

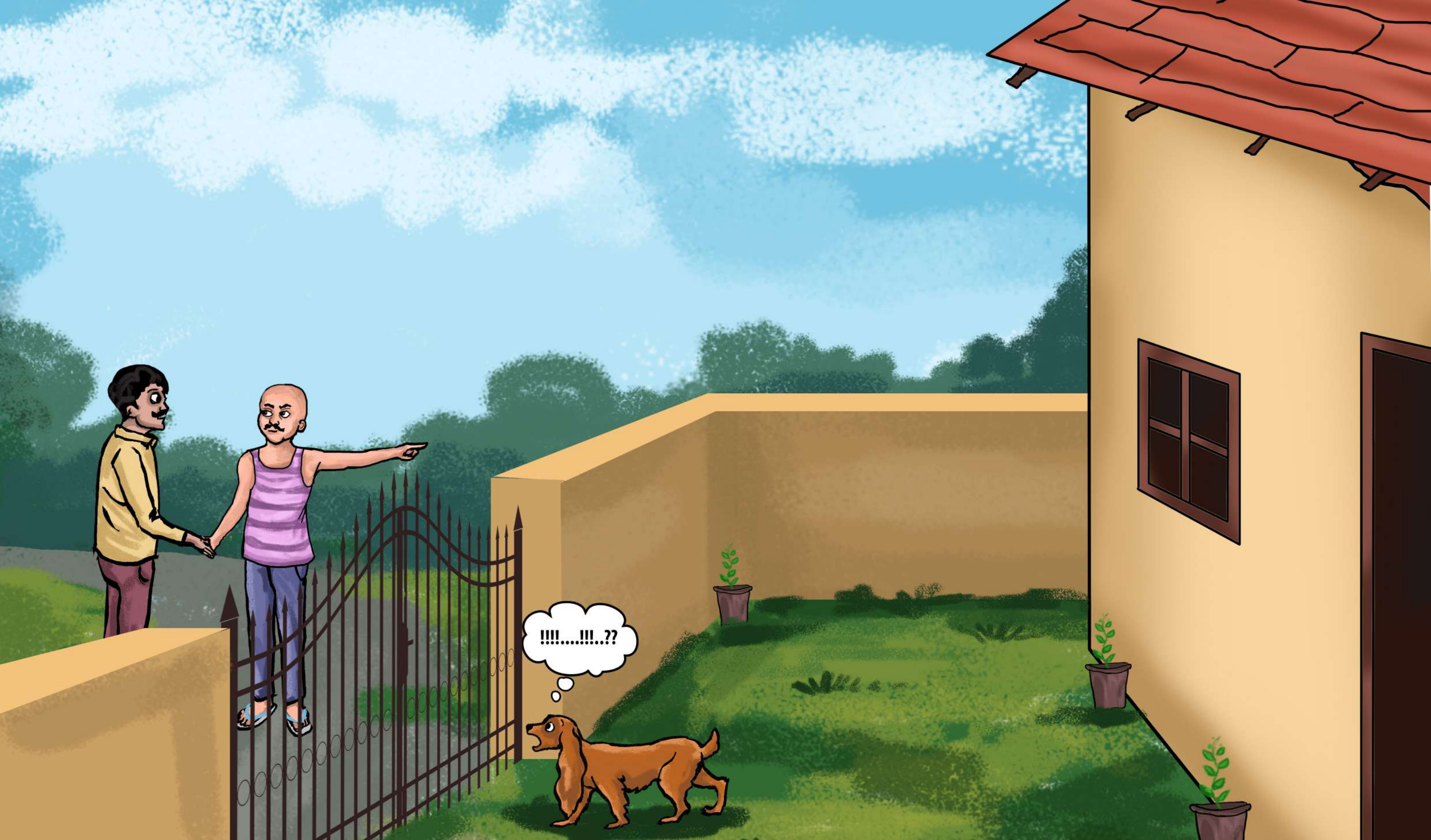
Which Secrets to Keep

१. १. १. १.





Somu's mother's birthday was coming up. He was very excited because he had planned a party and present for her. The best part of this was that it was a secret! He had not told her about it because he wanted it to be a surprise for her. He kept imagining how surprised and happy she would be when she opened the box and saw her new pink saree and when all the guests arrived along with the birthday cake that had been ordered for the evening! Only two others were in on the secret—Dad, because he was helping with organizing the birthday surprise plans and Tommy because...well, Tommy and Somu were best friends and Somu always told Tommy everything!



The day before Somu's mother's birthday, while Somu was at school, Tommy was sitting outside the house, near the gate, when two strange men came by. They did not notice Tommy as they whispered to each other, pointing to the house.

"Yes, so we will come tonight...at around midnight so that the family is fast asleep..." said one."

"We can break in through the side door—it looks a little old so it should be easy to get in that way," said the other. "And if the family and the kid give us any trouble as we steal all the stuff in the house, we will just hit them on the head."

Tommy pricked up his ears when he heard their conversation, especially the last part about the stealing and the family being hurt...someone was going to hit his beloved Somu??



Suddenly they noticed Tommy but did not realize that he belonged to the house they were going to rob and the family they were planning to hurt. The first man laughed and said "aha, you silly dog...so you heard our secret! You had better not tell...it is a secret...if you don't tell, I will give you a large box of your favourite biscuits." "And if you tell, we will smack you on the head with a heavy stick", said the other one.



Tommy felt afraid...and confused. What did they mean that it was a secret? Weren't secrets supposed to be good things? Just like Somu's secret about his mother's birthday surprise? What kind of secret was this then—where these strange people were planning to steal stuff and hurt people? Was he supposed to really keep it a secret when he knew that Somu's house was going to be robbed and Somu and his family were going to be hurt??



And so, that night, Tommy did not go to sleep as usual on Somu's bed. He sat by the window and kept watch—long after Somu was asleep, and his parents had gone to bed. At about midnight, Tommy heard a noise and saw two men come down the road—the thieves he had seen yesterday, the ones who had told him to keep a bad secret. He started to bark loudly.



Somu and his parents woke up and came running to see what the matter was. Standing by Tommy, Somu's father saw the two thieves approach the house.



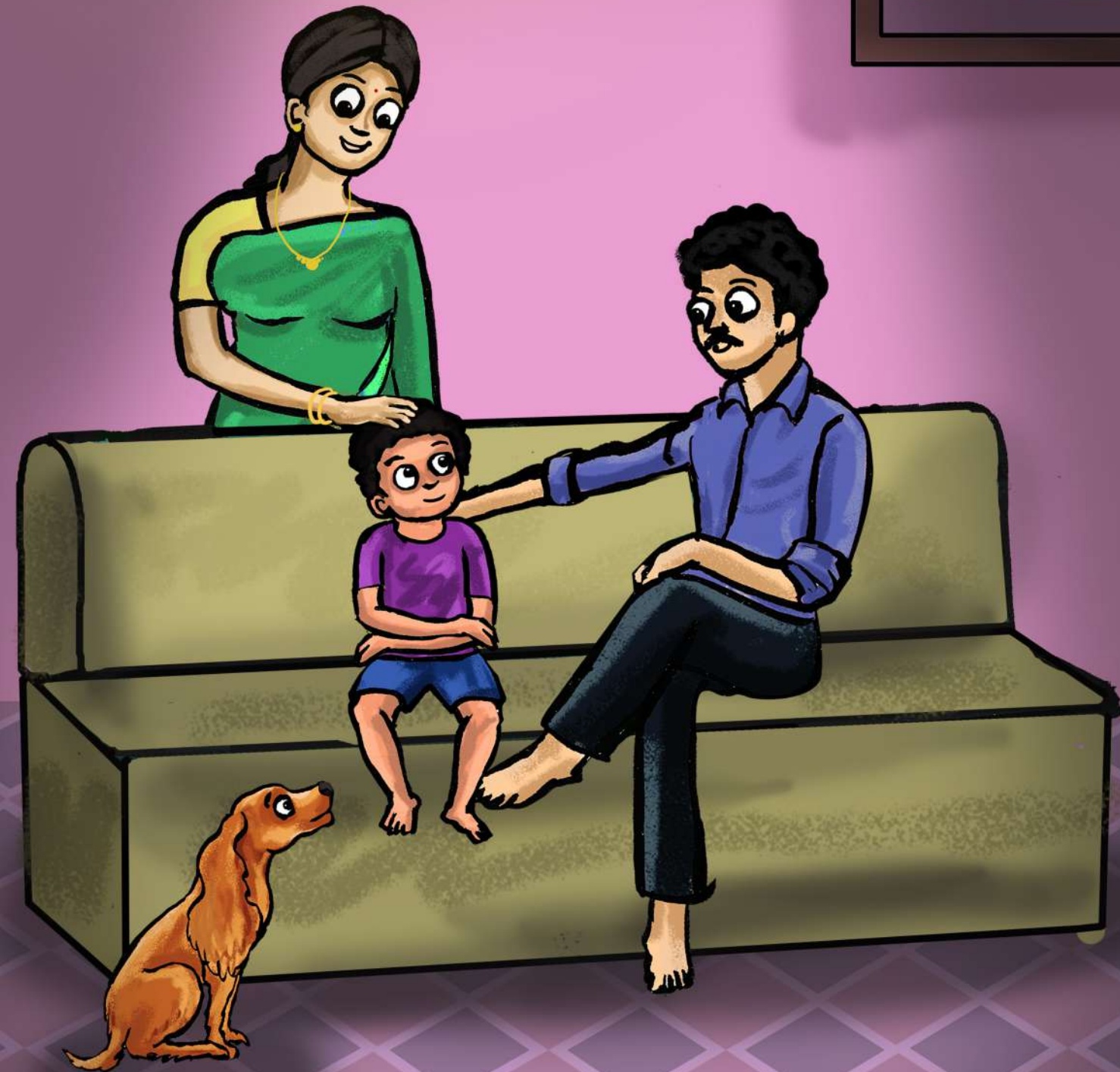
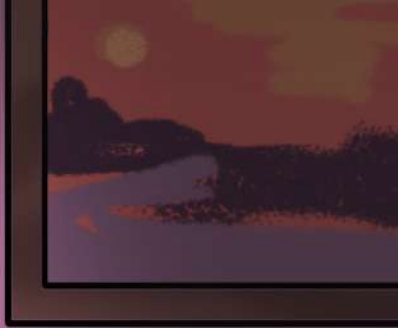
He immediately called the police.



Within minutes, the police car was at their house and the two thieves, who had been hiding in the bushes near the gate, were caught.



Tommy was petted by the family and given his favourite food the next day. "Clever dog," said Somu's mother.



"I wonder how he knew the thieves were going to come," said Somu. And Tommy thought to himself: "I heard them plan...and knew their secret. But their secret was not a safe or good secret and so I did not keep it."

That evening, Tommy watched Somu and his father give his mother the surprise birthday present, and the guests and cake arrive for the surprise party. Somu's mother was excited and happy... "I never knew you had planned all this!" she said. "It was a secret," said Somu.

"A very good secret", thought Tommy. "Because no one got hurt and everyone was happy"

Community Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service Project,
Department of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry,
National Institute of Mental Health & Neurosciences (NIMHANS)
(Institute Of National Importance)
Hosur Road, Benaaluru - 560029

Website : www.nimhans.ac.in
Email : capnimhans@gmail.com

Supported by the Dept. of Women and Child Development, Govt. of Karnataka

Design and Art work : SathishRam

