



The Yellow Pond



TARAKA DEVI DASI

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my Sunday Class students.

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This story is set in ancient India, in a lovely area of forests and villages called Vrindavan. Vrindavan is the home of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna. Five thousand years ago He lived there with His many friends, relatives, and pets and enacted various pastimes to attract everyone to Him. Some of His friends were called 'gopas', or cowherd boys, and some were called 'gopis', or cowherd girls. They all lived simply and peacefully, in harmony with nature.

In this story you'll meet Krishna's favourite gopi friend Radharani, His funny friend Madhumangala from a priestly family, and many of His other companions. You'll also learn of special places in Vrindavan like Govardhan Hill and Radha Kunda, Malyahari Kunda and the Yamuna River. Govardhan Hill is where the cows graze in the day and Krishna and His friends play and eat lunch. The word 'kunda' means pond, so Radha Kunda is Radharani's pond and is Krishna's favourite place. The Yamuna is a river where Krishna and His friends swim in the heat of the day. You can visit all these places even today.

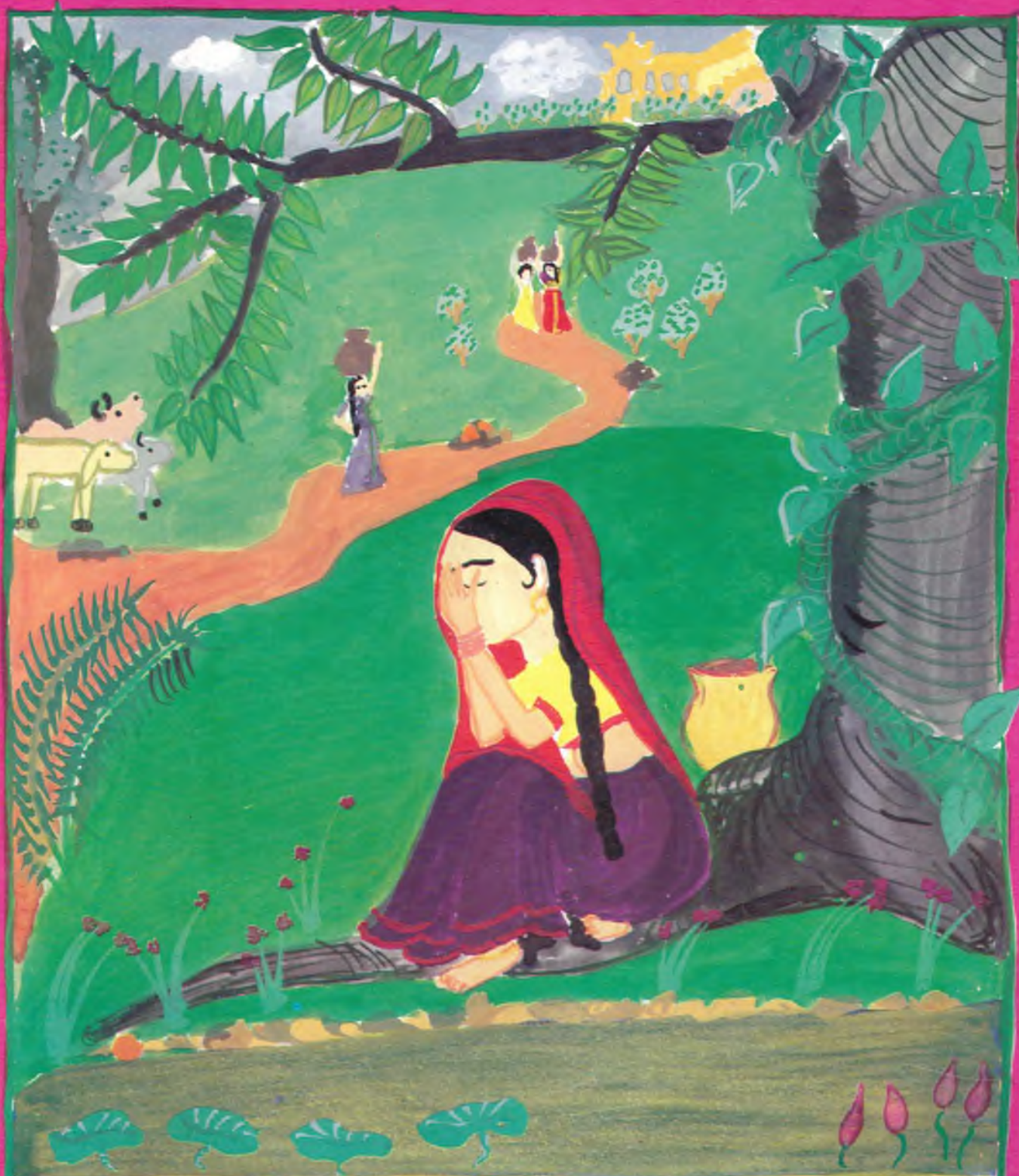
One day Srimati Radharani went to Nandagram to see Nanda Maharaj and Mother Yasoda. At Nanda's palace She met Yasoda, who loved Radharani very dearly. In fact, Yasoda loved Her so much that she always dreamed Radharani would become Krishna's bride. Yasoda often thought of Radharani's good qualities and how She was the perfect match for her beloved son Krishna.



Mother Yasoda hugged Radharani and then took Her inside. As Yasoda looked at Radha's fresh beauty and thought what a perfect daughter-in-law She would be, Yasoda could not control her feelings, and her eyes became moist with tears. She took Radharani's lotuslike hands and spread turmeric paste on them. When a lady does this in India, it means that the her son and the girl are now engaged and have the good wishes of the parents. Of course, Mother Yasoda was being a little tricky, because Radharani's parents didn't know anything about the engagement!



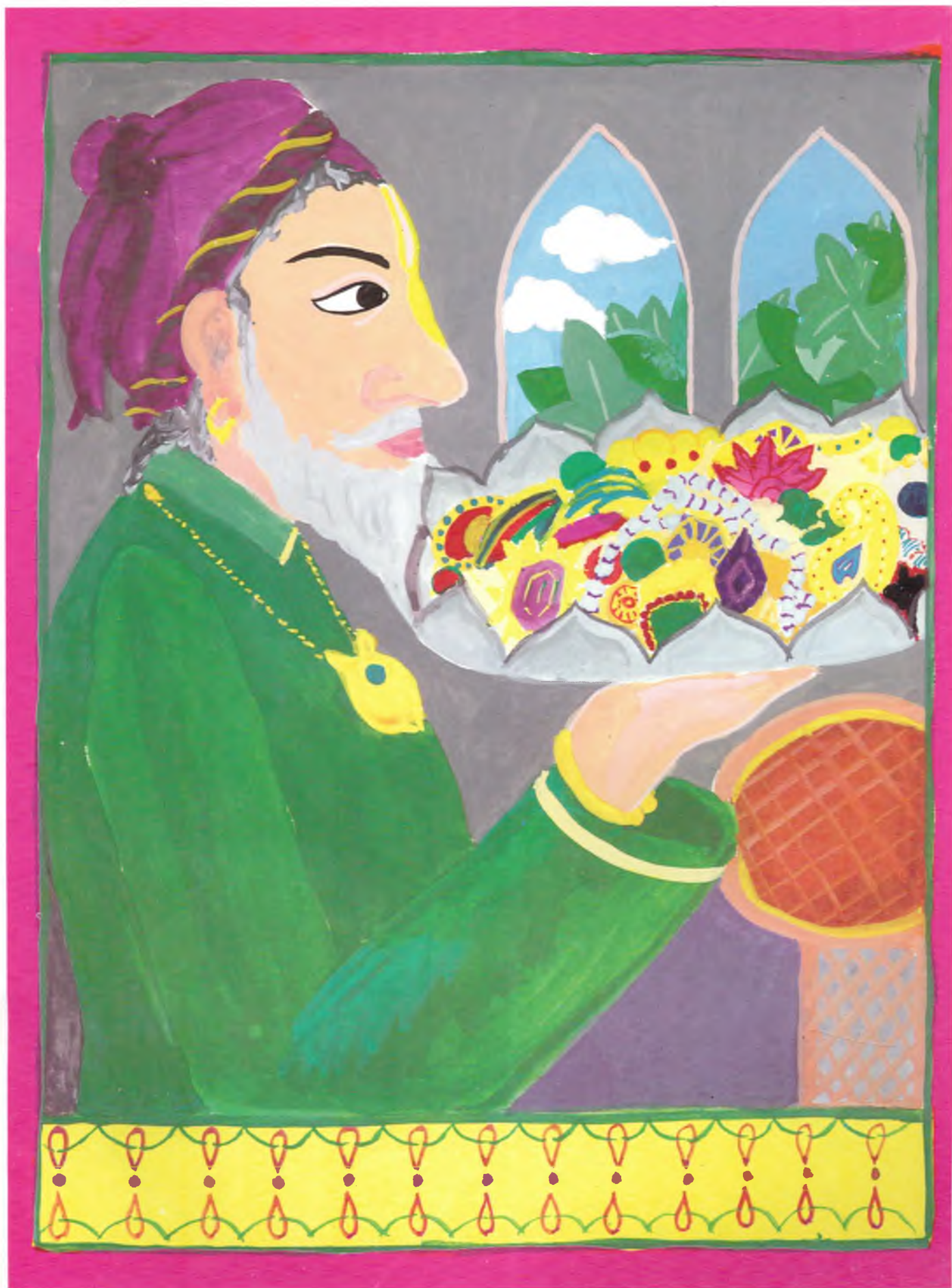
Radharani became upset when She understood what was going on. These things only happened to the big girls of the village! She quickly left Nanda's palace and ran to a pond near Her home. She thoroughly washed Her turmeric-covered hands in the water, turning it yellow. But when the village ladies saw the yellow pond they guessed Mother Yasoda's plans, and they rushed to Radharani's parents to tell them the news.



Radharani was worried Her parents would be sad to learn what had happened. Finally She went home, very shyly. She was surprised to see them waiting at the top of the palace stairs for Her, their arms open to hug Her. In fact, they were so excited that Mother Yasoda had made such a plan that they were dancing for joy. They too always thought that Krishna and Radharani would make a perfect match, and now their dream was coming true.



In India it is the custom that after the girl's hands have been decorated with turmeric, her parents offer the boy's parents a gift. So Vrishabhanu Maharaj filled a beautiful silver tray with jewels and had one of his servants take it to Nanda Maharaj and Mother Yasoda. When they saw the wonderful gift their hearts filled with bliss and they began to dance. And when the villagers heard the news, they all ran to Nanda's palace and began singing and dancing. The chanting of 'Radhe Shyama!' 'Radhe Shyama!' resounded everywhere.



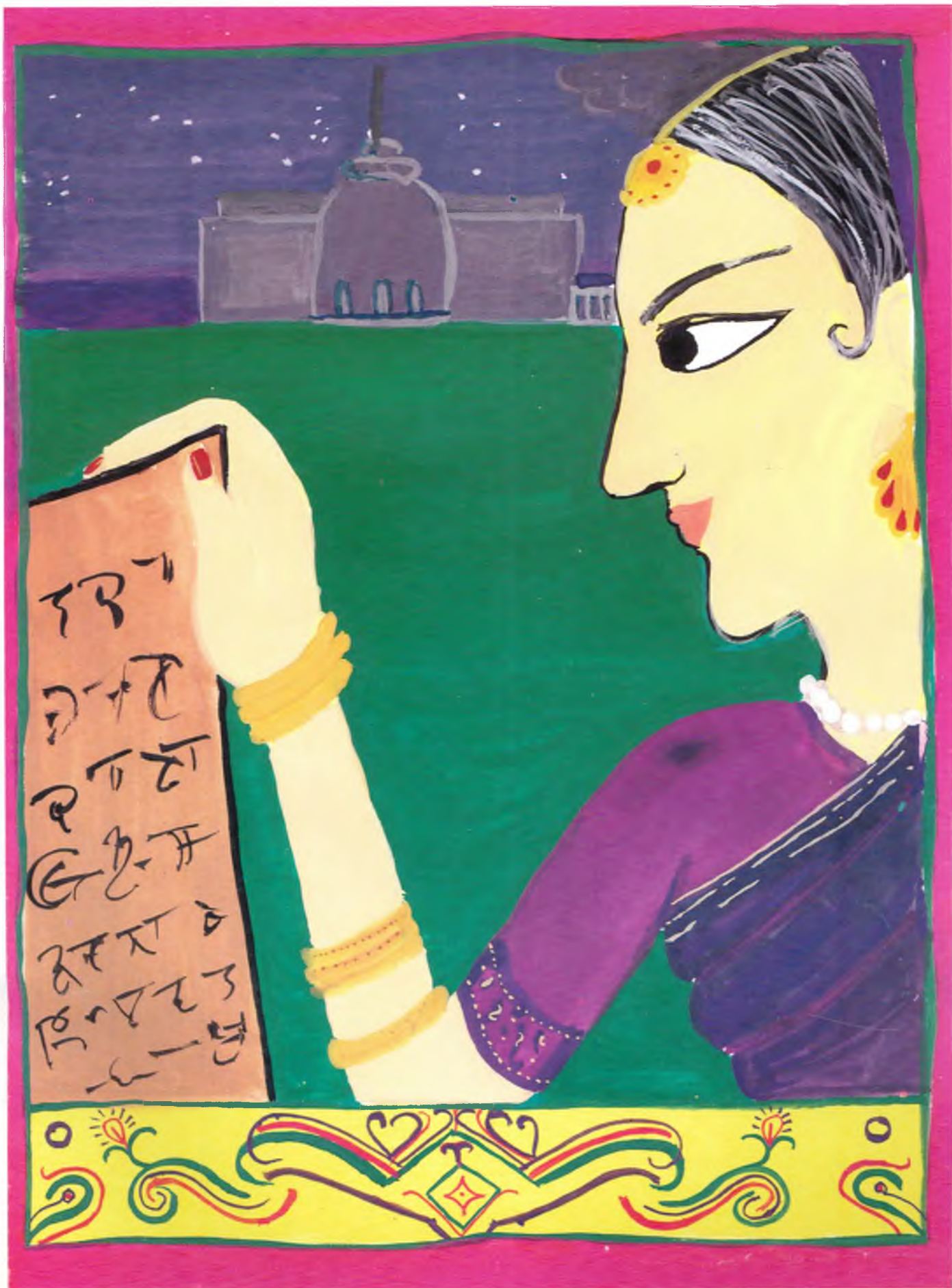
Krishna's parents were now supposed to send a return gift to Radha's parents. But Krishna's parents became sad, thinking, 'Alas! We have plenty of butter and yogurt, but we have hardly any gems or gold! So what will we send to Vrishabhanu and Kirtida?' But these thoughts quickly disappeared because Nanda and Yasoda had to take care of the many guests who had come to celebrate the engagement of Radha and Krishna. Just then Krishna sneaked into the room and took the tray of jewels. He went into a field near the barn and carefully placed the jewels into the soil. Immediately trees grew and blossomed, and the fruits that appeared were precious gems! Krsna ran inside to tell His parents so they could help pick the beautiful jewel-fruits. Nanda and Yasoda filled a big bullock cart with the gems and sent it off to Vrishabhanu Maharaj and Mother Kirtida.



When Radharani's parents received the cart full of gems, they were so pleased that they called Purnamasi, the Guru of Vrindavan, to tell her the good news. But when Purnamasi heard the plan for the marriage she thought, 'In time, Radharani is supposed to marry Abhimanyu. Let me look over my astrology charts and then tell Her parents that now is not a good time for Radha to wed.'

Purnamasi looked at the horoscope and told Radharani's parents, 'Now the moon, sun, and stars are poorly positioned. If Radha and Krishna marry now, the marriage will not last. Better wait.'

Everyone was disappointed, but they trusted Purnamasi to fulfill all of Krishna's desires in time.





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