



Vol. 531 Rs. 25

Karna



Amar Chitra Katha: the Glorious Heritage of India



Karna

The Mahabharata is a gallery of heroes and Karna is the most heroic of them. Fate denied him all his dues. But he fought and achieved all that a man could aspire to have.

He was as much a Pandava prince as any of the other five. But he never knew his lineage. At last when he knew it, he could not but disown it.

He was brought up as a commoner and therefore humiliated. Teachers would not teach him. His equals shunned him. He received no honour despite his valour but he never lost heart. Duryodhana, the Kaurava prince, offered him kingship. For this act of kindness, he remained loyal to Duryodhana till the very end.

**AMAR CHITRA KATHA means good reading.
Over 78 million copies sold so far.**

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Artworks: Ram Wazerkar

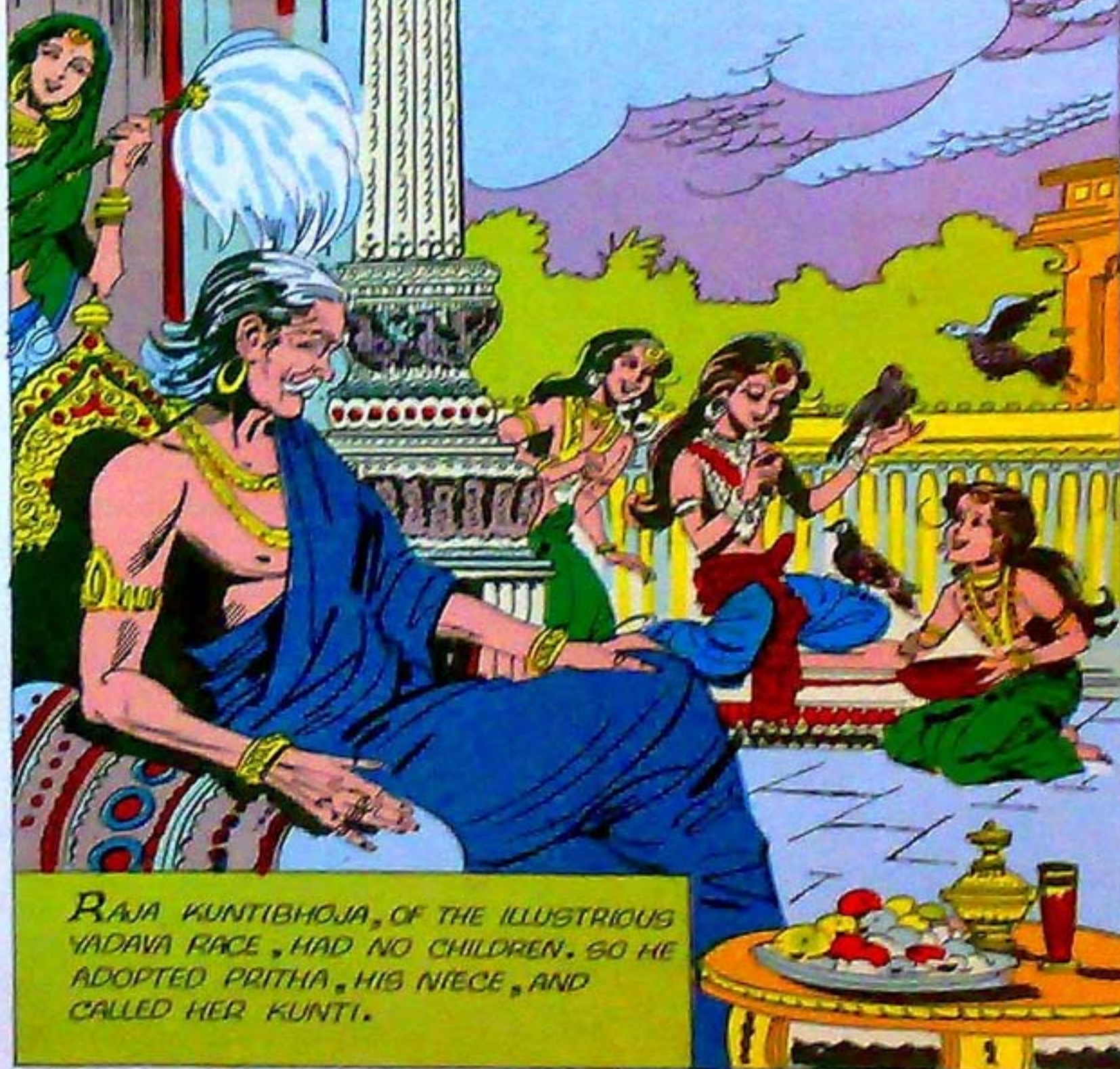
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Karna



RAJA KUNTIBHOJA, OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS YADAVA RACE, HAD NO CHILDREN. SO HE ADOPTED PRITHA, HIS NIECE, AND CALLED HER KUNTI.

ONE DAY SAGE DURVASA, FEARED FOR HIS VIOLENT TEMPER AND HARD TO PLEASE, VISITED RAJA KUNTIBHOJA.

THE VENERABLE SAGE WILL BE OUR GUEST. LOOK AFTER HIM WELL.



FOR A FULL YEAR KUNTI LOOKED AFTER THE SAGE CAREFULLY, PATIENTLY AND WITH DEVOTION.

I AM GLAD THE YEAR IS ALMOST COME TO AN END WITHOUT A MISHAP.



AND DURVASA WAS WELL PLEASED.

I WILL GIVE YOU A DIVINE MANTRA*. IT WILL ENABLE YOU TO CALL UPON ANY GOD TO COME AND BLESS YOU WITH A SON WHO IS IN EVERY WAY HIS EQUAL.



* A WORD OR WORDS OF POWER.

AS SOON AS DURVASA LEFT -

I WONDER IF IT REALLY WORKS. OH! LORD SURYA SMILES AT ME. I WILL CALL HIM DOWN.



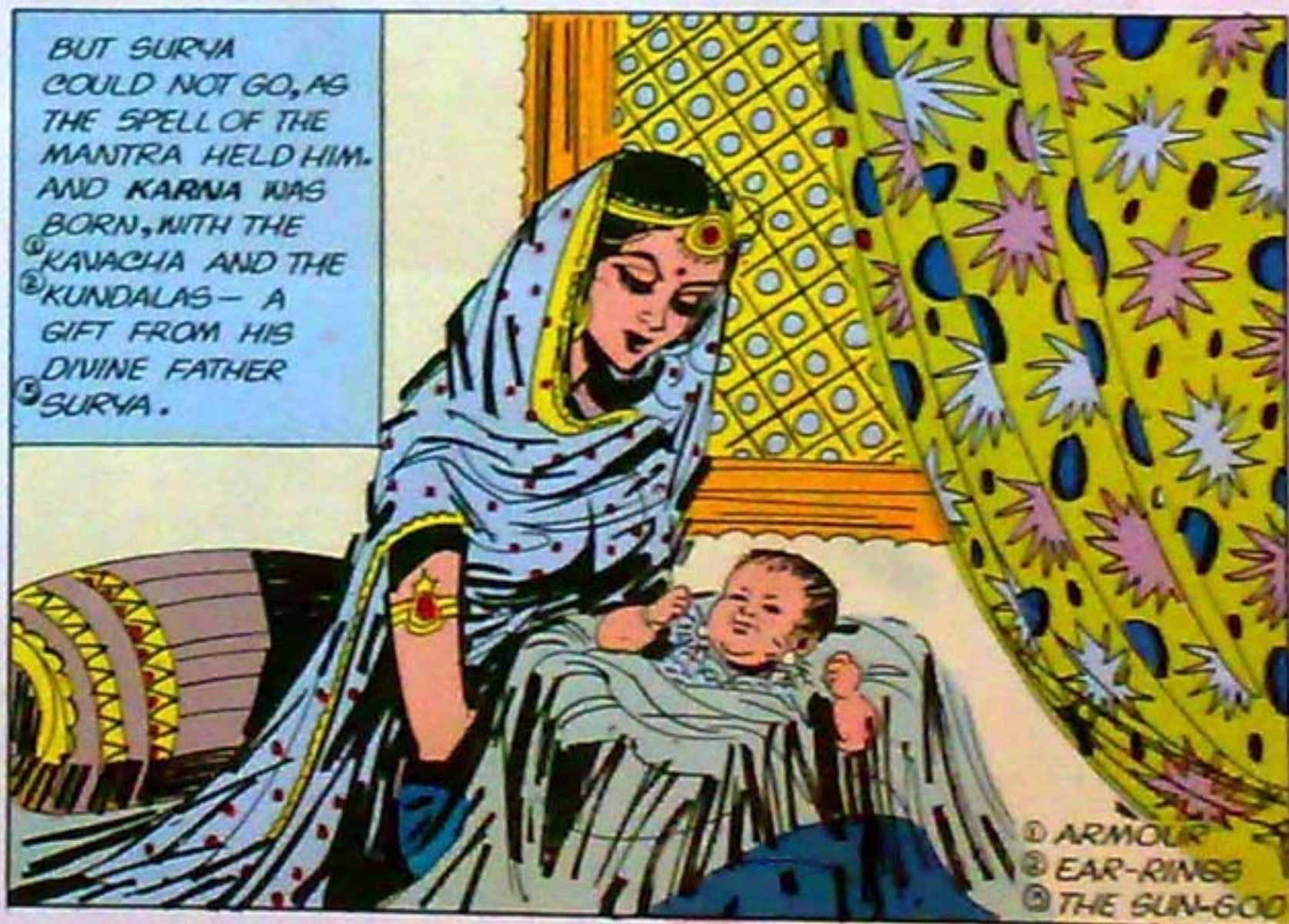
THE MANTRA OF COURSE WORKED.

YOU SHALL HAVE THE SON YOU DESIRE.

BUT I AM NOT MARRIED. I WAS ONLY CURIOUS TO SEE IF YOU WOULD COME. PLEASE, PLEASE GO BACK.



BUT SURYA COULD NOT GO, AS THE SPELL OF THE MANTRA HELD HIM. AND KARNA WAS BORN, WITH THE
① KAVACHA AND THE
② KUNDALAS - A GIFT FROM HIS DIVINE FATHER
③ SURYA.



① ARMOUR
② EAR-RINGS
③ THE SUN-GOD



FURTHER DOWN THE RIVER A CHILDLESS CHARIOTEER ADHIRATHA SAW THE BASKET AND LOOKED INTO IT.



AH! WHAT A BEAUTIFUL CHILD, ABANDONED BY SOME HEARTLESS MOTHER, NO DOUBT.



HE TOOK THE CHILD HOME TO HIS WIFE, RADHA.

LET US CALL HIM VASUSHENA OF THE KAVACHA AND KUNDALAS.



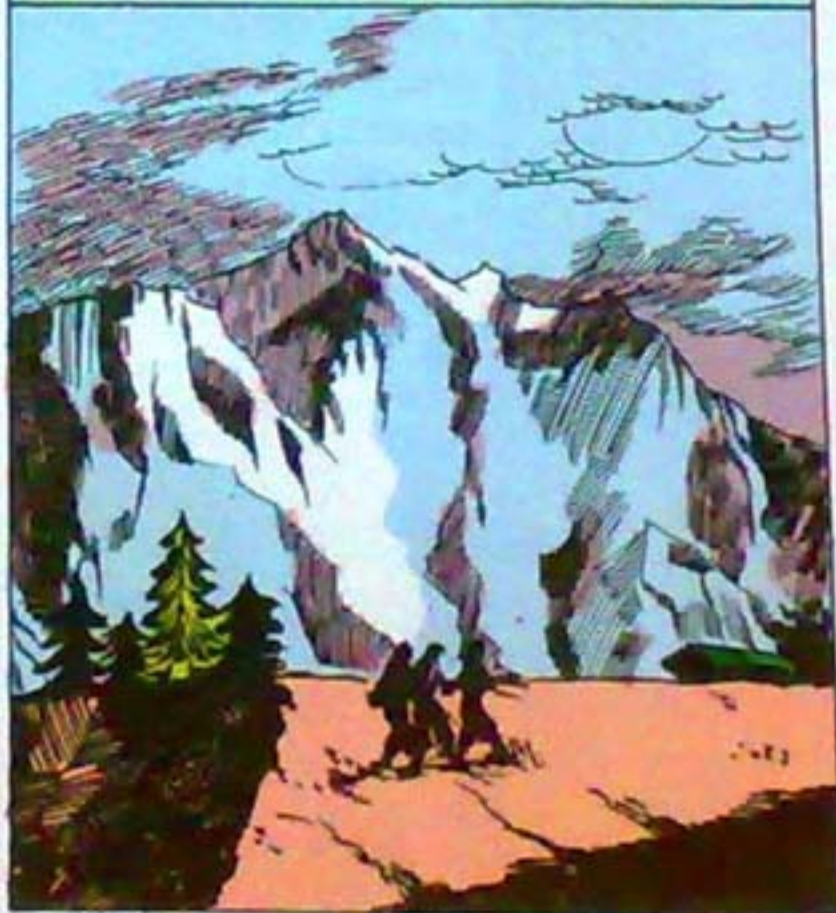
KARNA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD
WAS A HAPPY ONE.



KUNTI MEANWHILE HAD MARRIED
KING PANDU OF HASTINAPURA,
WHO RULED THE KINGDOM FOR
HIS BLIND BROTHER
DHRITARASHTRA.



BUT KING PANDU BECAUSE OF A
CURSE COULD NOT HAVE CHILDREN.
SO HE RETIRED WITH HIS TWO
QUEENS, KUNTI AND MADRI, TO A
QUIET LIFE IN THE HIMALAYAS.



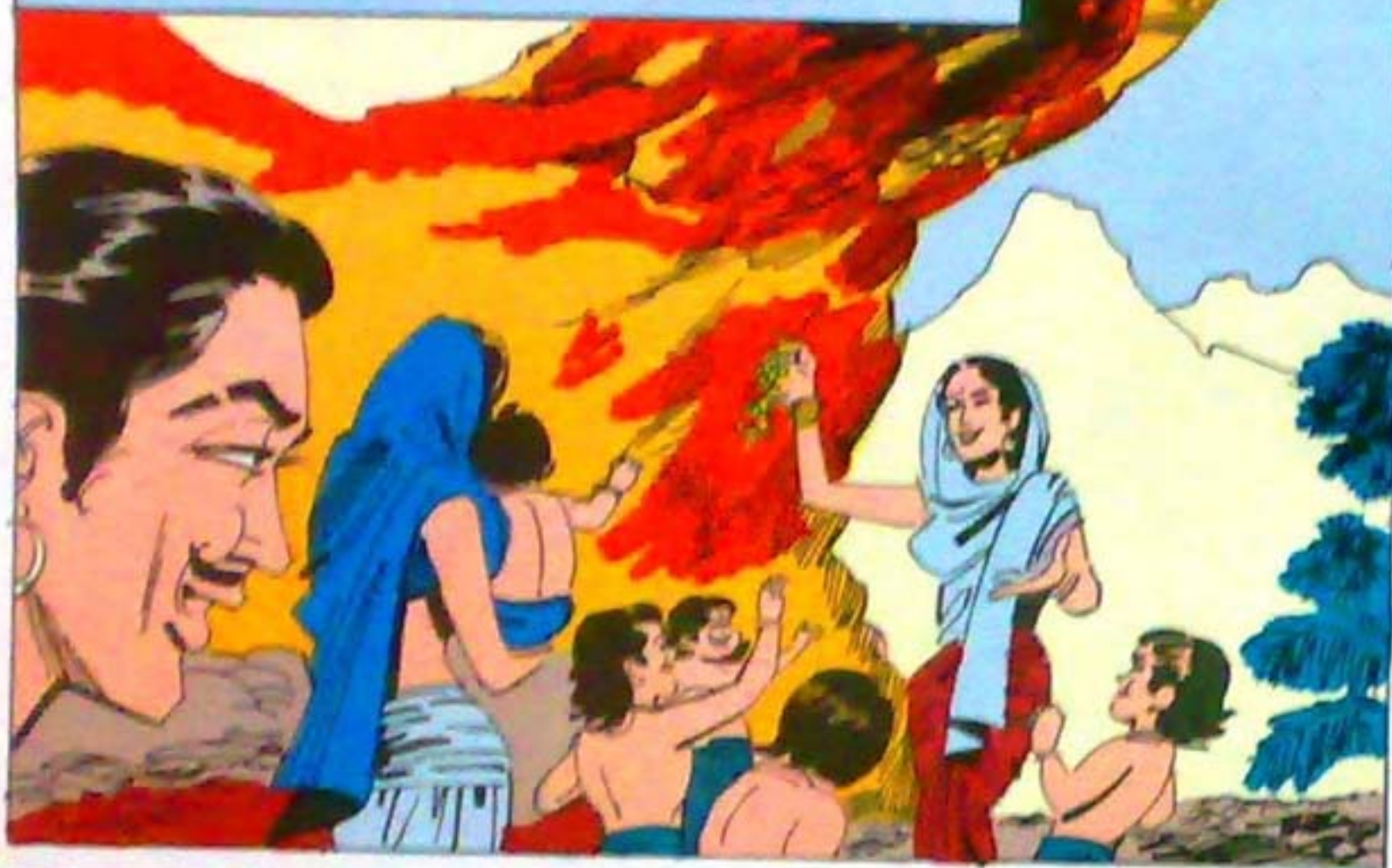
BUT ONE DAY -

DEAREST ONE,
HOW I SORROW
WHEN I SEE
YOUR CHILDLESS
STATE!

DO NOT
GRIEVE, MY LORD.
I KNOW
OF A WAY OUT
BUT I HAVE NOT
TOLD YOU
ABOUT IT.



WITH THE HELP OF THE MANTRA, KUNTI AND MADRI HAD FIVE SONS IN ALL - THE PANDAVA PRINCES.



WHEN PANDU DIED, MADRI BURNT HERSELF ON THE FUNERAL PYRE. KUNTI TOOK THE FIVE PRINCES, YUDHISHTHIRA (SON OF DHARMA), BHEEMA (SON OF VAYU), ARJUNA (SON OF INDRA), NAKULA AND SAHADEVA (SONS OF THE ASVINI TWINS), TO HASTINAPURA.



FROM THE BEGINNING A BITTER RIVALRY SPRANG UP BETWEEN THE COUSINS. THE KAURAVA PRINCES WERE UNHAPPY.

OUR COUSINS HAVE COME AND SPOILT OUR LIFE.

BHEEMA TORMENTS ME ON THE PLAYGROUND AND HAUNTS MY DREAMS.



AND KARNA WHO OFTEN CAME TO HASTINAPURA WATCHED.

BHEEMA IS UNFAIR! POOR DURVODHANA.



DRONACHARVA, MASTER IN THE PRINCELY ARTS, TAUGHT THE PRINCES.

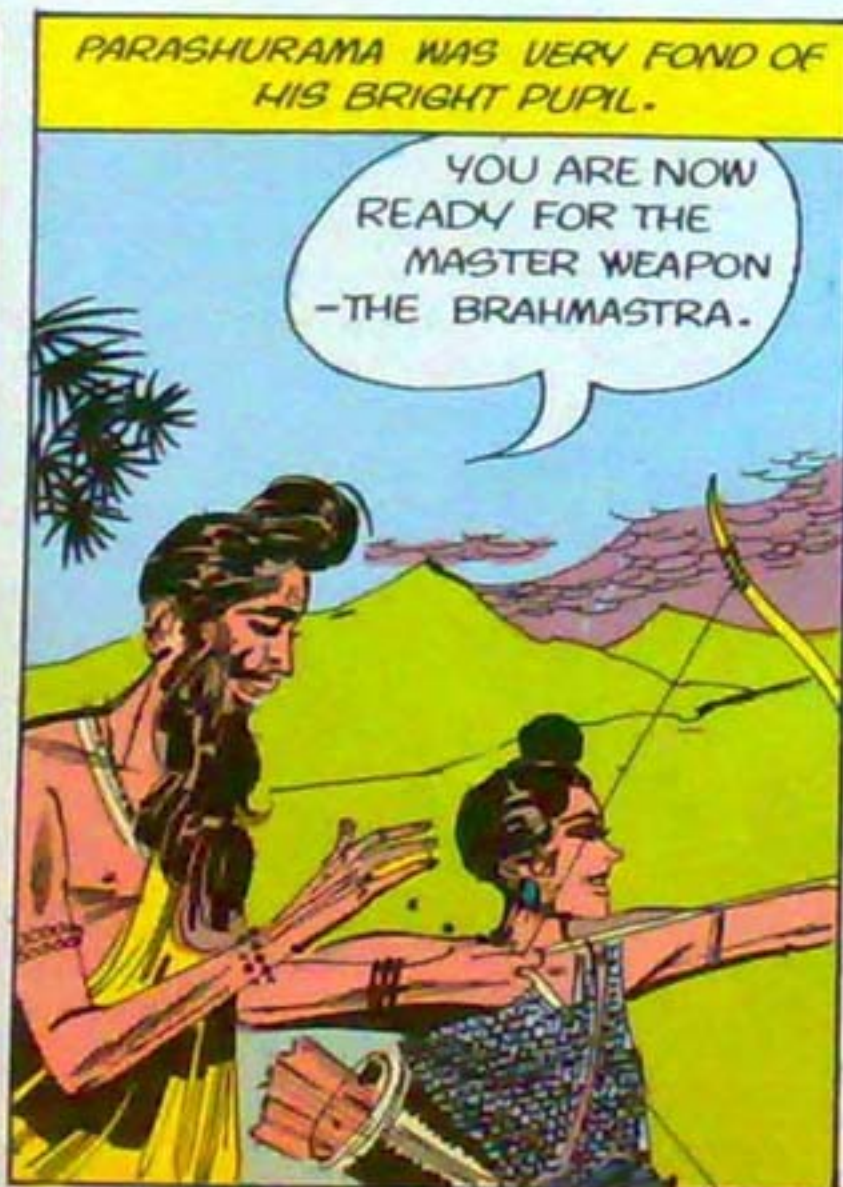
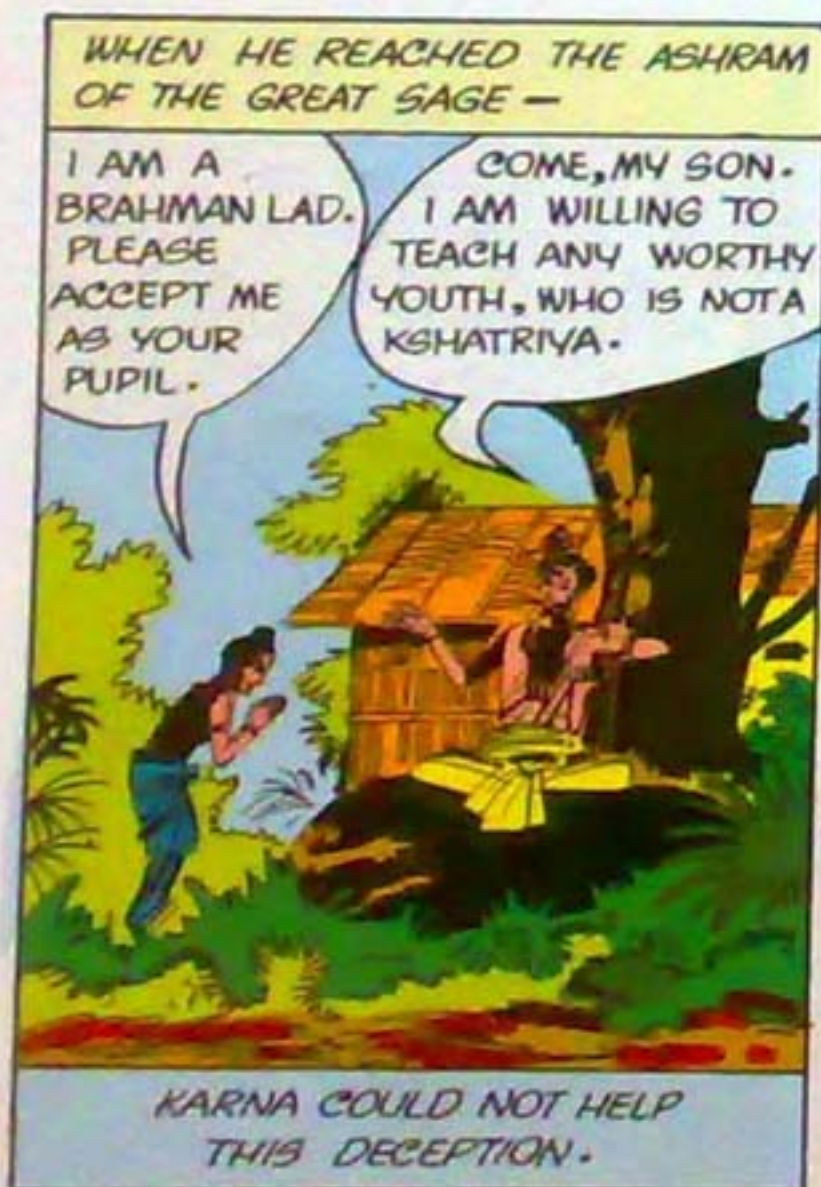
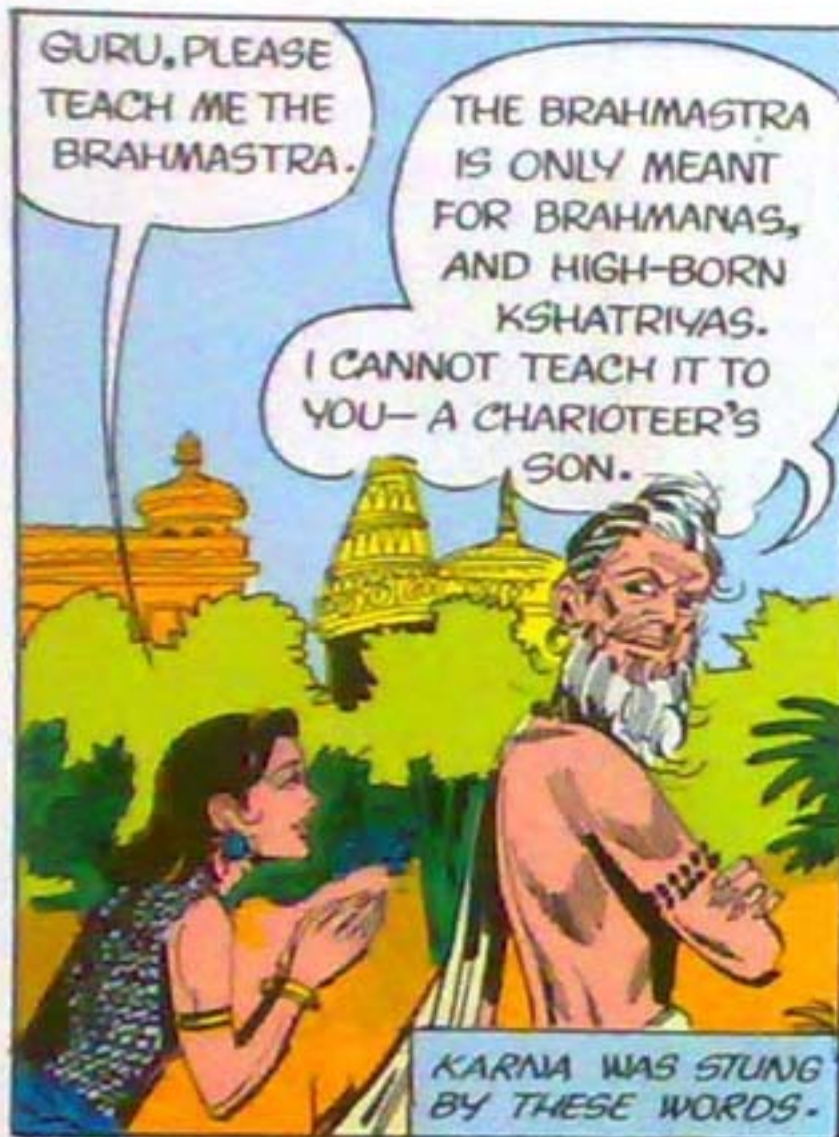
ARJUNA'S SKILL IN ARCHERY IS UNMATCHED BY ANY OF US. I FEAR THOSE PRINCES WILL RULE US ONE DAY.



KARNA TOO BECAME HIS PUPIL. BUT—

HE IS PARTIAL TO ARJUNA. HE WILL NEVER LET ME SURPASS HIM.





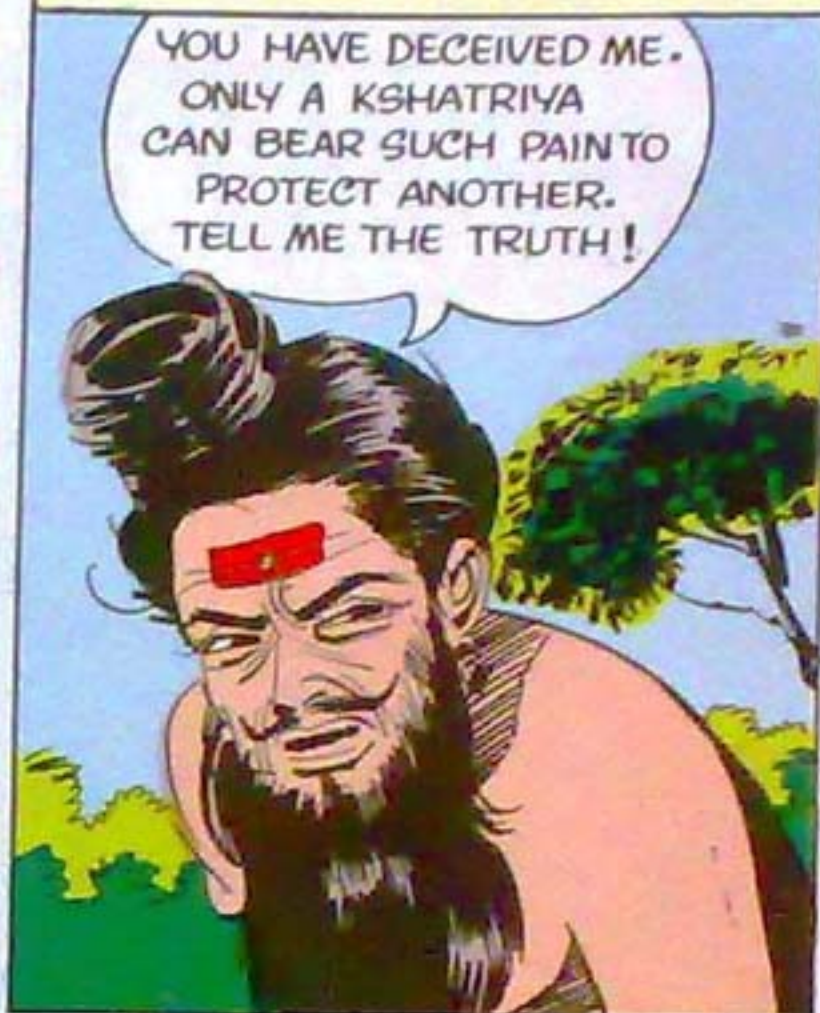
THEN ONE DAY WHILE PARASHURAMA
WAS RESTING WITH HIS HEAD ON
KARNA'S LAP -



AH! HOW THE LITTLE
INSECT STINGS. BUT
I WILL NOT DISTURB
YOUR REST, BELOVED
MASTER. SLEEP ON.

AND THE SOUND ALECK BUT
KARNA DID NOT STOP.

WHEN THE SAGE WOKE UP AND SAW
THE BLOOD -



YOU HAVE DECEIVED ME.
ONLY A KSHATRIYA
CAN BEAR SUCH PAIN TO
PROTECT ANOTHER.
TELL ME THE TRUTH!

KARNA CONFESSED.



I AM THE SON OF
ADHIRATHA,
THE CHARIOTEER,
A SUTAPUTRA.
FORGIVE ME, SIR.

THE ENRAGED SAGE CURSED KARNA.

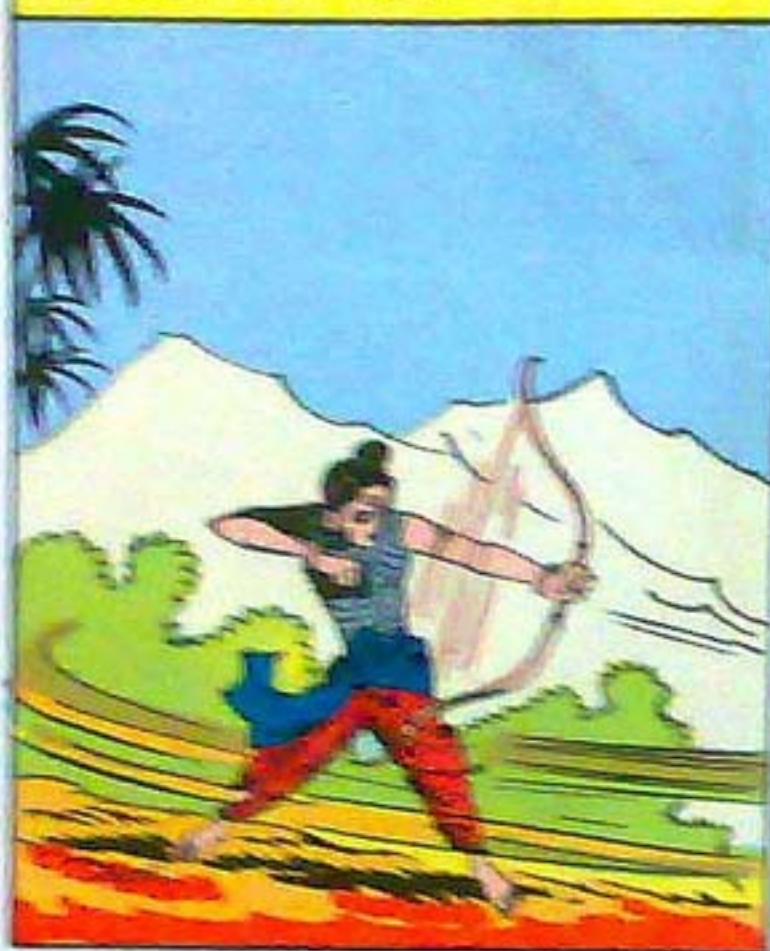


FOR DECEIVING YOUR
GURU, YOUR
KNOWLEDGE WILL
FAIL YOU WHEN YOU
NEED IT MOST!

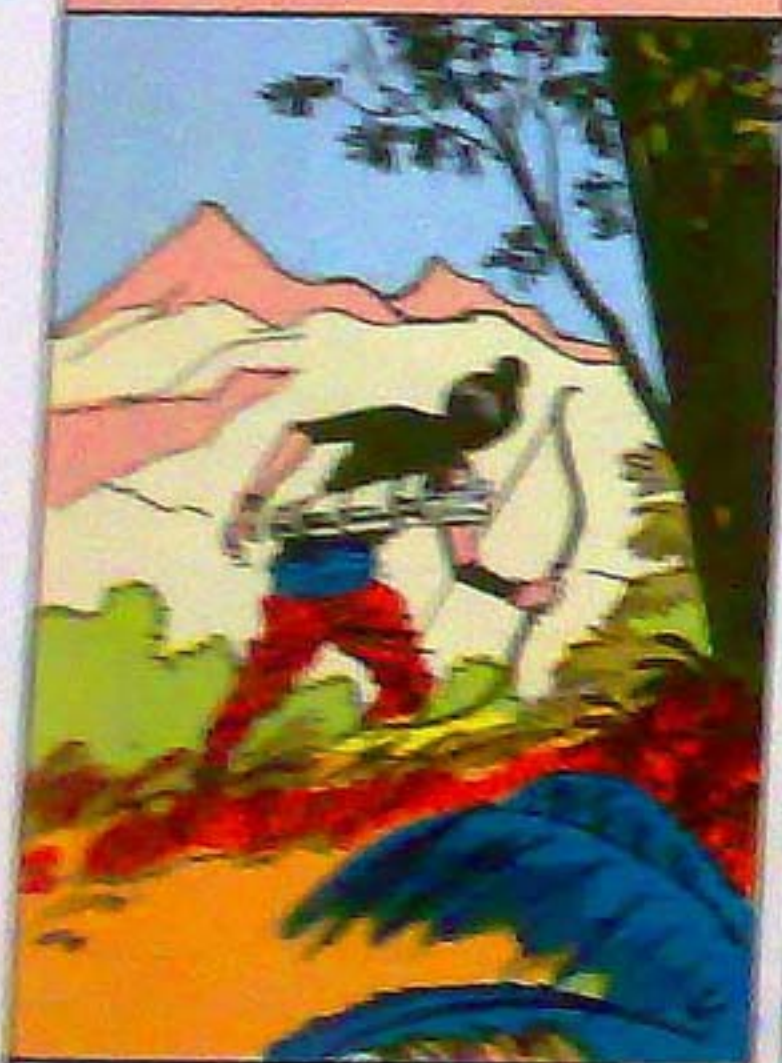
AS HE WALKED AHEAD, THE TIGER
DEJECTEDLY WENT AWAY, AS IF
WHERE HE WAS GOING.



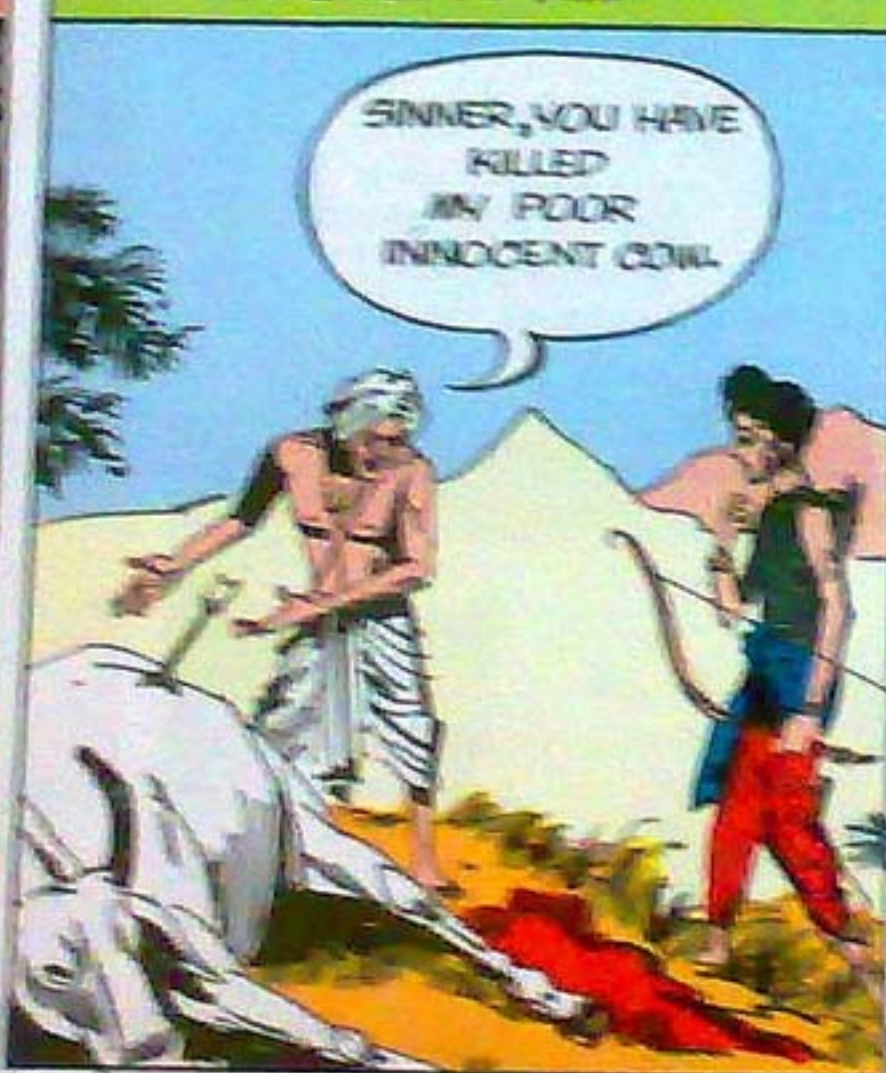
SUDDENLY AN ANIMAL RUSHED PAST
AND WITHOUT THINKING HE DREW
HIS BOW AND KILLED IT.



AS HE WALKED THROUGH
THE DEAD ANIMAL -



A GOATMAN WENT
ANGRY AT HIM.



IGNORING KARNA'S ATTEMPTS TO EXPLAIN, THE BRAHMIN CURSED HIM.

YOU TOO WILL BE KILLED WHEN YOU ARE HELPLESS TO DEFEND YOURSELF. EVEN AS YOU KILLED MY HELPLESS SON.

KARNA SADLY RETURNED TO THE ONE PERSON WHO KNEW AND LOVED HIM—HIS MOTHER.

IT SEEMS AS IF FATE IS AGAINST ME. I WONDER WHAT FURTHER HUMILIATIONS SHE HAS IN STORE FOR ME.

HE STAYED WITH HER A FEW DAYS. THEN ONE DAY—

MOTHER, I HEAR THAT AN OPEN TOURNAMENT IS TO BE HELD AT HASTINAPURA. I WILL COMPETE. A VALIANT WARRIOR WILL FIND HIS PLACE AMONG THE VALIANT.

WHAT KARNA HAD HEARD
WAS TRUE.

YOU ARE
READY FOR AN
EXHIBITION AND
AN OPEN
CONTEST OF
YOUR SKILLS.

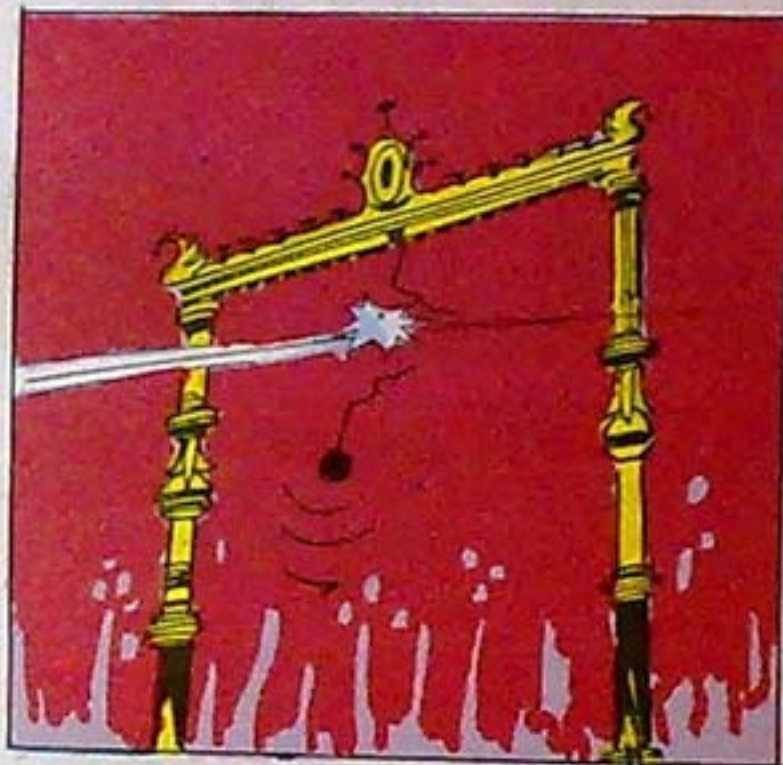
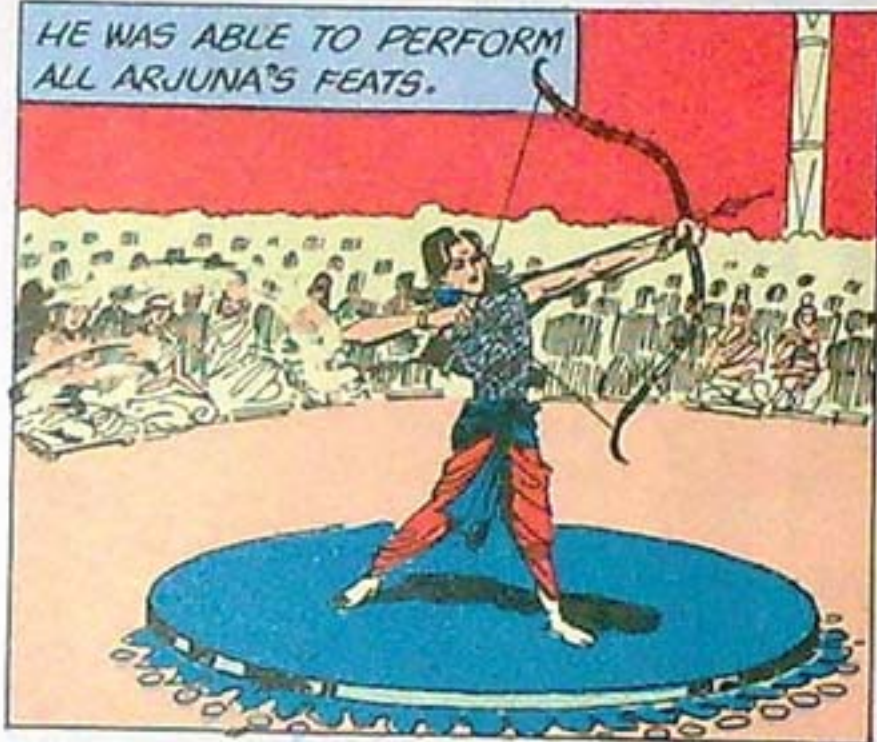
AFTER A CONSULTATION WITH THE
KURU ELDERS, THE DAY WAS FIXED.

WITH HIS SPLENDID FEATS ARJUNA WAS EASILY THE
CHAMPION OF THE DAY.

SUDDENLY THERE WAS A COMMOTION AND ALL EYES WERE TURNED TOWARDS THE ENTRANCE. A FIGURE ENTERED ON THE SCENE—IT WAS KARNA.

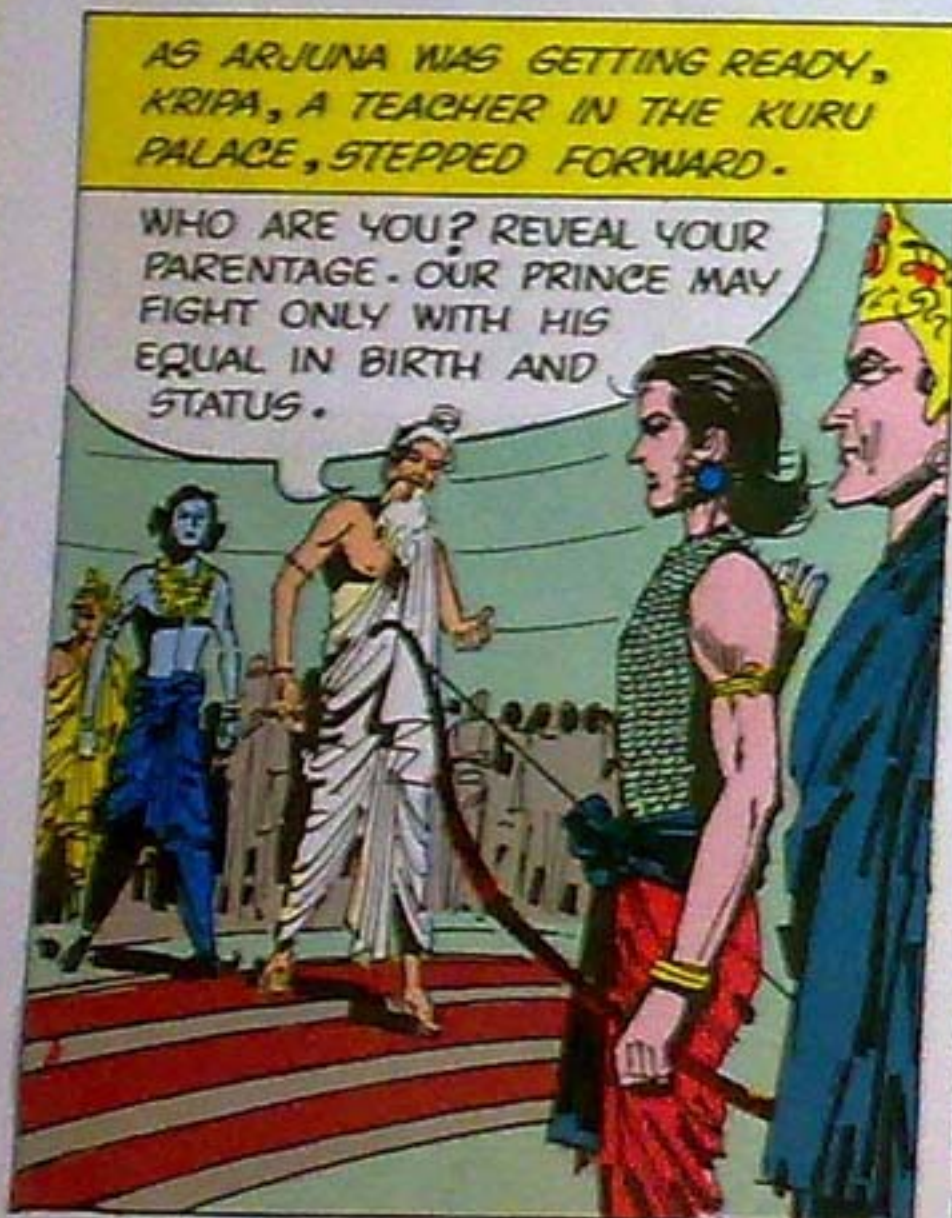


HE WAS ABLE TO PERFORM ALL ARJUNA'S FEATS.



BRAVO!

WELL DONE!



THE NOBLE DURYODHANA CAME
TO HIS RESCUE.



JUST THEN ADHIRATHA
WALKED FEEBLY TO-
WARDS THE STAGE.



BHEEMA SUDDENLY ROARED
WITH AMUSEMENT.



DURYODHANA COULD HARDLY
CONTAIN HIS ANGER AS HE LED
KARNA AWAY FROM THE HUMILI-
-ATING SCENE.



AS THEY DROVE AWAY IN DURYODHANA'S CHARIOT-

IT IS STRANGE!
I FEEL SAFE
FROM THE
PANDAVAS, ALREADY.
WHAT POWER
DOES THIS KARNA
HAVE THAT MAKES
ME FEEL SO?

DURYODHANA YOU HAVE NOT
BEFRIENDED ME IN VAIN. I WILL
KILL ARJUNA IN SINGLE
COMBAT ONE DAY!
I WILL!



AS THE YEARS PASSED, RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE COUSINS ONLY
WORSENERD. KARNA, IMPELLED
BY HIS LOVE FOR DURYODHANA,
BLINDLY TOOK HIS SIDE. YUDHISH-
THIRA WAS CHEATED AT A GAME
OF DICE, DEPRIVED OF HIS KING-
DOM AND BANISHED FOR
THIRTEEN YEARS, WITH HIS BROTHERS
AND QUEEN DRAUPADI. AT THE END
OF THE PERIOD THE PANDAVAS
OPTED FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLE-
MENT. BUT DURYODHANA, ENCOUR-
AGED BY KARNA, AND AGAINST
THE WISHES OF HIS ELDERS,
REFUSED TO NEGOTIATE. IF THE
PANDAVAS WANTED THEIR KINGDOM
THEY WOULD HAVE TO FIGHT FOR IT.



IN THE HEAVENS INDRA WAS
CONCERNED ABOUT ARJUNA...

IF KARNA IS DEPRIVED OF
HIS KAVACHA AND KUNDALAS,
MY SON ARJUNA
NEED FEAR NO
MORTALS



...AND SURYA ABOUT KARNA.

IF INDRA INTERVENES,
MY SON HAS NO
CHANCE. I MUST
WARN KARNA.



SURYA TRIED TO WARN HIS
SON IN A DREAM.

LORD INDRA WILL
TRY TO TAKE
ADVANTAGE OF YOUR
GENEROSITY. DO
NOT PART WITH
YOUR KAVACHA
AND KUNDALAS



INDRA APPROACHED KARNA IN
THE GUISE OF A BRAHMAN.

I BEG FOR ALMS.
KARNA, IT IS SAID,
REFUSES NOTHING
TO THOSE WHO ASK.
I WANT YOUR
KAVACHA AND
KUNDALAS.



DESPITE SURYA'S WARNINGS,
KARNA, THE GENEROUS, PARTED
WITH THE KAVACHA AND KUNDALA'S.

MY LORD, I KNOW WHO
YOU ARE AND WHY YOU
ARE HERE. YET, I GIVE
TO YOU MY VERY LIFE.
NEVER LET IT BE SAID
THAT KARNA REFUSED
ANYONE ANYTHING.



INDRA WAS TOUCHED.

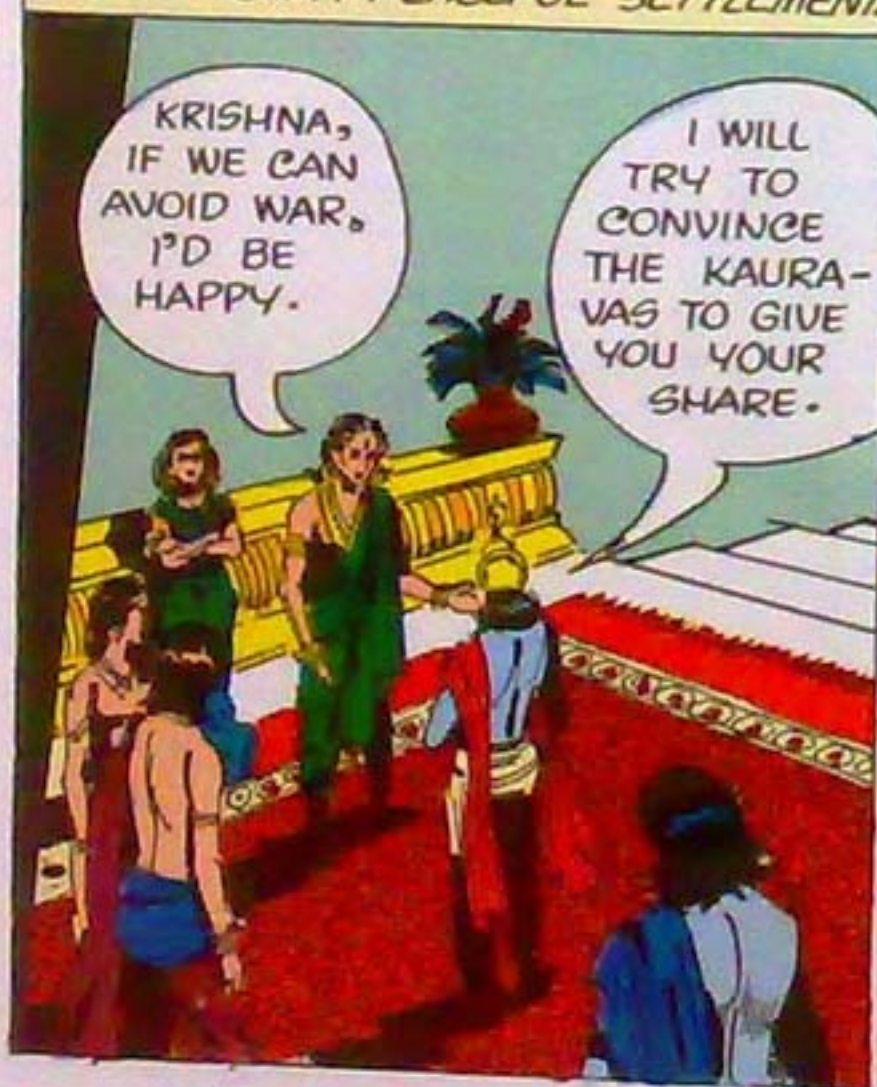
IN RETURN
I GRANT YOU MY
MASTER WEAPON
SHAKTI, BUT YOU MAY
USE IT ONLY ONCE.



THE PANDAVAS MEANWHILE STILL
HOPED FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT.

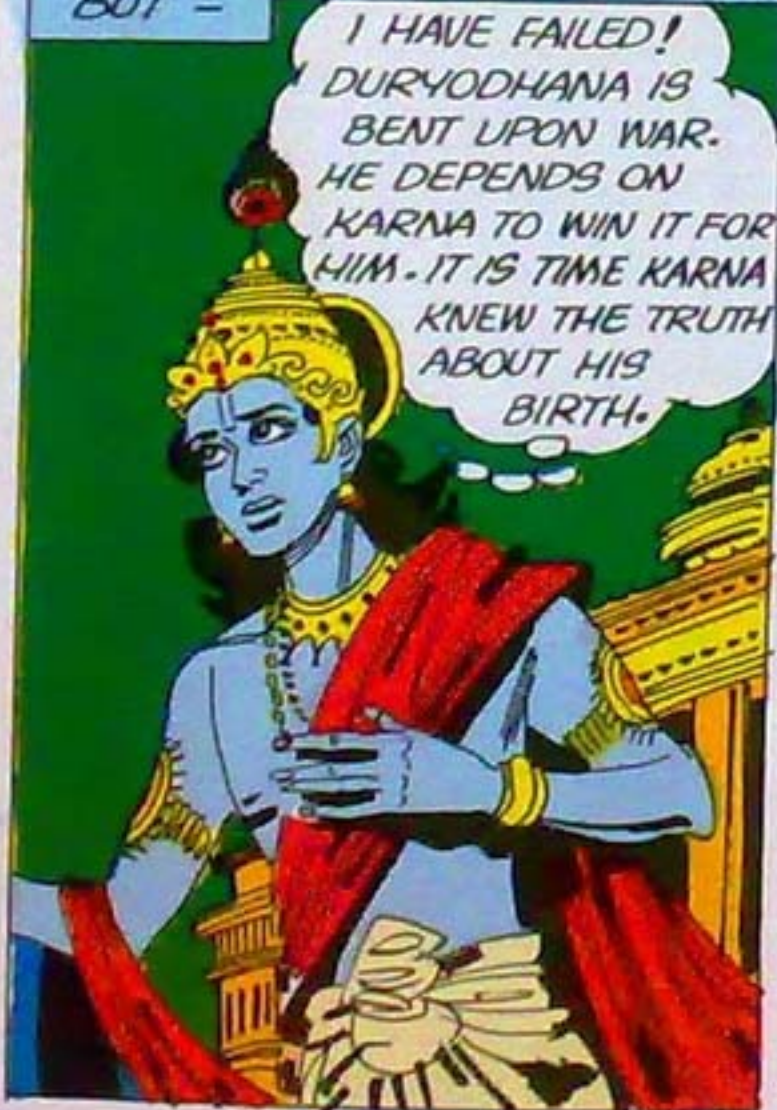
KRISHNA,
IF WE CAN
AVOID WAR,
I'D BE
HAPPY.

I WILL
TRY TO
CONVINCE
THE KAURA-
VAS TO GIVE
YOU YOUR
SHARE.



KRISHNA WENT TO HASTINAPURA.
BUT -

I HAVE FAILED!
DURYODHANA IS
BENT UPON WAR.
HE DEPENDS ON
KARNA TO WIN IT FOR
HIM. IT IS TIME KARNA
KNEW THE TRUTH
ABOUT HIS
BIRTH.



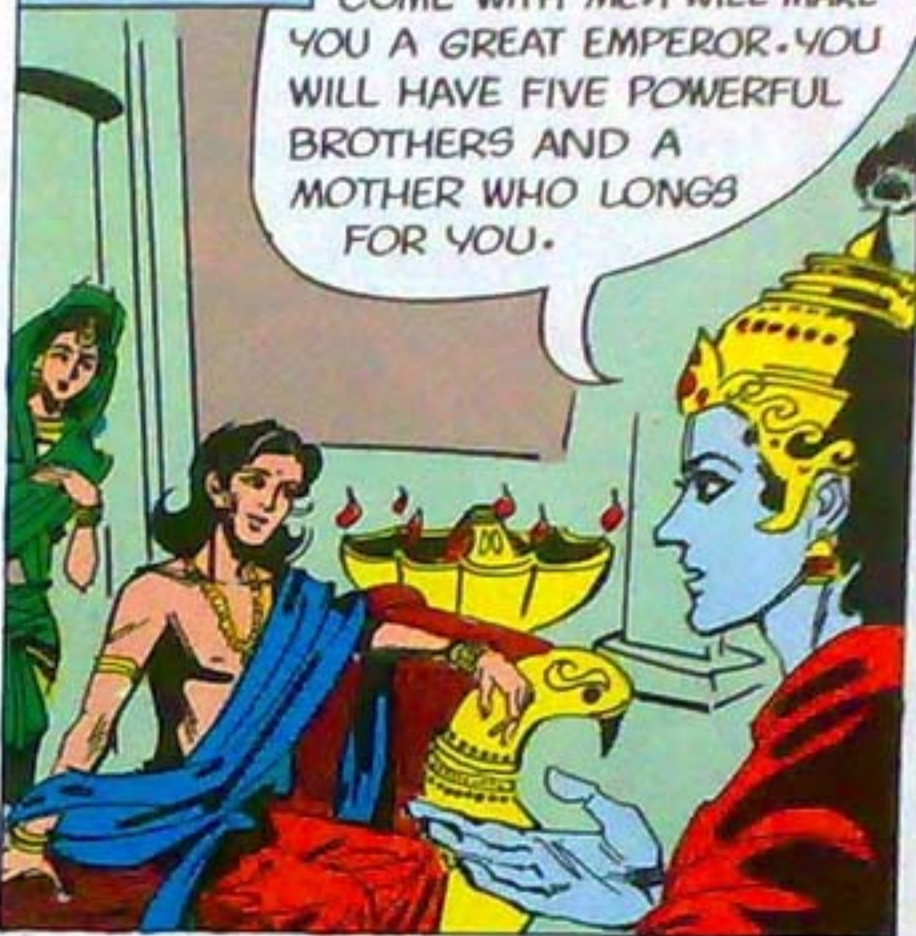
KRISHNA WENT TO KARNA AND TOLD HIM THE STORY OF HIS BIRTH. WHEN HE FINISHED —

COME WITH ME. I WILL MAKE YOU A GREAT EMPEROR. YOU WILL HAVE FIVE POWERFUL BROTHERS AND A MOTHER WHO LONGS FOR YOU.

KARNA WAS IN A TERRIBLE PREDICAMENT.

DURYODHANA'S LOVE IS WHAT I VALUE MOST IN MY LIFE. SO IF YOU REALLY HAVE MY INTEREST AT HEART PROMISE ME THAT YOU WILL KEEP THE SECRET OF MY BIRTH TILL I DIE.

I WILL!



WHEN KUNTI HEARD THAT KRISHNA'S TALKSHAD FAILED, SHE WAS FULL OF GRIEF.

I MUST NOW TELL KARNA WHO HE IS. THE WAR MAY YET BE AVERTED.

SHE WENT TO KARNA WHEN HE WAS AT THE END OF HIS MIDDAY PRAYERS.

MY MOTHER! HERE! WHAT CAN SHE WANT?

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, O QUEEN?



SHE TOO RELATED TO KARNA THE STORY OF HIS BIRTH AND PLEADED WITH HIM NOT TO FIGHT HIS BROTHERS.

SEE, EVEN LORD SURYA, YOUR FATHER, JOINING ME IN MY REQUEST.

MOTHER, WHAT YOU ASK ME TO DO IS AGAINST MY DHARMA.



BUT HE WOULD NOT LET HIS MOTHER'S PLEAS GO IN VAIN.

I WILL FIGHT AGAINST YOUR SONS, MY BROTHERS, BUT I WILL NOT KILL ANY EXCEPT ARJUNA. YOU SHALL STILL HAVE FIVE SONS ALIVE AND I MY HONOUR.



KUNTI BLESSED KARNA AND LEFT HIM WITH MIXED FEELINGS.



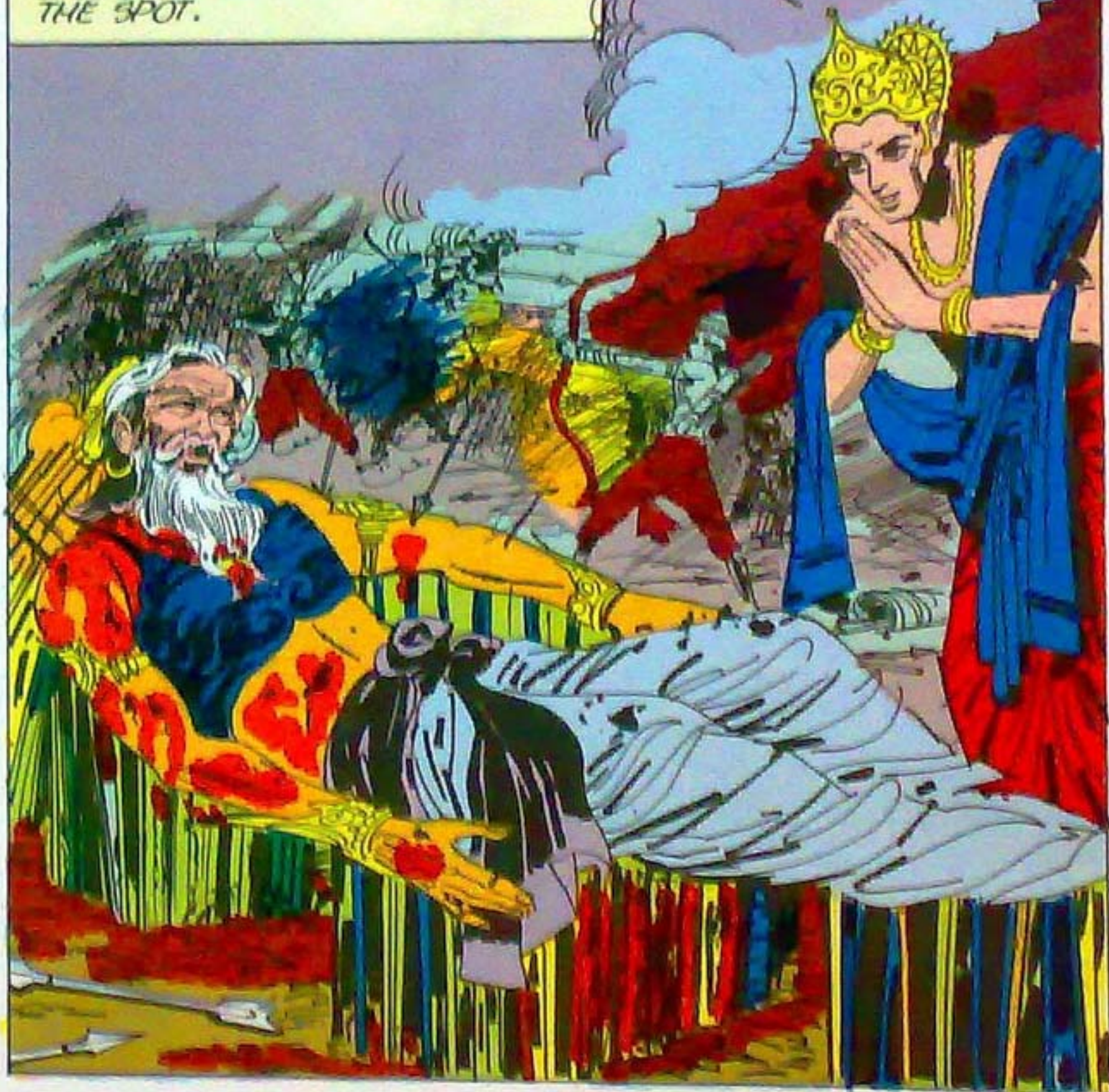
BHISHMA HAD TO LEAD THE KAURAVA ARMY. WHEN KARNA HEARD THAT, HE WENT TO DURYODHANA.

BHISHMA HAS NEVER LIKED ME, AND I WILL NOT TAKE ORDERS FROM HIM. I WILL ENTER THE FIELD ONLY WHEN HE HAS FALLEN.



AND SO THE BATTLE OF KURUKSHETRA BECAME A REALITY. IT LASTED FOR 28 LONG DAYS. MANY VALIANT MEN WERE LOST ON EITHER SIDE. THE VENERABLE COMMANDER BHEESHMA, OF THE KAURAVA ARMIES, FELL ON THE TENTH DAY. HE FELL ON A BED OF ARROWS - STICKING OUT FROM HIS OWN ARMOUR. KARNA HAD ALWAYS LONGED FOR THE GRANDSIRE'S LOVE. WHEN HE HEARD THAT HE LAY WOUNDED, KARNA RUSHED TO THE SPOT.

MY LORD!
I HAVE NEVER BEEN
FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO
BE LIKED BY YOU. YET I
HAVE COME TO PAY MY
RESPECTS TO YOU AND
TO ASK FOR YOUR
BLESSINGS.





DEAR KARNA! I KNEW WHO YOU WERE.
YOUR FIRM LOYALTY TO DURYODHANA
IS YOUR CHOSEN DHARMA. MAY
YOU LEAD HIS FORCES TO
VICTORY! GO FIGHT YOUR
FATED ENEMIES.

IN A HURRIED COUNCIL, IT WAS DECIDED
THAT DRONA SHOULD NOW COMMAND
THE KAURAVA FORCES.



I DID HOPE THAT
YOU WOULD
LEAD US,
KARNA.

IT IS BEST THAT
DRONA LEAD US. LET
THERE BE NO
JEALOUSY AMONG
OUR HEROES AT
THIS STAGE.

AND SO THE BATTLE RAGED ON. IT WAS THE FOURTEENTH DAY. KARNA WAS ENGAGED IN FIGHTING BHEEMA. KARNA COULD EASILY HAVE KILLED HIM, BUT -



FORGIVE ME, DURYODHANA. I HAVE BHEEMA AT MY MERCY BUT I CANNOT KILL HIM. I HAVE PROMISED MY MOTHER. AH! ARJUNA COMES TO DEFEND BHEEMA. I AM LUCKY.

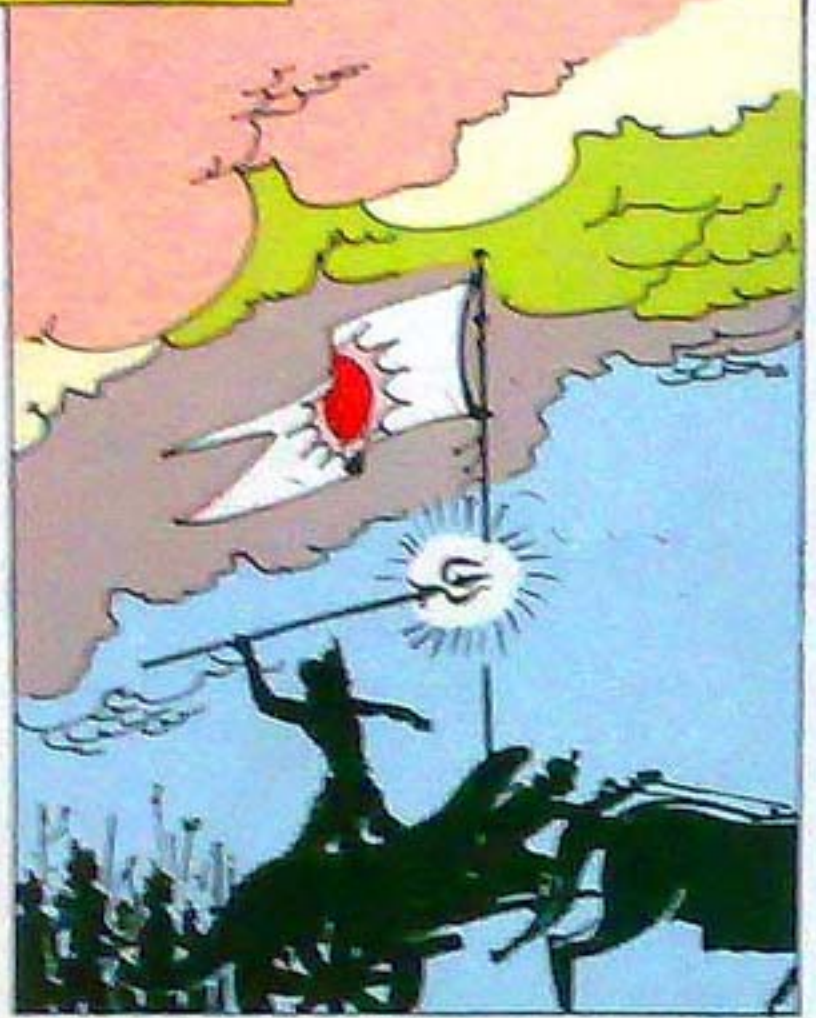


THAT DAY THE BATTLE CONTINUED INTO THE NIGHT. THIS WAS LUCKY FOR BHEEMA'S SON GHATOTKACHA AND HIS RAKSHASA FORCES, FOR RAKSHASAS ARE STRONGEST AT NIGHT.

KILL THAT FELLOW IMMEDIATELY, KARNA. OR ELSE OUR WHOLE ARMY WILL BE VANQUISHED.



THE RE-FATED KARN, IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE, FORGOT HIMSELF AND USED THE INFALLIBLE SHAKTI-THE WEAPON OF INDRA.



ONCE MORE THE GODS HAD SMILED ON THE FAVOURED ARJUNA.



ALAS! I HAVE KILLED GHATOTRACHA BUT I HAVE LOST THE MIGHTIEST WEAPON SHAKTI WHICH I HAD MEANT TO USE ON ARJUNA.





AND THUS KARNA ASSUMED COMMAND OF THE KAIRATA FORCES. THAT DAY HE HAD NAVILA AT HIS MERCY.



MY CHILD, BE PROUD THAT YOU FOUGHT A DUEL WITH KARNA. NOW GO HOME TO ARJUNA AND TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.



I WOULD RATHER HE KILLED ME. OH THE SHAME OF IT!



ONE MORE DAY HAS PASSED AND ARJUNA STILL LIVES.

IT SHALL BE DONE!

IT IS THE SKILL OF KRISHNA, HIS CHARIOTEER, THAT KEEPS HIM ALIVE. IF ONLY YOU COULD CONVINCE SHALYA TO BE MY CHARIOTEER, VICTORY WILL BE OURS.



KARNA LEFT DURYODHANA
AND WENT TO HIS TENT.
THERE, AS HE LAY AWAKE—

TOMORROW I FIGHT ARJUNA
AND I MUST HONESTLY TRY TO
KILL HIM. BUT I KNOW MY
CHANCES ARE POOR.



HE TOSSED ABOUT RESTLESSLY.
IT WAS A DIFFICULT NIGHT FOR
HIM.

TOMORROW
I WILL TRY TO
FIGHT AND SPARE
YUDHISHTHIRA TOO.
MOTHER KUNTI
MUST KNOW HOW
I KEPT MY
PROMISE.

HOW I LONGED FOR HER
LOVE AND RECOGNITION!
AND IN THESE MOMENTS,
HOW I TREASURE THE
BOUNDLESS LOVE OF MOTHER
RADHA AND MY NOBLE
DURYODHANA.



THIS LAST THOUGHT FINALLY
LULLED HIM TO SLEEP.

THE NEXT DAY KARNA HAD HIS WISH TO ENGAGE YUDHISHTHIRA IN SINGLE COMBAT.

ARJUNA
SHALL AVENGE
ME.

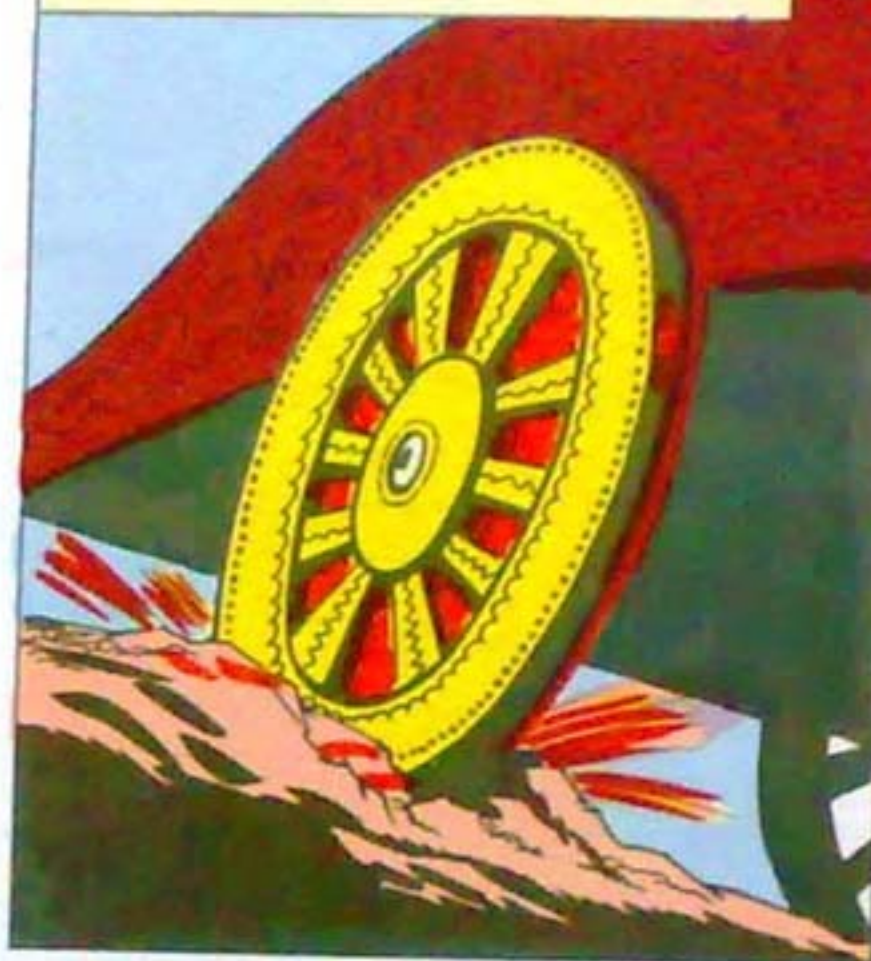
I SPARE YOUR LIFE,
YUDHISHTHIRA. YOU
CAN NEVER KILL ME
IN SINGLE COMBAT.
LEAVE YOUR SUPERI-
ORS TO THEIR
EQUALS.

WHEN ARJUNA HEARD
OF YUDHISHTHIRA'S
HUMILIATION, HE COULD
NOT WAIT TO ATTACK
KARNA. HE SOON HAD
THE CHANCE.

HOW WELL MY
BROTHER
WIELDS HIS
WEAPONS!

HE FIGHTS LIKE A
KING. IT IS HARD TO
BELIEVE THAT HE IS
ONLY A CHARIOTEER'S
SON!

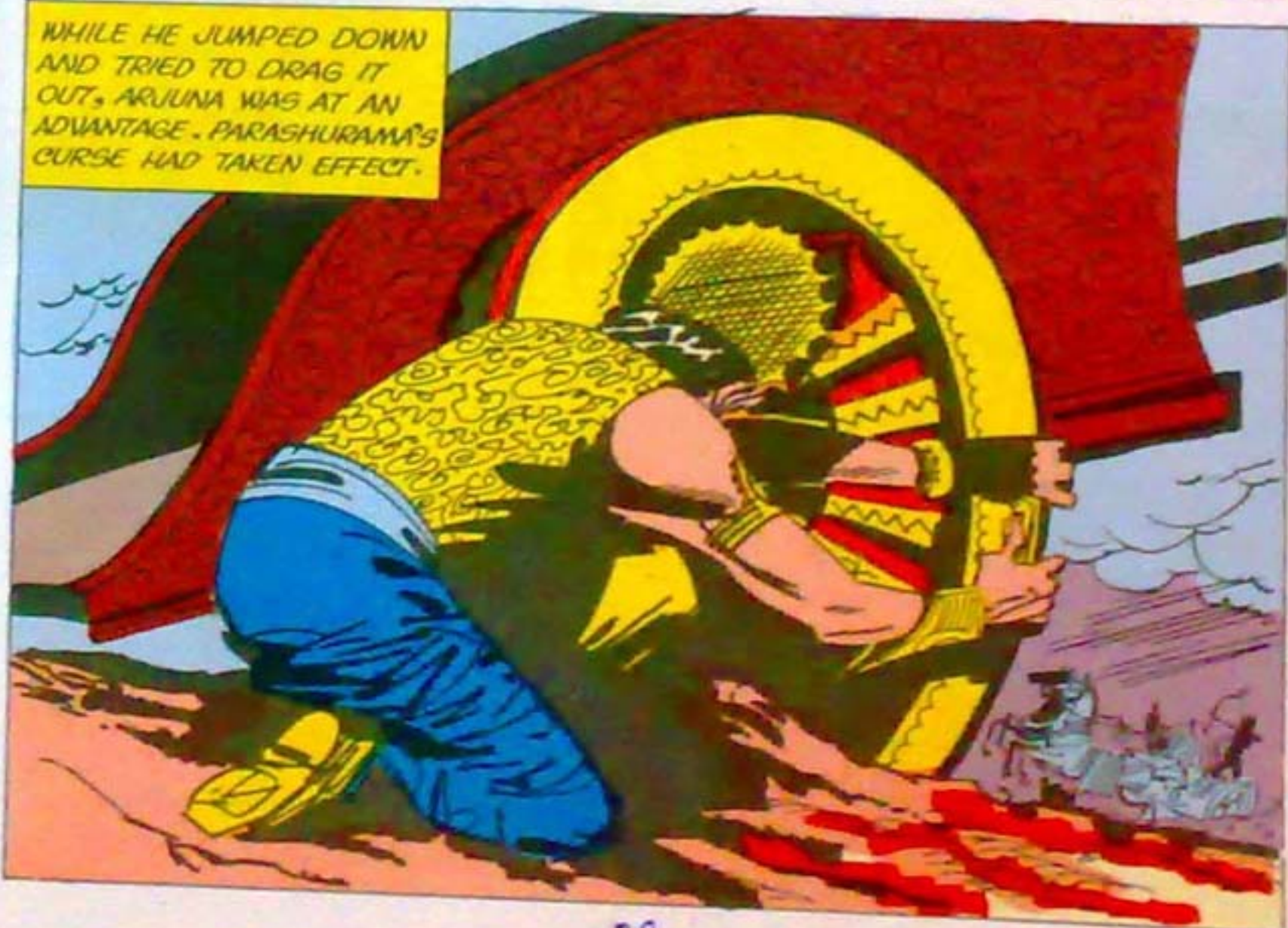
ALAS! FOR KARNA THE END WAS DRAWING NEAR. A WHEEL OF HIS CHARIOT SANK INTO THE GROUND.



MY MEMORY FAILS ME.
I CANNOT RECALL THE
MANTRAS OF THE GREAT
PARASHURAMA!



WHILE HE JUMPED DOWN
AND TRIED TO DRAG IT
OUT, ARJUNA WAS AT AN
ADVANTAGE. PARASHURAMA'S
CURSE HAD TAKEN EFFECT.



WHEN KARNA WAS THUS HELPLESS, ARJUNA,
WITH KRISHNA'S PROMPTING



.... SHOT AN ARROW THAT SEVERED THE HEAD
OF THE GREAT HERO FROM ITS BEAUTIFUL BODY.



THE CURSE OF THE BRAHMAN
HAD NOT BEEN IN VAIN.

WHEN KUNTI HEARD OF KARNA'S DEATH —

DEAR, DEAR, SON!
I CAST YOU OFF AT BIRTH
AND YOUR DEATH I CAN
BUT LAMENT IN
PRIVATE.



AFTER THE BATTLE, THE VICTORIOUS PANDAVAS PERFORMED THE DEATH CEREMONIES FOR THE DEAD.

WILL I HAVE THE
COURAGE TO SEND
YOUR SOUL ON ITS
JOURNEY AS
BEFITS YOUR
BIRTH?



JUST AS YUDHISHTHIRA HAD ENDED
WITH THE LAST OFFERING TO
THEIR KINGMEN —

WAIT! THERE IS
ONE MORE
LEFT.

WHO IS IT
THAT I HAVE
FORGOTTEN?



KARNA!

BUT WHY
SHOULD I DO
IT FOR KARNA?
KARNA, OUR ARCH
ENEMY, KARNA THE
CHARIOTEER'S
SON!



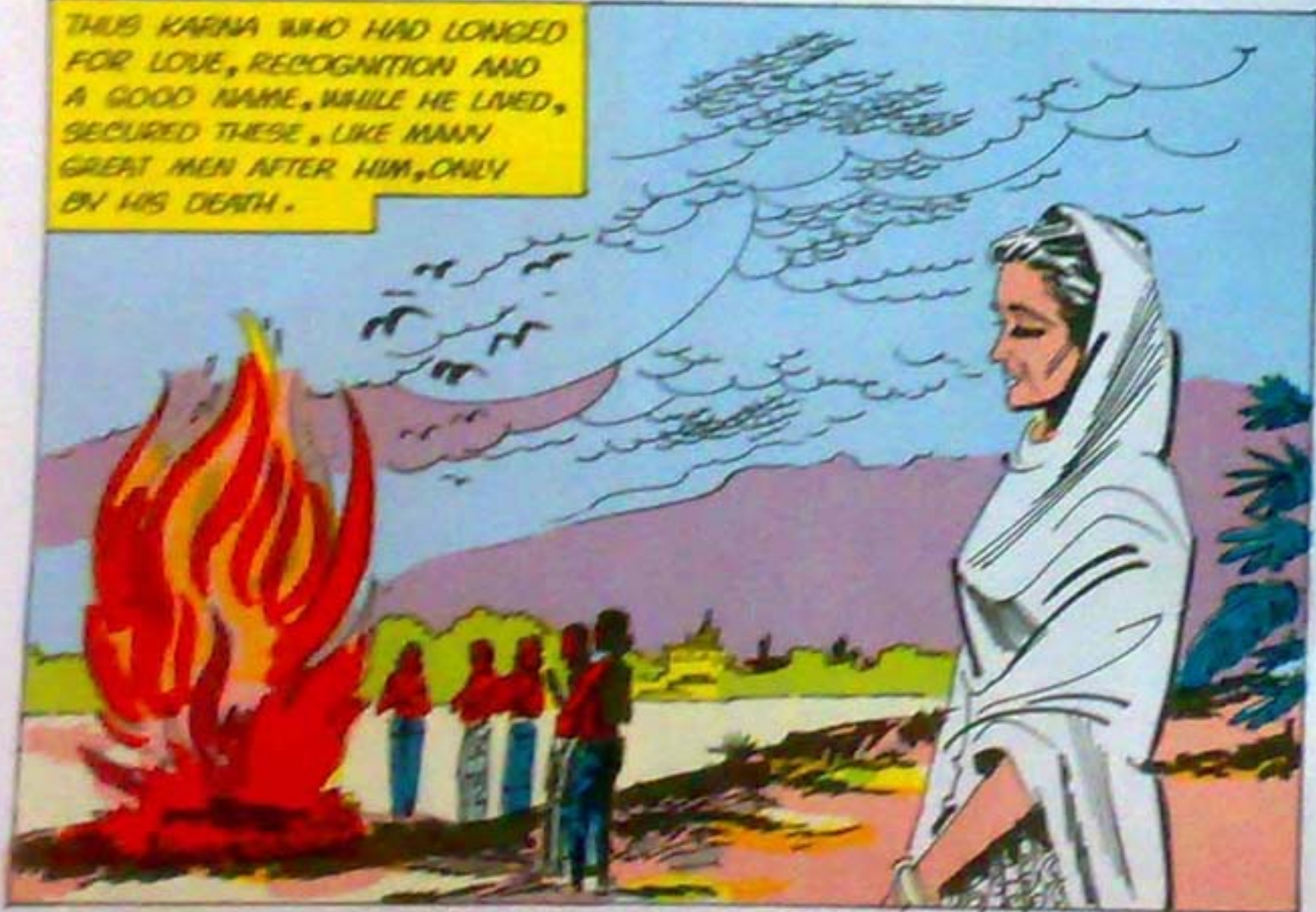
KUNTI THEN BROKE DOWN
AND TOLD HER TALE.



THE SUN SMILED. EACH OF THE
PANDAVAS REMEMBERED HIS
OWN ENCOUNTER WITH THE
DEAD BROTHER AND THEIR
HEARTS REACHED OUT TO HIM.

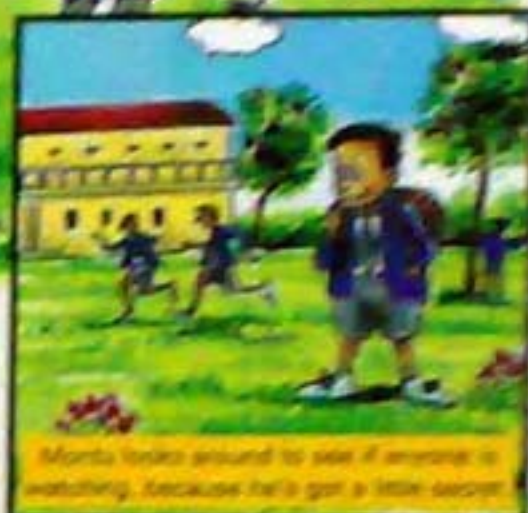


THUS KARNA WHO HAD LONGED
FOR LOVE, RECOGNITION AND
A GOOD NAME, WHILE HE LIVED,
SECURED THESE, LIKE MANY
GREAT MEN AFTER HIM, ONLY
BY HIS DEATH.



THE MANY MISADVENTURES OF MONTU, THE MAHAKID

Some heroes
are brave
Some are
clumsy.
But some
are like you
and me.



Win exciting prizes!



Konica Camera
Junior POP

Video Game



Maha Lacto
School Bag

Maha Lacto Caps



Send in your letters to
illustrating the rest of the
story in 4 panels on a
separate sheet of paper with
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