



Level 3

The Little Bird in the Big Mountains

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Meera lives in a small village. It is right on top of a mountain in Himachal Pradesh. From her kitchen window, she can see snowcapped mountains. Huge eagles with golden wings often fly over their house.

One day, when she is older and taller, Meera wishes to climb up to the highest peak and look down at the other side.

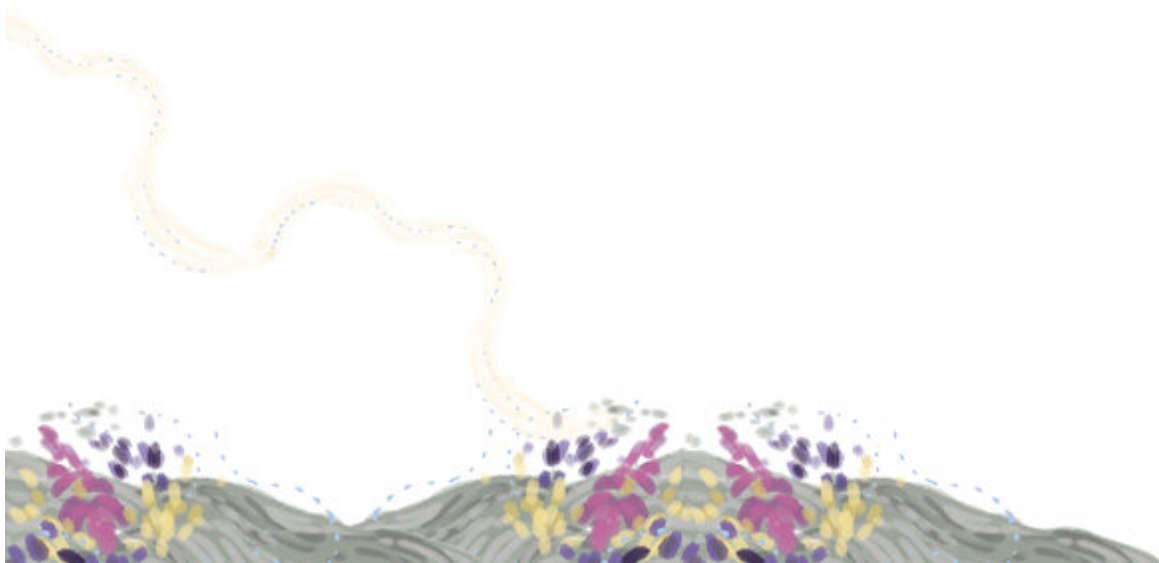
But today, Meera, her brother Rajesh, and Ma are walking downhill. They are going to the market to buy new shoes. The town is far but Meera does not mind. She walks an hour every day to go to school.

They set out at dawn. They have to walk for two hours to reach the main road. Then they will take the bus.





Sometimes, the path disappears and they slide down the rocks. “Whee!” say Meera and Rajesh as they jump over the stones.







Crunch crunch, go the twigs and dry leaves under their feet.
"Cree ..ckrr..ckre!" a small green barbet calls from the shrubs.
A gang of langurs watch them quietly from the pine trees.







Meera stops to drink water from a spring hidden behind rocks and ferns. Suddenly, she sees a little bird. It is lying in the ferns.

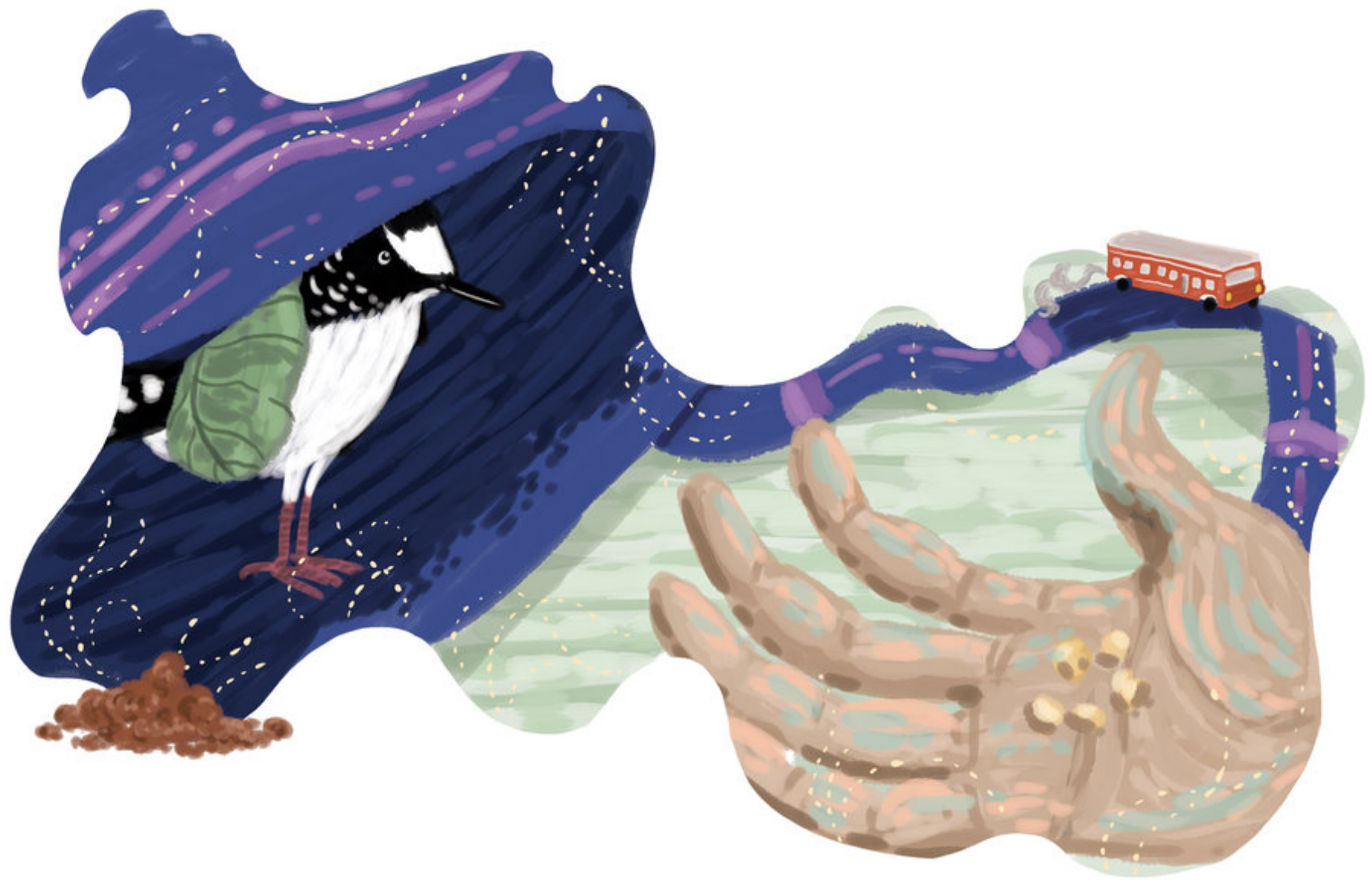
“Poor thing. He has injured his wing,” says Ma.

She gently picks up the bird.

“Should we take him with us?” asks Meera.

The bird is a spotted forktail. The bird watches them with his tiny eyes. He is scared. “Do not worry,” Meera tells him softly.





“First I must mend the wing,” says Ma. They put some wet earth on the wing and wrap the bird in a big leaf. Meera puts the bird in her cloth bag.

On the main road, the bus has just arrived. In the bus, Meera can feel the bird moving about in her bag. "Maybe he is hungry," says Ma. "So am I," says Rajesh. They eat some roasted gram.

Meera crushes a few and gives it to the bird.

The old bus rumbles along on the winding mountain road.





The town is noisy and crowded.

“Stay close to me, Meera and Rajesh!” Ma calls. They hold hands tightly.

When they reach the market, they buy Meera's shoes. Ma also buys some hot jalebis for them from the sweet shop.

Meera gives the bird a tiny piece but he does not like it. He instead tries to peck at the cloth bag.



Soon it is time to take the bus to go back home. As the bus sways from side to side, Meera can hear the little bird chirping in her bag.

“We will soon be at the spring,” Meera whispers to the bird. When they reach the spring, Meera lets him out. He hops a bit, drinks some water and then sits on Meera’s feet. The bird likes the new shoes, too!







It is almost dark when they get home. Meera makes a soft bed with some straw for the bird. The bird goes to sleep in his new bed.



Meera and the bird become good friends. Meera gives him tiny rice and chana balls to eat. After a week, the bird suddenly flies away.



Now, every time Meera walks down the hill, she sees a black-and-white bird with a long tail.

The bird always nods and chirps at her. Do you think he is the same bird?

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The Little Bird in the Big Mountains

(English)

Meera is going to the market to buy new shoes. On the way, Meera, her brother and Ma rescue an injured bird. A story that brings alive the sights and sounds of mountain life and its gentle rhythms.

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



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