

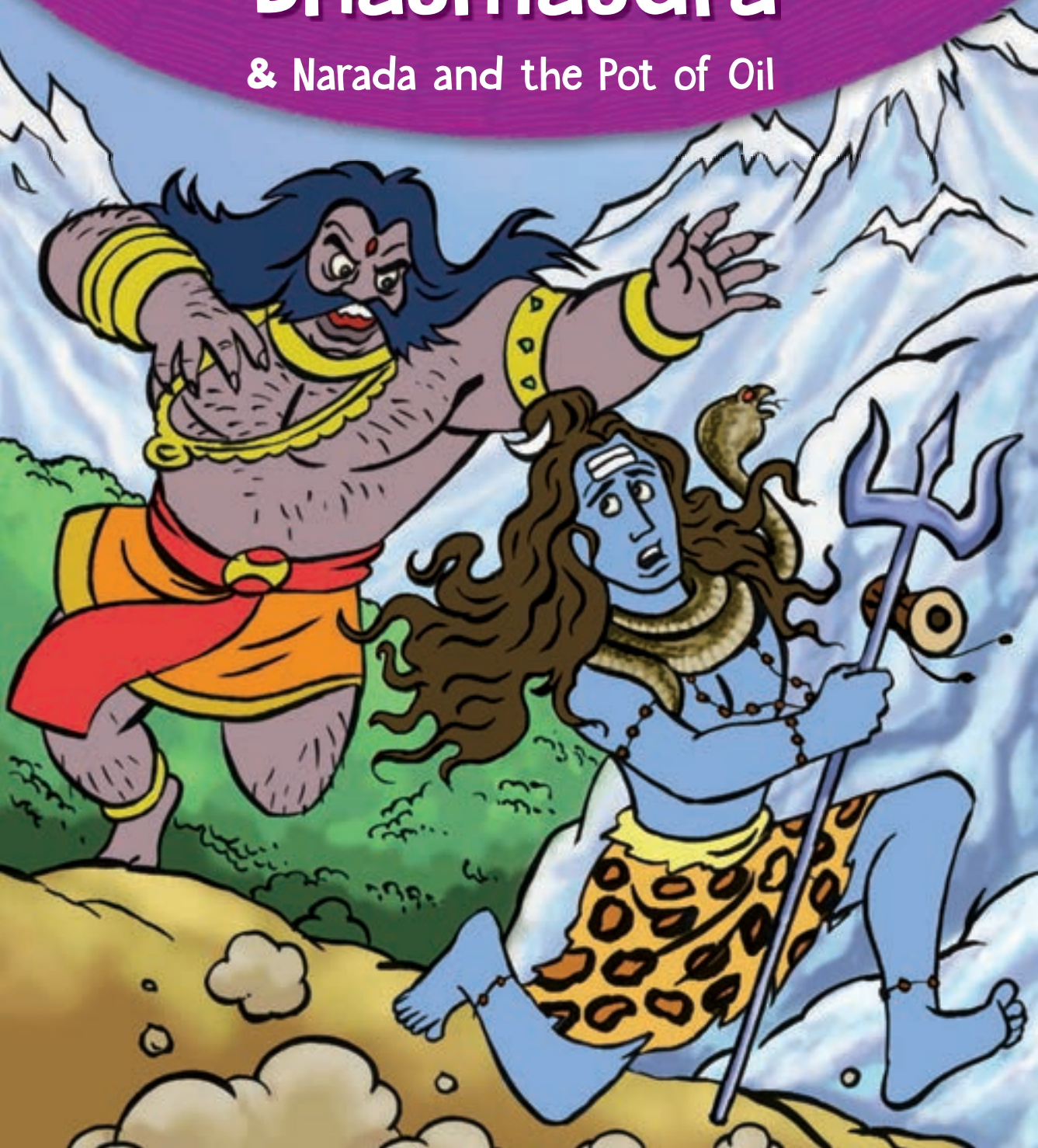


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Shiva and Bhasmasura

& Narada and the Pot of Oil





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KAPWING

Classics for Kids

Shiva and Bhaskasura

Story told by
Vijita Mukherjee

Illustrations
Arijit Dutta Chowdhury



This book belongs to

Editor: Reena J. Puri

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Virkasura the asura was a fierce demon. "There is no one stronger than me," he would roar. "I should be master of the universe. Everyone should do as I say."



"You need special powers for that," his teacher, Guru Shukracharya, told him. "Pray to Shiva. He is easy to please and will give you what you want." Everyone knew that Shiva was the easiest god to please. His devotees also called him Bholenath, the simple one.



So Virkasura put his weapons aside and went into a deep, dark forest to pray.



He prayed all day and he prayed all night. He stood in the hot sun and in the cold rain. Nothing could disturb him from his prayers.

Virkasura had a very cunning plan in mind. He stood near a fire, and chanted, "Shiva . . . Shiva . . . Om namah Shivaya."



The sound of his chanting was the only sound that could be heard for miles in the forest.

Many years passed. Sitting outside his cave on Mount Kailasha, Shiva heard the demon's prayers and sighed, "Virkasura has prayed long and hard. I will have to go to him. He is not praying for simple gifts, nor does he want to become clever like the gods or the sages. Yet, I must listen to him because he is praying to me." So, he picked up his trident and set out to meet Virkasura.



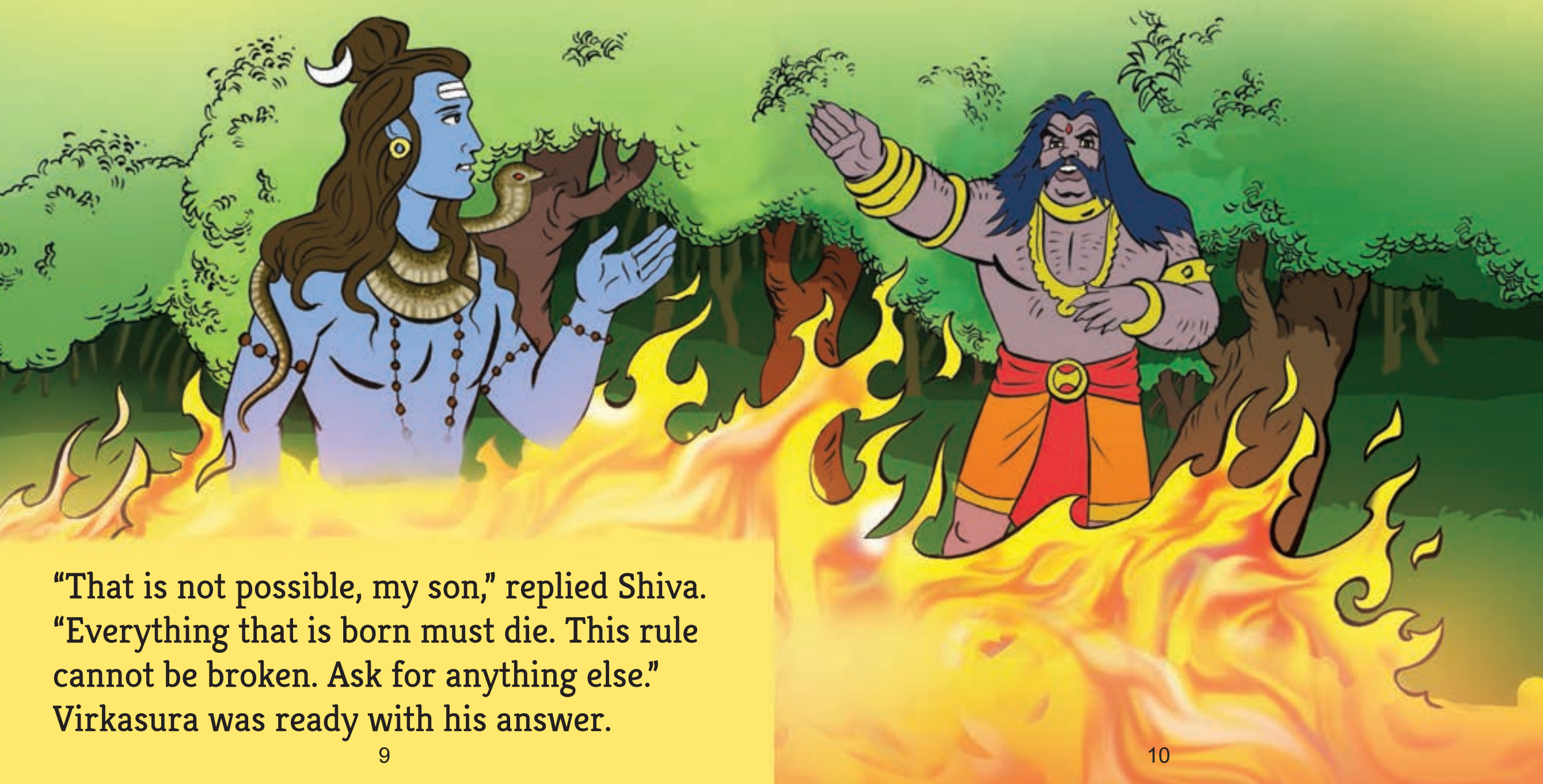
In the blink of an eye, Shiva was in front of Virkasura's fire. Raising his hand in blessing, he asked, "Virkasura, what do you want?" Virkasura looked up at Shiva's kind and radiant face.

For a moment, he was filled with peace and forgot his wicked plan.



“Speak, Virkasura,” smiled Shiva. “What boon can I grant you?”

“My wish is very simple,” said Virkasura, suddenly remembering his plan. “I want to live forever.”



“Then grant that whenever I place my palm on someone’s head, he will turn into ash.”

“So be it,” said Bholenath, granting the asura’s wish.

“That is not possible, my son,” replied Shiva. “Everything that is born must die. This rule cannot be broken. Ask for anything else.” Virkasura was ready with his answer.

Virkasura smiled a wicked smile.
“I will now be known as Bhasmasura, the
ash demon. I will rule the whole universe,”
he thought gleefully.



He leapt over the fire and stretched out his
arm towards the startled Shiva.



“Let’s test the power of your boon, O Shiva,”
he chuckled, his eyes glinting. “Show me
your head!”



Quick as a flash, Shiva realised Bhasmasura's evil plan and broke into a run. "Come back!" shouted Bhasmasura. "You cannot escape me." Red-eyed and puffed up with pride, Bhasmasura set off after Shiva. "Fooled by my own devotee!" thought Shiva, running as fast as he could.

They ran through forests and deserts, over mountains and oceans. They even ran through many galaxies.



Vishnu, who was at home in Vaikuntha, saw his friend, Shiva, running. He shook his head.



“My Bholenath can never stop himself from fulfilling his devotees’ wishes,” he said to himself. “I need to step in and do something.”

As Shiva turned around a bend in a mountain, Vishnu pulled him into a cave. "Go, hide inside," he whispered quickly, "and leave the rest to me."

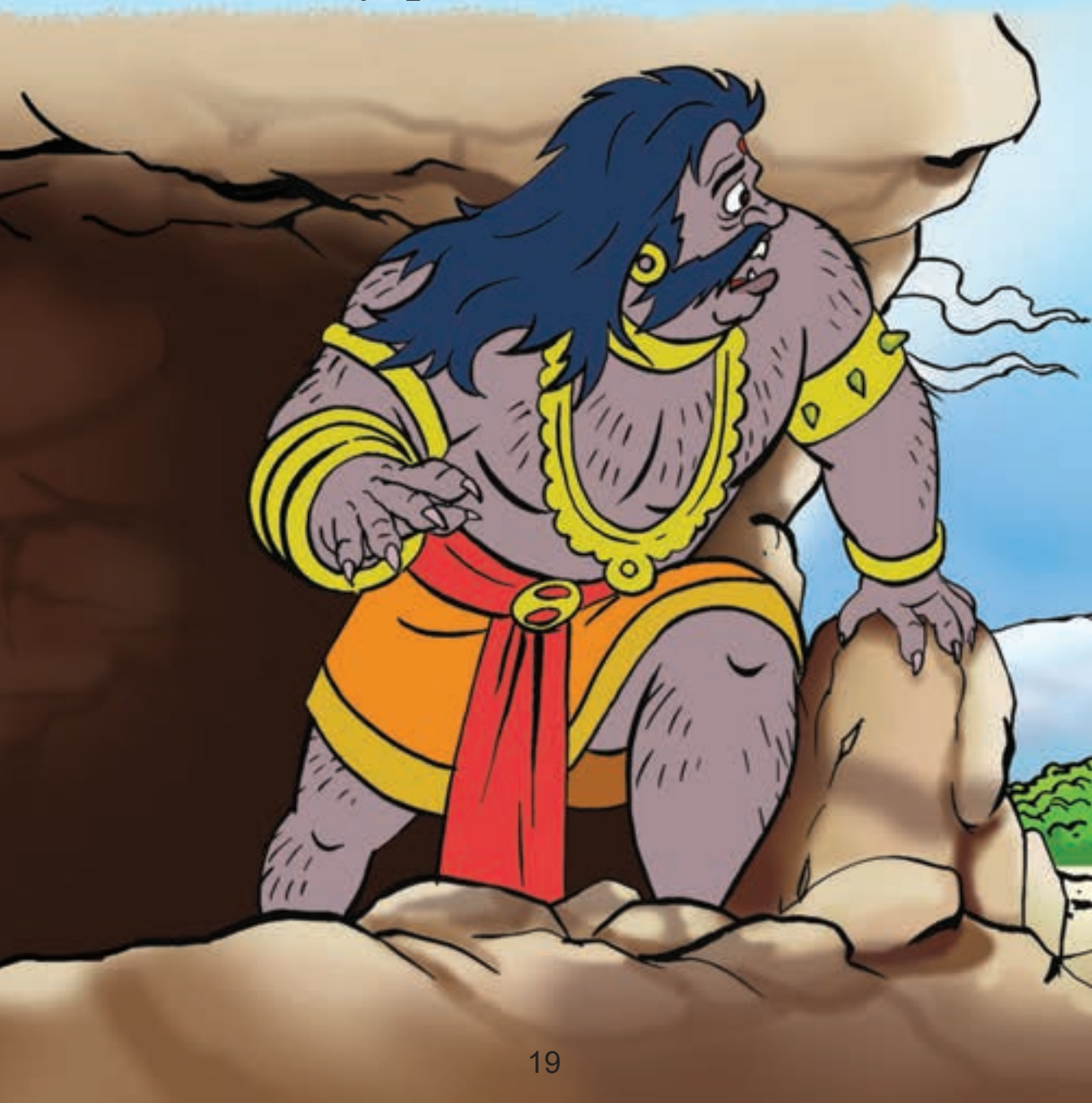


“Watch out! He is a nasty fellow,” warned Shiva.

“Don’t worry about me,” said Vishnu with a grim smile.



Bhasmasura came huffing and puffing round the corner and stopped in his tracks. He had been chasing the rough haired, poorly-dressed Shiva and here was somebody quite different.



Oh yes, very different! Before him stood the most beautiful woman he had ever seen in all the three worlds!



As Bhasmasura stood there, rather red in the face and looking very foolish, a musical voice spoke. "My name is Mohini. Why are you running? You look so tired. Come, rest a while." It was the beautiful lady.



"Er . . . I am not tired . . . I have to catch Shiva!" blustered Bhasmasura, and then he stopped.



"What grace, what beauty!" he thought with a smirk.

"She would make the perfect wife for the ruler of the universe—and that's me! I can finish off old Shiva any time."

Bhasmasura glanced at his reflection in a pool nearby and straightened his necklace. He twirled his mustache, thumped his chest and said, "Mohini, what a lovely name! I am going to be the lord of all creation soon. Marry me and be my wife."



Mohini turned away with a sigh. "It would be an honour to marry a brave man like you, but . . ." "But what, Mohini?" asked Bhasmasura. "Tell me what is holding you back and I will remove the problem forever."

“I have vowed only to marry the one who can dance with me, matching me step for step and mudra for mudra,” replied Mohini. “So far, everyone who has tried has failed, even Vishnu and Shiva.”



“Vishnu and Shiva! Bah! What do they know?” said Bhasmasura tossing his head impatiently. “Come, show me and I will dance with you.”

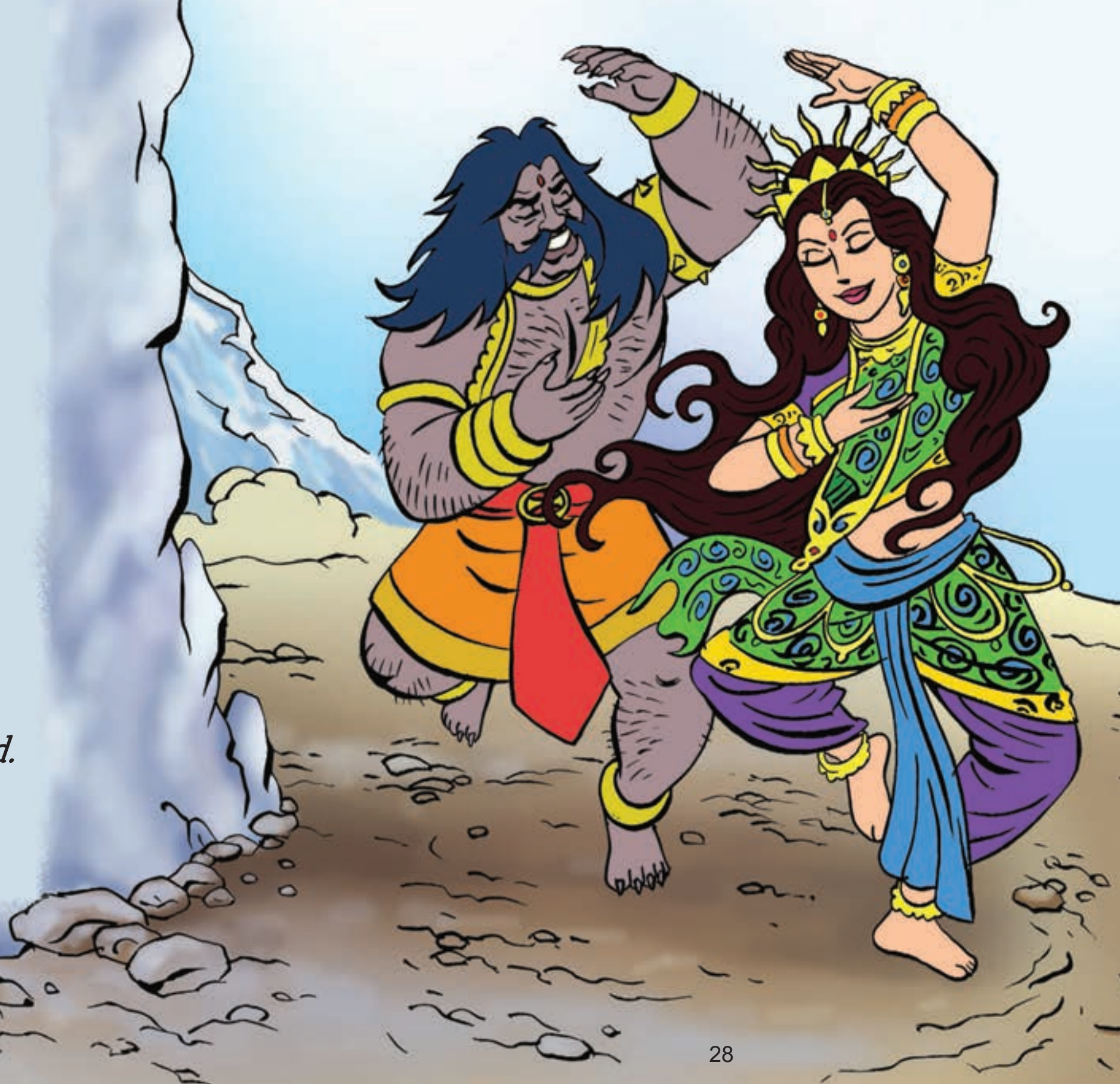
So they danced . . .

*Taiyum-tāt-tāt,
taiyum-taaa,
Mohini teaches the Asura.*

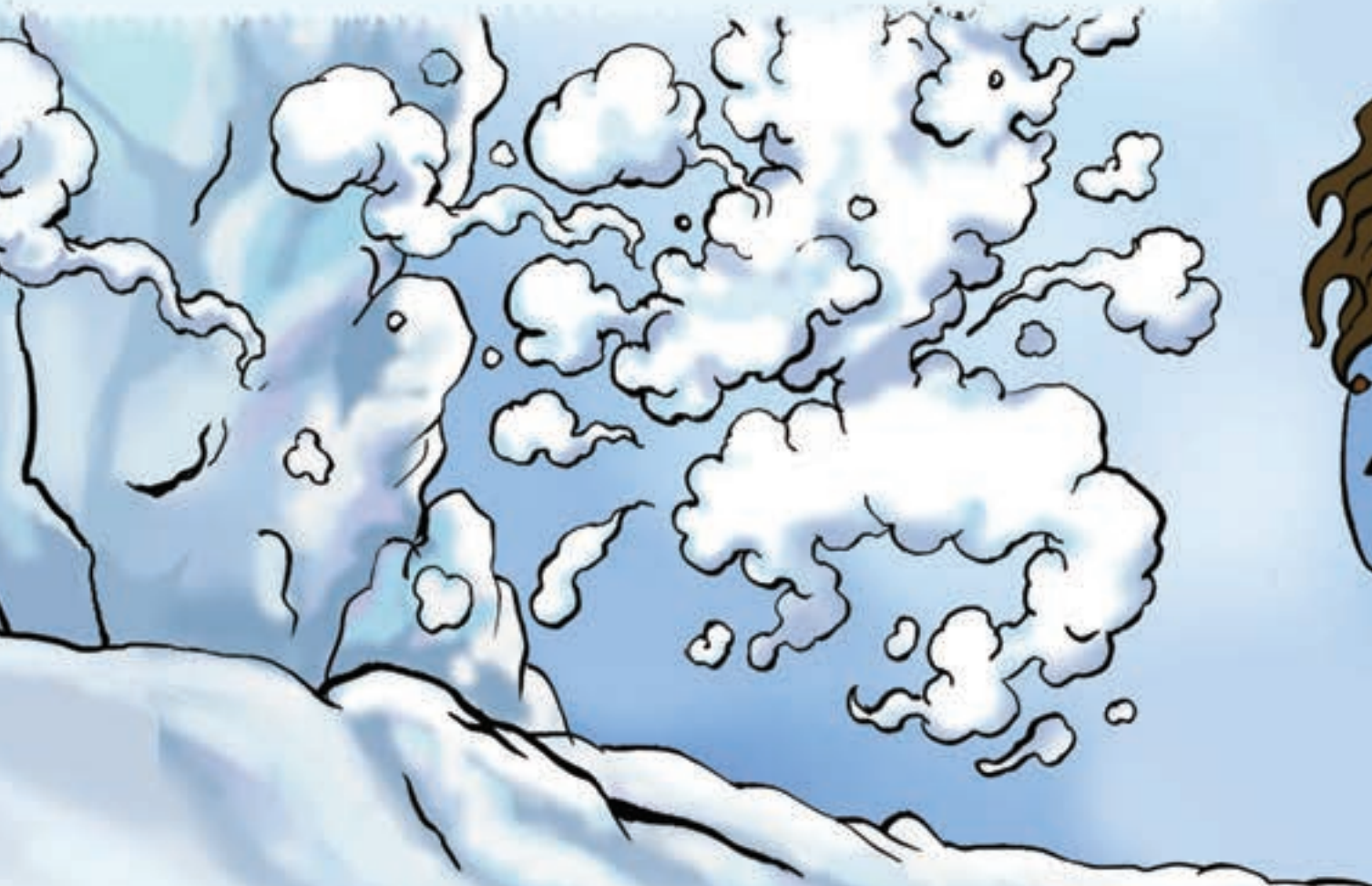
*Four steps left,
then back to the centre.
Turn to the right,
now that's much better.*

*A hand on the waist,
the other on the shoulder.
She sways to the beat,
and he grows bolder.*

*She closes her eyes,
moves her palm to her head.
He closes his eyes and
... oops! That's THE END!*



Bhasmasura was so busy copying Mohini's movements that he forgot all about his boon! As soon as his palm touched his head . . . **WHOOMPH** . . . he turned into a pile of ash.



Mohini smiled and walked towards the cave. "That wasn't difficult, Shiva," she said. "It's over now."

"Whew! He got burnt by his own pride," said Shiva as he stepped out of the cave. "You danced pretty well."



Mohini laughed and turned into Vishnu, for that is who she was!

“Be careful when you fulfill your devotees’ wishes the next time, my friend,” he said. Chuckling to themselves, the two went their separate ways.





Learning

Ladder

Rage	Great anger
Weapons	Objects used for fighting, like swords or spears.
Chant	To say something again and again in a sing-song tone.
Sages	Holy, wise men
Trident	A spear with three points

Radiant	Shining brightly
Devotee	Follower
Unruly	Untidy
Vowed	Promised
Chuckling	Laughing quietly





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KAPWING

AFTER THE STORY...

Om
namah
shivaya means,
'I bow to you, O
Shiva'.

Ash is called Bhasma
in Sanskrit.

Anyone can
pray to Shiva.
According to an
ancient story even
animals prayed to him.

A
mudra is a
movement of
the hands and
fingers in dance.

Kerala is a state
in South India. It
has a dance called
Mohiniattam or Dance
of Mohini.

Vishnu travels on the
eagle king, Garuda.
Shiva travels on the
great bull, Nandi.

