

A Day of Lights

From above the Cascade hills Vasti could see Geeta's house and the new shop among the many twinkling lights down yonder. "Wow, what a magnificent sight, Kevin!" he exclaimed. His brother agreed. They were in total awe of the many lights in neat rows. As they approach the house, they could feel the atmosphere being charged. They could hear the loud cracking from the bamboo bursting. They also notice people were outside busy lighting more diyas. The children could not wait to get to Geeta's Courtyard, the name of Geeta's new shop. Then little Sam whispered, "It is very noisy, Pa. Why are there so many lights?"

This question got Papa excited; he was just waiting for an invitation to give his last son the story both Vasti and Kevin got years ago when they too were three years old. "Sam, tonight we are celebrating Divali, the festival of lights. "

"Oh, I know it signifies the victory of good over evil, Dad," interrupted Kevin.

"Yes, that is right," his father continued, "victory of good over evil and the 'lifting of spiritual darkness'. Some believe that the story goes like this, Sam.

"King Narakasura had turned evil, he mistreated the innocent, and this caused much displeasure to his parents, Lord Krishna and Satyabhama. So they started a war against the evil Narkasura. At first Mura, his Army General, was killed. It was indeed a fierce battle that scared many; and caused heavy storms and thunders everywhere whenever their weapons came in contact."

"I don't like thunders at all, Dad," cried Sam as he slid down into his seat. His older brother Vashti soothed him. The youngest smiled, so his dad continued.

"Then it happened that the evil Narakasura, with his trident, caused Krishna to faint." Sam shook his head vigorously while his brothers smiled knowingly.

"Now, it was through divine intervention this happened. Seeing her husband fall like that, Satyabhama became very angry and gathered all her courage and determination to kill Narakasura." Dad paused for a while and then calmly said.

"She succeeded."

“Yay!” exclaimed little Sam. “Narasura was not nice.”

“Narakasura, was dying and made one dying request...”

“Request?” Sam exclaimed. Kevin and Vashti were hardly surprised to see their little brother’s response, because they thought he was quite smart for his age.

“It is okay, Sam. Maybe he now understood he did bad things. Don’t you want to know what he requested?”

“Of course, Dad.”

“While dying, Narakasura requested a boon from his parents to celebrate his death with colourful lights on the earth. That is just one story, Sam. Another is where some believe the celebration commemorated Lord Rama’s and Lakshman’s return to their ancestral home of Ayodhya after a 14-year exile.” The boys enjoyed the story and soon found their vehicle parked in front of Geeta’s Courtyard.

The shop was freshly painted yellow and the huge door and window reflected the many tiny lights from the street. As the boys got out the vehicle, they could see people, all dressed in new clothing. Some boys were firing crackers and bursting bamboo. Then they saw Geeta; she welcomed the children and their dad, and handed each boy a box of delicious candy. The boys soon joined in the festivity, lighting diyas, and bursting bamboo.

Questions

Answer the following questions in your notebook

1. What does Divali means?
2. Name three things people do during Divali.
3. Can you name a candy made during Divali?
4. What is the main idea of the story?
5. Name the characters in the story.

6. Select the factual statement in the list below.
A deya is a small clay pot that has oil and a cotton wick.
During Divali people dress up in costumes.
Divali is celebrated in Trinidad every January.
Divali is called the “Festival of Colours”.

7. Where were the brothers going?
8. What did Geeta give the boys?
9. Would you consider Sam smart?
10. Who told the boys the story of Divali?
11. In the story, what caused Krishna to faint?
12. Place the following words in alphabetical order.
 - a. Divali, deyas, festival, cotton, wick.
 - b. Bamboo, vehicle, firecrackers, courtyard
 - c. Light,
13. What message behind the Divali festival?
14. Why were the characters fighting?