



Geeta Dharmarajan

Art by Atanu Roy



one  
**magical**  
morning



a 300m thinkbook from Katha 



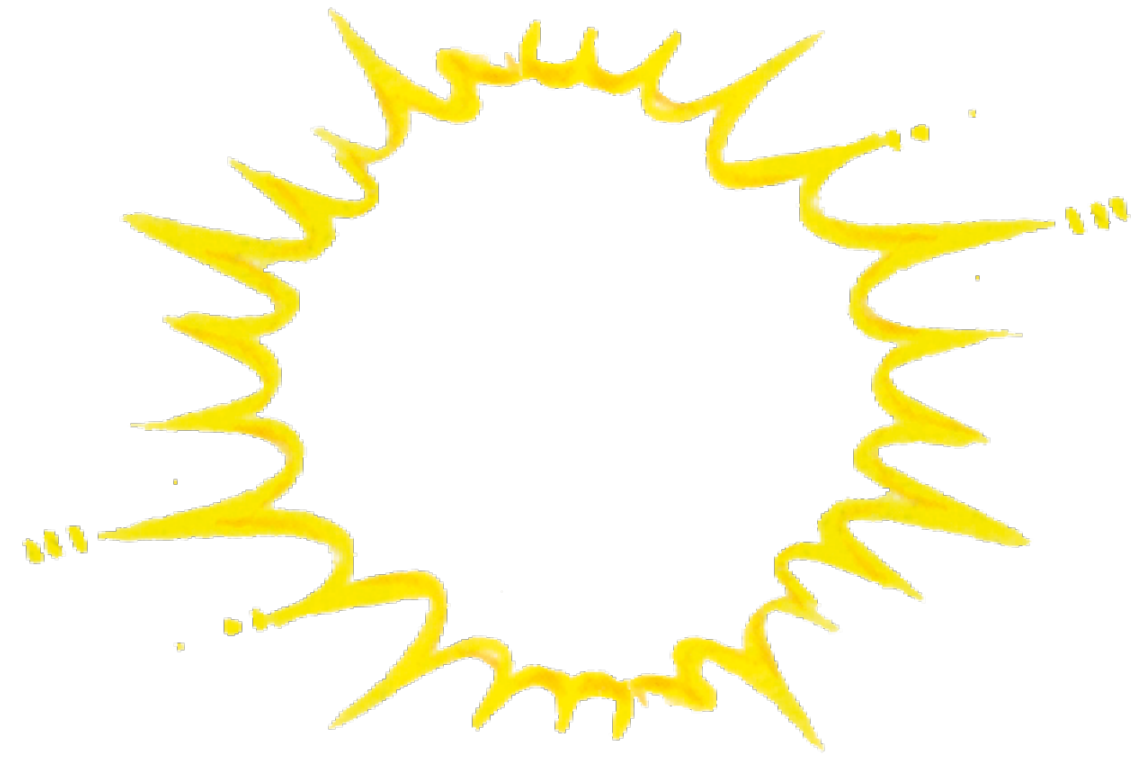
One day when Jishnu, the Sarpanch of Vikaspur, was going to his fields, he found a stone.

It glowed.

It felt warm like the sun.



“I am the Sun God,” a  
mysterious voice boomed.  
“Make a wish!”



Jishnu had no sons.  
“I want a son,” he said.  
And promptly Jishnu’s  
stomach began to grow!



“Me? Me?” spluttered  
Jishnu the Sarpanch.

“I don’t want a son!”

“You don’t?” asked  
the Voice.



“No, no, I... men don’t have  
babies!” mumbled Jishnu.

Sun God chuckled and said,  
“Vishnu became Mohini  
to have a baby. Now, it’s  
Jishnu’s turn!”

The news of Jishnu's pregnancy spread like

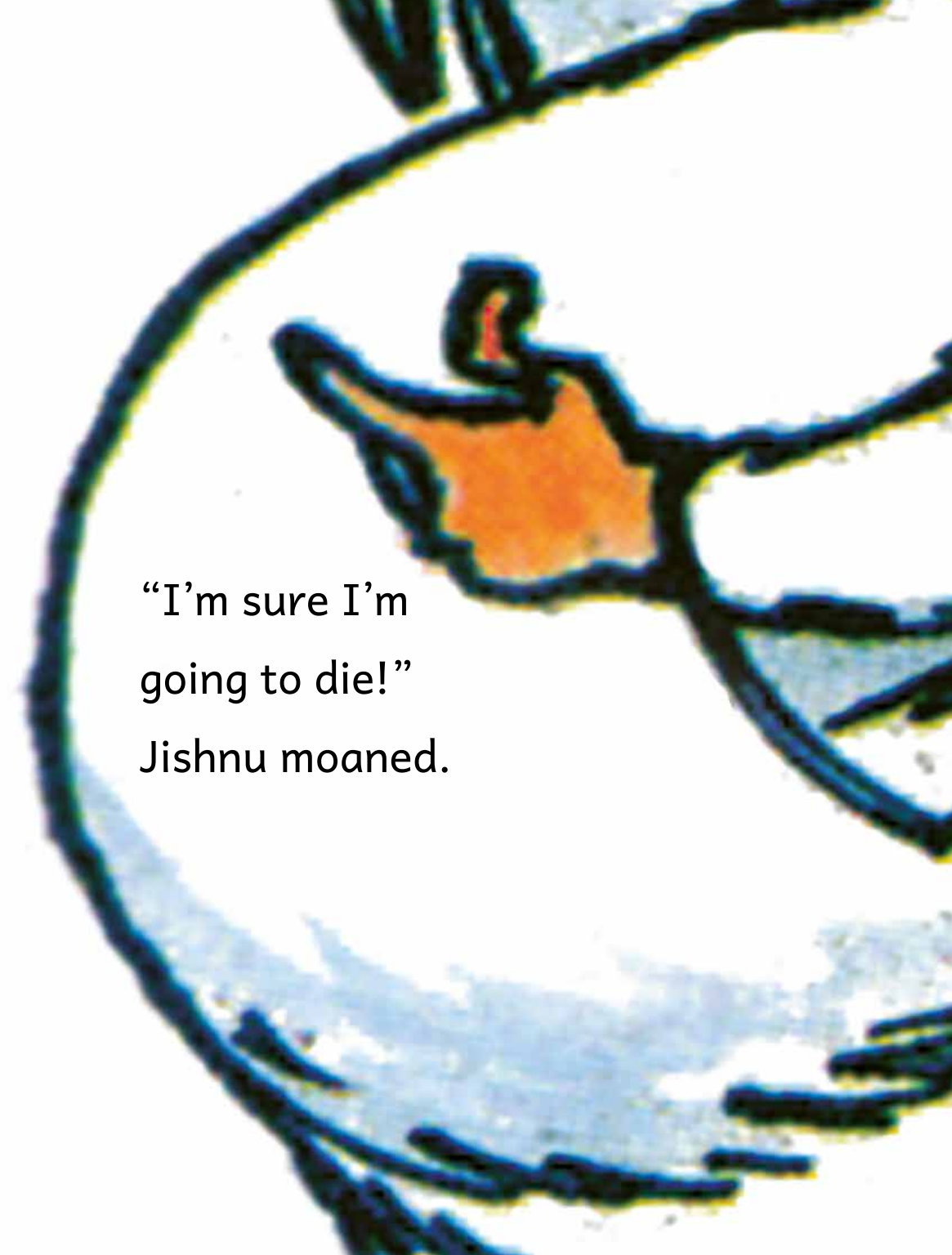
**wildfire!**



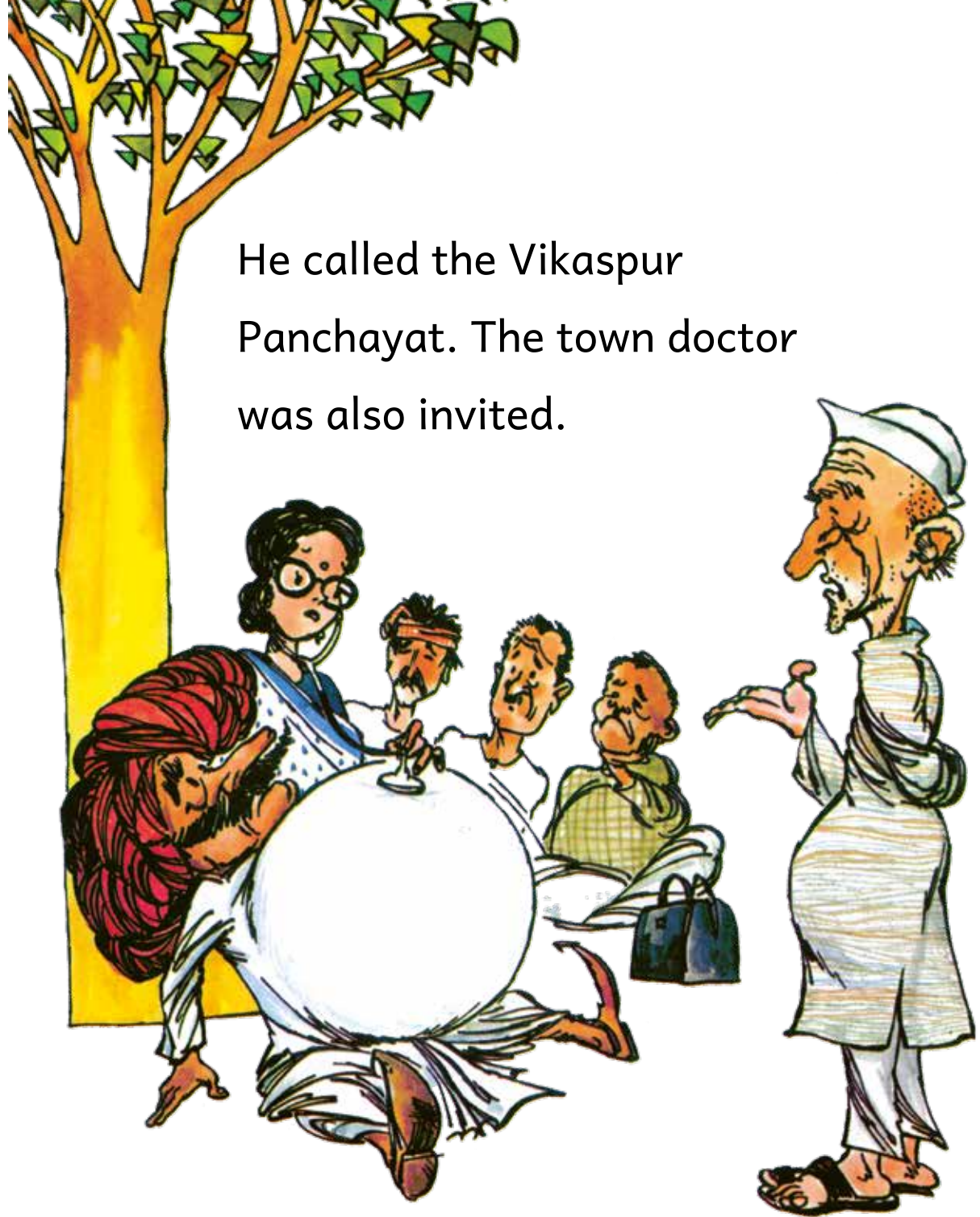
“What a fuss you made when you had little Meetu,” Jishnu told his wife, Ranu.

But as months went by,  
Jishnu began to wonder  
how Ranu had done all  
the housework when she  
was pregnant.

“I’m sure I’m  
going to die!”  
Jishnu moaned.



He called the Vikaspur Panchayat. The town doctor was also invited.

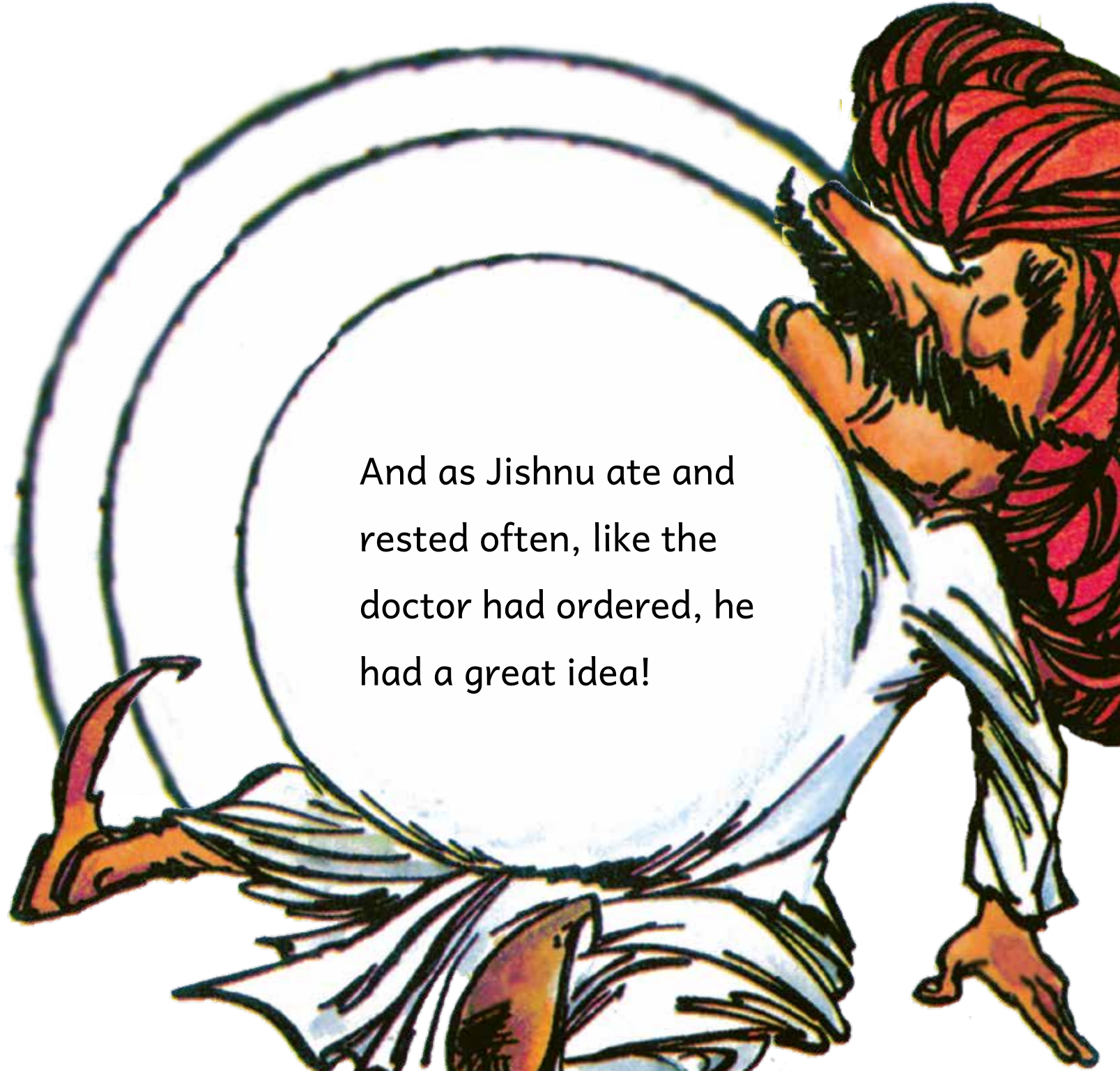


An elder got up to say, “Every day, hundreds of women ...er....*people* die during childbirth. Let our Sarpanch be saved!”

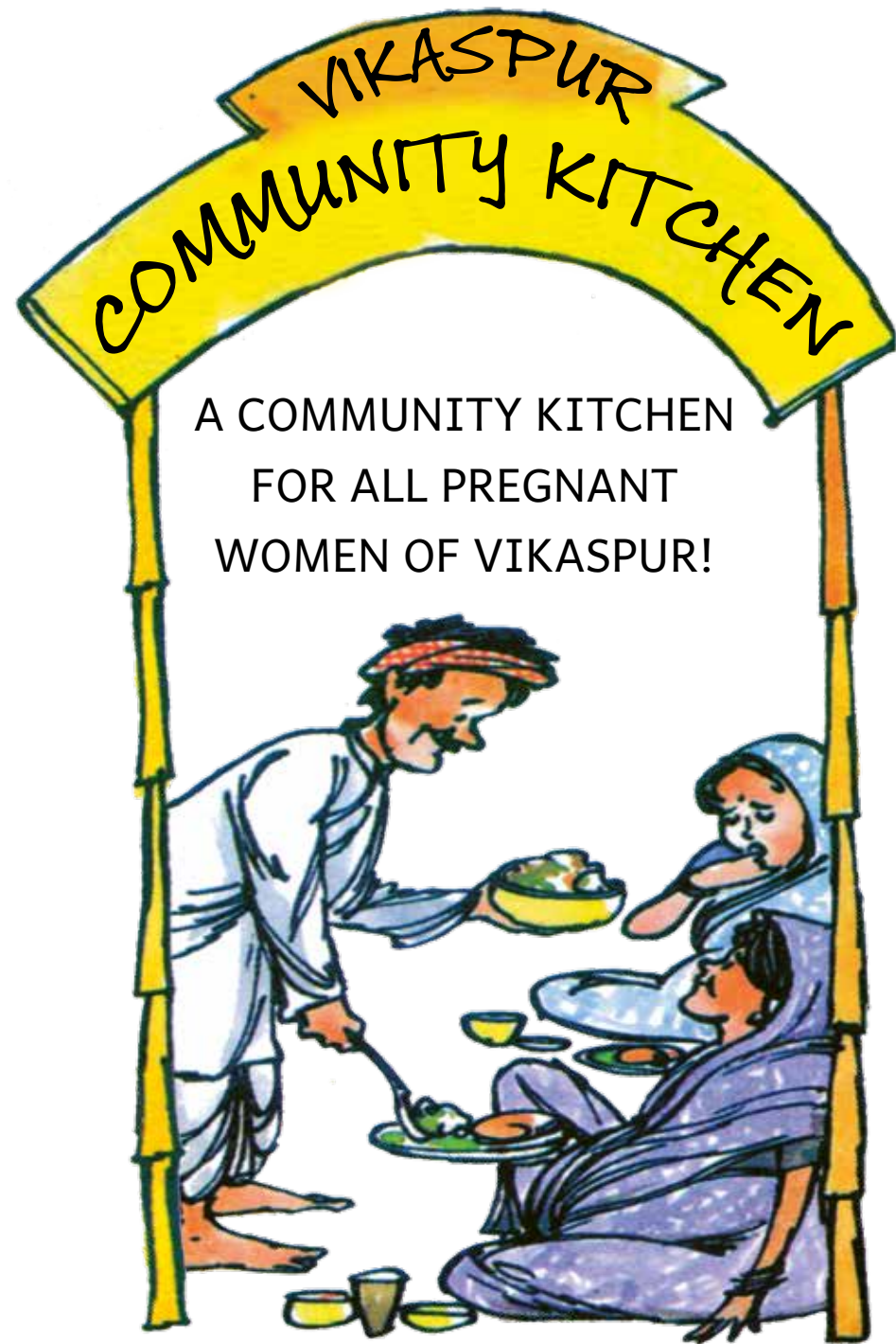
Jishnu promised himself that he would not die.

As Jishnu grew  
bigger and  
**bigger**,  
a strange thing happened.  
For the first time he  
noticed how many women  
were pregnant!

And as Jishnu ate and  
rested often, like the  
doctor had ordered, he  
had a great idea!







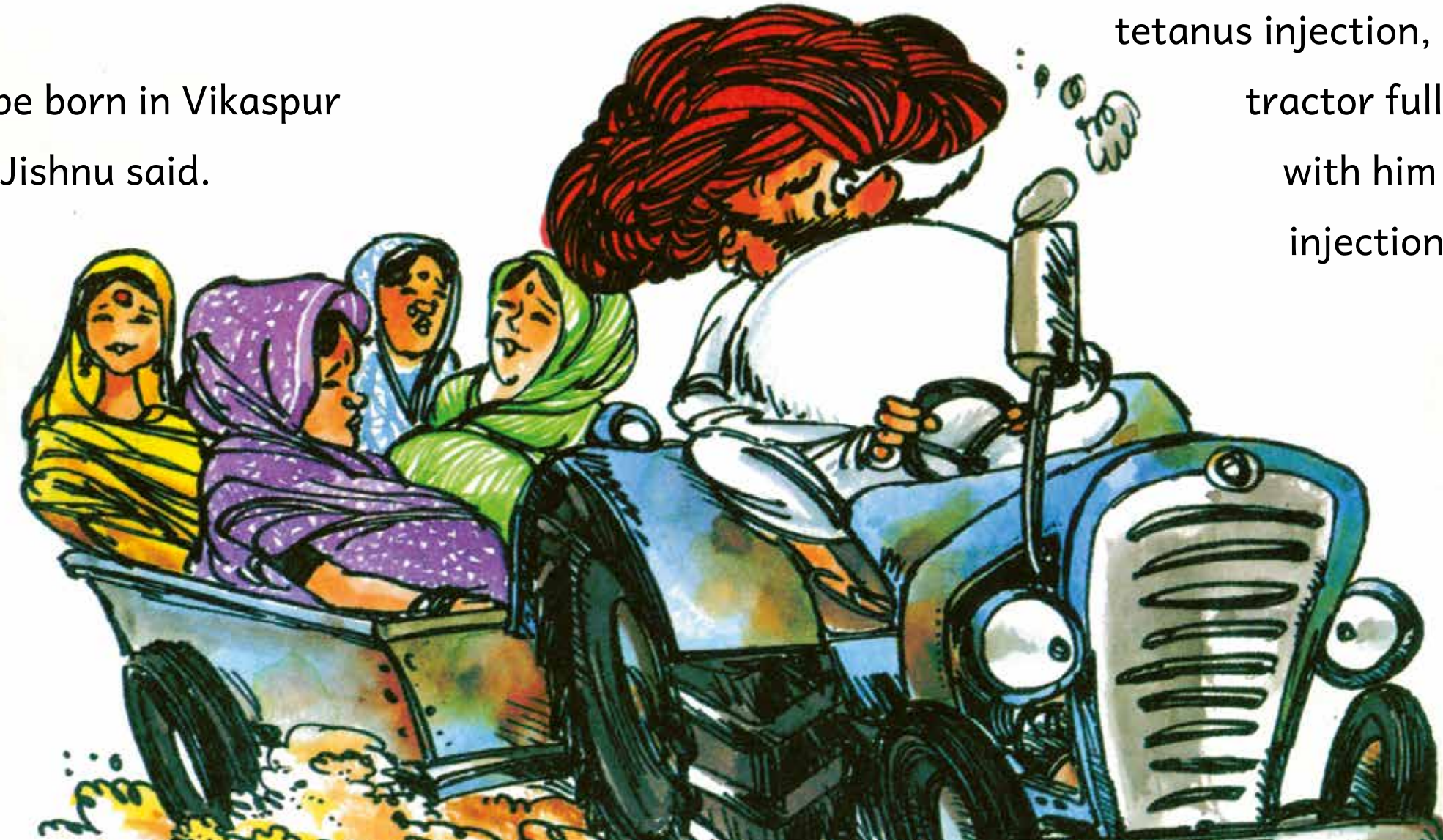
“Our children must be born healthy! From now, all pregnant women shall eat in the Vikaspur Kitchen,” he ordered. “And no fasting for pregnant women!”



Jishnu even helped the Vikaspur Mahila Mandal start a Dai Fund, to pay for the dai.

“No baby shall be born in Vikaspur without a dai!” Jishnu said.

And Jishnu, who was terrified of injections, even went for an anti-tetanus injection, taking a tractor full of women with him to get the injections too!



So it came to pass that  
that year all the babies  
were born alive and  
healthy in Vikasapur.



People all over India  
heard about Jishnu.  
Newspapers said he was  
the best Sarpanch!

At last, Jishnu's BIG day came ...

"Vhee...e... VHEEEE...ee!"

screamed the baby.



"I'm a mother! A father!"

shouted Jishnu. "My son!"

“Well,” said the doctor  
softly, “it’s a girl.”

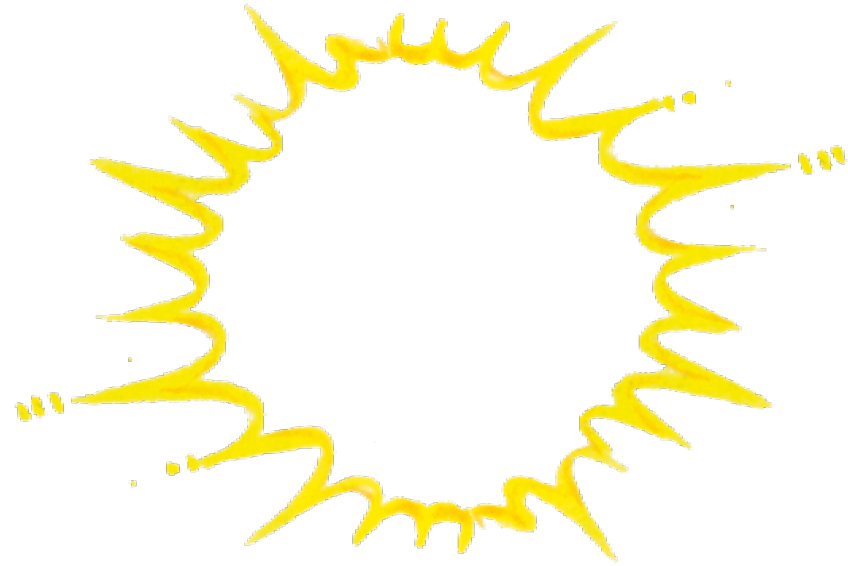


Jishnu was

**shocked!**

The god had tricked him!





“We’ll get hold of that Sun God and get you a son!” said the Panchayat members.

Jishnu looked at them. They looked determined. What if they found Sun God? What if he became pregnant again?



“A son? A daughter? How does it matter?” said Jishnu the Sarpanch in his grandest voice.

“The God made me understand that the difference between a son and a daughter is the one we create.”



Jishnu grinned at Ranu.

Ranu grinned back,

**HAPPILY.**



## THINK

Do you think if Jishnu weren't pregnant then he would have never realized the truth that daughters are as important as sons?

## ASK

Is it correct to discriminate between girls and boys? Why?/  
Why not?

## DISCUSS

Read the newspapers. What kind of problems do girls face in India? Discuss with your family and friends. Find the causes and look for solutions.

## ACT

Women hold up half the sky, but few of them hold important public positions. But there are some inspiring women who are breaking conventions and showing India the way forward, like Arti Devi of Orissa, Meena Behen of Gujarat, Sushma Bhadu of Haryana, who are all Sarpanches of their villages. Read about them and get inspired.



**Geeta Dharmarajan** loves writing for children. She received the Padma Shri in 2012 for her work in literature and education.

**Atanu Roy** is a renowned illustrator of children's books. He has illustrated over a hundred books for children.

## KATHA

Katha is a globally recognised non-profit organization ([www.katha.org](http://www.katha.org)) that has been working in the literacy to literature continuum since 1988. Our nearly 30 years of experience is in publishing and education for children in poverty.

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A3, Sarvodaya Enclave, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110 017

Phone: 91-11 4141 6600 . 4141 6610

E-mail: [editors@katha.org](mailto:editors@katha.org), Website: [www.katha.org](http://www.katha.org)

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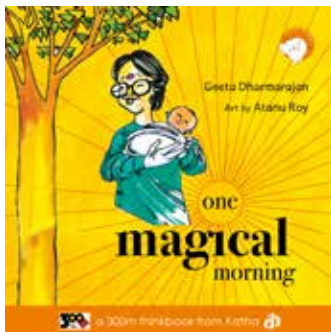
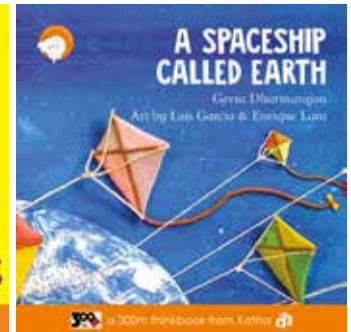
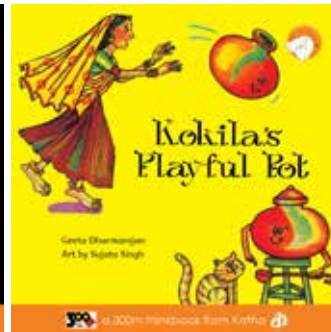
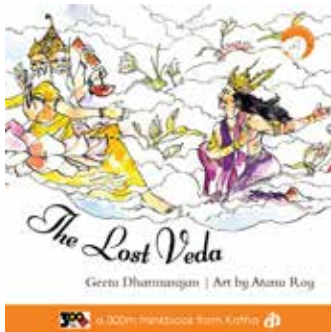
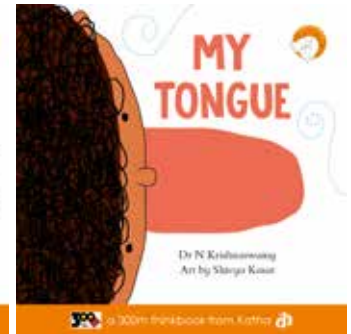
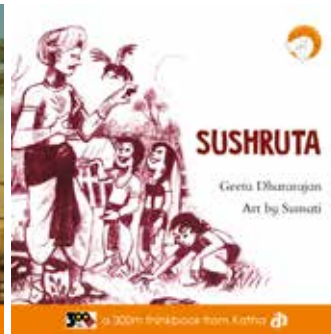
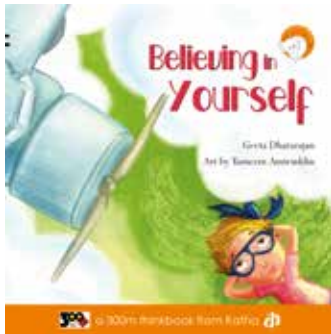
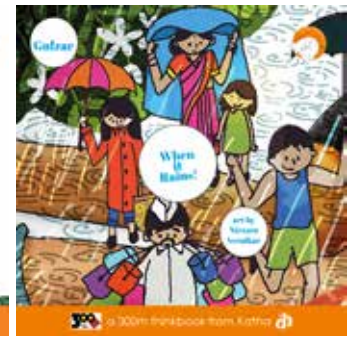
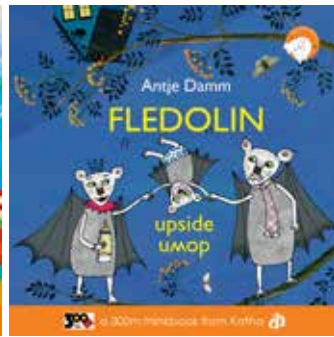
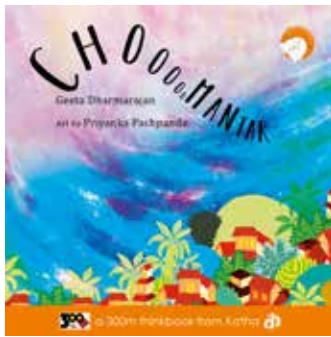
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