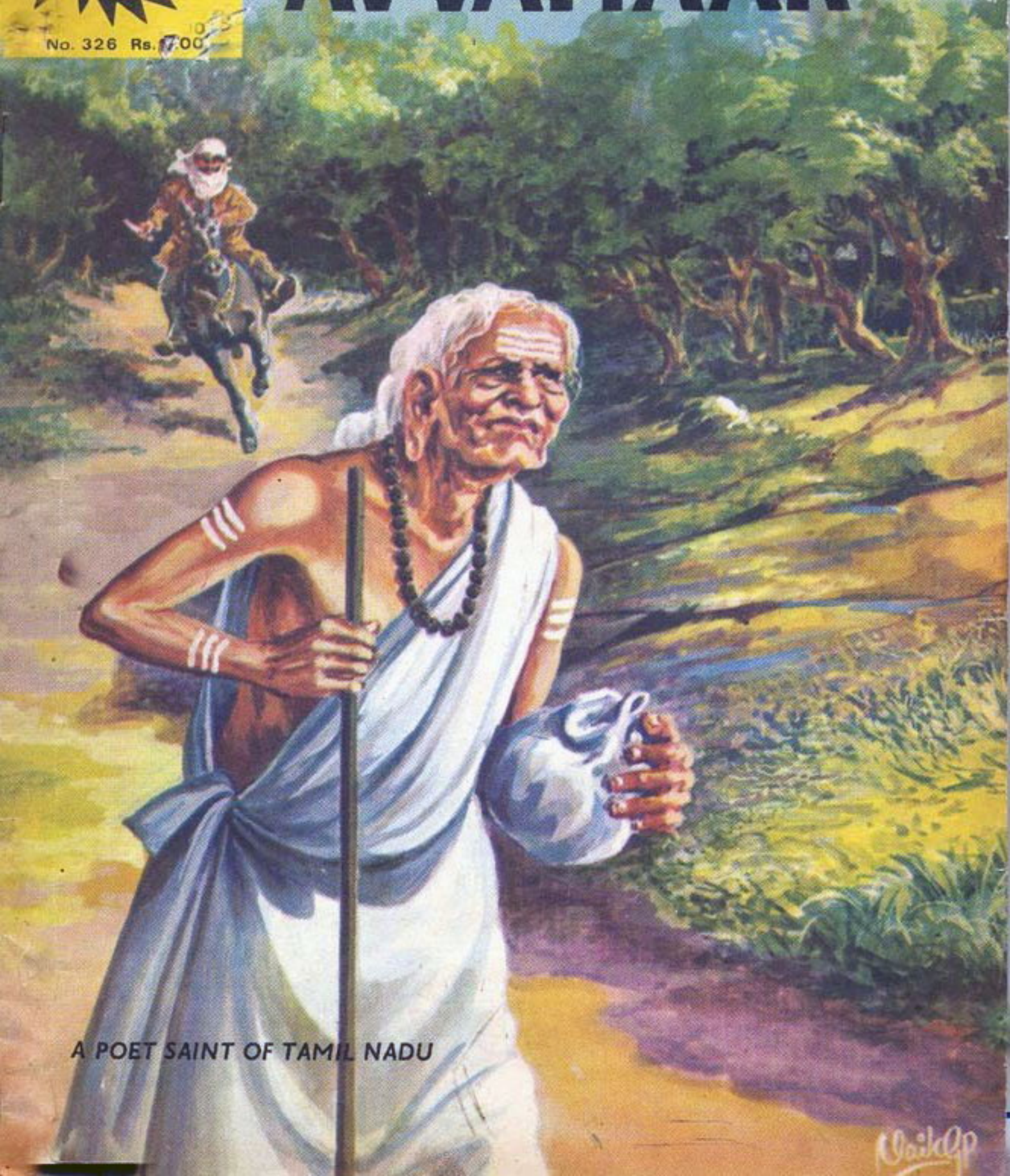




No. 326 Rs. 7.00

TALES OF AVVAIYAAR



A POET SAINT OF TAMIL NADU

Waidop

Amar Chitra Katha

No. 326 January 15, 1985

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Tales of Avvaiyaar

Avvaiyaar, the renowned Tamil poetess, came to be revered as a saint. She had no one home and travelled where her fancy took her. This brought her into contact with all sorts of people. Poor and rich, commoner and king, were alike to her.

A story is told of the origins of Avvaiyaar. It is said that she was born of a low-caste mother and a high-caste father. The father forced the mother to abandon the child. but this story is not accepted by all.

There is also a popular belief that the cowherd boy who came to the aid of the hungry Avvaiyaar was Lord Muruga (or SUBRAHMANYA) himself come down to meet the great poetess. And, of course, it was only before this deity in disguise that Avvaiyaar acknowledged defeat.

Avvaiyaar's poems are vigorous and zestful and full of earthy common sense and wisdom. They also provide telling insights into human nature.

Because of labour unrest, we have not been able to maintain the printing and despatch schedules of Amar Chitra Katha and Tinkle from the middle of October 1984. The inconvenience caused to our subscribers and our readers is regretted.

We hope to be back on schedule in the near future.

~ Publishers.

OUR NEXT RELEASE ON
February 1, 1985

TAPATI

AVVAI AND PAARI

ONE DAY, A VISITOR WAS ANNOUNCED TO THE COURT OF KING PAARI OF PARAMBU NAAD.



THE REVERED
POET AVVAIYAAR
IS HERE TO SEE
YOU, SIR.



AVVAI! DEAR
AVVAI! YOU HAVE COME
AT LAST TO THREAD
YOUR SWEET VERSES
LIKE PEARLS ON THE
BARE STRING OF
MY LIFE!



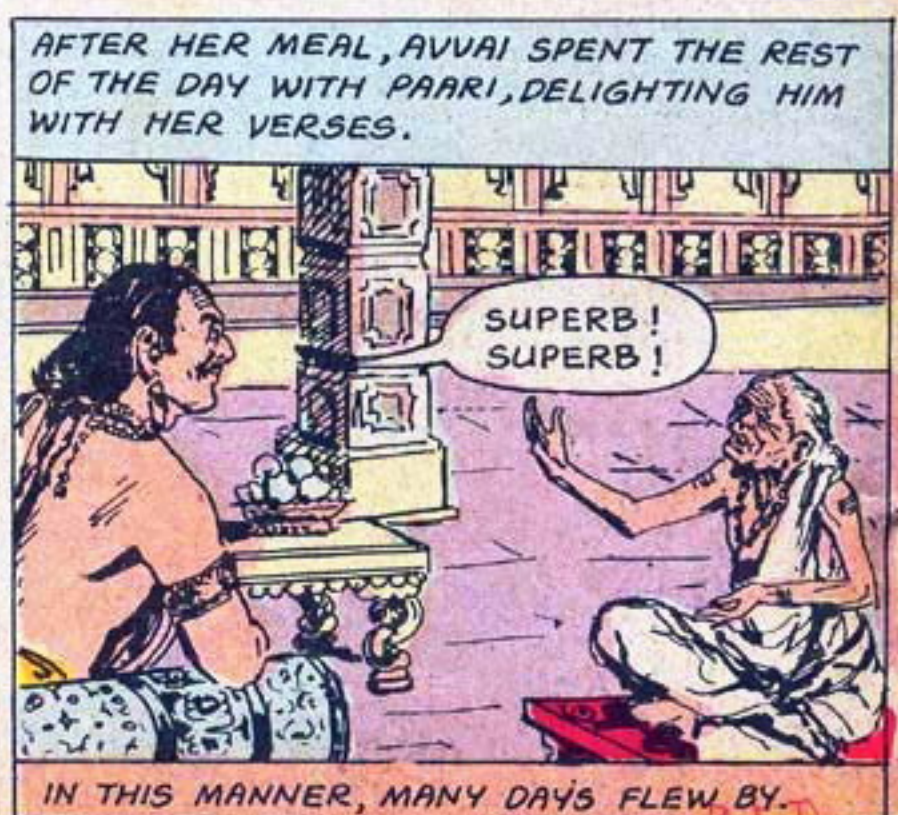
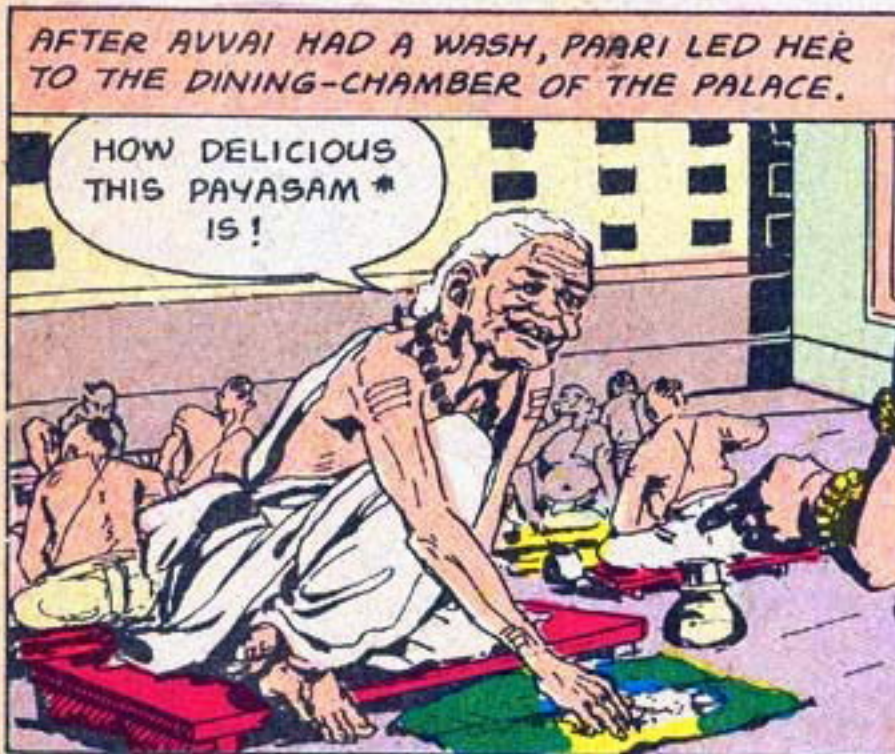
I AM SO HAPPY
TO SEE YOU AGAIN,
PAARI.

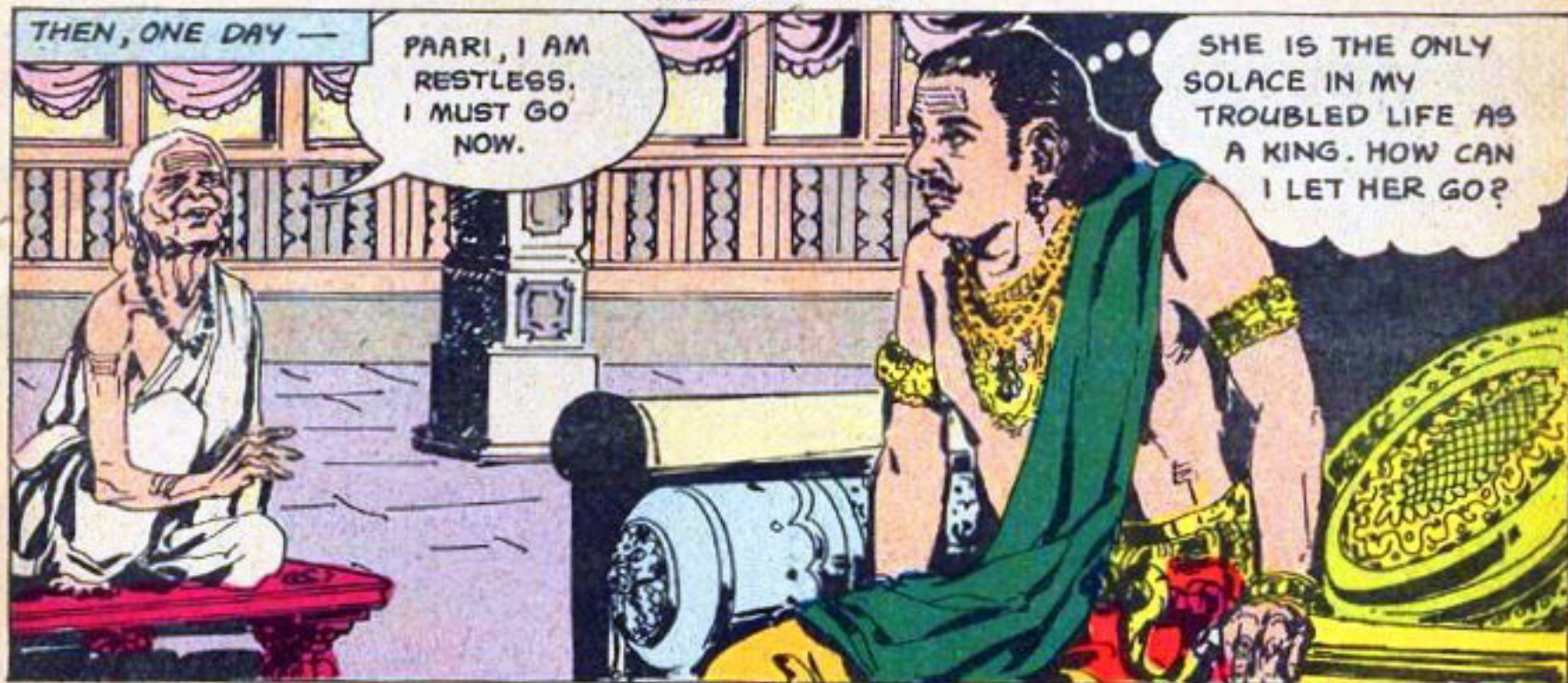
BUT YOU
LOOK TIRED.



ANY KING WOULD
GLADLY PROVIDE
YOU WITH A CAR-
RIAGE. BUT, NO, YOU
WILL INSIST ON
WEARING OUT
YOUR FEET.

WHAT
AM I
TO DO?





... A FIGURE RODE TOWARDS HER...



... AND —

HAND OVER ALL
YOU HAVE, IF YOU
VALUE YOUR
LIFE!

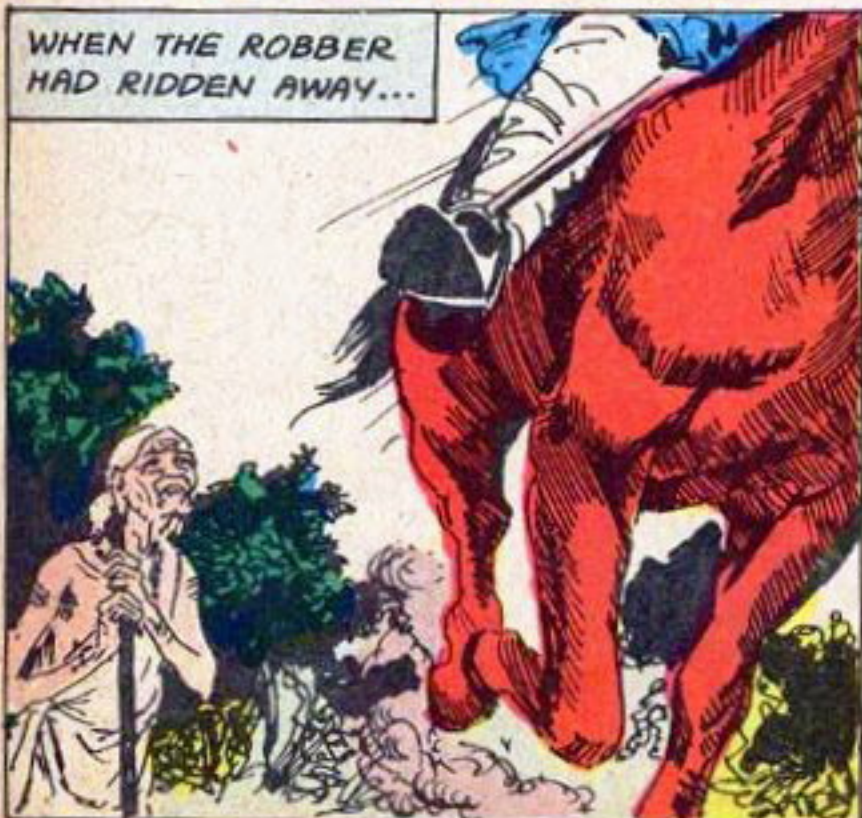
WHAT!
A ROBBER IN
PAARI'S
LAND?



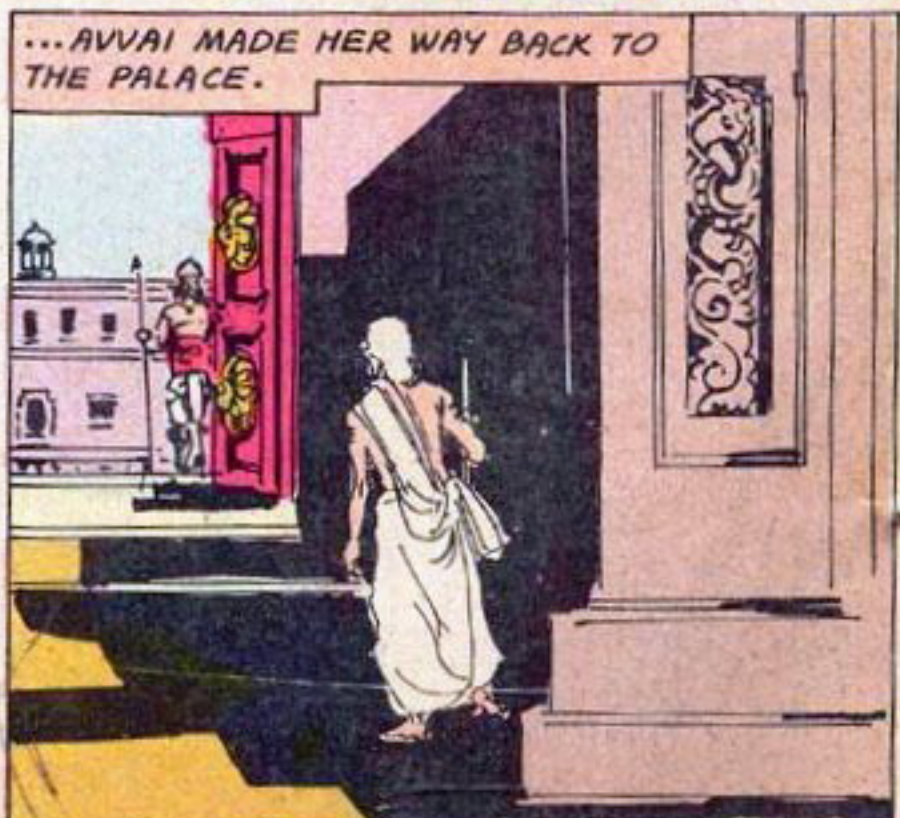
ALL RIGHT, HERE
YOU ARE! BUT YOUR
KING WILL HEAR OF
THIS, BELIEVE ME.

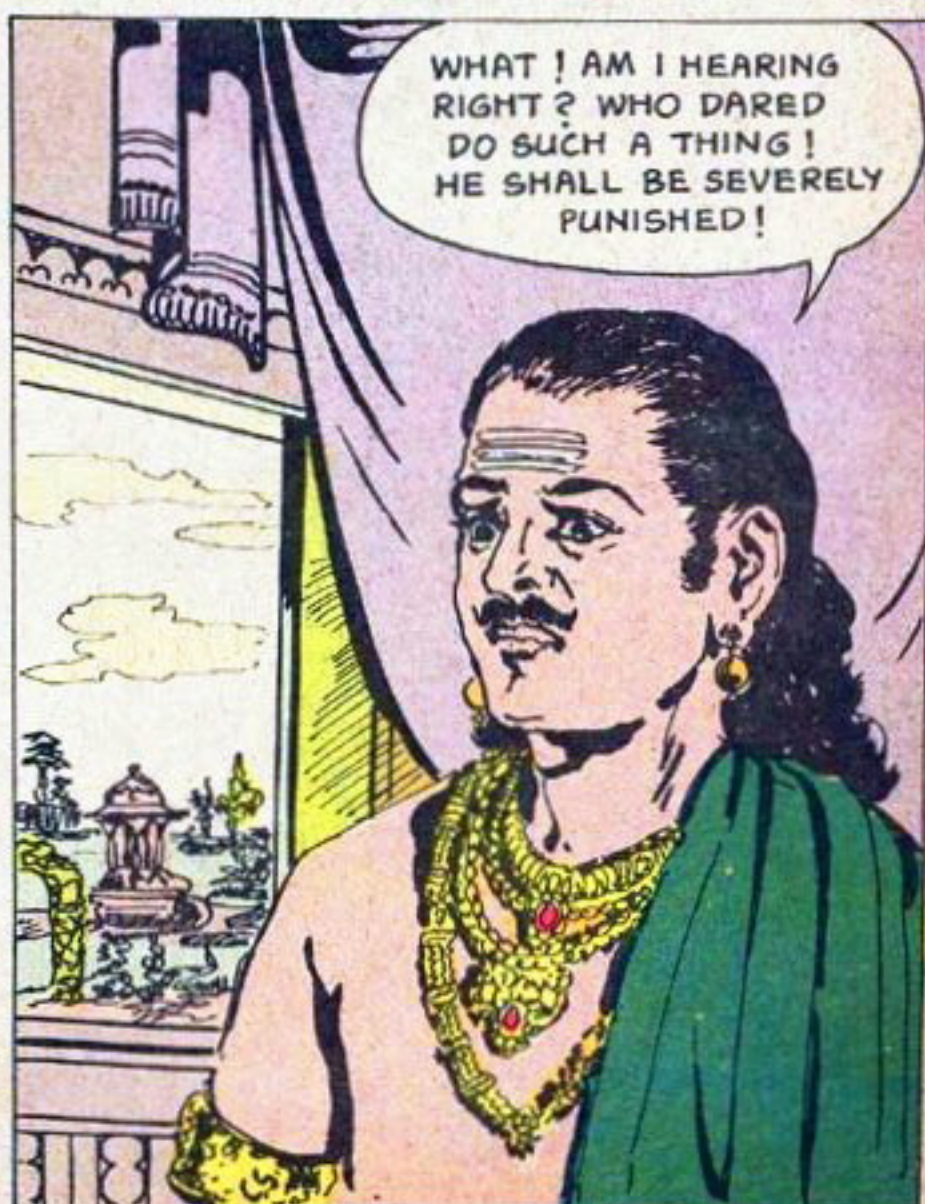
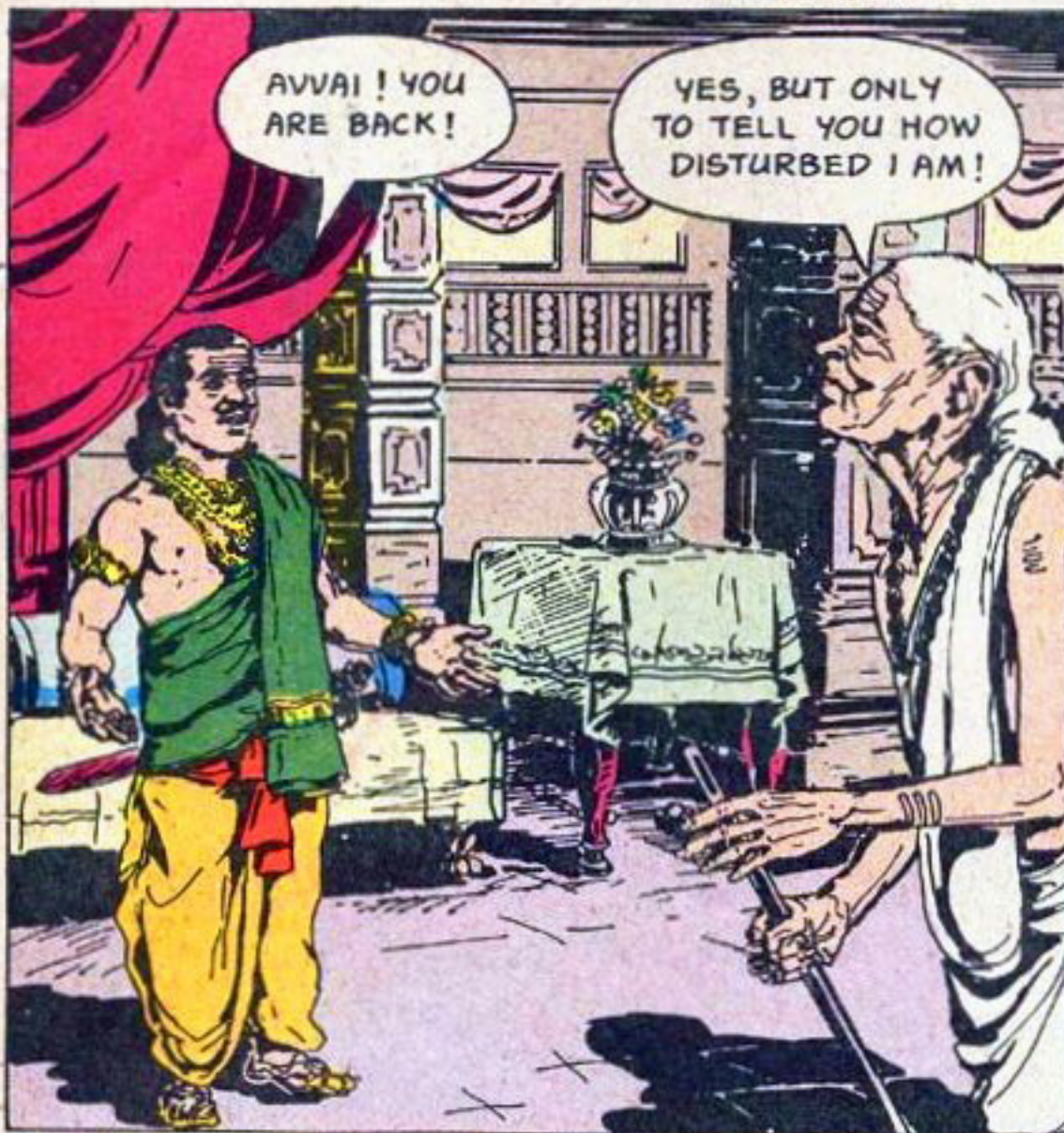


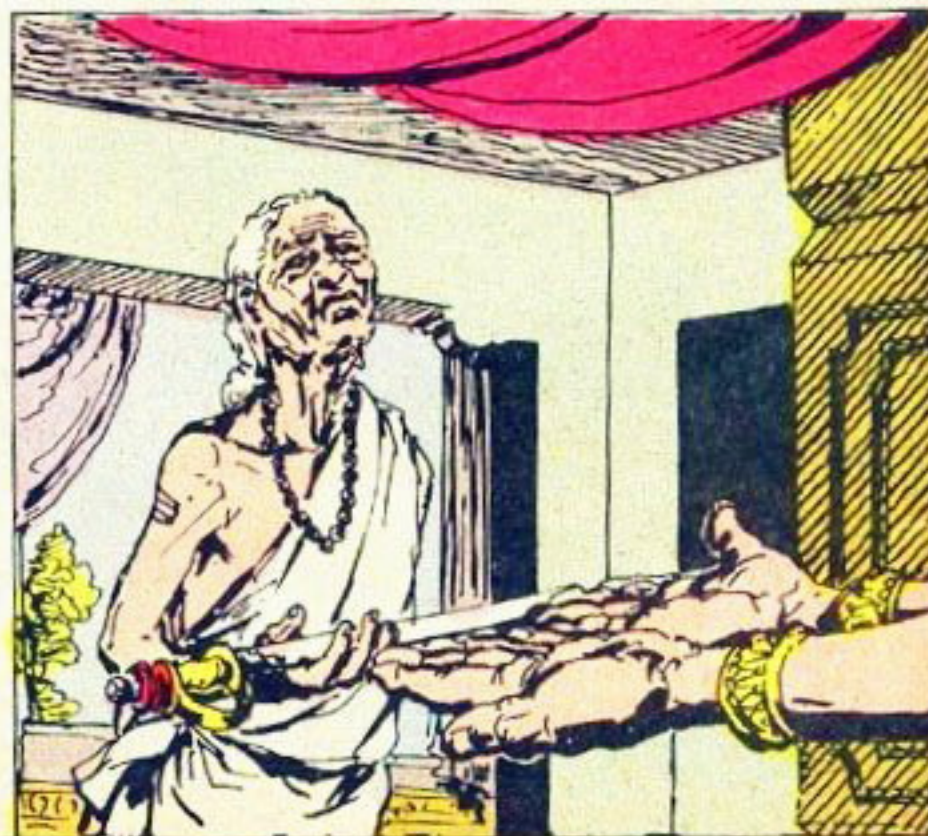
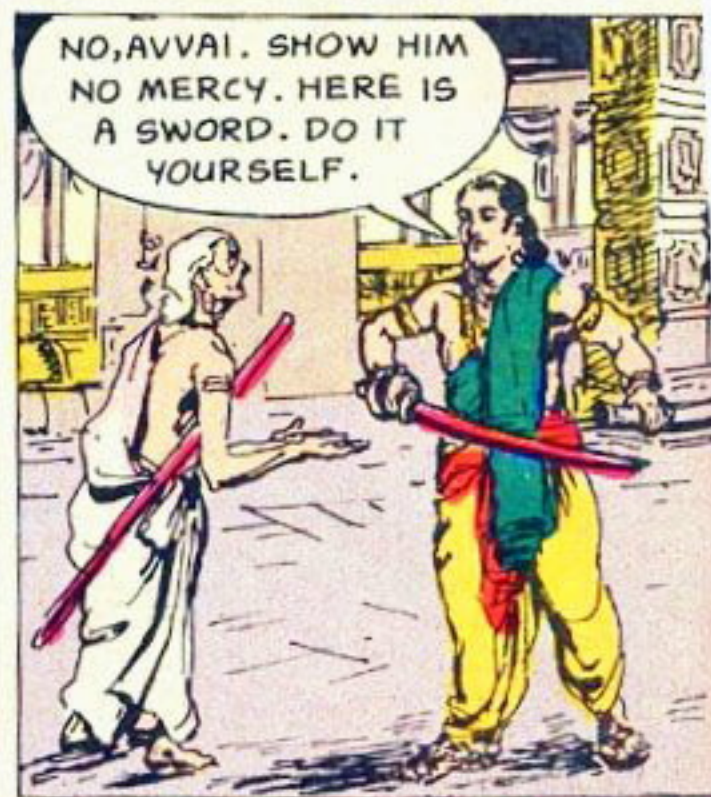
WHEN THE ROBBER
HAD RIDDEN AWAY...

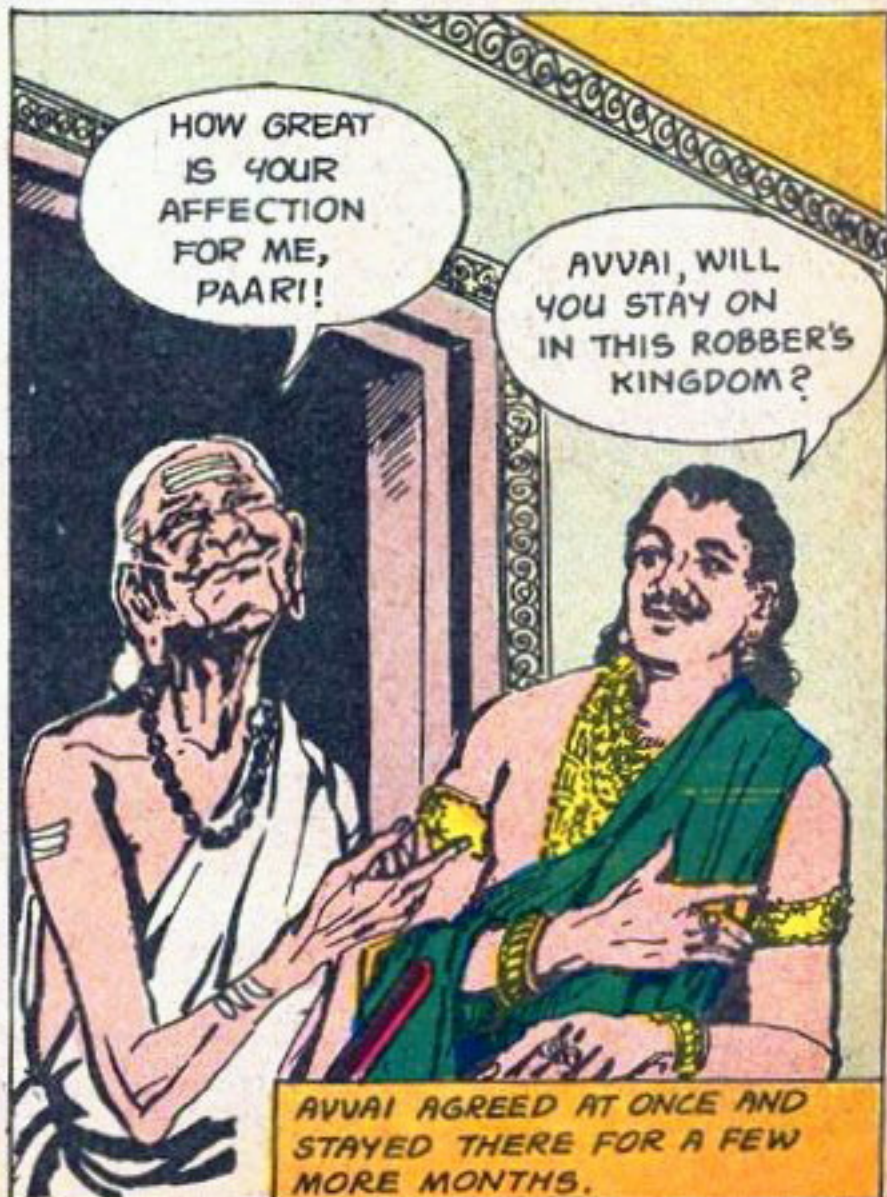
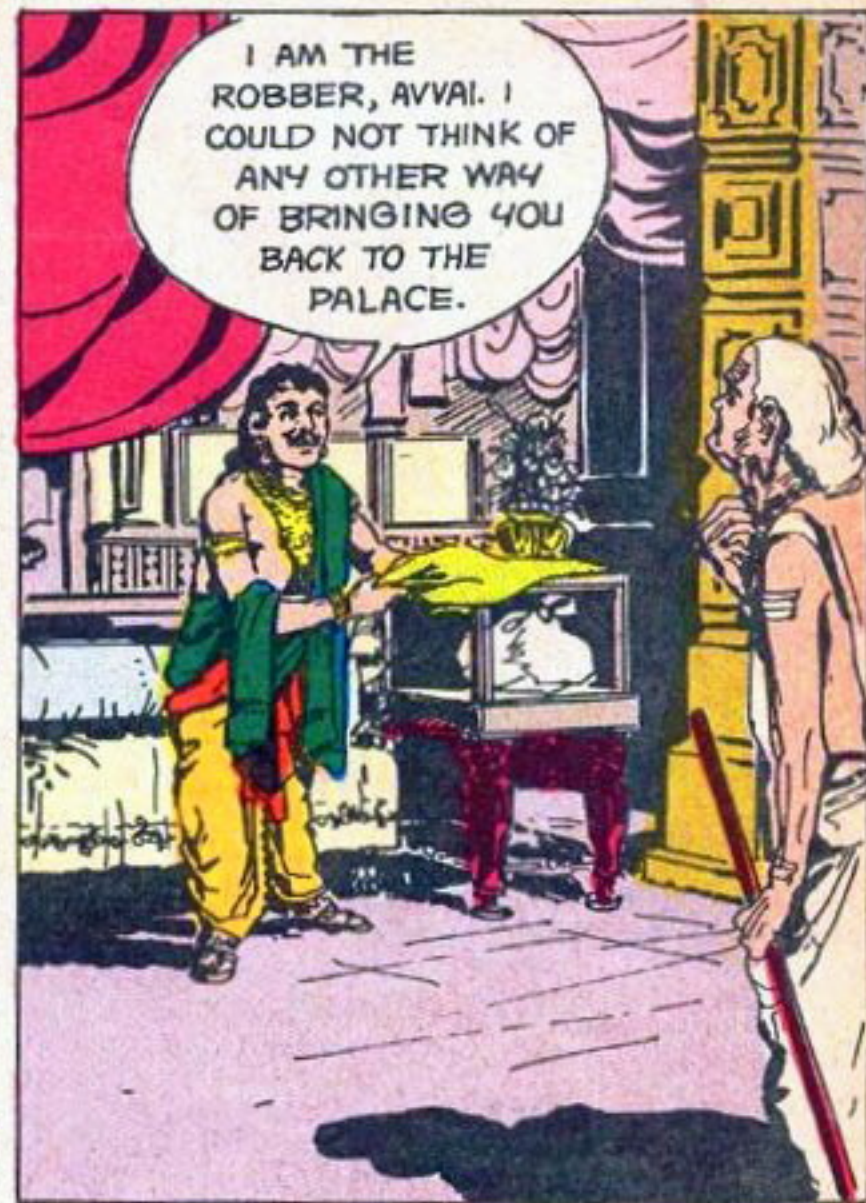


... AVVAI MADE HER WAY BACK TO
THE PALACE.

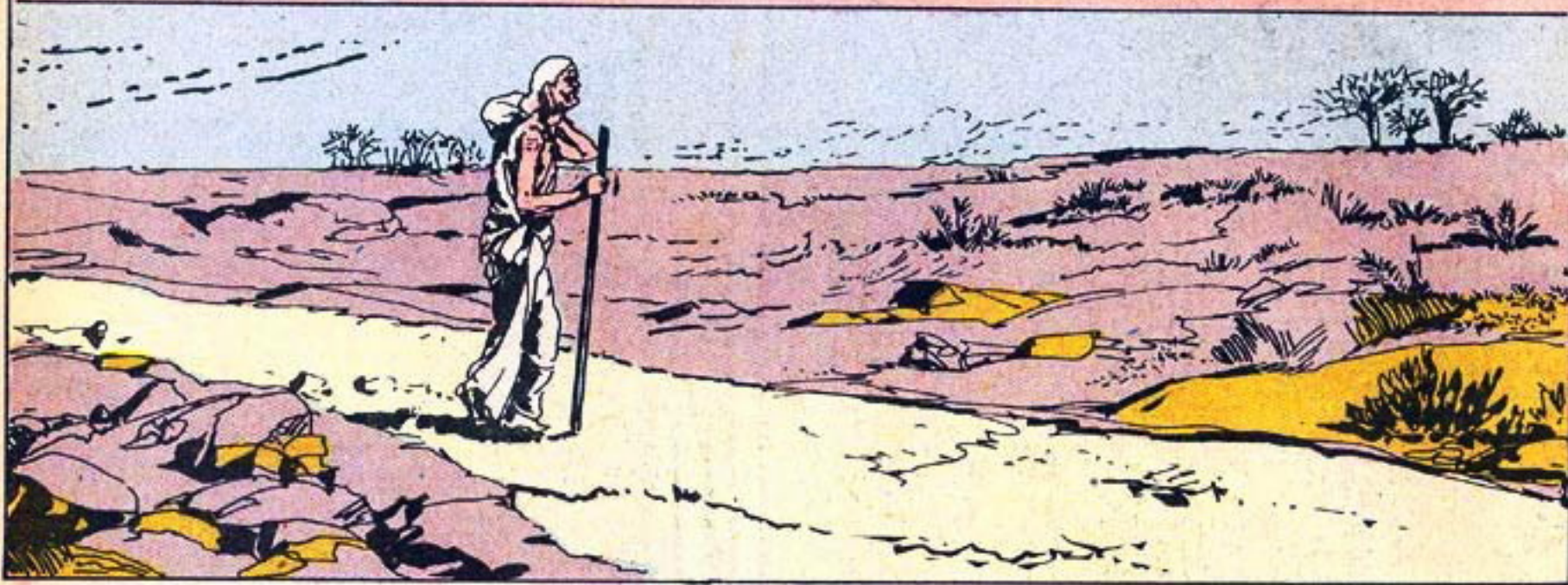








THEN, LEAVING PAARI'S KINGDOM, AVVAI CONTINUED ON HER WANDERINGS. ONE DAY, HER PATH LED HER THROUGH A VAST STRETCH OF BARREN COUNTRY.



AS SHE WALKED ON, HUNGER AND THIRST BEGAN TO TORMENT HER.

NOT A SINGLE
FRUIT-BEARING TREE!
NOT A STREAM OF WATER
IN SIGHT!

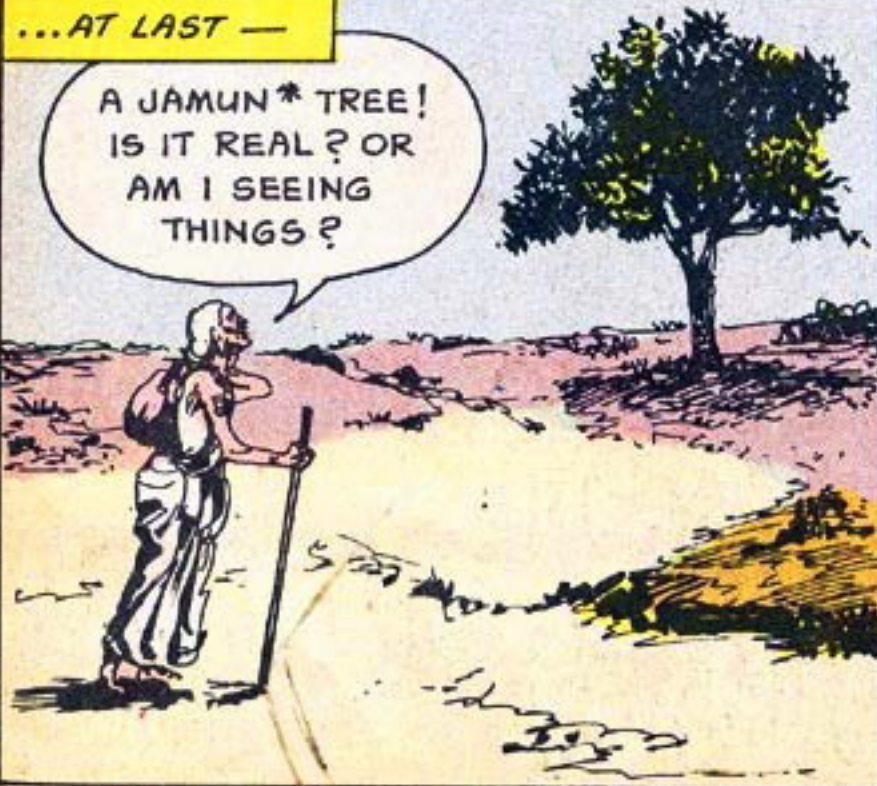


SOMEHOW SHE STAGGERED ON TILL...



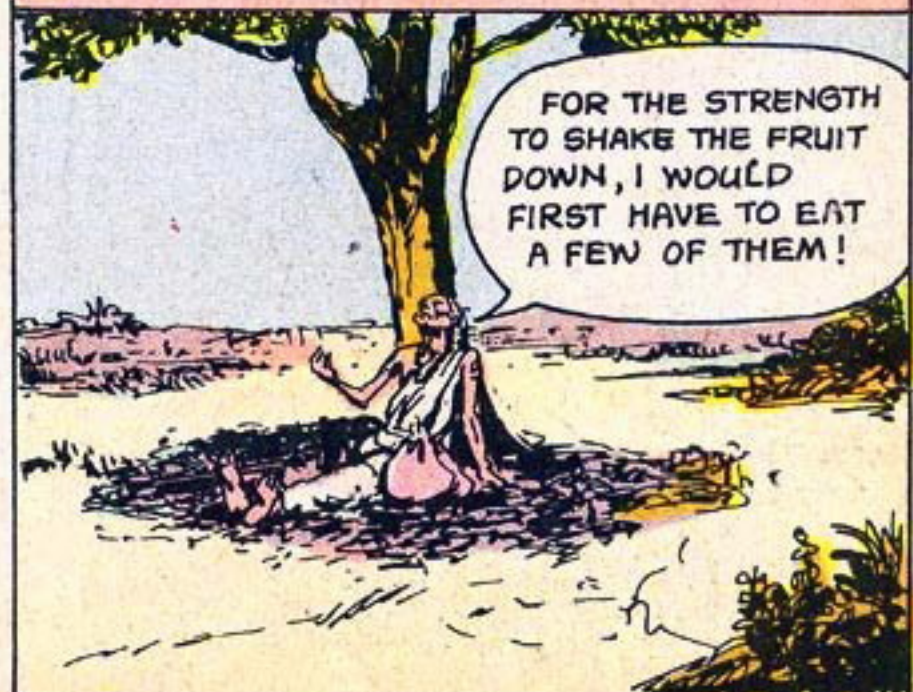
...AT LAST —

A JAMUN* TREE!
IS IT REAL? OR
AM I SEEING
THINGS?



AVVAI APPROACHED THE TREE AND SAT EXHAUSTED UNDER IT.

FOR THE STRENGTH
TO SHAKE THE FRUIT
DOWN, I WOULD
FIRST HAVE TO EAT
A FEW OF THEM!



* A LUSCIOUS DARK VIOLET FRUIT

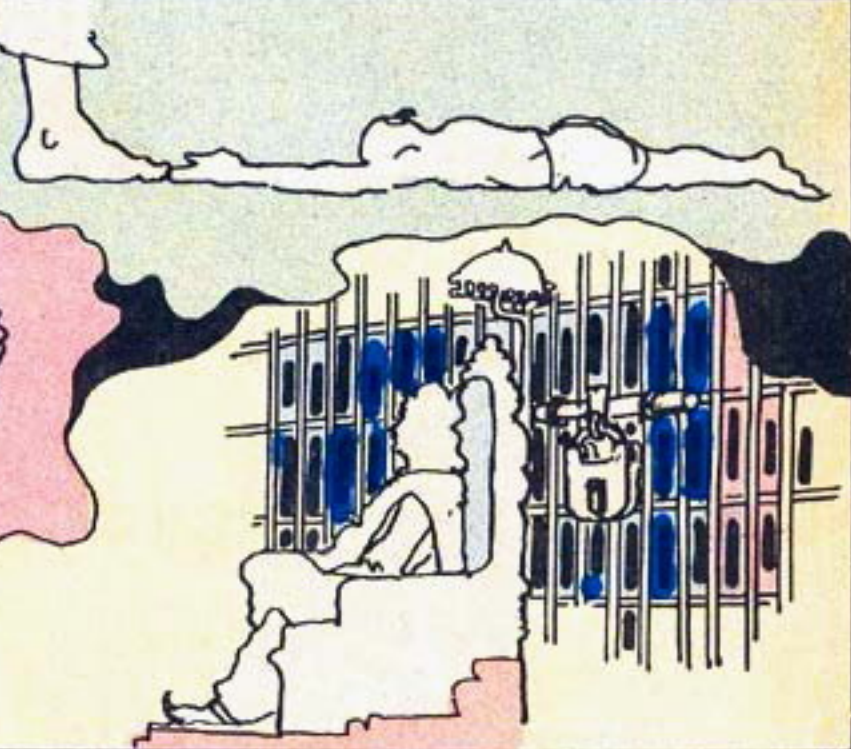
EVEN THERE, TRAPPED IN SUCH A SITUATION, AVVAI DID NOT LOSE HER SENSE OF HUMOUR.

NOW, WHEN THIS STOMACH CANNOT GET A THING TO EAT, HOW KEENLY IT HUNGERS FOR YOUR PAYASAM, PAARI!



"O MY BAG OF TROUBLES, IF I ASK YOU TO MANAGE WITHOUT FOOD FOR ONE DAY, YOU CANNOT. YET, WHEN YOU COULD HAVE TAKEN IN ENOUGH FOR DAYS TO COME, YOU DID NOT AGREE. NEVER WILL YOU UNDERSTAND MY TROUBLES. YOU ARE A DIFFICULT ONE TO LIVE WITH!"

WE BOW TO THE UNDESERVING, WE CROSS THE SEAS, WE PUT ON MANY ACTS, WE ENSLAVE PEOPLE AND RULE OVER THEM, WE SING THE PRAISES OF ALL KINDS OF MEN—ALL FOR A MEASURE OF RICE FOR THIS TYRANT.



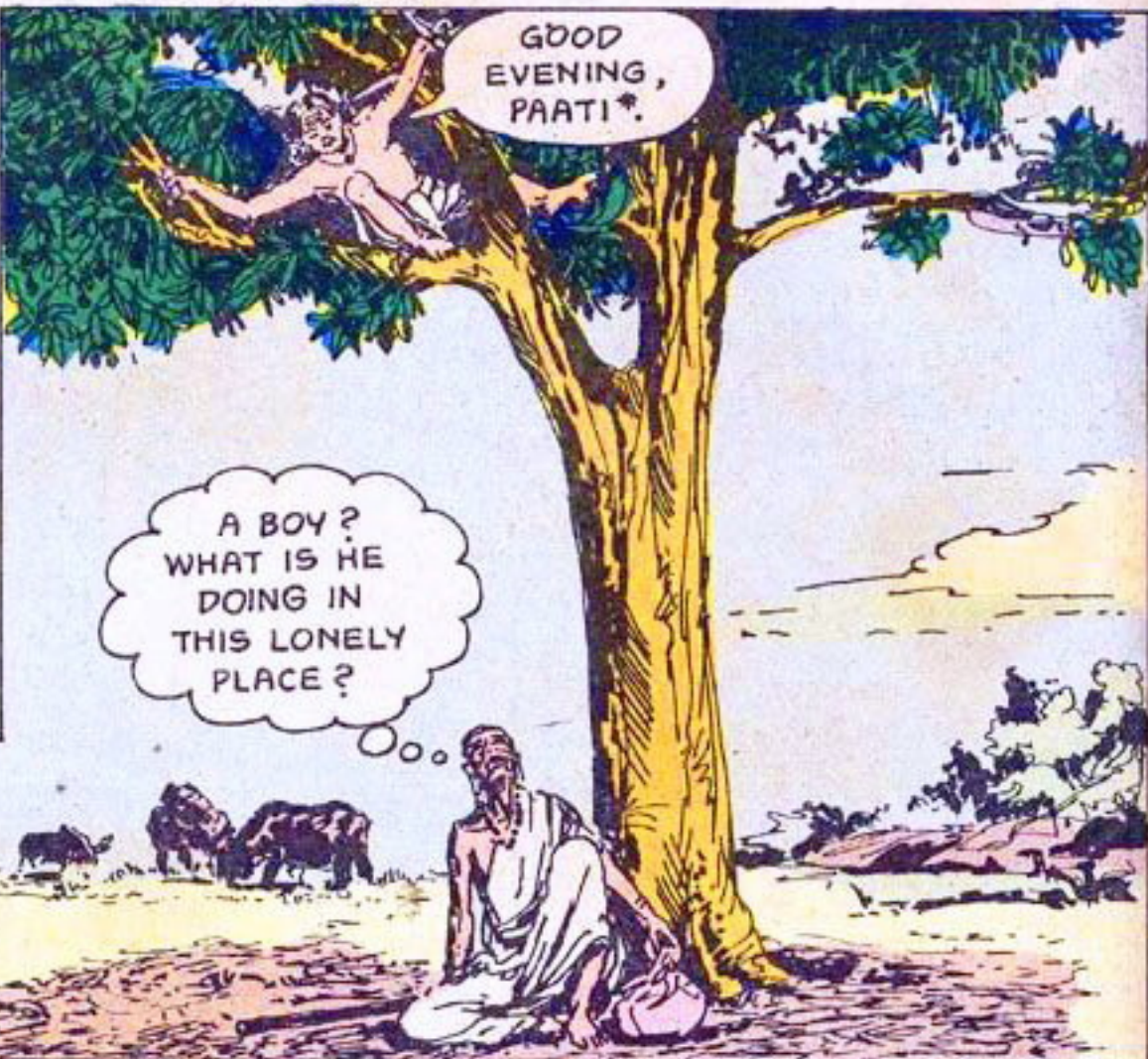
FOR A MEASURE OF RICE AND FOR FOUR CUBITS OF CLOTH TO COVER HIS BODY, MAN MUST THINK AND THINK OF HIS EIGHTY CRORE DEVICES.



AVVAI LAUGHED AT THESE VERSES, COMPOSED ON AN EMPTY STOMACH!



THEN SHE BEGAN TO MUSE.
SUDDENLY A VOICE BROKE
INTO HER THOUGHTS.



GOOD
EVENING,
PAATI.

A BOY?
WHAT IS HE
DOING IN
THIS LONELY
PLACE?



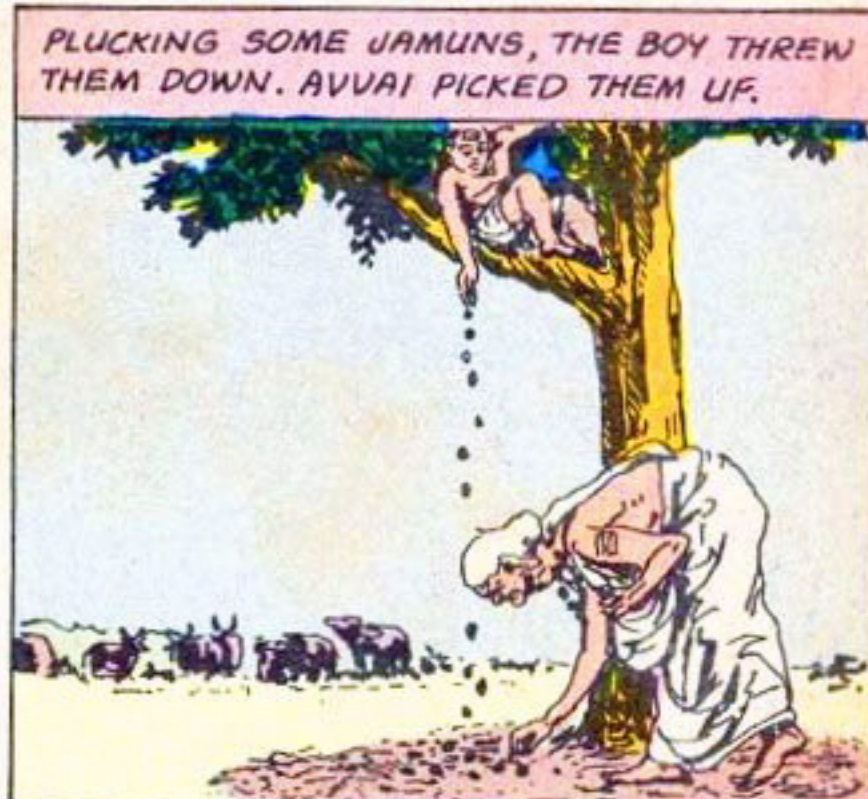
MY CHILD,
I AM TIRED AND
HUNGRY. WILL
YOU THROW ME
SOME FRUIT?

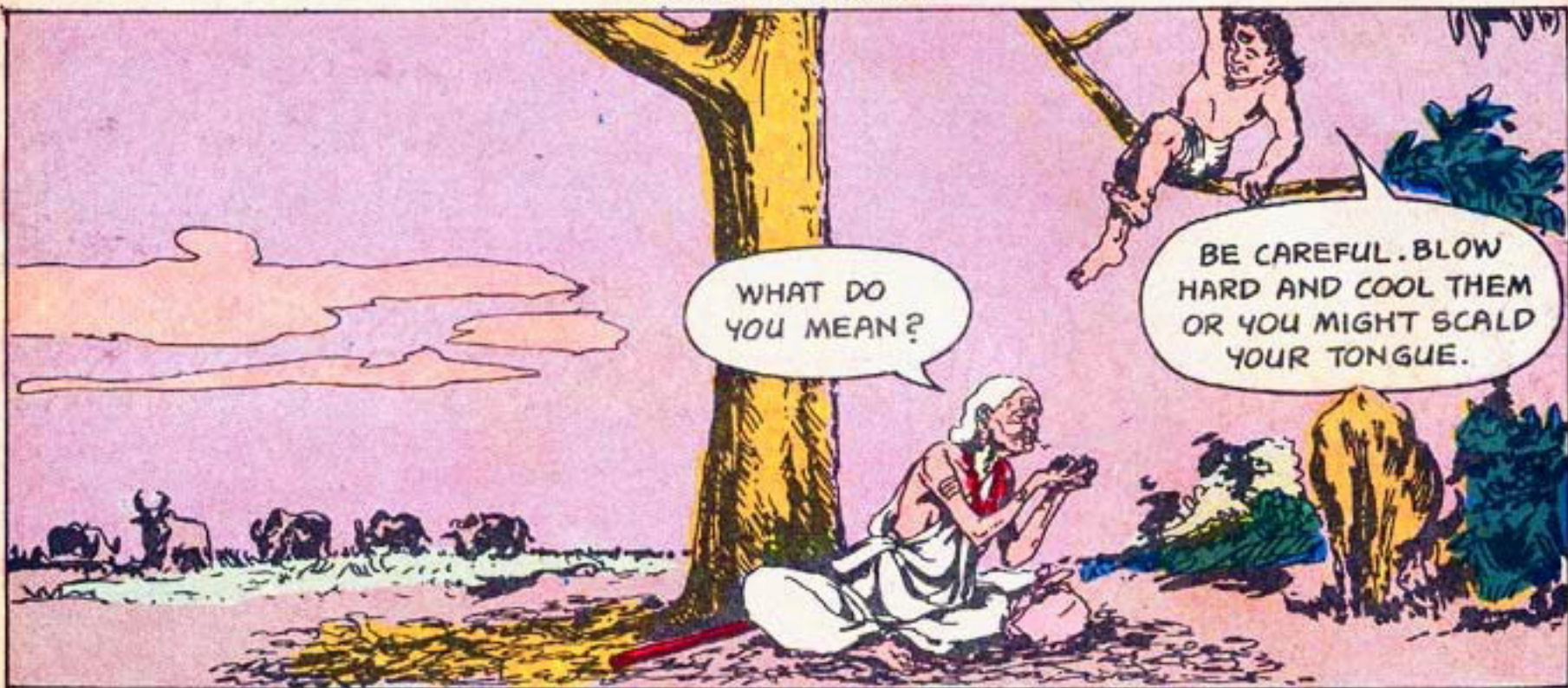


CERTAINLY,
PAATI! DO YOU
WANT HOT FRUIT
OR COLD?



HOT FRUIT
OR COLD? HE'S
TEASING ME.
I WILL
HUMOUR HIM.



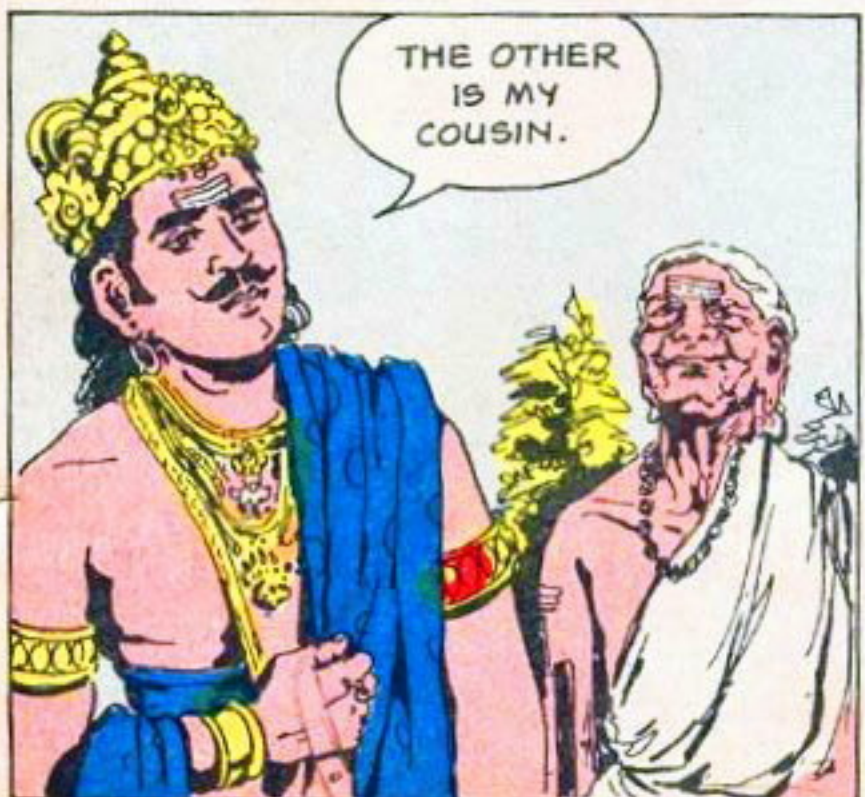


SUDDENLY, AVVAI UNDERSTOOD THAT THE BOY HAD MADE A PUN ON THE WORD "HOT".



THE SOLE CONSIDERATION

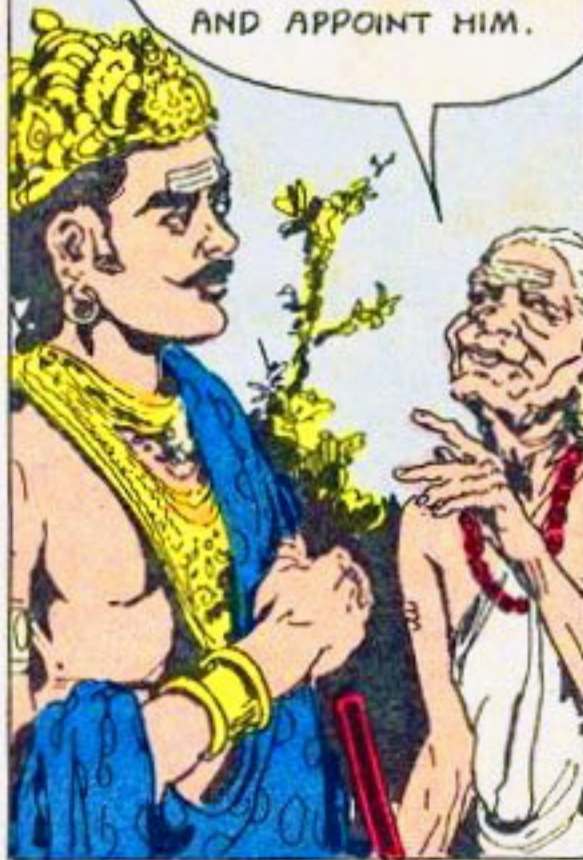
AVVAI OFTEN VISITED THE COURTS OF KINGS WHERE SHE WAS WELCOMED WITH WARMTH AND HEARD WITH RESPECT.



THE DISEASE WE ARE BORN WITH COULD KILL US. ON THE OTHER HAND THE HERB THAT GROWS IN THE DISTANT JUNGLE CURES US.



MERIT SHOULD BE THE SOLE CONSIDERATION IN APPOINTING A PERSON TO A POSITION OF RESPONSIBILITY. FIND OUT WHICH OF THEM IS MORE CAPABLE, JUST AND TRUSTWORTHY AND APPOINT HIM.



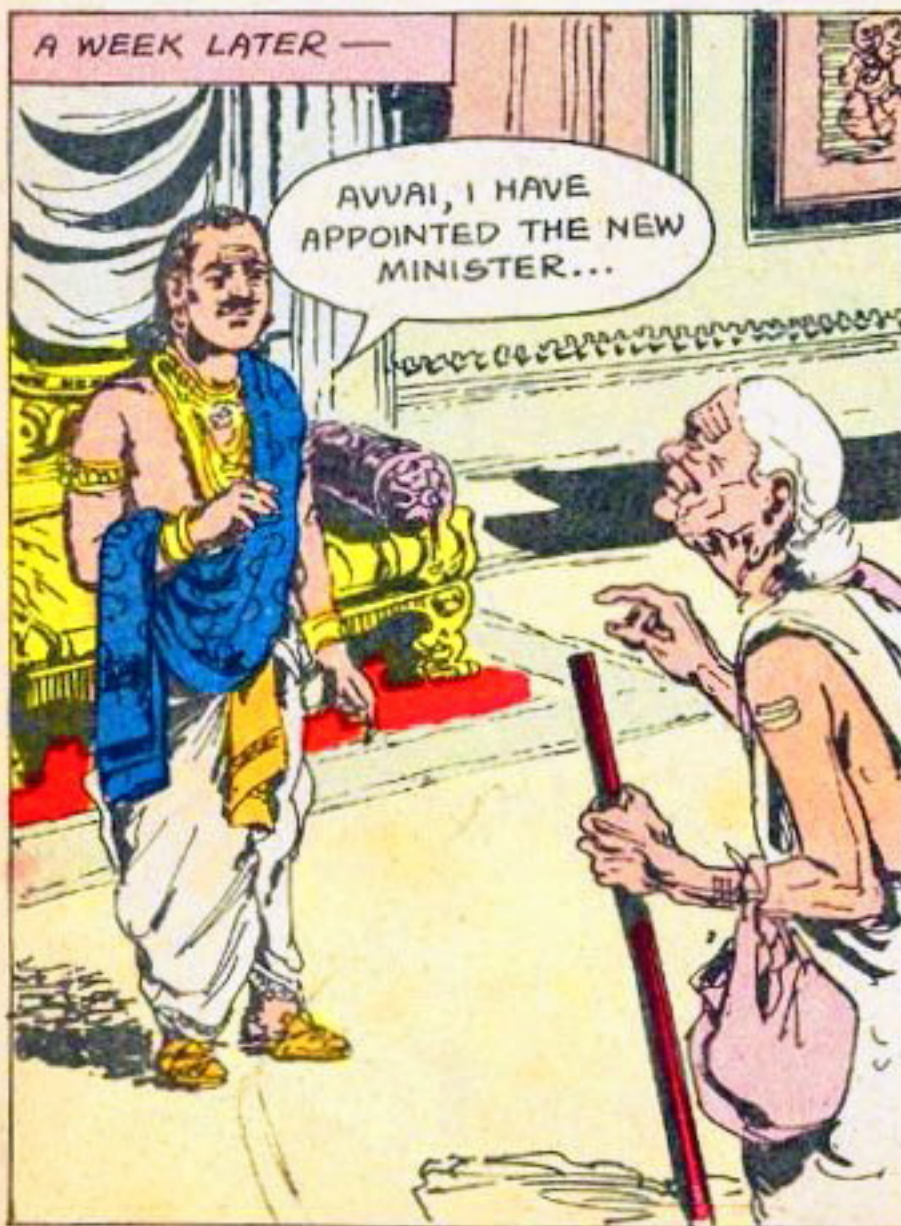
I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU, AVVAI. WHEN I SEEK ADVICE NO ONE SPEAKS OUT FREELY...

THAT IS ANOTHER QUALITY YOU MUST LOOK FOR IN THE MINISTER YOU APPOINT.



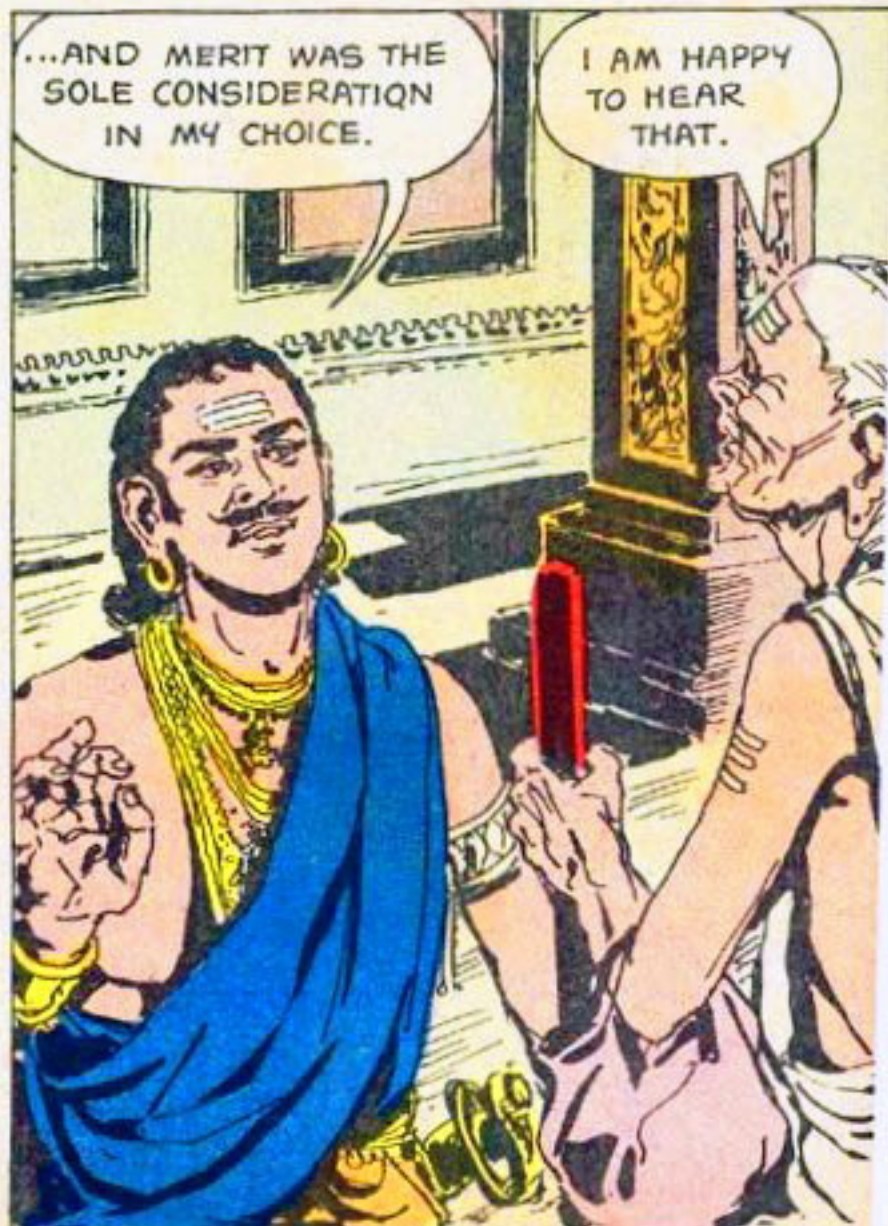
A WEEK LATER —

AVVAI, I HAVE APPOINTED THE NEW MINISTER...



...AND MERIT WAS THE SOLE CONSIDERATION IN MY CHOICE.

I AM HAPPY TO HEAR THAT.



VARAPPUYARA

ONCE AVVAI WAS INVITED TO A KINGDOM WHERE AN ASSEMBLY OF POETS WAS TO BE HELD. AS USUAL, SHE WALKED ALL THE WAY THERE.



THIS SPRING, TOO, IS DRYING UP.

WILL THE DROUGHT THIS TIME MEAN THE DEATH OF US ALL?



THE CROPS ARE RUINED. WHAT SHALL WE DO FOR FOOD?



AVVAI REACHED THE PALACE AS THE POETS BEGAN TO READ OUT THEIR COMPOSITIONS.

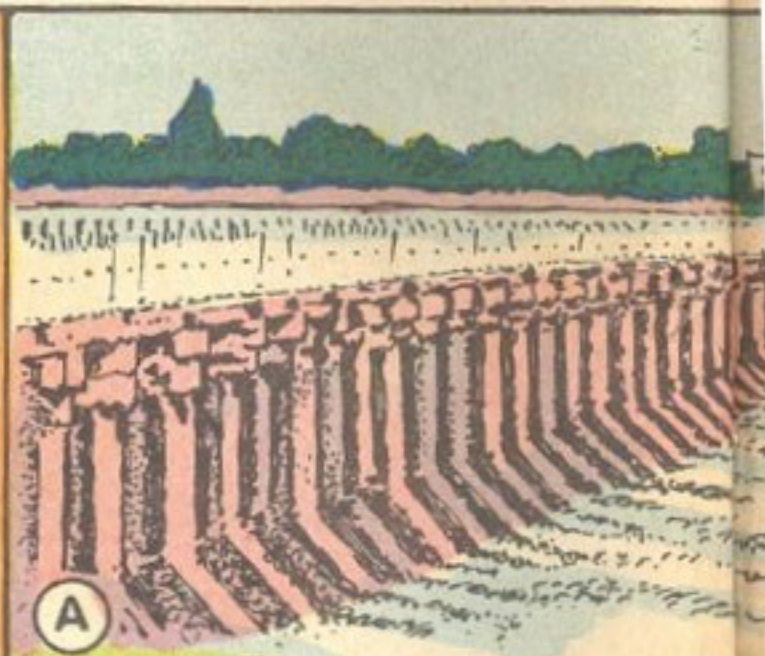
ONE AFTER ANOTHER THEY PRAISED THE KING AND BLESSED HIM WITH A LONG LIFE AND A PROSPEROUS REIGN.





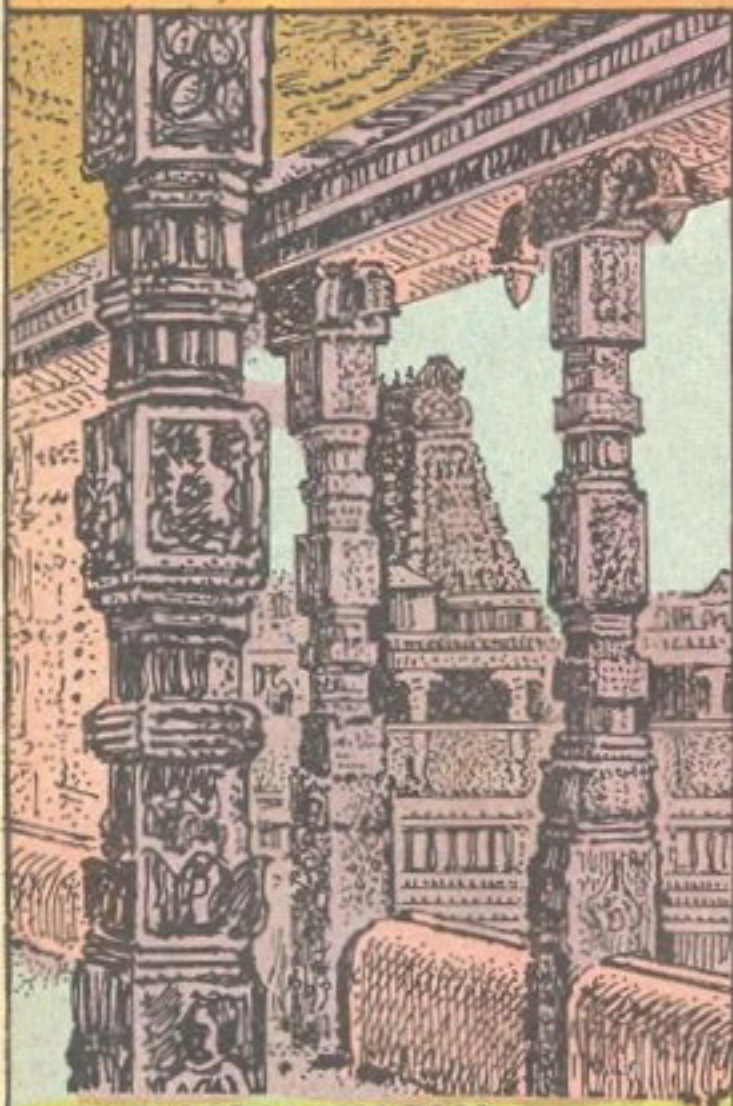
Quiz INDIA -16

Compiled by : Swarn Khandpur
Illustrated by : S.K. Parab



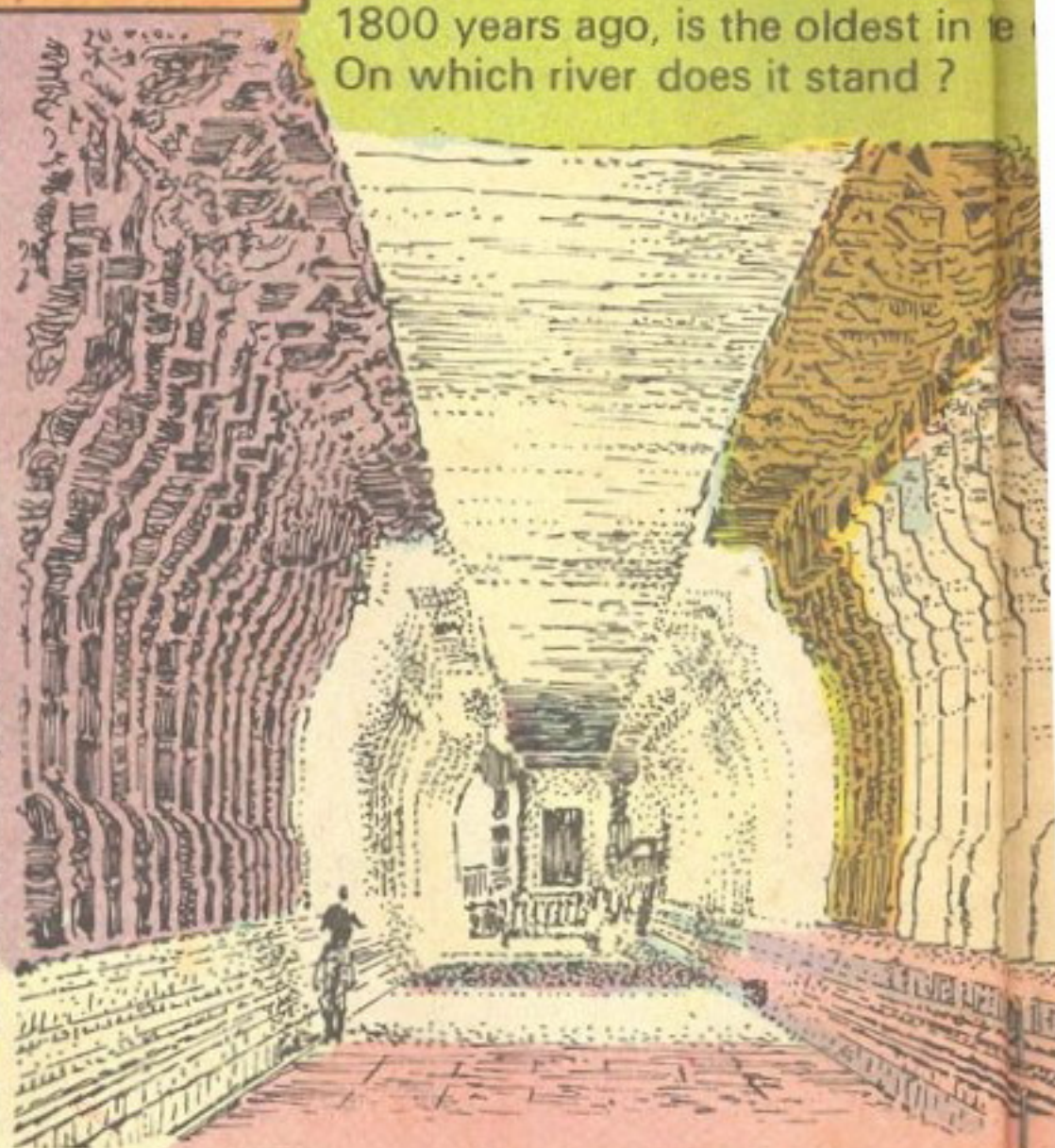
A

This dam, built by the Chola king K
1800 years ago, is the oldest in te
On which river does it stand ?



DID YOU KNOW...

...that in the Hall of a Thousand
Pillars of the Madurai Temple,
there are carved pillars which
when tapped produce musical
notes ?

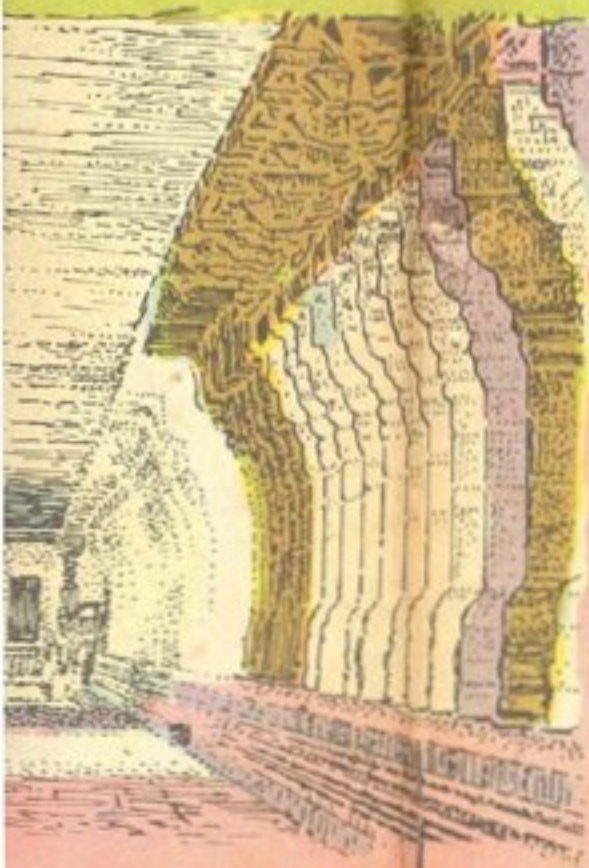


B

This 1220-metre-long temple corridor, the long
in our country, belongs to a temple on a island
the Palk Straits. What is the name of the temple ?



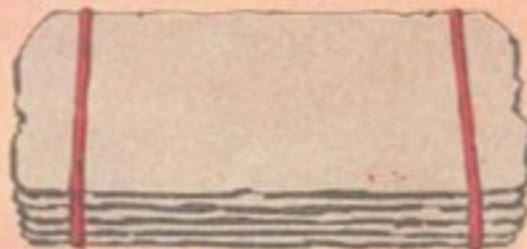
built by the Chola king Karikala,
years ago, is the oldest in the country.
In which river does it stand?



g temple corridor, the longest
leads to a temple on an island in
What is the name of the temple?



C This is the temple in Tamil Nadu
where Shiva is represented as
Nataraja. What is the name of
this temple?



D The Tirukkural is a world-
famous Tamil Classic. Who
was its author?

Rules:

1. The first fifty all-correct entries will each win a prize of Rs. 10.
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Quiz-16
INDIA

ENTRY FORM

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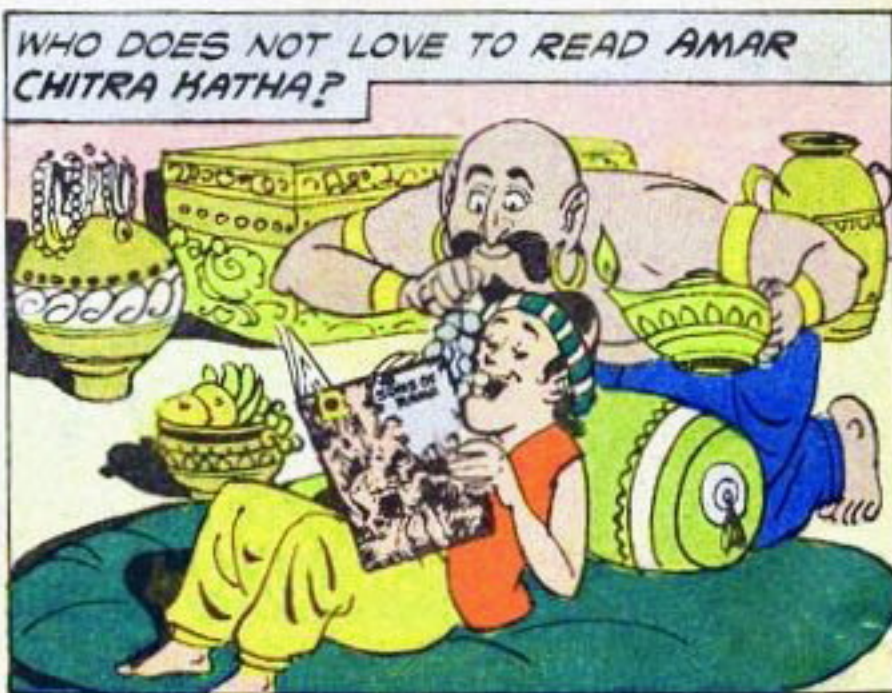
MY ANSWERS

A _____

B _____

C _____

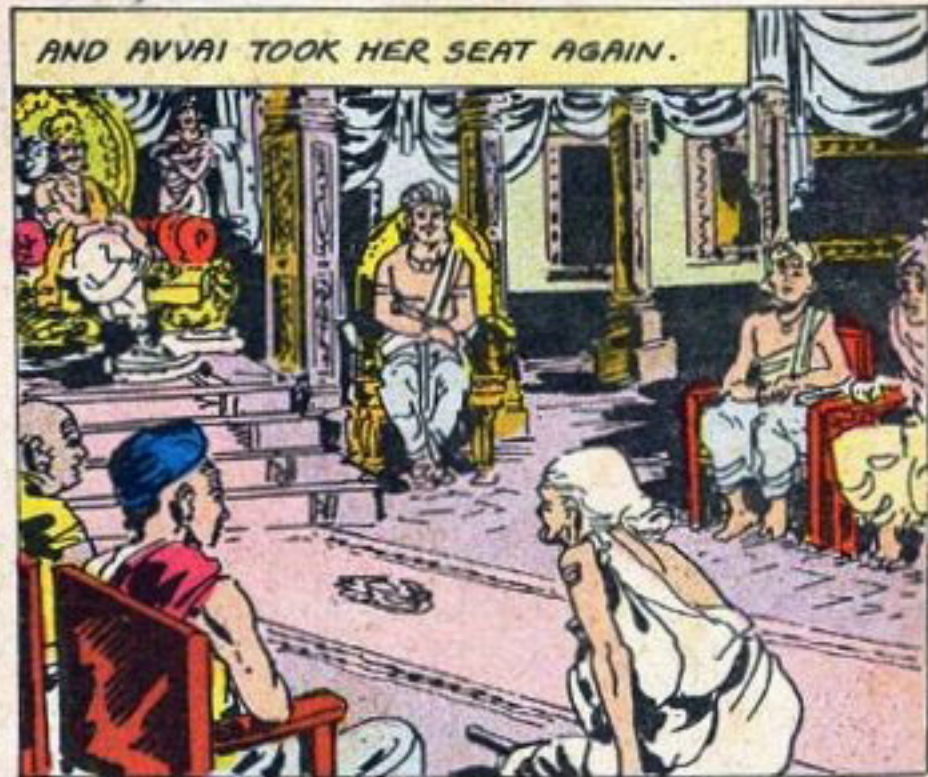
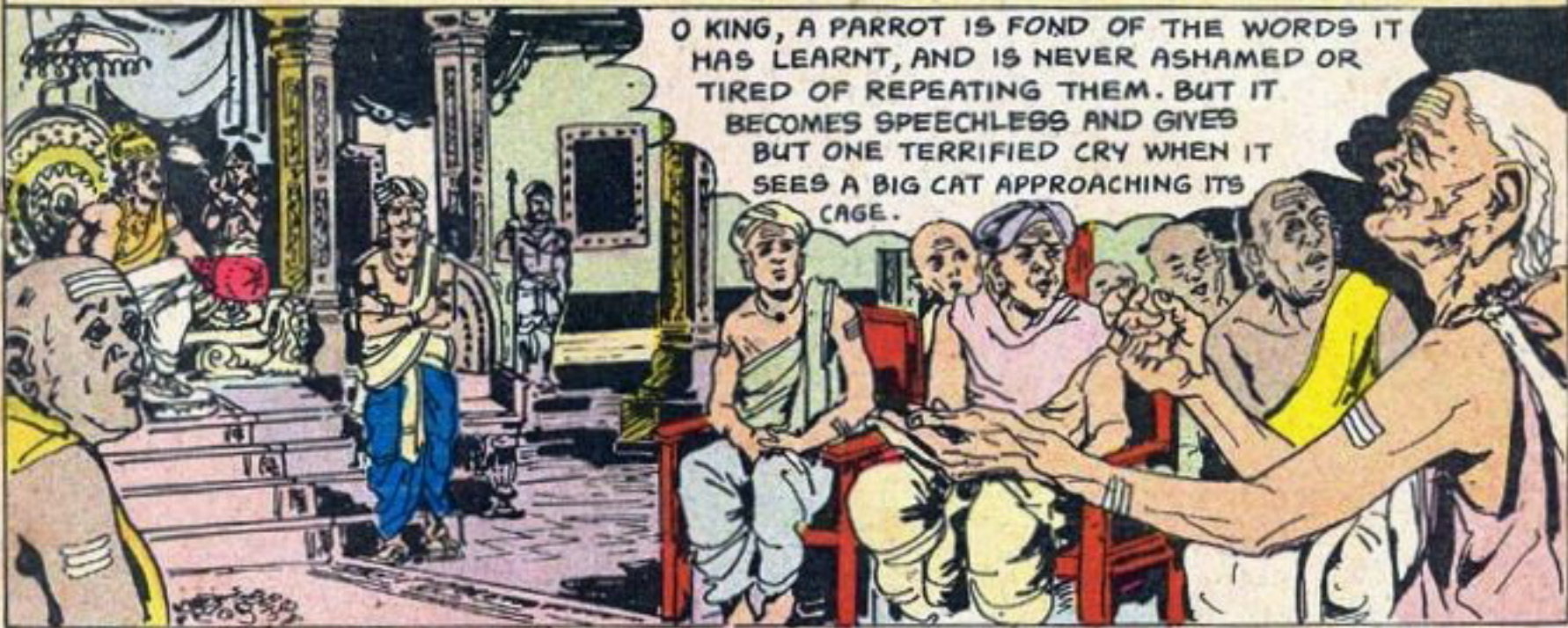
D _____



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FINALLY, AVVAI ROSE TO HER FEET. EVERYONE WAITED EAGERLY TO HEAR HER COMPOSITION.



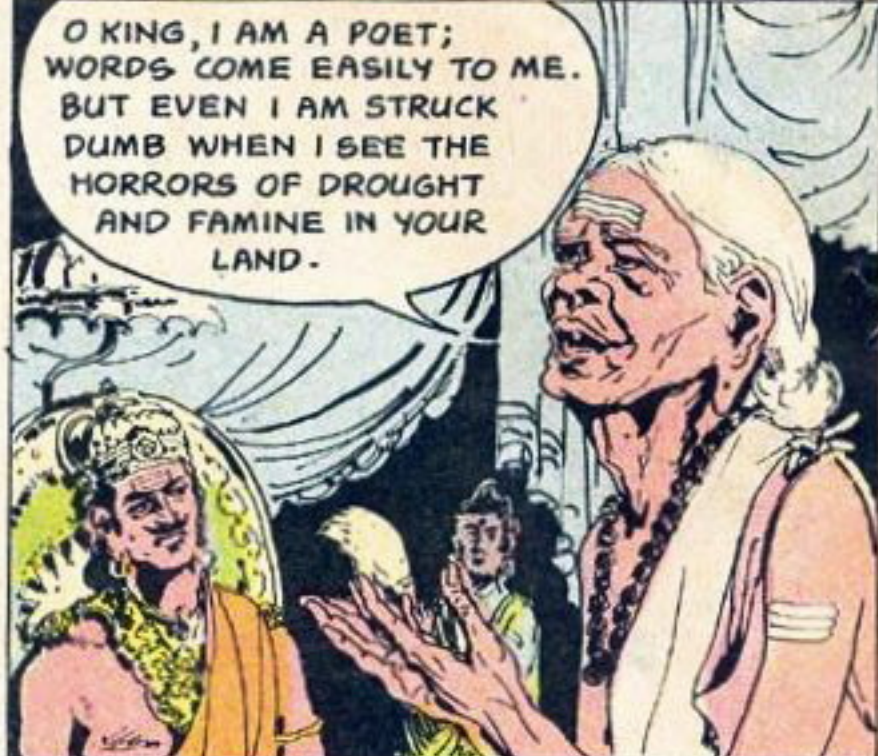
* LET BUNDS BE RAISED. (VARAPPU UYARA)

BUT THE KING KNEW THERE WAS MORE TO IT THAN THAT.

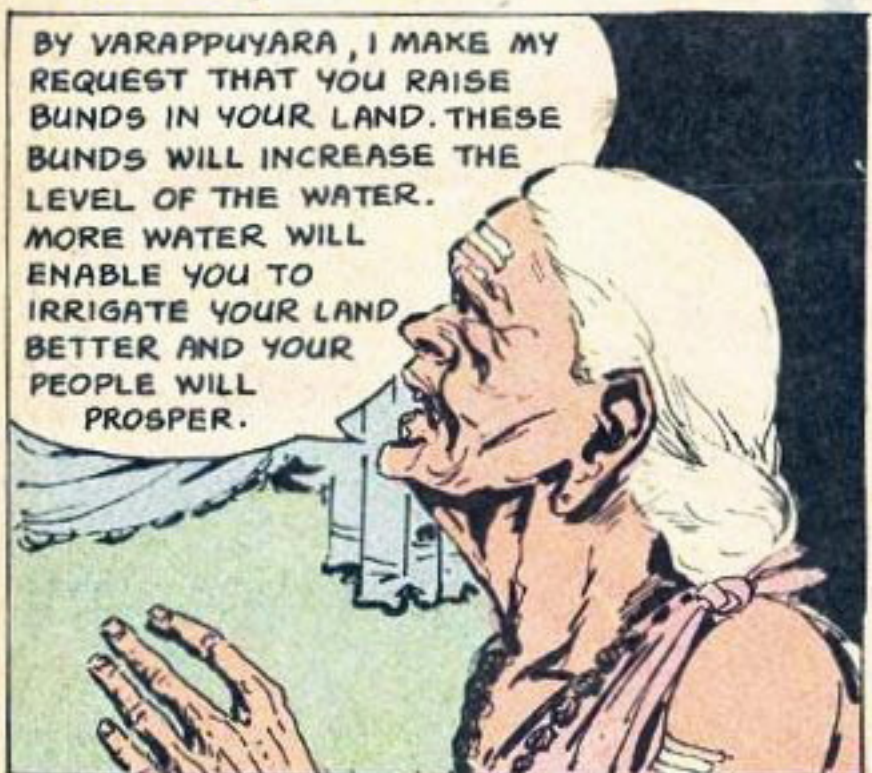


AVVAI, I WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOU EXPLAINED YOUR POEM TO US.

O KING, I AM A POET; WORDS COME EASILY TO ME. BUT EVEN I AM STRUCK DUMB WHEN I SEE THE HORRORS OF DROUGHT AND FAMINE IN YOUR LAND.



BY VARAPPUYARA, I MAKE MY REQUEST THAT YOU RAISE BUNDS IN YOUR LAND. THESE BUNDS WILL INCREASE THE LEVEL OF THE WATER. MORE WATER WILL ENABLE YOU TO IRRIGATE YOUR LAND BETTER AND YOUR PEOPLE WILL PROSPER.



THE KING WAS VERY PLEASED.

AVVAI, YOU HAVE SPOKEN LIKE THE GREAT POET AND HUMANITARIAN THAT YOU ARE.



THEREAFTER, THE POETS AND MINISTERS ALL LEFT.

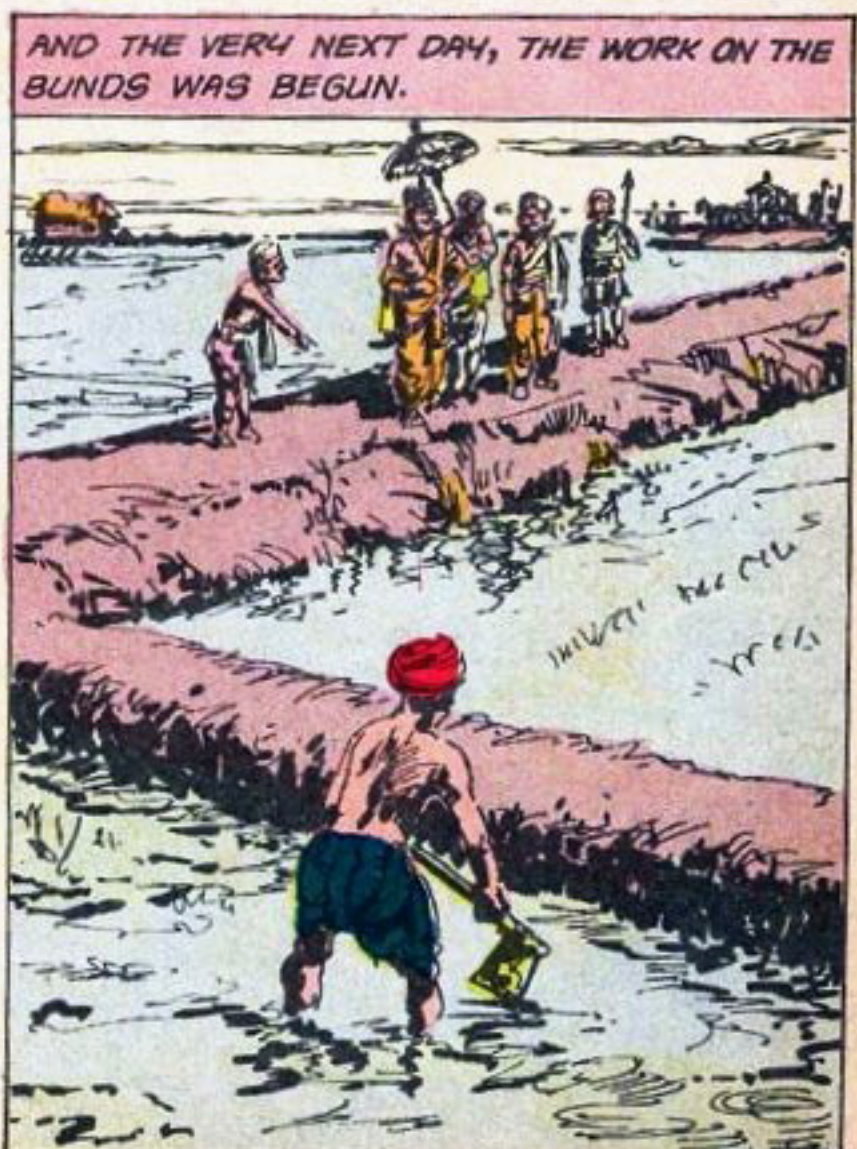
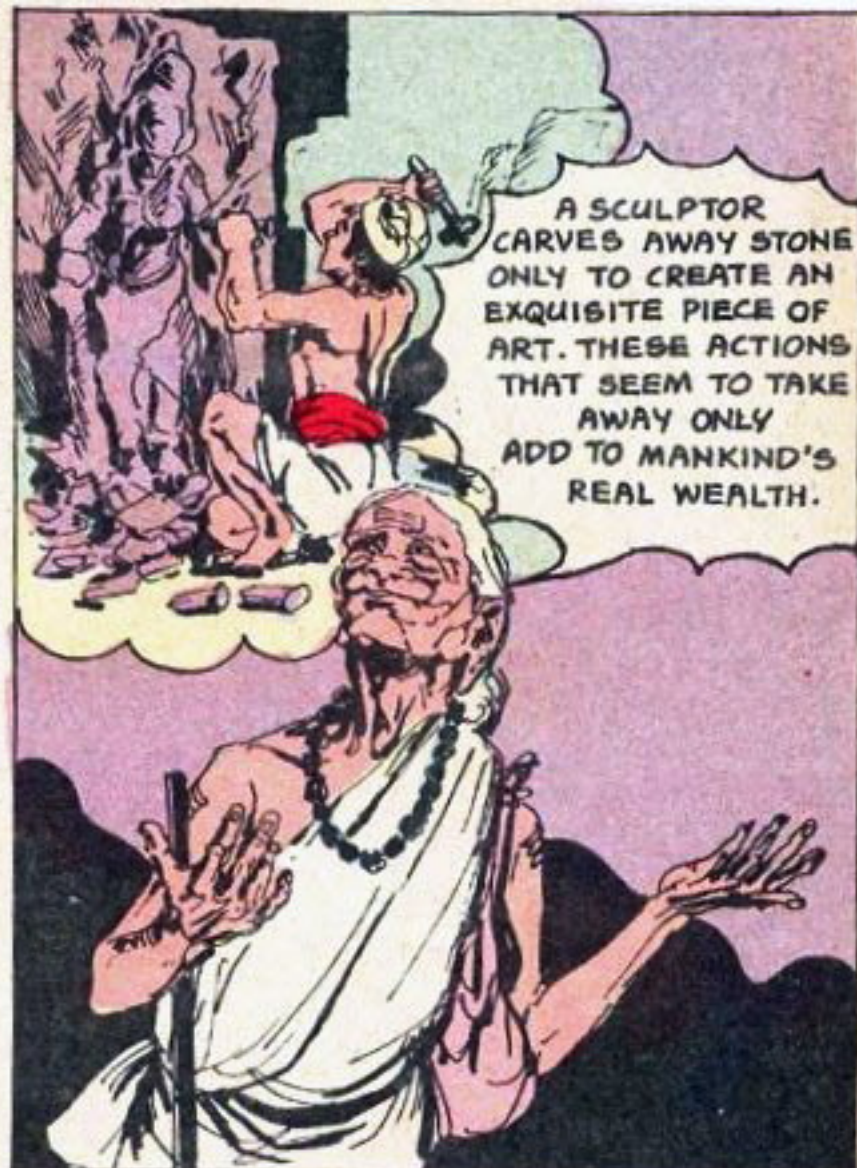
THE KING WHO TILL THEN HAD BEEN SO ENTHUSIASTIC, SUDDENLY HAD SECOND THOUGHTS.



HMM... BUNDS! BUNDS EVERYWHERE WILL DEplete OUR ROYAL TREASURY.

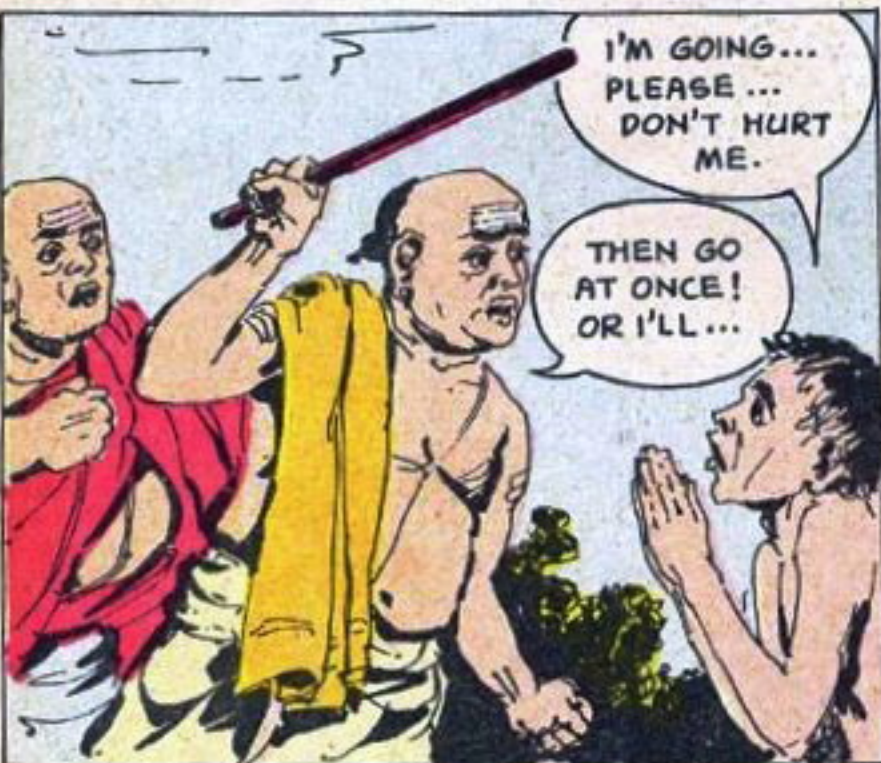
O KING, WHAT YOU SAY REMINDS ME OF ANOTHER VERSE.





AVVAI TO THE RESCUE

ONE DAY, AS AVVAI WAS PASSING THROUGH A VILLAGE —



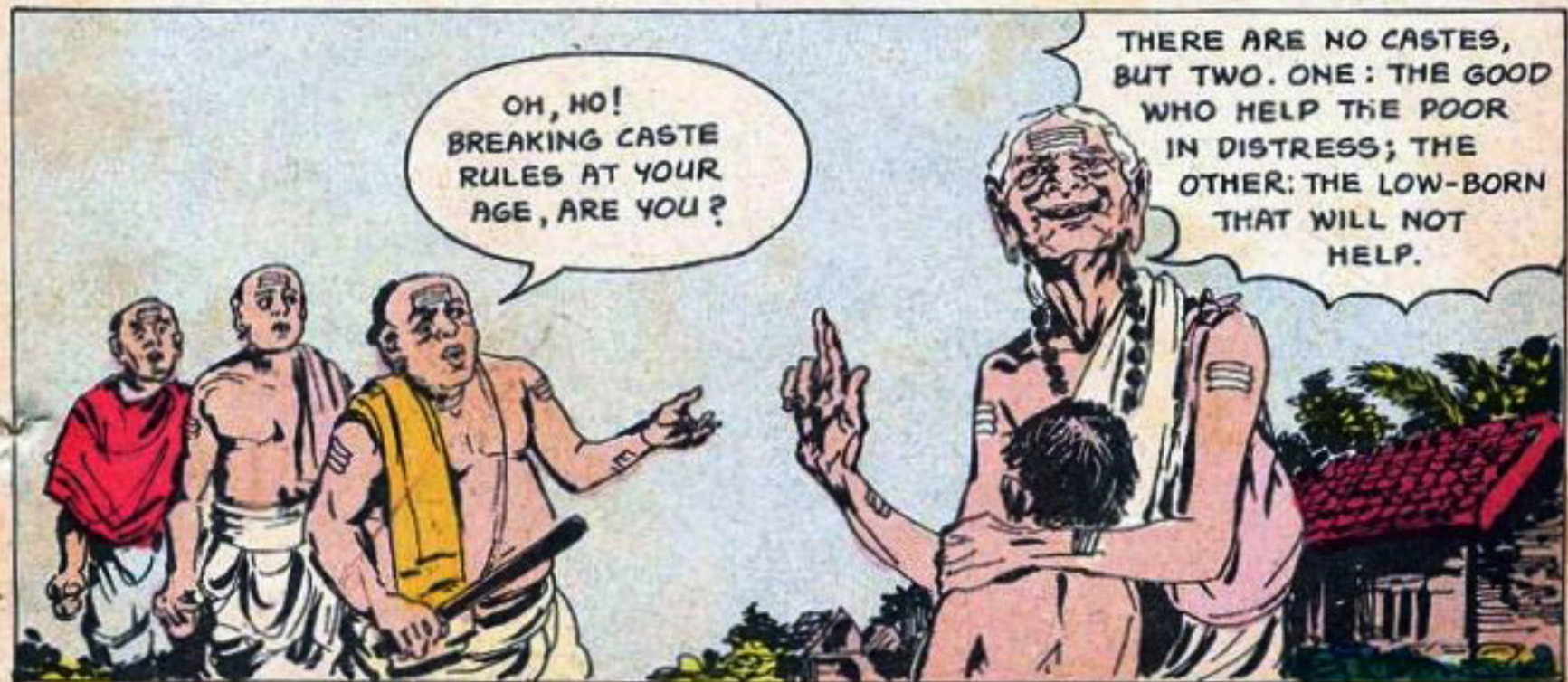


LET ME JUST
LAY MY
HANDS...

DON'T MOVE
ANOTHER
STEP!

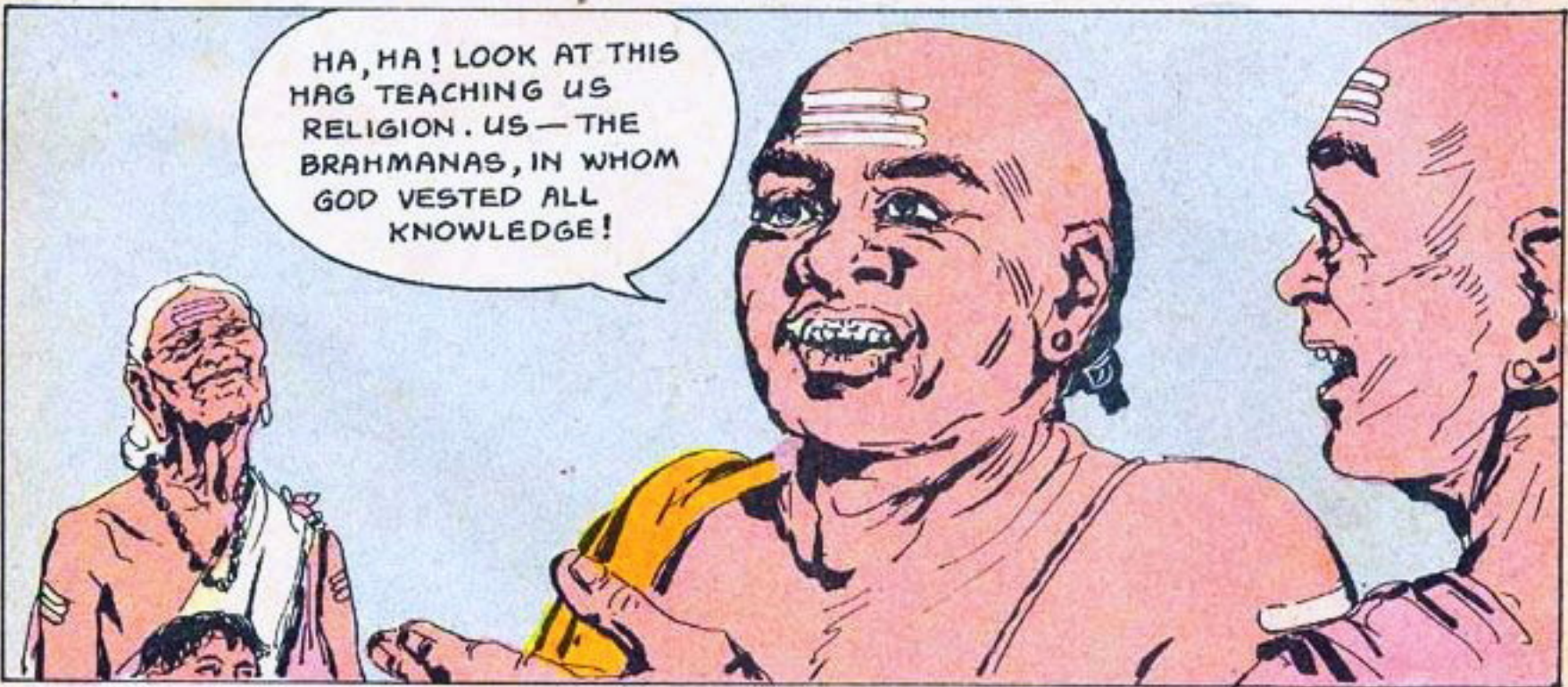
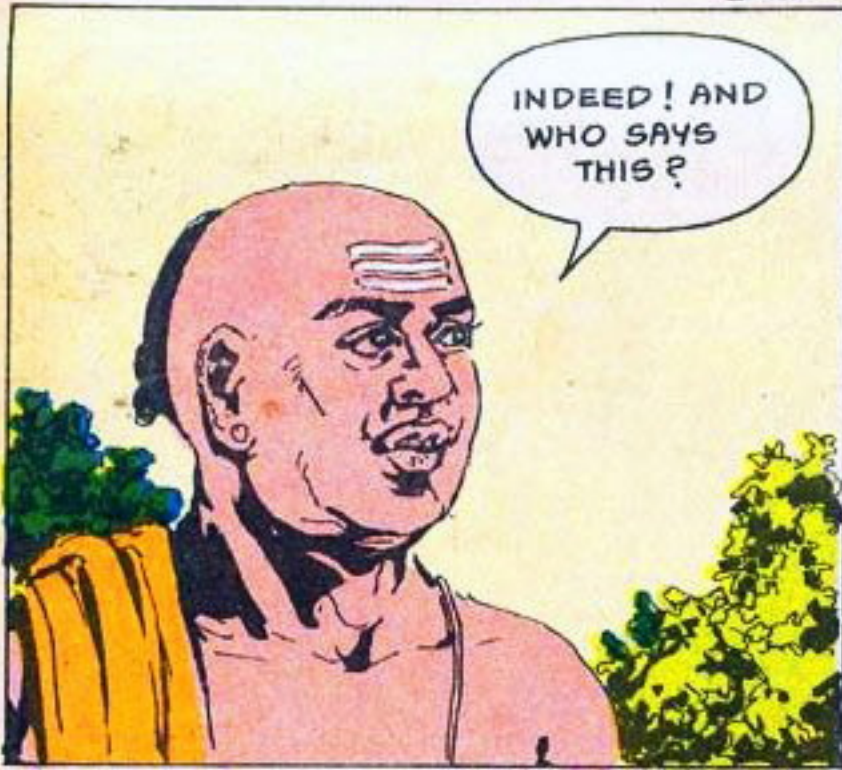


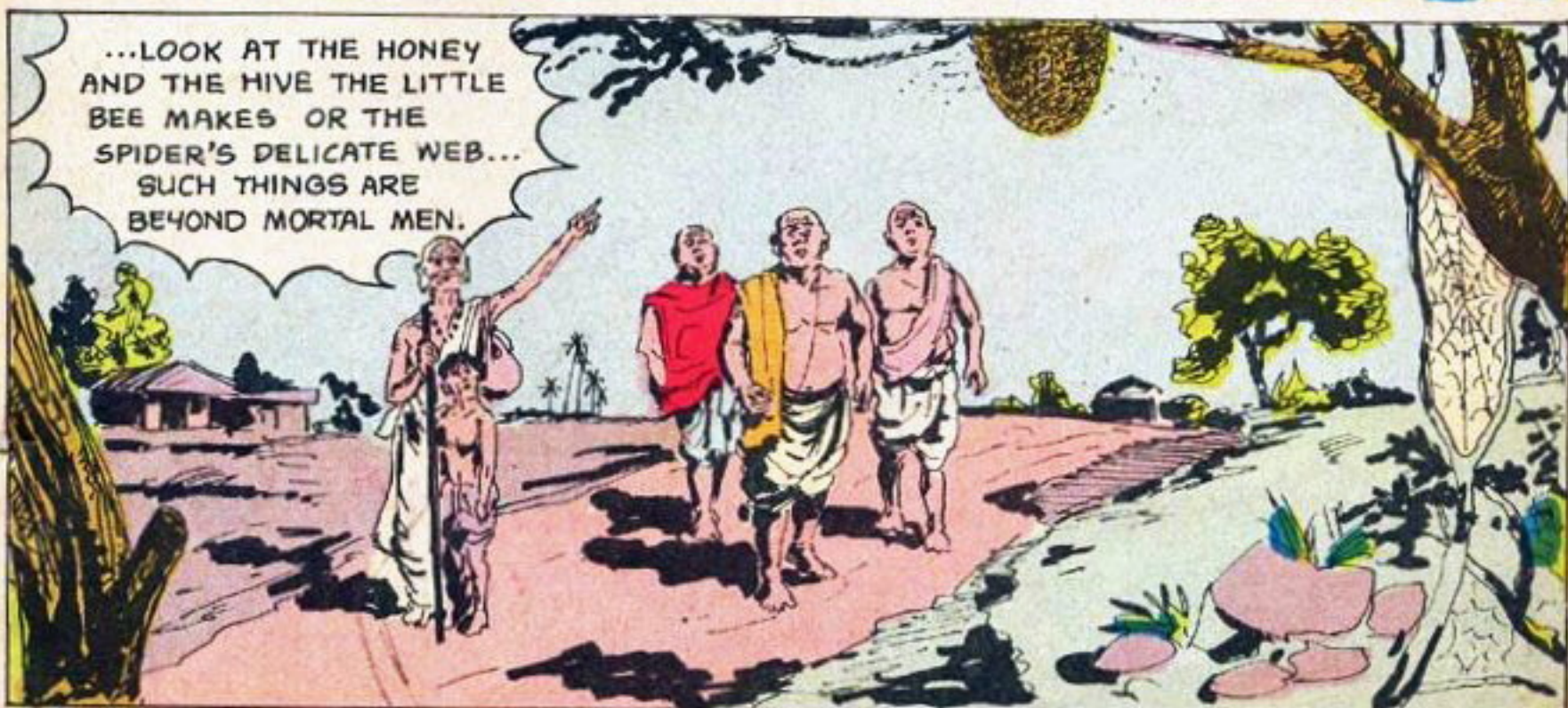
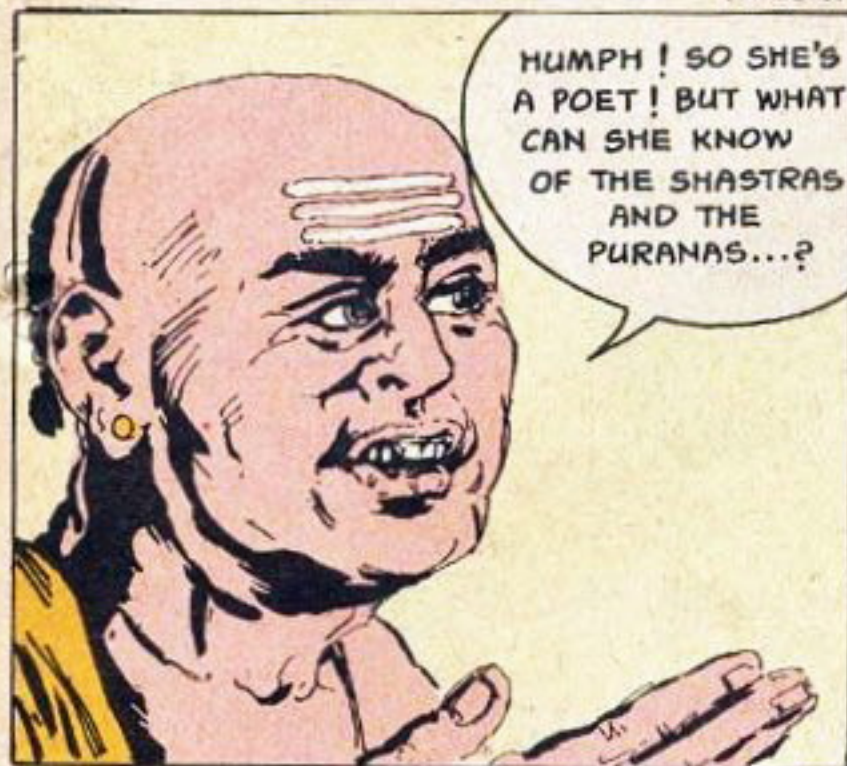
I WILL NOT LET
YOU TOUCH A HAIR
ON THIS CHILD.



OH, HO!
BREAKING CASTE
RULES AT YOUR
AGE, ARE YOU?

THERE ARE NO CASTES,
BUT TWO. ONE: THE GOOD
WHO HELP THE POOR
IN DISTRESS; THE
OTHER: THE LOW-BORN
THAT WILL NOT
HELP.

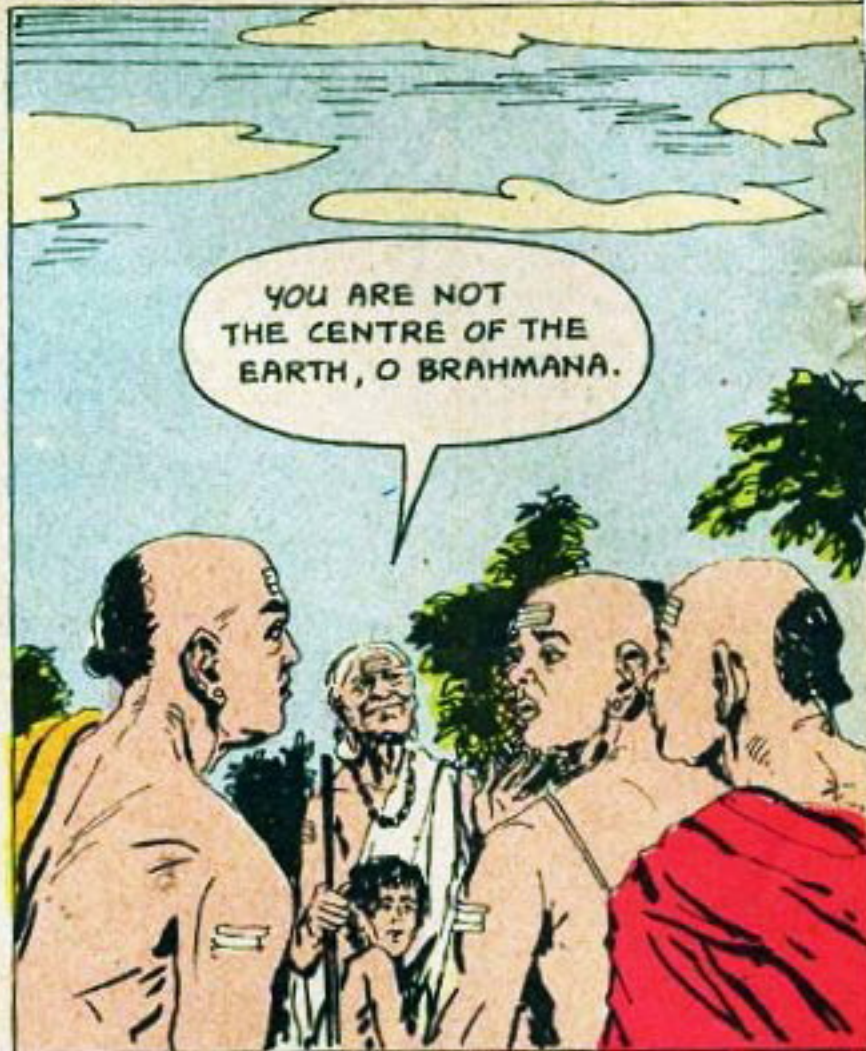




LET NO ONE THEREFORE
BOAST OF KNOWING THIS OR
THAT... EVERY CREATURE
ON THIS EARTH EXCELS
IN SOMETHING.

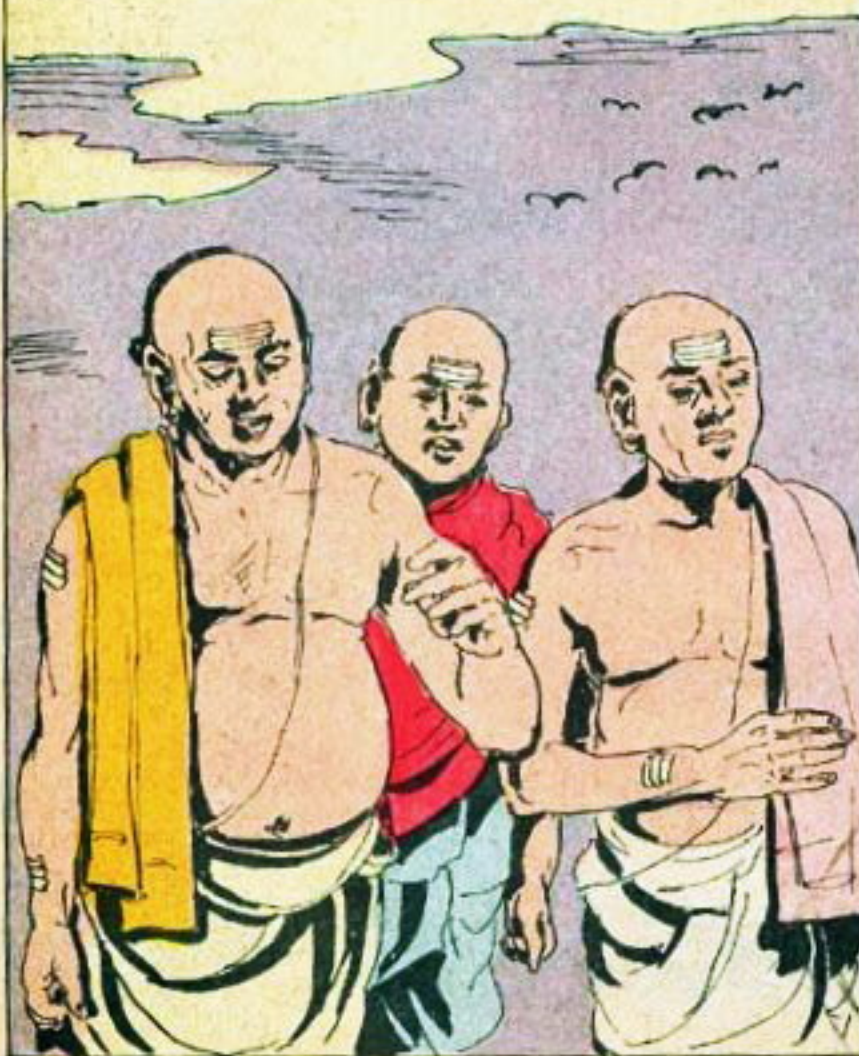


YOU ARE NOT
THE CENTRE OF THE
EARTH, O BRAHMANA.



THE BRAHMANA LOOKED AS IF HE WOULD
EXPLODE, THEN SLOWLY...

... HIS EYES FELL ...

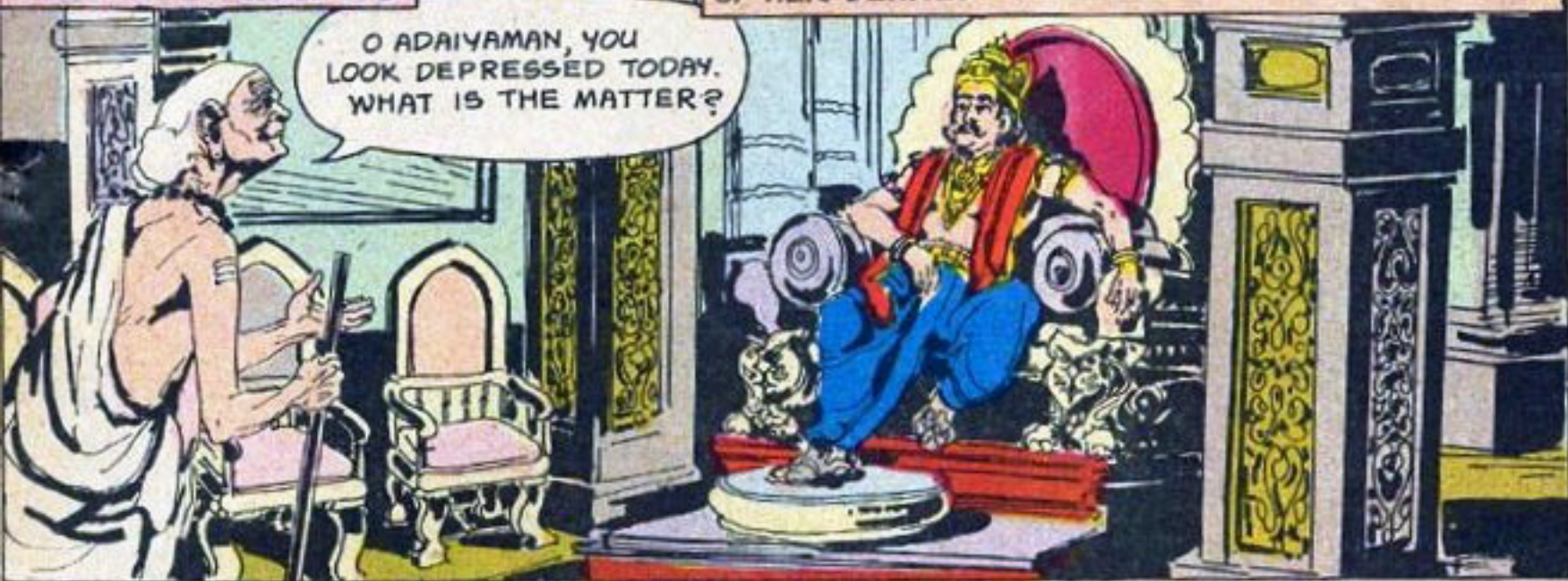


... AND FOLLOWED BY THE OTHERS HE
QUIETLY LEFT THE SCENE.

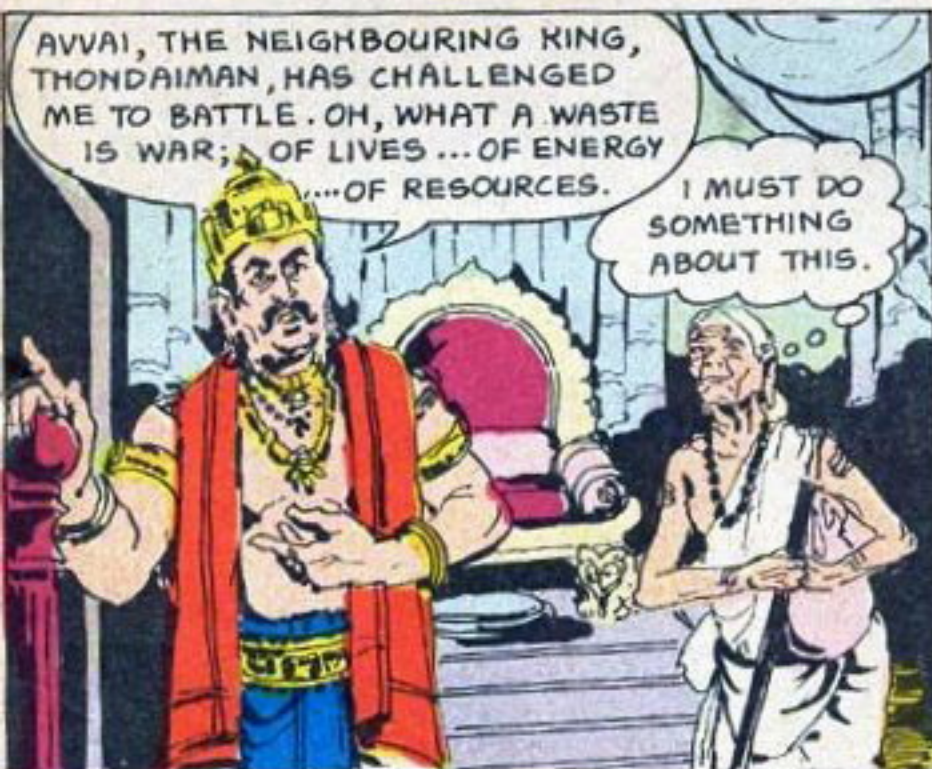


AVVAI AND ADAIYAMAN

AVVAI OFTEN SPENT TIME IN THE KINGDOM OF THE MIGHTY KING ADAIYAMAN, WHOM SHE HELD AS ONE OF HER DEAREST FRIENDS. ONE DAY —



O ADAIYAMAN, YOU LOOK DEPRESSED TODAY. WHAT IS THE MATTER?

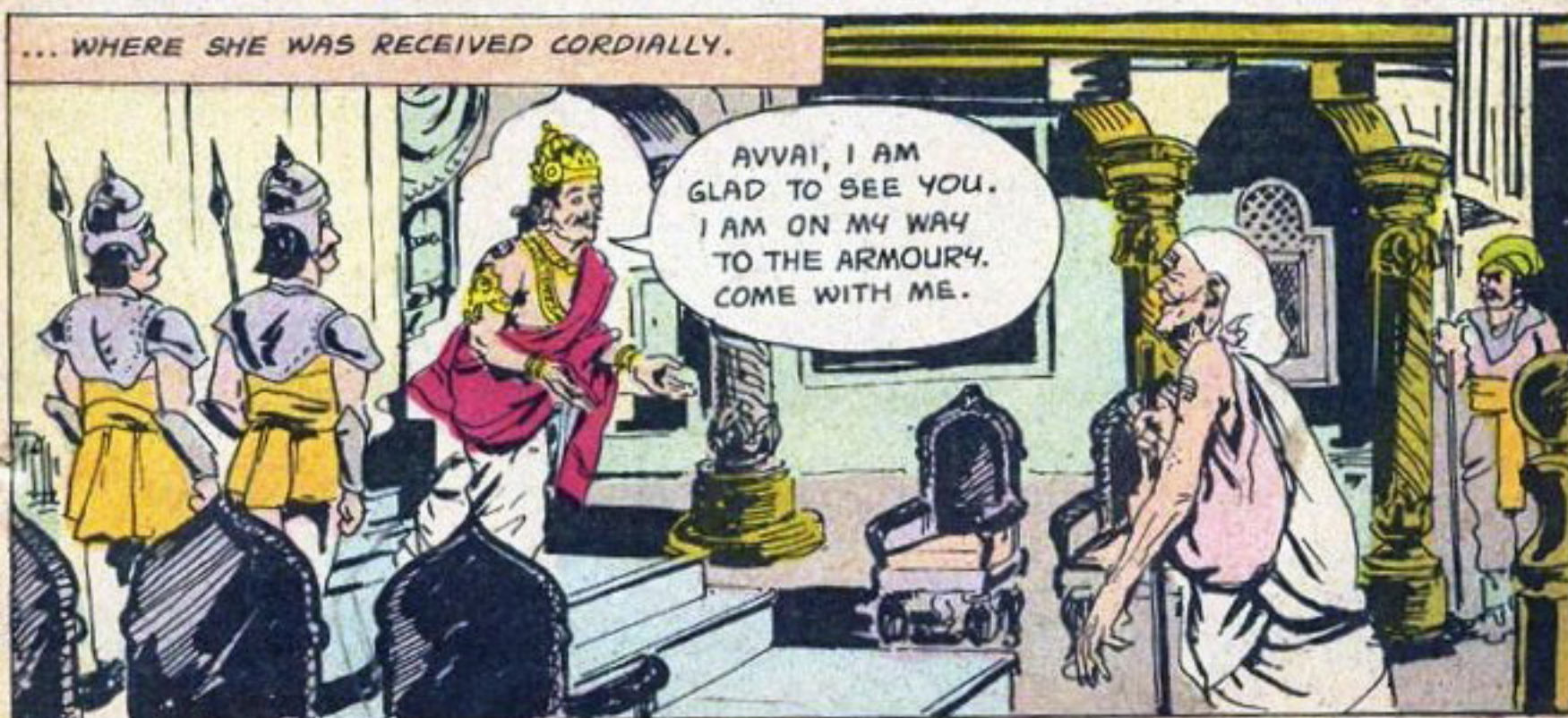


AVVAI, THE NEIGHBOURING KING, THONDAIMAN, HAS CHALLENGED ME TO BATTLE. OH, WHAT A WASTE IS WAR; OF LIVES ... OF ENERGY ... OF RESOURCES.

I MUST DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS.



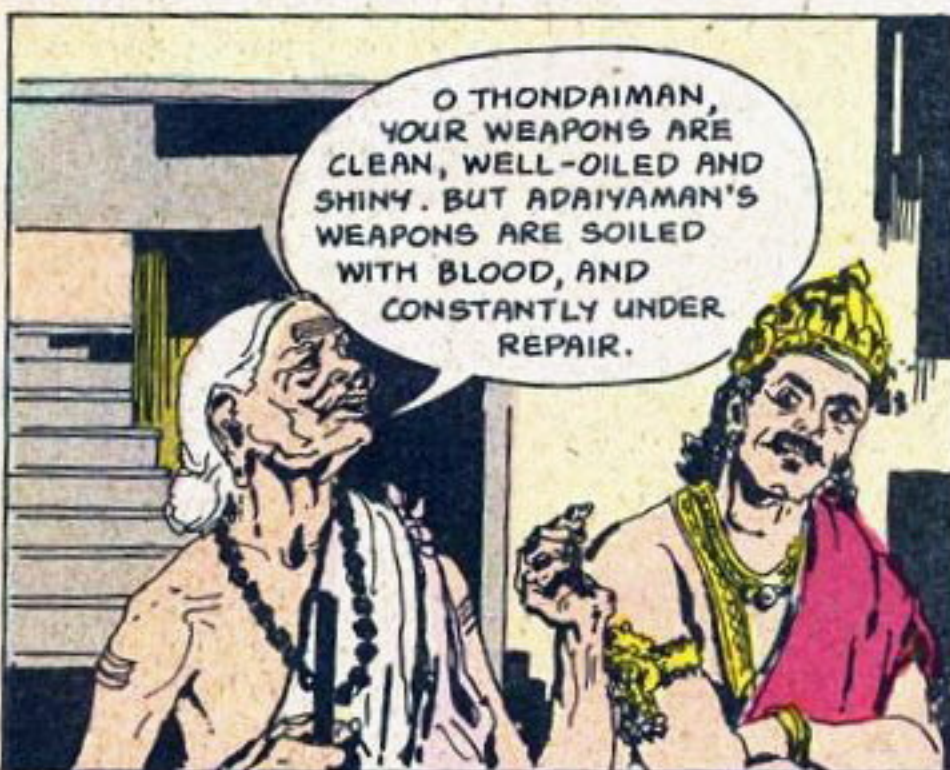
AVVAI IMMEDIATELY MADE FOR THONDAIMAN'S KINGDOM...



... WHERE SHE WAS RECEIVED CORDIALLY.

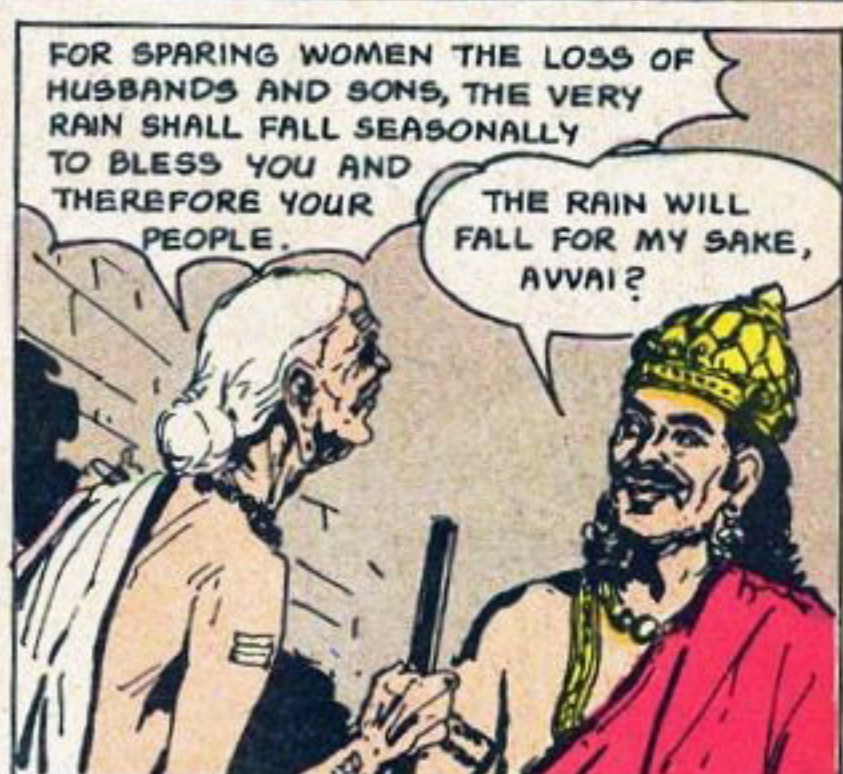
AVVAI, I AM GLAD TO SEE YOU. I AM ON MY WAY TO THE ARMOURY. COME WITH ME.

AND AT THE ARMOURY, THONDAIMAN PROUDLY SHOWED AVVAI HIS ARRAY OF WEAPONS.



AT ONCE, HE UNDERSTOOD THE IMPLICATION OF THE WORDS OF THE POET.





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