

Reading for Meaning

Welcome, story supporter!

**We hope that you and your child
have fun with this story.**

**Nurturing and supporting
your child is important for
their physical, emotional and
academic development.**

**ZERO
DROP/OUT**

**Part of the Zero Dropout campaign working towards
halving the rate of school dropout by 2030.**

The boy, the bullies, and the bicycle

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One hot summer afternoon, when I was riding my new bike home from school, my life changed. The bike was the best present I had ever been given, and I had shown it off at school that day.

But when I was near my home, Vuzi and Siphon were waiting for me. They blocked my way on the narrow path from the road to my home. "Oh no!" I thought. "Not this. Oh please, not this."

Vuzi and Siphon were two bullies from school who had made my life miserable for the whole of the first term. Vuzi was large and round, like a hippo on two legs, and Siphon was thin and fast like a lizard.

I slowly came to a stop in front of them. I tried to hide the shaking in my legs.

Vuzi sneered at me: "You think you are a rich boy on your bike? Too rich to walk home, are you?"

"Hey bra," said Siphon. "Why don't we show him

how to ride properly? This country boy rides his bike like a donkey.”

Then Vuzi kicked my leg from under me and sent me, my bike and my school books flying into the dust. Quick as a flash Siphso grabbed my bike and rode off wildly through the veld, laughing at me and shouting insults. “Donkey! Donkey!”

I tried to run after him, but Vuzi grabbed me from behind and started squeezing the breath out of me.

I don't know what happened inside me, but something changed. Maybe it was all the weeks of their bullying that I had suffered. Or maybe it was because I was scared of my bike being broken. Or maybe it was Vuzi's hot breath on my neck and feeling my life being squeezed out of me.

Whatever it was, I made a snap decision to defend myself. I thought “No! Here is where I stand up for myself.” I stamped the heel of my

shoe onto the top of Vuzi's foot. With a yell of pain and surprise he let me go.

I jumped away and he dived at me. But as he did this, he tripped and fell on the ground hard. He started bleating like a baby goat.

A little way up the path I saw Siphon skid to a stop, turn and come rushing back to see what the noise was. I thought: "Uh-oh! Here comes trouble!" and dived into the long grass. I was really hoping he wouldn't see me but as he came racing past me, I thought: "Okay, it's now or never!" I leaped out and grabbed my bike handlebars.

Siphon went flying and landed with a thud against an ant-hill, and all the breath was knocked out of him. He lay there, kicking his legs like an overturned beetle, and made horrible gurgling noises as he battled for air. Then he started crying and groaning.

It was over. As Vuzi bleated and Siphon groaned,

I stood up straight and said very clearly: “Don’t you ever try to bully me again!” Then I calmly picked up my books, grabbed my bicycle and rode the rest of the way home.

I couldn’t believe what I had done, and now my legs were really shaking, but I suddenly felt stronger. It felt as if a heavy load had been lifted from my shoulders.

The next day they were absent from school.

When they did eventually come back to school, limping and bruised, everybody knew what had happened. Siphon and Vuzi never bothered me again.

I do not think fighting should be used to solve problems, but this experience taught me the importance of standing up for myself.

And that is the end of the story.

Based on Mike Hart 'The Bicycle' (Fundza)

EXTEND THE STORY...

Be a talk show host



GAMES

WHAT TO USE

Blank paper, pencil or pen, table, chair

WHAT TO DO

- Now that you have read the story with your child, it's time to get creative.
- Help your child to set up for an interview (an interview is when one person asks another person questions and the first person answers the questions). You will play the host of the TV show and your child can be

the main character in the story (so you will be like Oprah and ask questions). Together with your child, choose a name for the character.

- Ask your child questions about what happened in the story. For example, you can ask him how he felt about being bullied by Vuzi and Siphiso.
- Allow your child to be free, they can speak in any language.

This is a chance for you to talk to your child about bullying. We hope you enjoy this activity!

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