



*Now Presenting...*

## **All the Rice in India**

*Arjun is in love with Chahna, the Rajah's daughter. The problem is that Arjun is an elephant trainer, and the Rajah surely won't approve of their marriage. How can Arjun prove himself worthy?*

### **Characters**

Narrator.....

Chahna .....

Arjun.....

Rajah.....

Guard .....

Advisor .....



# All the Rice in India

## ..... Characters .....

Narrator  
Chahna  
Arjun

Rajah  
Guard  
Advisor

**Narrator:** In a small village in India a long time ago, there lived a man by the name of Arjun. Arjun was a caretaker for the Rajah's elephants. He was in love with Chahna, and Chahna was in love with him. They planned on getting married, but they had to keep it a secret. Chahna was the Rajah's daughter, you see, and if he knew the princess was in love with an elephant trainer, he would have thrown a royal tantrum. Every morning, Arjun and Chahna met each other and talked by the elephant yard.

**Chahna:** Arjun, what are we to do? My only dream is to be with you, but my father will forbid it.

**Arjun:** I will prove myself to him. The Rajah will see that I am worthy to be the husband of his one and only daughter.

**Chahna:** He's not that easy to impress, as you know. In fact he seems to be more stuck in his ways than ever.

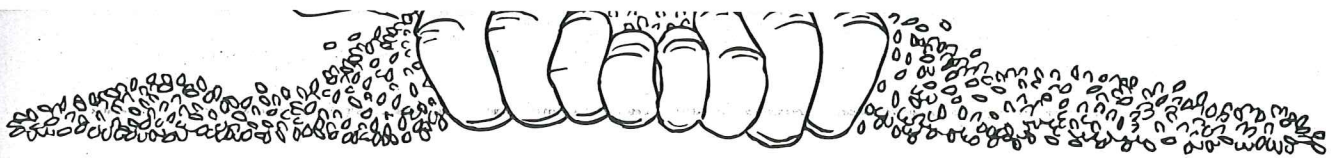
**Arjun:** I know. He has demanded one bag of rice from every villager, even though we barely have enough for ourselves. I wish he could see how we suffer.

**Chahna:** We will find a solution, dear one. Where there is love, there's a way.

**Arjun:** One of the messengers is coming! Let us pretend that everything is normal.

**Guard:** *(entering)* Good morning, Princess. Are you ready for your morning stroll?





**Chahna:** Yes, Arjun was getting Ganesha ready for me.

**Messenger:** She's a grand elephant, isn't she?

**Chahna:** Yes, she is. She's my favorite, as a matter of fact. I've been riding her ever since I was a child. *(to Arjun)* I will bring her back later today.

**Arjun:** Yes, Your Highness.

**Narrator:** The next day, Chahna came to the elephant yard bright and early, as usual. To her surprise, Ganesha would not get up. She just lay on the ground with her eyes half closed. The sight of this threw Chahna into a panic.

**Chahna:** Arjun, what's wrong with Ganesha?

**Arjun:** She must have fallen ill. She was like that when I got here this morning.

**Chahna:** *(crying)* Arjun, you must do something. Ganesha is like a sister to me.

**Arjun:** Don't cry, Chahna. Ganesha will be all right. I'll see to her myself.

**Narrator:** Ganesha did not move for the rest of the day. Arjun inspected every inch of her body. Finally, he noticed a spot on her foot where a sharp thorn had pierced her thick hide and become embedded in her flesh. The wound had become infected. He ground up some medicinal herbs and packed the mixture around the cut. In a few days, Ganesha was back on her feet.

**Advisor:** Your Majesty, I bring good news.

**Rajah:** What is it?

**Advisor:** Ganesha has been healed.

**Chahna:** Thanks be to all the gods and goddesses!

**Advisor:** Actually, you can thank Arjun the elephant trainer. It was he who cured Ganesha.



**Rajah:** Please bring Arjun here. I would like to thank him myself.

**Advisor:** He is in the next room, Your Majesty. I knew you would want to speak with him. *(louder)* Arjun, you may enter.

**Arjun:** *(entering)* Good afternoon, Your Majesty. *(bowing toward Chanha)* Greetings, Your Highness.

**Rajah:** I would like to thank you for healing Ganesha. Chahna loves that elephant dearly, and Chanha's happiness is dear to me. Therefore, I owe you my happiness. Name your reward.

**Arjun:** I don't ask for much. Just a grain of rice.

**Rajah:** That's all? You can have anything you want, and all you ask for is a grain of rice?

**Arjun:** All right, then. If it pleases Your Majesty, you may give me a single grain of rice today. Tomorrow you can give me two grains of rice. On the following day, give me four grains of rice. For 30 days, give me double the rice you gave me the day before.

**Rajah:** That hardly seems to be a worthy reward. But if that is your wish, you shall have it.

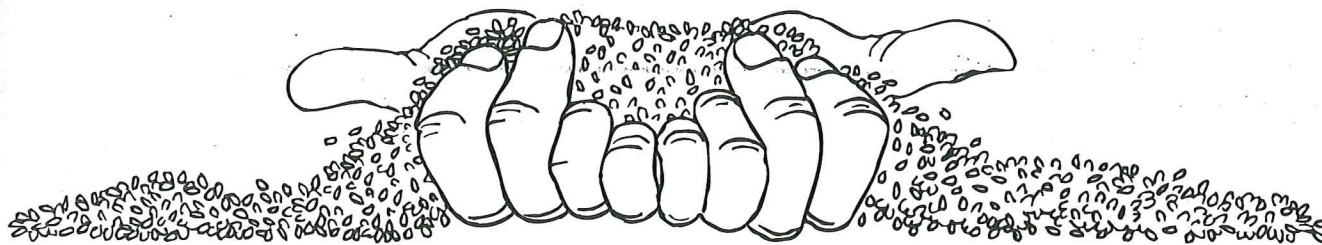
**Narrator:** On the next day, Arjun received two grains of rice. The following day, he received four grains of rice. On the fourth day, he received eight grains of rice. The amount doubled every day. On the 10th day, it had only come to 512 grains of rice. The Rajah was amused.

**Rajah:** *(to his advisor)* Arjun may have a gift for handling animals, but he certainly isn't so clever with numbers. He could have had anything he wanted, and all he asked for were a few measly grains of rice.

**Advisor:** To be sure. Today is the 11th day. A messenger gave him 1,024 grains of rice.

**Rajah:** And so tomorrow we will give him 2,048 grains of rice.





**Advisor:** Correct.

**Rajah:** It sounds like a lot, but it only adds up to a couple handfuls of rice. I guess he will learn his lesson the hard way.

**Narrator:** On the 16th day, Arjun received 32,768 grains of rice. That was enough to fill a bag. On the 17th day, two bags of rice were delivered. On the 18th day, he got four bags. The Rajah was getting slightly concerned.

**Rajah:** Tell me, how much rice did we give Arjun today?

**Advisor:** I'm afraid that this is beginning to add up, Your Majesty. Yesterday, we gave Arjun two bags of rice. And today, we gave him four bags of rice.

**Rajah:** And eight bags tomorrow.

**Advisor:** And 16 bags the day after that.

**Rajah:** I know how to count! Now be gone!

**Narrator:** On the 27th day, the situation was getting serious.

**Messenger:** Your Majesty, today we have to deliver 2,048 bags of rice to Arjun. It's too much for us to carry. We need to use Your Majesty's elephants.

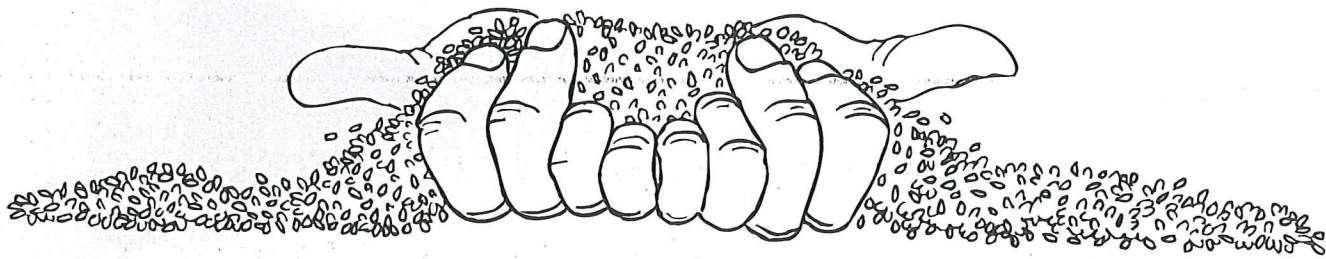
**Rajah:** Go ahead. Out of curiosity, what does all this add up to tomorrow?

**Messenger:** It will be 134 million . . .

**Advisor:** . . . 217 thousand . . .

**Chahna:** . . . 728 grains of rice.

**Advisor:** Or, in other words, one whole storehouse of rice.



**Rajah:** This added up to more than I thought. But there are only three more days to go. Then this whole nuisance will be over with.

**Advisor:** But we're dealing with bigger numbers now. Tomorrow we must deliver two full storehouses of rice. On the next day...

**Rajah:** Just tell me what it comes to on the 30th day.

**Advisor:** It comes to 536 million, 870 thousand, 912 grains of rice. That is more than we have, Your Majesty.

**Rajah:** I see that one grain of rice can indeed add up to a lot. Arjun is much more clever than I thought. Bring him to me at once.

**Advisor:** Yes, Your Majesty.

**Chahna:** Father, there's something you should know.

**Rajah:** Not now, Chahna. Let me speak to Arjun first.

**Arjun:** *(entering)* Yes, Your Majesty?

**Rajah:** Arjun, you have outwitted me. Your request is impossible to satisfy. Name any other reward you want.

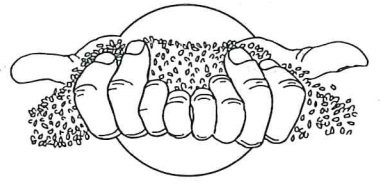
**Arjun:** I ask for your daughter's hand in marriage.

**Rajah:** How dare you! You think you can trick me into letting you marry my daughter? She is more precious to me than life itself. You can have all the rice in India, but you *cannot* have my daughter.

**Chahna:** Father, please let us marry. I am in love with Arjun, but I didn't know how to tell you.

**Rajah:** Chahna, you know I cannot deny you. If you want to marry Arjun, so be it. He has proven himself to be clever and resourceful. May you both live happily ever after.

Name \_\_\_\_\_



## Comprehension Questions

How well did you understand this play? Write your answers to the questions in the spaces provided.

1. What is the problem at the beginning of the play?

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2. What kind of person is the Rajah?

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3. What is wrong with Ganesha, and how does Arjun help her?

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4. What does Arjun want for his reward?

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5. What does the Rajah think of Arjun's request?

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6. Why do you think Chahna didn't tell the Rajah about her plans to marry Arjun?

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7. What do you think is the moral or lesson of the story?

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