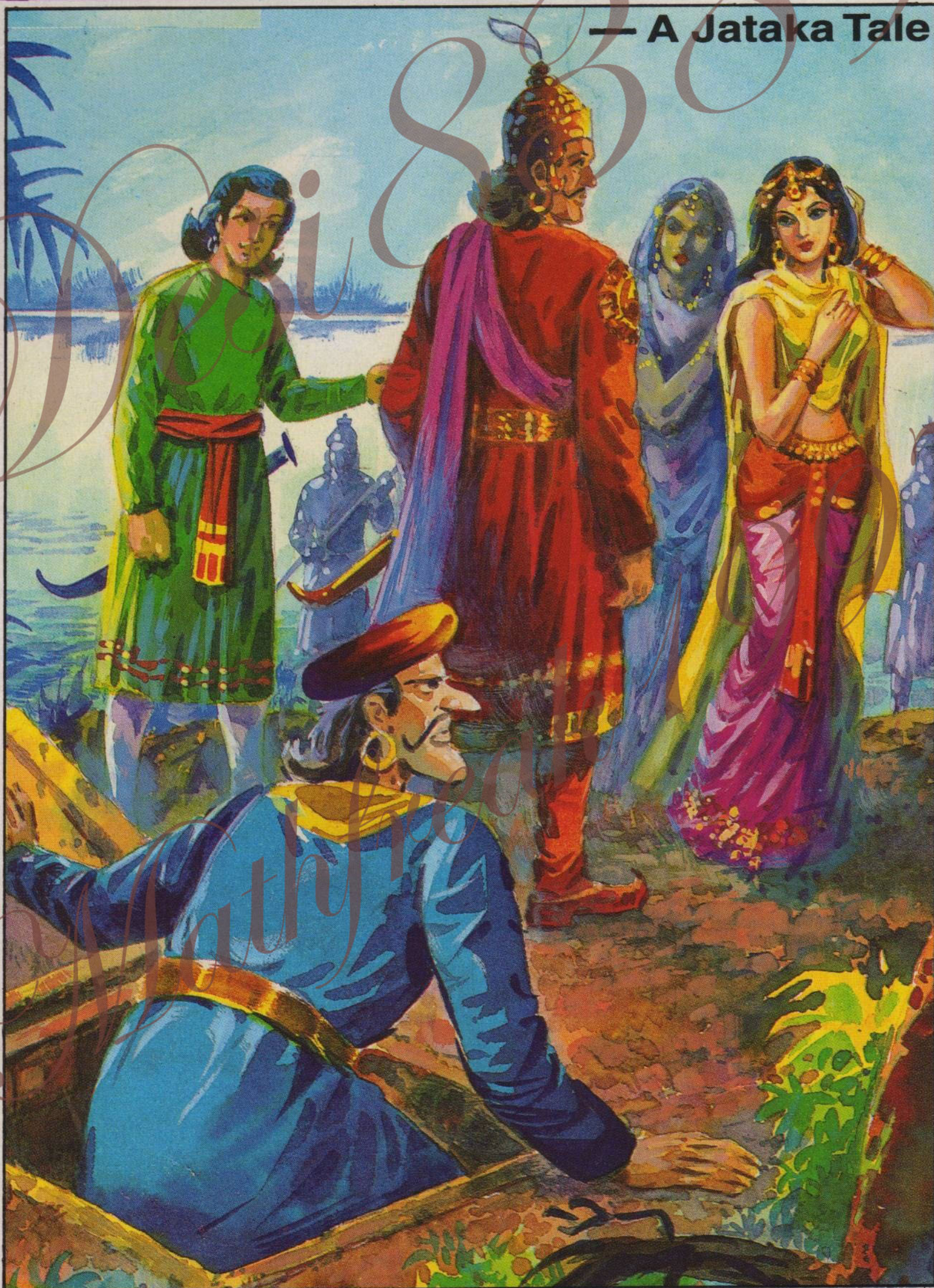




Vol. 665 Rs 25

The Deadly Feast

— A Jataka Tale



Amar Chitra Katha: the Glorious Heritage of India



THE DEADLY FEAST

According to legend, several lifetimes as a Bodhisattva went into the making of the Buddha, the Enlightened One.

The Bodhisattva came in many forms — man, monkey, deer, elephant, lion. Whatever his mortal body, he spread the message of justice and wisdom, tempered with compassion. This wisdom, the wisdom of right thinking and right living, is preserved in the Jataka tales.

These tales are based on the folklore, legends and ballads of ancient India. We cannot assign a definite date to the Jataka stories. Taking into account archaeological and literary evidence, it appears that they were compiled in the period third century B. C. to fifth century A. D. They give us invaluable information about ancient Indian civilization, culture and philosophy.

According to Maha Ummagga Jataka, the Bodhisattva was once born as Aushadha Kumar who was endowed with celestial knowledge and superhuman powers. Earlier, we had published the stories of Aushadha Kumar's childhood (Battle of Wits) and his early life at the court of Mithila (The Priceless Gem). This issue of Amar Chitra Katha presents Aushadha Kumar in the role of the chief minister of Mithila.

Script : Yagya Sharma

Illustrations : Ram Waeerkar



AMAR CHITRA KATHA :

The Route to Your Roots

Over 80 million copies have been sold so far

Editor : Anant Pai

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THE DEADLY FEAST

AUSHADHA KUMAR WAS A REINCARNATION OF BODHISATTVA. DAZZLED BY HIS INTELLECTUAL FEATS, VAIDEHA, KING OF VIDEHA ADOPTED HIM AND BROUGHT HIM UP.



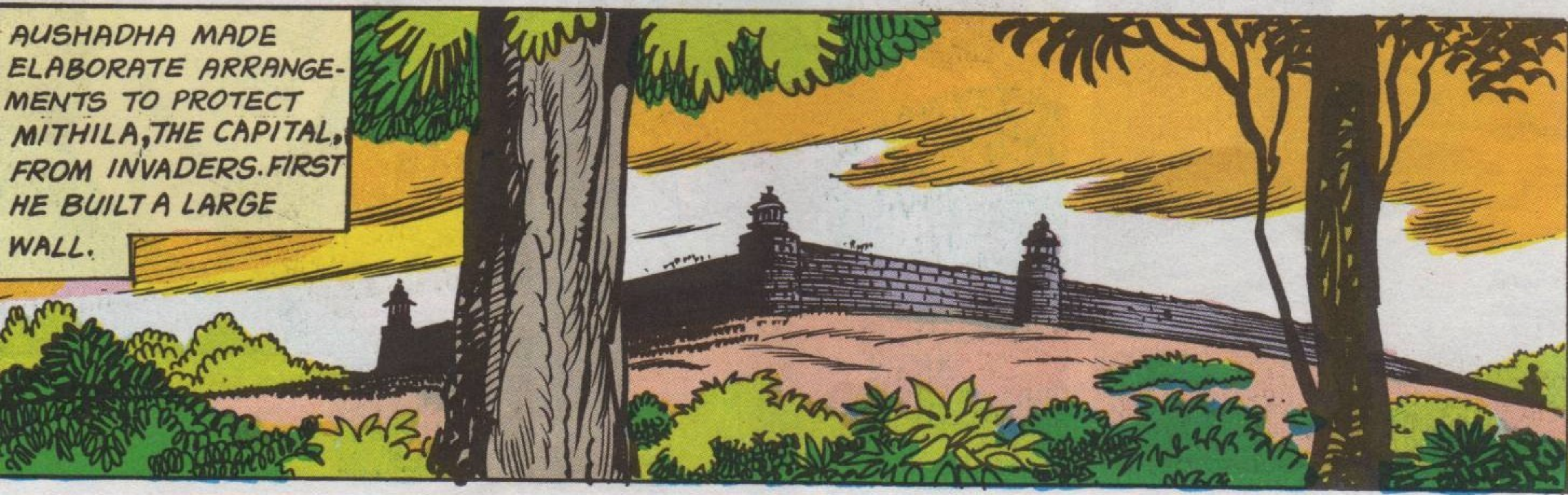
SOON THE KING WAS SO IMPRESSED BY AUSHADHA KUMAR'S WISDOM THAT HE APPOINTED HIM HIS CHIEF MINISTER.

MAHARAJ VAIDEHA, WE MUST FORTIFY OUR CAPITAL TO PREPARE FOR ANY EMERGENCY.

DO WHAT YOU THINK APPROPRIATE, AUSHADHA.



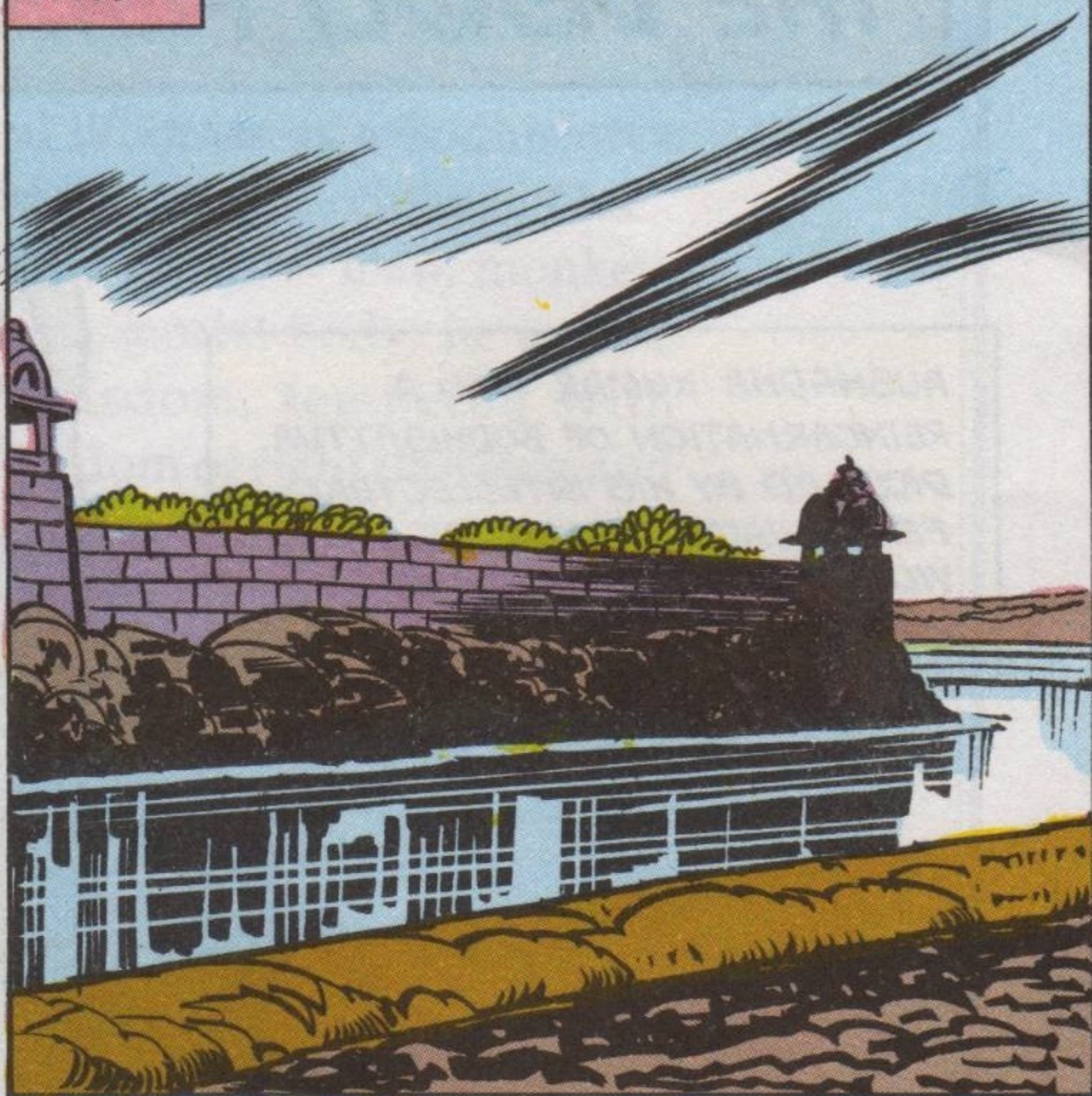
AUSHADHA MADE ELABORATE ARRANGEMENTS TO PROTECT MITHILA, THE CAPITAL, FROM INVADERS. FIRST HE BUILT A LARGE WALL.



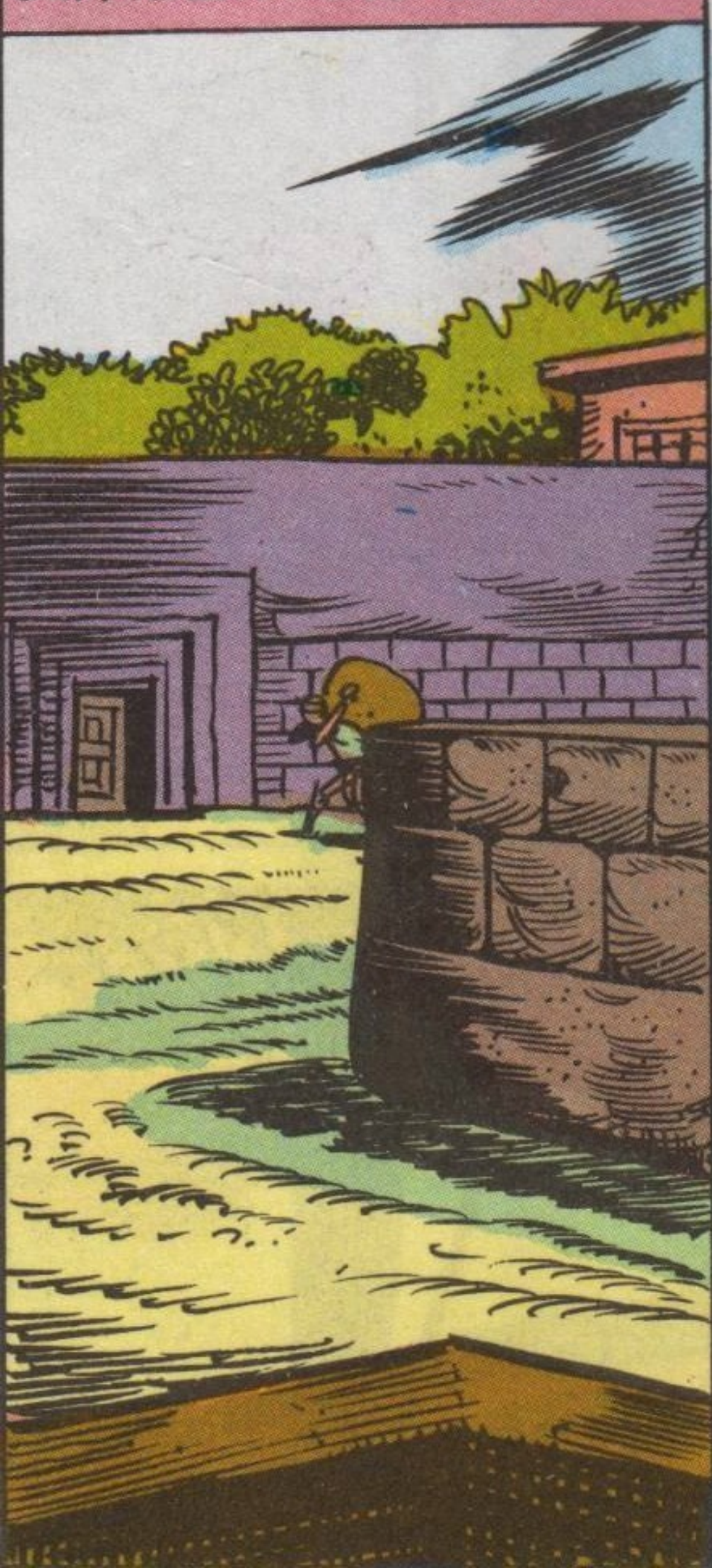
THE WALL HAD WATCHTOWERS FOR SENTRIES.



THEN HE BUILT THREE MOATS AROUND THE WALL. THE FIRST HE FILLED WITH WATER AND THE SECOND WITH SLUSH. THE THIRD WAS LEFT DRY.



IN THE FORTIFIED CITY HE CONSTRUCTED LARGE TANKS OF WATER AND STOCKED SUFFICIENT FOOD GRAINS.



THEN HE SELECTED A HUNDRED FAITHFUL WARRIORS AND SENT THEM TO THE HUNDRED KINGDOMS OF JAMBUDVEEPA *

WIN THE CONFIDENCE OF THE KINGS BUT DO NOT REVEAL YOUR REAL IDENTITY...



...AND SEND ME REGULAR REPORTS OF THEIR PLANS.



THE MEN CARRIED OUT RUSHADHA'S BIDDING.

WHILE AUSHADHA WAS MAKING ARRANGEMENTS TO PROTECT THE KINGDOM OF VIDEHA, KEVATTA, THE MINISTER OF PANCHALA WAS PLANNING TO EXPAND THE DOMAIN OF HIS KING, BRAHMADATTA.

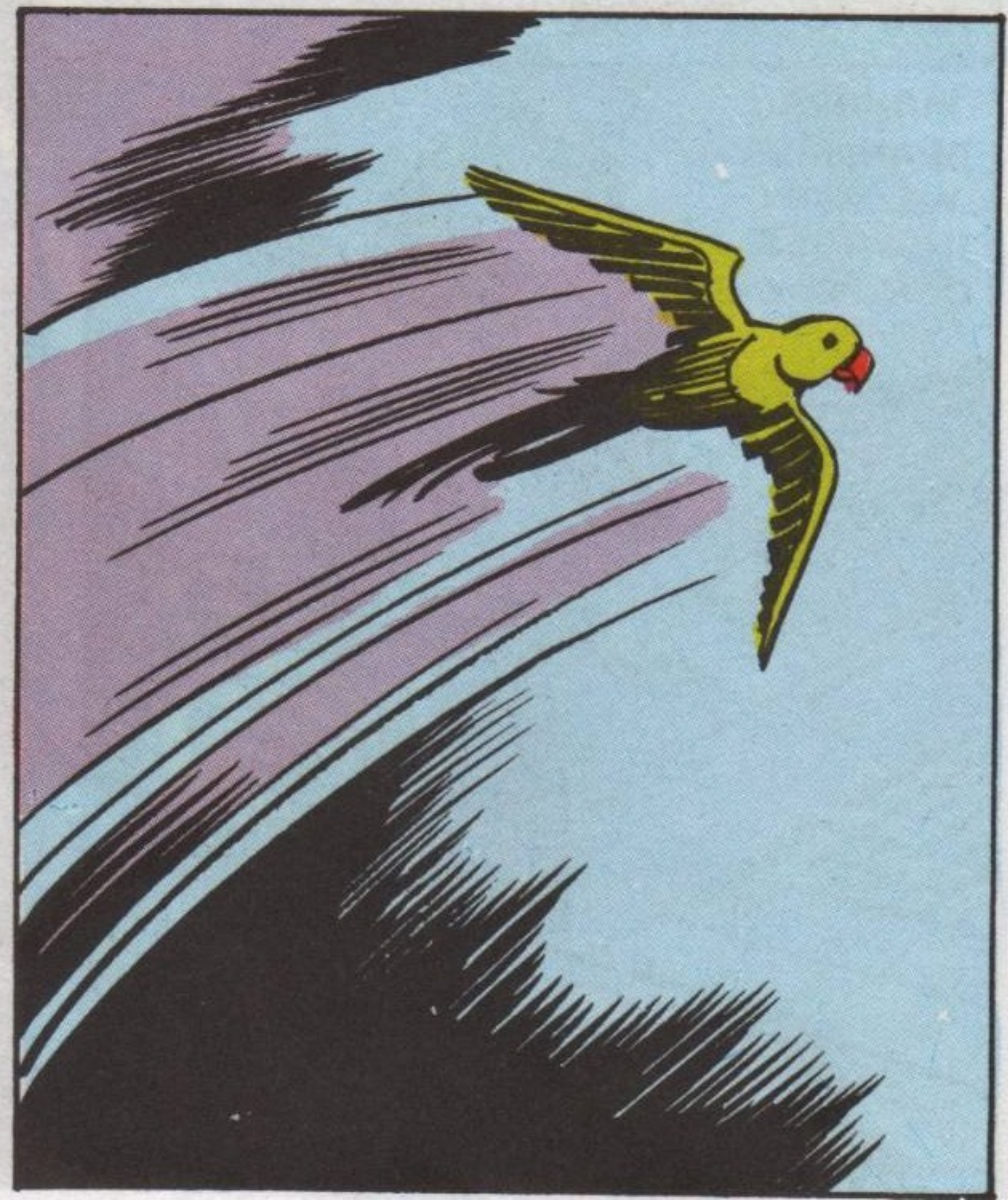
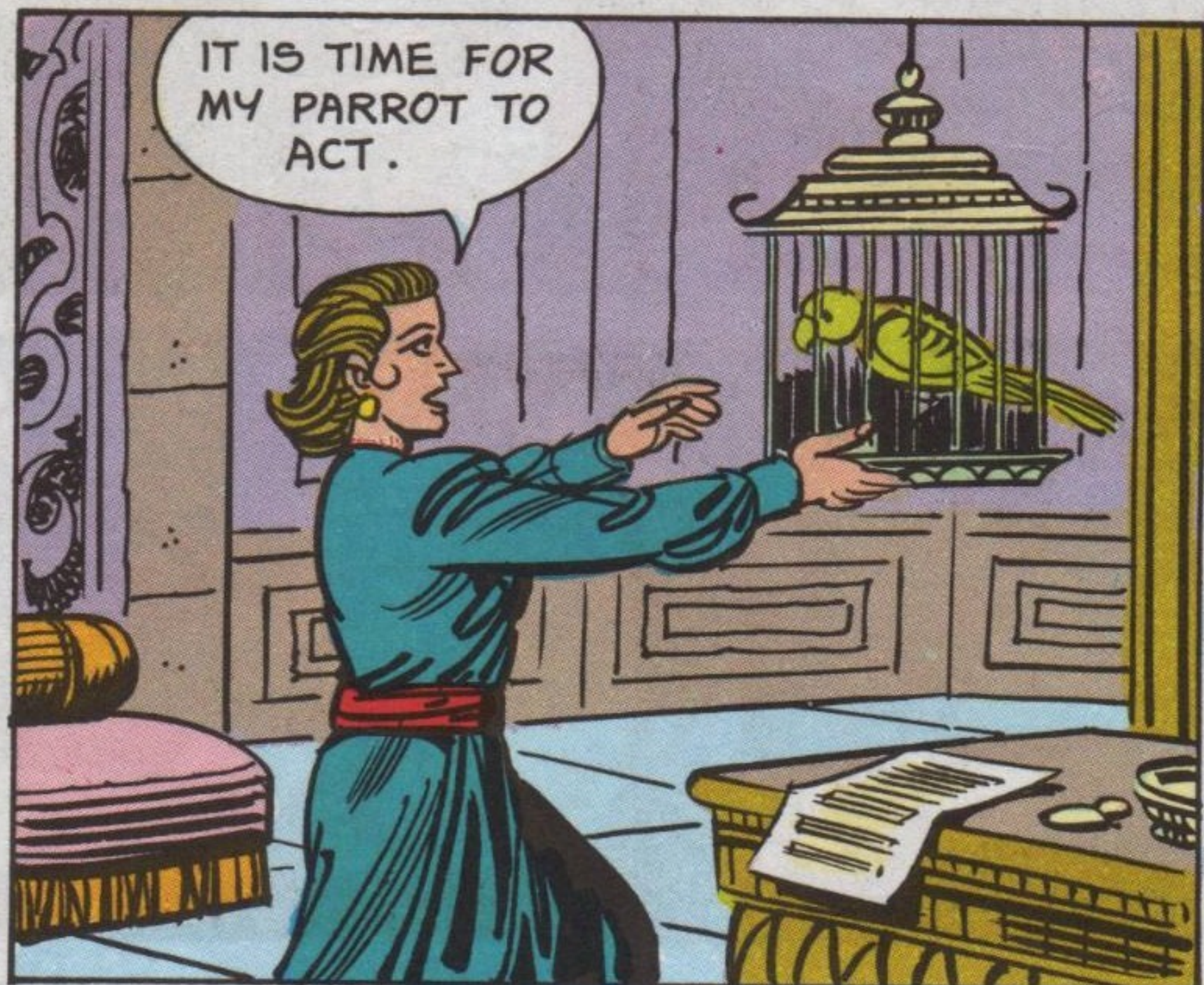
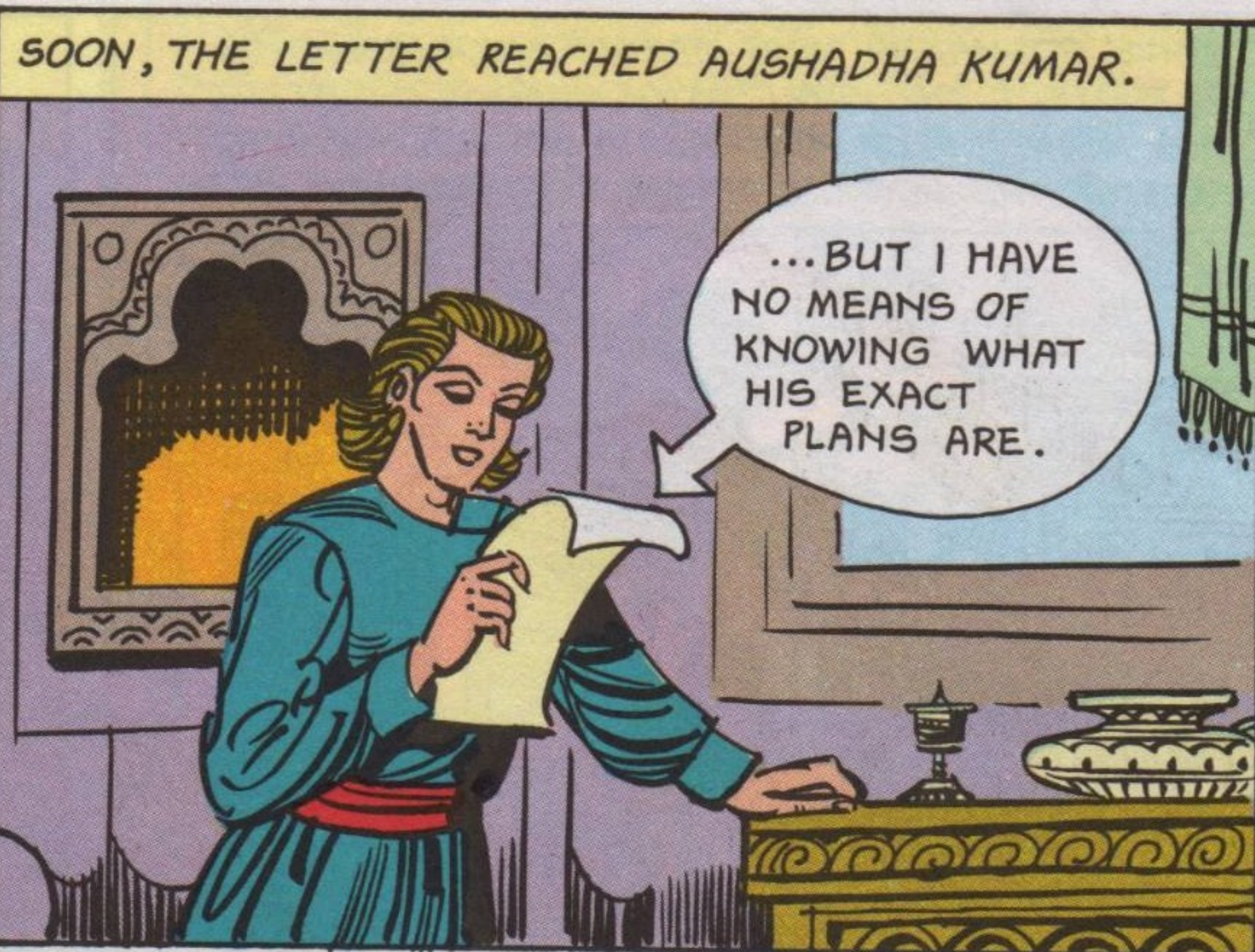
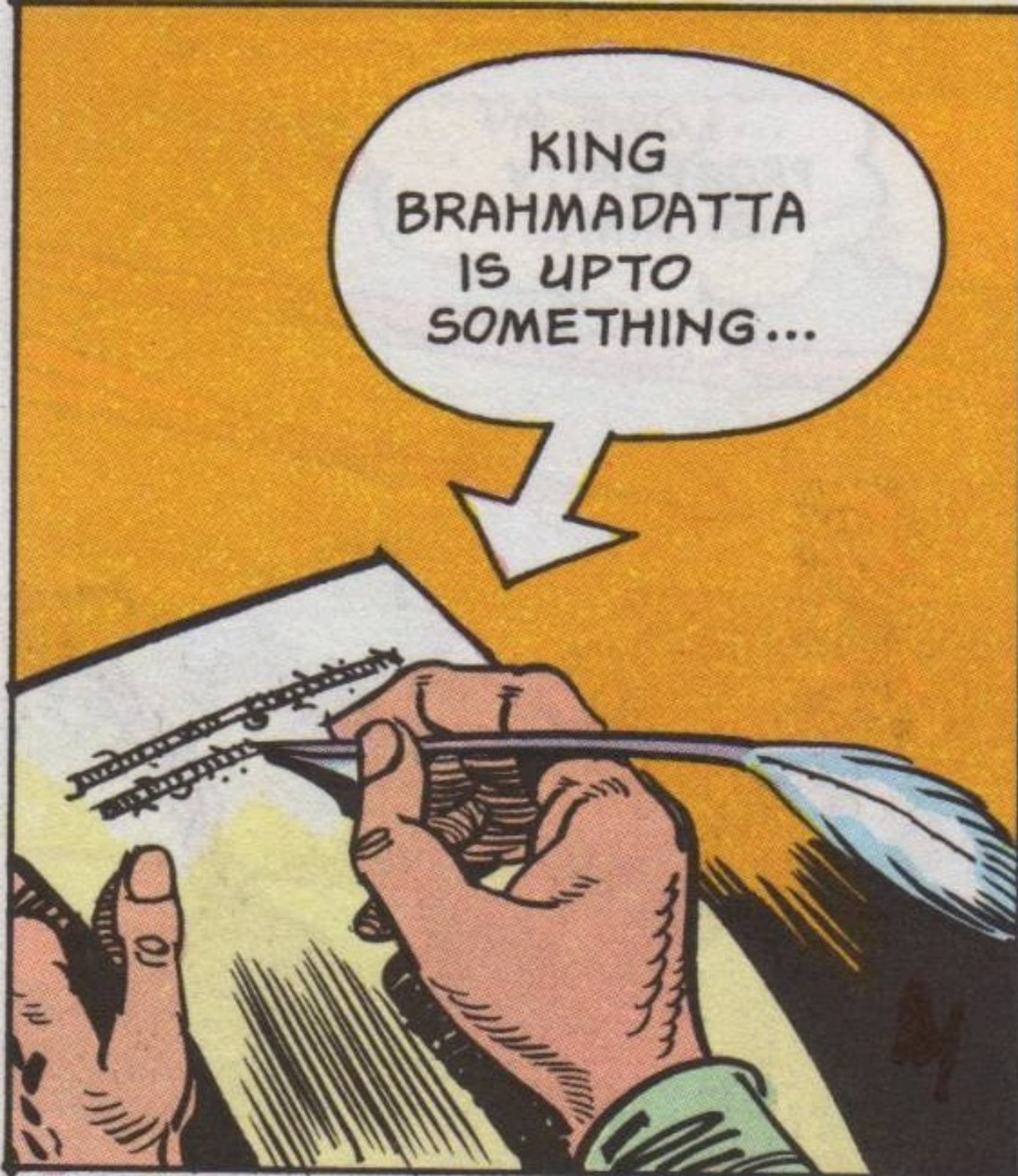


AND SO, KEVATTA WORKED OUT A PLAN.

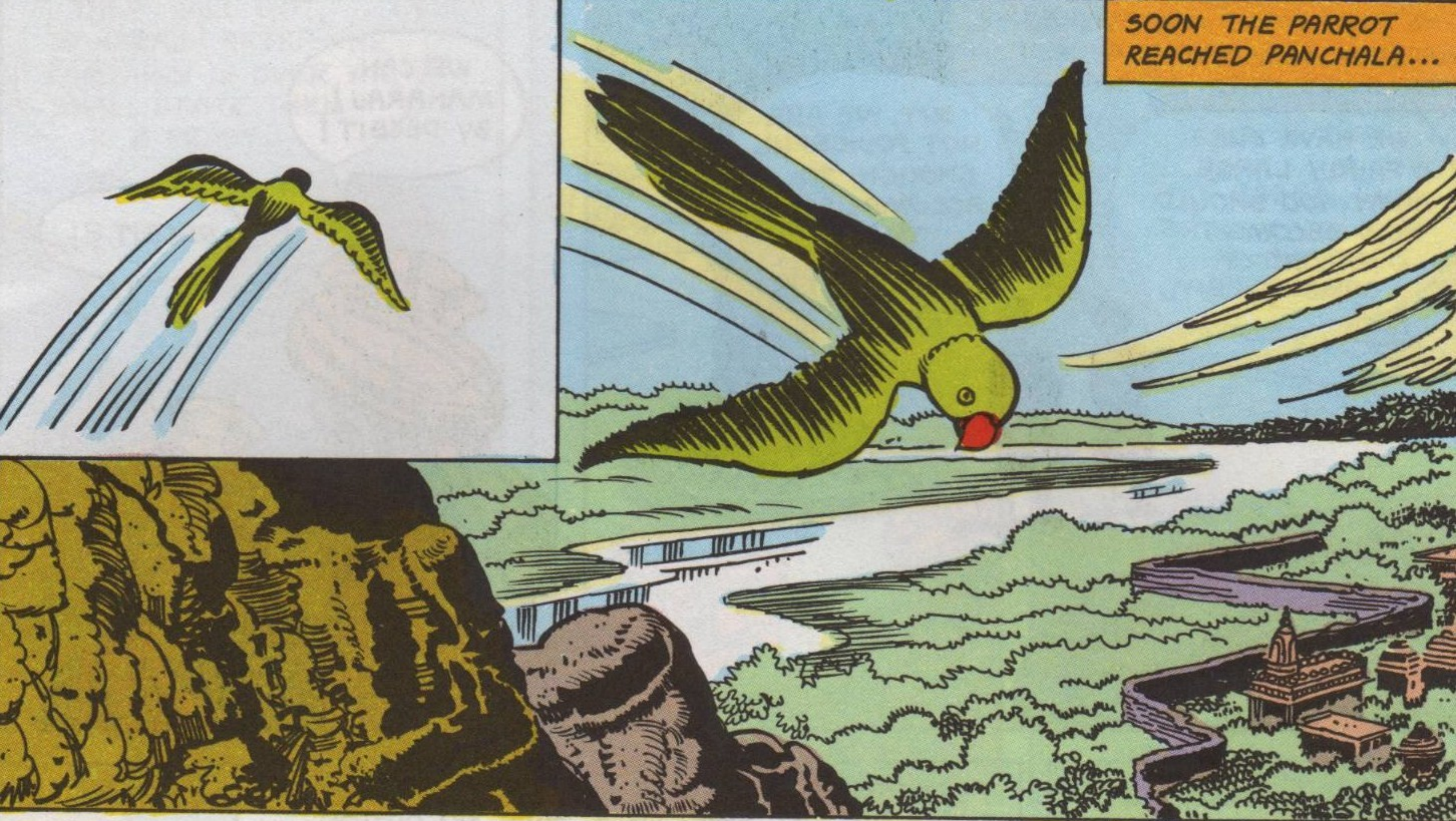


ONE OF AUSHADHA KUMAR'S SPIES WAS PRESENT IN THE COURT OF BRAHMADATTA.





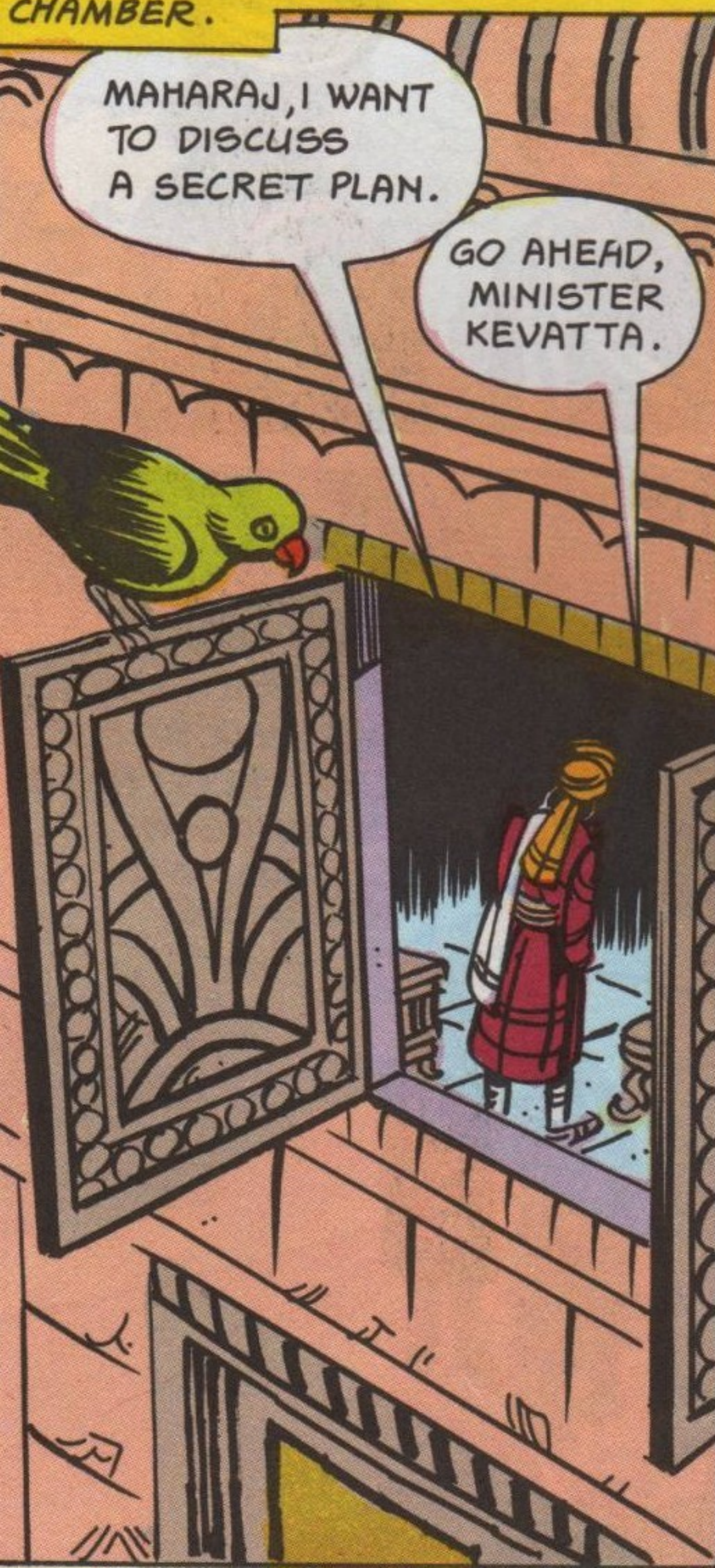
SOON THE PARROT
REACHED PANCHALA...



...AND ALIGHTED ON THE WINDOW-
SILL OF KING BRAHMADATTA'S
CHAMBER.

MAHARAJ, I WANT
TO DISCUSS
A SECRET PLAN.

GO AHEAD,
MINISTER
KEVATTA.



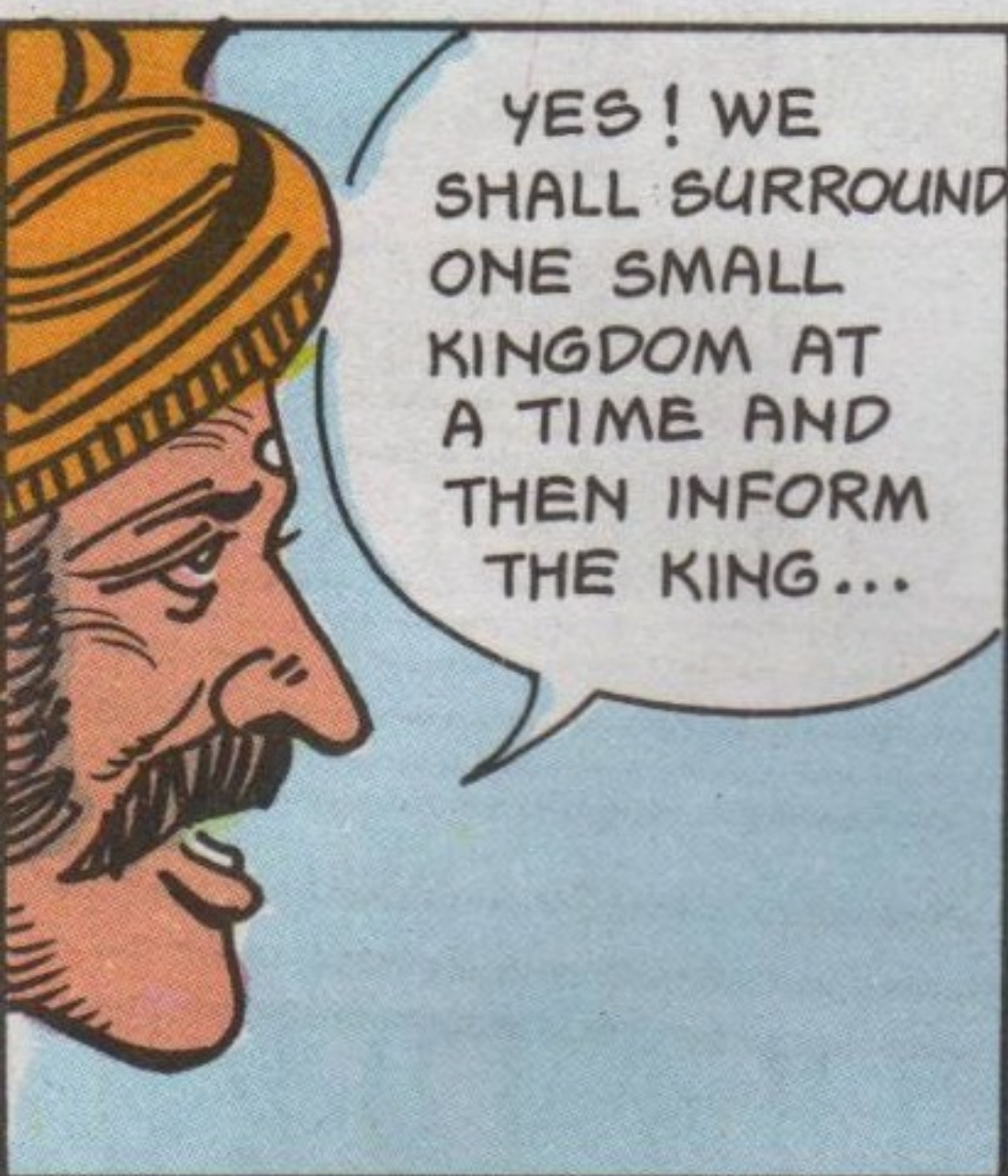
NOT HERE,
MAHARAJ! EVEN
WALLS ARE
SAID TO HAVE
EARS...



...LET US
GO INTO THE
GARDEN.



THE TWO WENT INTO THE ROYAL GARDEN. AUSHADHA'S PARROT FOLLOWED THEM.





THEY WILL NOT,
MAHARAJ! AFTER THE
CAMPAIGN IS OVER WE
SHALL INVITE THEM
TO A FEAST...



... WHERE ALL
OF THEM WILL BE
POISONED.



RASCAL!



AFTER THE FEAST, NO
KING WILL LIVE TO
CHALLENGE YOUR
THRONE.

EXCELLENT!

I MUST INFORM
AUSHADHA PANDIT
IMMEDIATELY.

WHILE TAKING OFF, THE PARROT MADE
A LOUD SOUND.



KIRI!
KIRI!
KIRI!

OH! WHAT
A RACKET
THIS PARROT
MAKES!

THE ANGRY PARROT DROPPED HIS EXCRETA
ON KEVATTA.



DRAT
THAT
PARROT.

THE PARROT FLEW STRAIGHT TO AUSHADHA KUMAR. AUSHADHA WAS PERTURBED BY THE INFORMATION.



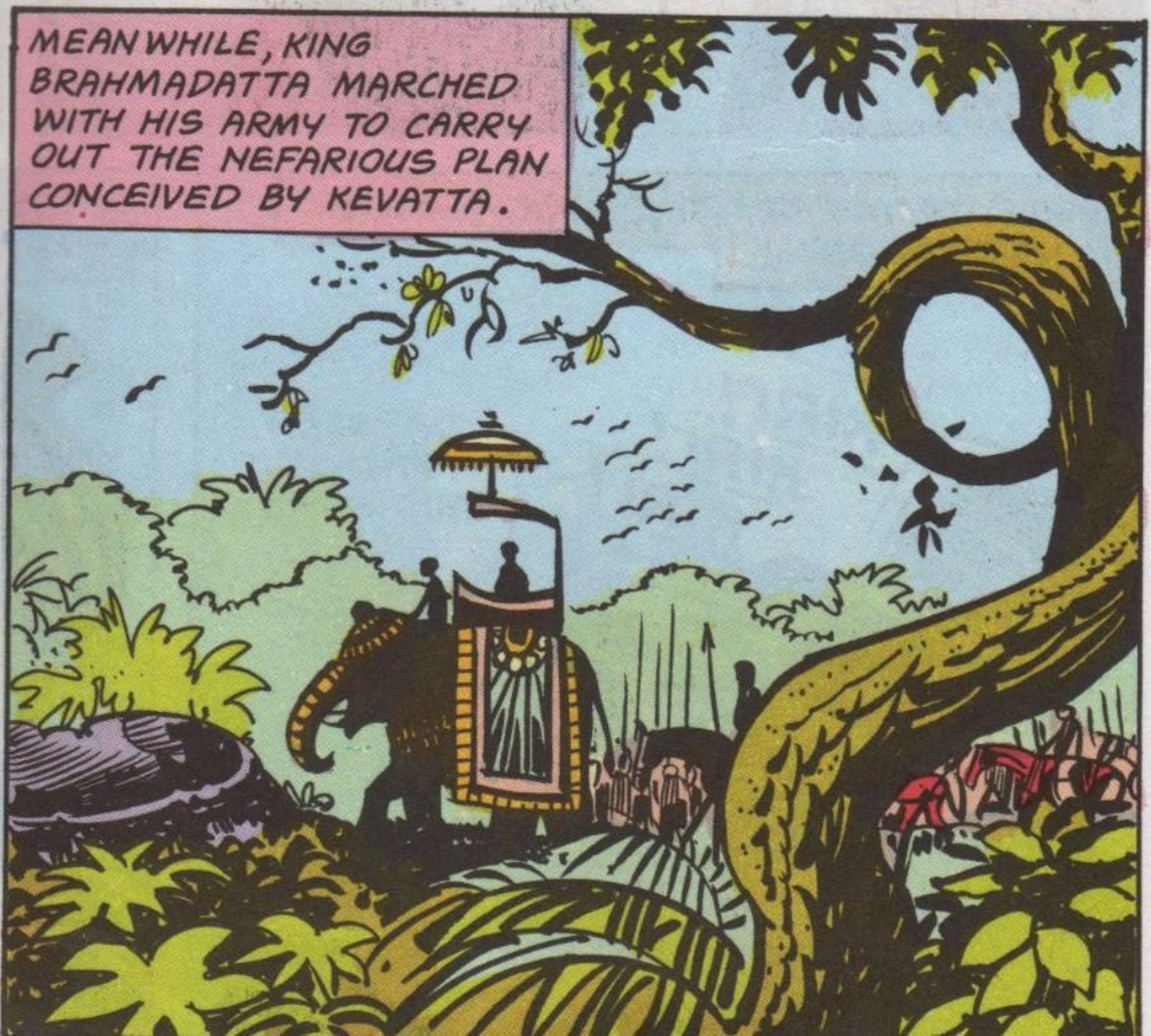
AUSHADHA KUMAR MOVED THE CITIZENS FROM THE OUTSKIRTS INTO THE FORTIFIED CITY.



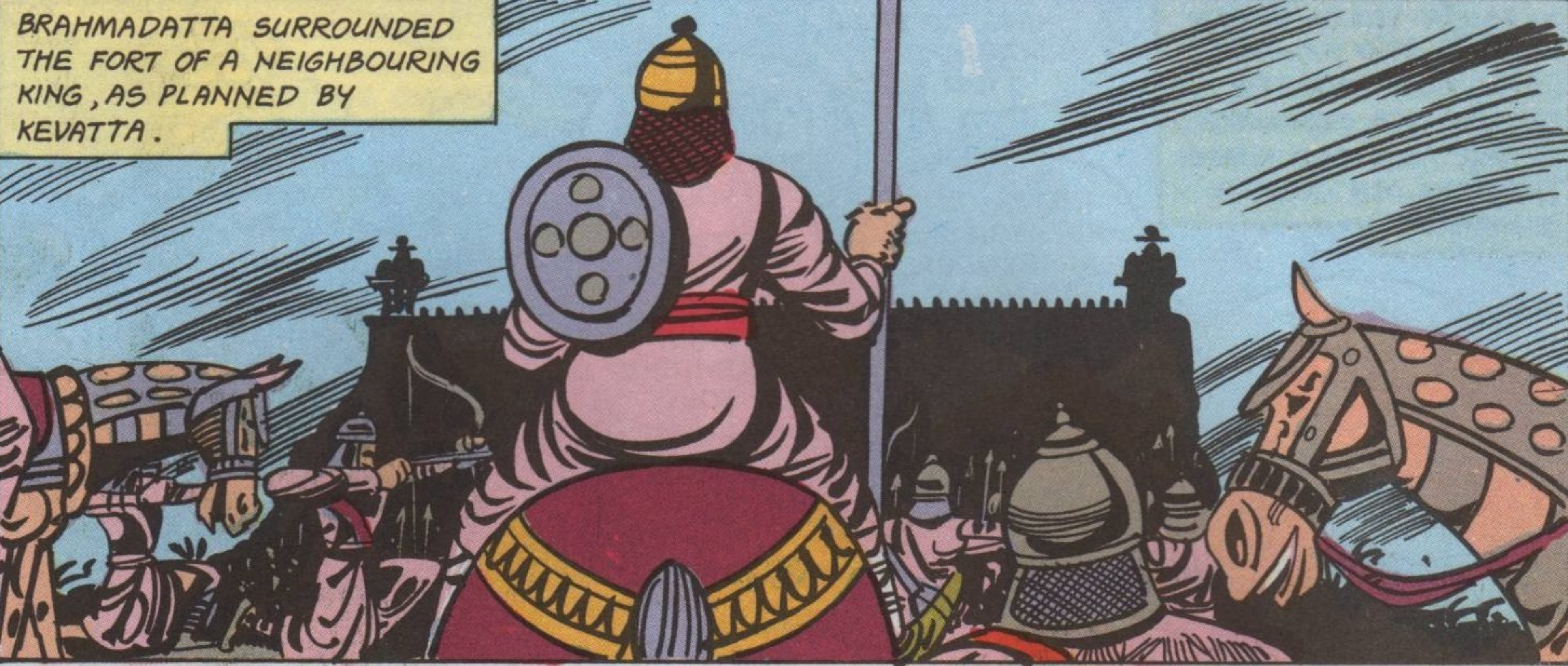
THEN HE STOCKED THE GRANARIES WITH AMPLE QUANTITIES OF FOOD GRAINS.



MEANWHILE, KING BRAHMADATTA MARCHED WITH HIS ARMY TO CARRY OUT THE NEFARIOUS PLAN CONCEIVED BY KEVATTA.



BRAHMADATTA SURROUNDED
THE FORT OF A NEIGHBOURING
KING, AS PLANNED BY
KEVATTA.



NOW WE
SHOULD
SEND OUR
MESSAGE
OF PEACE!



SOON, THE MESSENGER REACHED
THE ENEMY KING.

ACCEPT OUR
FRIENDSHIP AND
PROSPER OR INVITE
OUR WRATH AND
PERISH.



AS ENVISAGED BY
KEVATTA, THE ENEMY
KING SURRENDERED
WITHOUT GIVING FIGHT.



IN SEVEN YEARS, SEVEN MONTHS AND SEVEN DAYS, BRAHMADATTA BECAME THE OVERLORD OF ONE HUNDRED KINGS THROUGH HIS CLEVER SCHEME.

I, KING OF KASHI SURRENDER TO YOU.

I, KING OF MAGADHA SURRENDER TO YOU.

I, KING OF KALINGA SURRENDER TO YOU.

I, KING OF ANGASURRENDER TO YOU.

I, KING OF VANGA SURRENDER TO YOU.

I, KING OF SHRAVASTI SURRENDER TO YOU.

AUSHADHA KUMAR RECEIVED TIMELY REPORTS OF SURRENDERS OF EACH OF THE HUNDRED KINGS.

KEVATTA IS CRAFTY. BUT I AM READY FOR HIM.

KEVATTA WAS AWARE OF AUSHADHA'S CAPABILITY. SO WHEN ONE DAY KING BRAHMADATTA SUGGESTED—

WE SHOULD NOW TURN TO VAIDEHA. HIS IS THE ONLY KINGDOM NOT UNDER US.

MAHARAJ. VAIDEHA IS A VERY SMALL KINGDOM.

...IT WILL BE DEMEANING FOR AN OVERLORD OF A HUNDRED KINGS TO ATTACK A TINY STATE.

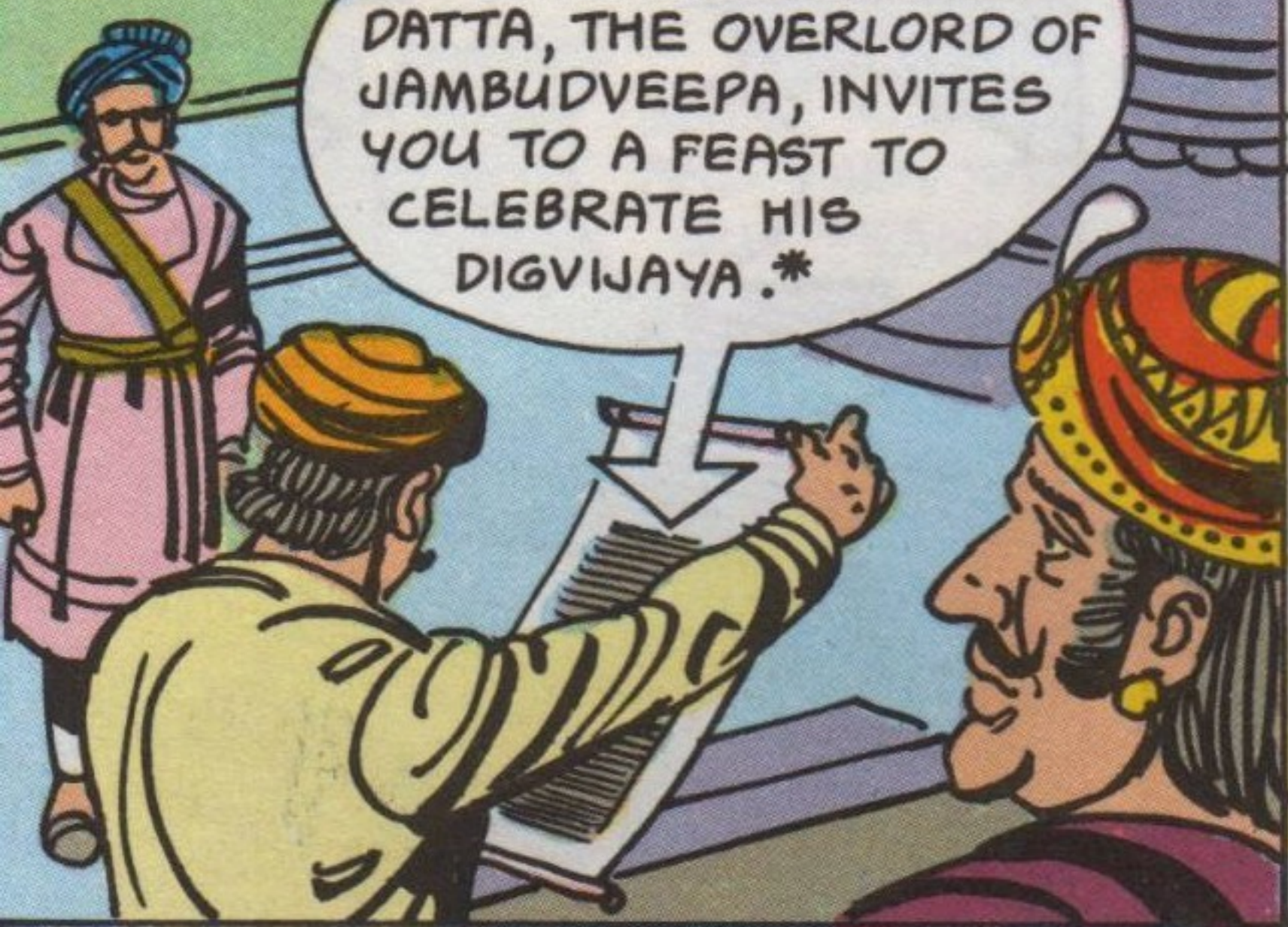
ALL RIGHT, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE REMAINING PART OF OUR SCHEME...

... WHEN DO WE GET RID OF THE KINGS?

I SHALL SEND INVITATIONS OF DEATH TO THE KINGS RIGHT NOW.

THE HUNDRED KINGS RECEIVED IDENTICAL MESSAGES.

EMPEROR BRAHMA-DATTA, THE OVERLORD OF JAMBUDVEEPA, INVITES YOU TO A FEAST TO CELEBRATE HIS DIGVIJAYA.*



WHEN AUSHADHA KUMAR LEARNT THAT THE DEADLY FEAST HAD BEEN FIXED, HE DECIDED TO ACT.

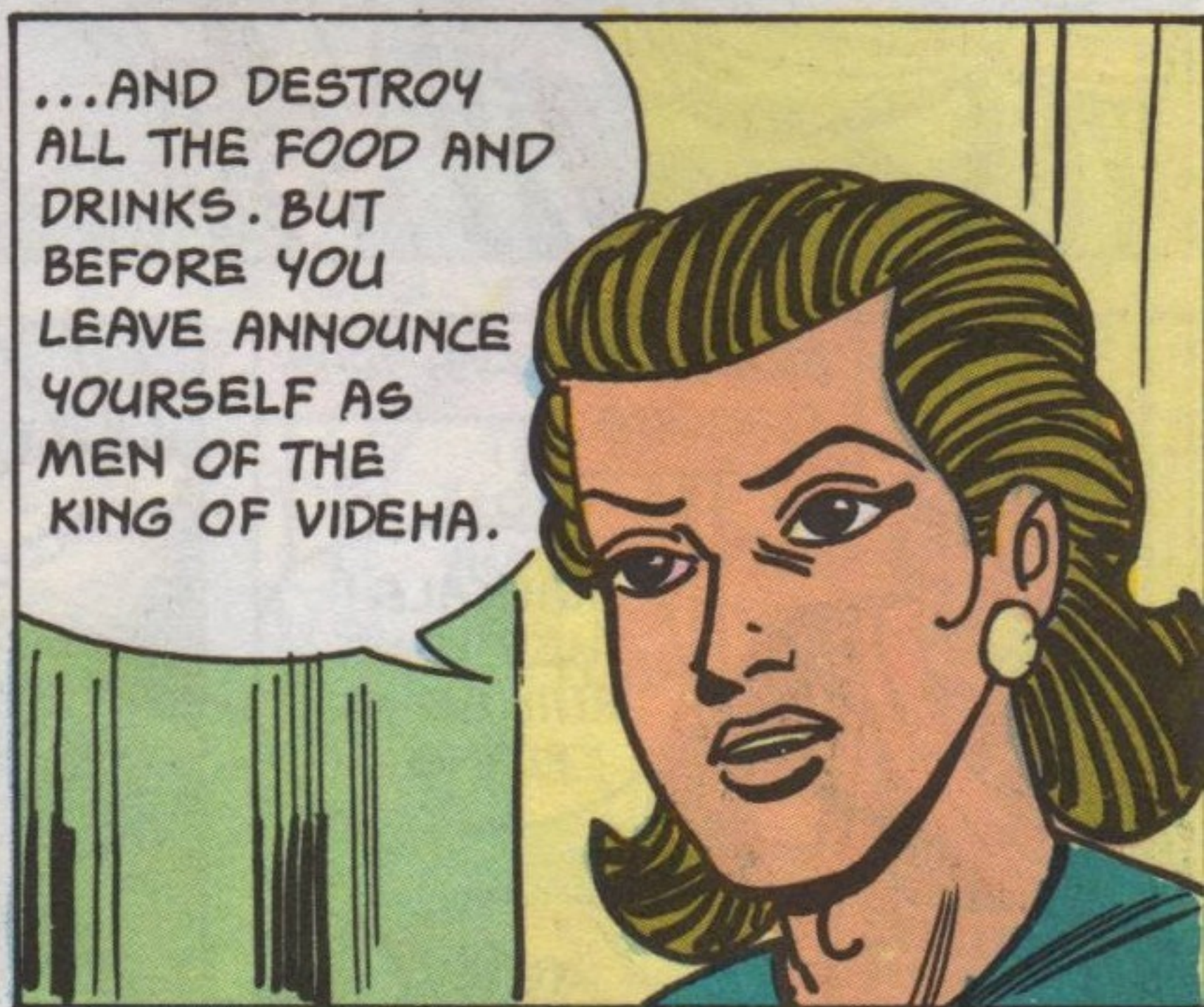
TAKE A HUNDRED TRUSTED WARRIORS DISGUISED AS PANCHALAS...



... ENTER THE VENUE OF THE FEAST A LITTLE BEFORE ITS SCHEDULED TIME...



...AND DESTROY ALL THE FOOD AND DRINKS. BUT BEFORE YOU LEAVE ANNOUNCE YOURSELF AS MEN OF THE KING OF VIDEHA.



THE MEN DID AUSHADHA'S BIDDING.

WHERE IS THE SEAT FOR KING VAIDEHA?

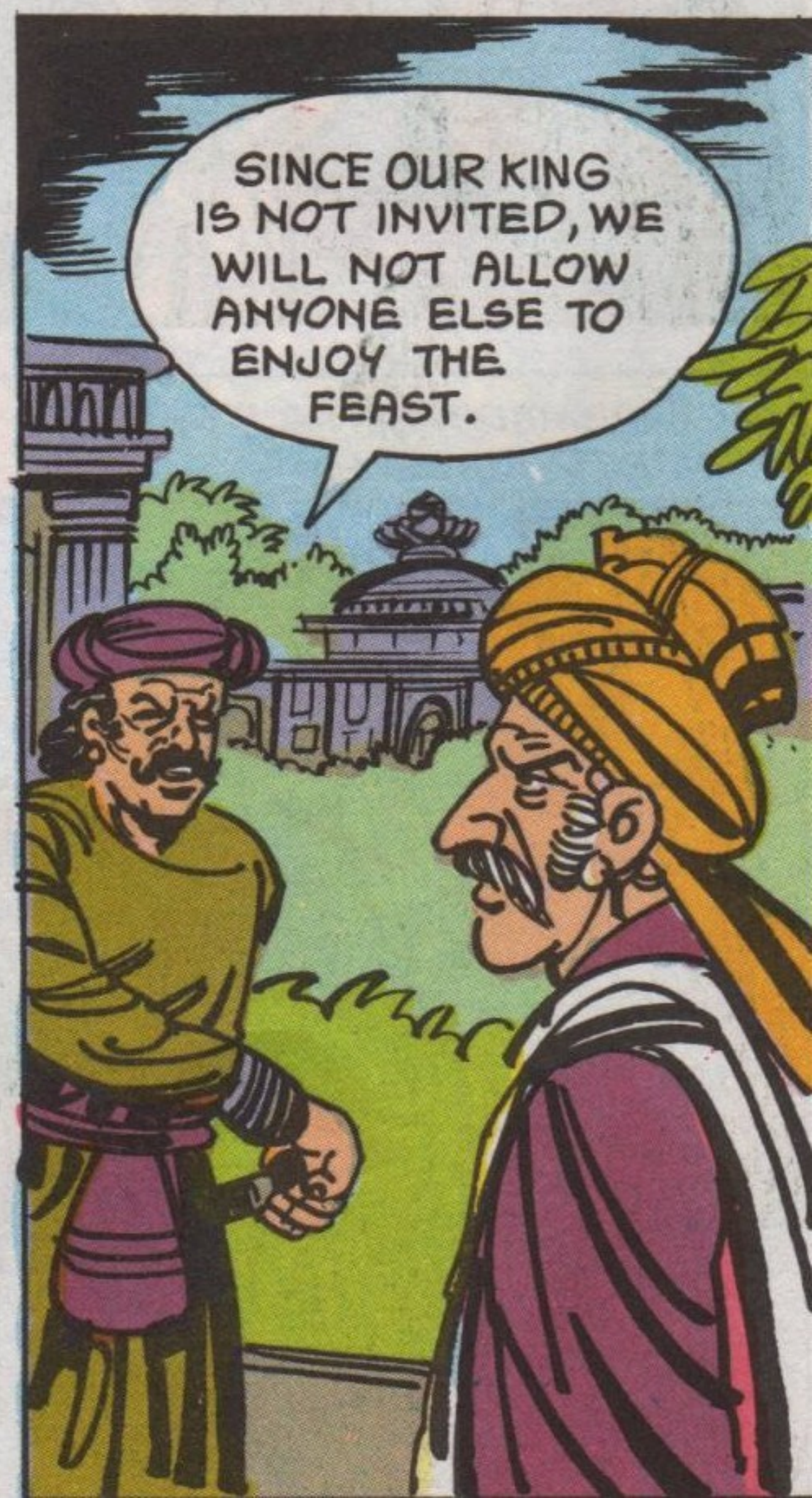
HE IS NOT INVITED.



THAT IS AN INSULT TO OUR KING.



SINCE OUR KING IS NOT INVITED, WE WILL NOT ALLOW ANYONE ELSE TO ENJOY THE FEAST.



SO, AUSHADHA KUMAR'S MEN DESTROYED THE POISONED FOOD...



...AND ESCAPED ON SWIFT HORSES.



BRAHMADATTA WAS FURIOUS.



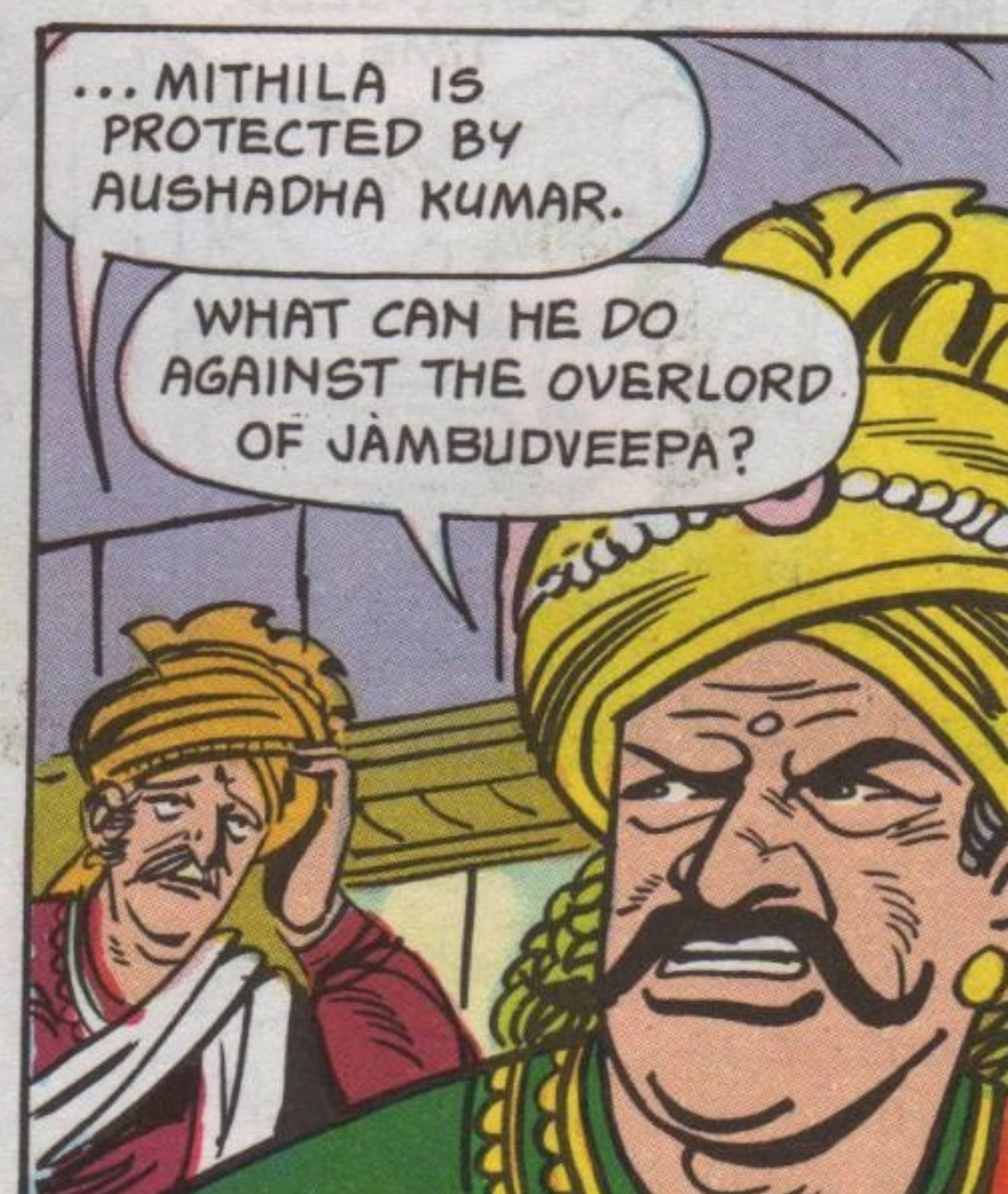
RASCALS!
THEY HAVE
RUINED MY
PLANS.

I SHALL ATTACK
MITHILA AND
BEHEAD
VAIDEHA.



MAHARAJ,
IT WILL NOT
BE AN EASY
TASK...

... MITHILA IS
PROTECTED BY
AUSHADHA KUMAR.

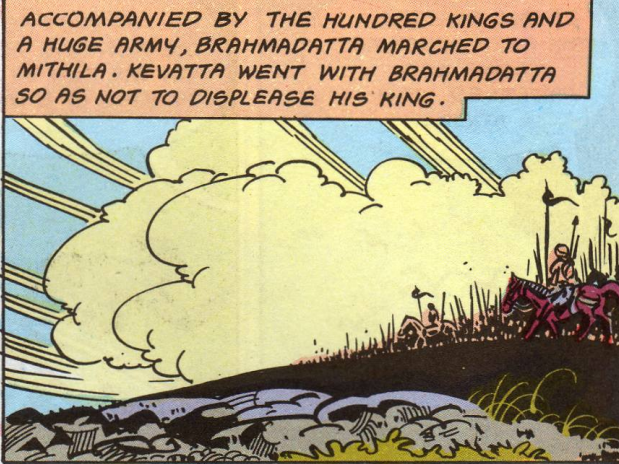


WHAT CAN HE DO
AGAINST THE OVERLORD
OF JAMBUDVEEPA?

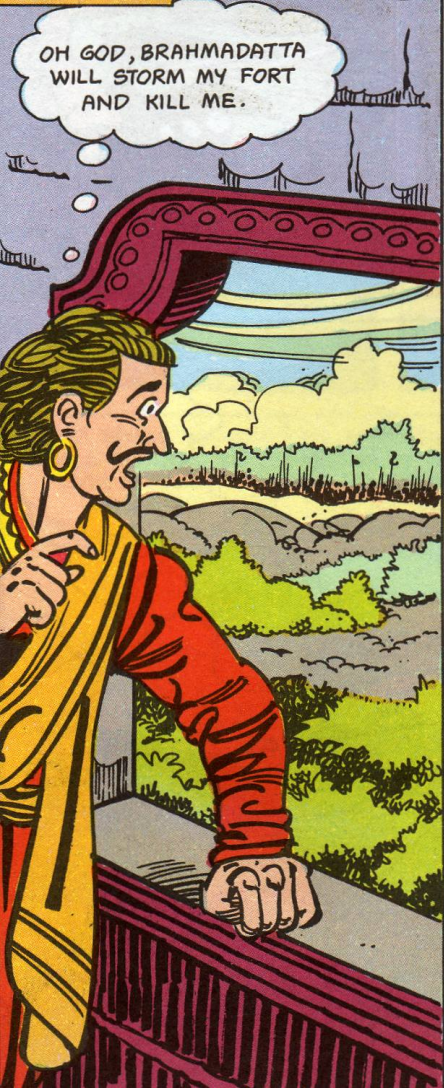
SO BRAHMADATTA INCITED THE HUNDRED KINGS —



THE KING OF
MITHILA HAS INSULTED
ALL OF US BY
RUINING OUR
FEAST.



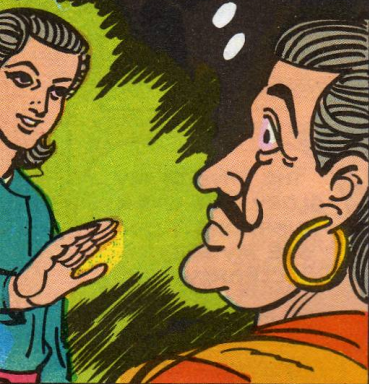
SOON, BRAHMADATTA LAID A SIEGE TO MITHILA.



BUT, AUSHADHA KUMAR, UNAFRAID LIKE A LION, INSPECTED THE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS. HE THEN REPORTED TO THE KING.



I SHALL SCATTER
THE ENEMY JUST AS
CROWS ARE
DISPERSED WITH
A STICK...



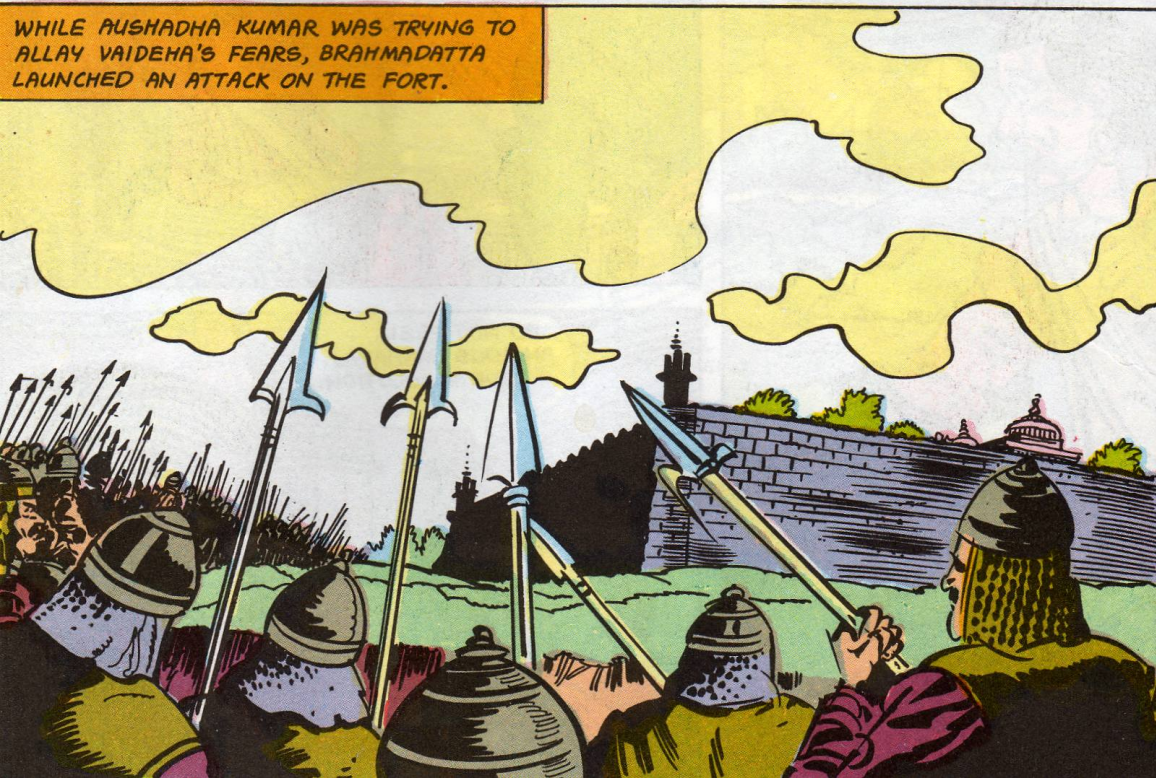
... OR JUST AS
THE MONKEYS ARE PUT
ON THE RUN BY A
HANDFUL OF STONES...



... BE RELAXED MAHARAJ,
FOR THE ENEMY WILL RUN
AWAY LEAVING EVEN
THEIR WEAPONS.
BEHIND.



WHILE AUSHADHA KUMAR WAS TRYING TO
ALLAY VAIDEHA'S FEARS, BRAHMADATTA
LAUNCHED AN ATTACK ON THE FORT.



THE APPROACH TO THE FORT WAS MADE DIFFICULT BY THE THREE MOATS AROUND IT.



WHEN THE ENEMY SOLDIERS CAME NEAR THE FORT, VAIDEHA AND SOLDIERS SHOWERED THEM WITH STONES AND OTHER MISSILES...



...AND BRAHMADATTA'S ATTACK FAILED MISERABLY.



WHAT SHALL WE DO? SHALL WE LIFT THE SIEGE AND GO BACK?

NO, THAT WILL MEAN A LOSS OF FACE. YOU CANNOT AFFORD THAT AS THE OVERLORD OF JAMBU-DVEEPA.



BUT HOW CAN I SAVE MY FACE?

I SHALL USE A TRICK TO GAIN A TOKEN VICTORY.



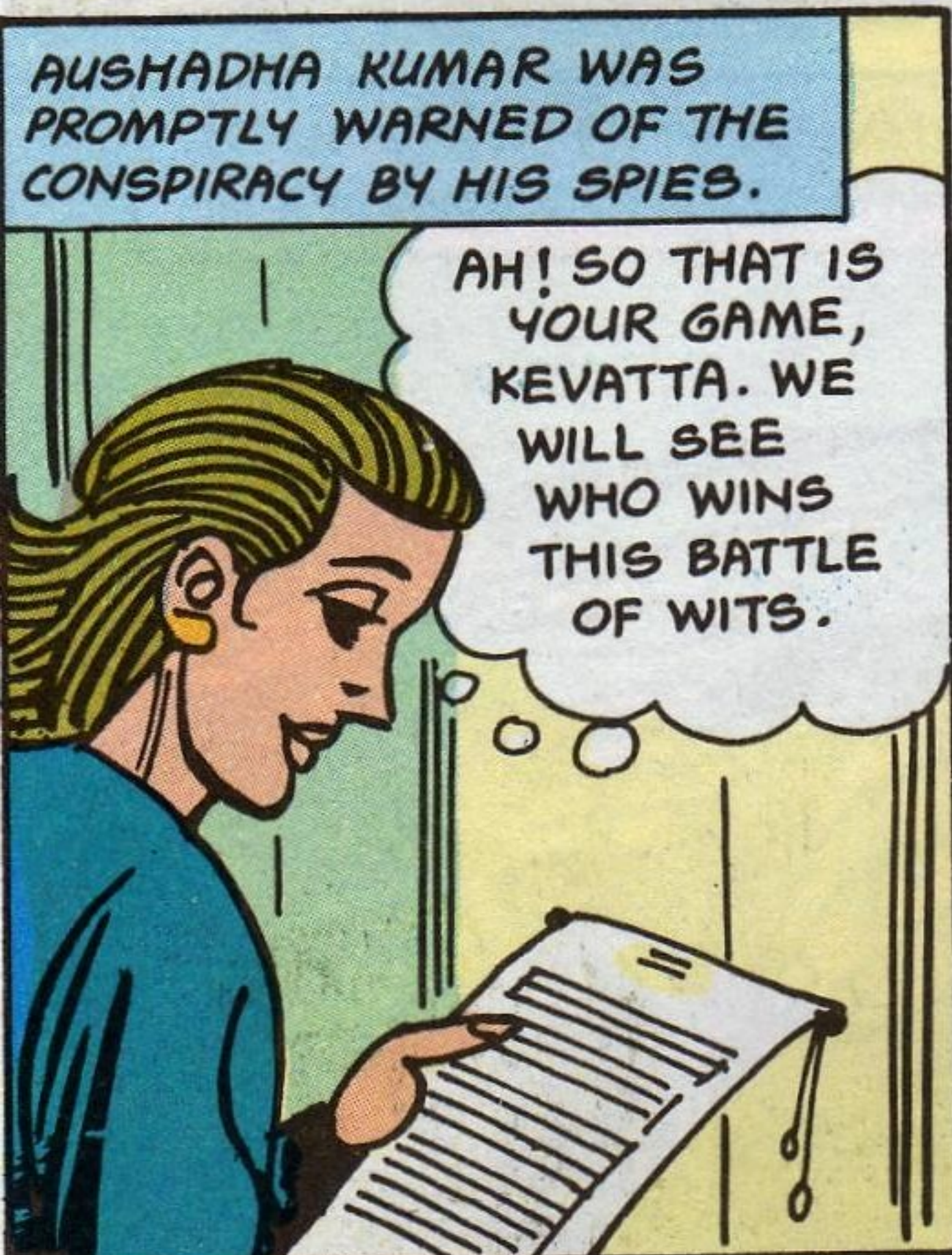




SINCE, HE IS YOUNGER, HE WILL BOW TO GREET ME.



THE MOMENT HE DOES THAT I SHALL ANNOUNCE THAT HE HAS ADMITTED DEFEAT.



AUSHADHA KUMAR WAS PROMPTLY WARNED OF THE CONSPIRACY BY HIS SPIES.

AH! SO THAT IS YOUR GAME, KEVATTA. WE WILL SEE WHO WINS THIS BATTLE OF WITS.



ON THE DAY OF THE DHARMAYUDDHA, AUSHADHA CARRIED A PRICELESS JEWEL AS A PRESENT TO KEVATTA.

I AM SORRY PANDIT KEVATTA, THAT I COULD NOT GREET YOU EARLIER...



... BUT NOW KINDLY ACCEPT THIS GEM AS A TOKEN OF MY RESPECT.



WHILE GIVING THE GEM, AUSHADHA KUMAR DELIBERATELY LET IT FALL ON THE GROUND.



UNTHINKINGLY KEVATTA BENT DOWN TO PICK UP THE GEM.

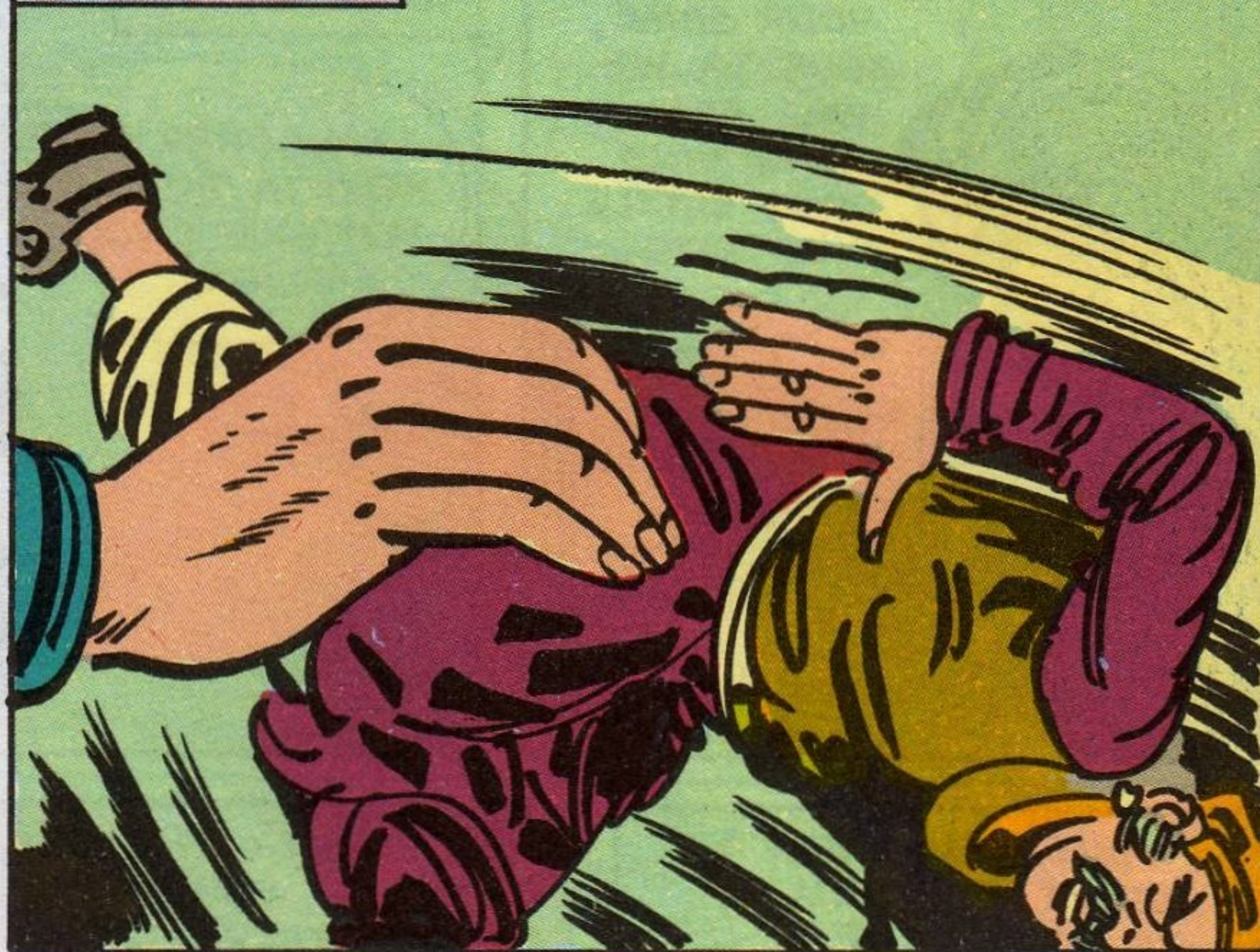
AS SOON AS KEVATTA BENT DOWN, AUSHADHA-KUMAR PLACED HIS HANDS ON KEVATTA'S SHOULDERS AND PRESSED HIS HEAD DOWN ON THE EARTH. THE HEAD STRUCK WITH FORCE AND A DEEP GASH APPEARED ON KEVATTA'S FOREHEAD



THEN AUSHADHA WHISPERED TO KEVATTA —



AND THEN HE PUSHED KEVATTA AWAY WITH SUCH FORCE THAT KEVATTA FELL DOWN AT A DISTANCE.



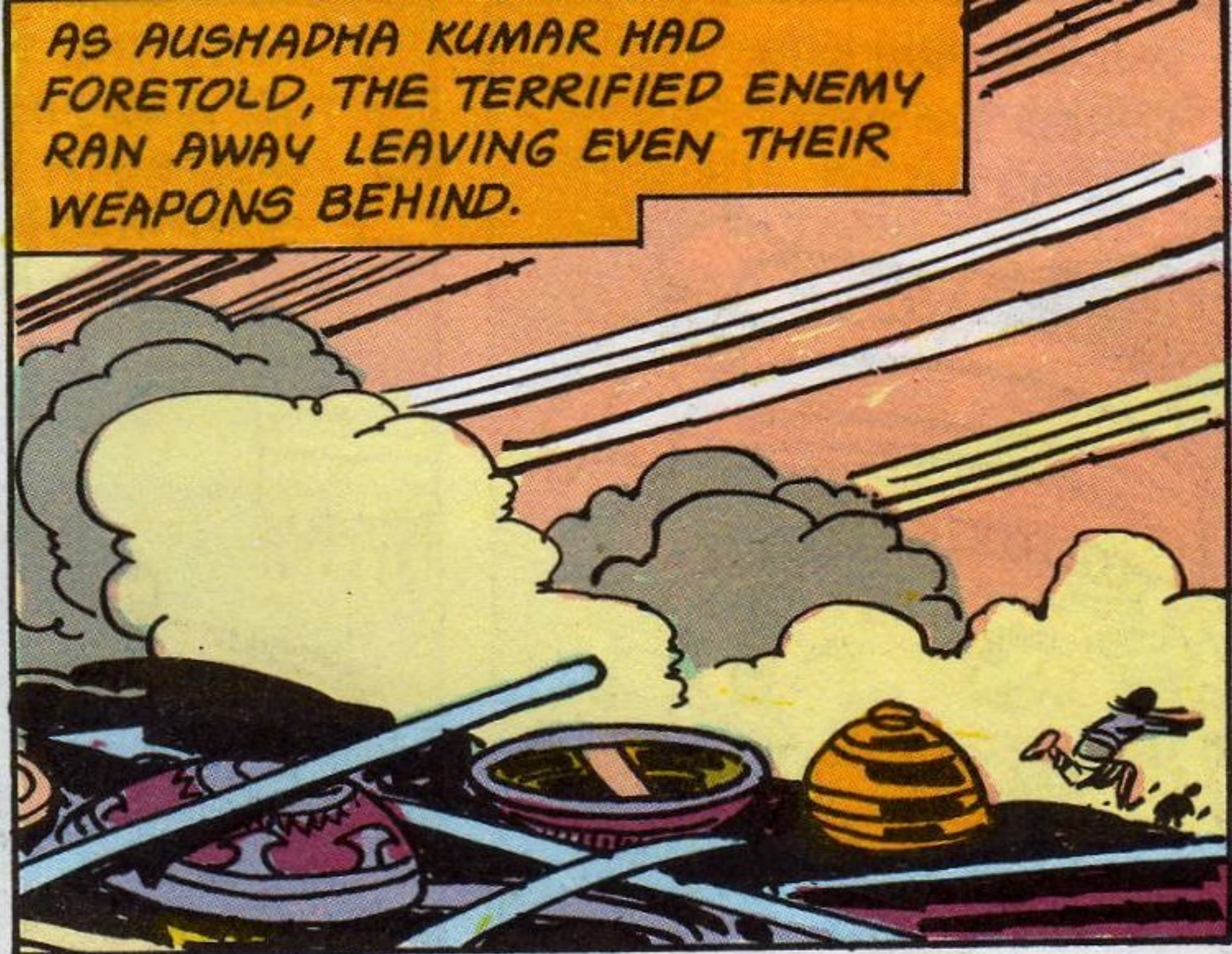
AND IMMEDIATELY AT A PRE-ARRANGED SIGNAL AUSHADHA KUMAR'S ARMED SOLDIERS RUSHED OUT OF VAIDEHA'S FORT. KEVATTA RAN AT THE SIGHT OF THE SOLDIERS.



AND SO DID BRAHMADATTA, THE HUNDRED PANIC STRICKEN KINGS AND THEIR SOLDIERS.



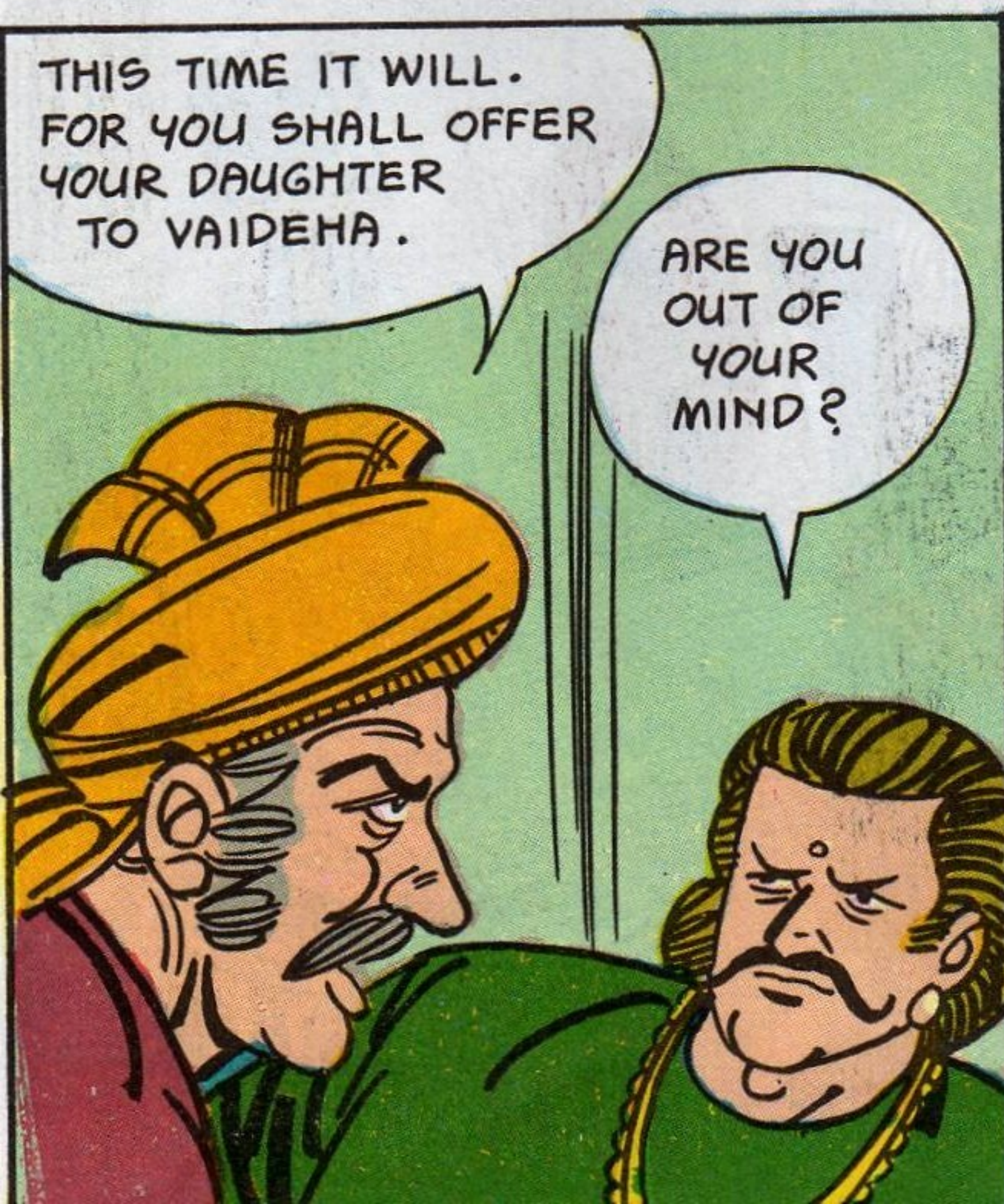
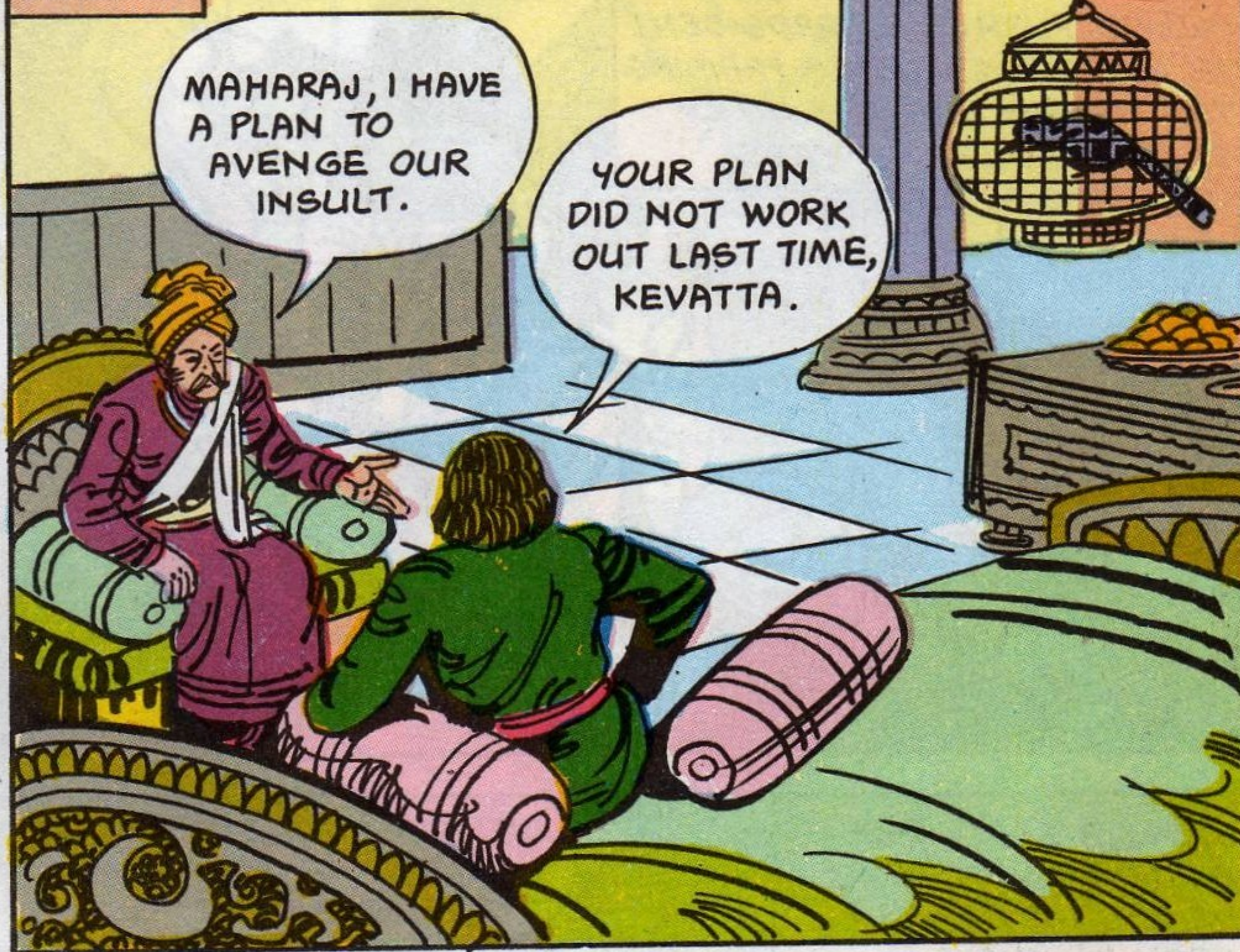
AS AUSHADHA KUMAR HAD FORETOLD, THE TERRIFIED ENEMY RAN AWAY LEAVING EVEN THEIR WEAPONS BEHIND.

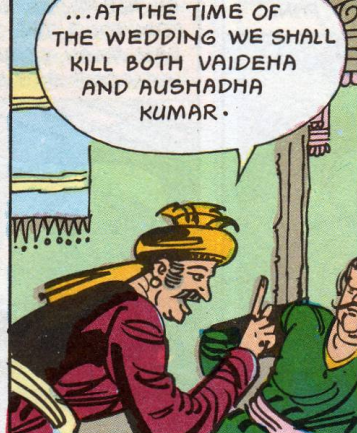


THE WOUND ON KEVATTA'S FOREHEAD LEFT A MARK. THE MARK CONSTANTLY REMINDED KEVATTA OF HIS HUMILIATION.



FINALLY, KEVATTA HATCHED A SCHEME.

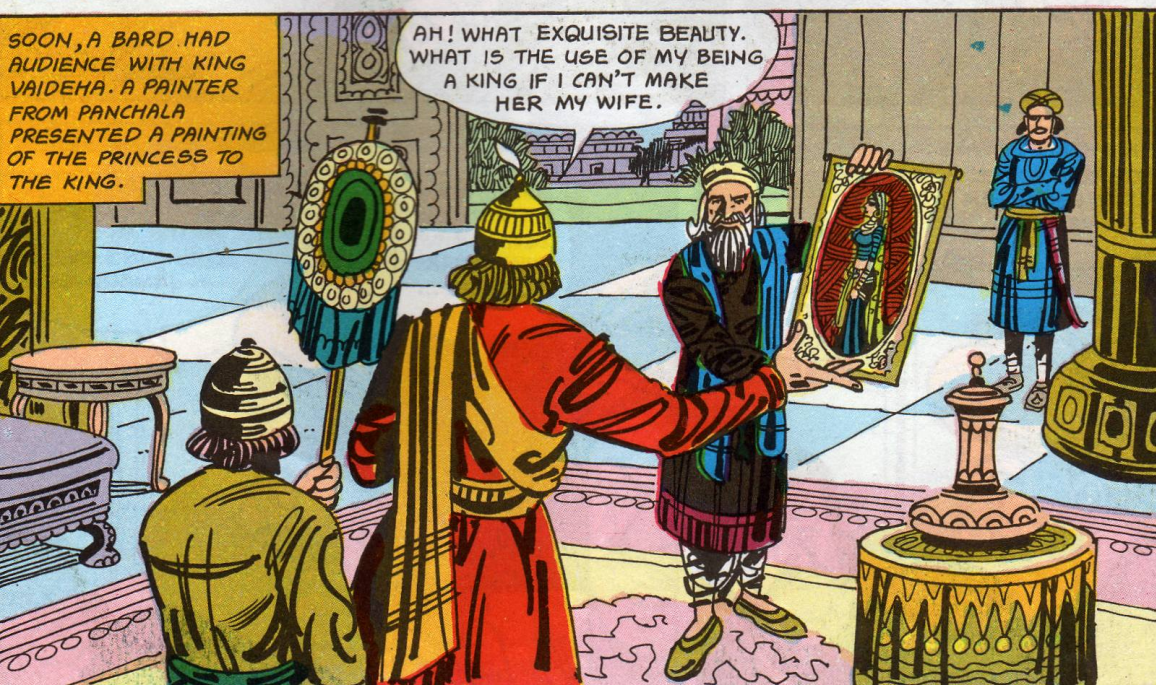




KEVATTA PREPARED A METICULOUS PLAN. THE BARDS SENT BY HIM SANG VERSES PRAISING THE ENCHANTING BEAUTY OF THE PANCHALA PRINCESS.



SOON, A BARD HAD AUDIENCE WITH KING VAIDEHA. A PAINTER FROM PANCHALA PRESENTED A PAINTING OF THE PRINCESS TO THE KING.



LATER AUSHADHA EXPRESSED HIS DOUBTS.



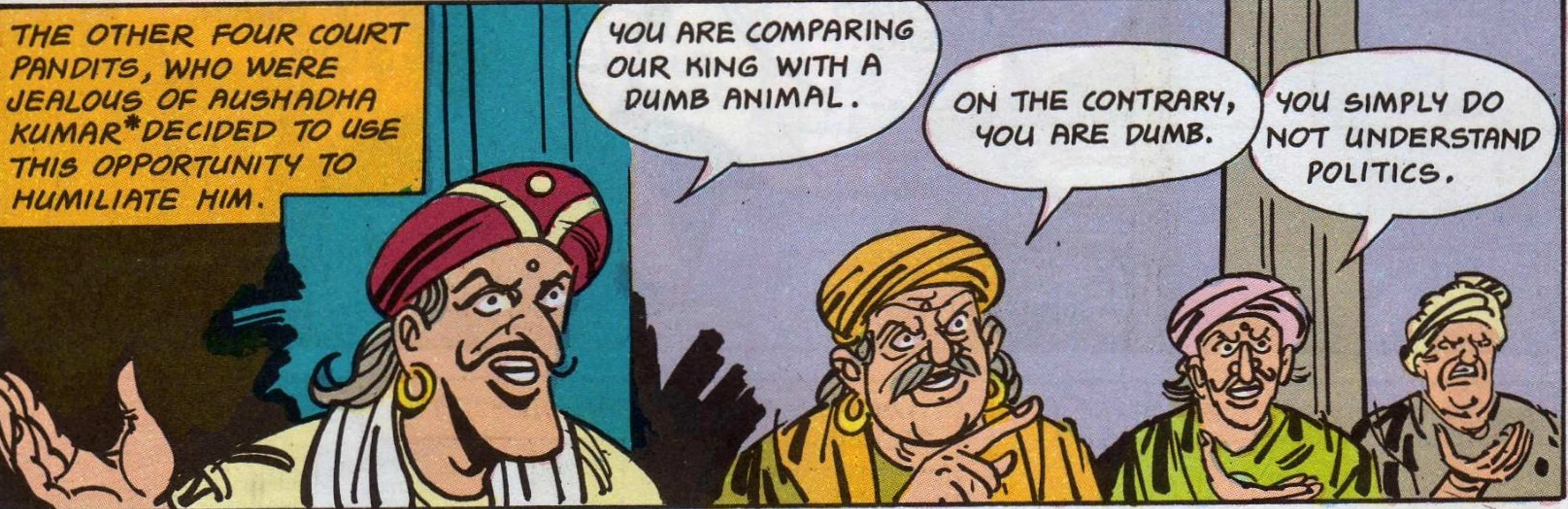
MAHARAJ, YOU SHOULD NOT ACCEPT THE ALLIANCE.

WHY?



BECAUSE I THINK BRAHMADATTA IS LURING YOU THE WAY A HUNTER USES A TAME DOE TO TRAP A STAG.

THE OTHER FOUR COURT PANDITS, WHO WERE JEALOUS OF AUSHADHA KUMAR* DECIDED TO USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO HUMILIATE HIM.



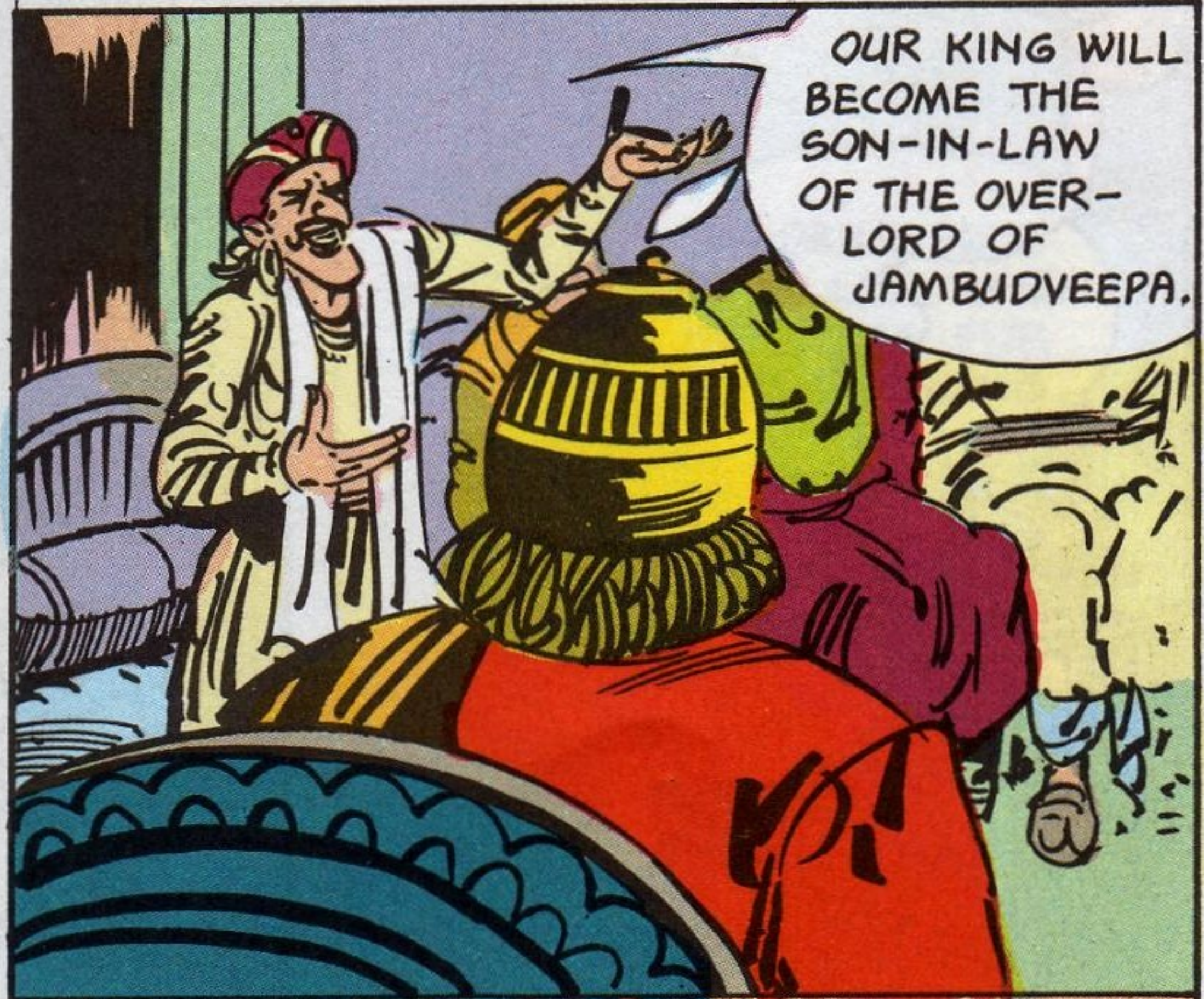
YOU ARE COMPARING OUR KING WITH A DUMB ANIMAL.

ON THE CONTRARY, YOU ARE DUMB.

YOU SIMPLY DO NOT UNDERSTAND POLITICS.



THIS MARRIAGE MUST BE SOLEMNISED. IT WILL HAVE FAR-REACHING POLITICAL ADVANTAGES FOR US...



OUR KING WILL BECOME THE SON-IN-LAW OF THE OVER-LORD OF JAMBUDVEEPA.

AUSHADHA WAS AFRAID THAT THE MARRIAGE WOULD LEAD TO DISASTER BUT HE DID NOT KNOW HOW TO DISSUADE THE KING.

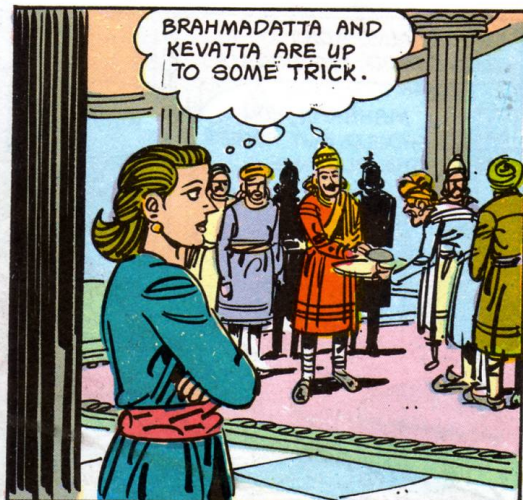
SO WHEN KEVATTA BROUGHT THE MARRIAGE PROPOSAL —

THIS ALLIANCE WILL UNITE THE PEOPLE OF PANCHALA AND VIDEHA.

I'M HAPPY TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL.



BRAHMADATTA AND KEVATTA ARE UP TO SOME TRICK.



SO HE SOUGHT INFORMATION FROM HIS SPY IN PANCHALA. PROMPTLY HE RECEIVED A MESSAGE—

CLEAR INFORMATION IS NOT AVAILABLE. KEVATTA AND BRAHMADATTA REGULARLY CONFER IN A CLOSED ROOM. NO OTHER SOUL WAS PRESENT EXCEPT A CAGED MYNAH BIRD.

I MUST SEND MY PARROT AGAIN.



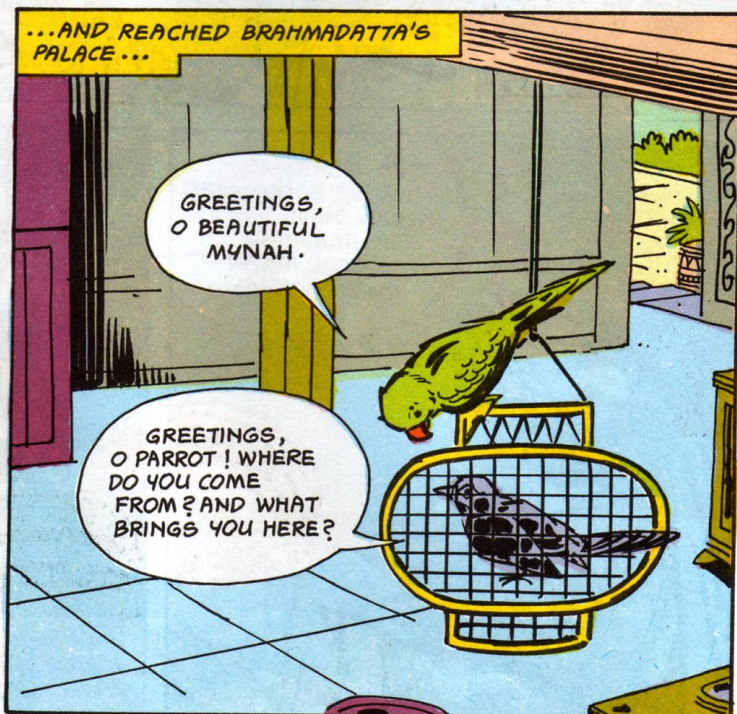
AGAIN THE PARROT FLEW...



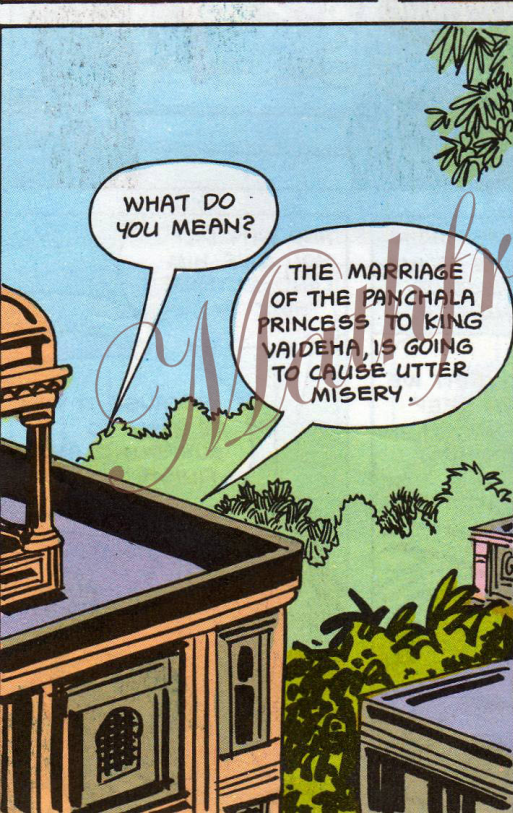
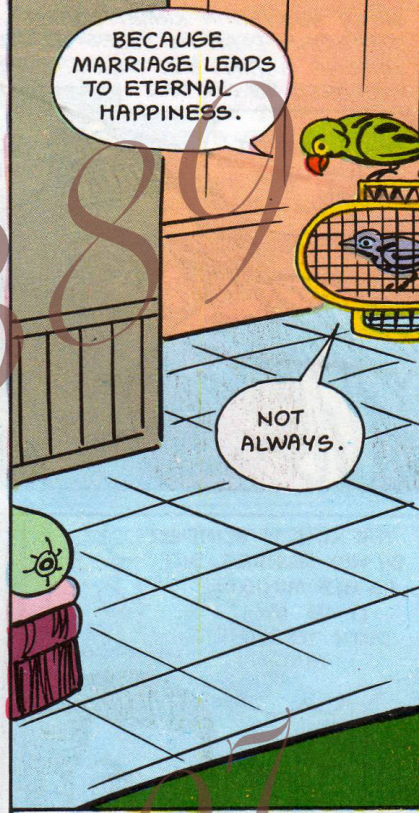
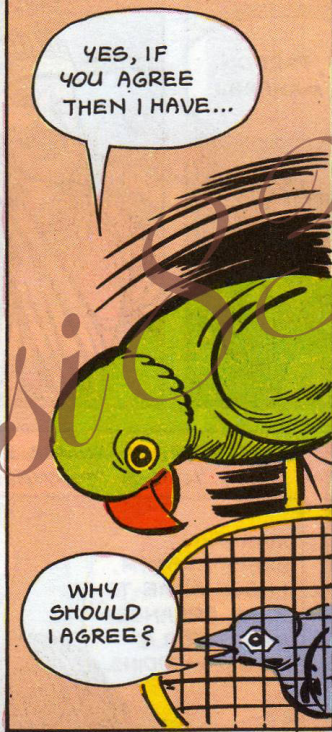
...AND REACHED BRAHMADATTA'S PALACE...

GREETINGS, O BEAUTIFUL MYNAH.

GREETINGS, O PARROT! WHERE DO YOU COME FROM? AND WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?



TO EXTRACT THE VITAL INFORMATION, THE PARROT LIED TO THE MAINAH —



WHEN AUSHADHA KUMAR LEARNT OF THE DASTARDLY PLAN HE TRIED TO DISSUADE VAIDEHA AGAIN. BUT VAIDEHA WAS NOT PREPARED TO LISTEN.

YOUR PARROT IS A STUPID BIRD.

BUT, PARDON ME, MAHARAJ.

NO, I'LL NOT DISCUSS THE MATTER ANY FURTHER.

AS YOU WISH, MAHARAJ.

THE KING IS BLINDED BY HIS DESIRES. BUT AS HIS MINISTER IT IS MY DUTY TO PROTECT HIM.

SO, AUSHADHA KUMAR WENT WITH THE ADVANCE PARTY TO THE PANCHALA CAPITAL.

MAHARAJ BRAHMADATTA, I HAVE COME TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR A GRAND WEDDING.

LET US KNOW IF YOU NEED ANY HELP.

I DO, I NEED A HOUSE AND SOME LAND TO BUILD A LODGE FOR THE WEDDING PARTY.

THAT WILL BE ARRANGED.

SO AUSHADHA WAS GIVEN A HOUSE NEAR THE PALACE TO STAY AND A PIECE OF LAND OUTSIDE THE CITY.

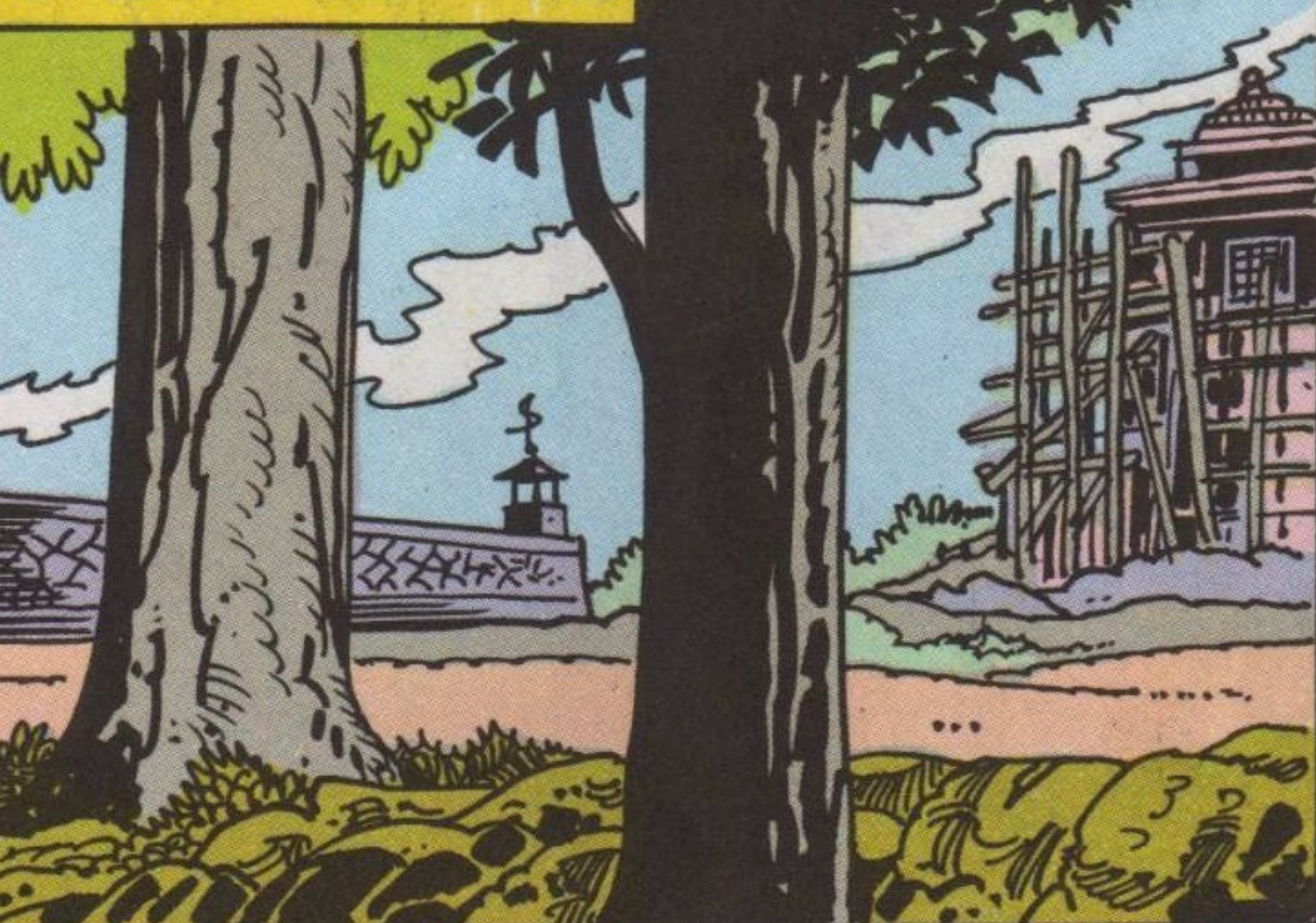
WHY DID YOU ALLOW HIM TO STAY NEAR THE PALACE?

SO THAT WE CAN KEEP A WATCH ON HIM.

AND WHY DID YOU GIVE HIM LAND OUTSIDE THE CITY?

BECAUSE IT WILL BE EASY TO SURROUND AND FINISH THEM OFF THERE.

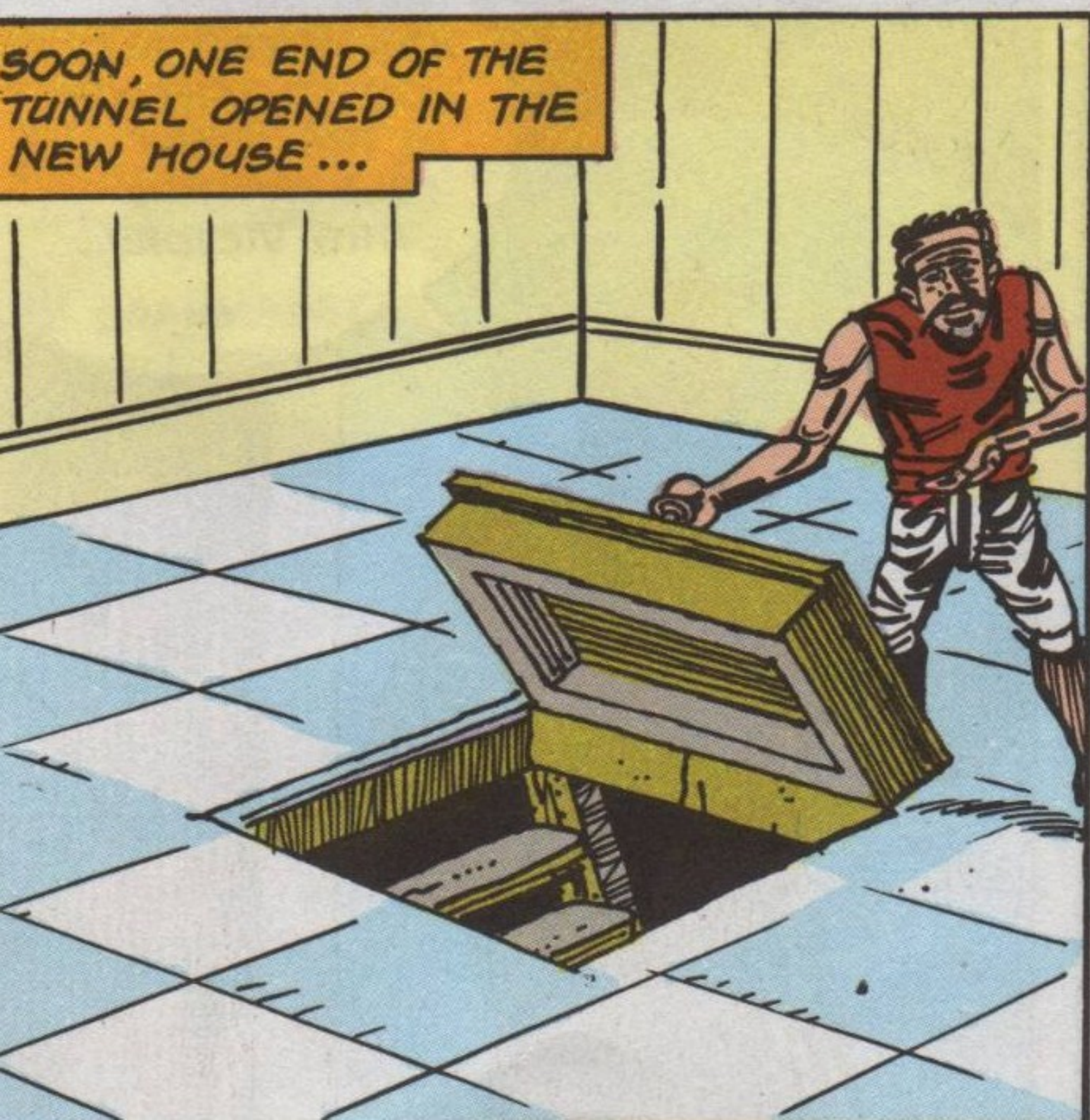
ONCE AUGHADHA WAS SETTLED, HE STARTED TWO WORKS SIMULTANEOUSLY—THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PALATIAL HOUSE OUTSIDE THE CITY...



...AND THE DIGGING OF A TUNNEL FROM THE HOUSE WHERE HE WAS STAYING.



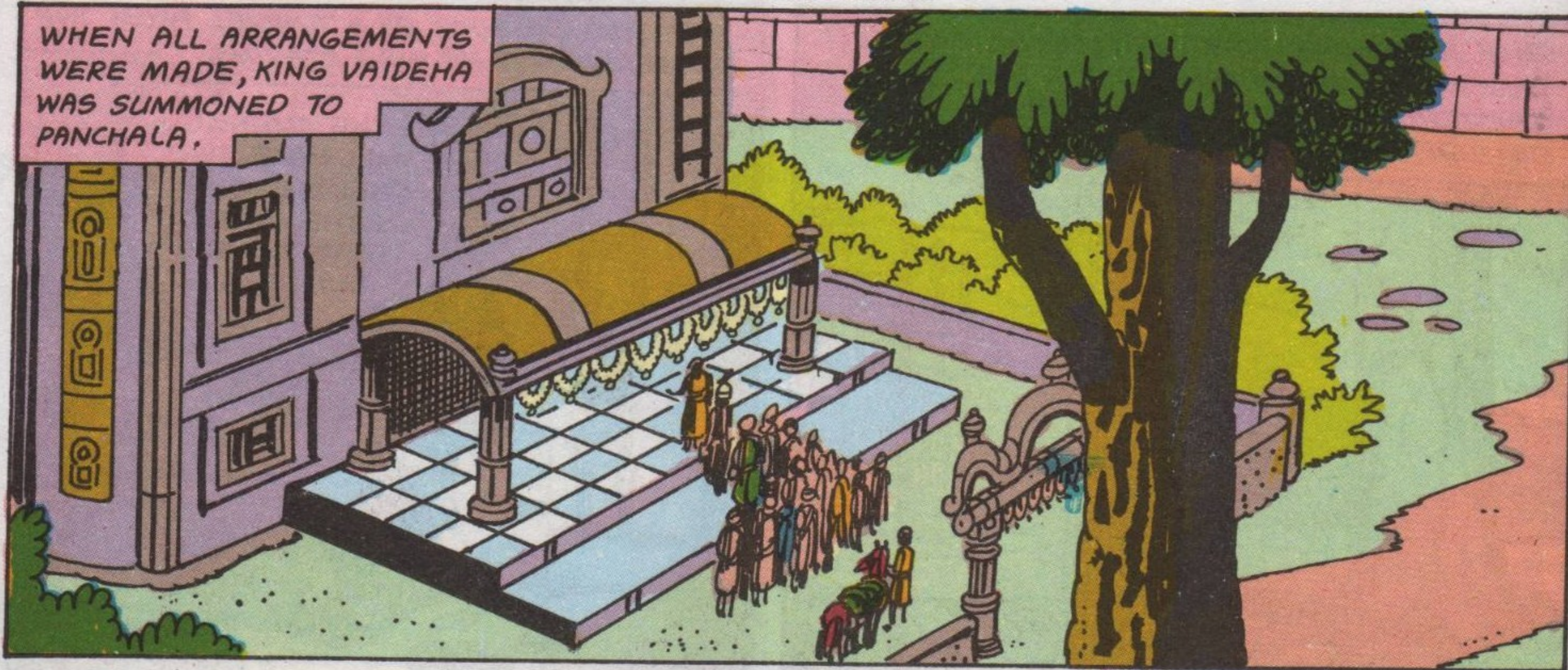
SOON, ONE END OF THE TUNNEL OPENED IN THE NEW HOUSE...



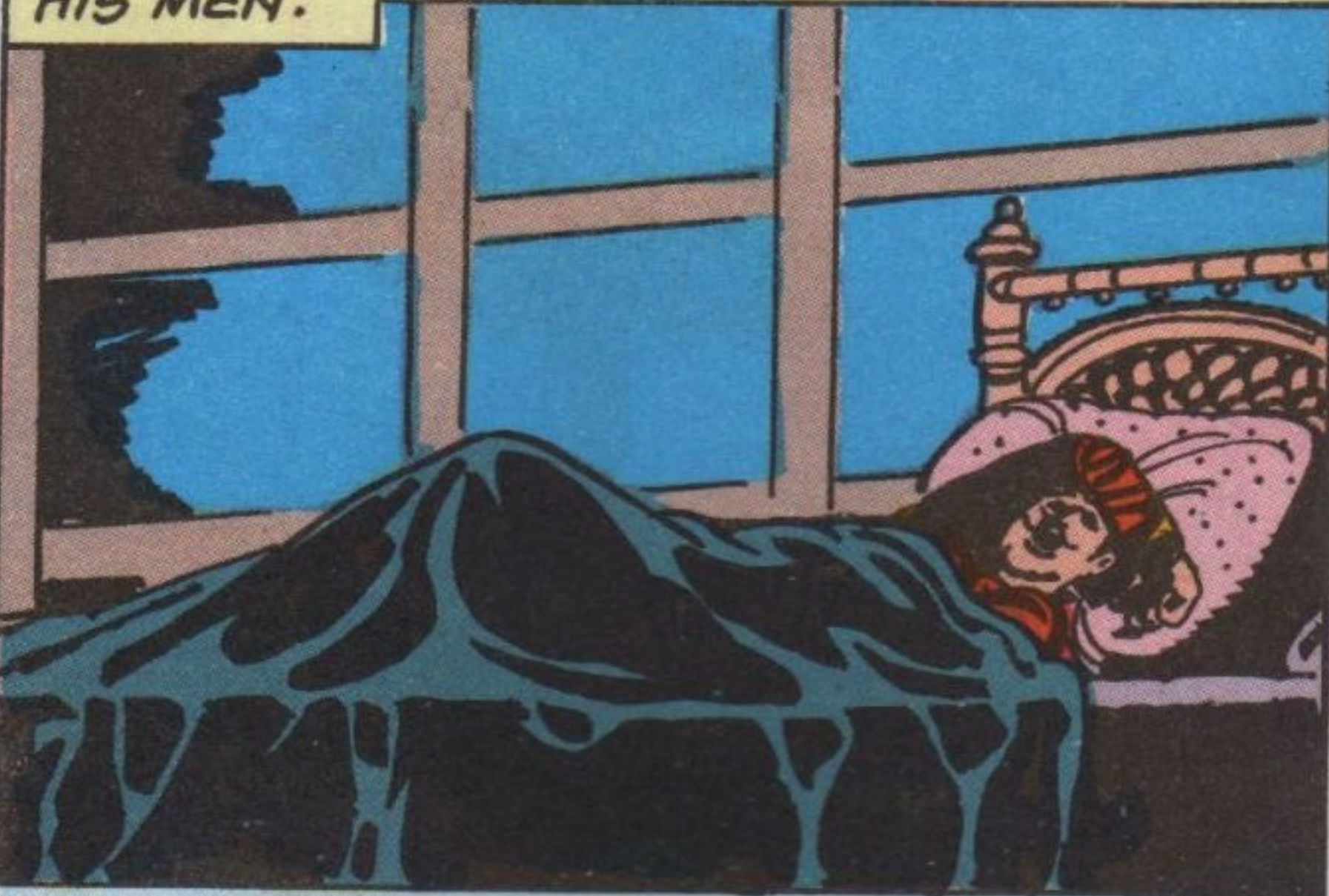
... AND THE OTHER IN THICK BUSHES NEAR THE RIVER.



WHEN ALL ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE, KING VAIDEHA WAS SUMMONED TO PANCHALA.



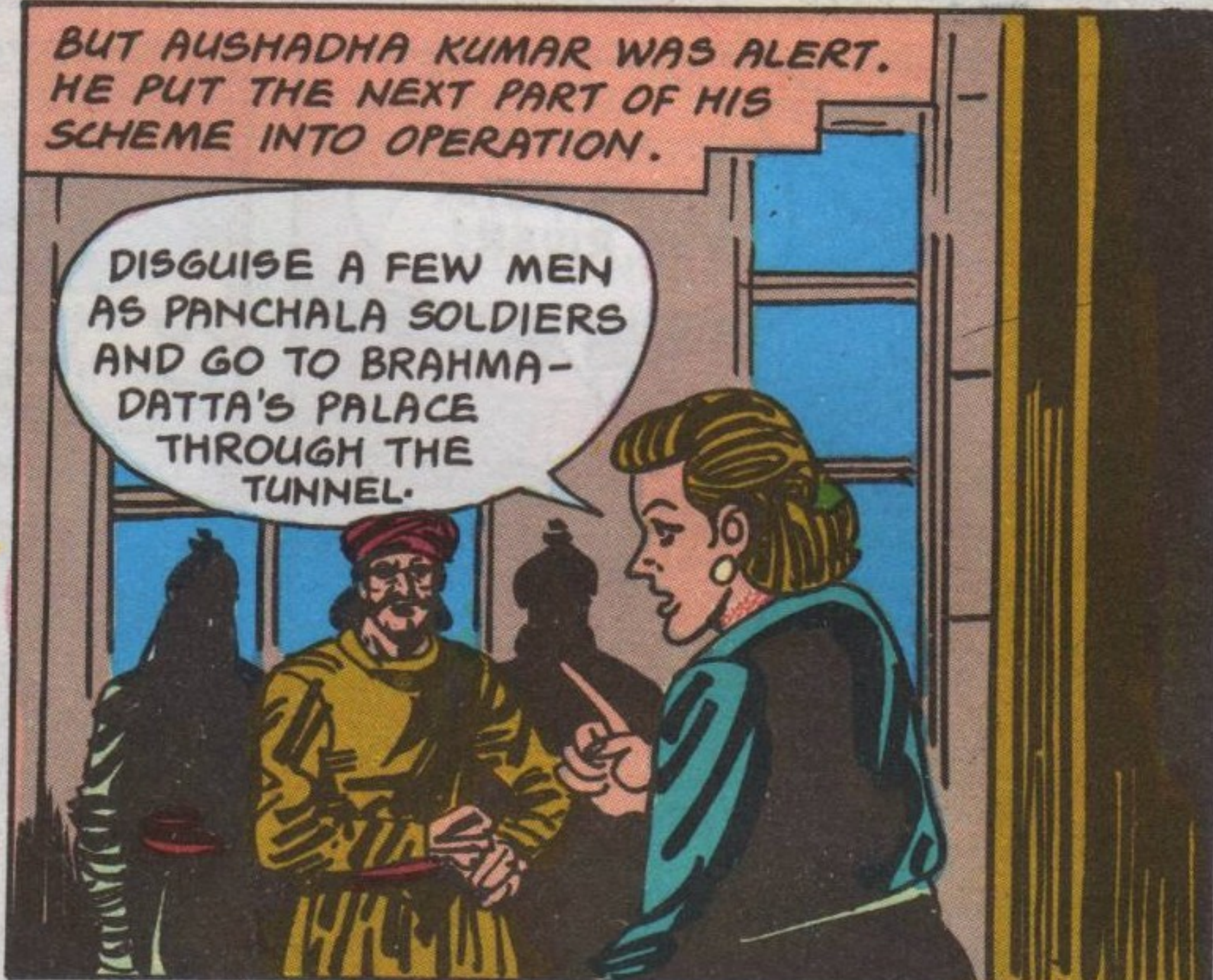
SOON AFTER VAIDEHA ARRIVED, HIS HOUSE WAS SURROUNDED BY BRAHMADATTA AND HIS MEN.



UNAWARE OF THE TREACHERY, AND TIRED FROM THE JOURNEY, VAIDEHA WAS SLEEPING.

BUT AUSHADHA KUMAR WAS ALERT. HE PUT THE NEXT PART OF HIS SCHEME INTO OPERATION.

DISGUISE A FEW MEN AS PANCHALA SOLDIERS AND GO TO BRAHMADATTA'S PALACE THROUGH THE TUNNEL.



AS INSTRUCTED THE MEN WENT TO BRAHMADATTA'S PALACE AND ADDRESSED HIS QUEEN.

O QUEEN! VAIDEHA HAS BEEN KILLED...



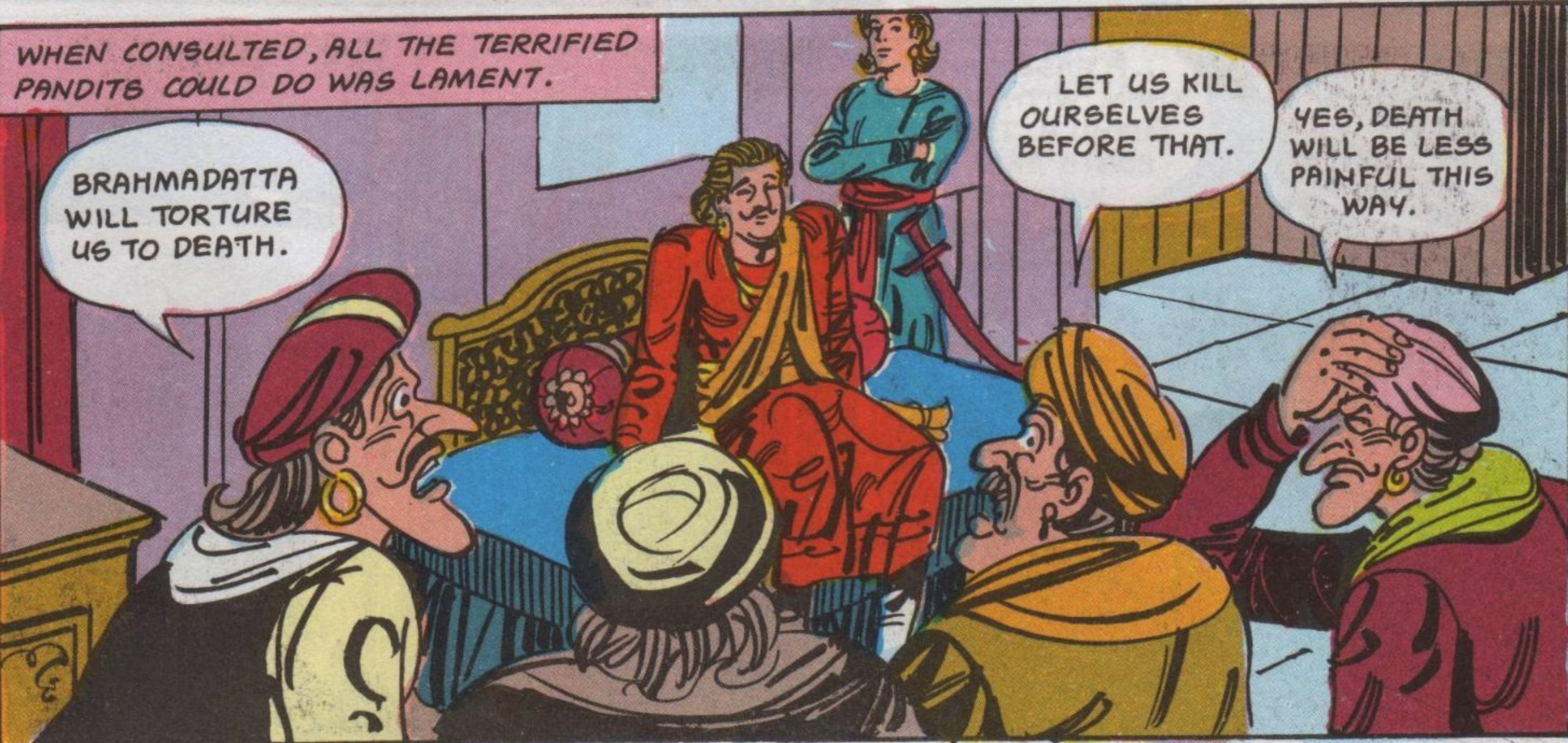
... KING BRAHMADATTA HAS ASKED ALL OF YOU TO JOIN HIM IN THE FEAST CELEBRATING THIS VICTORY.



THUS THE PANCHALA QUEEN AND THE PRINCESS WERE TRICKED INTO ACCOMPANYING AUSHADHA KUMAR'S SOLDIERS.



MEANWHILE, VAIDEHA WAS AWAKENED BY THE NOISE MADE BY THE PANCHALA ARMY.





A MUCH RELIEVED VAIDEHA RUSHED TOWARDS THE BOAT.

COME ON AUSHADHA, LET US NOT WASTE TIME.

I AM NOT COMING, MAHARAJ...



...MY MEN ARE TRAPPED BY THE ENEMY. I CANNOT LEAVE THEM BEHIND.



NEXT MORNING WHEN BRAHMADATTA BARGED INTO THE HOUSE WHERE VAIDEHA WAS STAYING —

WHERE IS VAIDEHA?

HE HAS GONE TO MITHILA WITH YOUR WIFE AND DAUGHTER.



WHEN BRAHMADATTA LEARNT THE TRUTH HE BECAME LIVID WITH RAGE.

CUT OFF HIS NOSE, CUT OFF HIS HANDS, CUT OFF HIS HEAD.

THINK CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING RASH, O KING...



...BECAUSE, IF YOU CUT OFF MY NOSE, MY KING WILL CUT OFF THE NOSE OF YOUR QUEEN.





BUT BRAHMADATTA DID NOT DARE TO PUNISH AUSHADHA AT THE RISK OF HIS WIFE'S LIFE.



SOON, AUSHADHA RETURNED SAFELY TO MITHILA WITH ALL HIS MEN.



THE END.