



STORY SUMMARY

In a Tanzanian village school, Anna struggles to keep up. Her walk home takes so long that when she arrives, it is too dark to do her homework. Working through the lunch hour instead, she misses a visit from the bicycle library. Anna hides her disappointment, happy to help her friends learn to balance and steer. She doesn't know a compassionate friend will offer her a clever solution—and the chance to raise her own cloud of dust.

Alma Fullerton's free-verse novels for juvenile and young adult readers have earned her multiple nominations and awards. Her first picture book, *A Good Trade*, has been a White Ravens Choice, a Bank Street Best Book, and a nominee for the OLA Forest of Reading Blue Spruce Award and the Kentucky Bluegrass Awards. Alma lives in Midland, Ontario.

Brian Deines is a fine artist and the award-winning illustrator of over 20 children's books, including *A Bear in War*, *Bear on the Homefront*, and *Elephant Journey*. A graduate of the Alberta College of Art, Brian lives in Toronto, Ontario with his wife and daughter.

BICYCLES IN AFRICA

In many parts of Africa, cars, trucks, and planes abound. However, about 50% of the people in the southern African countries, including Tanzania, do not have access to motorized transportation. In these places, bicycles play a vital role in giving isolated people access to schools and jobs. An increasing number of communities have bicycle libraries where individuals can sign out bicycles in the same way they might sign out a book.

LEARN MORE THROUGH THESE ORGANIZATIONS:

Bicycles for Humanity

www.bicycles-for-humanity.org

Village Bicycle Project

www.villagebicycleproject.org

Bikes for the World

www.bikesfortheworld.org

World Bicycle Relief

www.worldbicyclerelief.org

Worldbike

worldbike.org

PAIR THIS BOOK WITH:

- *The Red Bicycle* by Jude Isabella and Simone Shin (Kids Can Press, 2015)—Picture Book
- *Pedal It! How Bicycles are Changing the World* by Michelle Mulder (Orca Books, 2013)—Nonfiction Picture Book
- *Wheels of Change: How Women Rode the Bicycle to Freedom (With a Few Flat Tires Along the Way)* by Sue Macy (National Geographic, 2011)—Juvenile Nonfiction
- “Calgary bicycles donated for children in remote Nunavut hamlet” (*The Calgary Eyeopener*) www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/calgary-bicycles-donated-for-children-in-remote-nunavut-hamlet-1.3114501—website article and radio interview

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THEMES

Compassion, Bicycles, Cooperation, Tanzania, Education

BISAC CODES

JUV030010 JUVENILE FICTION / People & Places / Africa

JUV039220 JUVENILE FICTION / Social Issues / Values & Virtues

JUV039060 JUVENILE FICTION / Social Issues / Friendship

JUV041000 JUVENILE FICTION / Transportation / General

BEFORE READING

Discuss

- How do you feel when you don't get something you want? How do you act? Could you act differently?
- Have you ever been able to solve a problem for a friend? How did it make you feel?

Pair and Share

Give students a few minutes to tell a partner something they like, or a memory they have, about bicycles. Then have the pairs present in turn, each student telling the class what his or her partner shared.

AFTER READING

Discuss:

- Why did Anna have to do her homework at lunchtime?
- How did Anna feel when she realized all the bikes were gone? How did she act?
- How did the other students show compassion for Anna? How is showing compassion different from just feeling sorry for someone?
- Why did Mohammad give Anna the bike once he reached his home?
- How will sharing her friends' bikes on the way to and from school change Anna's life?
- How is Anna's school day different from yours? How is it the same? Where can you find clues about this in the book? Where could you learn more about rural schools in Tanzania?

ACTIVITIES

- Discuss the differences between realistic fiction and an informational text. Write the characteristics of each on individual strips of paper, using a different color for each kind of text. Model how students can identify *In a Cloud of Dust* as realistic fiction by placing the appropriate characteristics on or near it, then looking at the dominant color. Leave this activity in your literacy center for students to practice on other books.

- Listen to the radio interview "Calgary bicycles donated for children in remote Nunavut hamlet" listed on the previous page. Discuss the similarities and differences between this story and *In a Cloud of Dust*. Have the class compare the characteristics of a news story to those of a picture book.
- Drawing on Anna's story and their own experiences, ask students to list ways in which they think bicycles make the world a better place. As a class, explore the websites of some of the organizations listed on the previous page. Have students hunt for examples of bicycles making a difference. List each example along with its source.
- Through guided discussion, have your class come up with strategies for hosting a bicycle drive at your school. Model the writing of a procedural text that lays out their plan. As you prepare for the drive, you can have students create many other kinds of media, including promotional posters, informational pamphlets, oral announcements, and letters to local news media or politicians.
- Using student input, write a chant about a bicycle ride using action words from the text like "bumpety-bump" and "careen." Discuss how the rhythm of a chant can feel like the thing it is describing. Come up with actions and perform the chant.
- Tell students that *In a Cloud of Dust* is written in free verse, a kind of non-rhyming poetry. Have them study the way the text is laid out on the page and compare it to other picture books. Ask them to suggest reasons why the author and book designer may have decided on this text placement.
- Ask students to imagine what Mohammad's school day was like: the walk to school, morning classes, the football (soccer) game at lunch, the visit from the bicycle library, learning to ride, and sharing his bike with Anna. Have them write or tell the story from Mohammad's perspective.