

Chintu's Big Heart



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By Naramsetti Umamaheswararao

Chintu, a fifth-grader, was known for his intelligence beyond his years. Every day, he walked a mile to school by himself. When his parents offered to accompany him, he confidently replied, “I can go by myself. I’m grown up now.” Since their village, Seethanagaram, was a small town, there wasn’t much fear of children being abducted or harmed, so his parents didn’t object.

One day, Chintu woke up early and set out for school earlier than usual. He packed a small spade, a water bottle, and his books into his schoolbag and slung it over his shoulder.

His mother, who had been observing him, asked, “Why are you leaving so early? There’s still time for school.”

“I have some work, mother. I’ll tell you when I come back,” Chintu replied.

On his way to school, Chintu spotted some discarded mango seeds. He carefully picked out the good ones and walked a little further from the road. Using his small spade, he dug holes and buried the seeds. Then, he poured some water from his bottle over them.

As Chintu was about to leave, an old beggar woman sitting under a nearby tree called out, “Come here, boy.”

Chintu approached her and greeted her politely.

“I saw you planting those seeds. That’s a good deed. But who will water them every day?” she asked.

“I pass this way to school every day. I will water them,” Chintu replied.

While talking to the old woman, Chintu noticed she looked weak and was coughing frequently. Concerned, he asked, “Do you have a fever? Have you eaten anything?”

“I don’t have the strength to move. I haven’t gone anywhere and haven’t eaten anything either,” the old

woman replied.

“Oh no, that’s not good,” said Chintu, opening his lunch box and offering her some food.

The old woman hesitated. “You’ll be hungry in school. Don’t worry about me, son. I’m used to this.”

“Don’t worry about me. My friends will share their food with me,” Chintu reassured her. He then gave her water to drink and asked some passersby to help take her to the hospital before heading to school.

After school, on his way back home, Chintu saw a small puppy being chased by a big dog. The puppy, terrified, ran in search of shelter, letting out pitiful cries. It squeezed through the gate of a house, but the house dog barked at it, causing it to retreat. The puppy then ran into an alley, where a pig scared it further. Not knowing what to do, the puppy let out a helpless whimper.

Seeing the puppy in distress, Chintu took out his spade and used it to chase away the big dog. He picked up the trembling puppy and comforted it, saying, “Don’t be scared. I chased it away.”

Just then, a woman from the house across the street came outside and noticed the puppy in Chintu’s arms. “Its mother died in an accident while crossing the road. You can take it home if you want to raise it,” she said.

Without a second thought, Chintu took the puppy home.

When Chintu's mother saw him with the puppy, she frowned. "Why did you bring a puppy home? It will make a mess everywhere. Leave it where you found it."

"Poor thing... its mother died, and a big dog and a pig were chasing it. It was so frightened. Let's take care of it for a while. We can let it go later. First, give it some food and milk," Chintu pleaded.

"You seem to be taking on more responsibilities than necessary. You should be focusing on school, not trying to act like a grown-up," his mother scolded.

"But if everyone thought that way, who would help those in need? Grown-ups can't always do everything, and if kids aren't allowed to help either, then who will assist those in trouble? Remember when you asked me this morning where I was going early? Let me explain now. I heard my teacher say that many people throw away mango seeds after eating the fruit. He said they shouldn't go to waste. So, I buried some seeds by the roadside, and I'll water them every day. There was an old woman with a fever under a tree. I gave her my lunch, and she was so happy. She blessed me," Chintu said, his eyes wide with excitement.

"Is that so? You did a good thing. Keep helping others whenever you can. I'll get some food for the puppy.

Don't worry about it. We'll take care of it for a while and then find it a good home," his mother said kindly.

"Let's do that. I didn't tell you this morning because I thought you might scold me. But now I know you're kind-hearted and will understand. From now on, I'll tell you everything I plan to do," Chintu promised.

"You're my precious child," his mother said, hugging him lovingly.



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Naramsetti Umamaheswararao has written more than a thousand stories, songs, and novels for children over 42 years. he has published 32 books. His

novel, *Anandalokam*, received the Central Sahitya Akademi Award for children's literature. He has received numerous awards and honours, including the Andhra Pradesh Government's Distinguished Telugu Language Award and the Pratibha Award from Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University. He established the Naramshetty Children's Literature Foundation and has been actively promoting children's literature as its president.

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