

A Startling Report Card





Papa took Pattu's report card from Ms Anuradha like it was a big box of sweets –with a big smile to match.



Last time, Pattu had made a paper plane out of his report card. He said he sent it flying home – it never got there. Wonder why?



Maybe the sparrow in the tree could tell you what a warm nest it made. Or the peanut seller could tell you what a nice cone it made.



So this time, Papa went with Pattu to get his report card from the teacher himself. Papa looked at Pattu's report card. His smile went from a slice of papaya to the thin wedge of a lime.



3 out of 10 for Reading. Papa's eyebrows dashed together like colliding bulls.

4 out of 10 for Recitation. He shook his head from side to side, like a tree in a storm.

2 out of 10 for Spelling. He let out a long whoosh, which sounded like a train engine.



As they walked home, Papa thought, “This report card needs to be made not into a paper plane, but into a rocket and launched far, far away. What will Pattu’s Mummy say? She always used to come first in her class.”



Just then, Pattu's friend Shambavi came running and gave Pattu a toffee. "This is for sharing your pencils with me yesterday, when I forgot to bring one," said Shambavi. "No wonder Pattu comes home with no pencils," thought Papa.



On the way home, a bunch of dogs ran alongside them, wagging their tails happily. Pattu bent down and patted their heads. “I . . . er . . . I give Kalu, Chintu and Bintu a few puris from my lunchbox,” he said.

“And your mummy is so happy you are asking for extra puris,” thought Papa, “If only she knew where they disappeared!”



Pattu and Papa were almost home, when their neighbour Das Uncle called out from his garden, "Hello Pattu, I don't need medicines today."

Papa wondered, "We don't need medicines as well. Why is he talking about medicines?" Das Uncle said, "I ask your son to buy medicines from the corner shop for me. He always brings back exact change. You must be proud of him."



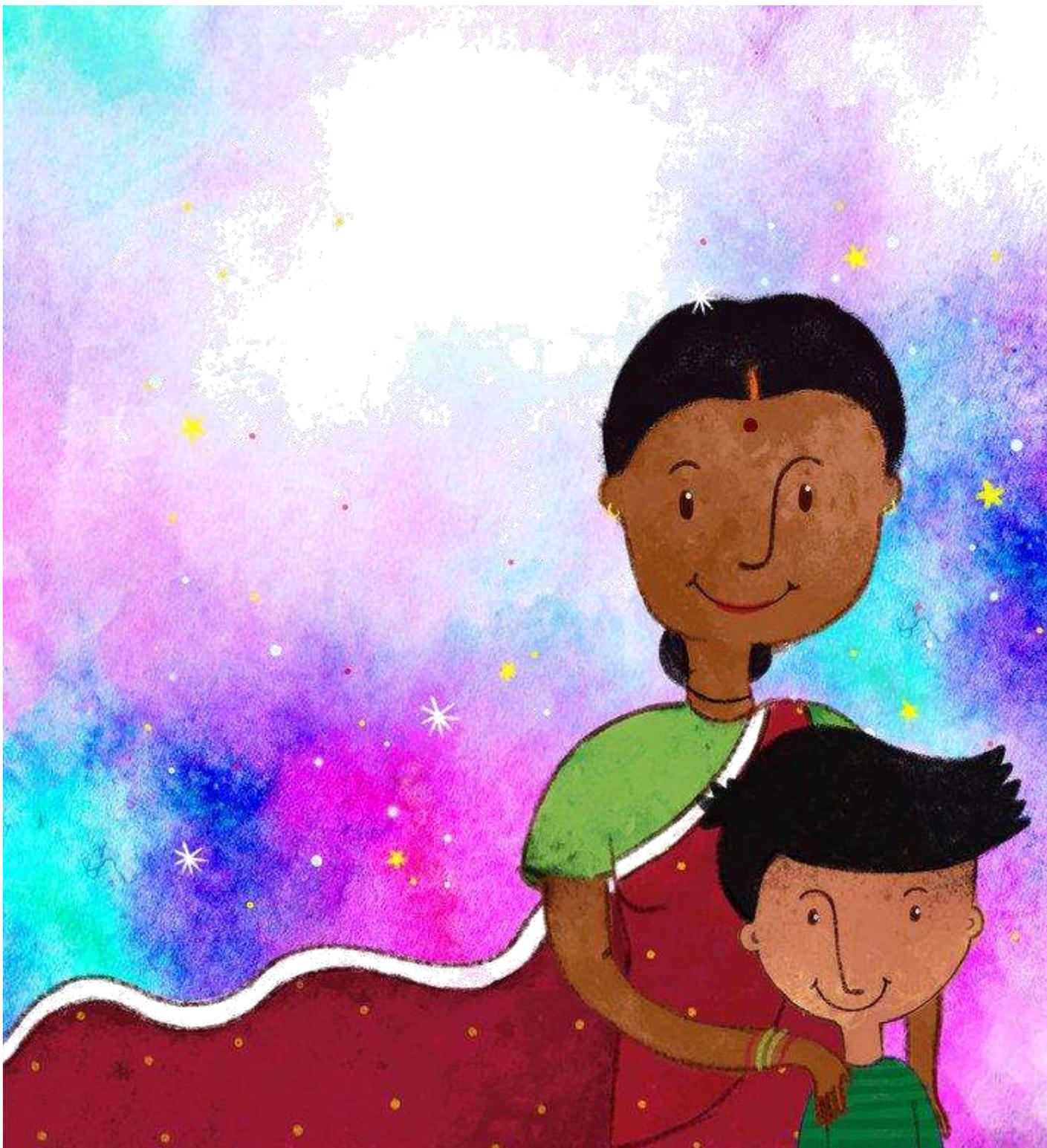
At home, Mummy came out and asked, “How is Pattu’s report card?”
Papa closed his eyes, and said, “It was a big, big shock!”
Pattu’s face was as small as a crushed grape.



“9 out of 10 for sharing,” said Papa.
“10 out of 10 for kindness.
11 out of 10 for respect.”



Pattu's face was like an orange and Mummy's like a watermelon – both bright and full of joy.



Mummy sat down with Pattu.
“This is my real report card,”
Pattu said.

Mummy smiled. “12 out of 10
for honesty. No one could get
a better report card.”

