

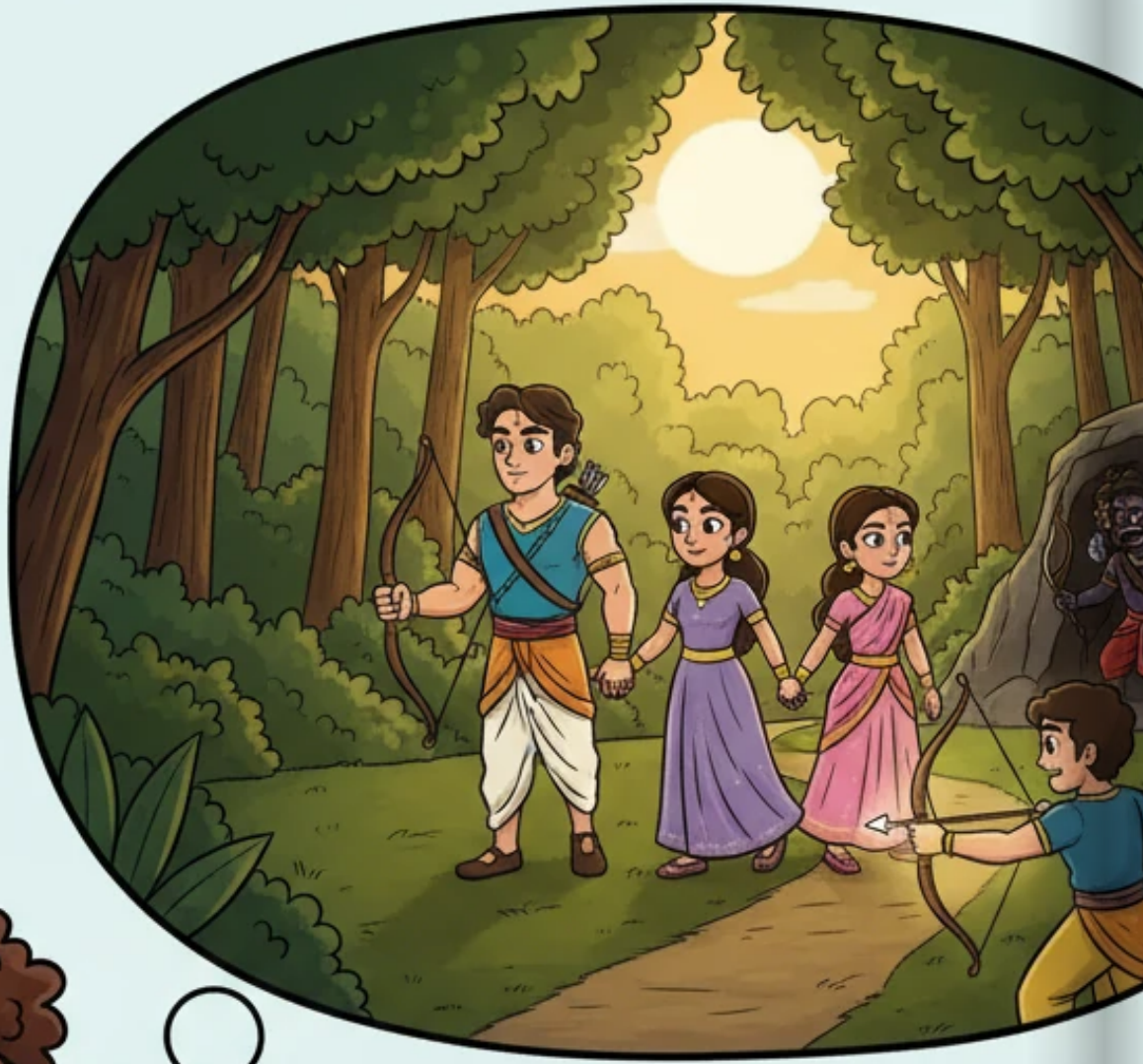


The Light of Diwali: A Story of Good Over Evil

by Deirdre Bauer



Maya, a curious girl with twinkling eyes, stood before a dazzling display of lights. Homes were adorned with glowing diyas, and the streets twinkled with fairy lights. Diwali, her grandmother explained, meant 'row of lights,' a time to celebrate the victory of light over darkness and good over evil.



Her grandmother began the story of Prince Rama. Maya imagined Rama, his wife Sita, and his brother Lakshmana walking through a lush forest, their faces determined. She learned of the evil Ravana and how Rama, with courage and determination, rescued Sita, bringing light back to their home.



Next, Maya heard the tale of Lord Krishna. She pictured Krishna, strong and brave, facing a fearsome evil figure. The story taught her that courage and fairness always triumph over injustice, and that standing up for what is right is always worth it.



Maya's grandmother then spoke of Goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. Maya envisioned a beautifully decorated home, sparkling with cleanliness and light. She understood that true prosperity came from honesty, hard work, and a pure heart.



The stories continued, explaining how Diwali is celebrated across different faiths. Maya learned about Bandi Chhor Diwas in Sikhism, celebrating freedom and helping others. She also heard about Jainism and the importance of spiritual purity and truth.



Finally, Maya helped her family prepare for the evening. Together, they lit diya, created colorful rangoli, and shared delicious sweets. As they gathered, Maya realized that Diwali was more than just lights; it was about the values of bravery, honesty, kindness, and unity, shining brightly in everyone's hearts.