



Cheeku and Tooi

By Esther David

Cheeku liked to watch the birds that lived around his house. There were sparrows, crows, pigeons, doves, mynahs and parakeets. They spent every night in the trees of a park near Cheeku's house.

One day, a parakeet suddenly fell from the sky into the courtyard. Baa picked it up and placed it in her knitting basket. "Maybe it is learning to fly," she said. "It must be in a state of shock. When it feels stronger, it will fly away." Cheeku, who was eating an apple, shared a small slice with the bird, and they became fast friends.

Cheeku named the parakeet Tooi. Before leaving, Baa told Cheeku: "Tooi cannot be left alone at night. I'll find a cage for it." Once Cheeku was alone with Tooi, he offered his hand in friendship to the bird. Tooi promptly climbed to his shoulder. Cheeku was happy, and when Baa returned, she was pleased to see Cheeku's new friend.

During the day, Tooi stayed with Baa and Cheeku, but spent the night in a cage. Tooi lived in the house as a free bird. His favourite place was the kitchen, where he ate fresh fruits and vegetables. Once, Cheeku offered him a taste of his chapatti, and he loved it. From then on, Tooi always ate a few pieces of chapatti for lunch at the dining table with the family.





One day, Cheeku and Baa couldn't find Tooi. Cheeku was in tears. Baa consoled him saying: "I think Tooi has finally flown away. Anyway, I didn't like locking him up in a cage. Maybe he has flown away with the other park birds." Cheeku seemed to understand but nevertheless missed Tooi.

The very next evening, Tooi returned with a family of parakeets to spend the night in the park nearby. Tooi flew into Cheeku's house to sit on his shoulder. Cheeku and Baa smiled, happy that Tooi had not forgotten them. From then on, every morning, Tooi would pay Cheeku a visit. He would sit on his shoulder, eat a piece of chapatti and fly away.

Indeed, as Baa wisely remarked to Cheeku: "Birds and human beings can be friends, if only they can learn to live together peacefully in the same world."

THE END

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