

The Good Turn

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Every time Gina walked down the lane where she lived, some neighbour or the other would remark that 'The Brat' was off to some place. The six-year-old was the only child of her parents and they spoilt her totally. Even when she was a small child, her parents had never refused her anything. And she, in turn, always made sure that she got what she wanted.

One day Gina's mother, Nitya Mehta, suddenly noticed that her daughter was not ready to share anything with her friends - be it a book, a toy or something to eat.

She discovered something else as well - most children did not like to play with her daughter. They said she bossed them around and made them cry.



Gina's mother realised that it was their fault Gina was behaving like this. For, hadn't they spoilt her by giving her anything and everything she asked for? Would Gina be able to make good friends and learn to share things with them? She would soon know, for Gina was now admitted to Class I, in a proper school.

Everyone in her class admitted that Gina was very intelligent. But she had no friends until Rita joined her class. New to the city and too shy to make any friends, she did not mind being taken under Gina's wing. Though knowing Gina, it was more of bossing around! But at least she had someone to play with.

One day, the teacher scolded Rita for doing her sums without thinking. The little girl cried because the whole class had laughed at her. For, the teacher had patiently explained how to do the sums, but Rita was just not able to understand.

Gina told her mother about Rita crying in class. "Why don't you try to explain to her simply," asked her mother. "She likes you very much and if you teach her, she will understand."

"Mummy, I don't have time to waste. What can I do if she is dumb?" said Gina. "But Rita is your friend and if you don't help her, who will?" scolded her mother. Then she decided to tell Gina the story of an ant and a dove.

"One day an ant fell into a stream and was desperately trying to save herself. A dove sitting on a tree overhanging the water plucked a leaf and let it fall into the stream close to the ant. The ant climbed onto it and floated safely to the bank," went the story.

"A little later, a bird-catcher came and stood under the tree, preparing to throw a net over the unsuspecting dove. The ant knew what he was planning and stung him in the foot. The bird-catcher yelled out in pain and the noise made the dove fly away."

"Did you understand the story, Gina?" asked her mother. "It means that if you do a good turn, you will only get good in return." To this Gina said: "What a silly story, mummy. It is for little children, I have grown big."

Then Gina's mother decided to act tough. "If you do not help her out, I will not let you watch cartoons for a week."

Extremely unhappy, Gina helped Rita. And wonder of wonders, Rita understood, for Gina knew the trick of explaining simply. The teacher was happy that Rita had finally understood the sums and complimented her in front of the class. Rita was thrilled and told everyone what a good friend Gina was. But Gina preferred to forget the incident as something unpleasant she had been forced to do.



Meanwhile, Rita had been wondering how she could repay her friend. The opportunity came sooner than she thought.

One day, in a fit of anger Gina called one of the younger girls in the school a "stupid idiot" (these words were banned in the school). She also pushed the girl, who fell and bruised her knee.

The matter was reported to the Principal who scolded Gina before the entire school, during the morning assembly. Not only that, the Principal told Gina to stay back for two hours after school and pick up the waste paper from each and every classroom during detention.

Gina was heartbroken. She was a proud girl and could not bear the thought of being humiliated. Right now all she wanted was for the ground to open up and swallow her so that she wouldn't have to show her face to anyone.

After school finished, Gina was left all alone. And then she did what she had been holding back the whole day - she sobbed and sobbed and sobbed.

That is how Rita found her best friend - sobbing. She stayed back with Gina and helped her clean the school and remembered the story of the ant and dove.

From that day, Gina and Rita became the best of friends.

(Source: <http://www.pitara.com/Talespin/stories/online.asp?story=140>)