



# CHENNAMMA OF KELADI

THE QUEEN WHO DEFIED AURANGAZEB

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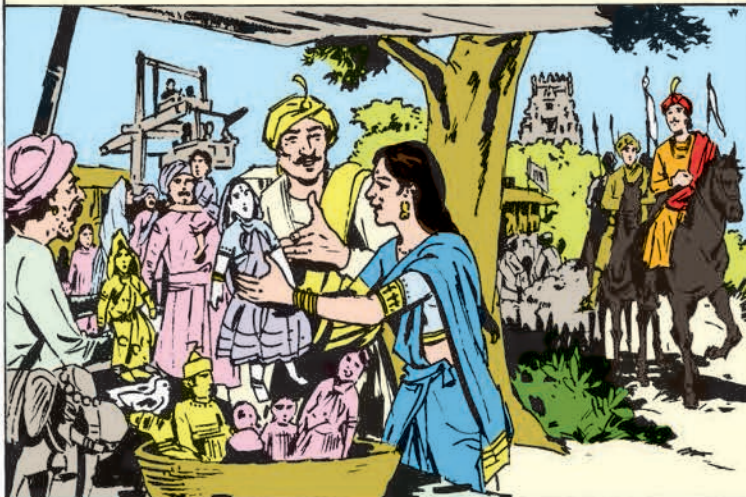
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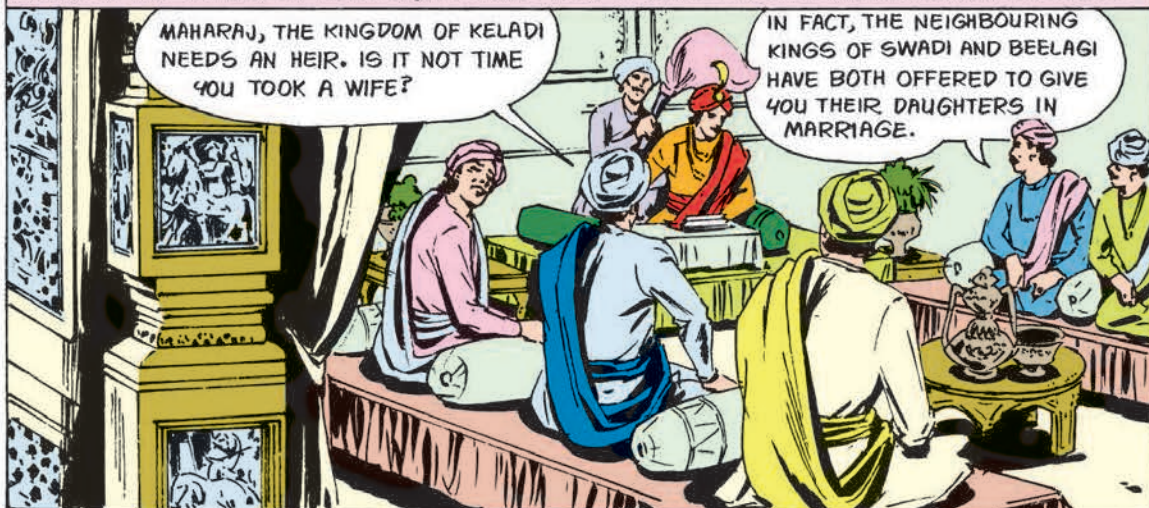


# CHENNAMMA OF KELADI



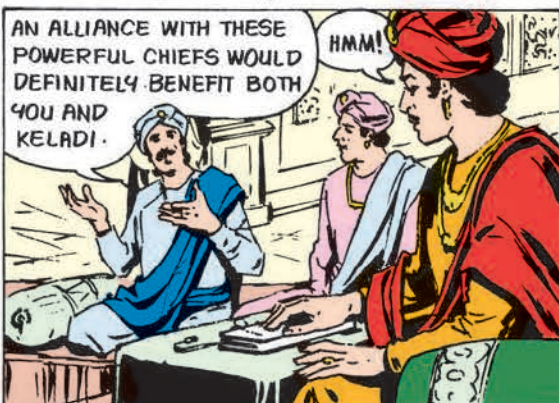
THE YEAR WAS 1663. SOMASHEKHARA NAYAK, KING OF KELADI\*, WAS AT THE RAMESHWAR FAIR. IT WAS THERE THAT HE SAW HER.

LATER, AT THE PALACE IN BIDANUR, THE KING WAS AT A MEETING. HIS MINISTERS WERE WORRIED.



MAHARAJ, THE KINGDOM OF KELADI NEEDS AN HEIR. IS IT NOT TIME YOU TOOK A WIFE?

IN FACT, THE NEIGHBOURING KINGS OF SWADI AND BEELAGI HAVE BOTH OFFERED TO GIVE YOU THEIR DAUGHTERS IN MARRIAGE.



AN ALLIANCE WITH THESE POWERFUL CHIEFS WOULD DEFINITELY BENEFIT BOTH YOU AND KELADI.

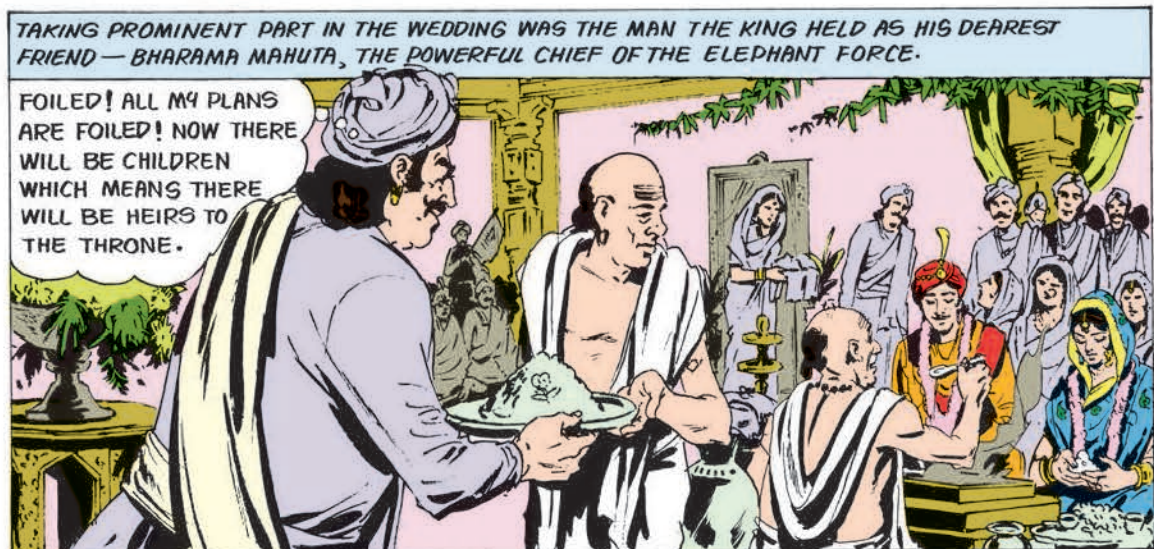
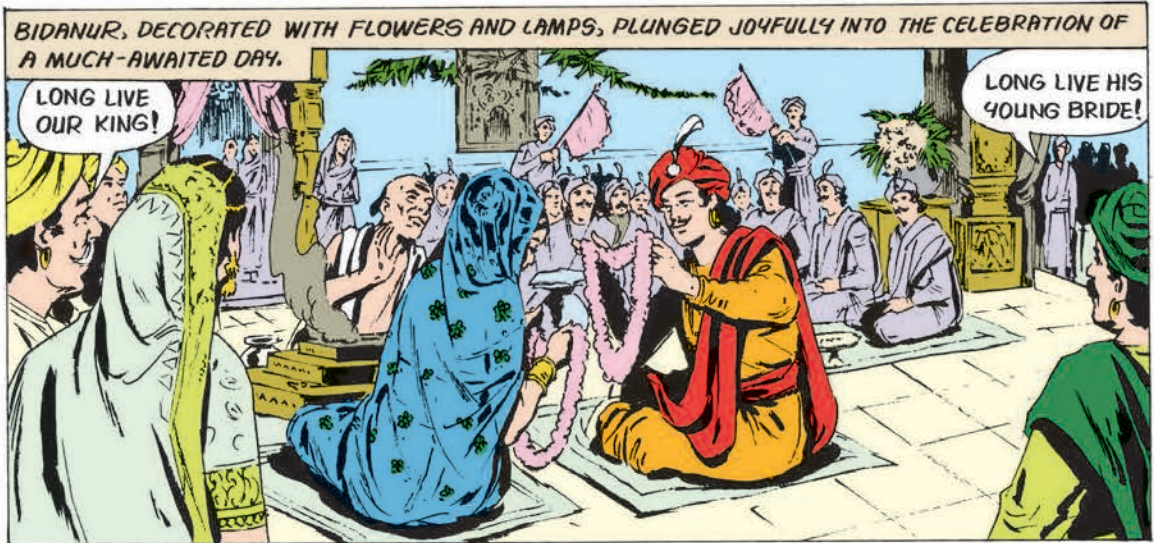
HMM!



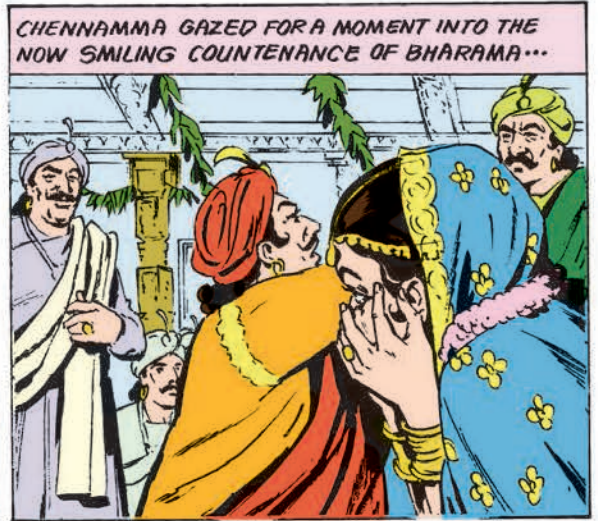
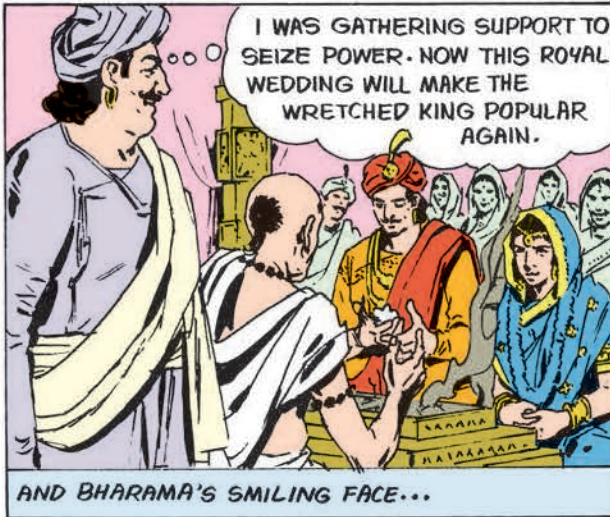
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUGGESTIONS, MY MINISTERS. I WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE NOW.

\* A KINGDOM IN THE MALNAD AREA OF











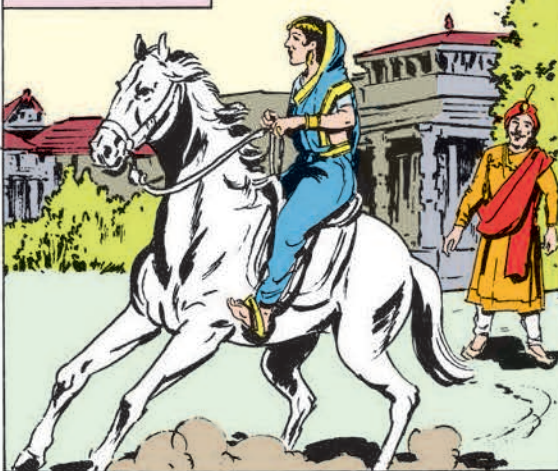
AND LITTLE CHENNA, THE MERCHANT'S EXUBERANT CHILD-LIKE DAUGHTER...



... IN THE FOLLOWING MONTHS, BECAME TRANSFORMED ...



... INTO ...



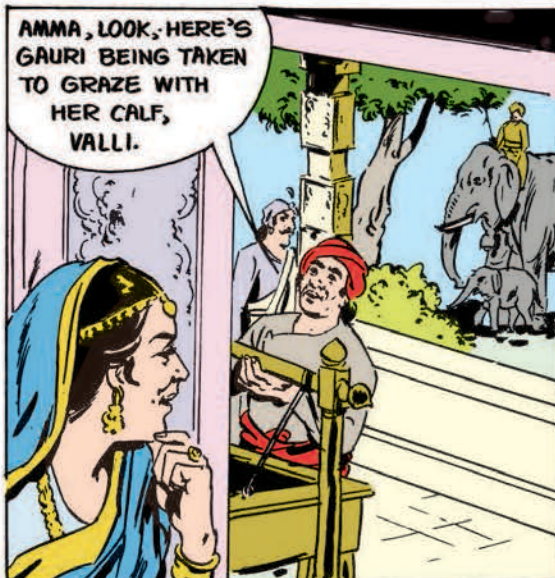
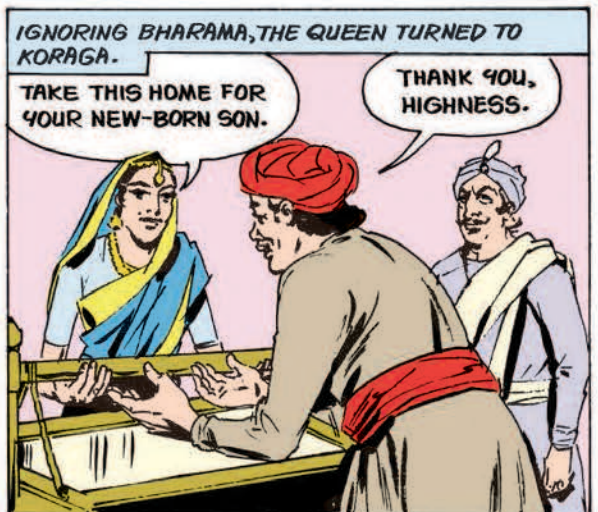
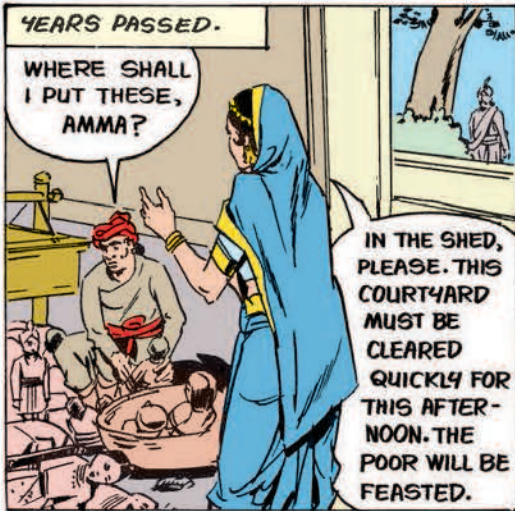
... RANI CHENNAMMA OF KELADI.



MY CHENNA IS NOW READY TO BECOME THE MOTHER OF THE HEIR TO KELADI'S THRONE.









BHARAMA WAS LOST IN HIS OWN THOUGHTS WHEN CHENNAMMA LEFT THE PLACE.



A FEW MINUTES LATER —



PARDON ME, MAHARAJ... BHARAMA, WHAT ARE YOU DREAMING OF?



I WAS DREAMING OF AN HEIR TO THE THRONE, MAHARAJ... A SON AS HANDSOME AND COMPETENT AS HIS FATHER...

DON'T WE ALL WISH THAT?



IT'S BEEN SOME YEARS NOW, BHARAMA. I MUST CONFESS, I AM DISAPPOINTED.

AH...

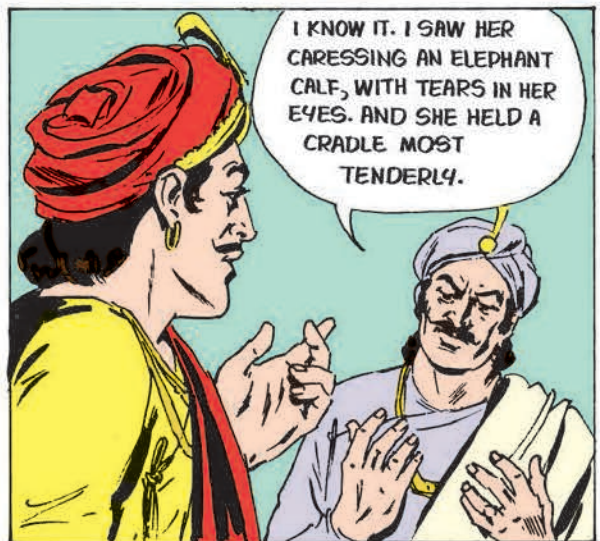
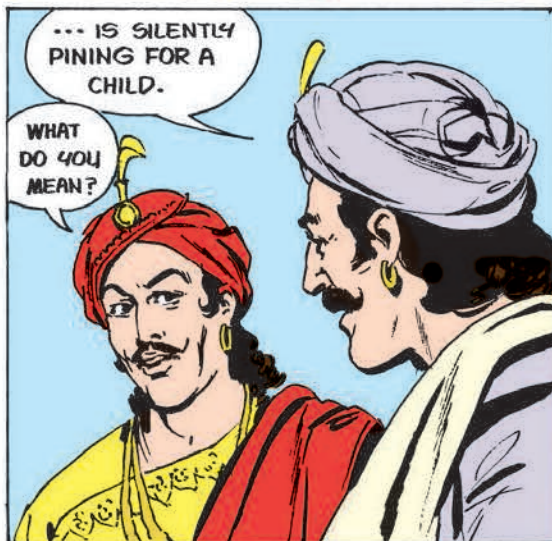
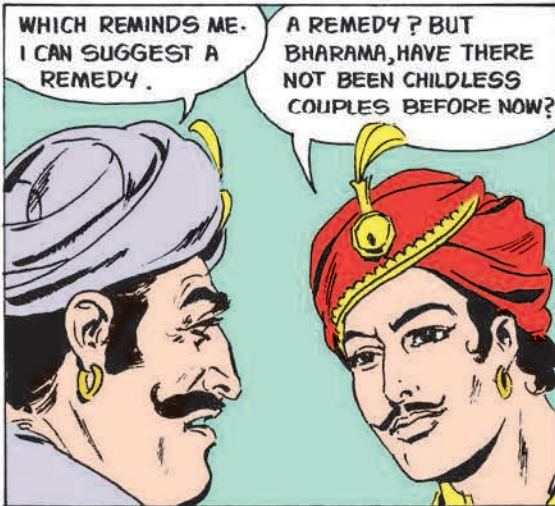


IS IT NOT SAID IN THE SACRED BOOKS THAT THE BIRTH OF A CHILD ENSURES HIS PARENTS A SAFE JOURNEY TO HEAVEN?

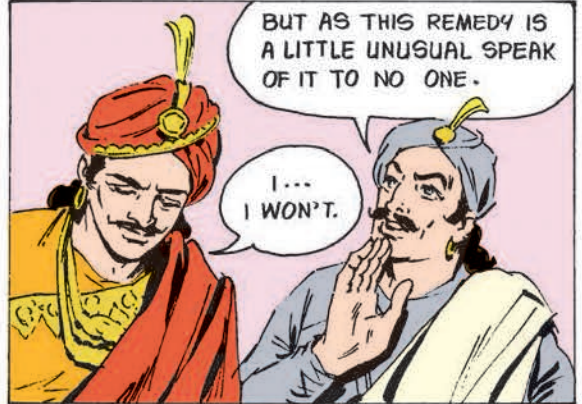
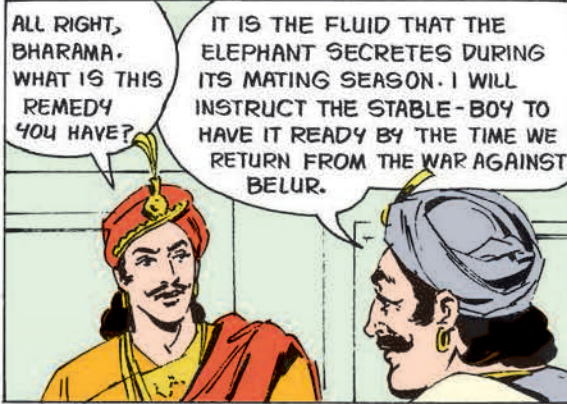
YOU HAVE TAKEN THE WORDS STRAIGHT OUT OF MY MOUTH, HIGHNESS.











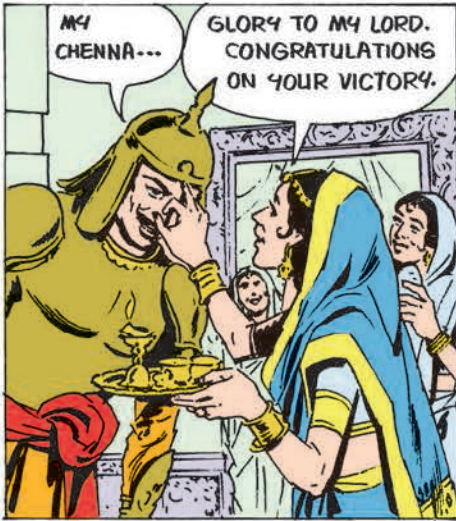
THE FOLLOWING WEEK —



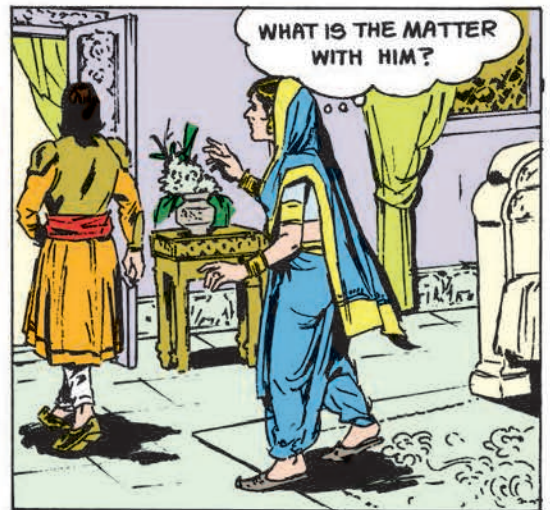
AND SOON AFTER —



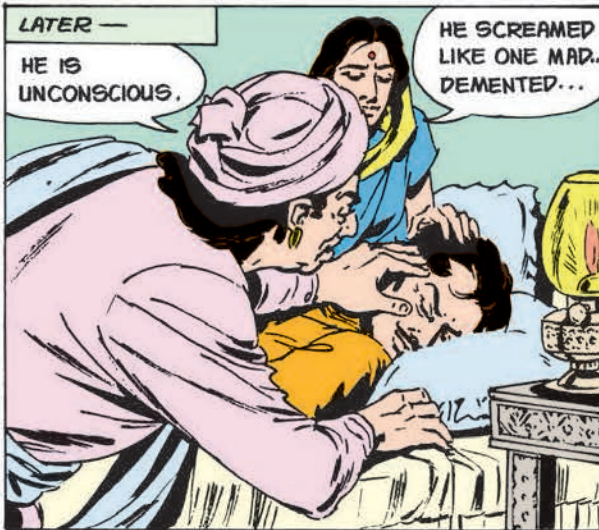
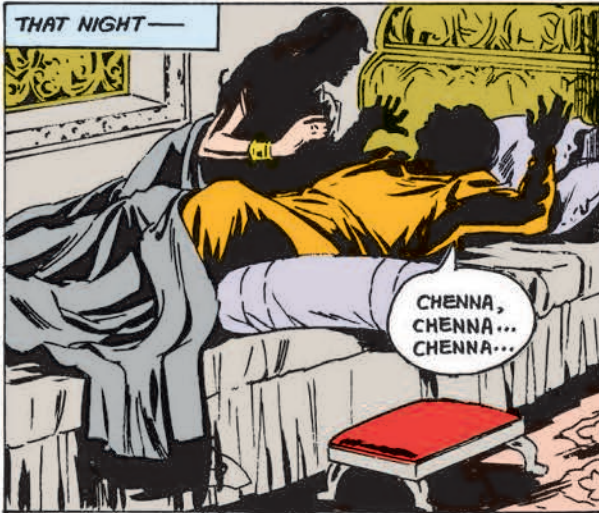






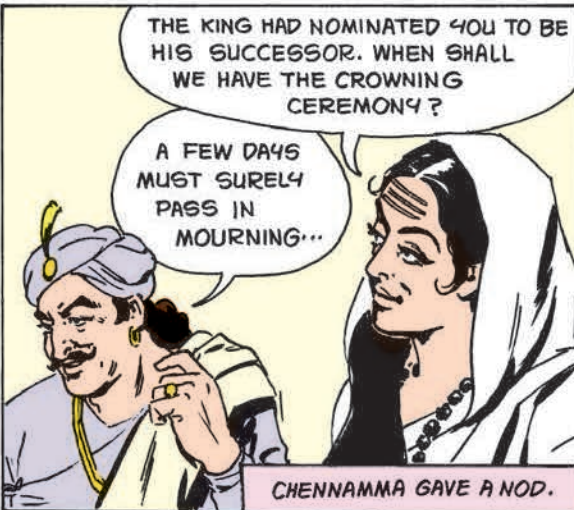
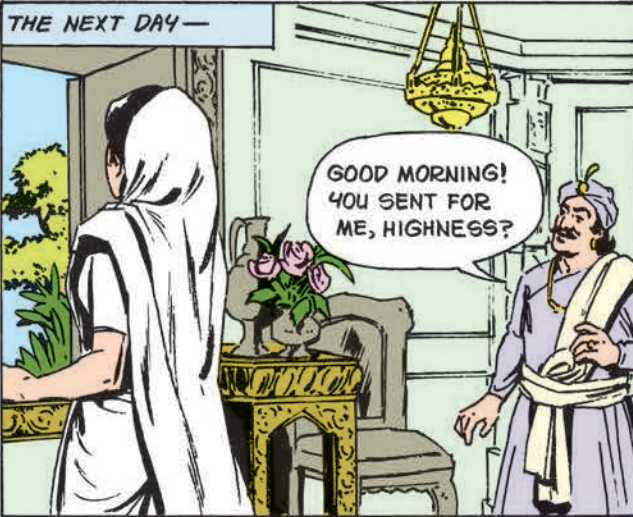




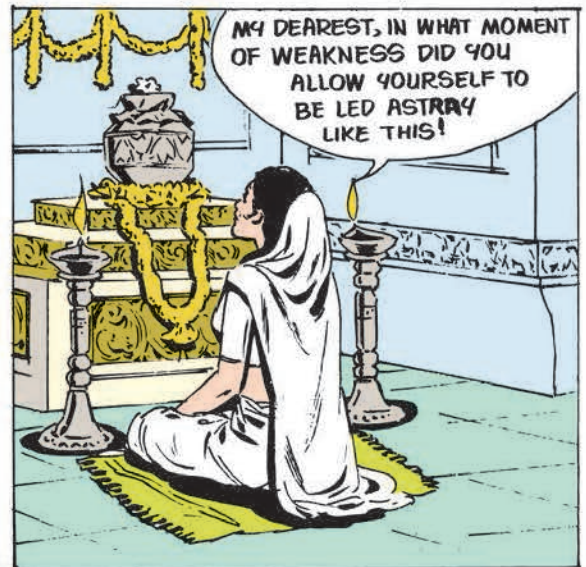
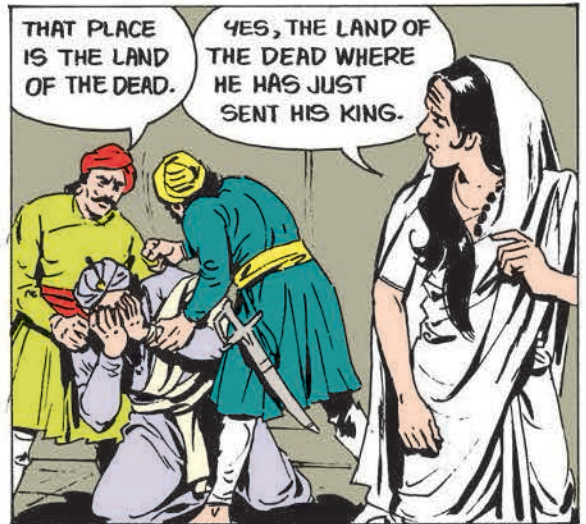
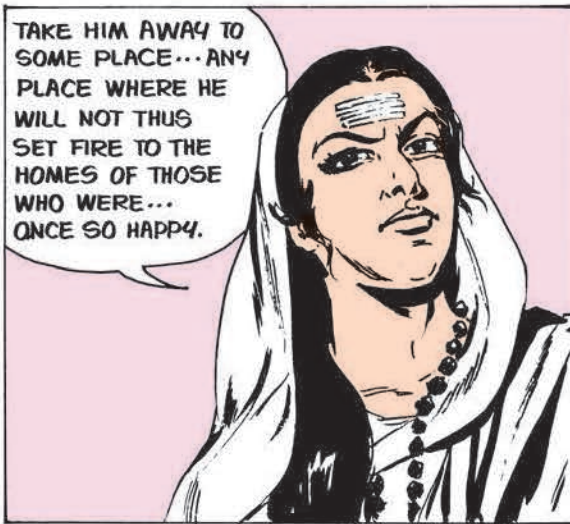
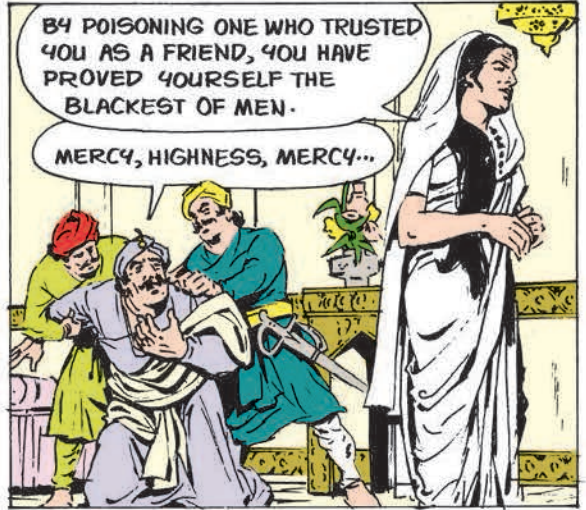
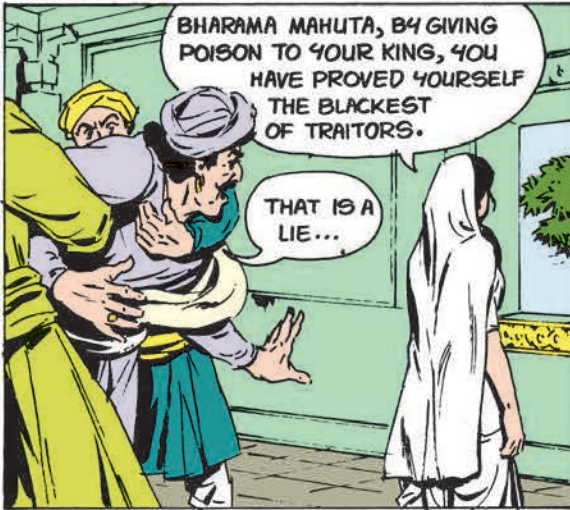




THE NEXT DAY —

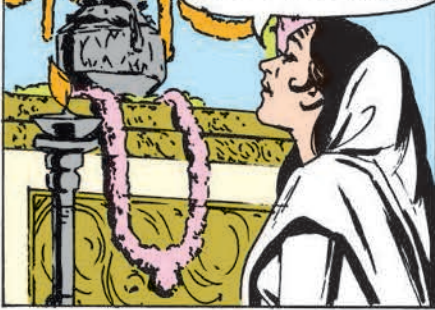






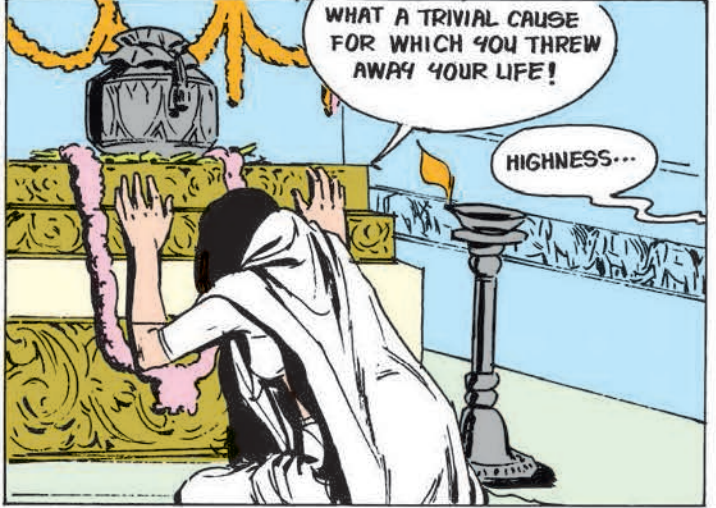


CHILDREN? SONS? HEIRS? WE HAD EACH OTHER. AND NEED OUR CHILDREN BE BORN OF OUR OWN BODIES? THE CITIZENS OF KELADI—THEY ARE OUR CHILDREN. ALL THE CHILDREN WE KNOW—THEY ARE OUR CHILDREN.

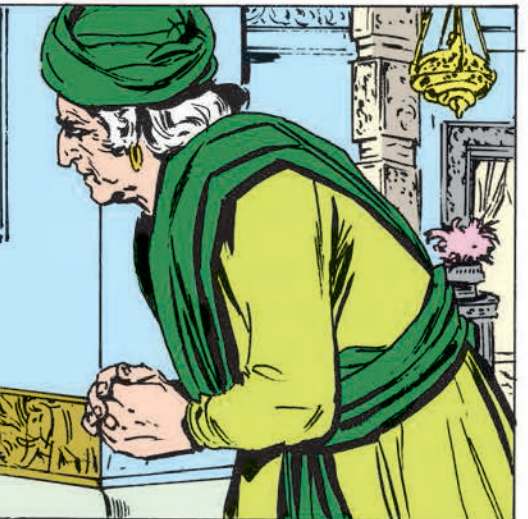
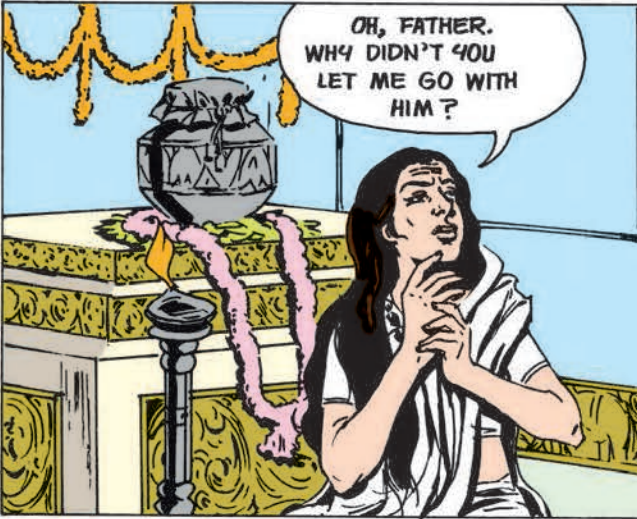


WHAT A TRIVIAL CAUSE FOR WHICH YOU THREW AWAY YOUR LIFE!

HIGHNESS...



OH, FATHER. WHY DIDN'T YOU LET ME GO WITH HIM?

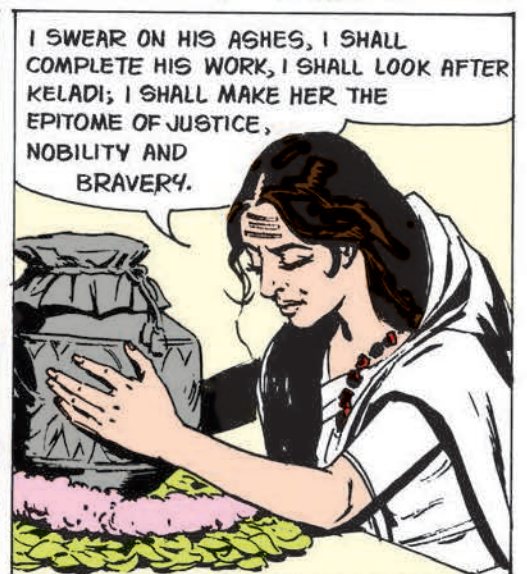


HE IS GONE, CHILD. BUT HIS WORK REMAINS.

YES, HIS WORK REMAINS.



I SWEAR ON HIS ASHES, I SHALL COMPLETE HIS WORK, I SHALL LOOK AFTER KELADI; I SHALL MAKE HER THE EPITOME OF JUSTICE, NOBILITY AND BRAVERY.





KELADI BECAME A TROUBLED LAND. EVERY POWERFUL MINISTER SPONSORED A DIFFERENT PERSON AS SUCCESSOR TO SOMASHEKHARA.

HIGHNESS, THIMMANNA MAY BE THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, BUT AS THE COUNCILLORS, WE WANT SHIVAPPA NAYAK HERE TO BE CROWNED KING.

GENTLEMEN, I WILL THINK THE MATTER OVER AND LET YOU KNOW.

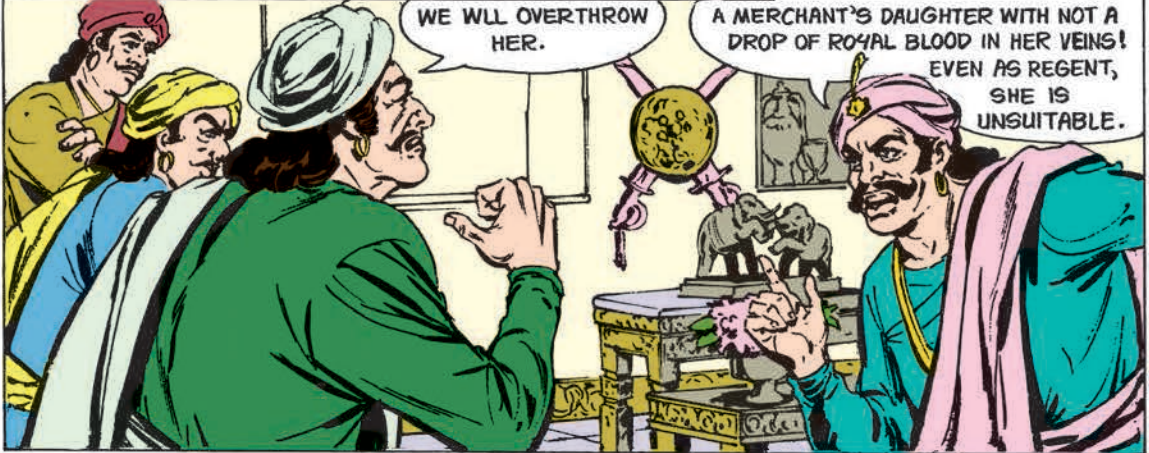
NO — I SUPPORT VEERABHADRA HE HAS A GREATER RIGHT TO THE THRONE.



THE QUEEN'S REPLY WAS MISTAKEN FOR INDECISION AND THE INTRIGUES CONSEQUENTLY DEEPENED. THE MINISTERS BEGAN TO PLOT AGAINST CHENNAMMA HERSELF.

WE WILL OVERTHROW HER.

A MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER WITH NOT A DROP OF ROYAL BLOOD IN HER VEINS! EVEN AS REGENT, SHE IS UNSUITABLE.



BUT THE VERY NEXT DAY IN COURT, AMIDST NOISY ARGUMENTS AND ANGRY SHOUTINGS, THE BIGGEST BLOW FELL.

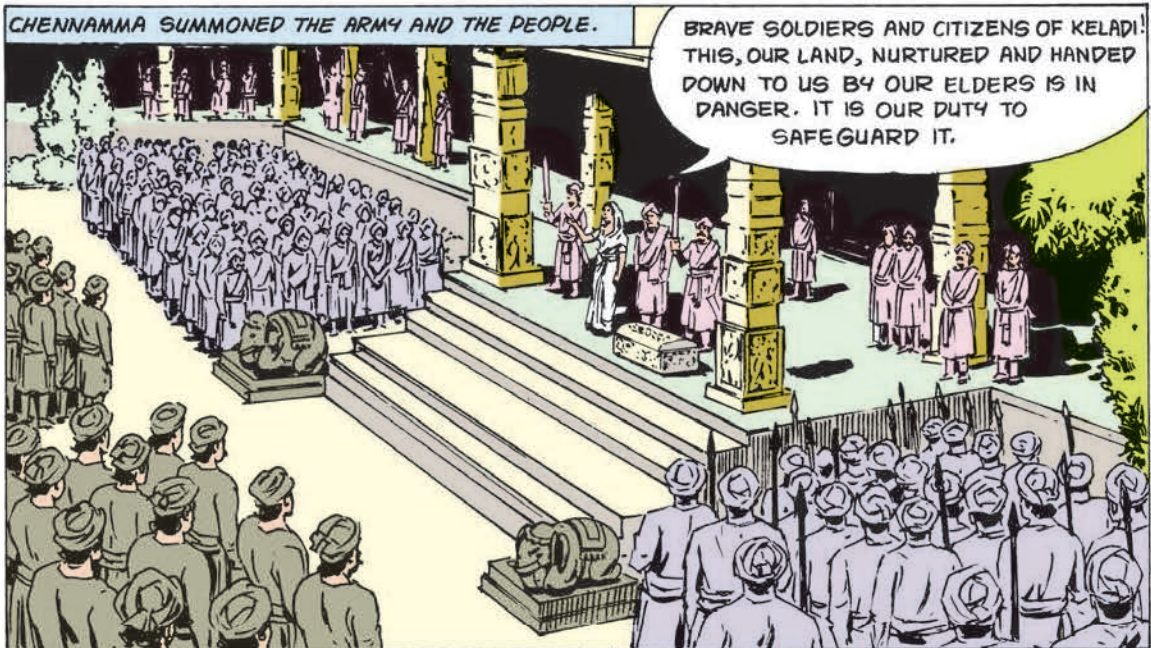
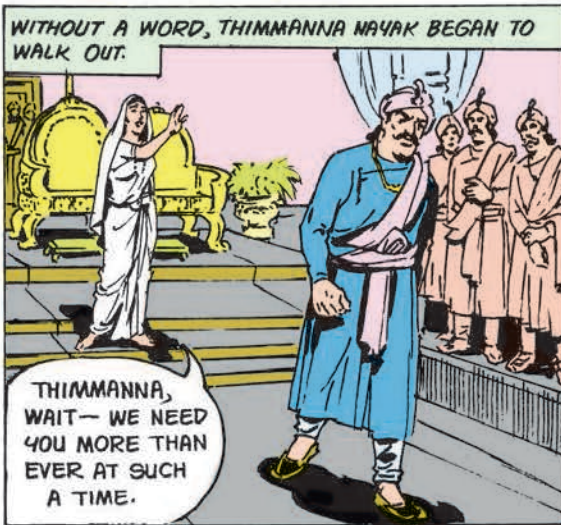
QUIET, EVERYONE! LISTEN! NEWS HAS JUST ARRIVED THAT THE BIJAPUR ARMY UNDER JANNOPANT IS ON ITS WAY TO ATTACK KELADI.

OH, NO! WHAT SHALL WE DO?

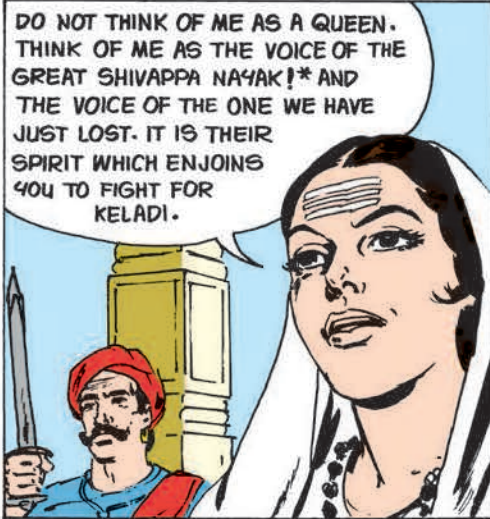
WHAT SHALL WE DO?







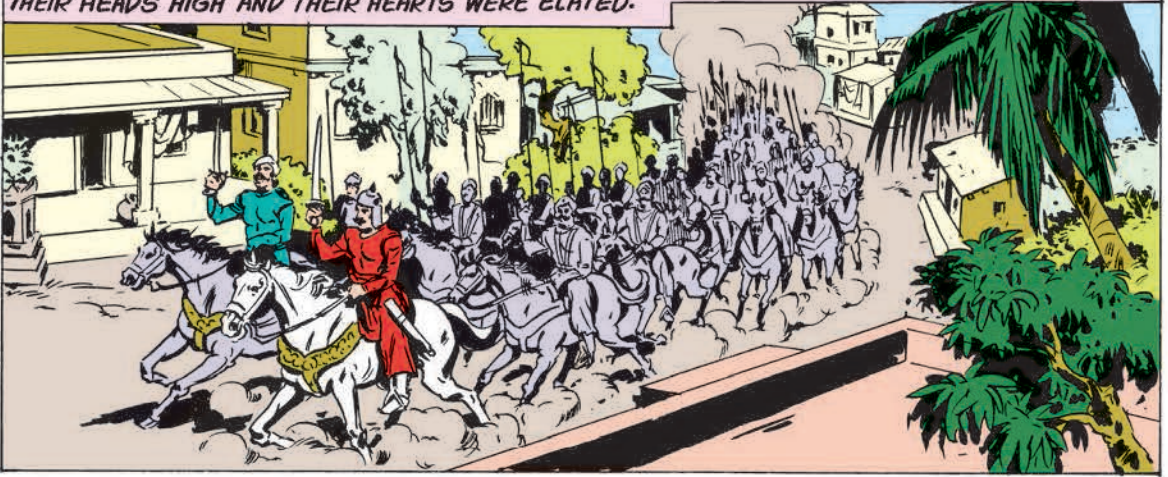




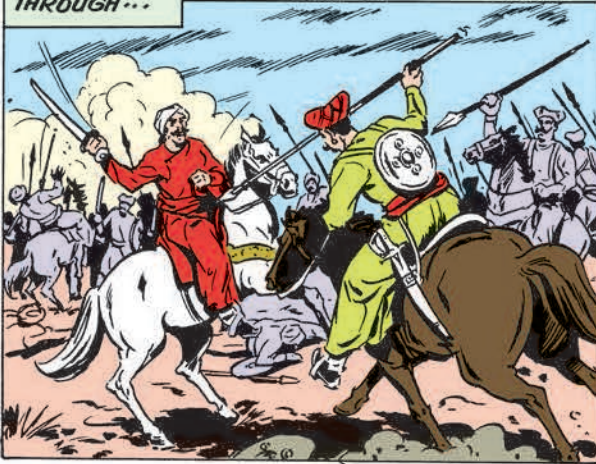
\* THE MOST CELEBRATED RULER OF KELADI, SOMASHEKHARA NAYAK.



THE ARMY OF KELADI MARCHED AGAINST THE FAR LARGER ARMY OF BIIAPUR, THE SOLDIERS HELD THEIR HEADS HIGH AND THEIR HEARTS WERE ELATED.



BUT THE BIIAPUR ARMY FORCED ITS WAY THROUGH...



...AND CAPTURED THE FORT OF BIDANUR.



WHERE IS THE THRONE? WHERE IS YOUR WOMAN-RULER? WHERE ARE THE JEWELS, THE MONEY IN YOUR ROYAL TREASURY?



GONE WHERE YOU CAN NEVER FIND THEM. WE ARE THE FEW WHO HAVE REMAINED. DO WHAT YOU WILL WITH US.



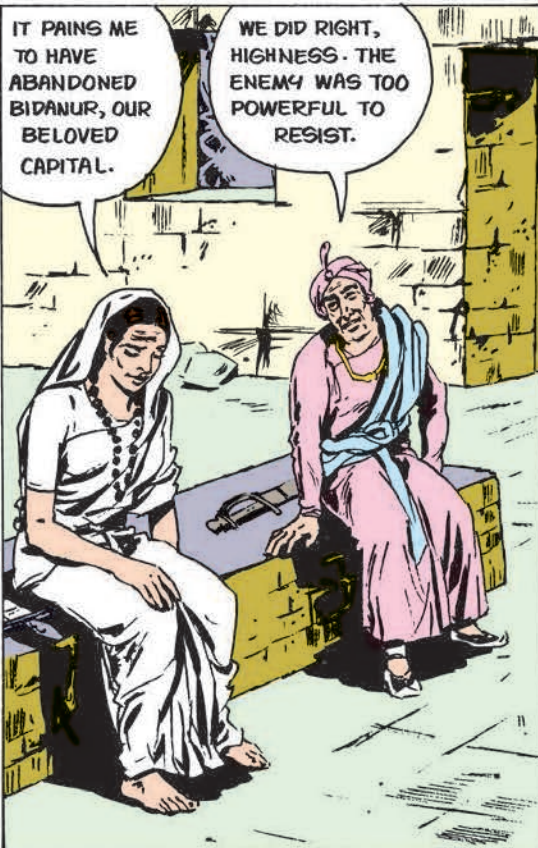


MEANWHILE CHENNAMMA HAD TAKEN REFUGE IN THE FORTRESS OF BHUVANAGIRI, DEEP IN THE FOREST.



IT PAINS ME  
TO HAVE  
ABANDONED  
BIDANUR, OUR  
BELOVED  
CAPITAL.

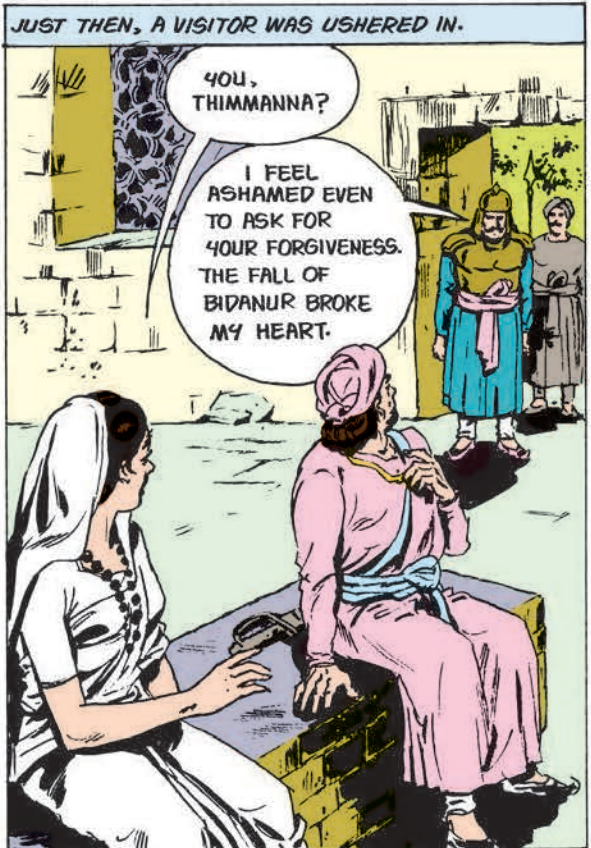
WE DID RIGHT,  
HIGHNESS. THE  
ENEMY WAS TOO  
POWERFUL TO  
RESIST.



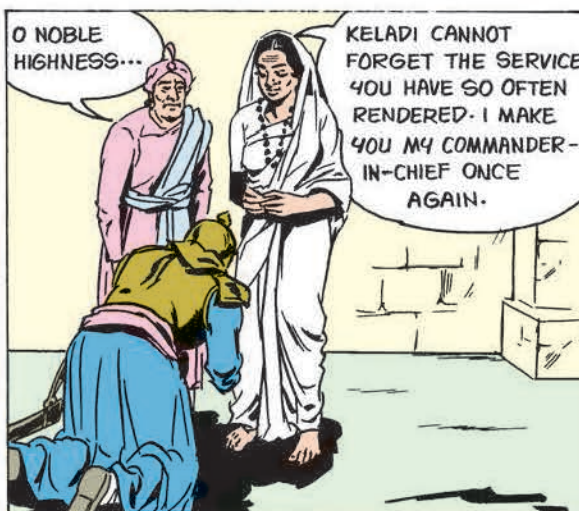
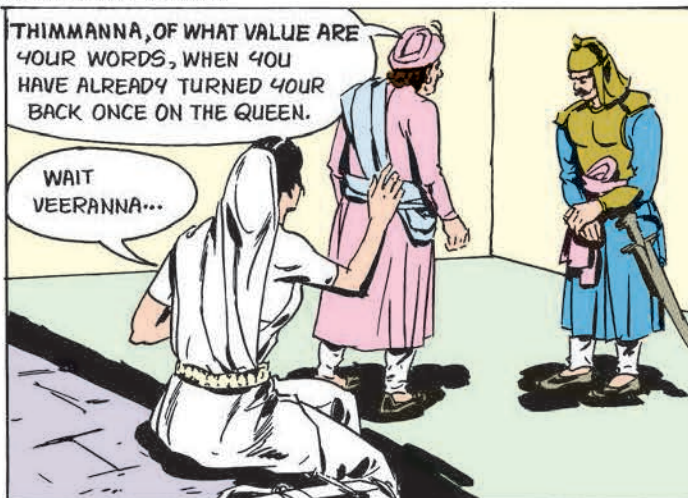
JUST THEN, A VISITOR WAS USHERED IN.

YOU,  
THIMMANNA?

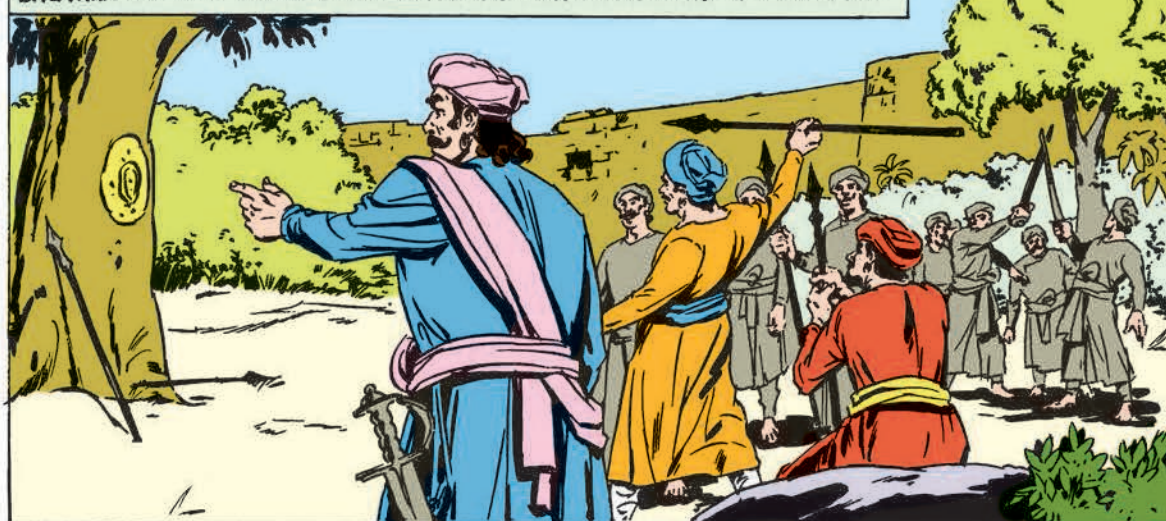
I FEEL  
ASHAMED EVEN  
TO ASK FOR  
YOUR FORGIVENESS.  
THE FALL OF  
BIDANUR BROKE  
MY HEART.



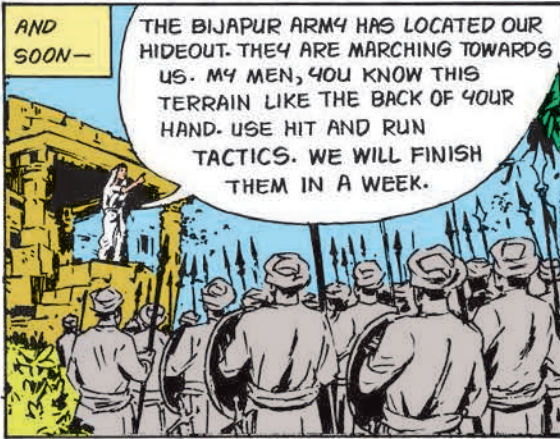




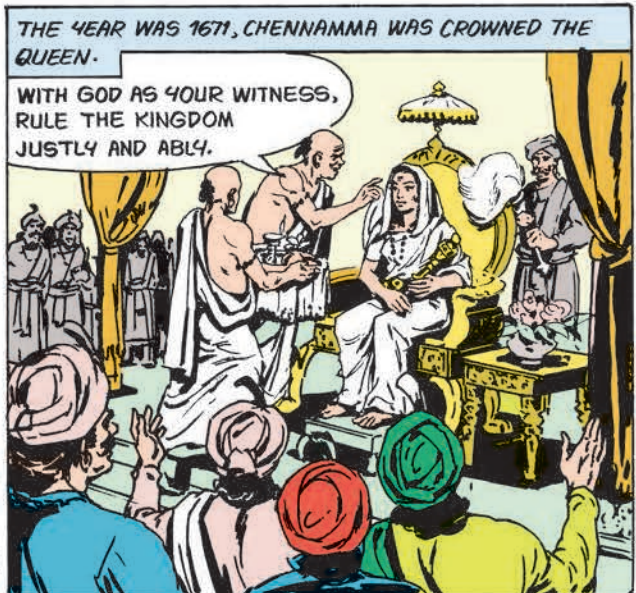
THIMMANNA NAYAK ORGANISED THE CHIEFTAINS AND CITIZENS FROM THE SURROUNDING PARTS OF BHUVANAGIRI AND TRAINED THEM INTO A COURAGEOUS BAND OF SOLDIERS.







IN MANY SURPRISE MANOEUVRES, THE KELADI ARMY DEMOLISHED THE ENEMY.



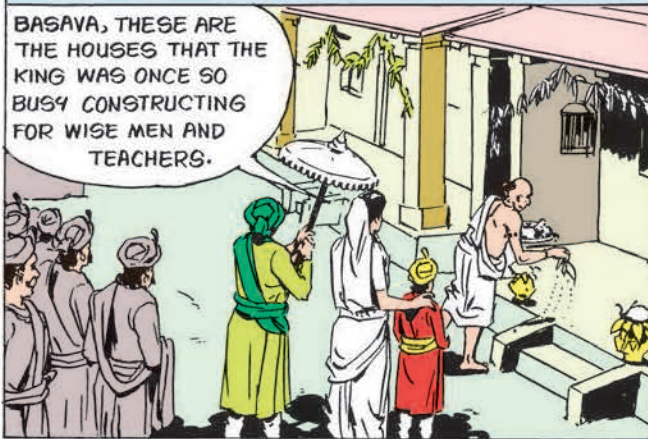


CHENNAMMA TOOK FULL CONTROL OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE KINGDOM.



THEN, ONE DAY, CHENNAMMA CAME TO THE INAUGURATION OF AN AGRAHARA. WITH HER WAS A YOUNG BOY.

BASAVA, THESE ARE THE HOUSES THAT THE KING WAS ONCE SO BUSY CONSTRUCTING FOR WISE MEN AND TEACHERS.



NOW ONLY YOU AND I ARE HERE TO SEE IT COMPLETE. IT SHALL BE CALLED "SOMASHEKHARA".



IN MEMORY OF THE KING AND WITH THE PEOPLE'S HEARTFELT BLESSINGS, I HAVE ADOPTED YOU, BASAVA. YOU ARE OUR CHILD — THE KING'S AND MINE. LIVE TO BRING HONOUR TO HIS NAME, MY SON.

I WILL, MOTHER.

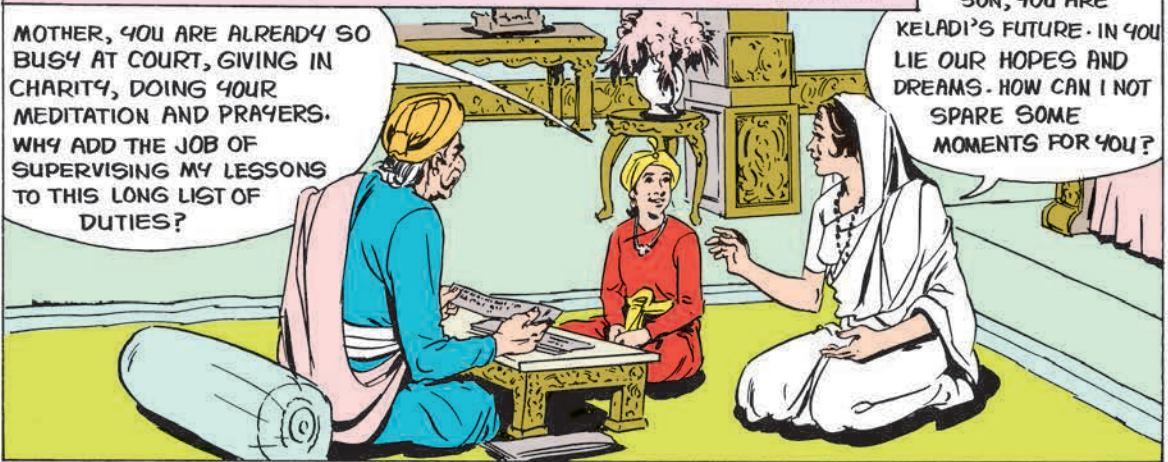




CHENNAMMA GAVE SPECIAL ATTENTION TO BASAVA NAYAKA'S UPBRINGING.

MOTHER, YOU ARE ALREADY SO BUSY AT COURT, GIVING IN CHARITY, DOING YOUR MEDITATION AND PRAYERS. WHY ADD THE JOB OF SUPERVISING MY LESSONS TO THIS LONG LIST OF DUTIES?

SON, YOU ARE KELADI'S FUTURE. IN YOU LIE OUR HOPES AND DREAMS. HOW CAN I NOT SPARE SOME MOMENTS FOR YOU?



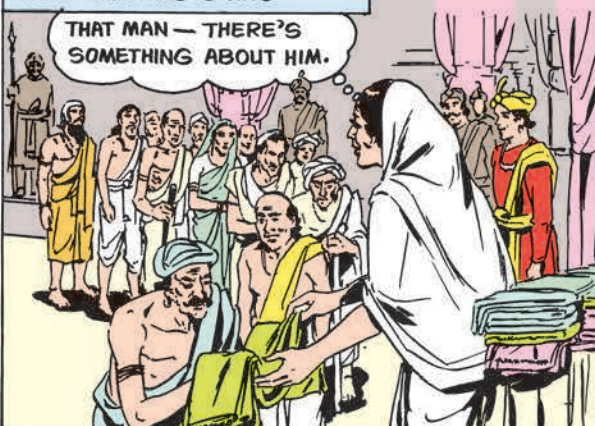
THEN FELL ON CHENNAMMA'S SHOULDERS, THE BURDEN OF NEW WARS. MANY ENVIED KELADI'S LONG SEA-COAST THAT ENABLED HER TO TRADE PROFITABLY WITH THE ARABS, THE PORTUGUESE, THE DUTCH AND THE ENGLISH FOR VALUABLE ARAB HORSES AND MILITARY AMMUNITION IN EXCHANGE FOR THE EXCELLENT PEPPER AND RICE THAT GREW IN KELADI. CHIKKADEVARAYA WODEYAR, THE KING OF MYSORE, WAS ONE OF THESE JEALOUS RULERS. HE LAUNCHED AN ATTACK ON KELADI. MANY WARS FOLLOWED.



REBELLIOUS KELADI CHIEFTAINS AND NEIGHBOURING KINGS JOINED MYSORE TO OUST THE WOMAN IN A MAN'S WORLD. BUT CHENNAMMA, LIKE THE GODDESS OF WAR, ENLISTED VICTORY ON HER SIDE IN THE END. SHE TREATED HER PRISONERS WITH COURTESY AND WON THE ADMIRATION OF HER ENEMIES. KELADI AND MYSORE SIGNED A TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP...

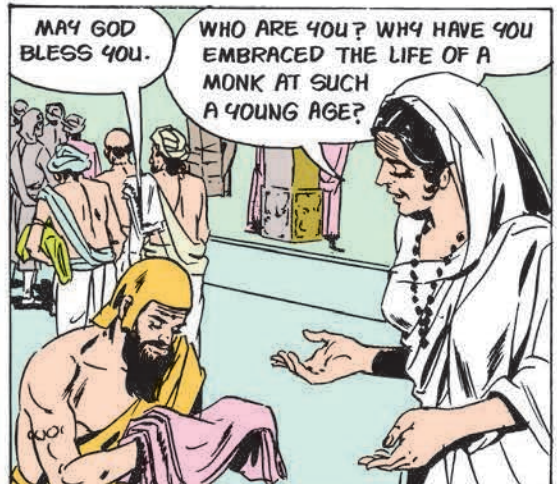
...LEADING TO A PERIOD OF PEACE. ONE DAY DURING HER DAILY ALMS-GIVING —

THAT MAN — THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT HIM.

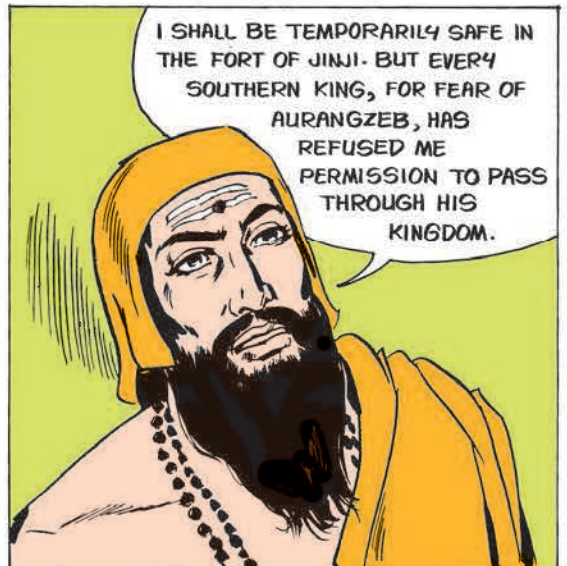
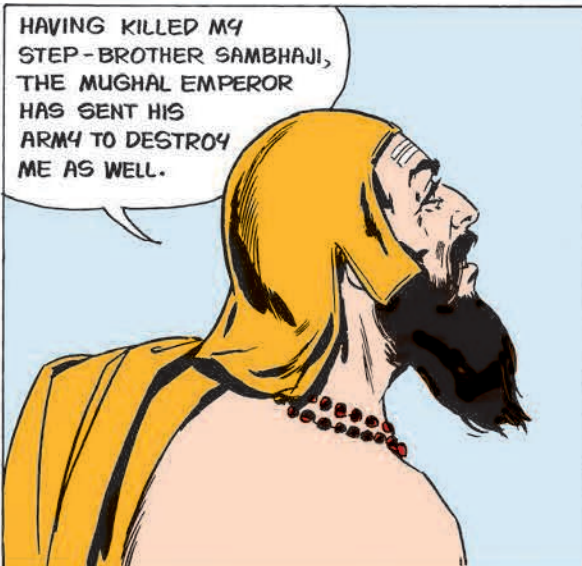
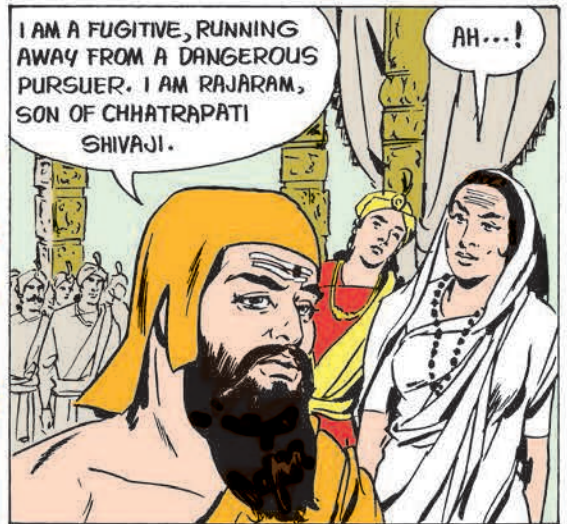
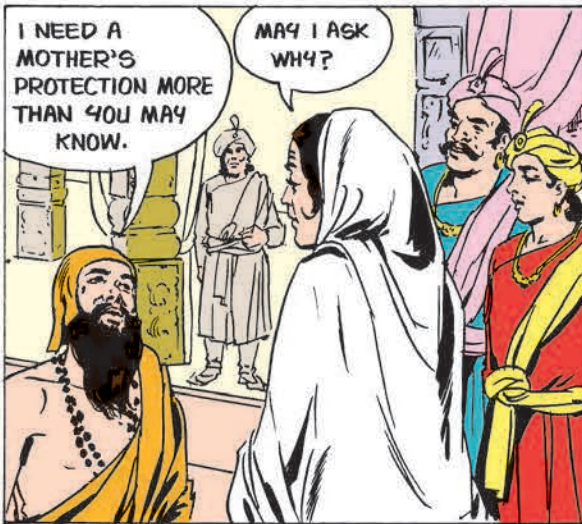
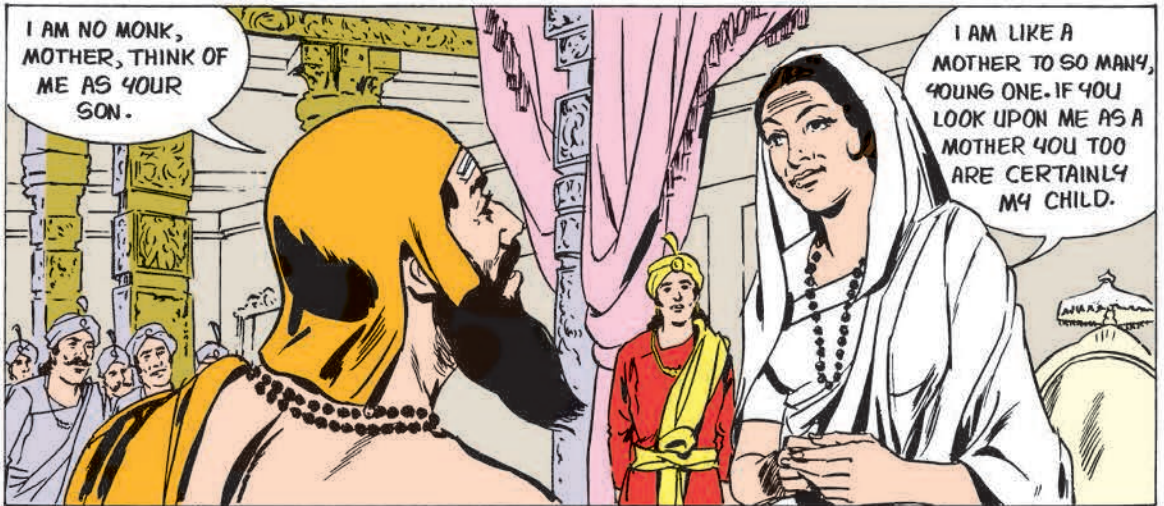


MAY GOD BLESS YOU.

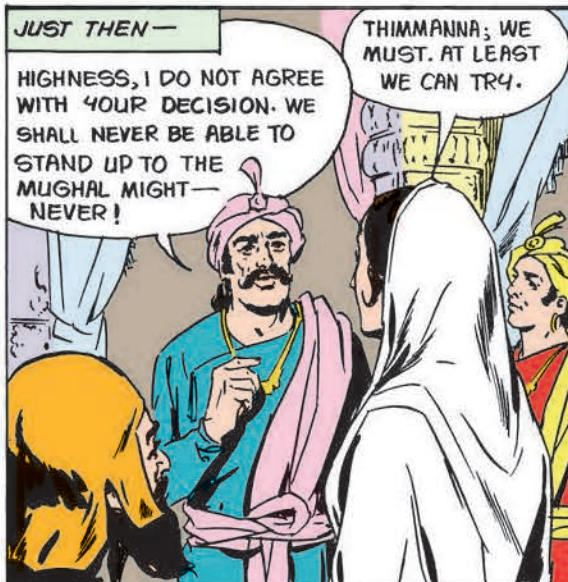
WHO ARE YOU? WHY HAVE YOU EMBRACED THE LIFE OF A MONK AT SUCH A YOUNG AGE?



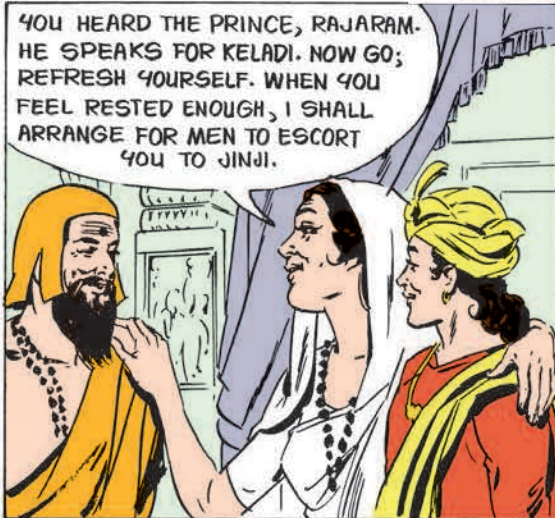




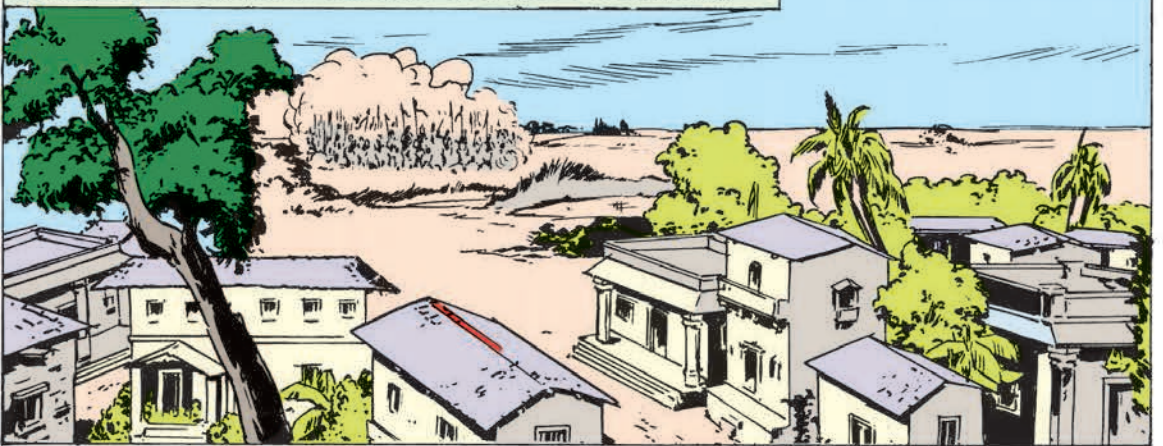




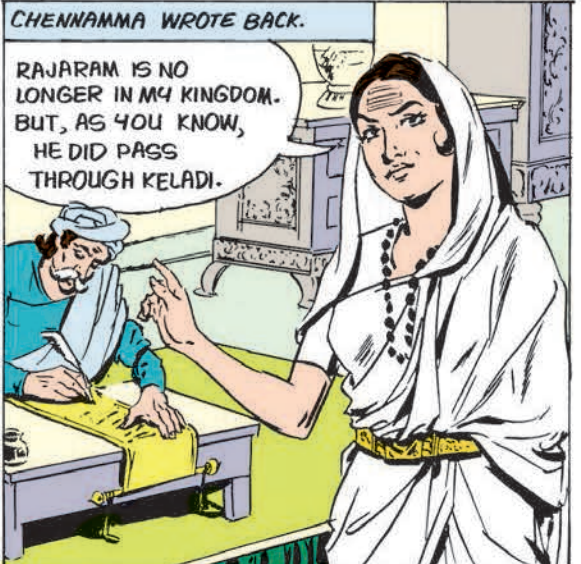
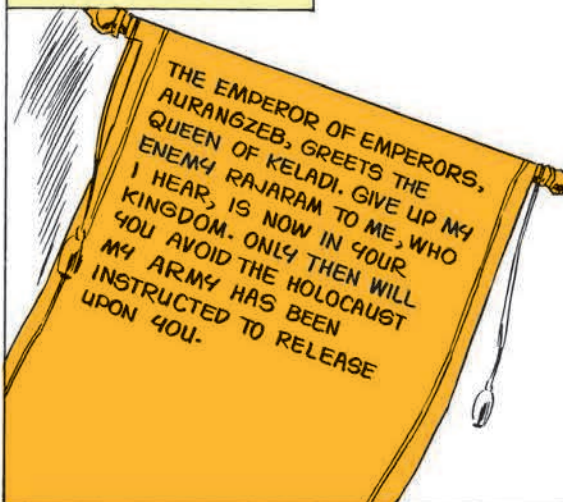




SOON, THE MUGHAL ARMY UNDER JAAN NISAR KHAN, GOT WIND OF RAJARAM'S PRESENCE IN KELADI AND IMMEDIATELY MARCHED TOWARDS ITS BORDERS.



EVEN AS THE ARMY APPROACHED, CHENNAMMA RECEIVED A LETTER.





BEFORE CHENNAMMA'S LETTER COULD REACH AURANGZEB, THE MUGHAL ARMY ATTACKED, GAINING ENTRY INTO THE KINGDOM.



ONCE THE MUGHALS WERE IN THE THICK MAZES OF THE MALENADU JUNGLES, THE KELADI SOLDIERS PUT INTO USE THEIR HIT-AND-RUN MANOEUVRES. THEY WON MANY SUCCESSES...



... BUT ALSO LOST IN MANY ENCOUNTERS.

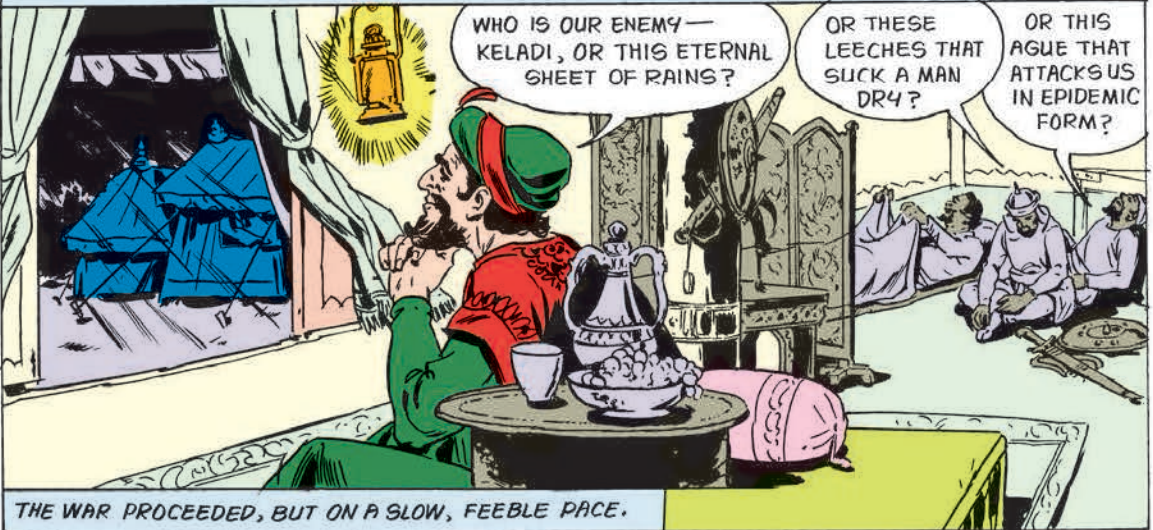


THEN THE RAINS SET IN.





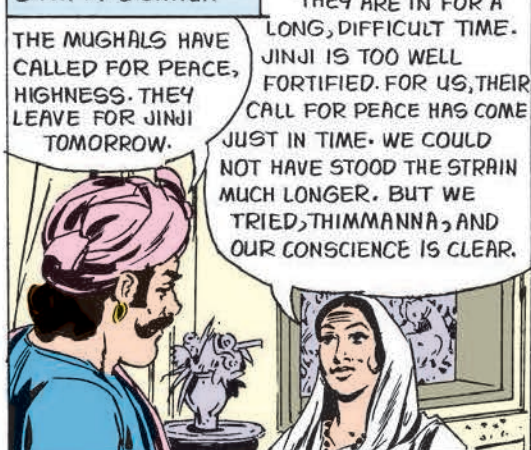
THE FORESTS, UNFAMILIAR TO JAAN NISAR KHAN AND HIS MEN, TURNED INTO SOGGY MARSHES.



THEN CAME THE NEWS THAT RAJARAM HAD SAFELY REACHED JINJI.

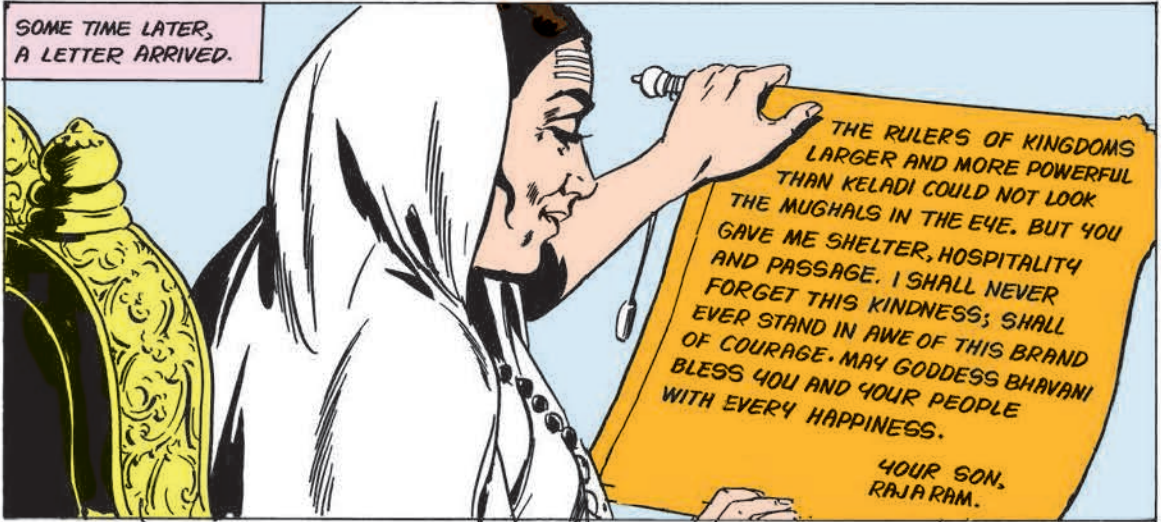


BACK AT BIDANUR—





SOME TIME LATER,  
A LETTER ARRIVED.



THE RULERS OF KINGDOMS  
LARGER AND MORE POWERFUL  
THAN KELADI COULD NOT LOOK  
THE MUGHALS IN THE EYE. BUT YOU  
GAVE ME SHELTER, HOSPITALITY  
AND PASSAGE. I SHALL NEVER  
FORGET THIS KINDNESS; SHALL  
EVER STAND IN AWE OF THIS BRAND  
OF COURAGE. MAY GODDESS BHAVANI  
BLESS YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE  
WITH EVERY HAPPINESS.

YOUR SON,  
RAJARAM.

CHENNAMMA RULED FOR 25 YEARS; YEARS NOTED FOR EFFICIENT RULE, JUSTICE AND GENEROSITY.  
PLACES OF LEARNING AND TEMPLE TOWNS FLOURISHED DURING HER REIGN.

BASAVA, I THINK MY TIME HAS  
COME. THOUGH NOT BORN OF  
OUR BODIES, THE KING AND I  
COULD NOT HAVE WISHED FOR  
A FINER SON THAN YOU.  
BEFORE I GO...

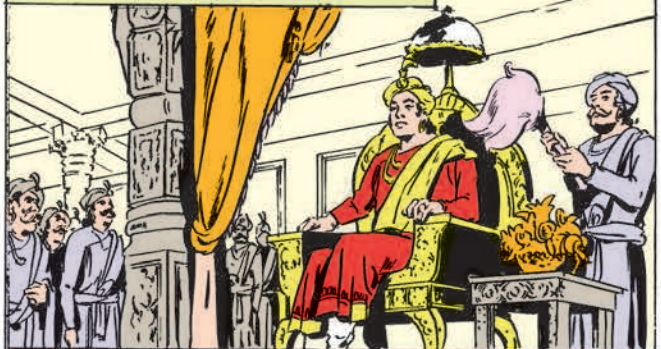
MOTHER,  
DON'T SPEAK  
LIKE THAT. WHAT  
WILL I HAVE LEFT  
WITHOUT  
YOU?



YOU WILL HAVE KELADI. WHAT MORE  
PRECIOUS TREASURES CAN THERE BE?  
YOU ARE ALREADY AN ABLE  
ADMINISTRATOR. BUT I HAVE SOME  
WORDS OF ADVICE. ALWAYS KEEP YOUR  
WORD. BEWARE OF THOSE WHO SEEK  
REFUGE. NEVER LOSE COURAGE WHEN FACED  
WITH DIFFICULTIES. WORSHIP GOD AND  
STRIVE TO KNOW YOURSELF



WHEN CHENNAMMA DIED, BASAVA NAYAKA CAME TO THE  
THRONE AND EARNED A GOOD NAME.



TODAY, THE FORT OF CHENNAGIRI, NAMED BY BASAVA  
NAYAKA AFTER HIS MOTHER AND THE FINE KANNADA  
WORK "SHIVATATVARATNAKARA", WRITTEN BY BASAVA,  
REMAIN AS MEMORIALS OF THAT BYGONE AGE.



# WHICH OF THE ACKs HAVE YOU STILL NOT READ?

## EPICS AND MYTHOLOGY

*Best known stories from the Epics and the Puranas*

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Andhaka  
Aniruddha  
Aruni And Utanka  
Ashwini Kumara  
Ayyappa  
Bahubali  
Bhanumati  
Bheema And Hanuman  
Bheeshma  
Chandrasekhar  
Dasharatha  
Dhruva And Ashtavakra  
Draupadi  
Drona  
Elephants  
Gandhari  
Ganesha  
Ganesha And The Moon  
Ganga  
Garuda  
Ghatotkacha  
Hanuman  
Hanuman To The Rescue  
Harischandra  
Heroes Of Hampi  
Indra And Shachi  
Indra And Shibi  
Indra And Vritra  
Jagannatha Of Puri  
Jayadratha  
Kacha And Devayani  
Kama  
Kartikaya  
Konark  
Kishna  
Krishna And Jarasandha  
Krishna And Narakasura  
Krishna And Rukmini  
Krishna And Shishupala  
Krishna And The False  
Vasudeva  
Kubera  
Kumbhakarna  
Mahabharata  
Maharavana  
Nachiketa  
Nahusha  
Nala Damayanti  
Parashakti  
Parashurama  
Prabhavati  
Pradyumna  
Prahlad  
Purushottam Dev And  
Padmevati  
Rama  
Ravana Humbled  
Saraswati  
Sati And Shiva  
Savitri  
Shiva Parvati  
Stories Of Creation  
Subhadra  
Sudama  
Sukanya  
Surya  
Tales From The  
Upanishads  
Tales Of Arjuna  
Tales Of Balarama  
Tales Of Durga  
Tales Of Indra  
Tales Of Narada

Tales Of Shiva  
Tales Of Vishnu  
Tales Of Yudhishtira  
Tapali  
Thanjavur  
The Churning Of The  
Ocean  
The Gita  
The Golden Mongoose  
The King In  
A Parrot's Body  
The Lord Of Lanka  
The Pandava Prince  
The Pandavas In Hiding  
The Pariksha Tree  
The Sons Of Rama  
The Syamantaka Gem  
Tirupati  
Tripura  
Uloopi  
Valahna Devi  
Vai  
Vishwamitra  
Yayati

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Buddha  
Chaitanya Mahaprabhu  
Chandrasekhar  
Chokha Mele  
Dayananda  
Deshbandhu  
Chittaranjan Das  
Eknath  
Fa Hien  
Ghanshyamdas Birla  
Guru Arjan  
Guru Gobind Singh  
Guru Har Gobind  
Guru Nanak  
Guru Tegh Bahadur  
Huen Tsang  
J.R.D. Tata  
Jagadish Chandra Bose  
Jamaati Tata  
Jawaharlal Nehru  
Jayaprakash Narayan  
Jim Corbett  
Jnaneshwar  
Kabir  
Kalidasa  
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Veer Dhaval

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Birbal The Just  
Birbal The Wise  
Birbal The Witty  
Birbal To The Rescue  
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The Dwarf  
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The Goat  
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The Pious Cat  
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Balban  
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Bappa Rawal  
Beni Madho And Pir Ali  
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Hemu  
Humayun  
Jahangir  
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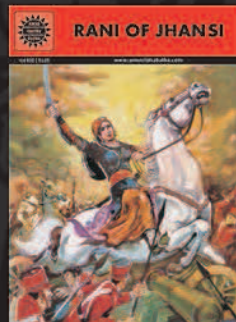
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There was great consternation in the court of Keladi, when the king married a commoner.

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Before she could calm the troubled kingdom, Keladi came under attack from the powerful armies of Bijapur. Undaunted, Chennamma sold her jewellery to finance the battle. Then she marched out to meet the invaders, at the head of her army.

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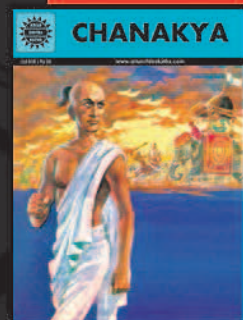
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