



No. 157 Rs. 2.50

Manonmani



RETOLD FROM
FAMOUS TAMIL CLASSIC

FAM tanka

Tamil literature is a rich storehouse of poetry and prose. Yet there was no play in Tamil till the end of the nineteenth century. Sundaram Pillai, a great admirer of Shakespeare, first introduced the play as a literary form.

His play *Manonmaniyam*, has, apart from elements of mystery and romance, an underlying allegory. Jeevakan, the soul, shrouded in *maya* characterised by Kudilan, comes to grief. Sundara Muni, the guiding spirit, brings enlightenment at the appropriate moment.

The story of Manonmani, an unaffected, simple girl, who finds her love blossoming after a crisis, has long been popular in Tamil Nadu; and though Tamil drama has come a long way since Pillai wrote *Manonmaniyam*, this pioneering play continues to be studied by students of Tamil literature.

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MANONMANI

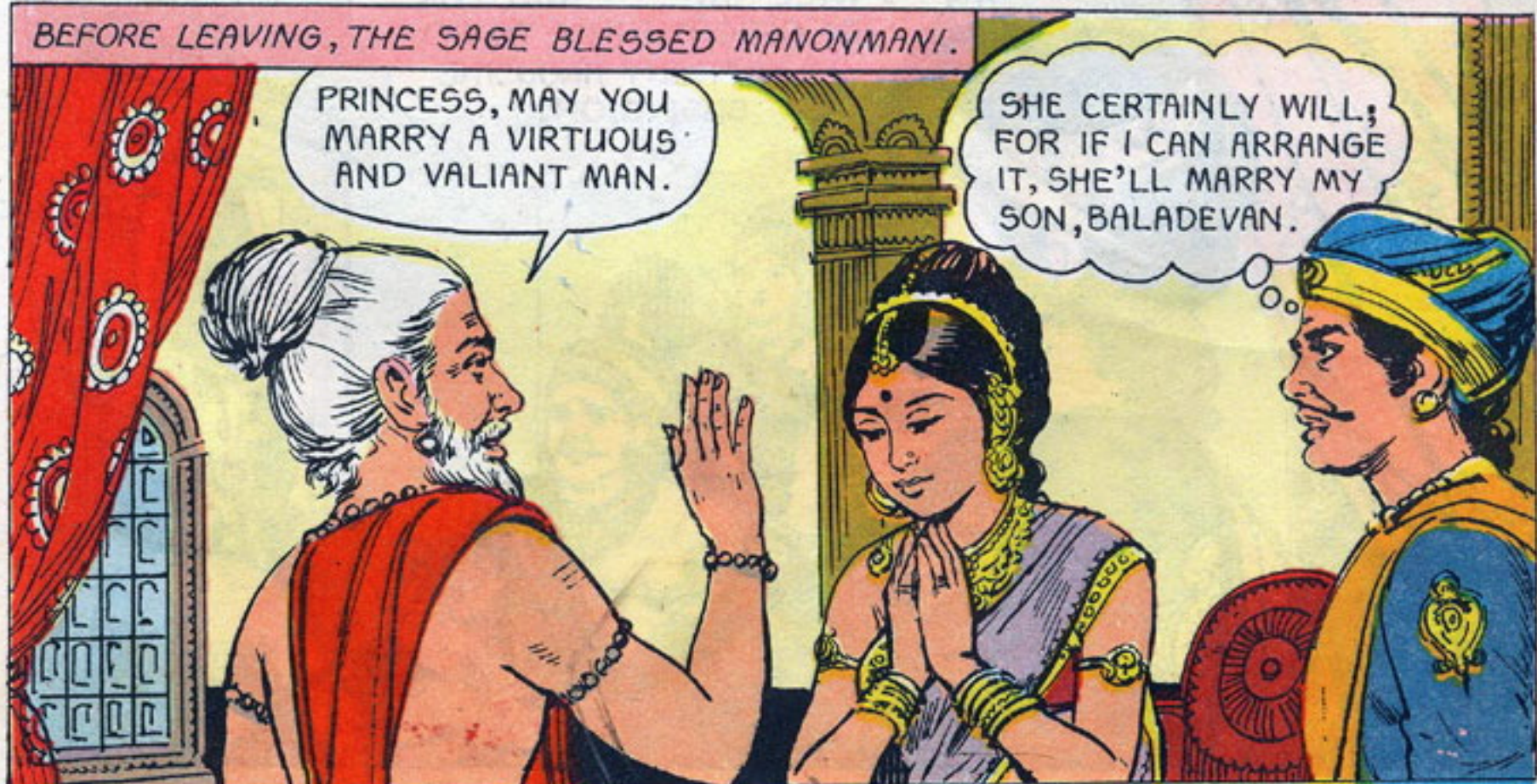


MANONMANI WAS THE ONLY CHILD OF JEEVAKAN, THE WEAK PANDYA KING. UNDER THE SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OF THE SAGE, SUNDARA, HOWEVER, THE KING RULED WELL AND HIS SUBJECTS WERE HAPPY...

... ALL EXCEPT HIS CUNNING CHIEF MINISTER, KUDILAN.

IF MY PLANS HAVE TO SUCCEED, I MUST GET THAT INTERFERING, OLD SAGE OUT OF THE WAY. I WILL HAVE TO WAIT FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO IT WITHOUT AROUSING SUSPICION.







DURING THE ABSENCE OF THE SAGE, WHILE KUDILAN PLOTTED AND PLANNED, MANONMANI'S EIGHTEENTH BIRTHDAY CAME ROUND.

OUR PRINCESS CAN BE DESCRIBED AS THE EMBODIMENT OF PANDYA GLORY.

BUT KUDILAN'S WILES WILL STAIN THAT GLORY.



AS THE COUNCILLORS CAME OUT OF THE ROYAL COURT...

OLD AGE AND THE ABSENCE OF THE WISE SAGE HAVE MADE OUR KING BLIND TO KUDILAN'S WICKED WAYS.

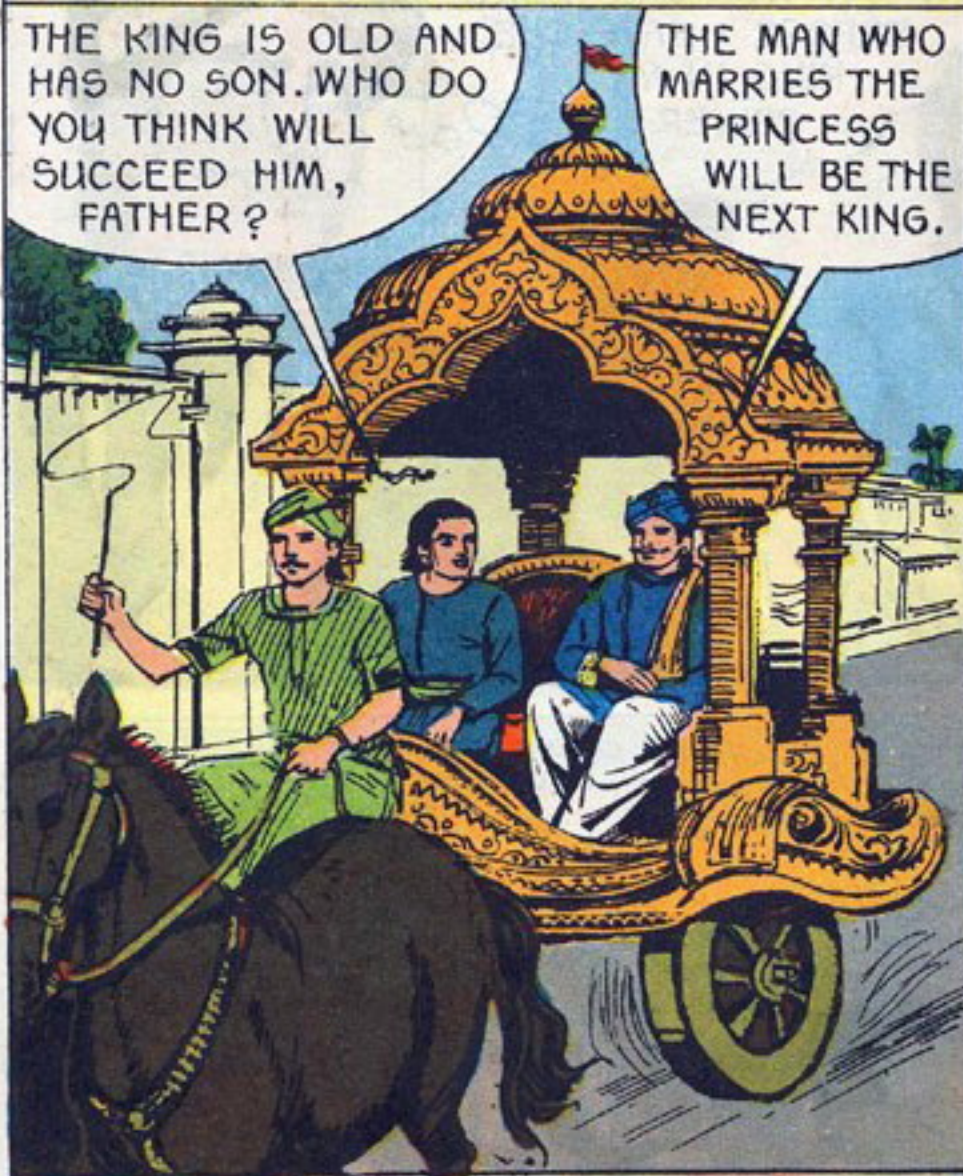
WE SHOULD BE VIGILANT AND PROTECT THE KING FROM HIS MINISTER.



LATER, AS KUDILAN AND HIS SON, BALADEVAN, RODE AWAY FROM THE PALACE—

THE KING IS OLD AND HAS NO SON. WHO DO YOU THINK WILL SUCCEED HIM, FATHER?

THE MAN WHO MARRIES THE PRINCESS WILL BE THE NEXT KING.



FATHER, WITH YOUR INFLUENCE OVER THE KING, I COULD EASILY BE THAT MAN...



LATER, WHEN KUDILAN WAS ALONE—

I WILL HAVE TO PLAN MY MOVES CAREFULLY. THE PEOPLE OF MADURAI WILL OTHERWISE RISE IN REBELLION.



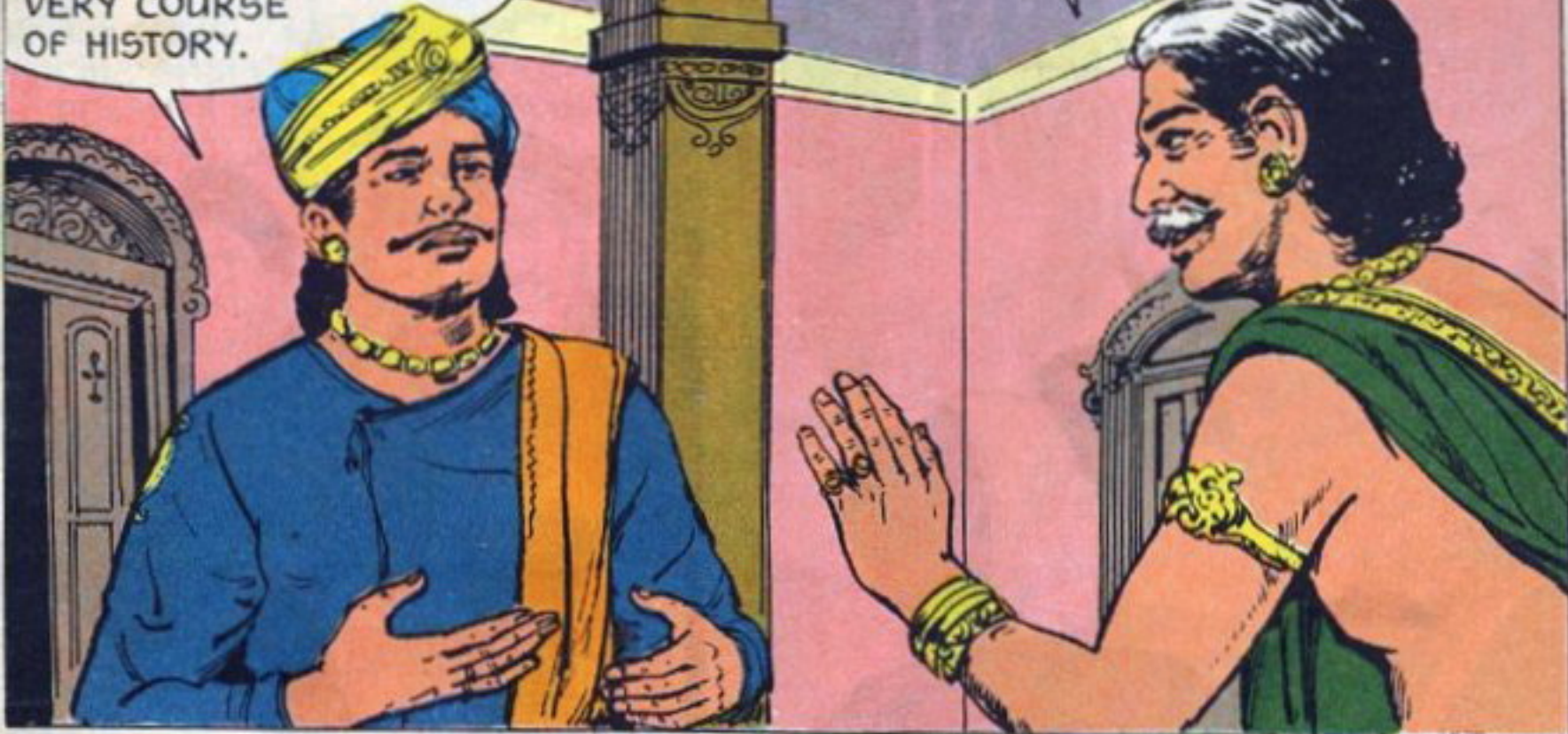
TO BEGIN WITH, I MUST GET THE KING TO RULE FROM TIRUNELVELI, MY STRONGHOLD.



A FEW DAYS LATER—

...AND YOUR MAJESTY, BY RULING FROM TIRUNELVELI, YOU MIGHT CHANGE THE VERY COURSE OF HISTORY.

I'LL PUT THE MATTER BEFORE MY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.



NOT ONE AMONG THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, HOWEVER, TOOK KINDLY TO THE PROPOSAL.

TIRUNELVELI IS TOO SMALL AND TOO FAR AWAY TO BE THE CAPITAL.

A GOOD KING CAN RULE FROM ANYWHERE.

BUT, FATHER, ALL OUR ANCESTORS HAVE RULED FROM MADURAI.

THAT MAY BE TRUE...



...BUT I WOULD BE A PIONEER AND FAMED FOR GIVING TIRUNELVELI THE STATURE OF MADURAI! WHAT DO YOU SAY, KUDILAN?

A WISE MAN SEES THE MIGHTY TREE IN A SMALL SEED.

BUT THE SEED NEEDS PROTECTION. AS THE ARMY CHIEF, I CAN TELL YOU THAT WITHOUT A STRONG FORT IT WILL FALL AN EASY PREY TO ENEMIES.

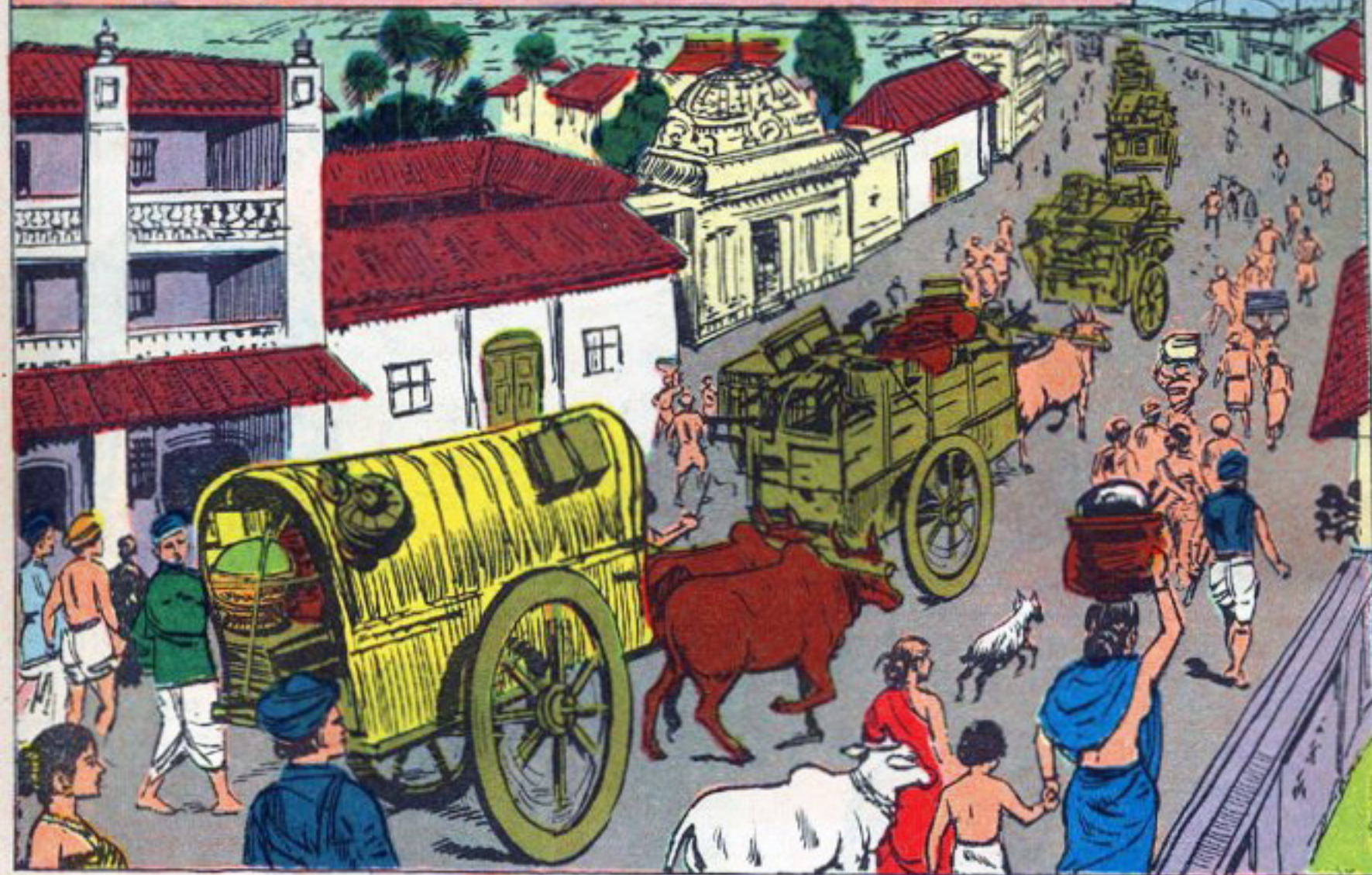
HE IS RIGHT, YOUR MAJESTY. WE MUST CONSIDER ALL ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM BEFORE TAKING SUCH A MAJOR DECISION.

KUDILAN PRETENDED TO BE OFFENDED.

IF YOU HAVE NO FAITH IN MY JUDGEMENT, YOUR MAJESTY, IT'S BEST THAT I RESIGN.

NO, KUDILAN! YOU MUSTN'T. I NEED YOU. I SHALL DO AS YOU SAY.

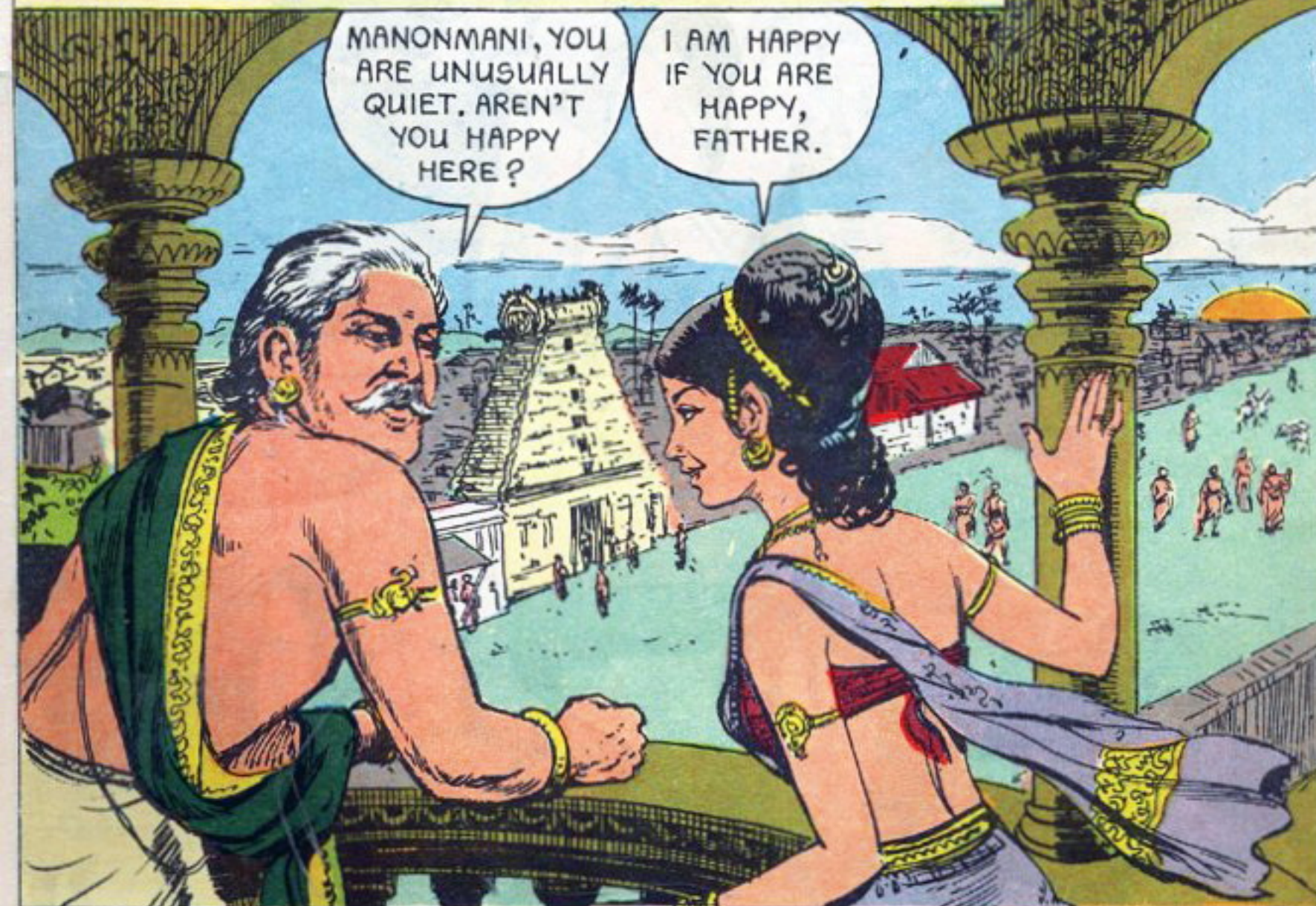
THE KING WASTED NO TIME, AND THE SHIFTING BEGAN FORTHWITH.



TIRUNELVELI BECAME THE CAPITAL OF THE PANDYA KINGDOM BUT MANONMANI WAS NOT HAPPY ABOUT IT.

MANONMANI, YOU ARE UNUSUALLY QUIET. AREN'T YOU HAPPY HERE?

I AM HAPPY IF YOU ARE HAPPY, FATHER.



HER ANSWER, HOWEVER, DID NOT SATISFY JEEVAKAN. HE DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH KUDILAN.



MEANWHILE, THE SAGE HAD RETURNED FROM HIS PILGRIMAGE,
BUT TO MADURAI, THE OLD CAPITAL.

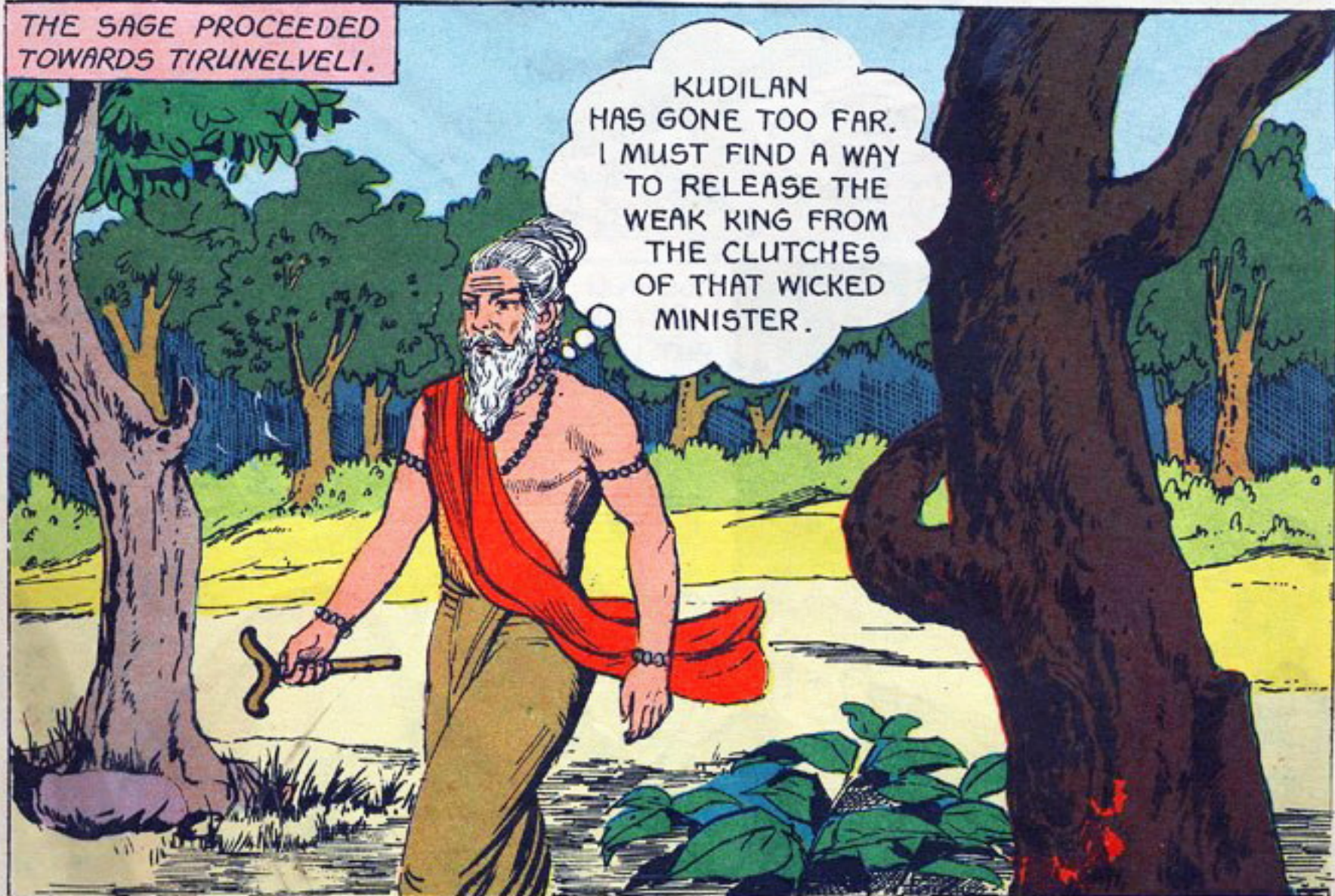
HOLY SAGE, THE KING
NO LONGER LIVES HERE.
TIRUNELVELI IS
HIS NEW CAPITAL.

IT IS KUDILAN'S WORK.
HE SEEMS TO HAVE
SOME STRANGE POWER
OVER THE KING.



THE SAGE PROCEEDED
TOWARDS TIRUNELVELI.

KUDILAN
HAS GONE TOO FAR.
I MUST FIND A WAY
TO RELEASE THE
WEAK KING FROM
THE CLUTCHES
OF THAT WICKED
MINISTER.



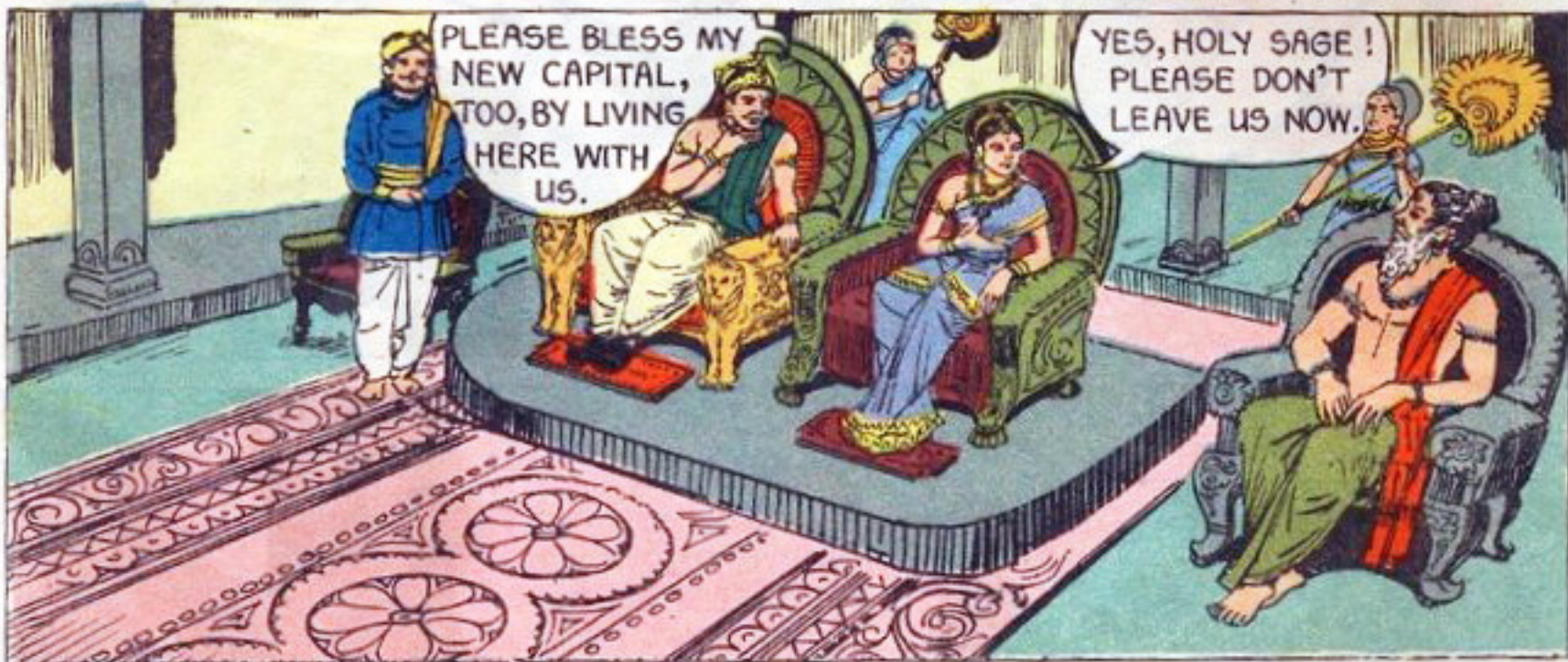
AT TIRUNELVELI—

MAY GOD BLESS YOU.



PLEASE BLESS MY
NEW CAPITAL,
TOO, BY LIVING
HERE WITH
US.

YES, HOLY SAGE!
PLEASE DON'T
LEAVE US NOW.



BUT KUDILAN QUICKLY
INTERVENED.

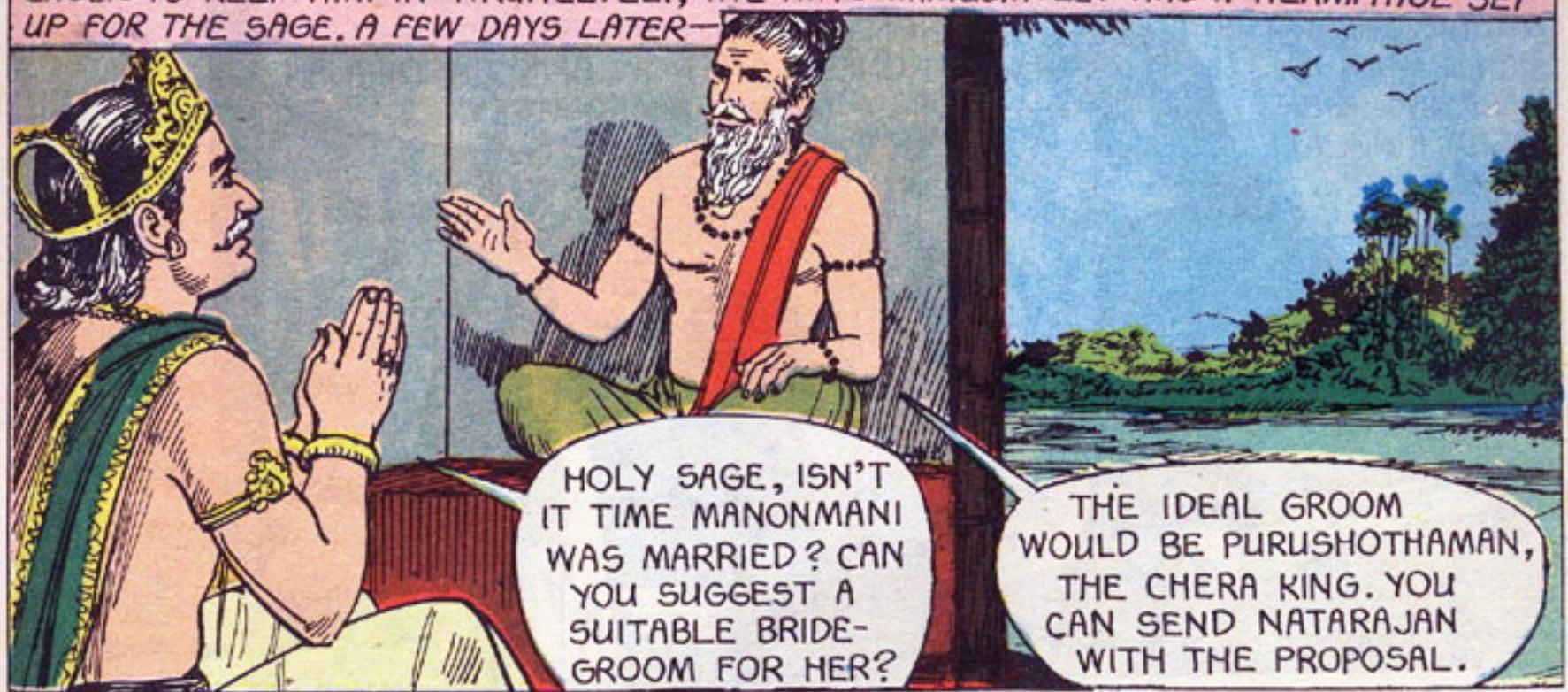
IT IS NOT PROPER FOR
MENDICANTS TO STAY
IN ONE PLACE FOR
TOO LONG.

SO YOU WANT ME
OUT OF THE WAY.
BUT I HAVE OTHER
PLANS.

JEEVAKAN,
I ACCEPT YOUR
HOSPITALITY
BUT I WANT
A SECLUDED
PLACE TO
LIVE IN.



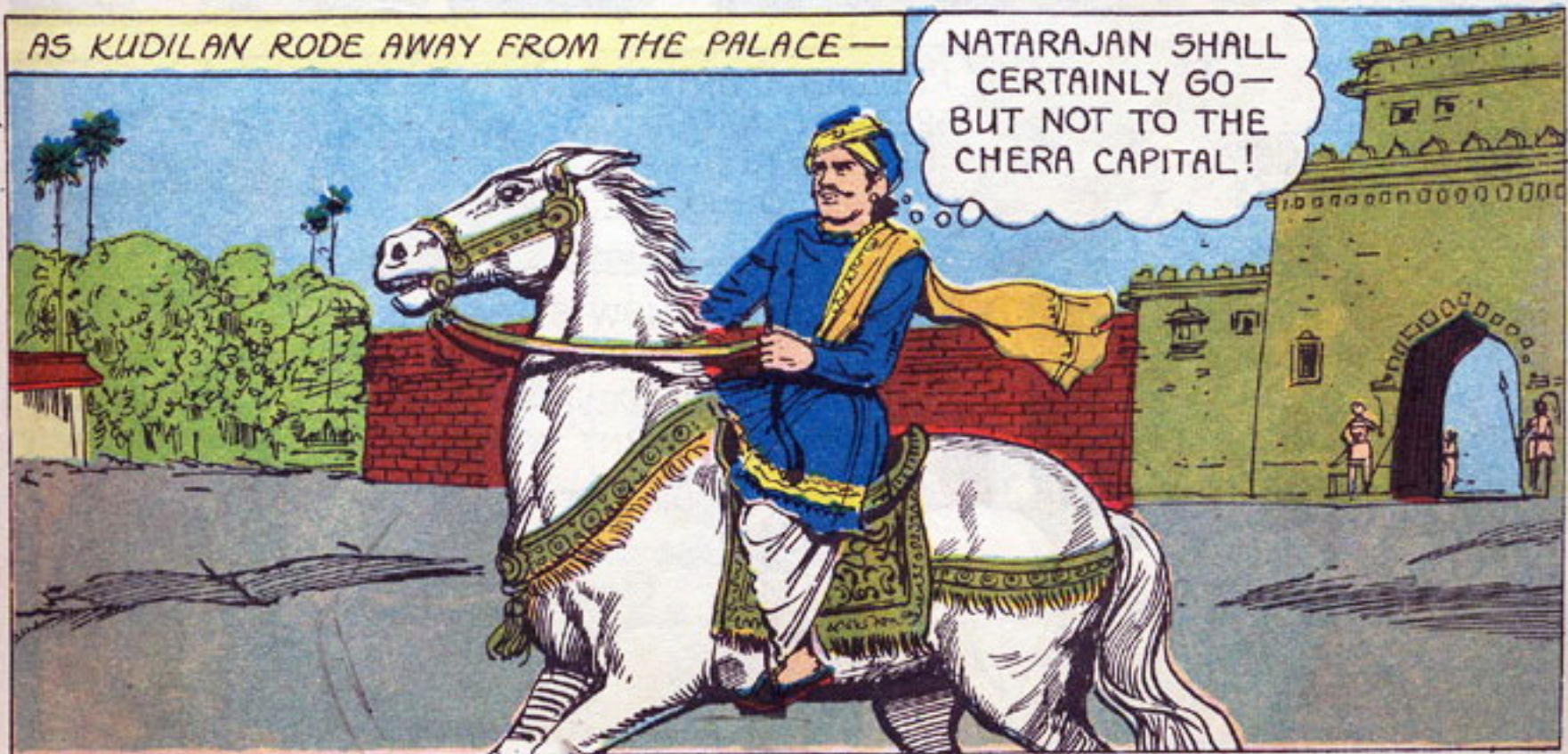
EAGER TO KEEP HIM IN TIRUNELVELI, THE KING IMMEDIATELY HAD A HERMITAGE SET UP FOR THE SAGE. A FEW DAYS LATER—



LATER, AT THE PALACE—



AS KUDILAN RODE AWAY FROM THE PALACE—



THE MOMENT HE REACHED HOME, BALADEVAN CAME TO SEE HIM.

FATHER, I HEAR THAT MANONMANI IS MARRYING THE CHERA KING. YOU PROMISED...

MANONMANI WILL MARRY YOU AND NO ONE ELSE. NOW BRING NATARAJAN TO ME IMMEDIATELY.



WHEN NATARAJAN CAME —

GO TO MADURAI AT ONCE. TAXES FROM THERE ARE DUE FOR QUITE SOME TIME.

I WILL START IMMEDIATELY, SIR.

AH! I BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND MY FATHER'S PLANS.



THE NEXT DAY, AT THE PALACE —

KUDILAN, DIDN'T YOU SPEAK TO NATARAJAN? HE HAS NOT YET COME TO SEE ME.

HOW STRANGE! YOUR MAJESTY, MY SON BALADEVAN HIMSELF WENT TO HIM.



BALADEVAN WAS SUMMONED.

YOUR MAJESTY, NATARAJAN SAID THAT HE WAS BUSY AND WOULD SEE YOU AFTER HE HAD FINISHED THE WORK ON HAND.



YOUR MAJESTY, HE IS UNRELIABLE. WHY DON'T YOU SEND BALADEVAN INSTEAD? HE, NO LESS THAN MYSELF, IS YOUR SERVANT.

A GOOD SUGGESTION. BALADEVAN, YOU MAY LEAVE IMMEDIATELY.



LATER—

GO, BALADEVAN. AND SEE THAT THE CHERA KING DOESN'T RESPOND FAVOURABLY TO THE PROPOSAL.

I'LL CERTAINLY SEE TO IT THAT HE DOESN'T, FATHER.



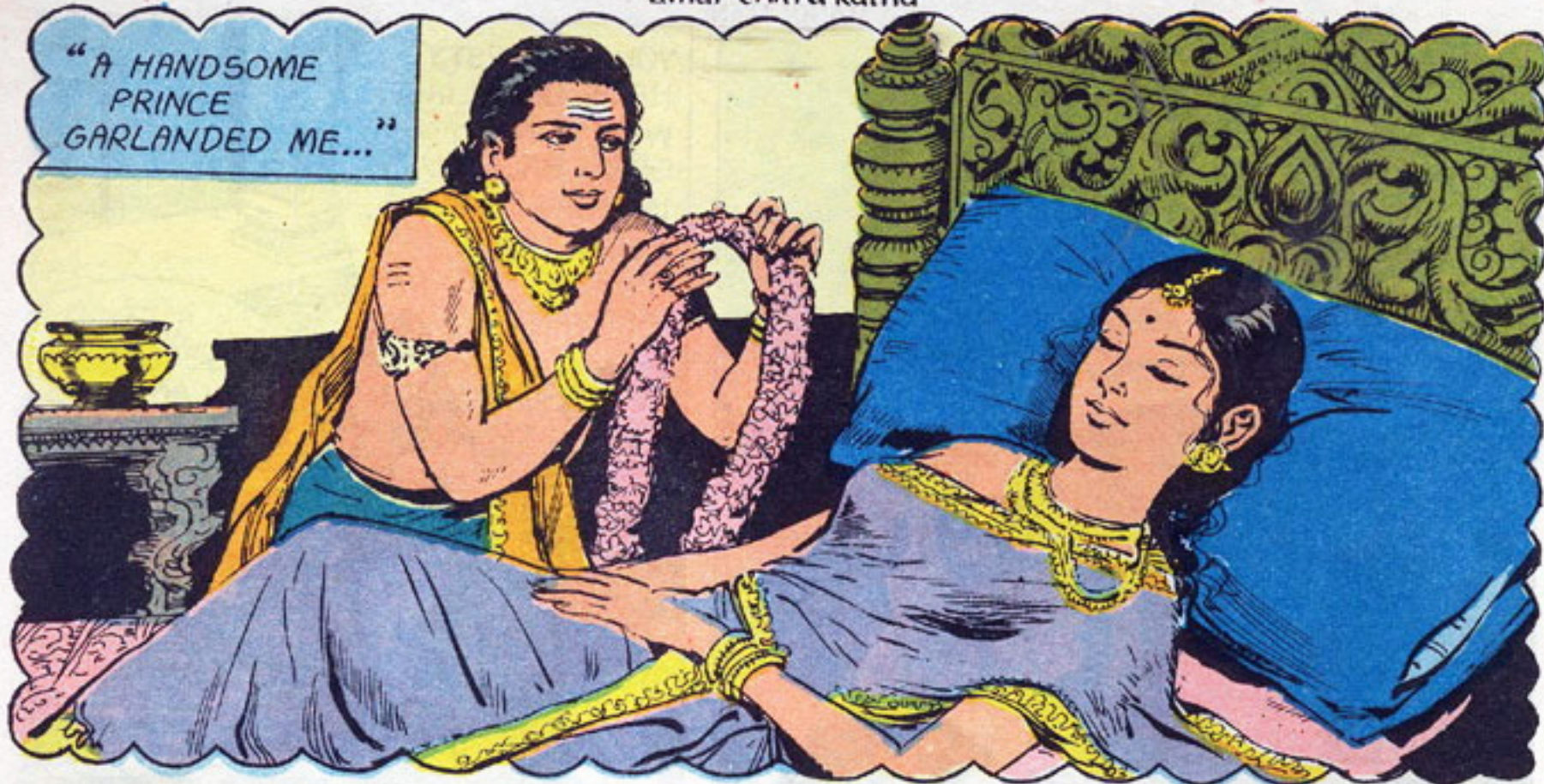
MEANWHILE, IN THE PALACE GARDEN—

YOU DON'T SEEM TO BE YOURSELF. WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH YOU, PRINCESS?

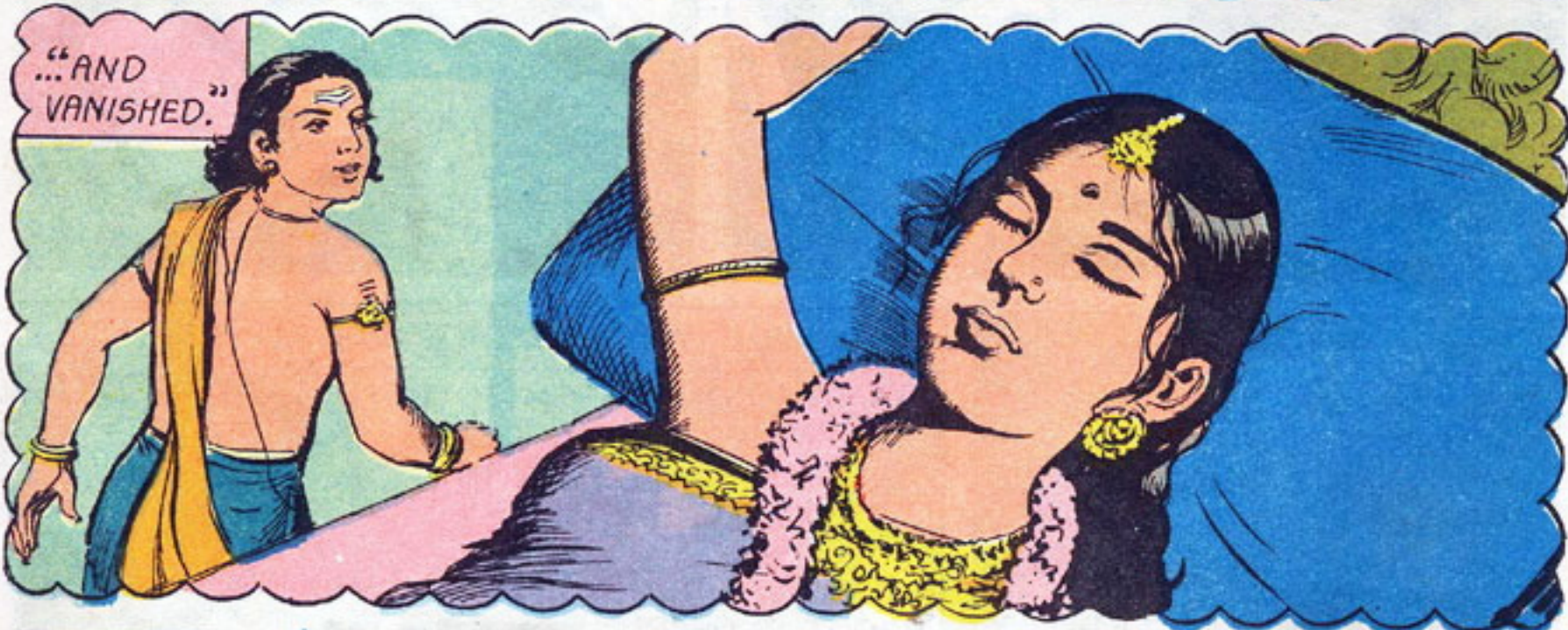
I CAN TELL YOU ABOUT IT, DEAR VANI. I HAD A STRANGE DREAM LAST NIGHT.



"A HANDSOME
PRINCE
GARLANDED ME..."



"...AND
VANISHED."

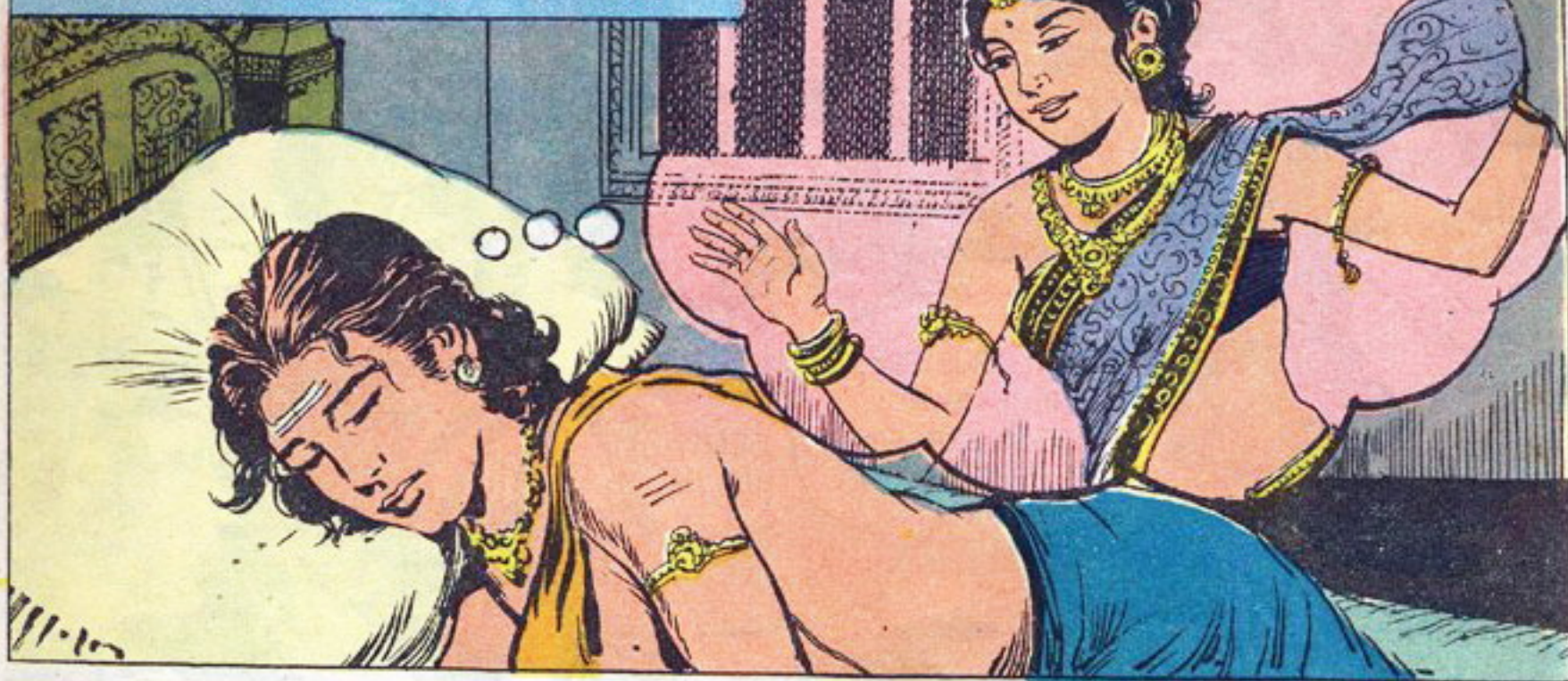


WHO IS HE?
WHERE DOES
HE LIVE?

I DON'T KNOW.
BUT I WILL
MARRY HIM AND
NO ONE ELSE.



AT THAT VERY MOMENT, MILES AWAY,
THE CHERA KING, PURUSHOTHAMAN,
WAS ALSO TROUBLED BY A DREAM.



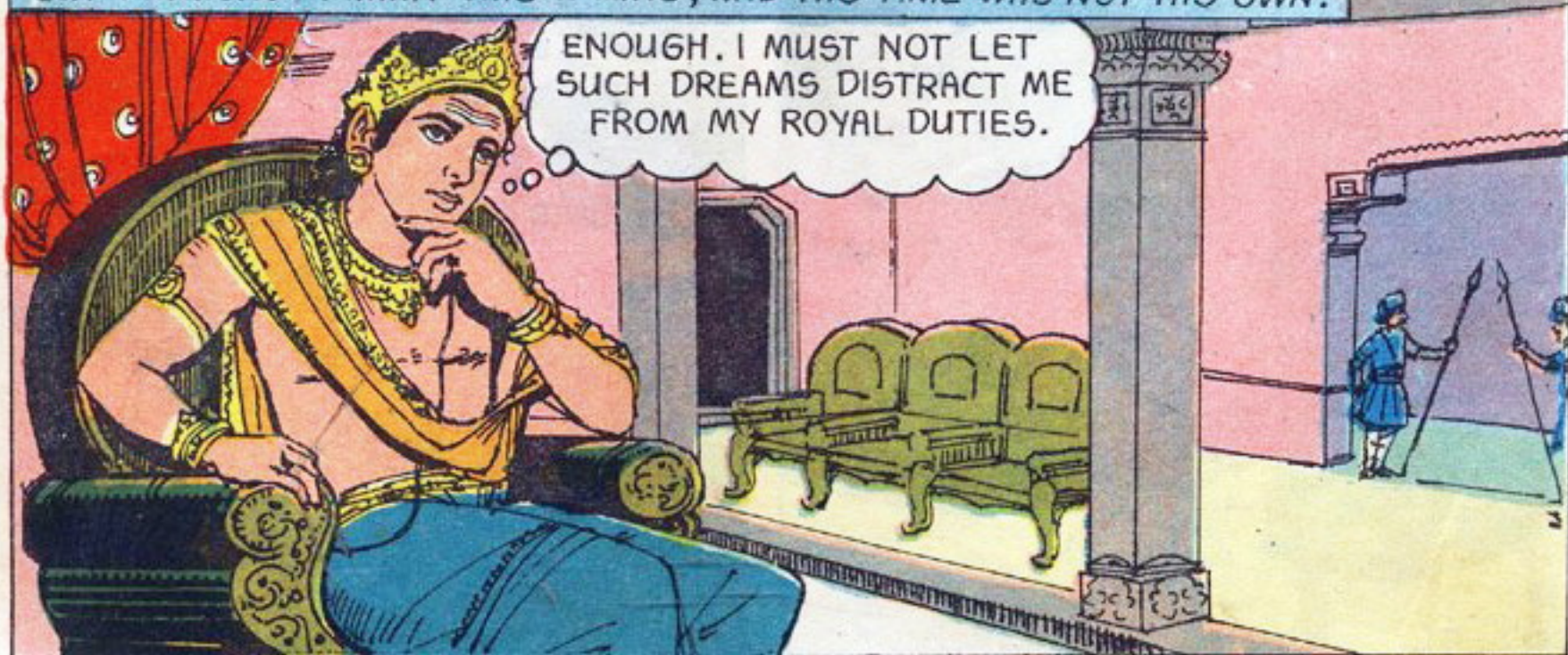
HE WOKE UP IN A DAZE.

WHERE IS SHE? WHO
IS SHE? WHOEVER SHE
IS, SHE HAS STOLEN
MY PEACE.



BUT PURUSHOTHAMAN WAS A KING, AND HIS TIME WAS NOT HIS OWN.

ENOUGH. I MUST NOT LET
SUCH DREAMS DISTRACT ME
FROM MY ROYAL DUTIES.



LATER, AS PURUSHOTHAMAN SAT ON HIS THRONE AT COURT, NOT A TRACE OF HIS DISTURBING DREAM SHOWED ON HIS COUNTENANCE.

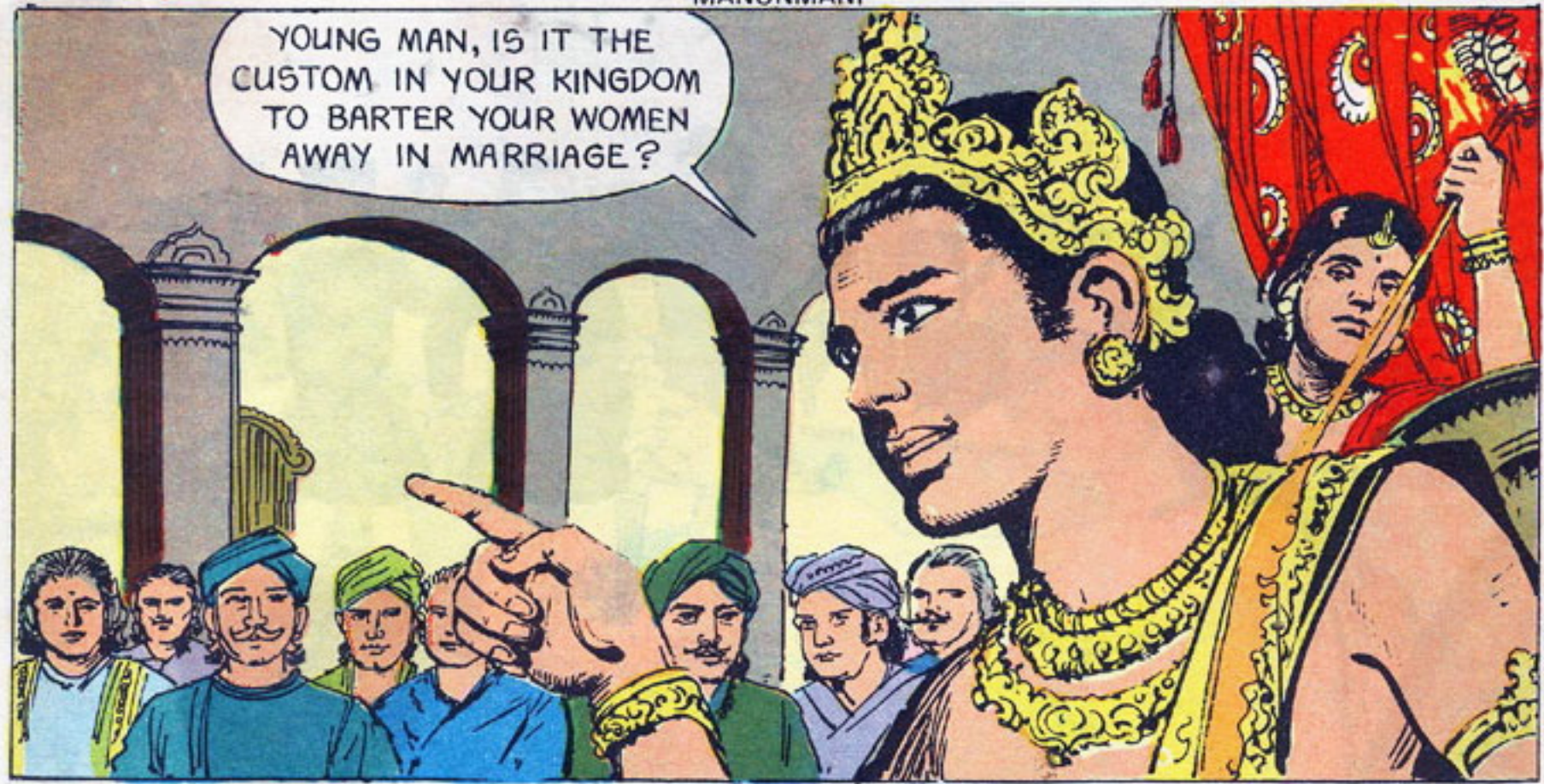


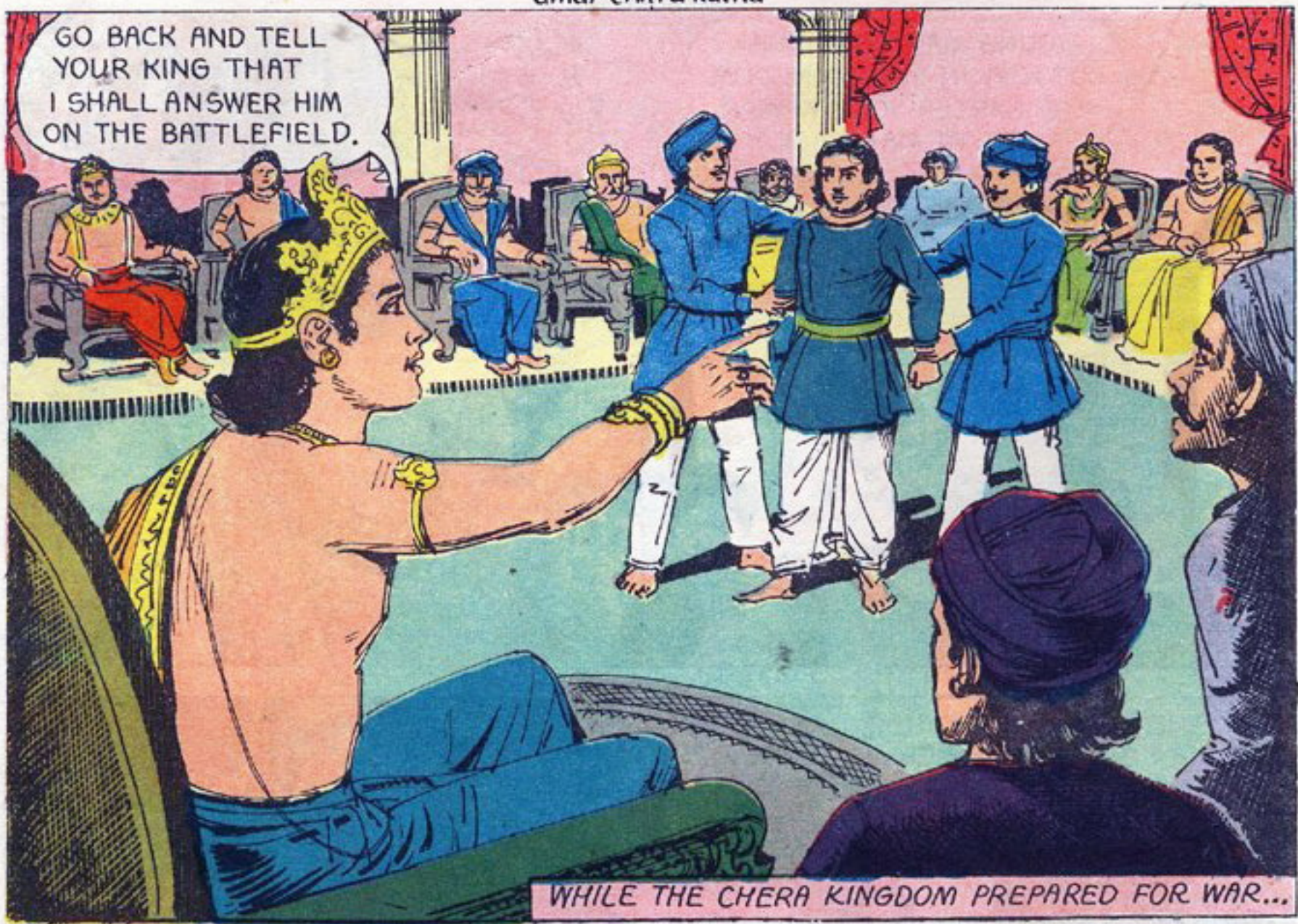
WHILE BALADEVAN'S IMPUDENCE LEFT THE COURT GASPING, THE CHERA KING CONTROLLED HIS ANGER.

WITH WHAT RIGHT DOES YOUR KING MAKE HIS CLAIM?

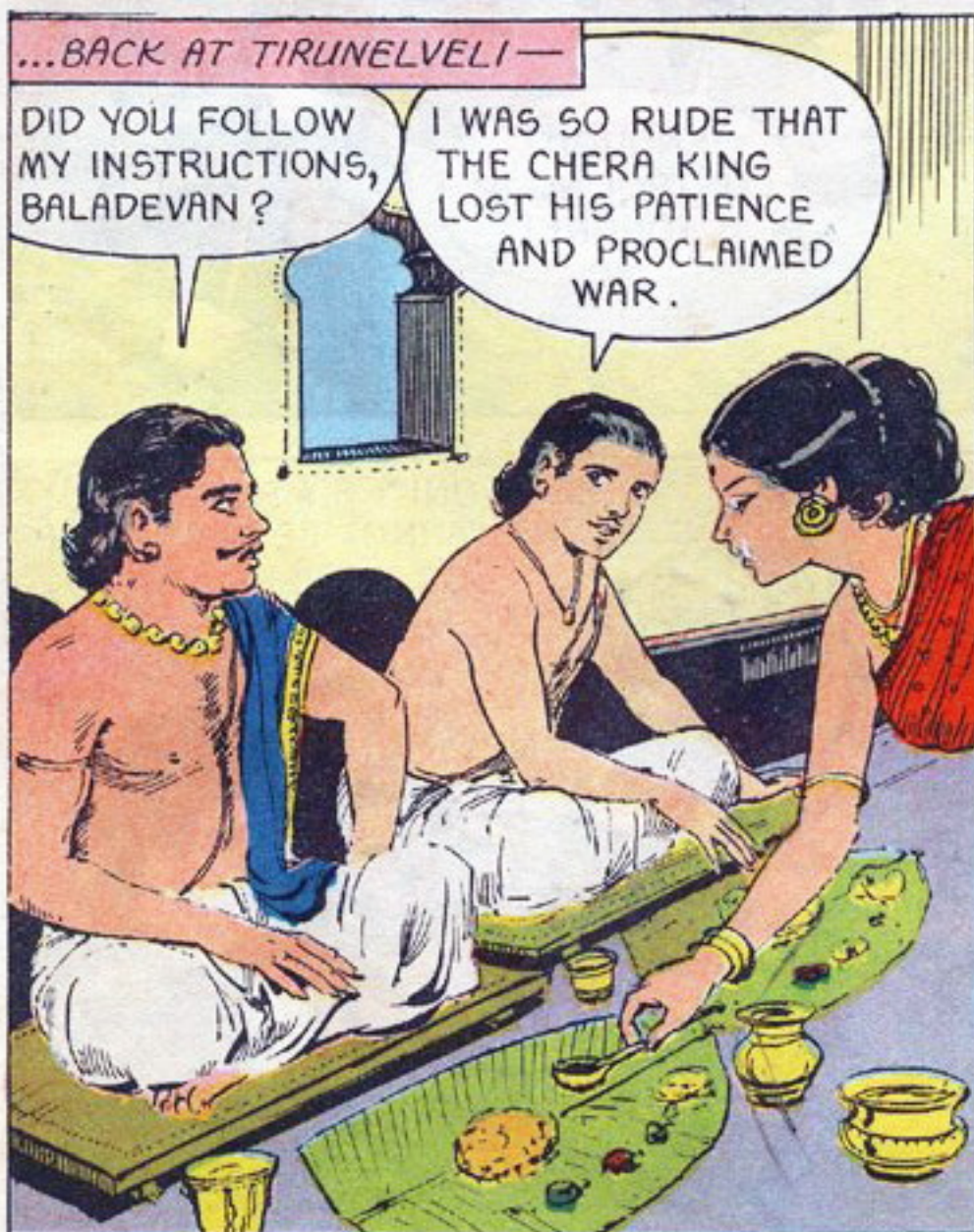
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO PAY THE TRIBUTE, MARRY OUR PRINCESS.

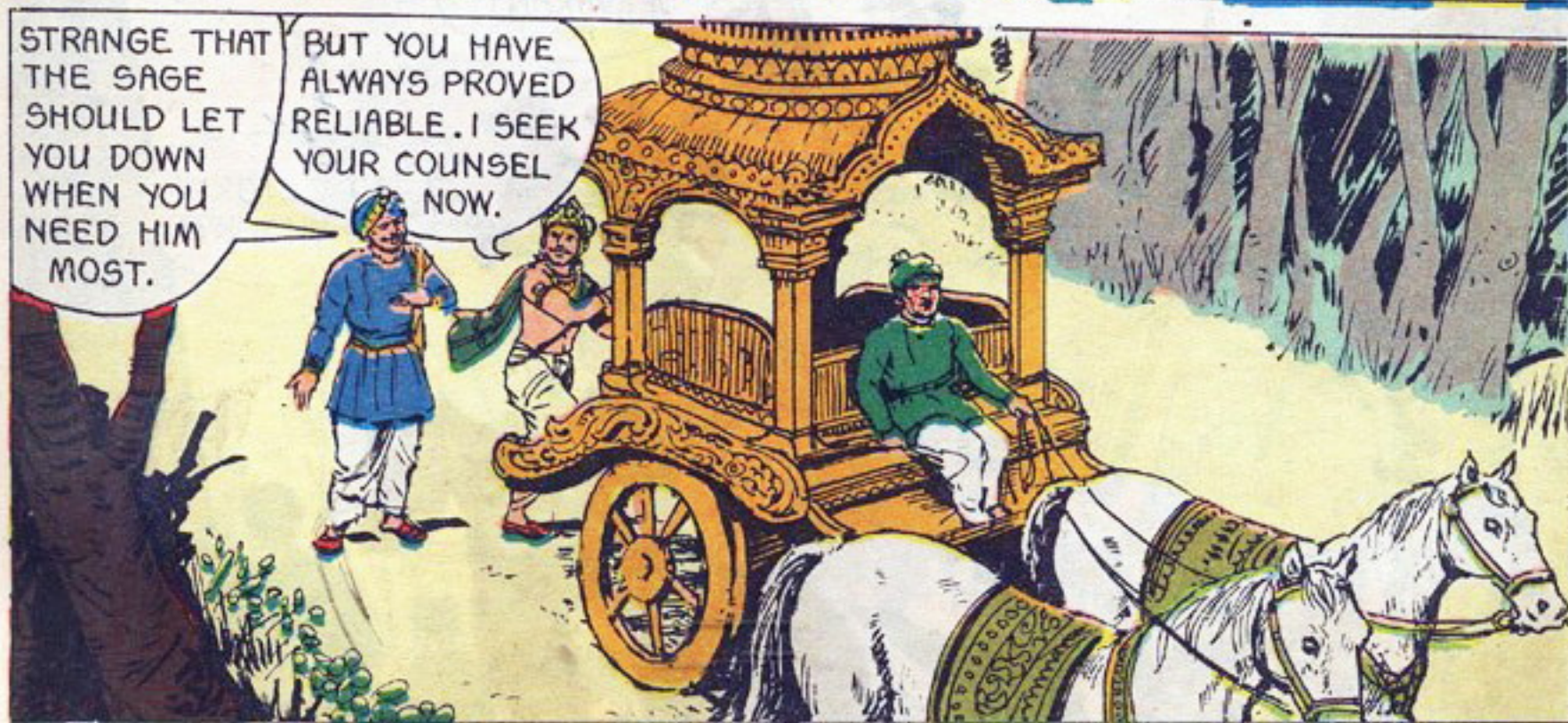
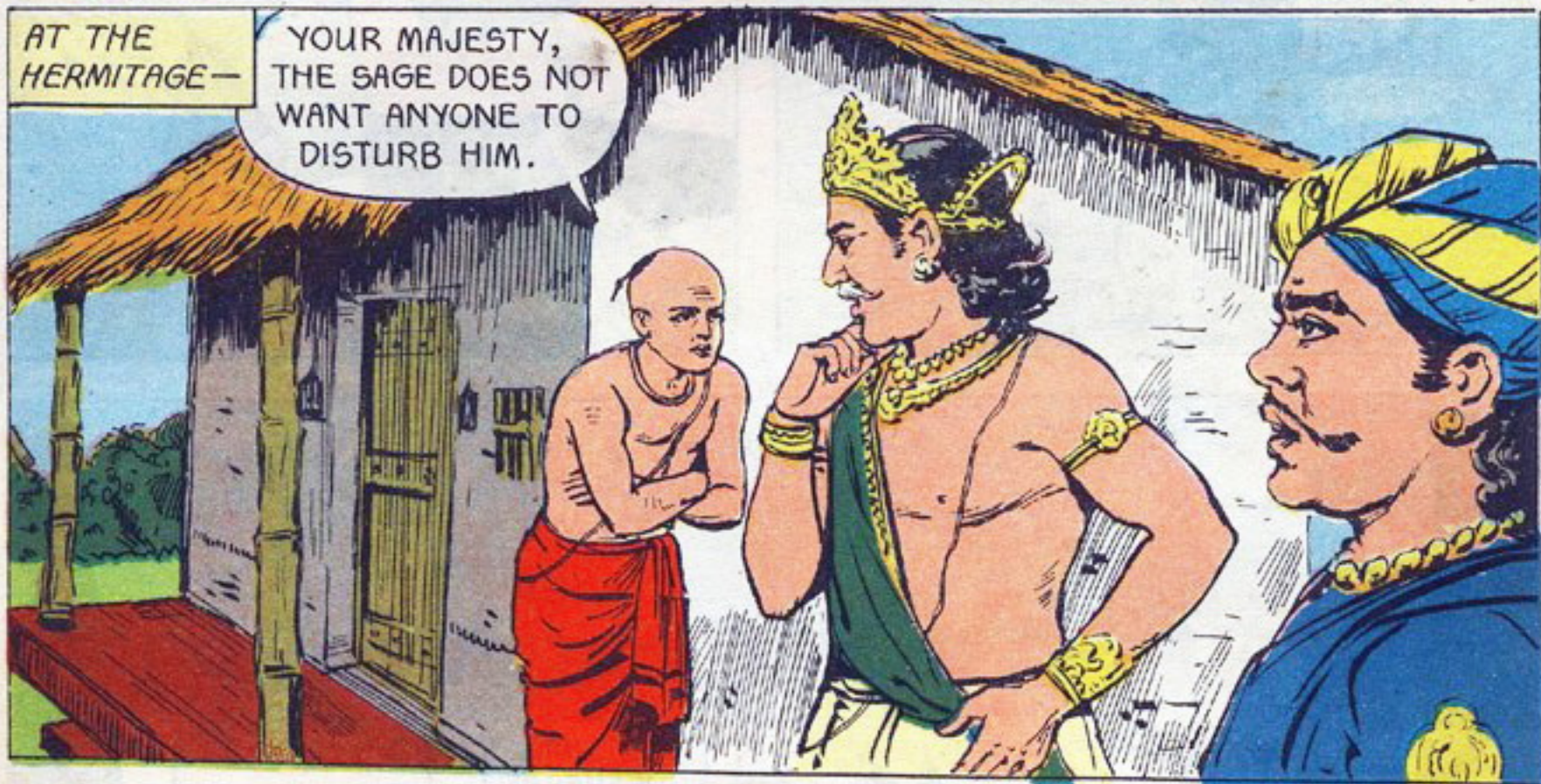
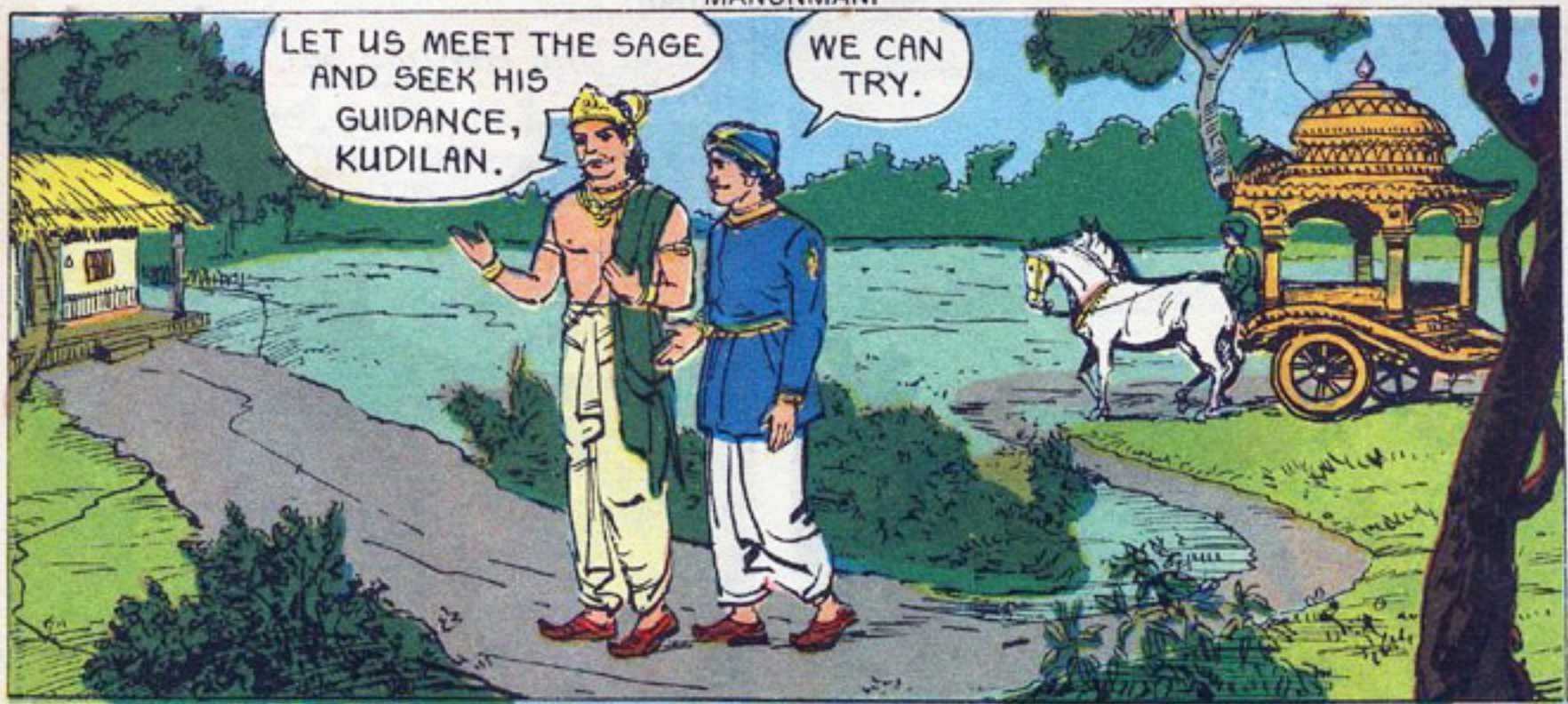






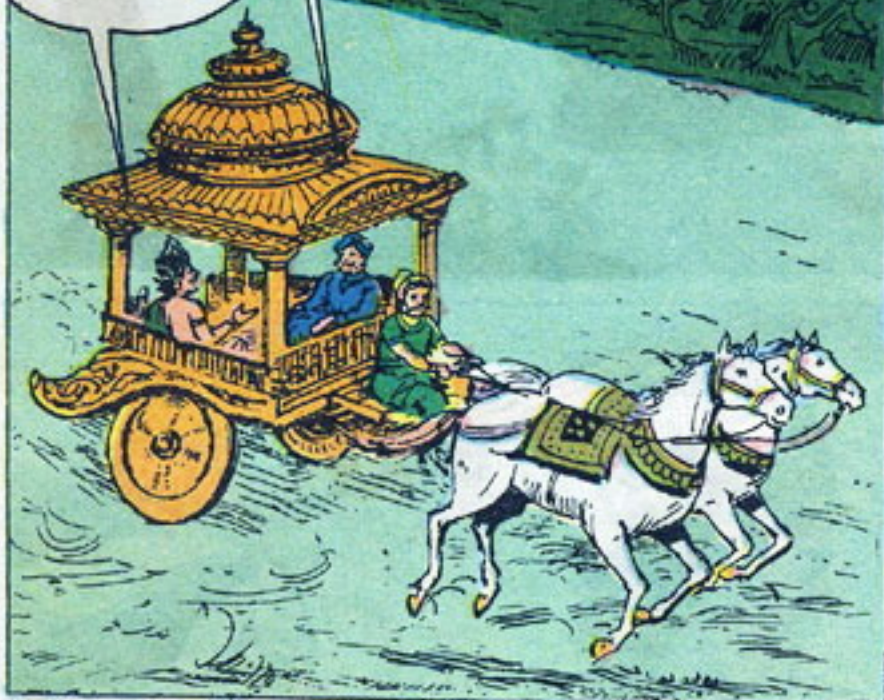
WHILE THE CHERA KINGDOM PREPARED FOR WAR...





THE COURSE WE SHOULD TAKE IS OBVIOUS.

YES. LET US GIVE THEM A TASTE OF THE PANDYA VALOUR.



BEFORE THE PANDYAS SET OUT FOR THE BATTLE —

MY CHILD, SEND ME TO THE BATTLEFIELD WITH A SMILE.

YOUR BRAVERY IS KNOWN, BUT BEWARE OF VILLAINY.



ALL HAIL TO JEEVAKAN!

TO VICTORY!
TO VICTORY!

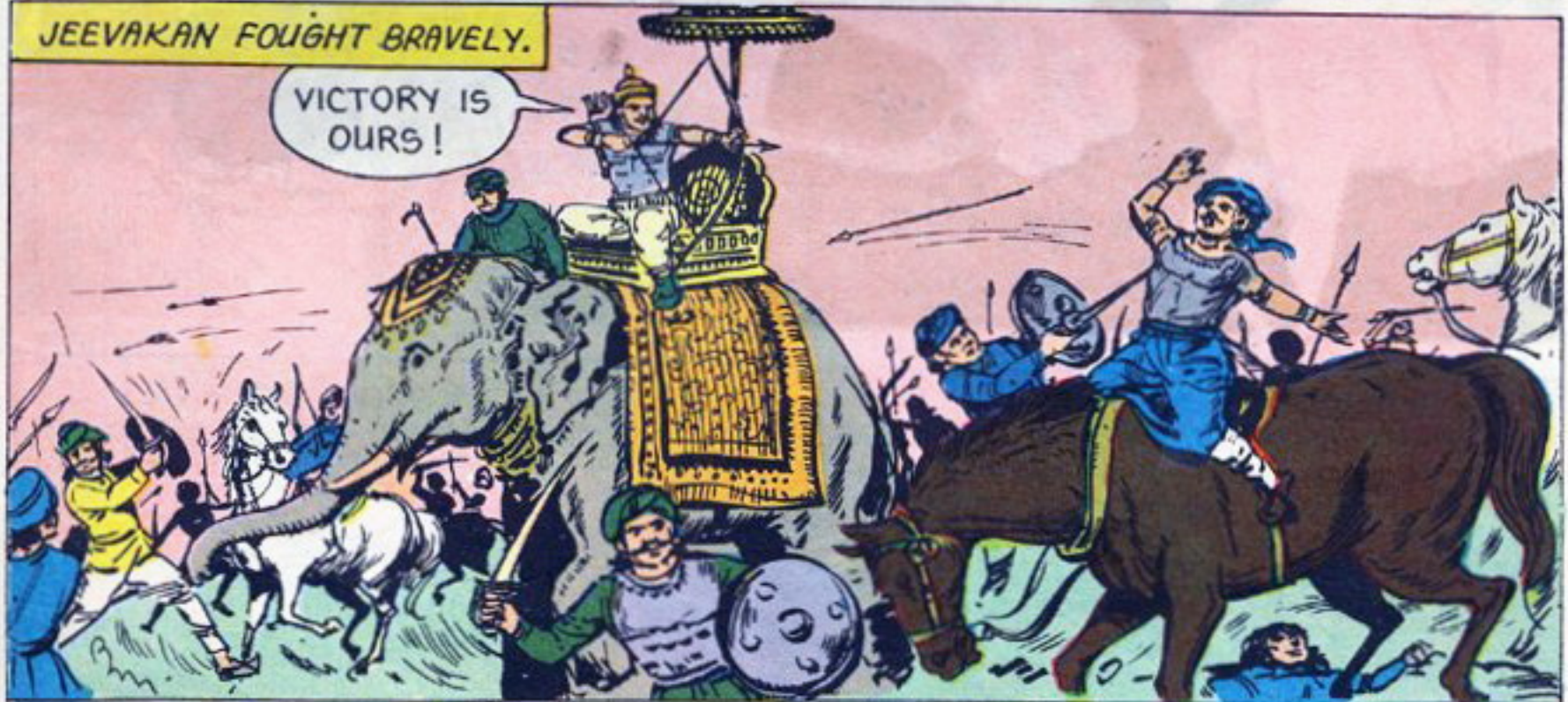
SUPPOSING OUR KING WINS?
YOUR PLANS WILL FALL
THROUGH THEN; WON'T
THEY, FATHER?

WIN OR LOSE, THE KING
SHALL DIE ON THE
BATTLEFIELD,
BALADEVAN!



JEEVAKAN FOUGHT BRAVELY.

VICTORY IS
OURS!



EVEN THE
CHERA KING
ADMIRERD
HIS OLDER
ADVERSARY.

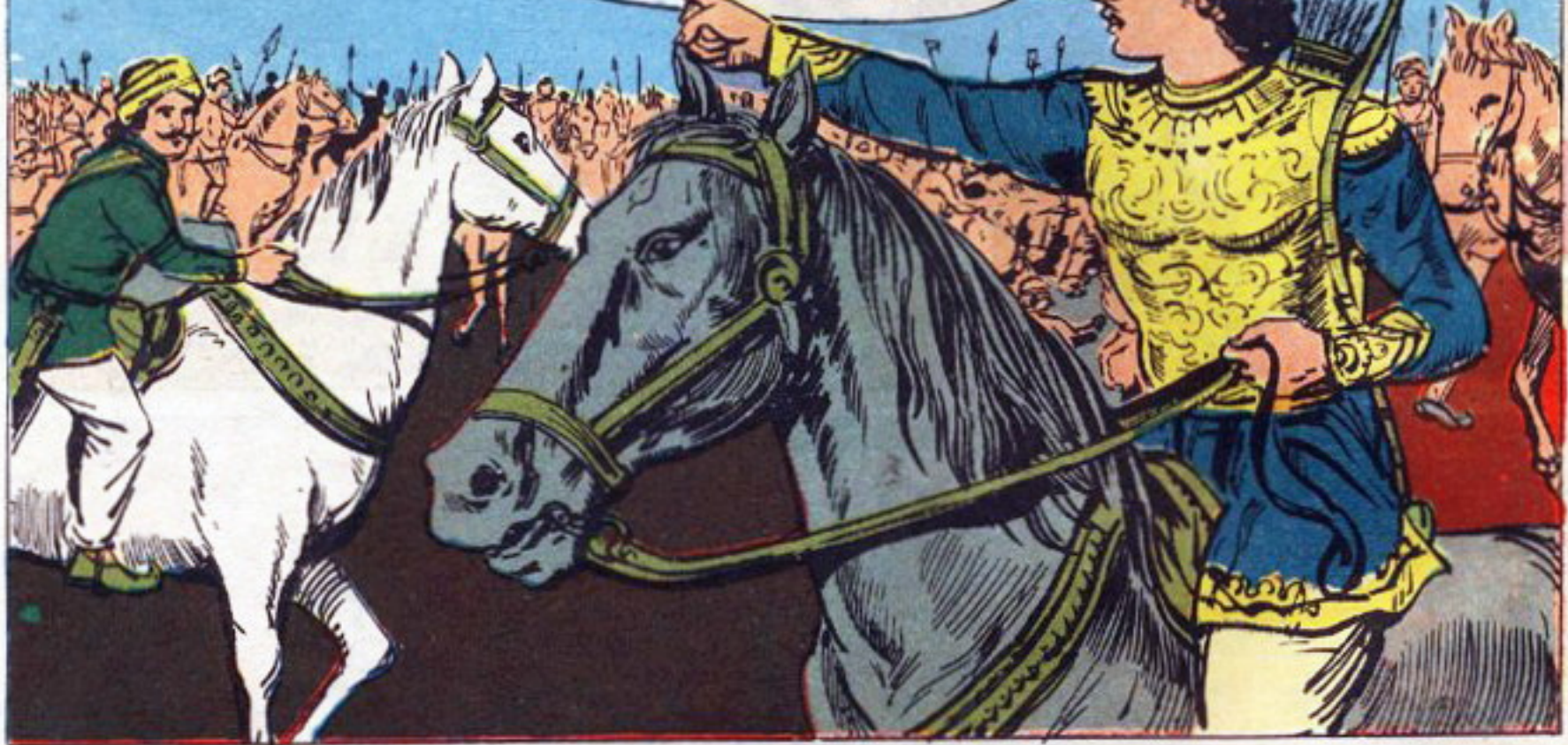
FIGHTING LIKE THE
GOD OF WAR HIMSELF
—AND AT HIS AGE!



WHEN BALADEVAN SAW THAT THEY WERE AT AN ADVANTAGE —

I MUST THINK FAST. THAT'S IT.
I'LL SPLIT THE ARMY.

THE ENEMIES ARE ATTACKING
THE FORT FROM THE OPPOSITE
SIDE. GO THERE, I'LL STAY
HERE.



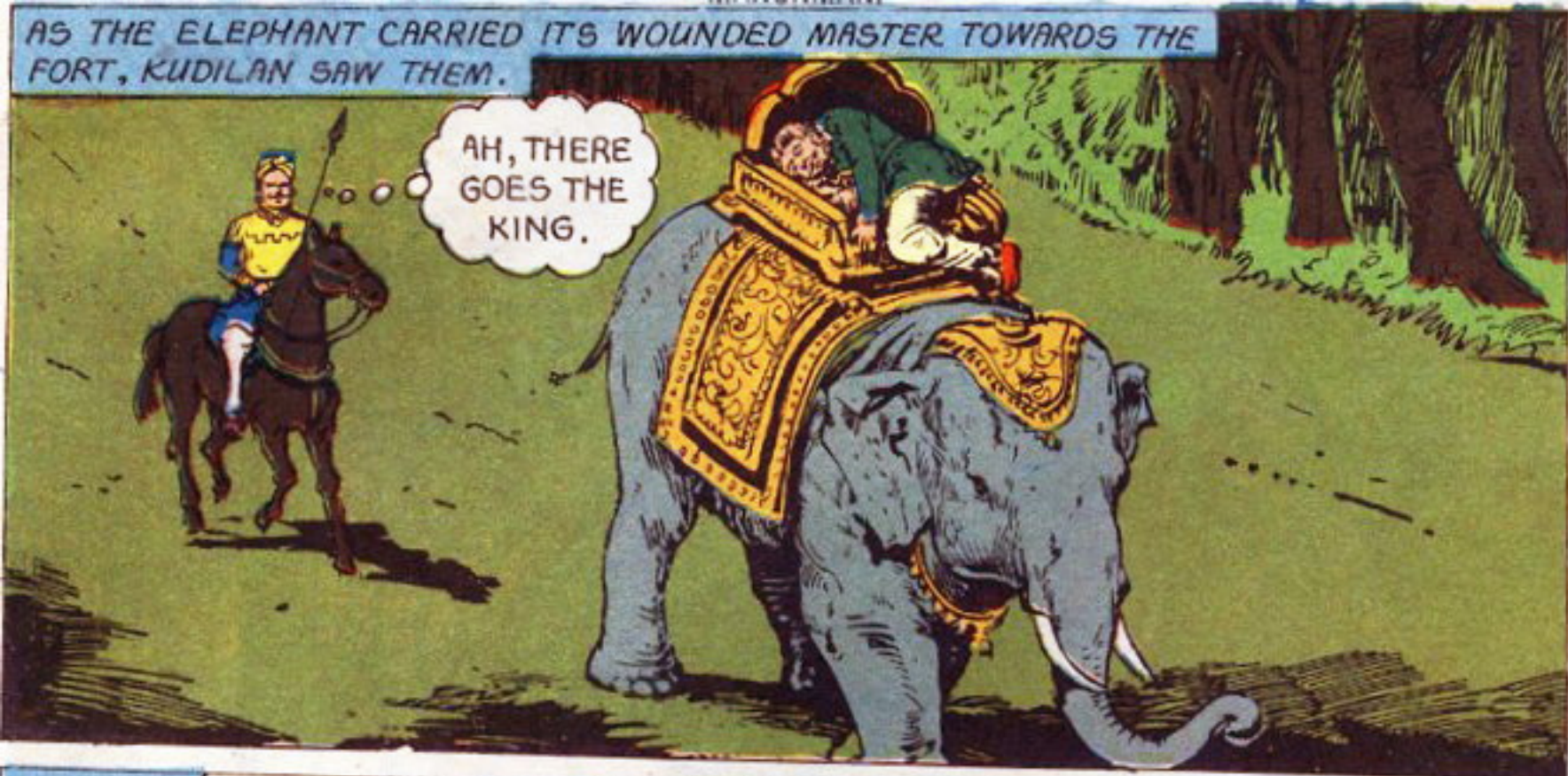
THE COMMANDER TRIED TO CALL THEM
BACK. JEEVAKAN LOOKED ON HELPLESSLY
AS HIS MAHUT, PIERCED BY AN ARROW, FELL.



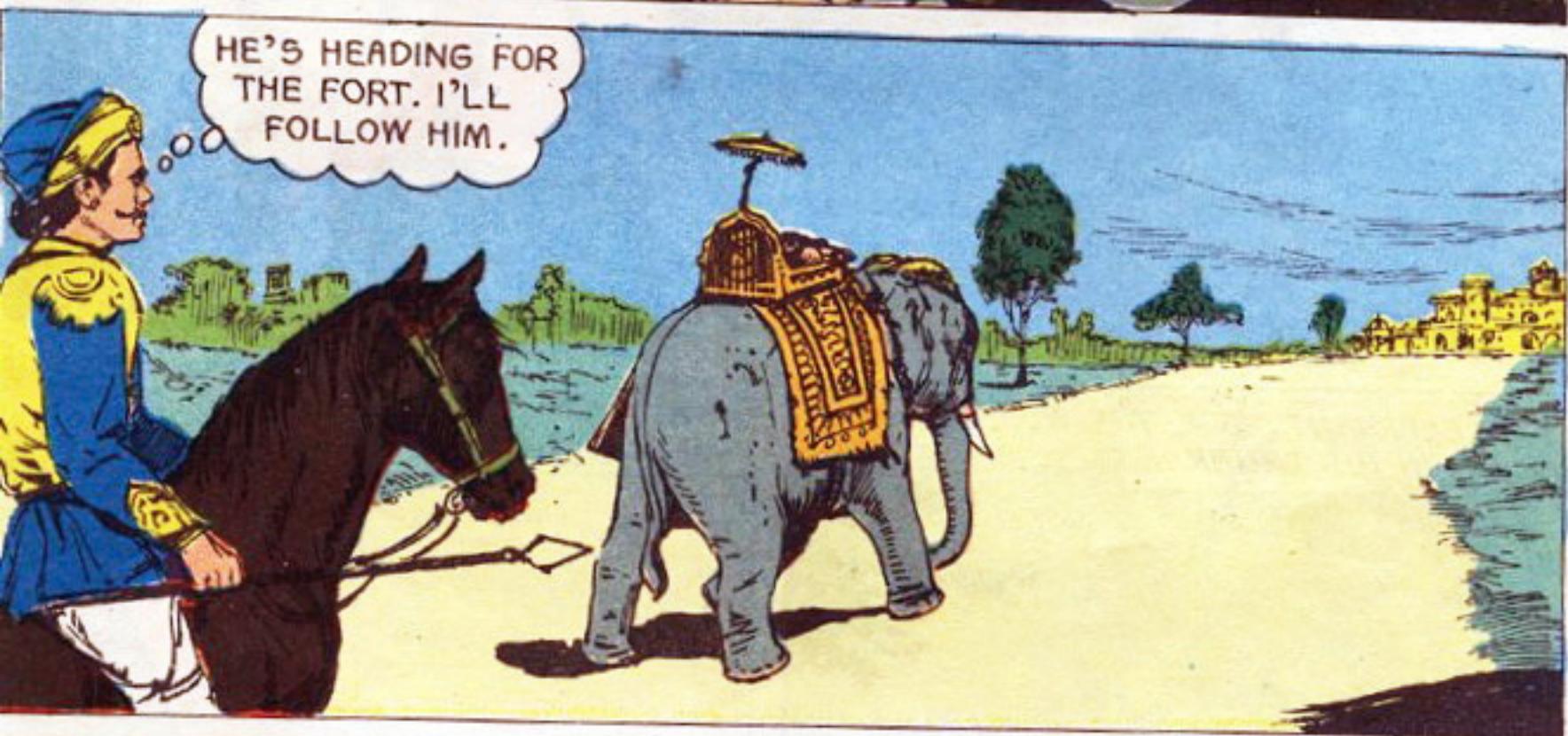
AT THIS INOPPORTUNE MOMENT,
AN ARROW HIT THE KING.



AS THE ELEPHANT CARRIED ITS WOUNDED MASTER TOWARDS THE FORT, KUDILAN SAW THEM.



AH, THERE GOES THE KING.



HE'S HEADING FOR THE FORT. I'LL FOLLOW HIM.

SOON AFTER THE ROYAL ELEPHANT ENTERED THE GATES OF THE FORT, KUDILAN CAME RUSHING IN.

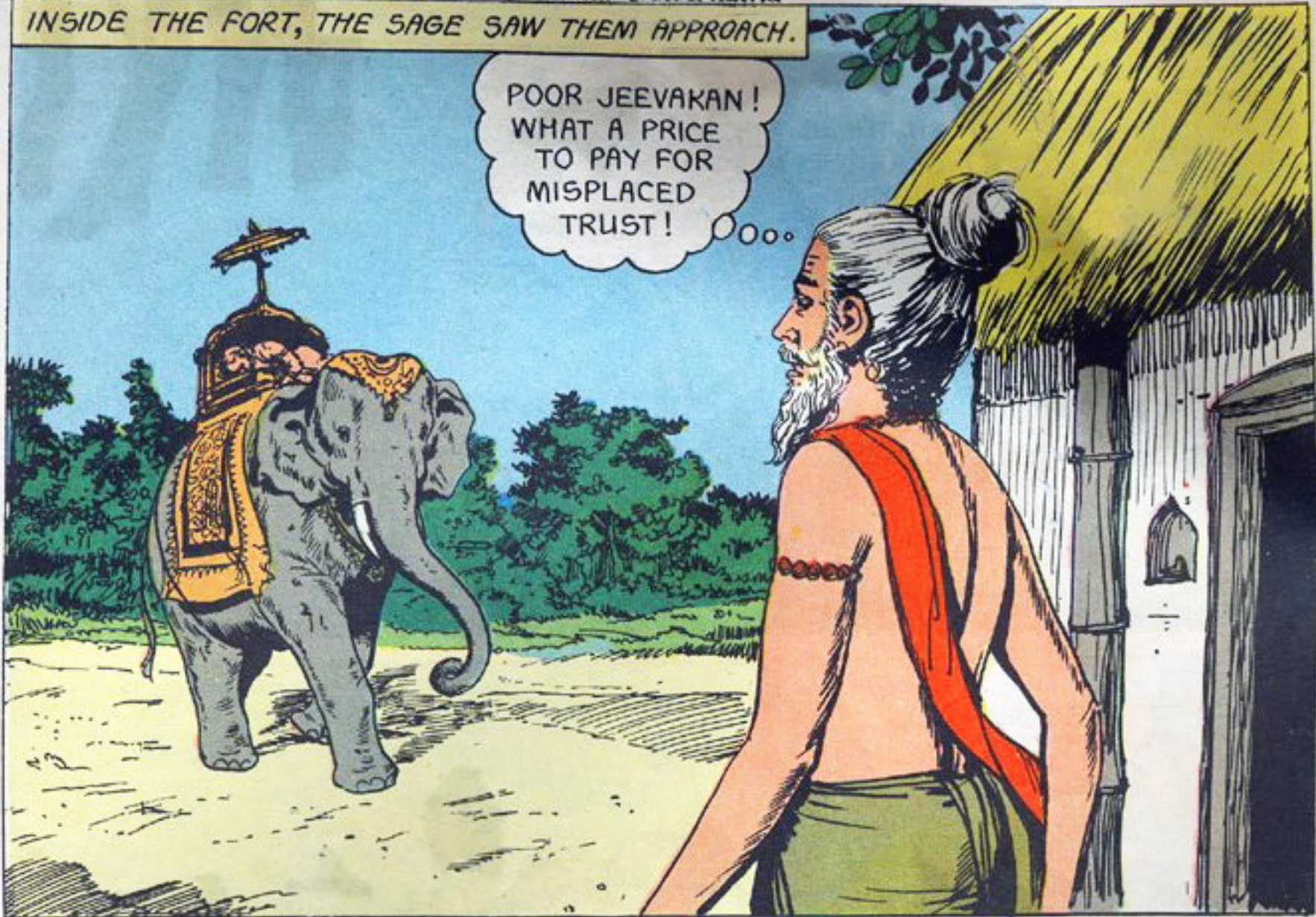


THE ENEMY SOLDIERS ARE COMING. QUICK! SHUT THE MAIN ENTRANCE.

AS SOON AS YOU'RE IN, SIR!

INSIDE THE FORT, THE SAGE SAW THEM APPROACH.

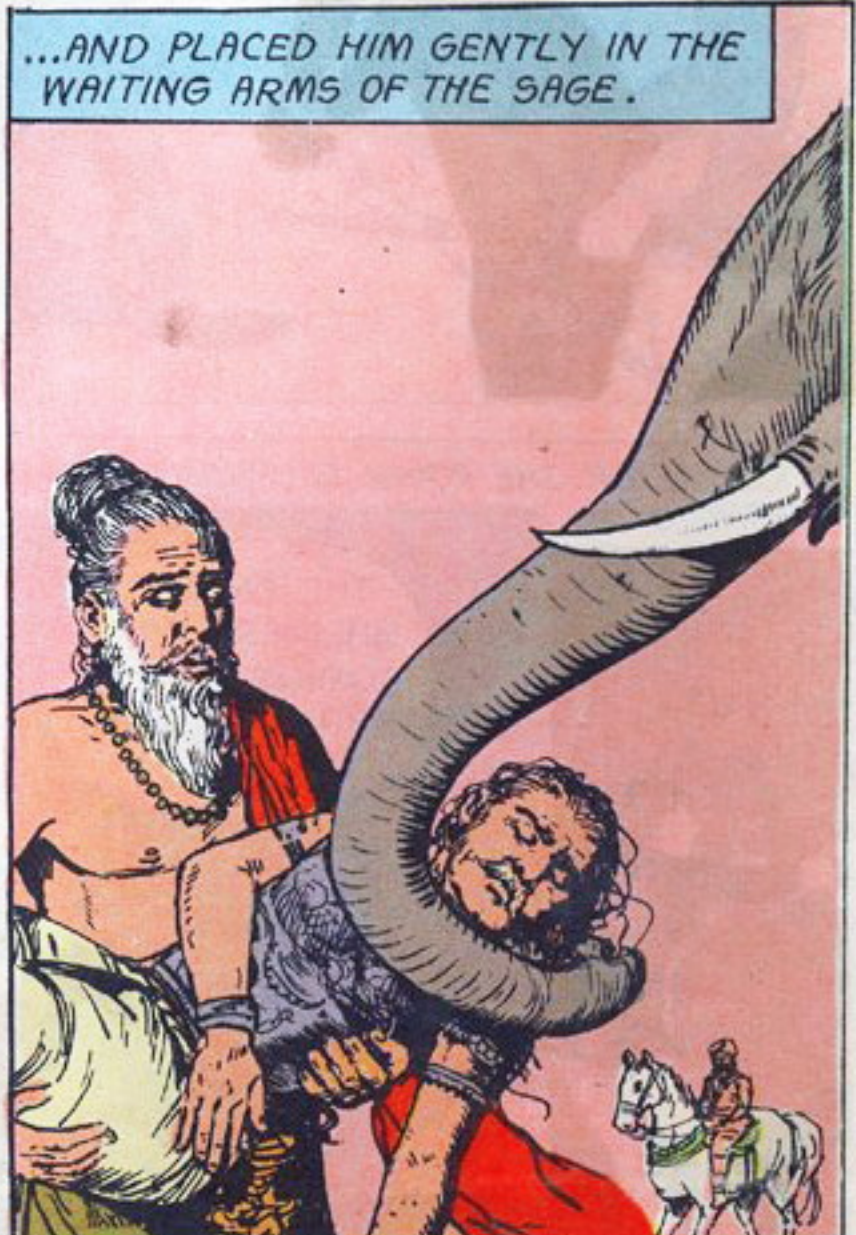
POOR JEEVAKAN!
WHAT A PRICE
TO PAY FOR
MISPLACED
TRUST! Ooo



THE ELEPHANT TOOK THE WOUNDED
KING IN HIS TRUNK...



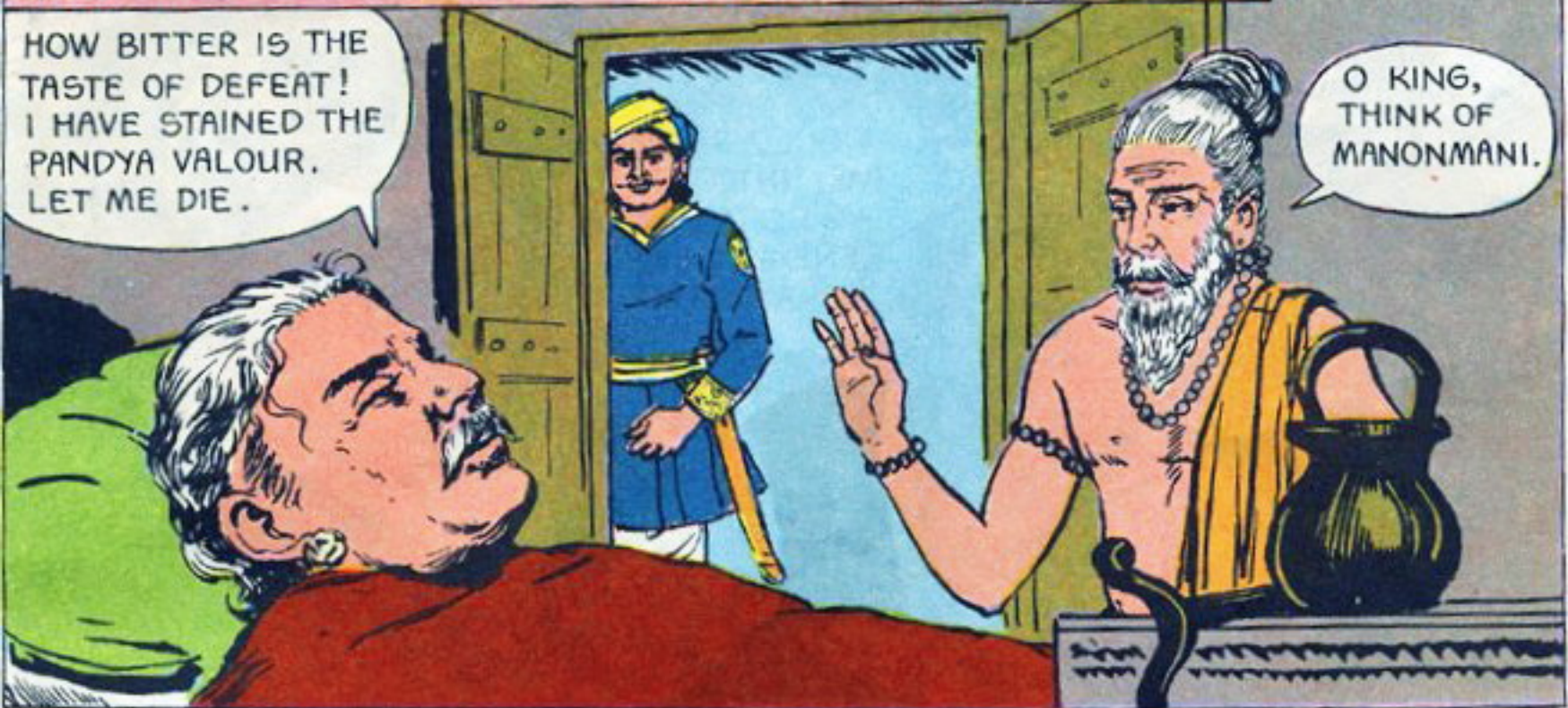
...AND PLACED HIM GENTLY IN THE
WAITING ARMS OF THE SAGE.



WITH THE SAGE'S CARE, JEEVAKAN SOON REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS.

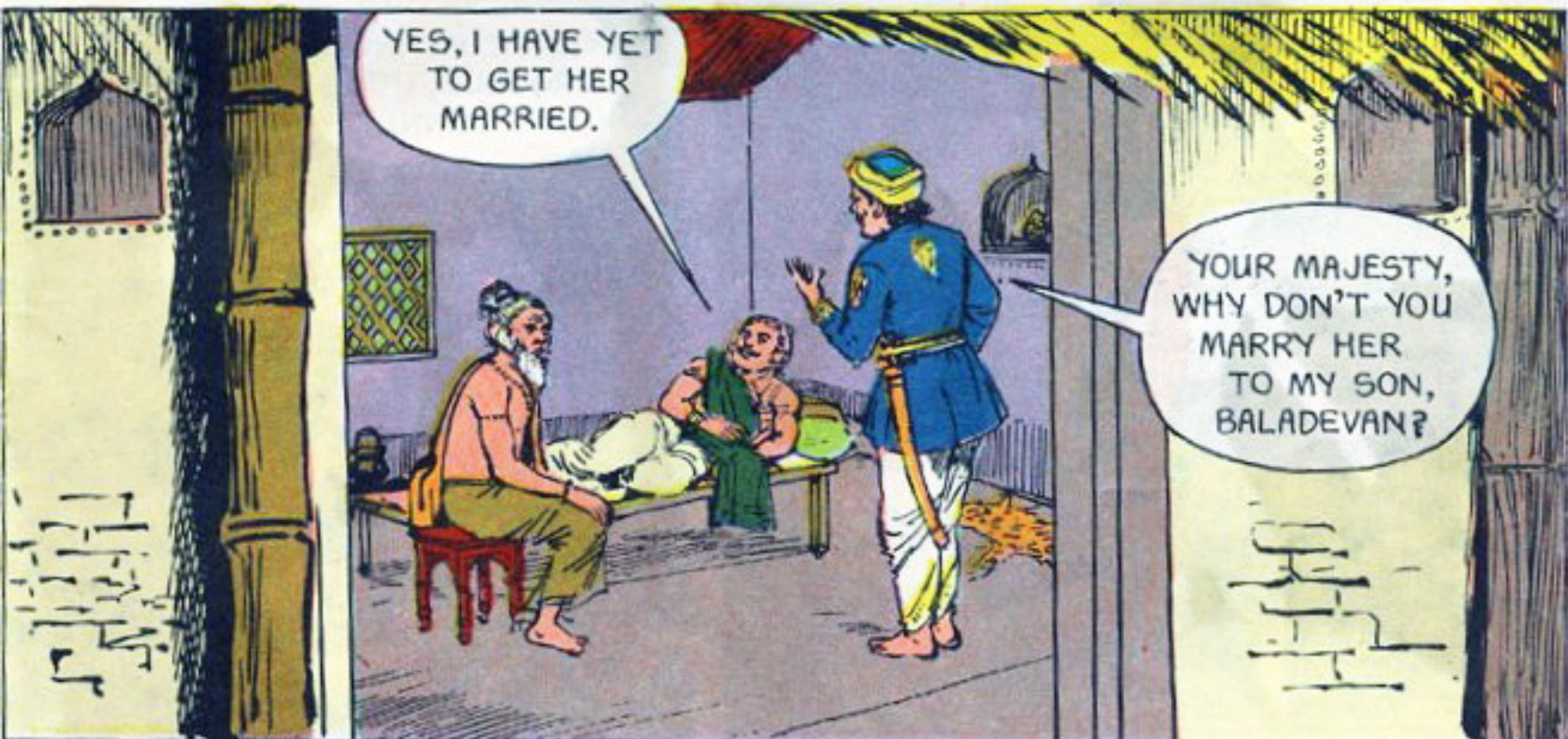
HOW BITTER IS THE
TASTE OF DEFEAT!
I HAVE STAINED THE
PANDYA VALOUR.
LET ME DIE.

O KING,
THINK OF
MANONMANI.



YES, I HAVE YET
TO GET HER
MARRIED.

YOUR MAJESTY,
WHY DON'T YOU
MARRY HER
TO MY SON,
BALADEVAN?



JUST THEN MANONMANI
HERSELF CAME RUNNING
IN, FOLLOWED BY
BALADEVAN.

FATHER, ARE
YOU ALL
RIGHT?







ONE MOMENT, YOUR MAJESTY.
BEFORE YOU USE THIS TUNNEL,
WE SHOULD MAKE SURE
THAT ENEMY SOLDIERS
ARE NOT ANYWHERE
NEAR THE EXIT.



LET ME GO
AHEAD ALONE AND
SEE IF THE WAY
IS CLEAR.

IT IS KIND
OF YOU TO
DO SO.

AS KUDILAN MADE HIS WAY THROUGH THE TUNNEL—



SO THE SAGE WILL
FOIL MY PLANS, WILL
HE! I HAVE ONLY
ONE WAY OUT.

MEANWHILE, AT THE CAMP OF PURUSHOTHAMAN, THE CHERA KING—

JEEVAKAN HAS WITHDRAWN INTO HIS FORT. WE WILL HAVE TO ATTACK THE FORT.

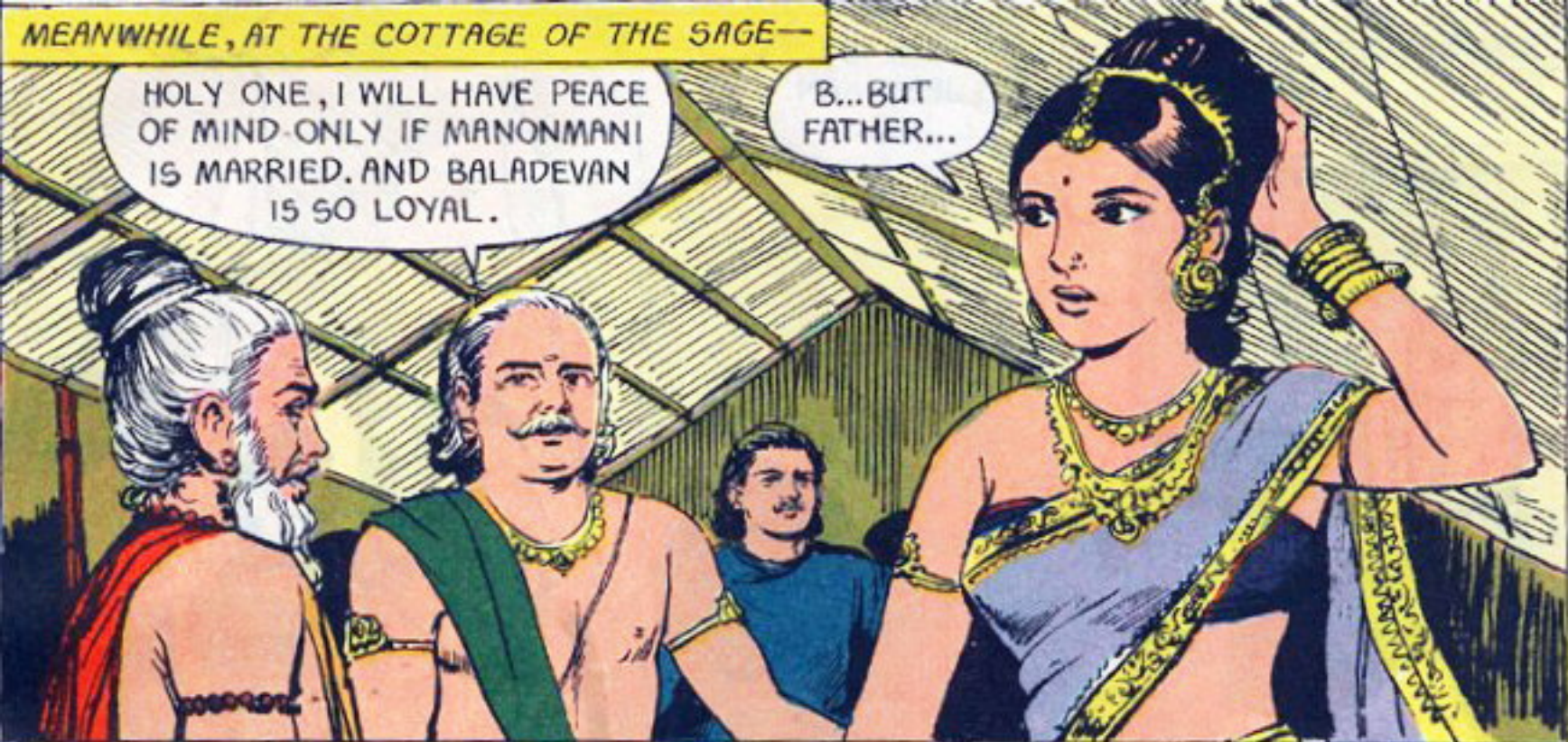
WE HAVE NO CHANCE, MY LORD. THE FORT IS IMPREGNABLE.



MEANWHILE, AT THE COTTAGE OF THE SAGE—

HOLY ONE, I WILL HAVE PEACE
OF MIND ONLY IF MANONMANI
IS MARRIED. AND BALADEVAN
IS SO LOYAL.

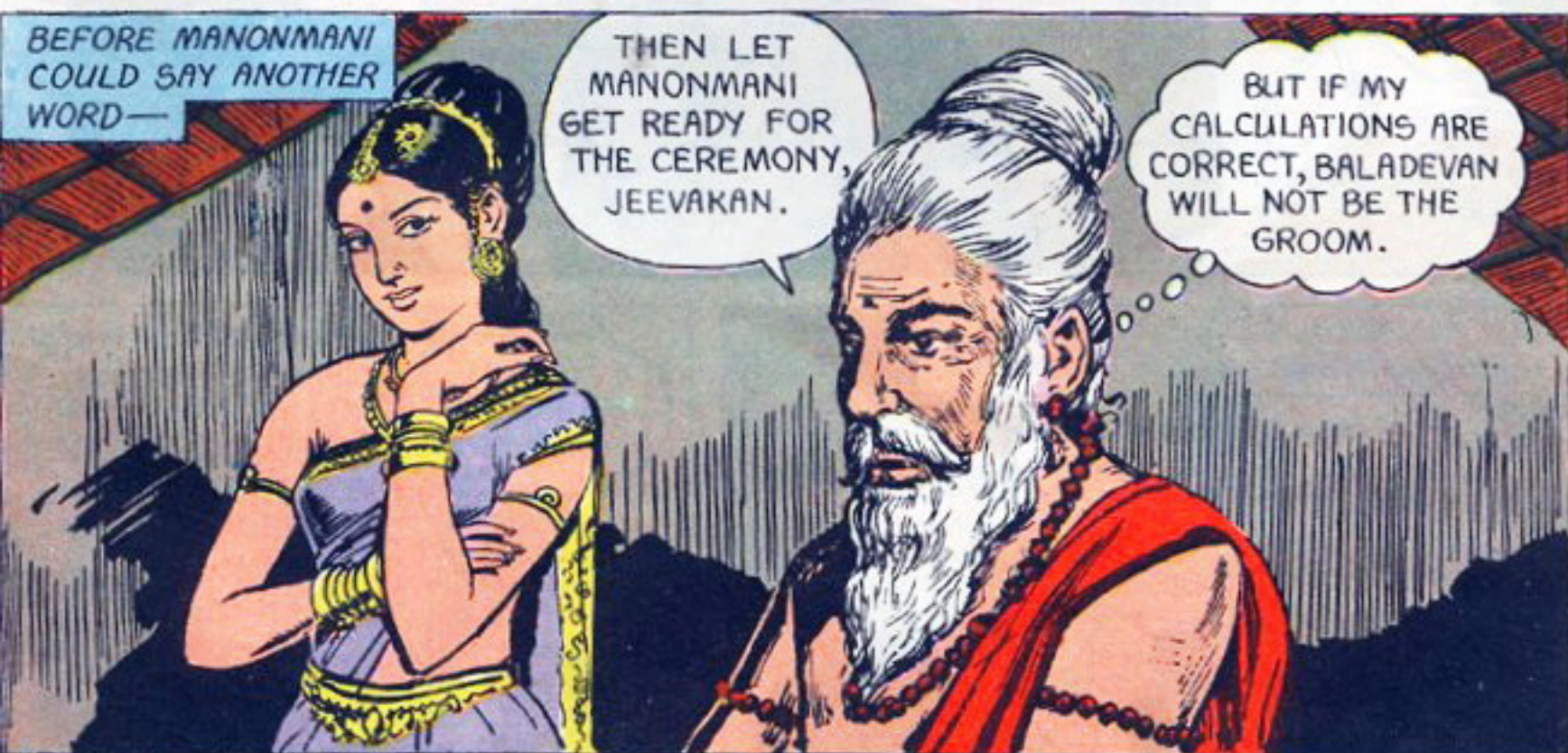
B...BUT
FATHER...



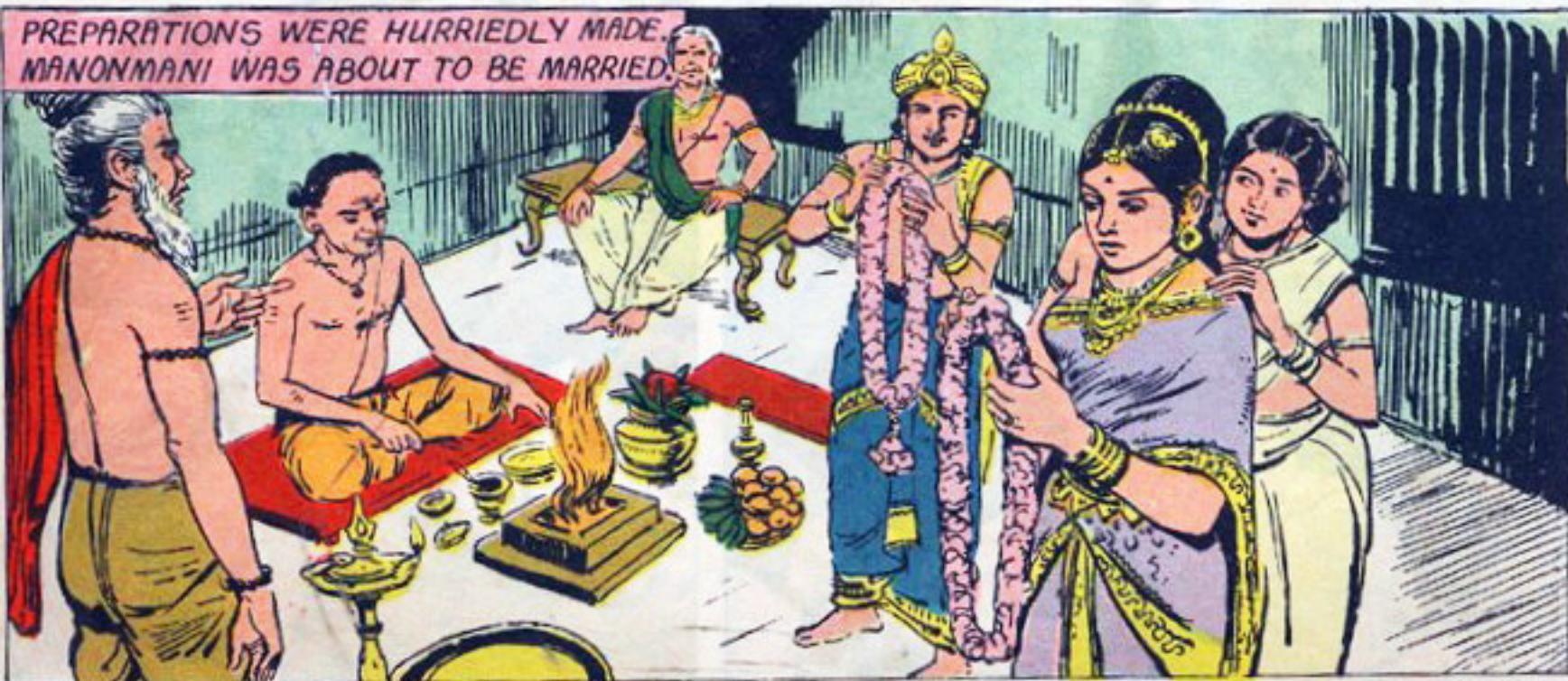
BEFORE MANONMANI
COULD SAY ANOTHER
WORD—

THEN LET
MANONMANI
GET READY FOR
THE CEREMONY,
JEEVAKAN.

BUT IF MY
CALCULATIONS ARE
CORRECT, BALADEVAN
WILL NOT BE THE
GROOM.



PREPARATIONS WERE HURRIEDLY MADE.
MANONMANI WAS ABOUT TO BE MARRIED.



SUDDENLY—

THERE HE IS!
THAT'S JEEVAKAN.
KILL HIM.



BUT TO KUDILAN'S SURPRISE,
PURUSHOTHAMAN WHIRLED ROUND.

YOU WORM! YOU TRAITOR!
DID YOU BELIEVE THAT
I WOULD KILL THE
VALIANT KING? IT'S YOU
WHO SHALL DIE.

MERCY,
MY LORD!



FALL AT
THE FEET OF
YOUR KING!

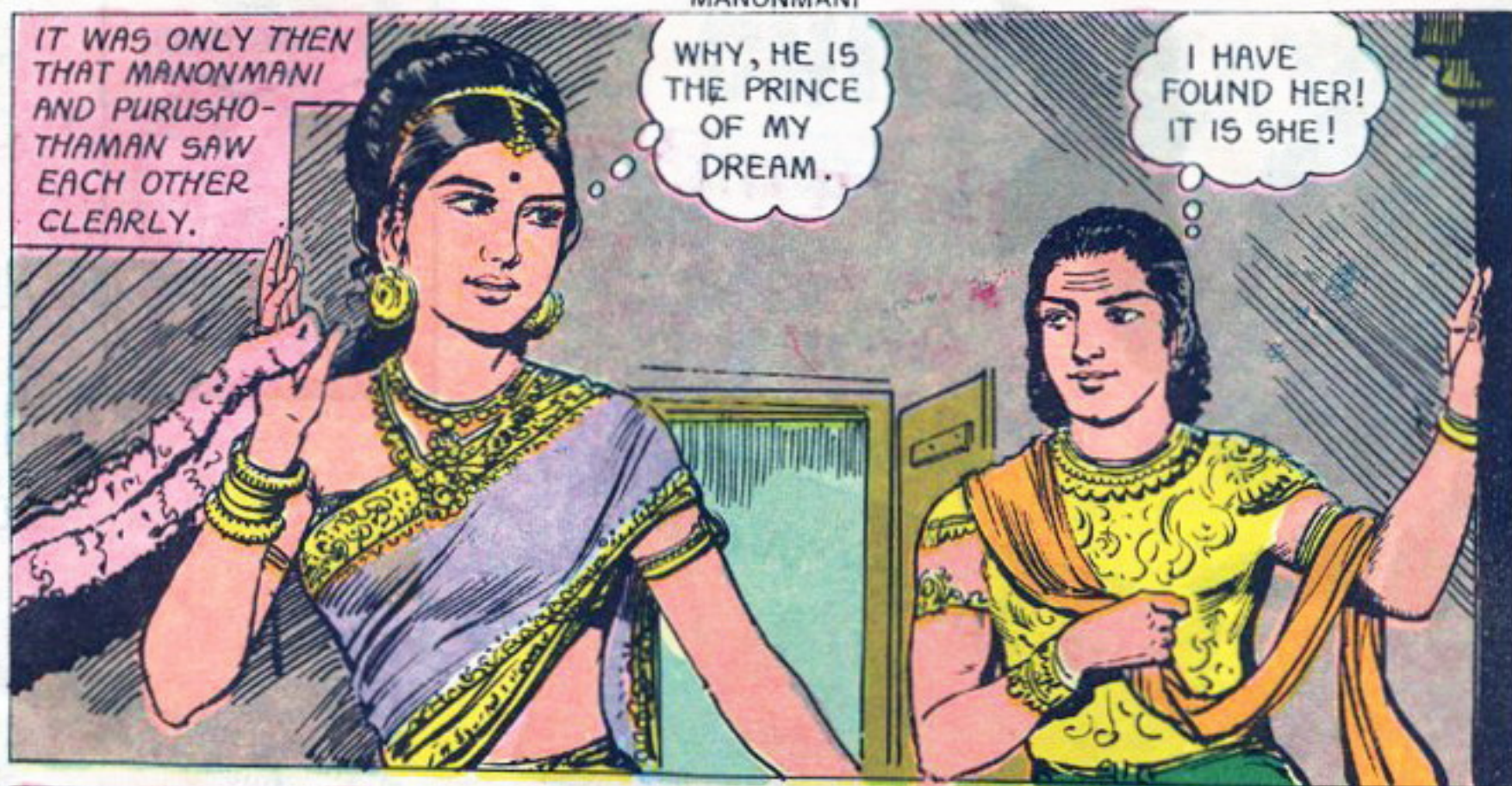
I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU,
PURUSHOTHAMAN.
YOU ARE MAGNANI-
MOUS. KUDILAN AND
HIS SON SHALL BE
BANISHED FROM MY
KINGDOM
FOREVER.



IT WAS ONLY THEN THAT MANONMANI AND PURUSHOTHAMAN SAW EACH OTHER CLEARLY.

WHY, HE IS THE PRINCE OF MY DREAM.

I HAVE FOUND HER! IT IS SHE!



AND WALKING IN A DREAM AS IT WERE, MANONMANI WENT UP TO PURUSHOTHAMAN AND GARLANDED HIM.

LATER, AS JEEVAKAN AND PURUSHOTHAMAN SAT TALKING IN THE PALACE ABOUT THE UNNECESSARY BLOODSHED THAT HAD BEEN CAUSED BY THE EVIL KUDILAN AND BALADEVAN—

IT IS MY FAULT. BALADEVAN'S BEHAVIOUR SHOULD HAVE MADE ME SUSPECT THAT SOMETHING WAS WRONG SOMEWHERE.

WHEN THE MINISTER AND HIS SON COULD DUPE ME, THEIR KING, WHY DO YOU BLAME YOURSELF?





AMAR CHITRA KATHA

- 11 KRISHNA
- 12 SHAKUNTALA
- 13 THE PANDAVA PRINCES
- 14 SAVITRI
- 15 RAMA
- 16 NALA DAMAYANTI
- 17 HARISCHANDRA
- 18 THE SONS OF RAMA
- 19 HANUMAN
- 20 MAHABHARATA
- 21 CHANAKYA
- 22 BUDDHA
- 23 SHIVAJI
- 24 RANA PRATAP
- 25 PRITHVIRAJ CHAUHAN
- 26 KARNA
- 27 KACHA
- 28 VIKRAMADITYA
- 29 SHIVA PARVATI
- 30 VASAVADATTA
- 31 SUDAMA
- 32 GURU GOBIND SINGH
- 33 HARSHA
- 34 BHEESHMA
- 35 ABHIMANYU
- 36 MIRABAI
- 37 ASHOKA
- 38 PRAHLAD
- 39 PANCHATANTRA I
- 40 TANAJI
- 41 CHHATRASAL
- 42 PARASHURAMA
- 43 BANDA BAHADUR
- 44 PADMINI
- 45 JATAKA TALES I
- 46 VALMIKI
- 47 GURU NANAK
- 48 TARABAI
- 49 RANJIT SINGH
- 50 RAM SHASTRI
- 51 RANI OF JHANSI
- 52 ULOOPI
- 53 BAJI RAO I
- 54 CHAND BIBI
- 55 KABIR
- 56 SHER SHAH
- 57 DRONA
- 58 SURYA
- 59 URVASHI
- 60 ADI SHANKARA
- 61 GHATOTKACHA
- 62 TULSIDAS
- 63 SUKANYA
- 64 DURGADAS
- 65 ANIRUDDHA
- 66 ZARATHUSHTRA
- 67 THE LORD OF LANKA
- 68 TUKARAM
- 69 AGASTYA
- 70 VASANTASENA
- 71 INDRA & SHACHI
- 72 DRAUPADI
- 73 SUBHADRA
- 74 AHILYABAI HOLKAR
- 75 TANSEN
- 76 SUNDARI
- 77 SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE
- 78 SHRIDATTA
- 79 JATAKA TALES II

- 80 VISHWAMITRA
- 81 THE SYAMANTAKA GEM
- 82 MAHAVIRA
- 83 VIKRAMADITYA'S THRONE
- 84 BAPPA RAWAL
- 85 AYYAPPAN
- 86 ANANDA MATH
- 87 BIRBAL THE JUST
- 88 GANGA
- 89 GANESHA
- 90 CHAITANYA MAHAPRABHU
- 91 HITOPADESHA I
- 92 SAKSHI GOPAL
- 93 KANNAGI
- 94 NARSINH MEHTA
- 95 JASMA OF THE ODES
- 96 SHARAN KAUR
- 97 CHANDRAHASA
- 98 PUNDALIK & SAKHU
- 99 RAJ SINGH
- 100 PURUSHOTTAM DEV & PADMAVATI
- 101 VALI
- 102 NAGANANDA
- 103 MALAVIKA
- 104 RANI DURGAVATI
- 105 DASHARATHA
- 106 RANA SANGA
- 107 PRADYUMNA
- 108 VIDYASAGAR
- 109 TACHCHOLI OTHENAN
- 110 SULTANA RAZIA

**Acquaint your
children with their
cultural heritage**

- 111 SATI & SHIVA
- 112 KRISHNA & RUKMINI
- 113 RAJA BHOJA
- 114 GURU TEGH BAHADUR
- 115 PAREEKSHIT
- 116 KADAMBARI
- 117 DHARVA & ASHTAVAKRA
- 118 KING KUSHA
- 119 RAJA RAJA CHOLA
- 120 DAYANANDA
- 121 VEER DHAVAL
- 122 ANCESTORS OF RAMA
- 123 EKANATH
- 124 SATWANT KAUR
- 125 UDAYANA
- 126 JATAKA TALES III
- 127 THE GITA
- 128 VEER HAMMIR
- 129 MALATI & MADHAVA
- 130 GARUDA
- 131 BIRBAL THE WISE
- 132 RANAK DEVI
- 133 MARYADA RAMA
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