



A Sackful of Potatoes

Arundhati Nath, Guwahati, Assam



There lived four friends named Bunty, Rumi, Kailash and Reema in a village. They went to school together and played in the nearby playground every evening. They were best friends.

A year after, two boys named Ravi and Asif joined them. They had recently moved into the nearby apartment. These boys often quarrelled and fought with one another.

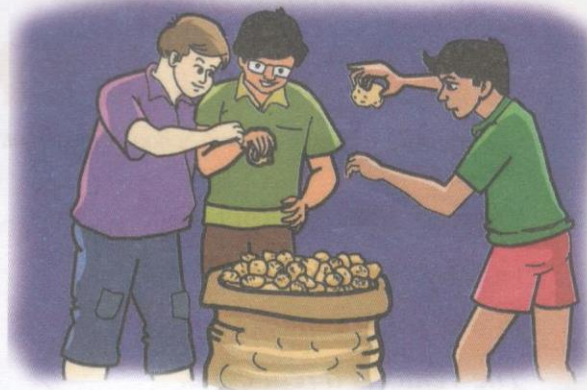


One day Mr Singhal, an elderly gentleman from the neighbourhood noticed the children.

He called all the six children to his house.

When they arrived, Singhal greeted them with a smile and offered some hot chocolate. He said, "Children, could you check what is inside that sack?"

The children checked the sack and found potatoes inside it. They also noticed that there were two rotten potatoes outside the



Gopinath Menon

sack. Singhal asked the children to put the rotten potatoes inside the sack with fresh potatoes. The children did as they were told, though they wondered why Singhal uncle said so.

"Come back to me after two weeks, children," he said.

When the children visited Singhal after two weeks, they found the sack as they had left it. Uncle asked them to check what was inside it.

To their amazement, the children found that almost all the potatoes were rotten.

The uncle said, "Children, when I had asked you to mix the two rotten potatoes with the good ones, the fresh potatoes too started rotting. So, choose your friends carefully because it won't take much time for bad company to destroy you."

The children thanked the uncle and realized that they should keep away from bad company. They learnt that a 'man is known by the company he keeps.' ●



THE HOT VENUS

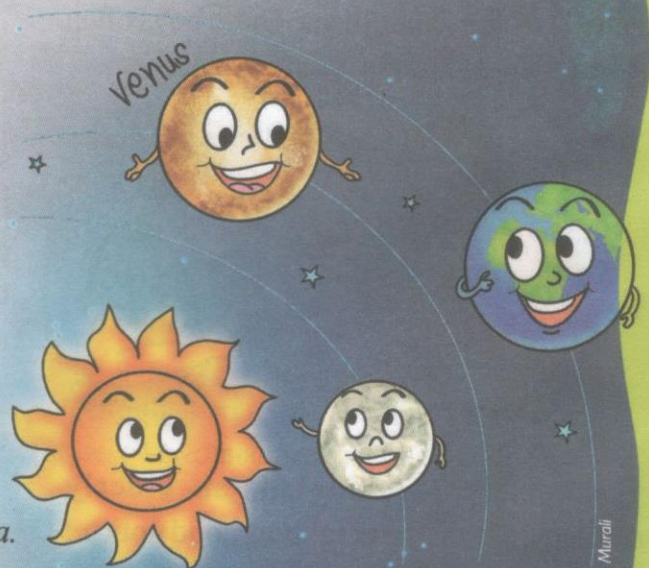
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*Named after the Roman
Goddess of Love and Beauty
In our solar system,
The Venus is a real cutie.*

*This Earth's neighbour,
Is beautiful and hot,
In the clear skies,
She looks like a bright blue dot.*

*She is full of volcanoes and lava,
You definitely cannot grow any guava.
She just has 224 days in a year,
That is because the Sun is so near.*



Mureli