

ABHIMANYU



ABHIMANYU, THE SON OF ARJUNA, THE PANDAVA AND SUBHADRA, KRISHNA'S SISTER, IS RENOWNED FOR THE VALOUR DISPLAYED BY HIM IN THE MAHABHARATA WAR.

HIS FATHER, ARJUNA COULD NOT HELP LOVING HIM MORE THAN HIS OTHER SONS.

ABHIMANYU SHALL GROW UP TO BE THE FOREMOST AMONG THE PANDAVAS AS WELL AS THE YADAVAS!

HUSH! ONE OUGHT NOT TO PRAISE ONE'S OWN CHILD THUS.



BUT ALAS! MISFORTUNE SOON BEFELL THE PANDAVAS WITH THEIR COUSINS, THE KAURAVAS, PLOTTING AGAINST THEM.

THE PANDAVAS ARE BECOMING TOO POWERFUL.



WE MUST TAKE THEIR KINGDOM AND GET RID OF THEM SOMEHOW!

I HAVE IT! YUDHISHTHIRA HAS A WEAKNESS FOR GAMBLING. LET US INVITE HIM TO A GAME AND MAKE THE DICE OBEY US.



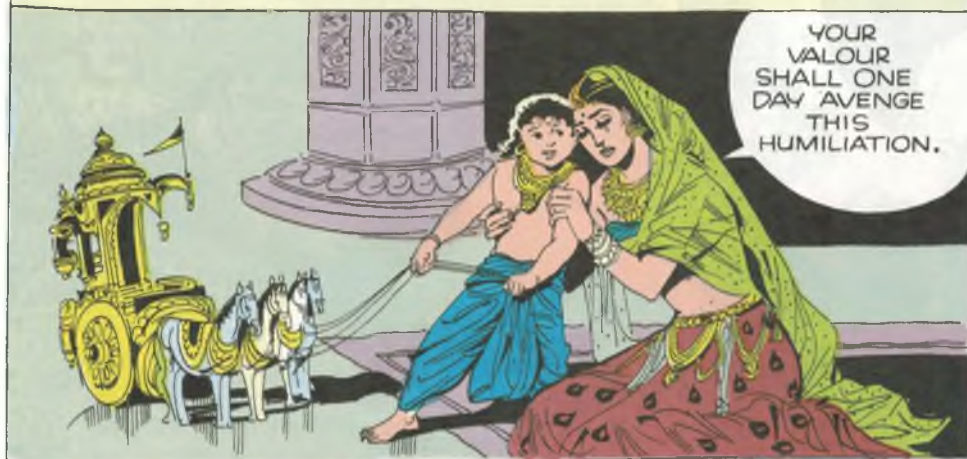
THE KAURAVAS CARRIED OUT THEIR WICKED PLOT.



THE PANDAVAS SET OUT FOR THE FORESTS WITH THE SORROWFUL CITIZENS WHO HAD GATHERED TO BID THEM FAREWELL, IN ATTENDANCE.



ABHIMANYU WAS A MERE CHILD WHEN THESE EVENTS TOOK PLACE, BUT HE WAS WELL LOOKED AFTER BY HIS MOTHER.



YOUR VALOUR SHALL ONE DAY AVENGE THIS HUMILIATION.

HE GREW UP TO BE A VALIANT YOUTH AND KRISHNA'S FAVOURITE NEPHEW.



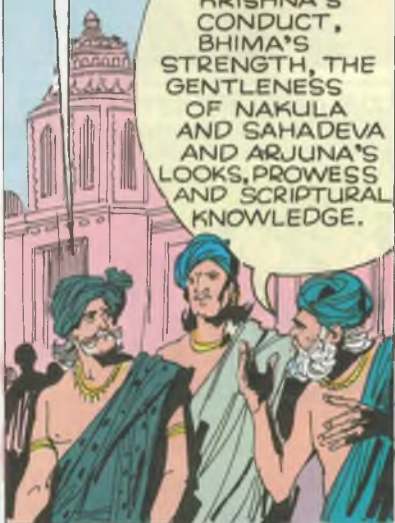
I SHALL FIGHT THE KAURAVAS AND WIN BACK OUR KINGDOM.

WELL SPOKEN, ABHIMANYU, WELL SPOKEN!

HE WAS LOVED AND ADMIRER BY ALL WHO KNEW HIM.

ABHIMANYU HAS INHERITED THE QUALITIES OF KRISHNA AND THE PANDAVAS.

YES. HE HAS YUDHISHTHIRA'S PATIENCE, KRISHNA'S CONDUCT, BHIMA'S STRENGTH, THE GENTLENESS OF NAKULA AND SAHADEVA AND ARJUNA'S LOOKS, PROWESS AND SCRIPTURAL KNOWLEDGE.



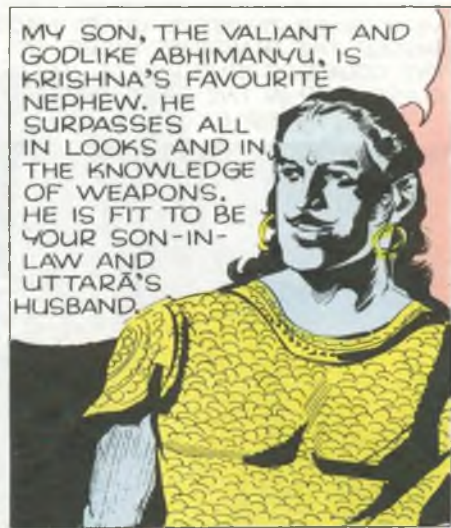
MEANWHILE THIRTEEN YEARS HAD PASSED. THE PANDAVAS WERE AT THE COURT OF KING VIRATA, IN DISGUISE AND IN THE LAST YEAR OF THEIR EXILE.

WHILE THERE, ARJUNA HELPED VIRATA'S SON UTTARA TO TRIUMPH OVER A KAURAVA ATTACK.



AFTER ARJUNA AND UTTARA RETURNED FROM THE BATTLE, THE PANDAVAS DISCLOSED THEIR IDENTITY TO VIRATA.





YUDHISHTHIRA, TOO, GAVE HIS ASSENT AND WORD WAS SENT TO KRISHNA TO BRING SUBHADRA AND ABHIMANYU AND THEIR KINSMEN TO VIRATA'S KINGDOM.



THE WEDDING OF ABHIMANYU AND UTTARA WAS SOLEMNISED AMIDST GREAT FEASTING AND REJOICING. IT WAS ATTENDED BY A HOST OF FRIENDLY KINGS OF NEIGHBOURING KINGDOMS.



AFTER THE WEDDING THE PANDAVAS HELD A COUNCIL.



BUT KING DURYODHANA, THE KAURAVA, WAS OBSTINATE.



AND IT WAS WAR BETWEEN THE PANDAVAS AND THE KAURAVAS - THE TERRIBLE WAR OF THE MAHABHARATA - IN WHICH PRACTICALLY ALL THE KINGS OF THOSE TIMES FOUGHT, AS ALLIES, ON ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER.

IT IS NOT YET NOON AND OUR ARMY IS BEING ROUTED BY THE KAURAVAS.

BHEESHMA, THE GRANDSIRE IS CREATING HAVOC WHEREVER HE GOES.



ABHIMANYU WHEN HE HEARD THIS CHARGED UPON BHEESHMA.

A MERE STRIPLING OF A BOY BUT WHAT A FINE WARRIOR! HE SEEMS TO BE EVERYWHERE.



THUS ABHIMANYU DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF ON THE VERY FIRST DAY OF THE BATTLE.

SOON OTHER WARRIORS CAME TO RELIEVE HIM AND BHEESHMA TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO THEM. BUT THE FIRST DAY WAS A BAD ONE FOR THE PANDAVAS. THAT NIGHT -



BHEESHMA HAS DECIMATED OUR ARMIES ON THIS VERY FIRST DAY OF BATTLE.

WHY DO YOU WORRY? YOU HAVE VALIANT BROTHERS, NEPHEWS AND ALLIES. MOREOVER SHIKHANDI IS DESTINED TO BE THE CAUSE OF BHEESHMA'S DEATH.

THUS KRISHNA CONSOLED AND ENCOURAGED THE PANDAVAS.

ON THE SECOND DAY, THE KAURAVAS INTOXICATED BY THEIR EARLY VICTORY, WERE OVER CONFIDENT AND CARELESS. TILL -



IT IS WISE TO END THE FIGHT FOR THE DAY AND RETIRE. WE HAVE SUFFERED HEAVY REVERSES AND OUR TROOPS ARE WEARY.

AND THE PANDAVAS WON THE DAY.

SO THE BATTLE WENT ON, SOMETIMES FAVOURING THE PANDAVAS, SOME TIMES THE KAURAVAS.



TILL AT LAST ON THE TENTH DAY BHEESHMA FELL, AT THE HANDS OF ARJUNA SHIELDED BY SHIKHANDI.



DRONA WAS MADE COMMANDER OF THE KAURAVA ARMIES.



WITH YOU AS OUR LEADER WE CAN EASILY DEFEAT YUDHISHTHIRA AND HIS MIGHTY ALLIES.



AND THE GREATEST BOON YOU COULD GIVE ME WOULD BE TO CAPTURE YUDHISHTHIRA ALIVE!

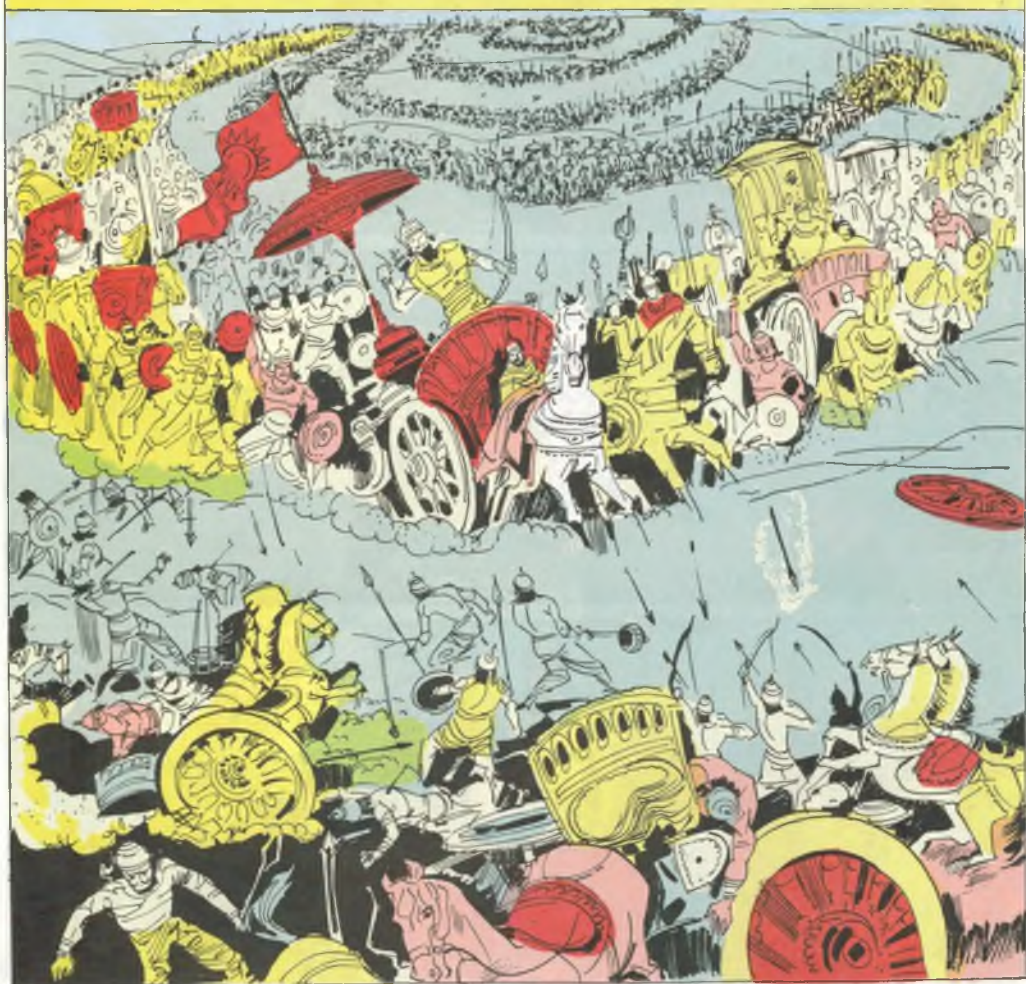
DRONA TRIED BUT FAILED. THAT EVENING THE KAURAVAS HELD A SPECIAL CONFERENCE.



WE CAN NEVER TAKE YUDHISHTHIRA AS LONG AS ARJUNA IS BY HIS SIDE.



THE PLOY WAS SUCCESSFUL. ARJUNA WAS DRAWN AWAY, AND DRONA ATTACKED. THE ATTACK WAS SO FIERCE THAT THE PANDAVAS WITH ARJUNA AWAY, WERE LOSING GROUND.



AT LAST YUDHISHTHIRA APPROACHED ABHIMANYU, PLACING THE BURDEN ON HIS YOUNG SHOULDERS.





... I DO NOT KNOW
HOW TO COME OUT OF IT,
IF I AM OVERPOWERED
AND IN DANGER.



BREAK THE
FORMATION
AND MAKE
WAY FOR US
TO ENTER. WE
WILL FOLLOW
CLOSE UPON
YOUR HEELS
AND PROTECT
YOU.



I WILL
BREAK
THROUGH IT
AND SLAUGHTER
THE KAURAVAS.
MY
ACHIEVEMENT
TODAY SHALL
EMBELLISH THE
FAIR NAME OF
THE PANDAVAS
AND
THE YADAVAS.



MAY YOUR
MIGHT
INCREASE
EVEN AS
YOU
SPEAK.

ABHIMANYU COMMANDED HIS CHARIOTEER.

PROCEED!
PROCEED!
URGE THE HORSES
TOWARDS DRONA'S
TROOPS.

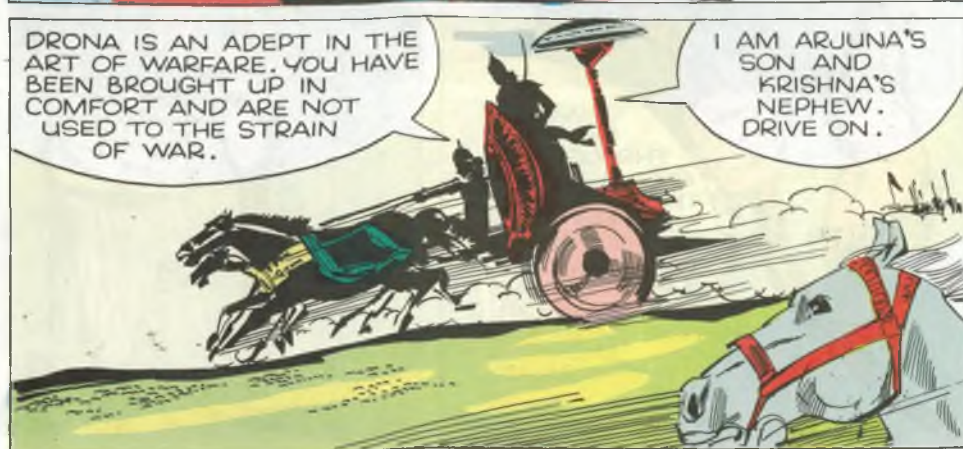


THE
PANDAVAS
HAVE
PLACED
A HEAVY
BURDEN
ON YOU
TODAY.
THINK WELL
BEFORE
YOU
PROCEED.

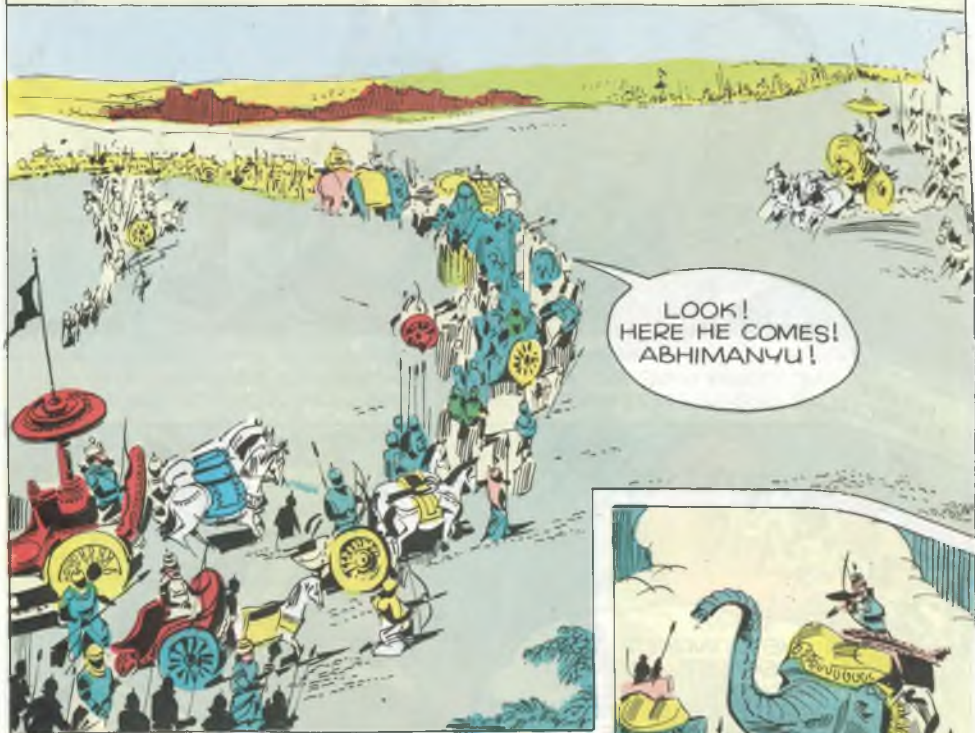


DRONA IS AN ADEPT IN THE
ART OF WARFARE. YOU HAVE
BEEN BROUGHT UP IN
COMFORT AND ARE NOT
USED TO THE STRAIN
OF WAR.

I AM ARJUNA'S
SON AND
KRISHNA'S
NEPHEW.
DRIVE ON.



THEY REACHED DRONA'S ARRAY WITH THE PANDAVAS AND THEIR ALLIES FOLLOWING CLOSE BEHIND.



THEN LIKE A PROUD YOUNG LION FALLING UPON A HERD OF ELEPHANTS, ABHIMANYU RUSHED AT DRONA.



THE HEROES FOUGHT ON AND THE TROOPS SLAUGHTERED ONE ANOTHER.



WHILE THE TERRIFYING BATTLE RAGED, ABHIMANYU, BREAKING THE CIRCULAR ARRAY, ENTERED IT UNDER THE VERY NOSE OF DRONA.



BUT ALAS FOR HIM, BEFORE THE PANDAVAS AND THEIR WARRIORS COULD FOLLOW HIM, THE BREACH WAS EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY CLOSED BY JAYADRATHA.



BUT HE FOUGHT BRAVELY AND FELLED THE KAURAVA WARRIORS,
COVERING THE EARTH WITH THEIR MUTILATED BODIES.



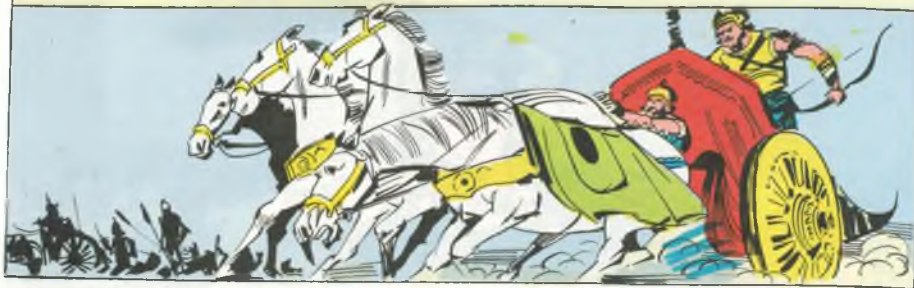
THE KAURAVA TROOPS TERRIFIED BY THIS ONSLAUGHT, TRIED TO FLEE ON
CHARIOTS AND ELEPHANTS FORSAKING THEIR WOUNDED KINSMEN AND
FRIENDS.

WE WILL NEVER
CONQUER THIS
MIGHTY HERO.

LET US ESCAPE
WHILE THERE IS
STILL LIFE LEFT
WITHIN US.



WHEN DURYODHANA SAW HIS ARMY BEING THUS ROUTED BY ABHIMAN-
YU, HE WAS FURIOUS AND RUSHED TOWARDS HIM.



DRONA WAS ALARMED.



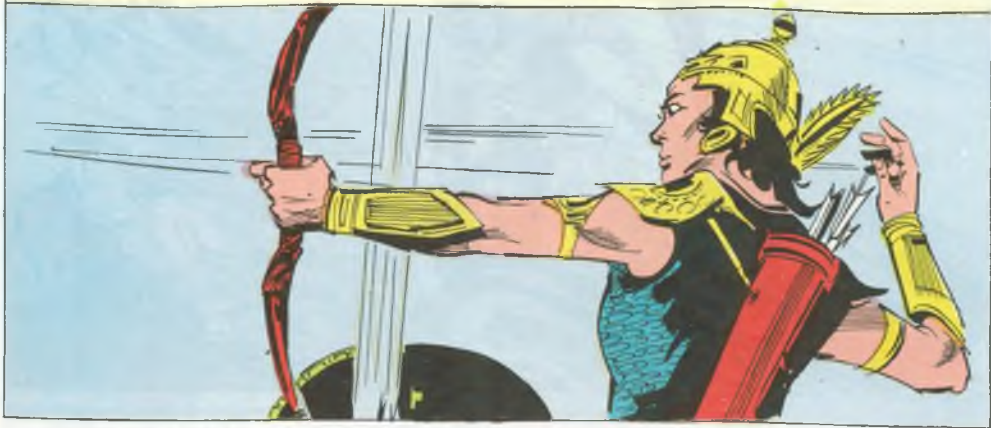
A GREAT NUMBER OF WARRIORS IMMEDIATELY WENT TO DURYODHANA'S RESCUE.



BUT ABHIMANYU WAS ENRAGED WHEN HE FOUND HIS PRIZE TARGET BEING SNATCHED AWAY.



HE VENTED HIS ANGER ON THE WARRIORS WHO HAD PROTECTED DURYODHANA.



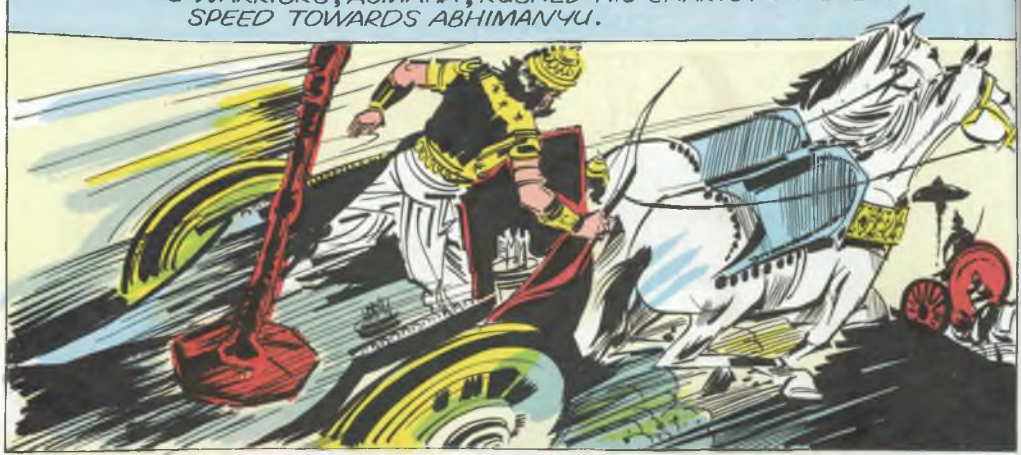
FORGETTING THE CODE OF WAR CONDUCT, A NUMBER OF WARRIORS, LED BY DRONA, JOINTLY ATTACKED YOUNG ABHIMANYU.



IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTROL THEIR ADVANCES. BUT A SHOWER OF ARROWS FROM ABHIMANYU'S BOW HELD THEM.



ONE OF THE WARRIORS, ASMAKA, RUSHED HIS CHARIOT AT GREAT SPEED TOWARDS ABHIMANYU.



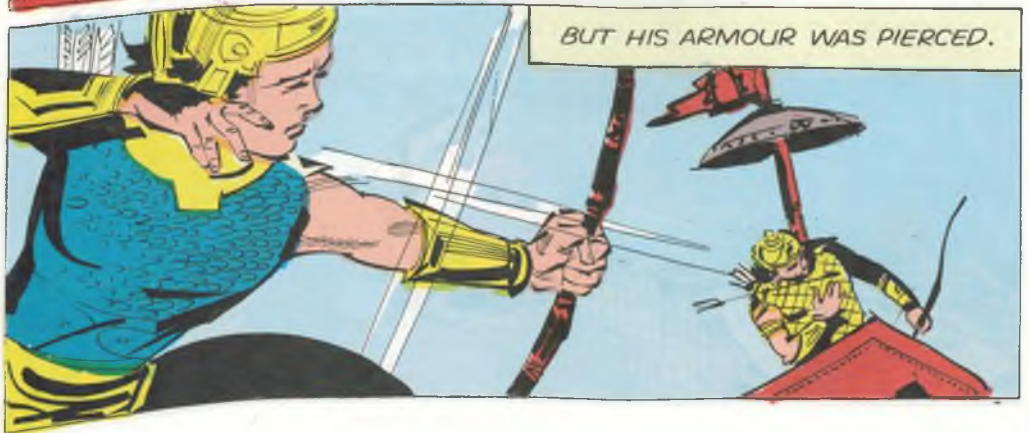
ABHIMANYU'S ARROW KILLED HIM.



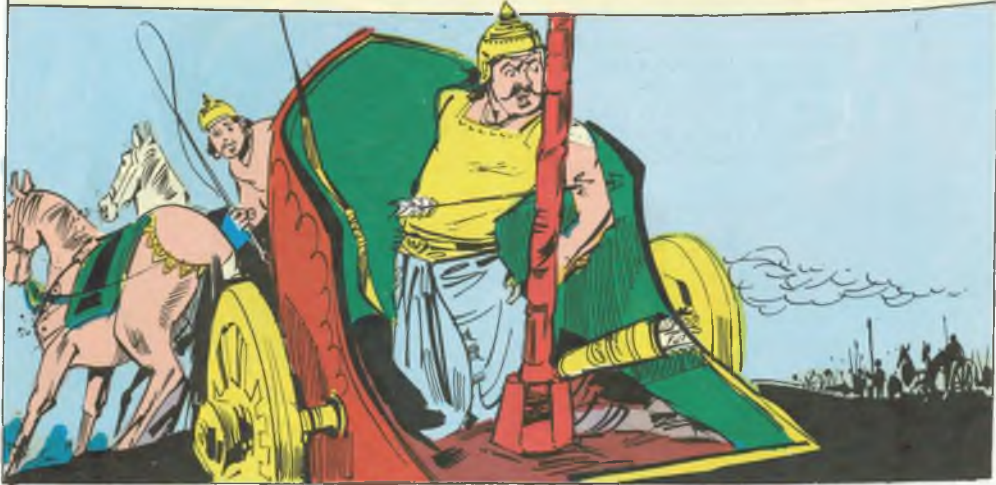
KARNA THEN MADE A DASH TOWARDS ABHIMANYU.



BUT HIS ARMOUR WAS PIERCED.



ABHIMANYU THEN WOUNDED SHALYA SO BADLY THAT THE GREAT WARRIOR COULD NOT EVEN MOVE FROM HIS SEAT.



SHALYA'S BROTHER RUSHED FORWARD.

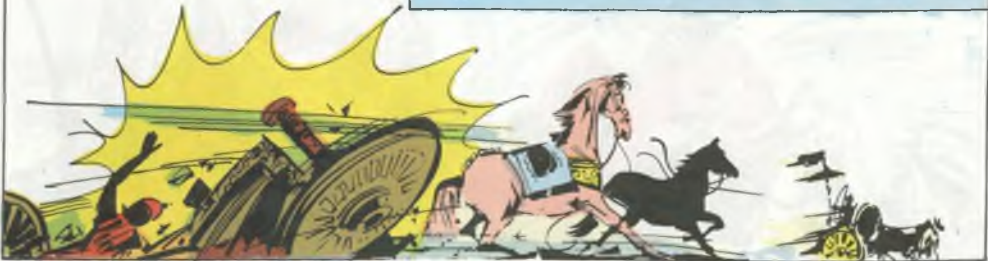
I MUST AVENGE
THE DEFEAT
OF MY
BROTHER.



ONE SINGLE ARROW FROM
ABHIMANYU'S BOW...



...BROKE HIS CHARIOT TO PIECES.



SO GREAT WAS THE SKILL DISPLAYED BY ABHIMANYU THAT EVEN DRONA WHO LED THE ATTACK, ADMIRED HIM.



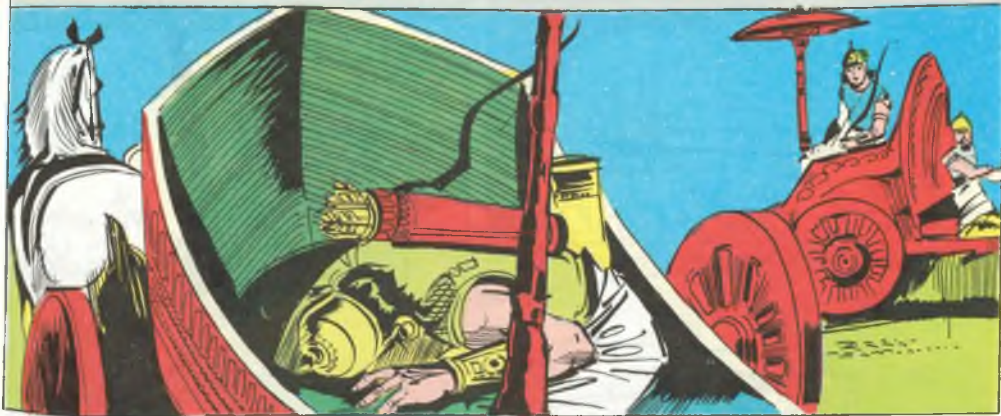
DURYODHANA, WHO OVERHEARD THIS REMARK, BECAME VERY ANGRY.



THE CHARIOTS OF ABHIMANYU AND DUHSHASANA MADE WONDERFUL MOVEMENTS AGAINST EACH OTHER.



VERY SOON, DUHSHASANA FELL SENSELESS IN HIS CHARIOT, STRUCK BY ONE OF ABHIMANYU'S ARROWS.



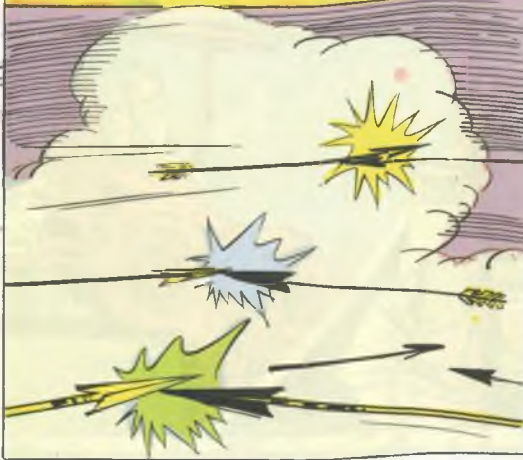
DUHSHASANA'S CHARIOTEER RUSHED AWAY FROM THE BATTLE SCENE TO SAVE HIS MASTER.



IT WAS NOW KARNA'S TURN. HE SENT A SHOWER OF ARROWS.



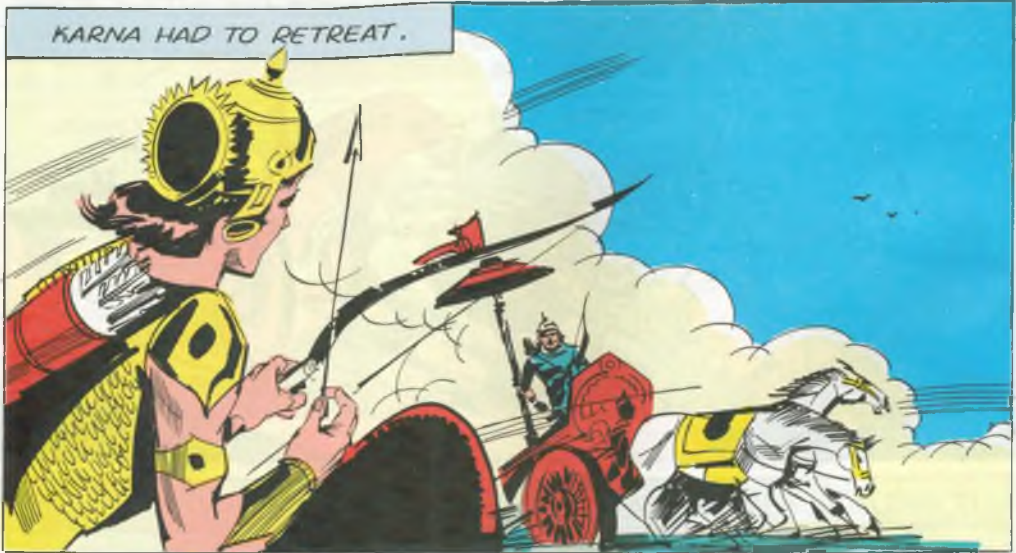
ABHIMANYU INTERCEPTED THEM ALL.



AND SENT A FRESH SHOWER OF ARROWS IN THE DIRECTION OF KARNA.



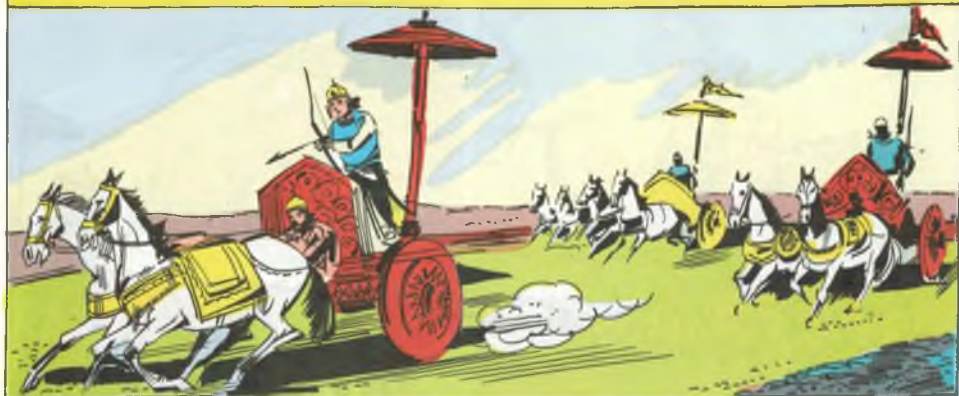
KARNA HAD TO RETREAT.



DURYODHANA'S SON, LAKSHMANA, A BRAVE WARRIOR, RUSHED TOWARDS ABHIMANYU IN A BID TO SAVE THE HONOUR OF THE KAURAVA ARMY.



KARNA, DRONA AND MANY OTHER RETREATING WARRIORS, NOW CAME BACK TO SUPPORT LAKSHMANA IN HIS FIGHT.



BUT A SHARP ARROW FROM ABHIMANYU'S BOW CAME WHIZZING...



...AND PIERCED LAKSHMANA.



SEEING THE DEAD BODY OF HIS YOUNG SON, DURYODHANA WAS FURIOUS.



AT THIS COMMAND OF DURYODHANA, DRONA, KARNA AND THE OTHER WARRIORS IN THE KAURAVA ARMY MOUNTED A FRESH ATTACK ON ABHIMANYU.

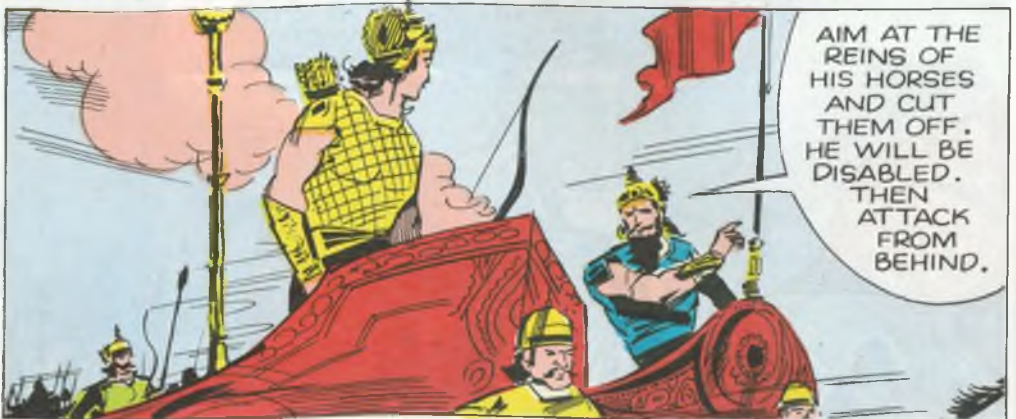


KARNA TURNED TO DRONA.



TELL US
HOW TO
KILL HIM
BEFORE
HE
SLAYS
US ALL.

YOU WILL
NEVER BE ABLE
TO PIERCE
HIS
ARMOUR.



AIM AT THE
REINS OF
HIS HORSES
AND CUT
THEM OFF.
HE WILL BE
DISABLED.
THEN
ATTACK
FROM
BEHIND.

KARNA CUT OFF THE REINS OF HIS HORSES.



FROM BEHIND, HE SHOT AN ARROW THAT BROKE ABHIMANYU'S BOW.



SOON ABHIMANYU'S HORSES LAY DEAD AND HIS CHARIOTEER WAS KILLED.



NOW HE JUMPED TO THE GROUND AND...



...WHIRLED HIS SWORD AND SHIELD. ALONE IN THE FIELD,
HE HELD HIS GROUND AGAINST MANY WARRIORS.



SOON AN ARROW FROM DRONA
BROKE HIS SWORD...



...AND AN ARROW FROM KARNA
BROKE HIS SHIELD.



THUS ABHIMANYU WAS TOTALLY DISABLED. BUT UNDAUNTED, HE PICKED UP THE WHEEL OF HIS CHARIOT...



...AND BEGAN WHIRLING IT AGAINST HIS UNFAIR AND UNJUST ENEMIES. BUT HE WAS COMPLETELY ENCIrcLED.



ARROWS FROM MANY BOWS CAME WHIZZING FROM ALL DIRECTIONS.



AND SOON THE WHEEL LAY BROKEN TO PIECES.



ABHIMANYU THEN PICKED UP A MACE THAT WAS LYING ON THE FIELD.



DUHSHASANA'S SON CLOSED IN.



WHILE FIGHTING
BOTH FELL TO THE GROUND.



BUT DUHSHASANA'S SON WAS
THE FIRST TO GET UP.



AND BEFORE ABHIMANYU COULD RISE, HE BROUGHT THE MACE DOWN ON HIS SKULL.



WHEN THE MIGHTY HERO FELL, LIKE SAVAGES THE KAURAVA WARRIORS DANCED AROUND HIS DEAD BODY.



NOT ONE OF THEM, HOWEVER, OUTLIVED THE WAR. ARJUNA, BHEEMA AND THE MIGHTY PANDAVAS AVENGED ABHIMANYU BY KILLING THEM ALL IN THE BATTLES THAT FOLLOWED AT KURUKSHETRA ...



...AND ABHIMANYU'S BRAVERY IS REMEMBERED TILL THIS DAY.



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Abhimanyu

Abhimanyu, like a shooting star, illuminated the horizon of the great epic Mahabharata for a few heroic moments, and then vanished in a blaze of glory.

Abhimanyu's father was the great Pandava prince, Arjuna. His mother, Subhadra, was the sister of Lord Krishna. In spite of being surrounded by powerful personalities, Abhimanyu easily found his rightful place among the greatest of his time.

We know little about Abhimanyu's childhood except his lineage. His marriage to Uttara too was overshadowed by Arjuna's powerful presence. But it was in the battlefield of Kurukshetra that he truly came into his own and proved his mettle. His humility is seen in his complete obedience to Yudhisthira. His idealism comes through when he takes up the fatal assignment on the battlefield. And his unwavering courage shines out when he single-handedly confronts the enemy.

It took seven of the greatest warriors on the Kaurava side to vanquish the young lion that was Abhimanyu. Youth has seldom scaled such heights in any epic known to humankind.

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