

The Little Narcissist



By Kanika G

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Dedicated to Spoonty

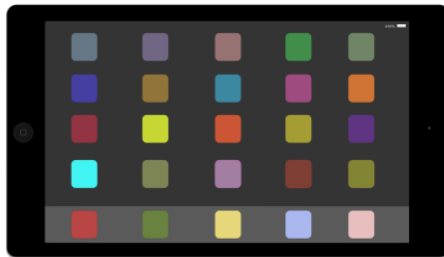
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Mama got a new tablet. It had front and rear facing cameras. Mama could use it for video chats, as well as to make home videos. Mama was using it to chat with Tania's aunt Poonam.

Poonam stayed in Baltimore in America, and Tania stayed in Bombay. So they did not get to see each other often. Mama thought video chats would be an excellent way for them to keep in touch. This way Poonam could see Tania growing up and interact with her.



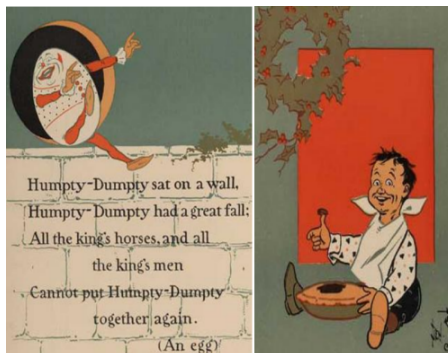
Tania liked seeing and talking to her aunt, but what intrigued her most,

was the little video of herself that appeared on the screen. Mama saw her interest and asked, "Tania, would you like me to make a video of you?"

"Yes Mama!" Tania was jumping up and down.

"Why don't you recite one of your nursery rhymes and do all the actions for it." Mama suggested. "I'll record it on this. Then you can see the video."

Tania recited *Humpty-Dumpty* and *Little Jack Horner*, making the appropriate hand gestures.



Mama played the video, and Tania and Mama watched it together. Mama

thought it was really cute, and Tania was fascinated. She begged Mama to make some more videos. Mama saw her fascination with the new toy and obliged. They made four videos of Tania that night.

The next afternoon, Tania asked, "Mama, will you make a video of me eating lunch? I want to see it."

"Tania, that is silly. Why do you want a video of yourself eating lunch?"

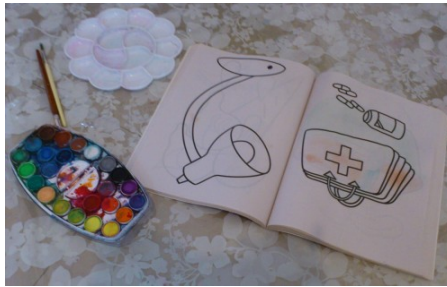
"Please Mama, I want it. Please, please!"

"Oh, all right, but this is the last video I am making of you."

"Thanks Mama," said Tania sweetly, ignoring the part about it being the last video.

Tania asked to see the video and watched Mama intently. She learned how to operate the tablet to play the video.

After lunch, Mama had some work to do on her laptop. Tania usually spent Saturday afternoon doing some drawing or coloring. So Mama set her up with her art supplies on a big plastic mat on the living room floor and went to work in the bedroom.



An hour later when Mama came to see how Tania's art was progressing, she was surprised to see Tania absorbed in doing something on the tablet. At closer inspection, she saw that Tania was watching videos of herself. Her art supplies lay on the mat, untouched. She asked "Tania, what have you been doing?"

"Hmm.." said Tania hardly hearing her.

"**Tania!**" Mama called, loudly snapping her fingers to attract Tania's attention.

Tania paused the video and said, "What happened?"

"Tania, you haven't done any of your art work. Have you been watching videos this whole hour?"

"Yes, Mama."

"But sweetie, you are supposed to practice your art on Saturday afternoons."

"I wanted to see the videos, Mama. I'll do my art later."

Mama was feeling annoyed. She was reminded of Narcissus from Greek mythology. She wondered what she should do, so Tania would not get addicted to watching videos of herself.



She said, "Tania, I have an idea. Why don't you draw a nice picture now? If it comes out really nice, I'll take a photograph of it, and make it the wall paper on the tablet."

"You will make my drawing the wall paper on your tablet?"

"Yes, if you do a good job."

Tania was thrilled with the idea and worked hard on her art for the rest of the afternoon. Temporarily she forgot all about videos. She did a marvelous job of coloring a beautiful

landscape, and Mama made it the wall paper on the tablet as promised. Tania glowed with pride.



Over the next few days, every time Tania remembered the tablet and asked Mama to make a video of her, Mama distracted her and asked her to do some interesting activity and promised to take a picture of the results. Once they made objects from whole wheat dough and decorated them with permanent markers.



Another time they made a sock doll. They made lanterns, kites, jams and many more interesting things. Each time, Mama took a picture.



Soon Tania forgot all about making videos of herself. She was trying to come up with interesting projects to do. At the end of a month, Mama

printed out all the pictures she had taken of Tania's creative endeavors and suggested they make a scrap book.

Tania felt proud to see all that she had achieved in a month. She realized it was much more satisfying to see what she had created, rather than watch videos of herself. She rarely asked Mama to make videos of her any more.

But she could not resist watching the video of herself, when she chatted with aunt Poonam. Oh well, neither could aunt Poonam. Tania is adorable after all.

Landscape picture drawn by Anupama Kumar.