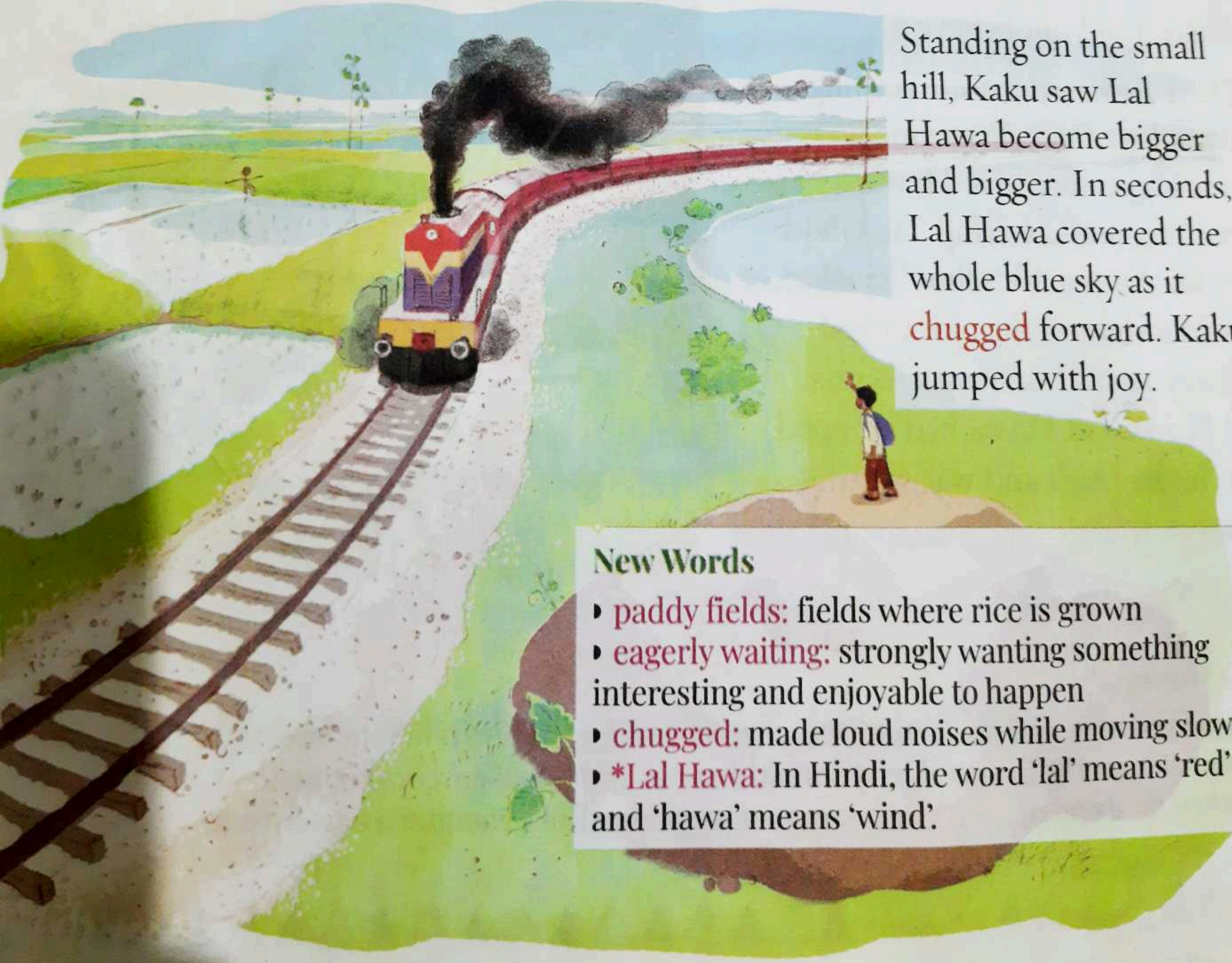


Kaku lived in a small village called Chhoti Dadi. Every day, Kaku had to walk to his school. He loved the long walk to school because he had made a new friend on his way. No one knew why he loved walking past the green **paddy fields**, the village lake and the old ground to reach school. No one knew Kaku's little BIG secret on the way to school—not even Amma.

Every morning Kaku would be ready in his school uniform, **eagerly waiting** for his tiffin box. As soon as he got his tiffin box, he would run out of the house to meet his friend—**Lal Hawa***.

As he crossed the paddy fields, soft *chuk-chuk* sounds greeted Kaku. He was happiest when he heard Lal Hawa coming. He always got the best view of Lal Hawa from the top of a small mud hill near the village lake. Kaku knew just the place when the speeding Lal Hawa would whistle. He believed, Lal Hawa said, "Hello" in its language when it whistled. Kaku whistled back, welcoming Lal Hawa.



Standing on the small hill, Kaku saw Lal Hawa become bigger and bigger. In seconds, Lal Hawa covered the whole blue sky as it **chugged** forward. Kaku jumped with joy.

New Words

- ▶ **paddy fields**: fields where rice is grown
- ▶ **eagerly waiting**: strongly wanting something interesting and enjoyable to happen
- ▶ **chugged**: made loud noises while moving slowly
- ▶ ***Lal Hawa**: In Hindi, the word 'lal' means 'red' and 'hawa' means 'wind'.

He clapped and waved as Lal Hawa *chuk-chuk*-ed past him. As his eyes followed its magical wheels, he saw small hands waving to him. He ran along with Lal Hawa, waving back at the small hands.

Kaku loved meeting Lal Hawa every day. He liked its red paint, its fast moving wheels and the *chuk-chuk* sound it made, as it moved. Every night, he prayed for Lal Hawa to stop at his village—just once.

One day, Kaku asked his school teacher, “Why doesn’t Lal Hawa stop at Chhoti Dadi, sir?”

His teacher replied, “Kaku, our village is too small for the **mighty** Lal Hawa.”

Kaku was sad. His Amma gently **consoled** him by saying, “Don’t be sad, Kaku. I am sure Lal Hawa will stop here one day.” But Lal Hawa never stopped. Every day, it **raced past** the village lake, leaving Kaku alone on the small mud hill.

A few days later, Kaku reached the small hill as usual. He could see Lal Hawa **approaching**. Kaku closed his eyes and started praying that his dear friend would stop. His eyes were closed but he wondered why his ears could not hear the *chuk-chuk* of Lal Hawa. **Startled**, he opened his eyes. There, right in front of him, Lal Hawa had stopped! Kaku could not believe it!

Then, he heard a noise coming from the village. Everyone was running towards Lal Hawa, shouting and cheering. He could see his Amma, his school teacher, his friends, and the old **retired** railway guard hurrying towards Lal Hawa. Lal Hawa had stopped at Chhoti Dadi and was waiting to meet Kaku!



New Words

• **mighty**: strong and powerful • **consoled**: comforted him when he was sad • **raced past**: moved at a very high speed past something • **approaching**: coming near • **startled**: be shocked or alarmed • **retired**: stopped working after reaching a certain age

Lal Hawa whistled aloud and Kaku laughed and whistled back. Quickly, he climbed onto Lal Hawa. And just then, Lal Hawa *chuk-chuked* again. The *chuk-chuk* sound became faster and soon **Lal Hawa was flying on magic wheels** with Kaku in it. Amma smiled. She had tears in her eyes. From a window, Kaku waved to everyone. Lal Hawa was flying and so was Kaku!

Anubha Yadav

New Words

► **Lal Hawa was flying on magic wheels:** Lal Hawa was moving so fast on the tracks that it felt like it was moving on magic wheels which made it fly.

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Understanding the Text

A | Number these sentences in the correct order.

- a. Kaku had a secret friend. He had not told anyone about his little big secret. ()
- b. One day, while waiting for Lal Hawa, Kaku closed his eyes and prayed for Lal Hawa to stop. ()
- c. Every night, Kaku prayed that Lal Hawa would stop at his village. ()
- d. Kaku climbed onto Lal Hawa and soon they were flying together. (10)
- e. Kaku lived in a small village called Chhoti Dadi. (1)
- f. His teacher said that Lal Hawa would never stop at Chhoti Dadi as it was a small village. ()
- g. Lal Hawa whistled and Kaku whistled back welcoming it. ()
- h. Kaku was sad as he always wanted to meet Lal Hawa. ()
- i. Every day, he would run up a small hill and look at his friend, Lal Hawa. ()
- j. When he opened his eyes, he saw that Lal Hawa had stopped in front of him. ()