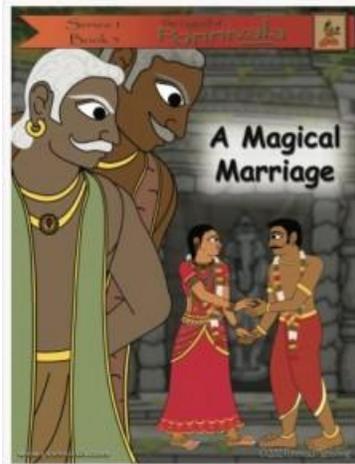


Episode 5 – A Magical Marriage (Sub Stories a, b, and c)
Resource Materials: Graphic comic books, ipad books, + videos)
VISIT our SHOP: Choose the retelling that works best for you



5-a) TRIAL #2: THE HERO IS TESTED / BULLIED FOR A SECOND TIME

Once the hero is back in his familiar surround Vishnu appears once more. .. again in disguise and again uses sacred ash to cast a spell. This time he gives him clearer instructions. He is to explain to his “bosses” who he is and how he is related to their sister. Then he is to immediately demand her hand. So the next morning the elder brothers of the lovely girl now find the boy standing in their path again. This time he finds the courage to speak. He tells them that he really the son of a powerful farmer and thus their equal. But the two brothers react badly and give the boy a severe beating for his egotism. He falls unconscious and the men then place a big stone on him, assuming he will die.

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?

COMMENTARY: After a 2nd “trial” the boy is still suffering... now even more than before. He is left in a very tough spot. Even his 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 are bullied. Sometimes the effects are cumulative, so that lack of success on the first or second try make things harder and harder. 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 themselves (as in this story) or because they don't want others to hear it (which can be called “blackmail”).

5-b) TRIAL #3: THE HERO IS TESTED A THIRD TIME NOW A HELPER INTERVENES

When the shepherd regains consciousness he is still under a huge stone. But now he sees Vishnu standing beside him. He moans and asks the god for help. Vishnu throws magical ash on the brother's palace and it catches fire. The servants rush out. They ask the two brothers to stop the fire. Suffering themselves now, the two men go to the temple to find help. There they see a beggar (Vishnu in disguise) and address him as a learned man. Gradually Lord Vishnu reasons with the brothers and explains that they really are related to the shepherd boy. The men listen

and accept this “revelation.” They then lift the stone off the suffering boy. But these men still refuse to marry their sister to a former palace servant.

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. But was the situation itself changed in some way... so as to prevent a similar event ever happening again?

COMMENTARY: As the third trial begins the boy turns to someone senior for help and so gets the assistance he badly needs. This voice “from a person of rank” backs his claims. Sometimes a voice that can speak with authority is needed to help settle a bitter dispute. Now the high status of the boy is confirmed, but that isn’t the end of the story. The brothers still don’t want him to marry their sister. How is this final step in the story achieved?

5-c) THE PROBLEM IS RESOLVED AND THE MARRIAGE ARRANGED

The old beggar demands that the girl be given to him. The brothers resist. But the wise man points to the fire consuming their palace. They now see they have been “set up” for a bargain. They consent to hand over their sister to the old man in exchange for his promise to stop the fire. He does this and the girl is sent to the edge of the village to meet him where he said he would wait. This god-in-disguise now arranges the wedding in a no-mans-land outside the village in a forest. Only the other gods attend. Once the wedding is over the brothers leave several gifts and signs on the path indicating that their sister is never to return home. Instead she and her husband are now to leave the area entirely. The newly weds walk away from the village.

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

COMMENTARY: There are other elements to this story that can also be discussed. One interesting outcome is the fact that the girl 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. “Linbo” or no-mans-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.).

