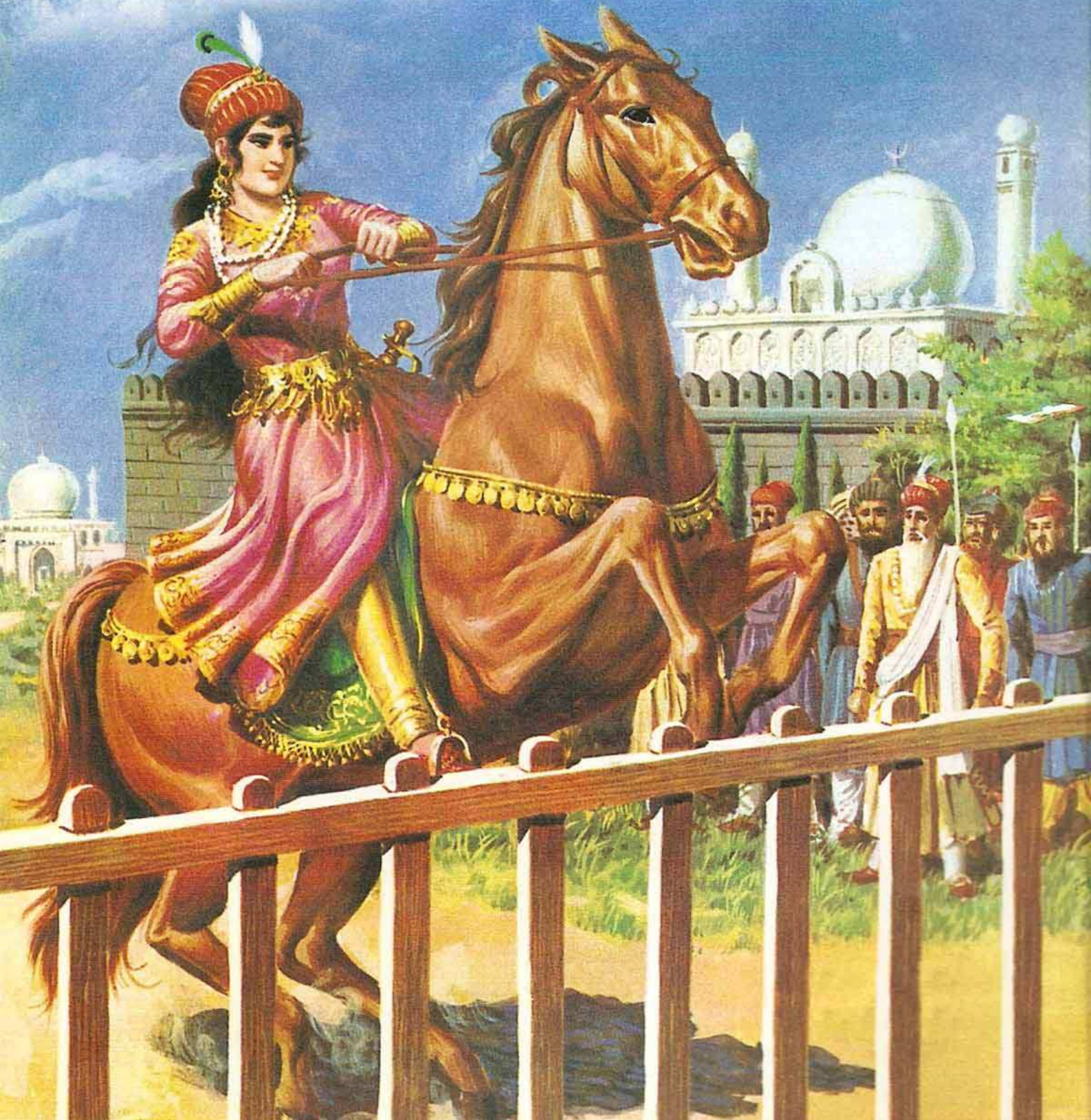




Sultana Razia

NO. 725 RS.35



TPH Original

SULTANA RAZIA



SULTANA RAZIA WAS THE ONLY REIGNING QUEEN WHO EVER SAT ON THE THRONE OF DELHI. SHE WAS THE DAUGHTER OF SULTAN SHAMSUDDIN ILTUTMISH OF THE SLAVE DYNASTY.

IN 1236, SULTAN ILTUTMISH RETURNED TO DELHI WITH HIS VICTORIOUS TROOPS AFTER CRUSHING A REBELLION IN SIND.



WELCOME HOME, MY LORD. I TRUST ALL WENT WELL.

VICTORY WAS OURS. BUT IT WAS A TIRING CAMPAIGN.

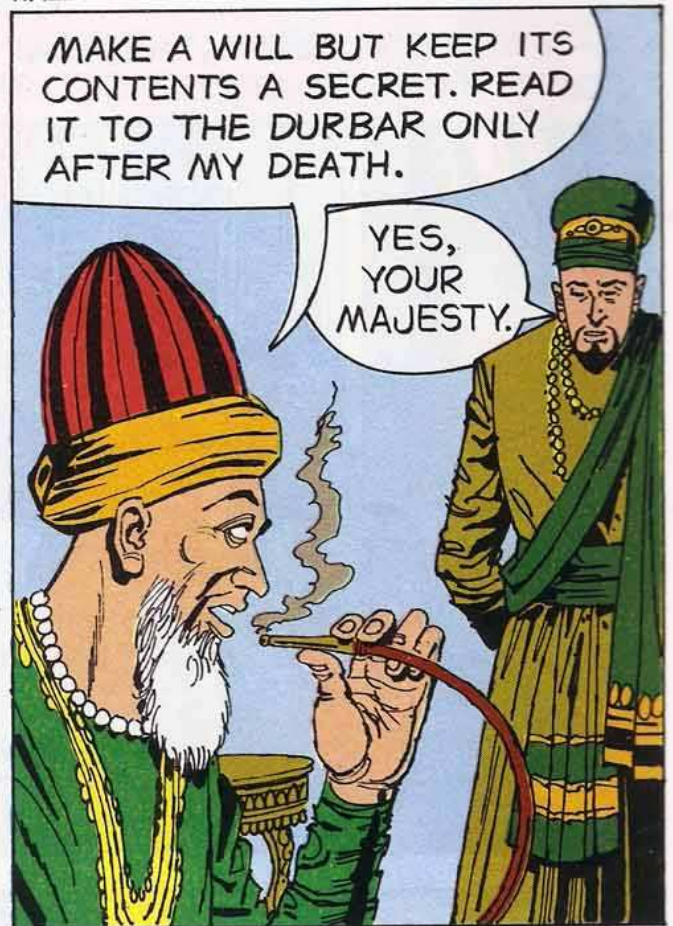


IT MUST HAVE BEEN. YOU LOOK ILL, MY LORD! LET ME SUMMON THE DOCTOR.

LATER, SHAH TURKAN. THERE ARE MORE PRESSING MATTERS THAT NEED ATTENTION. SEND FOR TAJUDDIN.



TAJUDDIN WAS HIS TRUSTED MINISTER.



AFTER THE FUNERAL, TAJUDDIN SUMMONED THE FORTY AMIRS *AND READ OUT THE SULTAN'S WILL.



THE NIZAM-UL-MULK** WAS THE FIRST TO VOICE THE FEELINGS OF THE ANGRY AMIRS.

HOW COULD HIS MAJESTY DO SUCH A THING?



* POWERFUL TURKISH NOBLES

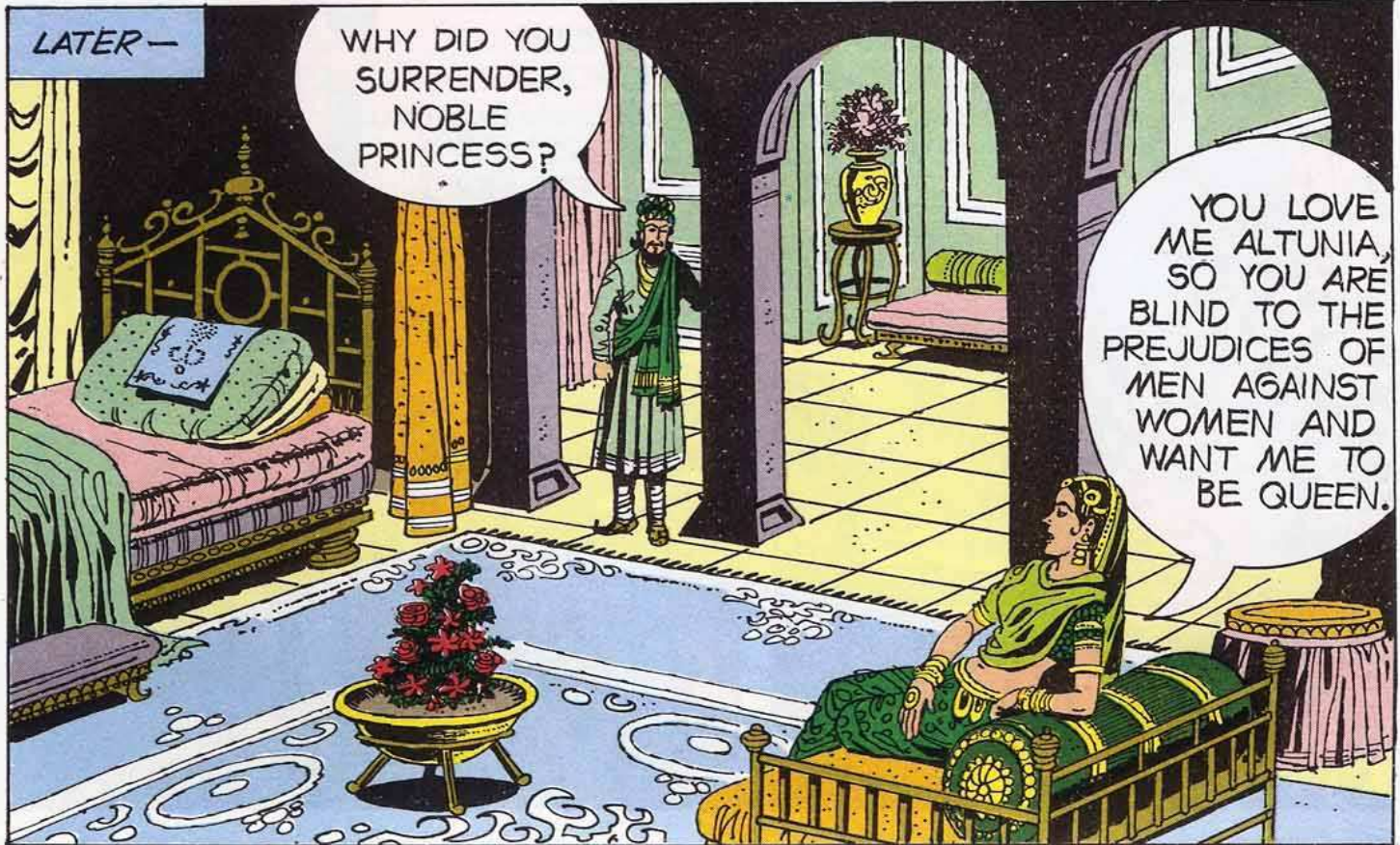
HOW CAN WE SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO A WOMAN?

THE PRINCESS MAY PROVE TO BE AN EFFICIENT RULER, AYAZ. HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHAT AN EXCELLENT ADMINISTRATOR SHE MADE WHEN THE SULTAN WAS AWAY AT GWALIOR?



** PRIME MINISTER





AS ILTUTMISH HAD FORESEEN, RUKNUDDIN LED A LIFE OF PLEASURE, NEGLECTING THE AFFAIRS OF STATE.

THE GOVERNORS OF LAHORE AND HANSI WOULD LIKE AN AUDIENCE WITH YOUR MAJESTY.

TELL THEM I AM BUSY. I HAVE NO TIME TO MEET THEM.



WHY DON'T YOU MEET THEM, YOUR MAJESTY? I BESEECH YOU TO DEVOTE MORE TIME TO STATE AFFAIRS.

AND I BESEECH YOU NOT TO BE IRKSOME.



MEANWHILE, SHAH TURKAN GREW JEALOUS OF HER STEP-DAUGHTER, RAZIA'S INCREASING POPULARITY WITH THE SUBJECTS.

I MUST GET RID OF RAZIA.

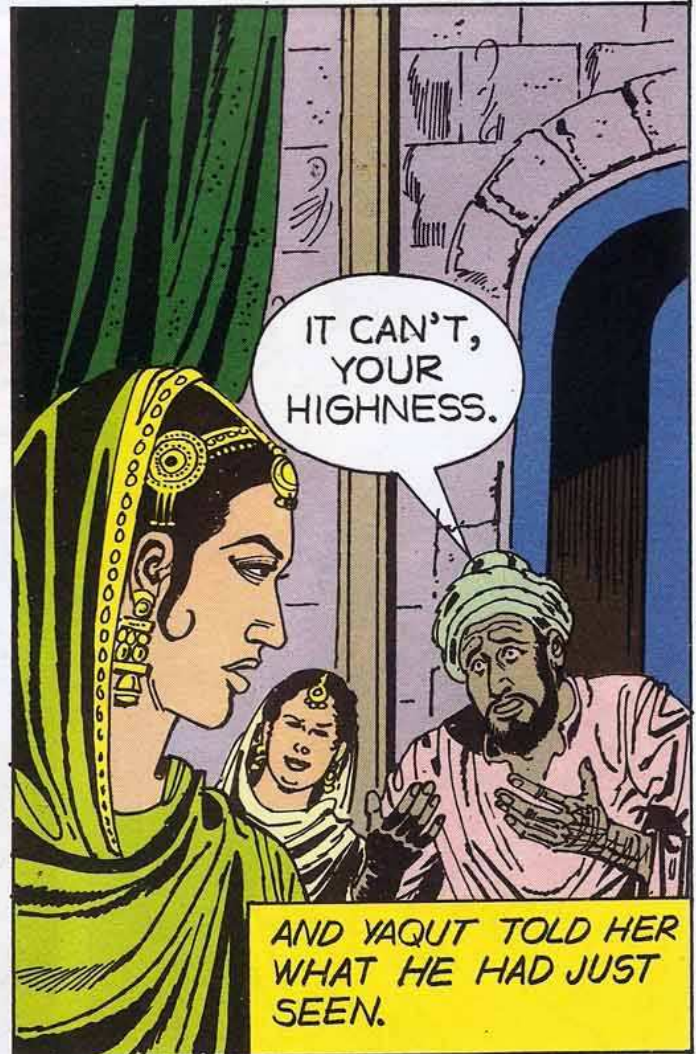
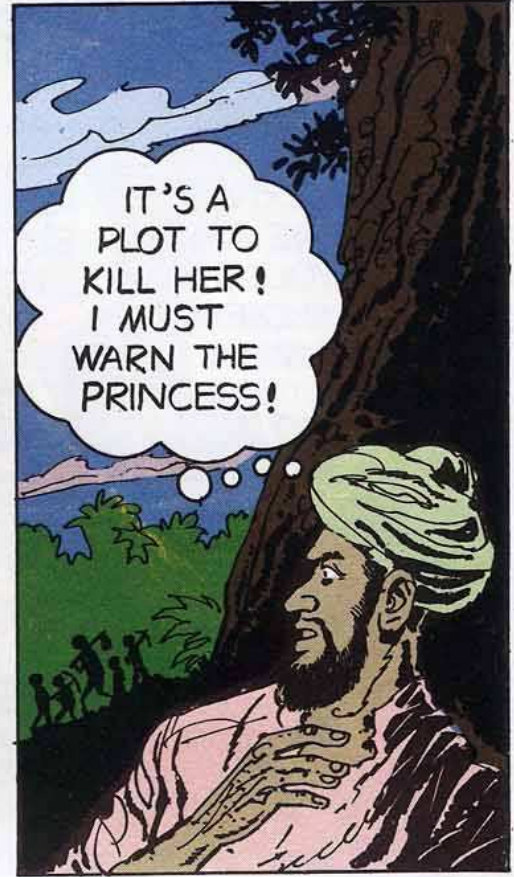


ONE DARK NIGHT, AS JAMAL-UD-DIN YAQUT, THE KEEPER OF THE ROYAL STABLES, WAS WALKING HURRIEDLY TOWARDS THE PALACE—

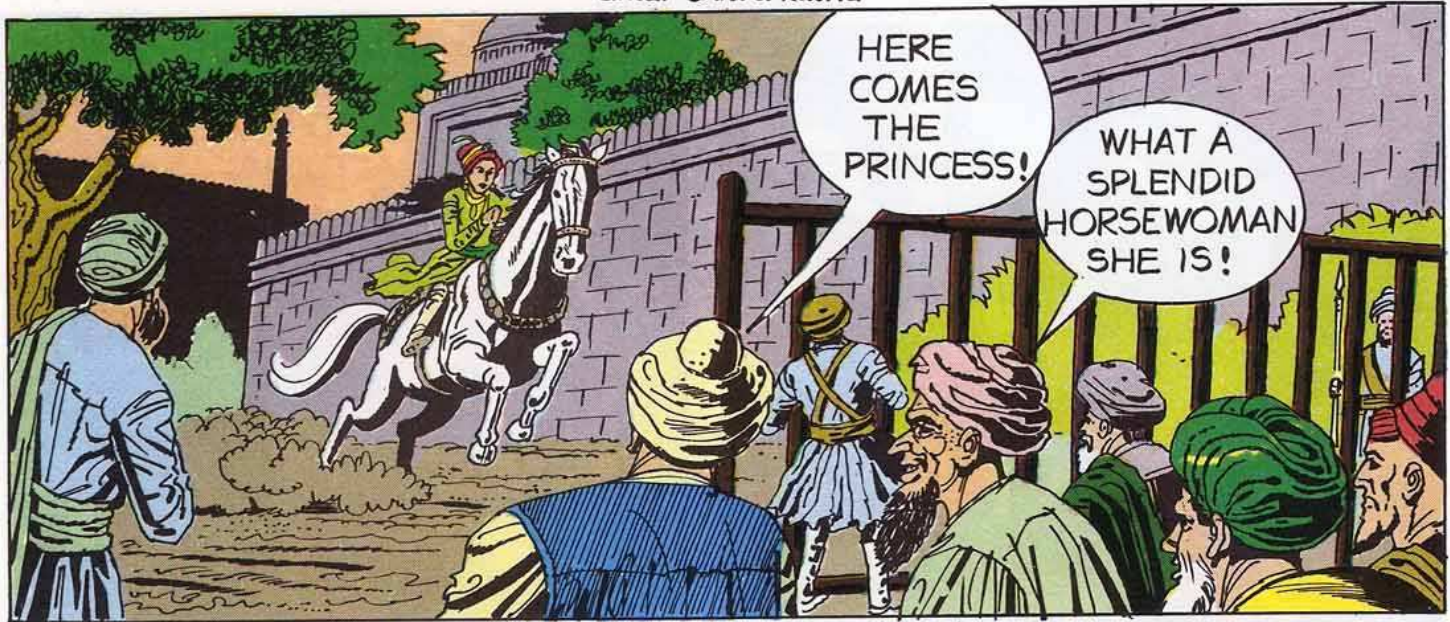
HOW CARELESS OF ME TO HAVE FORGOTTEN TO TIE THE PRINCESS' HORSE...

HEY! WHAT ARE THOSE MEN UP TO?













SUDDENLY, A SAINTLY FIGURE CAME FORWARD.



MY PEOPLE ! I PROMISE BEFORE GOD THAT I SHALL PROVE WORTHY OF YOUR TRUST. AND BECAUSE I AM BORN A WOMAN, I HERE AND NOW SOLEMNLY PLEDGE THAT I SHALL SIT ON THIS GREAT THRONE OF OUR ANCESTORS ONLY IF I PROVE TO BE AS GOOD AS ANY MAN.

LONG LIVE THE SULTANA!



RAZIA DRESSED AND ACTED LIKE A KING. SHE HAD COINS STRUCK IN HER NAME...



...AND HELD CONSULTATIONS WITH THE FORTY AMIRS.



SHE WAS THE LEADER OF HER ARMIES,



SHE RESTORED PEACE AND ORDER IN HER KINGDOM.



SHE BUILT ROADS, PLANTED TREES...



...DUG WELLS...



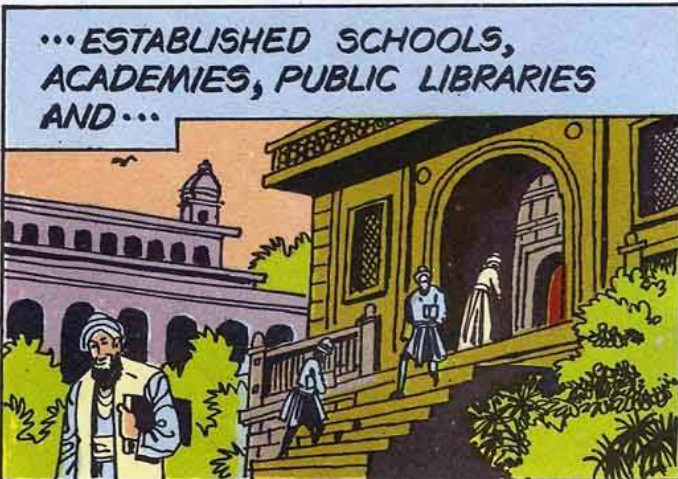
... ENCOURAGED TRADE ...



...DISPENSED JUSTICE...



...ESTABLISHED SCHOOLS, ACADEMIES, PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND...



...PATRONISED SCHOLARS, POETS, PAINTERS AND MUSICIANS



RAZIA APPEARED FREQUENTLY IN PUBLIC WITHOUT A VEIL.



YOUR MAJESTY, IN YOUR ILLUSTRIOUS FATHER'S TIME, YOU NEVER APPEARED THUS BEFORE THE PUBLIC. A THIN VEIL ALWAYS COVERED YOUR NOBLE FACE.

BUT IN MY FATHER'S TIME I WAS NOT THE RULER. NOW I FACE MY SUBJECTS AS THEIR SULTANA.



TRUE, YOUR MAJESTY, BUT YOU ARE A WOMAN...

TO THE PEOPLE, I AM THEIR PROTECTOR AND BENEFACITOR.



YOUR REASONS ARE STRONG, YOUR MAJESTY. BUT TONGUES WAG...

THEN STAY THEM! TELL THE AMIRS THAT MY BEHAVIOUR IS A PART OF MY FAITH.



JUST AS THE NIZAM-UL-MULK LEFT, ALTUNIA ARRIVED.

HERE COMES AN-OTHER MAN! ALTUNIA, ARE YOU ALSO PREJUDICED AGAINST ME BECAUSE I AM A WOMAN?

HOW CAN I BE? I LOVE YOU!

I AM SORRY, ALTUNIA. YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A LOYAL FRIEND AND I LOVE YOU TOO...

...BUT EVER SINCE I HAVE BECOME QUEEN, I AM DISTURBED BY THE ATTITUDE OF MY AMIRS.

HAS SOMEBODY BEEN POISONING YOUR MIND AGAINST ME?

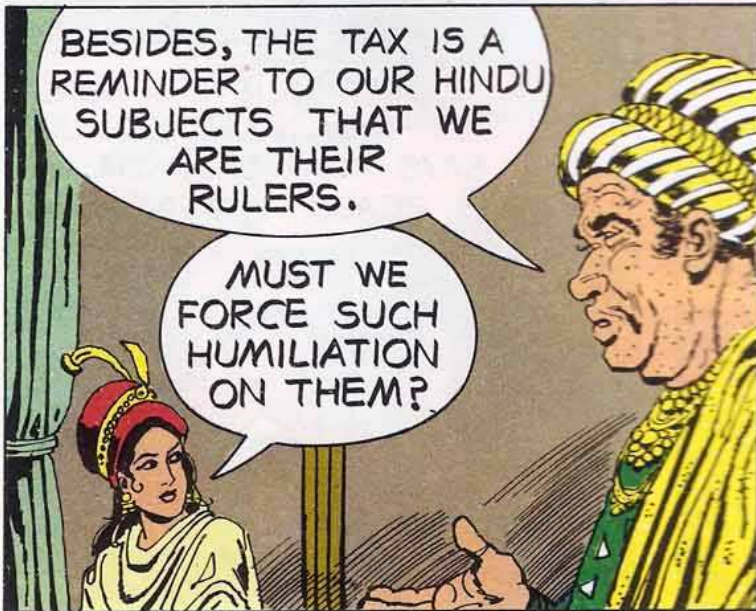
NO ONE CAN DO THAT. WE HAVE BEEN SUCH GOOD FRIENDS SINCE CHILDHOOD. HOW I WISH MY OTHER AMIRS WERE LIKE YOU!

ONE DAY, AT COURT—



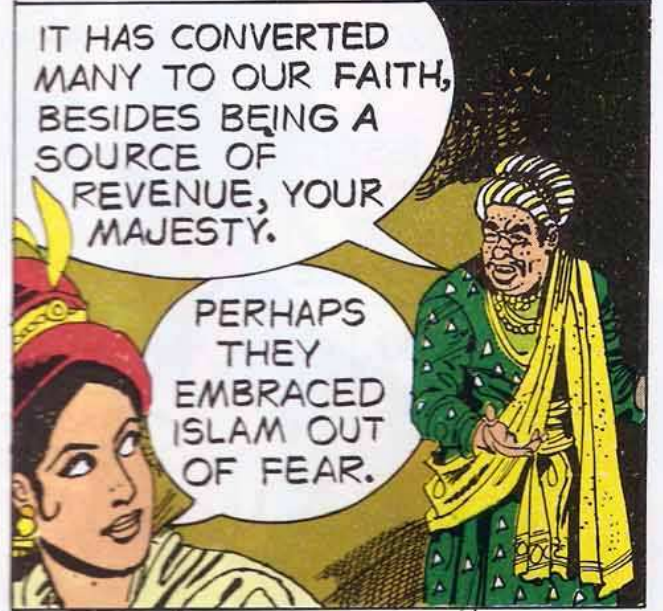
I FEEL, THE JAZIAH * SHOULD BE ABOLISHED.

YOUR MAJESTY, THE ABOLITION OF JAZIAH WILL WEAKEN OUR AUTHORITY.



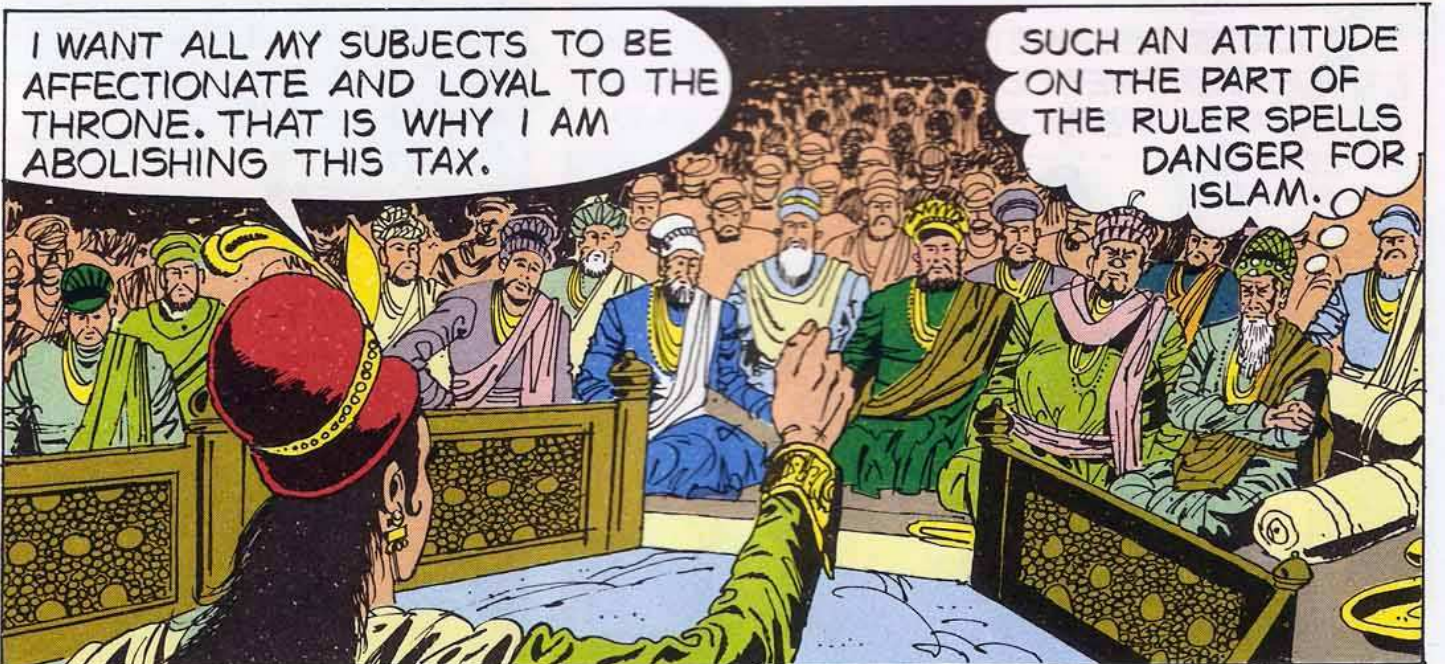
BESIDES, THE TAX IS A REMINDER TO OUR HINDU SUBJECTS THAT WE ARE THEIR RULERS.

MUST WE FORCE SUCH HUMILIATION ON THEM?



IT HAS CONVERTED MANY TO OUR FAITH, BESIDES BEING A SOURCE OF REVENUE, YOUR MAJESTY.

PERHAPS THEY EMBRACED ISLAM OUT OF FEAR.



I WANT ALL MY SUBJECTS TO BE AFFECTIONATE AND LOYAL TO THE THRONE. THAT IS WHY I AM ABOLISHING THIS TAX.

SUCH AN ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF THE RULER SPELLS DANGER FOR ISLAM.

* A TAX IMPOSED ON ALL NON-MUSLIMS

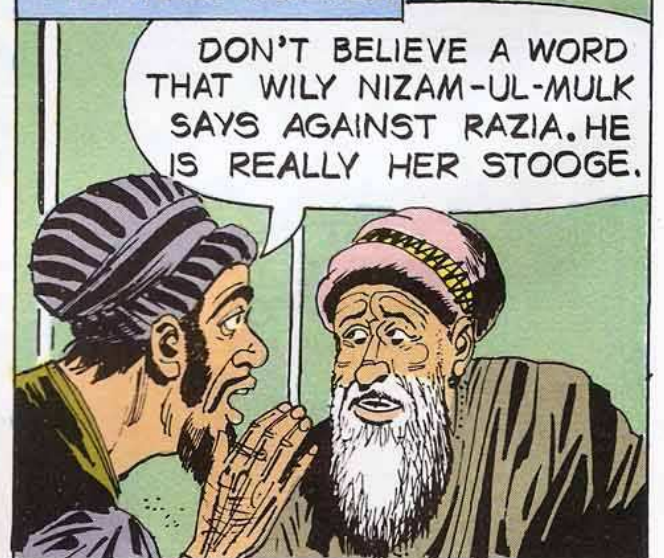
SOME OF THE AMIRS LED BY THE NIZAM-UL-MULK PLOTTED TO OVERTHROW RAZIA.



BUT THE LOYAL ALTUNIA WARNED HER OF IT IN TIME.



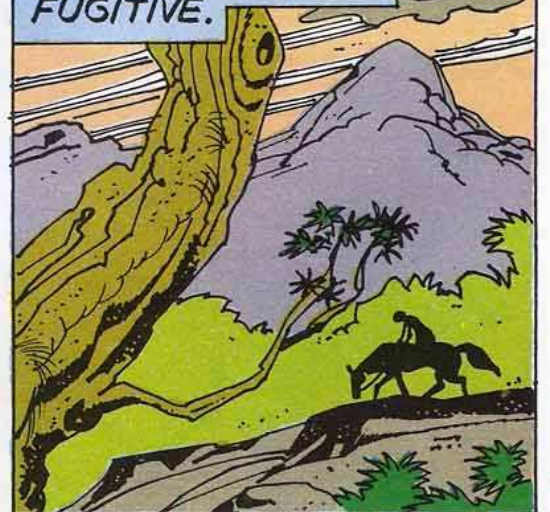
THE RUSE WORKED.



THE AMIRS BECAME SUSPICIOUS OF EACH OTHER AND THEIR DISUNITY MADE THEM WEAK. THEY WERE SOON CAPTURED AND TRIED FOR TREACHERY.



THE NIZAM-UL-MULK FLED TO THE SIMUR HILLS WHERE HE DIED A FUGITIVE.



AS A REWARD FOR HIS LOYALTY, RAZIA MADE ALTUNIA THE GOVERNOR OF BHATINDA.



I AM HONoured, YOUR MAJESTY.

UNDER YOU, AT LEAST THAT PART OF MY EMPIRE WILL BE IN SAFE HANDS.



MARRY ME, RAZIA... BEFORE I LEAVE!

HOW CAN I, ALTUNIA? IT WILL MAKE THE AMIRS JEALOUS.

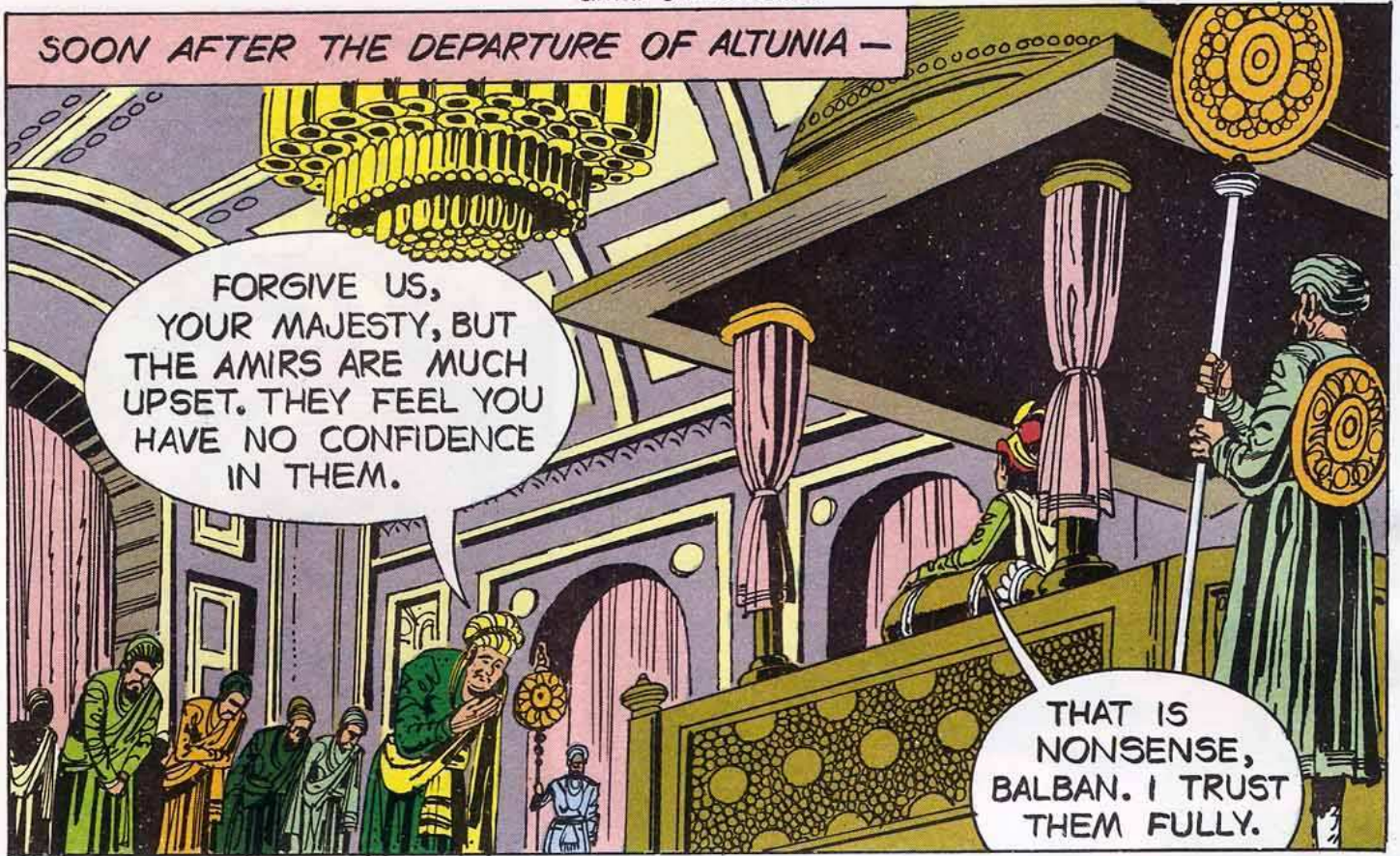


BUT WHAT ABOUT OUR FEELINGS? WE ARE YOUNG. WE NEED EACH OTHER.

DO YOU THINK I DON'T WANT TO MARRY YOU? BUT FOR THE PRESENT I MUST CONCENTRATE ON THE AFFAIRS OF STATE.

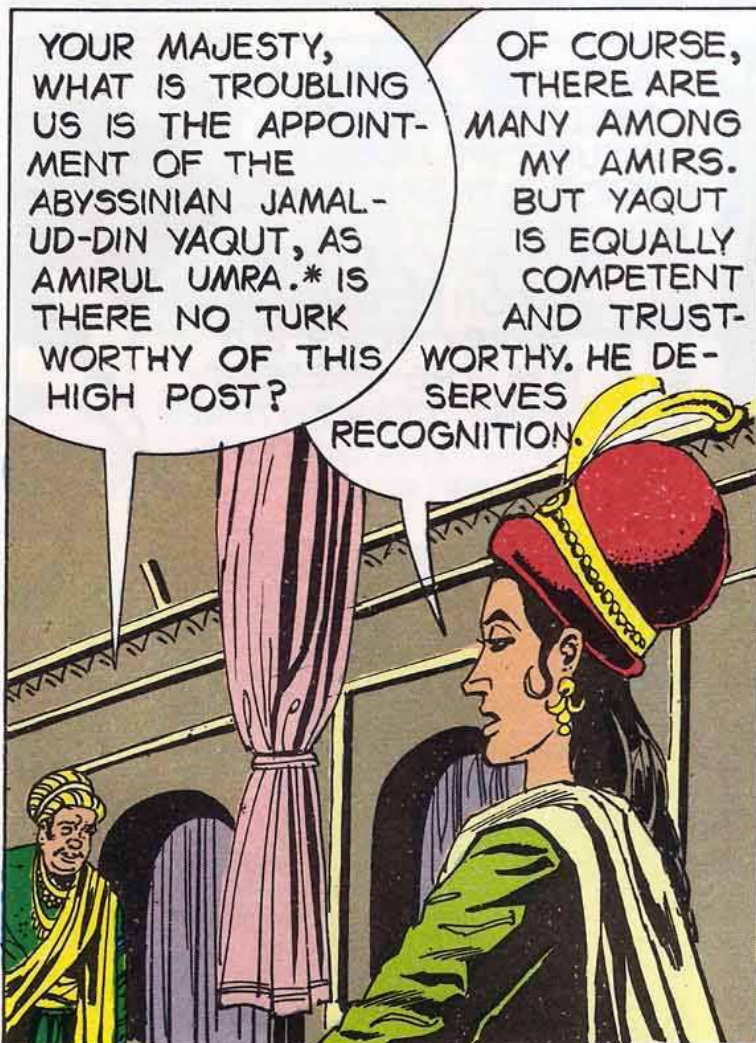


SOON AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF ALTUNIA —



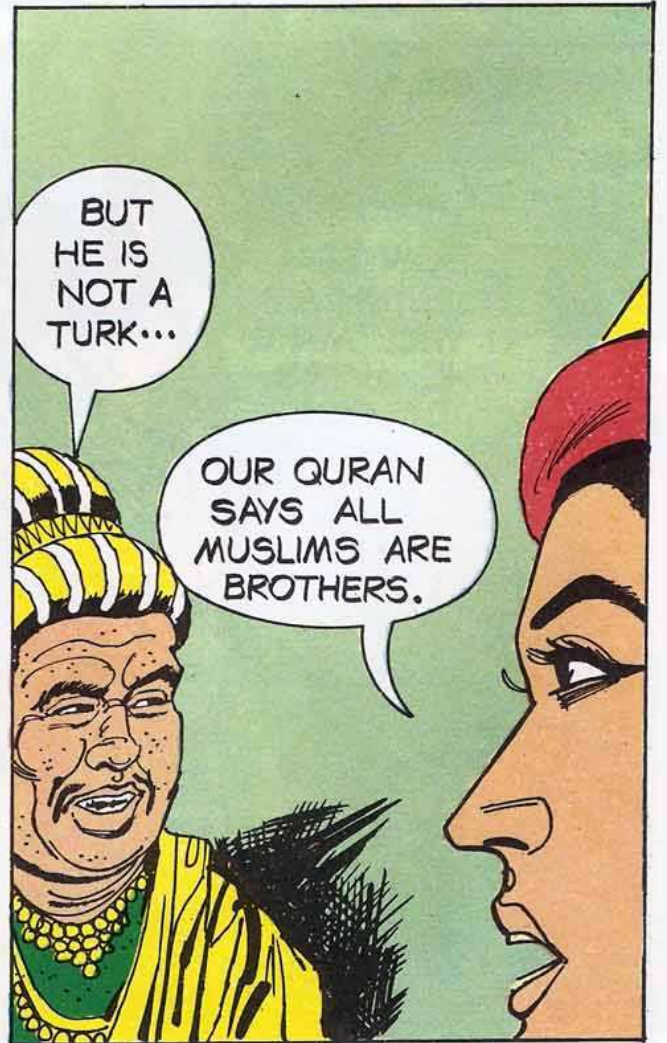
FORGIVE US, YOUR MAJESTY, BUT THE AMIRS ARE MUCH UPSET. THEY FEEL YOU HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN THEM.

THAT IS NONSENSE, BALBAN. I TRUST THEM FULLY.



YOUR MAJESTY, WHAT IS TROUBLING US IS THE APPOINTMENT OF THE ABYSSINIAN JAMAL-UD-DIN YAQUT, AS AMIRUL UMRA.* IS THERE NO TURK WORTHY OF THIS HIGH POST?

OF COURSE, THERE ARE MANY AMONG MY AMIRS. BUT YAQUT IS EQUALLY COMPETENT AND TRUST-WORTHY. HE DESERVES RECOGNITION.

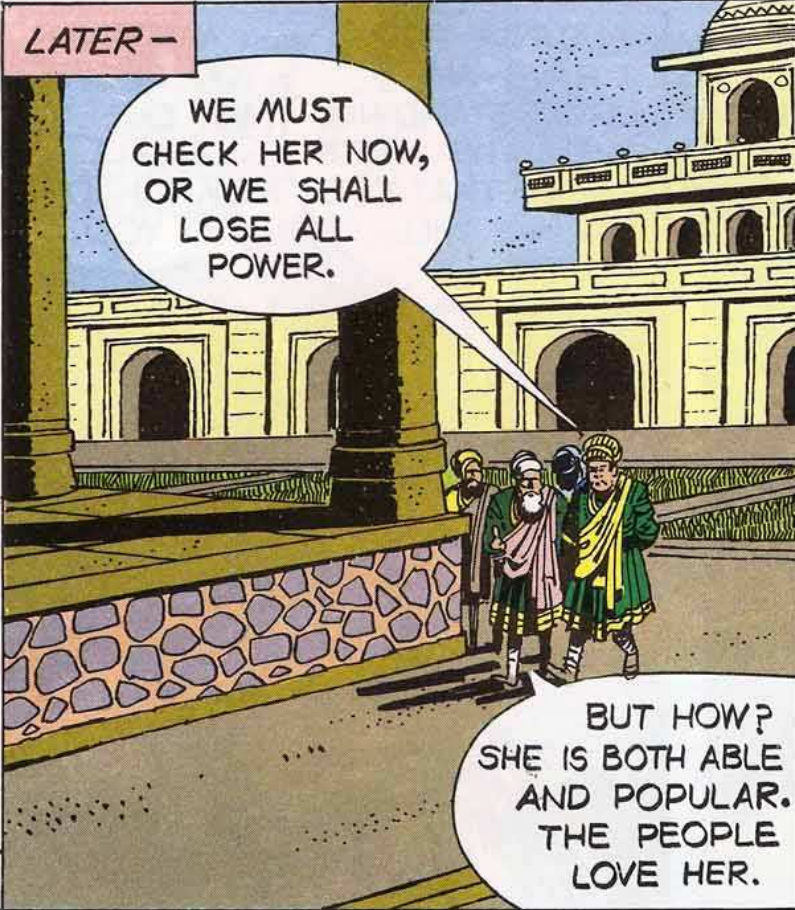


BUT HE IS NOT A TURK...

OUR QURAN SAYS ALL MUSLIMS ARE BROTHERS.

* CHIEF OF NOBLES.

LATER—



WE MUST
CHECK HER NOW,
OR WE SHALL
LOSE ALL
POWER.

BUT HOW?
SHE IS BOTH ABLE
AND POPULAR.
THE PEOPLE
LOVE HER.



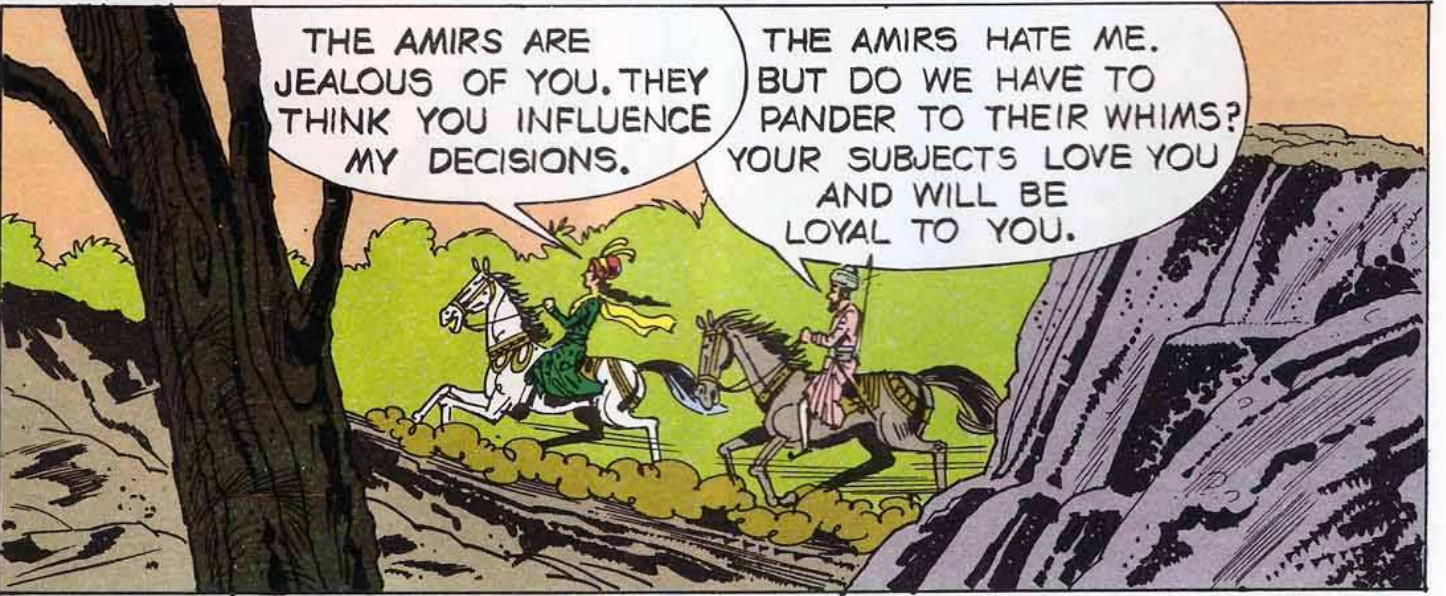
WE
MUST FIND
A WAY.

MEANWHILE—



YAQUT, SOMETIMES
I WONDER WHAT I'D DO
WITHOUT YOUR ABLE
SUPPORT.

MY LIFE IS AT
YOUR COMMAND,
NOBLE LADY.



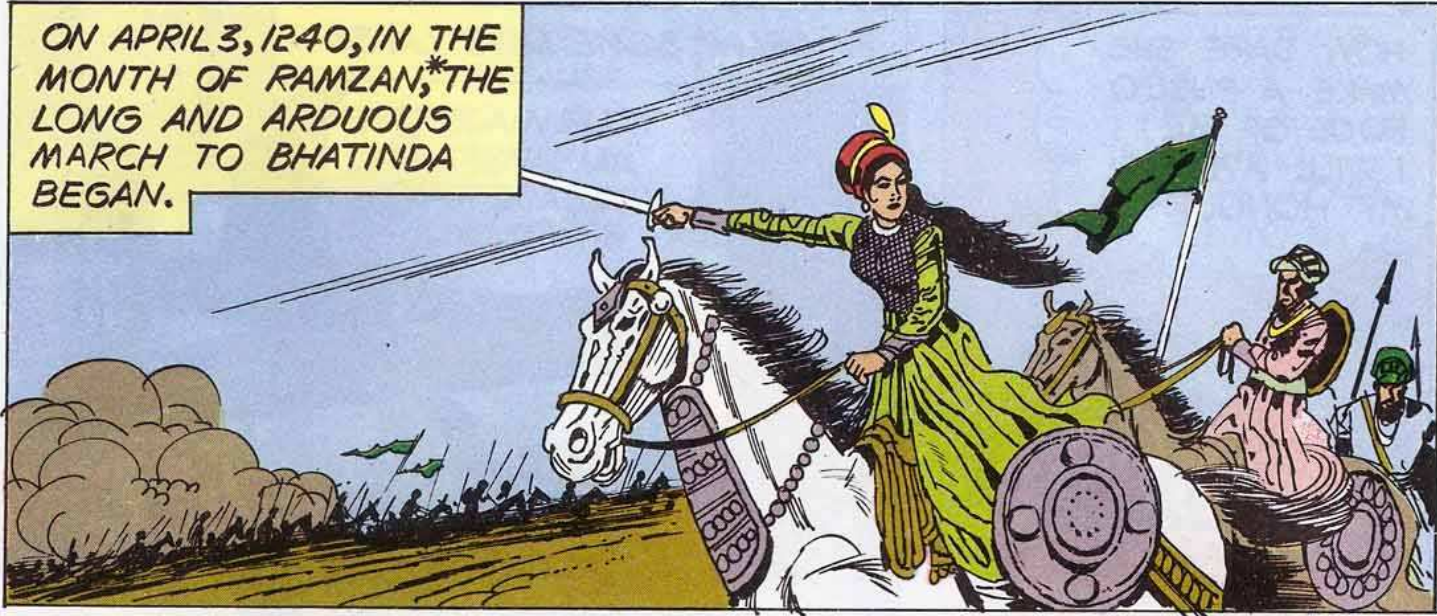
THE AMIRS ARE
JEALOUS OF YOU. THEY
THINK YOU INFLUENCE
MY DECISIONS.

THE AMIRS HATE ME.
BUT DO WE HAVE TO
PANDER TO THEIR WHIMS?
YOUR SUBJECTS LOVE YOU
AND WILL BE
LOYAL TO YOU.





ON APRIL 3, 1240, IN THE MONTH OF RAMZAN,* THE LONG AND ARDUOUS MARCH TO BHATINDA BEGAN.



AS THE DAYS PASSED, THE HEAT AND THE FASTS TOOK THEIR TOLL OF THE TROOPS.

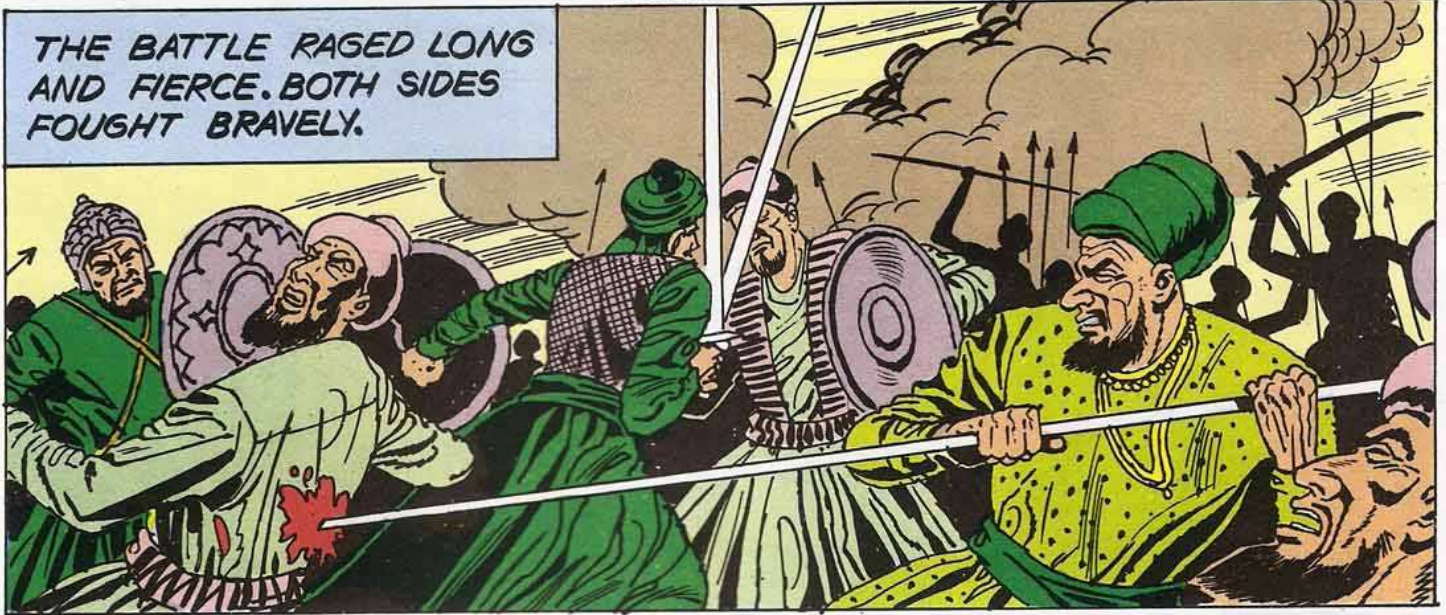


WEARY AND LOW IN SPIRIT, THEY REACHED BHATINDA TO FIGHT ALTUNIA'S FRESH, WELL-EQUIPPED TROOPS.

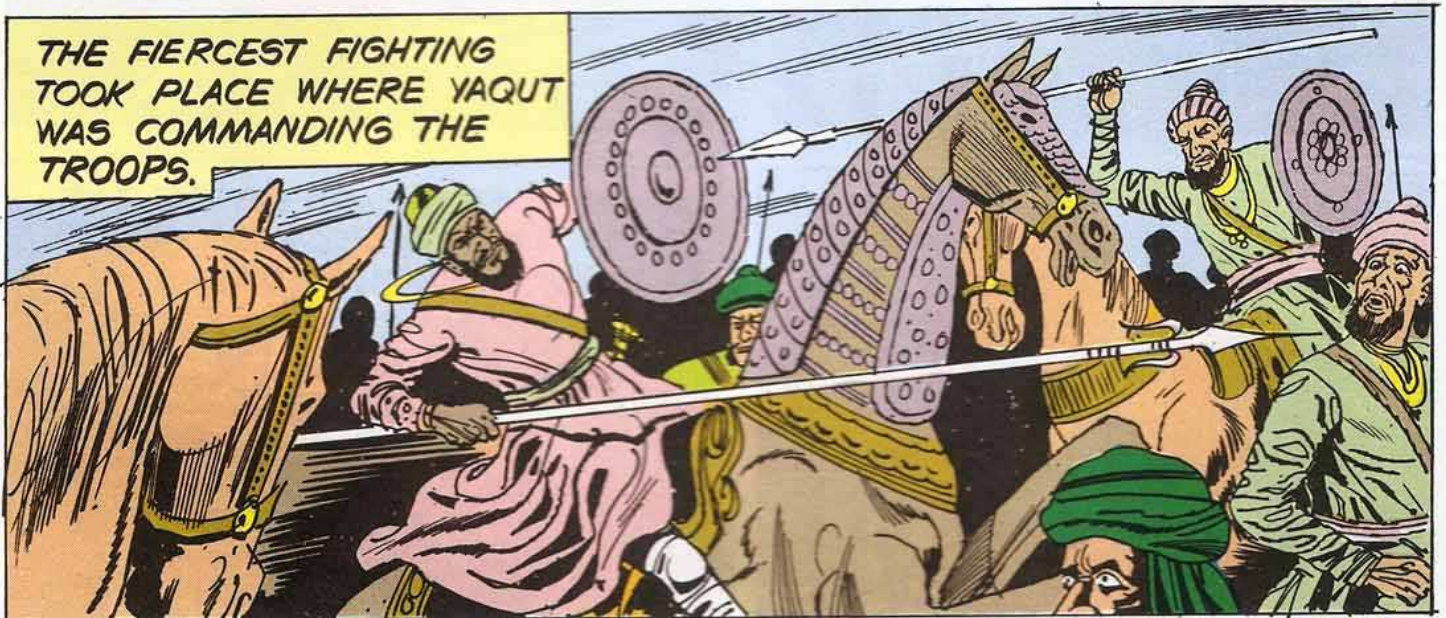


* THROUGHOUT THIS MONTH, MUSLIMS FAST FROM DAWN TO DUSK, WITHOUT DRINKING EVEN WATER.

THE BATTLE RAGED LONG AND FIERCE. BOTH SIDES FOUGHT BRAVELY.



THE FIERCEST FIGHTING TOOK PLACE WHERE YAQUT WAS COMMANDING THE TROOPS.



YAQUT'S FORCES WERE HOPELESSLY OUTNUMBERED.



DIE, ENEMY OF ALTUNIA!

WITH YAQUT KILLED, RAZIA'S PANIC-STRICKEN TROOPS SURRENDERED.



RAZIA WAS CAPTURED AND MADE A PRISONER OF ALTUNIA, THE MAN WHO HAD DECLARED HE LOVED HER

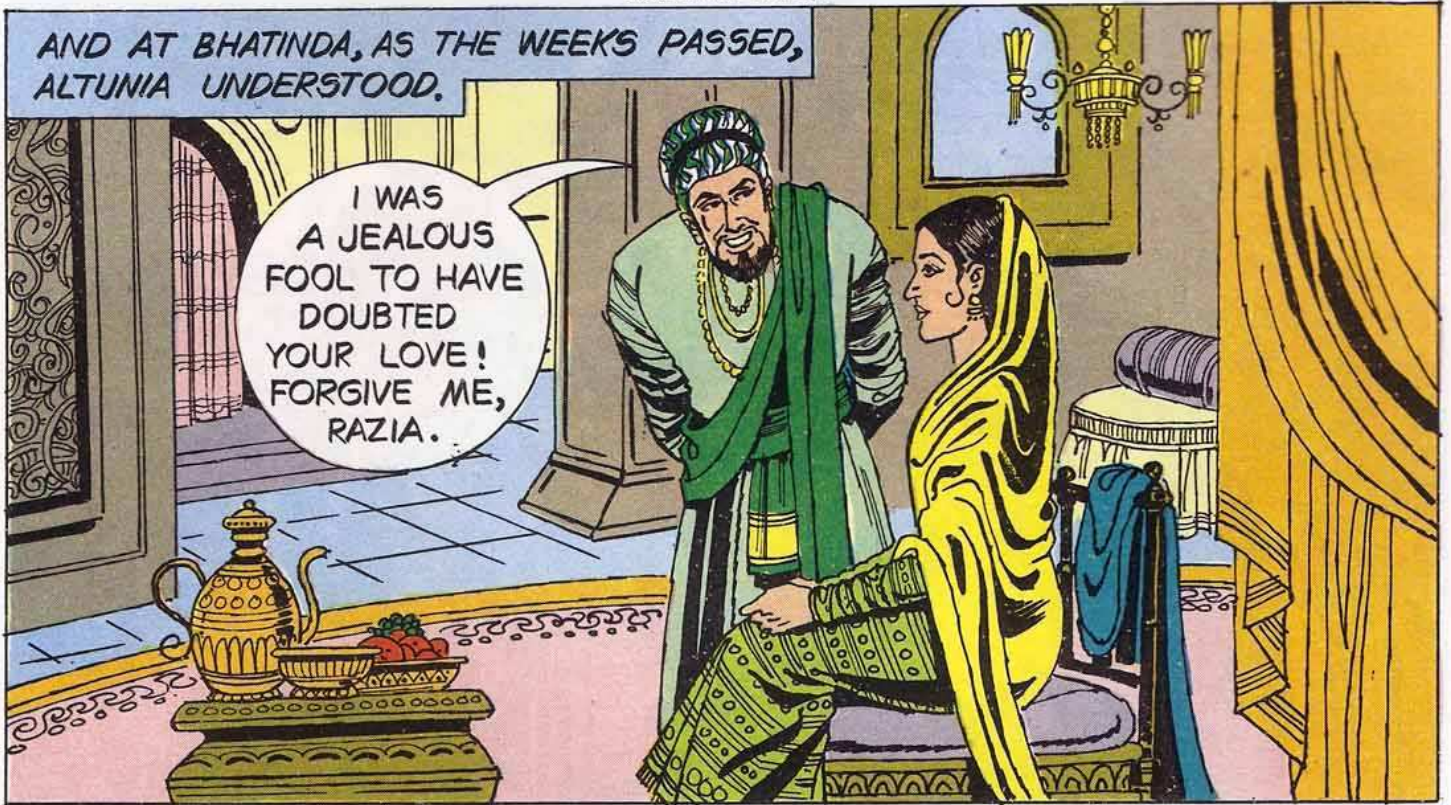


AT DELHI, ON RAZIA'S DEFEAT, THE FORTY AMIRS PROCLAIMED HER HALF-BROTHER BEHRAM, SULTAN.



AND AT BHATINDA, AS THE WEEKS PASSED,
ALTUNIA UNDERSTOOD.

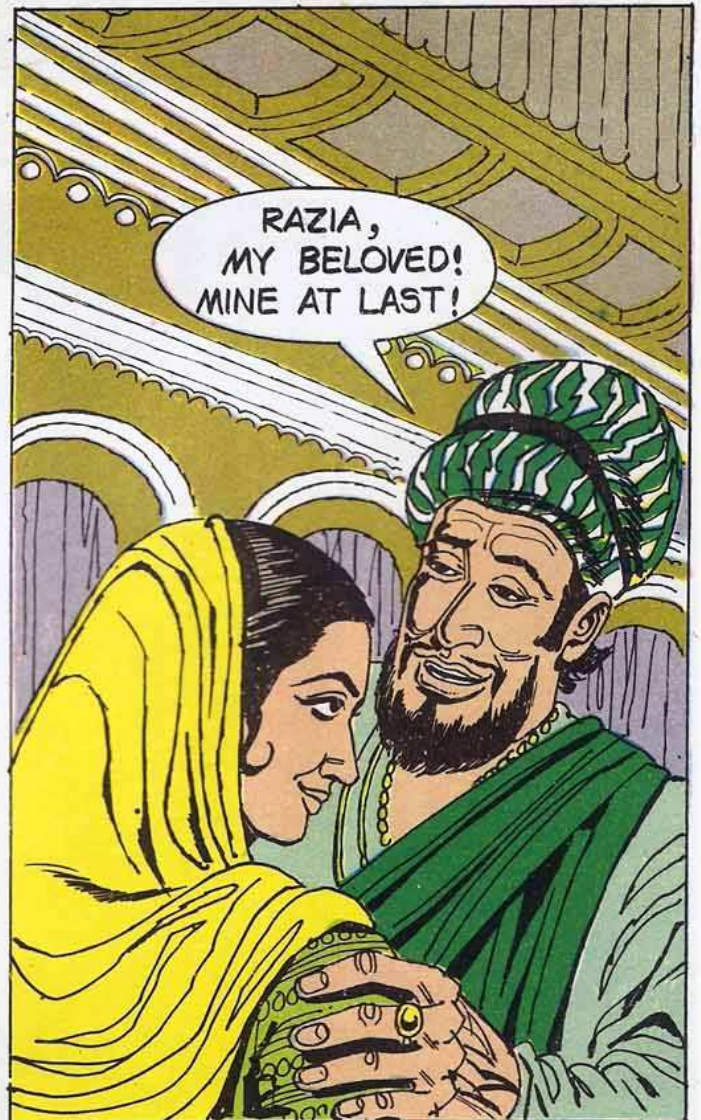
I WAS
A JEALOUS
FOOL TO HAVE
DOUBTED
YOUR LOVE!
FORGIVE ME,
RAZIA.



LET US
FORGET THE
PAST AND START
A NEW LIFE
TOGETHER.
I LOVE
YOU SO!



RAZIA,
MY BELOVED!
MINE AT LAST!

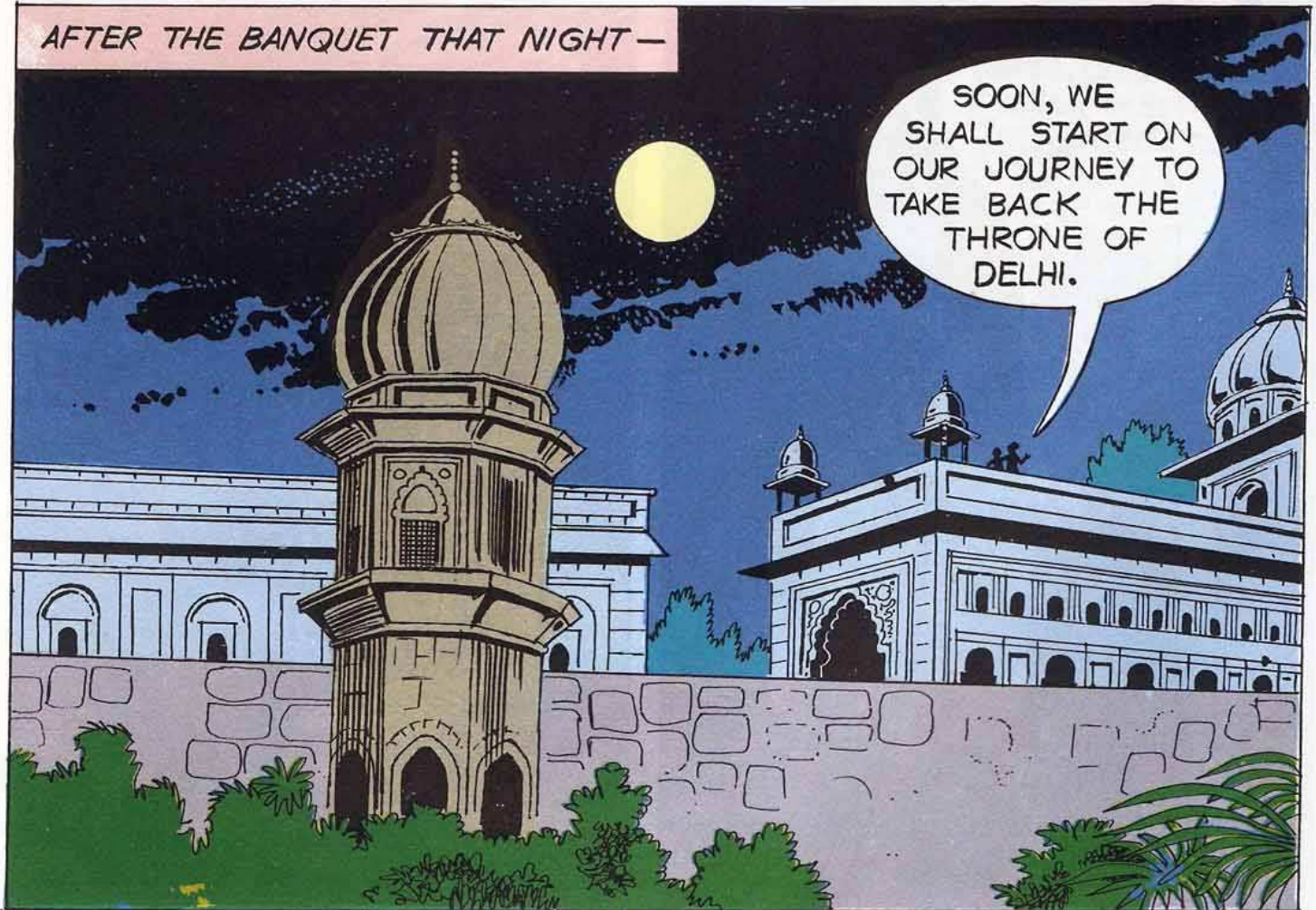


THE WEDDING OF RAZIA AND
ALTUNIA WAS CELEBRATED
WITH GREAT POMP IN
BHATINDA.



AFTER THE BANQUET THAT NIGHT —

SOON, WE
SHALL START ON
OUR JOURNEY TO
TAKE BACK THE
THRONE OF
DELHI.

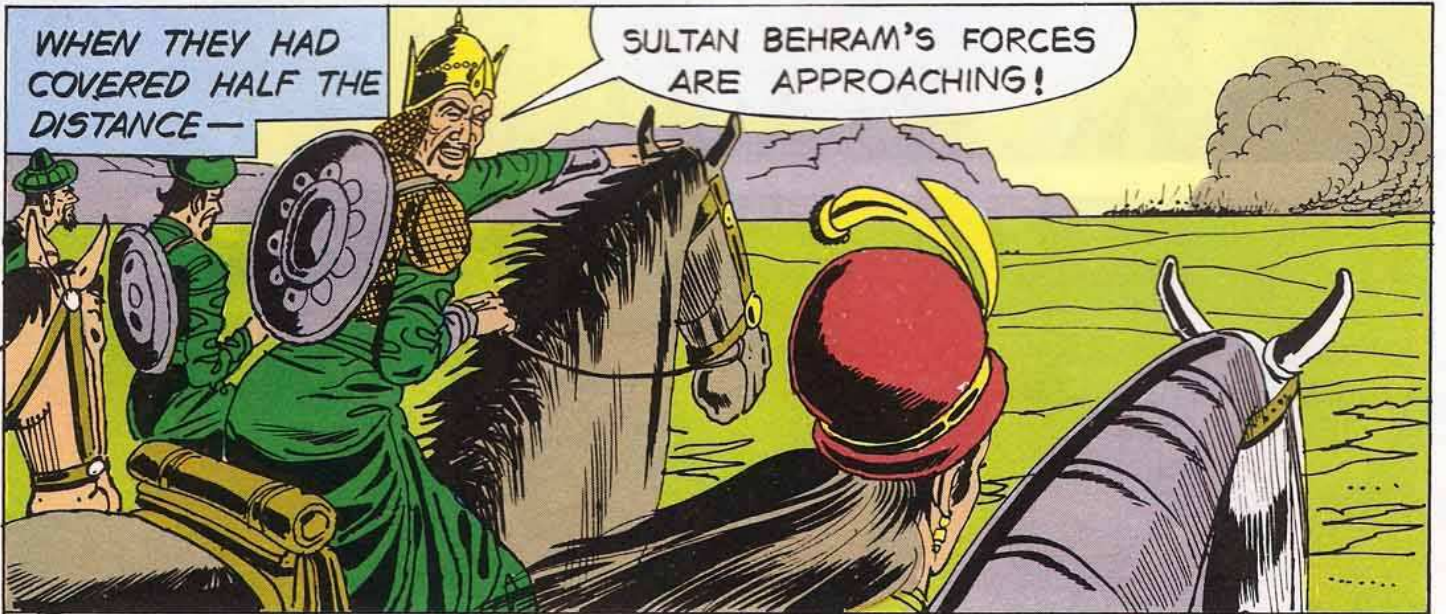


A FEW DAYS LATER,
THEY RODE FORTH.

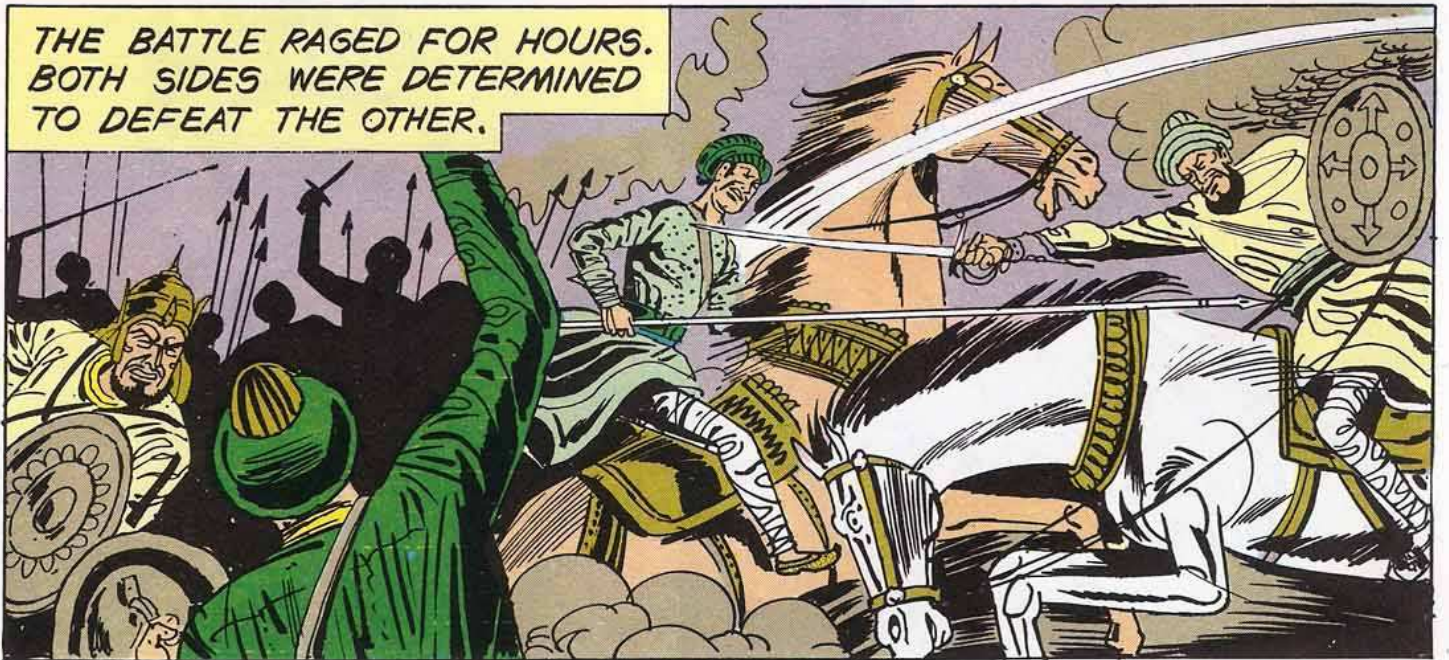


WHEN THEY HAD
COVERED HALF THE
DISTANCE —

SULTAN BEHRAM'S FORCES
ARE APPROACHING!



THE BATTLE RAGED FOR HOURS.
BOTH SIDES WERE DETERMINED
TO DEFEAT THE OTHER.



BUT BEHRAM'S FORCES, MORE IN NUMBER AND BETTER EQUIPPED, GRADUALLY STARTED GAINING OVER THE TROOPS OF RAZIA AND ALTUNIA.



IN THE HEAT OF THE BATTLE, BEHRAM'S EMISSARY APPROACHED ALTUNIA.

SURRENDER, YOUR EXCELLENCY! SULTAN BEHRAM GRANTS YOU FULL PARDON!

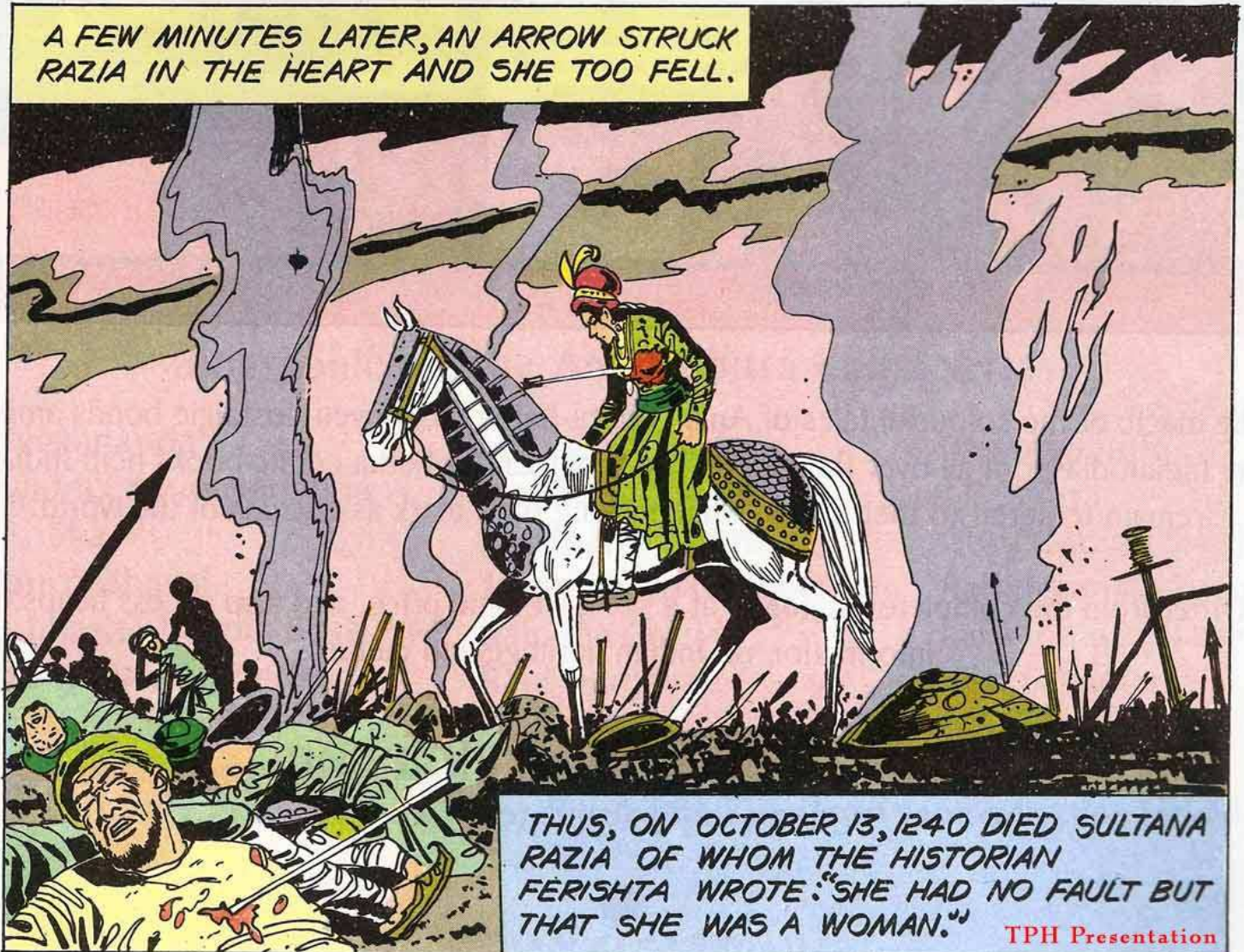


I WOULD RATHER DIE FOR RAZIA THAN LIVE FOR THE SULTAN.





A FEW MINUTES LATER, AN ARROW STRUCK RAZIA IN THE HEART AND SHE TOO FELL.



THUS, ON OCTOBER 13, 1240 DIED SULTANA RAZIA OF WHOM THE HISTORIAN FERISHTA WROTE: "SHE HAD NO FAULT BUT THAT SHE WAS A WOMAN."

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Mahmud Ghazni was followed a century and a half later by Muhammad Ghorī. His defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan at the Second Battle of Tarain in 1192 AD brought the whole of northern India under Muslim rule. The credit for this achievement was due to Muhammad Ghorī's slaves, notably Kutub-ud-din Aibak, the first Slave King to rule over Delhi.

His slave and son-in-law Iltutmish succeeded Aibak in 1210 AD. Before his death in 1236 AD, Iltutmish made his daughter Razia heir to the kingdom and the successor to the throne. When objections were raised, he is said to have replied, "My sons are devoted to the pleasures of youth, and not one of them is qualified to be a king. After my death you will find that there is no one more competent to guide the state than my daughter."

His prophetic words came true. In the three and a half years of her rule, Razia demonstrated that she was a great monarch. She was wise, just and generous, a benefactor to her kingdom, a dispenser of justice, the protector of her subjects and the leader of her armies. This Amar Chitra Katha encapsulates the inspiring tale of Sultana Razia.

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