

## **The Most Beautiful Heart**

One day, in a heavily crowded place, a young man began shouting.

“People, look at me. I have the most beautiful heart in the world.”

Many people looked at him and were stunned to see his beautiful heart in a perfect shape, without any flaw. It looked quite amazing. Most of the people who saw his heart were mesmerized by the beauty of his heart, and praised him.

However, there came an old man who challenged the young man, “No my son, I have got the most beautiful heart in the world!”

The young man asked him, “Show me your heart, then!”

The old man showed his heart to him. It was very rough, uneven, and had scars all over. In addition, the heart was not in shape; it appeared like bits and pieces joined in various colours. There were some rough edges; some parts were removed, and fitted with other pieces.

The young man started laughing, and said, “My dear old man, are you mad? See, my heart! How beautiful and flawless it is. You cannot find even a bit of imperfection in my heart. See, yours? It is full of scars, wounds, and blemishes. How can you say your heart is beautiful?”

“Dear boy, my heart is just as beautiful as your heart is. Did you see the scars? Each scar represents the love I shared with a person. I share a piece of my heart with others when I share love, and in return I get a piece of heart, which I fix at the place from where I have torn a piece!” said the old man.

The young man was shocked.

The old man continued, “Since the pieces of heart I shared were neither equal nor in the same shape or size, my heart is full of uneven edges and bits and pieces. My heart is not in shape because sometimes I do not get love in return from those to whom I gave it. Your heart that looks fresh and full with no scars indicates that you never shared love with anybody. Isn’t that true?”

The young man stood still and did not speak a word. Tears rolled down his cheeks. He walked to the old man, tore a piece of his heart and gave the piece to the old man.

## **The Lottery**

"It's a secret. Don't tell anyone!" Maya crossed her heart. "I swear. I won't tell anyone.

What's the secret?"

Tina looked around. She wanted to be sure that no one could hear her. Then she whispered into Maya's ear: "My parents won the lottery. We're rich!" Tina and Maya then talked about how different her life would be. "I guess I'll travel around the world now. And get new sneakers. These are falling apart." She looked down at her worn-out shoes. Then, she kicked them off. "I'm sure that now that we have money, my mother won't complain if I just throw these away."

It was getting late. They headed home for dinner. Tina waited for her parents to announce how much they had won. But dinner was the same old thing: rice and chicken wings. They didn't talk about their riches. Tina figured they were waiting for just the right time to tell her.

Maya met her sister on the porch. "I've got something to tell you, but you have to promise not to tell anyone." Then she said, "Tina's rich. Her parents won the lottery."

Her sister didn't understand about secrets. She burst through the door and yelled, "Tina's family won the lottery!" She was loud enough for all the neighbors to hear.

There had been talk around town for days about the lottery. Someone in their town had won. The winner had not come forward. So everyone was guessing about who it could be.

Tina's father was doing the dishes when the first neighbor arrived. Her mother opened the door. "Excuse me," Mrs. Hanly said. "But we are having some trouble with the rent. Could you lend me \$100 please?" There was soon another knock at the door. Then another. "My car is broken down. Could you maybe help me get it fixed?" asked one. "We need just \$50," said another. "Just enough for a bus ticket." Soon the house was full of people. All of them needed something. "We would love to help," Tina's parents said. "But what makes you think we are so rich to help everyone?" One by one, they mentioned the lottery.

"I did win a lottery," Tina's mother said. "At my work. It was a drawing to see who would get next Saturday off. And I won."

## **Umbrellas and Sea Salt**

There once was a woman who was constantly worried about her two sons. Both of the sons were peddlers, and they both had to work very hard to make a living. The older son sold umbrellas, and the younger one sold salt, which he made by drying out sea water in the sun.

One day, the woman woke up to see that the sky was clear and beautiful. But the wonderful weather only caused her to worry. “Oh dear, what will you do?” she said to her older son. “There is no rain today, and thus no one will buy your umbrellas. Oh dear, we shall be poor for sure.”

“Don’t worry, Mother,” said the son. “Soon the rainy season will be here. It will rain every day, and I’ll be able to sell more umbrellas than I can make!”

“Rain, every day! Oh dear! What, then, will your younger brother do? Without the sun shining, how will he dry out his salt? He will have none to sell! Oh dear, we will be poor for sure.”

The younger brother, who overheard his mother’s words, tried to reassure her.

“Mother, don’t worry! The rainy season always ends, and when it does, people have used up all their salt and are very eager to buy some more. I’ll make plenty of money when the weather turns dry again.”

“Dry again! Oh dear, but what about your older brother! How will he sell his umbrellas?”

“Mother!” the two sons cried out at once. “Please! Can’t you see how ridiculous your worries are?”

“That’s right, Mother,” the younger son continued. “You should think in a more positive way. When it rains, ONE of us can make a lot of money. When it’s dry, the OTHER ONE of us can make a lot of money. So ONE of us is always making money! In fact, it’s a perfect arrangement! Someone is always making money no matter what the weather is like!”

“A perfect arrangement?” answered the mother. “Well, I never thought of it that way. It is quite perfect, isn’t it?”