



## The Reward of Kindness

Potte Vaikuntam



Raju and Balu were inseparable best friends who lived in a vibrant, peaceful village surrounded by lush fields. Whether attending school, working on household tasks, or exploring the outdoors, the two boys shared every moment of their lives together.



On a bright afternoon, the two friends gathered with their playmates beneath the sprawling, cool branches of a ancient mango tree. The shade provided a perfect shelter from the warm sun as all the children prepared for a lively day of fun.



Laughter echoed across the fields as the children excitedly played traditional village games like hide-and-seek, gilli-danda, and lagori. Dusty footprints flew through the air while Raju and Balu cheered on their friends under the majestic canopy.



After hours of running and playing, the children grew parched and weary. They walked over to the nearby stone well, pulling up a bucket of clear, cool water to refresh themselves before heading back toward the village.



As Raju and Balu walked away from the well, a faint, soft whimpering caught their attention. Pausing in their tracks, they listened carefully until they pinpointed the small, crying sound coming from a dense thicket nearby.



Parting the tall wild grass, they discovered a tiny, helpless puppy trapped tightly inside a sharp thorn bush. The little creature shivered with fear, unable to wiggle free from the painful brambles on its own.



While others might have walked away, Raju and Balu instantly remembered their schoolteacher's wise words about protecting living beings in distress. Working together with gentle patience, they carefully untangled the little puppy without causing it any harm.



Noticing that the tiny pup had a few minor scratches, the compassionate boys gently cradled it in their arms and hurried straight to the village animal clinic. The local veterinarian treated the puppy's minor bumps, ensuring it was safe, fed, and healthy.



News of the boys' selfless kindness quickly spread, reaching the village Sarpanch. The respected leader gathered all the villagers in the central town square, publicly praising Raju and Balu for setting a noble example for everyone and presenting them with a special honor.



With the happy, healed puppy trotting joyfully beside them, Raju and Balu felt deep satisfaction in their hearts. From that day on, the two inseparable friends continued performing acts of goodwill, bringing warmth and smiles to their entire community.