



The Sound of Water

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Level 4

It was a dry summer. The forests around Varsha's house had become brown and yellow. Most of the leaves were on the ground, not on the trees.

"It's so hot," Varsha complained. "I wish we had water to swim in!"

"At least we have enough to drink," Appa said. "Lots of people and animals don't."





That night, Varsha dreamt of water. She heard a sound in her dreams: **THUMP-SPLASH!**

She woke up with a jump.

Her heart went **THUD THUD THUD.**

Varsha checked under the bed. Nothing.



The sound was quieter now: **SPLISH
SPLASH MROW.** Varsha tip-toed to the
window and looked out. The garden
was empty. **SPLISH SPLASH MROW.**

The next morning, Varsha was sitting in the garden, watching a frog when she heard a sound: **SCRITCH-SPLASH!**

“Appa, did you hear that big water-sound?” she asked.

“Nonsense! Go do your homework,” said Appa.



At lunch, the sound had changed again:
CRRRRR-SPLASH! MROW!

Varsha imagined enormous claws
dragging down the house wall and
throwing it into the well.

“Appa! You must have heard that
sound!”
she shouted.

“It’s just you slurping your sambhar,”
Appa said.



All day Varsha kept hearing the sound.
It kept changing and moving:
SPLISH SPLASH MROW HISS SPLOSH SPLISH!
And all day Appa heard nothing.



Did Appa need a hearing aid, Varsha wondered?
And was some large water monster hiding in the
garden?



That night, Varsha couldn't sleep. **SPLISH SPLASH SPLISH SPLASH** went the sound. Varsha imagined an angry water monster marching to attack her.

She had a brilliant idea – the well!
She decided to look.



It wasn't a monster. It was a leopard cub, wet and hungry.

"Hello cub!" Varsha said.
"I heard you fall in last night.
You must be starving!"

"MROW!" said the cub.

“Climb up, cub!” Varsha said.
The cub stayed on its ledge.



Varsha tried again. “Here, cub cub cub! Here, cub!”
The cub didn’t move.

Varsha ran in and got leftovers from dinner.
“Do leopards like fish?” she wondered.



Varsha arranged a trail of fish.

“Mmmm, fish!” Varsha said softly. “Here cub! Dinner!”

The cub climbed up, grabbed the fish and darted back into the well’s darkness.

“Don’t be scared,” Varsha said.

She sat still and waited for the cub. Then she fell asleep.






It was morning. The cub climbed out of the well, eating all the fish. It went to look at the vessel.

It ate hungrily.

“WHAT IS THIS?” Appa shouted. The leopard shot up a tree.

“Huh?” Varsha yawned. “It’s a leopard, Appa. It was in the well!”

The cub made a soft hissing sound.

A leopard is perched on a dark brown tree branch in the upper left quadrant of the page. The leopard has a brown and black spotted pattern and a friendly-looking face.

“It’s a wild animal! You could go to jail!
You could be eaten!” Appa shouted.

“It was stuck in the well!” Varsha yelled back.
“And it was starving!”





"I'm calling the forest department,"
Appa said.

It took the forest department the
whole day to get the leopard down
from the tree.



"I don't want to give her my leopard," Varsha whispered to Appa.

"It's not your leopard," the ranger said. "It belongs in the forest. If you keep it you could go to jail."

"Exactly," Appa beamed. "Not going to jail is Varsha's birthday present this
-----"

The ranger got into her jeep.
“This is my third wild animal rescue this week.
Lots of animals are leaving the forest this
summer, looking for water,” she said.

“Your well has a lot of water! If you make a pond
near it, wild animals can drink safely.”



“Mrow,” the leopard agreed.

“Bye cub!” Varsha shouted. She waved
until the jeep was fully gone.

Varsha turned to Appa.

“Can we make a pond, Appa?”
she asked.

“Do your homework,” Appa replied.

“Pleeeeeease?” Varsha asked.
“Thirsty animals won’t fall in the
well any more, and I won’t try to
kidnap them.”

“Fine,” Appa said. “But you’re doing
all the work.”





Varsha spent the rest of her holiday digging... and digging... and digging... and digging.

“This ... is ... your ... birthday ... present,” Appa panted.

“I thought not going to jail was my birthday present,” Varsha said.

Appa was too tired to reply.

The monsoon arrived with dark clouds and thunder.
A week later was Varsha's birthday.



"Happy birthday!" Appa said. "Binoculars!"

"I thought the pond was my present," Varsha said.
"Wait, I thought not going to jail was my present."

"Last present," Appa said. "No more."



With the binoculars, Varsha could see every part of the pond. It was full. Frogs croaked. A white-headed kite miaowed hungrily over the water.

“I can’t hear them,” Appa sounded sad.

“I have a present for you, Appa,” Varsha said. “We’re going to see an ear doctor next week. Happy not-birthday!”



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The Sound of Water

(English)

Varsha and her Appa live near the forest. It has been a hot summer and Varsha is feeling the heat. One day she hears a strange noise and decides to investigate. Only she can hear the sound and wonders what it is. What will Varsha find and will Appa believe her?

This is a Level 4 book for children who can read fluently and with confidence.



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