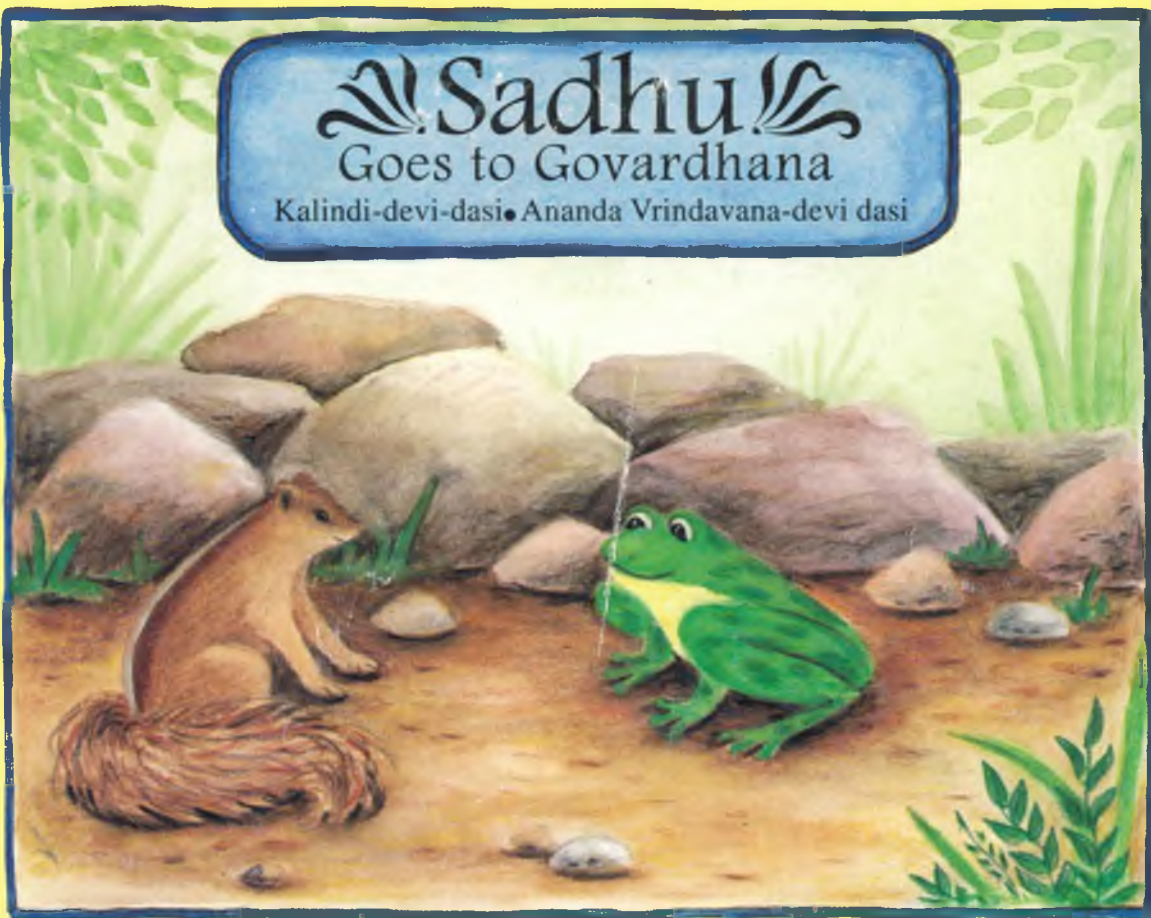


Sadhu

Goes to Govardhana

Kalindi-devi-dasi • Ananda Vrindavana-devi dasi



Sadhu Goes to Govardhana

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Offered with love to

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



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Govardhana Hill is special because Krishna performed many pastimes there. Krishna lifted this hill like a large umbrella, and sheltered all the devotees from Indra's rain storm. Govardhana is about one hour from Vrindavana town—longer if you come by bullock cart, as Sadhu and Frog did.

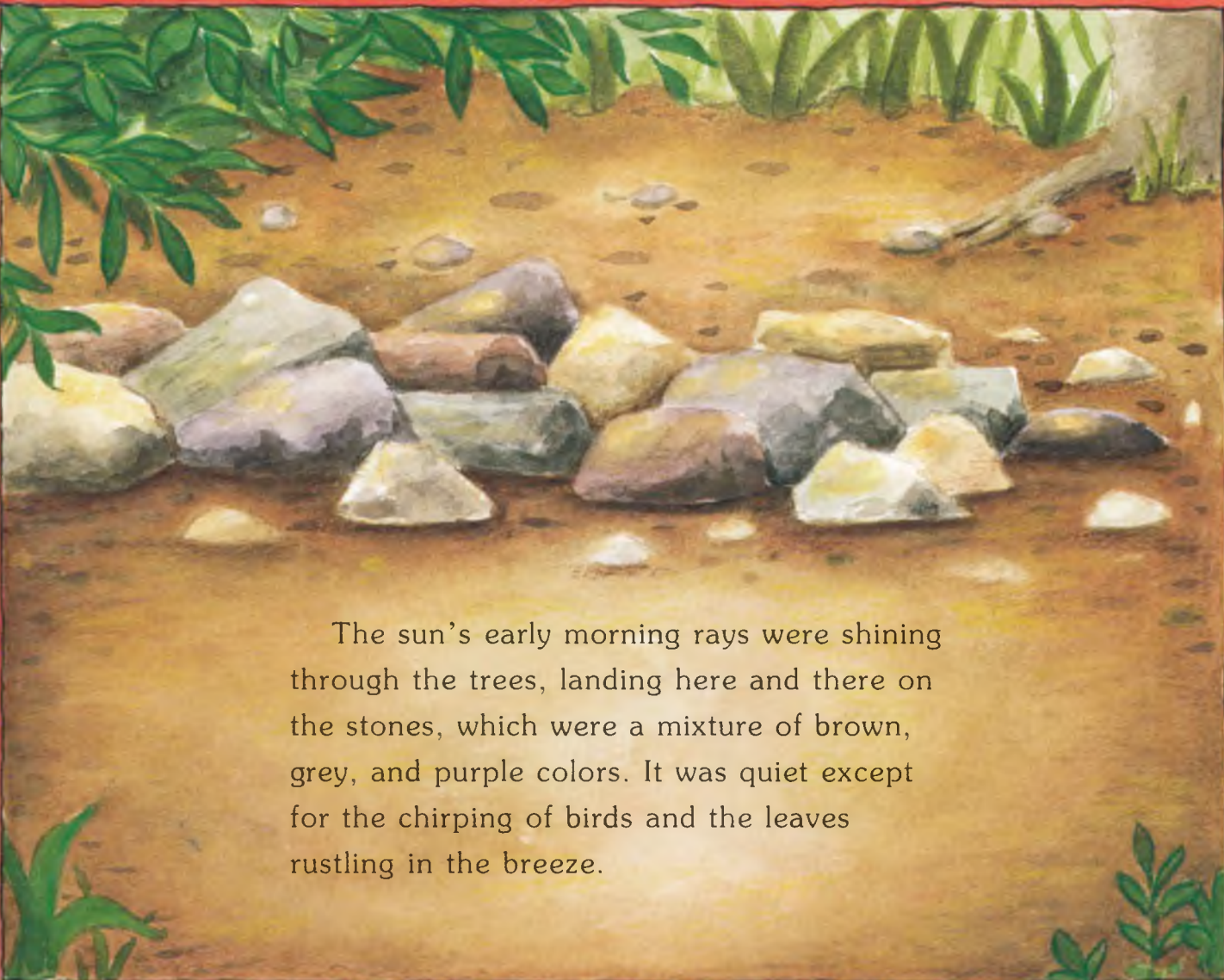
When they arrived, Sadhu jumped off the bullock cart and raced to the side of the road.

“Sadhu! Sadhu! Wait for me,” Frog called anxiously, afraid he might get lost.

“Follow me,” Sadhu said, and disappeared into the bushes. He and Frog were good friends, and this was the first time they had gone to Govardhana together. When Frog caught up, Sadhu said, “Look straight ahead. Do you see those few rocks and boulders? That’s the beginning of Govardhana Hill.”

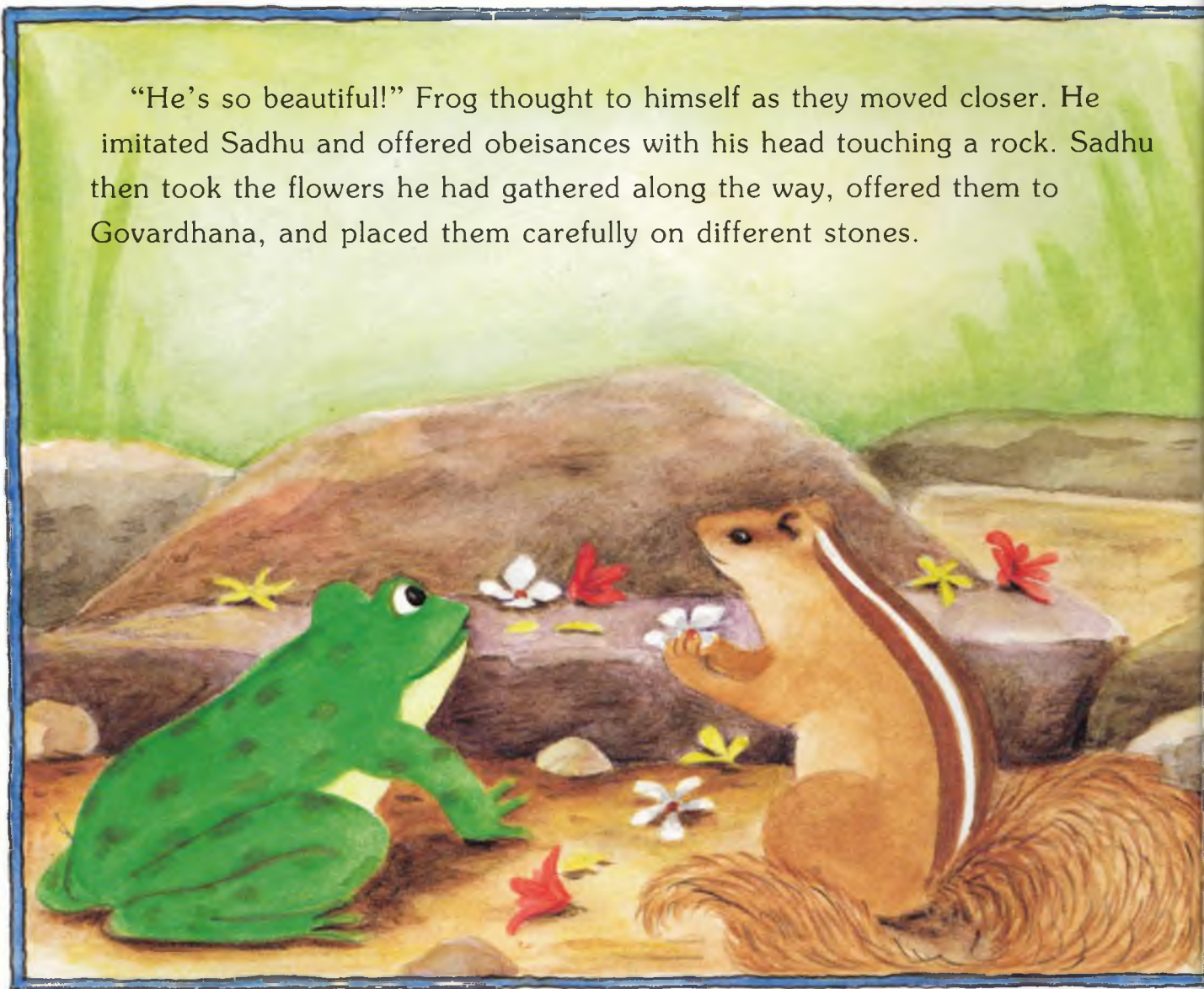
Frog blinked and looked carefully.





The sun's early morning rays were shining through the trees, landing here and there on the stones, which were a mixture of brown, grey, and purple colors. It was quiet except for the chirping of birds and the leaves rustling in the breeze.

“He’s so beautiful!” Frog thought to himself as they moved closer. He imitated Sadhu and offered obeisances with his head touching a rock. Sadhu then took the flowers he had gathered along the way, offered them to Govardhana, and placed them carefully on different stones.



“Govardhana is considered the greatest devotee of Krishna, because he lets Krishna and Balarama, with Their cows and friends, play on him. He gives soft green grass for sitting on, fresh clean water for drinking, caves in which to hide, rocks for climbing on, and all kinds of slides and swings and ...”

“Water to swim in?” interrupted Frog.

“Yes!” Sadhu laughed, “and water to swim in for His frog friends like you, who splash about and make Him happy.”





They took a ride on another cart as far as Manasi Ganga, the large kunda where the water is nondifferent from the Ganges. Frog bathed and felt refreshed, while Sadhu sprinkled drops of water on his head. They heard the story of how Krishna dressed as a boatman and took the gopis across the lake to the other side.

There was a storm, and when the boat began to leak, the gopis became frightened. Krishna just laughed. He made them throw all their jewelry and pots of ghee and yogurt into the water, but still the boat was sinking. Finally, when the gopis clung to the boatman, they understood that he was Krishna and they were relieved.



Frog liked the story and jumped back into the water.

“I have a great idea!” he said. “Let’s stay here all day!”

“What about Dan Gati, Govinda Kunda, Aniyora and all the other wonderful places at Govardhana?” Sadhu asked.

“But it’s so hot. I might dry up.”

“Don’t worry, Frog. There are lots of kundas. Look over there. Let’s take a ride on that lady’s bundle of grass. Quickly.”





Frog scrambled up the steps to keep up with Sadhu. They jumped into the grass and soon were perched high above the busy street, watching all the action below.



As they approached Dan Gati, Sadhu explained that this was where Krishna demanded tax from the gopis, who were carrying butter and yogurt across the narrow path. The gopis were indignant, and they threw butter and yogurt at Krsna.

Sadhu and Frog offered obeisances at Dan Gati and sat next to the hill.

“Govardhana is higher here,” Frog said.

“Mmm,” Sadhu replied, “and he gets even higher further on.”

They looked up at the rocks and boulders, which seemed so big compared to their small bodies. Lots of monkeys were on the hill, the older ones moving about slowly and the babies jumping, tumbling, and chasing one another.





They stopped for lunch at Aniyora, in the shade of a pipal tree. As they ate they shouted “Aniyora! Aniyora! Give me more! Give me more!” just as Krishna had shouted when He ate all the offerings the Brijbasis had cooked.

A bullock cart carrying cow dung patties stopped on the road, and the two friends climbed aboard. “After Govinda Kunda we will walk,” Sadhu said. Frog was beginning to think Govardhana parikrama was easy.



“Some devotees do dandavat parikrama,” Sadhu continued.

“Danda what?”

“Dandavat. That’s when you offer obeisances all the way around the hill. It takes a long, long time.”

Frog thought it would take him ages to do dandavat parikrama since his body was so short. Sadhu’s body was longer, plus he had a tail. Sadhu read his thoughts.

“You would surely dry up doing dandavat parikrama,” he laughed. Frog heartily agreed.

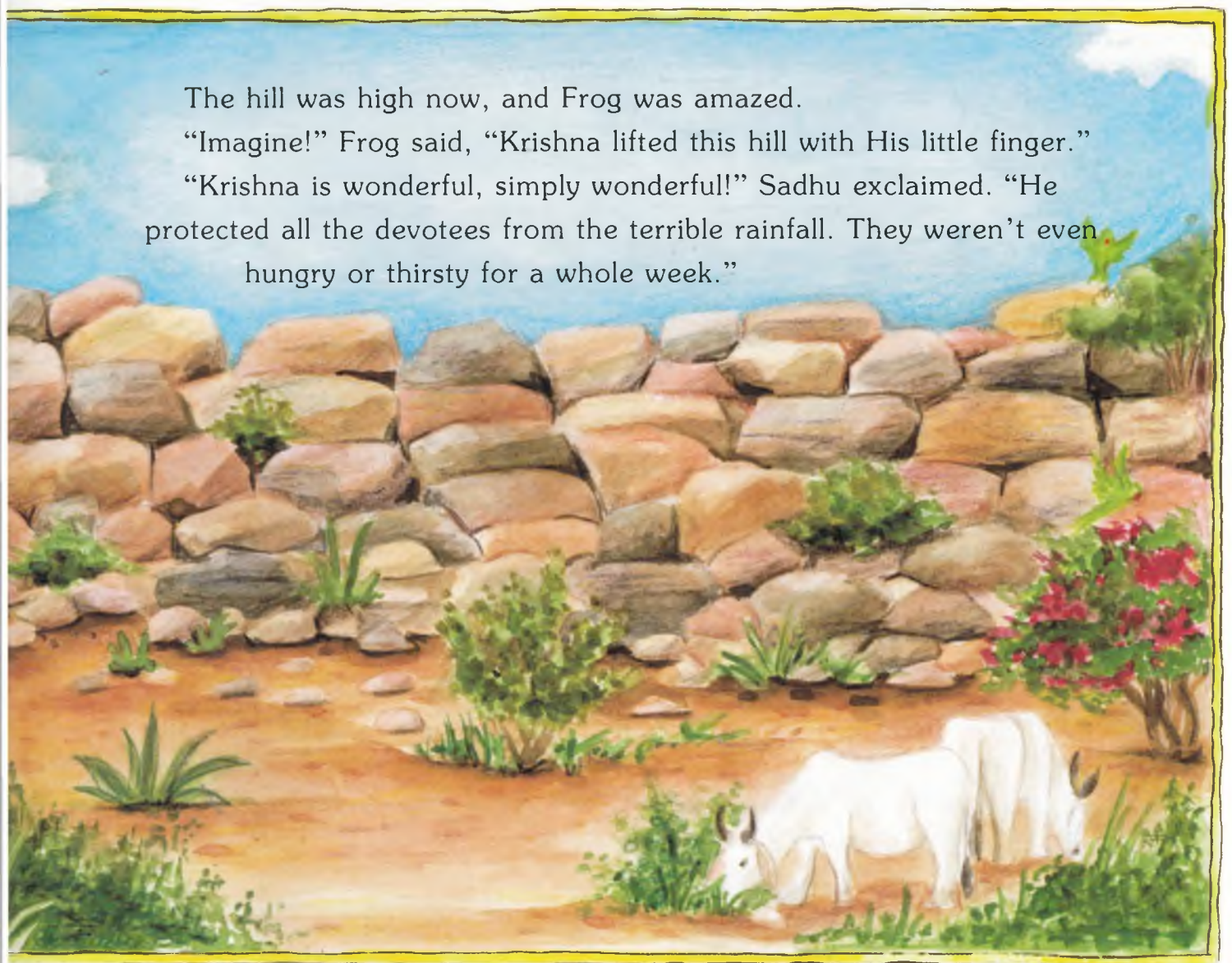


As the cart moved down the road, they were able to see Govardhana Hill clearly. Cows and goats were grazing on his sides. White clouds floated in the blue sky above and the colorful bougainvillaea flowers looked like splashes of paint against the copper, brown, grey, and purple boulders. Peacocks, parrots, and other birds kept the air filled with song.

The hill was high now, and Frog was amazed.

“Imagine!” Frog said, “Krishna lifted this hill with His little finger.”

“Krishna is wonderful, simply wonderful!” Sadhu exclaimed. “He protected all the devotees from the terrible rainfall. They weren’t even hungry or thirsty for a whole week.”





After bathing at Govinda Kunda, they walked on a sandy path that brought them close to the hill. It was getting hot. There were lots of different footprints in the sand, and Sadhu and Frog tried to guess whose they were.

“Ouch! Hare Krishna!” Sadhu shouted. He had stepped on a thorn.

“It’s mercy,” he thought as he held back his tears. Frog helped him pull it out and they continued on their journey.

“Look, Frog” Sadhu said excitedly, “ do you see those small stacks of rocks by the side of the path?”

Frog nodded.

“There is a famous prayer by Rupa Goswami that says, ‘Govardhana, please let me live close by you.’ Devotees come and build little stone houses, praying that one day they will live by Govardhana and serve Krishna.”

“Can we build one?” Frog asked.

“Why not!” Sadhu replied cheerfully.





They set to work. It was hot, but they pulled and pushed and heaved the stones on top of one another. They were careful not to disturb anyone else's house. As they worked they chanted *Jaya Giri Govardhana, jaya Giri Govardhana*. They decided to make one big house and share it.

"Let's make it so big that our friends can also come and live with us by Govardhana," Sadhu suggested.

"Great idea!" Frog said.

Soon they were done and Sadhu was just placing the last stone on top. It was heavy, and he had to lean and stretch to push it up. Somehow he put the rock down crooked and the whole house collapsed—with both of them inside! For a moment, everything was quiet. All that could be seen was a bundle of rocks and Sadhu's furry tail sticking out the top.



“Frog?”

“Yes?”

“Are you all right?”

“Yes. Are you?”

“I think so. I’m stuck though, and I can’t find my tail.”

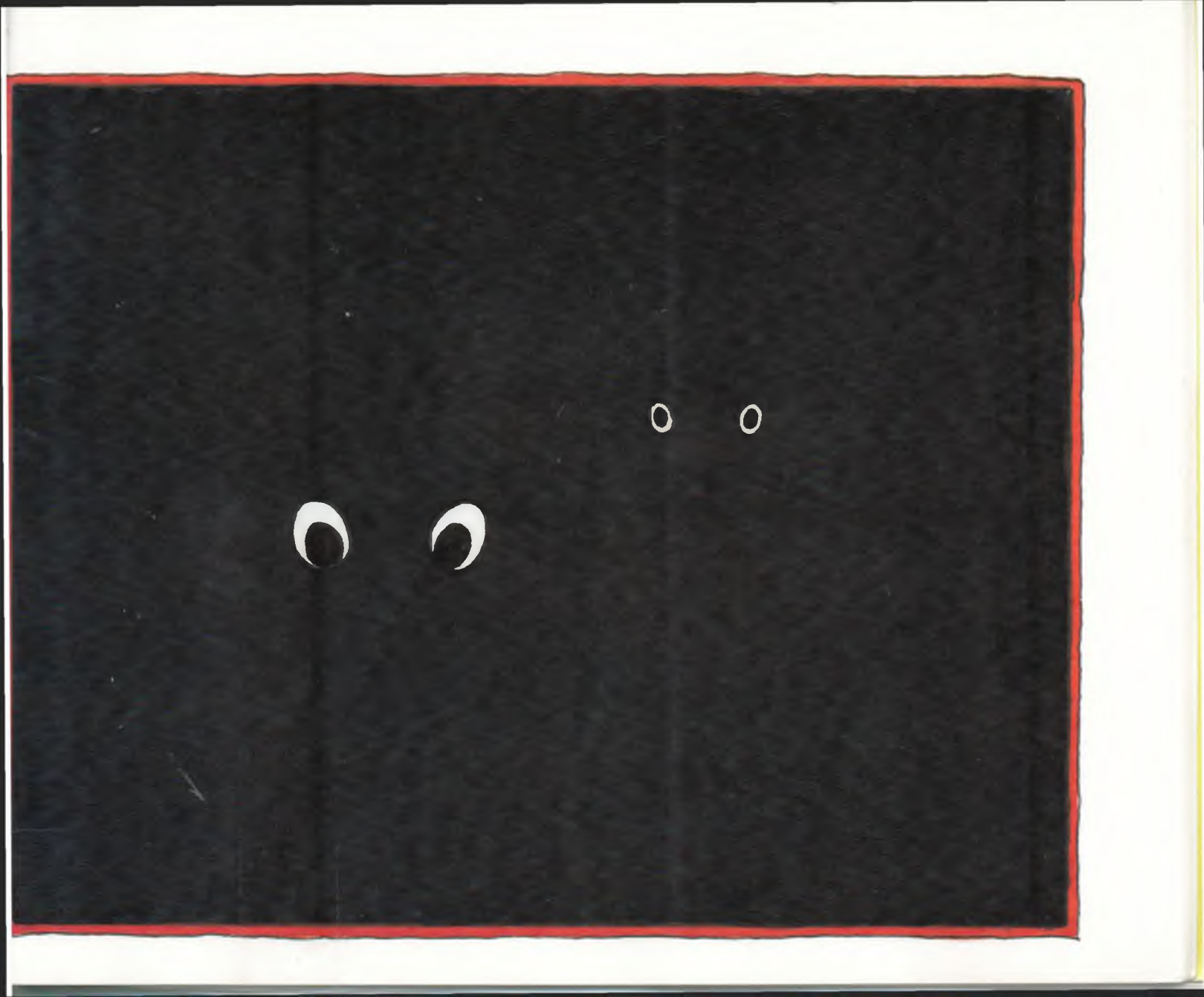
They peered at each other through the darkness.

“Maybe Govardhana is fulfilling your desire to live by him,” Frog suggested.

“Very funny, Frog.”

“What will we do now, Sadhu?” Frog was beginning to feel anxious.

“Pray,” Sadhu said, “and start trying to move these rocks.”





There was light coming in through the cracks between the rocks. Frog pushed and pushed, but the rocks were jammed. He couldn't make an opening. It was beginning to look hopeless. A big tear welled up in his eye.

"I'm scared," he said.

"Don't worry, Frog. Krishna will help us. I'm sure of it." Sadhu replied, even though he himself didn't feel so brave."

They sat and chanted. Sadhu found his tail and pulled it in inch by inch. It was painful, but once he got his tail back he felt a lot better.

"Okay, Frog. Lets work together to move these rocks," Sadhu said. "Ready? One, two, three—PUSH!"





With great effort they managed to move the rocks enough to make a small opening. Sadhu squeezed out and then helped Frog, who was covered in dust but happy to be free.

“Oh, Sadhu!” he said. “Thank you for saving me. I thought I would be stuck in there forever.”

“That’s okay, Frog,” Sadhu said, as he rubbed his bruised tail. “That’s what friends are for. Krishna is also our best friend, and He and His devotees will always take care of us no matter what.”

He gave Frog a big hug. Now it was getting late, so they dusted themselves off quickly and went to Puncari.



Sadhu brought Frog to the area where Krishna had His rasa dance. “Shhh,” he whispered. “This is a very special place. This is where Krishna danced with the gopis under the moonlight. Only pure devotees can see these pastimes.”

“Then what are we doing here?” Frog asked, opening his big eyes wide.

“Trying to get some mercy so we can understand we are Krishna’s eternal servants. Then we can go back home, back to Godhead.”

“And in the meantime?”

“Back home, back to Vrindavana!” Sadhu said with a smile, and scampered off toward the roadway.

“Wait, wait for me Sadhu!” Frog called after him, hopping and huffing and puffing to catch up.





When they arrived home they rushed to tell Priya, their cow friend, all about their adventures.

“You’ll never believe what happened at Govardhana,” Sadhu began, full of excitement. Priya listened to the two friends.

“Sounds like you had a good day,” Priya said. “Maybe next time I’ll go with you.”

“Haribol!” shouted Sadhu and Frog.

Just then, Frog jumped on Priya’s back.

“And maybe I can take a ride if I get tired?” he grinned.

“Sure,” said Priya. Then she swished her tail and sent Frog tumbling onto the grass.

“You’ll just have to hold on tight!” she added, and all three friends laughed and laughed.



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Join Sadhu and his friends as he discovers the sacred land of Vrindavana

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