



No. 258

THE SECRET OF THE TALKING BIRD



A FOLKTALE FROM KARNATAKA

There are many who love to tell a story and many more who love to listen to one. And each time a story is retold, it acquires a new colour and a fresh dimension.

The grandmother who heard a story as a little girl from her grandmother, tells the same story to her grandchild but with a few embellishments of her own. The traveller from a distant land who happens to hear a story in the course of his travels, later tells it to his own people, modifying it to make it more dramatic or more acceptable to his audience. That is how stories which had first been told centuries ago have been kept alive and why we find recurring themes in the tales told in different regions separated by hundreds of miles.

This Amar Chitra Katha retells the folktale MATANADUVA GILI MATTU BEDARA HUDUGA, originally narrated in Kannada by Dr. Chandrashekar Kambar

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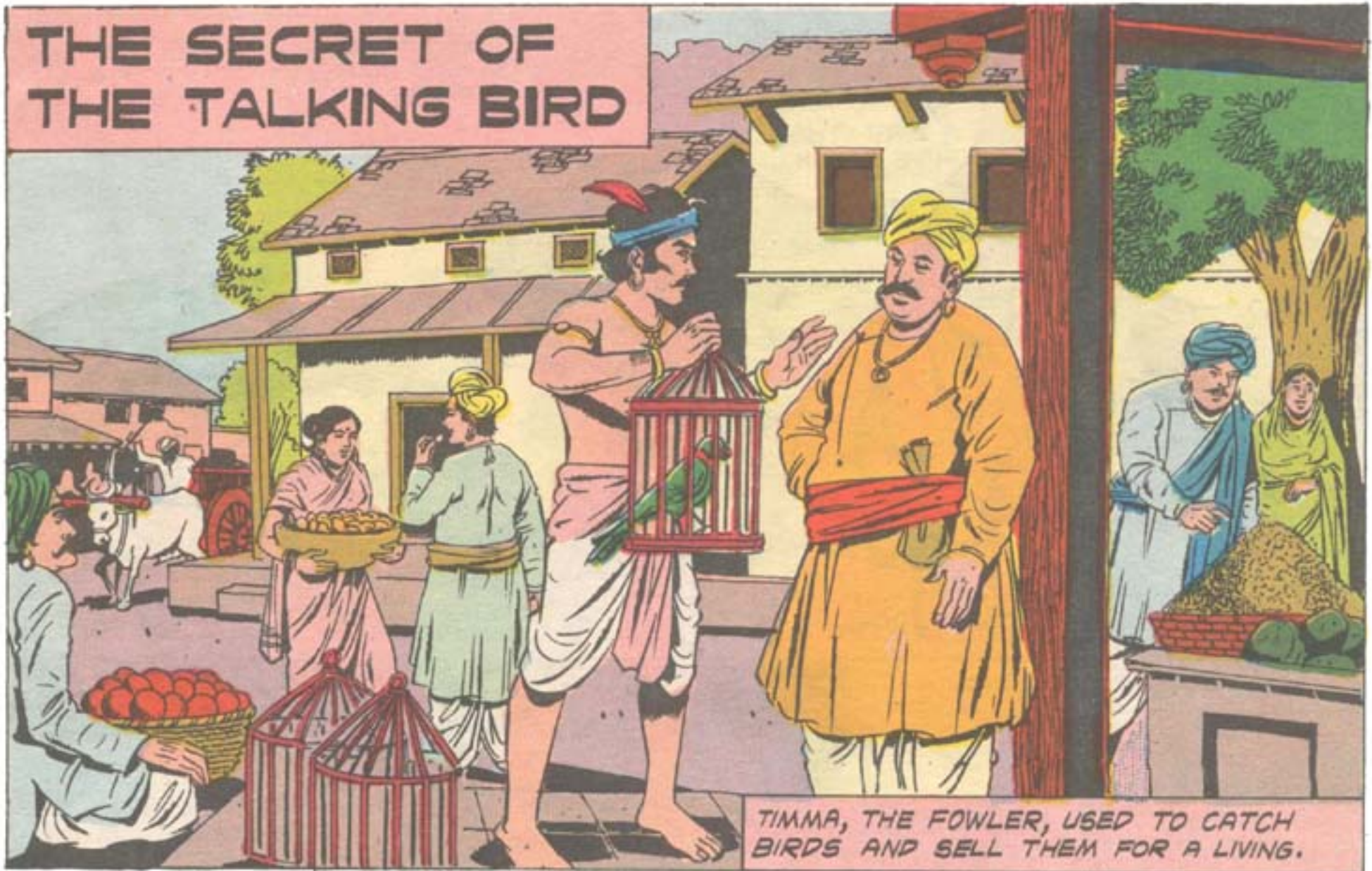
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Published by H.G. Mirchandani for India Book House Education Trust, Rusi Mansion, 29 Nathalal Parekh Marg, Bombay 400 039 and printed by him at IBH Printers, Marol Naka, Mathuradas Vissanji Road, Andheri (East), Bombay-400 059.

Editor : Anant Pai Script: Subba Rao Artworks : Dilip Kadam

THE SECRET OF THE TALKING BIRD



TIMMA, THE FOWLER, USED TO CATCH BIRDS AND SELL THEM FOR A LIVING.

ONE EVENING—

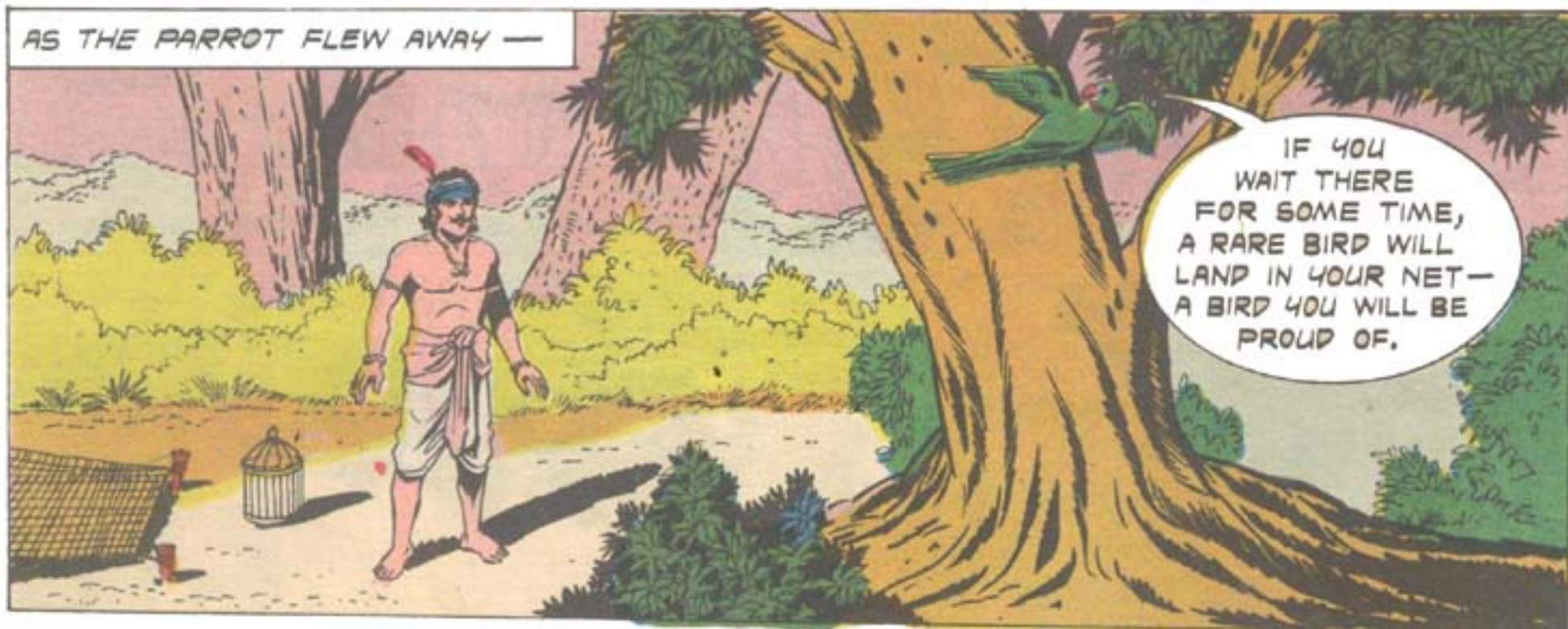


WHEN TIMMA WAS ABOUT TO TRANSFER THE PARROT TO THE CAGE—





AS THE PARROT FLEW AWAY —

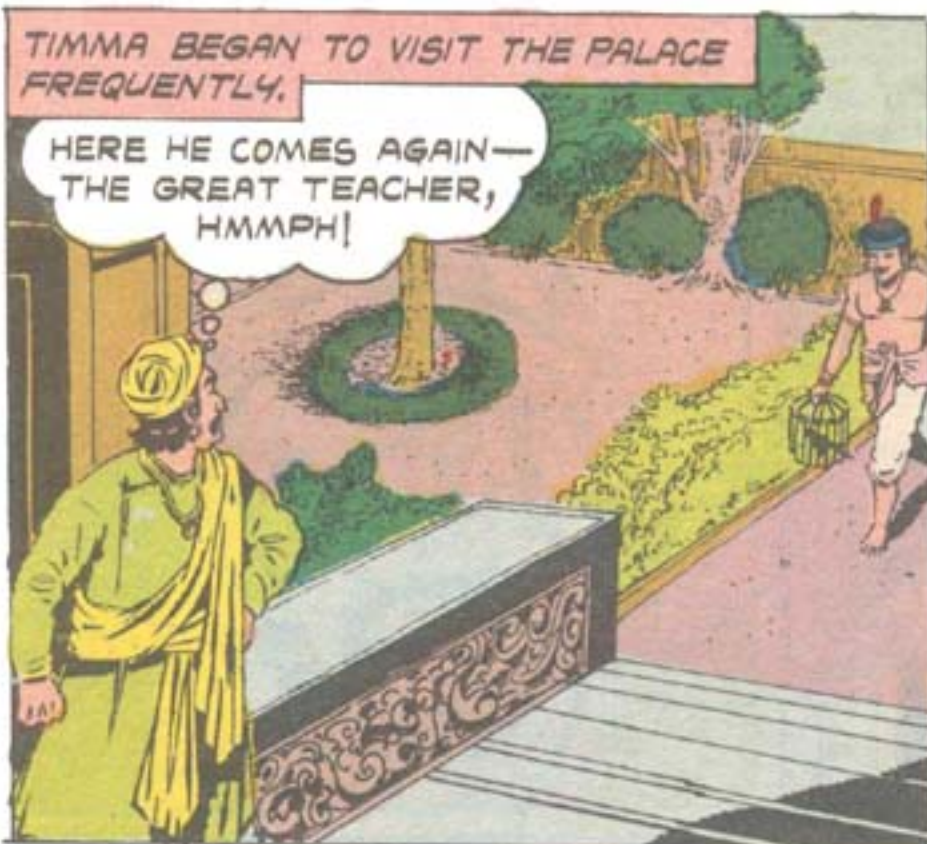


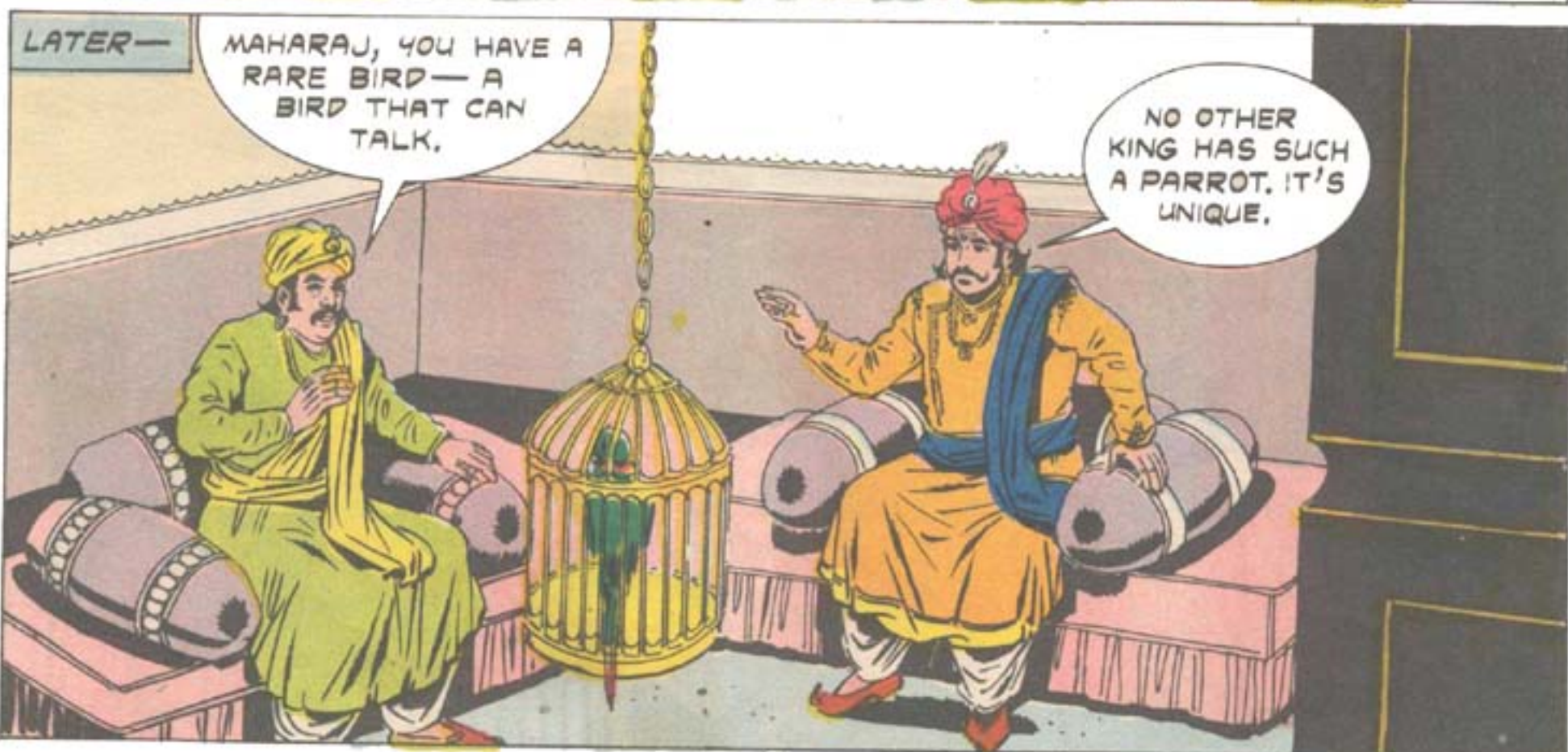
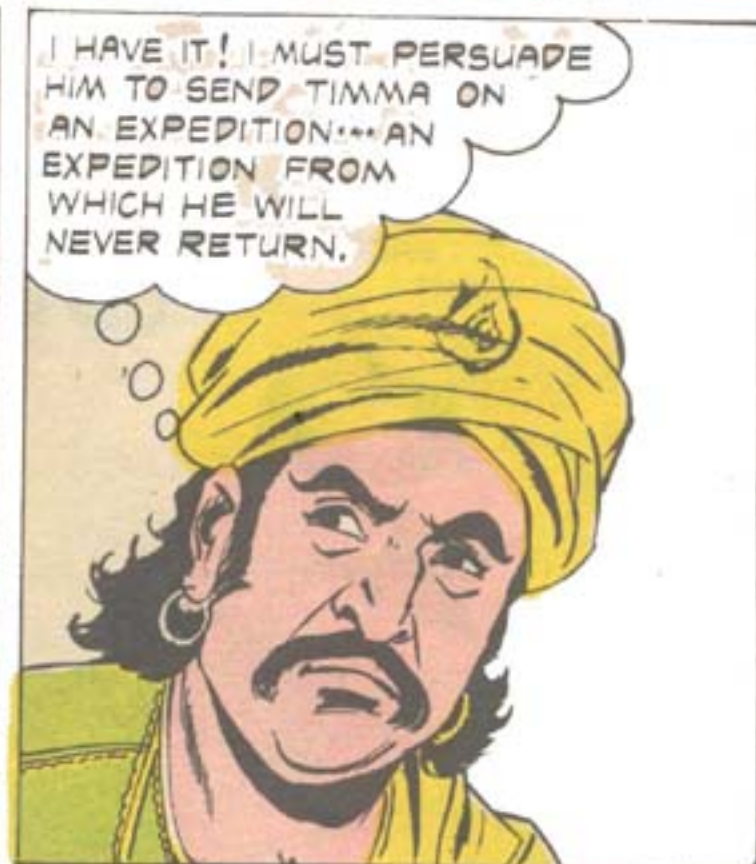
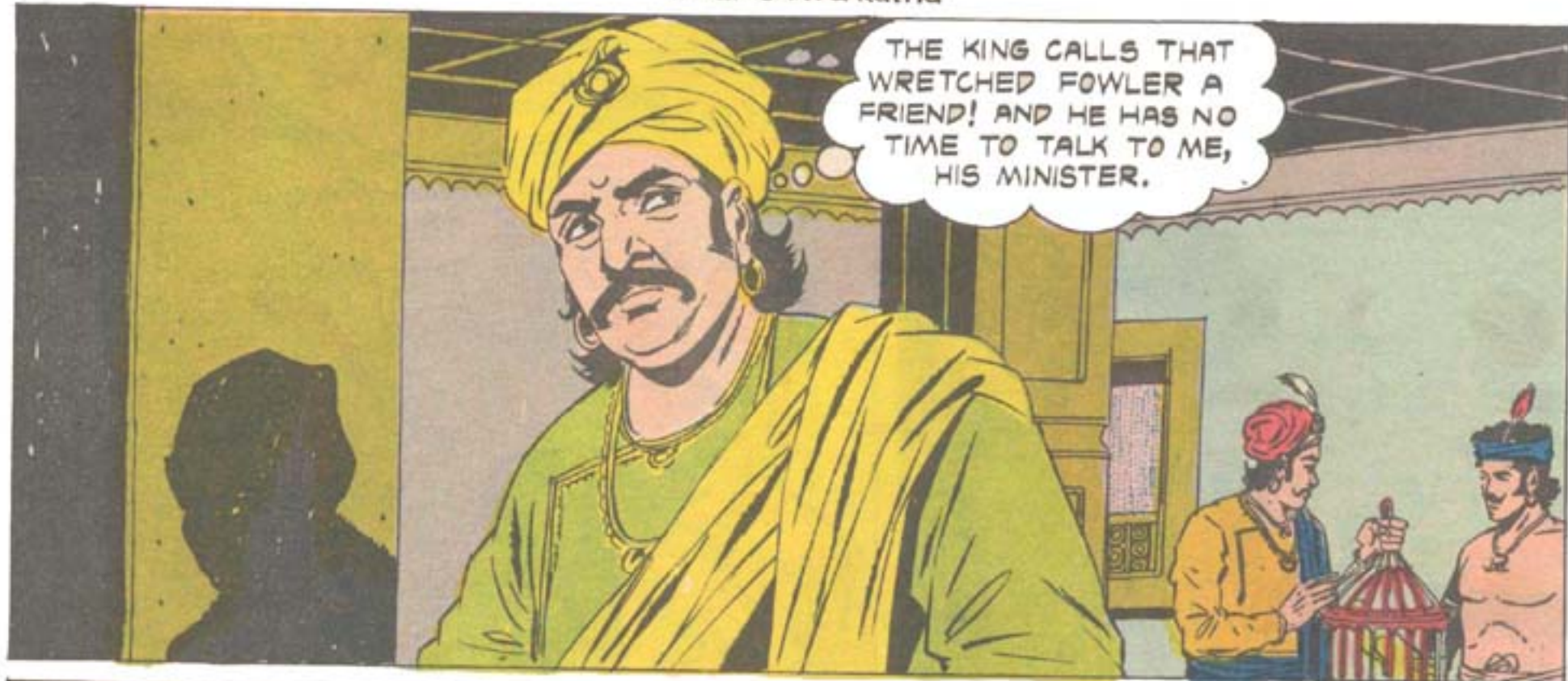
TIMMA TOOK THE PARROT'S ADVICE AND WAITED FOR ANOTHER BIRD TO COME HIS WAY. A SHORT WHILE LATER —

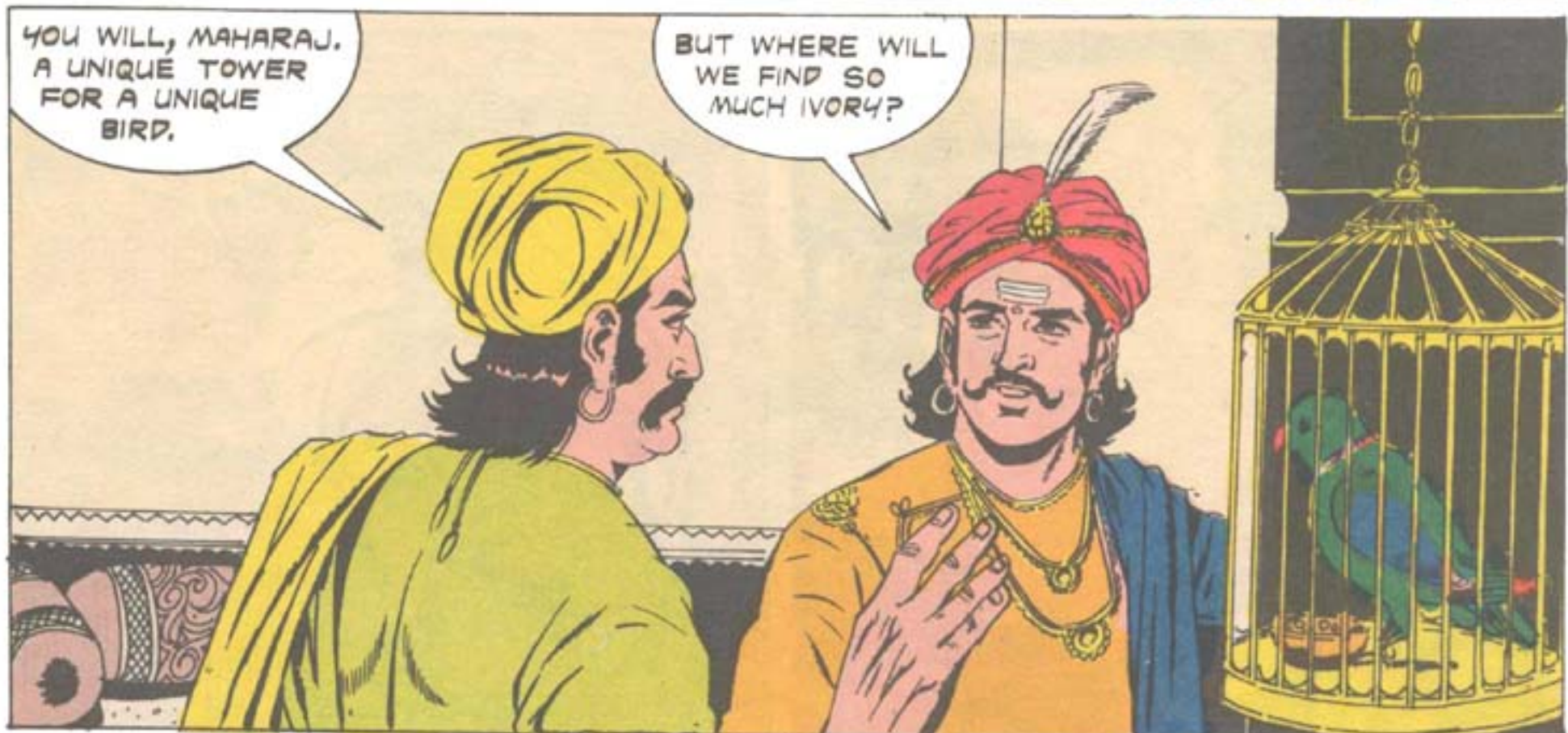
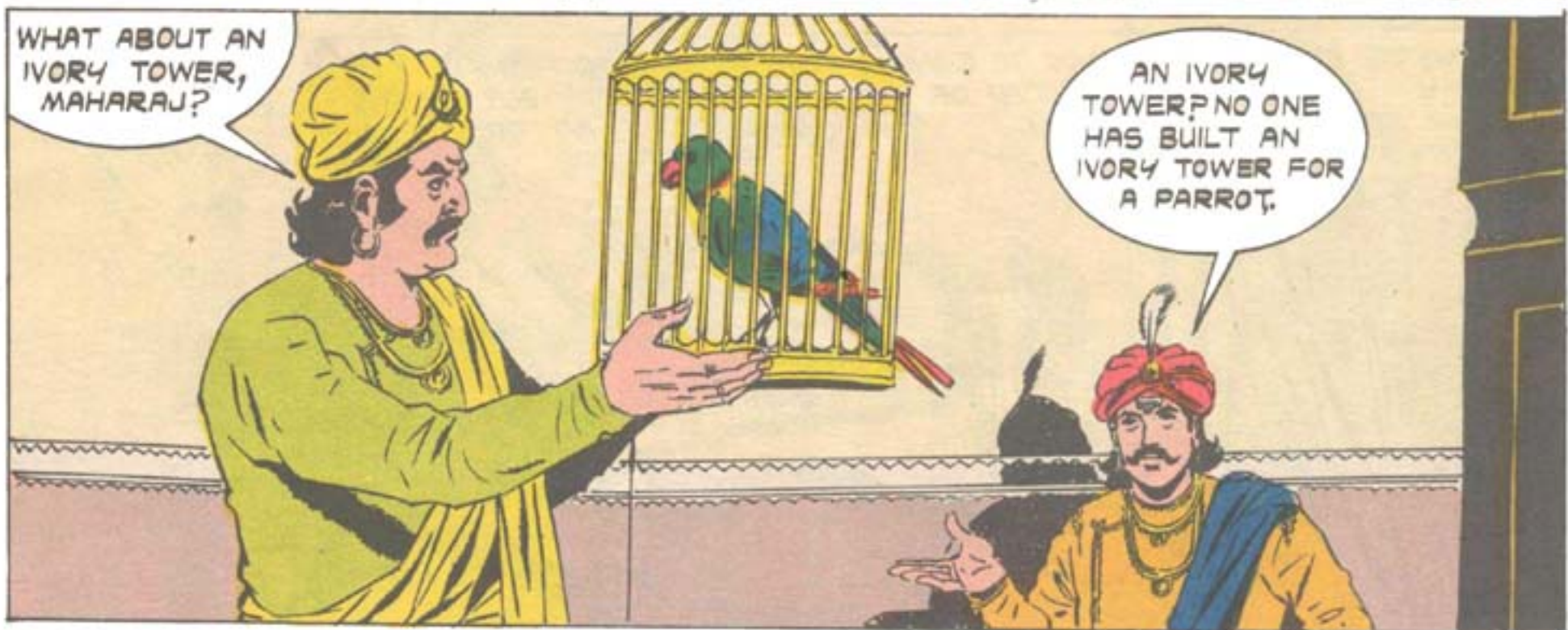


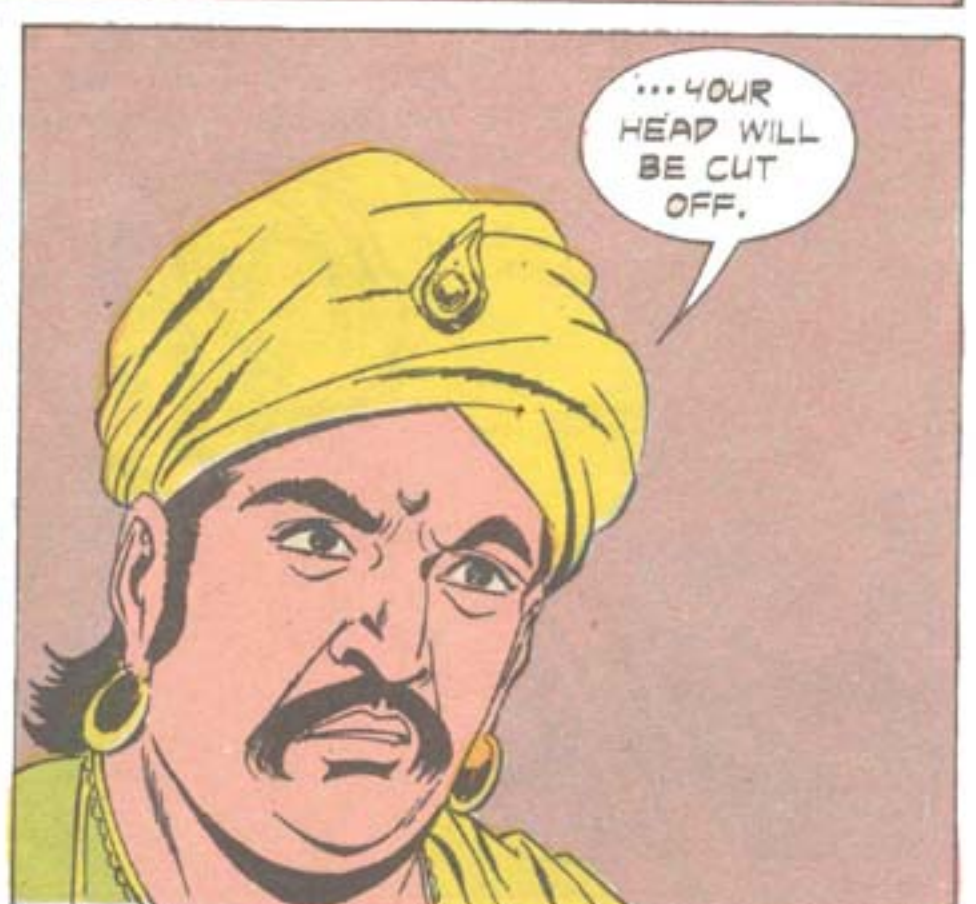
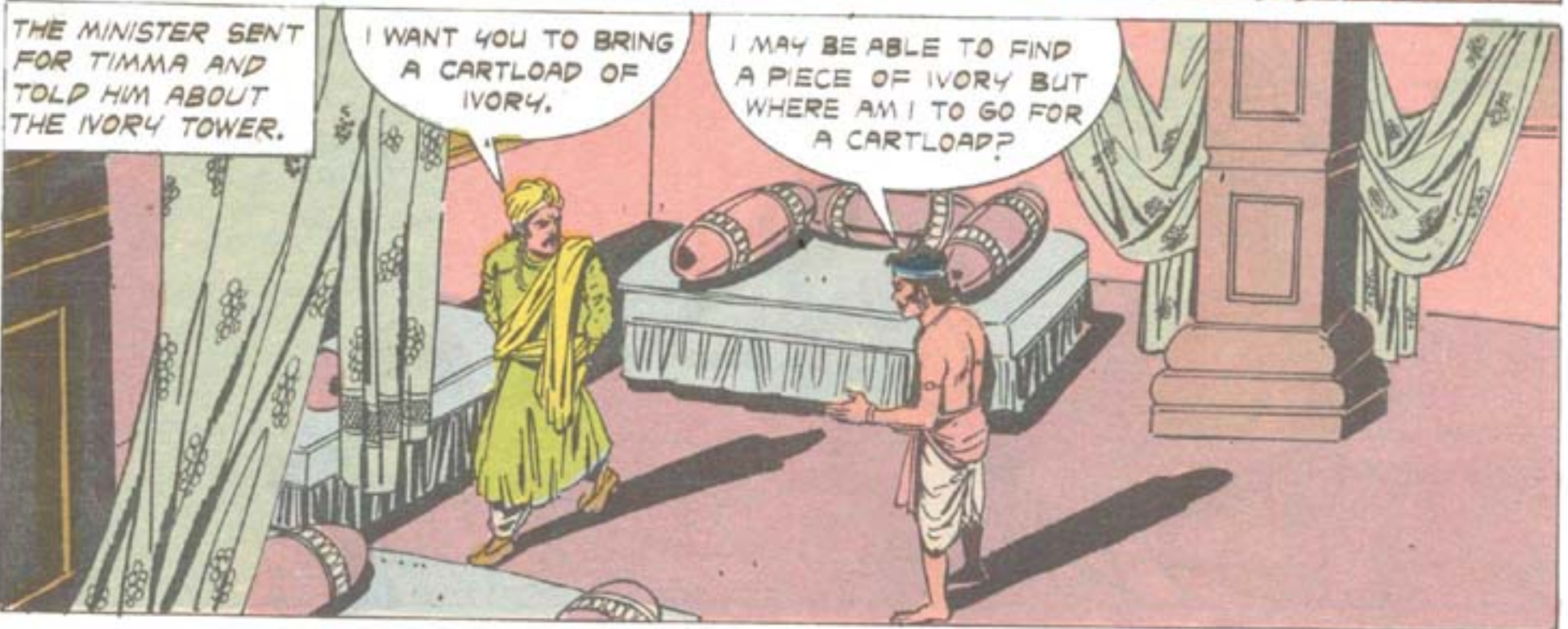
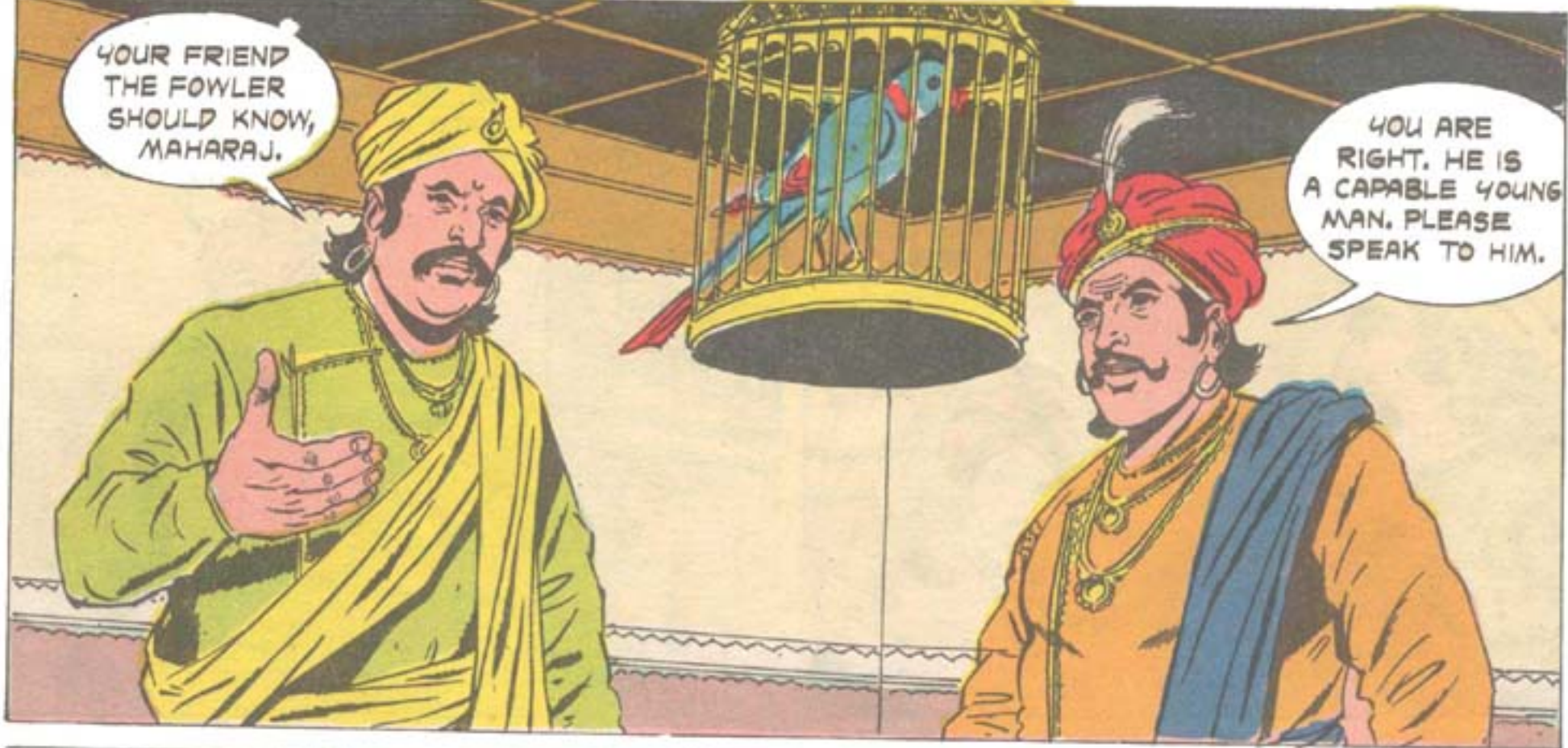




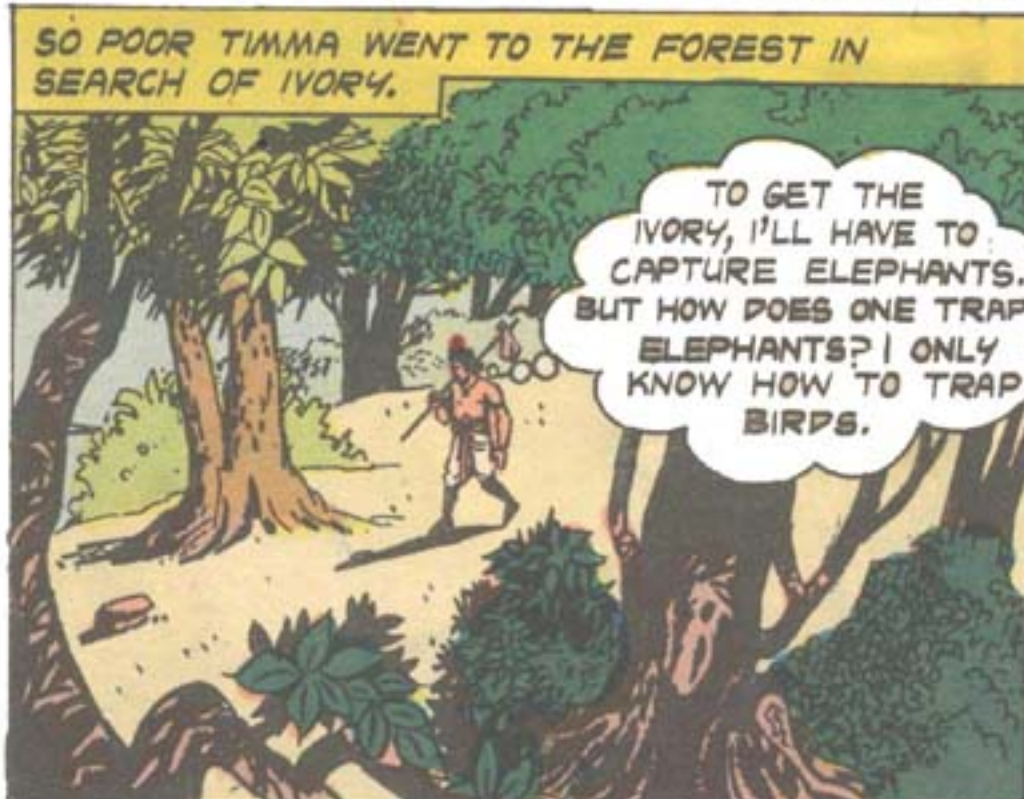




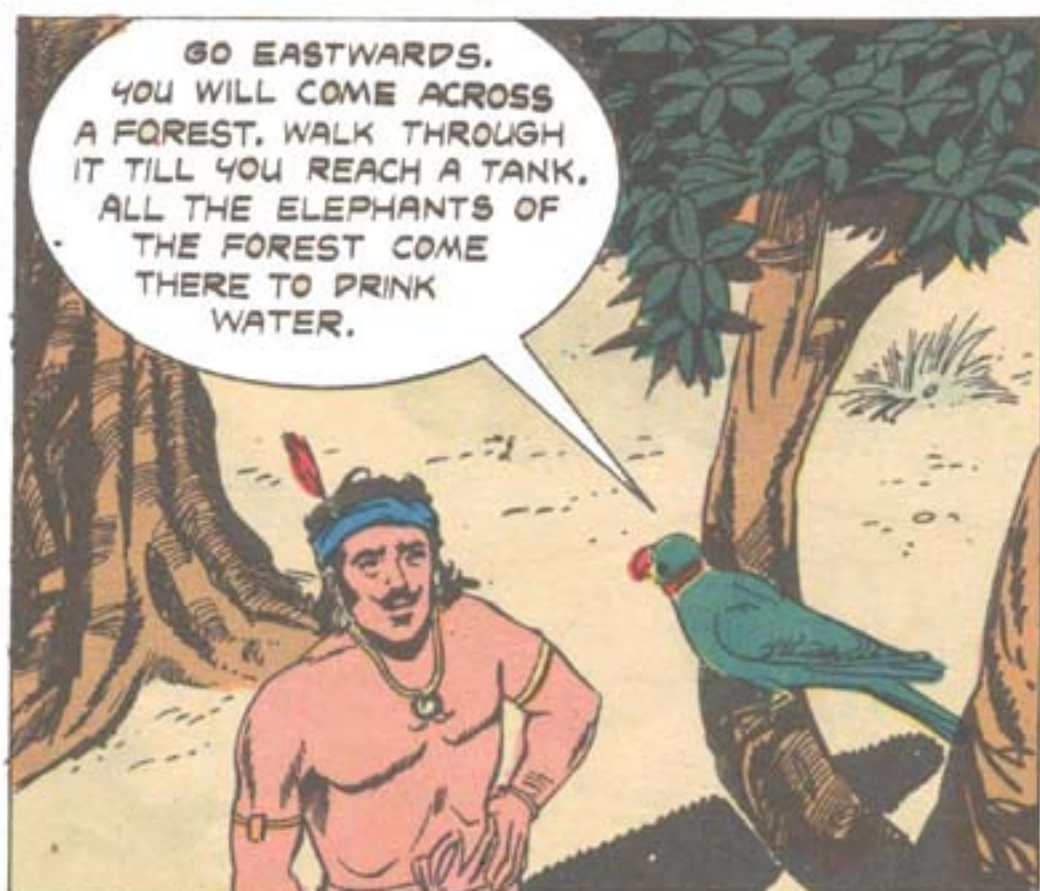




SO POOR TIMMA WENT TO THE FOREST IN SEARCH OF IVORY.



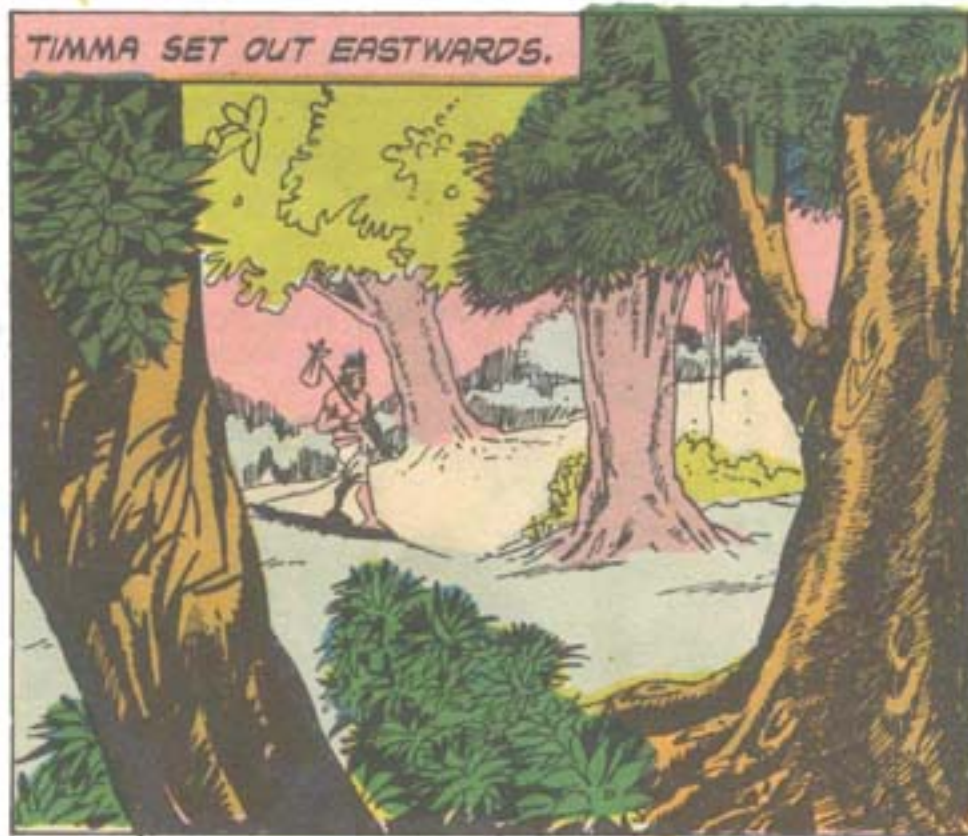
TIMMA TOLD THE BIRD ALL ABOUT THE TOWER OF IVORY.



SPEAK TO THE KING
ELEPHANT. HE WILL
HELP YOU.



TIMMA SET OUT EASTWARDS.



TOWARDS NOON HE CAME UPON THE TANK.
HE COULD SEE THE ELEPHANTS
FROLICKING IN THE WATER.

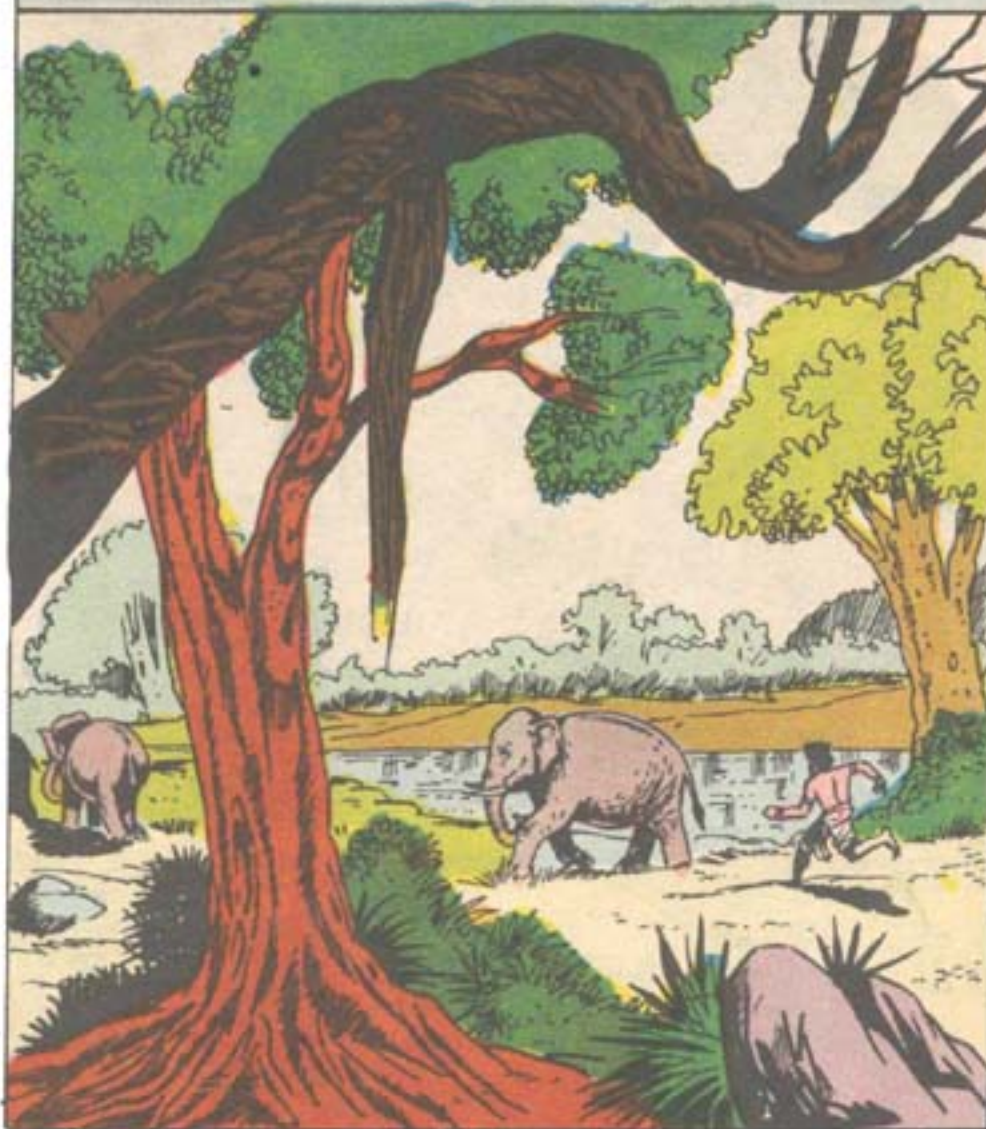


IN THE EVENING AS THE ELEPHANTS LEFT THE TANK —

THAT OLD ONE
MUST BE THEIR
KING.



TIMMA RAN UP TO THE OLD ELEPHANT...



...AND FELL AT HIS FEET.

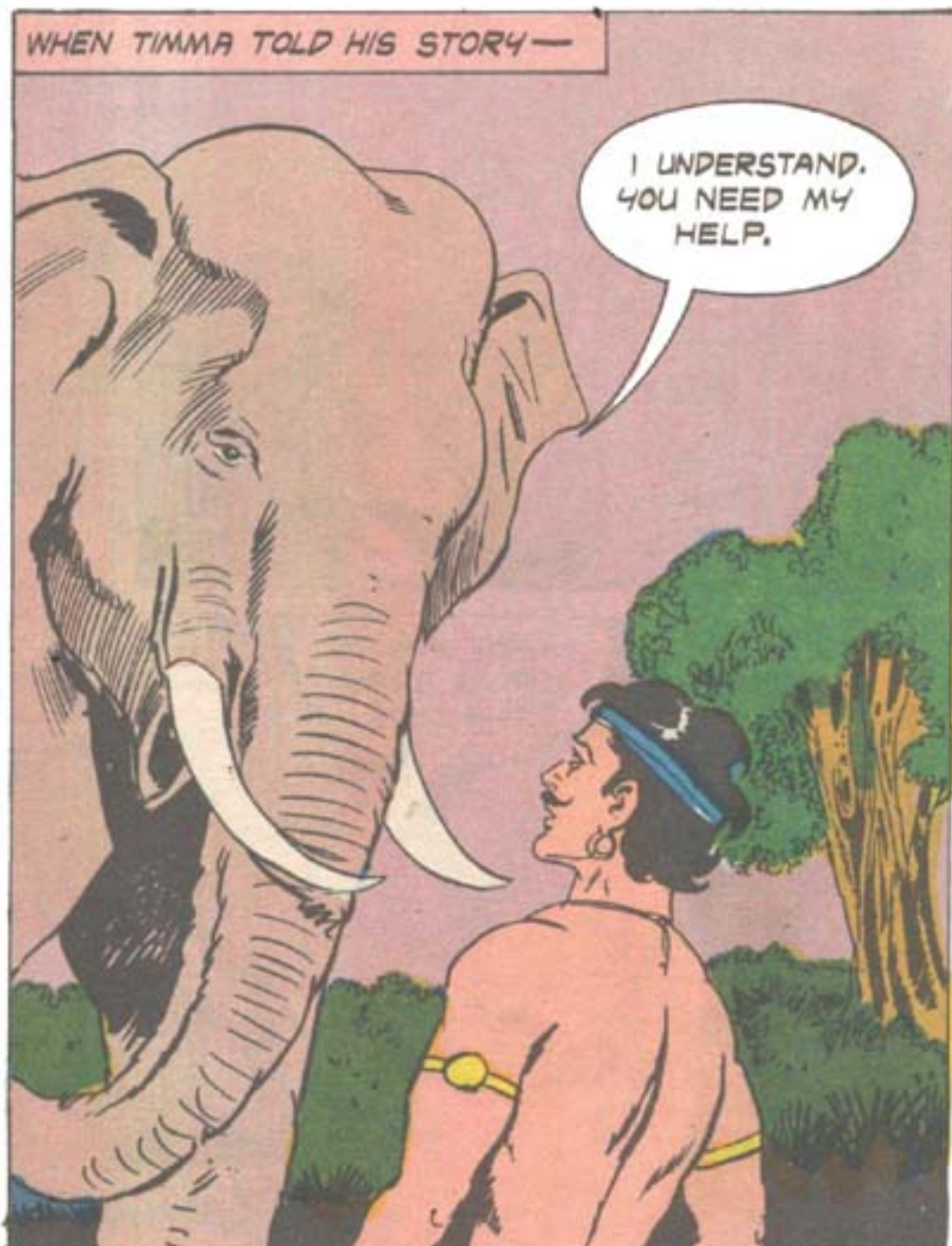


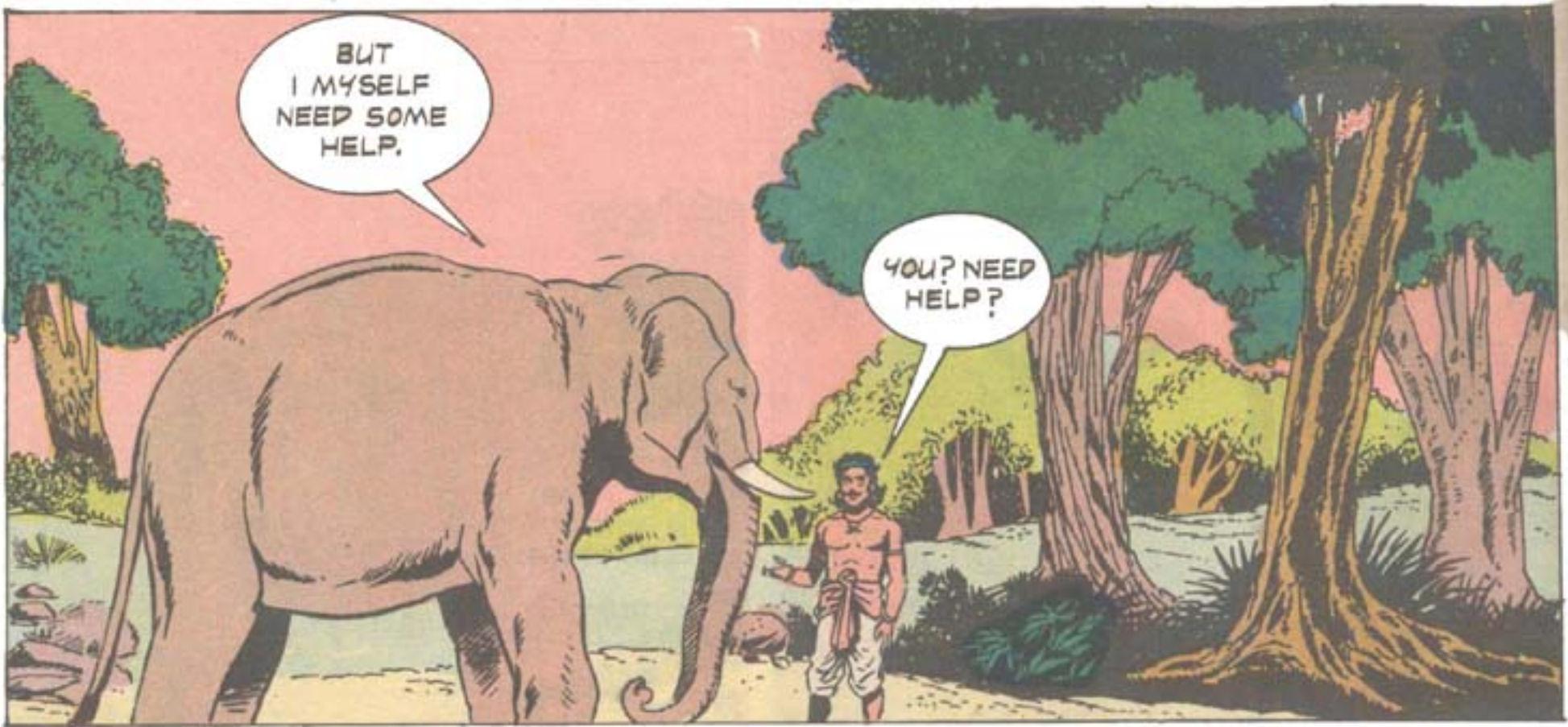
STAND UP, CHILD.
WHO ARE YOU?
WHAT DO YOU
WANT?



WHEN TIMMA TOLD HIS STORY—

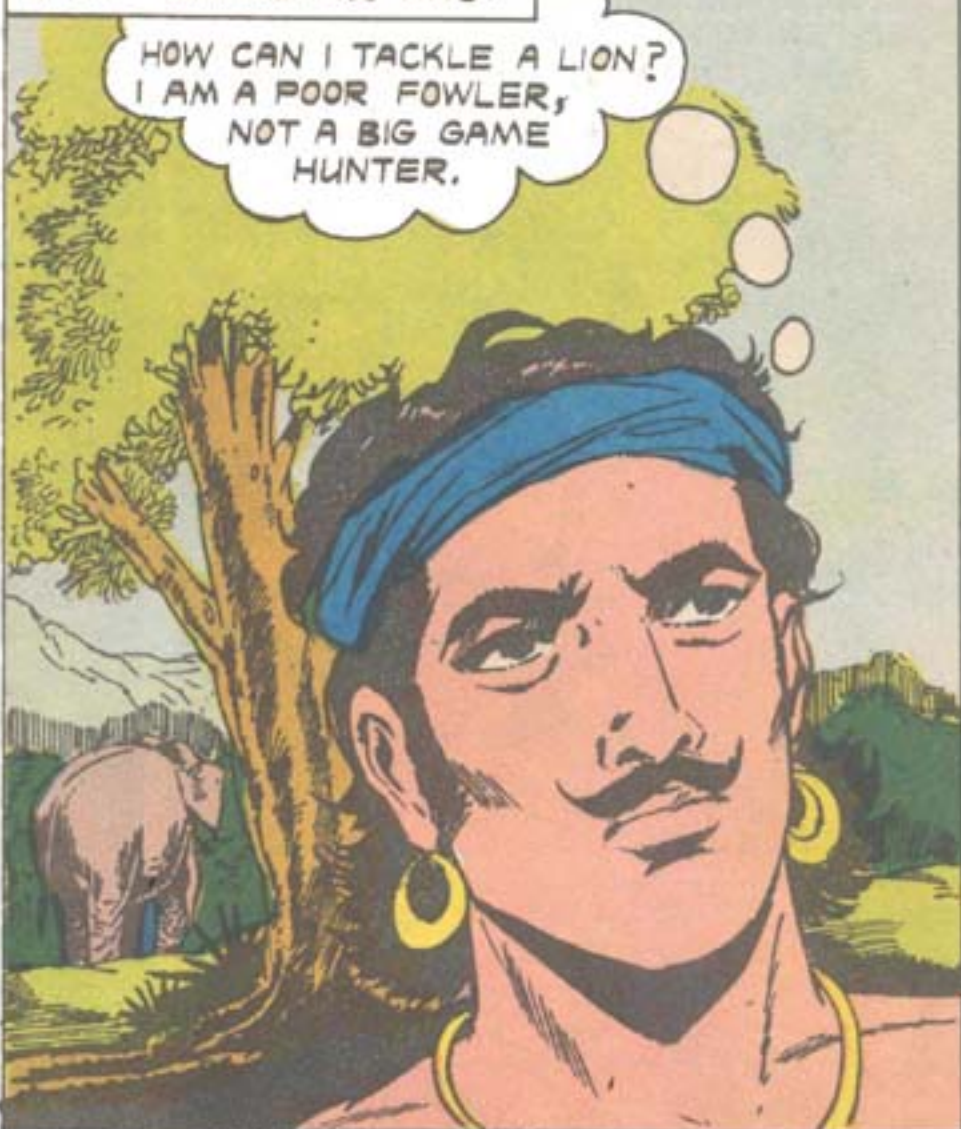
I UNDERSTAND.
YOU NEED MY
HELP.







THE ELEPHANT LEFT, BUT TIMMA
STOOD WHERE HE WAS.



AS HE BENT DOWN TO TAKE THE WATER IN HIS
PALMS—



I DON'T HAVE
TO BE A BIG GAME
HUNTER TO HANDLE
THAT LION,

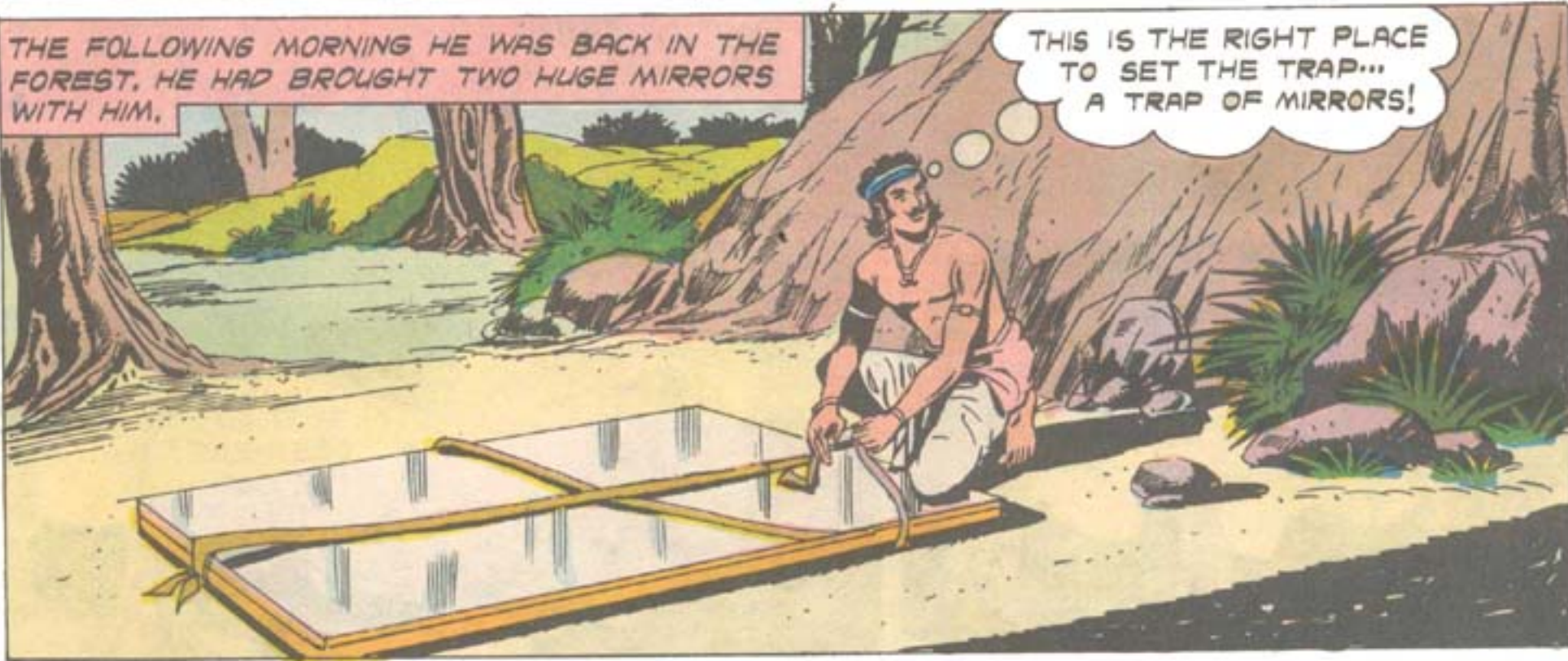


TIMMA QUICKLY QUENCHED HIS THIRST AND THEN SET
OUT FOR HIS CITY.



THE FOLLOWING MORNING HE WAS BACK IN THE
FOREST. HE HAD BROUGHT TWO HUGE MIRRORS
WITH HIM.

THIS IS THE RIGHT PLACE
TO SET THE TRAP...
A TRAP OF MIRRORS!



TIMMA PLACED THE MIRRORS OPPOSITE EACH OTHER.

HAH! NOW
I AM READY TO
RECEIVE THE
KING OF THE
JUNGLE.



FEELING ABSOLUTELY CONFIDENT, HE SAT DOWN AND BEGAN TO SING.

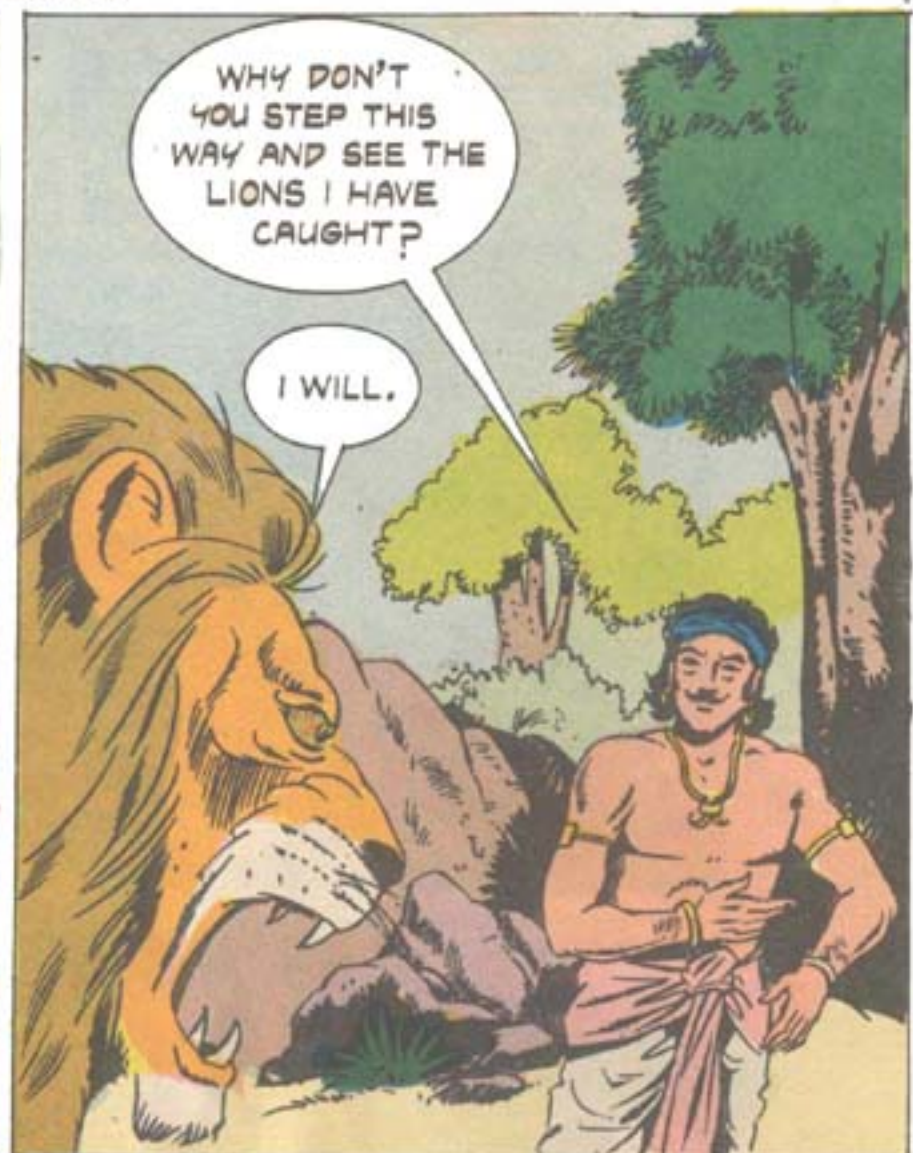
TARA
LA...LA...
LA.

SOON HE HAD COMPANY.

G-R-R-R!

YOUNG MAN, EVEN VETERAN
GAME HUNTERS RUN AWAY
WHEN THEY SEE ME.
AREN'T YOU
SCARED?

SCARED? WHO, ME PHAH!
DO YOU KNOW TO
WHOM YOU ARE
TALKING?



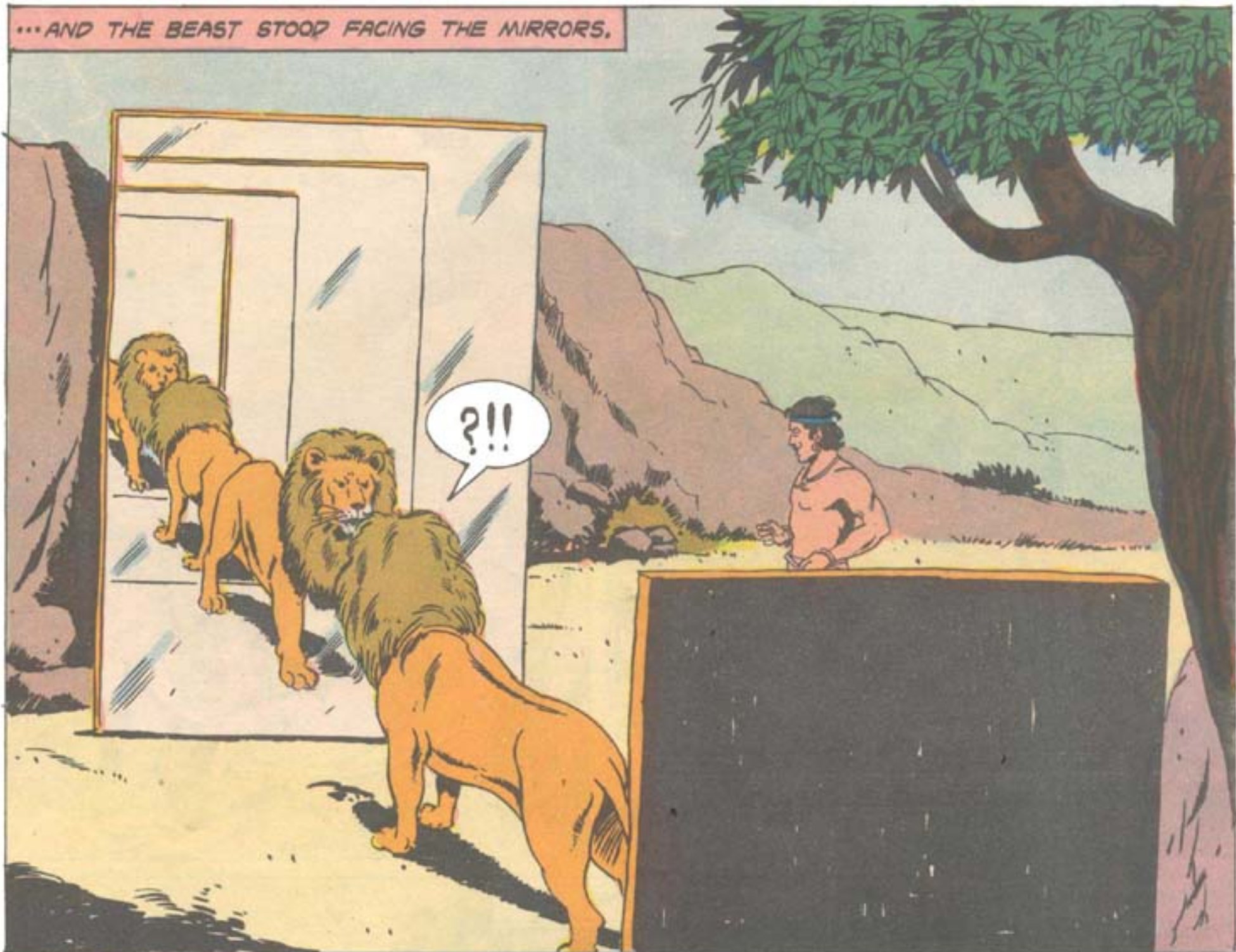
AS THE LION LEAPT TOWARDS HIM...



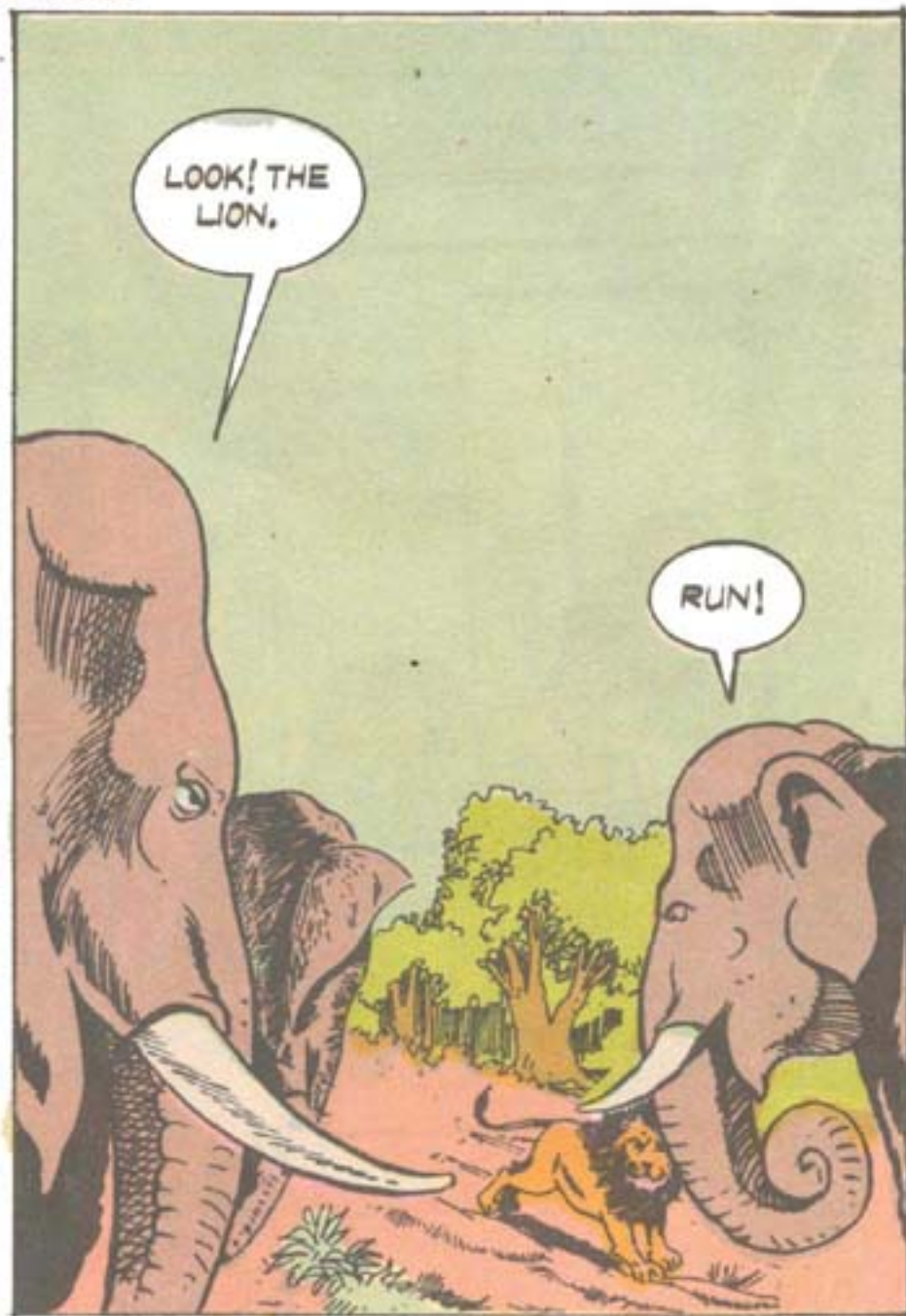
...TIMMA DEFTLY STEPPED ASIDE...



...AND THE BEAST STOOD FACING THE MIRRORS.



WITHOUT A MOMENT'S DELAY THE LION FLED.



EVEN AS THE ELEPHANTS MADE WAY, THE LION SPED BY...



...AND DISAPPEARED.

NEVER AGAIN WILL HE BE SEEN IN THIS FOREST.

THANK YOU, MY FRIEND. AND NOW I SHALL KEEP MY PART OF THE BARGAIN. COME WITH ME.



THE KING ELEPHANT TOOK TIMMA TO A CAVE.

LOOK, THOSE ARE THE SKELETONS OF ELEPHANTS KILLED BY THE LION. YOU MAY TAKE ALL THE TUSKS.



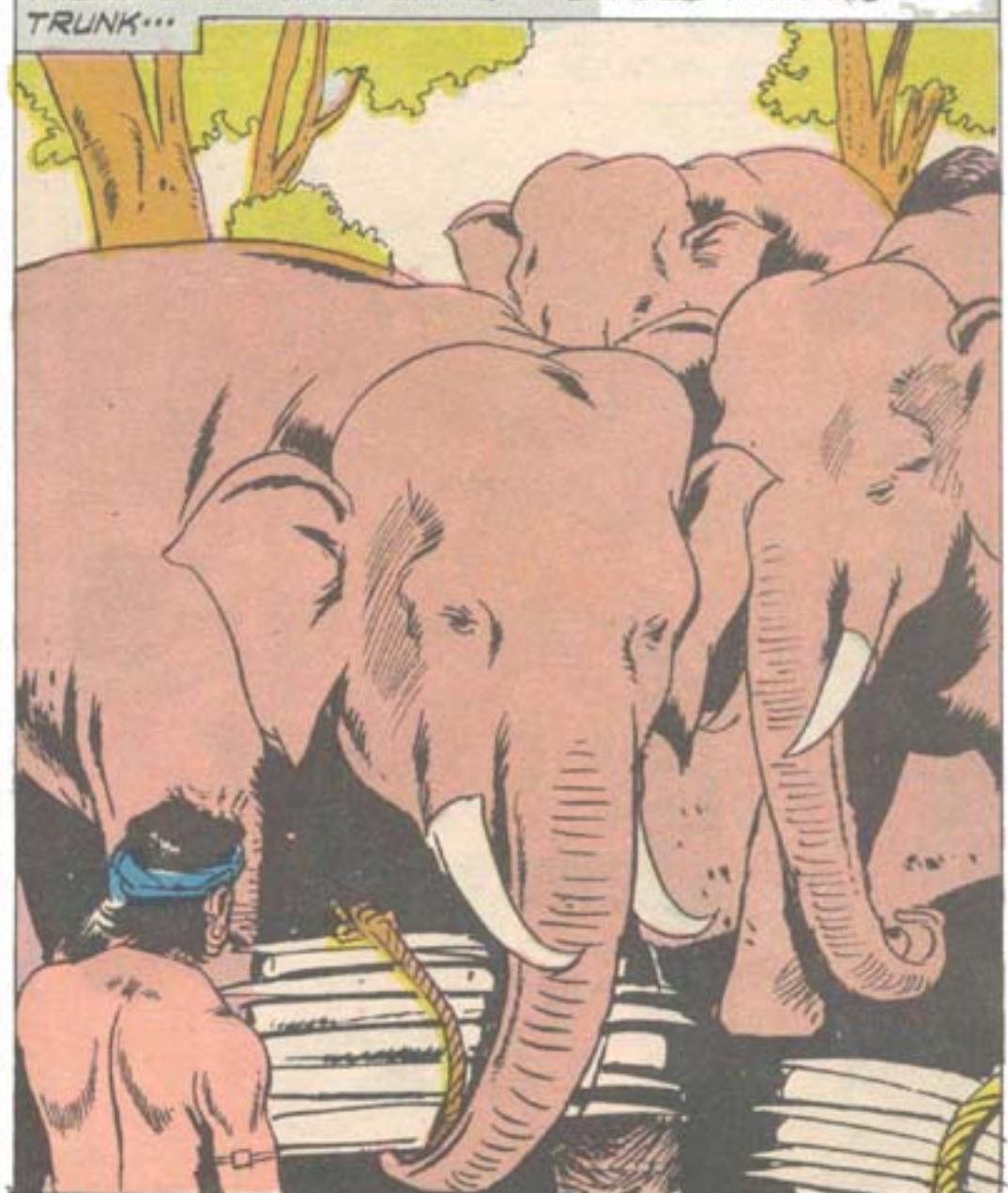
TIMMA TIED THE TUSKS INTO HUGE BUNDLES.

HOW SHALL I CARRY ALL THESE BUNDLES TO THE CITY?

MY ELEPHANTS WILL CARRY THEM FOR YOU.



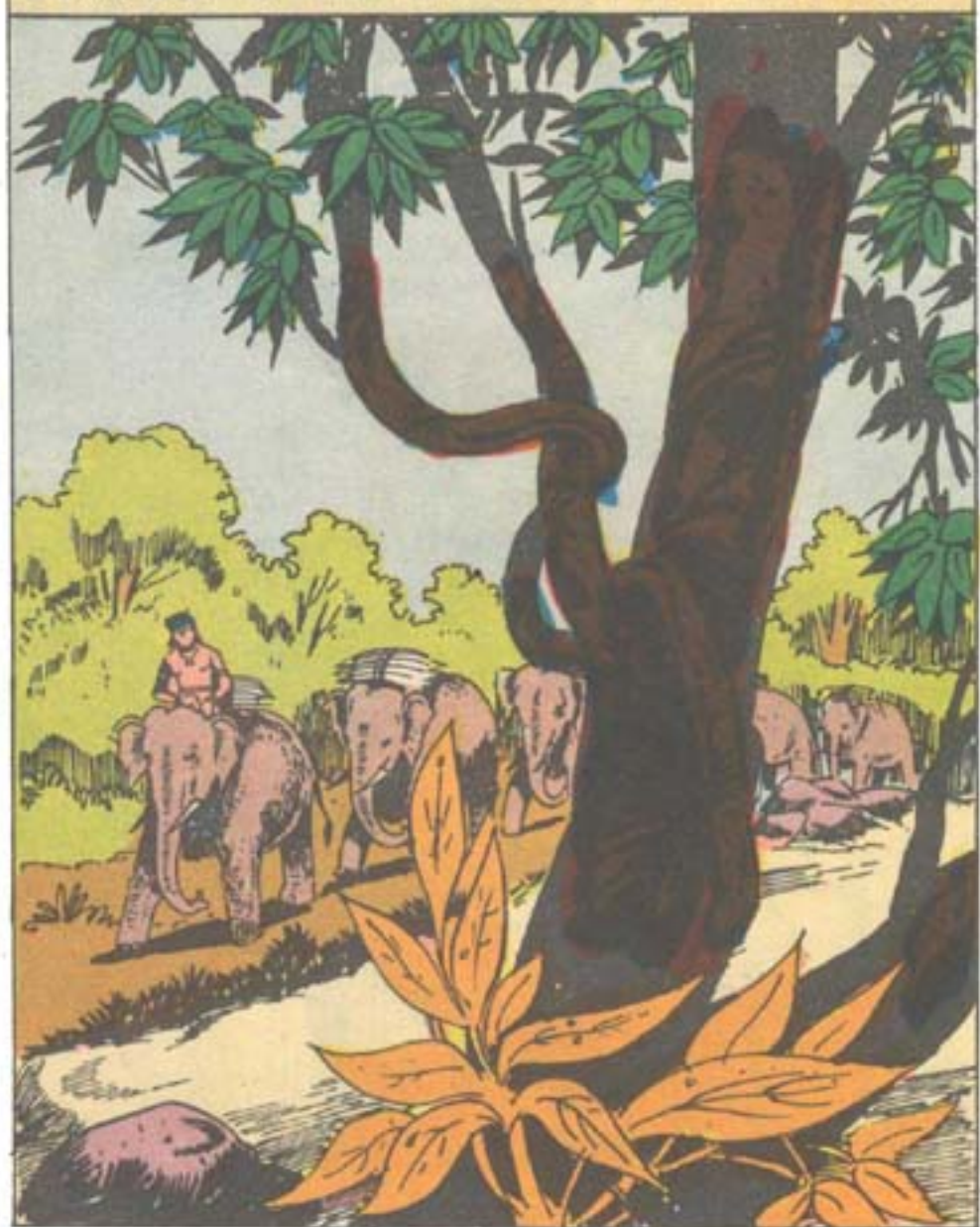
THE KING ELEPHANT LIFTED A BUNDLE WITH HIS TRUNK...



...AND PLACED IT ON THE BACK OF AN ELEPHANT.



THUS TIMMA LEFT THE FOREST AT THE HEAD OF A CARAVAN OF ELEPHANTS LOADED WITH IVORY.



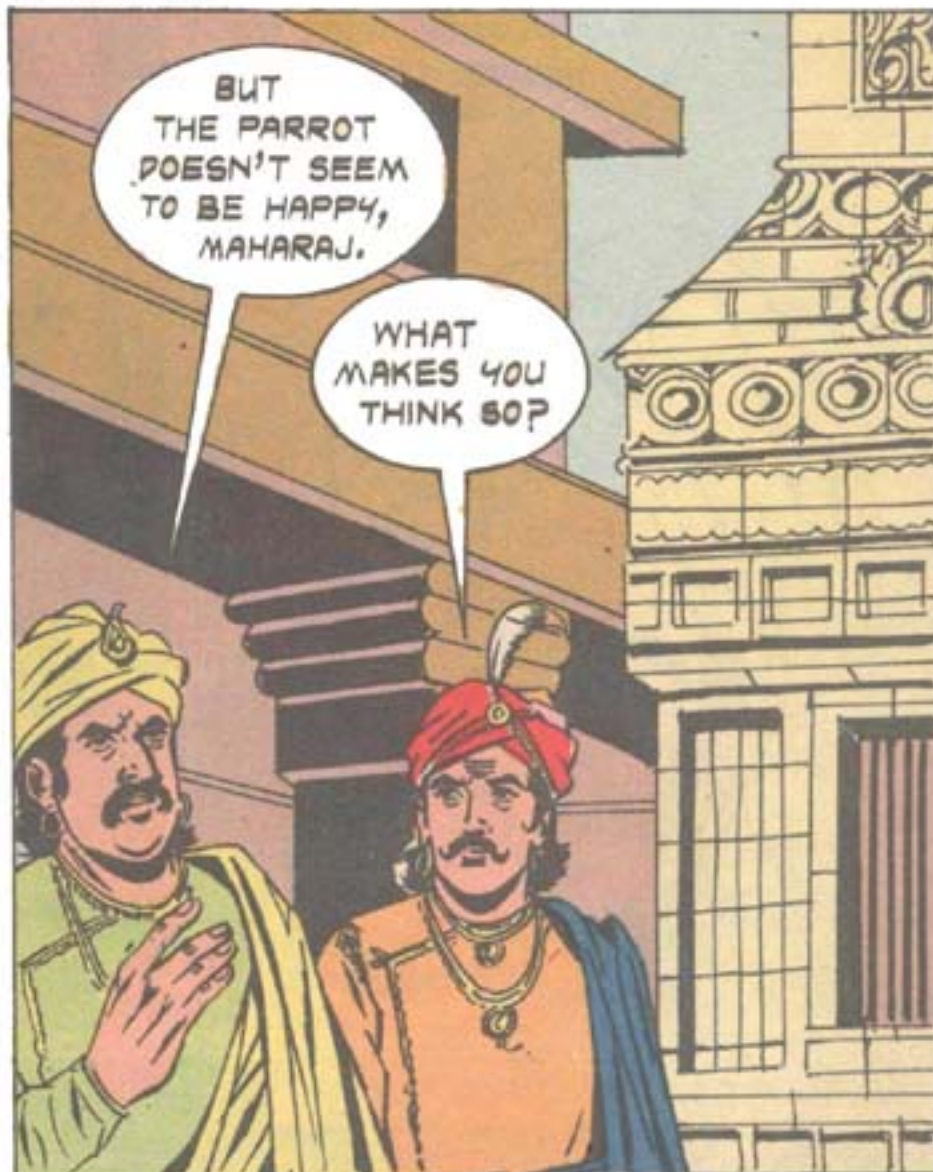
WHEN HE REACHED THE PALACE, THE KING HIMSELF CAME OUT TO RECEIVE HIM.



MEANWHILE THE KING HAD A TOWER OF IVORY BUILT.

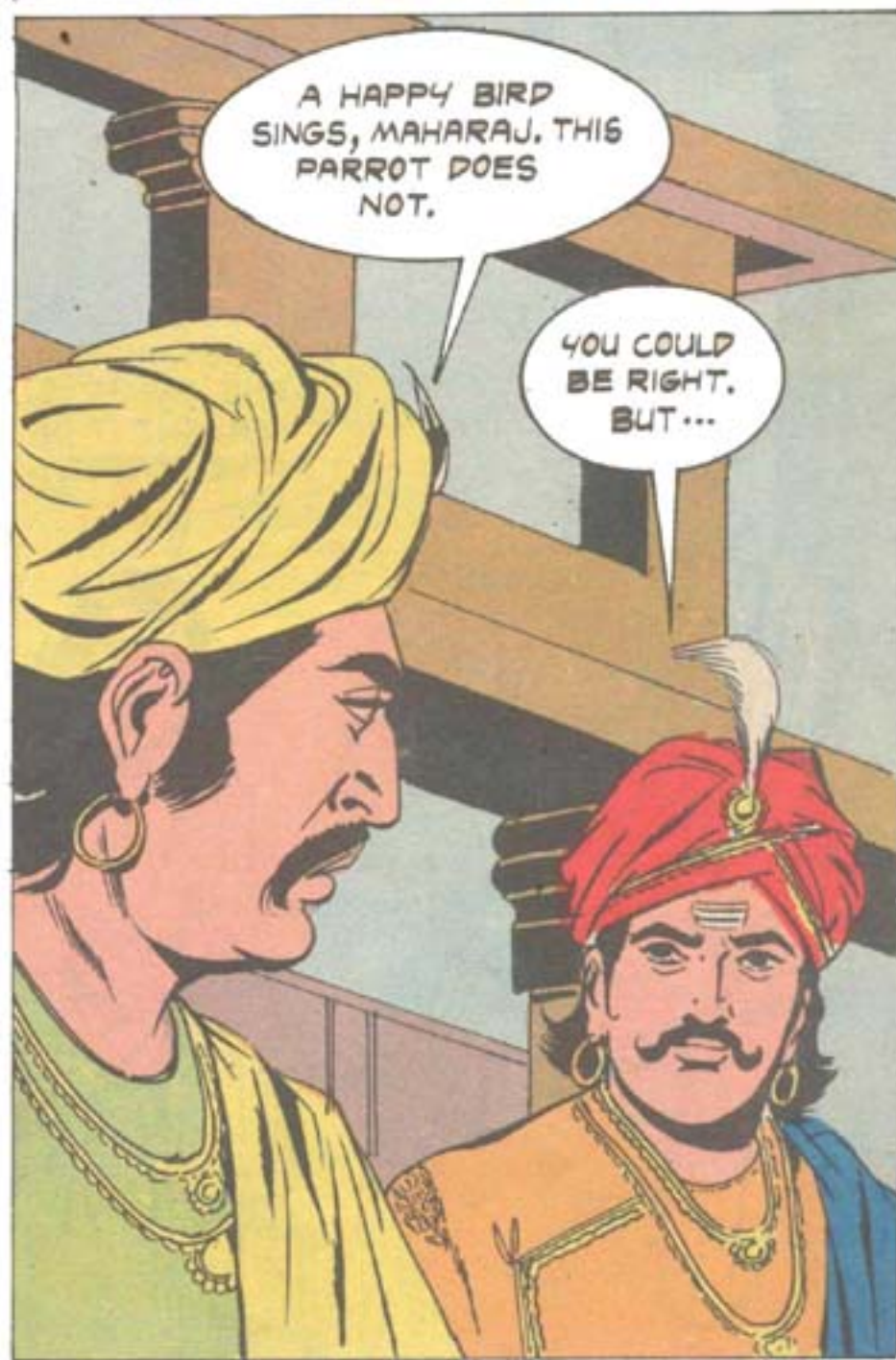


I MUST
THANK YOU
FOR SUGGESTING
THIS IDEA.



BUT
THE PARROT
DOESN'T SEEM
TO BE HAPPY,
MAHARAJ.

WHAT
MAKES YOU
THINK SO?



A HAPPY BIRD
SINGS, MAHARAJ. THIS
PARROT DOES
NOT.

YOU COULD
BE RIGHT.
BUT...

THE PARROT MUST BE MISSING ITS OLD MASTER.

BUT HOW ARE WE TO TRACE ITS OLD MASTER?

OUR TIMMA SHOULD KNOW, MAHARAJ.

THE MINISTER SENT FOR TIMMA.

THE KING WANTS YOU TO BRING THE OWNER OF OUR PARROT HERE.

I DON'T KNOW WHO THE OWNER IS. I CAUGHT IT IN THE FOREST.

THE KING IS NOT INTERESTED IN EXCUSES. HE WANTS RESULTS.

BUT...

IF YOU DON'T BRING THE OWNER HERE WITHIN FOUR WEEKS, YOUR HEAD WILL BE CUT OFF.

TIMMA WENT TO HIS OLD FRIEND IN THE FOREST.

THE KING HAS ORDERED ME TO FIND THE OWNER OF THE PARROT. CAN YOU HELP ME?

I WILL. FOLLOW ME.

TIMMA FOLLOWED THE BIRD.

IT LED HIM TO A TEMPLE WHERE THERE STOOD A MECHANICAL HORSE.

MOUNT THIS HORSE AND FLY WESTWARDS. WHEN YOU FLY OVER THE SEA YOU WILL COME ACROSS AN ISLAND...

THEN THE BIRD TOLD HIM WHAT TO DO.

TIMMA MOUNTED THE HORSE AND TURNED THE KEY.

THE NEXT MOMENT HE WAS UP IN THE AIR.

GOOD LUCK, MY FRIEND.

THE HORSE FLEW OVER FOREST...



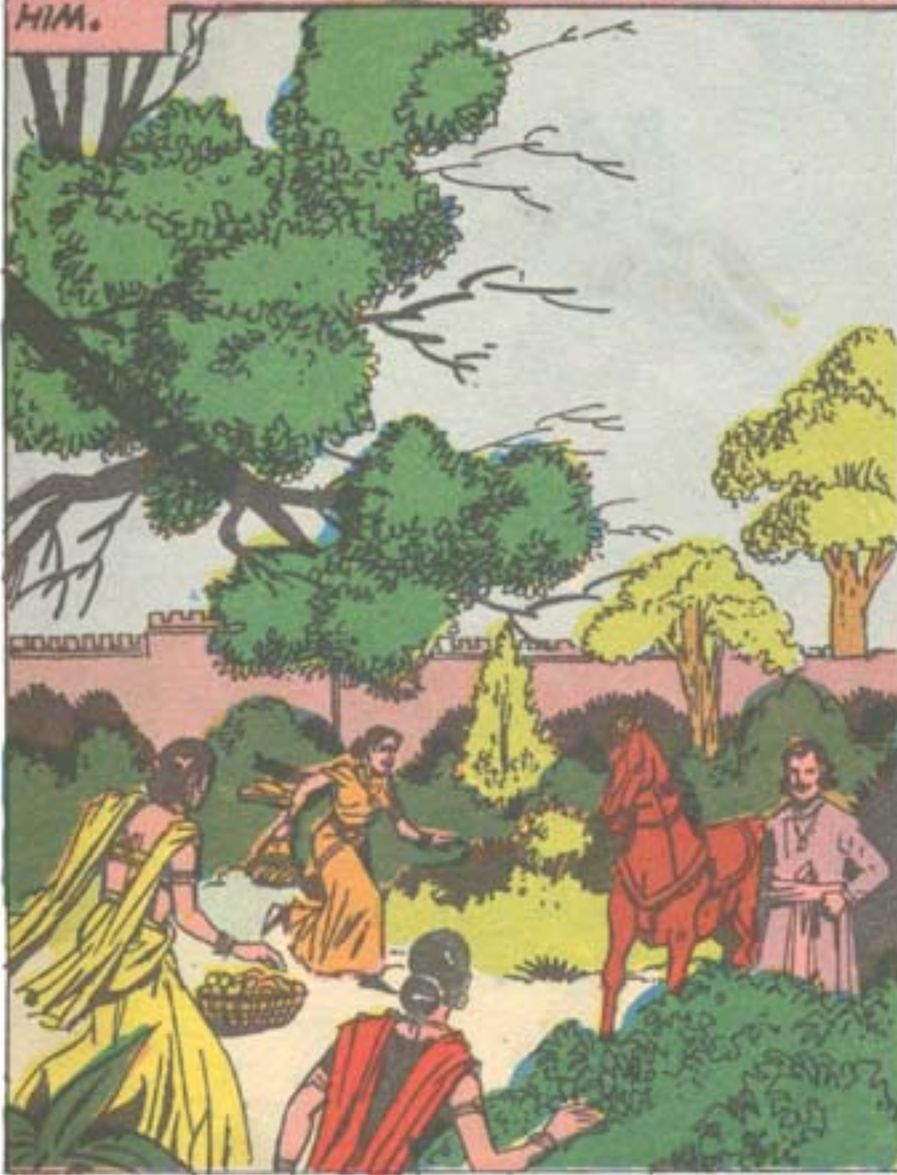
...AND SEA. AT LAST —



AS HE FLEW OVER THE ISLAND —



TIMMA LANDED IN THE ROYAL GARDEN. THE FRIENDS OF THE PRINCESS RAN TOWARDS HIM.



WE HAVE NEVER SEEN SUCH A HORSE BEFORE.



WE WOULD LIKE TO FLY TOO.

YOU ARE WELCOME.



A FEW GIRLS FLEW ON THE HORSE.

IT'S MARVELLOUS!



THEN CAME THE PRINCESS.

I TOO
WOULD LIKE
TO FLY.



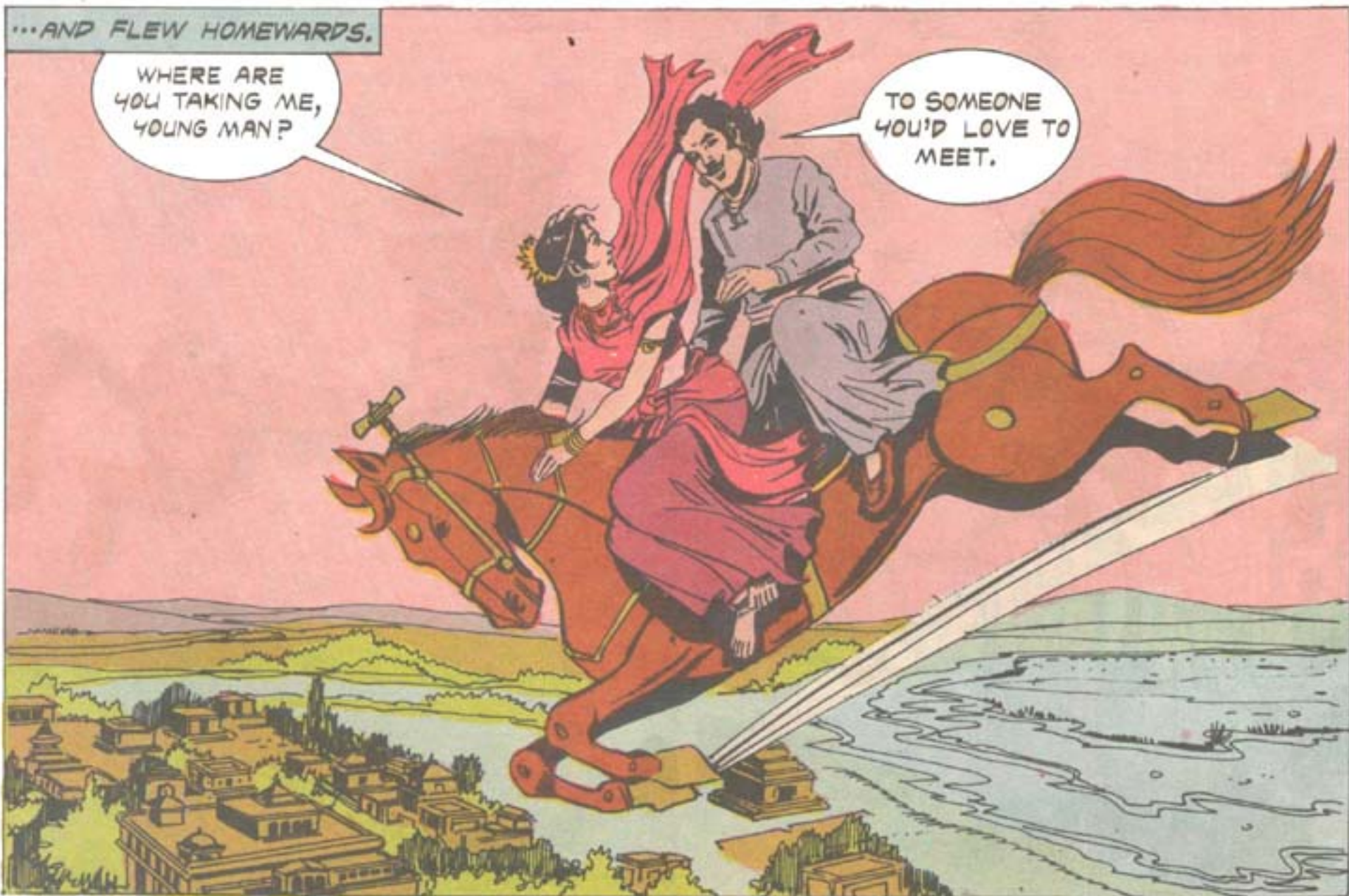
SO TIMMA TOOK OFF WITH THE PRINCESS...



...AND FLEW HOMEWARDS.

WHERE ARE
YOU TAKING ME,
YOUNG MAN?

TO SOMEONE
YOU'D LOVE TO
MEET.



AS THEY NEARED THE TOWER OF IVORY, THE PARROT BEGAN TO SING.



THE KING HEARD THE NEWS AND CAME TO THE TOWER.



THE KING MARRIED THE PRINCESS AND APPOINTED TIMMA COMMANDER OF THE ARMY.



A FEW WEEKS LATER, THE PRINCESS FELL ILL. NO PHYSICIAN COULD CURE HER.

I'M SORRY, MAHARAJ. THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.

THERE MUST BE SOMEONE WHO CAN CURE HER.



YOU MUST SEND FOR A PHYSICIAN FROM THE LAND OF OUR QUEEN, MAHARAJ.

I AGREE, MAHARAJ. WE COULD SEND OUR COMMANDER TO THE ISLAND.



I'M SURE THE PEOPLE OF THE ISLAND WILL BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THE MAN WHO KIDNAPPED THEIR PRINCESS. TIMMA WON'T RETURN ALIVE.



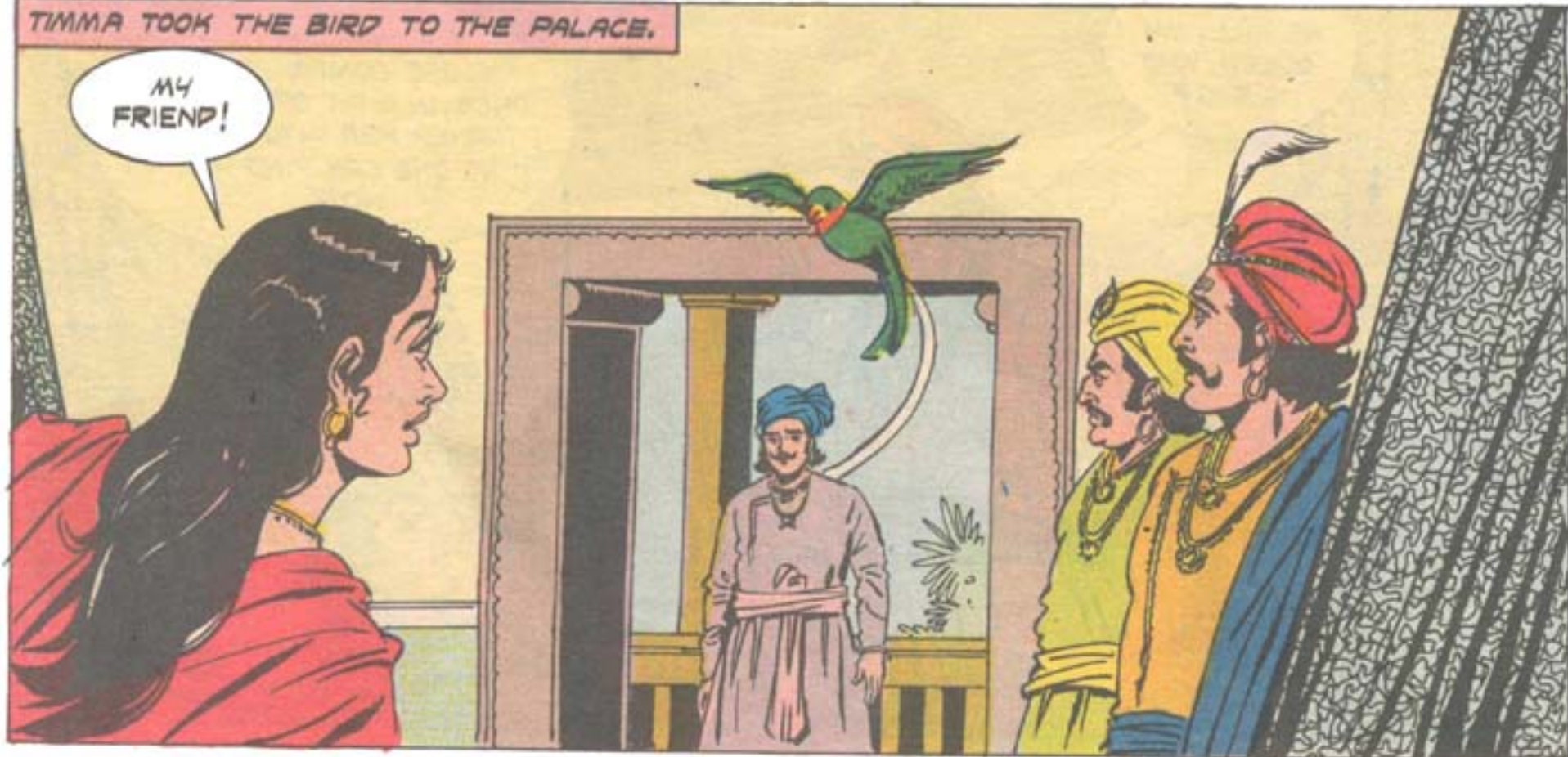
THEN THE QUEEN SPOKE.

THERE IS ONLY ONE PERSON WHO KNOWS THE REMEDY AND YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO FIND HER.





TIMMA TOOK THE BIRD TO THE PALACE.



THE MOMENT THE QUEEN TOUCHED THE BIRD...



...IT TURNED INTO A BEAUTIFUL GIRL.



THE QUEEN WAS CURED; HER LONG-LOST COMPANION MARRIED TIMMA WHOM THE KING APPOINTED AS HIS MINISTER, AND THE ENVIOUS MINISTER LEFT THE CITY FOR EVER.



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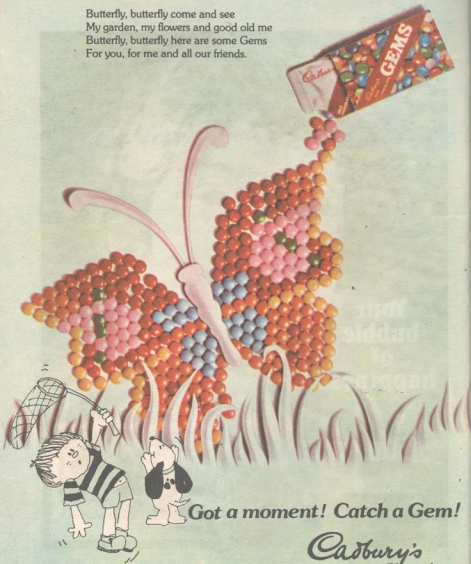


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Butterfly, butterfly come and see
My garden, my flowers and good old me
Butterfly, butterfly here are some Gems
For you, for me and all our friends.



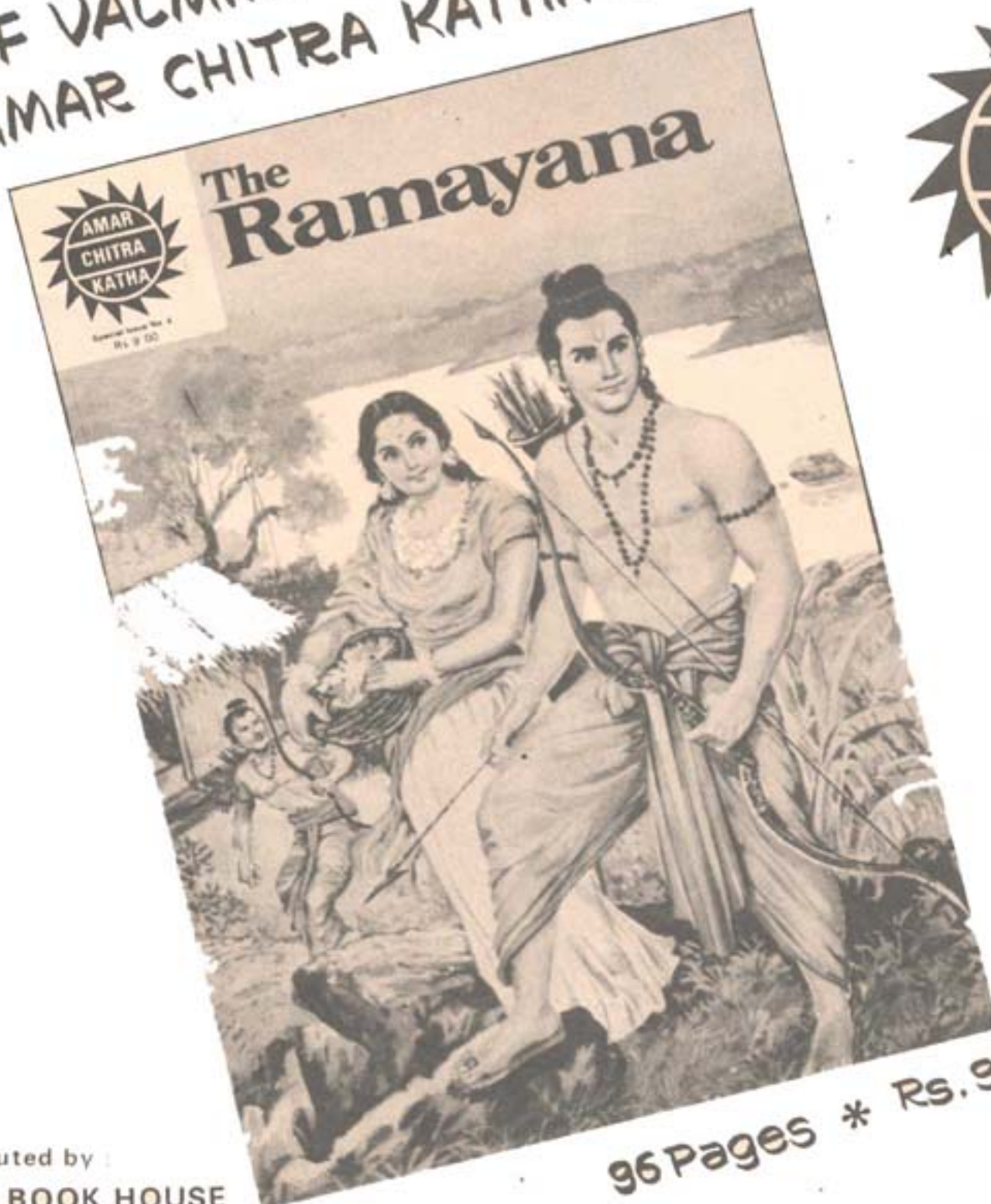
Got a moment! Catch a Gem!

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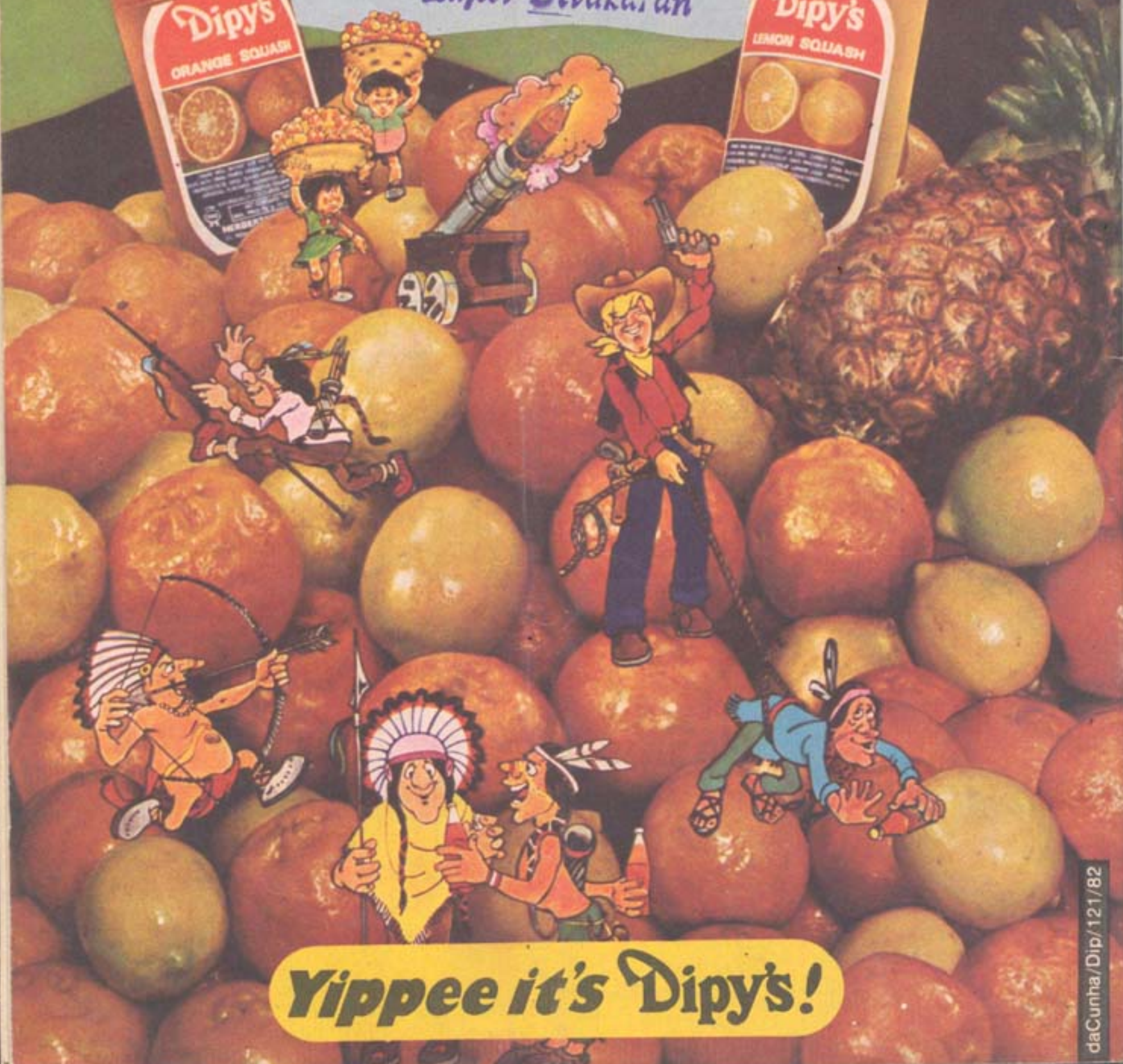
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Dipy dee Dipy doo come to Dipyland

Rajeev Divakaran



Yippee it's Dipy's!