

# THE GENEROUS *Giant*

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BlueRoseONE<sup>.com</sup>  
S t o r i e s   M a t t e r

New Delhi • London

**BLUEROSE PUBLISHERS**

India | U.K.

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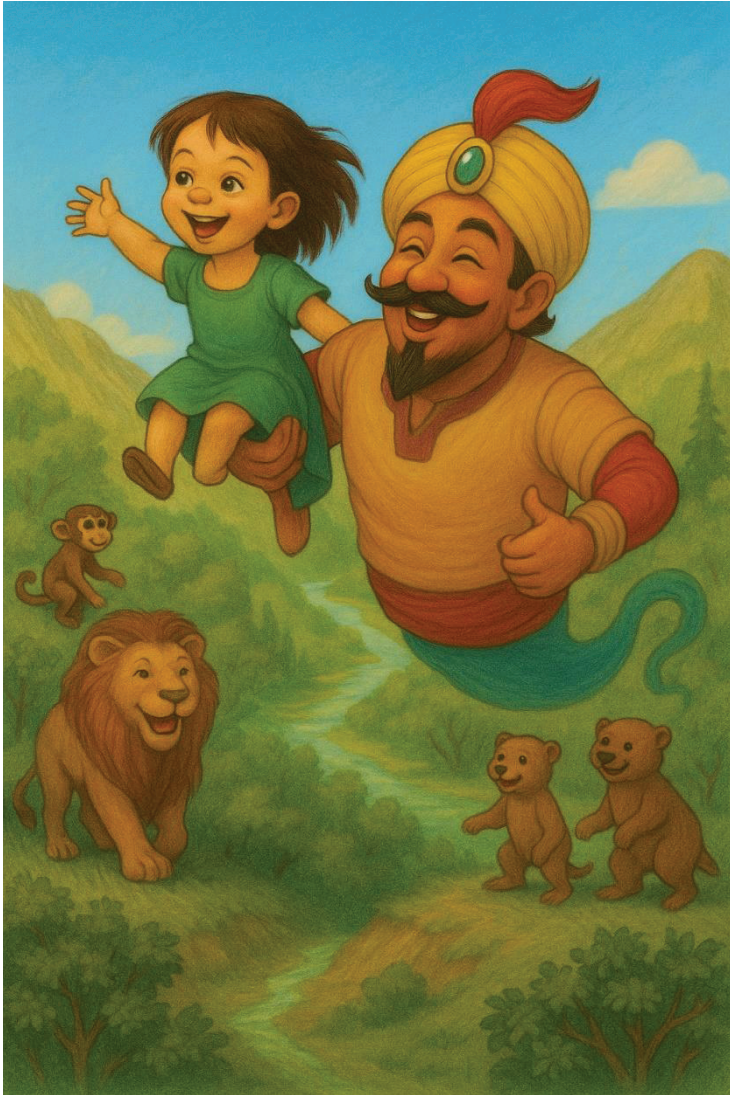
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ISBN: 978-93-7139-846-6

Cover design: Daksh  
Typesetting: Tanya Raj Upadhyay

First Edition: June 2025



"The book features illustrations at the start of each chapter, and we encourage children to color them based on their imagination."







**To *My* Dearest Father,  
...whose gentle words and  
constant faith lit the path  
for my writing...**

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# The Generous Giant





# Chapter 1

## Her Dream Land!

The air was thick with the scent of jasmine and sandalwood, swirling around little Suri as she twirled in a golden gown. The fabric shimmered under the glow of a thousand oil lamps, each flicker casting a warm halo on the marble floors of her palace. Servants bowed low, their silken turbans brushing the ground, offering her platters of saffron-infused biryani, glistening jalebis, and mango lassis.

“Oh, Princess Suri,” cooed a servant girl, her voice soft as a lullaby, “shall we fetch the emerald tiara or the ruby one for tonight’s feast?”

Suri giggled, her small hands clapping. “The ruby one! It sparkles like the stars!” She felt weightless, her heart soaring as musicians strummed sitars in the distance, their notes weaving through the air like a spell. This was her world—a place where hunger was a forgotten word, where her bare feet never touched the cracked earth of her village, where she was not just Suri, the girl who lived in a thatched house.

She spun again, the gown fanning out like a lotus in bloom, and the crowd gasped in awe. “Princess Suri,” they

chanted, “our jewel, our light!” Her chest swelled with a warmth she’d never known, a longing so deep it ached. *If only this could be real*, she thought. *If only I could stay*.

But then—a jolt. Her body twitched, and the palace wavered like a reflection in a disturbed pond. The music faded, the lamps dimmed, and the poor girl’s face blurred into shadow.

“Suri! Get up!”

The voice was sharp, cutting through the dream like a knife. Suri’s eyes fluttered open, and the golden gown dissolved into the rough cotton of her faded frock, patched everywhere. The marble floor was gone, replaced by the cold, packed dirt of their one-room shack. Her mother, Sunita, stood over her, hands on hips, her face etched with lines of worry and exhaustion.

“Dreaming again, haan?” Sunita said, softening her tone as she brushed stray hair from Suri’s forehead. “School won’t wait, and neither will the dishes. Come on, now.”

Suri groaned, rubbing her eyes. The taste of jalebi lingered in her mind, but her stomach growled with the familiar ache of last night’s watery dal. She sat up on the thin mat, the straw poking through, and glanced at the corner where her schoolbooks lay, dog-eared and borrowed.



“Ma,” she whispered, her voice small, “what if I could be a princess? Just for one day?”

Sunita’s eyes flickered with something—sadness, maybe, or a memory of her own lost dreams. She knelt beside Suri, her cold hand cupping her daughter’s cheek. “Suri, princesses live in stories. But you—you’re real. You’ve got a sharp mind and a big heart. That’s better than any crown.”

Suri nodded, but her gaze drifted to the window, where the dawn painted the sky in hues of her dream—gold, pink, and fleeting. She wanted to tell her mother how the palace felt, how the weight of silk made her stand taller, how the servants’ smiles made her feel seen. But the words stayed locked in her throat, heavy as the reality waiting outside.

“Come on,” Sunita said, pulling Suri to her feet. “Put on your uniform. You’ll be late.”

As Suri slipped into her frayed school dress, she clung to the fading edges of her dream. One day, she promised herself, she’d find a way to make her world sparkle—even if it was just a little.



## Chapter 2

### For the Sake of Pink Ice Cream

Suri stood at the edge of the government school's dusty courtyard, glaring at her uniform like it had personally insulted her. The faded blue was more of a sad, washed-out gray, with a tear at the hem that screamed, "I give up!" She adjusted her bag, which was less a bag and more a collection of stitches holding hands, and sighed dramatically. "I'm too fabulous for this place," she muttered, tossing her hair like a celebrity. *I'm a princess. Why am I stuck with these...hmmmm..... paupers?*

The other kids shuffled in, their uniforms a patchwork of poverty, their tiffins leaking the smell of yesterday's dal or, worse, stale chapatis. Suri wrinkled her nose. "Ugh, they probably think a sandwich or a chocolate mousse is a myth," she whispered to herself, ignoring the pang in her own empty stomach. She was better than them—smarter, prettier, destined for greatness. So why, oh why, had God plopped her in this dump? "Divine clerical error," she huffed, kicking a pebble so hard it nearly declared war on a stray dog.

Her parents were no help. Her mother, Sunita, scrubbed floors like it was her life's calling, and her father, Ravi, pedaled his rickshaw like a hamster on a wheel, coming home smelling like a monsoon gone wrong. Suri's one-room shack, with its leaky roof and a floor that doubled as a bed, was basically a cruel joke. "I deserve a mansion," she grumbled, "not a house that cries when it rains."

She endured the attendance call, slouched in her seat, plotting her escape. The teacher's droning voice was like a lullaby for boredom, and the second the register slammed shut, Suri was out the door, dodging her classmates' curious stares. "Keep staring, peasants," she muttered, strutting toward freedom—or at least the gates of St. Mary's Private School, where freedom smelled like ice cream and looked like money.

Leaning against a tree outside St. Mary's, Suri watched the rich kids tumble out of their shiny cars, their uniforms so crisp they probably crackled when they walked. Their lunch boxes were practically treasure chests, stuffed with chips and chocolates, while Suri's pocket held a grand total of two rupees and a dream. The street vendors' carts wafted temptation—spicy vada pav, mango ice creams, candies that winked at her like they knew her secrets. "One kulfi a week?" she whined to the universe. "That's not a life, that's a tease!"

Then she saw it: Pavani's school bus, gleaming like a chariot of snootiness. Pavani, the daughter of her mother's employer, was Suri's ticket to a taste of the good life. She was also a walking attitude problem, with a smirk that said, "I'm better than you, and my mirror agrees." Suri plastered on a grin so wide it hurt and dashed to the bus.

"Pavani, my VIP!" Suri chirped, snatching Pavani's fancy leather bag before it touched the ground. "Let me carry this. Wouldn't want it to get... dusty." She held it like it was the crown jewels, ignoring the twinge of self-loathing.

Pavani barely looked up, flipping her glossy braid. "Whatever, Suri. Don't scuff it. It costs more than your house." She sauntered toward the gate, her shoes clicking like tiny applause for her own existence.

Suri trailed behind, carefully placing the bag on the school bench like it was a sacred offering. Her eyes darted to a vendor scooping out creamy strawberry ice cream. "Pavani, look at that!" she said, her voice dripping with enthusiasm. "Doesn't it just scream 'eat me'?"

Pavani snorted, adjusting her hairband. "You're like a stray puppy, always begging. Don't you have food at home?" She paused, then grinned like a cat toying with a mouse. "Fine, I'll get you one. But you're carrying my books tomorrow too."

Suri's face burned, but her mouth watered more than her pride stung. "Deal," she mumbled, hating how her heart did a little jig. Pavani handed her the ice cream, and Suri took a bite, the cold sweetness hitting her like a hug from a better life. She closed her eyes, picturing herself as Pavani—rich, bossy, with a lunchbox that didn't embarrass her. She'd wear St. Mary's uniform, ride in a car, maybe even have a room that didn't double as a kitchen. *One day, I'll be her. No, better than her.*

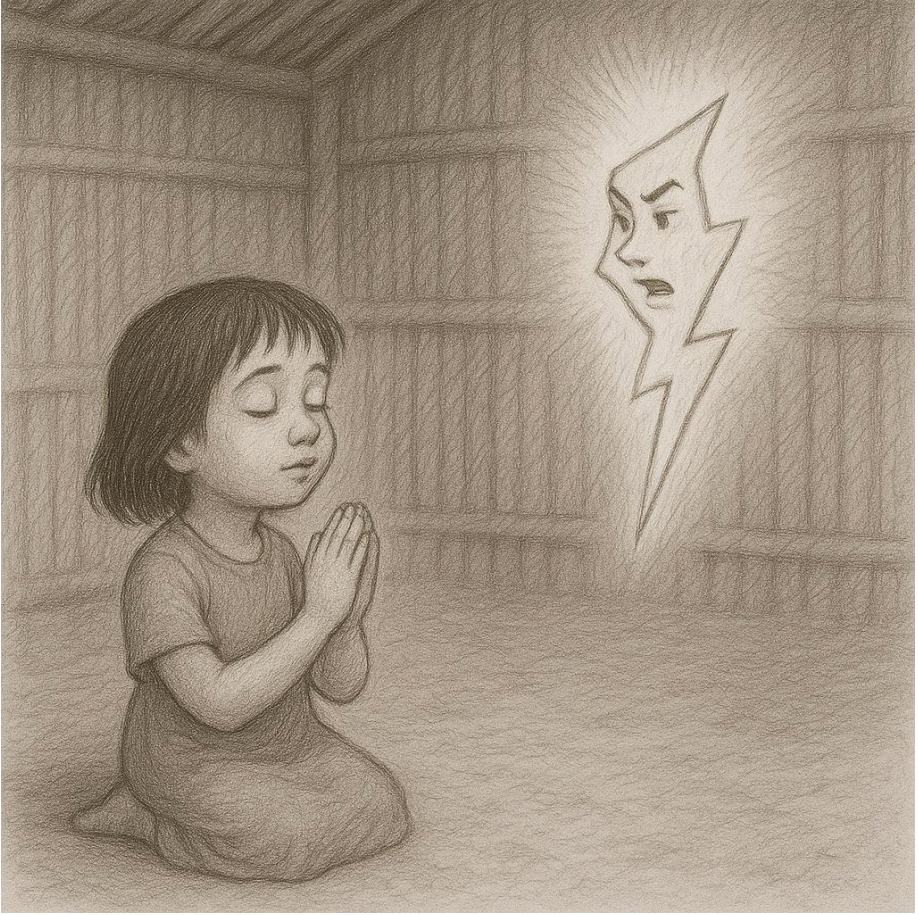
"Oi, drama queen," Pavani snapped, snapping Suri out of her fantasy. "You're dripping pink all over your hands. Gross."

Suri wiped her sticky fingers on her uniform, mumbling, "Sorry." She glanced at the St. Mary's gates, where Pavani's friends giggled, their lives as shiny as their hair. A lump rose in her throat. She was just Suri, the girl with two rupees and a head full of dreams, stuck outside the gates, licking ice cream she didn't pay for. *One day, she thought, her jaw tightening, I'll walk through those gates. And I won't carry anyone's bag but my own.*

Until then, she'd keep smiling at Pavani, keep swallowing her pride, and keep dreaming of a life that didn't make her laugh and cry at the same time.

**“Imagine you’re the star of this story! Draw yourself as  
the main character!”**







# Chapter 3

## Yes Suri-It's the Big Boss

Every night, Suri knelt on the lumpy straw mat in her leaky shack, her hands clasped so tight her knuckles turned white, praying with the fervor of a Bollywood heroine mid-climax. “God, please,” she’d whisper, eyes squeezed shut, “give me a life that sparkles—piles of rupees, dresses that don’t look like they fought a washing machine and lost, food that doesn’t taste like sadness, and a one-way ticket to some far-off land where nobody knows what a rickshaw is!” Her stomach growled in agreement, dreaming of butter chicken instead of watery dal.

She’d been at it for years, this one-track prayer, convinced the gods were just waiting for her to hit the right note of desperation. But that night, as the monsoon drizzle tapped the tin roof like an impatient creditor, something bizarre happened. Suri was mid-prayer, throwing in an extra “pretty please” for good measure, when a voice—deep, echoey, and slightly annoyed—boomed in her head.

“Suri, chill with the nightly whining already!” it said, making her eyes pop open. She froze, glancing around the dark

room. Her mother's snores rattled from the corner, and a stray cockroach scuttled across the floor, but no divine presentation appeared. "W-who's that?" she stammered, heart doing a nervous dance. *God? A ghost? The neighbor's radio?*

"Not a radio, you dramatic bean," the voice snapped, now with a hint of sass. "You've impressed the Big Boss Upstairs with your relentless praying. Patience, check. Passion, check. Slightly annoying persistence, double check. You deserve better, kid, and you'll get it—riches, travel, food, clothes. But don't go full greedy goblin when it starts rolling in, got it?"

Suri's jaw dropped, her anxiety spiking like a Diwali firecracker. "M-me? Get everything?" she squeaked, half-expecting to wake up and find this was just another dream where she was a princess eating jalebis. But the voice was real, and it wasn't done.

"Tomorrow, go to that nasty old hut next to your place," it continued, sounding like it was reading from a cosmic to-do list. "Yeah, the one that smells like regret and rotting onions. Look closely—there's a purple light. Pray near it. Someone will show up, a friend, a guide. Don't freak out. And maybe hold your nose."

The voice vanished, leaving Suri staring at the ceiling, her heart a mix of jitters and joy. "A guide? For me?" she

whispered, a grin creeping onto her face. Finally, someone—something!—had heard her! She was practically vibrating, imagining a fairy godmother or a genie with a credit card. But the hut? That place was a biohazard, a crumbling shack even the rats avoided. What if the purple light was just a moldy glowstick? Or worse, what if this was a prank by the gods, who were probably sipping chai and laughing at her?

She barely slept, her mind ping-ponging between hope and dread. By morning, she was a bundle of nerves, tiptoeing past her mother’s suspicious squint. “Where are you off to, Suri?” Sunita called, scrubbing a pot.

“Uh, just... praying!” Suri lied, bolting out the door before her mother could ask why she looked like she’d seen a ghost and invited it for tea.

The hut loomed next door, sagging like it was tired of existing. Suri wrinkled her nose as she pushed the creaky door open, the stench of damp wood and something suspiciously like dead fish hitting her like a slap. Her eyes scanned the gloom—broken pots, cobwebs, a vibe that screamed “haunted real estate.” Then she saw it: a faint purple glow flickering in the corner, pulsing like a disco ball with a budget cut.

Suri’s heart thudded, but she inched closer, her frayed frock catching on a splinter. “Okay, purple light, don’t be

creepy,” she whispered, kneeling beside it. She clasped her hands, praying harder than ever, half-expecting a thunderclap or an angel. “Please, send my guide, my friend, my... whoever you are!”

The light flared, and Suri yelped, scooting back. The air shimmered, and a figure began to form—vague, shadowy, definitely not a vendor selling ice cream. Her stomach did a flip, but her grin was unstoppable. “Yes! Yes!” she squealed, clutching her hair. “Someone’s here for me! I’m saved! No more dal, no more shack, just me and my VIP life!”

She leaned forward, squinting into the purple haze, her anxiety drowned out by a wild, giddy hope. Whoever this was, they were her ticket out—and she was ready to trade her two-rupee dreams for a first-class future.

**Would like to add a pet to the story, what would it be?**

**Draw your magical animal friend!**



# Chapter 4

## Jumbo-My VIP

The light pulsed, eerie and alive, casting shadows that danced like ghosts plotting a reunion. *Is this it?* she thought, half-expecting a demon or a disco ball to pop out. *God, don't prank me now.* The purple glow swelled, rising like a monsoon cloud, and Suri's breath caught. It bloated, bigger and bigger, until the hut felt too small to hold it. A low hum vibrated the dirt floor, and the light shimmered, twisting into a shape—humanish, but not quite. Suri scooted back, her frayed frock snagging on a splinter. “Oh no, no, no,” she squeaked, clutching her hair. “Don't be a ghost!” The shape solidified, and the purple haze parted like a curtain at a village play, revealing... a genie?

Not just any genie. This one was round as a laddoo, with a belly so huge and jiggled that it felt like it had its own postal code. His turquoise vest barely contained the chaos, and his grin was so wide it could sell toothpaste. He floated an inch off the ground, chuckling with a laugh that sounded like a scooter backfiring. “Brap-pap-ap! Suri, my girl, you look like

you just saw a buffalo in a sari!” he boomed, slapping his knee, which sent a ripple through his entire frame.

Suri blinked, her anxiety wobbling between terror and confusion. “Y-you’re... my guide?” she stammered, eyeing his pointy slippers, which curled up like they were plotting to escape. “You look like you ate a palace!”

The genie guffawed, spinning in midair until he was upside down, his turban defying gravity. “Ate a palace? Kid, I *am* the feast! Been cooped up in that purple light for eons, snacking on cosmic vibes. Name’s not ‘Genie,’ though—too cliché. Call me... well, we’ll get to that.” He winked, and a spark shot out, singing a nearby cobweb. “So, what’s the deal, Suri? Why the long face? You’re not praying for a math tutor, I hope.”

Suri’s mouth twitched, the genie’s ridiculousness thawing her fear. “I... I hate everything,” she admitted, crossing her arms. “My school’s a dump, my uniform’s a tragedy, my parents are poor, and I live in a shack that smells like this hut’s cousin. I want riches, fancy clothes, food that doesn’t taste like regret, and to travel to far far away land!”

The genie flipped right-side up, stroking his chin like a philosopher who’d misplaced his wisdom. “Hate everything,



huh? That's a lot of hate for a pint-sized human. Tell me, kid, what *do* you like? Besides dreaming of gold-plated samosas."

Suri hesitated, then giggled despite herself. "I... like ice cream. And Bollywood songs. And... maybe you, because you're not boring." She paused, her eyes lighting up. "And now you're here, I'm gonna love life! You'll give me everything, right? Like, *poof*, princess mode?"

The genie cackled, his belly wobbling like a jelly in an earthquake. "Princess mode? Slow down, drama queen! I'm no ATM. You'll get your sparkly life, but it's a journey, not a home delivery. Gotta keep that greed in check, or you'll end up with a palace full of problems." He leaned closer, whispering conspiratorially. "Ever try eating ten jalebis at once? Trust me, it's not as fun as it sounds."

Suri burst out laughing, her anxiety melting like kulfi in the sun. "Okay, fine, no greed. But you're funny! I thought you'd be all serious, like a temple priest."

"Priest? Pfft!" The genie struck a pose, one hand on his hip, the other waving dramatically. "I'm the cosmic comedian, the sultan of sass! Speaking of, I need a name. 'Genie' is like calling a mango a fruit—technically true, but snooze. Think of me as your buddy, your wingman for this fancy-life quest. What's my new title?"

Suri tapped her chin, squinting at his goofy grin and bouncing belly. “Hmm... you’re loud, you’re fun, you’re huge, you’re... like a festival in a turban....you are a Jumbo giant” She grinned, snapping her fingers. “Jumbo! That’s your name.”

The genie—now Jumbo—clapped so hard a gust of glitter exploded from his hands, dusting Suri’s hair. “Jumbo! I love it! Alright, Suri, you and Jumbo are in this for the long haul. Stick with me, and we’ll turn your two-rupee dreams into a blockbuster!” He winked again, and a tiny firecracker popped in the air, making Suri jump and laugh all at once.

As the purple light dimmed, Suri felt a warmth in her chest, like the first spark of a bonfire. With Jumbo by her side, the shack, the school, the whole dusty world felt less heavy. She was still nervous—would this really work?—but for the first time, she believed her prayers might just have a punchline worth waiting for.

**Create your own magical Genie—any shape, size, or color  
you like!**



# Chapter 5

## Jumbo Passes the Test

Suri squinted at the jolly, jiggly genie floating before her, his belly wobbling like a bowl of kheer caught in a breeze. “Jumbo,” she shouted, tapping her chin like a detective in a low-budget mystery. The genie’s eyes widened, and he let out a laugh so loud it rattled the cobwebs in the smelly hut. “Jumbo? Yes Yes, now I am Jumbo! It sounds like I’m a wrestling champ who ate the ring!” He spun in midair, his turquoise vest sparkling with cosmic glitter. “But you know what, kid? I love it. Jumbo’s got pizzazz! You’re comfy with it, and that’s what counts. Now, what’s next? You gonna ask for a palace or just stare at my fabulousness?”

Suri giggled, her anxiety from the purple-light fiasco fading like a bad dream. She didn’t ask for anything grand—not yet. Instead, she started visiting Jumbo every day, sneaking into the hut after school. The place still smelled like a fish market’s nightmare, but Jumbo’s goofy grin made it bearable. They’d sit (well, she’d sit, he’d float), and Suri would spill her dreams like a monsoon overflow.

“Jumbo, I want dresses that shimmer like Diwali lights,” she’d say, waving her hands. “Lehengas with so much gold they make my neighbors jealous! And shoes—sparkly ones, not these sandals that look like they’re begging for retirement.”

Jumbo nodded, stroking his chin like a philosopher who’d flunked philosophy. “Solid choices, Suri. But let me tell ya, sparkly shoes? They’re a scam. You trip once, and you’re shining the floor with your face. What else you got?”

“Food!” Suri’s eyes lit up. “Pista ice cream, butter chicken, jalebis so crispy they sing when you bite them. None of this watery dal nonsense. Oh, and I want to travel to a far-far-away land, where nobody knows my shack or my two-rupee life.”

Jumbo leaned back, folding his arms, which made his belly bounce like a trampoline. “Far-far-away land, huh? Been there, done that, got the cosmic postcard.

Picture this: mountains so tall they tickle the sky, waterfalls that sing louder than your Bollywood tunes, sunrises and sunsets that look like someone spilled paint. Birds chirping every note you can imagine, animals dancing like they’re in a talent show, and rainbows so bright they make your eyes throw a party. It’s wild, Suri. You’d love it.”

Suri's jaw dropped, her heart doing a little dance. "You've *been* there? Jumbo, you're like a travel vlogger with magic! Take me! Or at least get me a souvenir!"

"Patience, my pint-sized dreamer," Jumbo chuckled, wagging a finger. "You're not ready for the rainbow rodeo yet. Keep dreaming, keep chatting. I'm your buddy, not your Taxi."

So Suri did. Day after day, she poured out her heart, and Jumbo listened, tossing in witty quips that made her laugh until her sides ached. "You want butter chicken?" he'd say. "Better hope you don't get a chicken that holds a grudge. Those drumsticks fight back!" She felt lighter, like her dreams weren't just wishes but blueprints for a future she could touch.

One humid afternoon, Suri decided to test the waters. She plopped down in the hut, eyeing Jumbo, who was doing a lazy midair somersault. "Jumbo," she said, smirking, "if you're such a big-shot genie—sorry, *Jumbo*—prove it. Get me an ice cream. Pista, my favorite."

Jumbo raised an eyebrow, his grin turning sly. "Oh, testing the Jumbo, are we? Alright, kid, buckle up. Close your eyes, count to three, and no peeking. I'm not running a free show here."

Suri squeezed her eyes shut, giggling nervously. "One... two... three!" She opened them, and there, in Jumbo's chubby

hands, was a perfect pista ice cream, green and creamy, glistening like a jewel in the dim hut. Her breath caught, and then—pandemonium. “Jumbo!” she shrieked, leaping to her feet, her voice bouncing off the walls. “You did it! You actually did it!”

She snatched the ice cream, her hands trembling with joy so wild it felt like her heart might burst. She took a bite, the nutty sweetness exploding on her tongue, and her eyes welled up. Laughter spilled out, mixed with hiccupy sobs, as she twirled in place, ice cream dripping onto her fingers. “It’s perfect!” she cried, tears streaking her cheeks. “It’s like... like heaven decided to throw a party in my mouth!”

Jumbo watched, chuckling, his belly jiggling like a happy earthquake. “Told ya I’m the real deal, kid. But careful—you’re wearing more ice cream than you’re eating. You want a bib with that?”

Suri laughed harder, wiping her face with her sleeve. Her chest felt full, like every buried wish was clawing its way to the surface. This wasn’t just ice cream—it was proof. Jumbo was real, his magic was real, and her dreams didn’t have to stay dreams. She looked up at the hut’s cracked ceiling, whispering, “Thank you, God. Thank you for Jumbo. I don’t have to hide what I want anymore. I can *have* it.”



She turned to Jumbo, grinning so wide her cheeks hurt. “You passed the test, you know. I trust you now. You’re my... my magic VIP!”

Jumbo struck a pose, one hand on his hip, the other waving theatrically. “VIP? Kid, I’m the whole parade! Stick with Jumbo, and we’ll make your life a blockbuster. But next time, maybe ask for something less melty. This hut’s not air-conditioned, you know.”

Suri licked her ice cream, her heart soaring. With Jumbo by her side, the shack, the school, the whole dusty world felt like a stage, and she was finally ready to steal the spotlight.



## Chapter 6

# Jumbo did it Again!!

Suri's heart was doing cartwheels, practically bursting with glee since Jumbo's pista ice cream miracle. Her buried desires—shiny dresses, far-off lands, food that didn't taste like a budget cut—were clawing their way out, screaming, "We're free!" But now, sprawled on her lumpy straw mat, she was stumped. "I want *everything*," she muttered, staring at the shack's leaky ceiling. "Jewelry, lehengas, ice cream for breakfast... but what if Jumbo's magic has a data cap?" She decided to play it smart—one wish at a time, like rationing her two-rupee pocket money. That way, she'd test how far Jumbo's cosmic credit card could stretch.

She thought all night, her brain churning like a street vendor's blender. Lehenga? Too basic. A trip to that rainbow land Jumbo bragged about? Too soon. She tossed and turned, muttering, "Come on, Suri, pick something epic!" Exhaustion won, and she conked out, dreaming of gold bangles chasing her through a field of jalebis.

Morning came, and Suri shot out of bed like a Diwali rocket, her next wish crystal clear. She didn't even brush her

hair—just bolted to the smelly hut next door, her sandals slapping the dirt. “Jumbo! Come out! It’s *urgent!*” she yelled, panting like she’d outrun a monsoon.

The purple light flickered, sluggish as a government office queue. Slowly, it bloated, hummed, and finally spat out Jumbo, who materialized with a yawn, his belly wobbling like a jelly on a joyride. “Kid, what’s with the panic?” he said, rubbing his eyes. “You look like you saw a ghost or, worse, a math test. What’s so urgent?”

Suri bounced on her toes, barely containing herself. “Jumbo, there’s a wedding in two days, and I *need* to slay! New jewelry, a lehenga so sparkly it blinds people, and shoes that say, ‘I’m the star!’ Everyone should be staring at me, not the bride. Can you do it?”

Jumbo blinked, then let out a belly laugh that shook the hut’s cobwebs. “Only *this* much? Kid, I’ve conjured feasts for kings who ate with their feet! This is a warm-up.” He paused, stroking his chin, a mischievous glint in his eye. “Here’s the plan: visit Pavani this evening.”

Suri’s jaw dropped, her excitement screeching to a halt. “*Pavani?* The snooty princess who treats me like her personal porter? Jumbo, I’ve got *you* now! I’m not going back to carrying her bag and begging for ice cream scraps!”

Jumbo's grin widened, infuriatingly smug. "Trust your old pal Jumbo. Just go after school. You'll see."

Suri stomped out, her mood sourer than curd left in the sun. "Trust him? He's lost it," she grumbled, kicking a pebble so hard it probably filed a complaint. Jumbo's magic was supposed to be *poof*, instant glamour, not sending her to grovel at Pavani's mansion. Her dreams of dazzling the wedding faded, replaced by a heavy, gnawing sadness. "Maybe Jumbo's just a one-hit wonder," she sighed, imagining a lifetime of watery dal and her patched frock. "Ice cream was his peak, and now I'm stuck."

School was a drag. The government classroom smelled like chalk and despair, her tiffin was a sad roti, and her stomach growled louder than the teacher's lecture. She slumped in her seat, doodling sparkly lehengas in her notebook, each stroke laced with dejection. Jumbo had failed her. Her big, magical break was a dud.

After the final bell, Suri trudged toward Pavani's house, her heart as heavy as her tattered bag. "Jumbo better have a good reason," she muttered, half-expecting Pavani to hand her a broom and call it a day. She knocked on the polished door, bracing for the usual smirk.



But when Pavani opened it, Suri nearly fell over. “Suri!” Pavani squealed, her glossy braid bouncing. “Oh my gosh, I’ve missed you!” She pulled Suri inside, her smile brighter than a Diwali lamp. “Come, eat! I’ve got samosas, pakoras, and mango lassi—take it all!”

Suri blinked, dumbfounded, as Pavani piled a plate high with snacks. “Uh... you okay, Pavani?” she asked, nibbling a samosa that tasted like heaven had a fryer. “You’re being... nice.”

Pavani’s eyes softened, and—was that a tear? “I’ve been thinking about you every day,” she said, her voice wobbly. “You stopped coming to my school, and I... I missed my friend. I know I’ve been a bit bossy, but I want to make it right.”

Suri’s samosa paused mid-bite. *Friend?* Since when? But before she could process, Pavani clapped her hands. “Oh! The wedding you’re going to! I’ve been dying to give you something.” She darted to her room and returned with a shimmering lehenga, gold jewelry that winked in the light, and sparkly heels that looked like they’d walked out of Suri’s dreams. “These are for you. My best outfit, jewelry, shoes—everything. You’ll be the star!”

Suri’s brain short-circuited. She stared at the lehenga, its embroidery glittering like a starry night, and the jewelry,

heavy with promise. “P-Pavani... for me?” she whispered, her voice cracking. Then it hit her—*Jumbo*. That sneaky, belly-jiggling genius had orchestrated this! Her sadness exploded into joy, a wild, fizzy rush that made her want to dance and cry and hug the world. “Jumbo, you’re so cool!” she thought, her heart soaring like a kite in a festival sky.

She threw her arms around Pavani, squeezing tight. “Thank you, thank you, thank you!” she squealed, her laughter bubbling over. Pavani grinned, pulling her to a mirror. “Try it on! Let’s make you a princess.”

Suri slipped into the lehenga, the silk cool against her skin, its gold threads catching the light like fire. The jewelry—bangles, earrings, a necklace—clinked softly, each piece making her feel taller, brighter. The heels lifted her an inch, but her confidence soared miles. Pavani dabbed on some makeup—kajal, a touch of pink lipstick—and stepped back. “Look,” she said, pointing to the mirror.

Suri turned, and her breath caught. Staring back was a princess, her lehenga shimmering like a galaxy, her jewelry sparkling like stolen stars. Her eyes, lined with kajal, glowed with a fierceness she’d never seen. She was radiant, undeniable, the girl who’d steal every glance at the wedding. Her chest swelled with triumph, a victory sweeter than any ice cream. Joy flooded her, warm and unstoppable, like a



monsoon breaking free. She wasn't just Suri, the shack girl with two rupees—she was Suri, the star, the dreamer whose wishes were coming true.

She pressed her hands together, looking upward. “Thank you, God,” she murmured. “Thank you for Jumbo. My desires aren't buried anymore—they're alive, and I'm never letting them go.” She twirled, the lehenga fanning out, and laughed, a sound so bright it could light up the night.

**A Genie pops out of a lamp! What are the three amazing wishes you'd ask for?**



# Chapter 7

## Suri is Truly Grateful

Suri woke with a heart so full it felt like it might burst, the memory of her princess moment in Pavani's mirror still sparkling in her mind. The lehenga's shimmer, the jingle of gold jewelry, the way her kajal-lined eyes had glowed—she couldn't wait to tell Jumbo. She slipped out of her shack before the sun peeked over the horizon, tiptoeing past her mother's soft snores, her sandals barely touching the dirt as she raced to the smelly hut next door. Her questions buzzed like a swarm of curious bees: Why Pavani? How did Jumbo pull it off? Was he secretly besties with her former snooty friend?

“Jumbo! Come out, it's me!” she called, her voice bright but trembling with excitement as she stepped into the hut. The familiar stench of rotting onions hit her, but she didn't care. The purple light flickered, slow and sleepy, bloating into Jumbo's round, jiggly form. He materialized with a yawn, his turquoise vest sparkling faintly, his grin as wide as a festival moon.

“Morning, kiddo,” Jumbo said, floating an inch off the ground, his belly wobbling like a happy pudding. “You’re bouncier than a goat at a fair. What’s got you so chirpy?”

Suri’s words tumbled out, her eyes wide with wonder. “Jumbo, you won’t believe it! The lehenga Pavani gave me—it was like wearing a piece of the sky! The jewelry sparkled so much I felt like a star, and the shoes? Oh, they made me taller than my dreams! I looked... I looked like a princess.” Her voice softened, almost shy. “Thank you, Jumbo. But... I have questions. Why Pavani? Do you know her? How did she suddenly turn nice? Did you, like, sprinkle magic on her heart?”

Jumbo let out a laugh so loud it shook a cobweb loose, his belly jiggling like a monsoon wave. “Oh, Suri, you’re curiouser than a cat in a spice market! But hold up, kid—I can’t spill the cosmic beans. My job’s to make your wishes happen, not to give you the behind-the-scenes director’s cut. As long as you’re not greedy, I’m your guy. So, what’s next?”

Suri blinked, her inquisitive spark dimming with a flicker of confusion. “But... Jumbo, I need to know! Was it you? Did you talk to Pavani? She was never this nice before. Please, just tell me!” Her voice was earnest, her hands clasped like she was praying to him instead of God.

Jumbo's grin softened, but he shook his head, floating closer. "Suri, Suri, you're chasing shadows when you've got the sun. I'm here to fulfill your desires, not explain the plumbing. Ask me your next wish—let's keep the magic rolling."

Suri's shoulders sagged, but her heart lifted at the word *wish*. A new wish? She hadn't thought that far. The wedding outfit was everything she'd dreamed of, and now her mind was a blank slate, like a chalkboard wiped clean. "I... I don't know what to ask for," she admitted, her voice small but honest. "Can I think about it? I'll come back tomorrow."

Jumbo's eyes twinkled, and he leaned back, folding his arms over his massive belly. "And *that's* why I like you, kiddo," he said, his voice warm, almost tender. "You're not greedy, grabbing at every shiny thing like a magpie. You're simple, clean-hearted, the kind of soul that makes the gods sit up and listen. That's why God sent me to you. You're his chosen one, Suri—He wants you happy, and I'm here to make it happen."

Suri's breath caught, her eyes stinging with sudden tears. Chosen one? Her, the girl from the shack with two rupees and a patched frock? Her heart swelled, a mix of awe and gratitude washing over her like a gentle rain. She thought of her mother, Sunita, kneeling at their tiny altar, whispering, "There's power in prayers". Suri had always believed, had always folded her

hands and asked God for a better life, but now, with Jumbo's words, she felt it—truly felt it. Her prayers weren't just words; they were a bridge to something divine.

She smiled, a soft, radiant curve that lit up her face. "Ma was right," she said, her voice quivering with emotion. "She always said prayers have power. I... I believe it now, Jumbo. More than ever." She pressed her hands together, bowing slightly to the genie, her heart full of a quiet, god-fearing reverence. "I'll be back tomorrow. I'll think of something good."

Jumbo chuckled, a sound like a warm hug. "Run along, chosen one. And tell your ma she's got a wise head on her shoulders."

Suri turned, her steps light as she darted out of the hut, the morning sun kissing her face. She felt simple, yes, but not small—not anymore. She was clean-hearted, god-chosen, and with Jumbo by her side, her dreams were no longer whispers but promises. As she ran home, her smile was a silent prayer, a thank-you to God for seeing her, for loving her, for making her shine.



**Think about your school—what do you love the most?**

**Write or draw it here!**



## Chapter 8

### Suri's Next Wish—St Mary's

Suri sat cross-legged on her straw mat, her brow furrowed like a detective puzzling over a Bollywood plot twist. No more piddly wishes for ice cream or a one-off lehenga—she was done with small fries. Jumbo was her cosmic VIP, sent by God Himself to answer her prayers, and she deserved *big*. “I’m not just some shack girl,” she muttered, kicking a stray pebble across the dirt floor. “I’m Suri, future superstar!” But what to ask for? A palace? A private jet? A lifetime supply of pista kulfi?

As she rummaged through her tattered bag, her fingers brushed against last year’s report card, crumpled but proud. She smoothed it out, her eyes widening. *First in class!* The teacher’s scrawled note glowed like a neon sign: “Suri is brilliant, a star student.” But then, the sting—the warning her teacher had whispered: “Stay in this government school, and you’ll be married off before you can spell ‘future.’ You’ll be stuck, like your ma, like everyone here.” Suri’s heart sank, heavy with the truth. The government school, with its cracked walls and droning teachers, was a dead end. She’d be swept

into the same cycle—shack, chores, an early marriage—unless she broke free.

Her eyes lit up. *That's it!* She knew her next wish, and it was bigger than a Diwali firecracker. The sun was dipping low, painting the sky orange, but Suri didn't care. She bolted out of the shack, her sandals slapping the dirt, and burst into the smelly hut next door. "Jumbo! Jumbo, wake up! It's me!" she shouted, her voice bouncing off the cobwebs.

The purple light flickered, lazy as a monsoon afternoon, and slowly bloated into Jumbo's round, jiggly form. He materialized mid-bite, his mouth stuffed with biryani, rice grains clinging to his chin like tiny rebels. His turquoise vest strained against his belly, and he held a golden plate piled high with spicy goodness. "Mmmph!" he mumbled, eyes wide with surprise. Suri burst out laughing, clutching her sides.

"Jumbo, you look like a biryani bandit caught red-handed!" she giggled, pointing at his stuffed cheeks. "Is that a whole goat in there?"

Jumbo swallowed hard, coughing out a cumin seed. "Kid, don't sneak up on a genie during dinner! This biryani's a masterpiece—spiced to perfection, unlike your timing." He wiped his mouth with a sparkly napkin, still chuckling. "Let me finish, then I'm all ears. Five minutes, tops."

Suri plopped onto the dirt floor, grinning despite her urgency. “Fine, but don’t fall asleep in your plate. I’ve got a *big* wish.” She watched him shovel in another mouthful, his cheeks puffing out like a chipmunk’s. Her heart raced with hope, but a tiny flutter of doubt nibbled at her. Could Jumbo really pull off something this huge?

Jumbo finally set the plate down, letting out a satisfied burp that smelled faintly of saffron. “Alright, kiddo, I’m full and ready to nap for a century. But you’re here, so spill it—what’s the wish? And make it quick, my eyelids are staging a protest.”

Suri took a deep breath, her voice steady but brimming with emotion. “Jumbo, I’m a brilliant student. My report card says so, and my teacher says I’m a star. But this government school? It’s a trap. If I stay, I’ll have no future—just marriage and chores, like Ma. I want to study at St. Mary’s, the private school where Pavani goes. It’s fancy, with real books and teachers who care. That’s my wish.”

Jumbo raised an eyebrow, leaning back until his belly wobbled like a water balloon. “Private school, huh? Not bad, kid. Alright, here’s the plan: take your marksheet and go meet the principal tomorrow.”

Suri's jaw dropped, her eyes bugging out. "*What?* Jumbo, have you lost your mind? I'm in the sixth standard! The principal will laugh me out of the room! I'll look like a kid begging for laddoos at a temple!"

Jumbo's grin was pure mischief, like a cat who'd swiped the cream. "Trust your old pal Jumbo. Just go. Show 'em that report card and charm the socks off 'em. You've got spunk, Suri."

Suri's heart did a nervous flip, but she remembered Pavani's lehenga miracle. Jumbo had tricks up his sparkly sleeves. She squared her shoulders, her voice firm. "Okay, but I'm not done. If I'm going to St. Mary's, I want it all—no fees, free books, free uniforms, free extracurriculars. Dance, art, everything! I shouldn't pay a single rupee. Can you do that?"

Jumbo let out a belly laugh that shook the hut's rickety walls. "Kid, you're negotiating like a bazaar auntie! No fees, free books, free everything—done! Anything else? A pony? A moonbeam to ride to school?"

Suri giggled, her doubts melting into a warm glow of hope. "No, that's it. You're sure you can do this, right?"

Jumbo waved a chubby hand, already sinking back into the purple light. "It's as good as done, kiddo. Now scoot—I need my beauty sleep, or I'll wake up looking like a grumpy

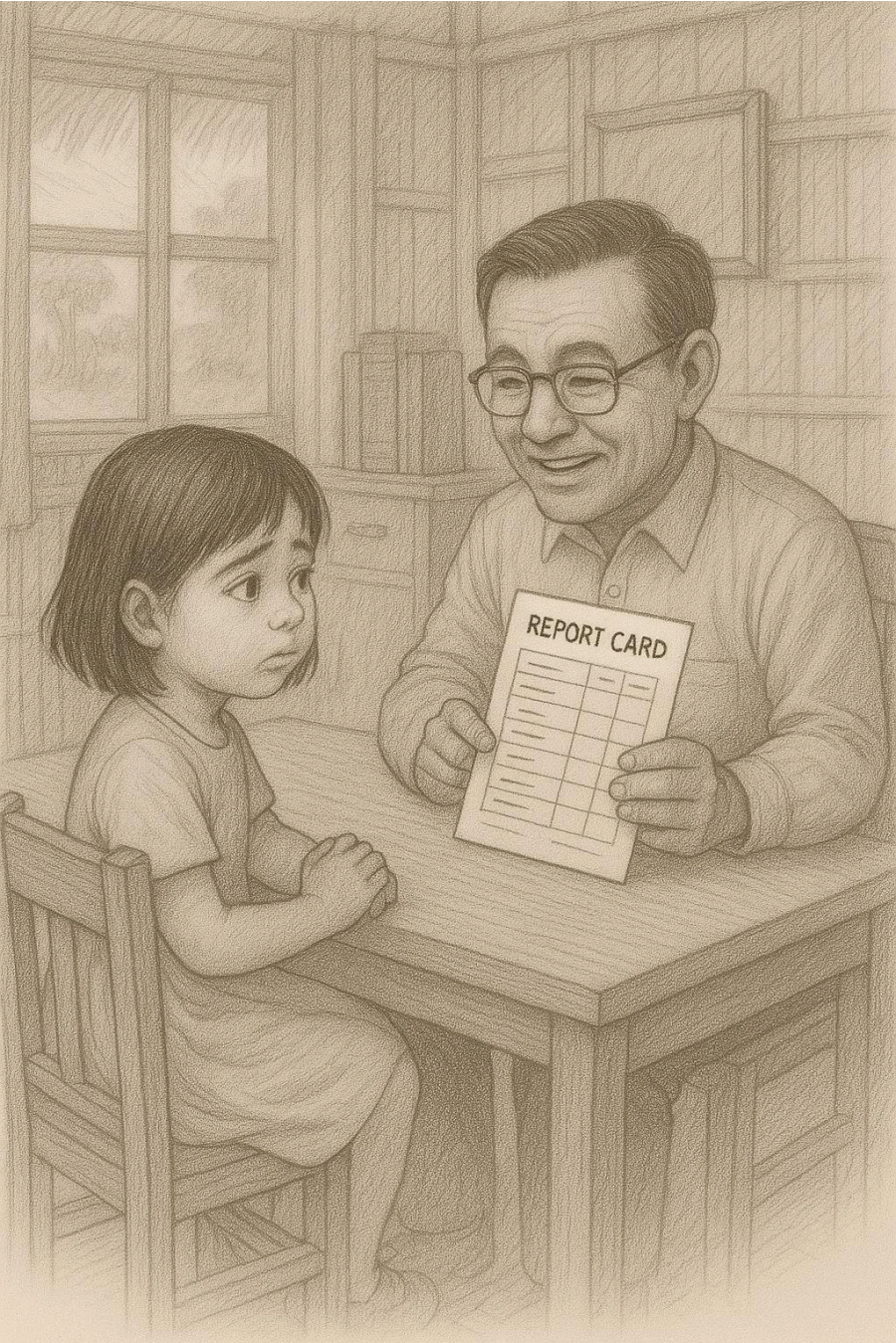


buffalo.” He yawned, his eyes half-closed. “Go be brilliant tomorrow.”

Suri stepped out into the evening, her heart a mix of nerves and joy. The idea of walking into St. Mary’s, her report card clutched like a golden ticket, made her stomach flutter. What if the principal laughed? What if she tripped on her own sandals? But Jumbo’s confidence was infectious, and deep down, she believed. She was brilliant, chosen, a girl whose prayers had summoned a genie. Her mother’s words echoed: “There’s power in prayers.” Suri smiled, tears pricking her eyes as she looked at the starry sky. “Thank you, God,” she whispered. “Thank you for Jumbo. I’m going to shine—not just for me, but for Ma, for everyone.”

She clutched her report card, her emotions swirling—fear, hope, and a fierce determination to break free of the cycle that trapped her. With Jumbo’s magic and her own spark, St. Mary’s wasn’t just a wish—it was her future, and she was ready to claim it.





# Chapter 9

## Suri's Ticket to the Future

Suri woke with a stomach full of butterflies, each one fluttering with a mix of nerves and hope. Today was the day—her chance to walk into St. Mary's Private School and claim the future she'd dreamed of. She slipped into her tattered school uniform, the faded gray fabric hanging like a tired sigh, its patches whispering of her old life. She smoothed it down, her fingers trembling, but her chin lifted high. "Jumbo said it'll happen," she whispered to herself, clutching her crumpled report card like a talisman. "If Jumbo says it, it's as good as done." Her heart thumped, but beneath the jitters, a spark of confidence glowed—she was brilliant, chosen, and ready to shine.

The walk to St. Mary's felt like a pilgrimage. The school's towering gates loomed ahead, gleaming in the morning sun, and Suri's sandals seemed to hesitate on the dusty path. She imagined the principal—a stern man with a mustache that judged you before you spoke—laughing her out of his office. "Class VI girl, asking for *this*?" she muttered, mimicking a gruff voice. But Jumbo's mischievous grin flashed in her mind,

and she squared her shoulders. “No turning back, Suri. You’re a star.”

To her shock, no one stopped her at the gate. The peon, a lanky man chewing paan, glanced at her report card and waved her through with a lazy, “Principal’s office, that way.” Suri’s eyes widened. “Jumbo, you sneaky genie,” she whispered, her hope surging like a kite catching the wind. The school’s polished corridors smelled of fresh paint and possibility, a far cry from her government school’s chalky despair. Her heart raced as she knocked on the principal’s door, her knuckles barely making a sound.

“Come in,” a calm voice called. Suri stepped inside, her patched uniform stark against the office’s gleaming wood and framed certificates. The principal, a kind-eyed man with gray hair and no scary mustache, looked up from his desk. “Your name, child?” he asked, his tone gentle.

“Suri,” she said, her voice small but steady. She held out her report card, her fingers trembling. “Sir, I... I want to study here.”

He gestured to a chair. “Sit, Suri. Tell me why you’re here.”

Suri sat, her heart pounding but her words spilling out with honest fervor. “Sir, I’m a good student. I stood first in my class last year—here’s my report card. My teacher says I’m

brilliant, but my government school... it's not enough. If I stay there, I'll be married off soon, stuck like my ma. I want to study at St. Mary's, learn everything, be someone. I... I know it's a lot to ask, but I had to try."

The principal leaned back, studying her report card, then her face. Suri held her breath, expecting a polite "no" or a chuckle. But he smiled, a warm, surprising smile. "Very well, Suri," he said. "We have a few seats for economically weaker sections, and in Standard 6, one vacancy remains. If you're willing, take this admission form, get it signed by your parents, and submit it. Once it's processed, you'll be admitted."

Suri's eyes widened, her breath catching. "R-really, sir?" she whispered, afraid to believe it.

He nodded, his smile growing. "That's not all. You'll receive two sets of uniforms, a full set of books, notebooks, and pens—all free. You can use the school bus at no cost, and every month, you'll get a stipend to cover your daily needs. We want you to focus on your studies, Suri, not worry about money."

Suri's heart exploded with joy, a wild, fizzy rush that made her want to leap from the chair and shout to the heavens. She gripped the admission form he handed her, its crisp paper

feeling like a golden ticket to a new life. Her eyes stung with tears, but her smile was radiant, brighter than the Diwali lamps she loved. “Thank you, sir,” she said, her voice quivering with gratitude. “Thank you so much.”

As she stepped out of the office, the form clutched to her chest, Suri felt like she was floating. The world looked different—brighter, bigger, full of promise. She saw herself in St. Mary’s crisp uniform, her bag heavy with books, not patches. She saw herself in classrooms that sparked her mind, on a stage dancing, in a future where she wasn’t just a shack girl but a doctor, a teacher, a star. Her hope was a river, unstoppable, washing away the fear of marriage and poverty. “Jumbo, you did it,” she whispered, tears slipping down her cheeks. “God, you saw me.”

She imagined her mother’s face when she showed her the form, the pride in her tired eyes. “Ma, your prayers worked,” she’d say, and they’d hug until the shack felt like a palace. Suri’s steps quickened as she headed home, her tattered uniform no longer a weight but a reminder of where she’d started. With Jumbo’s magic and her own brilliance, she was stepping into a future that shimmered like the lehengas she’d once dreamed of—a future she’d build, one hopeful step at a time.

**If the characters had a picnic, what fun foods would  
they eat? Draw their tasty spread!**







# Chapter 10

## Suri Needs Desperate Help!

Suri's first term at St. Mary's Private School was supposed to be her fairy tale, her leap from the shack to the stars. She'd strutted into those polished corridors, her crisp new uniform gleaming, her heart bursting with visions of topping the class, wowing teachers, and proving she was the brilliant star her government school report card swore she was. But when the results came, it was like a monsoon had washed away her dreams. Second last in her class. *Second last!* The words burned in her mind, each one a slap to her pride. Her classmates' names marched above hers on the rank list, mocking her with their tidy scores, while hers squatted near the bottom like a stubborn stain.

She sat in her classroom, staring at the report card, her hands shaking. "This can't be right," she whispered, her voice cracking. "I'm *smart*. I stood first back home!" But the numbers didn't lie—maths: 42, science: 38, English: a pitiful 45. Her dreams of being a doctor, a teacher, a *someone* flickered like a dying lamp. What if St. Mary's kicked her out? No more free books, no stipend, no shiny future—just back to

the government school, then a wedding, then a life scrubbing floors like her ma. Fear clawed at her chest, and her hope, once a bright river, felt like a muddy puddle.

That evening, Suri trudged to the smelly hut, her heart heavy as a sack of rice. She'd visited Jumbo daily, chattering about school lunches and new friends, never asking for more since her admission miracle. But now, she *needed* him. She was desperate, her mind a jumble of panic and illogical plans. "Jumbo will fix this," she muttered, clutching her report card. "He *has* to."

"Jumbo! Come out!" she shouted, her voice sharp with urgency. The purple light flickered, lazy as ever, and Jumbo materialized, yawning so wide his turquoise vest strained. His belly jiggled as he rubbed his eyes, looking like a cosmic teddy bear caught mid-nap. "Hoo boy, Suri," he mumbled, smacking his lips. "What's with the yelling? I was dreaming of a biryani buffet."

Suri's eyes welled up, and before she could stop herself, she burst into sobs, tears streaming down her cheeks. "Jumbo!" she wailed, waving her report card like a flag of defeat. "I'm a failure! I came second last in class! Second last! I'm supposed to be brilliant, but I'm nothing here! They'll throw me out, stop my stipend, send me back to that awful government school! My dreams are dead, Jumbo, *dead!*"

Jumbo's sleepy grin vanished, his eyes widening with worry. He floated closer, his voice soft but firm. "Whoa, whoa, kiddo, slow down. Tell me everything. I'll solve this, I promise."

Suri hiccuped, her words spilling out in a frantic, desperate rush. "I worked hard, Jumbo, I swear! I studied, I listened, but these kids—they're richer, they have tutors, they know stuff I don't! I can't be last, I *can't*! If I fail, I'm done—back to the shack, married off, stuck forever! You got me into St. Mary's, you *have* to fix this! I'm smart, I know I am!" Her voice cracked, her logic crumbling under the weight of her fear. "I can't lose this chance, Jumbo. I won't!"

Jumbo leaned back, his belly wobbling as he let out a chuckle that echoed in the hut. "Second last, huh? Kid, you're not getting tossed out, and your pocket money's safe. Relax! You're a good student, Suri. St. Mary's is tougher, sure, but you're tougher. You just gotta study harder, not take this blessing for granted. Keep at it, and you'll climb that rank list like a monkey up a mango tree."

Suri's tears stopped, replaced by a flare of anger. "*Study harder?*" she snapped, her voice rising. "That's it? That's your big solution? Jumbo, I'm drowning here! I need help, not advice! You're a genie—do something magical!" Her desperation twisted into something reckless, and she blurted, "Get me the question papers for all the subjects! If I know the

questions, I can ace the exams and come first, like I'm supposed to!"

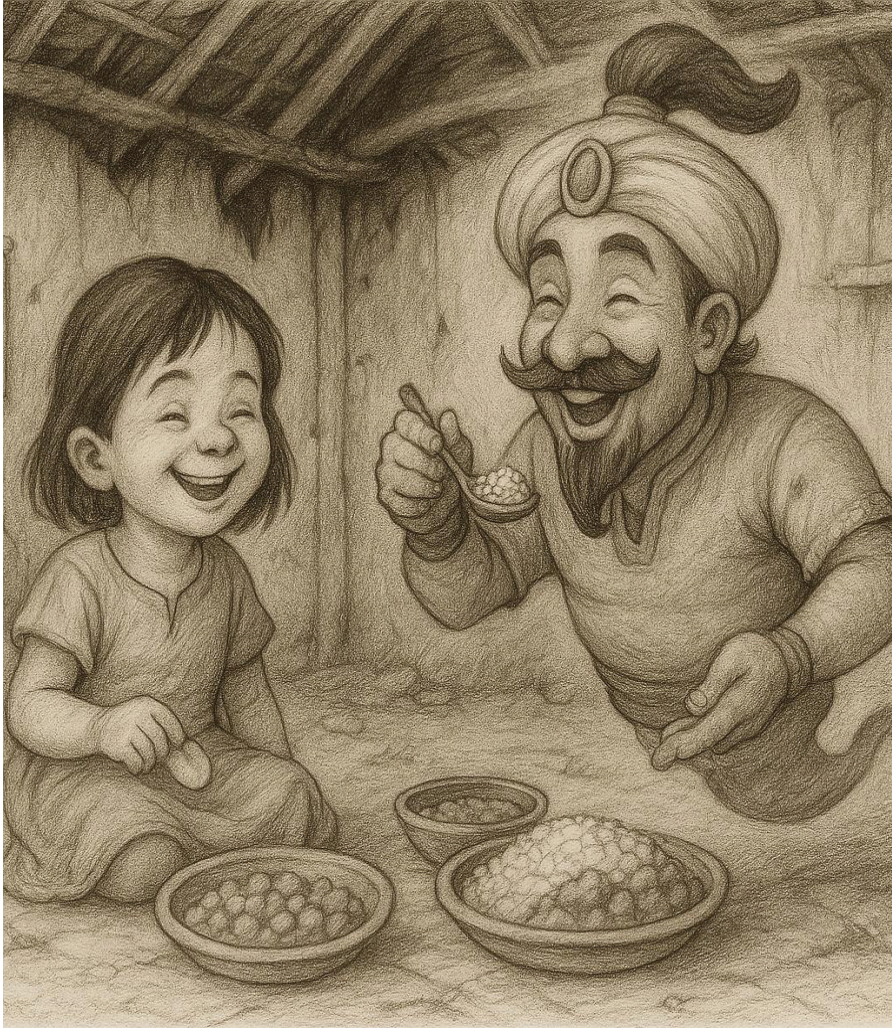
Jumbo's chuckle died, his eyes narrowing. "Question papers? Suri, you want to *cheat*? You, the honest kid who prayed her heart out and got me as a boon? Why this now? It's just one term—work hard, give your studies time, and you'll do fine. Cheating's a shortcut to nowhere."

Suri's face burned, her hands clenching into her fists. "You don't get it!" she shouted, her voice raw with dejection and fury. "I *have* to be first! I can't wait! Everyone's laughing at me, Jumbo, and you're just... just sitting there, eating biryani and telling me to try harder! If you won't help, what good are you? I thought you were my genie!" Her words were illogical, driven by panic, but they poured out like a broken dam.

Jumbo's expression turned serious, his voice low and intense. "Suri, listen up. I'm your genie because you're honest, clean-hearted, chosen by God for your pure prayers. But if you go down this unfair path, you're risking everything. I can't do anything dishonest—it's against the cosmic rulebook. And here's the deal: if you push me to do something wrong, I vanish. Poof. Gone. And the boon God gave you? It'll vanish too. You'll lose it all, kid. Don't throw away your heart for a cheap win."

Suri froze, her anger flickering as his words sank in. Lose Jumbo? Lose everything? Her heart pounded, but her mind was still a storm of fear and frustration. “You’re supposed to help me!” she muttered, her voice softer now, but still bitter. “I’m not greedy, I just... I can’t fail.” She turned away, tears stinging her eyes, dejected that Jumbo had denied her, angry that he’d lectured instead of waved a magic wand. She stormed out of the hut, the purple light dimming behind her, her report card crumpled in her fist.

As she trudged home, the lesson lingered, sharp and unwelcome. Cheating might get her a shiny rank, but it would cost her soul—and Jumbo. Unfairness was a trap, a glittery lie that led nowhere. Suri’s heart ached, her dreams bruised but not broken. She thought of her mother’s words: “Prayers have power, but so does hard work.” Maybe Jumbo was right—maybe she *could* climb that rank list, not by stealing answers but by proving her brilliance the honest way. Her anger softened, replaced by a flicker of resolve. She’d study, she’d fight, and she’d show St. Mary’s who Suri really was. But for now, she was just a girl, scared and stubborn, learning that shortcuts only cut you short.





# Chapter 11

## Yes, Hard Work Pays Brilliantly!

Suri's midterm flop at St. Mary's had been a punch to the gut, but she wasn't the type to stay down. Second last in class? Fine. She was Suri, the girl who'd prayed a genie into existence, and she wasn't about to let a report card write her story. She rolled up her sleeves—metaphorically, since her crisp new uniform was too precious to rumple—and got to work. No more daydreaming about lehengas or pista kulfi; it was time to shine. She skipped extracurriculars, trading dance and art for late nights hunched over books, her pencil stub worn to a nub. She marched to her teachers, her chin high, and asked, "Where am I weak? Tell me, I'll fix it." They saw her fire, her grit, and they helped, breaking down fractions and Oscar Wilde until her brain felt like a well-oiled machine.

She knew she was sharp—her government school medals hadn't lied—but St. Mary's was a different beast, with its rich kids and fancy lessons. Extra effort was the key, and Suri poured her heart into it, her hope a steady flame. One day, she bumped into Pavani, her old frenemy-turned-friend, whose glossy braid still screamed privilege. Pavani, two years older



and sharper than a tailor's needle, grinned. "Suri, you're a brainiac. I know it—heck, you did my homework for samosas and dresses back in the day!" She handed Suri a treasure trove: her old notes, past question papers, even tips for Standard 6 finals. "Your midterm was just bad luck," Pavani said, her eyes kind. "You've got this. Study hard, but don't ditch dance—you're too good."

Suri clutched the notes, her heart swelling. Pavani believed in her, saw her potential, and that was fuel. She studied like her life depended on it, because it did. No cheating, no shortcuts—just hard work, the kind her mother said moved mountains. When the final exams came, Suri walked into the hall, her pencil sharp, her mind sharper. She tackled each question, her hand steady, her hope a soaring kite. The results day arrived, and when the teacher pinned the rank list to the board, Suri's name glowed: *Third in class*. Third! Her classmates clapped, her teachers beamed, praising her dedication, her comeback. Suri's chest felt like it might burst, joy and triumph bubbling up like a festival firecracker. She wasn't just a shack girl—she was a star, and hard work had lit her way.

That evening, Suri raced to the smelly hut, her heart a wild drumbeat. She hadn't seen Jumbo since her desperate, illogical plea for question papers, when she'd stormed out, dejected

and angry at his refusal. Now, shame tinged her excitement—she'd been so foolish, doubting him, doubting herself. But her triumph pushed her forward. "Jumbo! Come out!" she called, her voice quivering with emotion.

The purple light flickered, and Jumbo bloomed into view, his belly jiggling like a cosmic jelly, his turquoise vest sparkling. He yawned, scratching his turban. "Kiddo, what's the ruckus? I was napping off a dream about a tandoori feast."

Suri's eyes welled up, and she lunged forward, arms wide. "Jumbo, I did it!" she cried, trying to hug him. But Jumbo, being a glowy genie, was like hugging a cloud. Her arms passed right through, sending her stumbling forward with a squeak. She tried again, flailing, her hands swiping through his sparkly form. "Oh, come *on*!" she laughed, tumbling to the dirt floor in a heap, giggles spilling out like monsoon rain. "You're the worst hugger ever, Jumbo!"

Jumbo cackled, his belly wobbling like a happy earthquake. "Kid, I'm a genie, not a pillow! You want cuddles, get a goat!" He floated closer, his grin softening. "But look at you, all teary and triumphant. Spill it—what's got you giggling like a festival clown?"

Suri sat up, wiping her eyes, her smile brighter than a Diwali lamp. "I came third in class, Jumbo! Third! After that

awful midterm, I worked so hard, studied all night, got help from Pavani, and now the teachers love me! I'm not a failure—I'm *me* again!" Her voice cracked, pride and relief mixing with a touch of shame. "I'm sorry I got mad at you. I was so stupid, asking to cheat. You were right—hard work's the way."

Jumbo's eyes twinkled, and he clapped, sending a burst of glitter into the air. "That's my girl! Third place? You're a rockstar, Suri. Hard work pays, kiddo—better than any stolen answer sheet. I'm proud of you." He leaned back, smirking. "So, what's this visit about? You gonna keep laughing at my unhuggable self, or you want a treat?"

Suri's face lit up, and she bounced to her feet. "A treat! Oh, Jumbo, you read my mind! I want chicken biryani, kheer, *and* a Coke—my ultimate feast!" She rubbed her hands, grinning like a kid at a mela.

Jumbo guffawed, his belly bouncing like a trampoline. "Biryani, kheer, *and* Coke? Kid, your tummy's tinier than a sparrow's! You sure you won't pop like a Diwali cracker?" He winked, waving a chubby hand. "Close your eyes, greedy guts."

Suri squeezed her eyes shut, giggling, and when she opened them, a feast sparkled before her on a golden tray: steaming biryani fragrant with saffron, creamy kheer studded with nuts, a fizzy Coke, and—bonus!—a bunch of roses, their

petals bright as her mood. “Jumbo!” she squealed, clapping like a one-girl audience. “You’re the best! This is... this is magic!” She dove in, scooping biryani, slurping kheer, the Coke’s fizz tickling her nose. Her heart was a firework, bursting with joy at the food, at Jumbo, at her victory.

Between bites, she paused, her eyes gleaming. “Jumbo, I’ve got one more thing to ask,” she said, her voice soft but eager.

Jumbo raised an eyebrow, licking a speck of imaginary kheer off his finger. “Oh? Another wish? Lay it on me, kiddo.”

Suri took a deep breath, her excitement bubbling over. “It’s summer vacation now, and I want to go to that far-far-away land you told me about. The one with mountains tickling the sky, waterfalls singing, birds and animals dancing, rainbows everywhere. Take me there, Jumbo, please!”

Jumbo’s grin widened, his turban bobbing. “The rainbow rodeo? Nice choice, Suri. Alright, it’s a deal—you’re going.”

Suri’s jaw dropped, biryani forgotten. “Really? But... what about my parents? Ma will never let me go to some magical land! She barely lets me go to the market!”

Jumbo chuckled, waving a hand like it was no big deal. “Leave the convincing to me, kid. I’m a genie, not a rookie. Come back tomorrow morning, and I’ll handle the rest.”

Suri blinked, her heart racing. “You’re *sure*? Like, really sure? Ma’s tougher than a monsoon storm!”

“Trust your old pal Jumbo,” he said, winking. “Now finish that kheer before it stages a protest. See you tomorrow!”

Suri leapt up, her laughter echoing as she ran home, singing a mangled Bollywood tune, her voice bouncing off the dusty path. The far-far-away land was no longer a dream—it was a promise, and Jumbo’s magic was her ticket. Her triumph at school, hard-won through sweat and diligence, was proof: hard work paid, not just in marks but in a life that sparkled. As she danced into her shack, her heart sang louder than any waterfall, ready for the adventure of a lifetime.

**If your story had a theme song, what would it be called?**

**Write some fun lyrics!**





# Chapter 12

## Get Set Goooo!!!!

Suri woke with a jolt, her heart racing like a rickshaw dodging festival traffic. Today was the day—Jumbo was taking her to the far-far-away land! Her excitement fizzed like a bottle of Thums Up, but a tiny knot of uncertainty tugged at her. Jumbo hadn't mentioned packing, and what if Ma asked where she was off to? Playing it safe, she slipped into her best outfit—a bright pink frock with only one small patch. She twirled in front of the cracked mirror, grinning. “Good enough for rainbows and dancing animals,” she whispered.

At breakfast, she shoveled down her ma's parathas, the buttery warmth fueling her courage. “Ma, I'm off to... uh, play!” she said, kissing her mother's cheek and darting out before Sunita's suspicious squint could pin her down. Her sandals slapped the dirt as she raced to the smelly hut, her mind buzzing with questions. Had Jumbo really convinced her parents? What was this far-far-away land like? Would there be actual dancing goats?

“Jumbo! I'm here!” she called, bursting into the hut. The purple light pulsed, and Jumbo materialized, looking like he'd

raided a cosmic costume shop. His usual turquoise vest was swapped for a dazzling emerald robe, shimmering with gold threads, and his turban sported a peacock feather that bobbed like it was in on the joke. “Jumbo, you look like a walking Diwali stall!” Suri giggled, clapping her hands.

Jumbo struck a pose, his belly jiggling like a happy jelly. “Kid, I’m dressed for the occasion! The far-far-away land deserves my A-game sparkle. You ready for the trip of a lifetime?” His grin was infectious, but Suri’s excitement wobbled.

“Jumbo, did you talk to my parents?” she asked, “Ma will never let me go to some magical land! She barely lets me go to the market!”

Jumbo’s laugh was a warm rumble, his eyes twinkling with mischief. “Relax, kiddo. I’ve cast a spell—nobody will notice you’re gone. Not your ma, not your friends, not even that nosy neighbor who spies on everyone. You’re invisible for four days, but that’s the limit. We *must* be back, no extensions, no greed. Got it?”

Suri nodded, her eyes wide. “Four days? That’s... wow. But what if—”

Jumbo raised a chubby hand, his voice turning serious. “One more thing, Suri. This trip’s our secret. No blabbing about

the far-far-away land, no showing off. Not everyone's got a Jumbo, and most parents can't afford such fancy trips. You're honest, that's why I'm here, but if you start bragging, you're breaking the deal. Stay true, and we're golden."

Suri swallowed, her heart thumping with the weight of his words. "I promise, Jumbo. No greed, no show-off. I'll keep it a secret." Her smile returned, brighter than ever. "Let's go!"

Jumbo winked, his peacock feather bobbing. "That's my girl. Close your eyes, kiddo, and hold on tight!"

Suri squeezed her eyes shut, her stomach doing a nervous dance. The air around her hummed, warm and tingly, like standing too close to a festival sparkler. She felt a whoosh, as if the world had spun like a top, and Jumbo's chuckle echoed in her ears. "Open your eyes, Suri!" he boomed.

She did, and her breath caught, her jaw dropping so fast it nearly hit the ground. She was standing on the peak of a mountain, its rocky crest dusted with flecks of silver mica that winked in the sunlight. The wind swept over her, cool and crisp, carrying the sweet scent of pine and wildflowers. It teased her hair, tugging at her frock like a playful friend, and she laughed, spinning in place, her arms wide. Below her stretched a vast green land, a patchwork of emerald meadows and jade forests that rolled to the horizon like a painting too

beautiful to be real. Patches of mist clung to the valleys, glowing gold in the morning light, and far-off waterfalls glittered like ribbons of liquid diamond.

“Jumbo!” Suri squealed, her voice echoing off the peaks. “It’s... it’s *perfect!*” Her elation was a wildfire, burning away every worry, every doubt. She bounced on her toes, her pink frock fluttering, her eyes drinking in the mountains—tall and proud, their slopes cloaked in green, their tips brushing the sky like they were whispering secrets to the clouds. The vast land below shimmered with life, dotted with bursts of color—red flowers, yellow grasses, and was that a rainbow arcing over a distant hill? “It’s exactly like you said!” she cried, turning to Jumbo, who floated beside her, his robe sparkling in the breeze. “Mountains tickling the sky, waterfalls singing—look, Jumbo, look!”

Jumbo grinned, his peacock feather dancing in the wind. “Told ya, kid. This place is the real deal. Wait till you see the dancing goats—they’ve got better moves than your Bollywood heroes.”

Suri laughed, her heart so full it felt like it might soar off the mountain. The cool wind kissed her cheeks, the green land promised adventures, and the mountains stood like guardians of her dreams. She wasn’t just Suri from the shack—she was Suri, explorer of magical lands, chosen by God, guided by

Jumbo. Her elation was boundless, a song that echoed in her chest, louder than any waterfall. “Thank you, Jumbo,” she whispered, her eyes shining. “Thank you, God. I’ll never forget this.”

She took a step forward, the mountain solid beneath her, the vast green land calling her name. Four days wasn’t long, but it was enough—enough to dance with animals, chase rainbows, and carry this joy back to her ordinary world. With Jumbo by her side, honest and true, Suri was ready for the adventure of a lifetime.





# Chapter 13

## Magical Four Days

Suri stood on the mountain peak, her pink frock fluttering in the cool, pine-scented wind, her heart soaring higher than the clouds kissing the sky. The far-far-away land was everything Jumbo had promised and more—a dream stitched from rainbows and magic. For four days, she was no longer the shack girl with two rupees; she was Suri, explorer of wonders, chosen by God, guided by her sparkly genie. Her elation was a wildfire, bright and unstoppable, as Jumbo led her through a world that felt like it was made just for her.

On the first day, Jumbo floated beside her, his emerald robe glinting like a jewel, his peacock feather bobbing as he pointed to the mountains. They rose like ancient giants, their rugged faces cloaked in emerald moss and dotted with wildflowers—red, yellow, purple—that winked in the sunlight like scattered gems. Some peaks were sharp, piercing the sky; others were soft, cradling patches of mist that glowed gold in the dawn. “Look, kiddo!” Jumbo boomed, spinning midair. “These mountains tickle the stars at night!” Suri laughed, her

voice echoing off the cliffs, her chest swelling with joy so fierce it felt like she might burst.

They trekked down a winding path, the cool wind teasing her hair, and reached a waterfall that roared like a thousand festival drums. It cascaded from a cliff, its water a shimmering veil of diamonds, spraying mist that kissed her face with tiny, icy droplets. Suri squealed, kicking off her sandals to splash in the pool below, the water so clear she could see pebbles glinting like coins. “Jumbo, it’s singing!” she cried, twirling in the spray, her frock soaked but her grin brighter than the sun.

At sunrise, they perched on a grassy ledge, and Suri’s breath caught as the sky bloomed—pink, orange, gold—spilling over the vast green land below like a painter’s wildest dream. The meadows stretched endless, patched with forests and dotted with lakes that mirrored the heavens. At sunset, the sky burned crimson and violet, the mountains silhouetted like guardians bidding the day goodbye. Suri clapped, her eyes shining, her elation a song in her heart. “It’s like God painted this just for me!” she whispered, and Jumbo chuckled, his belly jiggling like a happy jelly.

On the third day, Jumbo led her into the jungle, and Suri’s joy hit new heights. The forest was a living tapestry—towering trees with bark rough as elephant hide, their canopies woven with vines that dangled like nature’s curtains. Sunlight filtered

through, dappling the ground in golden pools, and the air hummed with life: the rustle of leaves, the chatter of unseen creatures, the sweet scent of earth and blooms. Streams wove through the jungle, their water crystal-clear, gurgling over smooth stones like a lullaby. Suri knelt to drink, the water cold and sweet, tasting of mountains and magic. “Jumbo, this is better than Coke!” she giggled, splashing her face.

The animals were the real miracle. A lion ambled by, its mane glowing like a king’s crown, but instead of roaring, it nudged her hand with a purr that vibrated her bones. “He likes you, kid!” Jumbo said, scratching the lion’s ear. A tiger followed, its stripes bold as a painter’s brush, its amber eyes twinkling with mischief. It playfully swatted at Suri’s frock, and she laughed, fearless, her heart dancing. A leopard slunk from the shadows, sleek and spotted, rubbing against her like a giant cat. An elephant lumbered up, its trunk curling gently around her wrist, and a bear—fuzzy and brown—offered a lazy wave, as if saying, “Join the party!”

Suri was in love. She climbed trees, her hands gripping rough bark, her laughter ringing as monkeys swung beside her, chattering like gossiping aunties. One cheeky monkey stole her scarf scampering up a branch, and Suri chased it, shrieking with glee. “Give it back, you thief!” she called, but when the monkey draped it over its head like a sari, she collapsed in

giggles. Birds swooped down—parrots with feathers like emeralds, peacocks trailing tails of sapphire and gold—singing melodies so sweet Suri swore they were talking to her. “Are you saying I’m awesome?” she asked a tiny blue bird, and it chirped, bobbing its head as if nodding.

The jungle was a feast, and Jumbo was her guide. “This one, kid!” he said, plucking a mango, its skin golden and warm from the sun. Suri bit into it, juice dripping down her chin, the sweetness exploding like a festival sweet. She munched guavas, tart and crunchy, and plucked berries—red, plump, bursting with flavor—that stained her fingers like Holi dye. Jumbo handed her a starfruit, its edges sharp but its flesh juicy, and she savored every bite, her eyes wide. “Jumbo, this is paradise!” she said, licking her fingers, her joy so bright it outshone the sun.

Suri’s heart was a firecracker, popping with every new sight, sound, and taste. Running through the jungle, her bare feet sinking into soft earth, she felt free—free from the shack, the government school, the weight of her old life. The animals were her friends, the birds her choir, the fruits her treasure. Each moment was a gift, wrapping her in a joy so pure it felt like God Himself was smiling down. She wasn’t just happy; she was *alive*, every laugh, every leap, every bite a celebration of her dreams coming true. The far-far-away land wasn’t just a

place—it was her heart’s home, where she was bold, brilliant, unstoppable.

On the fourth day, as Suri sat by a stream, a mango in one hand and a monkey perched on her shoulder, Jumbo floated beside her, his peacock feather still bobbing. “Suri,” he said, his voice gentle but firm, “it’s time to go home.”

Suri froze, her smile fading for a heartbeat. “Already?” she whispered, her eyes tracing the jungle’s green canopy, the distant waterfall’s shimmer. But then she nodded, her elation softening into gratitude. “Okay, Jumbo. I promised—no greed.” She stood, brushing dirt from her frock, her heart still singing. The far-far-away land had filled her with wonders she’d carry forever—memories brighter than any lehenga, sweeter than any kheer.

“Thank you, Jumbo,” she said, her voice thick with emotion. “Thank you, God. This... this was everything.” She closed her eyes as Jumbo’s magic hummed, the jungle’s song fading, but her joy stayed, a spark that would light her way back home.





# Chapter 14

## Make me Rich!

Suri's four days in the far-far-away land had changed her, but not in the way she'd hoped. The mountains tickling the sky, the jungle's singing streams, the friendly lions and dancing monkeys—they'd filled her heart with a joy so bright it should've lasted forever. But back in her cramped, thatched shack, with its leaky roof and dirt floor, the memories didn't warm her; they taunted her. Why should she, Suri, the brilliant, beautiful girl who'd stood third in class, live like this? She was special, chosen by God, gifted a genie. She deserved *more*—not just a fleeting trip, but a life dripping with gold, where she could be a princess without lifting a finger.

One evening, sprawled on her straw mat, Suri's thoughts twisted like vines in that magical jungle. "A new house," she muttered, staring at the cracked walls. "Big, shiny, with marble floors and a bed softer than clouds. And money—piles of it, enough to buy dresses, jewels, anything I want." Her eyes gleamed, her mind racing. "I'm smart, I'm pretty—I deserve it. Jumbo took me to that far-far-away land, didn't he? He can make me rich, easily. No more studying, no more slogging. I'll

live like royalty, and a prince will come, all handsome and charming, to sweep me away. It's just a matter of time."

Her heart, once clean and humble, was clouding with greed, each thought shinier and more selfish than the last. She didn't see the girl who'd worked hard for her St. Mary's triumph or thanked God for Jumbo's miracles. She saw only what she *could* have, what she *should* have. Jumbo was her ticket, her servant, bound to obey. Why settle for less when she could have it all?

Suri marched to the smelly hut, her chin high, her pink frock swaying with purpose. The evening air was thick with monsoon promise, but she barely noticed. "Jumbo! Come out!" she barked, her voice sharp, not the eager chirp of before but a command that echoed like a market hawker's demand.

The purple light flickered, slower than usual, as if hesitant. Jumbo materialized, his emerald robe dimmer, his peacock feather drooping slightly. His round face, usually lit with a mischievous grin, was clouded, his eyes searching hers. "Suri," he said, his voice soft but heavy, "what's with the bossy tone? You sound like you're ordering a chaiwallah, not calling your old pal Jumbo."

Suri crossed her arms, her lips a tight line. "Make me rich, Jumbo. I want a big, fancy house—marble floors, silk curtains,

the works. And money, lots of it, so I never have to work or worry again. You're here to make me happy, aren't you? That's what God sent you for. So do it."

Jumbo's belly, usually jiggling with laughter, stayed still. His heart—if a genie had one—ached, a quiet sadness settling in. Suri, his honest, hardworking kiddo, was changing. The girl who'd splashed in waterfalls and apologized for her mistakes was fading, replaced by this demanding stranger whose eyes glinted with greed. He felt like a tool, not a friend, his magic reduced to a servant's chore. The warmth of their bond, built on her pure prayers and his playful miracles, was cooling, and it hurt more than he'd expected.

"Suri," he said, his voice low, almost pleading, "is everything alright? You're... different. Talk to me, kiddo. What's going on?"

"Everything's fine!" Suri snapped, her tone sharp enough to cut. "God sent you to make me happy, and I'm not happy in that stupid shack with no money! I deserve better, Jumbo—a princess's life! So make it happen. A house, money, now." Her words were cold, her greed blinding her to the flicker of pain in Jumbo's eyes.

Jumbo forced a smile, but it didn't reach his heart. He saw the truth, clear as the streams of the far-far-away land. Suri's

greed was a poison, eating away at the humility and honesty that had earned her God's blessing. She'd been chosen for her clean heart, her diligence, her gratitude—but now, she was chasing a hollow dream, one that would cost her everything. He knew the cosmic rules: if her heart turned fully to greed, if she broke the bond of trust, his time with her would end. Three strikes, and he'd vanish, taking her divine boon with him. Her demands for riches were a step toward that edge, and it broke him to see her teetering there.

But Jumbo said nothing. He couldn't force her to see, couldn't make her choose the right path. "Alright, Suri," he said quietly, his voice heavy with unspoken warnings. "You've made your wish."

Suri didn't wait for more. "Good. Make me rich, Jumbo. Don't mess this up." She turned on her heel, striding out of the hut without a glance back, her mind already decorating her imaginary mansion. The purple light dimmed behind her, fainter than ever, as if mourning the girl she'd been.

Jumbo floated alone, his sadness a weight that even his magic couldn't lift. He thought of Suri's laughter in the jungle, her awe at the mountains, her tears of triumph at St. Mary's. That Suri was slipping away, and with each greedy demand, she was unraveling the blessing she'd been given. "Kiddo," he whispered to the empty hut, "you're losing yourself. And if you

keep this up, you'll lose me too." He faded into the light, his peacock feather still, hoping—praying—she'd find her way back before it was too late.







# Chapter 15

## Suri has a Mansion

Suri's heart had turned to gold—not the warm, glowing kind, but the cold, glittering sort that blinded her to everything else. The far-far-away land, with its singing waterfalls and dancing monkeys, had planted a seed of greed that grew wild in her shack's dim light. She'd demanded riches from Jumbo, her once-beloved genie, with a voice sharp as a bazaar knife, seeing him not as a friend but as a servant to her whims. She wanted a mansion, piles of money, a princess's life—no more studying, no more struggle. She was Suri, beautiful and brilliant, and she deserved it all.

The next day, her father, Ravi, burst through the shack's flimsy door, his face red with joy, his voice booming like a festival drum. "Sunita! Suri! We're rich!" he shouted, waving a crumpled lottery ticket like a flag of victory. "I won the jackpot—millions, millions! We're not poor anymore!" Suri's eyes widened, her greed flaring like a monsoon fire. She didn't think of Jumbo, didn't whisper thanks to God. She only saw her wish coming true, as if the universe had bowed to her

command. “It worked!” she squealed, clapping her hands, her mind already decorating a palace.

Sunita, her mother, gasped, clutching her dupatta. “Ravi, is it real?” she asked, but her eyes gleamed with the same hunger Suri felt. The family huddled, laughing, dreaming aloud—new house, new clothes, a car, feasts every night. Suri’s heart raced, not with gratitude but with a ravenous need to *have*. She imagined silk lehengas, gold bangles, a bed piled with cushions, a life where she’d never scrub a dish or patch a frock again. The shack, with its leaky roof and straw mat, felt like a bad dream she’d finally escaped.

Five days later, a government official arrived, his briefcase stuffed with papers and promises. He verified Ravi’s name and address, then handed over a cheque so fat it seemed to glow. Suri’s family didn’t pause to pray, didn’t light a lamp at their tiny altar to thank God for this miracle. They were too busy, too consumed by greed’s fever. Ravi cashed the cheque, and the money poured in like a monsoon flood—millions, more than they’d ever imagined. They didn’t count it carefully, didn’t plan. They spent.

First came the mansion, a sprawling marble monster with chandeliers that sparkled like stolen stars and floors so shiny Suri could see her reflection. It had ten bedrooms, a garden with fountains, and a kitchen bigger than their old shack. Suri

ran through it, squealing, claiming the grandest room for herself, piling it with plush pillows and velvet curtains. “This is my palace!” she crowed, twirling in a new silk frock, one of dozens her father bought without blinking. Gold bangles clinked on her wrists, heavy and cold, but she loved their weight, their shine. She didn’t think of Jumbo, didn’t wonder if his magic had spun this lottery win. Her greed was a tide, sweeping away memories of her genie, her prayers, her old self.

Ravi bought a car—a sleek, black beast that roared like a tiger and gleamed in the sun. He drove it through the village, honking proudly, while neighbors gaped. Sunita filled wardrobes with saris embroidered with silver thread, her fingers glittering with rings. They ate like royalty—biryani, kheer, jalebis, delivered daily from the city’s best restaurants. Suri gorged on chocolates, pizzas, anything she craved, her stomach never full, her greed never sated. She wore a new outfit every day, tossing aside barely-worn dresses like they were rags. “I’m a princess now,” she told her reflection, her smile sharp, not soft.

The money flowed out faster than they could track. Ravi bought gadgets—a massive TV, a music system that shook the mansion’s walls. Sunita hired servants, then more, until the house buzzed with people she barely noticed. They threw

parties, inviting strangers who drank their wine and praised their wealth. Suri danced at these, her gold jewelry flashing, her laughter loud but empty. They didn't check the bank balance, didn't save. Greed was their god now, and they worshipped it mindlessly, buying, eating, flaunting, until the millions began to thin.

Suri forgot Jumbo entirely. The smelly hut, his jiggly belly, his peacock feather—they were shadows, irrelevant in her glittering world. She didn't kneel at the altar, didn't fold her hands to thank God, who'd blessed her with a genie for her pure heart. That heart was buried under gold, her humility drowned in greed. Her family, once close in their poverty, now drifted in the mansion's vast halls, chasing more, always more.

One night, as Suri lounged in her room, surrounded by dresses she'd worn once, her father's voice echoed faintly downstairs, tense for the first time. "How much is left?" he asked Sunita, but Suri didn't care. She was rich, untouchable, a princess waiting for her prince. The lottery had been her wish, her right. But in the quiet, if she'd listened, she might've heard a faint hum, like a fading purple light, mourning the girl who'd lost her way.

**If a Genie invited you on a magical trip, would you go?**

**Where would you two fly off to?**



# Chapter 16

## And, it Slowly Slipped Away

Suri's world, once a glittering palace of chandeliers and silk clothes, was crumbling like a sandcastle under a monsoon wave. The lottery millions, which had seemed endless, vanished faster than festival sweets at a fair. Her family's greed had fueled a mindless spree—marble mansions, roaring cars, gold bangles, feasts that left plates piled high. Suri, her parents, Ravi and Sunita, hadn't paused to count, to save, to thank God for the miracle. They'd worshipped wealth, and now it was betraying them.

The mansion's shine dulled as bills piled up. Servants left, unpaid. The massive TV flickered, its sound hollow in empty rooms. Ravi and Sunita borrowed money, first small loans, then bigger ones, to keep up their lavish life—parties, new saris, Suri's endless dresses. But the debt grew like a jungle vine, choking them. Suri, no longer the scholarship girl at St. Mary's, was just another student now, her fees, books, and uniforms full price. The school's concessions had ended, and the family's bank account was a ghost, haunted by their reckless spending.



One morning, a notice was pinned to the classroom board, listing students who hadn't paid fees for three months. Suri's name glared back at her, a dagger to her heart. She froze, her breath shallow, her classmates' whispers stinging like bees. "A mistake," she muttered, clutching her bag. "It's got to be a mistake.". She walked home, her steps heavy, her mind reeling. How could they be broke? They were *rich*—millions rich!

At the mansion, Suri found her mother in the kitchen, no longer bustling with servants, just Sunita, her face lined with worry, chopping onions with a dull knife. "Ma," Suri said, her voice casual but tight, "there's a notice at school. Says we haven't paid fees. It's wrong, right?"

Sunita's knife paused, her shoulders sagging. She turned, her eyes red, not from onions but from sleepless nights. "Suri, my child" she said, her voice cracking, "there's no mistake. We... we have no money left. We spent it all—the house, the cars, the clothes. We're selling the cars next week, and if things don't improve..." She swallowed, tears spilling. "We might lose the house."

Suri's heart stopped, then exploded. "*What?*" she screamed, her voice raw, shattering the kitchen's quiet. "We had *millions*, Ma! millions! How could you and Papa be so stupid? You've ruined everything!" Her words were venom,

her face twisted with anger and fear. “I’m back to being the shack girl, aren’t I? Poor, miserable, nothing! This is *your* fault!” She didn’t see her mother’s trembling hands, didn’t hear the pain in her voice. Suri’s greed, her belief in a princess’s life, blinded her to her own role in their fall.

Sunita reached for her, but Suri stormed out, tears burning her eyes. Her heart pounded, not just with rage but with a flicker of hope. Jumbo. Her generous giant, her cosmic savior. She’d forgotten him in the haze of wealth, hadn’t visited the smelly hut since demanding riches months ago. But he was still hers, bound to make her happy. “Jumbo will fix this,” she whispered, her voice shaky but desperate. “More money, another lottery. He *has* to.”

Without telling her parents—she’d never mentioned Jumbo to them—Suri slipped into the family’s car with her driver, one of the last luxuries before it was sold. They drove to the village’s edge, her hands trembling, her mind a storm of fear and entitlement. The thatched hut stood as it always had, weathered and quiet, its familiarity a jolt to her heart. She parked, her bangles clinking, and crept to the door, her breath hitching. What if Jumbo was gone? What if he wouldn’t help? She pushed the thought away, her greed louder than her doubt.

“Jumbo,” she called softly, her voice quivering with emotion, a mix of hope and dread. The door creaked open, and to her relief, a faint purple light flickered inside, pulsing like a heartbeat. Suri’s eyes welled up, her chest tight with a flood of memories—Jumbo’s jiggly belly, his peacock feather, the far-far-away land. She’d abandoned him, but he was still here. The light grew, and Jumbo emerged, his emerald robe dim, his grin absent. His eyes, usually twinkling, were heavy, searching hers.

“Suri,” he said, his voice low, tinged with sadness. “It’s been a while, kiddo.”

Suri’s tears spilled, her heart cracking under the weight of her family’s ruin, her own greed, the life she’d lost. “Jumbo,” she whispered, her voice breaking, “I need you.” She didn’t see his pain, didn’t feel the distance her demands had carved. She only saw salvation, a way back to riches, blind to the cost of her wish.

**Pick your favorite character from the book—and draw  
them just the way you see them!**



# Chapter 17

## Final Goodbye

Suri's heart was a vault, locked tight with greed, its key long lost to the glitter of gold. The mansion, the car, the silk clothes—they'd vanished like monsoon mist, leaving her family drowning in debt, their dreams reduced to a crumbling fantasy. The notice at St. Mary's, branding her a fee-defaulter, had been a slap, but Suri refused to feel the sting. She was *Suri*, chosen by God, destined for riches. Jumbo, her generous giant, was her way out. He'd made her rich once; he'd do it again, bigger this time—millions upon millions, a palace grander than the last, a car that roared louder. "God wants me happy," she told herself, her voice firm, her eyes hard. "Jumbo's job is to make it happen."

The night was heavy, the air thick with unshed rain, and fear pricked her skin. She hadn't seen Jumbo since demanding riches months ago, hadn't visited his smelly hut since the lottery win she'd claimed as her right. "Jumbo," she said, her voice sharp, no trace of the bubbly girl who'd laughed in his hut. "Make me rich again. Richer than before—millions, a huge

house, a bigger car. I want it all, and I want it now. God sent you to make me happy, so do it.”

Jumbo’s shoulders sagged, his sadness a weight that dimmed the purple light around him. He looked at Suri, searching for the girl who’d splashed in waterfalls, who’d worked hard for third place, who’d thanked God with tears in her eyes. That girl was gone, buried under a greed so fierce it choked her heart. His voice, usually warm, was heavy, each word a stone. “Kiddo,” he said, “I told you from the start—as long as you’re not greedy, as long as your heart’s clean, I’m with you. I gave you money once, a golden chance to change your life, your family’s life. But you didn’t care. You spent it like it was nothing, threw it away on things that didn’t matter. You know why? Because it came too easy. If you’d earned it, sweated for it, you’d have respected it, spent it wisely. I gave you that chance to learn, to grow, but you chose greed instead.”

Suri’s face burned, her tears hot with anger, not remorse. “Don’t lecture me!” she shouted, her voice raw, cutting through the hut’s quiet. “You’re my genie! You’re *supposed* to obey me! I deserve to be rich, Jumbo—I’m beautiful, I’m smart! You gave me money before, so give it now! More! Stop talking and do your job!” Her words were venom, each one a lash, her



greed blinding her to the pain in Jumbo's eyes. She saw him as a tool, not a friend, his magic hers to command.

Jumbo's smile returned, but it was sad, final, like a sunset before a storm. "Suri," he said softly, "remember our first meeting? You were a girl with a pure heart, bubbling with dreams, ready to work for them. I told you I'd help as long as you stayed honest, stayed true. But the Suri standing here? She's lost, chasing easy riches, demanding what she hasn't earned. That's not the girl God chose." His voice deepened, resonant with a profound grief. "Child, you're lost. Find yourself. Let go of this greed. Go back to being the happy, hardworking, generous girl you were."

Suri's anger faltered, a flicker of fear breaking through. "What are you saying?" she whispered, her voice small now, trembling.

Jumbo's eyes held hers, steady and sorrowful. "Goodbye, Suri," he said, and with a crack like lightning, the purple light flared, then vanished. The hut plunged into darkness, the air cold and still. Suri stumbled forward, her hands grasping at nothing. "Jumbo!" she cried, her voice breaking. "Jumbo, come back!" She searched the shadows, called his name until her throat ached, but the purple light was gone. Jumbo was gone.

She sank to the dirt floor, her bangles clinking, her tears falling like rain. Despair wrapped her tight, heavier than any gold. Jumbo, her generous giant, her miracle, was lost to her, and with him, the blessing she'd taken for granted. She saw it now—her greed, her demands, her blindness to God's gift. She'd had everything: a chance at St. Mary's, a trip to the far-far-away land, a lottery to lift her family. But she'd thrown it away, chasing more, always more, forgetting the hard work, the gratitude, the heart that had summoned Jumbo.

Suri sat in the dark, her sobs echoing, her world shattered. The mansion would be sold, the car gone, her family broken by debt. She'd screamed at her parents, blamed them, but the truth cut deeper: she was as guilty, her greed a mirror to theirs. She thought of her mother's tired eyes, her father's tense voice, the shack they might return to. And Jumbo's words burned: *Find yourself*. Could she? Could she be that girl again, bubbling, hardworking, generous? The hut offered no answers, only silence, and Suri wept, alone with her despair, a girl who'd lost more than money—she'd lost her way.

**What's the one part of the story you'll never forget?**

**Share it here!**



# Chapter 18

## Lessons from Jumbo

Suri's story is like a wild rickshaw ride through a magical land, packed with sparkly genie, jungle adventures, and a big ol' lesson about life. She started as a hardworking, bubbly girl who prayed her way to a genie that's me, Jumbo, but her greed for gold turned her tale topsy-turvy. Here's what you can learn from Suri's ups and downs to keep your heart shining!

### 1. **Greed's a Sneaky Thief—Hold Your Blessings Tight!**

Suri had it all: a genie, a lottery win, and a trip to a far-far-away land with dancing monkeys. But she wanted *more*—bigger houses, fancier clothes—and forgot to say “thanks” for what she had. Greed stole her joy and even Jumbo!

*Lesson:* Love what you've got—your family, friends, even your favorite aloo paratha. Don't chase shiny stuff and lose what makes you smile.

### 2. **Hard Work Beats Shortcuts Every Time!** When Suri studied hard, she rocked her exams and felt like a superstar. But when she got easy money from a lottery, she and her family spent it like it was free candy, and

poof—it was gone. Jumbo warned her: things you earn with effort mean more.

*Lesson:* Put in the work for your dreams, whether it's acing a test or saving for a new toy. It's like building a kite—it flies higher when you make it yourself!

3. **Stay Humble, Stay Happy!** Suri forgot to thank God for her genie and miracles, acting like she deserved everything. That pride cut her off from her blessings, like unplugging a radio mid-song.

*Lesson:* Be grateful for the big and small stuff—your parents, your pet, even a sunny day. A humble heart keeps you connected to the magic in life.

4. **Your Heart's the Real Treasure!** Suri was smart and pretty, but Jumbo loved her for her kind, hardworking spirit. When she got greedy, that sparkle faded, and she lost her way.

*Lesson:* Be honest, generous, and keep trying, no matter what. A good heart is worth more than all the gold in the world—it's what makes you a true hero.

**Big Message:** Don't let greed trick you into chasing glittery things like Suri did! Work hard, be thankful, and let your heart be your guide. True happiness comes from love, effort, and a conscience as clean as your best school uniform. Suri's story is

a reminder: stay true to your awesome self, and you'll shine brighter than any palace. Now go out there, dream big, and make your own magic!