

AMAR
CHITRA
KATHA
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PANCHATANTRA

Crows and owls and other stories



A. Vitanka

CROWS AND OWLS



A COLONY OF CROWS DWELT IN A GREAT BANYAN TREE IN A FOREST. THE NAME OF THEIR KING WAS CLOUDY.

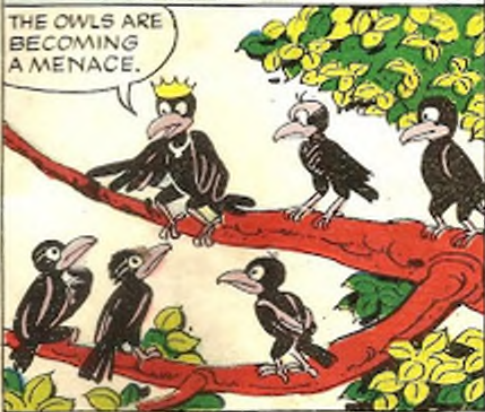
THE CROWS WERE CONSTANTLY HARASSED BY THEIR POWERFUL ENEMIES, THE OWLS. THEIR KING, FOE-CRUSHER WOULD ATTACK ANY CROW HE CAME ACROSS.

WHOOO-OOOO-IT!



THEN ONE DAY, CLOUDY CALLED A MEETING OF HIS FIVE COUNSELLORS.

THE OWLS ARE BECOMING A MENACE.



THEY ARE ARROGANT AND POWERFUL AND THEY ATTACK US AT NIGHT WHEN WE CANNOT SEE. WE CANNOT COUNTER-ATTACK DURING THE DAY BECAUSE WE DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY DWELL.



ADVISE ME, COUNSELLORS. WHAT SHOULD WE DO?





THEN CLOUDY TURNED TO A VERY OLD CROW NAMED LIVE-STRONG.

ATTACK ME AT ONCE WITH A GREAT SHOW OF ANGER.

ATTACK YOU? MY WISEST MINISTER?

AND WHAT DO YOU ADVISE, REVERED SIR?

I ADVISE PUPCILITY, MY LORD.

YES. WE MUST PUT UP THIS SHOW FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR FRIEND OVER THERE.

AN OWL!

LET HIM THINK WE'VE FALLEN OUT. THROW ME OUT OF THE TREE. THEN, WITH ALL YOUR SUBJECTS...

...FLY TO ANTELOPE MOUNTAIN.

AND WHAT WILL YOU DO?

I WILL BEFRIEND THE OWLS AND WIN THEIR TRUST. AND THEN I'LL FIND A WAY TO BRING ABOUT THEIR DOOM.





THE OWL LOST NO TIME IN REPORTING WHAT HE HAD HEARD AND SEEN TO HIS MASTER, KING FOE-CRUSHER.



THEY HAVE THROWN OUT ONE OF THEIR MINISTERS.

THEN THIS IS A GOOD TIME TO ATTACK THEM. A DISORGANISED ENEMY IS EASILY DEFEATED.




FOE-CRUSHER AND HIS OWLS ATTACKED THE BANYAN TREE WITH BLOODCURDLING WAR CRIES.




BUT THEY SOON REALISED THAT THERE WAS NOT A SINGLE CROW IN THE TREE.

THE COWARDS
HAVE FLED!




OLD LIVE-STRONG WHO HAD BEEN WATCHING
THE PROCEEDINGS FROM THE GROUND WAS
PLEASED WITH THE WAY THINGS WERE GOING.


THE FIRST
PART OF MY
PLAN HAS
SUCCEEDED.



NEXT COMES THE
MOST DANGEROUS PART...
BUT THERE'S NO TURNING
BACK NOW.



WELL,
HERE GOES.



CAW! CAW!

LOOK, A CROW!



I AM NO ORDINARY CROW.
I AM CLOUDY'S MINISTER.
BE GOOD ENOUGH
TO INFORM YOUR MASTER
OF MY PRESENCE.

I HAVE MUCH
TO DISCUSS
WITH HIM.

I'LL
FETCH HIM.



THE OWL SOON RETURNED WITH FOE-CRUSHER WHO WAS ASTONISHED TO SEE THE BATTERED CONDITION OF THE OLD CROW.

HOW HAVE YOU COME
TO SUCH A SORRY STATE,
MY DEAR SIR?

THIS IS THE WAY
I HAVE BEEN
REWARDED FOR
GIVING GOOD ADVICE,
YOUR MAJESTY.



MY MASTER, CLOUDY,
BECAME FURIOUS WITH
ME WHEN I URGED HIM
TO PAY YOU TRIBUTE.
HE ASSAULTED ME AND
THREW ME OUT OF
THE TREE.

HENCEFORTH
I SHALL WORK FOR
THE DESTRUCTION OF
ALL CROWS. NOW I
THROW MYSELF AT
YOUR MERCY.

I WILL
TALK IT OVER
WITH MY
ADVISERS.



FOE-CRUSHER HAD FIVE ANCESTRAL COUNSELLORS. THEIR NAMES WERE RED-EYE, FIERCE-EYE, HOOK-NOSE, FLAME-EYE AND WALL-EAR.

THE CROW SEEKS ASYLUM. WHAT IS YOUR OPINION, RED-EYE?

SLAY HIM WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY, MY LORD. HE IS A CROW!



BUT THE OTHER COUNSELLORS WERE MORE CHARITABLE.

GRANT HIM REFUGE, O KING!

IT WOULD BE WRONG TO KILL ONE WHO SEEKS YOUR PROTECTION.

HE MAY PROVE USEFUL TO US IN OUR WAR WITH THE CROWS.

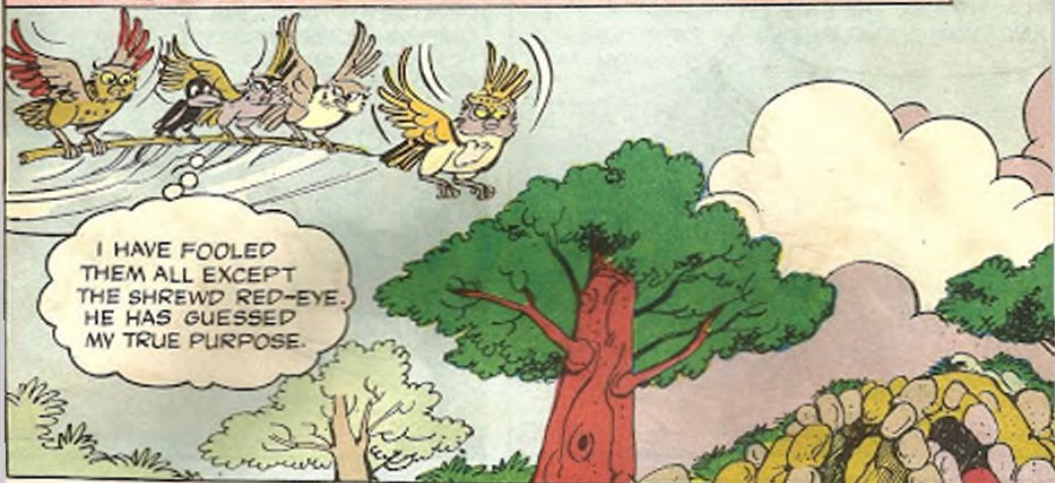


DO NOT LISTEN TO THEM, YOUR MAJESTY. SLAY HIM! HE IS UP TO NO GOOD!

I HAVE ALREADY MADE UP MY MIND, RED-EYE. THE CROW STAYS WITH US. WE SHALL TAKE HIM TO OUR FORTRESS.



THE OWLS LIFTED UP LIVE-STRONG AND CARRIED HIM TO THEIR FORTRESS.



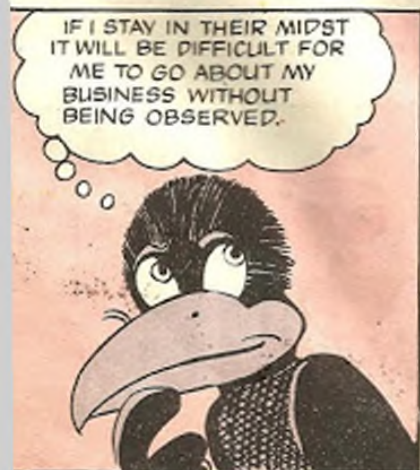
I HAVE FOOLED THEM ALL EXCEPT THE SHREWD RED-EYE. HE HAS GUESSED MY TRUE PURPOSE.



THIS IS OUR FORTRESS, SIR. HERE YOU MAY STAY IN COMFORT AND HONOUR.




HO, THERE! MAKE OUR GUEST COMFORTABLE. LOOK AFTER HIS NEEDS.



IF I STAY IN THEIR MIDST IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR ME TO GO ABOUT MY BUSINESS WITHOUT BEING OBSERVED.




O KING, IT WOULD NOT BE PROPER FOR ME TO ENTER YOUR FORTRESS. I AM, AFTER ALL, A CROW AND UNWORTHY OF THE HONOUR.




GIVE ME A LITTLE PLACE NEAR THE GATE AND THAT IS ENOUGH.

YOU MAY STAY NEAR THE GATE IF IT PLEASES YOU, MY FRIEND.



THE SECOND PART OF MY PLAN HAS GONE THROUGH SUCCESSFULLY. I CAN COME AND GO AS I WISH.

LIVE-STRONG MADE HIMSELF COMFORTABLE NEAR THE GATE AND BEGAN TO ENJOY A LIFE OF EASE AND COMFORT, UNPERTURBED BY RED-EYE'S HOSTILITY.




HAVE SOME RICE, YOUR HONOUR.

AND HERE ARE SOME MANGOES.

HOW THEY PAMPER HIM. IT MAKES ME SICK!



WE ARE FATTENING HIM WHILE HE IS PLANNING OUR DESTRUCTION. HE MUST BE LAUGHING AT US.



YOUR MAJESTY, THE CROW MUST GO! HE IS MAKING A FOOL OF YOU!

RED-EYE!

LEAVE THAT POOR CREATURE ALONE. HE IS HARMLESS.



THEY WON'T LISTEN TO ME. I CAN'T STAY HERE ANY LONGER.



RED-EYE GATHERED HIS FOLLOWERS AND TOLD THEM TO PACK UP THEIR BELONGINGS.

THE END IS AT HAND. I CANNOT SAVE THE KING AS HE REFUSES TO BE GUIDED BY ME. LET US, AT LEAST, SAVE OURSELVES WHILE WE CAN.



ANYONE WHO CONTINUES TO LIVE HERE DOES SO AT HIS OWN PERIL. LET US GO FORTH AND SEEK ANOTHER FORTRESS IN THE MOUNTAINS.



LIVE-STRONG WAS OVERJOYED WHEN HE SAW RED-EYE LEAVING THE FORTRESS WITH HIS FOLLOWERS.

ONLY HE COULD HAVE FOILED MY PLANS. THE REST OF THEM ARE NUMSKULLS.



THE DAYS OF THE OWLS ARE NUMBERED. FROM TOMORROW I SHALL START BUILDING MY NEST OF DEATH.



EACH DAY THEREAFTER, LIVE-STRONG WENT INTO THE FOREST AND RETURNED WITH A TWIG WHICH HE DROPPED INSIDE THE GATE.



I AM BUILDING A NEST, YOUR MAJESTY. I HOPE YOU DO NOT MIND.

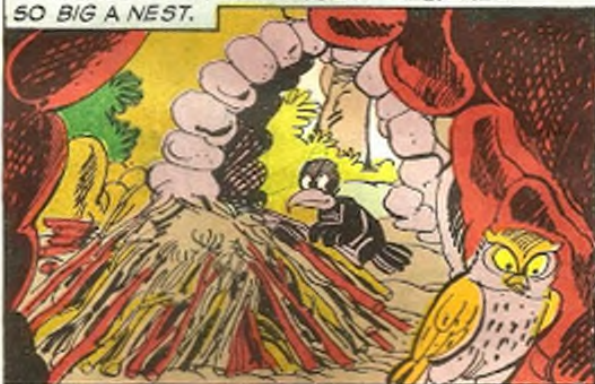
OF COURSE NOT!



LET US KNOW IF YOU NEED ANY HELP.



SOON THERE WAS A LARGE PILE OF TWIGS AT THE GATE, BUT NONE OF THE OWLS STOPPED TO WONDER WHY THEIR GUEST REQUIRED SO BIG A NEST.



THEN ONE MORNING WHEN THE OWLS WERE ASLEEP, LIVE-STRONG QUIETLY LEFT THE FORTRESS.



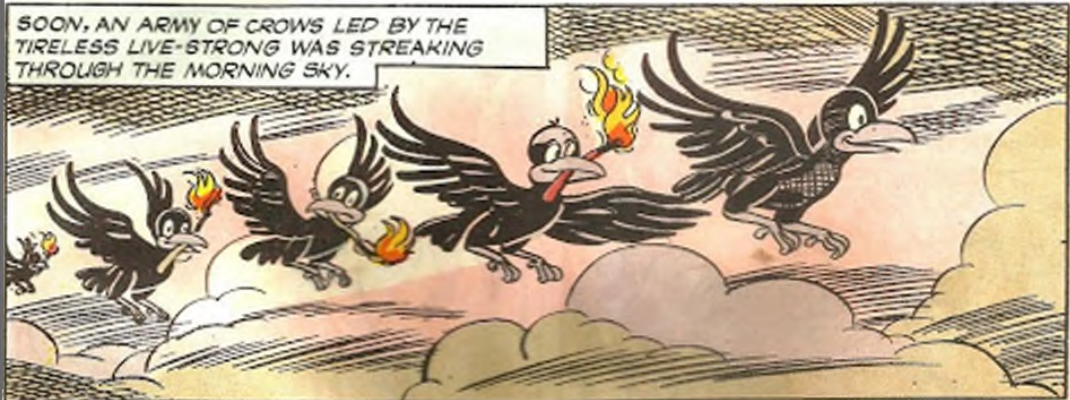
HE FLEW DIRECTLY TO A NEARBY MOUNTAIN WHERE CLOUDY AND THE OTHER CROWS WERE WAITING FOR HIM.



WE ARE DELIGHTED TO SEE YOU BACK WITH US!



SOON, AN ARMY OF CROWS LED BY THE TIRELESS LIVE-STRONG WAS STREAKING THROUGH THE MORNING SKY.



THERE'S THE CAVE. DROP YOUR TWIGS ON THE NEST AND SET IT ON FIRE.



THE CROWS DID AS THEY WERE TOLD.



AND SOON—



FIRE!
THE CAVE IS
ON FIRE!

THE OWLS, STILL HALF ASLEEP, TRIED TO RUSH OUT OF THE CAVE BUT WERE BEATEN BACK BY THE FLAMES.



THE CROW HAS
DONE THIS!! I SHOULD
HAVE LISTENED
TO MY FAITHFUL
RED-EYE!



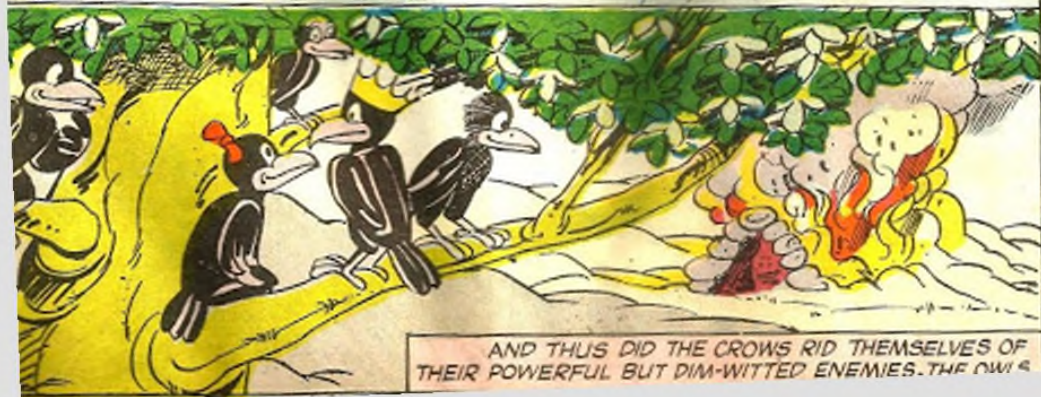
WE ARE
DOOMED!
DOOMED!

AH!



THE CAVE, CLOSED AS IT WAS FROM ALL SIDES, BECAME A FIERY FURNACE.

THOSE OF THE OWLS WHO MANAGED TO EVADE THE FLAMES WERE SUFFOCATED BY THE FUMES. ALL OF THEM, INCLUDING KING FOE-CRUSHER, PERISHED.



AND THUS DID THE CROWS RID THEMSELVES OF THEIR POWERFUL BUT DIM-WITTED ENEMIES. THE OWLS

THE NOBLE ENEMY

A MAN WAS SEARCHING FOR GEMS ON THE TOP OF A CERTAIN MOUNTAIN.

AFTER A LONG UNSUCCESSFUL SEARCH, HE WAS EXHAUSTED AND THREW HIMSELF ON THE GROUND BEHIND A ROCK.

I'LL TAKE A SHORT NAP AND THEN TRY AGAIN.



...TOO MANY DACOITS AROUND HERE...

...THE GEMS...

GOOD GOD! THOSE YOUNG MEN HAVE FOUND SOME GEMS!



...WOULD
BE SAFEST...
IN OUR
STOMACHS!

THEY ARE
SWALLOWING
THEM!

THIS IS NOT FAIR
AT ALL. I SHOULD
GET SOME GEMS
TOO FOR MY
TROUBLE.

I KNOW WHAT!
I'LL MAKE FRIENDS
WITH THESE FELLOWS
AND WHEN THEY ARE
ASLEEP, I'LL SLIT
OPEN THEIR BELLIES
AND TAKE THE
GEMS.

LOOK,
THERE'S A MAN
FOLLOWING
US.

GOOD MASTERS,
I AM FORTUNATE
TO HAVE MET
YOU.

I AM ALONE
AND I WAS LOOKING
FOR COMPANY ON
THIS DANGEROUS
ROAD.

YOU ARE
WELCOME TO
TRAVEL WITH US,
MY FRIEND.



BUT UNFORTUNATELY FOR HIM, THAT
MOMENT WAS NEVER TO COME, FOR
AS THEY PASSED A VILLAGE THAT LAY
ALONG THEIR ROUTE...



... A BIRD IN A ROBBER CHIEF'S HUT
BEGAN TO SING.



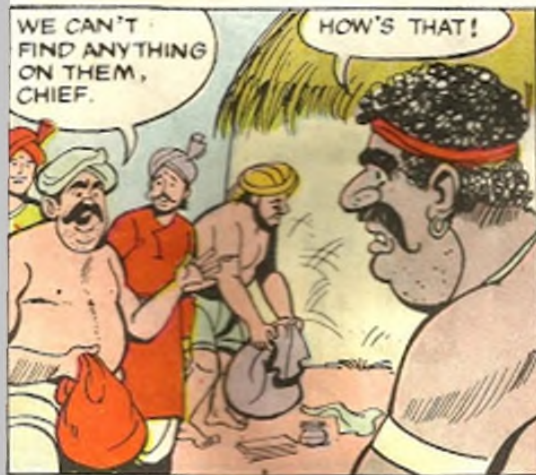


SEARCH THEM!



THE MEN SEARCHED THEIR CAPTIVES THOROUGHLY.

THERE HAS BEEN SOME MISTAKE. WE DON'T HAVE ANY GEMS WITH US!



WE CAN'T FIND ANYTHING ON THEM, CHIEF.

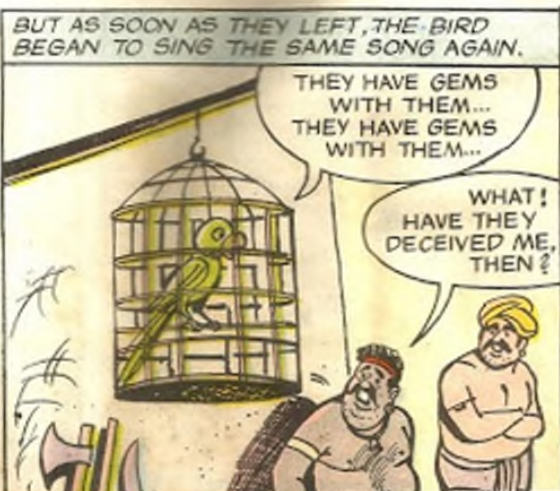
HOW'S THAT!



OH, WELL! THE BIRD MUST HAVE BEEN MISTAKEN.



ALL RIGHT. LET THEM GO.

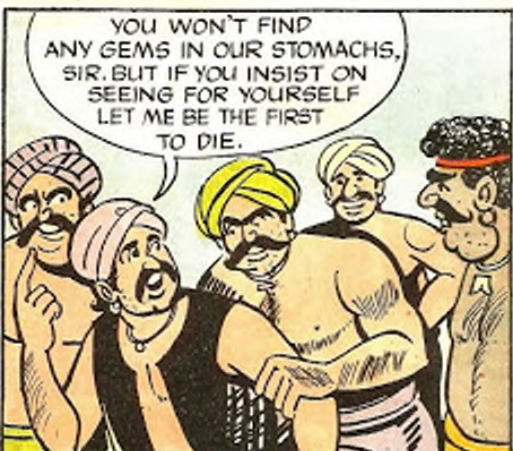
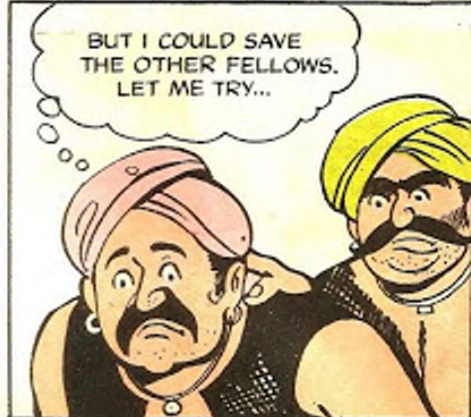


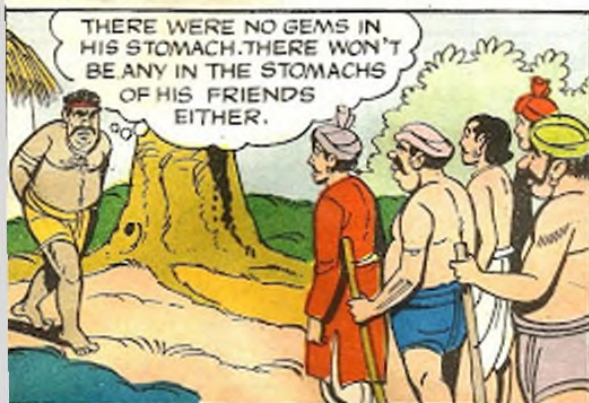
BUT AS SOON AS THEY LEFT, THE BIRD BEGAN TO SING THE SAME SONG AGAIN.

THEY HAVE GEMS WITH THEM... THEY HAVE GEMS WITH THEM...

WHAT! HAVE THEY DECEIVED ME, THEN?







THE FRIENDS TOO, UNAWARE THAT THEY HAD BEEN SAVED BY A CLEVER RUSE, THOUGHT THEY HAD JUST BEEN VERY LUCKY, AND LOST NO TIME IN GETTING OUT OF THE VILLAGE.

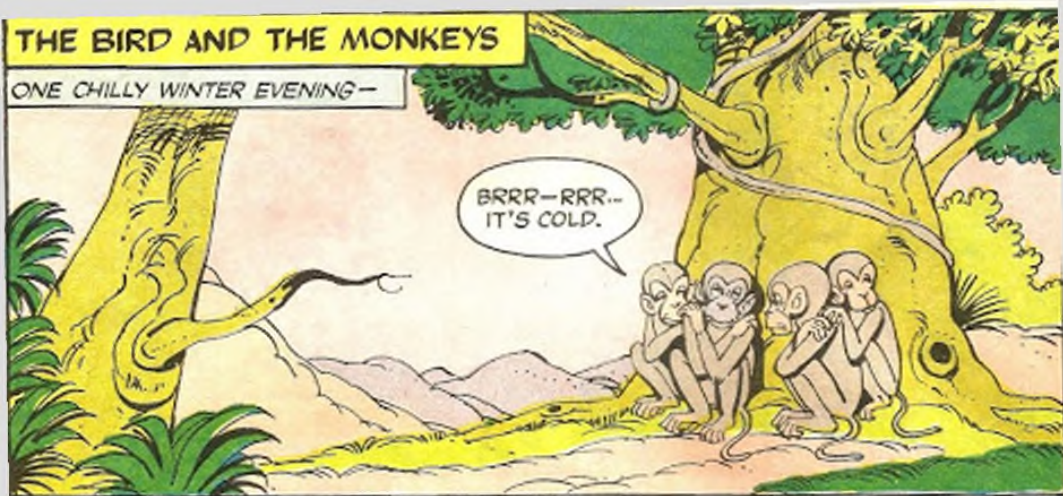


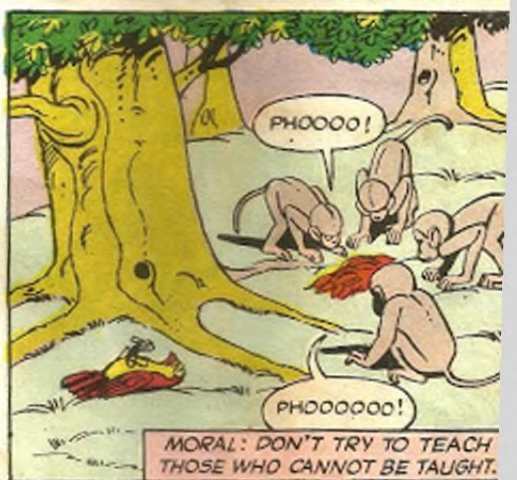
LITTLE DID THE CHIEF REALISE THAT HE HAD DONE EXACTLY WHAT THE DEAD MAN HAD HOPED HE WOULD'DO.

MORAL: A SENSIBLE ENEMY CAN OFTEN PROVE TO BE YOUR BEST FRIEND.

THE BIRD AND THE MONKEYS

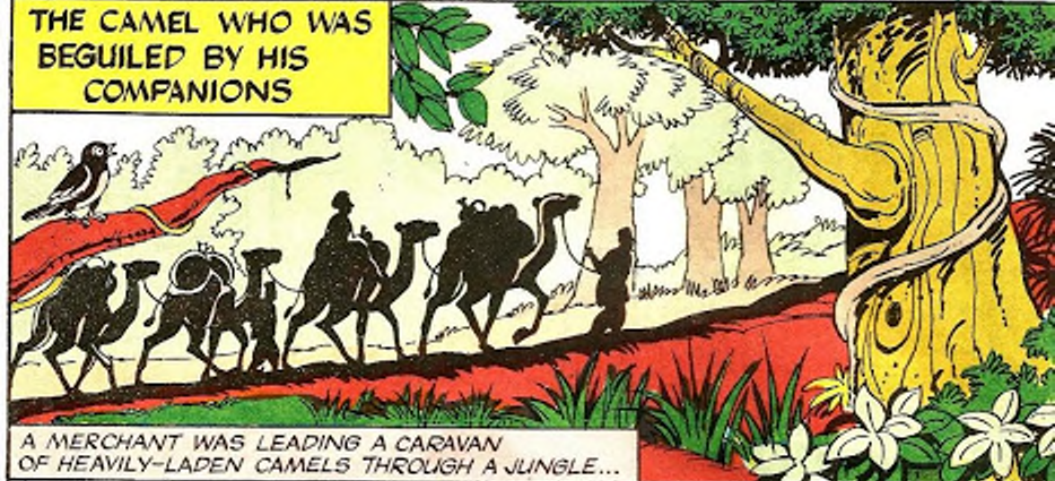
ONE CHILLY WINTER EVENING—





MORAL: DON'T TRY TO TEACH THOSE WHO CANNOT BE TAUGHT.

**THE CAMEL WHO WAS
BEGUILED BY HIS
COMPANIONS**



A MERCHANT WAS LEADING A CARAVAN OF HEAVILY-LADEN CAMELS THROUGH A JUNGLE...

...WHEN ONE OF THEM, OVERCOME BY FATIGUE, COLLAPSED.

LET US SHIFT HIS LOAD ONTO THE OTHERS AND BE OFF. WE MUST NOT LET THIS LAZY CREATURE DELAY US.



LATER, WHEN THE CAMEL RECOVERED HIS STRENGTH —

THEY HAVE GONE!
AND I AM ALONE IN
THIS STRANGE
JUNGLE.



FORTUNATELY,
THERE'S PLENTY
OF GRASS HERE.
AT LEAST
I WON'T STARVE.

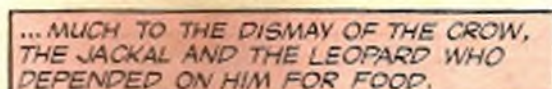
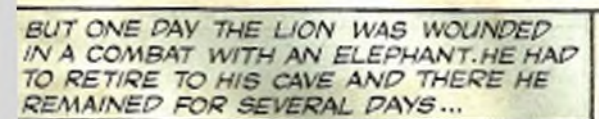


DAYS PASSED AND THE CAMEL SOMEHOW SURVIVED THE PERILS OF THE JUNGLE.

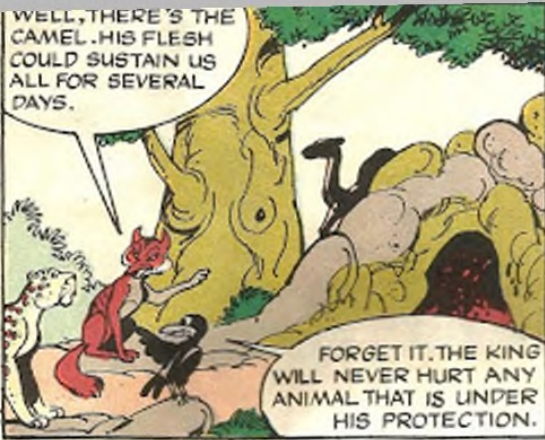


THEN ONE DAY, A LION FOLLOWED BY A LEOPARD, A JACKAL AND A CROW, CAME BY.











WELL, THERE'S THE CAMEL. HIS FLESH COULD SUSTAIN US ALL FOR SEVERAL DAYS.

FORGET IT. THE KING WILL NEVER HURT ANY ANIMAL THAT IS UNDER HIS PROTECTION.



I'LL HAVE A WORD WITH HIM IN ANY CASE.




O KING, WE COULD NOT FIND AN ANIMAL FOR YOU. BUT THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO STARVE.




YOU CAN EAT THE CAMEL.

WHAT!



ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT I HURT AN ANIMAL THAT IS UNDER MY PROTECTION?



GET OUT OF MY SIGHT, YOU WRETCH!

PLEASE DON'T MISUNDERSTAND ME, O KING.



I WAS ONLY THINKING OF YOUR WELFARE. OUR OWN LIVES ARE WORTHLESS WHEN YOURS IS AT STAKE.





NO, O KING, WE WERE NOT ABLE TO CATCH ANY CREATURE. YOU MAY EAT ANY ONE OF US INSTEAD.

AND THAT ONE WILL BE THE CAMEL!



I HOPE BROTHER LEOPARD TOO, CATCHES ON!

EAT ME, MASTER AND PROLONG YOUR LIFE FOR A DAY.



NO, NO, YOU'RE TOO SMALL. THE MASTER'S HUNGER WOULD HARDLY BE APPEASED BY EATING YOU.



EAT ME, MASTER. AS IF YOU'RE VERY BIG YOURSELF.



IT IS ME YOU SHOULD EAT, MASTER.



ALL OF THEM HAVE OFFERED TO LAY DOWN THEIR LIVES FOR THE KING, BUT HE HAS NOT HURT ANY OF THEM.



...AND KILLED HIM. THUS DID THREE ROGUES TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE TRUST REPOSED IN THEM BY A COMRADE.

