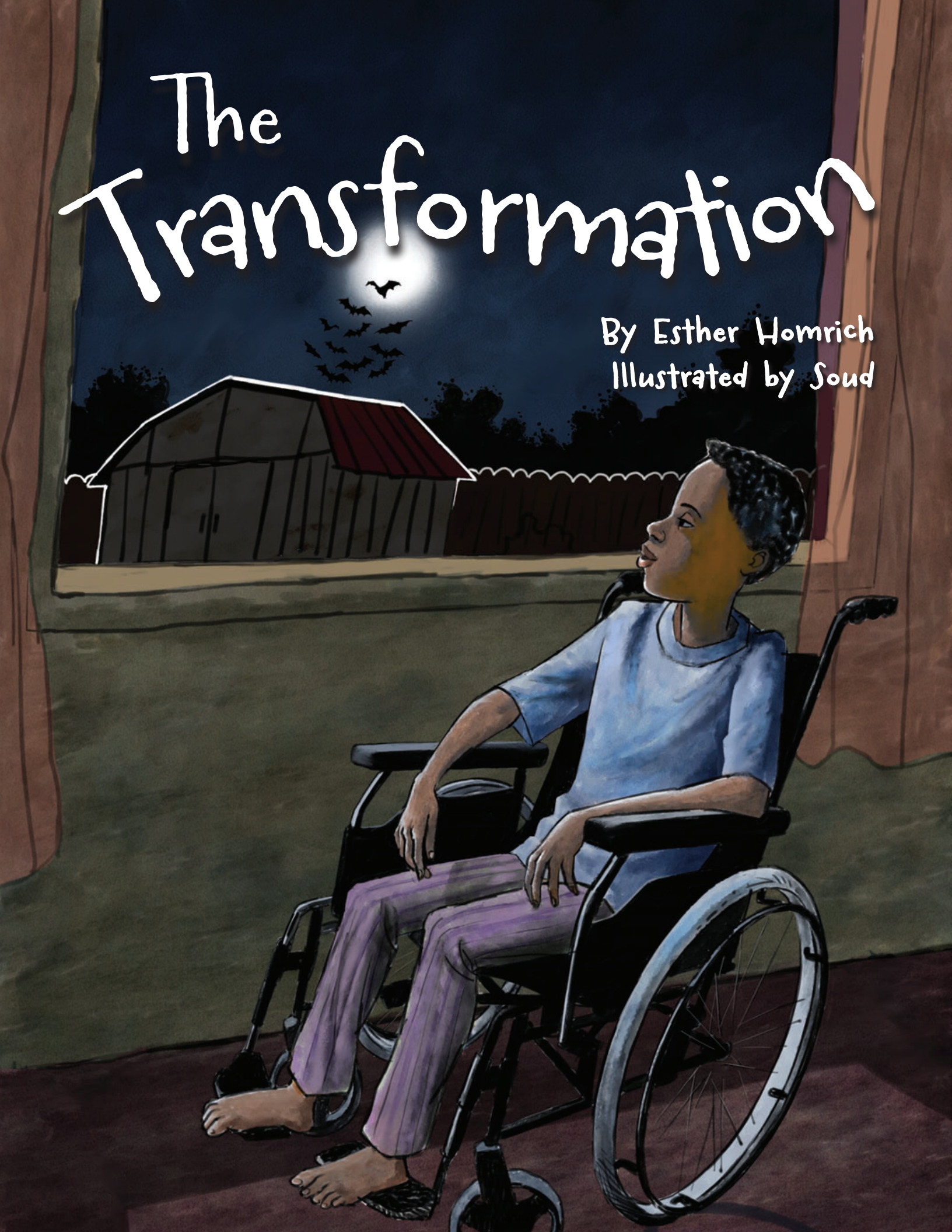


# The Transformation

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Illustrated by Soud



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## Chapter One

# No Need for Eyes

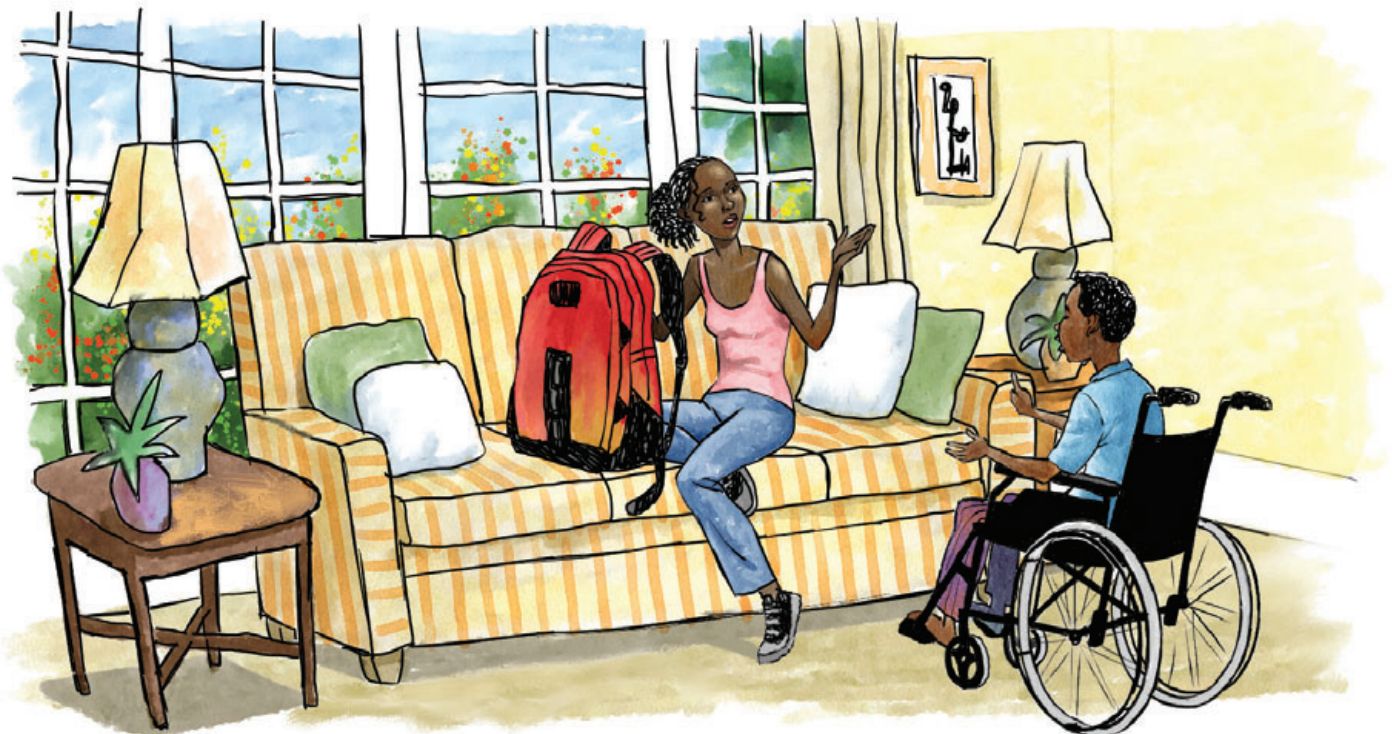
When my sister Sophia came home from overnight camp, I decided to tell her my secret. "There are bats in the shed," I said. "No one knows except me."

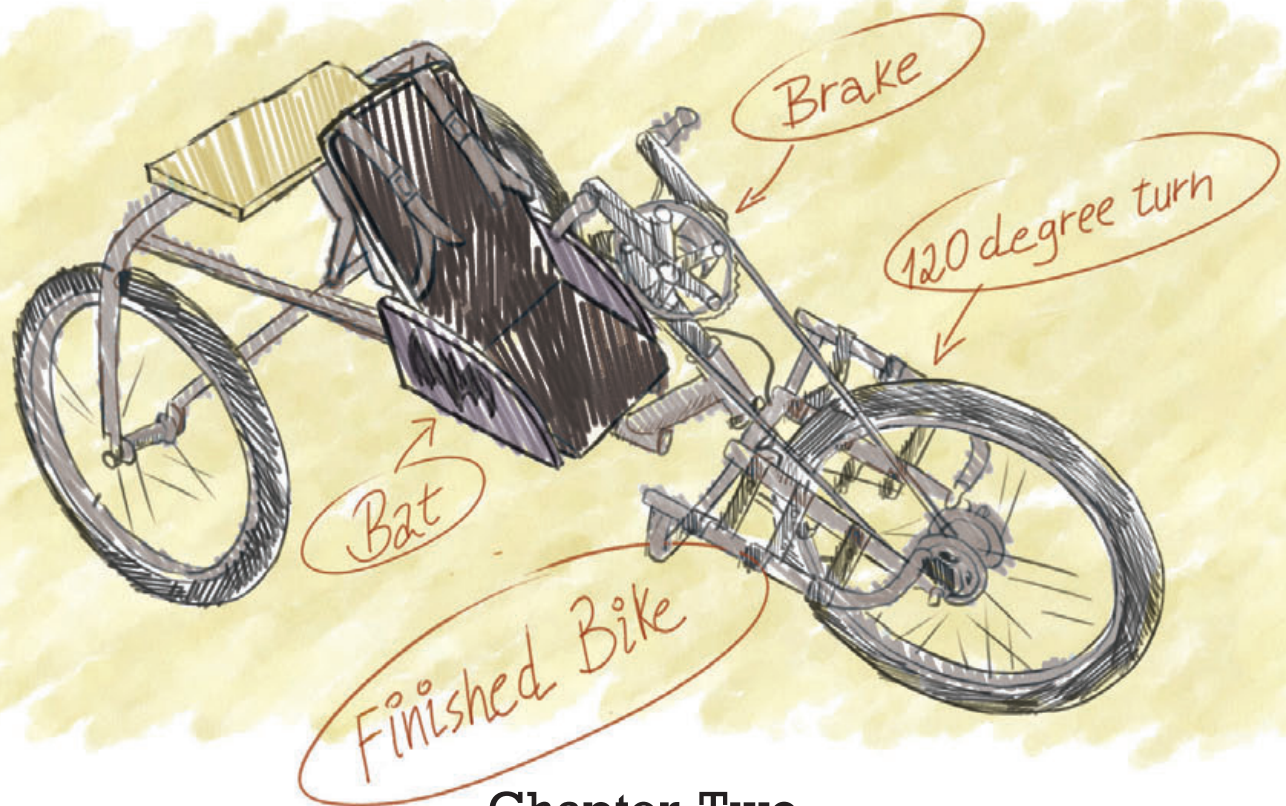
How did I know they were there? Sometimes I don't feel sleepy, so I pull myself into my wheelchair and roll to my window. I watch the bats fly in and out of the shed. When they return from hunting for food, they flap their wings, dive, and zero in on the small hole on the side of the shed. They never miss.

"I think we should tell Mom and Dad," Sophia said.

I pleaded with her not to tell them. I think bats are the world's coolest animals. They're mammals, just like cows and dogs and elephants and giraffes, but they fly like birds. They're even better than birds because they don't need their eyes to fly in the inky blackness of night.

"Besides, Mom and Dad might call the exterminator," I added.





## Chapter Two

# Secrets Shared

After giving it some thought, Sophia agreed to keep my secret. I decided then that I could trust her, so I let her in on another secret.

I showed Sophia the plans that I had stashed under my bed. These plans told step-by-step how to use parts from a regular bike to build a hand cycle. That's a three-wheeled bike that you pedal, stop, and steer with your arms instead of your legs.

"Wow! You really do have some surprising secrets up your sleeve! What made you suddenly want to ride a bike?" she asked.

I told her that I think about a lot of things when I stay up at night. Bats aren't blind, but they might as well be. Their eyes aren't very useful in the dark, so they "see" with their ears. I can't use my legs to walk, but I can use my arms to move my wheelchair. That's why it came to me that, even though I can't ride a regular bike, a special kind of bike would allow me to enter, and possibly win, the Pine Valley Junior Road Race.



## Chapter Three

# A Bike and a Plan

“My old bike is in the basement,” said Sophia, looking over the plans. “I also know where we can get all these tools and supplies. I have a friend whose father owns a bike shop. I bet he’ll let us work in his workshop. First, though, we have to discuss this with Mom and Dad.”

This time I agreed to share my secret with my parents. They were very proud of my sister and me. They encouraged me to go for it.

So, every day for a week, my sister and I traveled the seven blocks to her friend’s father’s workshop. With his help, we sawed metal pipes. We even used a welder, which is a tool that melts metal to stick two or more pieces together. One of Sophia’s friends offered to customize the seat for me so I could lean back and ride with my legs straight. We also welded a passenger seat onto the back.

Before long, all of the parts were cut and ready to put together. Soon after, all of the screw holes were drilled. Then, my sister’s friends told me that they would paint the hand cycle any color I wanted.

I paused for a moment. Then I told them, “I want it brown.”

“You don’t want black, or candy apple red?” my sister asked. “You just want plain old brown?”

“The bats in the shed are brown,” I explained. “If it’s good enough for them, then it’s good enough for me.”

Finally, the bike transformation was complete.



## Chapter Four

# Training to Win

My sister doesn't understand why I love bats so much, but she understands winning. Every day for the next two months she helped me train for the bike race. We did sprints and long rides. I lifted weights and did pull-ups to strengthen my arms. I rode with my sister on the back of the bike to make it harder to pedal.

When my hands got blisters, she bandaged them for me. When my muscles were sore at night, she rubbed them. When I was tired and didn't believe I could compete with the other kids, she encouraged me.

"You can do it, Shawn. Just because you can't use your legs doesn't mean you can't win using your arms."







## Chapter Five Flying!

My sister's words put a big smile on my face. They expressed the same thoughts I had when I was watching the bats. They can't see at night, but that doesn't stop them. They just use their ears instead.

Finally, the day of the race arrived. My heart went thumpity-thump. I sat on my hand cycle, gritted my teeth, and thought about bats. The instant the starter flag came down, I took off. In fact, I practically flew.

I guess I don't have to tell you who won the race. I'll let my trophy do the talking.