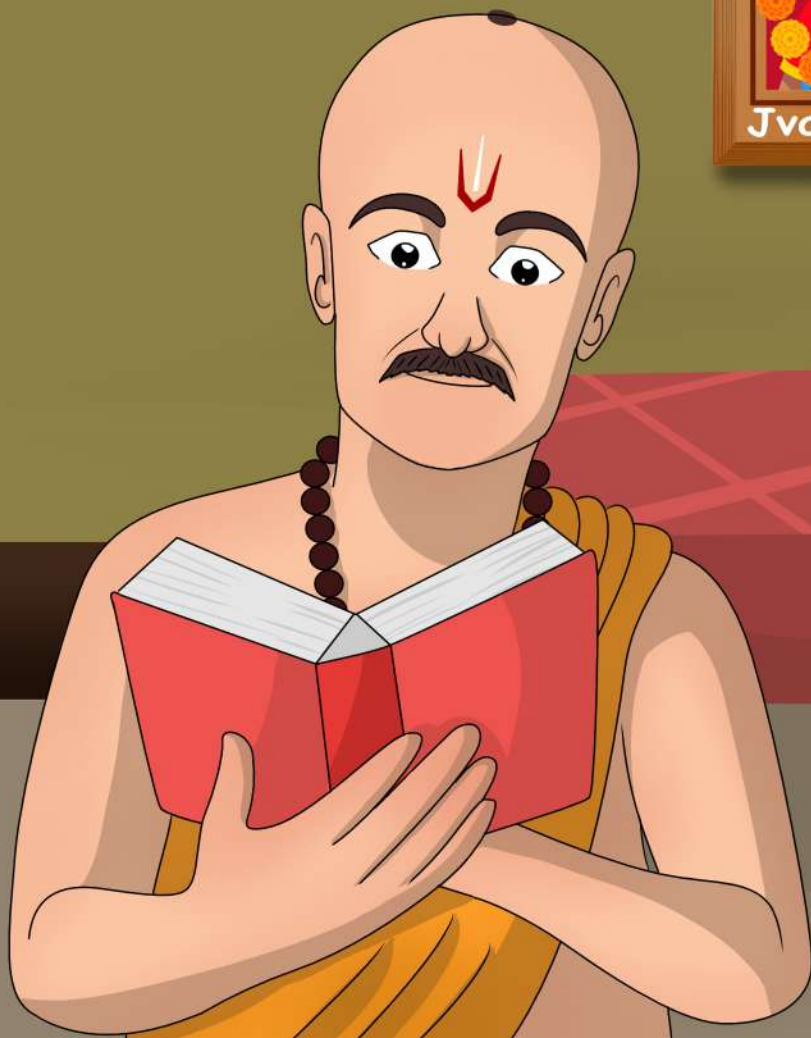


Aramasobha



There was a brahmin named Agnisharma who lived at Palasagrama. He was an expert in sacrificial rites and was thoroughly versed in the four Vedas. His wife's name was Jvalanashikha. He had a daughter named Vidyutprabha who was extremely grateful. When Vidyutprabha was eight years old, her mother passed away. This was a great shock for her.



Besides, the responsibility of managing the household was now on her young and immature shoulders. She would get up before sunrise, clean the house and besmear the kitchen; then she would follow the cattle to the jungle for their grazing.



At midday, she would be back home, milk the cows, serve food to her father and take food herself, and follow the cattle to the jungle again.



She would come back after sunset. After she had finished her daily duties, she would be exhausted. But she would not go to bed before her father and she would get up before him. Such was her daily routine.



One day Vidyutprabha came to her father and said,

"Father, I am somewhat incapable of running the household alone. Even the bulls will break down under pressure of so much work. So my request is that you marry some respectable lady so that she can share my burden and the household will run well."

This was a good proposal and Agnisharma agreed. He soon married and brought a new wife.



Even Vidyutprabha was happy to receive a new mother. But the happiness was not to last for long. The new mother had no training in household work, besides, she was too lazy and easy-going. So all her expectations were washed away, and Vidyutprabha had only remorse in store for her; but she would blame none but her own luck. With a deep sigh, she would say,

"So long I worked for my father, but now I have the added burden of a mother. I sought happiness but I have lost even what I had."



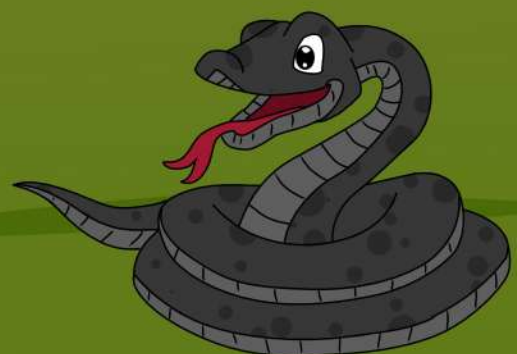
In this manner, four years rolled by, and those were long and unhappy years for the young girl. She was now a class of twelve. One day while looking after the cattle in the jungle, she laid under a tree and fell asleep. At that time, a big and dark snake who had a rapid pace and bloodshot eyes slowly approached and addressed her in a human voice:

"Charming maid! Fear me not. Do as I suggest. I have been living in this forest for a long time, and good luck prevailing, I was happy here. But today my ill-luck has come up, and there are some charmers in this forest who are in search of me. If they capture me, they will place me in a basket and make my life miserable. So I seek shelter with you. Place me on your lap and cover me with your clothes. To shelter one in distress is an act of righteousness."



Vidyutprabha woke up at the approach of the snake. She distinctly heard all this and hurriedly thought:

"I did not acquire much virtue in my previous life, and hence my present misery. If now I do not help this snake in distress, then the door to happiness will never open for me."



So thinking, she extended her hand to pick up the snake, placed it on her lap, and covered it with her cloth. No sooner had she finished all this than the charmers arrived on the scene and made inquiries about the snake. Vidyutprabha told them that she was sleeping and so she had no knowledge of it. The charmers were convinced.

"After all, this is a young girl,"

said they among themselves.

"She would have been frightened to see the terrible snake. So it can't be here."



When they were gone beyond sight, Vidyutprabha told the snake to come out and go its own way. But as she removed her cloth, there was no snake to be seen. She knew not if she was in a dream or confusion, but before she could think further, she heard a voice saying,

"I am overwhelmed by your courage, oh charming maid! Seek a boon."



Vidyutprabha turned around and saw a god who was repeating the aforesaid words. So said Vidyutprabha,

"Oh the best among the gods! If you are pleased with me, then be good enough to do something to help my cattle. Please give a forest cover to them. They are much oppressed by the rays of the sun."

The god cast a deep sigh.
Thought he,

"What a request! She could have gotten rid of her poverty. Ignorant she is. Whatever that may be, her wishes must be duly honored."



So he created a forest above her, as charming as the Nandana-vana, the celebrated heavenly forest. Then he said to her:

"Here is your forest, wherein you will get trees yielding all sorts of fruits and flowers. Wherever you go, this will follow you like an umbrella. Like a divine damsel, you will freely play in it, and your cattle will suffer no more. If at any time in the future you are in difficulty, think of me and I shall be at your service."



The god disappeared. Vidyutprabha ate sweet fruits from that forest and returned home in the evening. The mother asked her to take food, but she had no appetite. From now on, she would go to the forest early in the morning and return home in the evening. There she would be playing throughout the day while her cattle would be grazing.



One day as she was resting under a thick tree, King Jitashatru of Pataliputra with his retinue was passing by that way. He was delighted to see the divine forest and decided to rest there for some time. The king's throne was placed under a tree; the pack animals were let loose to eat grass; the chariots were parked in a shady spot; and the men were at ease, gossiping and relaxing. This disturbed the peace of the forest and Vidyutprabha's cattle fled away.



When Vidyutprabha woke up, she found that the cattle had disappeared. so she rushed forth to find them out. Now, as she moved, the forest-umbrella over her head moved too, and the king and his retinue were also moving, all topsy-turvy. This was a great surprise for the king. He was anxious to discover its secret and came to know that the forest was moving with the girl. So he asked his minister to approach the girl and request her to go back to her original position, assuring her that his men would find her cows.



The minister did as per the king's command. As soon as the girl returned, the forest stopped still. The king's men and animals were restored to order, and the king was happy. Then the minister said:

"Your Majesty! The surprise we experienced seems to be all due to this girl."

The king replied,

"Truly so. Is she a nymph, or a girl from the nether world, or even a damsel from heaven? She would be a precious acquisition for the palace of any king."



The minister agreed. At the king's wishes, he came again to the girl, told her all about the king, and finding her favorably disposed, at the right moment, he proposed for her hand for his master. Vidyutprabha was abashed and said,

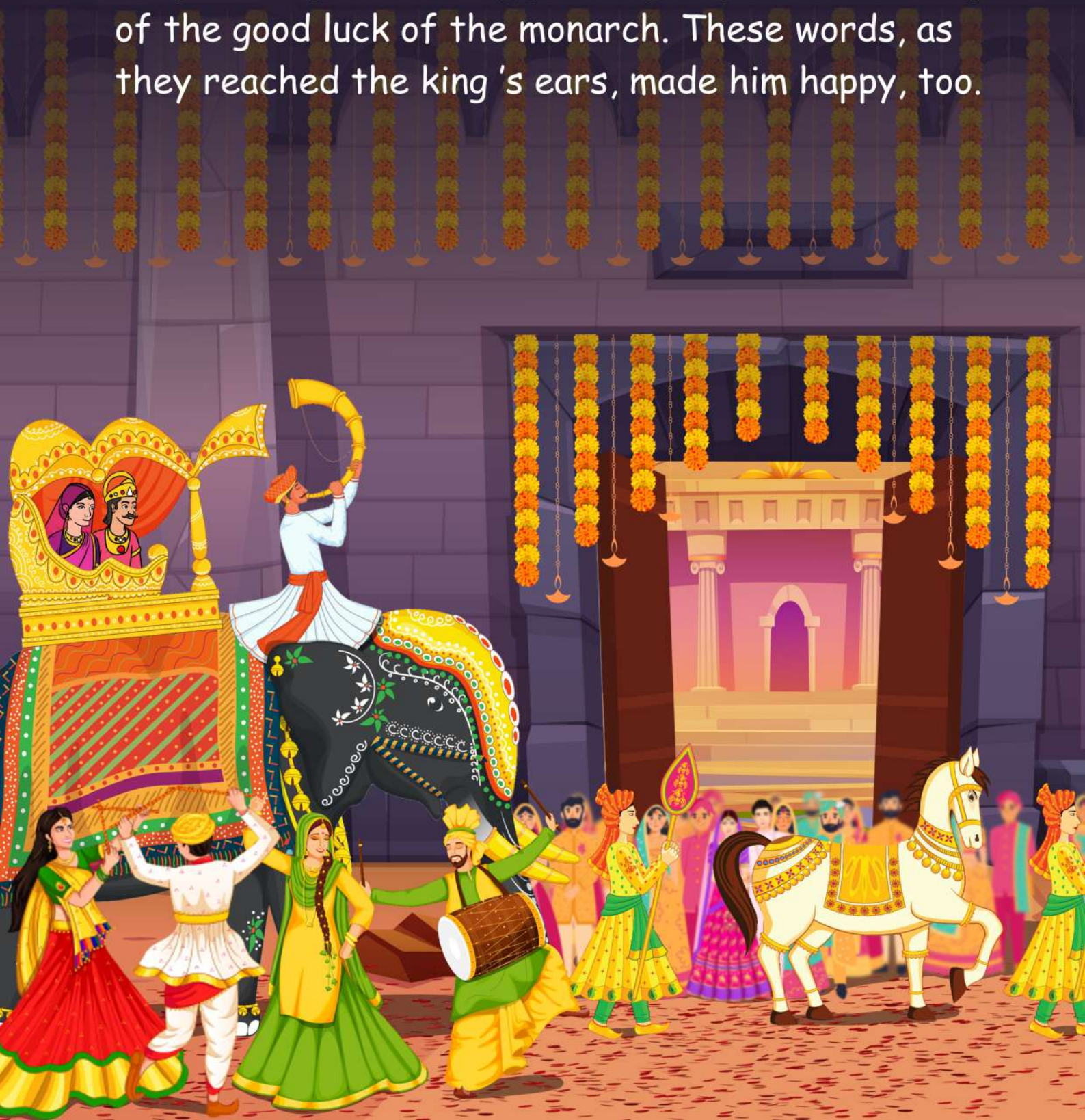
"Highborn damsels do not select their husband. He is selected for her by the parents. You may like to converse with my father. his name is Agnisharma, and he lives in the village nearby."



The minister went to her father and narrated the whole thing. This became a moment of great joy for Agnisharma, too. He was brought to the presence of the king in the forest. Now, delay was unbearable to the king, and so the marriage was celebrated then and there as per gandharva rites. The king wanted to change the name of his new consort, and as she had a forest umbrellacover on her head, she was henceforth to be called Aramasobha (meaning comfort and grace). To put the brahmin in affluence, the king bestowed on him revenue from twelve villages.



Then the king mounted on the elephant in the company of his wife ready to depart. The forest was still on her head. The minister went ahead of the party to organize the reception of the royal couple at the capital. It was a great occasion. People everywhere, singly or in groups, were talking of the good luck of the monarch. These words, as they reached the king's ears, made him happy, too.



The royal couple were now at the palace, where all comforts were provided for the new queen. The king and the queen lived henceforth a good life.



Now, brahmin Agnisharma had a daughter from his newly married wife. When she came of age, her mother thought that if somehow Aramasobha could be made to die, then the king might be pleased to consider her own daughter to be worthy of him.

"and to kill the daughter of a co-wife is no sin,"

she said to herself.



So she hatched a plot and one day said to her husband:

"Aramasobha has been at her husband's home for many years now, but we have never sent her anything. For girls, things from their parental homes are particularly dear."

The brahmin smiled and said,

"Aramasobha is no longer poor. She is now a queen and hardly needs anything from us."



Agnishikha (for such was the name of the brahmin's second wife) protested:

"Even though the father-in-law 's home has affluence all around, anything sent by parents is dear to a girl. Though rich, daughters expect occasional gifts from their former home."

The argument had no gap, so the brahmin could not turn it down.



The lady prepared kesariya-modaka (henceforth to be called modaka, a delicious sweetmeat), poisoned it, placed it inside a pot and sealed it. Then she entrusted it to her husband, saying:

"You give it to Aramasobha and no one else. Even Aramasobha is not to share the sweets with anyone. If she shares it with others, we shall be put to ridicule, poor as the stuff is, and poor as we are."



Agnisharma could not read into the evil design of his wife. He picked up the pot and turned his steps toward Pataliputra. When he was not far from the capital city, he was so tired that he placed the pot beneath a banyan tree on the wayside, lay down to rest and was soon fast asleep. A Yaksha used to live on that tree. By dint of his great insight, he came to know of the evil design of the brahmin lady. Thought he:

"when there is such an able one like me here, can anybody put Aramasobha to the torture of death? Has she not accumulated much righteousness in her previous birth?"

So thinking, he replaced the poisoned modaka with a good one, delicious like nectar.



The brahmin got up, picked up the pot, and resumed his journey. At last, he was at the palace gate. His arrival was duly announced, and with the royal sanction, the brahmin was conducted inside the court to the presence of His Majesty. The brahmin profusely blessed the king. then there were mutual inquiries about health, after which the brahmin presented the pot to the king. The king was very happy and ordered it immediately to be carried to the queen's chamber. The brahmin was honored by gifts of clothes and ornaments.



Now the king was in Aramasobha 's chamber. He thought of the modaka and wanted to have a portion of it. Happily did the queen open the pot and what joy, the whole chamber was filled with its fragrance.

"Surely,"

said His Majesty,

"is this modaka prepared with nectar."

The king cast a lustful glance at the queen and requested her to distribute it to all her co-wives. In deference to the king 's wishes, Aramasobha did it with her own hands. all the queens were happy to taste it and all spoke in glowing terms of the skill of her mother.



When the king came back to the court, the brahmin made a prayer for his daughter's going to his home for once. To this, the king smiled and said,

"The queen cannot even see the sun; so how can she go to her parent's home?"



The brahmin returned on fulfillment of his mission and reported it to his wife. The lady was now waiting to hear about her stepdaughter 's death. But the tiding did not come and she grew restless. Perhaps the sweet was not sufficiently poisoned. So she resolved to make a renewed attempt and continue it until her goal was attained.



This time she poisoned the modaka very deeply, packed it as before, and dispatched it with her husband with the same sort of message.



The brahmin was again on the road to Pataliputra. When he arrived beneath the same banyan tree, he was tired, lay down, and fell fast asleep.



As before, the modaka was changed by the Yaksha, was later taken to the court, and delivered to the king. This time, too, the modaka was tasted by all the queens, and both Aramasobha and her mother were praised by all.



But the coveted bad news about Aramasobha's death did not arrive, and the brahmin lady was bitter and highly depressed. So she repeated the mischief for the third time, mixing this time the most dreadful talaputa poison with it. She also insisted that Aramasobha should be brought once to her parental home, and if the king did not agree, she advised her husband to use his brahminical power to force his hands.



The brahmin started again and came under the same banyan tree, where everything repeated as before, so that the modaka was changed, and once again, at the palace, everyone was happy to taste the divine stuff and spoke in high praise of its sender.



The court was now in full session. Agnisharma made the proposal about his daughter's going to her parental home and insisted that her first child should, in fairness to the custom prevailing, be delivered there. But the king would not budge.

"That has never been so,"

said he,

"and that will never be."



The brahmin now displayed his brahminical power and threatened to commit suicide right there if his request was not honored. Said he,

"If you do not send Aramasobha with me, then I shall stain you with the sin of murdering a brahmin. Oh king, I gave you my daughter's hand not on this term that she would never see her parents at their own home. She too must be feeling keen to go there once. will the parental affection thus go unheeded?"



The minister intervened.

"Your Majesty! Surely this brahmin has gone mad. but if you do not agree, he will not hesitate to stain you with the blasphemy of killing him. So may it be decided that the queen goes once."

Under so much pressure, the king reluctantly agreed. The queen was given much treasure and was seen off. along with her started her forest-umbrella.



Agnishikha had her plot wholly ready. She had a deep well dug behind her house. At the right moment, Aramasobha gave birth to a godly child.



She was then taken to the backyard of the house for a wash, her stepmother attending. On seeing this well, she asked when it was dug. The mother said,

"This has been dug for you. you are now a queen, and there may be jealous people who may poison your drinking water if it is fetched from a distance. Hence this arrangement for your safety."



Aramasobha took it all as said and bent to have a look inside. As she did so, the stepmother pushed her into it. As she was going down, her mind went back to the god who had once promised her help, and he readily appeared on the scene. He supported her with his hand and made her sit in a comfortable place.



He would have punished Agnishikha on the spot for her misdeed but desisted as Aramasobha held fast his feet. In the nether world, the god built a chamber for her stay. The forest umbrella too stayed with her there.



Agnishikha now dressed her daughter in the clothes of a woman who has recently delivered a child and placed her on the couch.



When the servant maids returned, they expressed surprise to see a lusterless and uncouth woman with a plump frame lying there. False Aramasobha said,

"I do not know why all this has happened, but it seems some internal disease or disorder is the cause of my physical change."



When the servant maids reported the matter to Agnishikha, she rushed wailing and striking her breast:

"Oh daughter! How has this happened? Has anybody cast inauspicious glances at you? Or is it due to gastritis or some organic trouble? Alas! All my sweet dreams may come to an end!"

She pretended to make all possible arrangements for her restoration, but none yielded any result.



Now, the minister came to take the queen back. The party started for Pataliputra. On the way, when the servant maids asked why the forest-umbrella was not there, false Aramasobha said that it had gone to the well to take water and would soon follow. when the party was in the vicinity of Pataliputra, the king arranged a fitting welcome. He was pleased to see a godly son but was sorry at the queen's plight. When he inquired the cause of it, she repeated the same words as before—

"some internal disease or disorder."



The king's sorrow knew no end. When he inquired about the forest, the lady said,

"When I came, it was taking water at the well. So I have left it behind. It will come itself after some time."

The king had some doubt about the lady. Was it Aramasobha or someone else who had stepped in her place? He apprehended that there might be a trick behind it, some sort of mischief.



He said to her again:

"My dear! Bring that forest back.
I feel so uneasy without it."

And there was the
same evasive reply:

"Be not anxious, sir! It will
come back in time."

The king's doubt was now
largely confirmed.



This was another lady, and there must have been some mischief-mongering at his cost. The plot must be unfolded. At the other end, Aramasobha was safe and comfortable at her underground shelter, and all her needs were taken care of by the god.



One day she said to him,

"I feel very uneasy for my son It behooves you, oh god, to do something to relieve me of this."

"This can be done by dint of my power, but only on one condition. At night you may go to your son, but you must return before sunrise. If you fail, then you forfeit my assistance forever. And in that case, a dead snake will drop from your braid, and that will sever our link beyond repair. If you agree, then your desire to meet your son may be fulfilled."

Aramasobha agreed.



With the god's power assisting her, she reached the palace, embraced the child in her arms and was happy to play with him. When the time for her return approached, she placed the child on the couch, scattered some fruits and flowers from her forest, and left.



When in the morning the matter was reported to the king, he made inquiries about it from the queen who said,

"My Lord! I brought these fruits and flowers from my forest and scattered them here."

"Well, sir, I shall do so tonight."

"If that be so, then bring some fruits and flowers from the forest now."



The king had no more doubt about the mischief played on him. The event was repeated on the second night, and then on the third, this time the king himself keeping watch. With a sword in his hand, he sat in the shadow of a lamp. At the right hour, Aramasobha came, embraced the child and started playing with him. The king had no doubt as to who she was, but he restrained himself. Aramasobha left the palace before sunrise.



In the morning, he went to false Aramasobha and said,

"Lady! If you can restore the forest, well and good. Otherwise, I have no need of you. Go your way."

The earth now slipped away from beneath the lady's feet. She knew not what to do. The king rebuked her harshly and returned to the court.



On the fourth night, Aramasobha came as usual to her son. The king was in hiding.



Now, before sunrise, as she was about to return, he held her hand and said,

"My dear, why this trick with me? Come back to your palace. I can no longer abide your absence."

Aramasobha was taken aback. She tried to free herself but failed. In a helpless tone she said,

"Sir, there is some serious reason behind it. Tonight you delay me not. I shall come again tomorrow at the same hour and narrate the whole thing to you. If you do not release me now, I shall have cause to repent throughout my life."



The king said,

"My dear! My eyes have been languishing for you for many days. Now that you are within my grip, how can I let you go? Tomorrow is far off; even a moment would be too long."

Aramasobha was between a frying pan and the fire. To narrate the whole thing to the king would take a lot of time, and the sunrise was not far off. If she did not do so, the king would not release her. Seh could not disoblige the king, whatever the risk. She tried to be brief but all in vain.



Meanwhile, the early rays of the sun burst forth on the earth, and the dead snake dropped from her braid, as predicted.

"How unfortunate I am! Alas, I am undone!"

These words dropped from her lips as she herself dropped senseless on the ground.



When restored to her senses, she was only moaning and wailing. The king consoled her by saying,

"My dear! Who can avoid the inevitable? Whatever was destined has happened. Forget the past and look forward to a golden future."



The king was now rageful toward the false Aramasobha. She was handed over to the guards and severely beaten.

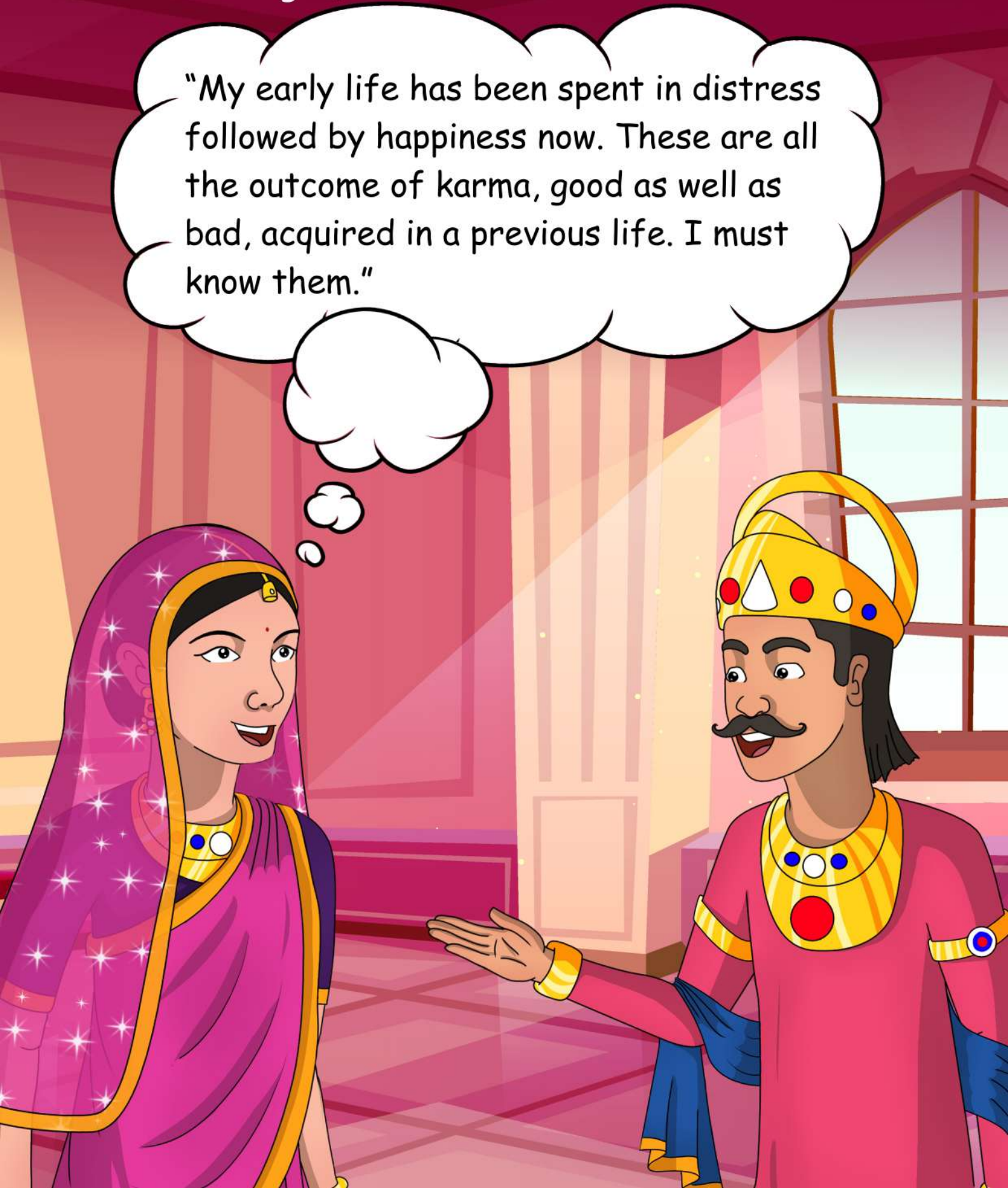


Aramasobha pleaded mercy for her sister, and the king could not deny it to her. But she was expelled from the city, and her father was deprived of the twelve villages and the treasures bestowed on him. The family was turned out from the kingdom for good.



Aramasobha was happy once again. One day the king and the queen were in conversation, when the latter thought,

"My early life has been spent in distress followed by happiness now. These are all the outcome of karma, good as well as bad, acquired in a previous life. I must know them."



In those days, Acharya Virabhadra with his spiritual family of five hundred monks was present there, and the royal couple thought of benefitting from the presence of the celebrate Acharya. After the queen had listened to the Acharya, she fell down in a swoon.



When she recovered, she made the following submission:

"Your Holiness! The account of my previous life as given by you is wholly correct. With my reawakened memory, I can fully testify to it. But I am now uneasy about the worldly existence. With the permission of my husband the king, I desire to be initiated by you into the holy order."



Needless to add, the king approved of her noble wishes. He, too, revealed his mind in the following words:

"My dear! Once having known the worthlessness of the worldly life, who wants to remain any longer in it? I too shall follow you."



Then, turning to the Acharya, he said,

"Your Holiness! I shall presently return to the palace and crown Aramasobha's son Malayasundara as king. Immediately thereafter I shall return to you. Until I come back, may your Holy Grace not withdraw from this city!"



The king went back to the palace and placed the young prince on the throne. Then both the king and the queen were initiated into the holy order.



They spent their time acquiring scriptural knowledge and soon became profound. The king, now a monk, was nominated by the Acharya as his successor to the holy chair, and under his able guidance, the order flourished. Aramasobha became the head of the order of nuns.



For many years, they served the order and then gave up their mortal frames through spiritual fasts and attained coveted higher regions.



Aramasobha's Previous Birth At Champapuri, there used to live a very rich merchant named Kuladhara. Kulananda was the name of his wife. The merchant had seven daughters named as follows: Kamalashri, Kamalavati, Kamala, Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Jayamati, and Priyakarini. They were as beautiful as they were proficient. They were all married to merchants of very noble birth. An eighth daughter was born to Kuladhara, but she was less fortunate. The parents were so unhappy at her birth that they did not perform even her naming ceremony.



The girl grew up and stepped from childhood into youth. But her father was indifferent to her future happiness and did not bother to settle her in life. If some member of his household drew his attention to this, he would only say that she would be settled as soon as a right groom was available, and he would assure them that he was on the lookout for one.



One day, as the merchant was seated at his shop, a stranger youth came up to him. His dress was poor and his hairs were disheveled and infested with lice. The merchant said to him,

"Who are you? Whence do you come?
What country do you belong to?"



The youth replied,

"Sir, I belong to Koshalapura. Nandi is the name of my father and Soma that of my mother. My own name is Nandana. I am penniless. I went to Chandadesha to do some business but my ill-luck followed me even there. At Chandadesha lives a merchant named Vasantadeva who belongs to this city. I am employed in his service. He has sent me with a letter which is to be delivered at his house, but I know not its location. It will be a great favor done to me if you could direct me thither."



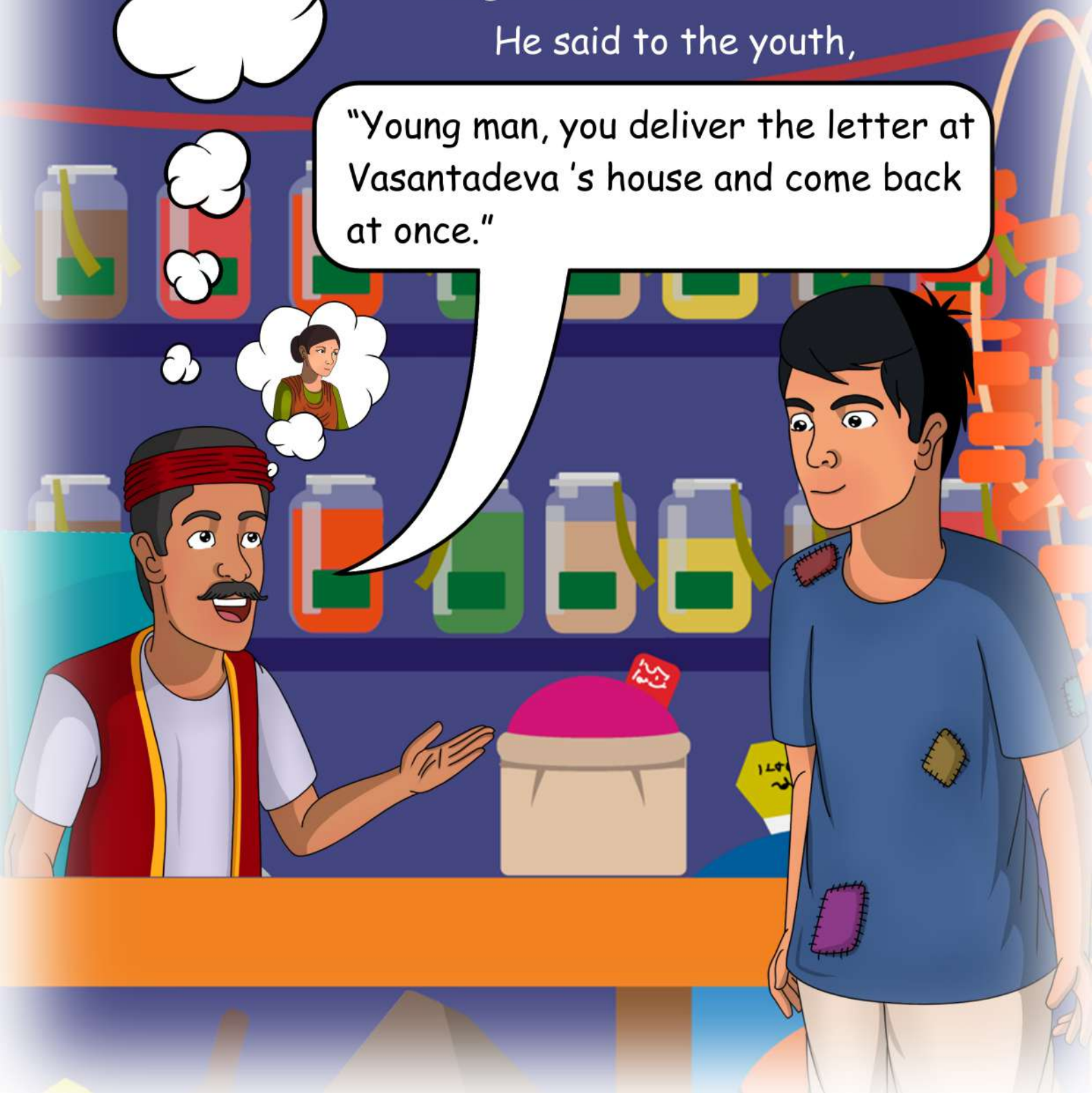
Kuladhara thought within himself that this would be a right groom for his youngest daughter.

"If I settle my daughter's marriage with this young man, then I get rid of her,"

thought he.

He said to the youth,

"Young man, you deliver the letter at Vasantadeva's house and come back at once."



The merchant sent one of his attendants to accompany him. the young man also did as he was asked to do. After he had finished his bath, the merchant gave him clothes and food, and then, at the right moment, he placed the proposal for his daughter 's marriage. Said the youth,

"I have to return this very day, sir."

The merchant replied,

"There will be no difficulty. I shall make every arrangement in a fitting manner, and the ceremony itself will not take much time. For your subsistence, I shall later bestow wealth on you."



The young man agreed, and the marriage ceremony was over within a few hours. The daughter bade goodbye to her parents' home.



The couple then set out on the road to Chandadesha. When they were very near to Avantidesha, they took shelter in a temple to pass the night there. It was the dead of night, and the bride was fast asleep. The young man thought,

"As my wife is with me, I cannot walk as fast as I would like to. And if I go like this, it will be necessary to spend a long time on the way. I have scanty means to support both of us in the journey, and if it is exhausted, I would be forced to beg. That will be highly unbecoming of me. So why don't I give up my bride here? This will save me from a probable calamity."



No sooner had he thought it than he gave effect to it. He picked up whatever things he could and immediately left the place.



At sunrise, when the lady got up, she found neither her husband nor the means to support herself. She could hardly think of such a thing happening but was soon reconciled to the hard reality and set her mind on the future. For a moment she thought of going back to her parents, but then she thought of the sort of life she had led there and the sort of reception she would receive now, and preferred to court suffering to going back to a life of scorn. But the very next moment she thought as to who would support her and how she would begin this new life.



The prospect of begging was not at all palatable, but she gathered courage and confidence and thought,

"If all living beings support themselves, I too can do the same. I will take up some work to support myself, but I must preserve my purity and truth."



The brave lose nothing; instead, they find a way. The lady got up and reached the marketplace of the city of Vishala. She stood in front of the shop of merchant Manibhadra. She looked at him, as he looked at her. She had a feeling that this was a good man. So she came nearer and said,

"Father, I am on the lookout for some work. It will be a great favor if you could gave me some."



Manibhadra felt compassion for her, but he hesitated to take an unknown lady into his household. He asked who she was and why she was there. The lady said,

"Sir, I am the daughter of merchant Kuladhara of Champa. I was on my way to Chandadesha in the company of my husband, but misfortune had befallen me, I have been separated from him. So I have come to you to seek some job so that my days of suffering may be easily spent."



Manibhadra consoled her and showed her affection. He invited her to stay in his household, and she was placed in charge of his household affairs. He sent men in search of her husband, but no trace of him could be found. He also made confidential inquiries about her parents, and they tallied with what she had told him. So she was installed in Manibhadra's family with full dignity and on her part, she won the affection of everybody by dint of her good behavior.



Now, Manibhadra built a magnificent Jina temple with high gates and colorful flags. Kuladhara's daughter went there daily to offer prayer and worship. She came into contact with the nuns and acquired the knowledge of nava tattva (nine doctrines).



Now she became a sravika like the great Sulasa, steadfast in equanimity. Manibhadra was never niggardly to fulfill her wishes and held her in great esteem. Once she desired to donate three gold umbrellas bedecked with jewels to be placed to cover the head of the Jina image, and this was readily arranged. Much of her time was now devoted to penance, service to the holy order, and sundry religious activities.



One day Manibhadra sat deeply immersed in anxiety when Kuladhara's daughter came to him and inquired about the cause. In apprising her of the situation, the merchant said,

"For the worship of the god, the king entrusted me with the upkeep of a flower garden, and flowers collected there were used daily for worship. But today the garden is suddenly dry. I tried my best to restore it to freshness, but all my efforts have been in vain. I know not what hard steps the king would now take against me for this."



"Father,"

said she,

"suffer not with anxiety. Leave the matter to me. I shall set it right. I command rock-like purity, and until the garden is restored to freshness, I give up my four foods."

"Don't say so, my daughter. Put me not to ridicule by taking my anxiety wholly on yourself."

"Father, you know, a vow taken once cannot be dishonored. You will just see that all the adverse forces will give way to the strength of my spirit."



Kuladhara 's daughter returned to the Jina temple. Bowing before the image, she immersed herself deep in kayotsarga. She touched neither food nor drink. A day passed, followed by a second and then a third.



At last, Sasanadevi, the controlling goddess of the order, made her appearance on the third night and said,

"My daughter, a god with a wrong outlook has played havoc with the garden. But he could not withstand your purity and has fled. Your vow is fulfilled, and in the morning you will find the garden restored to its freshness."



The morning saw the miracle happen. The garden was restored to its beauty and freshness. Manibhadra was astonished. He rushed to Kuladhara's daughter at the temple premises to break the news and congratulate her. Said he,

"My daughter, my wishes have been fulfilled by the strength of your purity and penance. It behooves you to break the fast now."

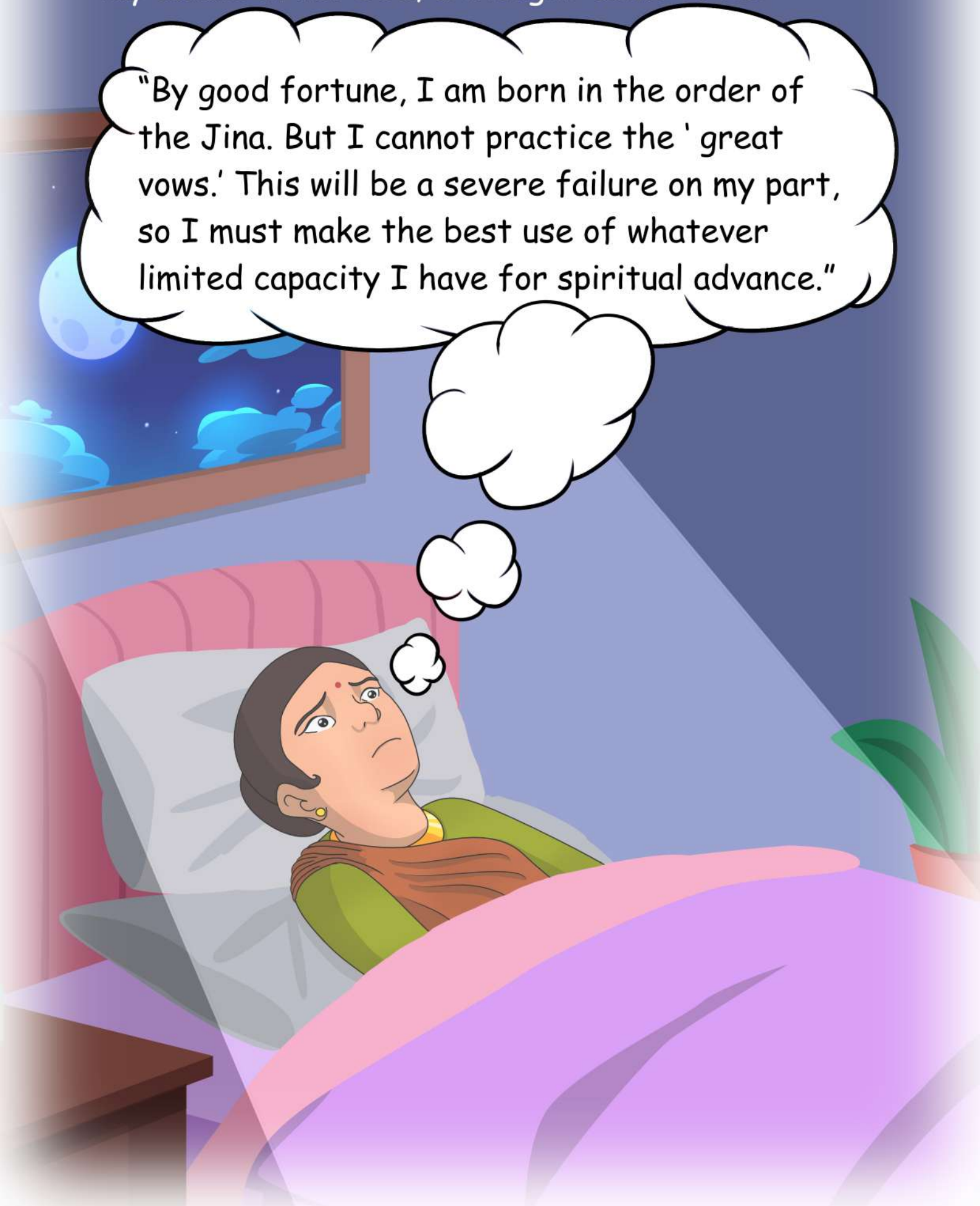


With the speed of lightning, the news reached every household in the town, and all the residents of the town, both men and women, came rushing to the temple. All spoke highly of her purity and the merchant's good luck who has such a worthy daughter in his house. Kuladhara's daughter offered food to the monks, served the same to the members of her order, and then broke her fast. This was indeed a great day for the religion of the Jina. Many days passed thereafter.



One night, at a late hour, as Kuladhara's daughter lay awake in her bed, a thought came to her:

"By good fortune, I am born in the order of the Jina. But I cannot practice the 'great vows.' This will be a severe failure on my part, so I must make the best use of whatever limited capacity I have for spiritual advance."



Now, she changed the course of her life. Sometimes she would fast for two days, sometimes three days, and sometimes for four days, raising the duration gradually to a fortnight and then a month. This reduced her body. Then she undertook the final fast and ended her life through auspicious meditation.



Thereafter she was born in heaven and named Saudharmaloka. Having completed her life there, she has been born in the house of brahmin Agnisharma as his daughter and has been named Vidyutprabha.

