



DASHA AVATAR

SPECIAL ISSUE

THE TEN INCARNATIONS OF LORD VISHNU

Vol 10002



MATSYA AVATAR



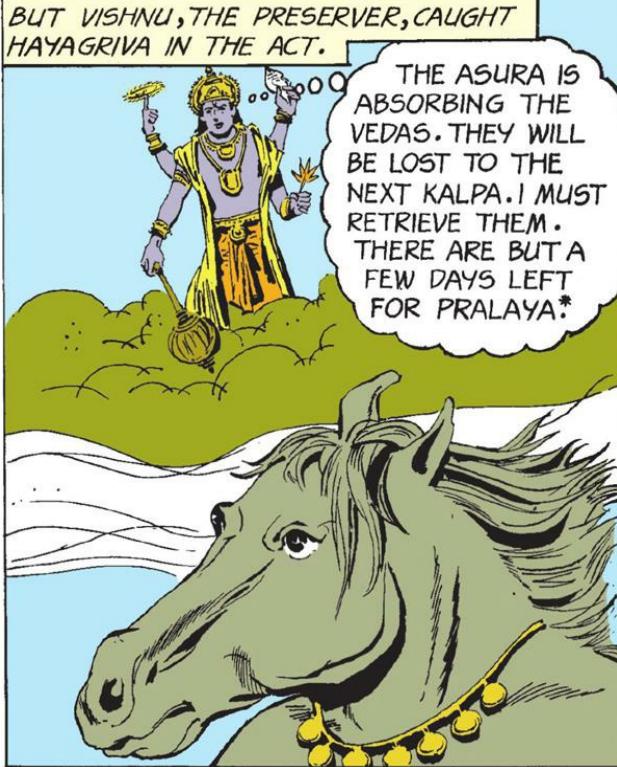
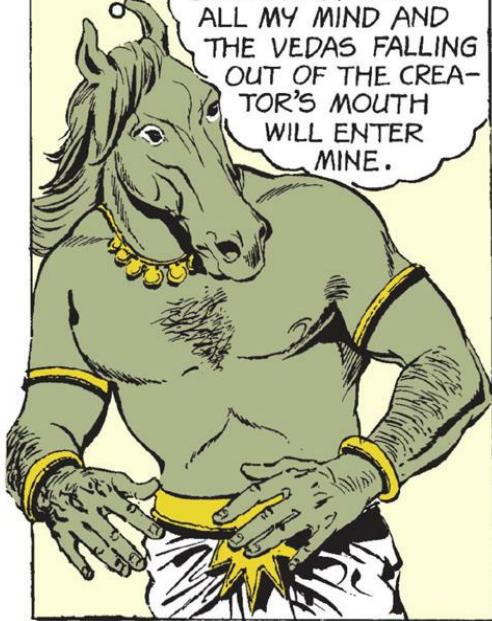
EXHAUSTED, BRAHMA STRETCHED OUT AND YAWNED. HIS DAY'S WORK WAS OVER. THE END OF THE CURRENT KALPA WAS IMMINENT. AS HIS EYELIDS DROOPED WITH SLEEP, WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE THE VEDAS SLIPPED OUT OF HIS MOUTH.

THE ASURA, HAYAGRIVA, WAS ALERT.

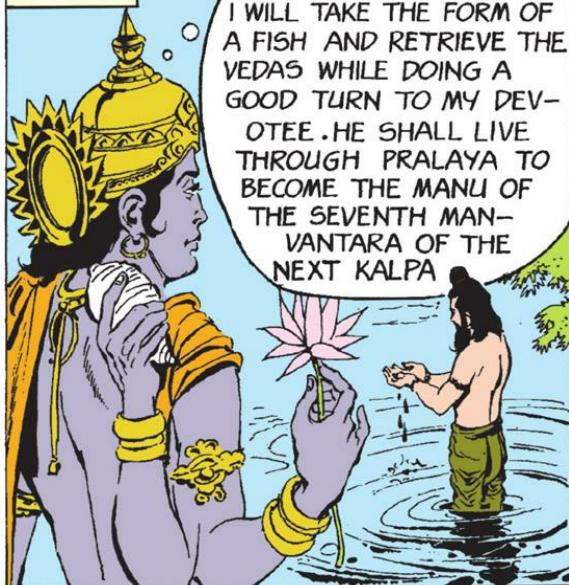
THIS IS MY CHANCE!
I MUST NOW
CONCENTRATE WITH
ALL MY MIND AND
THE VEDAS FALLING
OUT OF THE CREA-
TOR'S MOUTH
WILL ENTER
MINE.

BUT VISHNU, THE PRESERVER, CAUGHT HAYAGRIVA IN THE ACT.

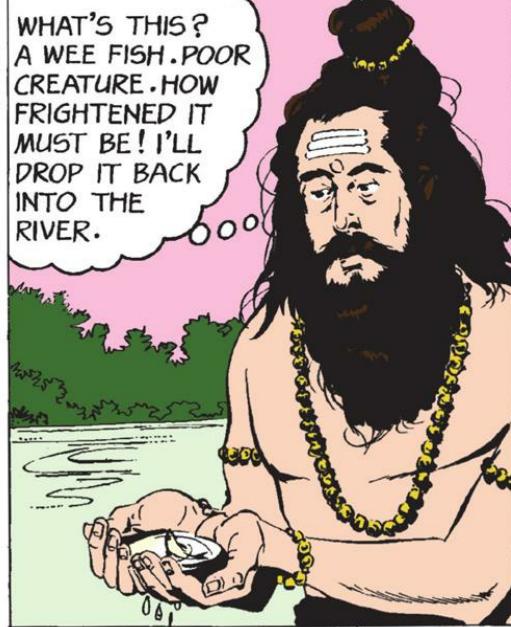
THE ASURA IS
ABSORBING THE
VEDAS. THEY WILL
BE LOST TO THE
NEXT KALPA. I MUST
RETRIEVE THEM.
THERE ARE BUT A
FEW DAYS LEFT
FOR PRALAYA.*



AS HE WONDERED WHAT TO DO, HE SAW THE ROYAL SAGE, SATYAVRATA, A STAUNCH DEVOTEE, OFFERING WATER TO THE MANES.



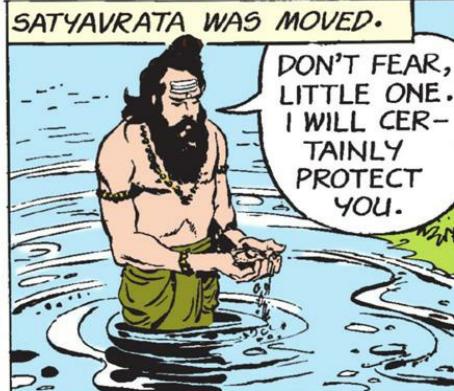
AS SATYAVRATA, SCOOPED UP THE NEXT HANDFUL OF WATER —



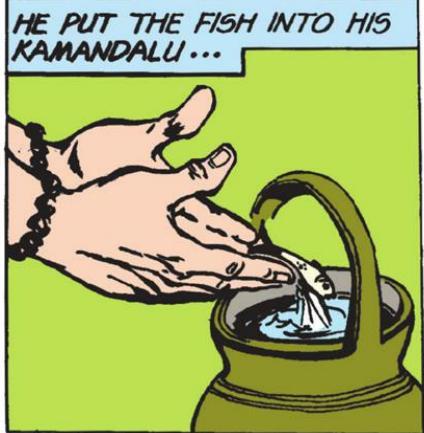
HE WAS ABOUT TO DO SO WHEN —



SATYAVRATA WAS MOVED.



HE PUT THE FISH INTO HIS KAMANDALU ...



... AND TOOK IT TO HIS HERMITAGE.



THAT NIGHT, HOWEVER,
THE FISH GREW AND GREW
TILL IT FILLED THE WHOLE
KAMANDALU.



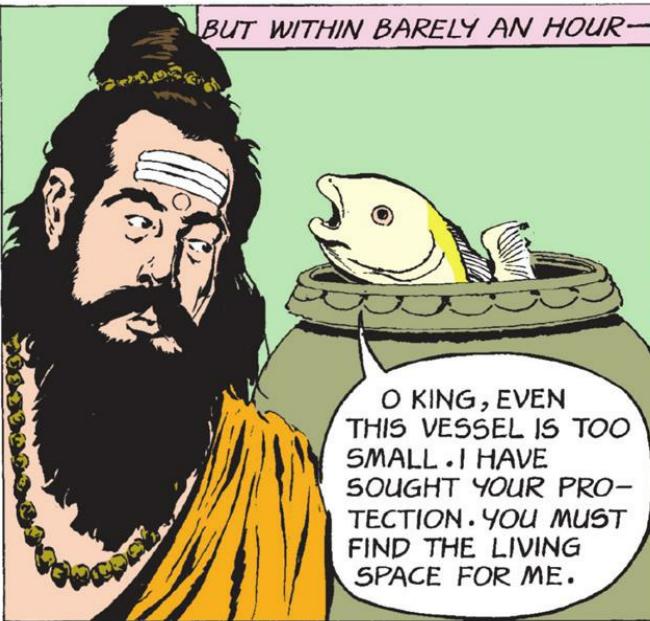
IN THE MORNING WHEN SATYAVRATA WENT TO
SEE IF IT WAS ALL RIGHT—



REMOVING IT FROM THE
KAMANDALU, SATYAVRATA
PLACED IT IN A LARGE
VESSEL OF WATER.



BUT WITHIN BARELY AN HOUR—



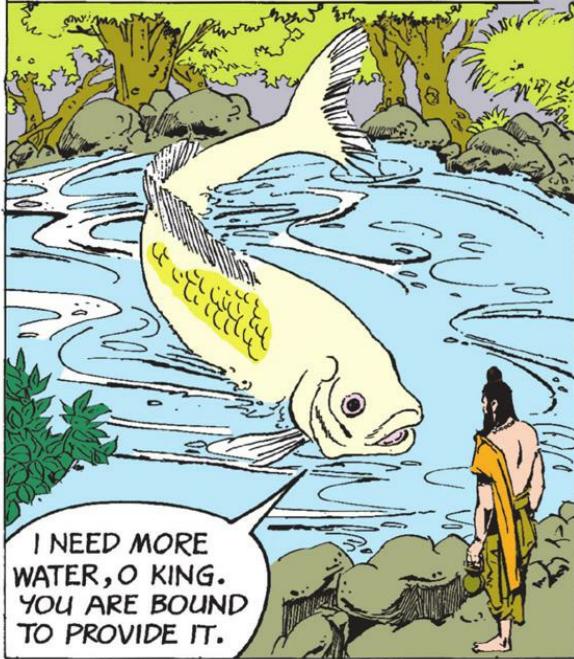
SATYAVRATA PUSHED THE
VESSEL TO A LARGE POND
NEAR THE HERMITAGE AND
TIPPED THE FISH INTO IT.



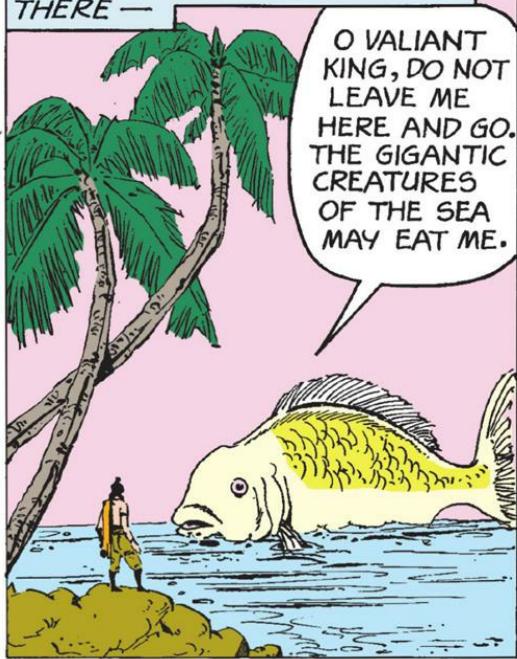
BUT IN NO TIME, THE FISH GREW TILL IT
FILLED THE WHOLE POND.



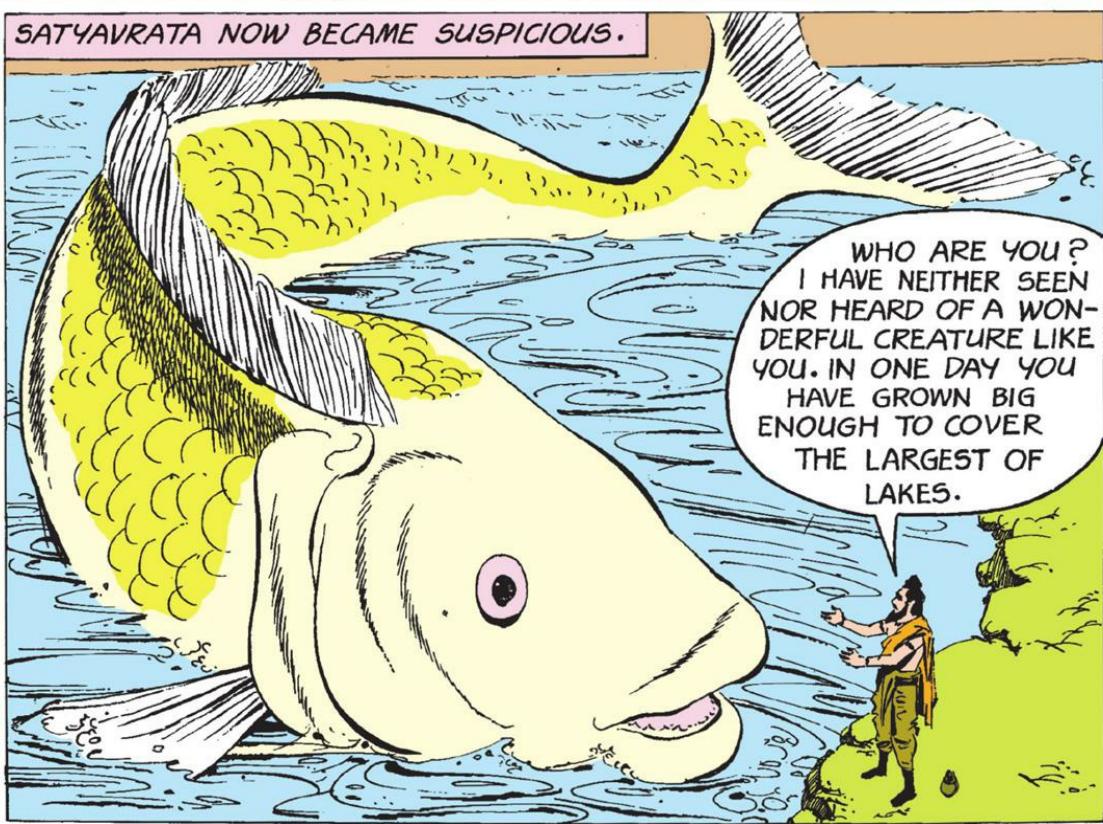
SATYAVRATA TOOK THE FISH TO A NUMBER OF LAKES, EACH LARGER THAN THE PREVIOUS ONE. BUT —

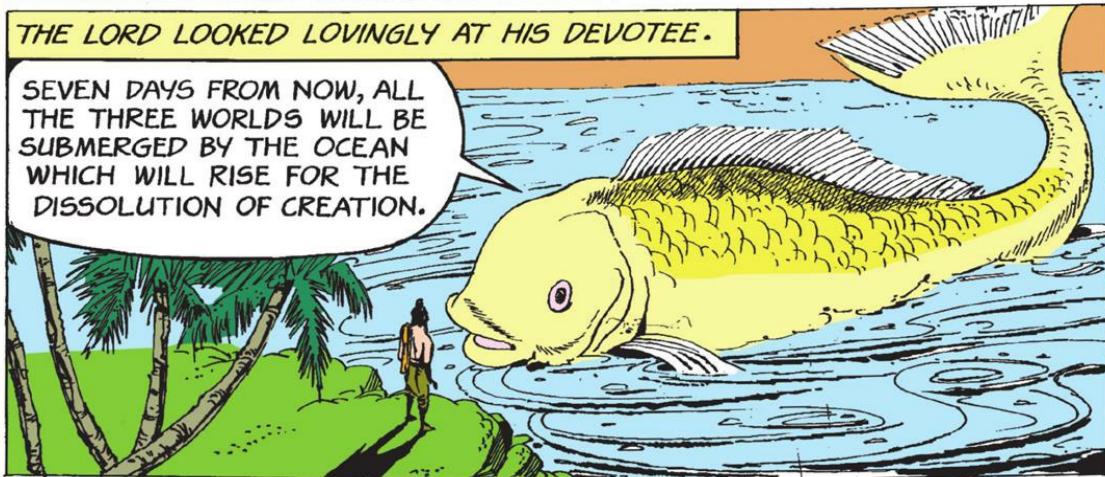
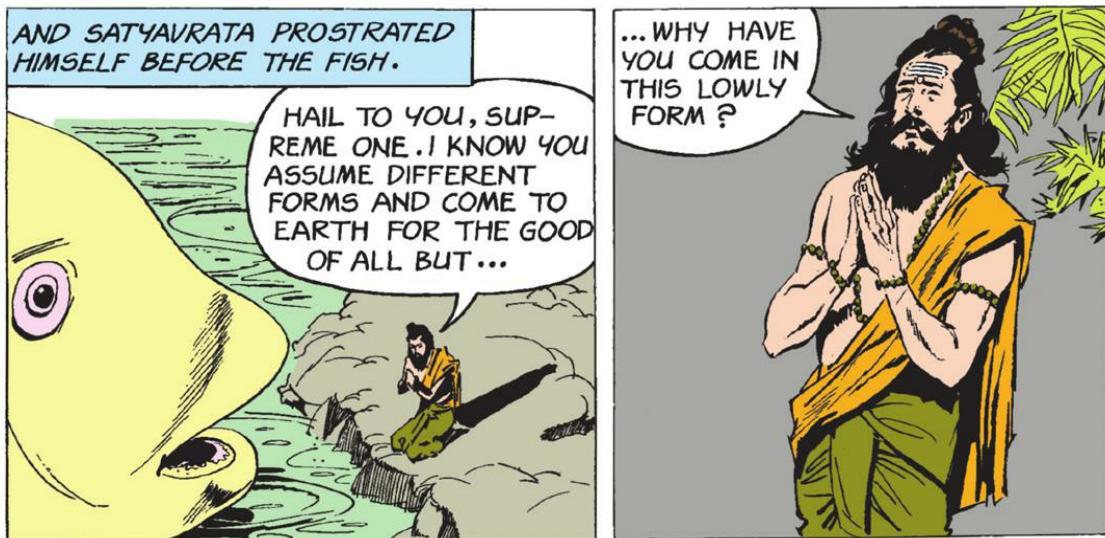
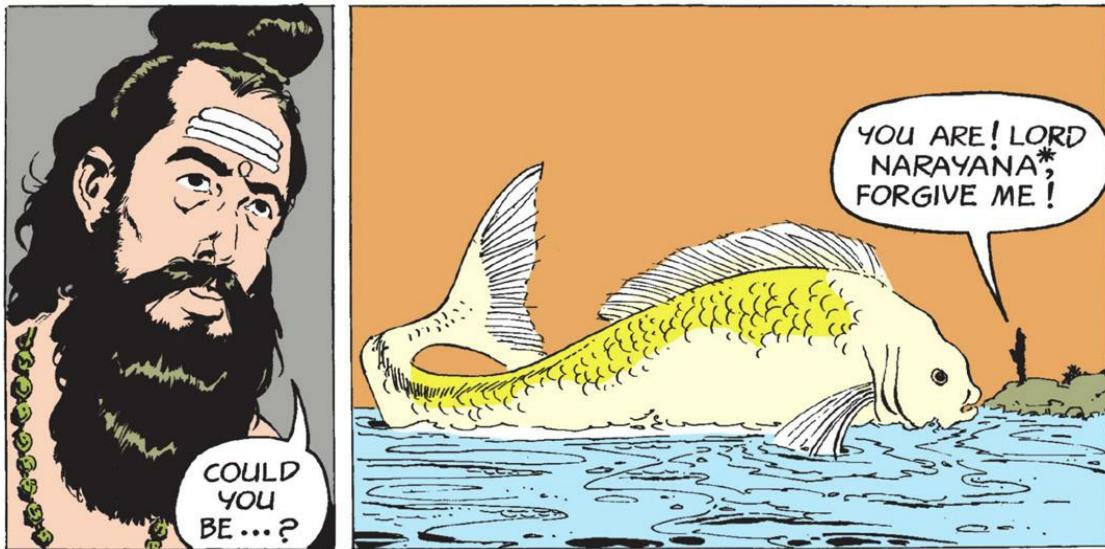


EXASPERATED, SATYAVRATA DECIDED TO LEAD IT TO THE OCEAN. BUT WHEN THEY GOT THERE —

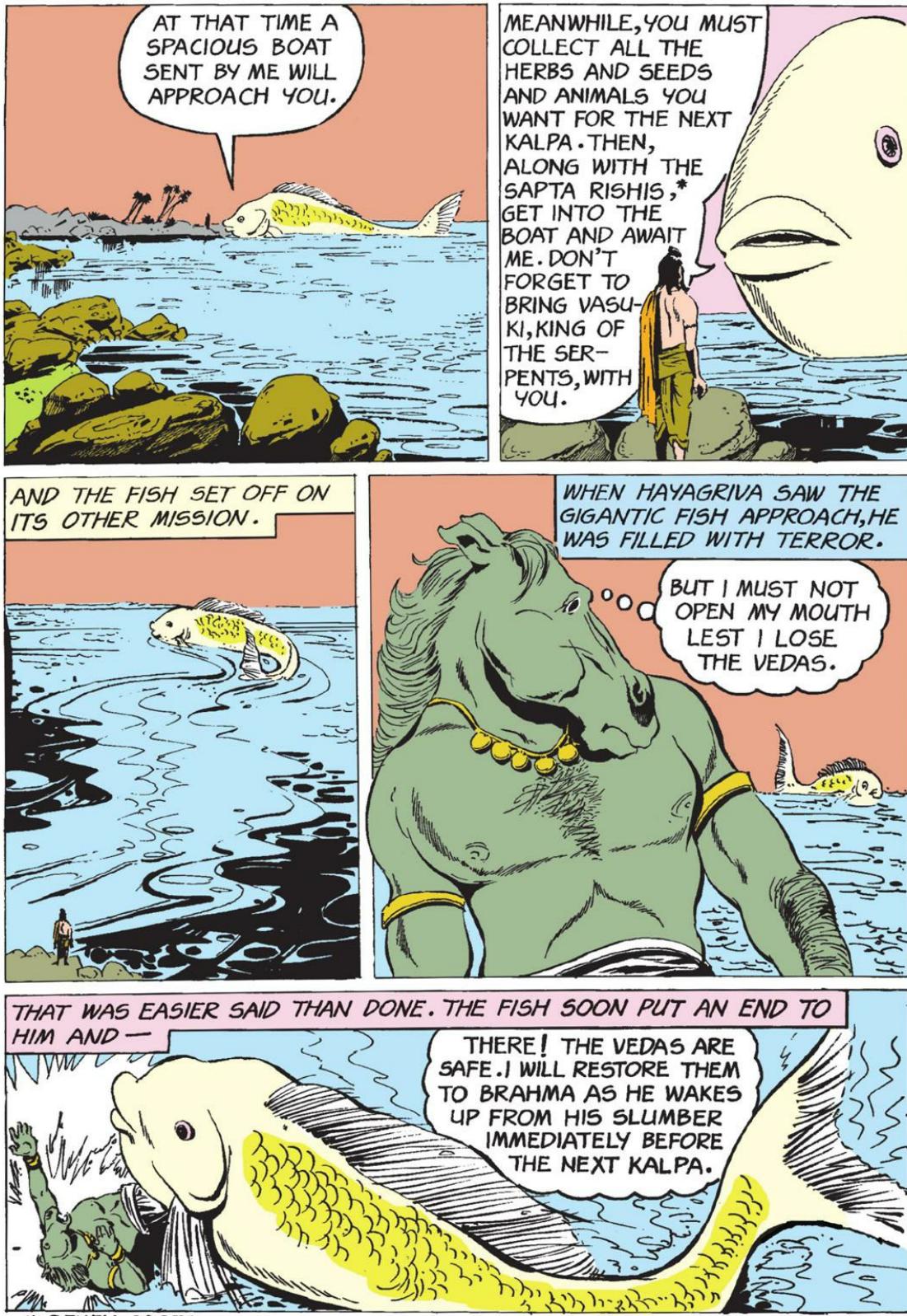


SATYAVRATA NOW BECAME SUSPICIOUS.

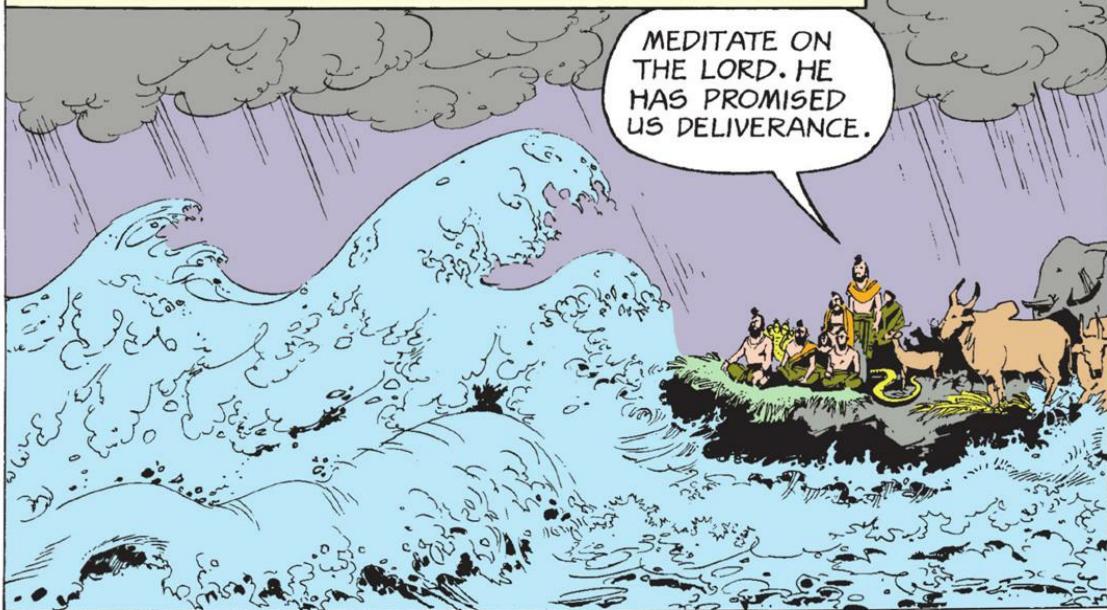




*ANOTHER NAME OF VISHNU.



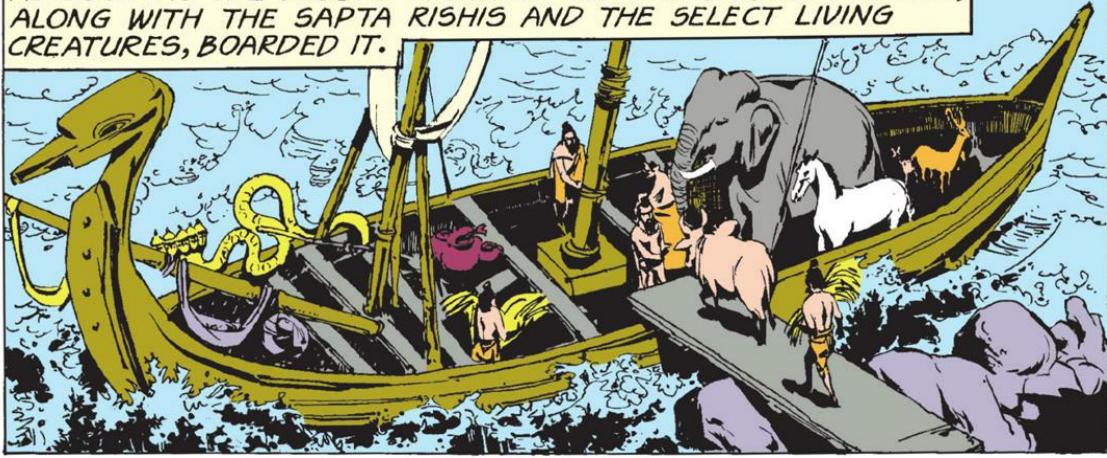
SEVEN DAYS LATER, HUGE CLOUDS GATHERED OVER THE OCEAN. THE RAIN POURED DOWN IN TORRENTS. THE OCEAN BEGAN RISING AND HUGE TIDAL WAVES BEGAN SWALLOWING THE EARTH.



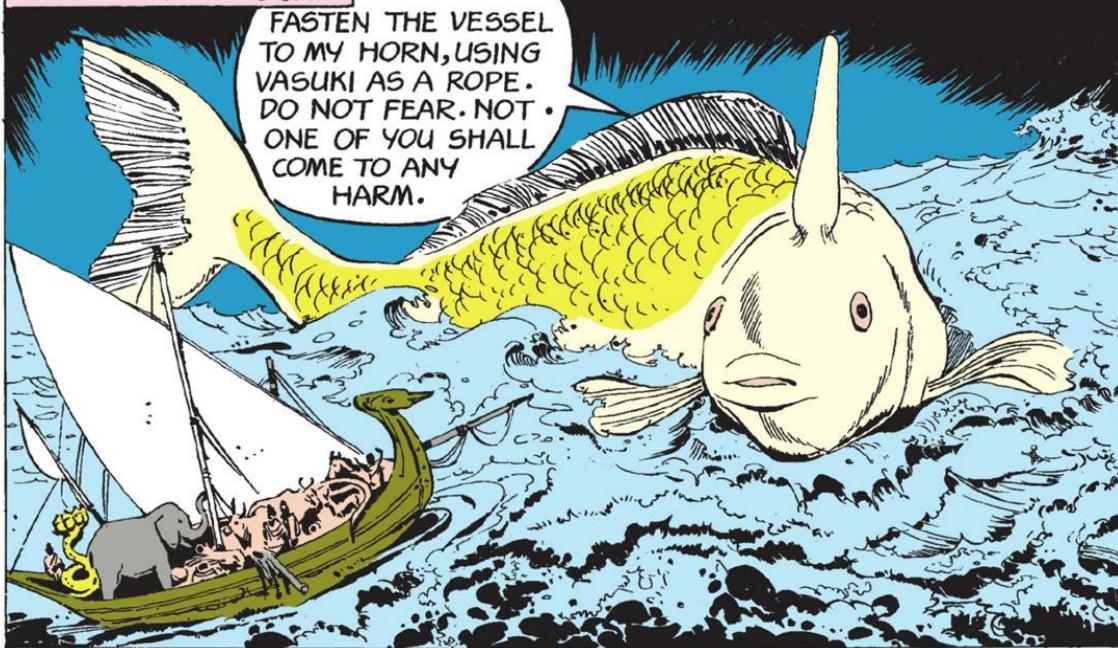
AS ADVISED BY THE FISH, SATYAVRATA AND THE SAPTA RISHIS WAITED ON THE SHORES. SUDDENLY —



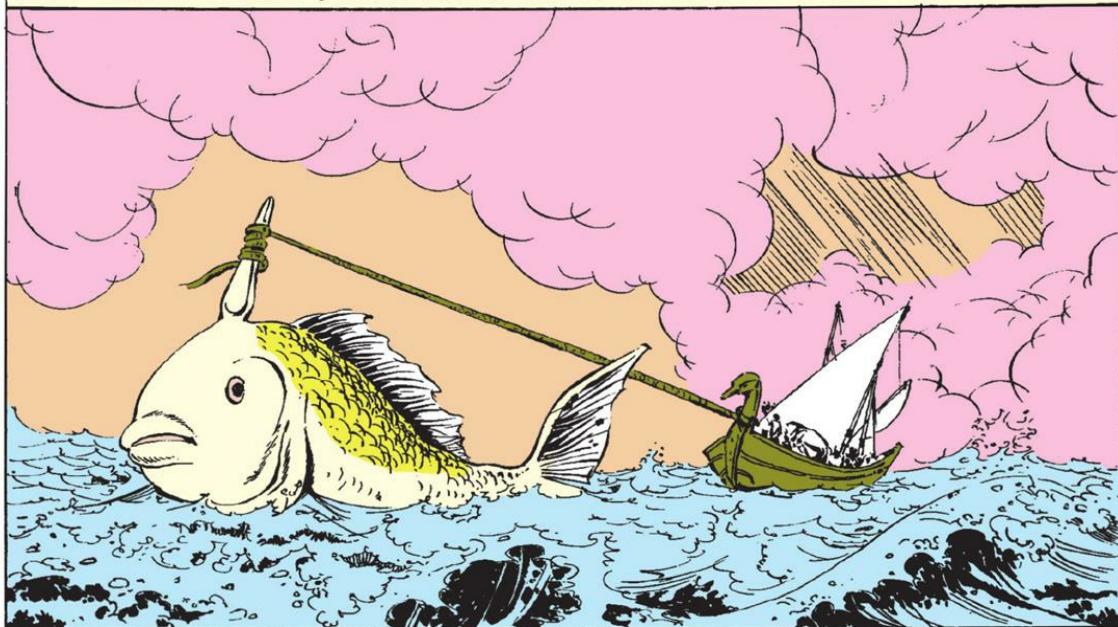
AS SOON AS THE VESSEL TOUCHED THE SHORES, SATYAVRATA, ALONG WITH THE SAPTA RISHIS AND THE SELECT LIVING CREATURES, BOARDED IT.



AS THEIR BOAT WAS TOSSED ABOUT BY THE TURBULENT OCEAN, THEY SUDDENLY SAW THE FISH APPROACH THEM. IT HAD A HORN NOW AND WAS GOLDEN IN COLOUR. IT LIT UP THE DARKENING SKIES, REASSURING THE INMATES OF THE BOAT.

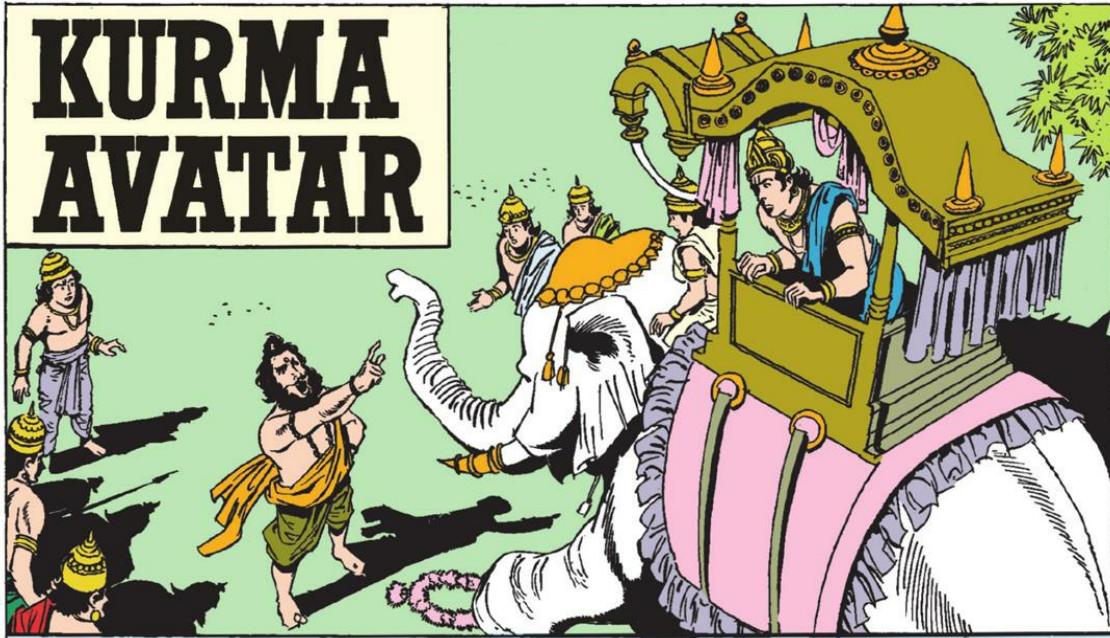


WHILE THEY SAILED ON THAT VAST EXPANSE OF WATER, THROUGHOUT THAT NIGHT* OF BRAHMA, VISHNU TAUGHT SATYAVRATA AND THE SAPTA RISHIS THE HIGHEST FORM OF TRUTH WHICH HAS COME DOWN TO US AS A COLLECTION OF PURANIC LORE, CALLED THE MATSYA PURANA. THUS DID VISHNU SAVE TRUE DEVOTEES FROM DISSOLUTION SO THAT THEY MIGHT CARRY DIVINE KNOWLEDGE TO THE NEXT KALPA.



* EQUIVALENT TO A DAY OF BRAHMA.

KURMA AVATAR



IT WAS THE SIXTH MANVANTARA OF THE PRESENT KALPA. INDRA, KING OF THE DEVAS, AND HIS SUBJECTS WERE IN TROUBLE. CONSULTATIONS AMONG THEMSELVES DID NOT PROVIDE ANY SOLUTION. SO THEY DECIDED TO GO TO BRAHMA THE CREATOR, WHO LIVED ON MOUNT MERU.

AT MOUNT MERU—

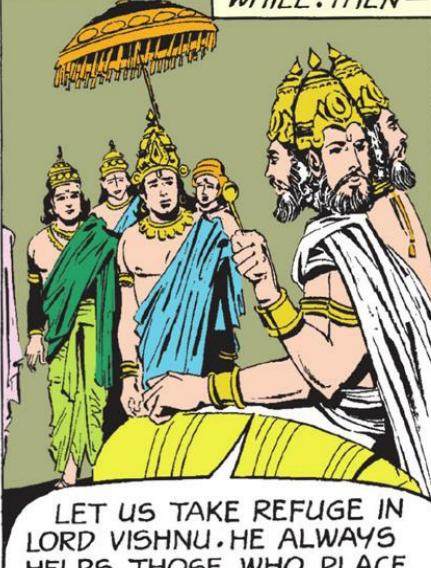
SIRE, WE HAVE COME TO YOU FOR HELP. THE CURSE OF DURVASA HAS TURNED US INTO A WEAK AND LACK-LUSTRE LOT. WE ARE HELPLESS AGAINST OUR FOES, THE ASURAS.



WE BECOME LISTLESS ON THE BATTLEFIELD AND OUR FORCES FALL DEAD IN LARGE NUMBERS, NEVER TO RISE AGAIN.



BRAHMA MEDITATED FOR A WHILE. THEN—



LET US TAKE REFUGE IN LORD VISHNU. HE ALWAYS HELPS THOSE WHO PLACE FAITH IN HIM. BESIDES, IT IS HE WHO PRESERVES THE ORDER OF THE UNIVERSE.

SO THEY WENT TO THE ABODE OF VISHNU, THE PRESERVER.

O OMNISCIENT ONE, YOU KNOW WHY WE, THE GUARDIANS OF THE WORLD, HAVE COME. WE SURRENDER OURSELVES TO YOU. SHOW US A WAY OUT OF OUR PLIGHT.

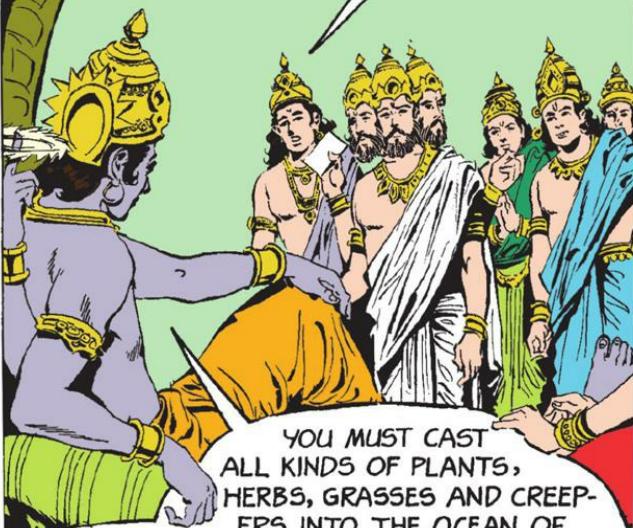


LORD VISHNU SPOKE IN HIS DEEP, RESONANT VOICE.

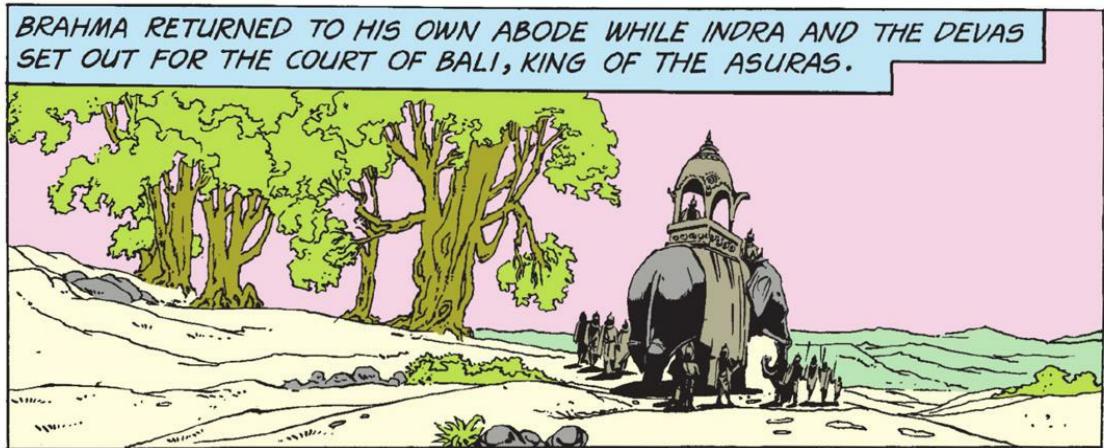
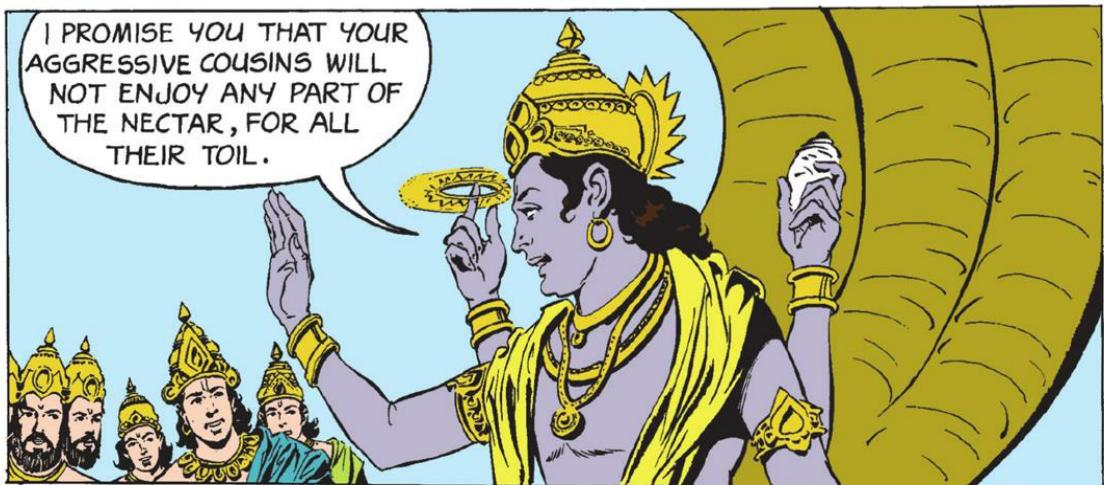
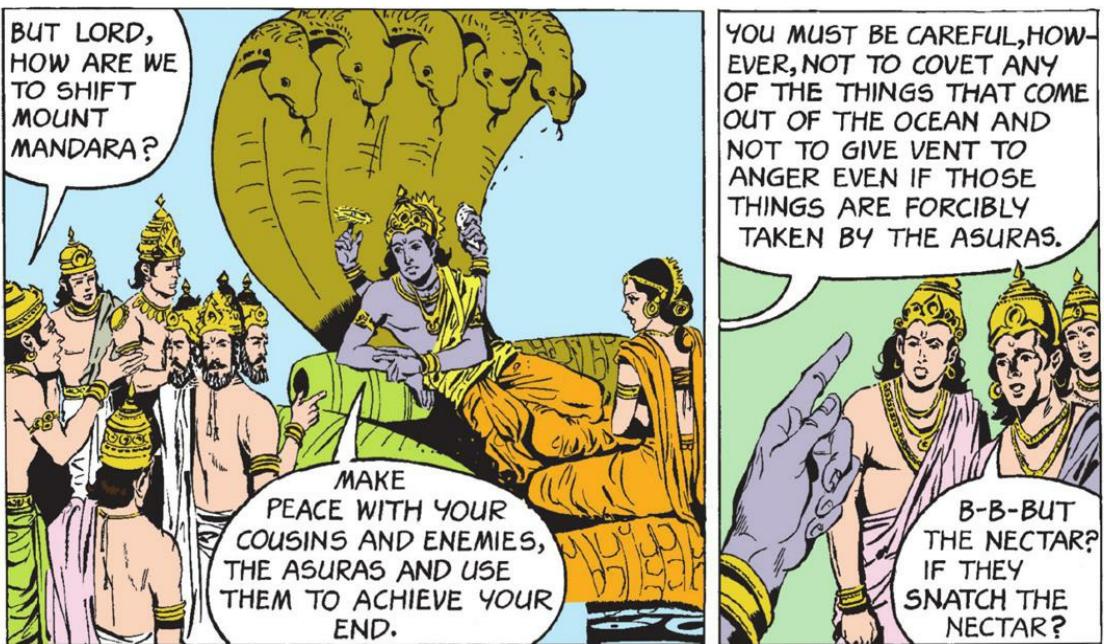
YOU WILL HAVE TO STRIVE HARD AND OBTAIN THE NECTAR OF IMMORTALITY. THAT IS THE ONLY WAY OUT FOR YOU.



HOW SHOULD WE OBTAIN THE NECTAR, O LORD?



YOU MUST CAST ALL KINDS OF PLANTS, HERBS, GRASSES AND CREEPERS INTO THE OCEAN OF MILK. THEN CHURN THE OCEAN USING MOUNT MANDARA AS A CHURN-DASHER AND VASUKI, KING OF THE SERPENTS, AS THE ROPE FOR TURNING IT.



WHEN BALI AND HIS ASURA FOLLOWING SAW THEIR ENEMIES APPROACH—



BALI RECEIVED INDRA AND THE DEVAS WITH RESPECT AND GAVE THEM SEATS OF HONOUR. INDRA TOLD HIM WHY THEY HAD COME.



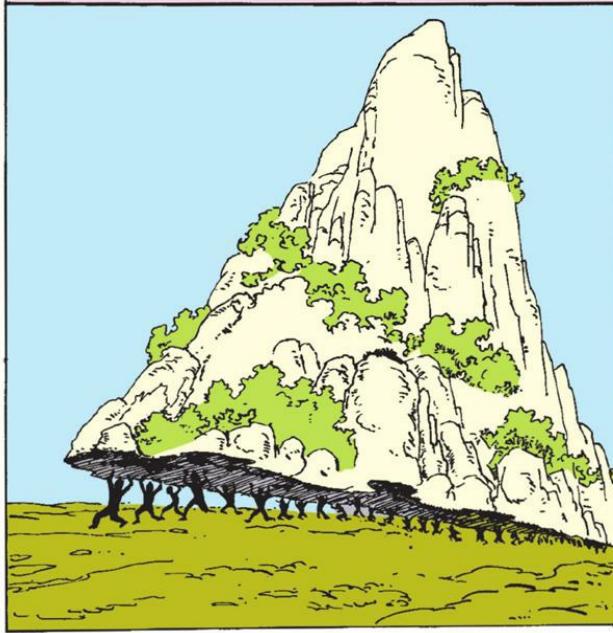
BALI, AS WELL AS HIS CHIEFS, FAVOURIED THE PROPOSAL AND PEACE WAS DECLARED BETWEEN THE ASURAS AND THE DEVAS.



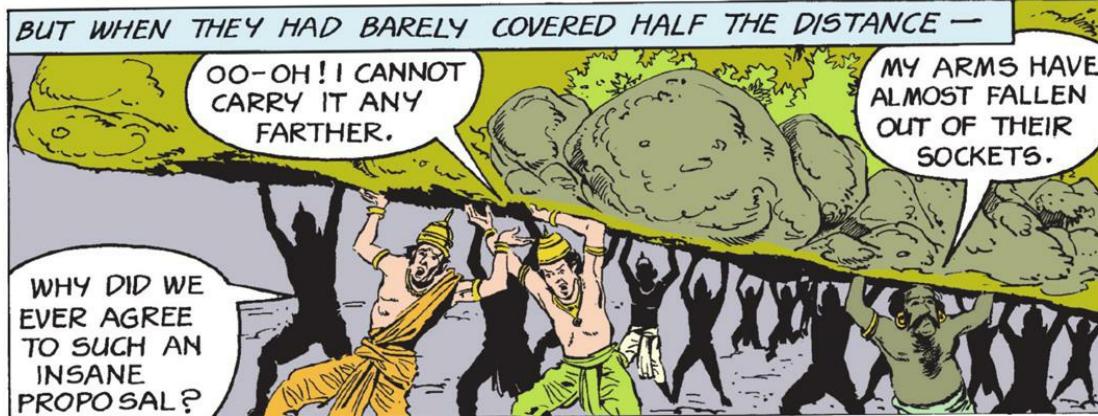
A LITTLE LATER, ALONG WITH THEIR Hordes, BALI AND INDRA BEGAN THE TASK OF UPROOTING MOUNT MANDARA...



...AND TAKING IT TO THE SEASHORE.



BUT WHEN THEY HAD BARELY COVERED HALF THE DISTANCE —



BEWARE!

ALAS!
WHAT A
FATE!

MOVE
OUT OF
THE WAY!



THE MIGHTY MOUNTAIN FELL,
CRUSHING LARGE NUMBERS OF
DEVAS AND ASURAS UNDER IT.
INDRA WAS DESPERATE.



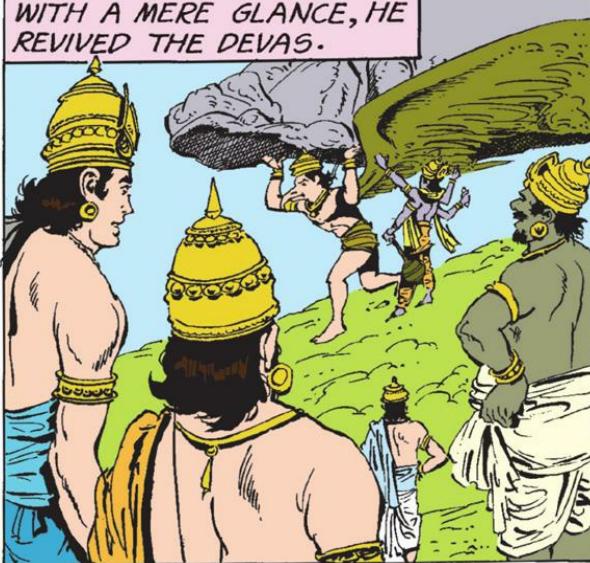
MEANWHILE —



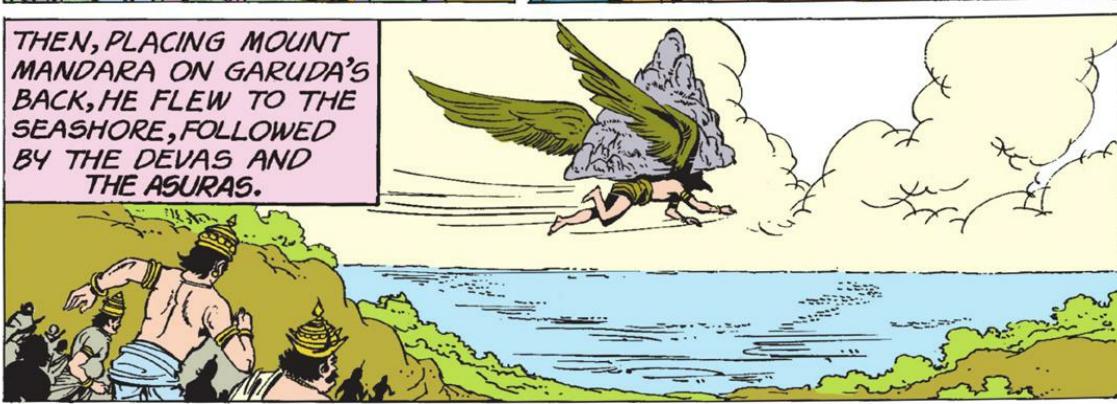
EVEN BEFORE INDRA
APPEALED TO HIM, THE LORD
HAD REACHED THE SPOT.



WITH A MERE GLANCE, HE
REVIVED THE DEVAS.



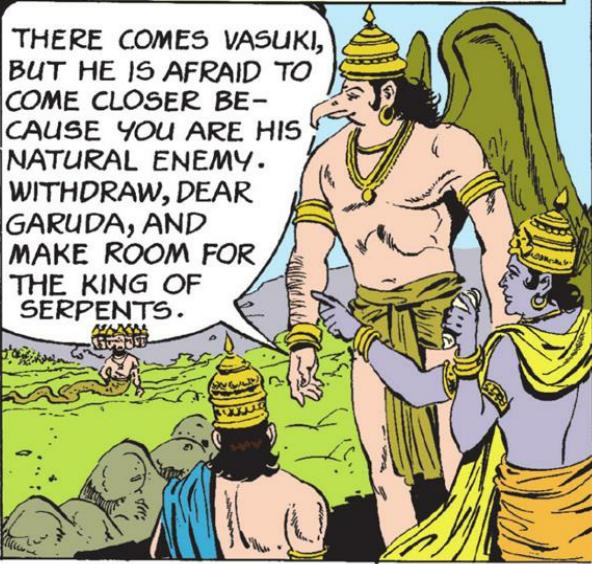
THEN, PLACING MOUNT
MANDARA ON GARUDA'S
BACK, HE FLEW TO THE
SEASHORE, FOLLOWED
BY THE DEVAS AND
THE ASURAS.



* VISHNU'S MOUNT.

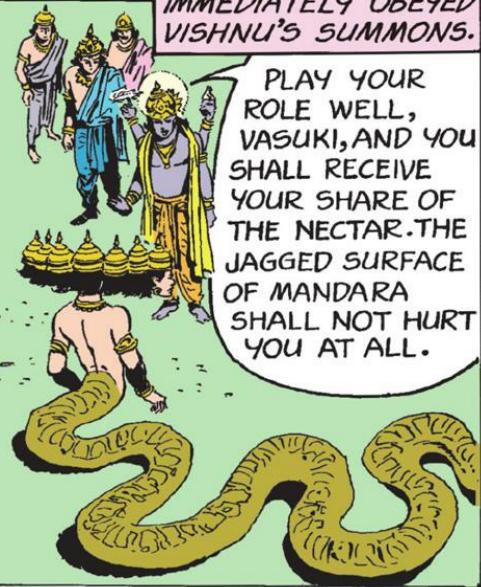
AFTER THE MOUNTAIN WAS SAFELY DEPOSITED ON THE SEASHORE, VISHNU TURNED TO GARUDA.

THERE COMES VASUKI, BUT HE IS AFRAID TO COME CLOSER BECAUSE YOU ARE HIS NATURAL ENEMY. WITHDRAW, DEAR GARUDA, AND MAKE ROOM FOR THE KING OF SERPENTS.



WHEN HE SAW THAT GARUDA HAD FLOWN AWAY, VASUKI IMMEDIATELY OBEYED VISHNU'S SUMMONS.

PLAY YOUR ROLE WELL, VASUKI, AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE YOUR SHARE OF THE NECTAR. THE JAGGED SURFACE OF MANDARA SHALL NOT HURT YOU AT ALL.

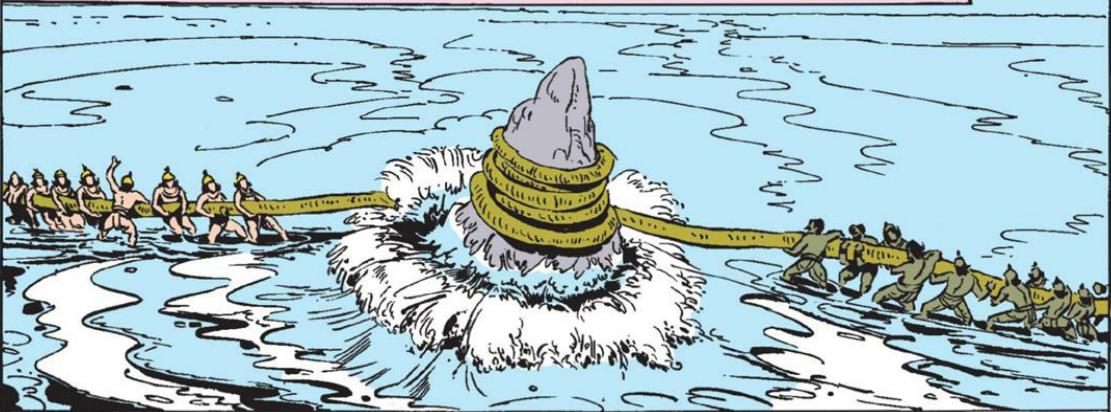


REASSURED, VASUKI ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE WOUND ROUND MANDARA.

THERE! NOW WE ARE READY. COME, FRIENDS AND BROTHERS, LET US CHURN WITH ALL OUR MIGHT FOR THE COMMON GOOD OF ALL OF US.



FULL OF JOYOUS ANTICIPATION, THEY BEGAN CHURNING.



BUT THEIR JOY SOON TURNED INTO DESPAIR. THE HEAVY MOUNT MANDARA, WHICH HAD NOTHING TO SUPPORT IT, SANK INTO THE OCEAN.

ALAS ! IS THE NECTAR NEVER TO BE OURS ?

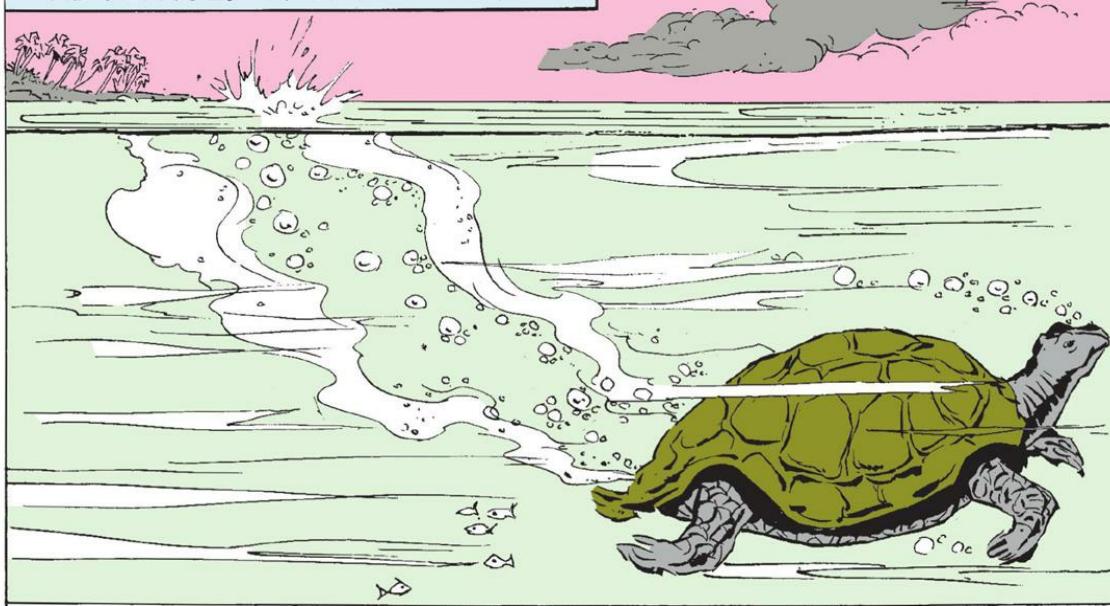
WHAT IS TO BE DONE NOW ?

IF WE, THE MIGHTIEST OF DEVAS AND ASURAS, COULD NOT HOLD UP MANDARA, WHO CAN ?

THERE WAS ONE AND ONLY ONE WHO COULD — LORD VISHNU. TAKING THE FORM OF A HUGE TORTOISE...

...HE PLUNGED INTO THE OCEAN...

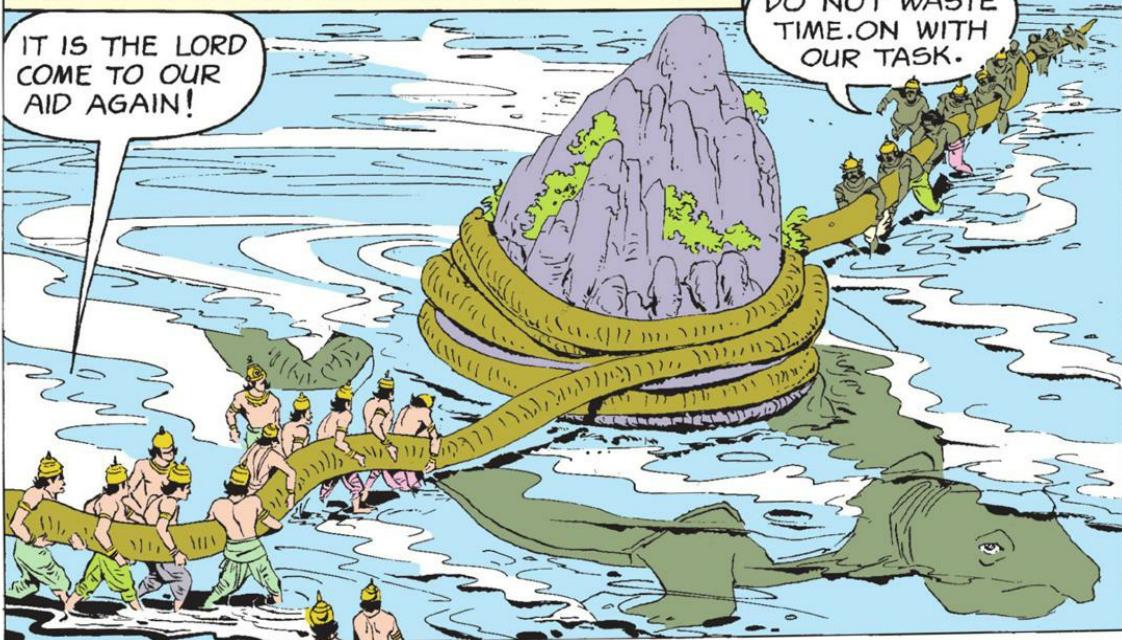
...HE PLUNGED INTO THE OCEAN...



...AND TO THE AMAZED DELIGHT OF THE DEVAS AND ASURAS,
CAME UP WITH THE MOUNTAIN ON HIS BACK.

IT IS THE LORD
COME TO OUR
AID AGAIN!

DO NOT WASTE
TIME.ON WITH
OUR TASK.



THEY CHURNED AND CHURNED; BUT IN VAIN.

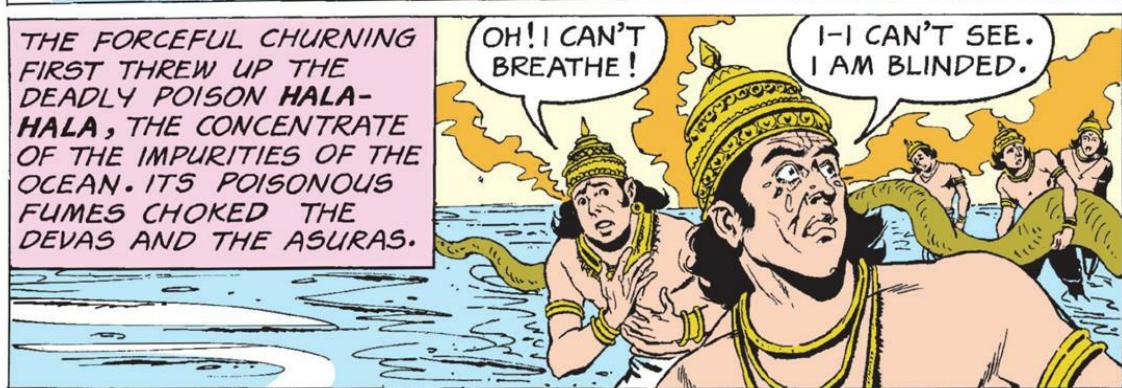
I CANNOT
CONTINUE ANY
LONGER. MY
LIMBS ARE
NUMB!.

I WILL HAVE
TO DO THE
CHURNING TOO.

THE FORCEFUL CHURNING
FIRST THREW UP THE
DEADLY POISON HALA-
HALA, THE CONCENTRATE
OF THE IMPURITIES OF THE
OCEAN. ITS POISONOUS
FUMES CHOKED THE
DEVAS AND THE ASURAS.

OH! I CAN'T
BREATHE!

I-I CAN'T SEE.
I AM BLINDED.



FRIGHTENED OUT OF THEIR WITS, THEY RAN TO LORD SHIVA AT KAILASA.



COLLECTING THE POISON
INTO HIS PALM ...



... SHIVA SWALLOWED IT.



AS SOON AS THE POISON WAS REMOVED, THE DEVAS AND ASURAS WERE ABLE TO CHURN THE OCEAN ONCE AGAIN.



AS THEY CONTINUED CHURNING, MANY PRECIOUS THINGS ROSE TO THE SURFACE, BUT NOT THE NECTAR. THEN SUDDENLY A BEING EMERGED —



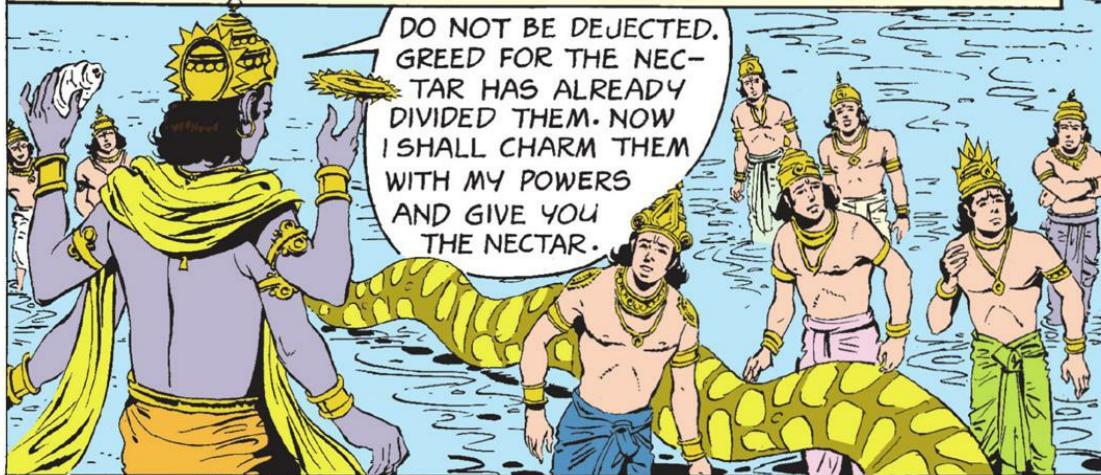
IT WAS DHANWANTARI WITH THE JAR OF THE NECTAR OF IMMORTALITY —



FORGETTING THEIR TRUCE, THE ASURAS SNATCHED THE PRECIOUS JAR ALL FOR THEMSELVES.

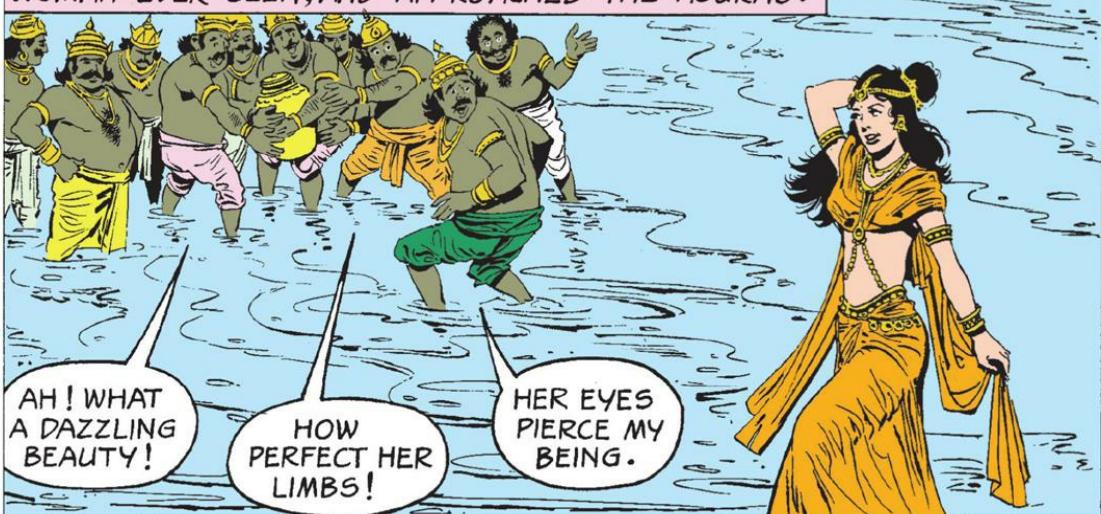


THE DEVAS WATCHED THE ASURAS IN DISMAY. BUT REMEMBERING VISHNU'S COMMAND THAT THEY SHOULD NOT QUARREL OVER WHAT THE OCEAN YIELDED, THEY MADE NO MOVE. VISHNU WAS PLEASED.



DO NOT BE DEJECTED. GREED FOR THE NECTAR HAS ALREADY DIVIDED THEM. NOW I SHALL CHARM THEM WITH MY POWERS AND GIVE YOU THE NECTAR.

THEN VISHNU TOOK ON THE FORM OF MOHINI, THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN EVER SEEN, AND APPROACHED THE ASURAS.



AH! WHAT A DAZZLING BEAUTY!

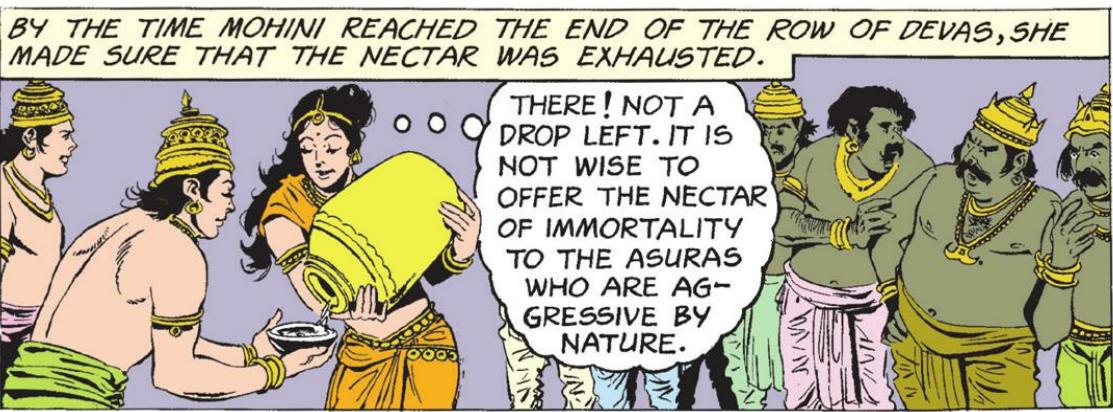
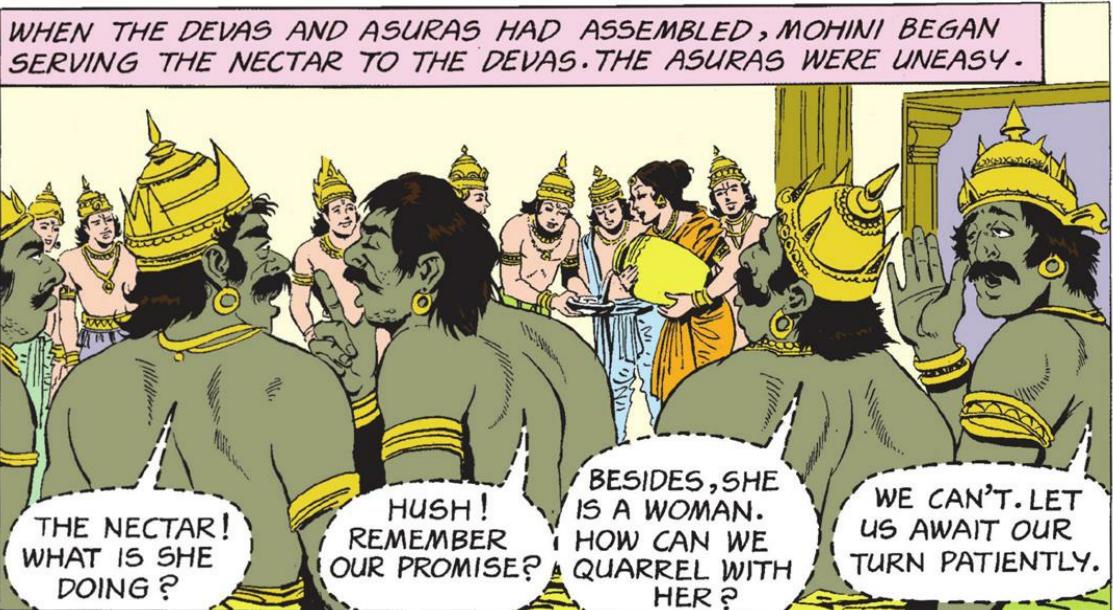
HOW PERFECT HER LIMBS!

HER EYES PIERCE MY BEING.



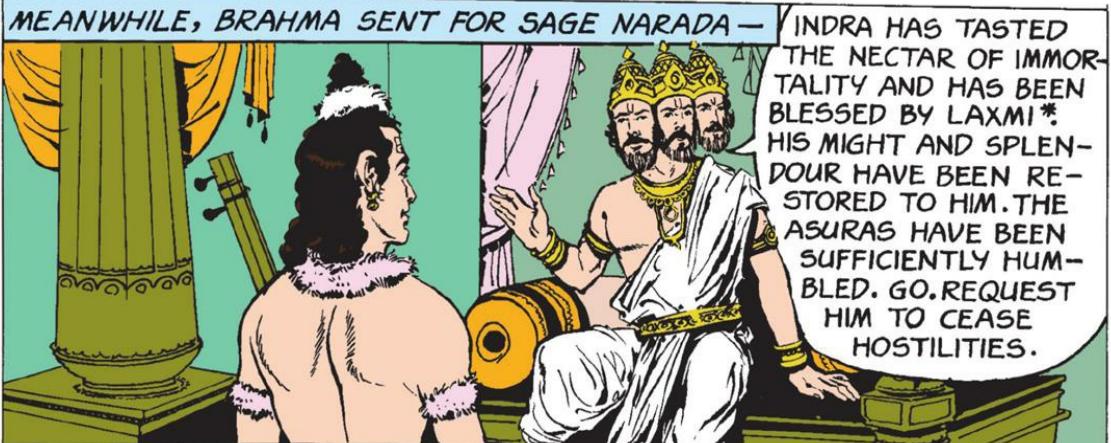
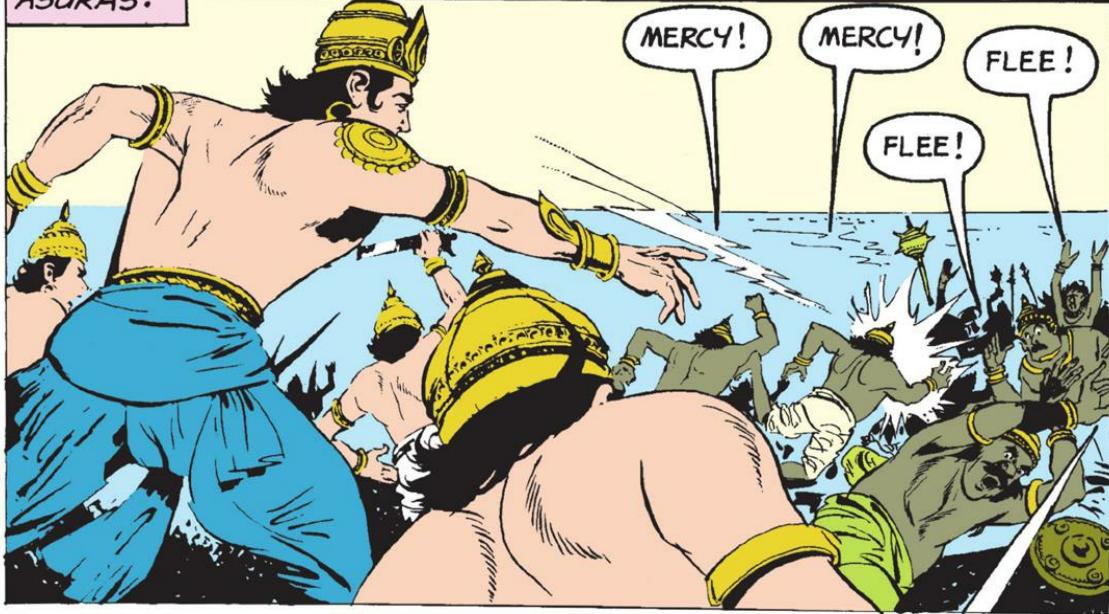
SO INFATUATED WERE THE ASURAS THAT THEY ENTRUSTED THE JAR OF NECTAR TO HER CARE.

PRAY, BEAUTIFUL ONE, DISTRI-
BUTE THE NECTAR SO THAT OUR
QUARREL MAY END.
BRING PEACE TO US.

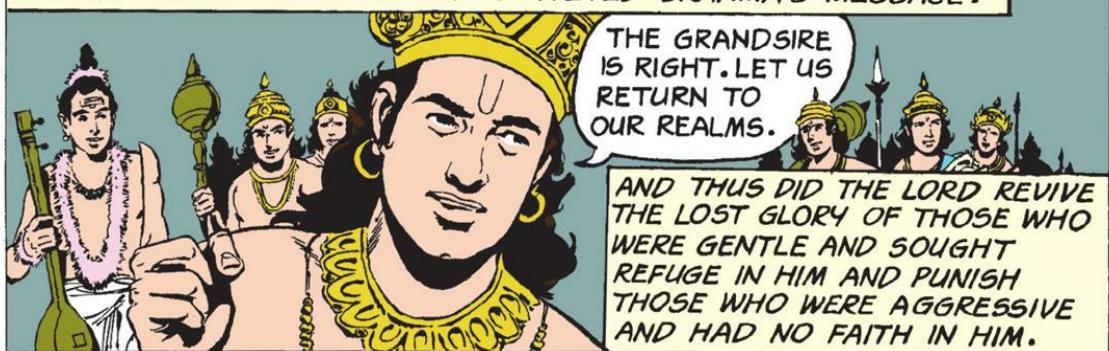




THE GREAT DEVA-ASURA WAR THAT ENSUED THERE, ON THE SEASHORE, WAS A TERRIBLE ONE. BUT WITH HIS THUNDER-BOLT, INDRA, DESPITE THE SEVERAL REVERSES HE SUFFERED, WAS ABLE TO VANQUISH THE ASURAS.



NARADA WENT TO INDRA AND CONVEYED BRAHMA'S MESSAGE.

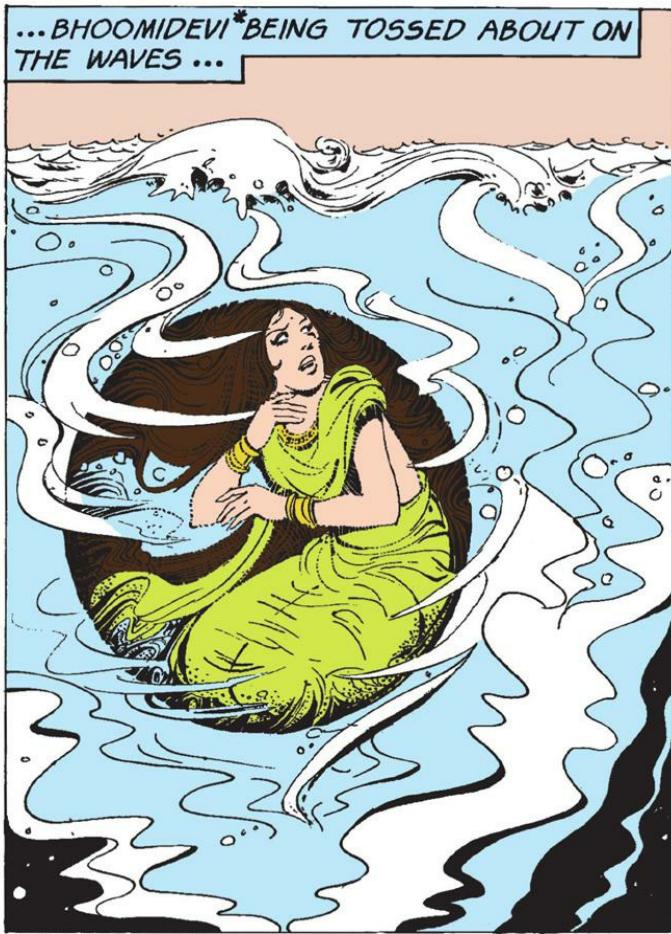


* THE GODDESS OF WEALTH.

VARAHA AVATAR

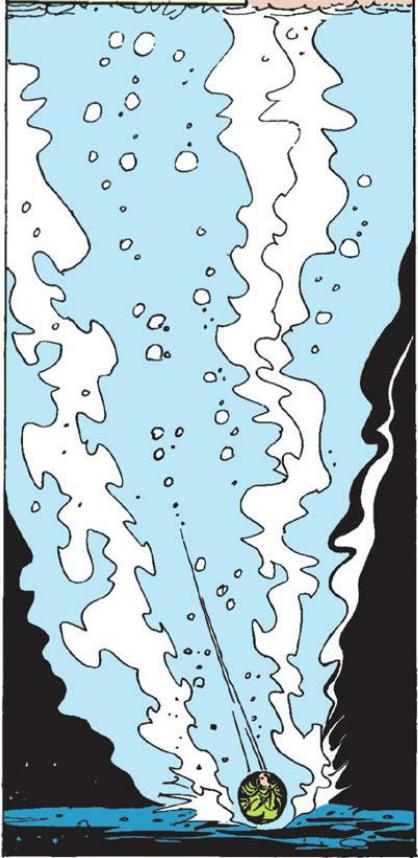


AFTER PRALAYA, AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW KALPA, WHILE BRAHMA WAS BUSY IN THE WORK OF CREATION ...



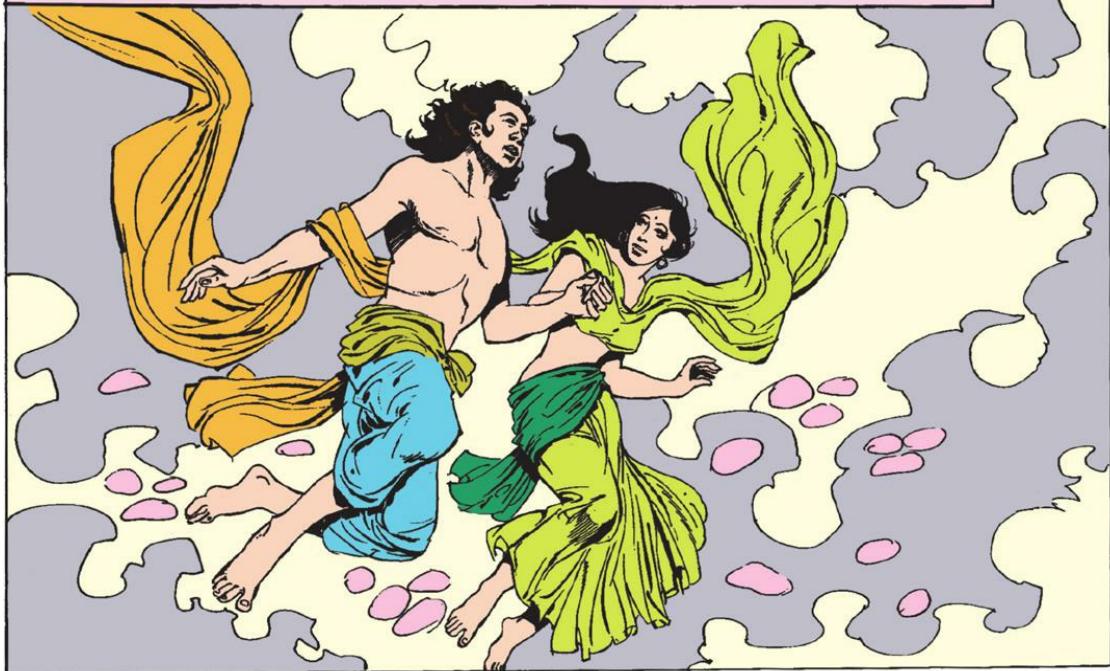
... BHOO MIDEVI * BEING TOSSSED ABOUT ON THE WAVES ...

... SANK TO THE BED OF THE OCEAN ...



*MOTHER EARTH

...AND SWAYAMBHUVA MANU AND SHATARUPA CAME INTO BEING.



THEY BOWED TO BRAHMA.

FATHER, TELL US
HOW WE MAY SERVE
YOU AS WELL AS EN-
SURE OUR HAPPINESS
IN THIS WORLD AND
THE NEXT.

KEEP YOUR HEART
FREE FROM JEAL-
OUSY, BEGET MANY
VIRTUOUS CHILDREN
AND RULE OVER THE
EARTH, FOR YOU
SHALL BE THE RUL-
ER OF MEN.



BRAHMA WAS TROUBLED.

WHAT SHALL I DO?
I WILL HAVE TO BRING
THE EARTH UP. O LORD
VISHNU, PLEASE HELP
ME.



AS BRAHMA MEDITATED ON THE
LORD, A TINY BOAR, HARDLY
AS BIG AS HIS THUMB, EMERGED
FROM ONE OF HIS
NOSTRILS.



EVEN AS BRAHMA GAZED AT IT
AMAZED, IT GREW...



...AND GREW...



...TILL IT WAS THE SIZE OF A LARGE ELEPHANT. BRAHMA WAS FULL
OF WONDER.

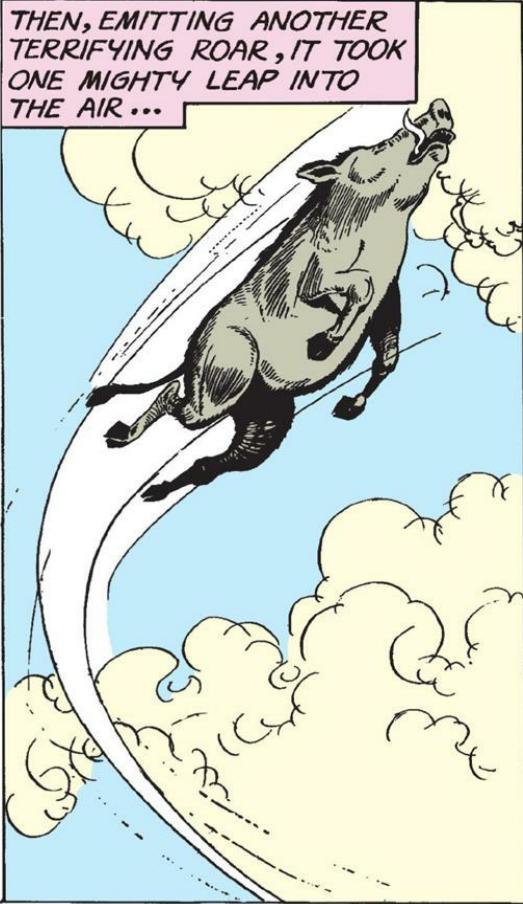
COULD IT
BE LORD
VISHNU
HIMSELF?



WHILE BRAHMA PONDERED THUS, THE BOAR, WHICH WAS NOW AS LARGE AS A HUGE MOUNTAIN, ROARED.



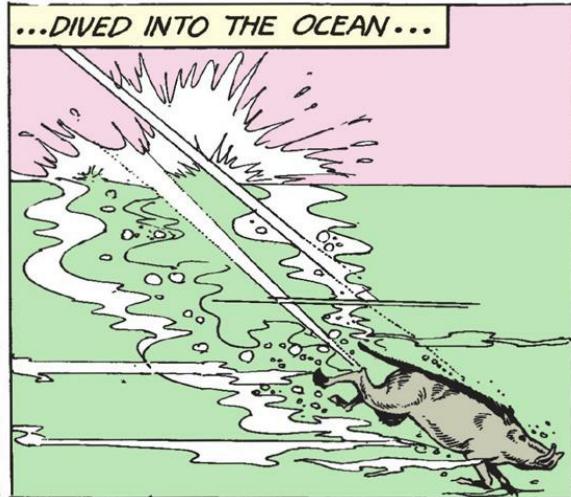
THEN, EMITTING ANOTHER TERRIFYING ROAR, IT TOOK ONE MIGHTY LEAP INTO THE AIR ...



...TORE THE CLOUDS WITH ITS HOOFs...



...DIVED INTO THE OCEAN...



...AND NOSED ITS WAY ABOUT THE OCEAN-BED, IN SEARCH OF THE EARTH ...



...TILL IT REACHED THE OTHER END OF THAT FATHOMLESS OCEAN AND DISCOVERED IN ITS DEPTHS ...

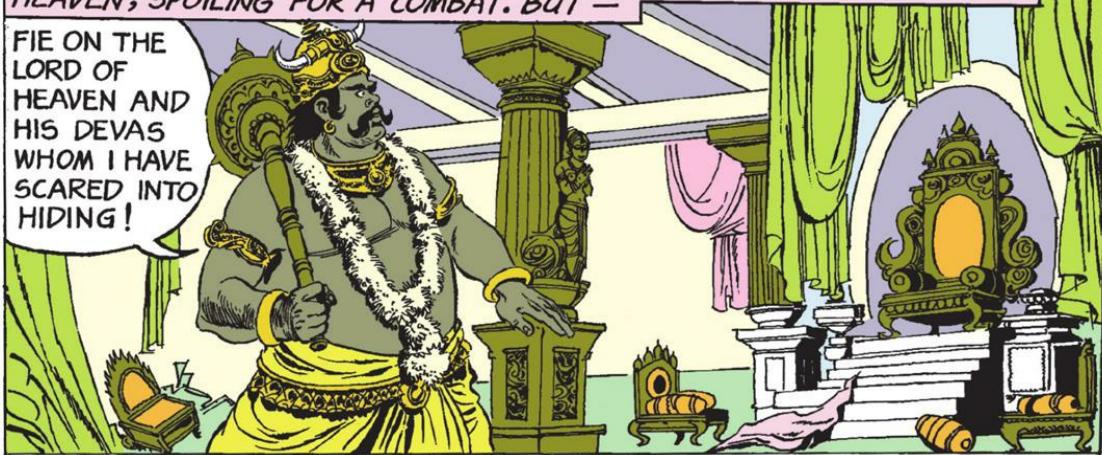


...THE OBJECT OF ITS QUEST-BHOOMIDEVI.

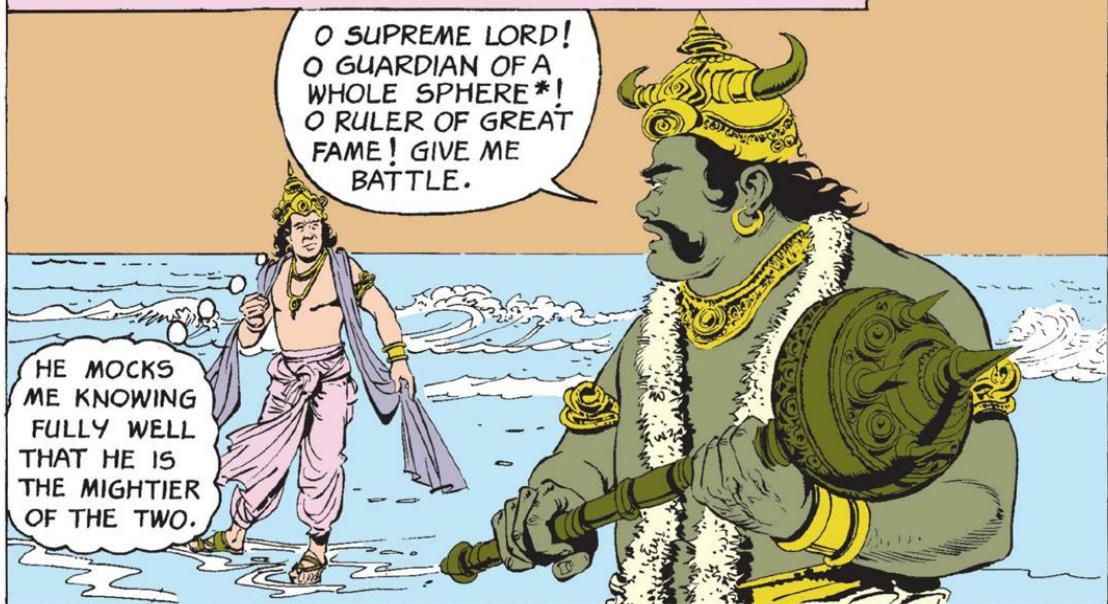


MEANWHILE, THE MIGHTY ASURA, HIRANYAKSHA, THUNDERED UP TO HEAVEN, SPOILING FOR A COMBAT. BUT —

FIE ON THE LORD OF HEAVEN AND HIS DEVAS WHOM I HAVE SCARED INTO HIDING!



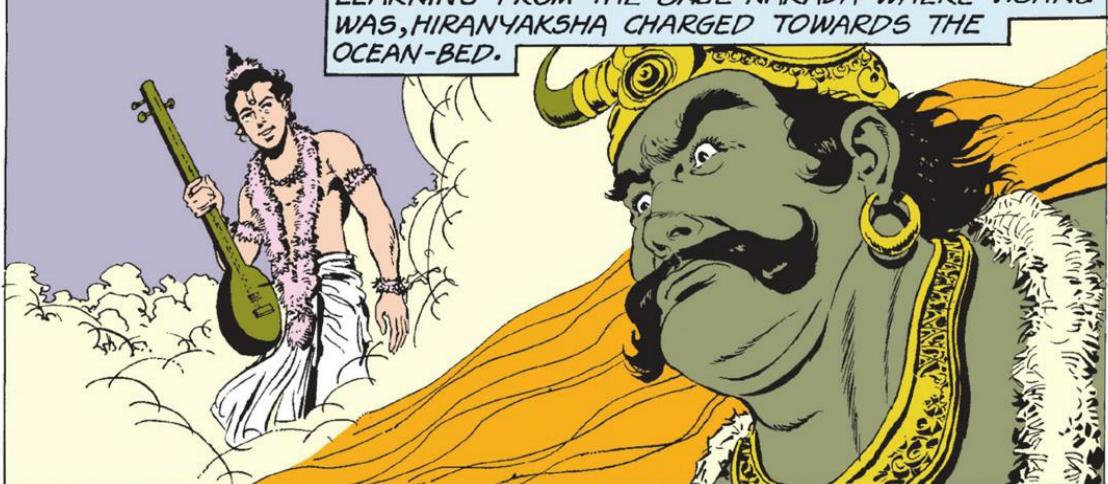
DISGUSTED AND ANGRY, HE MARCHED UP TO VARUNA, LORD OF THE WATERS AND FEIGNING HUMILITY, FELL AT HIS FEET.



BUT VARUNA CURBED HIS ANGER.

I HAVE GIVEN UP FIGHTING. I AM TOO OLD NOW. LORD VISHNU IS THE ONE YOU SHOULD APPROACH. HE ALONE WOULD BE AN EQUAL OPPONENT FOR YOU. GO SEEK HIM OUT.

LEARNING FROM THE SAGE NARADA WHERE VISHNU WAS, HIRANYAKSHA CHARGED TOWARDS THE OCEAN-BED.

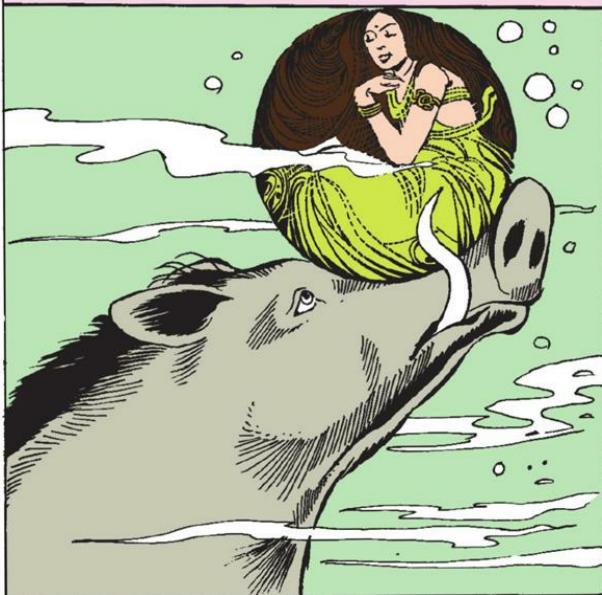


* HYDROSPHERE .

MEANWHILE THE BOAR HAD JUST DUG HIS TUSK INTO THE OCEAN-BED ...



... AND LIFTING BHOO MIDEVI ONTO IT...



... BEGUN RISING TOWARDS THE SURFACE, WHEN —

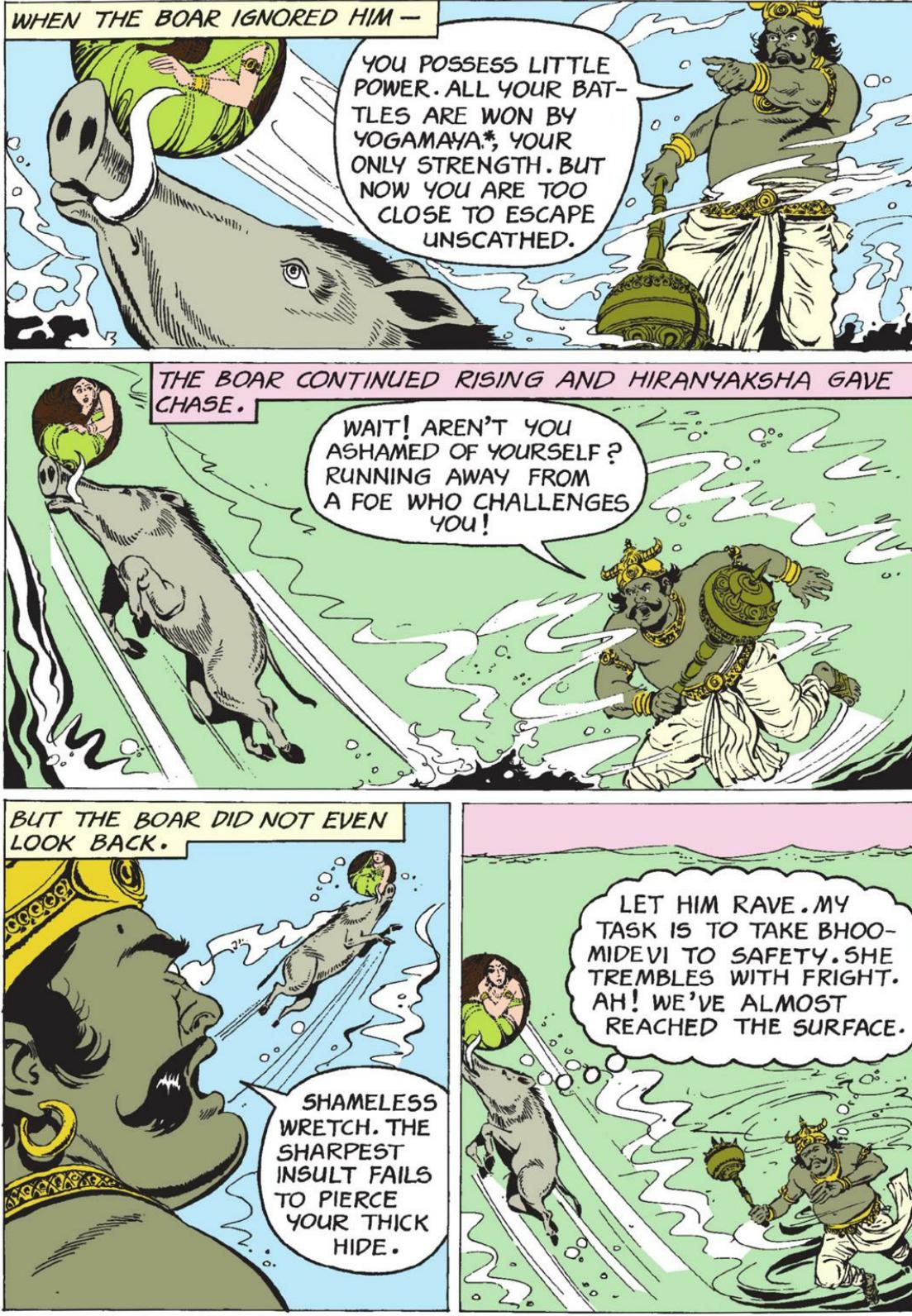
OH! SO HE IS NOW IN THE FORM OF A WILD BEAST!



HIRANYAKSHA CHALLENGED THE BEAST WITH A ROAR.

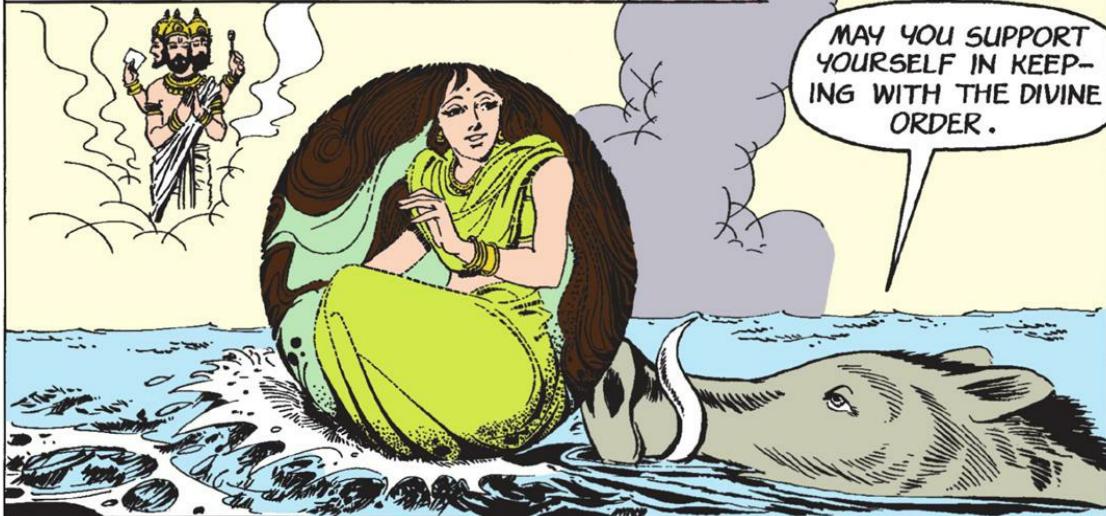
COME ON, YOU BEAST!
LEAVE BHOO MIDEVI ALONE.
SHE HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED
TO US BY THE MAKER OF
THE UNIVERSE.





* POWER OF ILLUSORY CREATION

AS SOON AS HE REACHED THE SURFACE OF THE OCEAN, HE PLACED BHOO MIDEVI GENTLY ON IT AND BLESSED HER.



THEN HE TURNED TO FACE HIRANYAKSHA, HIS SPEECH HEAVY WITH SARCASM.

O WRETCH, SCARED AWAY BY YOUR MACE, WE WHO HAVE STOLEN THE EARTH MUST TAKE OUR STAND IN THE BATTLEFIELD. FOR, HAVING INCURRED THE WRATH OF A POWERFUL ENEMY, WHERE CAN WE GO?



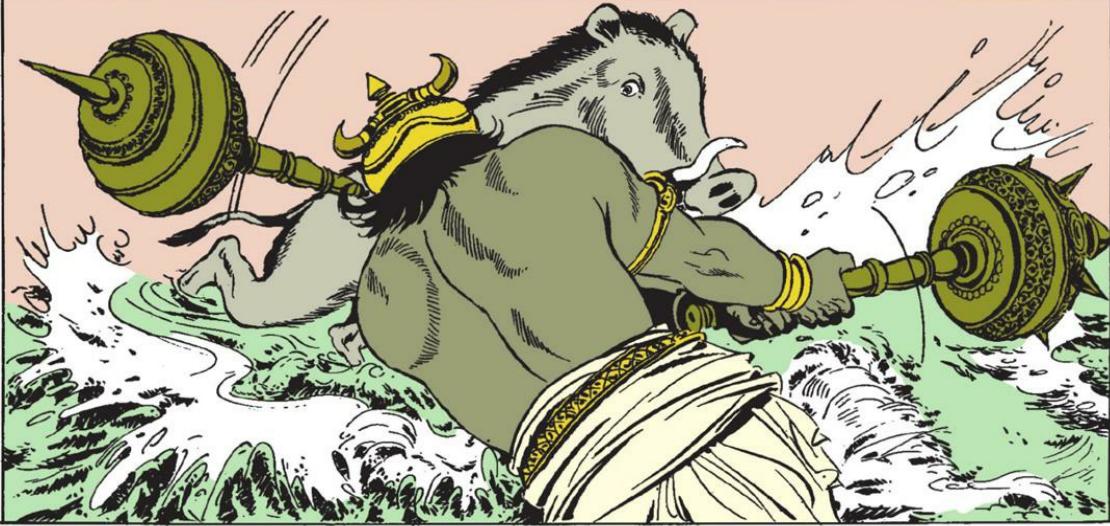
HIRANYAKSHA BECAME FURIOUS. SEETHING WITH ANGER, HE LIFTED HIS MACE AND ...



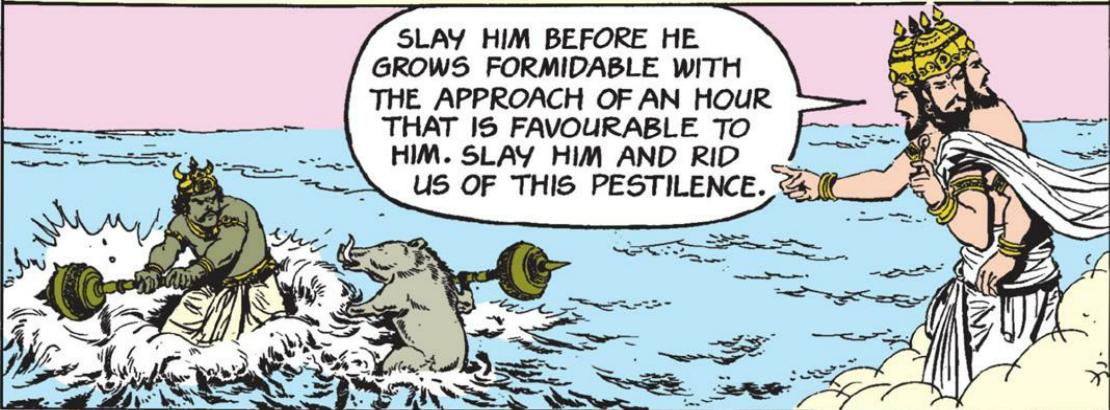
...SPRANG TOWARDS THE ANIMAL. BUT THE BOAR STEPPED ASIDE AND RAISED HIS OWN.



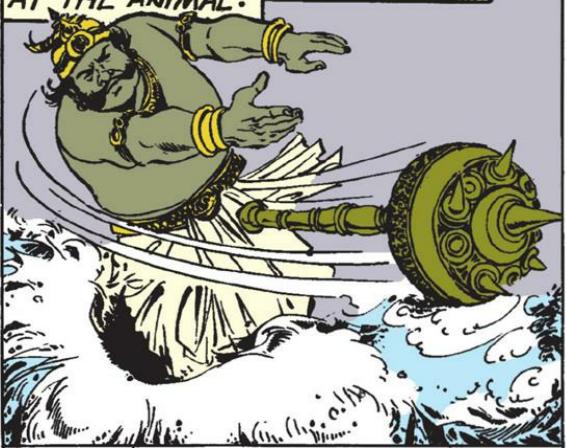
THEY FOUGHT FOR A LONG WHILE, EACH STRIKING OUT WITH HIS MACE.



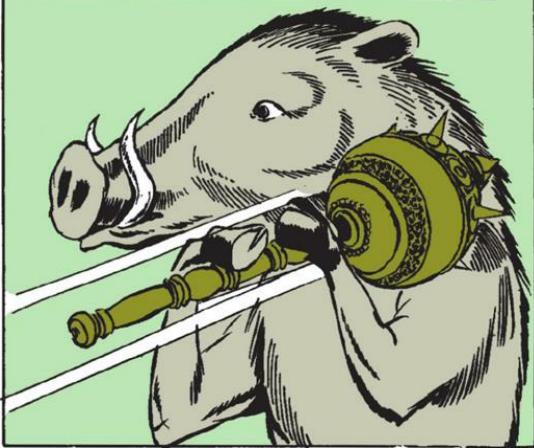
AS THE HOUR OF TWILIGHT DREW NEAR, BRAHMA SPOKE TO THE BOAR.



HEARING BRAHMA'S WORDS,
HIRANYAKSHA HURLED HIS MACE
AT THE ANIMAL.



THE MACE WAS CAUGHT BY THE
BOAR AS IF IT WERE A TOY.



ENRAGED, HIRANYAKSHA BEGAN HITTING OUT WITH HIS FISTS ON THE CHEST OF THE BOAR.



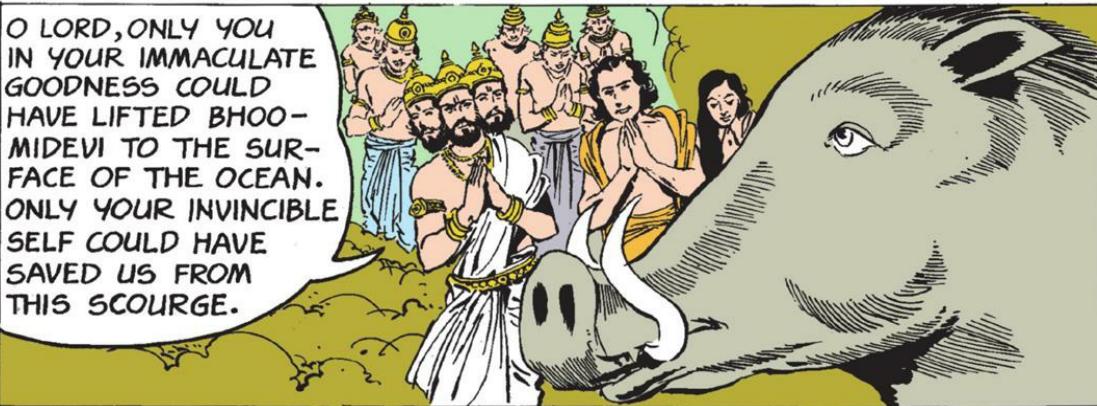
THE BOAR PLAYFULLY HIT THE DEMON BEHIND HIS EARS.



HIRANYAKSHA REELED AND FELL DEAD.



O LORD, ONLY YOU IN YOUR IMMACULATE GOODNESS COULD HAVE LIFTED BHOO-MIDEVI TO THE SURFACE OF THE OCEAN. ONLY YOUR INVINCIBLE SELF COULD HAVE SAVED US FROM THIS SCOURGE.



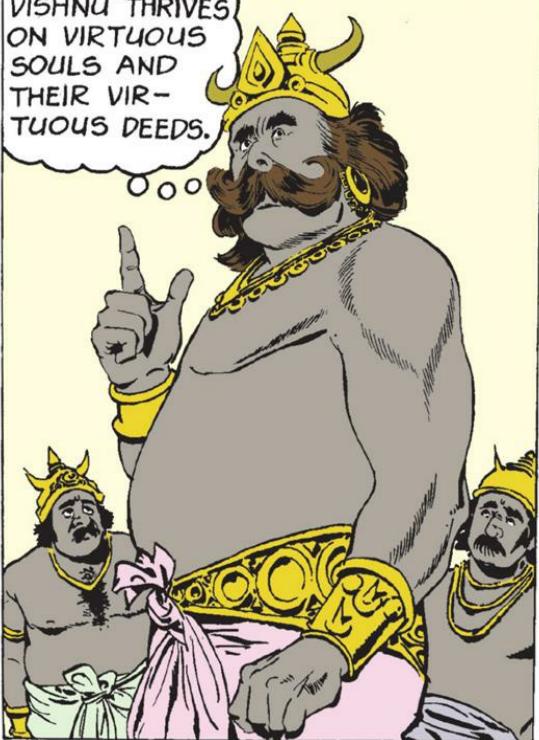
NARASIMHA AVATAR



VISHNU, IN THE FORM OF A BOAR, HAD KILLED THE EVIL ASURA, HIRANYAKSHA. THE DEVAS WERE HAPPY AND THERE WAS MUCH REJOICING IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH, BUT NOT FOR LONG.

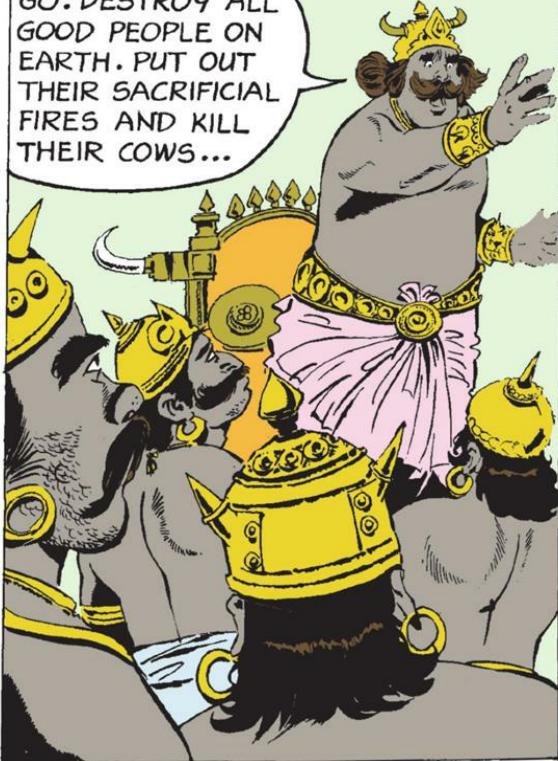
HIRANYAKASHIPU, HIRANYAKSHA'S ELDER BROTHER, SEETHING WITH ANGER, WAS BENT ON AVENGING THE DEATH OF HIS BROTHER.

VISHNU THRIVES
ON VIRTUOUS
SOULS AND
THEIR VIR-
TUOUS DEEDS.

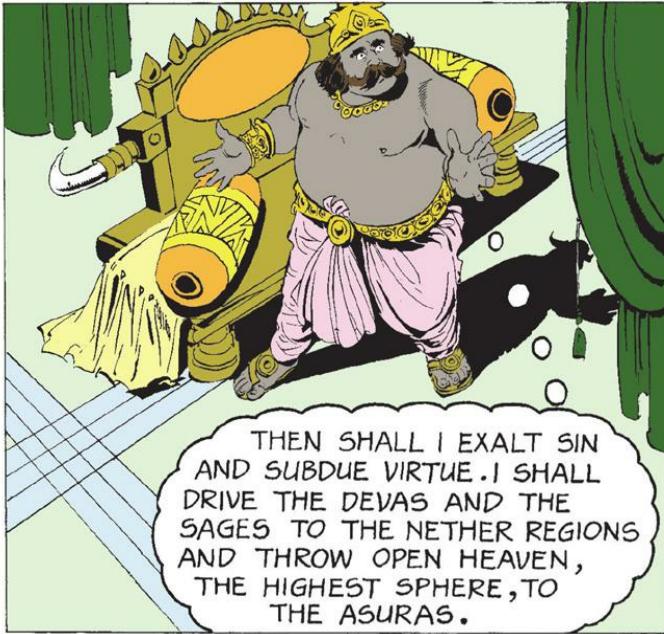


HE TURNED TO THE ASURAS WHO HAD COME TO OFFER HIM THEIR CONDOLENCES.

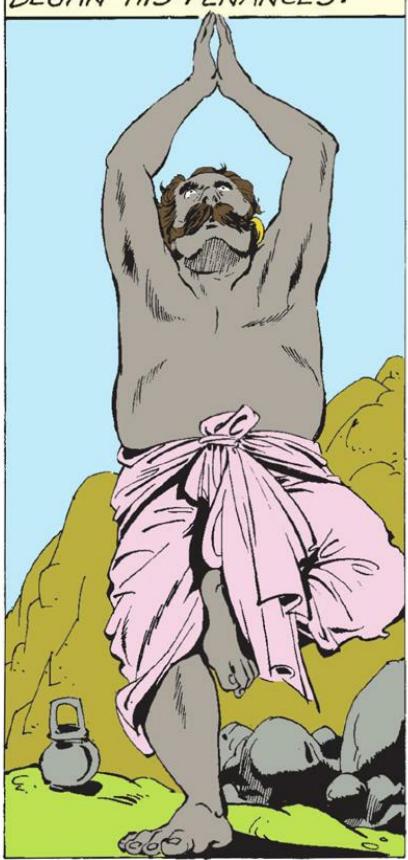
GO. DESTROY ALL GOOD PEOPLE ON EARTH. PUT OUT THEIR SACRIFICIAL FIRES AND KILL THEIR COWS...



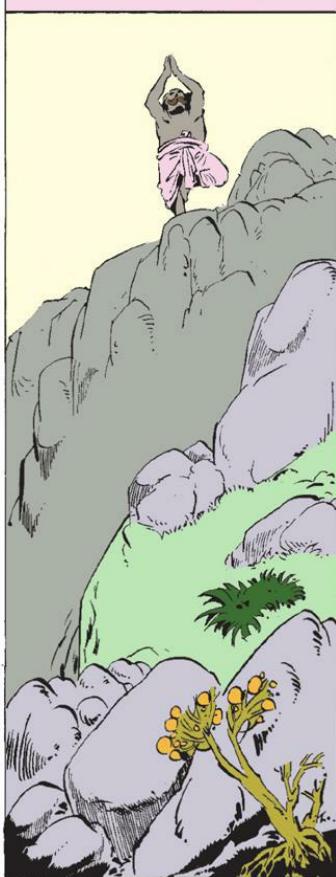
...WHILE I PRACTISE SEVERE PENANCES AND BECOME THE MASTER OF ALL THE THREE WORLDS—HEAVEN, EARTH AND OUR OWN REGIONS.



AND HIRANYAKASHIPU WENT TO MOUNT MANDARA AND BEGAN HIS PENANCES.



SO HE STOOD FOR YEARS AND YEARS.

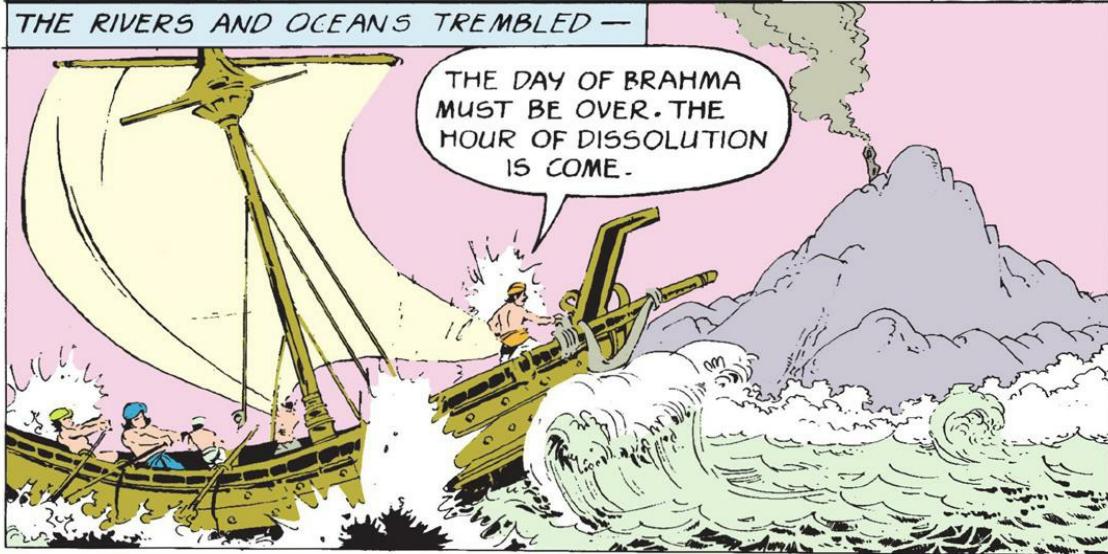


ANT HILLS AND GRASS GREW ON HIS PERSON BUT HE DID NOT MOVE.



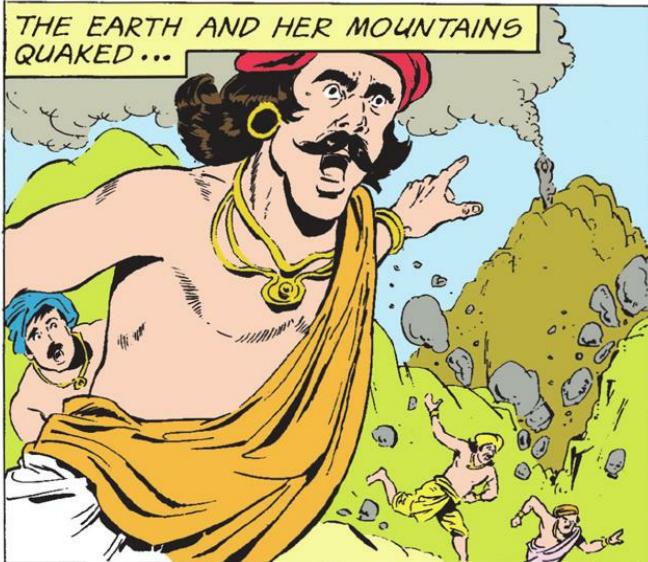
THE RIVERS AND OCEANS TREMBLED —

THE DAY OF BRAHMA
MUST BE OVER. THE
HOUR OF DISSOLUTION
IS COME.

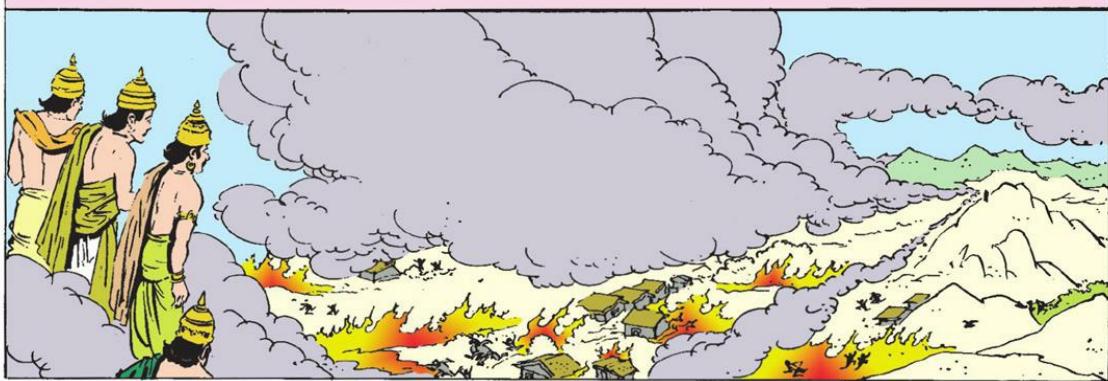


THE EARTH AND HER MOUNTAINS
QUAKED ...

... AND THE STARS AND
PLANETS DARTED ABOUT
IN PANIC.



SO INTENSE WAS HIRANYAKASHIPU'S PENANCE THAT THE FIERY SMOKE
EMERGING FROM HIS HEAD BEGAN TO SCORCH EVERYTHING IN ITS WAKE.



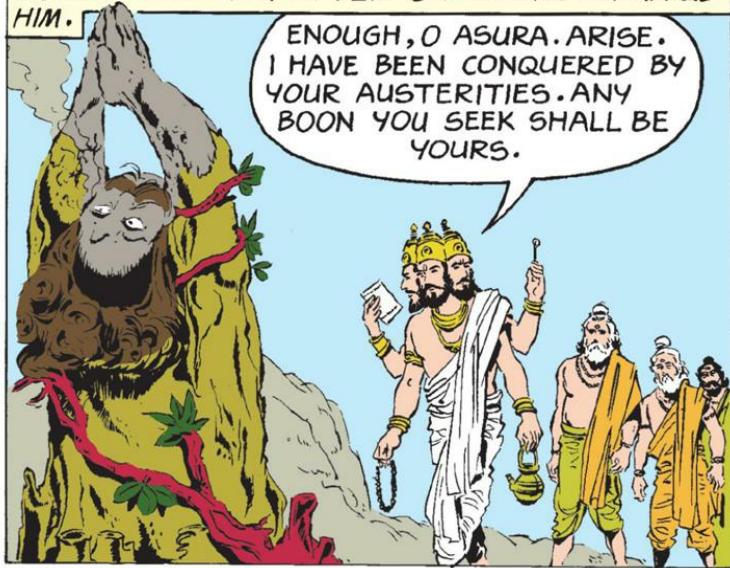
THE DEVAS WERE TERRIFIED. LED BY INDRA, THEY WENT TO BRAHMA, THE CREATOR.

O MERCIFUL LORD, PRAY DO SOMETHING, ANYTHING, BEFORE THE THREE WORLDS OF YOUR CREATION ARE CONSUMED BY THE FIRE OF THE ASURA'S PENANCES.



MOVED BY THEIR PLIGHT, BRAHMA WENT TO MOUNT MANDARA. A FEW SAGES ACCOMPANIED HIM.

ENOUGH, O ASURA. ARISE. I HAVE BEEN CONQUERED BY YOUR AUSTERITIES. ANY BOON YOU SEEK SHALL BE YOURS.



THE HOLY WATER FROM THE CREATOR'S KAMANDALU REJUVENATED THE ASURA. HE EMERGED, HANDSOME AND RADIANT.

LET NOT DEATH COME TO ME EITHER BY MAN OR BEAST, BY DAY OR BY NIGHT, INDOORS OR OUTDOORS, ON EARTH OR IN THE SKY. GRANT ME UNDISPUTED LORDSHIP OVER THE MATERIAL WORLD.

SO BE IT.



ARMED WITH THE BOONS, THE ASURA LOST NO TIME IN CONQUERING AND BRINGING UNDER HIS SWAY, BOTH HEAVEN AND EARTH.

I WISH TO OCCUPY THE PALACE OF THE LORD OF THE DEVAS. DRIVE HIM OUT.



BETRAYED BY BRAHMA, THE DEVAS APPROACHED VISHNU THE PRESERVER. VISHNU'S VOICE REASSURED THEM.

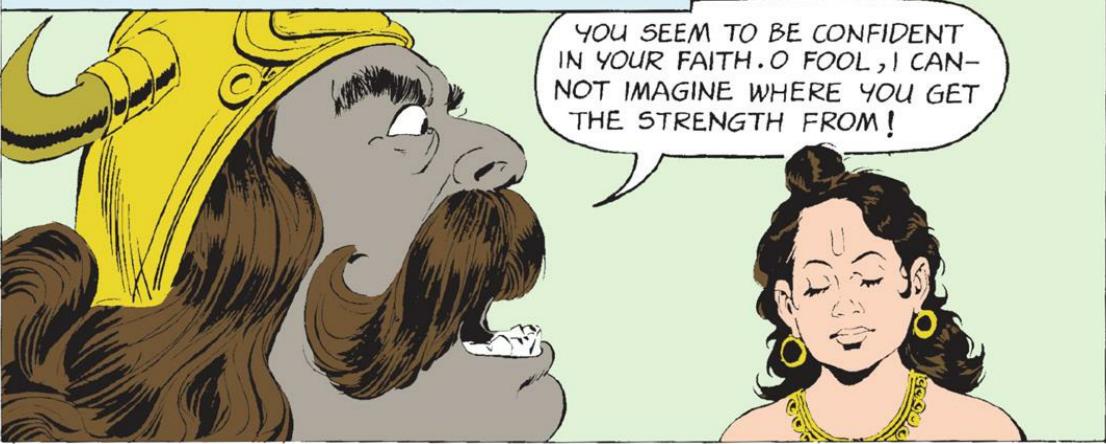
HAVE PATIENCE, O DEVAS. I KNOW THE EVIL THAT IS THE ASURA. HIS SON, THE HIGH-SOULED PRAHLAD* IS DEVOTED TO ME. WHEN THE ASURA SEEKS TO KILL MY DEVOTEE, I SHALL SLAY HIM.



THE DEVAS DID NOT HAVE TO WAIT LONG. EVEN AS VISHNU MADE HIS PROMISE, HIRANYAKASHIPU WAS SCREAMING WITH EXASPERATION AT HIS SON.



DEEP IN CONTEMPLATION OF LORD VISHNU, PRAHLAD DID NOT UTTER A WORD. HIRANYAKASHIPU ROARED IN FURY.



* SEE AMAR CHITRA KATHA NO.537 - PRAHLAD

AT LAST PRAHLAD SPOKE.

FROM WHOM NOT ONLY I BUT ALSO YOU AND ALL OTHER POWERFUL BEINGS DERIVE THEIRS—THE ALL-PERVADING LORD VISHNU.



HIRANYAKASHIPU BECAME LIVID WITH RAGE.

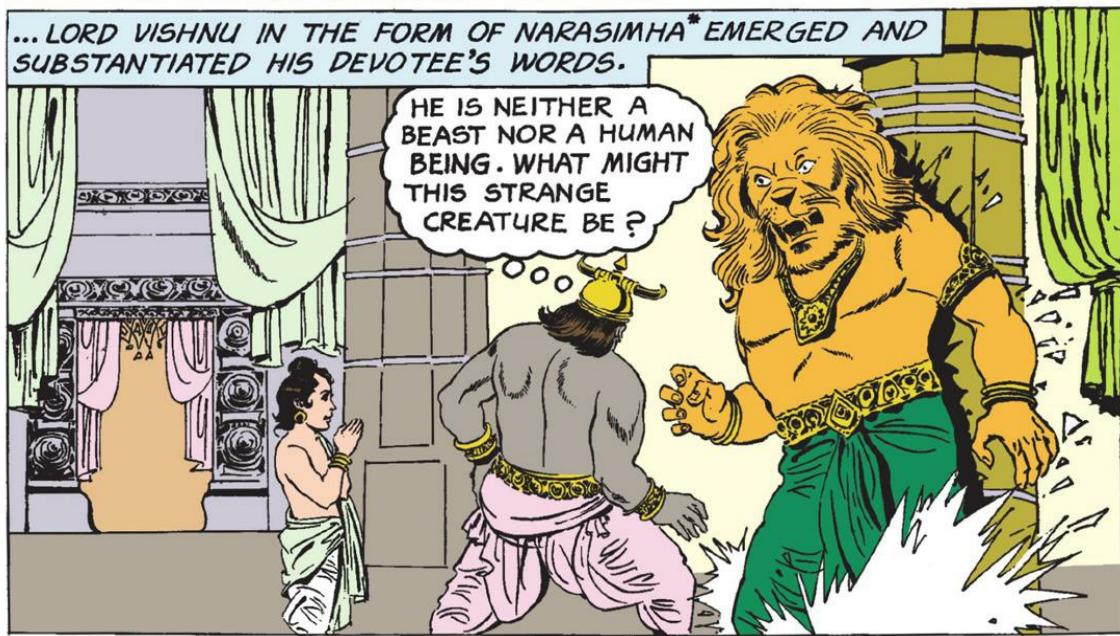
IF HE IS ALL-PERVADING, HE MUST BE IN THIS PILLAR. I AM GOING TO SLAY YOU NOW. LET HIM COME AND PROTECT ...

A RESOUNDING CRASH DROWNED HIS WORDS. THE PILLAR CRACKED AND...



...LORD VISHNU IN THE FORM OF NARASIMHA* EMERGED AND SUBSTANTIATED HIS DEVOTEE'S WORDS.

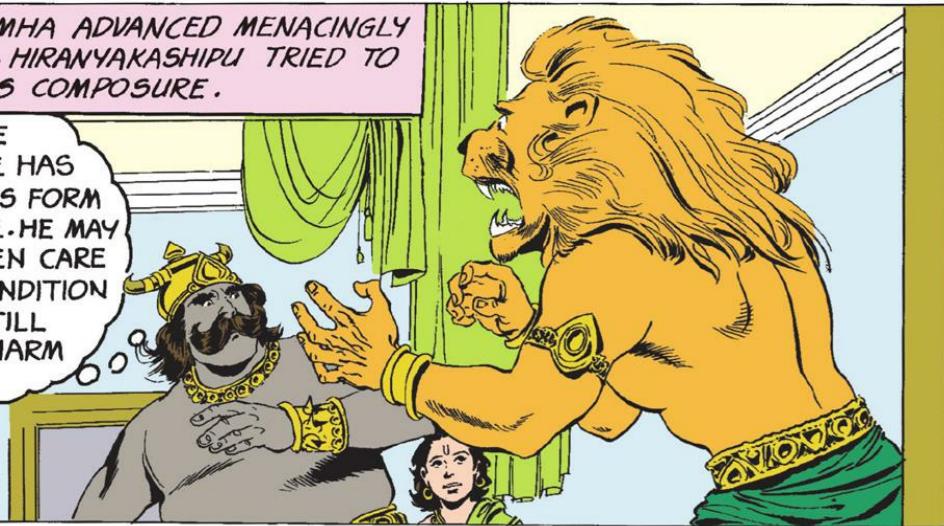
HE IS NEITHER A BEAST NOR A HUMAN BEING. WHAT MIGHT THIS STRANGE CREATURE BE?



* MAN-LION

AS NARASIMHA ADVANCED MENACINGLY UPON HIM, HIRANYAKASHIPU TRIED TO REGAIN HIS COMPOSURE.

IT MUST BE VISHNU. HE HAS TAKEN THIS FORM TO KILL ME. HE MAY HAVE TAKEN CARE OF ONE CONDITION BUT HE STILL CANNOT HARM ME.



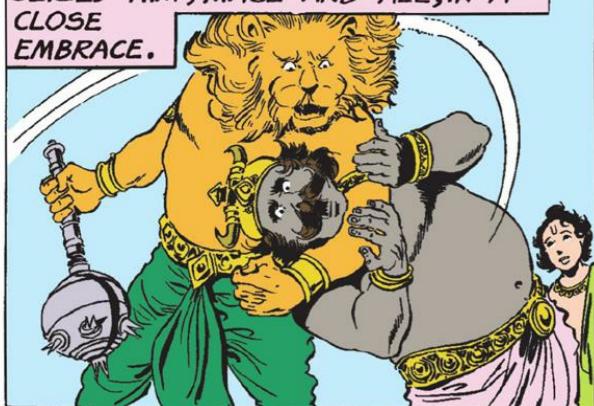
EMBOLDENED BY THAT THOUGHT, THE ASURA PICKED UP A MACE AND...



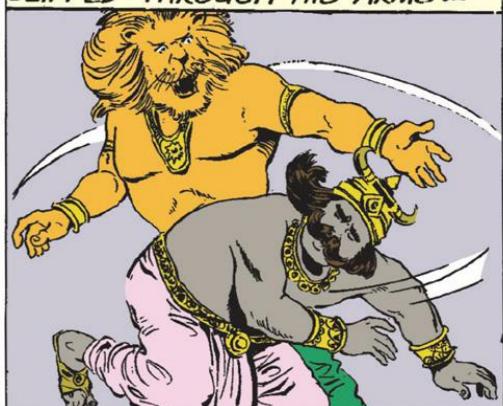
... ROARING LOUDLY RUSHED AT NARASIMHA.



BUT AS HE CAME NEAR, NARASIMHA SEIZED HIM, MACE AND ALL, IN A CLOSE EMBRACE.



HIRANYAKSHIPU HOWEVER SLIPPED THROUGH HIS ARMS...



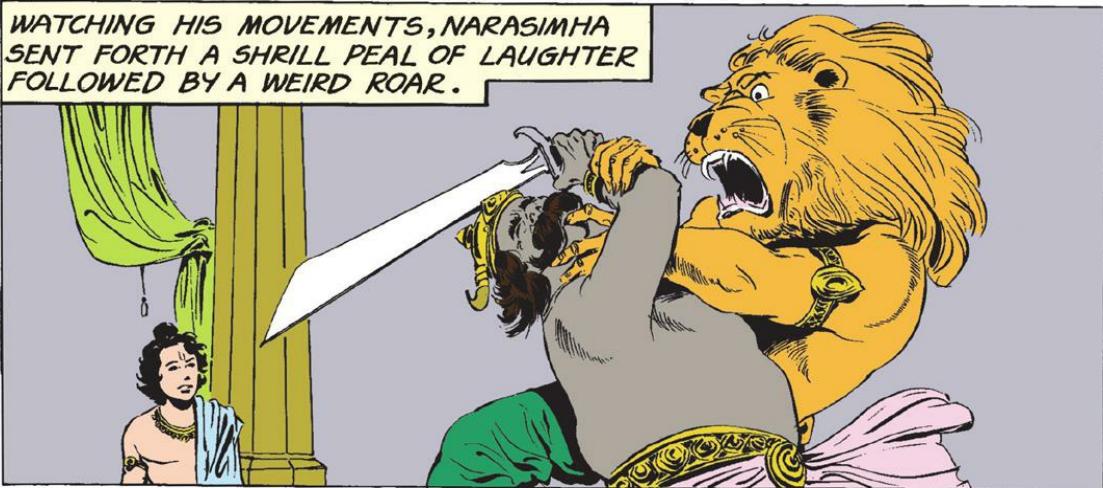
...AND GRABBING A SWORD...



...CHARGED ONCE AGAIN.



WATCHING HIS MOVEMENTS, NARASIMHA
SENT FORTH A SHRILL PEAL OF LAUGHTER
FOLLOWED BY A WEIRD ROAR.



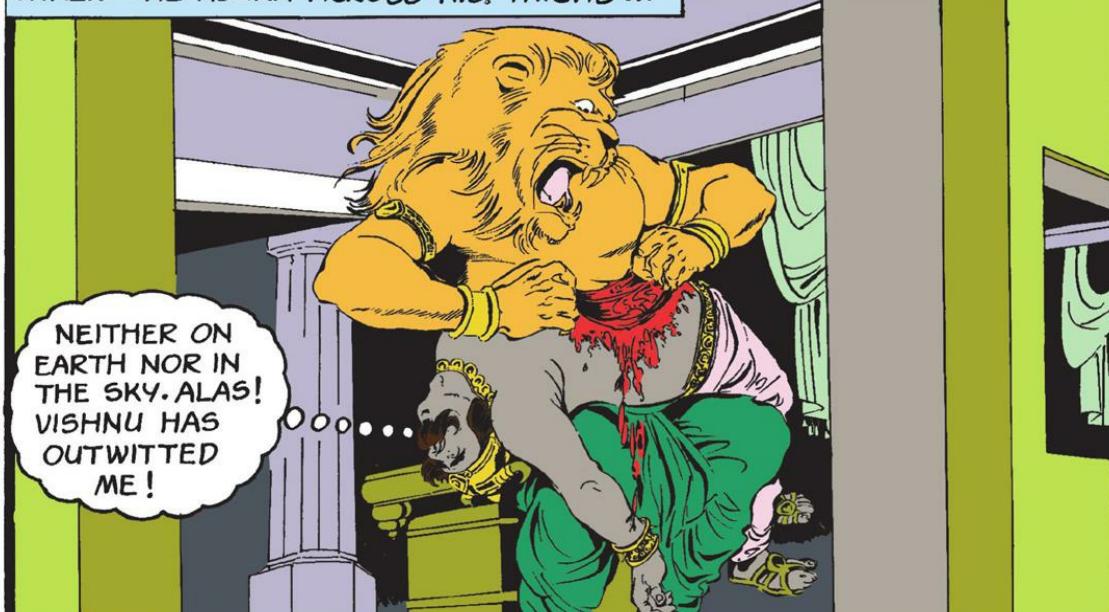
AND THE NEXT MOMENT, THE ASURA FOUND HIMSELF IN THE
VICE-LIKE GRIP OF NARASIMHA'S CLAWS.



NARASIMHA CARRIED THE ASURA TO THE THRESHOLD OF THE HALL.

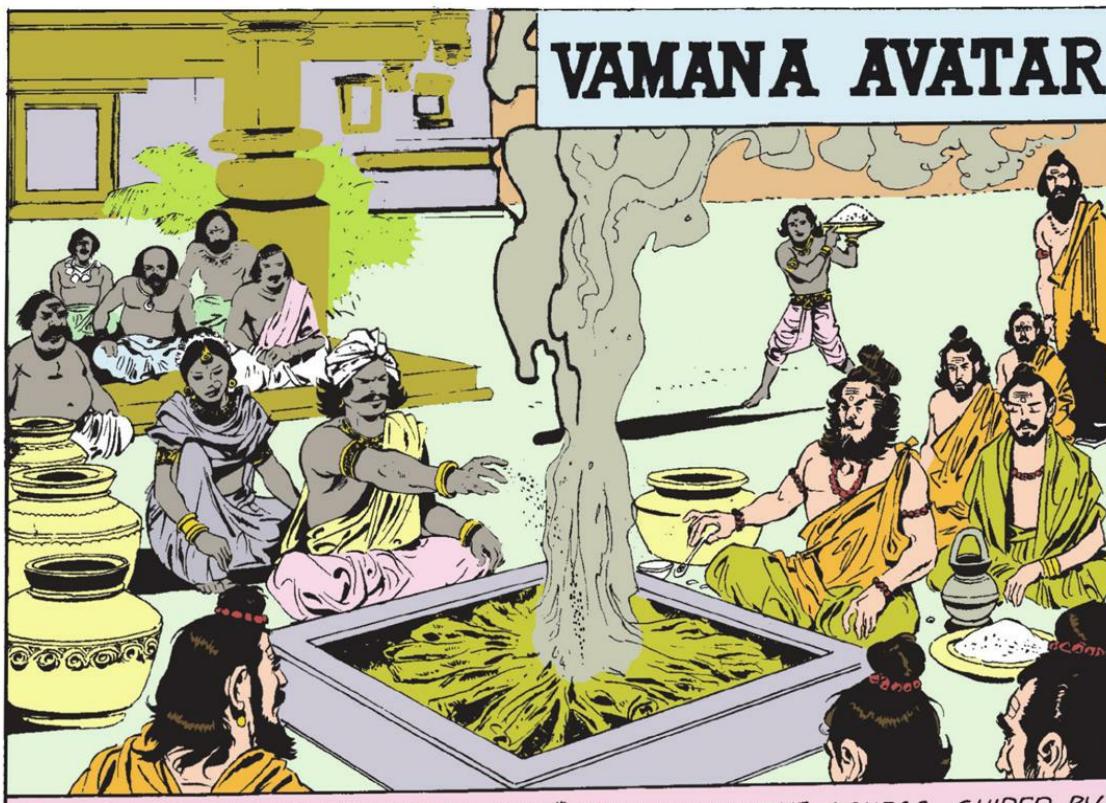


AND THERE, UNDER THE GREAT ARCH OF THE DOORWAY, NARASIMHA
THREW THE ASURA ACROSS HIS, THIGHS ...



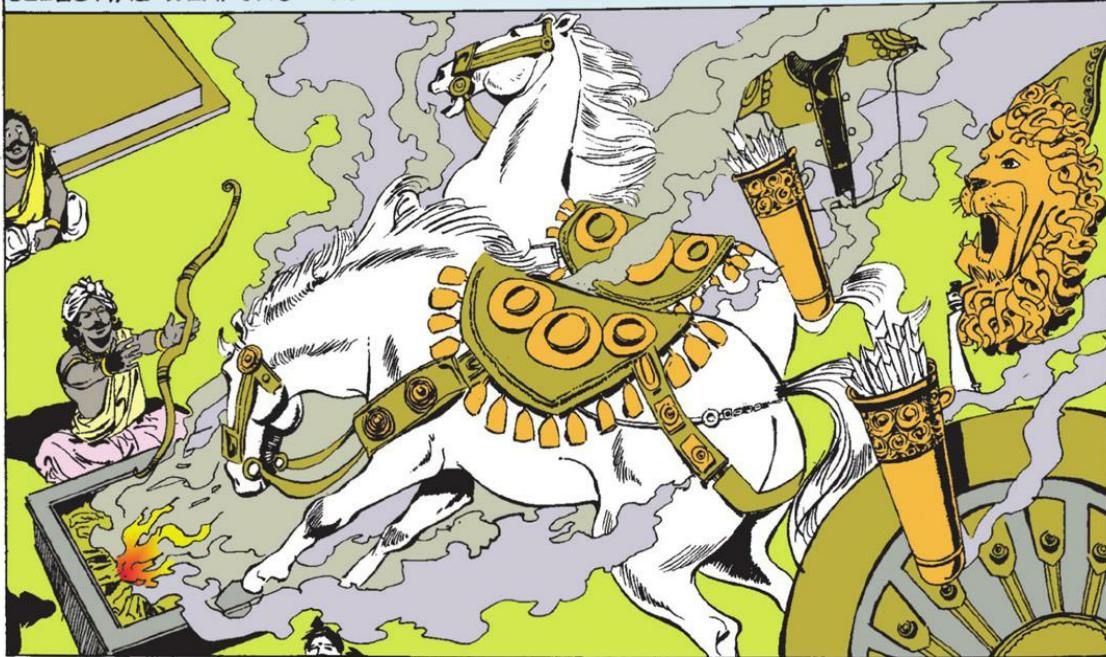
...AND TORE HIM TO DEATH WITH HIS CLAWS. THUS DID VISHNU, BY THE FAITH
OF HIS DEVOTEE, PREVENT THE TRIUMPH OF EVIL AND ESTABLISH VIRTUE.

VAMANA AVATAR



BENT ON CONQUERING THE DEVAS, BALI*, THE KING OF THE ASURAS, GUIDED BY SHUKRACHARYA, HIS PRECEPTOR, PERFORMED THE VISHWAJIT SACRIFICE **...

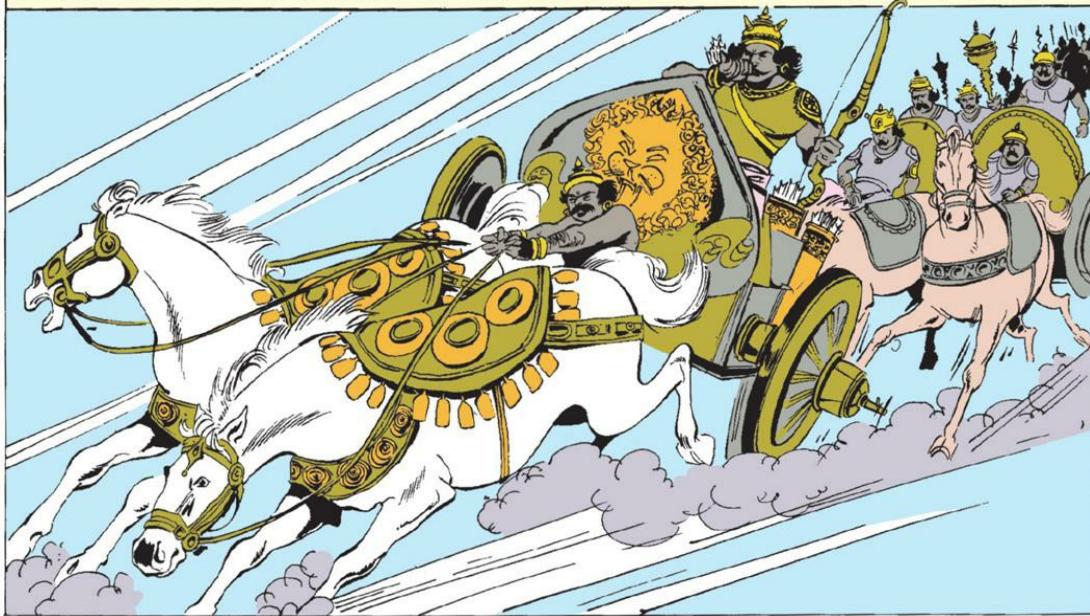
... AND RECEIVED FROM THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE A GOLDEN CHARIOT, CELESTIAL WEAPONS AND A COAT OF MAIL, FOR THE CONQUEST OF HEAVEN.



* GRANDSON OF PRAHLAD.

** A SACRIFICE PERFORMED TO GAIN MASTERY OVER THE THREE WORLDS.

DONNING THE ARMOUR, BALI MOUNTED THE CHARIOT AND WITH HIS ASURA HORDES ADVANCED ON AMARAVATI, THE CAPITAL OF THE DEVAS.



IN THE PALACE OF INDRA, KING OF THE DEVAS—

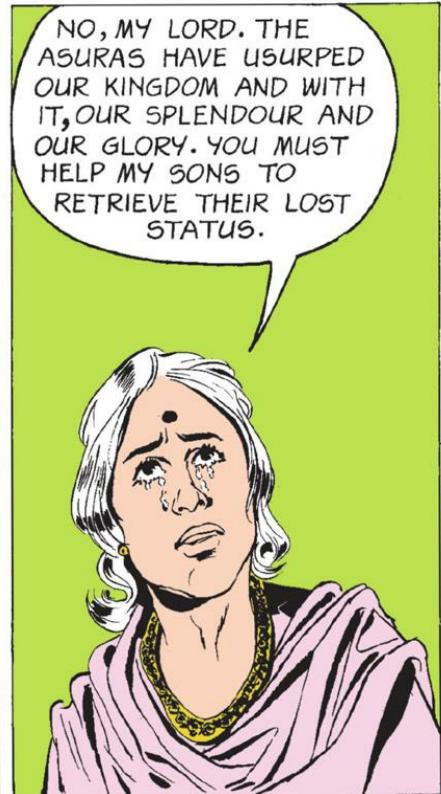
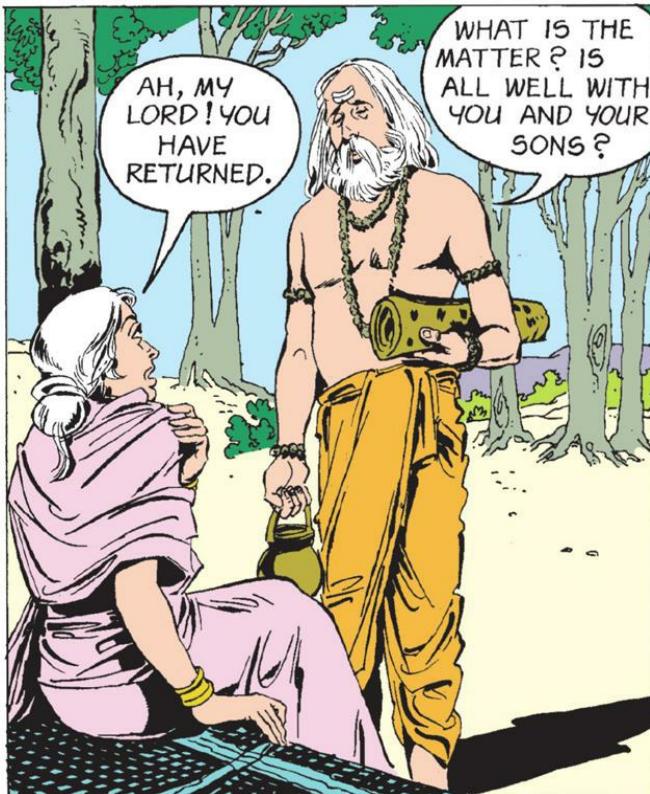
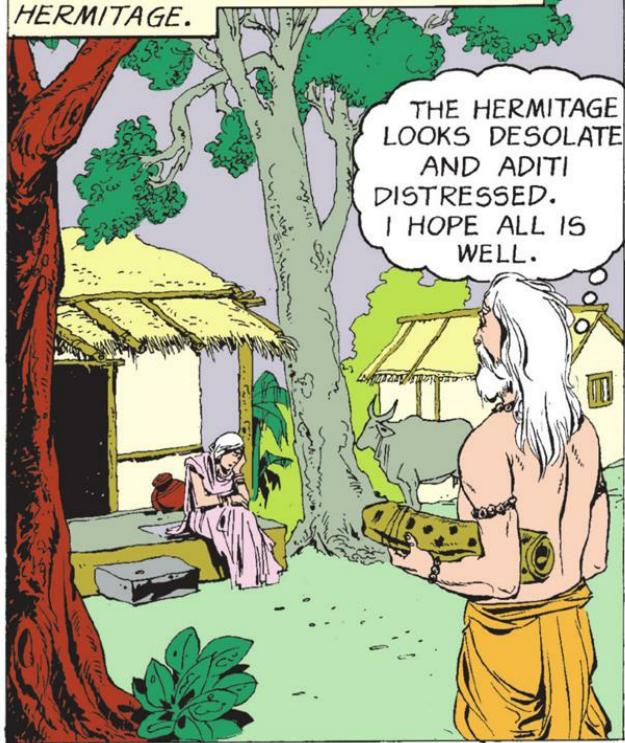


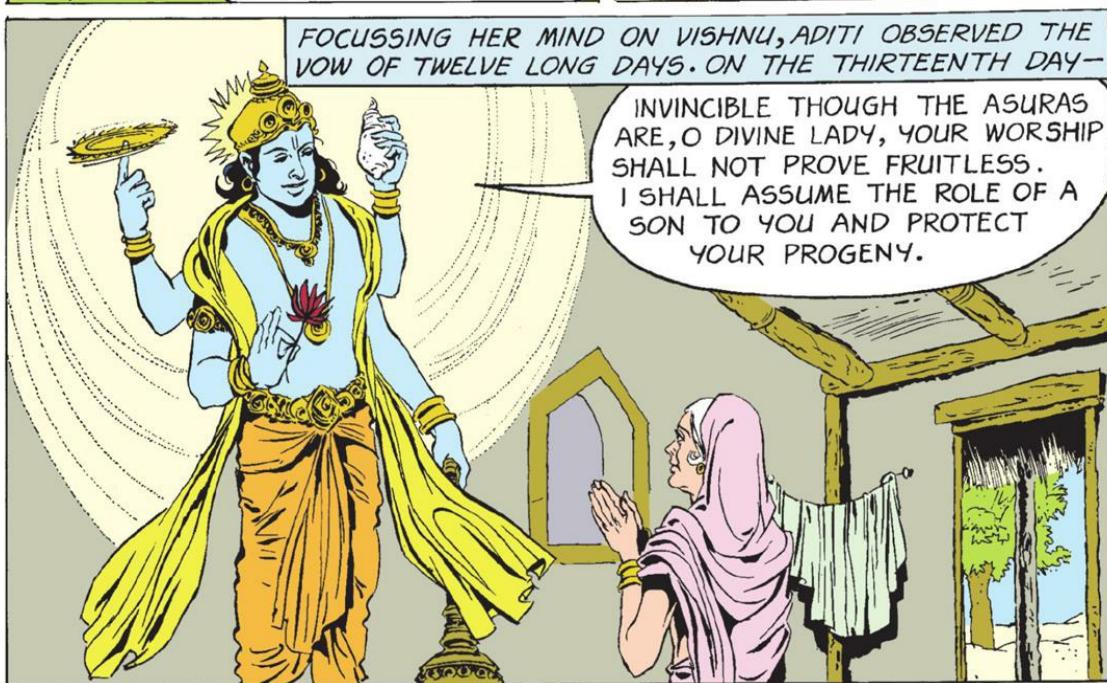
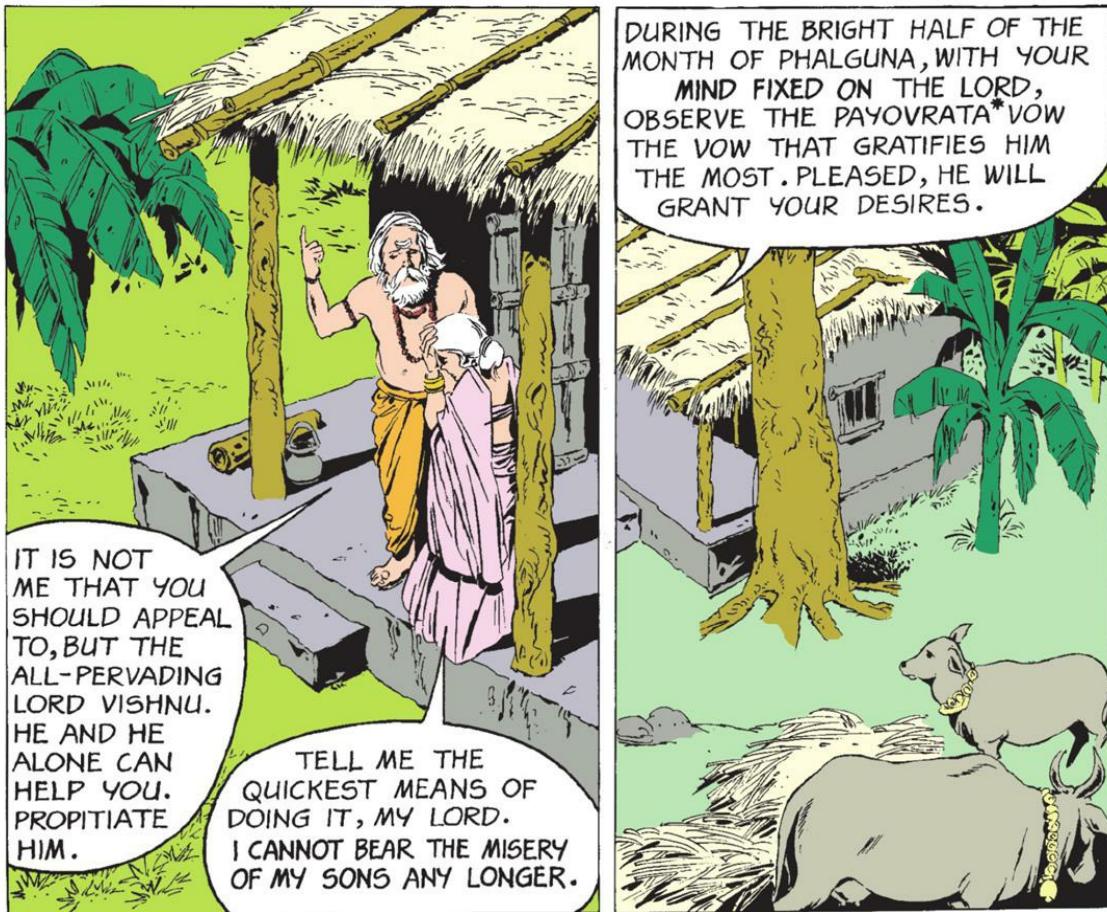


MEANWHILE, ADITI, THE MOTHER OF THE DEVAS, SAT BROODING ABOUT THEIR SORRY PLIGHT. SAGE KASHYAP, HER HUSBAND, WAS AWAY IN THE FOREST, MEDITATING.



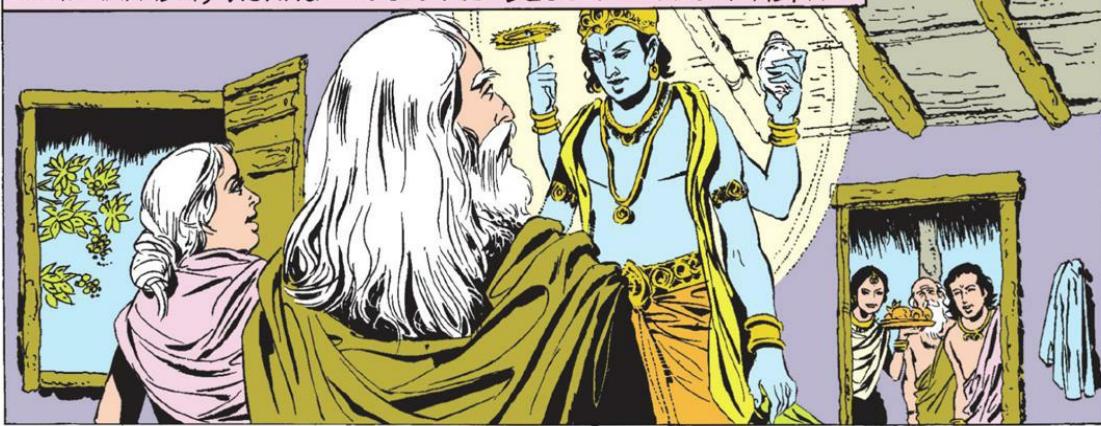
JUST THEN KASHYAP ENTERED THE HERMITAGE.





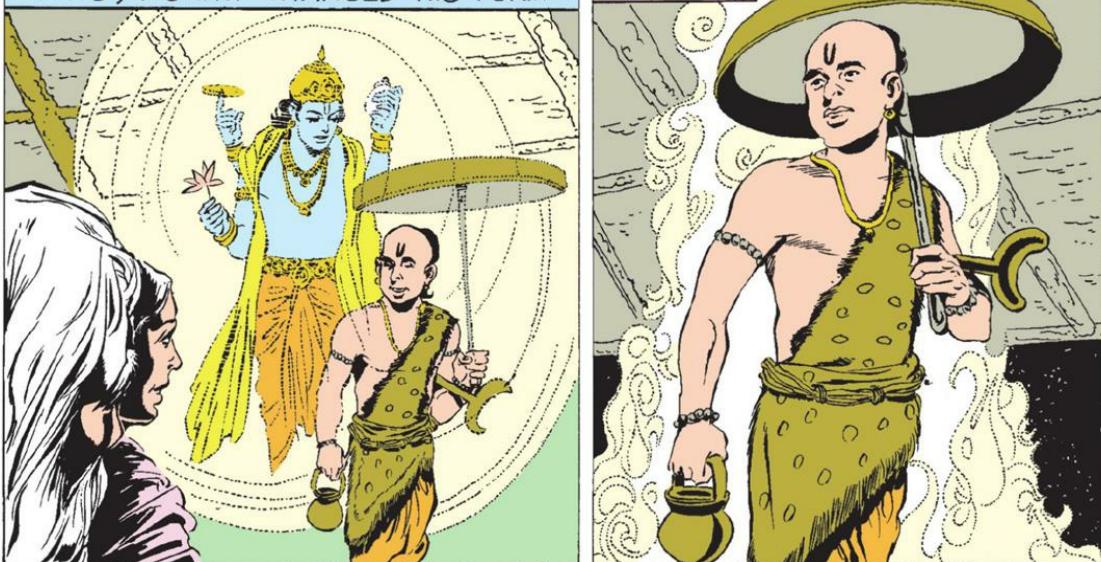
* VOW OF MILK (NOTHING BUT MILK SHOULD BE DRUNK BY THOSE WHO OBSERVE THIS VOW.)

MONTHS LATER, ON THE TWELFTH DAY OF THE BRIGHT HALF OF BHADRAPADA*, VISHNU TOOK HIS DESCENT FROM ADITI.



THEN, EVEN WHILE THE COUPLE STOOD GAZING, VISHNU CHANGED HIS FORM...

...TO THAT OF A SHORT-STATURED BRAHMAN.



A FEW DAYS LATER,
A BLINDING LIGHT
ILLED THE SACRI-
FICIAL GROUNDS
WHERE BALI WAS
PERFORMING A
SERIES OF HORSE
SACRIFICES.



COULD IT BE
LORD SURYA**
HIMSELF COME
DOWN TO WITNESS
OUR SACRIFICE?

* THE SIXTH MONTH OF THE HINDU CALENDAR

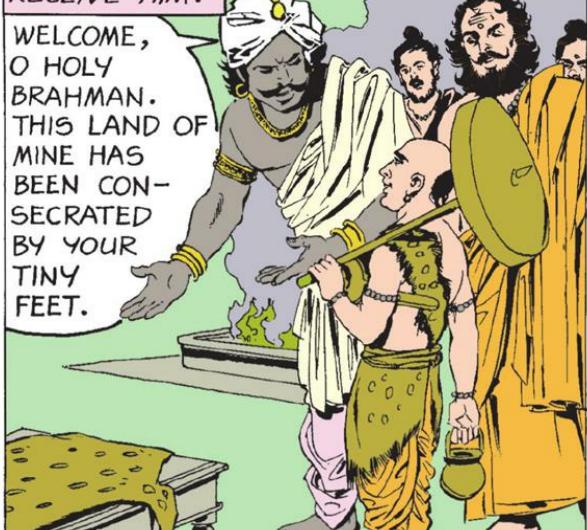
** THE SUN GOD

AS THEIR EYES GOT USED TO THE BRILLIANCE, THEY SAW THAT A BRAHMAN MIDGET HAD ENTERED THE SACRIFICIAL ENCLOSURE.

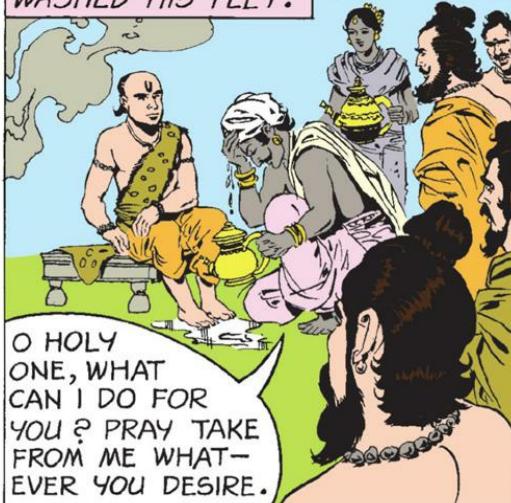


BALI ROSE FROM HIS SEAT TO RECEIVE HIM.

WELCOME, O HOLY BRAHMAN. THIS LAND OF MINE HAS BEEN CONSECRATED BY YOUR TINY FEET.



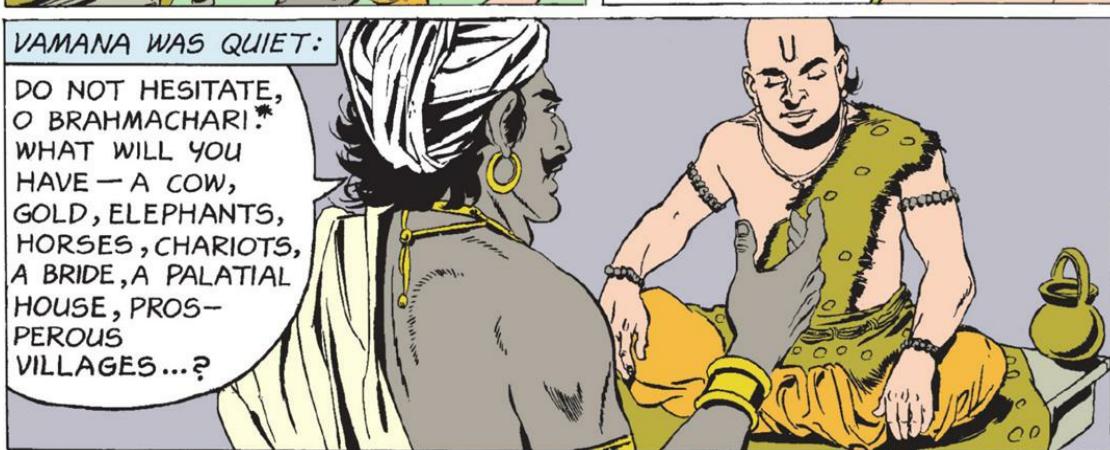
THEN HE GAVE THE DIVINE MIDGET, VAMANA, A SPECIAL SEAT AND WASHED HIS FEET.



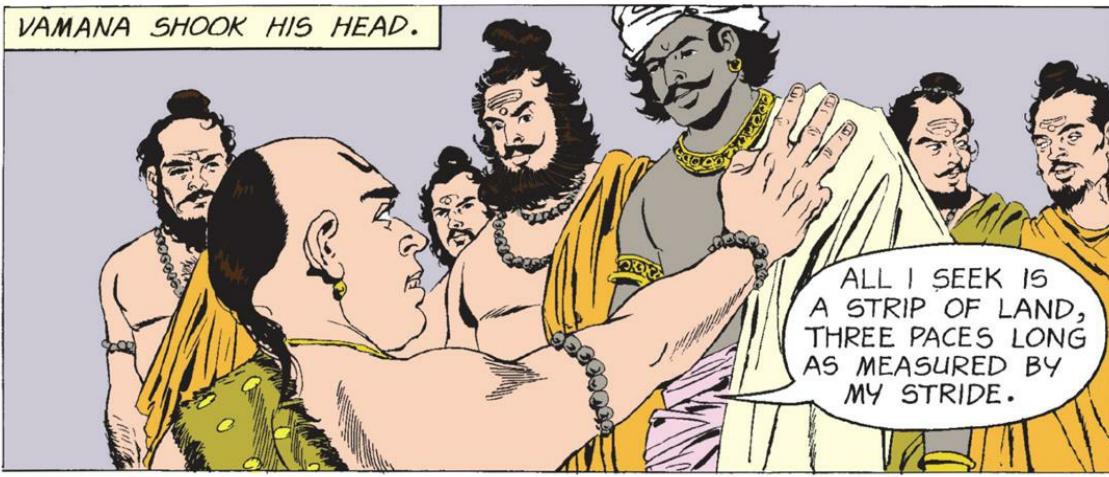
VAMANA WAS QUIET:

DO NOT HESITATE, O BRAHMACHARI!* WHAT WILL YOU HAVE — A COW, GOLD, ELEPHANTS, HORSES, CHARIOTS, A BRIDE, A PALATIAL HOUSE, PROSPEROUS VILLAGES...?

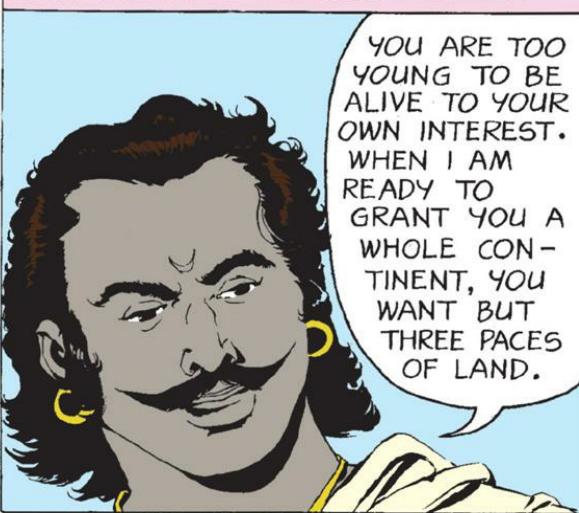
* CELIBATE.



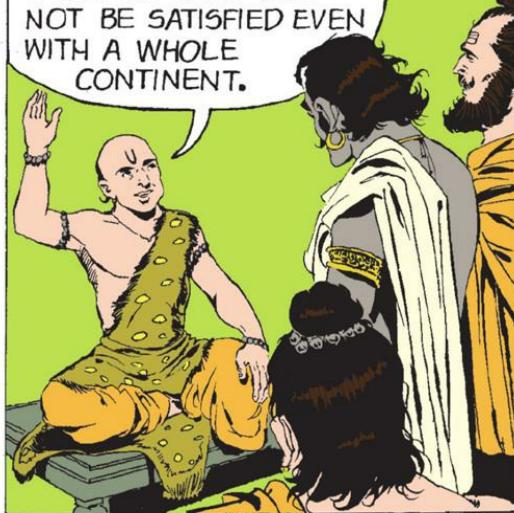
VĀMANA SHOOK HIS HEAD.

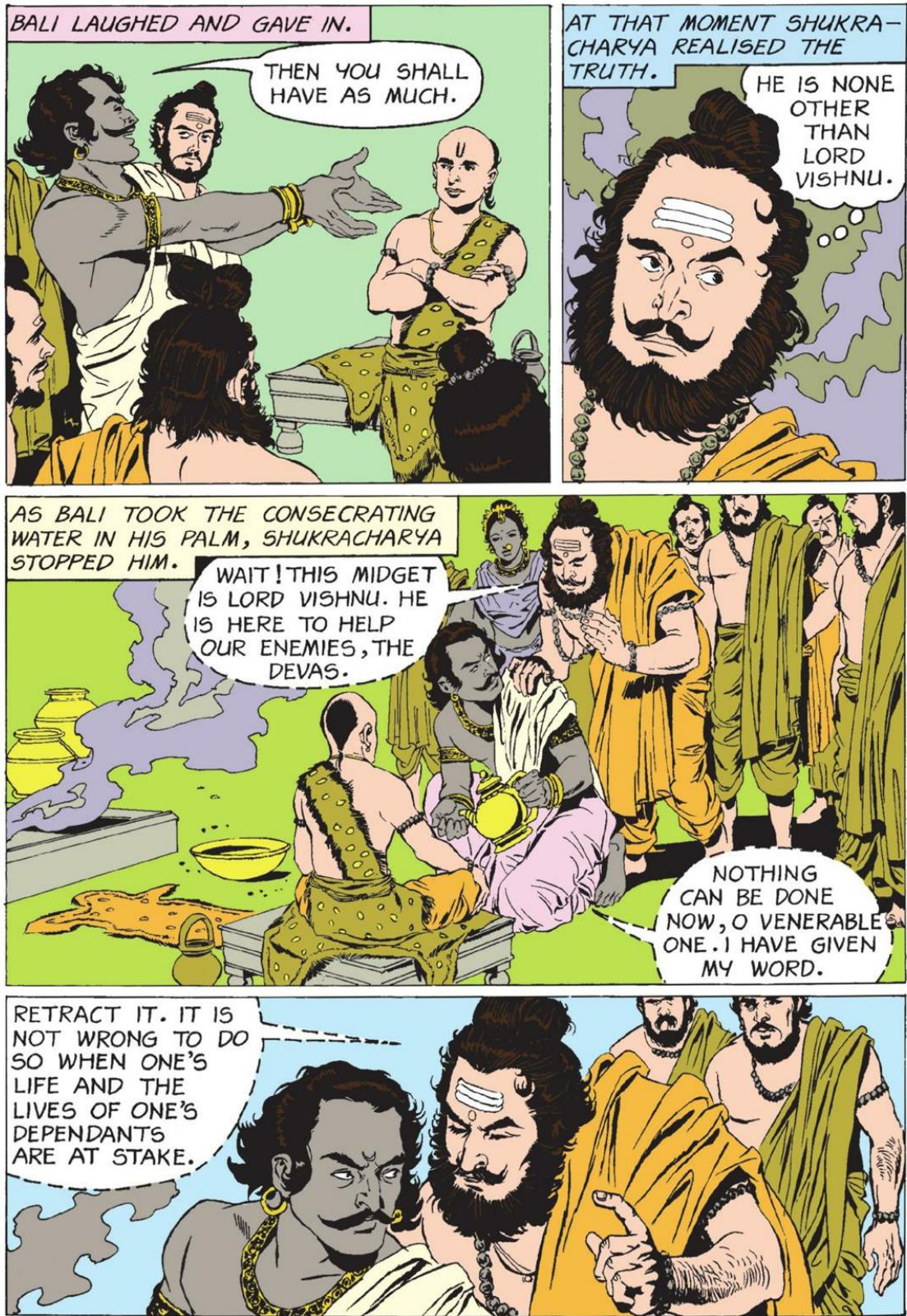


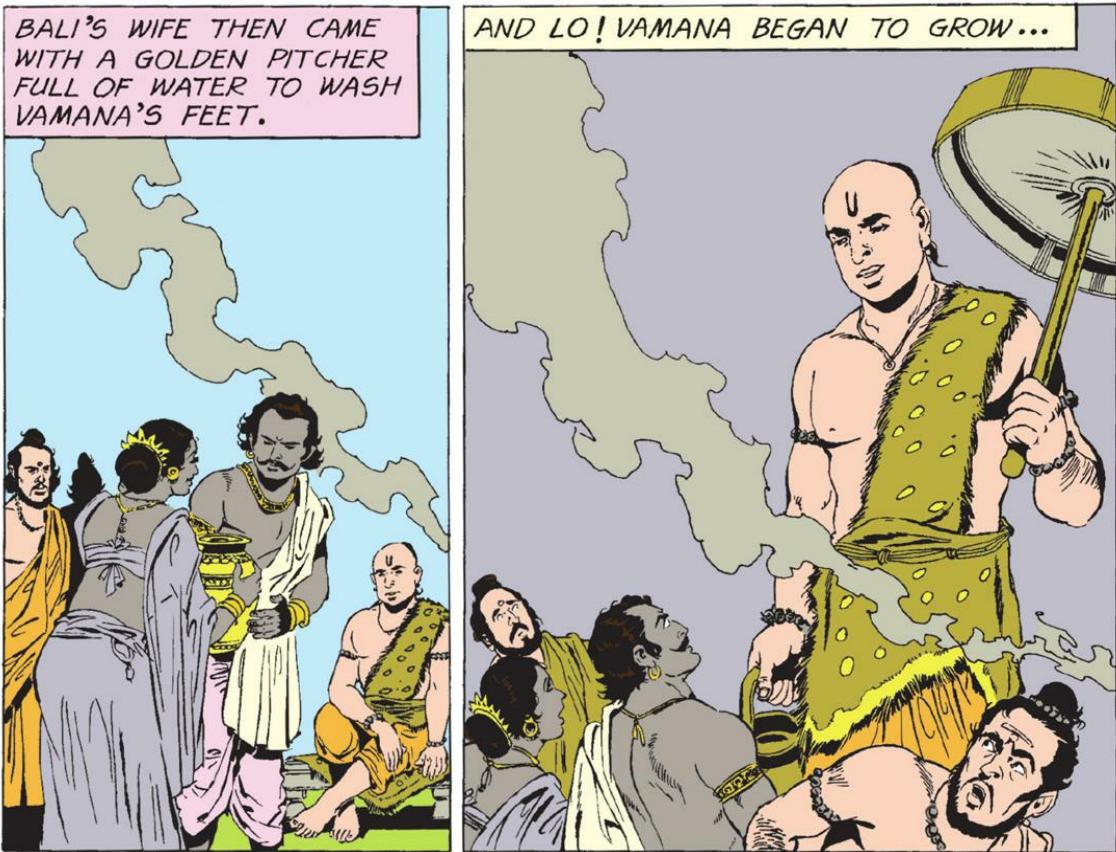
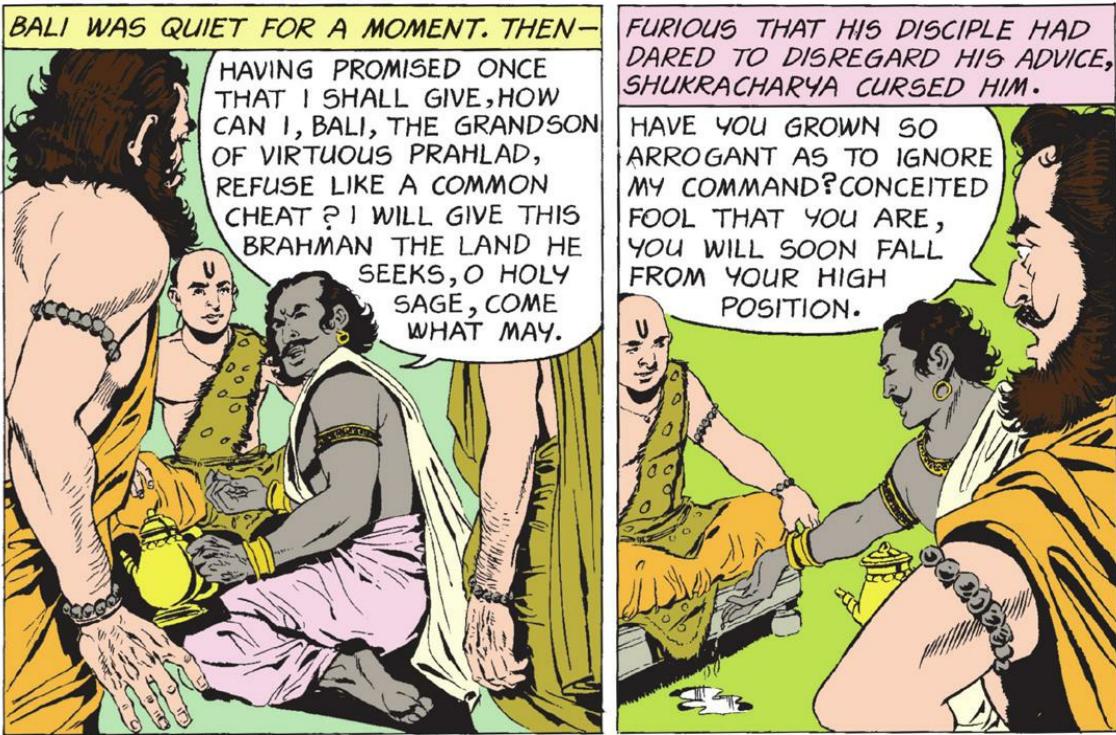
SEEKING TO WIN ACCLAIM FOR HIS GENEROSITY, BALI WAS DISAPPOINTED WITH VĀMANA'S HUMBLE DEMAND.



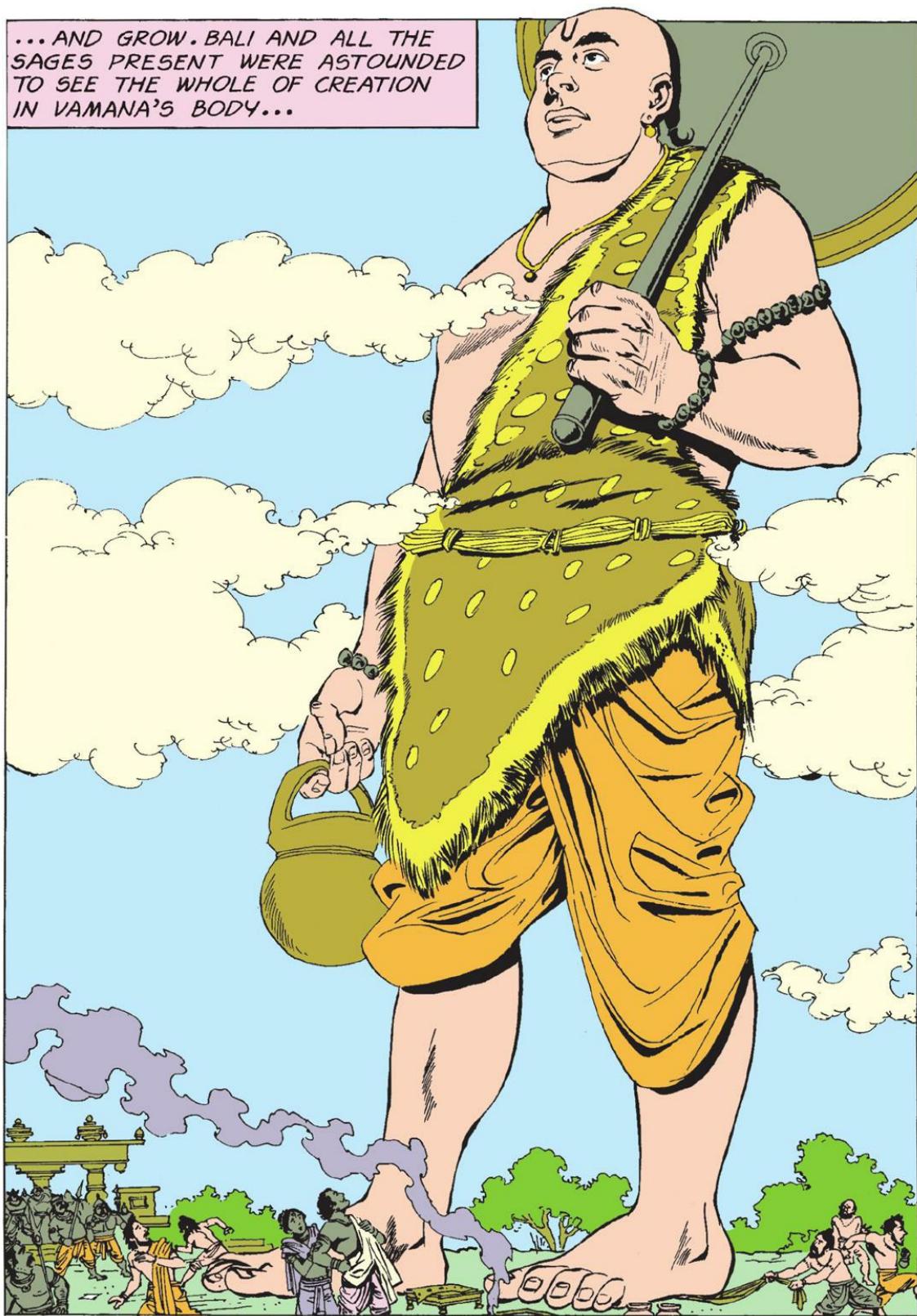
HE WHO CANNOT BE SATISFIED WITH THREE PACES OF LAND WILL NOT BE SATISFIED EVEN WITH A WHOLE CONTINENT.



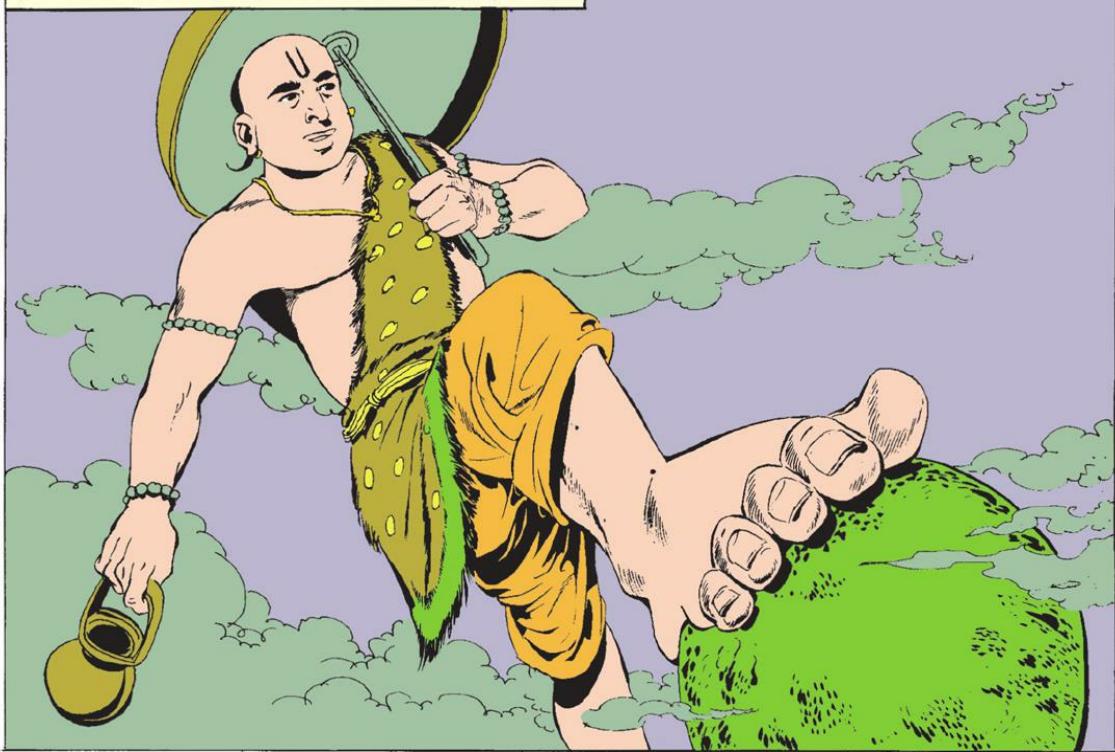




...AND GROW. BALI AND ALL THE SAGES PRESENT WERE ASTOUNDED TO SEE THE WHOLE OF CREATION IN VAMANA'S BODY...

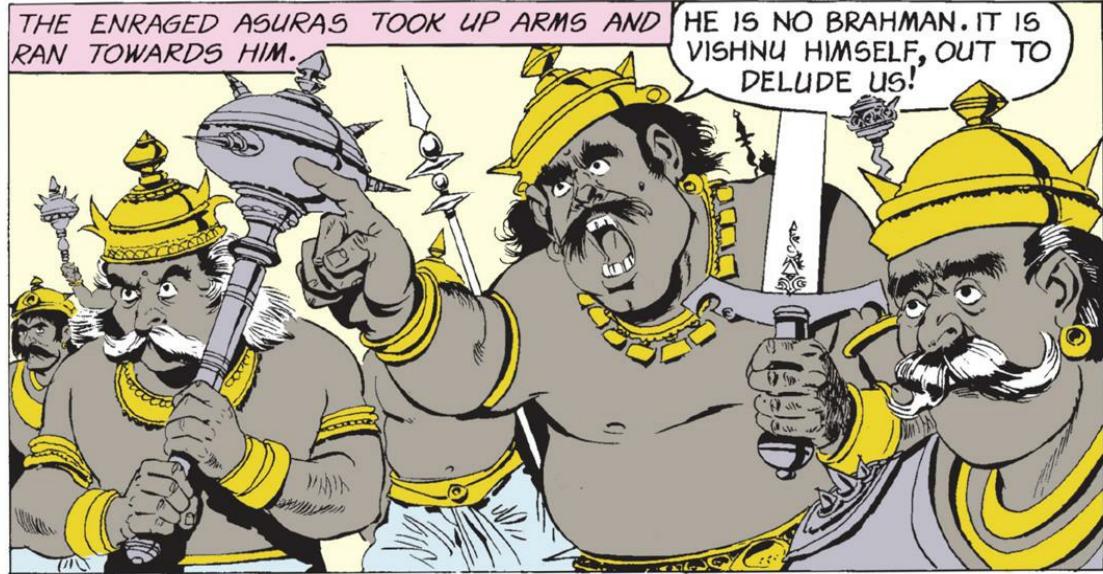


...AS HE BEGAN TO MEASURE THE THREE PACES. WITH HIS FIRST STRIDE HE COVERED THE EARTH...



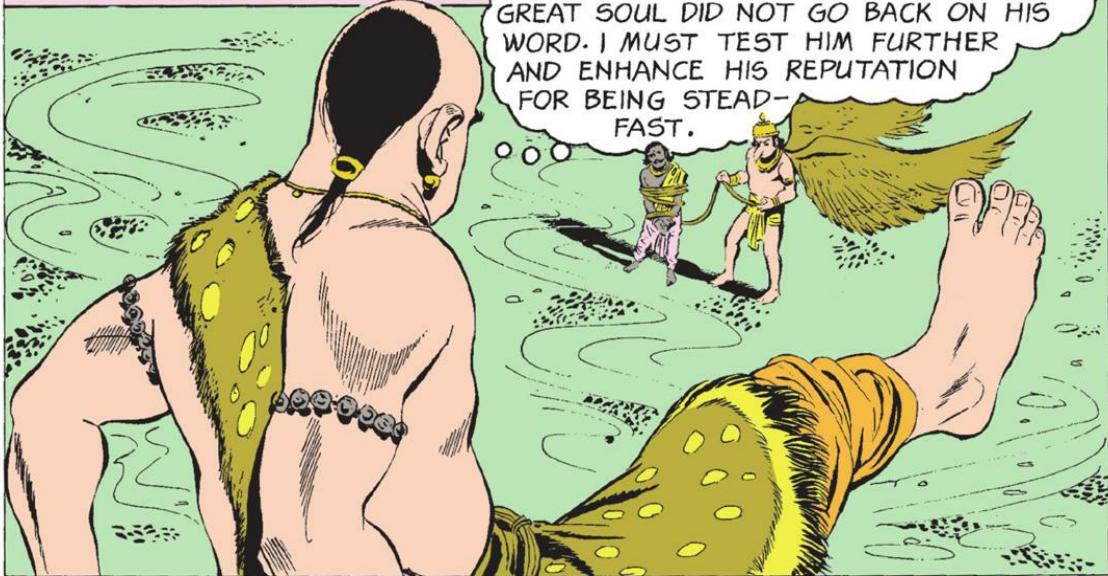
...AND WITH HIS SECOND, THE HEAVENS.





...AND TOOK HIM TO VISHNU.

THOUGH CURSED BY HIS PRECEPTOR, THIS GREAT SOUL DID NOT GO BACK ON HIS WORD. I MUST TEST HIM FURTHER AND ENHANCE HIS REPUTATION FOR BEING STEADFAST.



WITH THAT INTENTION VISHNU SPOKE HARSH WORDS TO HIM.

YOU PROMISED ME THREE PACES OF LAND AND I HAVE COVERED ALL THAT WAS YOURS IN TWO. YOU HAVE FAILED TO KEEP YOUR WORD. YOU WILL HAVE TO SUFFER FOR IT.

BALI WAS UNPERTURBED.

O ILLUSTRIOUS ONE, I AM NOT AFRAID OF PUNISHMENT AT YOUR HANDS AS I AM OF BEING CALLED IGNORABLE. I HAD NO INTENTION OF DECEIVING YOU.

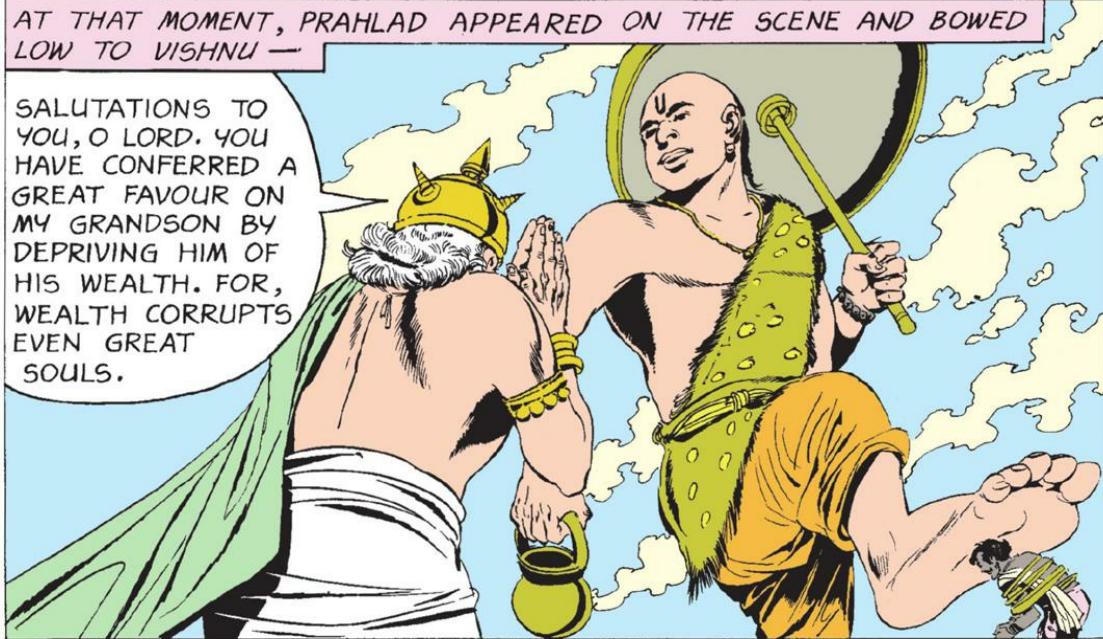
TO PROVE HIS STATEMENT HE BENT HIS HEAD LOW BEFORE VISHNU.

PRAY, PLACE YOUR THIRD STEP ON MY HEAD, WHICH IS MORE VALUABLE TO ME THAN ALL MY POSSESSIONS PUT TOGETHER.

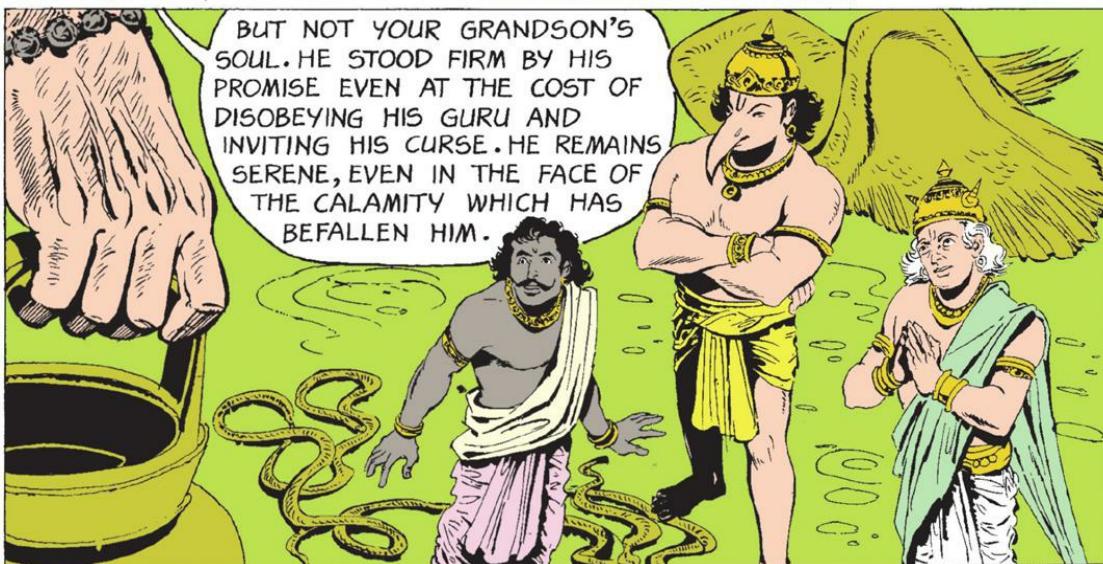


AT THAT MOMENT, PRAHLAD APPEARED ON THE SCENE AND BOWED LOW TO VISHNU —

SALUTATIONS TO YOU, O LORD. YOU HAVE CONFERRED A GREAT FAVOUR ON MY GRANDSON BY DEPRIVING HIM OF HIS WEALTH. FOR, WEALTH CORRUPTS EVEN GREAT SOULS.



BUT NOT YOUR GRANDSON'S SOUL. HE STOOD FIRM BY HIS PROMISE EVEN AT THE COST OF DISOBEDIING HIS GURU AND INVITING HIS CURSE. HE REMAINS SERENE, EVEN IN THE FACE OF THE CALAMITY WHICH HAS BEFALLEN HIM.



HE HAS ALL BUT EARNED ENTRY INTO MY OWN REALMS WHICH EVEN THE DEVAS FIND DIFFICULT OF ACCESS. BUT FIRST HE WILL ENJOY FOR A WHOLE MANVANTARA THE POSITION OF INDRA AS HE DESIRED IT.

THUS DID VISHNU IN HIS VAMANA AVATAR BEG THE EARTH AND THE HEAVENS FOR THE DEVAS FROM THEIR ENEMY, THE RIGHTEOUS BUT VAIN KING OF THE ASURAS.



PARASHURAMA AVATAR

KING ARJUNA, THE RULER OF THE HAIHAYAS, HAD PROPITIATED LORD DATTATREYA AND HAD SECURED FROM HIM BOONS WHICH MADE HIM INVINCIBLE. BUT ARJUNA MISUSED HIS POWERS AND BECAME A MERCILESS TYRANT.

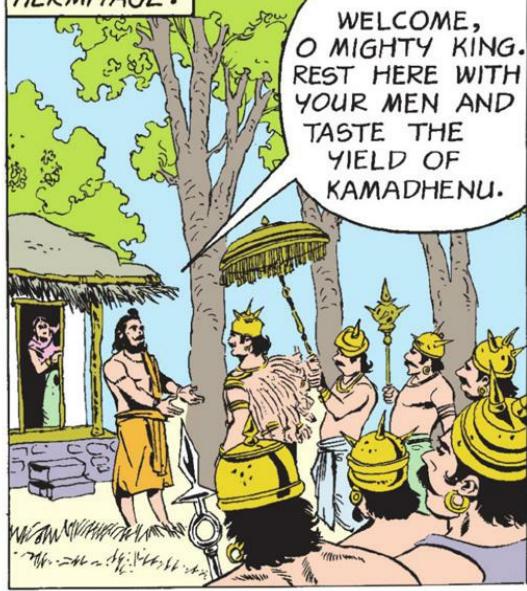
TO VANQUISH HIM AND ALL SUCH EVIL KSHATRIYAS, LORD VISHNU CAME TO EARTH AS RAMA, THE YOUNGEST SON OF SAGE JAMADAGNI, AND HIS WIFE, RENUKA.

IT'S STRANGE THAT
MY SON SHOULD KNOW
SO MUCH ABOUT
WEAPONS AND
THEIR USE.

IT WAS TRUE. THOUGH RAMA WAS THE SON OF A BRAHMAN, HE HAD AN INORDINATE LOVE FOR WEAPONS AND HIS FAVOURITE WAS THE AXE.

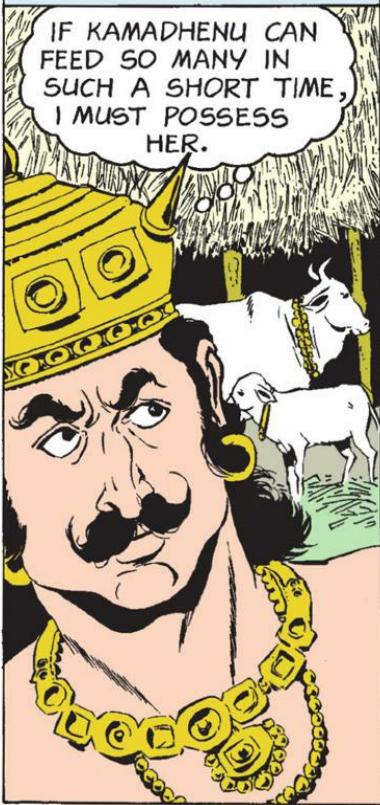


ONE DAY, WHILE PARASHURAMA* AND HIS BROTHERS WERE AWAY, ARJUNA ENTERED JAMADAGNI'S HERMITAGE.



BUT WHEN ARJUNA AND HIS MEN WERE FEED —

IF KAMADHENU CAN FEED SO MANY IN SUCH A SHORT TIME, I MUST POSSESS HER.



HE TURNED TO HIS MEN.

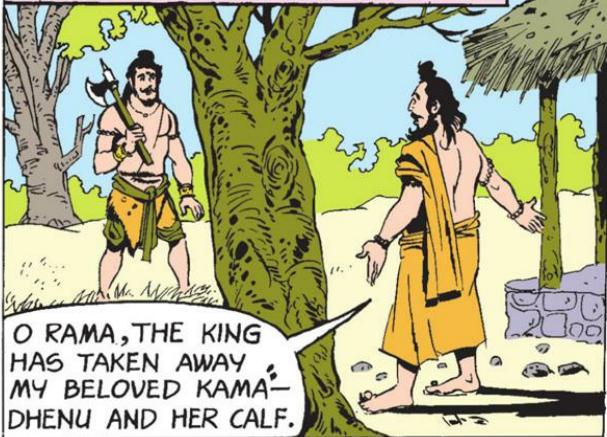


SEIZE THE ANIMAL AND HER YOUNG ONE. TAKE THEM TO MY CAPITAL.

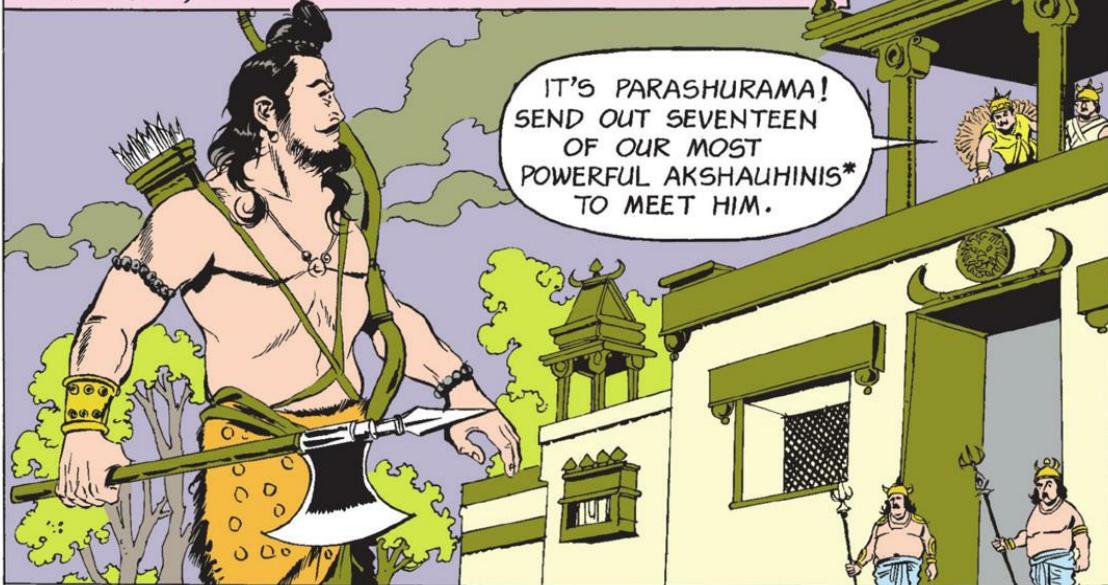


*SEE AMAR CHITRA KATHA NO.764 - PARASHURAMA

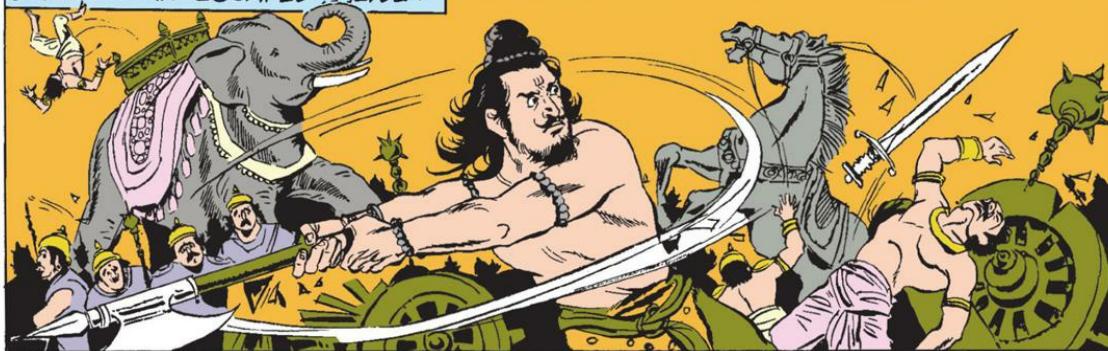
A FEW DAYS LATER, WHEN PARASHURAMA RETURNED TO THE HERMITAGE —



BRANDISHING HIS AXE, AN ENRAGED PARASHURAMA STORMED INTO MAHISHMATI, ARJUNA'S CAPITAL. ARJUNA WAS ALARMED.



BUT THE TERRIBLE PARASHURAMA DESTROYED THEM IN NO TIME. NOT A SINGLE MAN ESCAPED ALIVE.



*AN AKSHAUHINI CONSISTED OF 1,09,350 INFANTRY, 65,610 CAVALRY, 21,870 CHARIOTS AND AN EQUAL NUMBER OF ELEPHANTS.

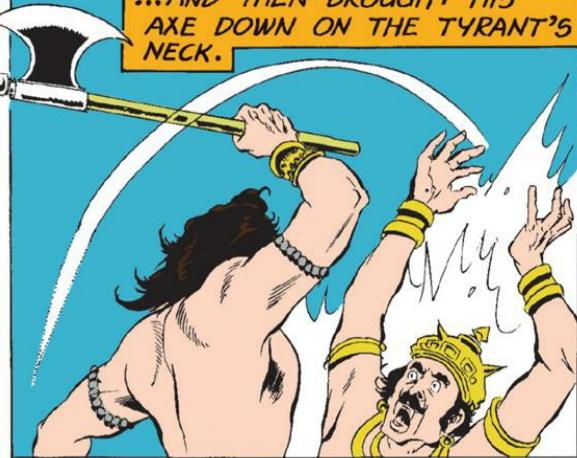
ENRAGED AT THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CORE OF HIS ARMY, ARJUNA HIMSELF RUSHED FORWARD. BUT —



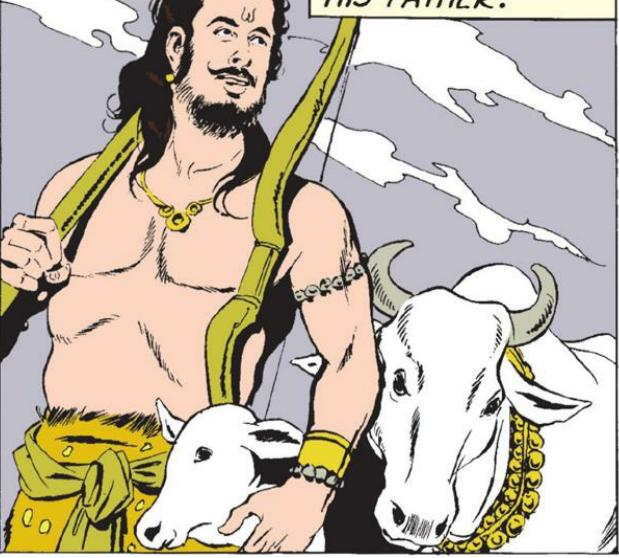
AS ARJUNA RUSHED TOWARDS HIM WITH UPROOTED TREES AND ROCKS, PARASHURAMA LOPPED OFF ALL HIS ARMS...



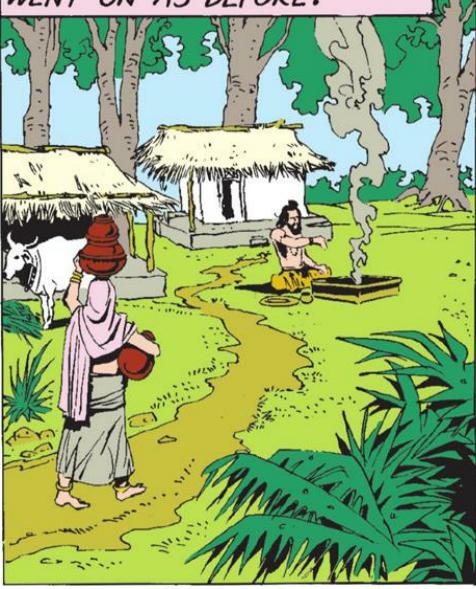
...AND THEN BROUGHT HIS AXE DOWN ON THE TYRANT'S NECK.



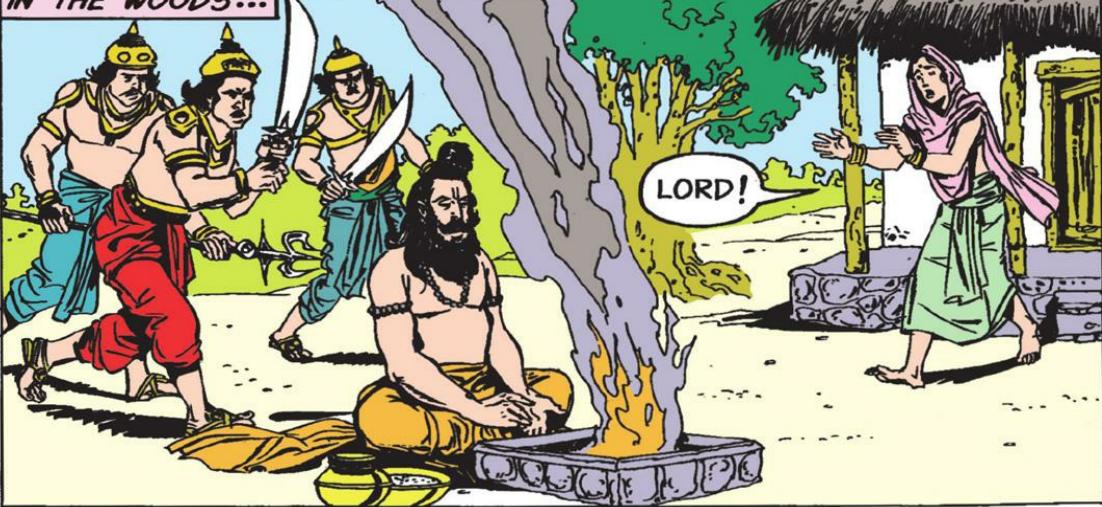
PARASHURAMA THEN LED KAMADHENU AND HER CALF TO HIS FATHER.



AND LIFE IN THE HERMITAGE WENT ON AS BEFORE.



BUT NOT FOR LONG. THE SONS OF ARJUNA WERE BENT ON AVENGING THE DEATH OF THEIR FATHER. ONE DAY, WHILE PARASHURAMA WAS AWAY IN THE WOODS...



LORD!

...THEY FELL UPON THE SAGE AND CUT OFF HIS HEAD.



RAMA! OH RAMA!



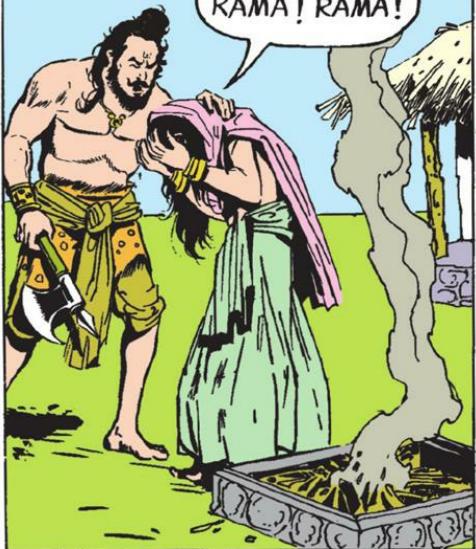
MEANWHILE, PARASHURAMA WAS ON HIS WAY BACK TO THE HERMITAGE. SUDDENLY —



WHEN PARASHURAMA REACHED THE HERMITAGE, HE WAS AGHAST.

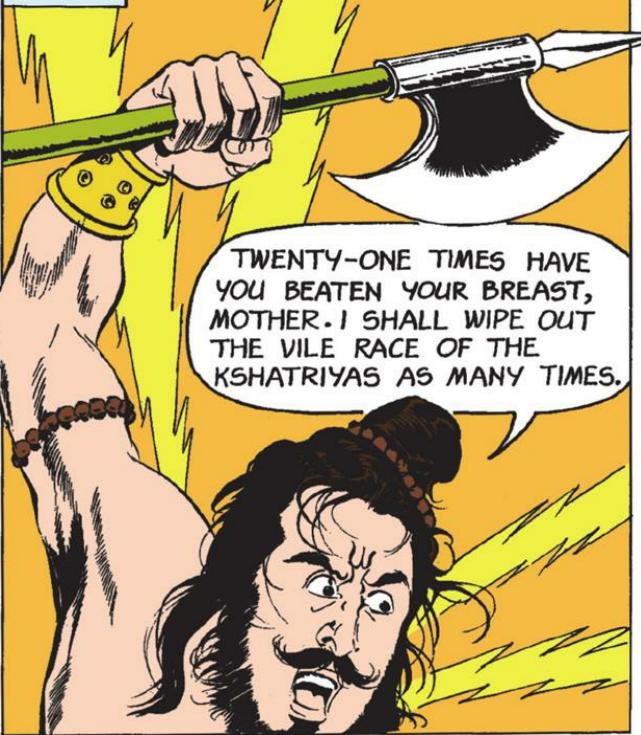
MOTHER ! WHO WERE THE FOUL MURDERERS ? TELL ME, MOTHER !

RAMA ! OH RAMA ! RAMA !

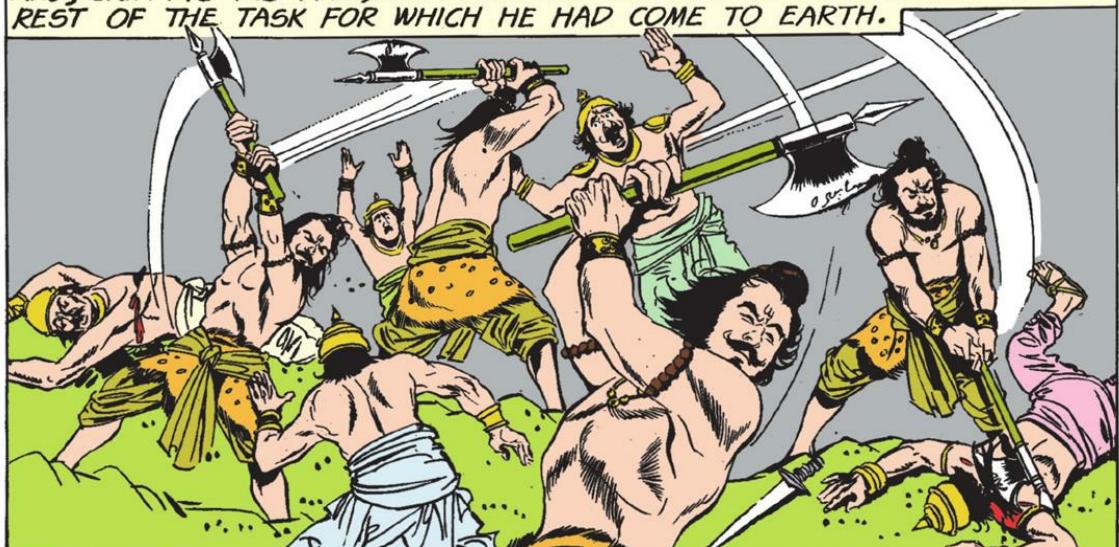


BUT RENUKA'S AGONY WAS SO DEEP THAT SHE COULD ONLY BEAT HER BREAST AND CRY. FULL OF GRIEF AND ANGER, PARASHURAMA MADE A VOW.

TWENTY-ONE TIMES HAVE YOU BEATEN YOUR BREAST, MOTHER. I SHALL WIPE OUT THE VILE RACE OF THE KSHATRIYAS AS MANY TIMES.

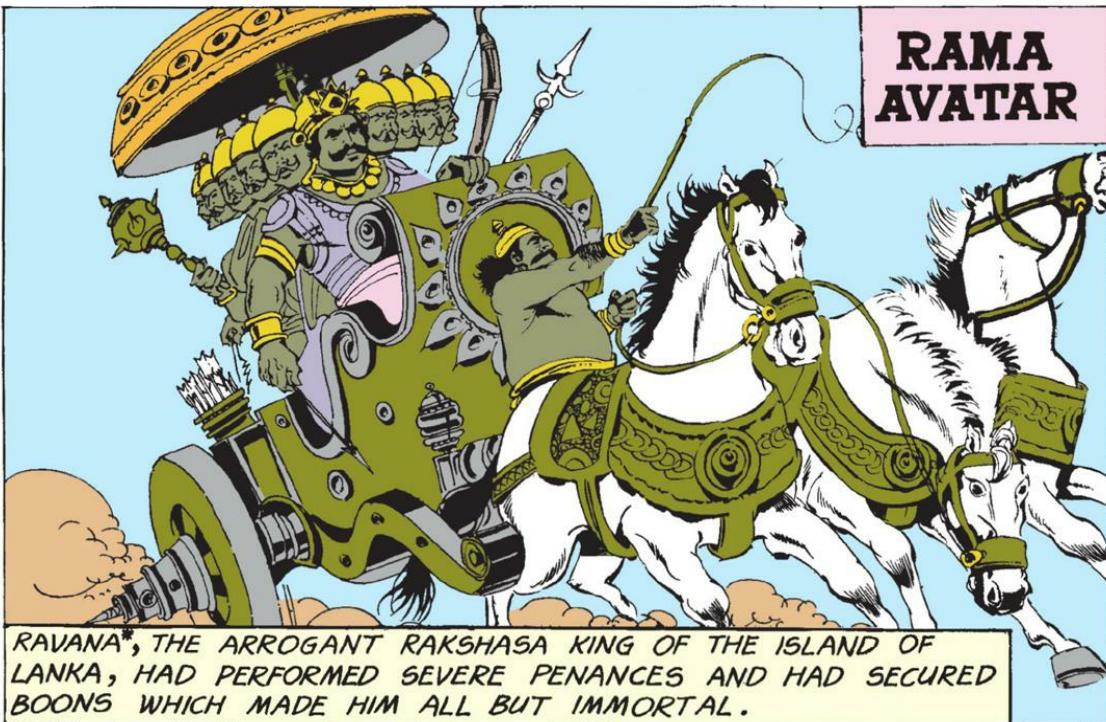


AND, GRIPPING HIS AXE, PARASHURAMA SET OUT TO ACCOMPLISH THE REST OF THE TASK FOR WHICH HE HAD COME TO EARTH.



THUS DID LORD VISHNU, AS PARASHURAMA, EXTERMINATE THOSE KSHATRIYAS WHO HAD BECOME A GREAT BURDEN TO BHOO-MIDEVI AND HER CHILDREN.

RAMA AVATAR



RAVANA*, THE ARROGANT RAKSHASA KING OF THE ISLAND OF LANKA, HAD PERFORMED SEVERE PENANCES AND HAD SECURED BOONS WHICH MADE HIM ALL BUT IMMORTAL.

PERTURBED BY THE ATROCITIES COMMITTED BY THE RAKSHASA, THE DEVAS APPROACHED VISHNU FOR PROTECTION.



VISHNU REASSURED THEM.

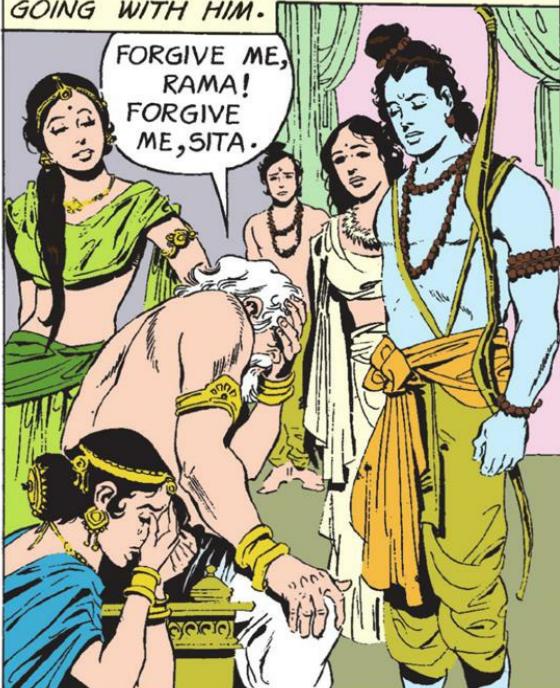


* SEE AMAR CHITRA KATHA NO.541—THE LORD OF LANKA

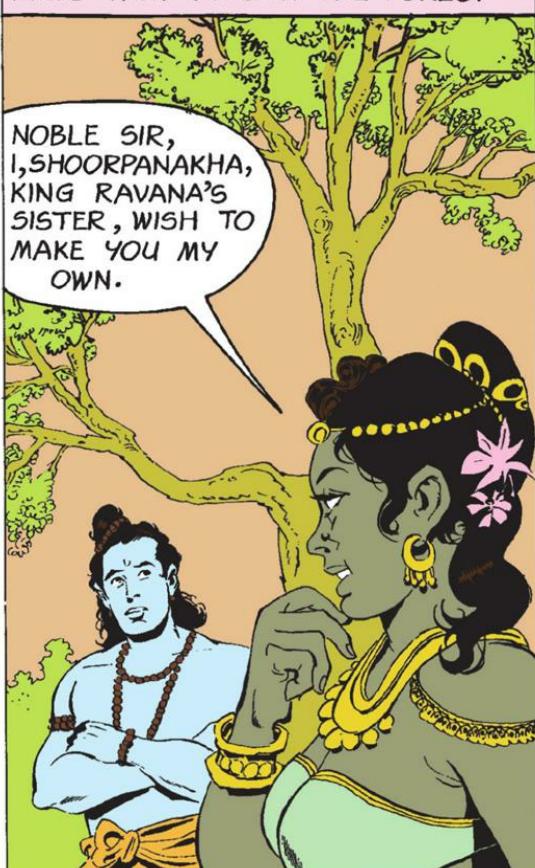
ACCORDINGLY, FOUR SONS WERE BORN TO THE THREE QUEENS OF DASHARATHA,* THE HEIRLESS KING OF AYODHYA. RAMA, THE ELDEST, TO KAUSALYA; BHARATA, TO KAIKEYI; AND LAXMANA AND SHATRUGHNA, TO SUMITRA.



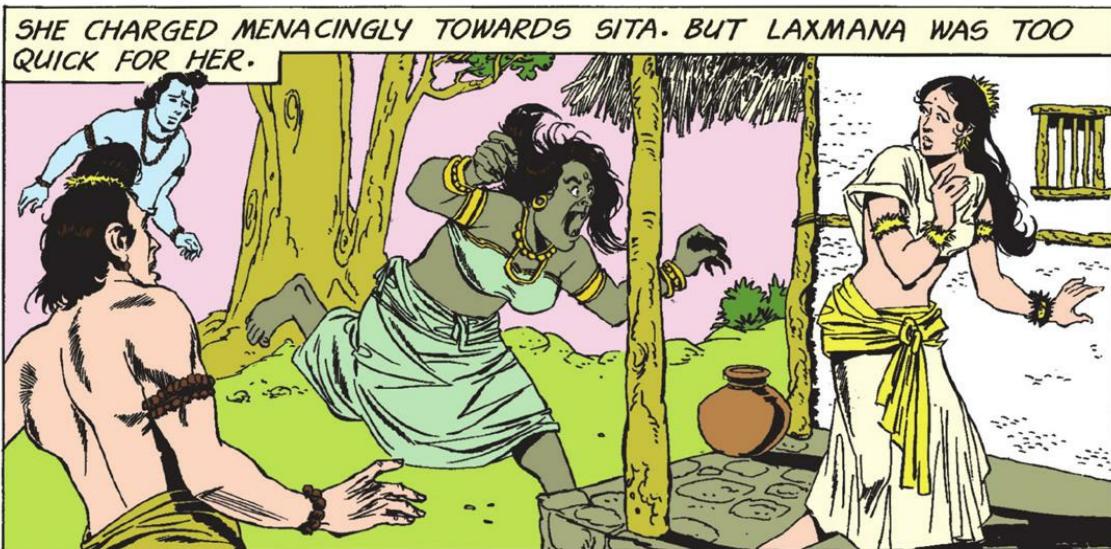
BUT, A FEW YEARS LATER, INSTEAD OF CROWNING HIM YUVARAJA, A HEARTBROKEN DASHARATHA, BOUND BY A PROMISE, WAS COMPELLED TO BANISH RAMA TO THE FOREST FOR FOURTEEN YEARS. SITA, RAMA'S YOUNG WIFE, AND LAXMANA INSISTED ON GOING WITH HIM.



WHILE THEY WERE IN THE FOREST—



*SEE AMAR CHITRA KATHA NO. 570—DASHARATHA AND NO. 504—RAMA.

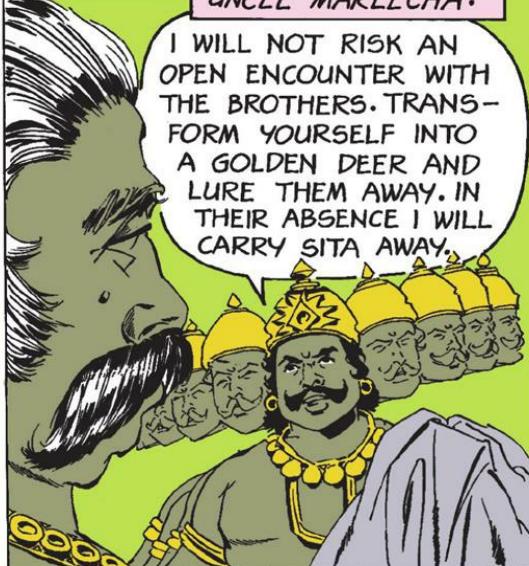


A TEARFUL, DISFIGURED SHOOR-PANAKHA STOOD BEFORE RAVANA.



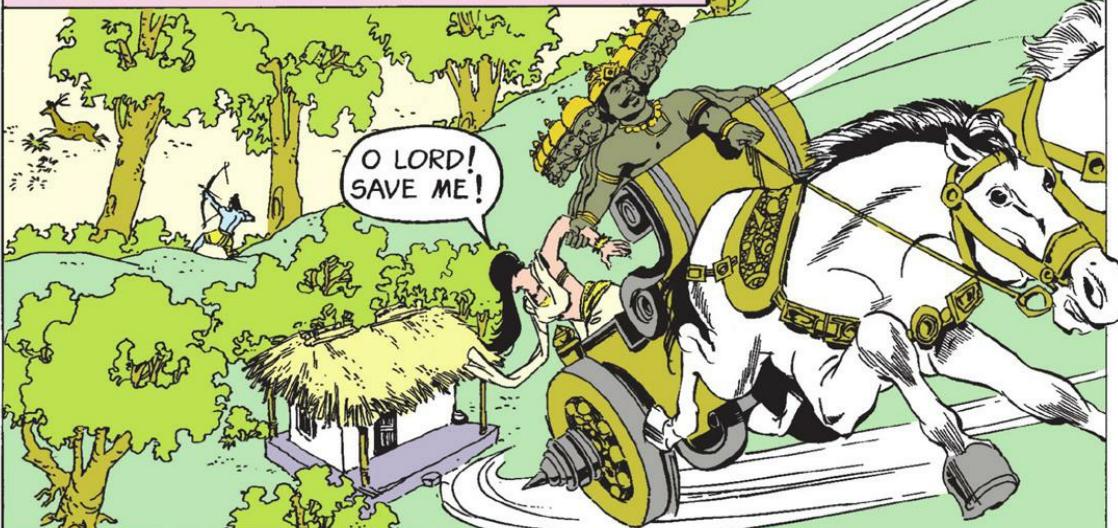
SINCE THEIR LOVE FOR SITA MADE THEM DO THIS TO YOU, I SHALL PUNISH THEM BY ABDUCTING HER FOR MYSELF.

RAVANA TOOK THE HELP OF HIS UNCLE MAREECHA.



I WILL NOT RISK AN OPEN ENCOUNTER WITH THE BROTHERS. TRANSFORM YOURSELF INTO A GOLDEN DEER AND LURE THEM AWAY. IN THEIR ABSENCE I WILL CARRY SITA AWAY.

RAVANA'S RUSE WORKED AND BEFORE LONG —



IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED WHILE RAMA AND LAXMANA WANDERED IN THE FOREST NOT KNOWING WHERE TO LOOK FOR SITA, THEY WON THE AFFECTION OF SUGREEVA, THE KING OF THE MONKEYS.



*SEE AMAR CHITRA KATHA NO.546 — VALI

HANUMAN*, HIS MINISTER, WENT ON THE ERRAND AND CAME BACK WITH THE NEWS THAT SITA WAS AT LANKA.

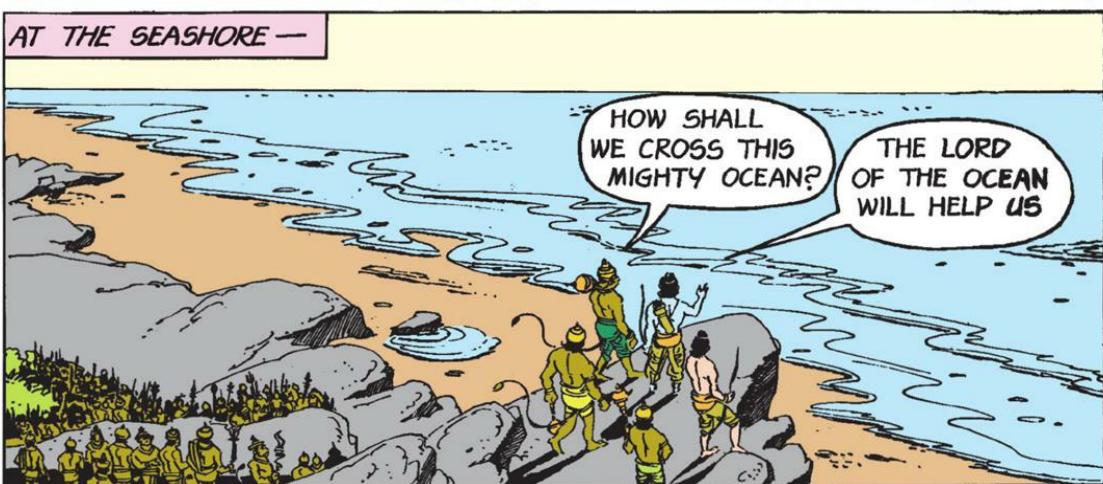
POOR SITA! LET US MARCH TO THE SEA-SHORE WITH YOUR FORCES, SUGREEVA.



AT THE SEASHORE —

HOW SHALL WE CROSS THIS MIGHTY OCEAN?

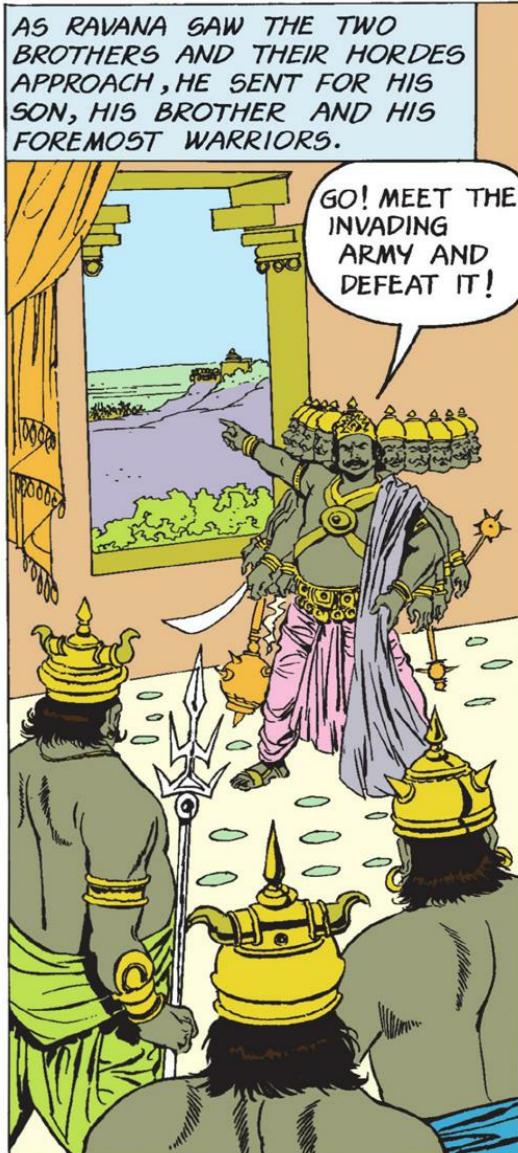
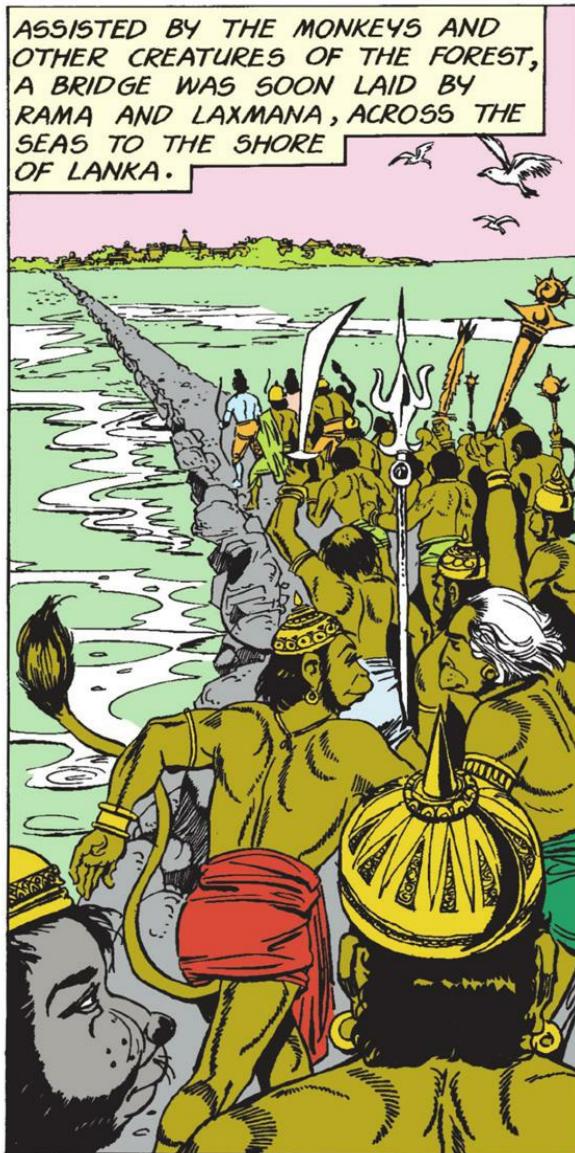
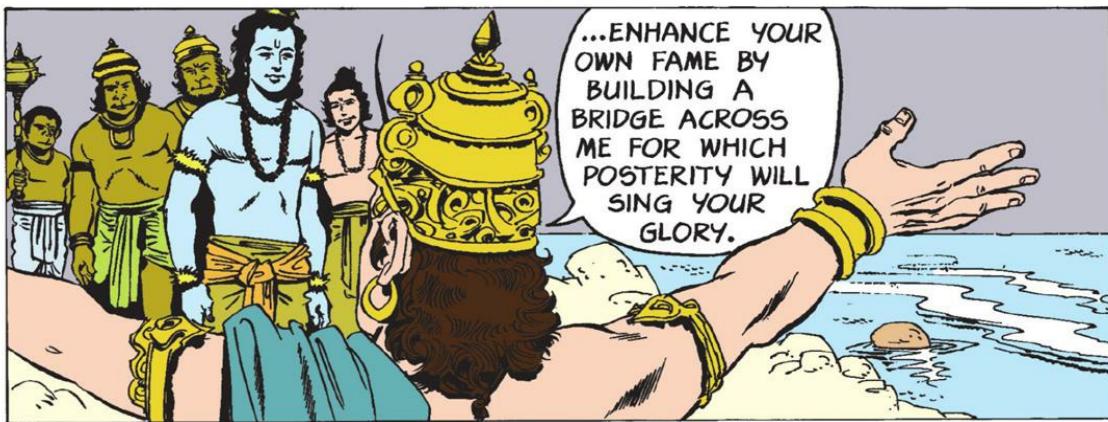
THE LORD OF THE OCEAN WILL HELP US



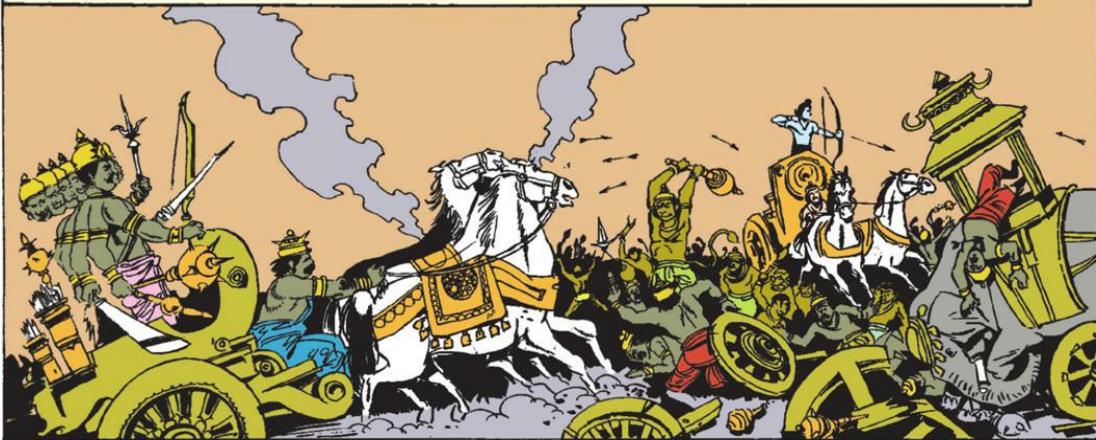
RAMA WAITED FOR THREE DAYS WITHOUT HAVING ANY FOOD OR WATER. AT LAST, VARUNA APPEARED AND IMMEDIATELY KNEW HIM TO BE VISHNU.

O LORD, PARDON MY IGNORANCE. YOU CAN MARCH ACROSS MY DOMAIN AT WILL BUT...





BUT RAMA, SUGREEVA, LAXMANA, HANUMAN AND THEIR WILD Hordes
EFFORTLESSLY DESTROYED RAVANA'S HUGE ARMY OF ELEPHANTS,
CAVALRY, INFANTRY AND CHARIOTS, IN A SINGLE ENCOUNTER!

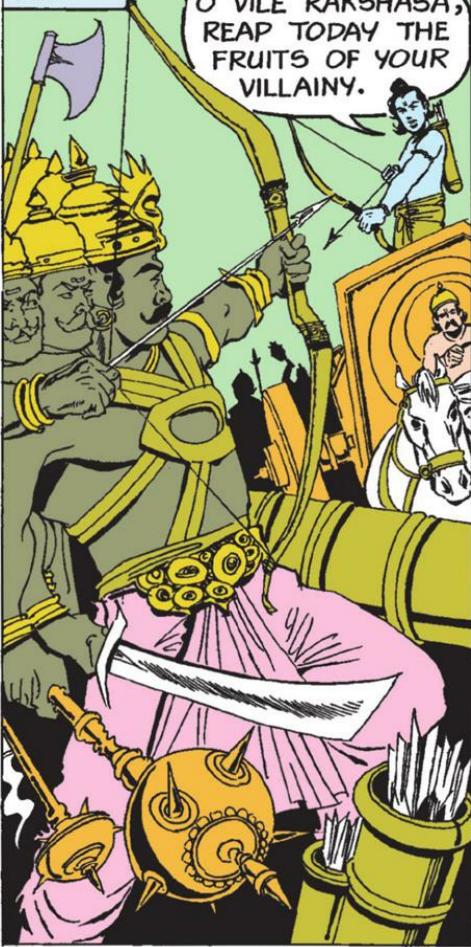


RAVANA WAS FURIOUS. HE
RUSHED TOWARDS RAMA.
BUT —

O VILE RAKSHASA,
REAP TODAY THE
FRUITS OF YOUR
VILLAINY.

AND WITH ONE
TWANG OF HIS
BOW ...

... VISHNU, AS RAMA,
COMPLETED THE
MISSION FOR WHICH
HE HAD TAKEN HIS
BIRTH ON EARTH.



KRISHNA AVATAR

ON THE EVE OF THE DAWN OF THE KALI YUGA, MANY TYRANTS LIKE KAMSA (AND THE DEMONS IN HIS PAY), JARASANDHA, SHISHUPALA, THE KAURAVAS AND THEIR HORDES, MOLESTED BHOO-MIDEVI OFTEN IN THE ROLES OF ARROGANT KINGS.

DISTRESSED, SHE STOOD BEFORE BRAHMA IN THE FORM OF A DISCONSOLATE COW.

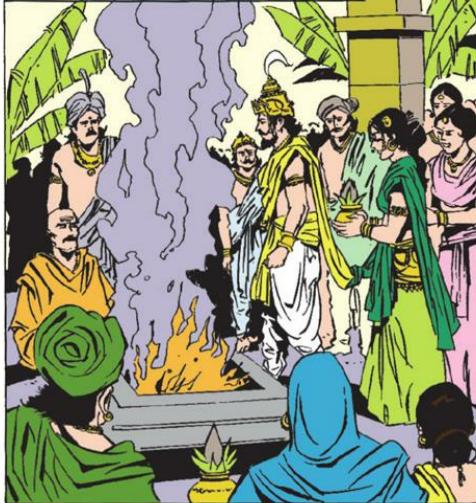
I SEEK REFUGE IN YOU, O LORD. RID ME OF MY BURDEN.

WHEN BRAHMA IN TURN PRAYED TO VISHNU FOR GUIDANCE —

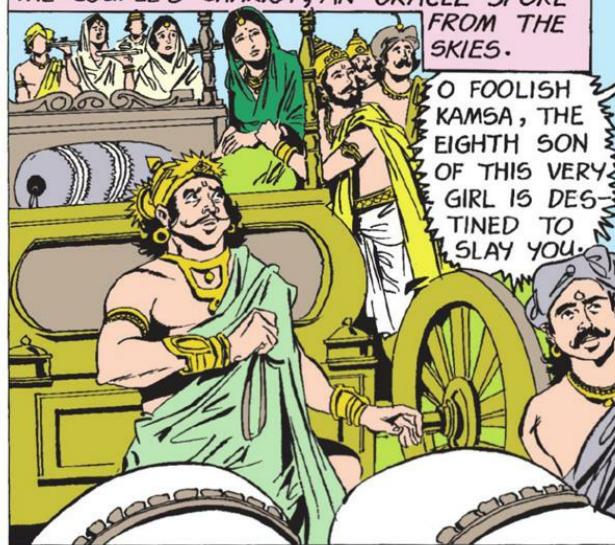
I KNOW OF BHOO-MIDEVI'S DISTRESS. SHESHA* AND I SHALL COME DOWN AS THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH SONS OF VASUDEVA TO FREE HER OF HER BURDEN. THE DEVAS, MEANWHILE, SHOULD PRECEDE US AS VIRTUOUS MEN AND AWAIT OUR DESCENT.

*THE SERPENT ON WHOM VISHNU RESTS.

AT THAT MOMENT, VASUDEVA, A YADAVA NOBLEMAN OF MATHURA, WAS GETTING MARRIED TO DEVAKI, KING UGRASENA'S NIECE.



LATER, WHEN UGRASENA'S SON, KAMSA, AFFECTIONATELY TOOK THE REINS TO DRIVE THE COUPLE'S CHARIOT, AN ORACLE SPOKE FROM THE SKIES.



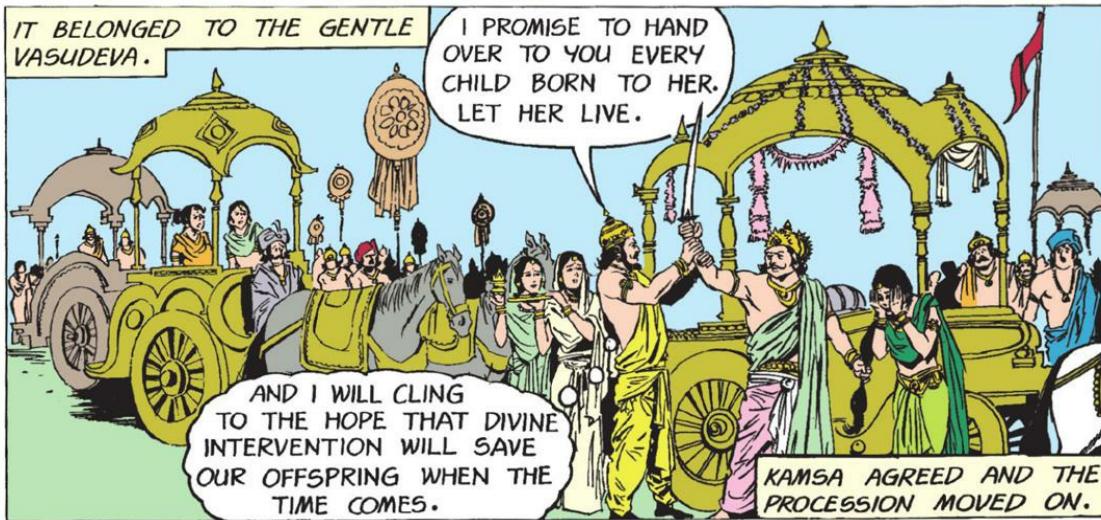
AN ENRAGED KAMSA SEIZED DEVAKI BY THE HAIR AND RAISED HIS SWORD TO BRING IT DOWN ON HER...



...WHEN A HAND STOPPED HIM.



IT BELONGED TO THE GENTLE VASUDEVA.



BUT, TERRIFIED BY THE PREDICTION, KAMSA IMPRISONED UGRASENA AND ASSUMING ALL POWER, BECAME THE RULER OF MATHURA.

THOUGH I TOO AM A YADAVA, SINCE A YADAVA IS DESTINED TO BE MY KILLER, I SHALL PERSECUTE AND DESTROY THE RACE.

WHEN THE SEVENTH CHILD WAS ABOUT TO BE BORN, VISHNU'S DIVINE POWER, YOGAMAYA APPEARED.

AS ORDERED BY THE LORD, I HAVE TO TRANSFER THE CHILD, BALARAMA, TO THE WOMB OF ROHINI, VASUDEVA'S WIFE AT GOKUL.

THIS WAS TO MISLEAD KAMSA INTO BELIEVING THAT DEVAKI HAD LOST HER SEVENTH CHILD.

MEANWHILE, TRUE TO HIS WORD, VASUDEVA HANDED OVER TO KAMSA'S MEN THE FIRST SIX SONS BORN TO DEVAKI.

PUT THE VILE INFANT TO DEATH.

AFTER ACCOMPLISHING HER TASK —

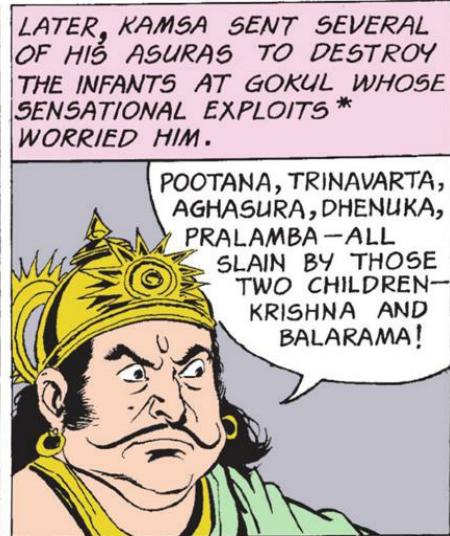
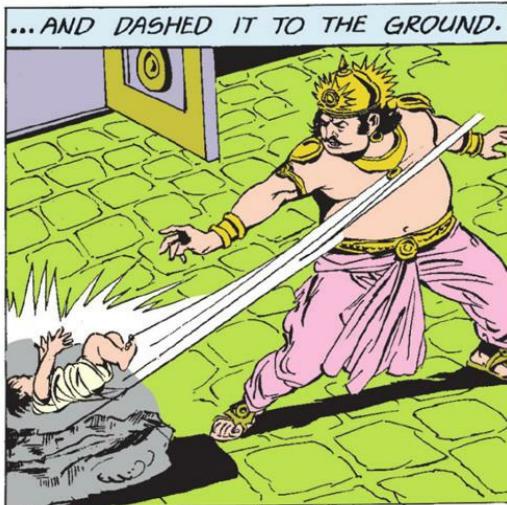
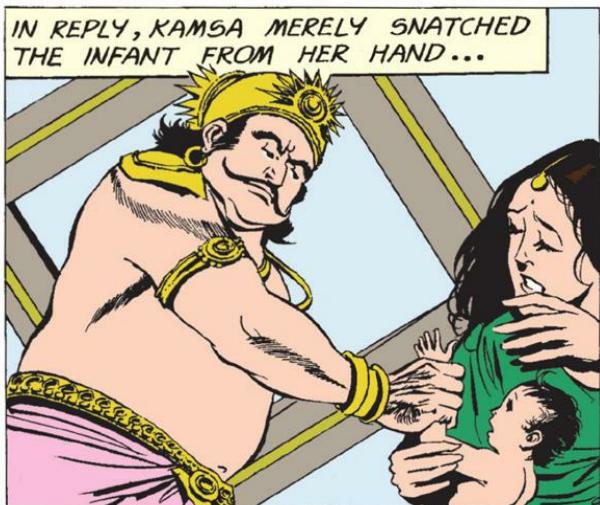
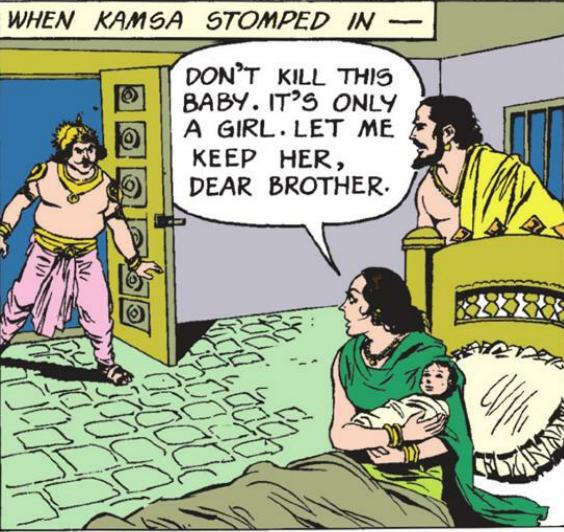
NOW, I MUST ENTER THE WOMB OF YASHODA, THE WIFE OF NANDA*, AND AWAIT THE DESCENT OF THE LORD.

A FEW MONTHS LATER, LORD VISHNU APPEARED BEFORE THE AWESTRUCK DEVAKI AND VASUDEVA.

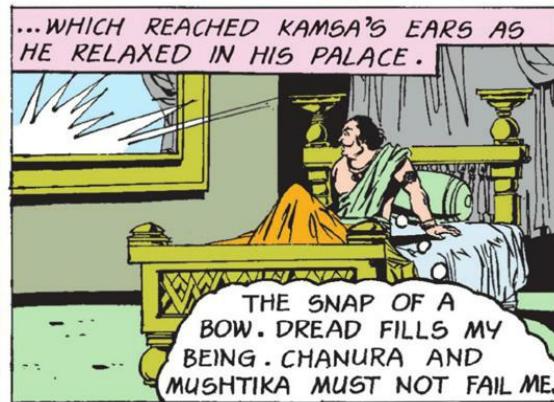
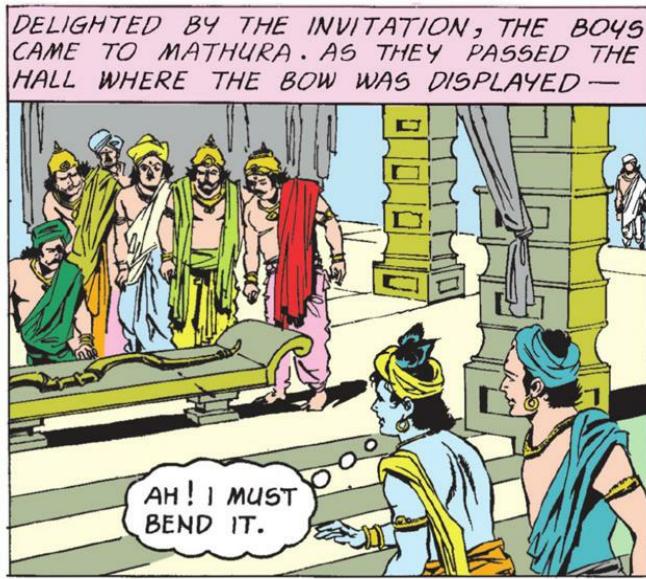
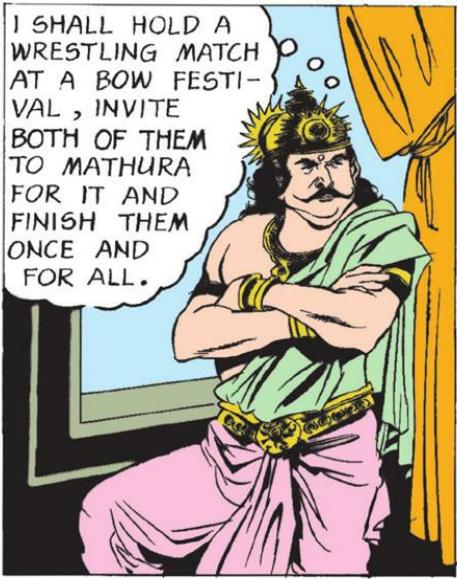
VASUDEVA, TAKE ME TO GOKUL AND LEAVE ME IN THE BED OF YASHODA. THEN BRING BACK THE GIRL THAT HAS BEEN BORN TO HER.

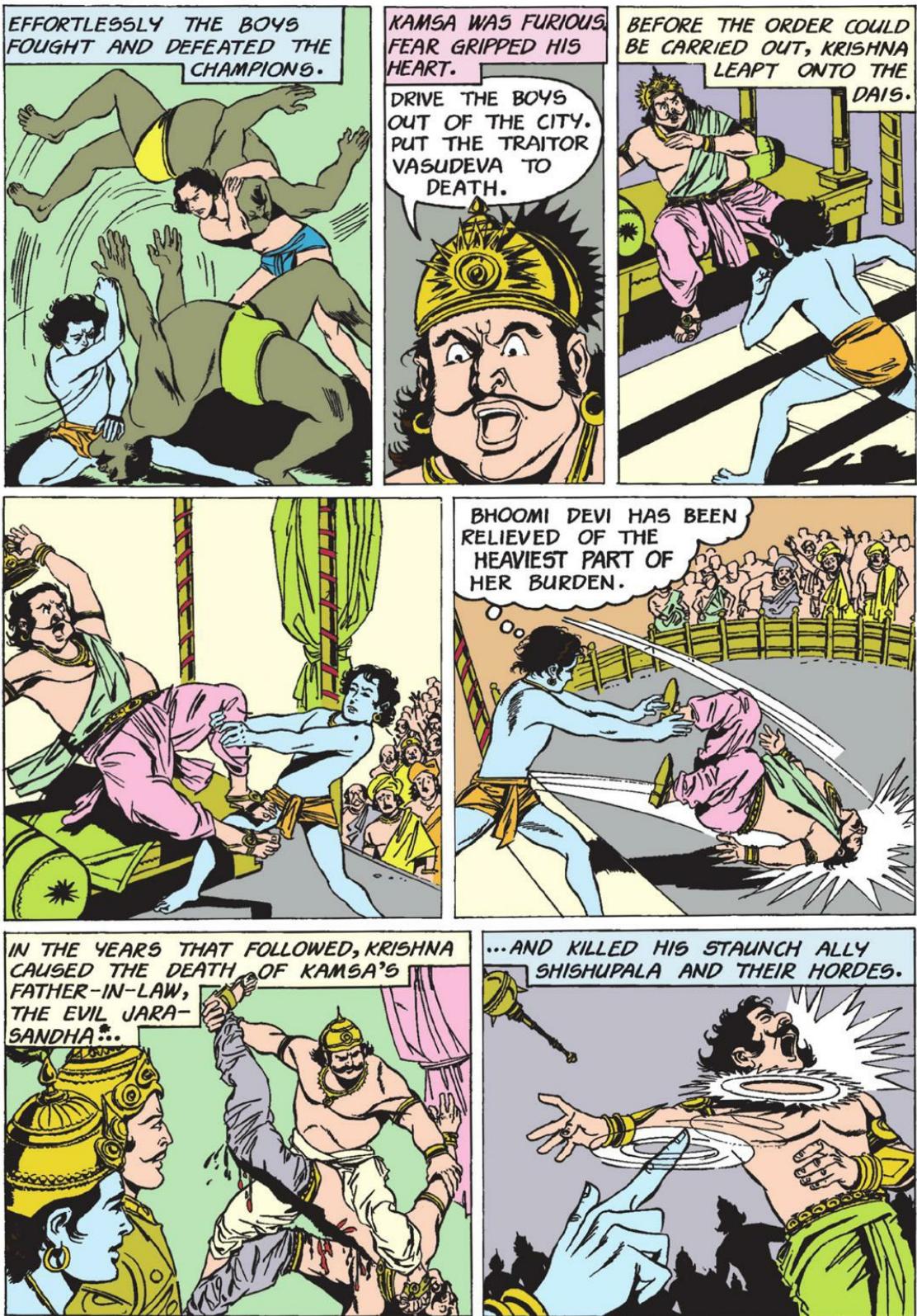
AND FORTHWITH VISHNU ASSUMED THE FORM OF A SMALL DARK BABY, WHO CAME TO BE KNOWN AS KRISHNA.

* A COWHERD CHIEF AT GOKUL



* FOR DETAILS READ AMAR CHITRA KATHA NO. 501—KRISHNA.





*SEE AMAR CHITRA KATHA NO.518 — KRISHNA AND JARASANDHA

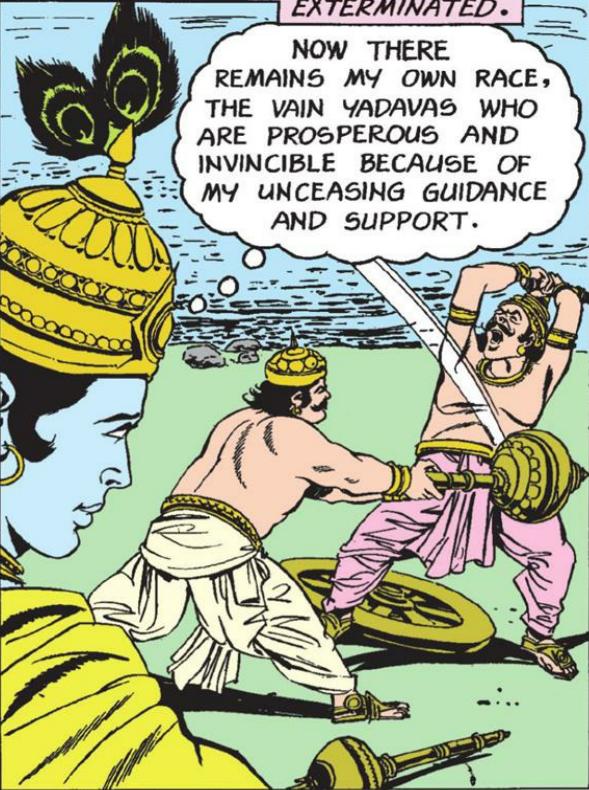
SOON AFTER THAT, KRISHNA'S COUSINS, THE VIRTUOUS PANDAVAS, WERE UNLAWFULLY DEPRIVED OF THEIR KINGDOM BY THEIR COUSINS, THE ARROGANT KAURAVAS, AND WAR BROKE OUT BETWEEN THEM.

I WILL SOON BE ABLE TO RID BHOOXI DEVI OF THE KAURAVAS.



IN THAT WAR THE KAURAVAS WERE EXTERMINATED.

NOW THERE REMAINS MY OWN RACE, THE VAIN YADAVAS WHO ARE PROSPEROUS AND INVINCIBLE BECAUSE OF MY UNCEASING GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT.



BACK AT DWARAKA —

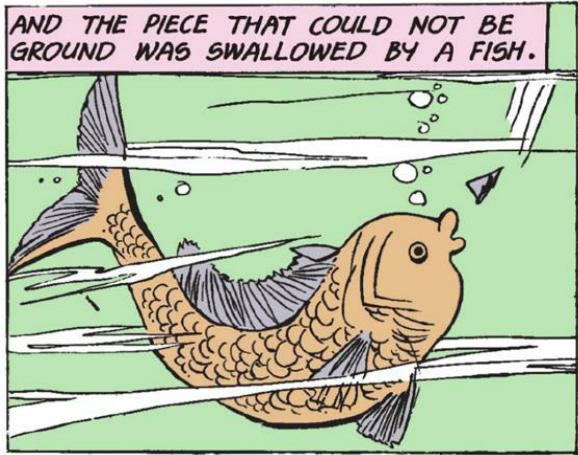
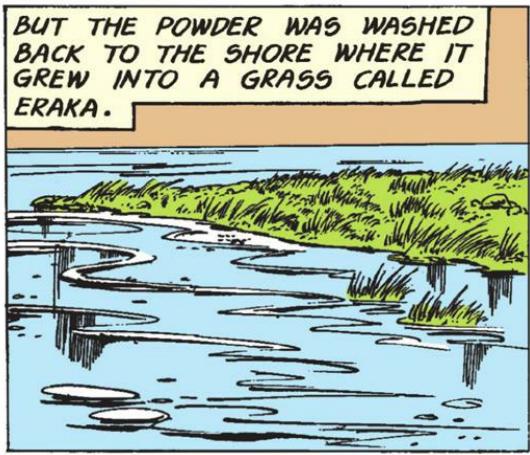
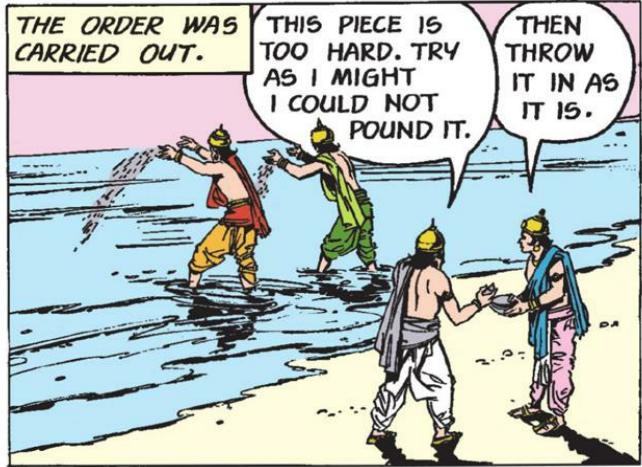
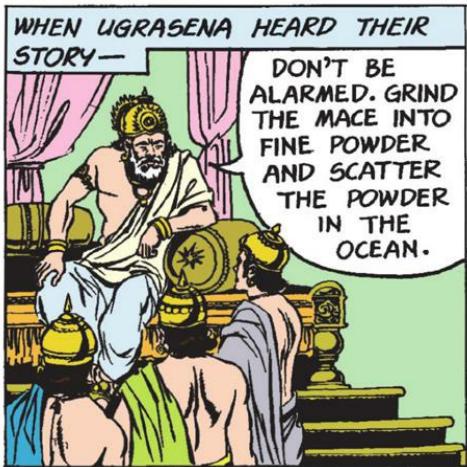
I SHALL CAUSE THE ARROGANT YADAVA YOUTHS TO TEASE THE RISHIS AND INVITE THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION. THEN BALARAMA AND I WILL BE FREE TO WITHDRAW OURSELVES FROM THE WORLD.

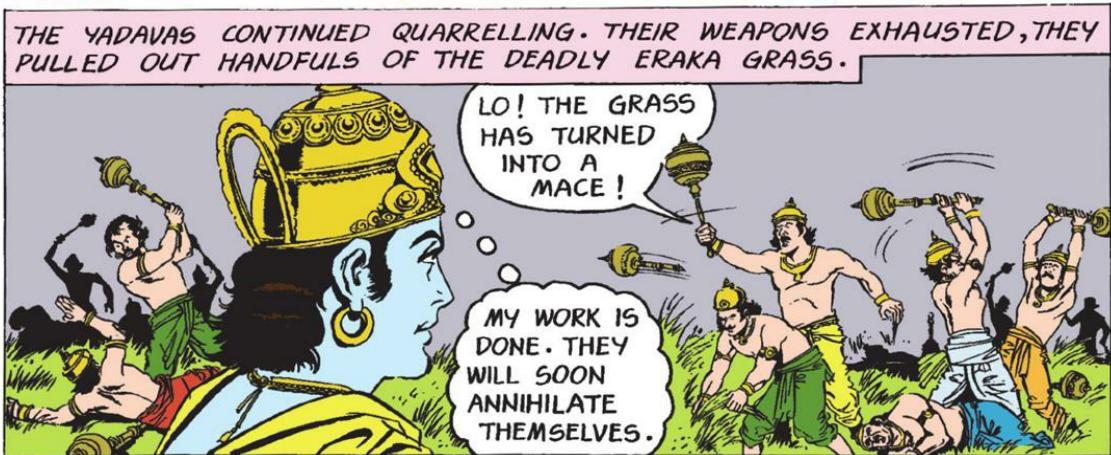
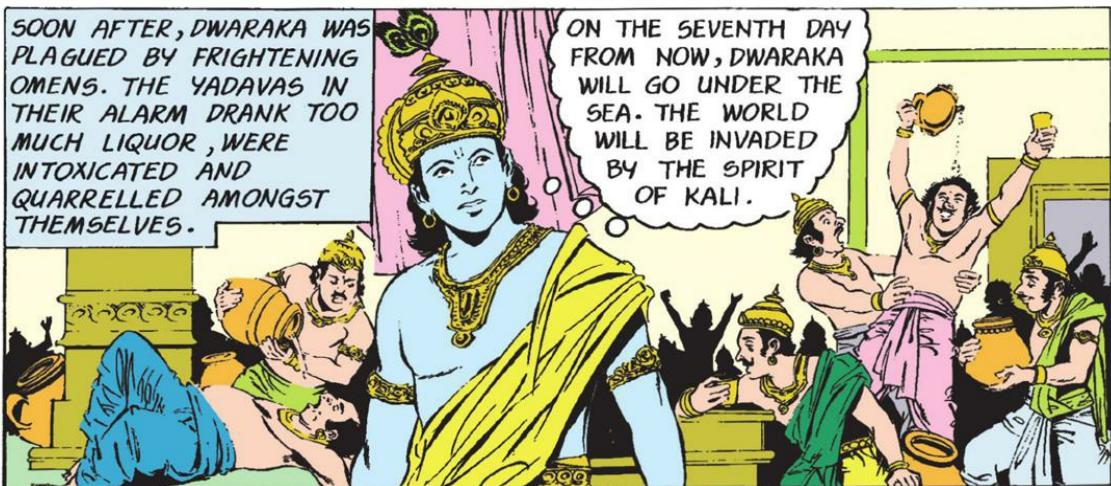
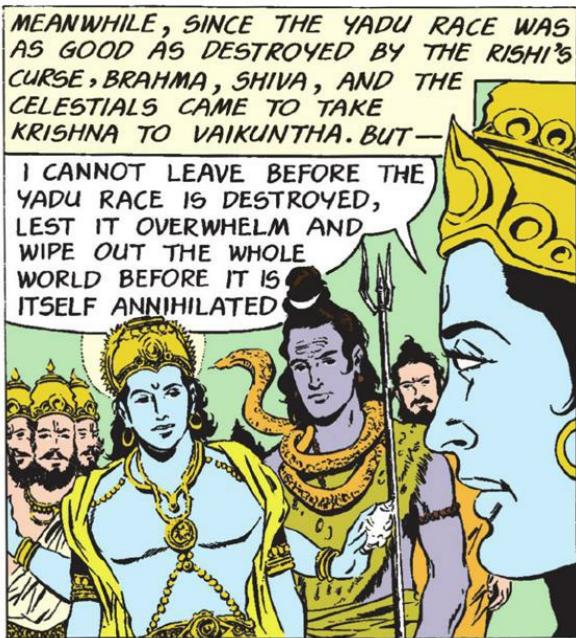
AT THAT TIME, THE RISHIS—NARADA, VISHWAMITRA, KANVA, DURVASA, VASISHTHA AND OTHERS—WERE LIVING NEAR DWARAKA.

LET US DRESS SAMBA AS A PREGNANT GIRL AND REQUEST THE RISHIS TO PREDICT THE SEX OF THE EXPECTED CHILD.

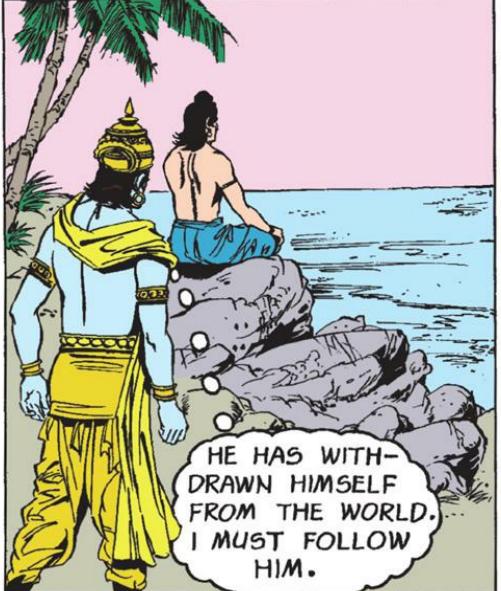
AN EXCELLENT IDEA!







HE WENT TO LOOK FOR BALARAMA
AND FOUND HIM ALREADY SEATED
IN MEDITATION BY THE SEASHORE.



KRISHNA SAT UNDER A PEEPUL TREE
AND LEANED BACK AGAINST IT.



JARA, THE HUNTER, WHO WAS PASSING BY, MISTOOK HIS FOOT TO BE THE MOUTH OF A DEER AND TOOK AIM.



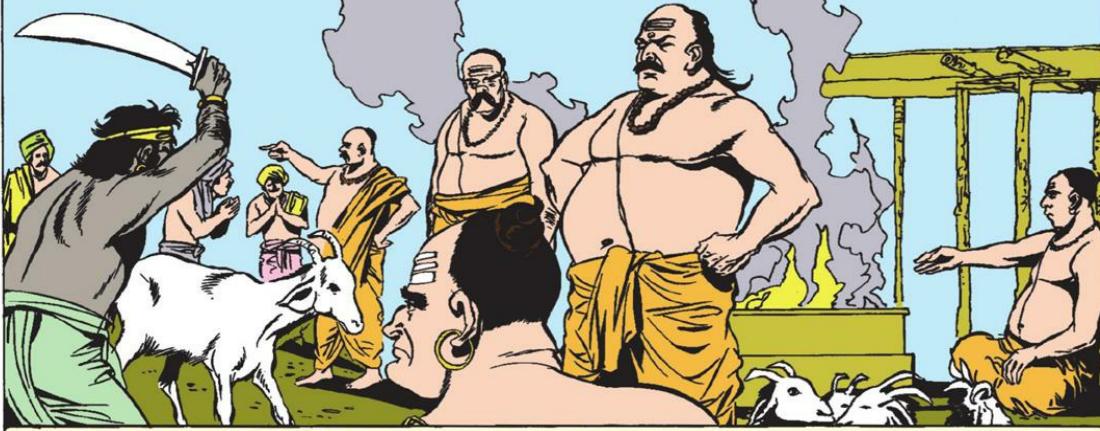
THE ARROW FOUND ITS MARK AND BROUGHT TO AN END THE MOST GLORIOUS AVATAR OF LORD VISHNU.



THE HEAVENS RAINED FLOWERS AND CELESTIAL MUSIC FILLED THE SKY AS VISHNU PASSED ON FROM EARTH TO HIS ABODE IN VAIKUNTHA.



BUDDHA AVATAR



WITH KRISHNA'S DEPARTURE FROM EARTH, THE AGE OF KALI SET IN. HINDUISM LOST MUCH OF ITS PURITY. THE AUTHORITY OF THE VEDAS BECAME QUESTIONABLE. EMPTY RITUALS REPLACED TRUE DEVOTION TO GOD AND POWER-DRUNK BRAHMAN PRIESTS EXPLOITED AND OPPRESSED THE OTHER CASTES.

MAYADEVI, THE QUEEN OF THE SAKYA KING, SHUDDHODANA OF KAPILAVASTU, HAD A STRANGE DREAM. A WHITE ELEPHANT WITH SIX TUSKS PIERCED HER WOMB.



A FEW MONTHS LATER, SHE WAS PASSING THROUGH THE LUMBINI GARDENS ON HER WAY TO HER PARENTAL HOME. AS SHE RESTED BENEATH A SAL TREE, SHE GAVE BIRTH TO A CHILD.

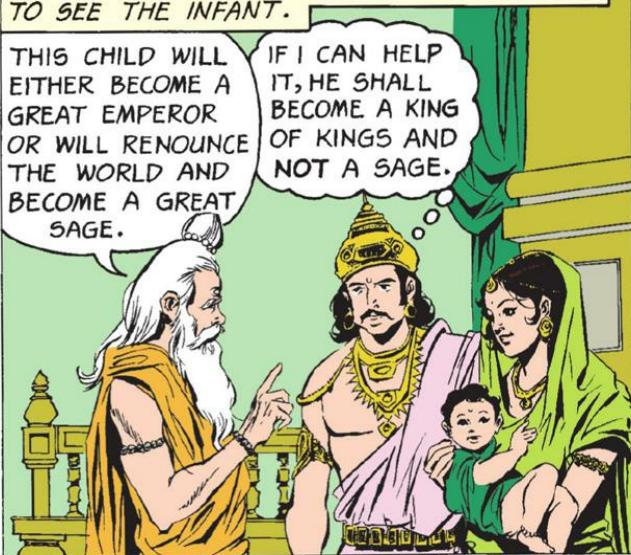


IT'S A BOY,
YOUR MAJESTY! HE
IS AS LUSTROUS AS
THE FULL MOON ABOVE.

LATER, AT THE PALACE, SAGE ASITA CAME TO SEE THE INFANT.

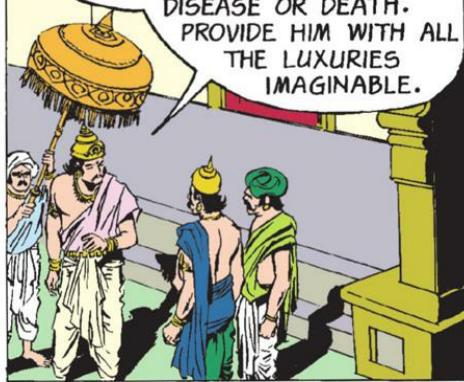
THIS CHILD WILL EITHER BECOME A GREAT EMPEROR OR WILL RENOUNCE THE WORLD AND BECOME A GREAT SAGE.

IF I CAN HELP IT, HE SHALL BECOME A KING OF KINGS AND NOT A SAGE.



WHEN SIDDHARTHA, AS THE CHILD WAS NAMED, GREW INTO A YOUNG LAD —

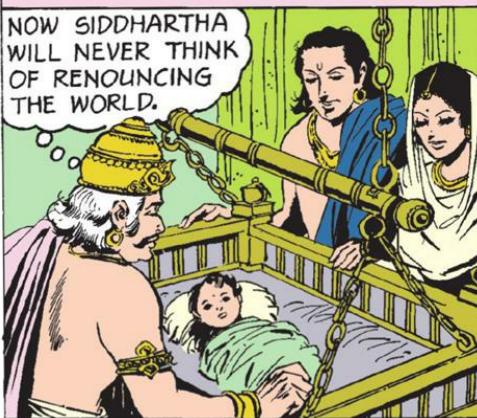
THE PRINCE SHALL NOT STEP BEYOND THE CONFINES OF HIS PALACE. LET HIM NEVER KNOW OF THE MISERIES OF OLD AGE, DISEASE OR DEATH. PROVIDE HIM WITH ALL THE LUXURIES IMAGINABLE.



AS SOON AS SIDDHARTHA, THE PRINCE WHO WAS IGNORANT OF THE PAIN AND MISERY OF THIS WORLD, CAME OF AGE, HE WAS MARRIED TO YASHODHARA, THE DAUGHTER OF A SAKYA NOBLE.

IN DUE COURSE, A SON WAS BORN TO THEM AND SIDDHARTHA HAD ALL THAT A MAN COULD WANT.

NOW SIDDHARTHA WILL NEVER THINK OF RENOUNCING THE WORLD.

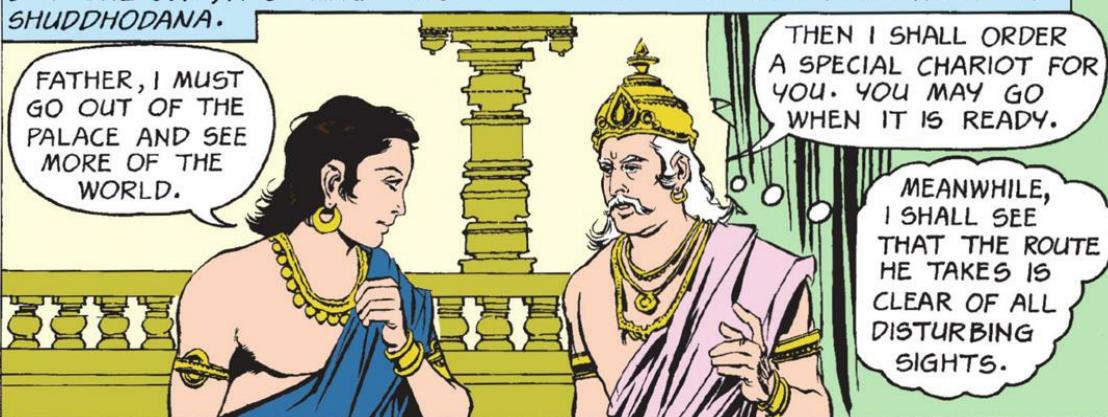


BUT ONE DAY, A STRANGE URGE CAME OVER SIDDHARTHA. HE WENT TO SHUDDHODANA.

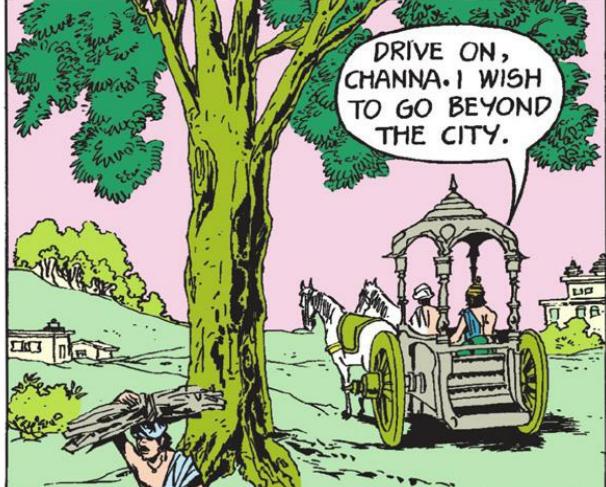
FATHER, I MUST GO OUT OF THE PALACE AND SEE MORE OF THE WORLD.

THEN I SHALL ORDER A SPECIAL CHARIOT FOR YOU. YOU MAY GO WHEN IT IS READY.

MEANWHILE, I SHALL SEE THAT THE ROUTE HE TAKES IS CLEAR OF ALL DISTURBING SIGHTS.



A FEW DAYS LATER, SIDDHARTHA RODE OUT IN A CHARIOT DRIVEN BY CHANNA. WHEN THEY REACHED THE CITY LIMITS —



AS THEY DROVE FURTHER —

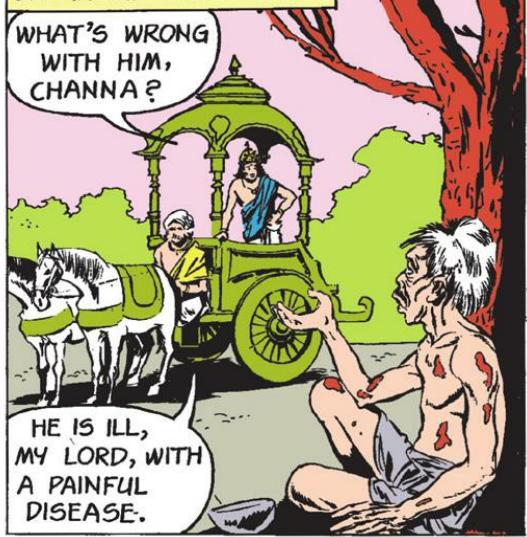
CHANNA! HALT! WHY DOES THAT MAN BEND SO? WHY DOES HE USE A STICK?



WHEN THEY RETURNED TO THE PALACE, THE PRINCE BROODED OVER WHAT HE HAD SEEN.



THIS TIME THEY SAW A SICK MAN, GROANING WITH PAIN.



WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM, CHANNA?

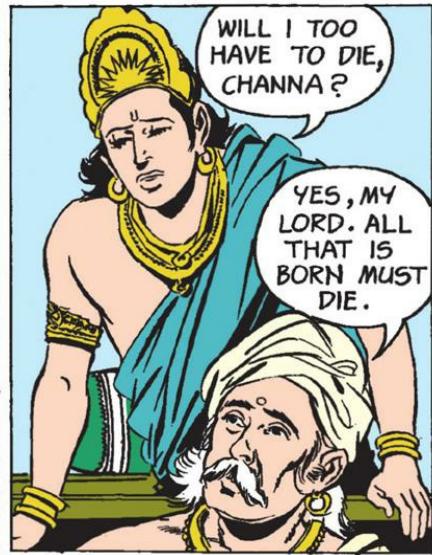
HE IS ILL, MY LORD, WITH A PAINFUL DISEASE.

IS DISEASE PECULIAR TO HIM, CHANNA?

NO, MY LORD. EVEN YOU MAY FALL ILL.



SIDDHARTHA'S GREED FOR MORE KNOWLEDGE
ON WHAT HAD HITHERTO BEEN CONCEALED
FROM HIM GREW. HE MADE ANOTHER TOUR.

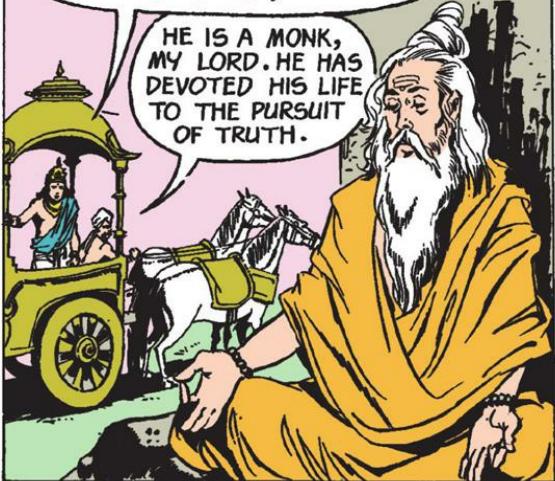


AS SIDDHARTHA PONDERED ON WHAT HE HAD SEEN, HIS LIFE OF EASE AND LUXURY BEGAN TO PALL ON HIM. HE NO LONGER FOUND JOY IN ANYTHING. HE WAS UNHAPPY AND DISTURBED.



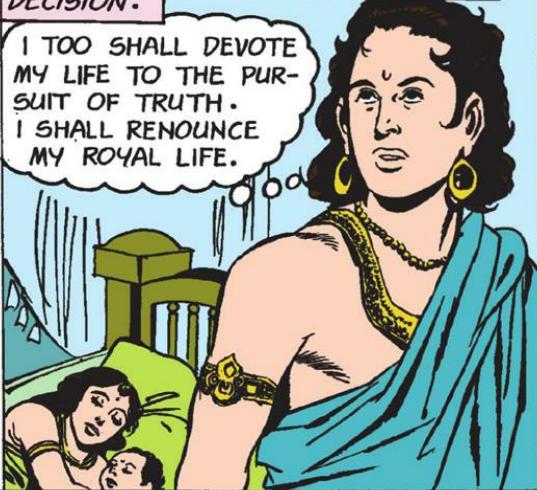
AND HE RODE OUT ONCE AGAIN.

STOP, CHANNA! THAT FACE! HOW CALM! HOW SERENE IT LOOKS!
WHO IS HE?



THAT NIGHT SIDDHARTHA MADE A DECISION.

I TOO SHALL DEVOTE MY LIFE TO THE PURSUIT OF TRUTH.
I SHALL RENOUNCE MY ROYAL LIFE.



SO SIDDHARTHA LEFT THE PALACE AND BECAME AN ASCETIC. AFTER YEARS OF BITTER STRUGGLES, HE PERCEIVED TRUTH, AS HE SAT MEDITATING UNDER A BODHI TREE.

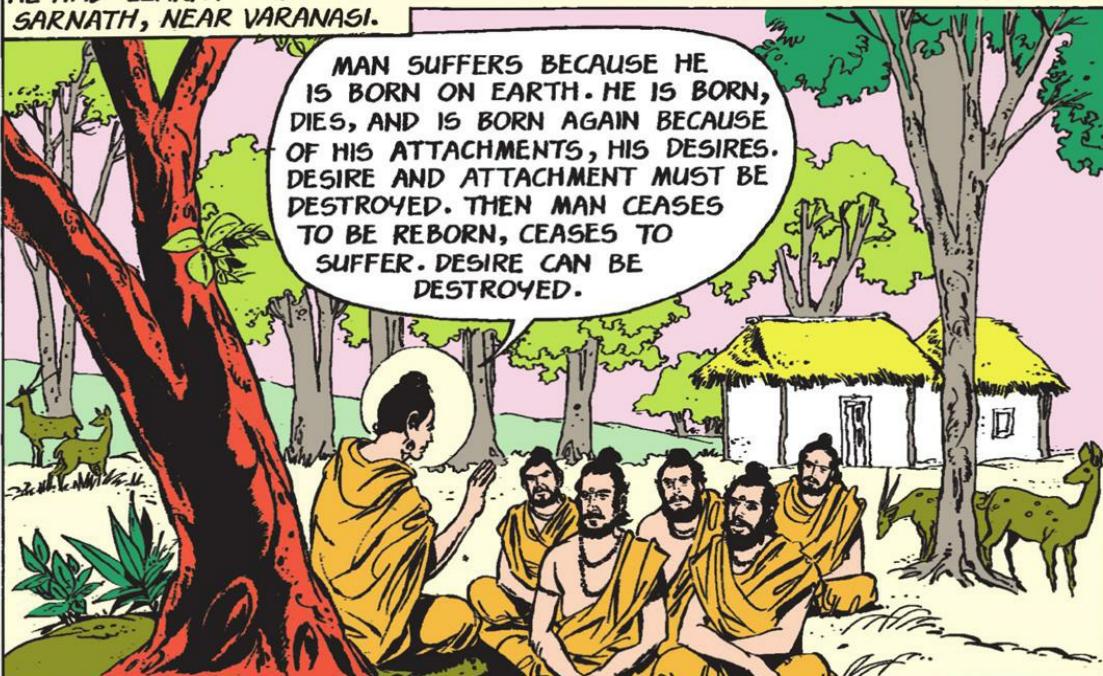


AND SIDDHARTHA, THE PRINCE, BECAME BUDDHA*—THE ENLIGHTENED ONE.



THEN BUDDHA CAME BACK TO LIVE AMONGST MEN AND TEACH THEM WHAT HE HAD LEARNT. HE HELD HIS FIRST SERMON IN THE DEER PARK AT SARNATH, NEAR VARANASI.

MAN SUFFERS BECAUSE HE IS BORN ON EARTH. HE IS BORN, DIES, AND IS BORN AGAIN BECAUSE OF HIS ATTACHMENTS, HIS DESIRES. DESIRE AND ATTACHMENT MUST BE DESTROYED. THEN MAN CEASES TO BE REBORN, CEASES TO SUFFER. DESIRE CAN BE DESTROYED.



FOR MANY YEARS DID BUDDHA PREACH, AND MANY WERE THOSE WHO SOUGHT REFUGE IN HIM AND IN HIS TEACHINGS. WHAT HE COULD GIVE, HOWEVER, TOUCHED BUT A DROP OF WATER IN THE SEA OF HUMANITY THAT WAS TOSSSED BY THE MISERIES FORETOLD FOR THE KALI YUGA.

* SEE AMAR CHITRA KATHA NO. 510—BUDDHA.



MANY GOOD MEN WALKED THE EARTH AFTER BUDDHA BUT INSIGNIFICANT WAS THE EFFECT THEY HAD AGAINST THE GROWING SUPREMACY OF EVIL AND EVIL ONES ON EARTH. WITH THE ADVANCE OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE THE LONGEVITY OF MAN HAS INCREASED BUT WITH THE ADVANCE IN TECHNOLOGY, MAN'S LIFE HAS BECOME A NIGHTMARE OF HYPERTENSIONS AND POLLUTION. BUT NOT ALL HOPE IS LOST.



"FOR WHEN THE AGE REACHES ITS NADIR AND ITS WORST FORCES HAVE WELL NIGH SPENT THEMSELVES, VISHNU WILL APPEAR AMONGST MORTALS IN HIS SATTVIC FORM AS KALKI. RIDING HIS CELESTIAL HORSE, HE WILL EXTERMINATE, BY THE MILLIONS, CORRUPT ROBBERS WHO BEAR HIGH POSITIONS IN LIFE AND WILL REINFORCE MORAL SENSE AND HUMANITARIAN VIEWS IN ALL GOOD PEOPLE, TILL TOWN AND COUNTRYSIDE WILL AGAIN ENJOY PEACE AND SECURITY. THEN WILL BEGIN A NEW CYCLE OF YUGAS WITH SATYA (TRUTH) AT ITS HEAD, WHOSE HUMAN GENERATIONS WILL BE IMBUED WITH GREAT MORAL, INTELLECTUAL, AND PHYSICAL STRENGTH, POSSESSING ALL IMMACULATE ATTRIBUTES."

WHICH OF THE ACKS HAVE YOU STILL NOT READ?

EPICS AND MYTHOLOGY <i>Best known stories from the Epics and the Puranas</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abhimanyu Agastya Andhaka Aniruddha Aruni And Uttanka Ashwini Kumars Ayyappan Bahubali Bhanumati Bheema And Hanuman Bheesma Chandrahasa Dasharatha Dhruba And Ashtavakra Draupadi Drona Elephantta Gandhari Ganesha Ganesha And The Moon Ganga Garuda Ghatotkacha Hanuman Hanuman To The Rescue Harischandra Heroes Of Hampi Indra And Shachi Indra And Shibi Indra And Vritra Jagannatha Of Puri Jayadratha Kacha And Devayani Karna Karttikaya Konark Krishna Krishna And Jarasandha Krishna And Narakasura Krishna And Rukmini Krishna And Shishupala Krishna And The False Vaasudeva Kubera Kumbhakarna Mahabharata Mahiravana Nachiketa Nahusha Nala Damayanti Pareekshit Parashurama Prabhavati Pradyumna Prahlad Purushottam Dev And Padmavati Rama Ravana Humbled Saraswati Sati And Shiva Savitri Shiva Parvati Stories of Creation Subhadra Sudama Sukanya Surya Tales From The Upanishads Tales Of Arjuna Tales Of Balarama Tales Of Durga Tales Of Indra Tales Of Narada 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tales Of Shiva Tales Of Vishnu Tales Of Yudhishtira Tapati Thanjavur The Churning Of The Ocean The Gita The Golden Mongoose The King In A Parrot's Body The Lord Of Lanka The Pandava Princes The Pandavas In Hiding The Parijata Tree The Sons Of Rama The Syamantaka Gem Tirupati Tripura Uloopi Vaishno Devi Vali Vishwamitra Yayati 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swami Chinmayananda Swami Pranavananda Tales Of Sai Baba Tansen Tulsidas Vidyasagar Vivekananda Zarathustra <p style="text-align: center;">INDIAN CLASSICS <i>Enchanting tales from Indian literature</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ananda Math Ancestors Of Rama Devi Choudhurani Durgesh Nandini Kadambari Kannagi Kapala Kundala Kumanan Maarthanda Varma Malavika Manonmani Prince Jivaka Raj Singh Ratnavali Shakuntala The Adventures Of Pratapan The Elusive Kaka Udayana Urvashi Vasanthesena Vasavadatta Veer Dhaval <p style="text-align: center;">VISIONARIES <i>Inspiring tales of thinkers, social reformers and nation builders</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adi Shankara Albert Einstein Anant Pai Babasaheb Ambedkar Basaveshwara Buddha Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Chanakya Chokha Mela Dayananda Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das Eknath Fa Hien Ghanshyamdas Birla Guru Arjan Guru Gobind Singh Guru Har Gobind Guru Nanak Guru Tegh Bahadur Huen Tsang J.R.D Tata Jagadis Chandra Bose Jamsetji Tata Jawaharlal Nehru Jayaprakash Narayan Jim Corbett Jnaneshwar Kabir Kalidasa Lal Bahadur Shastri Lokmanya Tilak M. 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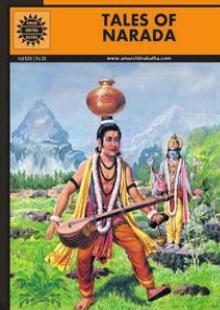
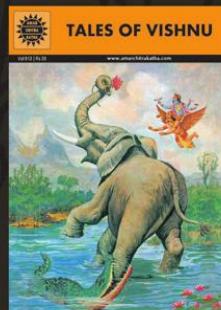
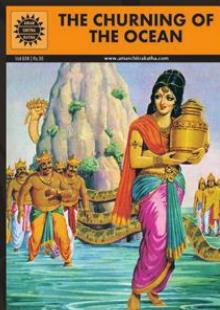
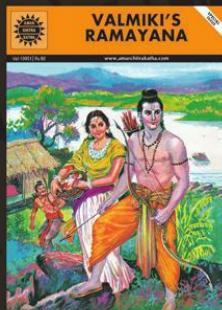
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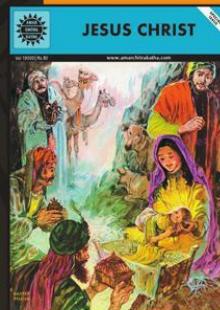
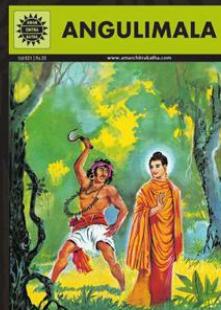
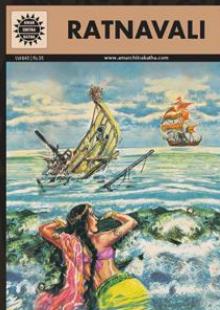
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