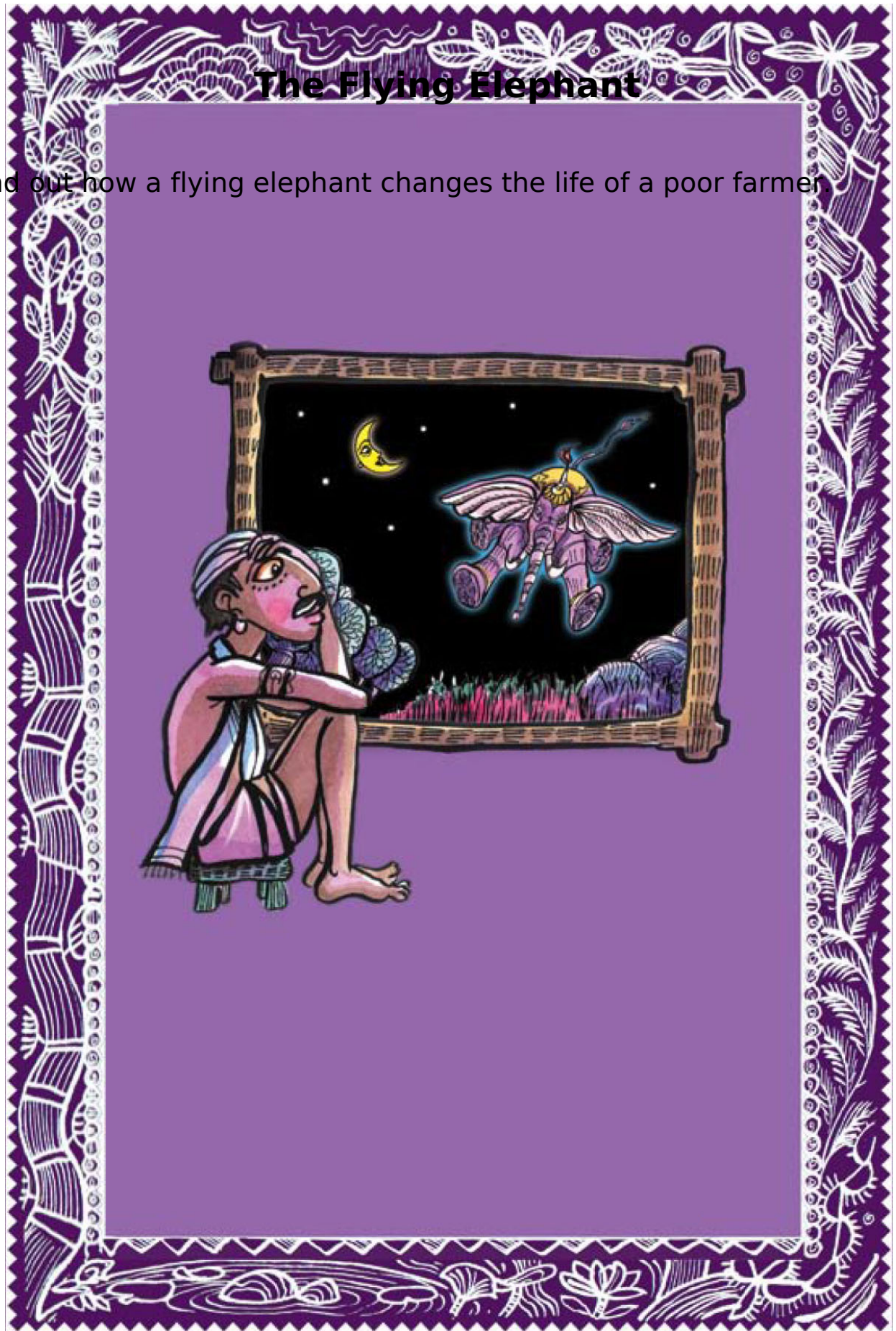
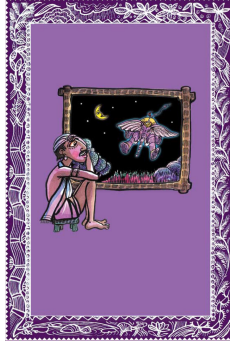

The Flying Elephant

Find out how a flying elephant changes the life of a poor farmer.





The Flying Elephant
Kuzhali Manickavel



Let's Read

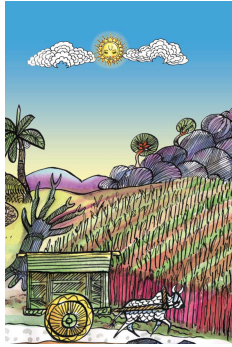


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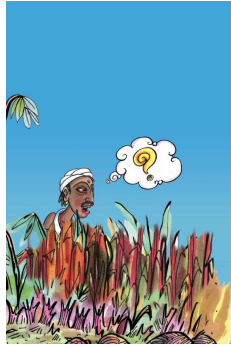
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There once was a sugarcane farmer who lived in a small village. He worked very hard in his fields and hoped to have a big harvest.







One morning, he saw that a big chunk of his crop was missing. The next day, another huge chunk of his crop was gone. "I'll stay awake tonight and see who's eating my sugarcane," the farmer thought to himself.



That night, he waited by the window, watching his fields. As the moon rose, he saw a tiny speck grow larger in the sky. It was an elephant flying right into his field!



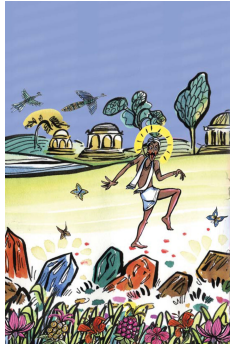
The farmer watched in amazement as it flew down and started eating his sugarcane.



He tiptoed outside and waited for the elephant to finish eating.



When the elephant began flying away, the farmer grabbed its tail. Soon he was flying above his fields into Indra's kingdom of Paradise.



Paradise was filled with beautiful birds and flowers. The ground was covered with silver grass and precious stones.



The farmer soon found the royal palace and met Indra. "Your elephant has been flying down and eating all my sugarcane," said the farmer. "My harvest is ruined."



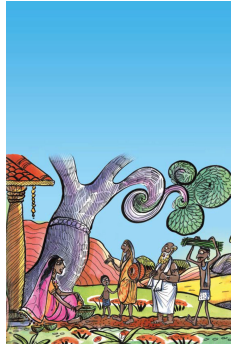
"I am very sorry," said Indra. "Please take whatever you want from my kingdom. I'll make sure he doesn't go down again and damage your crops." Indra then blessed the farmer with a safe journey home.



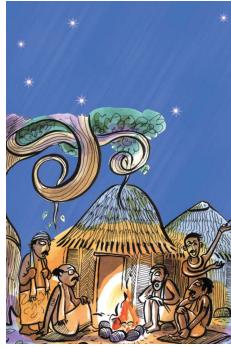
The farmer took two handfuls of gems and returned home.



He built himself a new house and became a very rich man. Soon the whole village was curious about his sudden wealth.



One day, some villagers went to visit the farmer's wife. "Where did you get all this money?" they asked. "Did you find buried treasure in your fields?". The farmer's wife told them what had happened.



That evening, the villagers decided to lure the elephant down themselves. "When we get to Paradise, we'll take more than just two handfuls of gems!" they said.



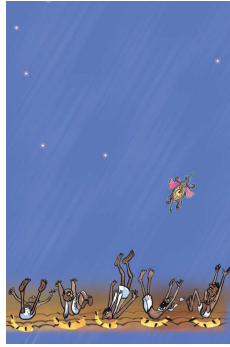
They planted a field of sugarcane, and sure enough, the elephant flew down one night.



One villager grabbed its tail, and soon there was a chain of villagers flying behind the elephant. As they flew up, they began talking about what they would bring back from Paradise.



"I'm going to carry back this many gems!" declared the villager holding the elephant's tail. He was so excited that he stretched his arms wide and let go of the elephant's tail.



The villagers all fell to the ground. They watched sadly as the elephant disappeared into the sky. "Don't worry," they said. "The elephant will come back tomorrow."



But Indra, hearing of the villagers' trick, arranged for a sugarcane field to be planted in Paradise. The elephant never felt the need to fly down again. The villagers waited for many nights, watching the sky. But the elephant never came back down again.

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