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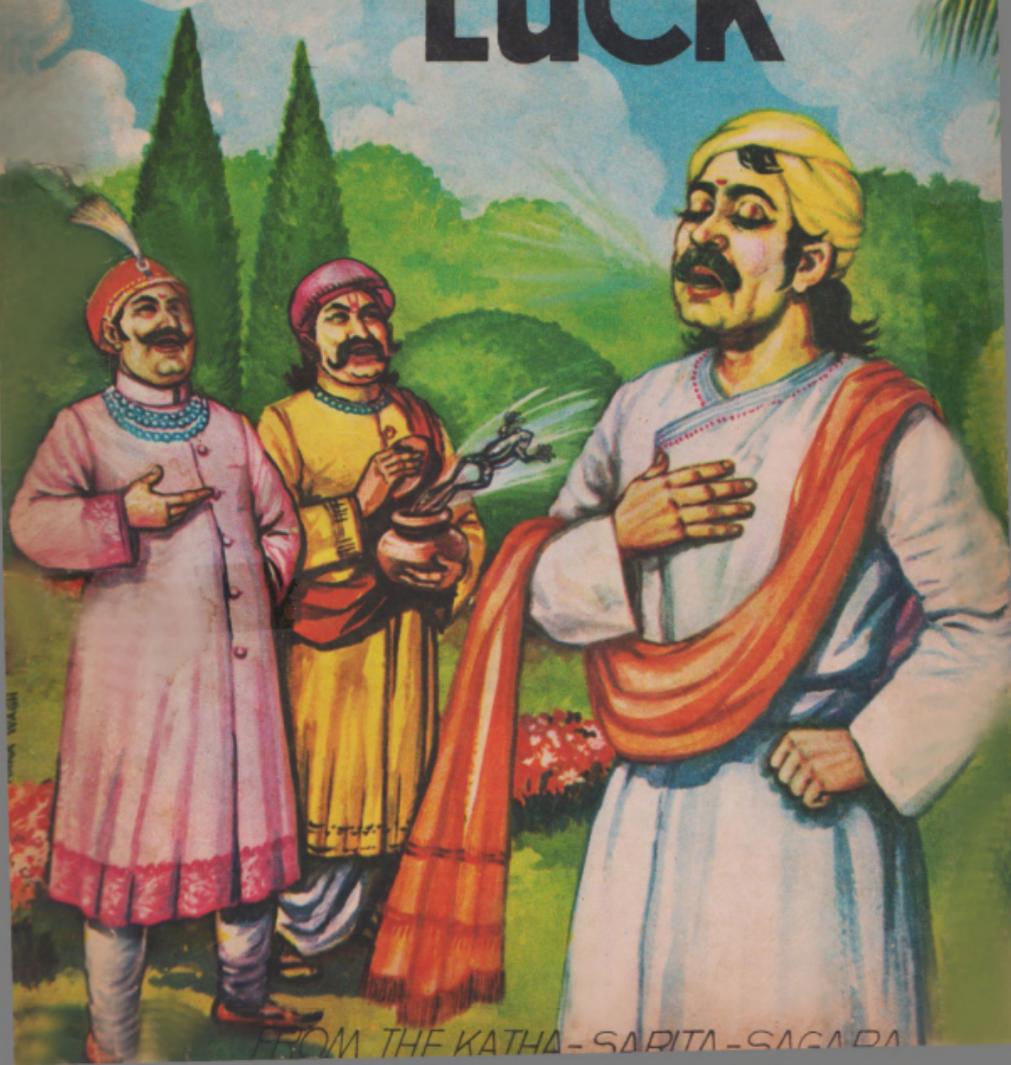
CHITRA

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10

A FOOL'S LUCK



FROM THE KATHA-SARITA-SAGARA

Man may strive hard in order to make his life comfortable, but human effort alone is not sufficient to ensure success in this world. One has to humble down before the gigantic machine of the cosmos which is ultimately responsible for the fulfilment of the aims of the individual.

This story from the *Katha-Sarita-Sagara* relates some amusing incidents of a foolish, yet simple Brahmin who had to face many vicissitudes in life before he was rewarded with riches beyond his expectations.

Editor : D. Kumar

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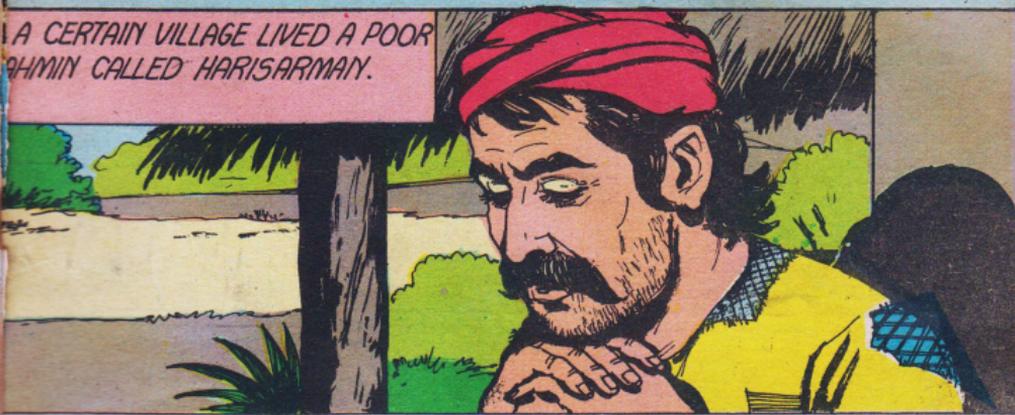
OUR NEXT TITLE :

SAI BABA OF SHIRDI

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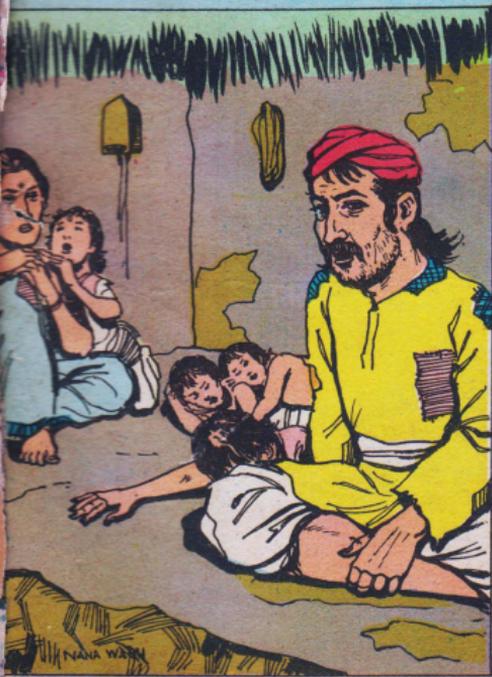
A Fool's Luck

A CERTAIN VILLAGE LIVED A POOR
RAHMIN CALLED HARISARMAN.



FATE WAS UNKIND TO HIM. IN ADDITION
TO BEING POOR, HE HAD A LARGE
FAMILY TO SUPPORT. HE HAD MANY
CHILDREN WHO WERE UNDER-
NOURISHED AND HIS WIFE WAS
ALWAYS WEAK AND SICK.

HARISARMAN WAS NOT ONLY POOR,
HE WAS ALSO FOOLISH. HE WAS
NOT A MAN OF LEARNING, SO
OFTEN HE AND HIS FAMILY HAD
TO GO HUNGRY.





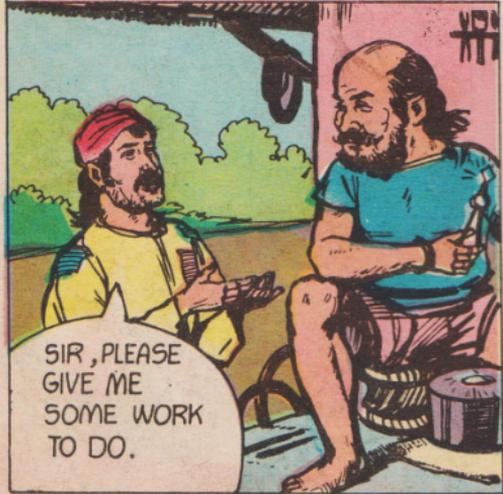
FATHER, HAVE YOU BROUGHT US ANYTHING TO EAT TODAY?

FATHER, BRING ME SOME CLOTHES, I FEEL COLD.

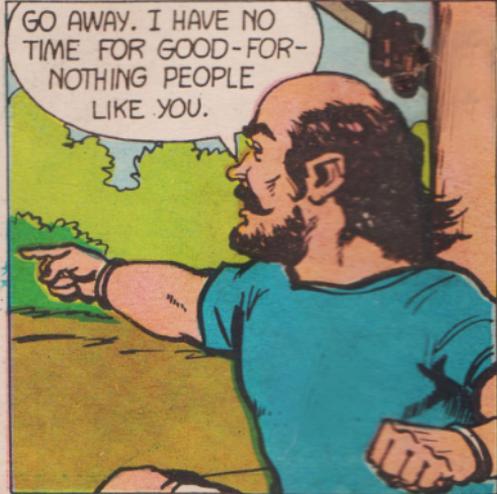
EVERY MORNING, HARISARMAN WOULD SET OUT TO LOOK FOR WORK.



I HOPE I FIND SOME WORK TODAY.



SIR, PLEASE GIVE ME SOME WORK TO DO.



GO AWAY. I HAVE NO TIME FOR GOOD-FOR-NOTHING PEOPLE LIKE YOU.

WHEN HE COULD FIND NO WORK, HE TOOK TO BEGGING, ALONG WITH HIS WHOLE FAMILY.



GO AWAY. WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THIS COUNTRY? PEOPLE ARE SO LAZY, THEY DON'T WANT TO WORK.

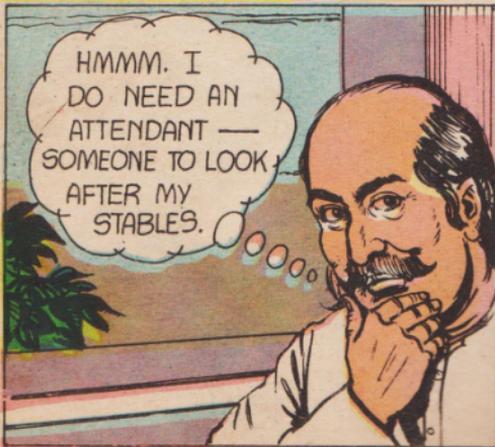


COME MY DEAR. LET US LEAVE THIS HEARTLESS VILLAGE AND GO AWAY.



SO HARISARMAN AND HIS FAMILY LEFT THE VILLAGE AND WALKED ON, TIRED AND HUNGRY TILL THEY CAME TO A CITY.

THERE, HARISARMAN WENT WITH HIS BROOD TO A HOUSEHOLDER CALLED STHULADATTA. HE APPROACHED HIM WITH FOLDED PALMS.



HARISARMAN WAS APPOINTED AS PERSONAL ATTENDANT TO STHULADATTA. HE WAS GIVEN A SMALL HUT NEAR THE HOUSE TO LIVE IN.



HIS SONS LOOKED AFTER THE MERCHANT'S COWS AND HORSES...



...WHILE HIS WIFE CLEANED THE HOUSE AND DID OTHER HOUSEHOLD CHORES.



SOON AFTER, HARISARMAN AND HIS FAMILY JOINED STHULADATTA'S HOUSEHOLD. THERE WAS A WEDDING FEAST IN THE HOUSE. THE MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER WAS GETTING MARRIED.





IS EVERYTHING READY ?
HAVE ALL THE SWEETMEATS
BEEN LAID OUT ?

YES SIR.
EVERYTHING IS
READY.



O WHAT WONDERFUL
THINGS TO EAT !
TODAY I AND MY FAMILY
WILL EAT WELL.



WE HAVE WORKED
HARD AND THE MASTER
WILL SURELY FEED US
AFTER ALL THE GUESTS
HAVE EATEN.

BUT ALAS! NO ONE REMEMBERED
POOR HARISARMAN AND HIS FAMILY!



AND THEY ALL WENT TO BED,
HUNGRY AND SORROWFUL.



SUDDENLY-

I HAVE AN
IDEA! LISTEN...

HE WHISPERED SOMETHING INTO HIS
WIFE'S EARS AND STOLE OUT OF THE
HOUSE IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT...



...AND MADE HIS WAY TOWARDS THE
STABLES.

THERE, HE UNTIED THE BRIDE-
GROOM'S HORSE...

COME ALONG, MY BEAUTY.
TODAY YOU WILL PLAY AN
IMPORTANT ROLE IN MY
LIFE.



...AND LED IT AWAY.



HE TOOK IT TO A SECRET HIDING PLACE AND, TYING IT TO A TREE, CONCEALED IT BEHIND SOME BUSHES.



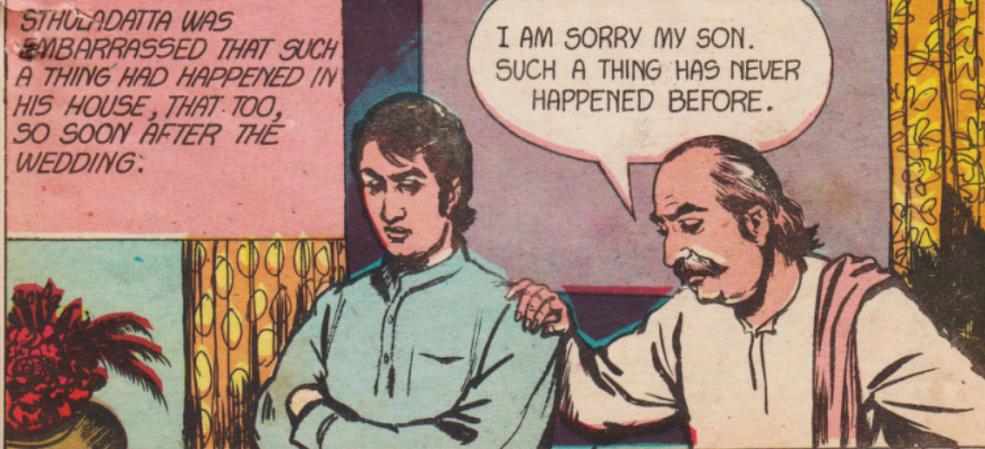
THERE YOU ARE . NOW NO ONE SHOULD FIND YOU BEFORE IT IS TIME TO DO SO !

IN THE MORNING-



WHERE IS MY HORSE ? MY GOD ! IT HAS BEEN STOLEN !

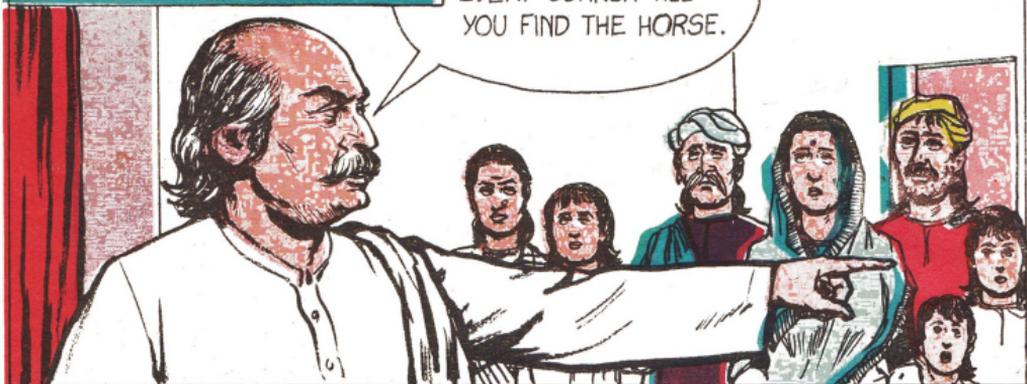
STHULADATTA WAS EMBARRASSED THAT SUCH A THING HAD HAPPENED IN HIS HOUSE , THAT , TOO , SO SOON AFTER THE WEDDING .



I AM SORRY MY SON . SUCH A THING HAS NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE .

HE SENT FOR ALL HIS
SERVANTS—

GO AND SEARCH
EVERY CORNER TILL
YOU FIND THE HORSE.



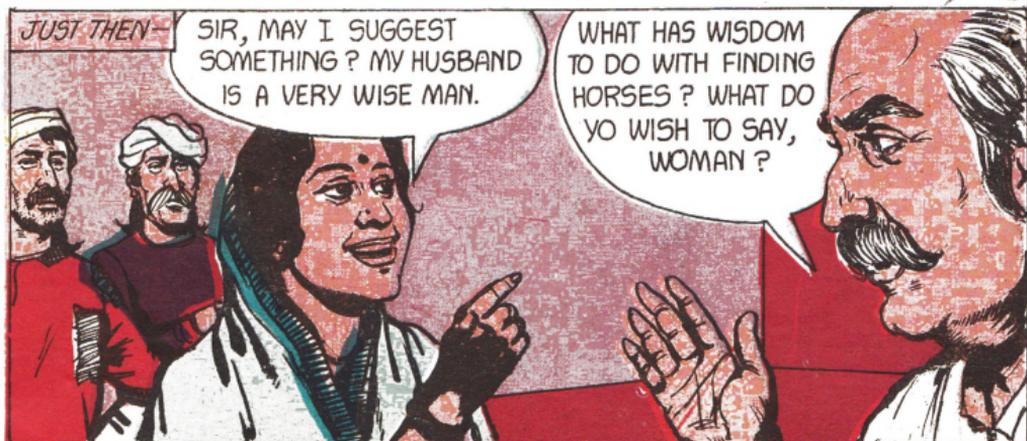
HE WILL NEVER
GET BACK THE HORSE. THE
THIEVES MUST HAVE RIDDEN
AWAY ON IT.

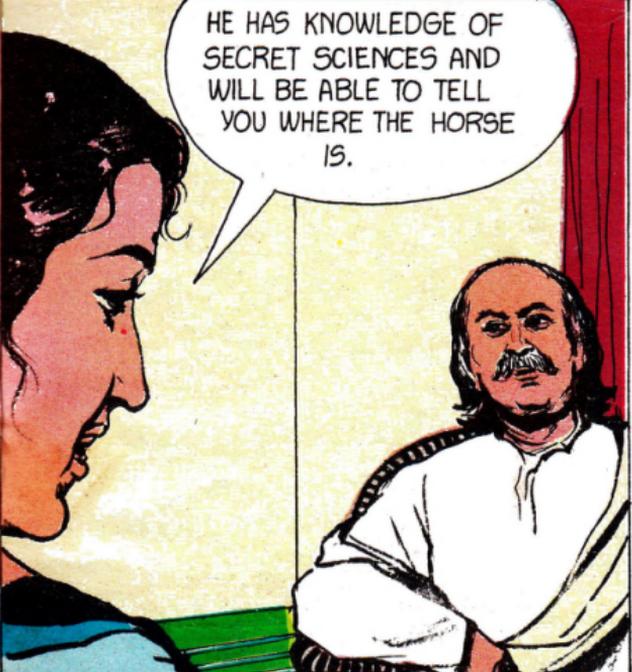


JUST THEN—

SIR, MAY I SUGGEST
SOMETHING? MY HUSBAND
IS A VERY WISE MAN.

WHAT HAS WISDOM
TO DO WITH FINDING
HORSES? WHAT DO
YOU WISH TO SAY,
WOMAN?



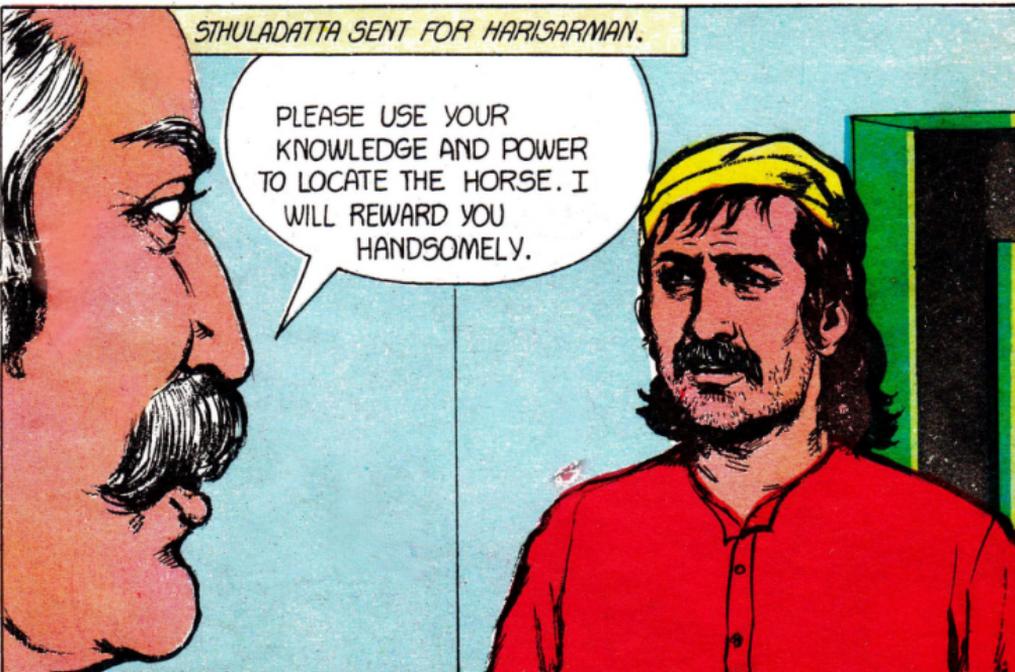


HE HAS KNOWLEDGE OF
SECRET SCIENCES AND
WILL BE ABLE TO TELL
YOU WHERE THE HORSE
IS.

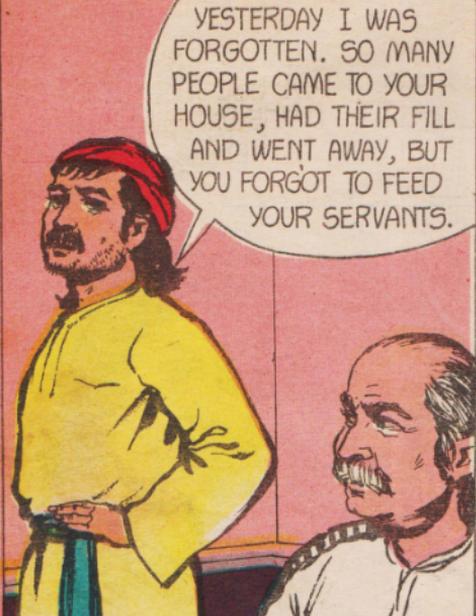


WHY DON'T YOU
ASK HIM. HE WILL
NOT USE THIS KNOW-
LEDGE UNLESS HE IS
ASKED TO DO SO.

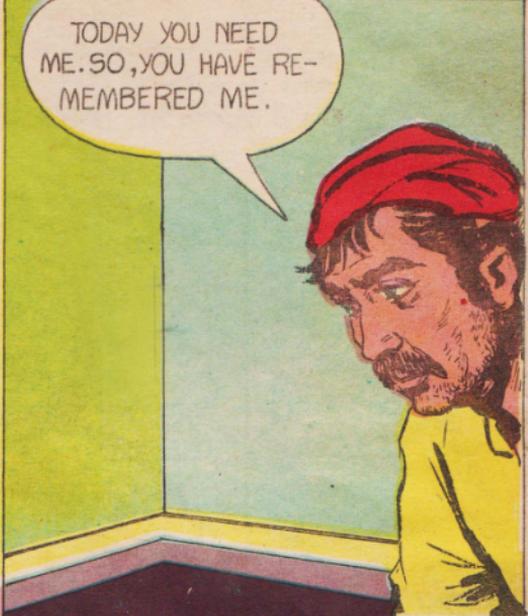
STHULADATTA SENT FOR HARISARMAN.



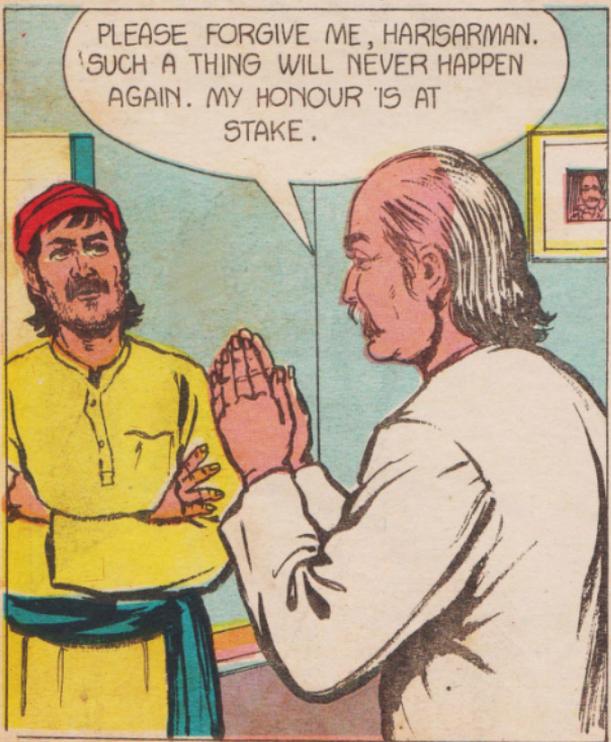
PLEASE USE YOUR
KNOWLEDGE AND POWER
TO LOCATE THE HORSE. I
WILL REWARD YOU
HANDSOMELY.



YESTERDAY I WAS FORGOTTEN. SO MANY PEOPLE CAME TO YOUR HOUSE, HAD THEIR FILL AND WENT AWAY, BUT YOU FORGOT TO FEED YOUR SERVANTS.



TODAY YOU NEED ME. SO, YOU HAVE RE-MEMBERED ME.

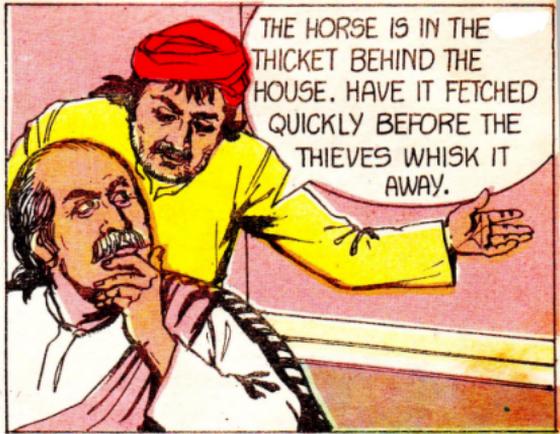


PLEASE FORGIVE ME, HARISARMAN. SUCH A THING WILL NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN. MY HONOUR 'IS AT STAKE.



THEN HARISARMAN ASKED FOR SOME PAPER...

...AND DREW A LOT OF DIAGRAMS.
HE PRETENDED TO MAKE
CALCULATIONS.



THE HORSE IS IN THE
THICKET BEHIND THE
HOUSE. HAVE IT FETCHED
QUICKLY BEFORE THE
THIEVES WHISK IT
AWAY.

TO THE MERCHANT'S GREAT DELIGHT, THE HORSE WAS SOON RECOVERED.



IT WAS IN THE THICKET,
TETHERED TO A TREE,
JUST AS HARISARMAN
SAID IT WOULD
BE!

AND HARISARMAN ACQUIRED
FOR HIMSELF A REPUTATION!



WHAT A HIDDEN
TALENT!

HOW MODEST
HE IS.

NO ONE EVEN KNEW
HOW LEARNED HE IS!

STHULADATTA HONoured
HARISARMAN WITH MANY GIFTS...



... AND HARISARMAN'S DAYS OF
POVERTY WERE OVER!

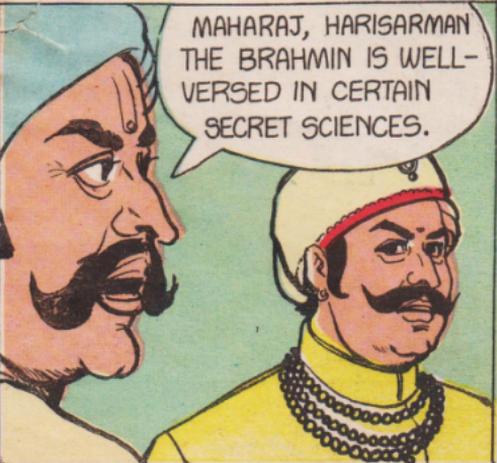




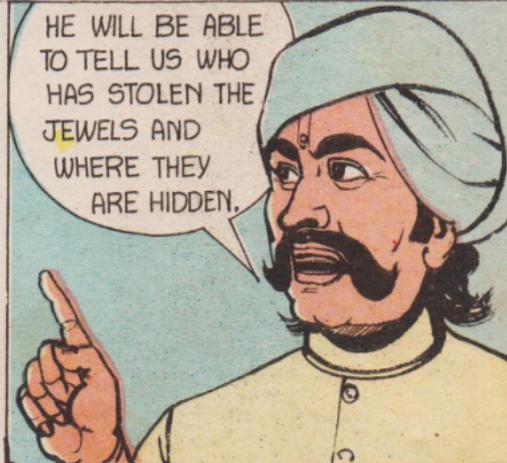
MAHARAJ! YOUR JEWELS!
THEY ARE ALL MISSING,
ALONG WITH A LARGE
AMOUNT OF GOLD!



WHAT? WHO HAS DONE
THIS? HOW WILL WE
CATCH THE THIEF?



MAHARAJ, HARISARMAN
THE BRAHMIN IS WELL-
VERSED IN CERTAIN
SECRET SCIENCES.



HE WILL BE ABLE
TO TELL US WHO
HAS STOLEN THE
JEWELS AND
WHERE THEY
ARE HIDDEN.

HARISARMAN WAS BEWILDERED WHEN THE KING'S MEN CAME TO TAKE HIM. HIS HEART THUDDED PAINFULLY AS THEY TOOK HIM TO COURT.



NOW, IN THE PALACE WAS A MAID CALLED JIHYA WHO WAS THE REAL CULPRIT.



SHE, ALONG WITH HER BROTHER, HAD STOLEN THE JEWELS AND THE GOLD THE NIGHT BEFORE.

BUT NOW THAT THE KING HAD SUMMONED HARISARMAN, SHE WAS ALARMED. HE WAS REPUTED TO BE SKILLED IN THE SECRET SCIENCES. SO COULD ANYTHING BE HIDDEN FROM HIM FOR LONG ?

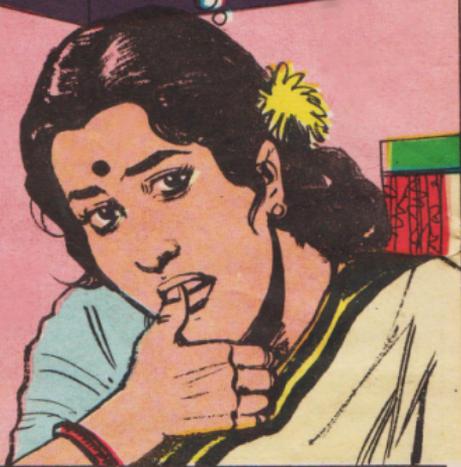
THIS BRAHMIN KNOWS EVERYTHING...



... HE WILL SURELY KNOW THAT I AM THE THIEF.



THEN THE GUARDS WILL CATCH ME AND I WILL SURELY BE BEHEADED. WHAT SHALL I DO ?



NIGHT CAME. SEEING THAT THE GUARD WAS ENGAGED IN CONVERSATION WITH ANOTHER GUARD, SHE SNEAKED UP TO THE DOOR AND PUT HER EAR TO IT.



AT THAT VERY MOMENT—

O JIHVA,* WHAT HAVE YOU DONE ?



* "JIHVA" IN SANSKRIT MEANS "TONGUE."

YOU HAVE OVERSTEPPED
YOUR LIMITS, ALL BECAUSE
OF YOUR DESIRE FOR
ENJOYMENT.

NOW YOU WILL
CERTAINLY SUFFER
FOR YOUR
MISDEEDS!

O MY GOD! HE
KNOWS! HE KNOWS
EVERYTHING!

WHAT SHALL I DO! THE BEST
THING WOULD BE TO CONFESS
TO HIM AND SEEK HIS
HELP.

SEEING THE GUARD STILL ENGROSSSED IN TALKING WITH HIS FRIEND...



...SHE QUIETLY SLIPPED INTO HARISARMAAN'S CHAMBER...



...AND FELL AT HIS FEET.



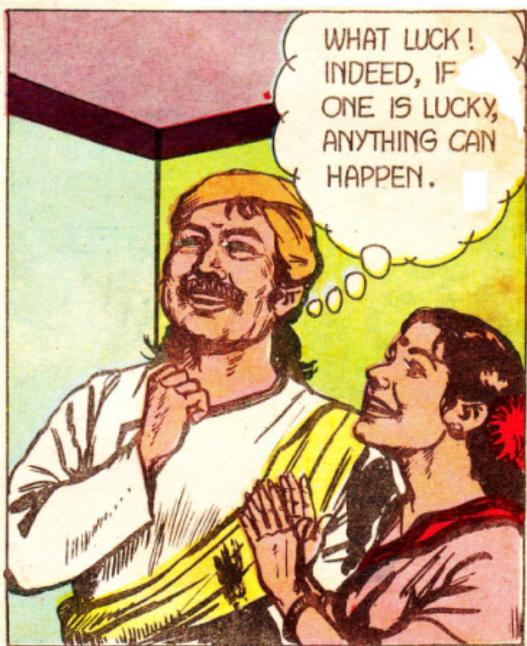
O GOOD BRAHMIN!

HERE I AM, THE ILL-FATED JIHVA WHO HAS STOLEN THE WEALTH!

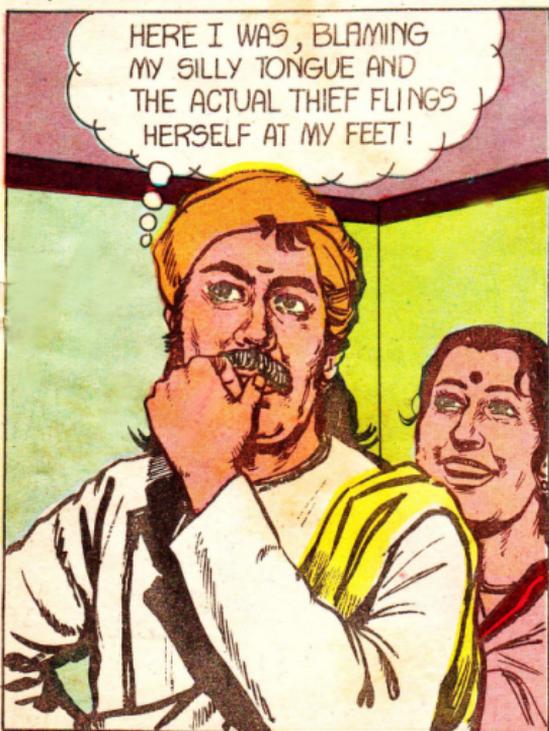




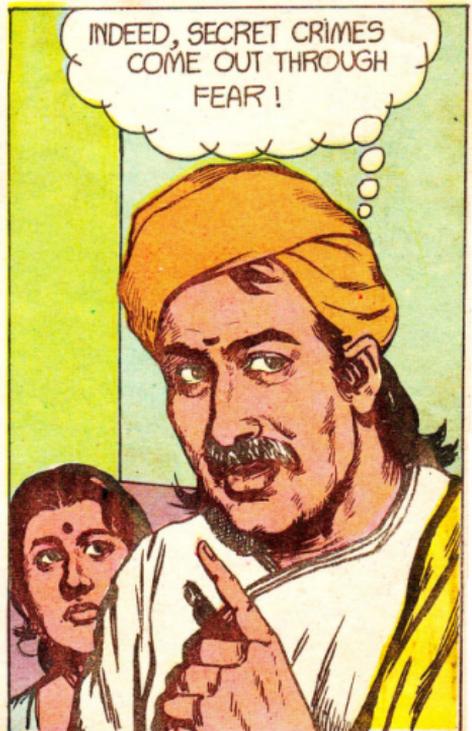
THIS IS
REALLY
INCREDIBLE!



WHAT LUCK!
INDEED, IF
ONE IS LUCKY,
ANYTHING CAN
HAPPEN.



HERE I WAS, BLAMING
MY SILLY TONGUE AND
THE ACTUAL THIEF FLINGS
HERSELF AT MY FEET!



INDEED, SECRET CRIMES
COME OUT THROUGH
FEAR!



GOOD SIR, I HAVE BURRIED IT IN A GARDEN BEHIND THE PALACE, UNDER A POMEGRANATE TREE.



HERE IS SOME GOLD FOR YOU SIR.

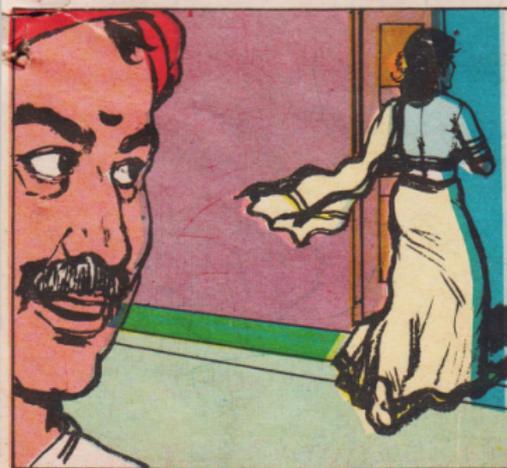


PLEASE TAKE IT AND SAVE ME FROM THE GALLOWS!



HARISARMAN DID SOME QUICK THINKING.

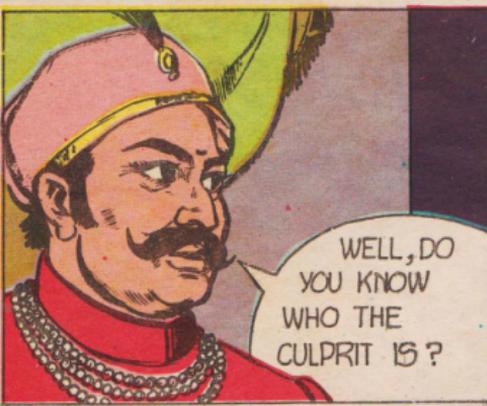
GO AWAY, YOU SILLY WOMAN!



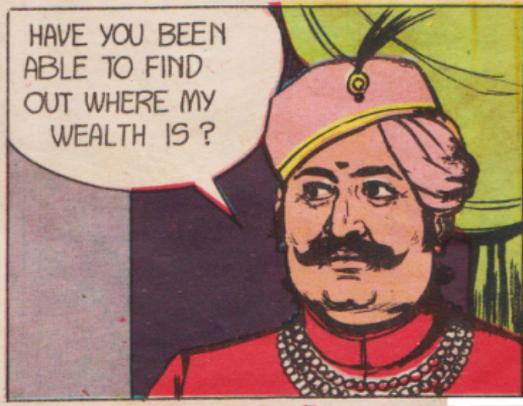
WHEN MORNING
CAME...



...HE WAS BROUGHT INTO THE
PRESENCE OF THE KING.



WELL, DO
YOU KNOW
WHO THE
CULPRIT IS ?



HAVE YOU BEEN
ABLE TO FIND
OUT WHERE MY
WEALTH IS ?



SIR, WE MUST
GO TO THE
GARDEN BEHIND
THE PALACE.

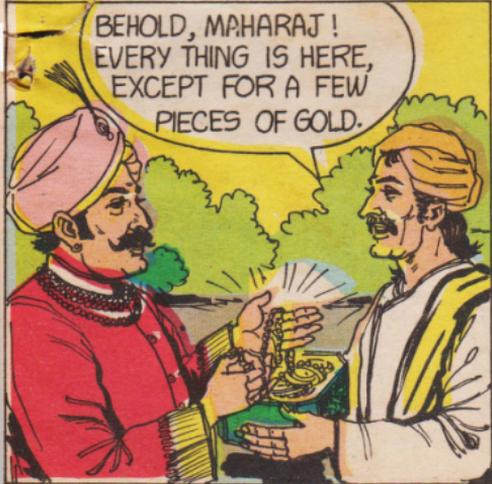


THERE I BEEN
WILL TELL YOU
EVERYTHING.

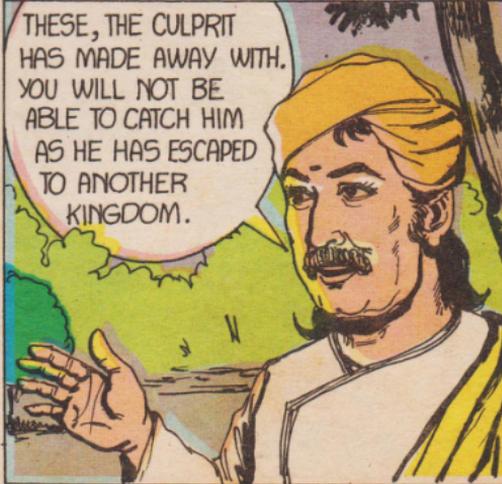
THE KING, ALONG WITH HARISARMAN AND HIS RETINUE CAME TO THE GARDEN.



MAHARAJ! HAVE THIS SPOT UNDER THE POMEGRANATE TREE DUG UP.



BEHOLD, MAHARAJ! EVERY THING IS HERE, EXCEPT FOR A FEW PIECES OF GOLD.



THESE, THE CULPRIT HAS MADE AWAY WITH. YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CATCH HIM AS HE HAS ESCAPED TO ANOTHER KINGDOM.

THE KING WAS DELIGHTED TO HAVE HIS TREASURE BACK.

I AM GREATLY PLEASED WITH YOU, HARISARMAN.

AS A TOKEN OF MY APPRECIATION, I WILL GIVE YOU...

JUST THEN—

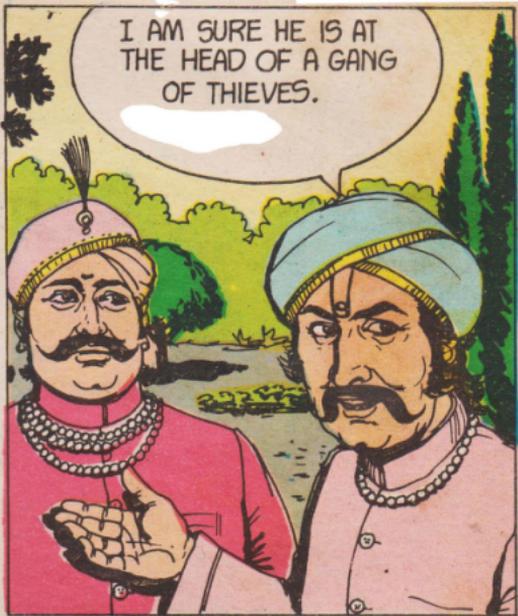
A MOMENT PLEASE, YOUR MAJESTY.

THE KING'S MINISTER LED HIM AWAY INTO A CORNER OF THE GARDEN.

YOUR MAJESTY, THIS LOOKS VERY SUSPICIOUS TO ME. CAN YOU NOT SEE HOW THIS MAN IS MAKING HIS LIVING?



OBVIOUSLY, HE GETS RICHLY REWARDED FOR FINDING PEOPLE'S THINGS FOR THEM.



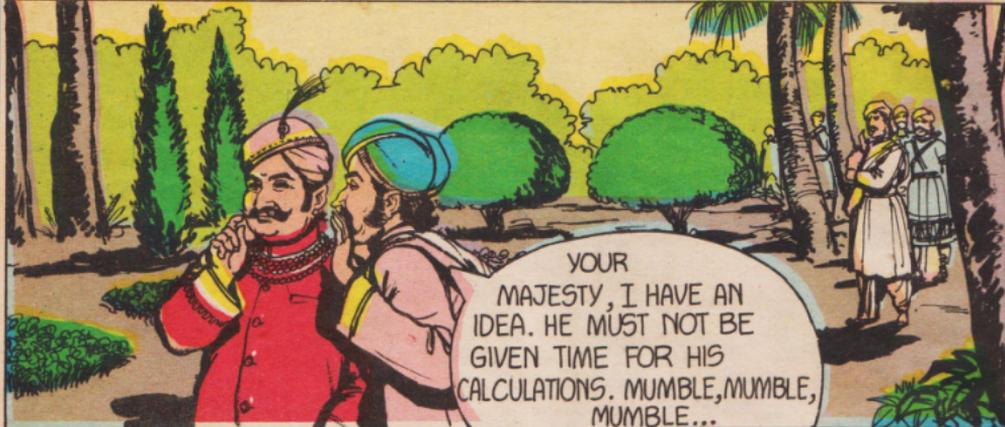
I AM SURE HE IS AT THE HEAD OF A GANG OF THIEVES.



HMMM. YOU COULD BE RIGHT, FOR HE HAS DONE THIS BEFORE.



BUT WHAT ARE WE TO DO? HOW CAN WE CATCH HIM AT HIS GAME?



YOUR MAJESTY, I HAVE AN IDEA. HE MUST NOT BE GIVEN TIME FOR HIS CALCULATIONS. MUMBLE, MUMBLE, MUMBLE...

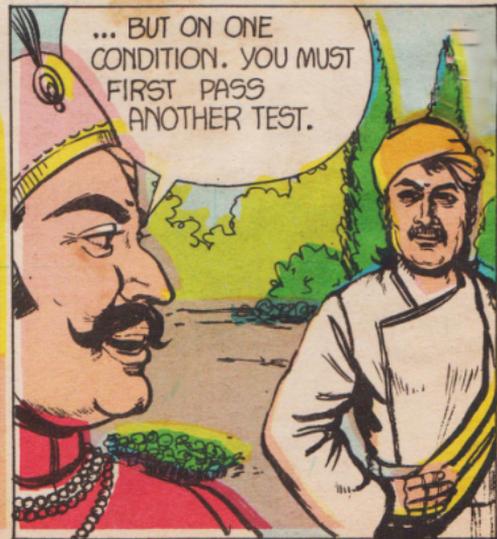


THAT'S A GOOD IDEA!

THE KING WALKED BACK TO WHERE HARISARMAN STOOD.



HARISARMAN, I WILL BESTOW ON YOU UNTOLD WEALTH...



... BUT ON ONE CONDITION. YOU MUST FIRST PASS ANOTHER TEST.

HE SIGNALLED TO THE MINISTER WHO CAME TOWARDS THEM WITH A COVERED PITCHER IN HIS HANDS.



ON THE WAY, WHEN HE WAS SURE NO ONE WAS WATCHING, THE MINISTER QUIETLY SLIPPED A SMALL FROG INTO IT.



REMEMBER ANOTHER THING.
YOU GET NO TIME FOR YOUR
SO-CALLED CALCULATIONS!
I MUST HAVE THE ANSWER
IN FIVE MINUTES.

O HARISARMAN!
WHAT HAVE YOU LET
YOURSELF IN FOR?



THIS IS SURELY
YOUR LAST HOUR
ON EARTH.



REMEMBER ALL YOUR
LOVED ONES AND SAY
YOUR LAST PRAYERS
NOW.



ALL THOSE GATHERED THOUGHT
THAT THE BRAHMIN WAS MAKING
QUICK MENTAL CALCULATIONS!





MY BELOVED WIFE AND CHILDREN,
THEY WILL MISS ME. MOTHER
LOVED ME SO MUCH... MY FATHER,
WHOM I WILL SOON BE JOINING,
USED TO CALL ME HIS LITTLE
FROG.

AND UNCONSCIOUSLY, HARISARMAN
BEGAN THINKING ALOUD—



O LITTLE
FROG! THIS
IS A FINE PITCHER
FOR YOU!

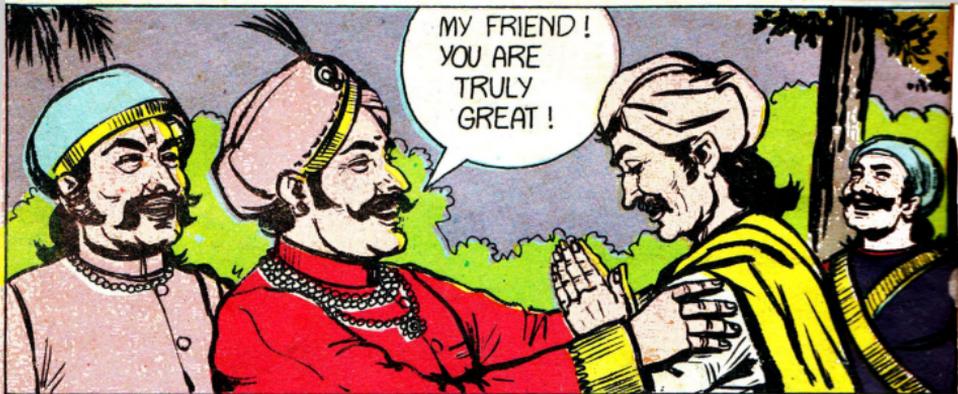
THE MINISTER
REMOVED THE
LID OF THE
PITCHER...

WHAT A
SAGE!

WHAT A
GREAT MAN!



...AND OUT JUMPED THE LITTLE FROG!



MY FRIEND!
YOU ARE
TRULY
GREAT!

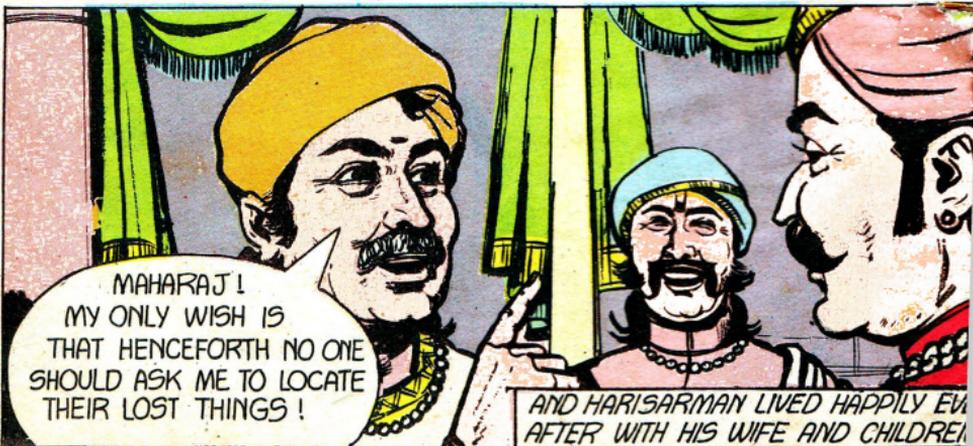
THERE WAS A SPECIAL CEREMONY ORDERED IN COURT THAT DAY.
HARISARMAN WAS GIVEN MANY COSTLY GIFTS.



GLORY TO
THE KING!

MAKE ANY
WISH YOU WANT,
HARISARMAN.

LONG LIVE
THE LEARNED
BRAHMIN!



MAHARAJ!
MY ONLY WISH IS
THAT HENCEFORTH NO ONE
SHOULD ASK ME TO LOCATE
THEIR LOST THINGS!

AND HARISARMAN LIVED HAPPILY EVER
AFTER WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN.

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