



KRISHNA AND RUKMINI

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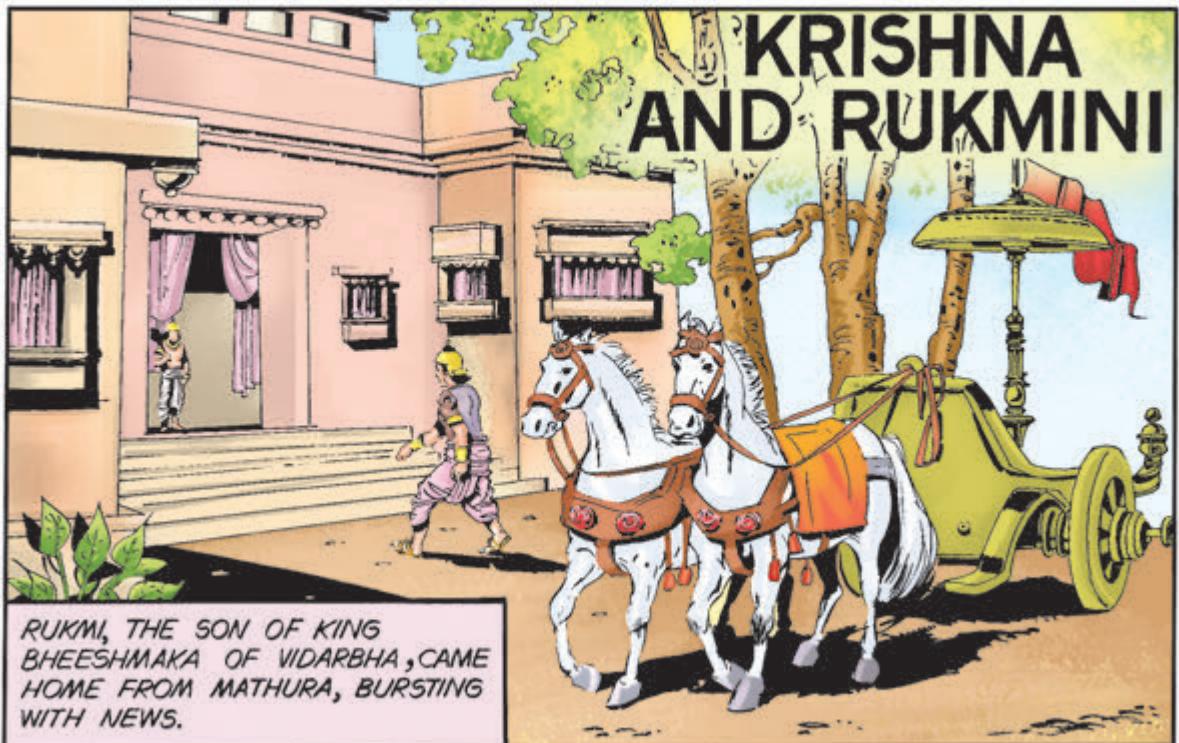
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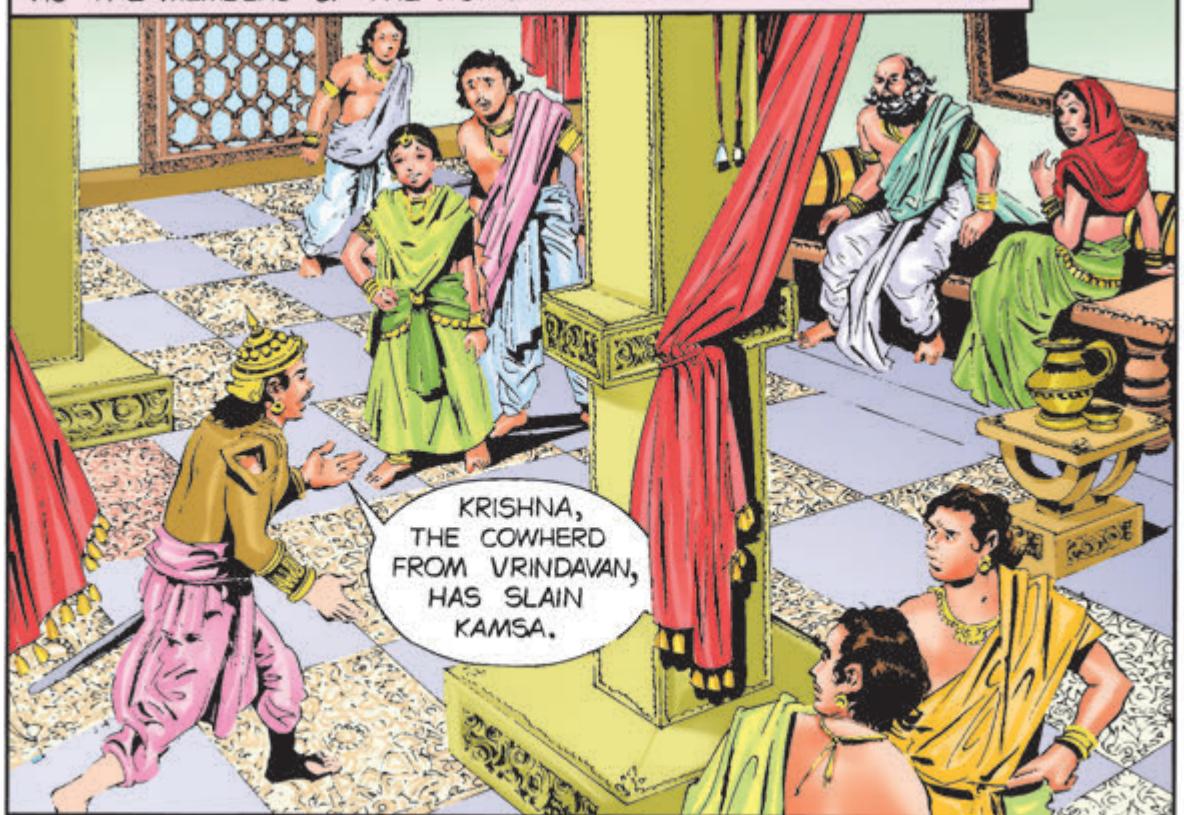
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KRISHNA AND RUKMINI



AS THE MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD SURROUNDED HIM—



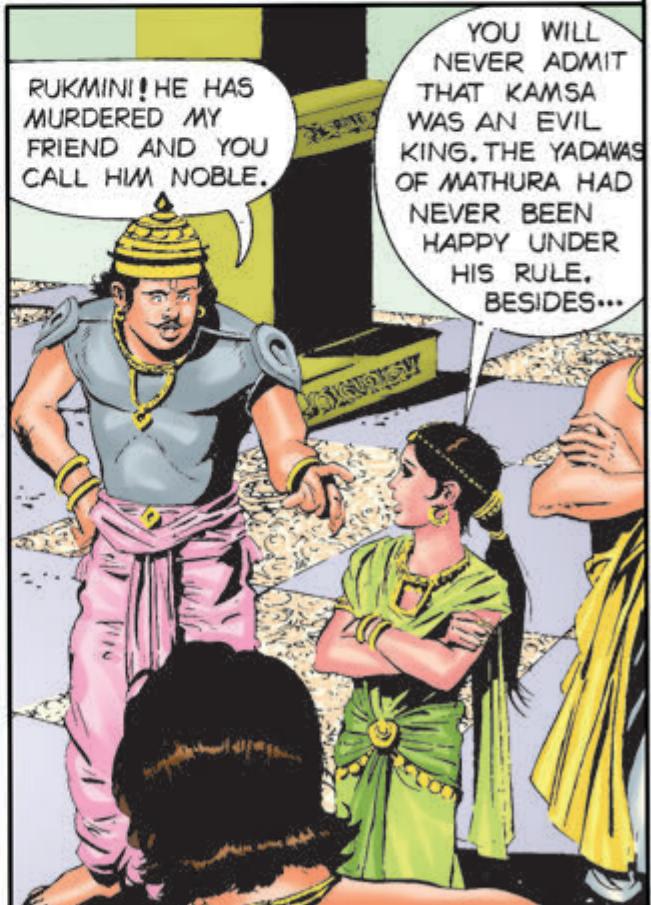
IT APPEARS THAT KRISHNA IS REALLY THE EIGHTH SON OF VASUDEVA AND DEVAKI, KAMSA'S COUSIN. HE AND HIS ELDER BROTHER, BALARAMA, WERE SECRETED AWAY TO GOKUL AS SOON AS THEY WERE BORN AND WERE BROUGHT UP AMONG THE COWHERDS.



SO IN SPITE OF ALL KAMSA'S EFFORTS THE PROPHECY HAS COME TRUE. IS KRISHNA REALLY A DIVINITY?

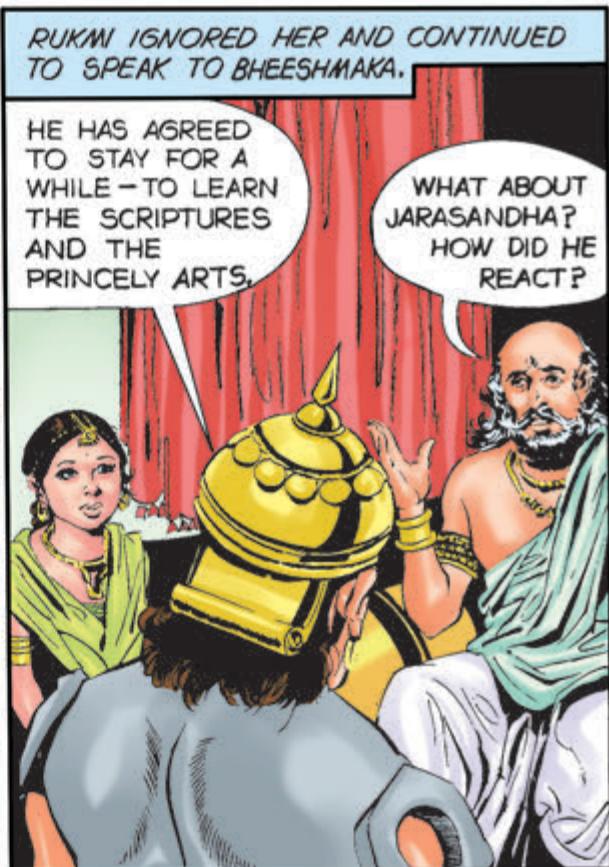
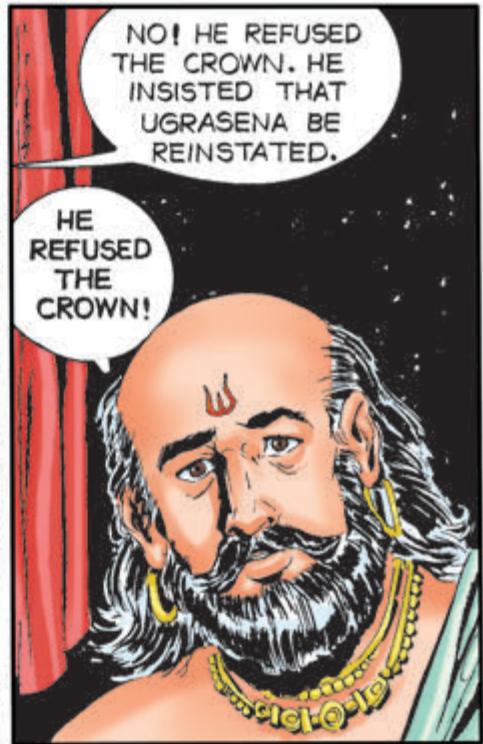


THEN HE IS NO COWHERD BUT A NOBLE YADAVA!



RUKMINI! HE HAS MURDERED MY FRIEND AND YOU CALL HIM NOBLE.

YOU WILL NEVER ADMIT THAT KAMSA WAS AN EVIL KING. THE YADAVAS OF MATHURA HAD NEVER BEEN HAPPY UNDER HIS RULE. BESIDES...



JARASANDHA, KAMSA'S FATHER-IN-LAW, WAS THE EMPEROR OF MAGADHA, THE MOST POWERFUL KINGDOM OF THOSE DAYS. MATHURA, LIKE VIDARBHA AND MOST OTHER KINGDOMS, OWED ALLEGIANCE TO HIM.

THE EMPEROR IS FURIOUS. BOTH HIS DAUGHTERS* HAVE BEEN WIDOWED IN ONE STROKE. HE VOWS TO TAKE REVENGE. HE HAS SENT FOR ME. I MUST GO AND SEE ABOUT THE CHARIOTS.



RUKMINI FOLLOWED HIM.

I MUST KNOW MORE ABOUT KRISHNA.



BHEESHMAKA AND HIS WIFE WERE ALONE.

THE BOY SEEMS TO BE VIRTUOUS. I CANNOT THINK OF A MORE SUITABLE HUSBAND FOR RUKMINI.

THE SAME THOUGHT OCCURRED TO ME. HE REFUSED THE CROWN OF MATHURA. HOW IT MUST HAVE PLEASED POOR, OLD UGRASENA.

AND MATTERS STOOD THERE.

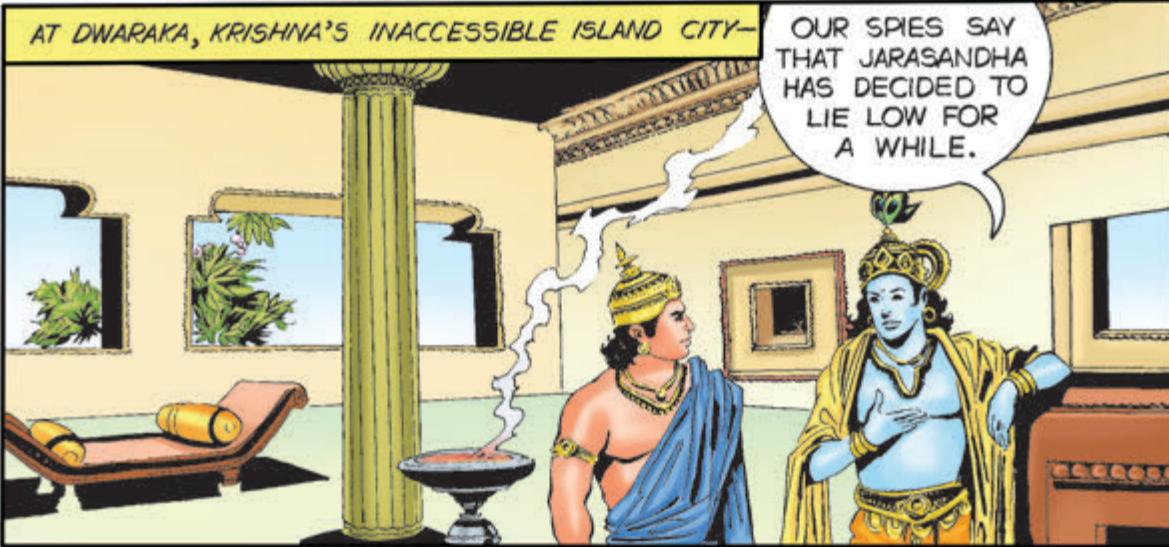
*KAMSA'S WIVES

MEANWHILE, WITH THE HELP OF RUKMI AND OTHER ALLIES, JARASANDHA MADE SEVERAL ATTEMPTS TO AVENGE THE DEATH OF HIS SON-IN-LAW, BUT IN VAIN. AFTER THE EIGHTEENTH ATTEMPT—



THE VILE YADAVA AND HIS BROTHER HAVE DODGED US AGAIN. WE WILL HAVE TO BIDE OUR TIME. LET MY FRIENDS RETURN TO THEIR CAPITALS FOR THE PRESENT.

AT DWARAKA, KRISHNA'S INACCESSIBLE ISLAND CITY—

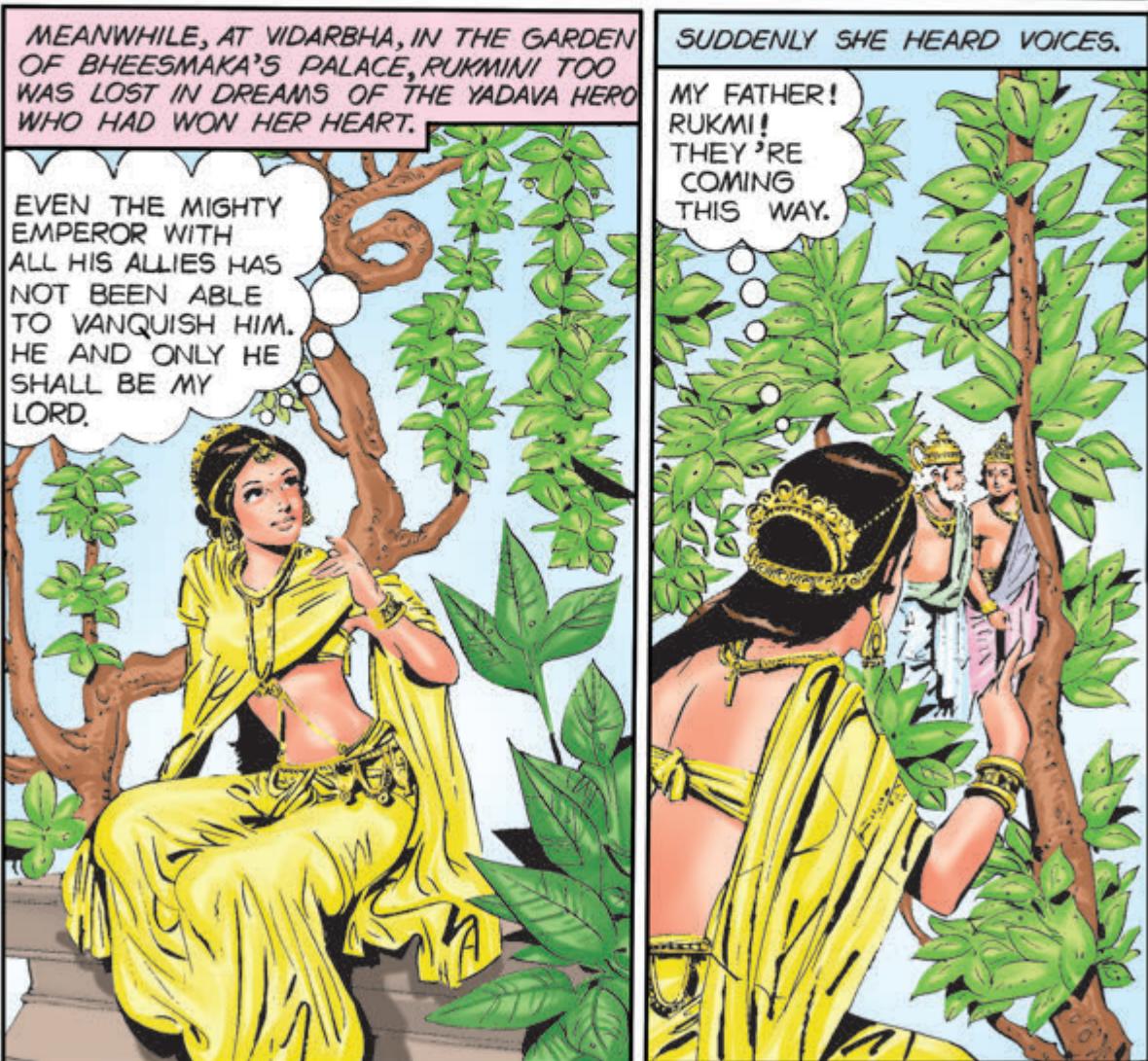


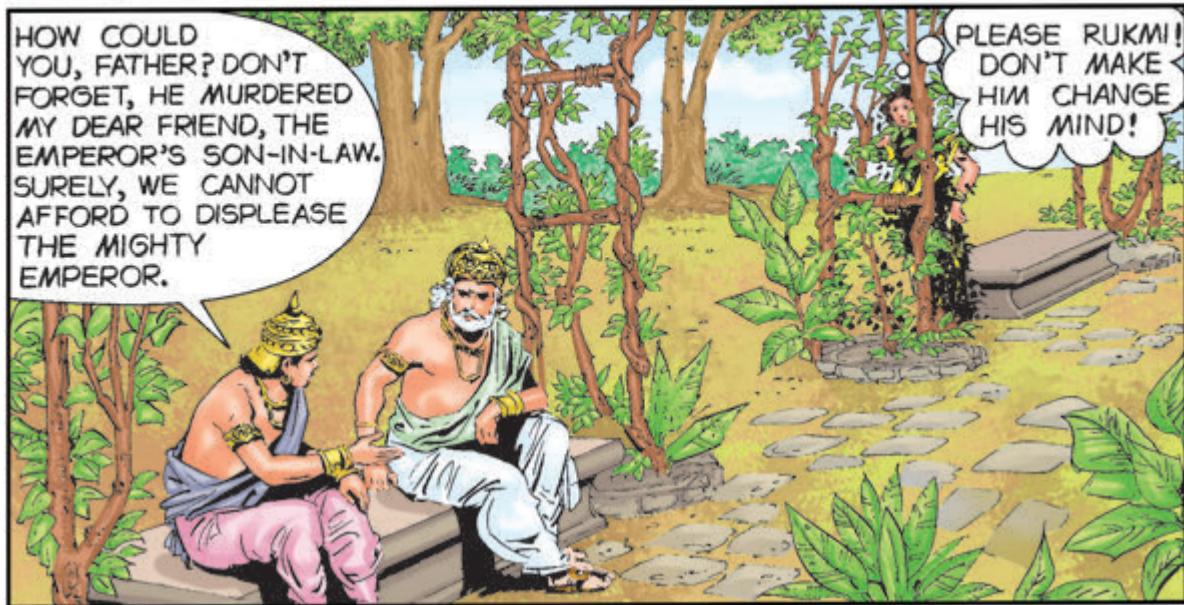
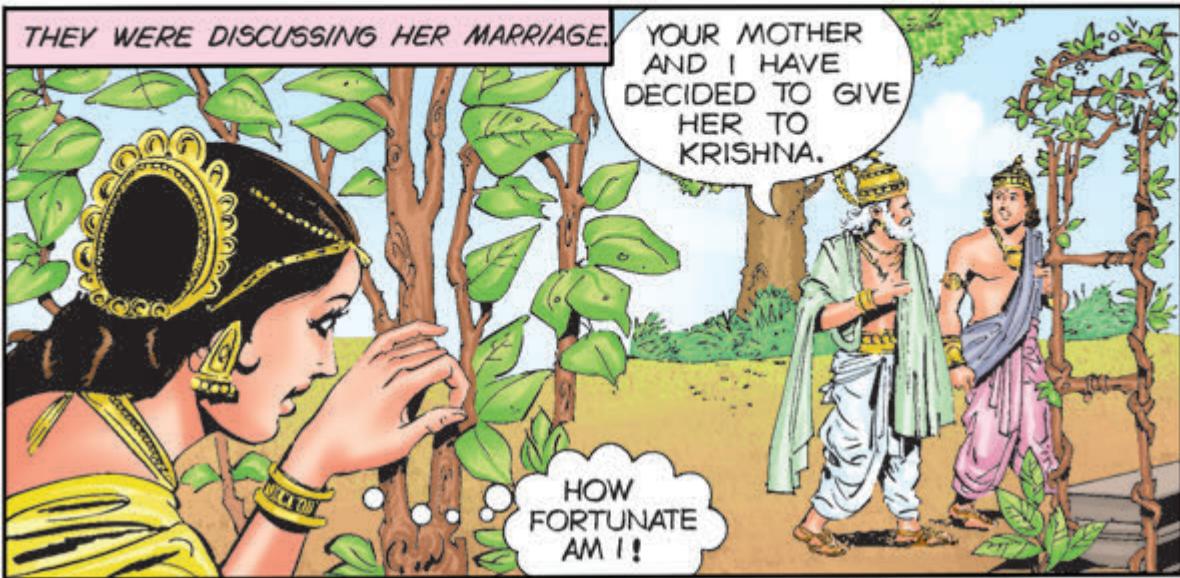
OUR SPIES SAY THAT JARASANDHA HAS DECIDED TO LIE LOW FOR A WHILE.

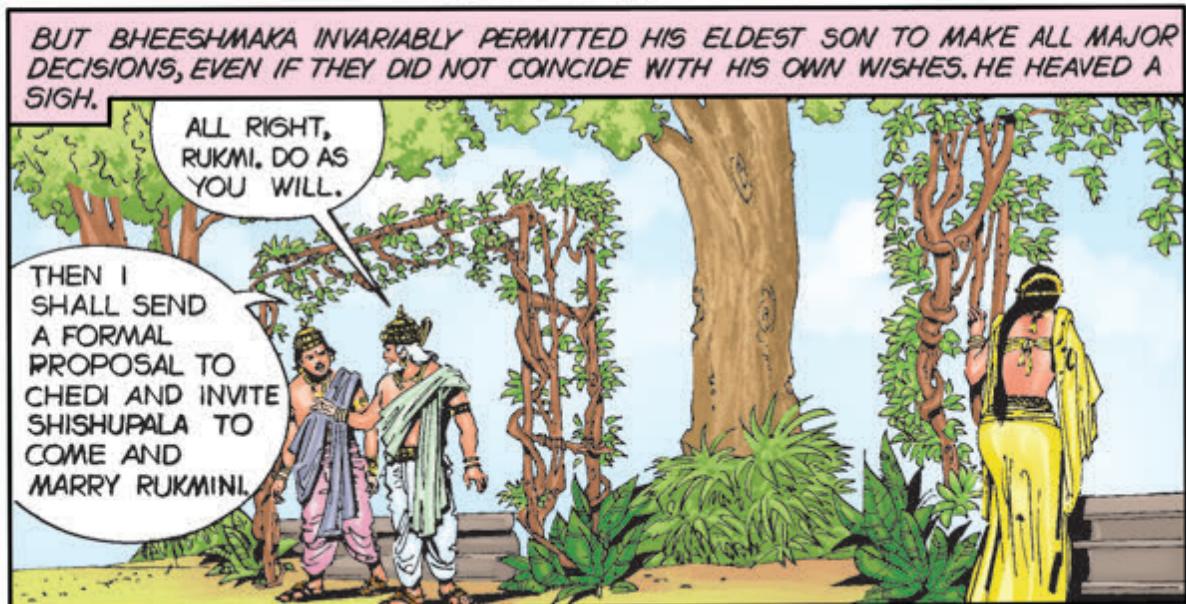
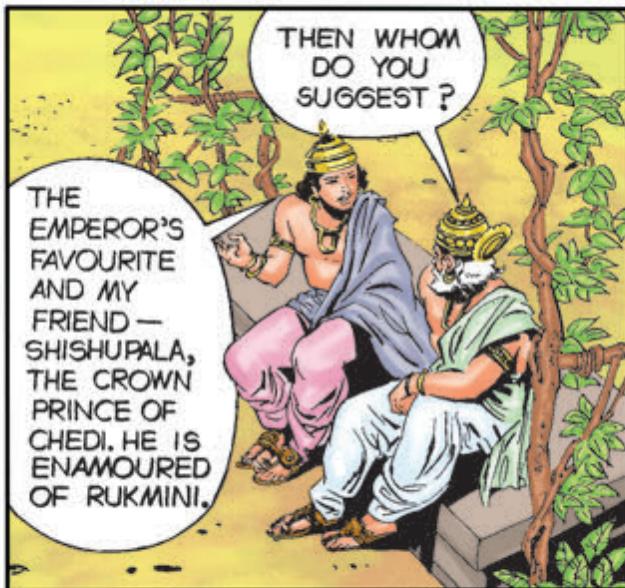
BALARAMA LOOKED AT KRISHNA WITH A MERRY TWINKLE IN HIS EYE.



NOW YOU'LL HAVE ALL THE LEISURE TO DREAM OF THE BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS OF VIDARBHA - THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER PRINCESS ON EARTH.







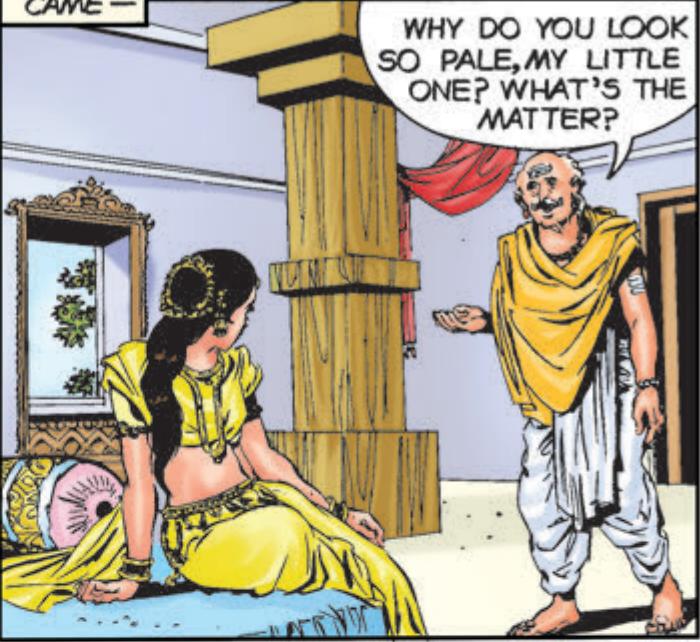
SUDDENLY AN IDEA OCCURRED TO HER.

WHY NOT! WHY
SHOULDN'T I?
AFTER ALL MY
PARENTS ARE
FOR IT.



SHE WENT INTO THE PALACE AND SENT FOR SUNANDA-A BRAHMAN WHOM SHE TRUSTED AND WHO WAS DEVOTED TO HER. WHEN HE CAME—

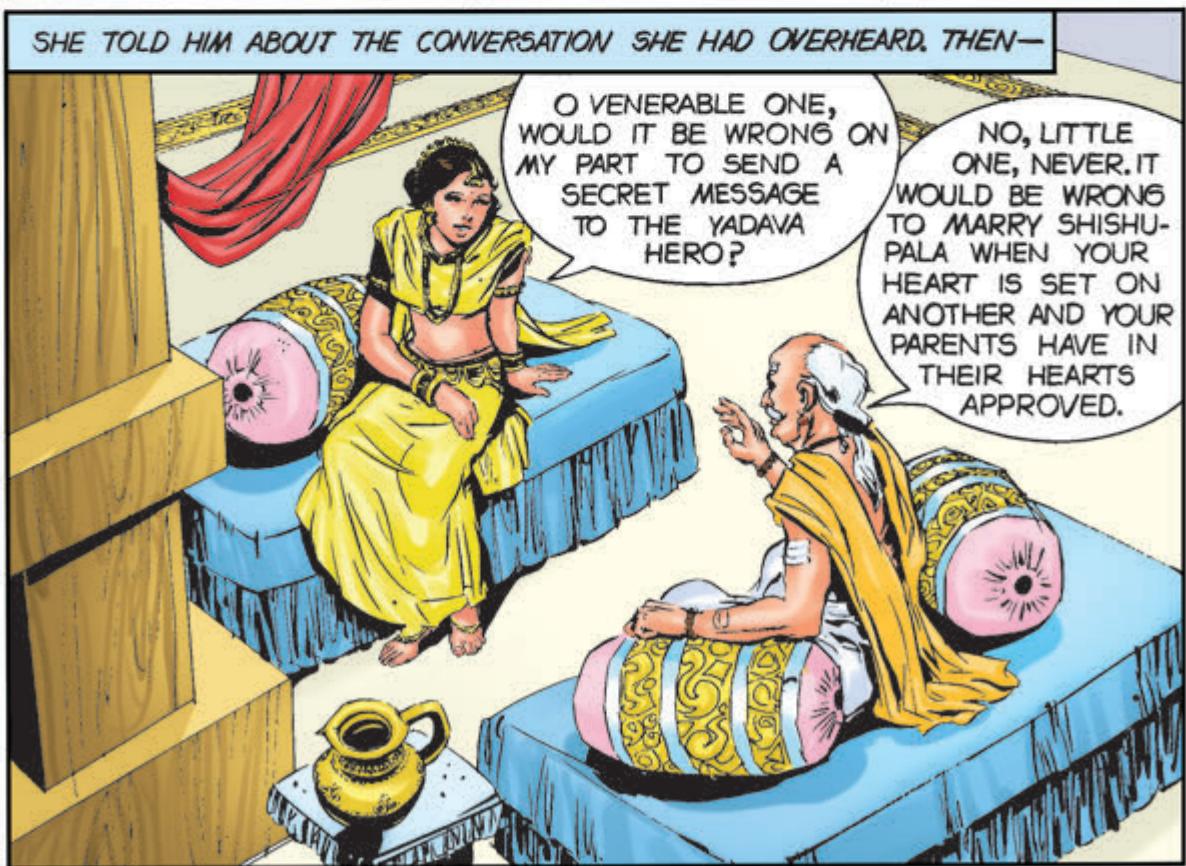
WHY DO YOU LOOK
SO PALE, MY LITTLE
ONE? WHAT'S THE
MATTER?

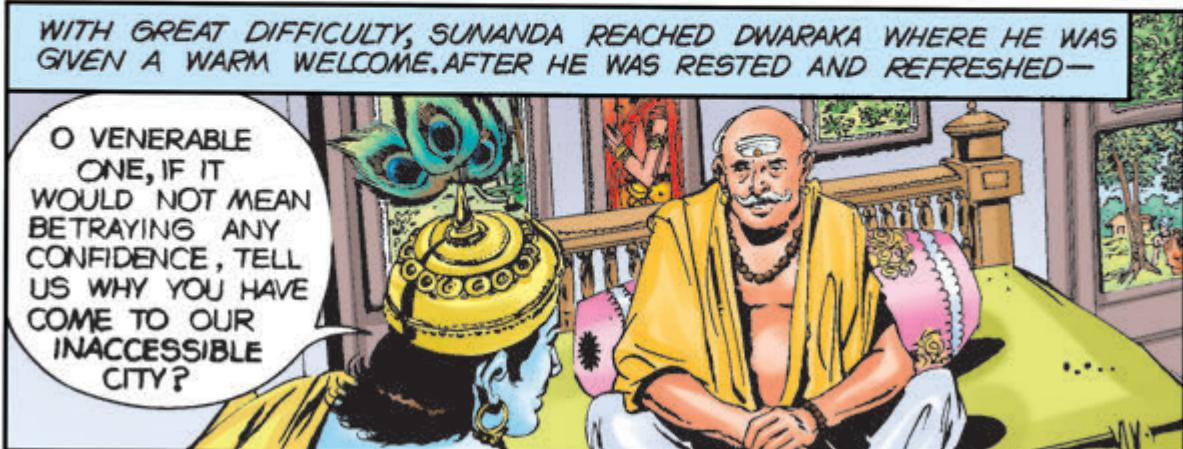
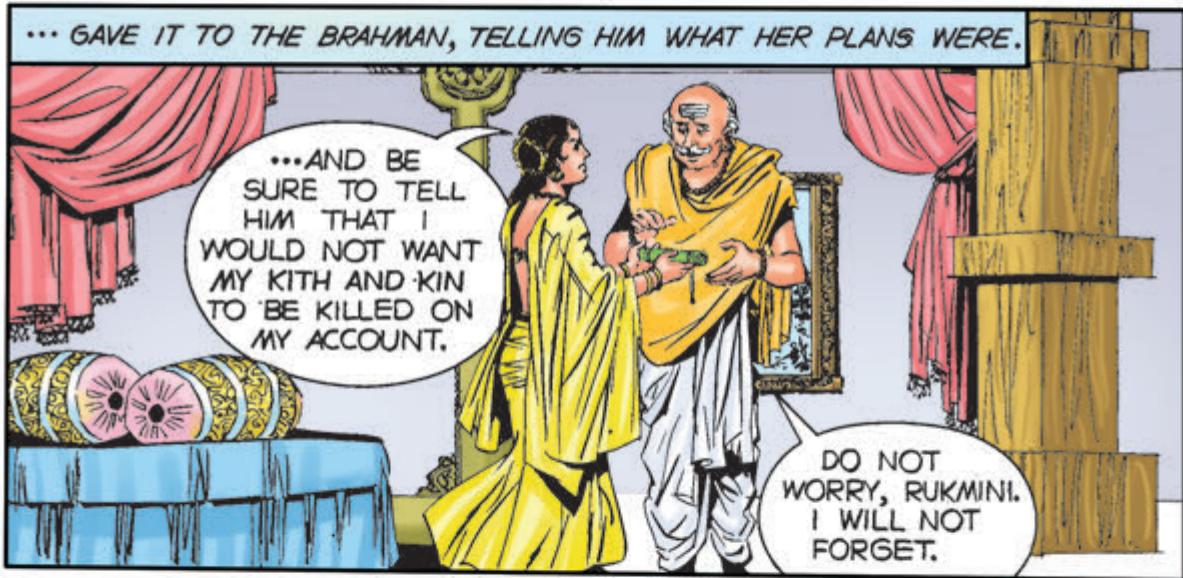


SHE TOLD HIM ABOUT THE CONVERSATION SHE HAD OVERHEARD. THEN—

O VENERABLE ONE,
WOULD IT BE WRONG ON
MY PART TO SEND A
SECRET MESSAGE
TO THE YADAVA
HERO?

NO, LITTLE
ONE, NEVER. IT
WOULD BE WRONG
TO MARRY SHISHU-
PALA WHEN YOUR
HEART IS SET ON
ANOTHER AND YOUR
PARENTS HAVE IN
THEIR HEARTS
APPROVED.



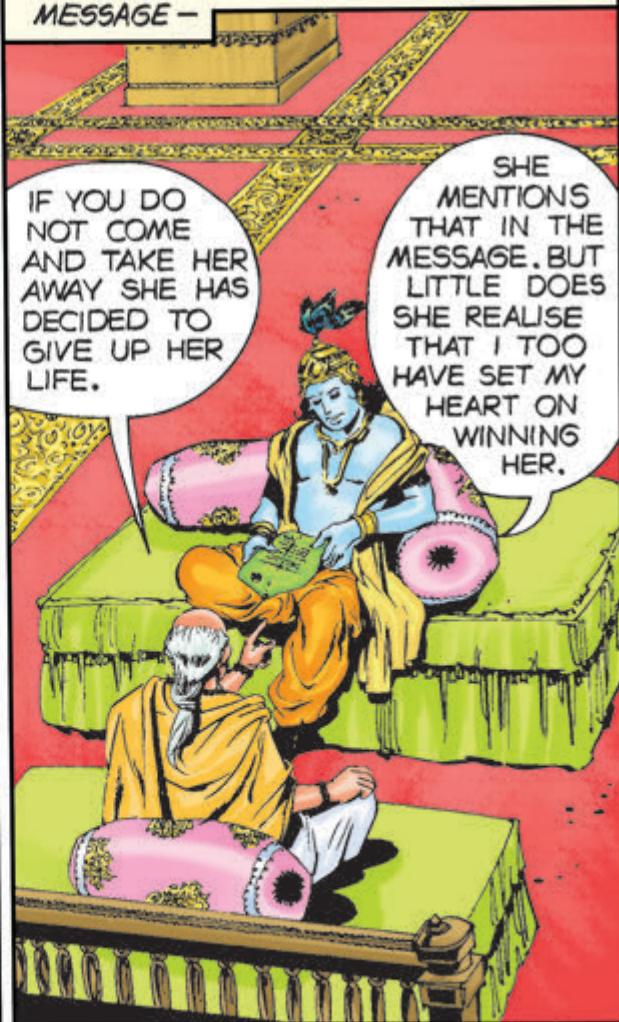


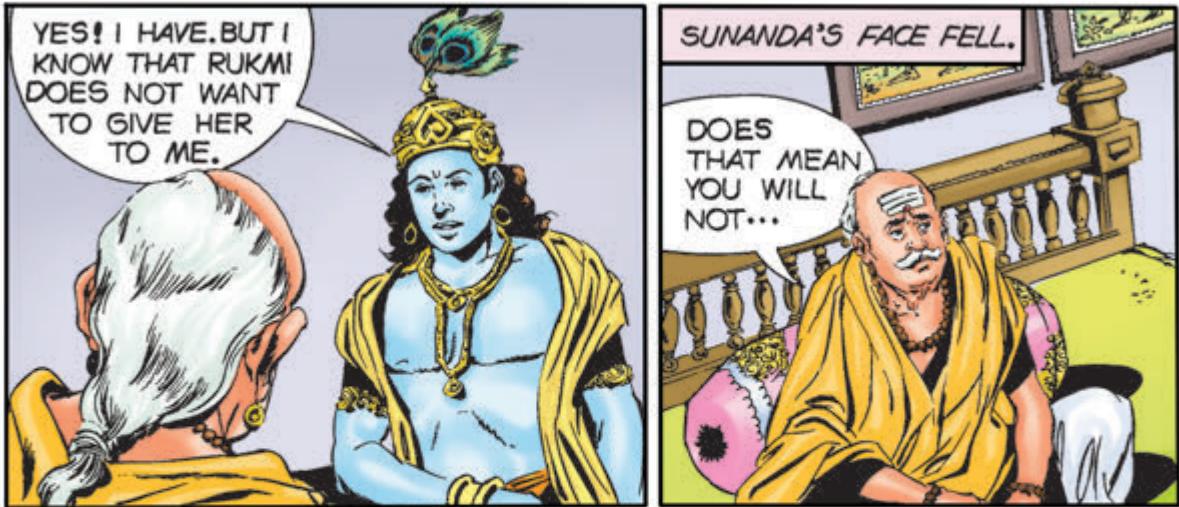


SUNANDA TOLD KRISHNA ABOUT THE CONVERSATION THAT RUKMINI HAD OVERHEARD. THEN HE GAVE KRISHNA, RUKMINI'S MESSAGE.



WHEN KRISHNA FINISHED READING THE MESSAGE -





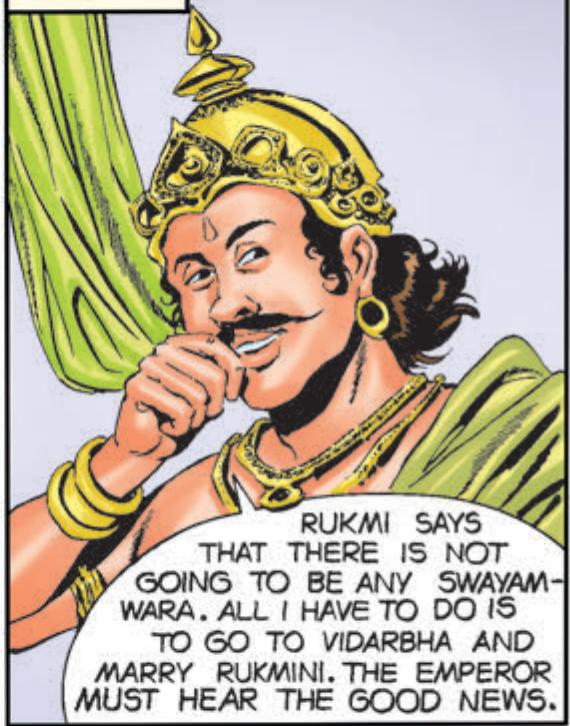
* RUKMINI IS BELIEVED TO BE THE GODDESS LAXMI REBORN ON EARTH.

KRISHNA SENT FOR HIS CHARIOTEER. WHEN HE CAME—

GET MY CHARIOT READY AT ONCE, DARUKA. AND TELL BALARAMA THAT I SHALL BE LEAVING FOR VIDARBHA IMMEDIATELY.



MEANWHILE, RUKMI'S FORMAL PROPOSAL AND INVITATION HAD REACHED SHISHUPALA. HE WAS JUBILANT.



RUKMI SAYS THAT THERE IS NOT GOING TO BE ANY SWAYAMWARA. ALL I HAVE TO DO IS TO GO TO VIDARBHA AND MARRY RUKMINI. THE EMPEROR MUST HEAR THE GOOD NEWS.

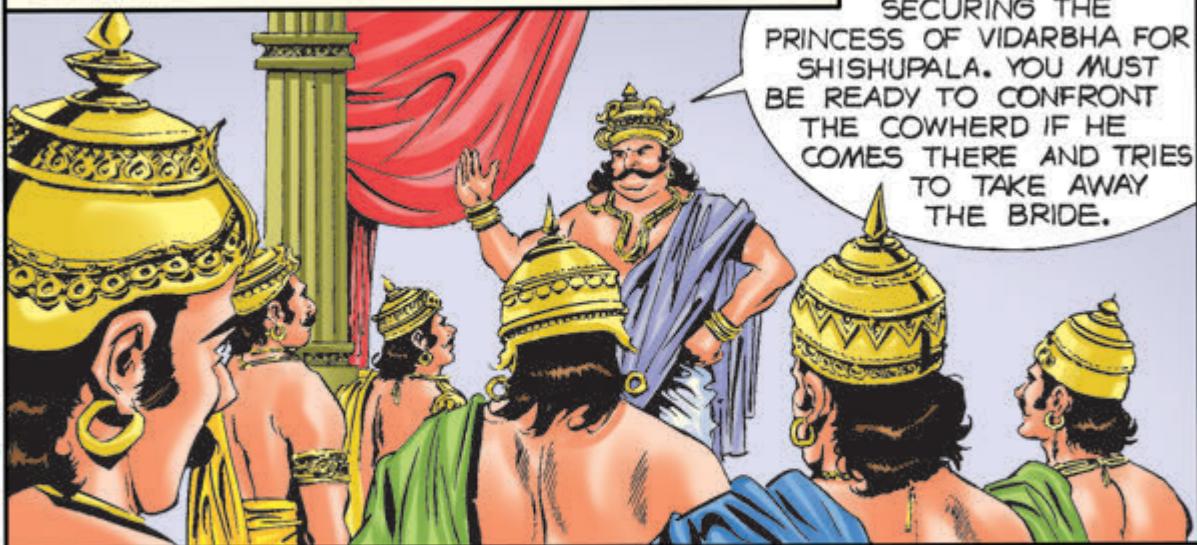
BUT JARASANDHA WAS NOT AS CONFIDENT.



IT'S NOT AS EASY AS YOU THINK. I DO NOT TRUST THAT VILE COWHERD. HE IS SURE TO HEAR OF THE NEWS AND SNATCH THE BRIDE AWAY. WE WILL HAVE TO BE PREPARED.

JARASANDHA SENT FOR ALL HIS VASSALS AND ALLIES.

I AM BENT ON SECURING THE PRINCESS OF VIDARBHA FOR SHISHUPALA. YOU MUST BE READY TO CONFRONT THE COWHERD IF HE COMES THERE AND TRIES TO TAKE AWAY THE BRIDE.



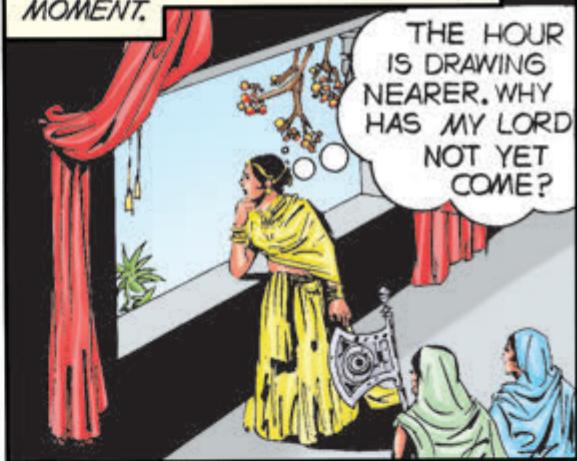
MEANWHILE, AS SOON AS KRISHNA HAD LEFT DWARAKA, ONE OF BALARAMA'S SPIES CAME TO HIM.

LORD, THE EMPEROR HAS INFORMED ALL HIS ALLIES TO MARCH TO VIDARBHA. HE EXPECTS TROUBLE FROM US.



AT VIDARBHA, RUKMINI'S ANXIETY, INCREASED WITH EACH PASSING MOMENT.

THE HOUR IS DRAWING NEARER. WHY HAS MY LORD NOT YET COME?



AS SHE LOOKED OUT OF THE WINDOW FOR THE HUNDREDTH TIME, SHE SAW SUNANDA ENTER THE PALACE.



SHE TURNED TO HER MAIDS.



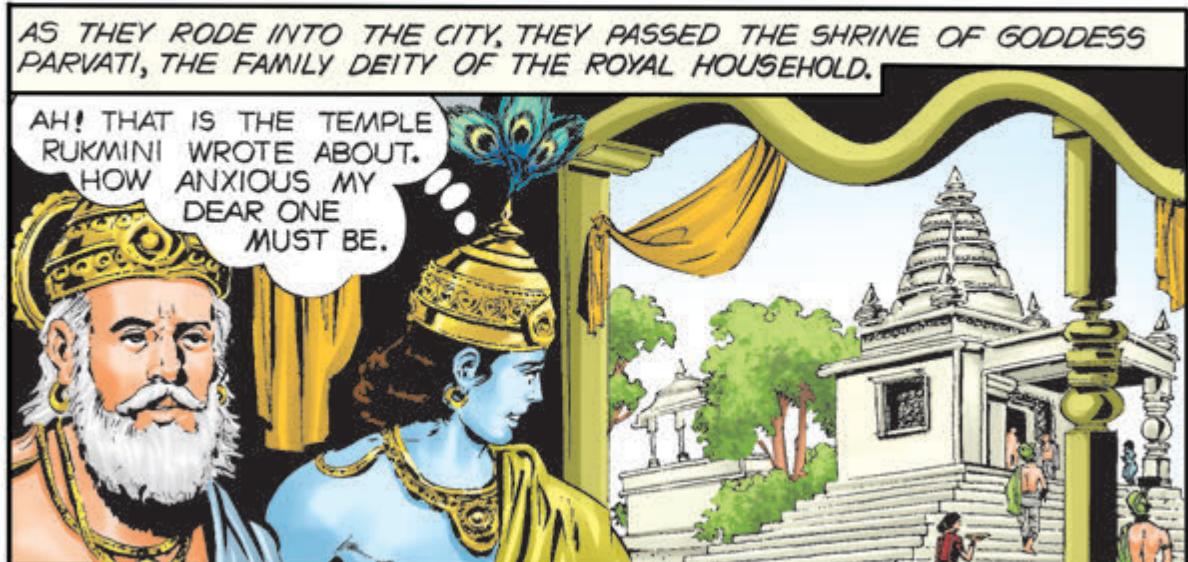
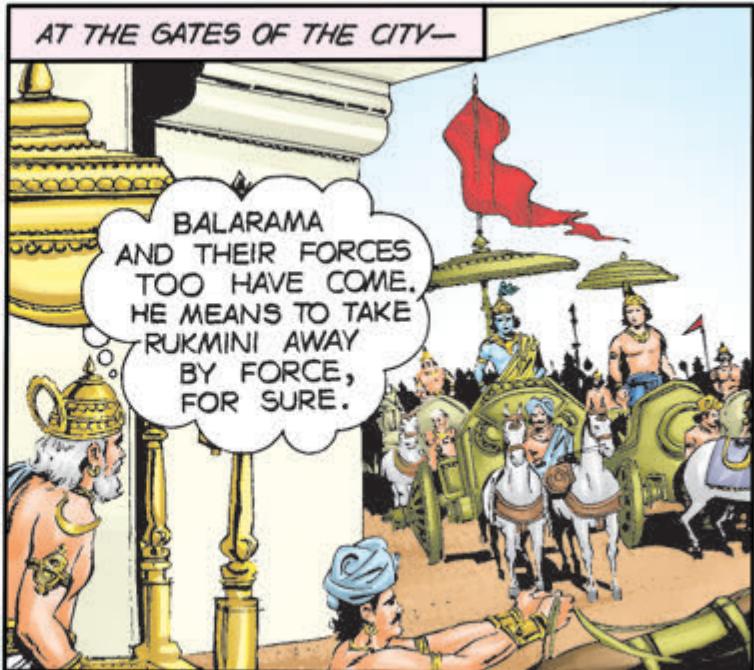
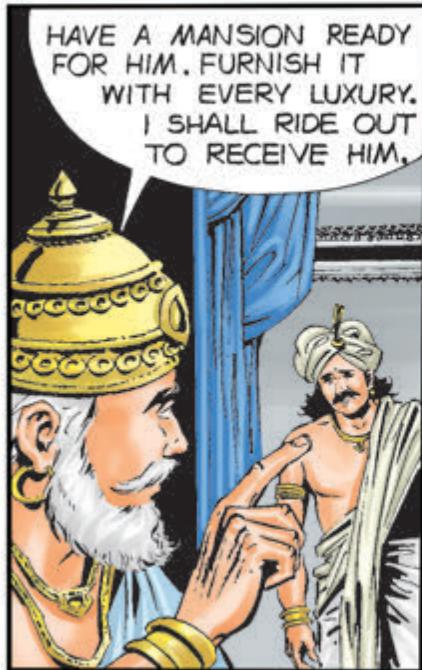
WHEN THEY LEFT, SHE RAN TO THE DOOR OF THE ROOM AND STOOD WAITING FOR THE BRAHMAN.



NEWS OF KRISHNA'S ARRIVAL REACHED BHEESHMAKA, TOO.

KRISHNA HAS ARRIVED.
HE HAS COME TO
WITNESS THE
WEDDING OF THE
PRINCESS.





BALARAMA WAS CONCERNED ABOUT OTHER THINGS. HE TURNED TO BHEESMAKA.

THE EMPEROR AND HIS MEN HAVE FLOODED THE CITY.

SHISHUPALA IS THE EMPEROR'S FAVOURITE. AND THE EMPEROR HAS MANY ALLIES.

THIS SHOULD HELP YOU PLAN YOUR STRATEGY.

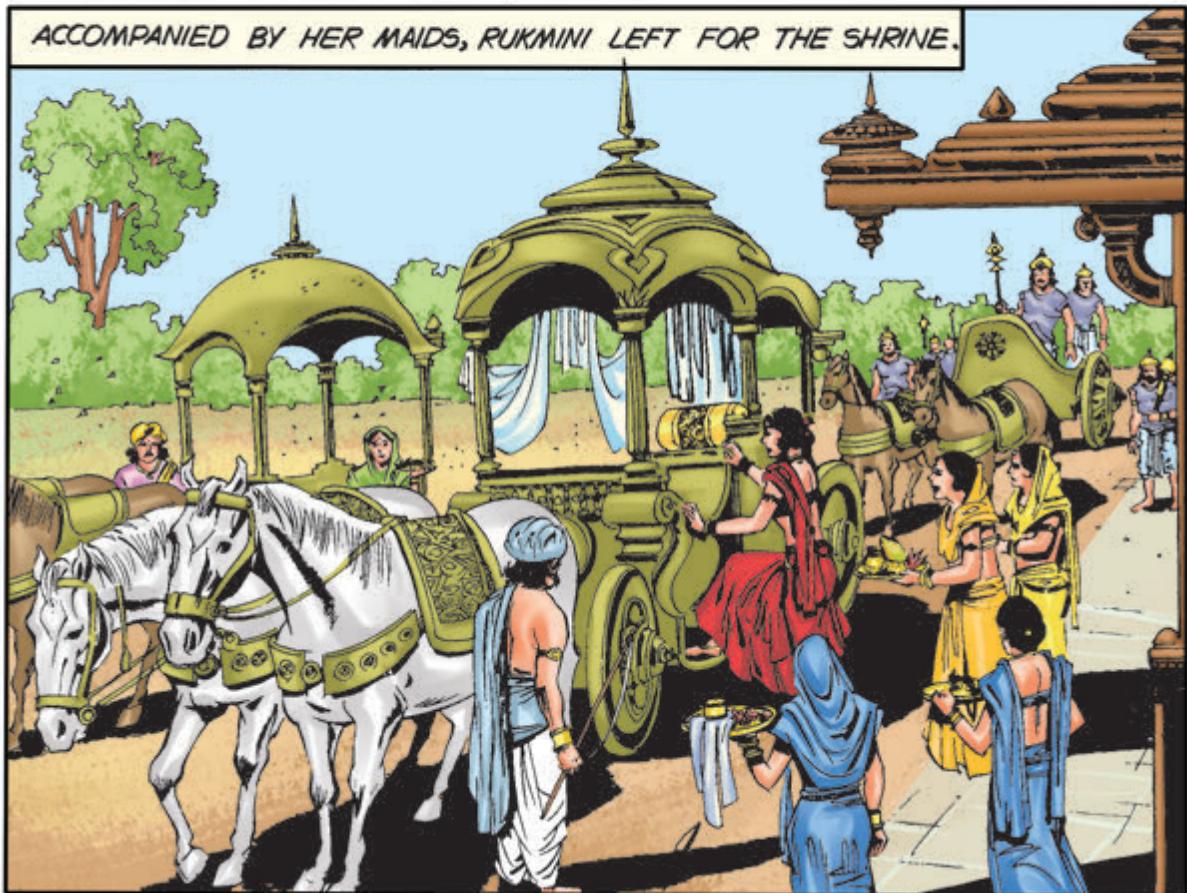
MEANWHILE AT THE PALACE—

RUKMINI, YOUR CHARIOT HAS ARRIVED. ARE YOU READY?

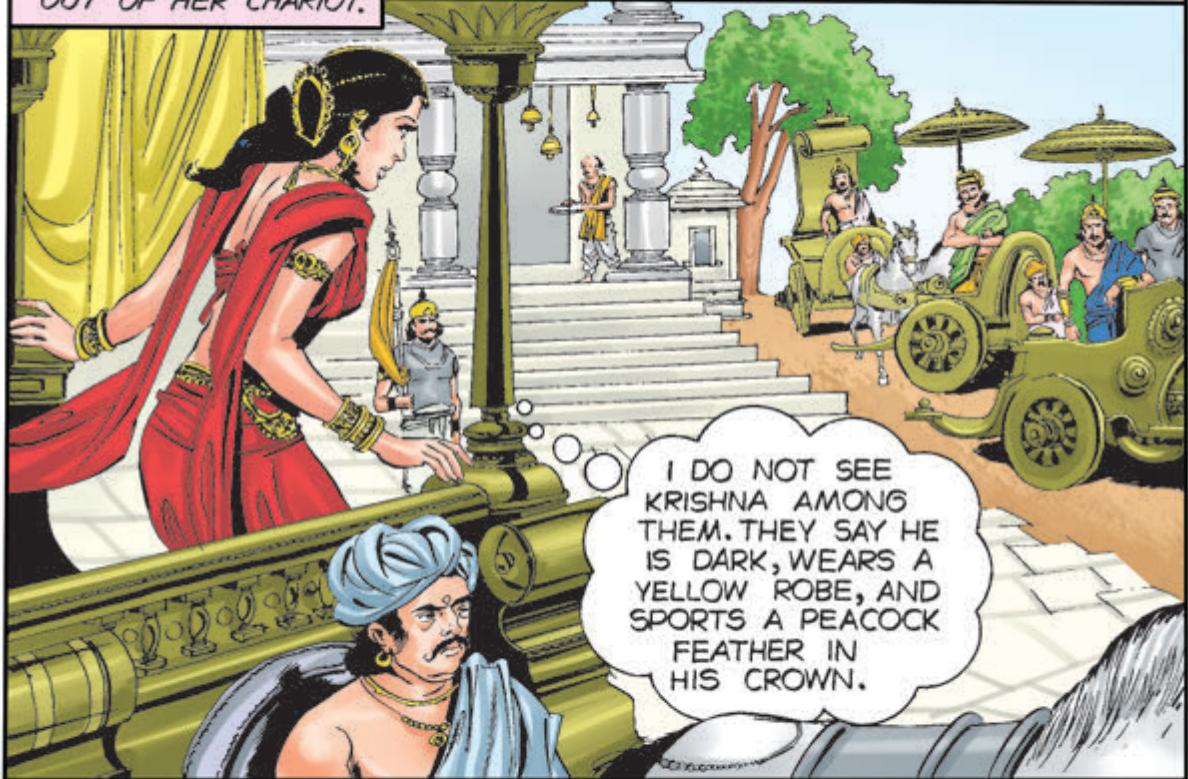
I AM. LET US LEAVE.



ACCOMPANIED BY HER MAIDS, RUKMINI LEFT FOR THE SHRINE.



WHEN THEY REACHED THE GATES OF THE TEMPLE COURTYARD, SHE STEPPED OUT OF HER CHARIOT.



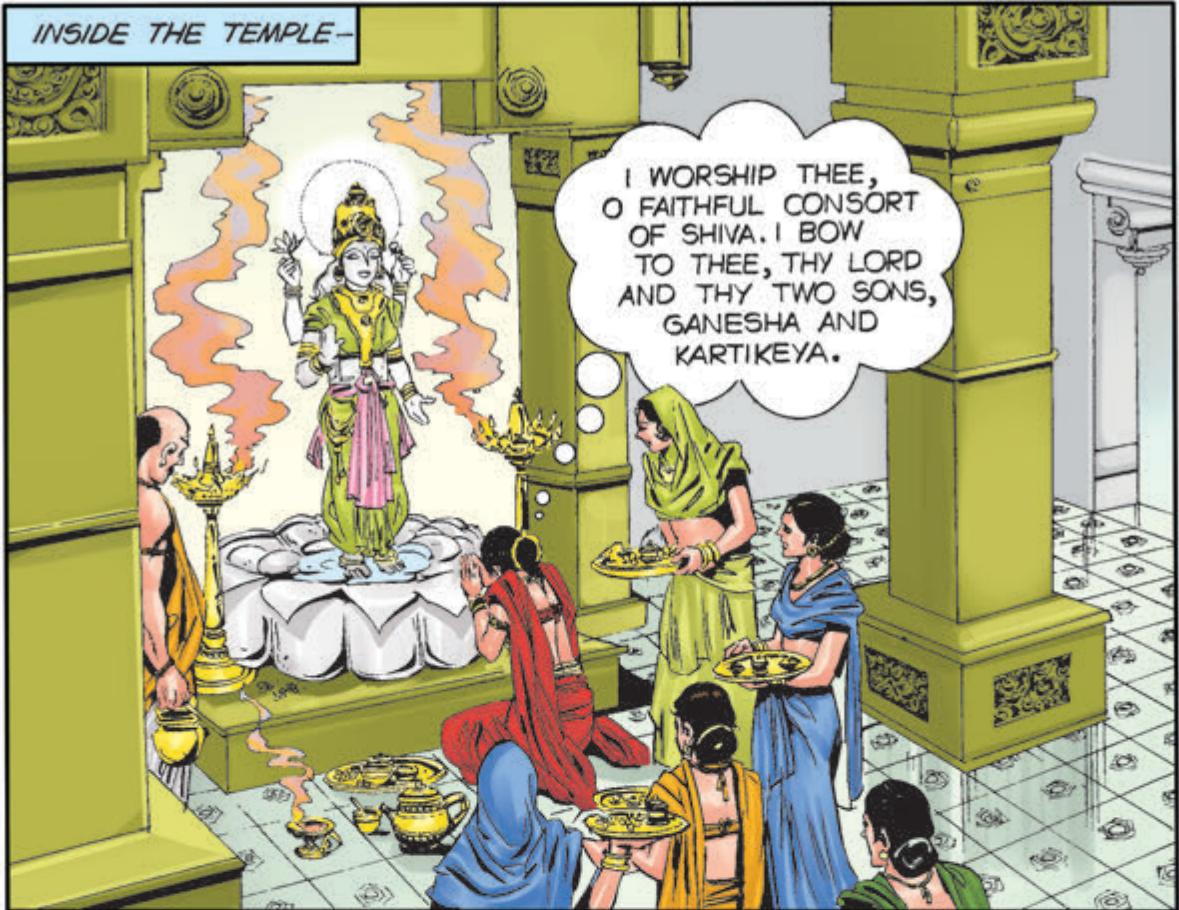
AS SHE WALKED TO THE TEMPLE, A MYRIAD EYES FOLLOWED HER EVERY MOVEMENT, DRINKING IN HER BEAUTY.



* LAXMI

INSIDE THE TEMPLE -

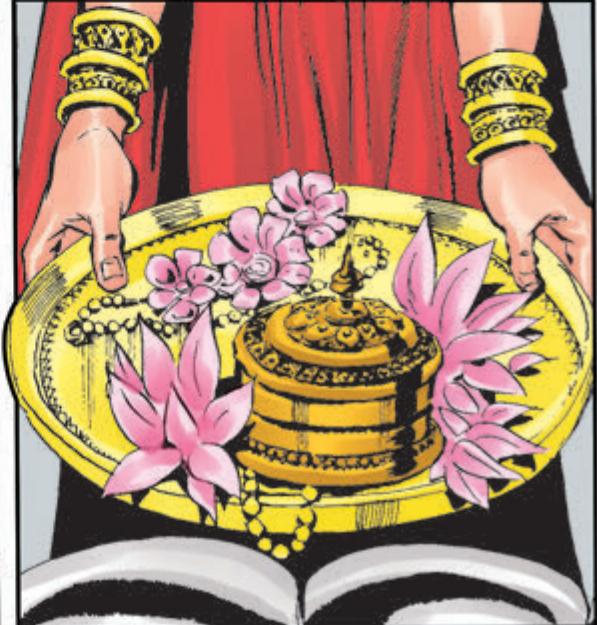
I WORSHIP THEE,
O FAITHFUL CONSORT
OF SHIVA. I BOW
TO THEE, THY LORD
AND THY TWO SONS,
GANESHA AND
KARTIKEYA.



SHE WASHED THE GODDESS' FEET
AND...



...PLACED OFFERINGS BEFORE HER.



THEN, OVERCOME BY THE THOUGHT THAT FILLED HER BEING, SHE PLEADED WITH THE GODDESS.

O GODDESS,
PLEASE LET KRISHNA AND ONLY KRISHNA WIN AND WED ME.



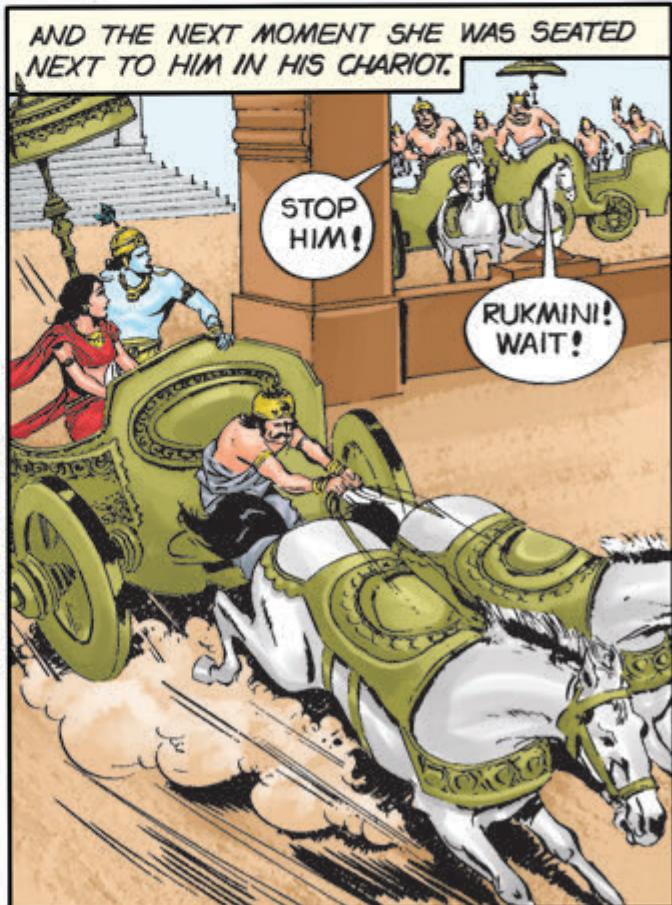
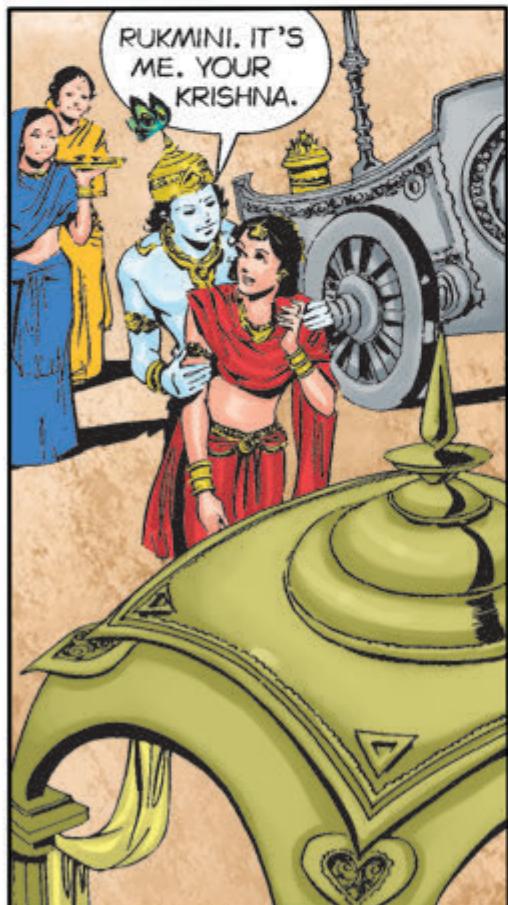
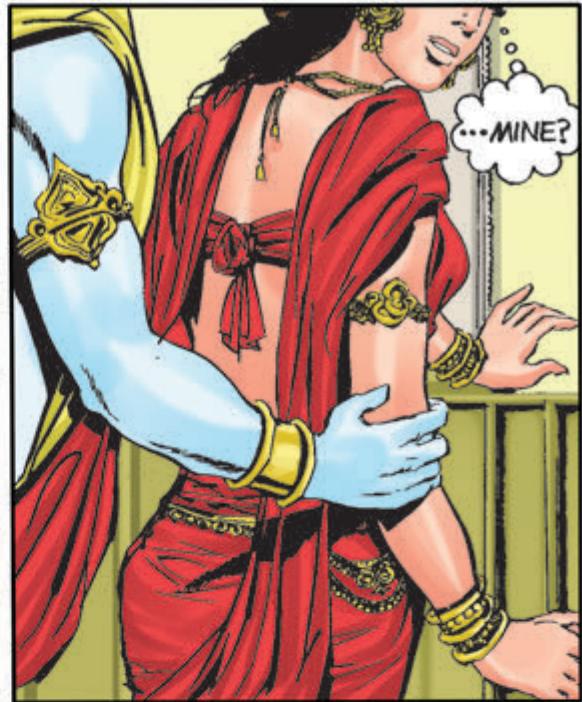
HER WORSHIP OVER, SHE CAME OUT OF THE TEMPLE.



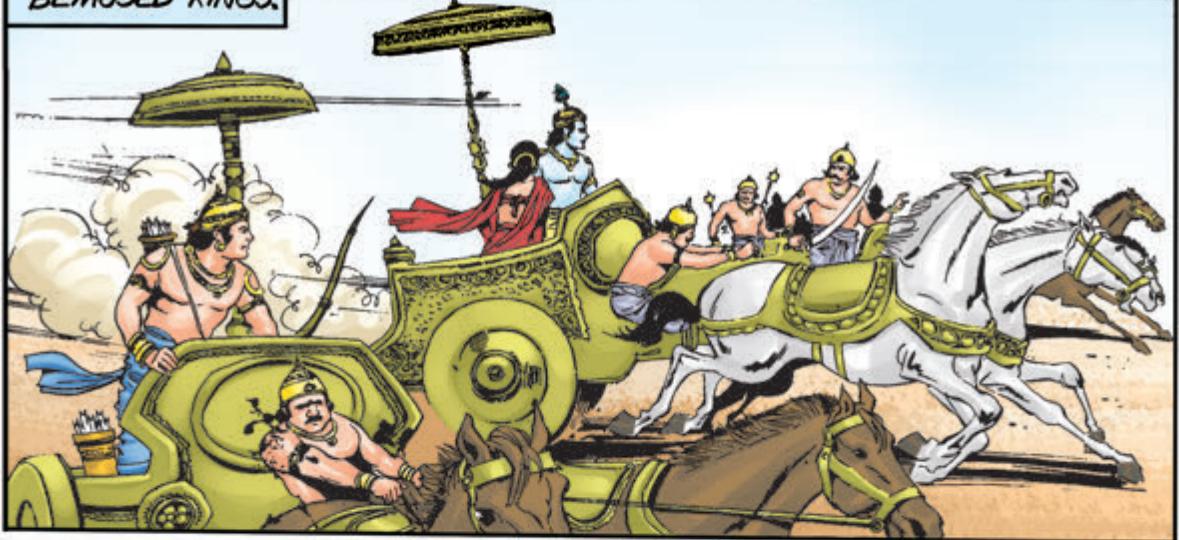
AS SHE WALKED TOWARDS THE GATE, HER EYES ANXIALLY SCANNED THE ASSEMBLY OF KINGS.

I DO NOT SEE HIM ANYWHERE.



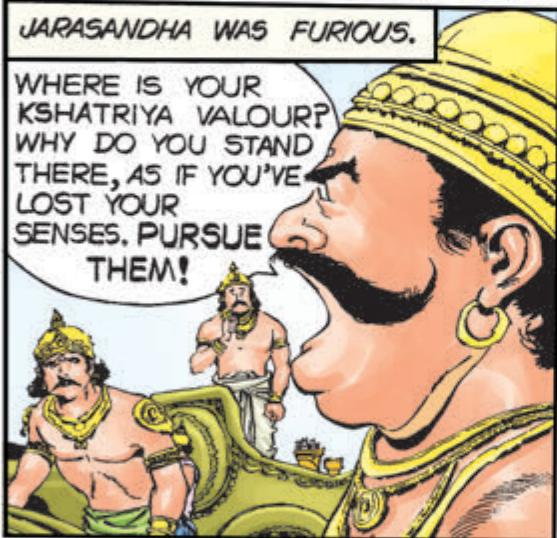


BUT KRISHNA'S CHARIOT SPED AWAY BLOWING DUST INTO THE EYES OF THE BEMUSED KINGS.

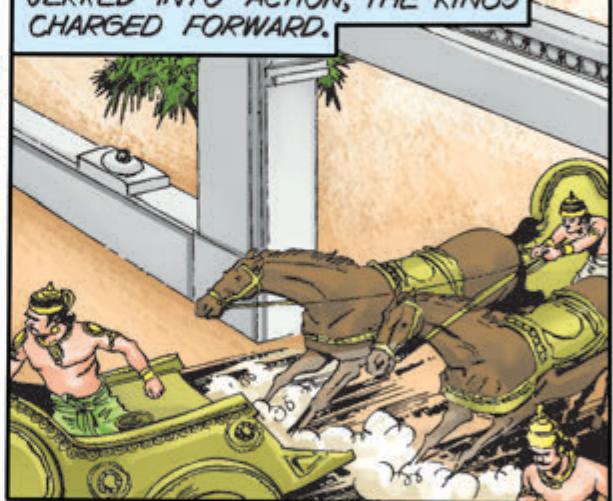


JARASANDHA WAS FURIOUS.

WHERE IS YOUR
KSHATRIYA VALOUR?
WHY DO YOU STAND
THERE, AS IF YOU'VE
LOST YOUR
SENSES. PURSUE
THEM!



JERKED INTO ACTION, THE KINGS
CHARGED FORWARD.



BALARAMA TURNED TO KRISHNA.

THEY'RE
GIVING CHASE.
YOU RIDE ON.
WE'LL FALL
BACK AND
DEAL WITH
THEM.



WHEN RUKMINI LOOKED UP IN TERROR AT KRISHNA, HE LAUGHED HEARTILY AND ALLAYED HER FEARS.

DON'T BE ALARMED. OUR ARMIES WILL SOON ROUT THE ENEMY. BALARAMA WILL NOT LOSE HIS DEAR SISTER-IN-LAW SO EASILY.



HE WAS RIGHT.

CHASE THE JACKALS AWAY, MY MEN! SHOOT THEIR HORSES! DESTROY THEIR CHARIOTS!



WHILE BALARAMA WAS BUSY TACKLING JARASANDHA, SHISHUPALA AND THEIR Hordes, RUKMINI CHARGED AHEAD AFTER KRISHNA'S VANISHING CHARIOT.

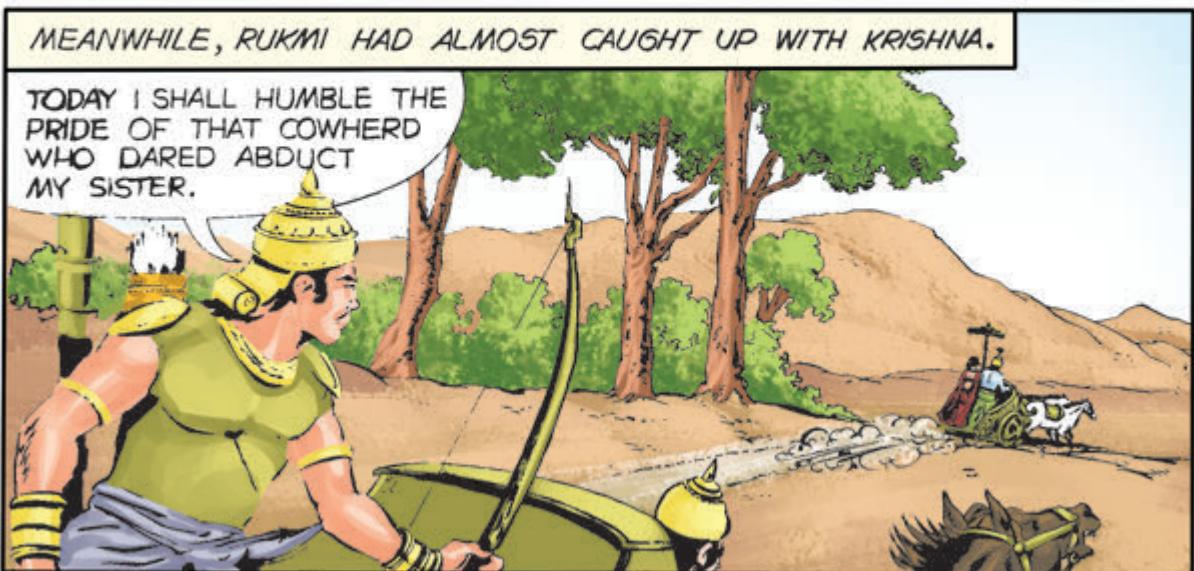
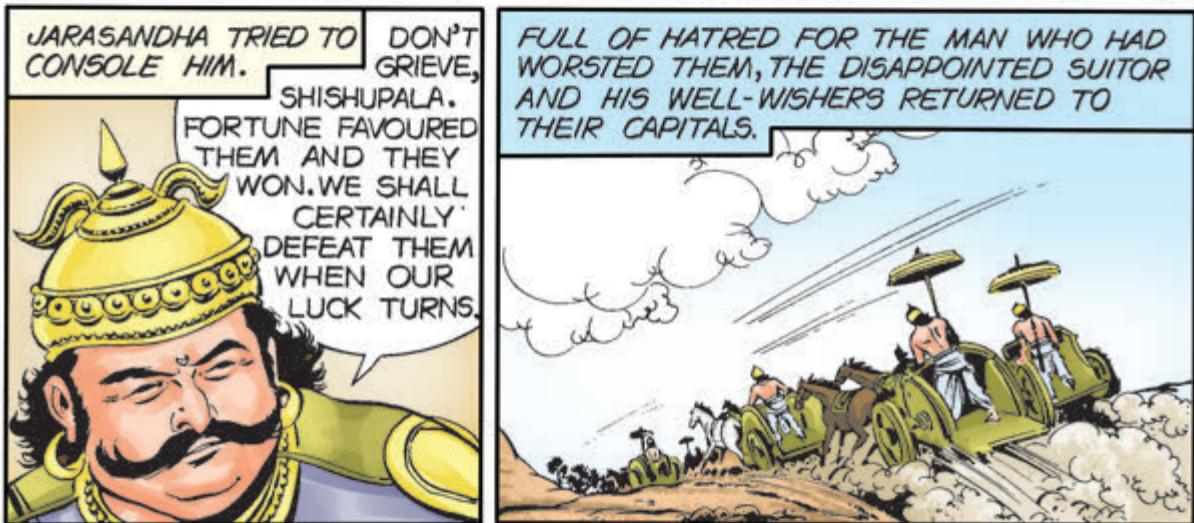
I WILL NOT RE-ENTER THE CAPITAL WITHOUT RUKMINI.

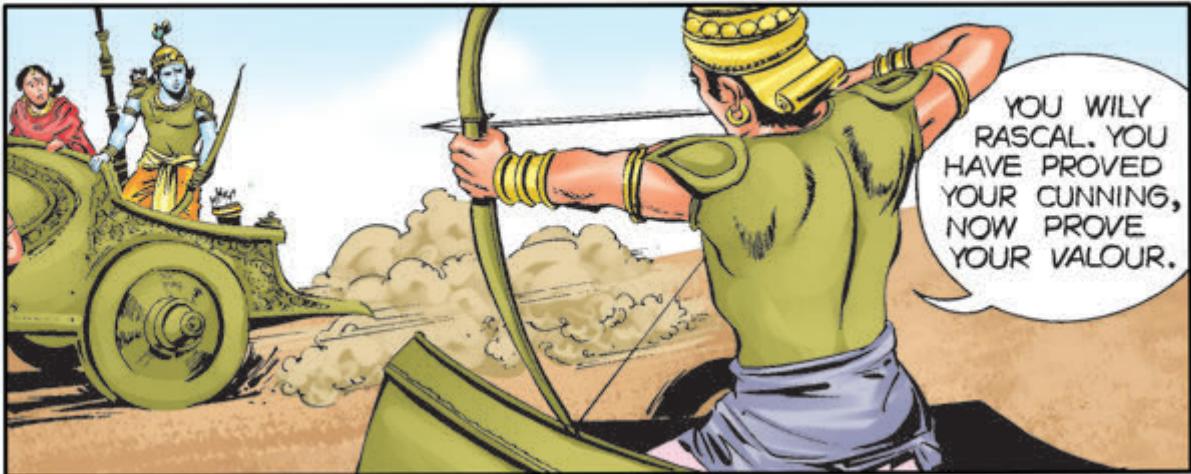
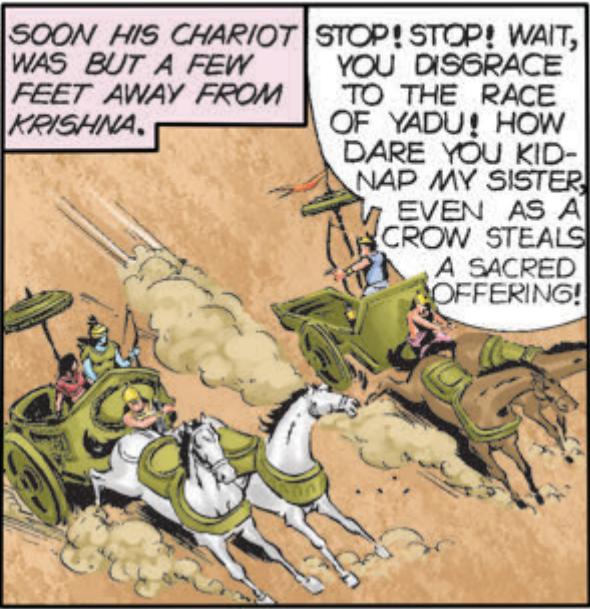


BALARAMA DID NOT TRY TO STOP HIM.

KRISHNA CAN DEAL WITH HIM, EVEN WITH RUKMINI IN HIS CHARIOT.







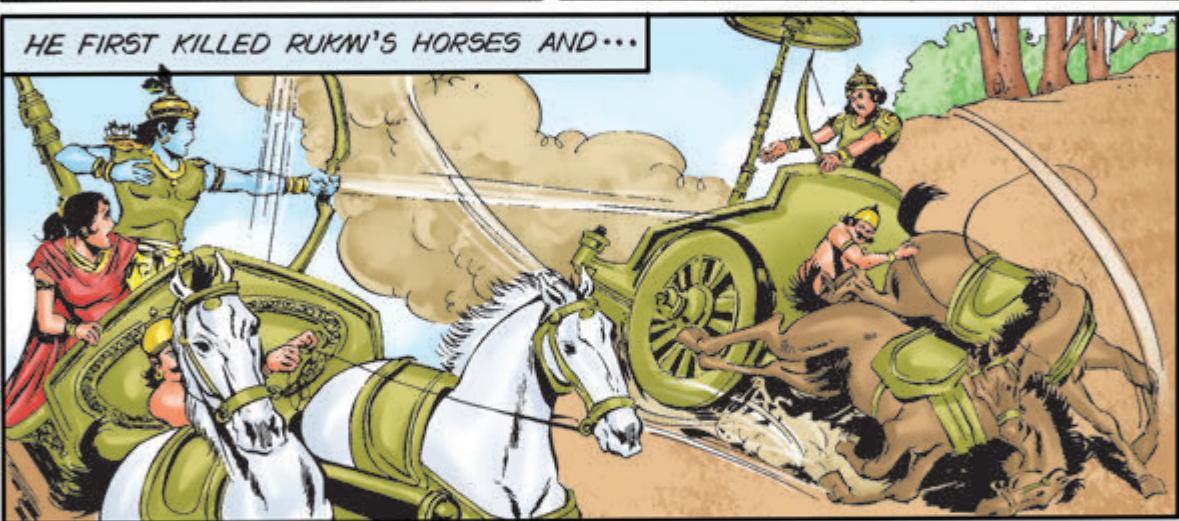
KRISHNA PULLED OUT AN ARROW
AND...



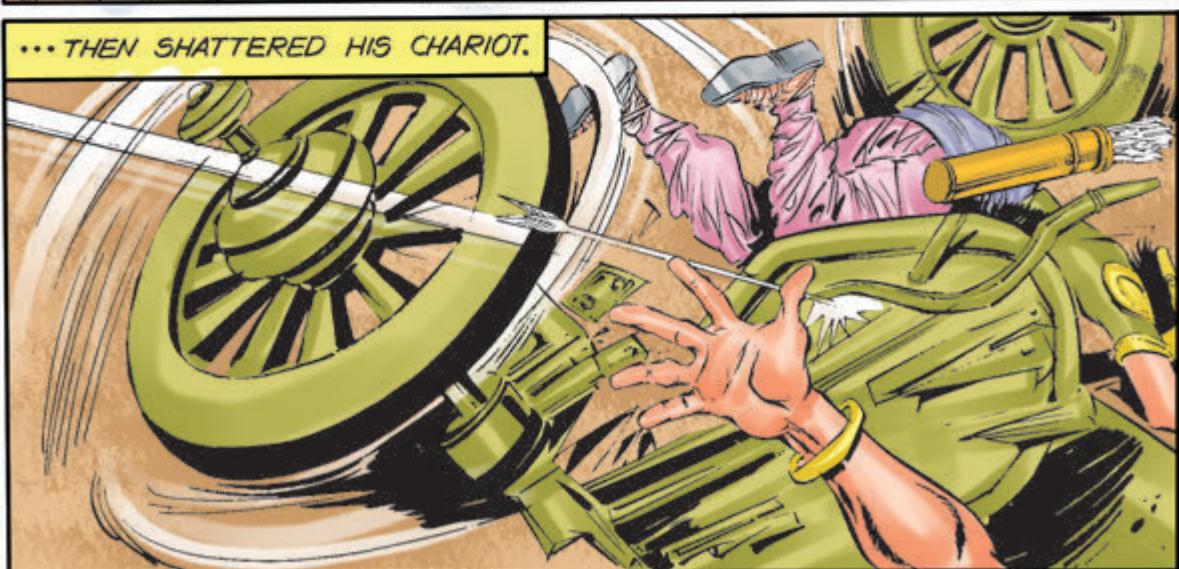
...LIFTED HIS BOW.

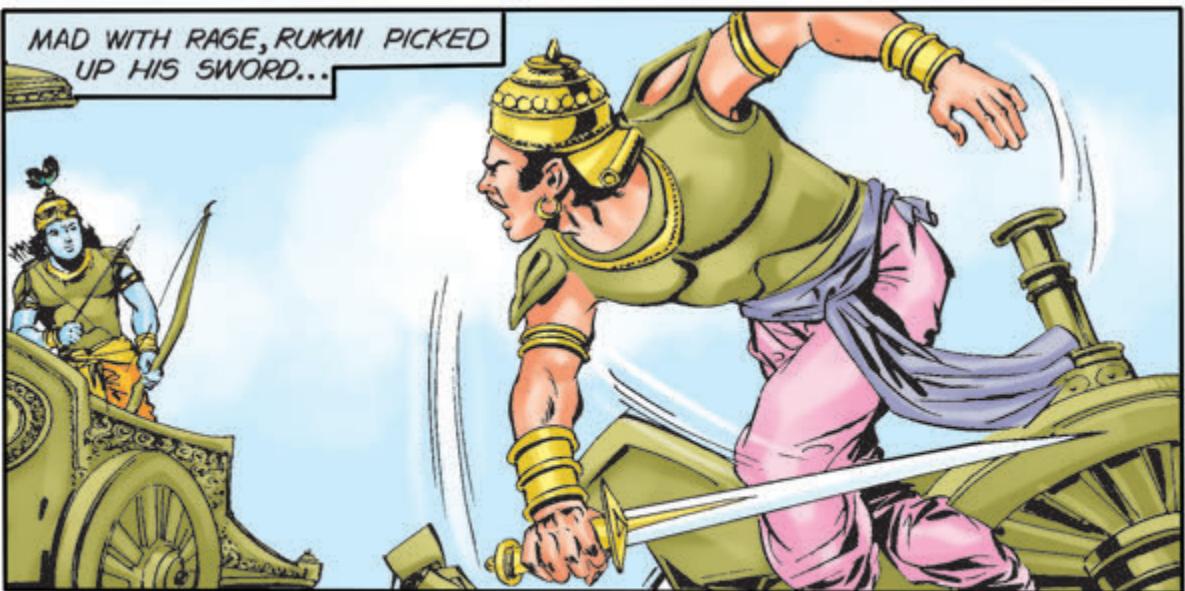
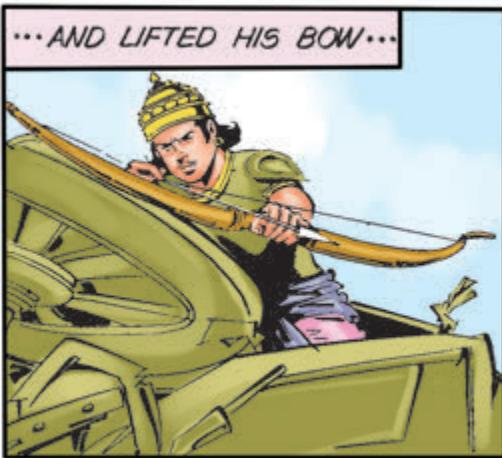
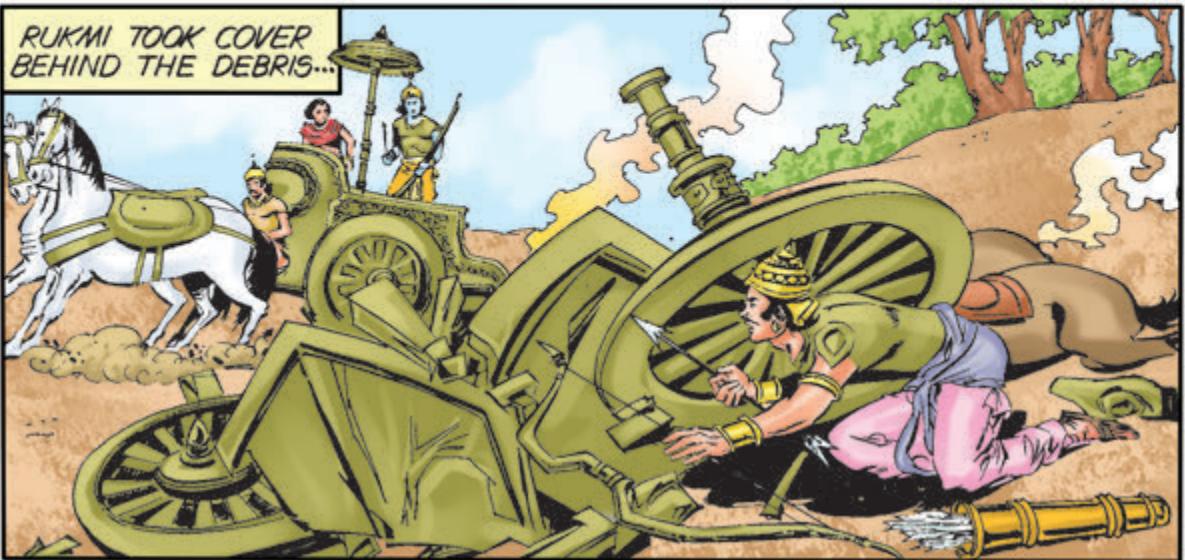


HE FIRST KILLED RUKMINI'S HORSES AND...



...THEN SHATTERED HIS CHARIOT.





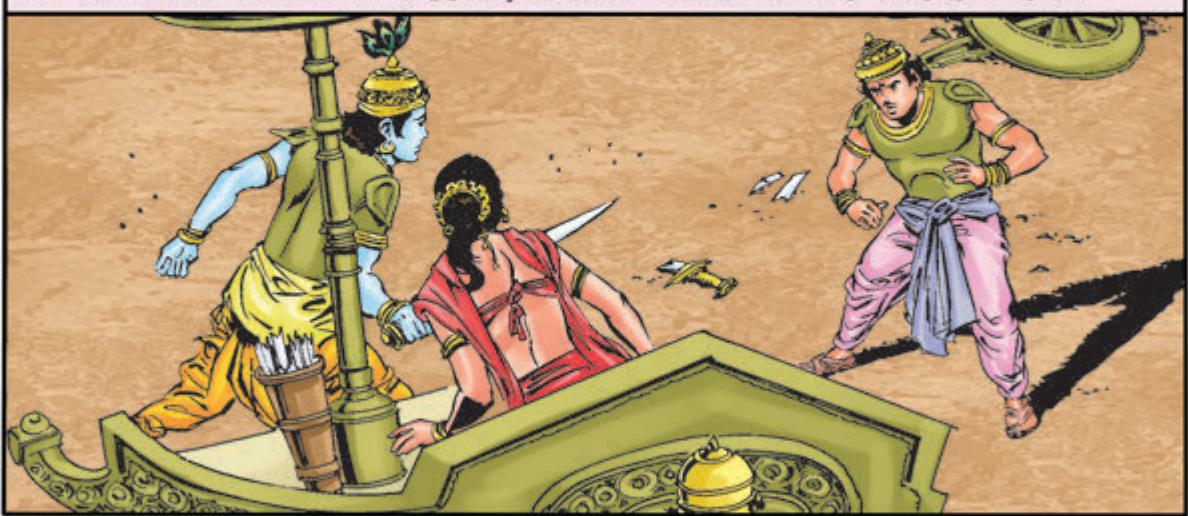
...AND RUSHED TOWARDS KRISHNA.



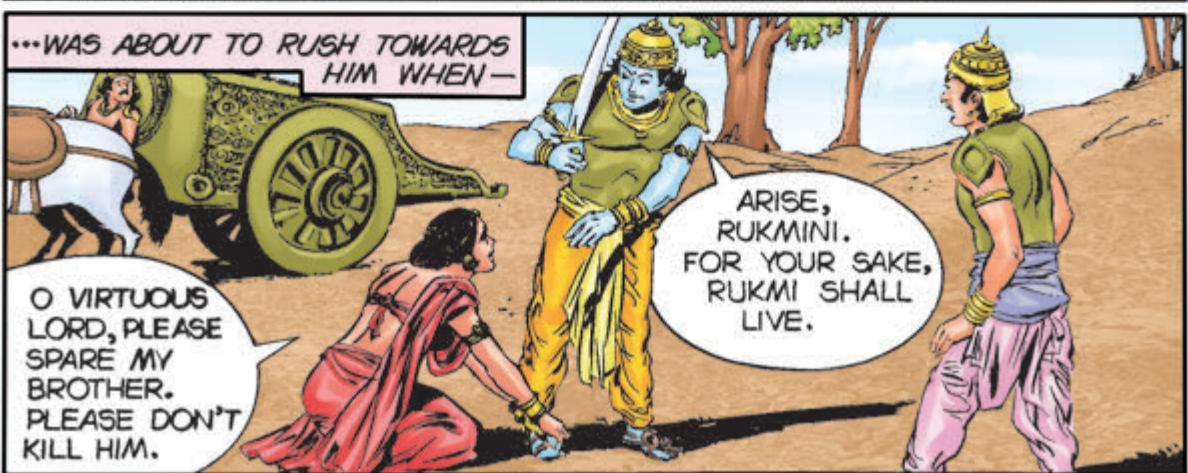
THE NEXT MOMENT, HOWEVER FOUND HIM HOLDING BUT THE HILT.

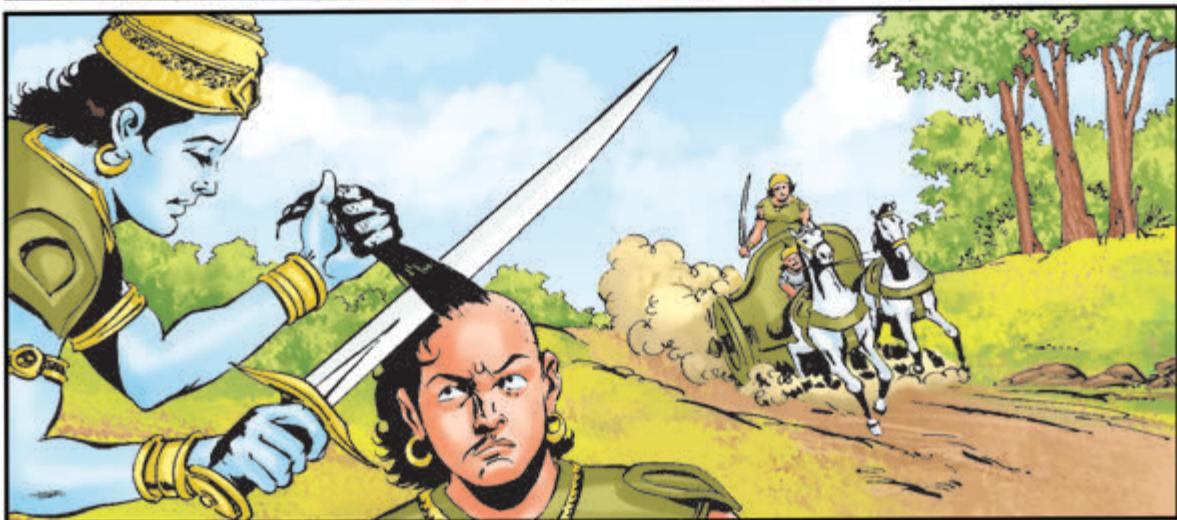
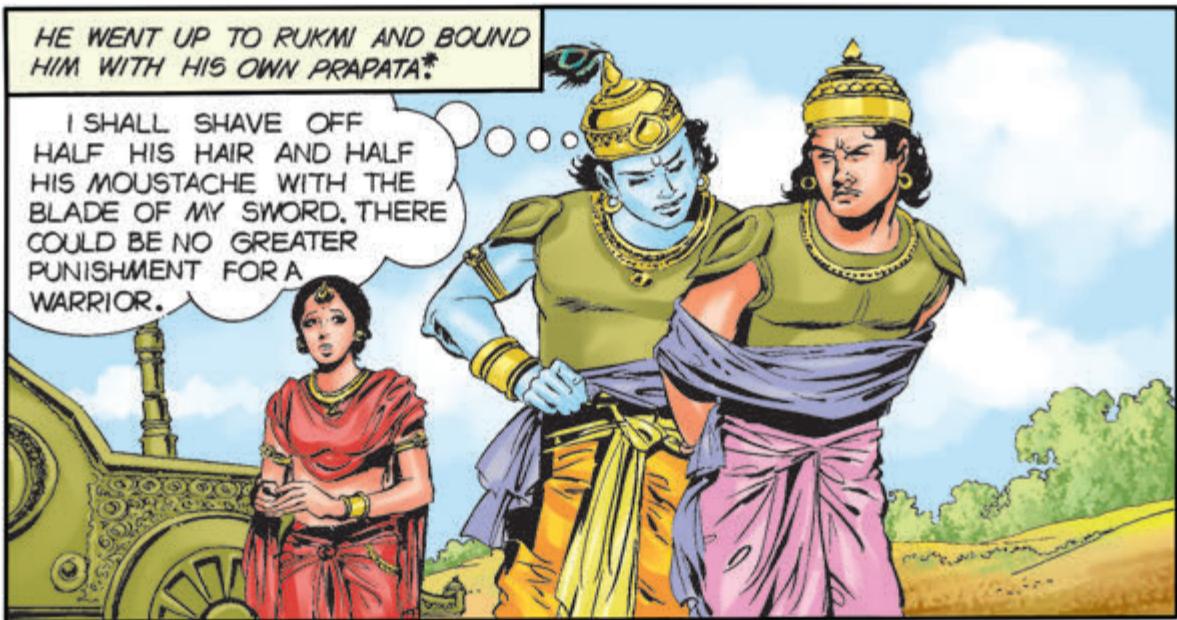


AS HE THREW IT AWAY IN DISGUST, KRISHNA PICKED UP HIS SWORD AND ...

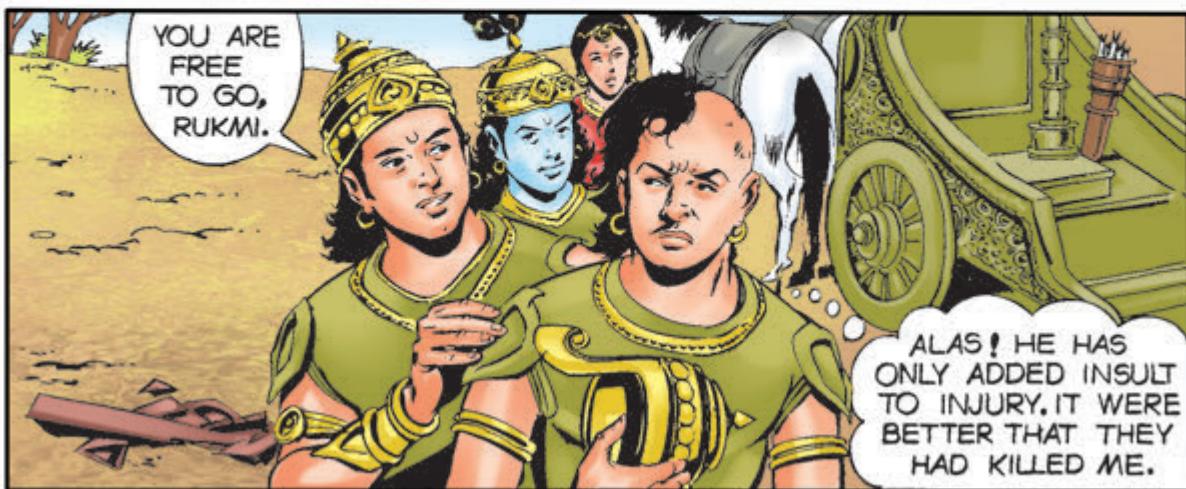
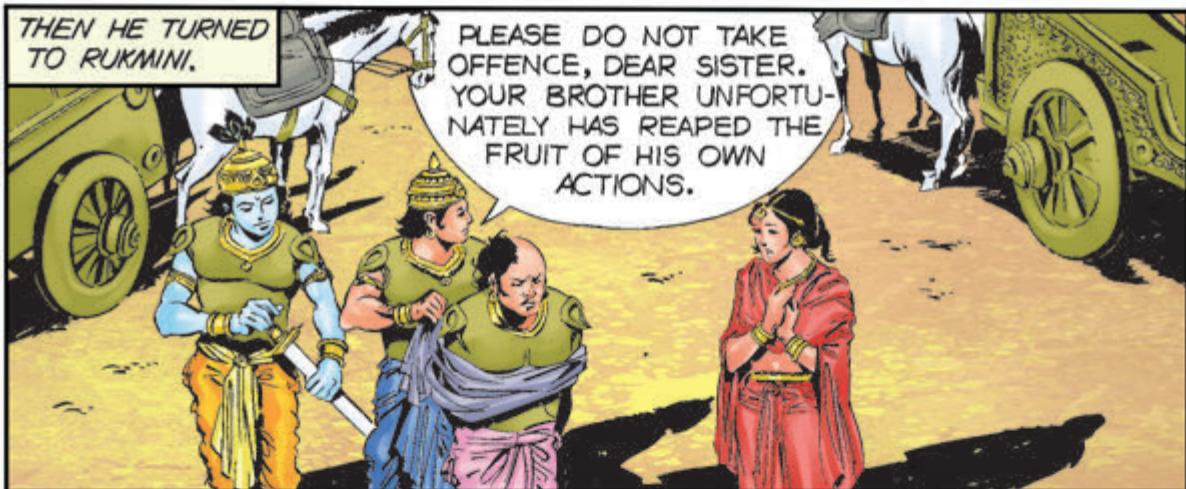


...WAS ABOUT TO RUSH TOWARDS HIM WHEN—



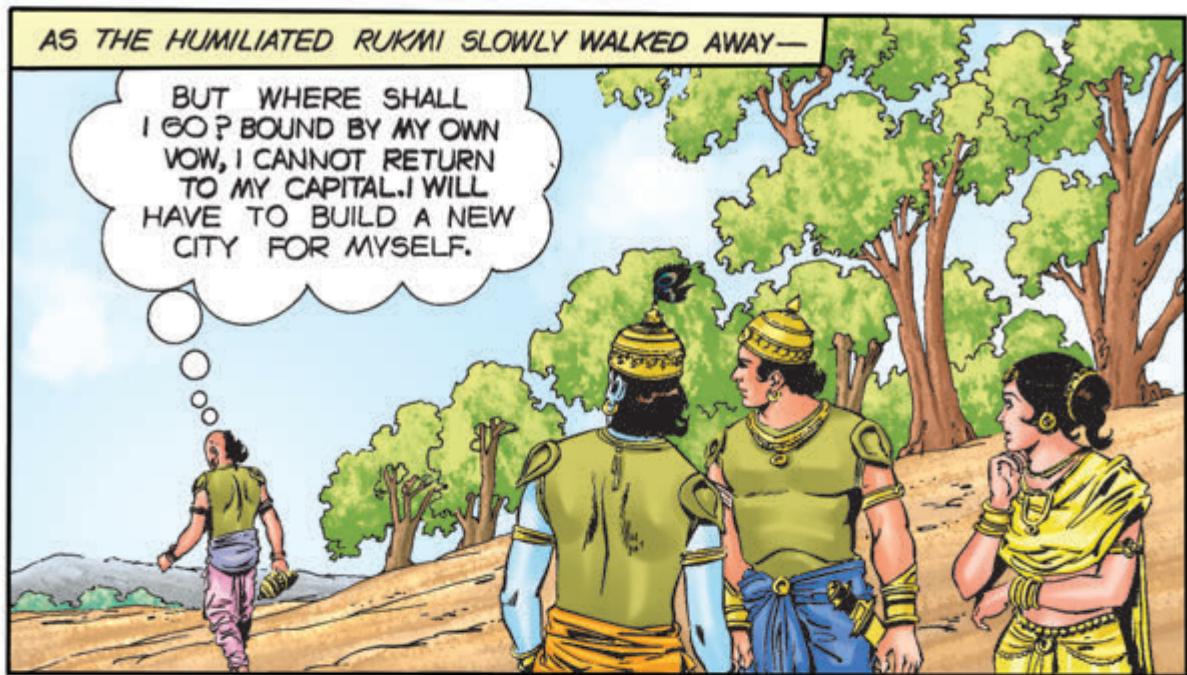


* CUMMERBUND.



AS THE HUMILIATED RUKMI SLOWLY WALKED AWAY—

BUT WHERE SHALL I GO? BOUND BY MY OWN VOW, I CANNOT RETURN TO MY CAPITAL. I WILL HAVE TO BUILD A NEW CITY FOR MYSELF.



COME INTO THE CHARIOT, RUKMINI. WE MUST HURRY TO DWARAKA AND HAVE OUR WEDDING SOLEMNISED BY RITUALS.

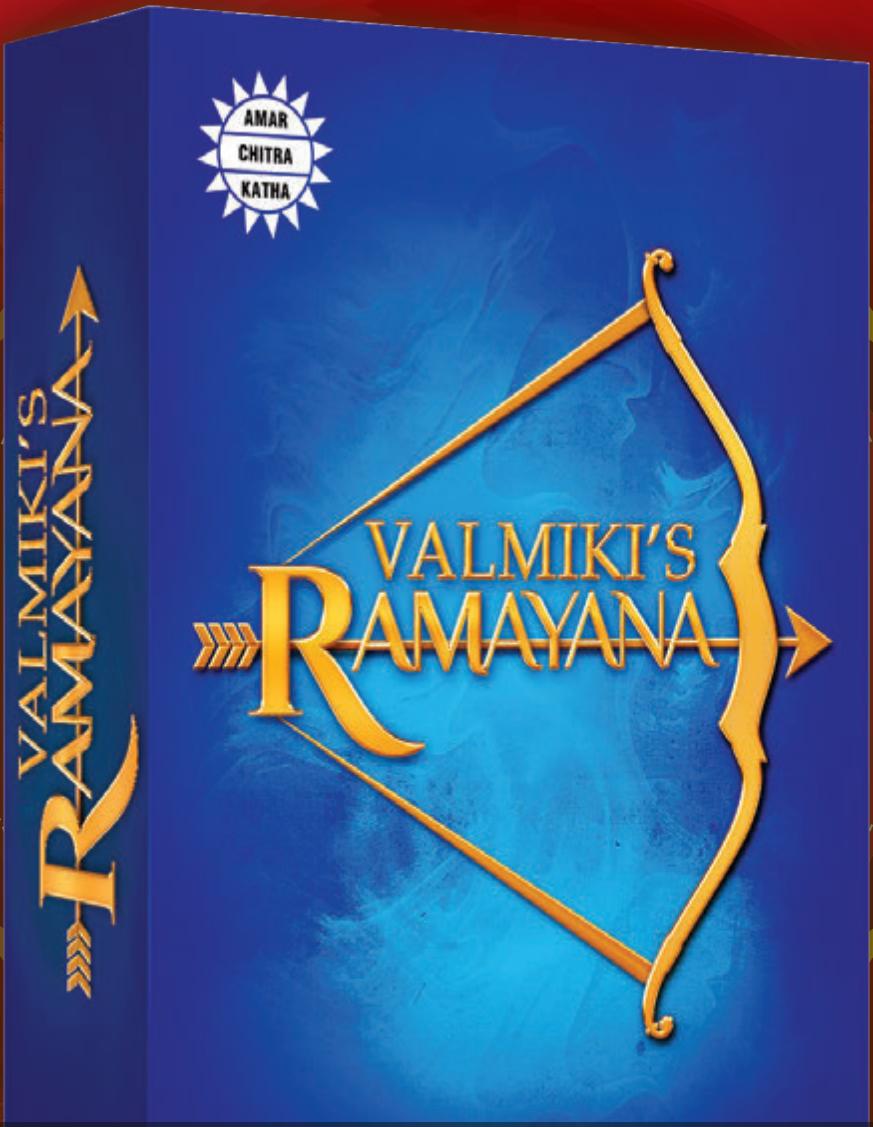


A FEW DAYS LATER AT DWARAKA, KRISHNA WAS MARRIED TO RUKMINI WITH GREAT POMP AND CEREMONY.





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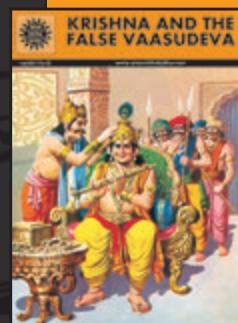
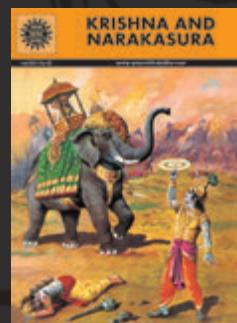
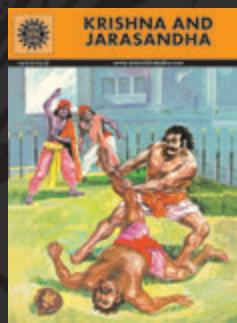
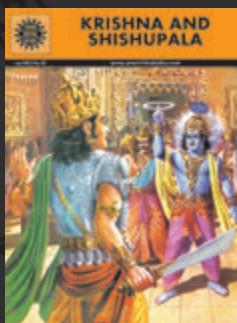


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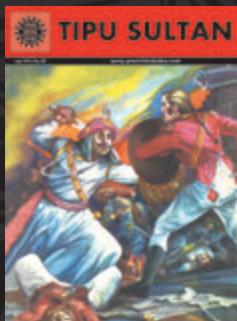
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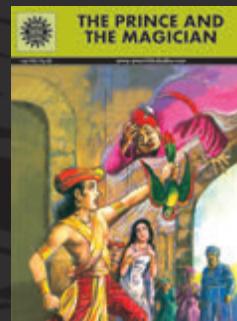
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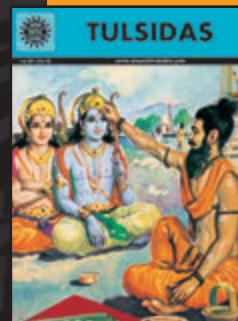
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