

STORY EPISODE 1.1

GETTING STARTED



KEY THEME: ESTABLISHING A HUMAN COMMUNITY

(Black = Event summary, Green = Discussion Topics, Red = Background Commentary for teacher reference)

SUMMARY: **HARD WORKING LOCAL FAMILIES BEGIN TO FARM**

The great goddess Parvati notices that there are lovely forests on earth and many wild animals. But there is no one to grow crops and there are no human communities. So the goddess decides to create 9 farmer-brothers. She then assigns them the task of opening up the tree-covered lands to cultivation. The goddess also creates nine women, so that each can have a wife and establish a family. These many brothers now work hard to bring a lovely and very fertile region of South India under the plough. These men also build huts for themselves, they dig wells and by marrying, they also establish a functioning local community. But after some time there is a serious drought. There is not enough food to go around. So the eldest brother, Kolatta, and his wife Ariyanacci, leave for a neighbouring kingdom ruled by a Chola monarch. There the king welcomes them, and after Kolatta's request, the ruler agrees to give a separate payment to his wife for her added contribution to the work needed. The payments will be in grain, and not in cash, and will sustain the couple comfortably. After some time the other eight brothers come in search of their eldest sibling. They are offered work by the Chola king as well. The whole family adjusts to their new status as labourers and the Chola's crops begin to flourish.

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SOME TALKING POINTS: Before the drought: What are the elemental building blocks on which a society is based? Why does this big legend begin with these seven fundamentals? Can students identify the point in the story where each one of these principles comes into play? **a)** The presence of humans, **b)** The presence of marriage and the plan to start families, **c)** A specific locale that provides a place to live and work, **d)** The building of homes **e)** Provision for a reliable source of water, **f)** The skills needed to grow sustainable food crops, **g)** People who form a group and are committed to working together.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES - ONE: Do you know someone with a grand vision? Do you dream of creating something big yourself? What are some of the modern things that have been created that you know about? Are these related to building a community, to producing food, or perhaps to helping people in different places to communicate with one another?

COMMENTARY: Often we have a dream or vision of something we would like to see happen... something grand and good. Sometimes if we work on a dream we can make it come true (for this story we can take the goddess's perspective... and think like she does). Often we need the support of others to help make a grand dream come true. In the above story it is the husband of the goddess (Lord Shiva) who gives her helpful psychological support. Many times a parent, a spouse, a sibling or a good friend plays the role of advisor in our own human lives... helping our own dreams advance through supportive words and actions. Shiva gave Parvati the courage to take a bold (and untried) step forward. She would create a new group of human beings.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES - TWO: Natural disasters happen around the world. We often hear in the news about floods, hurricanes, tornados, earthquakes and the like. Indeed, these seem to be more frequent now than ever before in recorded human history. Usually after such terrible events the unlucky people who experienced the disaster have to relocate. In this case natural forces created a severe drought that left the local people with no food. They had to migrate. Do you know anyone whose family has suffered from this kind of natural disaster and had to move? How did they do this and what kind of work did they find?

COMMENTARY: Kunnutaiya and Ariyanacci are not unusual in having experienced some kind of natural disaster. But they took the initiative and looked around for a solution. Eventually they managed to find a kind patron and then they worked hard to establish his trust. They fulfilled this patron's need for more workers to care for the crops in his fields. The Chola monarch was also a good man. He appreciated all the help that the workers gave him. Many new comers to the US and Canada have undergone similar kinds of adventures. They have come from places flattened by an earthquake, buried by a mud slide, flooded by excessive rain or the like. Do you have a story about some newcomer to your community that has suffered like this and survived? Can you tell it? What would you do if you faced a similar situation?

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THE NEWCOMERS



KEY THEME: IMMIGRATION & ADJUSTMENT

(Black = Event summary, Green = Discussion Topics, Red = Background Commentary for teacher reference)

SUMMARY: A NEW HOMELAND IS FOUND

The Chola king has hired workers who arrived from another land and were desperately looking for work. There are nine brothers and they have all worked hard. The king is pleased and after his lands begin to prosper he decides to reward these men. So he thinks of some distant lands he controls in a region called Ponnivala. Ponnivala means golden and this area is named for its beautiful golden river. Two other neighboring kings come to visit the Chola and he shares with them his plan to give his hard workers land in the area known as Ponnivala. But the other kings warn him that there are already men living there in that area. They are artisans by trade. So the Chola king calls these artisans to his palace and announces his plan to send his own hard-working farmers into the region. But of course the artisans are not happy with this news. They object to the idea of letting newcomers farm their local lands. The king has to find a compromise and so he calls on Lord Vishnu for his advice. He will make his lead farmer rise magically out of the earth and while this is happening the artisans may throw their metal swords at him and try to cut off his head. The artisans fail in this great contest and so the newcomers earn the right to plough Ponnivala's fine lands. But Lord Vishnu is wise and he also insists on establishing a social covenant between these rivals. The artisans will have rights to a fair share of the food the farmers grow. Vishnu lays out the details of the rights and obligations that are to bind these two groups together. He makes sure things are balanced. This will

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become a kind of “Constitution” or “Social Contract” that will rule local life. The artisans will be makers of “things” and the farmers will be “growers of food.”

SOME TALKING POINTS: Why do people sometimes uproot their families and move to a different place? In this story we see that immigration means being prepared for **a)** The unexpected, **b)** Encountering new types of people, **c)** Finding value in social differences **d)** The need to establish rules for fair exchange and interaction, **e)** The need to be ethical, responsible and sensitive to other’s differing skills and backgrounds

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES: Have you even had a disappointment that quickly became an opportunity to embrace something not thought of before... something new and good?

COMMENTARY: This contest may seem “unfair” in that Lord Vishnu takes the side of the new comers and helps them obtain rights to land that previously belonged to others. The former residents are “pushed aside” (and even embarrassed) in this process. However, this can easily happen in real life... a person loses a contest for a job, does not get admission to the school of their choice, or misses out on a good business deal. Sometimes an actual war forces people to leave their lands and abandon their livelihood. But, when we look at this event from the perspective of the artisans, we find that the outcome has several good (if initially hidden) benefits. For one, the artisans are now assured of a living, as the farmers enter a contract (or covenant) to give them a generous amount of food for each plough or other implement they make. Even more important, the unfortunate loss of land rights opens up a new and promising profession for this entire group of people. Now they will become the creators, the artisans responsible for shaping useful and beautiful new things. This is like finding a new career or a new skill,... a trade one would never have developed if an initial period of hardship and dislocation had not been experienced. It is also like “leaving the family homestead,” perhaps as a younger son who does not inherit land, and having to strike out on one’s own. Many fine artists, poets and entrepreneurs have this kind of personal story to tell... something that “pushed” them into discovering their own personal inner creative strength... a skill they didn’t initially know they had!

HARD WORK WINS REWARDS

Drought forces the lead farmer to leave his lands and migrate to find work in a land where there have been good rains. He is successful and the king is pleased. He will be rewarded by the king with a land grant where he can homestead and start again.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES: Do you have a story about someone in your family or your neighbourhood who started out with very little but worked hard and achieved much in the end?

COMMENTARY: This story is similar to the one above. An initial hardship causes dislocation, but then a person’s hard work in a new land (or new area) becomes recognized and praised. The powerful people there reward the skilled and dedicated worker and give him or her the assets needed to build a future independent life on. In this case the work is physical labor, but the king understands that the immigrant has brought more than this to his country.... The hero has literally brought a new abundance and prosperity to the king’s lands through applying his

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fine work ethic, demonstrating to all who know him his dedication and positive spirit. He works as an ally and for the good of the king, not just for personal reward, but as a loyal subject.... Of course, it is a personal reward of fine land that is gifted to him in the end.

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THE KING'S SACRED COWS MEET WITH MISFORTUNE



(Black = Event summary, Green = Discussion Topics, Red = Background Commentary for teacher reference)

SUMMARY: THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU ACT (OR DO YOUR HOMEWORK!)

After many years of fine weather, the Chola king's palace lands are brought to ruin by a great drought. His cows grow thin because there is so little to eat. Finally the king has to let them loose. He puts tags on their necks so that people will know why they are hungry and then let them go. Now they are left to wander, as sacred cows in India do..... to find their own food. These animals carry their story with them, but the farmer Kolatta does not take the time to do any research. He is shocked to find his fine crop ruined and he rushes to build a fence to protect his sugarcane. Without proper observations, he orders the artisans to build a fence that has sharp spikes on it. The wandering cows that belonged to the Chola king die trying to jump over this barrier. After all, they are very hungry and they are ready to try anything! The poor cows all die on the spikes. But now their spirits quickly rise to heaven where they find the council chamber of the great Lord Shiva high in the Himalayas. Shiva hears the cows' story and becomes angry. So he curses Kolatta's family to seven generations of barrenness. Years later, his unhappy wife, who finds she is unable to bear children.... starts to cry. Lord Vishnu takes pity on her and approaches the great Shiva, asking him to soften his heart. Finally Shiva agrees, and he grants Ariyacci a great gift... a lovely baby which he hides under some rocks. Kolatta's family will now have a child in the palace. The kingdom's future is assured and Kolatta's family is finally able to declare the presence of an heir for their Ponnivala lands.

SOME TALKING POINTS: For main Indian Hindus cows are especially sacred and must be respected. When they are set loose to wander they are like honoured beggars whom the honourable person has a duty to help. Here the cows can be seen as a kind of "test" of the young farmer Kolatta who has suddenly been made rich because a Chola king granted him a piece of fine land. When some wandering cows who are hungry because of a famine in the neighboring kingdom pass by, he should have helped them, not built a dangerous fence. There are two dimensions here, one is a kind of "testing" of Kolatta's moral fibre

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by the gods. This is a test he fails when he orders a spiked fence built without looking into what kind of animal had trampled his sugarcane. His lapse of judgement means that he “fails” this test and Lord Shiva curses him. The incident can be compared to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden when Eve picks an apple and offers it to Adam. God then kicks the couple out of paradise and the legacy of “original sin” is believed to have followed mankind ever since. The placement of this “sin” story at the very beginning of this great legend is like the placement of the story of Adam and Eve at the beginning of the Old Testament. One can say that this story is trying to show that everyone, even the original hero of a great story, is a less than perfect person. Everyone is capable of making mistakes.... something we need to remember.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES - ONE: Have you ever made a big mistake because you didn't ask enough questions before you decided to act?

COMMENTARY: This is a story about not taking sufficient care before deciding on a course of action. The farmer did not research the situation; he did not actually see a cow eating his sugarcane. He did not “read” any of the obvious “tags” they were carrying that explained their plight. As a result the farmer suffered a serious “curse” (an impediment or setback) that threatened to trouble his family for many years. There is a moral here: “Think before you act. Find out what impacts your decision could have on the innocent or the disadvantaged, before rushing into a decision.” The world has a way of “tripping you up” when you do something that is unfair to others, especially to those who are already weak and who are suffering. (There are plenty of modern examples in the financial world, such as a lending institution taking advantage of the poor by charging high interest rates or an investment salesman offering deceitful promises of prosperity later in return for handing over un-secured cash now). Another tack to take is to talk about taking measures for “personal protection” that could hurt innocent others un-intentionally (carrying a knife, bullying etc.) Also note the “contrastive” outcome for story 2a, about the same farmer. The two stories can be considered together.

THE GIFT OF A CHILD

The wife of a large landowner is barren because her husband has been cursed by the gods for his careless actions. The wife learns of this problem and pleads with Lord Shiva for help. Finally this great Lord promises to help her overcome her barrenness.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES - TWO: Do you know someone who very much wanted a child but couldn't have one naturally, and then had a happy surprise when one arrived unexpectedly?

COMMENTARY: The problem of barrenness has always been with humankind. It is a common modern issue too. Many couples seek help when they find their efforts do not easily lead to pregnancy. Often the woman is blamed (especially in earlier times, before the advent of scientific testing that nowadays can usually assign the problem to a biological barrier carried within one partner or the other). In a way this sub-story is “radical” for its time (though barrenness is a common motif in Indian mythology more generally). It is radical in a “social” sense because clearly the male half of the partnership is at fault. But his wife dearly wants children and so she works hard to find help. At last she is granted a child by the gods. This is often the feeling “expressed” by women who use fertility clinics. Their new and sudden ability to conceive seems, indeed, like a gift from above.

Now the story takes another surprise twist. The gift from Lord Shiva does not create a normal biological pregnancy. Instead he grants the story heroine the chance to adopt a “magical baby.” Again the legend can be called “socially stunning” because the gods endorse adoption from an “unknown” source. This is very modern, as most women who adopt these days do not know who the child's parents were, and are often legally prevented from obtaining this knowledge. The story illustrates how an essentially “blind” adoption procedure becomes a “blessing,” and a reason for celebration. Indeed this “blind adoption” is the god-sanctioned solution to a terrible problem for this barren family. The outcome gives them great

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happiness. See the opening of Episode 2 to learn about where the baby was found and how joyous this outcome is for this lucky family.

A MAGICAL CHILD



KEY THEME: ADOPTING AN INFANT

(Black = Event summary, Green = Discussion Topics, Red = Background Commentary for teacher reference)

SUMMARY: A BABE IS FOUND!

A beautiful child is found under some rocks by the farmer Kolatta. He has noticed that one of his cows is not feeding its calf. Yet there seems to be little milk in its udder. Following the child and questioning the shepherd Kolatta finally finds that there is a beautiful baby lying under a large pile of rocks in his field. The cow with the empty udder had been secretly feeding it! This child shines "like the sun itself." When the farmer takes it home his wife takes a few minutes to adjust to the idea, asks some questions, and then becomes overjoyed at the prospect of keeping and raising the little infant as her own. But before she agrees to adopt it she asks for a magical test that will put her mind at rest. The test is to prove to her that this child really belongs to her. It is a test that Lord Vishnu supervises. It allows milk from her own breasts to leap over seven curtains made of sari cloths... and then fall into the infant's mouth. Satisfied that the child is theirs, it is adopted into the family. The infant is raised lovingly and a fine naming ceremony is held for it.

SOME TALKING POINTS: Why are babies so appealing? What responsibilities are involved in adopting? Is it a good idea to adopt a child, and if so, why? In this story we see that finding and adopting a child brought great joy to the family. But building love and a sense of belonging around a newly adopted child can take time. **a)** What did the hero do to deserve such a gift? **b)** Why did the great god decide to lift his curse and give the couple this wonderful gift? **c)** Why do you think the child

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was hidden under so many rocks? **d)** What do you know about the “tests” social agencies give modern families before they are allowed to adopt a child

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES - ONE: Have you ever done some careful research before you took action, had a good outcome and been very glad that you asked lots of questions up front? Do you know any animal stories that describe gestures of caring or kindness towards the helpless, say an example where a she-dog adopted a kitten and raised it lovingly with its own litter of pups? Have you ever read a “children’s book” that tells a story like this?

COMMENTARY: This is essentially the same story as the one found in episode one, where Kolatta also looks for the answer to a problem. There he has mysterious animals eating his sugarcane. Here he has a cow that is mysteriously losing milk. But this time Kolatta does his research and thus the outcome reversed. Now his careful observations are amply rewarded. One can separately discuss the small sub-story how the farmer finds his baby in a surprising and un-natural place (under a pile of rocks in a field). (A biblical parallel with the tale of Moses in the Bullrushes comes to mind here). Abandon babies frequently make the news today as well. Often the mother will leave her child in a somewhat hidden spot.... in a stairwell, in a side ally or whatever and then a passerby later discovers it. Children are also commonly found in piles of rubble after an earthquake. Sometimes the natural mother is still alive and sometimes not. The fact that a cow is feeding the child in this story is a nice touch, almost suggesting it was living in a kind of cow “nursery” awaiting adoption. Stories about children raised or breast fed by animals are quite common, both in folklore (as in the popular wolf-boy story) and in mythology (a human child fed by mare, a doe etc.) Indeed the Legend of Ponnivala has such a story (in the third generation) where the story’s heroic male twins are fed by a tigress and also by a she-elephant. See Episode 14.2.

MORE TALKING POINTS: When something very unexpected happens... like finding a child... there can be disbelief. Is it really mine? What have I done to deserve this you might ask. Suppose you found a stray kitten, or \$100 on the street. What would you do? You would want to assure yourself that you had the right to take it. You might ask the ASPCA, for example, or the police if someone else had claimed what you found. Ariyanacci had no police men to ask, so she called on Lord Vishnu to “prove “ that she could rightfully raise this lovely babe. Vishnu’s test uses a test that pleases her since it shows her that her own milk belongs in the baby’s mouth. And when you get something you really want you will take good care of it. Ariyanacci and her husband Kolatta take really good care of this child. And they give it a name in a lovely ceremony. Wouldn’t you do the same if you adopted a stray animal... Of course your parents would also give a newly adopted child a name! This little child was named Kunnutaiya which means something like “man of the rock hill.” Of course you will understand where that name came from!

What are some of the legal issues today one needs to think about when adopting a child? How can a ritual or magical event of some kind help legitimize the integration of a new child into a family? Do you think this infant be treated responsibly, loved and cared for well? What could happen if the parents that have adopted a child suddenly die? What precautions would it be a good idea to take to protect the child ...in such a case?

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES – TWO
Do you have a friend whose family adopted a child? Can you tell that story?
What about an adopted kitten or puppy? Was the pet named right away?

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Was it given a good home? Are people always happy to take in stray animals or abandoned babies? If not, why might they have some doubts? What are some of the differences (and similarities) in adopting a human child and adopting a pet animal?

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A CHILD FOR JUST A FEW YEARS!



KEY THEME: FAMILY BELONGING

(Black = Event summary, Green = Discussion Topics, Red = Background Commentary for teacher reference)

SUMMARY: **AN ORPHAN IS CREATED BY HIS PARENTS' DEATHS**

Kolatta and Ariyanacci spend five joyful years with their young adopted son, Kunnutaiya. But then, suddenly, both of his die. The Lord of Death sends two messengers to announce that the couple's time on earth is up. The calculation has been made and they can be given only a few hours of mercy. Then they both must climb the ladder towards heaven. Alas, their adoring son Kunnutaiya must be left behind. But fortunately the neighbouring Chola monarch has come for the required funeral rituals. He tries to console the young boy. He also tries to rebuild his confidence. This kind and diplomatic ruler gives the family's clansmen the right to use Kolatta and Ariyanacci's lands for a few years, while the boy is still a child. But when Kunnutaiya grows up, the king reminds the clansmen that it is their duty to return the lands to him that his parents once owned. This boy, Kunnutaiya, is the rightful family heir. As soon as this gentle ruler leaves, however, the clansmen begin their abuse of the young and innocent boy. They attack the little hero verbally and also beat him physically. Their motive is obvious. They want to intimidate him, make him run away, and thereby insure that the family's land will become theirs forever. These clansmen quickly destroy the farmer king's palace so that he will (hopefully) never be able to find where it stood. Then they drag the brave but very frightened little

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boy off. They will make him work tending their animals and doing other menial tasks as a kind of household servant.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES: Do you know anyone whose two parents died together suddenly? Did this unexpected misfortune leave a child of theirs alone to cope in the wide world by itself? Can you imagine something like this happening to you?

COMMENTARY: There are many stories about orphan children that circulate in the world today. Take Haiti, for example, where both parents of some children died in the huge earthquake there, leaving them alone in the world. It is not the parents' fault that things like this happen. But the truth is that it does. This story reminds us that stories about child orphans are not new "modern-style" tragedies. This kind of sad story has always been with us, even though it usually affects just a small number of people in any given population. The consequences of suddenly finding one self an orphan are as old as human life itself. Orphan children suffer a lot and they are usually very vulnerable to exploitation.

The life of any orphan is tough, and this story can always be understood to describe that misfortune.. Furthermore, almost any story of child abuse will reverberate with similar issues. Greedy relatives want their kinsmen's wealth. The strong see opportunity (and sometimes pleasure) in abusing the weak. Some hold a grudge because their own fathers were "younger brothers" and did not inherit equally at their parents deaths. Among farmers there are always stories about how the land given to one son was not as good as that given to others. A straight forward telling of above story would emphasize common traditional pattern of land inheritance: that the eldest son normally gets the land. Think of what would happen if this were not the case... if the land gets sub-divided further and further in each generation... eventually the plots will become too small to sustain a family... or even too small to grow one decent crop.

Kolatta's family never had a "genuine" biological son. So the clansmen were just waiting for this moment, a time when they could move in and claim the land as theirs. The king asks these men why they did not state their claim to the land earlier and talk about it openly before Kolatta and Ariyanacci die. The clansmen standing before him have no good answer. The wise king therefore extracts a promise, making the men affirm that they will return the land to the newly orphaned Kunnutaiya when he is ready to farm it himself. But the king can not enforce this promise, and the clansmen know this. So as soon as this monarch leaves they start to intimidate the child and destroy his family palace They know that this will further weaken the boy's (likely) claims later, as a grown up. T

his same story can be broadened, of course, and used to reflect a larger landscape of exploitation. Almost any modern story of a young and dispossessed child whose future is taken in hand by a stronger and very manipulative adult could serve here for comparative purposes.

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A BRAVE ORPHAN



KEY THEME: FINDING INNER COURAGE

(Black = Event summary, Green = Discussion Topics, Red = Background Commentary for teacher reference)

SUMMARY: THE HERO SUFFERS AS AN ABUSED, HOMELESS BOY

The young orphan is sent from family to family. Each household treats him more cruelly than the last. In one home the wife is the meaner one, in another it is the husband. Some families will not have him at all. Finally the clansmen meet and decide to give him a begging bowl, asking him to beg for his food. But the little hero keeps up his spirits. He is very resourceful and manages to find ways to survive. The god Vishnu watches over him carefully and makes sure he is going to pull through this period of “character testing.”

SOME TALKING POINTS: In some ways Kunnutaiya is like a “street child” in our modern world. Why do you think this young boy was able to manage by himself, at such a young age? **a)** What kinds of problems do such kids face? **b)** Was he bullied? How, where and why? **c)** Was he exploited by older and more powerful people? What did they think they would gain from this poor treatment? **d)** What did Kunnutaiya do to survive such hardships? **e)** What advice would you give this poor orphan boy?

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES: Have you ever met and talked to a homeless child? Have you ever read a story like this about someone Kunnutaiya’s age? Can you find and tell the story of such a person? In this story Kunnutaiya is going to become a hero. So this period in his life is

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a kind of training, or a time of character testing? How can these difficulties affect a person (for better or for worse) as he or she grows up?

COMMENTARY: This episode features the sufferings of the homeless. It makes a good parallel for the stories of “street children” today. There are many examples of kids who live on the streets in any 3rd world country. There are also kids who live on the streets in affluent countries like Canada and the US.. The abuse experienced by such children is similar across cultures and across times and places. One can help students to identify certain basic themes found among among the homeless anywhere: a basic struggle to find food, the need for reliable shelter and a constant concern with personal safety. Good health and good hygiene are also common challenges for the homeless. But don't forget to discuss the ending tone as well. It is significant. The young hero is always hopeful. With each adventure he dreams of finding a place he can call home, a place where he will be respected, safe and properly fed. Such good fortune is not easy to come by but his optimism helps him pull through. One can also point to the hero's self reliance in adversity, his strength of character and his ingenuity in the face of hardship. Many “survivor” stories can be used as parallels available in our modern world.

A CLEVER SURVIVOR



KEY THEME: USING ONE'S WITS IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

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SUMMARY: A CHILD WITH MAGICAL STRENGTH

Five years pass while the poor orphan Kunnutaiya suffers in extreme poverty. At first he tries selling wood he has cut in the forest. He ties up a huge bundle and lifts it onto his head. Lord Vishnu watches over his work and helps him to carry this heavy head load to a neighboring village. As Kunnutaiya starts down a local street there, a woman sees that he has wood for sale. She offers him food in exchange for his bundle of dried branches. She invites Kunnutaiya to eat on her porch, but soon her husband comes home and he is quickly angered by seeing his wife giving precious food to a strange boy. Kunnutaiya runs away from this shouting man and now finds another village. There two farmers befriend him and ask him to cut brush for them. Kunnutaiya does an awesome job of this, again with a little help from his guardian "angel," Lord Vishnu. But when these men bring the boy home it is the wife who now has some doubts. Her husband becomes upset that she is not obeying his command to feed Kunnutaiya and so he proceeds to beat her. Kunnutaiya sees this and becomes upset. Frightened once again, the little boy runs still further into the unknown.

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SOME TALKING POINTS: The young hero Kunnutaiya is good at recognizing an opportunity. First of all, he figures out that he can collect forest wood that others might later buy from him. Tough times call for intelligent thinking. One has to spot opportunities. **a)** What kinds of opportunities might a street kid think of for earning money today? **b)** Some parents think that kids should enjoy youth and just have fun.... that work is only for adults. What do you think? **c)** Kunnutaiya's plan didn't work out very well. Why? Was his reasoning wrong? **d)** What did Kunnutaiya do next and can we learn from that? **e)** Do you think his attitude of wanting to try again and again will eventually pay off? **f)** Kunnutaiya feels that he has a magical helper, Lord Vishnu. It is a good feeling that helps to give him hope. Discuss this idea. Have you ever felt that you had an unseen helper behind you?

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES: Can you find a story of a sibling or a friend's child who did something absolutely unbelievable? Did they have a magical helper in order to succeed? How does this make a person stronger. What about the magical charms that people carry that they feel brings them good luck. Have you ever tried that?

COMMENTARY: Many folktales and myths describe children who have magical or supernatural strengths. But so-called "ordinary" children can also seem "magical" to their parents. This sub-episode has many folktale and mythical equivalents. Hundreds of popular tales feature the supernatural characteristics of a bright and charming child. Sometimes the youngster may also have "trickster" characteristics, as in the popular stories about the much loved boy-Krishna which circulate widely in Hindu India. Many of these stories are accessible on the internet. Read some and get your students to discuss the similarities.

REFUGE AT LAST!



KEY THEME: RECOGNIZING A GOOD EMPLOYER

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SUMMARY: AN ORPHAN BOY FINDS A KIND PATRON AND A GOOD HOME

The orphan boy Kunnutaiya has been suffering for a long time. He has endured years of being beaten, insulted and forced to live on stale millet gruel. Finally the boy sees the tower of a lovely temple in the distance. Hope for a good home rises once more in his heart. He starts to run towards this place. On the way two men who are resting at a small village street shrine see him run by. They call and stop him. When they ask the young boy questions they are impressed with his mature answers. The men take him home and introduce him to their wives. Treating him with kindness, they feed him and let him rest. Then they assign him work as their family shepherd. Kuuntaiya settles in and is respected. He also notices that these two men have a beautiful young sister. He considers her to be as beautiful as a lotus flower.

SOME TALKING POINTS: It is important to think positively. It is also important to recognize and to accept others' help when it seems genuine. Kunnutaiya's many life experiences have taught him to sense the presence of an honest benefactor. He finally gets "a break." **a)** What do you think would be signs of honesty in a person offering you work today? **b)** Can you list some of the reasons why one should learn to trust others, and some of the reasons that one needs to be cautious? **c)** Kunnutaiya now has a patron, someone who will reward him fairly for his work and also respect him. Who do you know who is like this? **d)** Kunnutaiya's work as a shepherd, and as a houseboy, suited

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the society he lived in. He was paid with food, shelter and respect, not with money. Are there any jobs left like this today

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES: Kunnutaiya lived in a society that mostly exchanged work for “goods” and “services.” Coins were known and traded but most people didn’t have any. Ask your students if they think an economic system like that be possible today? If so, how could it work? Try designing some kind of game or exercise where people exchange home-grown foods, clothing or whatever, that they have made themselves... for services performed. Try dividing the class into carpenters, farmer owners, laborers, hunters, merchants, weavers etc. And have them “bargain with one another over how much they want in “goods” for their own products or for their labourer.

COMMENTARY: Societies are always made up of a mix of personalities and character types. Some people are genuine and kind by nature. Some are cruel or greedy or mean. The rule of law and the existence of organizations responsible for solving various problems can help reduce the influence of anger, selfishness and cruelty on individual lives. But these kinds of human problems can never be completely eliminated, only controlled or suppressed. How does one learn to recognize honesty, sincerity, good leadership and other ways that people contribute to the rule of justice, peace, understanding and harmony? Open a discussion and let your students think about these issues. In this except from the larger story Kunnutaiya’s newly found patrons seem to be good and just men. But in later episodes we will see that these two brothers (and their wives) have certain major weaknesses too. You can ask them to compare this story with what we will learn in stories 5.1 and 5.2 and also with what happens in 9.1 and 9.2.

STORY EPISODE 4.2

MY SWEETHEART!



KEY THEME: FALLING IN LOVE

(Black = Event summary, Green = Discussion Topics, Red = Background Commentary for teacher reference)

SUMMARY: **THE HERO FALLS IN LOVE WITH A GIRL WHOSE SOCIAL RANK IS MUCH TOO HIGH**

The boy-hero Kunnutaiya finds refuge with a kind family of rich landowners. He is most grateful for this shelter and for his patron's kindness after having lived many years in exile. He is assigned work as a shepherd and is also assigned some household chores such as cutting firewood and fetching water. Kunnutaiya finds himself well treated and trusted. In time his two bosses also ask that he push a garden swing for their lovely young sister, Tamarai. Of course, while doing this the hero notices her charms and he gradually falls in love. But Kunnutaiya does not dare to show his interest. He realizes that he still holds the status of a mere worker in the eyes of this powerful farming family. Time passes. Kunnutaiya dreams big but realizes it will all come to naught. He keeps his feelings of affection hidden.

SOME TALKING POINTS: Falling in love with someone can be very pleasant, but it can also be disturbing. Often people who meet and “fall in love” are separated by huge social and economic differences. Kunnutaiya falls in love with his employer's young sister, a woman much higher in status. He is very poor and her family believes he is an orphan. They, on the other hand, are wealthy. **a)** Do you think Kunnutaiya has any chance at all of marrying this girl? Why or why not? **b)** What would you say if your sister was in love with... say... a garbage collector? Would you say anything or do anything to stop her seeing him? **c)** Kunnutaiya was being asked to “push” the swing of the girl he fell in love with? Why would the family have asking him to do that if they disapproved of the two of them falling in

STORY EPISODE 4.2

love? **d)** After a time Kunnutaiya learns that the girl he loves is also a kind of “orphan”... like himself. She, too, was born as a gift of the gods. Does this tell you anything about what might happen next?

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES: Do you know the story of someone, especially a story about a boy, who “fell in love” with a girl who was socially “out of reach?” Maybe she was from a different country? Maybe her parents didn’t approve of his “background.” Did he hide his affection for her for many years? Are there any reasons why a boy falling in love with a girl of higher status might be different from the story of a girl falling in love with a man of higher status?

COMMENTARY: This is the classic story of love “strings true” across all social barriers. The situation is all the more poignant because it features a boy in love with a woman of high status. In general it is considered less radical for a girl to think of “marrying up,” than for a man to dream of this. Indian norms fit this common social pattern. Women of high status are well-protected from the advances of would-be lovers of lower status. Though socially “radical,” the romance in this story is also very innocent. Nothing at all inappropriate happens between these two lovers. On the contrary, the girl’s exceptional innocence and purity is carefully preserved. Their dilemma, therefore, has to be “solved” by some type of exterior intervention.

4.2 -b) THE HERO’S TRUE STATUS IS REVEALED TO HIM BY A GOD

The goddess who looks after the boy’s (unknown) former family lands is unhappy. Her temple on earth has not had a good cleaning for twenty years. So she goes to her brother, Lord Vishnu, to seek his advice. Promising to help, Vishnu takes the form of an elderly beggar and visits the shepherd boy in the cattlefold where he sleeps. He now “reveals” to Kunnutaiya that the girl he admires is really an appropriate marriage mate. The only problem is that because he was orphaned as a young boy he doesn’t know much about his true parents. As it turns out, they were also local farmer-kings. The shepherd Kunnutaiya is shocked to hear this amazing news. At first he drives the mendicant away. Trying a second time, Lord Vishnu casts a spell over the boy. In this way he manages to persuade the humble shepherd/hero to stand strong and courageously request the hand of the girl he loves... in marriage.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES: Can you continue the story above? What happens next? How do the parents of the girl come to know about the boy who was in love with their daughter? Does the girl, Tamarai, have similar feelings about Kunnutaiya? How do you think the situation will evolve? Will the family finally come to accept the boy as their daughter’s suitor? What might they learn that could make them grow to respect him?

COMMENTARY: In this story we experience a classic “revelation” event. Faced with a similar situation, folk stories from various countries can be seen to reveal situation-shattering news in many different ways. In this case the details that solve the hero’s dilemma are delivered by a god disguised as a beggar. But teasing and testing also play a role in this important story. Lord Vishnu is having fun. He is behaving like a trickster, egging on a reluctant subject. He is testing Kunnutaiya’s inner self-confidence at every step. At first he will fail..... but as is typical of most folk traditions, the test will eventually occur three times....

STORY EPISODE 5.1

HE'LL NEVER MARRY MY SISTER!



KEY THEME: LOVE CAN CREATE SOCIAL PROBLEMS

(Black = Event summary, Green = Discussion Topics, Red = Background Commentary for teacher reference)

SUMMARY: **TRIAL #1: THE HERO SUMMONS HIS COURAGE BUT FAILS TO SUSTAIN IT**

The hero Kunnutaiya has fallen in love with his bosses' younger sister. She is much higher in status than he. Kunnutaiya has accepted the fact that he will never be able to marry her. But then a beggar finds him near the family's sheep and goat pen, the place where he sleeps each night. Unknown to the hero, this mendicant is actually Lord Vishnu in disguise. The beggar explains to the young man that he is really the son of a wealthy farmer himself, and that he has the right to ask for the hand of the girl he loves. Soon he persuades Kunnutaiya to go with him to the palace at dawn. Kunnutaiya is to lie in front of the palace door at the very place where his two bosses will exit on their way to the local temple to pray. But his heart is in turmoil..... and when the two men see him ...he loses his courage to speak out.

SOME TALKING POINTS: The two brother farmers are shocked to learn that their servant wants to marry into their family. Are they right to have these kinds of "our family is superior" feelings? **a)** What would you say if it was your sister the servant wanted to marry? **b)** Would you put any "conditions" on this marriage idea? **c)** What might persuade you to change your mind? **d)** Is this medieval society really very different in its values from our own?

STORY EPISODE 5.1

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES: Do you know the story of someone who was asked to make a declaration in front of elders (perhaps a judge, or a boss at work) about his real identity but was just too afraid to speak? Maybe he had something to say about others, ... perhaps some wrong that he saw occur that others do not want revealed.

COMMENTARY: Again we have a classic “folktale” scenario. The godlike figure “tests” the hero. The first time the young man fails that test. He is thoroughly intimidated by his two land-owning bosses. Any story where a person’s inner strength and conviction are tested can provide a parallel to this situation. Perhaps we can advise the hero using an old adage... “if at first you don’t succeed try, and then try again.”

SUMMARY CONTINUED:: TRIAL #2: THE HERO IS TESTED / BULLIED FOR A SECOND TIME

Once Kunnutaiya returns to his familiar surround Vishnu (in the form of a beggar) appears once more. ... this time, however, he uses sacred ash to cast a spell. This time he gives him clearer instructions. He is to directly explain to his “bosses” who he is and how he is related to their sister. Then he is to immediately demand her hand. The next morning the elder brothers of the lovely girl find the boy standing in their path again. This time he summons up the courage to speak. Kunnutaiya explains to the two men that he is really the son of a powerful farmer and thus he is their social equal. But the two brothers react badly and soon give the boy a severe beating for his egotism. Kunnutaiya falls unconscious and the men then tie his hands behind him and leave him with his back against a post. They then order their servants to give him a good beating.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES: Do you know someone who has gone through a long period of difficulties? Were they courageous? Did they keep up their hope that someday they would succeed? Do you know someone who has been bullied repeatedly? Do you think courage and optimism would help in that kind of situation too?

COMMENTARY: After a 2nd “trial” Kunnutaiya is still suffering... only now even more than before. He has been left in a very tough spot. Even a second courageous attempt to speak out does not bring him success. Many witnesses in courtroom cases have this problem. So do people who can’t find a job or kids who have been bullied. Sometimes the effects of abuse are cumulative, so that lack of success on the first or second makes the situation harder and harder for the underdog. Bullies continue to hurt their victims when they see that they are intimidated or scared. Sometimes the attacks or threats continue because the aggressor does not want to “hear” the truth (as in this story) or because they don’t want others to hear it

SUMMARY: TRIAL #3: THE HERO IS TESTED A THIRD TIME NOW A HELPER INTERVENES

When Kunnutaiya regains consciousness he is still tied to a post with his hands secured behind him.. But soon that peculiar beggar appears again. Kunnutaiya is angry and blames the beggar for his fate. The visitor asks for trust and explains that nothing is achieved without suffering. Then he directs some magic at Kunnutaiya and his hands are released. He also uses magic to set the palace fence on fire. The two bosses rush out and beg for the stranger to stop the fire. The beggar uses this threat to extract a promise from the two men that they will allow their sister to marry Kunnutaiya. But they feel ashamed and want the marriage to take place secretly, far

STORY EPISODE 5.1

outside their village. The matter is settled and the men have a maid lead their sister to a place where the stranger will take charge and then guide her to the designated wedding spot.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES: Do you know of a story where a teacher, a parent or some other senior person helped “rescue” someone who was being bullied? Did the person in authority persuade the aggressors to stop tormenting him or her? Very likely some examples will be found. Pursue this with more questions. Was the situation itself then altered in some way... so as to prevent a similar event ever happening again? Was there an agreement reached that would resolve the situation and prevent it from happening again?

COMMENTARY: When Kunnutaiya faces his third trial (tied to a post) he discovers that a magical helper has appeared beside him. Kunnutaiya turns to this odd stranger, doubting him at first but then accepting an offer of assistance ... something he badly needs. He looks him in the eye with compliance and trust. Sometimes a person that can act with authority is needed to step in to help settle a bitter dispute. The stranger does this by taking control of the situation (with his threat of a palace fire). When he has the attention of the two men he then confirms that Kunnutaiya deserves respect. Next he extracts a promise from the two men. They agree to let their sister marry Kuuntaiya. But they do place conditions on their consent. It is a compromise that has been worked out through the intervention of a powerful mediator. Many disputes are settled in this way. You can offer your own examples, and also let the students come up with descriptions of dispute settlement that they have personally experienced.

ARE THESE WEDDING GIFTS?



KEY THEME: THE POWER OF OSTRACISM

(Black = Event summary, Green = Discussion Topics, Red = Background Commentary for teacher reference)

SUMMARY: AN IMPROBABLE MARRIAGE IS ARRANGED

Two brothers consent to let their young sister marry Kunnutaiya, a man who has been their personal house servant for many years. These wealthy farmers did not feel that this domestic worker was a suitable match, but under duress and the application of some external pressure... they have agreed to let this happen. The two brothers now ask a maid to take their sister Tamarai to the edge of their village. There she is handed over to the strange man, some sort of wandering religious ascetic (but is really Lord Vishnu in disguise). He is the same stranger who forced the wedding agreement from them earlier. The stranger meets Tamarai and leads her to a temple deep in the forest. This god-in-disguise now arranges for the wedding rituals. Suddenly he transforms into Lord Vishnu himself. All the needed ceremonial items magically appear and he marries the couple in a simple ceremony. Meanwhile the two brothers, back at the palace, prepare some wedding gifts. These are to be an old bony cow, a bind goat and some grains they know their sister's new husband will not eat. These are delivered to the forest temple by a servant. Tamarai explains that these are not gifts but insults that send the message that the newly weds are never to return to her village. Kunnutaiya and Tamarai depart for his old

STORY EPISODE 5.2

homeland, searching for it on foot. Will they find the old palace and what adventures lie ahead in their new life together?

SOME TALKING POINTS: The marriage of Kunnutaiya with his beloved Tamarai is finally arranged, but at what cost? What is strange about the events the story describes? **a)** Where does the wedding take place and why? **b)** Who attends the wedding and where do the “guests” come from? **c)** Who performs the wedding and why are there no relatives there? **d)** What are the wedding gifts intended to say to the newly wed couple? **e)** What do the young bride and groom do when they learn they can not go back to her village? Do you think you be willing to suffer what they have suffered to marry someone your family disapproves of?

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES: In many bullying situations a teacher will resolve the problem by spatially separating the victim from the victimizer(s). Both may be asked to “start over again.” For example they could be assigned new classrooms, given new teachers or even sent to new schools. Judges, in their sentencing, often separate warring parties as well. Can you tell a story about a situation where this kind of “separation” resolution was imposed?

COMMENTARY: There are other elements to this story that can also be discussed. One interesting outcome is the fact that Tamarai was banished from her village and told not return, ever, to visit her family. (We see in episode 9 what happens when she actually disregards this edict and does come back). Such things happen in modern life too when one or both parents get angry and tell a son or daughter to leave home forever. A second line of discussion could involve all the interesting and very symbolic things the family leave as gifts... a blind goat, a broken pot hanger and a dried up old cow. Pointing this out can lead to a lively discussion about the huge emotive power of metaphor. More generally one can also point out the wide use in ceremonies (and in literature) of marginal spaces. “Limbo” or no-man’s-land is often the place selected for status transformation, and/or for contact with other (magical) worlds. People often seek visions in the wilderness (as for example Moses did). Native North American cultures deliberately send their young men out into the wilderness for spiritual inspiration.).

THE PIONEERS



KEY THEME: STARTING SOMETHING NEW CAN BE VERY CHALLENGING

(Black = Event summary, Green = Discussion Topics, Red = Background Commentary for teacher reference)

SUMMARY: **THE HERO FINDS THE OLD FAMILY HOMESTEAD**

The couple wander and eventually find the husband's traditional lands in Ponnivala. They see that the old palace was long ago flattened and ploughed under. The first step is to perform a proper ceremony for the local goddess. She welcomes the attention and blesses them. They set to work trying to build a new life and work hard to get their fields ploughed and planted.

SOME TALKING POINTS: Starting life in a new place can be very hard work. Although he is returning to ancestral lands, Kunnutaiya is essentially a pioneer. **a)** What are some things in common between Kunnutaiya's new life and the life of a pioneer in our North American history? **b)** What is the role of the pioneer wife? Is it any different from that of her husband? **c)** Why does Kunnutaiya have to go to the Chola king to get his lands back? **d)** Is the king's order that one field given back to the newly arrived couple now, and the rest after the harvest a fair one?

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES: Do you know a story about someone who traveled to a new place and found reasons for both joy and heartbreak upon arrival? Probably they realized that a lot of work lay ahead. Did they first enlist the support of the local authorities, and win their backing?

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COMMENTARY: This is what the hero and heroine decide to do by making the cleaning of the old family temple dedicated to their local goddess of the land their first priority. Although the goddess is angry at first, because she has had no attention for many years, the couple's hard work and respectful worship quickly bring this powerful protector onto their side. Think about the role of the goddess in this story as a kind of "healthy environment" thermometer. When the lands are well cared for and the crops flourish, then her devotees find that she is happy and supportive. But if her lands are not thoughtfully farmed using (what we now-a-days call "sustainable and green practices,") then the goddess will be angry and surely find a way to retaliate.

RIVAL CLANSMEN DISPUTE CONTROL OF THE FAMILY'S ANCESTRAL LANDS

The joy of the newly weds' homecoming does not last. The young wife soon detects a problem. She sees a group of rival clansmen approaching fields the couple have identified as theirs. These men are carrying their ploughs. Unsure about how to proceed, the husband leaves to consult the major ruler in the area, a Chola king. That monarch calls the clan rivals to his palace. The overlord then orders them to give the land back to its rightful claimants. But they disparage the new arrivals because the Kunnutaiya is known to be an "adopted" son. Of course this protest is in their own selfish interest. It reflects their desire to keep these lands for themselves. So the clansmen protest. The Chola king ensures that a compromise is reached. Kunnutaiya will get back one insignificant field now, and the rest of his lands after the next harvest. (See episode 2b for the full background story).

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES: Have you had someone take away something important that you believed belonged to you? Did they have a reason to feel that it should be "shared?" Did someone senior or highly respected finally intervene and settle the argument by suggesting a compromise?

COMMENTARY: The clansmen once promised the king (episode 2b) that they would give the land back to the hero when he became an adult. Actually, they had no intention of doing this. One can understand their point of view. These men are the hero's father's brothers' sons. They can lay a legitimate claim to these fields citing the common rule that "land descends in the male line." If no sons are born to one brother, the sons of the next brother may inherit that acreage. The "dispute" is over whether an adopted son should have a right equal to that of a biological son. What do the students think is "fair?" Tradition-based land claims cause similar problems in many parts of the world.

JEALOUS RIVALS



KEY THEME: PAST INEQUALITIES CAN LEAD TO JEALOUSY

(Black = Event summary and talking points, Green = Discussion Topics, Red = Background Commentary for teacher reference)

SUMMARY: A CRUEL TRICK IS SECRETLY ENGINEERED BY RIVALS

The husband returns home and wants to plough his newly acquired land. He tells his wife he is going to borrow a yoke of oxen. He wants to go ask his clansmen for this but his wife warns him against it because they are rivals with opposing interests. So he goes instead to an allied village to find families that traditionally provided services to his father. He is successful but upon returning home there is a second problem. He has forgotten to ask for planting seed. Again his wife warns him about the clansmen. This time, however, the hopeful farmer goes to visit his rivals anyway (without telling his wife). Those men secretly “toast” the seeds before giving them to him (see the illustration, above).

SOME TALKING POINTS: The hero, Kunnutaiya, is the newcomer. His cousin said he would give him planting seeds... but he had his wife secretly toast them first, so they would not sprout. The lands Kunnutaiya wants back belonged to his father. But he is in a weak position to demand their return. He was an orphan and he was forced into exile as a child. Now he has no wealth and no local connections.

QUESTIONS: **a)** Was Kunnutaiya right to go to the local monarch for help in getting his lands back? **b)** Kunnutaiya’s cousins are very mean but he doesn’t seem to suspect them of trickery. How is his personality different from that of his wife? **c)** How are Kunnutaiya’s skills different from that of his wife? What are his strengths and what are hers? **d)** Why won’t Kunnutaiya’s wife help with seeding the maize? Why do you think, in this culture, that this kind of work was considered a woman’s job?

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SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES: Do you know someone who played a similarly mean trick on a rival? Did they pretend to give away something good that turned out to be faulty or to not work at all?

COMMENTARY: There is actually a “double deception” here. The husband first deceives his wife by secretly going to ask a favour from people his wife warned him not to trust. So the fact that he is “tricked” by them is partly his fault. One can cite many similar examples from the modern world. Ponzi schemes or other deals advertised or offered that seem too good to be true are good examples of “tricks” that are easy to fall for. Internet scams would be another generic example. There are constant warnings... but naïve people sometimes ignore them and suffer as a result

SUMMARY CONTINUED: **THE INSIGHTFUL WIFE NOTICES HER HUSBAND HAS BEEN TRICKED**

Upon returning home, however, the wife notices they have been pre-cooked. The husband retains his confidence, but she is frightened and refuses to do the traditional woman’s job of planting (she fears the seeds won’t sprout and she’ll end up being held responsible). So the husband does the plowing and the planting both, by himself. But, unexpectedly, the hero is helped by Lord Vishnu who plants one magical seed beside each roasted one. But he doesn’t know this is happening. Assuming they will have a good harvest, the couple now plan to build a small house. Men from a “helper” village come to assist with the work. Their new home is soon complete.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES: Do you know a story about a good person who was tricked but didn’t realize it and so carried on as if nothing had happened? (And for older students) Did that person then spend money on still more things up front, not realizing that their whole future was being built upon a very “weak” foundation stone?

COMMENTARY: The wife of the hero is the one with “insight.” He is not a bad person. He is just naïve and over-trusting. She, by contrast, is perceptive, questioning and cautious. She is also in a tight bind. She would like to help her husband, but if seeds she has touched don’t sprout then she will get a bad reputation as a “sort of witch” whose involvement spoils things and causes them not to grow. Perhaps this is “superstition” but we can also call it “sensitivity” to public opinion. Fortunately the couple “get lucky” and Lord Vishnu helps out instead. We know (from other parts of the story) that this god is especially fond of the heroine. It is as if he steps in to take over her female role (this is symbolically a more interesting idea than his just deciding to help the hero).