



# VALMIKI'S RAMAYANA

THE GREAT INDIAN EPIC

SPECIAL  
ISSUE

Vol 10001 |

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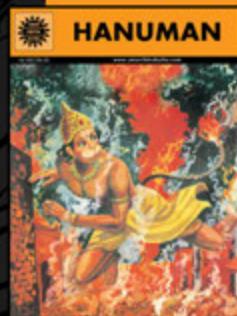
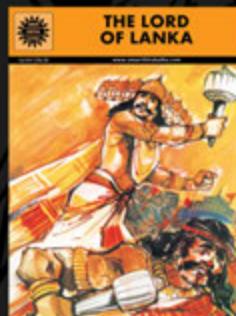
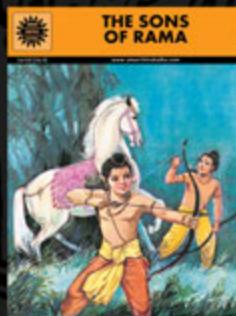
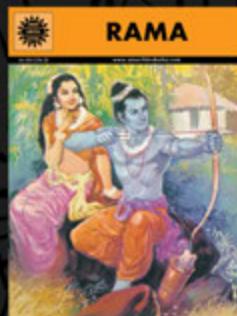
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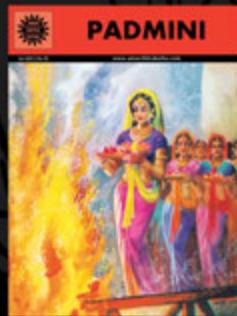
## VALMIKI'S RAMAYANA

Ramayana is the story of Rama, the prince of Ayodhya. Poet Valmiki describes Rama as a dutiful son, loving brother, devoted husband, fierce warrior and wise statesman, of pleasant manners and speech. Rama is above all an upholder of Dharma so it is no wonder that he is hailed as an avatar or incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

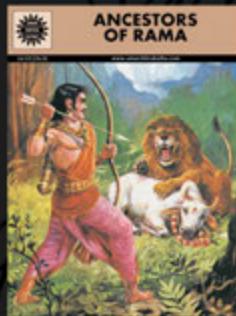
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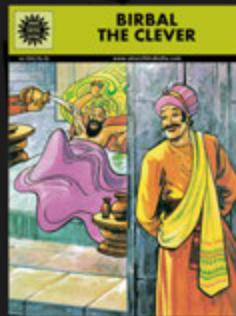
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"Amar Chitra Kathas are a glorious tribute to India's rich cultural heritage. These books have been an integral part of my children's early years, as they have been for many other families across India. Comics are a great way of reaching out to children, inculcating reading habits and driving their quest to learn more about our roots."

- NARAYAN MURTHY, CHIEF MENTOR, INFOSYS

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# THE RAMAYANA



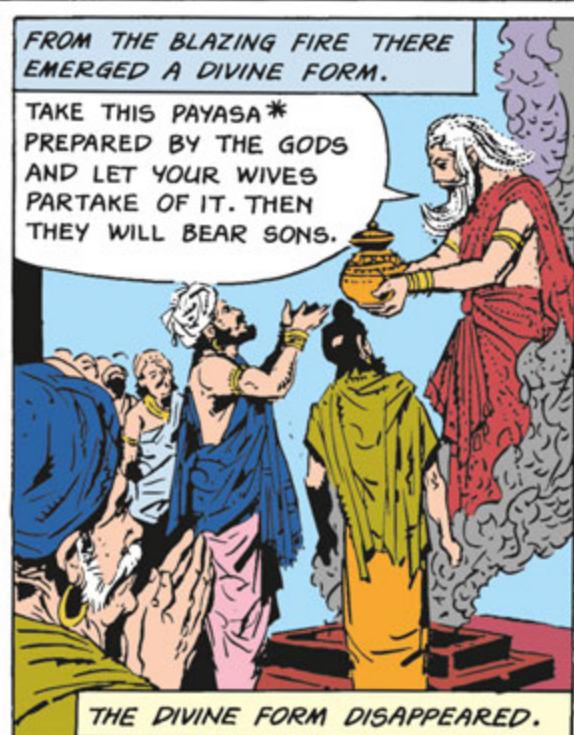
KOSALA WAS A PROSPEROUS KINGDOM IN ANCIENT INDIA RULED BY KING DASHARATHA. IT WAS SITUATED ON THE BANK OF THE SARAYU AND ITS CAPITAL WAS AYODHYA.

DASHARATHA HAD THREE QUEENS, BUT NONE OF THEM HAD BORNE HIM A SON. SO THE KING DECIDED TO PERFORM A YAGNA.



FROM THE BLAZING FIRE THERE EMERGED A DIVINE FORM.

TAKE THIS PAYASA\* PREPARED BY THE GODS AND LET YOUR WIVES PARTAKE OF IT. THEN THEY WILL BEAR SONS.



THE DIVINE FORM DISAPPEARED.

# THE RAMAYANA



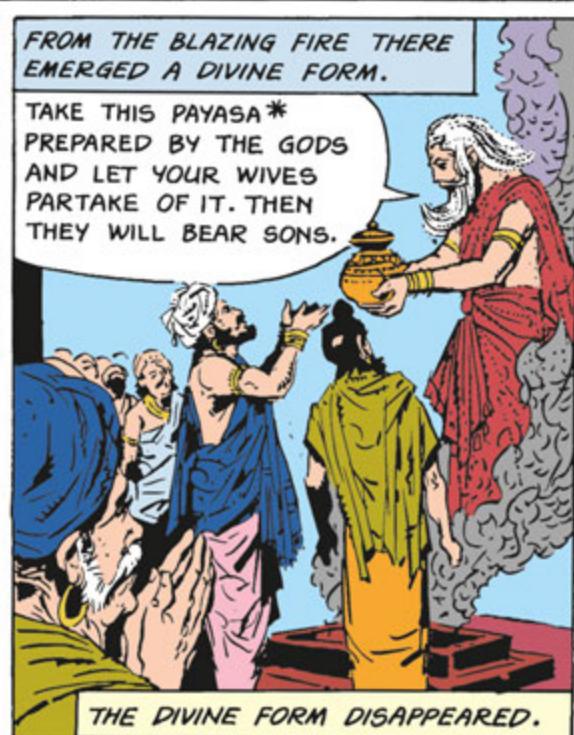
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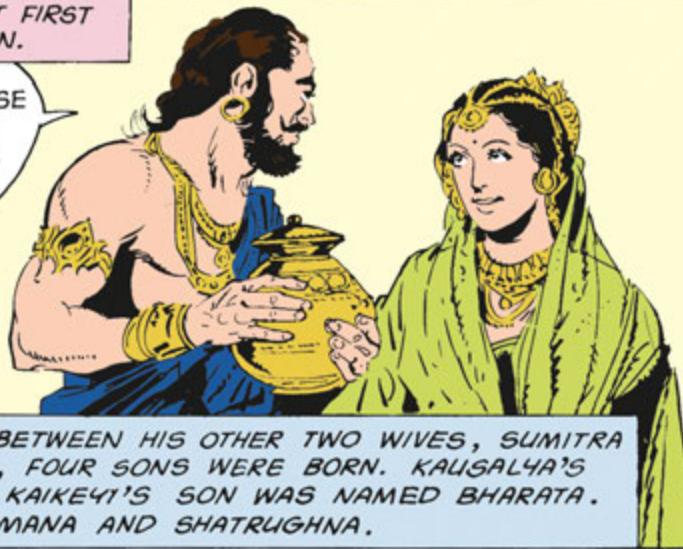
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THE DIVINE FORM DISAPPEARED.

THE KING TOOK THE PRECIOUS GIFT FIRST TO KAUSALYA, HIS ELDEST QUEEN.

KAUSALYA, PLEASE HAVE HALF OF THIS. YOU WILL HAVE A SON.



HE SHARED THE REMAINING BETWEEN HIS OTHER TWO WIVES, SUMITRA AND KAIKEYI. IN DUE COURSE, FOUR SONS WERE BORN. KAUSALYA'S SON WAS NAMED RAMA AND KAIKEYI'S SON WAS NAMED BHARATA. SUMITRA HAD TWINS, LAKSHMANA AND SHATRUGHNA.

THE PRINCES LEARNT THE VEDAS.



THEY LEARNT HOW TO RIDE HORSES AND ELEPHANTS.

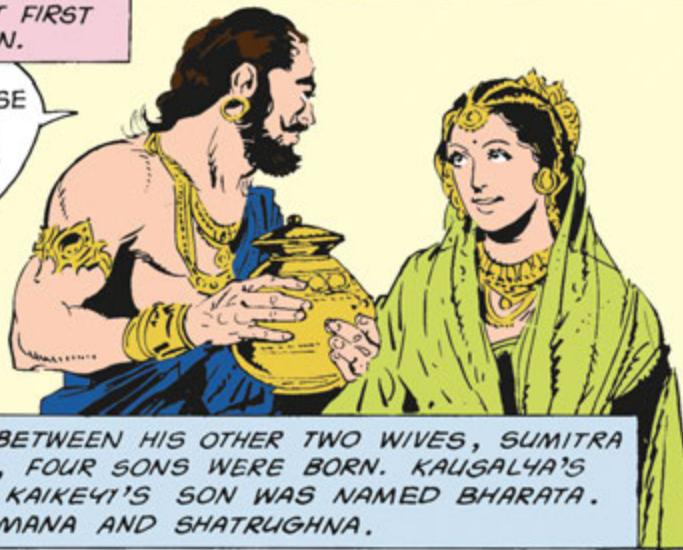


BEFORE THEY WERE SIXTEEN, THEY HAD MASTERED THE USE OF WEAPONS.



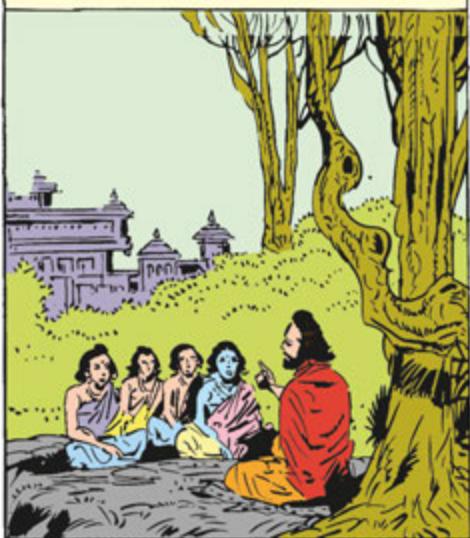
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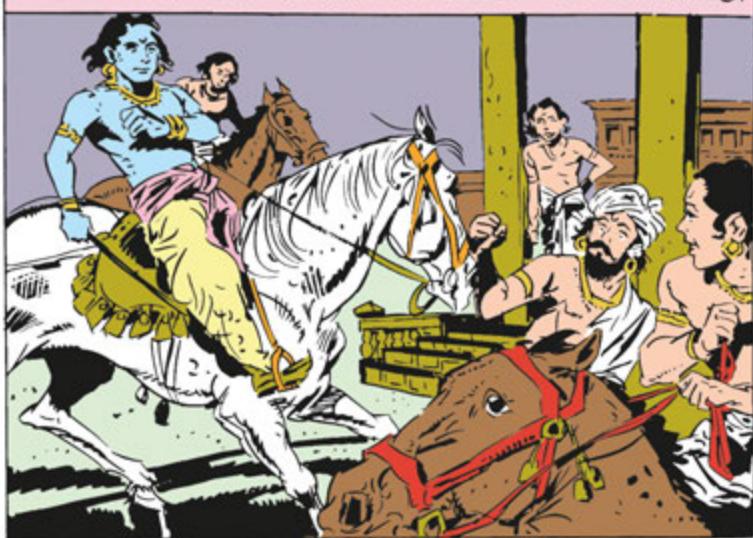


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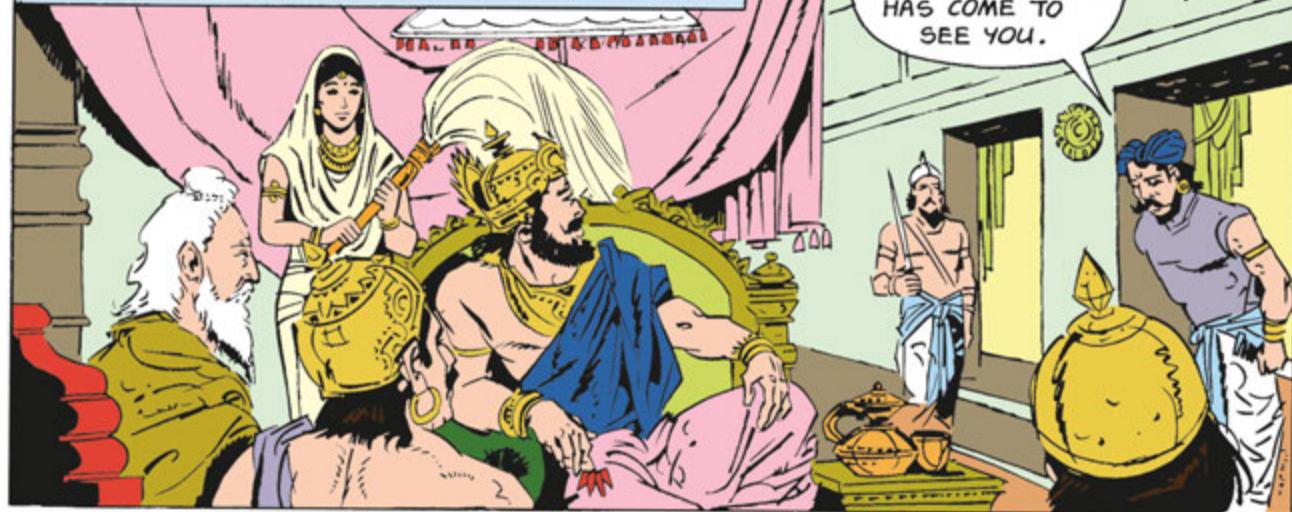


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ONE DAY, AS DASHARATHA SAT AT COURT WITH HIS MINISTERS, A ROYAL GUARD ENTERED THE HALL.

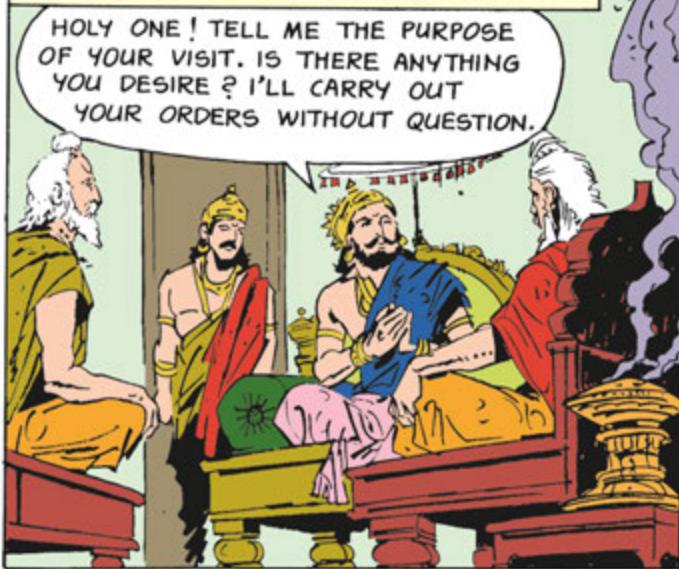
YOUR MAJESTY!  
SAGE VISHWAMITRA HAS COME TO SEE YOU.



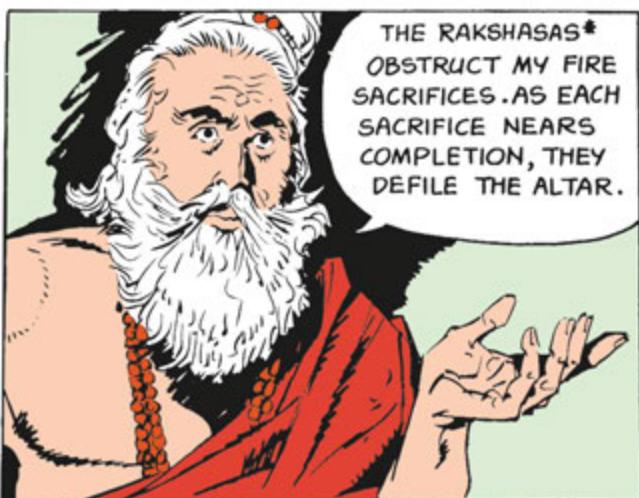
THE KING HURRIED OUT TO RECEIVE THE SAGE.



AFTER THE SAGE HAD COME IN AND ACCEPTED A SEAT, THE KING ADDRESSED HIM —



THE RAKSHASAS\* OBSTRUCT MY FIRE SACRIFICES. AS EACH SACRIFICE NEARS COMPLETION, THEY DEFILE THE ALTAR.

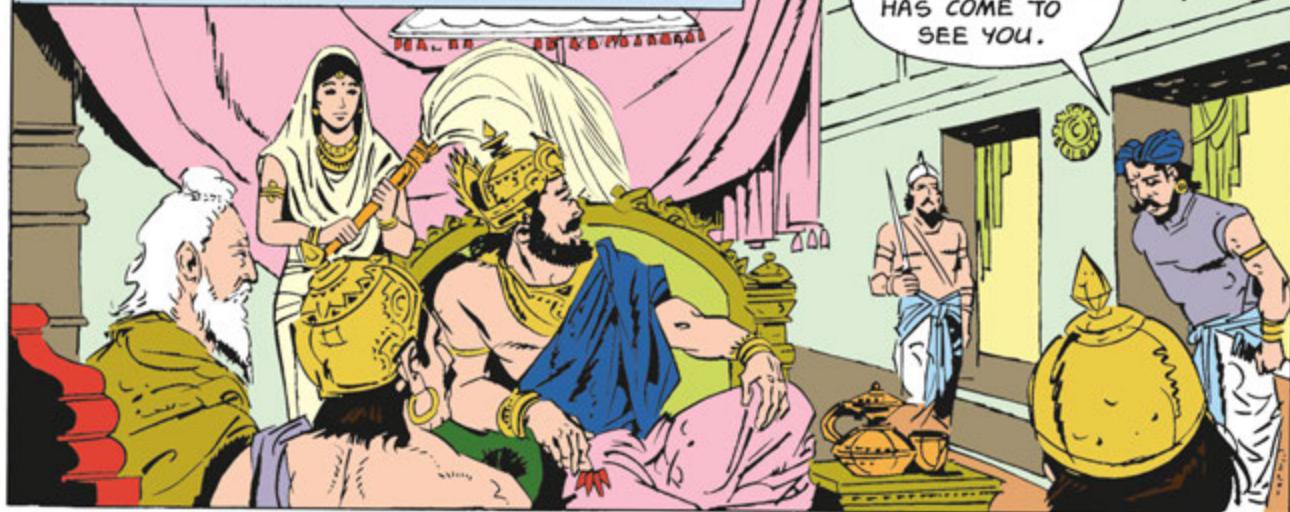


SEND YOUR VALIANT SON, RAMA, WITH ME TO DESTROY THEM.



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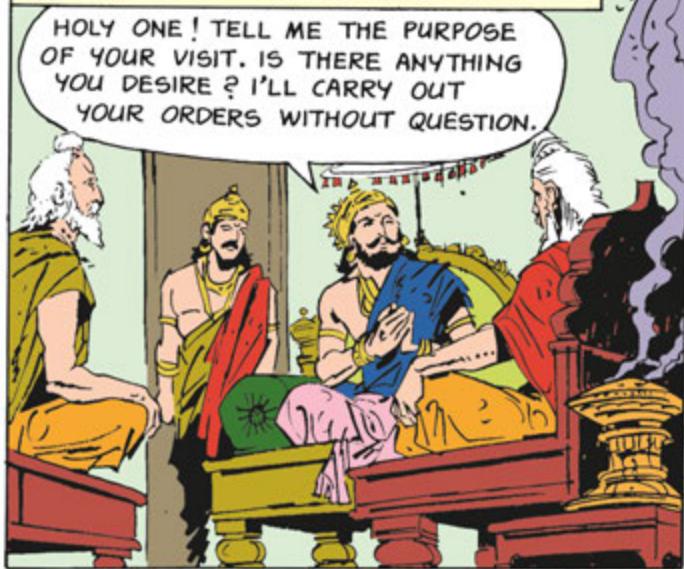
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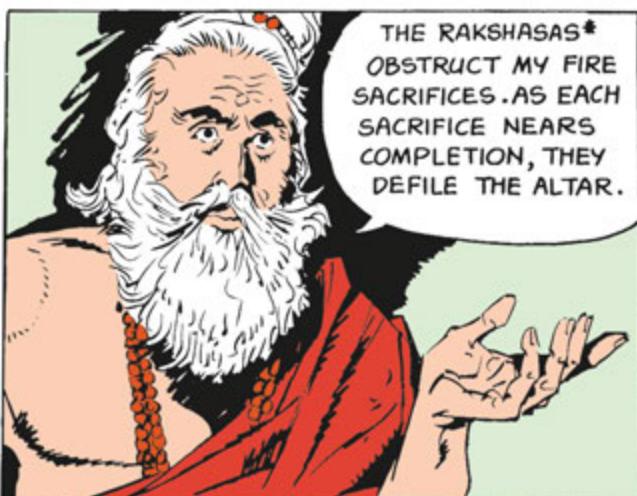
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SEND YOUR VALIANT SON, RAMA, WITH ME TO DESTROY THEM.



DASHARATHA WAS SHOCKED BY THE WORDS OF THE SAGE AND, LOSING CONSCIOUSNESS, HE FELL DOWN.



WHEN HE RECOVERED —

RAMA IS NOT YET SIXTEEN. HE HAS NO EXPERIENCE OF WAR. HOW CAN HE FIGHT THE MIGHTY RAKSHASAS?



TAKE MY ARMY. IF YOU WISH, I'LL COME MYSELF TO FIGHT THE RAKSHASAS. BUT SPARE MY DARLING SON, RAMA.



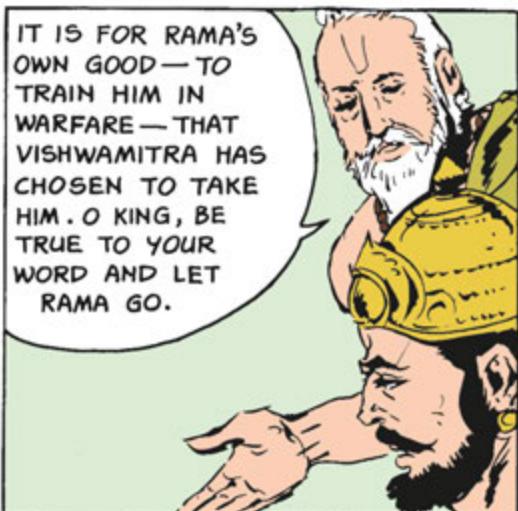
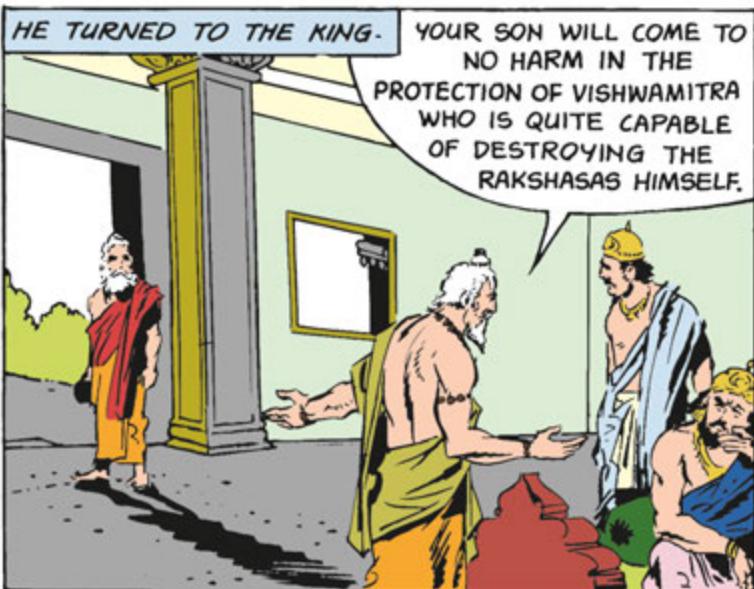
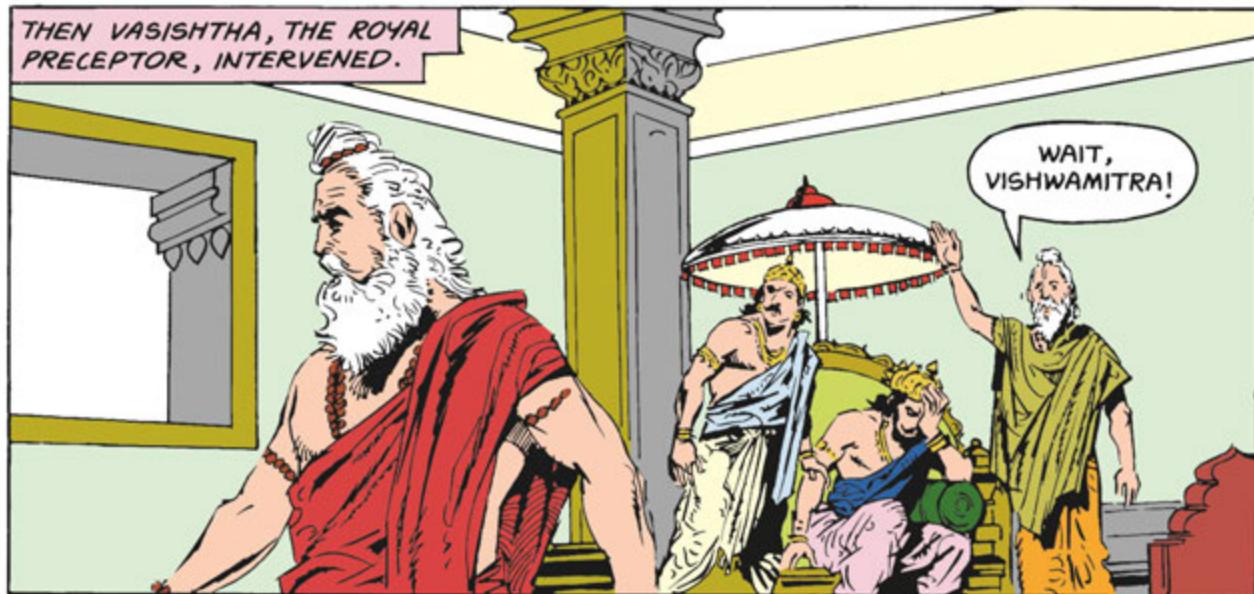
IT HAS TO BE RAMA — AND NO ONE ELSE.



O KING, YOU HAVE GONE BACK ON YOUR WORD. THIS ILL BEFITS THE NOBLE TRADITION OF YOUR FAMILY. I TAKE MY LEAVE OF YOU, O UNTRUTHFUL KING !



THEN VASISHTHA, THE ROYAL PRECEPTOR, INTERVENED.



DASHARATHA WAS SHOCKED BY THE WORDS OF THE SAGE AND, LOSING CONSCIOUSNESS, HE FELL DOWN.



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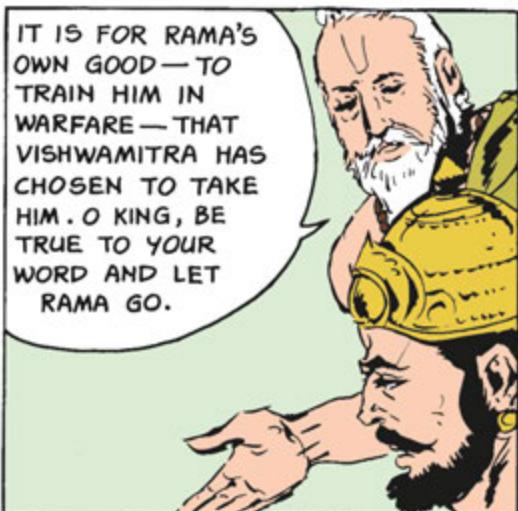
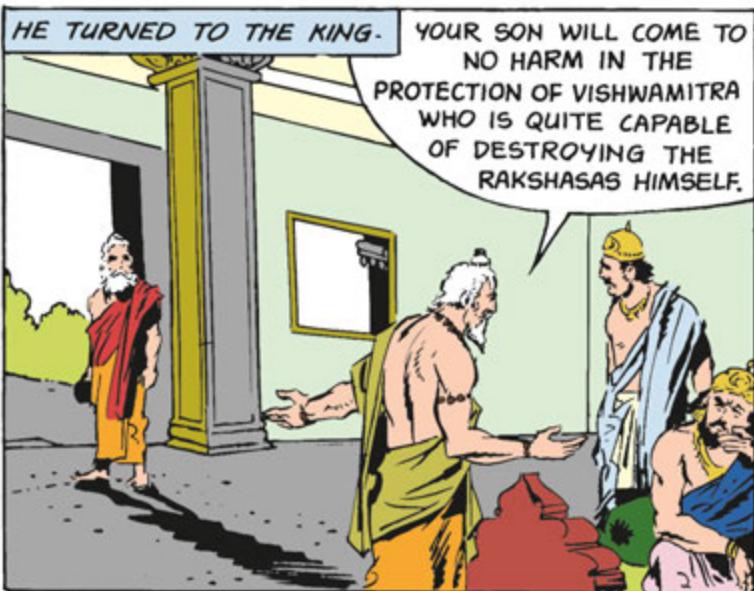
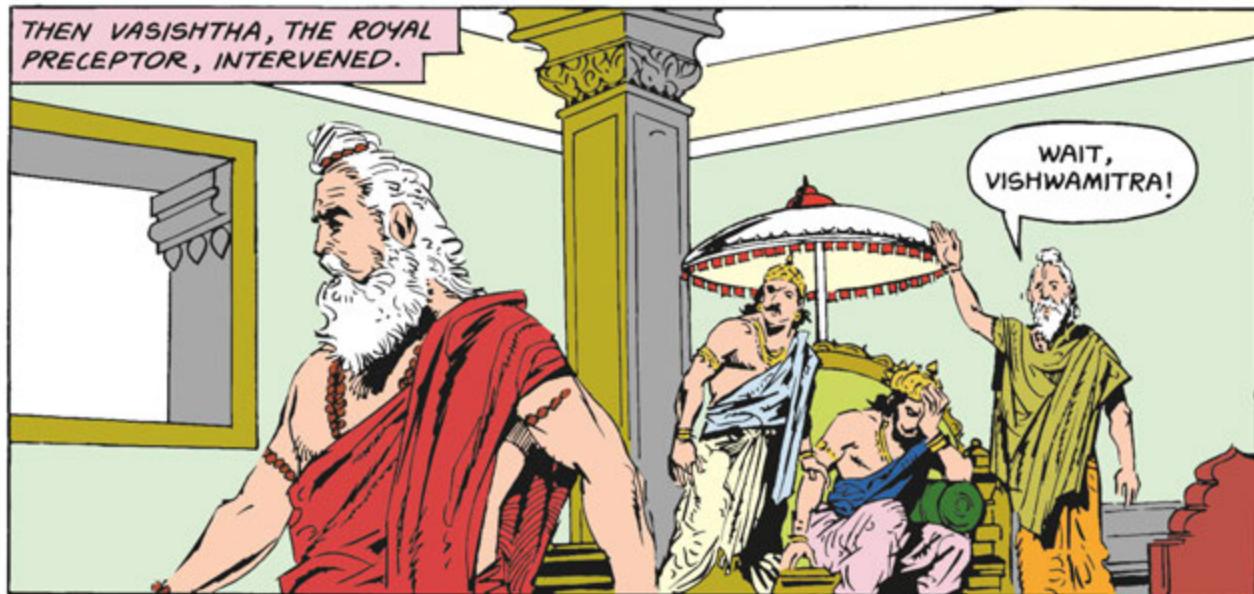
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THEN VASISHTHA, THE ROYAL PRECEPTOR, INTERVENED.



THE THREE LEFT AYODHYA, CROSSED THE CONFLUENCE OF THE SARAYU AND THE GANGA, AND PROCEEDED FURTHER.

O RAMA, ONCE THIS PLACE WAS ALIVE WITH PEOPLE. THE WICKED RAKSHASI\*, TATAKA, HAS DEVASTATED IT. SAVE THIS LAND BY DESTROYING HER.

AS YOU COMMAND, SIR.



AS RAMA LIFTED HIS BOW, THE SOUND OF ITS STRING ECHOED THROUGH THE FOREST. TATAKA HEARD THE SOUND—

RUNNING TOWARDS HIM, SHE THREW A SHOWER OF ROCKS WHICH RAMA PARRIED WITH EASE.



SHE MADE HERSELF INVISIBLE AND CONTINUED TO SHOWER HEAVY ROCKS ON THEM.



THE THREE LEFT AYODHYA, CROSSED THE CONFLUENCE OF THE SARAYU AND THE GANGA, AND PROCEEDED FURTHER.

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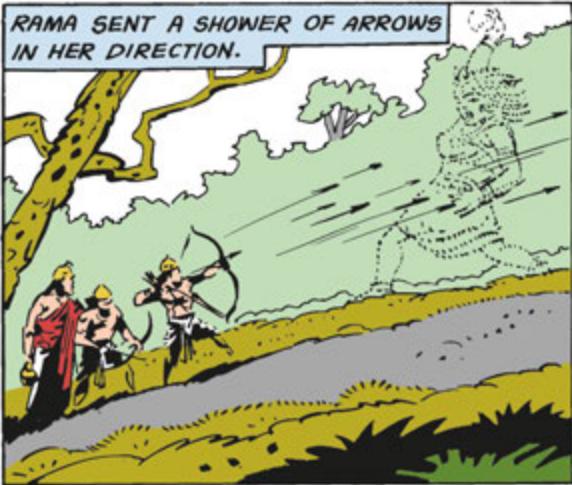
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RAMA SENT A SHOWER OF ARROWS IN HER DIRECTION.



BUT TATAKA CONTINUED TO ADVANCE MENACINGLY.

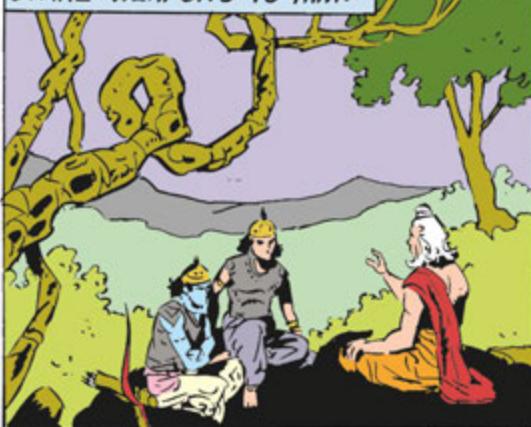


THEN RAMA'S ARROW PIERCED HER HEART...



...AND SHE FELL DEAD.

VISHWAMITRA WAS PLEASED WITH RAMA'S VALOUR, SO HE PROCEEDED TO REVEAL THE SECRETS OF THE DIVINE WEAPONS TO HIM.

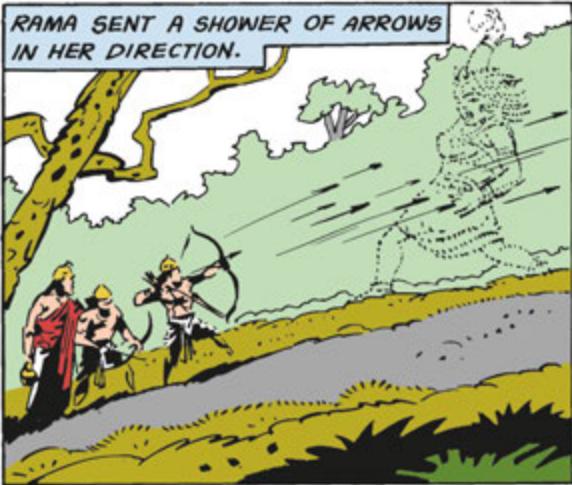


THEY RESUMED THEIR JOURNEY AND SOON ARRIVED AT THE SAGE'S HERMITAGE. THE ASCETICS RECEIVED THEM.

O GREAT SAGE, BEGIN YOUR SACRIFICE WITHOUT DELAY AND MAY SUCCESS ATTEND UPON YOU!



RAMA SENT A SHOWER OF ARROWS IN HER DIRECTION.



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RAMA AND LAKSHMANA KEPT VIGIL AS THE SACRIFICE PROGRESSSED. ON THE SIXTH DAY—



LOOK, LAKSHMANA! THE RAKSHASAS!



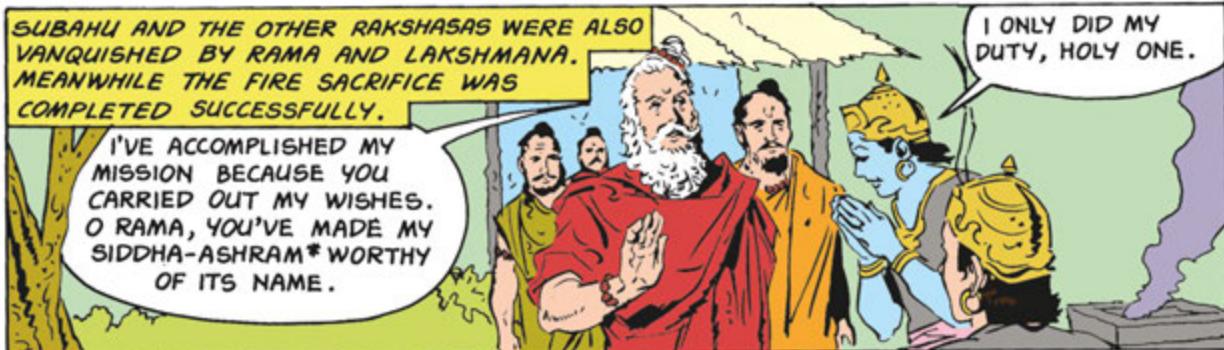
RAMA'S ARROW FOUND ITS MARK. THE RAKSHASA, MARICHA, WAS HIT WITH SUCH FORCE...



...THAT HE WAS FLUNG INTO THE SEA, A HUNDRED MILES AWAY.



SUBAHU AND THE OTHER RAKSHASAS WERE ALSO VANQUISHED BY RAMA AND LAKSHMANA. MEANWHILE THE FIRE SACRIFICE WAS COMPLETED SUCCESSFULLY.



I ONLY DID MY DUTY, HOLY ONE.

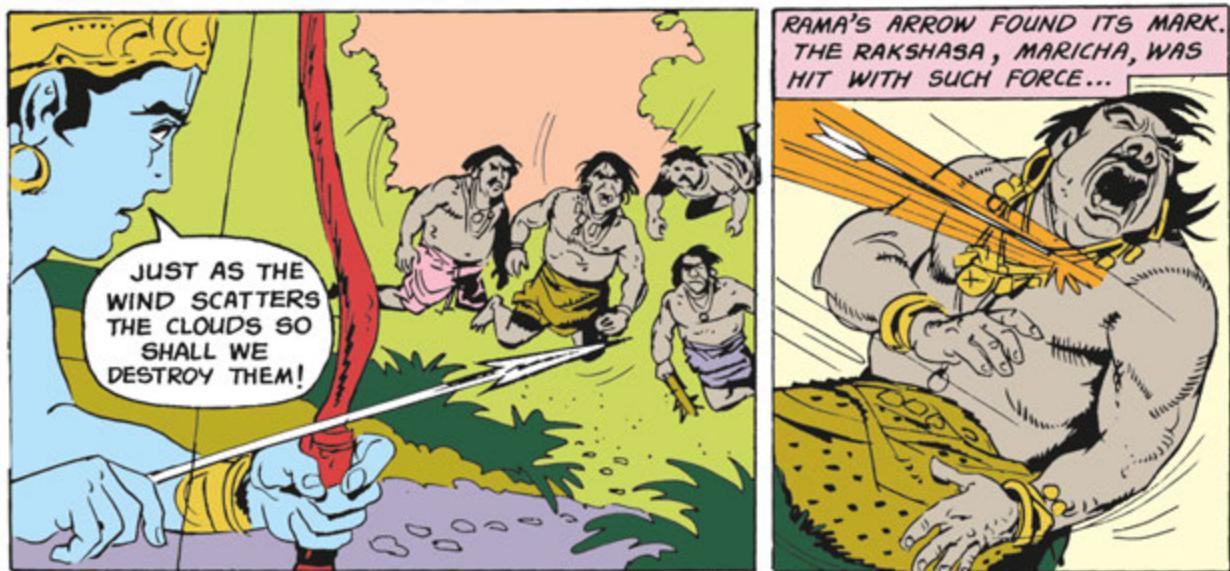
I'VE ACCOMPLISHED MY MISSION BECAUSE YOU CARRIED OUT MY WISHES. O RAMA, YOU'VE MADE MY SIDDHA-ASHRAM\* WORTHY OF ITS NAME.

\* THE HERMITAGE WHERE THE TASKS UNDERTAKEN ARE SUCCESSFULLY ACCOMPLISHED

RAMA AND LAKSHMANA KEPT VIGIL AS THE SACRIFICE PROGRESSSED. ON THE SIXTH DAY—



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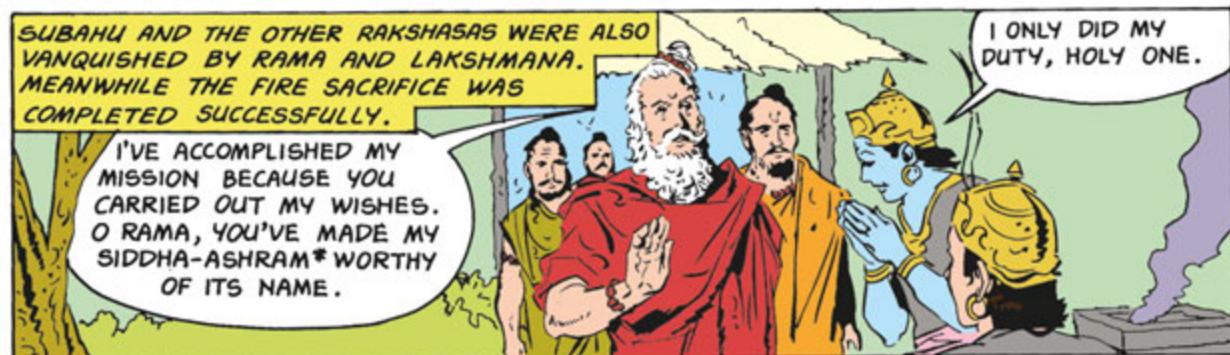
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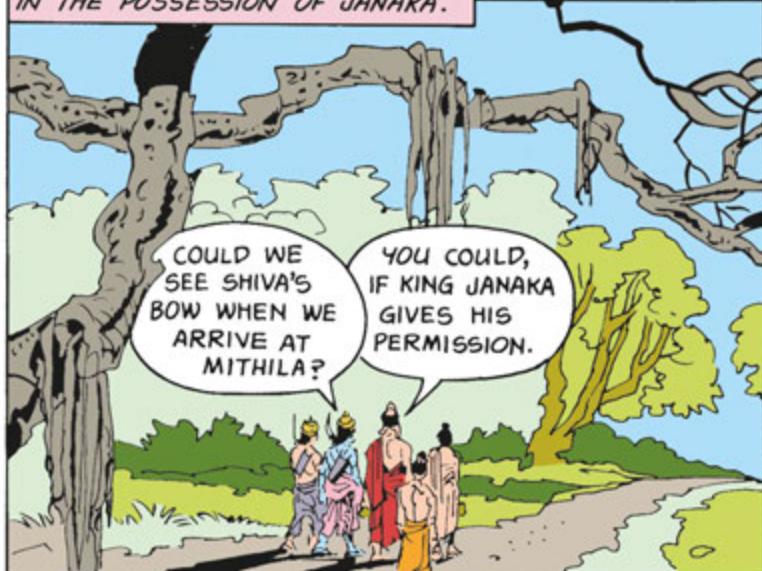
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THEN THE SAGES WHO HAD ATTENDED VISHWAMITRA'S SACRIFICE SPOKE TO RAMA.

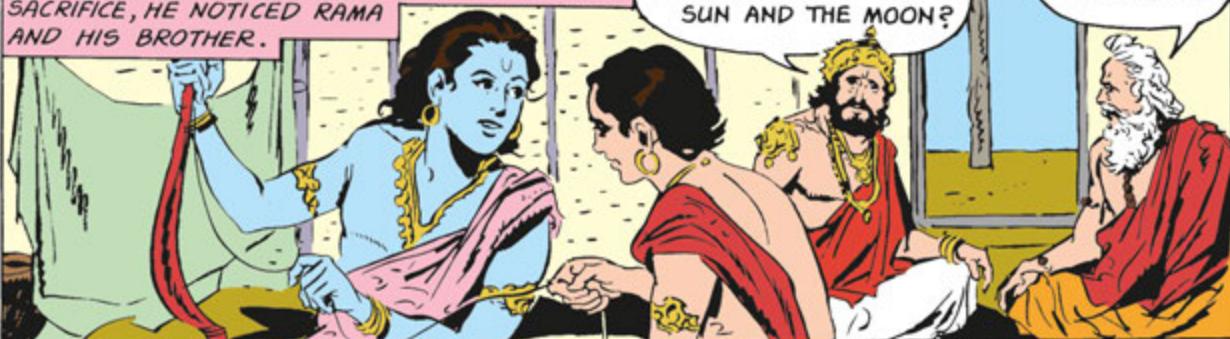
PRINCE, WE ARE GOING TO MITHILA TO ATTEND THE YAGNA TO BE PERFORMED BY KING JANAKA. WHY DON'T YOU COME WITH US?



SO RAMA AND LAKSHMANA SET OFF WITH VISHWAMITRA AND THE OTHER SAGES. ON THE WAY THE SAGES TOLD RAMA ABOUT SHIVA'S FAMOUS BOW WHICH WAS NOW IN THE POSSESSION OF JANAKA.



AT MITHILA, WHEN KING JANAKA CALLED ON VISHWAMITRA AND THE OTHER SAGES TO PAY HIS RESPECTS AND TO INVITE THEM TO THE SACRIFICE, HE NOTICED RAMA AND HIS BROTHER.



THE NEXT DAY, VISHWAMITRA AND THE PRINCES CALLED ON JANAKA AT THE SACRIFICIAL SITE.

O KING, THE PRINCES ARE EAGER TO SEE THE GREAT BOW.

MANY KINGS, O SAGE, HAVE TRIED IN VAIN TO STRING THE GREAT BOW OF SHIVA. IF RAMA SUCCEEDS IN THIS, HE SHALL MARRY MY DAUGHTER, SITA.



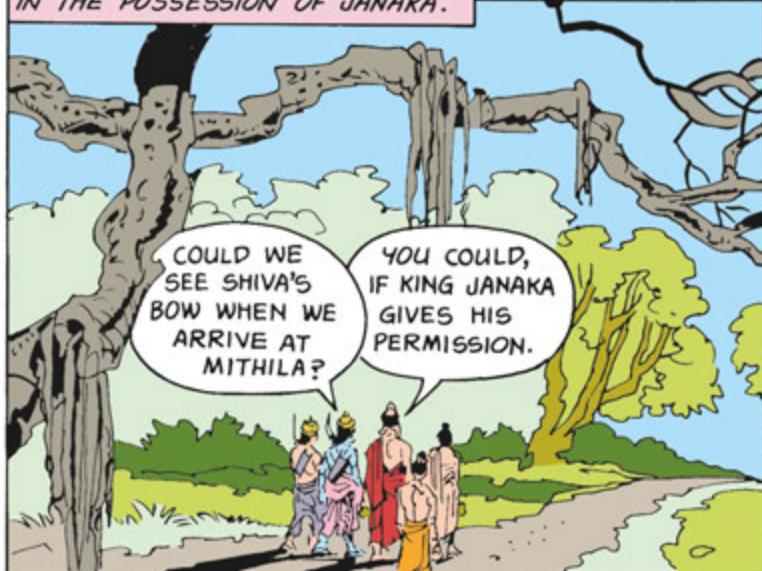
SITA WAS JANAKA'S ADOPTED DAUGHTER. WHILE PLOUGHING A SACRIFICIAL SITE HE HAD FOUND HER IN ONE OF THE FURROWS.

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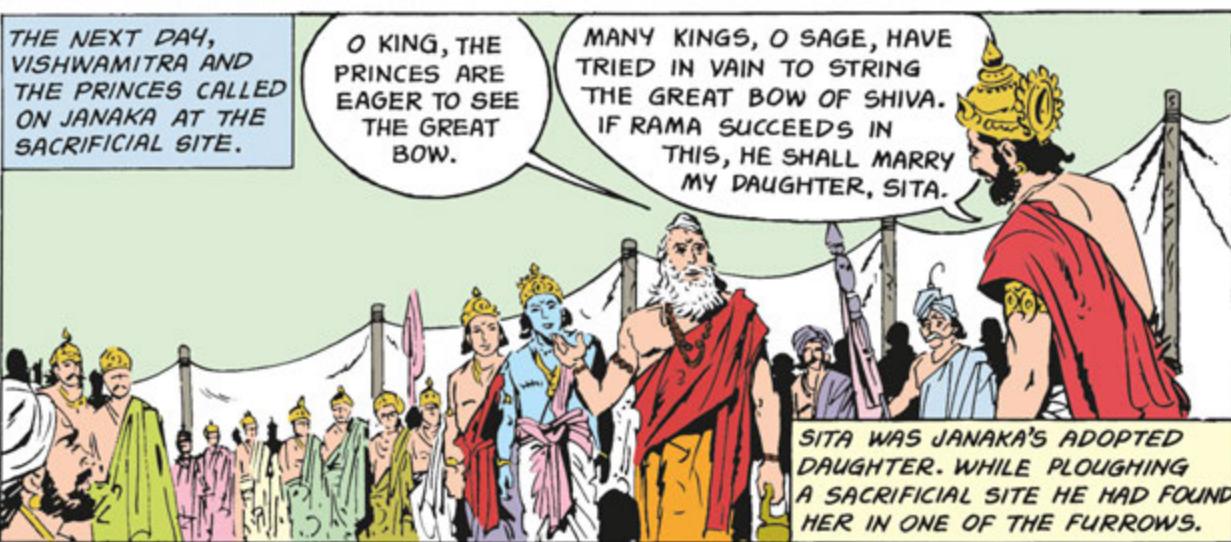
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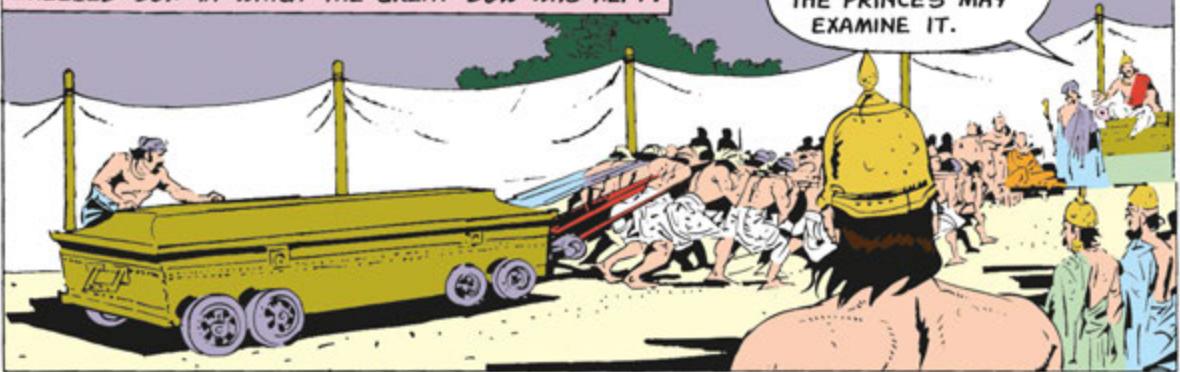
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SITA WAS JANAKA'S ADOPTED DAUGHTER. WHILE PLOUGHING A SACRIFICIAL SITE HE HAD FOUND HER IN ONE OF THE FURROWS.

SOON, AT JANAKA'S COMMAND, FIVE HUNDRED STRONG MEN BROUGHT FROM THE CITY THE EIGHT-WHEELED BOX IN WHICH THE GREAT BOW WAS KEPT.

O SAGE, HERE IS THE GREAT BOW OF SHIVA. THE PRINCES MAY EXAMINE IT.



RAMA OPENED THE BOX AND LIFTED UP THE BOW EFFORTLESSLY.

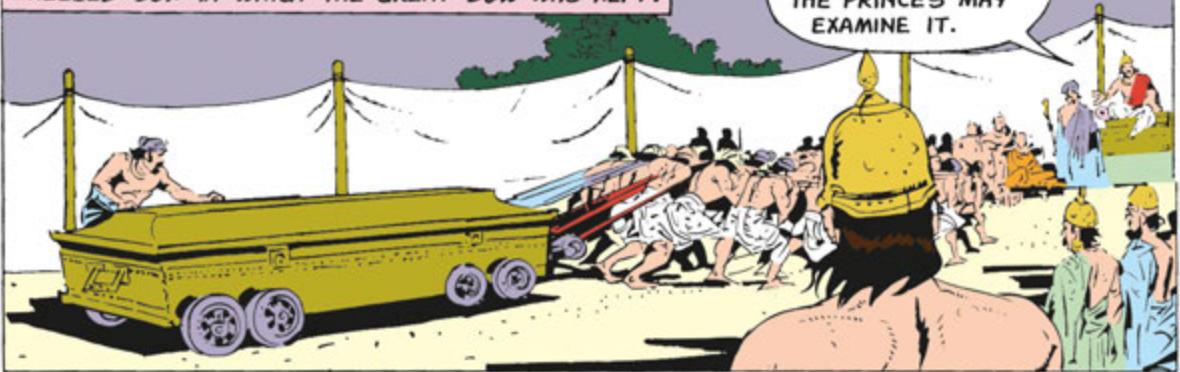


EVEN AS HE STRUNG IT...



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EVEN AS HE STRUNG IT...



...THE BOW BROKE INTO TWO WITH A THUNDEROUS SOUND THAT SHOOK THE EARTH.



WHEN HE HAD RECOVERED FROM THE SHOCK,  
JANAKA TURNED TO VISHWAMITRA.

I AM INDEED FORTUNATE TO  
HAVE WITNESSED SUCH A FEAT.  
MY DAUGHTER SHALL HAVE RAMA  
AS HER LORD, AND ENHANCE THE  
GLORY OF MY DYNASTY. WITH  
YOUR PERMISSION I WILL CONVEY  
THE GLAD NEWS TO KING  
DASHARATHA.



IN DUE COURSE, DASHARATHA ARRIVED IN MITHILA  
TO ATTEND THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY.

O RAMA, FROM THIS MOMENT,  
MY DAUGHTER, THE VIRTUOUS  
SITA, WILL BE YOUR COMPANION!  
SHE WILL FOLLOW YOU LIKE  
A SHADOW. MAY YOU BOTH  
BE HAPPY!



...THE BOW BROKE INTO TWO WITH A THUNDEROUS SOUND THAT SHOOK THE EARTH.



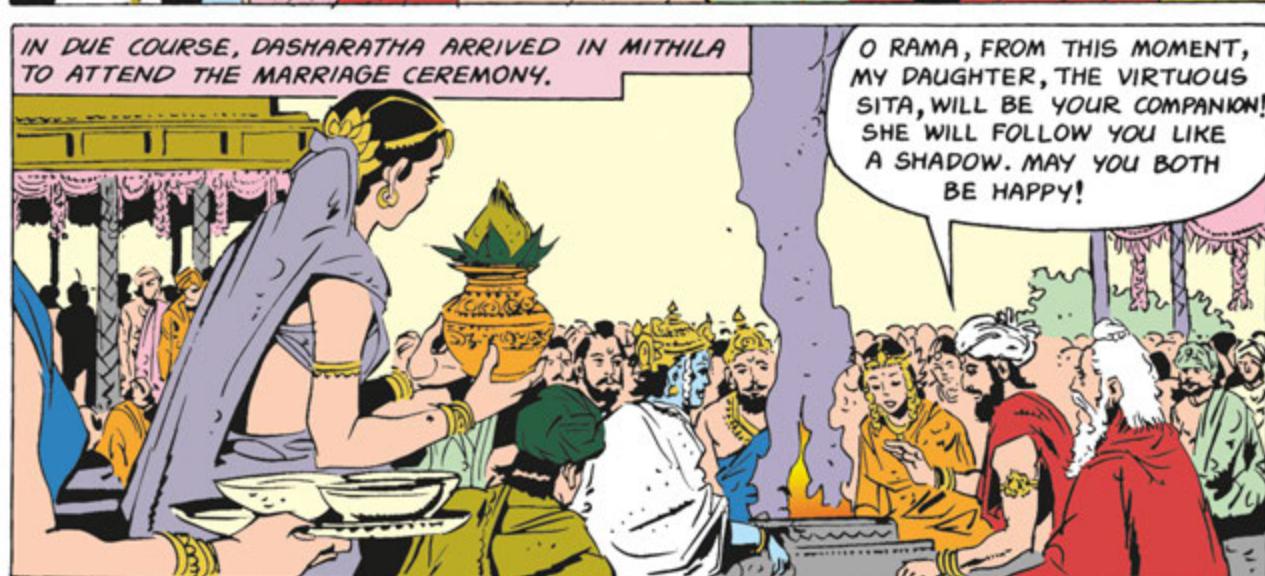
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AS HER LORD, AND ENHANCE THE  
GLORY OF MY DYNASTY. WITH  
YOUR PERMISSION I WILL CONVEY  
THE GLAD NEWS TO KING  
DASHARATHA.

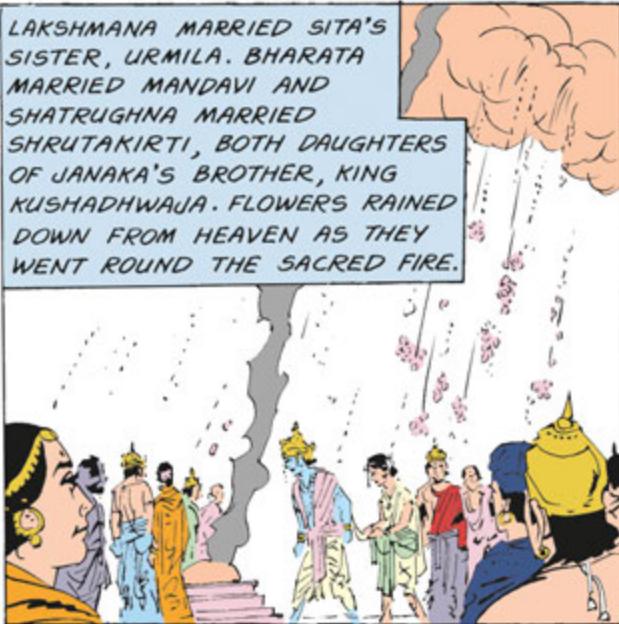


IN DUE COURSE, DASHARATHA ARRIVED IN MITHILA  
TO ATTEND THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY.

O RAMA, FROM THIS MOMENT,  
MY DAUGHTER, THE VIRTUOUS  
SITA, WILL BE YOUR COMPANION!  
SHE WILL FOLLOW YOU LIKE  
A SHADOW. MAY YOU BOTH  
BE HAPPY!



LAKSHMANA MARRIED SITA'S SISTER, URMILA. BHARATA MARRIED MANDAVI AND SHATRUGHNA MARRIED SHRUTAKIRTI, BOTH DAUGHTERS OF JANAKA'S BROTHER, KING KUSHADHWAJA. FLOWERS RAINED DOWN FROM HEAVEN AS THEY WENT ROUND THE SACRED FIRE.

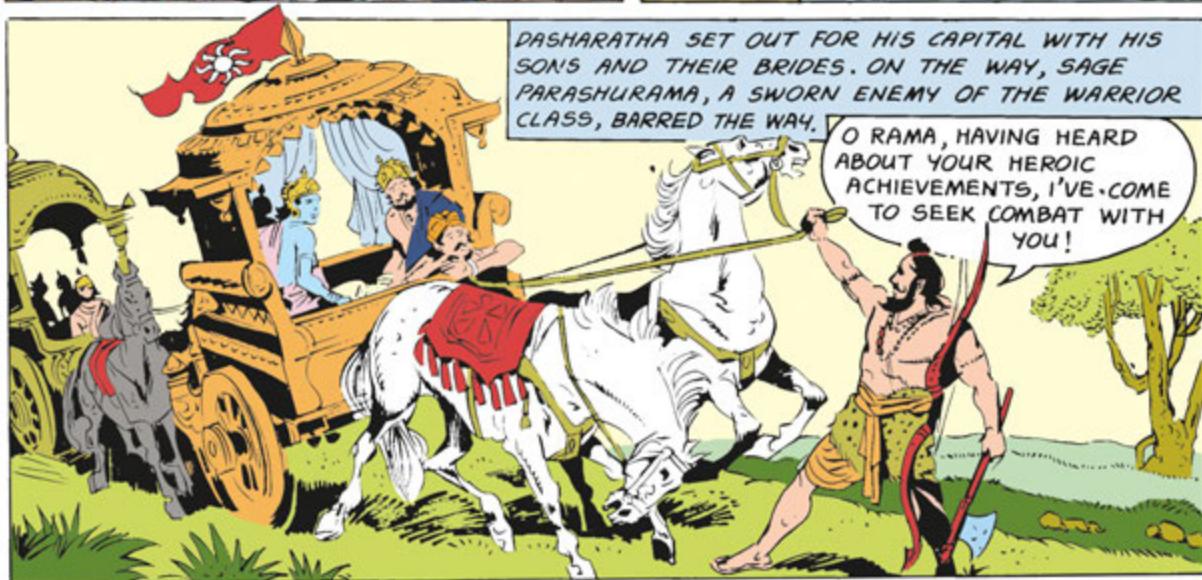


AFTER THE CEREMONY, VISHWAMITRA BLESSED THE PRINCES AND THEIR BRIDES...



... AND LEFT FOR THE HIMALAYAS TO MEDITATE.

DASHARATHA SET OUT FOR HIS CAPITAL WITH HIS SONS AND THEIR BRIDES. ON THE WAY, SAGE PARASHURAMA, A SWORN ENEMY OF THE WARRIOR CLASS, BARRED THE WAY.



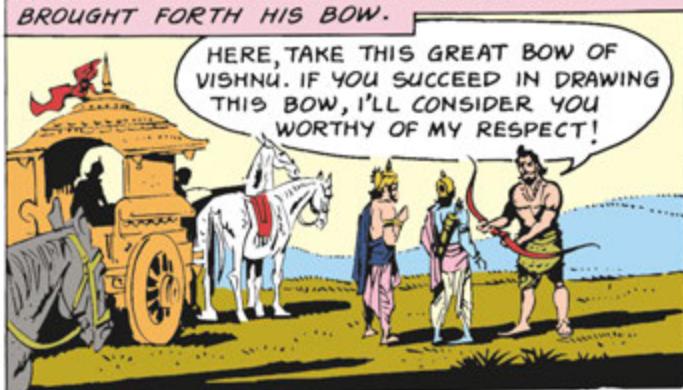
DASHARATHA TREMBLED ALL OVER.

O HOLY ONE! SPARE MY SON WHO IS BUT A CHILD, I IMPORE YOU!

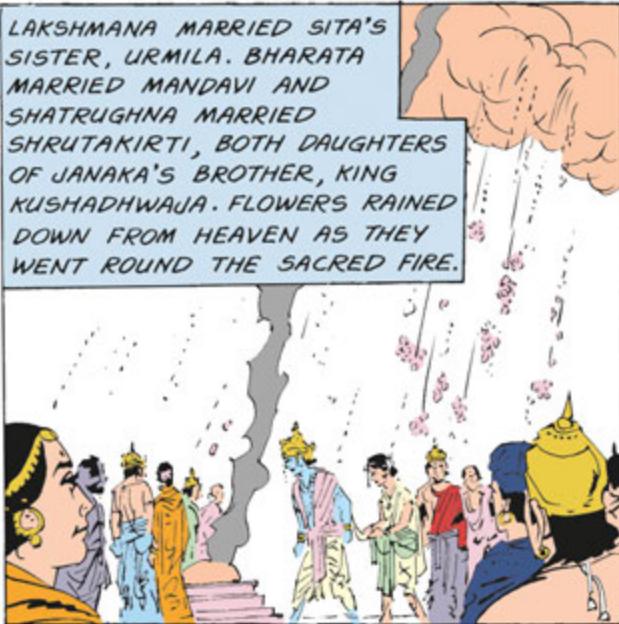


IGNORING DASHARATHA'S PLEAS, PARASHURAMA BROUGHT FORTH HIS BOW.

HERE, TAKE THIS GREAT BOW OF VISHNU. IF YOU SUCCEED IN DRAWING THIS BOW, I'LL CONSIDER YOU WORTHY OF MY RESPECT!



LAKSHMANA MARRIED SITA'S SISTER, URMILA. BHARATA MARRIED MANDAVI AND SHATRUGHNA MARRIED SHRUTAKIRTI, BOTH DAUGHTERS OF JANAKA'S BROTHER, KING KUSHADHWAJA. FLOWERS RAINED DOWN FROM HEAVEN AS THEY WENT ROUND THE SACRED FIRE.

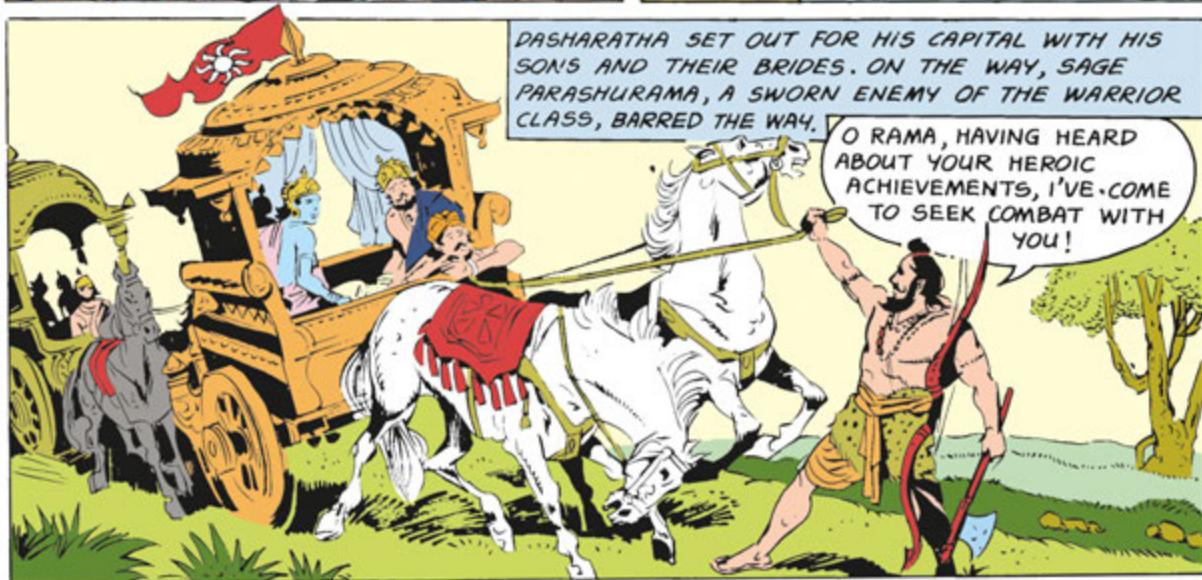


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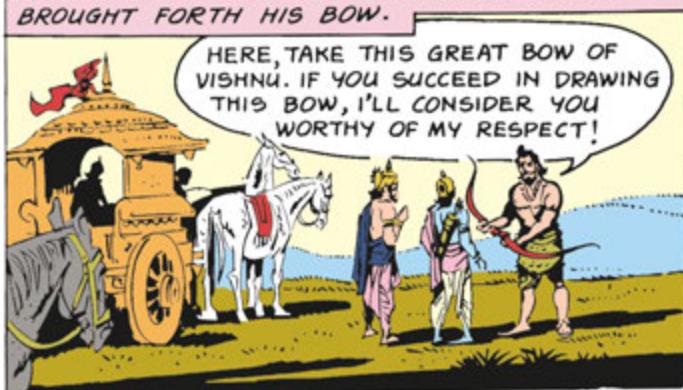
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HERE, TAKE THIS GREAT BOW OF VISHNU. IF YOU SUCCEED IN DRAWING THIS BOW, I'LL CONSIDER YOU WORTHY OF MY RESPECT!



RAMA THEN SEIZED THE BOW, AND PLACED AN ARROW IN IT, READY FOR USE.

PARSHURAMA RETURNED TO HIS ABODE IN MOUNT MAHENDRA AND DASHARATHA RESUMED HIS JOURNEY WITH HIS PARTY.



AYODHYA GAVE A ROUSING WELCOME TO THE PRINCES AND THEIR BRIDES.

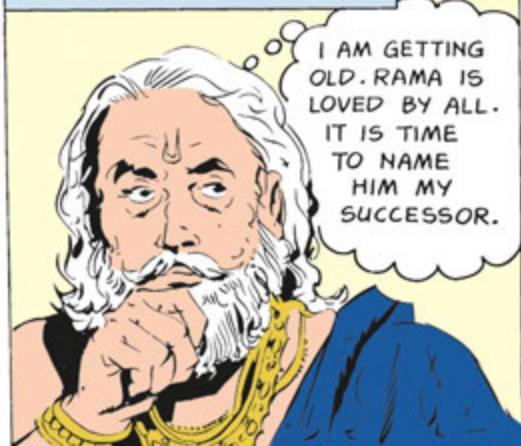


SOME TIME LATER, BHARATA WENT TO HIS MATERNAL GRANDFATHER'S KINGDOM ON A VISIT.

RAMA TOOK GOOD CARE OF HIS FATHER.



TWELVE YEARS PASSED BY.



KAIKEYI, DASHARATHA'S THIRD WIFE HEARD THE NEWS FROM MANTHARA, HER MAID.

MY RAMA IS TO BE CROWNED ! I AM SO HAPPY ! HERE TAKE MY NECKLACE AS A REWARD FOR BRINGING THE GOOD NEWS !

BUT MANTHARA FLUNG THE NECKLACE AWAY

THIS IS NO JOYOUS OCCASION ! RAMA WILL BE KING AND BHARATA — NOTHING !

BUT, MANTHARA, RAMA IS AS DEAR TO ME AS BHARATA .

O FOOLISH QUEEN, CAN'T YOU SEE WHY THEY HAVE DECIDED TO CROWN RAMA IN BHARATA'S ABSENCE ?

WHEN RAMA BECOMES KING, HE WILL EITHER BANISH BHARATA OR PUT HIM TO DEATH !

NO, HE WON'T. I KNOW MY RAMA !

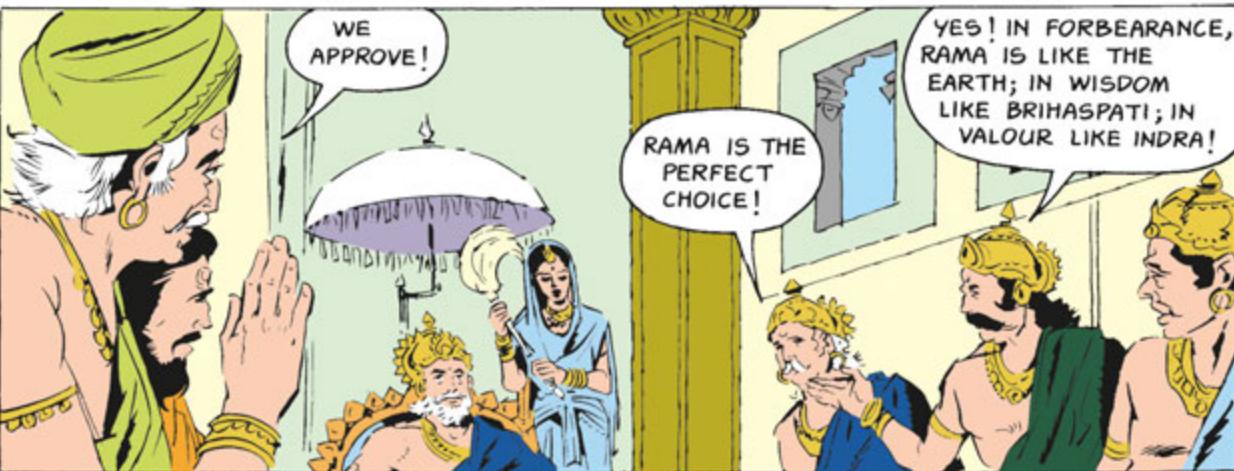
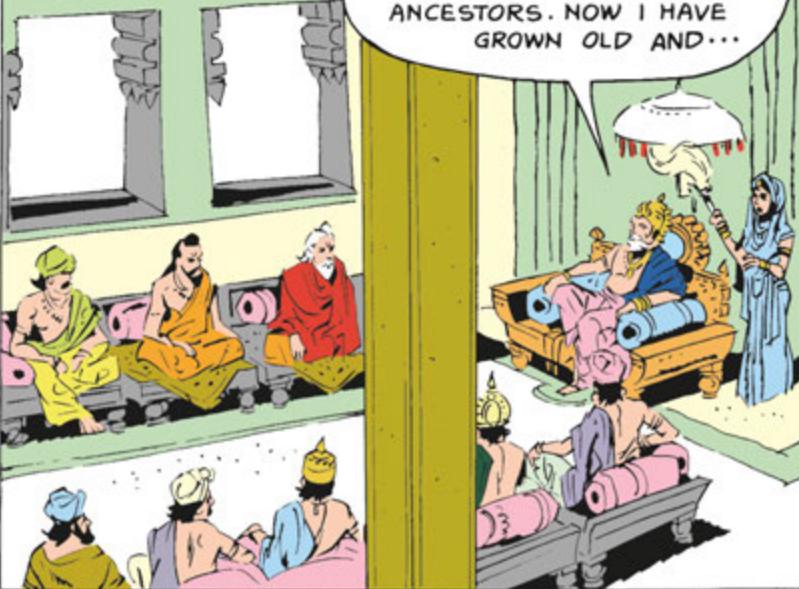
BUT MANTHARA CONTINUED RELENTLESSLY —

KAUSALYA WILL BECOME THE QUEEN-MOTHER AND YOU'LL HAVE TO BOW TO HER WISHES !

DASHARATHA CALLED A MEETING OF HIS COUNCIL.

I HAVE RULED THIS GREAT KINGDOM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TRADITIONS OF MY ANCESTORS. NOW I HAVE GROWN OLD AND...

...WITH YOUR CONSENT, I DESIRE TO INSTALL MY ELDEST SON, RAMA, BEST AMONG MEN, AS YUVARAJA\*.



THEN DASHARATHA SENT FOR RAMA.

MY SON, ACCEPT THE HIGH OFFICE OF YUVARAJA. RULE YOUR SUBJECTS WITH DUE REGARD FOR THEIR HAPPINESS.

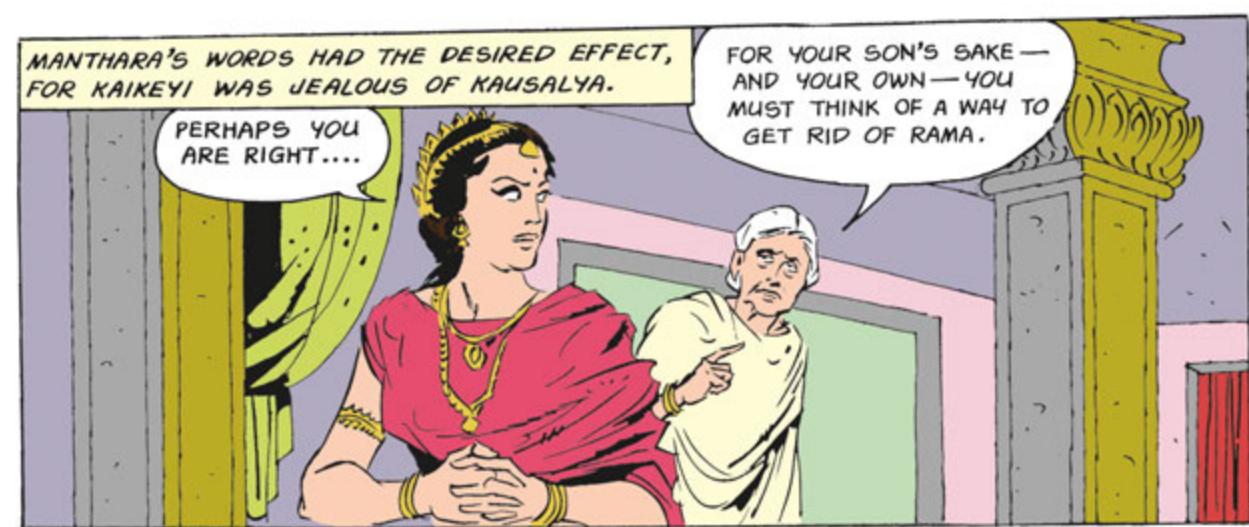
THANK YOU, FATHER.



MANTHARA'S WORDS HAD THE DESIRED EFFECT,  
FOR KAIKEYI WAS JEALOUS OF KAUSALYA.

FOR YOUR SON'S SAKE—  
AND YOUR OWN—YOU  
MUST THINK OF A WAY TO  
GET RID OF RAMA.

PERHAPS YOU  
ARE RIGHT....

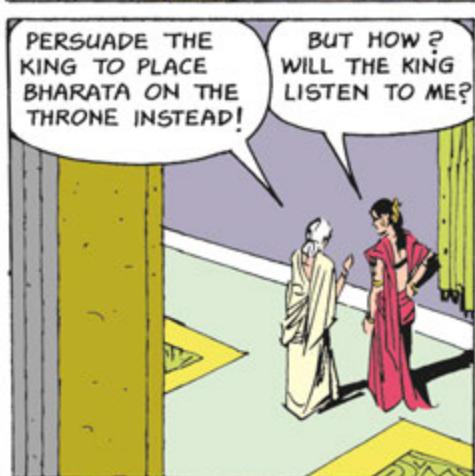


PERSUADE THE  
KING TO PLACE  
BHARATA ON THE  
THRONE INSTEAD!

BUT HOW?  
WILL THE KING  
LISTEN TO ME?

HAVE YOU  
FORGOTTEN THE  
BOONS THE KING  
BESTOWED ON  
YOU?

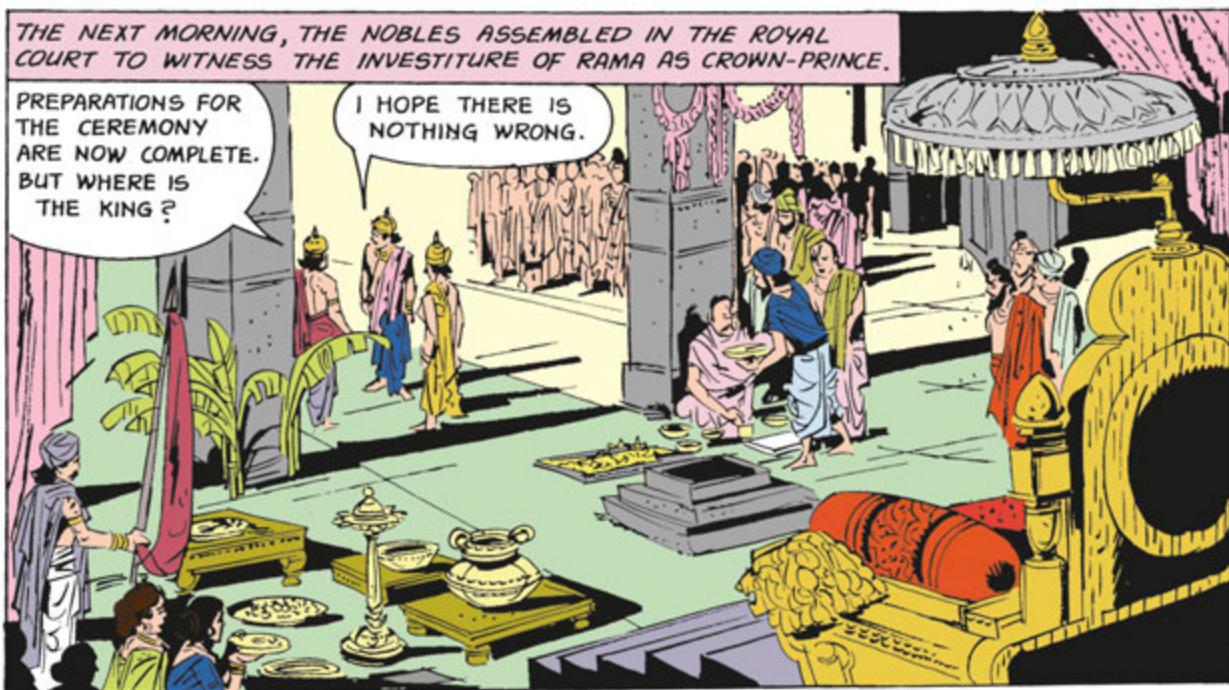
YES! I COULD  
USE THEM  
NOW.



THE NEXT MORNING, THE NOBLES ASSEMBLED IN THE ROYAL COURT TO WITNESS THE INVESTITURE OF RAMA AS CROWN-PRINCE.

PREPARATIONS FOR  
THE CEREMONY  
ARE NOW COMPLETE.  
BUT WHERE IS  
THE KING?

I HOPE THERE IS  
NOTHING WRONG.





WHEN SUMANTRA REACHED RAMA'S PALACE —

PRINCE, THE KING WISHES TO SEE YOU. HE IS IN THE APARTMENTS OF QUEEN KAIKEYI.

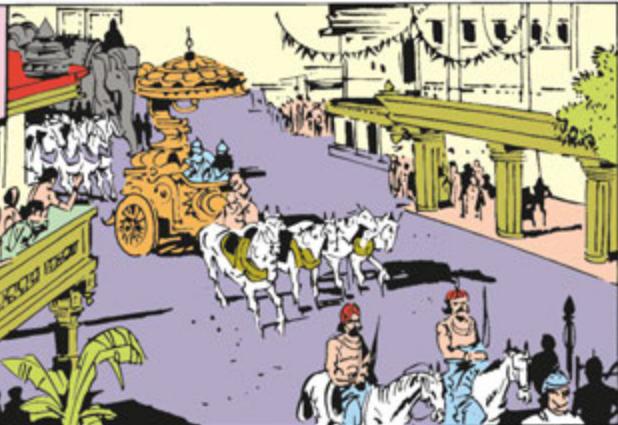


THEN RAMA TURNED TO SITA.

SITA, MOTHER KAIKEYI IS KIND AND CONSIDERATE. SHE IS PROBABLY DISCUSSING THE DETAILS OF THE CEREMONY WITH MY FATHER. I MUST HASTEN TO MEET THEM.

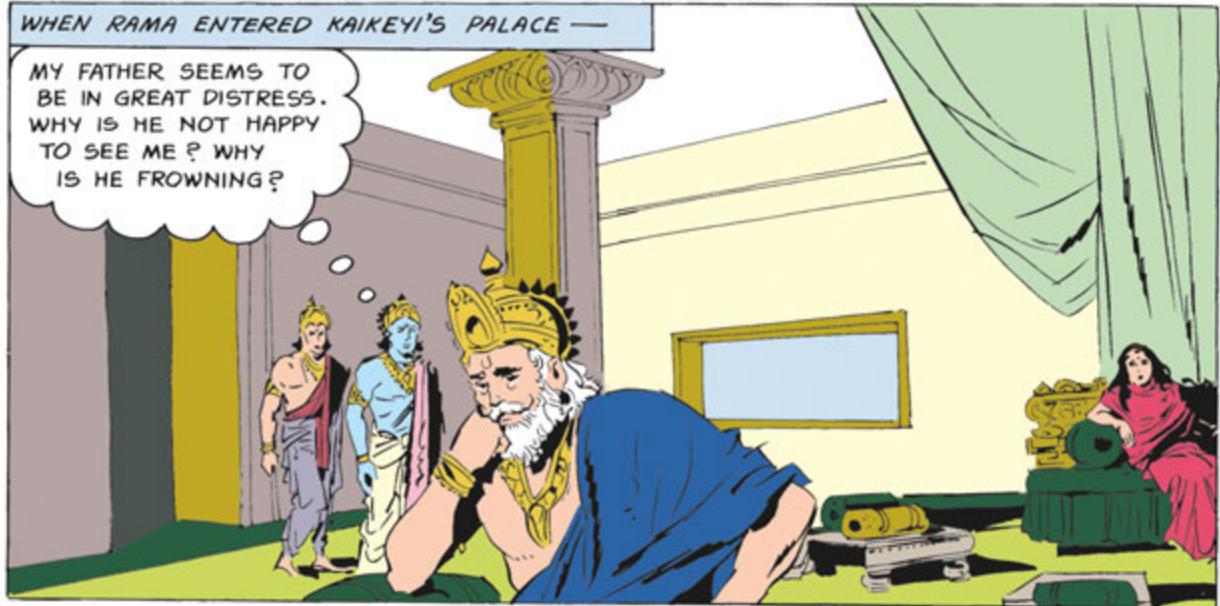


RAMA DROVE OUT TO KAIKEYI'S PALACE, PAST THE STREETS OF AYODHYA WHICH WERE GAILY DECORATED TO CELEBRATE HIS CORONATION. THE PEOPLE CHEERED HIM LUSTILY AS HE DROVE BY.



WHEN RAMA ENTERED KAIKEYI'S PALACE —

MY FATHER SEEMS TO BE IN GREAT DISTRESS. WHY IS HE NOT HAPPY TO SEE ME? WHY IS HE FROWNING?



HE TURNED TO KAIKEYI —

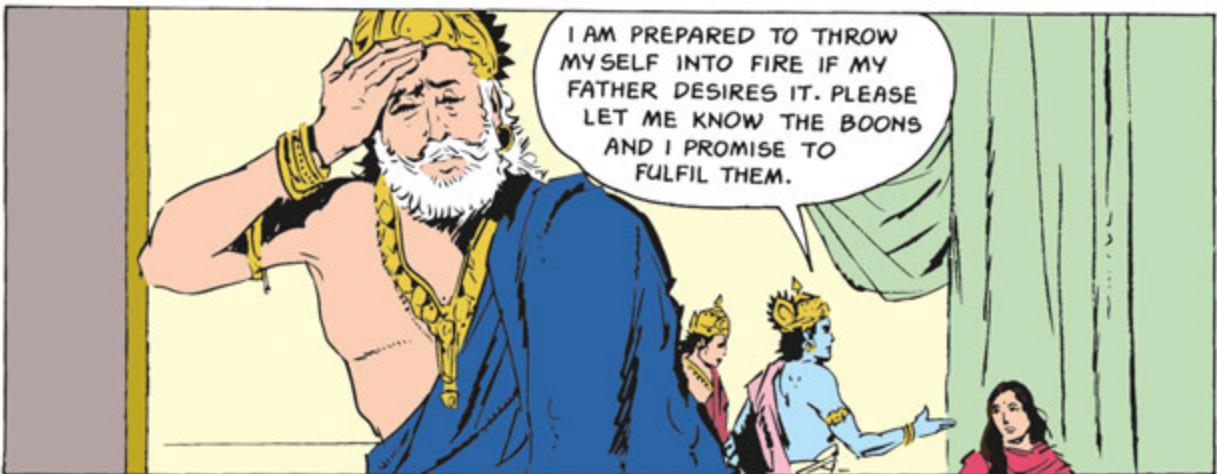
HAVE I OFFENDED MY FATHER? PLEASE PLEAD ON MY BEHALF, O MOTHER, AND ASK HIM TO FORGIVE ME.

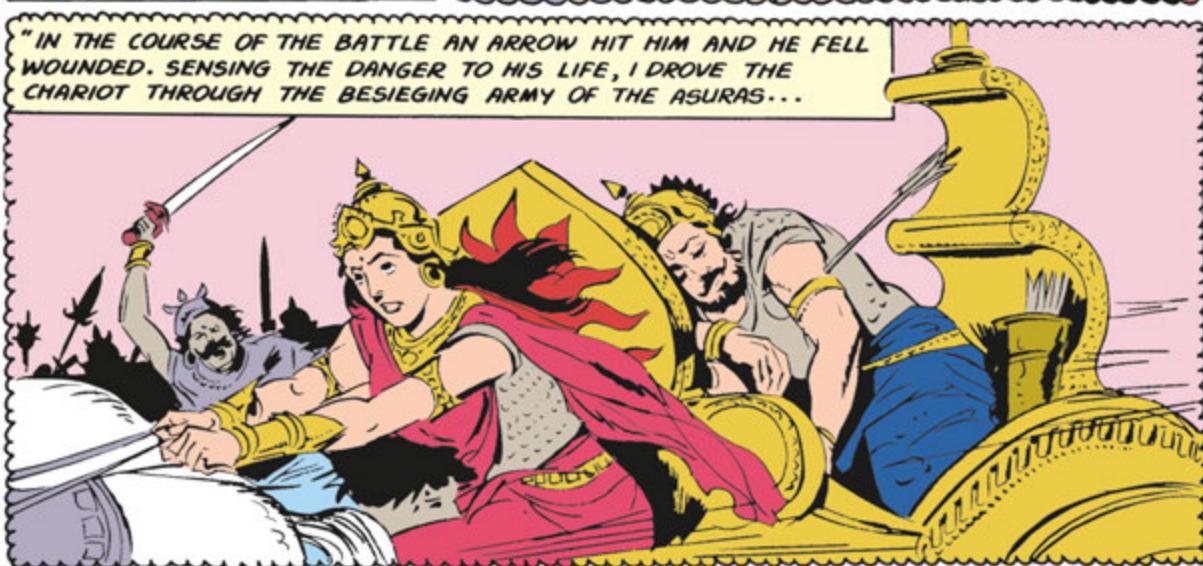
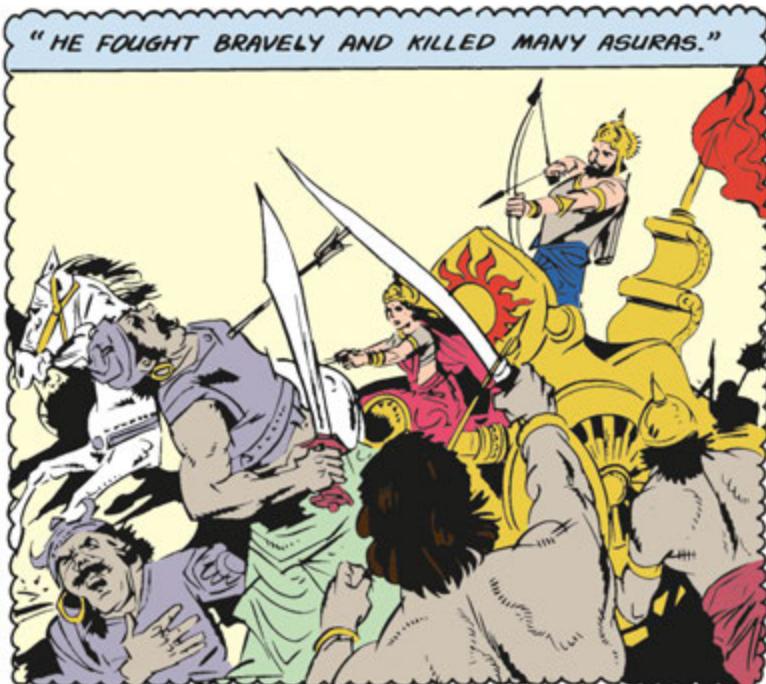
O RAMA; IF YOU ONLY KNEW KAIKEYI'S TRUE NATURE!

RAMA, LONG AGO YOUR FATHER HAD PROMISED ME TWO BOONS. HE IS SILENT AND RESENTFUL BECAUSE THE FULFILMENT OF THOSE BOONS WILL CAUSE YOU UNPLEASANTNESS.



I AM PREPARED TO THROW MYSELF INTO FIRE IF MY FATHER DESIRES IT. PLEASE LET ME KNOW THE BOONS AND I PROMISE TO FULFIL THEM.





I WANT BHARATA TO BE MADE THE YUVARAJA AND YOU, RAMA, EXILED TO THE FOREST FOR FOURTEEN YEARS.

AT THESE WORDS, DASHARATHA WAS AGAIN OVERWHELMED WITH GRIEF.

O, RAMA!

BUT RAMA BETRAYED NO SIGN OF DISTRESS.

TO FULFIL THE PROMISE MADE BY THE KING, MY FATHER, I SHALL LEAVE FOR THE FOREST IMMEDIATELY.

MY RAMA!

BUT WHY DOESN'T MY FATHER TALK TO ME AFFECTIONATELY? I FEEL DISTRESSED TO SEE HIM SHEDDING TEARS.

IT IS BECAUSE HE CANNOT BRING HIMSELF TO ASK YOU TO GO TO THE FOREST. BUT HE WILL NEITHER BATHE NOR PARTAKE OF FOOD UNTIL YOU LEAVE.

ON HEARING THE WORDS OF KAIKEYI, DASHARATHA GOT UP —

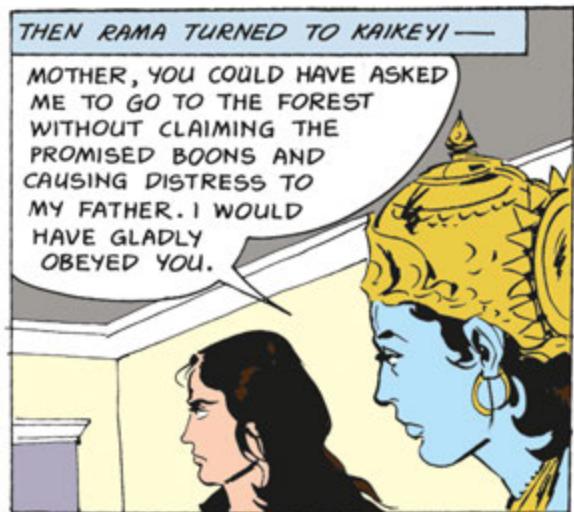
FIE UPON YOU, O KAI....

FATHER!

OVERCOME BY SORROW, HE FELL DOWN UNCONSCIOUS.

THEN RAMA TURNED TO KAIKEYI —

MOTHER, YOU COULD HAVE ASKED ME TO GO TO THE FOREST WITHOUT CLAIMING THE PROMISED BOONS AND CAUSING DISTRESS TO MY FATHER. I WOULD HAVE GLADLY OBEYED YOU.



ON HIS WAY OUT, WHILE PASSING THROUGH THE PALACE HALL, RAMA WALKED ROUND THE SACRED ARTICLES ARRANGED FOR THE CORONATION AND PRAYED.

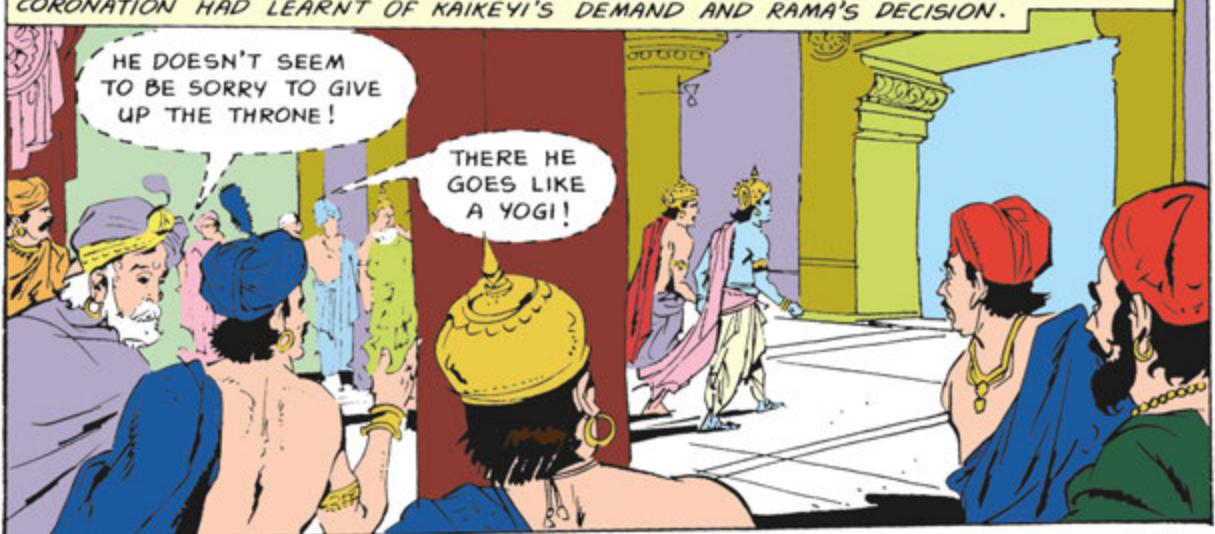
MAY THESE BE DEDICATED TO THE CORONATION OF BHARATA! MAY THE GODS PROTECT HIM!



BY THEN THE NOBLES WHO HAD ASSEMBLED IN THE PALACE HALL TO WITNESS THE CORONATION HAD LEARNT OF KAIKEYI'S DEMAND AND RAMA'S DECISION.

HE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE SORRY TO GIVE UP THE THRONE!

THERE HE GOES LIKE A YOGI!



RAMA CALLED ON KAUSALYA, HIS MOTHER, TO BID HER GOODBYE —

O CHILD, HOW CAN I BEAR THIS? TO HAVE A SON AND THEN TO BE SEPARATED FROM HIM IS WORSE THAN HAVING NO CHILD AT ALL!

WHEN LAKSHMANA SAW KAUSALYA IN TEARS, HE WAS OVERCOME WITH GRIEF.

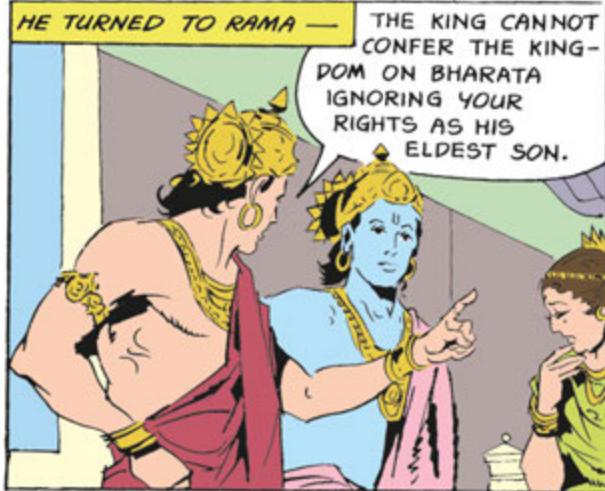
OUR FATHER HAS LOST HIS SENSES IN HIS OLD AGE OR HE WOULD NOT HAVE DEPRIVED SINLESS RAMA OF THE KINGDOM AND EXILED HIM!



HE TURNED TO RAMA —

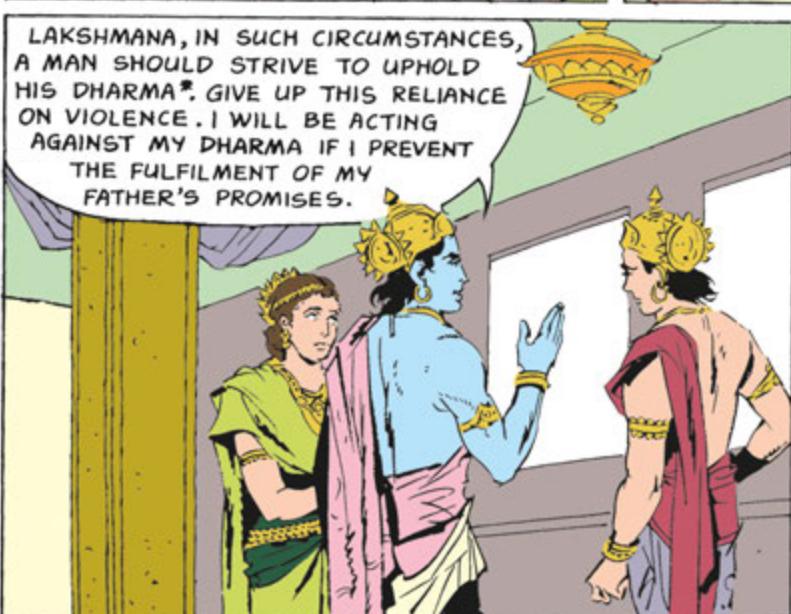
THE KING CANNOT CONFER THE KINGDOM ON BHARATA IGNORING YOUR RIGHTS AS HIS ELDEST SON.

THE MEEK ARE EVER OPPRESSED. ASSERT YOURSELF. IF ANY ONE DARES OPPOSE YOU, I WILL DEAL WITH HIM.



LAKSHMANA, IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, A MAN SHOULD STRIVE TO UPHOLD HIS DHARMA\*. GIVE UP THIS RELIANCE ON VIOLENCE. I WILL BE ACTING AGAINST MY DHARMA IF I PREVENT THE FULFILMENT OF MY FATHER'S PROMISES.

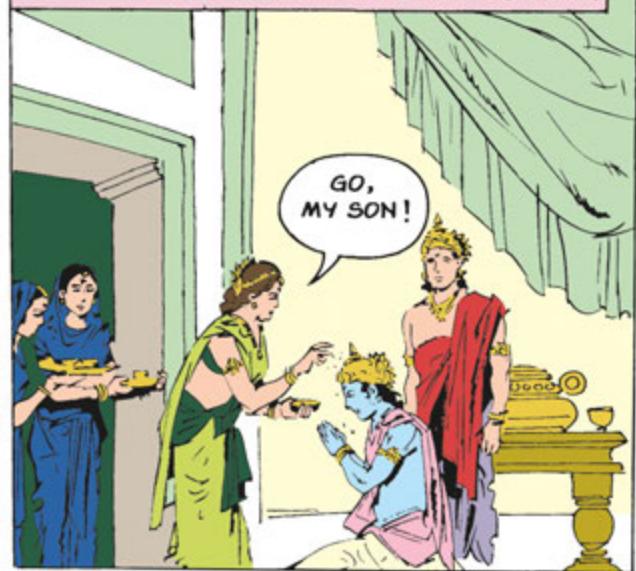
IF YOU CANNOT CHANGE YOUR MIND, LET ME, TOO, GO WITH YOU INTO EXILE.



\* DIVINE LAW, OBSERVANCE OF WHICH IS CONSIDERED A DUTY

MOTHER, THE KING IS ALREADY DEEPLY DISTRESSED. HE WILL DIE IF YOU DESERT HIM. YOUR PLACE IS BESIDE HIM. GIVE ME YOUR BLESSING AND LET ME GO.

KAUSALYA REALISED THAT IT WAS FUTILE TO TRY AND STOP HIM. SHE GAVE HER BLESSING AND THREW RICE OVER HIS HEAD.



SHE THEN APPLIED SANDALWOOD PASTE ON HIS FOREHEAD.

MAY THE GODS OF THE MOUNTAINS, SEAS, RIVERS, SPACE, DAY AND NIGHT AND THE STARS PROTECT YOU IN THE FOREST.

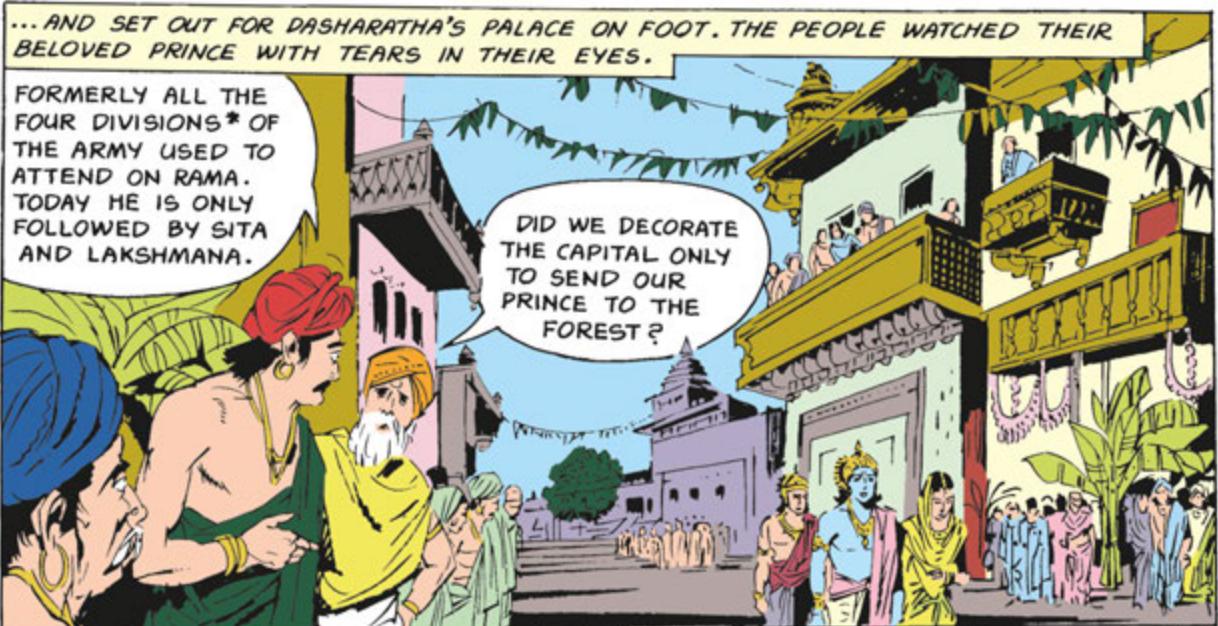
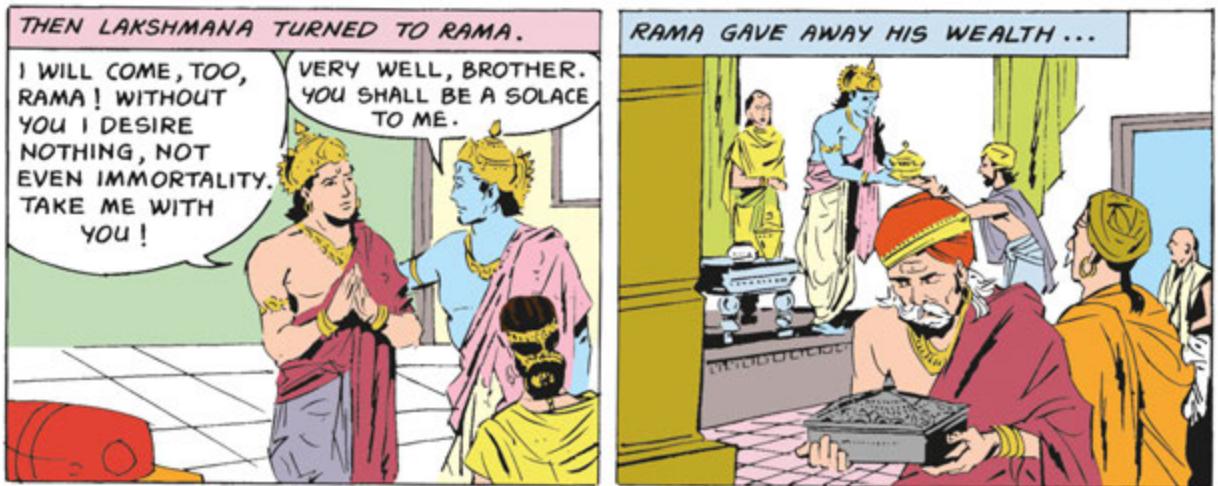


THEN RAMA WENT TO SITA TO TAKE HIS LEAVE OF HER.



SITA, THE FOREST IS FULL OF BEASTS. IT IS NO PLACE FOR A DELICATE LADY. YOU ARE USED TO COMFORTS. STAY HERE IN THE PALACE.





\* INFANTRY, CAVALRY, CHARIOT-RIDERS, ELEPHANT RIDERS

RAMA IS VIRTUOUS,  
COMPASSIONATE, LEARNED,  
TRUTHFUL AND SELF-  
CONTROLLED ...

... HOW COULD  
THE KING SEND  
SO DEAR A  
SON INTO  
EXILE!

WE WILL  
ABANDON OUR  
HOMES AND  
FOLLOW RAMA!

YES,  
WE WILL!

WHEN RAMA'S ARRIVAL WAS ANNOUNCED, THE OLD KING ROSE TO GREET HIM ...

O, RAMA!

... BUT THE NEXT MINUTE HE FELL DOWN,  
SENSELESS.

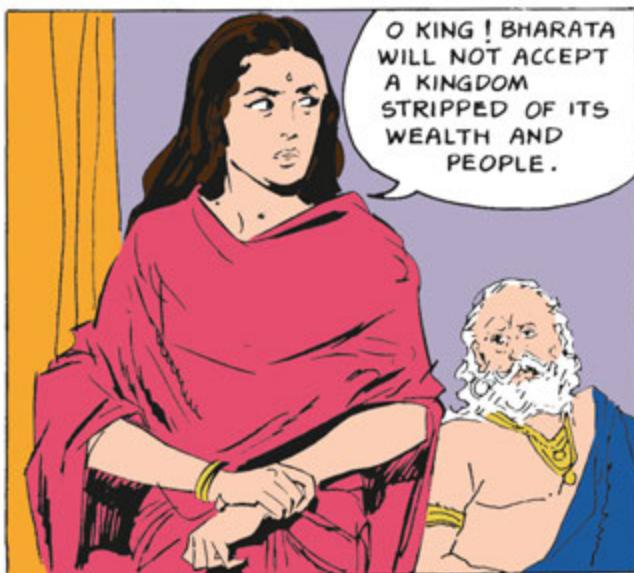
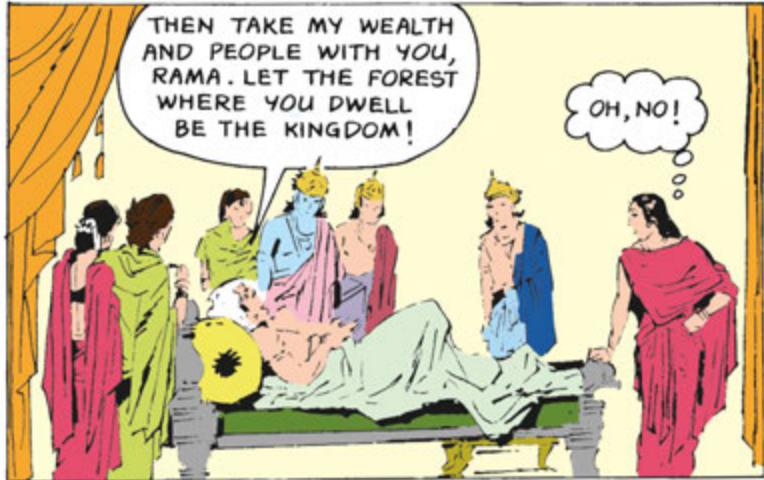
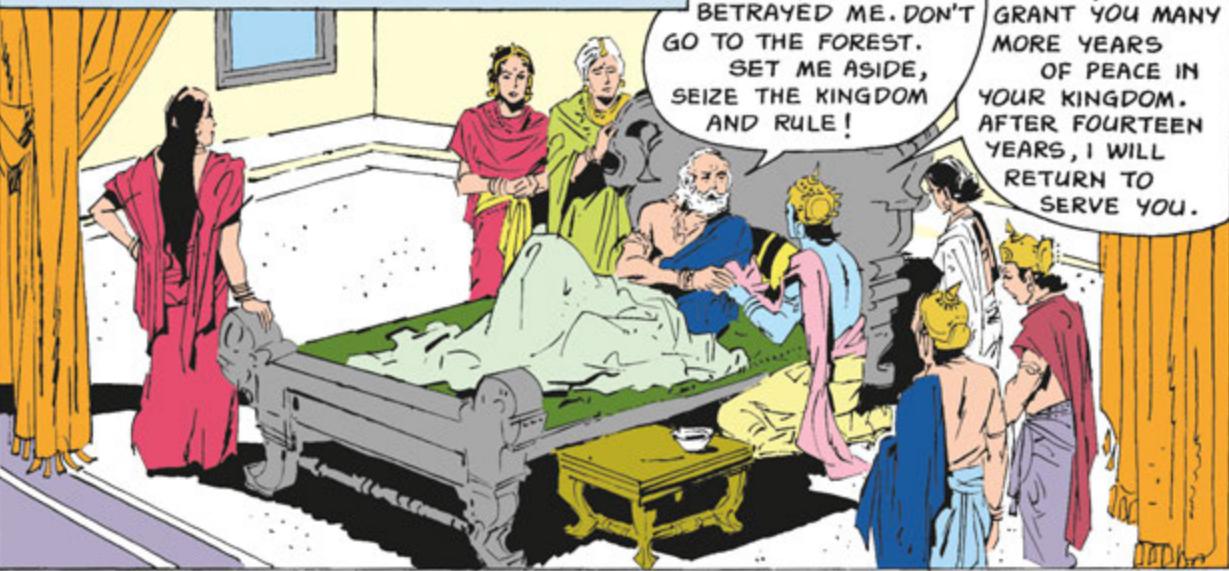
RAMA RUSHED FORWARD, TOOK HIM IN  
HIS ARMS ...

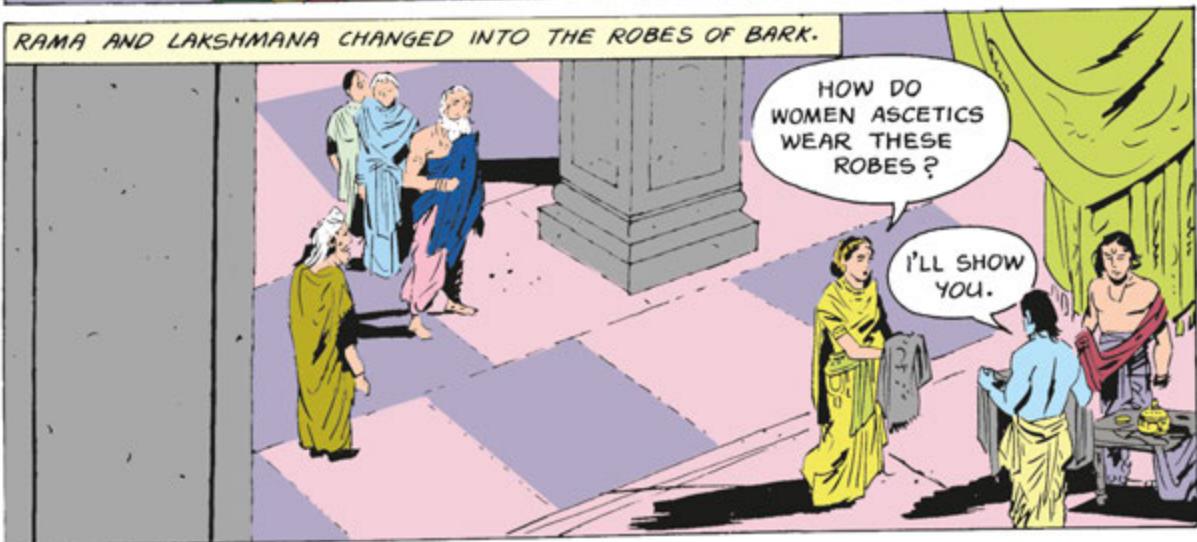
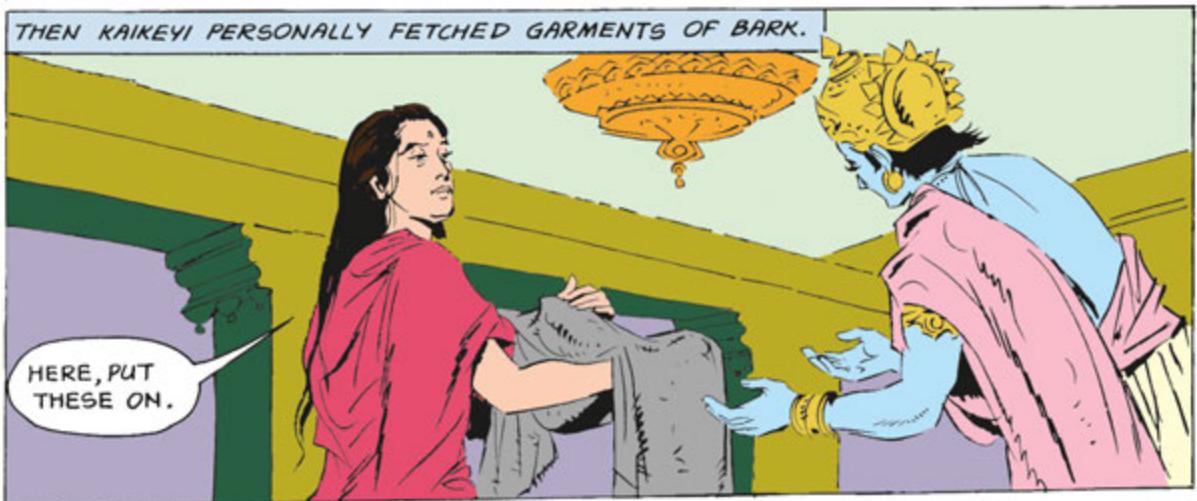
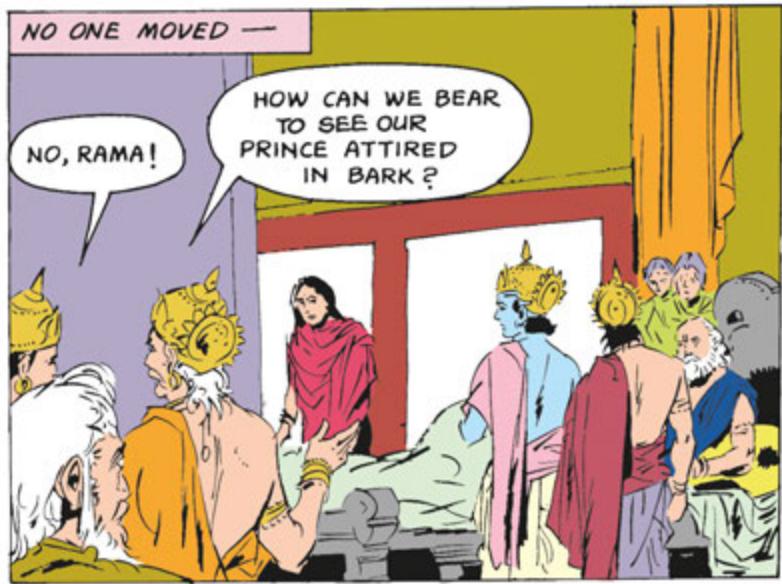
... AND PLACED HIM GENTLY ON THE COUCH.

WHEN DASHARATHA REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS—

O RAMA, KAIKEYI HAS BETRAYED ME. DON'T GO TO THE FOREST. SET ME ASIDE, SEIZE THE KINGDOM AND RULE!

FATHER, MAY GOD GRANT YOU MANY MORE YEARS OF PEACE IN YOUR KINGDOM. AFTER FOURTEEN YEARS, I WILL RETURN TO SERVE YOU.



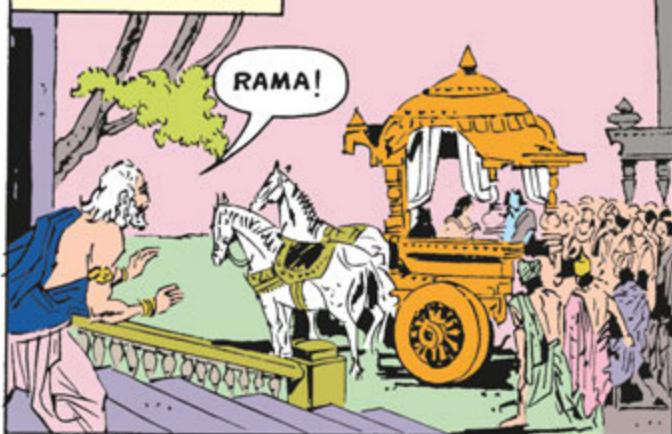


BUT VASISHTHA INTERVENED.

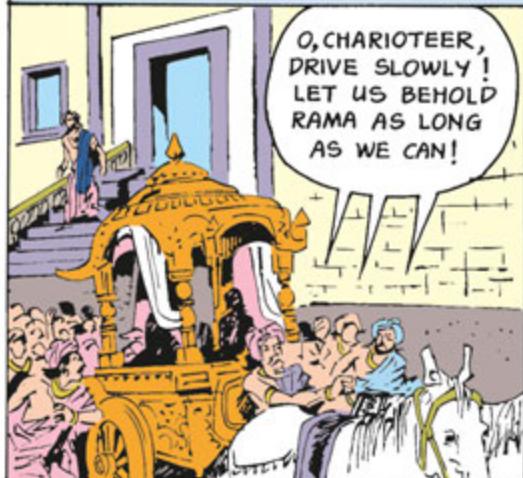
SITA IS NOT COMPELLED TO GO INTO EXILE. GOING OF HER OWN FREE WILL, IT IS ONLY BEFITTING THAT SHE SHOULD BE ATTIRED IN ROYAL DRESS. ALSO, LET HER KEEP HER ORNAMENTS AS WELL.

DASHARATHA UPHELD VASISHTHA'S CONTENTION. SITA BOWED TO THE WISHES OF THE ELDERS, AND ACCEPTED THE ORNAMENTS OFFERED BY DASHARATHA.

RAMA THEN SALUTED DASHARATHA AND THE QUEENS, AND LEFT THE PALACE WITH SITA AND LAKSHMANA. THEY STEPPED INTO THE CHARIOT WHICH WOULD TAKE THEM TO THE BORDERS OF THE KINGDOM.



SHEDDING TEARS, PEOPLE RAN AFTER THE CHARIOT WHILE THE OLD KING STOOD WATCHING HELPLESSLY.



NEXT MORNING, RAMA RUBBED HIS HAIR WITH THE SAP OF THE BHURJA TREE AND LAKSHMANA DID THE SAME. LIKE ASCETICS THEY HAD NOW THEIR HAIR MATTED.

THE NEXT DAY —

SUMANTRA, IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO RETURN TO AYODHYA.

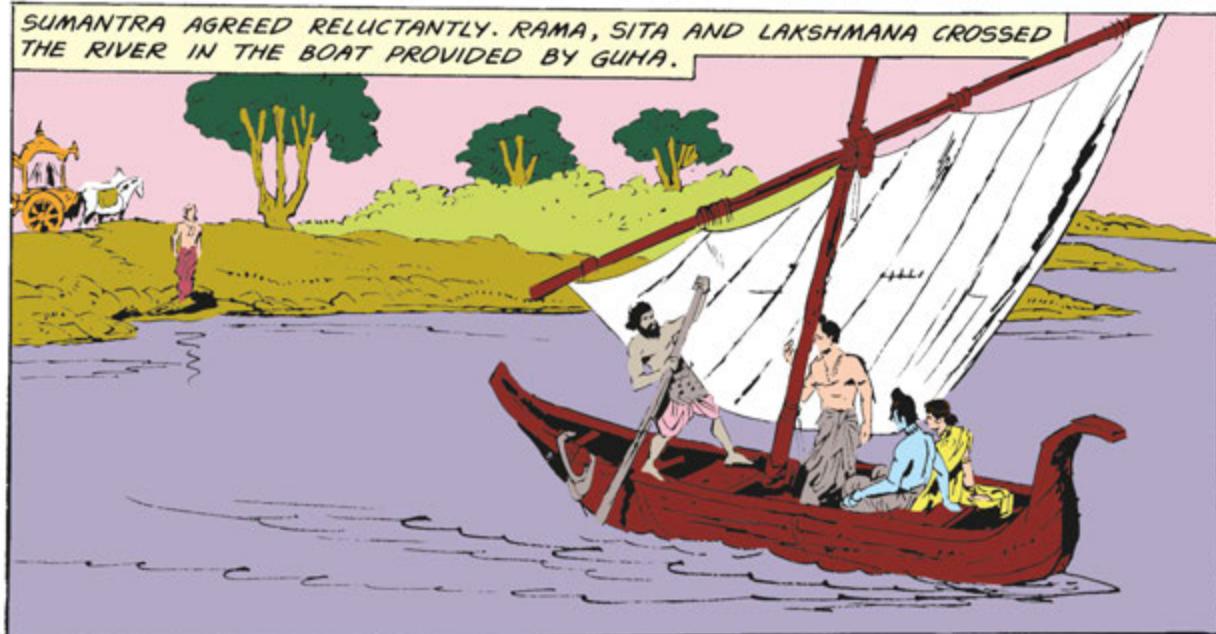


SUMANTRA'S EYES WERE FILLED WITH TEARS.

HOW CAN I RETURN WITH AN EMPTY CHARIOT? NO, RAMA, I WON'T GO BACK. I WILL ACCOMPANY YOU TO THE FOREST AND SERVE YOU!

SUMANTRA, IF YOU HAVE AFFECTION FOR ME, DO AS I SAY. GO BACK TO AYODHYA. CONSOLE MY FATHER AND ASSURE MOTHER KAIKEYI THAT I HAVE INDEED LEFT FOR THE FOREST.

SUMANTRA AGREED RELUCTANTLY. RAMA, SITA AND LAKSHMANA CROSSED THE RIVER IN THE BOAT PROVIDED BY GUHA.



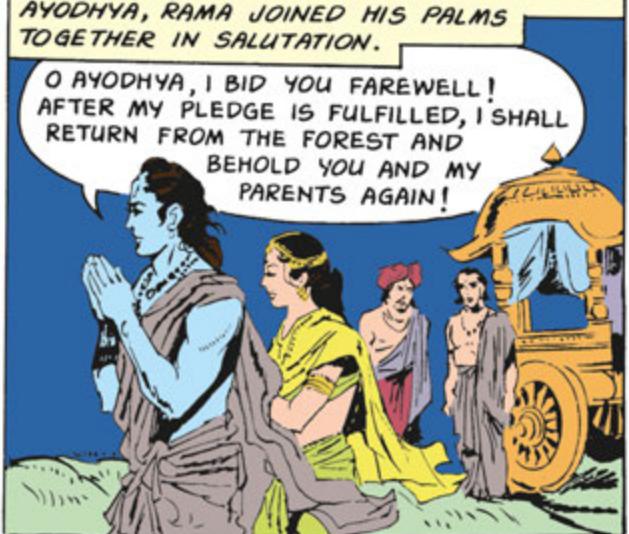
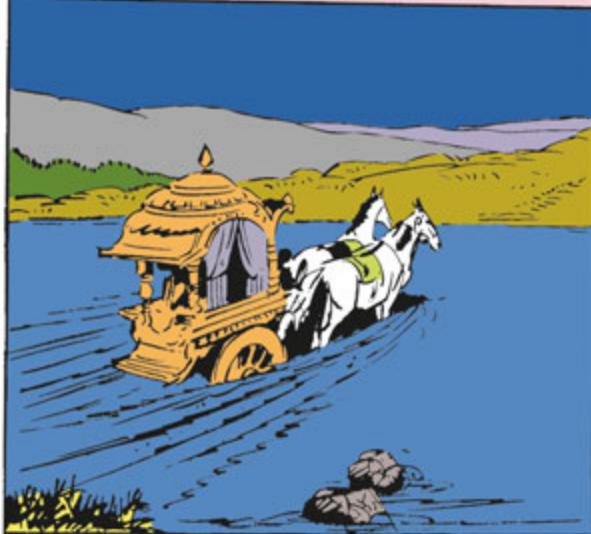
IT WAS NIGHT BY THE TIME THEY REACHED THE BANKS OF THE RIVER TAMASA. THERE THEY RESTED.

LAKSHMANA,  
LET US GO  
BEFORE THESE GOOD  
PEOPLE WAKE UP.  
OTHERWISE, THEY  
WILL NOT LEAVE  
US.

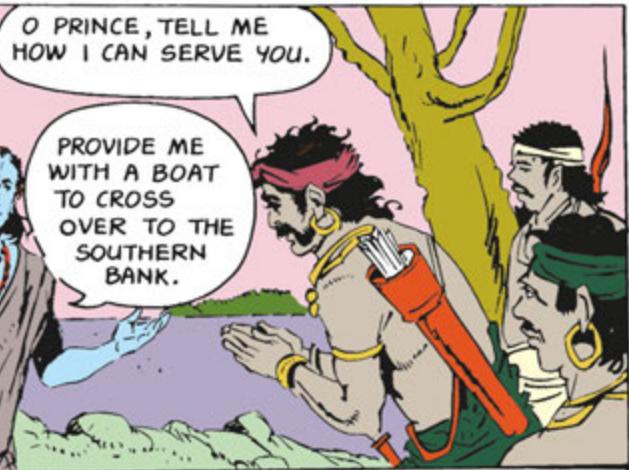


PROCEEDING SOUTHWARDS, RAMA, SITA AND LAKSHMANA CROSSED THE RIVERS TAMASA, VEDASHRUTI AND GOMATI...

...AND REACHED THE SOUTHERN BORDER OF KOSALA. THERE THEY ALIGHTED FROM THE CHARIOT. WITH HIS FACE TURNED TOWARDS AYODHYA, RAMA JOINED HIS PALMS TOGETHER IN SALUTATION.



WHEN RAMA ARRIVED ON THE NORTHERN BANK OF THE RIVER GANGA, GUHA, THE CHIEF OF THE TRIBE OF HUNTERS INHABITING THE REGION, RECEIVED HIM.



O PRINCE, TELL ME HOW I CAN SERVE YOU.

PROVIDE ME WITH A BOAT TO CROSS OVER TO THE SOUTHERN BANK.

THEY RESUMED THEIR JOURNEY THROUGH THE DENSE FOREST. WHEN THEY REACHED PRAYAG, WHERE THE GANGA AND THE YAMUNA MEET, THEY MET SAGE BHARADWAJA.

O,BLESSED SAGE,  
SUGGEST A SECLUDED  
PLACE WHERE WE  
MAY LIVE IN  
HAPPINESS.

O,CHILD, ACROSS THE YAMUNA IS THE MOUNTAIN CHITRAKUTA WHICH IS FILLED WITH FLOWERS AND FRUITS, SPRINGS AND WATERFALLS. THERE YOU WILL FIND AN IDEAL RETREAT.



SO RAMA WENT TO CHITRAKUTA,  
WHERE HE BUILT A HUT BY  
THE RIVER MANDAKINI.  
ONE DAY—

THE BIRDS ARE  
FRIGHTENED AND  
I SEE A CLOUD OF  
DUST IN THE  
DISTANCE. LAKSHMANA,  
PLEASE FIND OUT  
WHY.



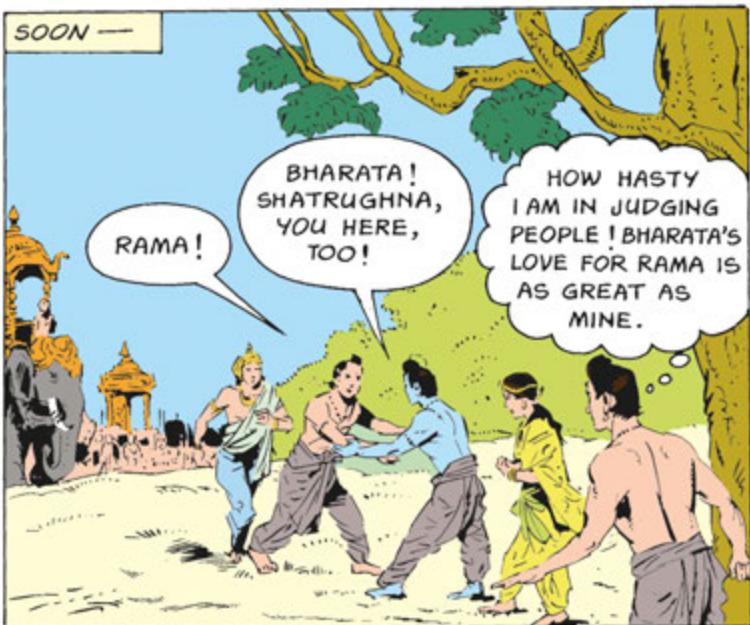
LAKSHMANA CLIMBED UP A TREE AND LOOKED INTO THE DISTANCE.

RAMA, BE ON GUARD!  
HAVING SECURED THE  
THRONE, BHARATA IS  
BRINGING HIS ARMY  
HERE TO DEPRIVE  
US OF OUR LIVES!

THE VIRTUOUS  
BHARATA ? NO, YOU'LL  
PRESENTLY SEE THAT  
YOU'VE WRONGED  
A NOBLE SOUL.



SOON —



BHARATA, WHY ARE YOU DRESSED IN ASCETIC ROBES? WHAT NEWS FROM AYODHYA? IS OUR DEAR FATHER WELL?



O RAMA, FATHER COULD NOT BEAR THE SEPARATION FROM YOU! HE WANTED TO BEHOLD YOU AGAIN. THINKING OF YOU, CALLING OUT YOUR NAME...

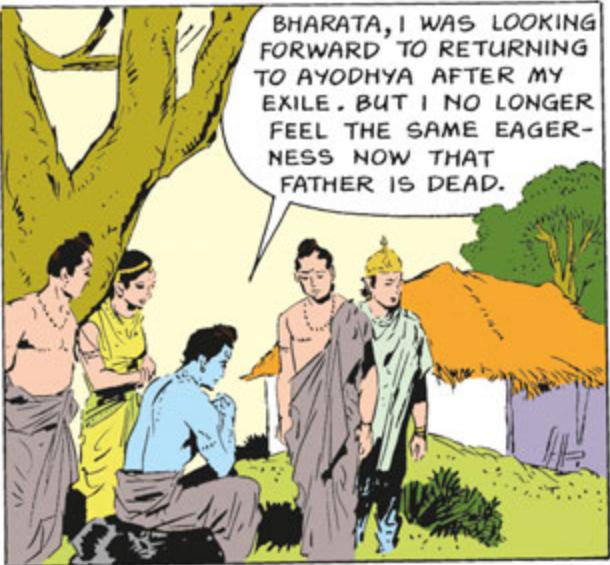


...HE DIED WHILE I WAS YET AT MY GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE.

OH! FATHER! FATHER!



BHARATA, I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO RETURNING TO AYODHYA AFTER MY EXILE. BUT I NO LONGER FEEL THE SAME EAGERNESS NOW THAT FATHER IS DEAD.



THEN RAMA OFFERED A LIBATION OF WATER TO HIS DEAD FATHER.

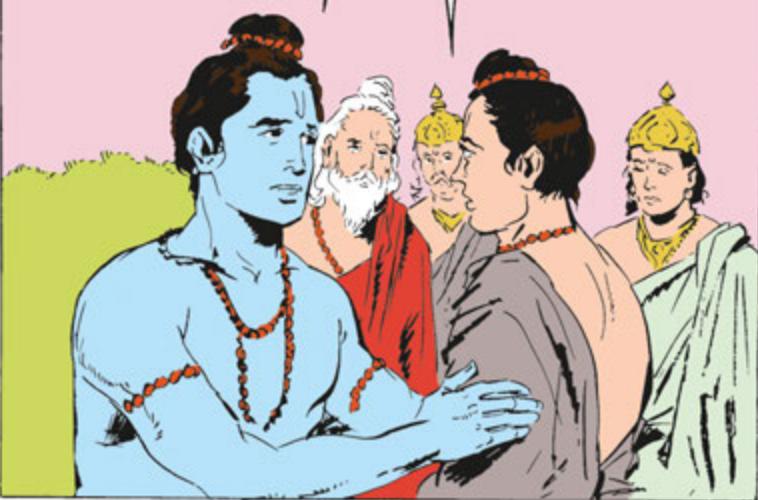
O KING, MAY THIS SACRED WATER OFFERED TODAY BE YOURS FOR EVER IN THE REGION OF OUR ANCESTORS!



SUMANTRA, VASISHTHA AND OTHER ELDERS WHO HAD BY THEN JOINED THEM CONSOLED RAMA. RAMA TURNED TO BHARATA.

YOU HAVEN'T ANSWERED MY QUESTION, BHARATA. WHY ARE YOU, TOO, DRESSED IN ASCETIC ROBES?

RAMA, WHEN THE LAWFUL SUCCESSOR TO THE THRONE IS LANGUISHING IN THE FOREST, HOW CAN I DON ROYAL ROBES?



THEN BHARATA OFFERED THE ROYAL ROBES AND SANDALS TO RAMA.

PLEASE PUT ON THESE KINGLY ROBES AND RETURN TO AYODHYA.

NO, BHARATA. I CANNOT DO THAT.



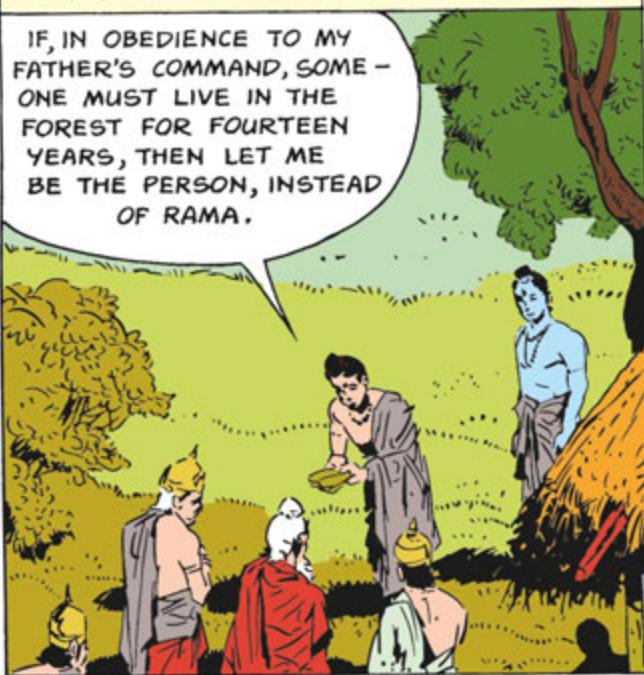
WHY NOT, RAMA? IT IS THE DHARMA OF THE ELDEST SON TO ASCEND THE THRONE.

BHARATA, OUR DHARMA LIES IN REDEEMING OUR FATHER'S PLEDGE TO MOTHER KAIKEYI.



THEN BHARATA APPEALED TO THE ELDERS.

IF, IN OBEDIENCE TO MY FATHER'S COMMAND, SOMEONE MUST LIVE IN THE FOREST FOR FOURTEEN YEARS, THEN LET ME BE THE PERSON, INSTEAD OF RAMA.



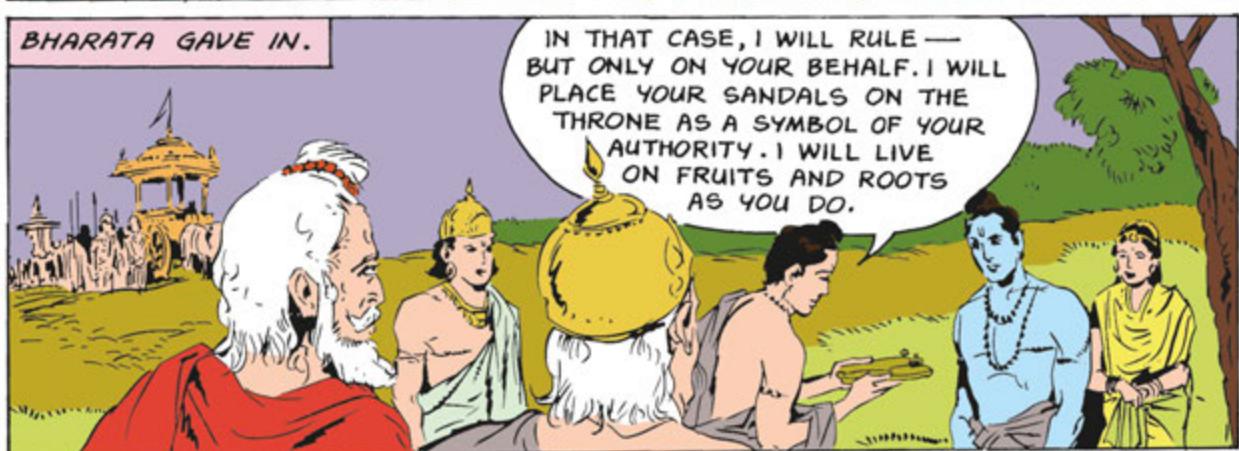
BUT RAMA WOULD NOT YIELD.

THE ISSUE IS STRAIGHT. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BOON, YOU RULE AND I GO INTO EXILE FOR FOURTEEN YEARS.



BHARATA GAVE IN.

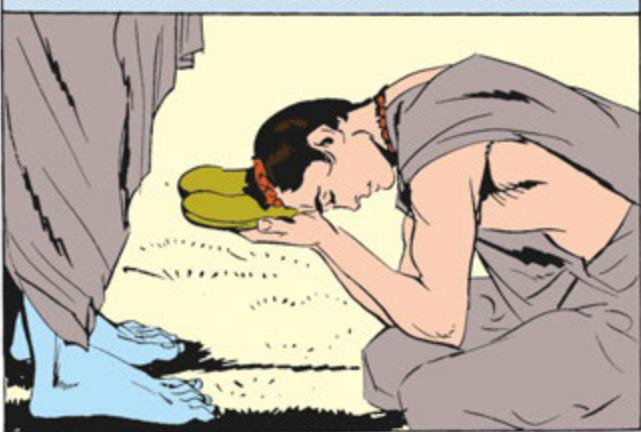
IN THAT CASE, I WILL RULE — BUT ONLY ON YOUR BEHALF. I WILL PLACE YOUR SANDALS ON THE THRONE AS A SYMBOL OF YOUR AUTHORITY. I WILL LIVE ON FRUITS AND ROOTS AS YOU DO.



RAMA PUT ON THE SANDALS OFFERED BY BHARATA.



AFTER A WHILE, HE TOOK THEM OFF, AND BHARATA RECEIVED THEM WITH DUE RESPECT.



THEN HE DEPARTED WITH A HEAVY HEART.

RAMA, I AWAIT WITH LONGING THE HAPPY DAY WHEN YOU WILL RETURN TO AYODHYA AT THE END OF YOUR EXILE.



RAMA EMBRACED BHARATA.

MEANWHILE, LOOK AFTER THE KINGDOM, BROTHER. PROTECT MOTHER KAIKEYI. DON'T BE ANGRY WITH HER.



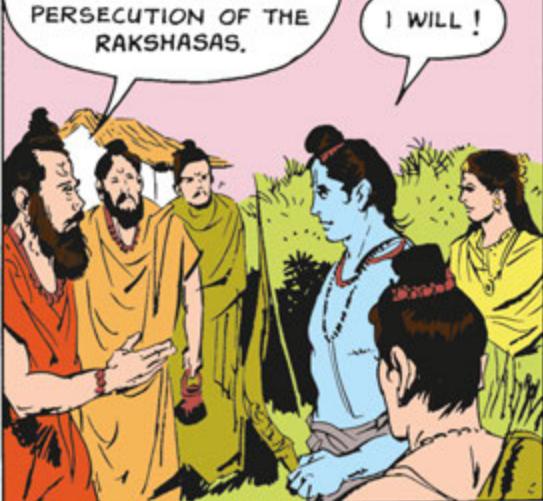
THEN, ACCCOMPANIED BY SITA AND LAKSHMANA, RAMA WENT TO THE DANDAKA FOREST WHERE HE KILLED THE RAKSHASA, VIRADHA.



SEVERAL SAGES LIVING IN THE FOREST MET RAMA.

WE ARE WITHOUT A PROTECTOR. DEFEND US FROM THE CRUEL PERSECUTION OF THE RAKSHASAS.

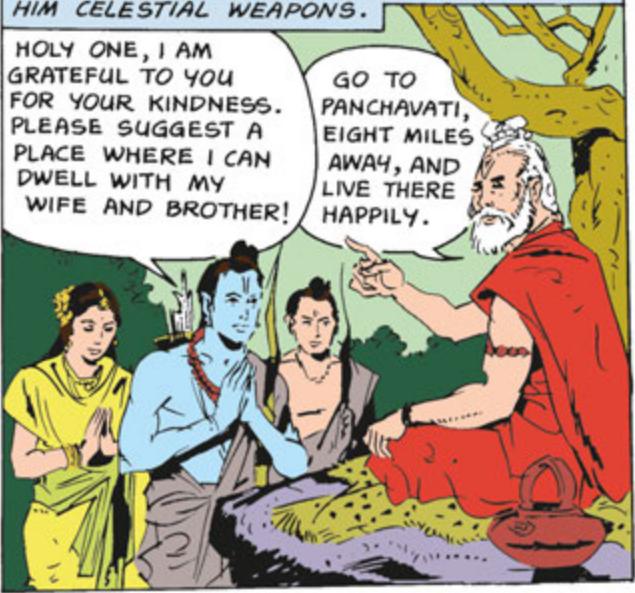
I WILL !



LATER, RAMA CALLED ON SAGE AGASTYA AND PAID HIS RESPECTS. THE SAGE GAVE HIM CELESTIAL WEAPONS.

HOLY ONE, I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS. PLEASE SUGGEST A PLACE WHERE I CAN DWELL WITH MY WIFE AND BROTHER!

GO TO PANCHAVATI, EIGHT MILES AWAY, AND LIVE THERE HAPPILY.



ON THE WAY TO PANCHAVATI, AN AGED VULTURE ADDRESSED HIM—

O RAMA ! I AM JATAYU, A FRIEND OF YOUR FATHER'S. I WILL STAY AROUND WITH YOU IN CASE YOU NEED MY HELP.

THANK YOU. YOUR PRESENCE WILL BE A COMFORT.

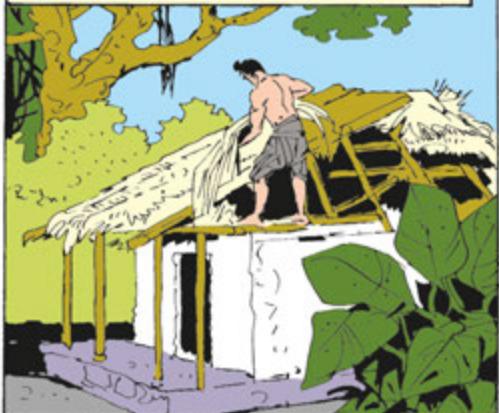


WHEN RAMA REACHED PANCHAVATI—

THIS IS THE PERFECT SPOT TO BUILD OUR COTTAGE.



LAKSHMANA BEGAN TO BUILD AN ASHRAM\* FOR HIS BROTHER.



WHEN IT WAS READY, HE BATHED IN THE HOLY GODAVARI. HE PRAYED TO THE GODS AND PLACED A LOTUS ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE COTTAGE AS AN OFFERING TO THEM.



THEN HE SHOWED THE ASHRAM TO RAMA.



IT'S WONDERFUL. THE ONLY WAY I CAN REWARD YOU IS BY...



... EMBRACING YOU.



THE ASHRAM WAS SPACIOUS AND COMFORTABLE. THE SPENT MANY HAPPY DAYS THERE. ONE DAY, SHOORPANAKHA, A RAKSHASI, WHO WAS PASSING THROUGH PANCHAVATI, SAW RAMA.

WHAT A HANDSOME MAN ! I WOULD LIKE TO MARRY HIM.



ASSUMING A BEAUTIFUL FORM, SHE APPROACHED RAMA.

O,ASCETIC, ARMED WITH BOW AND ARROW, WHY HAVE YOU COME TO THIS REGION OF THE RAKSHASAS?

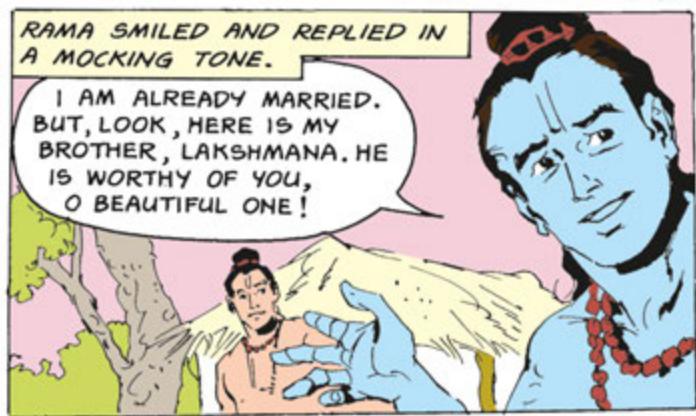
I AM RAMA, THE SON OF KING DASHARATHA, AND FOR FOURTEEN YEARS I HAVE TO LIVE IN EXILE IN THIS FOREST.

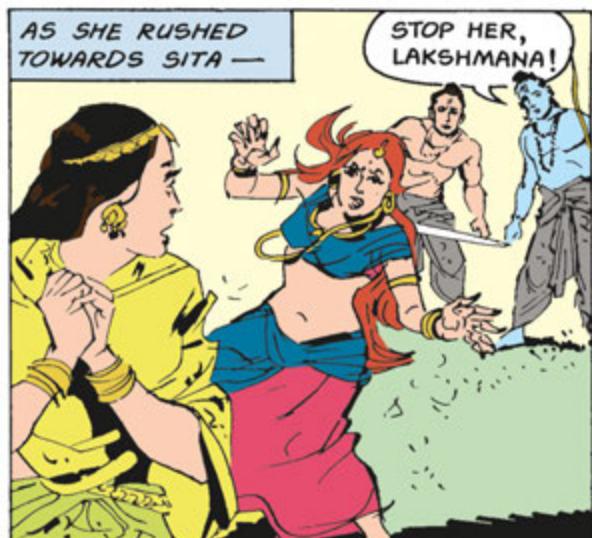
I AM SHOORPANAKHA, SISTER OF THE MIGHTY RAVANA. KHARA AND DOOSHANA OF MATCHLESS STRENGTH, WHO RULE JANASTHANA ARE MY BROTHERS....



RAMA SMILED AND REPLIED IN A MOCKING TONE.

I AM ALREADY MARRIED. BUT, LOOK, HERE IS MY BROTHER, LAKSHMANA. HE IS WORTHY OF YOU, O BEAUTIFUL ONE !





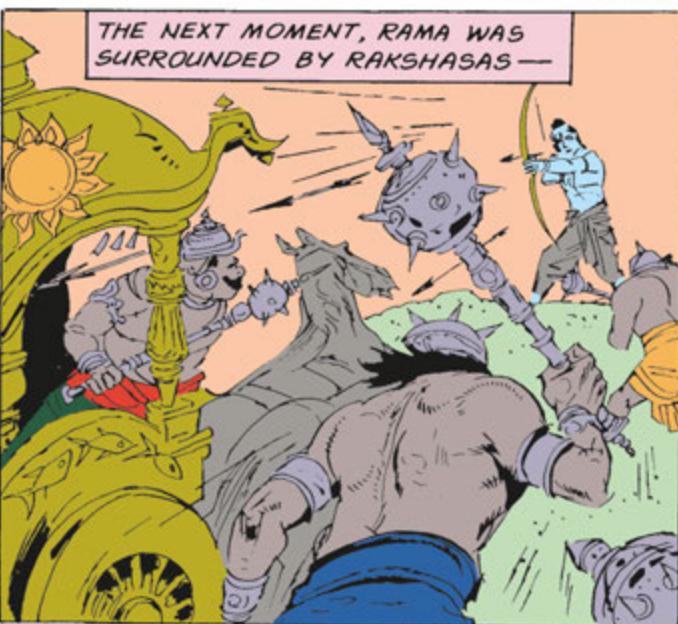
LAKSHMANA LEAPED AT HER AND CUT OFF HER EARS AND NOSE. SHOORPANAKHA REGAINED HER TRUE FORM AND FLED.



NOT LONG AFTER, SHOORPANAKHA RETURNED TO PANCHAVATI WITH DOOSHANA, KHARA AND FOURTEEN THOUSAND RAKSHASAS.



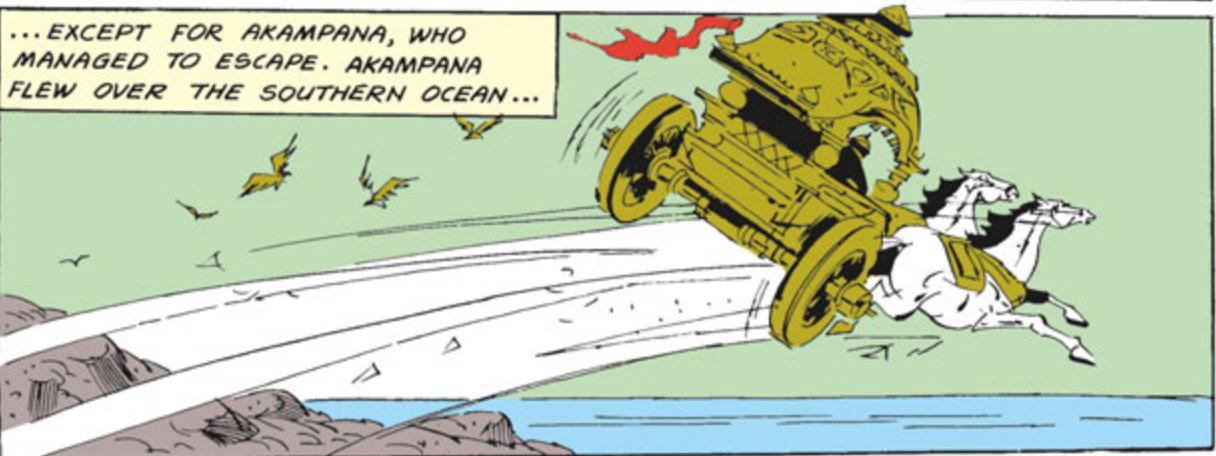
THE NEXT MOMENT, RAMA WAS SURROUNDED BY RAKSHASAS —



AND HE KILLED THEM ALL SINGLE-HANDED ...



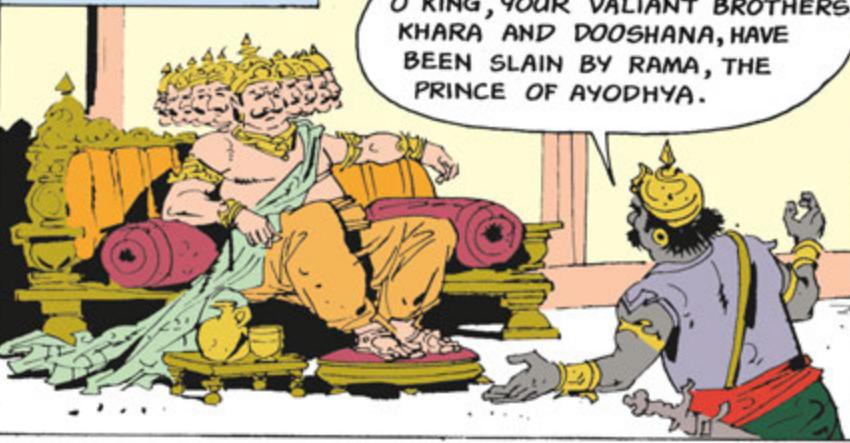
...EXCEPT FOR AKAMPANA, WHO MANAGED TO ESCAPE. AKAMPANA FLEW OVER THE SOUTHERN OCEAN...



...AND REACHED LANKA, WHERE RULED RAVANA, THE MIGHTY KING OF RAKSHASAS.

O KING, YOUR VALIANT BROTHERS, KHARA AND DOOSHANA, HAVE BEEN SLAIN BY RAMA, THE PRINCE OF AYODHYA.

MY BROTHERS KILLED BY A MERE MAN!



HE HAS INVITED HIS OWN DESTRUCTION BY KILLING MY BROTHERS! I'LL SLAY HIM!

O MIGHTY ONE, NOT EVEN THE GODS CAN OVERCOME RAMA!



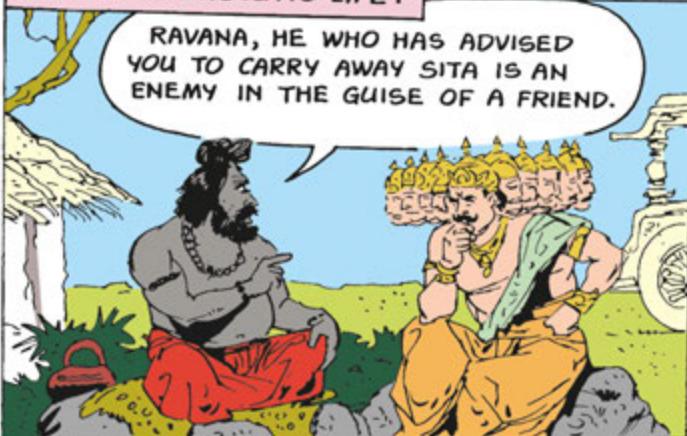
THE ONLY WAY TO DESTROY HIM IS TO CARRY AWAY HIS BEAUTIFUL WIFE, SITA. BEREFT OF HER WHOM HE LOVES DEARLY HE WILL CERTAINLY DIE OF A BROKEN HEART!

LET ME CONSULT MARICHA.



RAVANA CALLED ON MARICHA WHO WAS NOW LEADING AN ASCETIC LIFE.

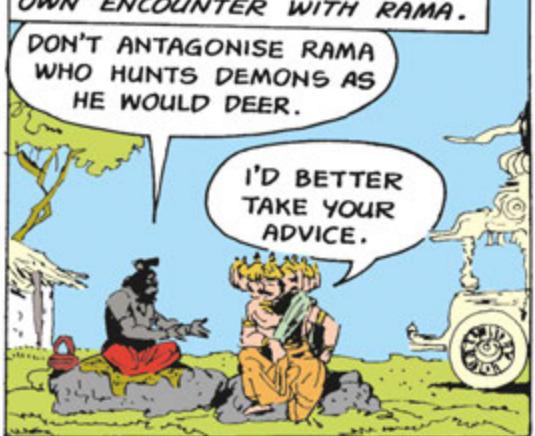
RAVANA, HE WHO HAS ADVISED YOU TO CARRY AWAY SITA IS AN ENEMY IN THE GUISE OF A FRIEND.



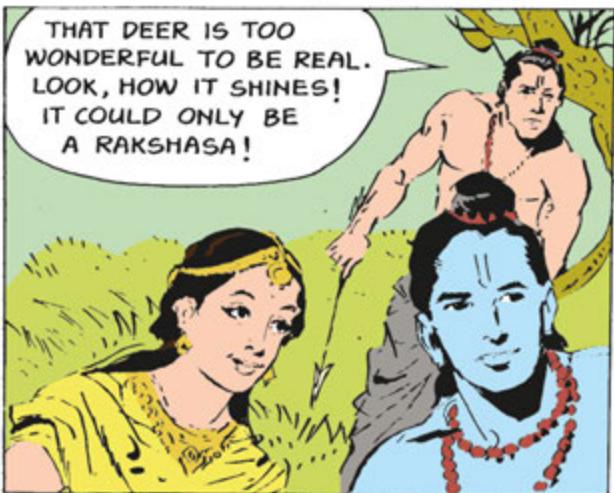
MARICHA THEN RECALLED HIS OWN ENCOUNTER WITH RAMA.

DON'T ANTAGONISE RAMA WHO HUNTS DEMONS AS HE WOULD DEER.

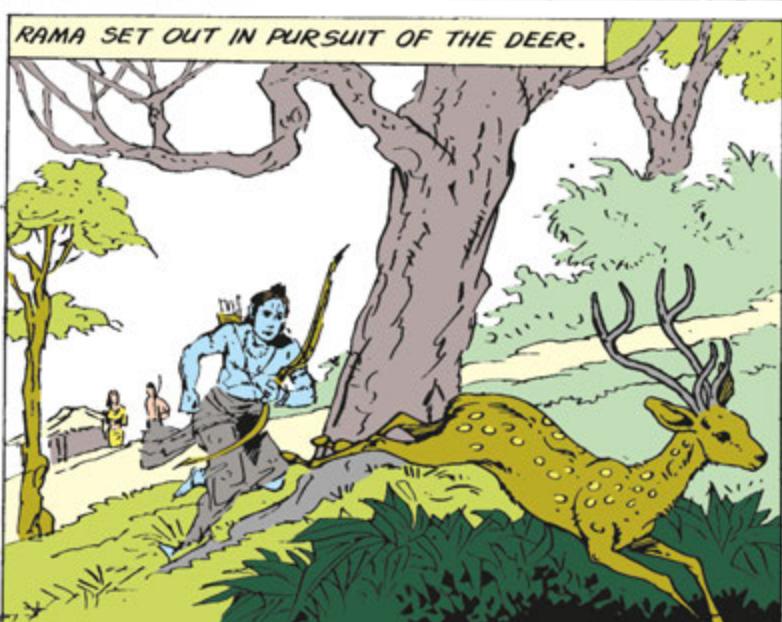
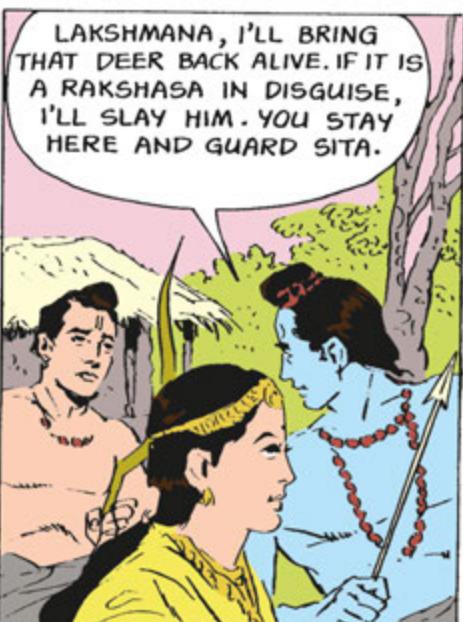
I'D BETTER TAKE YOUR ADVICE.



THE NEXT MOMENT —



IGNORING LAKSHMANA'S WORDS, SITA  
CONTINUED —



WHEN HE RETURNED HOME, RAVANA FOUND SHOORPANAKHA WAITING FOR HIM.

RAVANA WENT TO MARICHA AGAIN TO SEEK HIS HELP IN ABDUCTING SITA —

BROTHER, LOOK AT YOUR DEAR SISTER MUTILATED BY THAT MAN FROM AYODHYA! IF YOU DON'T AVENGE THE DEATH OF KHARA AND DOOSHANA, BOTH THE GODS AND HUMANS WILL CEASE TO FEAR THE RAKSHASAS! YOU MUST ACT AT ONCE!



O KING, THERE IS NO GREATER SIN THAN COVETING ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE! LEAVE SITA ALONE.

YOU REFUSE? THEN YOU SHALL FEEL THE KEEN EDGE OF MY BLADE!



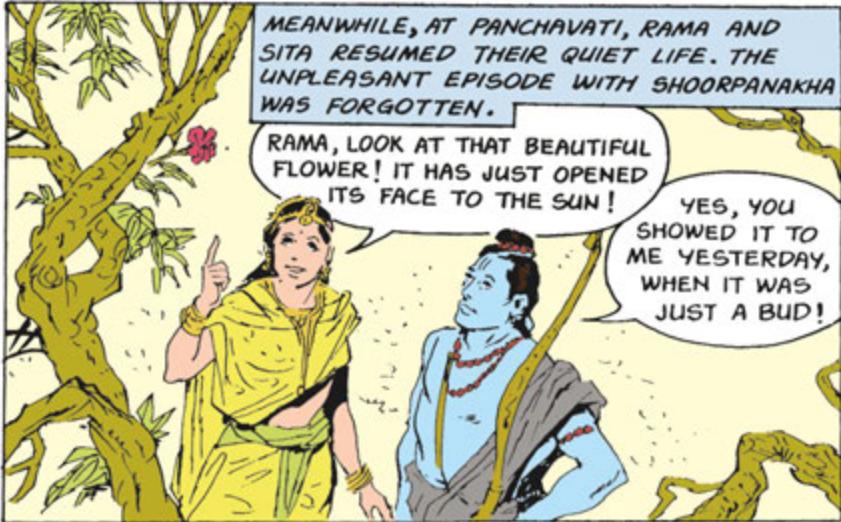
I'LL DO WHAT YOU ASK. BUT, REMEMBER, THOSE FOR WHOM THE LAST HOUR HAS STRUCK DISREGARD THE COUNSEL OF THEIR WELL-WISHERS.



MEANWHILE, AT PANCHAVATI, RAMA AND SITA RESUMED THEIR QUIET LIFE. THE UNPLEASANT EPISODE WITH SHOORPANAKHA WAS FORGOTTEN.

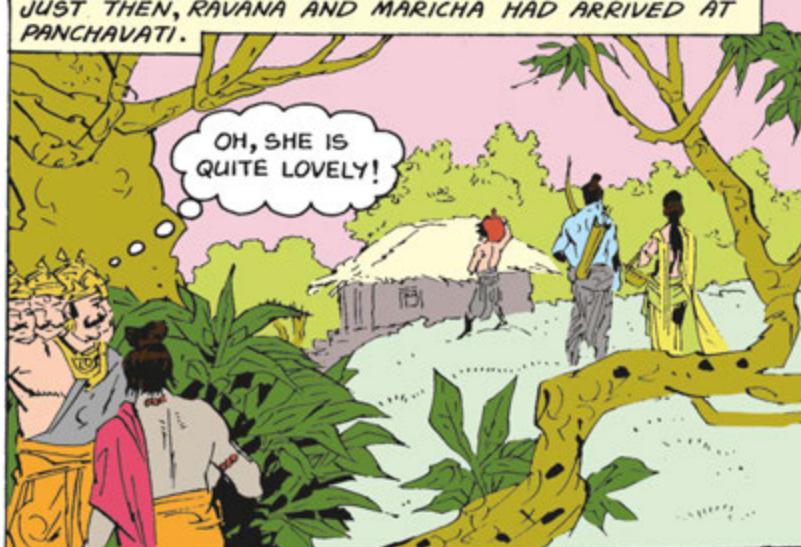
RAMA, LOOK AT THAT BEAUTIFUL FLOWER! IT HAS JUST OPENED ITS FACE TO THE SUN!

YES, YOU SHOWED IT TO ME YESTERDAY, WHEN IT WAS JUST A BUD!



JUST THEN, RAVANA AND MARICHA HAD ARRIVED AT PANCHAVATI.

OH, SHE IS QUITE LOVELY!



MARICHA, YOUR TASK IS TO LURE RAMA AND LAKSHMANA AWAY FROM THE COTTAGE.



SITA AND LAKSHMANA WAITED A LONG TIME BUT RAMA STILL DID NOT RETURN.

THE SWIFT-FOOTED DEER  
MUST HAVE LED HIM FAR.

RAMA WILL GET  
THE DEER, DEAD  
OR ALIVE.

SUDDENLY —

O SITA ...  
O LAKSHMANA ...

MY  
LORD!

IT IS MY LORD CRYING FOR  
HELP. LAKSHMANA! RUSH TO  
HIS AID. HE MUST BE IN  
DANGER!

LAKSHMANA WAS UNPERTURBED.

HE CAN'T BE. RAMA IS  
INVINCIBLE. IT MUST BE A  
RAKSHASA MIMICKING HIM.  
I WON'T LEAVE  
YOUR SIDE.

BUT SITA WAS NOT CONVINCED.

GO, LAKSHMANA!  
PLEASE GO! HELP  
MY HUSBAND!

I CAN'T GO. I CAN'T  
LEAVE YOU HERE  
UNPROTECTED.

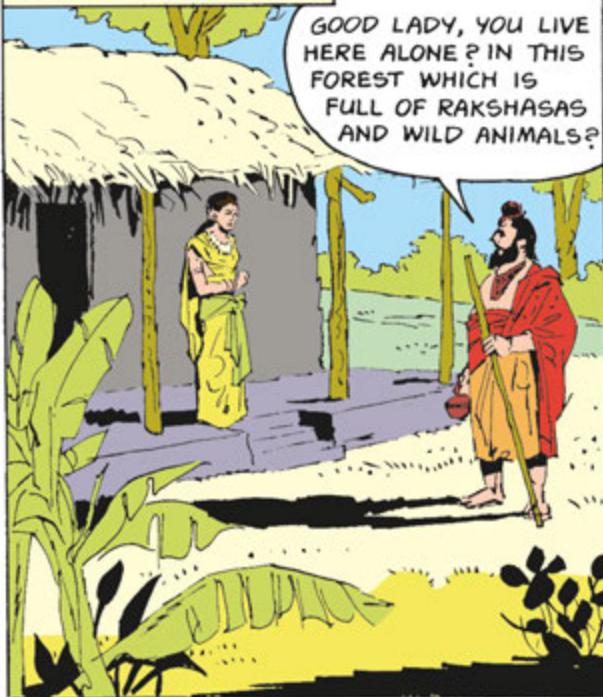
YOU ARE ONLY  
INTERESTED IN ME!  
WHAT'S THE USE OF  
YOUR PROTECTING  
ME WHEN MY HUSBAND  
IS IN DANGER?

I WOULD  
RATHER KILL MYSELF  
THAN LIVE WITHOUT  
RAMA!

ALL RIGHT, I'LL GO. BUT  
I GO UNWILLINGLY. MAY  
I FIND YOU SAFE  
WHEN I RETURN  
WITH RAMA!

GOOD! SOON SHE  
WILL BE ALONE.  
MARICHA HAS DONE  
HIS JOB WELL.

RAVANA THEN WENT TOWARDS SITA IN THE GUISE OF AN ASCETIC.



SITA OFFERED HIM WATER TO WASH HIS FEET, AND FRUIT TO EAT.



I AM RAMA'S CONSORT AND HIS ALONE ! VILE MAN, TO CARRY ME AWAY WOULD BE LIKE TAKING A BLAZING FIRE IN YOUR GARMENTS !



RAMA IS MY INFERIOR  
IN COMBAT. ACCEPT  
ME AS YOUR LORD!

O, RAKSHASA, HE  
WHO INSULTS A  
CHASTE LADY WILL  
NEVER ESCAPE  
DEATH EVEN IF HE  
DRINKS THE NECTAR  
OF IMMORTALITY.

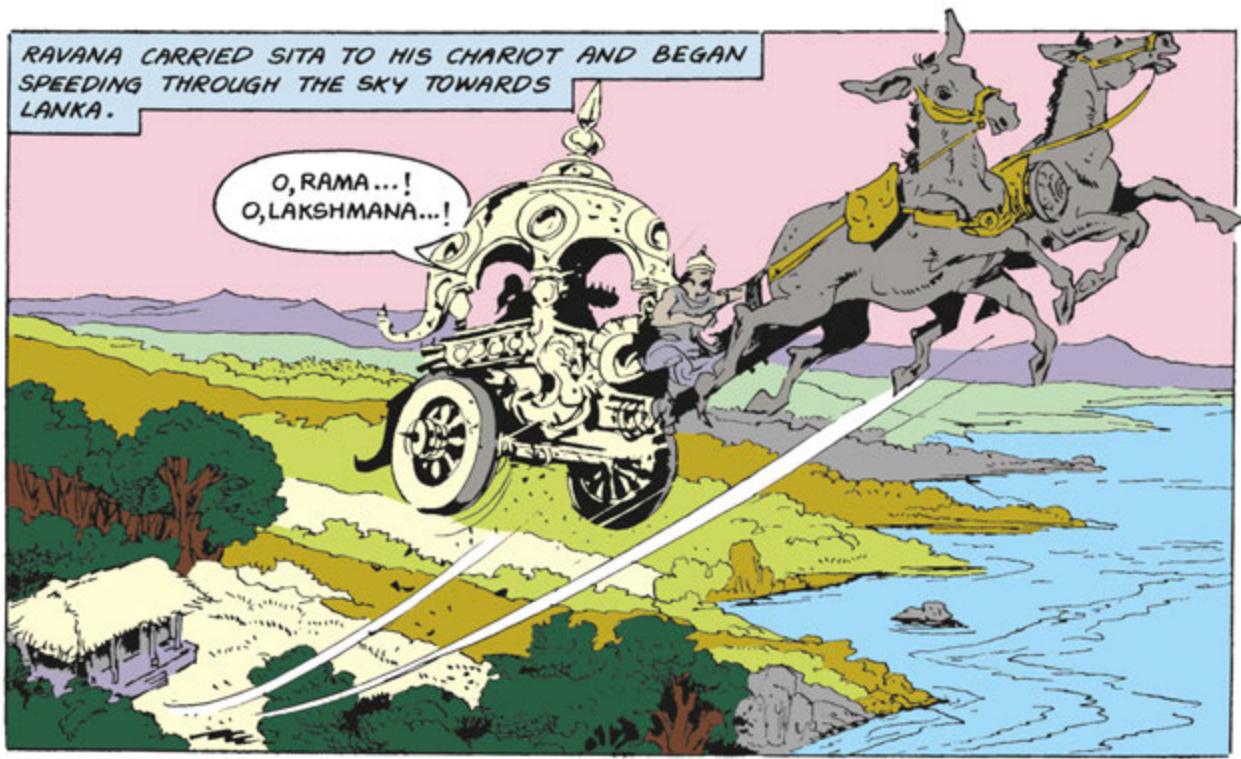
HAVEN'T YOU  
HEARD OF MY VALOUR?  
I CAN LIFT THE EARTH,  
PIERCE THE SUN AND  
DESTROY DEATH  
HIMSELF IN COMBAT!

INFLAMED BY SITA'S BEAUTY AND ANGERED BY HER REJECTION OF HIM,  
RAVANA ASSUMED HIS TRUE FORM AND DRAGGED SITA OUT  
OF THE COTTAGE.

SURRENDER TO  
A MASTER FAMED  
THROUGHOUT THE  
THREE WORLDS!

O RAMA!  
O RAMA....

RAVANA CARRIED SITA TO HIS CHARIOT AND BEGAN SPEEDING THROUGH THE SKY TOWARDS LANKA.



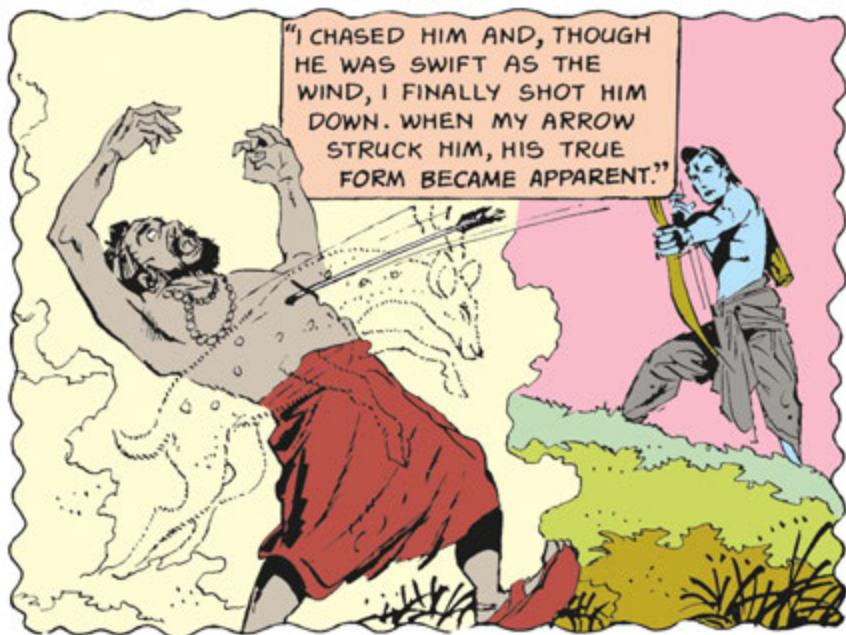
MEANWHILE IN ANOTHER PART OF THE FOREST —



I DID NOT CRY OUT! AS YOU SUSPECTED, THE DEER WAS NO ORDINARY DEER. IT WAS MARICHA, THE RAKHSHA.



"I CHASED HIM AND, THOUGH HE WAS SWIFT AS THE WIND, I FINALLY SHOT HIM DOWN. WHEN MY ARROW STRUCK HIM, HIS TRUE FORM BECAME APPARENT."

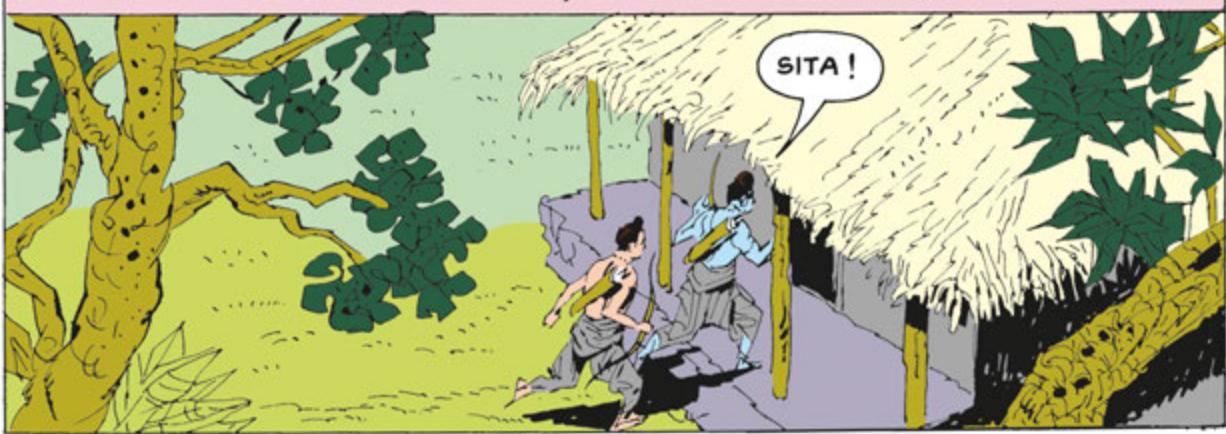


THEN, MIMICKING MY VOICE WITH HIS DYING BREATH HE CALLED OUT YOUR NAME AND SITA'S !

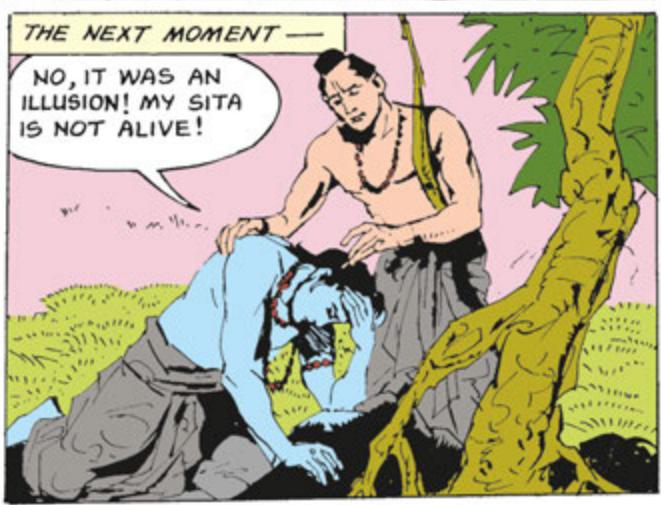
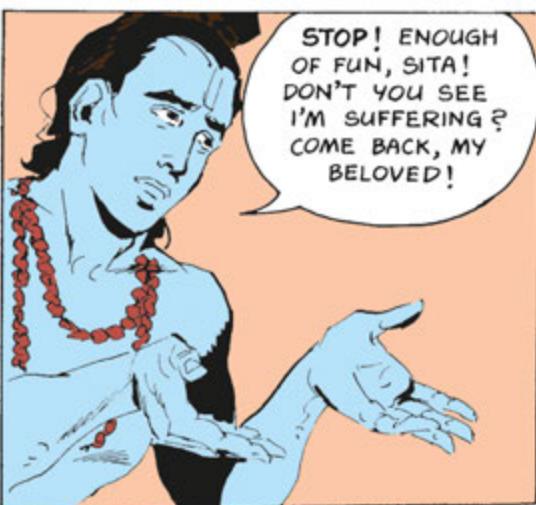
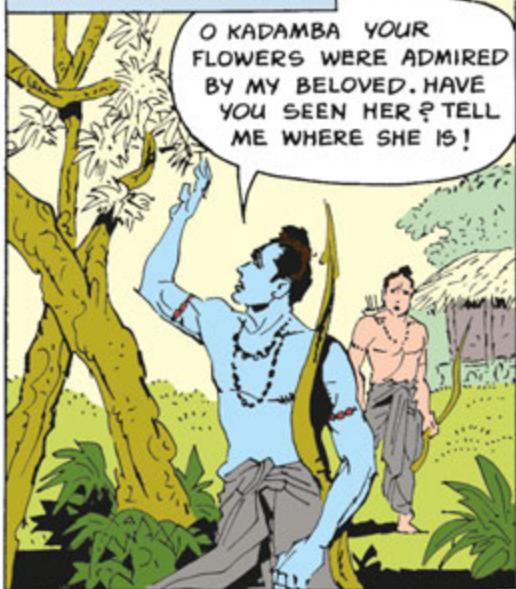
I KNEW IT WAS NOT YOU ! BUT SITA WAS DISTRACTED BY FEAR AND FORCED ME TO COME !

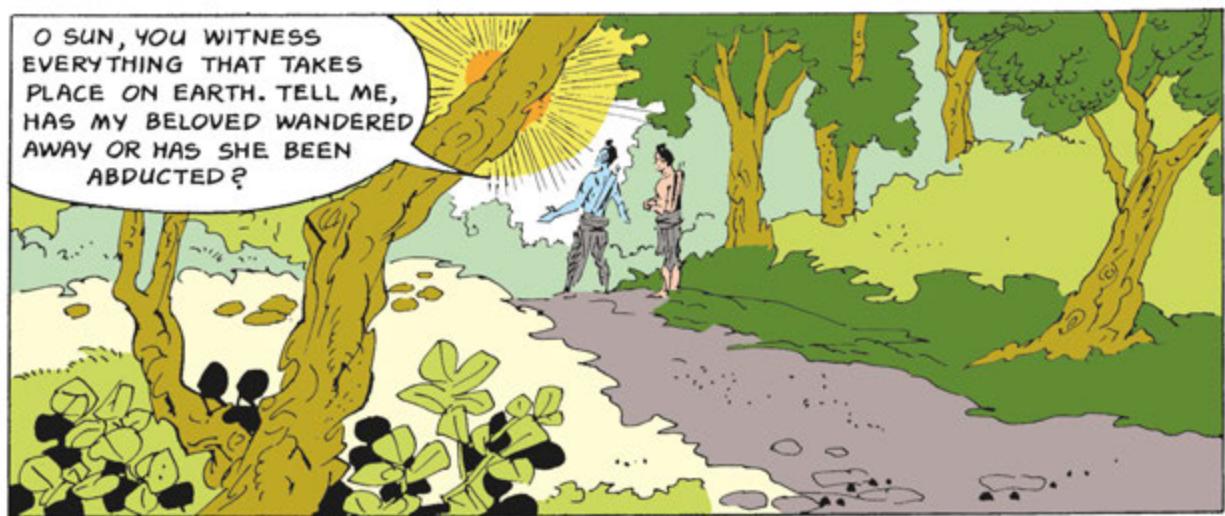
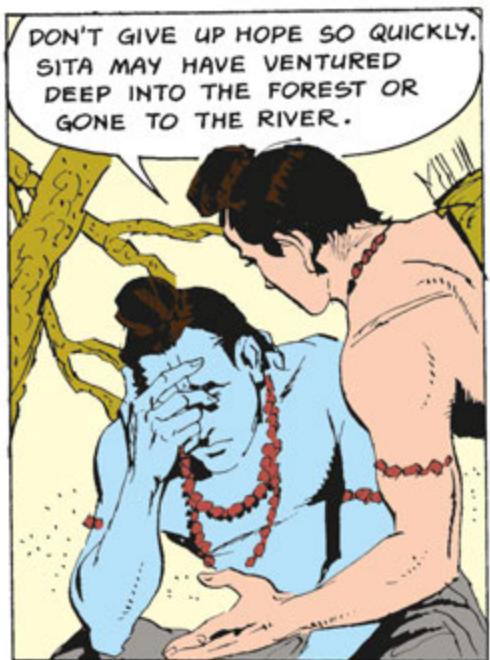


WHEN THE TWO REACHED THE ASHRAM, AN OMINOUS SILENCE GREETED THEM.



BUT SITA WAS NOT THERE. OVERCOME BY GRIEF, RAMA ADDRESSED THE TREES IN THE ASHRAM.





RAMA CONTINUED HIS SEARCH, ASKING RIVERS, TREES  
AND ANIMALS THE SAME QUESTION —

O DEER, SITA  
LOVED YOU. TELL  
ME WHERE SHE  
IS!



RAMA, THE DEER KEEPS  
LOOKING SOUTHWARDS.  
LET'S GO IN THAT  
DIRECTION!



WHEN THE BROTHERS PROCEEDED  
SOUTHWARDS, RAMA FOUND  
SOME FLOWERS SCATTERED  
ON THE GROUND.



LOOK LAKSHMANA! THESE ARE  
THE FLOWERS I HAD GATHERED  
FOR SITA. THE SUN, THE  
WIND AND THE EARTH  
HAVE PRESERVED THEM  
FOR ME!

A LITTLE FURTHER —

THESE ARE  
SITA'S FOOTPRINTS!  
BUT WHAT ARE  
THESE? GIANT  
FOOT-PRINTS!



AND THESE  
ARE SOME OF HER  
ORNAMENTS!



A SHATTERED CHARIOT,  
A BROKEN BOW, DEAD  
MULES AND A  
CHARIOOTEER KILLED!  
WHAT'S THIS? A  
BATTLE FOUGHT  
FOR SITA?



THE NEXT MOMENT, RAMA FLEW INTO  
AN UNCONTROLLABLE RAGE.



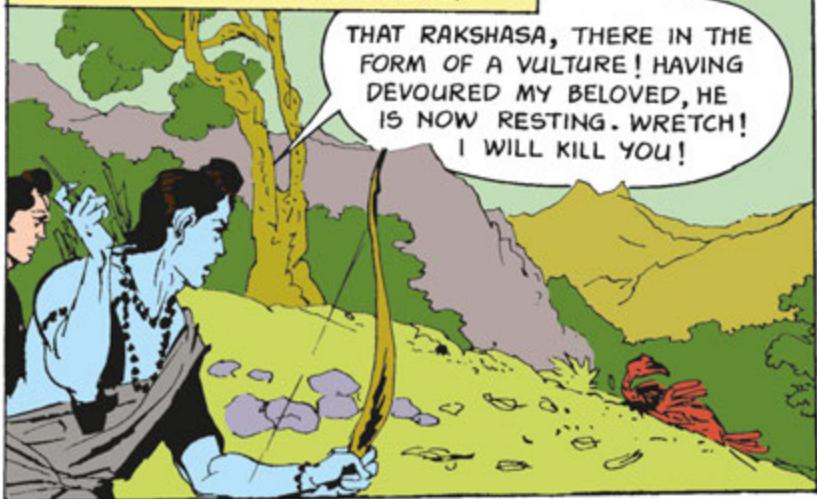
AS RAMA PREPARED TO RELEASE  
HIS TERRIBLE ARROW —

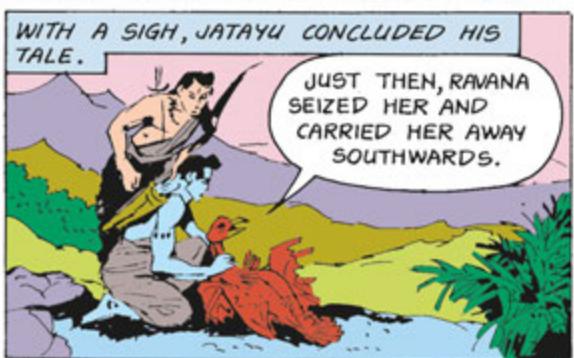


DON'T DESTROY THE  
WORLD FOR ONE MAN'S  
SIN! SEEK OUT YOUR  
TORMENTOR AND  
PUNISH HIM, BY ALL  
MEANS. BUT SPARE  
INNOCENT LIVES.



THUS PACIFIED, RAMA WITHDREW THE ARROW AND  
PROCEEDED FURTHER. SUDDENLY —





THEN HE STOPPED IN SUR

-

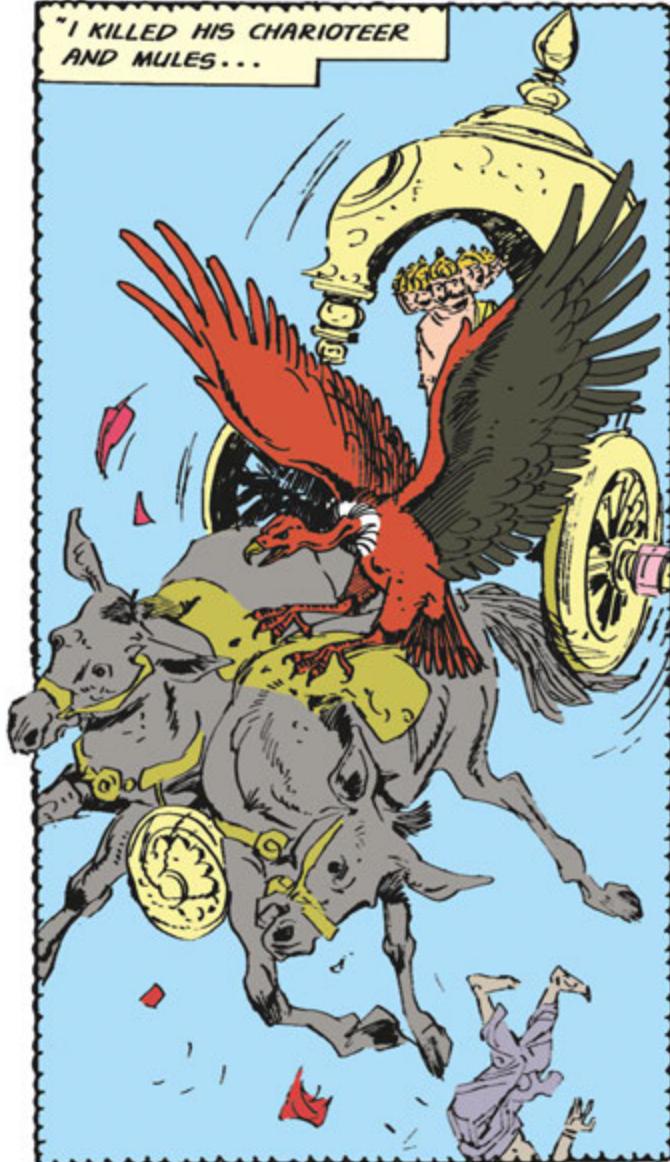
IT IS JATAYU!  
AND HE IS HURT!

O, RAMA, I SAW SITA  
BEING CARRIED AWAY  
BY RAVANA!



"I KILLED HIS CHARIOTEER  
AND MULES...

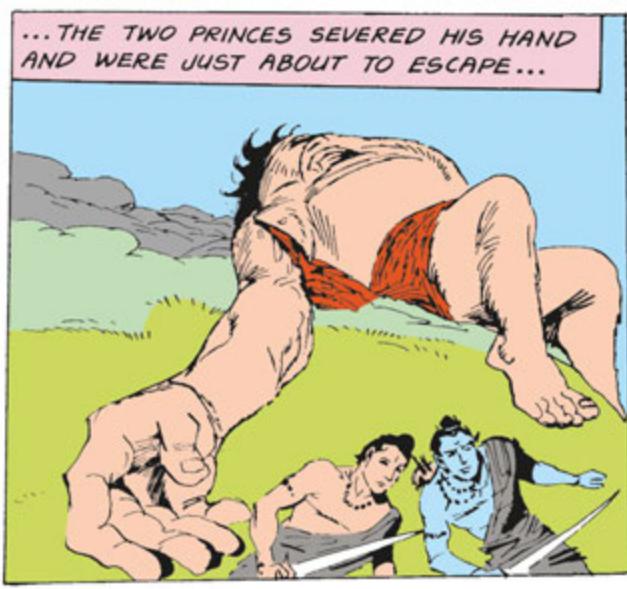
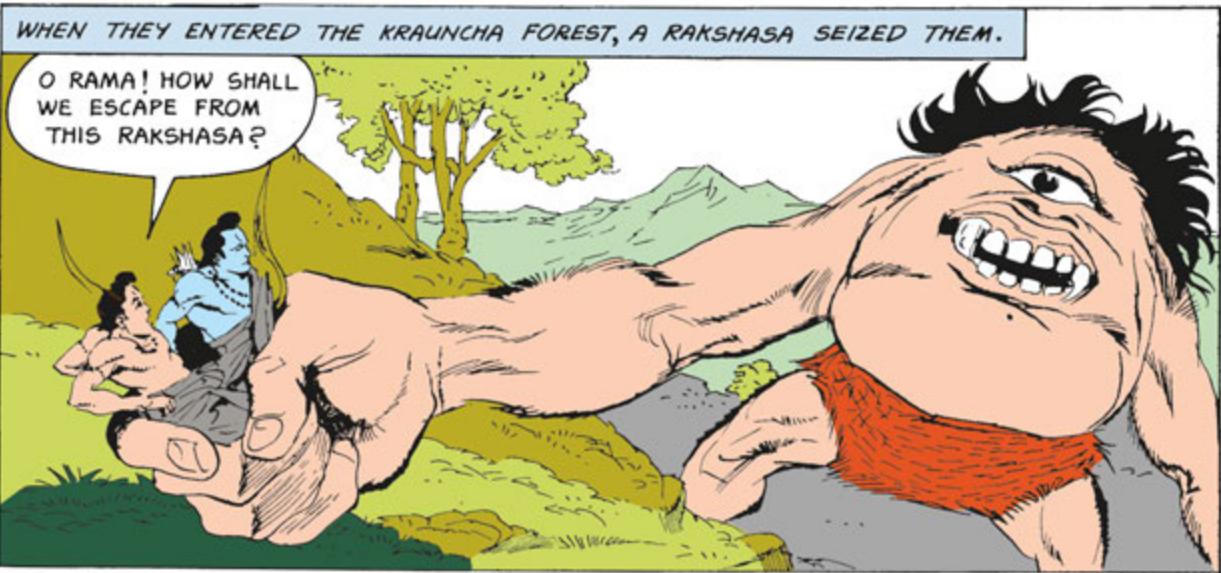
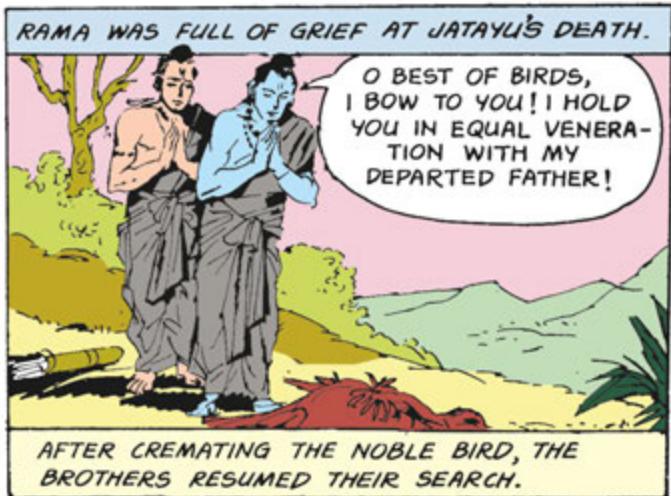
...AND SHATTERED HIS CHARIOT.  
RAVANA JUMPED TO THE GROUND,  
CARRYING SITA WITH HIM.

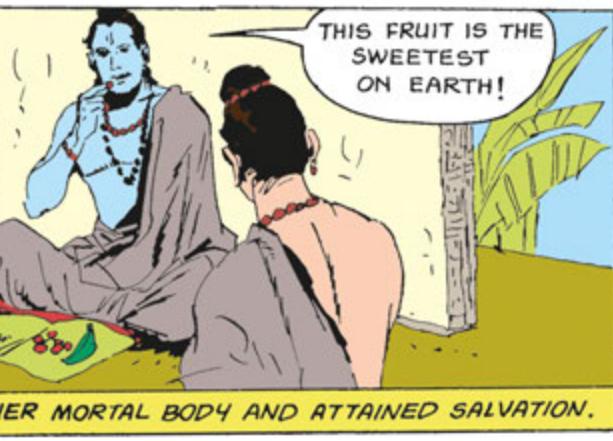
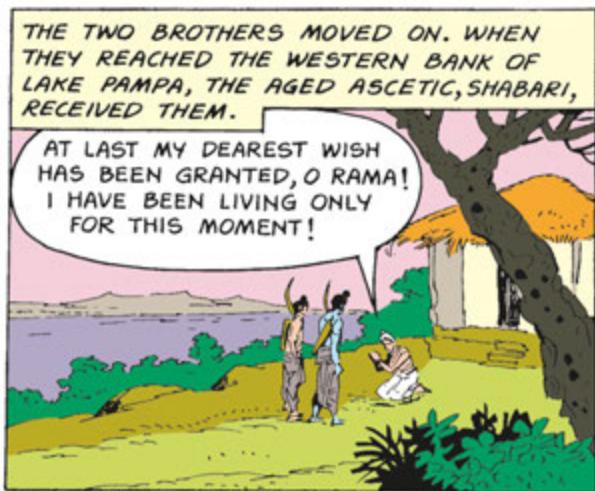
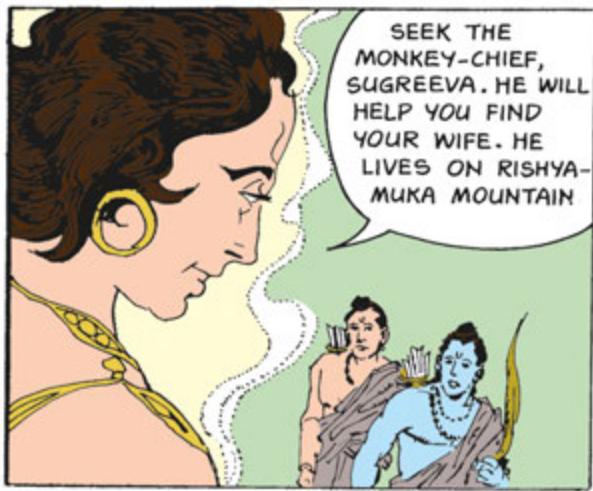
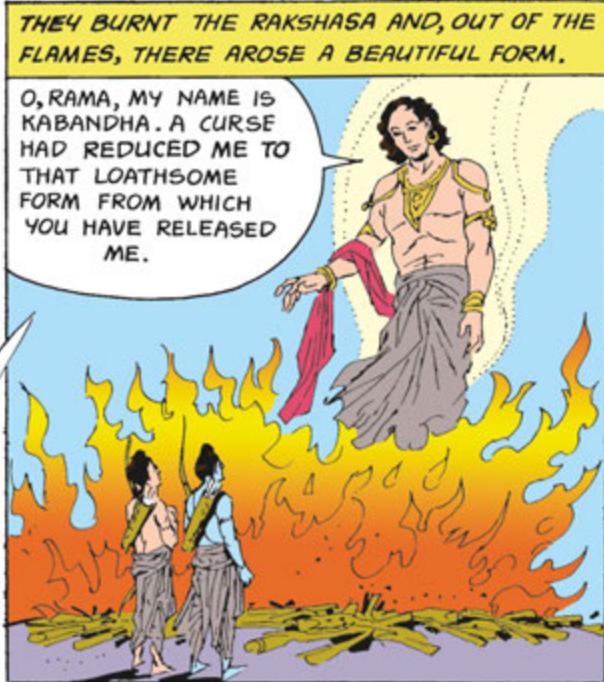
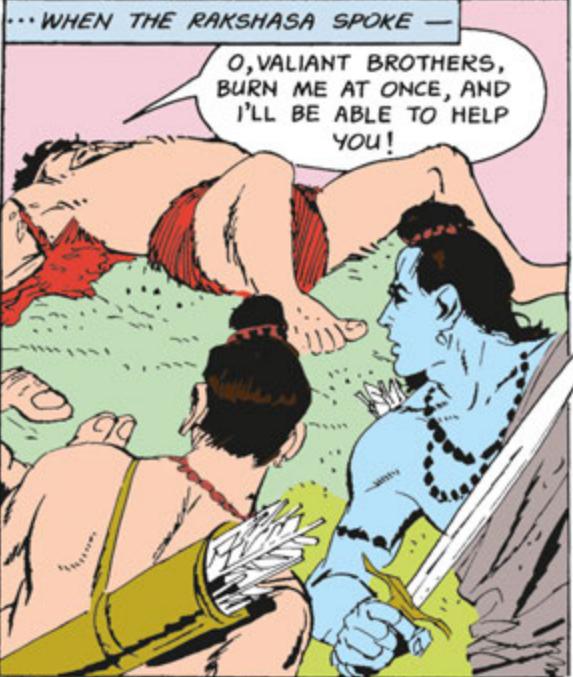


LEAVING SITA THERE, RAVANA ROSE  
INTO THE SKY AGAIN.

CHILD, RUN AWAY TO  
SAFETY. I'LL DEAL WITH  
THIS WRETCH!







SOON AFTER, SHABARI ABANDONED HER MORTAL BODY AND ATTAINED SALVATION.

RESUMING THEIR JOURNEY, RAMA AND LAKSHMANA CROSSED THE LAKE PAMPA. AS THEY APPROACHED RISHYAMUKA MOUNTAIN, A MENDICANT MET THEM.

YOU ARE STRANGERS HERE. WHERE HAVE YOU COME FROM?

ER...ER...



SEEING THEIR HESITATION, HE CONTINUED—

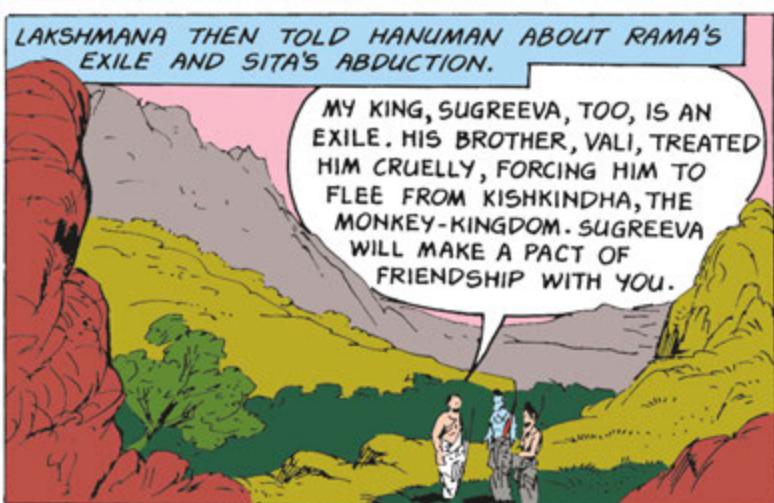
DON'T BE AFRAID. SUGREEVA, THE KING OF THE MONKEYS, DESIRES YOUR FRIENDSHIP. I AM HANUMAN, HIS MINISTER.



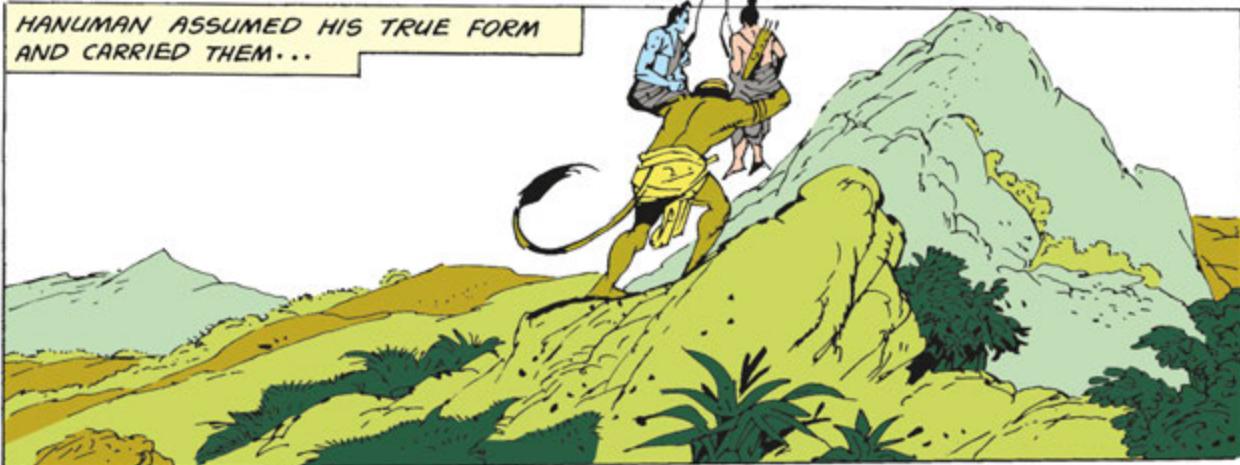
O, HANUMAN, WE HAVE HEARD OF SUGREEVA'S VALOUR. IN FACT, WE HAVE COME IN SEARCH OF HIM.

LAKSHMANA THEN TOLD HANUMAN ABOUT RAMA'S EXILE AND SITA'S ABDUCTION.

MY KING, SUGREEVA, TOO, IS AN EXILE. HIS BROTHER, VALI, TREATED HIM CRUELLY, FORCING HIM TO FLEE FROM KISHKINDHA, THE MONKEY-KINGDOM. SUGREEVA WILL MAKE A PACT OF FRIENDSHIP WITH YOU.



HANUMAN ASSUMED HIS TRUE FORM AND CARRIED THEM...



...TO RISHYAMUKA MOUNTAIN WHERE SUGREEVA LIVED. AFTER HANUMAN HAD RELATED RAMA'S STORY—



WITH FIRE AS WITNESS, RAMA AND SUGREEVA WERE UNITED IN FRIENDSHIP.



SUGREEVA, I WILL HELP YOU REGAIN YOUR KINGDOM.



RAMA, I WILL HELP YOU GET BACK YOUR WIFE BE SHE HIDDEN IN HEAVEN OR IN THE NETHER WORLD!



WE SAW SITA BEING CARRIED AWAY. SHE WAS CALLING OUT YOUR NAME AND SHE EVEN THREW DOWN HER JEWELS WHICH WE HAVE PRESERVED.

BRING THEM TO ME QUICKLY, DEAR FRIEND!



SUGREEVA BROUGHT SITA'S JEWELS FROM THE CAVE. RAMA TOOK THEM GENTLY.



HE SHOWED THEM TO LAKSHMANA.

O LAKSHMANA,  
DON'T YOU  
RECOGNISE  
SITA'S  
ORNAMENTS?

I DON'T RECOGNISE THE  
BRACELET AND EAR-  
RINGS, BUT I DO  
KNOW THESE  
ANKLETS FOR  
I WORSHIPPED  
HER FEET ALONE.

LATER, SUGREEVA CHALLENGED HIS WICKED BROTHER VALI TO FIGHT HIM. ALTHOUGH BADLY BEATEN EARLIER HE FOUGHT AGAIN, CONFIDENT THAT RAMA WOULD PLAY HIS PART AT THE RIGHT TIME.



RAMA'S ARROW  
FOUND ITS MARK  
AND VALI WAS SLAIN.



RAMA CROWNED SUGREEVA THE KING OF KISHKINDHA. UNFORTUNATELY, FORGETTING HIS DUTY TO RAMA, THE KING GAVE HIMSELF UP TO A LIFE OF PLEASURE. THEN HANUMAN GENTLY REBUKED HIS KING.



REPENTANT, SUGREEVA'S SENSE OF DUTY WAS AROUSED. HE CALLED A MEETING OF THE MONKEYS.

MY LOYAL SOLDIERS,  
I WANT YOU TO SPREAD OUT AND GO IN  
DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS  
IN SEARCH OF SITA!

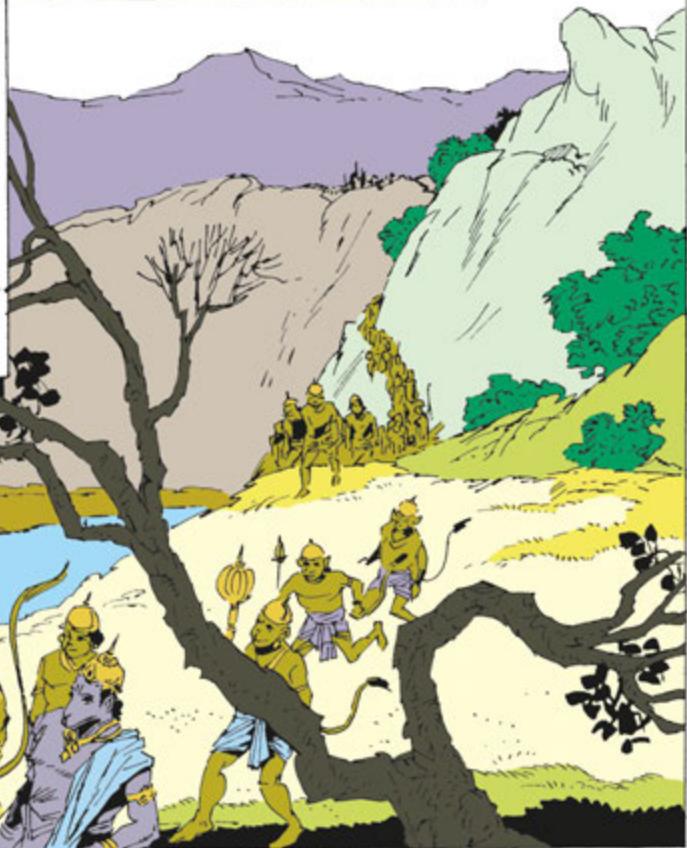


BEFORE HANUMAN SET OUT, RAMA GAVE HIM A RING.

IF ANYONE CAN FIND SITA IT IS YOU, HANUMAN. TAKE THIS RING! IT WILL BE A SIGN TO HER THAT YOU ARE MY MESSENGER.



HANUMAN WENT SOUTHWARDS ACCCOMPANIED BY ANGADA, THE CROWN PRINCE OF KISHKINDHA; JAMBAVAN, THE AGED AND WISE BEAR; AND MONKEYS OF GREAT STRENGTH.



THOUGH THEY SEARCHED CAREFULLY AND LONG, THEY COULD NOT FIND ANY TRACE OF SITA.

WHAT SHALL WE DO?  
THIS IS A FRUITLESS SEARCH!  
WE'LL NEVER FIND SITA!



THEN THEY NOTICED THE VULTURE, SAMPATI, BROTHER OF JATAYU, WHO HAD BEEN WATCHING THEM.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR SITA? I SAW RAVANA CARRYING HER ACROSS THE OCEAN TO HIS ISLAND KINGDOM, LANKA.



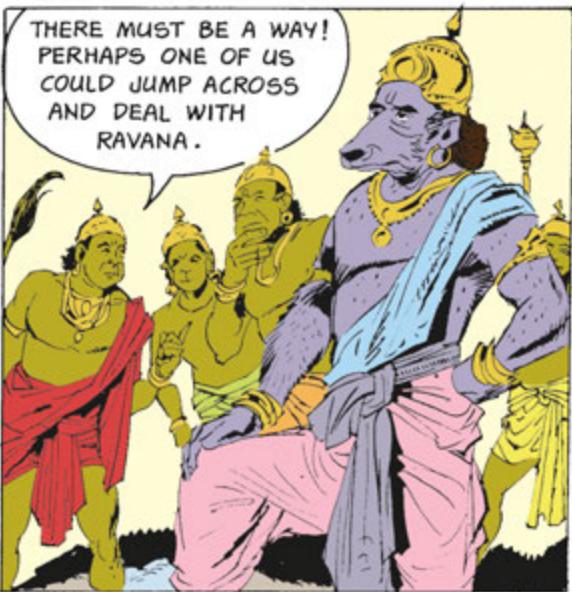
SO HANUMAN AND HIS ARMY RESUMED THEIR JOURNEY. WHEN THEY REACHED THE SOUTHERN OCEAN, THEY WERE FILLED WITH DISMAY.

THIS VAST STRETCH OF OCEAN LIES BETWEEN US AND LANKA. HOW SHALL WE GET ACROSS!

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! WE CAN'T GET TO LANKA!

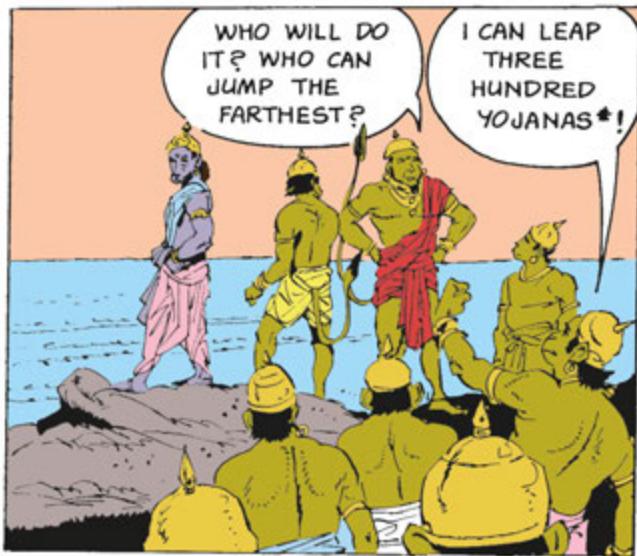


THERE MUST BE A WAY! PERHAPS ONE OF US COULD JUMP ACROSS AND DEAL WITH RAVANA.



WHO WILL DO IT? WHO CAN JUMP THE FARTHEST?

I CAN LEAP THREE HUNDRED YOJANAS\*!



BUT THERE WAS NO ONE AMONG THEM WHO COULD JUMP FAR ENOUGH, EXCEPT HANUMAN. JAMBAVAN, THE AGED BEAR APPROACHED HIM.

O HANUMAN, ONLY YOU CAN CROSS THE OCEAN! WHY ARE YOU SILENT? DON'T YOU KNOW YOUR OWN POWER?



I, FIVE HUNDRED!

I, FOUR HUNDRED!



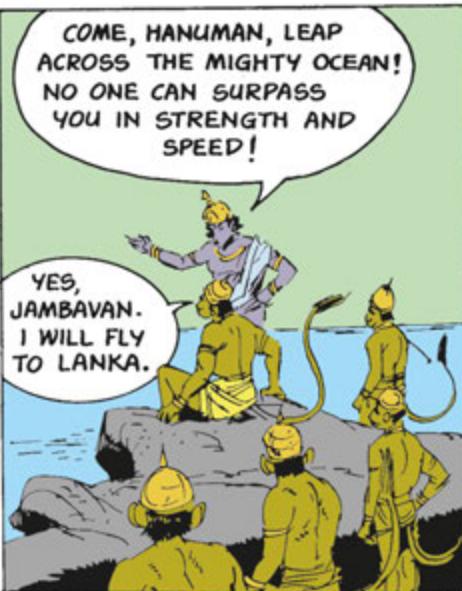
\* ONE YOJANA IS EQUAL TO THIRTEEN KILOMETRES

WHEN YOU WERE BUT A CHILD,  
YOU LEAPED TO SEIZE THE  
RISING SUN MISTAKING IT  
FOR A FRUIT!



COME, HANUMAN, LEAP  
ACROSS THE MIGHTY OCEAN!  
NO ONE CAN SURPASS  
YOU IN STRENGTH AND  
SPEED!

YES,  
JAMBAVAN.  
I WILL FLY  
TO LANKA.

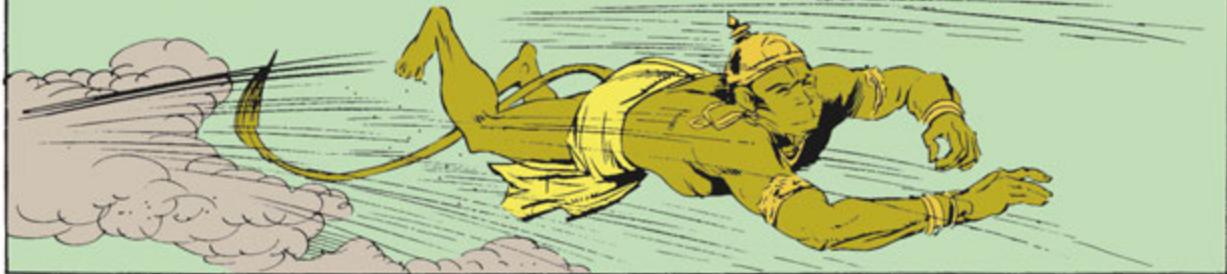


THEN HANUMAN, THE SON OF THE  
WIND-GOD, ASSUMED A HUGE FORM...

...AND LEAPED INTO THE SKY.



HANUMAN FLEW AT A GREAT SPEED.



SUDDENLY, A HUGE MOUNTAIN ROSE UP FROM THE OCEAN. HANUMAN STRUCK IT HARD ...



HANUMAN HAD BARELY FLOWN PAST MOUNT MAINAKA WHEN A NEW DANGER CONFRONTED HIM. SURASA, MOTHER OF SERPENTS, WHO HAD ASSUMED THE TERRIBLE FORM OF A SEA MONSTER TO TEST HANUMAN, WAITED FOR HIM WITH BURNING RAGE!



HANUMAN BEGAN TO INCREASE IN SIZE, BUT THE MONSTER ONLY OPENED HER JAWS WIDER AND WIDER.



... AND THE PEAK ASSUMED THE FORM OF A HUMAN FACE.

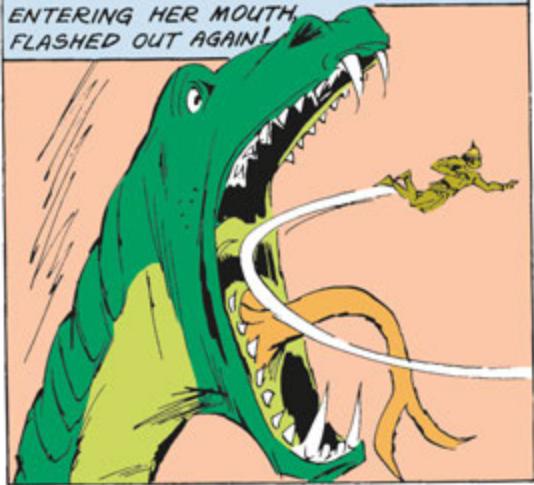
I AM MOUNT MAINAKA. YOUR FATHER ONCE HELPED ME. REST HERE A WHILE FOR YOU HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO.

THANK YOU, BUT I CAN'T REST TILL MY MISSION IS ACCOMPLISHED.



NO ONE CAN PASS ME WITHOUT ENTERING MY MOUTH. AND ONCE YOU ENTER, YOU CAN'T GET OUT ALIVE. SO PREPARE TO DIE!

SUDDENLY, HANUMAN REDUCED HIMSELF TO THE SIZE OF A THUMB AND, ENTERING HER MOUTH, FLASHED OUT AGAIN!



MEANWHILE, A RAKSHASI, SIMHIKA, WHO WAS LOOKING FOR FOOD, SPIED HIS SHADOW AS HE FLEW PAST HER.



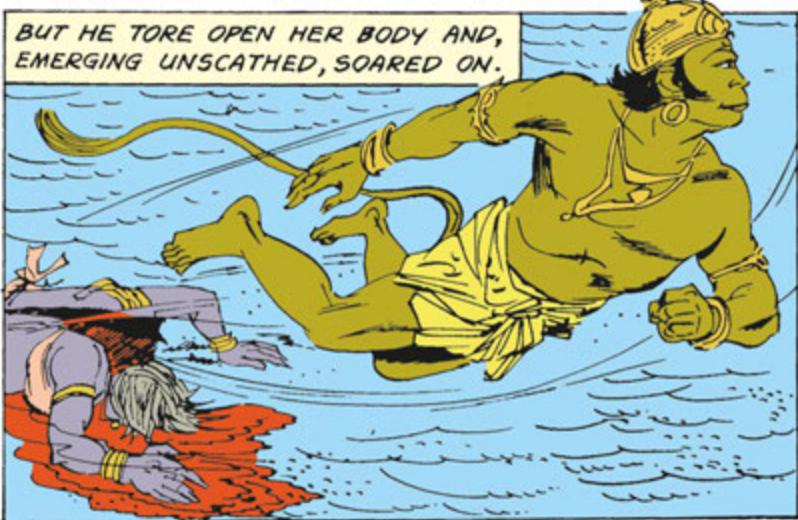
SIMHIKA SEIZED AT HIS SHADOW.



THE RAKSHASI OPENED HER MOUTH WIDE AS HANUMAN WAS DRAWN INTO HER JAWS BY A MYSTERIOUS FORCE.



BUT HE TORE OPEN HER BODY AND, EMERGING UNSCATCHED, SOARED ON.



HE WALKED THROUGH THE GOLDEN CITY OF LANKA  
TILL, AT LAST, HE CAME TO THE PALACE.



NO, IT CAN'T BE SITA!  
SEPARATED FROM RAMA WOULD  
SHE BE ABLE TO SLEEP? OR  
EAT? WOULD SHE YIELD TO  
RAVANA? THIS MUST BE SOME  
OTHER LADY - ONE OF RAVANA'S  
QUEENS, PERHAPS.



HANUMAN LEFT THE  
PALACE. ON REACHING A  
NEARBY GROVE, HE CLIMB-  
ED THE TALLEST TREE.

WILL I FIND  
RAMA'S CONSORT  
IN THIS GROVE?

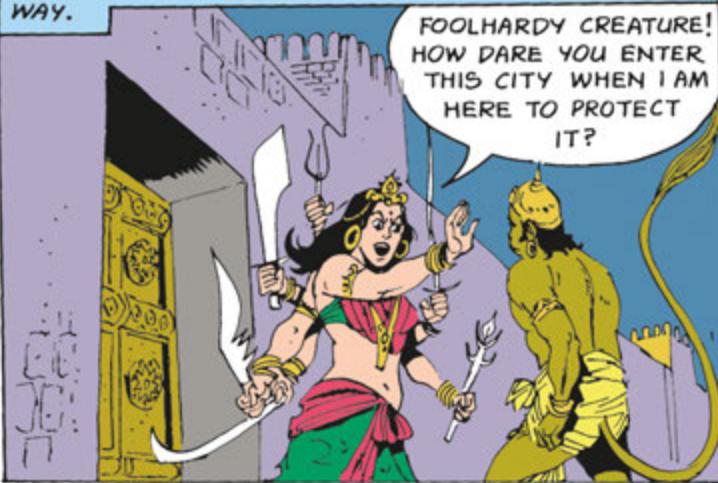


ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT, HE WANDERED SADLY ABOUT  
THE GROVE. AT DAY-BREAK —



WHEN, AT LAST, HE REACHED LANKA AND WAS ABOUT TO ENTER UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS, THE GUARDIAN DEITY OF THE CITY BARRED THE WAY.

FOOLHARDY CREATURE! HOW DARE YOU ENTER THIS CITY WHEN I AM HERE TO PROTECT IT?



THERE! THAT WILL TAKE CARE OF HER FOR THE MOMENT!

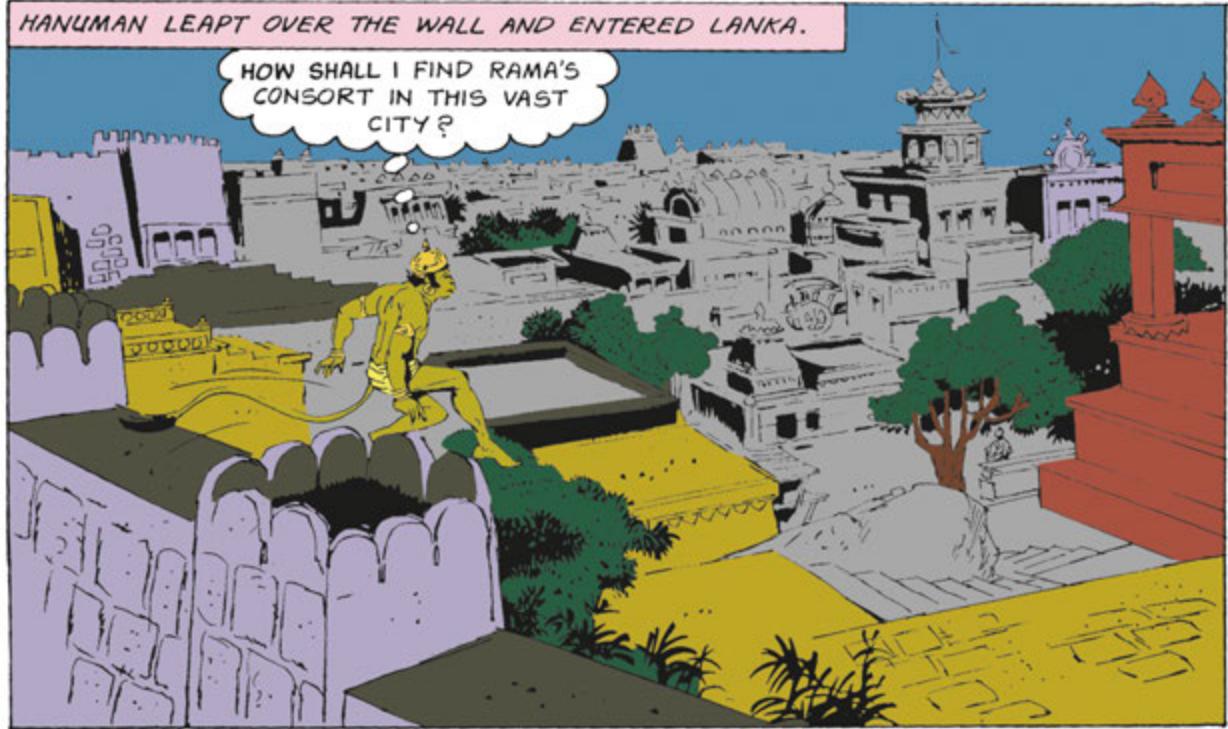


IT HAS BEEN FORETOLD THAT THE RAKSHASAS WILL CEASE TO BE INVINCIBLE WHEN I AM OVERCOME BY A MONKEY! I FEAR THAT DAY HAS COME!



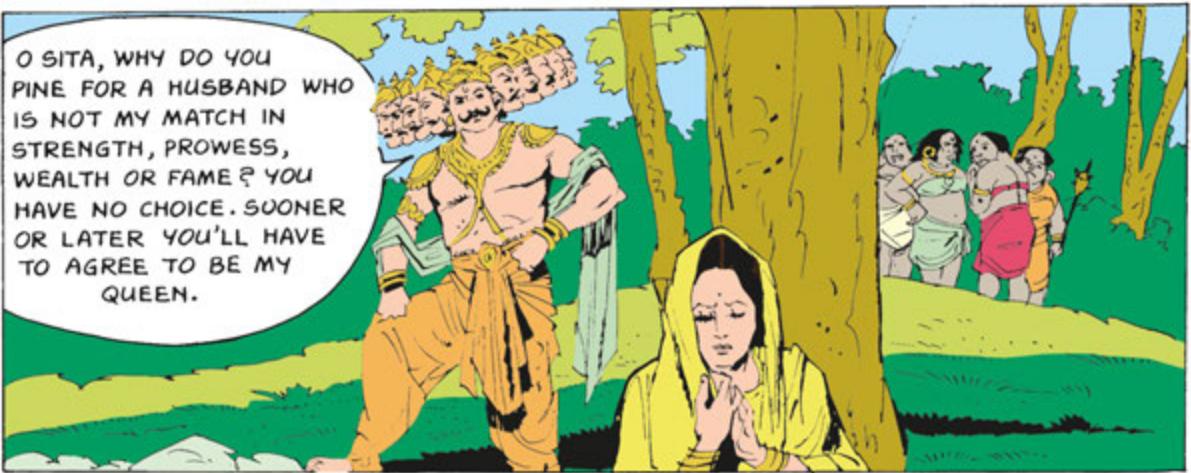
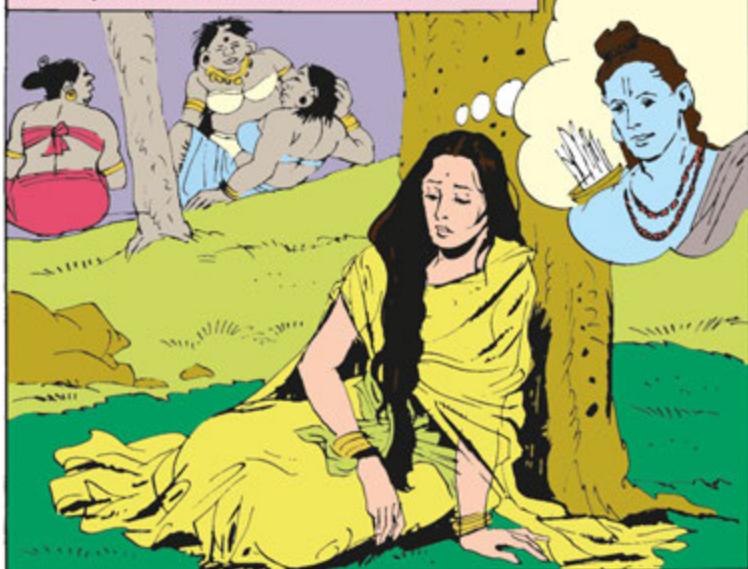
HANUMAN LEAPT OVER THE WALL AND ENTERED LANKA.

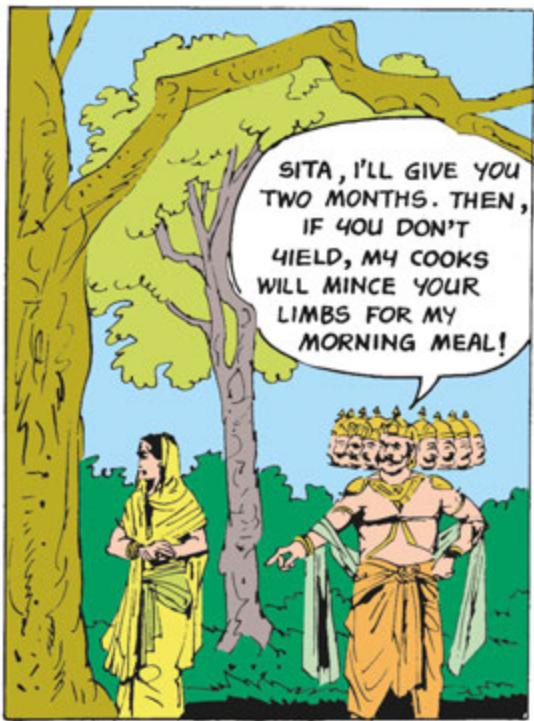
HOW SHALL I FIND RAMA'S CONSORT IN THIS VAST CITY?



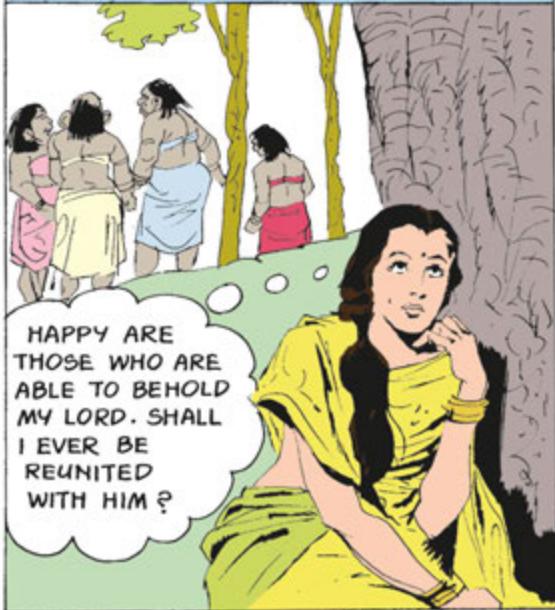
IT WAS INDEED SITA HELD CAPTIVE IN THE ASHOKA GROVE, GUARDED BY THE RAKSHASIS.

JUST THEN RAVANA ENTERED THE GROVE.





THE RAKSHASIS DRIFTED AWAY,  
DISCUSSING THE MATTER LOUDLY.



HANUMAN HAD, BY NOW, REACHED THE  
BRANCHES ABOVE SITA.

THE GRIEF-STRICKEN SITA IS NOT HERSELF.  
IF I MAKE MY APPEARANCE BEFORE HER  
NOW, SHE MAY MISTAKE ME FOR RAVANA  
IN DISGUISE. I MUST WIN HER CONFIDENCE  
FIRST. I WILL SPEAK TO HER OF RAMA'S  
EXPLOITS.



SITA UNTIED THE CORD THAT HELD HER HAIR  
TOGETHER.



HANUMAN BEGAN TO SPEAK SOFTLY ABOUT  
RAMA.

AT THE COMMAND OF HIS  
FATHER, RAMA, THE PRINCE OF  
AYODHYA, LEFT FOR THE  
FOREST ACCCOMPANIED BY HIS  
CONSORT, SITA, AND HIS  
BROTHER, LAKSHMANA....





RAMA WILL RESCUE YOU. NOTHING ELSE OCCUPIES HIS MIND. BUT NO ONE KNEW WHERE YOU WERE AND HE SENT ME AHEAD TO FIND OUT.



I WILL GO BACK AND TELL HIM YOU ARE HERE AND HE WILL COME AT ONCE TO RESCUE YOU. OR, PERHAPS, I COULD JUST CARRY YOU ON MY BACK TO RAMA.



NO, HANUMAN. RAMA WILL COME AND DESTROY RAVANA AND TAKE ME AWAY FROM HERE. ONLY THAT WILL VINDICATE MY HONOUR.

TAKING OUT A JEWEL WHICH SHE HAD CONCEALED IN HER CLOTHES, SHE OFFERED IT TO HANUMAN

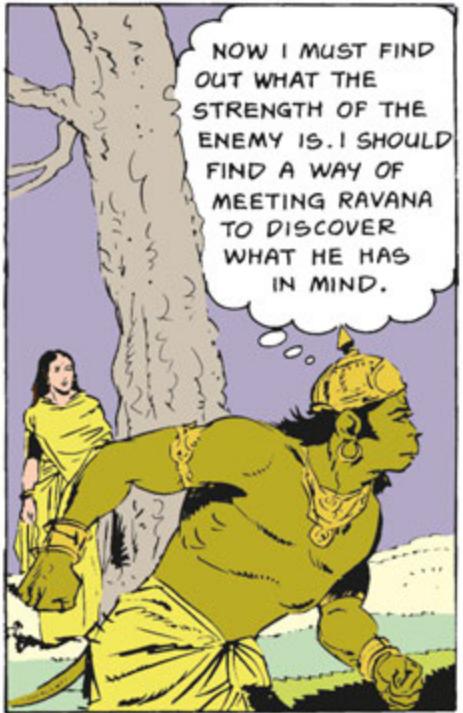


GIVE THIS TO MY LORD.



ASK HIM TO RESCUE ME FROM THE CRUEL AND WICKED RAVANA.

RAMA WILL BE HERE SOON. RAVANA WILL FALL BY RAMA'S ARROW AND YOU WILL BE REUNITED WITH YOUR LORD!



FINALLY, INDRAJIT INVOKED THE POWERFUL BRAHMA ASTRA WHICH ENABLED HIM TO BIND HANUMAN.

HA! I RECEIVED A BOON FROM BRAHMA HIMSELF BY WHICH I CAN BE FREE. BUT I WILL NOT USE IT. I MUST MEET RAVANA!

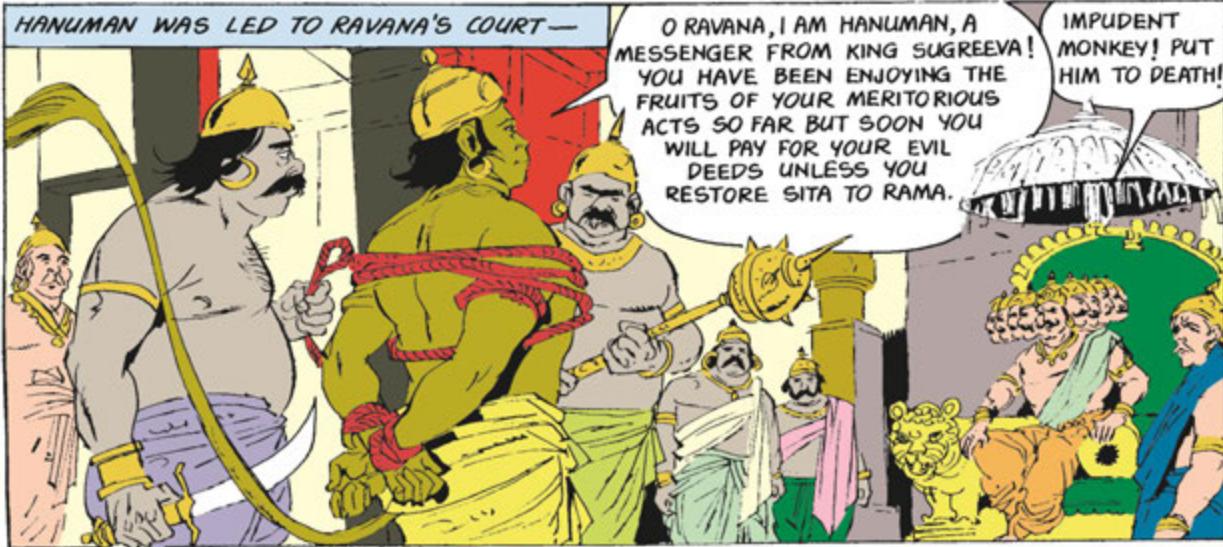
TAKE HIM AWAY!



HANUMAN WAS LED TO RAVANA'S COURT—

O RAVANA, I AM HANUMAN, A MESSENGER FROM KING SUGREEVA! YOU HAVE BEEN ENJOYING THE FRUITS OF YOUR MERITORIOUS ACTS SO FAR BUT SOON YOU WILL PAY FOR YOUR EVIL DEEDS UNLESS YOU RESTORE SITA TO RAMA.

IMPUDENT MONKEY! PUT HIM TO DEATH!



RAVANA'S VIRTUOUS BROTHER, VIBHEESHANA, INTERVENED.

O KING, AN ENVOY CANNOT BE PUT TO DEATH. SPARE HIS LIFE!

ALL RIGHT. THE MONKEY SHALL LIVE, BUT HE SHALL BE MUTILATED. SET HIS TAIL ON FIRE AND TAKE HIM AROUND LANKA!



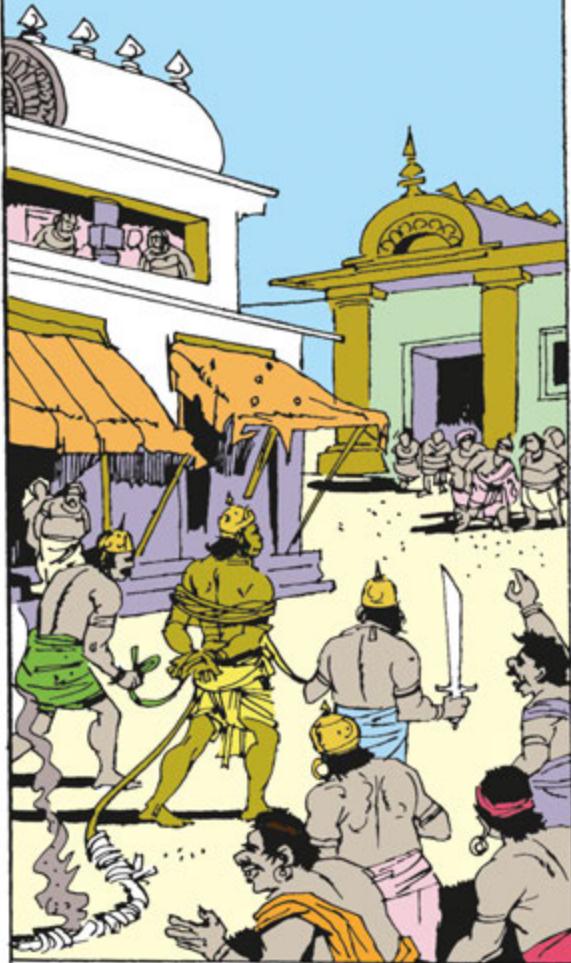
SO, OIL-SOAKED PIECES OF CLOTH WERE TIED AROUND HANUMAN'S TAIL. THEN IT WAS SET ON FIRE.



HE WAS LED THROUGH THE STREETS OF LANKA...

...BUT WHEN THE PROCESSION REACHED THE CITY GATES, HE LEAPED UP TO THE TOP.

THERE, ASSUMING A DIMINUTIVE FORM, HE CAST OFF THE ROPES THAT BOUND HIM AND BECAME FREE!



HE RESUMED HIS LARGE SIZE AND LEAPING FROM ROOF TO ROOF, HE SET FIRE TO LANKA.



HANUMAN THEN FLEW BACK TO REJOIN THE MONKEYS WAITING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE OCEAN.

MEANWHILE, AT KISHKINDHA, RAMA WAS WORRIED.



LOOK ! THERE'S A MONKEY RUNNING TOWARDS US. IT COULD BE THAT HE HAS NEWS OF SITA!



IT WAS DADHIMUKHA. HE SALUTED SUGREEVA.



EVERY TREE IN THE GARDEN HAS BEEN PLUNDERED OF ITS FRUITS!

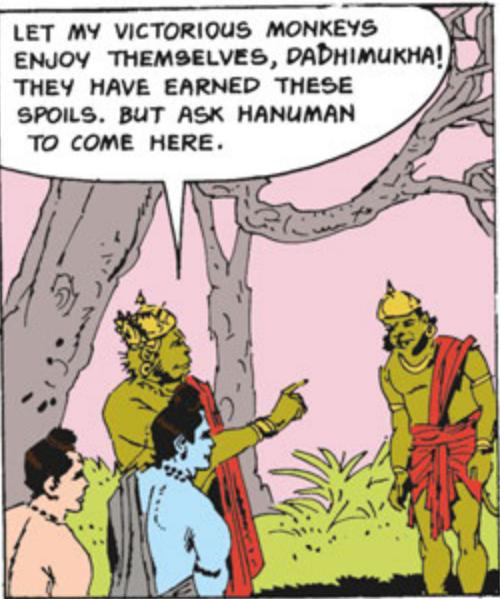
HANUMAN HAS FOUND SITA ! SO HE MUST HAVE ALLOWED THE MONKEYS TO CELEBRATE BY FEASTING ON FRUITS AND HONEY!



LET MY VICTORIOUS MONKEYS ENJOY THEMSELVES, DADHIMUKHA! THEY HAVE EARNED THESE SPOILS. BUT ASK HANUMAN TO COME HERE.

SOON —

AH! HERE HE COMES!



HANUMAN SALUTED THEM AND THEN UTTERED THE WORDS THAT FELL ON RAMA'S EARS LIKE IMMORTAL MUSIC.

LORD, I HAVE FOUND SITA. SHE IS A CAPTIVE IN LANKA, ACROSS THE SOUTHERN OCEAN. HERE IS THE JEWEL SHE ASKED ME TO GIVE YOU.



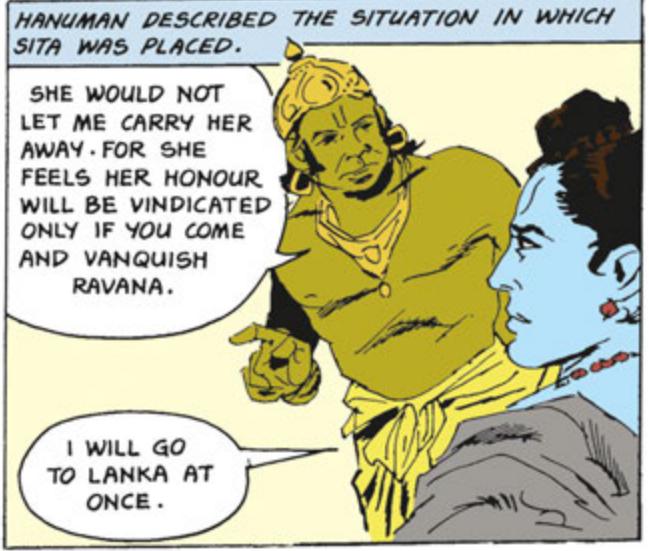
RAMA GAZED AT THE JEWEL AS IF IN A TRANCE. THEN HE TURNED TO LAKSHMANA.

WHAT COULD BE MORE PAINFUL THAN TO BEHOLD THIS JEWEL WITHOUT SITA?

HANUMAN DESCRIBED THE SITUATION IN WHICH SITA WAS PLACED.

SHE WOULD NOT LET ME CARRY HER AWAY. FOR SHE FEELS HER HONOUR WILL BE VINDICATED ONLY IF YOU COME AND VANQUISH RAVANA.

I WILL GO TO LANKA AT ONCE.



RAMA AND LAKSHMANA, ACCOMPANIED BY SUGREEVA, HANUMAN AND THE MONKEY ARMY, STARTED OUT ON THE LONG JOURNEY TO LANKA.



AT LAST THEY REACHED THE SOUTHERN SHORE.

WE WILL CAMP HERE. O VALIANT MONKEYS, WE MUST NOW FIND A WAY TO CROSS THIS GREAT OCEAN!



A LITTLE LATER —

LOOK! RAKSHASAS!  
BE PREPARED TO FACE  
AN ATTACK!



BUT THE RAKSHASAS HAD NOT COME TO ATTACK THEM —

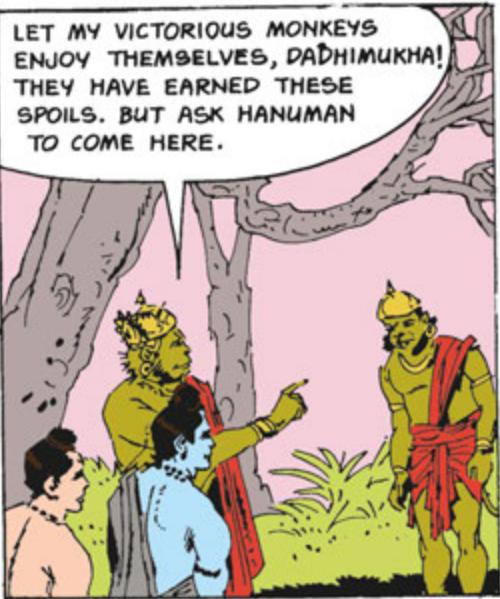
I AM VIBHEESHANA, RAVANA'S YOUNGER BROTHER. I URGED MY BROTHER TO RESTORE SITA TO RAMA. HE REFUSED. THEREFORE, I'VE COME HERE TO JOIN RAMA. TAKE ME TO HIM.



LET MY VICTORIOUS MONKEYS ENJOY THEMSELVES, DADHIMUKHA! THEY HAVE EARNED THESE SPOILS. BUT ASK HANUMAN TO COME HERE.

SOON —

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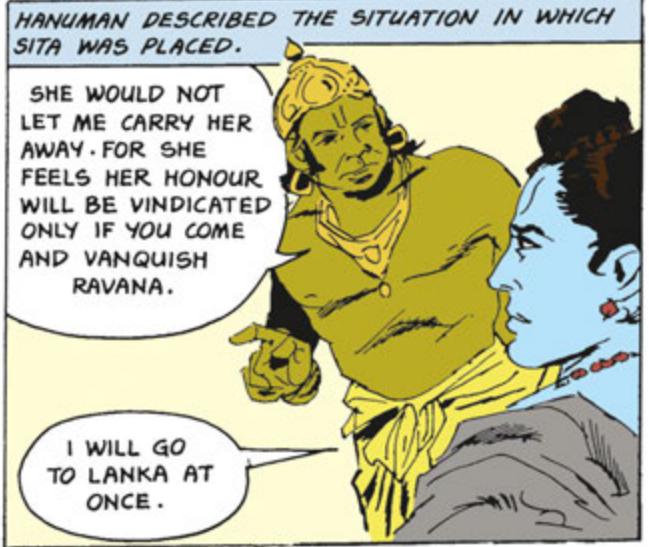
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I WILL GO TO LANKA AT ONCE.



SUGREEVA INFORMED RAMA OF VIBHEESHANA'S ARRIVAL.

RAMA, I SUSPECT A CONSPIRACY.  
DON'T TRUST RAVANA'S BROTHER.  
KILL HIM!

NO, SUGREEVA.  
ANYONE WHO COMES  
HERE SEEKING REFUGE,  
SHALL RECEIVE IT —

RAMA WELCOMED RAVANA'S BROTHER. AFTER A LONG DISCUSSION WITH VIBHEESHANA, RAMA WAS ABLE TO ACQUAINT HIMSELF WITH THE MILITARY STRENGTH OF THE ENEMY.

RAVANA SEEMS TO BE WELL ARMED. BUT, VIBHEESHANA, I WILL SURELY SLAY RAVANA!

THEN RAMA, ON VIBHEESHANA'S ADVICE, PRAYED TO SAGARA, LORD OF THE OCEAN.

O SAGARA, MAKE A PATH FOR MY ARMY TO CROSS OVER TO LANKA!

RAMA PRAYED AND FASTED FOR THREE DAYS BUT SAGARA DID NOT RESPOND. ENRAGED, RAMA TOOK AIM AT THE OCEAN.

MY PATIENCE HAS BEEN MISTAKEN FOR WEAKNESS!  
I SHALL DRY UP YOUR DOMAIN, O SAGARA, AND THE MONKEYS SHALL CROSS TO THE OTHER SHORE ON FOOT!

IMMEDIATELY SAGARA ROSE FROM THE OCEAN.

O RAMA, YOU HAVE WITH YOU THE MONKEY, NALA, WHO IS A GREAT BUILDER. LET HIM CONSTRUCT A BRIDGE OVER MY WATERS AND I WILL HOLD IT UP.

AT RAMA'S COMMAND, THE MONKEYS  
FELLED MANY TREES AND...



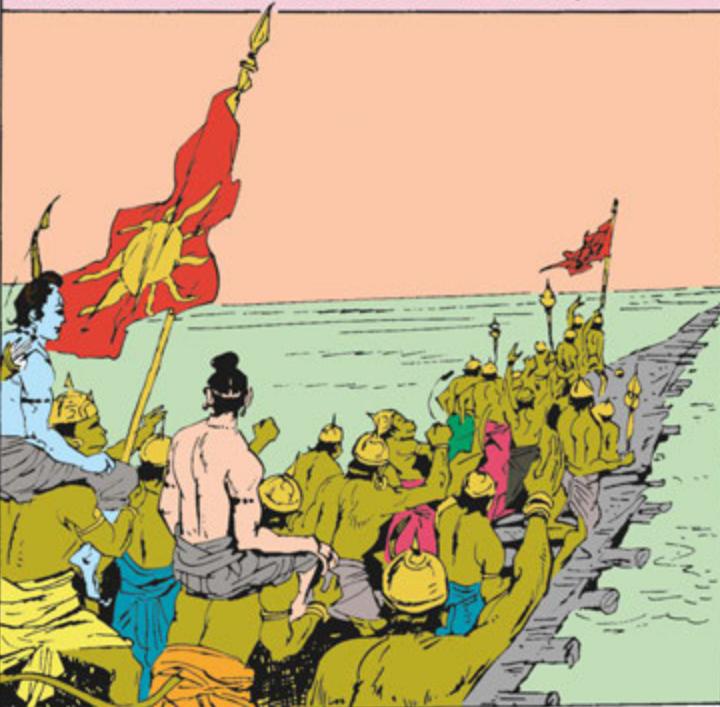
...CARRIED THEM TO THE SHORE.



UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF NALA, THEY BUILT A MIGHTY BRIDGE.

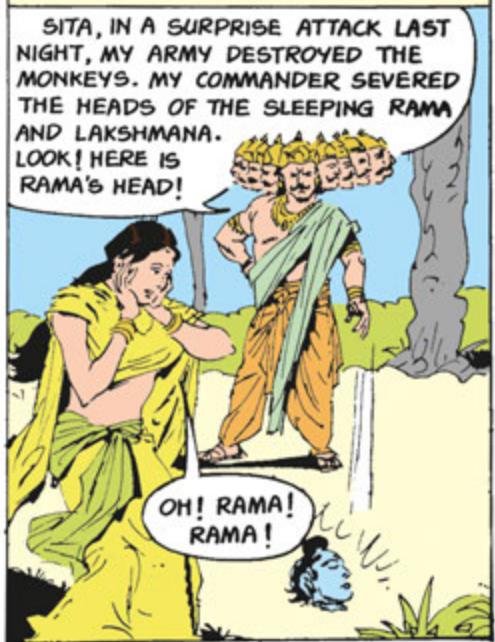


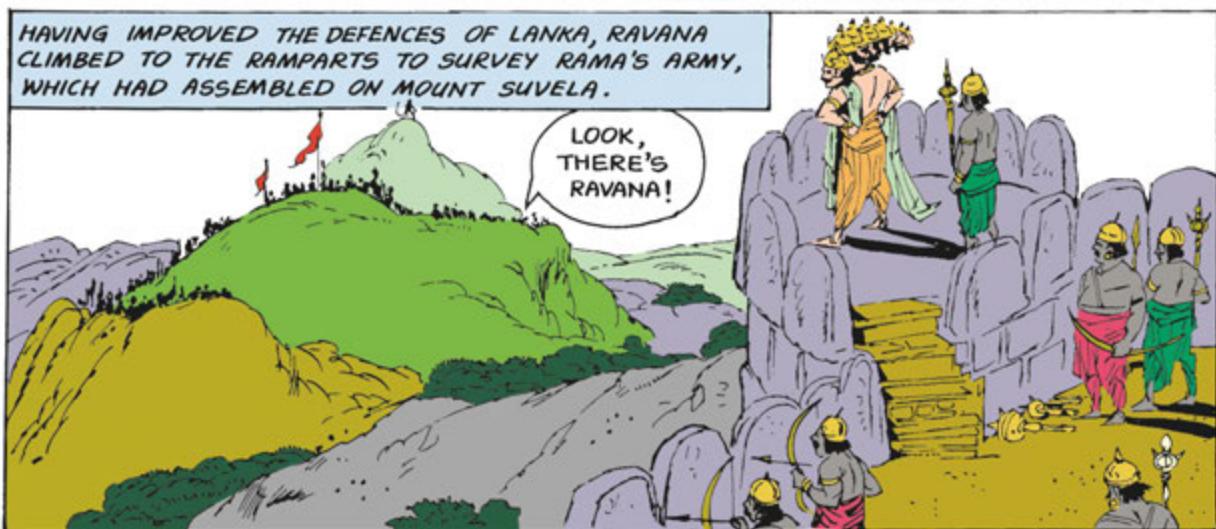
RAMA AND HIS PARTY CROSSED THE OCEAN.



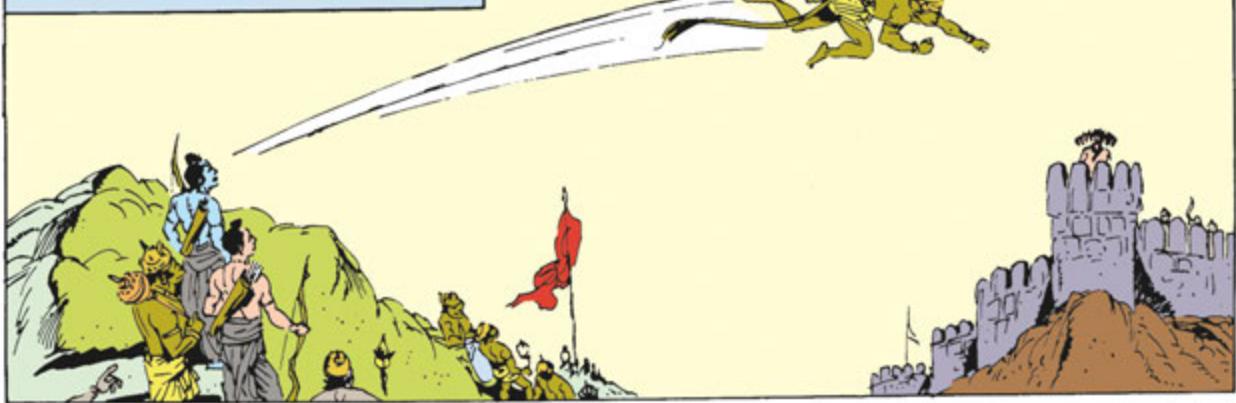
MEANWHILE, IN LANKA, RAVANA  
WAS STILL TRYING TO PERSUADE  
SITA TO MARRY HIM.

SITA, IN A SURPRISE ATTACK LAST  
NIGHT, MY ARMY DESTROYED THE  
MONKEYS. MY COMMANDER SEVERED  
THE HEADS OF THE SLEEPING RAMA  
AND LAKSHMANA.  
LOOK! HERE IS  
RAMA'S HEAD!





ON A SUDDEN IMPULSE, SUGREEVA LEAPED FROM THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT SUVELA.



HE DESCENDED ...



... AND FLUNG AWAY HIS DIADEM.



AFTER A BRIEF COMBAT WITH RAVANA, SUGREEVA REJOINED RAMA.



LATER, RAMA SENT PRINCE ANGADA TO RAVANA'S COURT —

IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO SAVE YOURSELF. RETURN SITA TO RAMA AND APOLOGISE, OR RAMA WILL SURELY SLAY YOU.

IMPUDENT MONKEY! SEIZE HIM! KILL HIM!



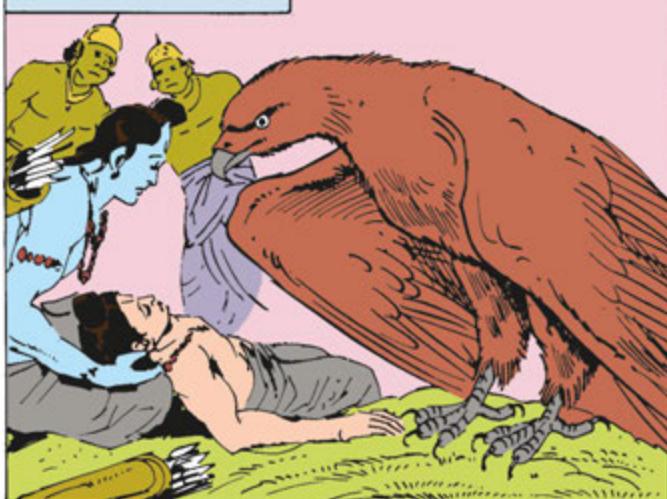
... AND THE BATTLE BEGAN.



BUT, IN A LITTLE WHILE, RAMA REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS. SEEING HIS BROTHER WHO LAY BLEEDING AND STILL UNCONSCIOUS, HE PUT HIS HEAD LOVINGLY ON HIS LAP.



GARUDA, THE DIVINE EAGLE, VEHICLE OF VISHNU, CAME AND CARESSED LAKSHMANA WITH HIS WINGS.



AT GARUDA'S TOUCH, THE WOUNDS HEALED AND LAKSHMANA REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS.

INDRAJIT SHOT POISONOUS SNAKES IN THE GUISE OF ARROWS AT YOU AND LAKSHMANA.

BEWARE OF THE RAKSHASAS! THEY ADOPT TREACHEROUS MEANS!

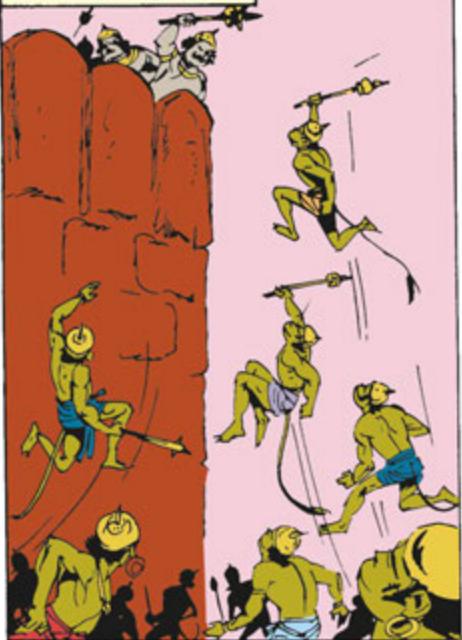


GARUDA FLEW AWAY. RAMA, LAKSHMANA AND THE MONKEYS CONTINUED THEIR BATTLE AGAINST THE RAKSHASAS.



RAVANA'S POWERFUL LIEUTENANTS, DHUMRAKSHA, AND PRAHASTA, ALONG WITH MANY OTHERS, WERE SLAIN.

THE MONKEYS LEAPT UP TO THE BATTLEMENTS...



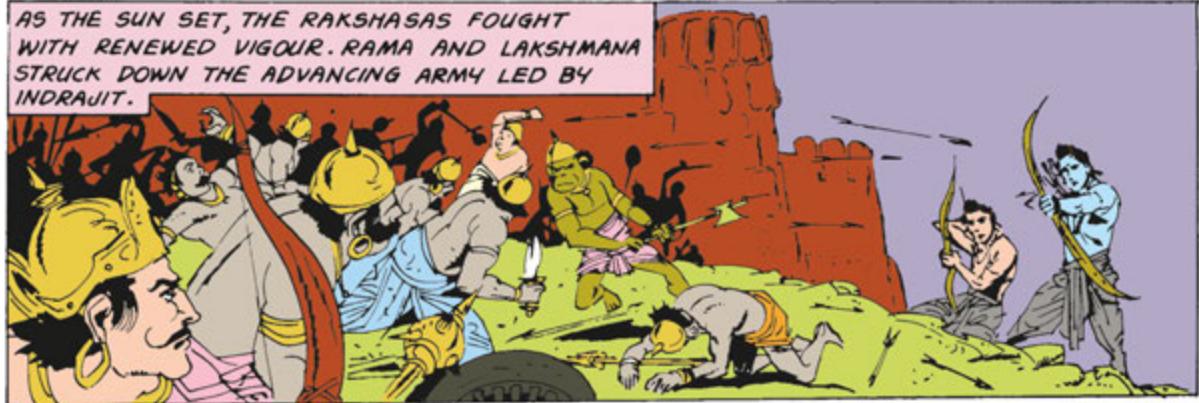
... DRAGGED THE DEFENDING RAKSHASAS DOWN...



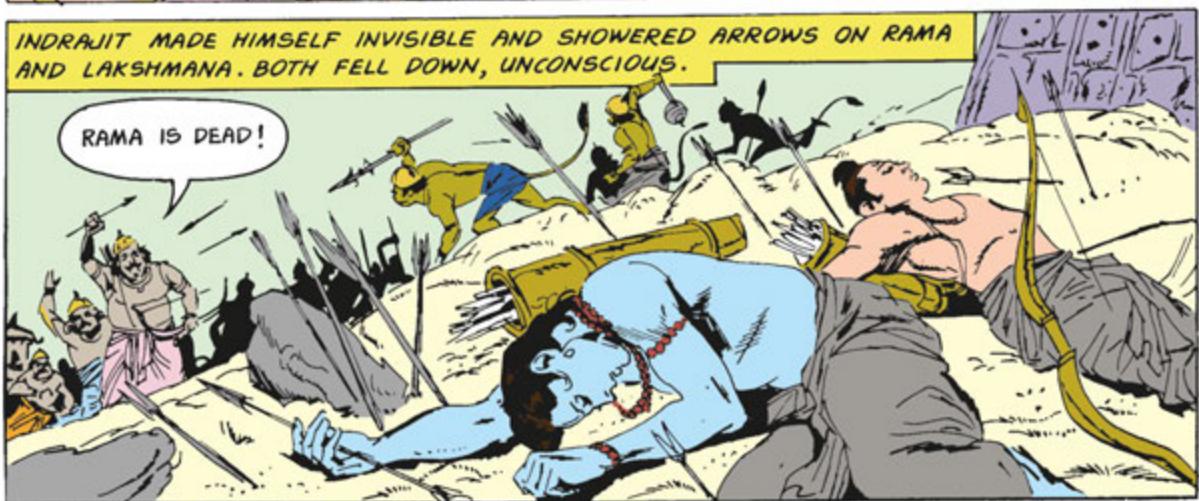
... AND ENGAGED THEM IN A FIERCE BATTLE THE WHOLE DAY LONG.



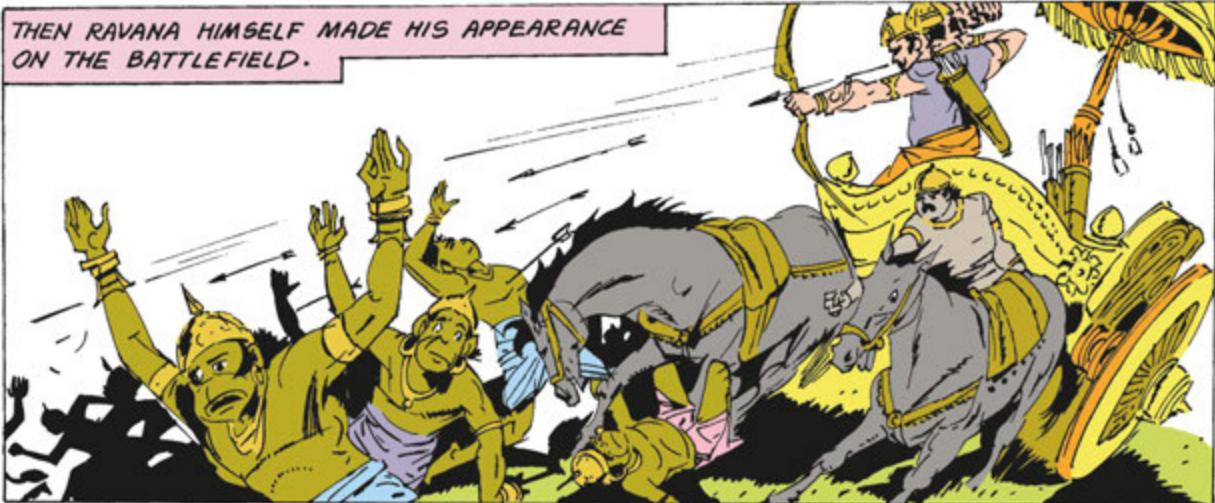
AS THE SUN SET, THE RAKSHASAS FOUGHT WITH RENEWED VIGOUR. RAMA AND LAKSHMANA STRUCK DOWN THE ADVANCING ARMY LED BY INDRAJIT.



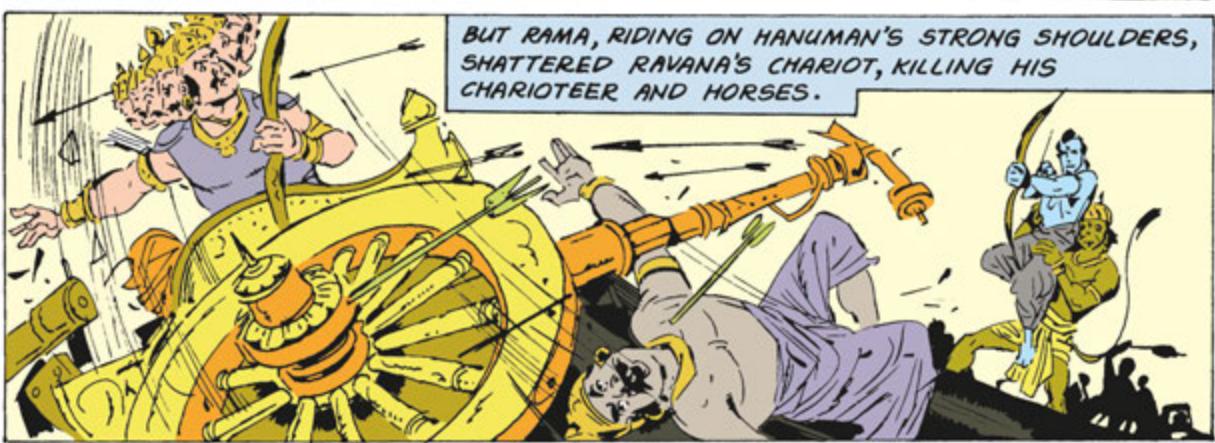
INDRAJIT MADE HIMSELF INVISIBLE AND SHOWERED ARROWS ON RAMA AND LAKSHMANA. BOTH FELL DOWN, UNCONSCIOUS.



THEN RAVANA HIMSELF MADE HIS APPEARANCE ON THE BATTLEFIELD.



BUT RAMA, RIDING ON HANUMAN'S STRONG SHOULDERS, SHATTERED RAVANA'S CHARIOT, KILLING HIS CHARIOTEER AND HORSES.



UNDER RAMA'S RAIN OF ARROWS, RAVANA LOST HIS BOW AND HIS DIADEM WAS SHATTERED.



I WON'T KILL YOU, RAVANA, SINCE YOU ARE TIRED AND UNARMED. YOU MAY GO BACK NOW.

RAVANA SAID NOTHING. FULL OF SHAME, HE RETURNED TO HIS PALACE.



HE SUMMONED HIS COUNCILLORS.

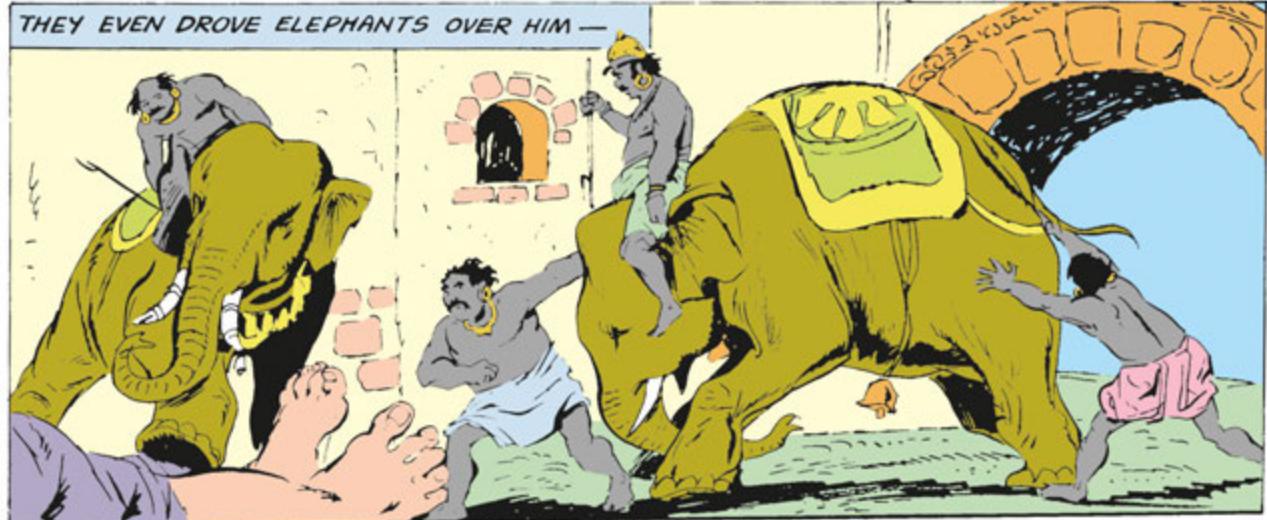
KUMBAHKARNA IS OUR LAST HOPE! WAKE HIM UP!



THE GIANT KUMBAHKARNA WAS IN THE HABIT OF SLEEPING FOR SIX MONTHS AT A STRETCH. TO WAKE HIM UP, A GREAT DIN WAS MADE BY BEATING DRUMS, BLOWING CONCHES AND TRUMPETS.



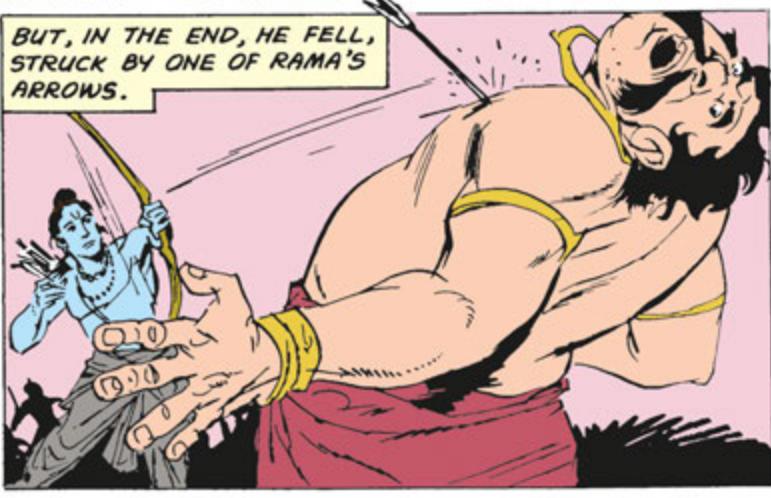
THEY EVEN DROVE ELEPHANTS OVER HIM —



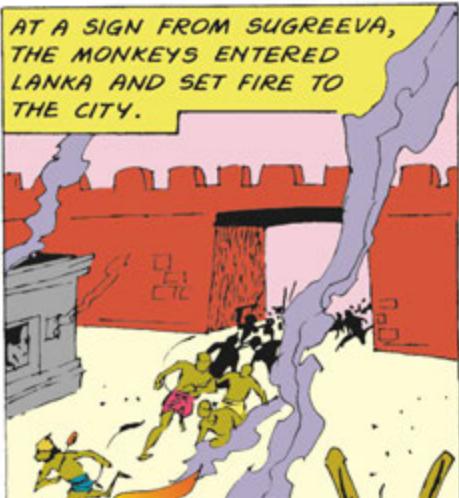
AT LAST, THE GIANT WOKE UP AND, AT THE COMMAND OF RAVANA, WENT TO THE BATTLEFIELD. THERE THE TREES AND ROCKS AIMED AT HIM BY THE MONKEYS HAD NOT THE SLIGHTEST EFFECT.



BUT, IN THE END, HE FELL, STRUCK BY ONE OF RAMA'S ARROWS.



AT A SIGN FROM SUGREEVA, THE MONKEYS ENTERED LANKA AND SET FIRE TO THE CITY.



THE RAKSHASAS GAVE WAY UNDER THE ONSLAUGHT OF THE MONKEYS, BUT AT THE DECISIVE MOMENT, INDRAJIT APPEARED —





AS INDRAJIT STRUCK THE ILLUSORY SITA THE STUNNED MONKEYS STEPPED BACK AND THEN FLED.



THE MONKEYS BROUGHT RAMA THE NEWS AND HE SWOONED. WHEN HE CAME TO, VIBHEESHANA CONSOLED HIM.



DISTURBED IN HIS RITES BY THE ARRIVAL OF LAKSHMANA, INDRAJIT ROSE TO THE NEW CHALLENGE.



BUT HE WAS QUICKLY FELLED BY LAKSHMANA'S SWIFT ARROW.

HIS AGONISED CRIES BROUGHT RAVANA TO THE SPOT.



RAVANA TOOK DEADLY AIM AT VIBHEESHANA.



BUT, IN THE NICK OF TIME, HIS ARROW WAS BROKEN INTO TWO BY ONE OF LAKSHMANA'S ARROWS.

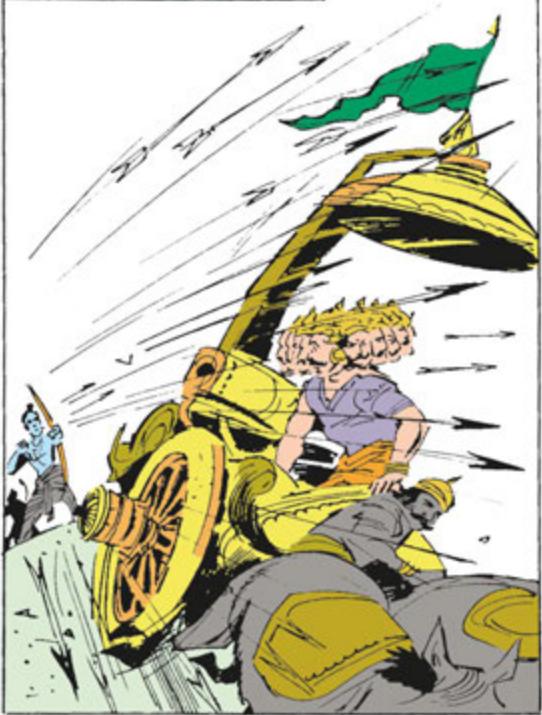


ENRAGED, RAVANA AIMED AGAIN AND HIS ARROW STRUCK LAKSHMANA IN THE HEART.



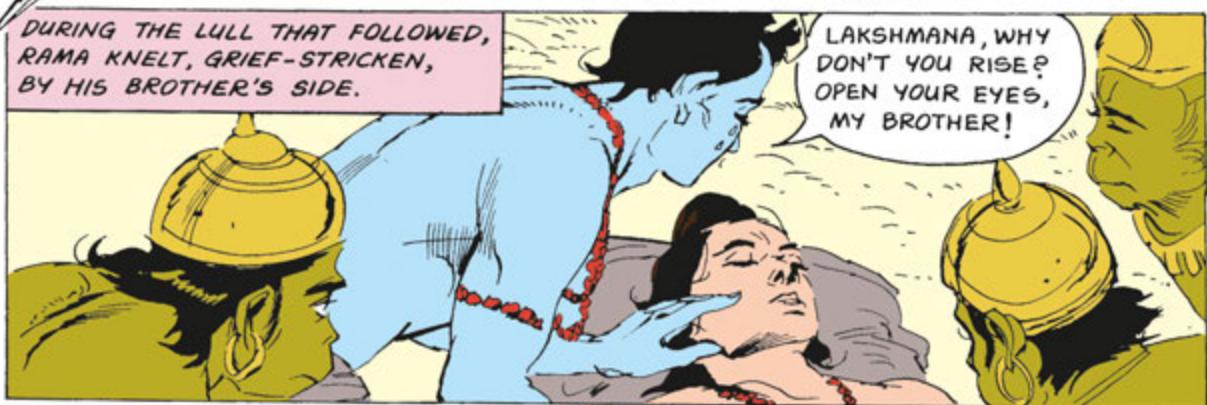
VALIANT MONKEYS, TAKE CARE OF MY BROTHER, LAKSHMANA, WHILE I DEAL WITH THIS MONSTROUS CREATURE. ONE OF US MUST NOW CEASE TO EXIST.

BUT AS RAMA'S ARROWS RAINED ON HIM, RAVANA FLED.



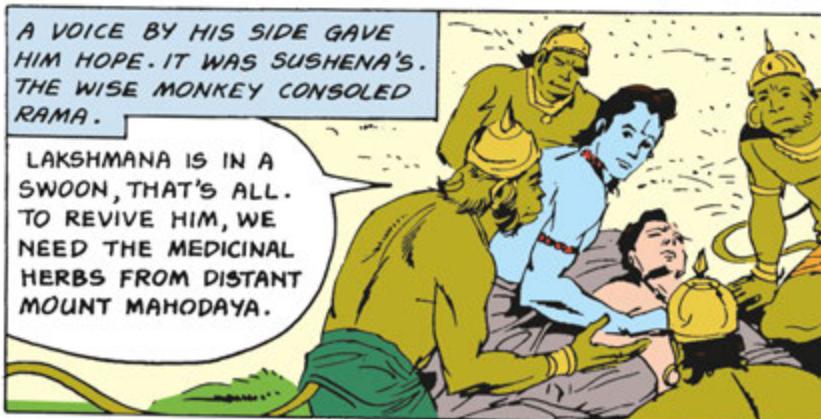
DURING THE LULL THAT FOLLOWED, RAMA KNELT, GRIEF-STRICKEN, BY HIS BROTHER'S SIDE.

LAKSHMANA, WHY DON'T YOU RISE? OPEN YOUR EYES, MY BROTHER!



A VOICE BY HIS SIDE GAVE HIM HOPE. IT WAS SUSHENA'S. THE WISE MONKEY CONSOLED RAMA.

LAKSHMANA IS IN A SWOON, THAT'S ALL. TO REVIVE HIM, WE NEED THE MEDICINAL HERBS FROM DISTANT MOUNT MAHODAYA.



MY DESPAIR HAS TURNED TO JOY! GO, DEAR HANUMAN, AND HURRY BACK WITH THE LIFE-GIVING HERB!



HANUMAN FLEW TO MAHODAYA,  
NEAR THE HIMALAYAS.



WHICH ARE THE  
HERBS? THESE  
OR THOSE?



OH, DEAR, I CAN'T  
DECIDE! I'LL CARRY THE  
WHOLE MOUNTAIN TO  
SUSHENA. HE CAN  
THEN SELECT THE  
HERB HE WANTS!



SO HANUMAN CARRIED THE  
MOUNTAIN ACROSS THE  
ENTIRE SUBCONTINENT, TO  
LANKA.



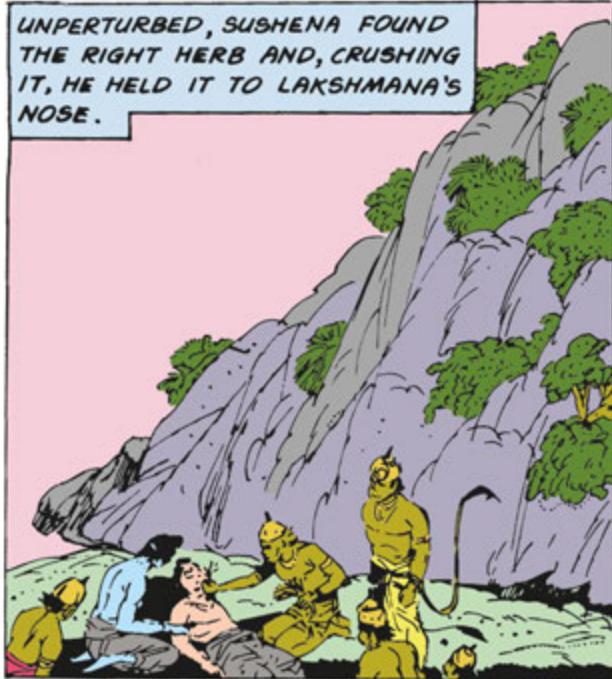
AT LANKA —

OH, LOOK! HANUMAN  
HAS BROUGHT THE  
WHOLE MOUNTAIN!

HANUMAN NEVER  
FAILS US!



UNPERTURBED, SUSHENA FOUND THE RIGHT HERB AND, CRUSHING IT, HE HELD IT TO LAKSHMANA'S NOSE.



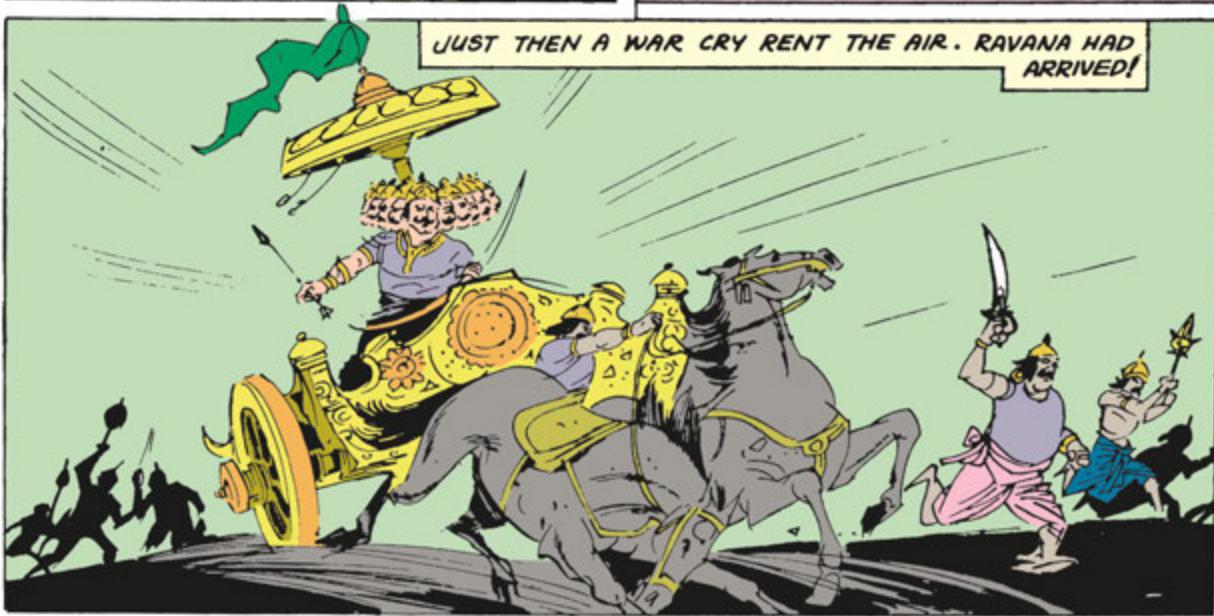
IMMEDIATELY LAKSHMANA REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS.

THANK GOD YOU ARE ALL RIGHT, LAKSHMANA!



HANUMAN TOOK THE MOUNTAIN BACK TO ITS ORIGINAL PLACE AND RETURNED TO RAMA.

JUST THEN A WAR CRY RENT THE AIR. RAVANA HAD ARRIVED!

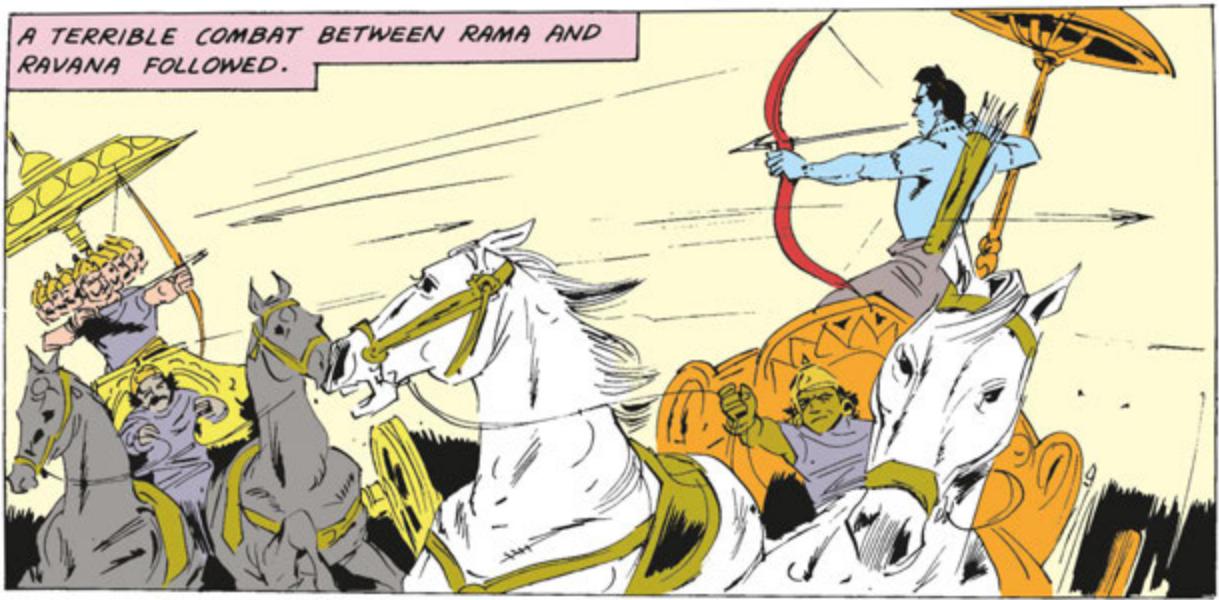


RAMA MOUNTED THE CHARIOT SENT TO HIM BY INDRA, LORD OF THE DEVAS.

YOU CARRIED SITA AWAY LIKE A THIEF WHEN SHE WAS ALONE AND DEFENCELESS. YOU KNEW, IF I HAD BEEN PRESENT, I WOULD HAVE DESPATCHED YOU STRAIGHT AWAY TO JOIN KHARA!



A TERRIBLE COMBAT BETWEEN RAMA AND RAVANA FOLLOWED.



FOR A WHILE, NOTHING WAS HEARD BUT THE MIGHTY CLASH OF STEEL AGAINST STEEL. DARKNESS SEEMED TO ENVELOPE THEM AND ONLY THE SPARKS OF CLASHING STEEL WERE VISIBLE.

FINALLY, RAMA UTTERED A PRAYER \* TO SURYA AND, INVOKING THE BRAHMA ASTRA, AIMED STRAIGHT AT RAVANA...



...AND RAVANA FELL DEAD.



\* TAUGHT BY SAGE AGASTYA ON THE BATTLEFIELD

LAKSHMANA CROWNED VIBHEESHANA THE NEW KING. PEACE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS WAS RESTORED TO LANKA.



LATER, WHEN RAMA AND SITA MET EACH OTHER —



... BUT NO MAN OF HONOUR CAN TAKE BACK A WIFE WHO HAS LIVED IN THE HOUSE OF ANOTHER. WE MUST PART.



SITA WAS SHOCKED TO HEAR HIS WORDS.

IT IS A FACT THAT I WAS RAVANA'S CAPTIVE. BUT MY MIND WAS FILLED WITH ONE PERSON ALONE — RAMA! NOW THAT YOU THINK I AM IMPURE I'VE NOTHING TO LIVE FOR. LET LAKSHMANA PREPARE A PYRE. I WILL SEEK REFUGE IN AGNI\*.

\* THE FIRE GOD



O AGNI, IT IS NOT THAT I WANT TO PROCLAIM MY VIRTUE TO THE WORLD. BUT SINCE RAMA DEMANDS IT, SHOW THAT I AM INDEED BLAMELESS!

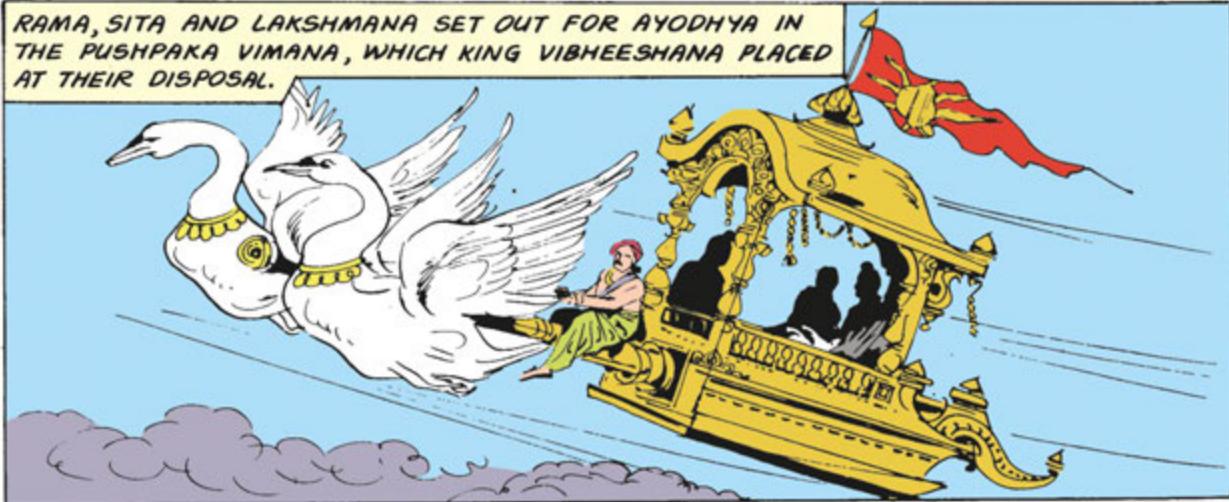
AGNI HEARD HER PRAYER. SHE PASSED THE TEST OF FIRE WITHOUT BURNING A SINGLE HAIR.

O RAMA, RECEIVE SITA ! SHE IS PURE AND VIRTUOUS !

FORGIVE ME, SITA. I KNEW YOU WERE BLAMELESS. BUT A KING'S WIFE MUST BE ABOVE SUSPICION. THAT IS WHY THE TEST HAD TO BE UNDERGONE.



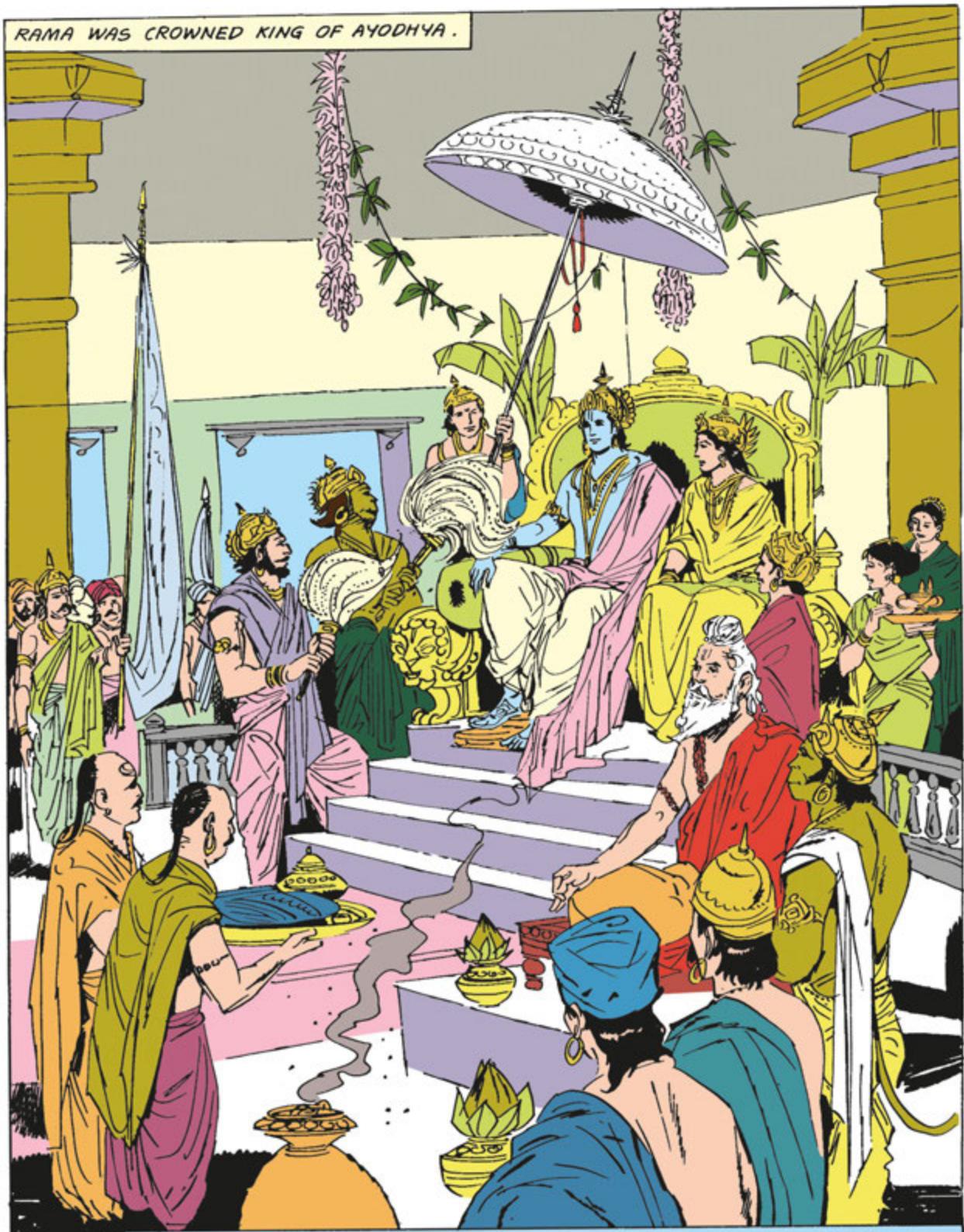
RAMA, SITA AND LAKSHMANA SET OUT FOR AYODHYA IN THE PUSHPAKA VIMANA, WHICH KING VIBHEESHANA PLACED AT THEIR DISPOSAL.



ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF AYODHYA, BHARATA WELCOMED THEM JOYFULLY.



RAMA WAS CROWNED KING OF AYODHYA.



RAMA RULED HIS KINGDOM WISELY AND STRICTLY FOLLOWED THE PATH OF DHARMA. PEOPLE FOLLOWED HIS EXAMPLE AND CARRIED OUT THEIR RESPECTIVE DUTIES. UNDER RAMA'S RULE, THERE WAS UNIVERSAL HAPPINESS.