

Friend or Foe

Nishan was very frustrated and said to himself, “Oh my God! Help me! What I will do now?”. He could not believe his own ears and he went back home tensed. His father, Mr. Sushil Roy, asked him, “What has happened to you?” But he ran back into his room crying without answering the question.

The next day, there was a theft in the house. It was a golden statue, a magnificent one, bought by Mr. Sushil, Roys great grandfather. There was a note saying ‘*Oh my God! I apologize and I promise I will soon return it*’. He was very upset. He cried and said to his sons, “Do not tell anybody. I don’t want the police and people crowding into my house and questioning us. I know God will punish us for being careless. Oh no!” Sushan asked his elder brother to play with him but he refused to play and said, “I am not feeling well. Go and play with Arko.” He went to the field

with his best friend, Arko Ganguly, but he could not play well for he had always shared everything with him and now he could not hide from him the happenings in his house. Arko questioned him and he told everything, everything that had happened. He said crying, "Please, don't tell anybody. My father will be furious." They both could not play and went back home. Arko went to his room, kept his books aside, and started thinking over what had Sushan told him. He felt it was certainly a grave matter. He said to himself, "I have read a number of detective stories including Sherlock Holmes, Feluda, Kakababu, Miss Marple and many more. Let me try and I may successfully solve the case as I have got a good notion of how to do this type of work." He made up his mind to have a conversation with everybody and do a bit of snooping when he would go to Sushan's house to take the notes from him.

At evening, he went to Sushan's house. At first he went to say 'Hello' to Mr. Sushil Roy. To his utmost surprise, he found that he talked quite normally. He went to Nishan and

said to him, "How are your studies going on?" Nishan replied, "Oh my God! I have to study and study and get myself prepared for the annual exams." Arko questioned him, "Why are you looking so restless? Had something important happened in your house?" Nishan's face turned white. "Oh my God! Nothing, nothing had happened." he said and ran back to his room, locked the door, and said annoyingly from inside, "I'm not feeling well. Don't talk with me." Arko was taken aback by the sudden change in his behavior. He wondered the reason for this. Then he took the notes from Sushan and went back home puzzled.

He meditated and cleared his mind of all thoughts. He started thinking about what Nishan had told him ---- "Oh my God! I have to study and study and get myself prepared for the annual exams.', 'Oh God! Nothing, nothing had happened', 'I'm not feeling well. Don't talk with me." He said to himself, "Oh! Now what's the mystery behind this?" Till this moment he was feeling as if he was indeed a real detective, but now he was thinking this try of his is going to

be unsuccessful. Suddenly a spark of light came to his head, “Yes, Yes, Yes! I have found it! There, in the note, the word ‘God’ was also used. Nishan was the only person who was repeating the word ‘God’ in every sentence”, he said to himself. He decided to take away Nishan’s diary the next time he goes their house.

Now, what was happening in Sushan’s house? Plenty was happening. The next morning, a note was found just where the golden statue was before it was stolen. It said ‘*How dare you take away my mouth and shallow? You will have to pay for it.*’ They were all very frightened and could not understand what to do. Arko went to Sushan’s house to play ‘Ludo’. On returning he saw that Nishan was not at house, so he snooped into his room, and took away his diary. He was feeling quite guilty. He was amazed to find the word ‘God’ in every sentence and Arko felt certain that Nishan was the real culprit. He went to his uncle, Gourav Ganguly who was a police officer, and told him about all his discoveries and all about he feels off. His uncle praised him

and told him to bring the first note. He said, "I had already thought of that. Don't you worry; see this, a photocopy of both the notes." His uncle said, "You are really a genius!" His uncle called up a handwriting expert and he assured that the first note and the handwriting in the diary is of the same people. Arko's uncle went to Nishan's house with his police force and took him to the police station. Mr. Sushil Roy and Sushan also went to the police station. Arko accompanied them. Arko related his own story and Nishan bursted out into tears and said, "Oh my God! One day, when I was playing in the park, I heard two men discussing about robbing the golden statue. That night only I crept into the oratory and stole it..." "Where is it now then?" demanded Mr. Sushil Roy. "It is now in the dickie of our car. I wrote an apologisation note for it was very hard for me to keep it a secret. The next day when Arko was questioning everybody, I understood he was trying to find out who has stolen the golden statue. So, the next day I was out before he came but he took the advantage and took away my diary.

That night the real robbers came; but as they could not find the golden statue, they were angry gave that dangerous note. I am very, very sorry for not telling you, father.”

Mr. Sushil Roy hugged Nishan and praised Arko. Then the Roy family and Arko with his uncle went back home happily.