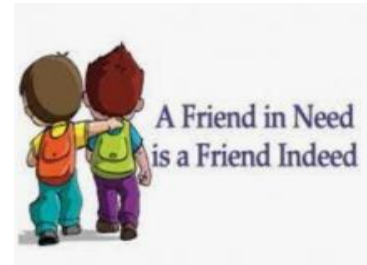


A friend in need is a friend indeed

Sudama was a poor Brahmin. He and his family lived in **utter**¹poverty and **misery**². For days together, they had very little to eat. They often slept without having any food at all.



Sudama cursed himself for not being able to provide for his family. The thoughts of committing suicide often crossed his mind. Once in a fit of depression he voiced his thoughts to his wife. She tried to **console**³ her husband and then, reminded him of his friendship with Lord Krishna—the King of Dwarika. As children Krishna and Sudama had lived and studied together in Sandipan Muni's Ashram.

"Go to him", she **pleaded**⁴, "Krishna is all powerful, kind and generous. He will surely help you in this hour of need". Sudama hesitated, "He is a King and I'm just a poor **wretched**⁵Brahmin. How can I visit him?" "So what!" she countered, "friendship is above class differences. You must seek his help. I can't see our children dying of hunger."

Finally Sudama agreed to visit Krishna. His wife borrowed some rice from neighborhood and gave it to Sudama as a gift for his friend. Sudama started on his journey.

At the Palace gate, the guard refused Sudama an entry inside.

Sudama argued that he was an old childhood friend of the King

¹ used to emphasize how complete sth is

² very poor living conditions

³ to give comfort or sympathy to sb who is unhappy or disappointed

⁴ to ask sb for sth in a very strong and serious way

⁵ extremely bad or unpleasant

and wouldn't leave without seeing him.

The word of **commotion** reached Lord Krishna. As soon as he heard Sudama's name, barefooted Krishna ran out to meet his friend. Both the friends **embraced**⁶ each other and **shed**⁷ tears of joy. Then with great honour and ceremony Krishna led Sudama inside the Palace. There, he himself washed and dried the dirty and bruised feet of his friend and made him sit on the throne.

Krishna's wives themselves attended on them, as the two friends ate and talked of the old days at their teacher's ashram.

During the course of meal Krishna asked Sudama, "What gift have you brought for me?" Sudama was too embarrassed to bring out the little poor quality rice tied up in an old rag. But Krishna **snatched**⁸ the bundle from him and ate the rice **flakes**⁹ with great **relish**¹⁰ leaving his own grand royal **feast**¹¹.

After the meal Krishna made Sudama lie in his Kingly bed. He himself sat there massaging his tired feet, until Sudama fell asleep.



Next day, Sudama took leave of his great friend. Krishna along with his family **bade**¹² him a loving **farewell**¹³ at the Palace gate. All this while, Sudama could not bring himself to reveal the real

⁶ to put your arms around sb as a sign of love or friendship

⁷ to let sth fall; to drop sth

⁸ to take sth quickly

⁹ a small, very thin layer or piece of sth

¹⁰ to get great pleasure from sth

¹¹ a large or special meal

¹² offer

¹³ the act of saying goodbye to sb

purpose of his visit. He left without doing so. His heart was heavy as he walked towards home. He didn't know what to tell his wife and children, who must be eagerly awaiting his return. The hungry faces of his family haunted him, on his way back, But a pleasant surprise awaited him at home. A beautiful palace stood in place of his poor broken hut. His wife and children dressed in silken clothes and jewellery greeted him at the gate. Krishna had blessed their lives with prosperity. He had also saved Sudama from the humiliation of asking for anything. Krishna was a great friend indeed, who came to his friend's rescue in his hour of need.

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