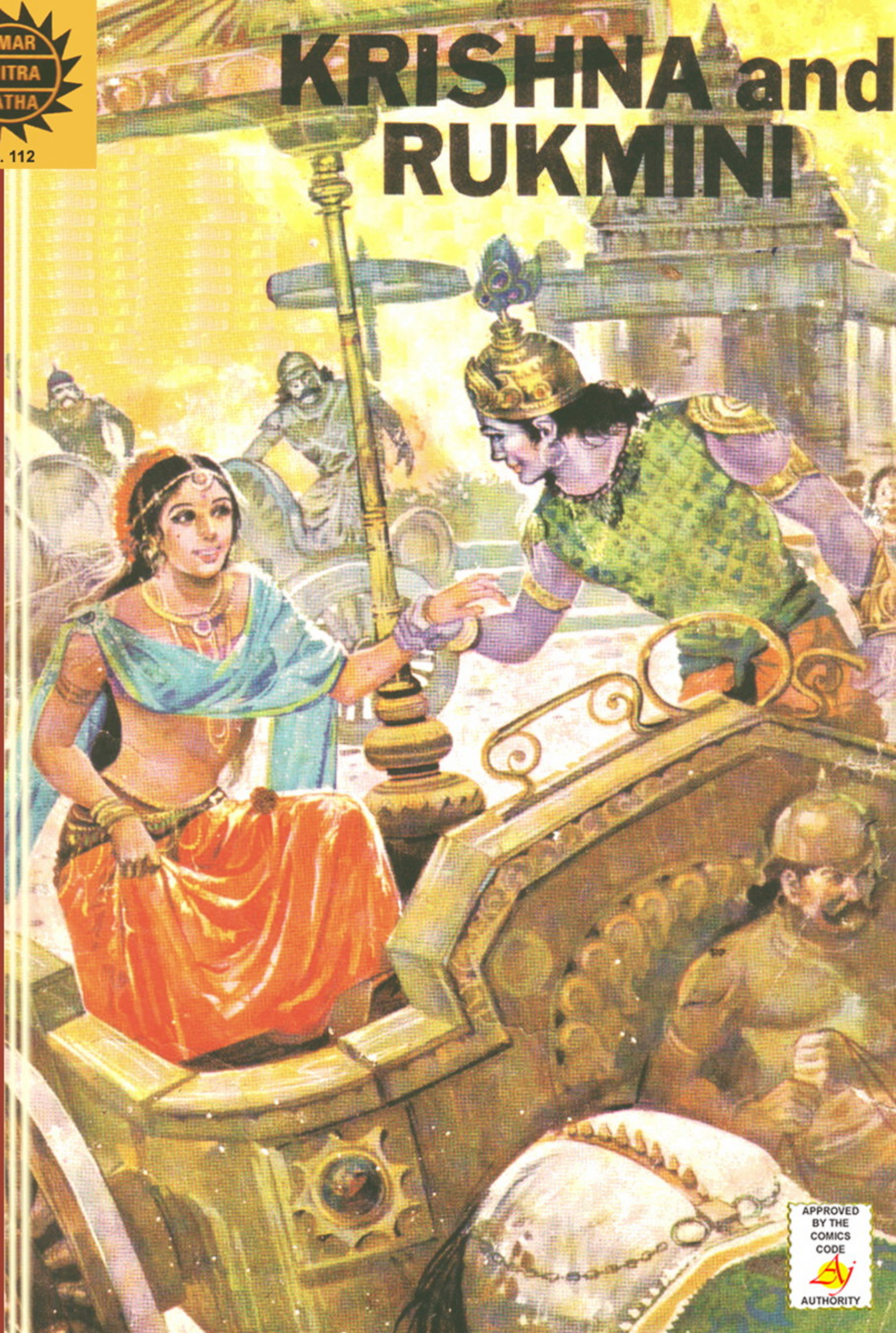


KRISHNA and RUKMINI

AMAR
CHITRA
KATHA



APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE



AUTHORITY

Krishna is the great lover of Indian mythology. Yet the details of the women he had wooed, won and wed are surprisingly limited and perhaps should be confined to his conquest of Rukmini. Here is the unalloyed romantic tale of none but the brave deserving the fair. Krishna here is the romantic hero par excellence who recklessly carries away his lady love under the very nose of his rivals.

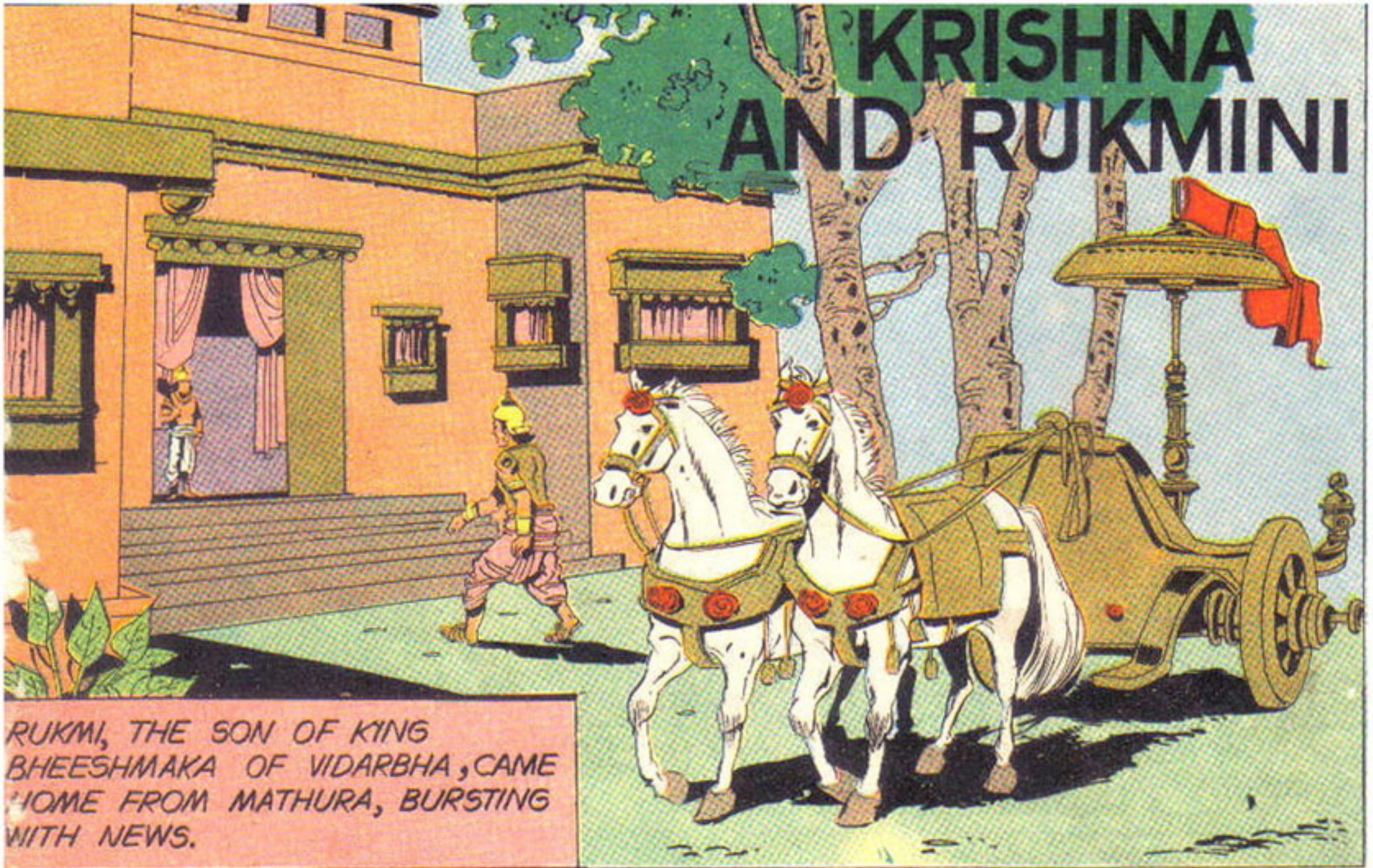
Rukmini is a perfect foil to Krishna in this idyllic tale. It is she who though coy, makes the first move, by confidently revealing her heart to her lover. She plans the details of their escapade too and proves how high the status of resourceful women was in ancient India.

This story has been so popular all over our country, through the centuries, that even today to most of us the word "Swayamvara" has specific reference to the story of Krishna and Rukmini. And it is ironical that in the conventional sense it was hardly a Swayamvara.

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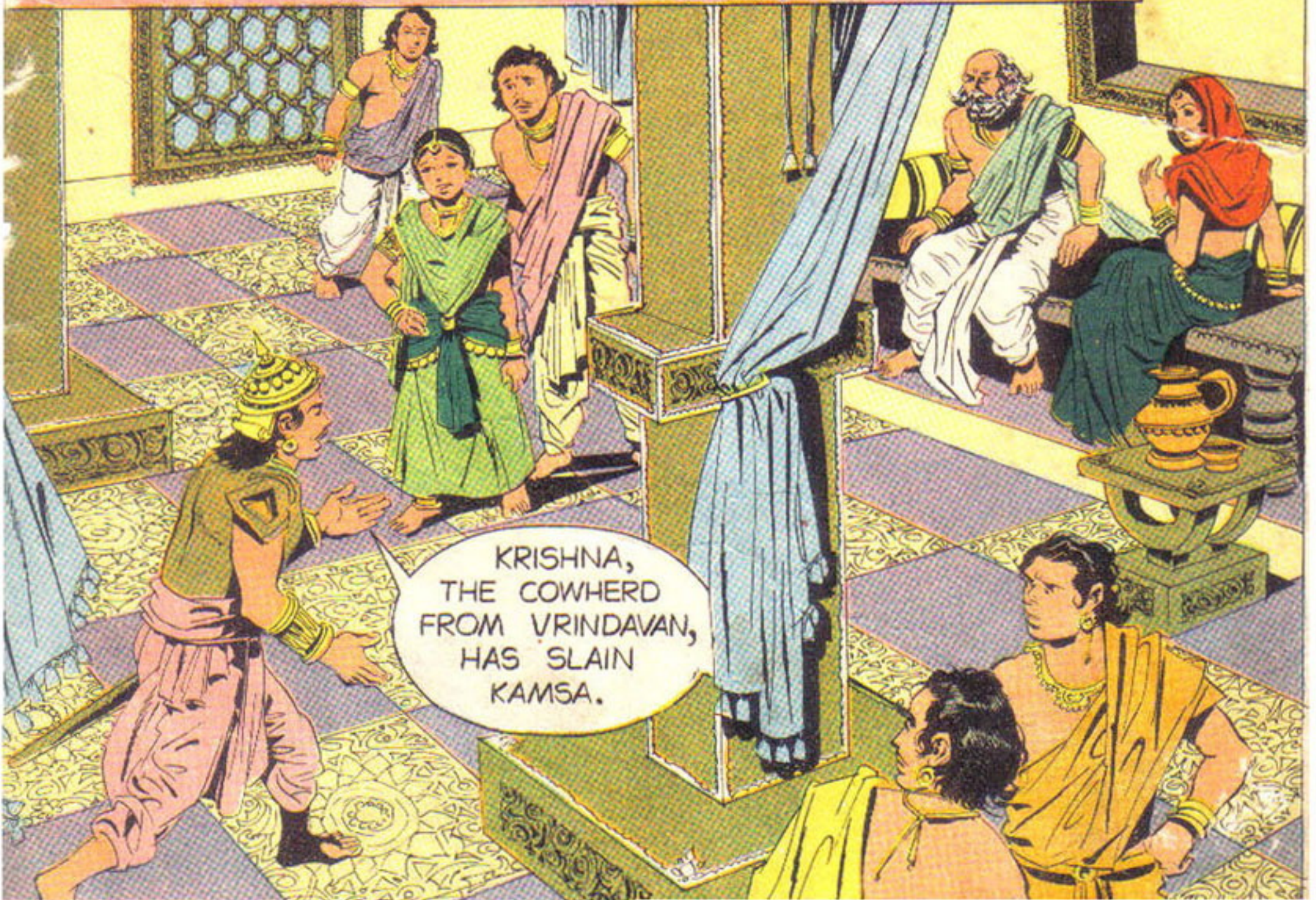
Editor: Anant Pai Associate Editor: Kamala Chandrakant
Script: Kamala Chandrakant Illustrations: Pratap Mulick

KRISHNA AND RUKMINI



RUKMI, THE SON OF KING
BHEESHMAKA OF VIDARBHA, CAME
HOME FROM MATHURA, BURSTING
WITH NEWS.

AS THE MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD SURROUNDED HIM —



KRISHNA,
THE COWHERD
FROM VRINDAVAN,
HAS SLAIN
KAMSA.

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?

RUKMI'S SISTER, RUKMINI, WAS A FORTHRIGHT GIRL.

THEN HE IS NO COWHERD BUT A NOBLE

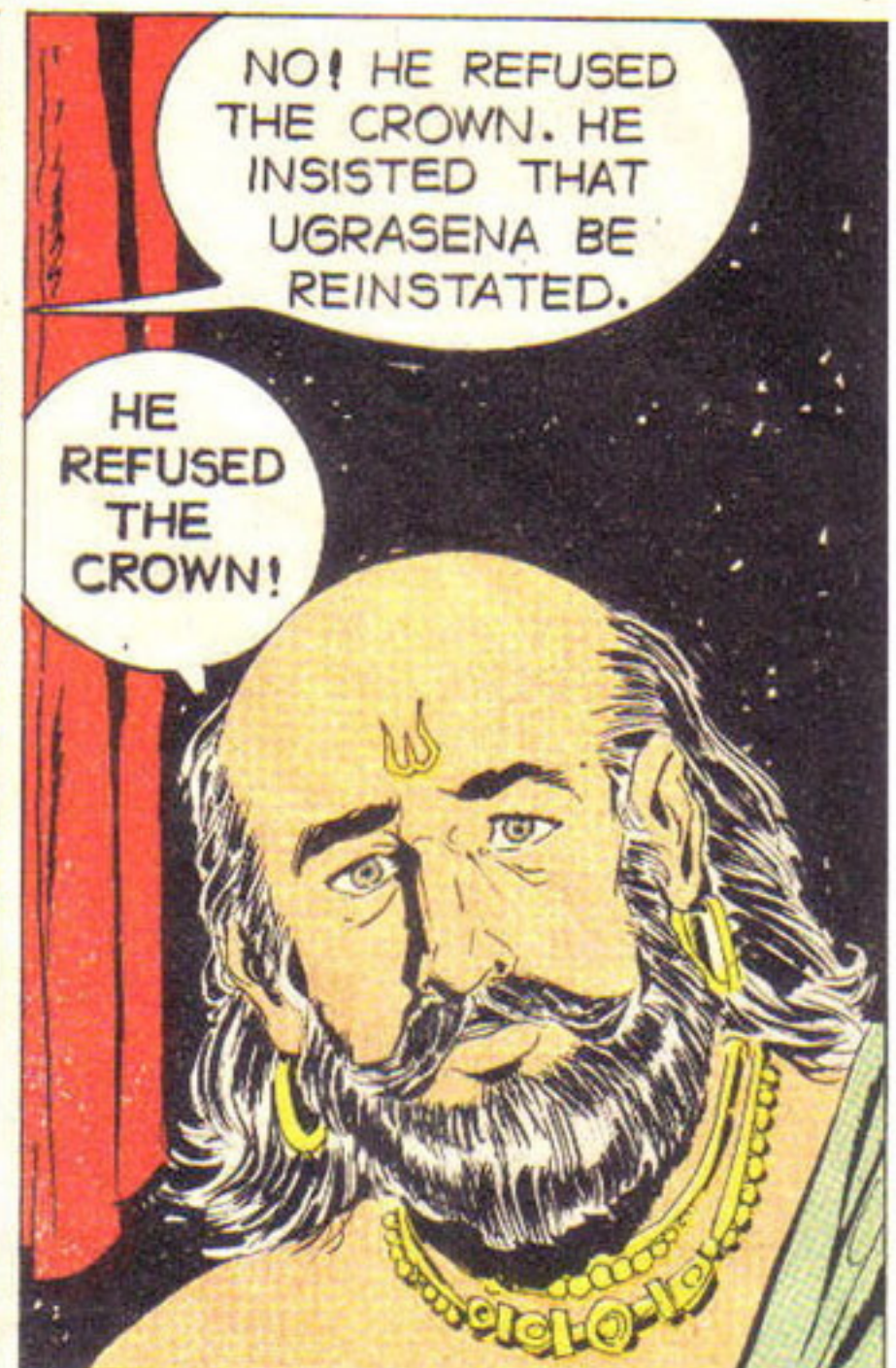
RUKMINI! HE HAS MURDERED MY FRIEND AND YOU CALL HIM NOBLE.

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



...DON'T FORGET HE DEPOSED HIS OWN FATHER AND USURPED THE THRONE.

I SUPPOSE KRISHNA WILL NOW BECOME THE KING.



NO! HE REFUSED THE CROWN. HE INSISTED THAT UGRASENA BE REINSTATED.

HE REFUSED THE CROWN!



YES! BUT KING UGRASENA AND THE NOBLES HAVE REQUESTED, NAY, INSISTED THAT HE REMAIN IN MATHURA AND...

WHO WOULDN'T! DID HE AGREE?

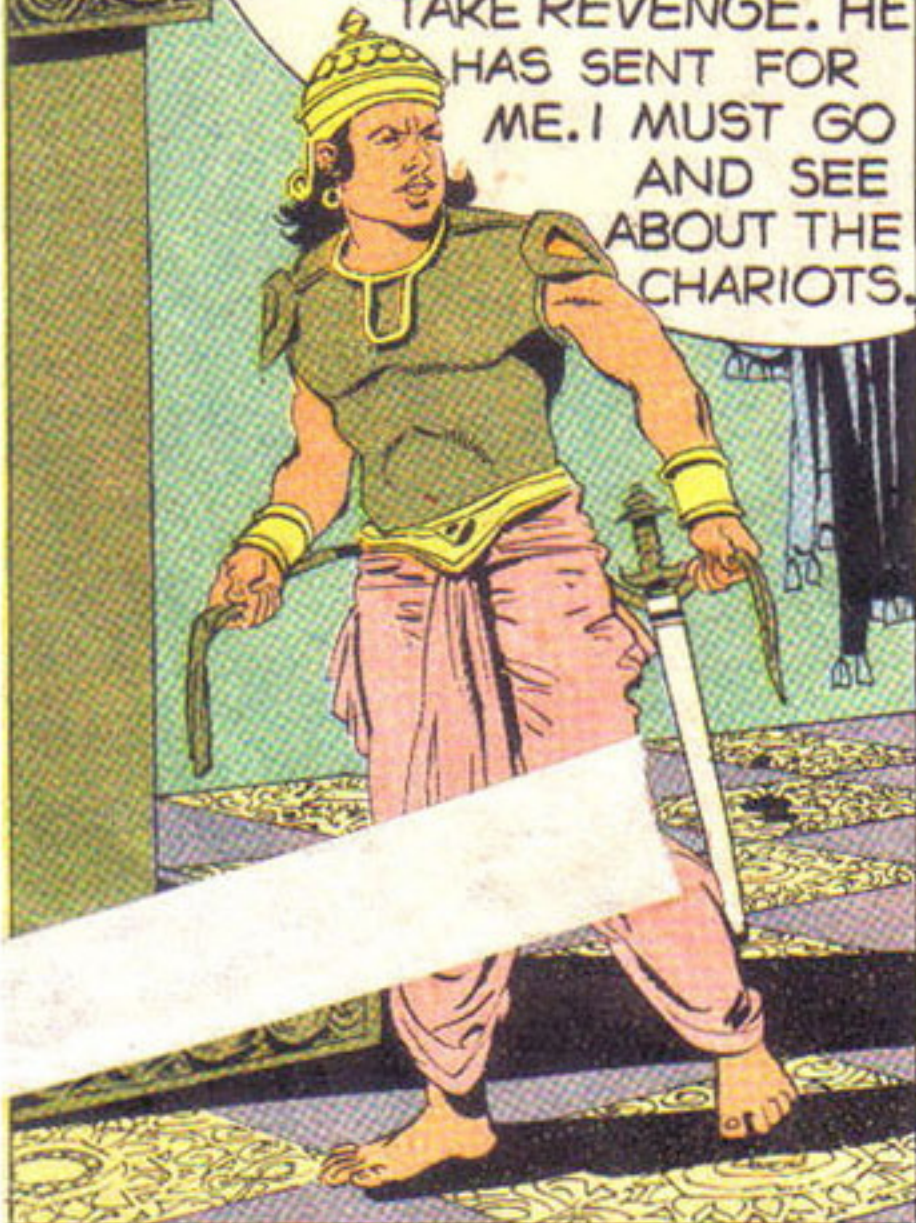
RUKMI IGNORED HER AND CONTINUED TO SPEAK TO BHEESHMAKA.

HE HAS AGREED TO STAY FOR A WHILE - TO LEARN THE SCRIPTURES AND THE PRINCELY ARTS.

WHAT ABOUT JARASANDHA? HOW DID HE REACT?

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.



UKMINI FOLLOWED HIM.

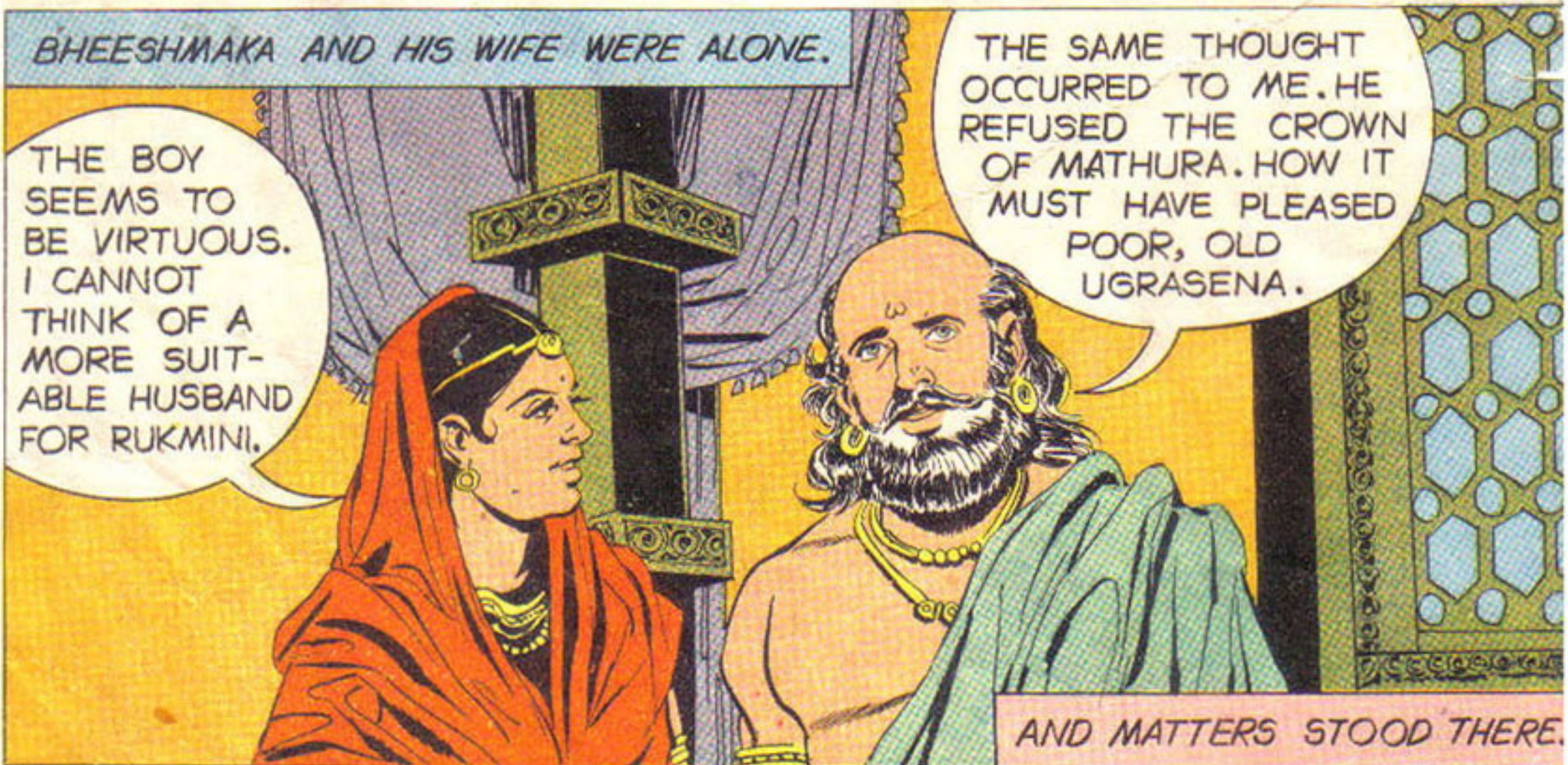
I MUST KNOW MORE ABOUT KRISHNA.



BHEESHMAKA AND HIS WIFE WERE ALONE.

THE BOY SEEMS TO BE VIRTUOUS. I CANNOT THINK OF A MORE SUIT-ABLE HUSBAND FOR UKMINI.

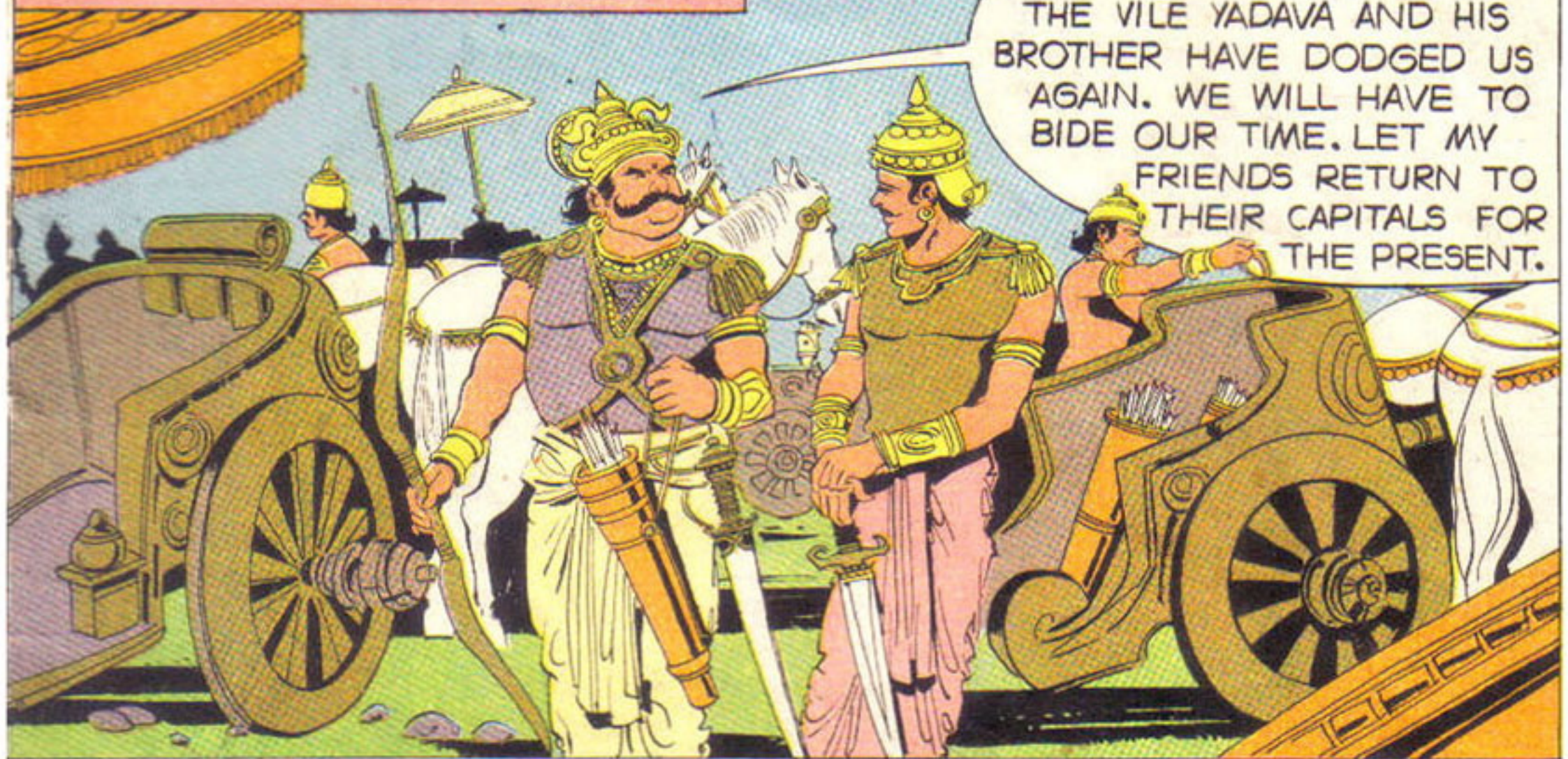
THE SAME THOUGHT OCCURRED TO ME. HE REFUSED THE CROWN OF MATHURA. HOW IT MUST HAVE PLEASED POOR, OLD UGRASENA.



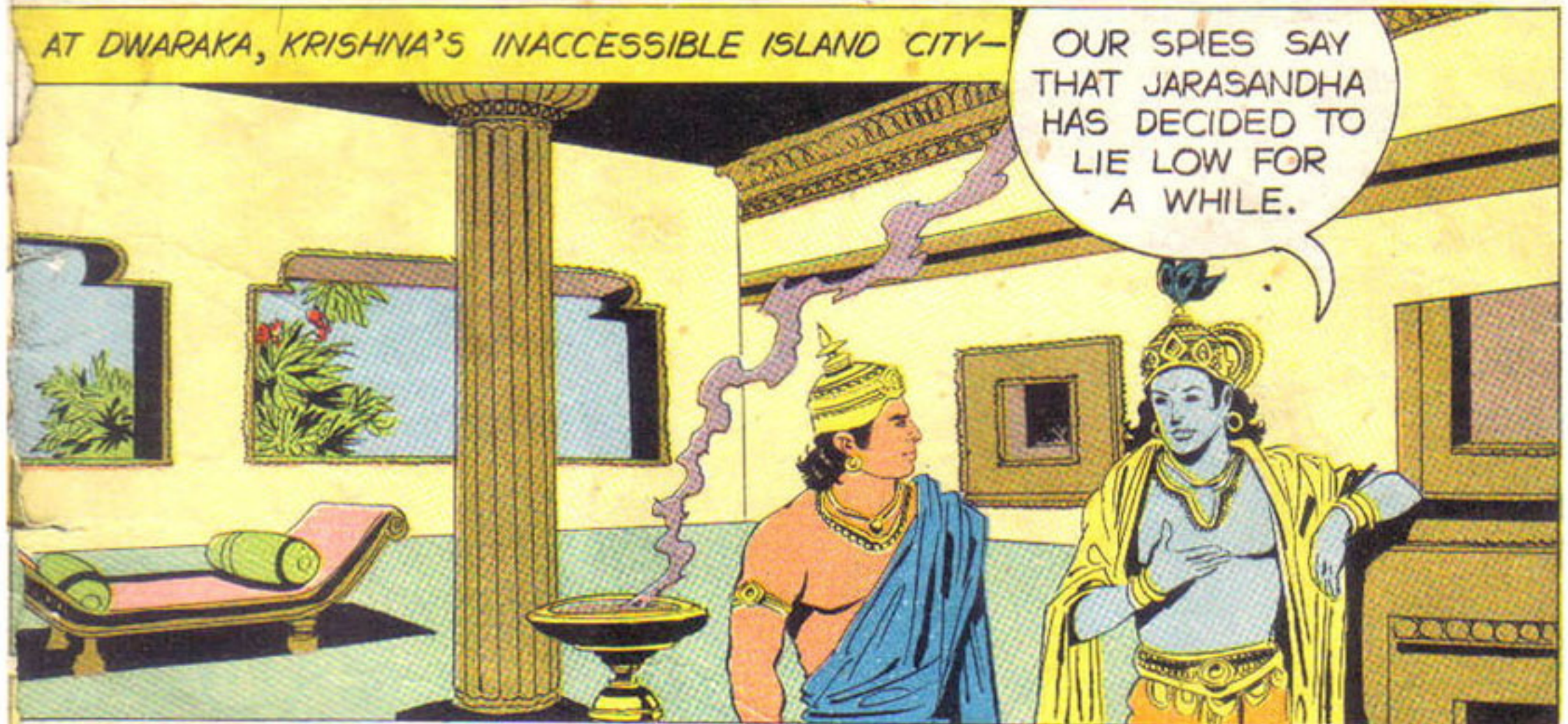
AND MATTERS STOOD THERE.

*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—



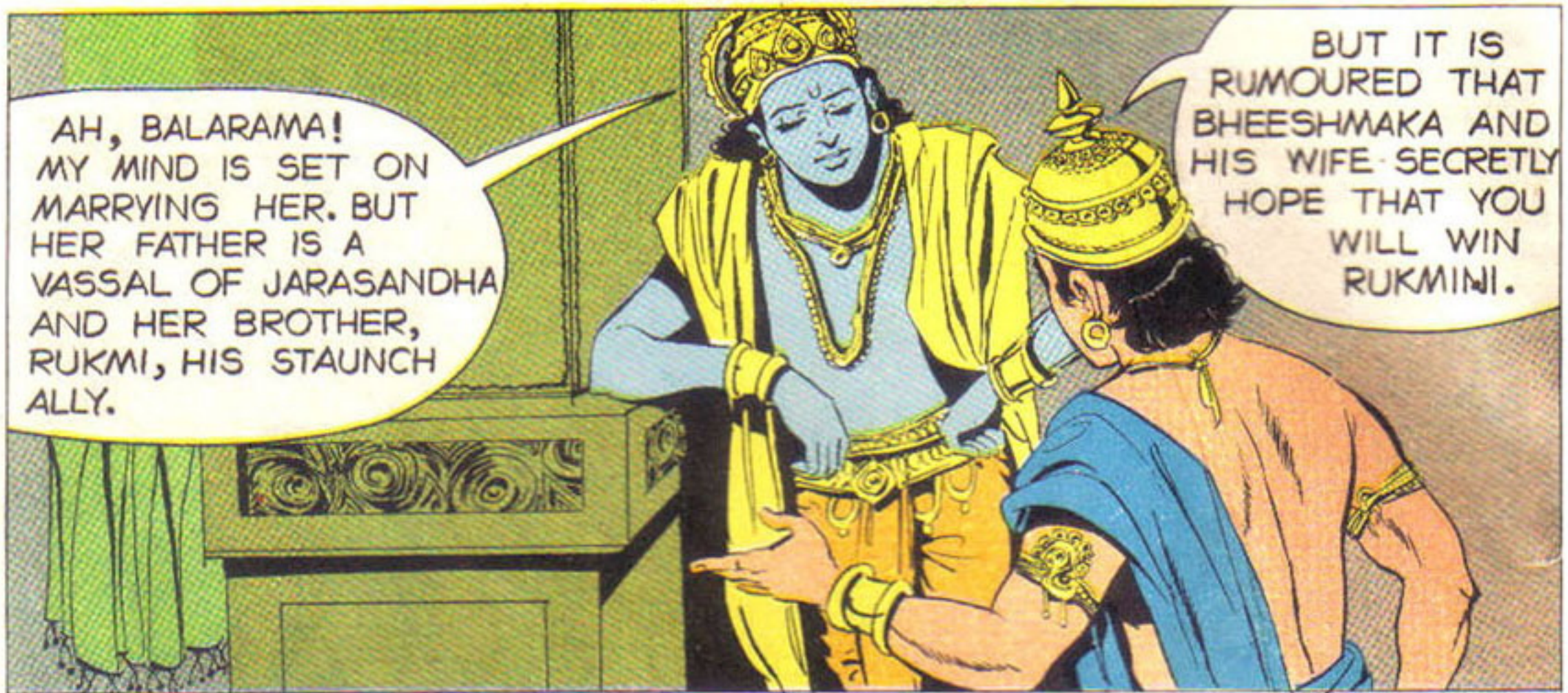
AT DWARAKA, KRISHNA'S INACCESSIBLE ISLAND CITY—



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.





AH, BALARAMA!
MY MIND IS SET ON
MARRYING HER. BUT
HER FATHER IS A
VASSAL OF JARASANDHA
AND HER BROTHER,
RUKMI, HIS STAUNCH
ALLY.

BUT IT IS
RUMOURED THAT
BHEESHMAKA AND
HIS WIFE SECRETLY
HOPE THAT YOU
WILL WIN
RUKMINI.

MEANWHILE, AT VIDARBHA, IN THE GARDEN
OF BHEESMAKA'S PALACE, RUKMINI TOO
WAS LOST IN DREAMS OF THE YADAVA HERO
WHO HAD WON HER HEART.

EVEN THE MIGHTY
EMPEROR WITH
ALL HIS ALLIES HAS
NOT BEEN ABLE
TO VANQUISH HIM.
HE AND ONLY HE
SHALL BE MY
LORD.



SUDDENLY SHE HEARD VOICES.

MY FATHER!
RUKMI!
THEY'RE
COMING
THIS WAY.



THEY WERE DISCUSSING HER MARRIAGE.

YOUR MOTHER
AND I HAVE
DECIDED TO GIVE
HER TO
KRISHNA.

HOW
FORTUNATE
AM I!

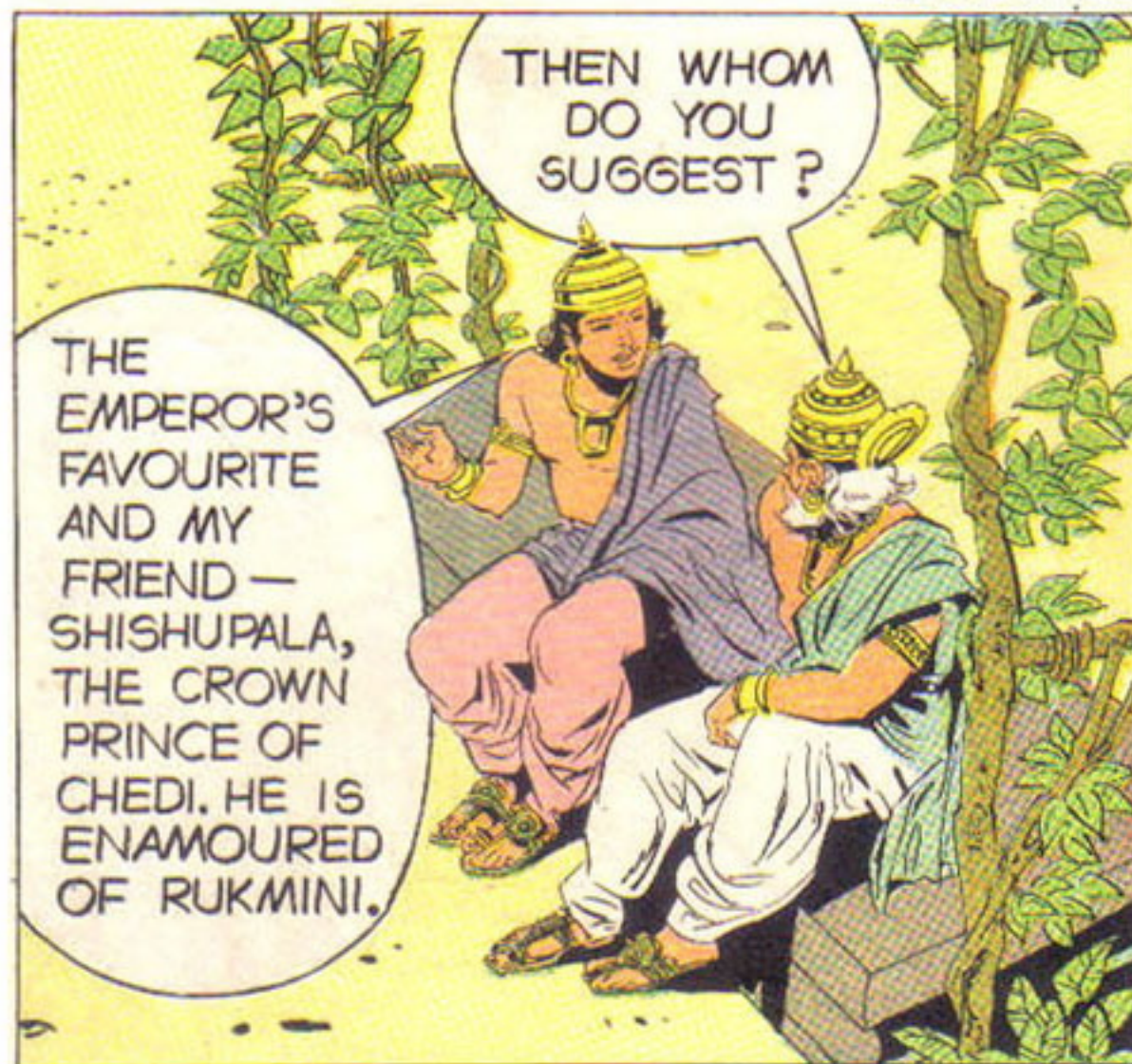
HOW COULD
YOU, FATHER? DON'T
FORGET, HE MURDERED
MY DEAR FRIEND, THE
EMPEROR'S SON-IN-LAW.
SURELY, WE CANNOT
AFFORD TO DISPLEASE
THE MIGHTY
EMPEROR.

PLEASE RUKMI!
DON'T MAKE
HIM CHANGE
HIS MIND!

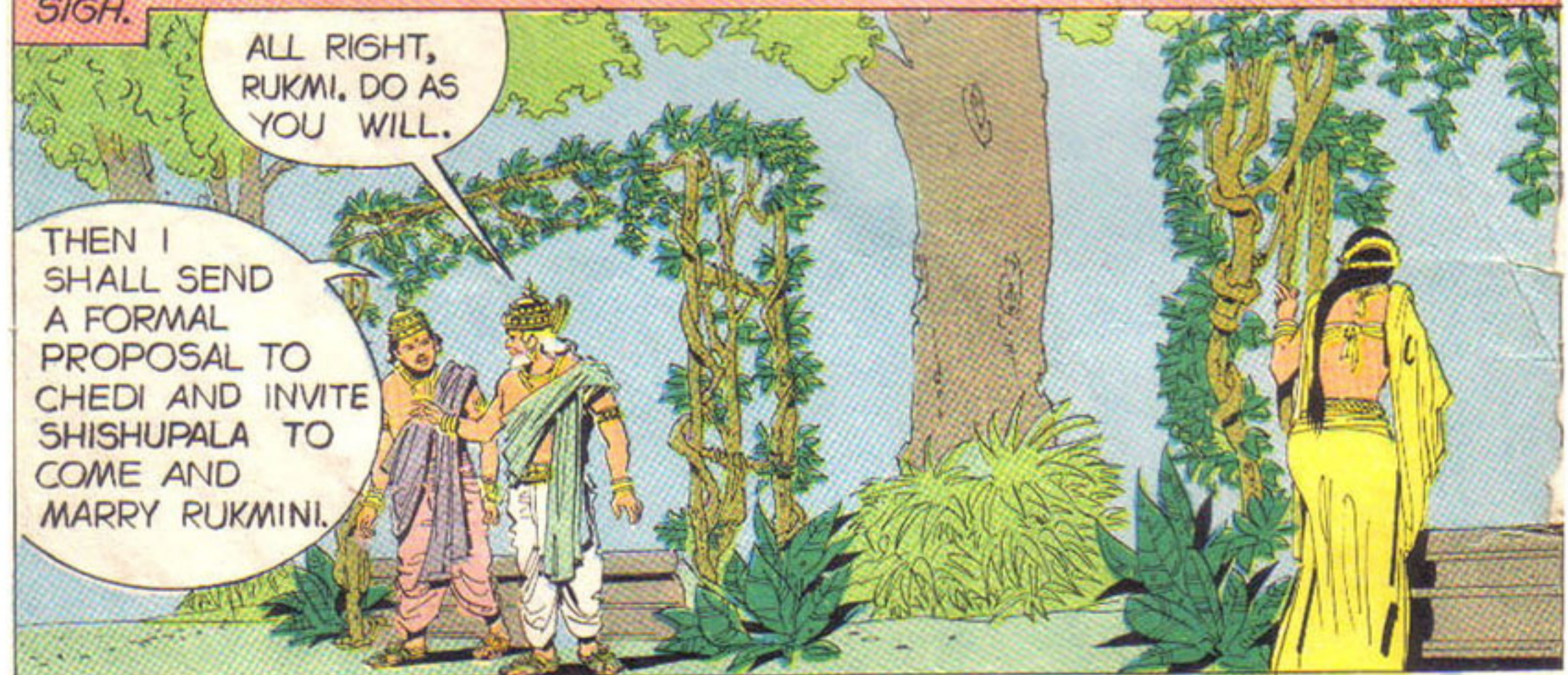
BHEESHMAKA WAS SILENT FOR A WHILE. THEN—

BUT WE CANNOT
THINK OF A MORE
SUITABLE HUSBAND
FOR HER. AFTER ALL
JARASANDHA HAS
NOT YET BEEN ABLE
TO AVENGE KAMSA'S
DEATH...

BUT HE
CERTAINLY
WILL. IT IS
ONLY A
MATTER
OF TIME.



BUT BHEESHMAKA INVARIABLY PERMITTED HIS ELDEST SON TO MAKE ALL MAJOR DECISIONS, EVEN IF THEY DID NOT COINCIDE WITH HIS OWN WISHES. HE HEAVED A SIGH.



THEY WALKED AWAY, LITTLE KNOWING THAT RUKMINI HAD OVERHEARD EVERY WORD OF THEIR CONVERSATION.



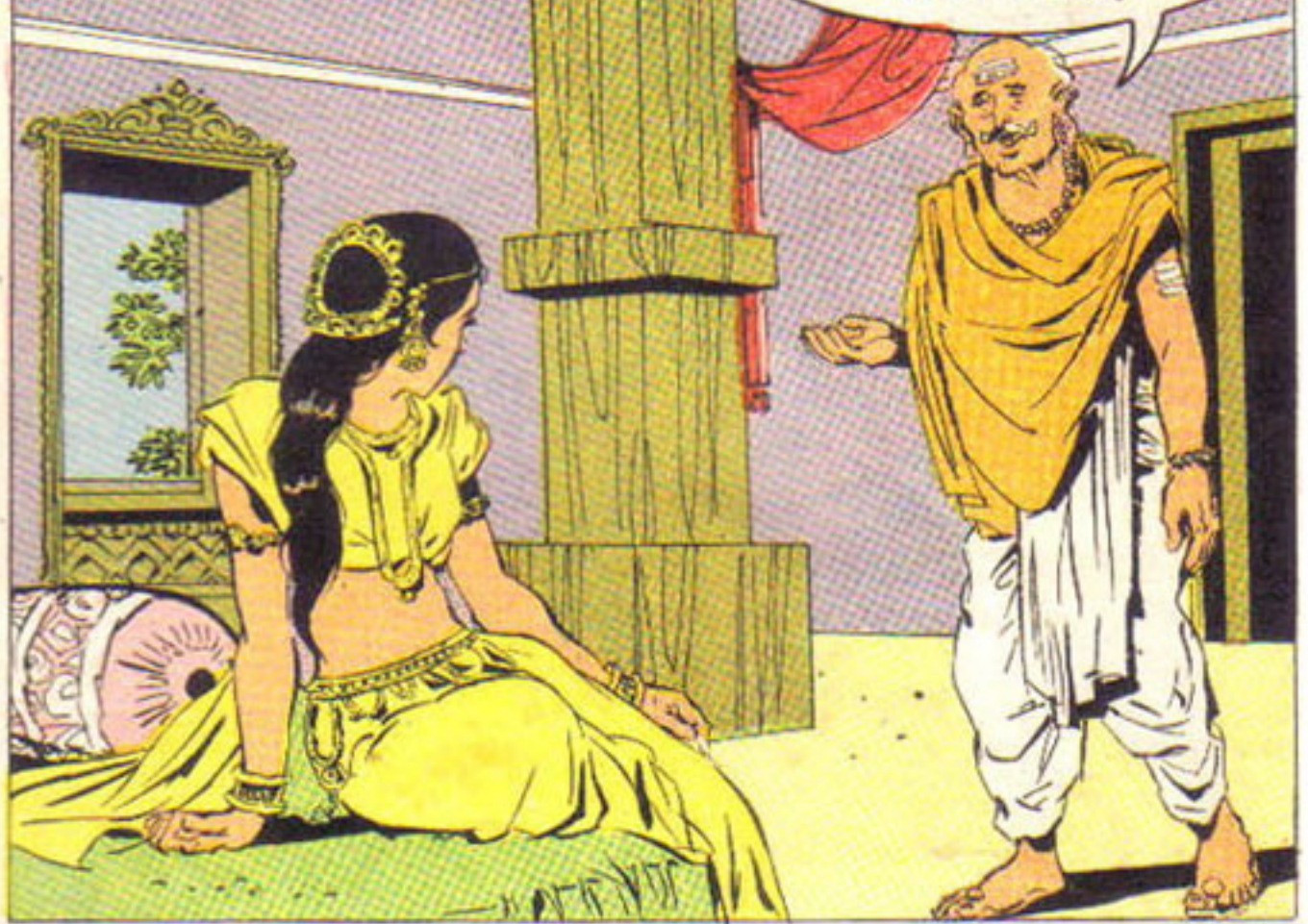
SUDDENLY AN IDEA OCCURRED TO HER.

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—

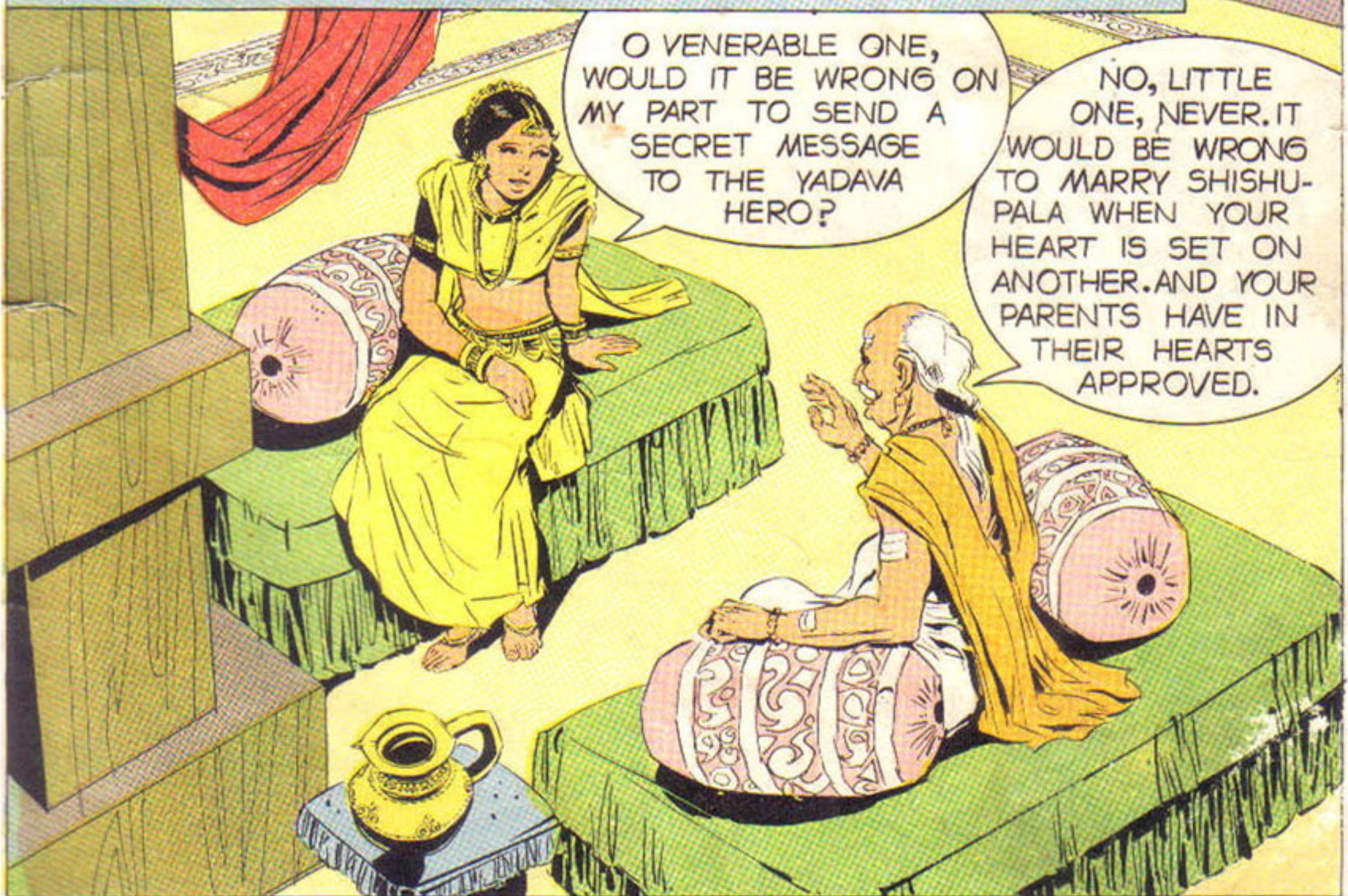
WHY DO YOU LOOK SO PALE, MY LITTLE ONE? WHAT'S THE MATTER?

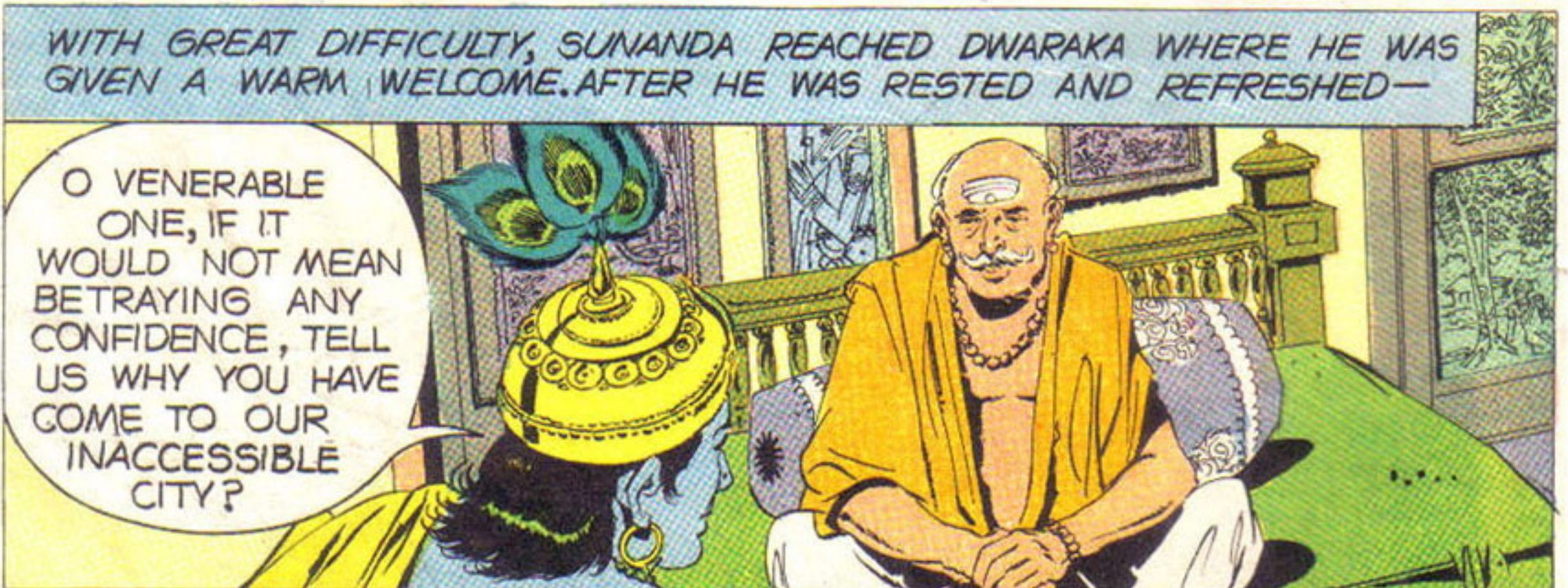
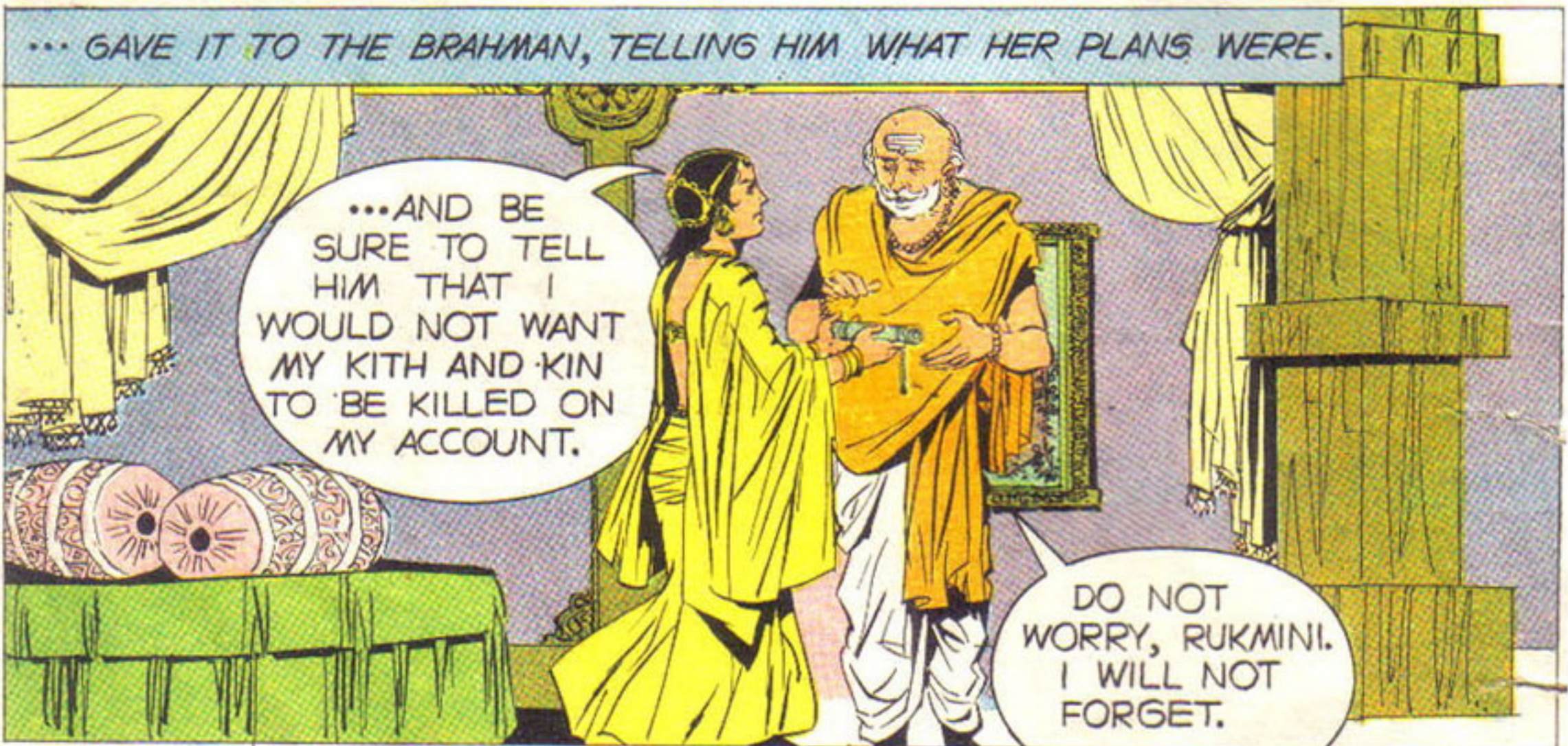


SHE TOLD HIM ABOUT THE CONVERSATION SHE HAD OVERHEARD. THEN—

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 SHISHUPALA WHEN YOUR HEART IS SET ON ANOTHER. AND YOUR PARENTS HAVE IN THEIR HEARTS APPROVED.







I HAVE COME WITH
A MESSAGE FROM
RUKMINI, THE
PRINCESS OF
VIDARBHA.

RUKMINI!
MY OWN
RUKMINI!

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

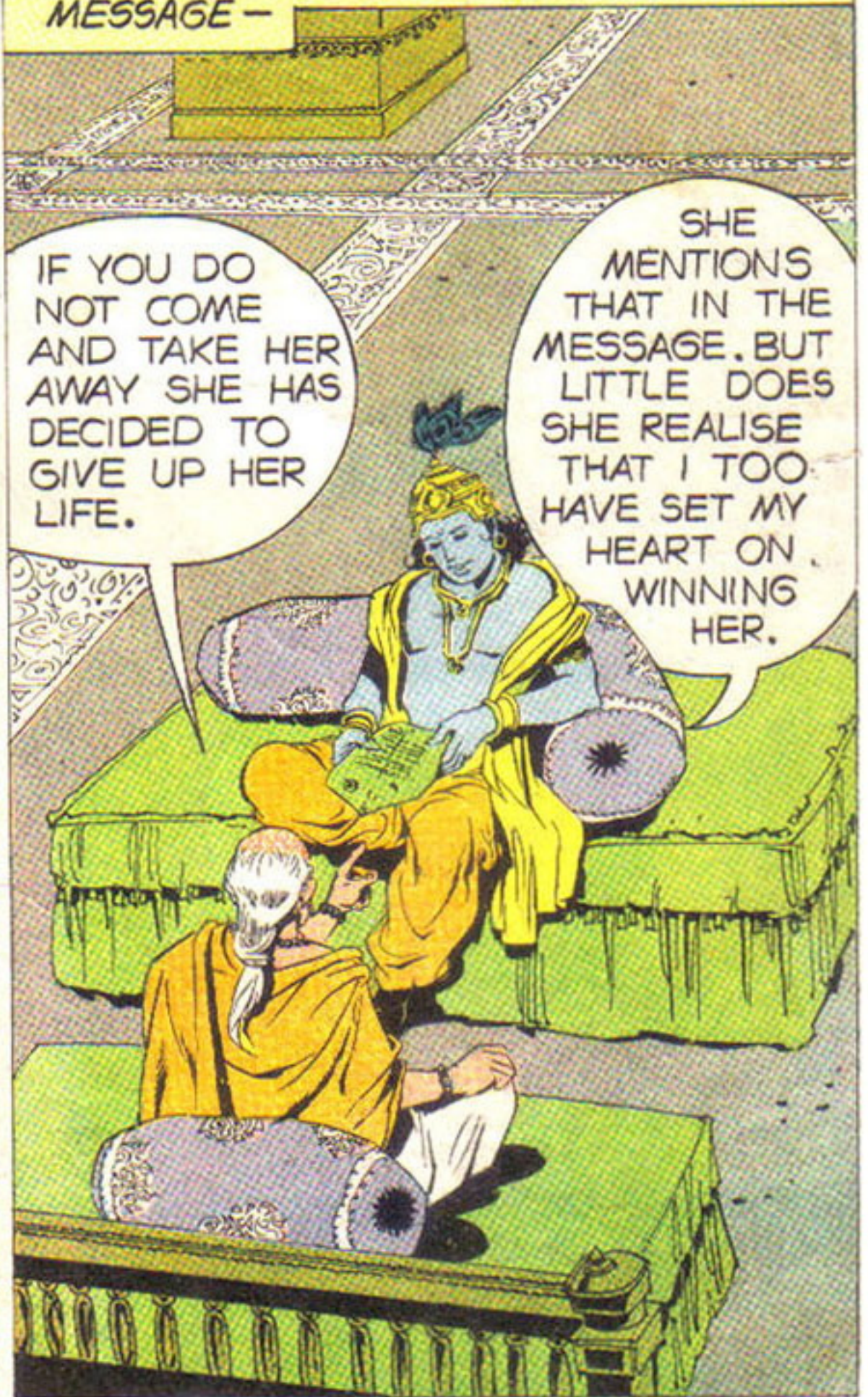
... I HAVE CHOSEN
YOU AS MY HUSBAND.
COME TO VIDARBHA,
VANQUISH THE ARMIES
OF JARASANDHA AND
SHISHUPALA AND
CLAIM ME...



WHEN KRISHNA FINISHED READING THE
MESSAGE —

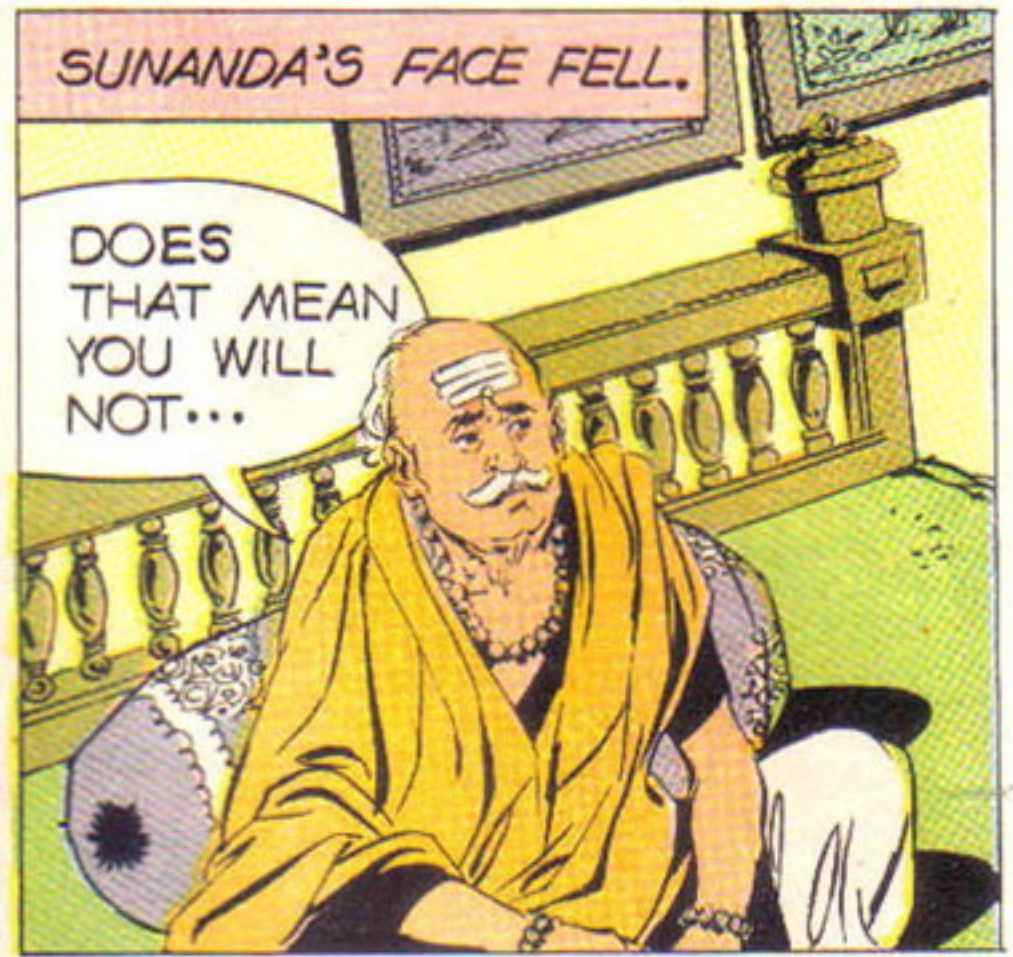
IF YOU DO
NOT COME
AND TAKE HER
AWAY SHE HAS
DECIDED TO
GIVE UP HER
LIFE.

SHE
MENTIONS
THAT IN THE
MESSAGE, BUT
LITTLE DOES
SHE REALISE
THAT I TOO
HAVE SET MY
HEART ON
WINNING
HER.





YES! I HAVE. BUT I KNOW THAT RUKMI DOES NOT WANT TO GIVE HER TO ME.



SUNANDA'S FACE FELL.

DOES THAT MEAN YOU WILL NOT...



NO. IT DOES NOT. NOW THAT SHE HAS REVEALED HER HEART TO ME, I SHALL MAKE HER MINE. I SHALL NOT HESITATE TO ROUT ALL THE KINGS WHO STAND IN MY WAY.

OVERJOYED, SUNANDA UNFOLDED THE REST OF RUKMINI'S PLANS. THEN —



THE GENTLE ONE IS ANXIOUS THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO FAMILY BLOOD SHED ON HER ACCOUNT.

IT IS BUT NATURAL FOR HER, A VERITABLE GODDESS*, TO FEEL THAT WAY.

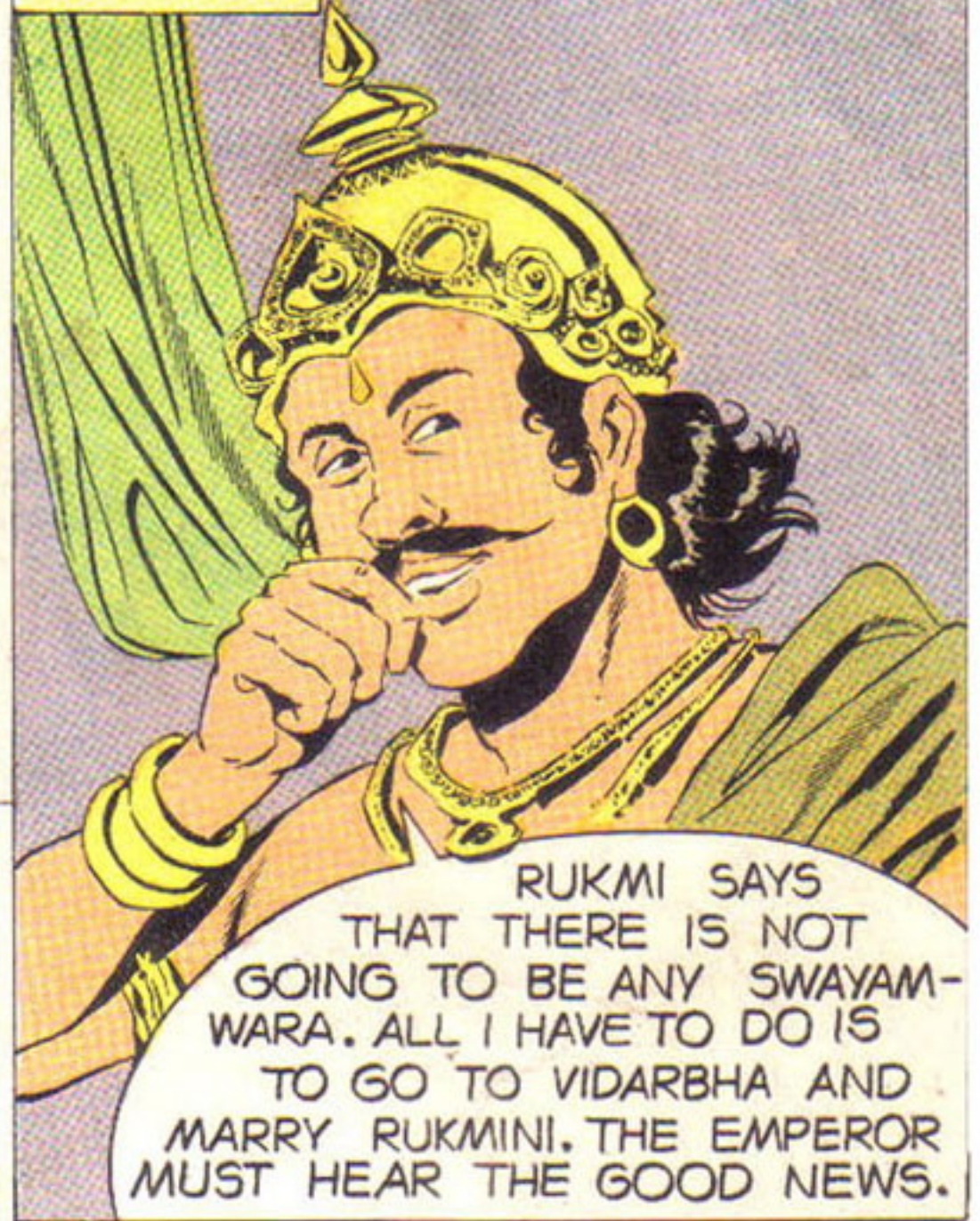
* RUKMINI IS BELIEVED TO BE THE GODDESS LAXMI REBORN ON EARTH.

KRISHNA SENT FOR HIS CHARIOTEER.
WHEN HE CAME —

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

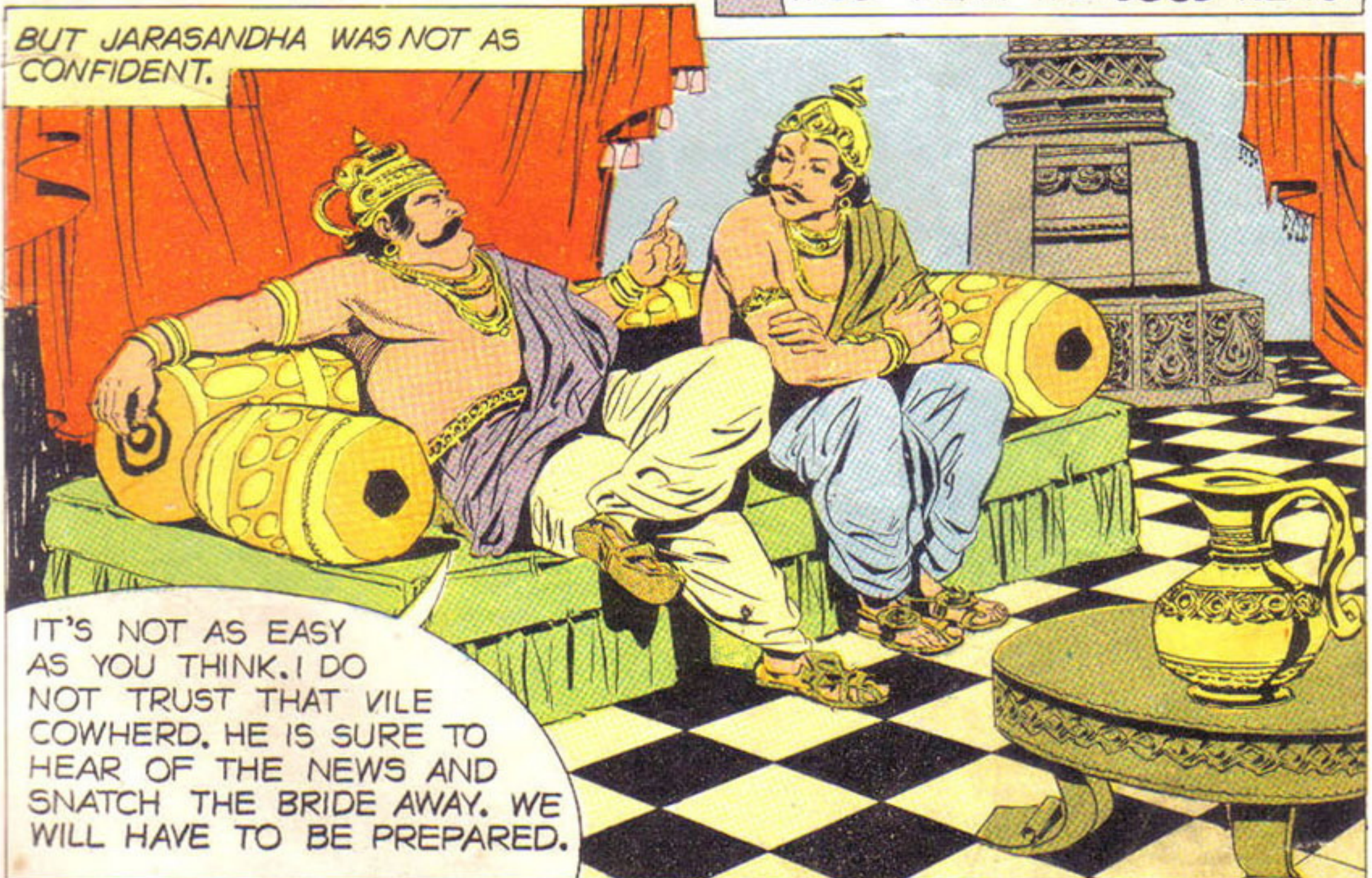


MEANWHILE, RUKMI'S FORMAL
PROPOSAL AND INVITATION HAD
REACHED SHISHUPALA. HE WAS
JUBILANT.



RUKMI SAYS
THAT THERE IS NOT
GOING TO BE ANY SWAYAM-
WARA. 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.

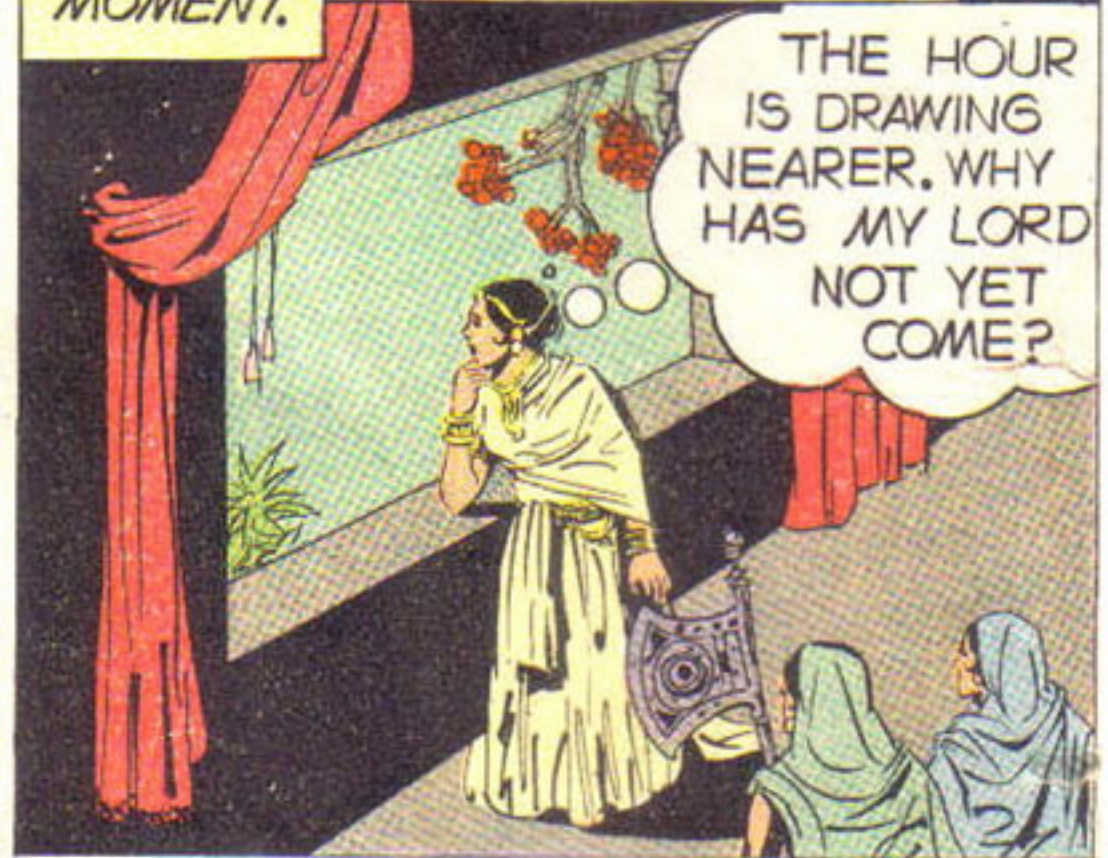
AND KRISHNA HAS GONE ALL ALONE!

GET MY CHARIOT READY! RALLY OUR ARMIES! ELEPHANTS, HORSES, CHARIOTS, ALL!



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

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



DID MY MESSAGE DISGUST HIM? IF SO, THEN WHY HASN'T SUNANDA RETURNED?



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

HE LOOKS CHEERFUL. HIS GAIT IS CONFIDENT. HE MUST BRING GOOD NEWS. HIS MISSION HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL.

SHE TURNED TO HER MAIDS.

YOU MAY GO TO YOUR ROOMS. I WISH TO BE ALONE.

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

HE HAS COME, LITTLE ONE. EVERYTHING IS TO GO ACCORDING TO PLAN. HIS BROTHER TOO HAS COME WITH THE YADAVA FORCES.

NEWS OF KRISHNA'S ARRIVAL REACHED BHEESHMAKA; TOO.

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

DARE I HOPE THAT HE HAS COME TO CARRY AWAY RUKMINI? DARE I?

HAVE A MANSION READY FOR HIM. FURNISH IT WITH EVERY LUXURY. I SHALL RIDE OUT TO RECEIVE HIM.

AT THE GATES OF THE CITY—

BALARAMA AND THEIR FORCES TOO HAVE COME. HE MEANS TO TAKE RUKMINI AWAY BY FORCE, FOR SURE!

WELCOME, O PRINCES! WE ARE HAPPY TO SEE YOU HERE. COME LET ME LEAD YOU TO THE PALACE WHERE YOU WILL STAY.

AS THEY RODE INTO THE CITY, THEY PASSED THE SHRINE OF GODDESS PARVATI, THE FAMILY DEITY OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD.

AH! THAT IS THE TEMPLE RUKMINI WROTE ABOUT. HOW ANXIOUS MY DEAR ONE MUST BE.

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

THE EMPEROR AND HIS MEN HAVE FLOODED THE CITY.

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

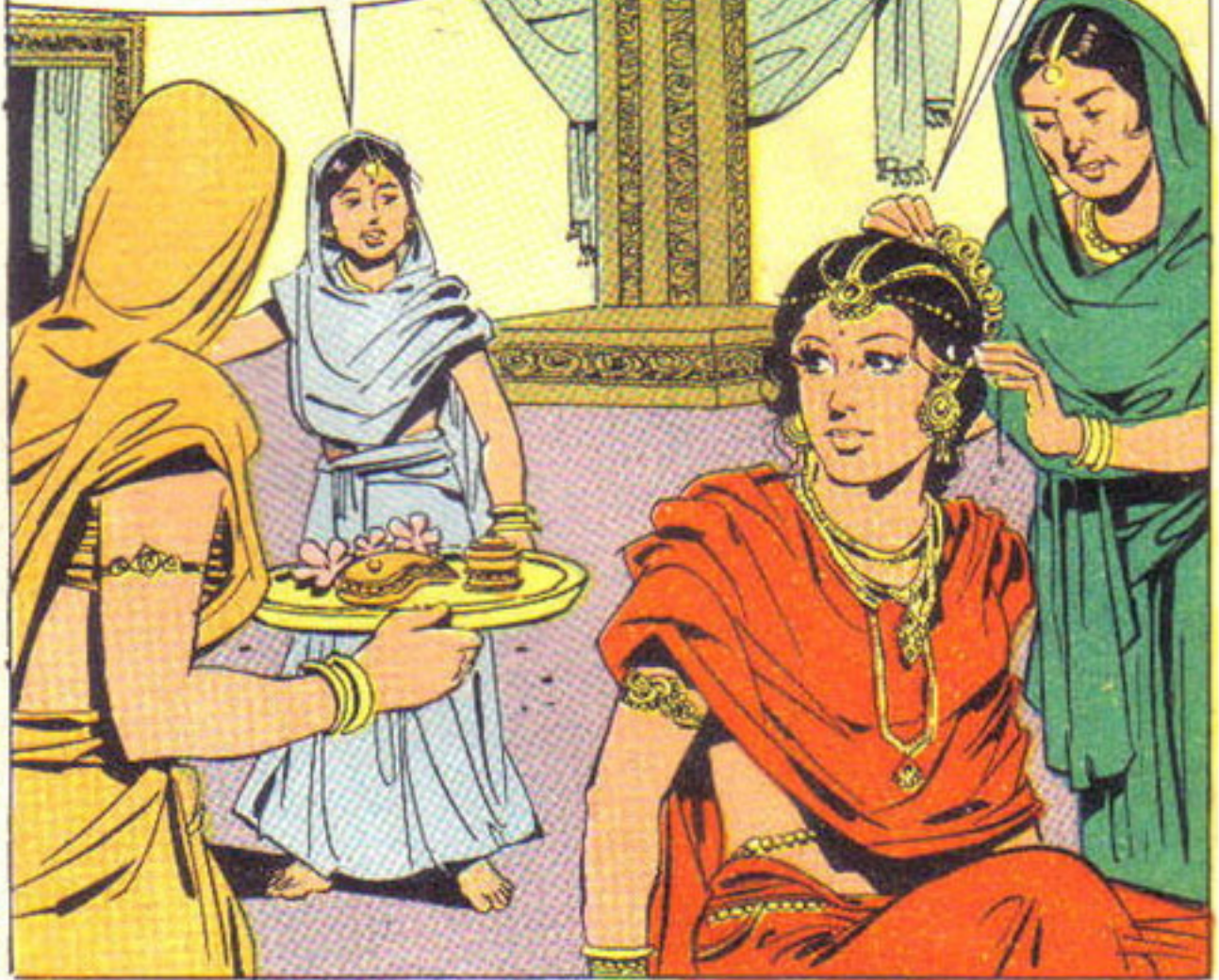
THIS SHOULD HELP YOU PLAN YOUR STRATEGY.



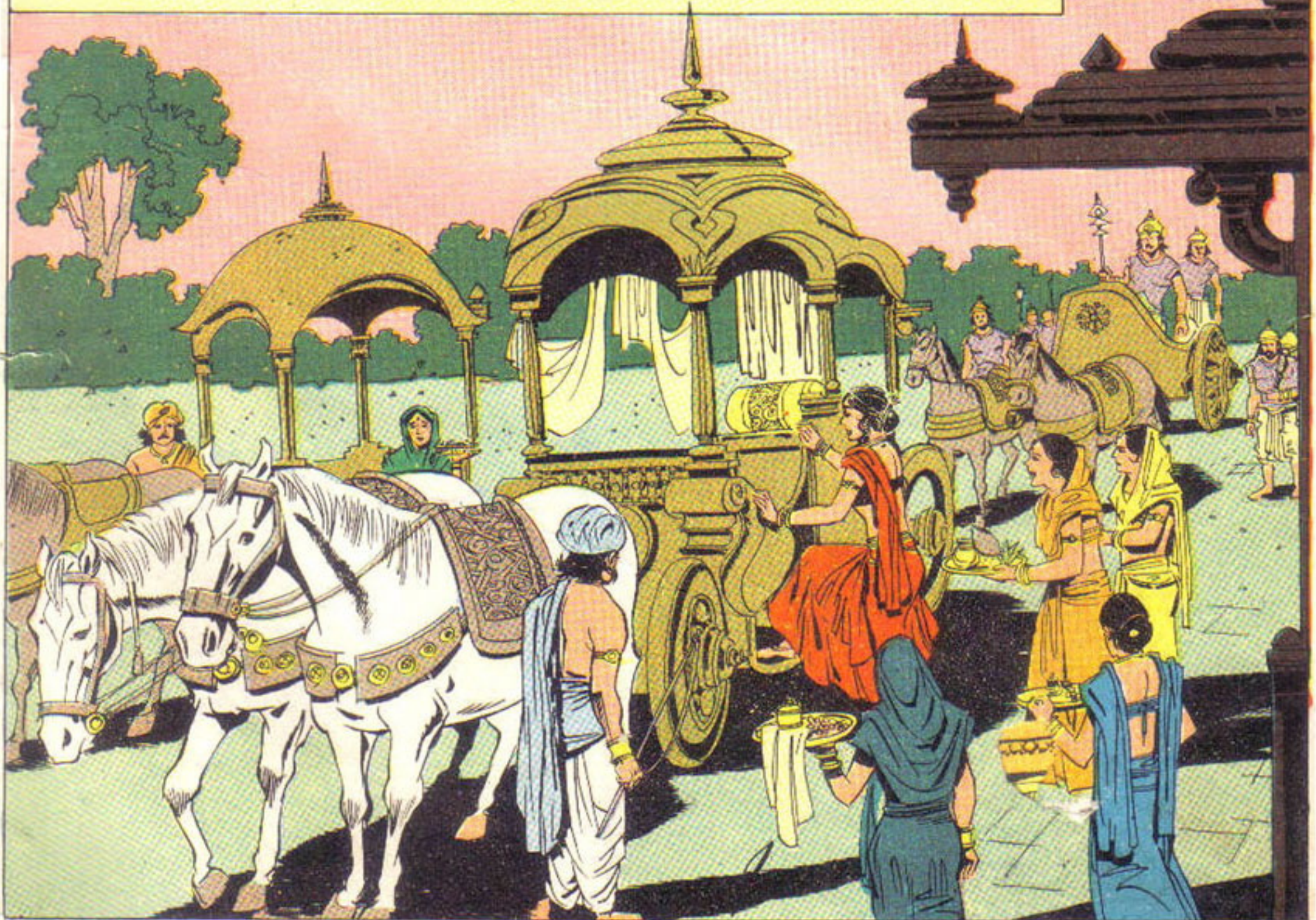
MEANWHILE AT THE PALACE—

RUKMINI, YOUR CHARIOT HAS ARRIVED. ARE YOU READY?

I AM. LET US LEAVE.



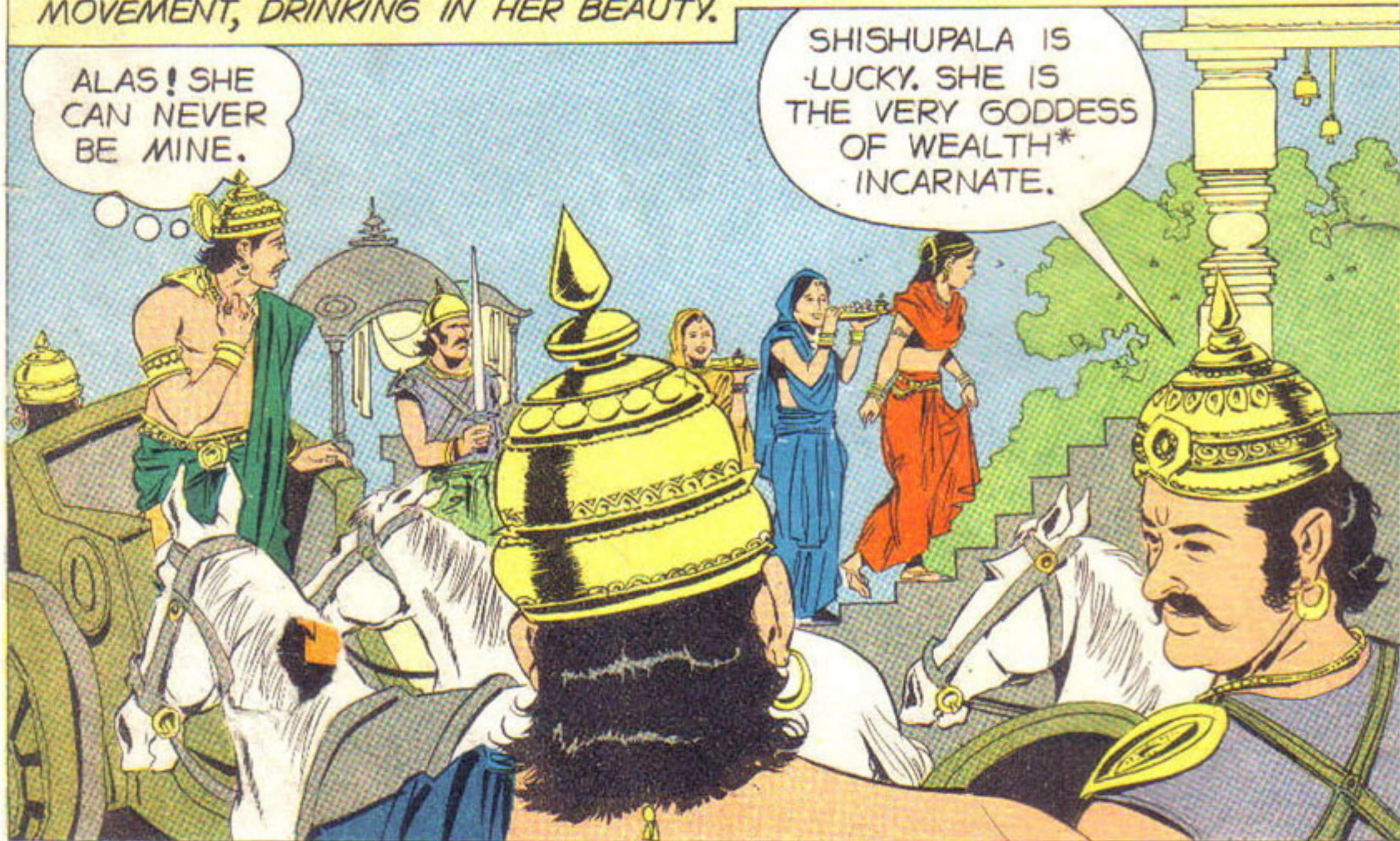
ACCOMPANIED BY HER MAIDS, RUKMINI LEFT FOR THE SHRINE.



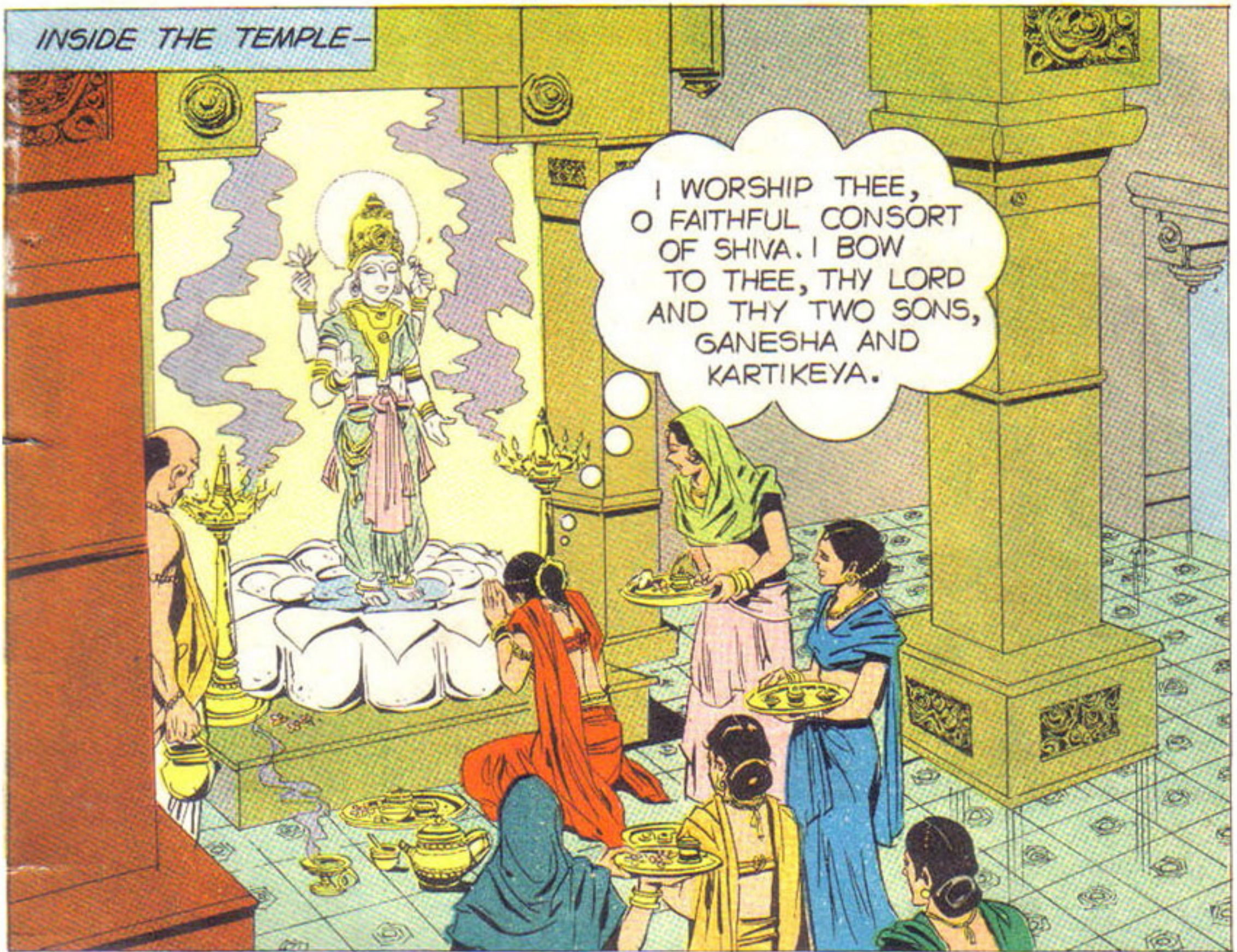
WHEN THEY REACHED THE GATES OF THE TEMPLE COURTYARD, SHE STEPPED OUT OF HER CHARIOT.



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



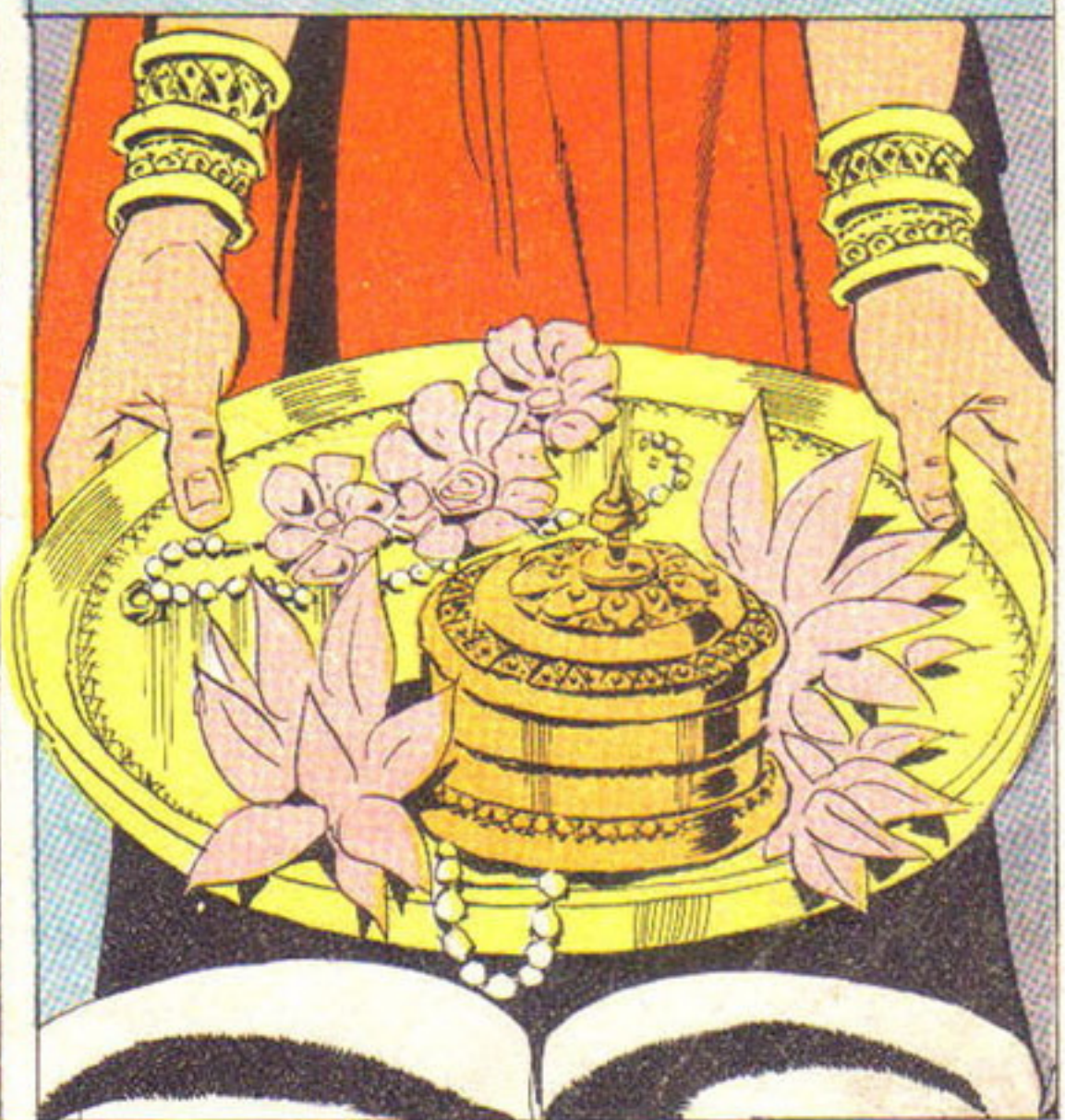
INSIDE THE TEMPLE—



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.



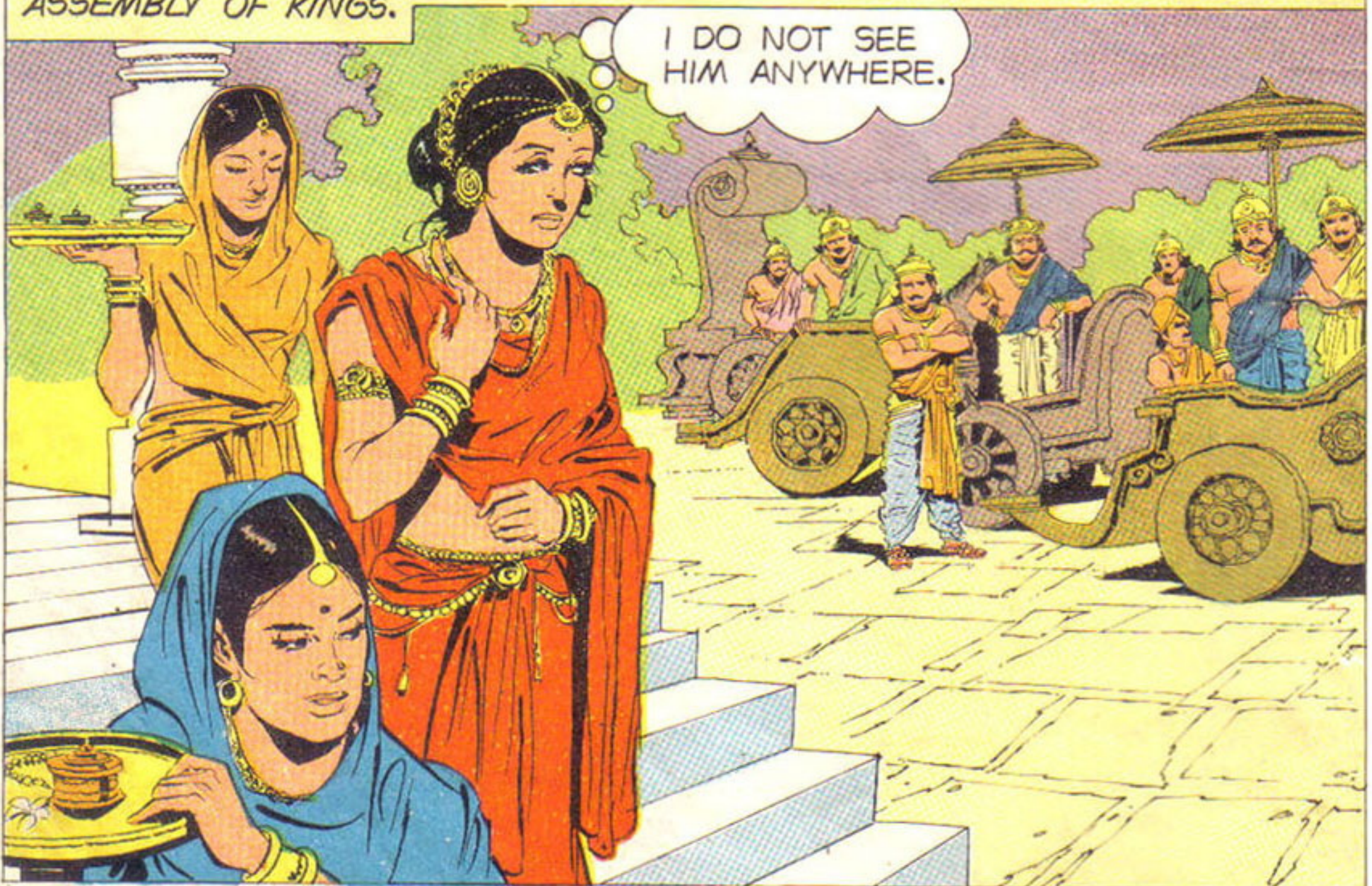
HER WORSHIP OVER, SHE CAME OUT OF THE TEMPLE.



O GODDESS, DO NOT FAIL ME.

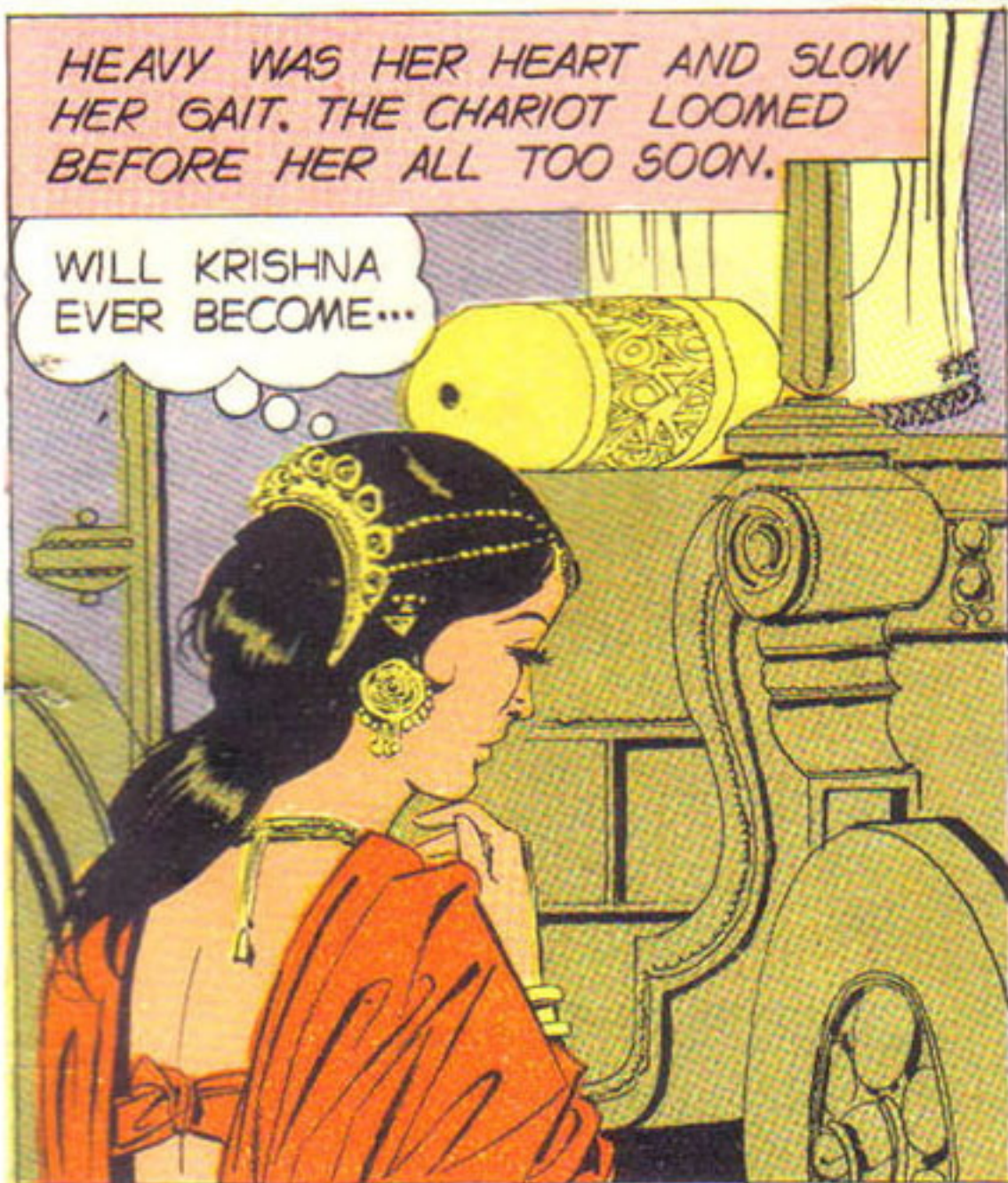
AS SHE WALKED TOWARDS THE GATE, HER EYES ANXIOUSLY SCANNED THE ASSEMBLY OF KINGS.

I DO NOT SEE HIM ANYWHERE.

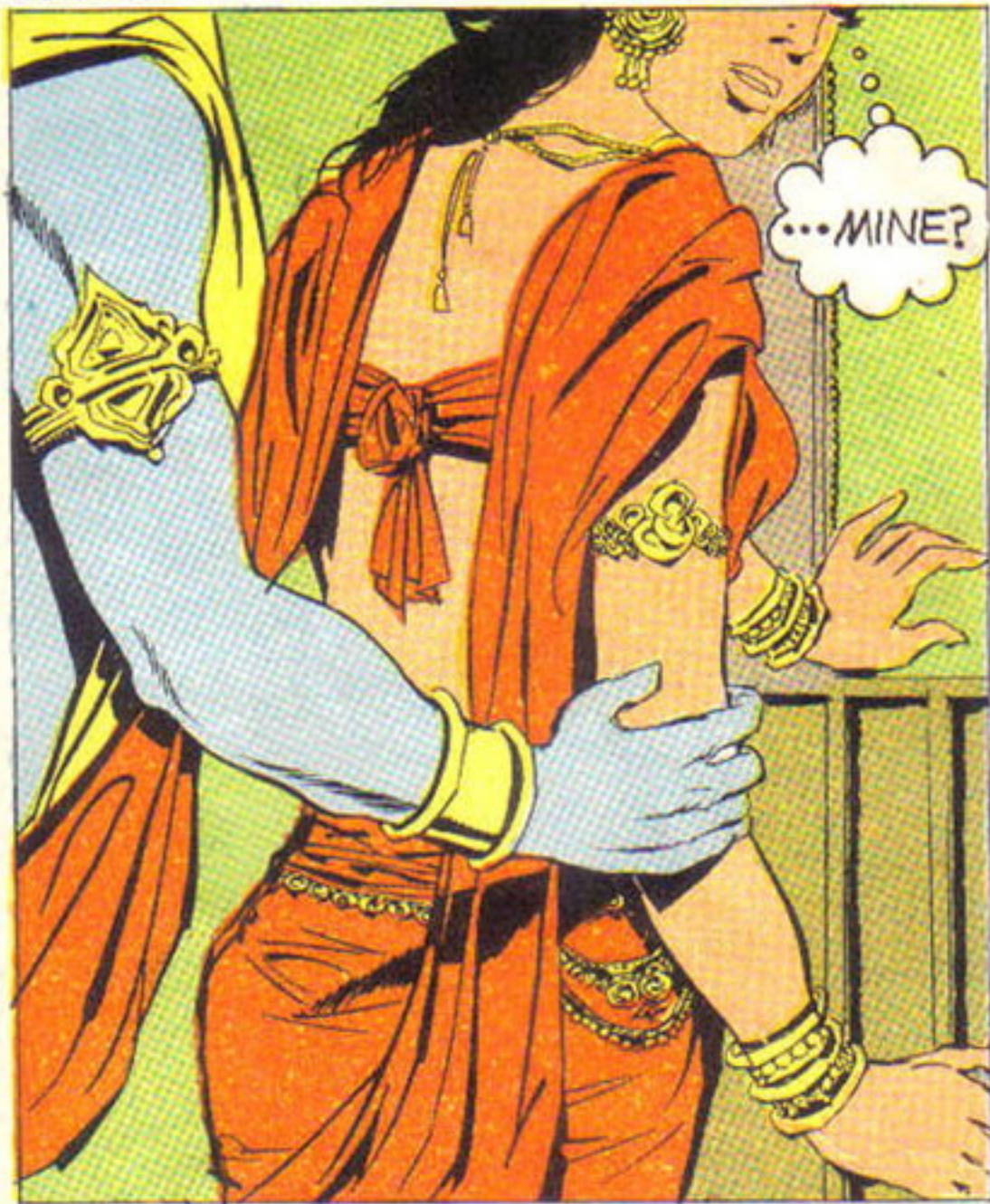


HEAVY WAS HER HEART AND SLOW
HER GAIT. THE CHARIOT LOOMED
BEFORE HER ALL TOO SOON.

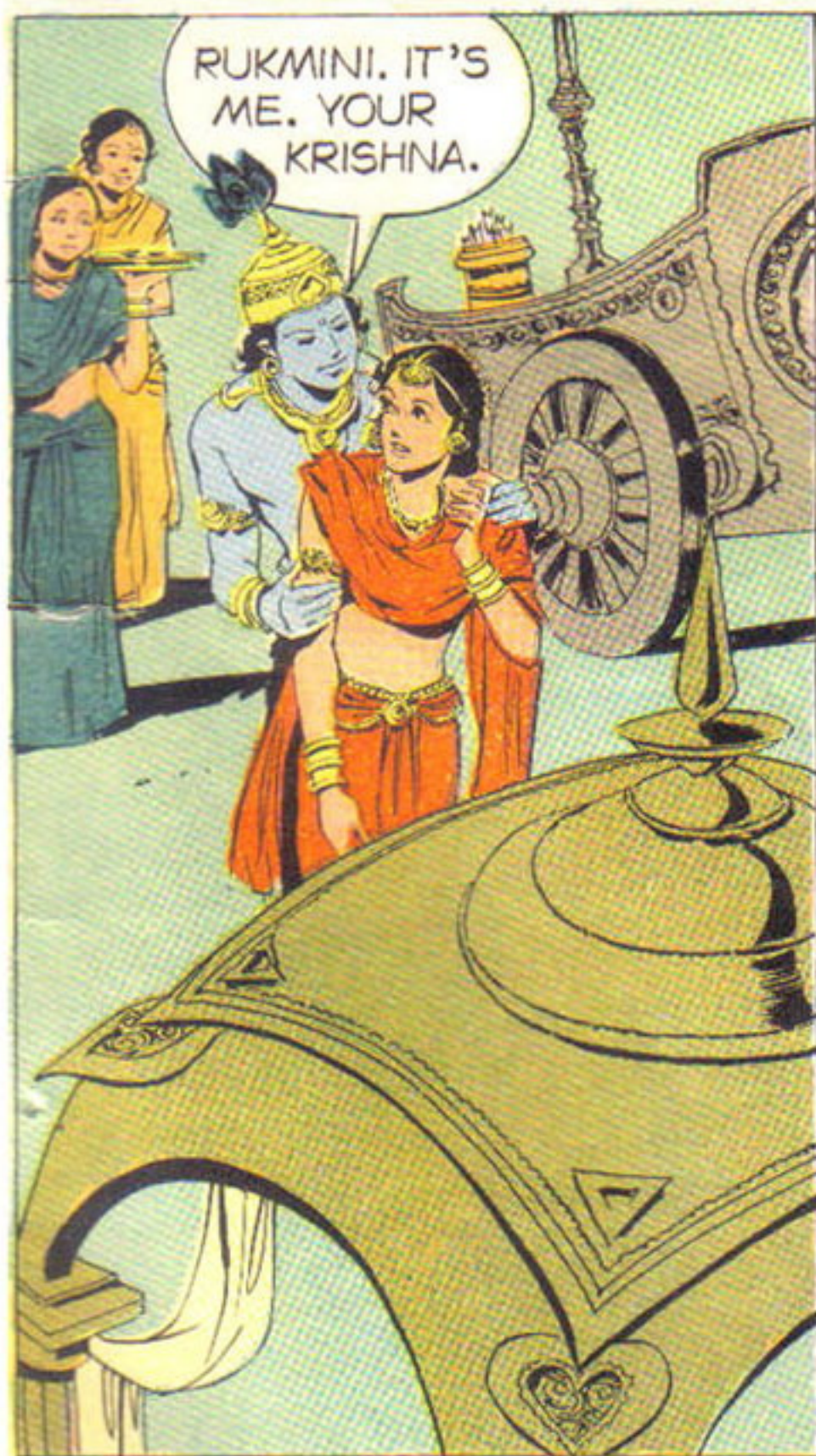
WILL KRISHNA
EVER BECOME...



...MINE?



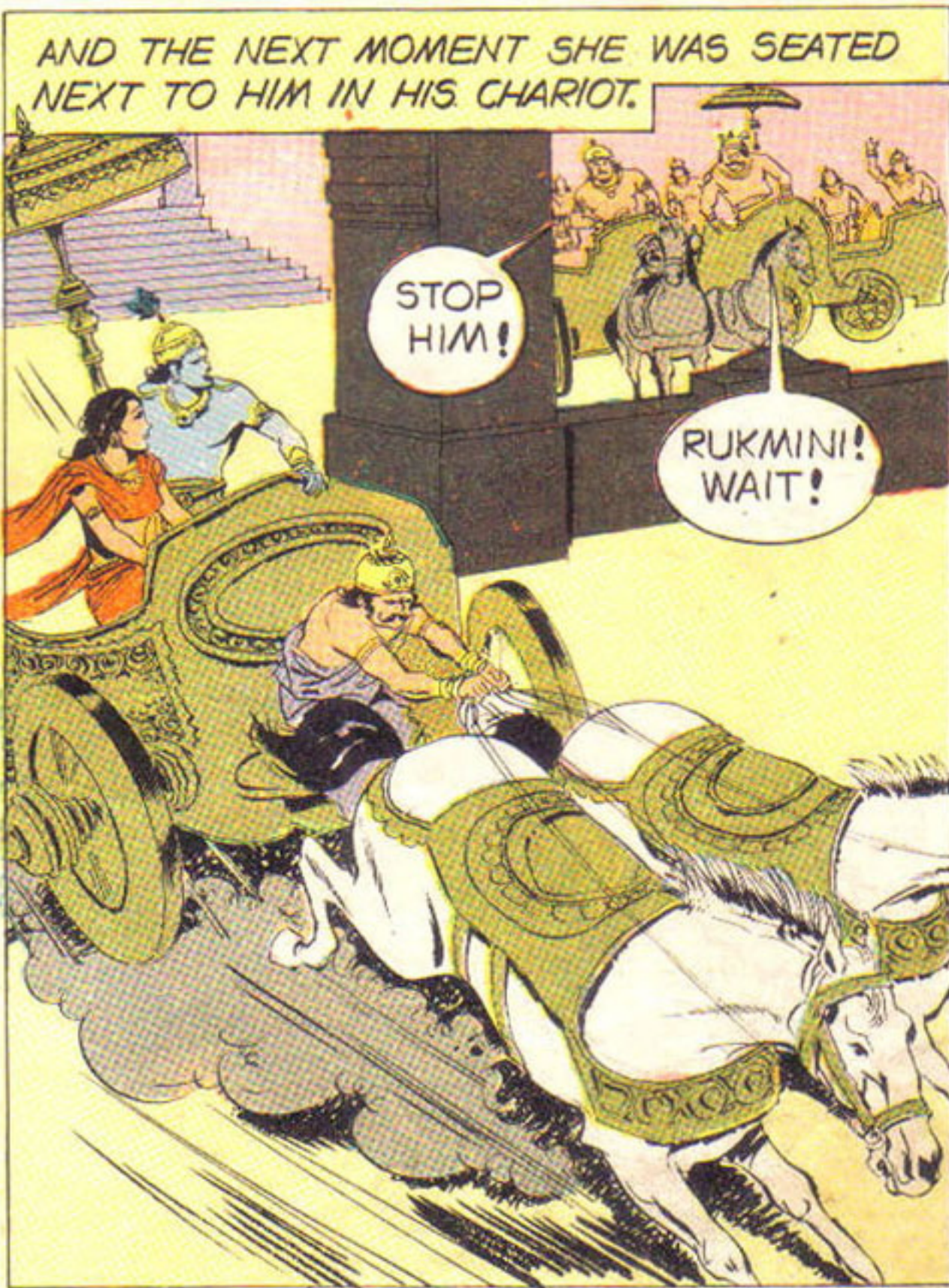
RUKMINI. IT'S
ME. YOUR
KRISHNA.



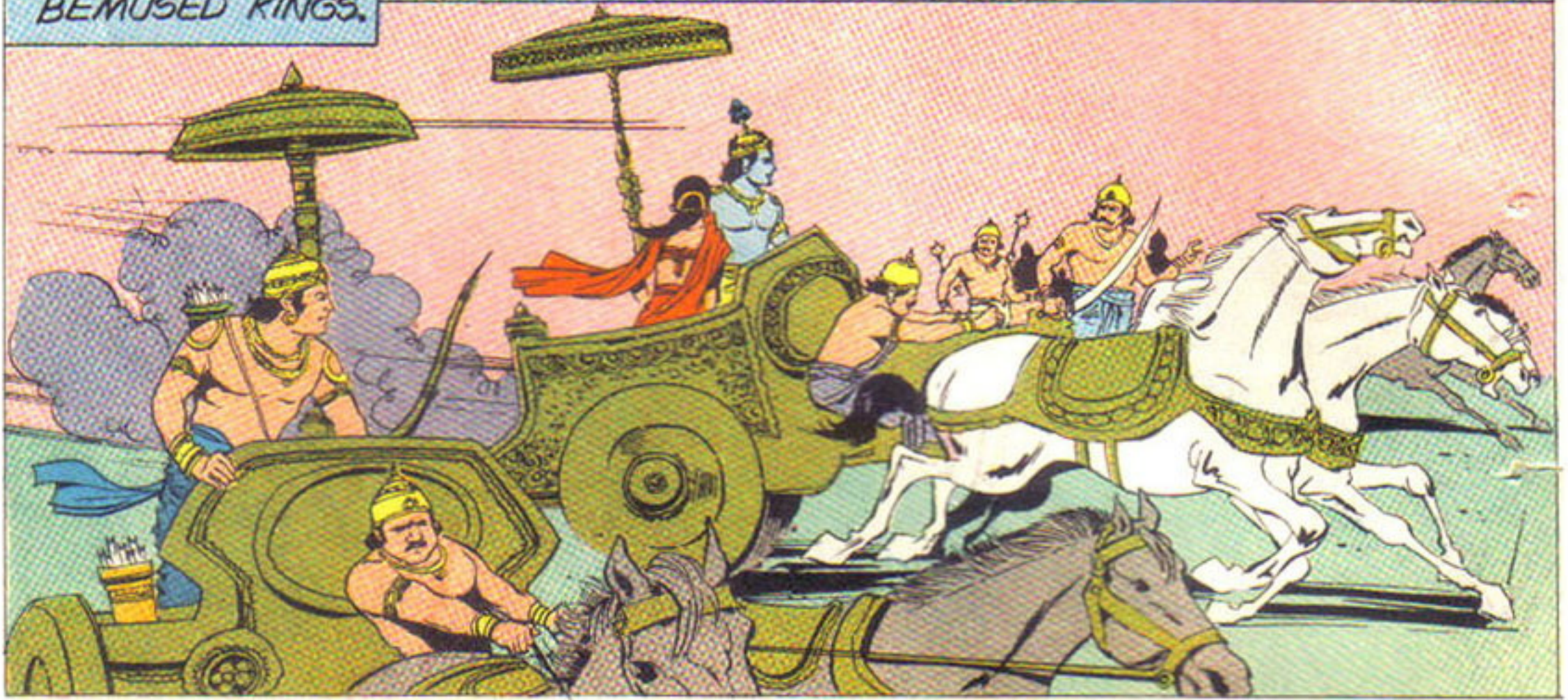
AND THE NEXT MOMENT SHE WAS SEATED
NEXT TO HIM IN HIS CHARIOT.

STOP
HIM!

RUKMINI!
WAIT!

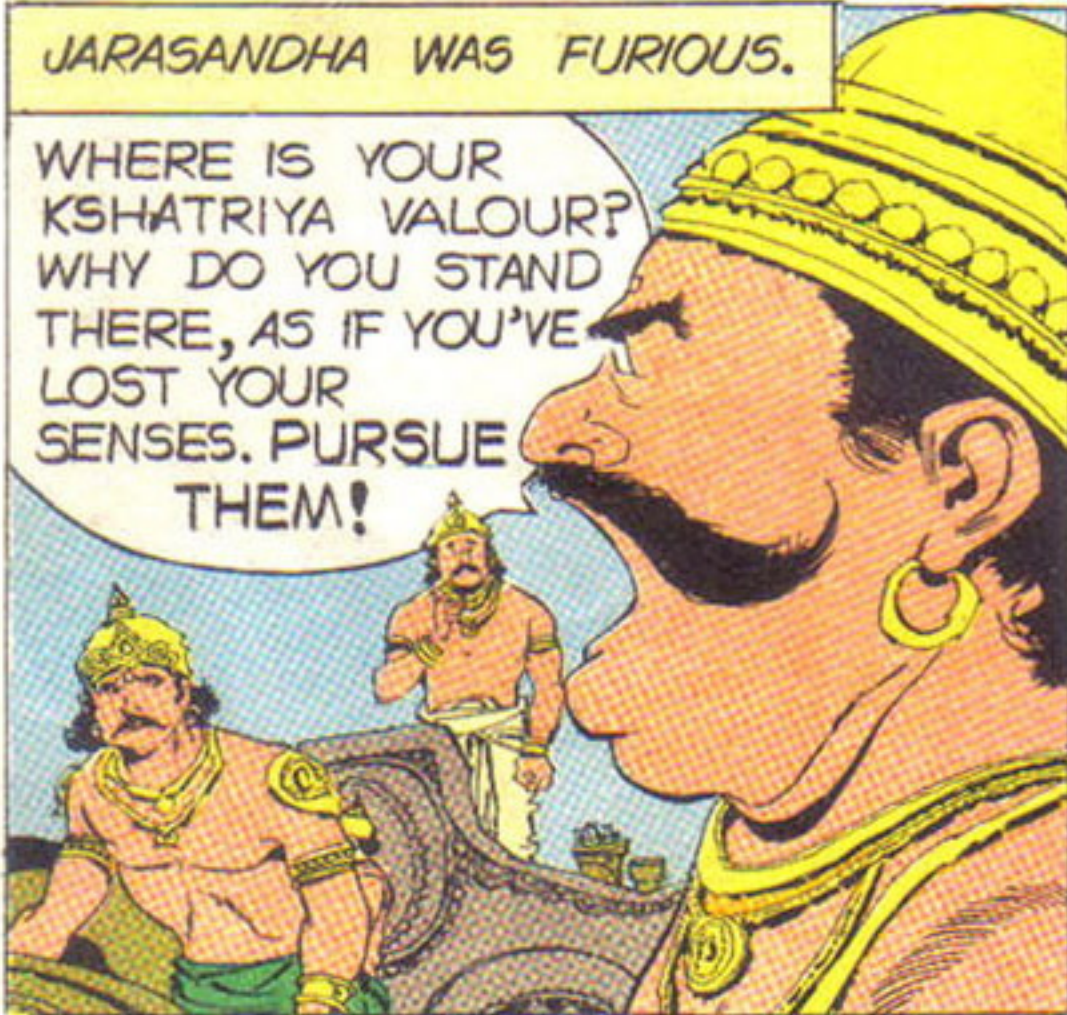


BUT KRISHNA'S CHARIOT SPED AWAY BLOWING DUST INTO THE EYES OF THE BEMUSED KINGS.

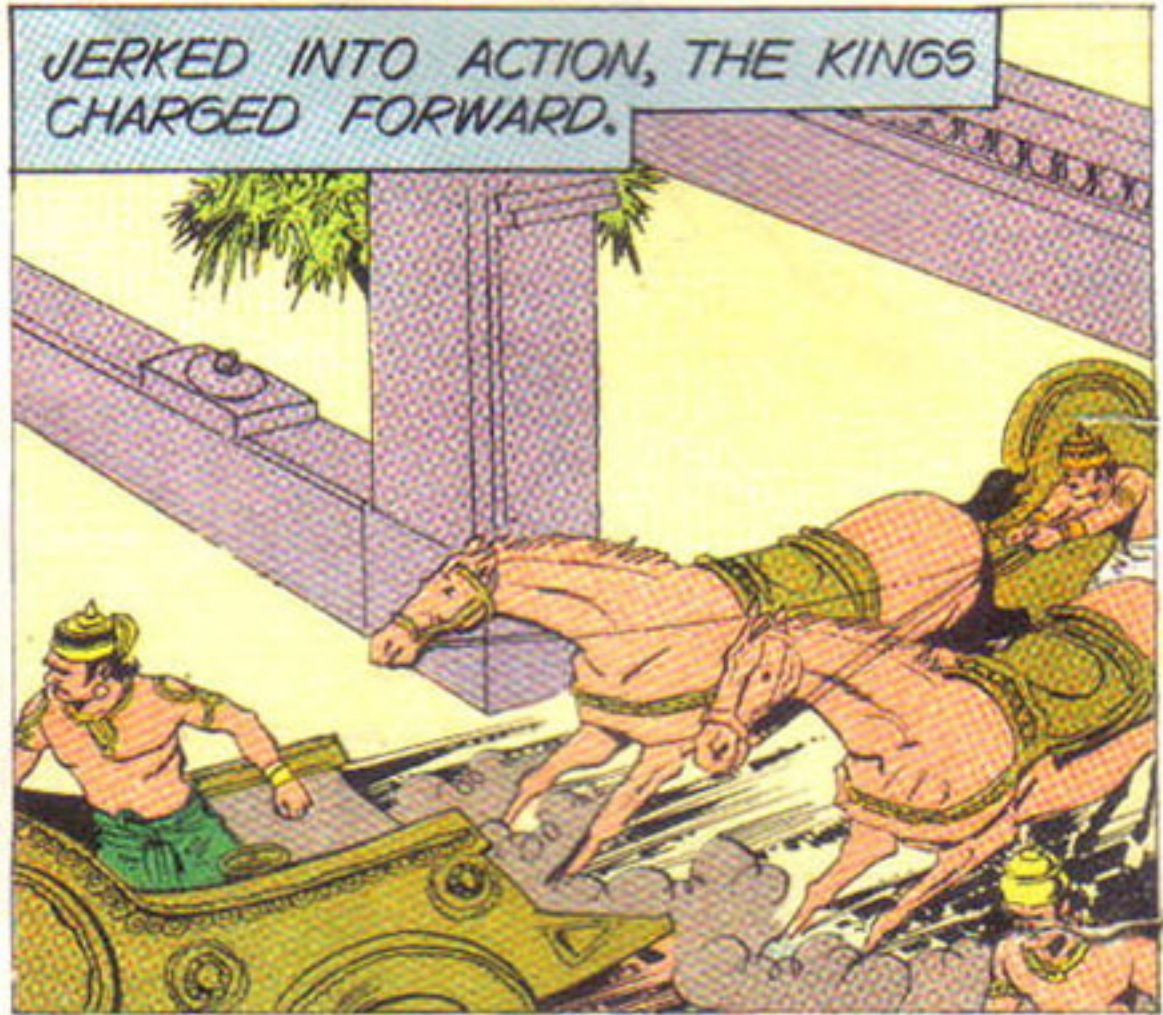


JARASANDHA WAS FURIOUS.

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

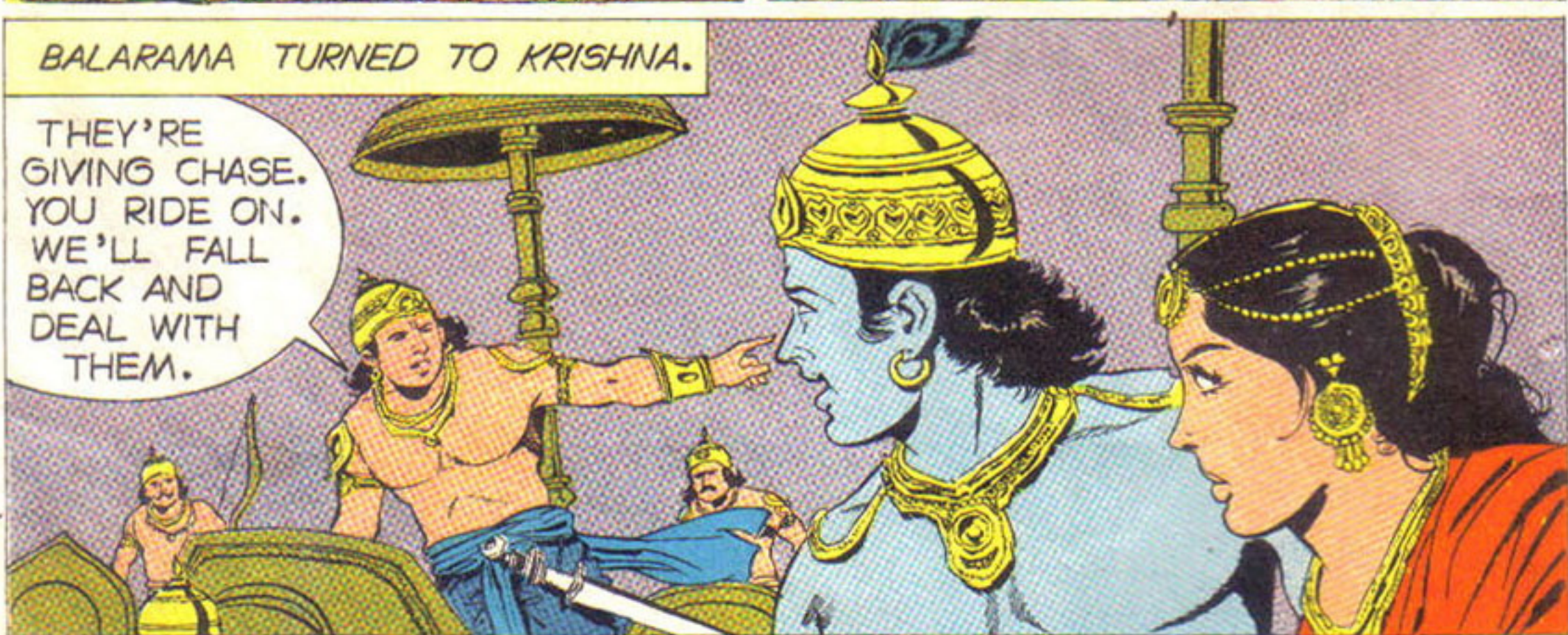


JERKED INTO ACTION, THE KINGS CHARGED FORWARD.



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.



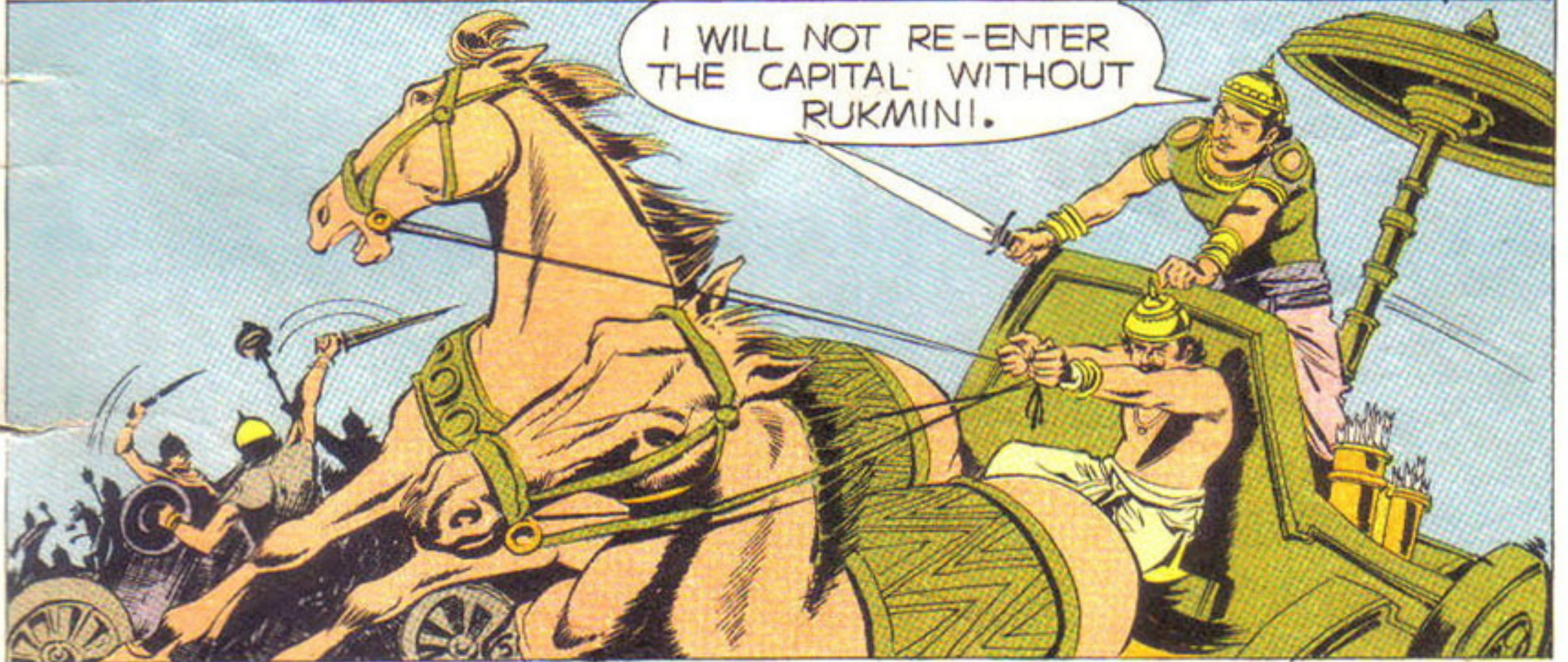
HE WAS RIGHT.

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



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

I WILL NOT RE-ENTER THE CAPITAL WITHOUT RUKMINI.



BALARAMA DID NOT TRY TO STOP HIM.

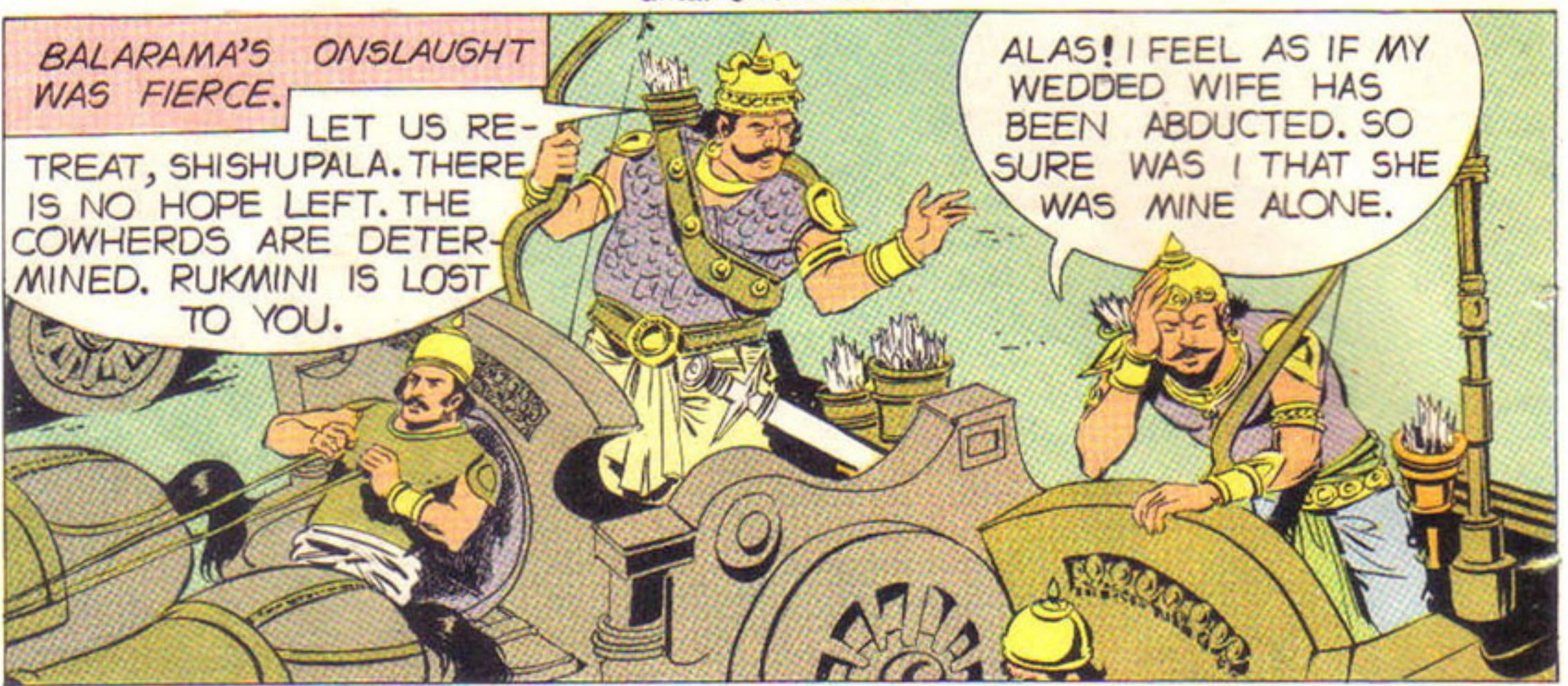
KRISHNA CAN DEAL WITH HIM, EVEN WITH RUKMINI IN HIS CHARIOT.



BALARAMA'S ONSLAUGHT WAS FIERCE.

LET US RETREAT, SHISHUPALA. THERE IS NO HOPE LEFT. THE COWHERDS ARE DETERMINED. RUKMINI IS LOST TO YOU.

ALAS! I FEEL AS IF MY WEDDED WIFE HAS BEEN ABDUCTED. SO SURE WAS I THAT SHE WAS MINE ALONE.



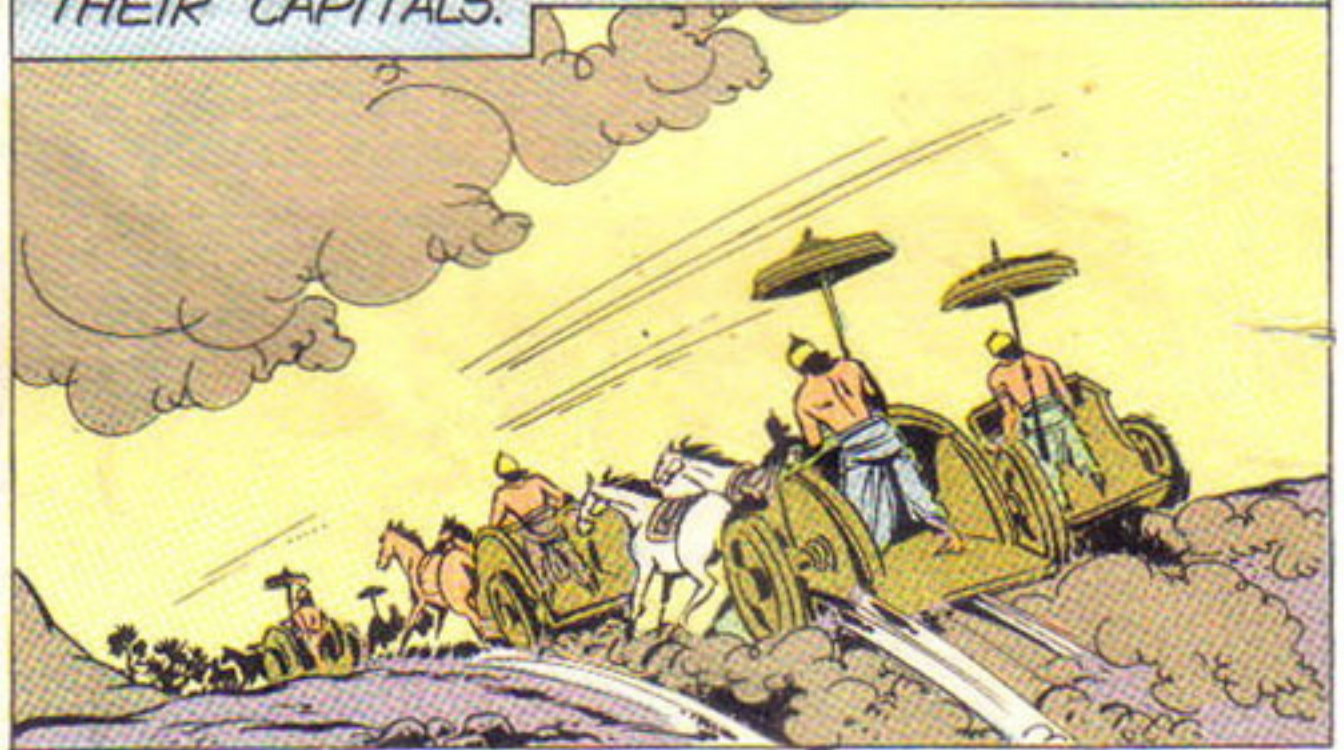
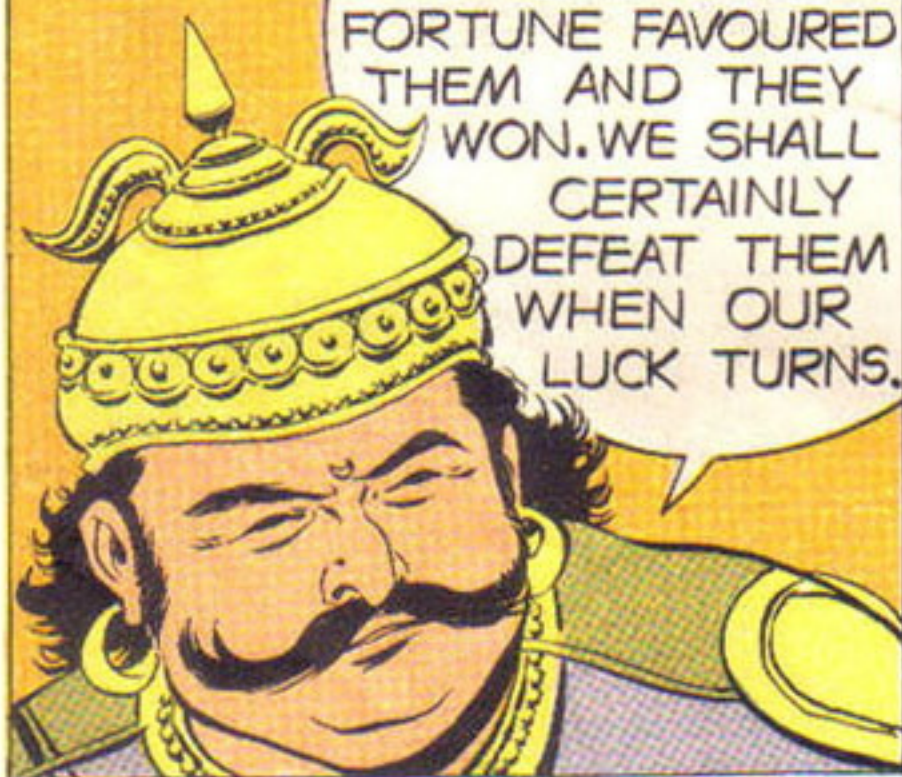
JARASANDHA TRIED TO CONSOLE HIM.

DON'T GRIEVE,

SHISHUPALA.

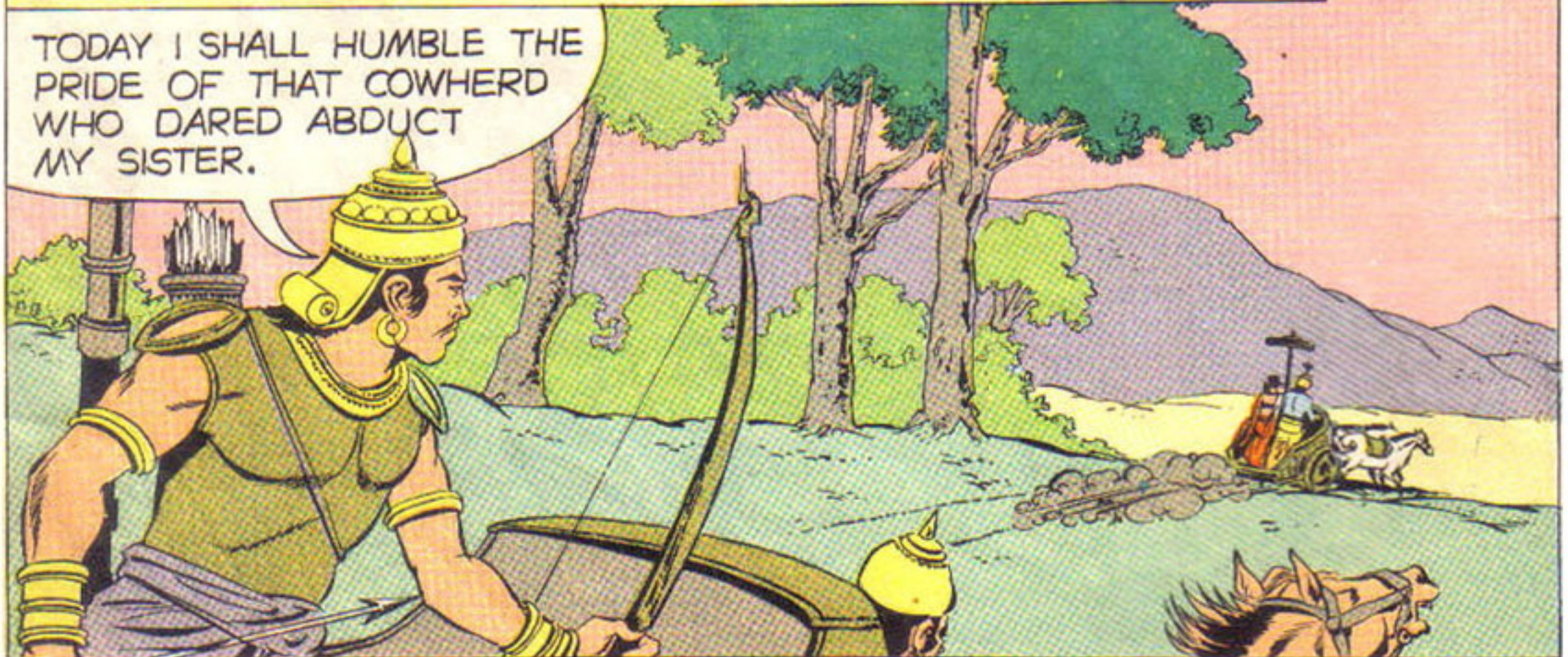
FORTUNE FAVOURED THEM AND THEY WON. WE SHALL CERTAINLY DEFEAT THEM WHEN OUR LUCK TURNS.

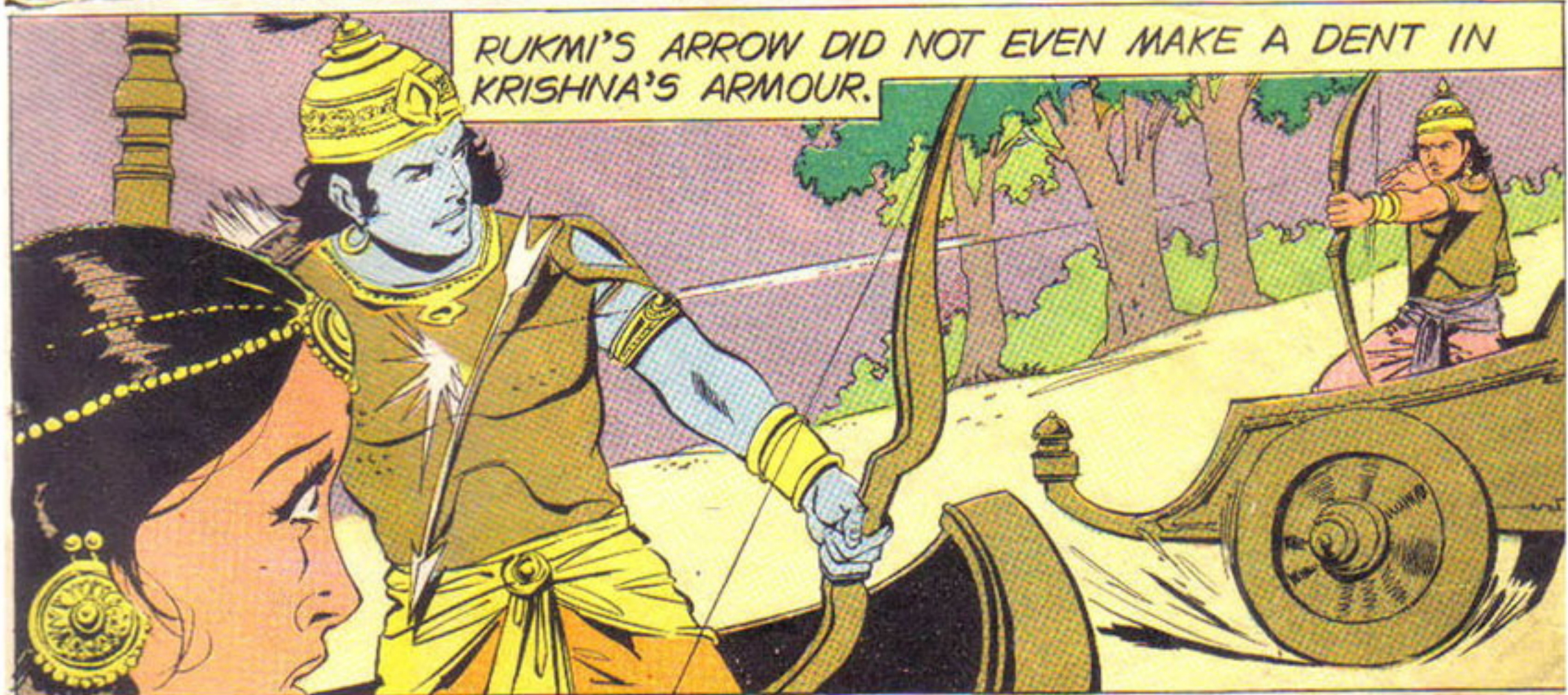
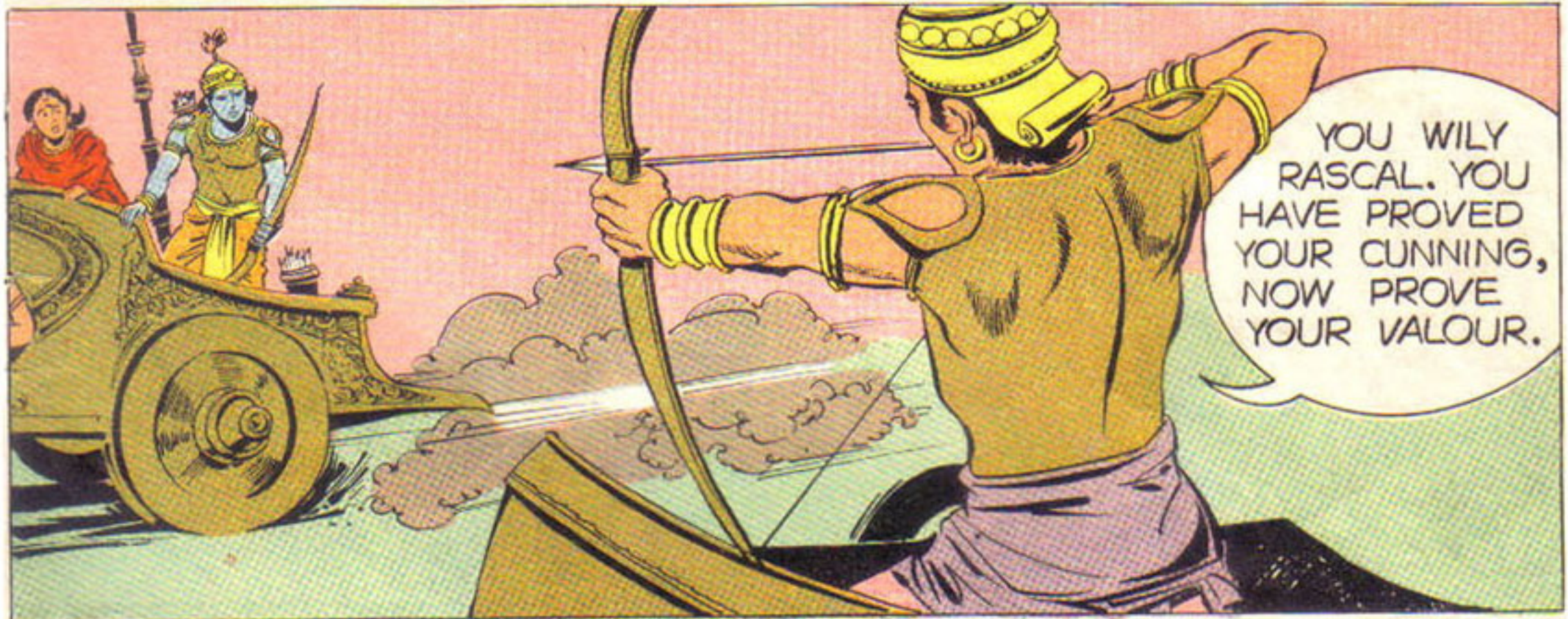
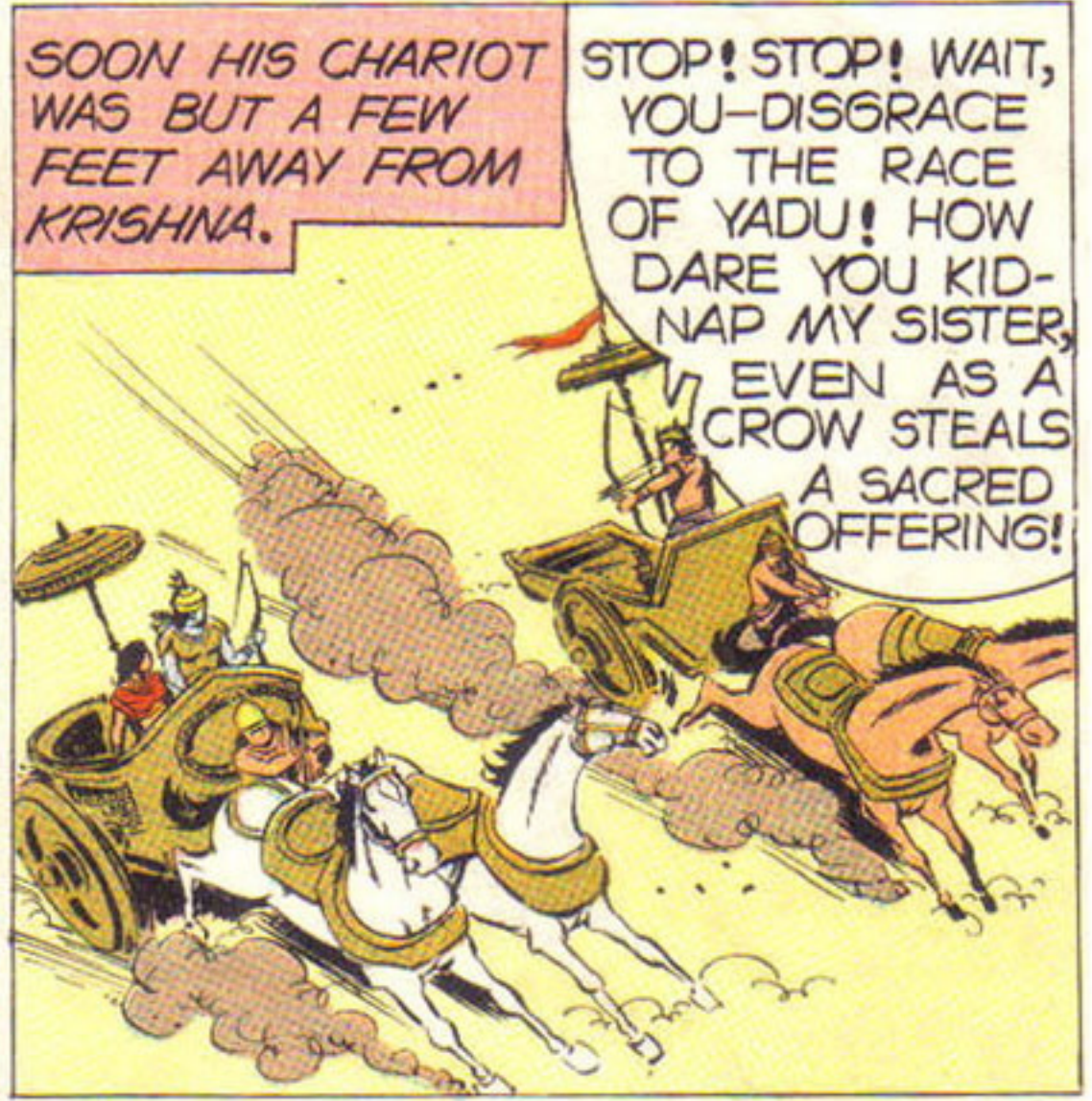
FULL OF HATRED FOR THE MAN WHO HAD WORSTED THEM, THE DISAPPOINTED SUITOR AND HIS WELL-WISHERS RETURNED TO THEIR CAPITALS.



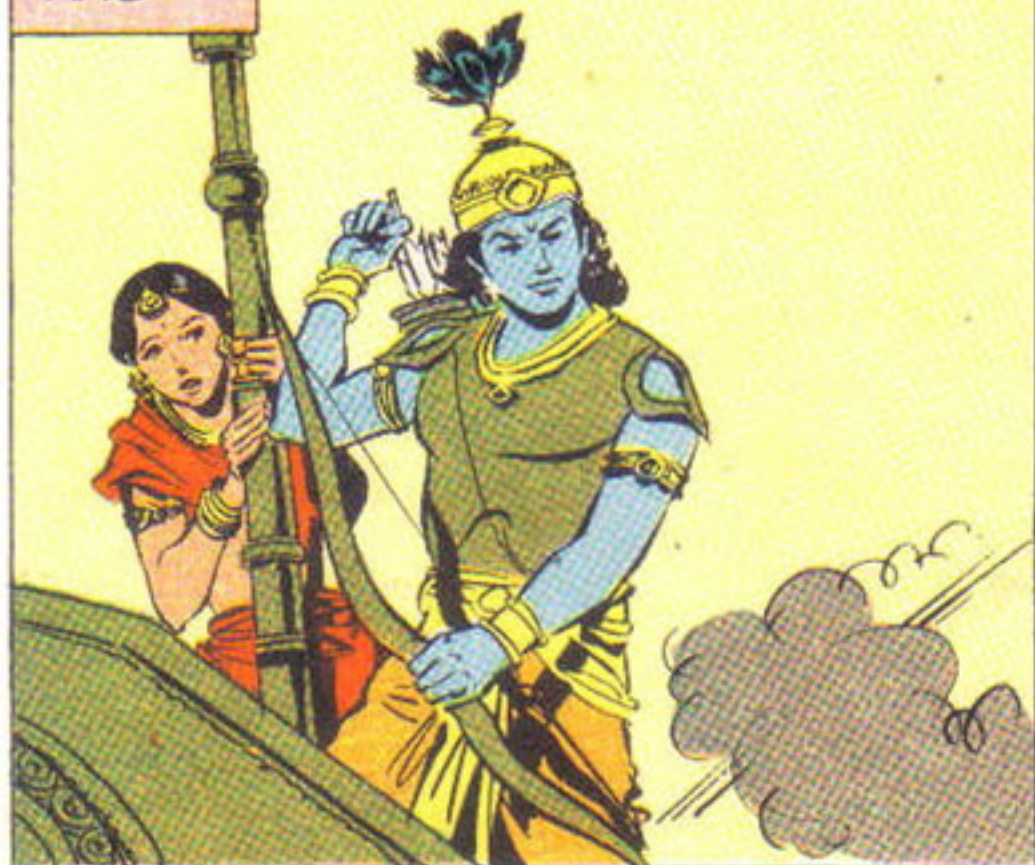
MEANWHILE, RUKMI HAD ALMOST CAUGHT UP WITH KRISHNA.

TODAY I SHALL HUMBLE THE PRIDE OF THAT COWHERD WHO DARED ABDUCT MY SISTER.

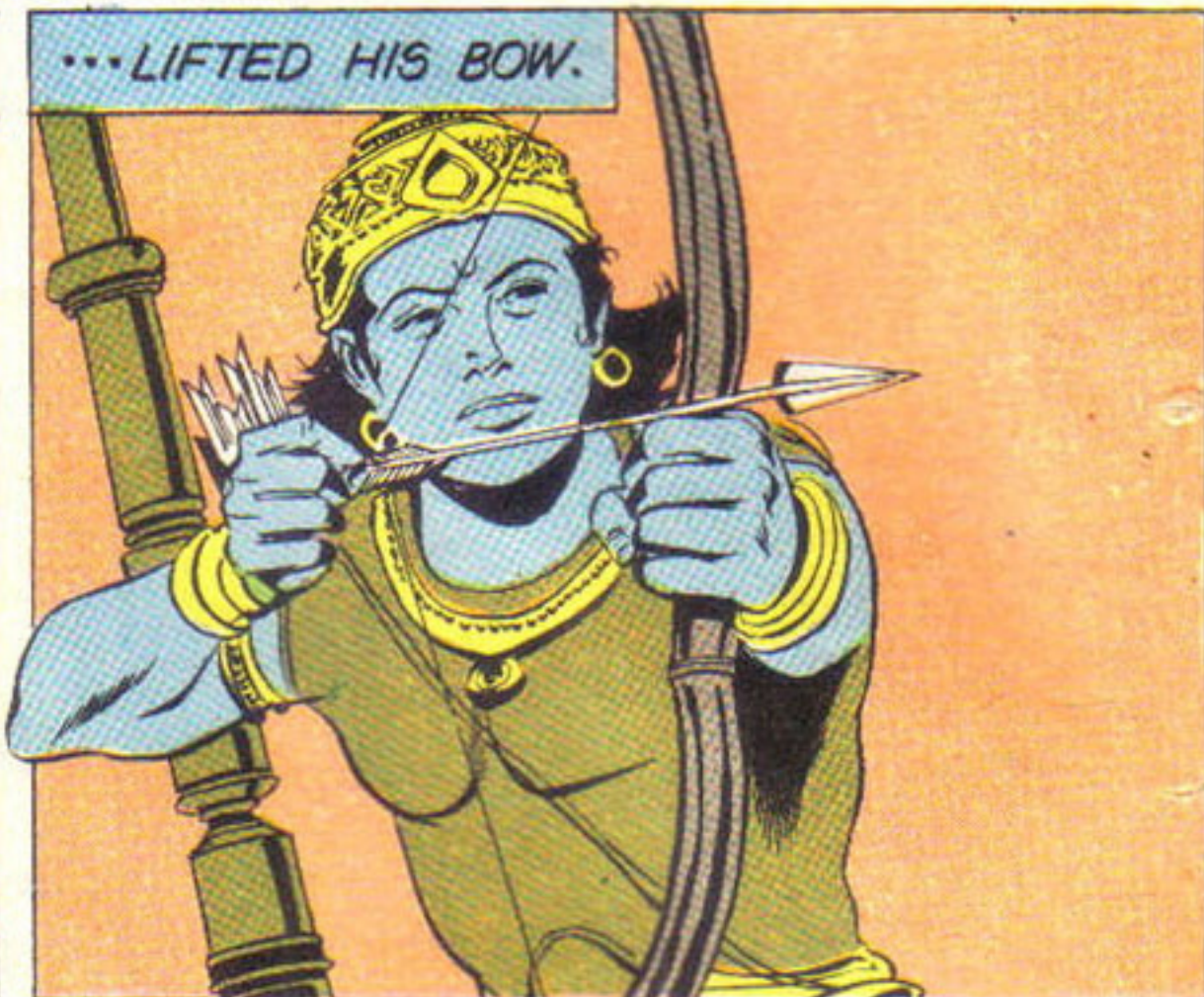




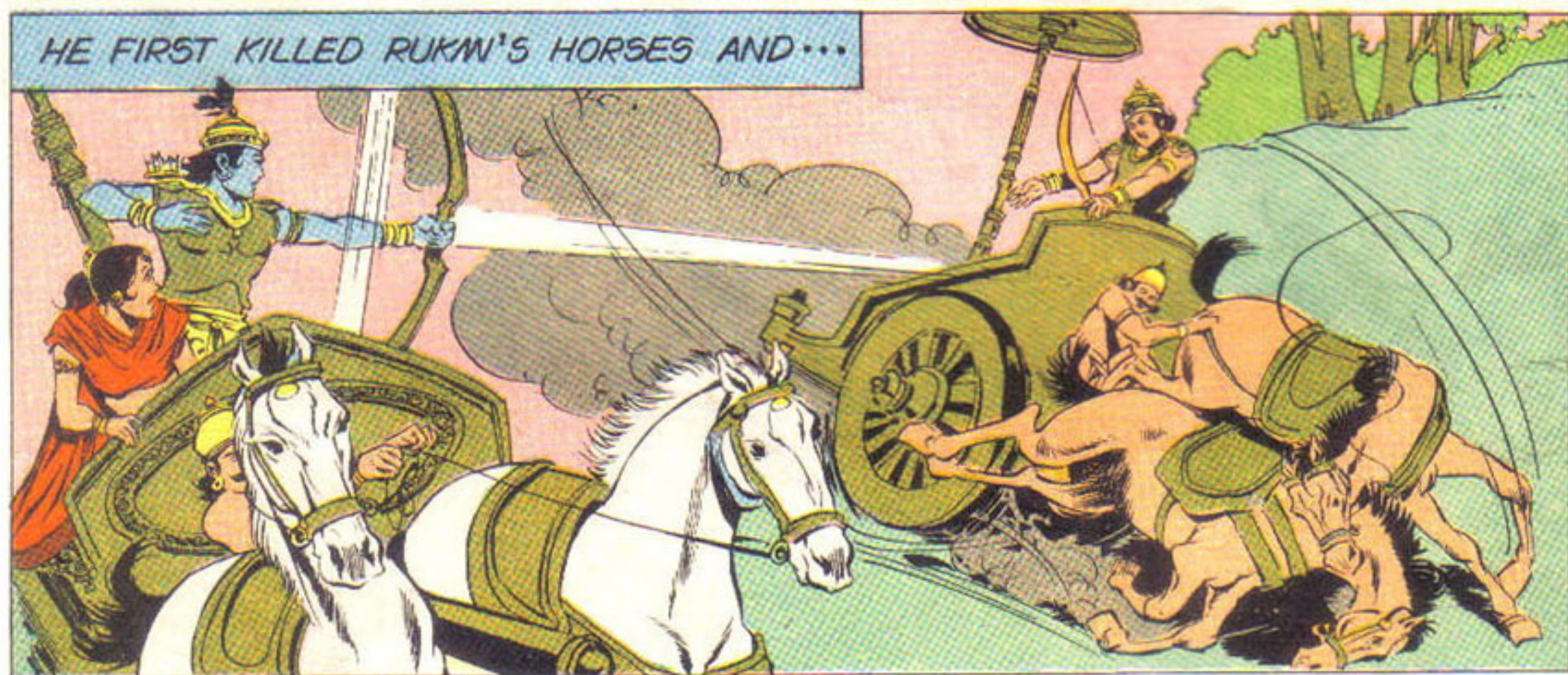
KRISHNA PULLED OUT AN ARROW AND...



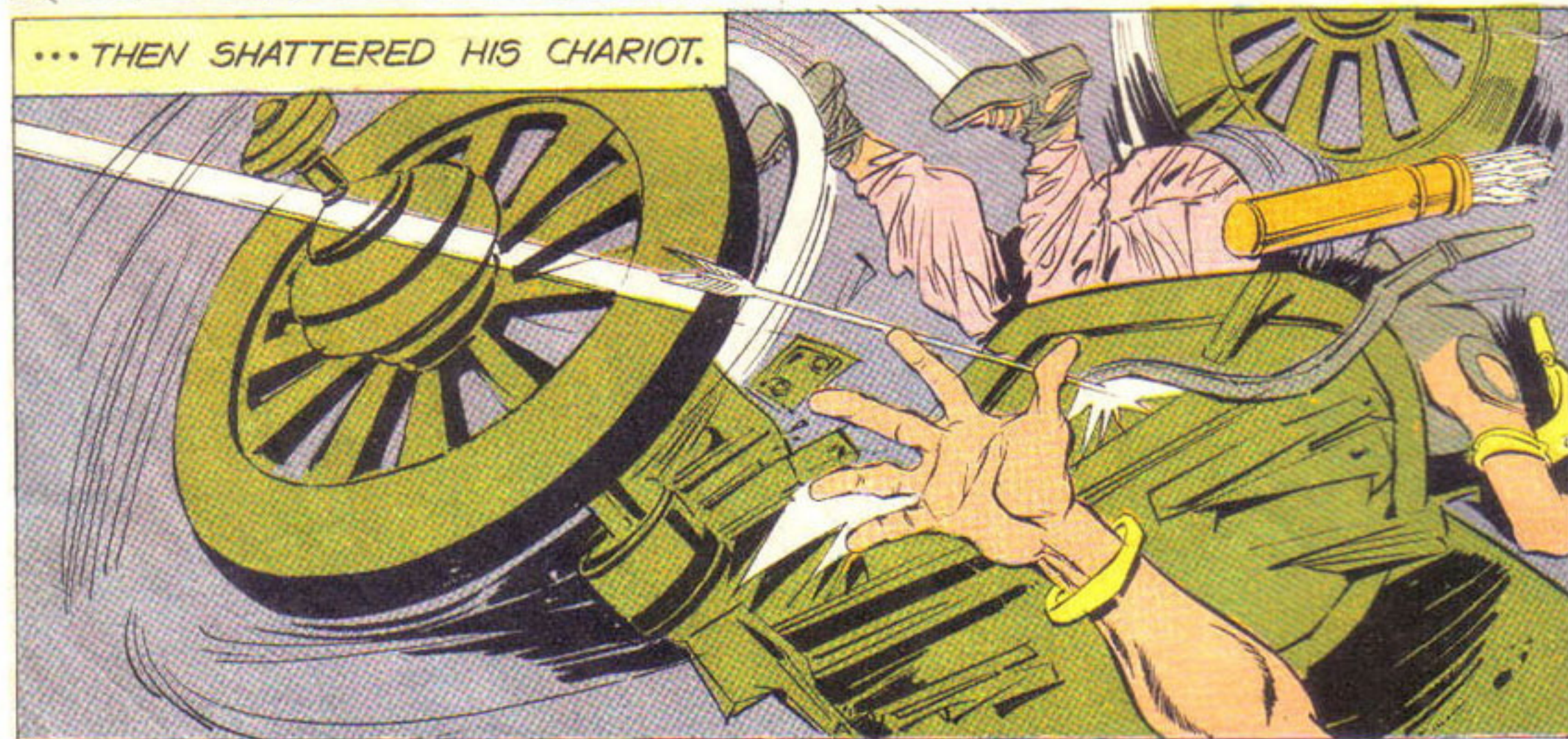
...LIFTED HIS BOW.



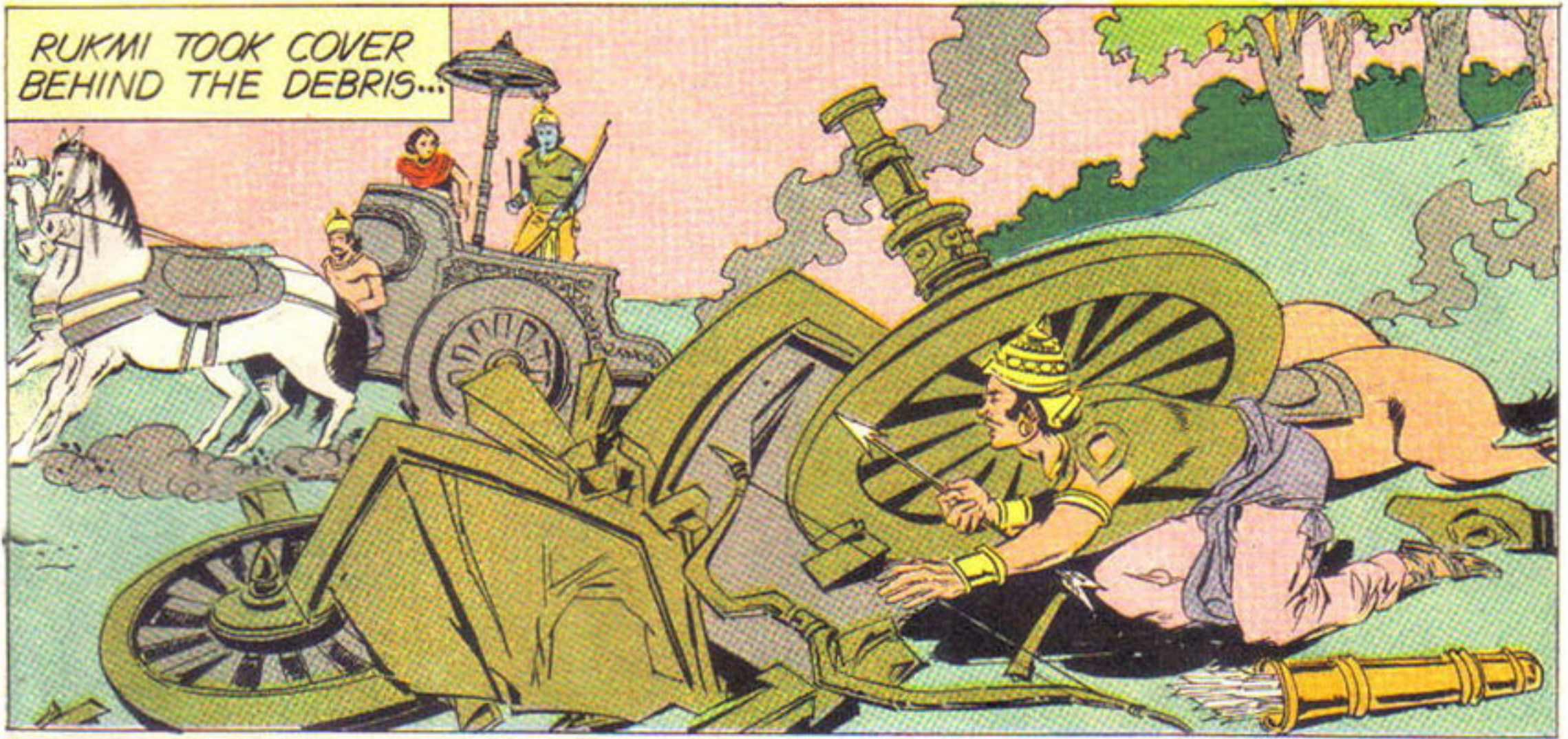
HE FIRST KILLED RUKM'S HORSES AND...



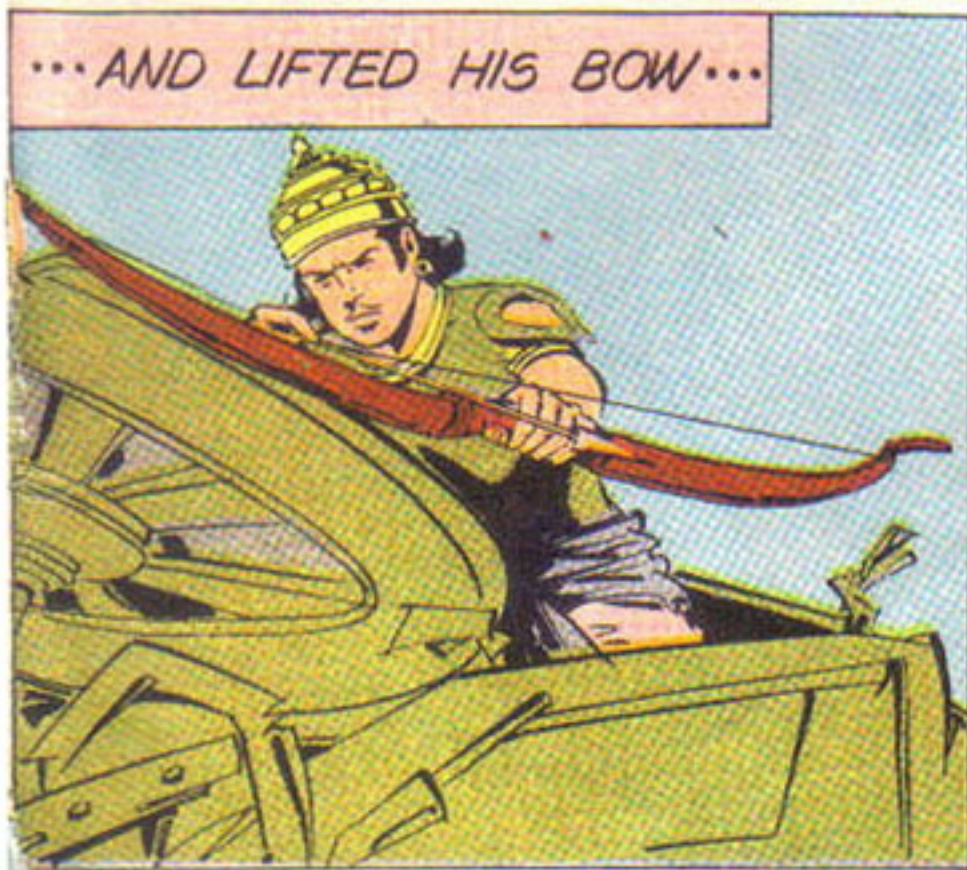
... THEN SHATTERED HIS CHARIOT.



RUKMI TOOK COVER
BEHIND THE DEBRIS...



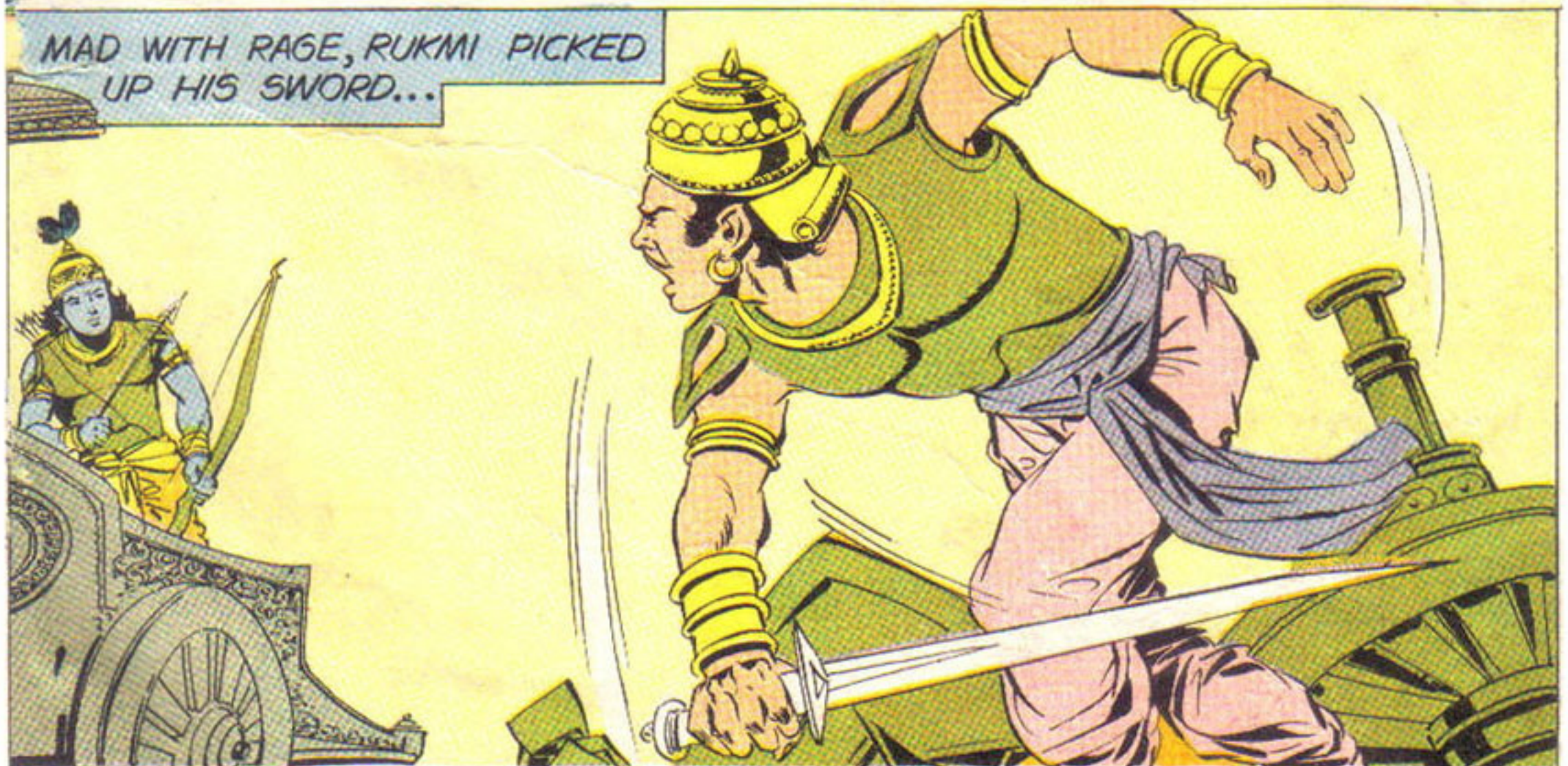
...AND LIFTED HIS BOW...



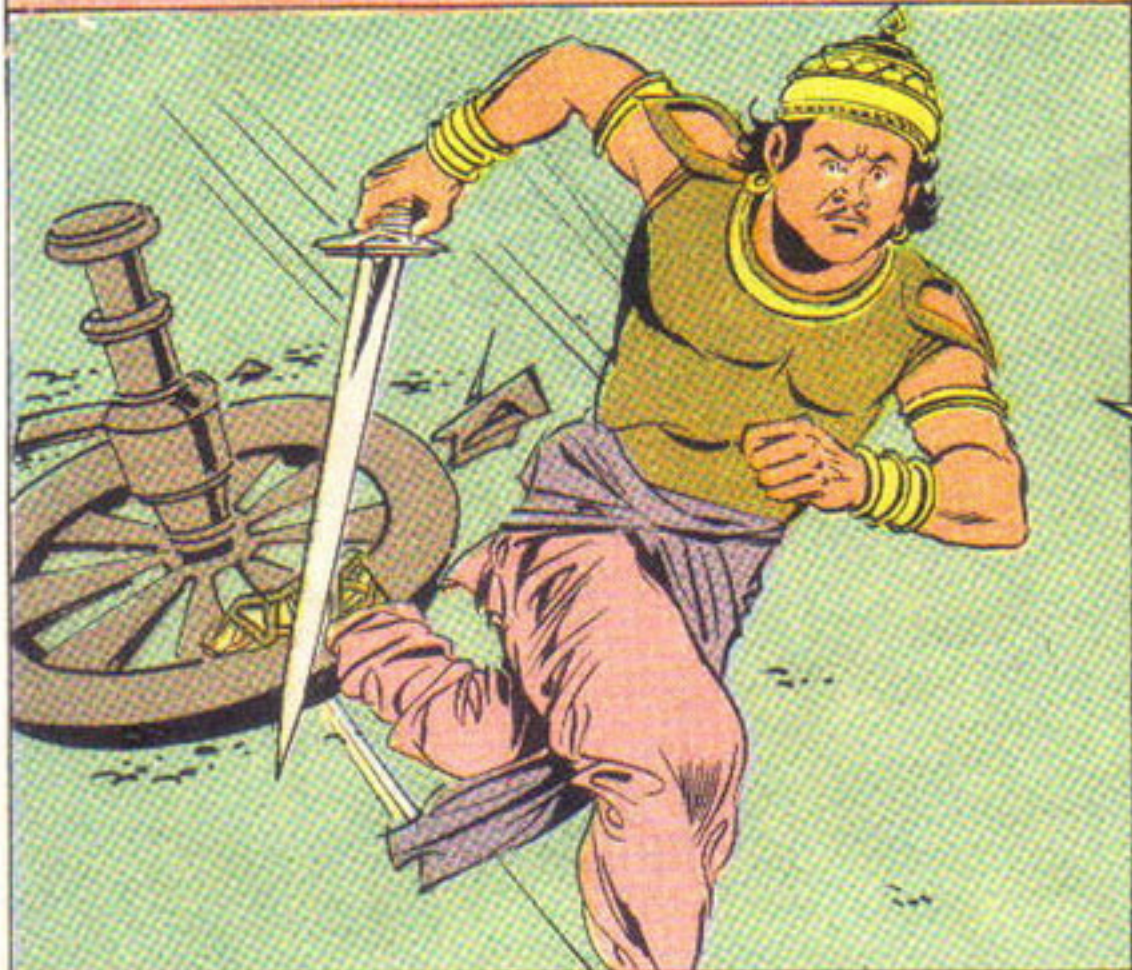
...ONLY TO HAVE IT BROKEN
TO BITS.



MAD WITH RAGE, RUKMI PICKED
UP HIS SWORD...



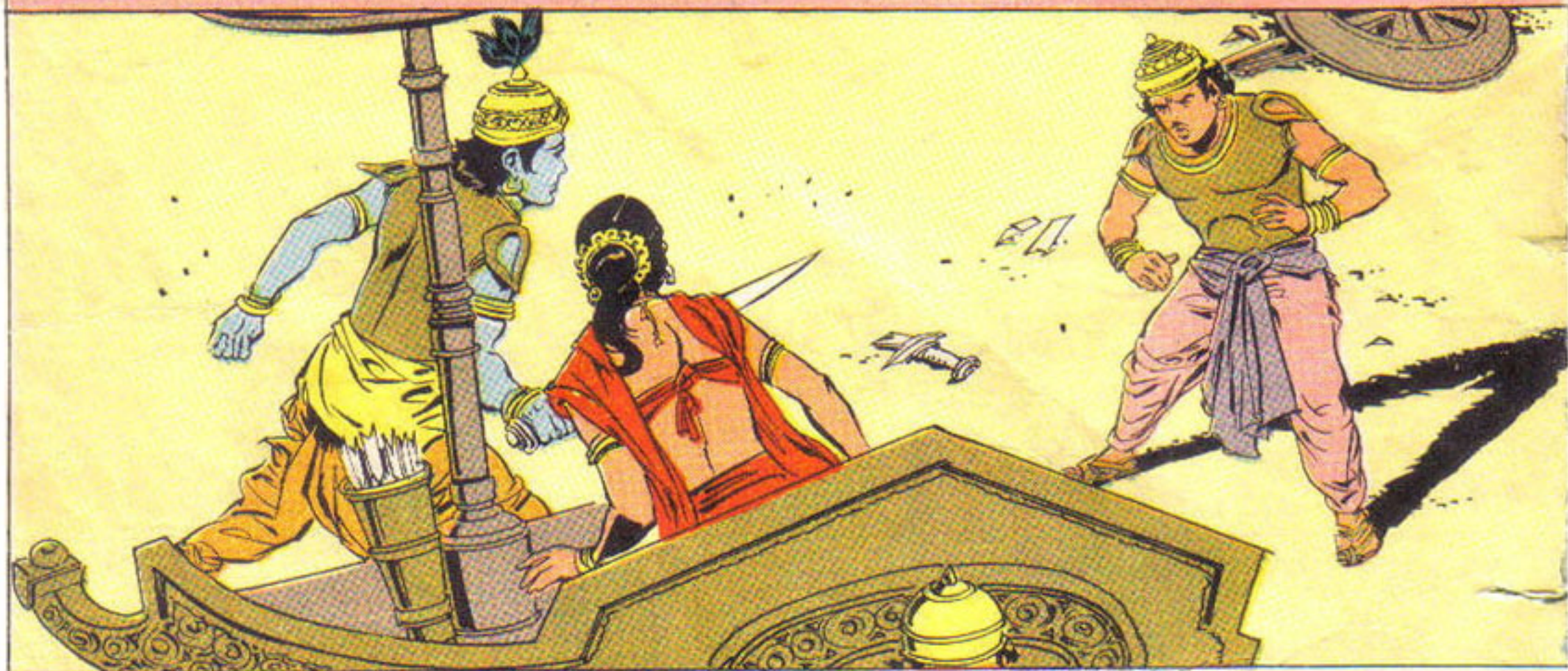
...AND RUSHED TOWARDS KRISHNA.



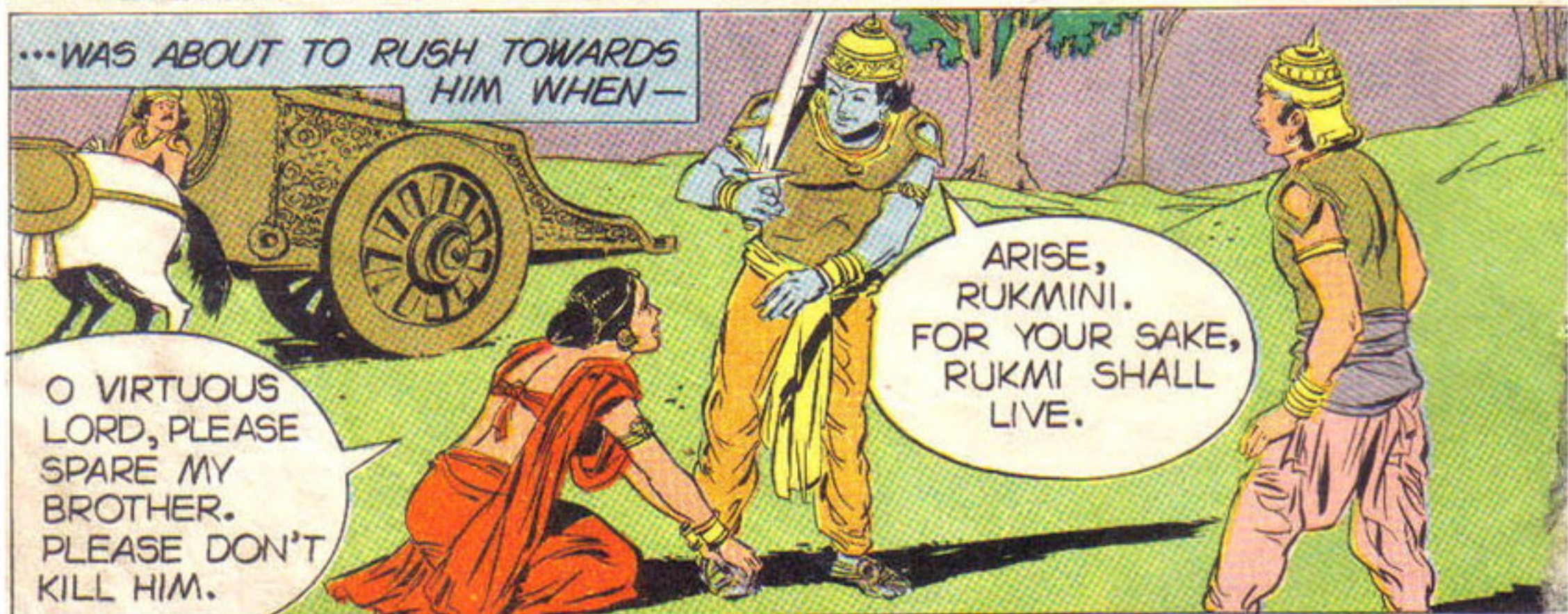
THE NEXT MOMENT, HOWEVER, HE FOUND HIM HOLDING BUT THE HILT.



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



...WAS ABOUT TO RUSH TOWARDS HIM WHEN—

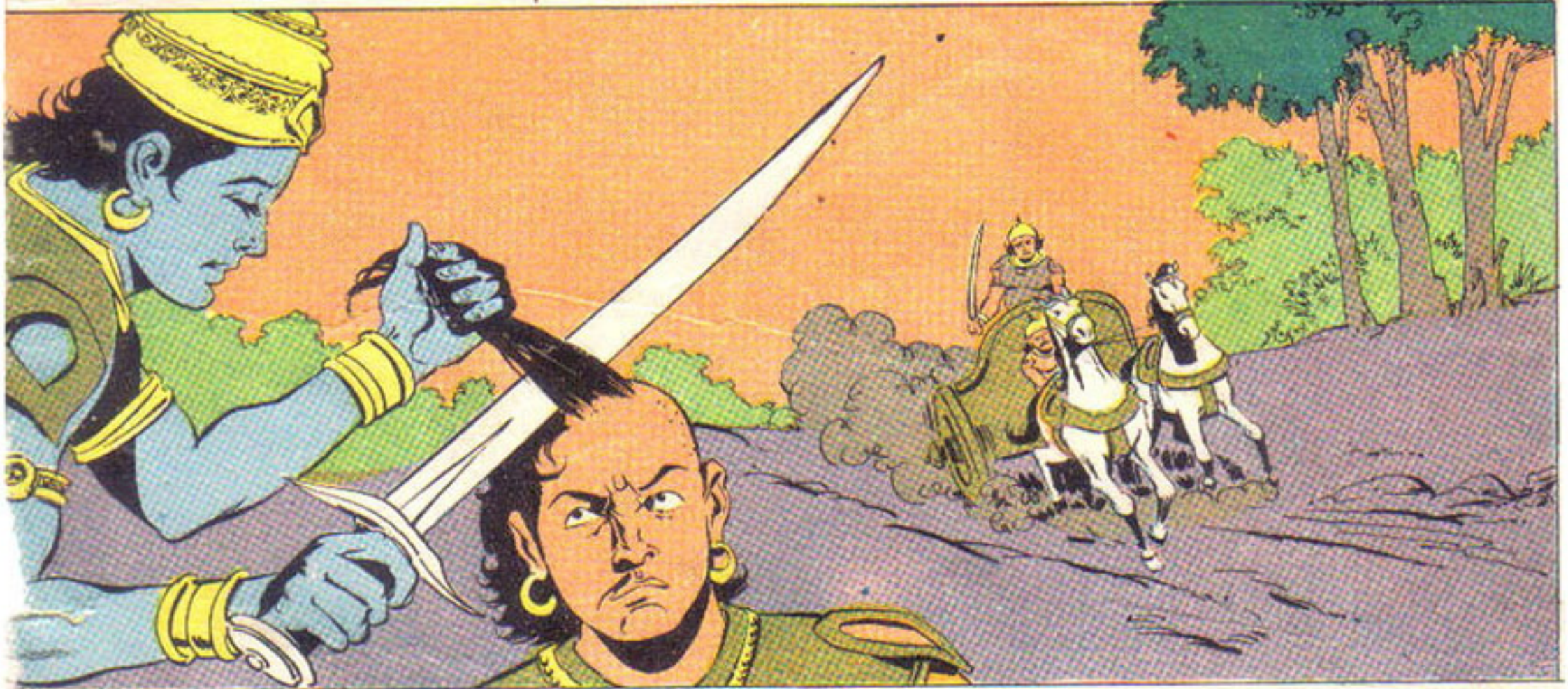


O VIRTUOUS LORD, PLEASE SPARE MY BROTHER. PLEASE DON'T KILL HIM.

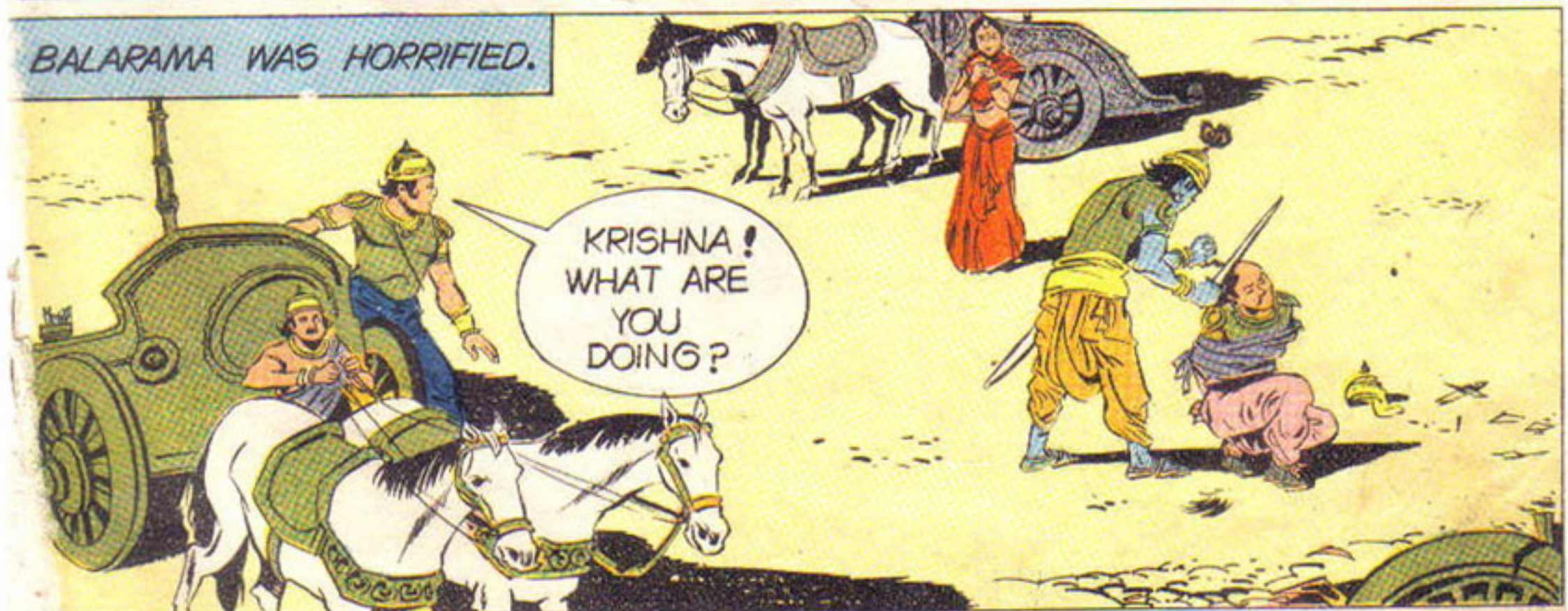
ARISE, RUKMINI. FOR YOUR SAKE, RUKMI SHALL LIVE.

HE WENT UP TO RUKMI AND BOUND HIM WITH HIS OWN PRAPATA*.

I SHALL SHAVE OFF HALF HIS HAIR AND HALF HIS MOUSTACHE WITH THE BLADE OF MY SWORD. THERE COULD BE NO GREATER PUNISHMENT FOR A WARRIOR.



BALARAMA WAS HORRIFIED.





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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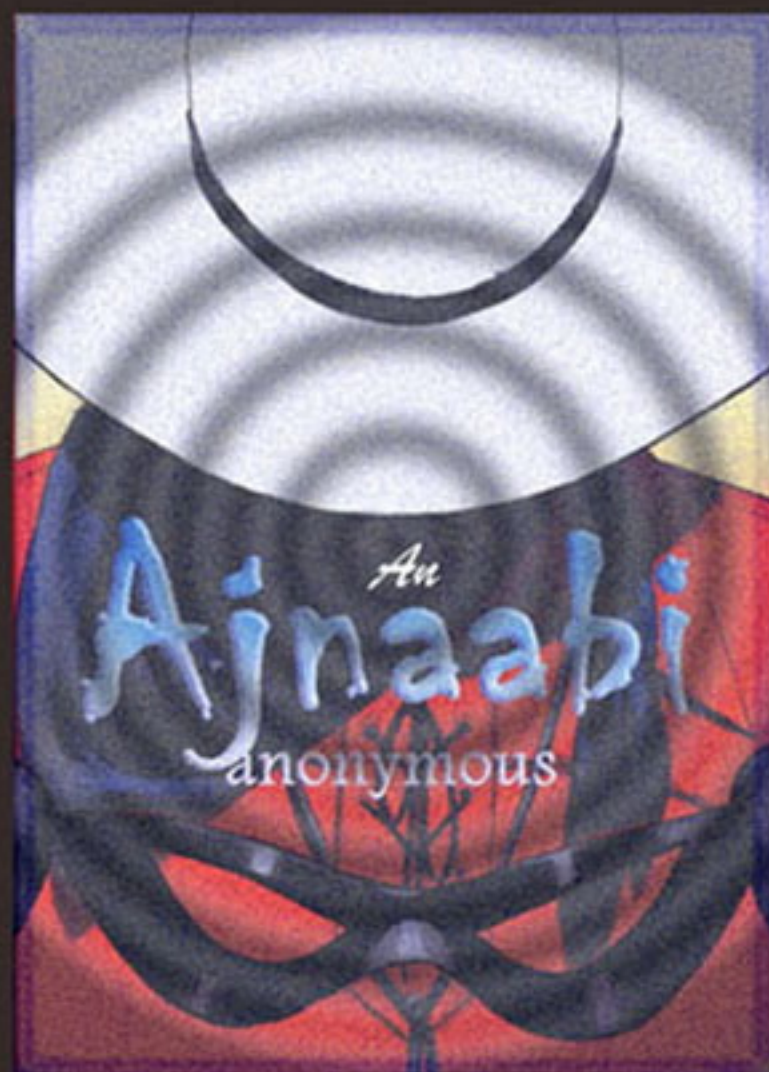
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