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# UNDER THE BLUE SKY

**Dr. Anuradha Sovani**



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Story By - Dr. Anuradha Sovani

**Vik** was taking a walk all alone. He knew his mother would be watching from the balcony of their house, and that made him feel safe. But he also felt good being all by himself. Walking in the open space around where they lived, with no adult walking beside him, made him feel older and more independent. The lockdown had made all of them housebound for so long. Much as he loved having everybody at home.....

Vik shook his head. He just filled up his chest with fresh air and puffed it out proudly as he looked up at the blue sky and down at the green grass.

Vik loved his friends and his family, but he also loved being alone. He liked thinking of many things without anyone around to disturb his chain of thoughts. He listened to the sounds around, and smiled.

He could identify the calls of bulbuls, which sounded like a couple of sharp, almost human whistles, and that of peacocks, which were strangely like a cat! Different kinds of frogs made so many different sounds. And spiders made none at all. His friend could only recognize the call of a cuckoo, which was not very clever of him; anyone could do that!

Vik pricked up his ears and listened to all the sounds around him. Well, his ears could not really prick up like a dog's could, but he liked imagining that they did. He could hear pressure cooker whistles, and bicycle bells, and car horns. He heard water in a bucket and a sharp ring of a doorbell. And a fire engine, far away down the road. Interesting how we could tell what was happening around even with our eyes

eyes closed, just listening to these sounds.

Vik knew he could watch people talk to one another from a distance, and even if he could not hear what they were saying, he knew if they were angry, or sad, or very tired. Their eyes, their face, the droop of their shoulders said so much. You should always watch people, and listen to them, and you knew the real truth in their minds, much more than you could know from what they said. Vik watched people in restaurants sometimes. It was so funny that they would come in together, and sit in front of each other, but instead of looking at one another, or talking, each would be checking their own phone! Both looking down at their own screen, and reading what someone else had sent. He wondered what would happen if the person

in front of them got up and left. Would they notice?

Sometimes, Vik thought, it was important to know what to look for, and where. At night, you should not look directly at objects, because you could see more when you looked away from them. We are so used to staring directly at things to see them in daylight. But Vik knew that you should look at things from the corner of your eye at night, when it was dark, to be able to see better.

And if you lost something, you should not go crazily searching for it all over, but just sit quietly with your eyes closed and think of where you saw it last! Vik was a wise little boy and knew many things.

He breathed in deeply again, with his chest and stomach puffed out. His parents made everyone at home go through weekly checks on the oximeter. Vik thought of how high the percentage would go with these deep breaths he was taking! He wondered what would happen to the uncle in their building who kept smoking. His oximeter reading would be really, really low, Vik thought sadly.

Vik peeped upstairs and saw his mother peep down at him. He looked away quickly because he did not want her to know that he was checking if she was watching. But he felt warm and light inside because she was. He looked down at his feet in the grass, and smiled contentedly to himself. So many of the things that made you happy were free.

The grass, the sunshine, birdsong, and laughter. Vik liked sharing a hearty laugh with whoever was with him; his friends, his grandparents or his mother and father. They would laugh till tears streamed down their faces, and their belly ached with laughing, and they could barely breathe.

But what Vik loved best was choosing what he wanted to do. He liked people who let him choose, and did not like people who told him what to do all the time. It made him feel responsible and good when he could make his own timetables, and plan his own day. Why did people feel that children were free all the time? Adults just come and tell children, "Come let us do this now". But what if the child had other plans? Which is why Vik liked people who asked

him about his own plans first. He was a kind little boy, and did not mind parking his own schedule if someone really needed him. But they really should ask first.

Grownups were odd, Vik thought sadly. Sometimes they chose to do the oddest things. They could choose to be happy and healthy, but they chose to smoke, or drink, or get addicted to the internet. That might make them happy for a while, maybe, but certainly not in the long run, and for sure it would not help them stay healthy.

Vik looked up again at what had been a blue sky, lit up with sunshine. It was suddenly cloudy, and he felt some drops of rain on his nose as he looked up. The rain never asked before it began, but that was okay.

He liked getting wet, but decided to go indoors before it began to pour. He wondered to himself whether the sky was crying tears of laughter or sadness... ..hmm, maybe he would ask mom and dad.

