The Singing Tree

Written by Kenneth Youngstein
Illustrations by Bookworks India
If you go down the road and pass the small white school, you will come to a light blue house with a red roof and a green door.
Here lives Anita, her brother, Ashok and their mother and father.
Mother is in the kitchen, preparing dinner. From the window she can see Ashok and other children playing. But where is Anita?
“Ashok, where is your sister” asks Mother.
“She is not with us” replies Ashok. “She is probably sitting under the Banyan tree, behind the house.”
Just as Ashok said, Mother finds Anita sitting under the big tree, playing with her doll.
“Why are you sitting here, all alone?” asks Mother.

“Oh,” replies Anita. “The other children don’t want to play with me.”
“What about playing with your friend Sheela?” asks Mother.
“Sheela is mad at me,” replies Anita. “She said that last week she waved to me and I ignored her. Mother, I really didn’t see her.”
“What about playing with your brother?” asks Mother.
“Ashok doesn’t like to play with me,” sighs Anita. “He says that every time he throws the ball to me, I miss it.”
“But aren’t you lonely?” asks Mother.

“Oh no”, replies Anita. “I love sitting here, listening to the tree sing its beautiful songs. Listen, can’t you hear it?”
Mother listens and then looks up into the tree and sees a beautiful parrot, a cuckoo, and a mynah, all singing their songs.
Early the next morning, Mother and Anita take the bus to the local clinic.
At the clinic, they meet Dr. Ajay. Anita sits on the chair and Dr. Ajay asks her to cover one eye with her hand and, with the other hand, to show him what she sees on the chart.
Anita looks and looks and says, “I can see something, but I am not sure what it is.”
Dr. Ajay puts a metal frame on Anita’s nose. Then, he slides a round glass into the frame and asks, “Now, what can you see?”
“I can see!” Shouts Anita.
As Dr. Ajay points to each line on the chart, Anita moves her hand up or down, to the left or to the right.
That’s perfect” says Dr. Ajay. “All you need are spectacles, and you will see just fine.”
“But I don’t want to wear spectacles”, says Anita. “My friends will make fun of me.”
“But, Anita,” many famous people wear spectacles”, replies Dr. Ajay. “Just think of Saurav Ganguly and Kiran Bedi, just to name a few. Wouldn’t you like to play cricket like Saurav Ganguly, or grow up and become like Kiran Bedi. And Nobita, don’t you like him? They all wear glasses too.”
A nurse takes Anita and her mother to another room where there are many shelves filled with spectacles of all sizes and colours. Anita chooses the bright red frames.
“A good choice,” says Mother.
After one week, they return to the clinic and Anita tries her new spectacles. As she looks out the window she shouts, “Mother. I can see that woman in a pink sari, and a small dog, and a red bird on top of that house.”
“Anita” says Dr. Ajay, “I want you to promise me that you will wear your spectacles every day.”

“Oh yes,” replies Anita. “I promise. I promise. I love my spectacles and all the wonderful things I can see.”
As Anita and her mother walk home, Anita sees Sheela on the other side of the road. “Hi, Sheela,” Anita shouts and waves. Sheela smiles and waves back.
Just as Anita and her mother reach their house, they meet some of Anita’s school friends.

“Oh Anita, I love your spectacles,” says one girl.

“They make you look very smart,” comments the boy.

“Maybe I also need spectacles?” remarks one of the other girls.
All of a sudden, a ball comes rolling towards Anita. She quickly catches it and throws the ball back to her brother. “Do you want to play?” asks Ashok.

“Yes,” she replies. “But first I have something very important to do.”
Anita walks behind the house and stands under the large tree. As she looks up, she can see the parrot, the cuckoo, and the mynah.
She puts her arms around the tree and with a big smile, says, “Thank you tree. Thank you for singing such beautiful songs to me.”
Some tips for eye health and safety

Do’s

1. Wash hands regularly with soap
2. Take care while using sharp objects
3. Sleep for 8 hours
4. Get an eye check up every year
Some tips for eye health and safety

**Don’ts**

- Touch your eyes frequently
- Share towel, handkerchiefs etc.
- Look at the sun directly with naked eyes
- Play dangerous games like gulli-danda