

The Secret to **Friendship**



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Other publications

- ❖ Sudu bataluwata paadamak-2019
- ❖ Kukulu Pawule Apuru Kude-2020
- ❖ Floppy's Adventure-2020
- ❖ Seven Tales-2023
- ❖ The paradise behind the big trees and other poems-2023
- ❖ My book of stories and poems-2025

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Dedication

To My Alma Mater
Mother Mahamaya



Foreword

In an increasingly complex global future, the "Hemamala Upahara" book project, led by Mahamaya Girls' College, stands as a turning point in girls' education. Over a decade, it has successfully nurtured thousands of children to become young authors.

This year, by collaborating with other schools, we aimed to provide students with a wealth of new experiences. The goal was to develop multi-faceted skills, including communication, values, and creative growth. As a result, children have written books that pay tribute to Princess Hemamala, who brought the Sacred Tooth Relic—the supreme symbol of the Buddhist world—to the Hill Country (Kandy).

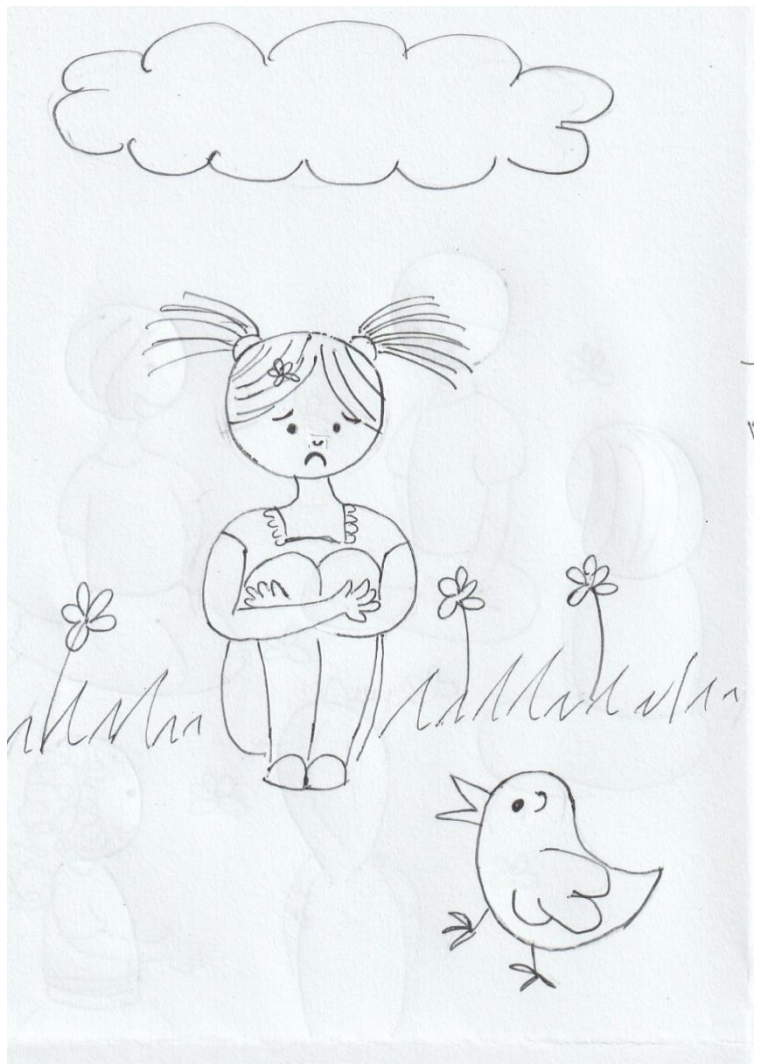
I extend my gratitude to everyone involved, including the students who contributed their creativity and the teachers who guided them.

Shashikala Senadhira
Principal
Mahamaya Girls' College

The Secret to Friendship



Elsie was bored and lonely. She and her parents had moved to their own new house in the village leaving the dusty city behind them only a week ago. But Elsie still had no one to play with, no new friends. Of course she would be going to grade three in the village school in a month after the school holiday but she couldn't bear to wait that long.



After all, she was an only child and only animals whom she could talk to were the hens clucking in the chicken coop. But hens didn't respond. The neighbors weren't children either. On one side lived cross old couple, and on the other side lived a young lady all by herself.

Elsie sighed and went back to unpack boxes that filled her room.



After finishing what seemed like a few hours of unpacking, Elsie went outside. It was dark now. Her mother had almost finished cooking dinner and her father would be home any minute. Elsie sat on the hammock in their garden which was tied between two apple trees. The cool breeze was whispering in her ear. She looked at the sky. She was searching for a lonely little star. Once, her grandmother had taught her to wish on tiny stars. She was about to check whether it was really true.

“There you are,” she whispered finding a star at last. “You’re the one I was looking for and I know you’ve been waiting for me”. “Of course I was, Elsie” a soft voice whispered back. Elsie jumped, frightened. She hadn’t been expecting this. In fact she hadn’t been expecting anything at all.



Suddenly, she realised that the voice was coming from the sky. “Don’t be afraid Elsie, I

won't hurt you. How can I even touch you when we're a million miles apart?" whispered the voice again.

Elsie gulped. "Who are you? Are you a star?" she asked. "Yes I am. And if I'm not very much mistaken you came here to ask me to grant a wish for a friend." Elsie nodded. "Well, the thing is Elsie, there is a secret to a good friendship. It's the kind that you have to find out by yourself. I'm sure you'll find the key to it soon enough, good luck." And here the star paused for a bit before saying, "Good night, Elsie. Good bye for now"

Elsie stared at the sky for a few seconds. She called out to the star again because now that she got over the surprise she liked to have a proper conversation. But she didn't get a reply. She thought along the words of this strange speaker. "There is a secret to a good friendship." What a curious thing to say? For a moment she was lost in thought but the sound of a car horn brought her back to the

real world. She shook herself and walked towards the house.



Night after night, Elsie went outside and called out to the star, hoping it would respond. She didn't tell anyone else about it. They'd think that it's some sort of children's fairytale. However the star never responded back that Elsie began to think that she had been dreaming.



One day, about a week after the conversation with the star, (if she could call it a conversation), Elsie was walking in the fields beside the woods all by herself. In front her a small stream flowed on merrily. The wildflowers were dancing in the breeze around her. She was collecting them for her mother. A little way away from her some children were playing a game.



Elsie looked at them curiously. Being shy by nature, she hadn't the courage to go and ask them if she could play with them too. She had forgotten the star's message now. It seemed of little importance. Smiling sadly she went back to pick flowers.

Suddenly, she heard a loud scream. She stood up and turned around. A little girl was running towards her chased by a little boy.

They were obviously playing a game because the girl was laughing but she wasn't watching where she was going. She ran forwards. She tripped over Elsie's flower basket and fell with her face down.

Elsie ran to help her. "Are you all right?" She asked kindly, as the little girl got up.



She brushed the mud off the little girl's knees. She was a bit scratched but she looked all right. She was about Elsie's age. Her friends ran towards them and gathered around the little girl. Elsie was left alone. A tear rolled down her cheek.



“Let’s play another game” somebody said. They began to walk away. But the little girl whom Elsie had helped asked her to join the game too.

Elsie was surprised but she was very happy and she willingly joined in.

Within a little while, Elsie began to feel that she had known the children all her life.



The little girl was called Anne and all of them were from the village and went to the same school. Elsie shared around a chocolate with them. In the evening as they went home, they had all become good friends.





That night as Elsie was falling asleep, she heard the star calling to her in her dreams, “You unlocked the secret, Elsie, the answer was kindness...”

..The End..



Afterword

With the approval of the Ministry of Education, this research-based project has empowered thousands of student authors for over ten years. Educationists recognize it as a program that significantly enhances the quality of school education.

In alignment with modern educational reforms, encouraging students to author a research work is a milestone in this journey. In this digital age of "Smart" technology, the modern school must demonstrate through research that books and technology should be used together. This is because the unique joy a child receives from a book cannot be replaced by anything else.

To prevent children from drifting away from books—which remain our primary educational tool and storehouse of human knowledge—Mahamaya Girls' College has spearheaded the "Hemamala Upahara" project for many years. Its primary objectives are to foster academic discipline, promote values, and pay tribute to Princess Hemamala, who fulfilled a historic mission to empower women.

We express our gratitude to the Principal, teachers, parents, alumni of Mahamaya Girls' College, representatives of other schools, the Diyawadana Nilame, and the staff of the Sri Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic) for their support.

Seneviratne Mahalekam
(Project Creator)