

KRISHNA: THE SUBDUER OF KALIYA

SHUKADEVA, THE SON OF SAGE VYASA, WAS TELLING PAREEKSHIT, THE GRANDSON OF ARJUNA, THE STORY OF KRISHNA.

YOU MEAN ALL THE PEOPLE OF GOKUL LEFT THE PLACE TOGETHER?

YES, THE ELDERS OF THE CLAN THOUGHT IT WAS WISER TO LEAVE GOKUL. KRISHNA, THE BELOVED SON OF THEIR LEADER, HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN TOO MANY MISHAPS IN GOKUL. SO THEY ALL WENT TO VRINDAVAN TO SETTLE THERE.

“THEY FOUND VRINDAVAN TO BE A BEAUTEOUS SPOT IN LUSH SURROUNDINGS. MOUNT GOVARDHAN LOOMED AT A DISTANCE, AND THE RIVER YAMUNA, WITH ITS GRASSY BANKS, FLOWED GENTLY PAST.



“THE NEW SETTLERS FIRST BUILT SHEDS FOR THE CATTLE...”



“...AND SOON SETTLED DOWN AFTER BUILDING THEIR OWN HOMES.



"BALARAMA AND KRISHNA WERE DELIGHTED TO BE IN VRINDAVAN. IN THEIR SWEET VOICES THEY WOULD OFTEN PRAISE THEIR NEW PLACE.



"THEY WISHED TO EXPLORE THE FOREST AROUND.



"WHILE THE CALVES GRAZED THE TENDER GRASS CONTENTEDLY, THE BOYS WOULD BE ENGROSSSED IN GAMES.



"THEY PLAYED THEIR FLUTES AND DANCED TO THE RHYTHM OF THEIR ANKLETS..."



"... OR THEY WOULD PRETEND TO BE BULLS FIGHTING."



"ONE DAY, KRISHNA AND HIS FRIENDS WERE HERDING THEIR CATTLE TOGETHER ALONG THE BANKS OF THE YAMUNA. SUDDENLY KRISHNA STOPPED TO STARE AT SOMETHING HE HAD SEEN."



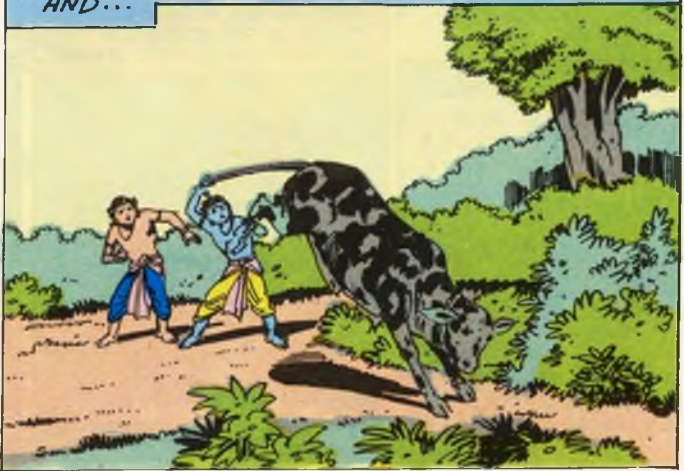
BALARAMA!
SEE THAT BLACK CALF!
SURELY HE IS NOT ONE OF OURS.

YES, HE LOOKS A LITTLE ODD.



SHH!
LET US APPROACH HIM QUIETLY FROM BEHIND.

"IN REALITY IT WAS A DEMON IN DISGUISE. KRISHNA STEALTHILY APPROACHED THE CALF AND..."



"...HOLDING HIS HIND LEGS FIRMLY IN ONE HAND, TWIRLED HIM AROUND."



" THEN WITH A TWIST OF HIS WRIST HE THREW THE DEMON CALF ON TO THE TOP OF A WOOD-APPLE TREE."



" THE DEMON REGAINED HIS TRUE FORM AS HE FELL TO HIS DEATH, CRUSHING A NUMBER OF TREES UNDER HIS WEIGHT."



" KRISHNA'S OTHER COMPANIONS BECAME EXCITED AS THEY SAW IT."



" WHEN THEY WERE A LITTLE OLDER, KRISHNA AND BALARAMA WERE ALLOWED TO TAKE THE OLDER CATTLE TO THE FOREST TO GRAZE."



" THEY WOULD CARRY THEIR MORNING MEAL WITH THEM, AND ROAM ALL DAY, FROM FOREST TO FOREST, WITH THEIR HERD. ONE DAY—



"WHEN THE COWS HAD QUENCHED THEIR THIRST, SUDDENLY —



"PERCHED BESIDE THE WATER WAS A CRANE. STRONG AND HUGE, IT POUNCED ON KRISHNA AND PICKED HIM UP IN ITS SHARP BEAK.



"EVEN AS KRISHNA'S COMPANIONS STARED OPEN-MOUTHED WITH SHOCK, THE CREATURE SWALLOWED KRISHNA AT ONE GULP.



"SO TERRIFIED WERE THE COWHERDS THAT THEY FAINTED FROM SHOCK.



"BUT AS SOON AS KRISHNA REACHED DOWN THE MOUTH OF THE DEMON, THE CREATURE FELT AN UNBEARABLE HEAT INSIDE HIS THROAT...



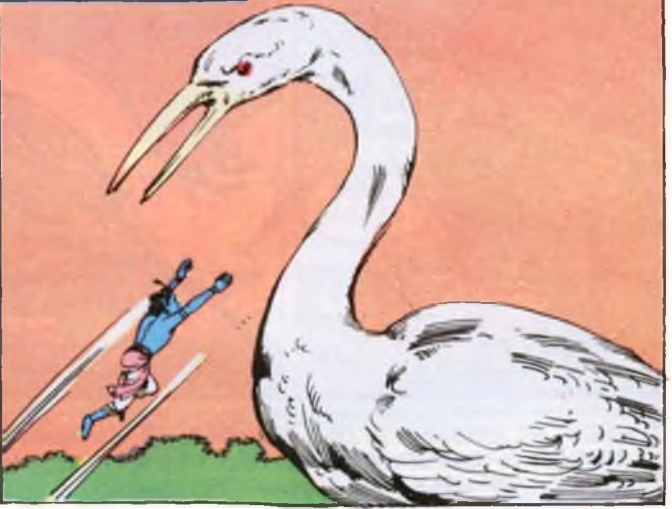
"... AND QUICKLY SPEWED OUT HIS VICTIM.



"THE CRANE WAS NONE OTHER THAN BAKASURA, A FRIEND OF KAMSA. ENRAGED, HE ATTACKED KRISHNA WITH HIS SHARP BEAK.



"NOW KRISHNA SPRANG UP. GRABBED THE CREATURE...



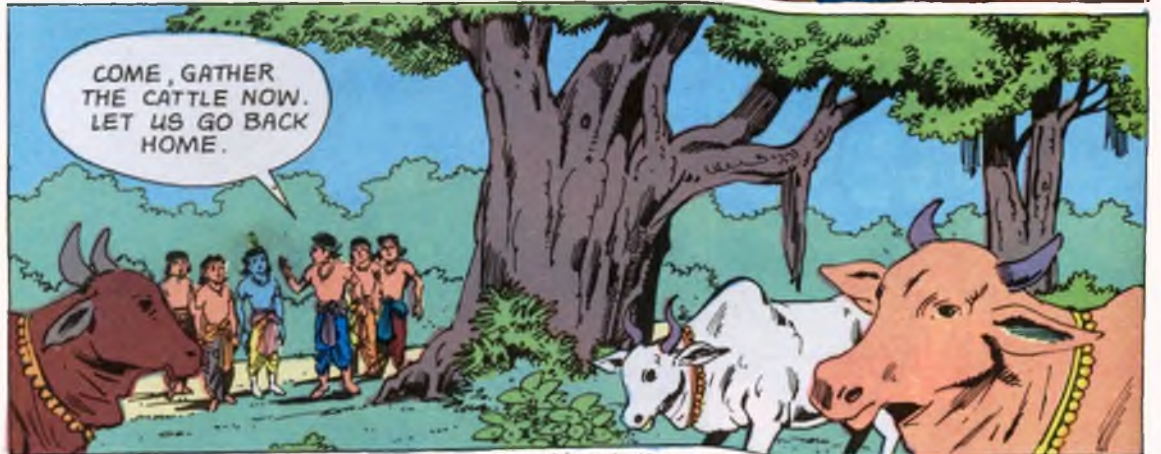
"... AND PLAYFULLY TORE IT APART.



"WHEN THEY REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS, THE COWHERDS WERE OVERJOYED TO HAVE THEIR PLAYMATE BACK AND HUGGED HIM AFFECTIONATELY.



COME, GATHER THE CATTLE NOW. LET US GO BACK HOME.



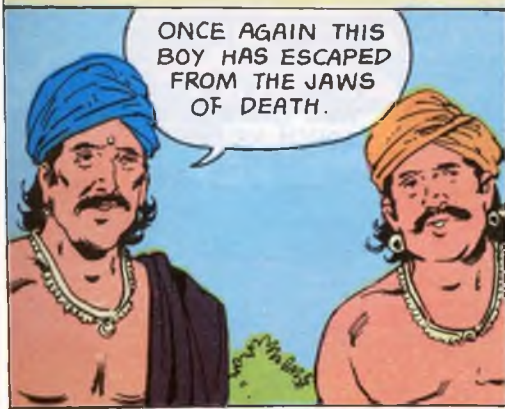
“THEY HURRIED HOME TO RELATE THE INCIDENT TO THEIR PARENTS. THE GOPAS AND GOPIKAS GATHERED TOGETHER TO HEAR THE TALE.”



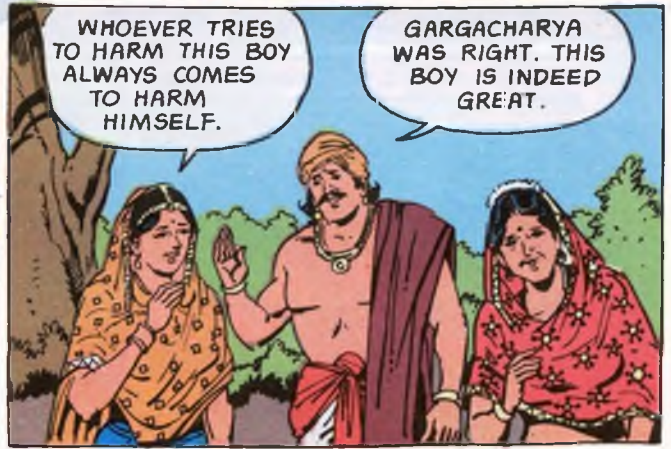
... AND KRISHNA TORE THE DEMON APART AS IF HE WERE TEARING UP A TINY REED.

WE WERE SO RELIEVED TO SEE HIM SAFE!

“THE ELDERS WERE AMAZED.”



ONCE AGAIN THIS BOY HAS ESCAPED FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH.



WHOEVER TRIES TO HARM THIS BOY ALWAYS COMES TO HARM HIMSELF.

GARGACHARYA WAS RIGHT. THIS BOY IS INDEED GREAT.

“KRISHNA AND BALARAMA SPENT THEIR DAYS HAPPILY FROLICKING AND PLAYING WITH OTHER COWHERDS. EARLY AT DAWN THEY WOULD LEAVE THEIR HOMES WITH THEIR HERD...”



“... AND SPEND THE DAY SPORTING IN THE FOREST AND FIELDS. THEY WOULD ADORN THEMSELVES WITH WILD FLOWERS, FRESH BLOSSOMS AND PEACOCK FEATHERS...”



“... OR PLAY A GAME OF HIDE AND SEEK...”



“... OR PLAY MUSIC ON THEIR FLUTES AND PIPES...”



“... OR RACE ONE ANOTHER.”



“THEY WOULD IMITATE THE SOUNDS OF THE FOREST.”



"...OR IMITATE THE BIRDS' WALK AND DANCE.



SEE! I AM AS GRACEFUL AS A SWAN.

I AM A PEACOCK. SEE MY DANCE.

"WITH THE MONKEYS OF THE JUNGLE, THEY WOULD SCAMPER UP THE TREES AND LEAP FROM ONE BRANCH TO ANOTHER.



"ONE DAY, WHEN THE COWHERDS WERE PLAYING THEIR SIMPLE GAMES AGHASURA, A DREADFUL DEMON SAW THEM.



HOW HAPPILY THEY ARE PLAYING HERE, AS IF THEY ARE JUST INNOCENT CHILDREN.



BUT AMONG THEM IS THAT BOY KRISHNA WHO KILLED MY SISTER POOTANA AND MY BROTHER BAKASURA.



TODAY I WILL KILL HIM AND ALL HIS FRIENDS.

"AGHASURA, WHO WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO TERRIFY EVEN THE DEVAS, ASSUMED THE FORM OF AN ENORMOUS SERPENT.



“ LIKE A HUGE MOUNTAIN HE SPREAD HIMSELF KEEPING HIS CAVE-LIKE MOUTH OPEN. HIS LOWER LIP RESTED ON EARTH, WHILE THE UPPER REACHED UP TO THE CLOUDS. LIKE A RED RIBBON OF A ROAD, HIS TONGUE EMERGED FROM WITHIN.



“ WHEN THE COWHERDS SAW THE CREATURE IN THEIR PATH, THEY WERE AMAZED.

SEE THIS ODD CREATURE. IT LOOKS LIKE A PYTHON WAITING TO SWALLOW US!

HA! HA! SEE HOW THE RAYS OF THE SUN ARE TURNING THE CLOUDS PINK.

THEY LOOK LIKE HIS UPPER JAW.



“ INNOCENTLY THEY SAID —



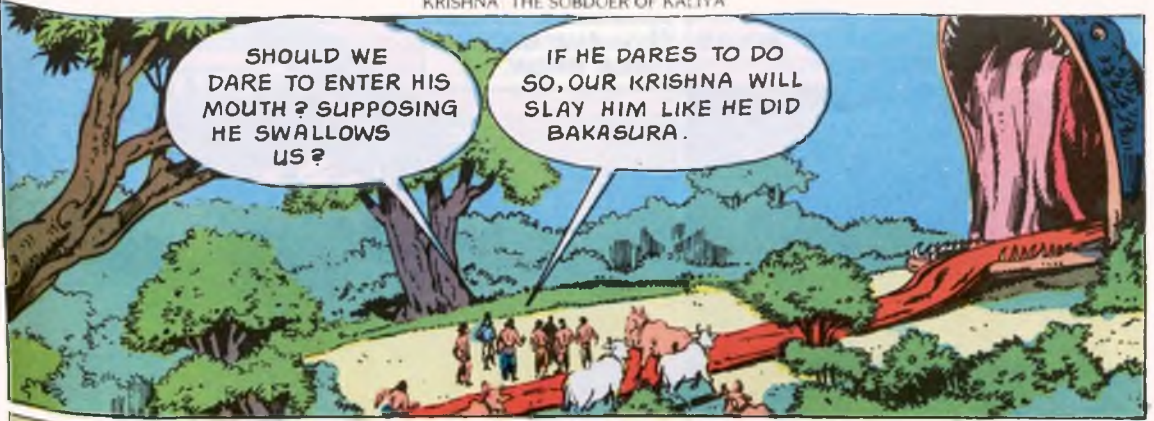
AND THE SHADOW OF THOSE CLOUDS IS ALSO RED. THAT MUST BE HIS LOWER LIP.

SEE THIS LONG RED-HUED ROAD. IT LOOKS LIKE THE TONGUE OF A SERPENT!

HOW HOT THE WIND IS! THERE MUST BE A FOREST FIRE NEAR BY!

AND SUCH A STENCH TOO! SOME POOR CREATURES MUST HAVE BEEN BURNT IN THE FIRE!



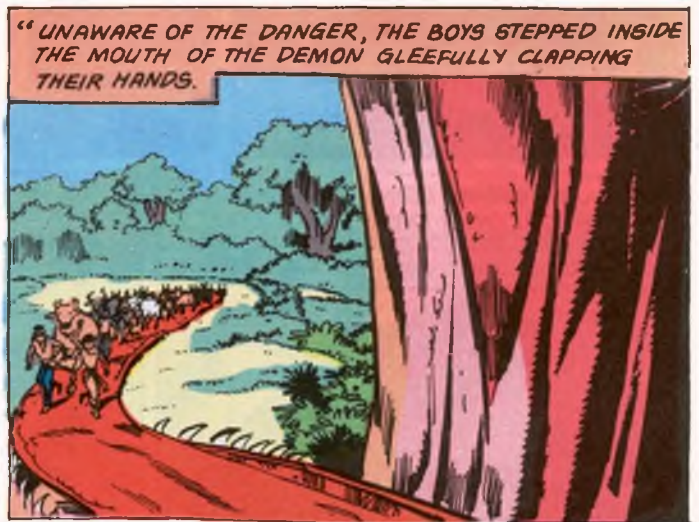


SHOULD WE DARE TO ENTER HIS MOUTH? SUPPOSING HE SWALLOWS US?

IF HE DARES TO DO SO, OUR KRISHNA WILL SLAY HIM LIKE HE DID BAKASURA.



IT CAN'T BE A SERPENT. LET'S GO! LET'S GO!



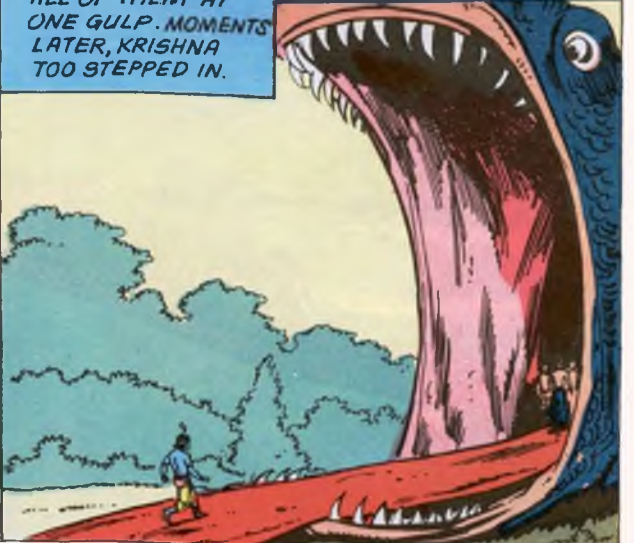
"UNAWARE OF THE DANGER, THE BOYS STEPPED INSIDE THE MOUTH OF THE DEMON GLEEFULLY CLAPPING THEIR HANDS."

"BEFORE KRISHNA'S VERY EYES, THE COWHERDS AND THEIR CATTLE HAD GONE INSIDE THE ASURA'S MOUTH."

"AGHASURA WAS WAITING FOR KRISHNA TO ENTER HIS MOUTH SO THAT HE WOULD SWALLOW ALL OF THEM AT ONE GULP. MOMENTS LATER, KRISHNA TOO STEPPED IN."



HOW COULD THEY MISTAKE THIS SERPENT FOR AN ILLUSION? I MUST SAVE THEM NOW.



"ONCE INSIDE AGHASURA'S MOUTH, KRISHNA BEGAN TO GROW..."



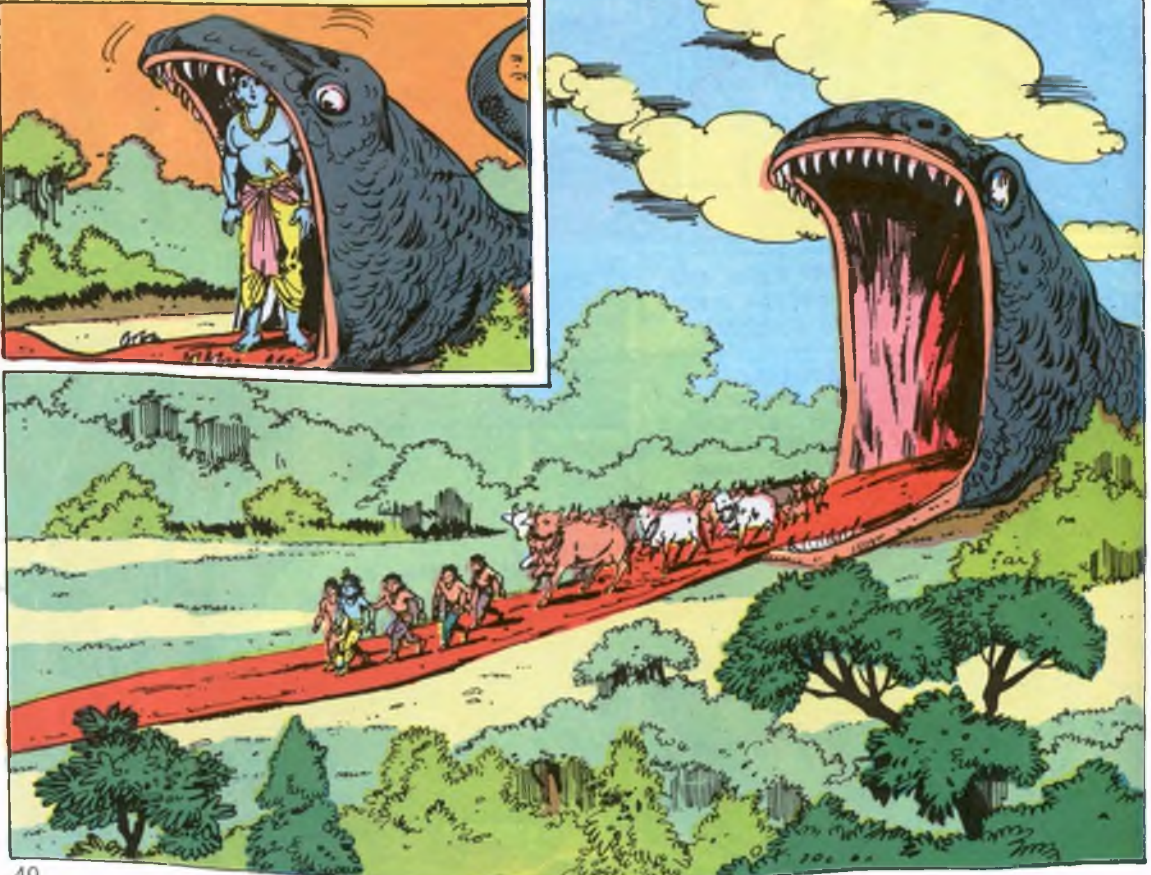
"...AND GROW AND GROW."



"NOW AGHASURA COULD NOT BREATHE. HIS THROAT WAS CHOKED, HIS EYE-BALLS BULGED OUT, AND SOON HIS ENORMOUS BODY BECAME LIFELESS."



"KRISHNA, THE COWHERDS AND THE CATTLE STEPPED OUT UNSCATHED FROM THE DEAD DEMON'S MOUTH."



"AFTER SOME TIME, THE SKIN OF AGHASURA BECAME STIFF AND DRY AND IT BECAME A FAVOURITE PLACE FOR THE CHILDREN TO PLAY.



"WHEN KRISHNA AND BALARAMA WERE SIX, THEY WERE ALLOWED TO GO FURTHER FROM HOME, INTO THE DEEP FOREST WITH THEIR COWS.



"THE SCENTED FLOWERS, THE SPARKLING WATERS OF THE BEAUTIFUL LAKES, THE GALLOPING DEER AND THE SWEET SOUND OF BIRDSONG IN THE FORESTS OF VRINDAVANA NEVER FAILED TO DELIGHT KRISHNA. ONE DAY KRISHNA AND BALARAMA WERE RESTING AFTER PLAY,



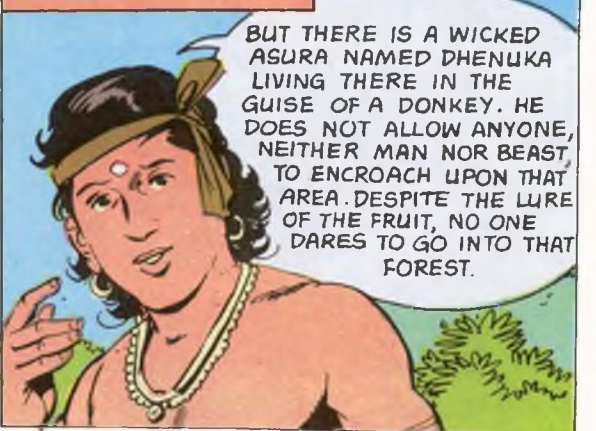
"AMONG THEIR COWHERD FRIENDS WERE SUBALA AND SHRIDAMA. THEY SAID —

YOU, BALARAMA AND KRISHNA, ARE UNEQUALLED IN STRENGTH. DO YOU KNOW THERE IS A DENSE FOREST NEAR BY WITH SEVERAL PALM TREES LADEN WITH FRUIT?



"SHRIDAMA SAID —

BUT THERE IS A WICKED ASURA NAMED DHENUKA LIVING THERE IN THE GUISE OF A DONKEY. HE DOES NOT ALLOW ANYONE, NEITHER MAN NOR BEAST, TO ENCROACH UPON THAT AREA. DESPITE THE LURE OF THE FRUIT, NO ONE DARES TO GO INTO THAT FOREST.





BUT YOU MUST HELP US GET THAT FRUIT, KRISHNA.



“ WITH A LAUGH, KRISHNA AND BALARAMA SPRANG UP.

COME, SHOW US THE WAY.

YES, LET'S GO RIGHT NOW.



“ WHEN THEY WENT INTO THE FOREST, BALARAMA FIRMLY CAUGHT HOLD OF ONE OF THE TREES.



“ ... AND SHOOK IT SO VIGOROUSLY THAT MANY FRUIT FELL DOWN. THE ASURA CAME RUNNING AS HE HEARD THE SOUND.



“ WITH HIS HIND LEGS, HE GAVE A SWIFT KICK TO BALARAMA



“ BUT WHEN HE TRIED TO DO SO AGAIN, BALARAMA CAUGHT HOLD OF HIS LEGS ...

"... AND TWIRLED HIM ROUND SO FAST THAT THE ASURA DIED.



"BALARAMA THEN FLUNG DHENUKASURA UP AND HE FELL ON THE TOP OF A PALM TREE.



"WITH A LOUD NOISE, THE TREE CRASHED TO THE GROUND, FELLING A NUMBER OF OTHER TREES TOO.



"KRISHNA AND BALARAMA RETURNED HOME HAPPY. FROM THAT DAY ON, PEOPLE OF VRINDAVAN VENTURED FEARLESSLY INTO THE FOREST TO EAT THE PALM FRUIT AND GRAZE THEIR CATTLE.



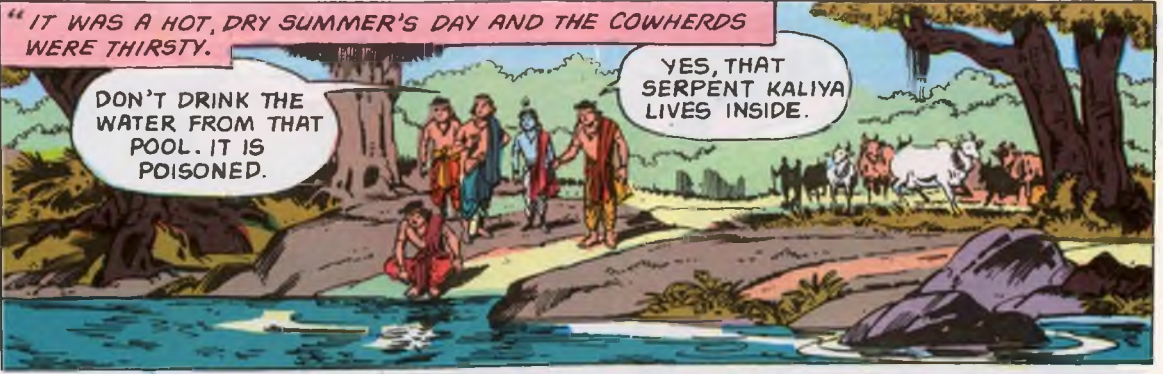
"BALARAMA AND KRISHNA WERE USUALLY INSEPARABLE. ONE DAY, HOWEVER, KRISHNA WENT WITH HIS OTHER FRIENDS TO THE BANKS OF THE YAMUNA, LEAVING BALARAMA BEHIND.



"IT WAS A HOT, DRY SUMMER'S DAY AND THE COWHERDS WERE THIRSTY."

DON'T DRINK THE WATER FROM THAT POOL. IT IS POISONED.

YES, THAT SERPENT KALIYA LIVES INSIDE.



HIS VENOM IS SO POWERFUL THAT EVEN THE PLANTS NEAR THE POND HAVE WILTED.

BUT OUR COWS ARE SO THIRSTY!

"UNMINDFUL OF THE WARNING, THE COWHERDS LED THE CATTLE TO THE RIVER."



"NO SOONER HAD THEY DRUNK THE WATER THAN THE CATTLE COLLAPSED ON THE RIVER BANK."

"KRISHNA COULD NOT BEAR TO SEE THIS."



"SWIFTLY, HE CLAMBERED UP A TREE..."



KRISHNA!
WHAT ARE
YOU
DOING?

"... AND DIVED INTO THE POND."



"PLAYFULLY HE BEGAN TO SPLASH ABOUT IN THE WATER. KALIYA, THE SERPENT, HEARD THE SOUND."



"... AND SUDDENLY EMERGING FROM THE DEPTHS, APPEARED BEFORE KRISHNA. WITH A HUNDRED AND ONE FORKED TONGUES LASHING OUT OF HIS HUNDRED AND ONE HEADS, HE WAS AN AWESOME SIGHT INDEED."



"BUT KRISHNA REMAINED CALM AND GAZED AT HIM WITH A GENTLE SMILE ON HIS LIPS.



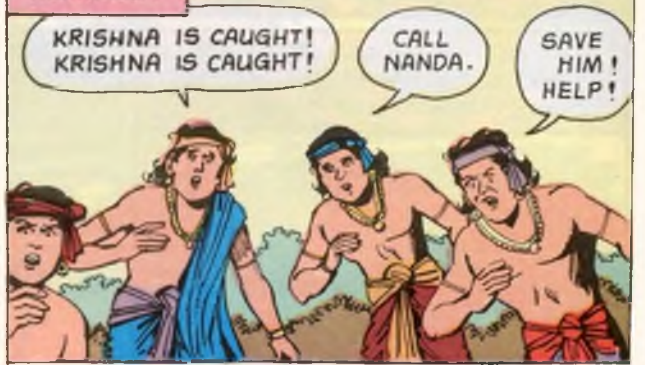
"THIS MADE KALIYA ALL THE MORE ANGRY. HE POUNCED ON KRISHNA..."



"...AND CAUGHT THE BOY IN HIS COILS.



"BY NOW THE COWHERD BOYS BECAME ALARMED.



"ON HEARING THE NEWS, NANDA AND OTHERS RUSHED TO THE SPOT. SOME OF THE COWHERDS HAD FAINTED OUT OF FRIGHT.



"YASHODA WAS ABOUT TO JUMP INTO THE RIVER, BUT THE GOPIKAS HELPED HER BACK FORCIBLY.



"THEY TRIED TO CONSOLE HER.



DON'T WORRY ABOUT KRISHNA.

REMEMBER HOW BRAVELY KRISHNA FACED THE WICKED POOTANA?

"BALARAMA COAXED NANDA AGAINST THE IDEA OF TRYING TO RESCUE KRISHNA.



"BOUND AS HE WAS IN THE SERPENT'S COILS, KRISHNA NOW MADE HIS BODY SWELL. HE GREW BIGGER...



"... AND BIGGER...



"... TILL HE GOT FREE FROM KALIYA'S HOLD. KALIYA BROKE AWAY, BUT RAISED HIS HOODS OMINOUSLY OVER KRISHNA.



"HE BLEW OUT SPRAYS OF VENOM THROUGH HIS NOSTRILS. HIS RED EYES GLARED AT KRISHNA. FLAMES SHOT OUT OF HIS MANY MOUTHS."



"KRISHNA PLAYFULLY DODGED EVERY ATTACK OF THE SERPENT."



"WHEN KALIYA SEEMED TO HAVE TIRED A LITTLE, IN ONE SWIFT LEAP KRISHNA WAS ON HIS HOOD."



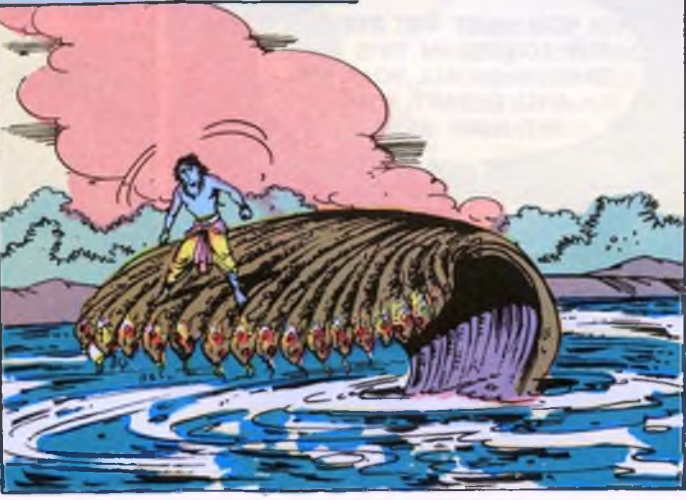
"WITH RHYTHMIC STEPS, KRISHNA BEGAN TO DANCE ON KALIYA, NIMBLY STEPPING FROM ONE HEAD TO ANOTHER."



"AT THE TOUCH OF KRISHNA'S FEET, THE HEADS WERE CRUSHED. KALIYA SOON LOST HIS STRENGTH."



"BLOOD OZED FROM HIS MOUTHS AND NOSTRILS, AND HE FELL IN A FAINT."



"REGAINING A LITTLE STRENGTH, KALIYA WOULD TRY TO LIFT ONE OF HIS HEADS."



"QUICKLY KRISHNA WOULD JUMP ON IT."



PAREEKSHIT INTERRUPTED SHUKADEVA IN HIS NARRATION.

KALIYA'S END SEEMED TO BE NEAR. JUST THEN, HIS WIVES AND CHILDREN, WHO WERE ALSO LIVING IN THAT POND, APPEARED BEFORE KRISHNA, AND BEGGED HIM TO LET KALIYA GO. THEIR ENTREATIES MOVED KRISHNA'S TENDER HEART, AND HE DECIDED TO SPARE KALIYA HIS LIFE.

DID KRISHNA KILL KALIYA?



“ ADDRESSING KALIYA, KRISHNA SAID —



YOU MUST NOT STAY ANY LONGER IN THIS POOL. TAKE AWAY ALL YOUR KIN AND DEPART FOR THE HIGH SEAS.

“ AS COMMANDED BY KRISHNA, KALIYA LEFT THE POOL AND WENT AWAY. THE WATER OF THE POOL BECAME MIRACULOUSLY PURE AND CLEAR.



“ PEACE AND TRANQUILITY RETURNED TO VRINDAVAN. EVEN IN THE HOT SUMMER DAYS, THE WEATHER REMAINED PLEASANT THERE, SURROUNDED AS THE PLACE WAS WITH DENSE FORESTS AND SPARKLING STREAMS. KRISHNA, BALARAMA AND THEIR FRIENDS REVELLED IN THE BEAUTIFUL SURROUNDINGS, WRESTLING IN THE LUSH GRASS, DANCING AND PLAYING HIDE AND SEEK.



"ONE DAY WHEN KRISHNA AND BALARAMA WERE TAKING THEIR CATTLE TO GRAZE BY THE RIVER-SIDE, PRALAMBA, THE ASURA, CAME THERE IN THE GUISE OF A COWHERD.

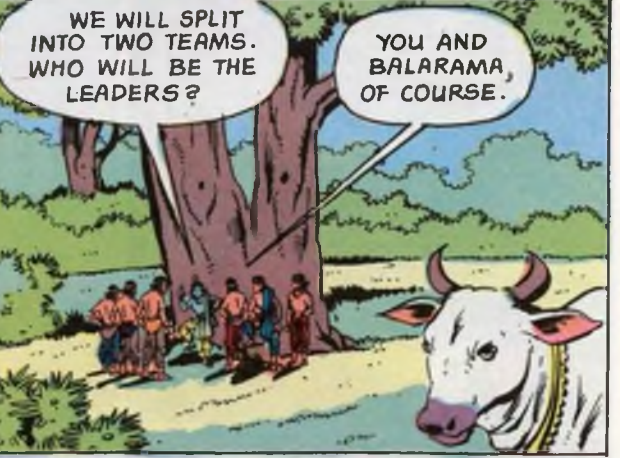
"KRISHNA HOWEVER WAS NOT FOOLED.



THERE IS SOMETHING ODD ABOUT THIS NEW BOY! I WILL HAVE TO TRICK HIM AND FIND OUT.

"HE CALLED ALL THE BOYS.

COME! WE WILL PLAY A NEW GAME TODAY.



WE WILL SPLIT INTO TWO TEAMS. WHO WILL BE THE LEADERS?

YOU AND BALARAMA, OF COURSE.

"KRISHNA AND BALARAMA CHOSE THEIR TEAMS AND PLAYED SEVERAL GAMES.

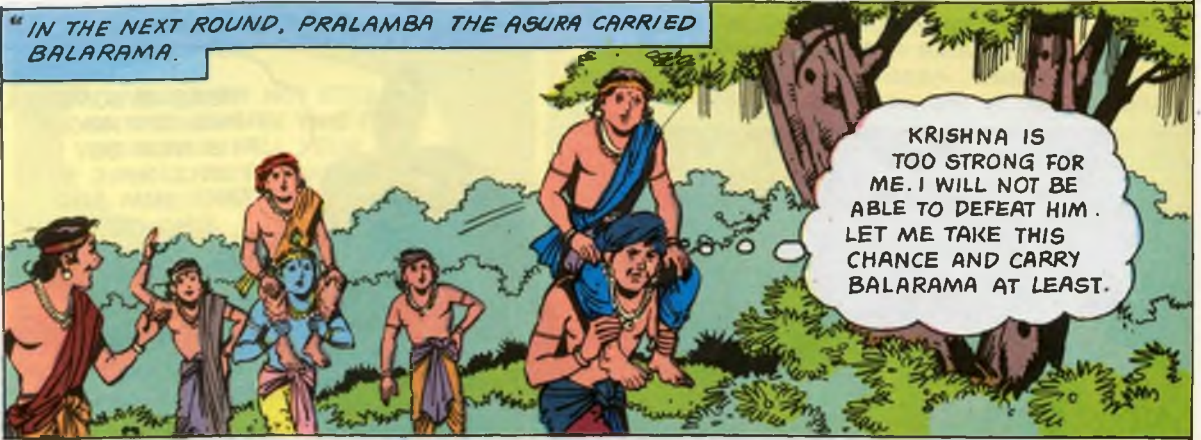


WE WON! OUR TEAM HAS WON THIS GAME. NOW FOR THE NEXT GAME, YOUR TEAM MUST CARRY OUR BOYS ON THEIR BACKS UP TO THAT TREE THERE.

"THE COWHERDS WERE THRILLED WITH THE NEW GAME. THE WINNER WOULD GLEEFULLY CLAMBER ONTO THE BACK OF THE LOSER.



"IN THE NEXT ROUND, PRALAMBA THE ASURA CARRIED BALARAMA.



KRISHNA IS TOO STRONG FOR ME. I WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DEFEAT HIM. LET ME TAKE THIS CHANCE AND CARRY BALARAMA AT LEAST.

"SO PRALAMBA HURRIED TO THE TARGET TREE. BUT INSTEAD OF STOPPING THERE, HE RAN FURTHER...

"... AND FURTHER. BUT SOON HE FELT FATIGUED WITH THE WEIGHT OF BALARAMA.



OHH! THIS LITTLE BOY IS TOO HEAVY. I C-A-N-T CARRY HIM FURTHER.

"WHEN HE PAUSED FOR BREATH, PANTING AND SWEATING, HE ASSUMED HIS ASURA FORM.

"THE FAIR FORM OF BALARAMA SHONE RADIANTLY ATOP THE DARK BODY OF PRALAMBA, LIKE THE RESPLENDENT MOON IN A DARK CLOUD.



"NOW THE ASURA BEGAN TO FLY UPWARDS."



WHAT'S THIS? I AM BEING CARRIED UP BY THIS UGLY CREATURE.



TAKE THIS!

"BALARAMA PROVED TRUE TO HIS NAME. ONE BLOW FROM HIS CLENCHED FIST WAS ENOUGH TO CRUSH THE ASURA'S HEAD."



"DOWN HE COLLAPSED TO THE EARTH, IN A HEAP."



AHHH!

"THE ANXIOUS COWHERDS WHO HAD BY NOW FOLLOWED THE PAIR, WERE RELIEVED TO SEE BALARAMA SAFE AND SOUND."



BRAVO, BALARAMA!

WELL DONE!

YOU WERE REALLY COURAGEOUS BALARAMA!

"CHILDREN THAT THEY WERE, THE COWHERDS, ALONG WITH KRISHNA AND BALARAMA, SOON WENT BACK TO THEIR FUN AND FROLIC.



"MEANWHILE THEIR COWS WANDERED OFF...

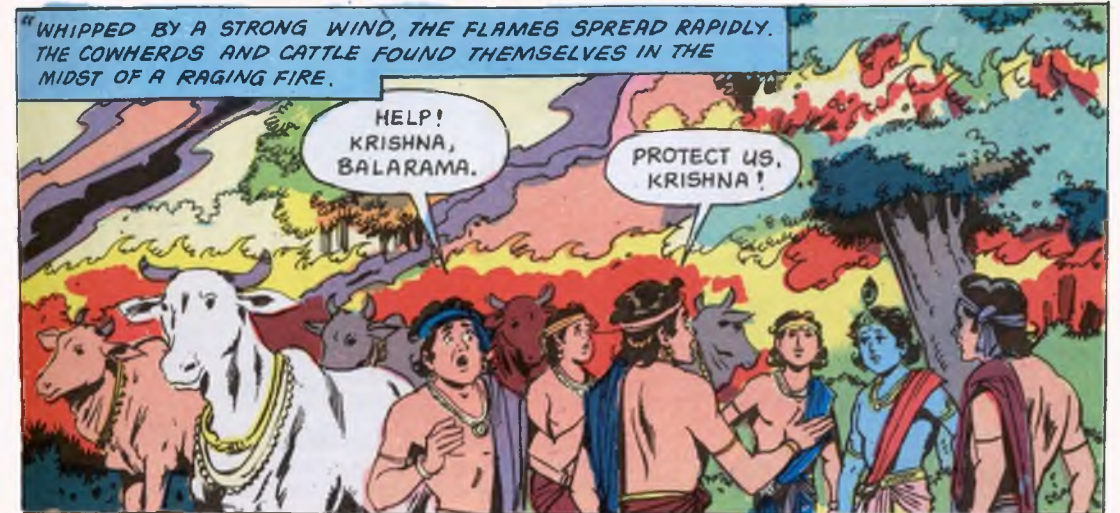
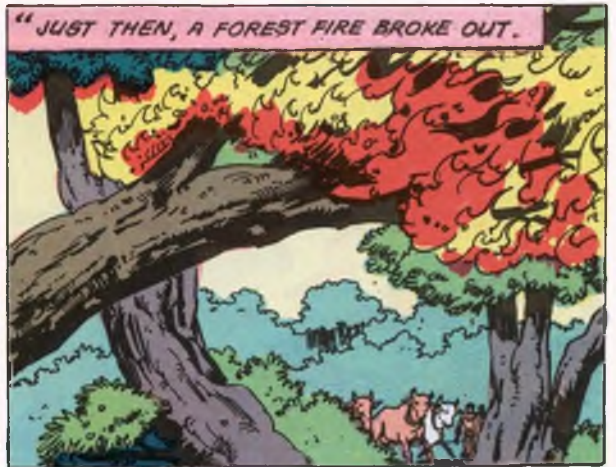
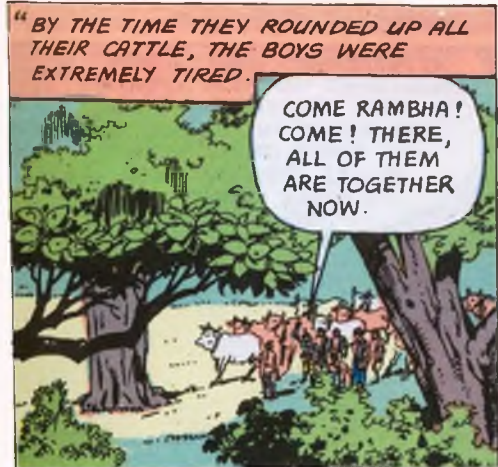


"...AND STRAYED INTO A DENSE WOOD NEAR BY, IN SEARCH OF TENDER GREEN GRASS.

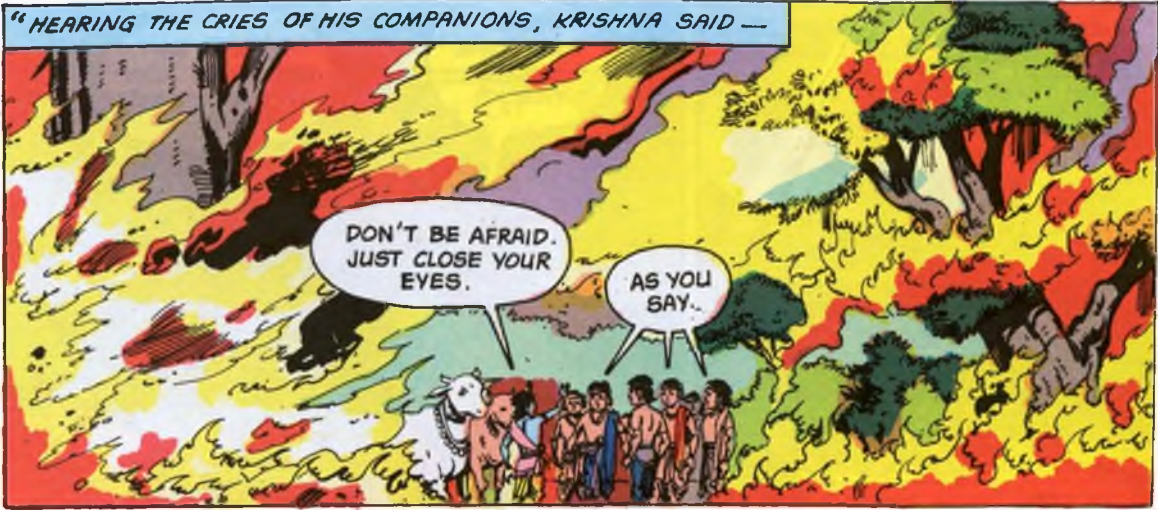


"AFTER A WHILE, THE BOYS NOTICED THEIR ABSENCE.





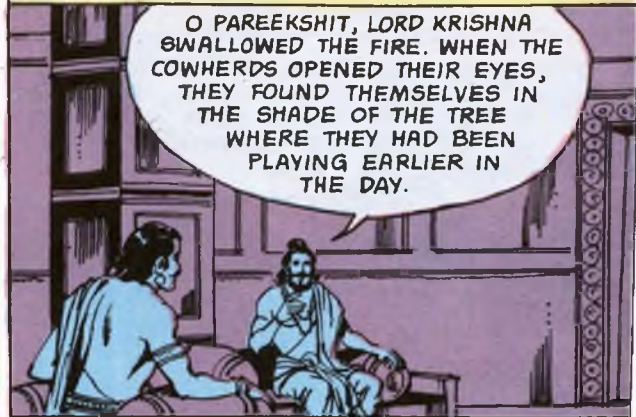
"HEARING THE CRIES OF HIS COMPANIONS, KRISHNA SAID —



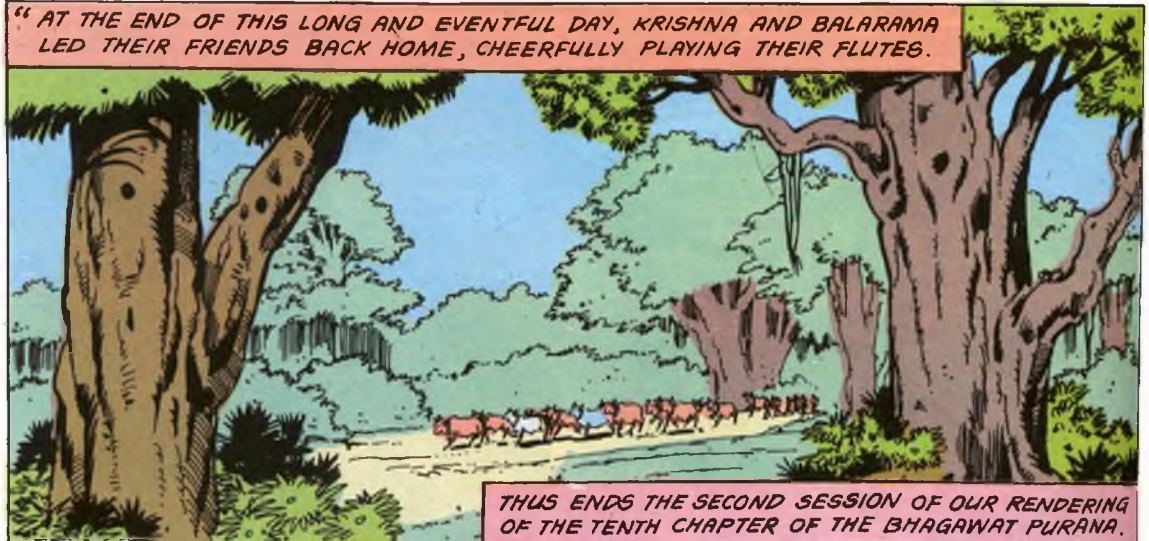
"KRISHNA THEN OPENED HIS MOUTH WIDE, AND THE LEAPING FLAMES WERE DRAWN INTO HIS MOUTH.



SHUKADEVA TOLD PAREEKSHIT ABOUT THE MIRACLE PERFORMED BY KRISHNA.



"AT THE END OF THIS LONG AND EVENTFUL DAY, KRISHNA AND BALARAMA LED THEIR FRIENDS BACK HOME, CHEERFULLY PLAYING THEIR FLUTES.



THIS ENDS THE SECOND SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF THE TENTH CHAPTER OF THE BHAGAWAT PURANA.