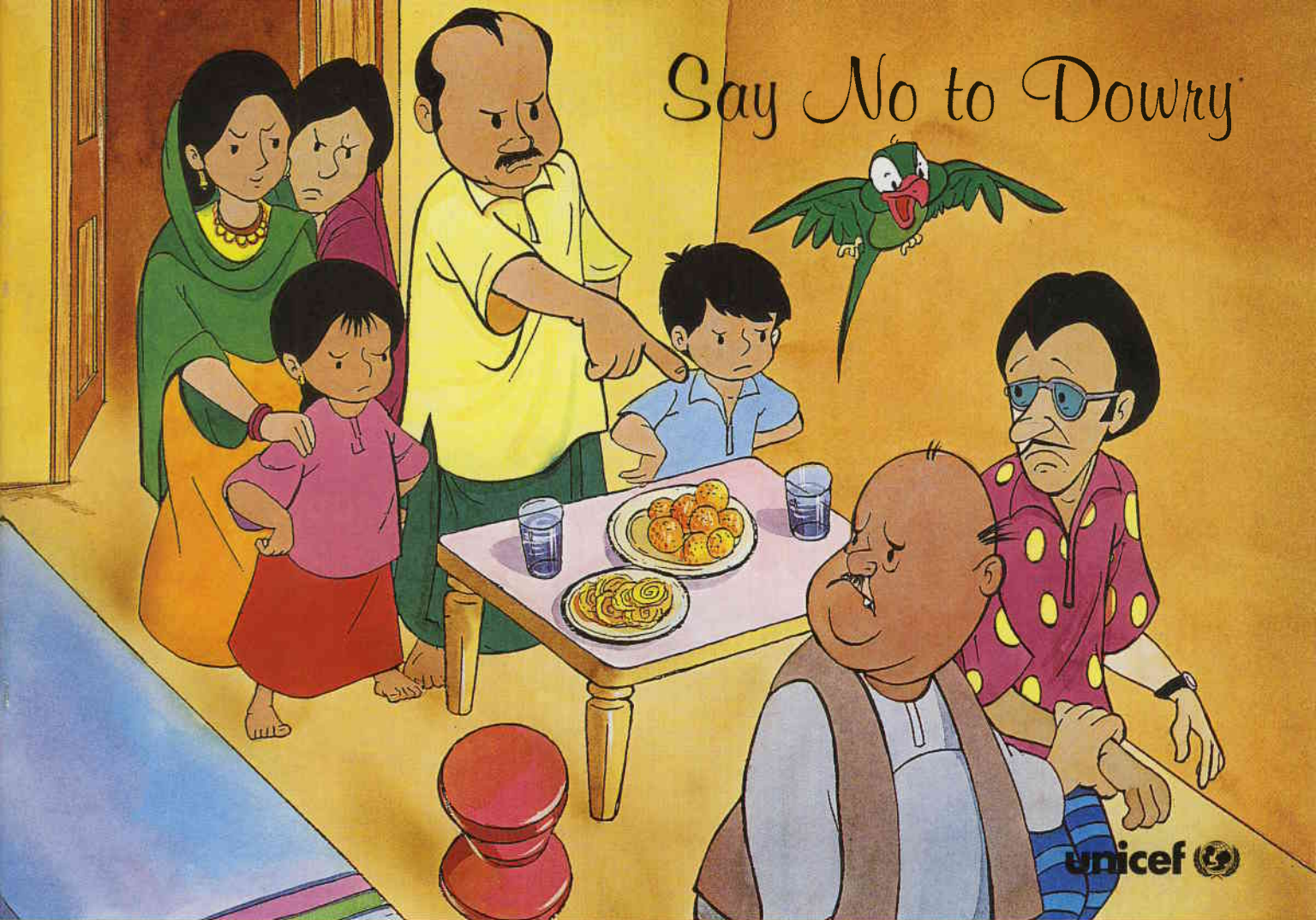
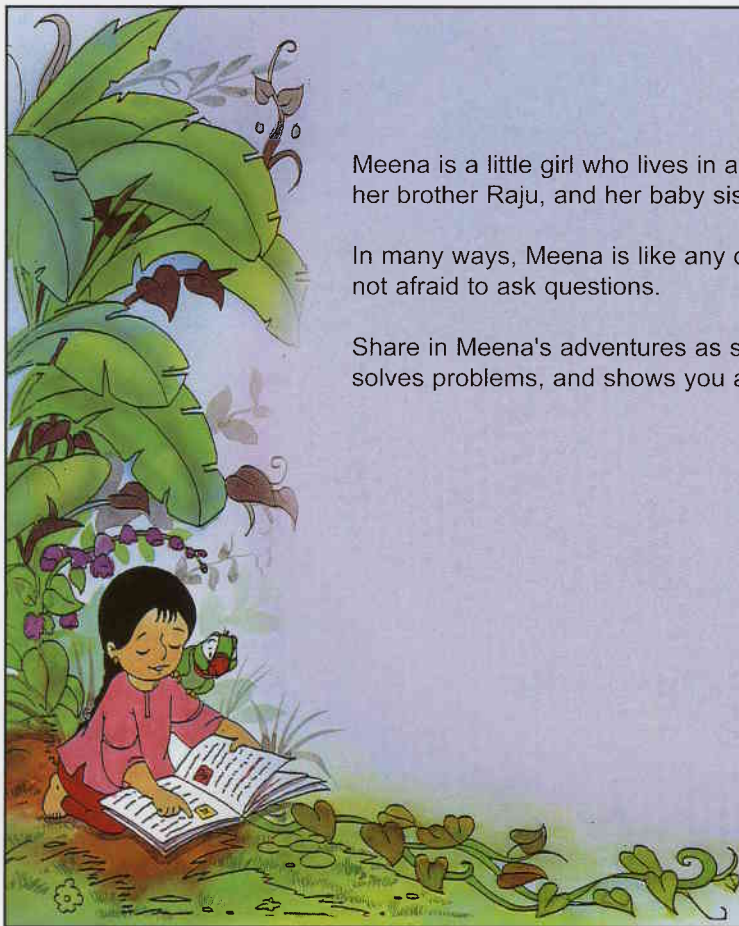


Say No to Dowry



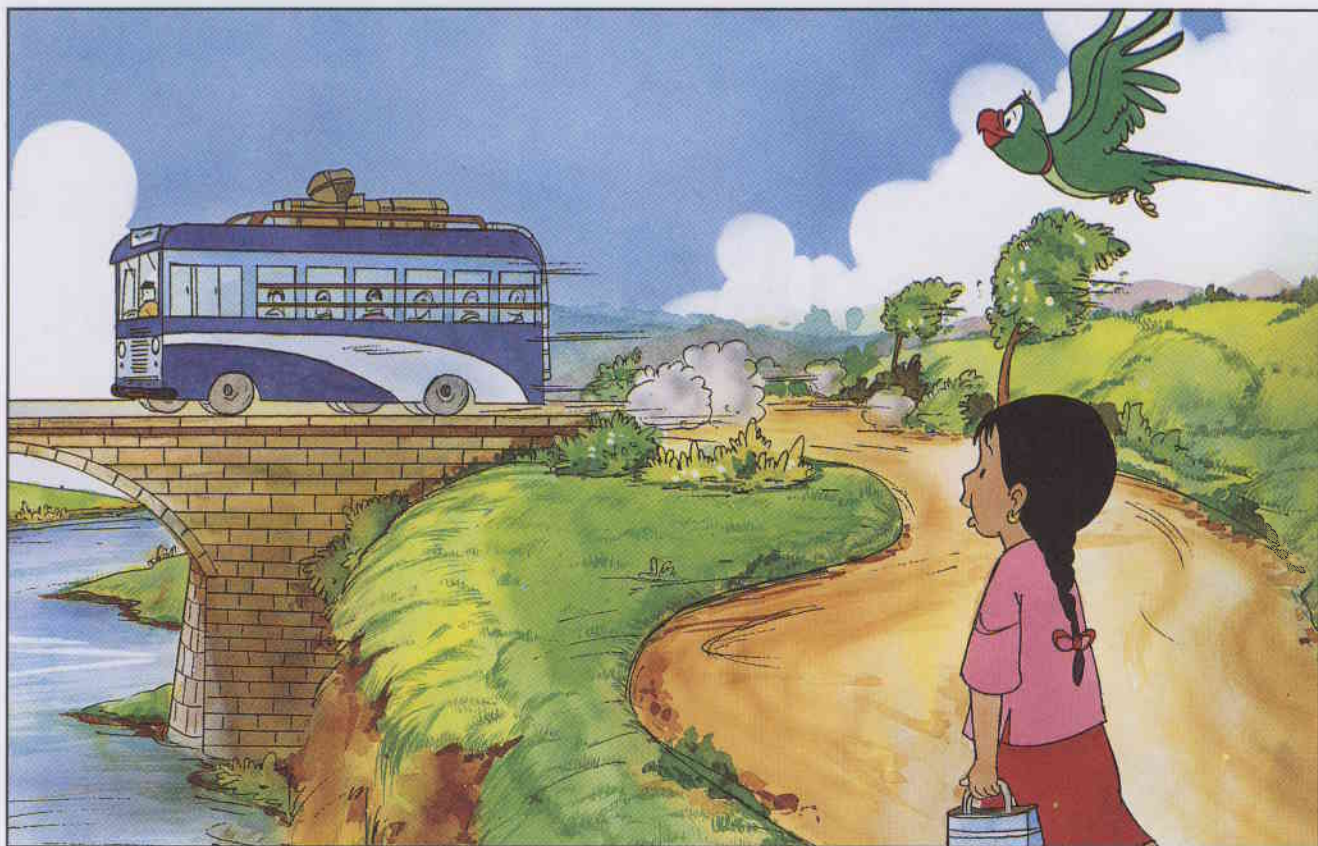


Meena is a little girl who lives in a village with her parents, her grandmother, her brother Raju, and her baby sister, Rani. Mithu, the parrot, is her best friend.

In many ways, Meena is like any other little girl you know. She is friendly but is not afraid to ask questions.

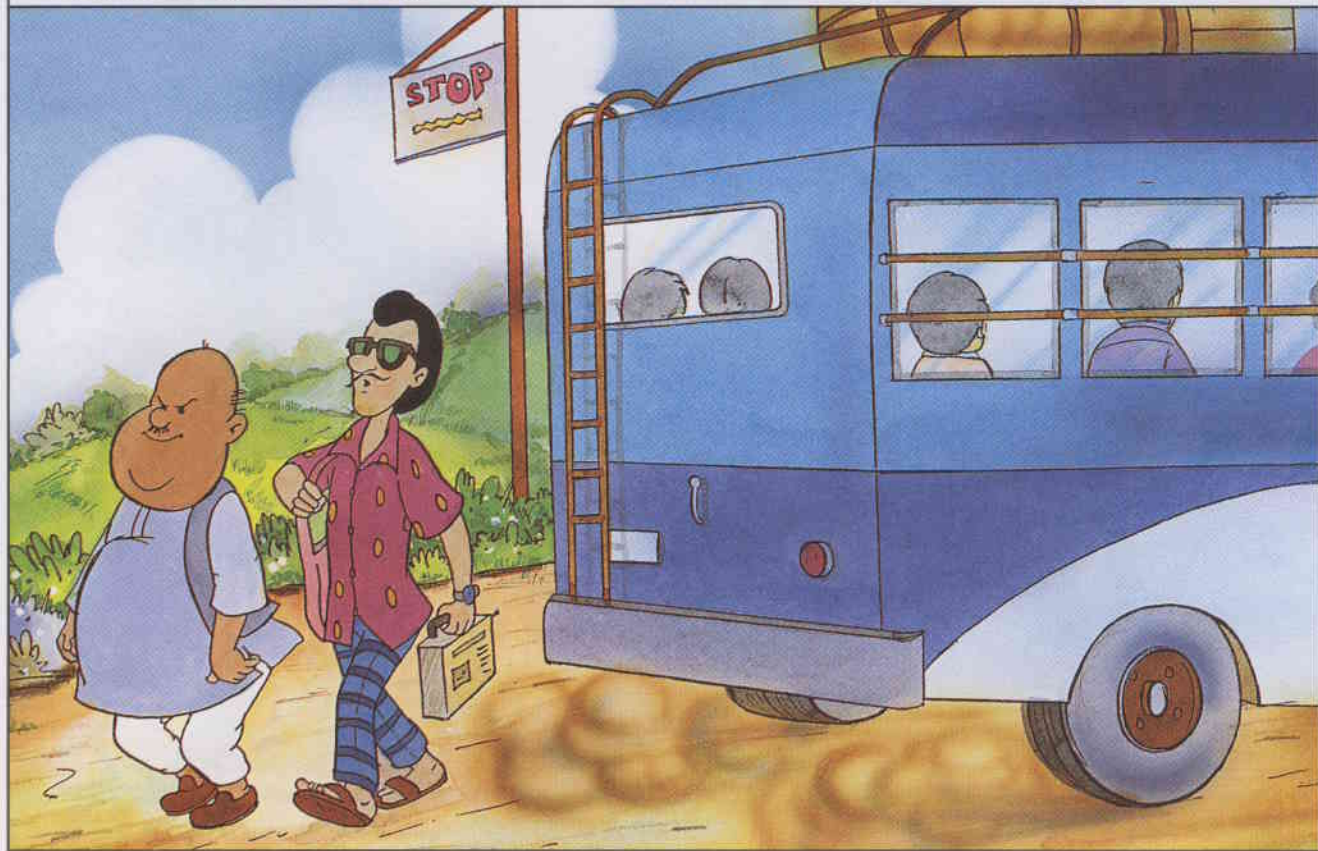
Share in Meena's adventures as she laughs, climbs trees, asks questions and solves problems, and shows you all the things that a little girl can do.

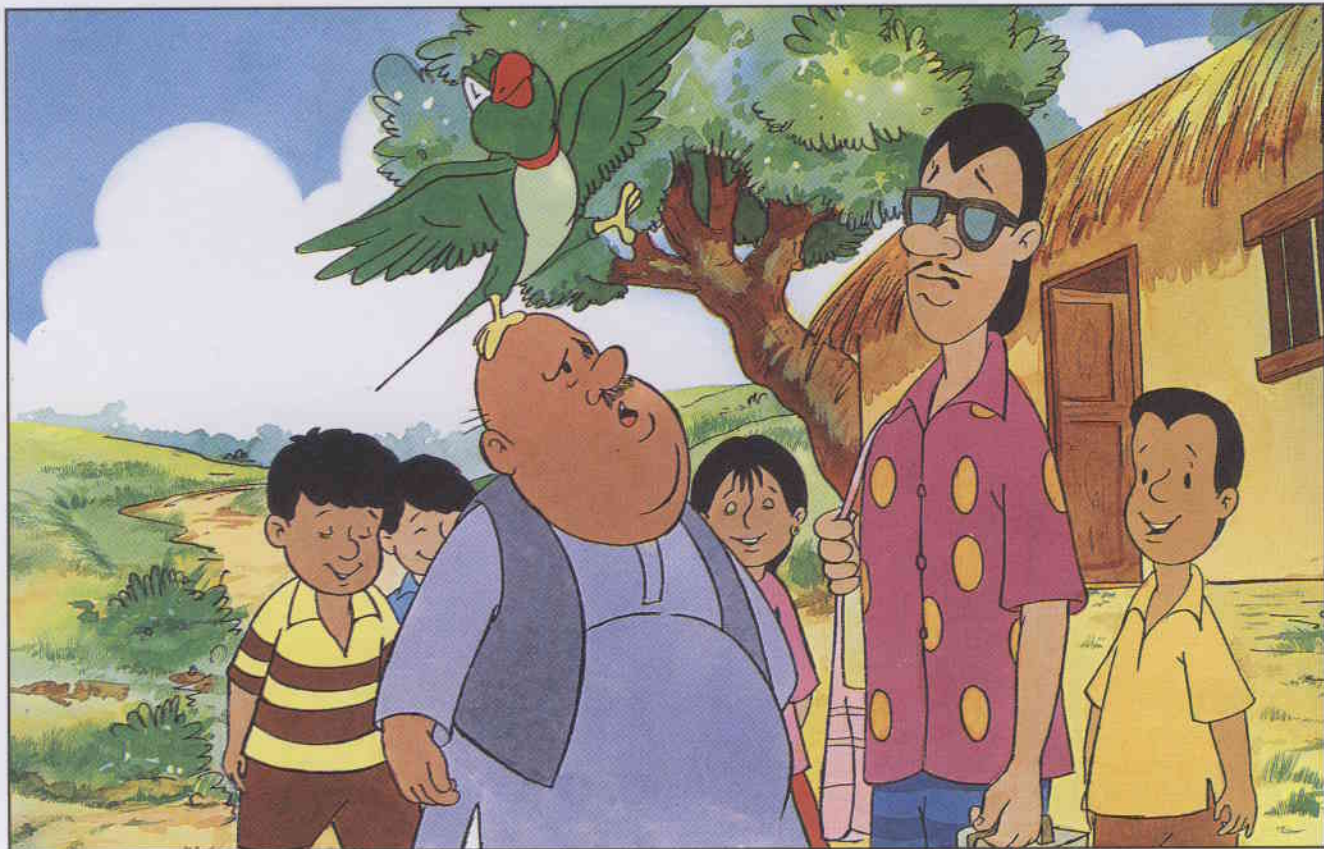
Script:	Rachel Carnegie
Original concept:	Neill Mckee
Comic book adaptation:	Deepa Balsavar and Deep Hari
Artistic development and character designs:	Ram Mohan
Research:	Dr. Mira Aghi and research teams in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan
Layout and design:	Harsha Mehta Kelvin Lopez Sachin Satankar Milind Kadam
Creative guidance and project management:	Nuzhat Shahzadi UNICEF - Rosa



Meena and her pet parrot Mithu were on their way to her cousin Tara's house one morning, when a bus rushed past them and came to a halt a short distance away.

Meena saw that two strangers had come to their village. They seemed like father and son and were obviously from the city.

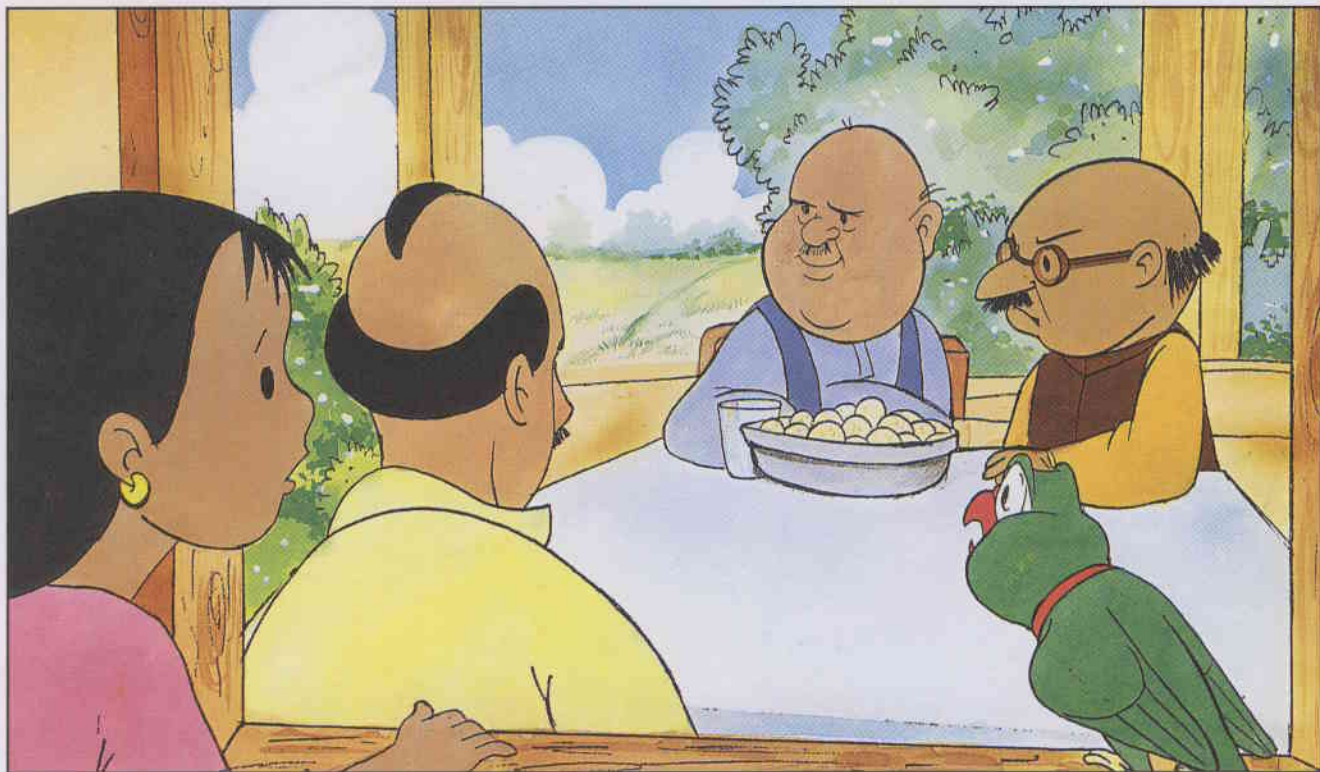




The other village children quickly noticed the newcomers and formed a procession behind them, until the older man rudely shouted at them.

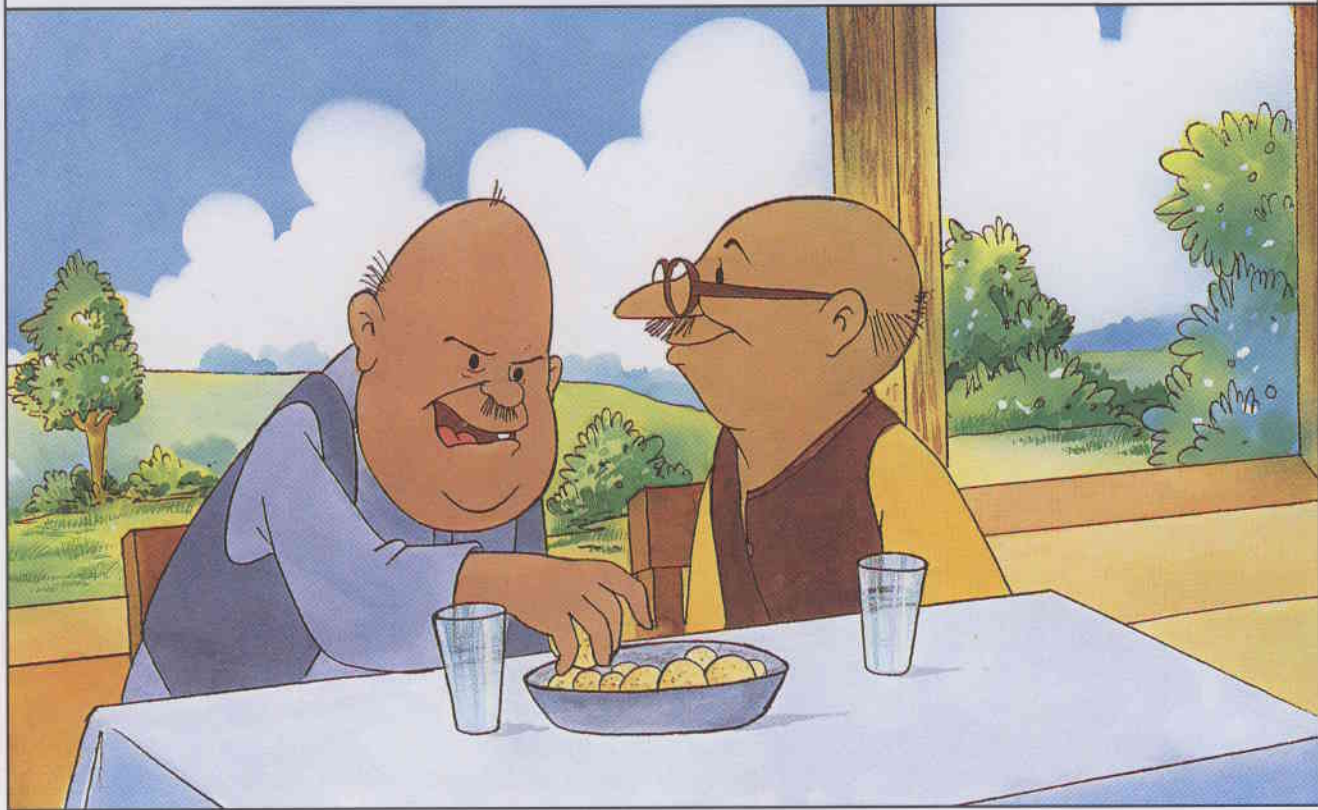


When Meena and Mithu reached Tara's house, they found her in tears. Tara had turned 18 and her parents had decided that it was time for her marriage. An offer had already come for her and the boy's father was outside at that very moment, talking about dowry. Tara was upset because the visitors seemed greedy. She didn't want her parents to be ruined paying dowry for her marriage. But what could she do?



Meena tiptoed to the window and looked out. Imagine her surprise when she saw who was seated there. It was the man from the city! And next to him was the mean village shopkeeper. Meena discovered that they were brothers and that the fashionably dressed young man she had seen in the morning with the rude man was the prospective groom.

“We are not asking for much,” she heard the men say. “Only a bicycle and some money. If you are not willing, there are plenty of families in this village who will be happy to pay for such a fine match.”

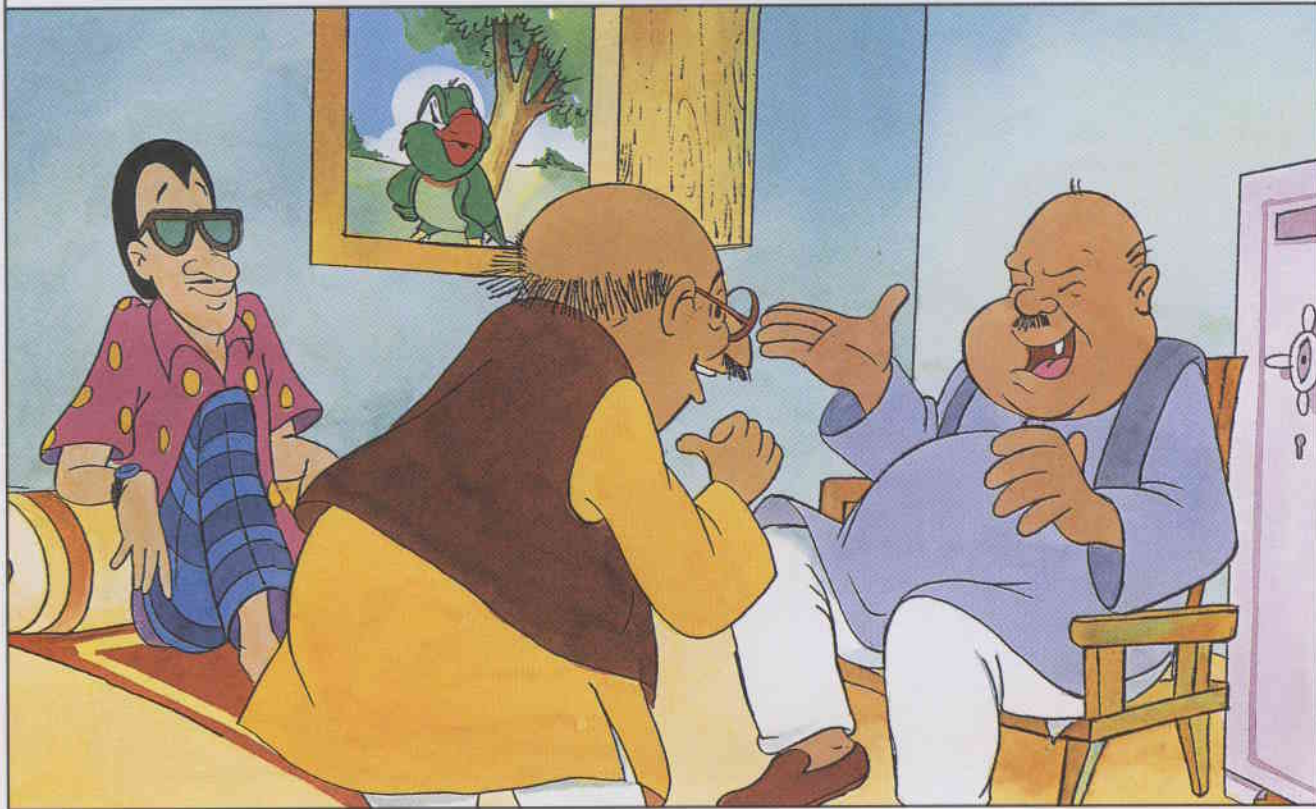




Meena went home and told her parents and grandmother what she had heard. They were all shocked. Meena's younger brother Raju decided that he would not ask for any dowry when he grew up and Meena decided that no dowry would be paid for her marriage either. "Say No to dowry," the children said to their proud parents.



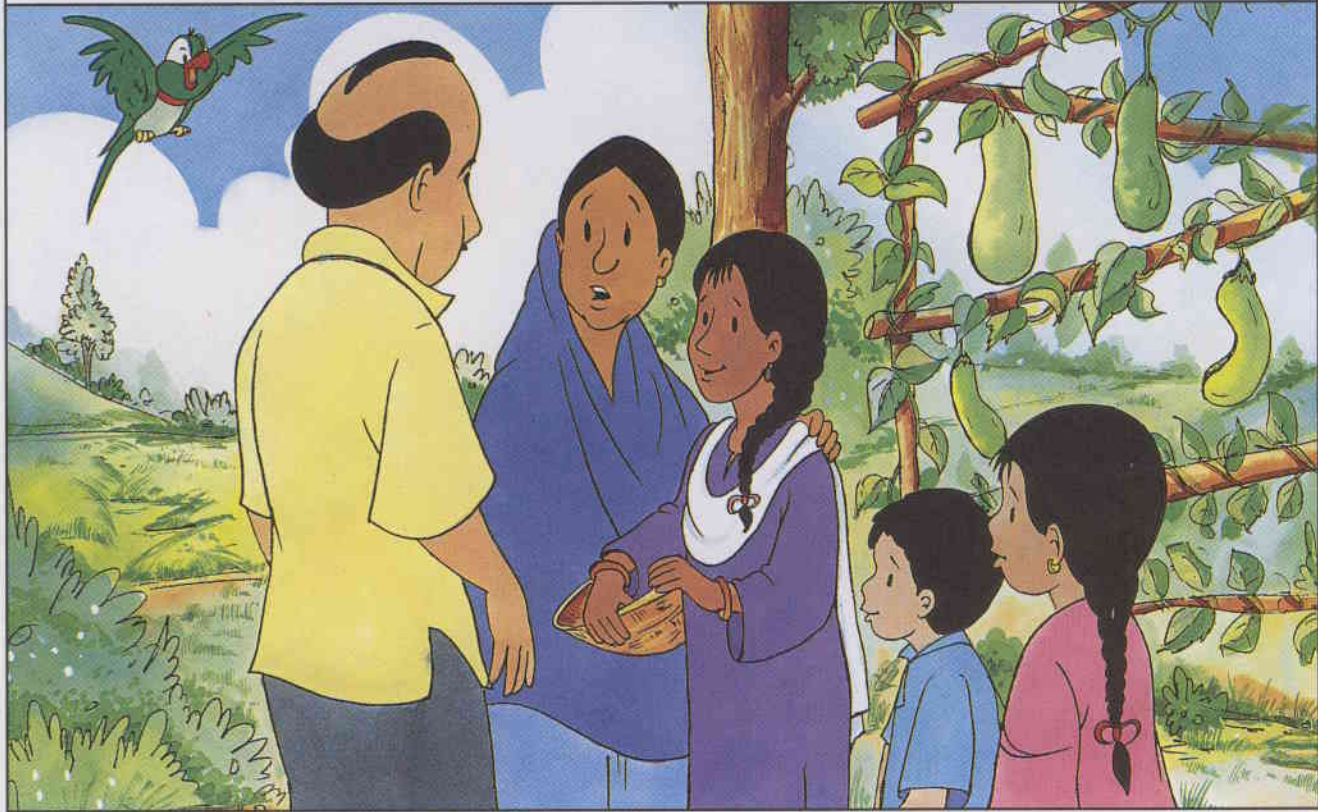
In the meantime, Mithu had flown to the shopkeeper's house to see what was happening. He overheard the shopkeeper's family making plans to ask Tara's parents for a motorcycle after the marriage, in addition to the bicycle before it. The city visitors were indeed greedy.





Grandmother and Meena got very angry when Mithu came back repeating, "Bicycle now, motorcycle later!" Meena and Raju ran to tell Tara and her parents the shocking news.

When Tara's parents heard the news, they decided to stop the marriage talks. They also decided that the whole village should be warned against such greedy people, who were more interested in their money than in their daughters.





A village meeting was called and everyone was informed about what had happened. Most of the villagers did not know that dowry is banned by law and that people can be punished for giving or taking it.

At the meeting, a decision was taken to stop the practice of dowry in the village. As Grandmother said, "Only if everyone refuses to give or take dowry can this evil be stopped."



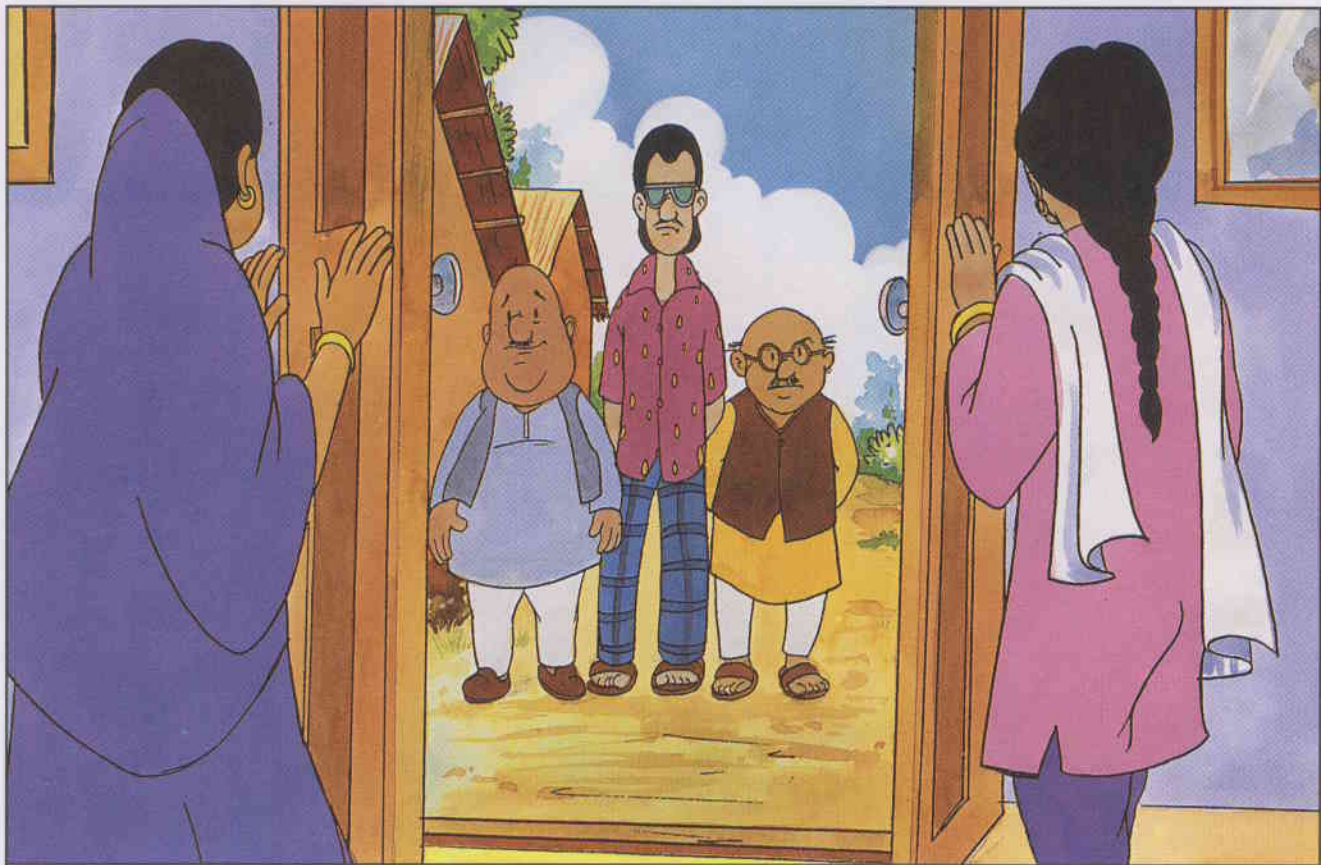


Meena and Raju taught all the youngsters their new slogan, "Say No to Dowry!" "Say No to Dowry!"

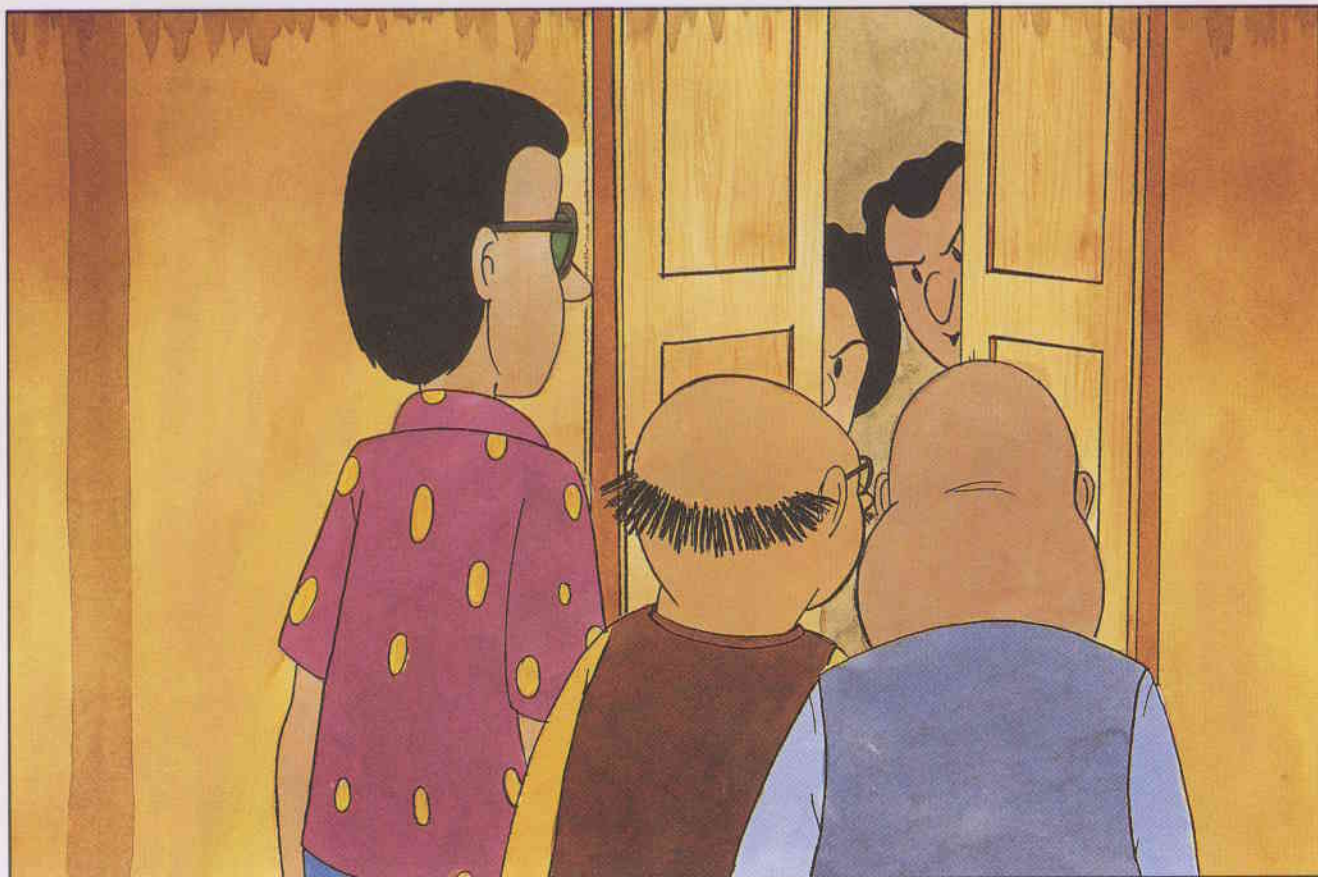
The next day, the shopkeeper, his brother and nephew were back at Tara's house. When Tara's father refused their demands, they were surprised but confident that other families would be willing to pay dowry.



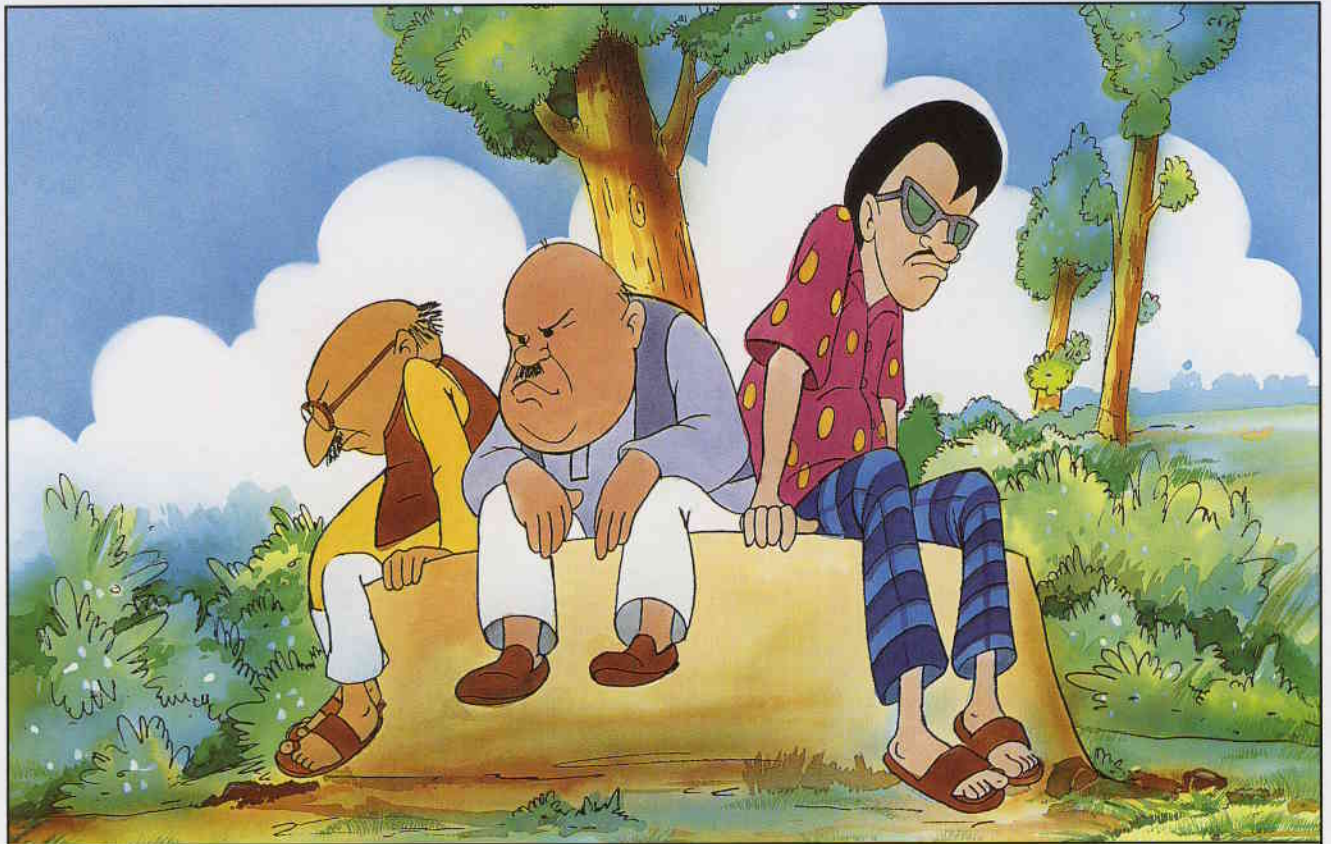




What a shock it was for them when every door was shut in their face...



... and they were turned away from every house!



At the end, after visiting several houses in the village, the disappointed bridegroom had to return to the city without a bride — or a dowry!

**Other titles in this series**

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2. Dividing the Mango
3. Will Meena Leave School?
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5. Saving a Life
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11. A Girls' Story
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