Kamala was a naughty seven-year-old girl. She lived in a village in West Bengal with her parents and one-year-old brother Khokun. Kamala’s parents worked from morning till evening in the fields. They were poor so they could not send her to school. Kamala stayed at home and did all the house work besides looking after her brother Khokun.
Every morning Kamala swept the hut and started the fire using dry wood her parents brought home. She then boiled the rice with some salt for the day's meal. They also had a cow that gave them milk. Before going to work, her mother milked the cow. Kamala’s job was to boil the milk. This was her daily routine.
One day, while little Khokun slept in the cradle, Kamala secured the opening of their hut and dashed out. First she splashed around in the village pond for sometime. Then she spread her towel in the water to collect fish. Within minutes she had caught five big fish. Kamala wrapped the fish in the towel and ran home to her brother.
Khokun was awake by the time she returned. He had soiled his clothes and was crying. Kamala quickly changed him and played with him for a while. Then she soaked the fish in salt water and warmed the boiled rice. Putting Khokun on her lap she gently fed him the boiled rice.
After she had finished feeding him, she took some in a plate for herself and ate the rice with the fish pickle her mother had made.

After her lunch Kamala put her brother on her lap and sang him a lullaby. In no time Khokun was fast asleep. She gently put him in his cloth cradle and crept out of the hut. This time Kamala ran to the mango orchard nearby. She just could not stay indoors.
Raw, green mangoes hung from the branches of the trees. Quickly Kamala scrambled up the trunk of a big tree.

Soon she was swinging on its branches. Then her hand reached out and she began to pluck the mangoes and throw them on the ground. There was no one around, so there was nothing to worry about.
After Kamala had plucked enough mangoes, she climbed down the tree and collected the mangoes in a big sheet. Then tying it into a bundle she happily took the mangoes home.

When Kamala reached home Khokun was wide awake. She lifted him out of his cradle and held him close. Then she made him sit nearby and poured some milk in a glass. She gently fed him the milk and Khokun was happy.
Kamala took Khokun out in the courtyard. She also took the red ball which he loved. She threw the ball up in the air. That made Khokun clap his hands with joy.
Very soon Kamala’s parents returned from the fields. Her mother was happy that Kamala had looked after her little brother so well. She then saw the fish soaked in salt water. She smiled as she set out to cook it for their dinner. That is when Kamala’s mother saw the basket of raw mangoes. Her father saw it too and scolded Kamala for stealing somebody’s mangoes.
Days passed. Then one day Kamala again went to the mango grove. The mangoes had ripened by now. She knew she could not throw them on the ground as they would get squashed. So Kamala carried a jute bag to put them in.
This time she climbed the higher branches of the tree as the mangoes there looked bigger and juicier. She began to pluck the juicy mangoes and put them in the bag tied to her waist. All the while she was thinking of her little brother who was also fond of ripe mangoes.

All of a sudden the branch on which Kamala had climbed snapped and swung low. If it were to break, Kamala would fall to the ground. Kamala was very scared. She shouted for help. For quite sometime nobody came to her rescue.

Some time later Kamala heard voices. She again began shouting for help. The voices came nearer. Kamala could see that they were boys from the village. They had also come to steal the mangoes.
The boys saw Kamala hanging desperately from a branch.
Tarun, the leader of the group, was a brave boy. He lost no time and quickly began to climb the tree. Soon, he had reached Kamala. He stretched his hand out to her and Kamala held on tight.
Gradually Tarun encouraged her to slide towards him as he led her to another strong branch. Kamala now felt safe. Slowly Kamala and Tarun came down the tree. The other boys were anxiously waiting to help the two to the ground.
Once on the ground, Kamala was so relieved that she began to cry. The boys consoled her and took her home. Khokun had just woken up. Tarun and his friends took him to the courtyard and played with him. Kamala washed some mangoes and they all sat together and ate them. Khokun too loved sucking the sweet and juicy mangoes.

When Kamala’s parents came to know of their daughter’s adventure, they thanked Tarun for helping her. From that day onwards, Kamala swore never to climb the higher branches of a tree. But would she stop climbing trees? NEVER!

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