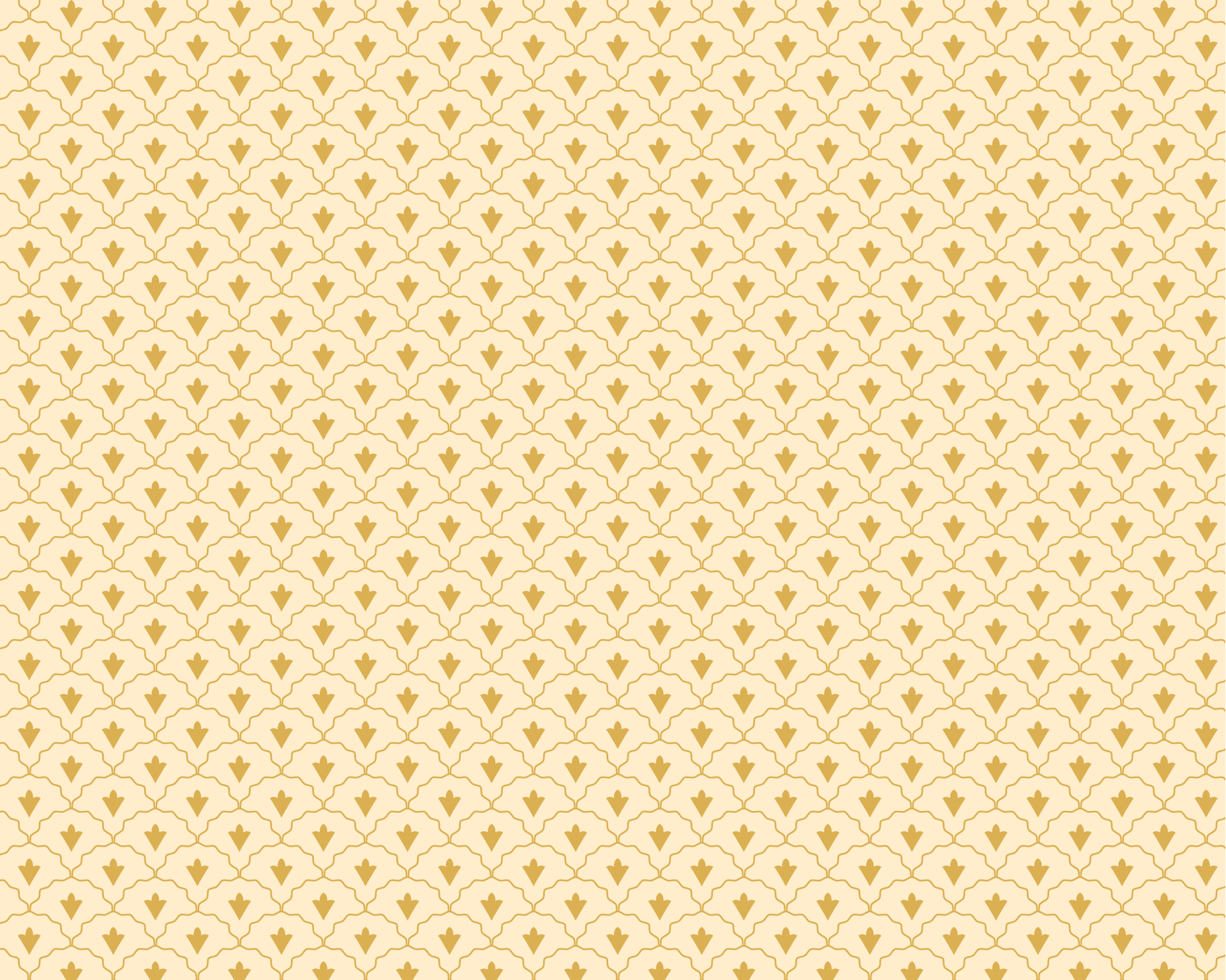


Ritu
weds
Chandni





Ritu & Chandni

*are getting married
& you are invited*



For Mom and Dad,
& *Saathi*

The story of Ritu & Chandni is an outcome of the design project titled '**The visibility & representation of LGBT in Indian Society**', undertaken by **Ameya Narvankar**, under the guidance of **Prof. Sudesh Balan** at IDC, IIT BOMBAY.

Ritu
weds
Chandni

WRITTEN & ILLUSTRATED BY
AMEYA NARVANKAR

Little Ayesha is all happy & excited,
to Ritu *didi's* wedding they have been invited.

She travels with her mother & father
towards *didi's* home in west Dadar.

"Today is my *didi's* wedding day
And I'm going to dance in her *baraat!*"
she'd say.



The last wedding they went to was so much fun!

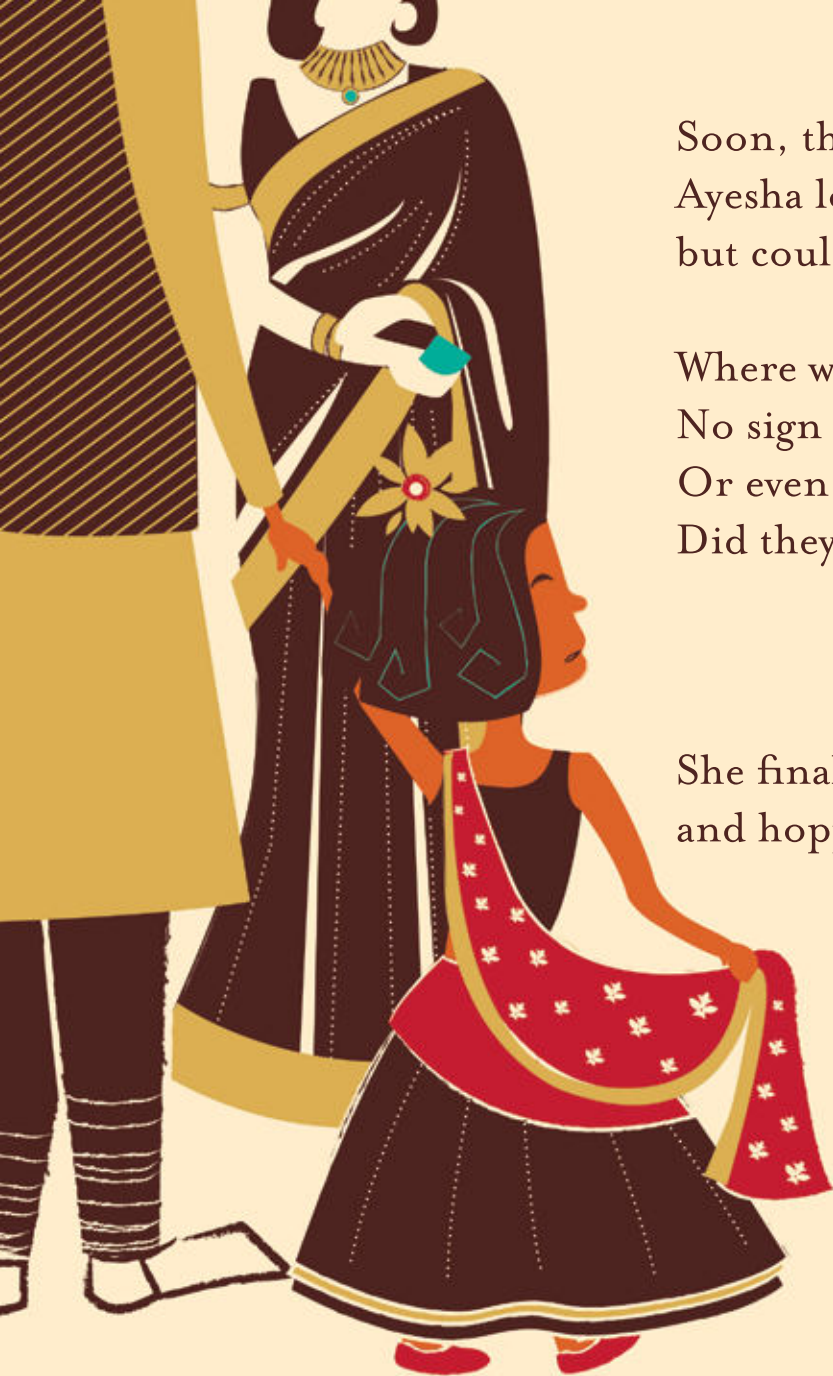
She ate all the *laddoos*,
one by one.

And danced with her cousins
Tanya & Rohan.

She was excited
to do it all again!

But most of all -
she was excited to see Chandni *didi*,
Ritu *didi*'s wife to be.





Soon, they reached *didi's* place.
Ayesha looked around
but could not spot a familiar face.

Where was everyone?
No sign of Tanya or Rohan.
Or even Dada & Dadi.
Did they forget today is the *shaadi*?

She finally spotted Charu *chachi*,
and hopped towards her to greet her.



"Hi Chachi, where is everyone?
Why have they not yet come?"

"They are not too happy, maybe
To see Ritu marry another lady."

But what is
WRONG?
with that?

"Nothing, beta.
They just don't understand."



"Bhaiya, you shouldn't have got Ayesha along.
The Moral Brigade will be there too.
You never know what could go wrong."



"Ritu & I tried to reason with them before —
*We shall not let a woman
marry another woman, they swore*

Riding atop their high horses
They refused to hear our voices."



Soon Ritu joined her *baraatis*,
wearing a beautiful red saree.

*"Ritu didi, Ritu didi
You are looking very pretty!"*

*"Thank you very much, Ayesha.
And I am so glad you came!
Without your presence
it just wouldn't be the same."*

*"I wouldn't have missed it
for anything!"*



Ritu Didi's
Home

One of the guests led in
a beautiful, decorated mare.
Ritu climbed atop
and leapt up mid-air.

And so the *baraat* began
their journey...

Wedding
Hall

PARK

Chandni's
Home

All the *baraatis* were singing
and dancing merry.
But the neighbours disapproved
and made them wary.



Ayesha felt sad upon
hearing the things
they said.

*"These words of venom they spew
are making didi feel sad & blue.
Chachi, I do not understand why
on this day, they want to make her cry."*

As the *baraat* proceeded,
tall gloomy figures appeared.

They were here. The Moral Brigade.

Towering over the *baraat*,
The Brigade stalked their path.
They looked down upon all
and made them feel very small.



Ayesha tugged at her
mother's sari in fear,
"I am scared. Why are they here?"

"Ayesha, don't be afraid.
Let them not rain on our parade
You see, it is they who fear,
to them it is unfamiliar."

"But she is just getting married
and not hurting anyone!"

As the *baraatis* neared the venue,
The Moral Brigade would no longer
let them continue.

*"We warned you from the start.
No bride shall have her baraats.
In peace, you shall not proceed
if you set upon this misdeed."*

True to their threat,
they made the *baraat* regret.

A barrage of eggs, so rotten
a lesson not to be forgotten.





Chandni's *baraat* arrived a bit late,
But they too suffered the same fate.

Ayesha couldn't bear to see the brides upset.
She had to do something to make them forget,
the awful events that happened along the way.
She wouldn't let those ruin their big day.

"Today is my *didi's* wedding day
And I am going to dance in her *baraat*,
come what may!"

And dance she did.



Ritu smiled, and so did Chandni.
The *baraatis* too danced with much glee.
The Moral Brigade were left looking stumped,
the plan to the spoil the wedding had been trumped.



A day they'd never see, they thought,
Ritu & Chandni finally tied the knot.
All their loved ones were there.
A special day together they'd share.

Ayesha pondered over the events of the day,
the harsh things people would do & say.
How it could go all out of hand
when people refuse to reason or understand.
Maybe, they'd realise with the passage of time
that loving someone is not a crime.





CREDITS

I would like to thank these individuals, for without their guidance and inputs the story of Ritu & Chandni wouldn't have been the same.

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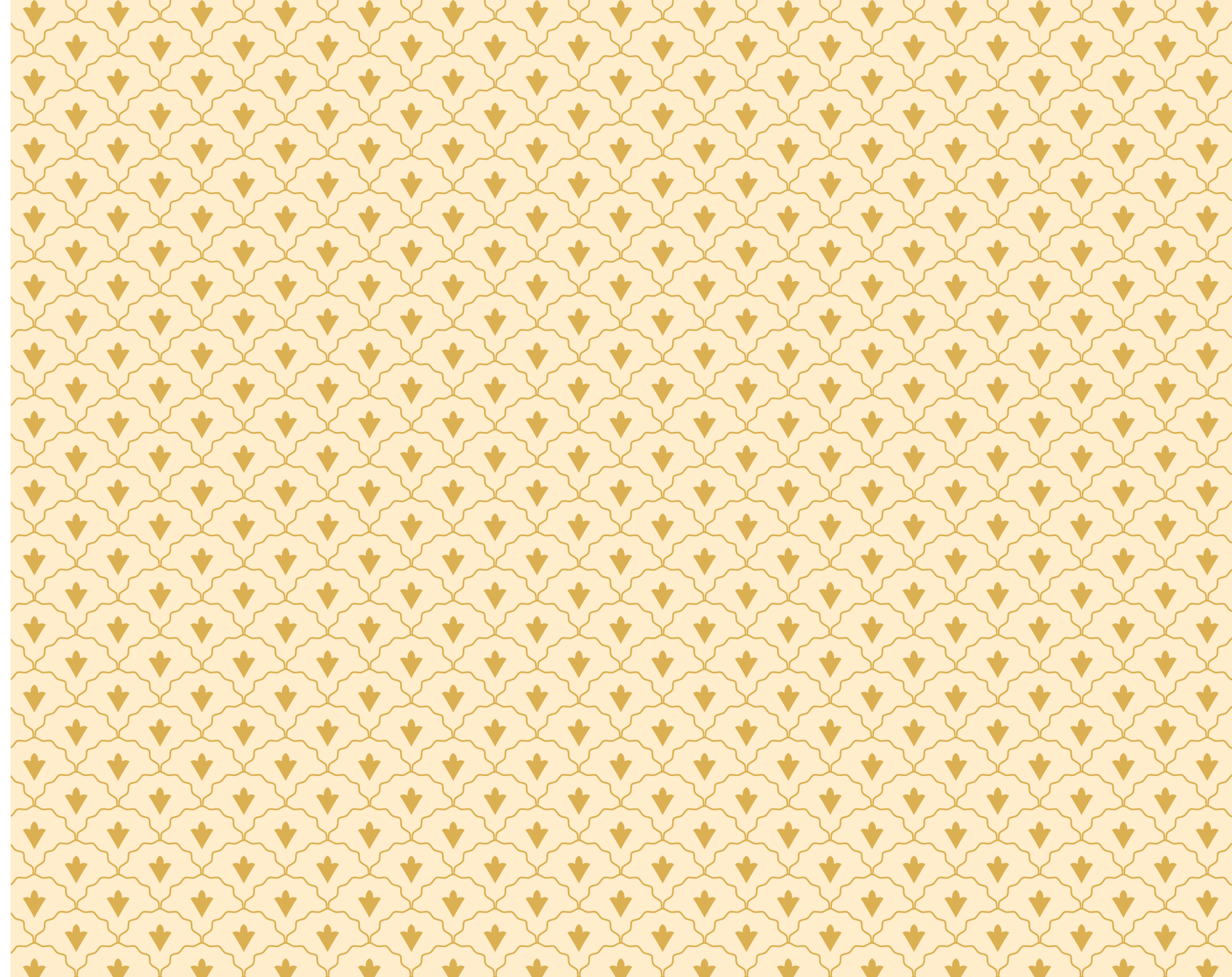
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& my family, classmates
and friends for their
unconditional support.



Ritu weds Chandni

Little Ayesha is excited for her cousin Ritu's wedding and is quite eager to dance in her wedding *baraat*.

But not everyone is as happy. Because Ritu is marrying another lady. The Moral Brigade know where the *baraat* is heading, and have vowed to stop the wedding.

Will they have their own way or shall Ayesha save her cousin's wedding day?

An illustrated storybook for children.
ENGLISH | Ages 8+

