

KRISHNA

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THE CHILDHOOD OF THE EIGHTH
AVATAR OF VISHNU

Krishna is the most endearing and ennobling character in Indian mythology. He is at once the common cowherd engaging the milk-maids in playful banter and the supreme intellectual engaged in the exposition of the Gita philosophy.

Krishna has a particular appeal for children because he is one of them as no other divine is. Krishna the boy is mischievous; he is naughty. He has irrepressible energy for innumerable escapades. He is no prig; he is no puritan. He has divine powers. But he humanises them and remains a boy. This powerful human element is the secret of Krishna's universal popularity. He is secular even as he is sacred, and so he remains throughout his life. That is why Krishna becomes a living presence to all children who have listened to the stories about him.

AMAR CHITRA KATHA means good reading.
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KRISHNA



VASUDEVA, A NOBLEMAN, HAD MARRIED PRINCESS DEVAKI OF MATHURA. HE WAS TAKING HIS BRIDE HOME.

DEVAKI'S COUSIN, PRINCE KAMSA, WAS DRIVING THE CHARIOT. HE WAS CRUEL AND THE PEOPLE FEARED HIM.



JUST THEN A HEAVENLY VOICE WAS HEARD.

KAMSA, YOU SHALL SOON DIE. THE EIGHTH CHILD BORN TO DEVAKI WILL SLAY YOU!



IF SHE LIVES TO HAVE THAT EIGHTH CHILD! I'LL SLAY HER BEFORE THEN!

KAMSA! DON'T!



YOUR SISTER HAS DONE YOU NO HARM, KAMSA. AS FOR THE CHILDREN WHO ARE YET TO BE BORN, I SHALL GIVE EACH ONE TO YOU, THE MOMENT IT IS BORN. I PROMISE.

I'LL SPARE DEVAKI, BUT I'LL MAKE SURE THAT YOU KEEP YOUR WORD.



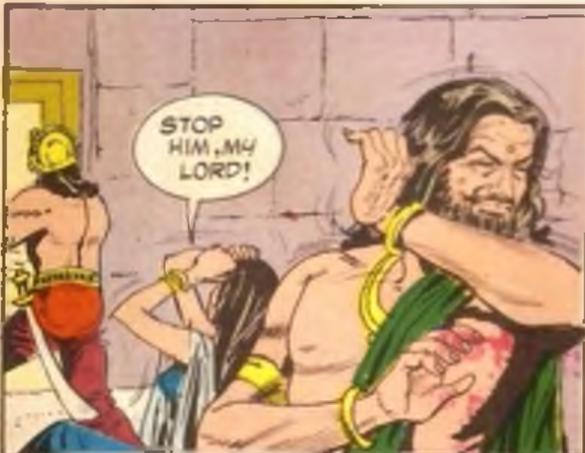
KAMSA CONFINED DEVAKI AND VASUDEVA IN A PALACE. HE VISITED THEM EVERY TIME A BABY WAS BORN.

DEVAKI, GIVE ME THE BABY.

NO!



STOP HIM, MY LORD!



I AM HELPLESS, DEVAKI!



THIS IS HOW THE COUPLE LOSE SIX OF THEIR CHILDREN. WHEN THE SEVENTH ONE WAS ABOUT TO BE BORN —

WE MUST TRY AND SAVE THIS CHILD, DEVAKI.

FROM THAT TYRANT, KAMSA? WE WILL NEVER SUCCEED.



WHO WILL HELP US? WHO WILL DARE RAISE A FINGER AGAINST ONE WHO HAS IMPRISONED HIS OWN FATHER?

YES, KING UGRASENA'S PLIGHT IS NO BETTER THAN OURS.

BUT DON'T LOSE HEART. REMEMBER THE PROPHECY.

THE SEVENTH CHILD WAS MIRACULOUSLY CARRIED TO ROHINI, VASUDEVA'S SECOND WIFE, IN GOKUL.

AND KAMSA WAS TOLD THAT DEVAKI'S BABY WAS STILL-BORN.

GOOD. THE NEXT WILL BE THE EIGHTH ONE — THE SLAYER OF MIGHTY KAMSA. HA!

PRADYOTA, HAVE VASUDEVA AND DEVAKI PUT IN CHAINS.

AS THE MONTHS WENT BY, HOWEVER, KAMSA GREW RESTLESS. CHANURA, THE COURT WRESTLER SENSED THIS.

LORD, WHY DON'T YOU COME TO THE GYMNASIUM?

NO, CHANURA!



I'LL BE AT PEACE ONLY WHEN I'VE KILLED THE EIGHTH CHILD.

IT RAINED HEAVILY ON THE EIGHTH DAY OF THE WANING MOON OF SHRAVAN*.



LORD! I THINK THE TIME HAS COME.

THE EIGHTH CHILD!



IT WAS PAST MIDNIGHT WHEN THE CHILD WAS BORN.

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL BABY HE IS! AND HE KNOWS HE MUST NOT CRY!



* RECKONED AS THE MONTH OF BHADRAPAD, IN NORTH INDIA



HOW LONG TO HOLD MY SON... BUT... THESE CHAINS...



SUDDENLY—

LOOK! THE CHAINS HAVE FALLEN OFF.



AND THE DOORS HAVE OPENED! IT'S A MIRACLE!



DEVAKI! QUICK! GIVE THE CHILD TO ME.



I'LL TAKE HIM TO OUR FRIEND, NANDA, IN GOKUL.



AND YASUDEVA WALKED PAST THE GUARDS WHO HAD FALLEN ASLEEP.

GOKUL WAS ON THE
OPPOSITE BANK OF THE
RIVER YAMUNA WHICH
WAS THEN IN SPATE.



AS VASUDEVA APPROACHED, HOWEVER, THE WATERS PARTED...



... AND VASUDEVA WALKED TOWARDS GOKUL.



AS HE NEARED GOKUL —

AH! THE
CRY OF A NEW-
BORN BABY. IT
COMES FROM
NANDA'S
HOUSE...



NANDA'S WIFE
YASHODA HAS HAD
A CHILD.



IT'S A
GIRL!



AND SURELY
KAMSA WOULD
NOT KILL A BABY
GIRL.



SO VASUDEVA LEFT HIS EIGHTH
CHILD IN NANDA'S HOUSE AND
CARRIED THE BABY GIRL TO MATHURA.

THE CHILD
IS QUIET, AND
THE GUARDS
ARE STILL
ASLEEP.



AS SOON AS VASUDEVA ENTERED THE PALACE, THE DOORS CLOSED MINUTES LATER—

DID YOU HEAR THAT? IT'S THE WAIL OF A NEW-BORN BABY!

COME! LET'S REPORT THIS TO THE KING!

THE EIGHTH CHILD! I WILL BE THERE IN A MOMENT.

WHEN KAMSA REACHED THE PALACE—

SPARE THE BABY, KAMSA. WHAT HARM CAN A GIRL DO YOU?

IGNORING HIM, KAMSA SEIZED THE BABY BY ITS LEGS AND WAS ABOUT TO DASH IT TO THE GROUND WHEN...

...IT ESCAPED FROM HIS GRIP AND FLEW TOWARDS THE SKY.

THEN—

THE ONE WHO SHALL DESTROY YOU STILL LIVES!

THE NEXT DAY,
IN GOKUL—

THEY SAW THAT
NANDA'S SON IS
VERY BEAUTIFUL.

YES, AND HE
HAS A BEAUTIFUL
NAME TOO—
KRISHNA!



KAMSA SET DEVAKI AND VASUDEVA FREE,
HOWEVER, HE WANTED TO TRACE THE EIGHTH
CHILD, SO HE SENT FOR THE WICKED PUTANA.

PUTANA! GO
OUT AND KILL
EVERY CHILD
BORN IN THE
MONTH OF
SHRAVAN!



PUTANA WENT ABOUT HER EVIL
TASK.

I'LL SMEAR
MY BREASTS
WITH POISON
AND
FEED THE
BABIES.



WHAT A SWEET
BABY! MAY I HOLD
IT?



THE MOTHER WAS FLATTERED,
SHE GAVE THE BABY TO PUTANA.

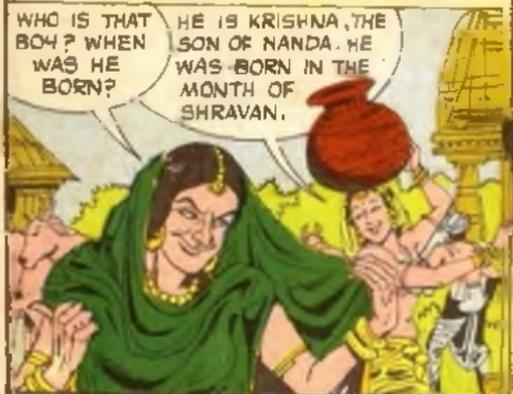
A FEW MINUTES
LATER— MY BABY! WHAT'S
HAPPENED TO MY
BABY? AND WHERE
IS PUTANA?



PUTANA HAD MADE HER WAY TO GOKUL!

WHO IS THAT BOY? WHEN WAS HE BORN?

HE IS KRISHNA, THE SON OF NANDA. HE WAS BORN IN THE MONTH OF SHRAVAN.



WHEN PUTANA FOUND KRISHNA ALONE —



LATER —

WHERE IS KRISHNA? I HAD LEFT HIM HERE!



OH! HE IS SAFE BUT... I SAW WHO IS THIS WOMAN? WHY IS SHE LINGERING HERE? I SAW HER NURSING KRISHNA.



THEN SHE MUST BE PUTANA! PUTANA THE BABY-KILLER. SHE HAS KILLED MANY BABIES IN MATHURA.

SHE IS DEAD! THE EVIL PUTANA IS DEAD!



KRISHNA WAS SAFE, AND LIFE IN GOKUL WENT ON AS BEFORE.

AS THE YEARS WENT BY, KRISHNA GREW TO BE AN ADORABLE LITTLE BOY.

KRISHNA!
COME. I HAVE
SOME FRESH
BUTTER FOR
YOU.



MAY
I HAVE SOME
MORE,
MOTHER?

NO, KRISHNA.
THAT'S ENOUGH
FOR TODAY.



HERE'S
BALARAMA*!GO
AND PLAY WITH
HIM.



THE TWO BOYS RAN OUT
TO MEET THEIR FRIENDS.

KRISHNA,
LET'S GO AND
PLAY ON THE
BANK OF THE
YAMUNA.

WAIT.
I'LL JOIN YOU
IN A MINUTE.



KRISHNA TIPTOED INTO A NEARBY HOUSE...



... AND WENT STRAIGHT TO THE POTS OF BUTTER. SUDDENLY —

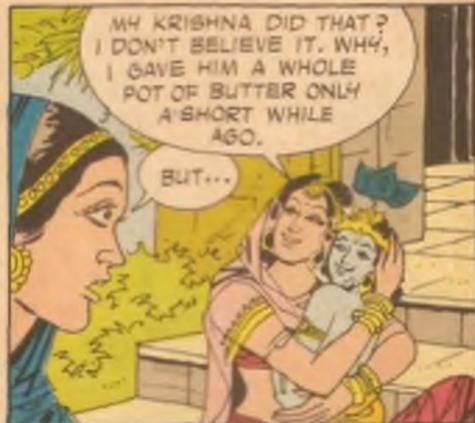


YOU NAUGHTY BOY! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

SHE DRAGGED KRISHNA TO YASHODA.



KRISHNA HAS EATEN ALL THE BUTTER IN MY HOUSE.



MY KRISHNA DID THAT? I DON'T BELIEVE IT. WHY, I GAVE HIM A WHOLE POT OF BUTTER ONLY A SHORT WHILE AGO.

BUT...



SISTER, YOU MUST KEEP THE MILK AND BUTTER BEYOND THE REACH OF CHILDREN.

THE GOPIKAS, AS THE WOMEN OF SOON WERE CALLED, TOOK YASHODA'S ADVICE. BUT KRISHNA WAS TOO CLEVER FOR THEM.

WHAT SHALL WE DO?

I HAVE AN IDEA.



SUCH WERE THE PRANKS KRISHNA PLAYED AND YASHODA FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO HANDLE THE COMPLAINTS THAT POURED IN.

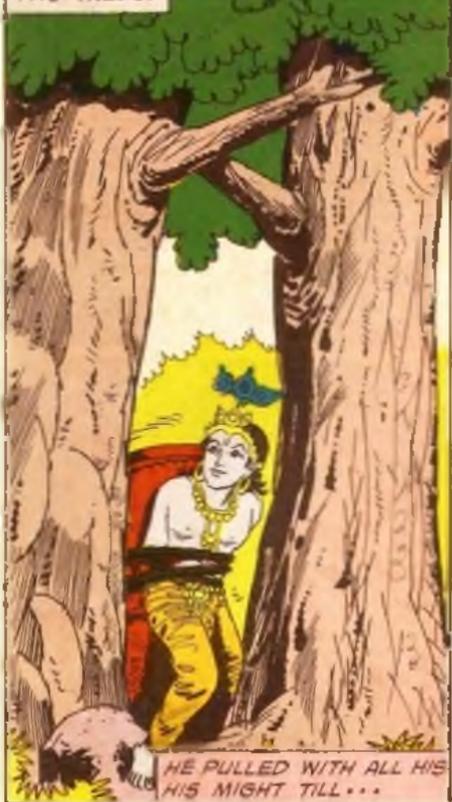
YASHODA! KRISHNA WAS DRINKING THE MILK STRAIGHT FROM MY COW!

BUT MOTHER, THE COW GAVE IT TO ME.





BUT WHILE HE WAS ON HIS WAY
THE MORTAR WAS CAUGHT BETWEEN
TWO TREES.



HE PULLED WITH ALL HIS
HIS MIGHT TILL...

... THE TREES CRASHED TO THE GROUND.



AS THE NEWS SPREAD, A CROWD
GATHERED AT THE SPOT.



THIS
BOY IS A
MARVEL!

HE UPROOTED
THOSE TWO
MIGHTY
TREES!

THESE STRANGE HAPPENINGS FRIGHTENED
THE PEOPLE, SO THEY DECIDED TO LEAVE
GOKUL AND GO TO VRINDAVAN.





ONE DAY —

IT'S
HASTIN! RUN,
KRISHNA!

I WON'T,
I'LL TAME
HIM.



PLEASE
COME BACK,
KRISHNA!
HE'LL HURT
YOU.



AS KRISHNA
NEARED HIM, THE
BULL SNORTED
FIERCELY AND
CHARGED.



BUT KRISHNA WAS TOO QUICK FOR HIM.

QUIET, MY
FRIEND. I WON'T
HURT YOU.



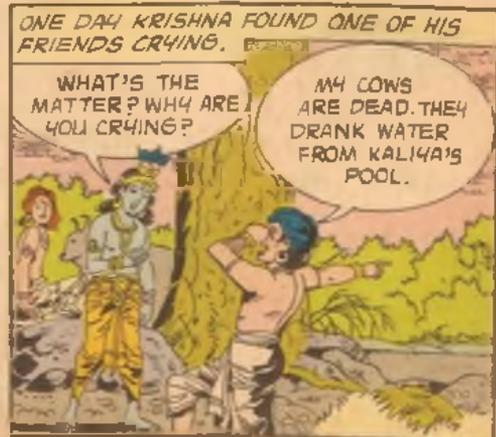
THIS DID KRISHNA, FIRMLY BUT
GENTLY, CALM THE ANGRY BULL.

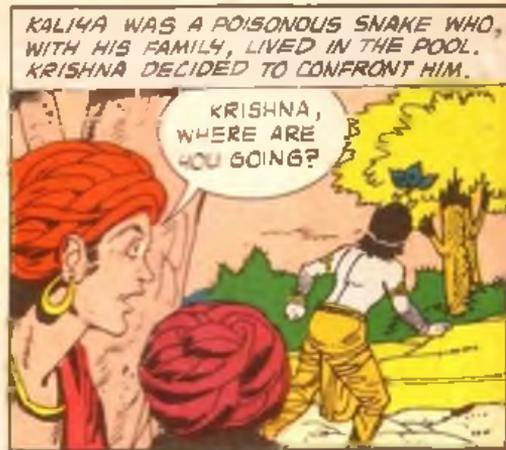
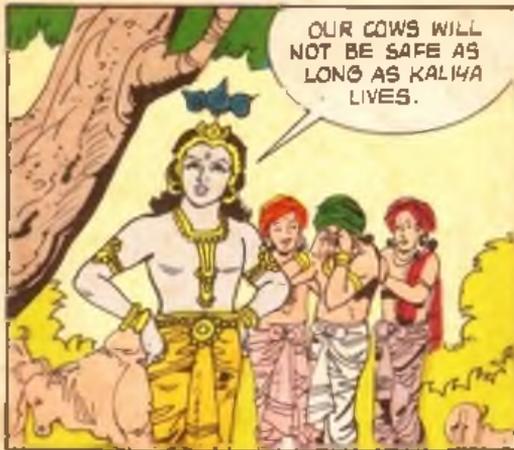


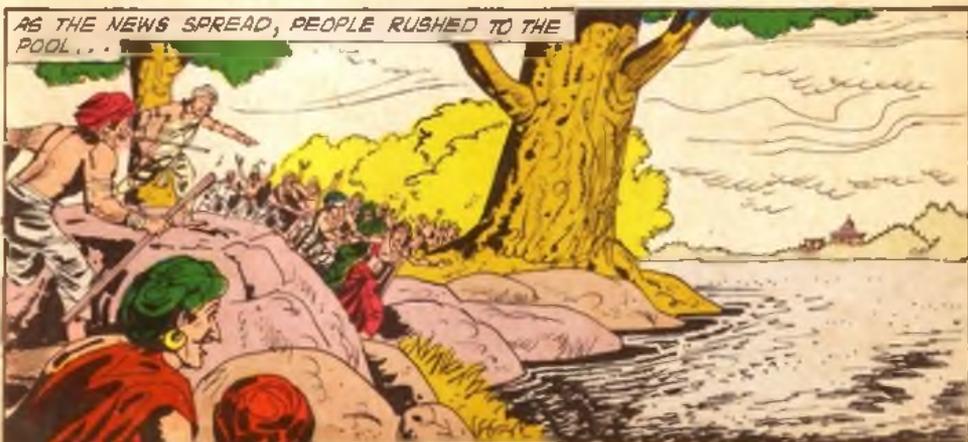
ONE DAY KRISHNA FOUND ONE OF HIS
FRIENDS CRYING.

WHAT'S THE
MATTER? WHY ARE
YOU CRYING?

MY COWS
ARE DEAD. THEY
DRANK WATER
FROM KALIYA'S
POOL.









...ONLY TO FIND KRISHNA DANCING ON THE HOOD OF A MEEK KALIYA.

WHAT A BOY!



KRISHNA ORDERED KALIYA TO LEAVE THE POOL WITH HIS FAMILY. PEACE RETURNED TO VRINDAVAN.



ONE DAY, AS THE PEOPLE OF VRINDAVAN WERE PREPARING TO WORSHIP INDRA —

WE WORSHIP INDRA BECAUSE WE ARE AFRAID OF HIM. WE OUGHT TO WORSHIP MOUNT GOVARDHANA WHOM WE LOVE!

KRISHNA IS RIGHT.



BUT WHILE GOVARDHANA WAS BEING WORSHIPPED, LOUD CLAPS OF THUNDER WERE HEARD...



...AND IT STARTED RAINING HEAVILY.

INDRA IS ANGRY. WE SHOULDN'T HAVE WORSHIPPED GOVARDHANA.



COME MY
PEOPLE,
FOLLOW
ME.



SUDDENLY A
RUMBLING SOUND
WAS HEARD.



GOVARDHANA IS
MOVING!

LOOK!
IT'S
RISING!



BRING
YOUR CATTLE
WITH YOU AND
TAKE SHELTER.
IT IS DRY
HERE.



IT'S A
MIRACLE! KRISHNA
IS HOLDING THE
MIGHTY GOVARDHANA
ON HIS LITTLE
FINGER!

KRISHNA SHELTERED THEM FOR SEVEN DAYS
AND SEVEN NIGHTS TILL INDRA'S FURY WAS SPENT.

WHEN NEWS OF KRISHNA'S DEEDS REACHED MATHURA —

PRADYOTA! I HEAR THAT KRISHNA HELD THE MIGHTY GOVARDHANA ON HIS LITTLE FINGER.

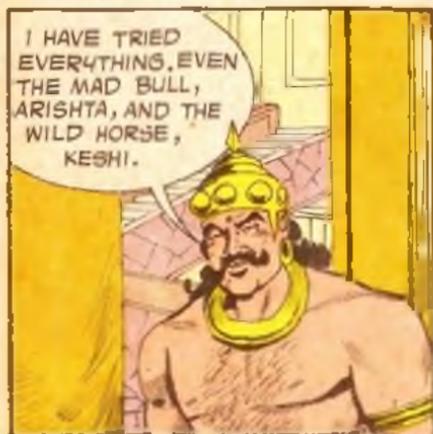
SO THEY SAY, MY LORD!



YOU FOOL! WHY HAVE YOU LET HIM LIVE SO LONG? DIDN'T I ORDER YOU TO HAVE HIM KILLED SOMEHOW?

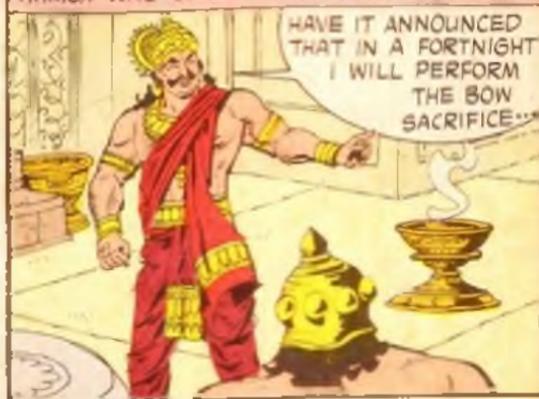


I HAVE TRIED EVERYTHING, EVEN THE MAD BULL, ARISHTA, AND THE WILD HORSE, KESHI.



KAMSA WAS SILENT FOR A WHILE, THEN —

HE IT ANNOUNCED THAT IN A FORTNIGHT I WILL PERFORM THE BOW SACRIFICE...



...AND... INVITE ALL, INCLUDING KRISHNA. YOU MUST SEE TO IT THAT HE DOES NOT RETURN ALIVE.



WHEN PRADYOTA LEFT, KAMSA SENT FOR CHANURA.

CHANURA! IF KRISHNA IS NOT KILLED BY PRADYOTA, CHALLENGE HIM TO A MATCH AND DON'T LET HIM ESCAPE ALIVE.



HE ALSO SUMMONED THE CHIEF OF MAHUTS.

YOU WILL STAND AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE YAGNA HALL WHEN KRISHNA COMES THERE SEE THAT YOUR ELEPHANT TRAMPLES HIM TO DEATH.



THEN HE SENT FOR THE WISE AKRURA.

I WANT THE WHOLE WORLD TO KNOW OF KRISHNA. ASK HIM TO COME TO MATHURA, FOR THE BOW SACRIFICE.



AKRURA SET OUT ON HIS MISSION.

AT VRINDAVAN—

YOU MUST PERMIT KRISHNA TO COME TO MATHURA.

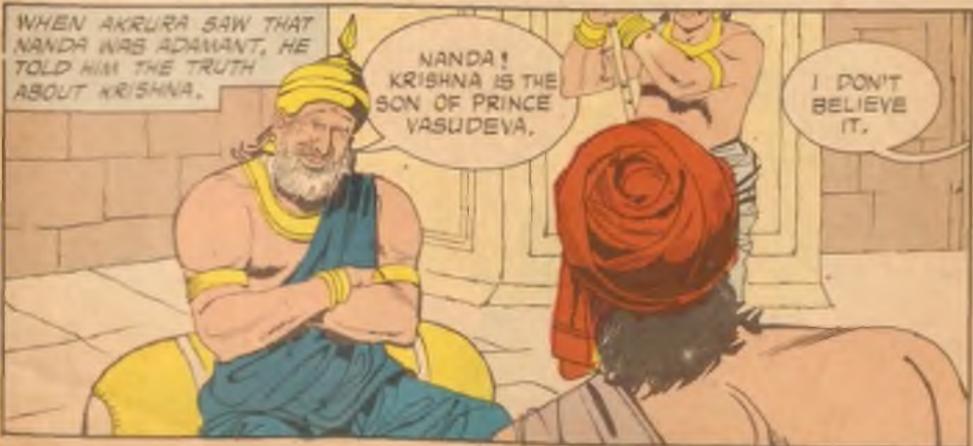
NO, AKRURA. I DON'T TRUST KAMSA. I WILL NOT SEND MY SON.



WHEN AKRURA SAW THAT NANDA WAS ADAMANT, HE TOLD HIM THE TRUTH ABOUT KRISHNA.

NANDA! KRISHNA IS THE SON OF PRINCE VASUDEVA.

I DON'T BELIEVE IT.



SO AKRURA NARRATED THE STORY OF KRISHNA'S BIRTH AND HOW HE WAS BROUGHT TO GOKUL.

KRISHNA, DID YOU HEAR THAT? AKRURA SAYS THAT DEVAKI IS YOUR MOTHER. I AM YOUR MOTHER, AREN'T I?

PLEASE DON'T BE UPSET, MOTHER. I SHALL ALWAYS LOOK UPON YOU AS MY MOTHER. BUT...

... I SEEK THE PERMISSION OF MY ELDERS TO GO TO MATHURA!

VERY GOOD, MY BOY! THE YADAVA CHIEFS WILL SEE THAT NO HARM COMES TO YOU.

YOU MAY GO, MY SON. BUT BEWARE OF KAMSA.

THE NEXT MORNING, KRISHNA, ACCOMPANIED BY BALARAMA, LEFT FOR MATHURA.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES, CHILDREN.

AND COME BACK SOON.

AS THEY NEARED THE CITY OF MATHURA, KRISHNA DECIDED TO WALK. SUDDENLY—

RISE, O WOMAN! WHY DO YOU FALL AT MY FEET?



LOOK AT TRIVAKRA! HER HUMPED BACK HAS STRAIGHTENED OUT.

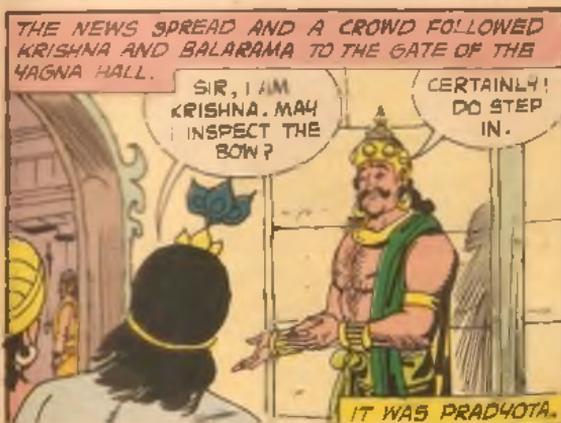
A MIRACLE! HE MUST BE OUR SAVIOUR.



THE NEWS SPREAD AND A CROWD FOLLOWED KRISHNA AND BALARAMA TO THE GATE OF THE YAGNA HALL.

SIR, I AM KRISHNA. MAY I INSPECT THE BOW?

CERTAINLY! DO STEP IN.



IT WAS PRADYOTA.

SO THIS IS THE BOY I HAVE TO KILL.



IS THIS THE BOW? IT DOESN'T LOOK VERY HEAVY.



BUT IT IS! EVEN THE MIGHTY WRESTLER CHANURA CANNOT LIFT IT.

I STILL DON'T BELIEVE IT IS THAT HEAVY.



KRISHNA LIFTED THE BOW...



...AND BROKE IT.



THE JUBILANT CROWD RUSHED INTO THE SACRIFICIAL HALL.



WHEN PRADYOTA WENT TO KAMSA WITH THE NEWS—



YOU HAD ORDERS TO KILL HIM, HADN'T YOU?

I KNOW, MY LORD! BUT THE CROWD THAT FOLLOWED HIM WAS FRIGHTENING.



THE NEXT MORNING
AS KRISHNA APPROACHED
THE GATE OF THE
HAGNA HALL—



THE ELEPHANT SEIZED
KRISHNA.



BUT KRISHNA
ESCAPED ITS
GRIP, LIFTED
IT BY ITS
TRUNK...



... AND HURLING
IT INTO THE
AIR ...



... KILLED IT.



THEN WITH BALARAMA, HE TOOK HIS PLACE IN THE ARENA WHERE THE GAMES WERE BEING HELD.



'KRISHNA, KAMSA HAS HEARD MUCH ABOUT YOUR STRENGTH AND VALOUR. HE HAS INVITED YOU TO WRESTLE... WITH ME!

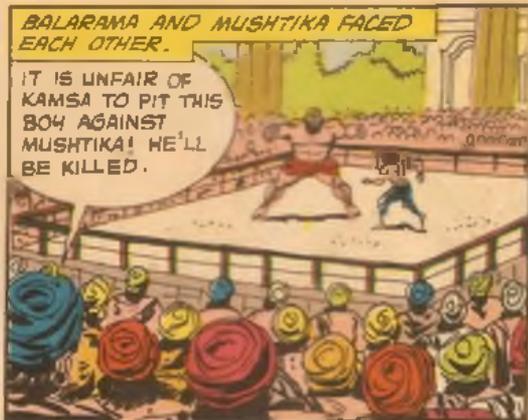
IT'S AN HONOUR, CHANURA. I AM READY.

FIRST MUSHTIKA WILL WRESTLE WITH YOUR BROTHER.



BALARAMA AND MUSHTIKA FACED EACH OTHER.

IT IS UNFAIR OF KAMSA TO PIT THIS BOY AGAINST MUSHTIKA! HE'LL BE KILLED.



BUT THE CROWD WAS IN FOR A SURPRISE.



LOOK! MUSHTIKA IS IN TROUBLE!

IT WAS BALARAMA WHO KILLED MUSHTIKA.

NOW CHANURA STEPPED FORWARD.

ARE YOU READY, KRISHNA?



CHANURA TRIED TO CRUSH KRISHNA IN HIS MIGHTY ARMS. BUT KRISHNA SLIPPED AWAY.



DISAPPOINTED, CHANURA RUSHED MADLY AT HIM.



BUT KRISHNA NIMBLY STEPPED ASIDE AND PICKING HIM UP...



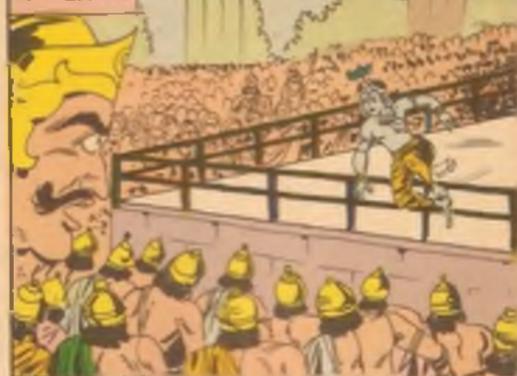
...DASHED HIM TO THE GROUND.



AS KAMSA'S SOLDIERS MOVED TOWARDS THE YADAVA CHIEFS...



... KRISHNA RUSHED TOWARDS KAMSA ...



... TOOK AWAY HIS SWORD ...



... AND THROWING HIM TO THE GROUND, KILLED HIM.



THE CROWD WAS STUNNED INTO SILENCE. KRISHNA LIFTED THE CROWN FROM KAMSA'S HEAD ...



... AND BEGAN WALKING TOWARDS THE PALACE.



HE WALKED PAST THE GUARDS...



... AND WENT UP TO UGRASENA, KAMSA'S FATHER.



MY LORD! I HAVE BROUGHT YOU WHAT RIGHTFULLY BELONGS TO YOU.



THIS WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING. KRISHNA LIVED LONG TO TRIUMPH OVER ALL EVIL. HIS GREAT DEEDS ARE REMEMBERED TO THIS DAY.

THE BIRTHDAY PRESENT



AMAR CHITRA KATHA ARE BROUGHT OUT BY PEOPLE

- who care for children
- who screen each word and each picture as they have a lasting impact on impressionable minds.
- for whom Chitra Katha is more a vehicle of education than a business.

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