

Savitri, Princess of India: A Tale From the Mahabharata's summary

The old king had 18 wives but no children, so he prayed to the Hindu gods and the goddess Savitri gave him a daughter. Princess Savitri, who shares the name of the goddess, grew up every day and became beautiful and intelligent. Her eyes shone like the sun, so people thought she was a goddess. When she was old enough to marry, no one wanted to marry her, so her father was very worried and told her to find a suitable man. Princess Savitri travelled for a long time in search of her future husband and at last she came to a riverside hideaway.

It was in this place that Savitri found her Mr. Right Satyavan, who had the best of virtues. When Savitri returned home, her father found Narada, the seer, to divine the future of Savitri and Satyavan. Narada said, "Satyavan will die in a year's time." But Savitri wasn't afraid, so they eventually got married. At the wedding, Savitri showed her good character. For a year the couple was happy, but Savitri feared that Satyavan's death would soon come. Although Savitri prayed for Satyavan day and night, Satyavan died. After Satyavan's death, Savitri saw Yama, who was the god of death.

When Yama brings the spirit of Satyavan to his domain, Savitri chases him until Yama stops her. For Yama's domain belonged to the man of death, but Yama admired Savitri's loyalty and so allowed her to enter the zone of death. Because of Savitri's steadfast spirit, Yama granted Savitri three boons, but could not choose her husband's life. The first boon was Savitri's choice for Yama to bring her father-in-law back to life and restore the kingdom he had lost. The second boon was that Savitri asked Yama to give her father many children. Finally, Savitri asked Yama to give her and Satyavan many children. Thus Yama appreciated Savitri's wisdom and returned Satyavan's soul to his body. The couple live happily ever after in a paradise of sorts again.