

The Gijjigadus and the Fireflies

Gopini Karunakar | Art by Atanu Roy



a 300m thinkbook from Katha 



Once upon a moontime,
some golden sparrows flew
all the way to the Kingdom
of Gods to pray for light.

“Devuda, Devuda!” they said,
these gijigadus.



“Women have lamps
they can light.”



“Cobras
have gems on
their foreheads to
light their way.”

"And owls have
eyes that shine in
the dark."





"But our nests
are filled with
darkness. Our
children wake up
at night and they
are scared."

"Please give us light!"
they prayed.



Devuda liked the golden sparrows. She said with smile, "I will help you, little friends! I am sure, together, we can think of a solution."

So the gijigadus huddled together to think of an idea.





One gijigadu
had an idea.



She said, "The moon rubs
against the sky, making
moondust. And this
moondust flies away,
as fireflies."



"So?" said the others.

"So, many many fireflies!
Can we ask the fireflies for
help?" she asked.


"Oyyamma yes!!!"
blurted all the
others.

Streaking through
the sky, the gijigadus,
with Devuda, went to the
fireflies for help.

Their friends, the fireflies, heard the gijigadus.



They said, "We'll be happy to help."



“Build your nests with soft mud,” said the fireflies.

“We’ll come and live there to light them up. So your little ones will never be in the dark.”

That’s why, from then on, nests of golden sparrows shimmer in the soft light of moondust fireflies.



Helpful Bugs



Just like the fireflies, there are other bugs in the natural world which help animals, and humans as well!

Can you match the description of the helpful bug to its name?



1. Makes a yummy sweet product that bears and humans drool alike on.
2. One of the prettiest bugs, known for its distinct spots. Very helpful to farmers.
3. A cleaning agent, it has enormous strength to collect and roll dung into small balls.
4. Eats insects that ruin plants and is helpful to have in gardens. Just watch out for its webs though!
5. Usually found around the wetlands, it has two sets of wings and flaps them about 300 times per second.

Spider

Honeybee

Dragonfly

Dung Beetle

Ladybug



Answers on last page

Beaky Buddies

Facts about Baya birds:

- Baya birds are members of the weaver bird family.
- They are very social and gregarious creatures.
- Also called *son chidi* in northern India, Bayas are mostly from Africa, but a few species are also found in India and Myanmar.
- They weave their fascinating nests with strips of grass and leaves.
- The construction of the elaborate nests is done by the male weaver bird during the mating season.

Get, set, glow!

Facts about fireflies:

- Fireflies talk to each other with light.
- They produce “cold light” and are the most efficient lights in the world.
- Each firefly species has its own particular pattern.
- Adult fireflies aren’t the only ones that glow. In some species, the larvae and even the eggs emit light.
- Fireflies have short lifespans.



Gopini Karunakar - Gopini is a poet and fictionist, and is assistant director to N Shankar, a noted director in the Telugu film industry. Many of his poems have found place in well-read Telugu journals and dailies. He particularly admires the oral style of storytelling – a legacy of his blind grandmother – recreating it in his writings. He says, through his writings he relives the memories of his childhood nights full of dreams and visions.

Geeta Dharmarajan founded Katha in 1988, with a children's magazine called *Tamasha!*. Her deep interest in social work in education led to the development of a special story-based pedagogy and curriculum for children coming from underserved communities. She views stories as a means of fostering unity by reinforcing diversity. Previously, she was one of the editors of *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, the magazine of the Ivy League University of Pennsylvania, and *Target*, a magazine for children which marked the beginning of her 31 years of professional editorial experience. She has 31 books and over 400 published pieces to her credit.

Atanu Roy - With over 100 children's books under his belt, Atanu Roy has devoted much of his creative prowess to children's literature. Roy's use of bold colours and vivid details, capture the hearts and eyes of his readers. It's no surprise then that Roy, who once worked as a political cartoonist for *India Today*, has won awards like the Children's Choice Award for Book Illustrations and the IBBY Certificate of Honour for Illustrations. His studio is located in Gurgaon.

☪ KATHA

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— Papertigers

Retold in English by Geeta Dharmarajan from a portion of the original Telugu story.



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Devoted to enhancing the joys of reading amongst children and adults, we work with more than 1,00,000 children in poverty, to bring them to grade-level reading through quality books and interventions.

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10% of the net proceeds from the sale of these books goes to support reading and life long learning programmes for underprivileged children.

Answers: 1. Honeybee

2. Ladybug

3. Dung Beetle

4. Spider

5. Dragonfly



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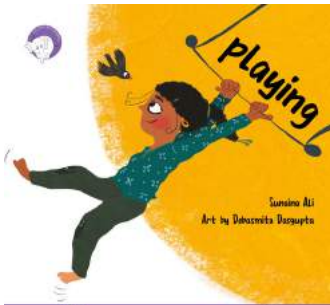
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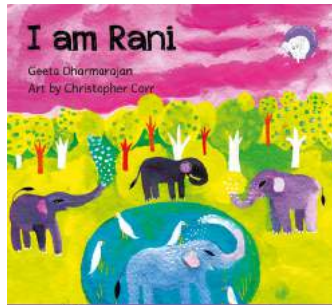
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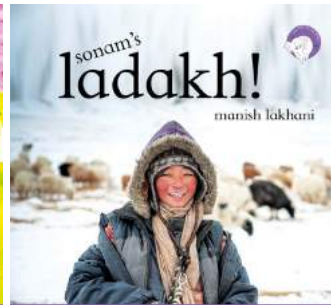
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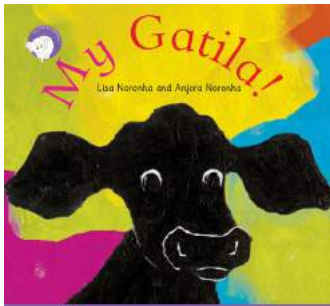
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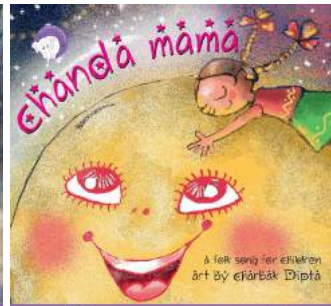
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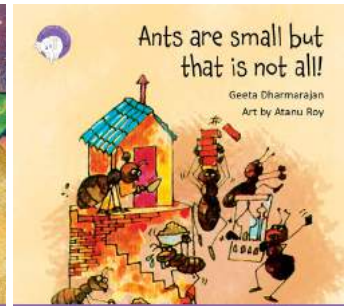
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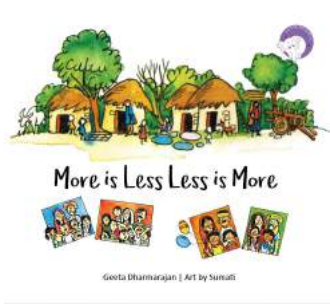
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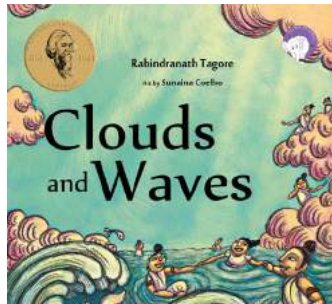
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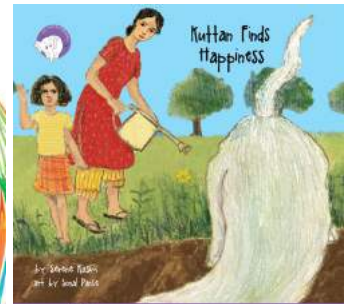
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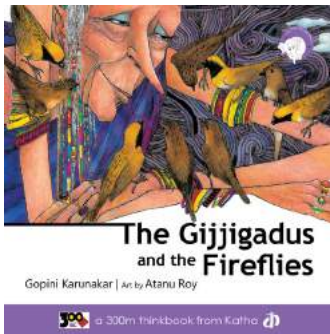
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