

# The Bequest



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*By Naramsetti Umamaheswararao*



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Sundaram and Sumathi lived in Nagur. They had only one son named Shiva. They raised him with love and care. At that time, Shiva was studying in sixth grade. Every day, he went to school obediently and studied attentively. In his free time, he would play with other kids on the school ground.

When Shiva came home from school each day, his mother Sumathi would prepare some snacks for him. He liked to take the plate and sit on the stone bench outside their house, enjoying his snacks.

As he ate, he liked watching the puppies running around the courtyard, the birds perched on the tree in front of the neighbour's house, the chickens pecking at grains, and the cows chewing fresh grass in the shed next door.

One day, when Shiva came home from school, Sumathi gave him sesame seed balls made with jaggery. As usual, he sat outside on the stone bench and began eating them.

Just then, Shankar, a boy from the same street, came by.

Standing in front of Shiva, he asked, "Hey! Will you give me one?"

Shankar's father worked as a laborer in an onion shop, and his mother worked in the fields.

"Nope... I won't give you one," replied Shiva.

"Come on... just one! Next time I get some, I'll share with you," pleaded Shankar.

"I won't give. Go ask your mom," Shiva said.

Sumathi, who was inside, overheard their conversation.

She immediately came to the doorstep and said, “Shiva, give one to Shankar.”

“Why should I give? Tell him to ask his mom!” replied Shiva.

“You shouldn’t eat without sharing with others. Give one to Shankar,” insisted Sumathi.

“Instead of telling me, you could just take one from the jar and give it to him,” grumbled Shiva.

“I told you to give it to him so that you learn the joy of sharing. If you give one to Shankar, I’ll give you two more,” she promised.

Hearing that, Shiva cheerfully said, “Here, take this,” and handed one sesame ball to Shankar.

Sumathi smiled with satisfaction, seeing the sparkle on Shankar’s face when he received the treat.

After Shankar left, Sumathi brought two more sesame balls and gave them to Shiva.

Sitting beside him and gently patting his head, she said, “We’re human beings, so we should help others. Shankar’s family doesn’t have much money. His parents can’t always afford treats like we can. That’s

why you should share what you have with children like Shankar. If your friends ask for help, you should always be willing to help.”

Just by looking at his face, Sumathi understood that Shiva wasn't entirely convinced by her words.

“Why should I do what you say? Their parents will buy for them, won't they?” he asked.

Sumathi believed that good habits and values must be taught from a young age. She paused for a moment, wondering how best to make her son understand.

Just then, she noticed a crow sitting on the wall of the house across the street.

She went inside, brought a chapati, and, while watching the crow, tore it into pieces and threw them into the courtyard.

“Shiva, watch what happens now,” she said.

The crow flew down, picked up one piece of chapati, then flew back to the wall and loudly cawed. Hearing its call, other crows from around the area came and picked up the remaining pieces and flew away.



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“Did you see how united the crows are? The first crow took only one piece. It didn’t try to hide or hoard more just because there were leftovers. It called its fellow crows and shared the food so that their hunger could be satisfied too. When even birds can think in such a noble way, we, as humans, should do even better. That’s why you must also share with the kids around you and help in whatever way you can,” explained Sumathi.

Shiva nodded, showing he had understood.

“I’ll do what you said,” he replied happily.

Sumathi’s words made a deep impression on Shiva’s mind. From that day on, whatever food his mother gave him, he made it a habit to share some with his friends. Sumathi was overjoyed to see this change in her son.

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