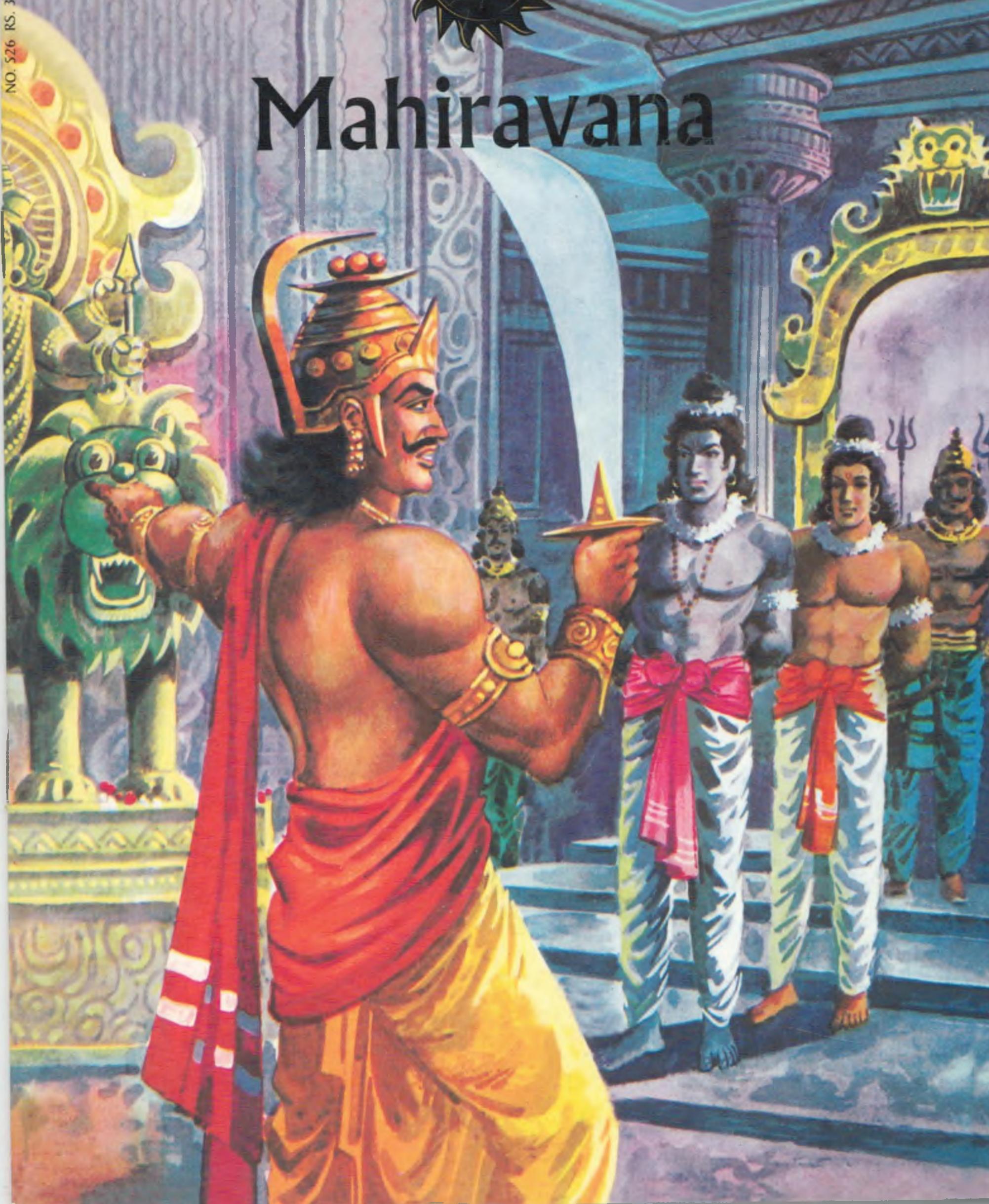


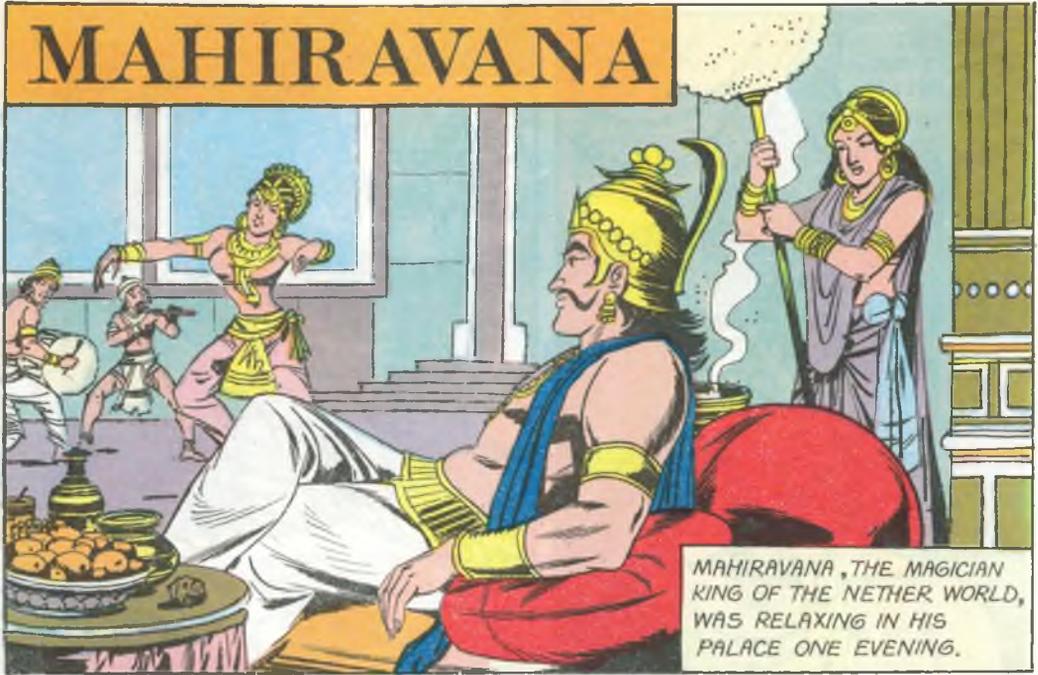
NO. 526 RS. 30



Mahiravana



MAHIRAVANA



MAHIRAVANA, THE MAGICIAN KING OF THE NETHER WORLD, WAS RELAXING IN HIS PALACE ONE EVENING.

SUDDENLY, THROUGH HIS SUPER-NATURAL POWERS, HE PERCEIVED THAT SOMEONE WAS IN DANGER AND NEEDED HIS HELP.

BUT WHO? WHO IS THINKING OF ME? I MUST FIND OUT.



RETIRING TO HIS CHAMBER, HE TRIED TO FIGURE OUT WHO IT WAS.

NO ONE HERE IN THE NETHER WORLD NEEDS MY HELP.



NO ONE NEEDS ME IN HEAVEN, EITHER.

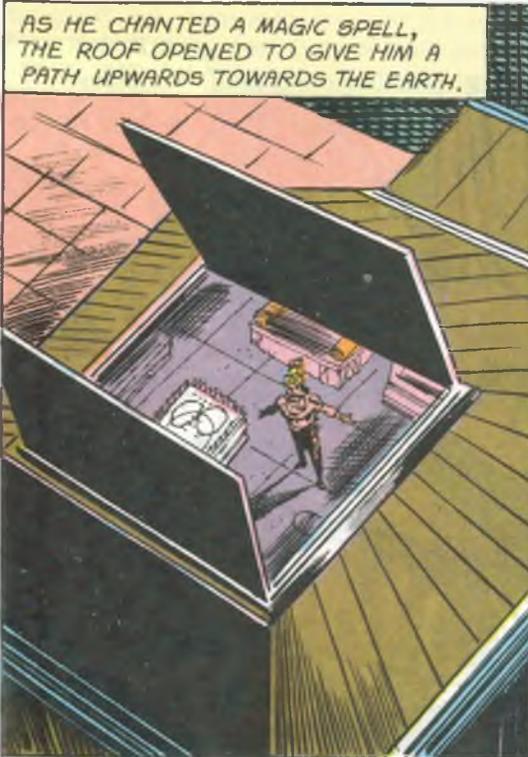


HE THEN THOUGHT OF HIS KITH AND KIN LIVING ON EARTH. THEN—

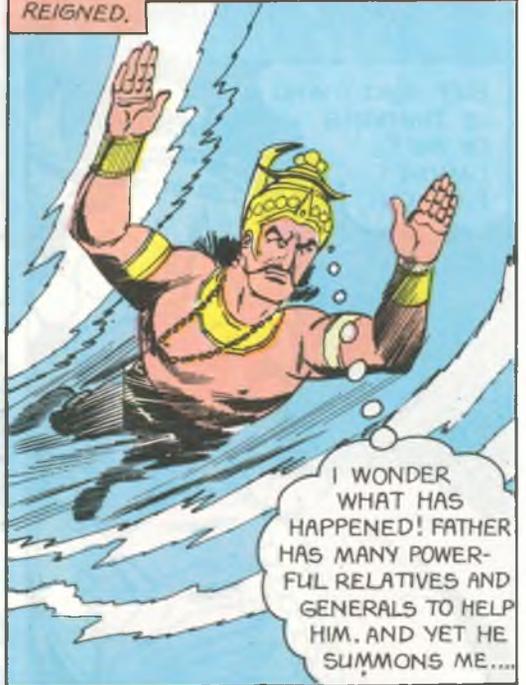
AH! IT'S MY FATHER! HE IS IN DANGER! I MUST GO TO HIM IMMEDIATELY.



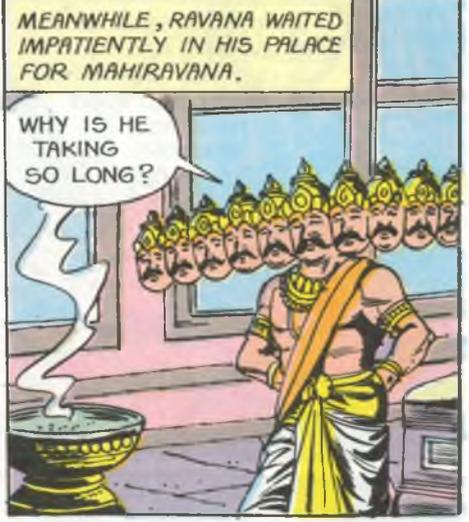
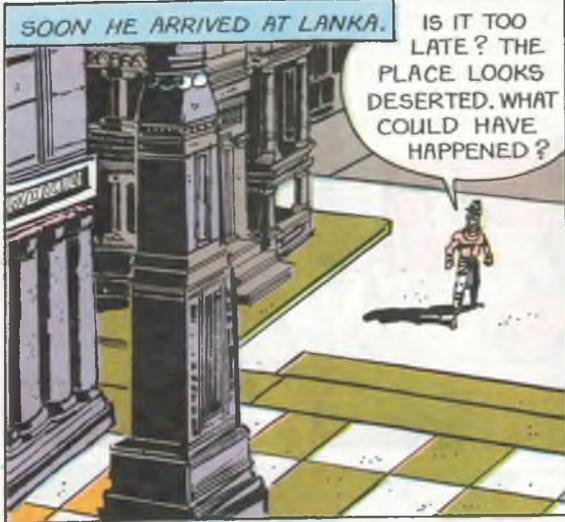
AS HE CHANTED A MAGIC SPELL, THE ROOF OPENED TO GIVE HIM A PATH UPWARDS TOWARDS THE EARTH.

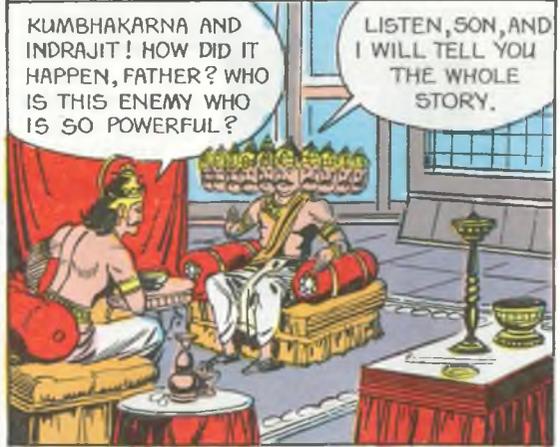
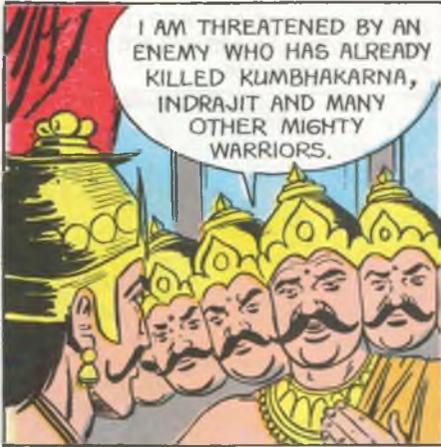


GLIDING OUT, MAHIRAVANA STARTED FOR LANKA, WHERE HIS FATHER, RAVANA, REIGNED.



I WONDER WHAT HAS HAPPENED! FATHER HAS MANY POWERFUL RELATIVES AND GENERALS TO HELP HIM. AND YET HE SUMMONS ME....





THEN RAMA SENT HANUMAN, A MONKEY, IN SEARCH OF SITA. HE CAME TO LANKA AND DESTROYED MY PRECIOUS ASHOKA GROVE.

I MANAGED TO HAVE HIM BOUND AND ORDERED HIS TAIL TO BE SET ON FIRE.



THE WRETCHED MONKEY JUMPED FROM ROOF TO ROOF
AND VERY SOON MY CITY WAS ABLAZE.



THEN RAMA CAME WITH HIS MONKEY ARMY.



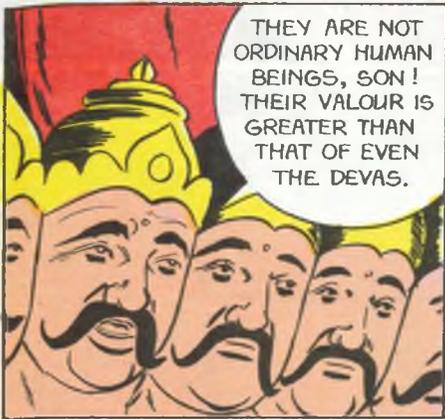
HE KILLED MANY OF MY BRAVE GENERALS AND WARRIORS.



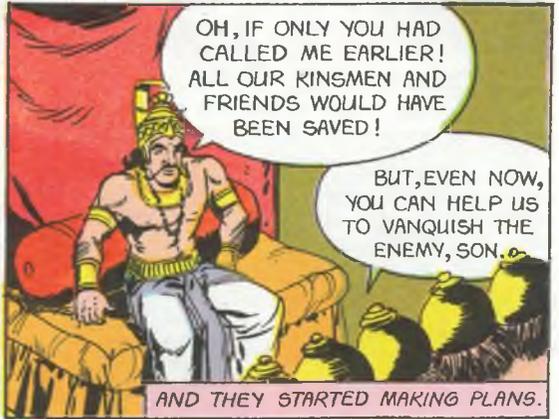


AND THAT IS WHY I NOW NEED YOUR HELP.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! YOU, WHO HAVE DEFEATED INDRA AND OTHER DEVAS, HAVE BEEN DEFEATED BY A BANISHED PRINCE AND A MONKEY-KING!



THEY ARE NOT ORDINARY HUMAN BEINGS, SON! THEIR VALOUR IS GREATER THAN THAT OF EVEN THE DEVAS.



OH, IF ONLY YOU HAD CALLED ME EARLIER! ALL OUR KINSMEN AND FRIENDS WOULD HAVE BEEN SAVED!

BUT, EVEN NOW, YOU CAN HELP US TO VANQUISH THE ENEMY, SON.

AND THEY STARTED MAKING PLANS.



MEANWHILE, IN RAMA'S CAMP, VIBHEESHANA* WAS ANXIOUS TO KNOW WHAT RAVANA'S NEXT MOVE WOULD BE.

MY LORD, ALL RAVANA'S MEN HAVE BEEN KILLED IN BATTLE. MAY I GO AND FIND OUT WHAT HE PLANS TO DO NEXT?

OF COURSE, VIBHEESHANA, IF YOU THINK IT IS NECESSARY.

*RAVANA'S BROTHER WHO HAD JOINED THE OPPOSITE CAMP

VIBHEESHANA ASSUMED THE FORM OF A BIRD AND FLEW OFF...



...TILL HE CAME TO RAVANA'S PALACE.



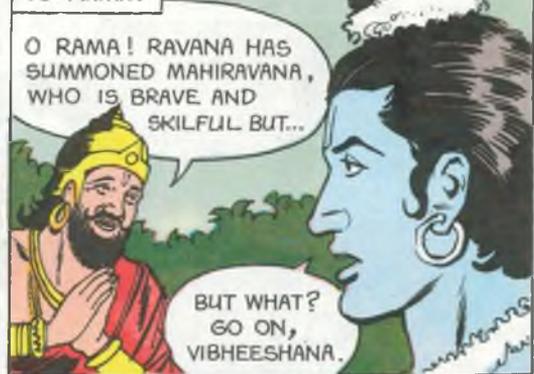
SO, THIS IS IT—RAVANA HAS SUMMONED MAHIRAVANA!

HE HURRIED BACK—



RAMA MUST BE INFORMED OF THIS!

REGAINING HIS NORMAL FORM, HE WENT TO RAMA.



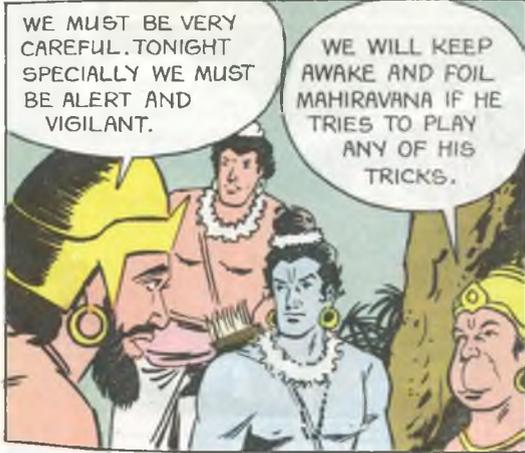
O RAMA! RAVANA HAS SUMMONED MAHIRAVANA, WHO IS BRAVE AND SKILFUL BUT...

BUT WHAT? GO ON, VIBHEESHANA.

... IT'S HIS MAGICAL POWERS WHICH ARE TO BE FEARED MOST. HE IS A WILY PERSON. ONE CANNOT FORETELL HIS PLANS.



I SEE...



WE MUST BE VERY CAREFUL. TONIGHT SPECIALLY WE MUST BE ALERT AND VIGILANT.

WE WILL KEEP AWAKE AND FOIL MAHIRAVANA IF HE TRIES TO PLAY ANY OF HIS TRICKS.



BUT WE MUST ALSO THINK OF A WAY OF KEEPING RAMA AND LAKSHMANA SAFE TONIGHT.



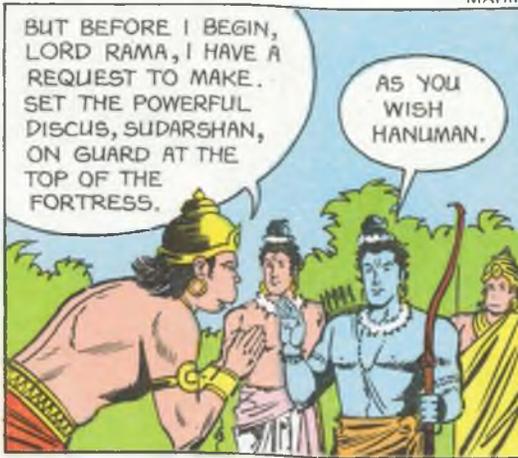
HANUMAN WAS DEEP IN THOUGHT. THEN—

YES! I HAVE IT! I'LL BUILD A STRONG FORTRESS AROUND RAMA AND LAKSHMANA SO THAT NO ONE WILL BE ABLE TO GET IN.

A FORTRESS? IN SUCH A SHORT TIME?



YES. YOU JUST WATCH!



BUT BEFORE I BEGIN, LORD RAMA, I HAVE A REQUEST TO MAKE. SET THE POWERFUL DISCUS, SUDARSHAN, ON GUARD AT THE TOP OF THE FORTRESS.

AS YOU WISH HANUMAN.



AND THEN, HANUMAN STARTED EXTENDING HIS TAIL. IT STOOD STIFF AND WENT HIGHER AND HIGHER...

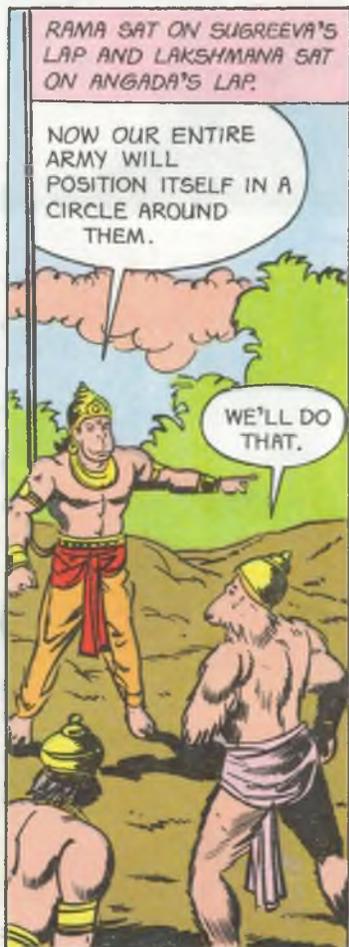


...TILL IT REACHED THE SKY. IT BECAME A HUNDRED YOJANAS* LONG. THEN HE TURNED TO SUGREEVA, THE KING OF THE MONKEYS.

O KING, PLEASE SIT THERE AND HOLD RAMA ON YOUR LAP.



ANGADA WILL LIKELIKE PROTECT YOU, LAKSHMANA.



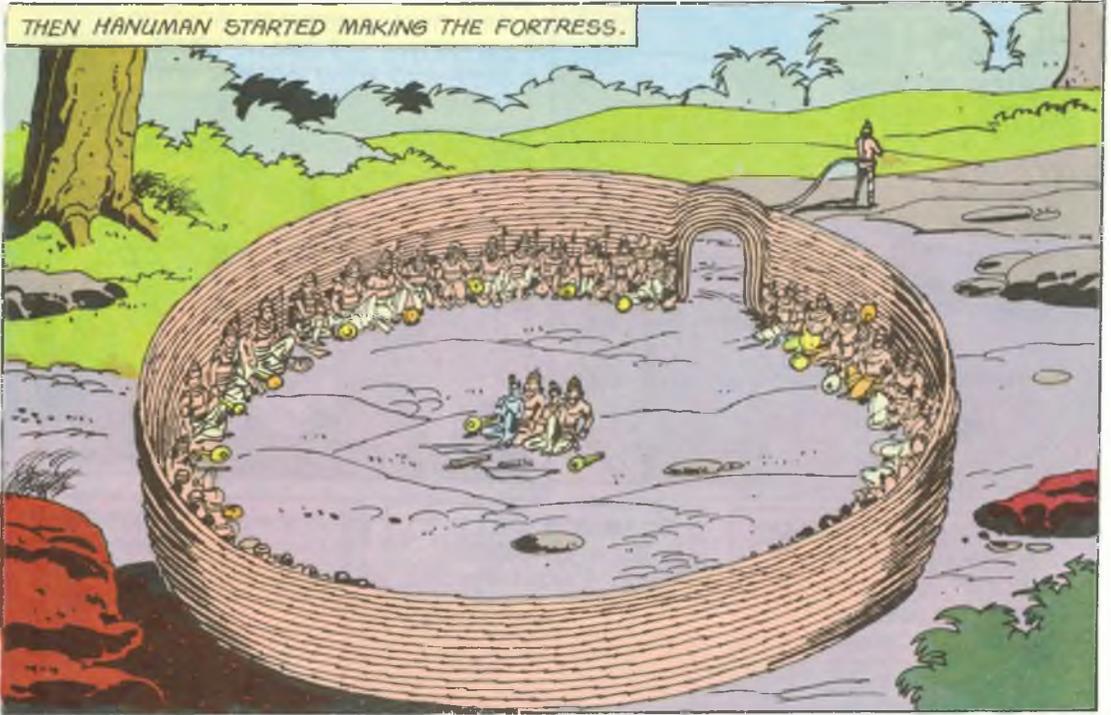
RAMA SAT ON SUGREEVA'S LAP AND LAKSHMANA SAT ON ANGADA'S LAP.

NOW OUR ENTIRE ARMY WILL POSITION ITSELF IN A CIRCLE AROUND THEM.

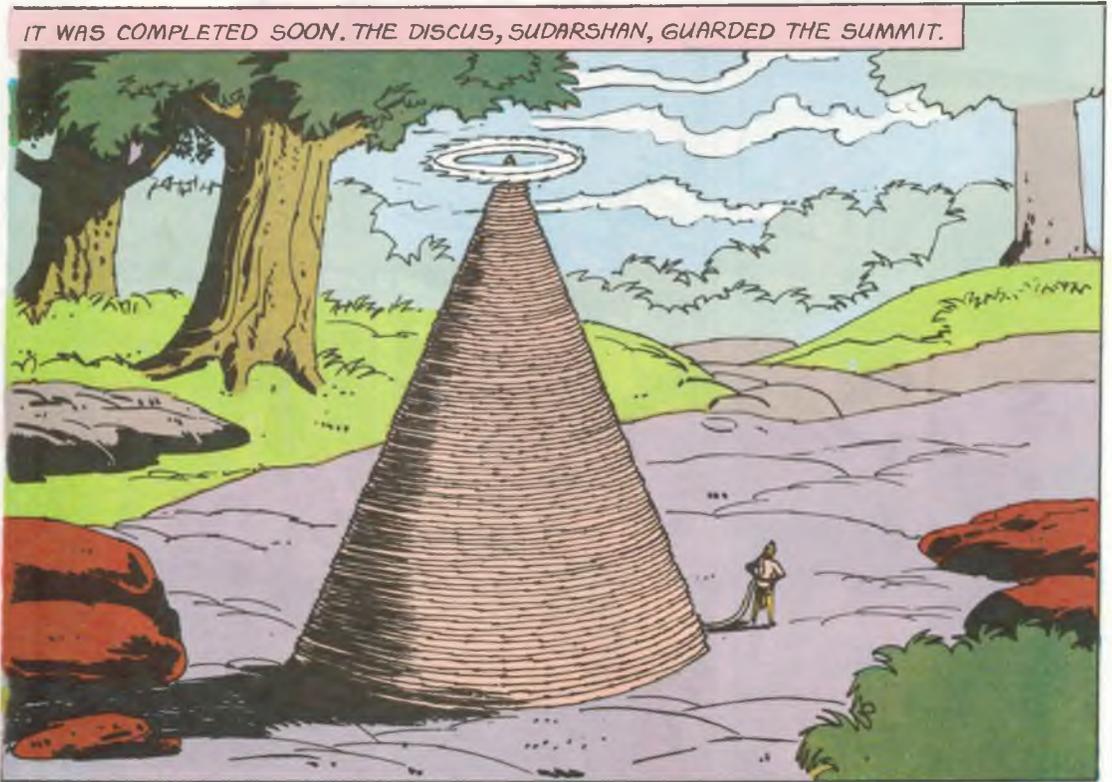
WE'LL DO THAT.

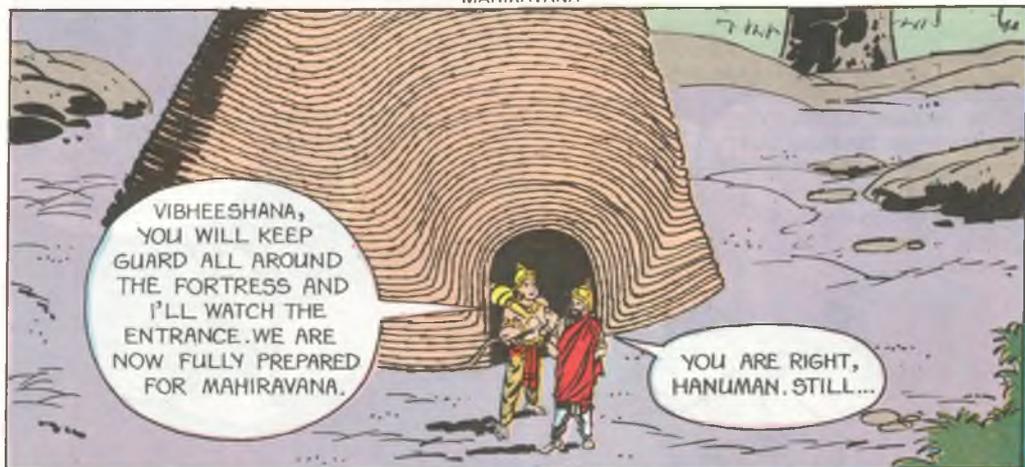
*ONE YOJANA = 13 KILOMETRES

THEN HANUMAN STARTED MAKING THE FORTRESS.



IT WAS COMPLETED SOON. THE DISCUS, SUDARSHAN, GUARDED THE SUMMIT.





VIBHEESHANA,
YOU WILL KEEP
GUARD ALL AROUND
THE FORTRESS AND
I'LL WATCH THE
ENTRANCE. WE ARE
NOW FULLY PREPARED
FOR MAHIRAVANA.

YOU ARE RIGHT,
HANUMAN. STILL...



...WE MUST BE VERY,
VERY CAREFUL. THAT
MAGICIAN CAN ASSUME
ANY GUISE. SO PLEASE
DON'T LET ANYONE
ENTER THE FORTRESS—
NOT EVEN YOUR OWN
FATHER, PAWAN.*

DON'T WORRY,
VIBHEESHANA,
I WON'T. NO ONE
WILL BE ALLOWED
TO GET IN.



WHEN NIGHT FELL,
THEY CONTINUED
THEIR VIGIL.

MEANWHILE, IN LANKA, RAVANA AND MAHIRAVANA WERE NOT IDLE. THEY, TOO, WERE MAKING CAREFUL PLANS.

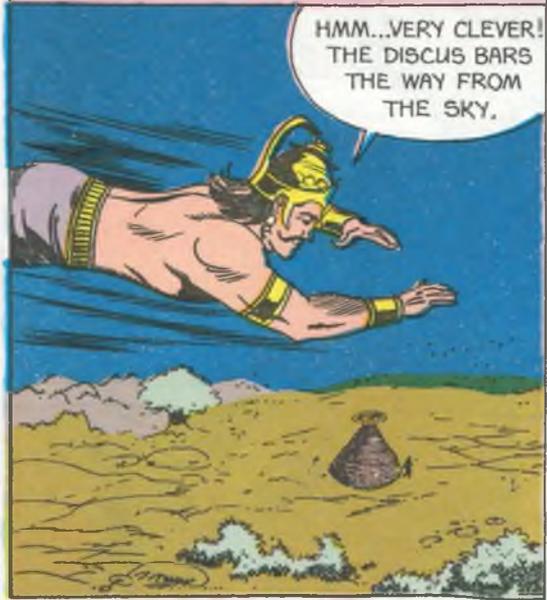
NOW FATHER, LEAVE EVERYTHING TO ME. I'LL TAKE RAMA AND LAKSHMANA AWAY TO THE NETHER WORLD AND SACRIFICE THEM THERE TO THE GODDESS, DURGA.

YOU HAVE TAKEN A LOAD OFF MY CHEST, SON.



MAHIRAVANA DEPARTED. HE TOOK NO MEN, NO HORSES AND NO WEAPONS. ENDOWED AS HE WAS WITH MAGIC POWERS, WITHIN MINUTES HE HAD REACHED RAMA'S CAMP.

HMM...VERY CLEVER! THE DISCUS BARS THE WAY FROM THE SKY.



RAMA AND LAKSHMANA MUST BE IN THAT FORTRESS. BUT HOW SHALL I GET PAST THE MONKEY TO REACH THEM?



THAT WAS INDEED A DIFFICULT PROBLEM, FOR HANUMAN WAS KEEPING A STRICT WATCH.

I WILL KEEP GUARD ROUND THE FORTRESS. REMEMBER, NOT EVEN YOUR FATHER IS TO BE ALLOWED IN.



BUT SOON AFTER VIBHEESHANA LEFT—

O MIGHTY HANUMAN ! I AM DASHARATHA, RAMA'S FATHER. LET ME ENTER. I WANT TO MEET MY SONS.

KING DASHARATHA!



PLEASE WAIT FOR A MINUTE, MY LORD. VIBHEESHANA WILL SOON BE COMING THIS WAY AND WILL TAKE YOU IN.



AH! HERE HE COMES.



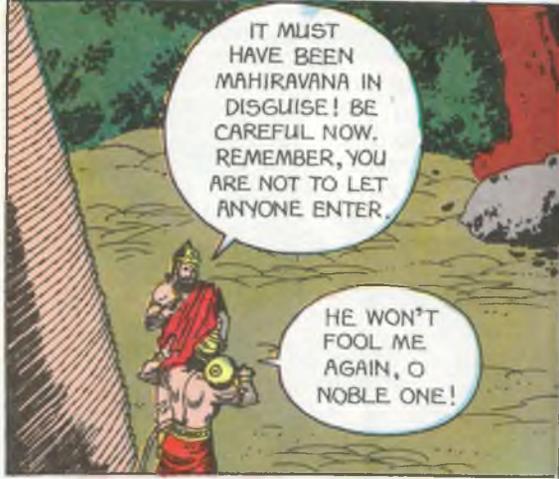
KING DASHARATHA IS HERE, VIBHEESHANA, TO MEET HIS SONS.

KING DASHARATHA? I SEE NO ONE HERE!





HERE....
OH! BUT
WHERE
HAS HE
GONE?



IT MUST
HAVE BEEN
MAHIRAVANA IN
DISGUISE! BE
CAREFUL NOW.
REMEMBER, YOU
ARE NOT TO LET
ANYONE ENTER.

HE WON'T
FOOL ME
AGAIN, O
NOBLE ONE!

AS SOON AS VIBHEESHANA LEFT ON HIS
ROUNDS —

O HANUMAN,
I HAVE NOT SEEN MY
BROTHERS FOR A
VERY LONG TIME!
PLEASE LET
ME GO IN.



PRINCE BHARATA!
YOUR BROTHERS
WILL BE HAPPY
TO MEET YOU.
BUT PLEASE
WAIT FOR
VIBHEESHANA.

BUT WHEN
VIBHEESHANA
CAME THERE —

HERE COMES
VIBHEESHANA.
HE'LL ESCORT
YOU



TO WHOM ARE
YOU TALKING?
THERE'S NO
ONE HERE!





THE NEXT MOMENT—

VIBHEESHANA, WHEN DID YOU COME OUT? I DIDN'T SEE YOU COMING OUT.

COMING OUT FROM WHERE, MY FRIEND? I HAVE BEEN OUT ALL THE TIME.



B...BUT...YOU WENT IN JUST NOW—TO TIE PROTECTIVE STRINGS ON THE WRISTS OF RAMA AND LAKSHMANA. OR, ARE YOU....

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I DIDN'T GO IN AT ALL!



YOU ARE LYING! YOU ARE A SPY OF RAVANA, I AM SURE! YOU PLAYED THIS TRICK UPON US...YOU...!

CALM DOWN, HANUMAN. IT SEEMS THE CLEVER MAHIRAVANA HAS TRICKED YOU BY COMING IN MY GUISE THIS TIME.



YOU COULD BE RIGHT! LET'S GO IN AND SEE.



FEAR GRIPPED THEM BOTH. THEY RUSHED INSIDE.



LOOK!

RAMA AND
LAKSHMANA
ARE NOT HERE!



EVERY ONE IS
FAST ASLEEP.
AS IF BY
MAGIC....

THIS IS MAHIRAVANA'S
WORK! SPRINKLING
THIS MAGIC POWDER
BEFORE THEM...



...HE PUT THE MIGHTY
WARRIORS TO SLEEP
AND CARRIED RAMA
AND LAKSHMANA
AWAY WITH HIM
THROUGH THE
TUNNEL.

ALL IS LOST!
PLEASE
FORGIVE ME,
VIBHEESHANA,
FOR SUSPECTING
YOU.

DON'T
WORRY ABOUT
THAT, HANUMAN.
LET'S WAKE
THE OTHERS
UP.



WAKE UP,
O SUGREEVA!
WAKE UP,
ANGADA!

SOON, EVERYONE WAS WIDE AWAKE.

O KING SUGREEVA !
RAMA AND LAKSHMANA
HAVE BEEN CARRIED
AWAY BY MAHIRAVANA.
I AM NOT FIT TO LIVE!
IT WAS ALL MY
FAULT.

NO ! AS YOUR
KING, THE
BLAME MUST
FALL ON ME.

-AND ON ME
TOO. I HAVE
FAILED IN
MY DUTY!



THEN JAMBAVAN, THE WISE ONE, SPOKE OUT.

THE BLAME MUST
BE SHARED EQUALLY
BY ALL OF US. BUT WHY
WASTE TIME ? LET US
THINK OF A WAY
OF RESCUING THEM.
HANUMAN SHOULD
GO AND FIND
THEM.

YES.
IF ANYONE
CAN FIND
THEM, IT IS
HANUMAN.



O HANUMAN, YOU
CROSSED THE
MIGHTY OCEAN TO
RESCUE SITA. ONLY
YOU CAN PERFORM
THIS TASK NOW.
WE DEPEND
UPON YOU.

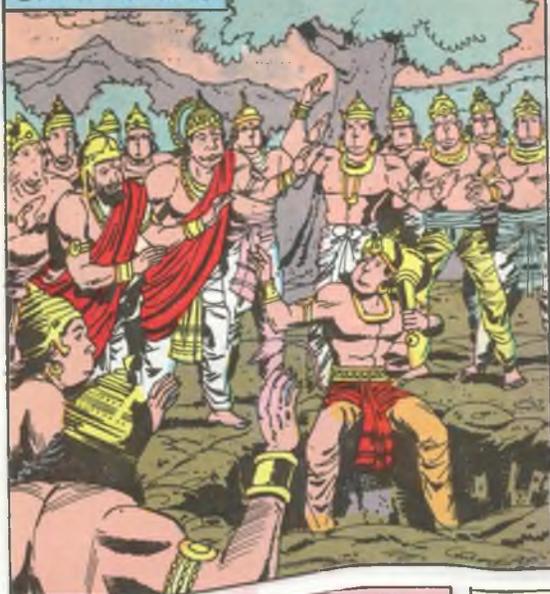
MY HEAD BOWS
LOW WITH
SHAME, MY LORD,
FOR I LET THE
DEAR ONES BE
CARRIED AWAY
UNDER OUR
VERY EYES!



TO ATONE I'LL SEARCH
THE THREE WORLDS
TILL I FIND THEM,
FOR WITHOUT THEM
I CANNOT LIVE.



HANUMAN'S TAIL CAME BACK TO ITS NORMAL SIZE. BIDDING THEM FAREWELL, HANUMAN ENTERED THE TUNNEL MADE BY MAHIRAVANA.



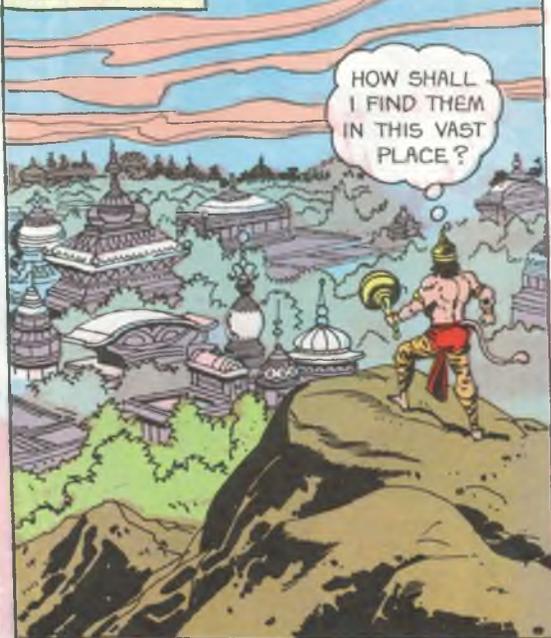
HE TRAVELLED THROUGH THE LONG TUNNEL...



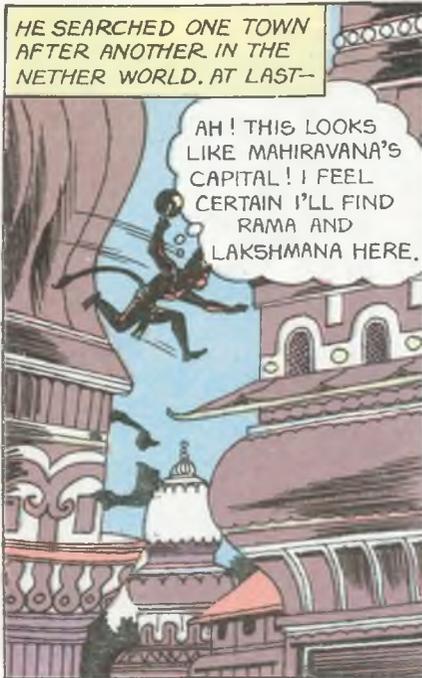
...TILL AT LAST HE REACHED THE END.



THE NETHER WORLD STRETCHED OUT IN FRONT OF HIM.



HE SEARCHED ONE TOWN AFTER ANOTHER IN THE NETHER WORLD. AT LAST--



THEN HE SAW A BEAUTIFUL LAKE. ASSUMING A VERY SMALL FORM, HE WAITED ON A HIGH TREE.

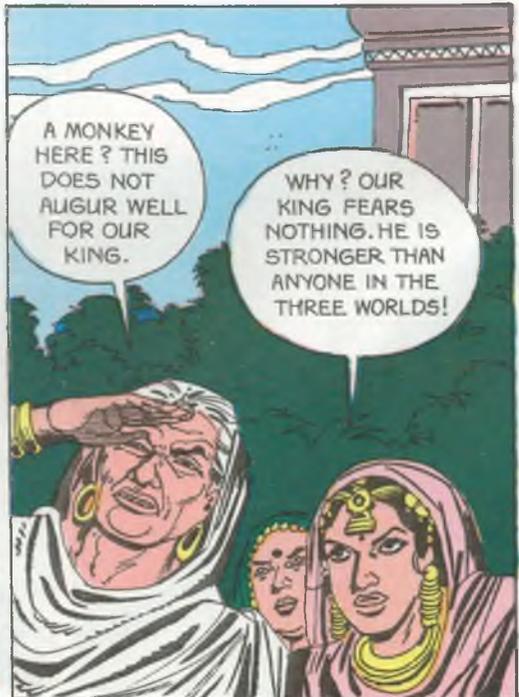


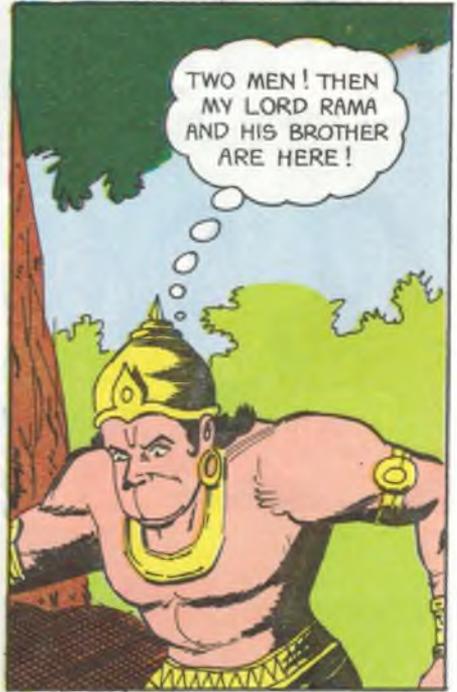
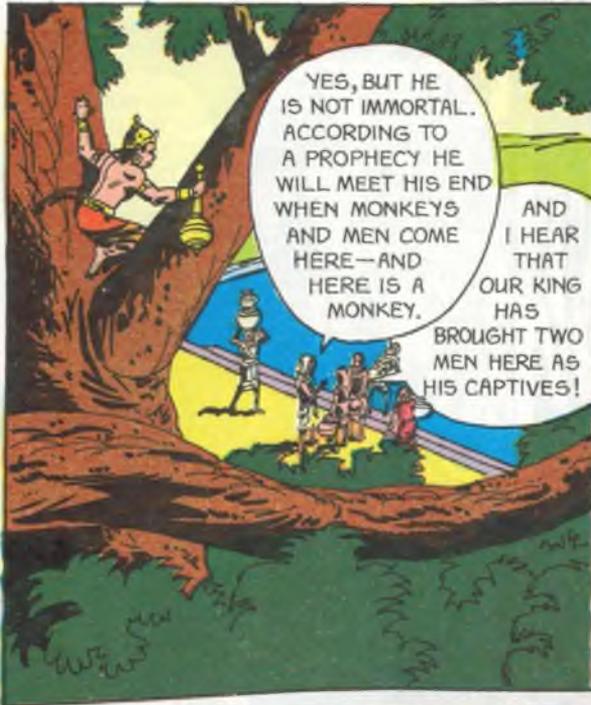
BUT HE WAS SPOTTED BY SOME WOMEN WHO HAD COME THERE TO FETCH WATER.

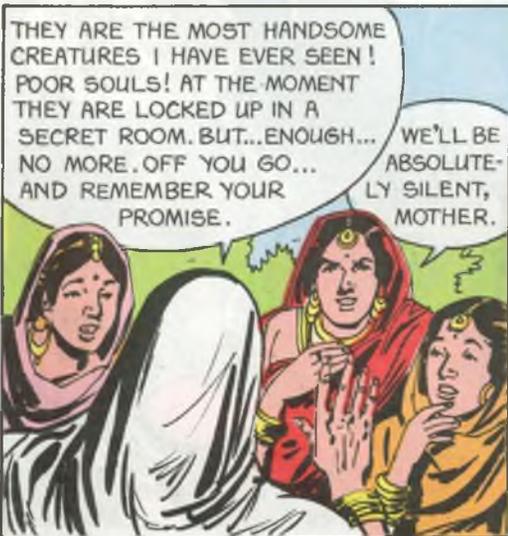
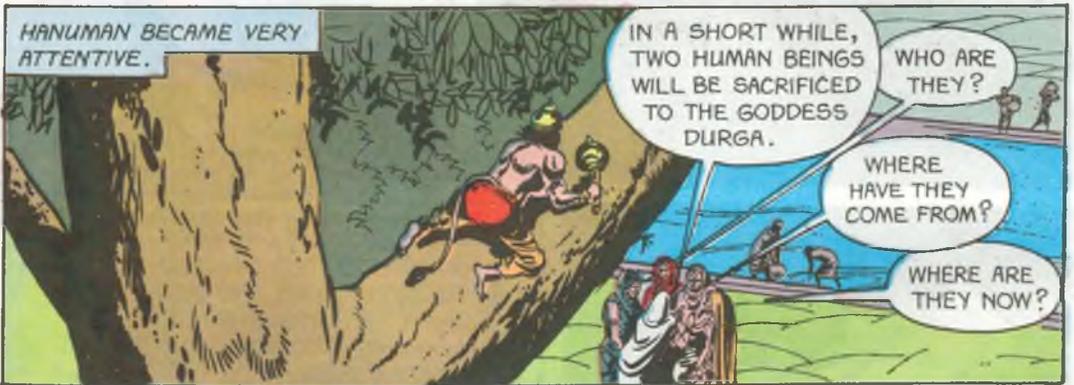


A MONKEY HERE? THIS DOES NOT AUGUR WELL FOR OUR KING.

WHY? OUR KING FEARS NOTHING. HE IS STRONGER THAN ANYONE IN THE THREE WORLDS!







...AND FOLLOWING IN THE DIRECTION OF THE NOISE, HE QUICKLY FOUND MAHIRAVANA'S PALACE.



HE SEARCHED EVERYWHERE TILL HE CAME TO A TEMPLE.



AH—THIS SEEMS TO BE THE PLACE WHERE THE SACRIFICE IS TO BE PERFORMED.

INSIDE THE TEMPLE HE FOUND A SECRET CHAMBER—

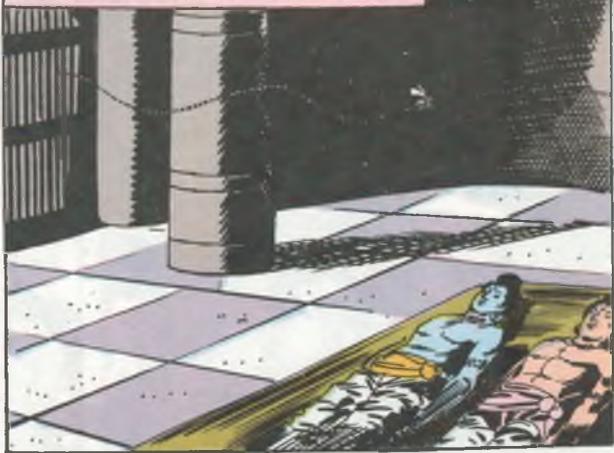


THEY ARE HERE!
AT LAST I HAVE FOUND THEM!

ASSUMING THE FORM OF A FLY...



...HANUMAN FLEW INTO THE CHAMBER.



THEN HE REGAINED HIS NORMAL FORM.

WAKE UP, MY LORDS! I HAVE COME TO RESCUE YOU!



RAMA AND LAKSHMANA GOT UP WITH A START.

WHERE ARE WE?

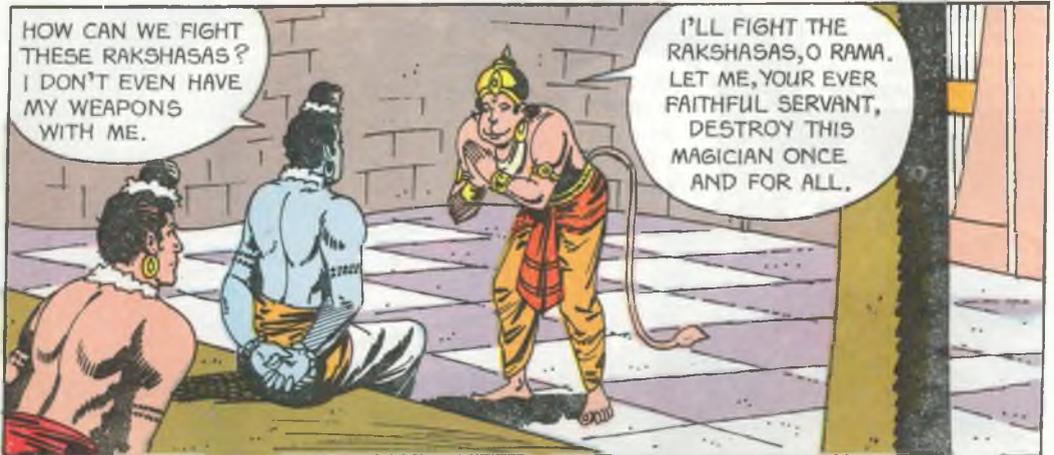
WHAT'S HAPPENING?

YOU ARE IN THE NETHER WORLD, THE PRISONERS OF MAHIRAVANA. HE BROUGHT YOU HERE USING HIS MAGICAL POWERS.



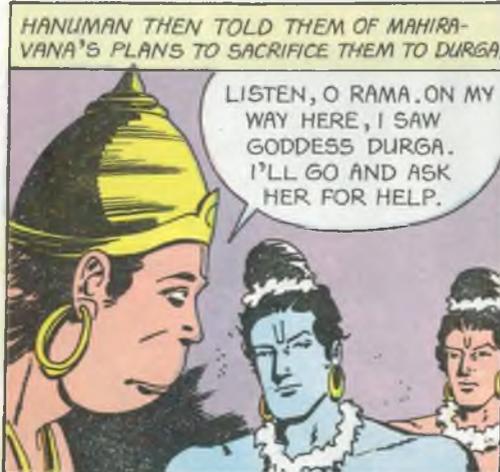
HOW CAN WE FIGHT THESE RAKSHASAS? I DON'T EVEN HAVE MY WEAPONS WITH ME.

I'LL FIGHT THE RAKSHASAS, O RAMA. LET ME, YOUR EVER FAITHFUL SERVANT, DESTROY THIS MAGICIAN ONCE AND FOR ALL.



HANUMAN THEN TOLD THEM OF MAHIRAVANA'S PLANS TO SACRIFICE THEM TO DURGA.

LISTEN, O RAMA. ON MY WAY HERE, I SAW GODDESS DURGA. I'LL GO AND ASK HER FOR HELP.



ALL I NEED NOW IS YOUR BLESSING, MY LORD!

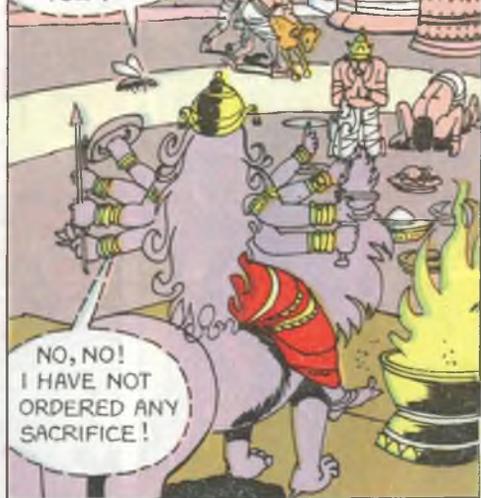
YOU ARE A TRUE FRIEND, HANUMAN. MAY YOU BE SUCCESSFUL.



ONCE AGAIN ASSUMING THE FORM OF A FLY, HANUMAN FLEW TO THE GODDESS.



THE EVIL MAHIRAVANA INTENDS TO SACRIFICE RAMA AND LAKSHMANA TO YOU. TELL ME, HAS THIS BEEN ORDERED BY YOU?



BUT MAHIRAVANA WORSHIPS YOU. WILL YOU HELP HIM? FOR IF YOU DO....

DON'T BE IMPATIENT, HANUMAN. LISTEN TO ME FIRST.



MAHIRAVANA WANTS TO GET RID OF HIS ENEMIES. THAT IS WHY HE IS SACRIFICING THEM. HE IS NOT DOING IT TO PLEASE ME.

SO YOU WON'T HELP HIM?



NO! I WON'T HELP HIM! MAHIRAYANA HAS STARTED PERSECUTING THE NOBLE AND THE INNOCENT. HIS END IS NEAR.

GOOD! THEN TELL ME HOW TO DESTROY HIM.



LISTEN CAREFULLY. RAMA AND LAKSHMANA WILL BE BROUGHT HERE SOON. YOU SHOULD ACCOMPANY THEM UNSEEN AND THEN....



WHEN THE GODDESS HAD FINISHED TELLING HANUMAN THE COURSE TO TAKE -

THANK YOU, O GODDESS! YOU HAVE SOLVED ALL MY PROBLEMS.



HANUMAN THEN RETURNED TO RAMA AND ASSUMED HIS OWN FORM.

THE GODDESS WAS VERY HELPFUL, MY LORD. SHE HAS SUGGESTED A CLEVER PLAN.

GOOD. TELL ME THE PLAN QUICKLY FOR THERE IS VERY LITTLE TIME LEFT.



HANUMAN TOLD RAMA WHAT WAS TO BE DONE.

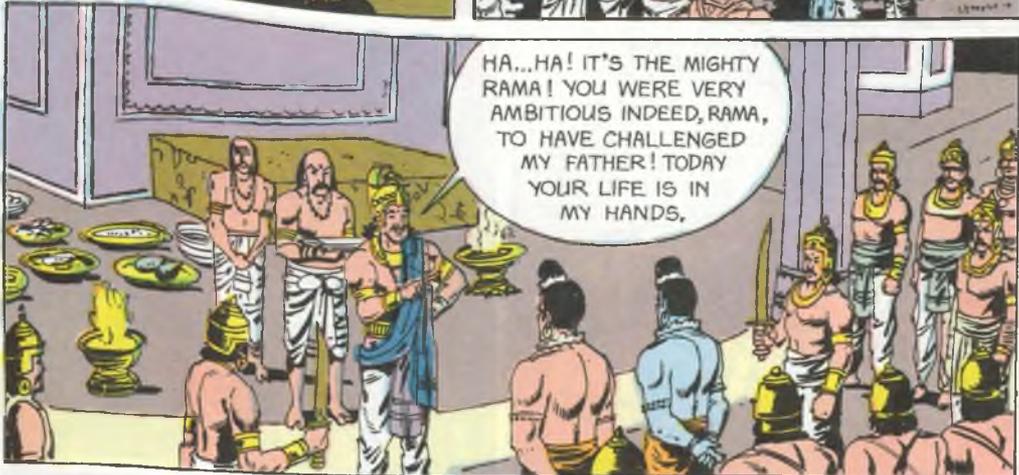
SOON—

BRING THE PRISONERS OUT.



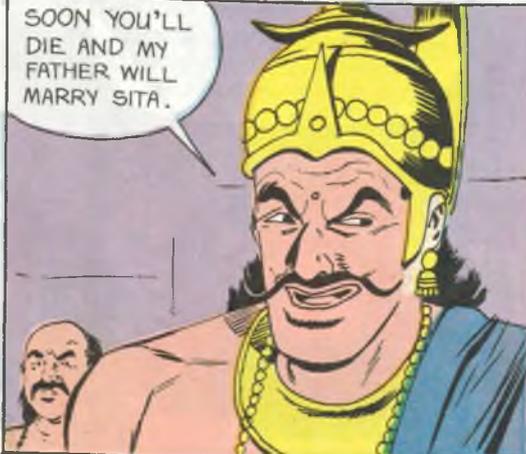
MAHIRAVANA

HANUMAN MADE HIMSELF INVISIBLE AND FOLLOWED RAMA AND LAKSHMANA TO THE TEMPLE.



HA...HA! IT'S THE MIGHTY RAMA! YOU WERE VERY AMBITIOUS INDEED, RAMA, TO HAVE CHALLENGED MY FATHER! TODAY YOUR LIFE IS IN MY HANDS,

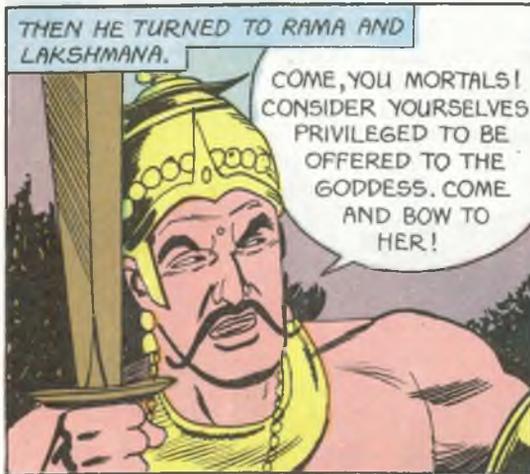
SOON YOU'LL DIE AND MY FATHER WILL MARRY SITA.

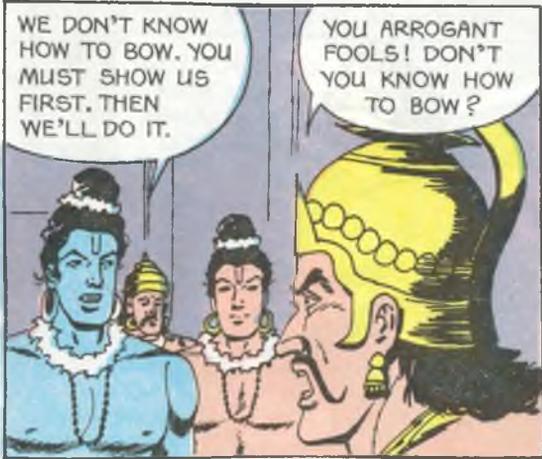


THE RITUAL BEGAN—

ALMIGHTY GODDESS! I BOW TO YOU!



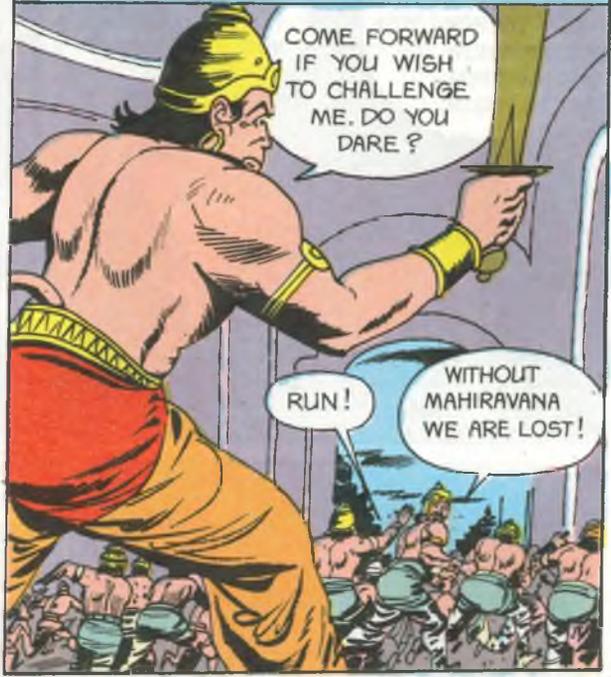




WITH TWO MORE BLOWS, HANUMAN SMASHED THE CHAINS THAT BOUND RAMA AND LAKSHMANA.



THEN HE TURNED TO DEAL WITH THE DEMONS—



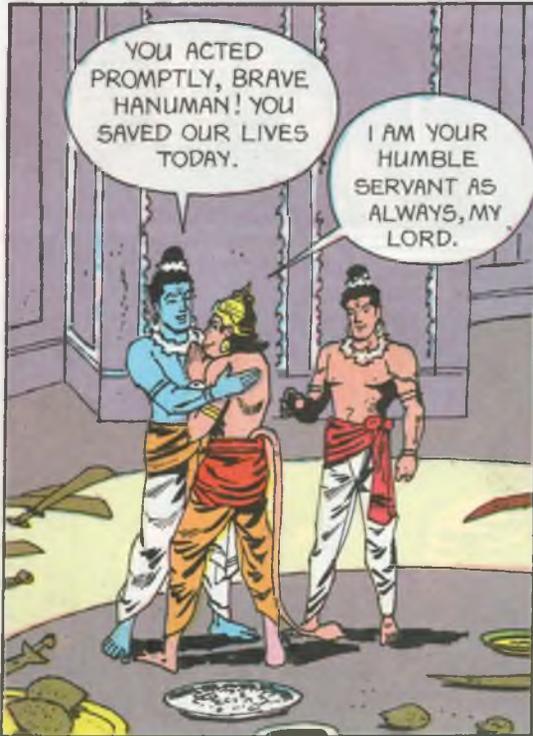
COME FORWARD IF YOU WISH TO CHALLENGE ME. DO YOU DARE ?

RUN !

WITHOUT MAHIRAVANA WE ARE LOST !

YOU ACTED PROMPTLY, BRAVE HANUMAN ! YOU SAVED OUR LIVES TODAY.

I AM YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT AS ALWAYS, MY LORD.



SOON THEY STARTED ON THEIR JOURNEY BACK.



