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# The Magic Pakodas

& The Star Blossom Tree







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**KAPWING**



Classics for Kids

# The Magic Pakodas

Story told by  
Gayathri Chandrasekaran

Illustrations  
Tanvi Choudhury



This book belongs to

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Editor : Reena J. Puri

ISBN 978-93-87304-53-6

©Amar Chitra Katha Pvt Ltd, April 2018

AFL House, 7th Floor, Lok Bharti Complex, Marol Maroshi Road, Andheri East,  
Mumbai- 400059

Printed at Indigo Press (India) Pvt Limited,  
Plot No 1C/716, Off Dadoji Kondedeo Cross Road,Between Sussex And Retiwala  
Ind. Estate, Byculla (E), Mumbai 400027

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Kesiya loved money. He would sit for hours in the king's treasury and run his hands through mounds of gold and silver coins.



He would separate the precious stones in the treasury into shining heaps of red, blue, green and yellow. "What sparkling gems!" he would say, his eyes gleaming with joy. He was, after all, the king's treasurer.





But Kesiya was a miser. He could not bear to part with a single coin. His wife, Karuna, had a difficult time with him.

"The children are growing up. They need new clothes," she would say.

Kesiya would quickly reply, "Let the older children pass on their clothes to the younger ones."

"Then what about the oldest one?" she would ask.

"You can alter one of my old shirts for him," he would reply at once.

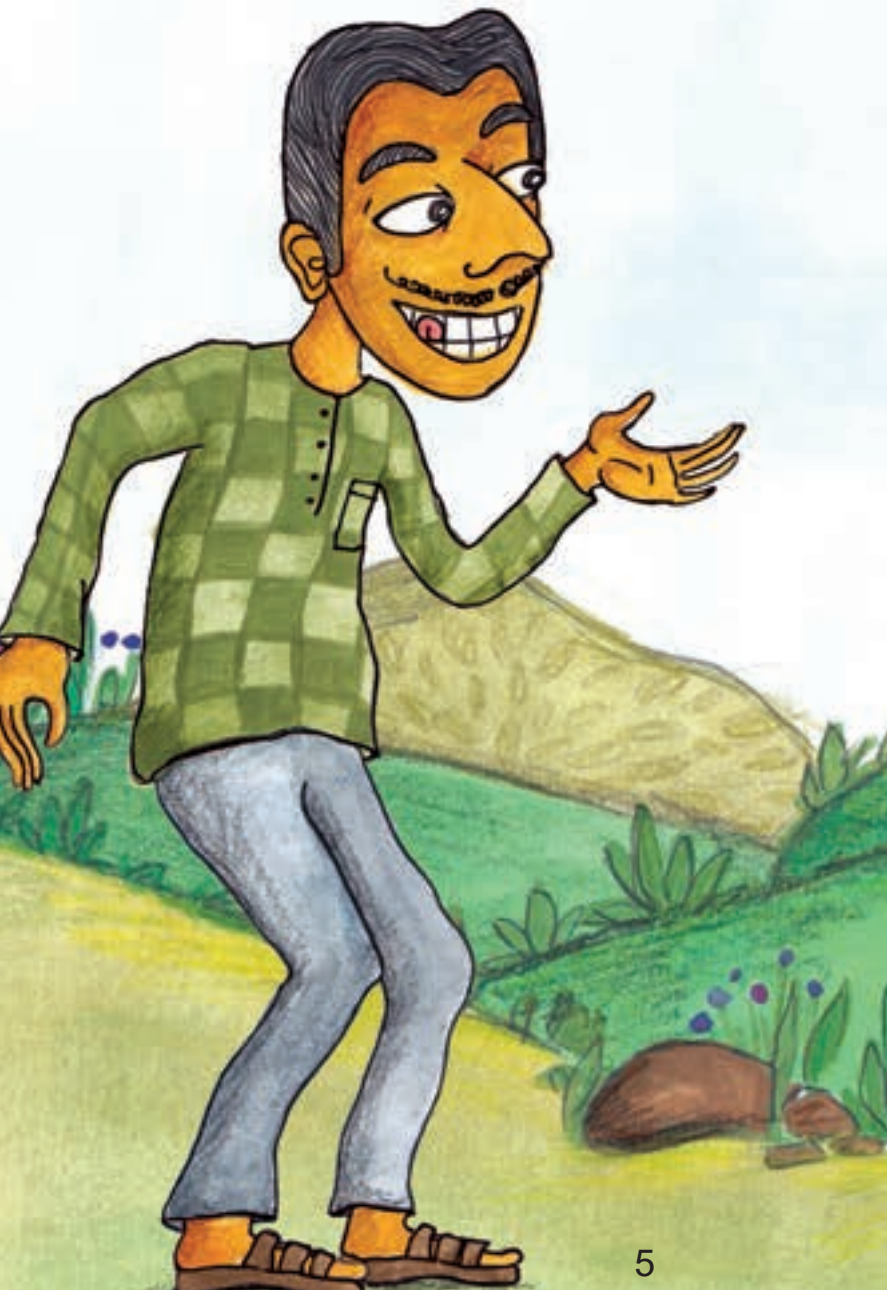
Karuna could only roll her eyes in disbelief.





One day, as Kesiya was walking home from the palace, a delicious smell tickled his nostrils.

"Mmmm . . . that smells like pakodas!" he exclaimed, taking a deep breath.



He looked around and saw a man selling freshly-fried pakodas.

"I'd love to eat pakodas!" Kesiya exclaimed. "But they cost too much", he thought sadly. Kesiya walked home dreaming of hot, crisp, golden pakodas.



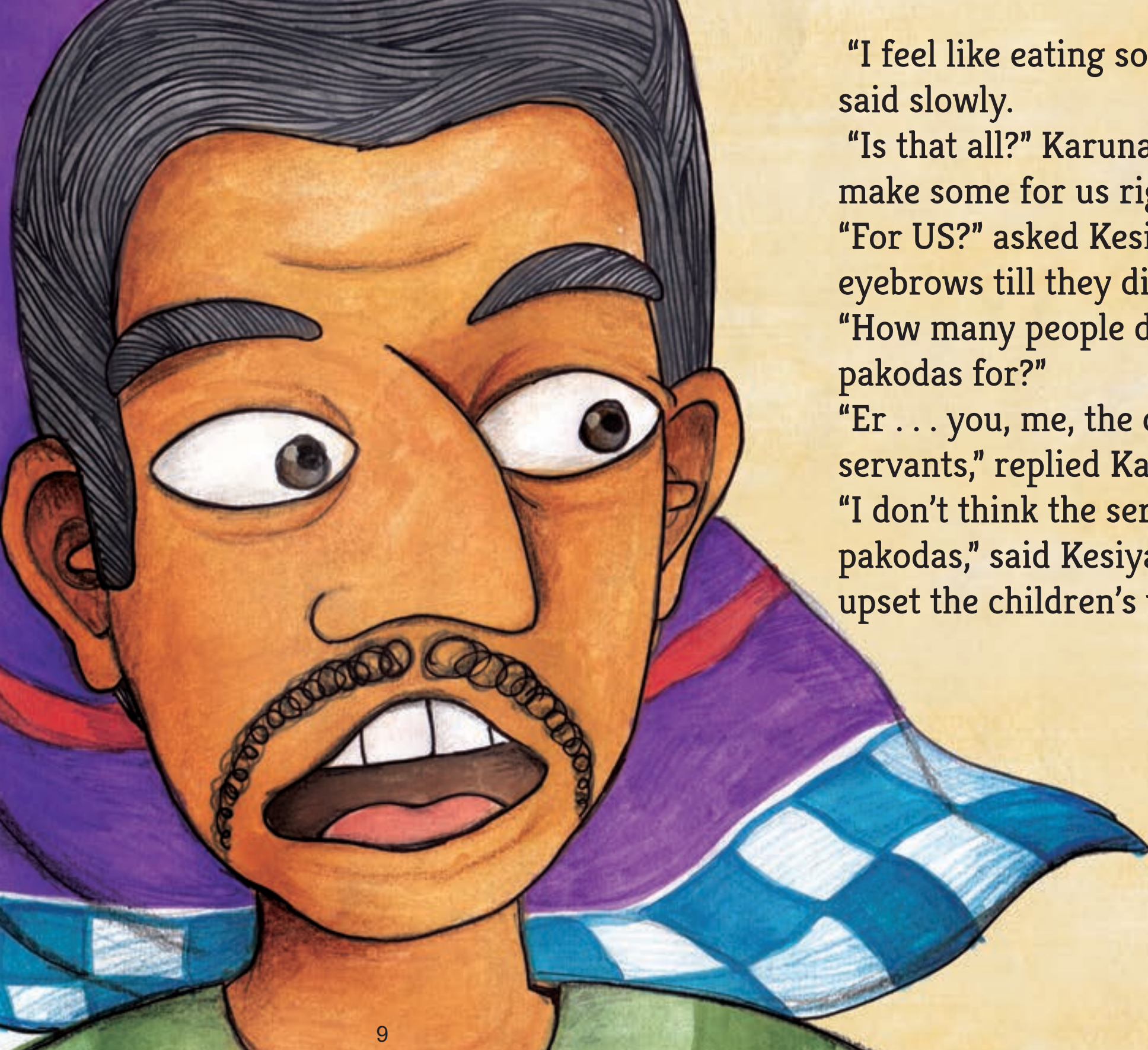


"What's the matter?" asked Karuna when Kesiya reached home. "You look sad."  
"Oh, it's nothing," he replied.

"There is something wrong," said Karuna. "Is the king angry with you?"  
"No, no!" said Kesiya.  
"Did the servants ask for more money?"  
"No, not at all," he replied.  
"Then what's the matter?"  
Karuna persisted.







"I feel like eating some pakodas," Kesiya said slowly.

"Is that all?" Karuna asked, surprised. "I'll make some for us right away."

"For US?" asked Kesiya, raising his eyebrows till they disappeared into his hair. "How many people do you want to make pakodas for?"

"Er . . . you, me, the children and the servants," replied Karuna.

"I don't think the servants want to eat pakodas," said Kesiya, firmly. "And it might upset the children's tummies."



Karuna sighed.

"Well then, I guess it's just for the two of us."

Kesiya looked at her in surprise.

"Why do you want to eat pakodas?" he asked. "Oh, all right, you can have one."

"Now listen," he continued. "Collect all the ingredients and vessels you need quietly, and go to the terrace to make the pakodas. I don't want people asking for them."



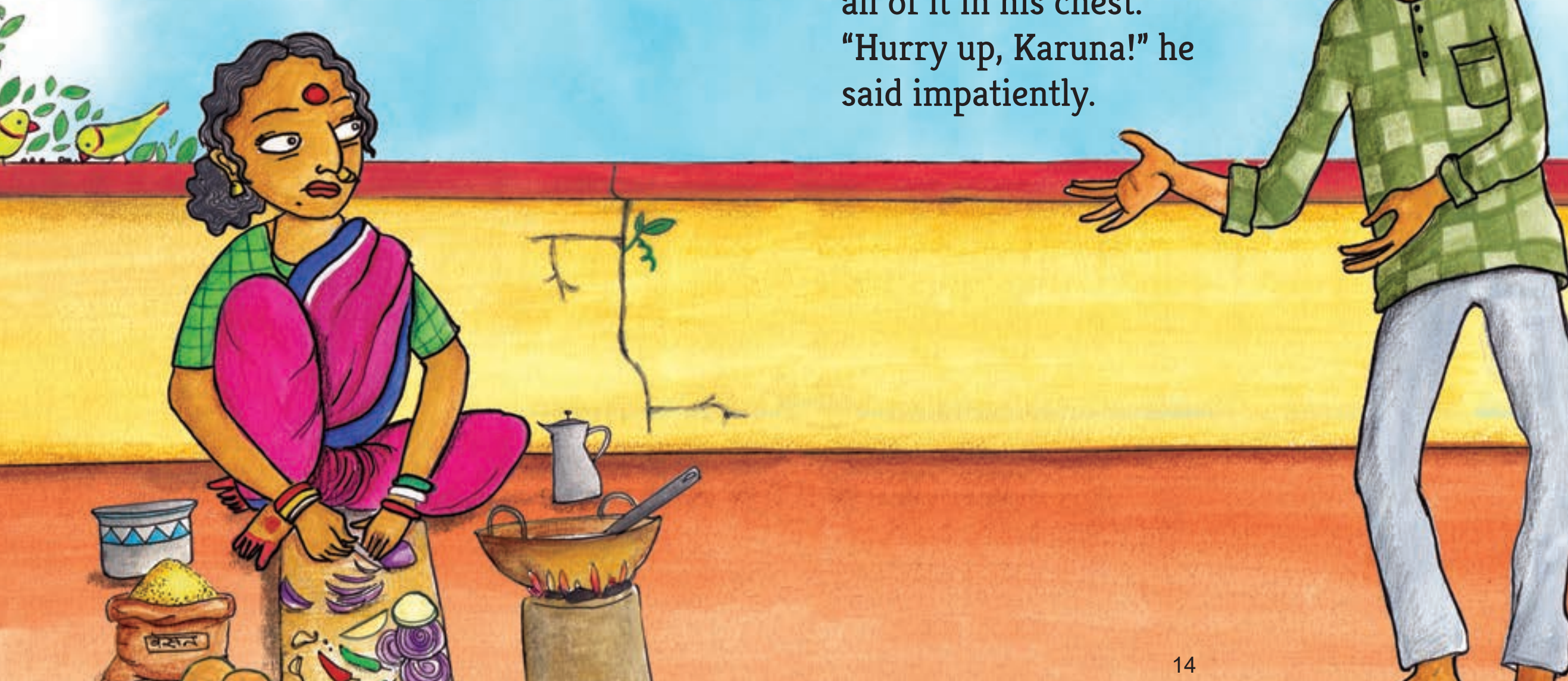


A short while later, Kesiya and Karuna tiptoed up to the terrace, carrying everything they needed for making the pakodas.

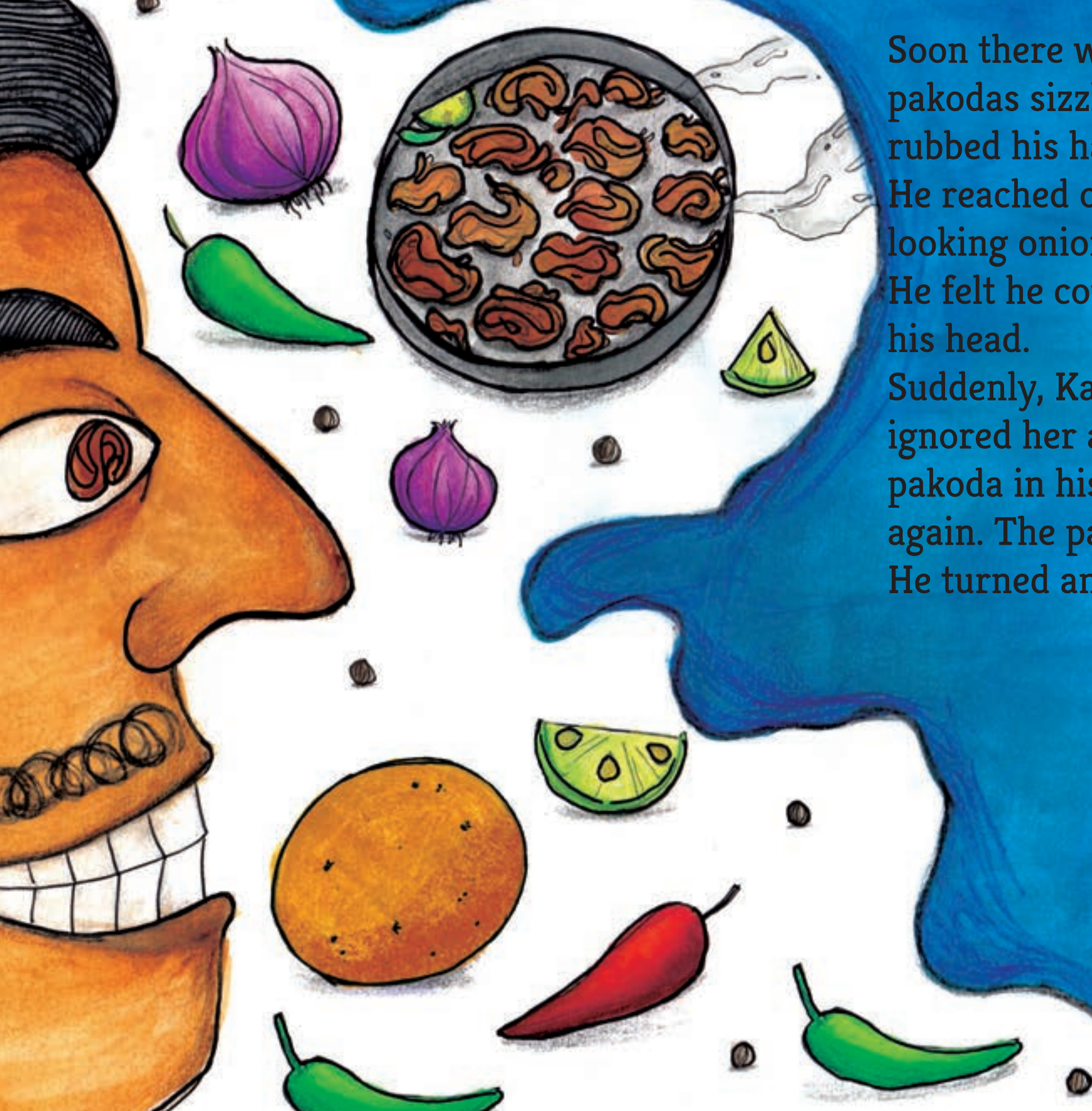
Karuna peeled and chopped onions and potatoes. She mixed the pieces with flour, spices and water and made a batter.

Soon the oil was hot, and Karuna put small portions of the batter into the frying pan. A lovely aroma filled the air. Kesiya breathed in deeply, trying to capture all of it in his chest.

"Hurry up, Karuna!" he said impatiently.







Soon there were a dozen hot, crisp, golden pakodas sizzling and ready to eat. Kesiya rubbed his hands with glee.

He reached out for one of the hot, delicious-looking onion pakodas. SLURP!

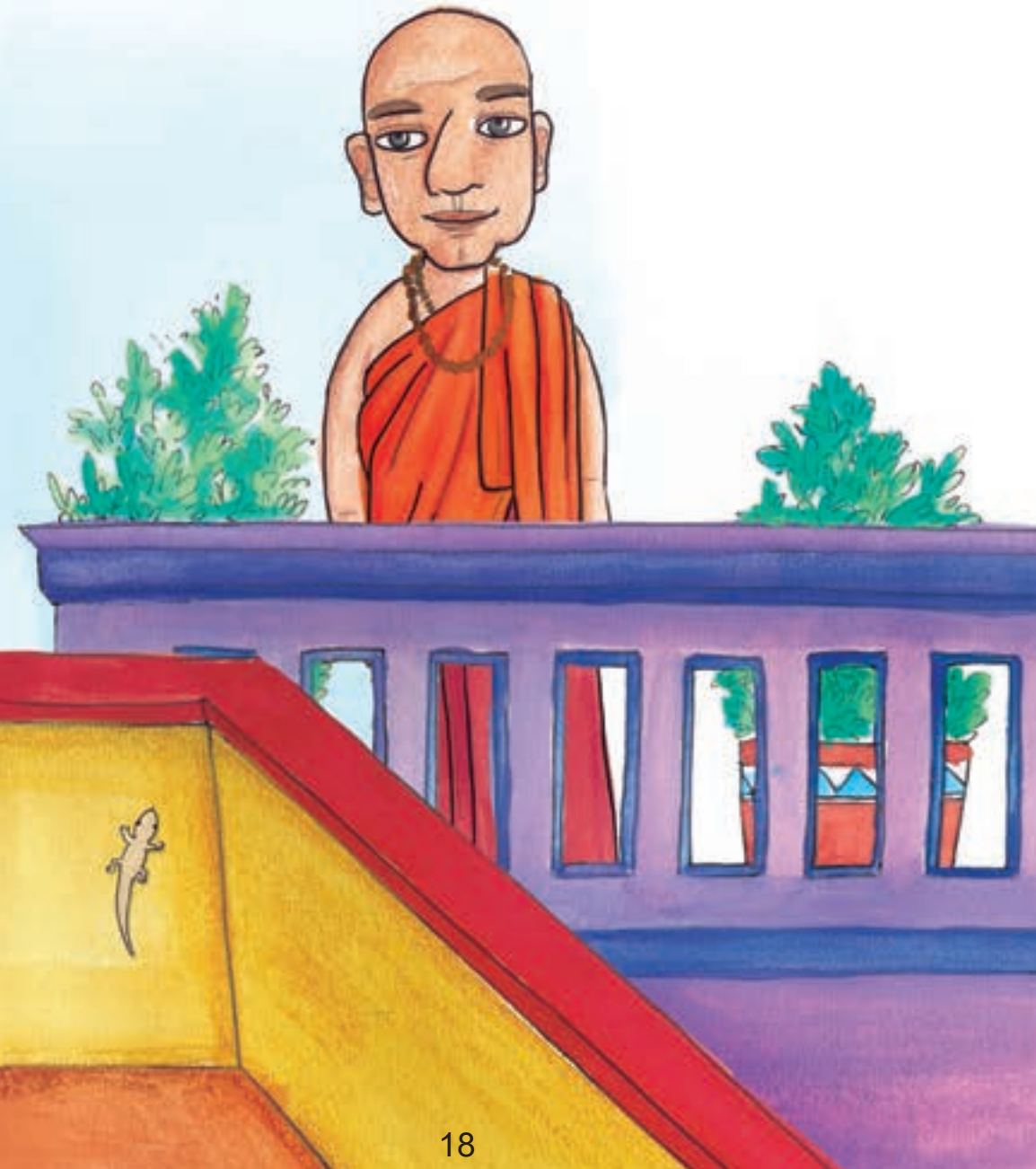
He felt he could taste the pakodas inside his head.

Suddenly, Karuna poked him. Kesiya ignored her and was about to put the pakoda in his mouth, when she poked him again. The pakoda fell from Kesiya's hand. He turned angrily towards her.



“Look,” she said, pointing to the neighbour’s terrace. “There’s a man looking at us!”  
There was a strange-looking man with a shaven head.

He was wearing orange-coloured robes looking at them unblinkingly.  
“Oh no!” groaned Kesiya. “He must have smelled the pakodas and decided to come up.”

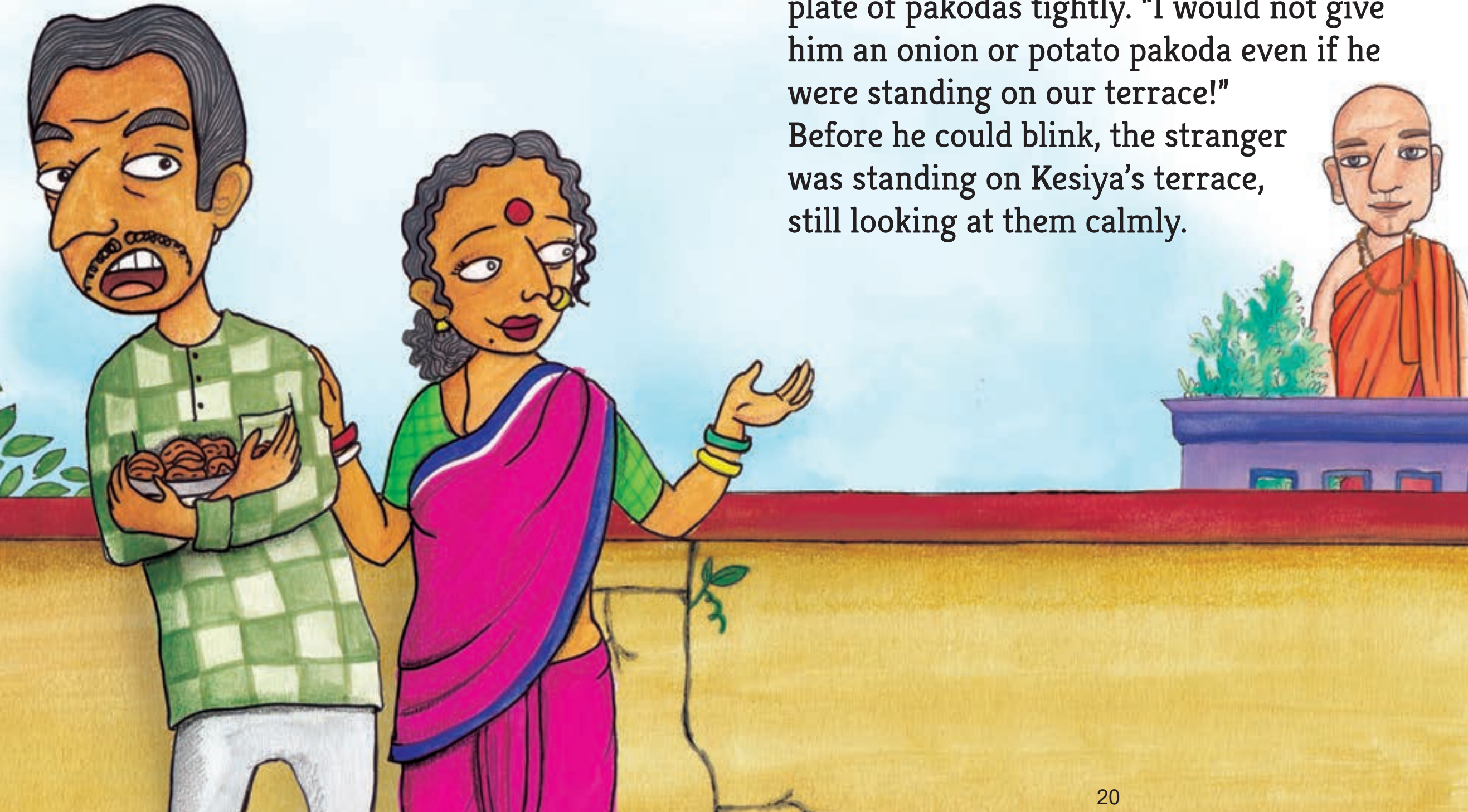




“He’s staring at us,” said Karuna. “Should I offer him a potato pakoda?”

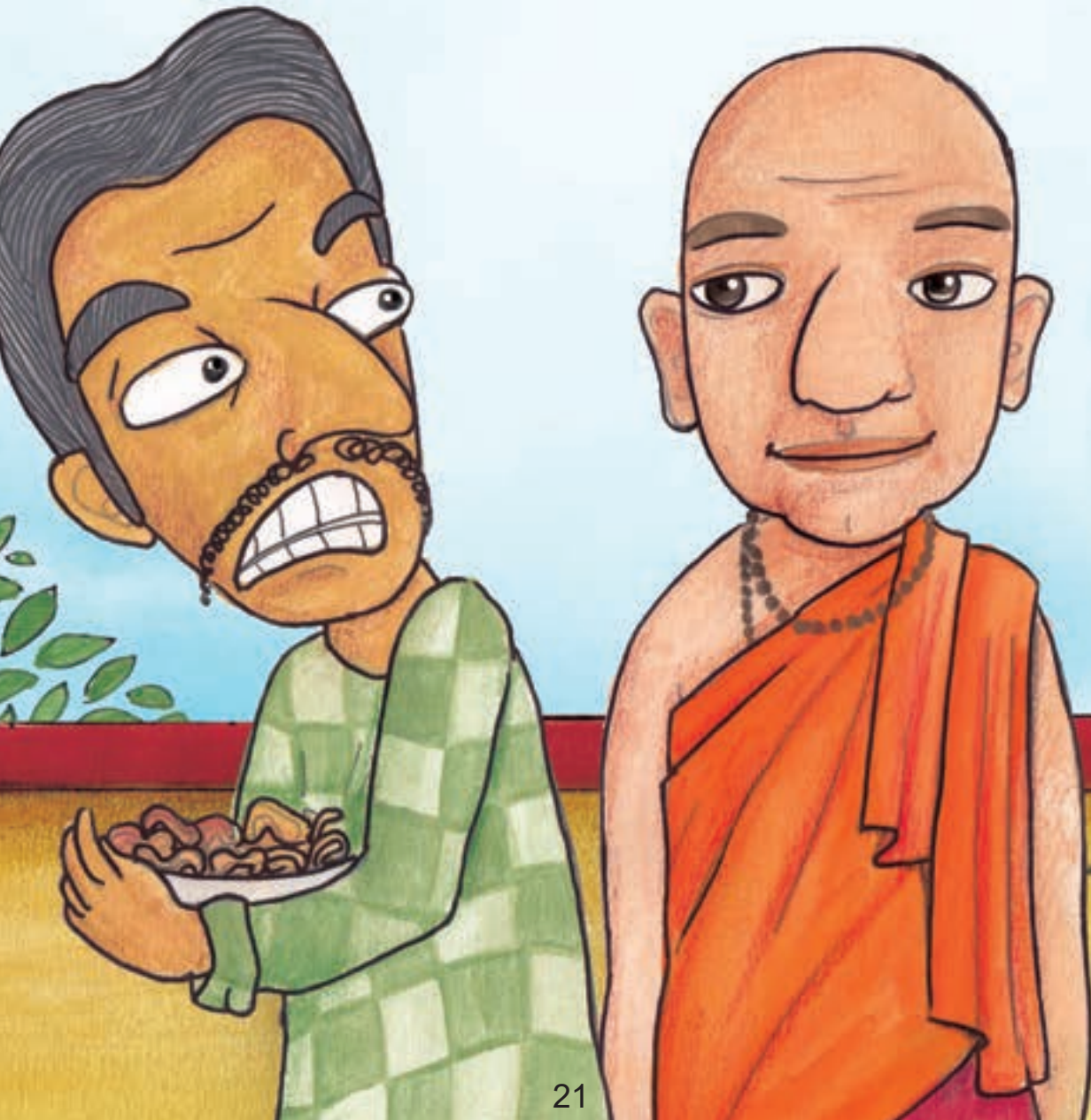
“No, no!” Kesiya jumped and held on to the plate of pakodas tightly. “I would not give him an onion or potato pakoda even if he were standing on our terrace!”

Before he could blink, the stranger was standing on Kesiya’s terrace, still looking at them calmly.





Kesiya gulped. This was not good. He clutched the plate of pakodas harder and turned to Karuna. "Even if this man were right next to me, I would not share the pakodas," he said.



A funny feeling filled Kesiya's stomach. He had known what would happen next. The man was standing right next to him!

"Urrrrr!" said Kesiya.

The stranger looked straight into Kesiya's eyes. And Kesiya felt as if the stranger knew all his secrets. He suddenly wanted to share the whole plate of pakodas.





What is wrong with me? he thought. He stepped back and said gruffly, "Karuna, make this man a teeny-weeny pakoda." Then, funny things started happening. No matter how much Karuna tried, she could not make a small pakoda. "Each new one I fry is bigger than a papaya!" she exclaimed.

Kesiya decided to give the man just one pakoda. But as he picked one up from his plate, he found that all the pakodas were stuck to it. He tried and tried, but he could not tear one from the other!







Kesiya dropped the plate in fear. He fell at the stranger's feet. "Please stop whatever it is you are doing," he begged. "Are you a magician? Take all my pakodas. Take anything you want. But please stop this!" The stranger smiled. "I am a monk," he said. "Some of my brothers are waiting for me to bring them some food. Will you give us a few pakodas?"



“Yes, sir, we certainly will,” replied Kesiya, getting up.

He and Karuna took all the pakodas they had made and followed the monk. They turned a corner and saw a sea of monks waiting for them.

“So many!” exclaimed Karuna. She looked at the plate Kesiya was carrying. There were not more than twenty pakodas.





“How will we feed so many people?” she asked. “Don’t worry,” said the monk. “Give with a generous heart and it will be enough.”

Kesiya took a deep breath and then he and Karuna began distributing the pakodas. Amazingly, the plate never became empty! And after having given pakodas to all the monks, there were still some left for Karuna and him!





As he put a hot, golden, crisp pakoda in his mouth, Kesiya felt strangely happy.



He smiled at Karuna. "Didn't you say you wanted to make pakodas for the neighbours as well? Tell you what, let's make pakodas for the entire kingdom. It feels so good to share!"





# Learning Ladder



Mounds

Heaps

Gleaming

Shining

Alter

Change

Mumbled

Spoke softly

Aroma

Nice smell

Glee

Happiness

Ignored

Did not pay attention

Shaven

To remove all the hair

Clutched

Held on tightly

Generous

Kind



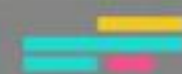


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**KAPWING**



# AFTER THE STORY...

Pakodas  
are a snack  
made in different  
parts of India.

They are also called  
bhajji or bhajiya.

Pakodas  
are made by  
dipping thin  
slices of vegetables,  
like potatoes and  
onions, in a batter  
and frying them.

Onions  
have been  
grown in India for  
over 5000 years.

A monk  
is a religious  
person who lives a  
very simple life.

A group of  
monks is called  
an 'order'.

