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Krishna and Kaliya

& Rama and the Squirrel





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KAPWING

Classics for Kids

Krishna and Kaliya

Story told by
Vijita Mukherjee

Illustrations
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Krishna and his big brother, Balarama, were playing near the river Yamuna with their friends Mana, Sridama and Sukha.

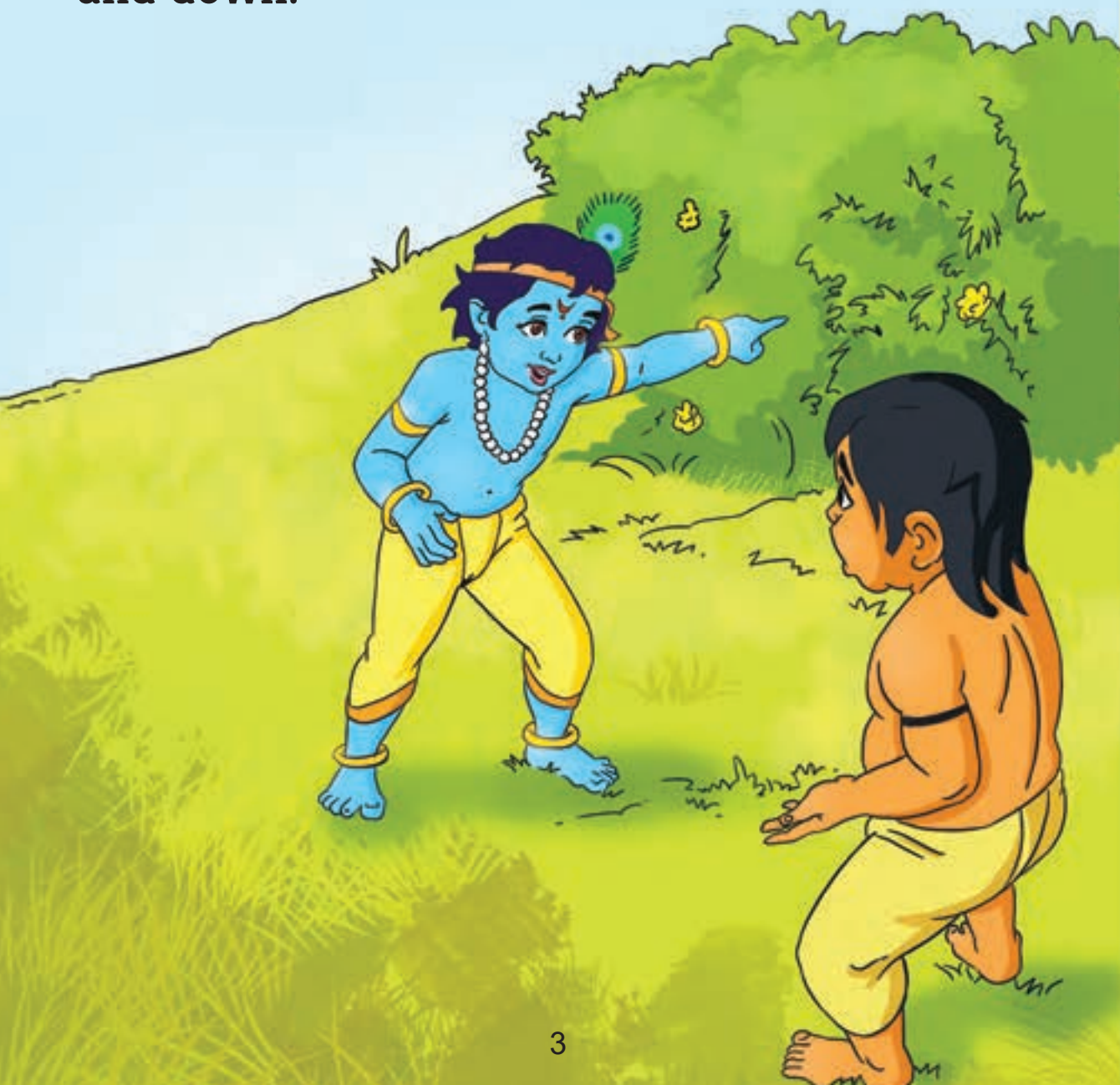
"This is the best way to spend an afternoon," said Krishna as he caught the ball from Balarama.



Krishna threw the ball.

Oops! Mana missed it and the ball went flying into a thorny bush.

“Mana has to fetch the ball! Mana has to find it!” shouted Krishna, jumping up and down.



Mana looked at the thorny bush.



“Why me?” he asked. “You threw the ball.”

“That’s the rule of the game,” grinned Krishna. “Miss the catch, fetch the ball!”

“Oh well,” sighed Mana, as he started to search in the bushes.

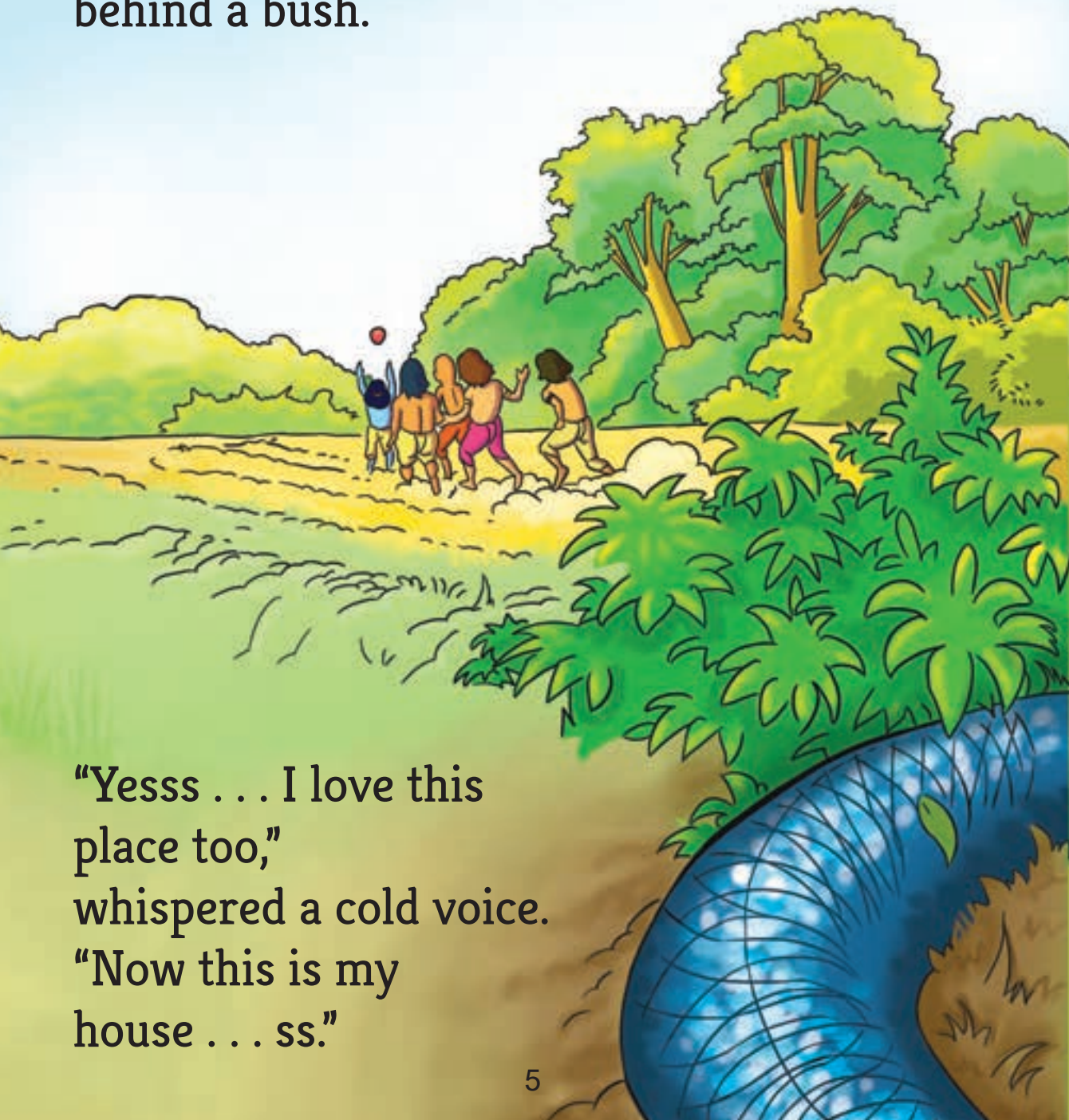
“Time we went home,” said Balarama.

“It’s almost sunset.”

Mana found the ball and the boys started back home to their village, Brindavan.

"I love this place," said Sukha.

They did not notice the dark shape behind a bush.



"Yesss . . . I love this place too," whispered a cold voice. "Now this is my house . . . ss."

Then, a terrible many-headed snake slithered silently towards the river.

It was Kaliya, the serpent king.

Kaliya had so much venom in him that the grass he slid on dried up and became black.



His flaming eyes flashed round as his family of many snakes, big and small, followed him.

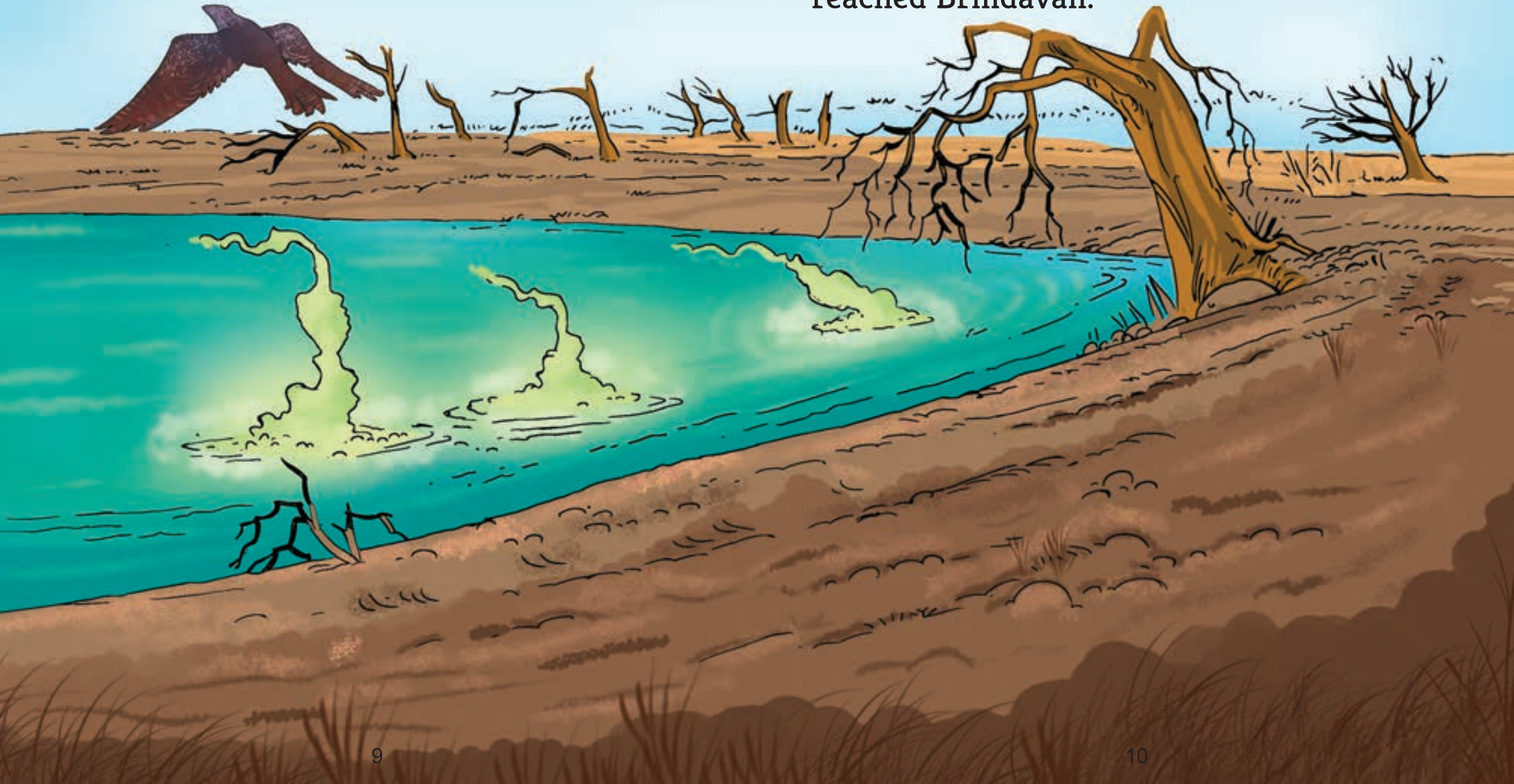
The snakes slithered across the land and
slid into the deep blue water.
Then everything started to change.
First, the river became a dirty green-black
and then it began to bubble with poison.

A horrible smell rose into the air from
the water.



“Choke . . . urrgh!” gasped the koel who stayed on a tree near by. “I can’t breathe in this air.” She flew away as fast as she could flap her wings.

The peepal and the kadamba trees started to wilt and die. The eastern bank of the river began to dry up. It was a terrible sight! It was not long before the news reached Brindavan.



Nanda, Krishna and Balarama's father, was the village chief. He called together all the people of the village.

"The river is poisoned. It is not safe anymore," he told them.



"Don't use the water and don't take the cows to graze and drink there either," he said, looking at Krishna and Sridama.

"That gives us more free time!" whispered Krishna. "Meet me near the kadamba tree. I'll get a new ball and we can all play." Before Sridama could answer, Krishna had run off.



A while later, the boys carefully made their way to the river bank. Krishna was waiting for them.

"This place gives me the creeps! Let's play somewhere else," said Sridama, looking at the dark water.

"Yes! I don't like it one bit," said Sukha.
"Come on!" smiled Krishna. "Now that we are here let's play for a while."

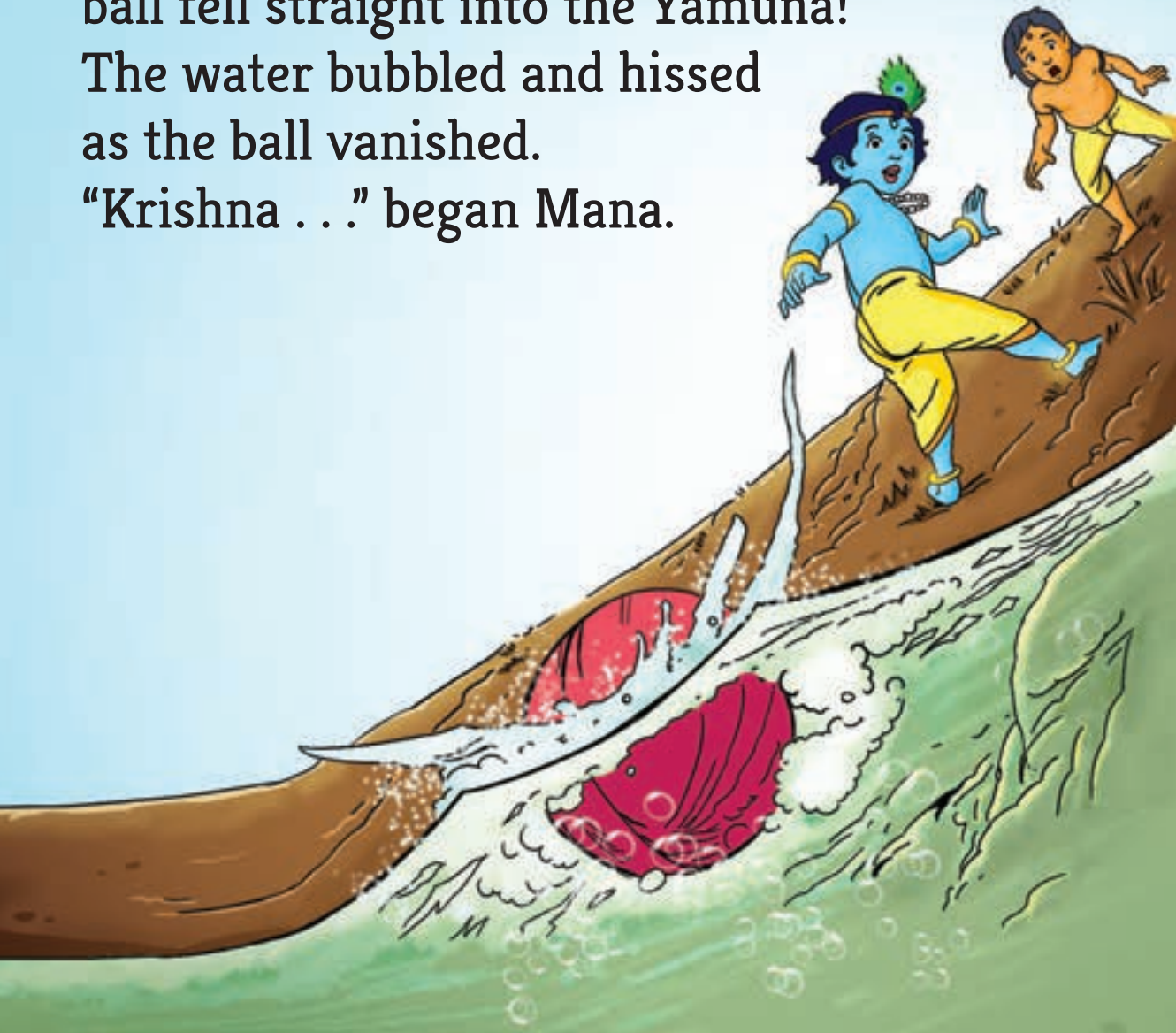


So they started a game, tossing the ball to each other.

Mana surprised Krishna with a sudden throw. Krishna missed the catch and the ball fell straight into the Yamuna!

The water bubbled and hissed as the ball vanished.

"Krishna . . ." began Mana.



"I know! I know! I missed the catch, I'll fetch the ball," laughed Krishna. Before the boys could say anything, Krishna had dived straight into the river.

"Krishna!" shouted Mana, running up and down the bank.

"What shall we do now?" cried Sridama.

“Go and tell my father,” said Balarama. “I’ll wait here in case Krishna comes out.”
The three boys sped towards the village while Balarama sat down.
“If I know my brother, I can guess the end of this adventure,” he thought with a grin.



Meanwhile, Krishna kept going deeper and deeper into the river.
It was a strange world below, filled with snakes—big snakes, small snakes, fat snakes and thin snakes.
Right in the middle of the river slept the great snake, Kaliya, with the ball in his coils.

Krishna swam up to him.
“Ssso you threw this ball here . . . spoilt my sleep,” murmured Kaliya, looking at Krishna through half-open eyes.
Then, he lazily lifted Krishna up in his coils and opened his mouth. “Sss . . . snack time!”



Krishna smiled and shrugged his shoulders.
The coils just slipped off him and hit the riverbed!

THUNK!



Kaliya's red eyes opened wide in surprise.
This had never happened before!
"Ssso, you think you are smart . . . silly
human," Kaliya hissed as he caught Krishna

tightly in his coils this time. "Nothing
escapes my coils . . . sss."
"He hasn't the smallest chance," whispered
a little snake who was watching. "Our king
will surely swallow this boy up."



But Krishna easily slipped out of Kaliya's coils again and dived to the left.

SWISH!

Kaliya whirled after him to the left and wickedly flicked his tail. But Krishna was not there. He had jumped to the right!



Kaliya lunged for Krishna but he was way off the mark.

"Uh . . . where isss he?" hissed the snake, angrily.

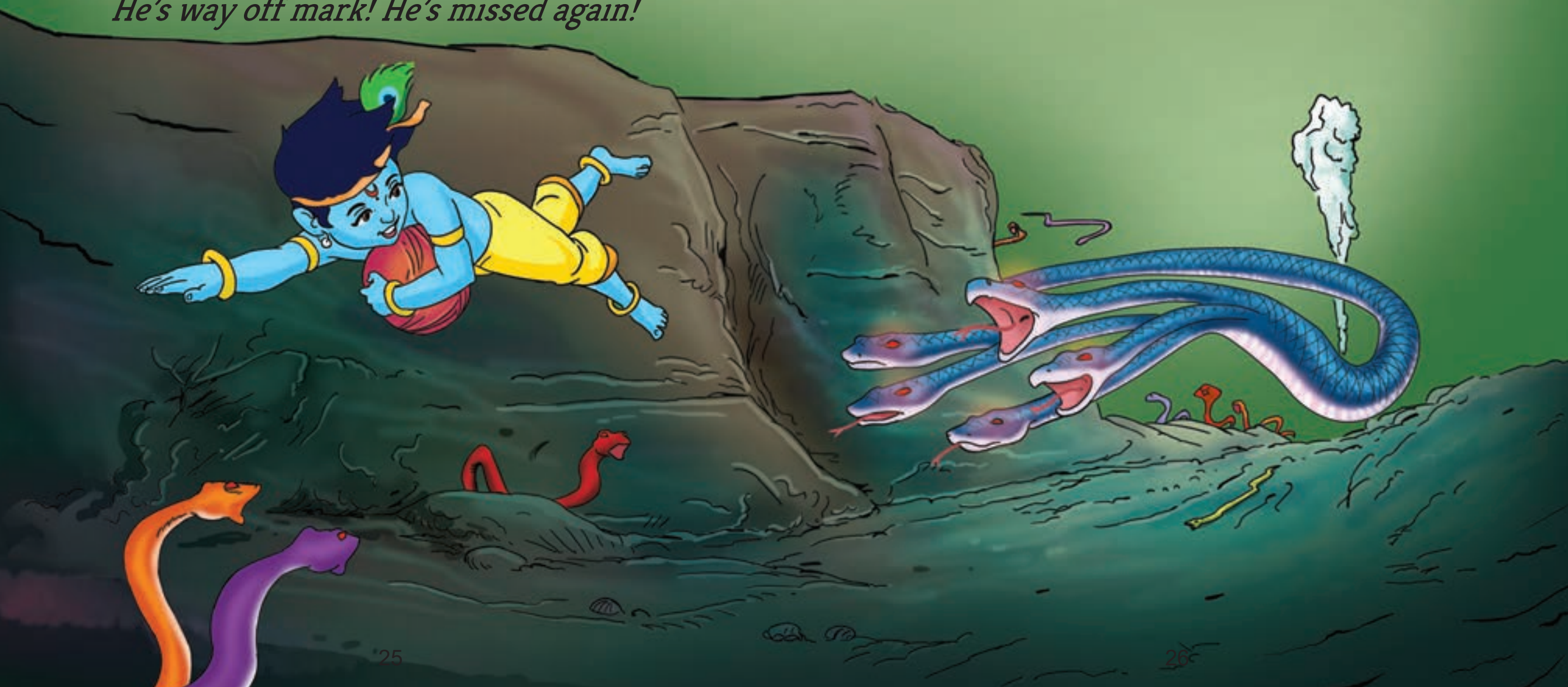
*Round and round the riverbed,
Kaliya turns his many heads,
Swimming left and swimming right,
Trying to keep Krishna in sight.*

*Blowing bubbles at baby snakes,
Such funny faces Krishna makes.
Kaliya swings his mighty tail,
He's way off mark! He's missed again!*

"Looking for something?" grinned Krishna, standing near Kaliya's tail, playing with the ball.

The chase went on.

"Face me if you dare!" hissed Kaliya, feeling very dizzy. "Stop dancing!"



"I haven't started dancing yet," laughed Krishna. "But it seems like a good idea." In a single jump, Krishna landed on Kaliya's hood! Then he started to dance, a wild and beautiful dance. All the snakes watched in fear as Krishna jumped from hood to hood.



"Stop! Stop! That hurts . . . sss . . ." whimpered Kaliya.

"Oh, please leave him," begged Kaliya's wives. "We will do as you say!"

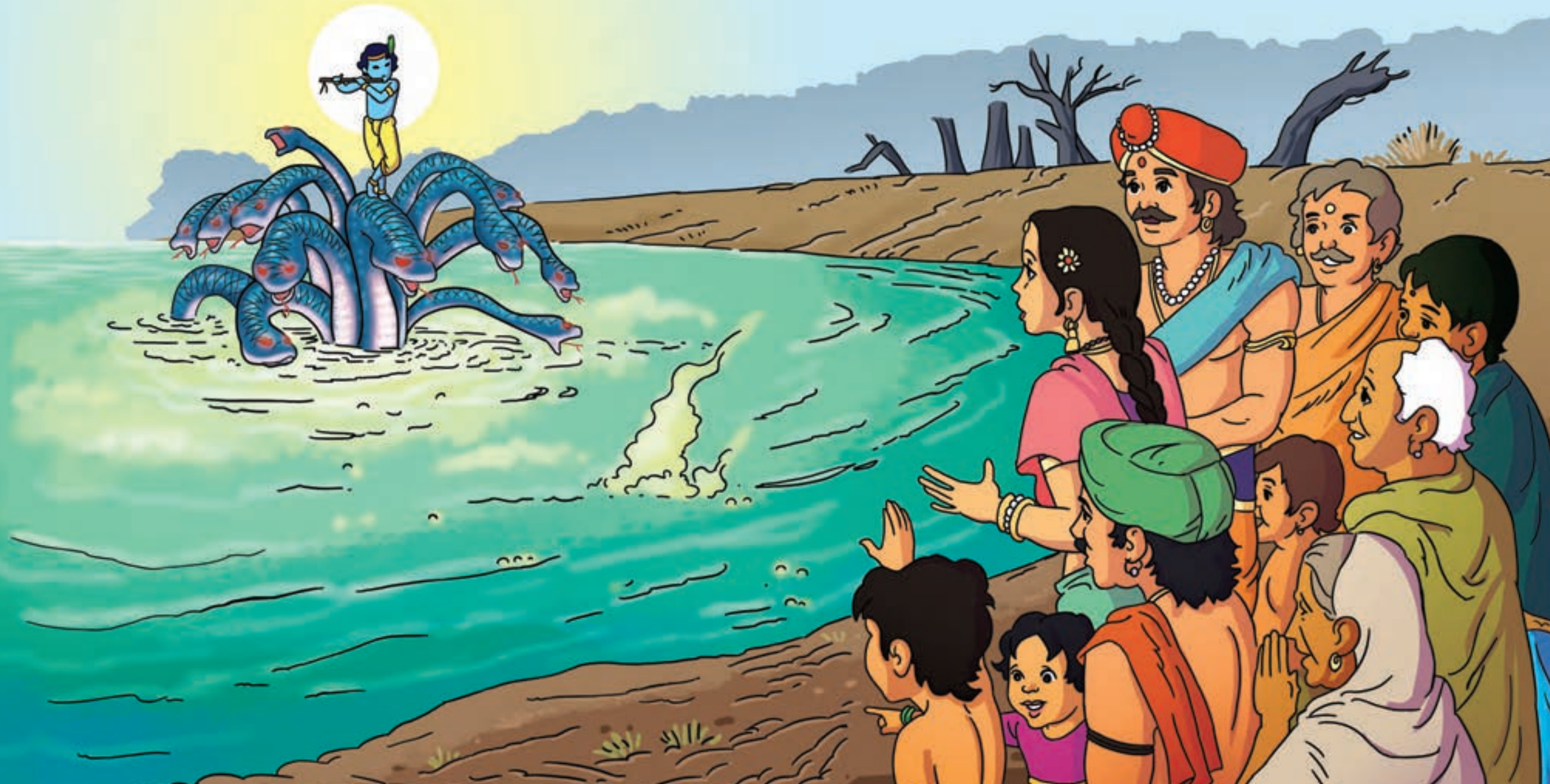
"Go away from the Yamuna forever," said Krishna in a stern voice.



"But where shall we go?" asked the snakes. "Go to Ramnaka, the snake kingdom. You will be happy there," said Krishna. "Now quick! Take me up to the surface. My mother will be worried."

Krishna was right. His mother, Yashoda, was very worried. The villagers were preparing to dive into the river to rescue Krishna when a defeated Kaliya rose up from the water.

Krishna stood on the serpent's head, playing his flute and smiling his charming smile. What a sight it was!



Kaliya gently lowered Krishna on to the riverbank. Then, with his big family, he left the Yamuna forever.

Yashoda knelt down and hugged Krishna. "Hey Mana!" grinned Krishna over his mother's shoulder, as he held up the ball. "I missed the catch, I fetched the ball!"



Learning Ladder

Serpent

Snake

Graze

To feed on grass

Venom

Poison

Kadamba tree

A tall shady tree with round yellow flowers

Slithered

Slid across

Coils

Loops

Koel

A bird

lunged

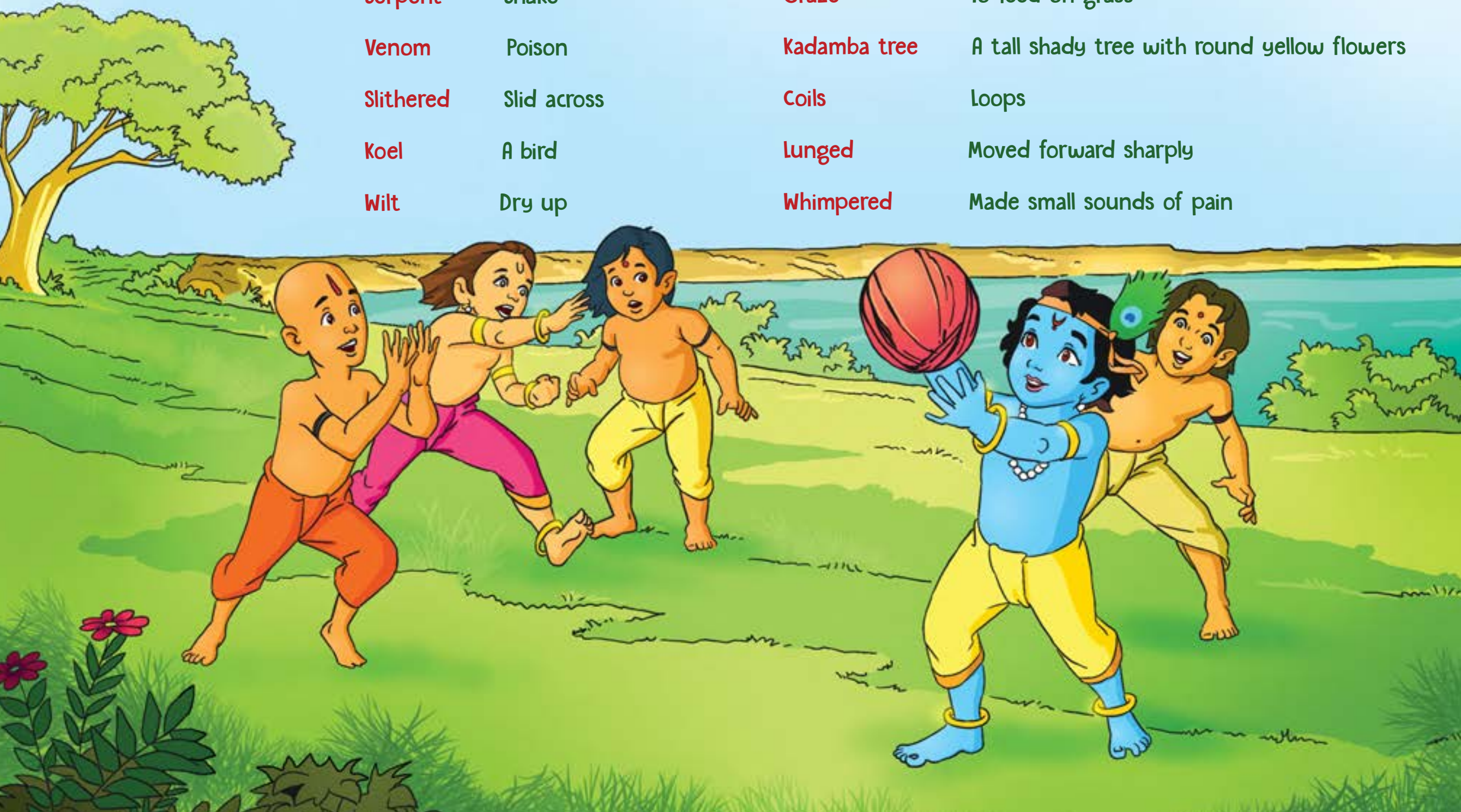
Moved forward sharply

Wilt

Dry up

Whimpered

Made small sounds of pain





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AFTER THE STORY...

Krishna has many other names. He is also called Gopal, Govinda and Hari.

Krishna lived in a village called Brindavan.

Krishna loved playing the flute.

Krishna and his friends used to look after herds of cows.

Krishna had an elder brother called Balarama.

Kaliya had a hundred and one heads.

