

PM

When Nina's best friend, Salim, discovers that his bike has been stolen, they decide to solve the mystery together. But then more objects go missing at school, and news spreads of jewellery robberies in town. Nina starts to wonder: could everything be connected?



Narrative

ISBN 978-0170332217



9 780170 332217

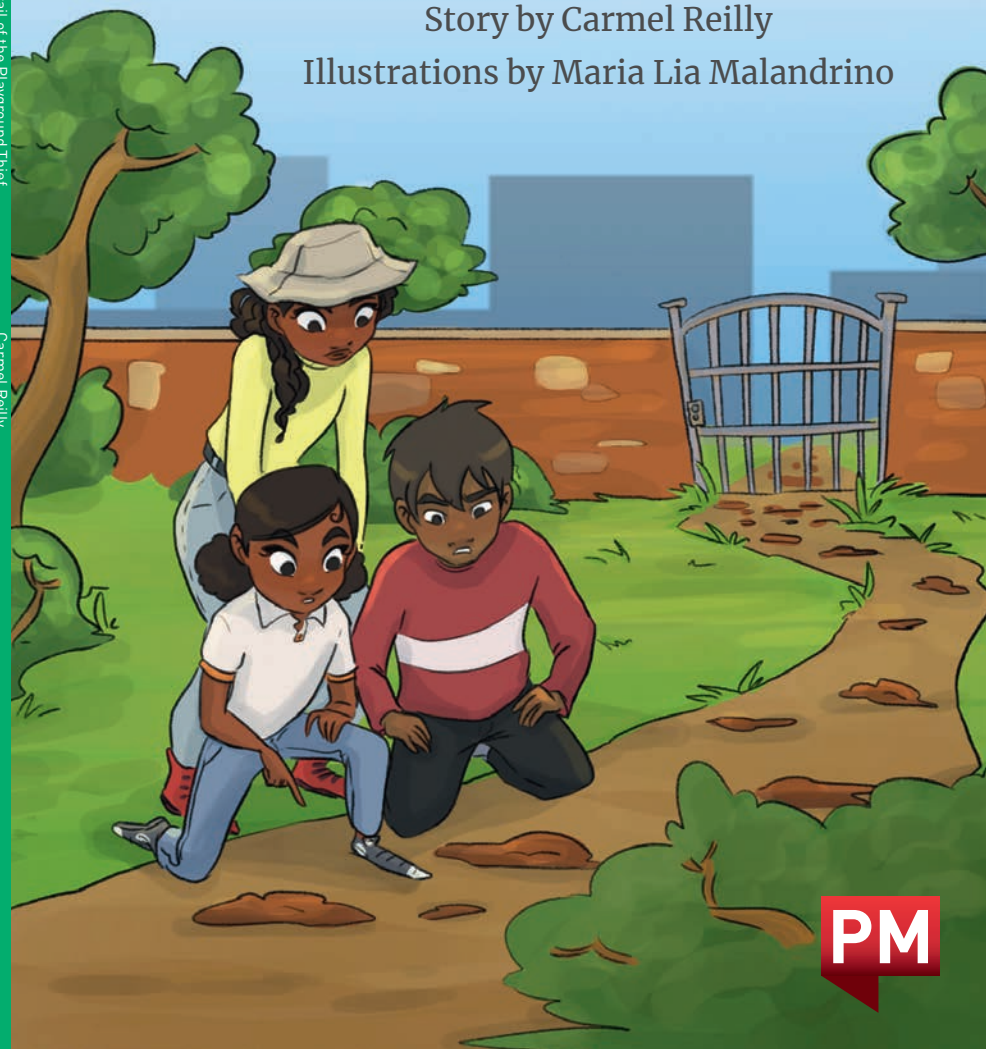
Nelson

Level
25

On the Trail of the Playground Thief

Story by Carmel Reilly

Illustrations by Maria Lia Malandrino



PM

On the Trail of the Playground Thief

Story by Carmel Reilly

Illustrations by Maria Lia Malandrino



Contents

Chapter 1	Who Took Salim's Bike?	2
Chapter 2	Another Disappearance	8
Chapter 3	A Bad Night's Sleep	12
Chapter 4	The Locked Gate	18
Chapter 5	On the Trail	22
Chapter 6	Digging Down	28

Chapter 1

Who Took Salim's Bike?



It was Monday, and I was meeting my friend Salim before school.

Salim is always cheerful, so when I saw his glum face that morning, I knew something was wrong.

"Nina!" he wailed. "My bike has been stolen. I left it at the bike shelter on Saturday afternoon after football practice because Alex's mum gave me a lift home. When I went to check on it this morning, it was gone!"

"Oh, no! Are you sure someone didn't just move it?" I asked.

"The security cable was cut," he replied. "I've looked all over the playground, but my bike is definitely not here." He shook his head. "I don't know why anyone would want it. It's so ancient!"



Who Took Salim's Bike?

We went to the office to report Salim's missing bike. It was busy that morning. We had to wait in line behind several people.

It was almost our turn when a delivery man with a trolley full of boxes came through the front door.

The office manager, Ms Morsha, waved to him and handed him some keys.

"Just pop those in the storeroom, thanks," she said, before turning to pick up the ringing phone.

When we finally got to speak to Ms Morsha, she looked concerned by our news.

"That's terrible, Salim," she said. "We'll report the theft to the police online, and you can ask your parents to do that as well when you get home later. In the meantime, I'll put out an alert on the school website and notify the staff to keep a lookout for your bike. Fingers crossed!"

"Thanks!" we said.



That afternoon, after school, Salim came over to my place.

Luckily for me, I live directly opposite school, which means it's easy for friends to come over after classes finish.

Salim rang his mum to tell her what had happened. She said she would fill out a police report online about the bike straight away. Dad made us afternoon tea.



"I'm sorry about your bike, Salim," he said. "There's an old bike in our garage you can use. I just need to oil it and pump up the tyres. I can do that now if you want to ride it home."

"That would be fantastic!" said Salim.

"Thanks so much."

"And if your bike doesn't turn up, you can keep that one," said Dad. "We don't use it any more."

"I'll take good care of it!" said Salim.