

Holi

MUSHROOM SOUP FOR BREAKFAST





There was a quiet town in a quiet country in an even quieter part of the world. A large town with rows of streets, each one faultlessly lined up next to another. Perfectly parallel.

Each street had a name, and the first was called Grey Street. The next was called Greyer Street, the one next to that Even More Grey Street and so on. You get the idea.

The town's supermarkets only sold grey mushroom soup.

The schools only had grey crayons to draw with.

The cinema only showed grey films.

Everyone wore grey clothes and everyone's homes had grey walls.

But the people of the town didn't know anything different. They enjoyed their grey lives, with their grey colouring-in and their grey mushroom soup.

One day, a man called Ranj was driving through the town. He didn't mean to be there. He took a wrong turn and ended up in town by accident. But it was dark and he needed some food and a place to sleep for the night.





He found the town's hotel. He walked through the grey doors and checked in at the grey desk. He walked through the grey halls and into his grey room. He threw himself on his grey bed and ordered room service from the grey menu. He ordered mushroom soup, and then he went to sleep.

It was only when Ranj was at breakfast the next morning that he realised something wasn't quite right.

"Excuse me, miss," he said to his waitress. "Is this the right menu? Only ... there is only mushroom soup on here, and it's breakfast time."





"Yes, sir," the waitress replied, with the straightest face you ever did see. "We only do mushroom soup." And she walked away in her grey apron.

"Thank goodness I wore my grey clothes today," he said, quietly, "or I would have stuck out like a sore thumb."

After a soupy breakfast, Ranj checked out of the hotel and dragged his big suitcase out of the lobby. It was so heavy with all his work things. He dragged it down a grey kerb and SNAP! the whole case sprang open in a cloud of colour. For Ranj was a cook, and now all of his sprinkles and his spices and his cupcake cases were all over the pavement.

Everyone stopped and stared for a moment. The hotel manager rushed up to Ranj. "Are you okay there, sir? My eyes are hurting from all this ... all this ... er - what is this?" The manager swept his arms out wide, gesturing at the multicoloured pavement.

Ranj couldn't work out what the hotel manager was talking about, until he looked around at all the grey. "Colour!" he said. "It's colour! Surely you've seen colour before?"



The hotel manager shook his head, straightened his grey tie and went back inside, leaving Ranj to it. Ranj picked up his things and got into his car. *How can you live in a world with no colour?* he thought to himself.

A week later, Ranj came back to the quiet town with the same suitcase. This time, he was wearing his most colourful clothes and had covered his car in the brightest stickers he could find. He opened the boot of his car and pulled out some more suitcases that were full of goodies. He had made rainbow sprinkle fudge and golden hot chocolate spoons. In another case were bowls of red tomatoes and orange carrot sticks and fruit in all the beautiful jewel colours.



He put up a sign. It read: *'Come and try some colour, guaranteed to make you smile!'*

But no one would come over to Ranj. They stood at a distance, squinting at him and his colourful car.

So Ranj reached into the back seat. He drew his hands back out, something in both fists. He opened his fingers and blew. POOOFFF! A cloud of red flour burst into the air. The people gasped. He opened his other fist. POOOFFF! A cloud of purple flour.

A little girl broke away from the crowd and ran over to Ranj. She tugged at his trousers. *"It's magic!"* she said. *"Please can I try some colour?"*

Ranj smiled down at the little girl and handed her a piece of rainbow fudge.

She looked at it, popped it into her mouth and smiled. Then a few more people came over. A mother, a grandmother, even a



Holi is the festival of colours, celebrated in February or March by followers of the Hindu, Sikh and Jain faiths. Anyone can join in though, as Holi unites people of all backgrounds in colourful joy!

puppy. Ranj brought out the boxes of coloured flour he had on the back seat. The people joyfully threw great handfuls of the coloured flour in the air and all over each other, laughing and shouting and filling their mouths with Ranj's delicious, colourful food.

From that day on, the quiet grey town became a place of colour and smiles. Mushroom soup was only served with a rainbow-sprinkles topping and the people lived happily ever after in Red Street, Orange Street, Yellow Street... You get the idea!

