



Vishwamitra

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VISHWAMITRA



ONCE, LONG AGO, WHILE ROAMING OVER THE EARTH WITH HIS HUNDRED SONS AND VAST ARMIES, THE MIGHTY KING VISHWAMITRA CAME UPON THE HERMITAGE OF THE POWERFUL SAGE VASISHTHA.



IT IS SURPRISING, BUT THE SIGHT OF THESE ASCETICS WHO HAVE RENOUNCED THE WORLD EXHILARATES ME.

VISHWAMITRA WALKED UP TO VASISHTHA.

I BOW MY HEAD AT YOUR FEET.

WELCOME O KING. COME, SIT DOWN. I PRESUME ALL IS WELL IN YOUR KINGDOM.



VISHWAMITRA SAT NEAR THE SAGE AND THEY TALKED OF MANY THINGS. THEN -

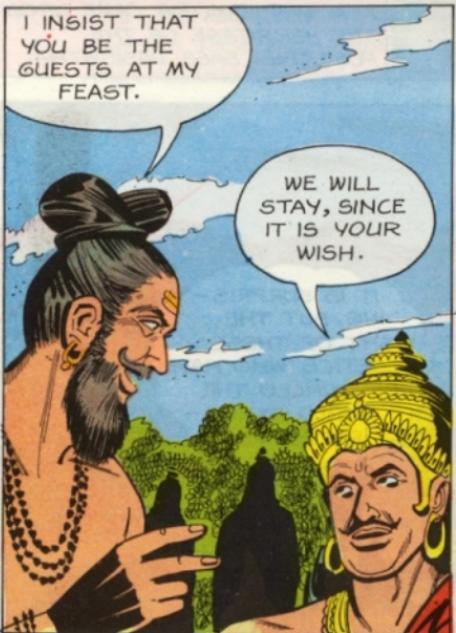
I WISH TO HONOUR YOU AND YOUR ROYAL RETINUE. PLEASE LET ME BE THE HOST AT A BANQUET WORTHY OF YOU.

O WISE SAGE, THE VERY SIGHT OF YOU IS A PRIVILEGE AND THIS GRACIOUS WELCOME, AN HONOUR. PRAY PERMIT US TO DEPART NOW.



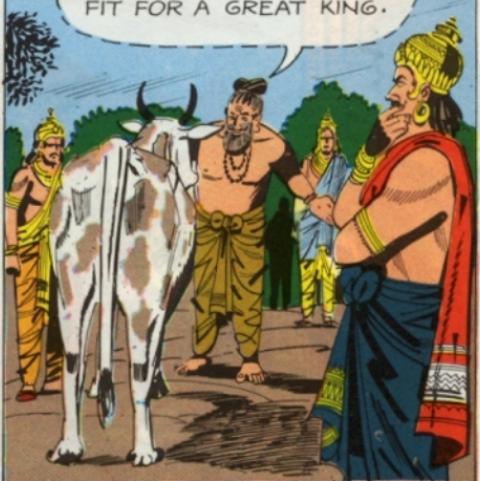
I INSIST THAT YOU BE THE GUESTS AT MY FEAST.

WE WILL STAY, SINCE IT IS YOUR WISH.



THEREUPON VASISHTHA SENT FOR HIS FAVOURITE COW, THE DIVINE KAMADHENU.*

DEAR KAMADHENU, PROVIDE US WITH FOOD FIT FOR A GREAT KING.



IN AN INSTANT, THERE EMERGED FROM THE DIVINE COW, CHOICE FOOD FOR THE ROYAL VISITORS.



VISHWAMITRA AND HIS MEN ATE TO THEIR HEART'S CONTENT.

I HAVE NEVER TASTED SUCH DELICACIES BEFORE. KAMADHENU SHOULD BELONG TO ME !

WHEN THE FEAST WAS OVER -

KAMADHENU IS A JEWEL AND JEWELS BELONG TO THE KING. BY RIGHT SHE SHOULD BE MINE. YET I WILL GIVE YOU A HUNDRED THOUSAND MILCH COWS IN RETURN.

NO. I CANNOT PART WITH HER EVEN FOR 1,00,00,000 COWS.



VASISHTHA'S REFUSAL
MADE VISHWAMITRA'S
DESIRE KEENER. HE
INCREASED HIS PRICE.



BUT VASISHTHA TURNED DOWN THE
OFFER.

FOR NO TREA-
SURE ON
EARTH WILL I PART
WITH HER, O KING.
SHE IS THE VERY
SOURCE OF MY
SPIRITUAL LIFE.
SHE PROVIDES
ME WITH ALL
I NEED FOR
MY RITUALS.

THEN I SHALL HAVE
TO TAKE HER AWAY
BY FORCE.

VISHWAMITRA CALLED TO HIS MEN.

SEIZE THE
SAGE'S COW
OF PLENTY
AND BRING
HER TO ME.

THE KING'S MEN FELL UPON THE BEWILDERED KAMADHENU.

WHY DOES THE HOLY ONE PERMIT THIS OUTRAGE? I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED AND SERVED HIM! I WILL SHAKE OFF MY TORMENTORS AND GO TO HIM.



KAMADHENU
TOSSSED
ASIDE HER
CAPTORS ...



... AND FLED.



SHE STOOD BEFORE VASISHTHA,
WEEPING AND LOWING.

O LORD, HAVE
YOU FORSAKEN
ME? DID YOU
NOT SEE HOW
I WAS TREATED?

DEAR ONE, I AM
HELPLESS AGAINST
THE KING AND HIS
MIGHTY ARMY.



KAMADHENU WAS NOT
CONVINCED.

YOUR SPIRITUAL POWERS ARE
DIVINE AND BOUNDLESS. HIS
MORTAL STRENGTH IS GREAT
BUT LIMITED. O HOLY ONE,
COMMAND ME AND BY YOUR
LIMITLESS SPIRITUAL POWERS
I SHALL HUMBLE THE PRIDE
OF THIS WICKED
WARRIOR.

SO BE IT,
KAMADHENU.



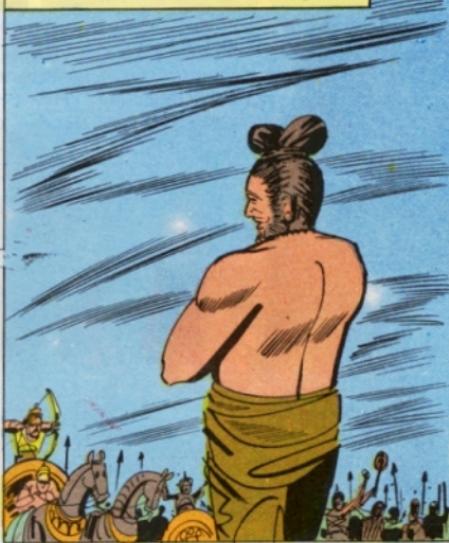
SO KAMADHENU LOWED LOUD AND LONG. HORDES
AND HORDES OF WARRIORS SPRANG UP MIRACULOUSLY
AND CHARGED AT THE KING'S SOLDIERS ...



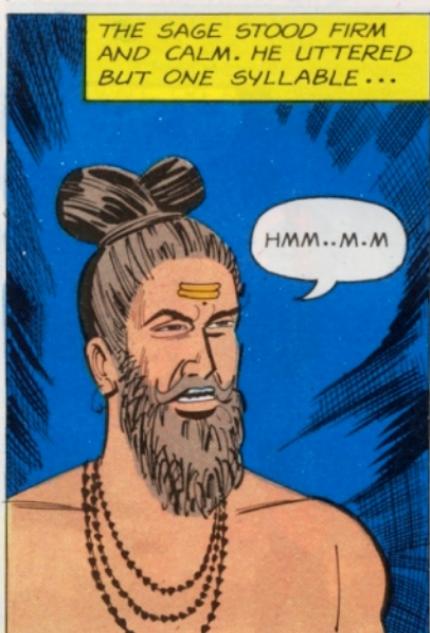
...AND SOON DESTROYED THEM.



ENRAGED, THE SONS OF VISHWAMITRA RUSHED TOWARDS VASISHTHA.



THE SAGE STOOD FIRM AND CALM. HE UTTERED BUT ONE SYLLABLE ...



...THE MERE SOUND OF WHICH BURNT THE PRINCES AND THEIR HORSES, CHARIOTS, WEAPONS AND ALL.



VISHWAMITRA RETURNED TO HIS KINGDOM FULL OF GRIEF AND SHAME. THERE -



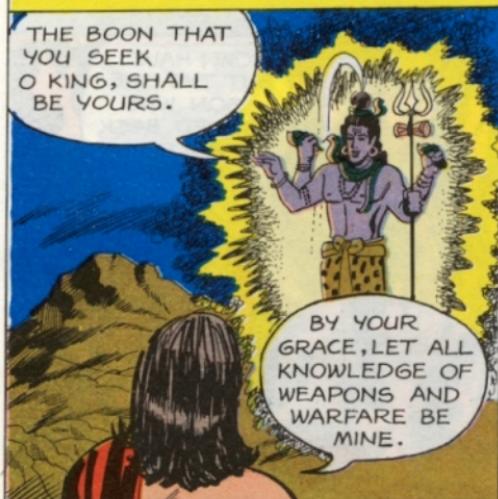
HE WENT STRAIGHT TO THE HIMALAYAS AND BEGAN PRACTISING SEVERE AUSTERITIES

I SHALL PROPITIATE LORD SHIVA AND BY HIS GRACE AVENGE THE DEATH OF MY GLORIOUS SONS.



AT LAST SHIVA WAS PLEASED. HE STOOD BEFORE VISHWAMITRA.

THE BOON THAT YOU SEEK O KING, SHALL BE YOURS.



BY YOUR GRACE, LET ALL KNOWLEDGE OF WEAPONS AND WARFARE BE MINE.

SHIVA GRANTED THE BOON AND WENT BACK TO HIS ABODE.

A TRIUMPHANT VISHWAMITRA NOW TURNED HIS FOOTSTEPS TOWARDS VASISHTHA'S HERMITAGE.

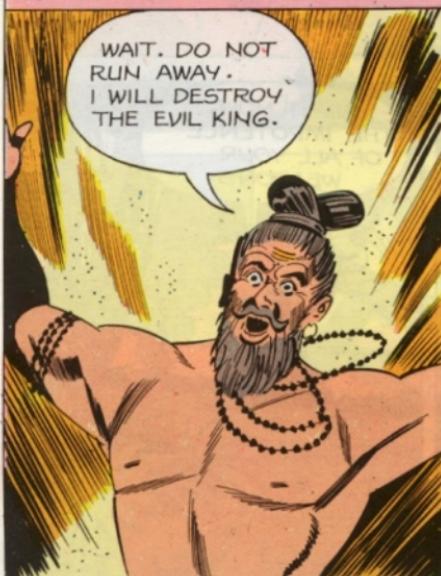
MERCY, O KING. MERCY.



AS SOON AS VISHWAMITRA REACHED THE HERMITAGE HE SENT OUT FLAMING MISSILES AND SET IT ABLAZE.



VASISHTHA TRIED TO STOP THEM, BUT IN VAIN.



A DEADLY SILENCE DESCENDED OVER THE DESERTED HERMITAGE. IT WAS BROKEN BY THE RESONANT VOICE OF VASISHTHA.



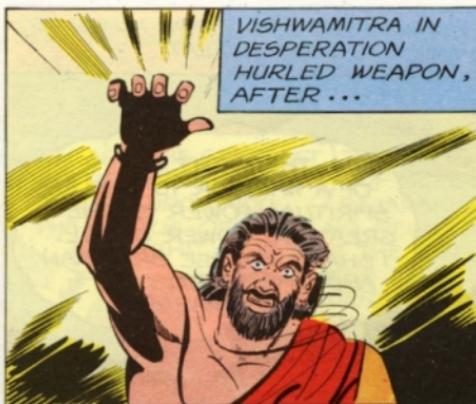
SNATCHING HIS STAFF HE ADVANCED TOWARDS VISHWAMITRA.



VISHWAMITRA HURLED THE WEAPON.
BUT -



VISHWAMITRA IN
DESPERATION
HURLED WEAPON,
AFTER ...



... WEAPON.



BUT THEY WERE
ALL ABSORBED BY
VASISHTHA'S STAFF.



AT LAST VISHWAMITRA SENT OUT
THE FATAL BRAHMASTRA. BUT ...



... VASISHTHA
SUBDUES EVEN THAT.



VISHWAMITRA, HIS PRIDE HUMBLED,
HAD TO ADMIT DEFEAT.

THE MIGHT
OF A WARRIOR IS USELESS.
SPIRITUAL POWER IS THE
GREATEST POWER OF ALL.
I SHALL REALISE BRAHMAN
AND THE STATUS OF
BRAHMARSHI*

HE LAID DOWN HIS ARMS AND WENT
HOME TO HIS QUEEN.

I WANT TO BECOME AS YOU COMMAND,
A BRAHMARSHI.
WE SHALL GO TO
A HERMITAGE
IN THE SOUTH.
THERE YOU
WILL HELP ME
IN MY
PENANCES.

SO VISHWAMITRA AND HIS QUEEN
SET OUT. THEY REACHED THE
CHOSEN HERMITAGE AND ...

THIS TIME I SHALL
SEEK THE FAVOUR
OF BRAHMA.

...VISHWAMITRA BEGAN HIS
PENANCES. IN THAT PERIOD FOUR
VIRTUOUS AND MIGHTY SONS
WERE BORN TO HIM.

THEN VISHWAMITRA CONTINUED HIS AUSTERITIES WITH GREATER SEVERITY UNTIL BRAHMA HAD TO APPEAR BEFORE HIM.

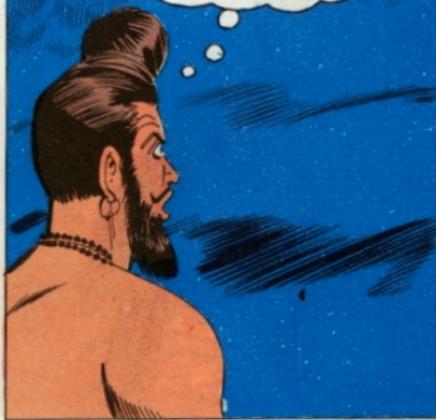
YOU ARE THE GREATEST ASCETIC AMONG KINGS. I CONFER UPON YOU THE STATUS OF RAJARSHI.*

THE STATUS OF MERE RAJARSHI IS NO REWARD FOR THE PENANCES I HAVE UNDERGONE. I SHALL ASK FOR ...



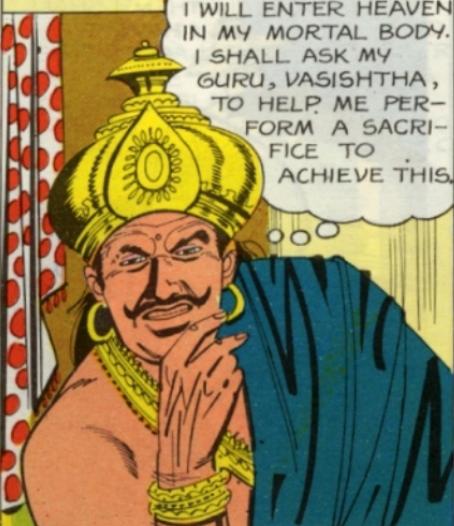
BUT BRAHMA HAD ALREADY DEPARTED. VISHWAMITRA WAS DEJECTED.

IN SPITE OF ALL MY PENANCES I AM ONLY A RAJARSHI TO THE GODS. I WILL STRIVE HARDER FOR GREATER SPIRITUAL POWERS.



MEANWHILE TRISHANKU, A GREAT KING OF THOSE TIMES, WAS SUDDENLY SEIZED WITH AN AMBITION.

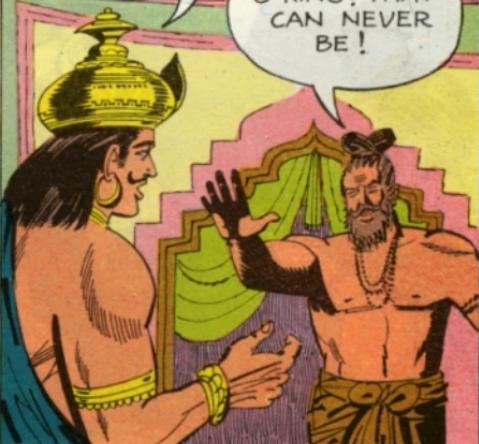
I WILL ENTER HEAVEN IN MY MORTAL BODY. I SHALL ASK MY GURU, VASISHTHA, TO HELP ME PERFORM A SACRIFICE TO ACHIEVE THIS.



HE SENT FOR VASISHTHA.

I WISH TO ENTER HEAVEN IN THIS MORTAL FRAME OF MINE, SO...

NO! O KING! THAT CAN NEVER BE!



BUT TRISHANKU REFUSED TO GIVE UP THE IDEA.

IF MY GURU WILL NOT HELP ME, HIS SONS WILL. I SHALL GO TO THEIR HERMITAGE IN THE SOUTH.

THERE TRISHANKU TOLD THE SONS OF VASISHTHA OF THEIR FATHER'S DECISION.

PRAY, WILL YOU BECOME MY GURUS AND HELP ME?

HOW DARE YOU SEEK OUR AID WHEN YOUR GURU, OUR WISE FATHER, HAS DISAPPROVED. YOU ARE NOT FIT TO CLAIM HIM AS YOUR GURU, YOU IGNORANT ONE.

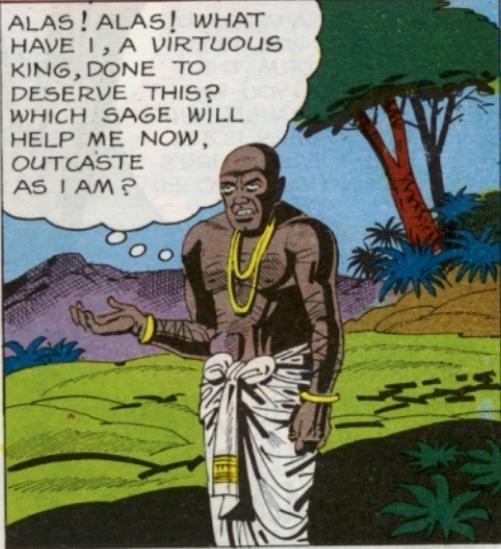
BUT TRISHANKU WAS BENT UPON PERFORMING THE SACRIFICE.

THEN I SHALL HAVE TO SEEK THE HELP OF SOME OTHER SAGE.

THE SONS OF VASISHTHA WERE FURIOUS WITH THE ADAMANT KING.



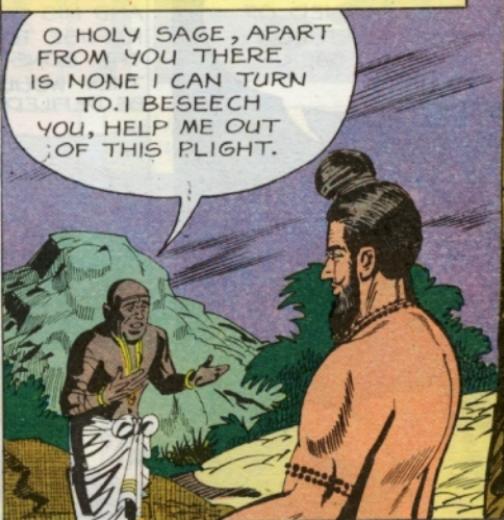
TO HIS DISMAY TRISHANKU FOUND HIS BODY TRANSFORMED.



THEN SUDDENLY, HE REMEMBERED VISHWAMITRA.



AS HE EXPECTED, VISHWAMITRA RECEIVED HIM COMPASSIONATELY AND LISTENED TO HIS TALE OF WOE.

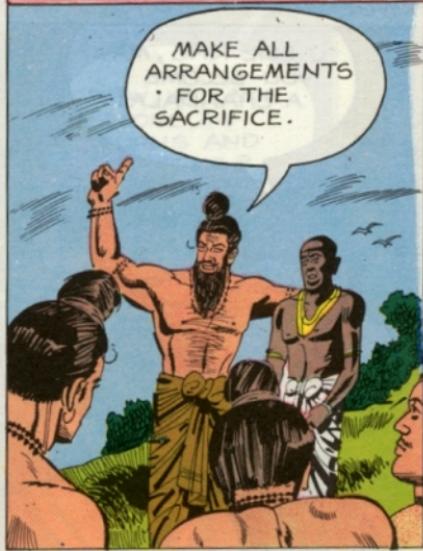


VISHWAMITRA CONSOLED AND COMFORTED THE MISERABLE KING.

YOU ARE A VIRTUOUS PERSON. I WILL HELP YOU PERFORM THE SACRIFICE. YOU WILL ENTER HEAVEN AND IN THIS VERY FORM WHICH YOUR GURU'S SONS HAVE IMPOSED ON YOU.

VISHWAMITRA SUMMONED HIS SONS TO HIM.

MAKE ALL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SACRIFICE.



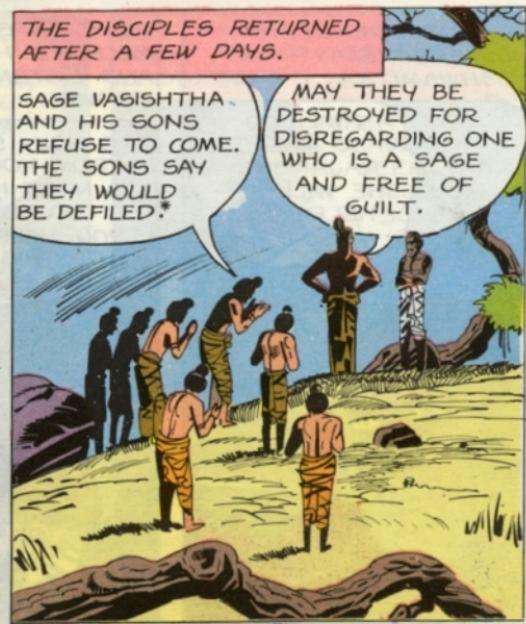
NEXT VISHWAMITRA CALLED HIS DISCIPLES TO HIM.

INVITE ALL THE PIous AND THE LEARNED OF THE LAND HERE FOR THE GREAT SACRIFICE.

THE DISCIPLES RETURNED AFTER A FEW DAYS.

SAGE VASISHTHA AND HIS SONS REFUSE TO COME. THE SONS SAY THEY WOULD BE DEFILED.*

MAY THEY BE DESTROYED FOR DISREGARDING ONE WHO IS A SAGE AND FREE OF GUILT.



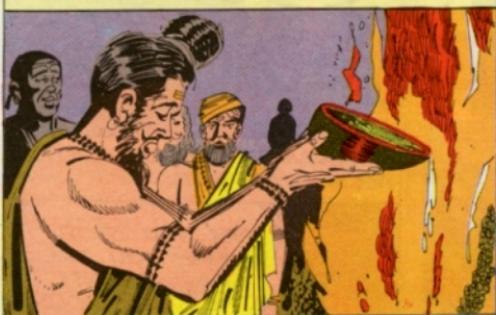
* ASSOCIATING ONESELF WITH UNTOUCHABLES MADE ONE UNCLEAN.

WHEN THOSE WHO
HAD ACCEPTED
THE INVITATION
ASSEMBLED—

THIS VIRTUOUS
KING SEEKS
YOUR GOODWILL
FOR THIS
SACRIFICE IN
A NOBLE
PURSUIT.

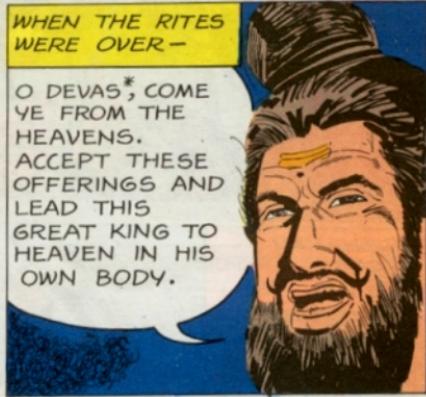


THEN THE RITES BEGAN, WITH
VISHWAMITRA OFFICIATING AS
THE CHIEF PRIEST.



WHEN THE RITES
WERE OVER—

O DEVAS*, COME
YE FROM THE
HEAVENS.
ACCEPT THESE
OFFERINGS AND
LEAD THIS
GREAT KING TO
HEAVEN IN HIS
OWN BODY.



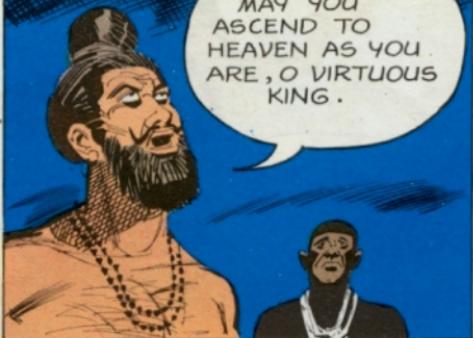
VISHWAMITRA WAITED. BUT
NONE OF THE DEVAS APPEARED.
HE WAS ENRAGED.

O KING, I WILL RAISE
YOU TO HEAVEN ON
THE STRENGTH OF
ALL THE SPIRITUAL
POWERS I HAVE
ACCUMULATED.

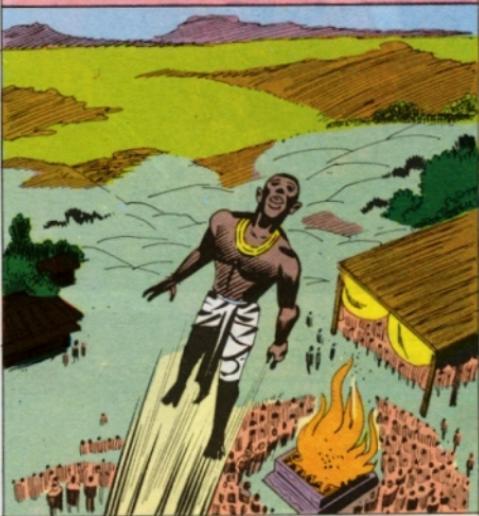


VISHWAMITRA THEN LOOKED
SKYWARDS.

MAY YOU
ASCEND TO
HEAVEN AS YOU
ARE, O VIRTUOUS
KING.



HARDLY HAD VISHWAMITRA UTTERED THESE WORDS THAN THE ASCENSION OF TRISHANKU BEGAN.



BUT WHEN HE REACHED HEAVEN, INDRA AND THE DEVAS BARRED HIS ENTRY.

WRETCH! YOU HAVE BEEN CURSED BY YOUR GURU'S SONS. HEAVEN HAS NO PLACE FOR YOU. MAY YOU GO DOWN TO THE DEPTHS OF THE EARTH.

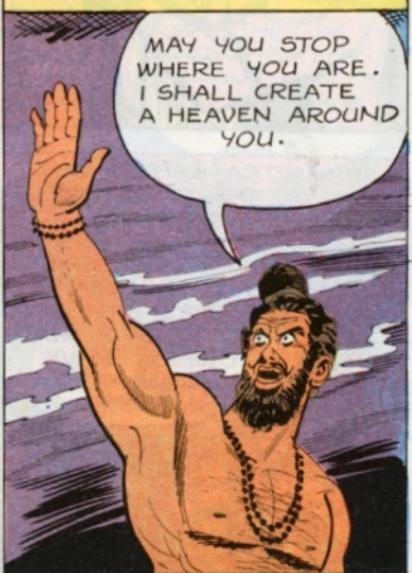


TRISHANKU BEGAN FALLING DOWN, DOWN -



VISHWAMITRA WOULD NOT ACCEPT DEFEAT.

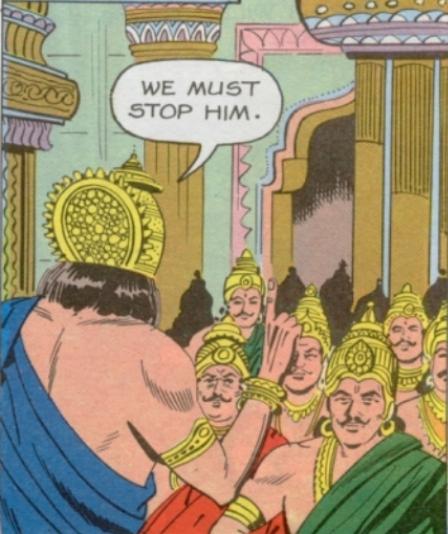
MAY YOU STOP WHERE YOU ARE. I SHALL CREATE A HEAVEN AROUND YOU.



AND VISHWAMITRA
CREATED SEVEN
PLANETS, THE
SAPTARSHIS* AND
TWENTY-SEVEN
STARS. BUT HE WAS
NOT SATISFIED.



WHEN THE DEVAS DIVINED HIS
INTENTIONS, THEY WERE
PERTURBED.

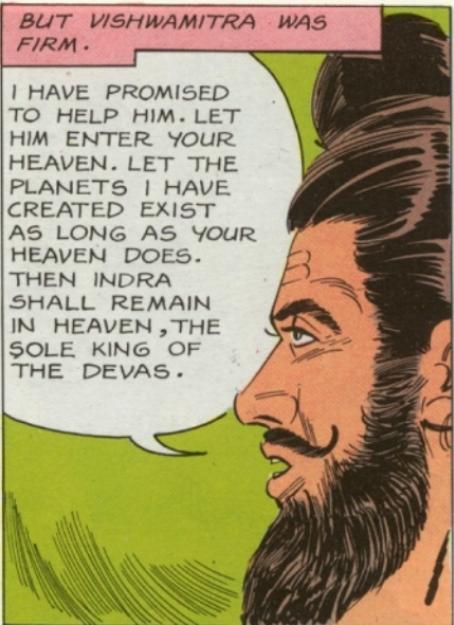


THEY APPEARED BEFORE HIM
AND PLEADED WITH HIM.

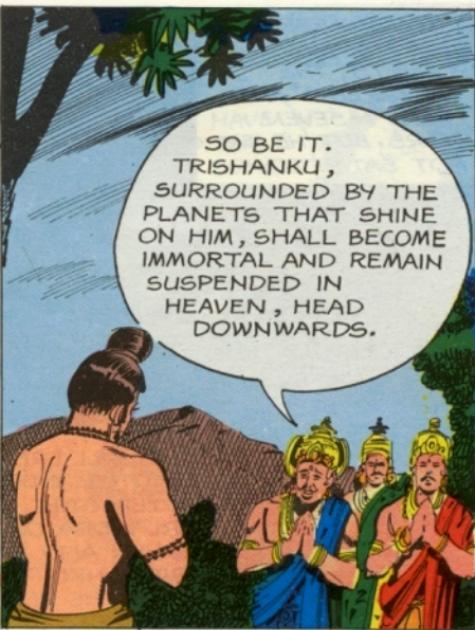


BUT VISHWAMITRA WAS FIRM.

I HAVE PROMISED TO HELP HIM. LET HIM ENTER YOUR HEAVEN. LET THE PLANETS I HAVE CREATED EXIST AS LONG AS YOUR HEAVEN DOES. THEN INDRA SHALL REMAIN IN HEAVEN, THE SOLE KING OF THE DEVAS.

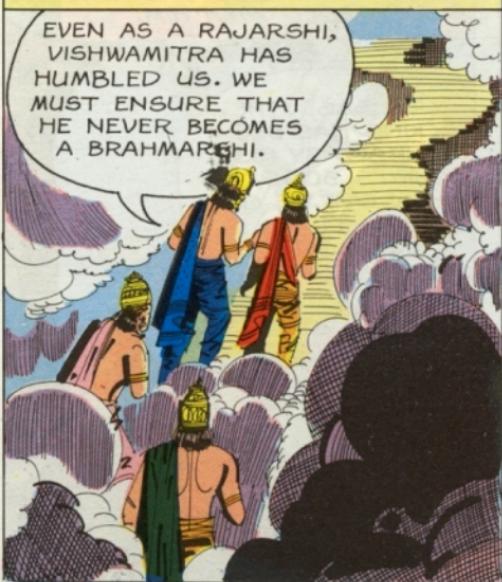


SO BE IT. TRISHANKU, SURROUNDED BY THE PLANETS THAT SHINE ON HIM, SHALL BECOME IMMORTAL AND REMAIN SUSPENDED IN HEAVEN, HEAD DOWNWARDS.

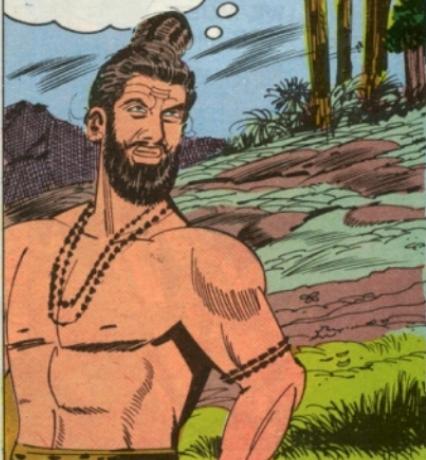


AS THE DEVAS, HEAVING SIGHS OF RELIEF, DEPARTED TO HEAVEN-

EVEN AS A RAJARSHI, VISHWAMITRA HAS HUMBLED US. WE MUST ENSURE THAT HE NEVER BECOMES A BRAHMARGHI.

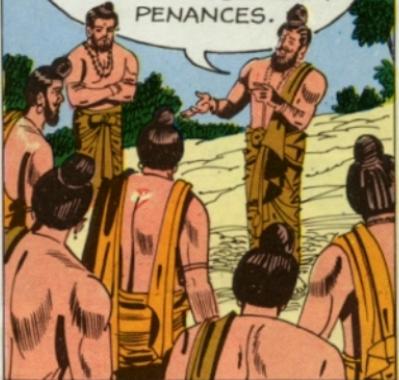


I HAVE HUMBLED THE DEVAS BUT EXHAUSTED MY SPIRITUAL POWERS. I WILL START ALL OVER AGAIN.



HE TURNED TO HIS SONS AND DISCIPLES.

THE WORLD HAS BEEN TOO MUCH WITH ME HERE. MY PENANCES HAVE COME TO NAUGHT. I SHALL GO WEST TO THE PEACEFUL PUSH-KAR TO RESUME MY PENANCES.



MEANWHILE AMBARISHA, KING OF AYODHYA, HAD DECIDED TO PERFORM A SACRIFICE. BUT -

YOUR MAJESTY,
THE SACRIFICIAL
ANIMAL HAS
BEEN STOLEN.

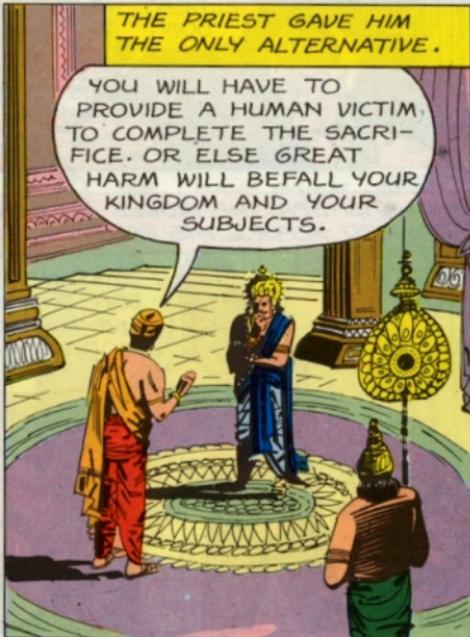


AMBARISHA HUNTED FAR AND WIDE FOR THE ANIMAL. BUT AS INDRA WAS THE UNKNOWN THIEF HIS SEARCH WAS HOPELESS.



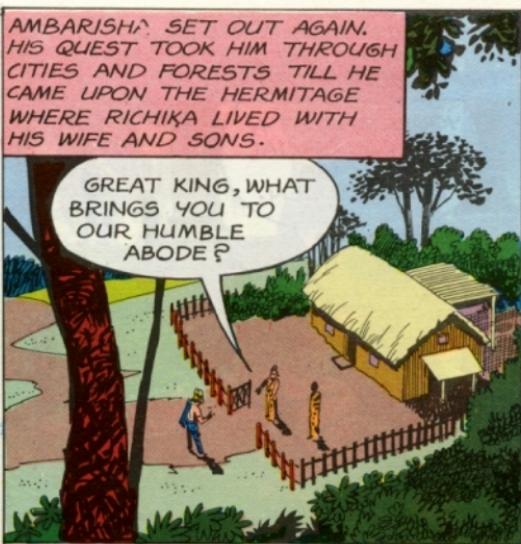
THE PRIEST GAVE HIM THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE.

YOU WILL HAVE TO PROVIDE A HUMAN VICTIM TO COMPLETE THE SACRIFICE. OR ELSE GREAT HARM WILL BEFALL YOUR KINGDOM AND YOUR SUBJECTS.



AMBARISHA SET OUT AGAIN.
HIS QUEST TOOK HIM THROUGH
CITIES AND FORESTS TILL HE
CAME UPON THE HERMITAGE
WHERE RICHIKA LIVED WITH
HIS WIFE AND SONS.

GREAT KING, WHAT
BRINGS YOU TO
OUR HUMBLE
ABODE?



AMBARISHA TOLD HIM ALL.

O SAGE, GIVE ME ONE
OF YOUR SONS FOR
100,000 COWS AND
HELP ME COMPLETE
THE SACRIFICE.



RICHIKA AND HIS
WIFE LOOKED AT
EACH OTHER.

I WILL
NEVER GIVE
UP MY
ELDEST
SON.

MY YOUNGEST
SHALL EVER
REMAIN WITH
US.



SHUNAHSHEPA, THE MIDDLE SON, STEPPED
FORWARD BEFORE HIS PARENTS COULD
SAY MORE.

TAKE ME, THE MIDDLE
SON, O KING, AND
GIVE MY PARENTS
100,000 COWS.

DELIGHTED THAT HIS SEARCH
HAD COME TO AN END, AMBARISHA
TOOK SHUNAHSHEPA AND
MOUNTING HIS CHARIOT TURNED
HOMEWARD.

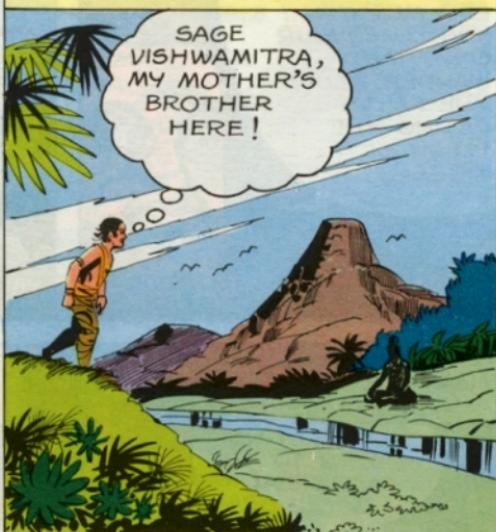


ON THE WAY THEY HAD TO
PASS THROUGH THE FOREST
OF PUSHKARA.

LET US REST FOR
A WHILE AT THAT
HERMITAGE OVER
THERE.

AS THE KING RESTED, SHUNAHSHEPA WANDERED ABOUT THE HERMITAGE. SUDDENLY -

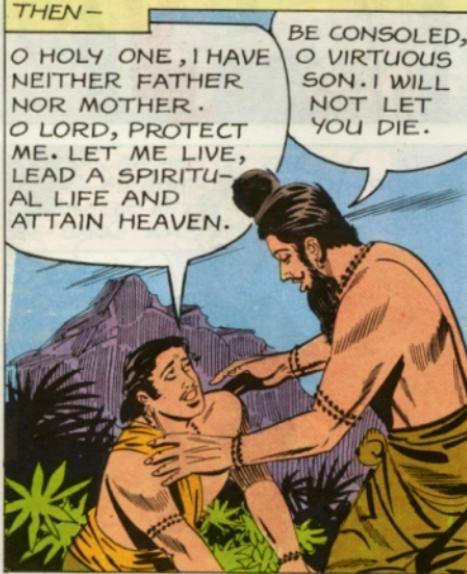
SAGE
VISHWAMITRA,
MY MOTHER'S
BROTHER
HERE!



SHUNAHSHEPA RAN TO HIM, FELL
AT HIS FEET AND TOLD HIM ALL.
THEN -

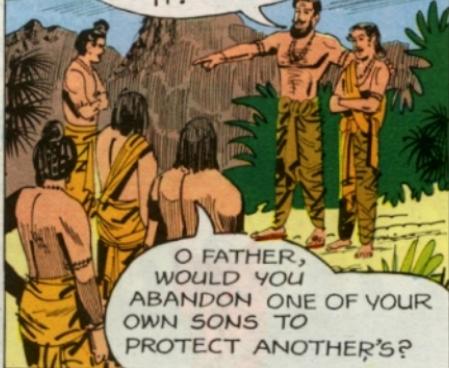
O HOLY ONE, I HAVE
NEITHER FATHER
NOR MOTHER.
O LORD, PROTECT
ME. LET ME LIVE,
LEAD A SPIRITU-
AL LIFE AND
ATTAIN HEAVEN.

BE CONSOLED,
O VIRTUOUS
SON. I WILL
NOT LET
YOU DIE.



VISHWAMITRA TURNED TO
HIS SONS.

SHUNAHSHEPA HAS
SOUGHT MY PROTECTION.
ONE OF YOU TAKE HIS
PLACE AND RESCUE
HIM. I HAVE GIVEN
HIM MY WORD.
HELP ME KEEP
IT.



YOU ARROGANT SONS. HAVE YOU NO AFFECTION FOR ME? MAY YOU LOSE YOUR CASTE AND WANDER ABOUT THE EARTH EATING THE FLESH OF DOGS.

VISHWAMITRA THEN ADDRESSED SHUNAHSHEPA.

I WILL TEACH YOU TWO MANTRAS IN PRAISE OF INDRA. REPEAT THEM AT THE SACRIFICIAL ALTAR AND YOU WILL BE SAVED.

SHUNAHSHEPA LEARNT THE MANTRAS AND RETURNED TO AMBARISHA.

O KING, LET US HASTEN TO THE SACRIFICIAL GROUND.

WHEN THEY REACHED THE SACRIFICIAL ALTAR, AMBARISHA HANDED SHUNAHSHEPA OVER TO THE PRIEST.

SHUNAHSHEPA REPEATED THE MANTRAS THAT VISHWAMITRA HAD TAUGHT HIM. SUDDENLY INDRA APPEARED BEFORE HIM.

I AM PLEASED WITH YOUR WORSHIP. MAY THE LONG LIFE YOU SEEK BE YOURS.

HE HAD KEPT HIS WORD BUT VISHWAMITRA HAD ONCE AGAIN SPENT HIS SPIRITUAL FORCE IN CURSING HIS SONS.

THIS TIME I WILL REMAIN HERE AND RESUME MY PENANCES.

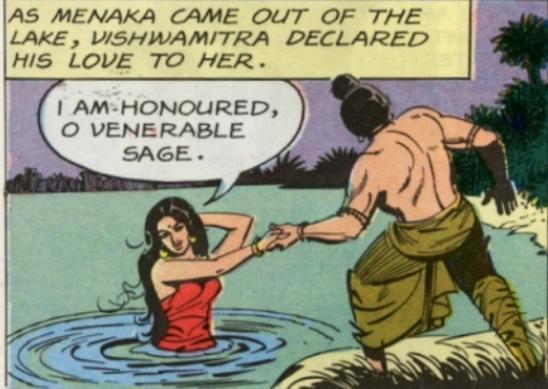
ONE DAY WHILE HE WAS ON THE BANK OF THE PUSHKARA LAKE -

IT'S THE IRRESISTIBLE APSARA, MENAKA.
I MUST MAKE HER MINE.



AS MENAKA CAME OUT OF THE LAKE, VISHWAMITRA DECLARED HIS LOVE TO HER.

I AM HONOURED,
O VENERABLE SAGE.



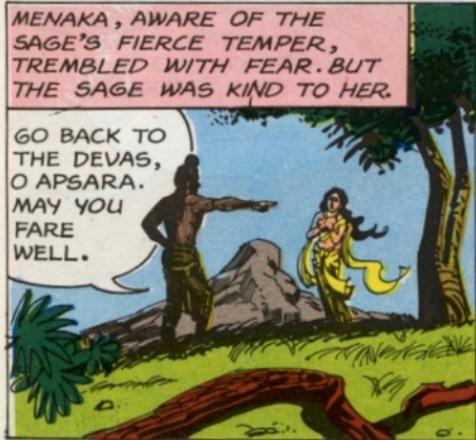
A FEW YEARS PASSED BEFORE VISHWAMITRA SUDDENLY REALISED HIS FOLLY.

I SEE NOW!
THE DEVAS
MUST HAVE
SENT YOU
HERE TO
DISTRACT
ME.



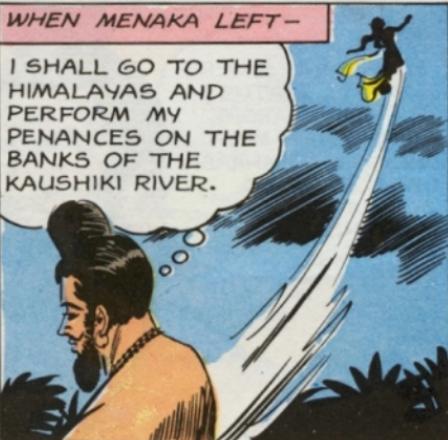
MENAKA, AWARE OF THE SAGE'S FIERCE TEMPER, TREMBLED WITH FEAR. BUT THE SAGE WAS KIND TO HER.

GO BACK TO THE DEVAS,
O APSARA.
MAY YOU FARE WELL.



WHEN MENAKA LEFT -

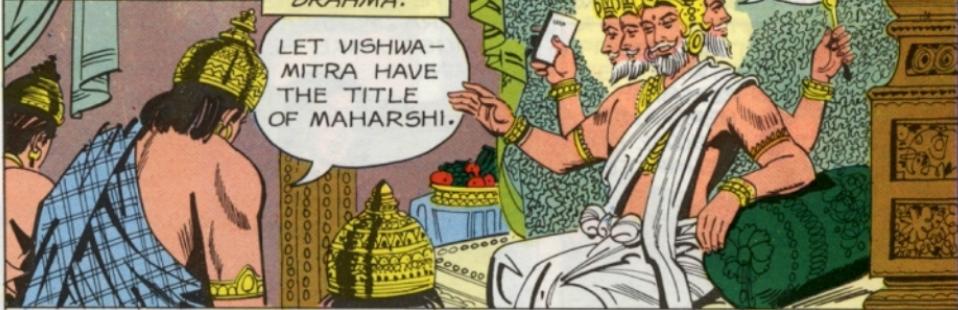
I SHALL GO TO THE HIMALAYAS AND PERFORM MY PENANCES ON THE BANKS OF THE KAUSHIKI RIVER.



SO SEVERE WERE HIS PENANCES
THERE THAT THE DEVAS WERE
PERTURBED. THEY APPROACHED
BRAHMA.

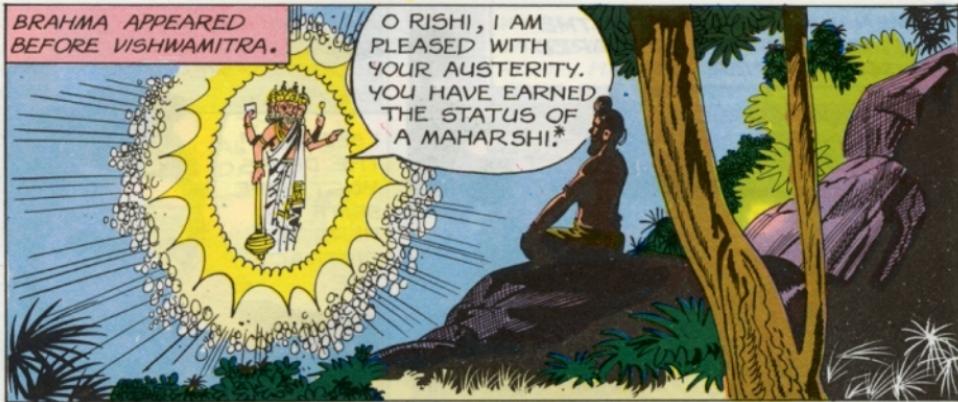
LET VISHWA-
MITRA HAVE
THE TITLE
OF MAHARSHI.

SO
BE IT.



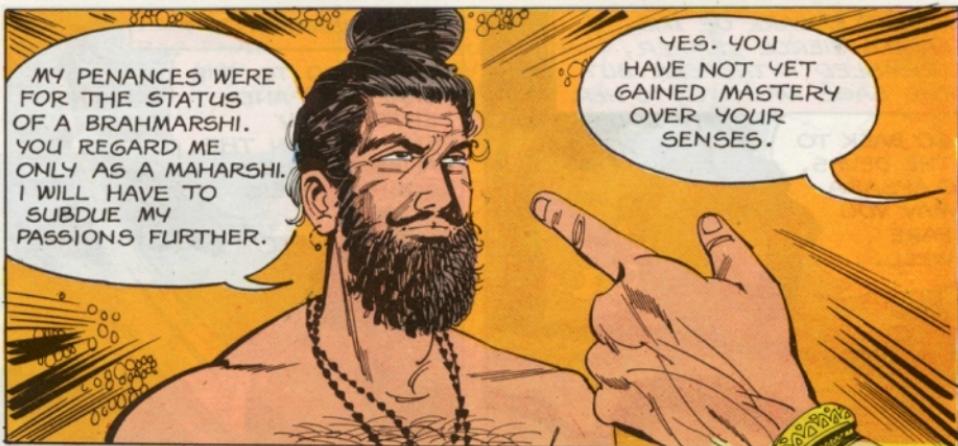
BRAHMA APPEARED
BEFORE VISHWAMITRA.

O RISHI, I AM
PLEASED WITH
YOUR AUSTERITY.
YOU HAVE EARNED
THE STATUS OF
A MAHARSHI.*

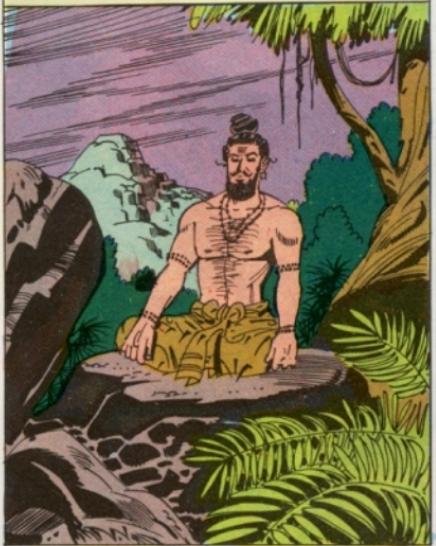


MY PENANCES WERE
FOR THE STATUS
OF A BRAHMARSHI.
YOU REGARD ME
ONLY AS A MAHARSHI.
I WILL HAVE TO
SUBDUER MY
PASSIONS FURTHER.

YES. YOU
HAVE NOT YET
GAINED MASTERY
OVER YOUR
SENSES.



WHEN BRAHMA DEPARTED,
VISHWAMITRA INTENSIFIED HIS
AUSTERITIES.



IN SUMMER HE STOOD ON ONE FOOT
IN THE MIDST OF FIVE BLAZING
FIRES, LIVING ONLY ON AIR.



THROUGH THE RAINY SEASON
HE CONTINUED STANDING.



AND IN WINTER HE STOOD
IN THE MIDDLE OF A
COLD STREAM.



THE DEVAS WERE ONCE AGAIN PERTURBED. THEN INDRA HAD AN IDEA.

HE SENT FOR RAMBHA.

YOU MUST ATTRACT MAHARSHI VISHWAMITRA AND DISTURB HIS PENANCES.

I WILL ASK THE APSARA RAMBHA OF MY COURT TO DISTRACT HIM.

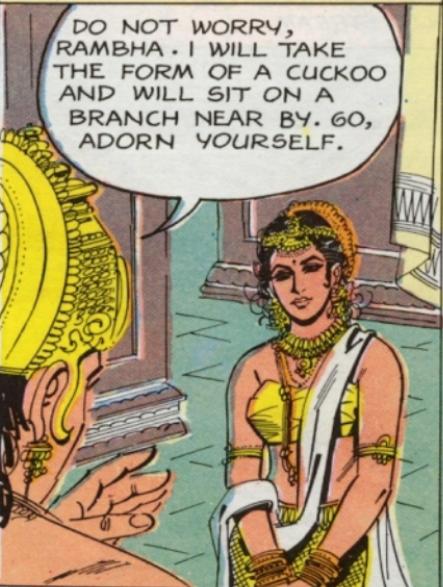
LORD,
PLEASE DO NOT SEND ME ON THIS TASK. THE SAGE HAS A TERRIBLE TEMPER AND A READY CURSE.

BUT INDRA REASSURED HER.

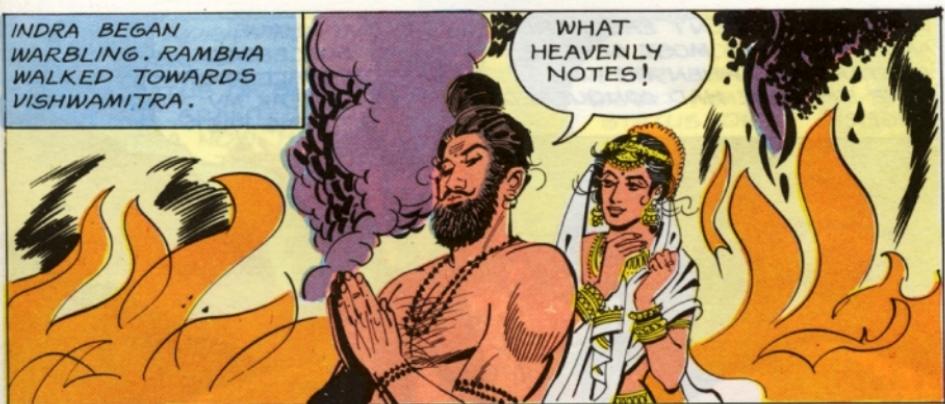
DO NOT WORRY,
RAMBHA. I WILL TAKE THE FORM OF A CUCKOO AND WILL SIT ON A BRANCH NEAR BY. GO, ADORN YOURSELF.

AS SOON AS RAMBHA WAS READY, THEY CAME TO VISHWAMITRA'S GROVE.

I WILL ROUSE HIM WITH MY NOTES.
THAT IS THE MOMENT FOR YOU TO APPROACH HIM.



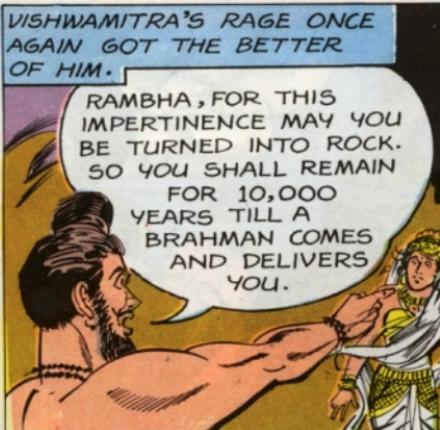
INDRA BEGAN
WARBLING. RAMBHA
WALKED TOWARDS
VISHWAMITRA.



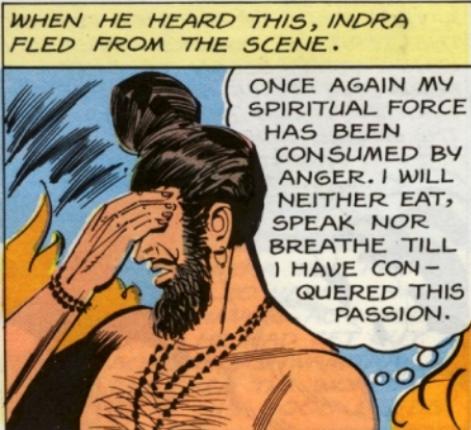
VISHWAMITRA OPENED HIS EYES.



VISHWAMITRA'S RAGE ONCE AGAIN GOT THE BETTER OF HIM.



WHEN HE HEARD THIS, INDRA FLED FROM THE SCENE.



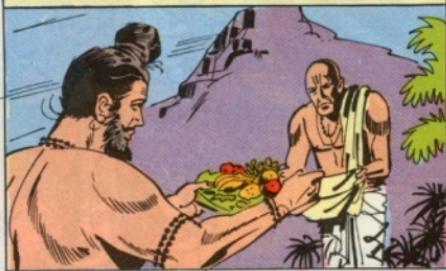
VISHWAMITRA WENT EASTWARD AND BEGAN HIS MOST SEVERE AUSTERITIES. WHEN HE WAS SURE THAT HE HAD CONQUERED ANGER—



AS VISHWAMITRA SAT DOWN TO EAT—



IT WAS INDRA WHO HAD COME IN THE GUISE OF A BRAHMAN TO TEST HIM. VISHWAMITRA WITHOUT UTTERING A WORD OFFERED HIM THE FOOD.



AFTER YEARS OF FURTHER PENANCE, THE TERRIBLE POWERS AMASSED BY VISHWAMITRA BEGAN TO EMIT PERVERSIVE THICK SMOKE, STRIKING TERROR AMONG THE BEINGS OF THE THREE WORLDS.



TERRIFIED, INDRA AND THE DEVAS WENT TO BRAHMA.

IF THE STATUS OF BRAHMARSHI IS NOT GRANTED TO VISHWAMITRA NOW, HE WILL DESTROY THE THREE WORLDS AND THEN HE WILL BE CONTENT ONLY WITH THE SOVEREIGNTY OF MY HEAVEN.

DO NOT FEAR. I SHALL GRANT HIM THE STATUS OF BRAHMARSHI. HE DESERVES IT.

BRAHMA ACCOMPANIED BY ALL THE DEVAS APPEARED BEFORE THE SAGE.

O VISHWAMITRA, BY THE POWER OF YOUR PENANCES YOU HAVE ACHIEVED THE STATUS OF BRAHMARSHI.

THEN INSTRUCT ME IN THE LORE OF THE BRAHMAN AND LET VASISHTHA ACKNOWLEDGE MY PRESENT STATUS.

THE GODS LED VASISHTHA TO VISHWAMITRA.

MY GREETINGS TO YOU, O BRAHMARSHI.

VISHWAMITRA TOO PAID HOMAGE TO VASISHTHA. THEN, HAVING ACHIEVED WHAT HE HAD SET OUT TO ACHIEVE, VISHWAMITRA ENRICHED THE WORLDS WITH HIS GOOD DEEDS.



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Vishwamitra

Known as the Land of the Rishis or *Rishi Bhoomi*, India proudly claims the heritage of the *rishis* (sages) as its own. Here, Vishwamitra stands out as a superlative example of the accomplishments of the *rishis*.

Vishwamitra was a Kshatriya king who constantly explored the realms of immortality beyond the kingdom of earth. His confrontation with Sage Vasishta convinced him of the superiority of spiritual power over physical strength, and so he set out to attain it.

When he was given the status of *Rajarshi*, he was not content. This was because the word connoted a rishi who was born a Kshatriya and was considered inferior to a *Brahmarshi*, a *rishi* who had been born a Brahmin.

The arduous paths that Vishwamitra had to tread to conquer his passions in order to reach spiritual heights are described in detail, giving us a glimpse of the glory of the *rishis*.

India was later named after Bharata, the grandson of Vishwamitra.

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