

When Somu Forgot the Stranger Safety Rules





Once upon a time, there was a boy called Somu. He lived with his parents and dog, Tommy, in a house that was on a busy street but also near a park. Tommy was a little brown dog with long silky ears and golden brown eyes; he was a happy, friendly dog and really loved his master, Somu.



Somu and Tommy were best friends. They played ball together and went swimming in the nearby pond; Somu always shared his biscuits and ice-cream with Tommy and Tommy even followed Somu to school and back.



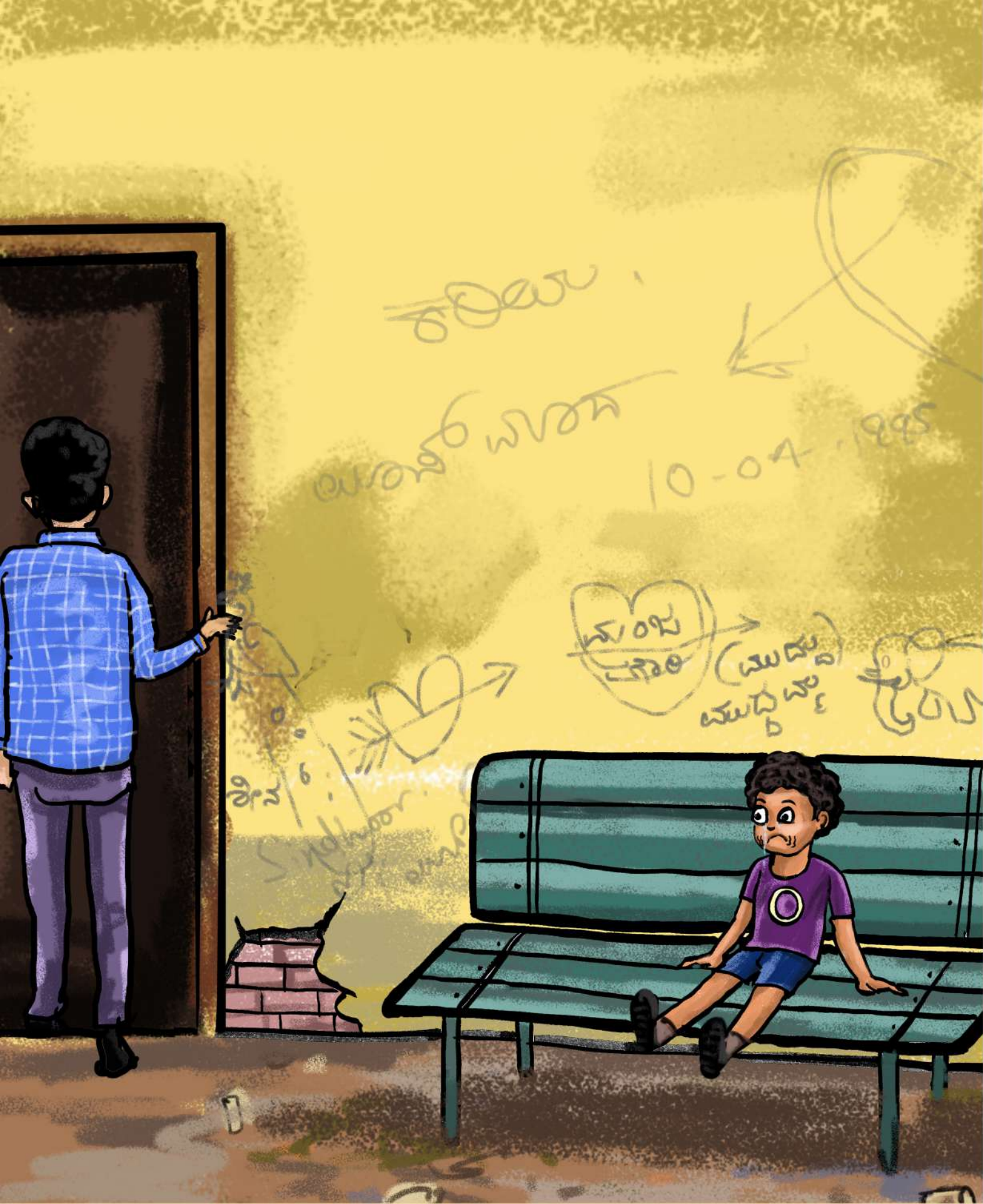
One day, Somu and Tommy were playing in the park. Suddenly, a man came to them and started to talk to Somu. "Hi, what a nice ball," he said to Somu. "Can I play too?" Somu smiled and agreed for the man to play with them. Tommy wondered why Somu was talking to a stranger. Didn't he remember what Somu's mother had told him about talking to strangers? That it was not safe to talk to people you did not know.



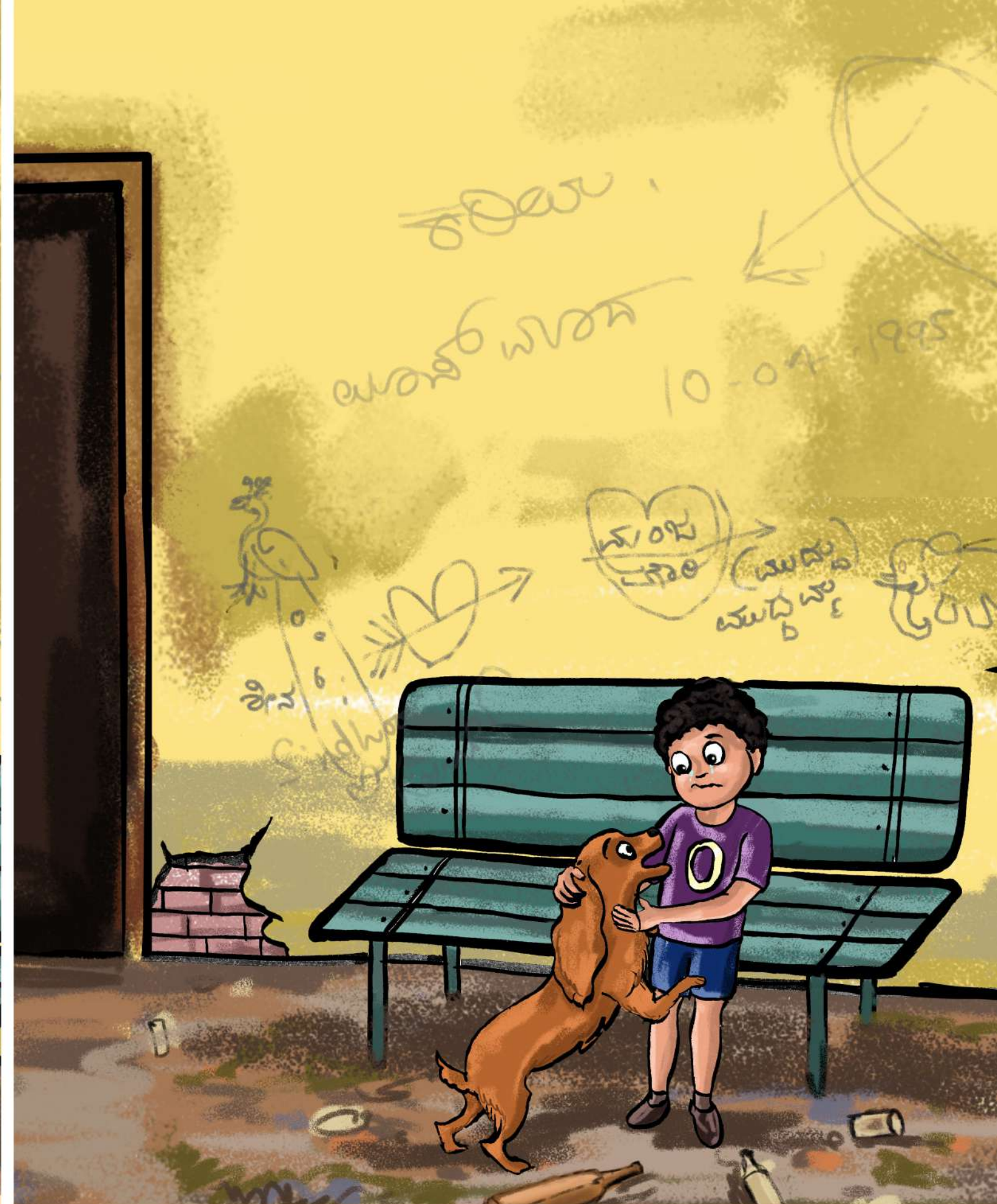
A few minutes later, the man had persuaded Somu to go to the toy shop with him and eat some ice-cream after. As Somu walked away with the strange man, Tommy became very worried. He decided to follow them. The man did not notice Tommy walking behind them and Somu was too excited as he was thinking about the toyshop and the ice-cream treat.



After a while, Somu realized that they were not walking towards the market at all. Instead they were in some strange street that he did not recognize. "I don't think that there is any toy shop or ice-cream parlour here," said Somu doubtfully. The stranger said nothing and Somu was starting to feel very nervous and afraid. Where were they going? Where was this man taking him?



At last, they reached a broken-down old building. The man told Somu to sit on the bench outside and wait for him. Suddenly, he did not sound as nice and friendly as he had seemed in the park. Somu sat down upon the bench and started to cry. "I want to go home, to mummy and daddy," he cried. 'I am scared...and I don't really know this man...I am lost now.'



Just then Tommy bounded up. Somu cried out in relief and hugged his dog. "O Tommy, I am so glad you are here...", he said. Tommy started to pull at Somu's shirt. "O I see...you know the way home and can take us back!" said Somu. "Come on Tommy, let us run...let us go quickly before that strange man comes back."



And so, Somu and Tommy ran all the way back home.



At home, where Somu's parents were starting to get very worried about them. "Where were you?" asked his mother. Somu told his parents what had happened at the park that morning and where all he had been after, how afraid he had been all alone with a stranger.

"So you forgot the safety rule about not talking to strangers...about never going anywhere with them even if they offer you sweets and toys," said his father.

"Yes," said Somu sadly. "But Tommy knew and remembered the rule. That is why he followed me—to protect me from any hurt or harm that may have happened to me."



So, clever Tommy was given many hugs and an extra special biscuit for helping Somu to be safe. And from then on, Somu always remembered the 3 safety rules about strangers:

- NEVER talk to strangers!
- NEVER go anywhere with them (or take rides with them)!
- NEVER accept offers of toys or sweets from them!

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