

Pinky and Chintu Learn to Keep Safe from Strangers





Pinky and Chintu were brother and sister. They lived with their mother and father in a nice house which was near an apple orchard.



Except for the fact that Pinky was a girl and Chintu was a boy, and that each had hobbies of their own (Chintu loved to build and fly model airplanes and Pinky liked to play with dolls), they enjoyed many of the same things too - bike riding, football, hide and seek and just going to the park.



There was one other important difference between them: Chintu was cautious and careful and a little weary of strangers. Pinky, on the other hand, wasn't the least bit weary. She was friendly to a fault. Just about everybody that came her way got a big "Hello!"

"Hello Butterfly!"

"Hello Frog!"

"Hello Mr. Truck driver!"

"Hello Mr. Postman!"



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Chintu worried about Pinky's free and easy way with strangers. Strangers weren't the problem for him. Not talking to strangers suited cautious and careful Chintu just fine. But friendly-to-a-fault Pinky was different. She talked to everybody.

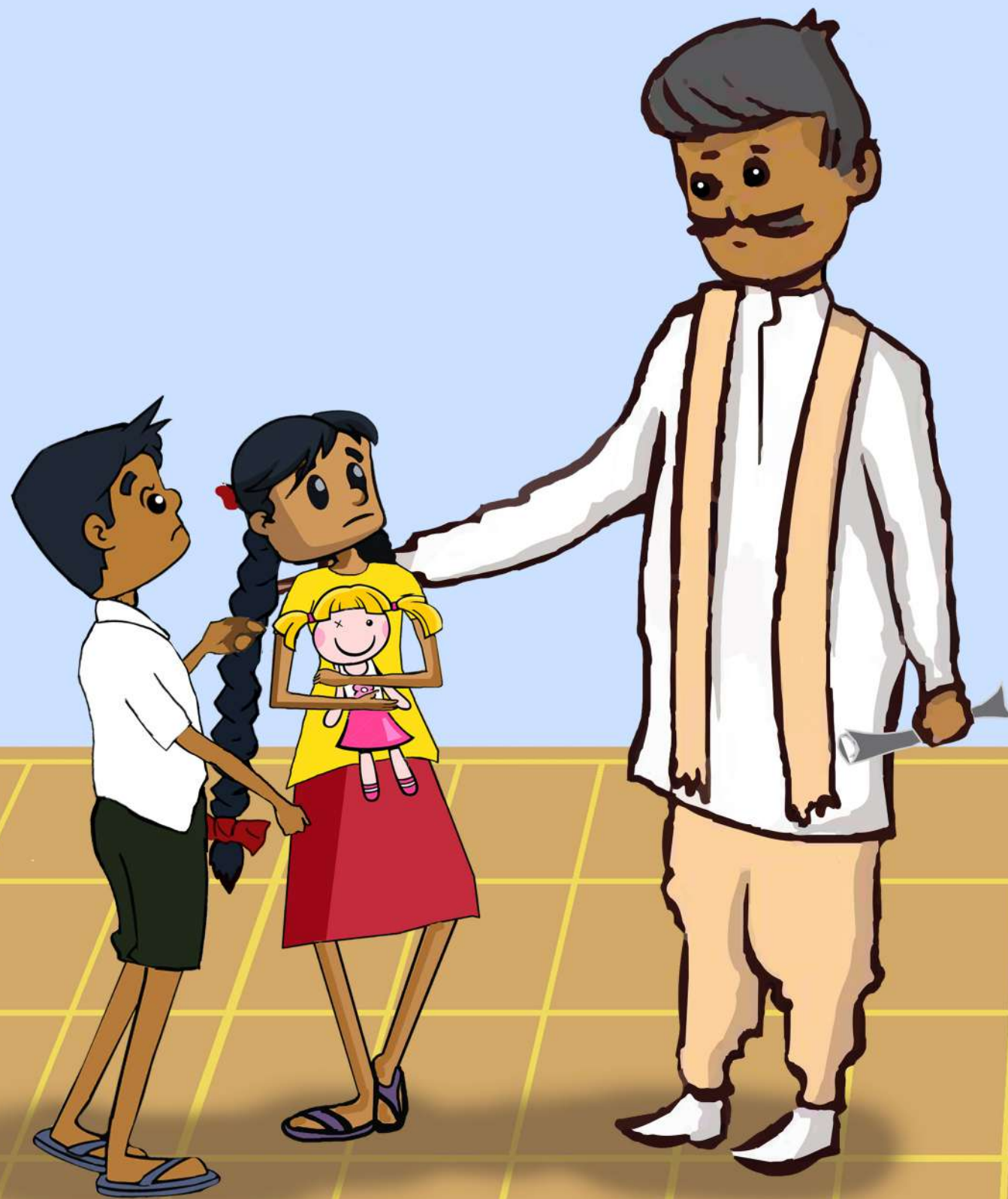
"Pinky" said Chintu. "You're going to have to stop that!!"

"Stop what?" she asked.

"Talking to strangers. It's just not a good idea!"

"Why?" She wanted to know. "Why shouldn't I talk to strangers? What harm is there in it? Is there something wrong with strangers?"

"Hmm" said Chintu thinking about it for a moment. "Those aren't questions for me. Those are for Mama and Papa..."



"Pinky, I'm glad you asked these questions" said Papa in his deepest and most serious voice. "The reason you should never talk to a stranger and never ever take presents or sweets from a stranger and Never Ever go anywhere with a stranger is that it's dangerous ! "

"What's dangerous about it?" she asked wide-eyed. "What can happen?"

"All sorts of things!" Papa said. "Here! Look at the newspaper."

As she looked at it her eyes grew wider and wider. This is what she saw:

STRANGERS TROUBLES CHILD
MISSING CHILD FOUND
POLICE QUESTIONS STRANGER
CHILD SAFETY MEETING

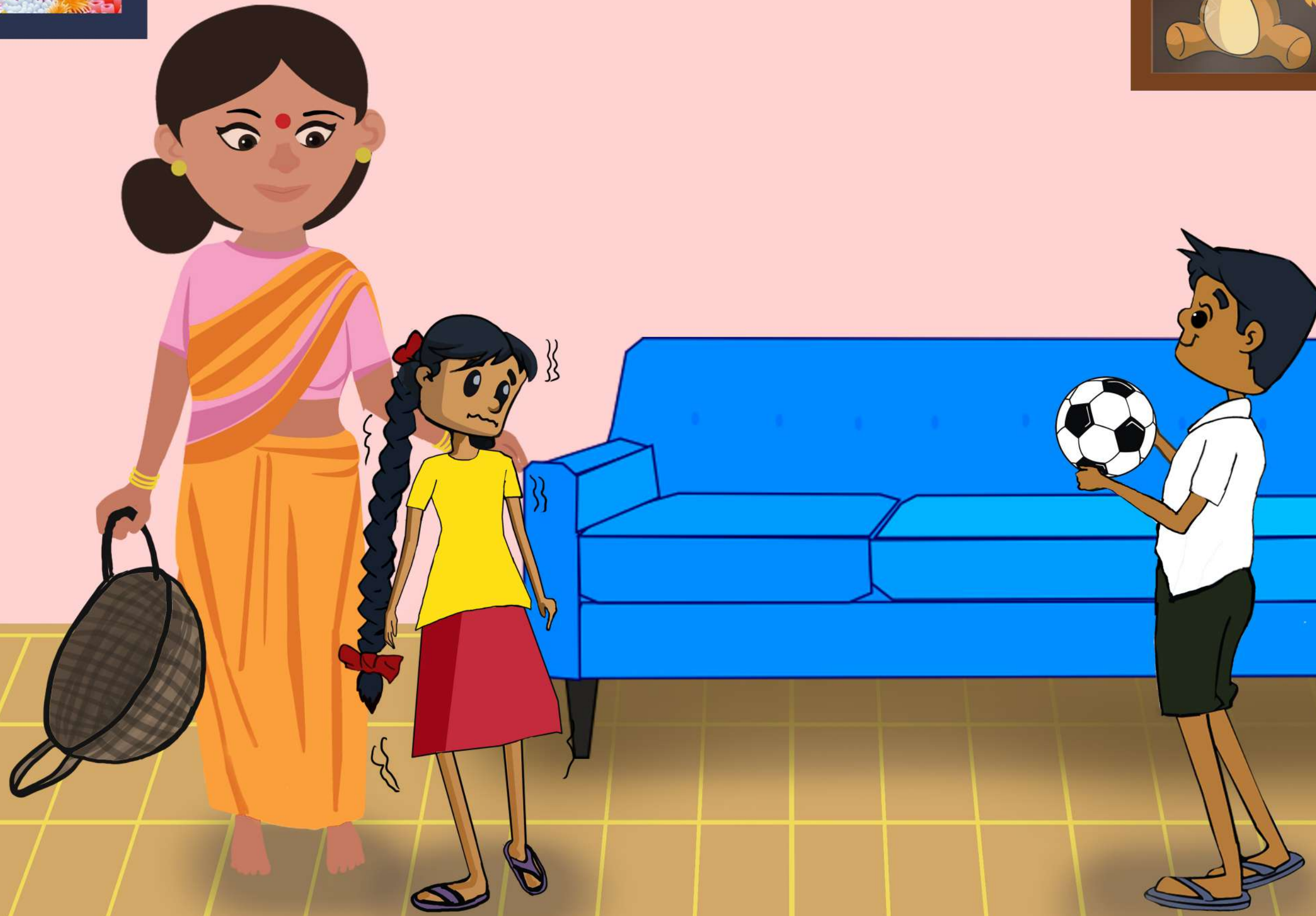
"I hope you're paying attention to all this" called Papa to Chintu and Pinky.



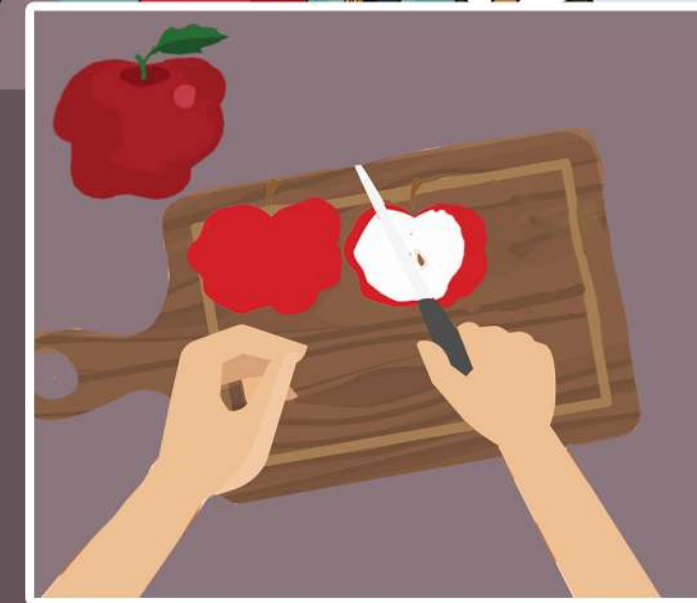
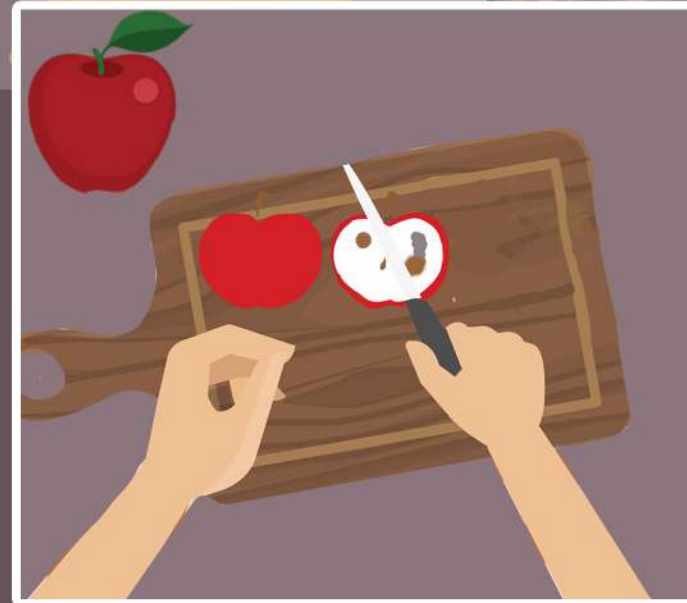
Pinky had a hard time falling asleep that night. Her mind was filled with those headlines.



The next day dawned bright and friendly to everybody but Pinky. She had spent a restless night and when she looked out the window everything seemed a little scary. The trees seemed bigger and like their branches were going to reach out to catch her; the owls and crows seemed to look at her in a frightening way.



."Well, how about some football?" But she didn't want to do that either. It wasn't until he suggested hide and seek, her favorite game that she agreed to go along. Before they left, they told Mama where they would be - It was a family rule that they never went anywhere without telling Mama or Papa. "That's fine" said Mama. "I'm on my way to pick some apples at the orchard. I'll stop by for you on the way home."



"How was the morning?" asked Mama on the way home in the car. "It was ok", said Pinky "But there were so many strangers!"

Later at home when Mama and Pinky were getting ready to make apple juice, Mama said "You know what Papa told you were quite right. It's not a good idea to talk to strangers, accept presents or rides from them."

"But" she continued. "That doesn't mean that all strangers are bad. Let me explain... it's like this barrel of apples. There is an old saying that goes there'll always be a bad apple in every barrel. That's the way it is with strangers. Children have to be careful because of the few bad apples."

"Look!" said Pinky. "I found one! It's all bumpy and has a funny shape!"

"Well, it's certainly strange looking, but that doesn't necessarily mean it's bad. You can't always tell from the outside which are the bad apples." She cut it in half. "See." She said. "It's fine inside."

"Now, here's one that looks fine on the outside..." said mother "...but inside it's all wormy."

"Ugh!" said Pinky.

"What's up?" asked Chintu.

"A bad apple!" said Pinky.

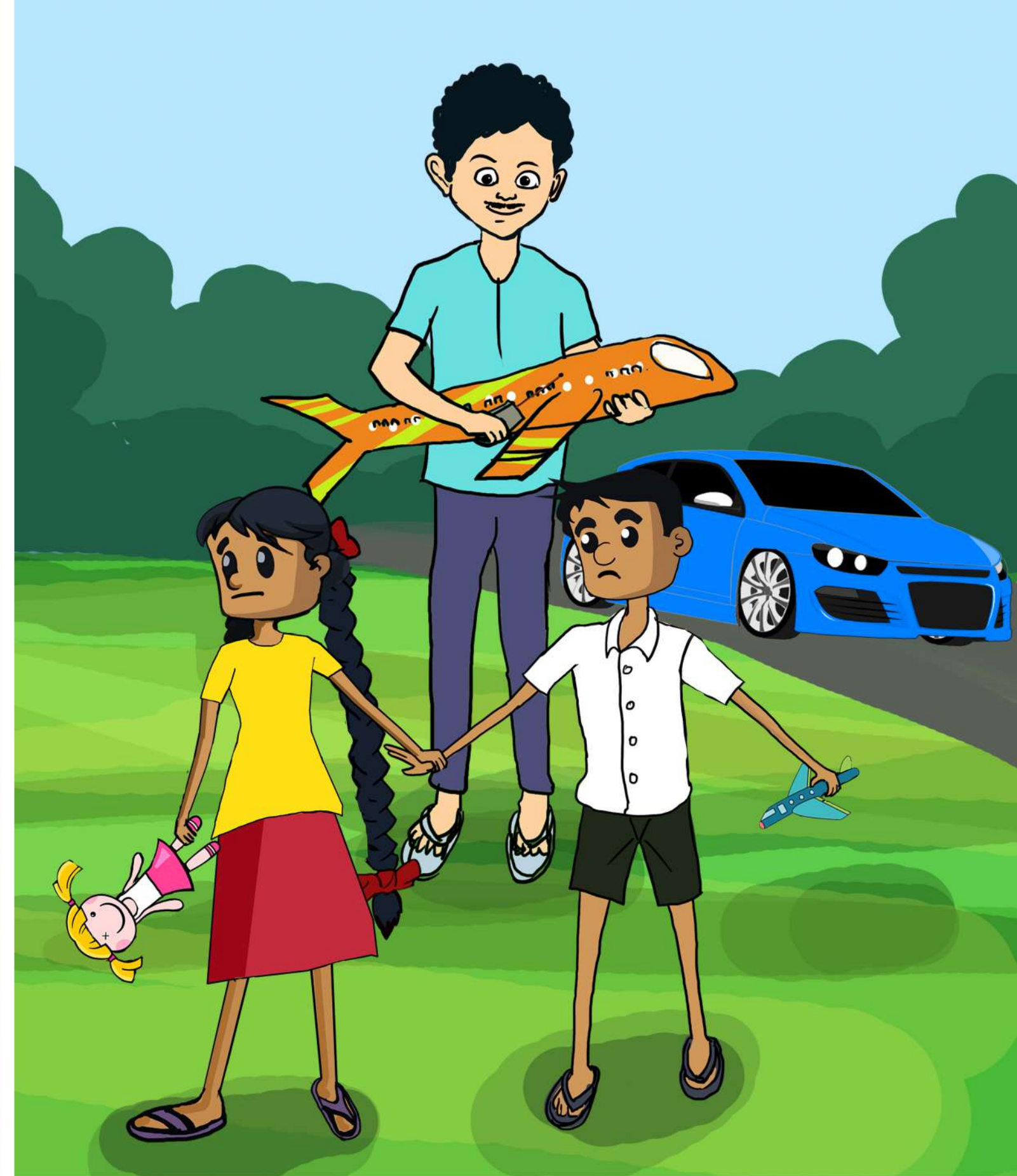
"See, that's what I mean," said Mama. "It looked good from the outside but was bad on the inside. People are also like that sometimes...some don't look very nice on the outside but may actually be good on the inside, so they are good people. Some look beautiful outside but may not be very nice on the inside—that is, they are not to be trusted. Just like apples, it is hard to tell what people are like on the inside by just looking at their outside. And that's why we cannot tell with strangers—we don't know who they are or what they are like inside."



"Hey, I'm going to the field outside to fly my new airplane. Want to come?" asked Chintu. "Sure" said Pinky. She felt much better now... more like her old friendly self.



The airplane was a great success and the children were about to head home when someone came to the field with a big beautiful orange and green model airplane.



Chintu ran up to the stranger and started talking to him! For that's what he was-- a stranger -- no matter how big and beautiful his airplane was!

"I'm going to send it up and follow in the car," the stranger was saying. "Want to come along?"

"Wow!" said Chintu. And he would have - if Pinky hadn't grabbed his arm and said "Don't you dare!" The stranger drove off following his airplane.



And Pinky ran home shouting, "Chintu talked to a Stranger! Chintu talked to a stranger!"
"But it was a big orange and green radio-controlled airplane!" said Chintu.



"That doesn't matter", said Papa. "We have rules about strangers - and they're important!"
"We have rules about tattletales too" said Chintu, glaring at Pinky.
"Pinky wasn't tattling. Tattling is telling just to be mean' explained Mama.
"And Pinky was telling because she loves you and she was worried."
"Do you think that fellow was like a bad apple?" asked Chintu.
"Probably not" said Mama.
"That's right" said Pinky, "Most folks are friendly and nice and wouldn't hurt a fly. But you have to be careful, just in case."

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