



My name is.....

I'm a student at Everest Academy in 6<sup>th</sup> grade

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On night the old woman had a dream. In the dream, she was told that she would have a son. She shared this dream with her husband and they both felt happy at the thought. They thought that their devotion to God is going to yield good results. The dream turned true. The old woman conceived a baby and had a son. But the son was born with *mula* (planetary positions in such a place according to astrology that the new born baby's birth would invite death to the parents). The parents were worried. They asked the astrologers in Broadway about what to do and did many things to avert death, but nothing would work. They were after all destined to death. They, however, consoled themselves thinking that even if they die, their son who would help them cross the river in the underworld after their death. They will not be forced to remain in hell as they had a son to lead them through. (Hindus believe that only the son can help them cross the deadly river and free them through the rituals from the cycle of rebirth and redeem them from sins they have committed in this life).

Time passed and parents died away. The son was left alone as an orphan. As he was an orphan and was small, his relatives (uncles and cousins) tried to chase him away from his house.

They wanted to drive him away and capture his property. Therefore, they started ill-treating him. In a long time run, the boy could not tolerate their treatment. He started keeping away from home. He looked after the cattle of some other villagers and thus made his living. The villagers told him that he had a sister who was married to a man of a far off village. They told him to go to his sister. The boy grew up in the village by looking after the cattle of other villagers and when he was young, he went to his sister's place.

As he reached to her house, he called her sister. His sister's sister-in-law came and asked him who he was. He told about himself and asked about his sister and whereabouts. The sister-in-law went in and informed that her brother's arrival. But she said that she did not have any brother. She evaded his call for a long time, but finally she came and asked who he was. She told that she had no brother and her parents were dead.

The boy took the name of their parents and revealed about his birth. Yet the sister did not trust. Finally she let him stay in her house as he had called her sister.

The boy now started staying in his sister's house. She used to cook delicious food for

her in-laws, but she did not give good food to him. She told him to go to the rice mill (*okhal*- a traditional manual mill where rice husks are separated in a stone pit using a heavy log of wood) to bring rice dust. Every day she would give him a bread of rice dust and send him to look after the cattle. In the pasture, all the other boys would call him an orphan and ridicule him.

One day his sister baked bread of rice dust. It was thick and not cooked properly. She threw this thick and uncooked bread at him and it dropped in his chest and rolled down. He tried to catch it as it rolled. Thus the boy ran after the rolling bread. The bread rolled down and the orphan ran after it and it happened for a long time. Finally the rolling bread fell on a milk pond of the wild buffaloes. He reached the milk pond, ate the bread and drank the milk. After eating the bread and drinking the milk, he went to a hollow tree nearby and took rest. In the evening the wild buffaloes came, filled the pond with milk again. They slept in the land nearby. Early in the morning, they got up filled the pond with milk and went to the wilderness to graze. In the evening, when the buffaloes came back, they found the milk pond empty of milk and the field they slept on clean. They were surprised and wondered who would have drunk the milk and

cleaned the field they slept. They did not know that the boy drank the milk and cleaned the dung from the field.

Every day the boy would repeat this: he would drink the milk from the pond and clean the dung from the field where buffaloes slept and spent the night. The wild buffaloes doubted that someone was there to do all this. Therefore, one day, one of the oldest of the buffaloes did not go for grazing. It kept hidden at the place in order to see who was there to drink their milk and clean the place they slept on.

When the boy saw all the buffaloes going to the forest for grazing, he quietly came out of the hollow trees. As usual he drank the milk and cleaned the field of dung. When he was ready to go to hide in the hollow tree, the buffalo which was hiding came to the boy. The boy was scared. The buffalo asked him who he was, how he found this place, why he drank their milk. The boy narrated the whole story of his birth, the death of his parents, his orphan state, the treatment of his relatives, his ordeals of life, and his final shelter in his sister's house, the treatment she gave, the bread that came rolling to the pond and his final arrival to the pond to drink milk. The old buffalo was moved on hearing his story.

By the time, it was evening and all the buffaloes came to their shelter. The old buffalo then told about the boy to all of them. All the buffaloes were equally moved. They all became happy that the boy was there. Now they told the boy to live there, drink their milk and use their milk in any other ways for his profit-- for making butter or ghee.

From that day, the boy decided to live there forever. He drank the milk of the buffaloes and cleaned their shelter. He also started making butter and selling it. By doing so he earned a lot. He built a beautiful house and used all the land around. The buffaloes were merciful to him. Using their milk, he made a good earning and eventually was rich. He became healthy and handsome as well. A nearby king heard about his wealth, the number of wild buffaloes he had and thus he gave his daughter to him. The orphan now got married to the princess. However, he continued his service to the buffaloes.

One day his sister heard about his wealth and beauty, his marriage to a princess, his children, his land and house, the number of wild buffaloes he had. Someone told her that her brother had become a great man. When she heard it, she went to her brother's place. He received her

respectfully and offered the most delicious food. After staying at her maternal home for some days, she was ready to go home. Her brother asked her what she would love to take with her from his house. She asked for a buffalo. He told her to choose the buffalo she would like to take. But before that, he made a bell for the buffalo and around the bell he wrote. "The bread of the rice dust rolled, and the orphan tried to catch it. Dong-- Dong, Dong--Dong". He put the bell around the neck of the buffalo, and stuffed the bell so that it would not ring there. He told his sister to take any other thing that she liked. He put a condition to clear the stuffed bell any time after she crossed the seven hills and reached near her village. He said, "Sister, I am your only brother. Take anything that you like as my gift. Thus she took what she wanted and went home with the buffalo. After crossing the hills, she unstuffed the bell, and it rang. The ringing bell resounded the words written on it: "The bread of rice dust rolled and the orphan tried to catch it...."

The sister heard the sound and was reminded of her treatment towards the brother. The boy lived happily unaware of what had happened to his sister after she heard the sound made by the buffalo bell.

# Questions

1-What is the theme of the story?

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2-What is the setting of the story? (time / place)

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3-What are the characters of the story?

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4-Did the old woman dream come true? What was her dream?

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5-What did happen to the parent?

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6-Did the orphan become rich?

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7-Did the orphan's sister deserve this bad ending?

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8-What did you learn from the story?

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9-Find the opposites or the synonyms of the underlined words.

- The old woman. ~~=~~

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- They were after all destined to death. ~~=~~

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- The boy lived happily. ~~=~~

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He made a good earning and eventually was rich.  
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