

# A RIDE INTO THE FUTURE



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It's a bright school day again and most of the children in the community are off early for classes...

As usual, Grace, a young bright girl can only look from the corridor of her home...

Oh God. How I wish I was also dressed in my uniform to join them go to school.  
Hmm.

Grace! Where are you? You are running late.



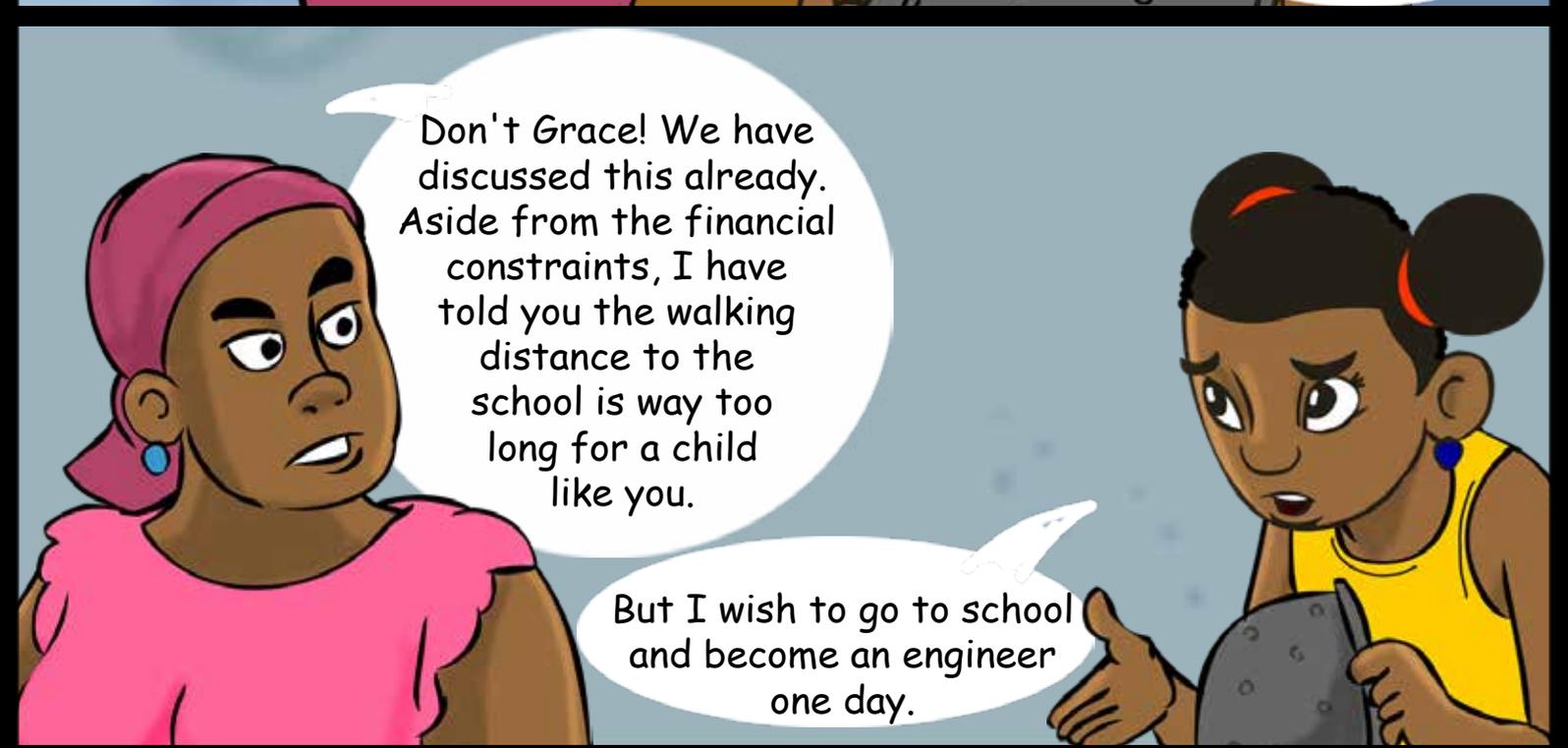


The bowl must return to Maame Serwa

Yes mother.

And what's with the dropping face?

Mother...when can I also join my friends to...?



Don't Grace! We have discussed this already. Aside from the financial constraints, I have told you the walking distance to the school is way too long for a child like you.

But I wish to go to school and become an engineer one day.



That schooling and engineer ambition can rest for now. You do as I say. Pick the items and off you go.

Grace sadly leaves the house and makes her way to the town centre to deliver the goods...

All I want is to be in school. How long will I continue to be left behind?



There you go Aunty Serwaa.

Thank you Grace. Regards to your mother.



The whole morning, as usual, was spent on errands, house hold chores, a little break and more chores...



Soon, school was over and most of the kids are returning home...

Hello Grace, we are back. Hope to see you soon.

Sure. Consider me there.

Great! We have some new books you might be interested in.



That Evening at Beatrice's home...

So what's the answer to this one?

It's Egypt!

Oh wow. You know the answer? That's incredible.

Thanks.

You are smart and I am wondering why you are still not in school, Grace.

Well, Hmm..It's a long story Beatrice. But I am hopeful that one day this will pass.

I really look forward to that.

Soon, It was time to go...

Bye Grace.

Alright. It's running late. I need to go home.

Sure. It's always been fun studying with you.

Early the next day, Grace wakes up to the noise of excited kids in the neighborhood.



It's Saturday! I wonder what could be so exciting out there at this time.

It's Abeiku, a visitor to the town having some fun with the children taking turns on his bicycle...



Ok. That's enough.

Hahaha. You fell again!



Let me show you how to ride... hands free.



Maami. Can I go play with my firends outside, please?

Sure. Right after your morning chores.



Quickly, Grace gets the chores out of the way...

Abeiku spots Grace staring at them from distance...

Would you like to try your luck riding?

No way. She's a girl. She can't ride. We couldn't.

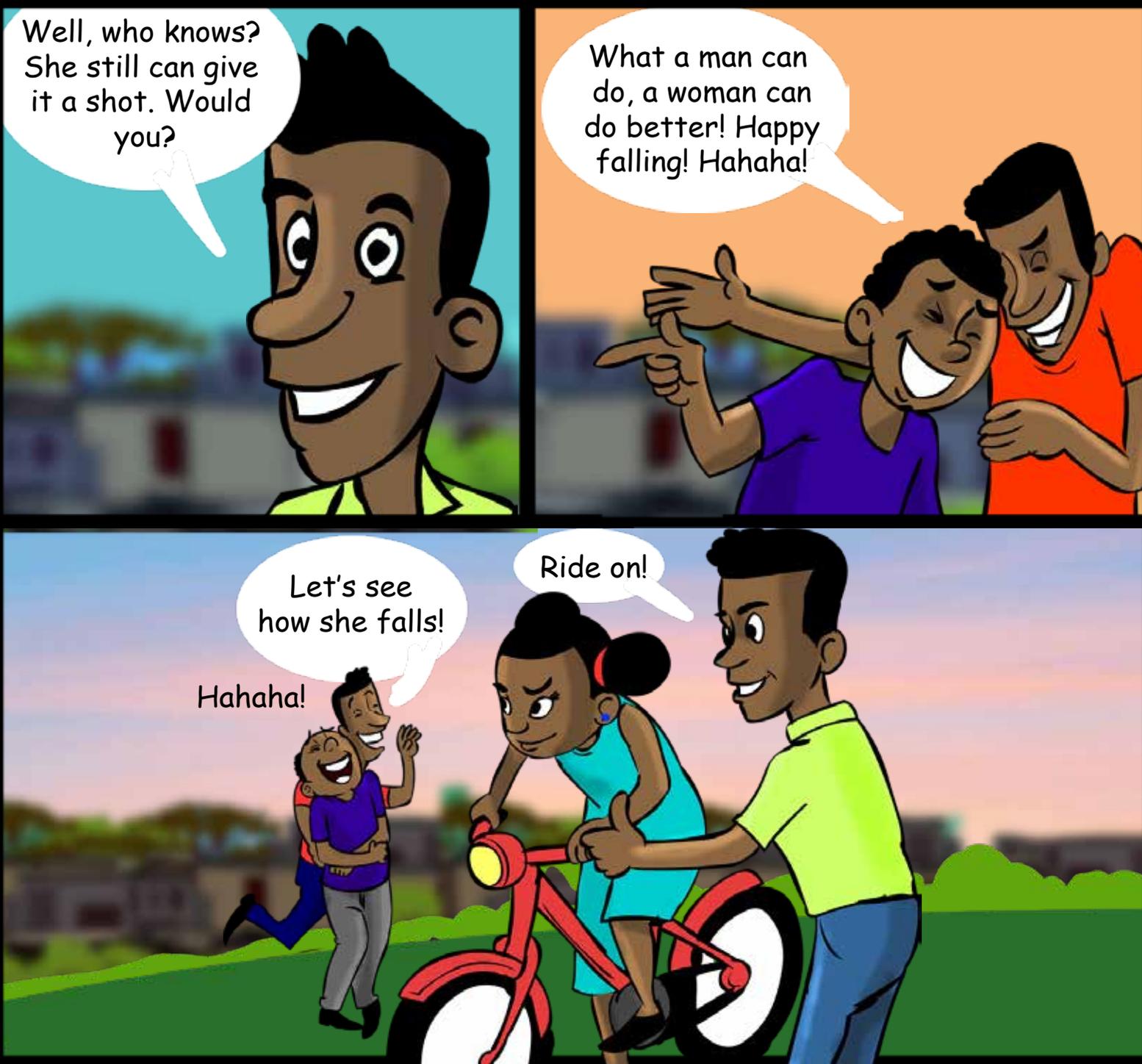
Well, who knows? She still can give it a shot. Would you?

What a man can do, a woman can do better! Happy falling! Hahaha!

Let's see how she falls!

Hahaha!

Ride on!



Wha..what!!!  
Unbelievable!  
Is she riding??

I can't believe  
my eyes!

Watch me boys. I'm  
making it to that tree  
and back. Hahahaa

Gracious God! The  
girl is riding the bike!

Hahaha. I am loving  
this. Go Grace! Show  
the boys how to do it.



OMG!  
She rides  
Indeed!



Indeed, Grace is doing what the boys failed to do. She rides comfortably back in one piece...

This is unbelievable!  
She rides like an expert!



How was that?

Awesome Grace.  
You beat the boys  
in riding the bike!  
You have surprised  
us all with your  
skill.

I...I can't  
believe this.



Can you do that  
again? Hahaha.

Sure.  
Why not?

Grace picks herself on the bike and once again paddles her way even further and with more confidence.

The boys had no choice than to follow her with cheers and jubilation.

Yohooo!  
Yes!

Hurray!!  
This is awesome!  
The first female  
bike rider in town!



Soon it was time to return to the big city. Everybody was sad. Just when they were getting used to Abeiku and the fun he brought to the kids, he had to leave.

I have a little surprise for you Grace. My mum has permitted me to gift you with this bike!

Oh! Wow!

We learnt you are a smart kid but having challenges to go to school due to the distance.

We hope you find this gift useful.

Absolutely! I am so speechless Abeiku. Thank you so much!

Mother, I guess the worry over "long distance" issue is over! I can now start going to school.

Absolutely! My girl!

The bike indeed was a blessing. Now she can, not just ride to school to get an education, but also run a few more errands for the family with much ease.

I will drop off these items  
before heading to school.  
I can't be late again.  
Hahahaha.



Grace soon became popular in school and would be found giving a few of her friends a ride home after school.

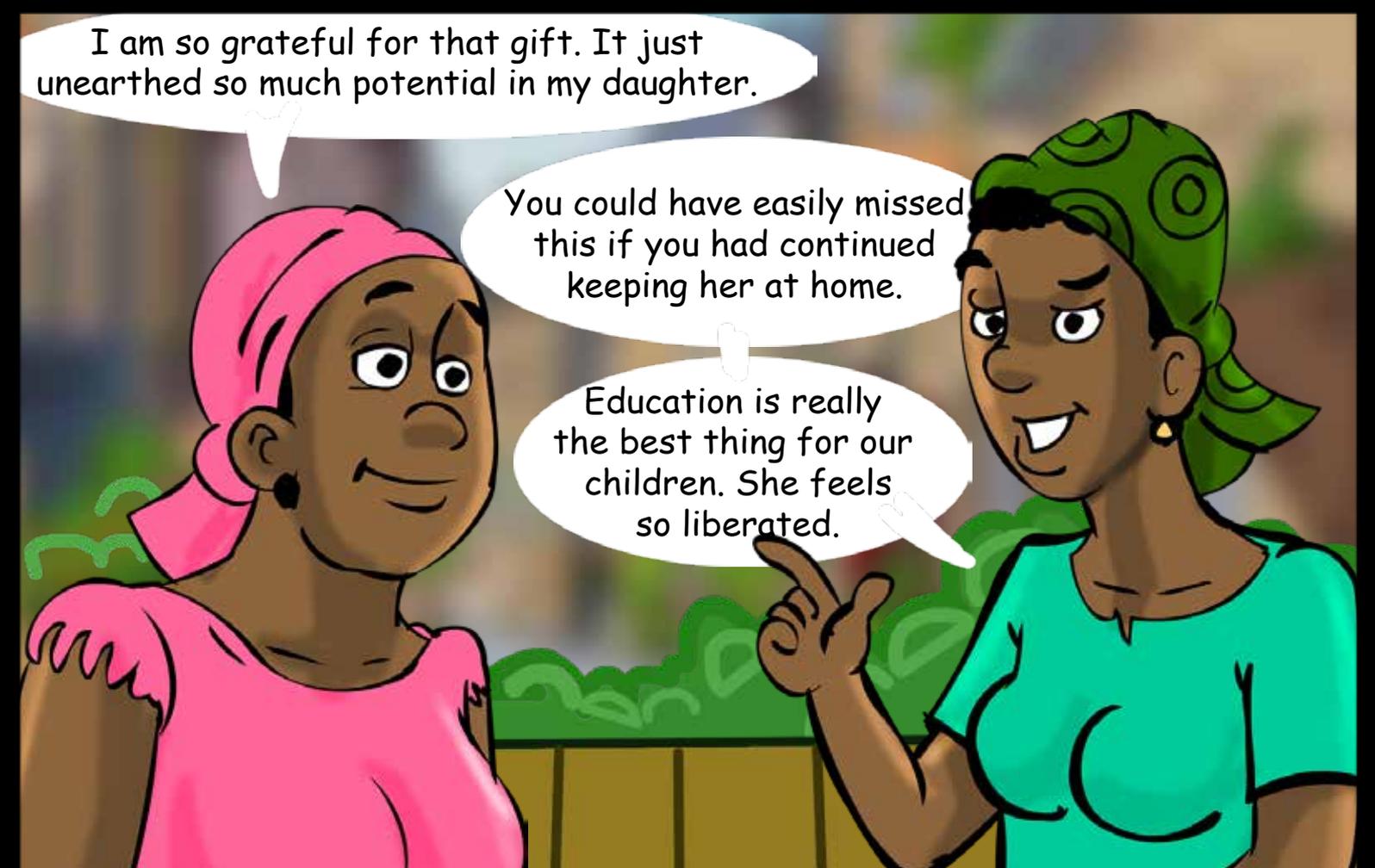


I must say, your daughter really looks different. She looks empowered.

Yes. And she has been so popular earning a nickname, "The Girl on the red bike". Imagine that!

She's also been helping other kids remain punctual at school with that bike.

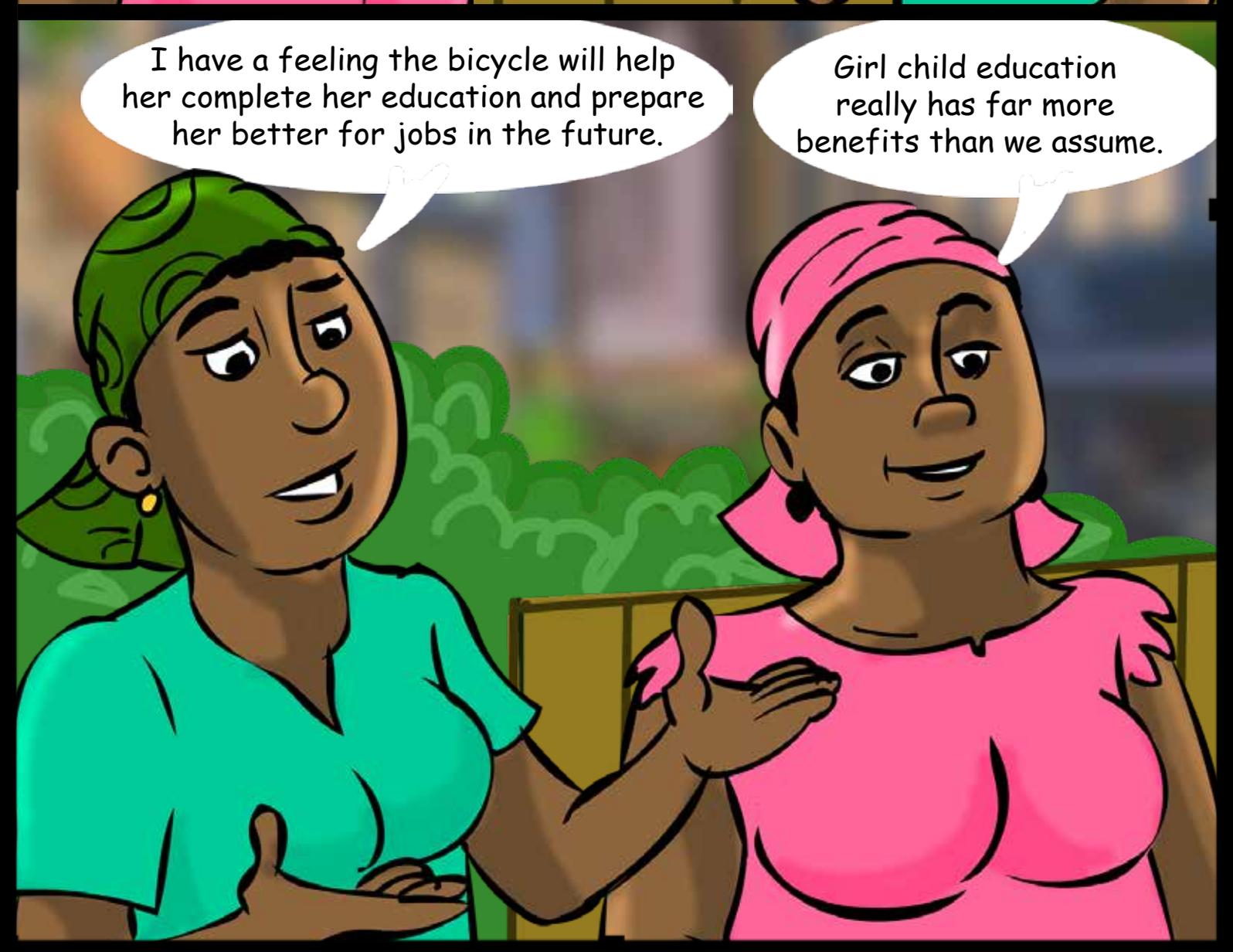




I am so grateful for that gift. It just unearthed so much potential in my daughter.

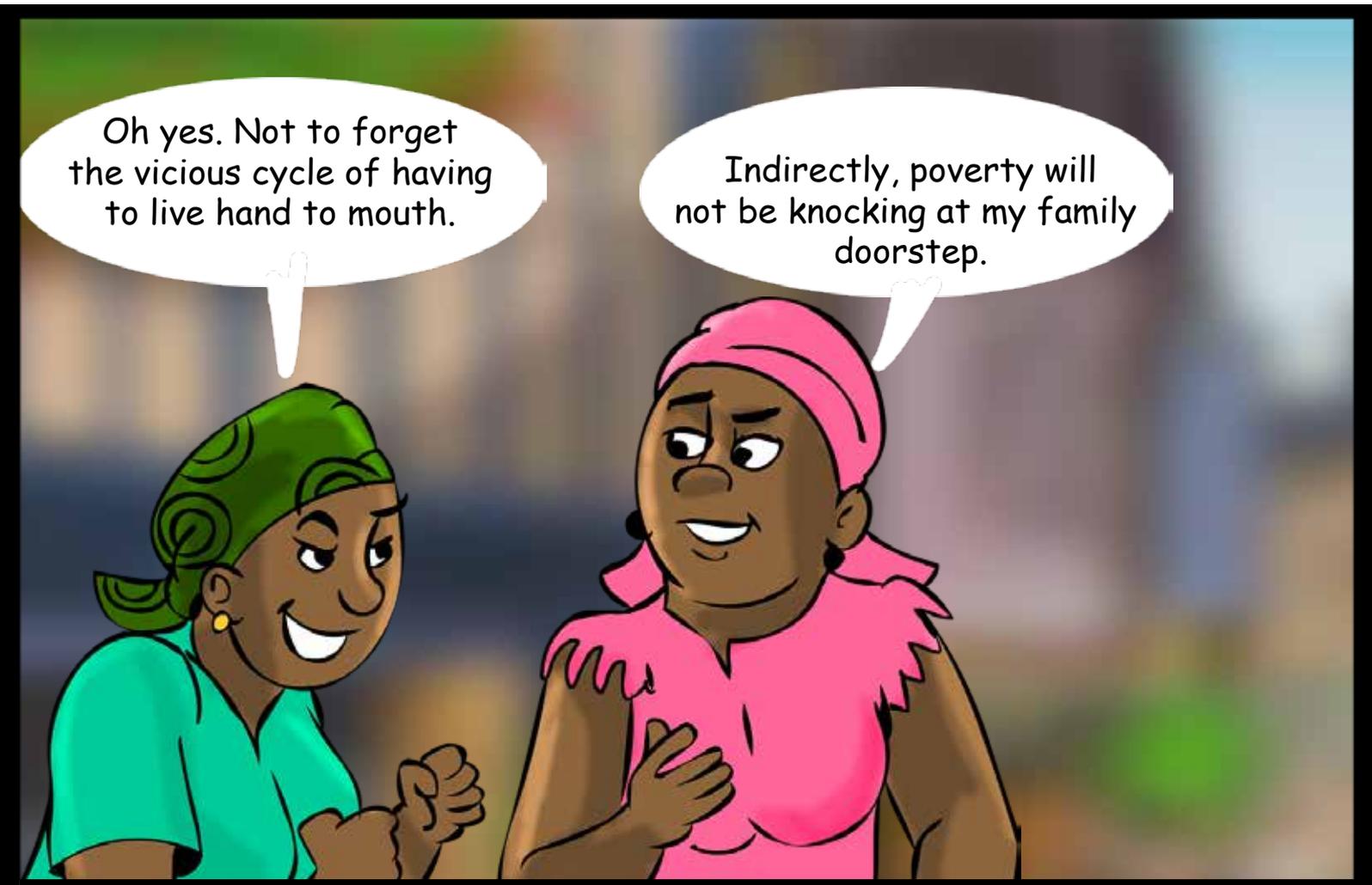
You could have easily missed this if you had continued keeping her at home.

Education is really the best thing for our children. She feels so liberated.



I have a feeling the bicycle will help her complete her education and prepare her better for jobs in the future.

Girl child education really has far more benefits than we assume.



Oh yes. Not to forget  
the vicious cycle of having  
to live hand to mouth.

Indirectly, poverty will  
not be knocking at my family  
doorstep.



Hahahaha. Thanks  
to Education!

Yes ooo.  
Hahaaa.

Indeed, with that gift, Grace managed to successfully ride through her primary to senior education. She passed and qualified for higher education in the city...



That's my daughter!

Another Good news. mother. I passed with flying colours. I am headed for higher education.



I am so proud of you. I have no doubt you are going to sail through all the challenges ahead.



Life in the city will be quiet different. We need to prepare our list of items to buy, to prepare you for the next phase of your education.

Thank you so much mother. I am truly grateful for the support.

A few weeks later, Grace and her mother were in the city. They took the opportunity to meet Abeiku and her mother...



I must say your thoughtfulness has really helped my girl complete her school.

We are glad to hear that. Abeiku told me she was a bright child. The best we could do was that gift.



Unlike many others, Grace arrived in school less tired, focused in class, punctual on daily basis. It really helped her improve her performance.



We are happy how far it has brought her.



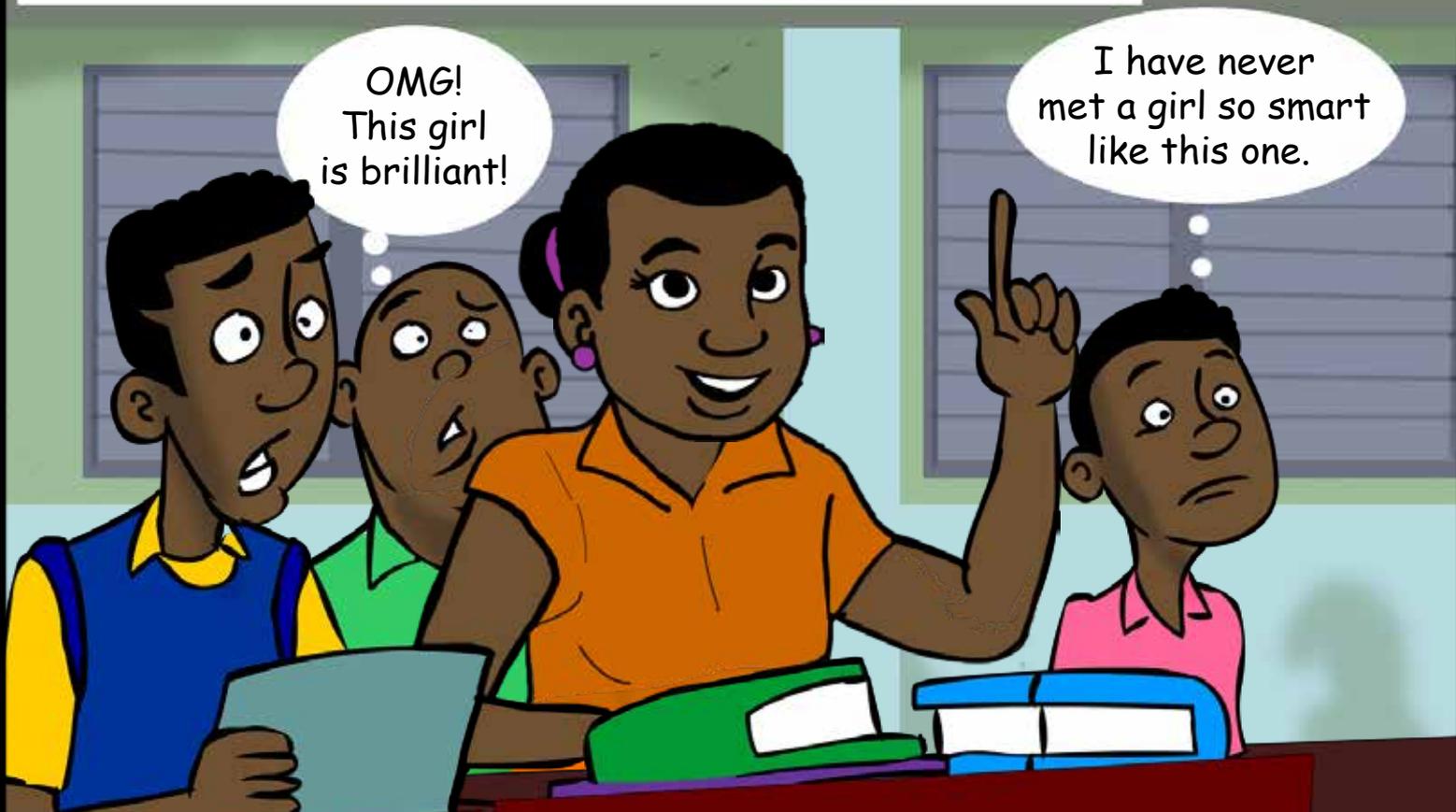
I believed in you the day Abeiku told me about you. You have really proven me right. Go finish off your education and be what you aspire to be.

I will madam. Thank you so much.

After the visit, Grace and mother drove straight to the university campus, It was a whole new beginning for her...



Even though Grace found herself in a male dominated class, she was not deterred. In fact, she proved more of a tough student to beat for the top scoring positions in most of the subjects.



Her success and 'First Class Student' achievement did not come as a surprise. Grace became a successful engineer after graduating from the university...



She never forgot her roots. She always went back to the town twice a year to support more students into education by donating bicycles to the school children.

Bicycles will help children commute safer to school, keep them in school, improve student's performance, increase self-esteem, especially among girls.

I was empowered to sail through my education with the bike. It is my hope and dream that these gifts will do same for all the children here, especially, the girl child.



There is a rapturous applause from the gathering...

I really am inspired.  
I will make sure my  
girl child gets educated  
to become like her  
one day

Grace beams with smile as she looks on at a girl attempting  
to ride the bike for the first time.

You can  
do it girl.

My mum tells  
whatever I focus  
to do, I can do it.

That's right  
dear. Keep  
the hope alive.



With determination,  
a girl can do and become  
anything she dreams  
of. Just keep riding  
on.



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