

RANA KUMBHA

'Victory for Mewar!' His father's last words seemed to spur the young ruler on to ever greater feats. His success on the battlefield raised Rajput pride as high as the magnificent tower at Chittor, which he completed in 1448. Tirelessly subduing mighty sultans as well as sly traitors, Rana Kumbha ensured that his name was inscribed as one of the land's most worthy sons.

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RANA KUMBHA

PILLAR OF RAJPUT PRIDE

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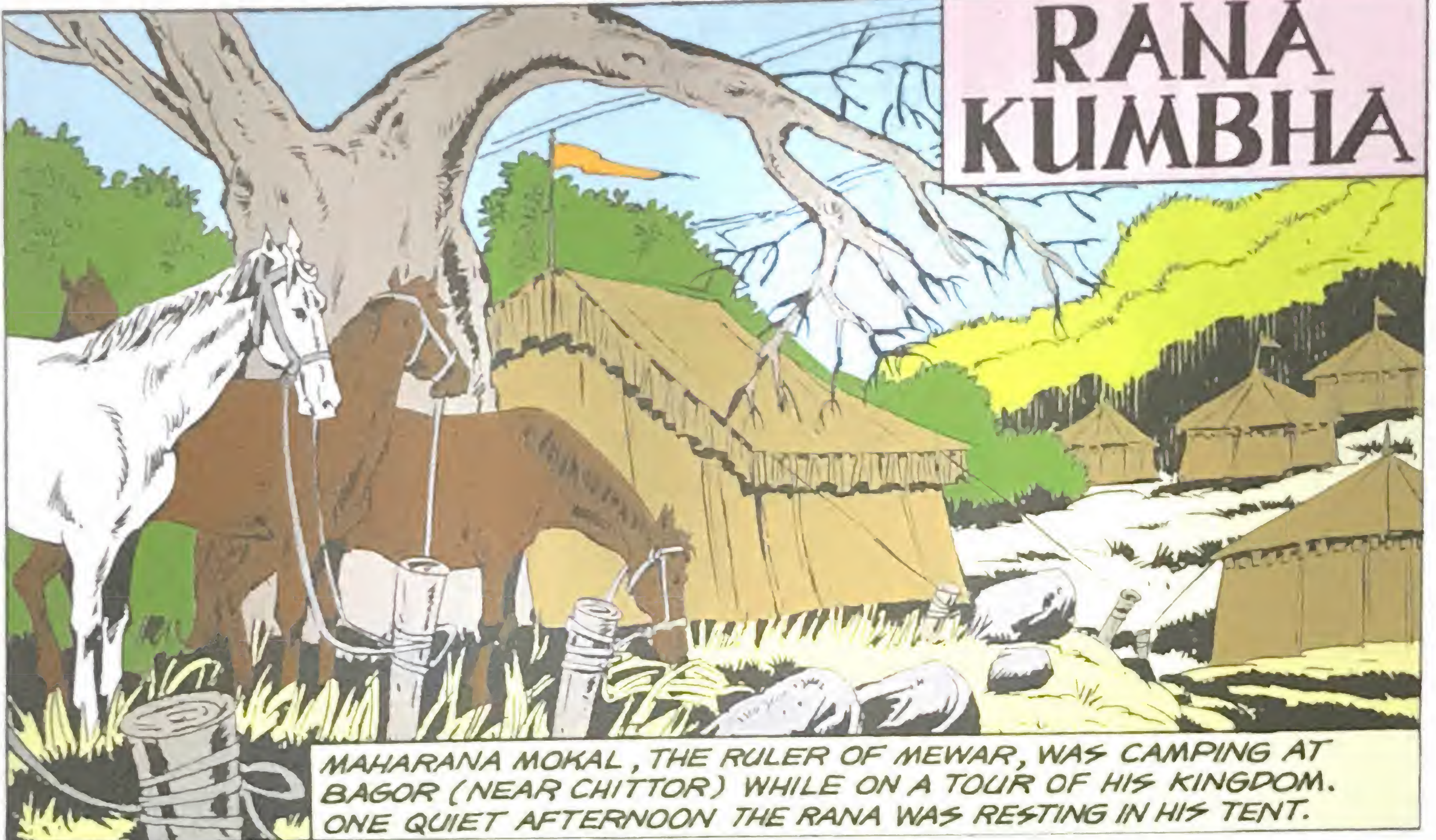


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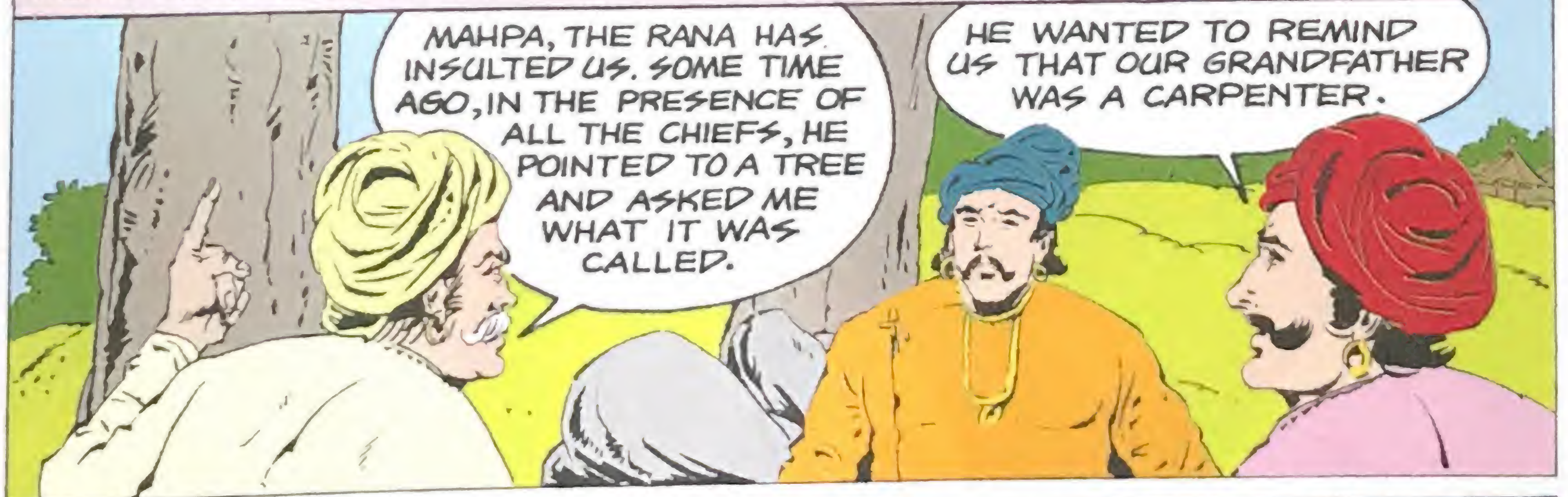
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RANA KUMBHA



MAHARANA MOKAL, THE RULER OF MEWAR, WAS CAMPING AT BAGOR (NEAR CHITTOR) WHILE ON A TOUR OF HIS KINGDOM. ONE QUIET AFTERNOON THE RANA WAS RESTING IN HIS TENT.

NOT FAR AWAY, TWO OF HIS OFFICERS, THE BROTHERS CHACHA AND MERA, WERE CONSPIRING WITH ANOTHER OFFICER, MAHPA, TO MURDER HIM.



MAHPA, THE RANA HAS INSULTED US. SOME TIME AGO, IN THE PRESENCE OF ALL THE CHIEFS, HE POINTED TO A TREE AND ASKED ME WHAT IT WAS CALLED.

HE WANTED TO REMIND US THAT OUR GRANDFATHER WAS A CARPENTER.



HE SHALL PAY WITH HIS LIFE.

WE SHALL AVENGE THIS INSULT.

YOU HAVE MY SUPPORT.

LOOKING FOR FURTHER SUPPORT, THE THREE MEN ASKED MALESI, THE RANA'S CHIEF GUARD, TO JOIN THEM. BUT THE LOYAL GUARD INFORMED THE RANA OF THE CONSPIRACY.

... AND NOW CHACHA AND MERA HAVE WON THE SUPPORT OF MAHPA. WE MUST BE ON OUR GUARD.

THE RANA DID NOT TAKE THE WARNING SERIOUSLY.

CHACHA AND MERA? WE CAN TAKE CARE OF THEM WITH EASE! BUT I DON'T THINK THEY WILL DARE TO RISE AGAINST ME.

HE WAS WRONG. THE VERY NEXT DAY, THE CONSPIRATORS DECIDED TO STRIKE. AS THEY RODE TOWARDS THE RANA'S TENT IT WAS PRINCE KUMBHA WHO ALERTED THE RANA.

FATHER! CHACHA AND MERA ARE COMING WITH THEIR MEN.

QUICK! BRING MY WEAPONS.

EVEN AS RANA MOKAL AND THE OTHERS GOT READY...

...THE CONSPIRATORS ENTERED THE TENT.

TRAITORS! IS THIS HOW YOU REPAY YOUR BENEFACTOR!

YOU INSULT US IN PUBLIC AND THEN CALL YOURSELF OUR BENEFACTOR! CHARGE, MERA! GET TO WORK, MAHPA!

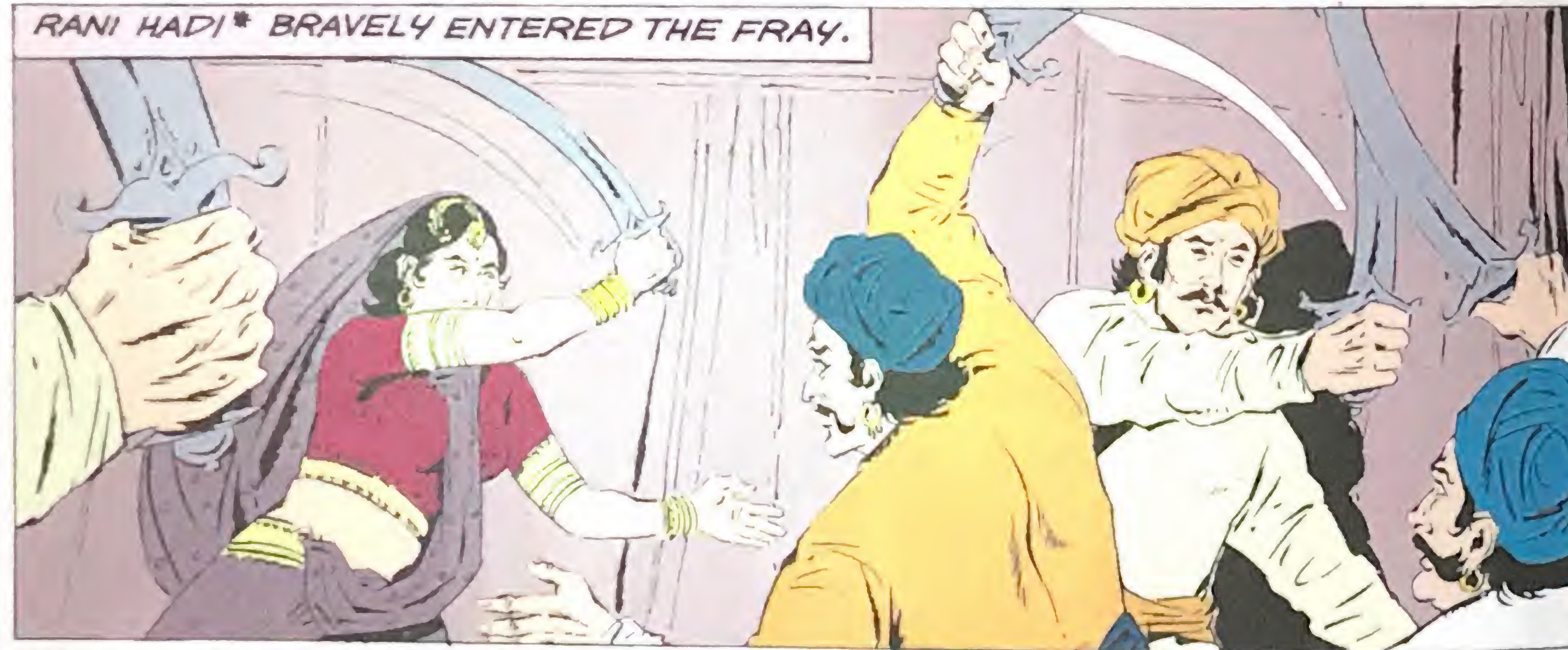
THE RANA DREW HIS SWORD AND ...



... HIS BLADE CLASHED WITH THOSE OF THE TRAITORS.



RANI HADI* BRAVELY ENTERED THE FRAY.



BUT THE RUTHLESS CONSPIRATORS SHOWED HER NO MERCY. WHEN SHE FELL, THE RANA CRIED OUT TO HIS YOUNG SON —



KUMBHA!
FLEE! WASTE
NO TIME!

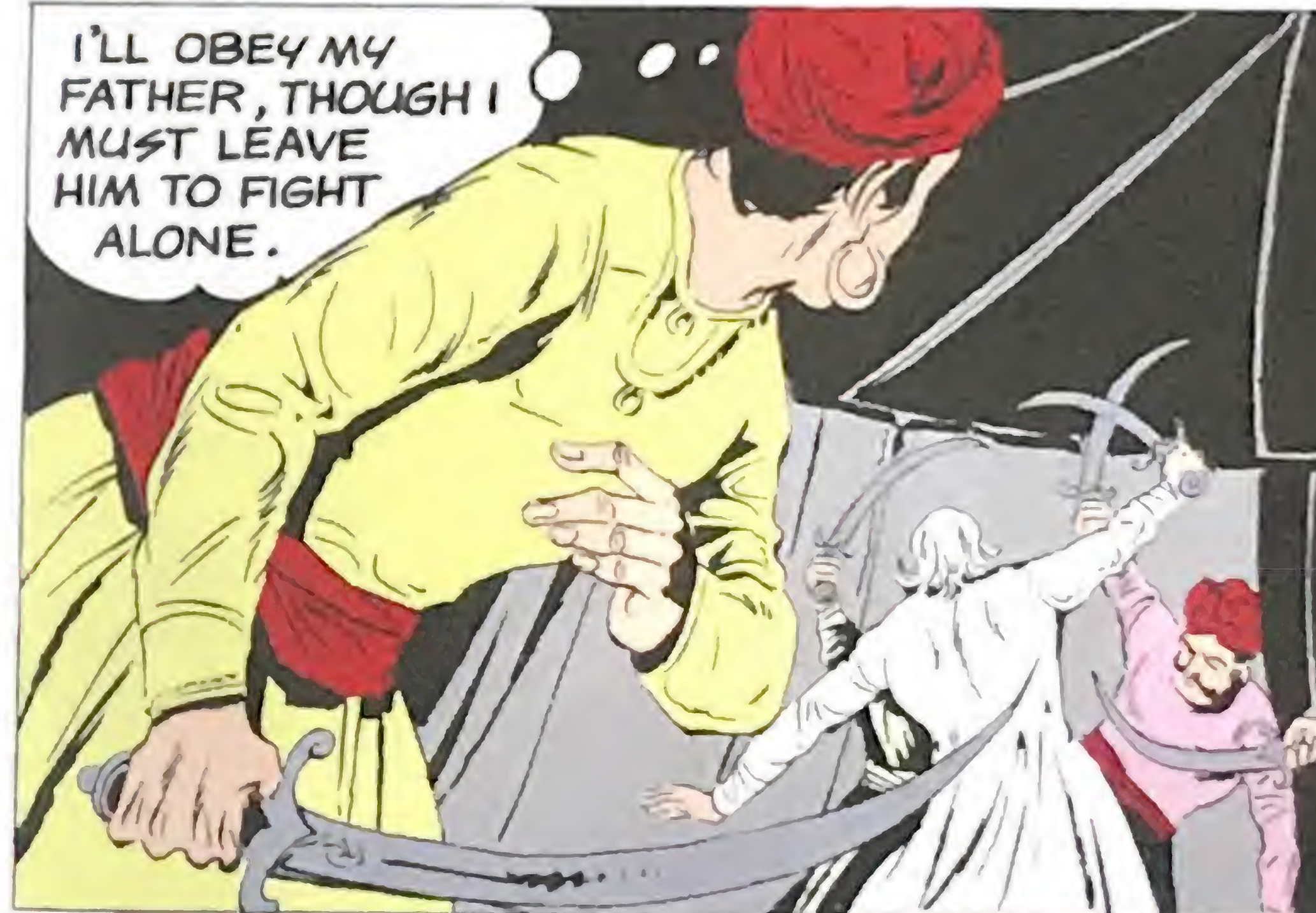
I CAN'T LEAVE
YOU, FATHER!
I'LL FIGHT
WITH YOU.

* KUMBHA'S STEP-MOTHER

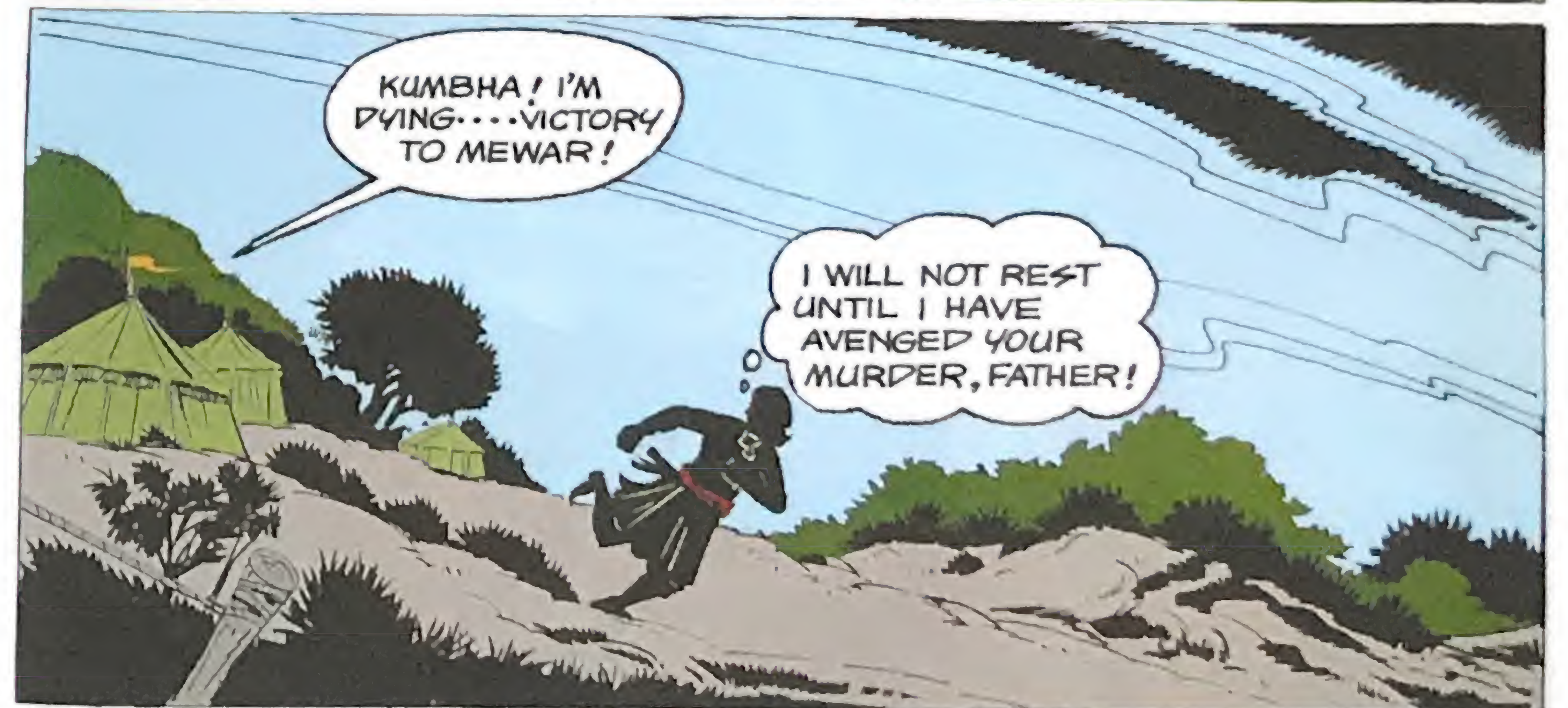
AS MORE MEN ENTERED THE TENT —



KUMBHA,
YOU MUST
ESCAPE FOR
THE SAKE OF
MEWAR! RIGHT
NOW!

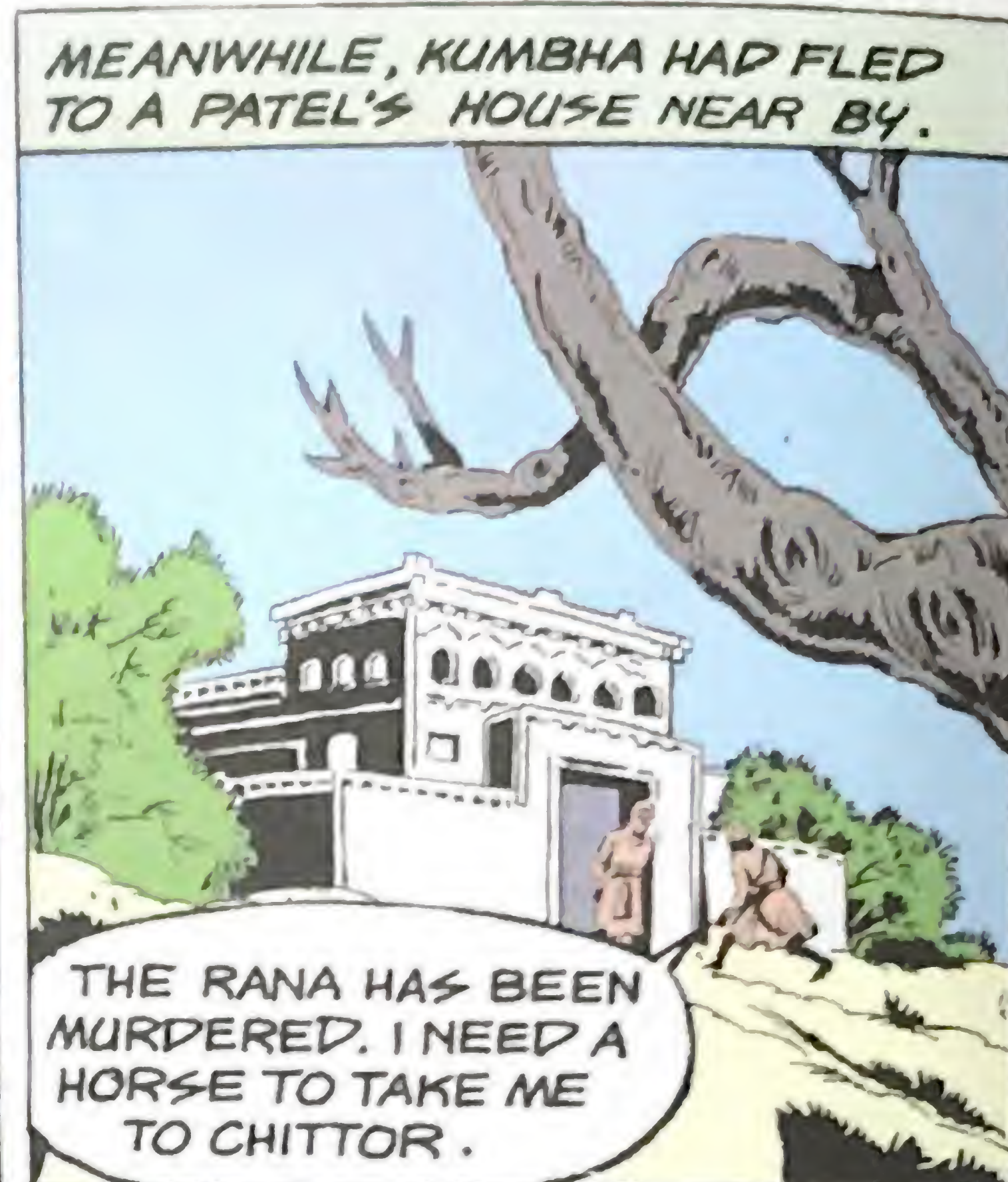


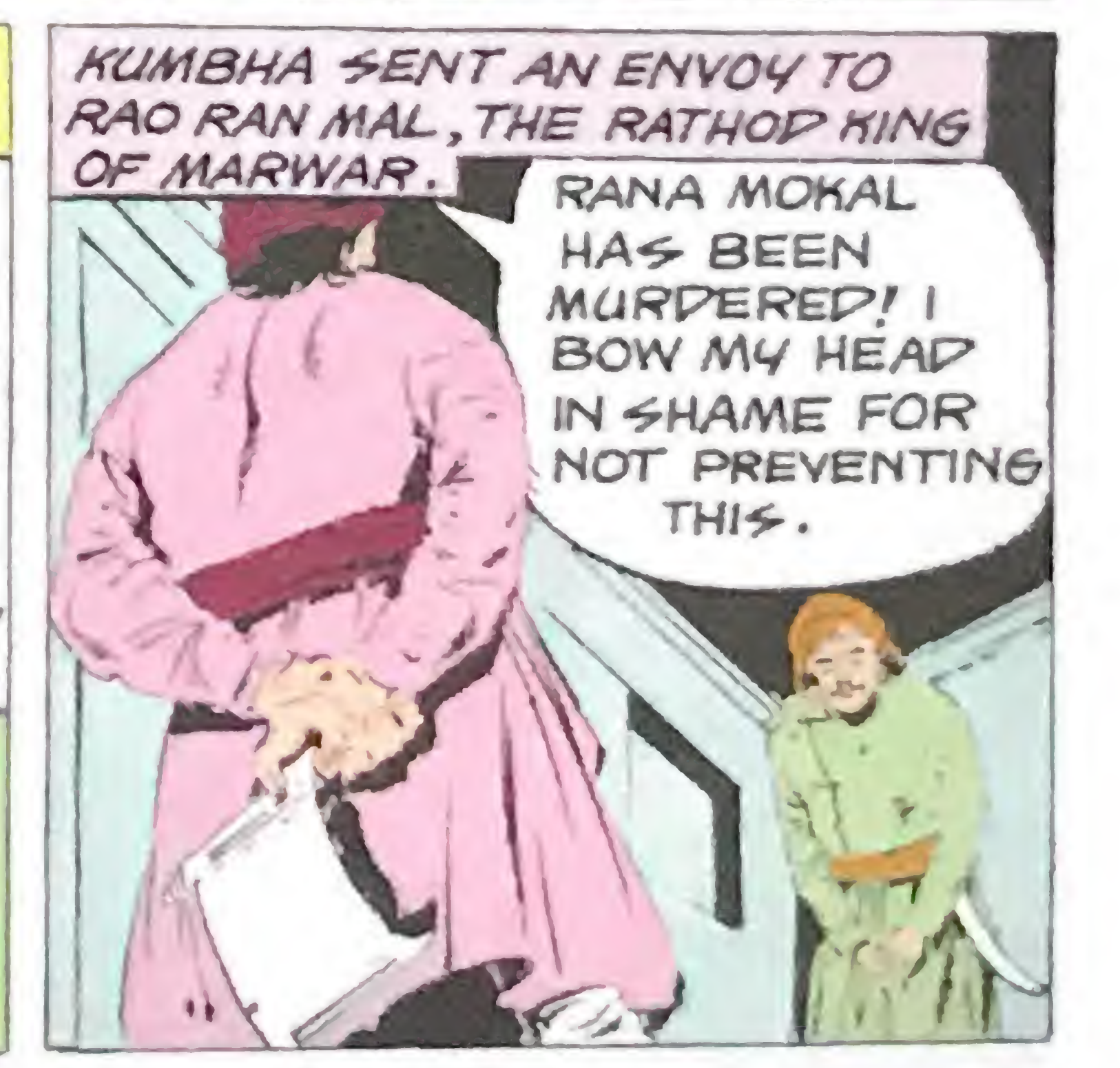
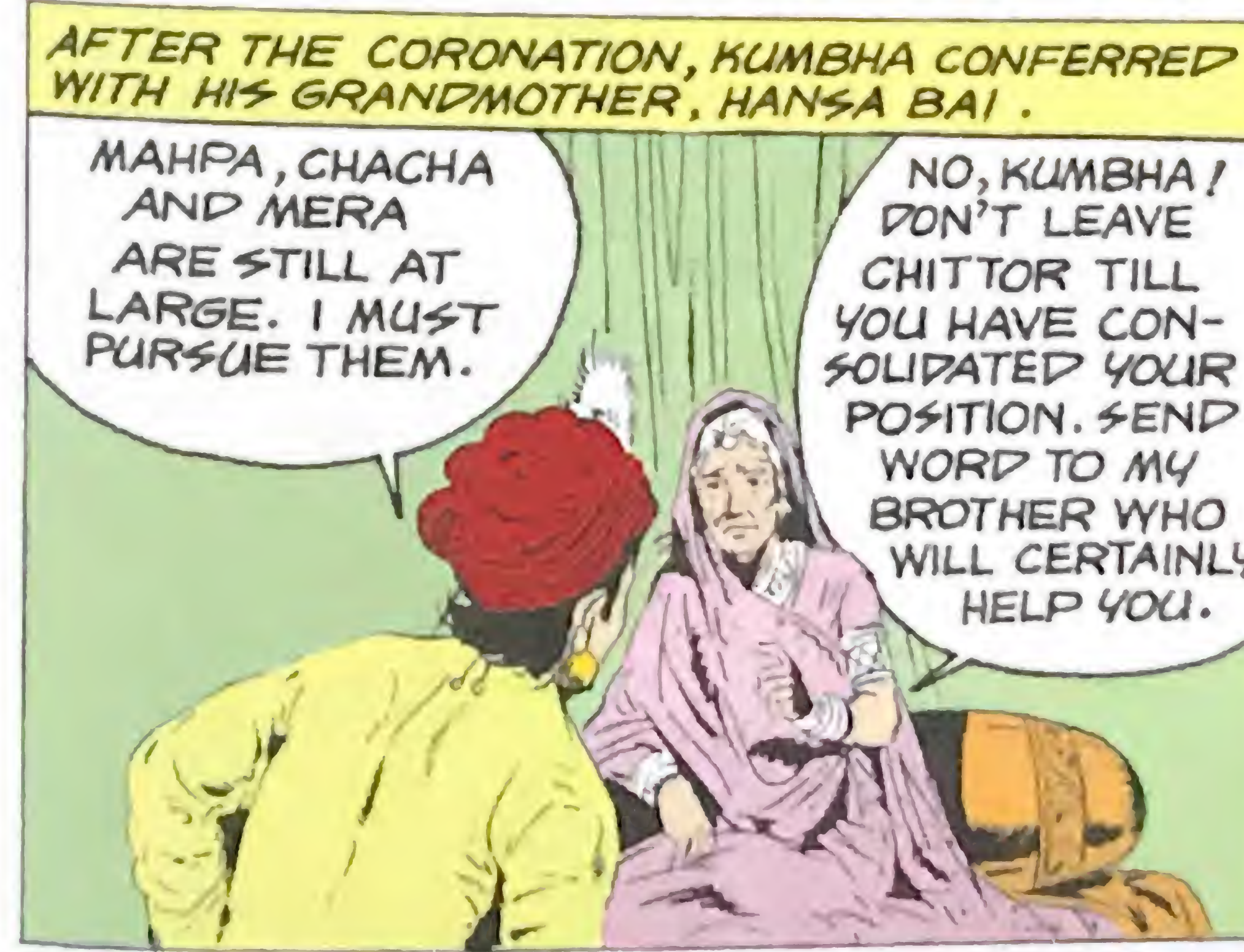
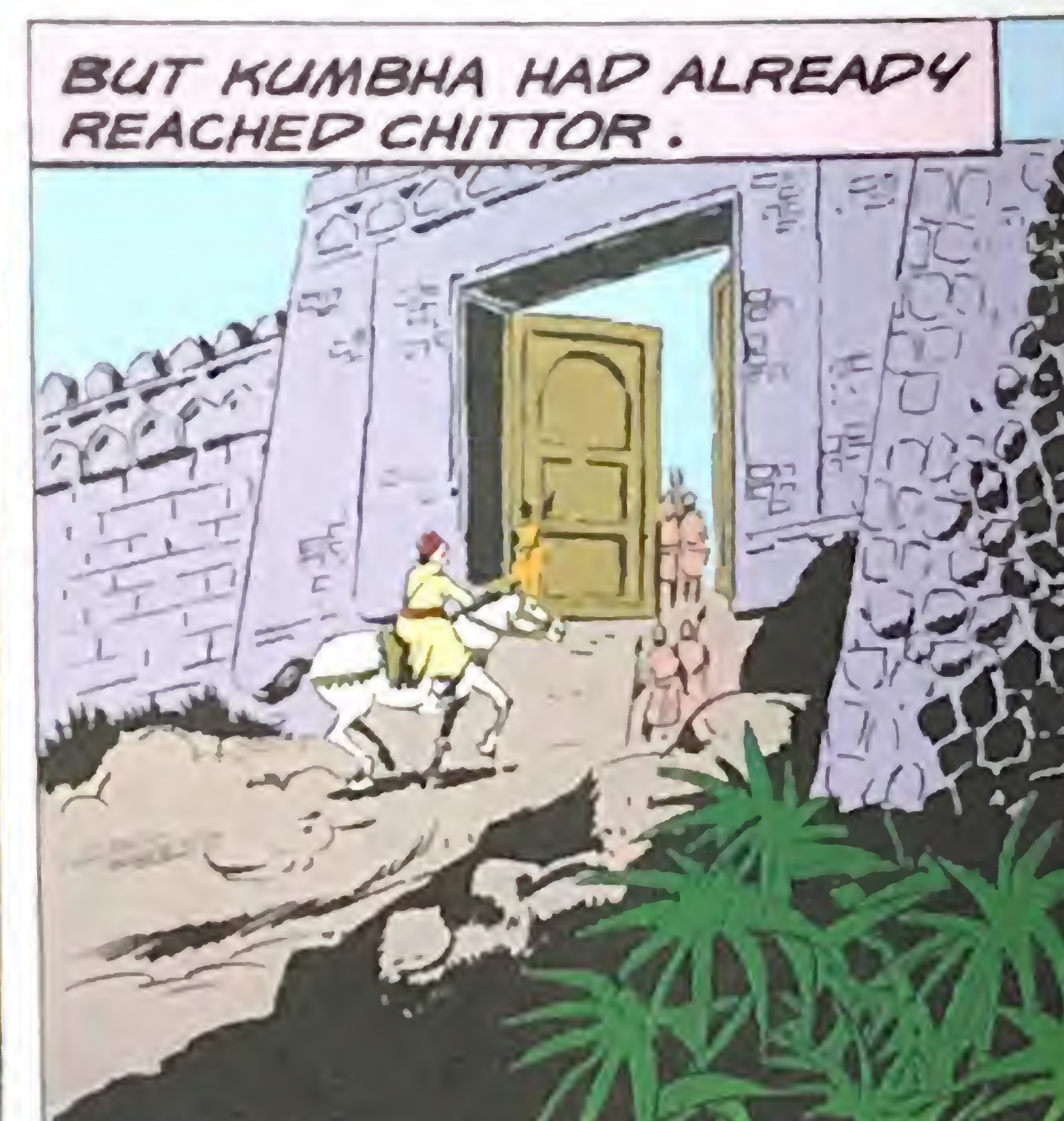
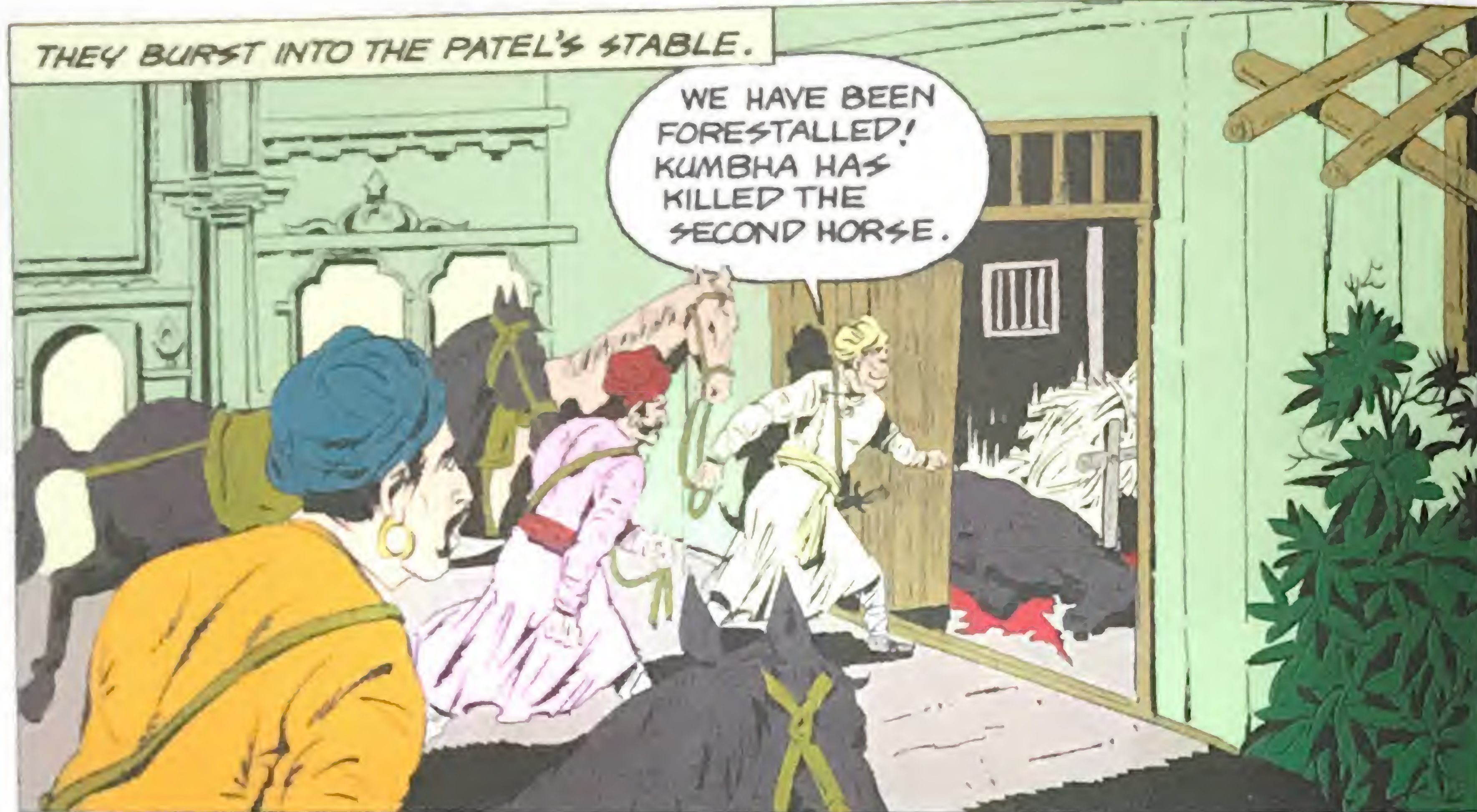
I'LL OBEY MY
FATHER, THOUGH I
MUST LEAVE
HIM TO FIGHT
ALONE.



KUMBHA! I'M
DYING....VICTORY
TO MEWAR!

I WILL NOT REST
UNTIL I HAVE
AVENGED YOUR
MURDER, FATHER!





HE TOOK OFF HIS TURBAN AND THREW IT TO THE GROUND.

I VOW NOT TO WEAR A PUGRI TILL THIS FOUL DEED IS AVENGED.

THEREAFTER, HE BEGAN WEARING A PHENTA—A SIMPLE HEAD-DRESS.

RAO RAN MAL THEN WENT TO CHITTOR.

THE TREACHEROUS ASSAULT ON RANA MOKAL BURNS MY HEART...

... AND A VOLCANO ERUPTS IN EVERY FIBRE OF MY BEING.

RAO RAN MAL SET OUT TOWARDS THE PAI KOTRA HILLS WHERE THE TRAITORS WERE HIDING.

WHEN HE REACHED THE FOOT OF THE HILLS, HE ASKED THE BHILS, THE TRIBALS OF THE AREA, FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE TRAITORS.

YOUR MAJESTY, IT IS TRUE THEY ARE HIDING IN THE FORT. BUT WAIT FOR A FEW DAYS. A LIONESS HAS JUST GIVEN BIRTH TO A CUB AND THE PATH IS BLOCKED.

I CAN'T WAIT. I MUST START CLIMBING THE HILL AT ONCE.

RAO RAN MAL BEGAN THE HAZARDOUS CLIMB WITH SIXTY TRUSTED MEN.

AS THE PARTY REACHED A LEDGE OF ROCK—

IT IS THE LIONESS!

RAN MAL'S SON JUMPED FORWARD...

... AND BEFORE THE LIONESS COULD ATTACK..

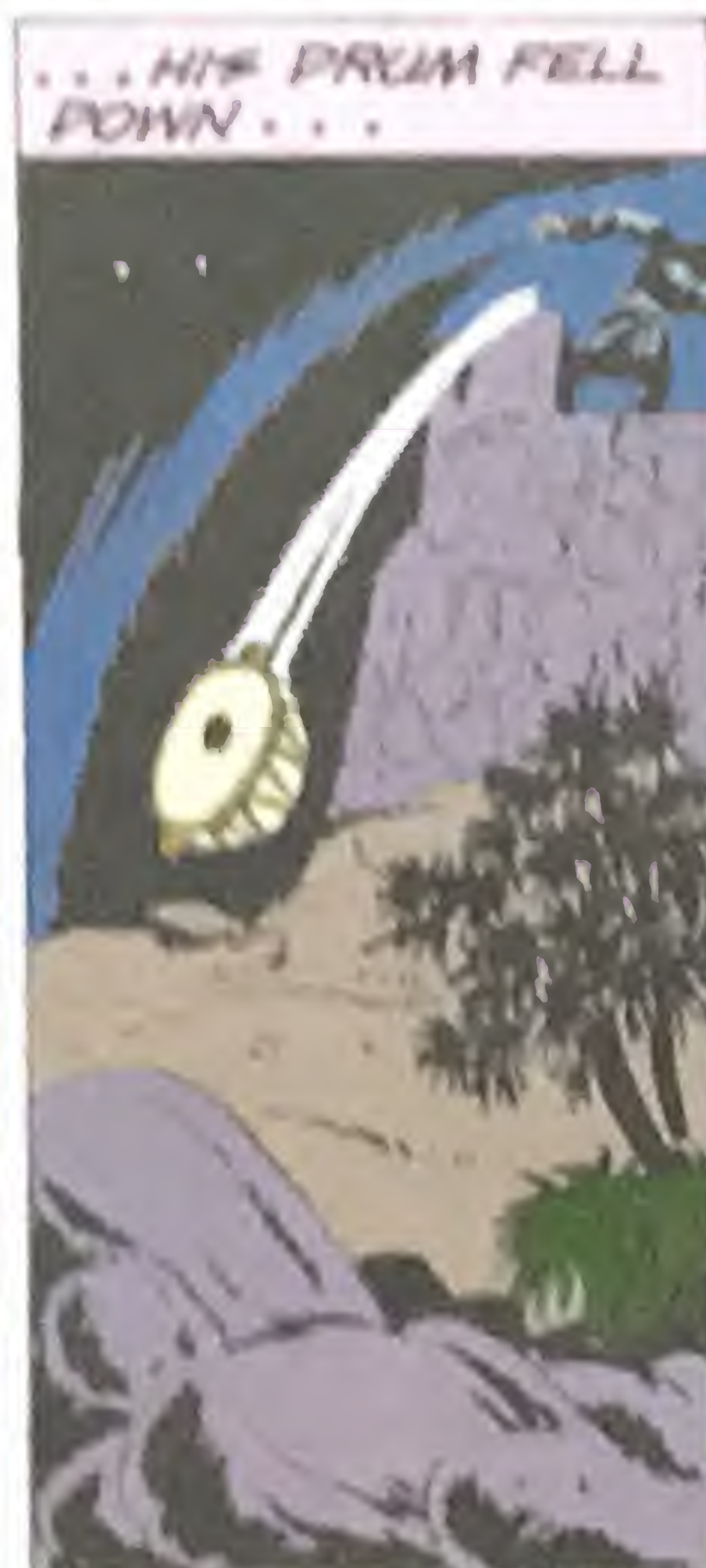
... HE BURIED HIS DAGGER INTO HER HEART.



THE PARTY SOON REACHED THE SUMMIT. RAO RAN MAL'S SOLDIERS CRAMBLED OVER THE PARAPET.



JUST THEN, THE DRUMMER ACCOMPANYING RAO RAN MAL'S ARMY SLIPPED AND...



... HIS DRUM FELL DOWN ...



... WITH A RE-SOUNDING CRASH.



INSIDE THE FORT, CHACHA'S DAUGHTER WOKED UP WITH A START.

FATHER! DID YOU HEAR THAT? PERHAPS KUMBHA'S MEN ARE HERE!

IT'S ONLY THE SOUND OF THUNDER! GO TO SLEEP, CHILD. KUMBHA'S MEN WON'T DARE TO CLIMB THIS STEEP HILL.



BUT SUDDENLY—

FATHER!



CHACHA WHIRLED ROUND.

RAO RAN MAL! YOU!



YES! I AM HERE TO AVENGE THE MURDER OF RANA MOKAL.

AARGH!



AFTER KILLING CHACHA AND MERA, RAO RAN MAL WENT IN SEARCH OF MAHPA.

HE'S NOT HERE. THE BIRD HAS FLOWN.

THANK GOD! THEY DON'T SUSPECT A THING.

MAHPA ESCAPED IN THE GUISE OF A WOMAN.

RAO RAN MAL RETURNED TO KUMBHA'S PALACE AT CHITTOR.

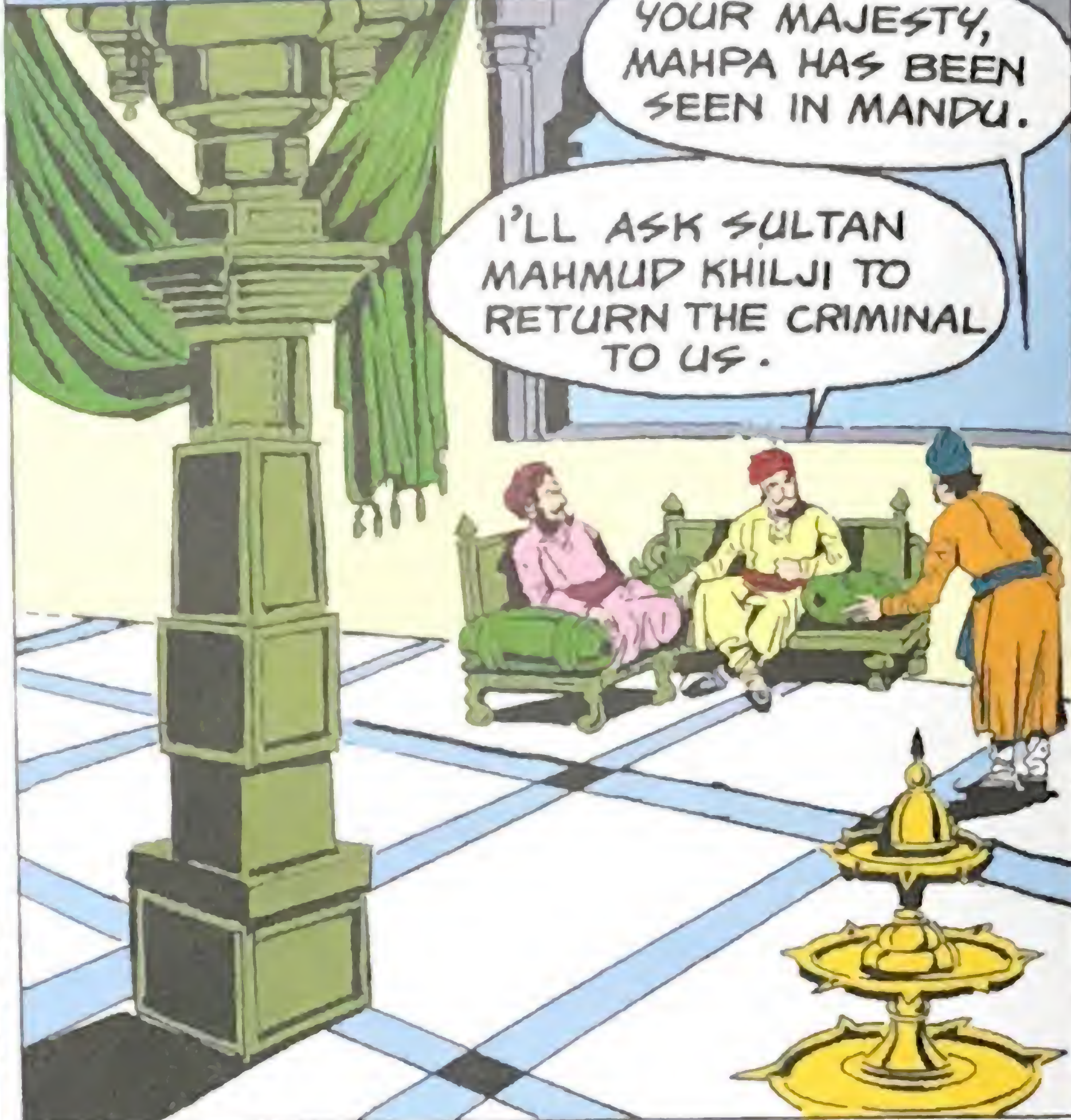
WE'VE TAKEN CARE OF CHACHA AND MERA. BUT MAHPA CANNOT BE FOUND.



A FEW YEARS LATER A MESSENGER CALLED ON KUMBHA.

YOUR MAJESTY, MAHPA HAS BEEN SEEN IN MANDU.

I'LL ASK SULTAN MAHMUD KHILJI TO RETURN THE CRIMINAL TO US.



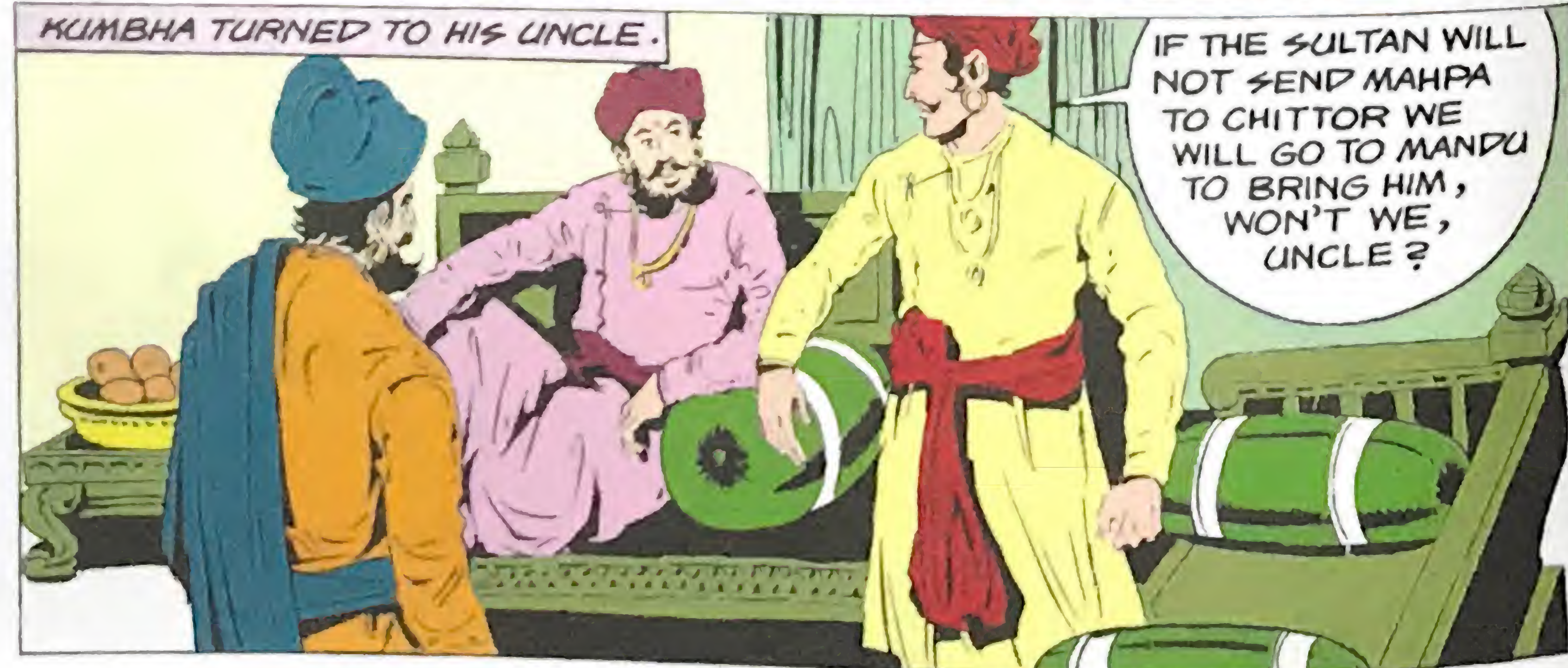
SOME TIME LATER, KUMBHA'S ENVOY RETURNED AFTER MEETING THE SULTAN.

YOUR MAJESTY, THE SULTAN SAYS THAT MAHPA IS NOW UNDER HIS PROTECTION AND REFUSES TO SEND HIM BACK.



KUMBHA TURNED TO HIS UNCLE.

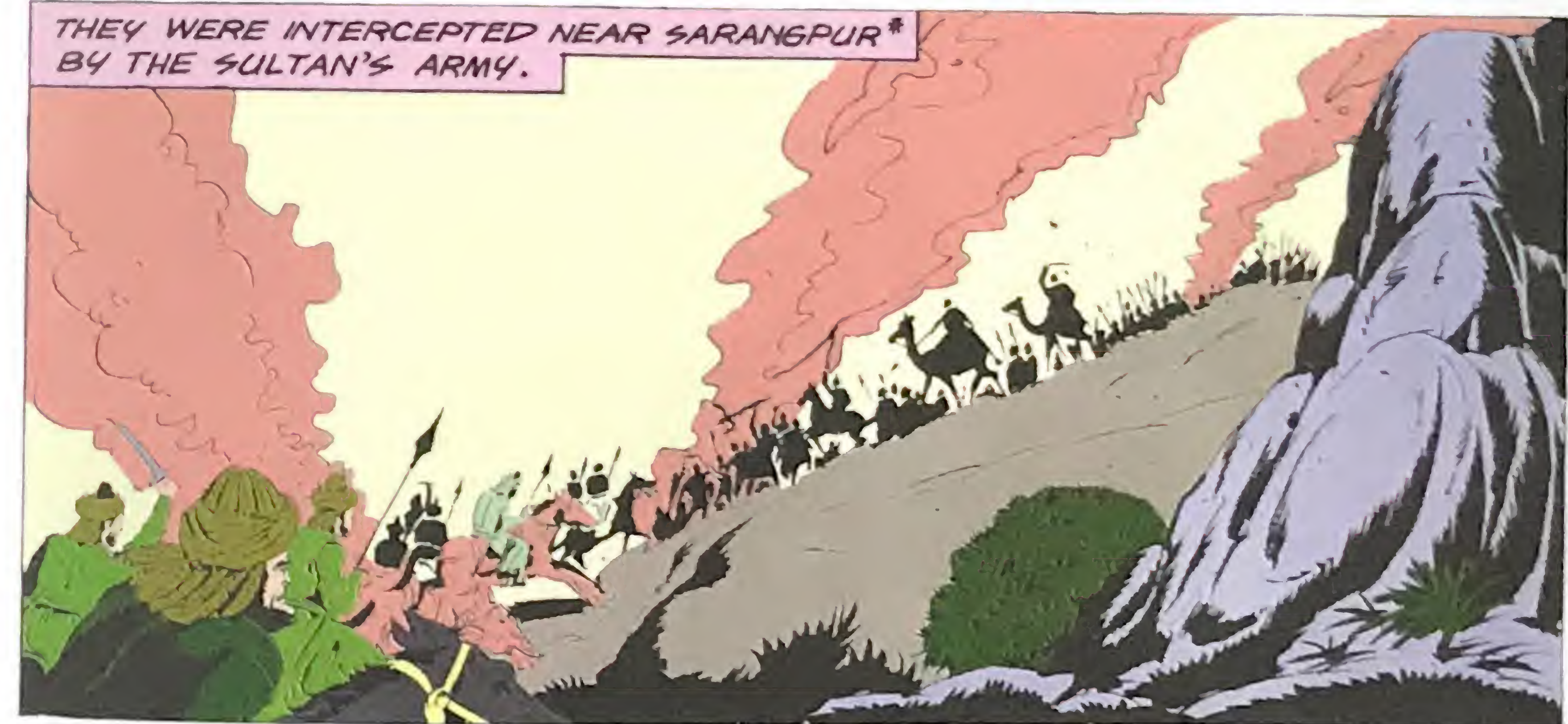
IF THE SULTAN WILL NOT SEND MAHPA TO CHITTOR WE WILL GO TO MANDU TO BRING HIM, WON'T WE, UNCLE?



SO RANA KUMBHA AND RAN MAL LEFT CHITTOR WITH THEIR FORCES.



THEY WERE INTERCEPTED NEAR SARANGPUR* BY THE SULTAN'S ARMY.



THE RAJPUTS PUT UP A VERY STRONG FIGHT AND THE SULTAN WAS FORCED TO RETREAT TO THE FORTRESS OF MANDU.

FALL BACK! BACK TO THE FORT!

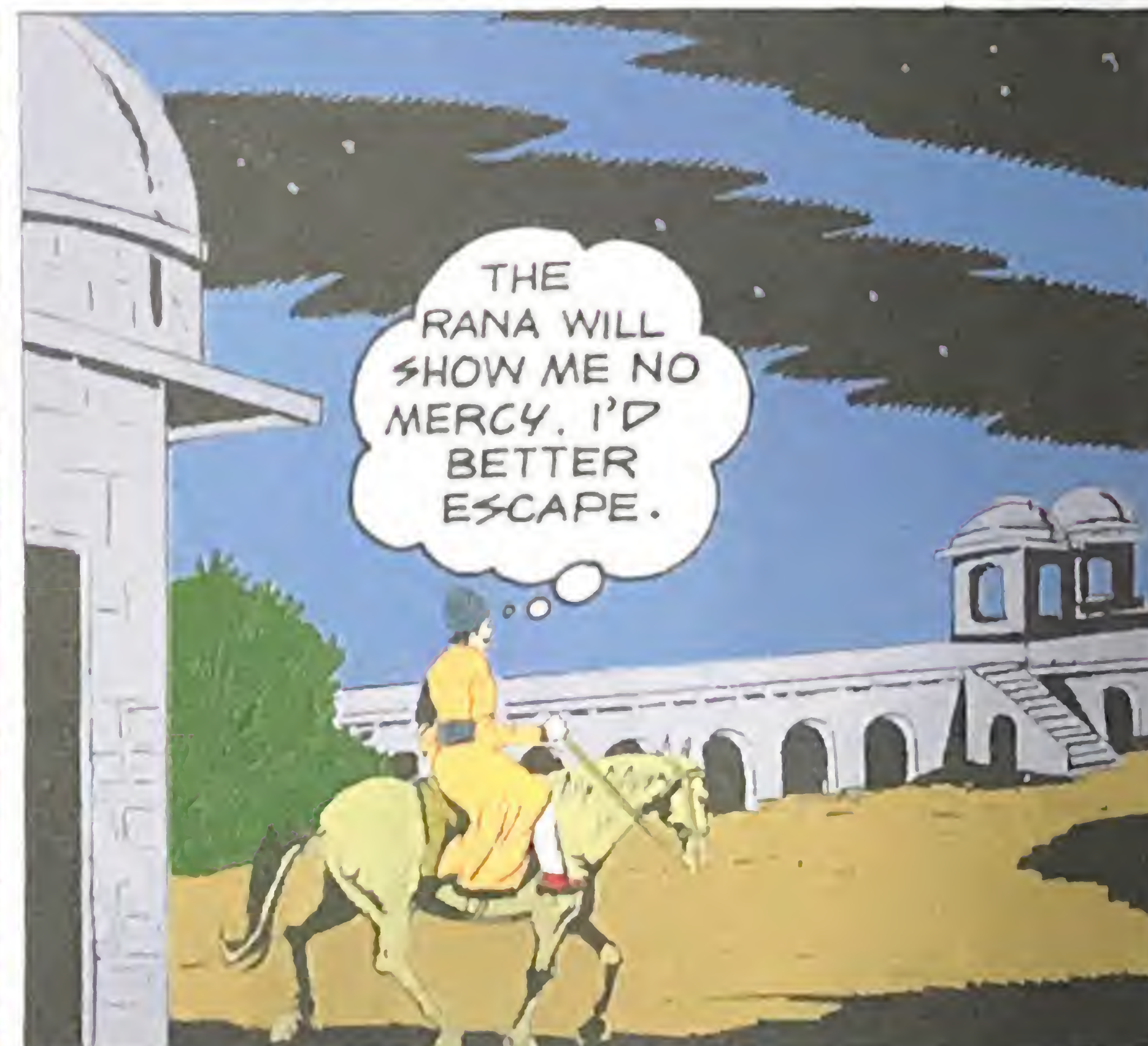


* SITUATED BETWEEN CHITTOR AND MANDSAUR

THE RAJPUTS PURSUED THE RETREATING ARMY AND LAID SIEGE TO THE FORTRESS OF MANDU.



MEANWHILE, SULTAN MAHMUD KHILJI SENT FOR MAHPA.



HE RODE UP TO THE RAMPARTS OF THE FORT...



... AND LEAPT OUT ON HORSEBACK.



THE HORSE WAS KILLED AS IT FELL TO THE GROUND...

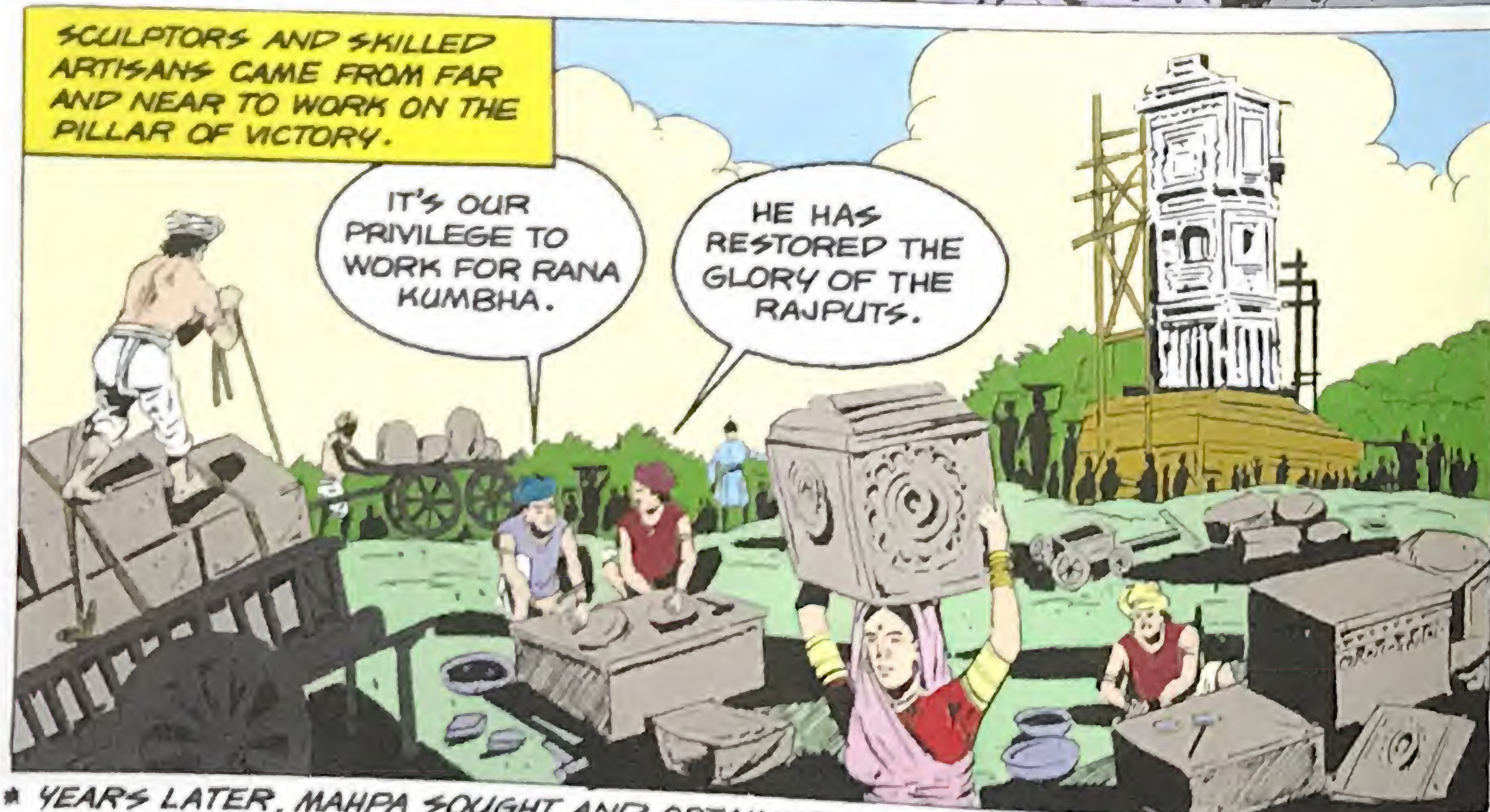


THE NEXT DAY THE RAJPUTS STORMED THE FORT.

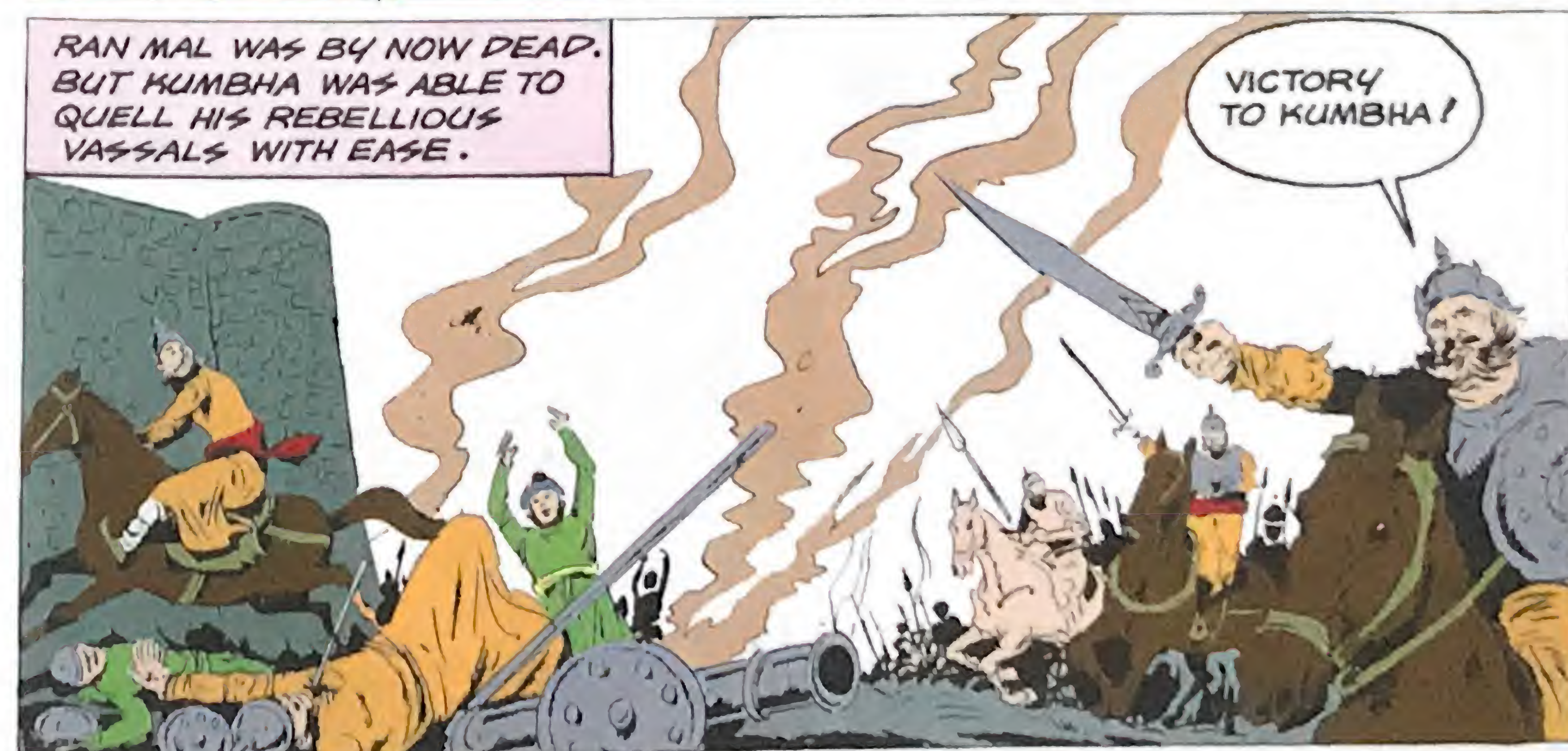
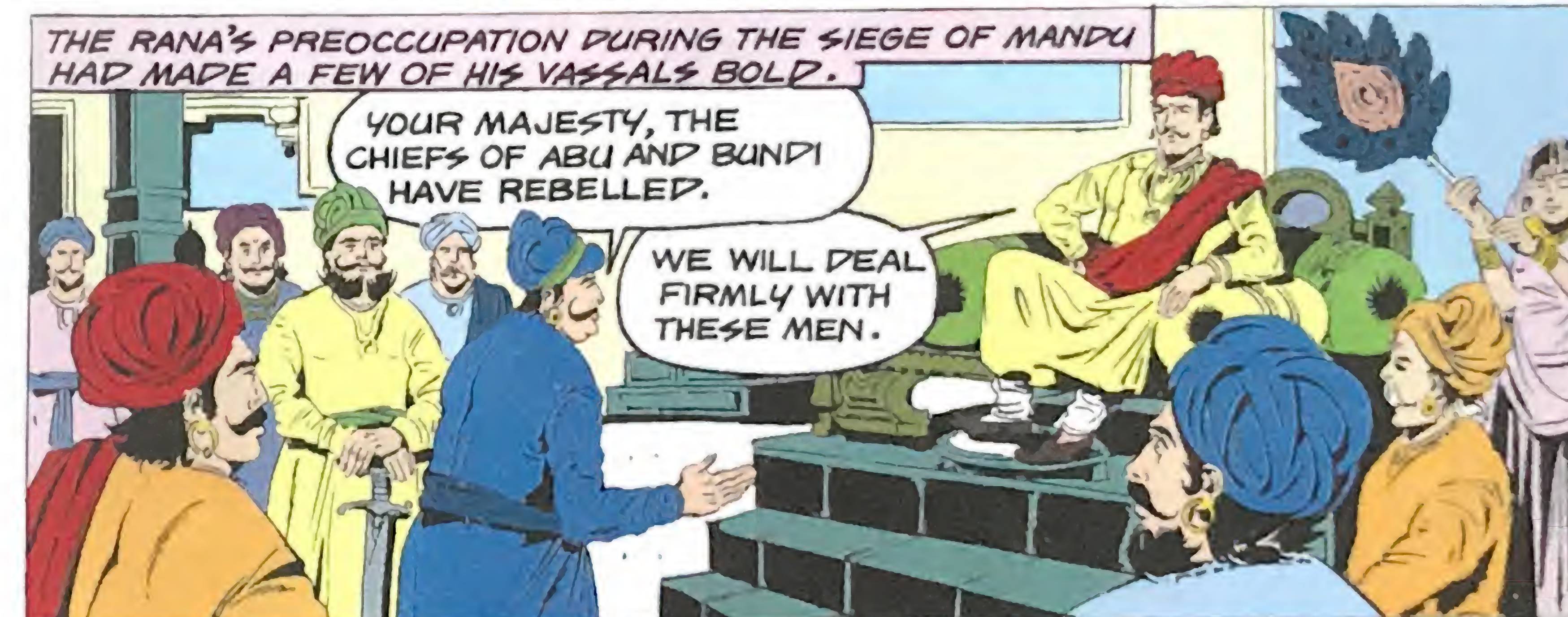


THE GATES OF THE FORT COULD NOT WITHSTAND THE MOUNTING PRESSURE OF THE RAJPUTS.





* YEARS LATER, MAHPA SOUGHT AND OBTAINED KUMBHA'S PARDON.



IN 1444, KUMBHA WAS AT HARAVATI PUNISHING SOME REBELS, WHEN HE RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM CHITTOR.



KUMBHA'S ARMY CAME UPON THE SULTAN'S FORCES NEAR MANDALGARH.

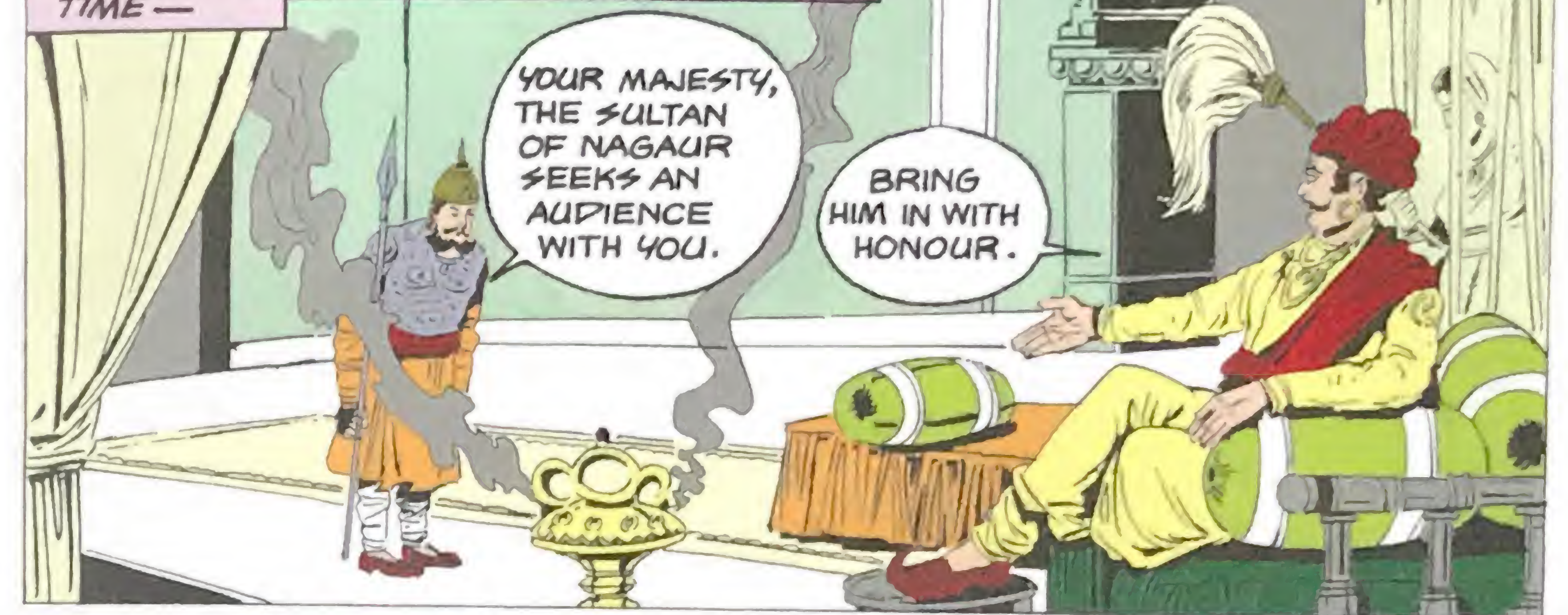


SULTAN MAHMUD KHILJI WAS ONCE AGAIN DEFEATED BY THE RANA AND HAD TO FLEE.

MEANWHILE, WORK ON THE RANA'S VICTORY PILLAR CONTINUED. IT WAS COMPLETED IN 1448.



ONE DAY, KUMBHA WAS RELAXING IN HIS PALACE AT KUMBHALGARH* AFTER DEFEATING THE SULTAN OF MANDU FOR THE THIRD TIME —



SHAMSKHAN, THE SULTAN OF NAGOUR, ENTERED.



* THE FORT BUILT BY KUMBHA ON A HIGH PEAK OF THE WESTERN RANGE OF THE ARAVALI HILLS.

KUMBHA ADVANCED UPON NAGOUR AND STORMED THE FORT.



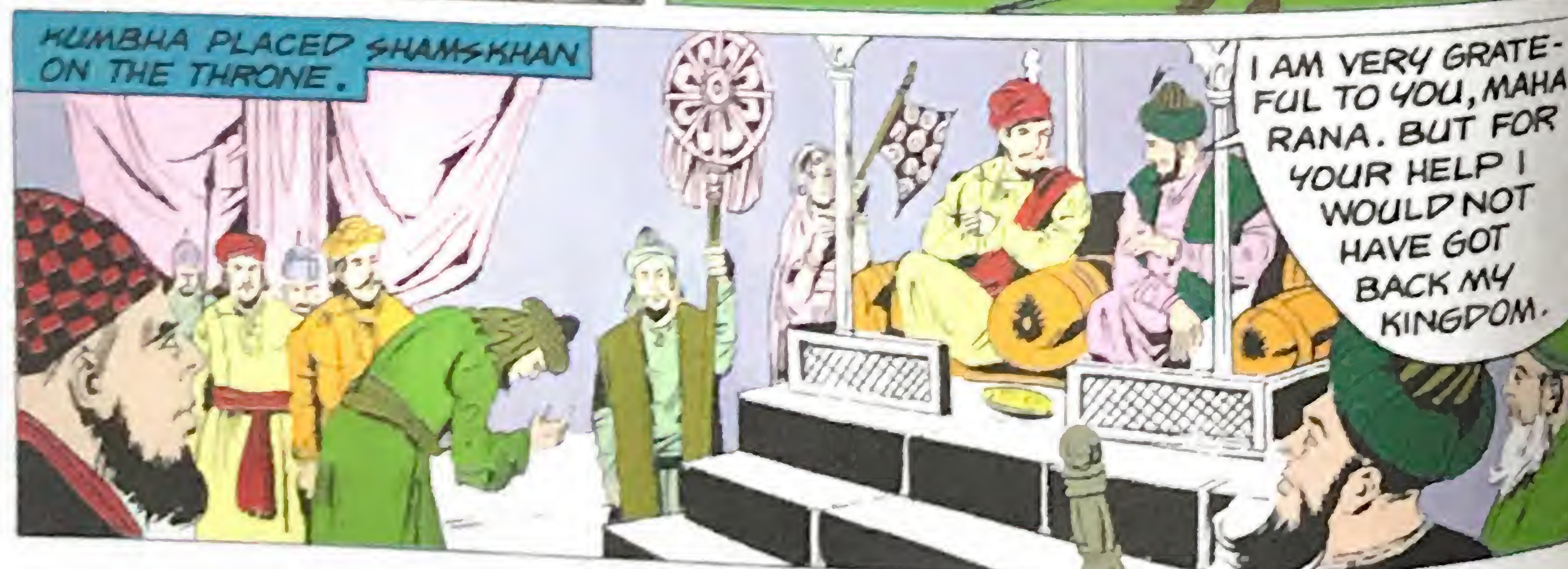
AS MUNAHID KHAN FLED FOR HIS LIFE...



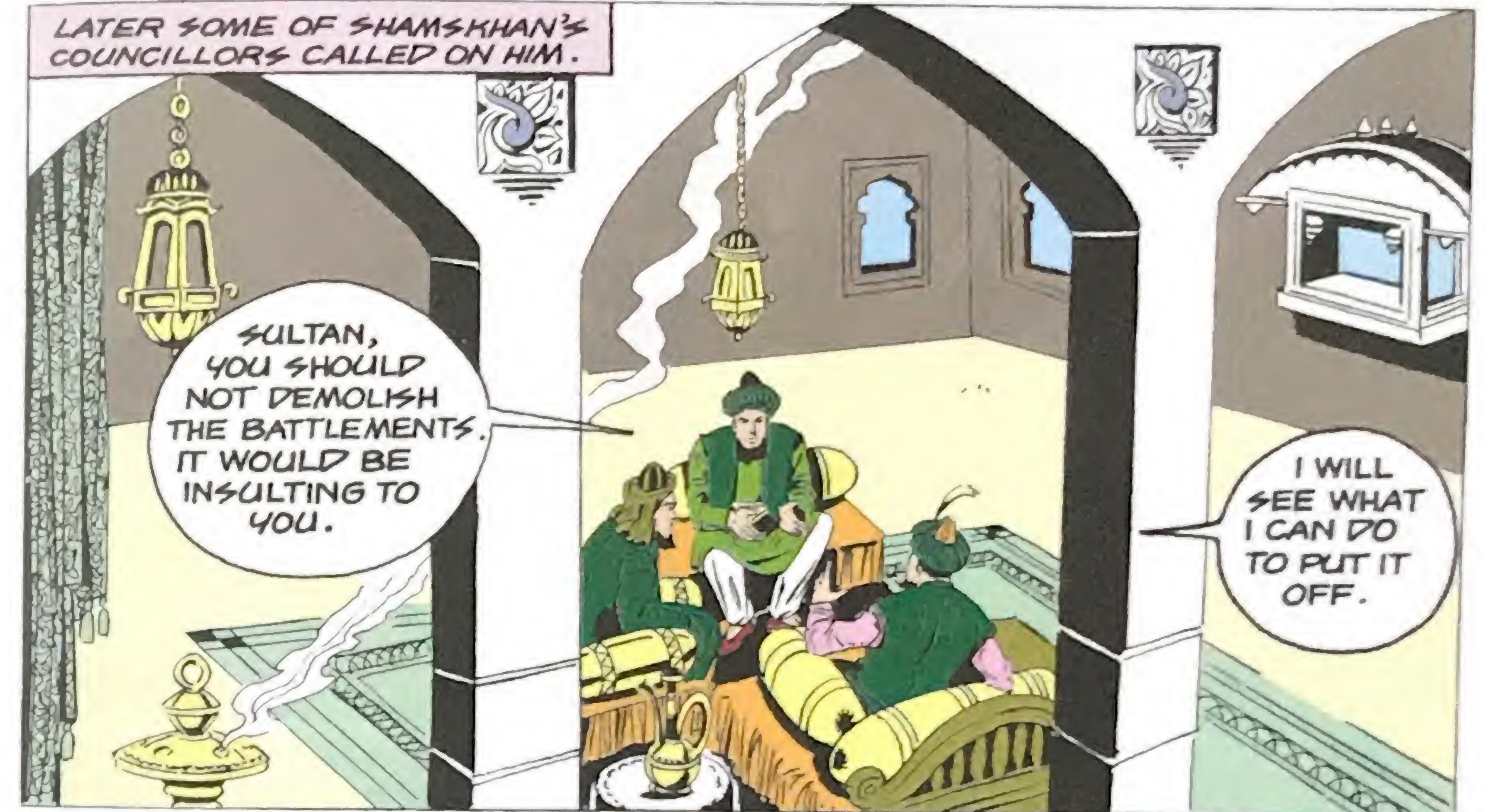
... KUMBHA ENTERED THE FORT IN TRIUMPH WITH SHAMSKHAN BY HIS SIDE.



KUMBHA PLACED SHAMSKHAN ON THE THRONE.



LATER SOME OF SHAMSKHAN'S COUNCILLORS CALLED ON HIM.

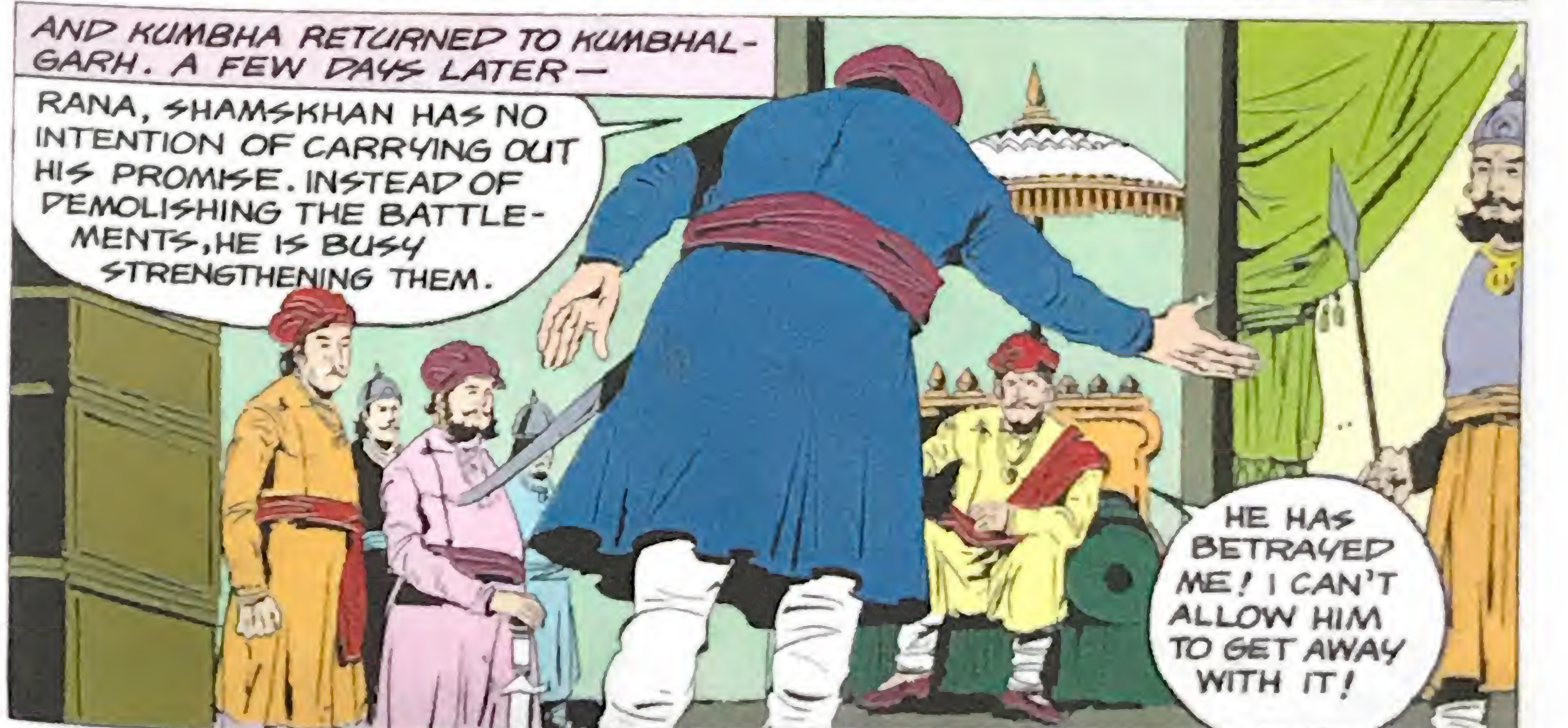


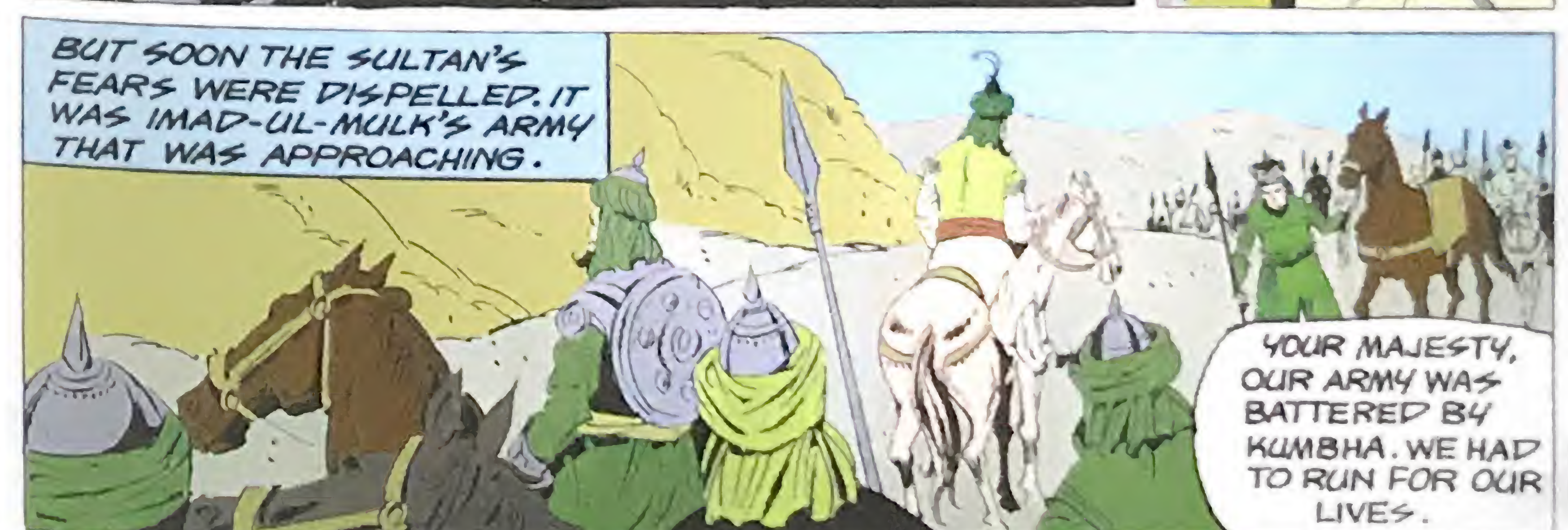
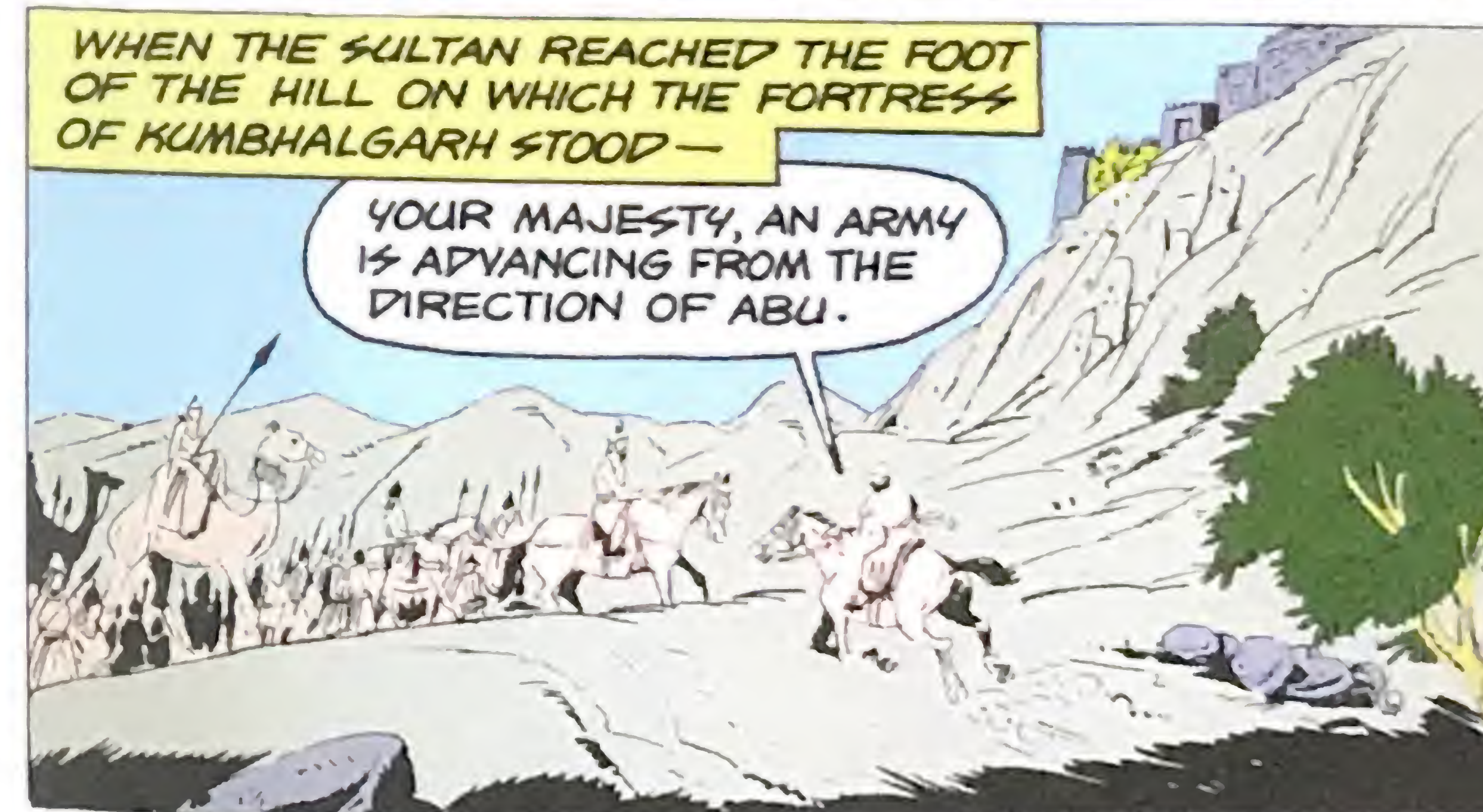
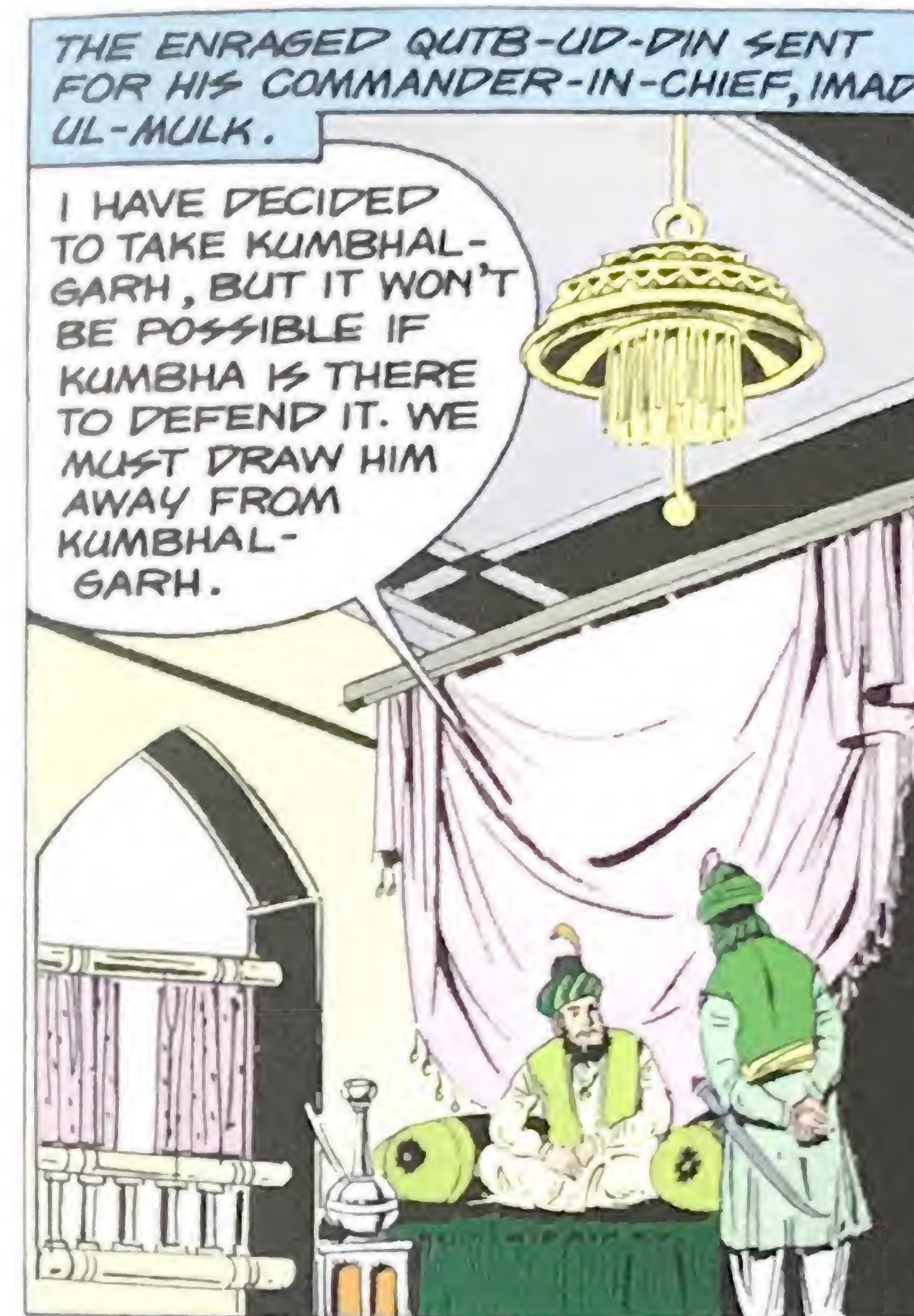
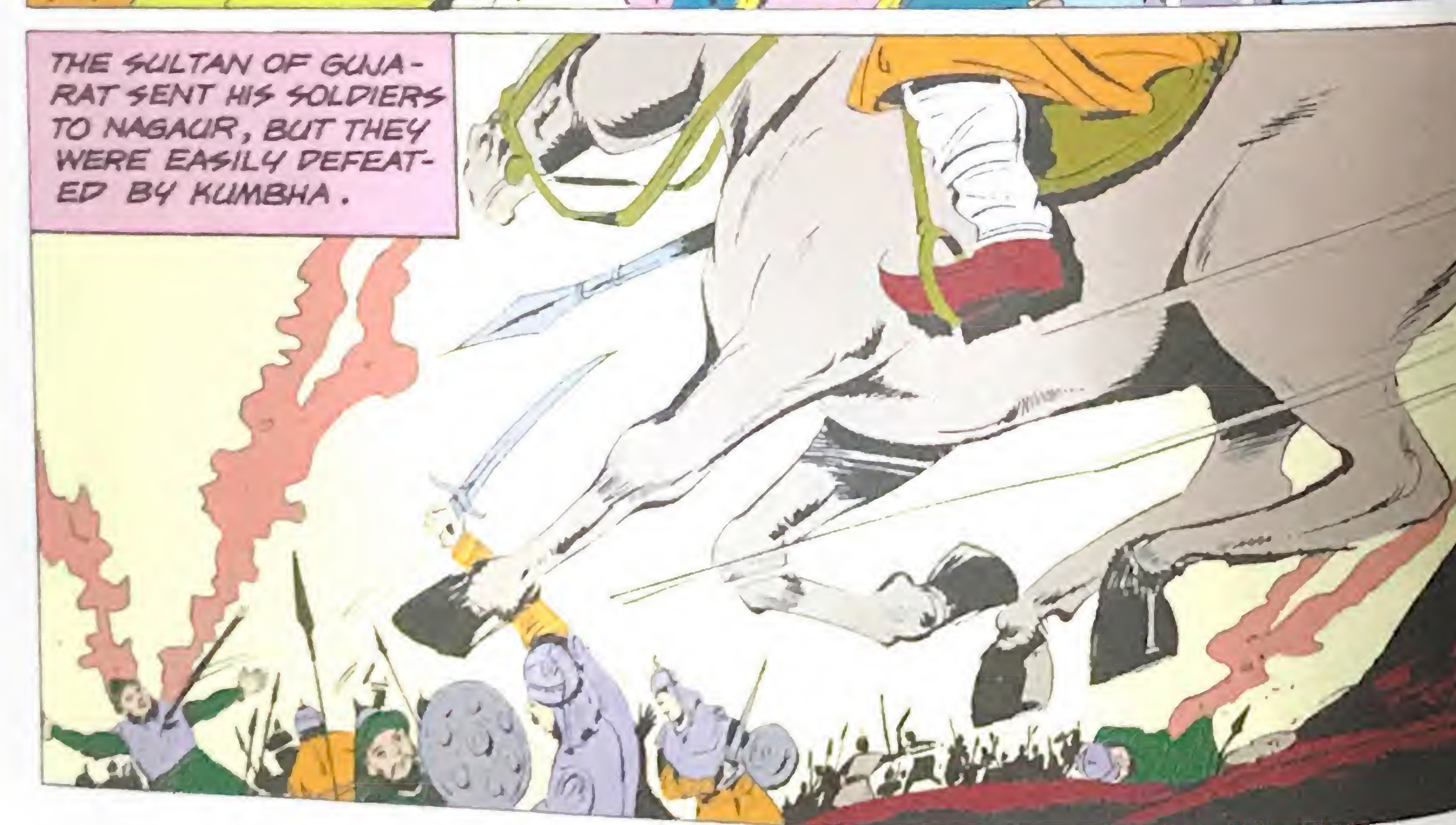
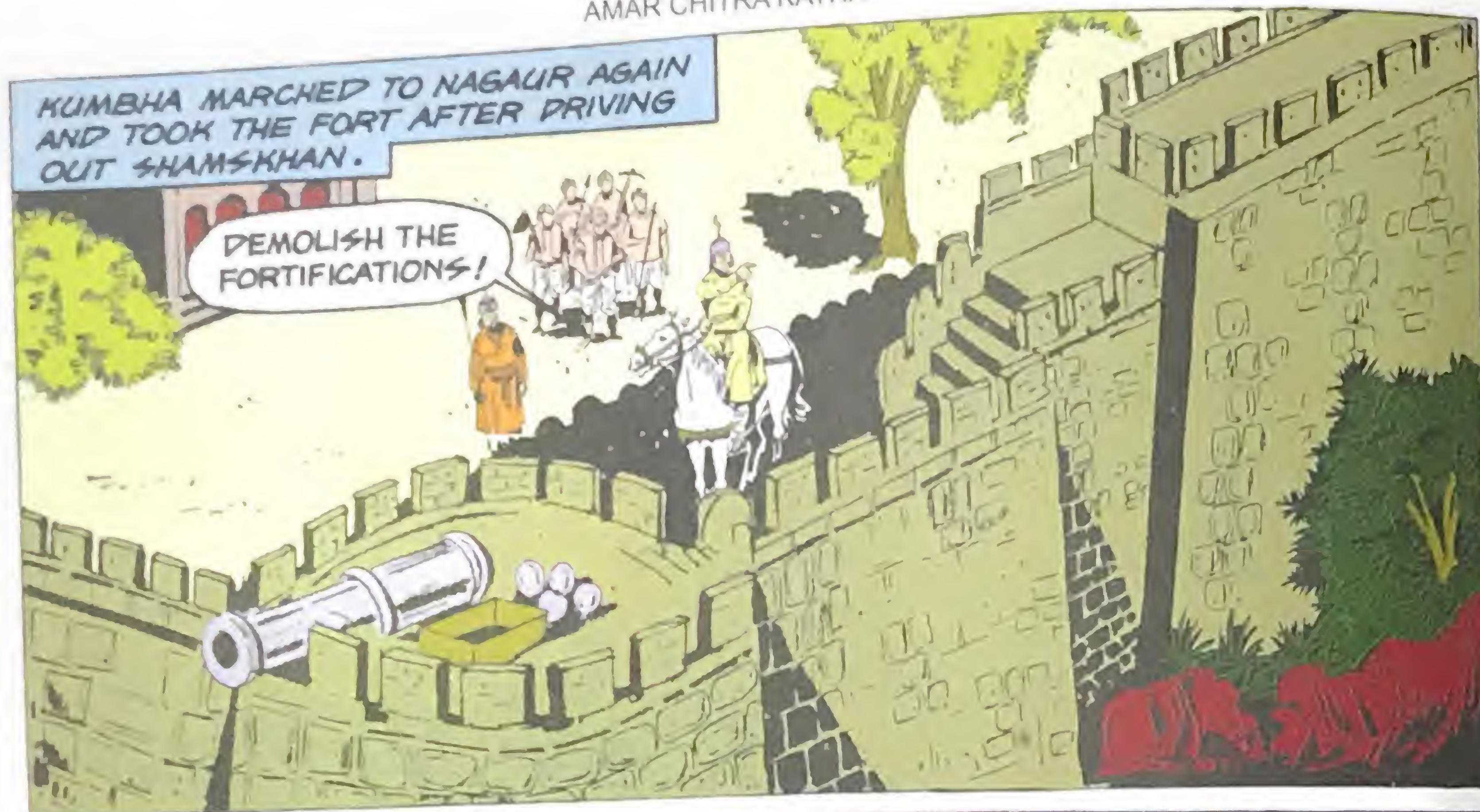
SHAMSKHAN CALLED ON KUMBHA.



AND KUMBHA RETURNED TO KUMBHAGARH. A FEW DAYS LATER—

RANA, SHAMSKHAN HAS NO INTENTION OF CARRYING OUT HIS PROMISE. INSTEAD OF DEMOLISHING THE BATTLEMENTS, HE IS BUSY STRENGTHENING THEM.







YOU DID WELL IN JOINING ME. WE'LL TAKE KUMBHALGARH WHILE KUMBHA IS BUSY CELEBRATING HIS VICTORY AT ABU.

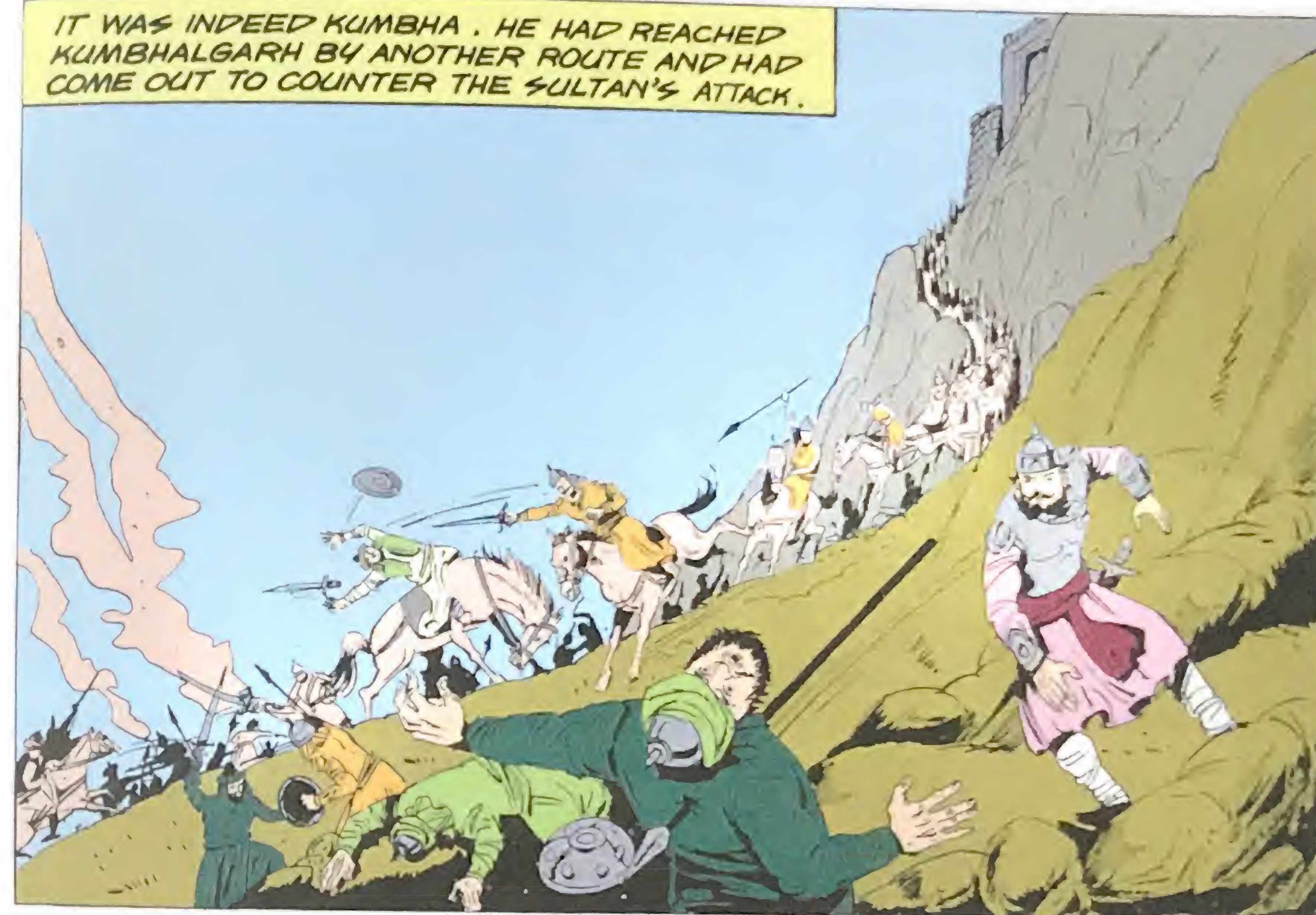


IT'S KUMBHA!

BUT AS THE SULTAN BEGAN TO CLIMB THE HILL WITH HIS ARMY —



IT WAS INDEED KUMBHA. HE HAD REACHED KUMBHALGARH BY ANOTHER ROUTE AND HAD COME OUT TO COUNTER THE SULTAN'S ATTACK.



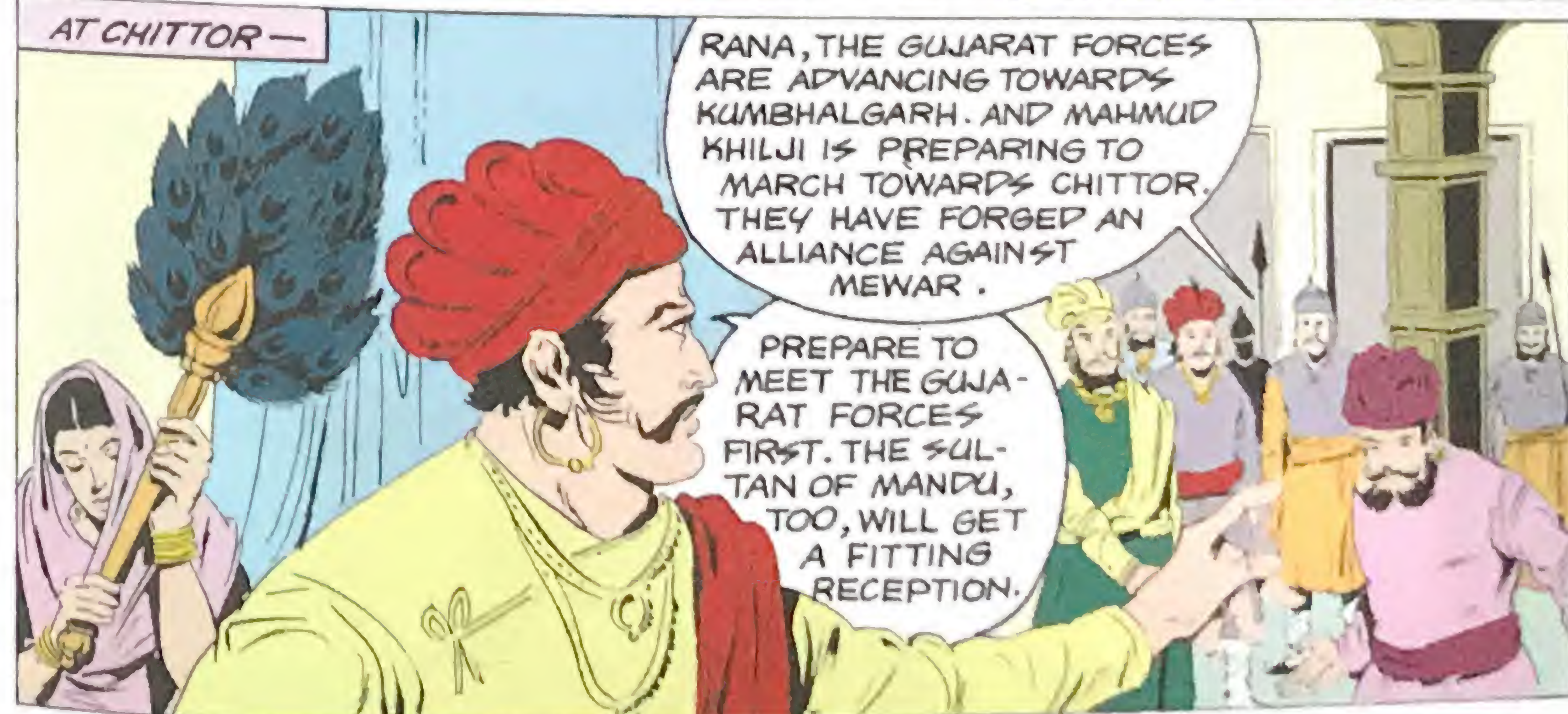
KUMBHA DEFEATED THE SULTAN OF GUJARAT WHO WAS FORCED TO RETRACE HIS STEPS. ON HIS WAY BACK —

SULTAN, I AM TEJ KHAN, THE PRIME MINISTER OF SULTAN KHILJI. IF THE FORCES OF MANDU AND GUJARAT JOIN HANDS, KUMBHA CAN BE EASILY DEFEATED.



I AM PREPARED TO ENTER INTO AN ALLIANCE WITH THE SULTAN OF MANDU.

AT CHITTOR —



RANA, THE GUJARAT FORCES ARE ADVANCING TOWARDS KUMBHALGARH. AND MAHMUD KHILJI IS PREPARING TO MARCH TOWARDS CHITTOR. THEY HAVE FORGED AN ALLIANCE AGAINST MEWAR.

PREPARE TO MEET THE GUJARAT FORCES FIRST. THE SULTAN OF MANDU, TOO, WILL GET A FITTING RECEPTION.

RANA KUMBHA'S FORCES MET THE ARMY OF GUJARAT AT MANDALGARH. IN THE BATTLE, THE RAJPUTS SUFFERED HEAVY LOSSES IN MEN AND EQUIPMENT.

MY MEN ARE FALLING.
WE MUST RETREAT —
AND NOW IS THE TIME
TO DO SO.



IN PITCH DARKNESS,
THEY RETREATED TO
A HILLY CAVERN.



THAT NIGHT RANA KUMBHA SPOKE TO HIS MEN.

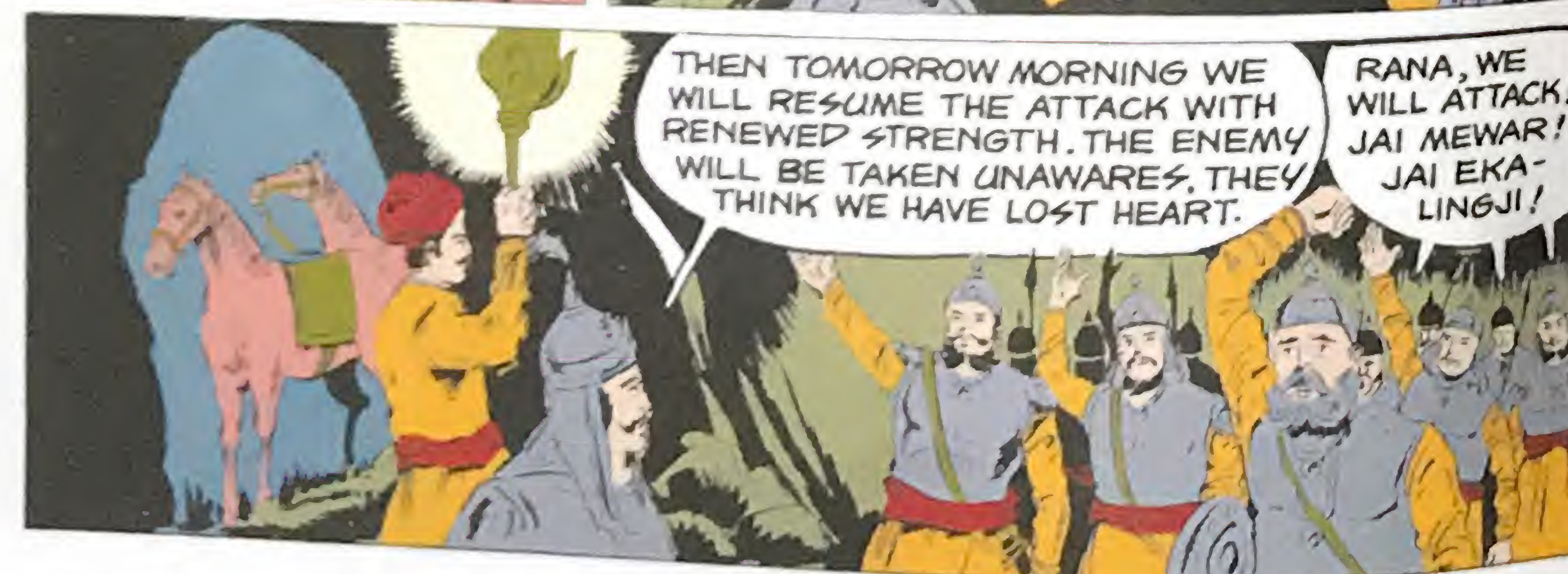
MY BRAVE MEN! IF WE
LOSE THIS BATTLE, THE
SULTAN OF MANDU WILL
OCCUPY CHITTOR
WHICH IS SACRED
TO US.

NO!
NEVER.

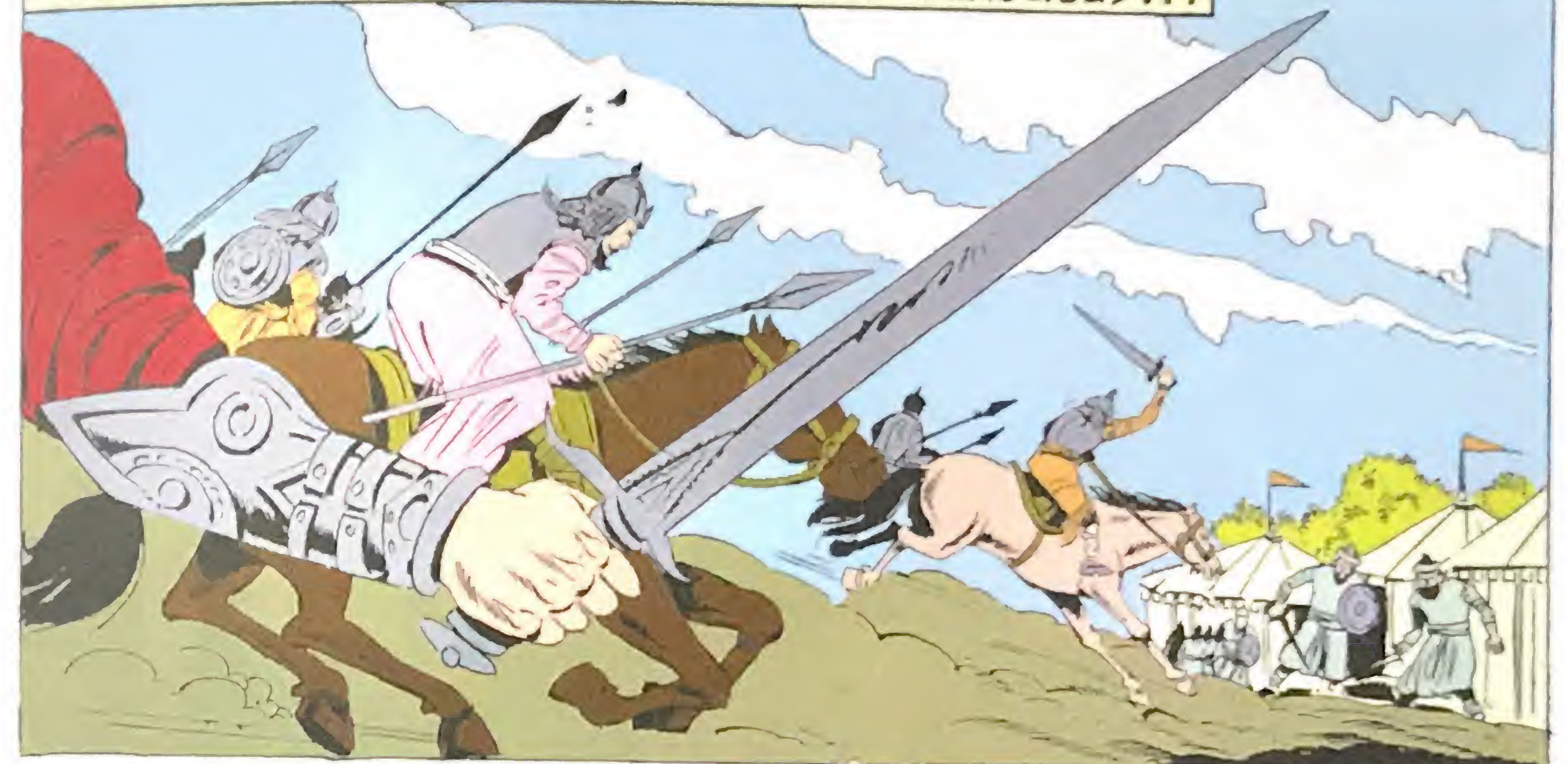


THEN TOMORROW MORNING WE
WILL RESUME THE ATTACK WITH
RENEWED STRENGTH. THE ENEMY
WILL BE TAKEN UNAWARES. THEY
THINK WE HAVE LOST HEART.

RANA, WE
WILL ATTACK!
JAI MEWAR!
JAI EKA-
LINGJI!



IN THE MORNING, THE RAJPUT ATTACK WAS SO FEROCIOUS...



... THAT THE GUJARAT FORCES
WERE DEFEATED.

JAI
EKALINGJI!

LONG LIVE
RANA KUMBHA!



MEANWHILE, THE SULTAN OF MANDU HAD LAID
SIEGE TO THE FORT OF CHITTOR.

SINCE THE BEST PART OF
KUMBHA'S ARMY MUST BE
WITH HIM, IT IS UNLIKELY
THAT THE FEW MEN LEFT IN
THE FORT CAN HOLD OUT
FOR LONG.



BUT HE WAS IN FOR A SURPRISE.

A CLOUD OF DUST IN THE EAST! COULD IT BE...?



THE SURPRISE ATTACK DEMORALISED THE FORCES OF MANDU.



I HAVE TRIED TIME AND AGAIN TO DEFEAT THE RANA. HE IS INVINCIBLE. I HAVE TO ACCEPT THIS BITTER TRUTH.



THEN THE SULTAN OF MANDU CALLED OUT TO HIS MEN.

TURN AROUND, MY MEN! RETREAT!



RANA KUMBHA WATCHED CONTENTEDLY AS THE SULTAN'S ARMY RETREATED.

HE WON'T TROUBLE US AGAIN. BUT EVEN IF HE DOES, WHAT DOES IT MATTER? AS LONG AS OUR PEOPLE ARE VIGILANT, THERE CAN BE NO THREAT TO OUR INDEPENDENCE.

