

The Magic
of Love
in Soulful
Folk Tales

from

India

Mumbiram

DISTANT
DRUMMER



The Magic of Love in Soulful Folk Tales from India

Volume 1
Sample Pages
Mumbiram



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www.distantdrummer.de

Painting on Book Cover: Artist Mumbiram would sometimes let his muses take to the brush and colour in some of his own line drawings. This one here is such an example.

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Publisher's Note



Medley of Rasa Art and Rasa Literature in the spirit of Rasa Renaissance

The stories in this “**Magic of Love in Soulful Folk Tales from India**” are presented as they are being told by Artist Mumbiram, who is as gifted literarily as he is in the painterly mode. He is a Krishna aficionado and a born admirer of the Sanskrit language. The five tales in this **Volume 1** are selected from his vast repertoire of favorite accounts of Krishna which he enthusiastically shares with people of all walks of life.

In all five stories it is the innocent people, loving devotees and courageous friends, who inspire Krishna to perform a Leela.

The innocence and selflessness of the Gopis is shown in “**How Krishna got accused of stealing Radha's Ring**”. Their unlimited love for Krishna doesn't stop them from introducing Krishna to a stranger girl, who is also attracted to him.

“Why Tulasi is so dear to Krishna” reveals how deeply attached Krishna is to his devotees and forgives them by solving a problem in ‘loving ways’.

For Mumbiram the real miracle is when people are motivated to act in noble, sublime ways, even at the risk to their life, in order to mitigate pain and suffering of others. That is the real miracle. Not some fantastic stories of stone idols doing this or that. What one needs to know about Mumbiram is that he has been one of the few, maybe only Indian, who has totally rejected the identity based on caste. Even before his return to India from the US, he has always insisted on being only identified and addressed as Mumbiram and formed friendships with India’s great variety of people from different strata of the Indian society. It has been especially the tribals and ‘lowest’ castes of India that he has always felt attracted to. It is them who appear in his artworks as Krishna’s closest companions.

In **“The Miracle of Mangalvedha”** Panduranga Ramavamshie, an outcast tribal man, is inspired to surrender all he has for the sake of justice by following Paramatma, God in everybody’s heart, the Universal Companion of every soul.

“Krishna waiting for Pundalik on a brick” is an account where Krishna bestows his mercy even on those who are not ‘lucky’ enough to be born of parents who encourage love of god. It reveals that one’s connection with god need not be determined only by one’s birth or up-bringing. As in the case of Pundalik the seed of love of god germinated and prospered in him even though his family did not encourage any such attachment.

The account of **“The Wives of the Yadnyik Brahmanas meet Krishna”** refers to ‘brahmanas’ as the preservers of spiritual knowledge, not as caste brahmins. This account of 5000 years old attributes to women the unique quality of developing spontaneous attraction to god, *Raganuga Bhakti* (spontaneous attraction for Krishna). That gift is shown as being far superior to what the learned scholars were able to achieve in their performance of rituals along strict rules. Experts about Krishna’s Leelas believe that the wives of the brahmanas had heard about Krishna and his Leelas from the Pulindya forest women in the market places of Mathura where they were selling forest products. These Pulindya women had witnessed Krishna’s Leelas in the forests of Vrindavan.

All five stories are emphasizing the power and beauty of the individual and their personal acts of love and courage.

Here in these presentations Mumbiram has juxtaposed his stories with images or details from his own Rasa masterpieces that he had created independently. They were inspired by real people and real happenings in the artist's personal universe. Artist Mumbiram has always found his inspiration in the rasaful meetings and friendships with the 'poor' of India, the tribals and rag-pickers. The images have a deja vu like resemblance to some episodes related to Krishna or his associates in the vast devotional milieu. They also have a deja vu like resemblance with images conjured by the stories of Mumbiram's choice repertoire presented here.

It is not by accident that Mumbiram's muses appear in his paintings with an aura of the protagonists of heroic tales from the scriptures. Mumbiram has a passion for seeing his muses in the context of the classics. In the highly elevated state of Love of Krishna everything in real life as well as in Art and Literature reminds the lover some-

thing related to the eternal happenings in Krishna's eternal realm. That is the essence of **Prema Vivarta Mood** of highly elevated Love of Krishna.

For the readers that are curious, insightful Rasa Appreciations of many of these masterpieces can be availed either in Rasa Appreciation page of www.mumbiram.com or the Rasa Art page of www.distantdrummer.de

Mumbiram's choice of these noble stories and the juxtaposed images from his own art both conform to the tenet of **Rasa Theory according to Bharat Muni** that "entertainment is a desired effect of arts but not the primary goal and that the primary goal is to transport the individual in the audience into another parallel reality, full of wonder, where one experiences the essence of one's own consciousness and reflects on spiritual and moral questions".

Mumbiram's Manifesto of Personalism is rightly identified as a clarion call of Rasa Renaissance in our times. It eloquently expresses what noble ideals Rasa Art is capable of kindling in the Rasik art-lover's consciousness.

The tales presented here are familiar stories in the Indian milieu. Yet many of them acquire wayward aberrations under the influence of time. Mumbiram's versions are diligently researched and refreshed to conform to sound devotional principles and delectable Rasa Flavors !



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Notes by Artist Mumbiram

These are stories related to Krishna and his friends, the cowherd boys called Gopalas and the cowherd girls called Gopis in the blessed, blessed place on this planet, named Vrindavan. These took place a long, long time ago, yet are very much alive in the minds of inhabitants of Vrindavan. Vrindavan is on the beautiful banks of the river Yamuna. That is where Krishna appeared on our earth planet from his eternal abode named Goloka Vrindavan to play out his Leelas along with the Gopis and Gopalas. That was at the cusp of the Kali Yuga and the Dvapara Yuga. According to the calendar of India now we are in the Kali Yuga. We are more than 5000 years into the Kali Yuga.

Leela is what you do out of your very own sweet pleasure and your own sweet will. In truth only God can act like that and do things only out of his or her sweet will. We in this embodied state have these material bodies that our souls inhabit. These bodies must obey the stringent laws of the material world. That limits all our activities.

Krishna likes nothing better than engaging in loving transactions with all the living entities. He is only controlled by the Love of his devotees. He will do anything under the influence of that Love. Sometimes he will even make his own words go false

in order to make the words of his friends come true. On the other hand there is nothing more fulfilling to the living entities than to hear and rejoice in the narrations of Krishna's loving dealings with the living entities who are verily His Own Creation.

Some of these stories are about the time when Krishna and his beloved Radha were growing up in the blessed land of Vrindavan on the bank of the Yamuna River. Radha and Krishna are eternal consorts from Goloka. Their activities appear like ordinary affairs between ordinary boys and girls even though they are exact re-enactments of Krishna's eternal Leelas with his associates in Goloka. That is precisely what makes them so relishable.

There are two different kinds of telling a Krishna Leela. There is the more scholarly tradition based on Sanskrit literature and then there is the folk tradition based on song, dance and drama remembering the blessed times that Krishna spent on the earth planet. Both these traditions meet in genuine unison in these stories narrated here. They have been preserved mainly by word of mouth over many centuries and I consider myself most fortunate that I can keep that tradition alive and present these rare episodes of Krishna Leelas to all friends of Mother India. They are really for everybody who is eager to hear a Krishna story. The art of story telling finds its fulfillment only in these divine episodes.



How Krishna got accused of stealing Radhaji's Ring



Young Boy Krishna once had a 'date' with Young Girl Radha to go to the river. So they met at the river. They had not told anybody else about it. You know how it is with boys. More often than not boys don't talk about their dates especially if it is a very special date. Then they keep it a secret. So Radha and Krishna met at the river and they held each other's hand and they walked along the river.

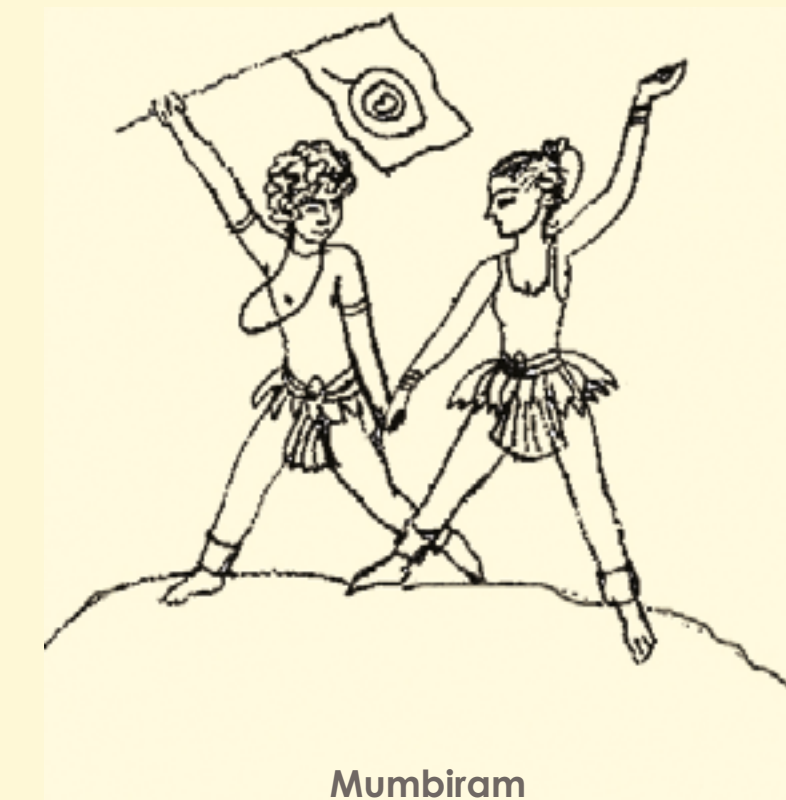
Krishna said to Radha, "See, Radhe ! How blue the sky is." And Radha said, "Yes Krishna, indeed the sky is very blue." And then Radha said, "But look Krishna how the waves of the Yamuna are going zulu zulu." And Krishna said, "Yes indeed Radhe, the waves of the Yamuna are going zulu zulu. And see the peacock ! How he is dancing !" "Yes, indeed he is dancing very nicely. But did you see the Cuckoo Birds that are calling? Maybe they are also happy to see us, as much as we are happy to see them."

And so they were taking a very nice walk along the river. While Krishna was holding the hand of Radha, he was playing with her fingers and with her ring. Sometimes he was slipping the ring off Radha's fingers and sometimes he was putting it back



on. Then all of a sudden Radha said, “Oh, I got to go, because my friends must be waiting for me.” And so Krishna said, “Oh yes ! And my friends must also be waiting for me.”

Radha had thought, ‘Oh, everything is so good, now let me just stop everything right here.’ That’s why she said, that she had to go. Krishna said, “Okay, when do we meet again ?” Radha said, “We will talk about it, you can call me !” Then Radhaji left in a hurry. Krishna was disappointed that their wonderful meeting had come to an end just when he was feeling like pouring his heart out to his Beloved. Krishna consoled himself thinking that it had been a nice morning anyway.



So Radha went home and indeed her friends were waiting for her. They love to be with her and then together they like to look for Krishna and have a meeting with him. So they were waiting for her to come back from wherever she had been. As soon as she came back they asked her, "Where have you been?" Radha said, "Nowhere!" "Aha, what do you mean nowhere? You have been with Krishna, right?" The Sakhis would not be fooled. So Radha said, "What! Did you see us? And how do you know?" The Sakhis relented saying, "Okay, don't worry, we like to do that also." Nevertheless, the girls looked at Radha from head to toe, searching for any signs of any intimacies between Radha and Krishna. They had a good look at her and said, "Where is your ring?" Radha said, "I did not wear it today." The Sakhis were on a hot trail now. "What! WE did your make up this morning at seven o'clock and we had put that coral ring on your second finger. Where is it now? We know what happened. Krishna lured you to a secluded place along the river. Then he took advantage of your innocence and your love for all that is beautiful. While his divinely delicious flirtations were sending you into rapture, Krishna was busy unloading your precious personal valuables. We have been telling you about this boy. He is a thief. Even as a little boy he

was stealing butter and now he has stolen your ring. You are so sweet and innocent, that is why he is taking advantage of you. Come on girls, let's go and find him!"

The girls of Vraja are always looking for excuses to meet Krishna. That was their favourite activity. So they all said, "Okay let's go and find him. Where was it Radhe that you said good-bye to him?" Radha answered reluctantly, "Oh, somewhere behind that hill there." Radha had no choice but to join the Sakhis. "So now he must be on his way." They all ran and spotted him right where they expected to find him.

Krishna said to himself, 'Now what is going on here? All these girls are coming right towards me! There must be some more good times in store for me this morning.' As soon as the girls came near Krishna they surrounded him. They challenged him right away, "You have stolen the coral ring of OUR Radha!" Krishna was taken by surprise, "What? Are you kidding? You think I would steal from MY Radha...?" "What do you mean YOUR Radha? Anybody who steals from a girl cannot say she is his girlfriend. And she is NOT his girlfriend. You have stolen the ring of our Radha. Come on now, out with it!" "Hey Girls,

cool down !” The girls did not cool down. Instead they got more aggressive. They said, “Let’s take a search of his Person !”

And guess what, Krishna indeed had the ring on him. This is how it happened. While Krishna was holding Radha’s hand and playing with her ring, he did not even notice when he unconsciously put the ring in the waist-folds of his dhoti. It all happened in that magical state of love. Or was it all for the purpose of the Leela?

The girls wanted to search him, so they said, “Let’s see in his dhoti.” Before Krishna could protest, the Sakhis shamelessly shook his dhoti and the coral ring fell down from the beautiful folds of his elegant yellow silk dhoti. “See ! Look how innocent he looks ! Look at him. Just look at him now !”

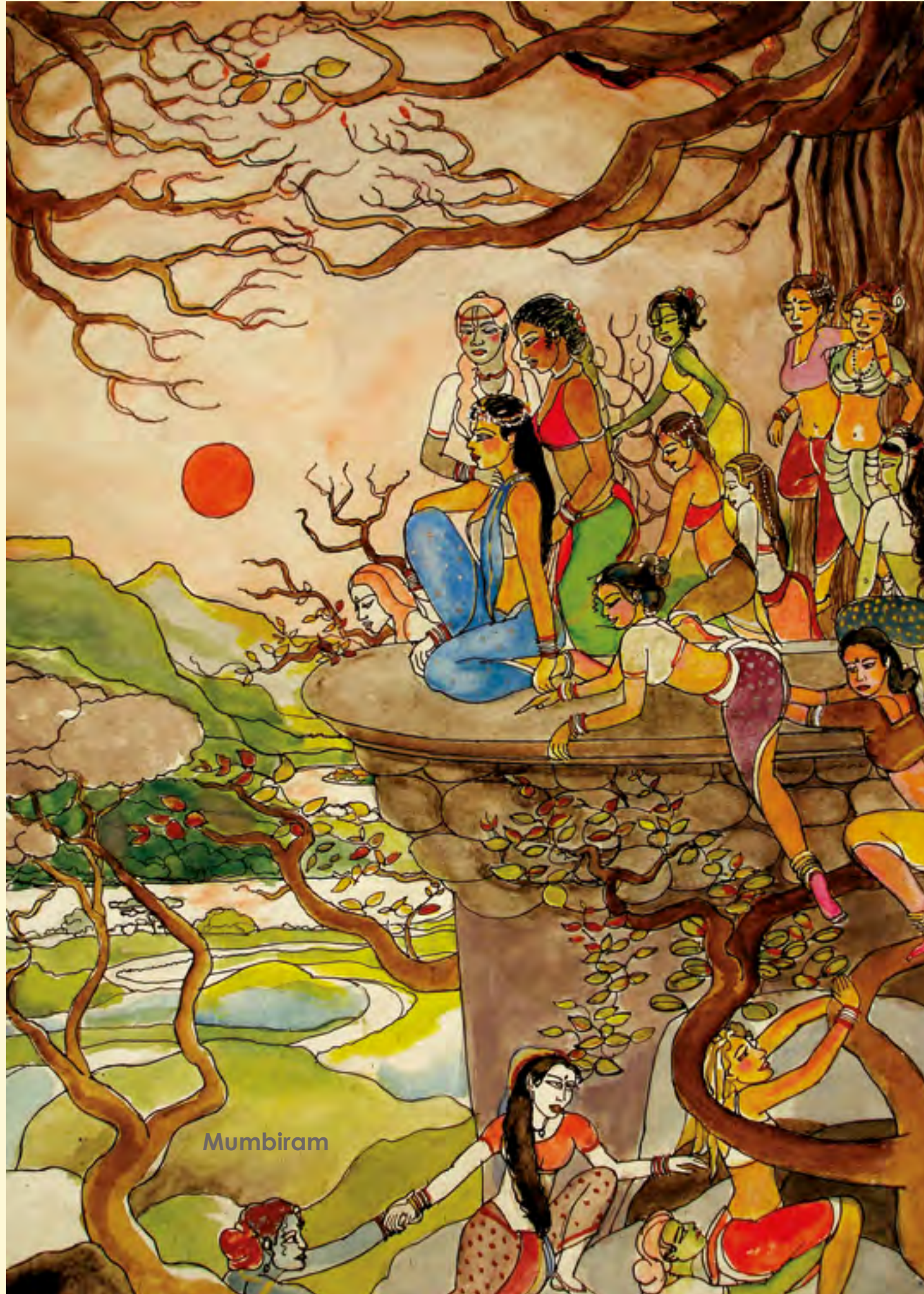
Krishna felt tickled, surprised and accused all at the same time. He mumbled out in defence, “What are you talking about, how could I... and don’t I have many beautiful rings at home...” The girls did not let him finish, “So there we have caught you. Don’t ever talk to our Radha again.” Then they pushed him contemptuously and left in a huff triumphantly.

Krishna thought to himself, ‘I don’t want to be accused of theft, which I did not even commit. I mean, I know I have done

such things, but to be accused when you have not done anything? I guess today is not my day. It is just not my day today. You know how it is. Best thing to do at a time like this is to take a nap. So I will take a siesta today. I will find a nice tree to lie under and I will take a nap.’

So Krishna found a nice tree with shade in the breeze. There he decided to rest and take a nap. So he took off his turban, his peacock feather, his bracelets, his armlets, his ankle bells, his waist bells, his flute, his blowing horn and everything else. He kept it all aside. Then Krishna fell asleep.

Meanwhile, the girls ran towards home. On the way they were talking, “How we caught him, and how he was playing so innocent. He is so sweet.” “Oh shut up !” “I wonder what Krishna will do now !” “Will he really stay away from us ?” That is how they talked amongst themselves all the while. They were all really very happy after their juicy encounter with Krishna and soon they reached home. But now what was left for them to do? They had quarrelled with Krishna and now had no excuse to go and see him again. Life appeared meaningless to them. So one of them suggested, “Hey, I have an idea. Krishna stole the



ring of our Radha and we got it back. But that is not enough. To be even, we have to take something from him now. Only then will it be fair.” “Hey, that is a great idea ! Let’s go and find him again !”

So they all rushed to the forest and soon from far away they could see Krishna under a beautiful tree. Krishna was fast asleep. He had put aside his clothes and ornaments beside him. So they tiptoed and first took a good close look at him. Then without spacing out, each one of them took one piece of his belongings. One took the flute, one took the peacock feather, one took his garlands, another one his bracelets and armlets, till they had picked up everything. Then they immediately left as quietly as they had arrived, gingerly treading on the blessed grounds of Vraja that bore the glorious foot-prints of their Beloved Shri Krishna. On the way home they talked, “Now when he wakes up he will cry like a baby. We have taken everything.” They all went back to Radha’s home.

In due course, when it was time for Krishna to wake up according to the script of his Leela, he woke up and said, “Hey, where am I ? What has happened ? This is not my home. Where

am I ? Oh, yes, now I remember. I decided to take a nap because in the morning I was accused of stealing Radhaji's ring. Okay now I have luckily forgotten it, now it is over and time for a new day." Krishna stretched and looked around where he had slept. Then he noticed that all his belongings were missing. Calamity ! 'It is bad enough to be accused as a thief when you are innocent. But when you have the reputation of being a great thief and you yourself are robbed, then there is nothing more shameful. Now I must think and salvage this situation. Ah, I know who is responsible for this sly mischief. The girls ! That is obvious, I know them all. Who else could have taken all my belongings? So now I have to get my things back or my friends will laugh about me and that will be even more shameful than it already is.'

Krishna fashioned for himself a beautiful girl's attire with the cloth that he had used to sleep on. Krishna is very beautiful. He looked quite wonderful as a young girl. Krishna put on a little kumkum on his forehead and covered his head as with a Palluh of a sari. He arranged the cloth nicely around himself. Then he went looking for the Sakhis. He knew they would all be in Barsana at Radharani's home.

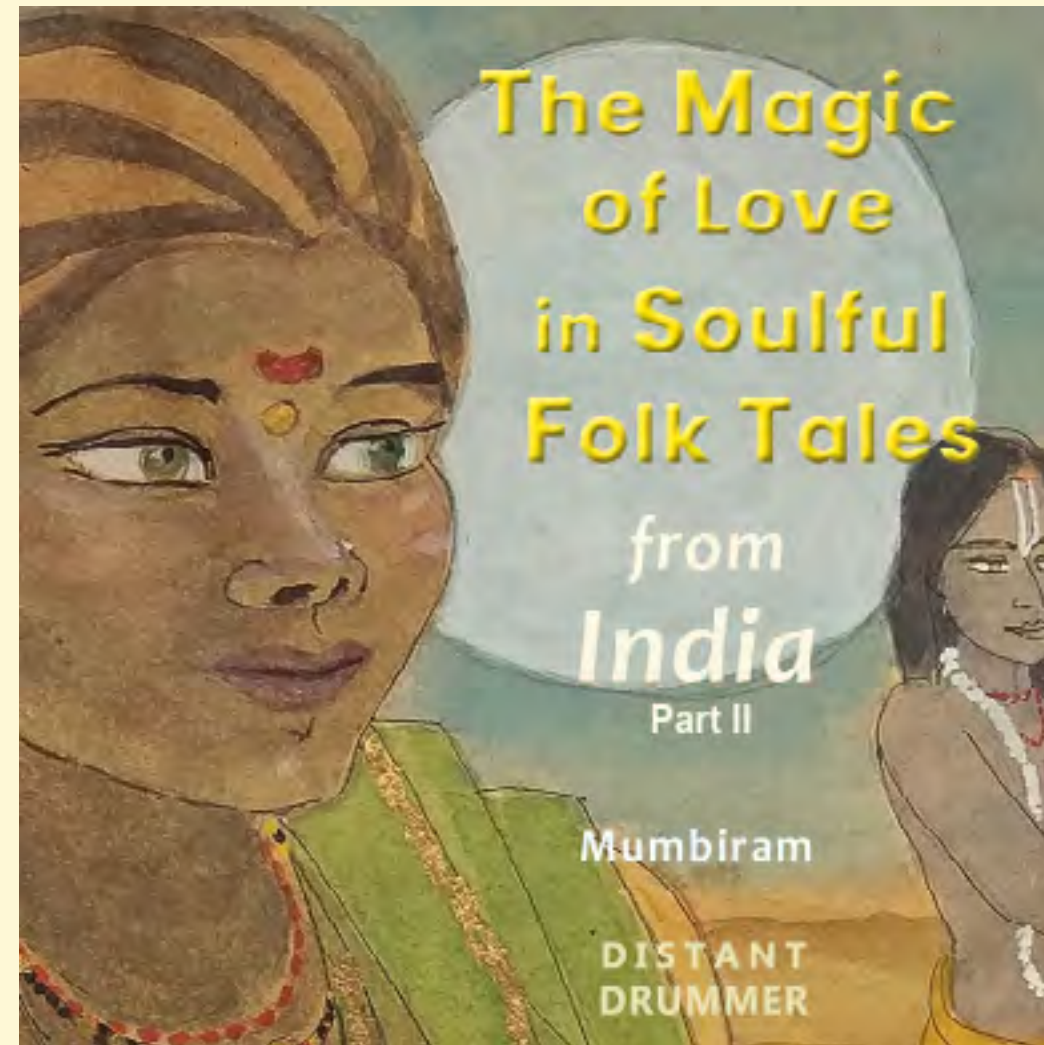
Krishna arrived under the window of Radha's bedroom and began to cry out loudly, "Oh, I am doomed. I don't want to live anymore. Life is over for me. I thought I would find it, but there is no hope."

Radha and her friends were most surprised to hear these cries. They rushed to the window in great curiosity. They wondered, 'Who is this girl and why is she crying? She is incredibly beautiful.' Radha was most touched and thought, 'Looking at her makes me think of Krishna. I would never have imagined I can be attracted so much by anybody else than Krishna. This girl is an exception.' Radha said to the Sakhis, "Hey, why don't we call her up and see why she is crying ?! In our beautiful Vrindavan how can it be that such a beautiful girl is crying ?"

*The narration continues in the complete version
of Magic of Love - Part 1*

“Magic of Love“- Part II

There is also part two of this “Magic of Love” Series.



Which has these stories:

“Krishna and Rukmini”

“Leela of Jagannath”

“Sudama”

“Magic of Love“- Part III

There is also part three of this “Magic of Love” Series.



Which has these stories:

“Harishchandra”

“Shakuntala”

“Nala and Damayanti”



You are welcome to find out more about the romantic world of Rasa Renaissance, that bring us good-tidings that the barren void in Art and Spirituality will once again resound with the passionate calls of cuckoos maddened by mango blossoms and hordes of bumblebees lusting after honey.

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