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राधिकान्हा

RAADHIKAA KAANHAA

राधिकान्हा

A LOVE STORY

by
Narayanalakshmi

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RADHIKAANHA



A LOVE STORY

INTRODUCTION

This work is based on almost the real occurrences in the life of Sri Krishna. The name of Raadhikaa or Raadhaa is not found in the Bhaagavata Puraana.

Krishna spent only eight years of life in Gokula and Brindaavan. Raadhaa was one of the elder groups of girls; but unlike the girls of her age, she played around with younger boys and children acting as a leader guiding them in all their wild adventures. As she had the misfortune to be rejected by her city-bred husband, she was boycotted by most of the womenfolk of the village as a luckless inauspicious symbol of womanhood. Her misfortunes in life became a blessing for her in the company of little Krishna. There arose a unique relationship between child Krishna and the elderly Raadhaa not based on any physical attraction. The picturization of Raadhaa and Krishna as a romantic pair rose by the influence of various devotional poetries of yester years. Most of these devotees of Lord Krishna imagined themselves in the form of Gopikaas and gave Krishna a youthful image in his life at Gokula; and they added Raadhaa as his eternal young spouse.

Of course, we have to respect these saints for their guileless devotion for the blue boy of Brindaavan.

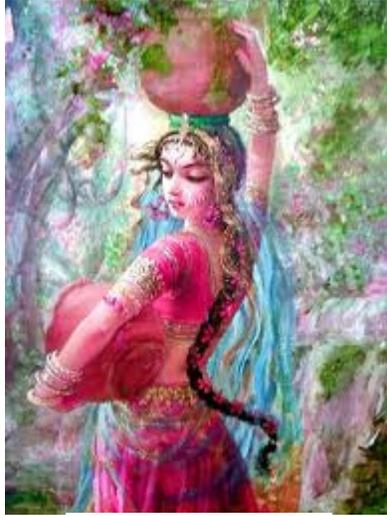
Though it is not objectionable on the devotional platform, it pains the heart to see the sacred relationship between Raadhaa and Krishna degraded as the carnal love of a sensuous couple in these days.

This work presents Krishna as he was -a child; and Raadhaa as what she was- an ordinary tomboyish girl who took pleasure in breaking the rules of the village.

All adventure-filled games of child Krishna praised as his 'Baala Leelaa' actually took place under the leadership of Raadhaa. She acted as a catalyst for building up his character of extreme courage and bravery which is appraised in all the devotional literature of Sri Krishna.

This work is offered at the sacred lotus feet of Raadhaa as an apology from Earth!

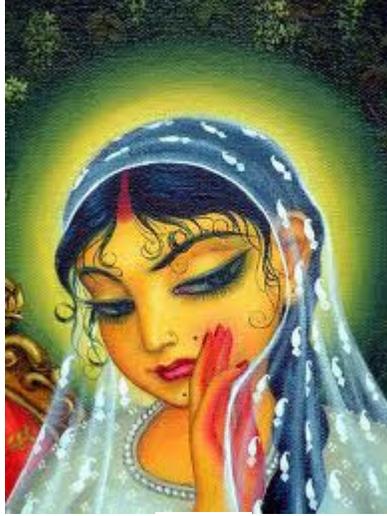




RAADHIKAA



*Lovelorn koels sang joyously.
Spring buds danced to their tunes.
Young hearts heeded not to the colors outside.
Only the forms of their beloveds shone in their eyes.
Laughter echoed in the alcoves and bowers of the woods.
Anklets danced on the creeper-lined paths.*



*While,
in Brindaaban,
Raadhaa,
Kaanhaa's Raadhikaa,
walked
alone.*

*Her long skirt was mud-strewn;
Her face was smeared with tears.
Her hair was uncombed.*

Her eyes were tired and lifeless.

A worn out peacock feather dangled loosely from her flowing locks.



*Two moons had lost their moon-light.
Two eyes were empty pools filled with dark nights.
A lovely champakaa flower had lost its fragrance.*

Or,

was it that the rains of 'Saawan (Monsoon)' had lost their mercy?



*Now and then,
she walked to a tree,
hugged it, and wept.
Sometimes, -she laughed aloud,
looking at a lonely little pond.
Sometimes,
suddenly,
in a fit of anger, she kicked a pebble on the ground.*



*Was it that the moon went walking in abandon,
or is it what Raadhaa looked like?
No, - it (she) was an anklet that was abandoned.*

*Once a pair of 'silver paayal' had adorned her feet,
but now rested inside the deep bowels of River Yamunaa.*

*Had she abandoned her mind, or lost it?
Not abandoned, but, intently concentrating on what?*



*Those glorious days with her child-friend!
Those laughters, those pranks, those dances...!*

*Kaanhaa... Kaanhaa... Kaanhaa ...!
Her heart cried.
Where was her dear friend?*

*She remembered every moment
spent with him so vividly.
It was like just yesterday...
when she first met him!
She was just passing the chieftain's house that day...*



KRISHNA



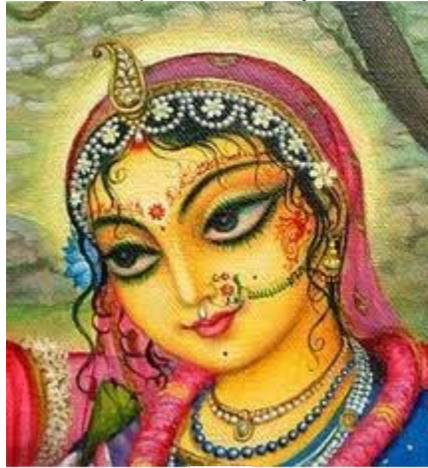
*The crowd in Nanda's house!
Gopikaas (cowherd-girls) gaily chattering!
Festive aroma of 'agar-battis' (incense sticks) and ghee lamps!*

*People were suddenly quiet.
A joyous mother came out with a little babe.
Yashodaa, the Chieftain Queen!
And, she held proudly - a baby boy
a beautiful baby boy!*

*The baby was staring;
not at the mother, but -
at Raadhaa.*



*He gurgled and smiled.
Smiled at her...!
Raadhaa wanted to madly rush and fondle that angelic form.*



*But,
her wedding tomorrow...!
Could she stand the crowd?
Their laughter and comments?*

*Before she knew it, -
her aunt descended on her.
Within a second-
a crowd of women had dragged her back hurriedly.*

'Her 'baraath' was due to arrive; what was she doing here...?'
they wondered.
"Stupid girl, you will be the death of me."
Some elderly voice screamed.

*As if on cue,
the baby in Yashodaa's arms-*

*let out a wail;
and no one knew, why 'He' cried;
except,-
the bride waiting for her 'baaraat'(bridal procession);
Her heart too cried.*

**THE CRY THAT WAS LOST IN THE WIND
NEVER REACHED THE SKY!**

RAADHIKAA

*Baraath (procession);
Crowds;
Shehnai (musical instrument);
Dolaks (Drums);
Songs;
Wedding;
Raadhaa hated it all!
And,
the Color RED;*



*Like an inferno raging in her heart
Red consumed her!
Red flowers;
Red Sindhoor (Vermilion);
Red Bridal Dress....!*

*

*Raadhaa went through the rituals mechanically.
She did not even look at her husband.
The husband too looked uneasy.
He wished he was back in Mathura.
In Mathura, his love waited for him.*



*Then, this wedding...?
He just chanted the hymns;
The bride did not.*



*He felt sympathy for her.
'Poor girl', he thought.
'Poor me', he lamented within.
Why did I fall in love?
His thoughts were with his other lover.
Above the 'dolaks' made a distinct sound.*



*A clatter of horse's hoofs...!
Quick steps running into the 'Mantap (Wedding Hall)'
Whispers and hurried consultations!
Raadhaa did not bother.
Her mind was elsewhere.*



*"Orders from the king", said the horseman.
"Come away now".
The festivities broke up.
The priest hurriedly chanted the remaining hymns.*



The Bride...?

*"Take her to my aunt's place" said the groom; so they left.
The groom on horseback to Mathura; The bride in the 'Doli'!
The 'Doli (Palanquin)' resting on strong shoulders.
The shoulders supported by four feet.
The feet on the road to 'Vishvapura'!
The kith and kin split up;*

*some to Mathura;
some to Vishvapura.*



*Raadhaa mutely observed all this.
She watched her beloved 'Gokul' disappear from her life.*

*The mango tree; the jasmine creeper;
the lotus pond in the village; her beloved calf;
the wild gardens around the hamlet;
she knew every tree, every pebble, and every pond there.*

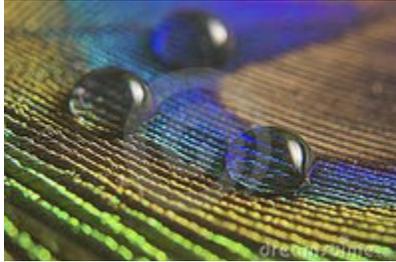
*Now- Where was she taken away by destiny?
She did not know.
What lay ahead?
She did not care.
For the first time in her life,
Raadhaa's large eyes brimmed with water.
And, as if their largeness could not hold her sorrow,
they overflowed the 'Kaajal (eye-paste)',
and gently kissed her cheeks.*





YASHODAA

*In front of Nanda's house,
Yashodaa was fondling the baby boy.*



*Raadhaa's tears did not stop.
As she leaned out of the palanquin,
one tear drop fell at the door of the Nanda-house.
A precious one indeed...!*

*Raadhaa left Gokul.
But, she had dissolved all her heart in one tear drop.
And that drop was content to fall out near Kaanhaa.*

*The bride left for her 'Sasuraal (house of Parents-in law)'
without her 'HEART'!*

THE WIND...! COULD IT LEAVE THE SKY?

KRISHNA



Gokul without Raadhaa...?!

No!

*Kaanhaa and the whole village left too; a few months later –
to Brindaaban.*

*Brindaaban- the forest of Tulsi (Holy Basil)!
The fragrant land of plenty!*

*On the banks of River Jamunaa, the dark beauty,
the beautiful flowering corners, ponds, streams and hills!*

*Beautiful Brindaaban!
The fragrant -holy -sylvan land!!*



KAANHAA- just four years old...!

*Yet, four full years of Kaanhaa was more than enough -
for the simple folk of Brindaaban.*

Kaanhaa was four – years - ‘too - old’;

*and
Yashodaa had acted in response;
to 'keep him out of trouble'!*

And so – Kaanhaa was kept out of trouble!



*He was crawling on the ground.
His waist was tied to a rope;
the rope to a stone -
a pounding stone !*

*Kaanhaa was covered in dust!
So was the stone!*

*Kaanhaa had been dragging it for a long time.
He was almost close to the forest now.*

*The evening Sun was peeping at him through the leaves.
A light wind ruffled his curls and dried the drops of sweat.*





*Krishna heaved a sigh!
He was hungry.
Hungry and tired!*

*Playing 'Horse-cart' was tiresome.
The 'cart' was heavy.
The 'horse' was hungry and tired.*

*He could not undo the knot.
So, he just sat on the cart;
Or, rather, on 'the pounding stone' - his 'throne'!
And -
looked around.*

*He heard-
anklet bells; jingling bangles.
A girl!*

*Some one- whom Kaanhaa had seen before...!
Or had he?
Kaanhaa stared unblinkingly.*





*She was tall and pretty.
She was a newcomer.
She held a piece of sugarcane in her hand.
She had noticed him.
She was coming towards him.*



RAADHIKAA

*'Sympathy' - thought Krishna.
'Somebody at last' – he felt relieved.
And,
he Yelled and began to cry.*

*The walking girl was Raadhaa;
Raadhaa, who had left Gokul;
Raadhaa, who had come to give life to Brindaaban;
Raadhaa, whose husband had forsaken her for good;
Raadhaa, who was indeed very happy to be in Brindaaban;
Raadhaa, who recognized in her heart- the little boy;
now - four years old!*

*Why was he crying?
She ran towards him.
But,
she suddenly stopped midway.
She saw –
Kaanhaa crying; the rope; the pounding stone!*

*She burst out laughing;
burst out into peals of laughter.*

Kaanhaa was shocked.

*He even forgot to cry.
And opened one eye –
to see why she was laughing.*

*And, Raadhaa-
She looked at the little boy,
spying on her.*

*Unable to control herself,
she pinched his chubby cheeks.*

*And,
When both his eyes opened in surprise,
she, with practiced ease,
winked!*



*Somewhere
a koel sang... !
The leaves above were dancing!
The sunlight flakes jumped around the two.*

*Silently...
as heart called to the heart,
the two souls stirred.*

*Something began to beat wildly in Raadhaa;
and to ignore it in vain,
she asked the boy.
“Shall I untie you?”*

“NO” -the child uttered an angry scream.

*Raadhaa wondered what to say next.
She again asked-
“Will you eat this sugarcane?”*

*Kaanhaa frowned.
He seemed to be concentrating hard.*

'Prestige or sugarcane'?

*Hunger decided the issue!
He nodded with a serious note.*



*A few minutes passed in silence.
The sweetness of the sugarcane- shared,
bridged the two strangers together!
Strangers?*

"You are Nanda's son?" she queried.

*A torrent of words flowed from the sweetened mouth,
like the waters of Gangaa!*

Gangaa washed and filled and overflowed in Raadhaa's mind.

"I will call you Kaanhaa, and what will you call me?"

"What is your name?"

"Raadhikaa"

"No, too long a name! I will call you Raa-Dhaa".

"Ok! But, Only if you play with me...!"

"Play with you? A girl...?"

Yes, of course! And, I will play only in the jungle!"

She laughed again!



**THE SKY BECKONED THE WIND!
THE CALL HAD COME AT LAST!**

KRISHNA

*Krishna was enchanted.
How sweetly she laughed!
Girls giggled, but Raadhaa laughed.*

*“Will you be my friend?”
The little voice begged!*

*Friend...? ”
Raadhaa laughed, once more holding back the wild thoughts.*

*Once more Kaanhaa thought-
‘She is not like others, but – more like me!’*

*“Will you be my friend?”
He repeated, throwing away all self-respect.*

*“Only if you will let me join you in all your games!”
Raadhaa laughed again.*

*‘What a funny condition!’
thought the little boy.*

'She was a strange girl; or, was she?'
His mind was made up.
He took a firm decision.
"Alright!"

Raadhaa laughed and pinched his cheeks again.
Kaanhaa's face reddened.
He laughed too.
Kaanhaa liked his bold new friend.



"Kanhaaaa...." Some voice sounded afar.
Someone was calling for Kaanhaa.
Raadhaa hesitated.
She did not want to meet anyone else.
But, she did not want to leave her little friend too.

"Kaanhaa.....Kishan....Where are you?"
the voice drew near.

Quickly Raadhaa kissed Kaanhaa on his forehead.
"Little friend..
I will see you tomorrow.
Now I must flee off".

Kaanhaa too wished, the voices would fade away.
But he knew she had to go.

"Come tomorrow to the Yamuna bank"
He hurriedly whispered.

Anklets tinkled!
Skirts rustled!
Bangles jingled!
And she glided off into the woods
like the soft wind!

*And Kaanhaa watched her;
wistfully, slowly.
“Raadhaa” “Raadhaa” – his heart beat.*

*Like the softest swish of the Yamuna waves touching the sands,
the name Raadhaa had crept into his heart.*

*He felt strangely moved.
But why, he did not understand.
He felt strangely happy!
Very Very happy!*



RAADHIKAA

*And Raadhaa...?
She was talking to the winds.*

*“Kaanhaa” - she said slowly;
letting the sound linger on her tongue,
tasting the nectar-like notes.*

*“Kaanhaa” “Kaanhaa” “Kaanhaa” ...
the name lingered in the air.
It mingled with the heady perfume of Tulsi.*

*Intoxicated, as if by wine, Raadhaa repeated it:
the koels echoed it;
the leaves rustled and whispered it.*

*River Yamunaa too gurgled the note-
Kaanhaa Kaanhaa Kaanhaa ...!*

*Raadhaa had reached her destiny today.
She had found her journey’s end.
“Kaanhaa...Kaanhaa...Kaanhaa...!”*



THE WIND HAD SEEN THE SPLENDOROUS CAPS!

KRISHNA

*Kaanhaa was ready when his mother came.
He hugged her tightly crying.
“My poor Laal, my dear one...”*

*Yashodaa gathered up her son in her arms,
and kissed him wildly;
while he looked at her face, accusingly
with a sad look.*

Within, his heart sang- “Raadhaa... Raadhaa...!”

*“I am going to play tomorrow on the banks of Yamunaa”
Kaanhaa loudly announced at home.
Yashodaa was only glad to hear it.
He would keep out of trouble;
Bala (BalaRaama) would look after him.*

*She sat next to her ‘laal’ and took him to her arms.
She wished he would not grow up so fast.
She saw less of him everyday.
And no matter how many times she held him,
she still could not let him go; not even for a second.
‘What a feeble heart!’ - the mother thought.
All the same she was cradling her son.*



RAADHIKAA KRISHNA



*The glades and bowers of Brindaaban woke up.
It was as if the whole forest had become alive.
Laughter rang out from its corners everyday.*

*Winds hushed the notes of a new song –
“Raadhaa - Kaanhaa Raadhaa - Kaanhaa...
the pair that bought life to the games;*

*The cowherd boys and Raadhaa and Kaanhaa!
Life in Brindaaban was never boring!
Escapades and adventures!
Two hearts grew up to this tune.*



*And,
he lost his cane today.*

“Where is that ‘danda’(stick)?”

“Someone must have taken it, it was left here only”.

“Sunanda?”

“No. Not me; ask Balaa.”

“Me? No! Search well!”



They heard the anklet bells and bangles.

*“Your ‘Danda’ is lost?”
asked a mischievous voice -
as if from nowhere.*

No one in sight!

A hush!

Whispers!

“Where is Raadhaa?”

*Soon,
the boys heard the anklet bells.*

*They ran shouting and laughing.
They caught the pretty thief.*

*But,
She had no ‘Danda’ in her hand.
“Where is my ‘Danda’? Give it back!”
Kaanhaa threatened.*

“On the moon”, said the thief with a smile.

“Get it yourself”

“Ah! I asked the Moon-Lord. He has told me the truth already!”

“Then look in the milk”

“It is all churned up into butter”

“Maybe the cows ate it up”

“No, cows eat grass and not the ‘Dandas’”

Suddenly, Balaa emerged from behind the tree.

“Here it is”.

He raised the staff for all to see.

Raadhaa laughed gleefully.

“Danda ki chorni (thief); Hamaari (our) Raadhikaa Raani (Queen)”

They danced around her clapping and singing.

Raadhaa whirled round and round,

inside the circle,

holding Kaanhaa’s hands in hers.



Exhausted, they all lay panting in the grass.

Yamunaa flowed peacefully.

A light breeze wafted the fragrance of Tulsi around them.

The world was silent and beautiful.



*Suddenly..
Kaanhaa gave a shout;
“My little calf....!”
His little calf was wandering close to the river bank;
reaching for a tuft of juicy grasses;
unaware of the swirling river below.*



RAADHIKAA KRISHNA

*The young boys watched, startled.
But, Raadhaa.....?!
She was halfway across the river sands.
Was she the wind?!*

*Kaanhaa?- maybe he was the sky!!
For, he was already there!*

The wind and the sky; Raadhaa and Kaanhaa!

*The calf was rescued and Raadhaa was rewarded.
Kaanhaa smiled!
It was bewitching, enchanting.
It was like the Sun coming out from the clouds.*

*Did the clouds rain on the parched land?!
Raadhaa dissolved into them.
But, she winked.*

*Kaanhaa too was joyous.
What would he do without Raadhaa?
She was his life!*

*Raadhaa thought too -
‘Kaanhaa, you are my very breath!’*

*And, the two raced into the jungle.
It was time for laughter and frolic.*



*Did they share their feelings ever?
What can mere words say?!*

*What did the wind say to the sky?
or, the sky to the wind?
Raadhaa to Kaanhaa? Kaanhaa to Raadhaa?*

*Raadhaa's destiny was today Kaanhaa's!
Kaanhaa found his life too!*

Who had found whom?

**THE WIND WHISPERED TO THE SKY!
THE SKY SPOKE IN SILENCE!**

KRISHNA

Maa....! Can I have some more butter?"

*Yashodaa frowned!
She was busy tending the calves.
"Butter, butter, butter!
Wasn't it the ninth time in the morning?"*

*A mother could do no more;
even if the child was Nanda-laal;
and the mother -Yashodaa!*

'Ninth time'...

*“Later, my child, later” cajoled the mother.
‘Later’ – Kaanhaa understood.
He walked out of the house.*

*What a heavy burden of childhood!
‘Later...!’
‘What if I fainted with hunger?’*

*The world was unfair to children;
Children who were six especially!*



*A humming noise interrupted the thinker.
A young ‘gopikaa’;
sitting outside the house;
the open ‘Katori’(bowl) of ‘Mehndi’ (red paste)!*

‘Was she going to get married soon?’

*Kaanhaa stopped.
He watched her silently.
She raised her head to look at him.
He smiled.*

*“What are you looking at?” -
the inevitable question.*

*But,
Kaanhaa was ready with the unexpected reply.
“You are so pretty...; like a flower!”*

*“Flower? Am I so beautiful?”
She was trapped in his words.*

*“Yes” – confirmed Kaanhaa.
“Like a ...hmm..Ch.. Champaka flower” –
His imagination overflowed.*

“Like a Champakaa?” – She giggled.



*And she said,-
“Will you have some butter?”
“With some sweets?”
She added with a smile.*

*The advantages of being six –
and –
being KAANHAA!!!*



RAADHIKAA KRISHNA

*Raadhaa laughed aloud.
“You ...! The divine enchanter!”
She pinched his chubby cheeks.
“How dare you flirt like this?”
“One of these days, hundred wives will trouble you”
She laughed again!*

Kaanhaa just pushed one more piece of the sweet into her mouth.

*“Pooh” – he said!
“Wives? Harrumph! Wives are all girls!”
His little red mouth puffed in disgust!*

“Am I not a girl?” –Raadhaa giggled again!



*Kaanhaa was surprised!
He looked up at the tall girl!*

*“Girls could be wives! But, was Raadhaa a girl?”
His forehead frowned in deep thought!*

*He again looked at her!
She was sitting on a low tree branch;
one leg dangling down, with abandon!
Her hair was falling loose, the braids undone!
One hand holding a twig and the other,
a half-bitten wild fruit.*



*“No” – he said, searching for the correct word!
“You are not a girl!” He pronounced loudly!
“You are not a boy either!
You are...
You are...”
He struggled for words.*

*“Kaanhaa!”
She laughed again!*

“I am You”

Kaanhaa had to convince her somehow...

She cant be a girl...

He continued...

“You are like me! My own friend! You are me!”

Raadhaa smiled!

“Whatever you say!”



Kaanhaa loved her, her beautiful smile...

But, of course he did not love girls!

Raadhaa was not a girl!

“How can Kaanhaa play with Kaanhaa?

Am I a mirror?”

She looked at him amusedly

and laughed again.

“Come and catch ‘yourself!’”

*She jumped down from the tree and
brushed off the dust from her long skirt!*

“No! You catch me, if you can!

This is how I run”

Kaanhaa ran ahead of her.

She followed...

shouting “Kaanhaa.....Kaanhaa”

The forest echoed with their laughter.

Today the sky had whispered a secret to the wind!

But did the wind know?

Did it care?

It loved the sky!

Was it not enough?!



THE SKY HAD SPOKEN; BUT THE WIND WAS SILENT!

KRISHNA



“Holi Hai” “Holi Hai”

*It was the day of Holi (Color Festival)!
The Spring festival!*

*Colors of the three worlds soaked Brindaaban...
Streets, walls, trees, calves, grass and people...all were covered with colors!
Had a rainbow fallen on Brindaaban?*

*Kaanhaa’s gang had finished throwing off all the colored powders!!
Weren’t colors supposed to be used up?!*

*They walked around now,
jumping on all colored strewn paths!
Young girls were giggling!*

*Some were offering worship to love-god Manmatha!
Yet others were playing.*

Raadhaa...??

Where did she disappear?

*Just now she was standing near that tree!
She had escaped all the color throwers.
Krishna could not see her at all anywhere.
Now where did she go so fast?
Kaanhaa returned home, crestfallen.*

*After lunch, he again ran out to find her.
No Raadhaa!*

*He ran to her house.
Only her old aunt was there!
No Raadhaa!*

*The River bank...?
No Raadhaa!*

*Groups of little girls, women and children!
No Raadhaa!*

*The Tulsi covered garden?
No Raadhaa!*

*Kaanhaa was worried!
He had to just check one last place.*

*He gathered all his friends.
They tip-toed
to the bower formed by the jasmine creeper.*



RAADHIKAA KRISHNA

*Raadhaa was there!
She was very clean!
No colors soiled her clothes yet.
She was bending over a bamboo reed.*

*Kaanhaa signaled with his hands.
Battle-attack!*

*The unwary enemy surrendered laughing uproariously.
She was instantly drenched in colors.
Her face was blue;
Her arms were green;
Her ears and hair – yellow!
Her dress had bigger patches of red all over the color drenched skirt.*



*She was hiding something behind her back.
She slowly brought out a bamboo reed.
It was a flute!
“For you Kaanhaa” – she said!
“Play it for me”*



*With practiced ease, Kaanhaa put it to his lips.
He played...
‘THE FLUTE’!*

*The boys listened;
Raadhaa listened;
so did the birds, trees and the 'colors'!*

*The waft of Tulsi's fragrance –
tightly hugged it, carrying it away!*



*The Flute poured out a hitherto unheard melody!
Was it a magical flute?*

*Sunanda remembered his mother's smile!
Yet another boy felt like crying!
The bees buzzed to see who was calling them!
The cows stopped grazing!*

*Balaa lost himself in some deep felt memory!
"Who was it calling him?
Where had he felt such a deep affection?"*

All boys stopped thinking!



*Raadhaa drank in the notes of the flute!
Bliss! Bliss! Bliss!
Her eyes filled with tears!*

*The music entered her heart!
Entered 'her'!
She lost herself!*

*No Raadhaa! No Brindaaban!
Only Kaanhaa!
His Flute!
His Music!*

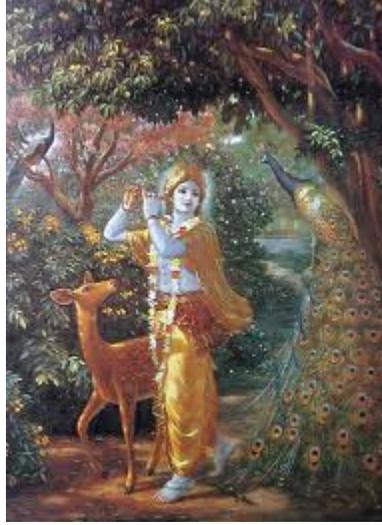


*The flute player was looking intently at Raadhaa!
Her eyes-
Her love-
He lost himself!*

*That was the call of the sky.
And the Wind?
The Wind listened to the music.
The music was Sky's own whisper!!*

THE SKY WHISPERED TO THE WIND TODAY!

KRISHNA



*Something had happened to Brindaaban!
The boys' laughter echoed!
It was the same!
The birds twittered in twilight!
It was the same!
The Winds rustled the leaves!
It was the same!*

*But-
all these joined to dance to the tunes of Kaanhaa's flute tunes!!!*

*It was a magic flute!
He called it 'my magic reed'!*

*What magic?
Whose magic?
Only that flute could create such a magic!
Raadhaa was the magic wind that danced to the command of his lips!*

*When Kaanhaa played the flute –
cows came home in time;
his mother pampered him;
his father felt happy;
young girls danced;
old ladies stopped gossiping;
and-*



*Raadhaa listened!
She was in the flute!
She was its life!
And-
Kaanhaa played it for her only!*

*Every time he played the flute -
she would listen -
to loose herself!!*

**THE WORLD WHICH HEARD THE MUSIC OF
THE WIND AND THE SKY
DISAPPEARED!!**

KRISHNA



*The carts returned from Mathura.
They had left for trading the wealth of the cow-herd community.
And-
they returned with clothes, toys, profits and losses!
The people of Brindaaban journeyed ceremoniously every month!*

*But- this month,
the month of Bhaadrapada –
the carts did not return alone!
A golden chariot drawn by five steeds followed!*

A distinguishing guest from Mathura!

*Kaanhaa was fascinated by the old man's eyes and beard!
The eyes- they were twinkling like stars!*

*And –
the old man- AKRURA [Non-cruel one], -
The chief adviser of the Vrishni clan of Yaadavas –
observed the little child!*

*So young – Yet, so spirited?!
“Was He really the savior?”*

RAADHIKAA KRISHNA

*Kaanhaa wore the new yellow dress!
He wanted to see Raadhaa first.*

*Like the dark cloud wrapped in Golden Sunlight,
Kaanhaa's dark body was enclosed in the yellow dress!*

*Before his parents could stop him-
Kaanhaa disappeared like a flash of lightning!*



“My father saw a ‘Raakshasa’ [demon], in Mathura”.
“My father rode on an elephant”.
“There are flying elephants in ‘Hastinaapura’ (Capital city).
Next time my father will take me with him.
And I will ride on them!”

“Look at this wooden cart; its bells are real silver!”
The excited chattering filled the woods!



Sounds of two anklets...??
And two more...?
Raadhaa was walking slowly with her friend ‘Shyaamaa’!
Shyaamaa was decked in green!
And –
Raadhaa – in red!
Red- the bridal color!

“Kaanhaa” whispered Shyaamaa!
“Raadhaa desires to be yours forever!”

“Mine?”
The young eyes were puzzled!

“Don’t worry! Just do as I say”
Shyaamaa took the child’s hand and walked!

Sun; Wind; Sky!

Wind; Sky!
Who bound them together?
The Sun!



**TODAY THE SUNLIGHT SPOKE.
THE WIND AND THE SKY WERE BOTH SILENT!**

RAADHIKAA KRISHNA

*Kaanhaa lifted his little thumb –
and dipped into the bowl of Sindhoor(red vermilion).
A great deal of it fell out!*



*Raadhaa knelt before him.
Her forehead was smeared red.
Shyaamaa smiled contentedly!*

*“Are you a girl?” asked Kaanhaa!
“Are you a boy?” asked Raadhaa!*

*“I am you; you are me”
Raadhaa hugged the little child!
She quickly wiped the tears –
lest Kaanhaa see them!*

“Let us change our identities”

Raadhaa managed to laugh aloud!

*They stepped behind the bushes!
Shyaamaa watched patiently!
They both came out within minutes!*

*Raadhaa – from her left;
in yellow ‘dhoti’ and with the flute!
Kaanhaa – from her right!
in a skirt too big for him, dragging it along!*

*“Kaanhika...Kaanhika” - chided Raadhaa!
“Raadhaa-laal.. Raadhaa-laal” - came the reply!*

*They both danced around Shyaamaa,
chasing each other madly!*

*Kaanhaa was Raadhaa! Raadhaa was Kaanhaa!
Were they two or one? Who was who?*

*Shyaamaa’s eyes were filled with tears of joy.
Her duty was over. She had joined two hearts!*

*Did their age matter?
Did the rules matter?
Did anything matter?
Only LOVE mattered!*



**THE WIND WAS THE SKYNESS.
THE SKY WAS THE WINDNESS.
THE SUNLIGHT HELD THEM IN TIGHT EMBRACE.
AND – IT BEGAN TO RAIN!!!**

KRISHNA

*At home, tears flowed like rain -
in Yashodaa's eyes!*

*“Maa...Maa..! Don't cry.....What is it?”
Kaanhaa's queries brought out another cloud-burst of tears!*

*Gradually the news came out!
He was informed -
by Balaa; by Nanda; by Akrura!!*

*By the fall of the night-
even Kaanhaa had lost his smile!*

*“Mathuraa - Devaki - Vasudeva – Kamsa”
The words echoed in his mind!*

He did not sleep well! Would he ever sleep well again?



*'Raadhaa would understand;
She would tell him not to go.
She would take a sword and kill Akrura!'*

*In his dream, Kaanhaa saw –
Raadhikaa in her red dress;
he in his yellow robes;*

both holding hands!

*Akrura was running away!
He smiled!
Everything would be alright tomorrow!
He smiled in his sleep!*



*Maa Yashodaa watched him smile in his sleep.
She clung to Nanda.
They both did not sleep!*

*‘Would they ever see him again?’
“My Laal” -*

*A feeble sound escaped from her lips;
She swooned in Nanda’s arms!
Nanda remained silent in speechless sorrow!
Maybe the sorrow disturbed the sleeping boy;
Kaanhaa stopped smiling!
Maa Yashodaa cried incessantly through her swoons!*

*The stars silently watched.
Was the sky leaving them behind?*



*Early morning –
Kaanhaa had vanished!*

*Yashodaa was worried and sad!
First of all-
he was leaving them all and going off!
Couldn't she have him with her for some more time?*



RAADHIKAA

“Raadhaa... Raadhaa... O Raadhaa...”

*Raadhaa came out, rubbing her eyes.
“What?”- She signaled!*

*‘Come out now’
Kaanhaa’s face was serious! This was no play!*

*“Mother...’ - she called;
“I shall go to the temple now; I will pray for my good fortune”*

*In one breath she blabbered all the words and ran out.
The old aunt came to the door surprised.
She saw only the vanishing figure of the girl far away.
‘What a girl! What had come upon her?’
She sighed!!*



**COULD ANYBODY STOP THE WIND
FROM TOUCHING THE SKY?**

RAADHIKAA

Yes! It had happened.

*Tragedy had befallen Brindaaban.
Mathuraa owned their Kaanhaa.*

*Raadhaa was shocked!
“My Kaanhaa...?
Chief Vasudeva’s son...?”*

“I won’t go...I won’t go... I won’t go.....”

*Kaanhaa banged one stone on the other.
He was angry.
He was sad.
He was frustrated!*

*Raadhaa’s eyes were filled with tears!
She held them back; she had to!
‘The wonder boy -
The Kaanhaa of Gokul -
had to go’!*

*He was no more ‘Kaanhaa’!
He was ‘Vaasudeva Krishna’!*

She looked at the temple of the Great Goddess Durgaa.

*“Raadhaa!”
She whispered her own name.
‘Who was this Raadhaa after all...!
In all the vast world of kings, cities and kingdoms -
what was she worth?
Who was she to resist the will of the wise and the great? ‘*





KRISHNA

“Kaanhaa” – she said, “Go...!”

“Go away!”

“Go to Mathura!”

She turned her face away to hide her tears!

Kaanhaa was angry!

*He threw the stones into the
bubbling waves of River Yamunaa!*

“Why, Why, Why ...Tell me why?”

He pulled Raadhaa towards him.

Small hands;

but strong hands!

‘Who cares? Who cares if the world is sad?’

‘Let Kamsa rule every city on Earth’

“I can’t leave you.

I can’t leave Brindaaban.

I can’t leave Maa.

I can’t leave Baaba (father).

The cows, houses, river, my friends, my Shyaamaa, my calves....”

And-

*like the first day..., when he met his Raadhaa,-
he began to cry!*

*But-
this time –
Raadhaa too cried with him!*

She wiped his tears and kissed his face.



*“Because....” - she faltered.
“Because... you have to...!”*

But her eyes were saying - “Don’t go”!

*Kaanhaa’s eyes were saying -
‘I will never go!’*



*But-
Kaanhaa knew his duties.
He had to help his imprisoned parents.
He stopped crying.*

*His lips just mechanically promised.
“It is alright! I will go now!
But, I will come back for you!
Wait for me!”*

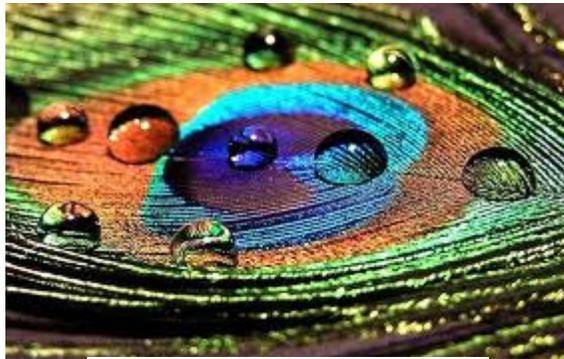
*Raadhaa had had enough!
With a quick parting kiss, she ran away!
Kaanhaa walked back home.*

*It was bright and sunny that day.
But clouds had covered the hearts of one and all!*



**THE WIND WAS GOING TO LOSE THE SKY.
WAS THE SKY UNREACHABLE THIS DAY?
WAS THAT WHY THE CLOUDS HAD COVERED IT?**

KRISHNA



Kaanhaa left Brindaaban.

*He had said goodbye to all.
He had not shed another tear after he left Raadhaa!
Lips set tightly, he comforted all!*

*But-
when he met Shyaamaa,
he just couldn't speak!*

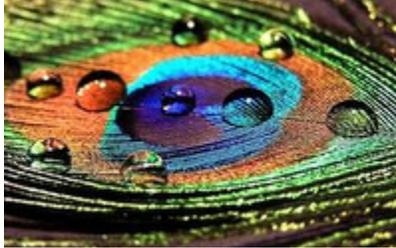
*He held her hands and pleaded silently with his eyes -
"Take care of my Raadhaa"*

Shyaamaa broke down!

"Kaanhaa...!"

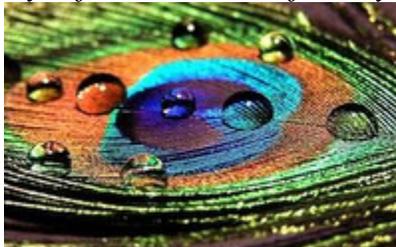
*Take Raadhaa with you...!
Take her away!
Here; sell this...!
Marry her and live in Mathuraa!"*

*She thrust a gleaming bangle in his hand.
"No... Shyaamaa ...No...!"
He ran away from her as fast as he could!*



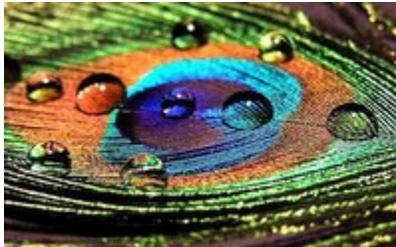
Kaanhaa left Brindaaban.

*Ma Yashodaa was too weak to speak.
She cried; wept; kissed; and hugged him!
She fed him for the last time.
When he finally left, she was half crazy with sorrow!*



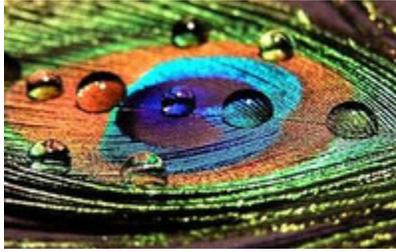
Kaanhaa left Brindaaban.

*He touched the feet of all elders;
bid good bye to all calves, cows and birds;
visited all his friends;
promised to ride the flying elephant;
promised to come back one day!*



Kaanhaa left Brindaaban.

*Raadhaa had not come to bid farewell.
But she would..!*

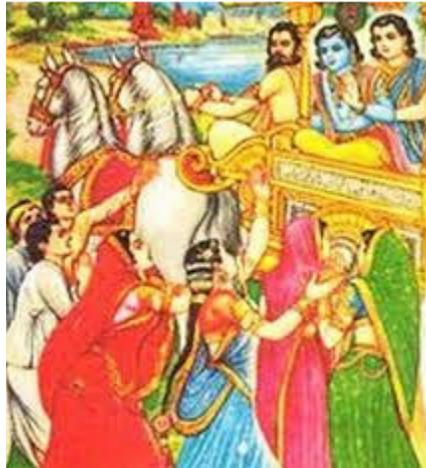


Kaanhaa left Brindaaban.

*The chariot wheels rattled on.
Balaa looked stern.
He held his brother's hand tightly.
What was he thinking?
Who can fathom what ran in his mind?*

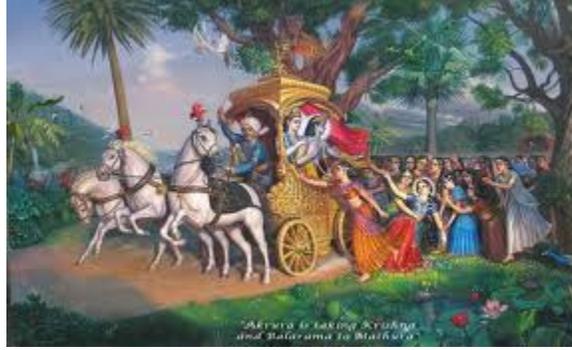


RAADHIKAA



The chariot wheels rattled on.

*Suddenly the chariot halted;
jerking the boys and their guardian –
from their seats!*



*They saw Raadhaa -
in the middle of the road -
tied to a pounding stone!*

*Kaanhaa jumped down;
ran to her; untied her!
They ran to the shade of the tree.*

*Akrura wanted to follow.
Balaa stopped him, saying-
“Please Sir, he will come back”.
Akrura waited.*



RAADHIKAA KRISHNA



*Raadhaa just said -
“Play the flute once for me;
just for me...!” He played.
She listened.*



*That was all!
This was what she was.
“THIS” belonged to her –
“THE MUSIC OF THE FLUTE”*

*She hugged Kaanhaa. She took one feather from his locks.
Just one peacock feather.*

*“Kaanhaa...” she said.
“I am the MUSIC of your FLUTE”
I will wait till you return!”*

*Kaanhaa put the flute away.
Was it dead?
No! It was waiting!*



**THE WIND WOULD WAIT TILL THE SKY
REACHED DOWN TO TOUCH IT!
THE SKY TOO LOVED THE WIND; DID IT NOT?**

KRISHNA

Kaanhaa's chariot left Brindaaban.

*Where was his destiny taking him?
He did not know. He did not care.*

*Somewhere in that vast expanse of the Universe -
she would wait for him;
she would wait!*



THE WIND WOULD WAIT FOR THE SKY TO CLEAR.

KRISHNA



Time rolled on.

*Mathura - Kamsa's death - Devaki - Saandeepani's Ashram -
Uddhava - Paandavaas - Dwaarakaa - war-politics - spies -
business - Kingdoms...!*

The Flute...?

*It never hung again in his waist.
It was kept in his treasure box -
like a miser's gold.*

*He never played it.
Never..!
Not for the lovely Rukmini -
not for the pretty Satyaa-
not for his sister Subhadraa -
or Draupadi -
or Arjuna -
or anybody!!!*

*There were times when he needed it.
When Jarasandha's army was ready to crush the Yaadavas -
he had taken it out.*

*His thoughts had rushed back to –
'that day'...!*



*That day -
in Brindaaban -
he had decided to tackle -
the black and the ugly serpent.*

"I will kill it" – he had said.

*His friends had refused to allow him -
in such a dangerous mission.*

Even Balaa had said – “No”.

*But Raadhaa ...!
She always believed in him.
“Go” – she had dared him.
And he went ahead and killed the snake.*

*If he had died that day -
his Raadhaa would have killed that snake.
But -
she would not have come out of those waters again.*



*“Yes”, he had decided; looking at his treasured bamboo reed!
He had to do it again.
His people trusted him.*

*That day –
He gave orders –
“We are going to shift the city; call the council!”*



**THE SKY TOO REMEMBERED THE WIND!
THE SKY WAS WAITING TOO!**

RAADHIKAA



*Kaanhaa came back as promised.
Vaasudeva Krishna came back.
King of Dwaarakaa came to Brindaaban.*

*His friends had all grown up.
Maa Yashodaa had gone insane.
She did not even look at him.
Nanda was weary and tired.*

*“Come away Father”, he called, “Come to my city.”.
“No, my son, this is my land, my people.
I cannot leave them.”*

Krishna sighed.

He went to see Shyaamaa. She had died at child-birth.

*Wherever he went -
new faces peered at him - fascinated.*

He was tired. His eyes searched for his soul-mate.

*Where was Raadhaa?
His Raadhaa...?*

*Suddenly, he saw a girl -
No-
she was an older woman!
Hair disheveled, face tear stricken!*

He stared.

*The eyes -!
It was Raadhaa!*

*He ran out to meet her.
But -
she was gone!*

*“Lord, your horses are ready.
The Kuru princes will arrive tomorrow.
The grandsire Bheeshma has sent a message
from Hastinaapura.”*

“Raadhaa ...Raadhaa...” His heart cried.

*Later at night, he confided to his friend –
his cousin Uddhava -
the most excellent Sage -
who was his only solace.*

*“Don’t meet her now, my friend.
I will take care of her, I promise.”
And he did, indeed.
He arranged for her to be given clothes, food and a house.*

*But-
Raadhaa never met Krishna Vaasudeva!
She was waiting for her Kaanhaa; not for the King of Dwaarakaa!*



**WHAT DOES THE WIND WANT BUT THE SKY’S FRAGRANCES?
THE WIND WAITED.**



RAADHIKAA

“Raadhaa...!”

The voice was choked with emotions.

Kaanhaa?

No; Uddhava, Kaanhaa’s friend!

Raadhaa heard nothing.

Maybe she was listening to some flute music.

‘Raadhaa...Raadhaa...’

He almost screamed!

He had kept his promise.

He had taken care of all her needs.

But -

she had no needs at all.

He was a very stable minded person.

He never got upset or excited anytime.

But - today ...!

He was very very upset.

He was not able to stop his tears.

“Raadhaa ...Raadhikaa...!”

“Listen... Kaanhaa is here...”

“Your Kaanhaa...”

She jumped suddenly.

*“Kaanhaa...?..Where...? Where is he ...?”
She opened a knot in her palloo (Saree end).*

“Here...!”

*I have some ‘chana’ [peanuts] for him;
Call him!”*

*Uddhava’s heart trembled.
Could the quiescent mind of a Sage waver?
What was happening to him?
He steadied himself.
He had to go through this somehow.*

*“Kaanhaa is within you. He has gone into you.
Close your eyes. See him there.”*

*‘Yes! He was there- like always!
But was he not outside?’*



*Uddhava said –
“Raadhaa... your Kaanhaa is no longer with us!
He is within you.”*

*There was silence.
Even the birds stopped chirping.*

*“The King of Dwaaraka had died two days ago.
So they had said!
“I too shall leave” – he said.*

*Raadhaa suddenly laughed.
She laughed and laughed till the woods rang with her laughter.
She patted Uddhava’s hands.
She winked at him.
“Kaanhaa is waiting for me” – she said.
She ran towards River Yamunaa.*



*Uddhava heard a splash.
He ran towards the river.
The waters were silent.
There was no one on the river bank.
Uddhava stared at the water like a frozen statue.*

*Cool winds blew.
He shivered slightly.
“Kaanhaa...Kaanhaa” - the wind sang.
Flute music sounded far away.*



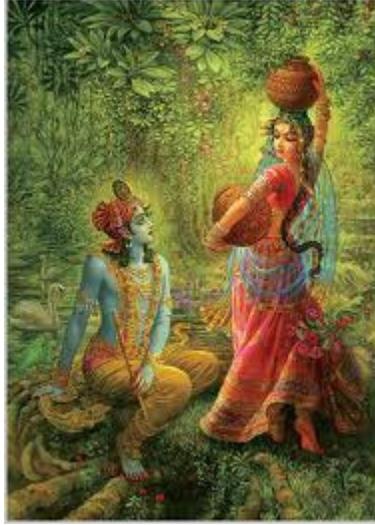
**THE WIND KNEW IT WAS THE SKY.
THERE WAS NO MORE -THE WIND OR THE SKY.**

**IT WAS THE WIND-SKY; THE SKY-WIND!
THE MELODY OF THE FLUTE!**



GOLOKA

*It was a place where koels sang eternally.
It was a place where the flowers bloom endlessly.
It was a place without hunger, sorrow or fatigue.
It was the forest filled with
the fragrance of Tulsi and champakaa.*



*There,
Kaanhaa danced with Raadhaa -
the eternal dance of love.*

*There,
Kaanhaa played his flute again.
Raadhaa listened.*



*Look within your own heart.
Fill it with love.*

*There -
in that Brindaaban –
Raadhaa and Kaanhaa dance!*

Kaanhaa plays the flute; Raadhaa listens.

*And
there in that place -
the place of eternal rest,
where-
only the flute echoes,
there is- the end of 'all waiting'!*



*Raadhaa waited. Kaanhaa came.
Did he also not wait?*

*The sky reached down to touch the wind.
The wind became the sky. The sky became the wind.*

*Sunlight spread the joy.
Rivers danced.
And the flute?
It never stopped playing again.*



The love of the wind and the sky has no name!

*Some call it love.
Some call it devotion.
Some call it the quest of truth.
Some call it contemplation.*

*But
The nameless relationship
sings in the melody
Raadhaa...Kaanhaa...Raadhaa...Kaanhaa...Raadhaa!*

*It is the music of the flute player.
The flute and its player!
Raadhaa and Kaanhaa!*



*Listen silently ... to the 'Bansi ki dhun'
Do you hear it too... 'Kaatrinile varum geetam'?
Meeraa heard it... 'Krishnana Kolalinaa Kare'
Godai heard it... 'Murali Gaanam'
Soordaas heard it... 'The Song of the Silence'
Listen silently... 'Hush' ... 'Just be'!*



NO END

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Narayanalakshmi, also known as Tejaswini in her ascetic life spent most of her life in the Himalayan terrain, engaged in the penance of knowledge. She is well-versed in all philosophies and is a scholar in Sanskrit language. Her mission life is to retrieve the lost knowledge of the ancient Rishis and offer it unblemished to all the seekers of the Truth.

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