



# Chuchu Manthu's Jar of Toffees

**Author:** Adithi Rao **Illustrator:** Krishna Bala Shenoi





"Chuchu Manthu, look!"



Chuchu Manthu turns to where Preet is pointing. She quickly eats up the chips on his plate. He always falls for this trick!

Chuchu is the pet name Preet has given him. Manthu means "Big Uncle" in Konkani.



Chuchu Manthu is the kindest person in Preet's world. He is also her best friend.





One day, Preet sees Chuchu Manthu scoop handfuls of toffees from a jar and drop them from his bedroom window. She watches in amazement as he ducks under the windowsill, chuckling to himself.

Cries of delight float up from the street!



At the end of the lane is a school. When the lunch bell rings, Chuchu Manthu secretly drops toffees down to the school children as they pass under his window.

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After lunch, Chuchu Manthu walks back to his office with his briefcase. When he passes the children playing, he doesn't look at them. So, the children never guess that the hand that sends them toffees every day belongs to this thin, solemn man dressed in white! But one day, Chuchu Manthu has a dreadful pain in his stomach. As he's taken to the hospital, he presses Preet's hand one last time...



Now, Preet sits in Chuchu Manthu's empty room. His yoga mat is on the floor. She remembers that longago day when she had walked in and found a pair of long, pyjama-clad legs poking into the air!

"Help!" Preet had yelled. "Chuchu Manthu is ultapulta!"





Amma and Mhavey had rushed into the room and burst out laughing!

"He's not ulta-pulta," Amma said.

"He's doing yoga!" Mhavey said.

"Goga," repeated Preet. She had watched with wondering eyes as Chuchu Manthu lifted his body on the palms of his hands, like a bird about to fly away! Preet blinks. Nobody can fill the Chuchu Manthu-shaped hole in her heart.

"Where is Chuchu Manthu? Where is his kindness?" wonders Preet.

She looks under the yoga mat. She searches through his bedside drawer. She goes across to his cupboard and opens it.





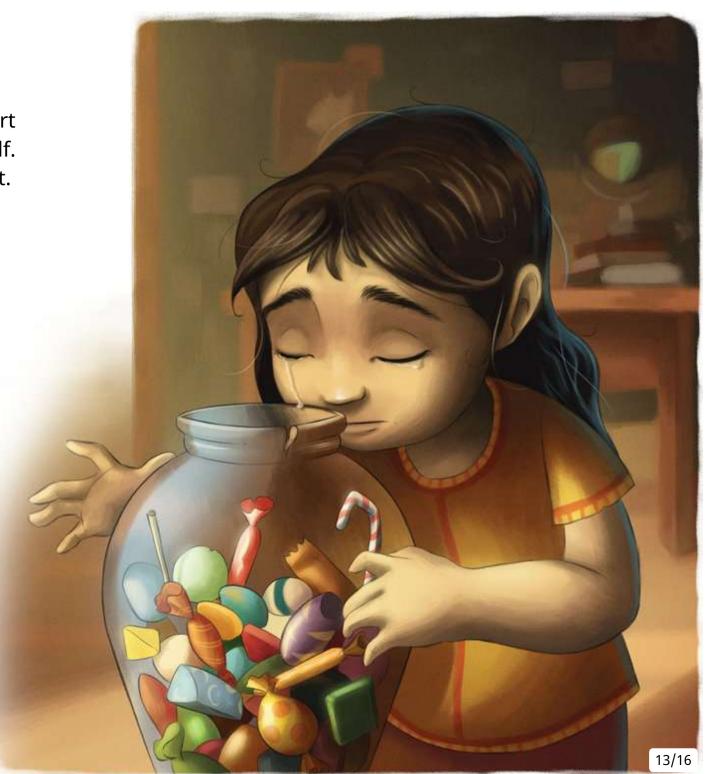
### Oops!

A white shirt tumbles out onto Preet's head.

Chuchu Manthu had two white shirts and two white pants. He had worn them by turns every day.

Now, there is only one white shirt and one white pant left in the cupboard. Neatly ironed. Preet carefully folds the shirt and puts it back on the shelf. And that's when she finds it. Chuchu Manthu's jar of toffees!

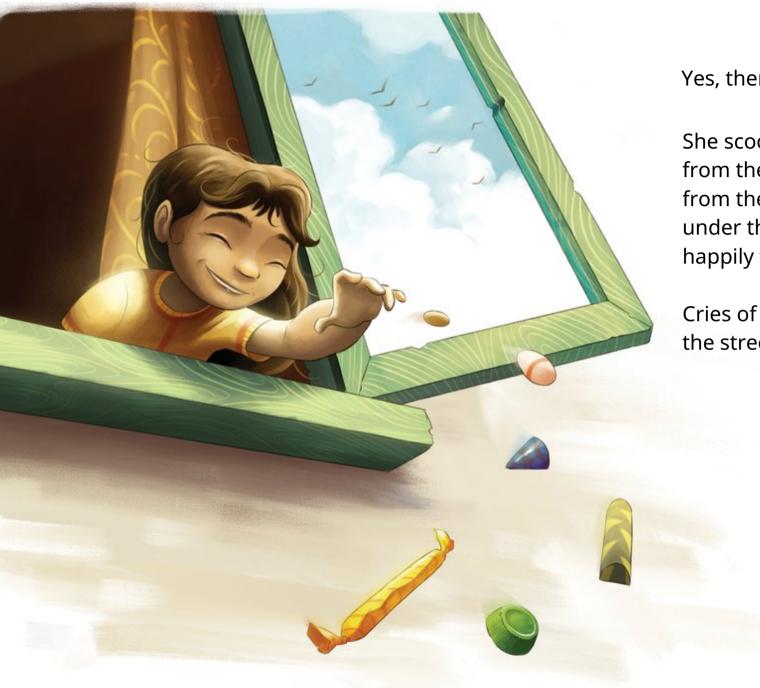
Preet's tears drop silently into it.





A bell rings in the distance. It is lunch time at the school. Soon, the children will pass under Chuchu Manthu's window.

But there's no one to give them toffees now.



Yes, there is! Preet jumps up.

She scoops handfuls of toffees from the jar and drops them from the window. Preet ducks under the windowsill, chuckling happily to herself.

Cries of delight float up from the street!





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'Chuchu Manthu's Jar of Toffees' has been published on StoryWeaver by Pratham Books. www.prathambooks.org Guest Art Director: Somesh Kumar; Dedication: "For Mr. U. Suresh Rao, my Chuchu Manthu, the kindest person in my world."

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## Chuchu Manthu's Jar of Toffees (English)

Chuchu Manthu is the kindest person Preet knows. After his death, Preet wonders if his kindness disappeared with him. A story about loss and grief, and kindness in everyday actions.

This is a Level 3 book for children who are ready to read on their own.



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