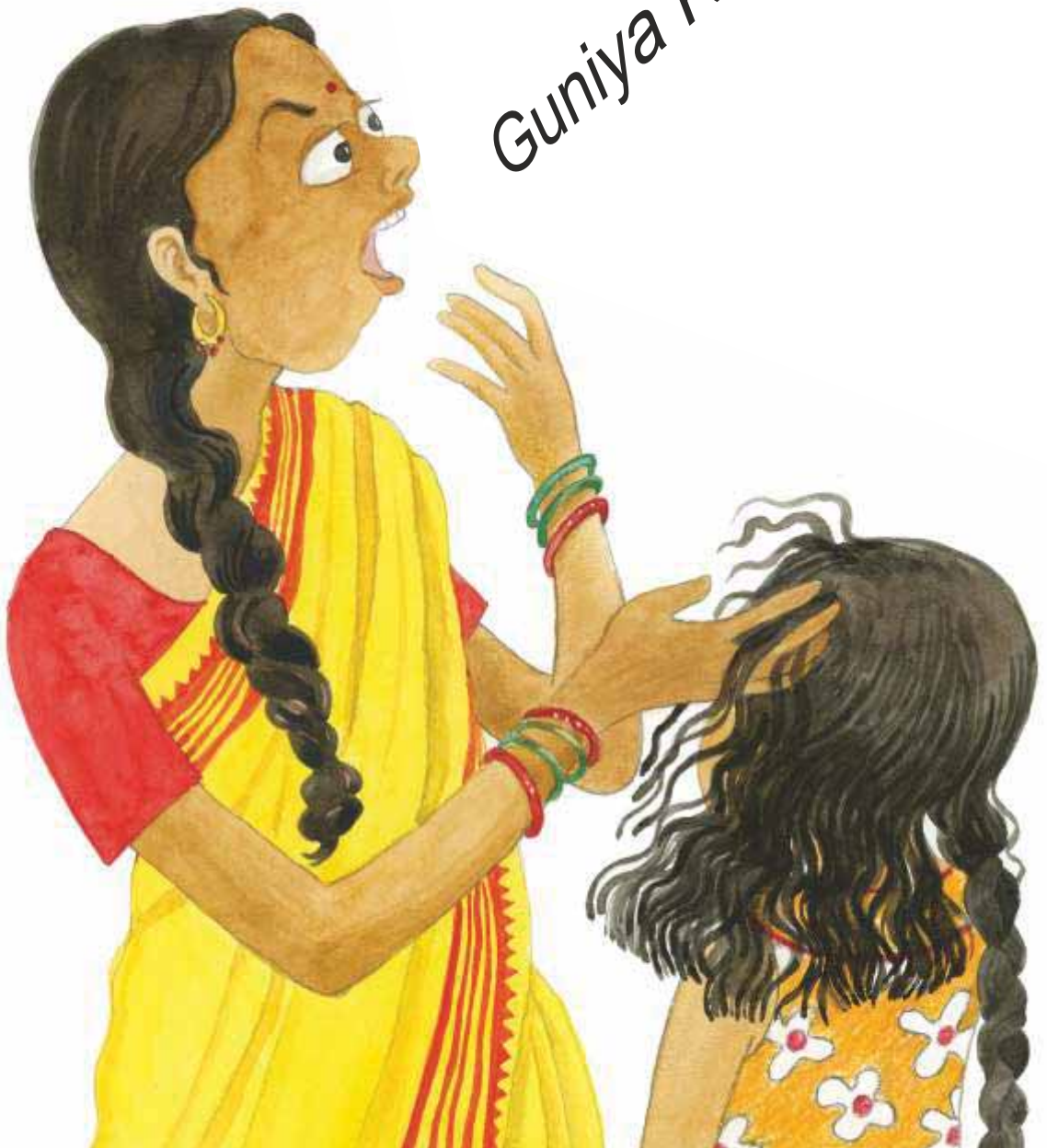
"I was feeling very hot and I turned on the table fan. But I was still feeling hot, so I went closer to it. Just then the fan pulled in my plait. I was trying to pull my hair out but just then you knocked on the door. If I did not open the door you would get angry. So I cut my hair with the scissors that Boka left here and opened the door."

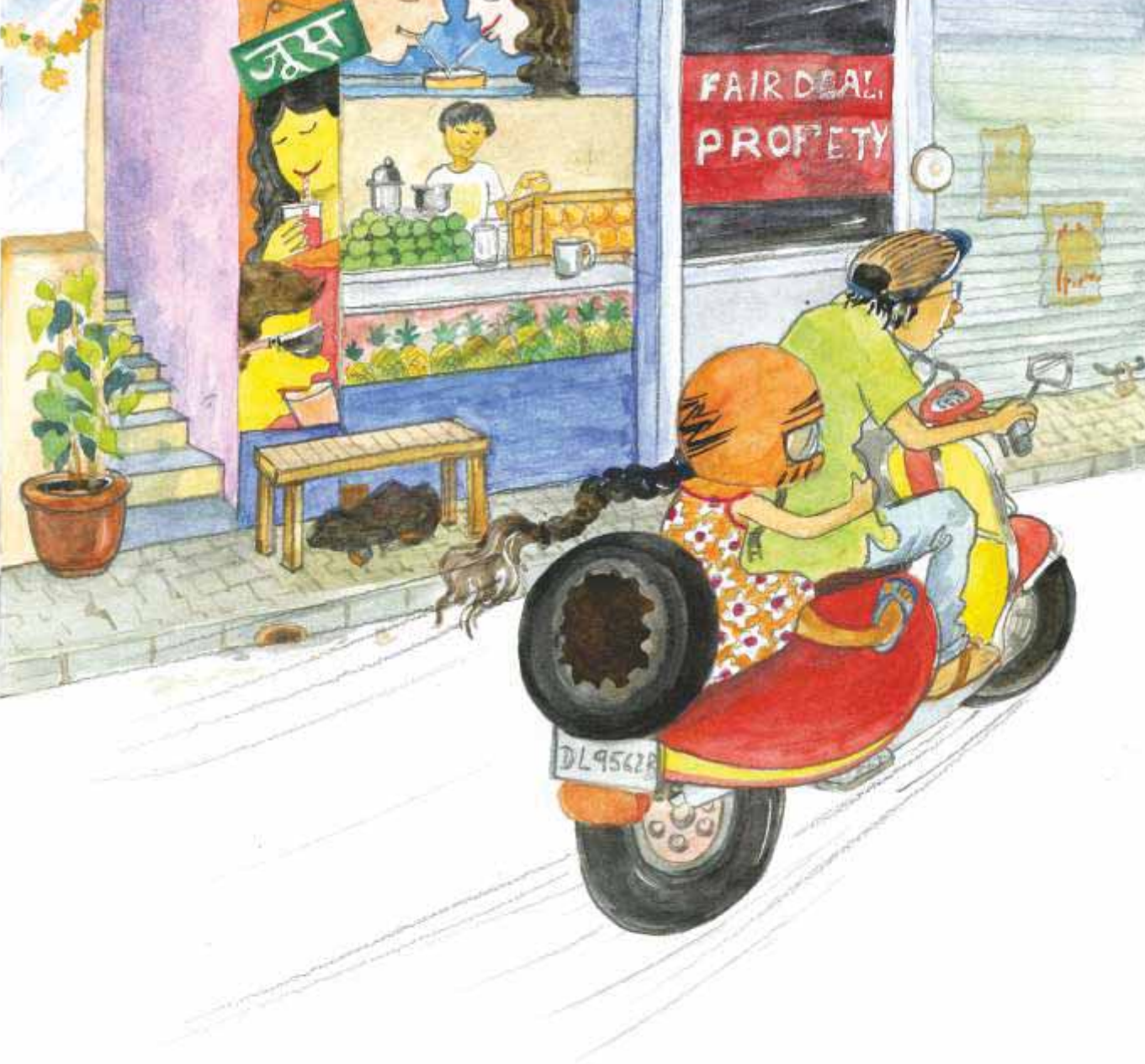




All mother could do was to stare in disbelief,  
and then she called her father.

**Guniya KE PAPA!!**





Father made Guniya wear his helmet and took her to the barber's. Before any of the neighbours found out about her hair, the barber got to work on it.



Guniya no longer has to wake up early to get her hair done. She can let the short hair fly carelessly in the wind. No longer do other children tease her or pull her plaits. She can scratch her hair easily and it no longer makes her feel sweaty or itchy, which means she can enjoy playing with her friends even more.

Oh, one more thing! Now her head also doesn't stink for hours because of that coconut oil!







Guniya's long hair always kept her worried. Not only did it feel hot, but made her sweat a lot too. So she could not sleep for long either. She used to reach school late everyday and had to invent new excuses to save herself. But how could these excuses get rid of her long hair? That needed nothing short of some magic trick.

Will Guniya be able to find that trick?



Price: ₹ 70.00

