



Vol. 531 Rs. 25

Karna



Amar Chitra Katha: the Glorious Heritage of India



Karna

The Mahabharata is a gallery of heroes and Karna is the most heroic of them. Fate denied him all his dues. But he fought and achieved all that a man could aspire to have.

He was as much a Pandava prince as any of the other five. But he never knew his lineage. At last when he knew it, he could not but disown it.

He was brought up as a commoner and therefore humiliated. Teachers would not teach him. His equals shunned him. He received no honour despite his valour but he never lost heart. Duryodhana, the Kaurava prince, offered him kingship. For this act of kindness, he remained loyal to Duryodhana till the very end.

**AMAR CHITRA KATHA means good reading.
Over 78 million copies sold so far.**

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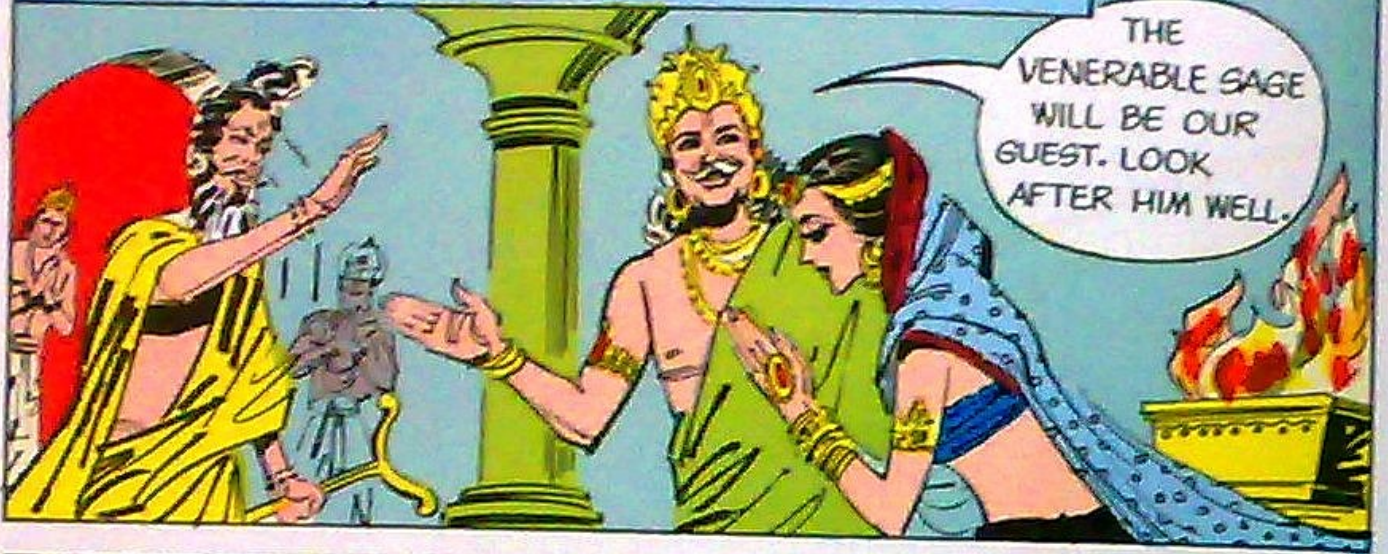
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Karna



RAJA KUNTIBHOJA, OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS YADAVA RACE, HAD NO CHILDREN. SO HE ADOPTED PRITHA, HIS NIECE, AND CALLED HER KUNTI.

ONE DAY SAGE DURVASA, FEARED FOR HIS VIOLENT TEMPER AND HARD TO PLEASE, VISITED RAJA KUNTIBHOJA.



FOR A FULL YEAR KUNTI LOOKED AFTER THE SAGE CAREFULLY, PATIENTLY AND WITH DEVOTION.



AND DURVASA WAS WELL PLEASED.



AS SOON AS DURVASA LEFT -

I WONDER IF IT REALLY WORKS. OH! LORD SURYA SMILES AT ME. I WILL CALL HIM DOWN.



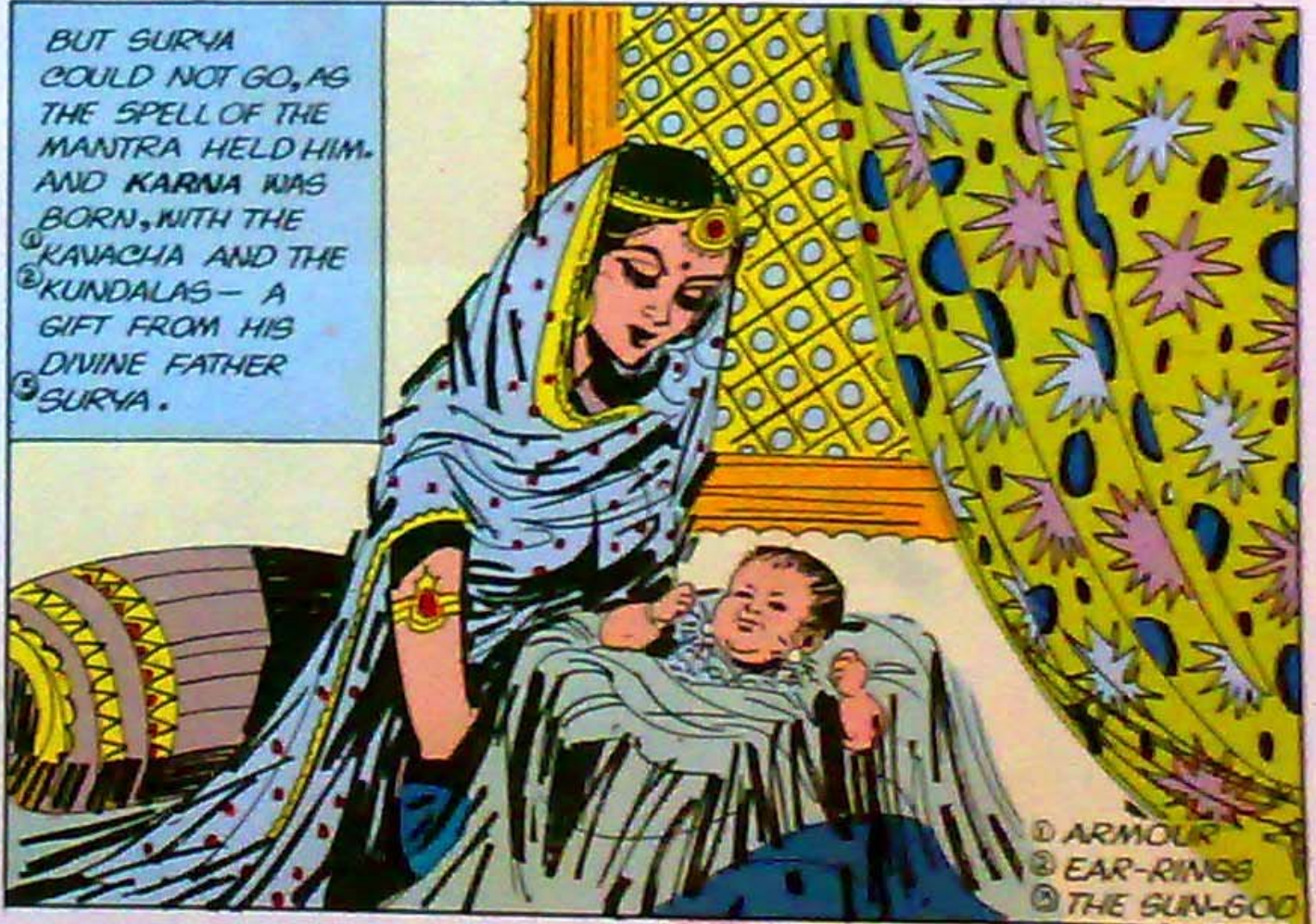
THE MANTRA OF COURSE WORKED.

YOU SHALL HAVE THE SON YOU DESIRE.

BUT I AM NOT MARRIED. I WAS ONLY CURIOUS TO SEE IF YOU WOULD COME. PLEASE, PLEASE GO BACK.



BUT SURYA COULD NOT GO, AS THE SPELL OF THE MANTRA HELD HIM. AND KARNA WAS BORN, WITH THE ① KAVACHA AND THE ② KUNDALAS - A GIFT FROM HIS DIVINE FATHER ③ SURYA.



① ARMOUR
② EAR-RINGS
③ THE SUN-GOD



FURTHER DOWN THE RIVER A CHILDLESS CHARIOTEER ADHIRATHA SAW THE BASKET AND LOOKED INTO IT.



AH! WHAT A BEAUTIFUL CHILD, ABANDONED BY SOME HEARTLESS MOTHER, NO DOUBT.



HE TOOK THE CHILD HOME TO HIS WIFE, RADHA.

LET US CALL HIM VASUSHENA OF THE KAVACHA AND KUNDALAS.

HE SHALL BE RADHEYA, DEAR WIFE - RADHEYA THE SON OF RADHA.



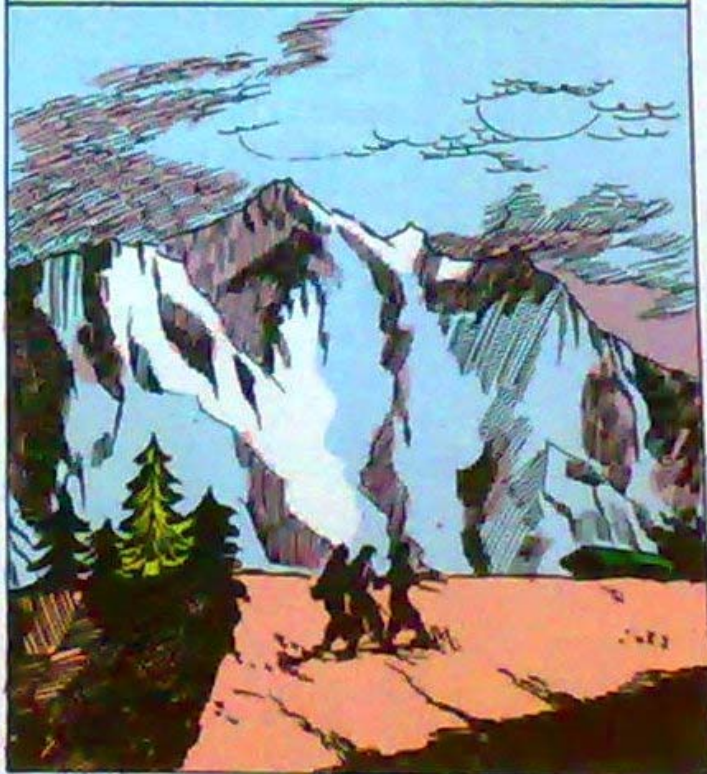
KARNA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD WAS A HAPPY ONE.



KUNTI MEANWHILE HAD MARRIED KING PANDU OF HASTINAPURA, WHO RULED THE KINGDOM FOR HIS BLIND BROTHER DHRITARASHTRA.



BUT KING PANDU BECAUSE OF A CURSE COULD NOT HAVE CHILDREN. SO HE RETIRED WITH HIS TWO QUEENS, KUNTI AND MADRI, TO A QUIET LIFE IN THE HIMALAYAS.



BUT ONE DAY -

DEAREST ONE, HOW I SORROW WHEN I SEE YOUR CHILDLESS STATE!

DO NOT GRIEVE, MY LORD. I KNOW OF A WAY OUT BUT I HAVE NOT TOLD YOU ABOUT IT.



WITH THE HELP OF THE MANTRA, KUNTI AND MADRI HAD FIVE SONS IN ALL - THE PANDAVA PRINCES.



WHEN PANDU DIED, MADRI BURNT HERSELF ON THE FUNERAL PYRE. KUNTI TOOK THE FIVE PRINCES, YUDHISHTHIRA (SON OF DHARMA), BHEEMA (SON OF VAYU), ARJUNA (SON OF INDRA), NAKULA AND SAHADEVA (SONS OF THE ASVINI TWINS), TO HASTINAPURA.



REVERED UNCLE BHEESHMA, AND WISE VIDURA, I LEAVE THE FATHERLESS SONS OF PANDU IN YOUR CARE.

THE PANDAVA PRINCES SHALL BE BROUGHT UP, AS THE HEIRS OF PANDU, ALONG WITH THEIR COUSINS THE KAURAVAS.

FROM THE BEGINNING A BITTER RIVALRY SPRANG UP BETWEEN THE COUSINS. THE KAURAVA PRINCES WERE UNHAPPY.

OUR COUSINS HAVE COME AND SPOILT OUR LIFE.

BHEEMA TORMENTS ME ON THE PLAYGROUND AND HAUNTS MY DREAMS.



AND KARNA WHO OFTEN CAME TO HASTINAPURA WATCHED.

BHEEMA IS UNFAIR! POOR DURYODHANA.



DRONACHARVA, MASTER IN THE PRINCELY ARTS, TAUGHT THE PRINCES.

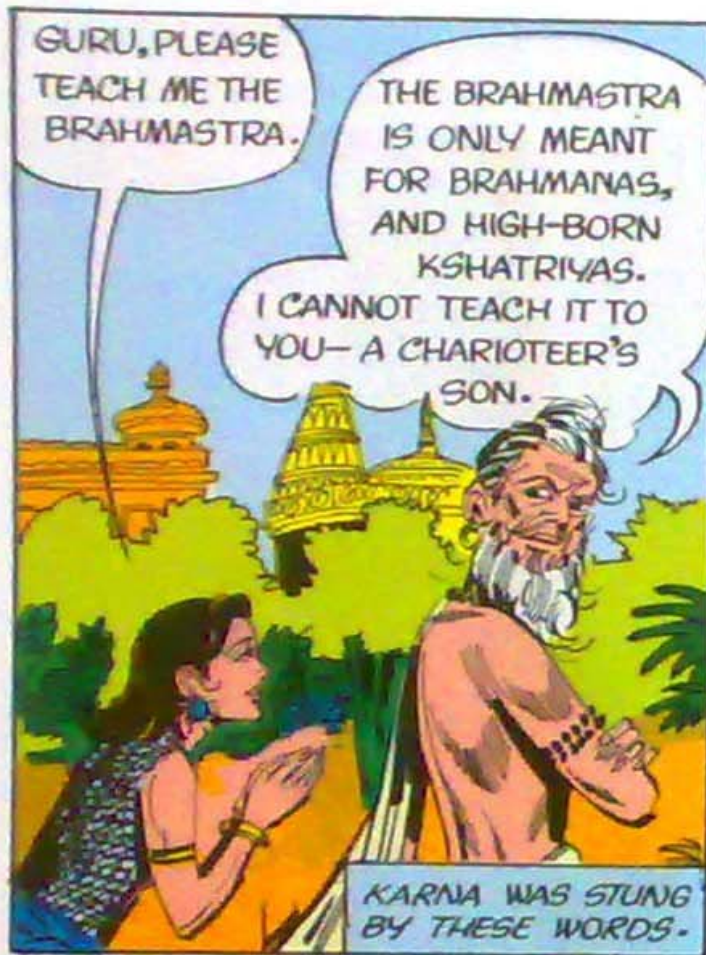
ARJUNA'S SKILL IN ARCHERY IS UNMATCHED BY ANY OF US. I FEAR THOSE PRINCES WILL RULE US ONE DAY.



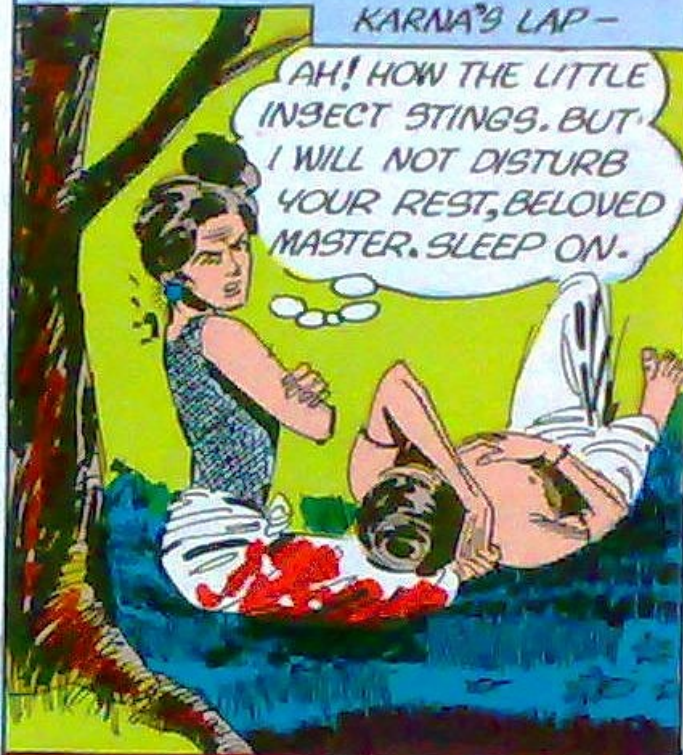
KARNA TOO BECAME HIS PUPIL. BUT—

HE IS PARTIAL TO ARJUNA. HE WILL NEVER LET ME SURPASS HIM.





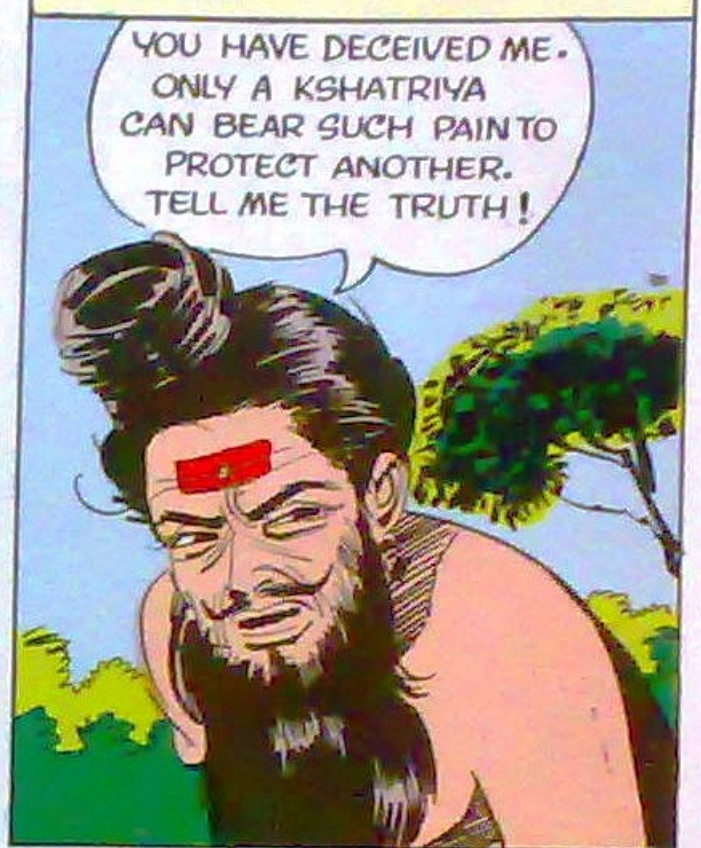
THEN ONE DAY WHILE PARASHURAMA WAS RESTING WITH HIS HEAD ON KARNA'S LAP -



AH! HOW THE LITTLE INSECT STINGS. BUT I WILL NOT DISTURB YOUR REST, BELOVED MASTER. SLEEP ON.

AND THE MEDICINE HELPED BUT KARNA DID NOT HEAL.

WHEN THE SAGE WOKE UP AND SAW THE BLOOD -



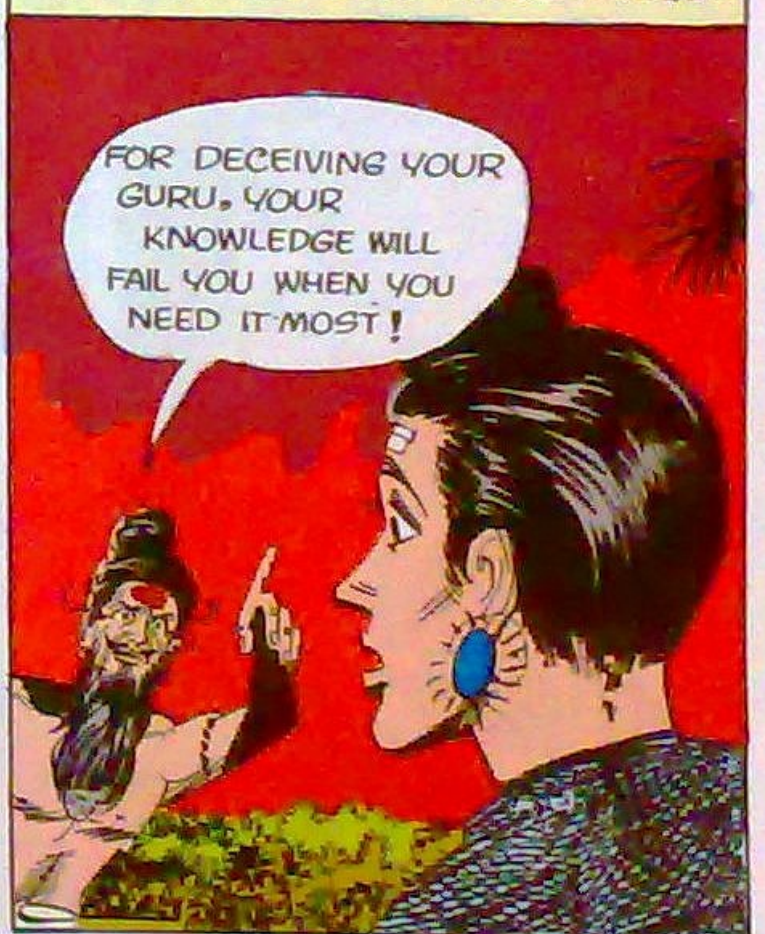
YOU HAVE DECEIVED ME. ONLY A KSHATRIYA CAN BEAR SUCH PAIN TO PROTECT ANOTHER. TELL ME THE TRUTH!

KARNA CONFESSED.



I AM THE SON OF ADHIRATHA, THE CHARIOTEER, A SUTAPUTRA. FORGIVE ME, SIR.

THE ENRAGED SAGE CURSED KARNA.

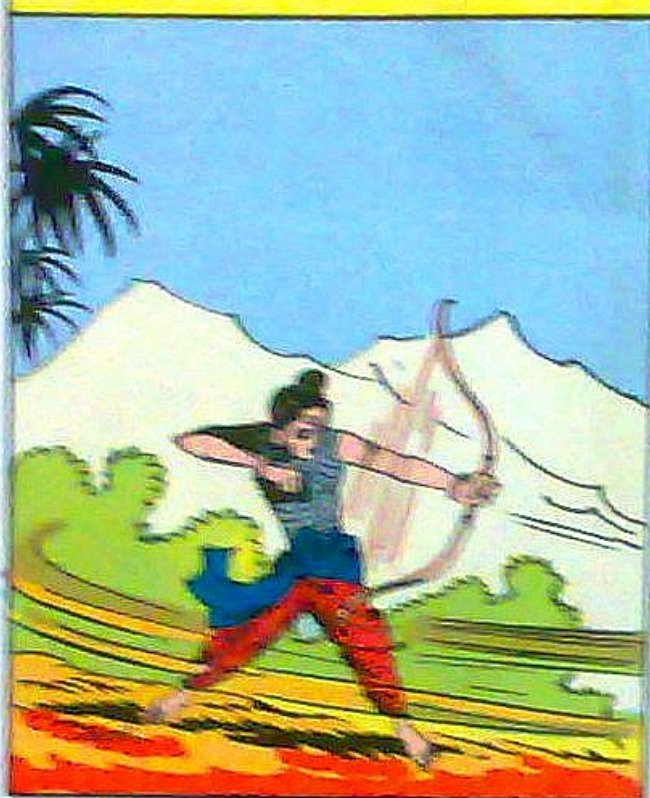


FOR DECEIVING YOUR GURU, YOUR KNOWLEDGE WILL FAIL YOU WHEN YOU NEED IT MOST!

AS HE WALKED AROUND THE TOTTERLY
DEJECTED ANIMAL WAGGLED AWAY
WHEN HE WAS GONE.



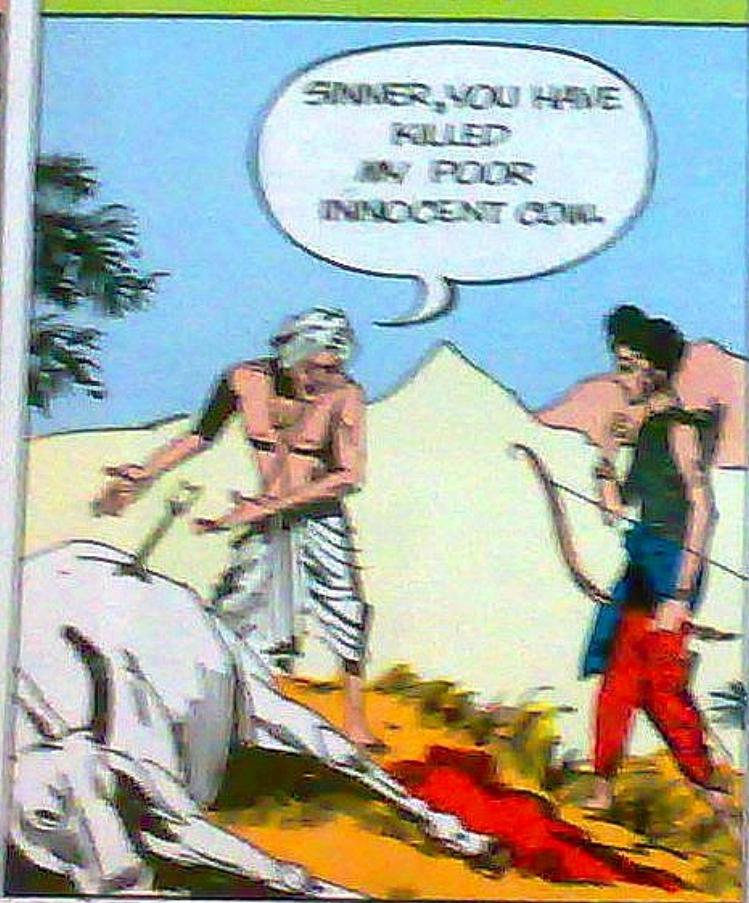
SUDDENLY AN ANIMAL RUSHED PAST
AND WITHOUT THINKING HE DREW
HIS BOW AND KILLED IT.



AS HE WALKED TOWARDS
THE DEAD ANIMAL -



A SOUVAIN WHIRED
ANGRY AT HIM.



IGNORING KARMA'S ATTEMPTS TO EXPLAIN, THE BRAWNIER CLASSED HIM.

YOU TOO WILL BE KILLED WHEN YOU ARE HELPLESS TO DEFEND YOURSELF. EVEN AS YOU KILLED MY HELPLESS SON.

KARMA SADLY RETURNED TO THE ONE PERSON WHO HAD KNOWN AND LOVED HIM—HIS MOTHER.

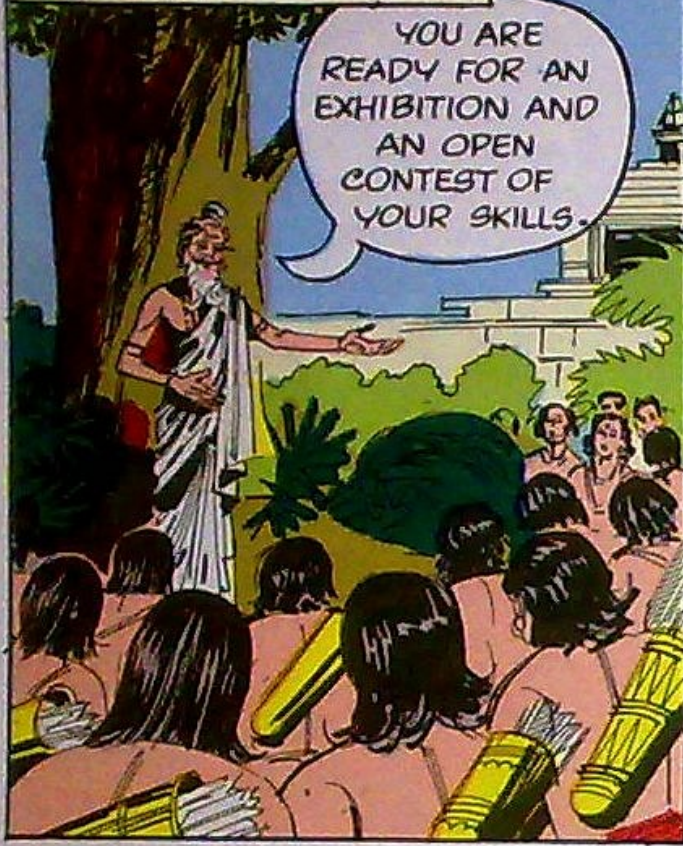
IT SEEMS AS IF FATE IS AGAINST ME. I WONDER WHAT FURTHER HUMILIATIONS SHE HAS IN STORE FOR ME.

HE STAYED WITH HER A FEW DAYS, THEN ONE DAY—

MOTHER, I HEAR THAT AN OPEN TOURNAMENT IS TO BE HELD AT HASTINA-PURA. I WILL COMPETE. A VALIANT WARRIOR WILL FIND HIS PLACE AMONG THE VALIANT.

WHAT KARNA HAD HEARD
WAS TRUE.

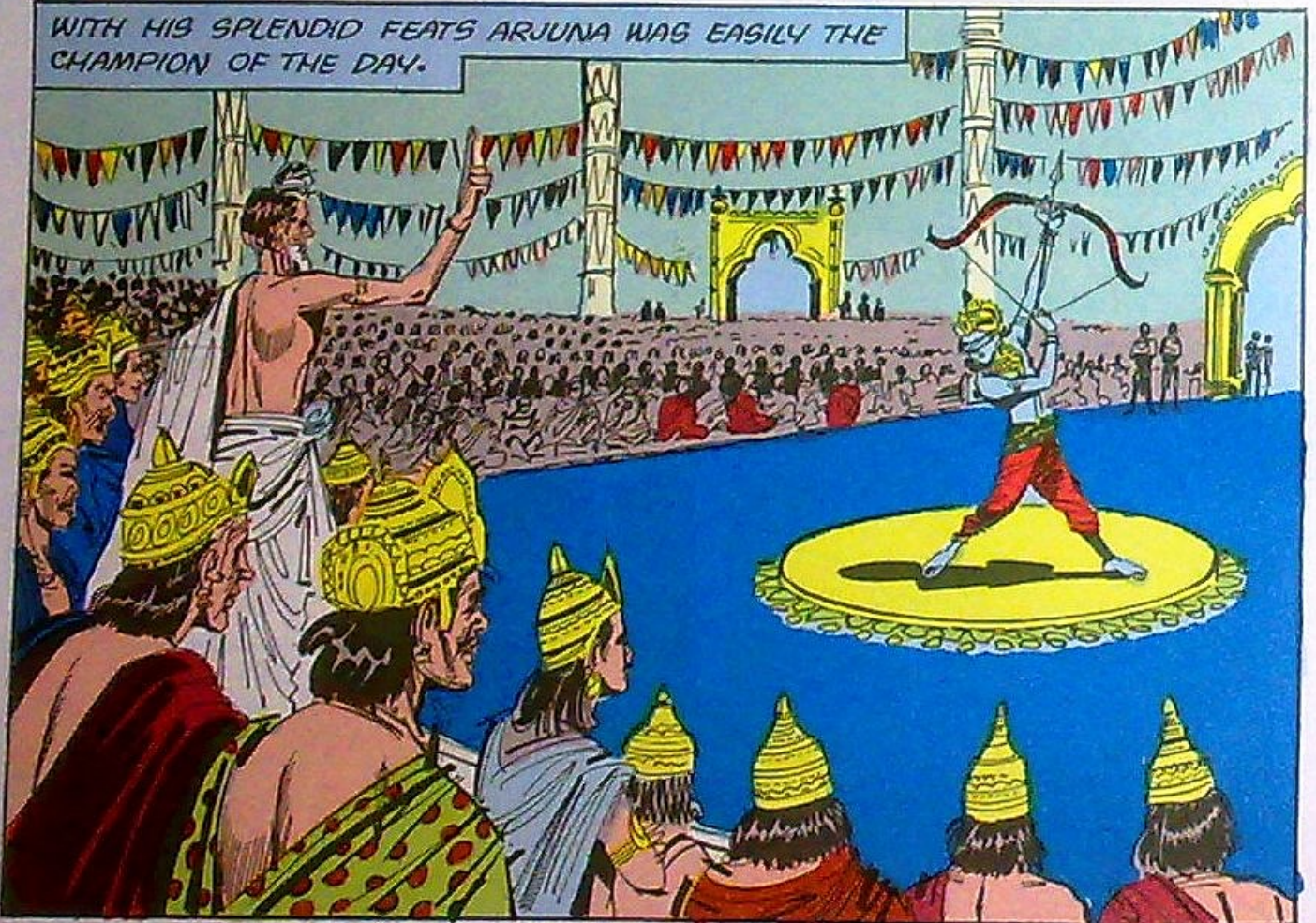
YOU ARE
READY FOR AN
EXHIBITION AND
AN OPEN
CONTEST OF
YOUR SKILLS.



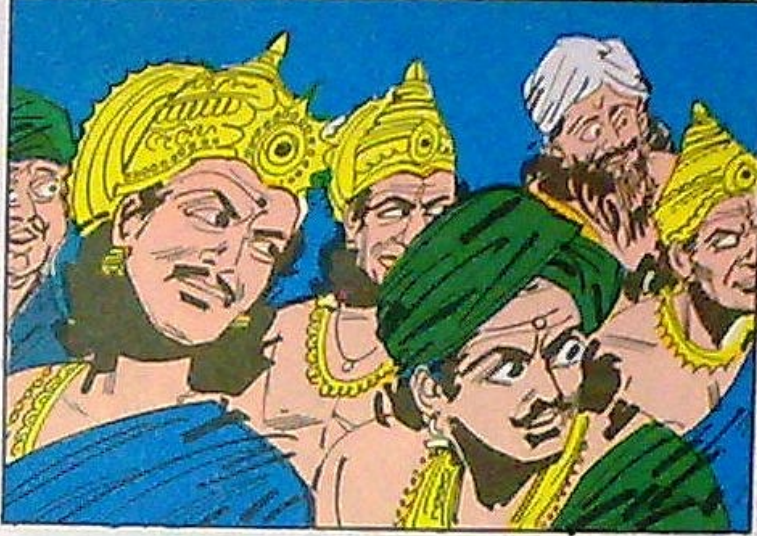
AFTER A CONSULTATION WITH THE
KURU ELDERS, THE DAY WAS FIXED.



WITH HIS SPLENDID FEATS ARJUNA WAS EASILY THE
CHAMPION OF THE DAY.

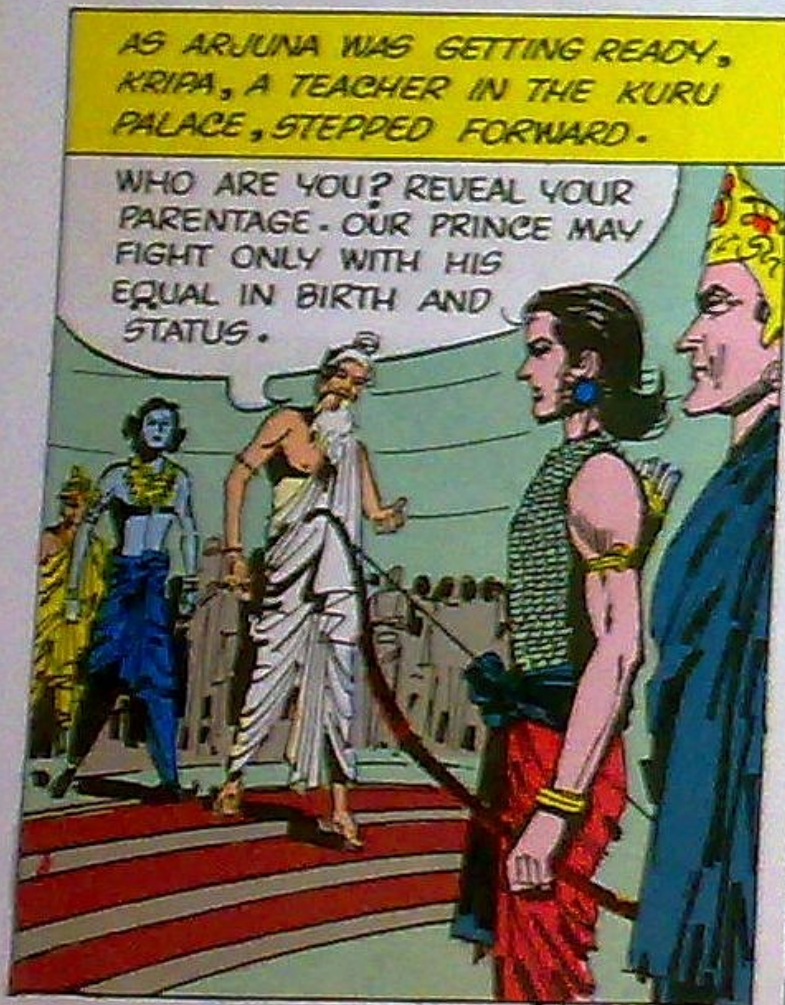


SUDDENLY THERE WAS A COMMOTION AND ALL EYES WERE TURNED TOWARDS THE ENTRANCE. A FIGURE ENTERED ON THE SCENE— IT WAS KARNA.



HE WAS ABLE TO PERFORM ALL ARJUNA'S FEATS.





THE NOBLE DURYODHANA CAME TO HIS RESCUE.



I CROWN KARNA PRINCE OF ANGA.

JUST THEN ADHIRATHA WALKED FEEBLY TOWARDS THE STAGE.



MY SON! MY BLESSINGS!

BHEEMA SUDDENLY ROARED WITH AMUSEMENT.



GO SUTAPUTRA! GO DRIVE YOUR CHARIOT! YOU ARE NOT WORTHY OF DEATH AT ARJUNA'S HANDS.

DURYODHANA COULD HARDLY CONTAIN HIS ANGER AS HE LED KARNA AWAY FROM THE HUMILIATING SCENE.



COME KARNA! IT TAKES A HERO TO RECOGNISE A HERO!

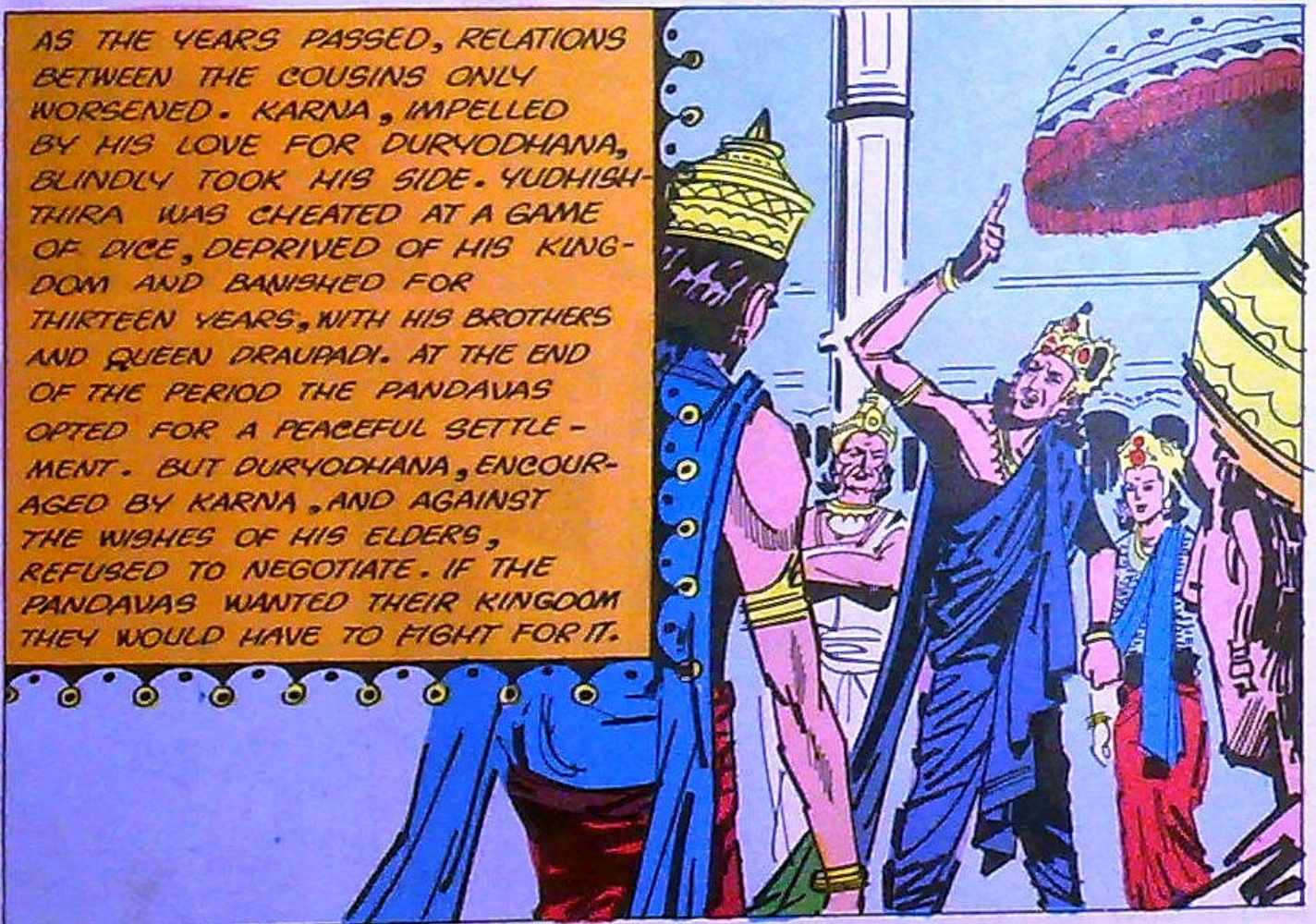
AS THEY DROVE AWAY IN DURYODHANA'S CHARIOT-

IT IS STRANGE!
I FEEL SAFE
FROM THE
PANDAVAS, ALREADY.
WHAT POWER
DOES THIS KARNA
HAVE THAT MAKES
ME FEEL SO?

DURYODHANA YOU HAVE NOT
BEFRIENDED ME IN VAIN. I WILL
KILL ARJUNA IN SINGLE
COMBAT ONE DAY!
I WILL!



AS THE YEARS PASSED, RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE COUSINS ONLY
WORSENERD. KARNA, IMPELLED
BY HIS LOVE FOR DURYODHANA,
BLINDLY TOOK HIS SIDE. YUDHISH-
THIRA WAS CHEATED AT A GAME
OF DICE, DEPRIVED OF HIS KING-
DOM AND BANISHED FOR
THIRTEEN YEARS, WITH HIS BROTHERS
AND QUEEN DRAUPADI. AT THE END
OF THE PERIOD THE PANDAVAS
OPTED FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLE-
MENT. BUT DURYODHANA, ENCOUR-
AGED BY KARNA, AND AGAINST
THE WISHES OF HIS ELDERS,
REFUSED TO NEGOTIATE. IF THE
PANDAVAS WANTED THEIR KINGDOM
THEY WOULD HAVE TO FIGHT FOR IT.



IN THE HEAVENS INDRA WAS CONCERNED ABOUT ARJUNA...

IF KARNA IS DEPRIVED OF HIS KAVACHA AND KUNDALAS, MY SON ARJUNA NEED FEAR NO MORTALS



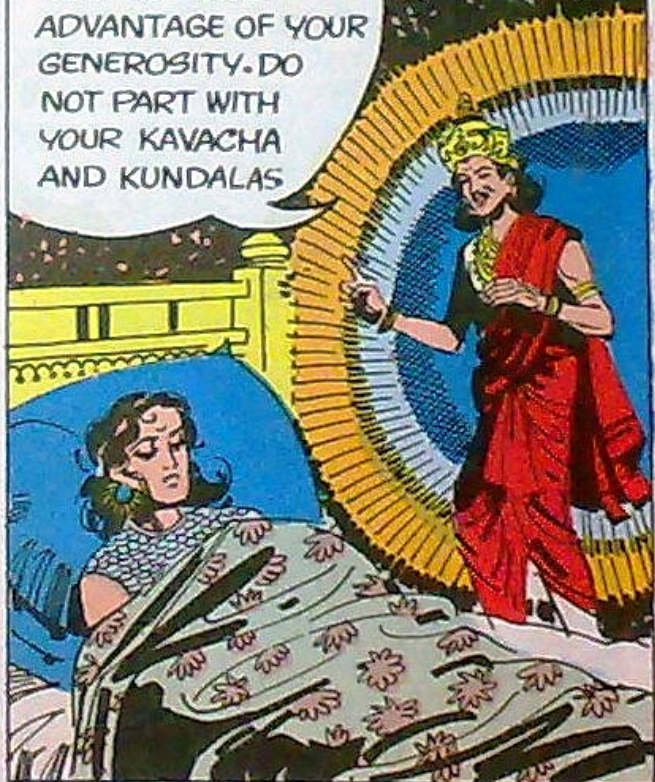
... AND SURYA ABOUT KARNA.

IF INDRA INTERVENES, MY SON HAS NO CHANCE. I MUST WARN KARNA.



SURYA TRIED TO WARN HIS SON IN A DREAM.

LORD INDRA WILL TRY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR GENEROSITY. DO NOT PART WITH YOUR KAVACHA AND KUNDALAS



INDRA APPROACHED KARNA IN THE GUISE OF A BRAHMAN.

I BEG FOR ALMS. KARNA, IT IS SAID, REFUSES NOTHING TO THOSE WHO ASK. I WANT YOUR KAVACHA AND KUNDALAS.



DESPITE SURYA'S WARNINGS, KARNA, THE GENEROUS, PARTED WITH THE KAVACHA AND KUNDALAS.

MY LORD, I KNOW WHO YOU ARE AND WHY YOU ARE HERE. YET, I GIVE TO YOU MY VERY LIFE. NEVER LET IT BE SAID THAT KARNA REFUSED ANYONE ANYTHING.



INDRA WAS TOUCHED.

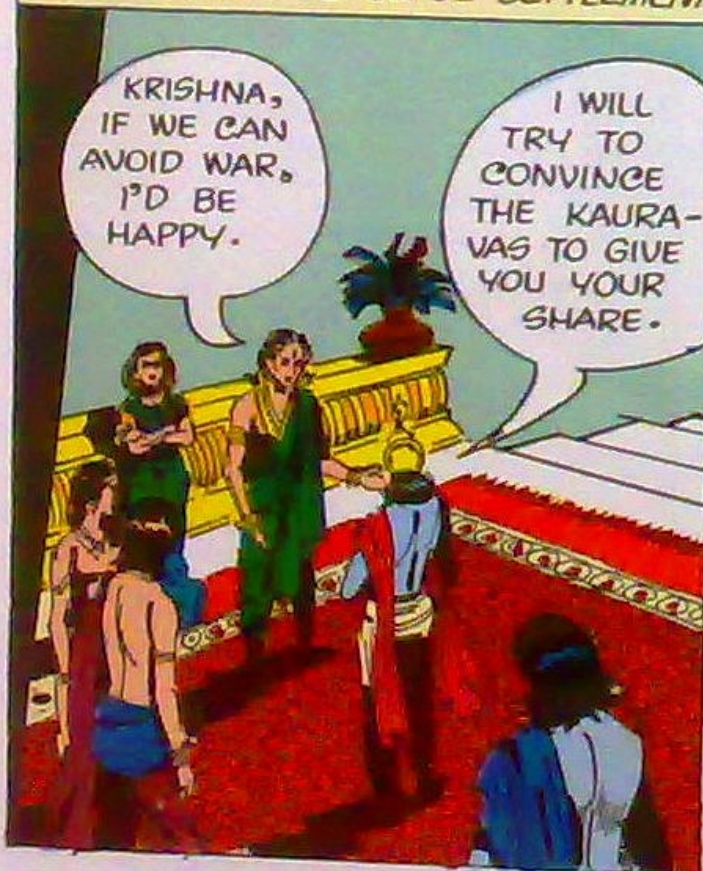
IN RETURN I GRANT YOU MY MASTER WEAPON SHAKTI, BUT YOU MAY USE IT ONLY ONCE.



THE PANDAVAS MEANWHILE STILL HOPED FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT.

KRISHNA, IF WE CAN AVOID WAR, I'D BE HAPPY.

I WILL TRY TO CONVINCE THE KAURAVAS TO GIVE YOU YOUR SHARE.



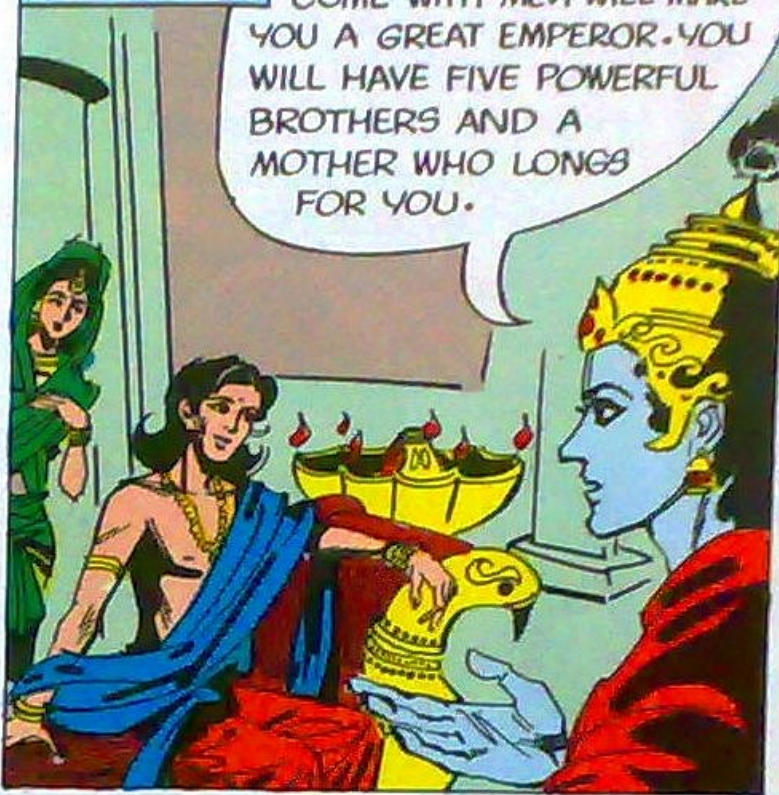
KRISHNA WENT TO HASTINAPURA - BUT -

I HAVE FAILED! DURYODHANA IS BENT UPON WAR. HE DEPENDS ON KARNA TO WIN IT FOR HIM. IT IS TIME KARNA KNEW THE TRUTH ABOUT HIS BIRTH.



KRISHNA WENT TO KARNA AND TOLD HIM THE STORY OF HIS BIRTH. WHEN HE FINISHED —

COME WITH ME. I WILL MAKE YOU A GREAT EMPEROR. YOU WILL HAVE FIVE POWERFUL BROTHERS AND A MOTHER WHO LONGS FOR YOU.



KARNA WAS IN A TERRIBLE PREDICAMENT.

DURYODHANA'S LOVE IS WHAT I VALUE MOST IN MY LIFE. SO IF YOU REALLY HAVE MY INTEREST AT HEART PROMISE ME THAT YOU WILL KEEP THE SECRET OF MY BIRTH TILL I DIE.

I WILL!



WHEN KUNTI HEARD THAT KRISHNA'S TALKSHAD FAILED, SHE WAS FULL OF GRIEF.

I MUST NOW TELL KARNA WHO HE IS. THE WAR MAY YET BE AVERTED.



SHE WENT TO KARNA WHEN HE WAS AT THE END OF HIS MIDDAY PRAYERS.

MY MOTHER! HERE! WHAT CAN SHE WANT?

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, O QUEEN?



SHE TOO RELATED TO KARNA THE STORY OF HIS BIRTH AND PLEADED WITH HIM NOT TO FIGHT HIS BROTHERS.

SEE, EVEN LORD SURYA, YOUR FATHER, JOINING ME IN MY REQUEST.

MOTHER, WHAT YOU ASK ME TO DO IS AGAINST MY DHARMA.



BUT HE WOULD NOT LET HIS MOTHER'S PLEAS GO IN VAIN.

I WILL FIGHT AGAINST YOUR SONS, MY BROTHERS, BUT I WILL NOT KILL ANY EXCEPT ARJUNA. YOU SHALL STILL HAVE FIVE SONS ALIVE AND I MY HONOUR.

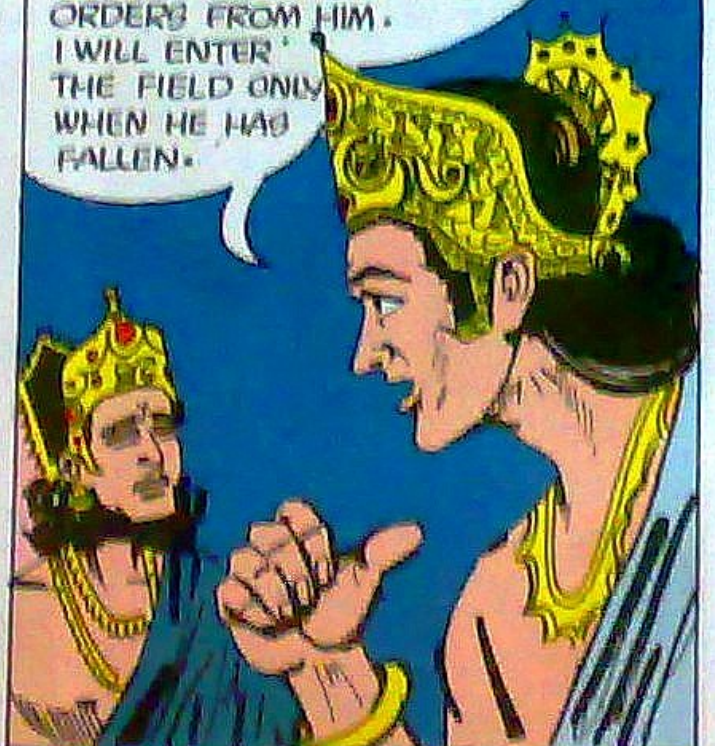


KUNTI BLESSED KARNA AND LEFT HIM WITH MIXED FEELINGS.



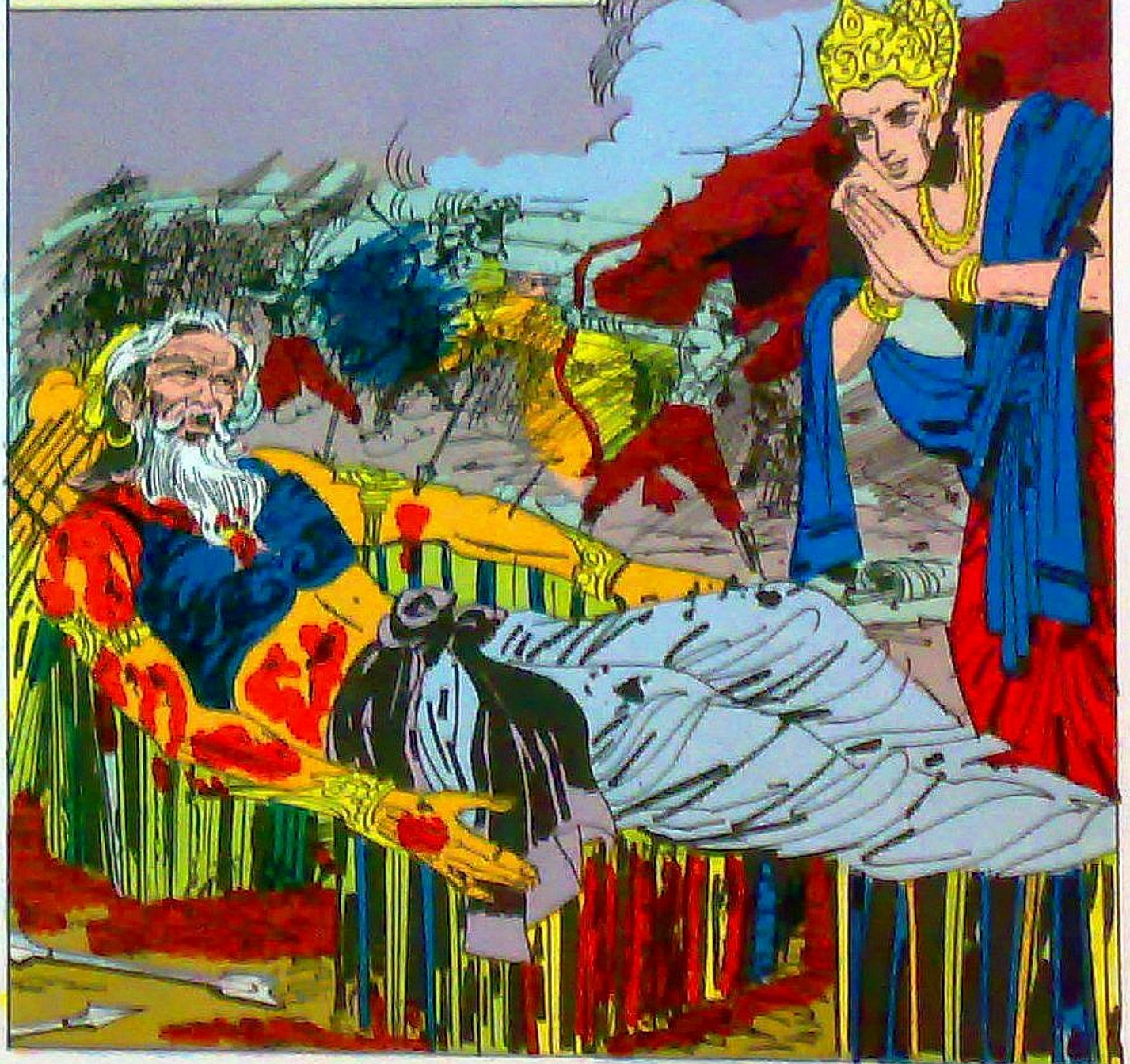
BHISHMA WAS TO LEAD THE KAURAVA ARMY. WHEN KARNA HEARD THAT, HE WENT TO DURYODHANA.


BHISHMA HAS NEVER LIKED ME, AND I WILL NOT TAKE ORDERS FROM HIM. I WILL ENTER THE FIELD ONLY WHEN HE HAS FALLEN.



AND SO THE BATTLE OF KURUKSHETRA BECAME A REALITY. IT LASTED FOR 18 LONG DAYS. MANY VALIANT MEN WERE LOST ON EITHER SIDE. THE VENERABLE COMMANDER BHEESHMA, OF THE KAURAVA ARMIES, FELL ON THE TENTH DAY. HE FELL ON A BED OF ARROWS - STICKING OUT FROM HIS OWN ARMOUR. KARNA HAD ALWAYS LONGED FOR THE GRANDSIRE'S LOVE. WHEN HE HEARD THAT HE LAY WOUNDED, KARNA RUSHED TO THE SPOT.


MY LORD!
I HAVE NEVER BEEN FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BE LIKED BY YOU. YET I HAVE COME TO PAY MY RESPECTS TO YOU AND TO ASK FOR YOUR BLESSINGS.






DEAR KARNA! I KNEW WHO YOU WERE.
YOUR FIRM LOYALTY TO DURYODHANA
IS YOUR CHOSEN DHARMA. MAY
YOU LEAD HIS FORCES TO
VICTORY! GO FIGHT YOUR
FATED ENEMIES.

IN A HURRIED COUNCIL, IT WAS DECIDED
THAT DRONA SHOULD NOW COMMAND
THE KAURAVA FORCES.



I DID HOPE THAT
YOU WOULD
LEAD US,
KARNA.



IT IS BEST THAT
DRONA LEAD US. LET
THERE BE NO
JEALOUSY AMONG
OUR HEROES AT
THIS STAGE.

AND SO THE BATTLE RAGED ON. IT WAS THE FOURTEENTH DAY. KARNA WAS ENGAGED IN FIGHTING BHEEMA. KARNA COULD EASILY HAVE KILLED HIM, BUT -



FORGIVE ME, DURYODHANA. I HAVE BHEEMA AT MY MERCY BUT I CANNOT KILL HIM. I HAVE PROMISED MY MOTHER. AH! ARJUNA COMES TO DEFEND BHEEMA. I AM LUCKY.

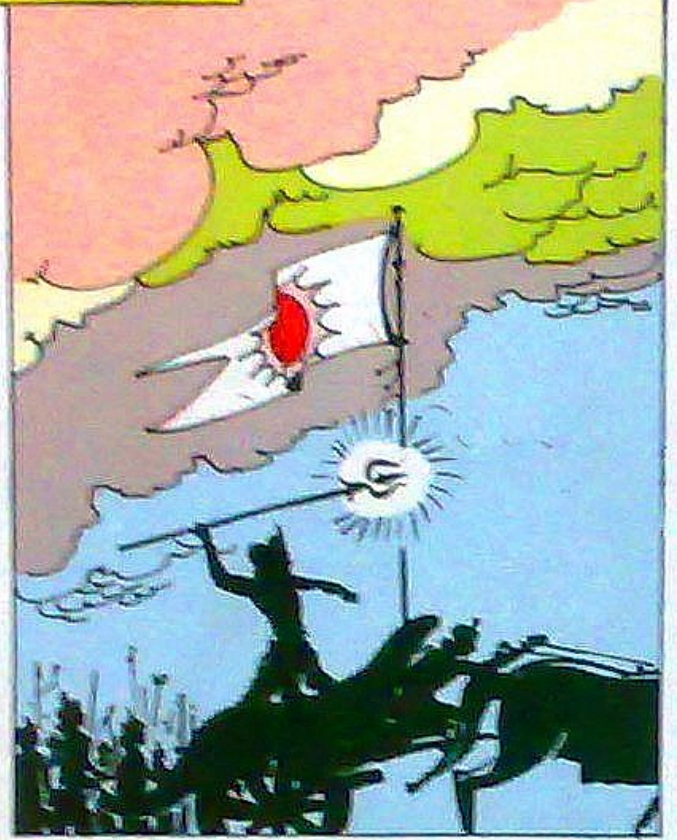


THAT DAY THE BATTLE CONTINUED INTO THE NIGHT. THIS WAS LUCKY FOR BHEEMA'S SON GHATOTKACHA AND HIS RAKSHASA FORCES, FOR RAKSHASAS ARE STRONGEST AT NIGHT.

KILL THAT FELLOW IMMEDIATELY, KARNA. OR ELSE OUR WHOLE ARMY WILL BE VANQUISHED.



THE REVERED KARNA, IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE, FORGOT HIMSELF AND USED THE INFALLIBLE SHAKTI-THE WEAPON OF INDRA.



ONCE MORE THE GODS HAD SMILED ON THE FAVOURED ARJUNA.



ALAS! I HAVE KILLED GHATOTRACHA BUT I HAVE LOST THE MIGHTIEST WEAPON SHAKTI WHICH I HAD MEANT TO USE ON ARJUNA.



ON THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE BATTLE, DRONA WAS SLAIN AND THE KAURAVA HEROES SPOKE AS ONE IN FAVOUR OF KARNA AS THEIR NEXT COMMANDER.

THE INDESTRUCTIBLE KARNA SHALL BE THE COMMANDER OF OUR FORCES.



DURYODHANA WAS PLEASED.

KARNA, YOU HATE THE PANDAVAS AS MUCH AS I DO. I AM SURE OF OUR VICTORY NOW.



KARNA WAS GLAD THAT HE COULD AT LAST REPLY HIS BELOVED KING.

I WILL LEAD OUR FORCES TO VICTORY, MY KING! ARJUNA SHALL DIE AT MY HANDS.



AND THUS KARNA ASSUMED COMMAND OF THE KAIRATA FORCES. THAT DAY HE HAD NIRULA AT HIS MERCY.



MY CHILD, BE PROUD THAT YOU FOUGHT A DUEL WITH KARNA. NOW GO HOME TO ARJUNA AND TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.



I WOULD RATHER HE KILLED ME. OH THE SHAME OF IT!



ONE MORE DAY HAS PASSED AND ARJUNA STILL LIVES.

IT SHALL BE DONE!

IT IS THE SKILL OF KRISHNA, HIS CHARIOTEER, THAT KEEPS HIM ALIVE. IF ONLY YOU COULD CONVINCE SHALYA TO BE MY CHARIOTEER, VICTORY WILL BE OURS.



KARNA LEFT DURYODHANA AND WENT TO HIS TENT. THERE, AS HE LAY AWAKE—

TOMORROW I FIGHT ARJUNA AND I MUST HONESTLY TRY TO KILL HIM. BUT I KNOW MY CHANCES ARE POOR.



HE TOSSED ABOUT RESTLESSLY. IT WAS A DIFFICULT NIGHT FOR HIM.

TOMORROW I WILL TRY TO FIGHT AND SPARE YUDHISHTHIRA TOO. MOTHER KUNTI MUST KNOW HOW I KEPT MY PROMISE.

HOW I LONGED FOR HER LOVE AND RECOGNITION! AND IN THESE MOMENTS, HOW I TREASURE THE BOUNDLESS LOVE OF MOTHER RADHA AND MY NOBLE DURYODHANA.



THIS LAST THOUGHT FINALLY LULLED HIM TO SLEEP.

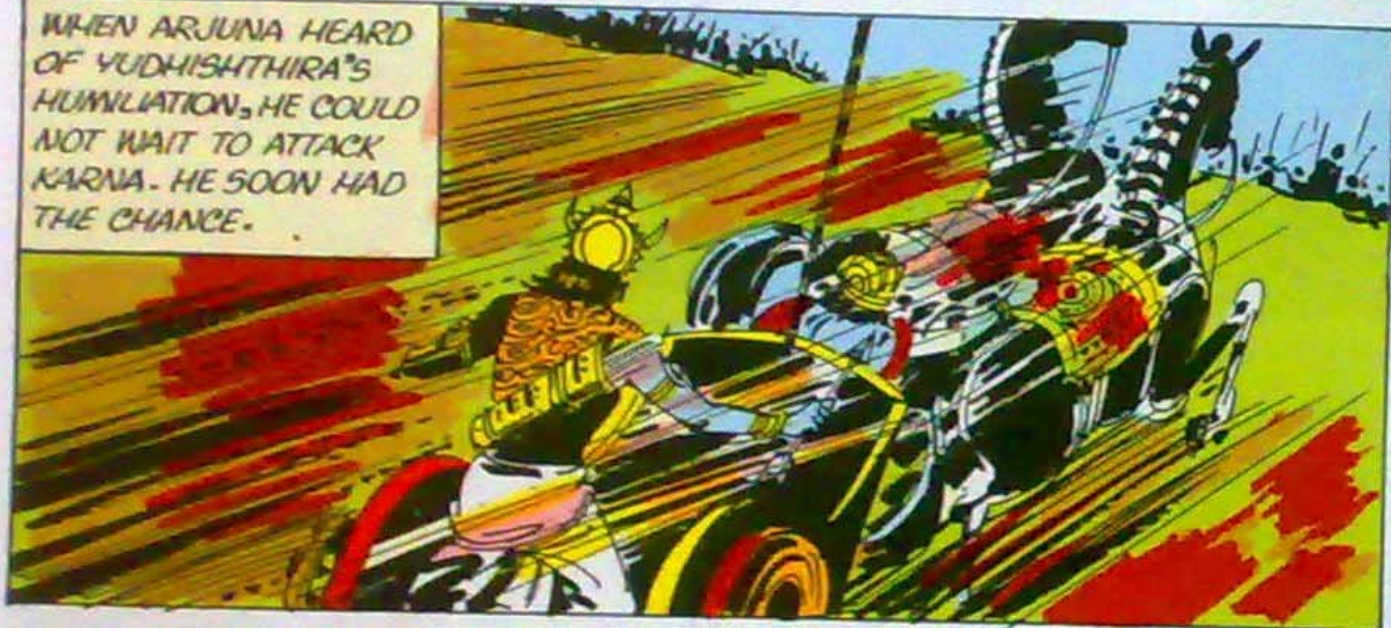
THE NEXT DAY KARNA HAD HIS WISH TO ENGAGE YUDHISHTHIRA IN SINGLE COMBAT.

ARJUNA SHALL AVENGE ME.

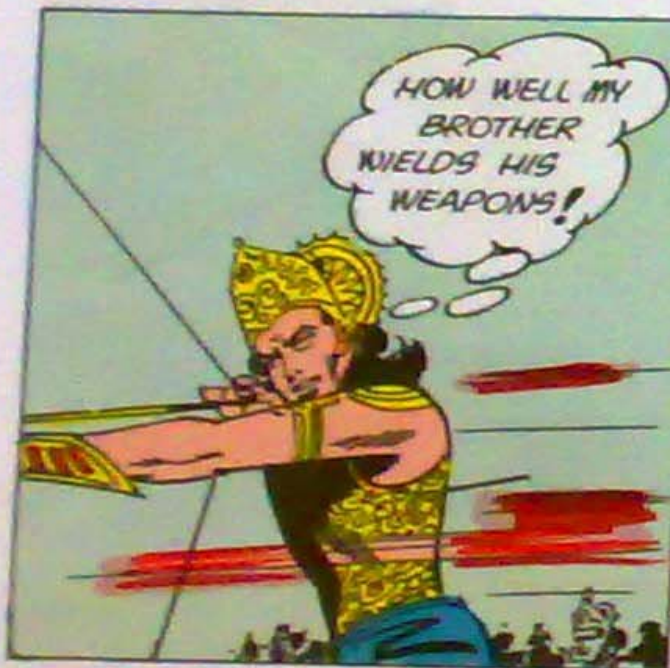
I SPARE YOUR LIFE, YUDHISHTHIRA. YOU CAN NEVER KILL ME IN SINGLE COMBAT. LEAVE YOUR SUPERIORS TO THEIR EQUALS.



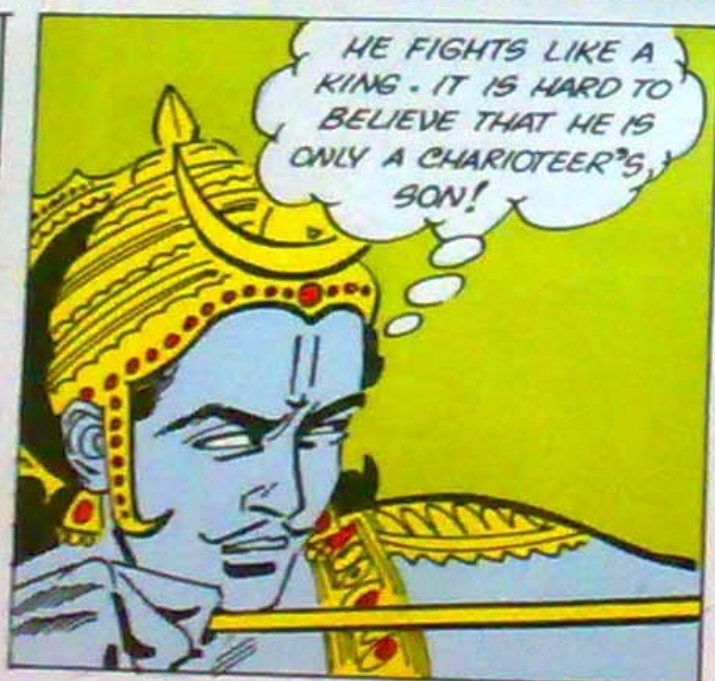
WHEN ARJUNA HEARD OF YUDHISHTHIRA'S HUMILIATION, HE COULD NOT WAIT TO ATTACK KARNA. HE SOON HAD THE CHANCE.



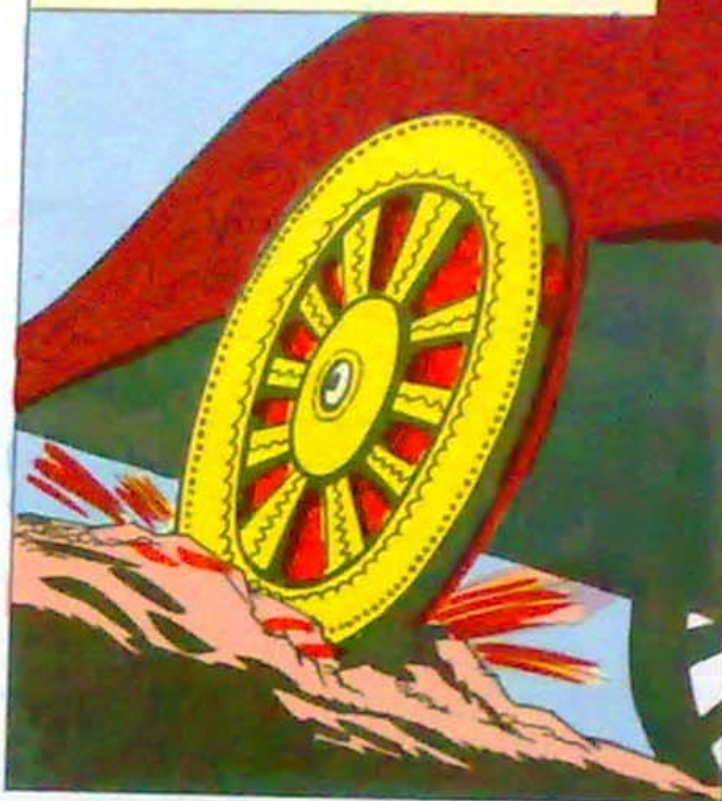
HOW WELL MY BROTHER WIELDS HIS WEAPONS!



HE FIGHTS LIKE A KING. IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT HE IS ONLY A CHARIOTEER'S SON!



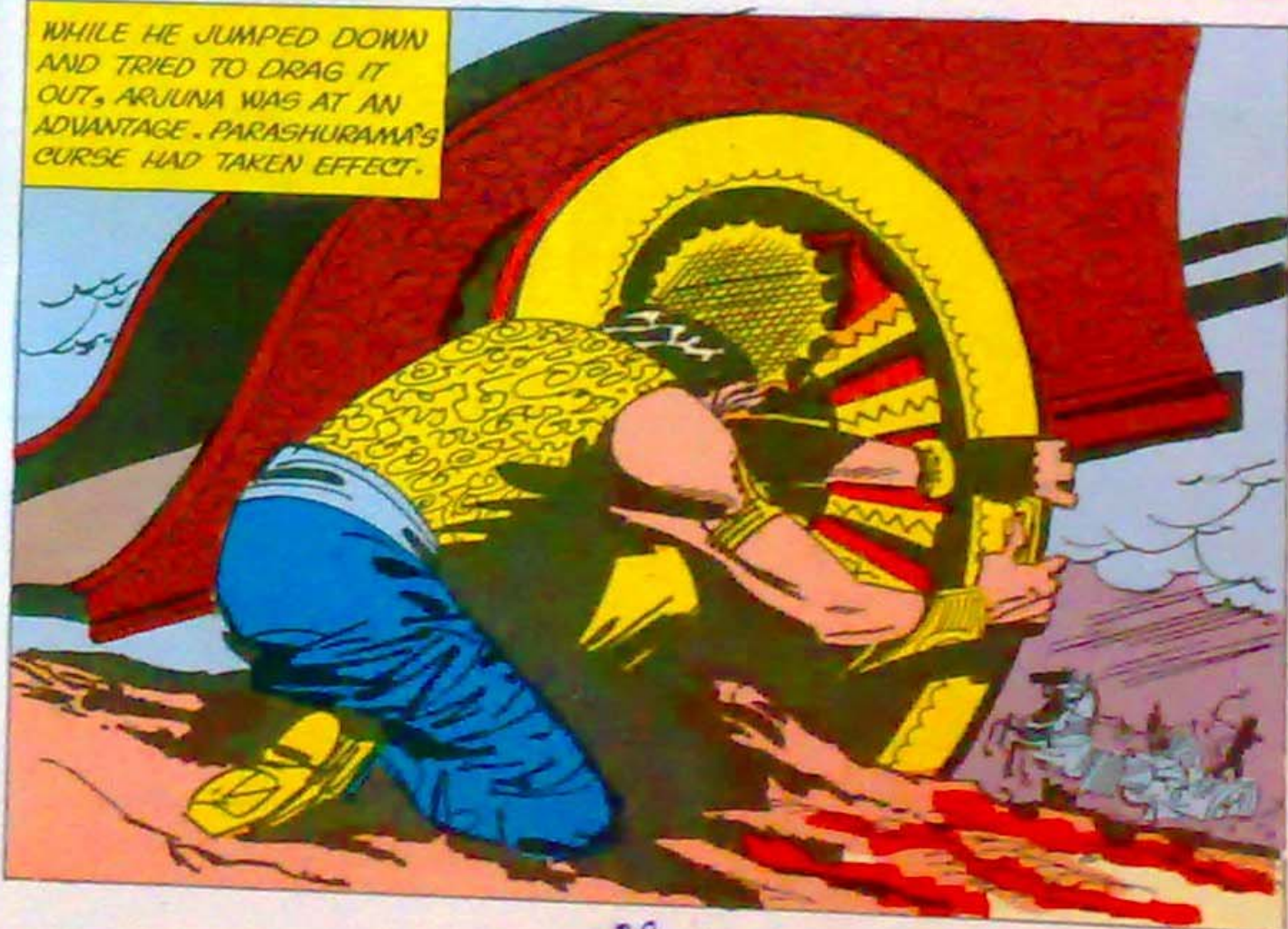
ALAS! FOR KARNA THE END WAS DRAWING NEAR. A WHEEL OF HIS CHARIOT SANK INTO THE GROUND.



MY MEMORY FAILS ME. I CANNOT RECALL THE MANTRAS OF THE GREAT PARASHURAMA!



WHILE HE JUMPED DOWN AND TRIED TO DRAG IT OUT, ARJUNA WAS AT AN ADVANTAGE. PARASHURAMA'S CURSE HAD TAKEN EFFECT.



WHEN KARNA WAS THUS HELPLESS, ARJUNA,
WITH KRISHNA'S PROMPTING . . .



. . . SHOT AN ARROW THAT SEVERED THE HEAD
OF THE GREAT HERO FROM ITS BEAUTIFUL BODY.



THE CURSE OF THE BRAHMAN
HAD NOT BEEN IN VAIN.

WHEN KUNTI HEARD OF KARNA'S DEATH —

DEAR, DEAR, SON!
I CAST YOU OFF AT BIRTH
AND YOUR DEATH I CAN,
BUT LAMENT IN
PRIVATE.



AFTER THE BATTLE, THE VICTORIOUS PANDAVAS PERFORMED THE DEATH CEREMONIES FOR THE DEAD.

WILL I HAVE THE
COURAGE TO SEND
YOUR SOUL ON ITS
JOURNEY AS
BEFITS YOUR
BIRTH?



JUST AS YUDHISHTHIRA HAD ENDED WITH THE LAST OFFERING TO THEIR KINSMEN —

WAIT! THERE IS
ONE MORE
LEFT.

WHO IS IT
THAT I HAVE
FORGOTTEN?



KARNA!

BUT WHY
SHOULD I DO
IT FOR KARNA?
KARNA, OUR ARCH
ENEMY, KARNA THE
CHARIOTEER'S
SON!



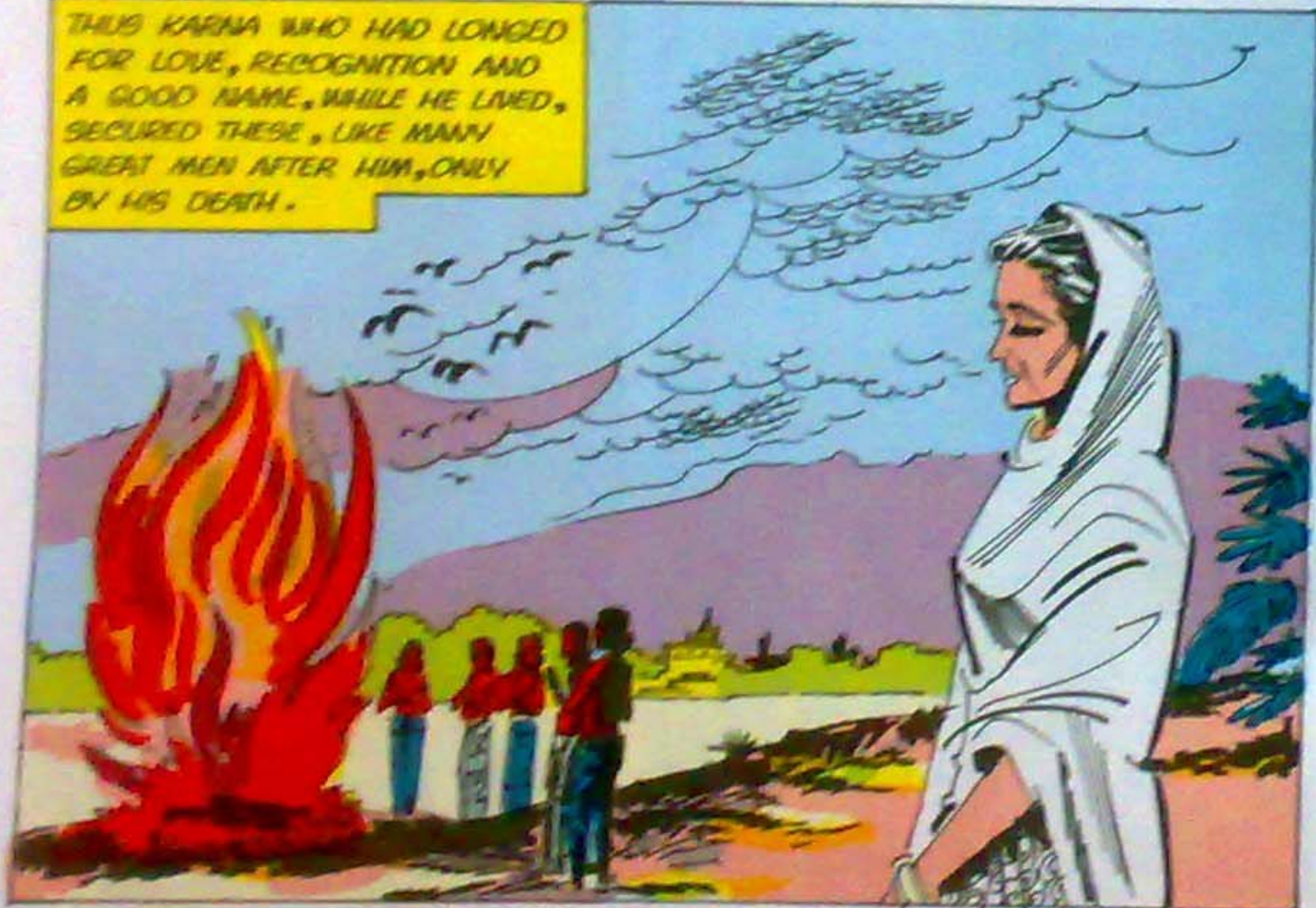
KUNTI THEN BROKE DOWN
AND TOLD HER TALE.



THE SUN SMILED. EACH OF THE
PANDAVAS REMEMBERED HIS
OWN ENCOUNTER WITH THE
DEAD BROTHER AND THEIR
HEARTS REACHED OUT TO HIM.

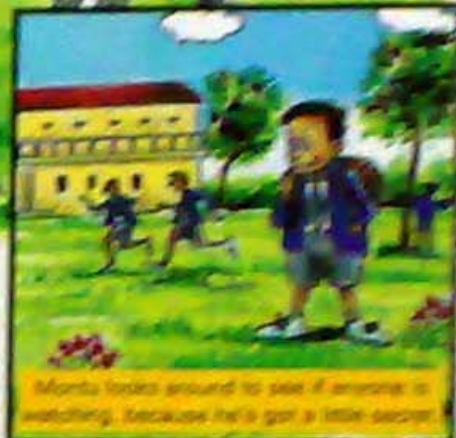


THUS KARNA WHO HAD LONGED
FOR LOVE, RECOGNITION AND
A GOOD NAME, WHILE HE LIVED,
SECURED THESE, LIKE MANY
GREAT MEN AFTER HIM, ONLY
BY HIS DEATH.



THE MANY MISADVENTURES OF MONTU, THE MAHAKID

Some heroes are brave
Some are cunning.
But some are like you
and me.



Win exciting prizes!



Kamera Kamera Junior POP

Video Game



Maha Lacto School Bag

Maha Lacto Caps



Send in your entries by illustrating the rest of the story in 4 panels on a separate sheet of paper with your name, age and address written at the bottom.

Exclude 10 Maha Lacto wrappers along with your entries and send to 'The Maha Lacto Mural Corner', 10, Laxmi Cinema Tower, Bangalore, Karnataka 560 001.



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