



A Cloud of Trash

By Karanjeet Kaur

Cheekoo was the unhappiest girl among her friends. She was certainly the unhappiest girl in her entire class. She was perhaps the unhappiest girl in the world.

Friends? Cheekoo had no friends anymore. No one wanted to play with Cheekoo. Because she had a cloud hanging over her head. A cloud of TRASH. Orange peels and biscuit packets, Broken toys and pencil shavings, Twisted plastic bottles and colorful plastic bags, All surrounded by a swarm of buzzing flies.

No one wanted to play with a girl who had a cloud of trash hanging over her. What if a rotten banana peel fell on your head? YUCK! Cheekoo couldn't even play hide-and-seek anymore. The cloud would always give her away.

"Let's walk to school together," she said to Sona. Sona ran off in the opposite direction. "May I borrow your pencil sharpener?" she asked Sweetie. Sweetie made a face and changed her seat to go sit with Asha. Cheekoo even had to eat her lunch alone. Cheekoo knew she should have listened to her Amma.

Amma always told her not to litter. "Don't throw the banana peel on the road!" "Throw the empty biscuit packet in the dustbin." But Cheekoo never listened. She only laughed and kept littering.





Then one day, Amma became very angry. “Soon, all this trash will start following you!” she said. Cheekoo just laughed. The next morning, Cheekoo woke up to a foul smell and the sound of buzzing flies. The cloud of trash was hanging over her head. Amma’s words had come true! And then, Cheekoo was unable to laugh.

Cheekoo tried to run away. But the trash cloud followed her everywhere. Cheekoo took a broom to sweep the cloud down. But the trash could not be swept away. Cheekoo tried EVERYTHING. She screamed and asked the cloud to leave her alone. She even tried throwing the cloud into the dustbin. But the cloud of trash just wouldn’t go. So Cheekoo became very unhappy.

Then something happened! Cheekoo saw Bala throwing a banana peel on the road. Cheekoo was annoyed. Could he not see the cloud over her head? “Oye silly boy!” she yelled. “Don’t throw the peel on the road. Someone will slip!” Bala, scared of the trash cloud, threw the peel in the dustbin.

The next day, the trash cloud had become smaller! “How did that happen?” Cheekoo wondered. Then, Cheekoo saw Reema Aunty throwing away plastic bags. “Aunty!” Cheekoo said. “Please pick up these bags and reuse them.” Reema Aunty picked up the bags and left. The next day when Cheekoo woke up, the cloud was much smaller. Cheekoo smiled. She knew what she had to do.





When someone threw away a biscuit packet or pencil shavings, Cheekoo stopped them. She picked up every twisted plastic bottle and put it in the dustbin. The village became cleaner and cleaner. And Cheekoo's cloud became smaller and smaller. Until one day, it was gone. COMPLETELY gone.

Cheekoo was now perhaps the happiest girl in the world. Cheekoo never littered again. Secretly, she liked living in a clean village. But she was also scared that the trash cloud would come back, some day. Who knew!

THE END

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