

THE DAY THE VEGETABLES CAME TO SCHOOL

Vivadi



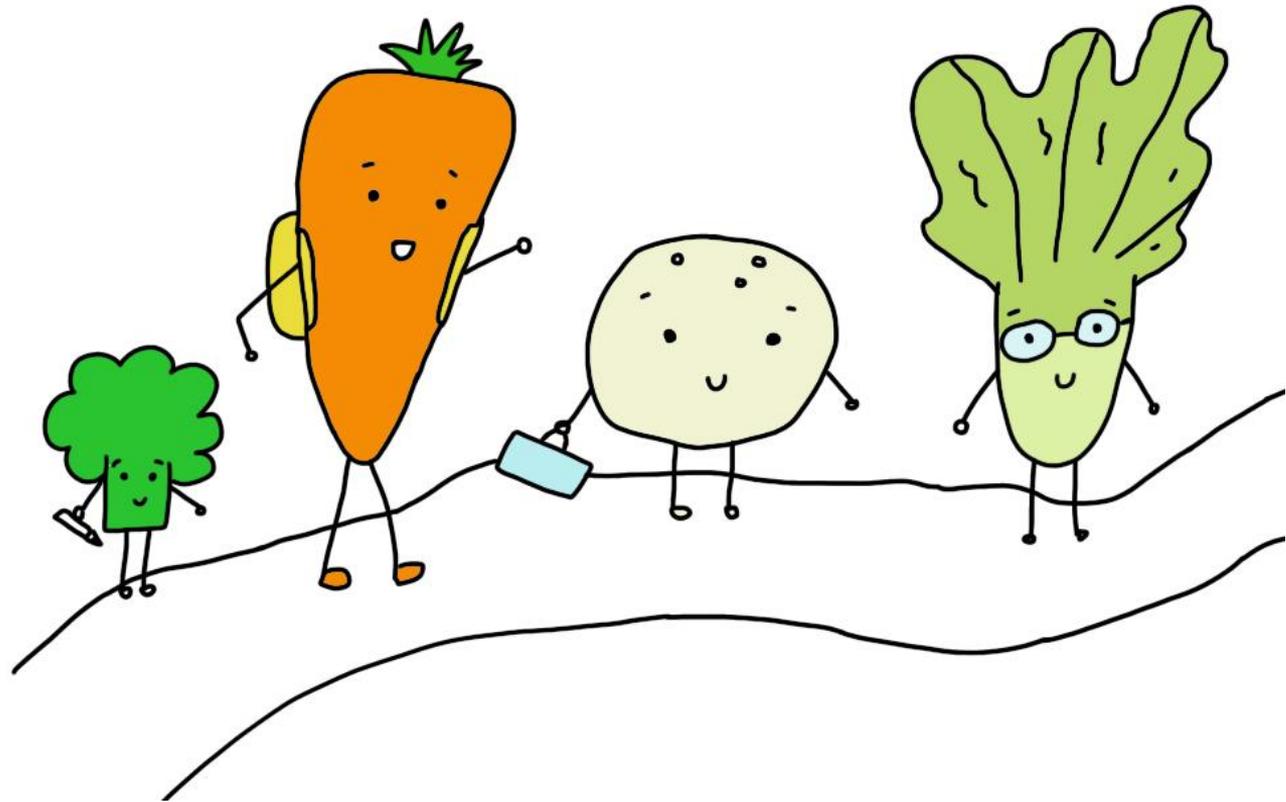
ONE MORNING, RAJU WAS ON HIS WAY TO SCHOOL AS USUAL. HE LOVED SCHOOL AND WAS WALKING ALONG HAPPILY, LOOKING FORWARD TO THE DAY.



THAT WAS WHEN HE SAW SOMETHING
STRANGE: AHEAD OF HIM WERE SOME
UNUSUAL SHAPES HEADING TOWARDS
SCHOOL THEMSELVES, SCHOOL BAGS SLUNG
OVER THEIR SHOULDERS.



AS HE CAME CLOSER, HE WONDERED IF THEY WERE VEGETABLES, THE KIND OF HE HAD SEEN IN THE MARKET. HE RUBBED HIS EYES IN DISBELIEF.



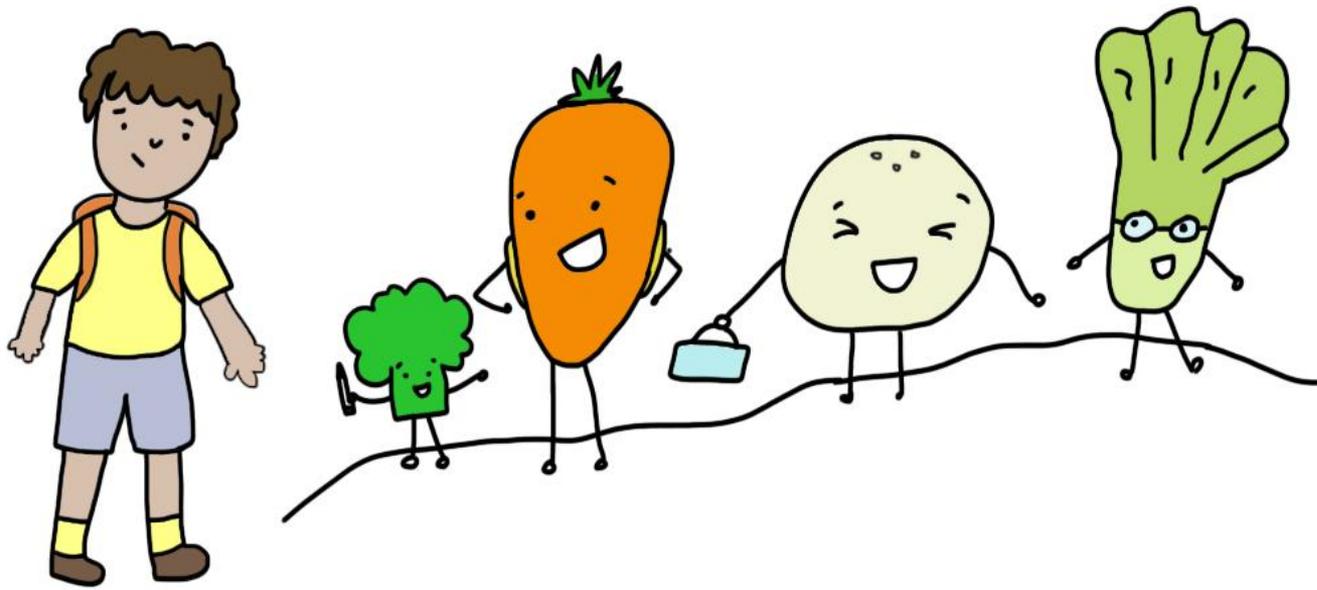
THE VEGETABLES LOOKED FRESH AND
HEALTHY. THEY WERE MARCHING TOWARDS
SCHOOL LIKE LITTLE SOLDIERS, ONE BEHIND
THE OTHER.



RAJU WALKED FASTER AND FASTER. HE WAS
FULL OF CURIOSITY, ABOUT HIS NEW
SCHOOLMATES AND WANTED A CLOSER LOOK
AT THEM.



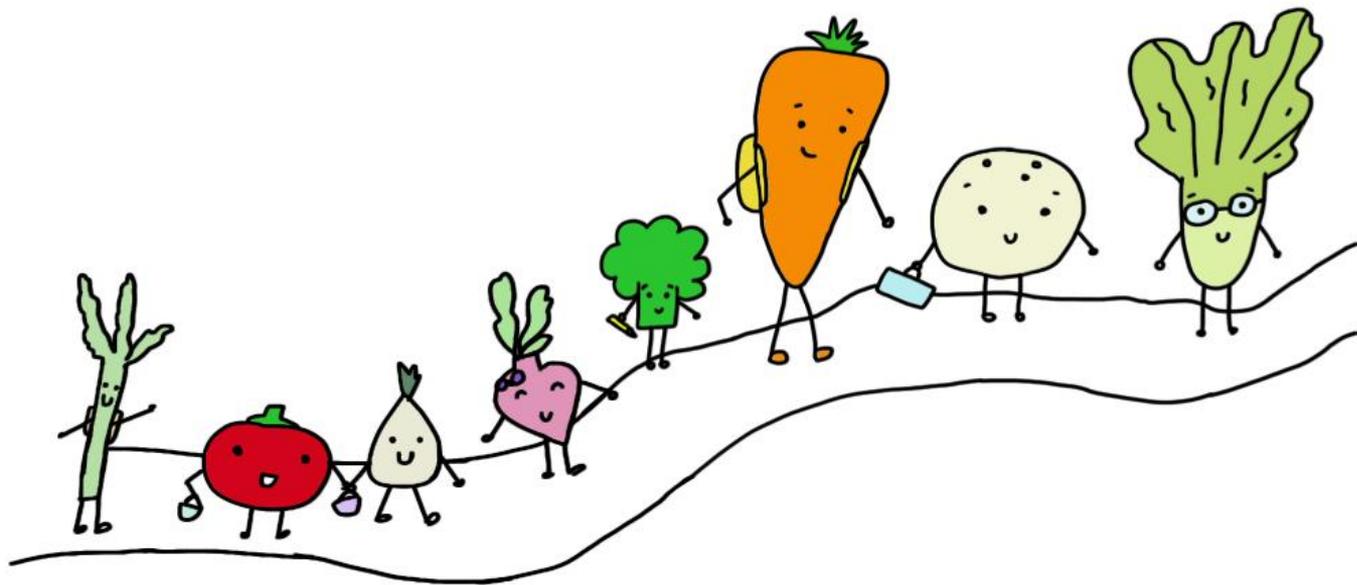
AT LONG LAST, RAJU CAUGHT UP WITH THE SHAPES MARCHING AHEAD OF HIM. HE STARTED AT THEIR FACES, MOUTH OPEN IN SURPRISE. JUST AS HE HAD GUESSED, THE SHAPES WERE REALLY VEGETABLES, POTATOES, SWEET POTATOES, YAMS, AND ALL THE OTHER ROOT VEGETABLES HE HAD SEEN IN THE MARKET.



“WHAT? IS IT REALLY YOU?” THE QUESTION POPPED OUT OF HIS MOUTH BEFORE HE REALIZED IT. THE VEGETABLES DID NOT REPLY, THEY JUST LOOKED AT EACH OTHER AND SMILED, AMUSED AT HIS AMAZEMENT. “WHERE ARE YOU GOING?” ASKED RAJU IN WONDER. “WHERE ELSE?” REPLIED THE VEGETABLES, SPEAKING TOGETHER AS ONE, “WE’RE ON OUR WAY TO YOUR SCHOOL!”

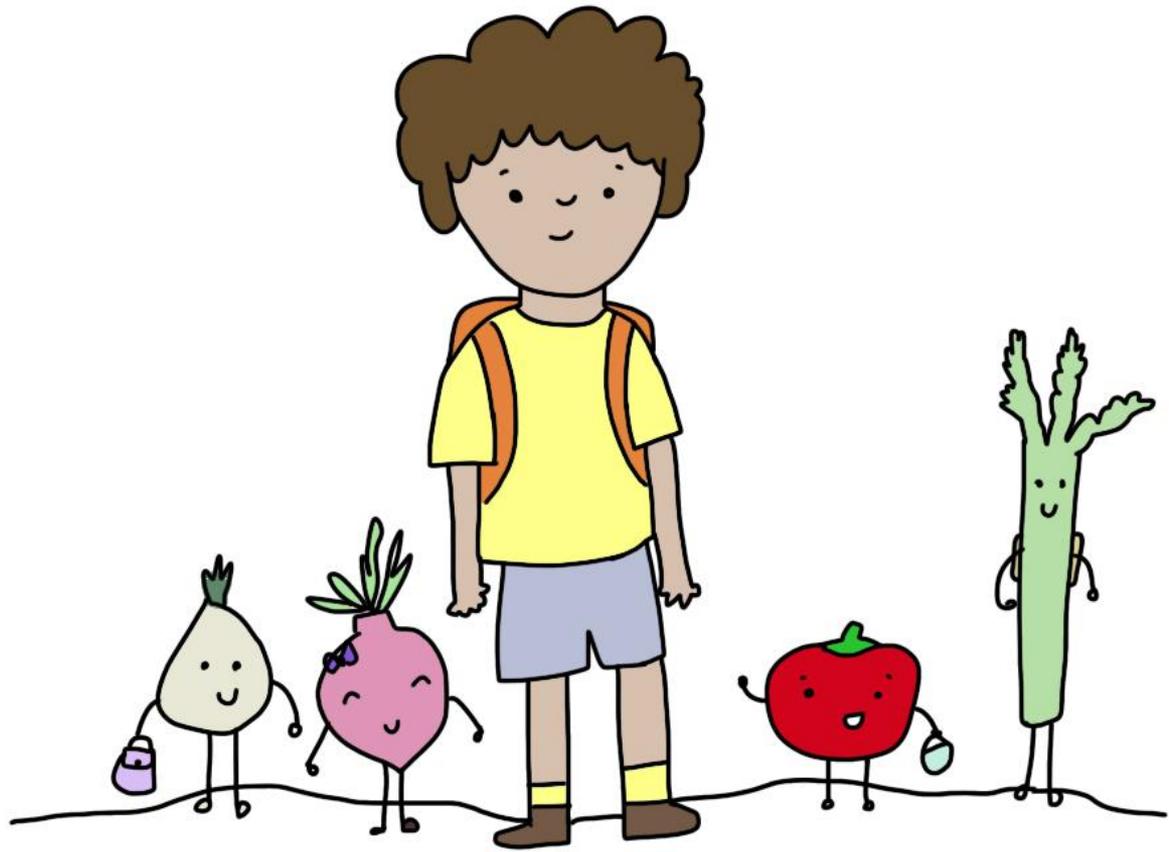


RAJU NODDED. HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY. HE CONTINUED ON HIS WAY TO SCHOOL.

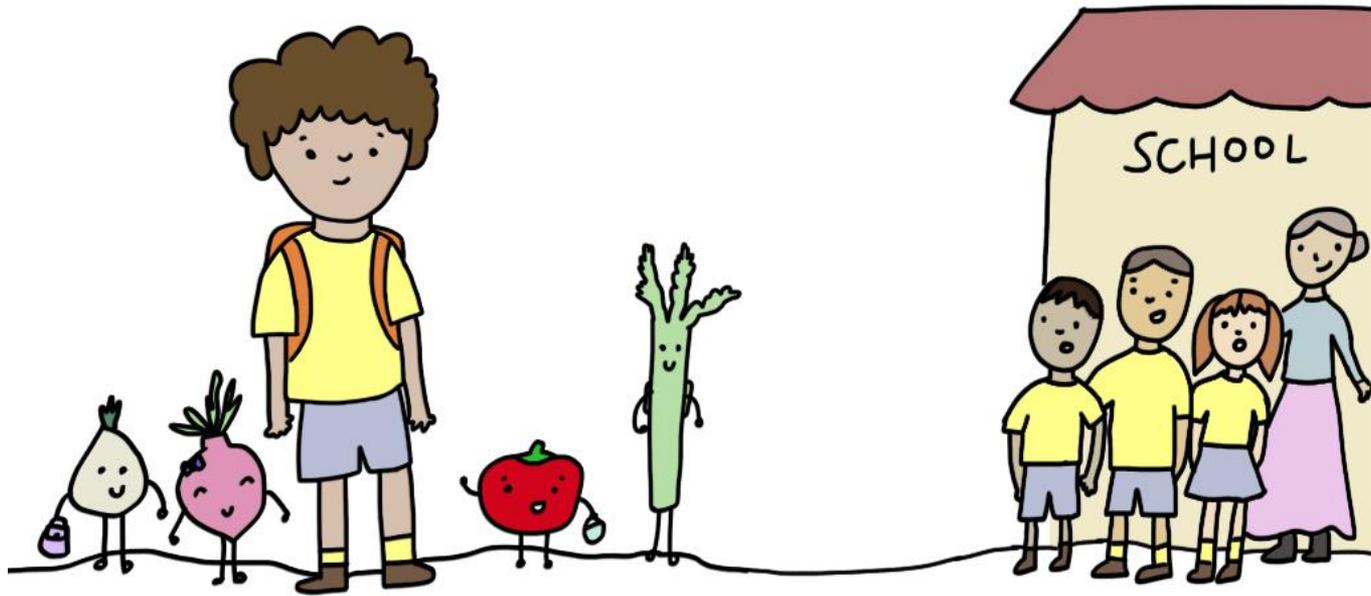


A LITTLE WHILE LATER, RAJU LOOKED BACK TO SEE IF THE VEGETABLES WERE STILL AROUND.

THAT WAS WHEN HE HAD HIS SECOND SURPRISE IN THE MORNING. A PARADE OF GREEN LEAFY VEGETABLES HAD NOW JOINED THE ROOT VEGETABLES. THEY WERE ALSO MARCHING TOWARDS HIS SCHOOL, THEIR SCHOOL BAGS OVER THEIR SHOULDERS.



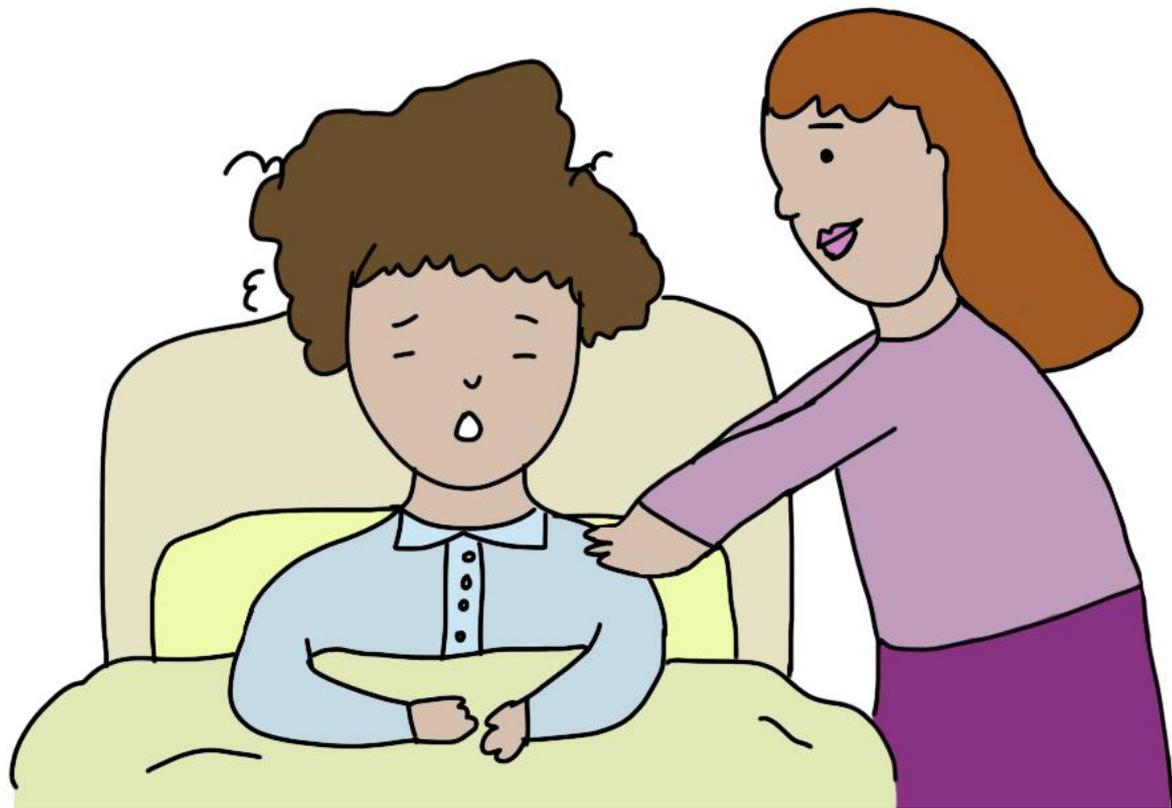
NOW THAT HE WAS PART OF THE PARADE
HIMSELF, RAJU'S JOY KNEW NO BOUNDS. NO
ONE HE KNEW HAD EVER GONE TO SCHOOL AS
PART OF A VEGETABLE PARADE BEFORE!



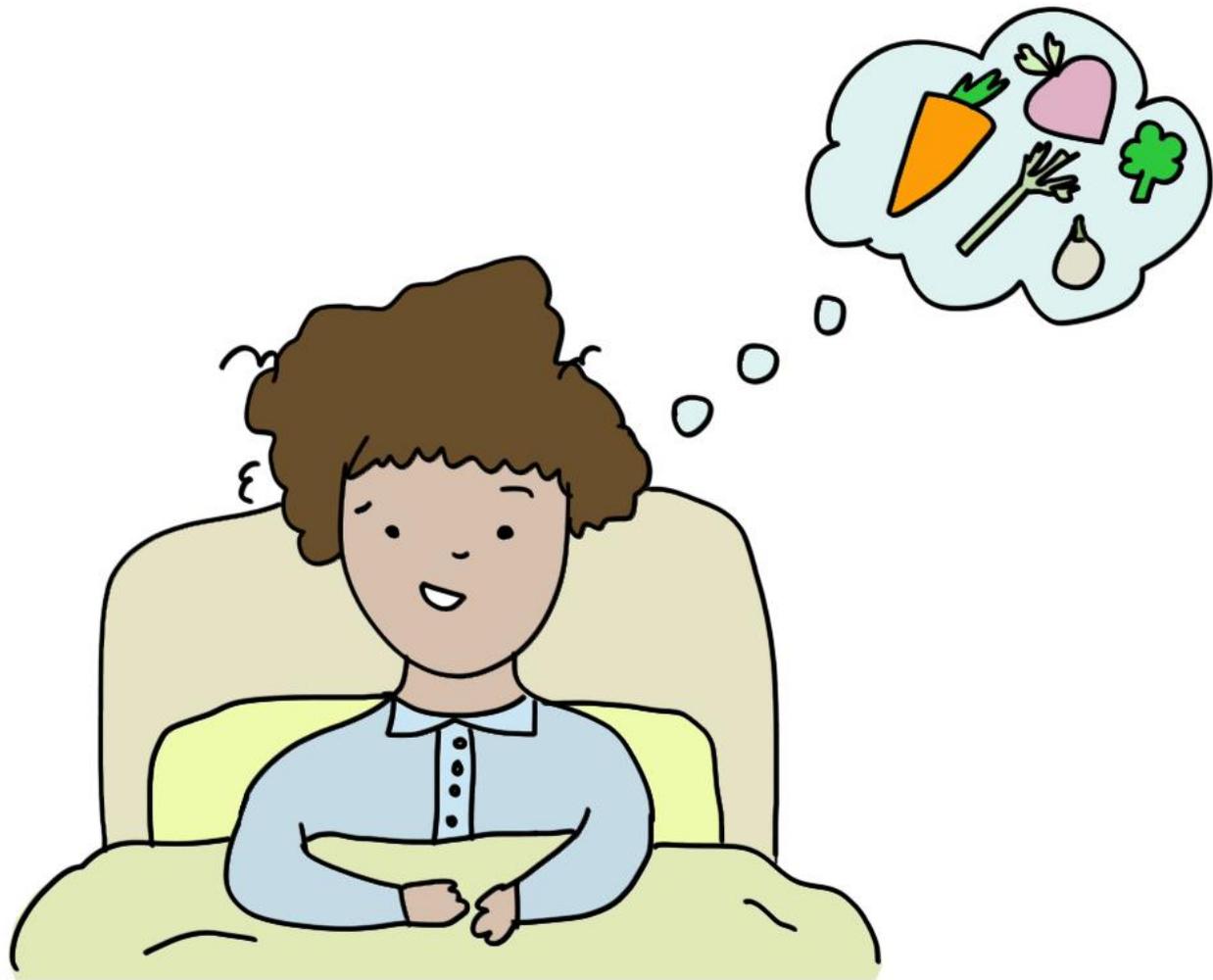
BY AND BY, THE PARADE REACHED THE
SCHOOL. ALL THE CHILDREN CAME TO THE
DOOR TO WATCH THE STRANGE PROCESSION.
THEIR MOUTHS FELL OPEN AT THE SIGHT.
THEIR EYES WERE FULL WITH ASTONISHMENT.



RAJU'S TEACHER CAME FORWARD TO WELCOME THEM. "GOOD BOY!" SHE SAID, PATTING RAJU ON THE BACK. RAJU WAS DELIGHTED. "THANK YOU, TEACHER," HE SAID HAPPILY. THE OTHER CHILDREN CLAPPED AND CHEERED.



THE TEACHER LEFT BUT SOMEONE CONTINUED
TO PAT HIM, AND QUITE HARD TOO. RAJU
OPENED HIS EYES. HIS MOTHER WAS SHAKING
HIM AWAKE, SAYING, “WAKE UP, RAJU! YOU’RE
GOING TO BE LATE FOR SCHOOL!.”



RAJU WAS FULLY AWAKE NOW. "I'VE BEEN DREAMING", HE SAID TO HIMSELF. "WHAT A STRANGE DREAM I'VE HAD!" RAJU GOT OUT OF BED, SMILING. HE WOULD HAVE TO HURRY IF HE WANTED TO GET TO SCHOOL IN TIME.