

AMAR  
CHITRA  
KATHA

# VIDYUT CHORA

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A JAINA TALE

# Amar Chitra Katha

No. 330 April 1, 1985

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Published by:  
H. G. MIRCHANDANI  
for IBH Publishers Pvt. Ltd.,  
Mahalaxmi Chambers,  
22, Bhulabhai Desai Road,  
Bombay 400 026 and printed by him  
at [redacted] Printers, Marol Naka,  
Mathuradas Vissanji Road,  
Andheri (East), Bombay 400 059.

© IBH Publishers Pvt. Ltd.,  
Bombay 400 026.

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Distributors in U. S. A.  
Admans Enterprises Inc.  
1123 Broadway Suite 1010  
New York N.Y. 10010

Subscription: (in India only)  
Rs. 48/- for 12 issues and Rs. 96/-  
for 24 issues. (Add Rs. 5/-  
for outstation cheques).

Sole Authorised Agency for  
Subscriptions: Partha Books Division,  
Nav Prabhat Chambers,  
Ranade Road, Dadar,  
Bombay 400 028.

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# Vidyut Chora



Jain monks took a keen interest in the moral and spiritual uplift of the common people. To make their philosophical concepts, expressed in terse statements, intelligible and interesting to the layman, they used the medium of stories. Thousands of such didactic stories in Sanskrit and Prakrit have come down to us.

The story of Vidyut Chora is retold from Shivakotyacharya's classic in Kannada, VADDARADHANE.

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# VIDYUT CHORA

PRINCE VIDYUT AND YAMADANDA, SON OF THE KOTWAL, WERE STUDYING UNDER THE SAME GURU AT HIS ASHRAMA IN THE FOREST. ONE DAY, WHEN THEY HAD SOME LEISURE —



LET'S PLAY, YAMADANDA.

THIEF AND KOTWAL?



IS THERE ANY OTHER GAME WORTH PLAYING?

NO, THERE ISN'T. GO AND HIDE. I'LL TRACK YOU DOWN.



A PRINCE IS EXPECTED TO MASTER THE SIXTY-FOUR ARTS AND THE ART OF THIEVERY IS ONE OF THEM. YET...



WHY SHOULD I ALWAYS PLAY THE THIEF?

BECAUSE I'M TRAINING TO BE A KOTWAL, VIDYUT.



WELL, TO CATCH A THIEF YOU MUST KNOW THE WAYS OF A THIEF.



SO... YOU BE THE THIEF... A THIEF WHO IS HIDING FROM THE KOTWAL. LET'S SEE HOW CLEVER YOU ARE AT IT.



VERY WELL, I'LL GO AND HIDE. LET'S SEE HOW CLEVER YOU ARE AT TRACKING ME DOWN.



YAMADANDA WENT AND HID AND THE PRINCE BEGAN TO LOOK FOR HIM.

TRAMPLED GRASS! SOMEONE HAS JUST GONE BY.



AHA! A BROKEN TWIG! WHO COULD HAVE STEPPED ON IT EXCEPT MY FRIEND!



I MUST BE CLOSE TO HIS HIDING-PLACE.



WHERE COULD HE BE? WHERE COULD HE BE?



THE PRINCE SEARCHED LONG AND HARD. BUT FINALLY —

HE HAS CONCEALED HIMSELF TOO WELL.



WILL I HAVE TO ADMIT DEFEAT AND PUT UP WITH HIS BRAGGING?



NO! I WON'T.  
NOT IF MY RUSE  
WORKS.



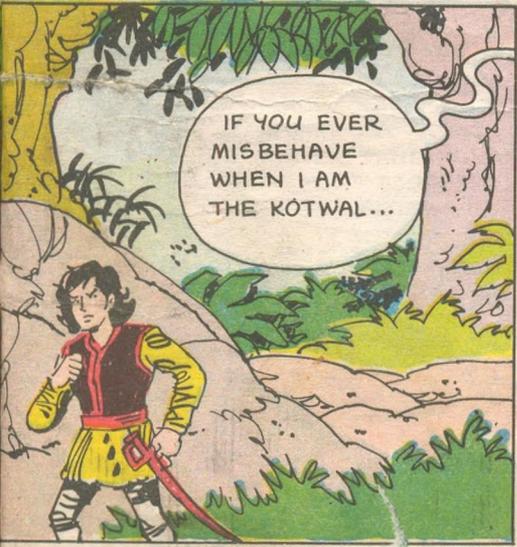
YOU HAVE WON,  
YAMADANDA! YOU  
HAVE WON THIS  
TIME.



BUT ONE DAY WHEN  
YOU ARE THE KOTWAL,  
I WILL COMMIT A CRIME  
YOU CANNOT SOLVE AND  
SEE THAT YOU ARE  
HANGED.



HANGED,  
DO YOU  
HEAR?



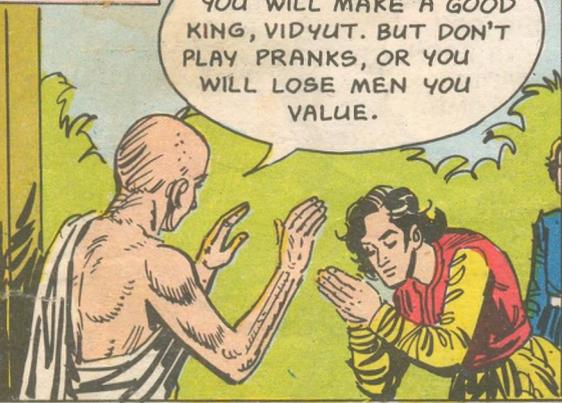
IF YOU EVER  
MISBEHAVE  
WHEN I AM  
THE KOTWAL...



... I WILL SEE  
THAT YOU ARE  
ARRESTED AND  
BEATEN UP!



THE YEARS PASSED. VIDYUT AND YAMADANDA FINISHED THEIR STUDIES AND WERE READY TO LEAVE THEIR GURU'S ASHRAMA.



YOU WILL MAKE A GOOD KING, VIDYUT. BUT DON'T PLAY PRANKS, OR YOU WILL LOSE MEN YOU VALUE.



AND YOU WILL MAKE AN EXCELLENT KOTWAL, YAMADANDA, PROVIDED YOU KEEP YOUR WITS ABOUT YOU.

WHEN VIDYUT RETURNED TO THE CAPITAL —



I HAVE GROWN OLD. I WISH TO SPEND THE REST OF MY YEARS IN THE FOREST.

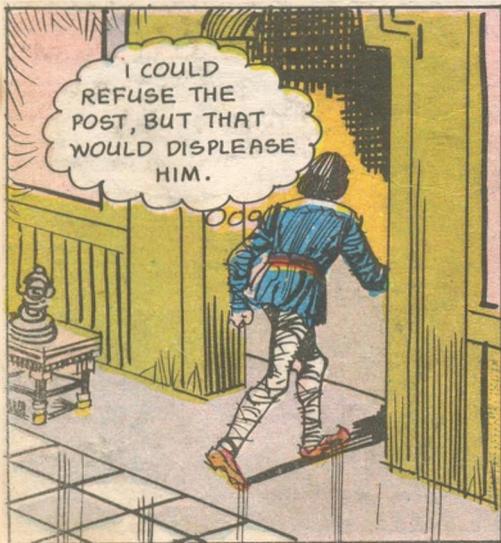


RULE WELL AND WISELY, MY SON.



YAMADANDA'S FATHER TOO RENOUNCED THE WORLD AND RETIRED TO THE FOREST.

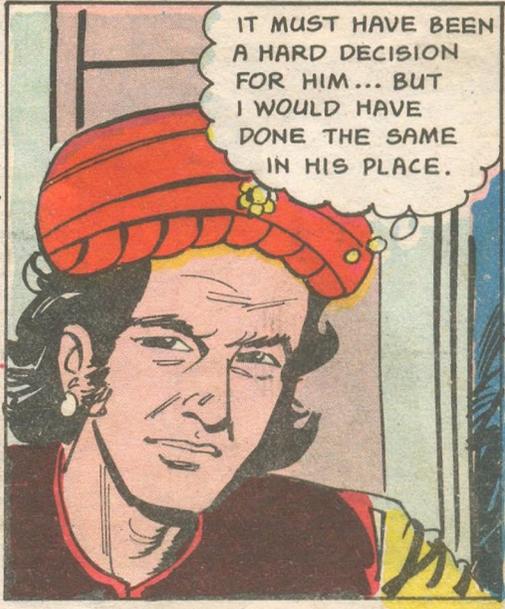
I'LL HAVE TO APPOINT A NEW KOTWAL.



WHEN VIDYUT WAS INFORMED OF HIS FRIEND'S DEPARTURE —



SO HE REMEMBERS!



IT MUST HAVE BEEN A HARD DECISION FOR HIM... BUT I WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME IN HIS PLACE.



SEND SPIES TO ALL THE NEIGHBOURING KINGDOMS. FIND OUT WHERE HE HAS GONE.



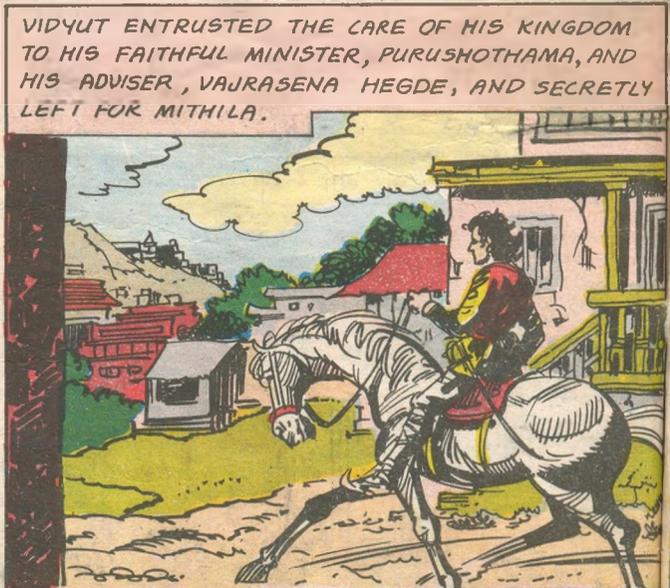
VIDYUT'S SPIES ROAMED EVERYWHERE.

AT LAST ONE OF THEM MET WITH SUCCESS.



YOU SAY HE IS IN THE SERVICE OF THE KING OF MITHILA?

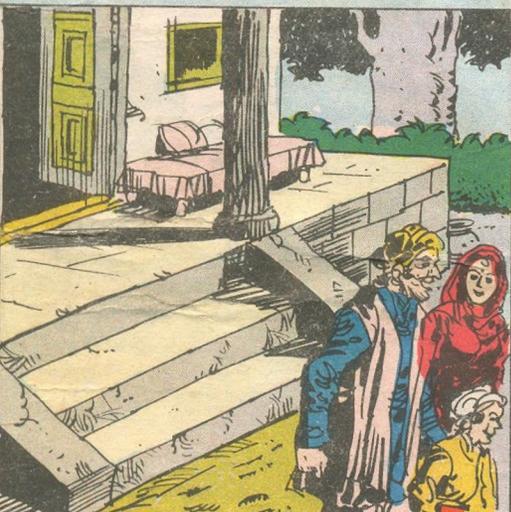
YES, MAHARAJ.



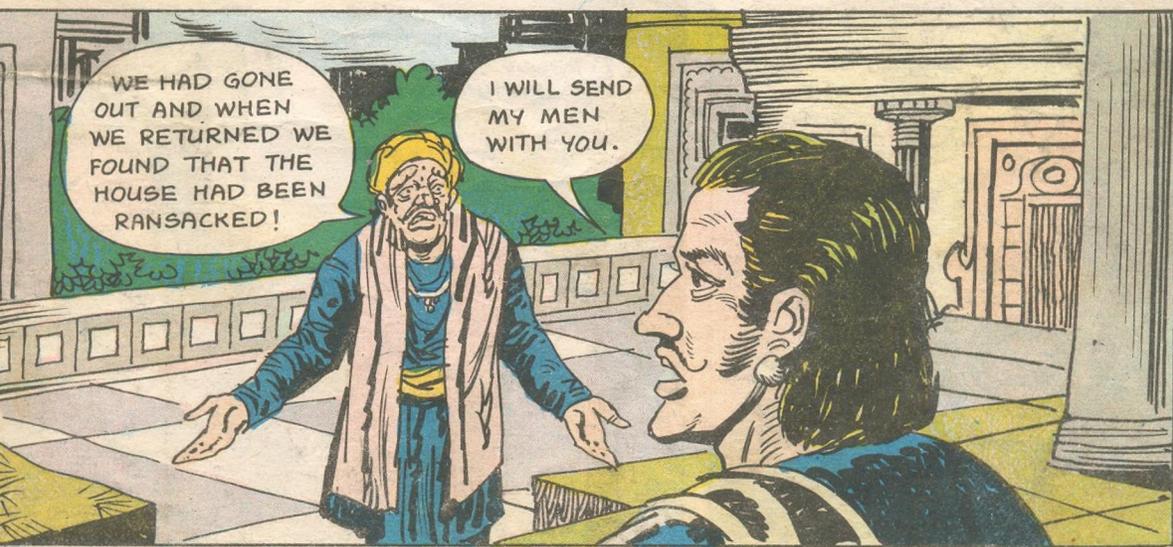
MITHILA WAS A PEACEFUL KINGDOM OF LAW-ABIDING SUBJECTS.

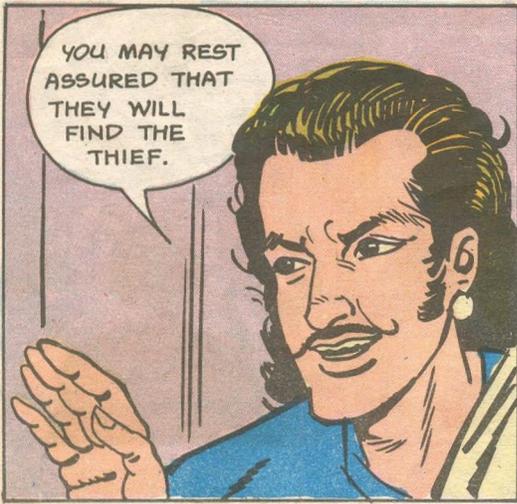


AS ROBBERY WAS ALMOST UNKNOWN, NOBODY LOCKED THEIR DOORS.



SO YAMADANDA, THE KOTWAL, WAS SHOCKED WHEN A CITIZEN CAME ONE DAY TO COMPLAIN OF A THEFT.





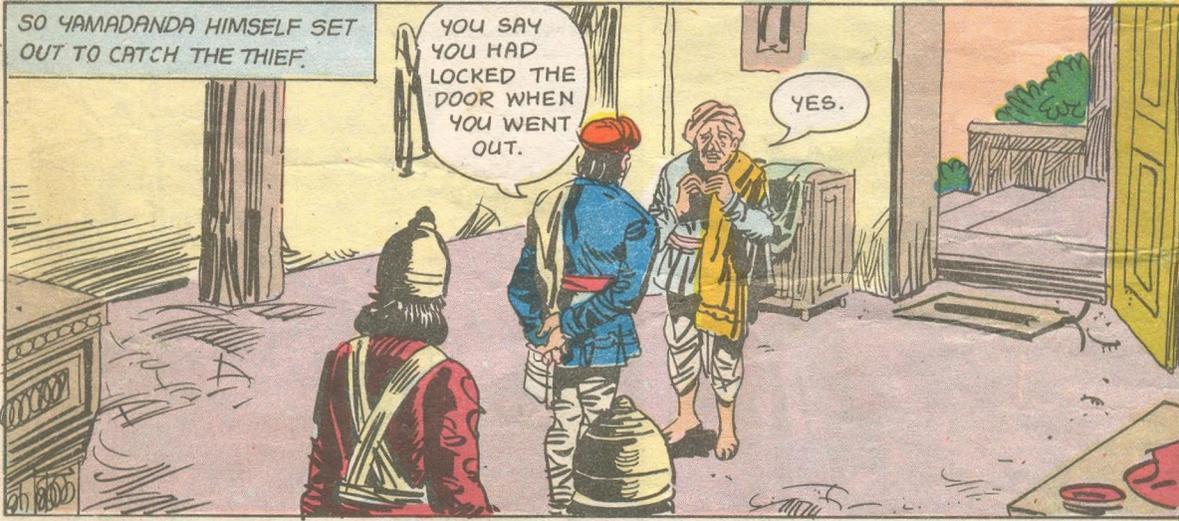
YOU MAY REST ASSURED THAT THEY WILL FIND THE THIEF.



BUT HARDLY HAD THE MAN GONE OUT OF SIGHT, WHEN —

SARKAR, MY HOUSE HAS BEEN BURGLED!

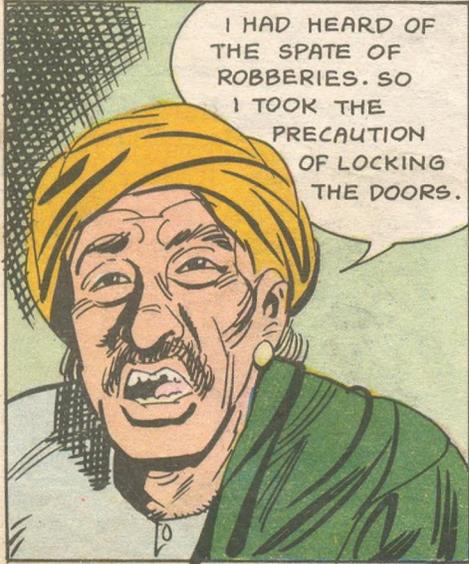
SEVERAL ROBBERIES WERE REPORTED IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.



SO YAMADANDA HIMSELF SET OUT TO CATCH THE THIEF.

YOU SAY YOU HAD LOCKED THE DOOR WHEN YOU WENT OUT.

YES.



I HAD HEARD OF THE SPATE OF ROBBERIES. SO I TOOK THE PRECAUTION OF LOCKING THE DOORS.



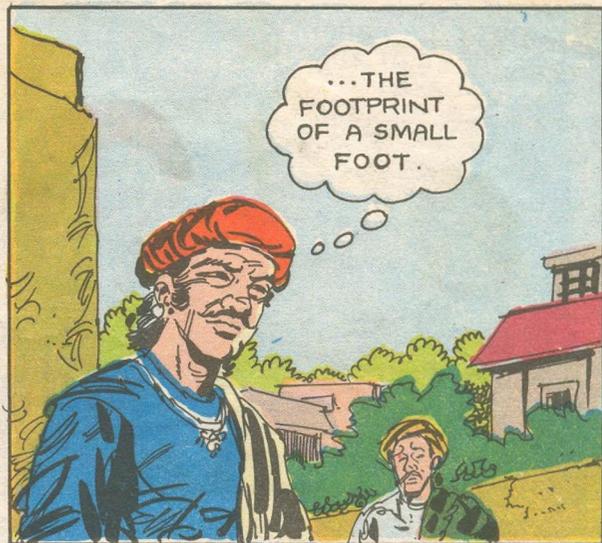
IT DID NOT OCCUR TO ME THAT THE ROGUE MIGHT ENTER THROUGH THE WINDOW.

YAMADANDA BEGAN LOOKING FOR CLUES.

THERE'S A FAINT FOOTPRINT HERE...



...THE FOOTPRINT OF A SMALL FOOT.



PEOPLE ARE SAYING THERE'S A GANG OF CRIMINALS ON THE LOOSE.

DON'T LISTEN TO RUMOURS.



ALL THE ROBBERIES ARE THE WORK OF THE SAME MAN... AND WE'LL CATCH HIM BEFORE LONG.

I AM SURE YOU WILL. BUT...

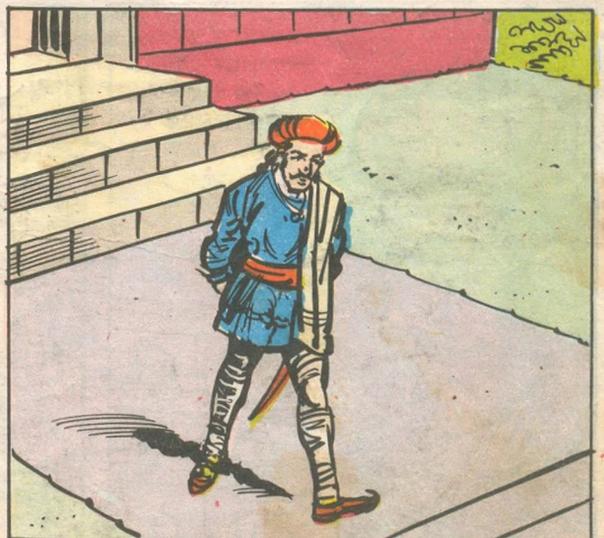


... BUT SOME OF THE PEOPLE HERE ARE GETTING RESTLESS.

SARKAR!







IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, YAMADANDA QUESTIONED HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE IN THE HOPE OF UNEARTHING SOME INFORMATION THAT COULD LEAD TO THE CAPTURE OF THE THIEF...



... BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS.

ONE WOULD THINK I WAS HUNTING A PHANTOM.



ONLY A PERSON WHO HAS MASTERED THE ART OF KARAPATAVIDYA\*, COULD BE SO ELUSIVE.



AND I KNOW OF ONLY ONE WHO HAS MASTERED THAT ART.



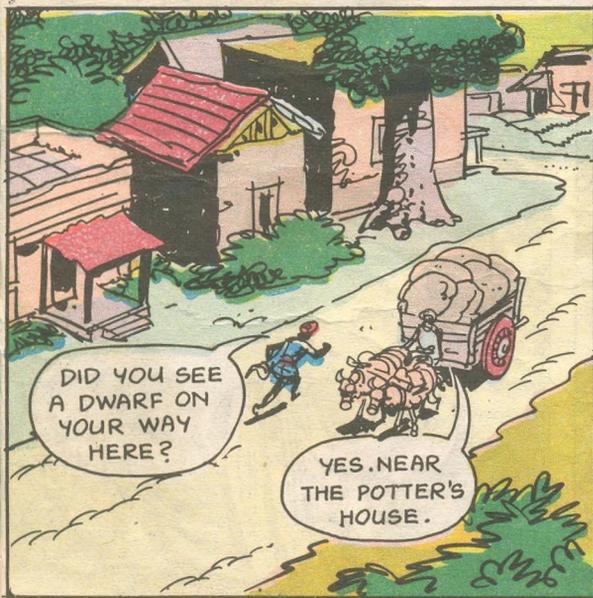
COULD HE HAVE FOLLOWED ME HERE TO ...

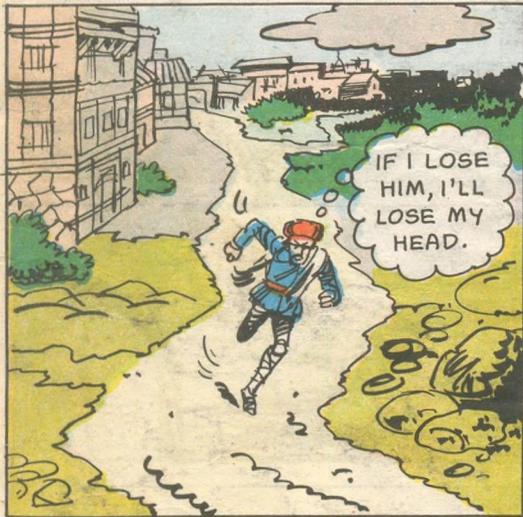
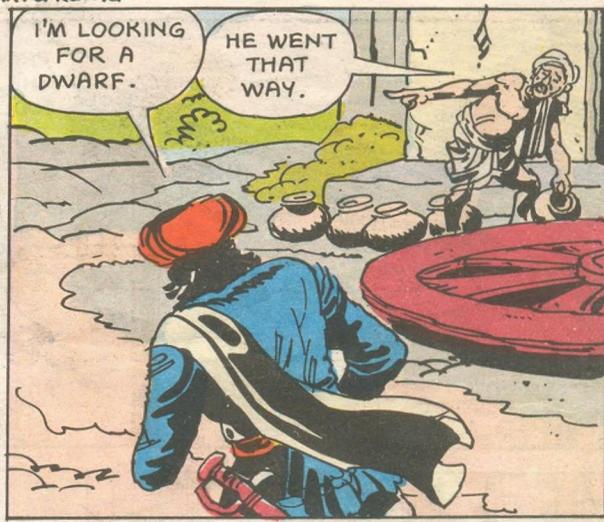
OH, A TODDY SHOP!

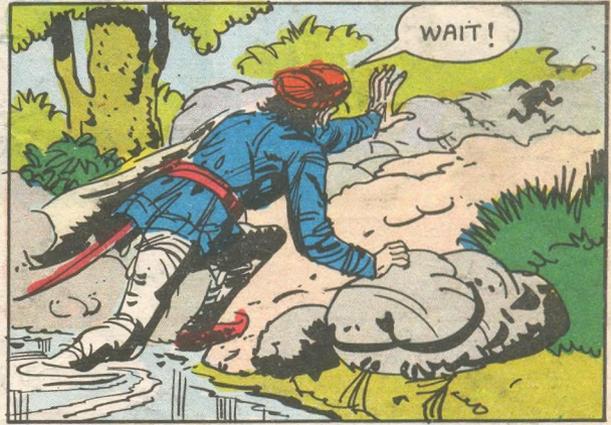


\* THE ART OF STEALING













I MAY BE POOR,  
BUT I AM AN  
HONEST MAN.



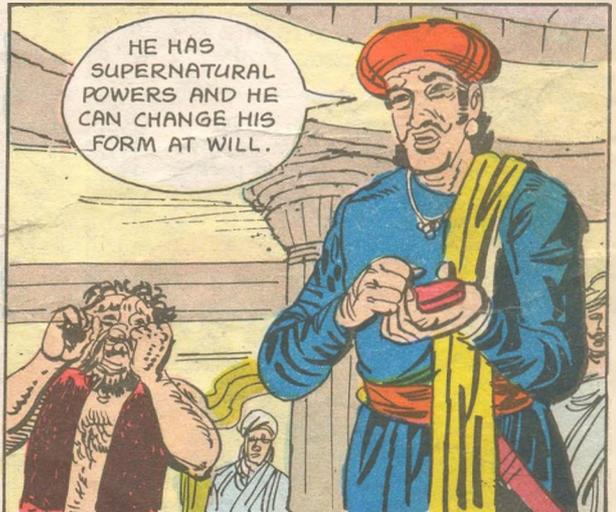
I'VE NEVER  
ROBBED ANYONE  
IN MY LIFE.

AND THE DWARF  
BEGAN TO CRY.



DO YOU HAVE  
ANY PROOF,  
KOTWAL? HE  
SEEMS HARM-  
LESS TO ME.

THAT'S WHAT HE'S  
TRAINED TO DO,  
MAHARAJ— APPEAR  
HARMLESS WHEN  
CAUGHT.



HE HAS  
SUPERNATURAL  
POWERS AND HE  
CAN CHANGE HIS  
FORM AT WILL.

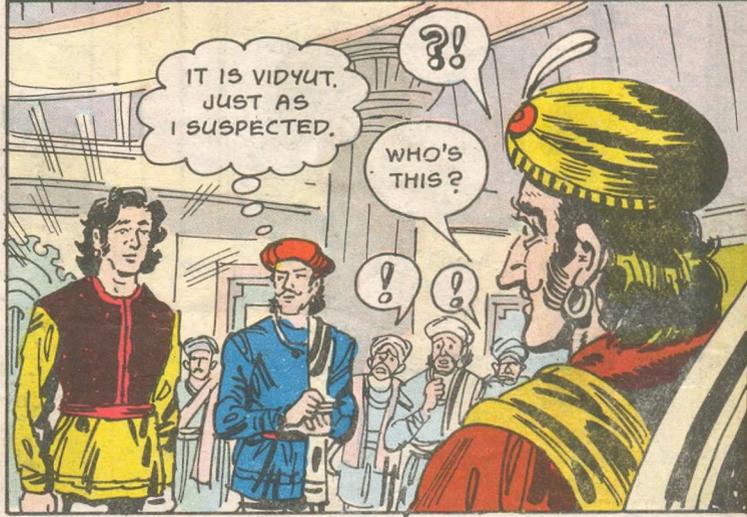


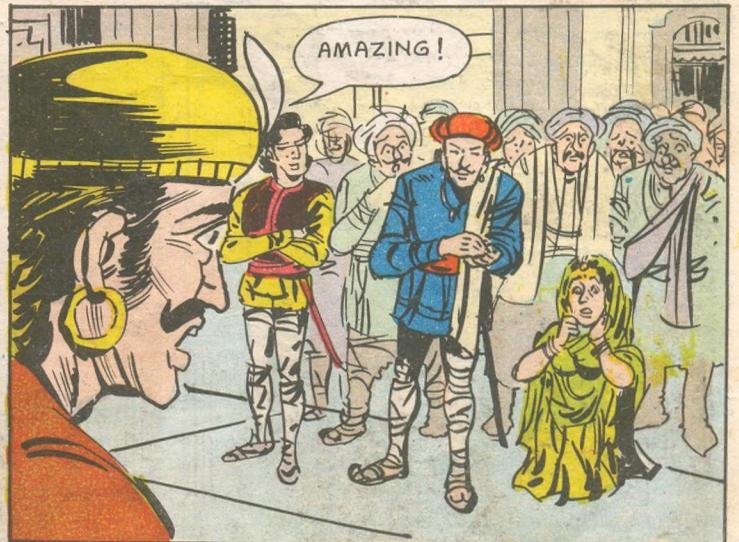
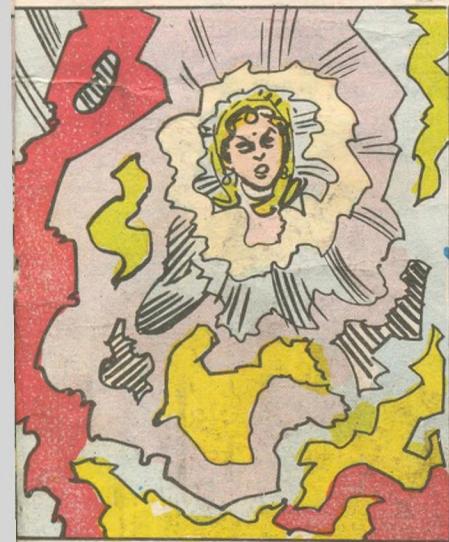
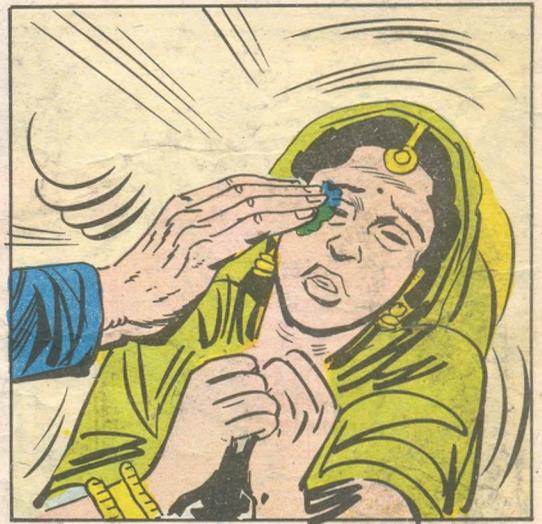
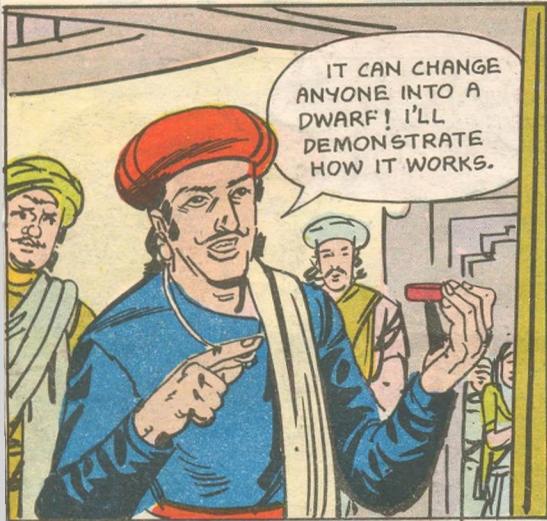
I'LL SHOW  
YOU HOW HE  
DOES IT.

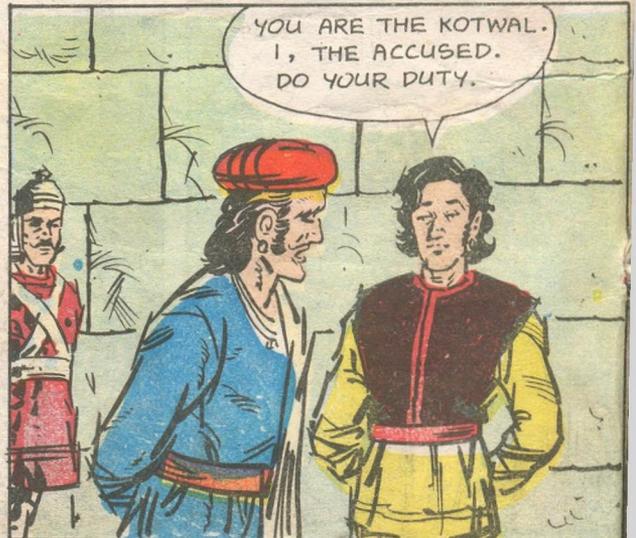
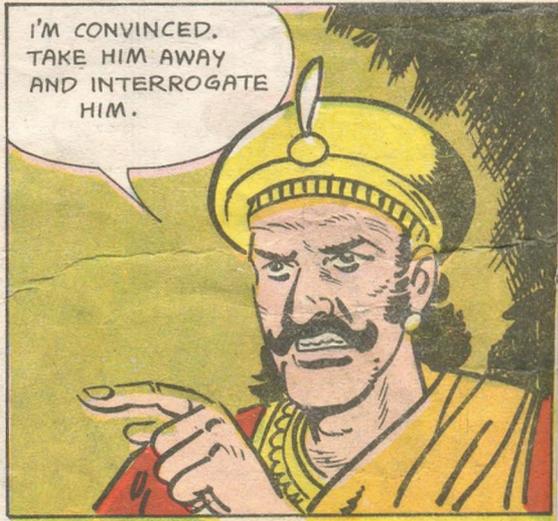
THE KOTWAL TOOK  
SOME PASTE FROM  
A BOX...

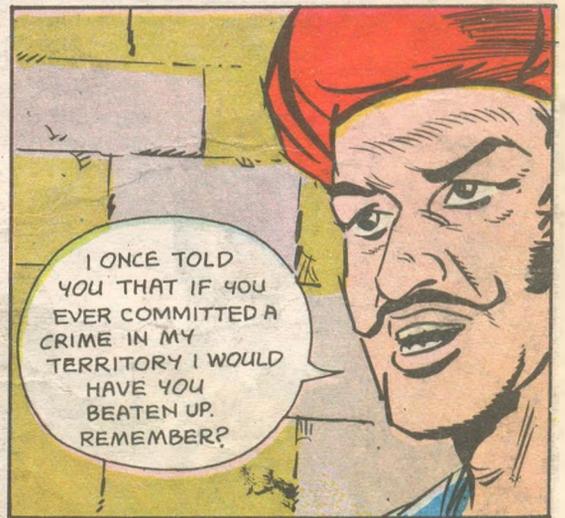
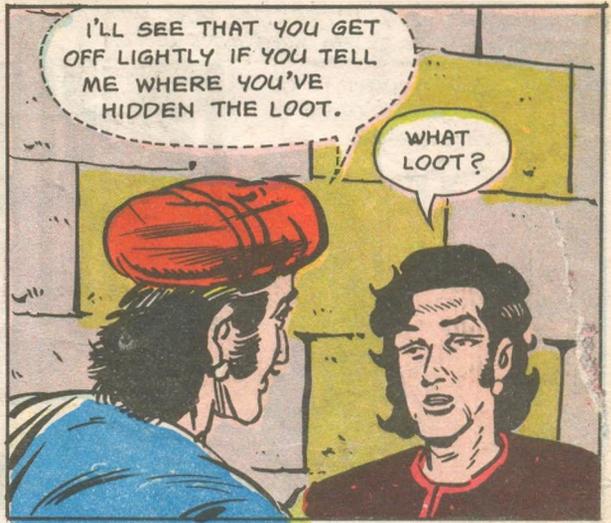
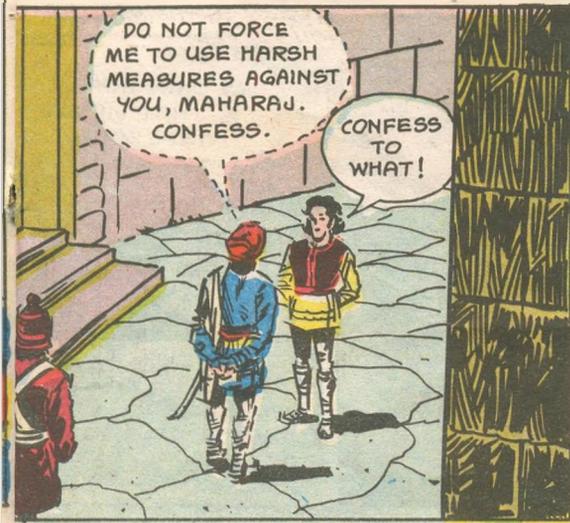


... AND SMEARED IT ON THE DWARF'S  
EYES.







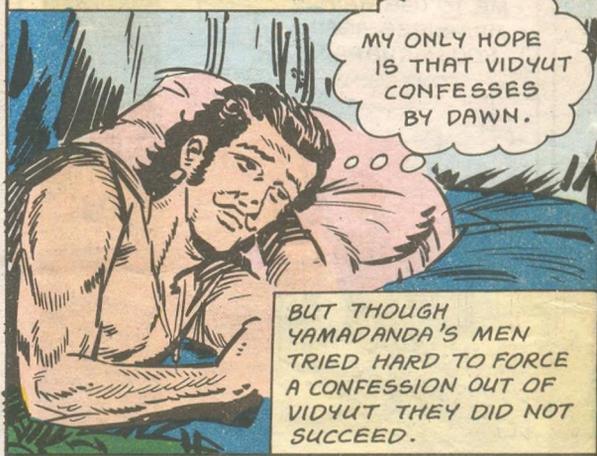


THROUGHOUT THE INTERROGATION, VIDYUT MAINTAINED THAT HE WAS INNOCENT.



AT MIDNIGHT, THE SEVEN DAYS WILL BE UP.

AND AS THE NIGHT WORE ON, YAMADANDA BEGAN TO FEEL ANXIOUS.



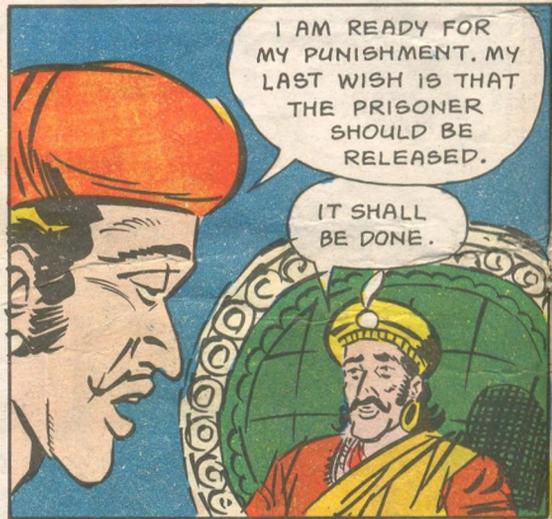
MY ONLY HOPE IS THAT VIDYUT CONFESSES BY DAWN.

BUT THOUGH YAMADANDA'S MEN TRIED HARD TO FORCE A CONFESSION OUT OF VIDYUT THEY DID NOT SUCCEED.

VIDYUT DID NOT CONFESS. AND THE NEXT MORNING —



I'VE FAILED TO RECOVER THE NECKLACE AND TO BRING THE THIEF BEFORE YOU.



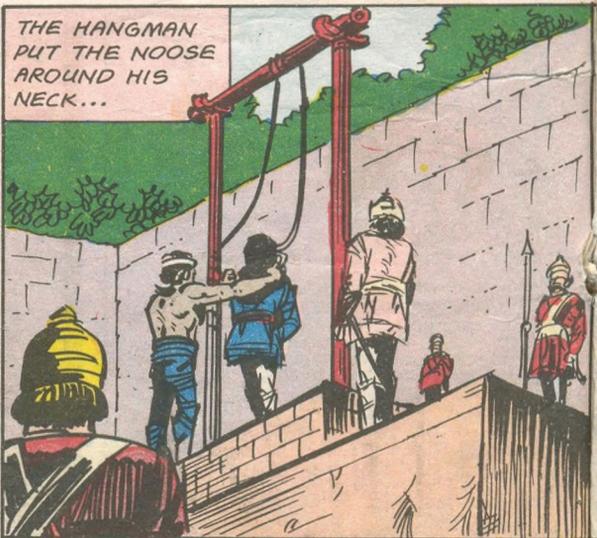
I AM READY FOR MY PUNISHMENT. MY LAST WISH IS THAT THE PRISONER SHOULD BE RELEASED.

IT SHALL BE DONE.

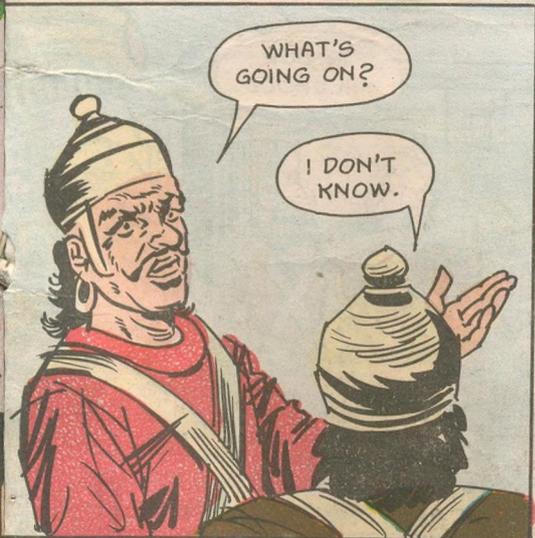
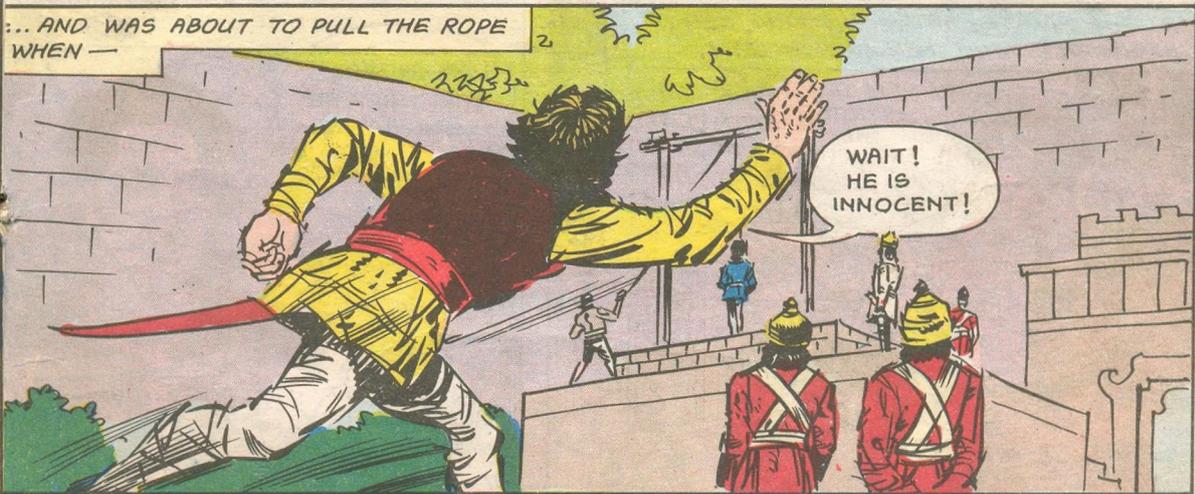
THE KOTWAL WAS LED TO THE GALLOWS.



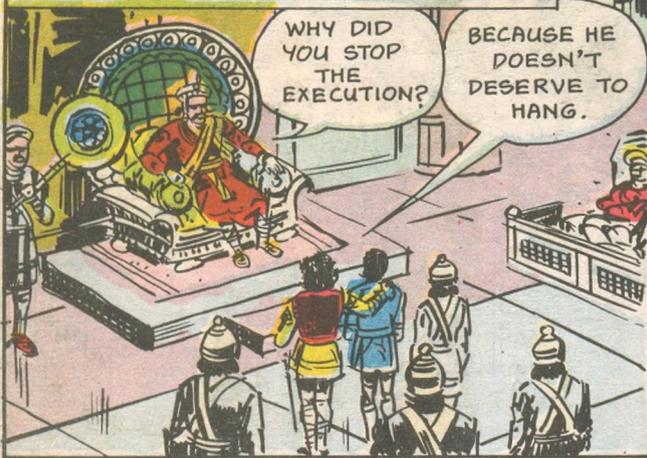
THE HANGMAN PUT THE NOOSE AROUND HIS NECK...



... AND WAS ABOUT TO PULL THE ROPE WHEN —



AT THE PALACE, AFTER THE KING HAD BEEN TOLD WHAT HAD HAPPENED —



WHY DID YOU STOP THE EXECUTION?

BECAUSE HE DOESN'T DESERVE TO HANG.



I AM INDEED THE THIEF HE SAID I WAS.



THE TREASURE IS SAFE. IT IS IN A CAVE NEAR THE RIVER WHERE I WAS CAUGHT.

I SHALL SEND MY MEN TO FETCH IT.



BUT MY CURIOSITY IS AROUSED. WHY SHOULD A THIEF WHO HAS BEEN RELEASED COME BACK TO CONFESS?

I AM NOT A PROFESSIONAL THIEF.



I WAS ONLY REDEEMING A PLEDGE I MADE SEVERAL YEARS AGO...



... IN OUR CHILDHOOD.

AND VIDYUT TOLD THE KING THE WHOLE STORY.

AFTER HE HAD FINISHED.

IS HE TELLING THE TRUTH? OR IS THIS A CLEVER RUSE TO SAVE THE KOTWAL?

JUST THEN —

MAHARAJ!

I HAVE A MESSAGE FOR YOU FROM VAJRASENA.

SO HE IS INDEED A KING!

NO TROUBLE, I HOPE.

NO. BUT MY MINISTERS SAY I HAVE STAYED AWAY TOO LONG.

THEY HAVE REQUESTED ME TO RETURN.

IT IS INDEED A PITY THAT I HAVE MADE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE SO LATE...

