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# Kovynintee

DIYA GETS BATTLE READY

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## 02

It is early 2020. Mumma and Pa haven't gone for work in days and neither have I gone to school (Yay!). I don't understand what the fuss and cry is all about because this is like summer vacation. But what is annoying is that I'm not allowed to play outside! I haven't seen my friends for three whole weeks now! Staying indoors hasn't been much fun either. Mumma has been ordering me to wash my hands ever so often that my palms are constantly wrinkly now. I can't watch TV because Pa has the news on at all times. All there is to hear nowadays is talk and worry about something the adults call "KovyNintee". Sounds funny. I just can't seem to hold it in whenever I hear the name. Ma caught me giggling once. She sits me down and clears her throat. And I know that it's time for a story.



'Now listen closely Diya. Outside our very house, there are gangs of naughty monsters running around scaring people. That is why everyone is staying indoors now.

Monsters! But they have such funny names!

'Mumma, can't we just drive them away! There must be some way to kick them out of here!'

'If it were only that easy, my dear. You see, these fiendish fellows can turn invisible! If we step outside, they jump onto our shoulders and follow us home.'



Ah-ha! But that's perfect!

'Just let them come home Ma, we'll box their evil monster heads and throw them out of the window then.' It was Mumma's turn to giggle now. What did I say that was funny? 'I'm sure you would do that and more to drive them away, Diya.'





But that's not all that these fellows do. The nasty business starts once you get home. They stick around and cast spells on people! And we end up falling sick. Not just the person whom the monsters came with, but all those around as well.'

There goes my plan out of the window instead. How am I supposed to fight against a fever spewing invisible villain?! Mumma sensed my disappointment. 'Don't look so glum, Diya. You don't always have to throw punches to win. I'll tell you what,' she said, moving closer, 'I know a secret.'



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'I know about a secret weapon or two that could be used against these monsters,' Ma said with a glint in her eyes, 'and I'm going to trust you with it, hoping that you will use it wisely. But before I tell you about it, I need you to promise me that you'll stay strong and protect me and Pa as well. We may forget to use these weapons and that's when you must do your part.' Poor Mumma sounded so worried. Why the doubt! 'You know I'm here to keep you and Pa safe, Mumma! You don't have to be scared! Just tell me what to do and I'll be ready to knock them out,' I say while showing her my air-punches that I'd been practicing.

'Careful now, don't practice your moves on me,' Ma says with a laugh, dodging one of my stray blows. I grin and stop, now that I got Mumma to smile again. 'I'll stop. But tell me your secret Mumma! Stop putting it off!'

'Alright, my impatient little Mohammed Ali! Secret number one- we must lock these pesky monsters out on the streets. And for that, we must stay indoors. With everyone inside their houses, the monsters won't find people to trick anymore and will be forced to leave. Simple so far?', Mumma asks. I nod.

'Is that all, Mumma? Sounds too easy! Why haven't they left already then?', I ask.

'Ah, that's because you have been a good girl and stayed inside. But not everybody has been doing the same. As long as there are people outside, the monsters will stick around to carry on with their mischief. Now, even if we all stay inside, some of them may escape and still make their way in. That's how sly these fellows are.'



In that case, we must protect ourselves using this potion,' she says, picking up an ordinary looking bottle.

'Does the potion have a name, Mumma?' I ask, trying to read the label. But the word is just too big for me to figure out. All I can see is a picture of a pair of hands, like the ones you see on hand wash bottles.

'This is called a "sanitizer", Diya.







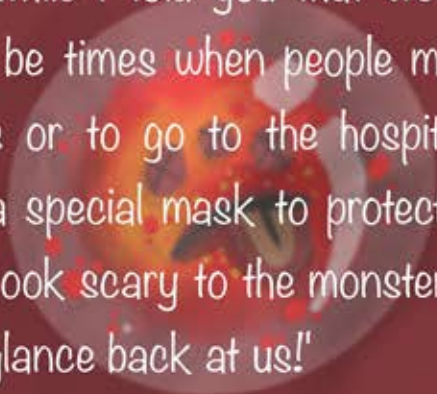
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It's a special potion that only we humans can use. Luckily, the monsters hate the smell and run from it as soon as they get a whiff. Rubbing this on your hands after washing them with soap will form a shield around you and will keep them at bay even if they manage to get past our gate! Now I get why Mumma was so adamant about me washing my hands.

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'As for secret number three- while I told you that we must stay indoors for a while, there may be times when people may have to step outside, to buy essentials or to go to the hospital. In such cases, we must always wear a special mask to protect ourselves. Because with the mask on, we look scary to the monsters and they make tracks without sparing a glance back at us!



With that, Mumma hands me my very own mask and asks me to keep it safe for emergency situations. If this is all it takes, then I'm ready to stay indoors and prepare my attack!



'You and Pa don't have anything to worry about now, Ma! I'm here to protect you from the KovyNintee Monsters. I'll be waiting for them and I'll send them flying in no time if they come in here!'



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DO THE FIVE  
BREAK THE CHAIN