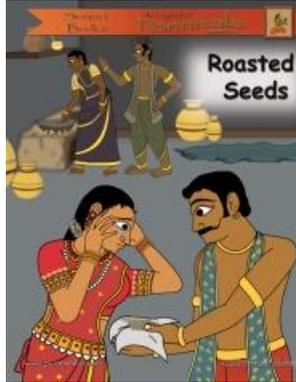


## Episode 6 – Roasted Seeds (Sub Stories a, b, c and d)

**Resource Materials: Graphic comic books, ipad books, + videos)**

**VISIT our SHOP: Choose the retelling that works best for you**



### 6-a) 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.

**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?**

**COMMENTARY:** This is what the hero and heroine decided to do by making the cleaning of the temple for the local goddess-guardian of the land their first priority. Although the goddess was angry that she has had no attention for many years, the couple's hard work and respectful worship quickly brought this powerful protector on side. Indeed one can point to 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 will 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.

### 6-b) 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 lands 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 (the new arrivals whom they disparage because the husband is known to be an "adopted" son). But the clansmen protest. A compromise is reached. The son will get back one insignificant field now, and the rest of his lands after the next harvest. (See episode 2b for the 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.

#### **6-c) 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 the clansmen for this but his wife warns him against it. 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 them anyway (without telling his wife). Those rivals quietly "toast" the seeds before giving them to him.

**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.

#### **6-d) 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).