

The Magnificent Story of the

Cycleplanet



JDR
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BYCS

Text: Mariana Salvador
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To my daughter Antonia and to all the children of the world.

This book was inspired by the need to show that there is another way of living, different from the extractive development system that alienates us from our essence and destroys the planet. A way of living in harmony with nature, with our body and spirit or however they call it in the rest of the universe.

Mariana.

Foreword by Jimena Pérez Marchetta

As adults who make decisions that impact the lives of children, choosing a book may seem trivial, but in reality it demands great responsibility.

As a mom, I like to choose stories that have been created not only to entertain, but to leave a message, and that the book can act as a wonderful bridge to other possible worlds.

Mariana is an activist for sustainable mobility and wrote “The Magnificent History of the Cycleplanet” thinking about all the girls and boys who deserve a better world. This book comes at a necessary time: climate change, the lack of equity in public space, and the devaluation of people in cities demand our attention and commitment.

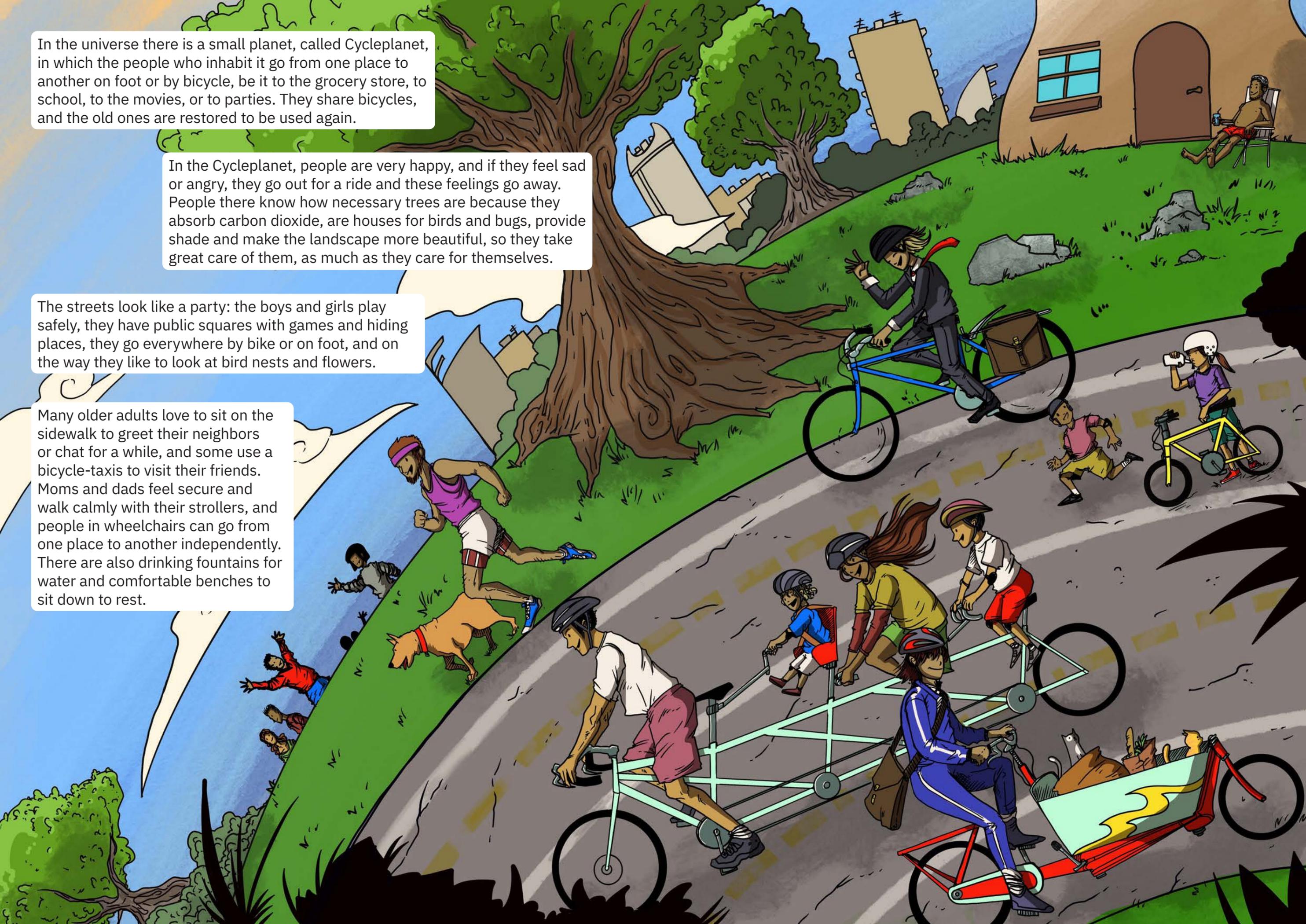
Bringing it home or giving it to someone means much more than a transaction: we want to provide an opportunity that allows us to create a kind, healthy and loving world, because what we read today can exist tomorrow.

In the universe there is a small planet, called Cycleplanet, in which the people who inhabit it go from one place to another on foot or by bicycle, be it to the grocery store, to school, to the movies, or to parties. They share bicycles, and the old ones are restored to be used again.

In the Cycleplanet, people are very happy, and if they feel sad or angry, they go out for a ride and these feelings go away. People there know how necessary trees are because they absorb carbon dioxide, are houses for birds and bugs, provide shade and make the landscape more beautiful, so they take great care of them, as much as they care for themselves.

The streets look like a party: the boys and girls play safely, they have public squares with games and hiding places, they go everywhere by bike or on foot, and on the way they like to look at bird nests and flowers.

Many older adults love to sit on the sidewalk to greet their neighbors or chat for a while, and some use a bicycle-taxis to visit their friends. Moms and dads feel secure and walk calmly with their strollers, and people in wheelchairs can go from one place to another independently. There are also drinking fountains for water and comfortable benches to sit down to rest.





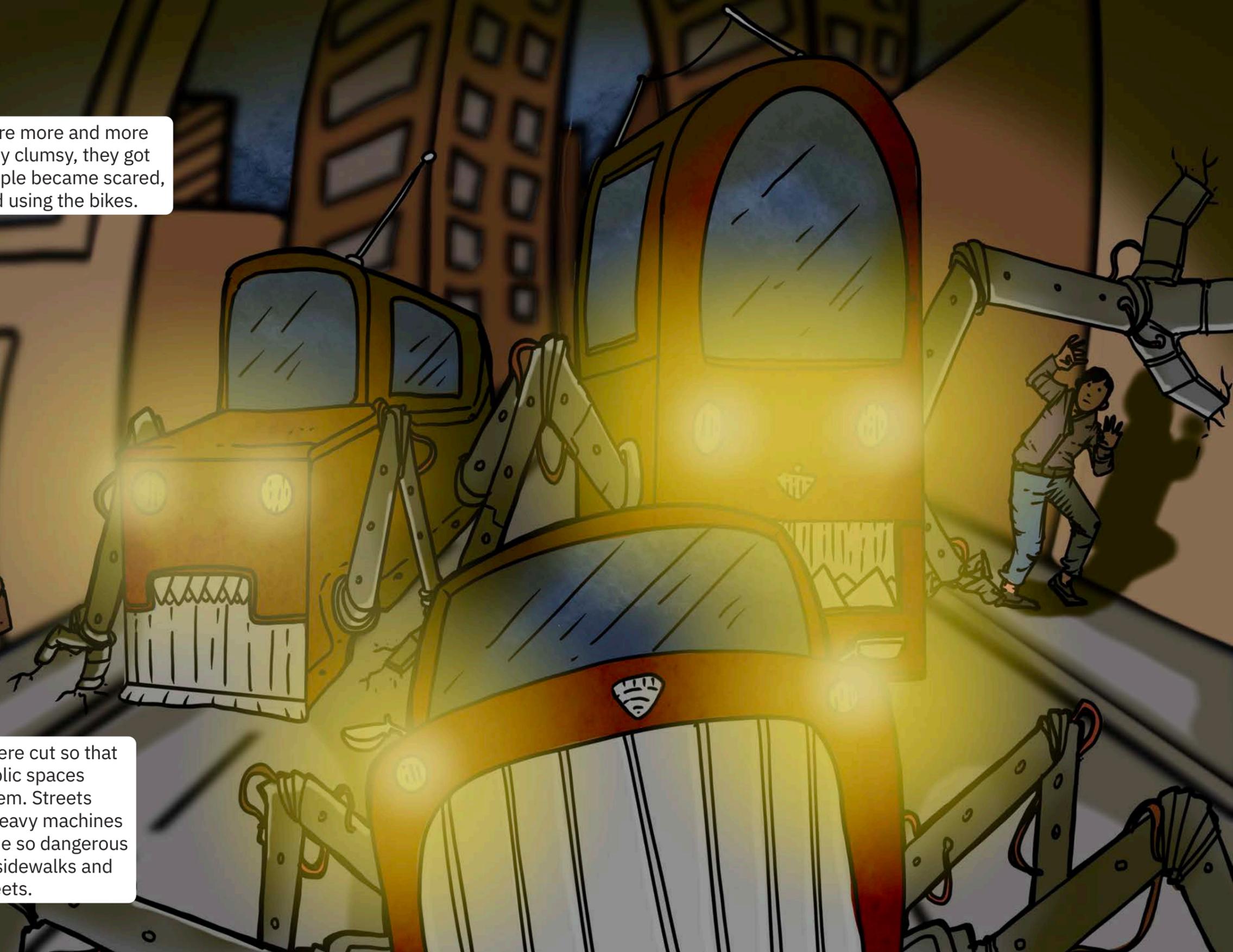
However, it was not always like this: legend has it that one day the watchmaker (who adjusted the clocks and the time) became distracted, lost control, and the hours began to pass faster, so people began to be late everywhere. By the time he was able to put time back together, they were used to living fast and doing lots of things every day.



Surprised, and in need of going to different places faster, the inhabitants of the Cycleplanet created a large, noisy machine with a smoking engine that they named Phants (because they were as big as an elephant). Little by little they opened factories for Phants and almost all the adults bought one.

As the days went by, there were more and more Phants, and as these were very clumsy, they got in the way of the bicycles. People became scared, and little by little they stopped using the bikes.

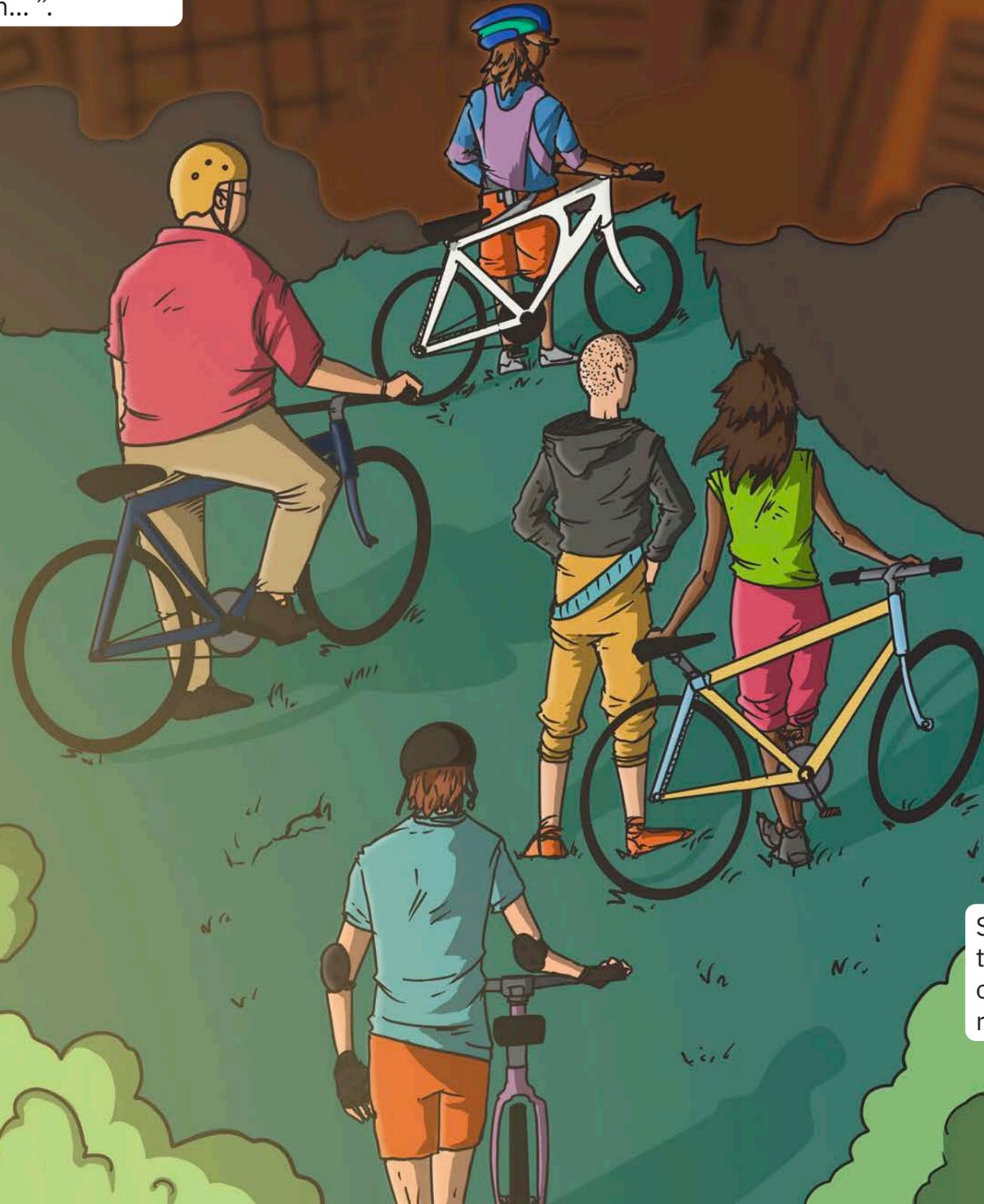
The little planet was changing: trees were cut so that the Phants could pass through and public spaces were taken away so they could park them. Streets were paved so that the wheels of the heavy machines did not get bogged down, and it became so dangerous that people no longer went out on the sidewalks and the children stopped playing in the streets.





The Cycleplanet was no longer the same, and the bikes were forgotten in the back of people's houses with all their junk.

Many years passed, until a brave and empathetic person of 9 years of age named Akira, who loved nature and seeing that the planet was so sad, decided to make a plan: they gathered all their friends and told them: "...we have to demand to our leaders to plant trees again, and prevent the Phants from using absolutely all the streets. We need to live in peace again...".



So they began to take out the rusty bikes, they painted them one by one in wonderful colors (fuchsia, silver, orange, gold and purple), and they created exercise routines so that their legs became as strong as before.

Once Akira's plan had begun; all the people saw their beautiful painted bicycles again and they began to remember how happy they had been.

From that day on, they remembered that using the bike and walking for all their activities, -as well as fun- was necessary for all the people who inhabited the planet, and even for the animals that had fled as they had been scared of the noise.

They observed that when they stopped using the Phants, the sky became blue again, the trees grew a lot, and pregnant women walked in the streets again because it was very good for them and their babies. Almost everything went back to the way it was before.

Akira and their friends, seeing that their plan had worked, decided that they were going to appoint a group of guardians of the Cycleplanet, who had the mission of doing collective activities: rides, walks, and gatherings, where beautiful stories of cycling would be told so that the people do not forget how good it was for them.

You will wonder what they did with the Phants. Well, some continued to be used in a shared way, others became huge flowerpots and others were only used when they had the need to go to very distant planets, where it was difficult or impossible to reach by bike or on foot.

The end.



The link between cycling, childhood and mobilities of care.

This story seeks to **normalise cycling as transportation for young children**. It touches upon several key themes that are related to active mobility and its role in creating more **human-centric cities**: cities that are safer, more playful, have cleaner air, stronger communities, as well as more accessible public spaces and green spaces.

Prioritizing cycling, especially for children and their caregivers, is advantageous for the city, due to its health benefits and its contribution to reducing health problems, inequality and pollution.

There are a number of specific benefits for young children and their caregivers that arise when cycling:

- It enables **greater connections between children and their caregivers** through shared experiences, conversation, time together and physical proximity.
- It supports **good cognitive development**, spatial and environmental awareness for children. It also enables playful learning as well as risk and danger assessment, critical skills that are needed when growing up.
- It increases children and caregivers' **connection with their community** and surrounding nature.
- It makes children that start cycling from an early age less likely to become inactive in the future by **inspiring a healthy, sustainable lifestyle**.
- It offers an **energy efficient, and low-cost mode of mobility** that is free of schedules and transit routes, providing more independence.

Developing media is an important way to begin changing the narrative of car-centric cities for the younger generations.

Several other strategies to ensure cycling is attractive, comfortable and safe for young children and caregivers can be found in the report [“Cycling Cities for Infants, Toddlers and Caregivers”](#), published by BYCS & the Bernard van Leer Foundation in 2020.

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