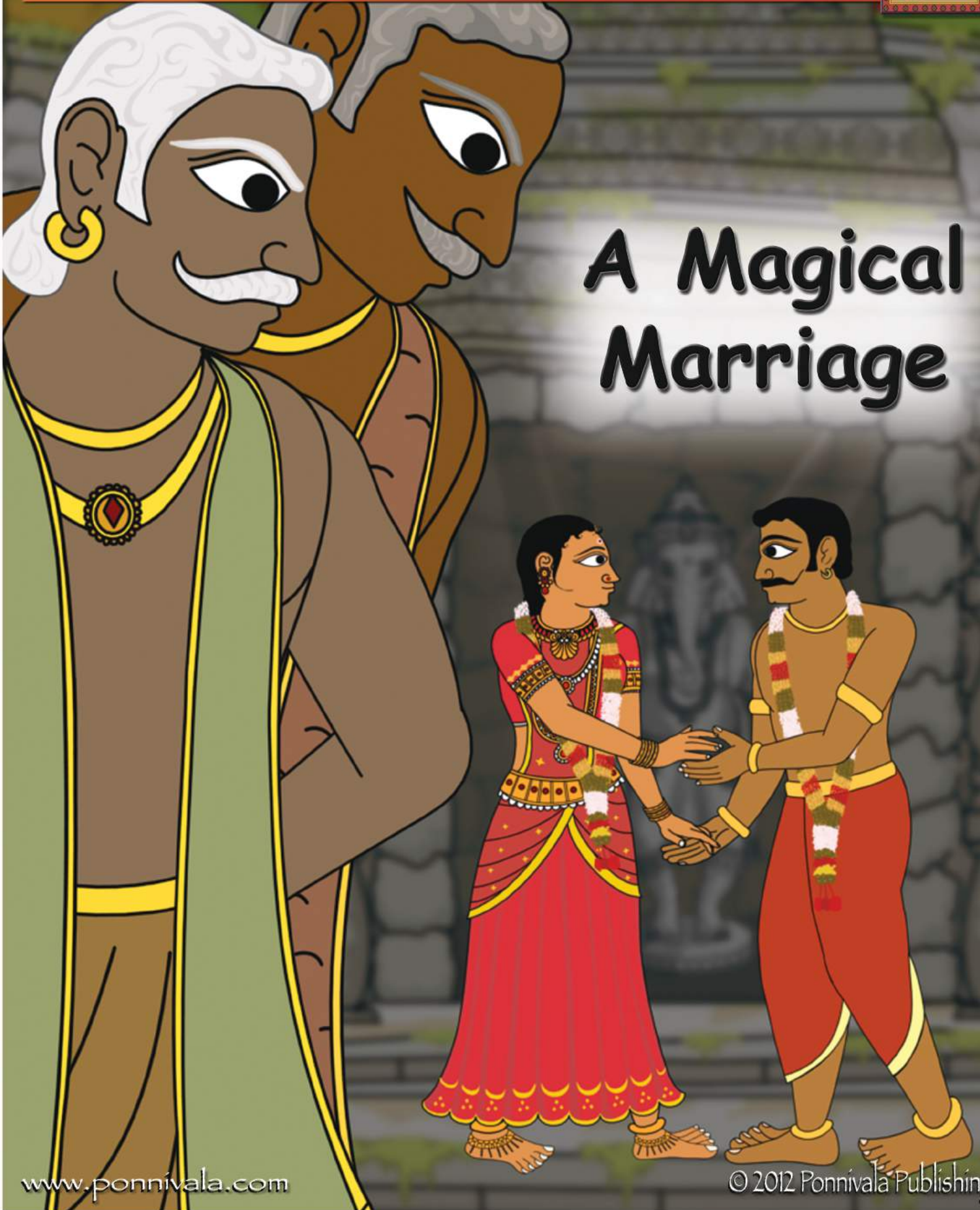


Series 1
Book 5

The Legend of
Ponnivala



A Magical Marriage

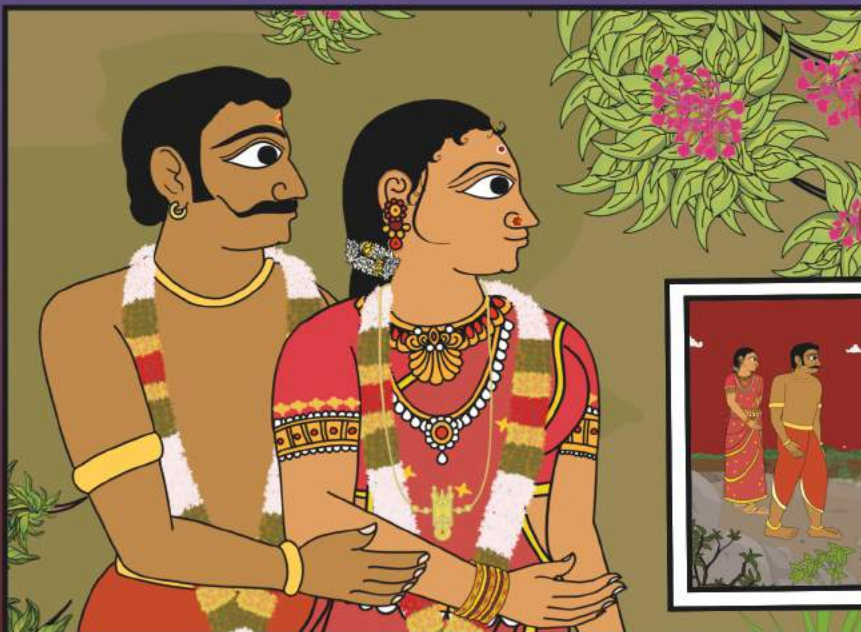


**A MAGICAL
MARRIAGE**
SERIES 1 COMIC 5

LORD VISHNU
TELLS A HARD
WORKING SHEPHERD
ORPHAN THAT HE IS
ELIGIBLE TO MARRY
HIS BOSSES' LOVELY
YOUNG SISTER.
THIS GOD TELLS THE
FRIGHTENED BOY HIS
PARENTS WERE
ALSO FARMERS AND
ARRANGES A
MAGICAL FOREST
MARRIAGE. BUT THE
GIRL'S FAMILY ARE
UPSET AT THIS
MATCH AND BANISH
THE NEWLY WEDS.
THE COUPLE LEAVE
TO SEEK THE BOY'S
ANCESTRAL HOME,
PONNIVALA ...



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THE YOUNG KUNNUTAIYA PONDERES ON SOME UNEXPECTED NEWS

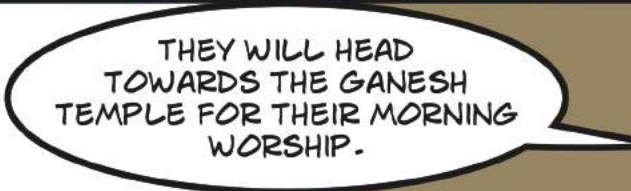


FOR 20 YEARS I HAVE BEEN A SHEPHERD FOR TWO FINE BROTHERS. THEY HAVE TREATED ME WELL AND KEPT THEIR PROMISE TO FEED ME EACH DAY.

IN EXCHANGE, I HAVE HERDED THEIR COWS AND GOATS. I ALSO DO HOUSEWORK AND PUSH A SWING FOR THEIR LOVELY SISTER.

NOW A STRANGE OLD MAN IS TELLING ME THAT GIRL IS ACTUALLY MY RIGHTFUL BRIDE, AND THAT MY TWO MASTERS ARE REALLY MY COUSINS! BUT IF I GO BEFORE THESE MEN TO ASK TO MARRY THEIR SISTER, THEY WILL BEAT ME! OH, WHAT SHALL I DO?







VISHNU, DISGUISED AS A WANDERING OLD MAN, HAS CONVINCED KUNNUTAIYA TO COME FORTH WITH THE TRUTH - THAT HIS MASTERS ARE, IN FACT, HIS COUSINS. HE TELLS KUNNUTAIYA TO LIE IN FRONT OF THE PALACE AND WAIT. BUT KUNNUTAIYA IS VERY SCARED.





Cock-a-doodle-doo

IT IS NOT LONG BEFORE THE COCK CROWS, AWAKENING KUNNUTAIYA'S MASTERS.



HMM, MORNING! TIME TO PAY HOMAGE TO GANESH!



LOOK! SOMEONE IS LYING DOWN THERE!

WHO IS IT?



THIS IS NOT A GOOD SIGN AS WE START OUT FOR OUR MORNING PRAYERS!



WHO DARES TO SLEEP ON OUR PATH?

THE BROTHERS GROW MORE AND MORE ANGRY. KUNNUTAIYA IS VERY SCARED.

A Magical Marriage



IN HIS FRIGHT, KUNNUTAIYA DOES NOT GO THROUGH WITH THE PLAN.





KUNNUTAIYA HAS FORGOTTEN EVERYTHING DUE TO HIS FEAR! HE HAS RUINED MY PLAN.



I HAVE TO THINK ABOUT WHAT TO DO NEXT!



THAT OLD MAN WHO TALKED TO ME LAST NIGHT WAS CRAZY!



THOSE TWO LANDLORDS WOULD HAVE BEATEN ME MERCILESSLY IF I HAD EXPLAINED MY RIGHT TO MARRY THEIR SISTER!



A Magical Marriage

I DON'T EVER WANT TO SEE THAT OLD MAN AGAIN!

SUNSET FALLS, AND KUNNUTAIYA FINISHES UP HIS DAILY CHORES. HE THINKS THAT HIS EXPERIENCE THE PREVIOUS NIGHT IS DONE WITH. HE IS CONTENT TO PUT IT BEHIND HIM.

HE LOCKS THE COWS AND GOATS IN THEIR ENCLOSURES, AND THEN GOES TO SLEEP.

Whoosh

BUT VISHNU HAS NOT GIVEN UP ON KUNNUTAIYA. ONCE AGAIN, HE DESCENDS FROM HIS COBRA COUCH ON THE MILK SEA, RIDING HIS GARUDA BIRD, AND JOINS KUNNUTAIYA IN THE CATTLEFOLD. VISHNU IS DETERMINED THAT KUNNUTAIYA TAKE THE BEAUTIFUL TAMARAI TO BE HIS BRIDE, AND THAT HE TAKE HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE AS RULER OF PONNIVALA.

The Legend of Ponnivala



A Magical Marriage



ONCE AGAIN, KUNNUTAIYA GOES WITH THE OLD MAN, THIS TIME A LITTLE MORE CONFIDENT. THE OLD MAN LEADS HIM TO THE PALACE, AND INSTRUCTS KUNNUTAIYA TO LIE DOWN IN THE SAME PLACE AS BEFORE. KUNNUTAIYA DOES THIS, THEN AWAITS THE ARRIVAL OF HIS MASTERS.





OH, COUSINS! YOU KNOW...DID YOU KNOW THAT I AM YOUR FATHER'S SISTER'S SON?

I AM THE RIGHTFUL GROOM FOR YOUR SISTER. SHE IS MY RIGHTFUL BRIDE!



YOU VILLAIN!

WE HAVE CARED FOR YOU AND RAISED YOU FOR TWENTY YEARS. YOU HAVE EATEN WELL.

NOW YOU COME AND DEMAND TO MARRY OUR SISTER!



HOW DARE YOU ADDRESS US AS CLOSE KINSMEN?

SERVANTS!

TAKE THIS MAN!

BEAT HIM WELL, AND THEN TIE HIM TO THE BIG PILLAR IN THE COURTYARD!

OH!

DON'T BEAT ME! I AM TELLING THE TRUTH!

HA HA HA! BELIEVE THIS...

The Legend of Ponnivala

KUNNUTAIYA IS BADLY BEATEN BY THE SERVANTS. HE IS THEN LEFT TIED TO THE PILLAR ALL NIGHT. WHEN MORNING COMES, VISHNU RETURNS TO HIM.



A Magical Marriage

EVERYONE MUST SUFFER IF THEY WANT TO ACHIEVE SOMETHING.

JUST KEEP QUIET. INSTEAD OF COMPLAINING, LOOK AT ME!

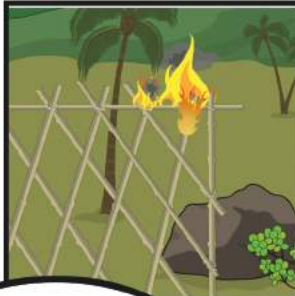


HAAH!....

VISHNU FREES KUNNUTAIYA, HEALS HIS CUTS AND BRUISES, AND THEN SETS THE PALACE ON FIRE!



FIRE!



QUICK, BRING SOME WATER!

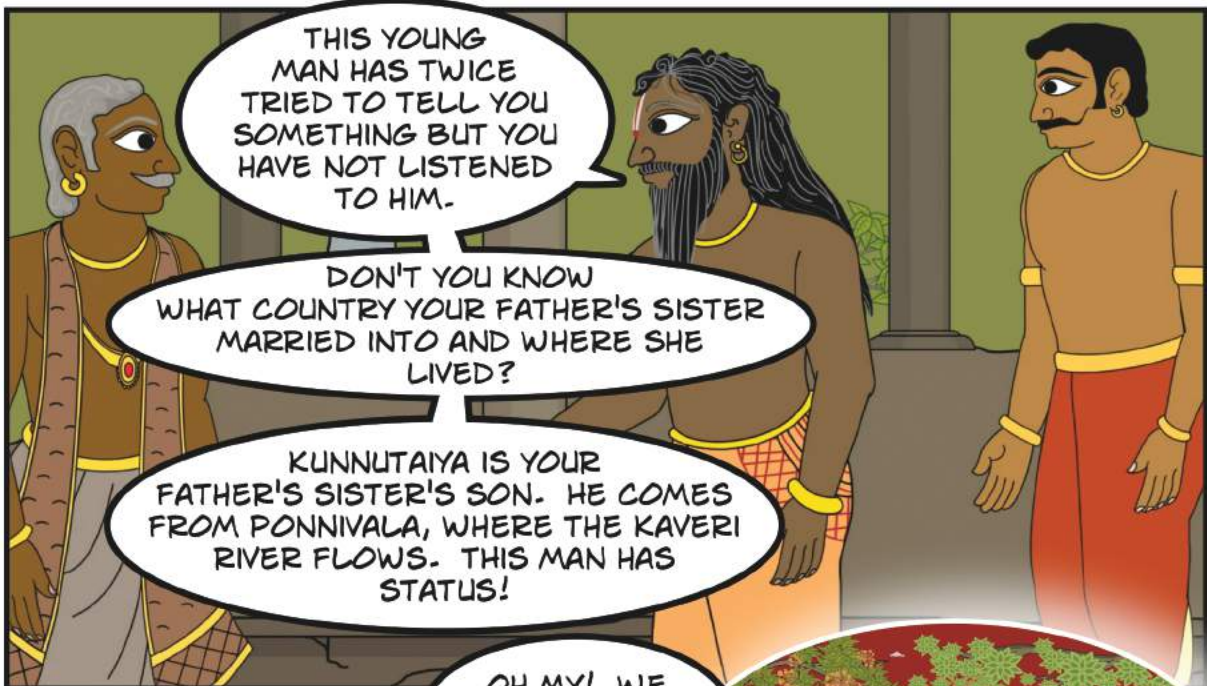
WHO ARE YOU?



I KNOW HOW TO STOP THIS FIRE! BUT BEFORE I DO, YOU MUST LISTEN TO ME.



WE WILL LISTEN, BUT SPEAK QUICKLY. WE HAVE TO STOP THIS FIRE!



THIS YOUNG MAN HAS TWICE TRIED TO TELL YOU SOMETHING BUT YOU HAVE NOT LISTENED TO HIM.

DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT COUNTRY YOUR FATHER'S SISTER MARRIED INTO AND WHERE SHE LIVED?

KUNNUTAIYA IS YOUR FATHER'S SISTER'S SON. HE COMES FROM PONNIVALA, WHERE THE KAVERI RIVER FLOWS. THIS MAN HAS STATUS!

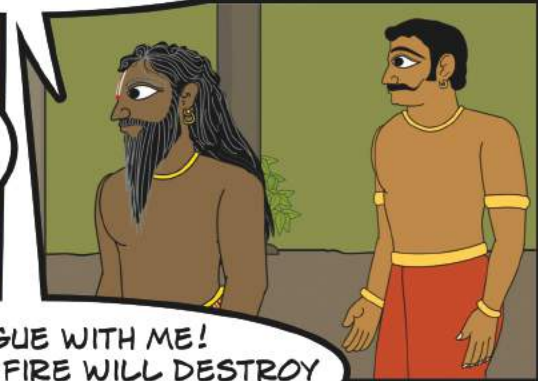


OH MY! WE DID NOT KNOW ALL THIS!

BECAUSE HE WAS BORN WHEN AN EVIL PLANET WAS IN ASCENDANCY, HE HAS SUFFERED A LOT!



KUNNUTAIYA HAS WORKED FOR US FOR 20 YEARS! HE IS NOT A PROPER BROTHER-IN-LAW!



DON'T ARGUE WITH ME! OTHERWISE THIS FIRE WILL DESTROY YOUR PALACE!

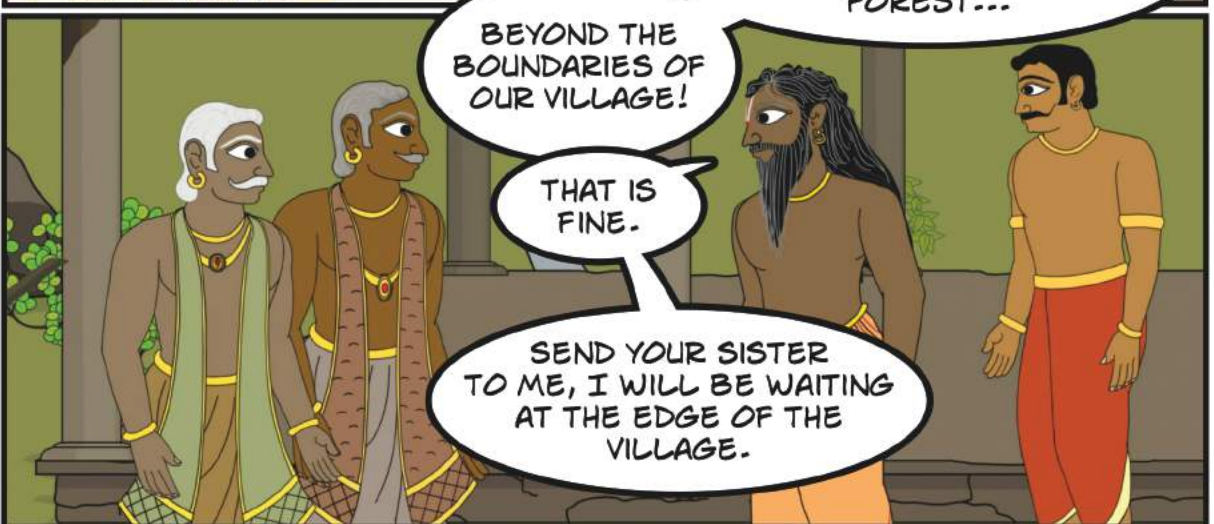


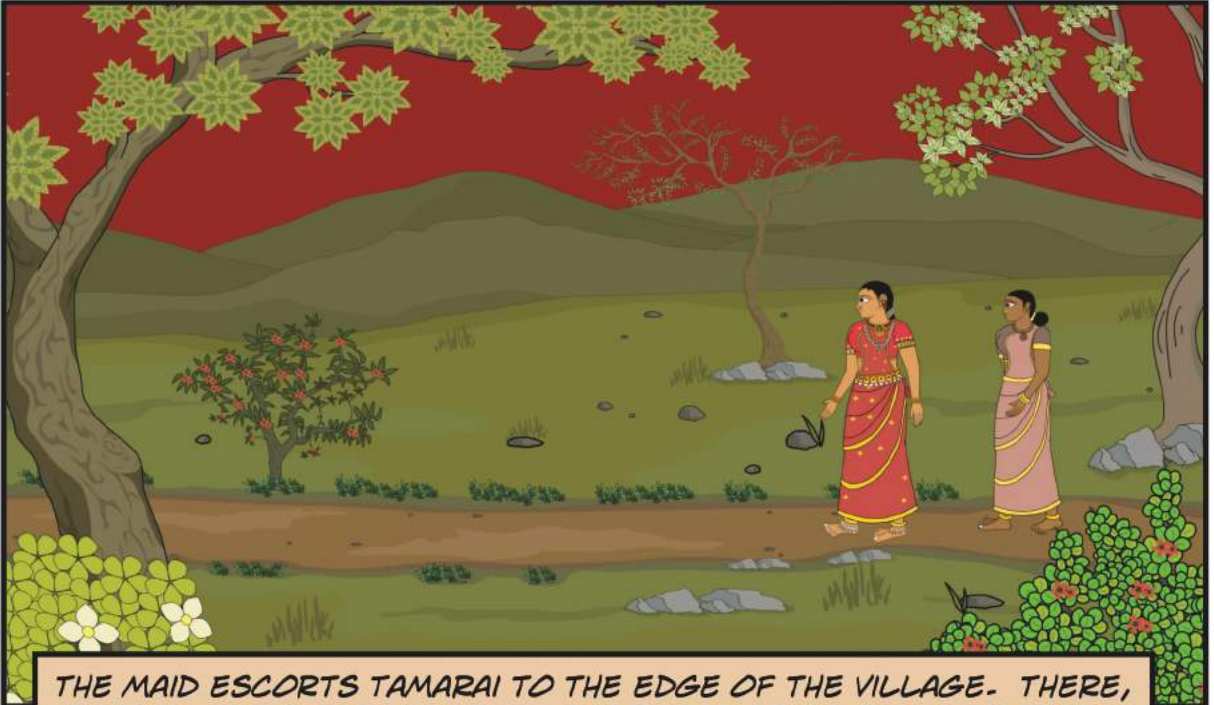
OKAY, OKAY! WE WILL AGREE!





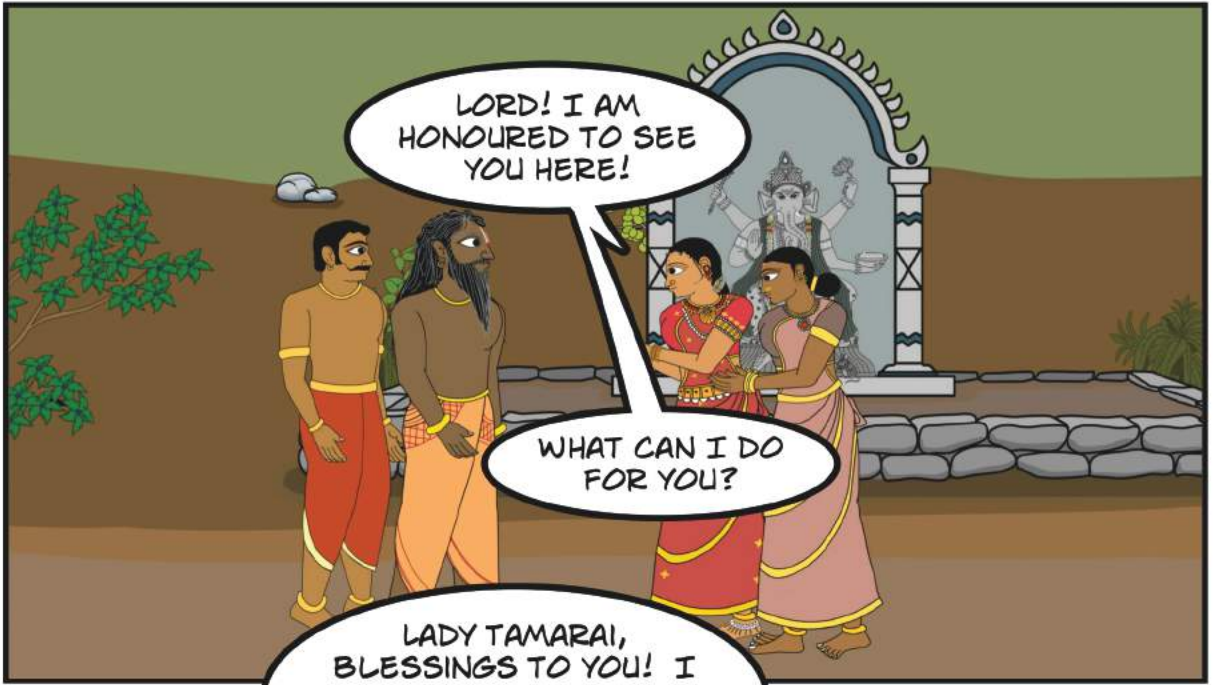
A DARK CLOUD FORMS AND IT RAINS. THE FIRE STOPS.





THE MAID ESCORTS TAMARAI TO THE EDGE OF THE VILLAGE. THERE, KUNNUTAIYA AND VISHNU - STILL DISGUISED AS AN OLD WANDERER - ARE WAITING. TAMARAI, BECAUSE OF HER MAGICAL GIFTS, IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZES THE OLD MAN FOR WHO HE REALLY IS.





LORD! I AM HONOURD TO SEE YOU HERE!

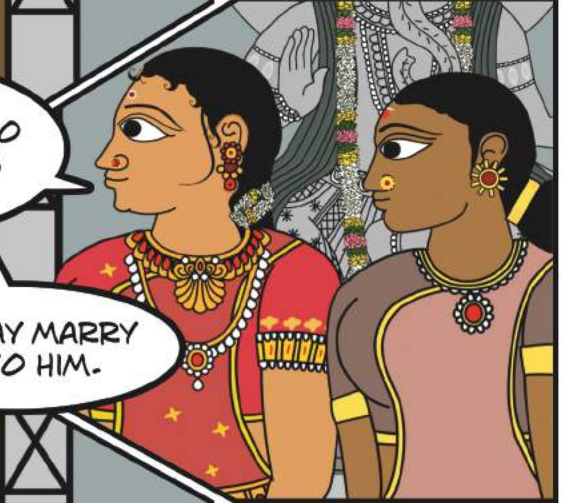
WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

LADY TAMARAI, BLESSINGS TO YOU! I WILL PROTECT YOU AND MAKE SURE YOUR FAMILY PROSPERS.

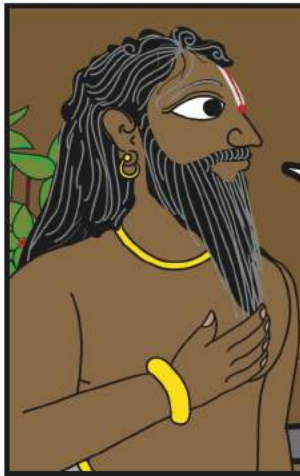
I AM GOING TO MARRY YOU TO YOUR FATHER'S SISTER'S SON, KUNNUTAIYA GOUNDER.



LORD! I TRUST YOU TO DO WHAT IS BEST.



YOU MAY MARRY ME TO HIM.



I AM PLEASD TO KNOW THAT. LET'S GO!

The Legend of Ponnivala



SERVANTS, WE NEED ONE DRIED UP OLD COW, AND ONE BLIND GOAT!



WE ALSO NEED TINAI MILLET AND VARAKU MILLET, SOME OIL, AND WATER!

NOW TAKE ALL THESE THINGS TO THE OLD GANESH TEMPLE.



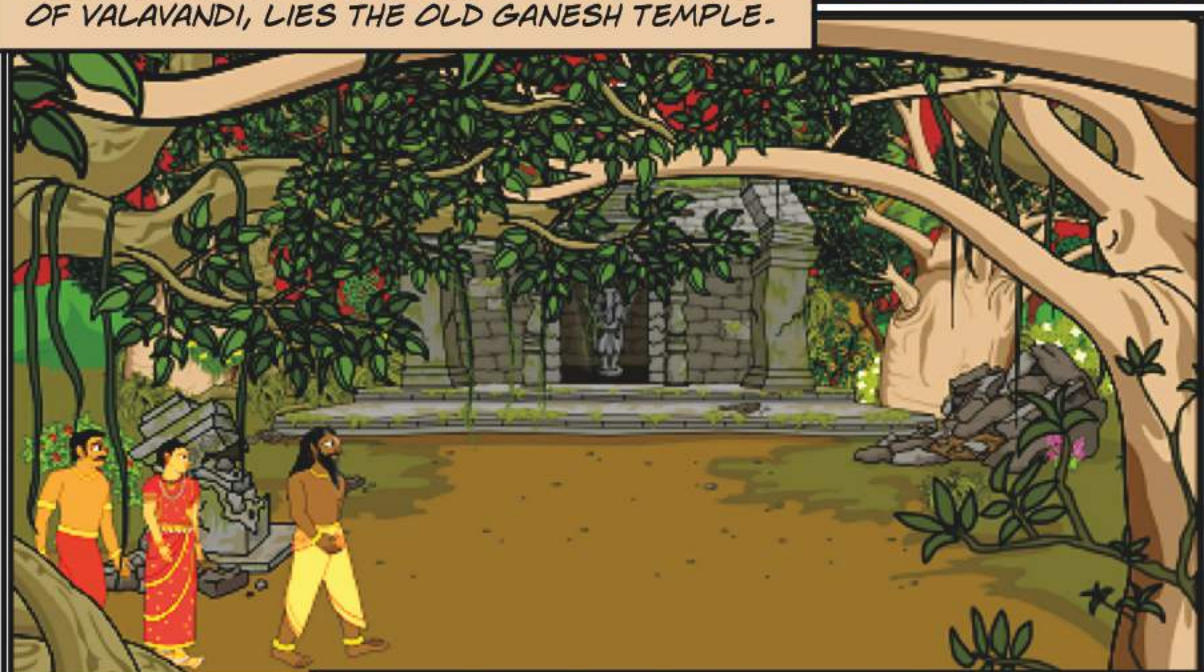
YOU WILL FIND TAMARAI THERE. GIVE THESE THINGS TO HER. SHE WILL KNOW THEIR MEANING.



THE TWO BROTHERS SEND THEIR WEDDING GIFTS TO THE COUPLE.



DEEP IN THE FOREST, OUTSIDE OF THE VILLAGE OF VALAVANDI, LIES THE OLD GANESH TEMPLE.



IT IS CRUMBLING WITH AGE. HERE, THE COUPLE ARRIVE AND PREPARE FOR THEIR WEDDING CEREMONY.





VISHNU NOW TAKES HIS TRUE FORM, AND KUNNUTAIYA IS IN AWE ...

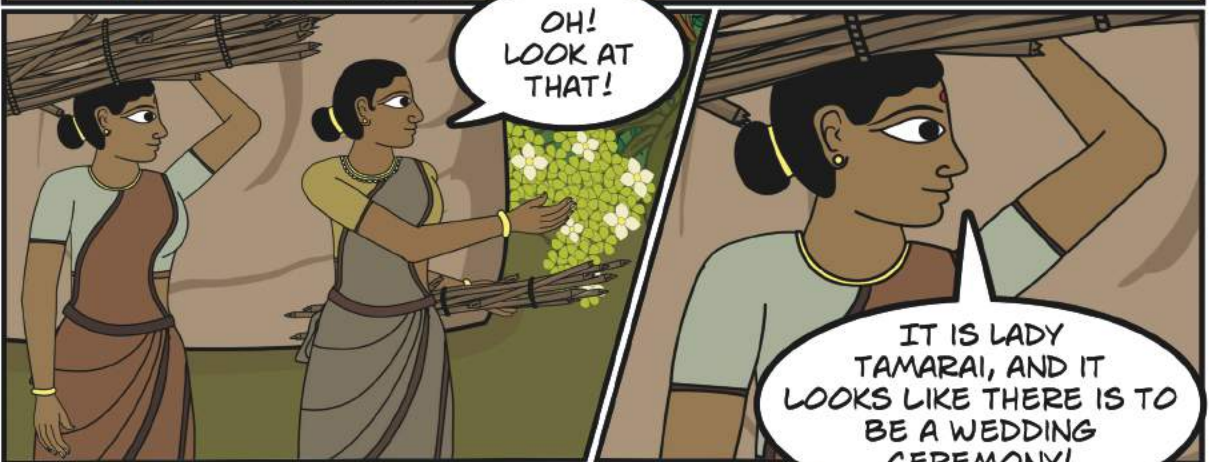


OH LORD! IT IS YOU! YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN MY PROTECTOR!

KUNNUTAIYA, I HAVE ALWAYS LOOKED AFTER YOU.



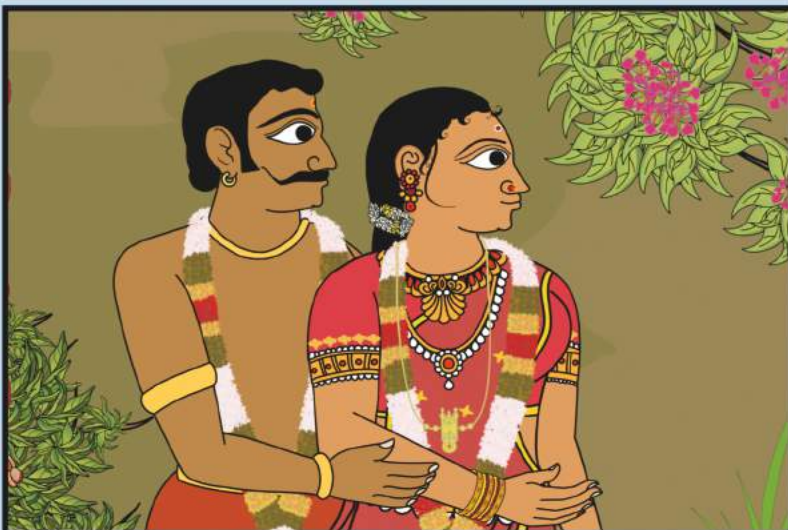
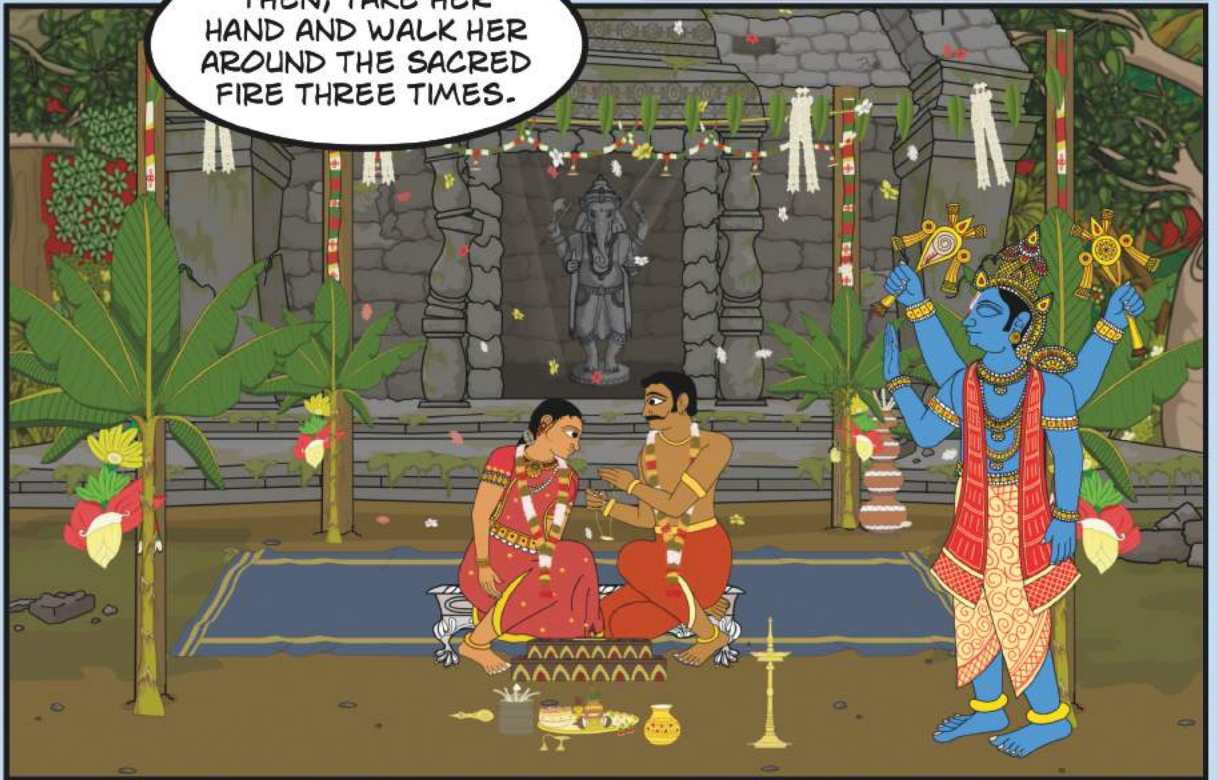
NOW, LET ME CREATE ALL THE THINGS WE WILL NEED FOR YOUR WEDDING CEREMONY!



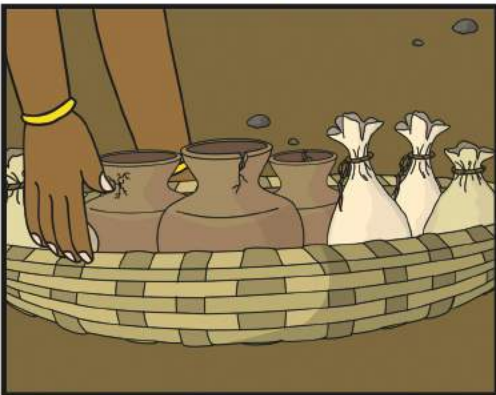
VISHNU CREATES BEAUTIFUL WEDDING DECORATIONS FOR THE CEREMONY. THEN HE INSTRUCTS THE COUPLE ON WHAT TO DO.

KUNNUTAIYA, TIE THAT WEDDING NECKLACE AROUND TAMARAI'S NECK.

THEN, TAKE HER HAND AND WALK HER AROUND THE SACRED FIRE THREE TIMES.

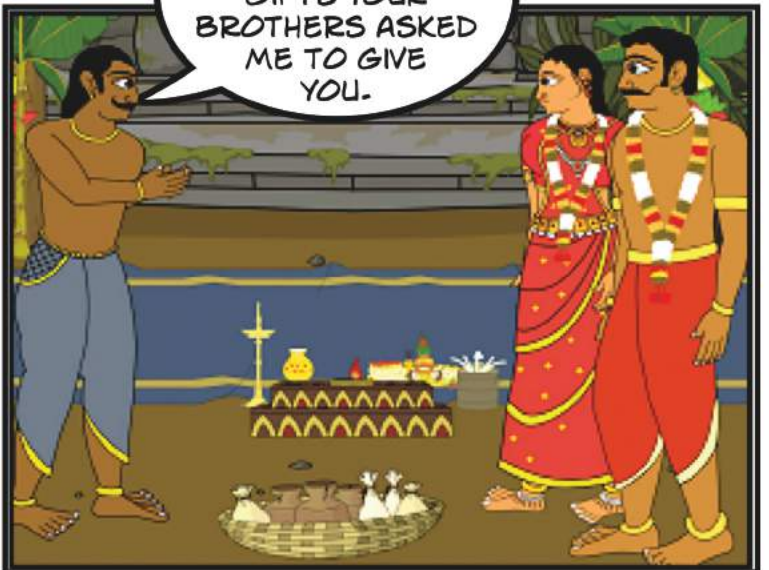
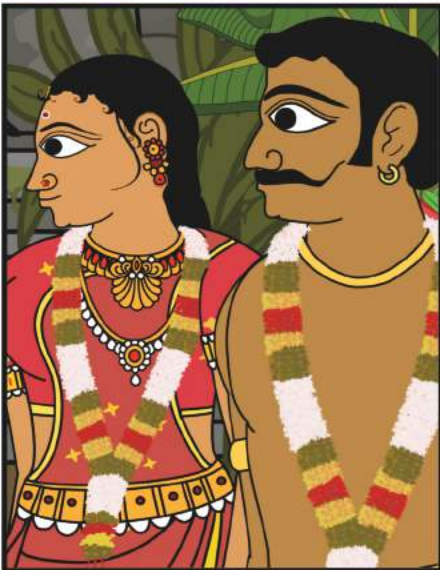


IN NO TIME, THE TWO ARE MARRIED. AS SOON AS THE WEDDING IS FINISHED, VISHNU RETURNS TO HIS COUNCIL CHAMBERS.



SOON,
TAMARAI'S
BROTHERS'
SERVANT
ARRIVES
WITH HER
BROTHERS'
GIFTS.

LADY
TAMARAI,
THERE ARE THE
GIFTS YOUR
BROTHERS ASKED
ME TO GIVE
YOU.

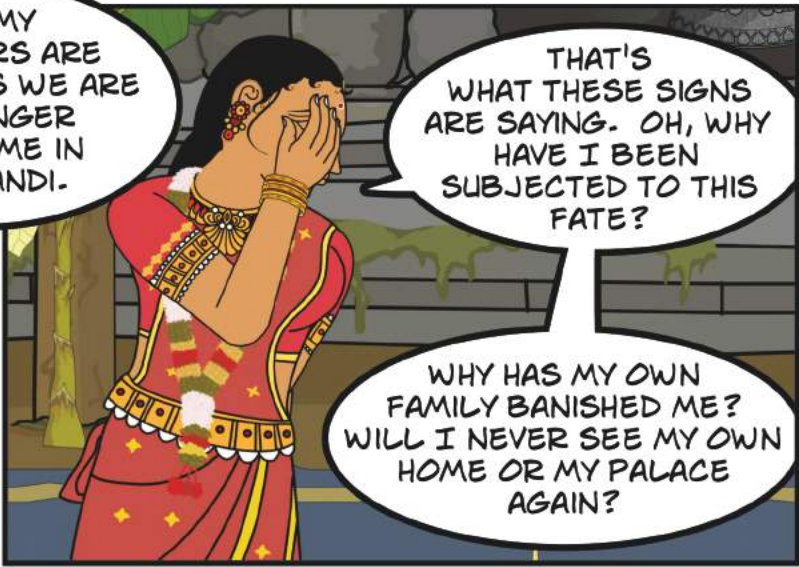


The Legend of Ponnivala





OH, MY BROTHERS ARE TELLING US WE ARE NO LONGER WELCOME IN VALAVANDI.



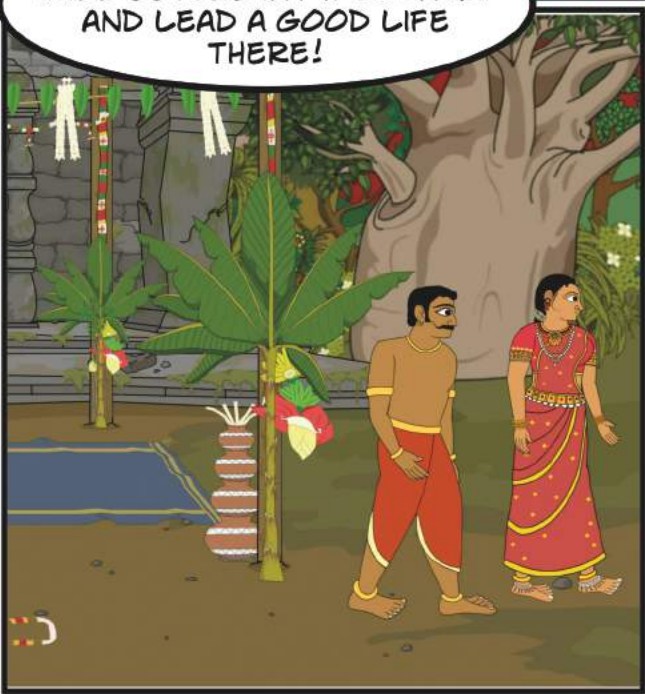
THAT'S WHAT THESE SIGNS ARE SAYING. OH, WHY HAVE I BEEN SUBJECTED TO THIS FATE?

WHY HAS MY OWN FAMILY BANISHED ME? WILL I NEVER SEE MY OWN HOME OR MY PALACE AGAIN?



OH BEAUTIFUL WIFE, THIS IS NOT YOUR HOME NOW.

DON'T CRY! WE WILL SETTLE IN MY COUNTRY AND LEAD A GOOD LIFE THERE!

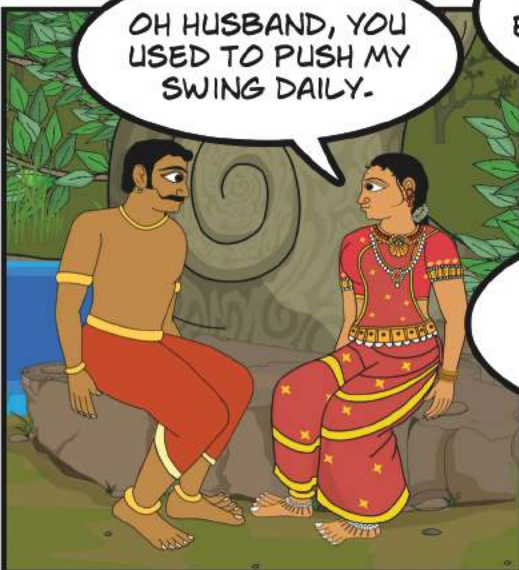




THE NEWLY WEDDED COUPLE STARTS OUT ON THEIR JOURNEY TO PONNIVALA. THEY TRAVEL FOR HOURS. THEN THEY FIND A LARGE FLAT STONE UNDER THE SHADE OF A TREE AND DECIDE TO TAKE A REST.



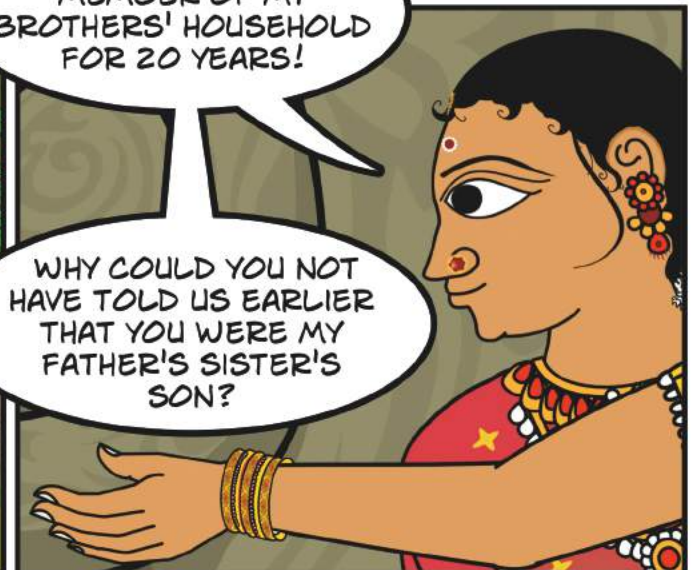
LET'S SIT HERE FOR A WHILE!

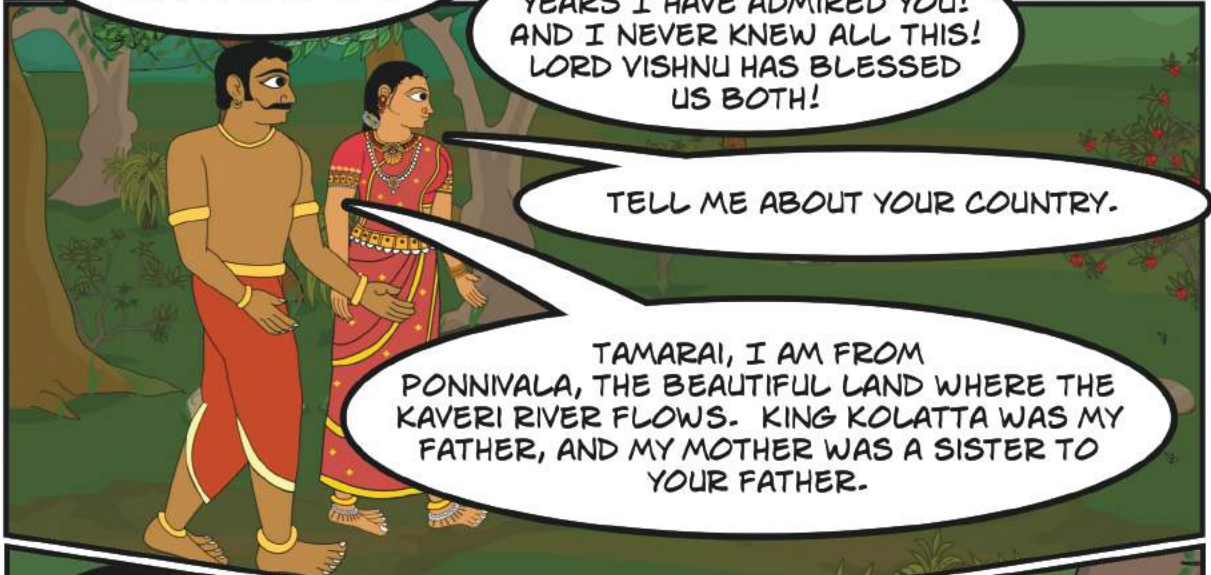


OH HUSBAND, YOU USED TO PUSH MY SWING DAILY.

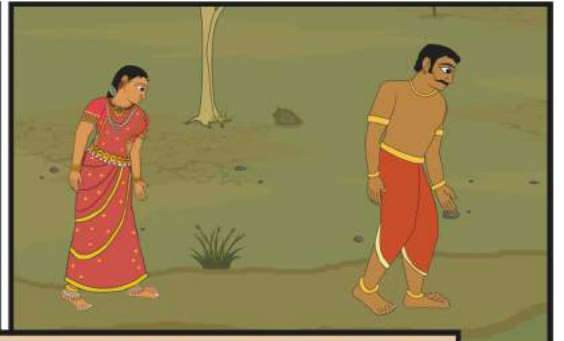
YOU WERE A MEMBER OF MY BROTHERS' HOUSEHOLD FOR 20 YEARS!

WHY COULD YOU NOT HAVE TOLD US EARLIER THAT YOU WERE MY FATHER'S SISTER'S SON?





The Legend of Ponnivala



AS THEY WALK, KUNNUTAIYA TELLS TAMARAI THE STORY OF HIS LIFE. THE HOT SUN BEATS DOWN ON THEM, WITH UNRELENTING HEAT. TAMARAI AND KUNNUTAIYA SWEAT AND PANT FROM EXHAUSTION.



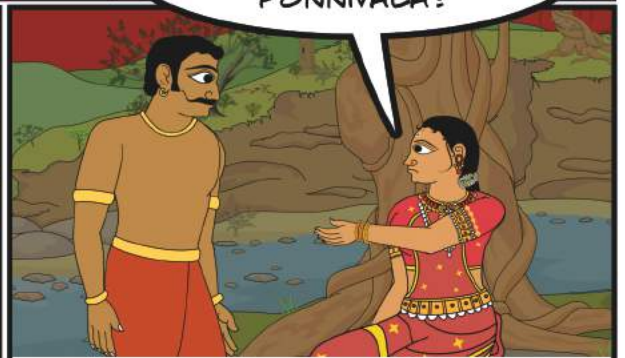


THE CHASTE LADY TAMARAI BEGINS TO CRY. SHE IS WILTING UNDER THE HOT SUN, AND KUNNUTAIYA'S NEWS MAKES HER EVEN MORE UPSET. SHE FEARS FOR HER FUTURE.





A Magical Marriage



THE COUPLE RESUMES THEIR JOURNEY. KUNNUTAIYA KNOWS THEY ARE GETTING CLOSE TO HIS FAMILY LANDS. TAMARAI TRIES HER BEST TO CONTINUE, EVEN THOUGH SHE HAS NEVER SEEN SO MUCH SUN IN HER LIFE.



OUR LANDS ARE CLOSE NOW, JUST A LITTLE FARTHER!



TAMARAI! LOOK THERE!

THOSE ARE OUR FAMILY LANDS AND THERE IS THE CELATTA TEMPLE!



I HAVE RETURNED HOME AT LAST!

KUNNUTAIYA IS NOW MARRIED TO THE WOMAN HE LOVES. AND FINALLY, AFTER MANY LONG YEARS, THE LANDS OF HIS FAMILY LIE BEFORE HIS EYES ONCE MORE. BUT WHAT SORT OF FUTURE LIES AHEAD? HOW WILL THE COUPLE EVER MANAGE TO CHALLENGE THE GREEDY CLANSMEN WHO NOW FARM THESE LANDS?

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/comic5

The Legend of
Ponnivala

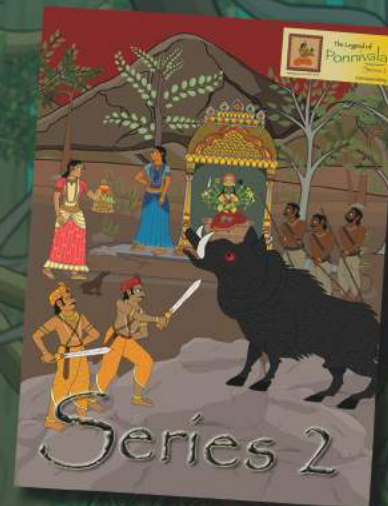
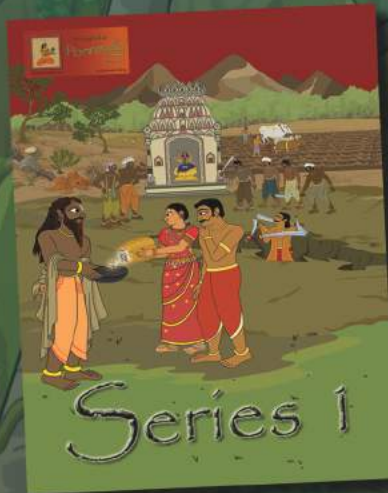
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