

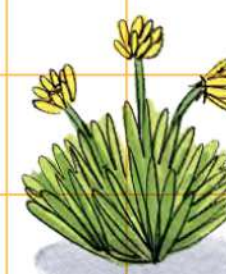
# How I Feel

## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN PICTURE BOOKS

Books with social and emotional learning enable readers to navigate their worlds, emotions and issues — be it understanding, compassion or kindness. Books that incorporate aspects of SEL into the art and words help children have more positive attitudes towards oneself, others, and their everyday lives.



Research shows that SEL increases prosocial behaviours (such as kindness, sharing, and empathy), improves student attitudes towards school, and reduces depression and stress among students.



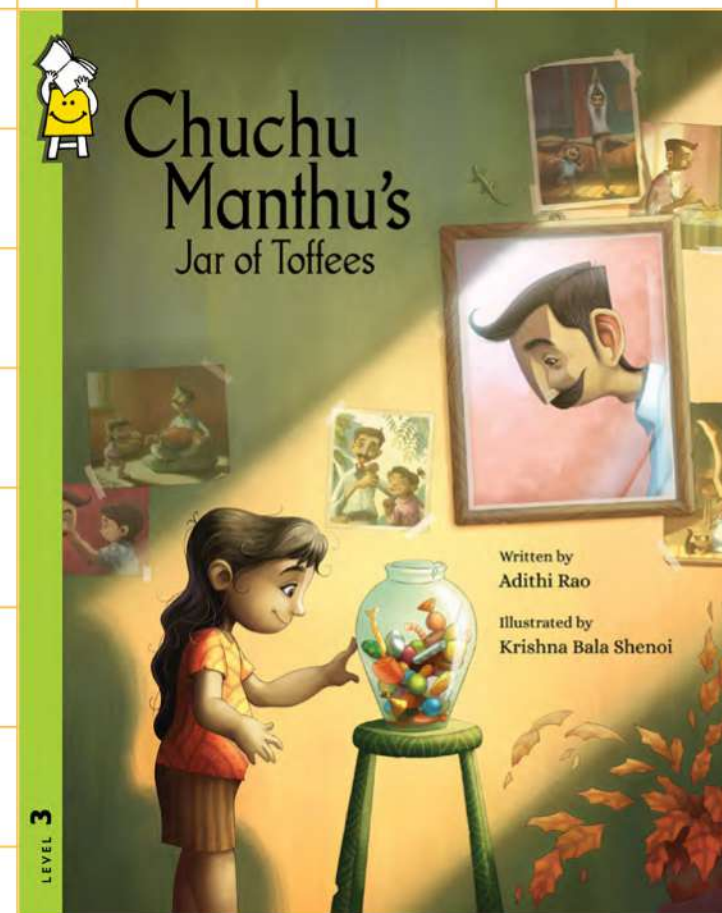


# RELATIONSHIPS

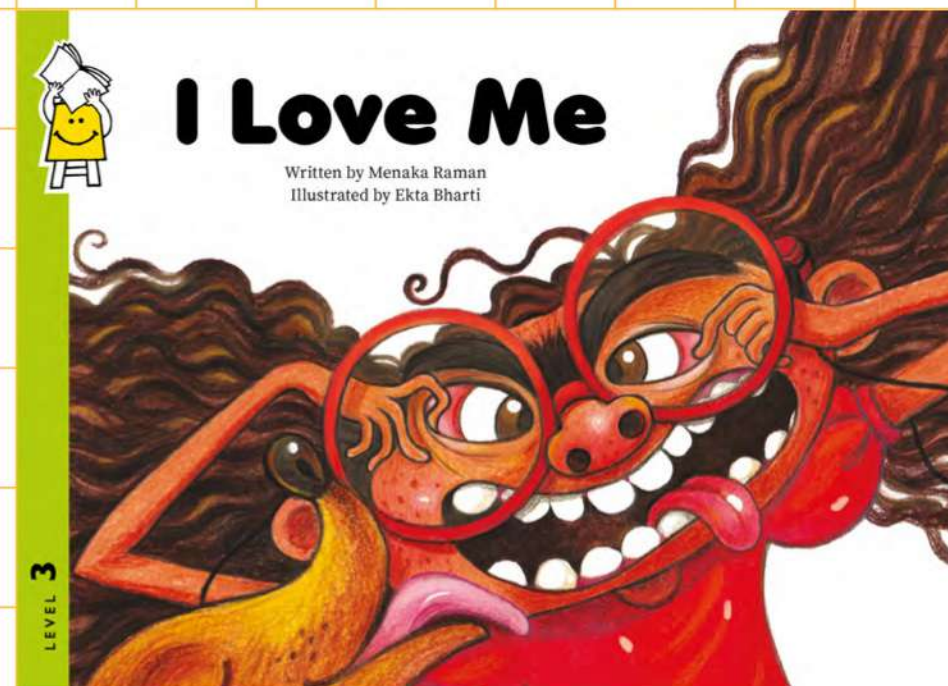
Children's picture books are antidotes to isolation in times of emotional distress... disabled children, children responding to violence, queer children and those responding to mental health issues feel "seen" and find language to express complex socio-emotional feelings that is accessible and close to their experience.

**Raviraj Shetty,**  
occupational therapist  
and author

Books with elements of SEL also help readers have more positive social behaviour and connections with people around them, including enhanced confidence, empathy and persistence.



Preet is grappling with the loss of her favourite uncle, her best friend, and finds a way to grieve and deal with his death through the same acts of kindness he carried out everyday.



Rubina has just moved to a new home and doesn't know anyone there. No one wants to play with her. Can Rubina find a friend of her own? A book that celebrates self love.

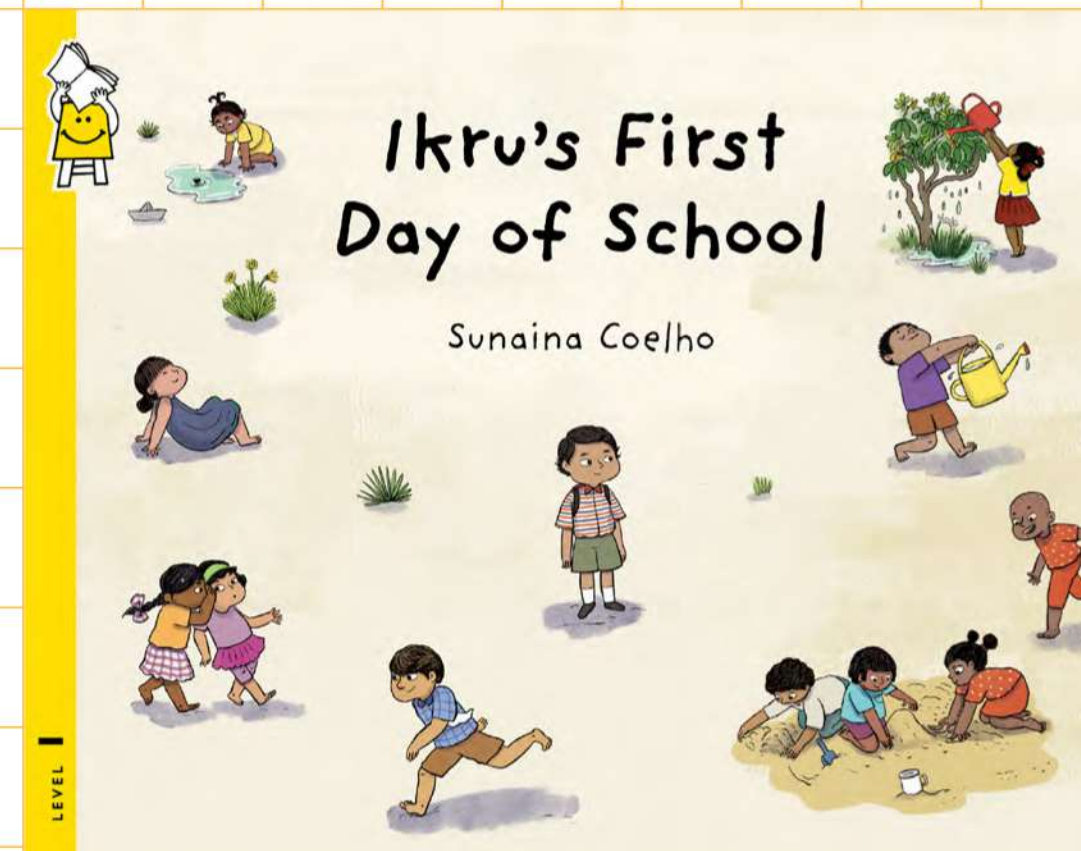


A determined little worm, who has often been shunned for his difference and ugliness, sets out to make new friends. A story about friendship and identity.

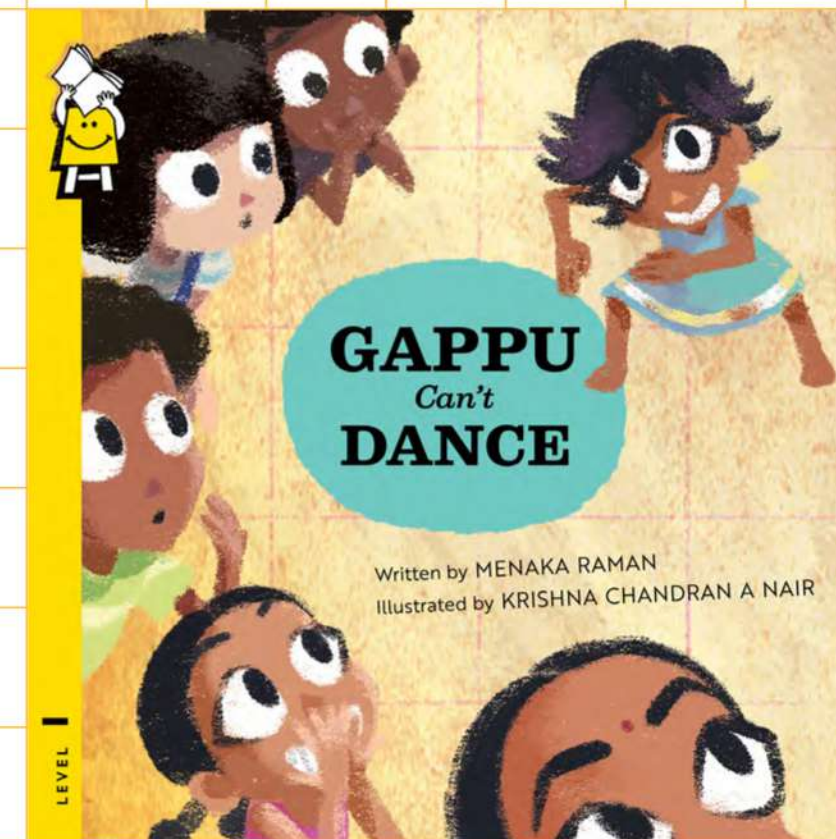


# SCHOOL STORIES

School is one of the primary places where students learn social and emotional skills and setting SEL stories in schools and classrooms helps readers situate themselves within the story and through that in real life.



This wordless picture book invites readers to navigate their own experiences, fears and joys of what their first day of school was/would be like through Ikru's eyes. The book helps ease children into unfamiliar situations and environments.



A young girl's inability to follow dance steps and instructions isn't seen as a mistake she should be reprimanded for nor is Gappu made invisible by being sent to the back row but instead she is celebrated.



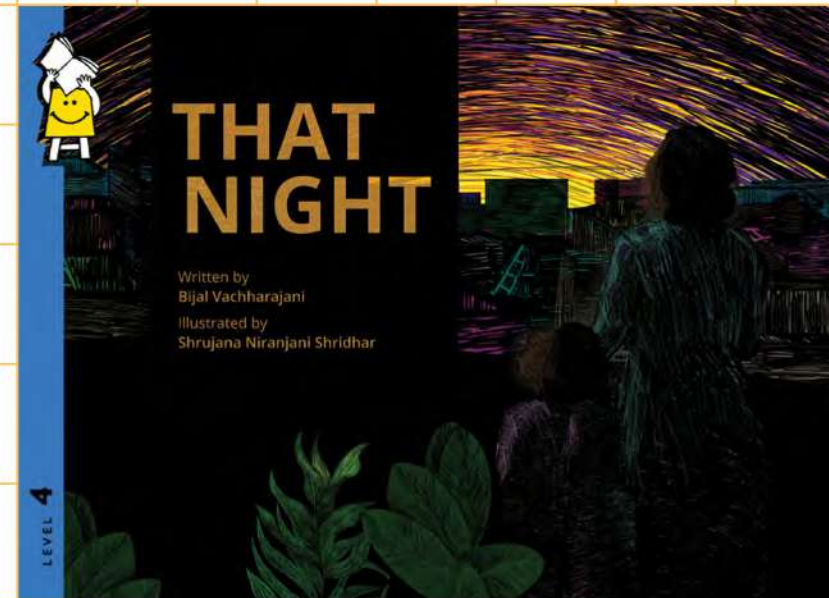


# CONFLICT

SEL books help children deal with the realities that might arise around them or equip them with the skills to comprehend darkness and setbacks. Because contrary to what adults think, children often know when something big is happening around them. They can feel the tension around them and the books we create are often a direct response to it.



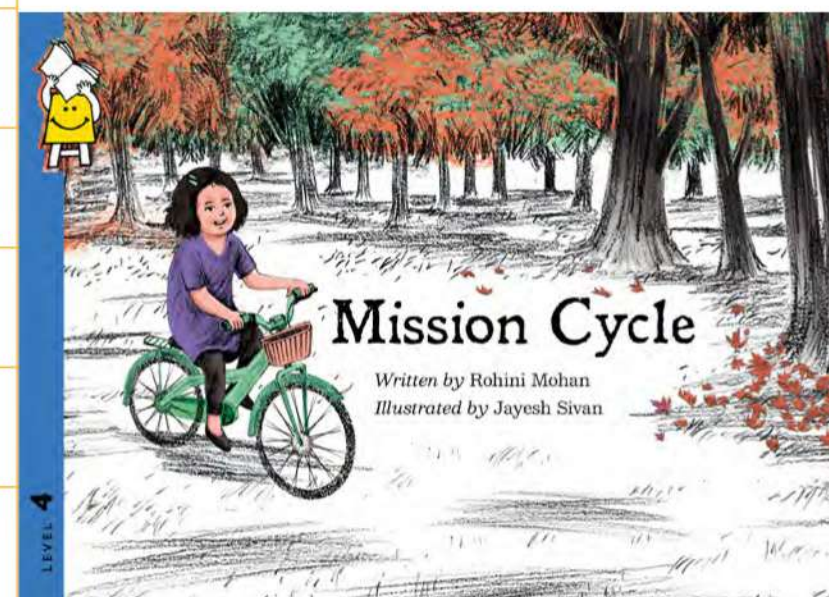
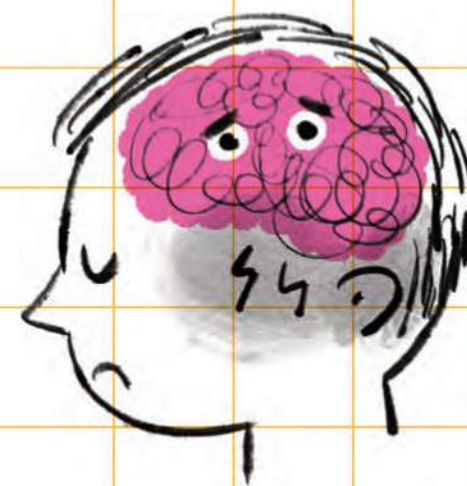
This poignant book talks about the refugee crisis and what leaving behind everything you know and love can elicit in kids going through something similar, as told by young Rubina.



Both these books tackle the issue of conflict without metaphors and shadows. While the former directly addresses themes of violence and fear, the latter approaches it more gently by talking about disruption and the alien-ness a child can face in the midst of curbs and curfews.



Darkness is manifested quite literally in this award-winning book, which explores the lingering effects of depression through the eyes of a younger sibling watching her brother cope with the darkness in his mind.



Kids are already scared, so let's give them some tools to cope with it beyond telling them not to worry about it all... scary stories tell kids there's always something worse, and in effect come across as more honest... Scary tales don't warp kids; they give them a place to blow off steam while they are being warped by everything else.

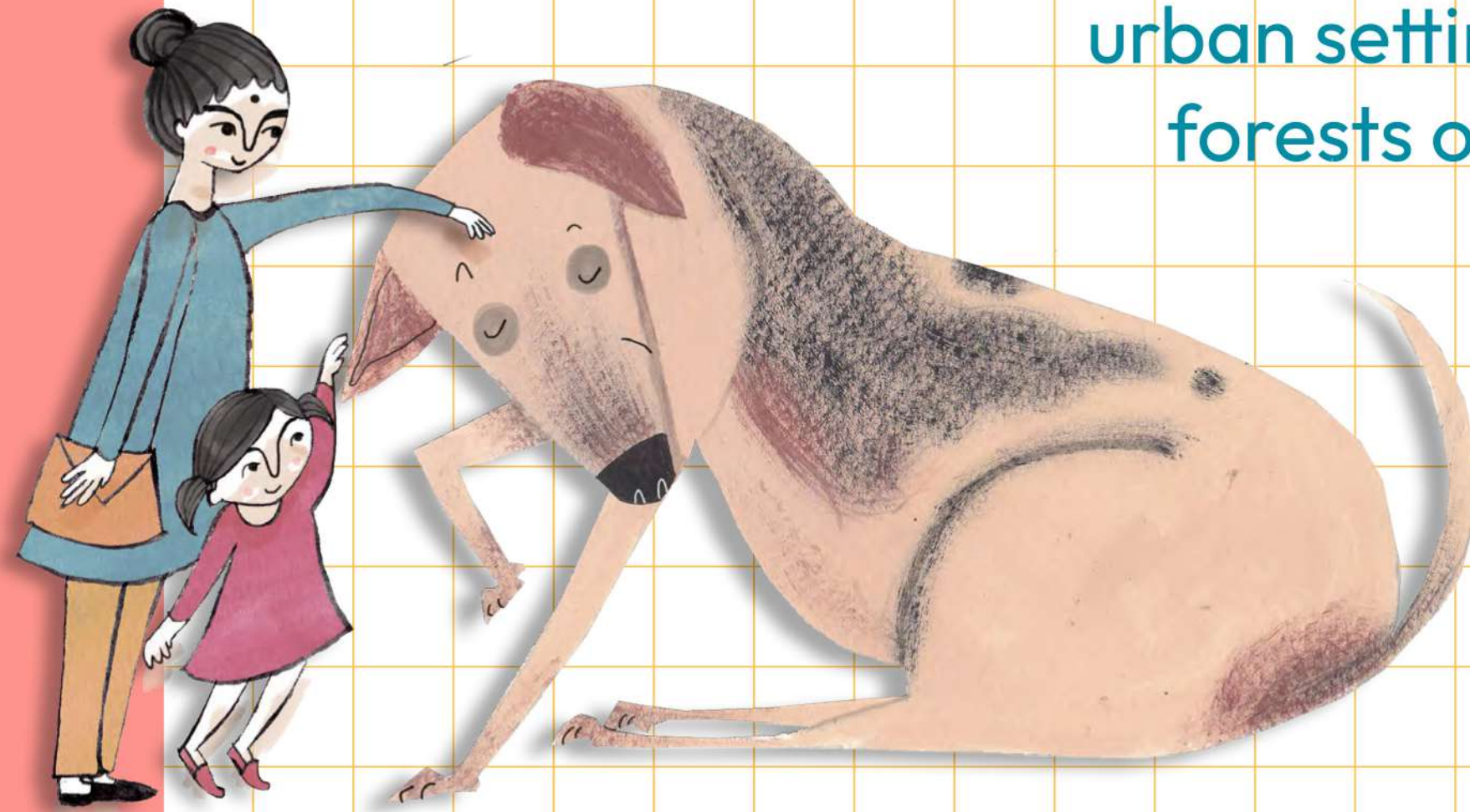
**Greg Ruth,**  
comic book writer



## EMPATHY TOWARDS ANIMALS

Children who are compassionate towards animals grow up to be empathetic adults. Several studies show that children who live with pets have a more developed emotional intelligence (EI), a greater ability to effectively understand, manage and express one's feelings and interpreting those of others. In short, they possess a greater ability to be kind and compassionate.

Our books reflect lived experiences of being around animals, whether it's in an urban setting, in farms and forests or on the streets.

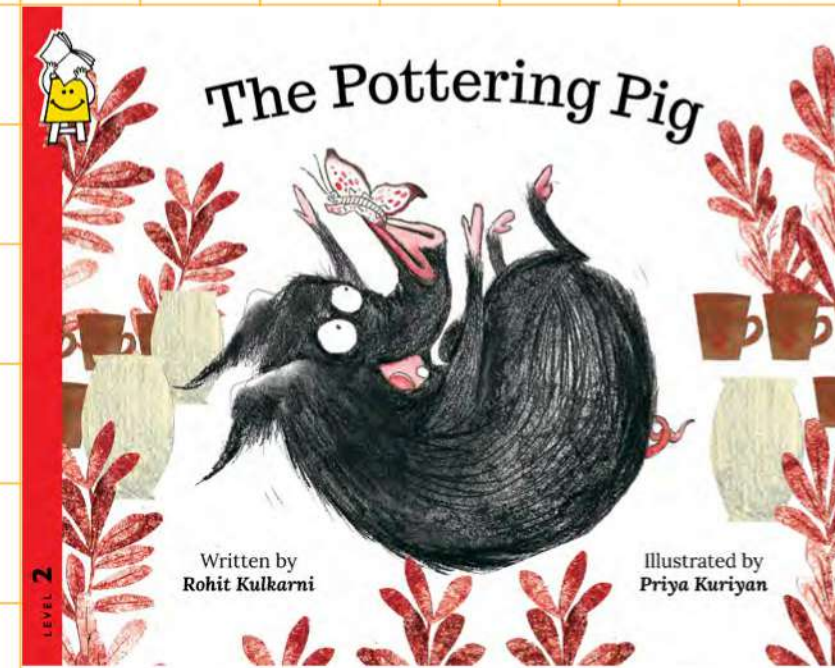


These stories offer readers an appreciation and understanding of the kind of animals around them.

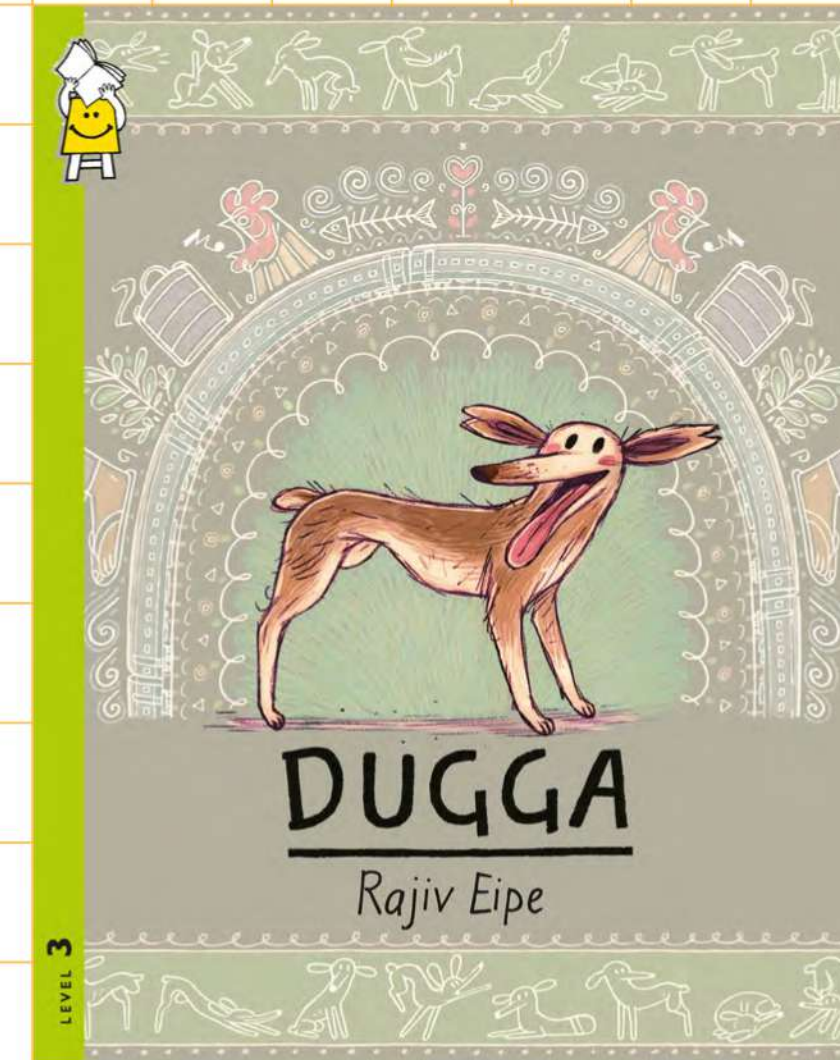




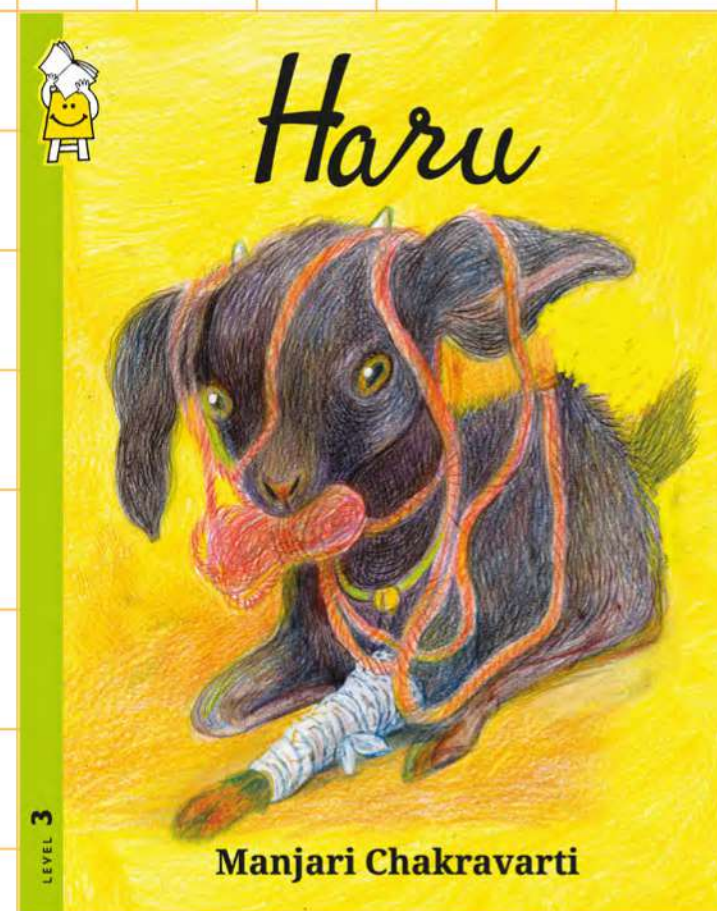
A heartfelt tribute to the street dogs of Mumbai, who are as much the citizens of the city as humans are. All of these stories make a strong case for a more compassionate and inclusive world.



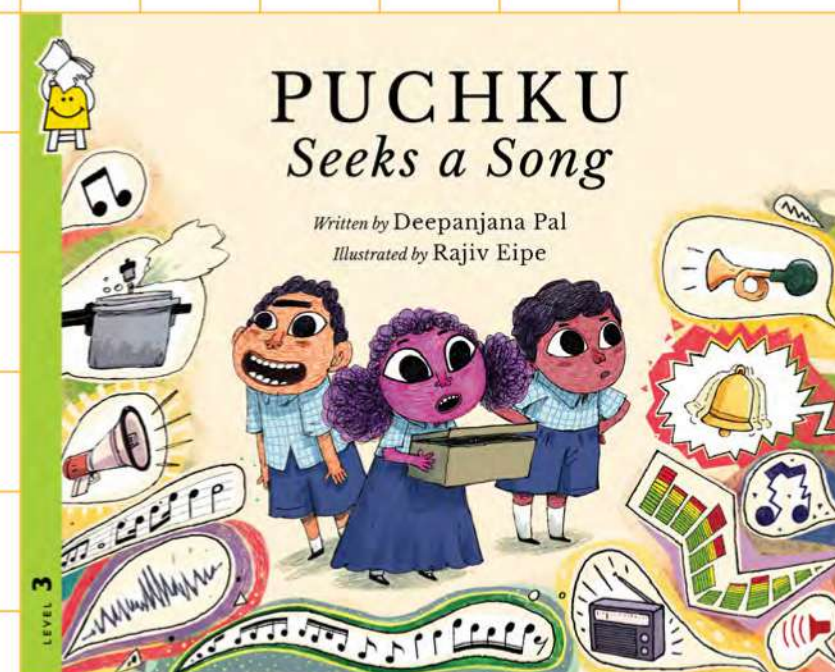
This story is inspired by the life of Lalitha, a pig who used to live in Pune with a real-life potter. Naughty and rambunctious, the pottering pig is often blamed for trouble at the potter's shop but often we just need to let pigs be pigs.



This wordless book demonstrates the life of a little dog on the street called Dugga who is curious and young and always up for an adventure until something turns Dugga's life upside down. With empathy and care of the humans around her, Dugga finds her way back to joy.



Haru, an injured, lonely goat, finds his way back to love, cheer and compassion.

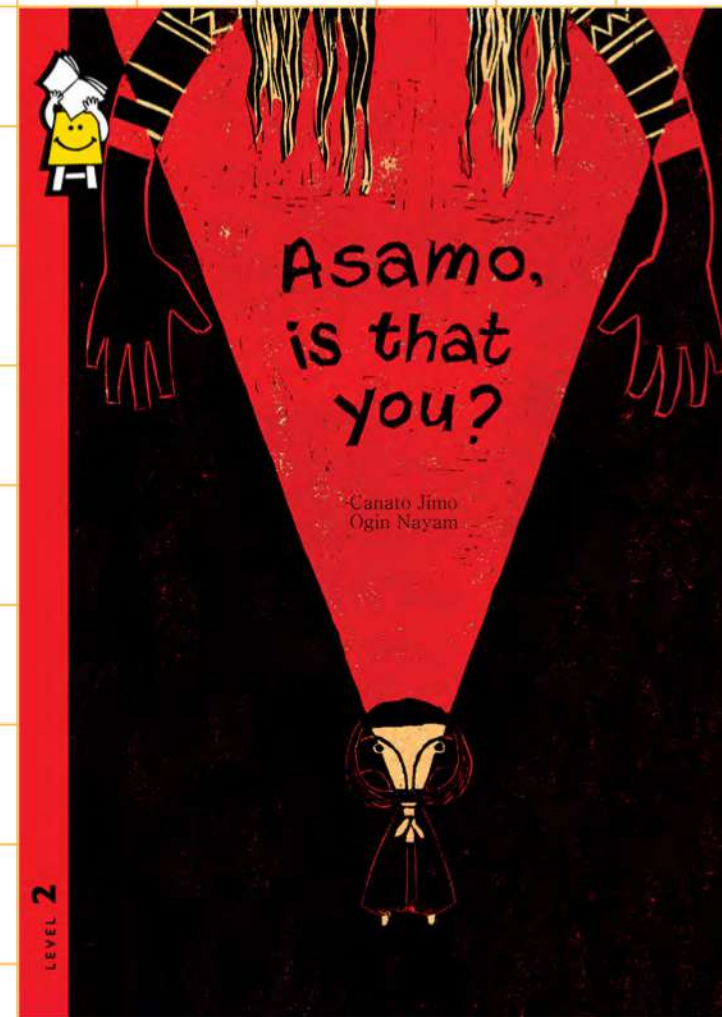


The second in the popular Puchku series, this charming book centres around three friends who want to help a baby bird find her song. The hope is that eventually we can create more Puchkus, Boltus and Dodlas who approach the world and its inhabitants, winged or otherwise, with gentleness, compassion and curiosity.

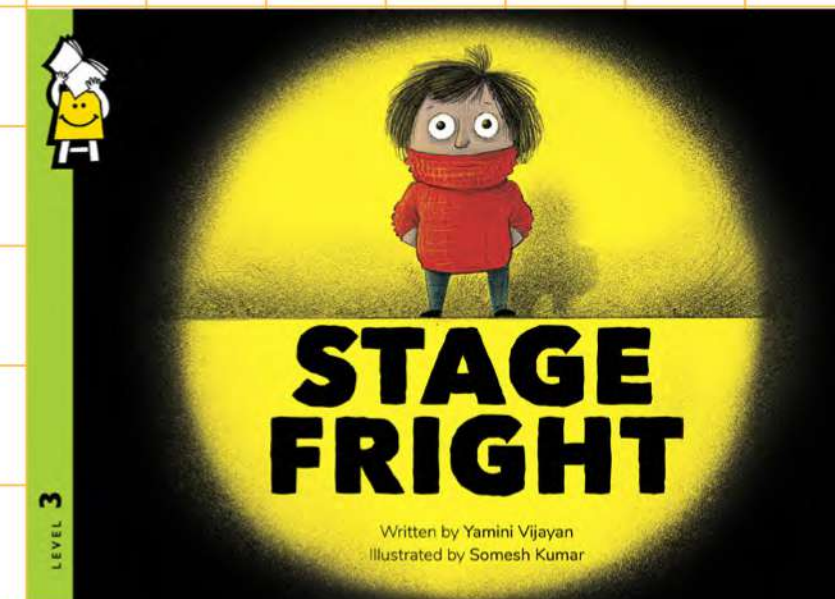


# FEAR

SEL books offer space for children to explore complex and dark emotions like fear, abandonment, darkness, death and much more, sometimes with a little help from friends who remind us that we are never alone in that darkness.



Yummyum sets out to look for her friend Asamo in the dark only to be confronted by monsters, high and low. But by using her senses and calling the monsters out for what they look like, she humanises them and challenges any fear.



Champa finds a friend in Basant when she has to sing on stage in front of lots of people, something she is terrified of doing. Will Champa be able to confront her fear and sing at her school's Annual Day?

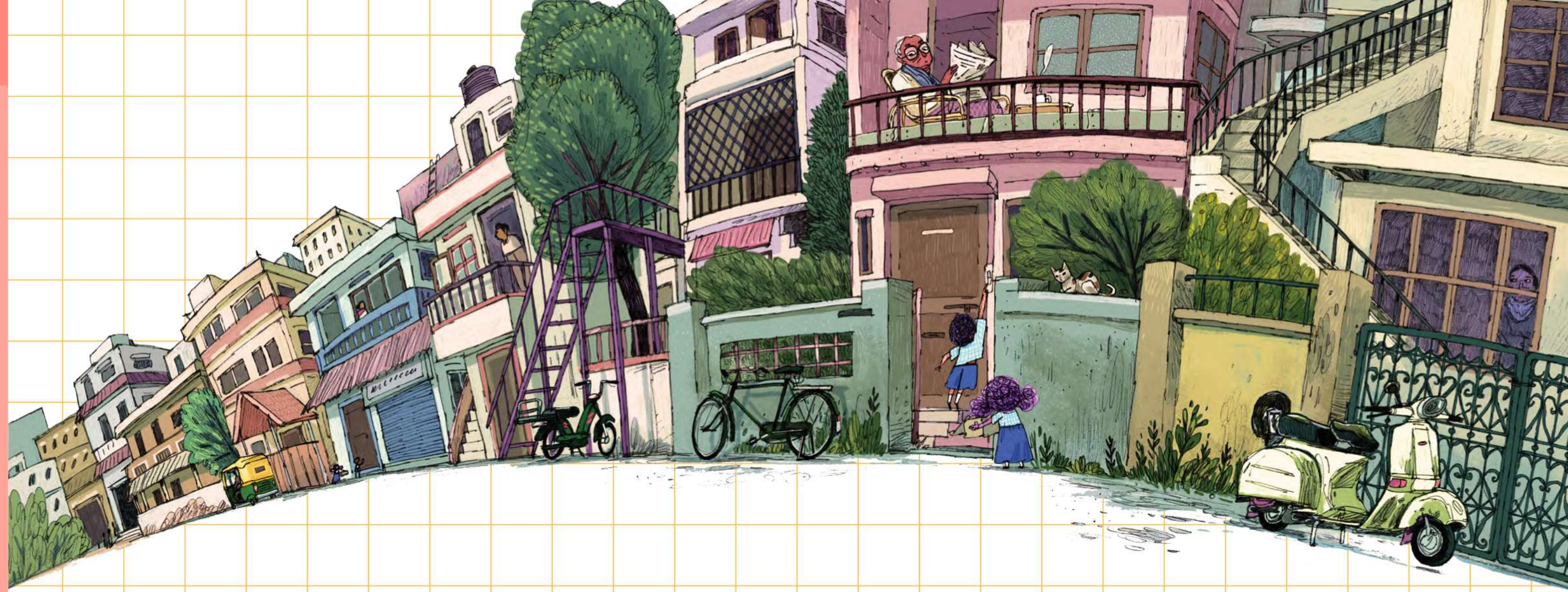
A popular way to help readers escape the fear of the everyday or learn to confront their own demons is through literature that features monsters.

Children often engage their own imagination and experience imaginary adventures with fictional monsters in order to build resilience for real life.



If we engage with characters who are nuanced, unpredictable, and difficult to understand, then I think we're more likely to approach people in the real world with an interest and humility necessary for dealing with complex individuals.

**David Kidd,**  
lead author of the Harvard study: "Reading Literary Fiction Improves Theory of Mind"



## Facing the world with books

While literacy and education can be powerful motivators to hand a child a book, reading a book can do so much more than just educate a child. A 2013 Harvard study on adults found that people who read literary fiction performed better on tasks like predicting how characters would act and identifying the emotion encoded in facial expressions much more than those who read non-fiction or didn't read at all. These speak to the ability to understand others' mental states, which scientists call Theory of Mind.

This is why our wonderful creator community is always infusing our books with humour and absurdities, with complex emotions and interactions, with a balance of reality and whimsy.



### *Illustrations*

#### **Ikru's First Day of School**

Sunaina Coelho

#### **Gappu Can't Dance**

*Written by* Menaka Raman

*Illustrated by* Krishna Chandran

#### **My City, My Dogs**

*Written by* Abodh Aras

*Illustrated by* Sumedha Sah

*Photographed by* Hashim Badani

#### **Puchku Seeks a Song**

*Written by* Deepanjana Pal

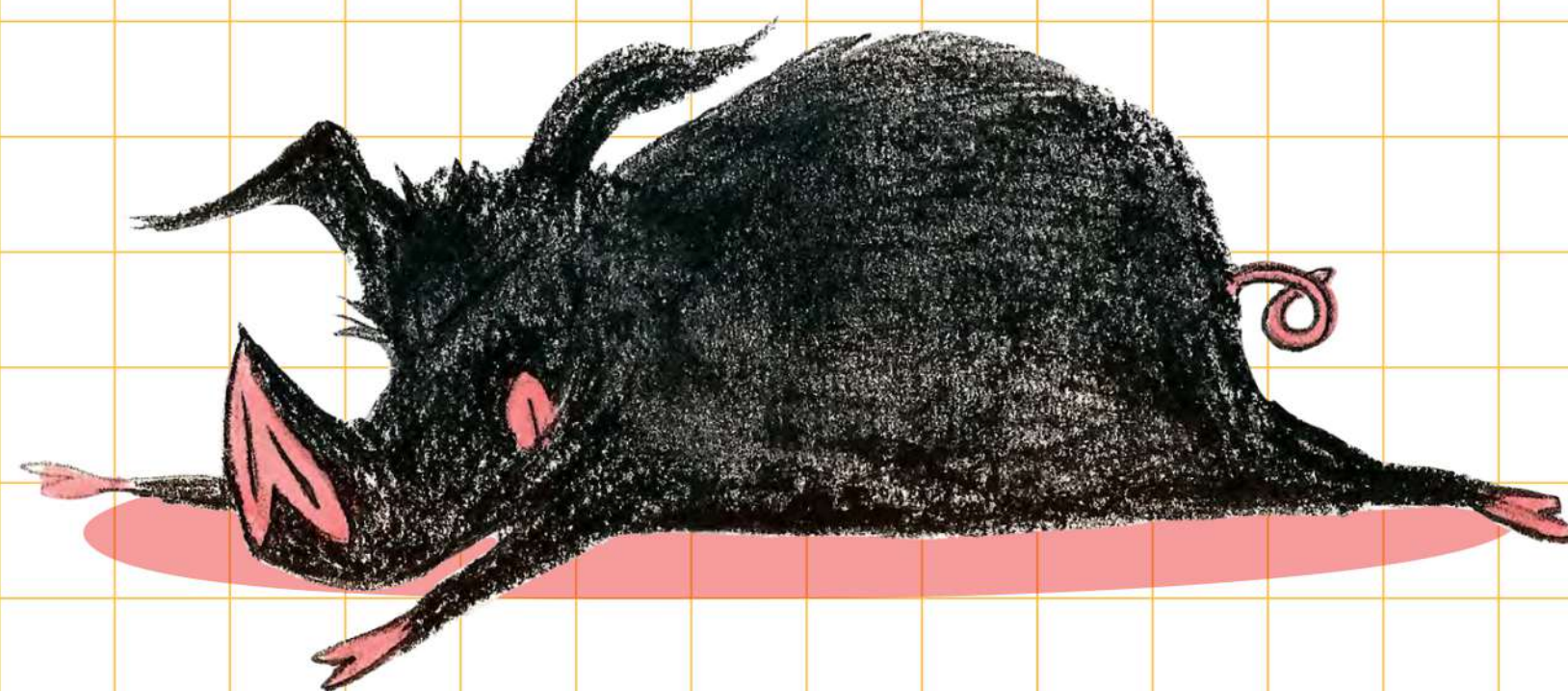
*Illustrated by* Rajiv Eipe

#### **The Pottering Pig**

*Written by* Rohit Kulkarni

*Illustrated by* Priya Kuriyan

Pratham Books is crafting nuanced SEL books that can change the way our readers approach their worlds and the world at large. Our books turn children into more mindful and sensitive adults even as they inherit all the problems we leave behind. We create books in the hopes that our readers are equipped to deal with all that is yet to come.



## **Pratham Books**

For the last 18 years, Pratham Books has been creating engaging picture books in multiple languages and formats to help children discover the joy of reading — in mother tongue languages, set in locations they can recognise, featuring characters with whom they can identify, and telling stories that capture their attention and fuel their imagination.