

**Boogadooga Series. Adventure One.**

# **The Lost Pencil**



**Guruprasad Nagarajan**

**Boogadooga Series**

**The Lost Pencil**

**A short story by Guruprasad Nagarajan**

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**Dedication**

This series of children's stories is dedicated to my wife. And to all the children who love a magical journey.

## Introduction

Peaches the baby elephant on her morning walk through the Boogadooga Forest with her best friends Coco the monkey and Alala the crow.



Peaches the elephant was sad that morning. She had lost a pencil, not a brand new pencil, or an expensive pencil imported from the Flaming Forest. It was a used pencil in fact. It was so much used it was almost a stub of wood with a blunt end of lead. Two weeks ago, Peaches realised that the pencil could not be used anymore as it had come to its very end. But someone had given that pencil in good condition to her many years ago. A little girl going to school had lost her way and wandered into the woods where Peaches and her family lived.

That day, Peaches went for her morning walk, as she always did, said hello to Coco the Monkey who always rode on Peaches' back until he got to his school. And halfway down the beautiful path with flowering plants, shrubs and trees that gave sweet fruits all year around, near the pond where Kuluma the Duck lived with her family, they saw a little girl. At first Peaches didn't know who or what it was, as she had never seen a human being. But Coco knew and he had even been to the places where these human beings lived. He was not just smart, he was brave too. They confirmed this with Alala the crow who had been to the far reaches of the forest and beyond. He knew everything.

The little girl was crying. Alala and Coco immediately knew the girl was lost and didn't know how she got here nor did she know how to get back. Both knew how to communicate with the girl. Soon they found out that the girl, Jimki, was on her way to school and since she had a test that day, she was rehearsing the rhymes and other lessons, she completely lost track of where she was going.

The little girl with her heavy school bag and lunch box, standing helplessly, tears flowing down her cheeks, was a sad spectacle that moved Peaches.

'She looks too distraught to go by herself even if she knows the way', opined Coco.



'Where is your school little girl?' asked Alala.

'Jasmine Garden School, near the red bus stop on the main road, ' said the girl, through her tears.

'Okay, stop crying now, go wash your face in the pond and we'll think of a way to get you back', said Coco.

Since neither Alala nor Coco could carry her, Peaches quickly offered to carry the girl with her heavy school bag and lunch box till the main road. This made the little girl, when she came back from the pond, very, very happy. At first she was frightened when she found herself in the woods, but after seeing Coco and Alala and hearing that Peaches would take her to the main road, her happiness knew bounds, for she had never ridden on elephant back.

So it was decided that Peaches would carry Jimki and her bags, Alala and Coco would show the way. Peaches went down on her front legs and helped Jimki up onto her back. Carrying her bags with her trunk, she followed Alala and Coco. Thus they reached the main road that Peaches had never seen before. She let the girl down gently and they all said bye. After she had gone a few steps, Jimki ran back, saying 'How silly of me! You have been such a big help and here I am not even being grateful. I always say thanks and sorry, not at the same time, but they teach us to be thankful to those who help and say sorry if you can't help at my school.'

Then she reached into her bag and proceeded to give two bananas from her lunch box to Coco and Alala, and a sandwich to Peaches.

'No, no, no little girl,' said Alala and Coco in chorus, Peaches shook her head as if to say no. 'You can't give your food to us, we find our own in the forest which has plenty of fruits and nuts, actually we should give you something as you are our guest'. Thus saying they went and got some nuts and fruits for Jimki.

'Thank you all so much', said Jimki. 'But I must give something, I have been taught never to accept an act of friendship without giving something back', she said while she produced three brand new pencils, two black ones and one bright red one from her box. She gave the bright red pencil to Peaches and the others to Coco and Alala.



That was the pencil Peaches was looking for now. Though she never used it much, or every time she tried to write what Alala taught her, on a rock, it would break and

she had to carry it to Tony the Toucan and have it sharpened. When the pencil was thus shortened, Peaches decided to just keep it in a hole in a tree.

‘Did you look in the hole?’ asked Coco as he chomped on an apple, enjoying the view from Peaches’ back.

‘I did, I did,’ said Peaches, ‘but it’s not there’.

‘Hmm’, pondered Coco ‘where could it be?’

‘I feel so bad,’ said Peaches, ‘my mom says it’s not good to be careless with gifts’.

‘She has a point’, agreed Coco, munching on a mango he just plucked from a tree. ‘I know!’ he cried, ‘let’s go to the Wise One, he may know where it is!’

‘That’s a brilliant idea, let’s go’, said Peaches.

Deep inside the forest, where the foliage was dense and dark, lived an owl, called Basho or the Wise One, because he knew many languages, rituals, spells and other things. He dispensed his wisdom to all the animals in the forest. ‘Be genuine in your requests,’ he would say to them. He was a philosopher too, for he always told a story to make his students understand. Mostly, everyone felt better after visiting him.

When Peaches and Coco reached Basho’s house on the tree, he had just finished some ritual which ended with some deep breathing meditation.

‘O Wise One,’ announced Peaches.

‘Who is that?’ said the owl, adjusting his glasses, ‘Oh it’s you Peaches, come, come. Good morning to you. Can I offer you anything? Some hot herbal tea to invigorate you on this crisp morning?’



‘No,’ said both, knowing what the invigorating tea tasted like.

‘Well then, how can I help you?’ said the owl.

‘I have lost a pencil someone gave me ...’

‘It’s careless to misplace a gift’, cut in the owl.

‘That’s what mama says,’ said Peaches ‘I try not to be careless, but can you use your looking glass and see where I might have lost it?’

‘Hmmm, I do have some free time today, I could help you out,’ said the owl. Pushing his glasses up, he said, ‘Before I look, I want to ask you a few things, Peaches, and whether we find your pencil or not can come later.’

‘Of course,’ said Peaches, ‘ask me Wise One’.

‘What did you cherish the most when you were little? Can you remember?’ asked Basho.

Peaches stopped swinging her trunk, and thought deeply. ‘I remember’, she cried, ‘it’s a sweater my mom made for me, a pajama my dad gave me with pictures of myself printed on it.’

‘So what did you do with them?’ asked the Wise One.

‘Well, I grew up and couldn’t wear them anymore, Wise One, so I gave them to my niece. Why do you ask?’

‘What else did you think you needed when you were young but found no need for later?’

‘Like what?’ asked Peaches.

‘Let me give you an example’, said Basho stroking his chin, ‘like your teeth’.

‘My teeth?’ asked Peaches, puzzled. ‘Well, they fell off, and I ...’

‘Your toys?’ continued Basho.

‘They too gave way to newer ones,’ said Peaches, less puzzled now.

‘Hmm,’ said the owl, sipping herbal tea from his cup. ‘You see, Peaches, all the things you grew up with, that were with you, went away. Things you thought you couldn’t live without, yes?’

‘Yes’, said Peaches.

‘Likewise, lots of things in life come to you when you need them, and leave you when the time is right,’ said the owl. ‘In other words, if you are always clinging to things, you won’t have room to grow. You want to grow, right?’ said Basho.

‘You can’t swing if you cling’, rhymed Coco who was fond of rhyming, and swinging from branch to branch, which he did now.

‘Yes, yes,’ said Peaches, clearer now.

‘Today it’s a pencil, tomorrow it’s a book, another time it’s your toy,’ continued Basho, ‘the lesson is, you should learn to let go. Now, do you still want me to consult the Looking Glass?’

‘No, Wise One,’ said Peaches, her mind clear and strong.

**The End**

## About the author



Guru has been peddling assorted products and services in the name of advertising for the last 20 years. He was born in Coimbatore, a small town surrounded by hills in Tamil Nadu, India. He lives in Singapore where he is currently adding more books to his repertoire. He swims, practises yoga and attempts to play the guitar. He loves to travel with his wife.