

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Music Box

A Children's Story For
The Centennial



Written by
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Dedicated to

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

On the occasion of the One Hundredth
Anniversary of his Appearance

Śrīla Prabhupāda Centennial Ki Jaya!
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“No.”

“Please, Braja,” Mummy said “I’ve asked you so many times. Mother Sita is your friend. She just wants to say hello to you!”

“No,” was again the muffled reply from behind Mummy’s sari.

“That’s O.K.,” Sita said “It’s good for little girls to be shy.”

“Sometimes I wonder about that,” Mummy said, “I think she may be too shy. Last weekend some devotees came to our house for prasādam. It was such a problem. She wouldn’t even come out of her room. She wanted me to stay in the room with her. I couldn’t even serve my guests!”



“How old is she now?” Sita asked.

“Six.”

“Well, she’ll grow out of it. Don’t worry. You know what Śrīla Prabhupāda said ‘Girls should be like a lamb at home and a lion in the chase.’”

“But he was talking about preachers,” Mummy said, “I just can’t imagine this girl ever being a preacher.”

As Braja stood there listening to her Mummy and Mother Sita, she thought, “Just wait and see, Mummy; I will be a preacher. . . someday.”

Braja wasn’t shy about going to the temple.

“Come on, Daddy. We’ll be late,” Braja shouted from the front door. “We can’t wait for

Mummy to get ready!"

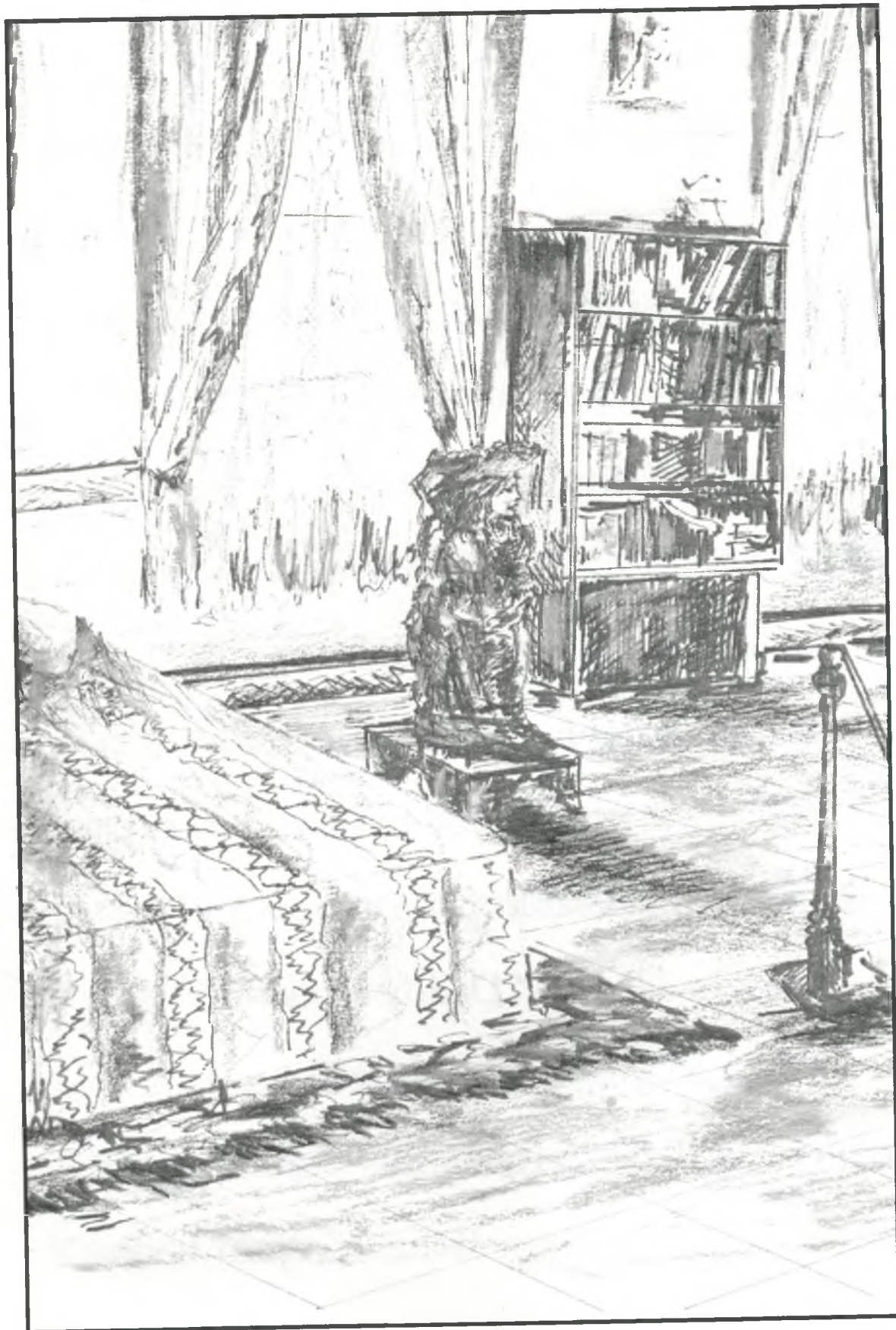
"You two go ahead. I'll come later," Mummy said.

Each day Braja would join all the devotees in the temple and bow before Rukmini and Dwarkadish. Of course, she made sure to hold tightly onto Daddy's hand. She didn't like to run up front like the other children.

After chanting in the kirtan for a few minutes, Braja whispered to Daddy, "Let's go upstairs to Śrīla Prabhupāda's room."

"All right, let's go," Daddy replied.

As they entered the brightly lit room and bowed before the deity of Śrīla Prabhupāda, Braja said, "Do you smell that incense? It smells

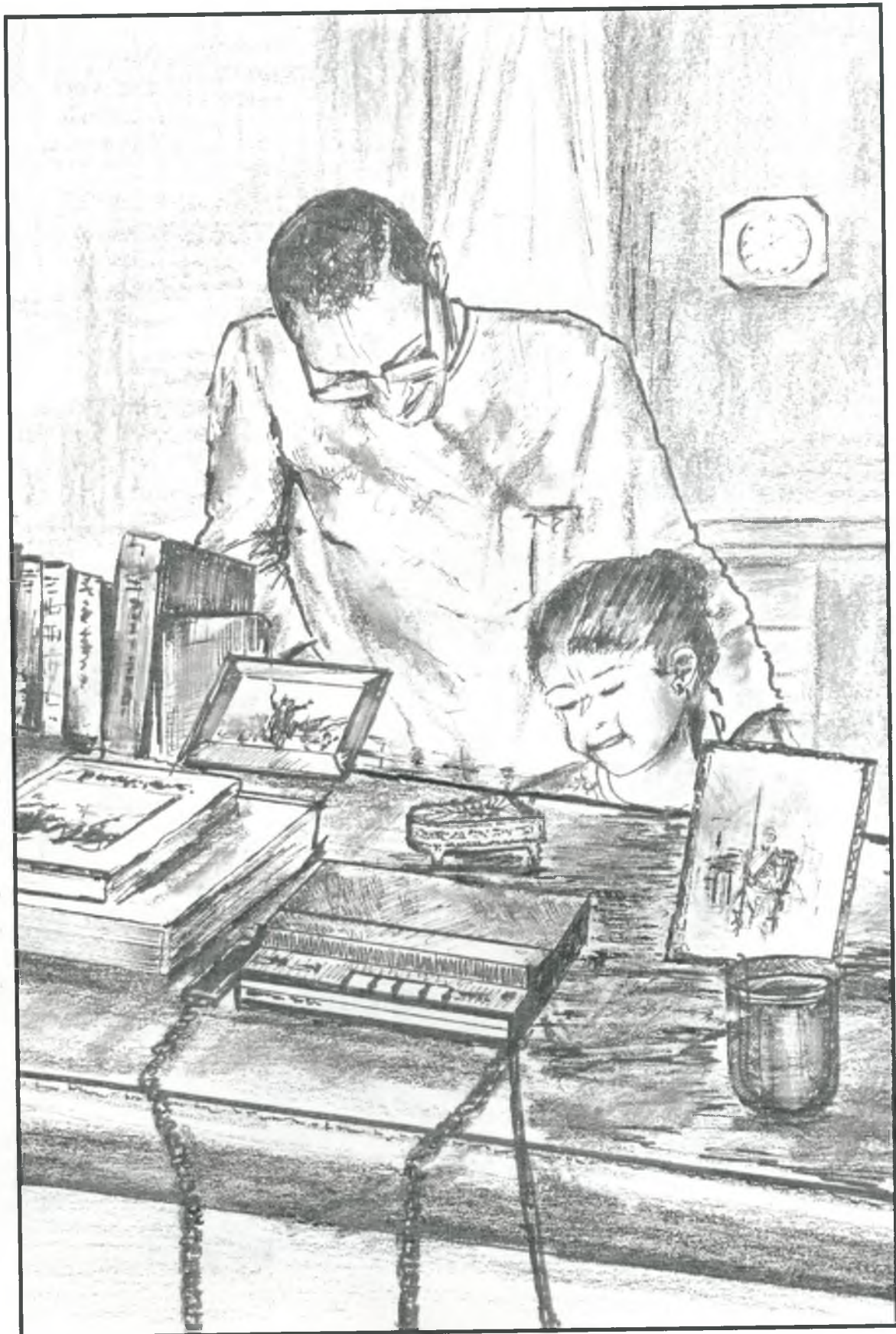


so good. This is my favorite place in the whole world!"

Śrīla Prabhupāda has three rooms at the Los Angeles temple, and the devotees keep them just as they were when Śrīla Prabhupāda actually stayed there. The walls are painted blue, and gold curtains decorate the windows. Each room is filled with things Śrīla Prabhupāda personally used.

There is the dictaphone he used to write his books. The bed he slept in. The rocking chair he sat in. His slippers, his medicine, and the table where he took prasadam.

Of all the things in Śrīla Prabhupāda's rooms, Braja was most enchanted by a small



music box placed on the table in the sitting room. It is shaped like a baby grand piano, and is engraved with a flower design. On the top there is a little Cupid holding a harp. It looks like it is made of silver, but it's not shiny. It probably hasn't been polished in a very long time.

The music box is the reason Braja likes Śrīla Prabhupāda's room so much. It's Braja's and Daddy's fun secret.

"Can I make it play that song, Daddy?"

"Yes, but do it quick before anyone else comes in."

Braja picked up the music box and wound up the handle. As she set it back on the table

and lifted the top, a soft sweet tinkling sound began to play.

The music box plays the tune “Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head.” It never fails to bring a smile to Braja’s face.

One day as Braja and Daddy were leaving Śrīla Prabhupāda’s room, Braja asked, “Daddy, where did Śrīla Prabhupāda get that music box?”

“I don’t know, Braja, but I’m sure that some of the other devotees know.”

“Will you ask them for me, Daddy?”

“Braja, I was thinking it might be nice if you asked them about the music box,” Daddy replied.

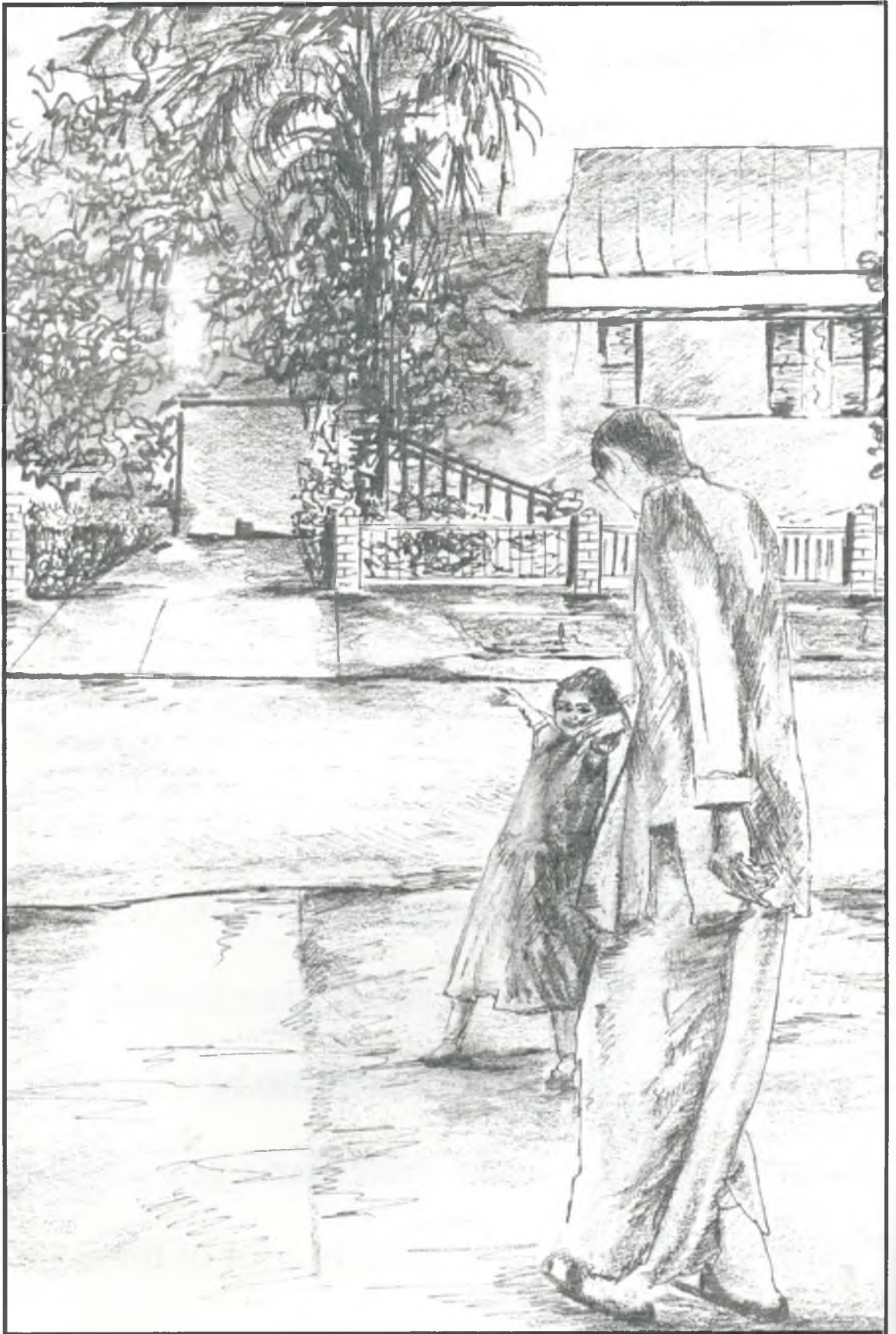
“No, no, Daddy. Please. You ask them for me, I don’t want to do it.”

“Well, O.K., but there is really no reason to be so shy, Braja. Noboby is going to bite you.”

Braja and Daddy first went to see Rabindranath Prabhu. He has lived at the Los Angeles temple longer than any other devotee.

“Excuse me, Prabhu,” Daddy said “My little girl is curious about that little music box on Śrīla Prabhupāda’s table upstairs. Do you know anything about how he got it?”

“No, I don’t, but I’m pretty sure it was there when Śrīla Prabhupāda last came here in 1976,” Rabindranath replied. “Why don’t you talk to Padmagarbha das? He collects a lot of the



things Śrīla Prabhupāda used. He might know something.”

“Thanks, we’ll do that.”

Padmagarbha didn’t know anything about the music box. But said that Hari Sauri Prabhu would be coming to the temple in a few days and we should ask him. Hari Sauri had been Śrīla Prabhupāda’s personal servant the last time Śrīla Prabhupāda came to Los Angeles. Perhaps he would know something about the music box.

By this point Daddy was ready to give up.

“Finding out about that music box is harder than I thought it would be,” he said.

Daddy was a little surprised when Braja

replied, "We can't stop now Daddy. Let's ask Mother Gunavati. She's a pujari. She probably knows about the music box."

But Mother Gunavati didn't know anything, and neither did Rama das, the head pujari.

Days passed, and although Braja and Daddy asked many devotees, not one of them knew anything about Śrīla Prabhupāda's music box.

"How's the music box project going?" Mummy asked one morning at breakfast.

"We've talked to so many devotees, but nobody knows anything. Padmagarbha Prabhu said Hari Sauri is coming here soon. Maybe he will know something," Braja said.

"She's pretty determined to find out

something. It's funny. That music box used to be our secret, but now Braja is asking everyone about it," Daddy said.

"She is asking everyone about it?"

"Yes, she is asking everyone," Daddy said. *"I thought you might be surprised to hear that."*

Finally, on Lord Caitanya's

Appearance Day Hari Sauri Prabhu arrived at the temple. During the morning class he read from his new book about Śrīla Prabhupāda to the large gathering of devotees. He described how Śrīla Prabhupāda was so kind to his devotees that every day he would spend time answering letters from around the world.

Everyone laughed and clapped on hearing



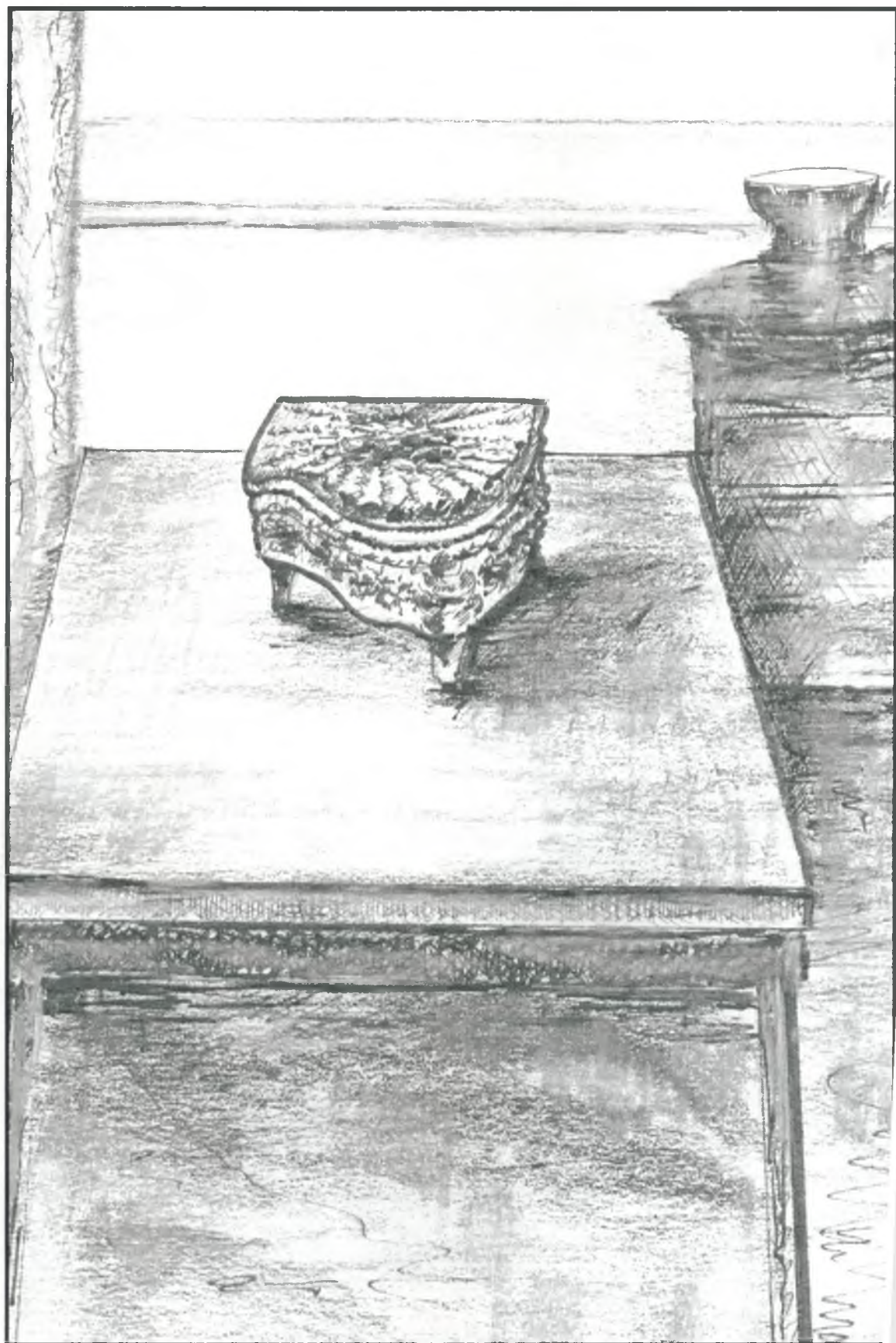
Śrīla Prabhupāda's pastimes. Hari Sauri then explained the importance of remembering Śrīla Prabhupāda's activities. At the end of his talk Hari Sauri Prabhu asked if there were any questions.

Braja leaned over and whispered into Daddy's ear, "Is it important for all the devotees to know about Śrīla Prabhupāda's music box?"

"Yes it is, Braja," Daddy said.

Braja quickly stood up and raised her hand. Before Daddy knew what was happening Braja was shouting, "Hare Krishna, Prabhu. Hare Krishna, Hari Sauri Prabhu. . ."

Mummy was shocked to hear Braja's voice.



She turned around and stared at Braja. Was this really her shy little girl speaking out loud in a room full of devotees?

“Yes? You have a question little girl?”

Hari Sauri replied.

The room suddenly becomes very quiet as all the devotees turned to look at Braja.

“Well. . . huh. . .yes,” Braja said “There’s a music box on Śrīla Prabhupāda’s table upstairs. . . . Do you know where he got it?”

Hari Sauri looked around the room of devotees and then smiled.

“I’m sorry to say I don’t know anything about it,” he said.

As Hari Sauri finished his answer, Braja

jumped into Daddy's lap. She was excited but a little sad too. She looked up at Daddy and said, "We'll never find out about the music box now."

The next morning while Braja and Daddy were listening to the music box Braja still seemed sad. Even the music box tune didn't make her smile.

Just as they were leaving the room Braja's face suddenly lit up.

"Daddy!" Braja exclaimed, "I just got an idea how we can find out about the music box!"

"Really?" Daddy said.

"You know how Hari Sauri Prabhu wrote a book telling about Śrīla Prabhupāda?" Braja

explained, "How he used to write letters to all the devotees. Well, I can write a letter to all the devotees around the world telling them about Śrīla Prabhupāda's music box. Someone, somewhere must know something about the music box. I can ask them to write a letter to me about it."

"I think that's a great idea Braja," Daddy said, "I'll help you write it."

"No, no. I want to do it! I want to write the letter!" Braja shouted.

"I think that's an even better idea Braja," Daddy said.

That very day Braja sat down and wrote a letter to the devotees. Daddy did help a little bit.



Dear Devotees,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

Up in Srila Prabhupada's room here at the Los Angeles temple there is a very nice little music box. It is shaped like a baby grand piano and plays a sweet song. I have been trying to find out how Srila Prabhupada got the music box. Do you know anything about it?

My Dad says it's important to know everything we can about Srila Prabhupada. If you know anything about the music box please write me a letter about it. Thank you.

Your friend,

Braja dasi



When Mummy read the letter she smiled and gave Braja a big hug.

“Well, has my little girl grown up to be a preacher so soon? I’d say you are just the kind of preacher Śrīla Prabhupāda wants, a lamb at home and a lion in the chase,” Mummy said.

“Yes” Daddy said, “She’s opening up just like Śrīla Prabhupāda’s music box. Quiet and shy, but when she speaks up in her sweet little voice she has something important to say. I guess she is really getting the mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda.”



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