



Our summer...

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“What punishment should I mete out?”

“We can write an imposition...” began Salim.

“We could clean the classrooms after school,” suggested Usha.

“We made a mistake, sir...” I began.

He held up his hand for silence. Then he pulled up a writing pad and began to write. He signed it, put it into a cover and sealed it. “Give it to your class teacher,” he said.

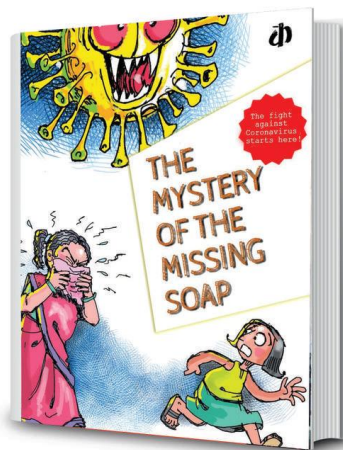
We walked to class, a forlorn bunch. We had to explain why we were late and handed over the letter to our class teacher. She read it and controlled a smile. In feigned innocence, she asked, “Why did the Headmaster want to see you?”

We blushed, hummed and hawed, but she was not taking that for an answer. Stuttering and stammering, we told her and the class about the summer of our tricks...in detail. The class roared with laughter. We felt extremely foolish. She asked, “So, was it right? Did your joy justify the means?”

“No,” we muttered.

“As punishment, the Headmaster says that you have to find the new children in the school and make friends with them, see what they need and make their passage into this school comfortable. You have to maintain a diary. And, he wants a daily account.”

It sounded easy enough but, when we got down to it, it was tough. All our break times, lunch and free periods were spent taking care of the newcomers. But, halfway down the term, we realised the importance of making someone feel welcome.



Title: *The Mystery of the Missing Soap*
Author: Geeta Dharmarajan
Publisher: Katha

 Bookworm

Slippery mystery

When the Virus Army comes looking for unwashed hands, they will be in for a big surprise!

The village of Dakshinpur is full of happy and loving faces. But the evil Asura, Tobakachi, plans to conquer India by spreading the attack of the deadly Coronavirus! And just then, the soap mysteriously disappears from the village. How will the villagers save themselves? Read the story to find out.

An exciting story that is also a one-stop guide to learn about the impact of Coronavirus. It also tells you how to protect yourself from the pandemic. The book can be read free here: <https://books.katha.org/e-books/>, and is available in English, Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, and Assamese.

Get Lucky:

After reading the book, draw your thoughts on any one of the following topics:

1. Your interpretation of the book in terms of the message you would like to share.
2. If you were a leader, how would you promote health and hygiene?

Mail the soft copy of your drawing to: youngworld@thehindu.co.in and don't forget to include your name, class, school, city, and parent's contact details.

The entry has to reach us before September 18. The contest is open to kids between std II and std VIII.

The top two winners will win two e-books from Katha — *Lachmi's War* and *One Magical Morning*. A third will get one e-book — *Lachmi's War*. A collage of the top 30 artworks will be featured on Katha's social media pages.

