

## Part Four

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# THE DESCENT OF RADHA KRISHNA TO GOLAK DHAM BRINDABAN

### Third Chapter

## EXTREMELY TERRIFIED OF RADHIKA, BIRJA TURNED INTO A FLOWING RIVER

Debonair Krishna arrived in the forest with sprightful agility and a dashing personality. He had a devil-may-care outlook. He pulled out a smile communicating intense love and looked at Birja with seductive calling eyes.

When Birja saw Krishna, she heaved a theatrical sigh. She let her hair down. Her face turned as soft and enchanting as the Autumnal moon. Her whole body became tense with the lascivious thought of intimacy. She greeted him with a warm and coquettish half-open smile. She gave Krishna a slanting kittenish glance, signaling a ravishing welcome.



An artist's impression of Birja with jewelry  
(Courtesy: Gopalkrishna blog. Royalty free)

Krishna was a grateful figure with a seeming courtliness. Noticing Birja in intense sensualism, he gave a big infectious smile that made her shapely body ache and her delicate heart race pitty-pat. Her soft and delicate hands began to sweat.

Soon, good looking Krishna, known also as *Neel kamal* (Blue lotus), heart throb of every girl, swept Birja off her feet. They both ambled deeper into the idyllic forest where they played intense love games on the comfortable makeshift flower beds. In a while, their physical exhaustion and emotional depletion put them to sleep side by side, throwing caution to the wind. They loved each other. Love is a many splendored thing.

All the ancient Vedic treatises mention that the greatest desire of all humanity is to love, to be loved, and to experience real love. But things do happen when you least expect them.

Lo and behold! Unknown to them, Radha's milkmaid chums were quietly observing their amorous dissipation. They soon went back and told Radha all about it.

They confided in a breathless torrent. "Oh Radhe, it is inconceivable. We do not know how to tell you. What is unthinkable and unimaginable has happened in Braj bhumi. Your dear paramour was playing Cupid with Birja in the forest. Tired-out from playing a passionate leela, they are still slumbering in their flower bed. Krishna is indeed, being unfaithful to you."

The heart-breaking news of the betrayal of trust, and finding out that her partner cheated on her, made the pain of infidelity extremely unbearable. Radha had momentarily lost her power of speech.

As she began to recover from the initial shock, Radha burst out with a sudden fury, which she was scarcely able to hide, and she cried as if her heart was breaking. She felt that the notions of human decency had gone beyond the ordinary. Her embers of pride rose into a fire of indignation.

Consumed with rage, her body began to tremble. With seriously deflated self-esteem and a big empty ego, she blushed as she spoke. Her voice was delicate and hungry. She told her buddies that she could not believe the sad tidings they brought, and she wondered whether they were just testing her reaction! And that she needed confirmation. She sought assurances from them that it was not happening, but none was forthcoming.

As glistening globules of clear warm tear drops that cast tiny rainbows in various directions, were rolling down her smooth cheeks haltingly, as if they did not want to leave, she exhorted them to swear that the story they were telling her was indeed not a fictionalized retelling, but an actual eye view. They had no choice but to confirm.

With an intense feeling of humiliation, Radharani remained lost in thought. It was so fretful. In a bit, as the evening was beginning to draw and a pink moon hung over her house, she began to think aloud. While exchanging stilted conversation with her mates, she gathered enough personal convictions to recognise the power of her gut instinct to the question of whether she was destined to end her life this way unceremoniously!

Then in a quiet, calm, and melancholic voice, Radha chuntered defensively, "Ha Krishna! How can you be so cruel? Is this an act of benevolence for which you are well known? Is this the gift for my selfless devotion to you, and sacrifice of my personal life since I came of age?"

Who am I to you? All that I do is to think all day and night about you and only you. My greatest pleasure is to immerse myself in thinking of ways of making you happy. It may be that I love you too much. I admit I am not often myself and get cross with you." Radha then became quiet again. The expression was perfectly touched with petulance.

Radha who had momentarily lost her power of talking with her mates, was now gradually recovering it, even if at first, she was capable of only half-made scrapes, such as "where are you all?" She endeavoured to control herself. Then, she turned to her friends and looked at

them with a critical eye and said in a tone which too plainly showed her anxiety and dismay, although under the circumstances of the moment.

Radha asked the gopis, "Oh! Where is this place you are talking about? If you are very certain, I would like to go there and see them with my own eyes and chastise Birja with culpable punishment for being a treacherous woman. I would like to see with my own eyes how resilient she is, and for her to witness how the Almighty Krishna could do to save her."

But no sooner had she uttered this than she realised that it was not prudent for her to go there with her friends. She informed her mates, "I am so disgusted with the whole thing that I do not feel like going there. You can go and forcibly bring Birja along with the thieving Krishna, who has a heart filled with poison, and lips smeared with September honey.

And what's more, I do not want him back inside my house. Keep him in the pavilion. Once I know you have arrived there, I will come over in seconds and put them on summary trial. This is not just a travesty but a tragedy."

Well familiar with Radha's fury and her pale gaze that was straining across, her companions with grief in their hearts agreed fully that Radha should stay behind, and they would go, apprehend Krishna and Birja. They promised they would bring them to her. They will show Radha their sorry spectacle. Soon, some of them left for the forest to find Krishna and Birja.

Time passed by very slowly. A moment was like a *kalpa* [Eon] to Radha while she was waiting for the return of her friends. Time then slowed to a stop for her. She took umbrage at the delay, while pacing her room, often stopping to cock her head to the side to listen.

Unable to bear the strain of waiting anymore, incandescent Radha, like a raging bull, rushed out alone charging towards this place of 'Sensuous pleasure'. When she arrived there, to her surprise, there was neither Krishna nor Birja there. All that she saw was a flowing river. Frustrated and still fuming, she returned home along with her friends.

Within minutes, a plan congealed. Shreemati Radhika set off for the pavilion in her chariot with her friends. The chariot was as shiny as the sun and decorated with jewels and gems. A flag on top of the roof, painted with all sorts of figures, fluttered in the wind. It had ten thousand wheels.

The chariot could move faster than the speed of the mind. It was supported by many pillars decorated with gems and surrounded with gold leaves. The guardian deity, Madan [Hindu god], sat at the apex of the dazzling canopy which was modeled like that of a house.

The ornate and luxurious chariot dripping with opulence, had many reclining beds, decorated with precious stones. It was so vast that it would take one thousand lakhs of *yuthak*, to promenade around. There were fruit and flower gardens with ornamental ponds.

The chariot was racing ahead of the wind and was filled with fragrance that wafted in one whiff, from so many flowers in the gardens. There was a variety of flowers, such as night jasmine, nagkesar (Ironwood tree), hibiscus, honeysuckle, and kadamba (burflower tree).

As the chariot approached the Pavilion, Radha saw ShreeDam guarding the entrance gate, holding a stick in his hand, against many lacs of her mates, who were also menacingly brandishing a stick each.

Radha was smart enough to think at her feet. Sometimes, the only way to know the stove is hot is to touch it.