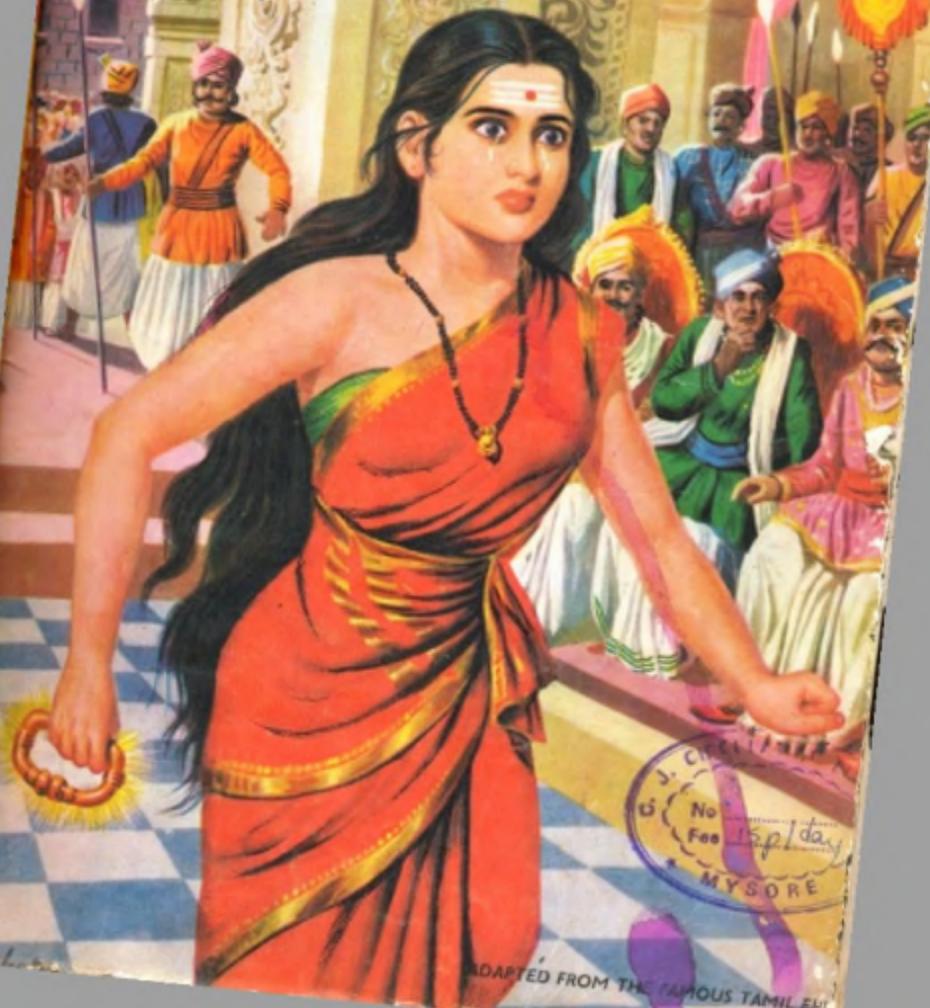


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KANNAGI



ADAPTED FROM THE FAMOUS TAMIL EPIC
KILAPPADIKARAN

KANNAGI, a gem of a housewife, a 'paragon of chastity', has been immortalized in the pages of *SILAPPADIKAARAM*, the famous Tamil epic of Ilango, the Chera prince-turned-ascetic. It is the story of a clash between three anklets: the anklet of the home, the anklet of the stage, and the anklet of the palace.

An ill-fated housewife, KANNAGI loses her husband, KOVALAN, to the art of a dancer, MADHAVI, and finds him again only to lose him to the blind law of a king. Her story is set in the three ancient cities of South India—POOMPUHAR the Chola capital where she grew up; MADURAI the Pandya capital where she fell; and VANJI the Chera capital which placed her on a pedestal.

The epic is a rich record of a great civilisation, vivid with descriptions of edifices, shrines, docks, market-places, squares, of laws and rituals, of "Natya Shastra," (Science of Dance), musicology and musical instruments of the day. Known for its high dramatic content, *SILAPPADIKAARAM* is a shining jewel in Tamil literature.

The memory of Ilango and his immortal classic has recently been perpetuated by the Tamil Nadu Government by erecting, at Kaveripattinam, a magnificent seven-story art gallery, *Silappadikaaram Kalaikoodam*, in ancient Dravidian architectural style. The structure narrates the story in stone carvings.

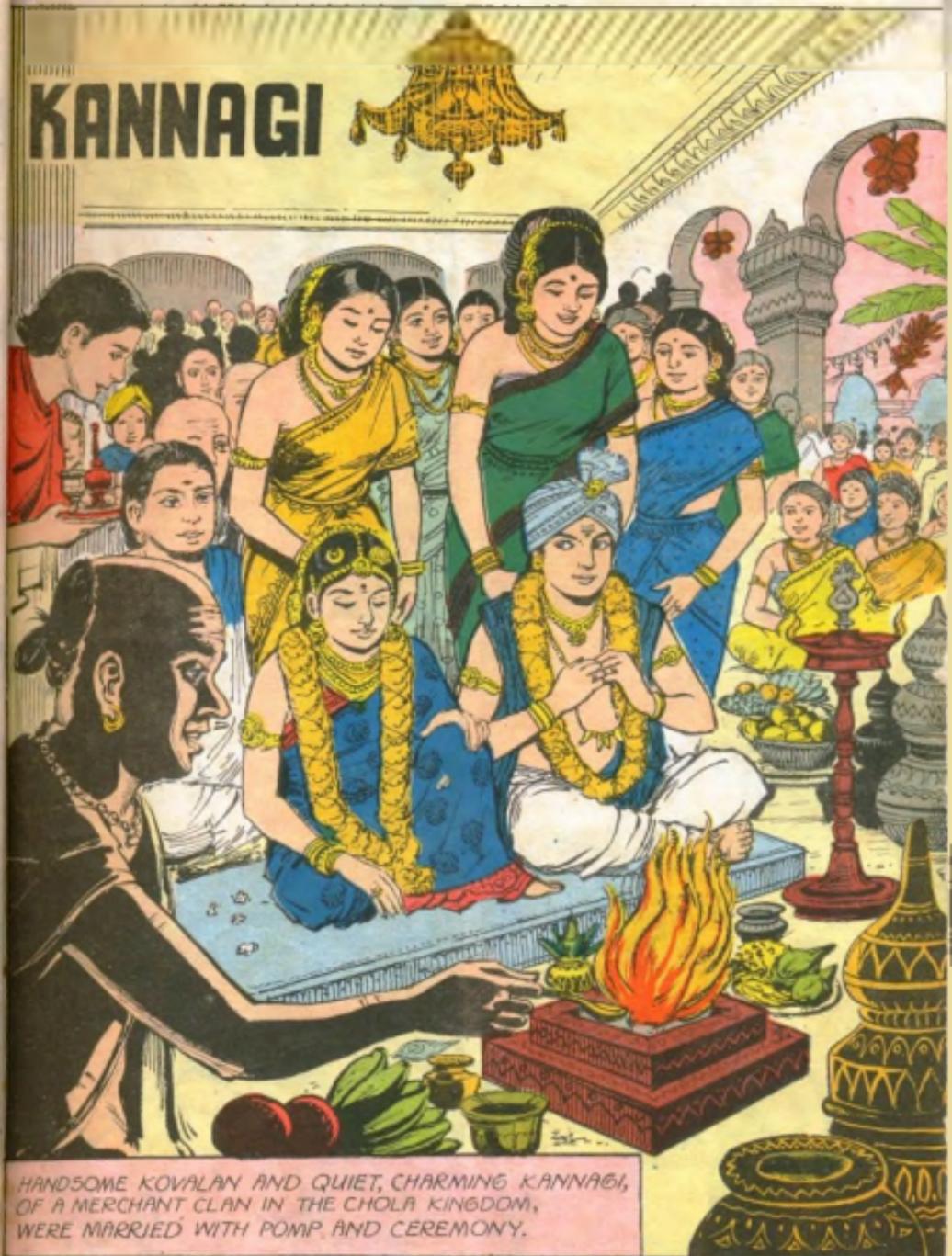
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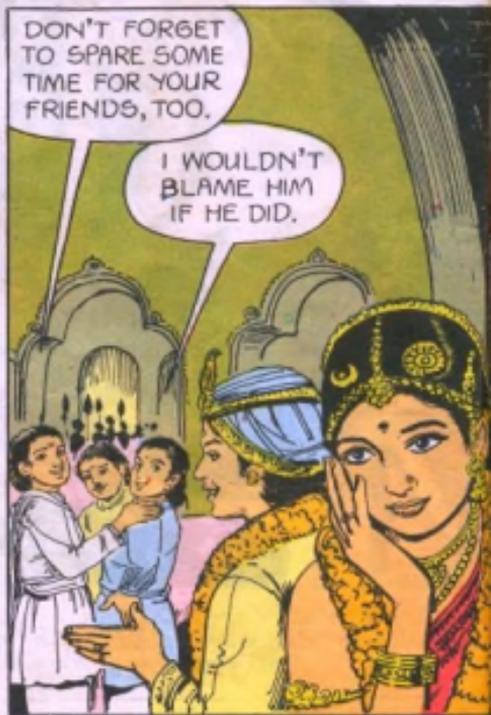
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KANNAGI



HANDSOME KOVALAN AND QUIET, CHARMING KANNAGI, OF A MERCHANT CLAN IN THE CHOLA KINGDOM, WERE MARRIED WITH POMP AND CEREMONY.



THE NEXT DAY--

KANNAGI, SHALL WE TAKE A WALK BY THE RIVER?

NO, AS YOU WISH. THAT IS WHAT MATTERS.

AS YOU WISH, MY LORD.

A MONTH LATER--

KANNAGI, LISTEN. I HAVE JUST CONCLUDED A DEAL WORTH LAKHS OF RUPEES.

NOW WE CAN BUY THAT HOUSE BY THE RIVER!

YOU HAVE BROUGHT ME LUCK, SO YOU SHALL BE THE MISTRESS OF THE NEW HOUSE.

DOES THAT MEAN WE HAVE TO LEAVE YOUR PARENTS?



THEY WILL BE GOING AWAY ON A PILGRIMAGE FOR A YEAR. WE WILL LOCK UP THIS HOUSE...



... AND I WILL MAKE THAT HOUSE A HEAVEN FOR YOU.

THREE YEARS LATER, DURING THE SPRING FESTIVAL—

MADHAVI WILL BE DANCING TODAY. THEY SAY SHE IS BEAUTIFUL.

CERTAINLY NOT AS BEAUTIFUL AS MY WIFE.



BUT WHEN KOVALAN SAW MADHAVI PERFORM—

YES. SHE IS BEAUTIFUL.

HE HASN'T TAKEN HIS EYES OFF HER.



WHAT AN EXCELLENT DANCER!

PERFECT! HER TECHNIQUE IS PERFECT!





THE NEXT DAY—

KOONI, TAKE THIS EMERALD NECKLACE AND SELL IT TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER. ONLY HE WOULD BE WORTHY OF HAVING MADHAVI.

LEAVE IT TO ME TO CHOOSE A HANDSOME RICH MAN.

BUY MADHAVI'S NECKLACE AND BECOME HER LORD.

IS THAT ALL ONE NEED DO TO GET HER? I'LL BUY IT.



YOU MUST PAY 1000 MEASURES OF GOLD COINS, YOUNG MAN.

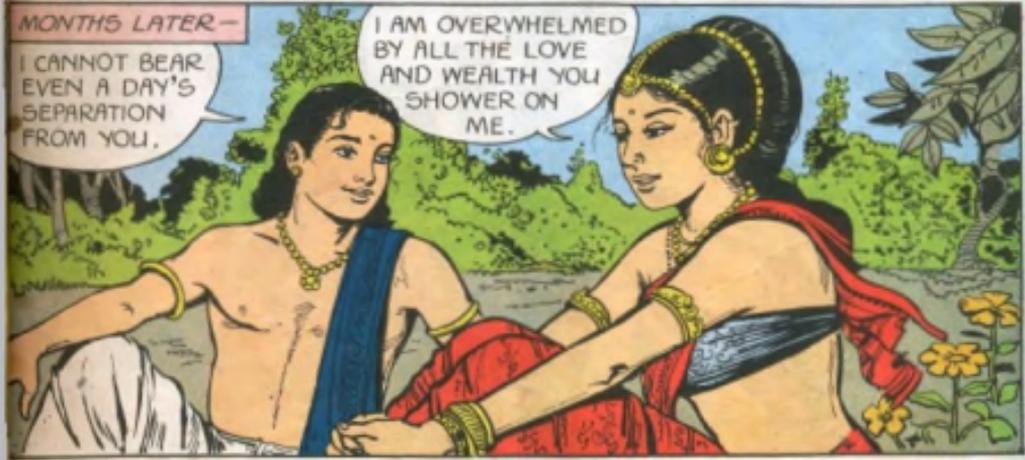
I'LL PAY THAT AND MORE.



MONTHS LATER—

I CANNOT BEAR EVEN A DAY'S SEPARATION FROM YOU.

I AM OVERWHELMED BY ALL THE LOVE AND WEALTH YOU SHOWER ON ME.



POOR KANNAGI,
SHE IS ALWAYS
IN TEARS.

HE DOES NOT
DESERVE SUCH
A GOOD WIFE.

THE CAD HAS TAKEN
AWAY ALL HER JEWELS
AND MONEY.



YOU MUST
EAT SOME-
THING. YOU
HAVE BEEN
STARVING.

FOR WHOM
SHOULD I LIVE?
KOVALAN NEVER
COMES HERE.

SEND HIM AWAY
EVEN IF HE
DOES. YOU ARE
TOO GOOD
FOR HIM.

NO. DON'T SAY
THAT. MY HUSBAND
IS MY GOD.



YEARS WENT BY, MADHAVI, IMMERSED IN HER LOVE, NEGLECTED HER PROFESSION.

MY DAUGHTER, AREN'T YOU READY? THE CROWD OUT THERE IS SHOUTING FOR YOU.

I AM IN NO MOOD TO DANCE.



MOOD OR NO MOOD, YOU'LL HAVE TO.



ONE DAY, WHEN MADHAVI WAS SINGING FOR KOVALAN—

I AM HERE AND HER SONG IS FOR A MISSING LOVER? IS SHE YEARNING FOR ANOTHER?



LITTERLY DISILLUSIONED KOVALAN WALKED AWAY FROM HER FOREVER.



SHE IS JUST ANOTHER DANCER. I WAS FOOLISH TO HAVE LOST MY HEART TO HER... TO HAVE SQUANDERED ALL MY MONEY ON HER.



MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE HIS HOUSE, KANNAGI WAS TALKING TO A FRIEND.

I DREAMT THAT HE CAME BACK TO ME. BUT... HE TOOK ME AWAY TO A NEW LAND AND... AND THEN WAS LOST.

DON'T PANIC. TRUST IN GODDESS PARVATI. SHE WILL PROTECT YOU.



SUDDENLY—

MISTRESS, THE MASTER IS COMING THIS WAY. HE LOOKS SAD.



KANNAGI RAN INDOORS AND WAITED FOR HER HUSBAND. AS SOON AS HE CAME IN—

KANNAGI, I WAS A FOOL TO HAVE LEFT YOU.





I WILL NEVER
NEGLECT YOU
AGAIN.

GODDESS PARVATI
HAS BEEN KIND
TO ME.

LATER—
I'LL NEED SOME
CAPITAL TO START
MY BUSINESS
AGAIN.

MY LORD, I STILL HAVE
MY ANKLETS—THE LAST
OF MY JEWELS. WE CAN
SELL ONE OF THEM.

IT WILL FETCH A BETTER
PRICE IN THE MARKETS
OF MADURAI. LET US
GO THERE.

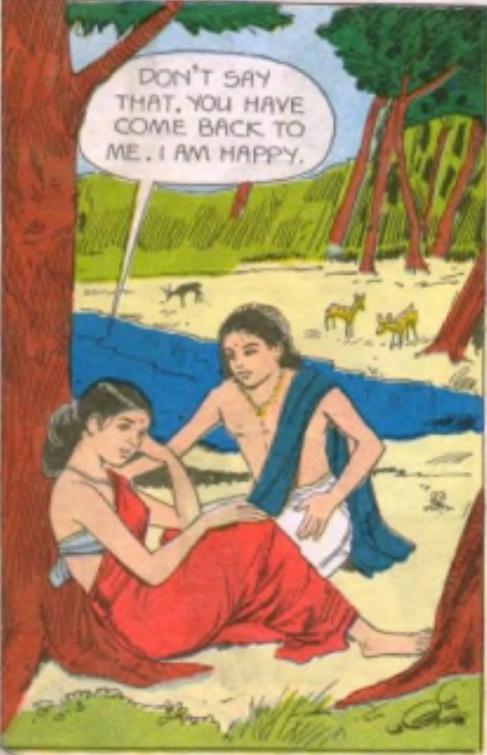
AS YOU WISH,
MY LORD, YOU
KNOW BEST.

EARLY, THE NEXT MORNING, THEY SET OUT FOR MADURAI. TOWARDS EVENING-

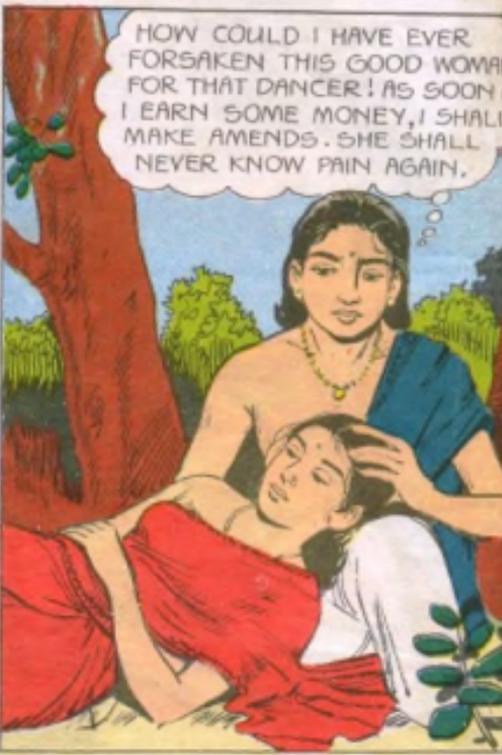


I CAN'T WALK ANY MORE, MY LORD. LET US REST FOR A WHILE.

HOW MUCH I HAVE MADE YOU SUFFER I AM SORRY, TERRIBLY SORRY



DON'T SAY THAT, YOU HAVE COME BACK TO ME. I AM HAPPY.



HOW COULD I HAVE EVER FORSAKEN THIS GOOD WOMAN FOR THAT DANCER! AS SOON AS I EARN SOME MONEY, I SHALL MAKE AMENDS. SHE SHALL NEVER KNOW PAIN AGAIN.

THE NEXT MORNING-

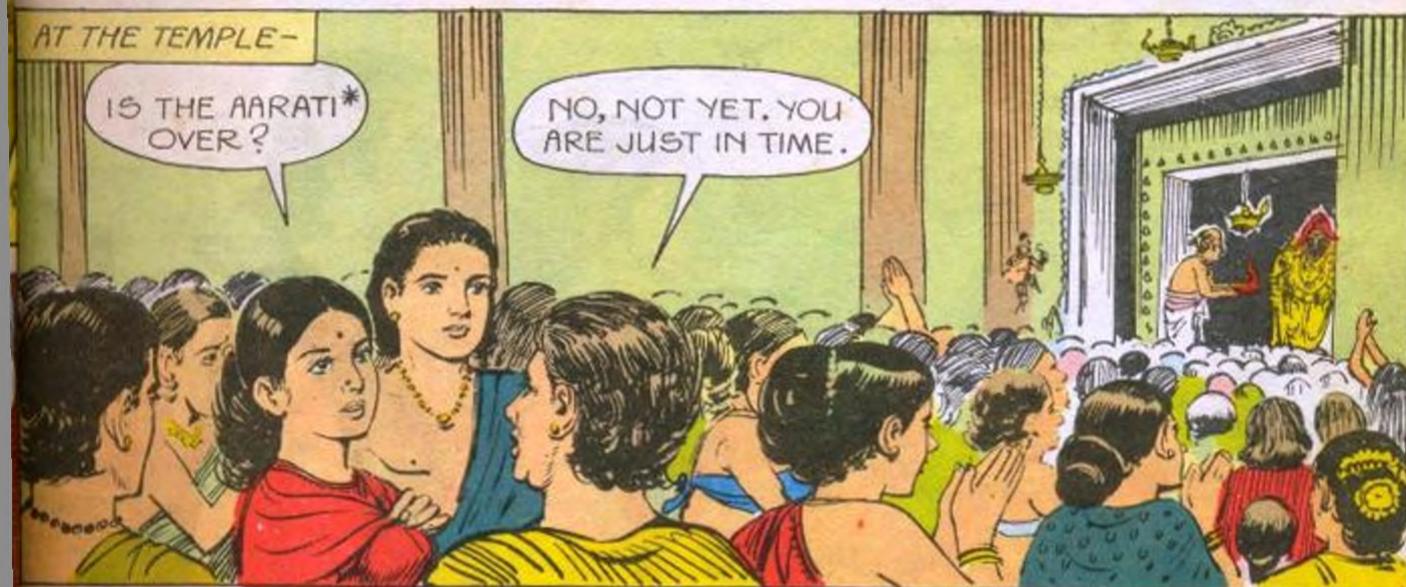
COME, KANNAGI. THERE IS A TEMPLE NEAR BY. LET US PRAY TO THE GODDESS THERE.



AT THE TEMPLE-

IS THE AARATI* OVER?

NO, NOT YET. YOU ARE JUST IN TIME.



LOOK! THE ORACLE OF THE GODDESS.

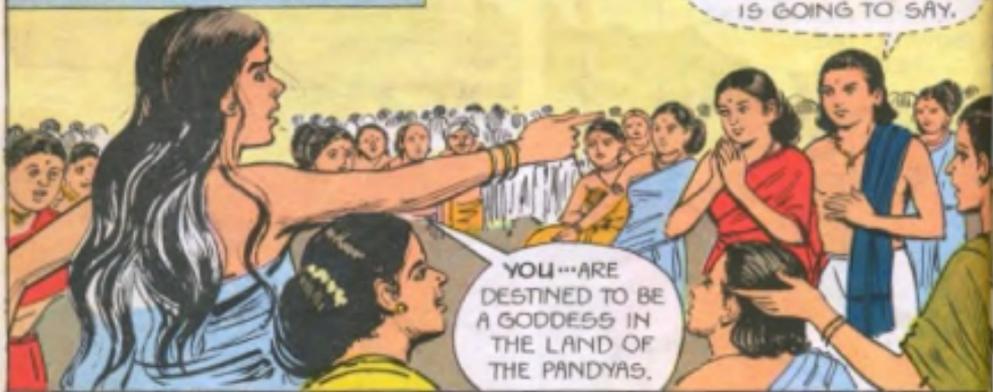
SHE SEEMS TO BE UNDER A DIVINE TRANCE.



THE CONCLUDING RITE IN RITUAL WORSHIP.

KOVALAN AND KANNAGI STEPPED FORWARD TO MAKE OBEISANCE TO HER. SUDDENLY—

SHE IS POINTING TO YOU. I WONDER WHAT SHE IS GOING TO SAY.



YOU...ARE DESTINED TO BE A GODDESS IN THE LAND OF THE PANDYAS.

KOVALAN WAS HAPPY BUT KANNAGI'S HEART WAS FILLED WITH A VAGUE DREAD. SHE REMEMBERED HER DREAM.

MY LORD, I AM AFRAID OF THE FUTURE.

YOU SHOULD BE THE GODDESS HERSELF. HOW BLESSED YOU ARE.



BETTER DAYS LIE AHEAD OF US. COME, LET US HASTEN TO MADURAI.

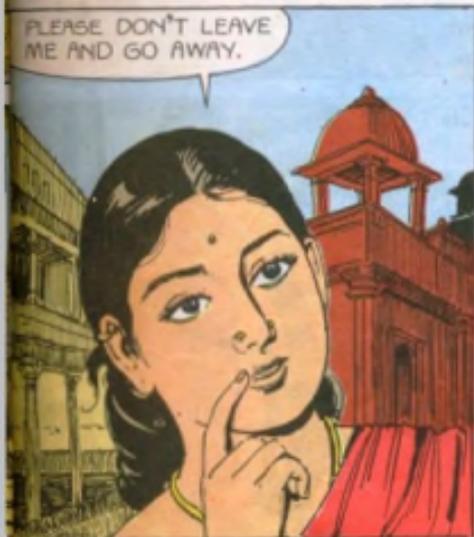
AT MADURAI-

WHAT A BIG CITY!
I FEEL LOST HERE.

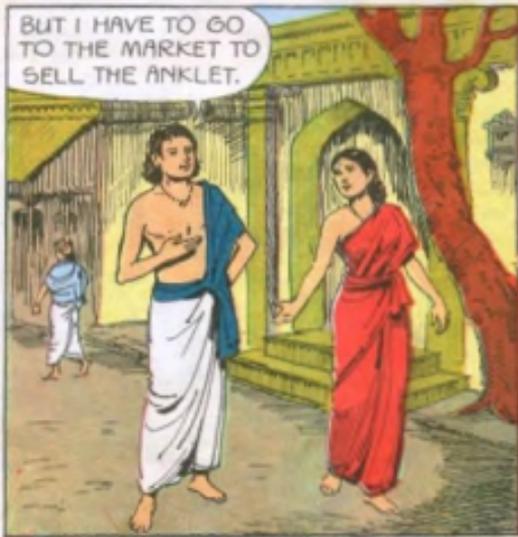
"YOU ARE SO TIMID.
COME, LET ME FIND
SOME GOOD PEOPLE
IN WHOSE CARE
I CAN LEAVE YOU.



PLEASE DON'T LEAVE
ME AND GO AWAY.



BUT I HAVE TO GO
TO THE MARKET TO
SELL THE ANKLET.



KOVALAN APPROACHED A KIND-LOOKING COUPLE.

SIR, MY NAME IS KOVALAN. I AM A STRANGER TO THIS CITY. I SEEK YOUR HELP AND HOSPITALITY.

I AM MADALAN. YOU ARE WELCOME TO MAKE MY HUMBLE HOME YOURS.



THEY WENT TO MADALAN'S HOUSE

DON'T LEAVE ME, MY LORD. I AM AFRAID.

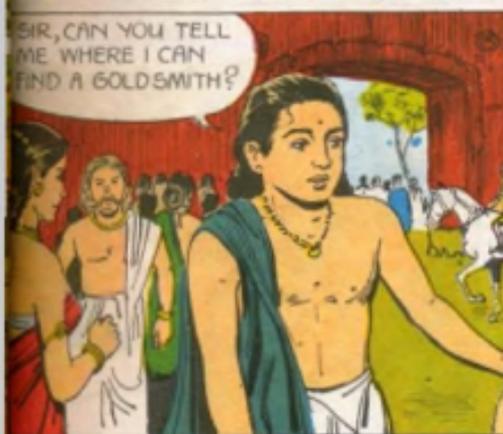
OF WHAT, KANNAGI? THEY ARE GOOD PEOPLE. YOU'LL BE SAFE WITH THEM.



YOU CAN TELL ME ALL ABOUT YOURSELF TOMORROW. GO NOW AND REST.

THANK YOU, SIR. MY WIFE IS TIRED.





KOVALAN BEGAN WALKING IN THE DIRECTION TOWARDS WHICH THE MAN HAD POINTED.



WHEN HE REACHED THE STREET OF THE GOLDSMITHS—



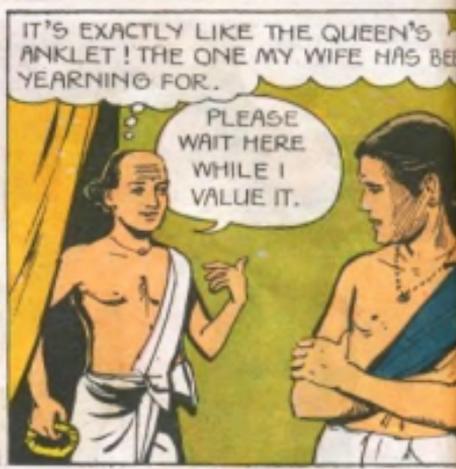
SIR, DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO BUY THIS ANKLET?

THAT MAN WOULD. HE IS THE QUEEN'S GOLDSMITH.



I WOULD LIKE TO SELL THIS ANKLET.

IT'S BEAUTIFUL.

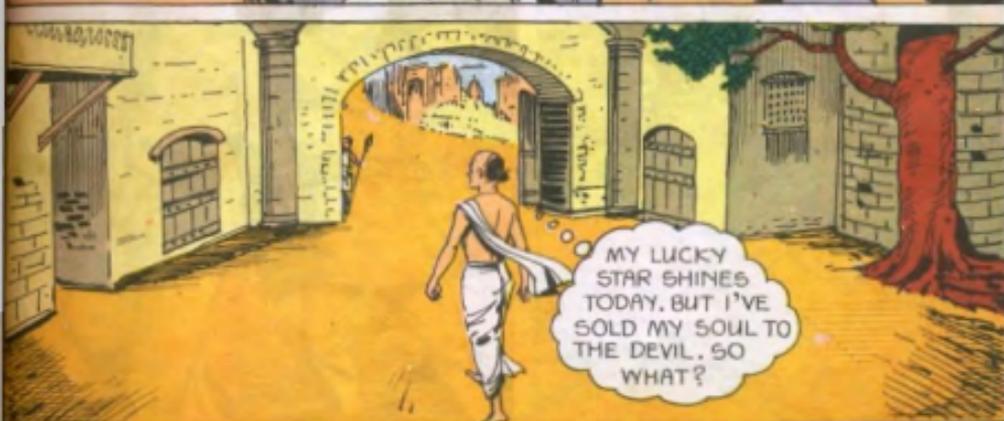
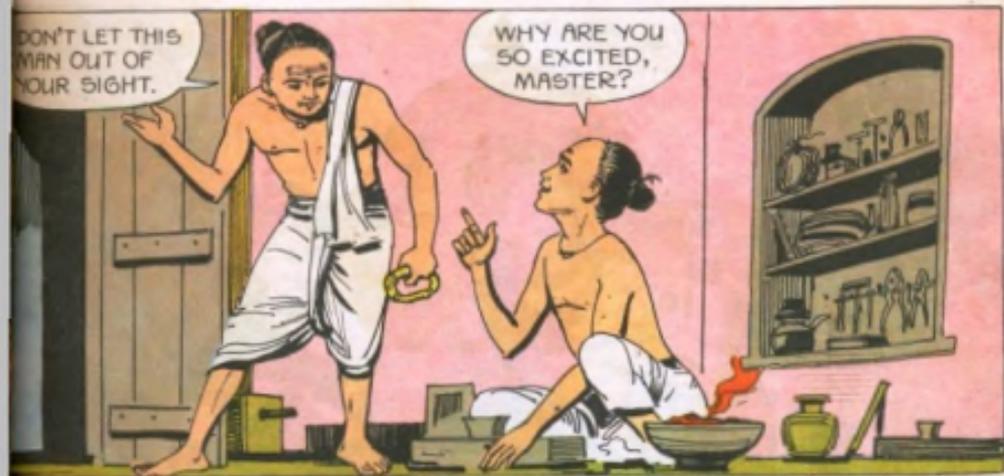


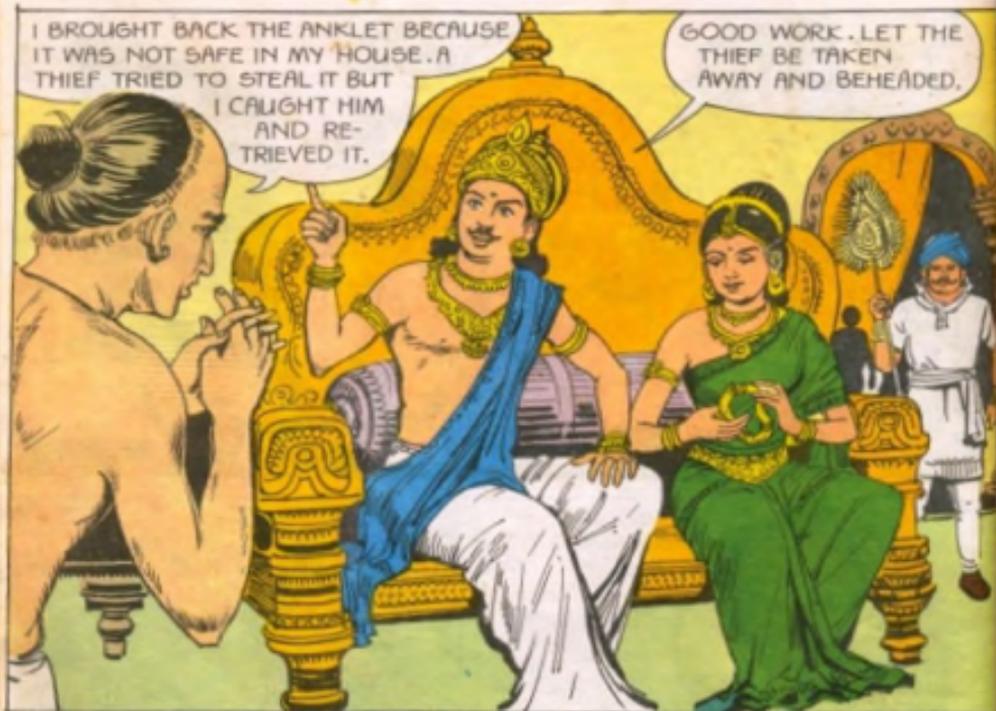
IT'S EXACTLY LIKE THE QUEEN'S ANKLET! THE ONE MY WIFE HAS BEEN YEARNING FOR.

PLEASE WAIT HERE WHILE I VALUE IT.



I'LL GIVE THE QUEEN'S ANKLET TO MY WIFE...AND RETURN THIS ONE TO THE QUEEN, SAYING THAT THIS STRANGER TRIED TO STEAL IT.





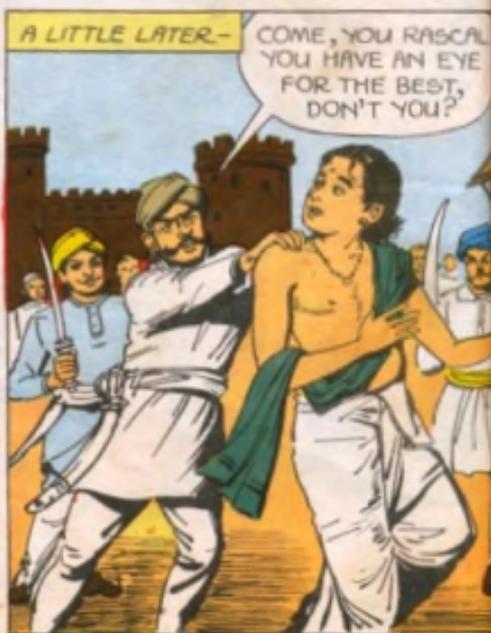
I BROUGHT BACK THE ANKLET BECAUSE IT WAS NOT SAFE IN MY HOUSE. A THIEF TRIED TO STEAL IT BUT I CAUGHT HIM AND RETRIEVED IT.

GOOD WORK. LET THE THIEF BE TAKEN AWAY AND BEHEADED.



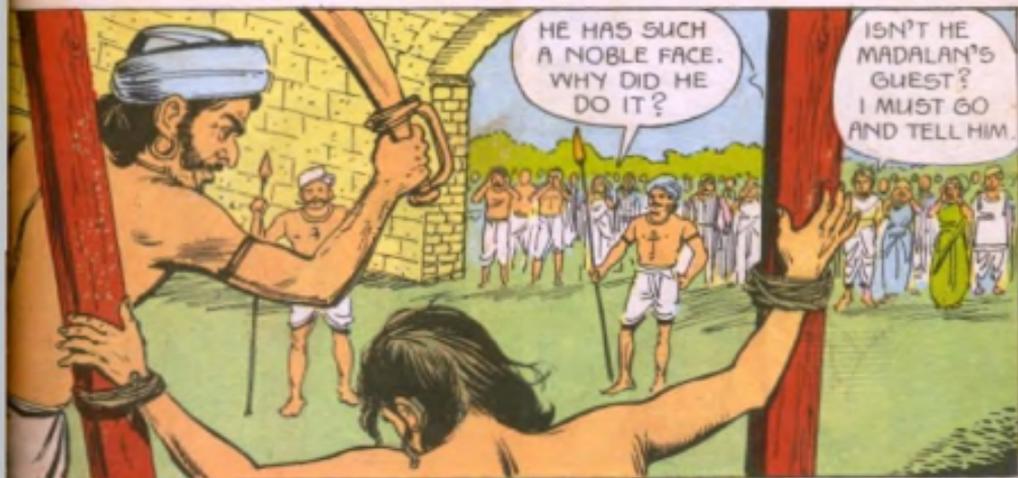
IN THE STREET—

IT'S A PITY THAT THE FELLOW HAS TO DIE WELL...



A LITTLE LATER—

COME, YOU RASCAL YOU HAVE AN EYE FOR THE BEST, DON'T YOU?



HE HAS SUCH A NOBLE FACE. WHY DID HE DO IT?

ISN'T HE MADALAN'S GUEST? I MUST GO AND TELL HIM.

THE MAN RUSHED TO MADALAN'S HOUSE -



YOUR GUEST IS DEAD.

NO!

DEAD? WHAT HAPPENED?



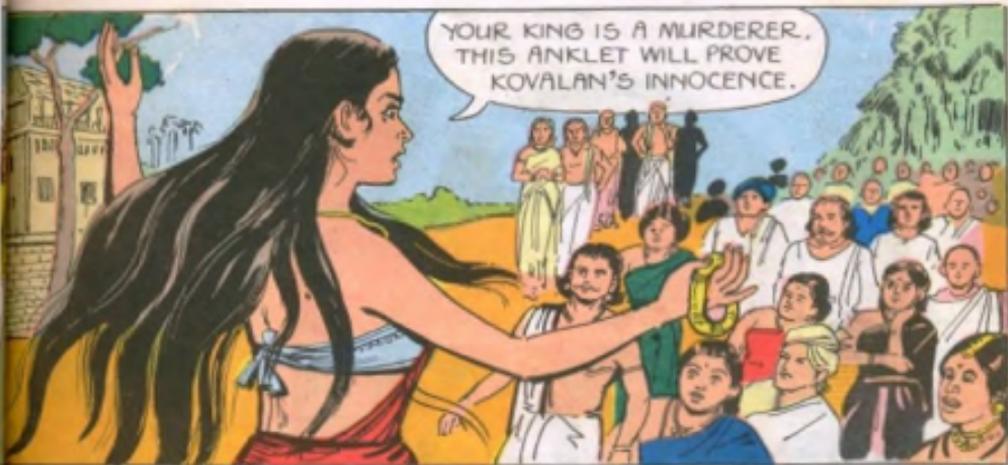
HE WAS BEHEADED. THE KING'S ORDERS. HE STOLE THE QUEEN'S ANKLET.



NO. IT CANNOT BE.

POOR KANNAGI, SHE HAS FAINTED.





YOUR KING IS A MURDERER.
THIS ANKLET WILL PROVE
KOVALAN'S INNOCENCE.

THE CROWDS FOLLOWED KANNAGI AS
SHE CHARGED TOWARDS THE PALACE.



WHAT A NOBLE
WOMAN!

HER HUSBAND
COULD NEVER
BE A THIEF.



ARE THERE NO WISE MEN
OR PURE WOMEN IN THIS
REALM? WHY DIDN'T THEY
SAVE MY HUSBAND?

AT LAST SHE REACHED THE GATES OF THE PALACE.



AS KANNAGI STRODE FORWARD MENACINGLY-



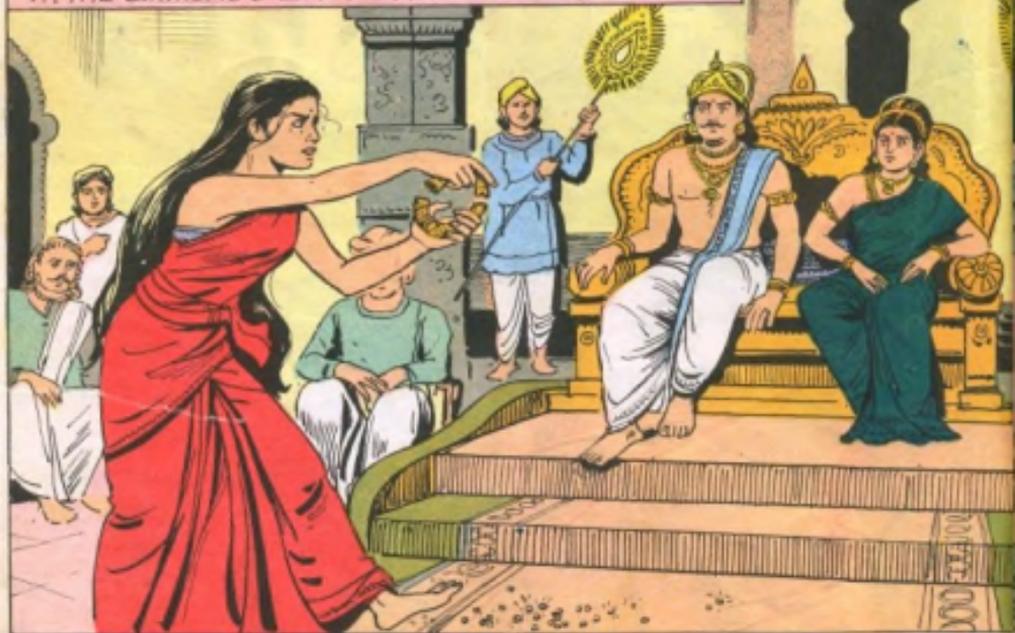


SO YOU ARE THE THIEF'S WIFE. HE STOLE THIS, MY QUEEN'S GOLD ANKLET WHICH HAS PEARLS INSIDE.

MY GOLD ANKLET HAS DIAMONDS INSIDE. HER IS THE SECOND OF THE PAIR



SHE TOOK THE ANKLET FROM THE KING AND BROKE IT, THE DIAMONDS LAY SCATTERED ON THE FLOOR.



LET THE OLD, THE
DIGABLED AND THE
CHILDREN BE
SPARED.



THE GODDESS OF MADURAI CAME DOWN.

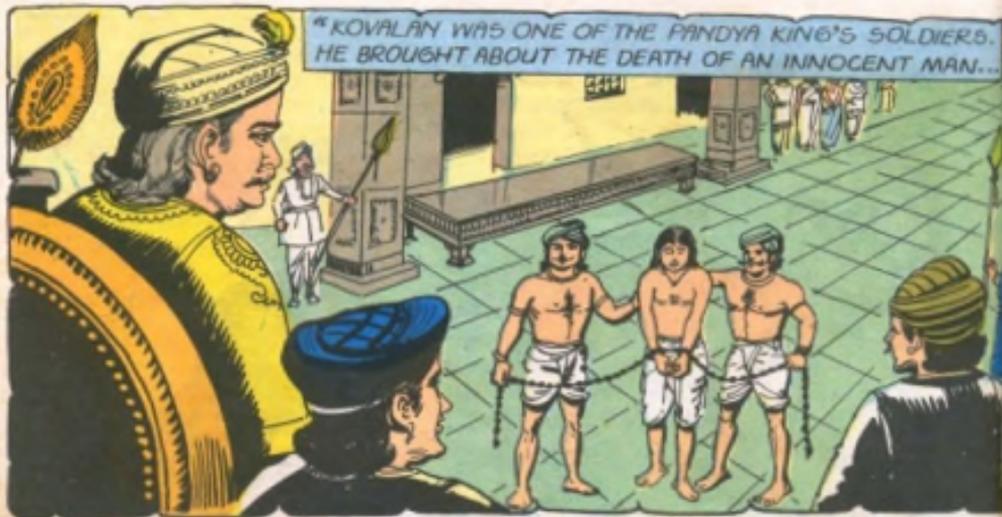


LISTEN TO ME,
O KANNAOI.
THE KING WAS
NOT AT FAULT.



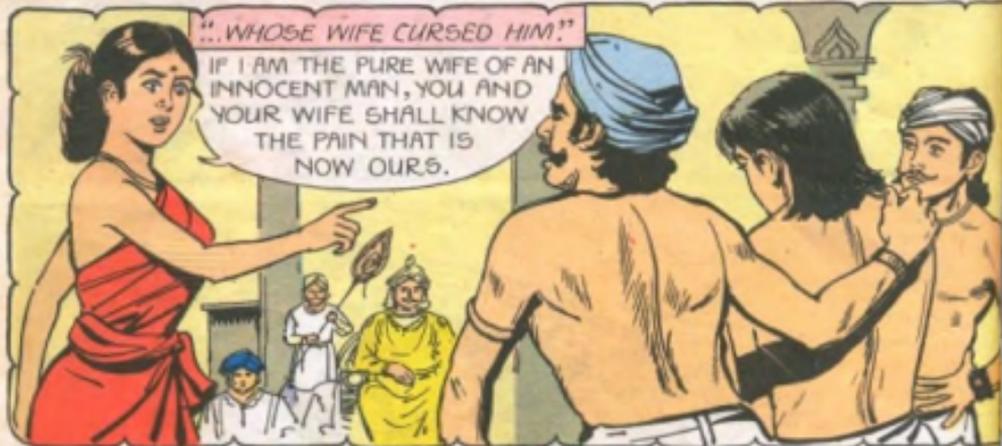
IT IS YOUR
HUSBAND'S SIN
IN A PREVIOUS
BIRTH THAT HAS
BROUGHT ABOUT
THIS TRAGEDY.

"KOVALAYN WAS ONE OF THE PANDYA KING'S SOLDIERS. HE BROUGHT ABOUT THE DEATH OF AN INNOCENT MAN..."



".. WHOSE WIFE CURSED HIM?"

IF I AM THE PURE WIFE OF AN INNOCENT MAN, YOU AND YOUR WIFE SHALL KNOW THE PAIN THAT IS NOW OURS.



KANNAGI UNDERSTOOD.



BLESS US, O GODDESS. RELEASE US FROM THE THROES OF THIS CURSE.



YOU WILL GO TO HEAVEN WITH YOUR HUSBAND. HE WILL COME DOWN AND TAKE YOU. MADURAI WILL BE REBUILT.



AS PROMISED BY THE GODDESS, KOVALAN CAME DOWN IN A WINGED CHARIOT.



KANNAGI, WE ARE NOW FREE OF ALL EARTHLY PAINS AND PLEASURES.

YEARS LATER, TEMPLES WERE BUILT TO HONOUR THE DIVINITY OF KANNAØI. EVEN TO THIS DAY PEOPLE WORSHIP HER.

