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# Leela Lights the Way

**Author:** Shyamala Shanmugasundaram • **Illustrator:** Bhargav Prakash Kulkarni  
• **Publisher:** Eklavya Books

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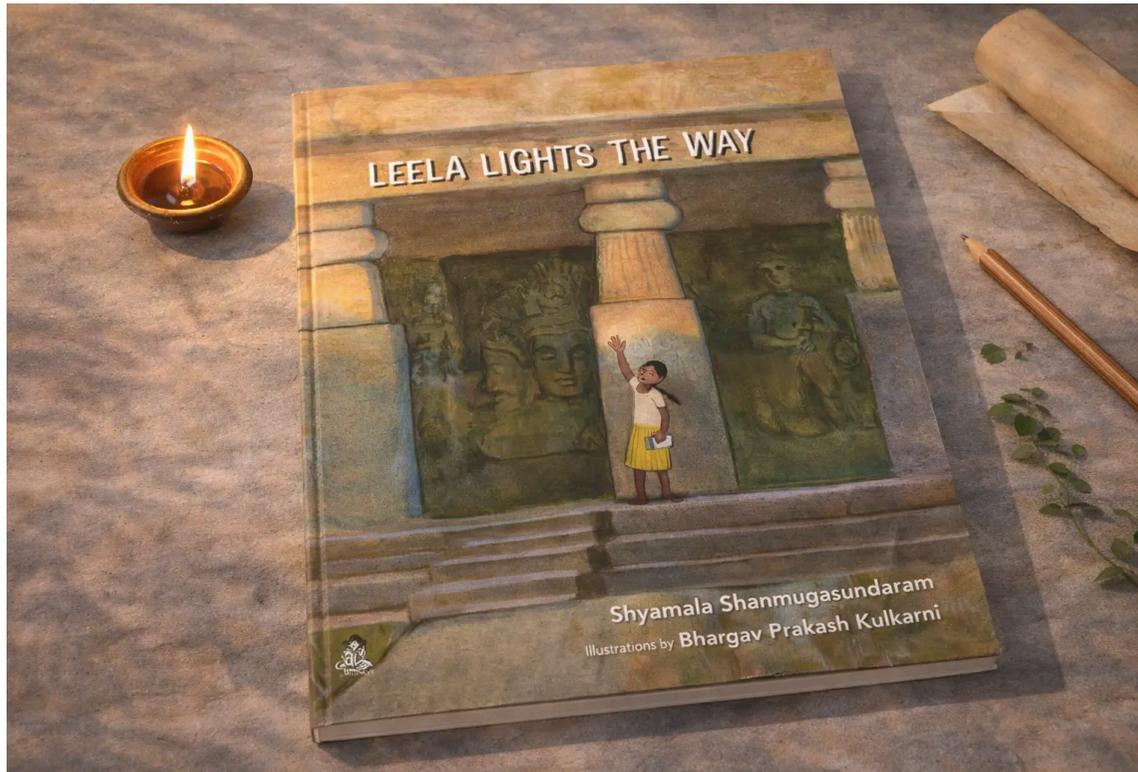
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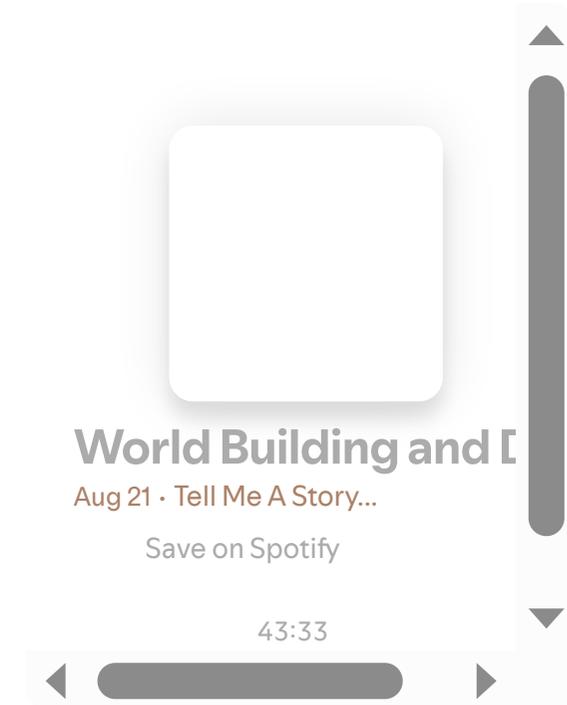
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## LISTEN WHILE YOU READ



## MY THOUGHTS

Have you ever wondered about the comfortable bubble we all live in? Apartment living with 24/7 electricity and running water, shopping at the same grocery stores, and visiting the same malls ensures our children live in a comfortable floating bubble that shields them from the ways of the world. Just a few kilometres away, life looks a lot different for kids just like them. No power after dark forces them to stay indoors. No running water for days teaches them the value of saving

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and storing water. Even going to the bathroom isn't always safe. Leela Lights the Way is a book about a young girl on Elephanta Island dealing with these issues.

Leela is used to seeing hundreds of tourists visit Elephanta Island daily to visit the world famous Elephant Caves. Her parents sell souvenirs and beverages to the tourists to make money. Her home, a little away from the hustle and bustle of the caves, is her refuge after a hard day of school and helping her parents at work. But she is acutely aware that by the time she reaches home, it is evening, and Leela can't study, play, or use the bathroom safely because their home doesn't have electricity. She looks longingly at the brightly lit mainland and wishes the same for her home. It is time to be proactive and make the change happen for her and her community.

Author Shyamala Shanmugasundaram weaves a story that shows life beyond the one our children know. I love the positive messaging of creating the change we want to see. Sure, there are issues, but no one is playing the victim here. Instead, Leela decides to create the change, no matter how long it takes. Bright, beautiful illustrations by Bhargav Prakash Kulkarni help children understand life on the island and what the issues are when basic facilities are not available.

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