

Night on Signal Hill

Reni Astuti



The Asia Foundation



Gendis and her brother like to wait for Father to come home from work. Their father is a motorcycle taxi driver in the city. He says there are more customers in the city than in the village where they live.



Because of the pandemic, Gendis is studying from home. More precisely, Gendis is studying on a hill. Gendis borrows Father's phone. and goes to a nearby hill to connect to the internet.



Today Gendis has to go to the hill to study again. All her friends have already left. But Gendis needs to wait for Father to get home. He has promised her that he'd arrive home early.



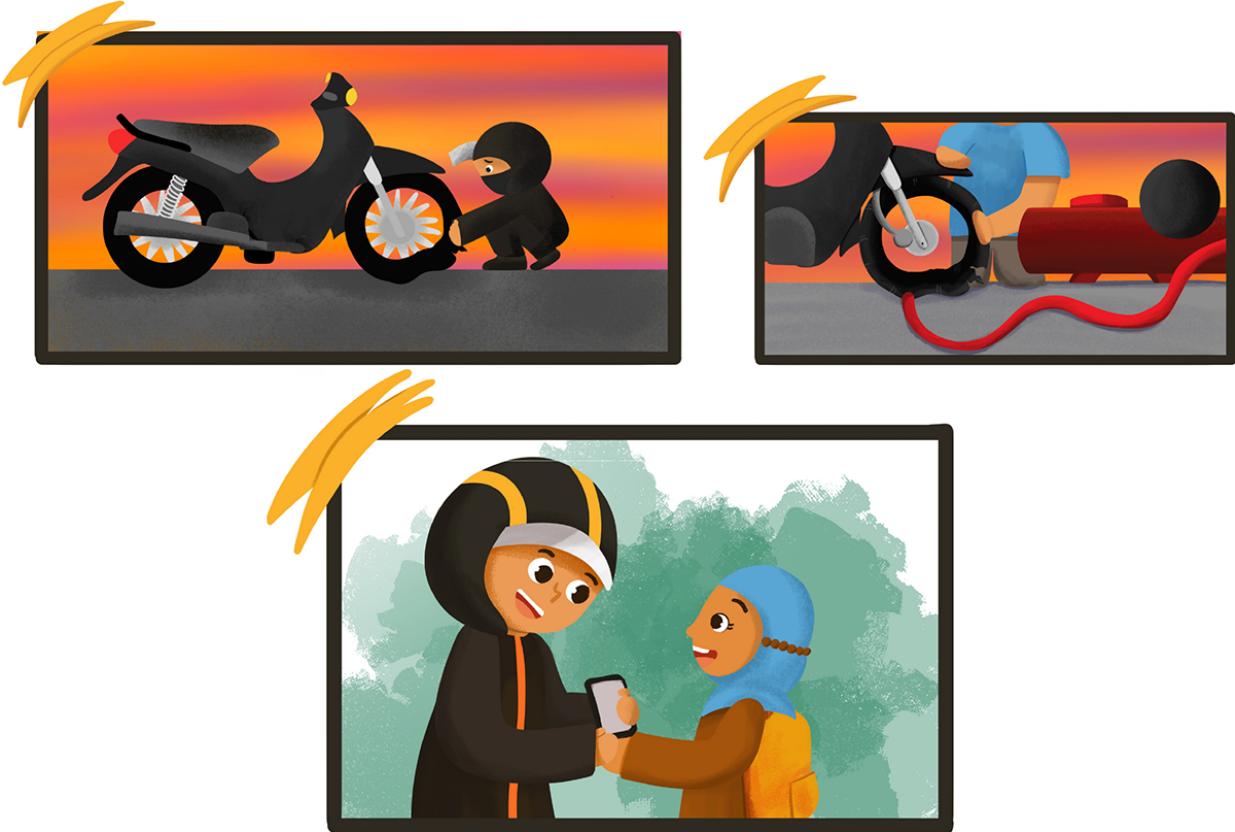
Mom asks, “You are still waiting for Father, right? Please, take care of Akbar for a moment, Gendis! I will bathe Rara.” Gendis leads Akbar to the porch. She can wait for Father there.



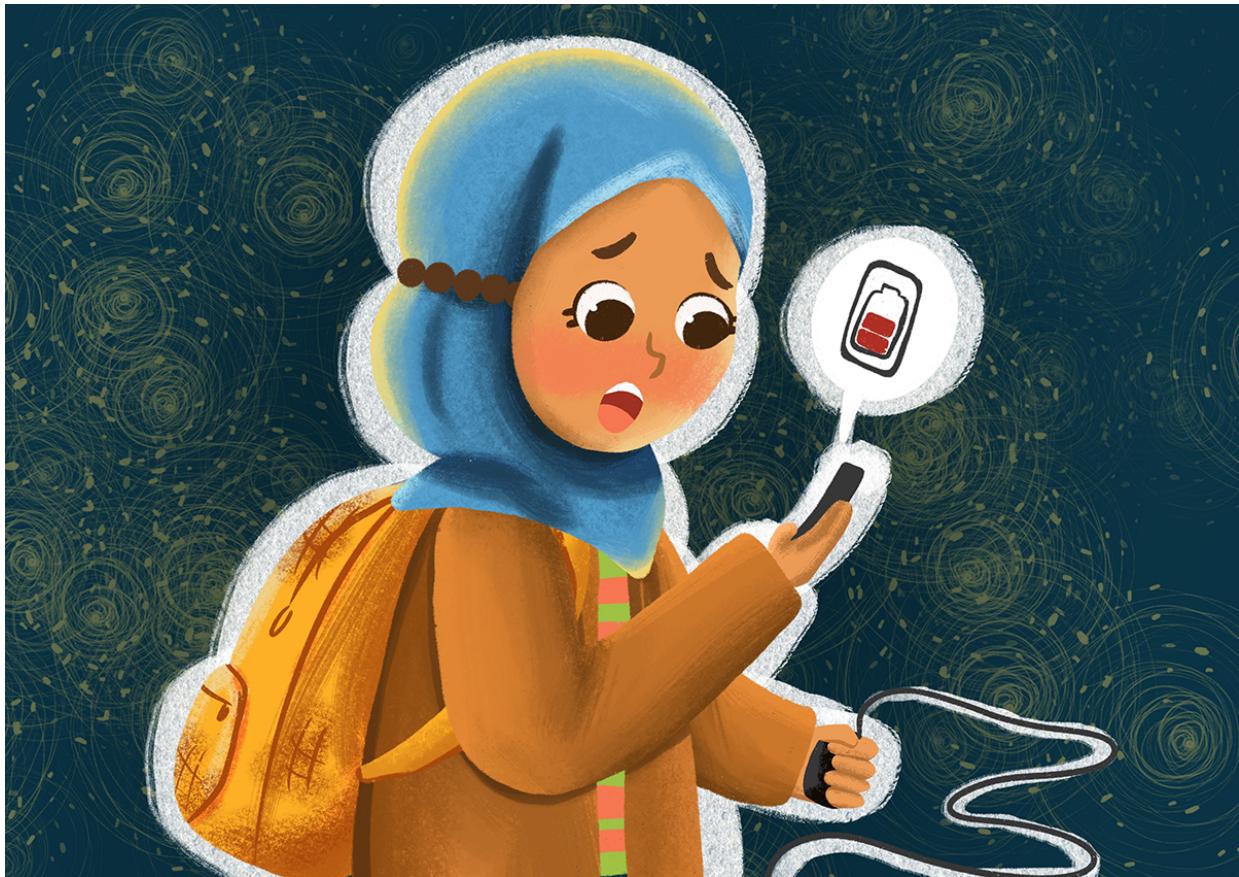
The day's getting late, and it is afternoon now. Where's Father? Gendis keeps looking for him on the street near their home. Then she hears a familiar sound.



Father! He's home at last. Gendis carries Akbar inside in a hurry. At the same time, Mom finishes giving Rara her bath. Gendis then runs back outside. "Oh, Father, where have you been?"



It turns out that Father had a flat tire. He had to find a repair shop that was still open.“Gendis, there’s a message from your teacher.” Father hands his phone over to Gendis.



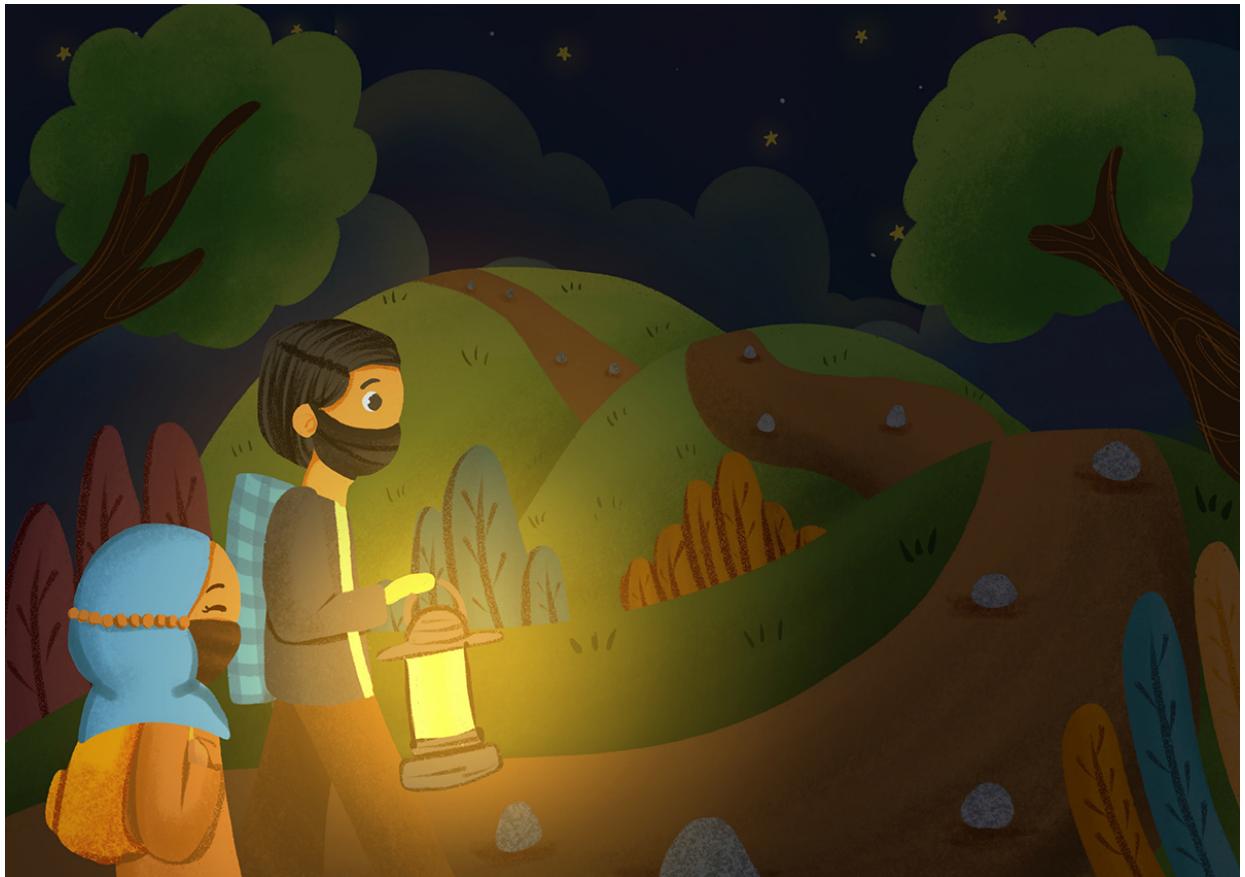
Gendis eagerly takes the phone. But... oh, the phone battery is almost dead! Gendis has to plug in the phone to recharge it. That takes a long time, so she won't be going to the hill until late. Most of her friends will probably

be home by then. Gendis is scared to study on the hill by herself.

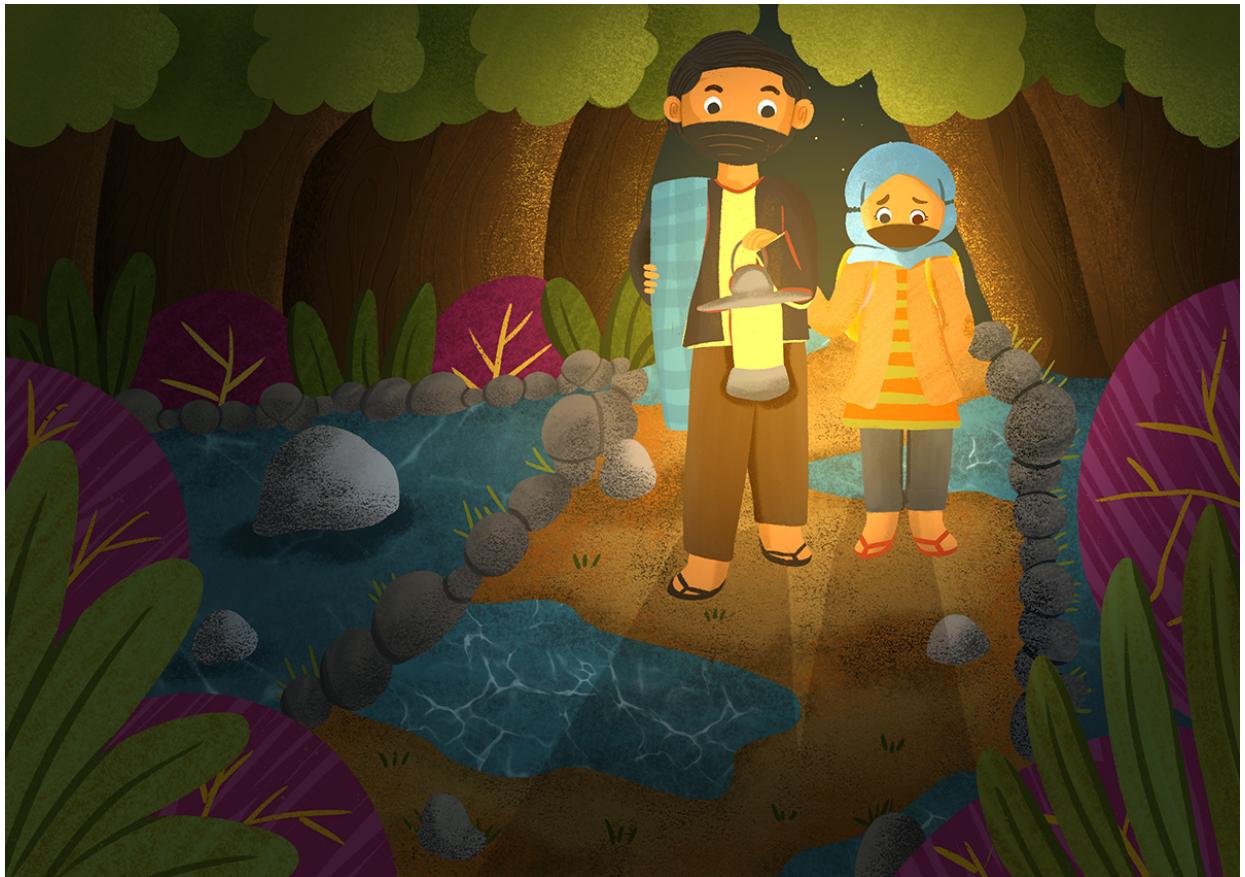


Gendis knows her father must be tired from working all day. But she can't ask Mom to accompany her to the hill. She finally braces herself to ask Father. To her surprise, Father is willing to go with her to the hill.

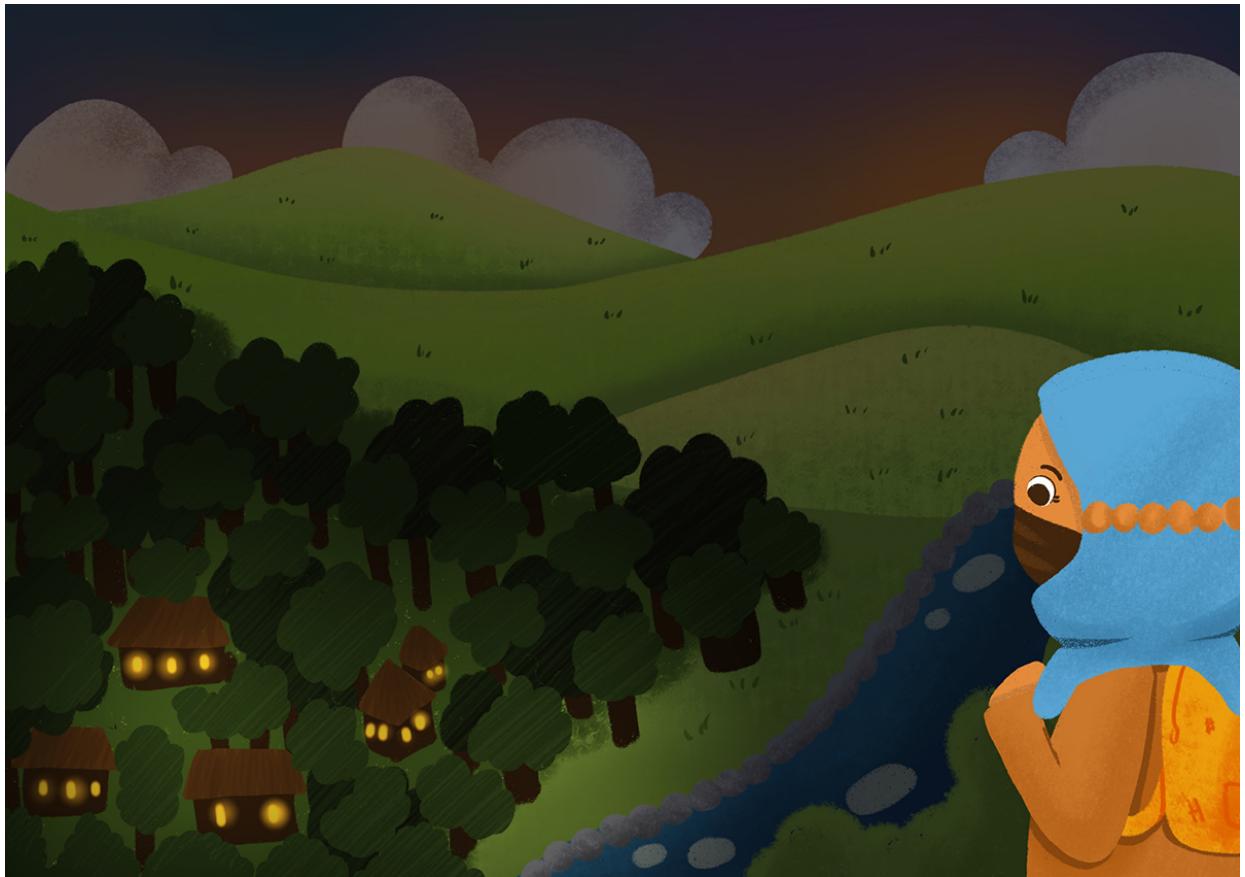
“Father can rest now while the phone is recharging,” Mom says.



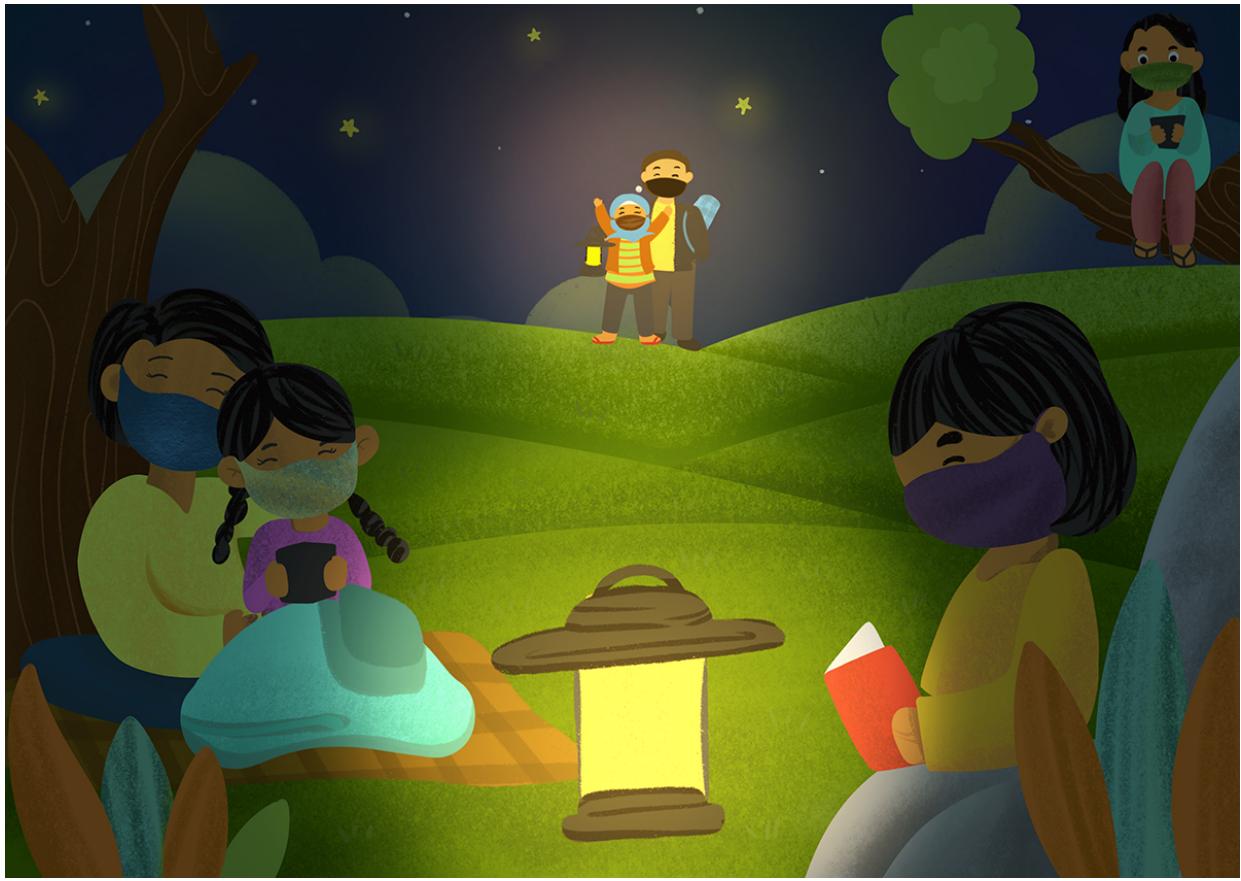
Gendis leaves for the hill after sunset. She carries a flashlight while Father brings a mat and an oil lamp. The path is quiet and dark the entire way.



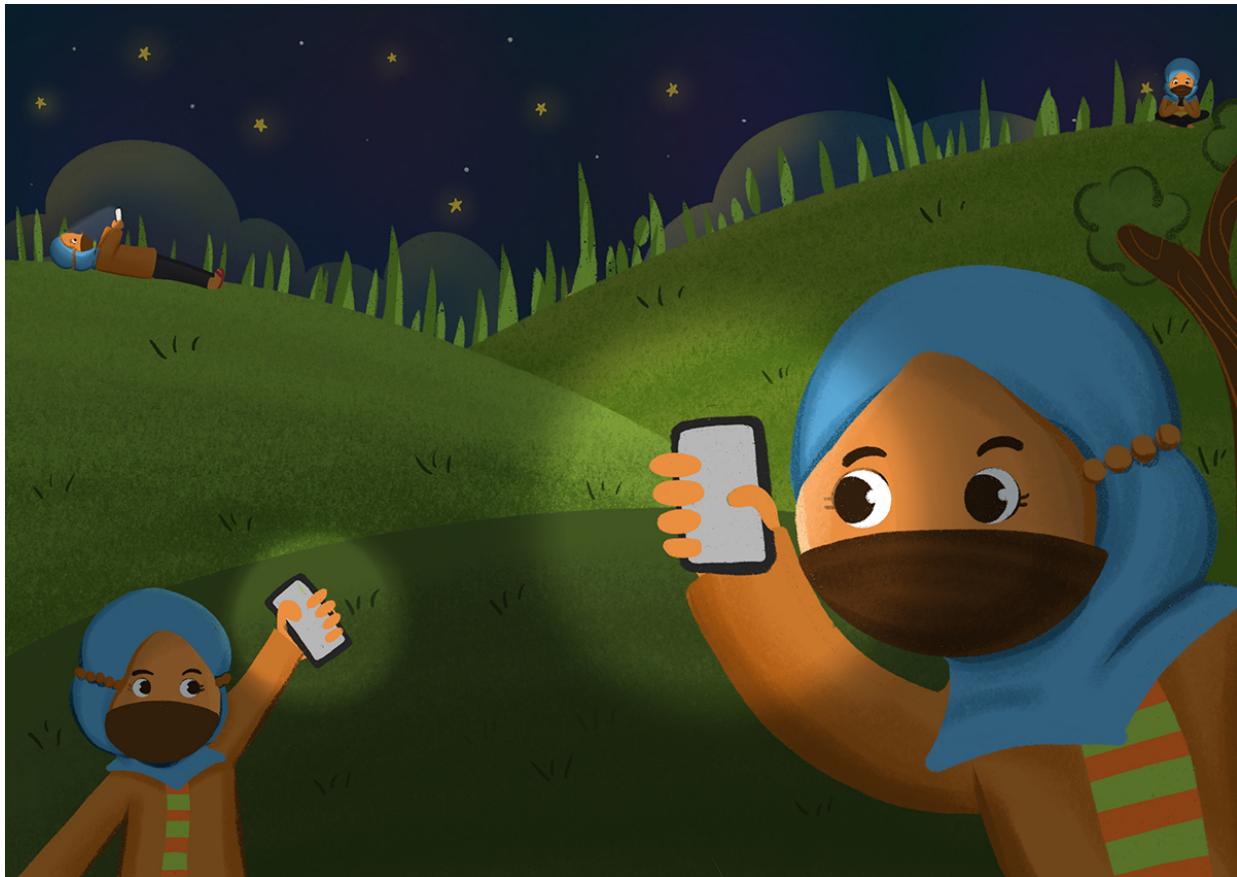
Gendis carefully steps over a rocky and curvy footpath as it gets steeper. She pulls her jacket tighter as she walks.



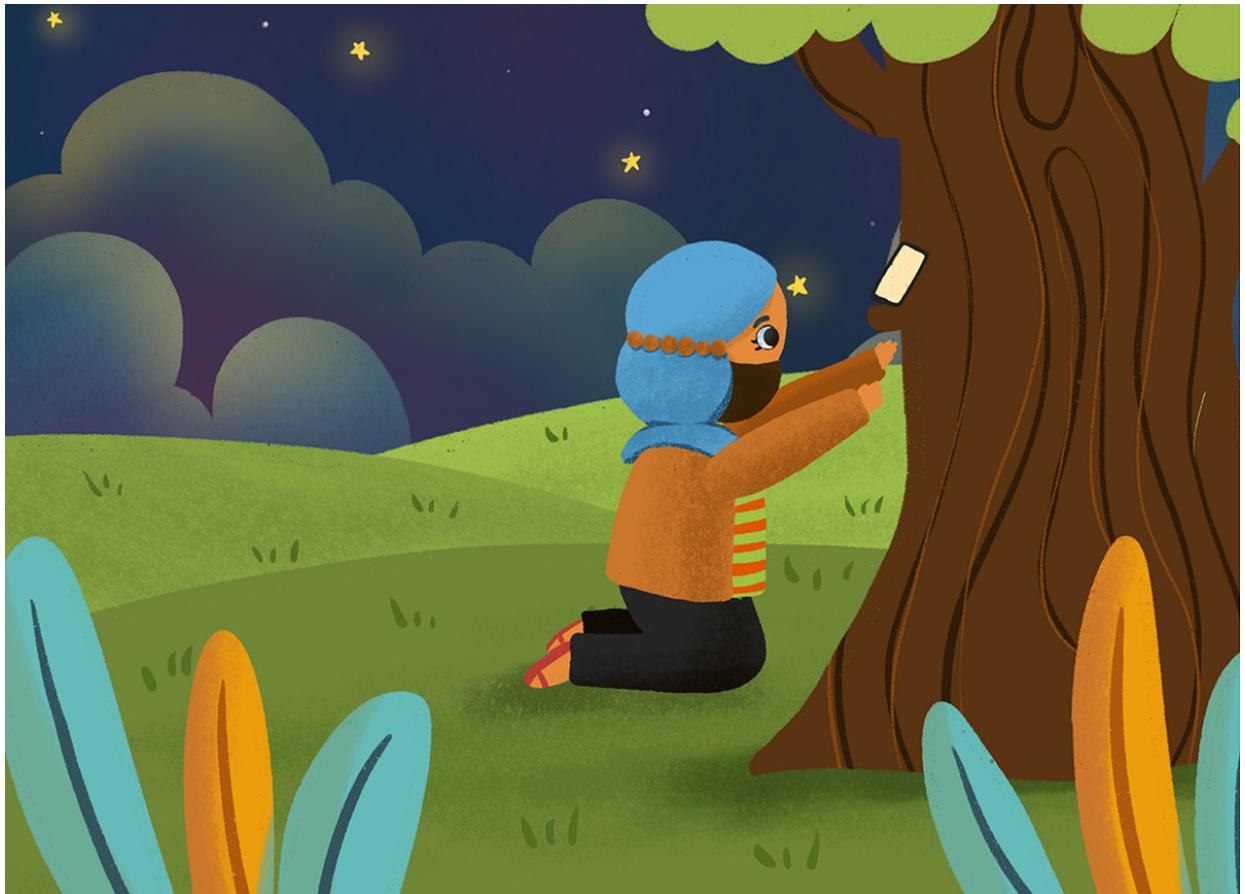
Gendis finally reaches the top of the hill. This is her first time coming to the hill at night.



There are many other children who are still studying. Like Gendis, they are accompanied by adults. However, Gendis doesn't see even one of her friends around.



Now it's time for Gendis to study. She immediately checks her phone signal and notices that it isn't connected yet. The signal is poor. She has to move around to get her phone connected.



What if the phone is attached to this tree? Hey, it works! Her phone's signal is so strong. Gendis can start studying.



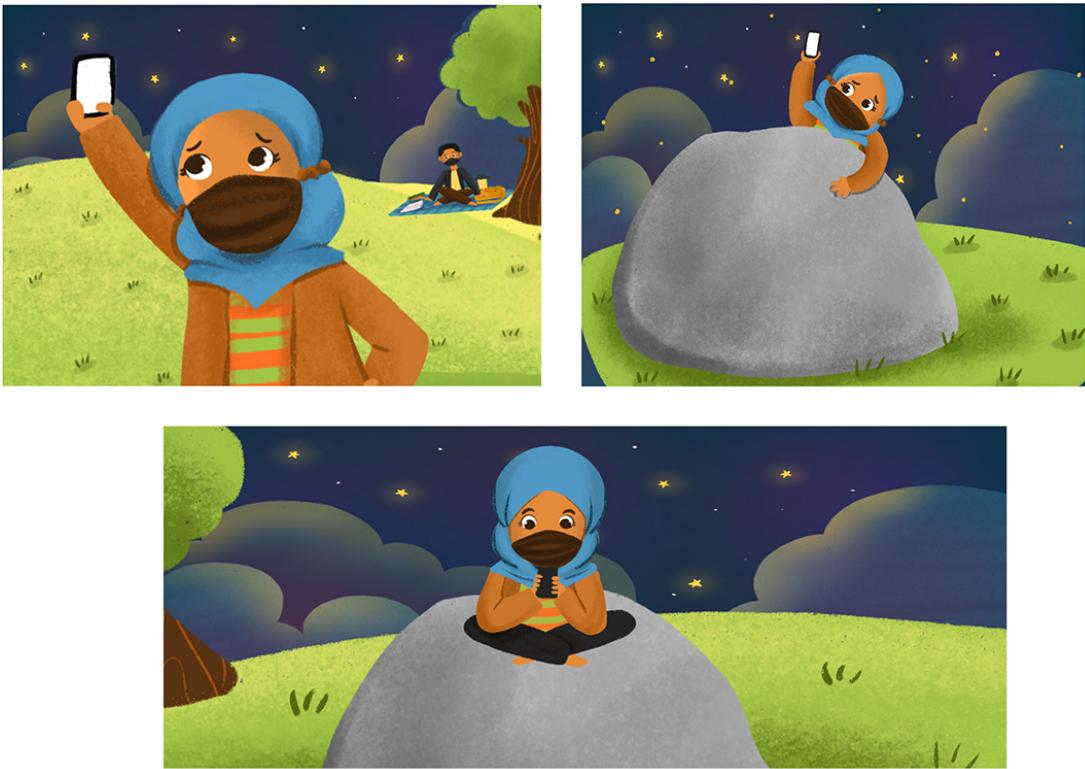
The notifications keep coming.
Gendis reads every message in her
inbox. One is from the teacher, telling
her what the new school lessons and
assignments are.



Father immediately spreads the mat so that Gendis can study. He sits beside her. Gendis focuses on her studies. Once in a while, she reads aloud from the phone screen.



As it gets later, the air turns colder. Some children have already finished their studies and are hurrying back home. Only a few are left with Gendis.



While Gendis is finishing her work, her phone suddenly loses its connection. Luckily, there is more space on the hill right now. She can freely move around to pick up a better signal. She climbs onto a big rock not far from where she was

sitting. Finally the phone reconnects! No wonder so many kids were studying here before.



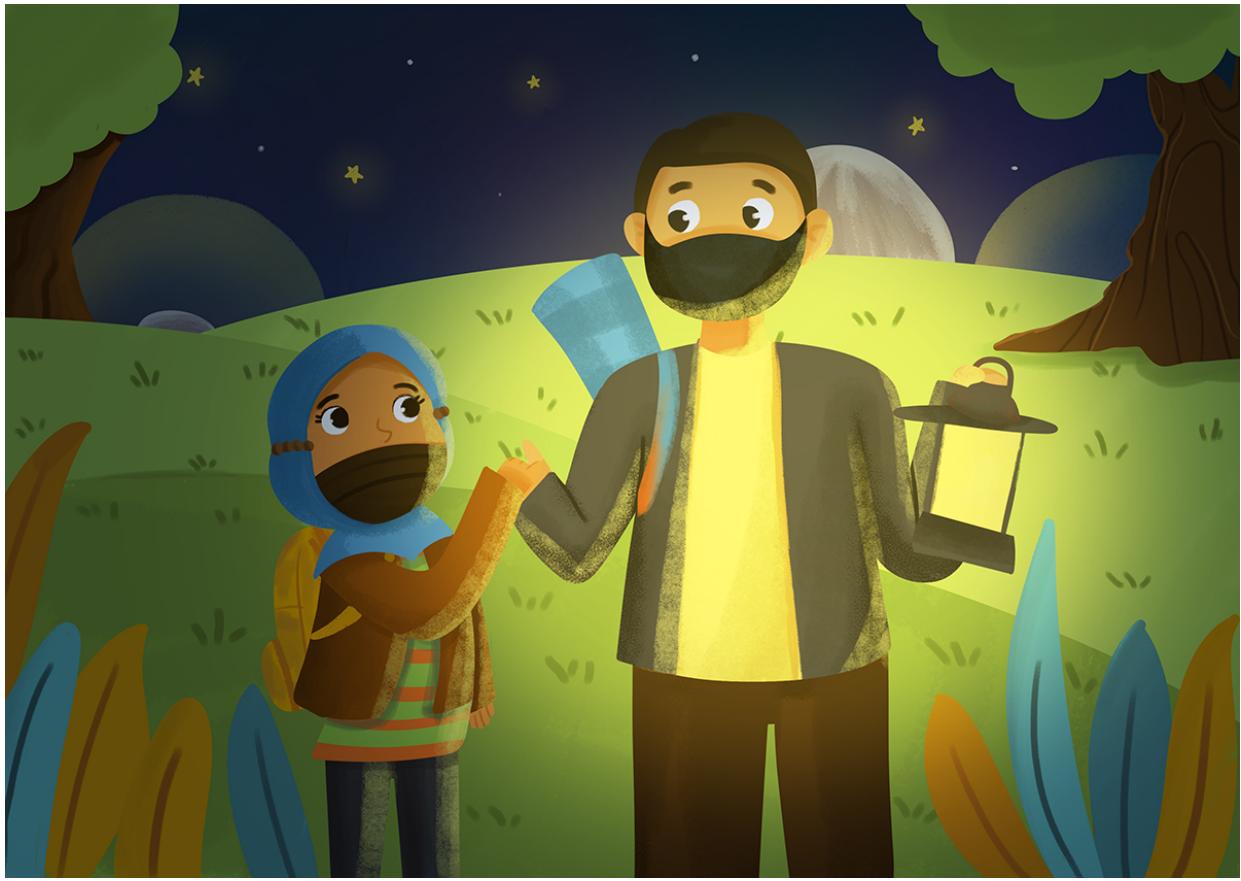
Gendis returns to her studies there, even though she keeps yawning. Later, Gendis hurries back to where Father is and says, “Let’s go home! I’m so sleepy.”



“Father, let’s go home!” Gendis says once more, but again he doesn’t say anything. When she looks carefully, she sees he’s fallen asleep.



Gendis taps softly on Father's shoulder until he wakes up. "Eh, are you finished, Gendis?" "Not yet, but I took some notes, so I can finish the assignments at home."



Gendis will have to go to the hill again tomorrow to send her finished assignments to the teacher. Gendis asks Father to get home sooner. “Okay, I’ll try to get home as fast as I can. Now, let’s go home!”



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Contributing translators: Jessica Suwandi and Jody Roy