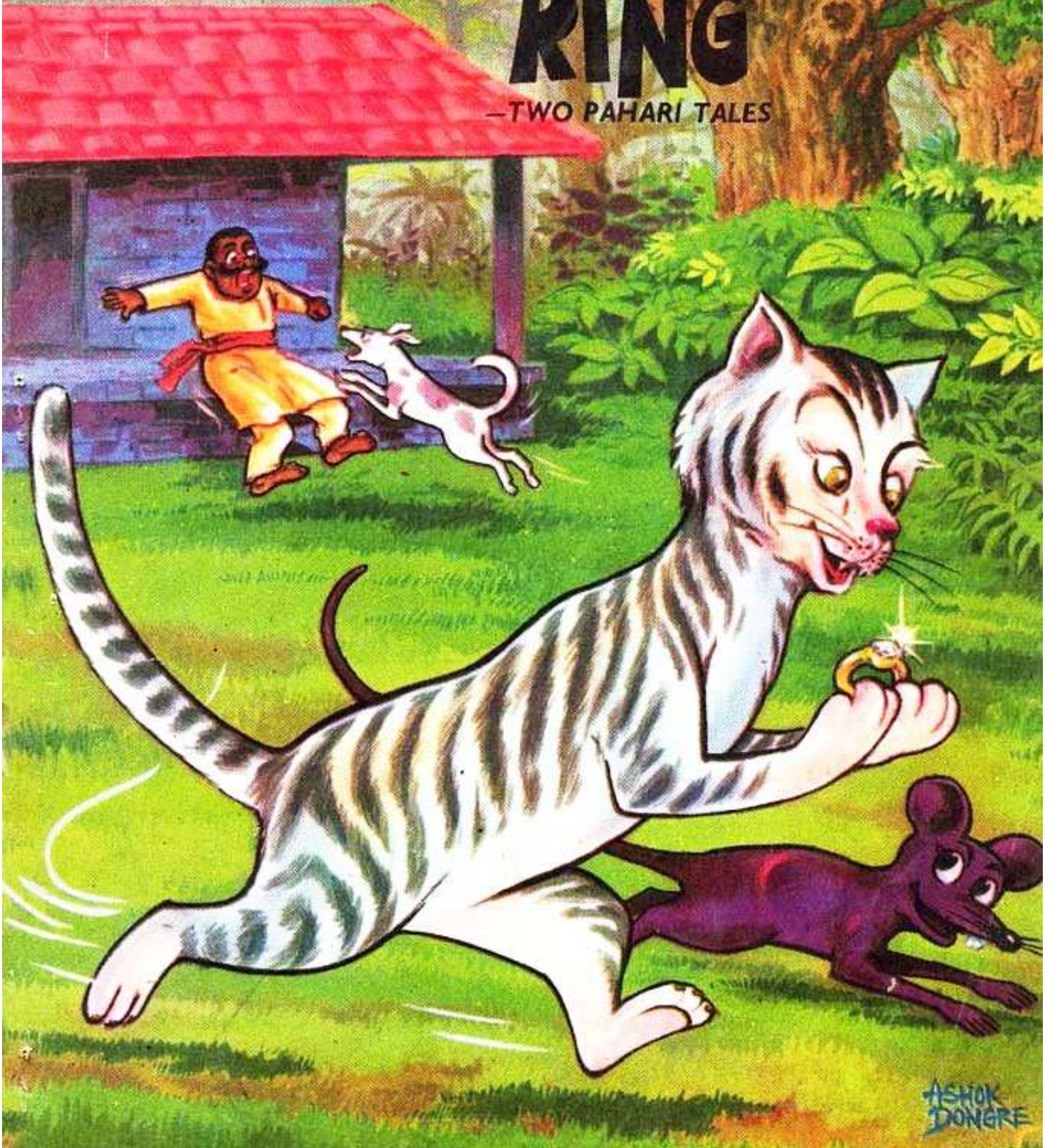




No. 307 Rs

THE BRIDEGROOM'S RING

-TWO PAHARI TALES



Amar Chitra Katha
No. 307, April 1, 1984

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The Bridegroom's Ring

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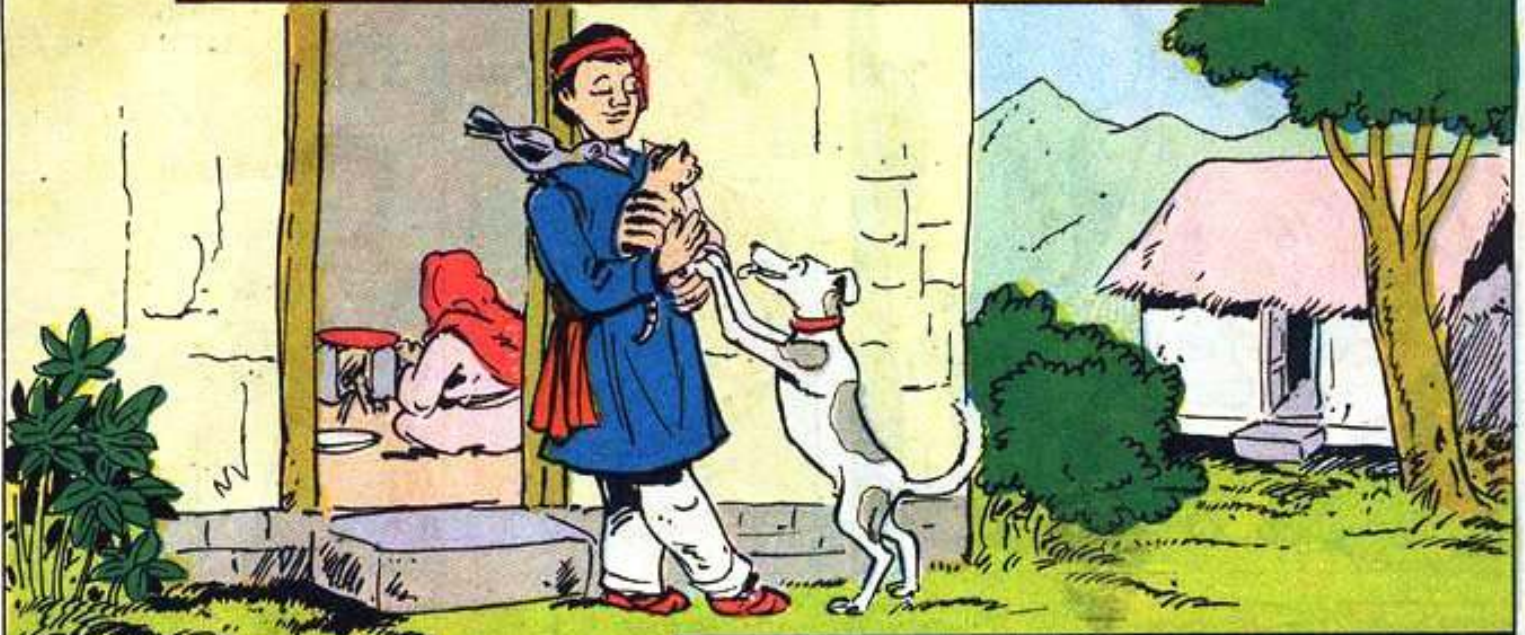
The grandmother who heard a story as a little girl from her grandmother, tells the same story to her grandchild but with a few embellishments of her own. The traveller from a distant land who happens to hear a story in the course of his travels, later tells it to his own people, modifying it to make it more dramatic or more acceptable to his audience.

This Amar Chitra Katha retells two folktales from Garhwal in Uttar Pradesh.

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THE BRIDEGROOM'S RING



YOUNG BHOLA LIVED IN A LITTLE HUT WITH HIS MOTHER AND HIS PETS, A CAT, A DOG AND A CROW.

ONE DAY BHOLA AND HIS FRIENDS SET OUT TO HUNT. SUDDENLY, THE CROW WHO WAS FLYING AHEAD OF THEM ...



... BEGAN TO CIRCLE EXCITEDLY ROUND AN OBJECT ON THE GROUND.



THE DOG RAN AHEAD OF THE OTHERS ...



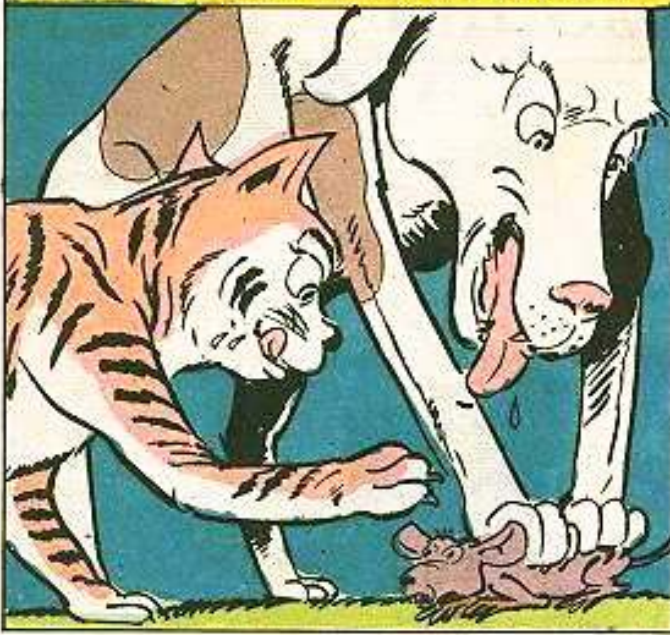
... AND POUNCED ON THE OBJECT.



IT WAS A MOUSE!



AS THE CAT WAS ABOUT TO STRIKE...



...IT FOUND ITSELF LIFTED OFF THE GROUND.



BHOLA GENTLY DROPPED THE CAT...



...AND PICKED UP THE FRIGHTENED MOUSE.



SOON —



THE MOUSE TURNED OUT TO BE SMART TOO.



THE MOUSE SEEMED TO BE AN EXPERT TREASURE-HUNTER.

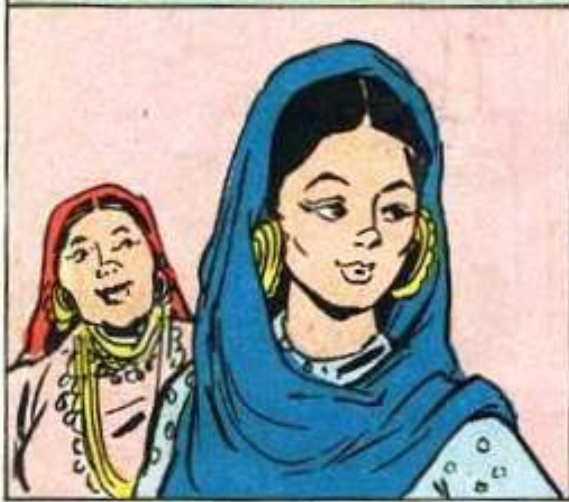


SOON BHOLA AND HIS MOTHER WERE ABLE TO MOVE INTO A BIG HOUSE!





SOON BHOLA'S MOTHER FOUND THE RIGHT GIRL FOR HIM ...



... AND ALL THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE WEDDING WERE MADE.





HOWEVER, ON THE EVE OF THE WEDDING—

MOTHER! WHAT'S THE MATTER?

SOB... SOB...



THE RING... THE WEDDING RING...



...IS MISSING.

OH!

SNIFF! SNIFF!



YOU MUST HAVE MISPLACED IT...

I HAVE LOOKED EVERYWHERE!



NO, BHOLA. SOMEONE HAS STOLEN IT.

STOLEN IT?

SNIFF! SNIFF!



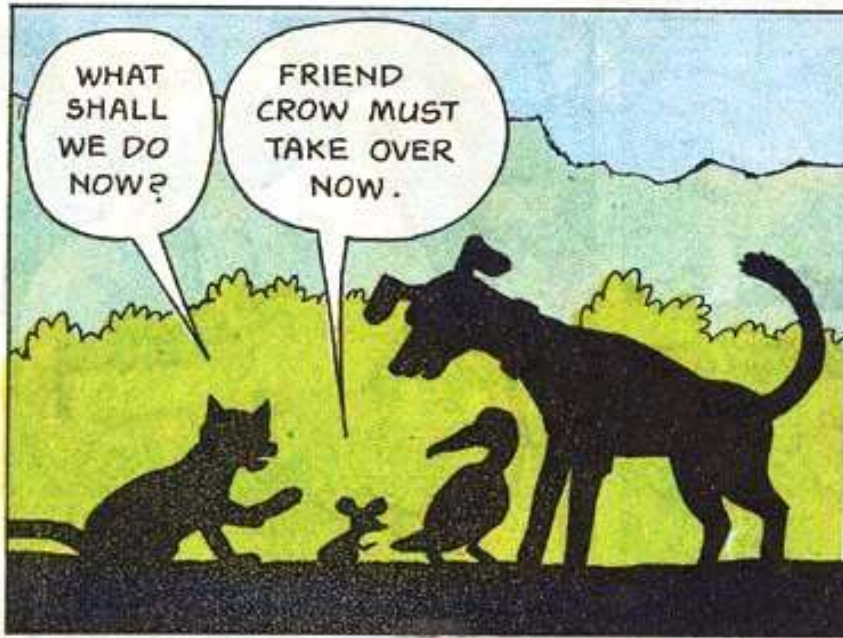
YES. ONE OF THE VISITORS TO WHOM I SHOWED THE WEDDING ORNAMENTS MUST HAVE WALKED AWAY WITH IT.

SNIFF! SNIFF!

BHOLA TURNED TO HIS ANIMAL FRIENDS —







WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?

FRIEND CROW MUST TAKE OVER NOW.



YES. I WILL LOOK FOR THE THIEF.



SOME TIME LATER —

HERE HE COMES!



I THINK I HAVE FOUND OUR MAN.

ARE YOU SURE?

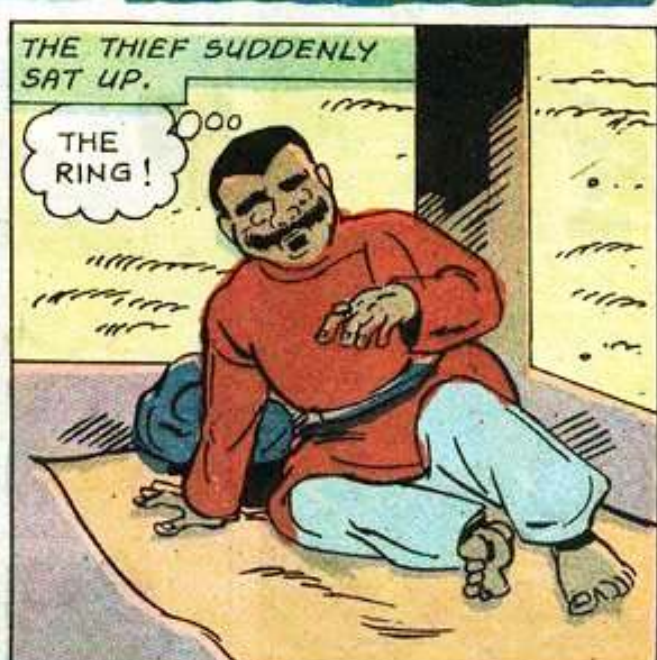


YES. HE HAS IT ON HIS FINGER.

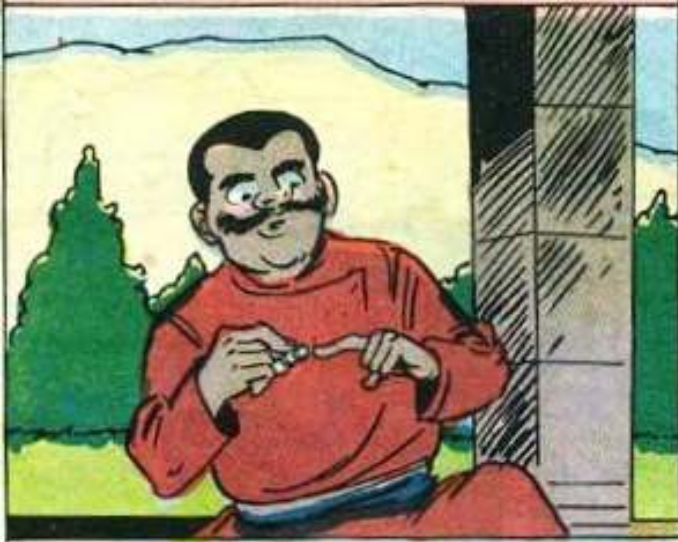


COME. LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT HIM.





HE TOOK IT OFF HIS FINGER ...

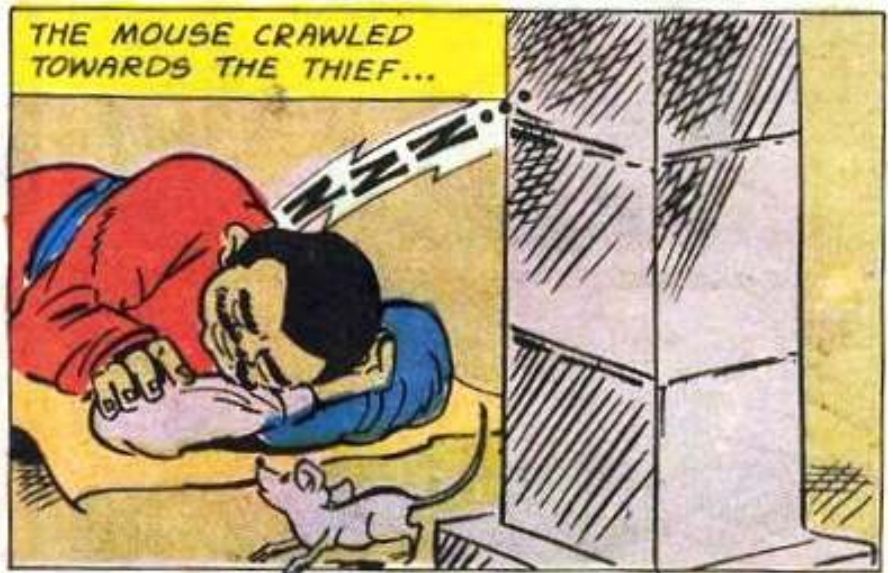


...PUT IT INTO HIS MOUTH ...



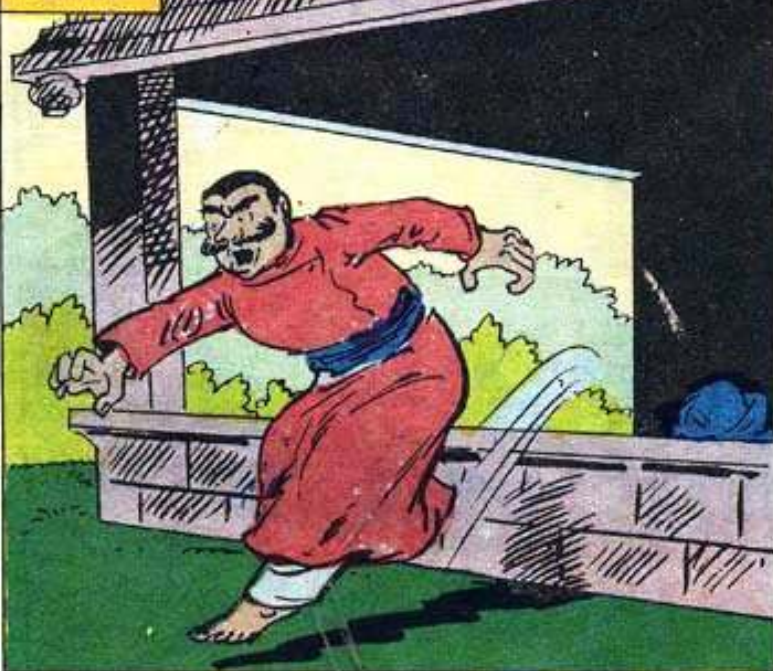
...AND LAY DOWN AGAIN.







AS HE LEAPT TOWARDS THE FLEEING CAT...



... HE WAS MET HEAD ON BY THE DOG.





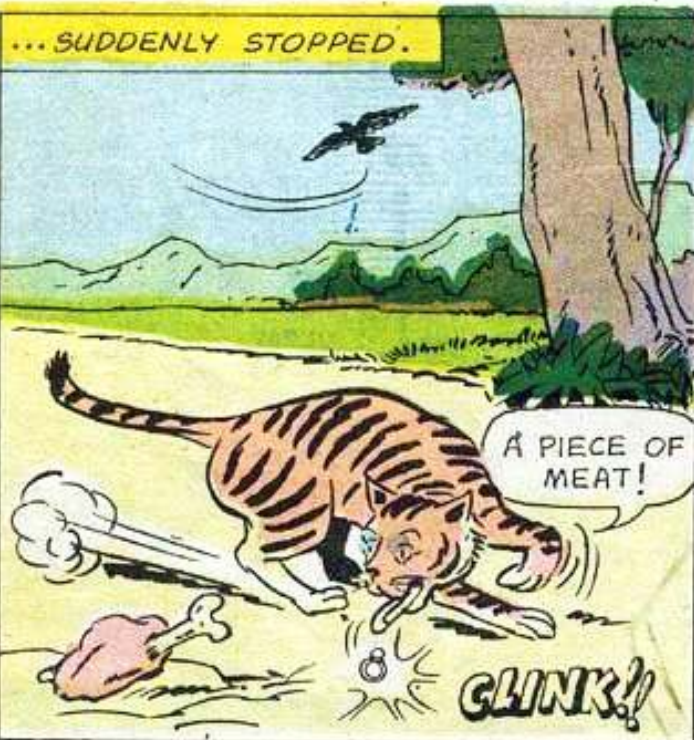
THE THIEF RAN OUT SCREAMING ...



... AND FELL INTO A DITCH.



MEANWHILE, THE CAT WHO WAS SPEEDING AWAY WITH THE RING IN ITS MOUTH ...



... SUDDENLY STOPPED.



IT DROPPED THE RING TO EAT THE MEAT.

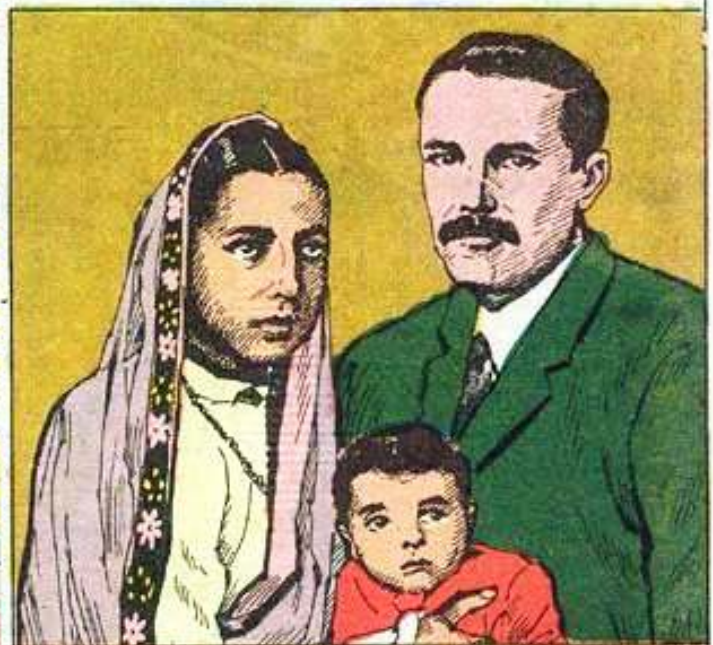
HIMACHAL PRADESH THE VALLEY OF THE GODS

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

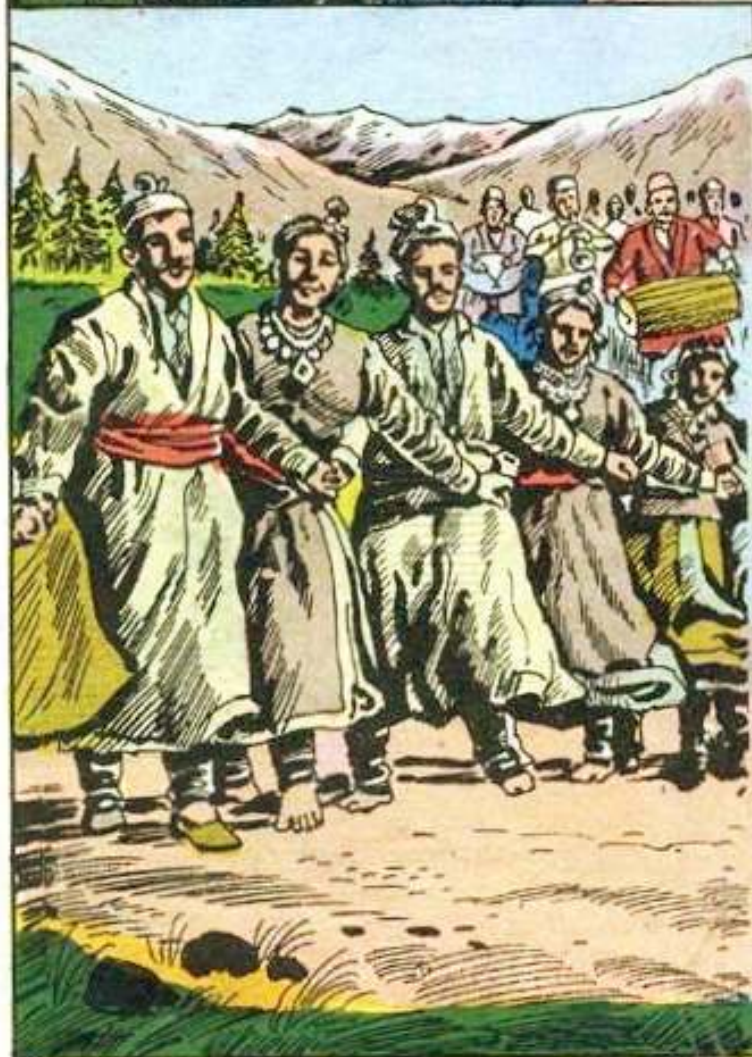
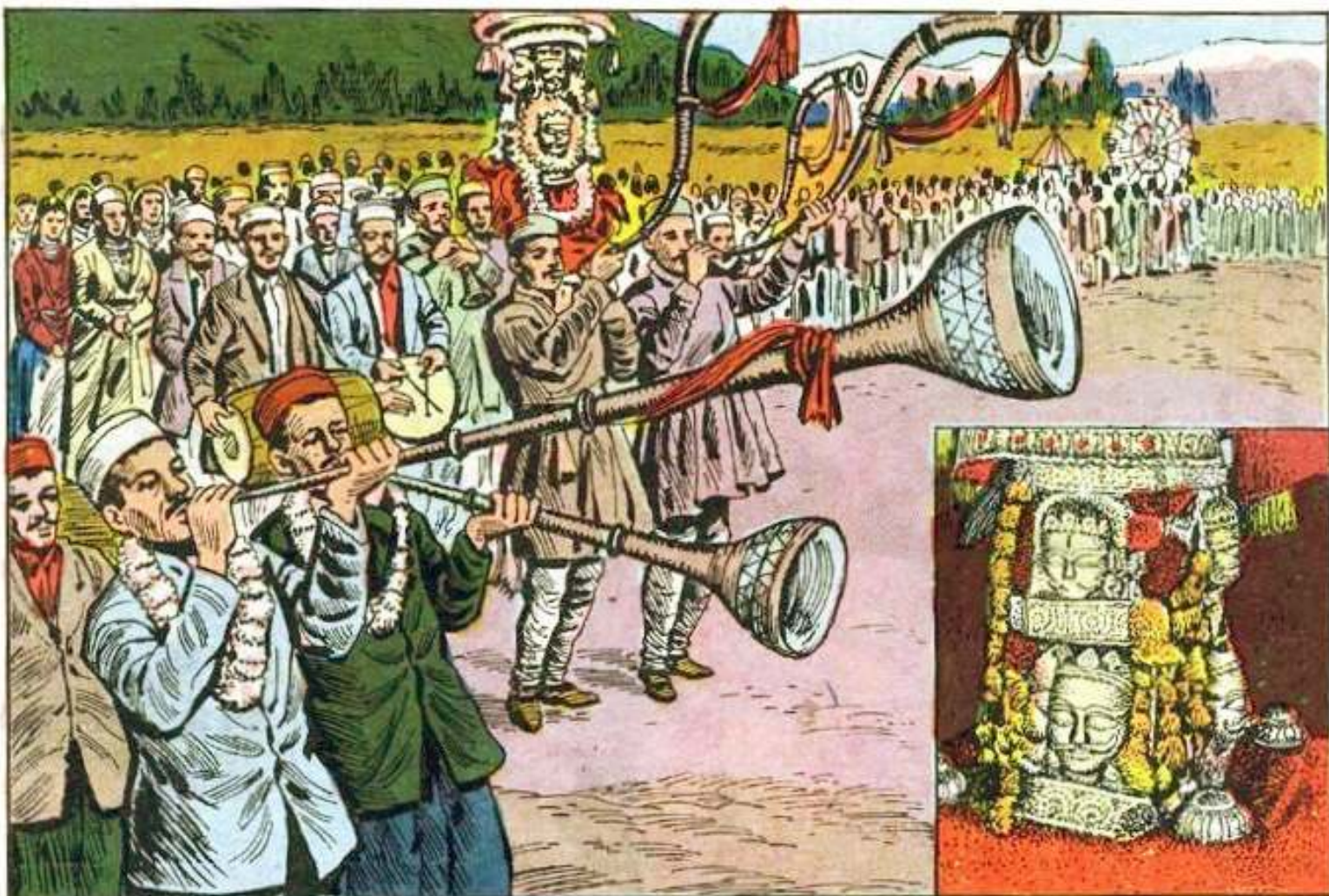
HIMACHAL PRADESH, AS THE NAME SUGGESTS, LIES IN THE HIMALAYAS, ITS HILLS AND VALLEYS PROVIDE RICH PASTURES FOR THE SHEEP AND GOATS THAT ARE REARED THERE IN LARGE NUMBERS.



IT IS THE 'APPLE STATE' OF INDIA. HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF HEAVILY-LADEN APPLE TREES DOT THE COUNTRYSIDE. APPLE ORCHARDS COVER SOME 100,000 HECTARES OF LAND IN THE STATE, AND EVERY YEAR MORE THAN 75,00,000 BOXES OF LUSCIOUS APPLES—GOLDEN, RED AND ROYAL DELICIOUS—ARE SENT OUT.



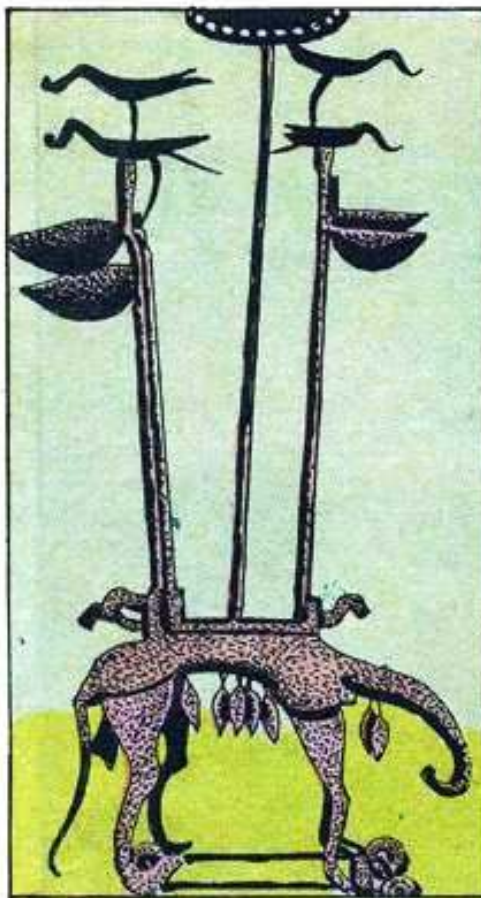
APPLES WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE STATE IN 1920, BY AN AMERICAN MISSIONARY, SAMUEL EVANS STOKES, WHO LATER TOOK THE NAME OF SATYANAND. HE ADOPTED THE HINDU WAY OF LIFE AND SETTLED DOWN IN KOTGARH. HIS PIONEERING WORK IN THE SCIENTIFIC CULTIVATION OF APPLES GAVE THE POOR PEASANTS UNDREAMT OF PROSPERITY.



SOCIAL MEETINGS ARE NOT EASY IN THE HILLS. BUT FAIRS AND FESTIVALS ARE OCCASIONS FOR FUN AND FROLIC.

THE DUSSEHRA FESTIVAL AT KULU IS ONE SUCH OCCASION FOR BOTH GODS AND MEN. IN GAILY DECORATED PALANQUINS MINOR DEITIES FROM THE NEIGHBOURING VILLAGES COME OUT OF THEIR TEMPLES FOR A 'DURBAR' WITH RAGHUNATHJI, THE MAIN DEITY OF THE VALLEY OF KULU.

THE 'VALLEY OF THE GODS' THEN REVERBERATES WITH THE BEATING OF DRUMS, SONGS AND DANCES.



IT IS IN THESE FAIRS THAT TRADING IS DONE. EXQUISITELY DESIGNED SHAWLS, WOODEN VESSELS AND METALWARE ARE BOUGHT AND SOLD HERE. THESE OBJECTS OF UTILITY AND BEAUTY ARE THE CREATIONS OF THE INGENUOUS ARTISANS OF THE REGION.

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF THEM ALL IS THE EMBROIDERED CHAMBA RUMAAL. ALTHOUGH LITERALLY 'RUMAAL' MEANS A HANDKERCHIEF, THE CHAMBA RUMAAL IS MUCH LARGER. IT FORMS AN IMPORTANT PART OF A BRIDE'S TROUSSEAU.



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EVEN AS ITS TEETH SANK INTO THE MEAT, A HAWK SWOOPED DOWN...



...AND FLEW AWAY WITH THE RING.





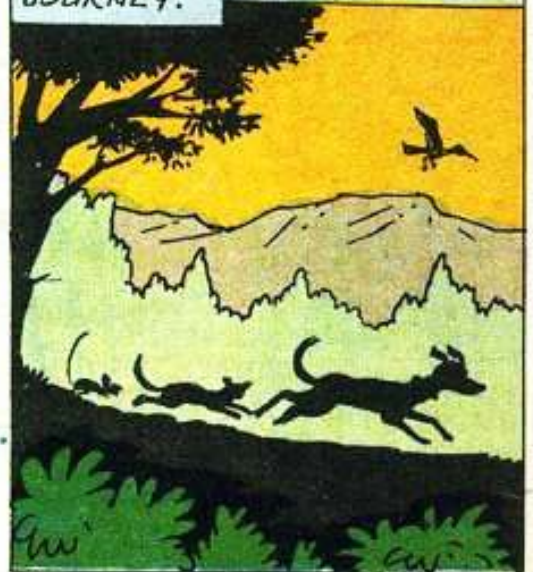
AS THE CAT PICKED UP THE RING THE DOG CAME ALONG.



THE CROW TOLD THE DOG THE WHOLE STORY.



SO, THE DOG TOOK CHARGE OF THE RING AND THE FRIENDS BEGAN THEIR HOMEWARD JOURNEY.



THEY HAD TO CROSS THE RIVER AGAIN TO REACH THEIR MASTER.



ON THE WAY THE DOG SWALLOWED SOME WATER.



AS IT SPAT THE WATER OUT —



AS SOON AS THEY REACHED THE BANK—



LET'S START DIGGING CANALS AND TURN THE COURSE OF THE RIVER.

THE FRIENDS WORKED HARD...



... AND SLOWLY, BUT STEADILY, THE WATER STARTED FLOWING OUT.



HEY! WHAT'S HAPPENING?

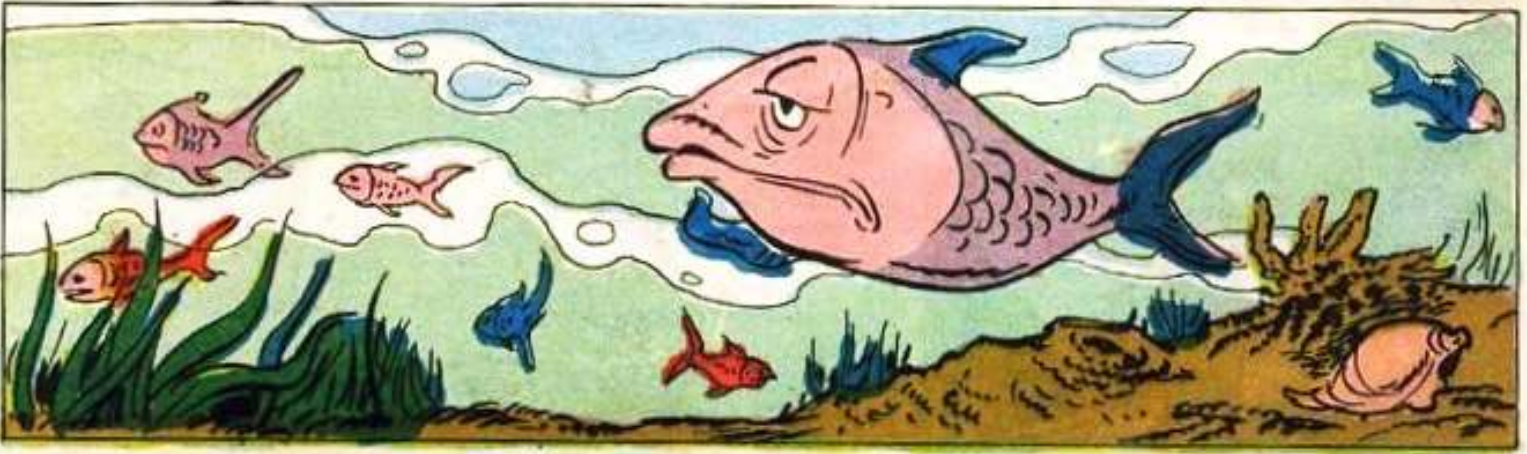
I'LL SWIM UP TO THE SURFACE AND FIND OUT.



HEY! WHY ARE YOU CHANGING THE WATER'S COURSE?

TO FIND A MISSING RING.

THE FISH SWAM DOWN WITH THE NEWS.



SOON A SMALL FISH BROUGHT THE RING TO THE CHIEF.

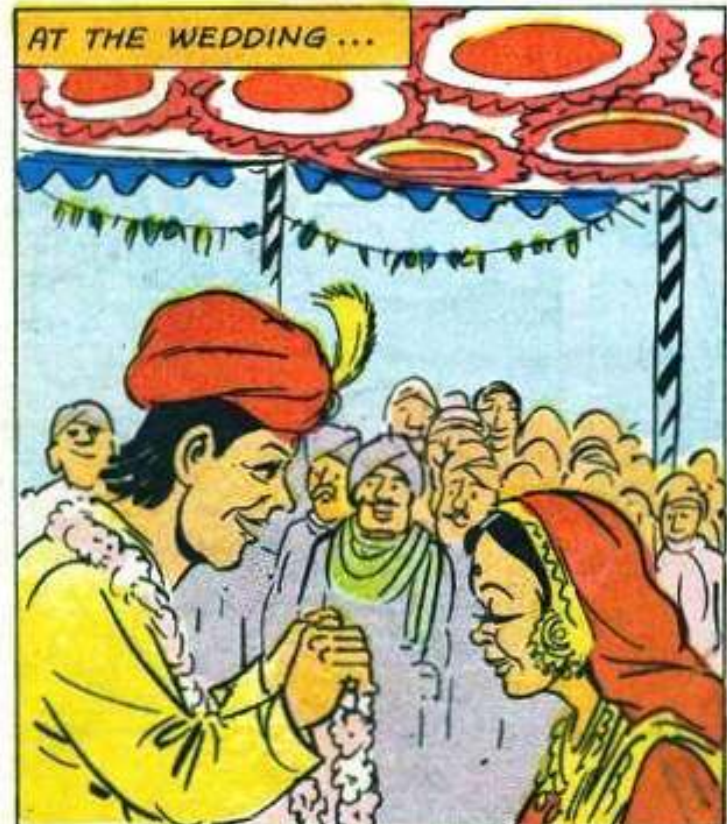


THE CHIEF SHOT UP CARRYING THE RING...



... AND OFFERED IT TO THE MOUSE.

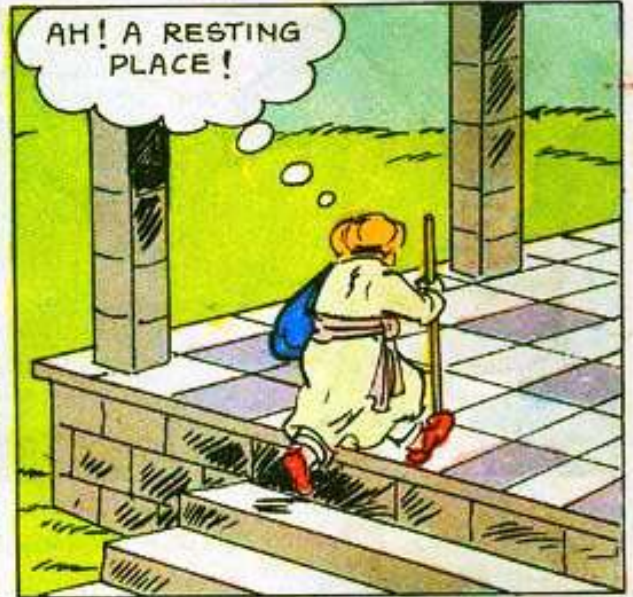




THE KAYASTHA AND HIS GUEST



IT WAS LATE IN THE EVENING WHEN A KAYASTHA REACHED THE OUTSKIRTS OF A TOWN.



JUST THEN —

HELLO ! YOU HAVE A GUEST.

EH!

A DE-DE-DEMON!

YES, A DEMON BUT A GUEST ALL THE SAME.



AND A HUNGRY ONE !

WH-WH-WHAT... WHAT... W-W-WOULD...



DO YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE ?

YE...YES.



OH, I'M NOT FUSSY ! ANYTHING WILL DO. MY MENU USUALLY INCLUDES A MAN...

M-MAN ?

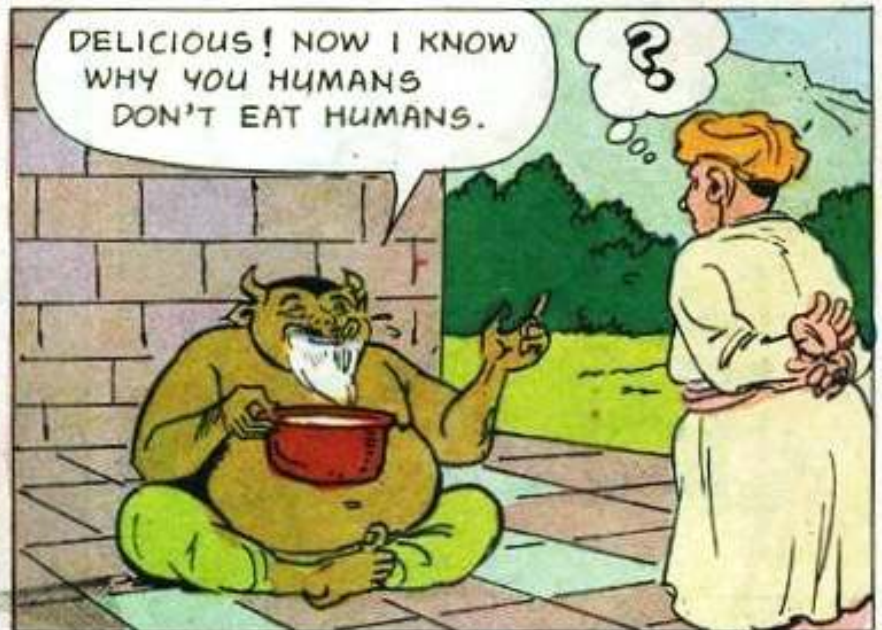


YES... LIKE YOU...

M-M-M-M-ME?



YOU'LL DROP THAT. LET ME HOLD IT.



SO THE KAYASTHA SPENT A MONTH WORKING AS A COOK.



DELICIOUS!

I MUST ESCAPE BEFORE HE TIRES OF THIS MENU.





HERE ARE THREE STRANDS OF HAIR FROM MY MOUSTACHE.



ANY TIME YOU NEED ME JUST BURN THEM.

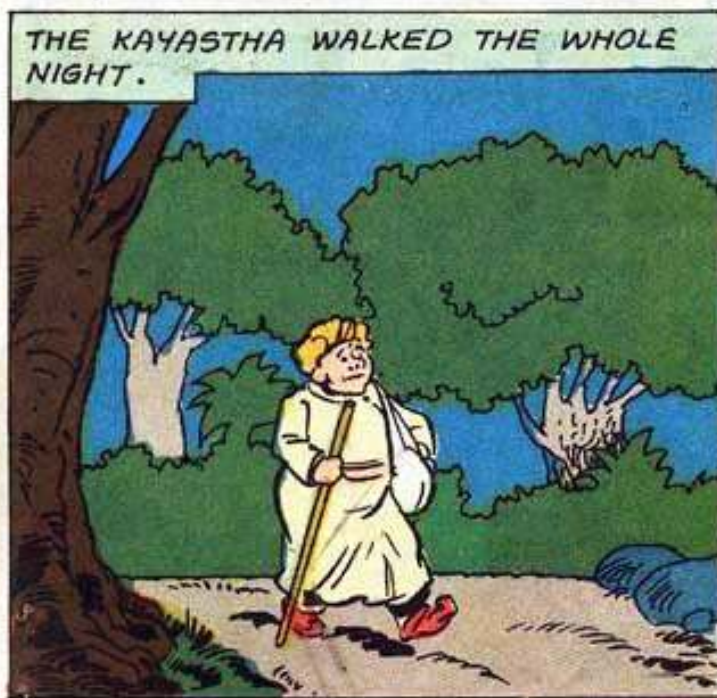


THE KAYASTHA TUCKED THE GIFT INTO HIS TURBAN ...



...AND LEFT.

I'LL MISS YOU!



THE KAYASTHA WALKED THE WHOLE NIGHT.



WHO'S THAT!



AND THE DEMON VANISHED.



AS THE KAYASTHA CONCLUDED THE STRANGE STORY —



THE MEN HOWEVER TURNED OUT TO BE HIS OWN SUBJECTS.



THE KAYASTHA LIVED HAPPILY THEREAFTER.

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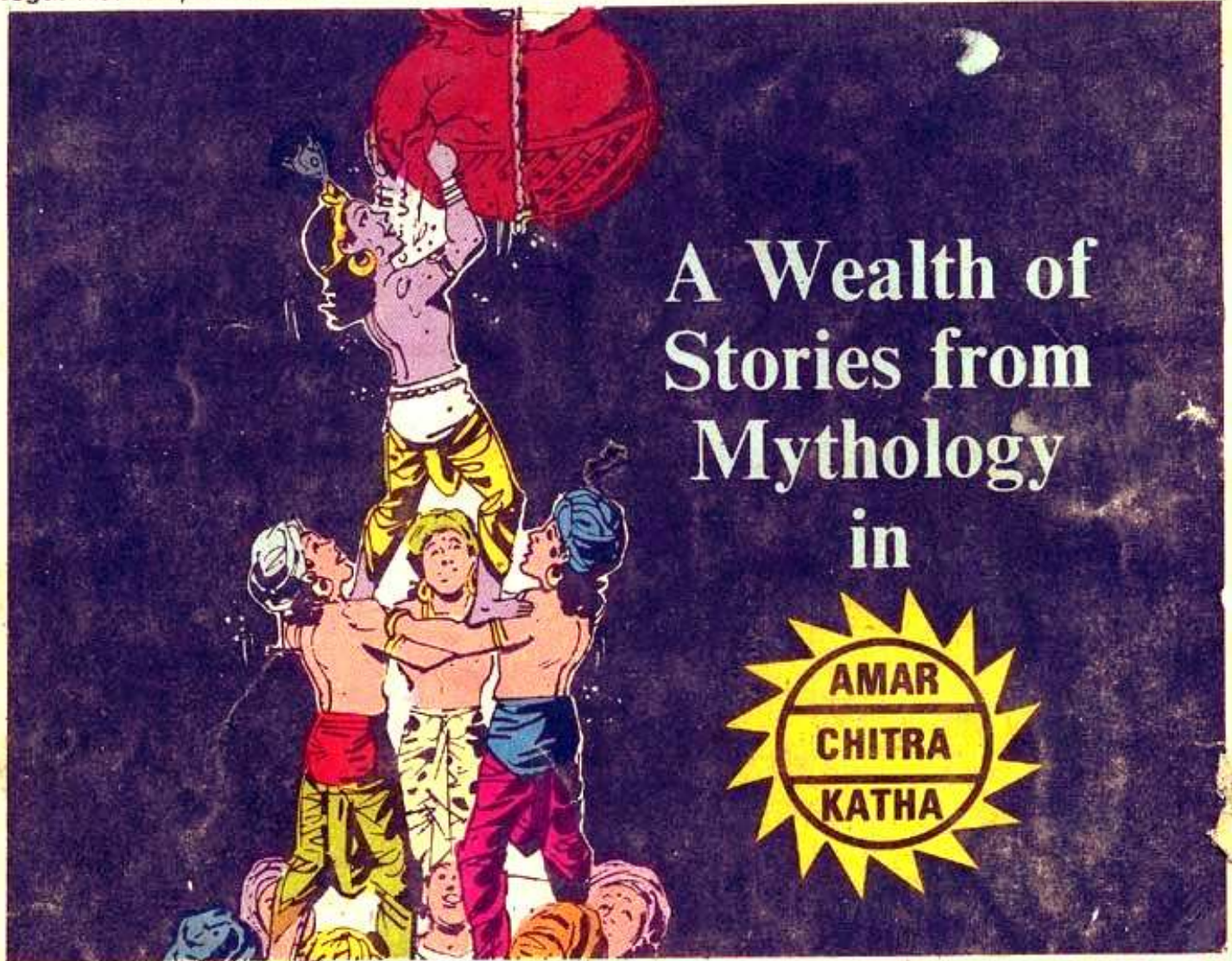


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