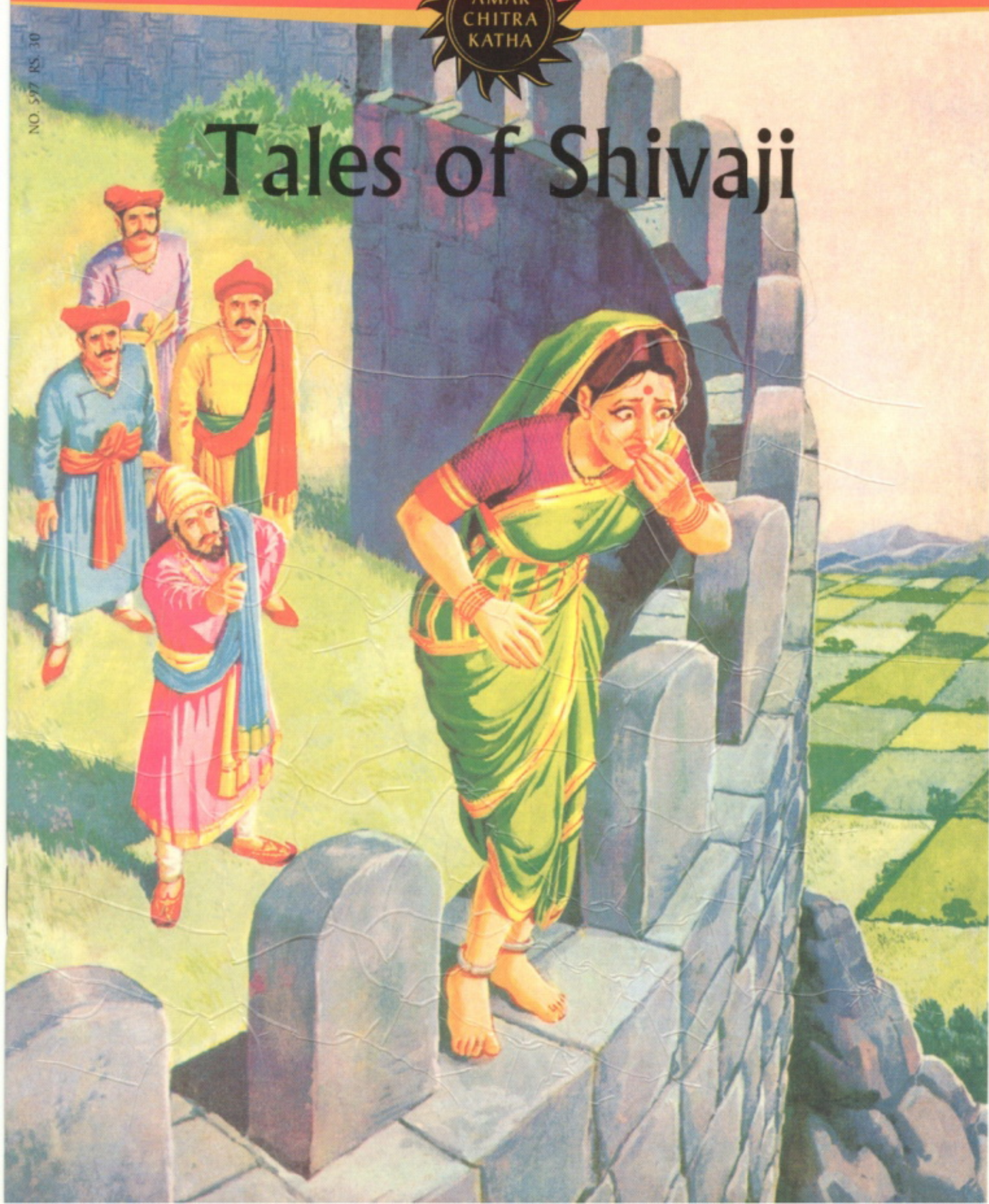




Tales of Shivaji





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INDIA BOOK HOUSE

HIRA THE MILKMAID

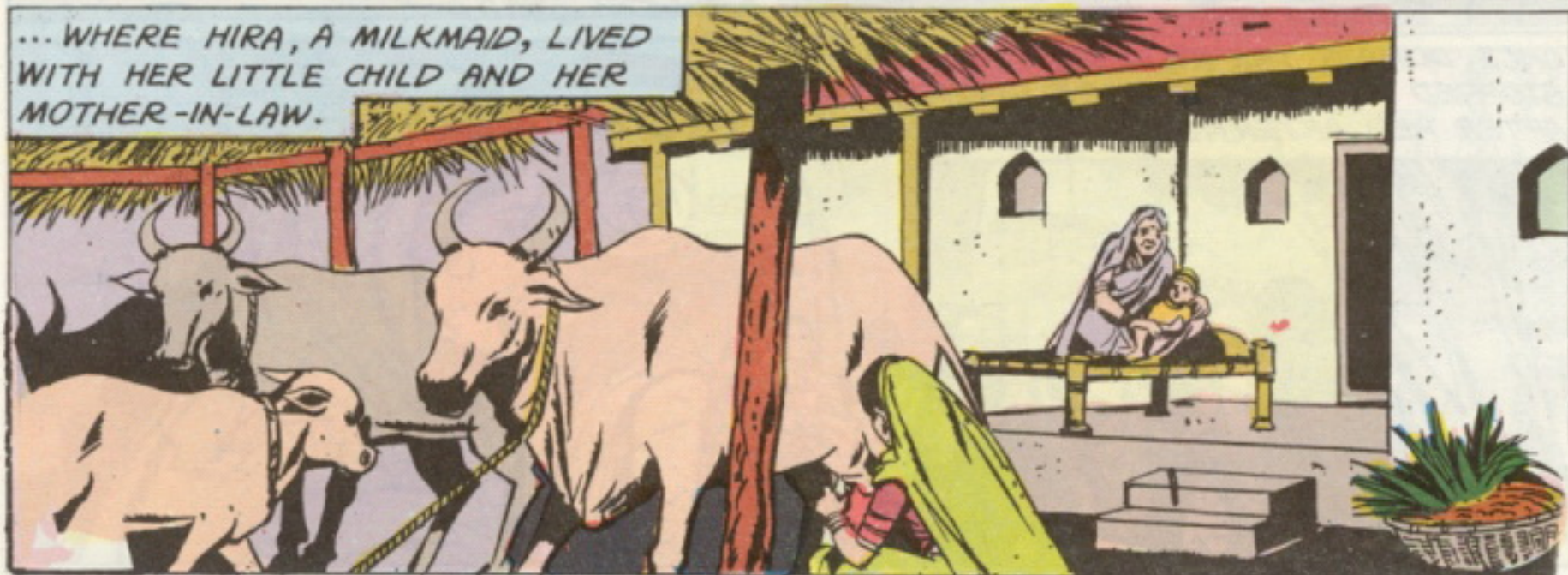


RAIGADH, CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI'S CAPITAL, WAS SITUATED ON THE TOP OF A HILL.

AT THE FOOT OF THE HILL THERE WAS A VILLAGE...



... WHERE HIRA, A MILKMAID, LIVED WITH HER LITTLE CHILD AND HER MOTHER-IN-LAW.



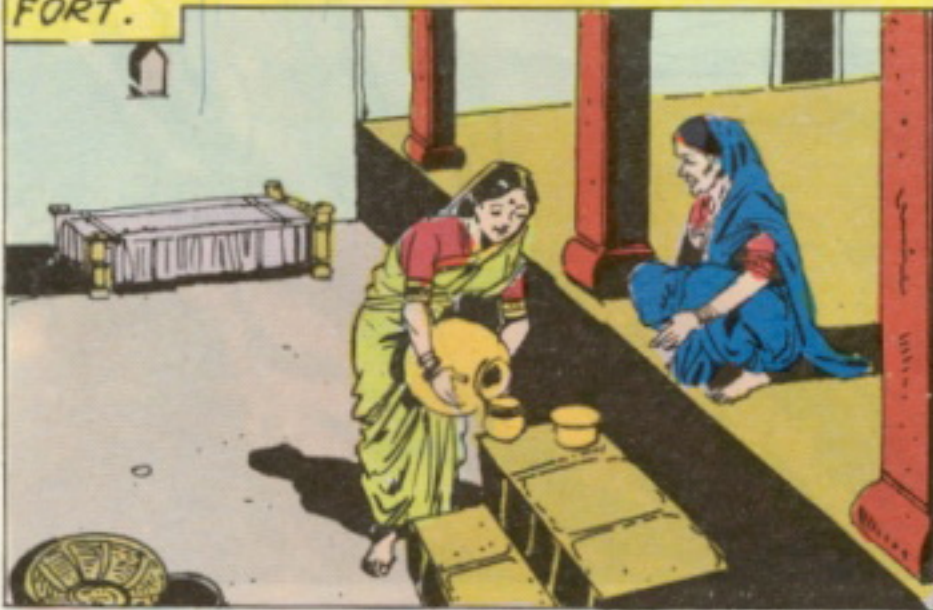
LEAVING HER CHILD WITH HER MOTHER-IN-LAW ...



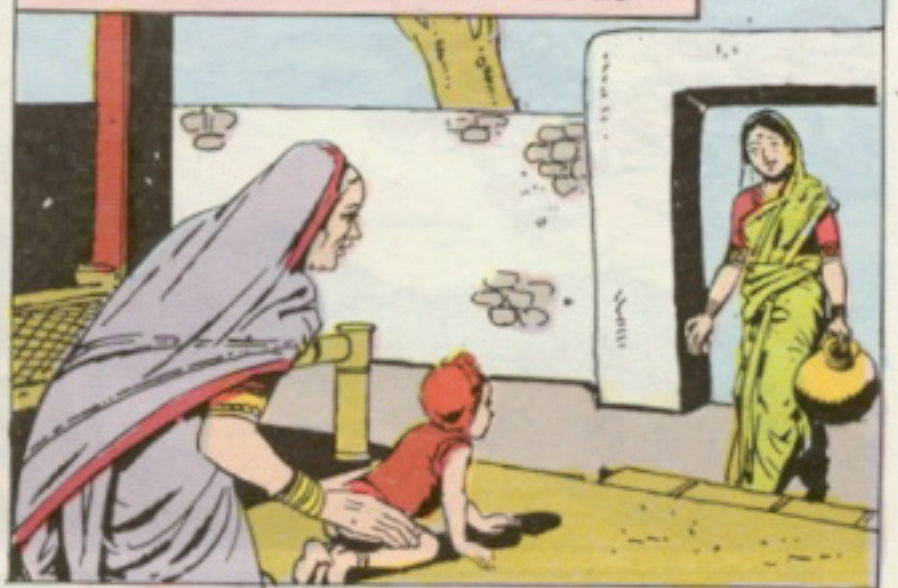
...HIRA WOULD GO TO RAIGADH TWICE A DAY— IN THE MORNING AND IN THE EVENING...



...TO SELL MILK TO THE PEOPLE IN THE FORT.



BY SUNSET SHE WOULD BE HOME AND FREE TO BE WITH HER CHILD.



ONCE, DURING THE KOJAGIRI FESTIVAL, HIRA STOPPED TO WATCH THE CELEBRATIONS, AFTER HER AFTERNOON ROUND.



CARRIED AWAY BY THE MERRY-MAKING,
SHE LOST COUNT OF THE HOURS.



SUDDENLY —



IT WAS SIX IN THE EVENING!
THE MAIN GATE OF THE FORT
WOULD SOON BE CLOSED!

HIRA RAN TOWARDS THE GATE...



...BUT IT WAS TOO LATE.

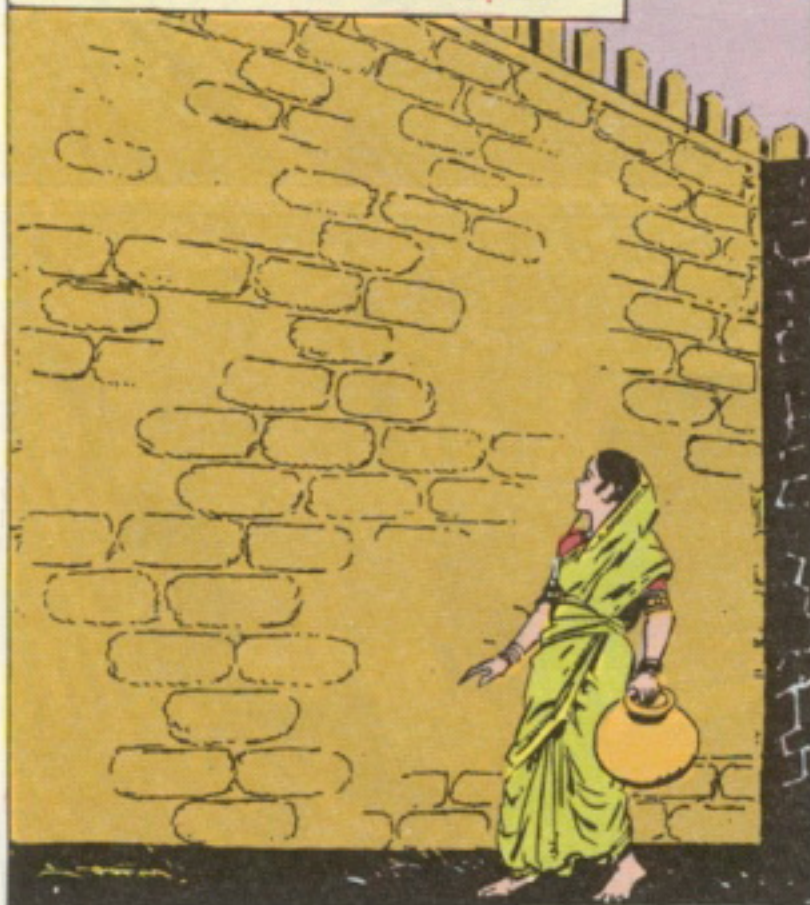






SHE KEPT WALKING ALONGSIDE THE WALL, LOOKING HOPEFULLY UP AT IT FROM TIME TO TIME.

WHEN SHE REACHED THE EASTERN SIDE, SHE SUDDENLY STOPPED.



SHE HID HER EMPTY VESSEL IN THE BUSHES ...



... CLAMBERED UP THE WALL ...



... AND SLITHERED DOWN TO THE OTHER SIDE.



OUT AT LAST!



THEN SHE STARTED CLIMBING DOWN THE HILL. IT WAS VERY STEEP AND SHE HAD TO BE CAREFUL.



ONCE SHE SLIPPED AND
LOST HER FOOTHOLD.



FORTUNATELY FOR HER THERE WAS A
BUSH LOWER DOWN. SHE HUNG ON TO IT...



...AND STEADIED HERSELF.

I'M COMING,
BAALYA.



AT LAST SHE REACHED THE BASE...



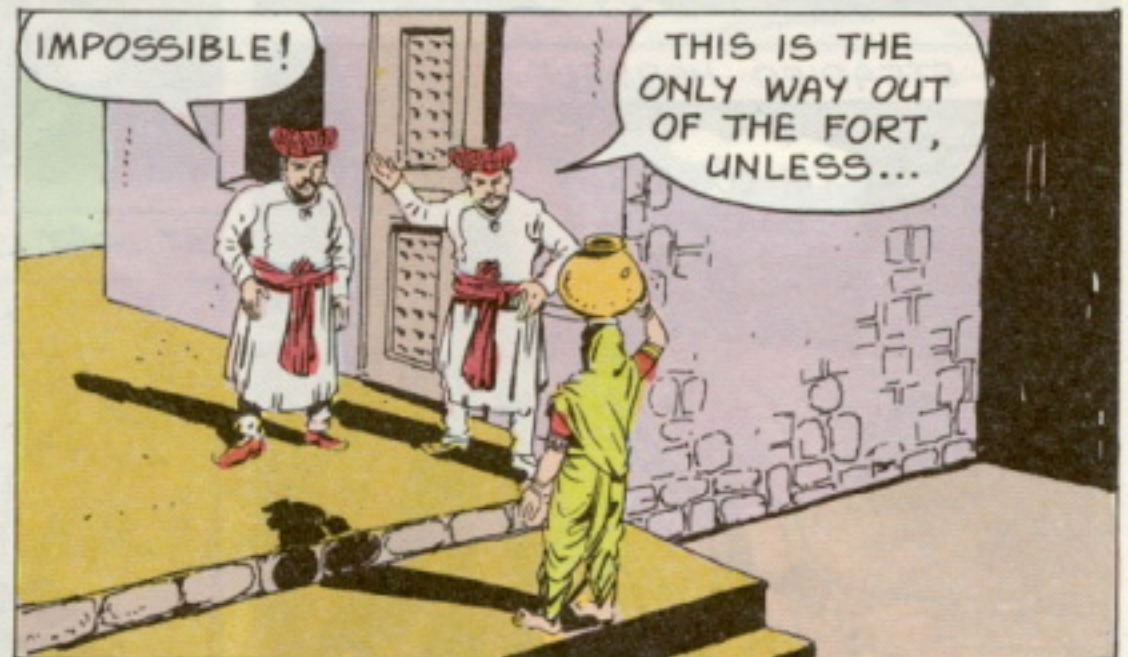
...AND RAN TOWARDS HER VILLAGE.



THE FOLLOWING MORNING WHEN THE GUARDS OPENED THE GATE...



...THEY COULD NOT BELIEVE THEIR EYES.



HIRA LED THE ROYAL PARTY TO THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE FORT.



HERE'S THE VESSEL I LEFT BEHIND, MAHARAJ.



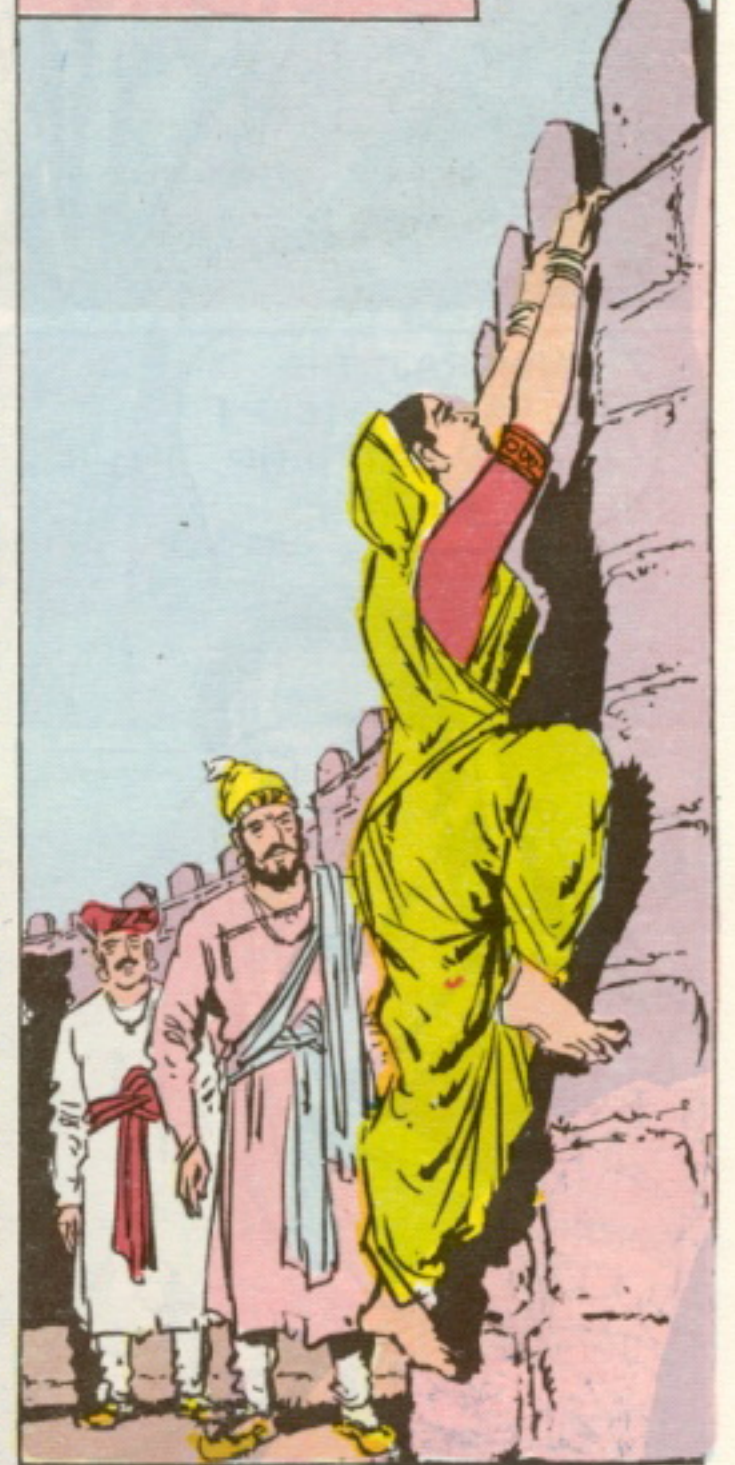
SHIVAJI WALKED UP TO THE WALL.



CAN YOU CLIMB DOWN NOW USING THE SAME ROUTE?



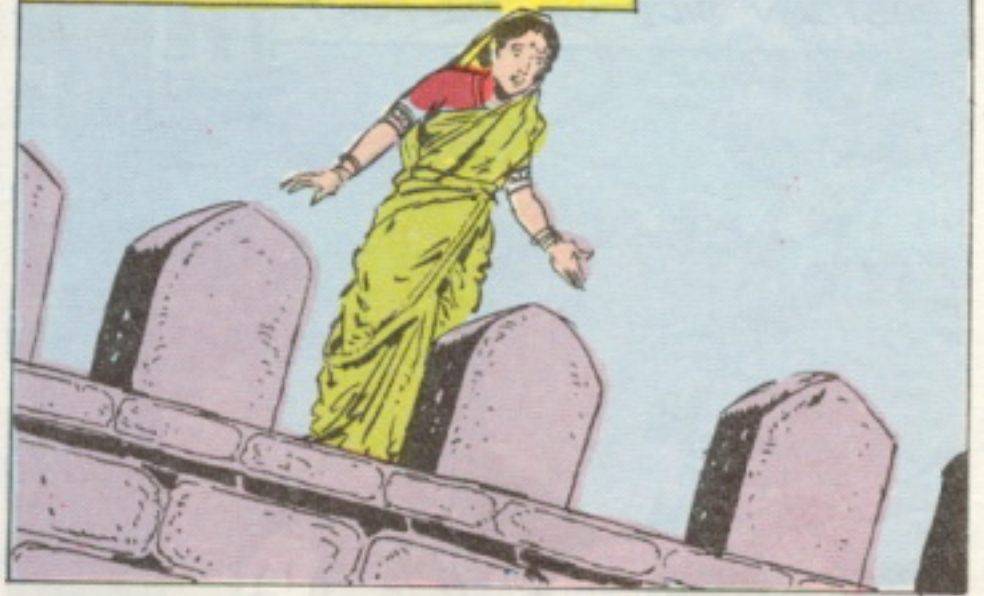
HIRA CLAMBERED UP THE WALL WITH EASE.



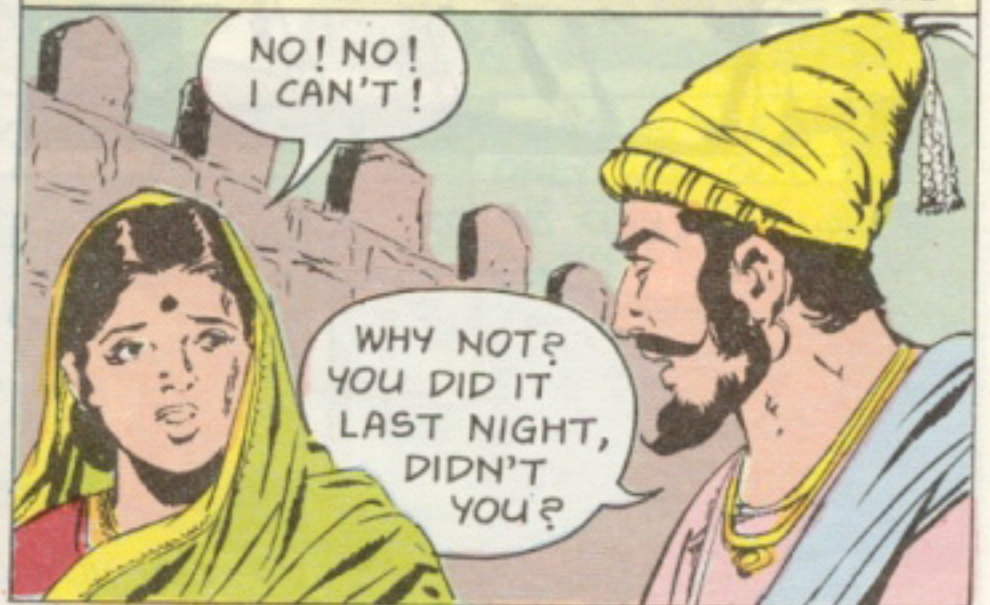
BUT WHEN SHE LOOKED DOWN...



...SHE WAS TERRIFIED.



SHE HURRIEDLY CLIMBED DOWN THE WALL.



NO! NO!
I CAN'T!

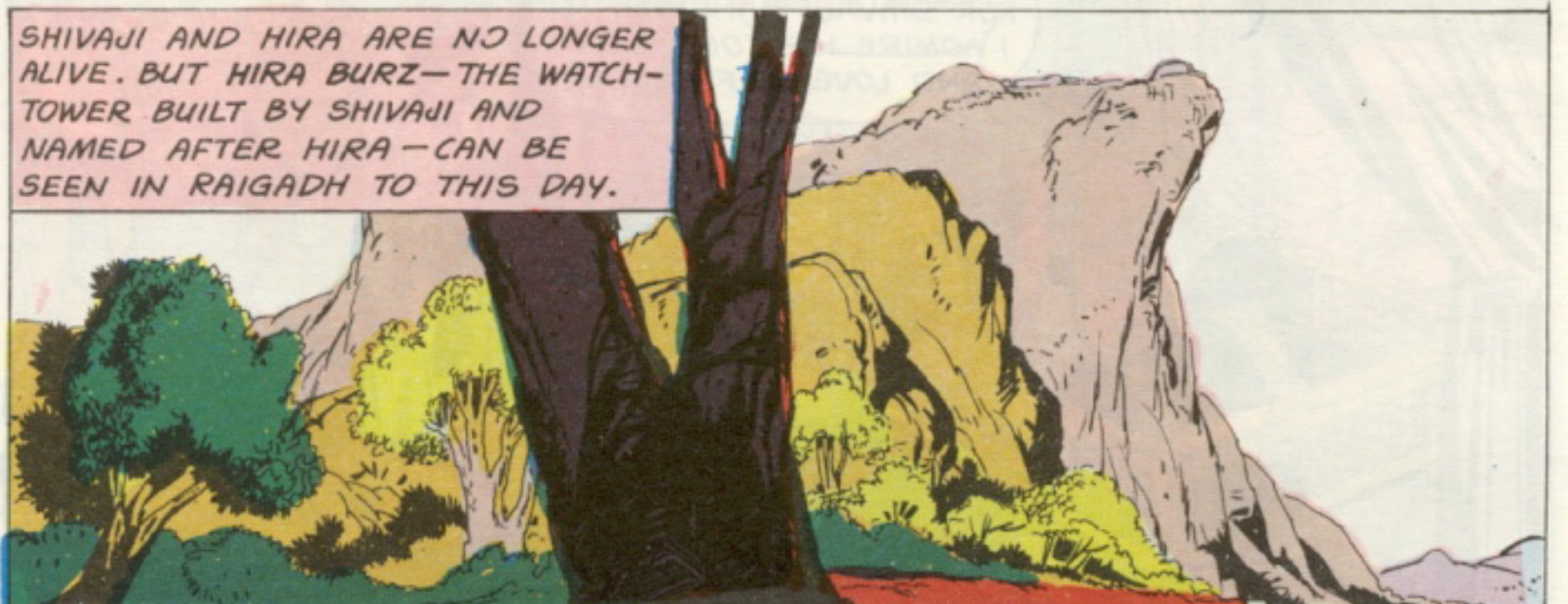
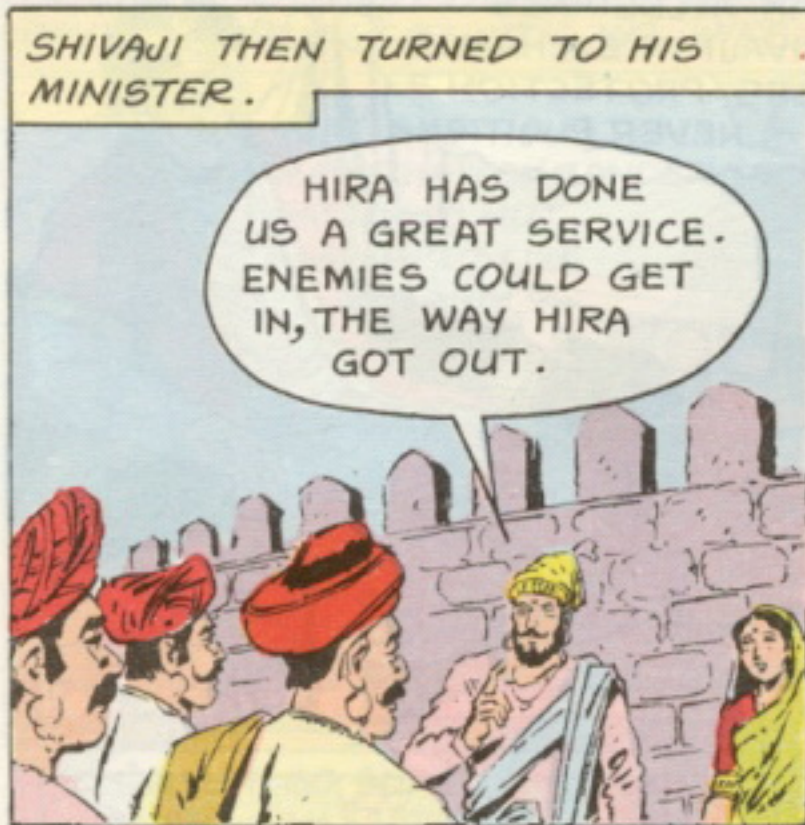
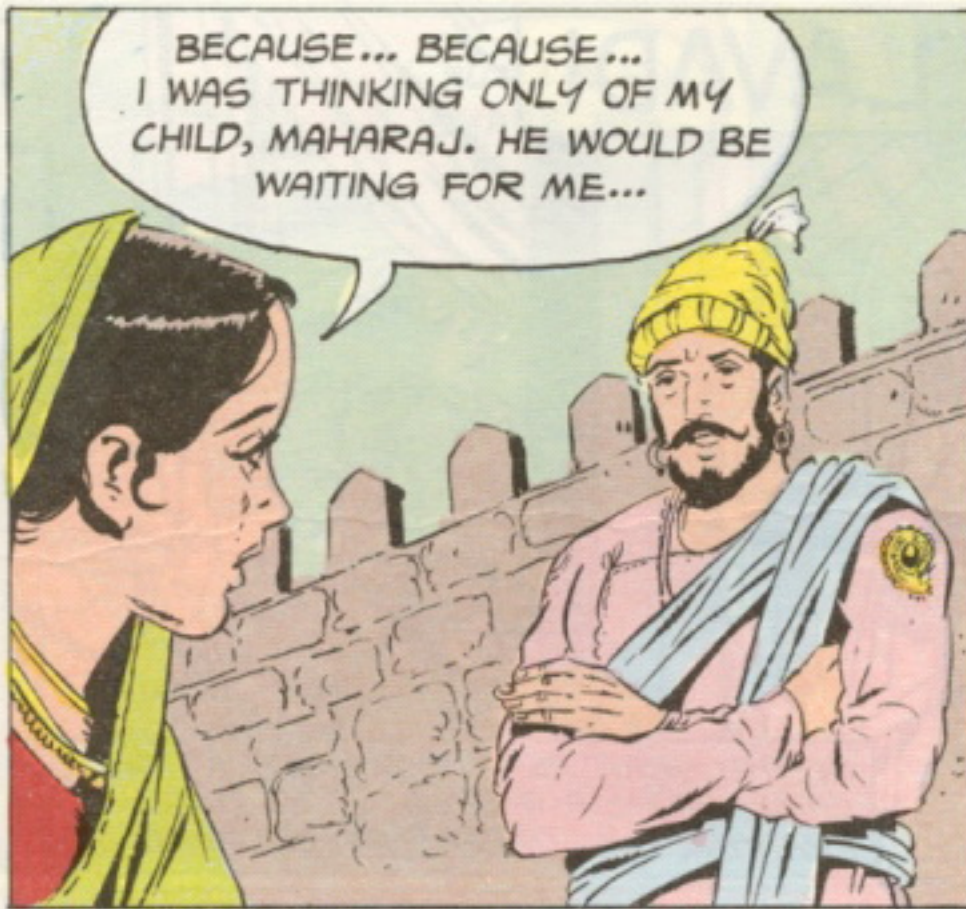
WHY NOT?
YOU DID IT
LAST NIGHT,
DIDN'T
YOU?

MAHARAJ, THE
HILL IS SO STEEP!
I COULD SLIP AND
FALL!

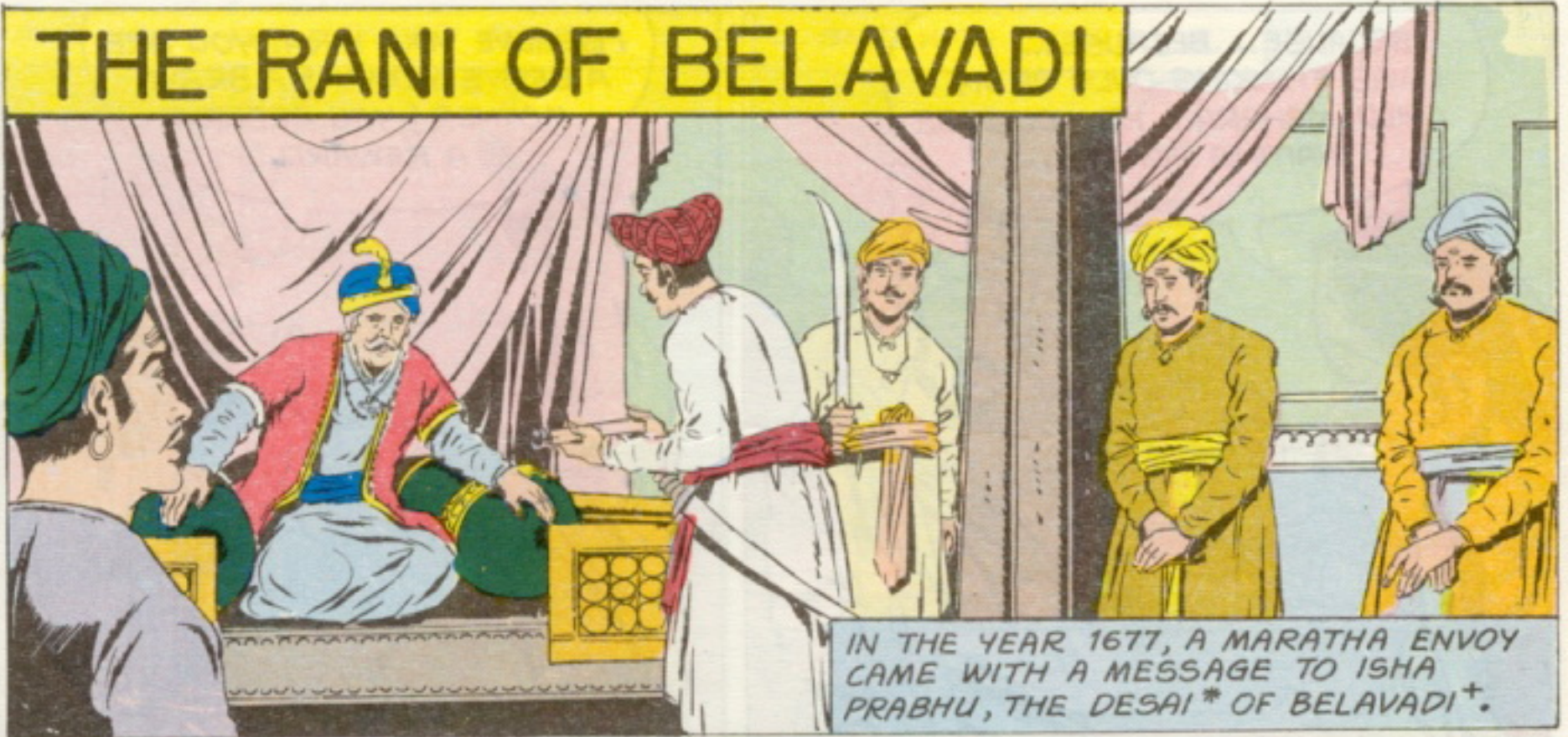


THAT DIDN'T
STOP YOU LAST
NIGHT!





THE RANI OF BELAVADI



IN THE YEAR 1677, A MARATHA ENVOY CAME WITH A MESSAGE TO ISHA PRABHU, THE DESAI* OF BELAVADI†.

THE MESSAGE WAS FROM DADAJI RAGHUNATH NEDKAR, ONE OF SHIVAJI'S MOST ABLE COMMANDERS.



SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO SHIVAJI IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS PROTECTION? NEVER!

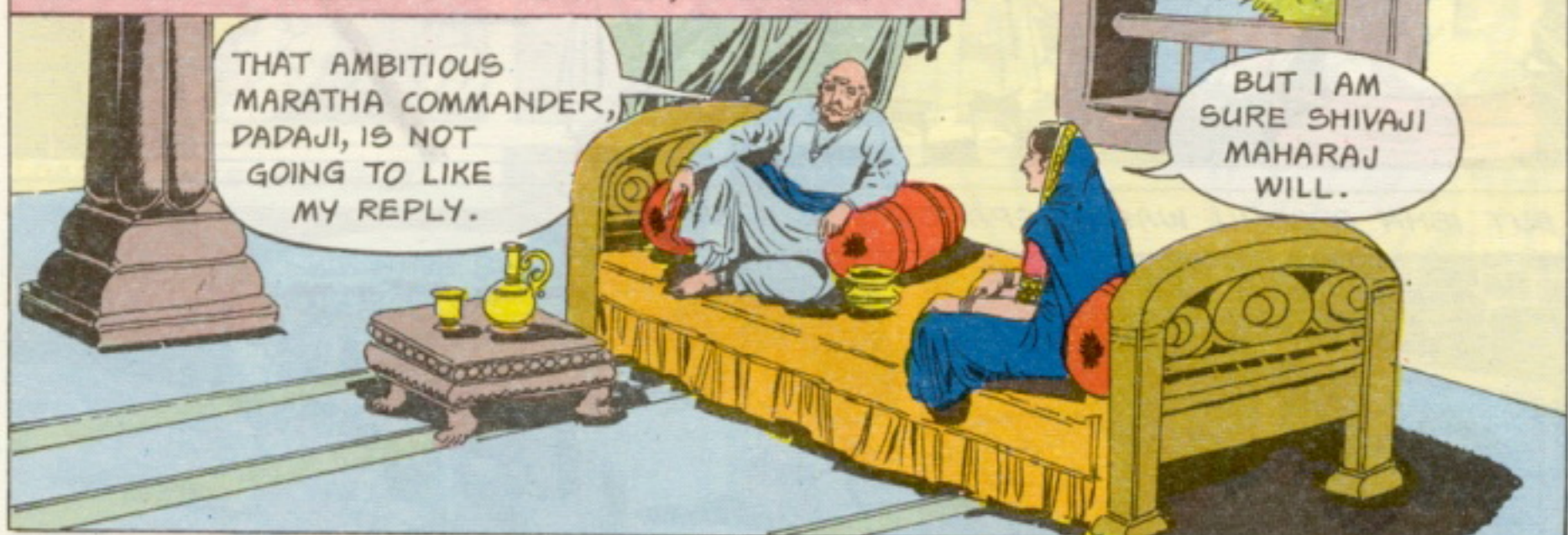


I HAVE GREAT RESPECT FOR SHIVAJI MAHARAJ. I ADMIRE HIS COURAGE AND LOVE OF FREEDOM.





LATER, WHEN ISHA PRABHU DISCUSSED THE DAY'S HAPPENINGS WITH HIS WIFE, MALLAMMA*—



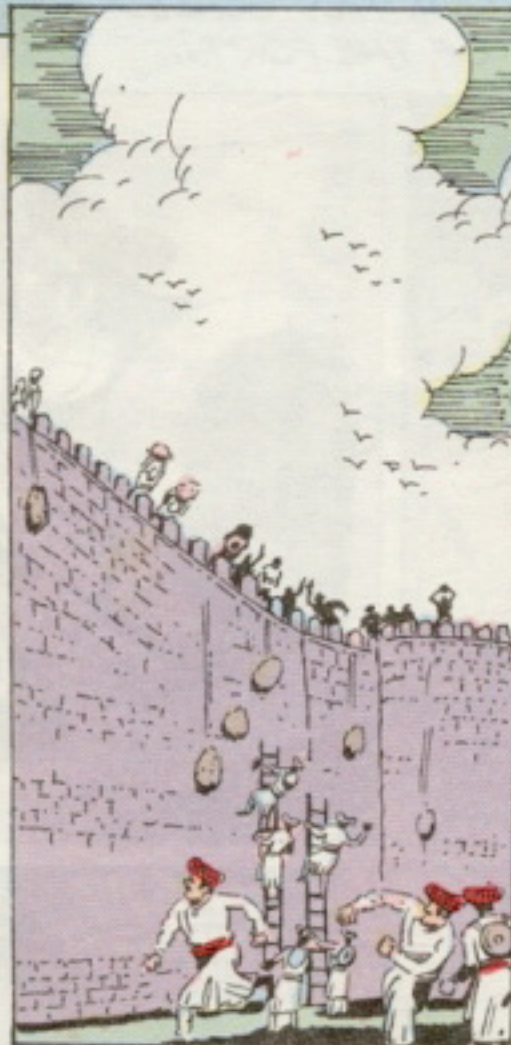
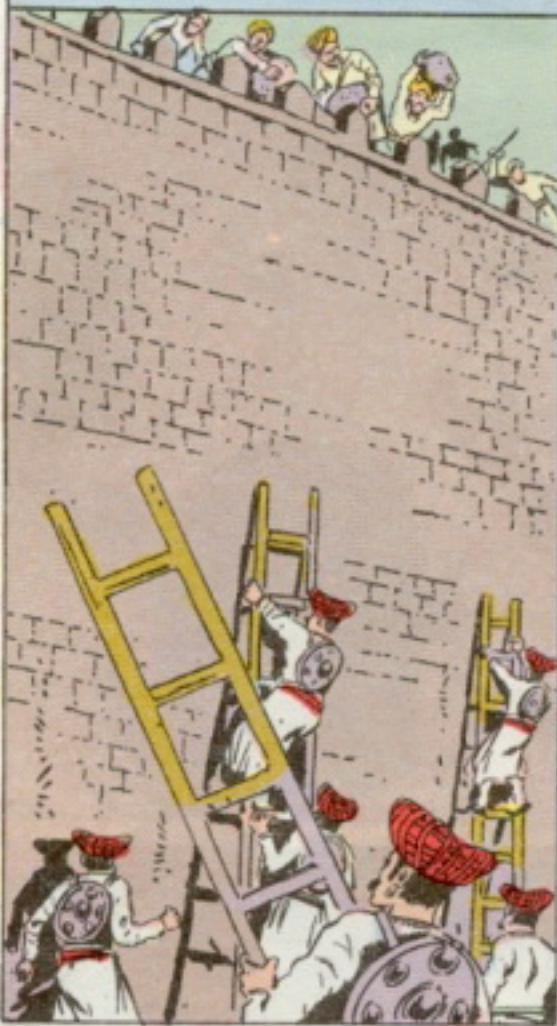
AS EXPECTED, DADAJI LAID SIEGE TO BELAVADI.
MARATHA SOLDIERS SURROUNDED THE FORT.

WHEN THEY RUN OUT
OF SUPPLIES THEY WILL
HAVE TO SURRENDER.

BUT ISHA PRABHU WAS PREPARED FOR A SIEGE.



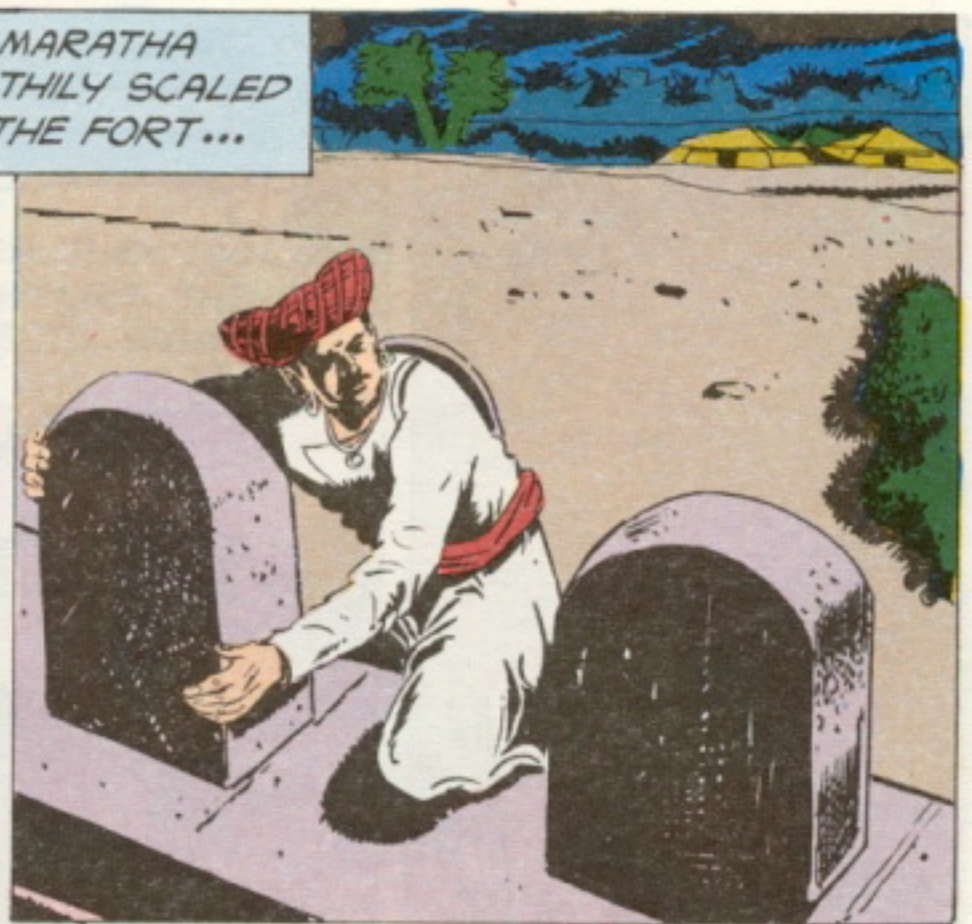
EVERY ATTEMPT OF THE ENEMY TO SCALE THE FORT WAS FOILED.



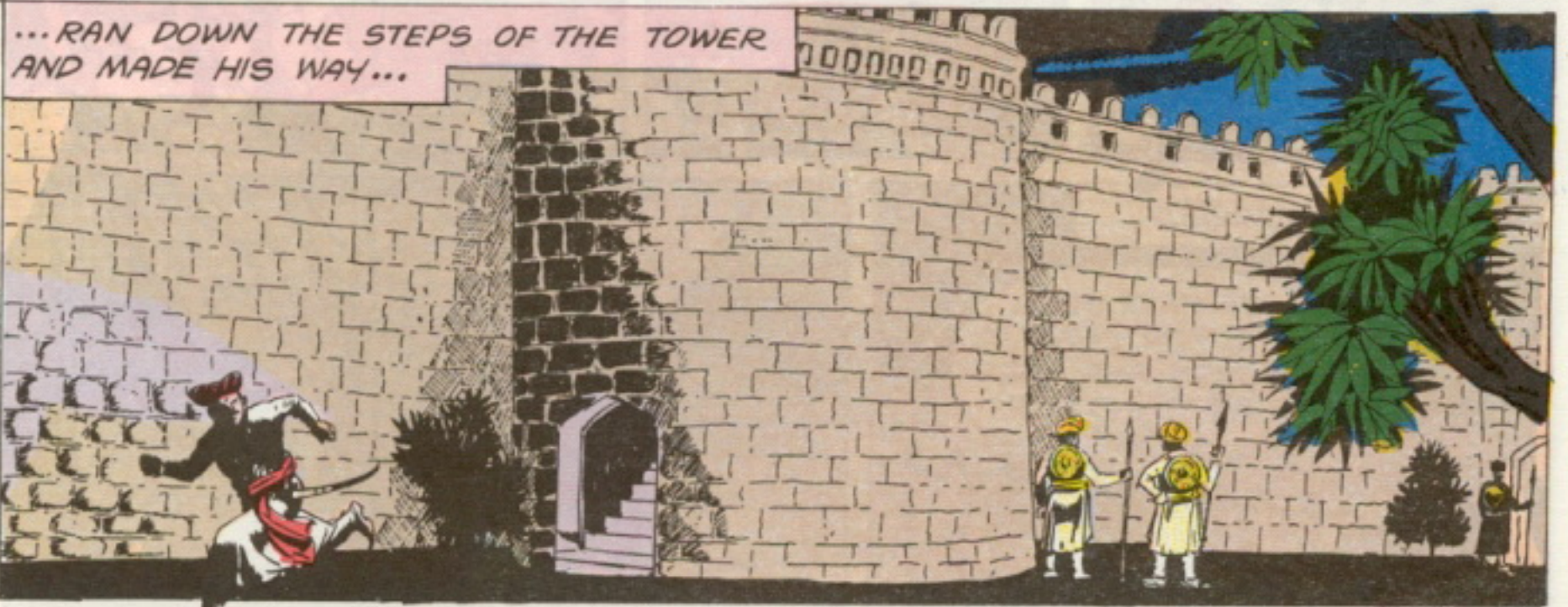
DADAJI WAS WORRIED.



THAT NIGHT A MARATHA
SOLDIER STEALTHILY SCALED
THE WALL OF THE FORT...



...RAN DOWN THE STEPS OF THE TOWER
AND MADE HIS WAY...



...TO THE PLACE WHERE THE HAY
FOR THE HORSES WAS STACKED.



THE FIRST TO NOTICE THE FIRE WERE THE GUARDS ON THE RAMPART.



AS THEY RAN DOWN...

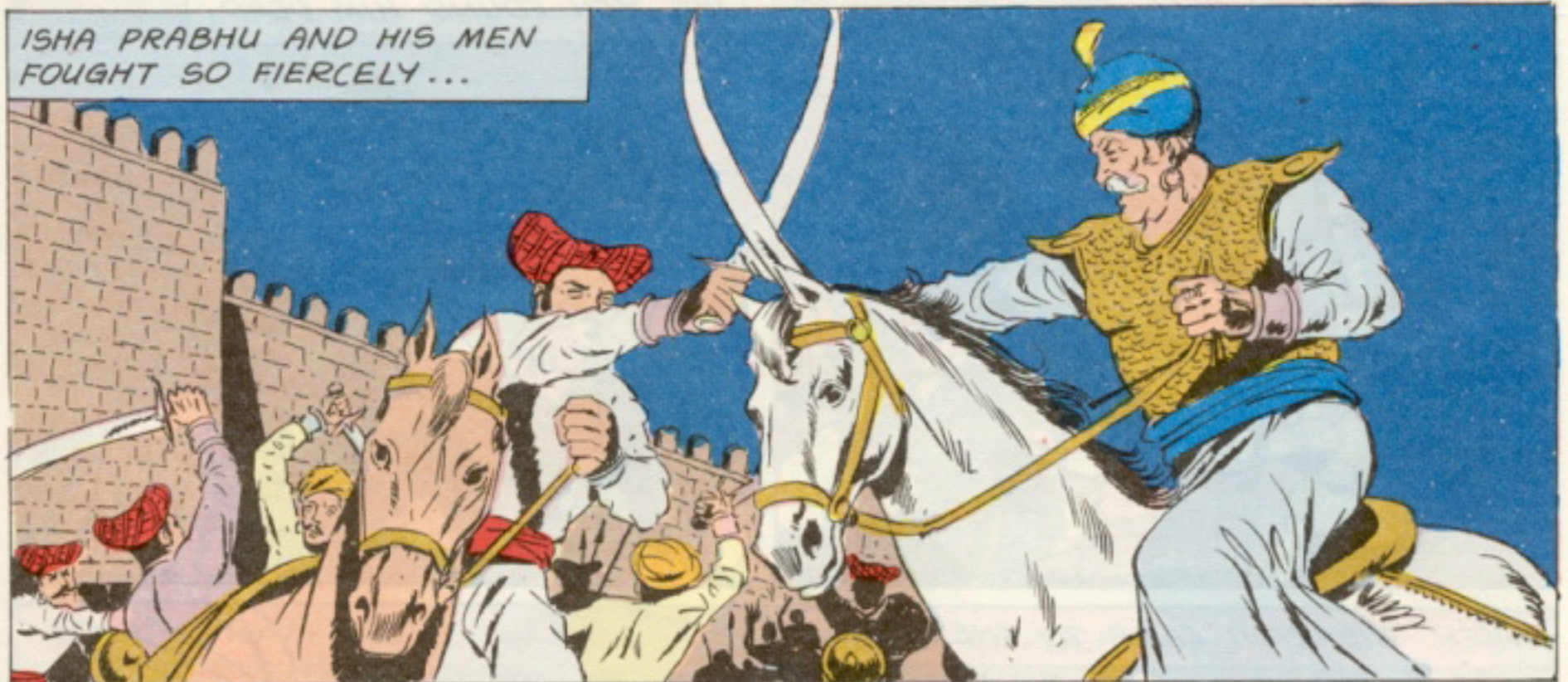


...THE MARATHA RAN TOWARDS THE GATES OF THE FORT.



SOON THE DESAI ARRIVED ON THE SCENE.

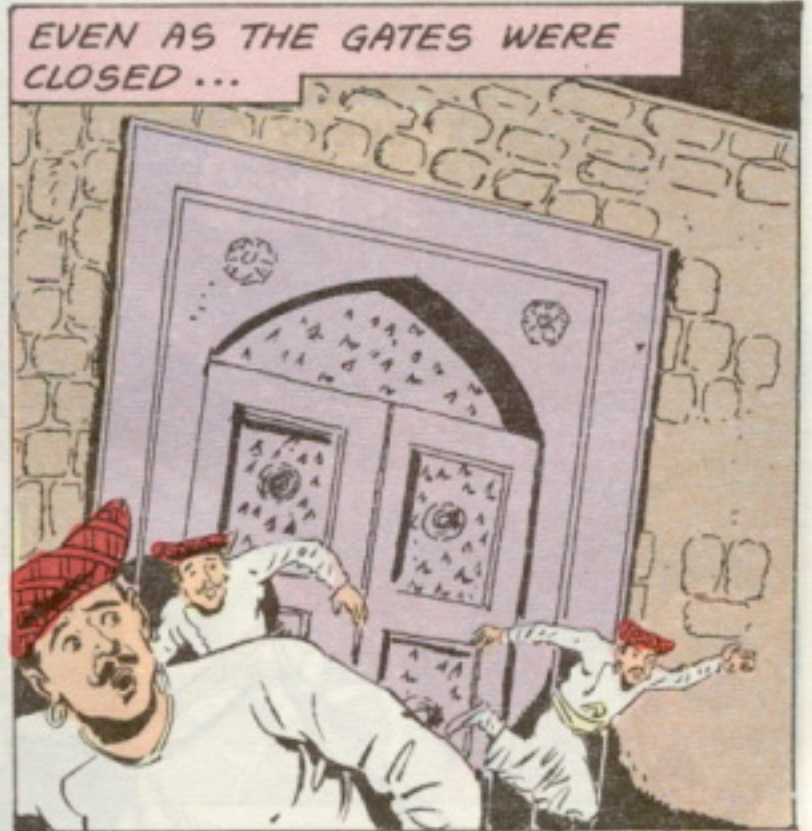




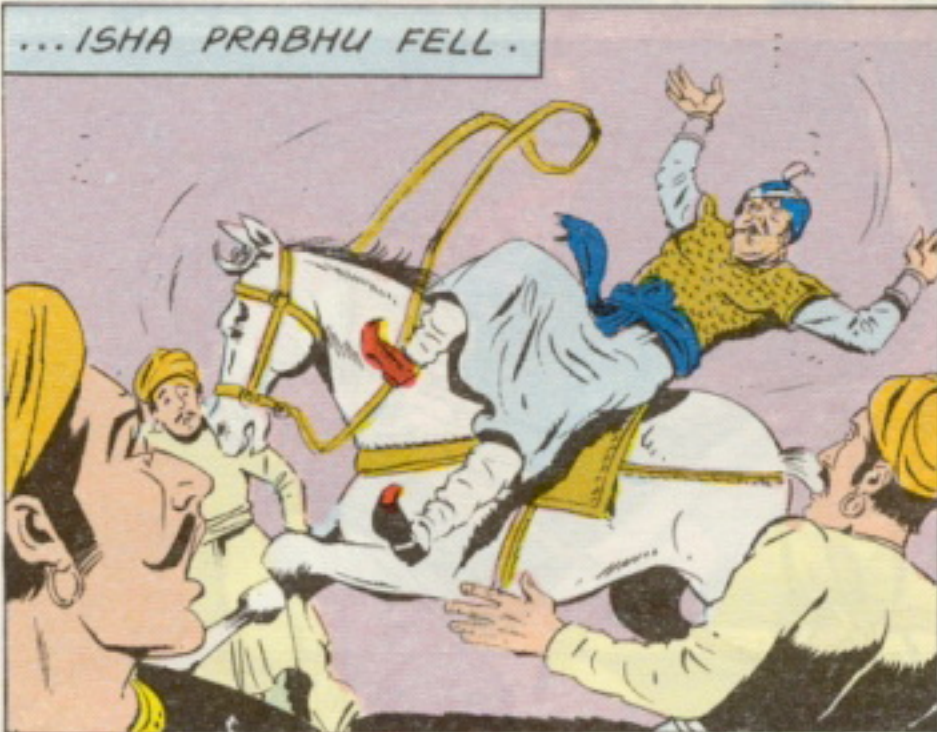
... TILL THE MARATHAS WERE
DRIVEN OUT OF THE FORT.



EVEN AS THE GATES WERE
CLOSED ...



... ISHA PRABHU FELL.



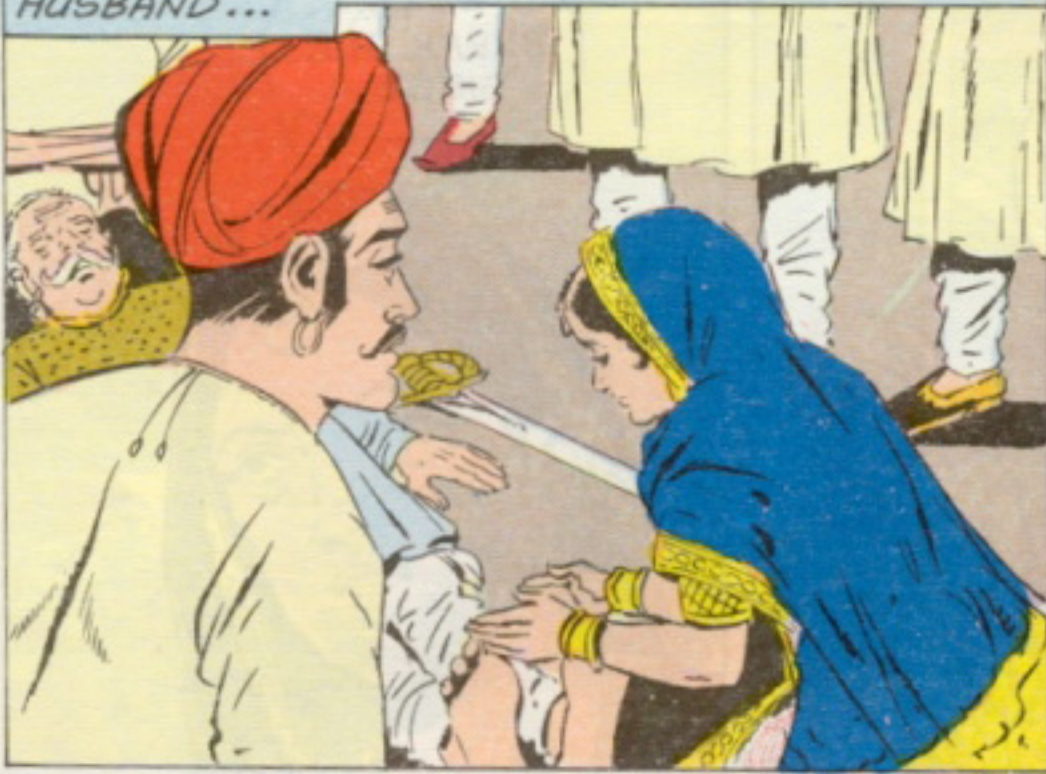
HIS MEN FOUND HIM DEAD.



WHEN THE RANI CAME TO THE SPOT...



...SHE TOUCHED THE FEET OF HER DEAD HUSBAND...



...AND PICKED UP THE SWORD LYING BESIDE HIM.



THE FOLLOWING DAY —



AND NO SUPPLIES CAN REACH US UNTIL THE SIEGE IS WITHDRAWN.





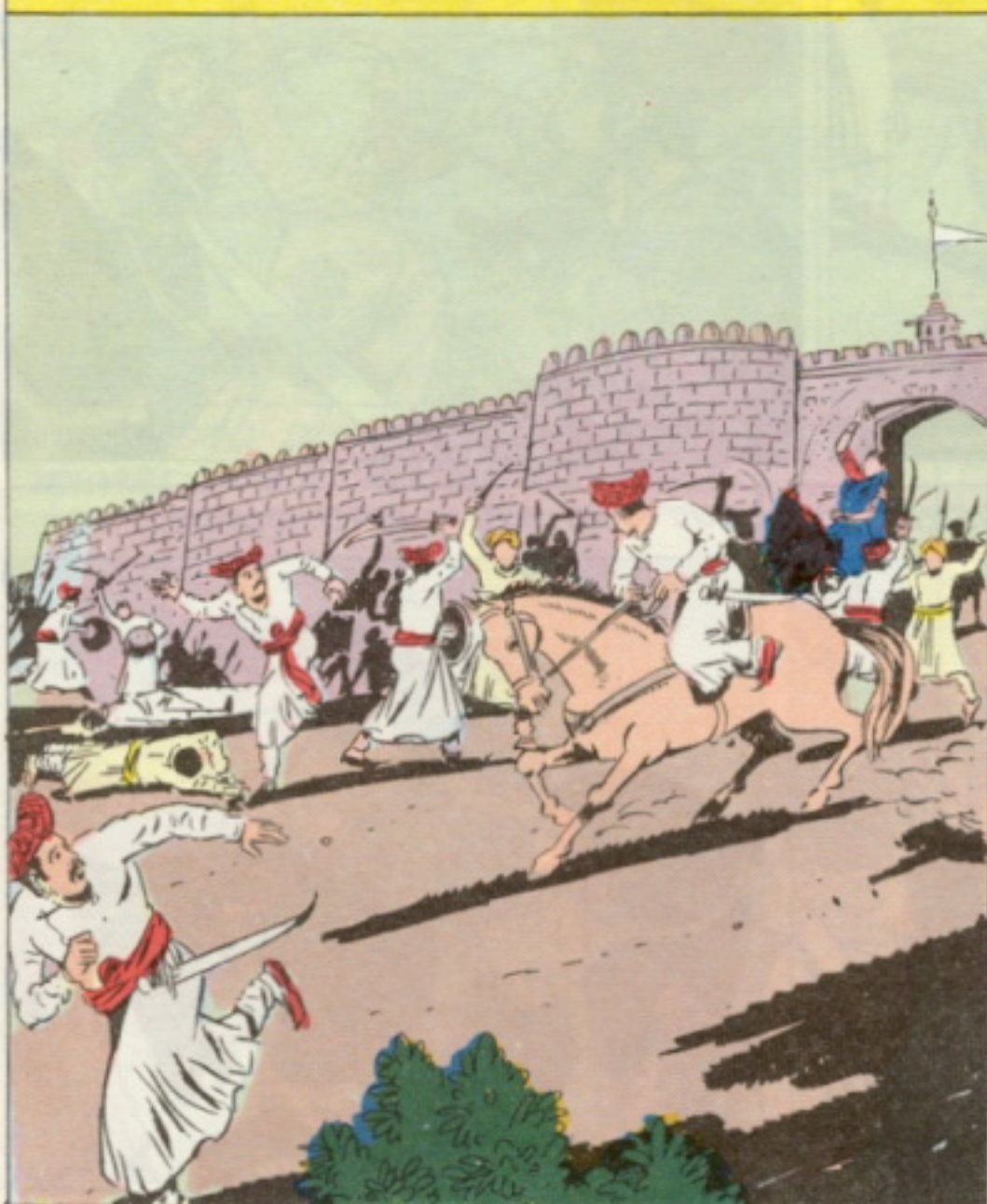
INSPIRED BY HER COURAGE THE MEN
FOUGHT FIERCELY.



THE RANI MOVED WITH LIGHTNING
SPEED.



DADAJI'S MEN REELED UNDER THE ATTACK.



WE'LL LOSE THE
BATTLE UNLESS
THE RANI IS
CONTAINED.

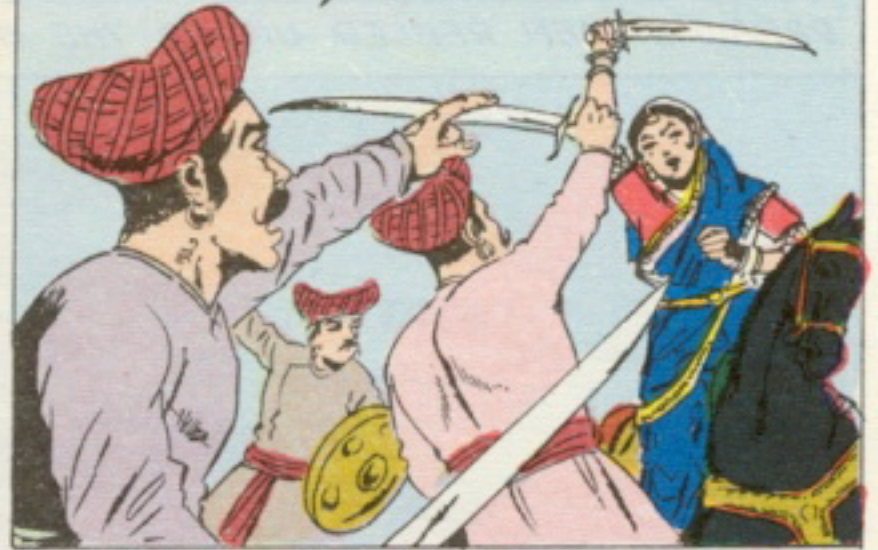




AS THE MEN CLOSED IN ON HER, THE RANI FOUGHT EVEN MORE VIGOROUSLY.



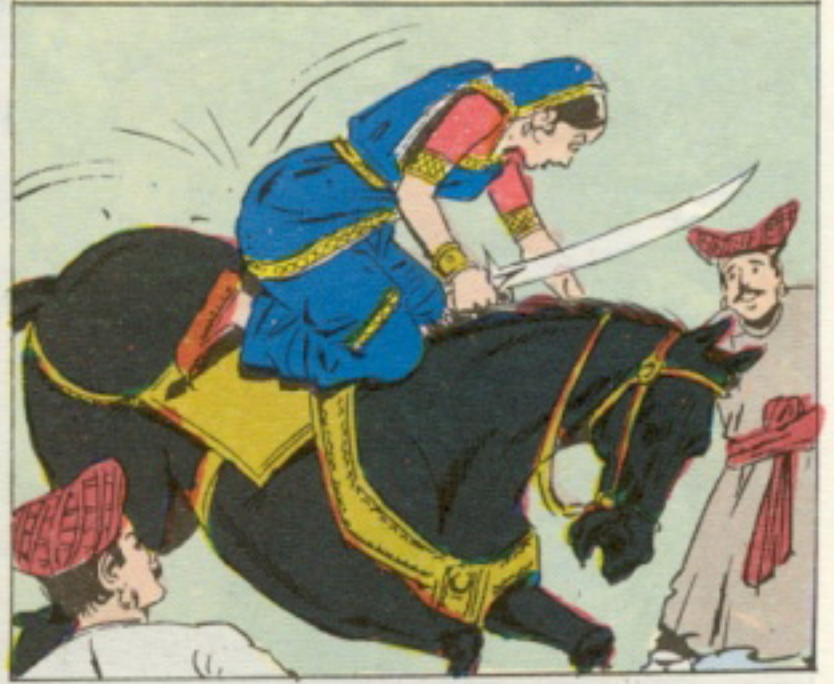
GET HER HORSE!



THE LEGS OF THE RANI'S HORSE WERE HACKED OFF.



BUT THE RANI WAS QUICK.



SHE JUMPED OFF THE HORSE AND ...



... CONTINUED THE FIGHT.



BUT SHE WAS STRUCK FROM BEHIND ...



... AND HER SWORD FLEW OFF.



SHE STOOD DISARMED. NO ONE MOVED TOWARDS HER. ALL STOOD STILL.



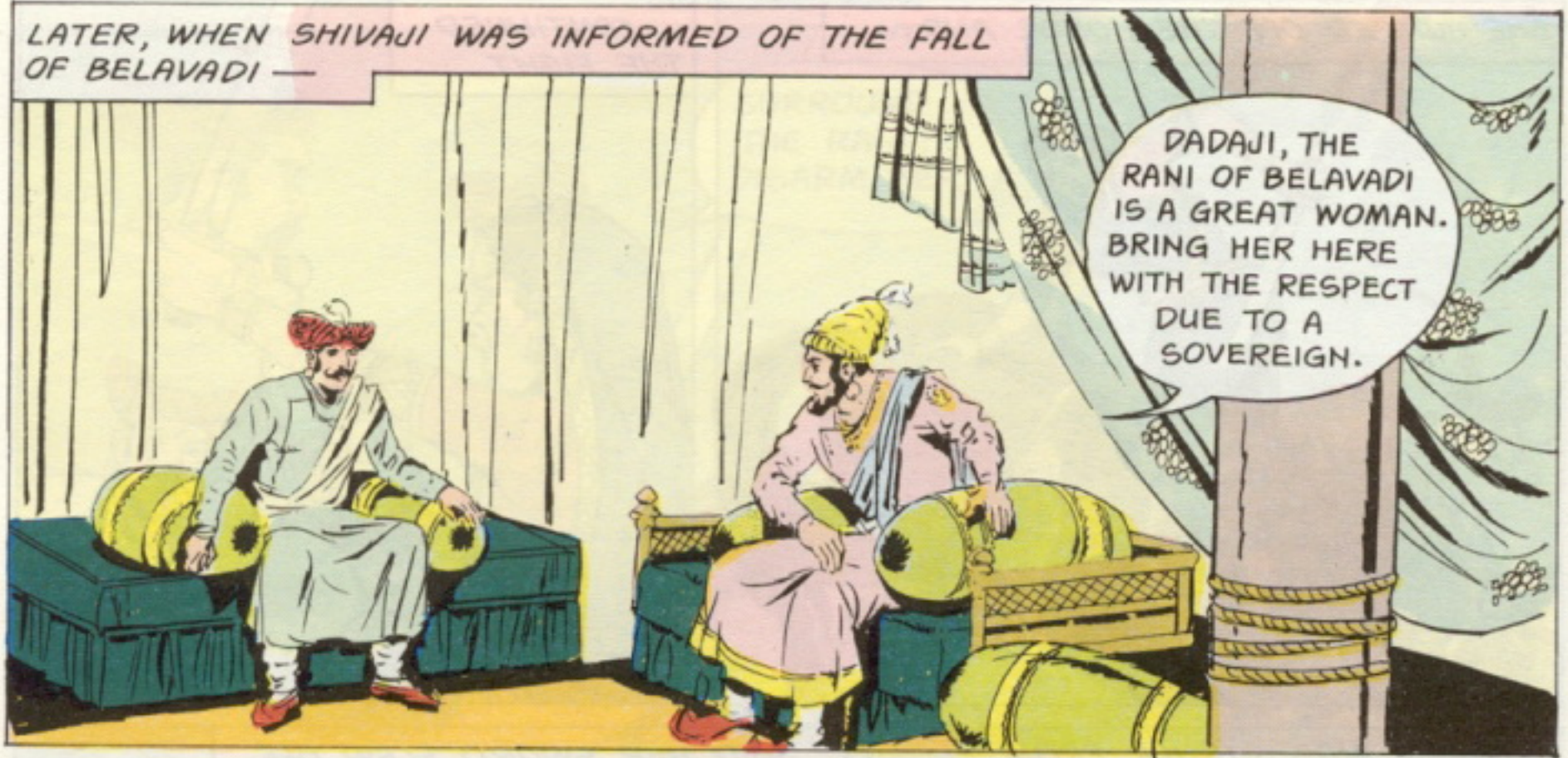
THEN THE RANI SPOKE.

I ACCEPT DEFEAT. PLEASE ENSURE THAT MY PEOPLE COME TO NO HARM.

THEY WILL BE SAFE, RANI SAHEBA.



LATER, WHEN SHIVAJI WAS INFORMED OF THE FALL OF BELAVADI —



WHEN THE RANI WAS BROUGHT TO HIS CAMP SHIVAJI STOOD UP TO RECEIVE HER.

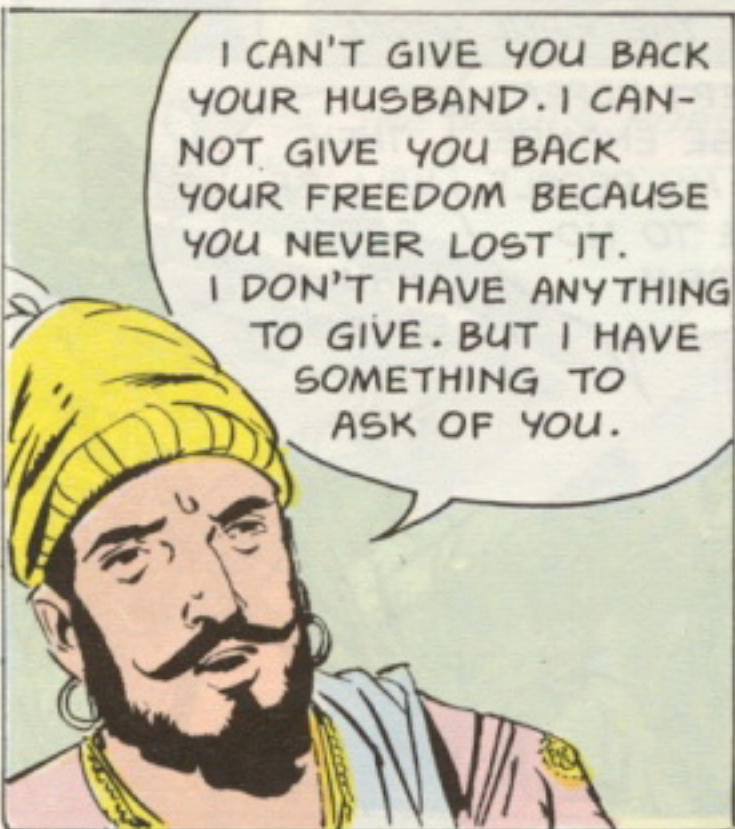
MOTHER, I SALUTE YOU FOR YOUR BRAVERY.



I DO NOT KNOW WHO IS THE VICTOR. I ONLY KNOW YOU ARE NOT THE VAN-QUISHED, YOU SHALL EVER REMAIN FREE.



I CAN'T GIVE YOU BACK YOUR HUSBAND. I CAN- NOT GIVE YOU BACK YOUR FREEDOM BECAUSE YOU NEVER LOST IT. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO GIVE. BUT I HAVE SOMETHING TO ASK OF YOU.

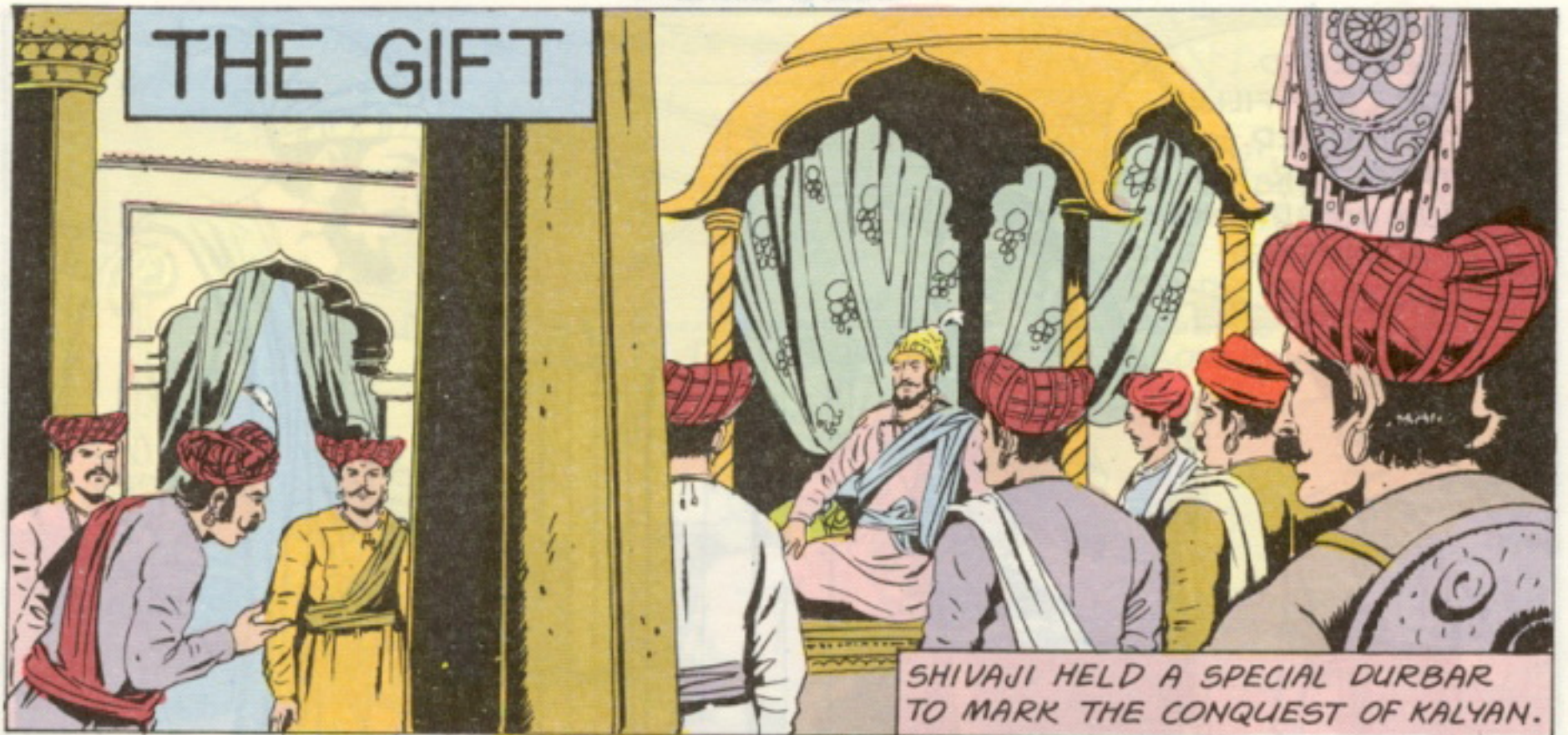


YOUR FORGIVENESS, MOTHER.





THE GIFT



SHIVAJI HELD A SPECIAL DURBAR TO MARK THE CONQUEST OF KALYAN.

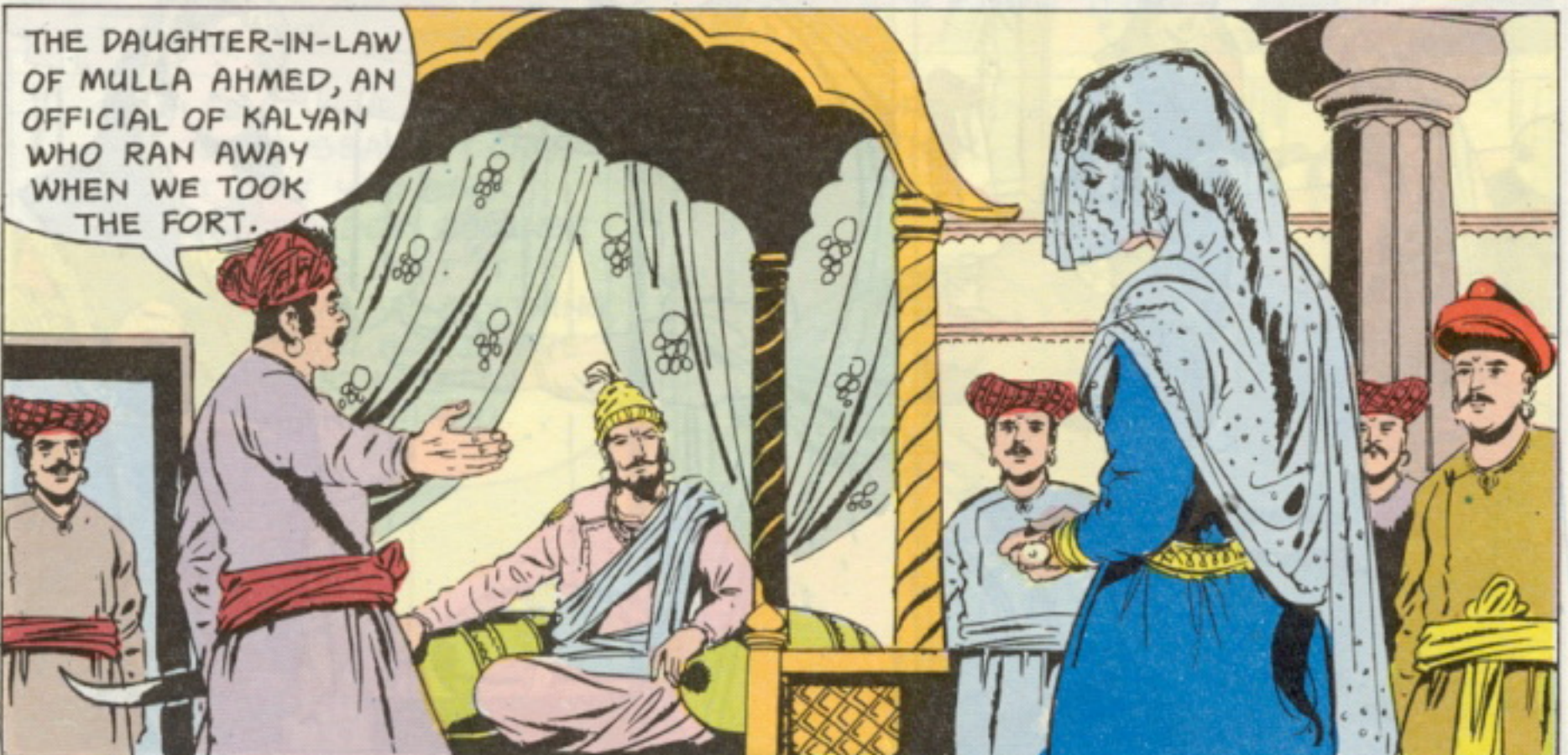
ONE BY ONE THE SPOILS OF THE CAMPAIGN WERE PRESENTED TO HIM.

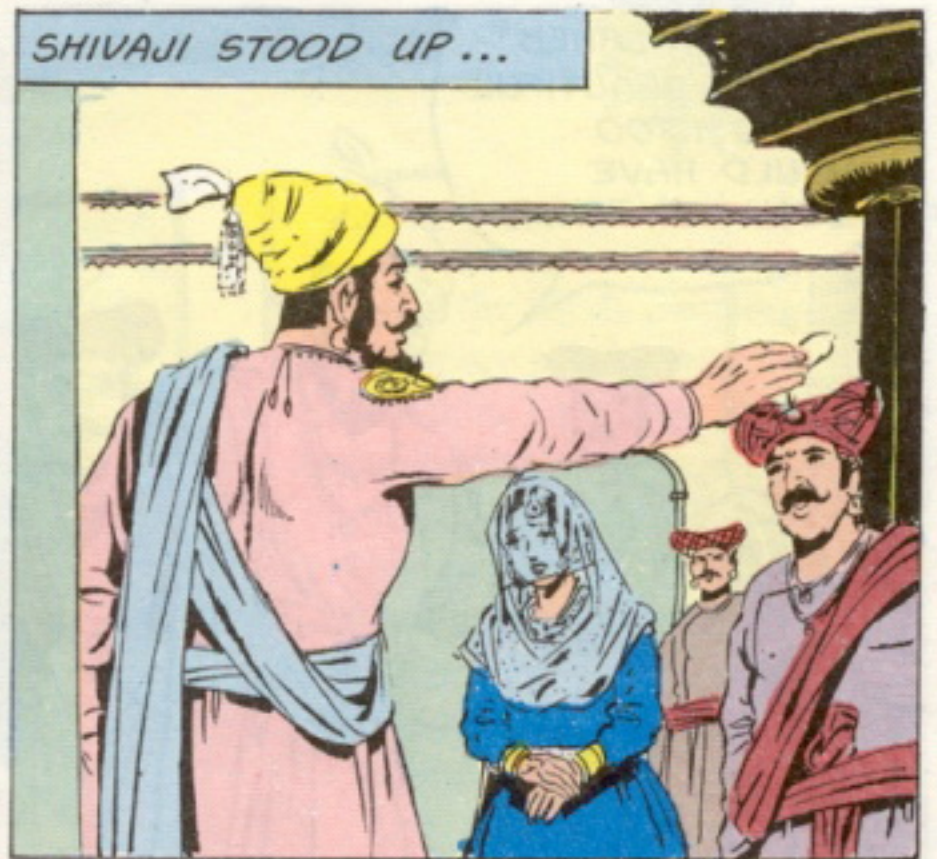


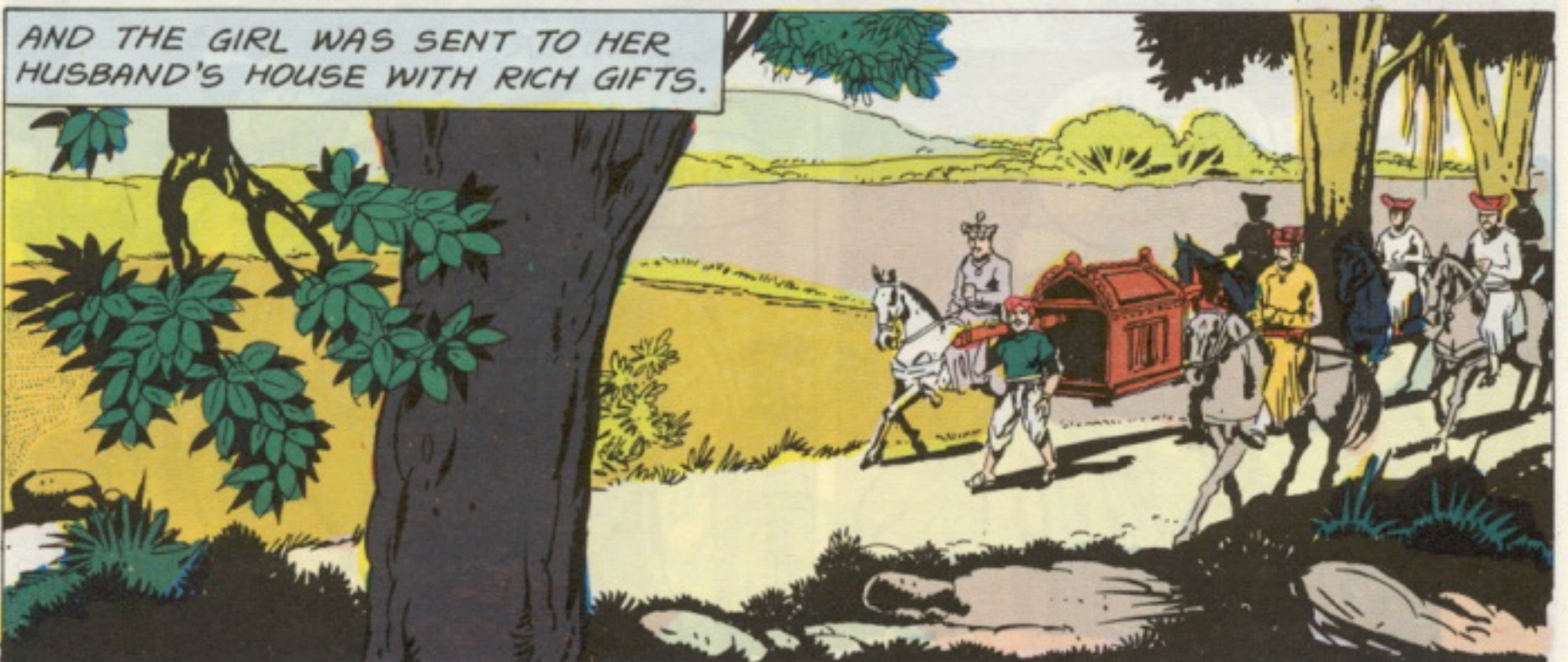
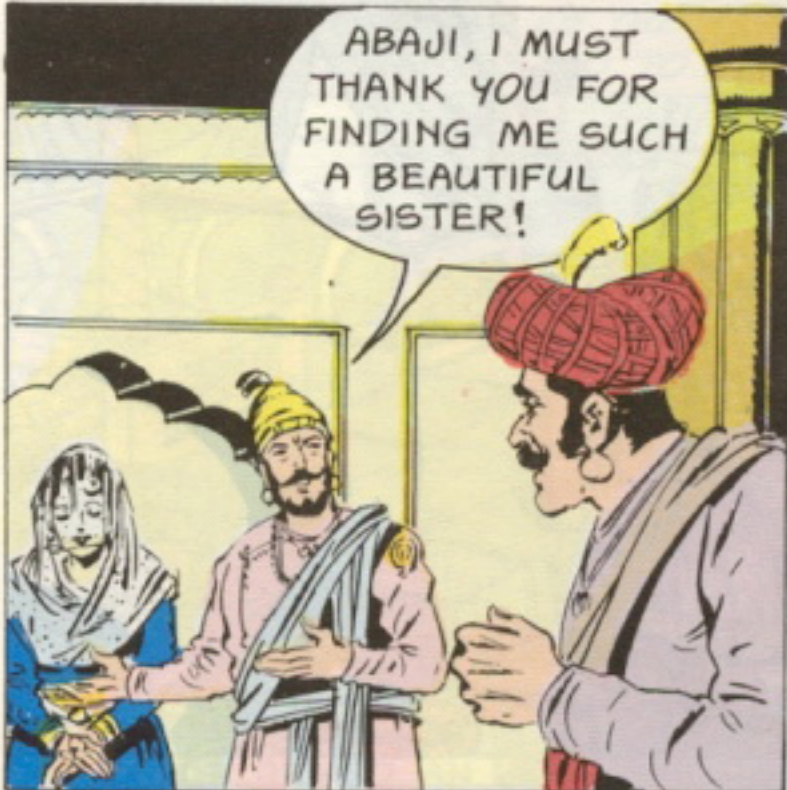
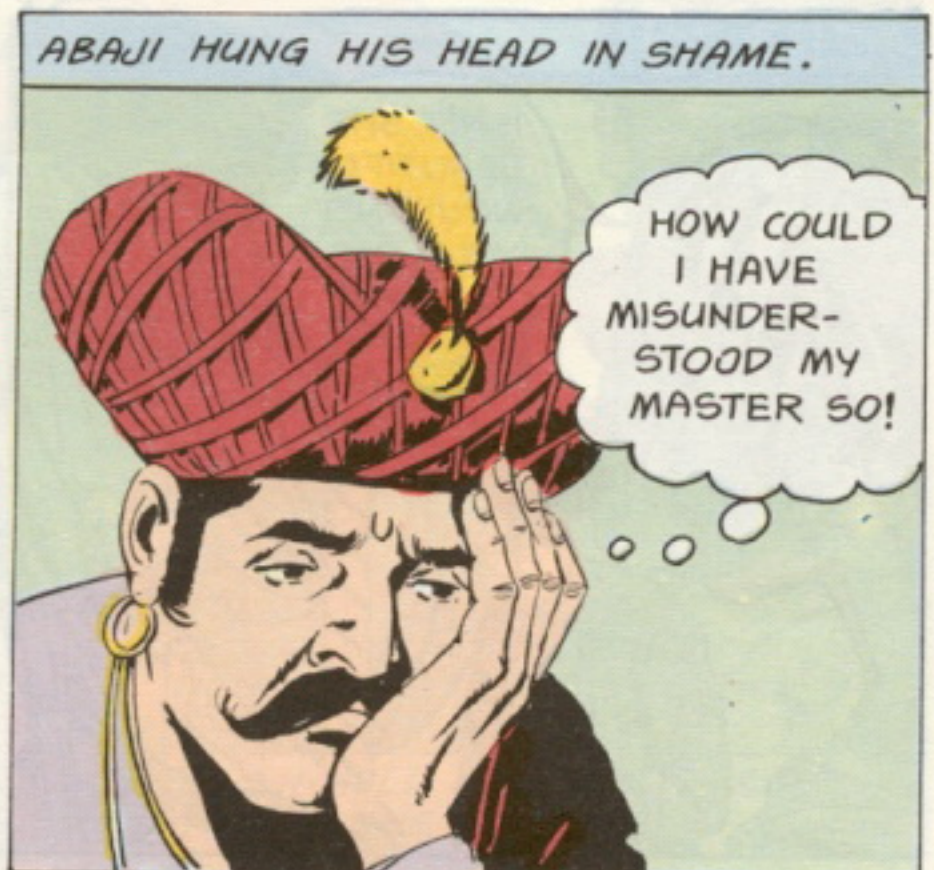
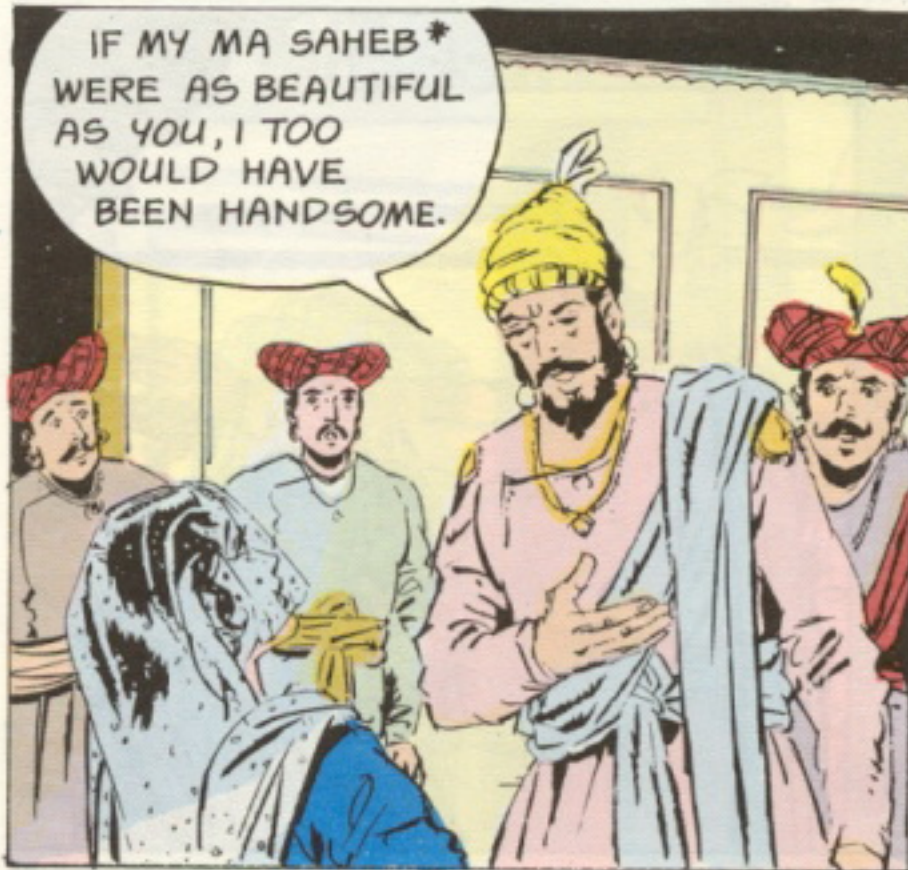
ABAJI MAHADEV, THE COMMANDER-IN-CHARGE OF THE KALYAN CAMP HAD A UNIQUE GIFT TO OFFER.



THE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW OF MULLA AHMED, AN OFFICIAL OF KALYAN WHO RAN AWAY WHEN WE TOOK THE FORT.









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