

# ***THE RACE***



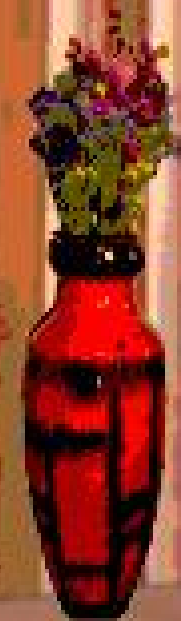
***BY BELLE B. HOUSE***



# ***THE RACE***



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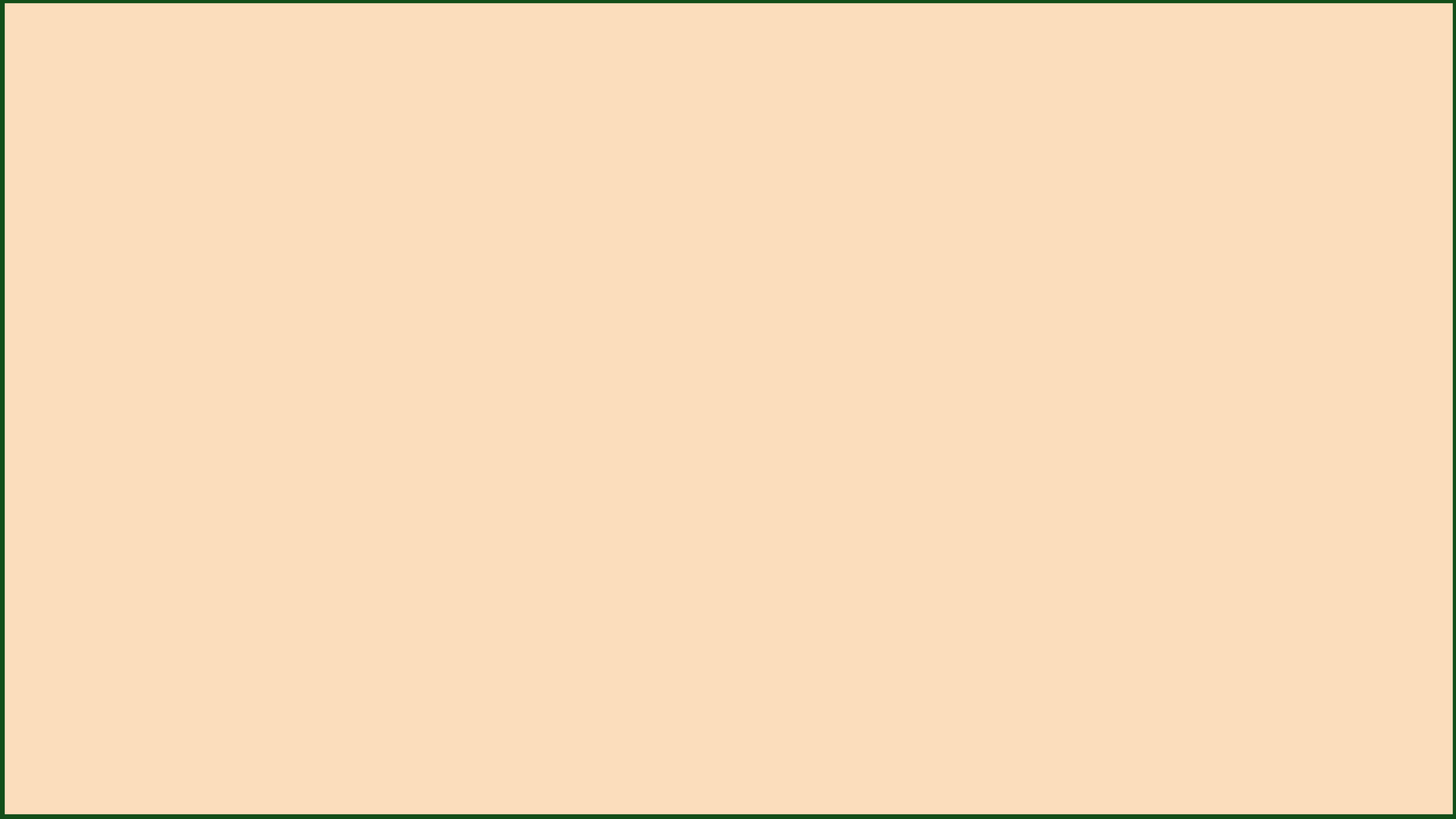




**Yes! I, Sage Fulbright will join the race and help raise money for the children's hospital. July is three months away. I will ask Dad and Grandpa to tighten my bike's training wheels and oil the rusty chains.**



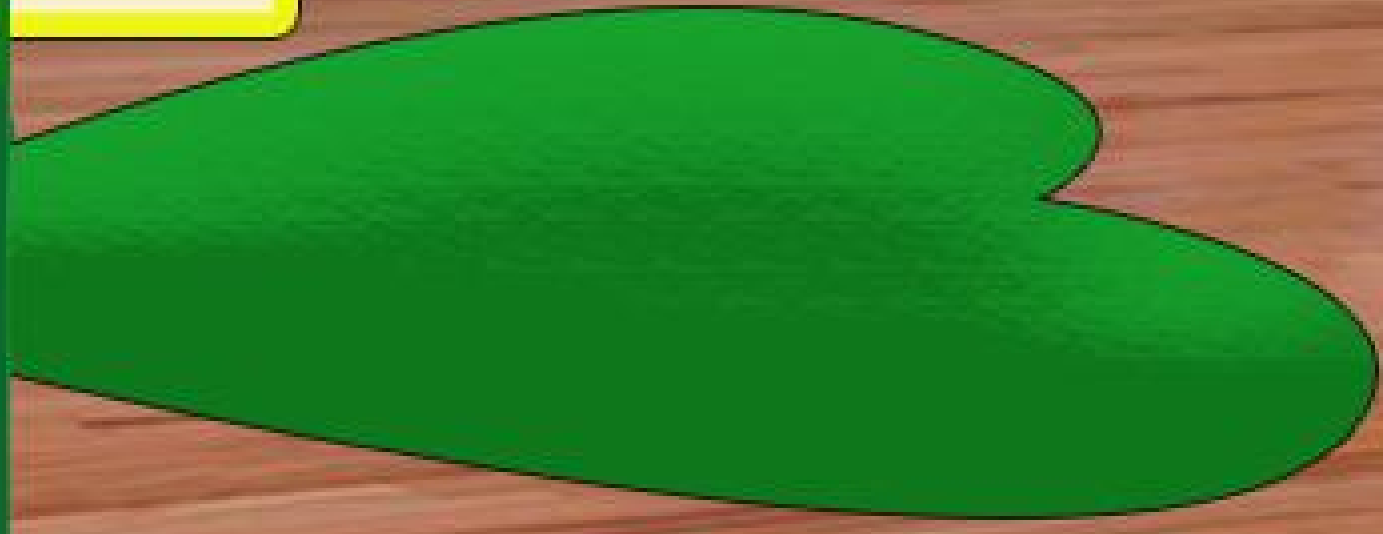
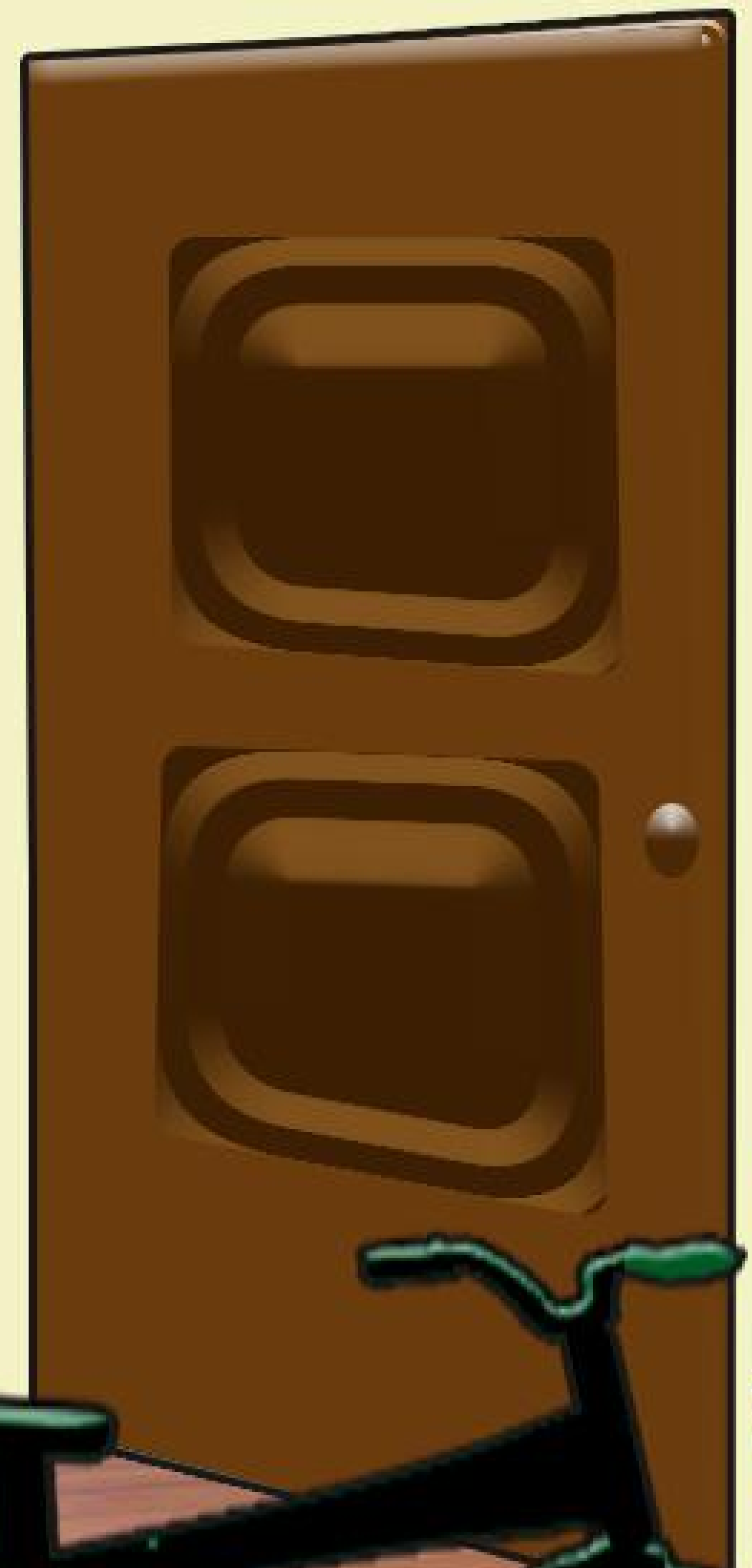
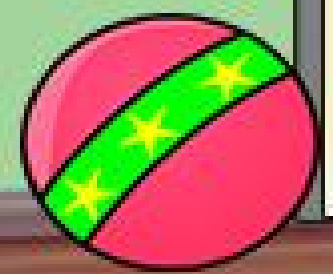
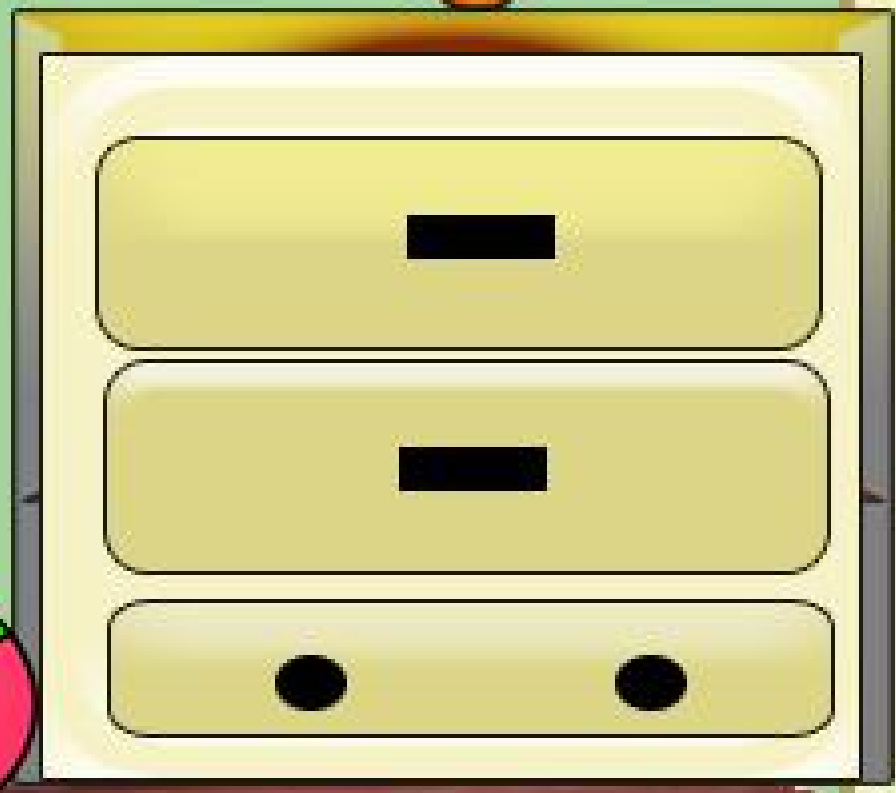
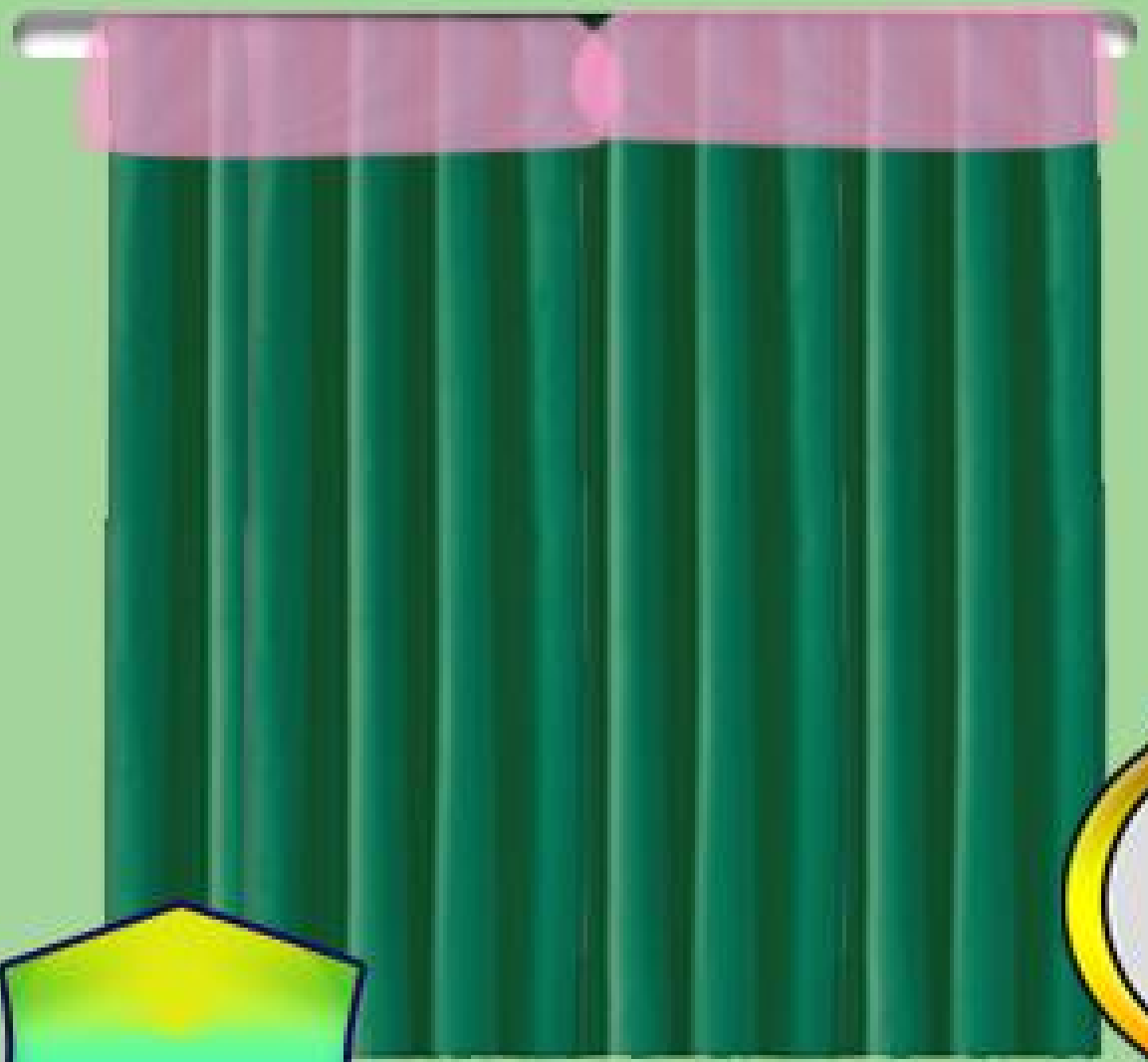




**Sage rode to the park on her bike. She tested how fast she could ride it, but the older kids speeding on their bikes zoomed past her and the tricycle riders. They yelled, Move out of the way! The bike winners are here!**

**Sage's bike's training wheels were faster than the tricycle riders, but slower than the older kids' bikes.**





**The Essence  
Community  
Bikeathon  
Rules.**

**You may not  
use bicycles  
with training  
wheels.**

**Oh, boy! What should I do?  
I don't know how to ride my bike  
without training wheels.**

**Can I learn to ride my bicycle  
without training wheels before  
July 24?**

**Whoa! This bike race may be too  
tough for me, but I'm going to  
try anyway.**

**Grandma, a bicycle race is coming this summer to help sick children in the hospital. My friends are racing, and I want to race too. No one may ride a bike with training wheels.**

**That's noble, Sage. You could use your old tricycle for the race.**

**Grandma, only babies ride tricycles. Can Grandpa teach me to ride? I may win if I learn to ride now.**

**Sage, we will ask your grandpa and parents to help you. I am sure they will help you get ready for the big race.**





**Grandpa, please don't let go of me!  
Sage, don't worry, honey; I've got you.**



Sage struggled to stay balanced on her bike. Soon, she mastered riding on two wheels and stopped falling off. Sage, you're doing great; keep it up, Dad replied.





**Thank you, Grandpa and Grandma.  
Now, I can ride my bike up, down, and all  
around.**

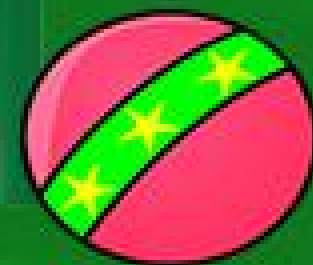
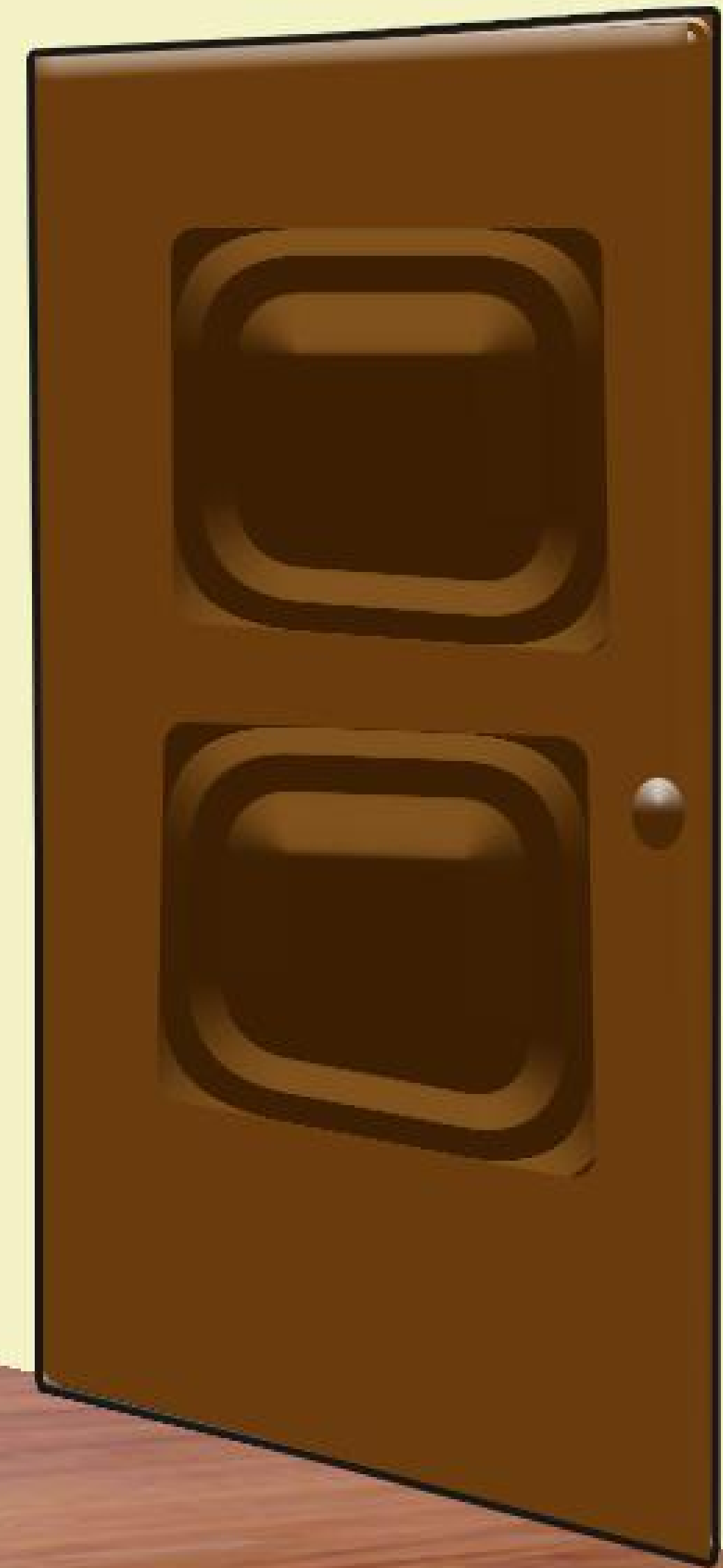
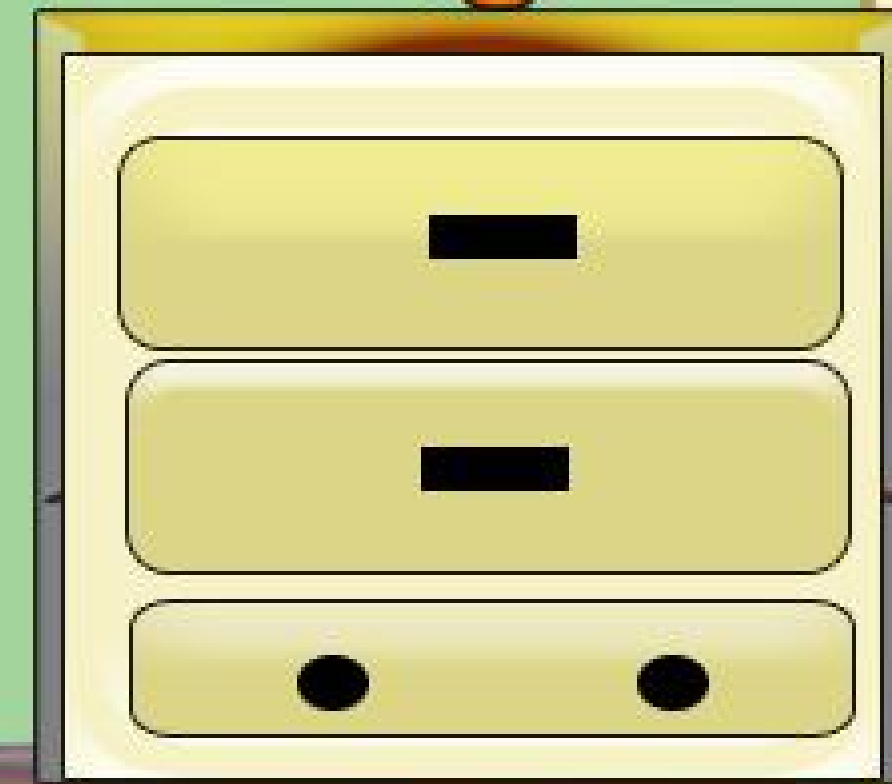
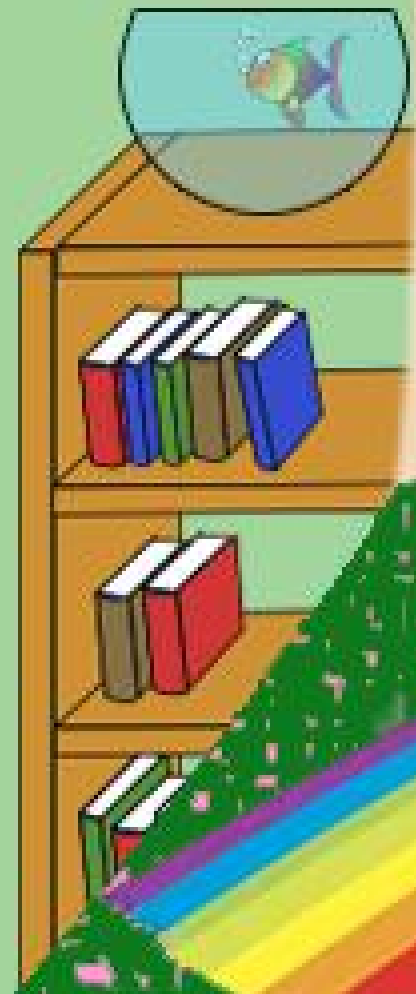
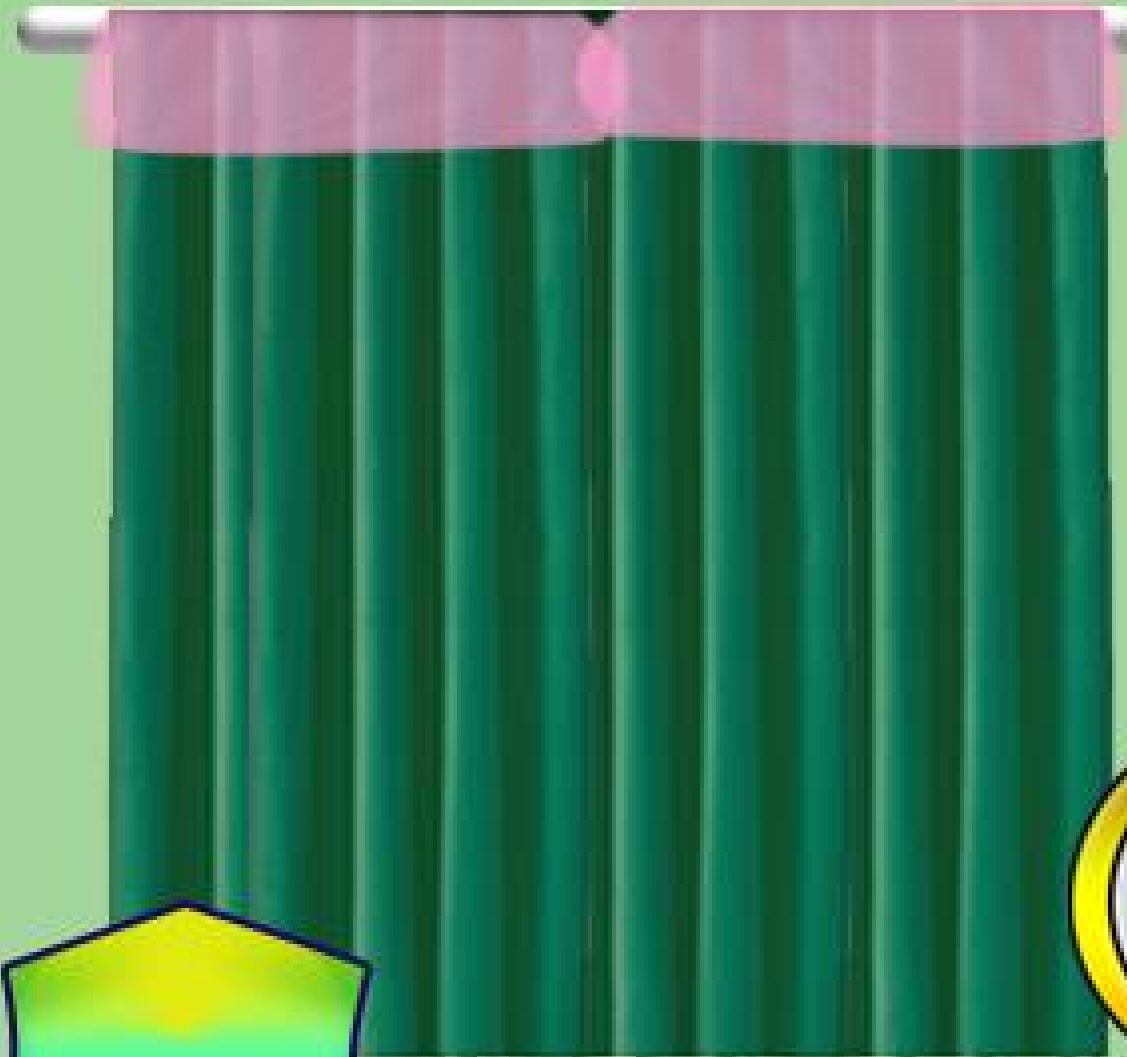
**Bikeathon! Here I come.**



**MIKE'S  
BIKES**

**FOR  
SALE**

**That bike is perfect! If I ride a bike with larger, faster wheels, I could win a first-place ranking in the bike race and help more sick children.**



**Shucks! I counted the money I saved,  
and I don't have enough money to buy  
the bike for sale. That bicycle will help  
me win this summer's race.**

**How will I raise the money?**



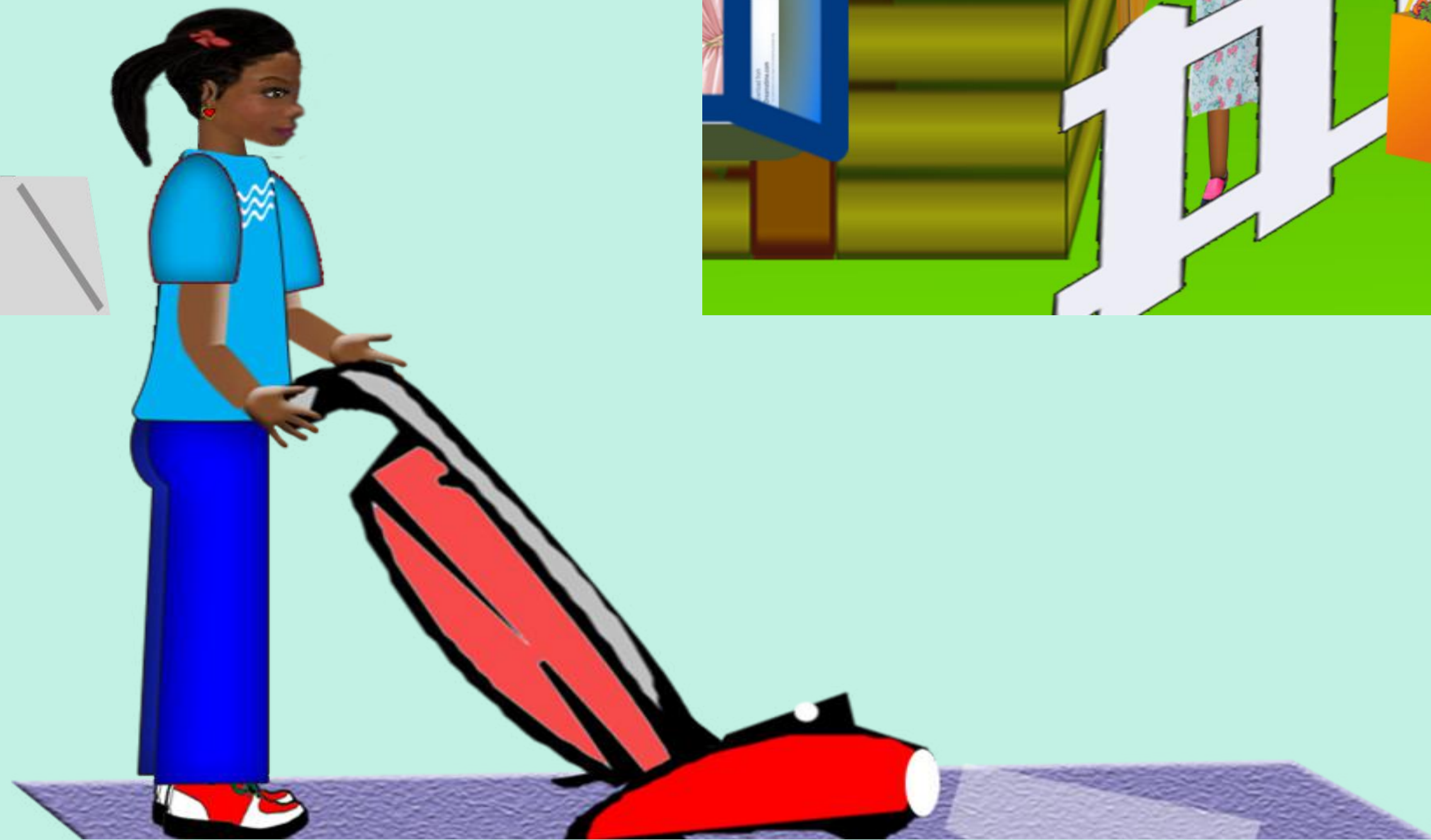


**I know! I could work to earn the extra money to buy the bike. I will clean my room and help throw out the garbage daily.**

**I could do extra chores at grandpa and grandma's house.**

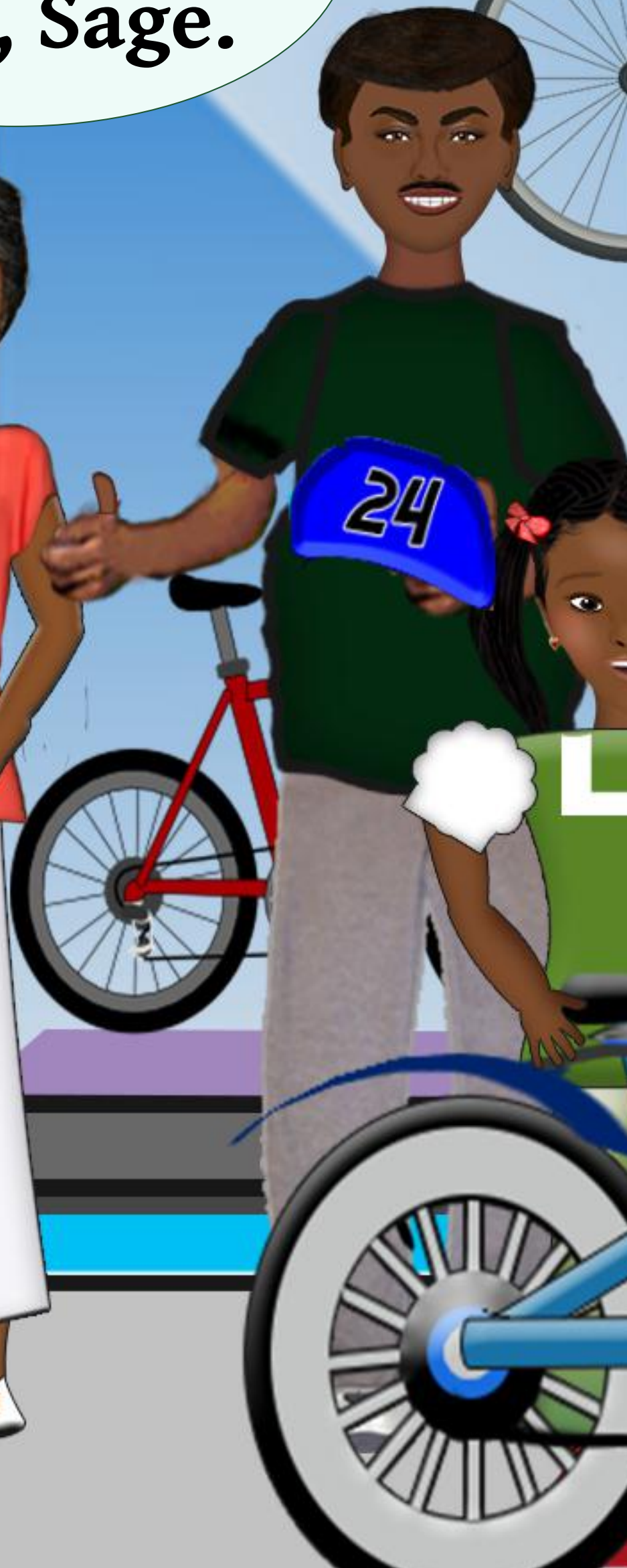
**If I help my neighbors with their packages and odd jobs, I'm sure I will raise the money soon.**

**Sage worked in her neighborhood. She learned work could be fun, and it taught her meaningful lessons about caring for and helping others. Family, friends, and neighbors praised her, and good wishes sprang up for the race.**



We are proud  
of you, Sage.

**MIKE'S  
BIKE**



**The bike race was a week away. Sage earned enough money to buy the smart-looking bike with bigger and faster wheels. Excited and hopeful, she believed her readiness, her willingness to win, and her new bicycle would win her the bike race.**

**Oh yeah, I got this  
race handled!**

# Welcome to the First Annual Essence Community Bikeathon!

The race to help our children's hospital

Let the races begin!

Thanks to everyone for supporting our charity.

Start line

You're The Best!

Go Racers



Riders waited at the start line. Their hearts beat faster as the flag dropped to begin the race. Fans' cheers filled the bike arena with excitement. Sage set her mind on crossing the finish line, but she could not see the long, uphill, curved racetrack ahead.





Besides the many hills and curving paths, the sunny, hot day made their race tougher. The heated air made the bikers sweat more. They often slowed down to drink water and wipe their faces as they huffed and puffed uphill. Sage led the way back to the stadium. When they saw the finish line, they pedaled faster towards it, leaving their challengers behind. One will win.

# The Finish Line



**With all her strength, Sage pedaled fast to cross the finish line first, but she didn't.**

**I finished second, disappointing everyone who expected me to win first place.**

**Whoa, me! I worked hard for three months preparing to win this bike race, and I believed I would win the grand prize, but another kid did.**

**I should be the winner.**

**Congratulations**

The race to help our children's hospital

**Congratulations**

**Congratulations**



**Hi everyone! My name is Steven Goodall.**

**I thank God and my parents for their help while I stayed at the Children's Hospital. I was sick for two years, and they didn't leave my side. My winning today's bike race means everything to me. From the hospital bed, I learned to walk again. It was tough.**

**I know how a sick child dreams of living at home, going to school, playing, and, oh yeah, going to Disney World! This race gave me an opportunity to help the hospital and thank the doctors and nurses who helped save my life.**

**After I got better and stronger, I learned to ride a bike without training wheels. Sage Fulbright, my new friend and the second-place winner, you were a good challenger, and I especially thank you for making me sweat.**

**Steven, God bless you!  
My friend,  
I am happy that you are this year's first-place  
bike winner.**

**You have been through real-life challenges and  
fought hard.**

**You are brave and have earned the  
championship. You are my hero. Thank you.**

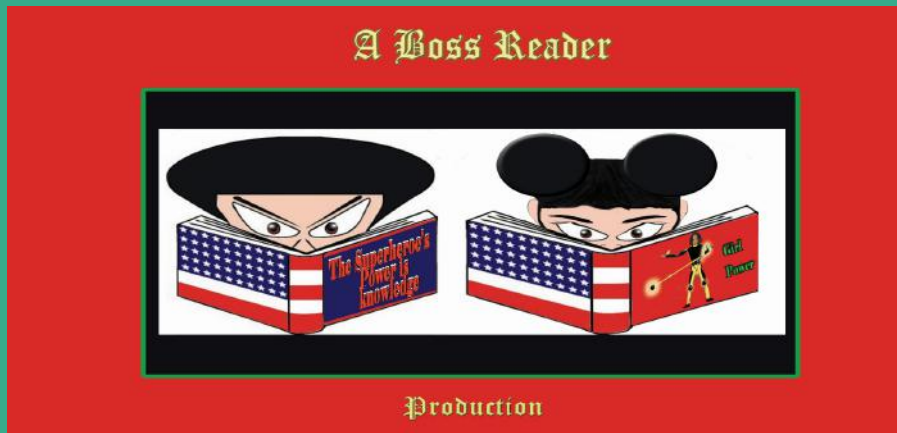
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The race to help our children's hospital

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