

# Hic! copotamus



Geeta Dharmarajan

Art by Atanu Roy



a 300m thinkbook from Katha 

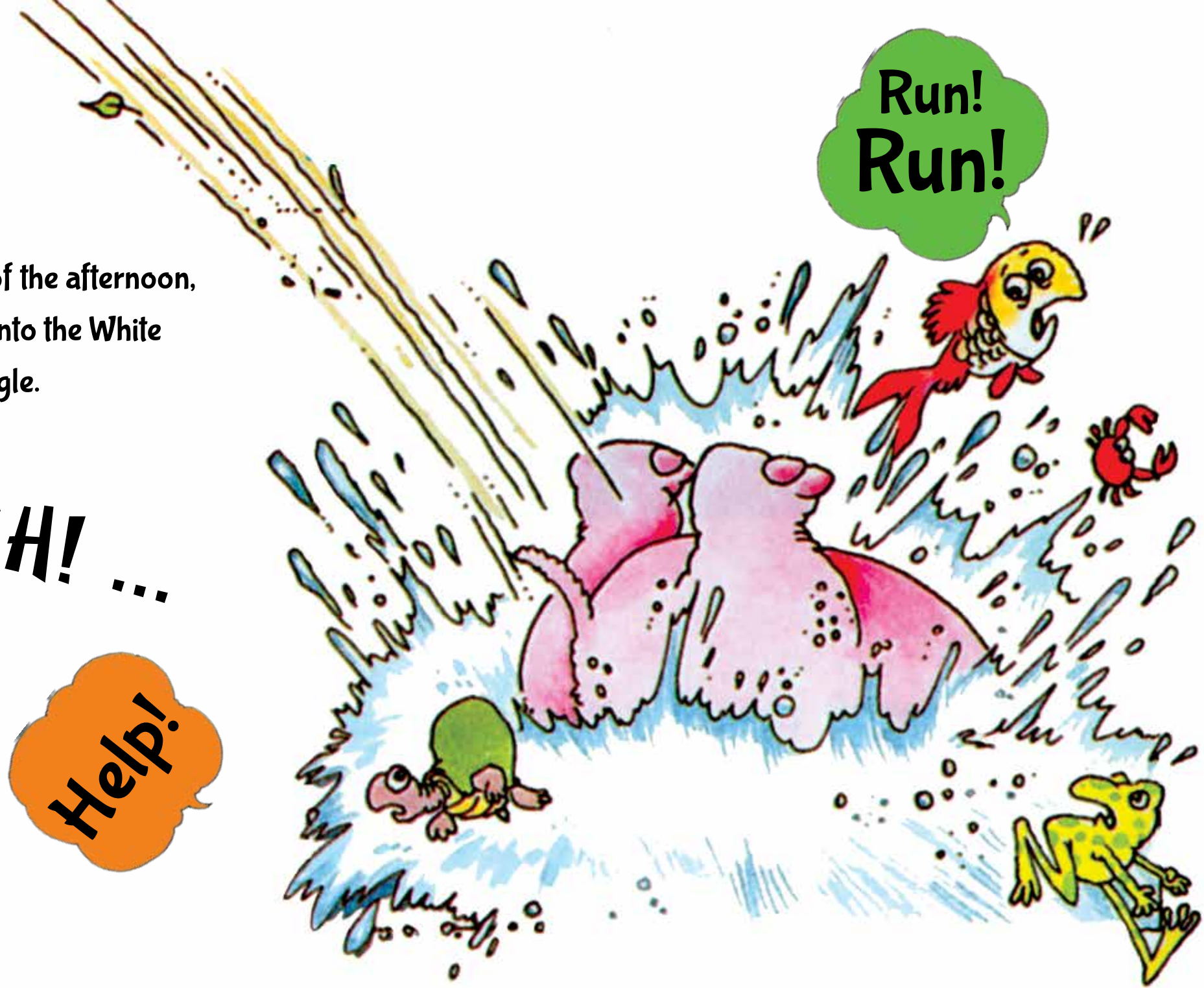
**O**ne day, in the middle of the afternoon,  
a most enormous thing fell into the White  
Lily Pond in Gulmohar Jungle.

**CRASH! ...**

**CLATTER! ...**

**Help!**

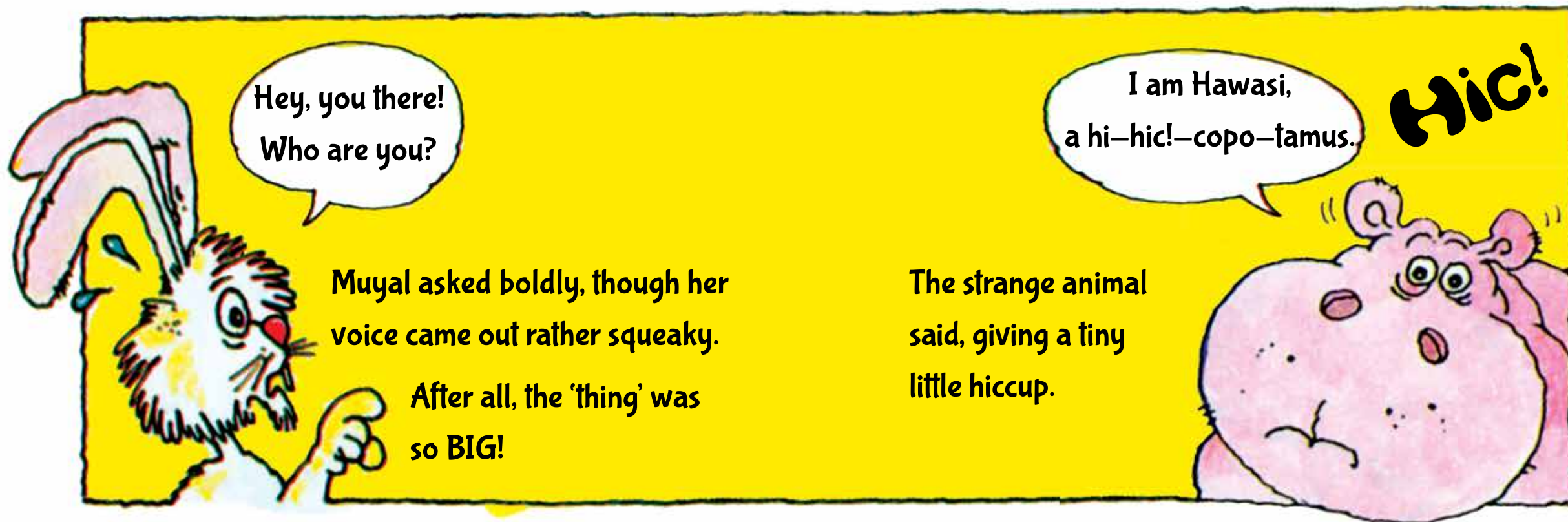
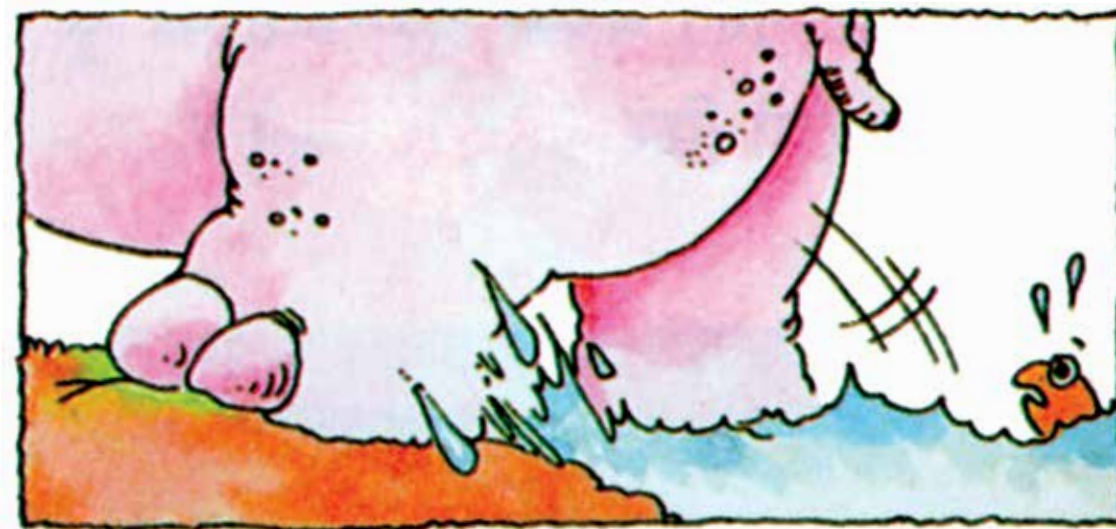
**Run!  
Run!**





Muyal the Rabbit, Hanu the Monkey, Popat the Parrot screamed ...

Everyone was so busy being afraid that they didn't see the 'thing' carefully walk out of the pond. Muyal was the first to spot him.





A hippopotamus?  
Hippos live in Africa!  
You're a long way from  
home, aren't you?

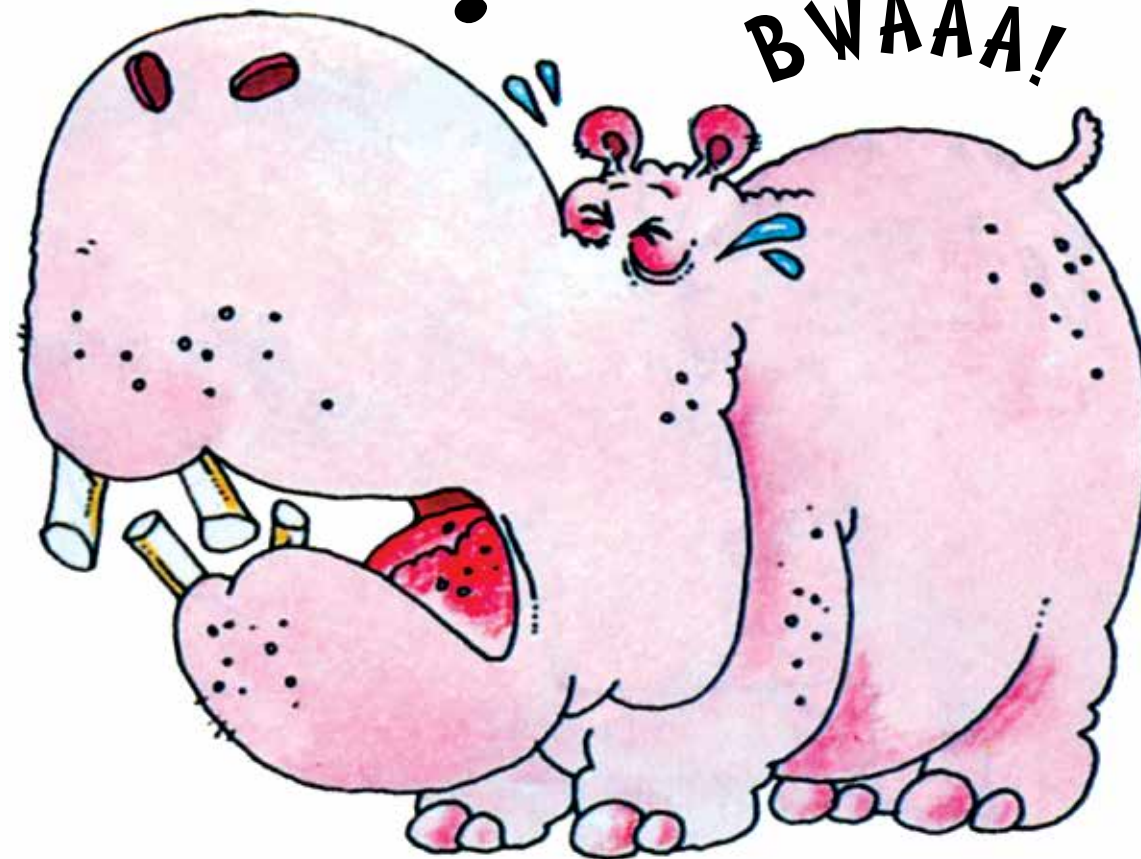
Raatri the Owl, who had  
been rudely awakened by  
all the noise, asked.

At once, Hawasi broke into tears.

"I wan ... t to go—hic—home!" he wailed, bouncing  
up a foot or two.

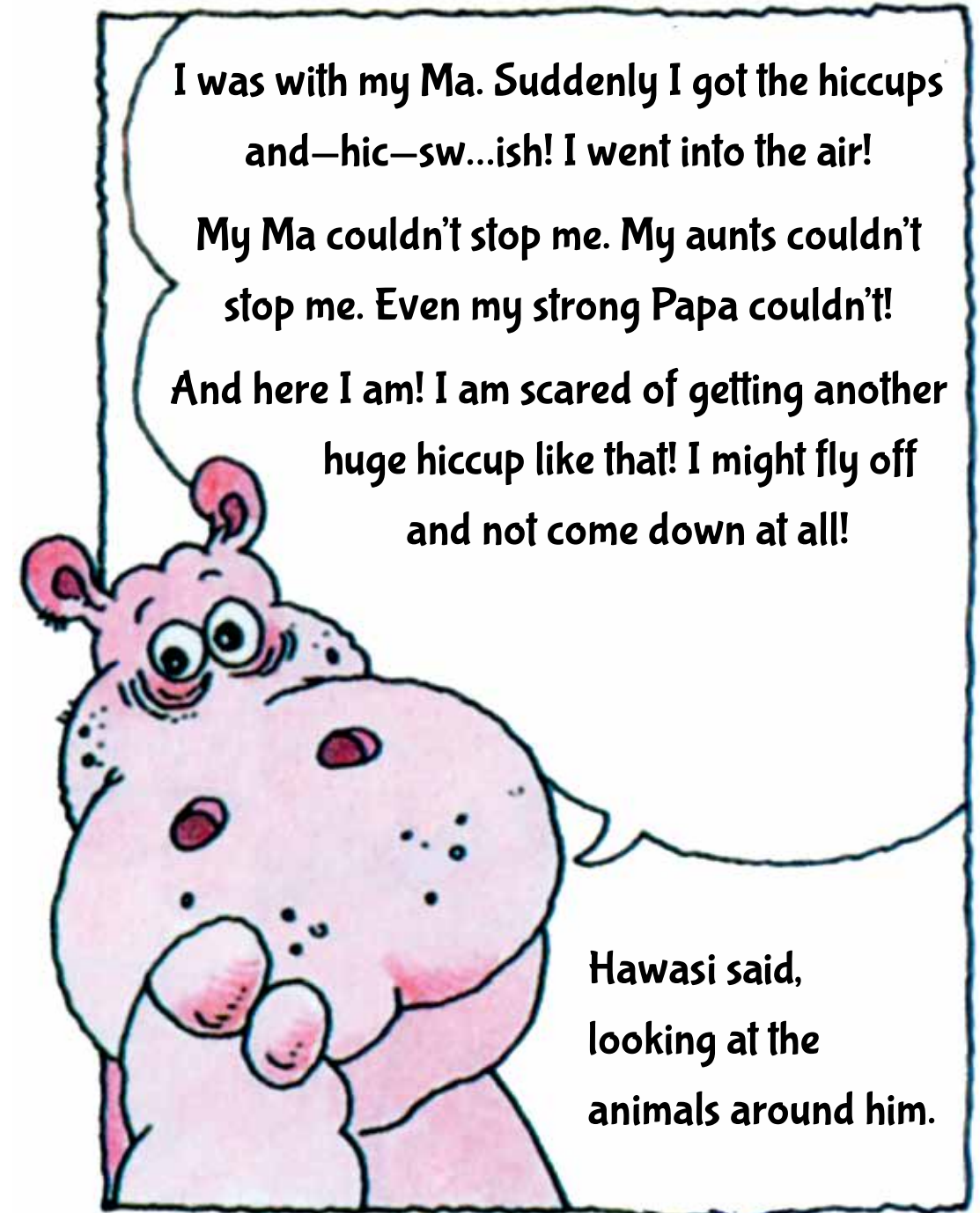
**Hic!**

**BWAAA!**





Ela the Caterpillar asked.





“We’ll help you get rid of your hiccups!”  
said Muyal helpfully.

“And get me back home?” asked  
Hawasi hopefully.

“Sure. We’ll try,” said Hanu. “Let’s call  
our other friends too! Someone might  
come up with a good cure for hiccups!”

So off went Muyal to call the haathi-log,  
the tigers and the bats and the spiders.  
And everyone.

Soon they were all busy thinking.

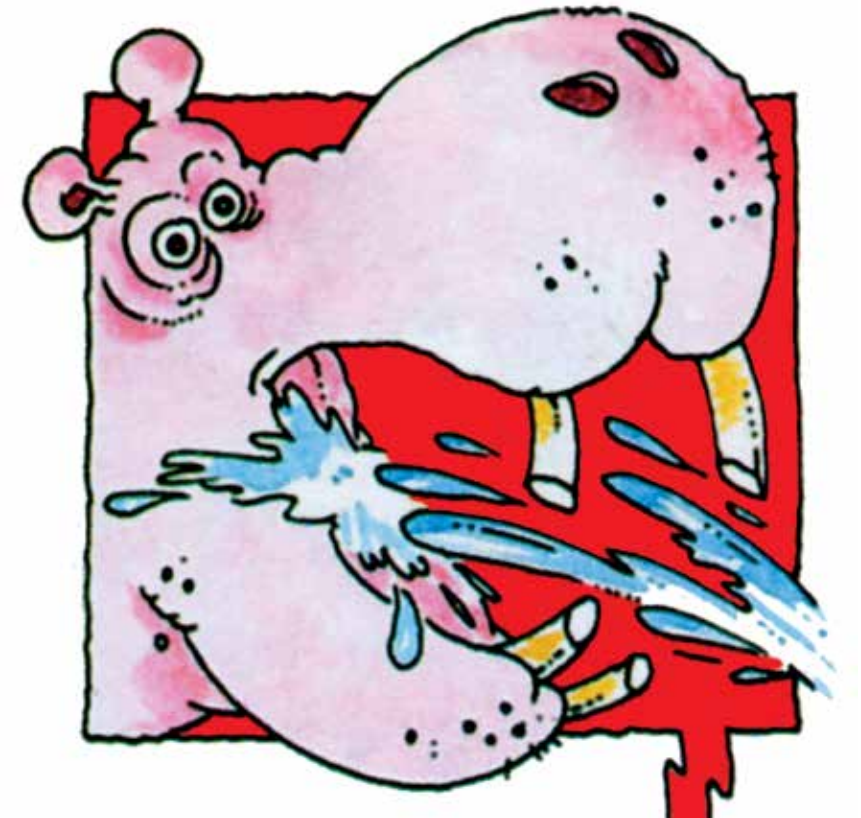
“Water!” said Forest Fox suddenly.

“That’s what we foxes drink when we  
hiccup. It works every time!”

“Thanks!” said Hawasi,

“Water I love!”

He promptly stepped  
into the White Lily  
Pond ... and just  
disappeared.



“Hey! Do you think he’s drowned or something?” asked Ee the Elephant when Hawasi didn’t come back for quite a few moments.

“He didn’t look as if he could swim,” said Ka-Ka the Crow in a worried voice. Just then, Hawasi came back smiling.



“It was like back home!” said Hawasi, gurgling happily. “And I just kind of forgot and went for a walk! Sorry!”

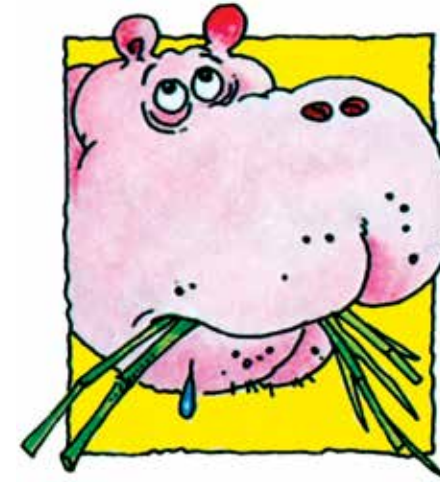
“A walk? Under the water?” asked Ee the Elephant in surprise.

“I love walking on the lakebed,” explained Hawasi. “I can swim well too! And I can beat you in a race on land t ...”

When suddenly ...

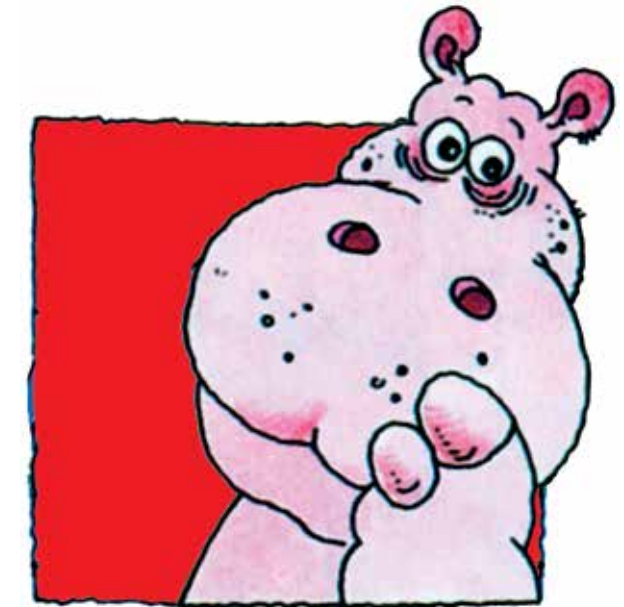


All the animals tried everything to help Hawasi get rid of his hiccups ...



... giving him sugar ...

... asking him to hold his breath ...




... and frightening him!

But Hawasi was so big. What would've scared him?



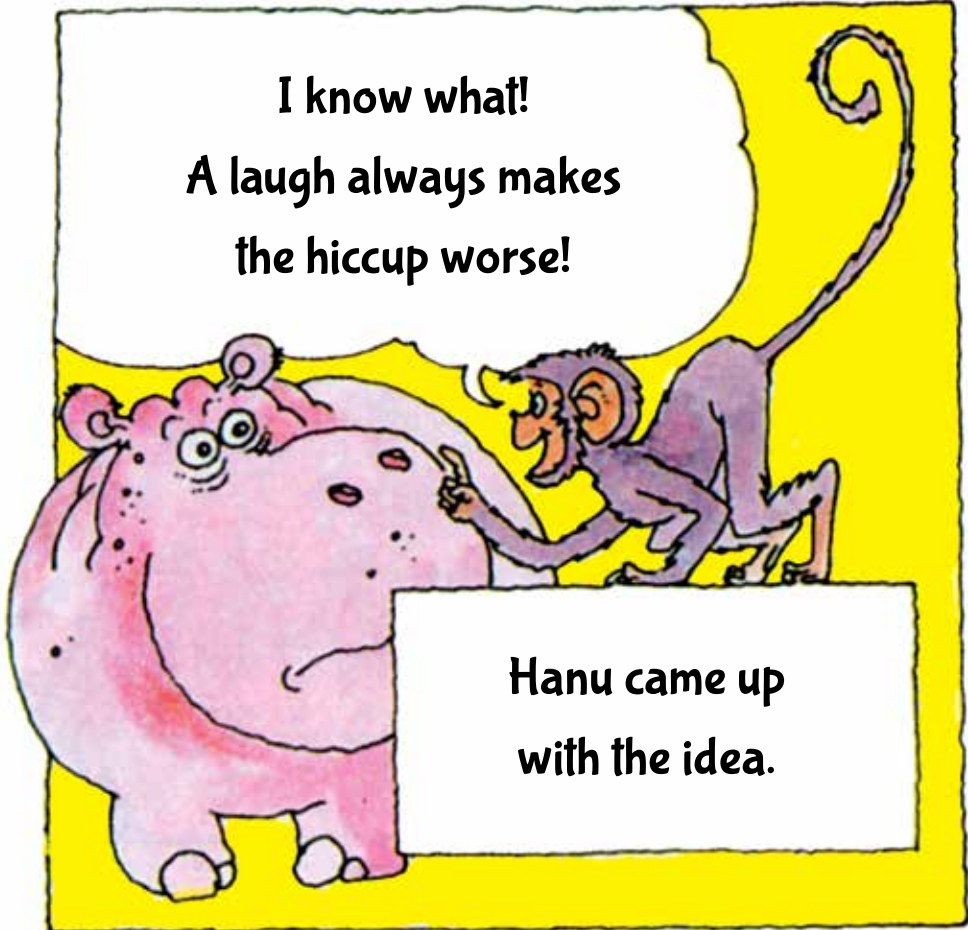
Just then ...



Listen! If we get rid of his hiccups, how will we get him back home?

“Oh no!” groaned Hanu when he heard Tejas the Tiger. “We never thought of that!”

“What we really need is a way to give him a huge hiccup that’ll take him all the way back home, the same way he came!” said Popat the Parrot.

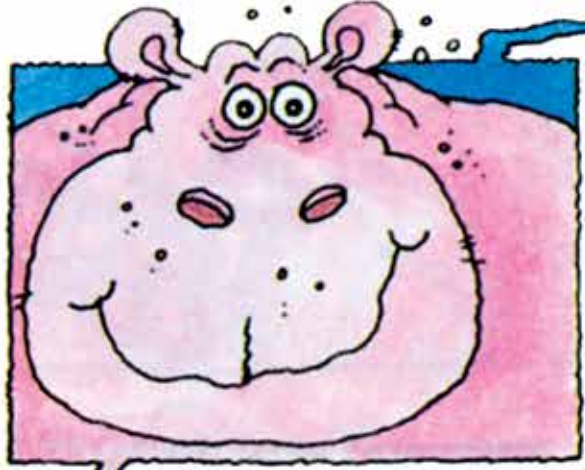
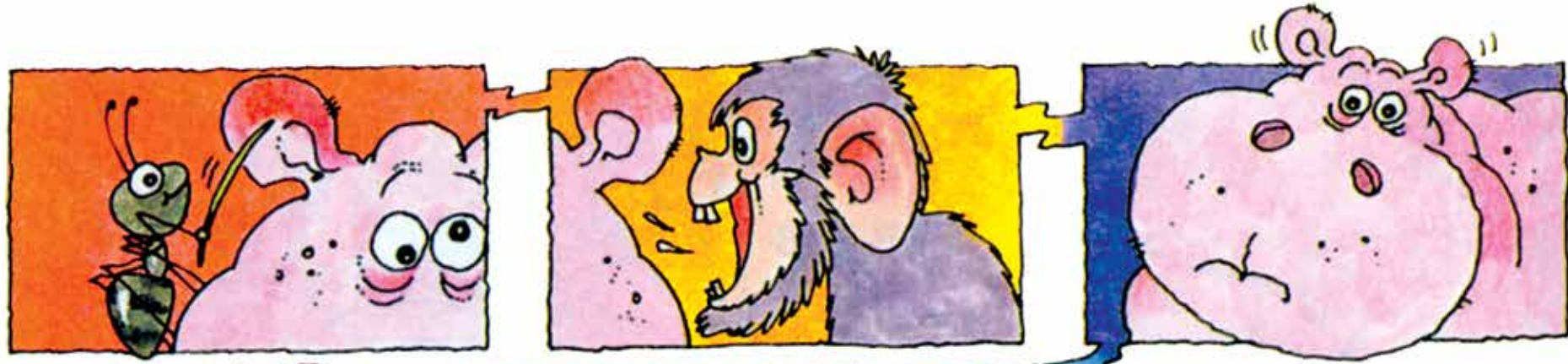


I know what!  
A laugh always makes  
the hiccup worse!

Hanu came up  
with the idea.

“We’ll tickle him!” said the ants.

“We’ll tell him such crazy jokes that they’ll take him all the way home!” said the monkeys. “Goody!” shouted Hawasi, his small eyes twinkling. “Here I come Mama!”



The ants tickled Hawasi.  
And everyone shouted all the jokes  
and the funny riddles they knew.

What is as big as a hippo,  
but weighs nothing?

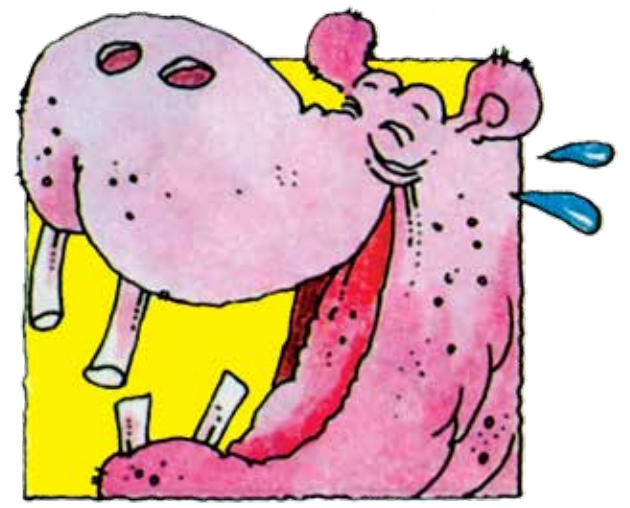
A hippo's  
shadow!

Where do frogs keep  
their money?

In river  
banks!

Monkeys, elephants, caterpillars and birds  
were all giggling their heads off!

In their middle was Hawasi,  
roaring with laughter. He'd  
never heard so many jokes  
before!



Why does a stork  
stand on one leg?

Because if she lifted  
the other one up too,  
she'd fall down!

Where does a seven-  
foot gorilla sleep?

Anywhere he  
wants to!

And right in the middle of a crazy elephant joke, Hawasi hiccuped!

A really huge, hippo-sized

# Hic!



**BACK HOME!**

Up he went flying, right over the banyan tree, the way he 'd come.

"Bye! And thanks!" shouted Hawasi from the sky as he flew off happily.

"Bye, bye! Happy landing!" called out all the animals.



And, oh yes, before I forget. Only yesterday the animals of Gulmohar Jungle heard a big 'thank you!' grunt from Mzima Springs, Africa.

Yes, you guessed right! It was Hawasi the Hicopotamus!

## Guess who?

Its name means 'river horse'. It looks like a pig. It's very big, fat and heavy (it weighs as much as you and more than 200 others like you put together!), but it can run faster than you can and can swim beautifully. Have you guessed its name? It's

# HIPPOPOTAMUS,

of course!

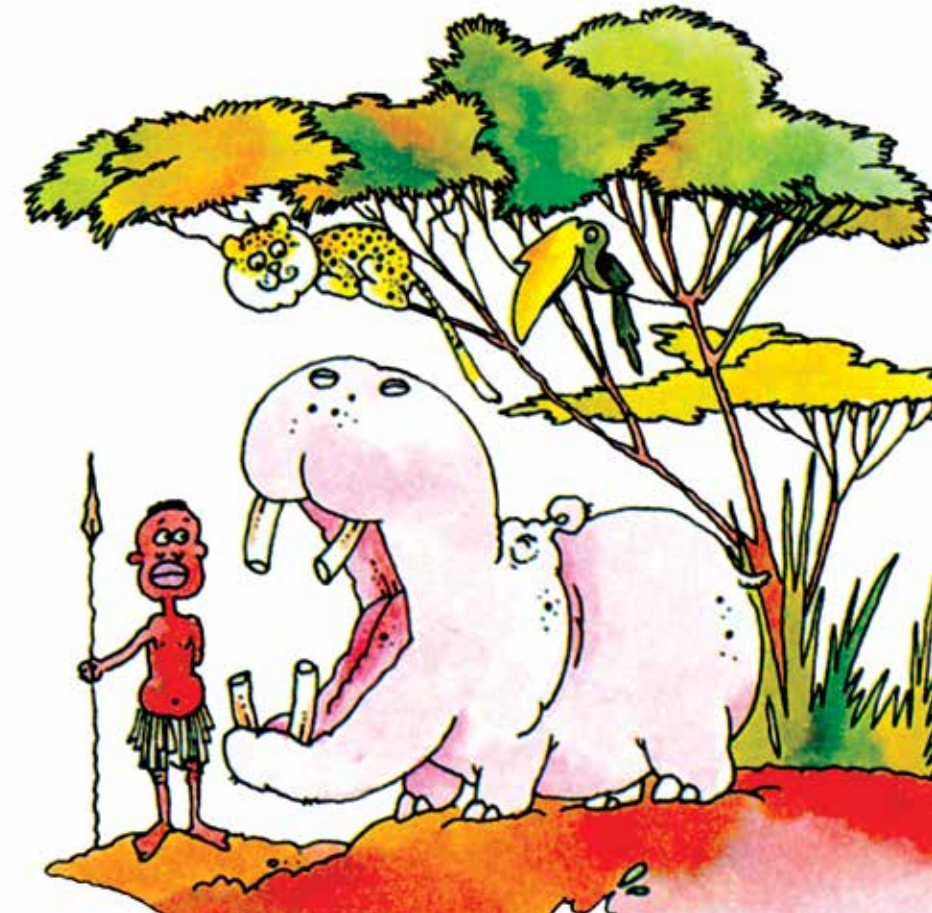
The skin on the hippo's back and sides is as thick as the width of your four fingers, and so it's not afraid of any other creature, except a full-grown lion maybe.

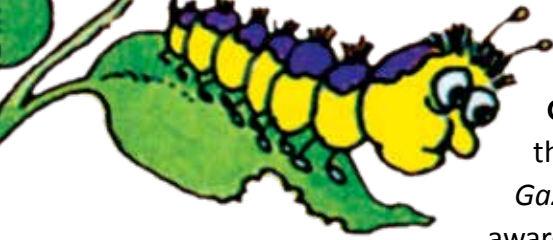
The hippo's mouth is so huge that you could easily step into it—not that you'd ever want to! Hippos are usually peaceful and friendly animals, if you leave them alone. But an angry hippo can crush a boat with its jaws!



Hippos love resting in their African rivers all day long. Sometimes they take underwater walks on the riverbed, gathering huge mouthfuls of weeds and water plants (hippos are vegetarian). They have special flaps of skin that cover their nostrils to stop the water from going into their lungs.

Baby hippos are born underwater and can swim even before they can walk! Only one baby is born at a time. As soon as a baby learns to walk, she or he likes to go off on adventures of her or his own. But mother hippos nudge their babies back gently. Baby hippos learn by watching their mothers—to stay out of danger, to find food, and to have fun!





**Geeta Dharmarajan** loves writing stories for children. She was one of the editors of *Target*, a magazine for children, and *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, the magazine of the University of Pennsylvania. She has been awarded the prestigious Padma Shri in 2012 for her distinguished service in the fields of literature and education.

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.

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ISBN 978-93-92454-65-6

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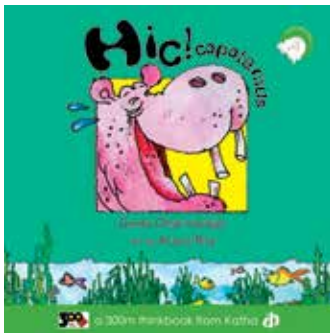
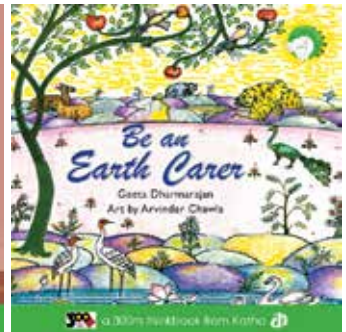
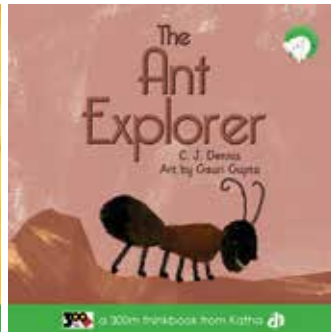
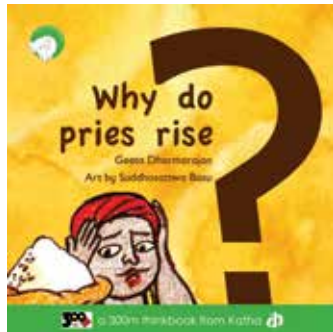
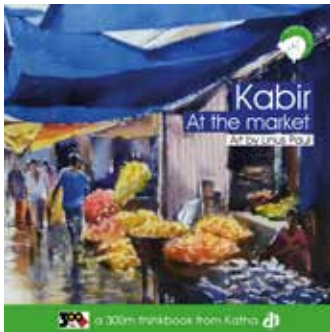
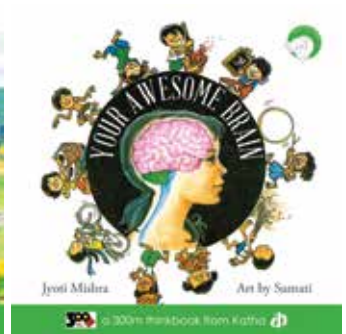
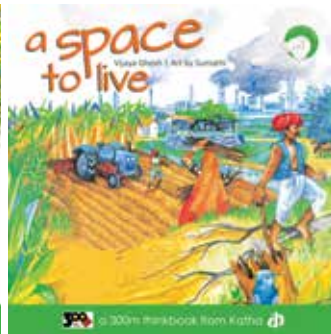
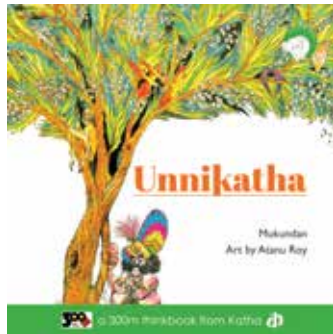
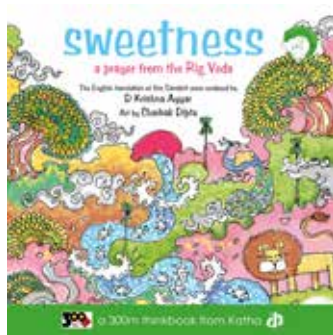
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