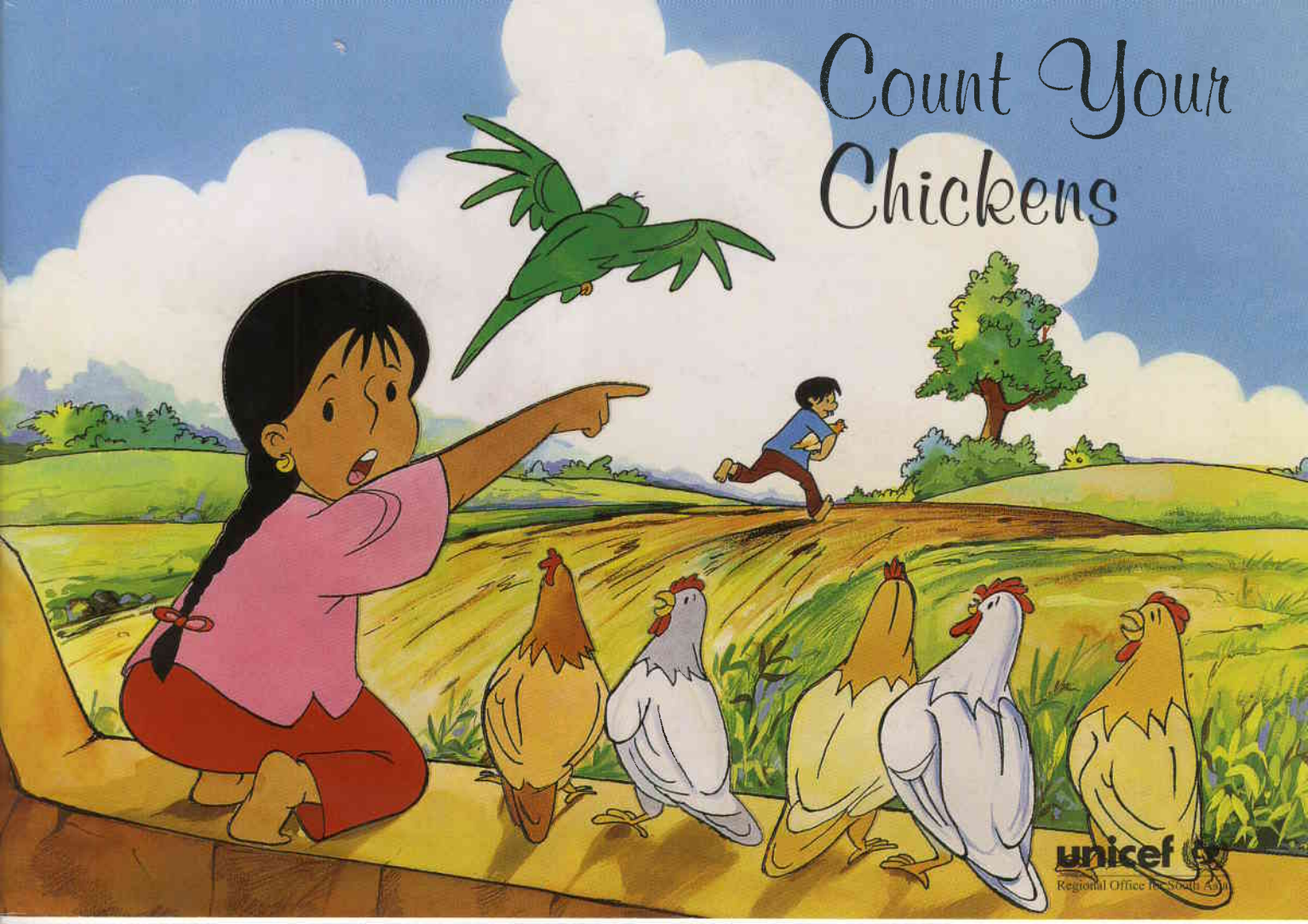
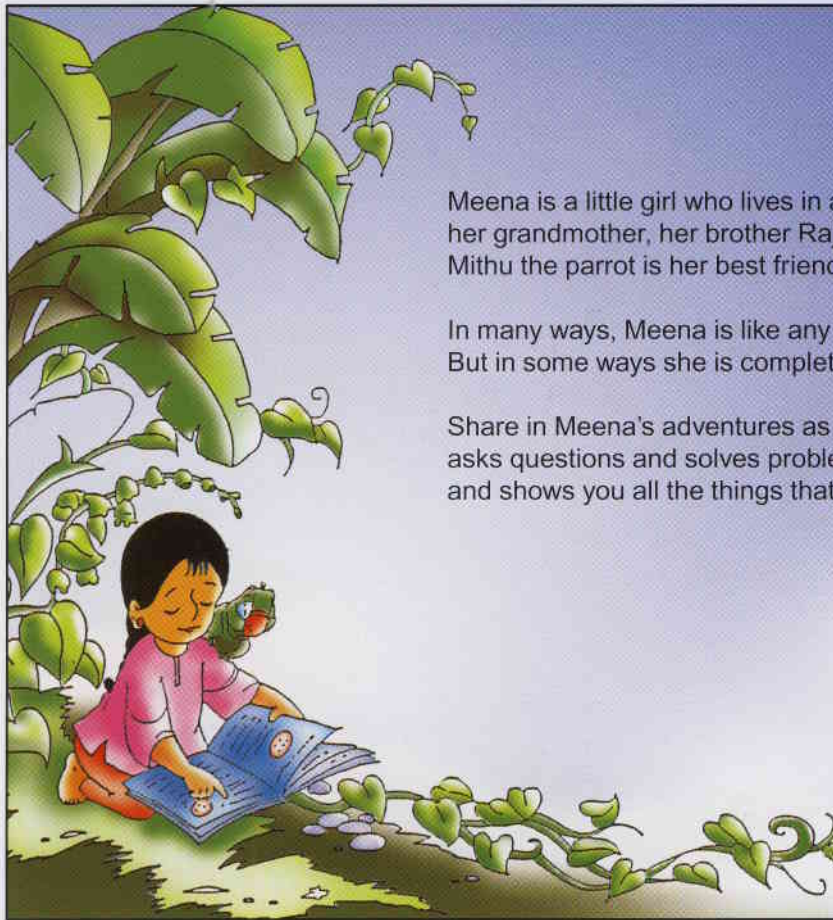


Count Your Chickens





Meena is a little girl who lives in a village with her parents, her grandmother, her brother Raju and her baby sister Rani. Mithu the parrot is her best friend.

In many ways, Meena is like any other little girl you know. But in some ways she is completely different.

Share in Meena's adventures as she laughs, climbs trees, asks questions and solves problems, and shows you all the things that a little girl can do.

| | |
|---|---|
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| Original concept: | Neill McKee |
| Comic book adaptation: | Deepa Balsavar and Deepa Hari |
| Artistic development and character designs: | Ram Mohan |
| Research: | Dr. Mira Aghi and research teams in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan |
| Layout and design: | Harsha Mehta Kelvin Lopez Sachin Satankar Milind Kadam |
| Project management: | Nuzhat Shahzadi |

One day, Meena and Mithu were returning home after collecting firewood.



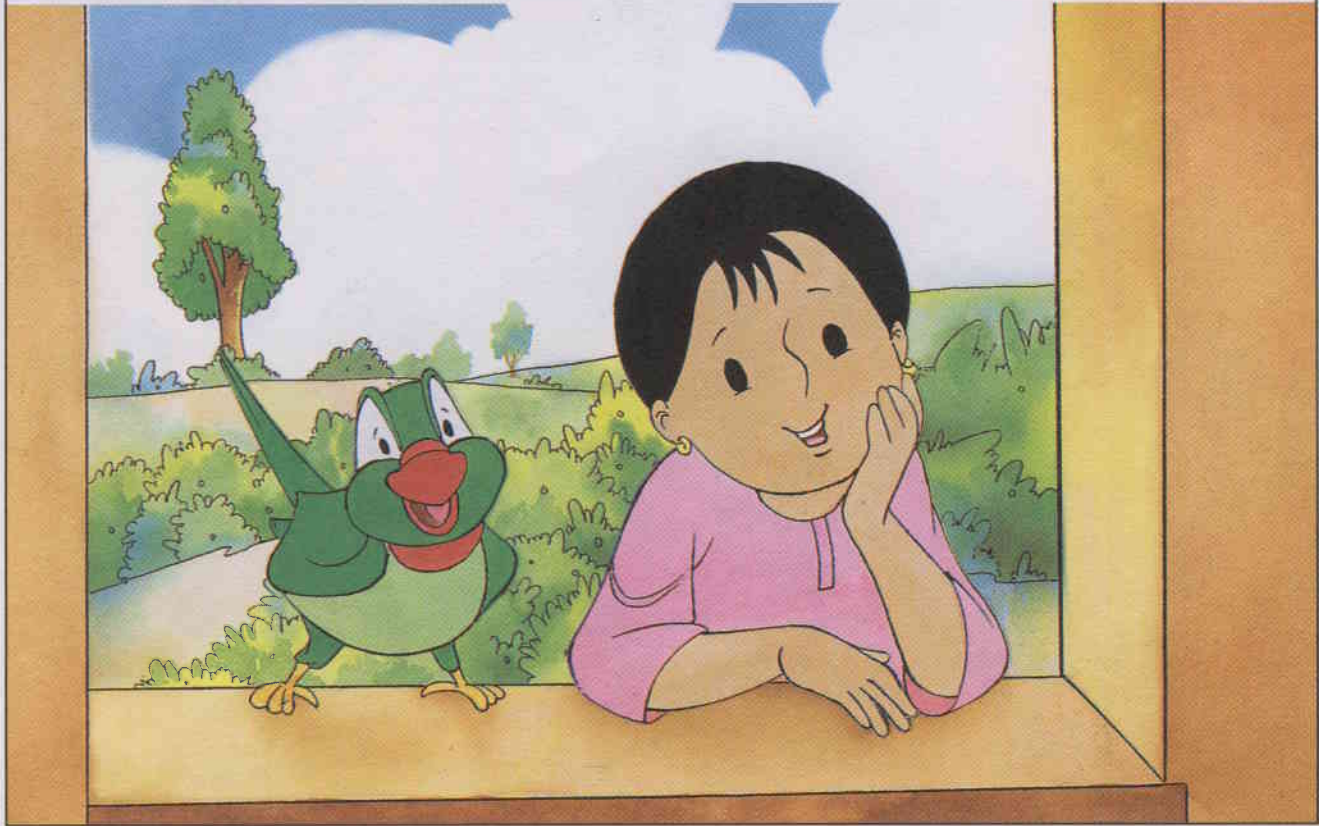
They had to pass the village school on the way. Raju went to this school. Meena and Mithu decided to stop at the school and see what was happening.



They found that the teacher was telling the children a wonderful story.



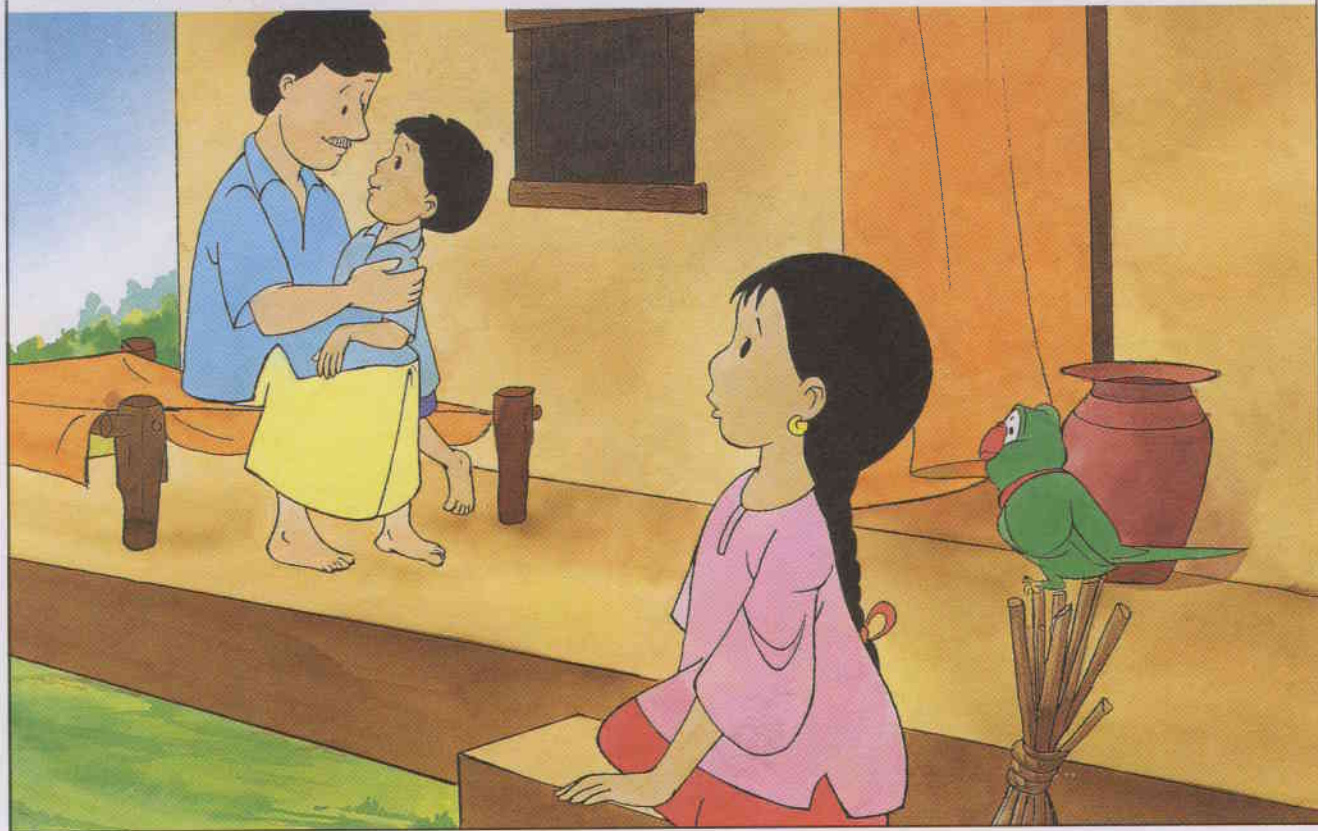
Meena and Mithu liked the story so much that they listened till the very end. Meena wished so much that she could go to school, too.



Walking back home, Meena pretended that she was a teacher and that Mithu was her student. She taught the parrot to say his name.



When Meena got home, Raju was proudly telling their father about all the things he learnt at school.



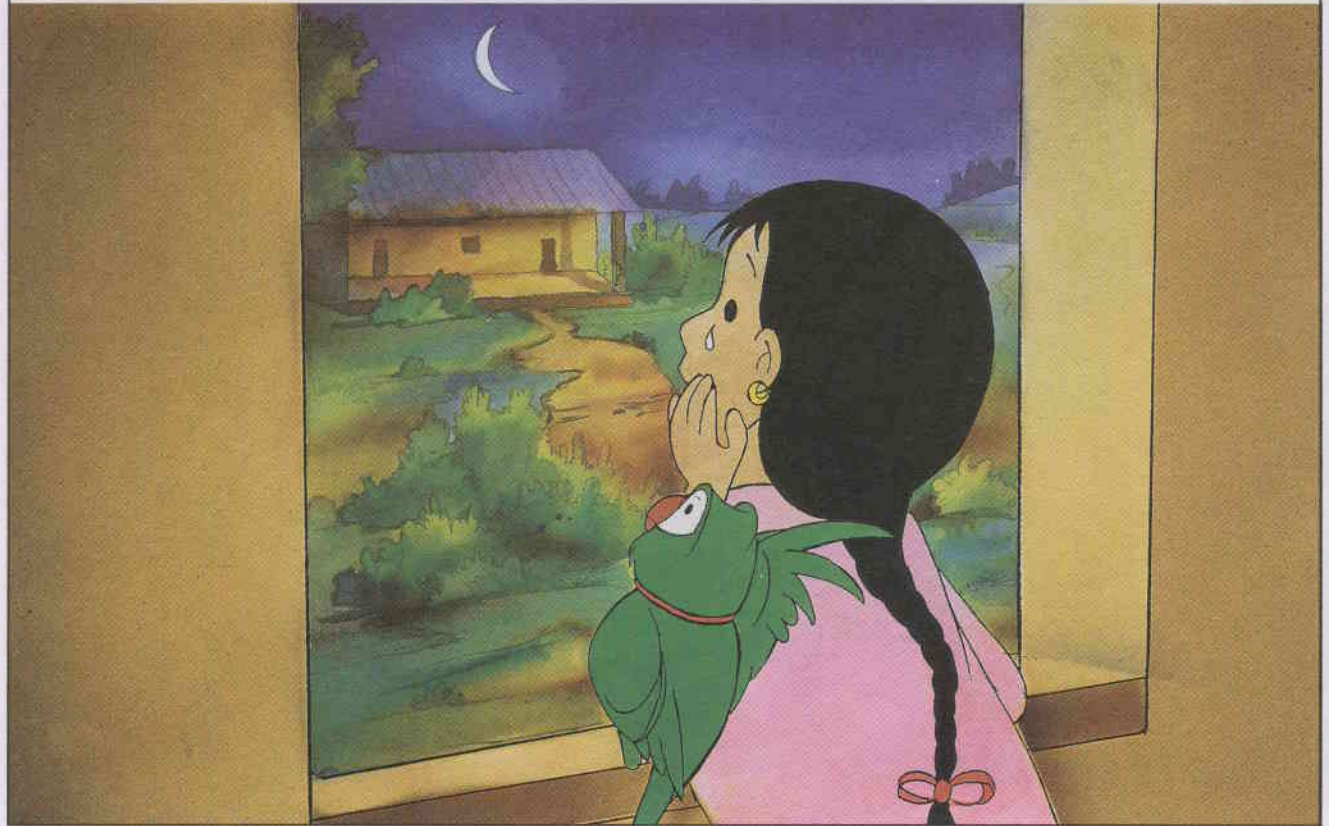
Meena looked at her father. "Oh, please, why can't I go to school, too?" she asked.



“You are needed at home to help Mother,” said her father. “Girls only need to cook, clean and look after the house,” added her mother. “You don’t need to go to school for that!”



Poor Meena! That night she stood sadly at the window. The school building was shining in the moonlight. How she wished she could study!



When she finally fell asleep, Meena had a strange dream. She was in class with many other girls and boys — and Mithu was the teacher!



The next morning, Meena watched sadly as Raju and his friends went to school.



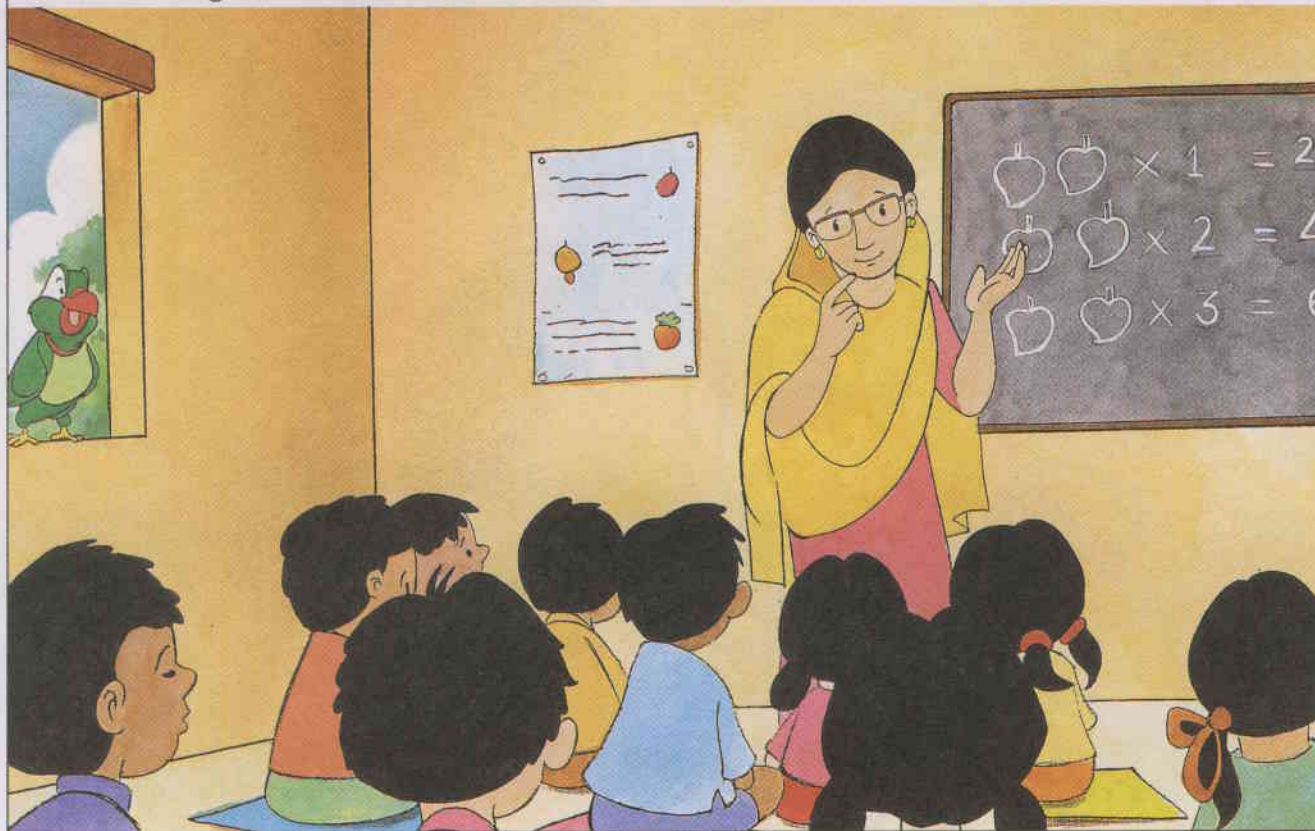
She remembered her dream and sat down to think. Somehow, she must make it come true. But how?



Then Meena had a wonderful idea. She would send Mithu to school. And he would come back and teach her everything he learnt there!



Mithu sat all morning at the window of the classroom. He listened carefully as the teacher taught the 2 times table.





And then he flew back home and taught Meena...



...Two ones are two
Two twos are four
Two threes are six...

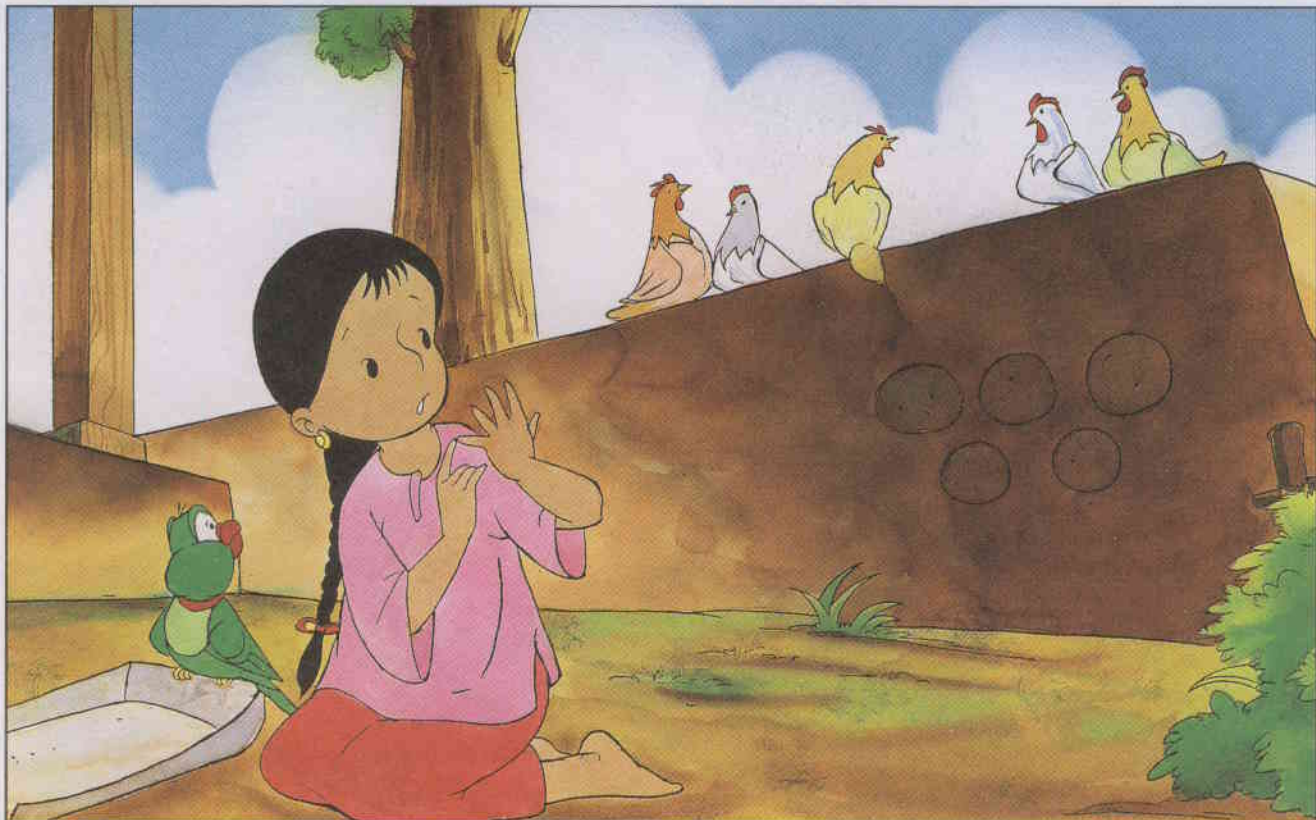
Soon, Meena was counting six of everything she saw.

She kept counting her father's six chickens. Meena was finally learning arithmetic, just like Raju.





That afternoon, when Meena and Mithu were busy, a thief came creeping up the wall. He stole one of the chickens and ran off.



“Six grains,” counted Meena, “.....and six chickens.” She turned to count them once more, but there was one missing.



Meena was puzzled. She looked all around, and that's when she saw the thief running away. "Thief, thief!" shouted Meena, as she and Mithu ran after him.



Soon, half the village had joined in the chase.



“Thief, thief,” squawked Mithu into the thief’s ear.
The man was so scared that he fell backward into the paddy field.



And there he stayed until the villagers came running up.

The village headman was very proud of Meena. He asked her how she had noticed the thief and Meena explained that she had counted the chickens and found one missing.





The headman then congratulated Meena's parents for sending such a clever girl to school. When Meena's parents said that Meena did not go to school, the villagers were amazed. "Every child should go to school," said the headman.



“Yes,” said a neighbour, “my married daughter lives far away, but she can write me letters, because I sent her to school.” “My educated daughter runs her own poultry business,” said an old woman proudly. “I went to school and can look after my baby better,” added a shy, young mother.



Meena's parents made a big decision. They decided that Meena would start school the very next day.

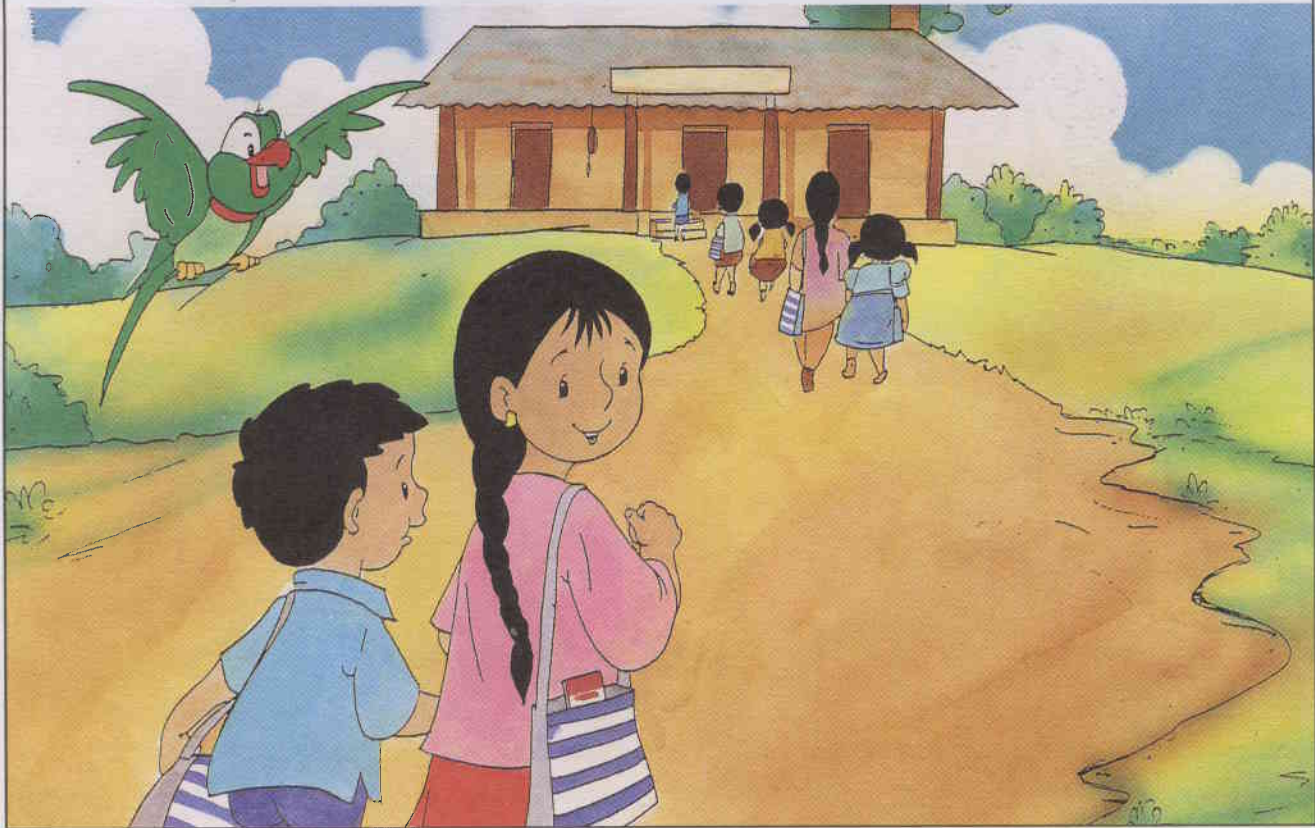
Meena and Raju were overjoyed. They danced with happiness.





Everyone was still puzzled about one thing. Who had taught Meena to count? "A friend," said Meena and giggled as Mithu announced proudly, "My name is Mithu!"

The next day was Meena's first day at school. She was so happy. She had caught a chicken thief and made her dream come true!



Meena and Mithu say, "Every child must go to school!"





Solve this puzzle by placing the point of your pencil on dot number 1 and drawing a line to dot number 2. Then draw another line to dot number 3 and so on, until you have connected all the dots. After you have done this, you may use your crayons to color this surprise picture.



Other titles in this series

1. Dividing the Mango
2. Will Meena Leave School?
3. Who's Afraid of the Bully?
4. Saving a Life
5. Meena's Three Wishes
6. Say No to Dowry
7. Too Young to Marry
8. Take Care of Girls
9. I Love School
10. It's Got to Be a Boy!
11. Meena in the City
12. A Girl's Story

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