

Miracle on the Mountain

**Written and illustrated
by Kavita Desai**

with many thanks to the class 6 of 2024–25
at the Freie Waldorfschule Freiburg-Wiehre,
who helped in the creation of this story.

Table of Contents

Author's note	3
Chapter One – Urvashi	8
Chapter Two – Akbar and Birbal	12
Chapter Three – Poor Anil	14
Chapter Four – The night on the mountain	16
Chapter Five – Prison	18
Chapter Six – Urvashi's plan	21
Chapter Seven – Very, very soon!	25
Chapter Eight – A tiny little light	29
Chapter Nine – Anil the Advisor	32
Chapter Ten – Like a bird	35
A note on parrots	37
Words to help you read	38
Glossary of Indian terms	46
Language to go	47



Chapter One – Urvashi

Urvashi was an amazing girl. When she was a baby, she sang and recited from her cradle. In India, people speak many different languages. Urvashi's father spoke Hindi but her nurse spoke Bhojpuri. The servants spoke Hindi, Bhojpuri and Urdu. Visitors often spoke Persian. Musicians and poets sang and recited in Sanskrit, Urdu and Braj. Urvashi listened to everyone and learnt to speak all of these languages.

Urvashi lived in a large house with a beautiful garden. Her mother had died when Urvashi was a baby, but she was the light of her father's life. When he saw how his daughter loved to learn, he found her a maths teacher, and when she was five years old Urvashi had her first maths lesson.

"What do I have," the maths teacher asked, "If I have five mangoes in one hand and six mangoes in the other hand?"

"Very big hands," answered Urvashi.

Urvashi's father understood that she was bored and needed different lessons. He paid the best teachers to teach his little girl. Urvashi studied mathematics, astronomy, history, literature and music. She had a beautiful voice

and she loved to sing. By the time she was twelve, she knew more than most of her teachers.

From her father's doctors she learnt about medicine. With the priests in the temple she discussed the Great Books.

As you can see, Urvashi had a quick and able mind. But she also had a warm heart. One day she found a little yellow bird with a broken wing. She made a splint for the bird's wing and kept the bird in a cage while its wing healed. She fed the bird and brought it clean water. As the bird grew strong and well, it began to sing.

„What a beautiful bird,“ said Urvashi's father. „Now you can keep it, and you will always have birdsong.“

But Urvashi took the birdcage into the garden and opened the door. The bird flew out and up into the sky. „What you set free will come back to you,“ said Urvashi to her father.

The next morning the bird flew back into the garden and alighted on Urvashi's outstretched hand. It opened its beak and sang a joyful song. From that day on, the bird often visited Urvashi in the garden.

The years went by and Urvashi grew up. She fell in love with a man named Birbal. Birbal shared Urvashi's love of poetry and music. His quick wit matched her own. Urvashi's father wanted her to marry a rich man.

Birbal was not poor,
but he was not rich either.

„I want the best man for you,“ said Urvashi's father to his daughter.

„Birbal is the best man for me,“ answered Urvashi.

„Fly, my songbird,“ said her father. „Go with my blessing. But come back and visit me often.“

„I will, Bapu,“ Urvashi promised.

After the wedding the young couple went to live in a beautiful house near the emperor's palace. They were very happy together.