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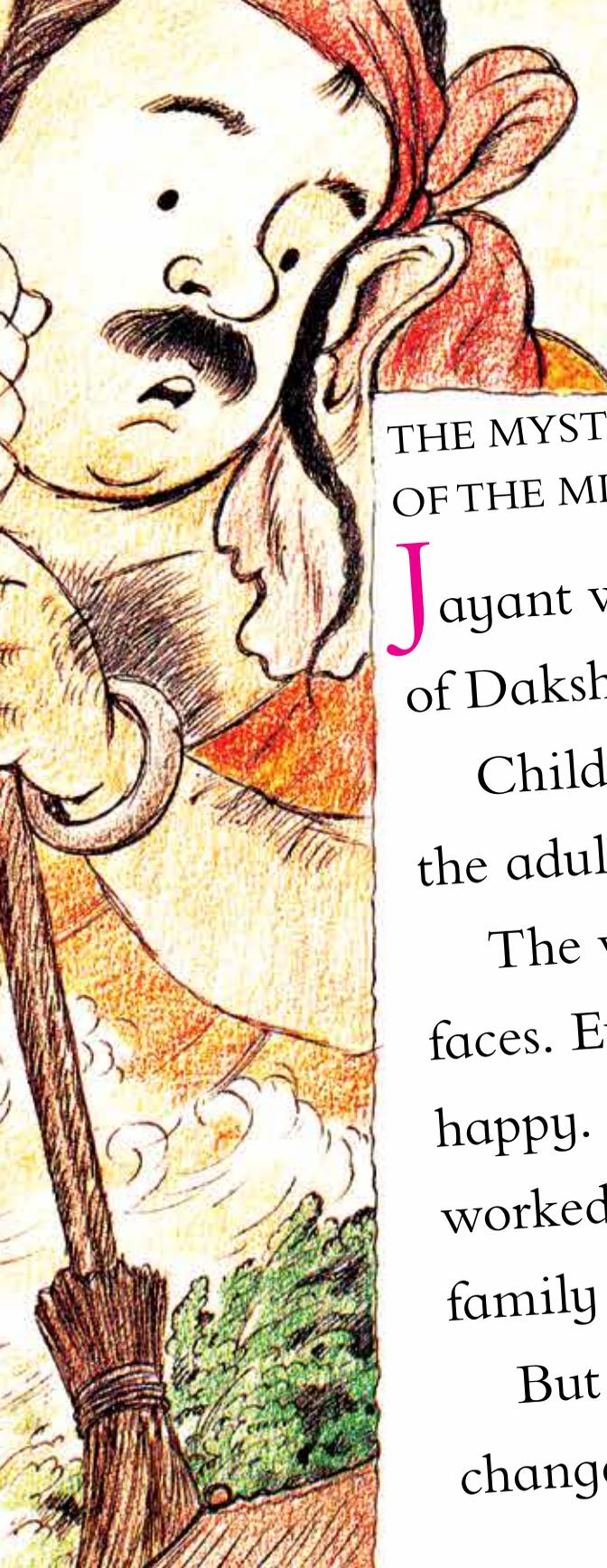
Geeta Dharmarajan

Art by Suddhasattwa Basu

Charbak Dipta

# THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING SOAP





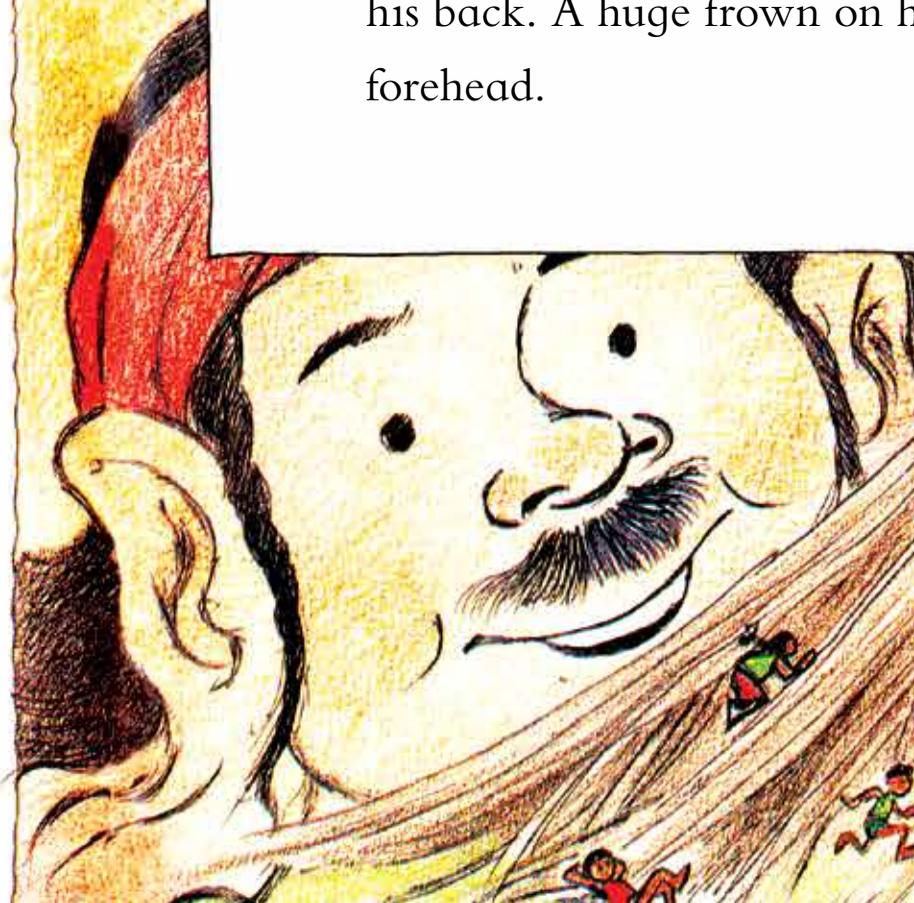
THE MYSTERY  
OF THE MISSING SOAP

Jayant was the kind Sarpanch of Dakshinpur.

Children loved him. So did the adults.

The village was full of happy faces. Everyone was healthy and happy. The people of the village worked hard. Had fun with family and friends.

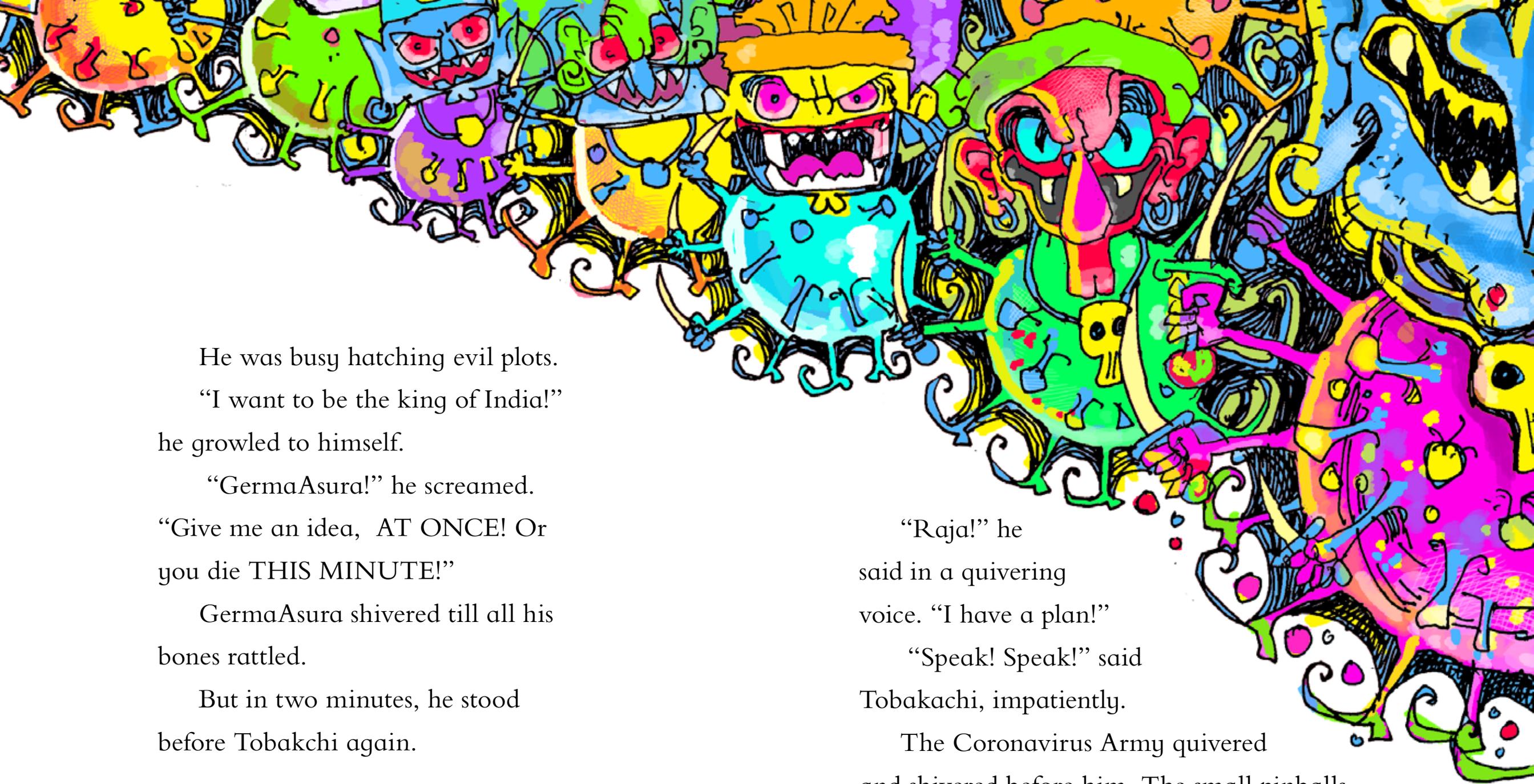
But everything was about to change!



Far far away, a dusty wind blew across the lonely hills of GermGram.

Under a thin, hunched moon, Tobakachi, the wicked Asura, walked and walked. Back and forth. His arms tied behind his back. A huge frown on his forehead.





He was busy hatching evil plots.  
“I want to be the king of India!”  
he growled to himself.

“GermaAsura!” he screamed.  
“Give me an idea, AT ONCE! Or  
you die THIS MINUTE!”

GermaAsura shivered till all his  
bones rattled.

But in two minutes, he stood  
before Tobakchi again.

“Raja!” he  
said in a quivering  
voice. “I have a plan!”

“Speak! Speak!” said  
Tobakchi, impatiently.

The Coronavirus Army quivered  
and shivered before him. The small pinballs  
became smaller and smaller.

At last GermaAsura spoke up.



“Maharaja!  
You know how  
we viruses are. So  
small that no one can  
see us. And so silent till we  
get into a human body ... ”  
“So?” boomed Tobakachi in his  
fearful voice.

“As you know, there is a friend of ours,  
the Coronavirus, who is working in India  
today.”

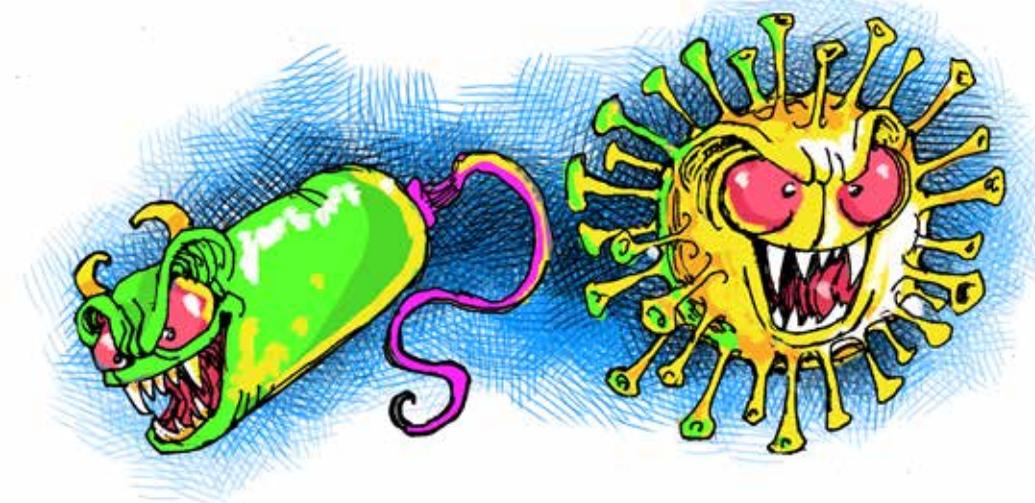
“So?” growled Tobakachi.

“Maharaja!” GermaAsura mumbled.  
“Most Indians don’t wash their hands.”

“So?” Tobakachi barked again.

GermaAsura took the liberty to grin.

“Raja! Our virus works best when people  
don’t wash their hands with soap and water!  
People must NOT wash their hands. They  
MUST touch their faces. Their eyes. Their  
mouth. No soap. No washing hands!”





When Jayant and the kids finished playing, they couldn't wash their hands!

## WHERE WAS THE SOAP?

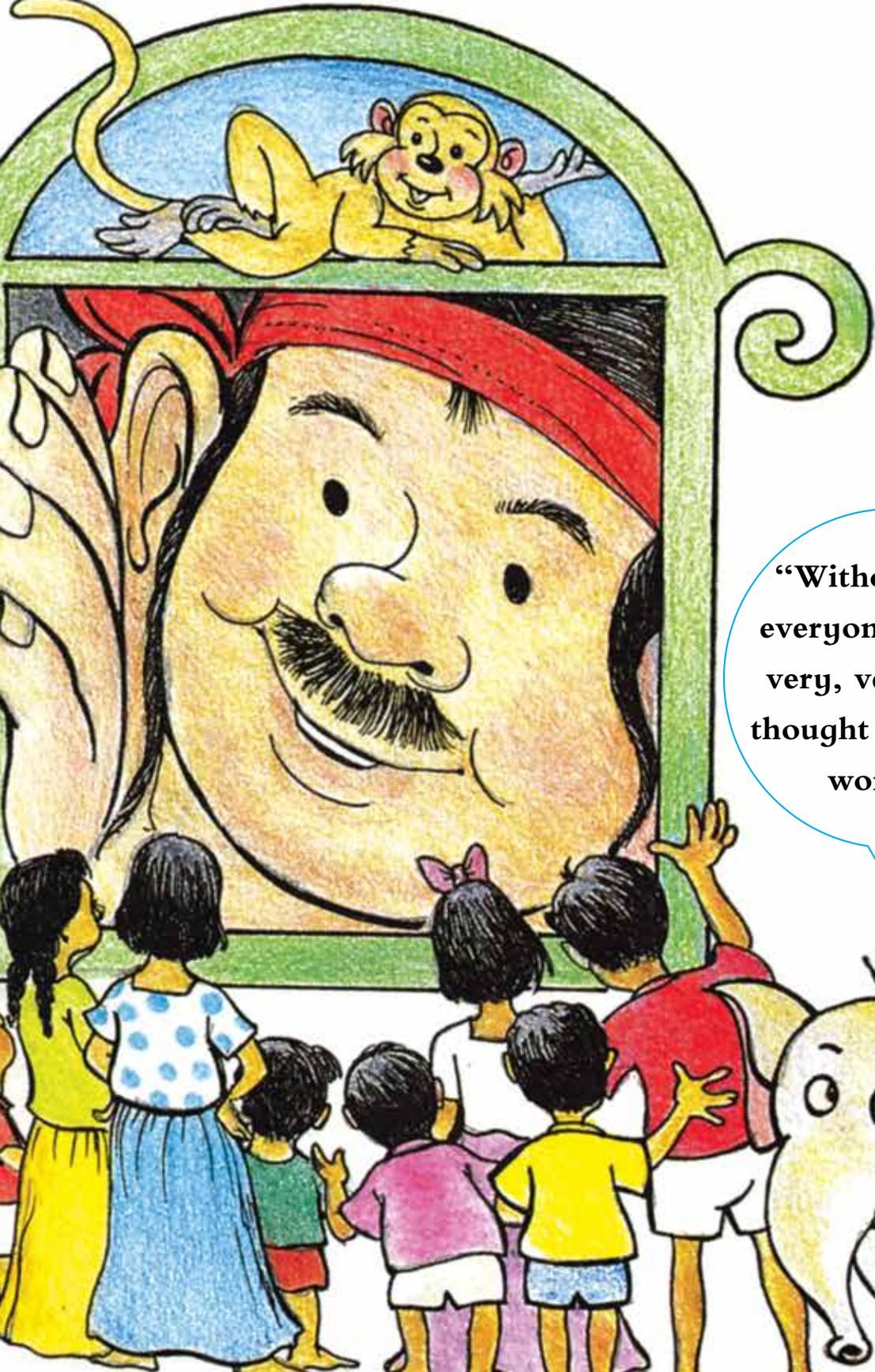
The whole village searched and searched. Everyone was out! Coughing. Sneezing.

“Aha!” said Tobakachi, his eyes shining. “So, if we make the soap disappear, our Virus Army will capture all humans. AND I WILL BECOME the Raja of the whole of India!”

This is exactly what happened! The Virus Army started attacking one of the happiest villages in the country — Dakshinpur!



They all searched— their fever, cold, running nose forgotten!



“Without soap, everyone will fall very, very sick!” thought Tamasha, worried.

All soap had mysteriously

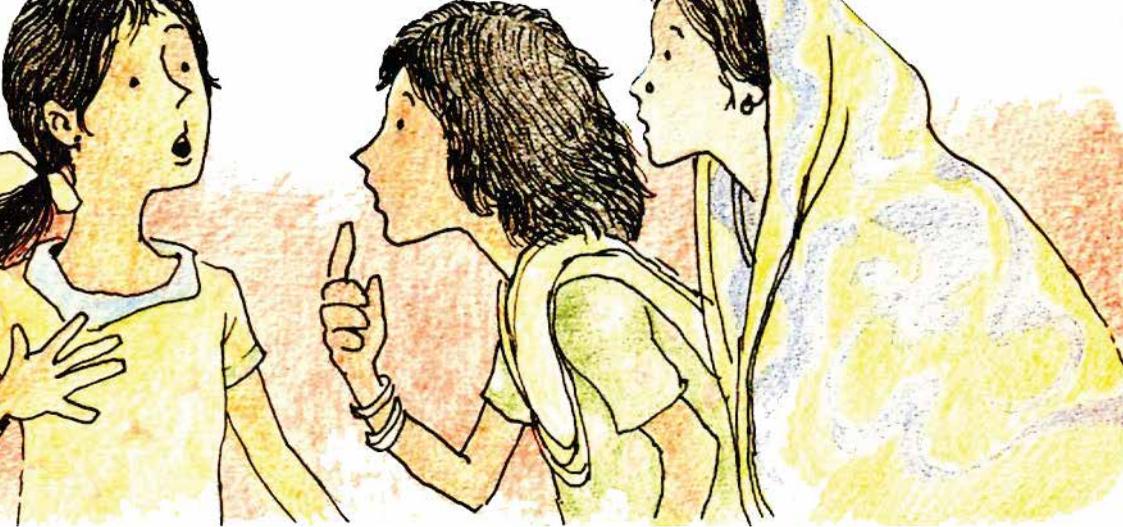
## DISAPPEARED!

“Ahhhhh!” said Tobakachi, rubbing his hands together. “Look how these ignorant people are spreading the disease on their own. They cough and sneeze into one another’s face.”

**V**ery soon, children were standing in front of Jayant’s home. “Our parents are sick. Everyone is sick!” they said. “Please help us!”

Tamasha, the helpful elephant of Dakshinpur was everyone’s friend. She had seen the evil Tobakachi and his Virus Army at work. She had to think fast!





**T**amasha asked Lachmi and the other girls and boys. “Give Jayant a Big Idea! What can we do?”

Lachmi was the most fearless girl in Dakshinpur. She was kind. She studied hard. Everyone loved her.

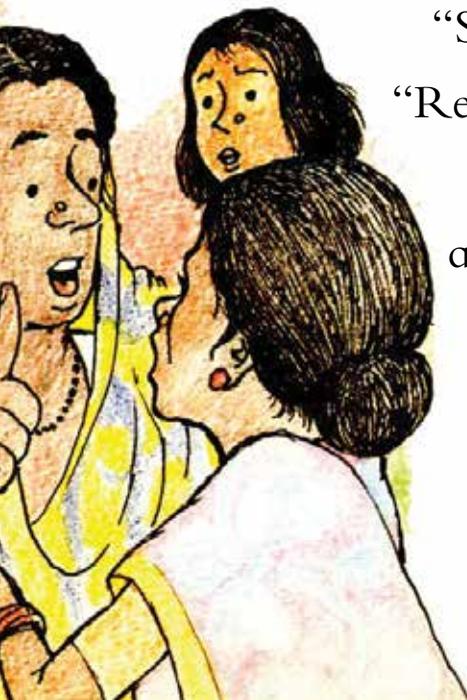
Lachmi said, “We can make soap!”

“Soap is easy to make!” said another girl.

“Remember we read about it in our book?”

Tamasha grinned. “That’s why you are the Reader-Leaders!”

Soon, Lachmi and her friends were showing everyone how to win the battle against the Virus Army.



The villagers were beaming with excitement.

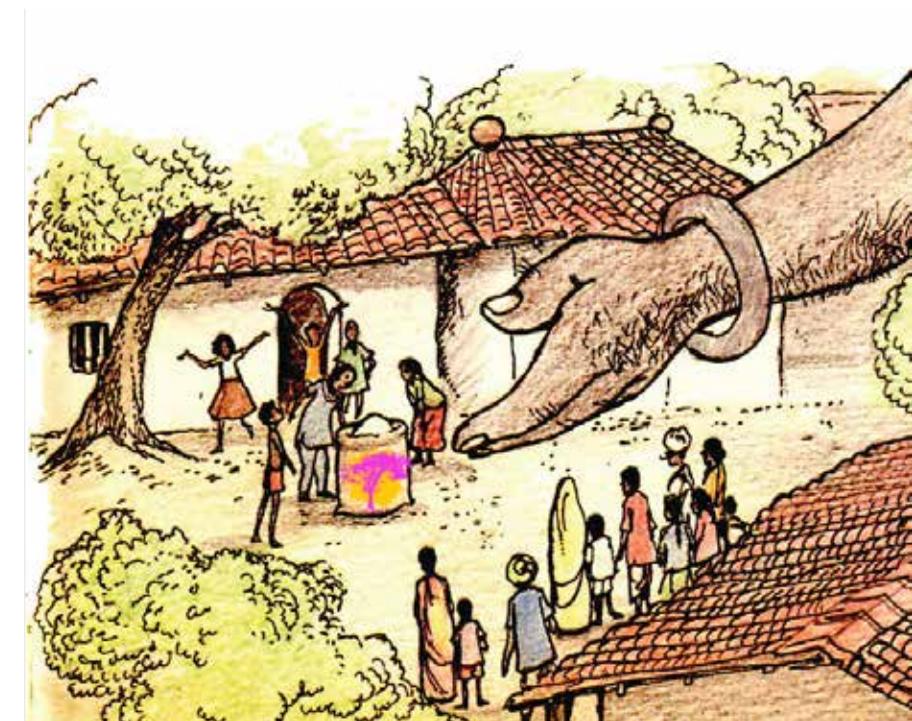
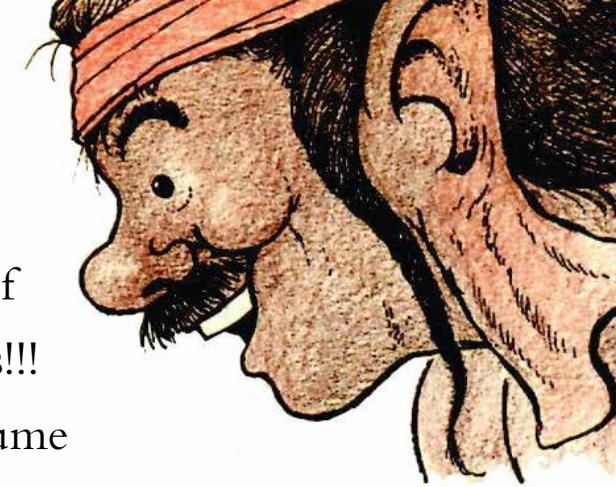
They made bags and bags of soap ... and washed their hands!!!

So when the Virus Army came looking for unwashed hands, they were in for a BIG, BIG surprise!

They took one look at all the clean hands and ...

Tobakachi and his Virus Army ran away as quickly and as faaaaaaaar as they could!

**“Shabaash! Lachmi! Shabaash! Dakshinpur!”**  
**said Jayant, in his booming happy voice!**



# HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN SOAP

By T.R. Vivek

1. Take 20 reetha berries and remove the seeds.

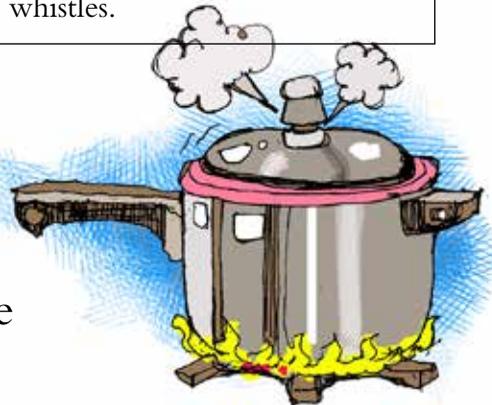


2. Soak the shells in a litre of water for a couple of hours.

You must boil it till the reetha is really soft. If you have a pressure cooker, you can pressure cook it to three whistles.



3. When the reetha are soft to the touch, boil them in the same water for 30 minutes. Alternatively you can pressure cook it to three whistles.



You can throw in some lemon or orange rind into the pot (optional).

4. When cooled, beat up the rind at high speed in a mixer. If you don't have a mixie, boil for a longer time. Cool it down. Mash the boiled nuts by hand.



5. Filter the pulp using a sieve and a little bit of water. Squeeze until you extract every bit of the soapy foam (a bit like extracting tamarind pulp when cooking).





6. Bottle the brown soap liquid.

This will last for a week after which it can smell a bit rancid but still be used for cleaning dishes and clothes. To make it last a little longer, pour a cap full of vinegar into one litre of the extract. To wash one bucket of clothes, you can use about 30 ml of the liquid.

You can dilute the extract with water and put in hand wash dispensers and use to clean hands and face.



## NAMES FOR REETHA IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

English name- soap nut, Soapnut, Soap Nut, Soapberry, Soap Berry, Washnut, and Wash Nut, South Indian Soapnut, three-leaf soapberry

Hindi name- Ritha, Reetha, Aritha, फेनिल phenil (as it produces froth), रिष्ट risht, रिष्टक rishtak

Kannada name - Antuvala kayi ಅಂಟುವಾಳ ಕಾಯಿ, ನೊರೆಕಾಯಿ norekaayi, ತೊಗಟೆ ಮರ togate mara

Telugu name- Kunkum Chettu, కుంకుడుచెట్టు kunkuduchettu, ఫేనిలము phenilamu

Tamil name- Pannankottai, புன்கலை punalai, பூந்தி punthi, பூவந்தி puvanti

Manipuri name - কেঁকু Kekru

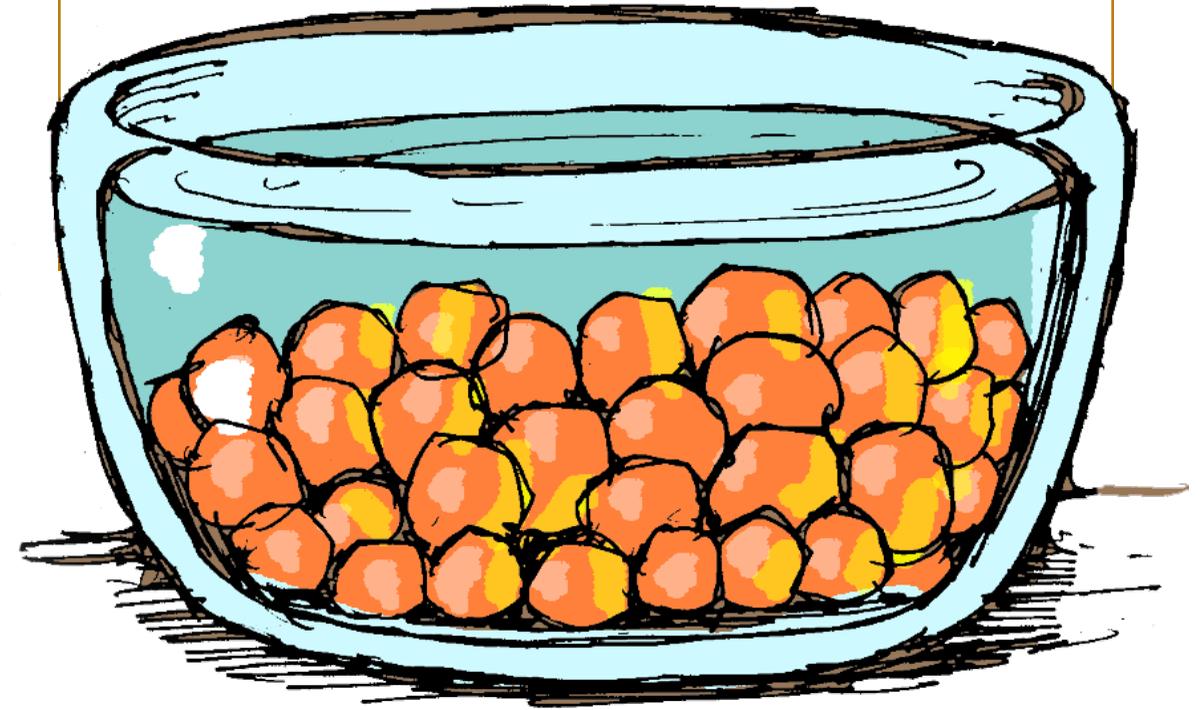
Malayalam name - ചവക്കായ് cavakkaay, പശക്കൊട്ടമരം pasakkottamaram, ഉറുവഞ്ചി uruvanchi

Bengali name - বীঠা Ritha

Oriya, Konkani name - ରୀଥା Ritha

Urdu name - Phenil, ريٹھا Reetha

Gujarati name - અરીઠી arithi, અરીઠો aritho, અરીઠું arithu



**TADAAA!**

## THE CORONAVIRUS

All viruses are a type of germ. The coronavirus is also a type of germ.

The coronavirus are so small that you cannot see them with your eyes. You need a powerful electron microscope.

When the Coronavirus get inside your body, they can make you sick.

They can give people colds, chicken pox, measles, flu, and many other diseases.

### HOW DO THEY GET INTO MY BODY?

- A virus cannot move on its own.
- Viruses spread mainly when someone coughs or sneezes, and their spit falls on you.
- Or droplets of the cough or sneeze fly out. Do you know that cough droplets can travel as far as 20–25 feet, and sneeze droplets as much as 30–35 feet?
- These droplets stay suspended in the air for up to 10 minutes.
- These droplets can land on surfaces like chairs, tables, door handles, etc. and can be active for more than a day.

- And if you touch a surface that has the virus and touch your nose, face or eyes, they can get into you. And make you very very sick.

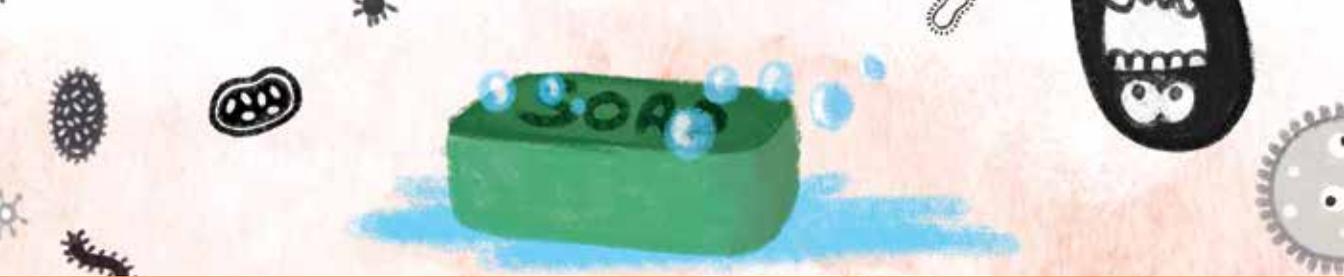
### WHAT CAN I DO TO STOP THE VIRUS?

#### VIRUS PROTECTION | PROTECT YOURSELF

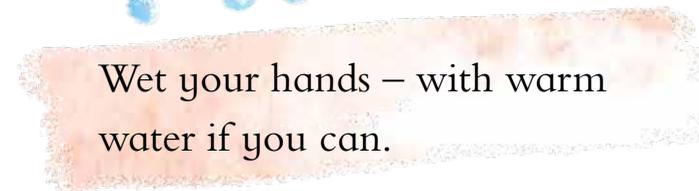


- Avoid crowded places.
  - Wash your hands frequently, with soap and water (preferably warm water).
  - Avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose.
  - When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth with a hanky or cough or sneeze into your bent elbow.
  - Stay at home if you feel unwell – even if it's a slight cold, cough or fever.
  - If you have fever or your cough is getting worse, or you have difficulty in breathing, seek medical help.
  - STAY FAR from anyone who has a cough, cold or fever.
- Take care of yourself!

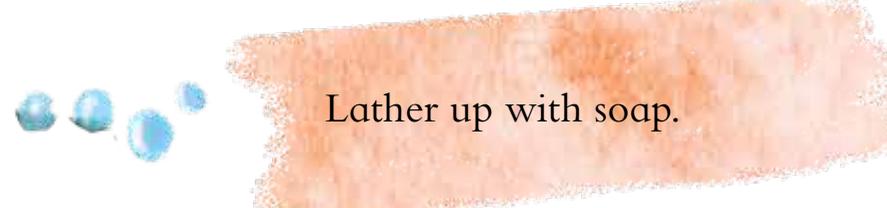
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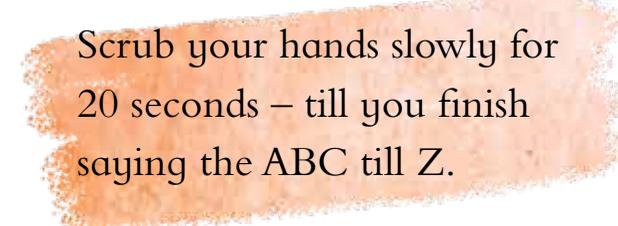
# Hand Washing is EASY and fun!



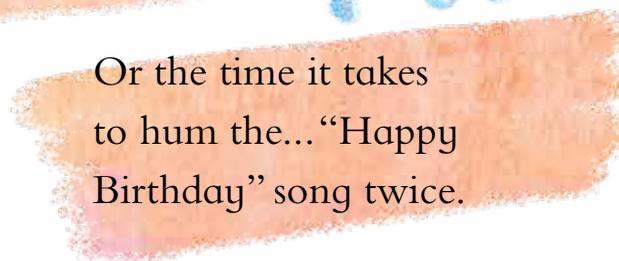
Wet your hands – with warm water if you can.



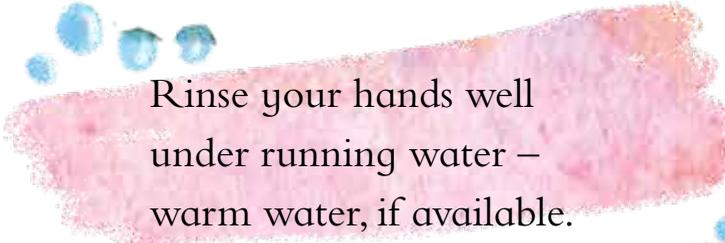
Lather up with soap.



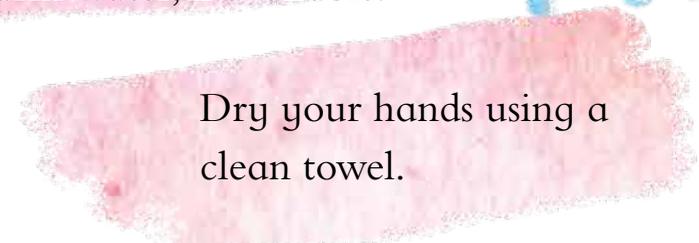
Scrub your hands slowly for 20 seconds – till you finish saying the ABC till Z.



Or the time it takes to hum the... “Happy Birthday” song twice.



Rinse your hands well under running water – warm water, if available.



Dry your hands using a clean towel.

Art by Sonal Gupta Vasvani

**Geeta Dharmarajan** loves writing for children. She received the Padma Shri in 2012 for her work in literature and education. She was also the joint winner of the Business Standard Award for Social Entrepreneur of the Year in 2018.

**TR Vivek** is a journalist based in Bengaluru. He is currently writing a contemporary biography of the Kaveri river to be published by Add Publications.

**Suddhasattwa Basu** is a renowned illustrator, painter and maker of animation films.

**Charbak Dipta** is an Oxford alumnus and an award-winning illustrator, a foodie and a globetrotter.

This book is dedicated with great fondness and love to Sister Subbulakshmi and to Gowri Chinnaswamy, of the Sarada Ladies Union, Chennai.

A tireless activist and a pioneer in the field of education. Sister Subbulakshmi changed the mindscape for women in the Chennai of the early 1900. She set up the Sarada Ladies Union in 1912, to stimulate critical thinking about women's rights, amongst ordinary housewives, of whom Gowri was one.



KATHA

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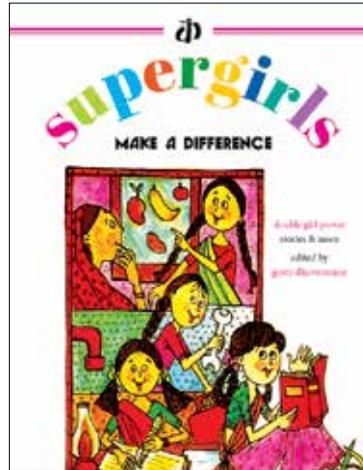
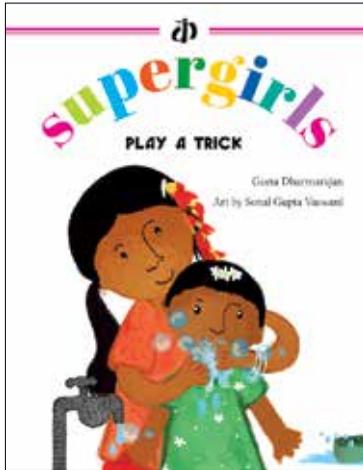
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