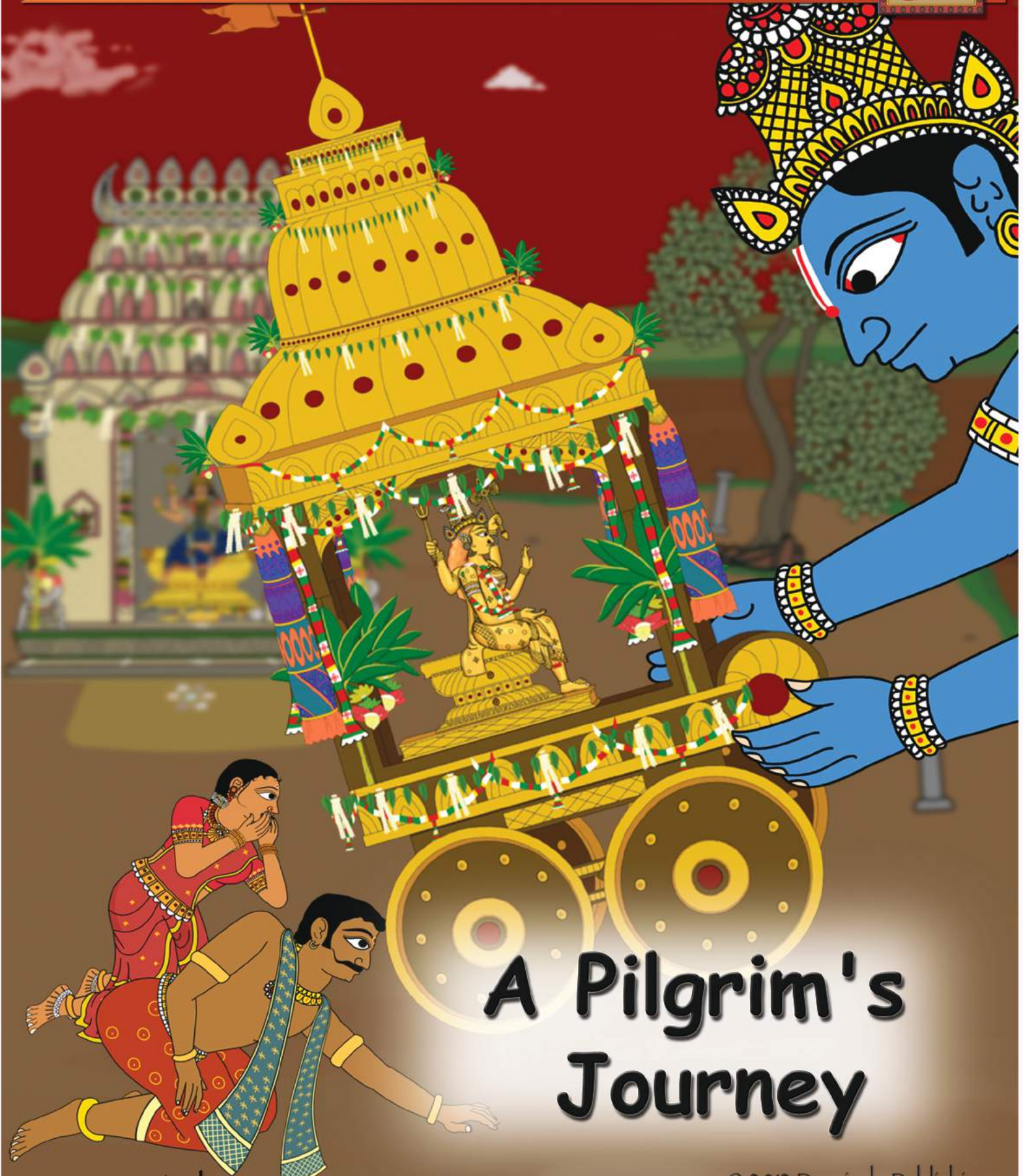


Series 1  
Book 11

The Legend of  
**Ponnivala**



# A Pilgrim's Journey





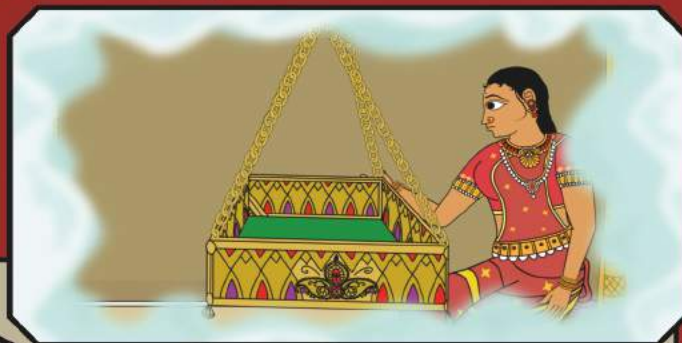
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**A PILGRIM'S  
JOURNEY**  
SERIES 1 COMIC 11

**LORD VISHNU**  
TELLS THE KING  
AND QUEEN OF  
PONNIVALA THEY  
MUST COMPLETE  
A LONG LIST OF  
CHARITABLE  
DEEDS IF THEY  
WANT TO BE  
GRANTED  
CHILDREN.  
MAKING LIFE  
TOUGH, A GROUP  
OF ARTISANS  
DEVELOP A PLOT  
TO KILL BOTH  
UNDER THE  
WHEELS OF A  
TEMPLE CART  
VISHNU HAD THEM  
COMMISSION.  
FAITH BRINGS  
THE GODS TO  
THE COUPLE'S  
RESCUE. BUT  
THEN LORD  
VISHNU SPELLS  
OUT ONE FINAL  
CHALLENGE ...



QUEEN TAMARAI'S  
HEART IS FILLED WITH  
SAD THOUGHTS ...



MY HEART IS CRUSHED!  
LORD VISHNU HAS JUST READ  
FROM HIS ALMANAC, AND I HAVE  
LEARNED THAT I AM CURSED TO  
BEAR NO CHILDREN AT  
ALL...



NOT IN THIS LIFETIME, AND  
NOT FOR SIX MORE REBIRTHS  
TO COME! HOW CAN I BEAR  
THIS BLEAKNESS?

WHAT IS THERE IN LIFE  
IF I CANNOT HAVE THE JOY OF  
SEEING MY OWN CHILDREN GROW  
UP AROUND ME? WHAT, OH WHAT  
CAN I DO TO LIFT THIS TERRIBLE  
FATE FROM MY  
SHOULDERS?





IT IS A NEW DAY IN THE LAND OF PONNIVALA. KING KUNNUTAIYA AND HIS WIFE QUEEN TAMARAI PATIENTLY LISTEN AS LORD VISHNU EXPLAINS HOW THEY CAN COUNTER THEIR CURSE OF BARRENESS.

OH KING AND QUEEN, THERE IS MUCH YOU MUST DO!

YOU MUST CONSTRUCT WELLS EVERY TEN MILES ALONG THE ROADS.

YOU MUST ALSO BUILD REST STOPS FOR PEOPLE.





YOU ARE TO  
CREATE SHELTERS  
FOR ANIMALS.



YOU MUST  
CELEBRATE THE  
WEDDING OF A  
MARGOSA AND A  
PEPAL TREE.



YOU MUST FEED A  
THOUSAND BEGGARS.



I ALSO  
WANT YOU  
BUILD A CART  
FOR CELATTA,  
AND DRAW IT  
AROUND HER  
TEMPLE.



AND  
FINALLY, YOU  
MUST PLACE A  
LARGE LAMP  
ON TOP OF A  
PILLAR IN  
FRONT OF THE  
GANESH  
TEMPLE.



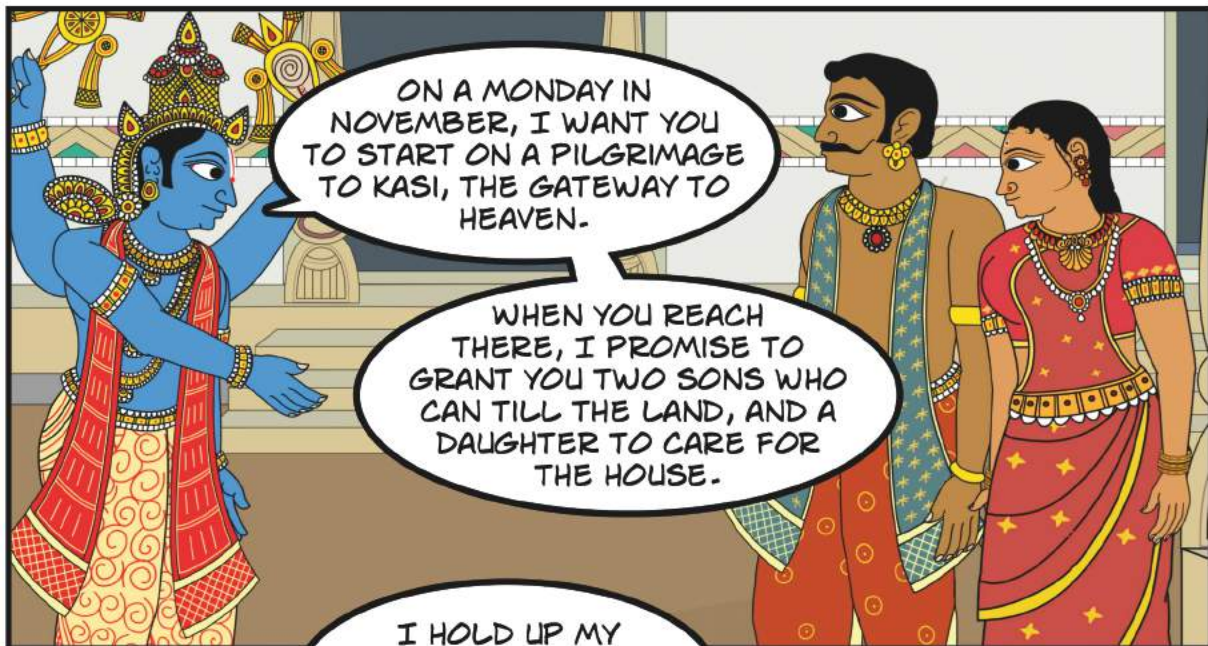
THE LIGHT  
MUST BE SO  
BRIGHT THAT IT IS  
VISIBLE FROM  
HEAVEN!



THIS WILL BE  
EXPENSIVE, MY LORD!



# The Legend of Ponnivala





THE SUN RISES THE NEXT MORNING, AND KING KUNNUTAIYA CALLS FOR THE STONE MASONS OF A NEARBY VILLAGE. THEY ARRIVE QUICKLY, EAGER FOR THE WORK THEY ARE ABOUT TO BE GIVEN.

OH STONE MASONS! ...I WANT YOU TO DIG A WELL AT TEN MILE INTERVALS ON EVERY ROAD IN PONNIVALA.

I ALSO WANT YOU TO CONSTRUCT RESTING PLACES AND EATING SHELTERS.

YES LORD! IT SHALL BE DONE WITHIN A MONTH!

MAID!  
BRING  
A MEASURE OF  
PEARLS.

THE MAID PAYS THE STONE MASONS PEARLS AS AN ADVANCE ON THEIR WORK.

OKAY MEN,  
GET TO WORK  
STRAIGHT AWAY!

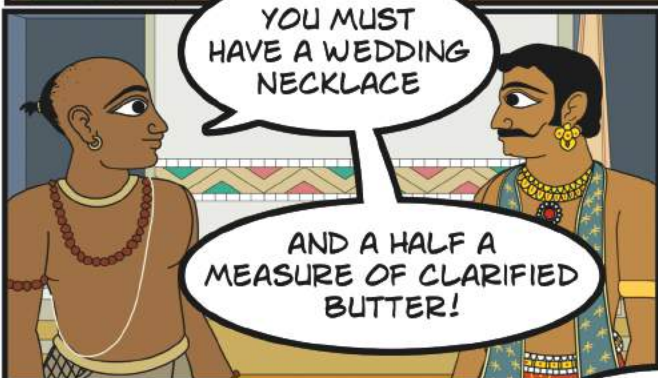


NEXT A BRAHMAN IS CALLED.



OH BRAHMAN!

WE WANT TO PERFORM THE WEDDING OF A MARGOSA AND A PEPAL TREE. WHAT WILL WE NEED FOR THIS?



YOU MUST HAVE A WEDDING NECKLACE

AND A HALF A MEASURE OF CLARIFIED BUTTER!



YOU WILL ALSO NEED COCONUTS...

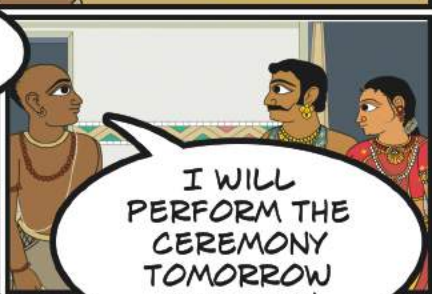


BETEL LEAVES AND ARECA NUTS...



BANANAS...

A BUNDLE OF THREAD AND SOME TURMERIC!



I WILL PERFORM THE CEREMONY TOMORROW MORNING!



OKAY! MAIDS, BRING EVERYTHING THE BRAHMAN ASKED FOR.





THE MORNING OF THE NEXT DAY, A CEREMONY IS HELD.





THE FOLLOWING DAY, A GROUP OF CARPENTERS ARE SENT FOR. THEY ARRIVE, EAGER TO HEAR WHAT THE KING AND QUEEN HAVE TO SAY. BY NOW, EVERYONE HAS HEARD ABOUT THE CHARITABLE ACTS THEY HAVE PLANNED TO UNDERTAKE.



CARPENTERS!  
WE WANT YOU TO  
BUILD A TEMPLE CART  
FOR CELATTA!

YES, OH KING!  
WE HAVE HEARD OF  
YOUR MANY GOOD  
DEEDS!

THE CART  
WILL BE A GIFT ASKING  
THE GODDESS TO GRANT  
FERTILITY TO BARREN  
COUPLES.

IT MUST  
BE VERY  
BEAUTIFUL.  
CARVE IT  
FROM THE  
WOOD OF THE  
VENKAI  
TREE.

YOU WILL FIND THIS  
TREE NEAR OUR VELLAN  
KULAM TANK.

WE WILL  
GET TO WORK  
RIGHT AWAY!

BE SURE  
TO FINISH  
WITHIN 30  
DAYS!

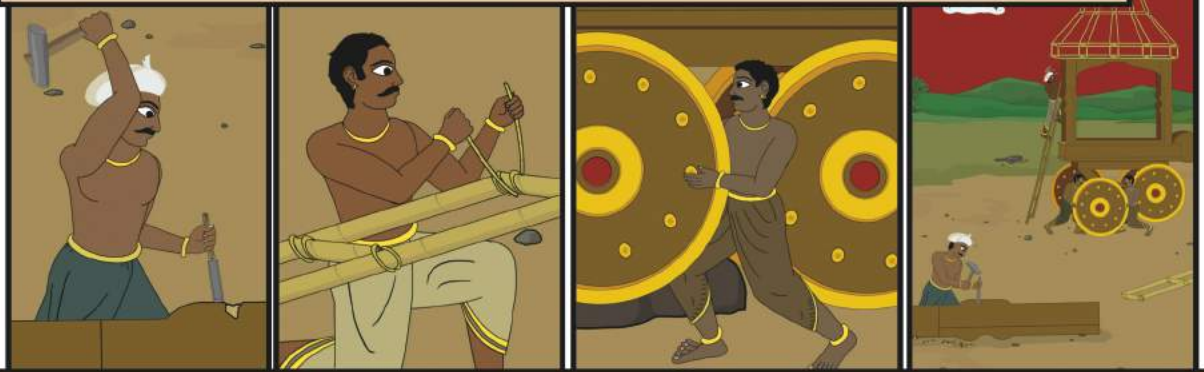


DEEP IN THE THICK FOREST...





THE CARPENTERS WORK HARD TO BUILD A MAGNIFICENT CART...



TIME PASSES, THE TANGAVALA CLANSMEN ARRIVE, OFFERING THE ARTISANS A BARGAIN THAT COULD MAKE THEM ALL RICH. THE CARPENTERS LISTEN TO WHAT THESE DEVIUS MEN HAVE TO SAY, INTRIGUED BY THE OFFER.







THE CARPENTERS AGREE TO THE DEAL, AND THE CLANSMEN DEPART.







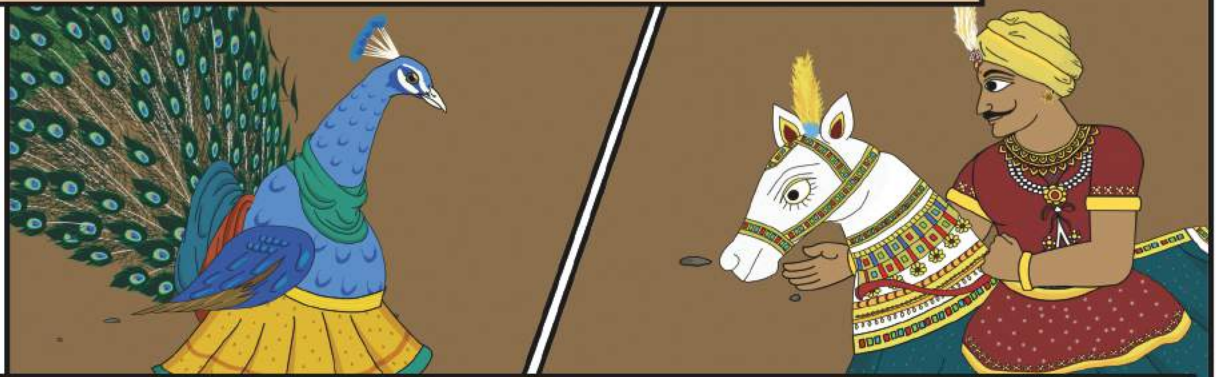


Da Da Da Daaaa

THE DAY OF THE CART FESTIVAL ARRIVES. INSTRUMENTS PLAY CHEERY TUNES IN CELEBRATION. FLAGS FLY PROUDLY IN THE BREEZE.



PEOPLE IN COSTUMES DANCE ABOUT. THERE IS MUCH JOY.



A PUJA IS HELD FOR CELATTA. PEOPLE COME FROM NEAR AND FAR.





THE TEMPLE GROUNDS ARE BUZZING WITH ANTICIPATION- IT IS TIME TO PULL THE CART!



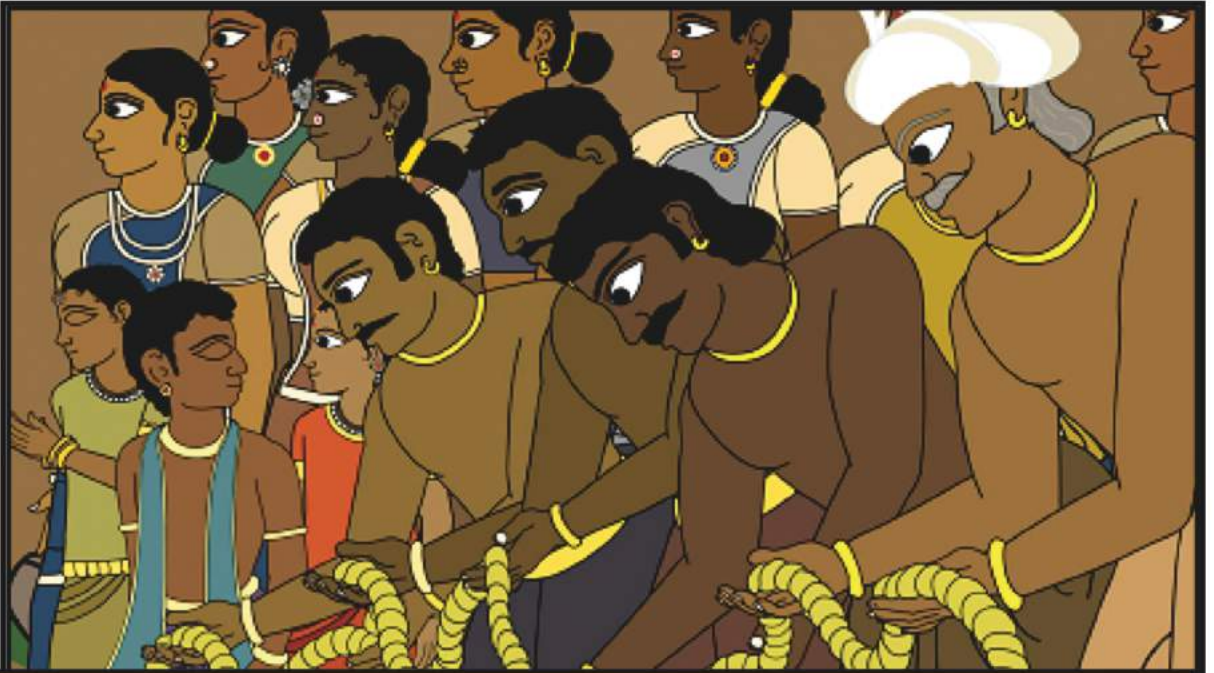
IT IS TIME TO PULL THE CART.











THE MEN PICK UP THE ROPE. LEVERS ARE USED TO MOVE THE WHEELS.



THE BRAHMAN AND TWO ARTISANS RIDE ON THE CART.







THE CHARIOT MOVES SOUTH. COCONUTS ARE BROKEN BEFORE THE WHEELS FOR EVERY FOOT IT TRAVELS.



THE CART IS THEN PULLED WESTWARD. MUSIC PLAYS AS PEOPLE CHEER.



BUT BEFORE THE CART CAN TURN TO THE NORTH, AN ARTISAN SNEAKILY APPLIES A BRAKE USING A WOODEN WEDGE. THE MUSIC HALTS ABRUPTLY.



THE CART HAS STOPPED!





OH  
ARTISANS!

WHY HAS THE CART  
STOPPED?  
KEEP IT MOVING!

EVERYONE IS SILENT. THIS IS A VERY BAD OMEN! NO ONE WILL SPEAK.



ARTISAN!  
WHAT IS IT?



AHH!  
OH!

AN ARTISAN LEAPS FROM THE CART----



ARTISAN!  
WHAT IS IT?

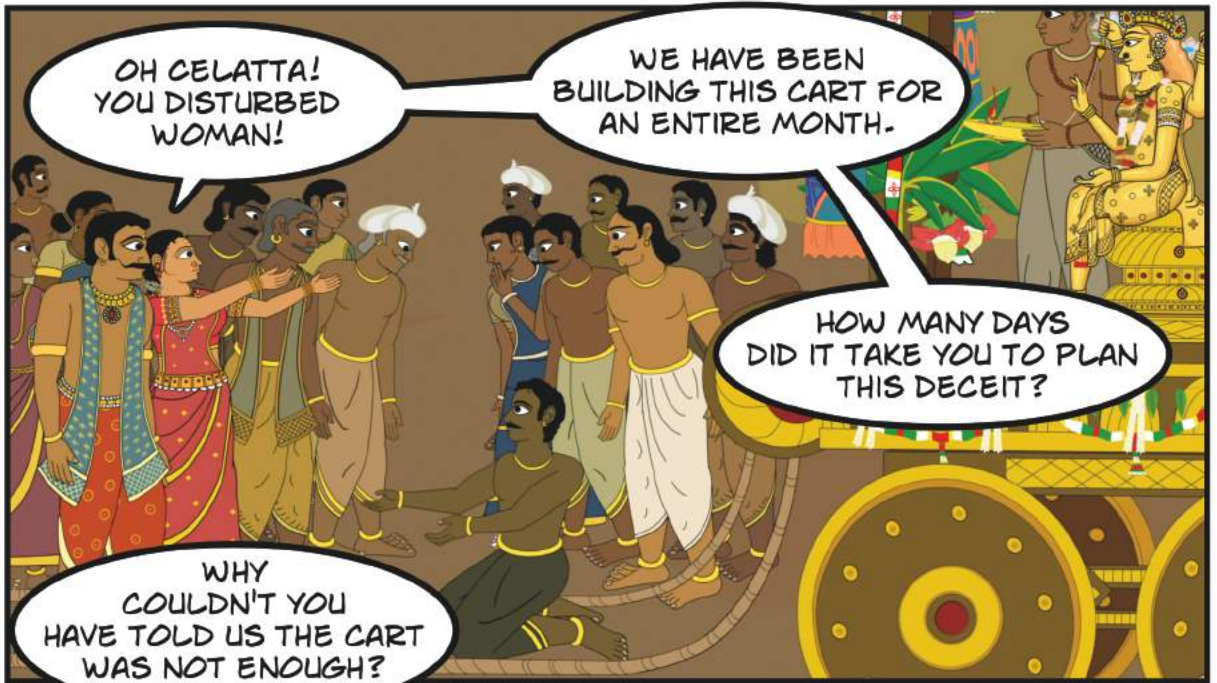


OH LORD! IT'S  
SO TERRIBLE! HOW  
CAN I SAY IT?







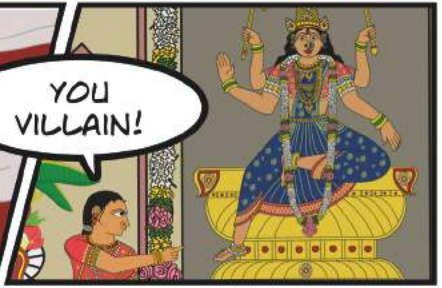
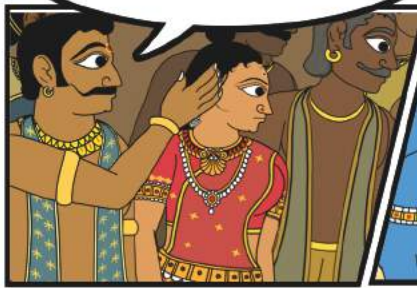


OH CELATTA!  
YOU DISTURBED  
WOMAN!

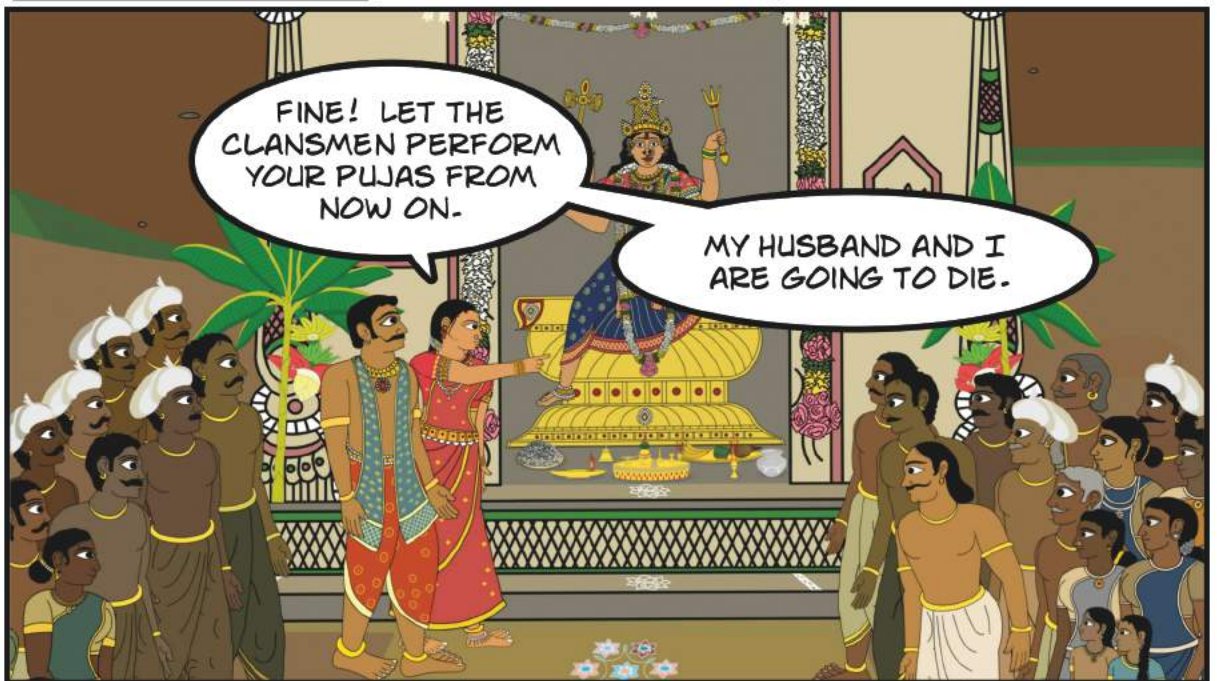
WE HAVE BEEN  
BUILDING THIS CART FOR  
AN ENTIRE MONTH.

HOW MANY DAYS  
DID IT TAKE YOU TO PLAN  
THIS DECEIT?

WHY  
COULDN'T YOU  
HAVE TOLD US THE CART  
WAS NOT ENOUGH?



YOU  
VILLAIN!



FINE! LET THE  
CLANSMEN PERFORM  
YOUR PUJAS FROM  
NOW ON.

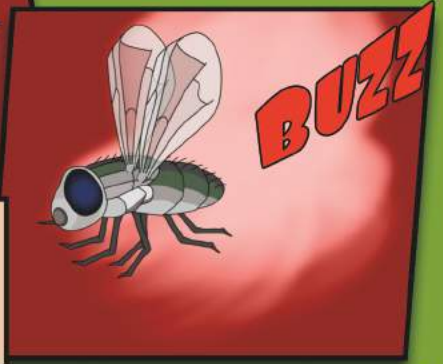
MY HUSBAND AND I  
ARE GOING TO DIE.





NO ONE CAN BEAR TO WATCH ...





BUT THIS TRICKERY HAS NOT GONE UNNOTICED! LORD VISHNU, WATCHING FROM THE MILK SEA, DECIDES TO INTERVENE. HE TURNS HIMSELF INTO A FLY AND DESCENDS TO EARTH.



WHEN THE CART IS PULLED FORWARD, HE MAGICALLY LIFTS IT INTO THE AIR. MANY ARTISANS DIE!





PEOPLE FLEE FROM THE SCENE. ONLY ONE ARTISAN REMAINS ALIVE...



I AM THE ONLY ONE LEFT!



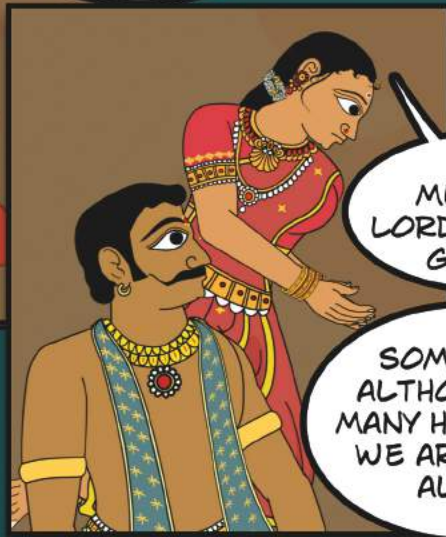
I MUST GET AWAY FROM HERE!



ONE DAY I WILL RETURN AND TAKE MY REVENGE!



OH WIFE! WHY HAVE WE NOT BEEN KILLED?



IT MUST BE LORD VISHNU'S GRACE!

SOMEHOW, ALTHOUGH SO MANY HAVE DIED, WE ARE STILL ALIVE!



SOME TIME PASSES. THE RULING COUPLE OF PONNIVALA STILL HAVE A FEW THINGS LEFT TO ACCOMPLISH BEFORE VISHNU WILL REWARD THEM WITH CHILDREN. TAMARAI DECIDES IT IS TIME THEY FINISH WHAT THEY HAVE BEGUN.



OH HUSBAND, THERE ARE TWO THINGS LEFT WE HAVE NOT DONE!

YOU'RE RIGHT. WE MUST DO THEM!

GO TO SRI RANGAM AND BRING BACK 1000 BEGGARS.

WE MUST FEED A THOUSAND BEGGARS!

WE CAN DO THAT ON MONDAY.

KUNNUTAIYA SETS OFF, TRAVELLING THROUGH THE COUNTRYSIDE.

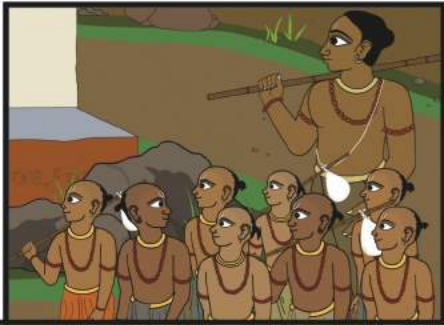




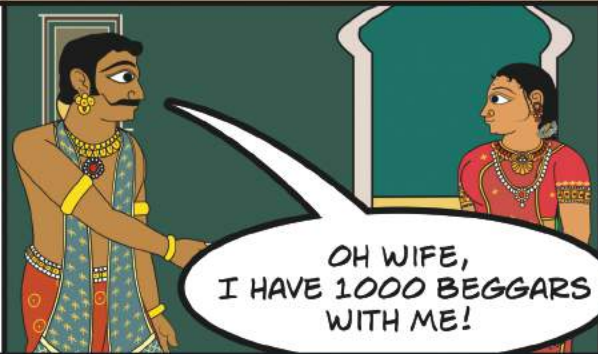
FINALLY, SEEING A TEMPLE ON THE HORIZON, HE KNOWS HE HAS ARRIVED!







THE MENDICANTS AND THE BOYS FOLLOW KUNNUTAIYA BACK TO PONNIVALA. MANY OTHER BEGGARS JOIN THEM ON THE WAY. ALL ARE HOPING FOR A MEAL. MEANWHILE, TAMARAI ORDERS A FEAST.



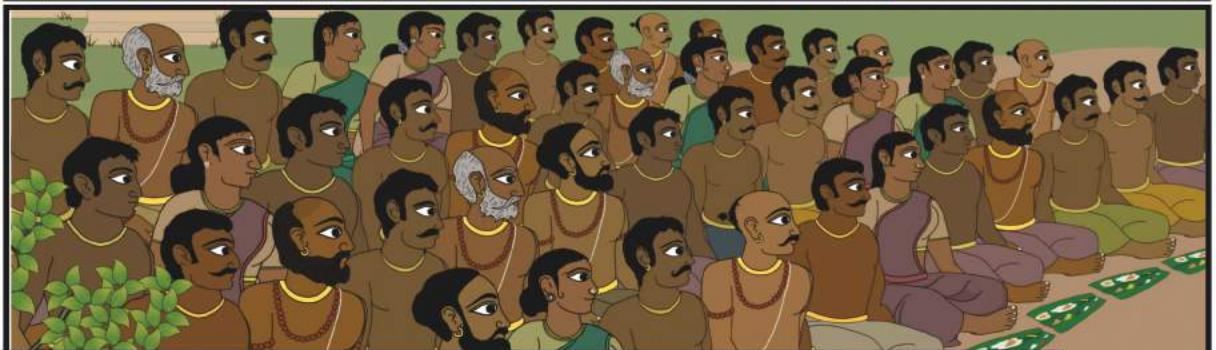
OH WIFE, I HAVE 1000 BEGGARS WITH ME!



MAID, IS EVERYTHING PREPARED?

WE HAVE 1000 MOUTHS TO FEED!

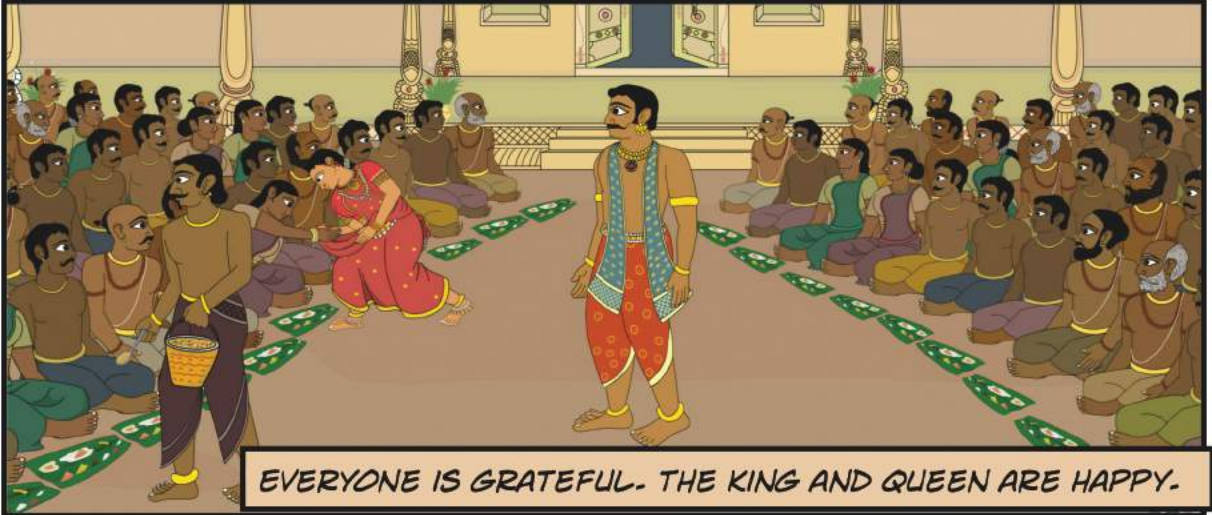
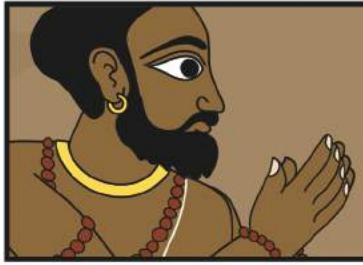
SOON THE PALACE AND ITS GROUNDS ARE FILLED WITH 1000 BEGGARS.



QUEEN TAMARAI FEEDS EVERY SINGLE MAN, WOMAN, AND CHILD.



# A Pilgrim's Journey



EVERYONE IS GRATEFUL. THE KING AND QUEEN ARE HAPPY.



HAVE YOU DONE ALL THE THINGS I ASKED YOU TO DO?

WITH A FLASH, ONE OF THE BEGGARS TURNS INTO LORD VISHNU HIMSELF!



LORD! WE HAVE COMPLETED ALL BUT ONE THING ON YOUR LIST!



WE STILL HAVE TO PLACE A LAMP ON A POST AT THE GANESH TEMPLE.





THE LAMP IS SOON COMPLETE, AND PLACED ON A PILLAR.



THE PEOPLE OF PONNIVALA BRING GIFTS FOR THE COUPLE.

OH VILLAGERS. IT WILL BE 21 YEARS BEFORE WE RETURN.

PLEASE LOOK AFTER EVERYTHING WELL UNTIL WE GET BACK!

SOON, THE TWO ARE LEFT ALONE.

OH LORD VISHNU!

PLEASE SEND BEETLES AND WASPS TO PROTECT THIS PLACE WHILE WE ARE GONE!

VISHNU HEARS THE PRAYER AND SENDS A SWARM OF STINGING INSECTS.

OH BEETLES, WASPS! PLEASE PROTECT THE PALACE FOR US!



THE COUPLE VISIT THE CELATTA TEMPLE.



OH LOVELY  
GODDESS  
CELATTA!



WE ARE  
GOING TO MAKE A  
PILGRIMAGE TO  
KASI.



PLEASE COME  
WITH ME AS MY  
GUARDIAN!

WITH YOUR  
HELP, I WANT TO  
OBTAIN A GIFT OF  
SONS.

ALL OVER THE KINGDOM, PEOPLE HEAR OF THE RULING  
COUPLE'S PILGRIMAGE. EVEN THE ANIMALS ARE INTRIGUED...



PONNIVALA'S BARREN COUPLES SEEK A BOON OF THEIR OWN.



HUSBAND! THE KING  
AND QUEEN ARE COMING  
THIS WAY!

SINCE THEY ARE GOING  
ON A PILGRIMAGE TO GET  
CHILDREN, LET'S ASK THEM FOR  
A SON OF OUR OWN!





SOON, THE COUPLE COME ACROSS A PAIR OF COWS, AND A PAIR OF HORSES. BOTH PAIRS OF ANIMALS HAVE THE SAME REQUEST...



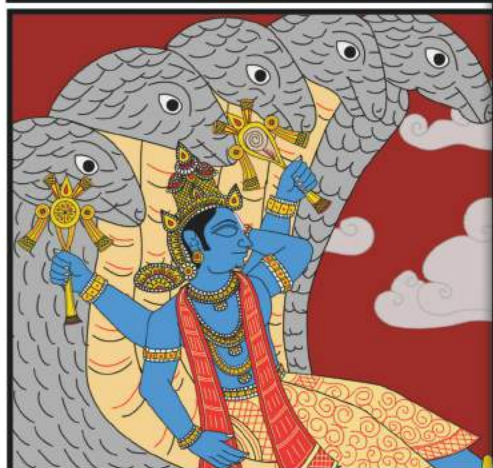
TAMARAI PROMISES TO RETURN WITH A BOON FOR ALL.



# The Legend of Ponnivala



THE COUPLE NOW START ON THEIR JOURNEY TO KASI.



TAMARAI AND KUNNUTAIYA HAVE COMPLETED THE TASKS SET FOR THEM BY LORD VISHNU. THEY HAVE MET DANGER, BUT THE GREAT GOD HAS PROTECTED AND GUIDED THEM THROUGH ALL THEIR DIFFICULTIES. STILL, A LONG JOURNEY NOW LIES AHEAD. WHAT WILL THE COUPLE ENCOUNTER ON THEIR 21 YEAR TRIP? AFTER ALL OF THE TRIALS THEY HAVE FACED, WILL THEY FINALLY BE REWARDED? OR ARE THERE SIMPLY MORE AND MORE DIFFICULTIES AHEAD FOR THE JUST KING AND QUEEN OF PONNIVALA?



## The Importance of The Legend of Ponnivala

This is an ancient epic, stemming from a long tradition of local village storytelling and passed down as a lively oral tradition. Its roots can be traced back to medieval times, well before the coming of the British to India. Its content was memorized by bards who first spent many years as apprentices. They learned from more experienced singers, eventually become leaders themselves, gaining the respect and even adulation of whole villages of eager listeners.

The primary source for this new compressed retelling is a tape recording made in 1965 over 18 consecutive nights in a village where music and song were still the primary means of after dark entertainment. At that time, electricity was scarce in the region and there were no televisions, computers, or CD players. Skilled bards provided the village entertainment, and served as the area's history teachers. They shaped the local understanding of the past by telling stories.

For the first time the Legend of Ponnivala is presented here as a connected chain of 26 short episodes. These sequential tales describe the rich past of Kongunadu through a chain of events that impact one local family. Its heroes and heroines are farmers who live in this specific cultural and geographic region. The larger Legend covers a period of roughly six centuries of South Indian medieval history. As a story it compresses what is known into three generations. Basically, the life of the grandfather covers the period from 1,000 to 1,200 CE, the father's adventures represent the events between 1,200 CE and 1,400, while the experiences of the sons match local events occurring between 1,400 CE and 1,600 CE. This is a story rich in cultural and sociological detail. Several events parallel real social upheavals documented by contemporary historical accounts.

The Legend of Ponnivala also presents a simplified template for a much larger idea - that all life is cyclical. A basic concept that underlies folk Hinduism is that cosmic rhythms move in great cycles. Each begins with the creation of a good age. Subsequently, various acts of human selfishness cause deterioration. After a considerable period, such a cycle must end, often helped by divine intervention. Via their deputies or incarnations, these deities kill all that is evil, washing and cleansing the earth and then setting in motion a new era. Our series presents a genuine folk model of how cosmic energies work. In a sense it tries to depict the very nature of human life on earth!

For website extras such as character details and name and place pronunciations unique to this graphic novel please visit the webpage below:

[www.ponnivala.com/comic11](http://www.ponnivala.com/comic11)

The Legend of  
**Ponnivala**

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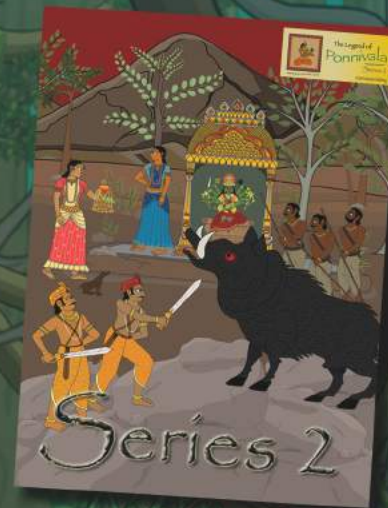
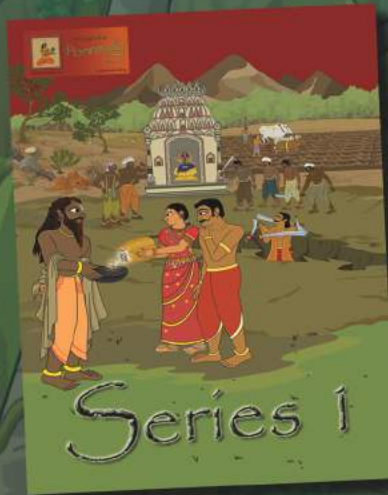






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## Collect All 26!

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