PRATHAM BOOKS

Fire! Fire!

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Level 3

When Ana moved from her hometown in Goa to Mumbai, she was very excited. But she was also sorry to leave her uncle, her grandmother, her friends and most of all... Mando.

Mando was a serious dog who slept peacefully all day. But whenever there was a wedding in the neighbourhood, he howled woefully, until Ana’s uncle stopped playing his violin!

Ana loved Mando. She knew he would always protect her from strangers and dangers. And from her uncle’s noisy violin!

Mumbai was a noisy city. Ana missed the sounds of the birds, the church bells and the village music. The only thing she didn't miss was her uncle's violin!

Sometimes, after school, Ana would go with her father as he delivered letters and parcels.

Ana would wait eagerly for her ride up in the lift. One day, she sneakily pressed all the buttons. The lift opened on every floor!

Every floor had a red speaker box on the wall.
Each floor also had a strange-looking shower-head on the ceiling.

‘Who would want to take a bath here?’ she wondered.

Ana tried to figure things out. The red speaker box never played any music.

And the shower? Not a drop of water ever dripped from it. It did not even have a tap!

One afternoon, while Ana and her father were on the fifth floor at Manju Aaji's door, they heard the most horrible wailing.

"Papa, what's that terrible noise?"

"I think that's the fire alarm, Ana. Come, we must get to the fire escape floor immediately."

Ana looked at all the people who had rushed to the safety point.

“Don’t worry Ana, it’s a very small fire on the second floor. Do you hear that siren? That’s the fire engine - it’s here to help us.”

Suddenly, the strange shower began to spray water all around.

Oh, and who was that in the corner? Manju Aaji’s kitten! She was terrified of the fire and the water.

The sight of the helpless little kitten made Ana feel brave. She dashed to its rescue.

Now that she had gathered some courage, she asked, “How did the shower come on, Papa?”

“These are fire sprinklers, Ana. When there is a fire, they turn on automatically,” her father said.

“But where is the tap, Papa?” she asked again. Ana’s father looked at the sprinkler. He wasn’t sure.

“There is no tap, Ana,” said Manju Aaji. “That red pipe is always full of water and is plugged tight with a bulb. When there’s a fire nearby, the bulb heats up and bursts. So the water comes rushing out.”

“Ah,” said Papa, who had just learnt something.

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP...
A large white ladder rose up right in front of them.
“Families with children and the elderly, please,”
a fireman announced into his horn.

As they climbed onto the fire lift, Manju Aaji clutched Ana’s hand, and shut her eyes tight. But Ana kept her eyes wide open.

“You were a brave girl today, Ana,” her father said proudly. “Did the fire alarm scare you?”

Ana hugged him and nodded.

“The fire alarm saved us all today, you know? It’s a good thing,” he said softly.

“It’s a bit like Mando, Papa,” Ana whispered back. Her father looked puzzled.

“The fire alarm is quiet every day. It only makes noise to save us from trouble.”

Technology helps us in many ways. During a fire, the automatic fire systems in schools, cinema halls and other buildings save our lives.

Here are some things we should do when we hear a fire alarm:
1. Get up calmly and walk towards the nearest fire exit at a steady pace. Do not take the lift as lifts are usually disabled during a fire.

2. Running will make you inhale more smoke or may cause an accident or stampede. So do not run; walk fast. If possible, cover your face with a wet towel.

3. Do not throw any water at the fire as this could make the fire spread or cause electrocution.

4. Ask a grown-up to switch off the electrical main switch. Do not touch any electrical appliances or switches.

5. If the exit way is filled with smoke it is better to crawl or creep out so that you inhale less smoke.

6. Once out of the building, walk towards the nearest fire assembly point or safe open area.

7. Wait in one place until your family member or caretaker has found you.

8. If you are injured, request the nearest grown-up for help.

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Fire! Fire!

(English)

Ana misses Goa. But she finds her new home fascinating. Everything seems so different in noisy Mumbai. In some tall buildings, she sees speakers and showers. Strange! They don’t ever come on until...

This is a Level 3 book for children who are ready to read on their own.

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