



Sita's Search

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Illustrated by Hywel Turner

The sun peeped shyly over the mountain top, making
the white snow rosy pink.

But Sita was still asleep next to her big sister on the
dirt floor – asleep and dreaming of touching soft
white snow.



“Wake up lazy bones!” said a soft voice. It was Ama, with sleepy eyes and her long black hair in a tidy plait. She was holding Sita’s little brother in her arms.

“Sita, go and look for Nanny goat. She is not outside and I have to work”. Ama worked in the fields as well as looking after the house and children. She was busy and she missed father who was working as a rickshaw driver far away in India.



Sita stood up quickly and shook her hair out of her eyes. The morning was cold and she only had one set of clothes and nothing warm.

She hoped that the sun would soon peek its head out a little further to warm the mountainside. She needed to go and look for the Nanny goat. No time for her usual breakfast of rice and lentils.



Sita poked her big sister with her big toe.

“Come and help me look for the Nanny goat” she said. “I can’t.” groaned her sister. “I have to look after the baby today”.

“No school for you then”, said Sita, as she slipped out of the door.



Sita dashed out, across the frozen dew and down the stony track that led to the village, her feet turning numb with the cold.

She hoped she would find the Nanny goat quickly. She didn't want to miss school like her big sister.



The first person that Sita met was Durga, her friend's big brother. Durga was always friendly, with his wide smile and twinkly eyes. He was clever too, maybe the cleverest child at school.

“Come and help me look for the Nanny goat,” called Sita. “Can't” smiled Durga, “I have to go and help in the fields.”

“No school for you then, ‘ said Sita, as she dashed by.



Sita ran past Yasoda's house. Yasoda was sitting on the step combing her hair

“Come and help look for Nanny goat”, called Sita.

“Can't “, answered Yasoda. “I have to stay and help Mum today and, anyway, I haven't got a pencil to use at school”.



Yasoda's little brother, Hari appeared on the
doorstep, his thumb in his mouth.

“No school for Hari either?” asked Sita.

“No,” answered Yasoda. “He is scared of his teacher.
She shouts and has a little stick.”



Sita turned onto the grassy track that led into the forest. Prayer flags between trees fluttered in the breeze.

Sita and her friends liked to play in the forest, although the long shadows and the silent leopards made it a frightening place after dark.



Sita heard a rustle and a shuffle deep in the undergrowth. A rustle and a shuffle, a whisper of leaves and the swish swash of grass. Could it be a leopard? It might even be a scary dog.



Sita heard a gentle maa, a soft baa, the tip tap of hooves. “Nanny?” she asked.

Nanny goat’s gentle inquisitive face appeared from behind a tree. Sita was pleased and relieved. “Why are you here?” scolded Sita. And then ..

Another smaller face appeared close to Nanny. What a surprise! Nanny had found a quiet place to have her baby.



All turned out well for Sita on this day. After taking Nanny goat home there was time to take her pencil and a small container of rice, to kiss Ama goodbye and to take the dusty track to school. Sita felt lucky.

She had a pencil in her hand and a kind teacher. She didn't have to stay at home – not today, anyway. And now she had a new baby goat too. The day looked bright.





First Steps Himalaya has been working in rural Nepal since 2008 to provide children with access to quality early years education. Wishes for Nepal is a fundraising initiative of First Steps Himalaya.

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