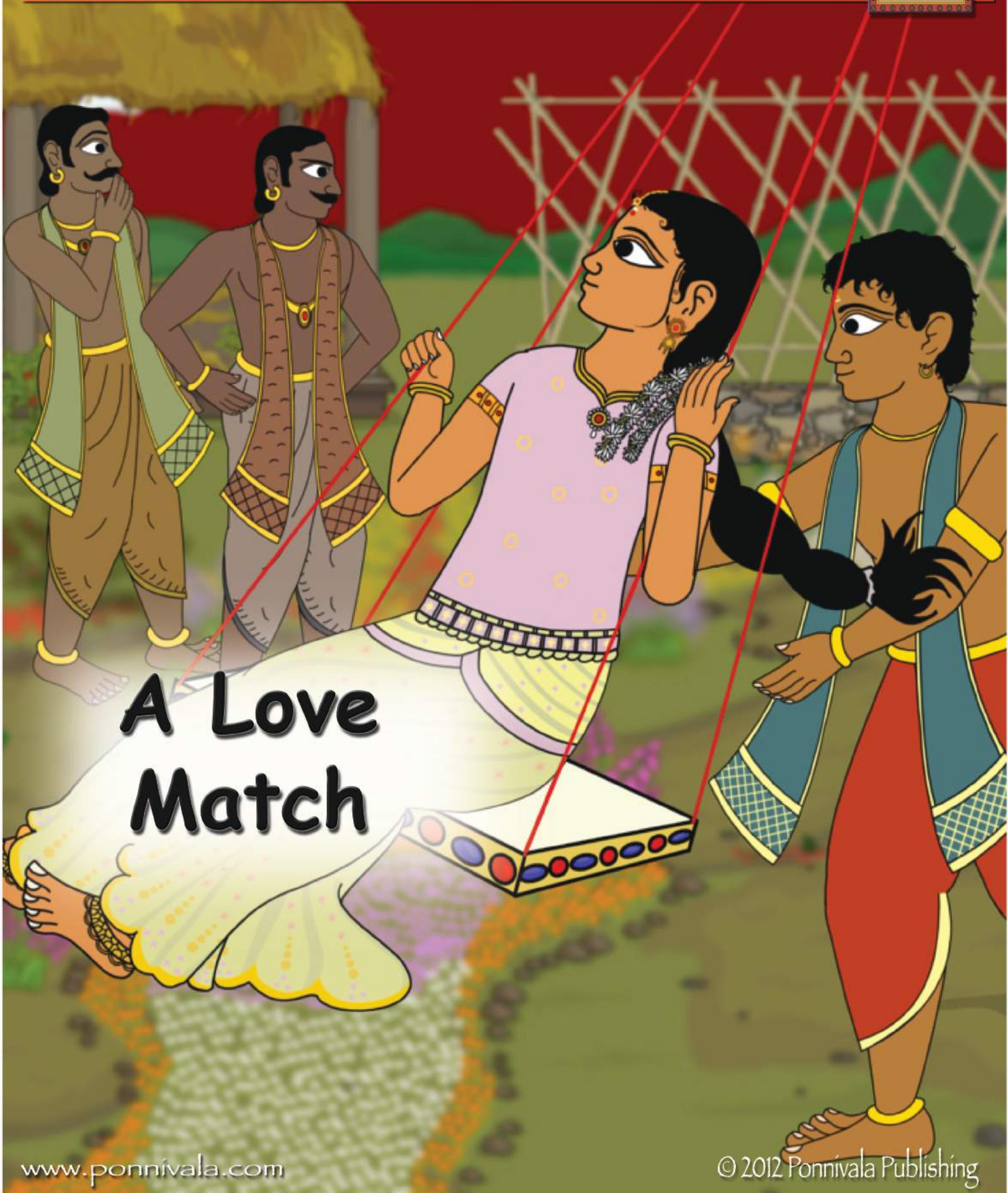


Series 1
Book 4

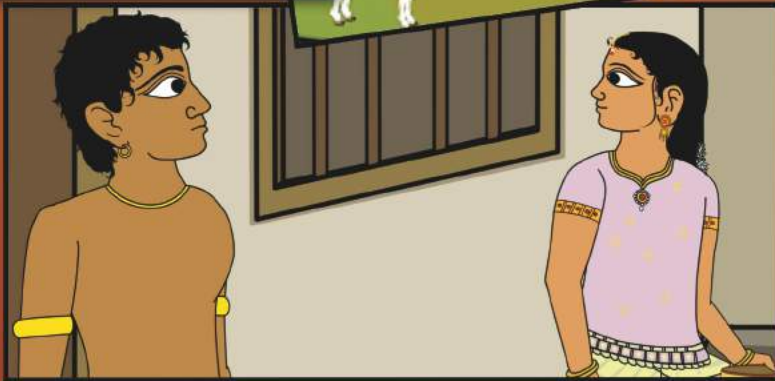
The Legend of
Ponnivala



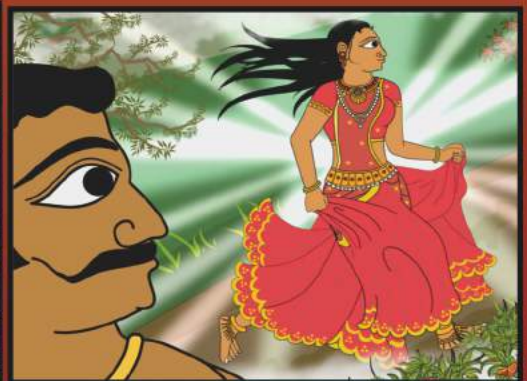
A Love Match

**A LOVE MATCH
SERIES 1 COMIC 4**

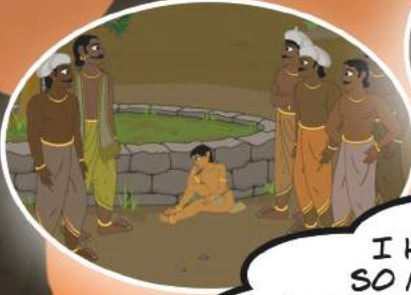
A WANDERING, ORPHANED BOY IS ADOPTED BY TWO PROSPEROUS AND KIND FARMER-BROTHERS. THE BOY BEGINS TO WORK FOR THESE MEN AS A SHEPHERD. HE GROWS UP AND THEN DISCOVERS HE HAS FALLEN IN LOVE WITH THE LITTLE SISTER OF HIS TWO RICH MASTERS. BUT HE HAS NO HOPE OF MARRYING HIS SWEETHEART BECAUSE SHE STANDS SO FAR ABOVE HIM SOCIALLY ..



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THE YOUNG ORPHAN THINKS ABOUT HIS PAST ----



I HAVE SUFFERED SO MUCH! SINCE MY MOTHER AND FATHER DIED FIVE LONG YEARS AGO, NO ONE HAS CARED FOR ME OR SHOWN ME LOVE....

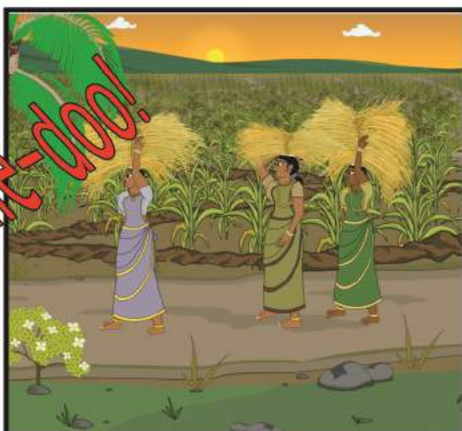
I HAVE BEEN FORCED TO WORK FOR MY GREEDY CLANSMEN. I HAVE BEEN BEATEN, INSULTED, AND FORCED TO LIVE ON LUMPS OF MILLET GRUEL! LIKE A POOR LABOURER, I HAVE CARRIED HUGE LOADS OF WOOD TO SELL FOR FIREWOOD....

BUT WAIT ... I SEE A LOVELY TEMPLE TOWER ON THE HORIZON. COULD LIFE BE ANY BETTER THERE? LET ME TRY MY LUCK WITH STRANGERS ONCE MORE!



KUNNUTAIYA RUNS TOWARDS THE DISTANT TEMPLE. NOTHING CAN SLOW HIM DOWN. HE TRIPS OVER A ROCK, AND FALLS IN THE MUD. BUT THE DETERMINED BOY JUST PICKS HIMSELF BACK UP AND CONTINUES ON HIS WAY.





THE SUN IS RISING OVER THE TOWN OF VALAVANDI, AND WORK IS ALREADY UNDER WAY. TWO BROTHERS, BOTH LARGE LAND OWNERS, HAPPEN TO BE RESTING AT THE LOCAL GANESH TEMPLE.



WHO IS THAT BOY RUNNING THROUGH OUR VILLAGE? STOP HIM AND BRING HIM HERE!



THE LOCAL LAND OWNERS ARE INTRIGUED WHEN A STRANGE YOUNG BOY RUNS PAST THEM. THEY ORDER THEIR WATCHMAN TO GO RETRIEVE THE BOY AND BRING HIM BACK TO THEM.





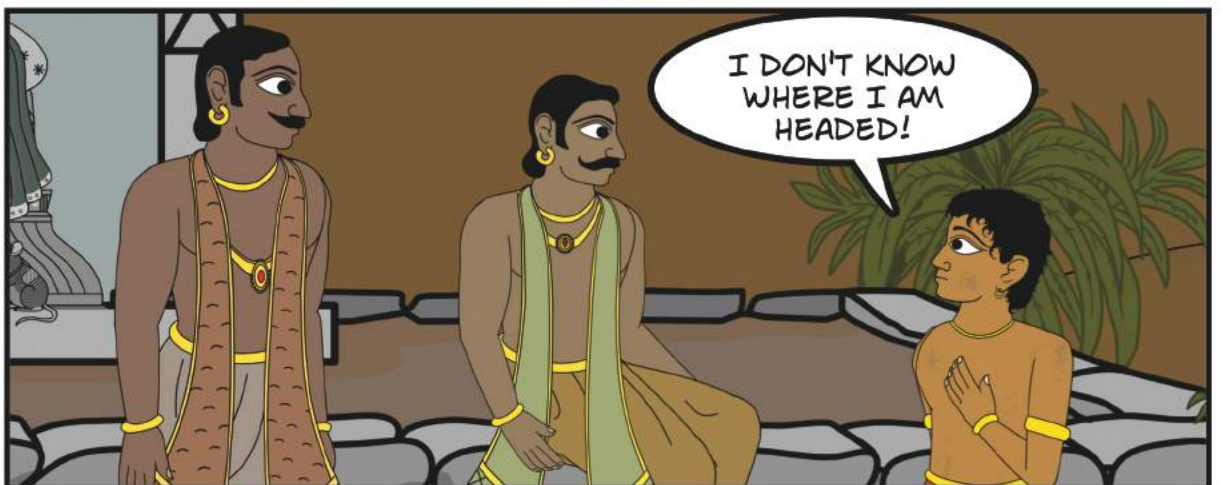
LORD! I AM KUNNUTAIYA GOUNDER FROM PONNIVALA, THE BEAUTIFUL LAND WHERE THE KAVERI RIVER FLOWS.

IN MY COUNTRY, THE THRESHING IS DONE WITH ELEPHANTS! PEOPLE SAY THAT GOLD ITSELF SPRINGS FORTH FROM THE EARTH IN PONNIVALA!

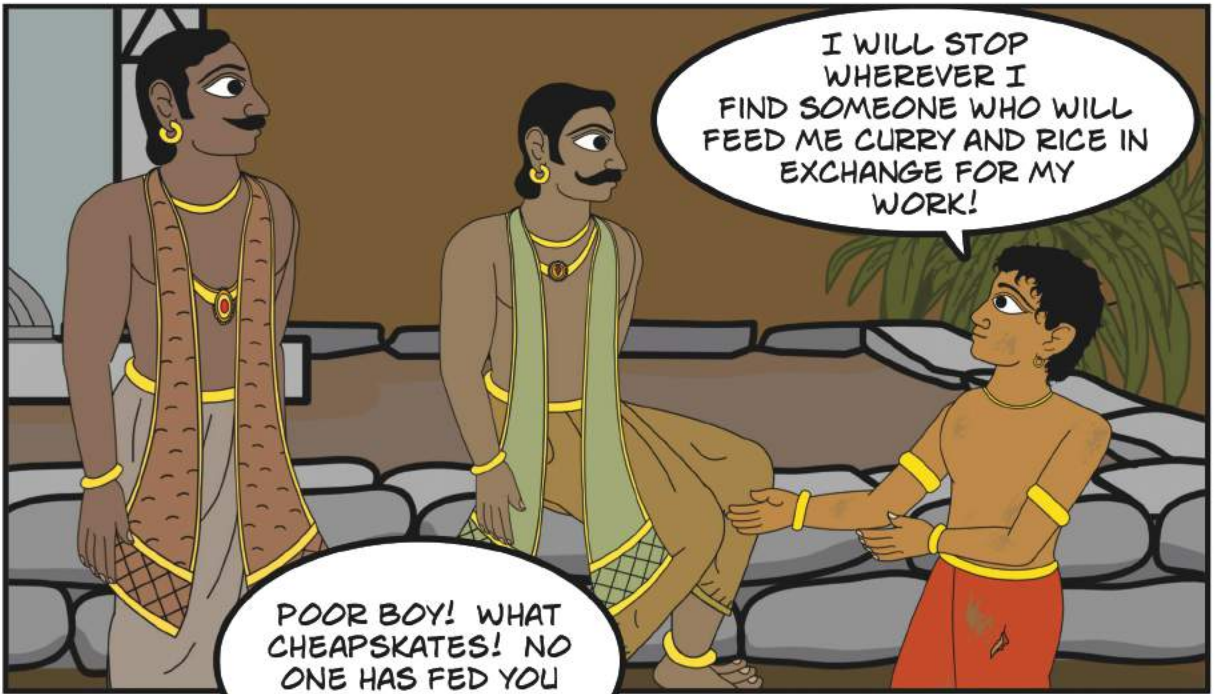
I WAS TAKEN IN BY MY CLANSMEN, BUT THEY BEAT ME AND FORCED ME TO WORK HARD FOR THEM. EVERY NIGHT I SLEPT IN A SHED. I HAVE EATEN NOTHING BUT MILLET GRUEL FOR FIVE YEARS!

EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE A SMALL BOY, YOU SPEAK LIKE A MAN!

WHERE WERE YOU GOING JUST NOW?

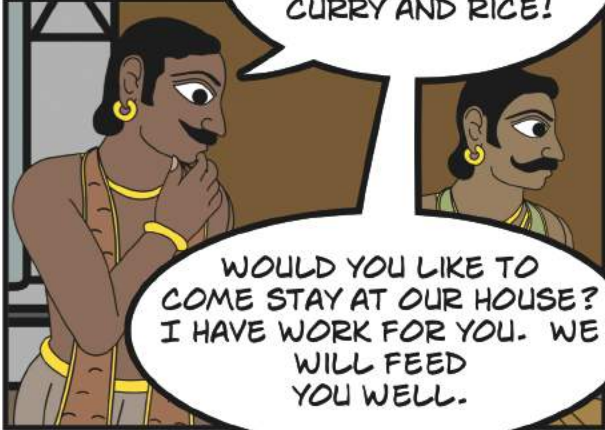


I DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM HEADED!



I WILL STOP WHEREVER I FIND SOMEONE WHO WILL FEED ME CURRY AND RICE IN EXCHANGE FOR MY WORK!

POOR BOY! WHAT CHEAPSKATES! NO ONE HAS FED YOU CURRY AND RICE!



WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME STAY AT OUR HOUSE? I HAVE WORK FOR YOU. WE WILL FEED YOU WELL.



OH YES! I WILL DO ANY KIND OF WORK YOU ASK FOR. PLEASE FEED ME CURRY AND RICE!



IT'S SETTLED! LET'S GO HOME!

THE KIND LANDOWNERS OFFER KUNNUTAIYA WORK, AND PROMISE TO FEED HIM WELL WITH CURRY AND RICE. THE YOUNG ORPHAN ACCEPTS THE OFFER, AND THE BROTHERS LEAD THE BOY TO HIS NEW HOME IN VALAVANDI.

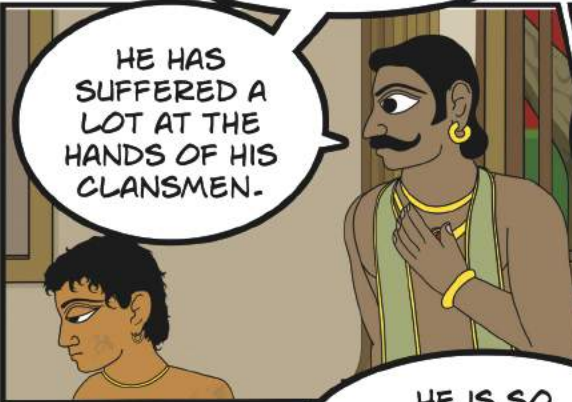
A Love Match



THE BROTHERS LEAD KUNNUTAIYA TO THEIR HOME. INSIDE, THEY INTRODUCE HIM TO THEIR WIVES, AND EXPLAIN TO THE WOMEN WHY THEY HAVE BROUGHT THIS BOY HOME.



WIFE, THIS IS KUNNUTAIYA GOUNDER.



HE HAS SUFFERED A LOT AT THE HANDS OF HIS CLANSMEN.

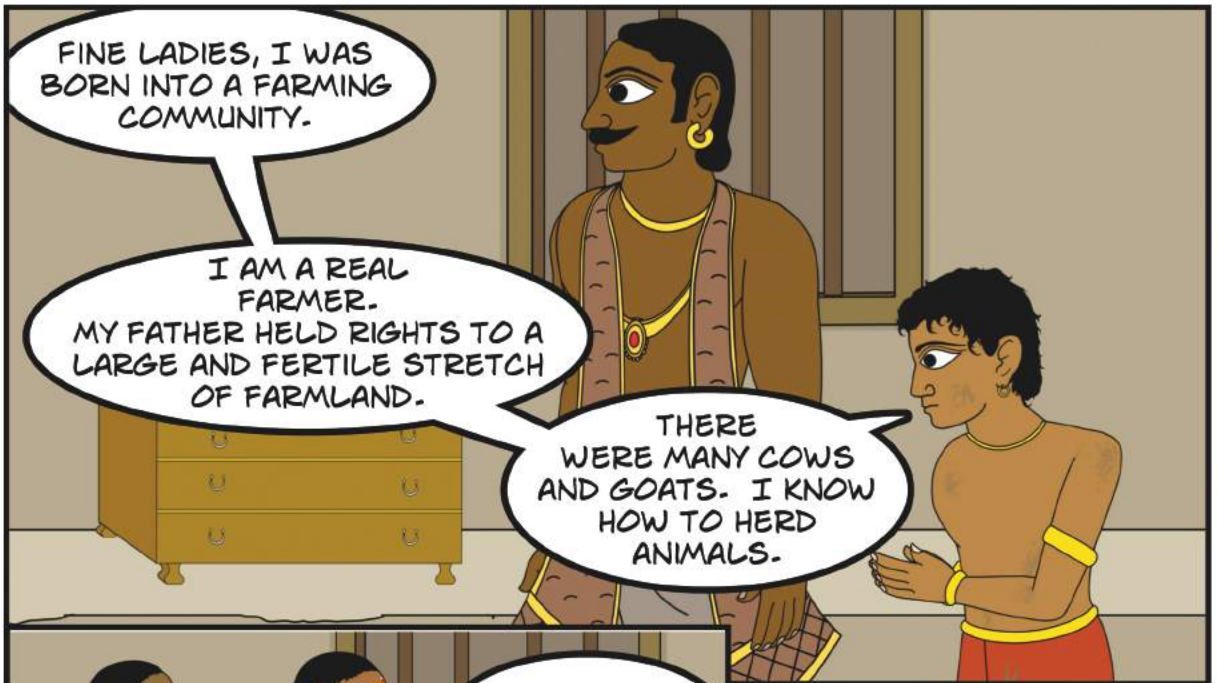


HE IS GOING TO STAY WITH US AND HELP US WITH THE FIELDWORK AND ALSO IN THE HOUSE.



HE IS SO SMALL, WHAT DOES HE KNOW ABOUT FARMING?

WE HAVE PLENTY OF COWS AND GOATS, BUT CAN HE MANAGE TO LOOK AFTER THEM ALL?



FINE LADIES, I WAS BORN INTO A FARMING COMMUNITY.

I AM A REAL FARMER. MY FATHER HELD RIGHTS TO A LARGE AND FERTILE STRETCH OF FARMLAND.

THERE WERE MANY COWS AND GOATS. I KNOW HOW TO HERD ANIMALS.



OH...WELL THEN...

DOING FARM WORK IS IN MY BLOOD.

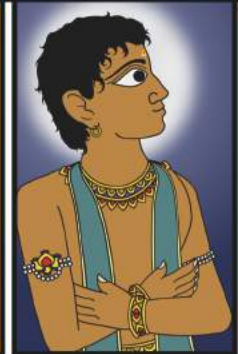
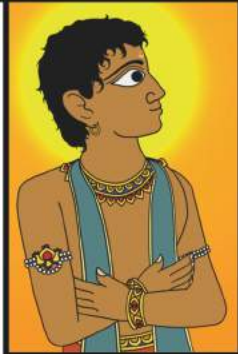


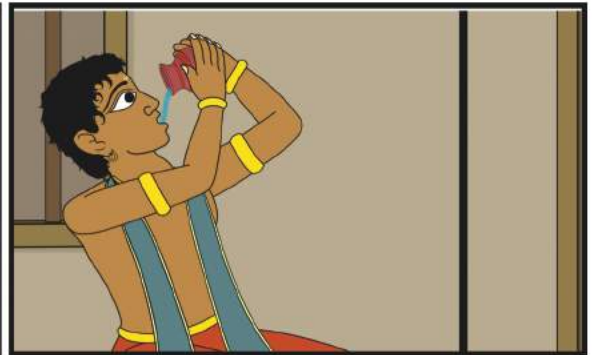
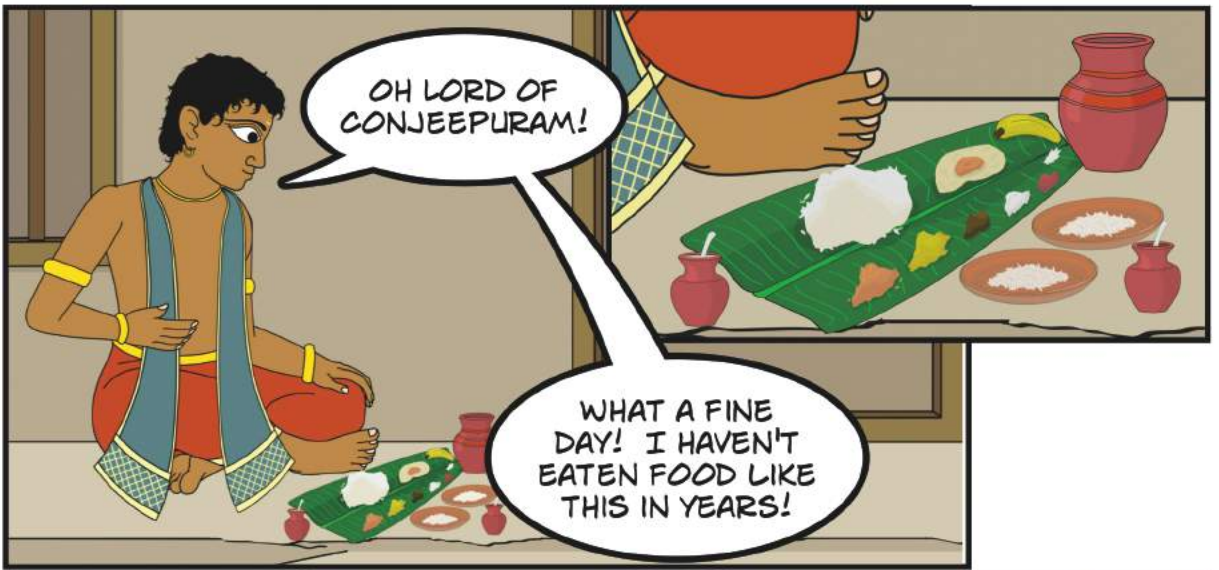
KIND LADIES IF YOU FEED ME CURRY AND RICE, I WILL DO ANY WORK YOU ASK ME FOR!





THE FINE YOUNG BOY SHINES LIKE THE SUN ITSELF. THE LANDOWNERS STARE AT HIM IN AWE.







WAKE UP
KUNNUTAIYA! THE SUN
WILL BE SETTING
SOON.

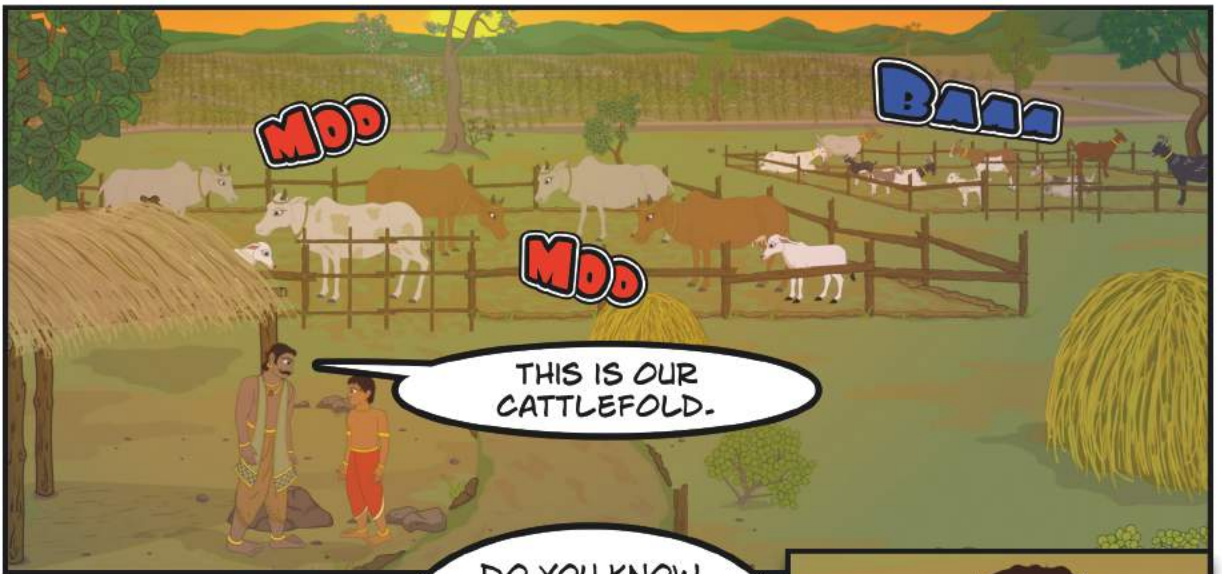


LET'S GO
TO A FIELD NORTH OF
HERE, WHERE WE KEEP
OUR COWS AND
GOATS.

YES LORD!

KUNNUTAIYA FOLDS HIS
SHAWL NEATLY AND
LEAVES IT BEHIND.





THIS IS OUR CATTLEFOLD.

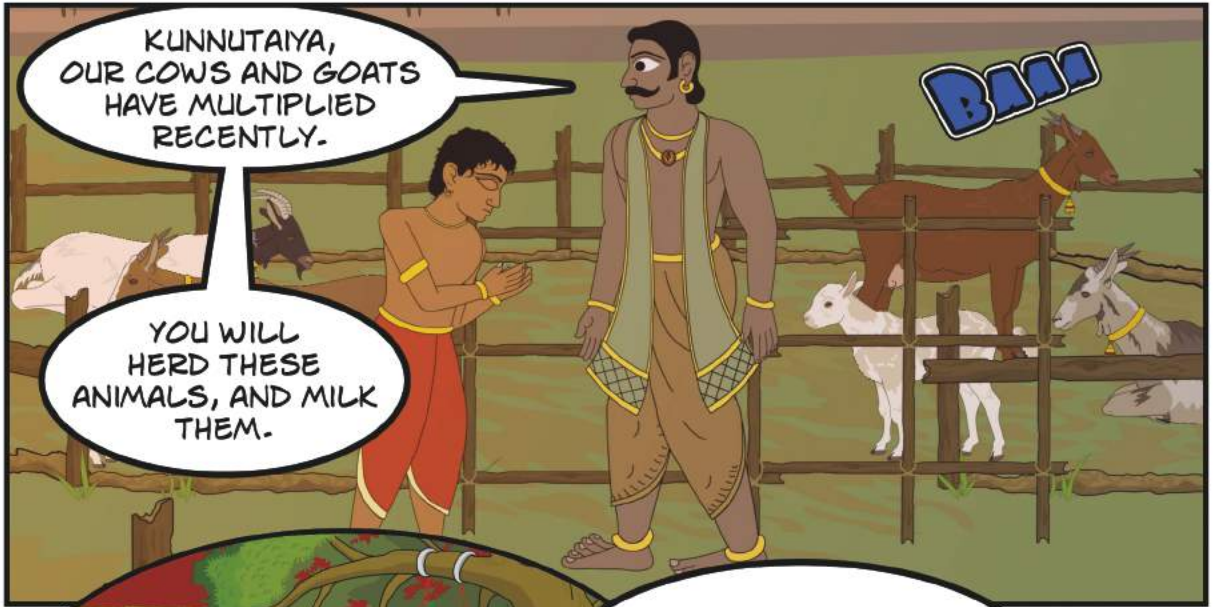


DO YOU KNOW HOW TO CARE FOR THESE FINE ANIMALS?

YES LORD, I HAVE DONE THIS TYPE OF WORK FOR YEARS.



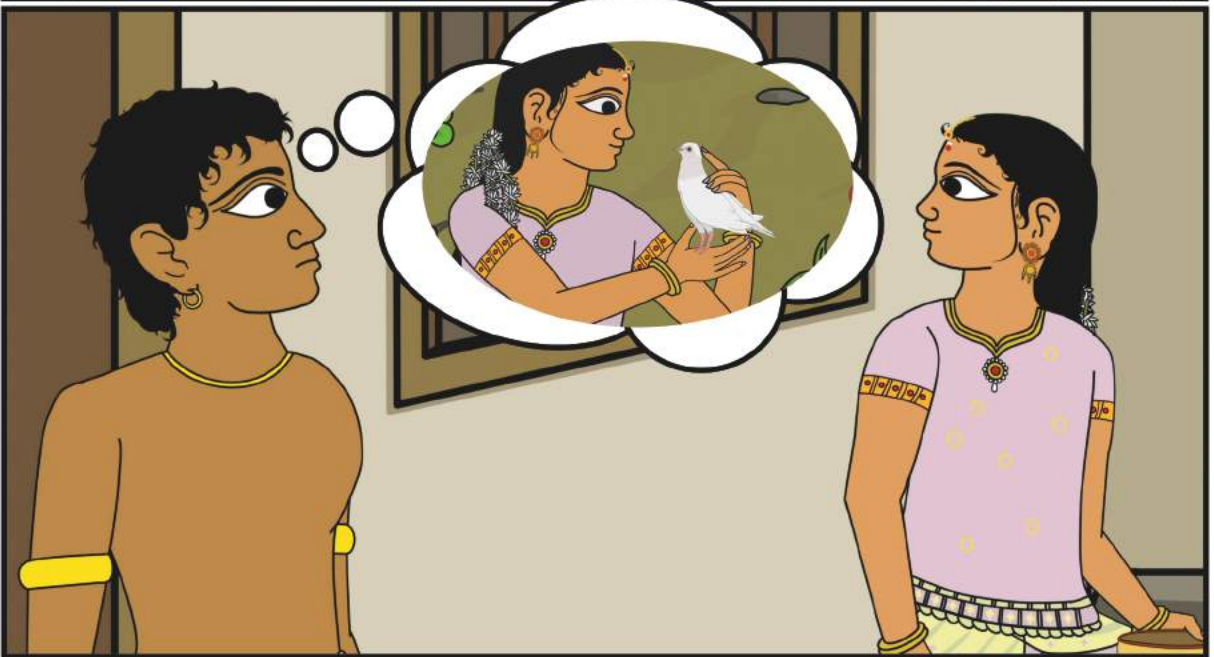
YOU DO NOT NEED TO COVER YOUR MOUTH WHEN YOU SPEAK. JUST ADDRESS ME IN A NORMAL MANNER.



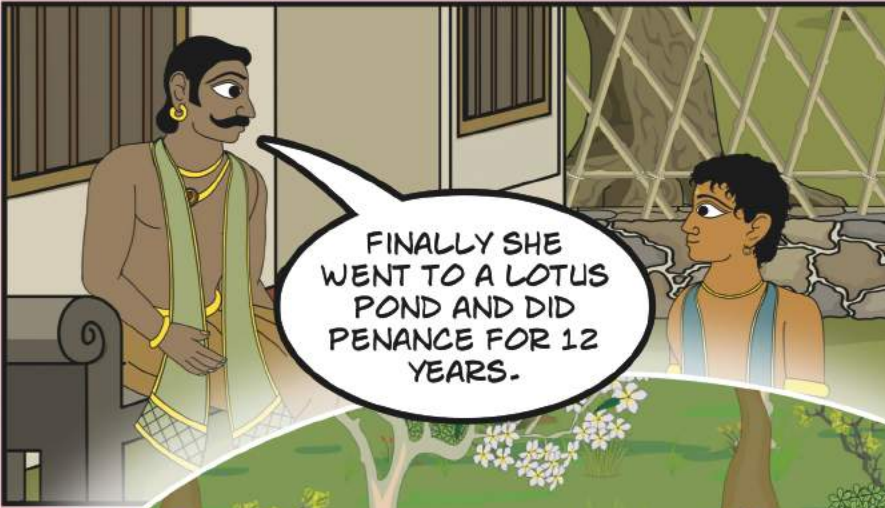
A Love Match



SOON, KUNNUTAIYA SEES THE LANDOWNERS' YOUNGER SISTER FOR THE FIRST TIME. HE IS INSTANTLY SMITTEN BY THE BEAUTIFUL GIRL.







FINALLY SHE WENT TO A LOTUS POND AND DID PENANCE FOR 12 YEARS.



SHIVA AND PARVATI LOOKED DOWN ON THE EARTH AND SAW MY MOTHER PRAYING.



THEY WONDERED WHAT THIS WOMAN COULD WANT SO BADLY THAT SHE WOULD SIT ON THE EDGE OF A LOTUS POND FOR SO LONG.





WHEN THEY REALIZED SHE WANTED A CHILD, SHIVA AND PARVATI TOOK THE FORM OF TWO DEER AND CREATED A SPECIAL SEED ...



WHICH FELL TO EARTH, INTO A LOTUS BLOSSOM...



AS A RESULT, A LITTLE BABY GIRL TOOK FORM INSIDE THE LOTUS FLOWER.



A Love Match



MY MOTHER
OPENED HER EYES
DURING HER MEDITATION
AND SAW THE BABY
GIRL.



SHIVA
EXPLAINED THAT
IT WOULD BE HERS
TO RAISE AND TO
LOVE.



HE
ASKED THAT
THE GIRL BE CALLED
TAMARAI AFTER THE
LOTUS BUD SHE WAS
BORN INSIDE.



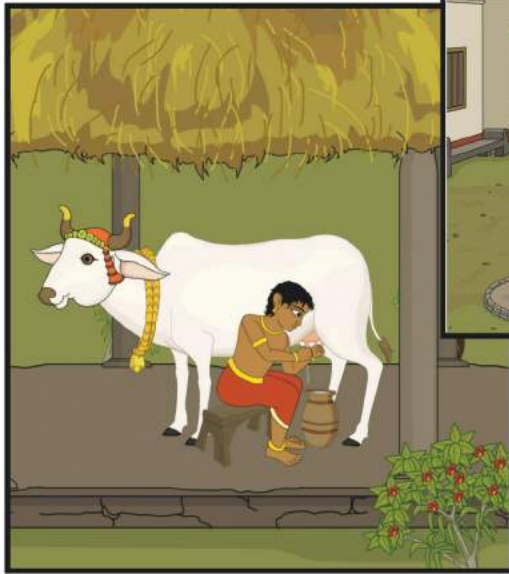
WHAT A FINE
STORY! SO SHE IS A CHILD
OF THE GODS. HOW
BEAUTIFUL SHE IS!



A Love Match



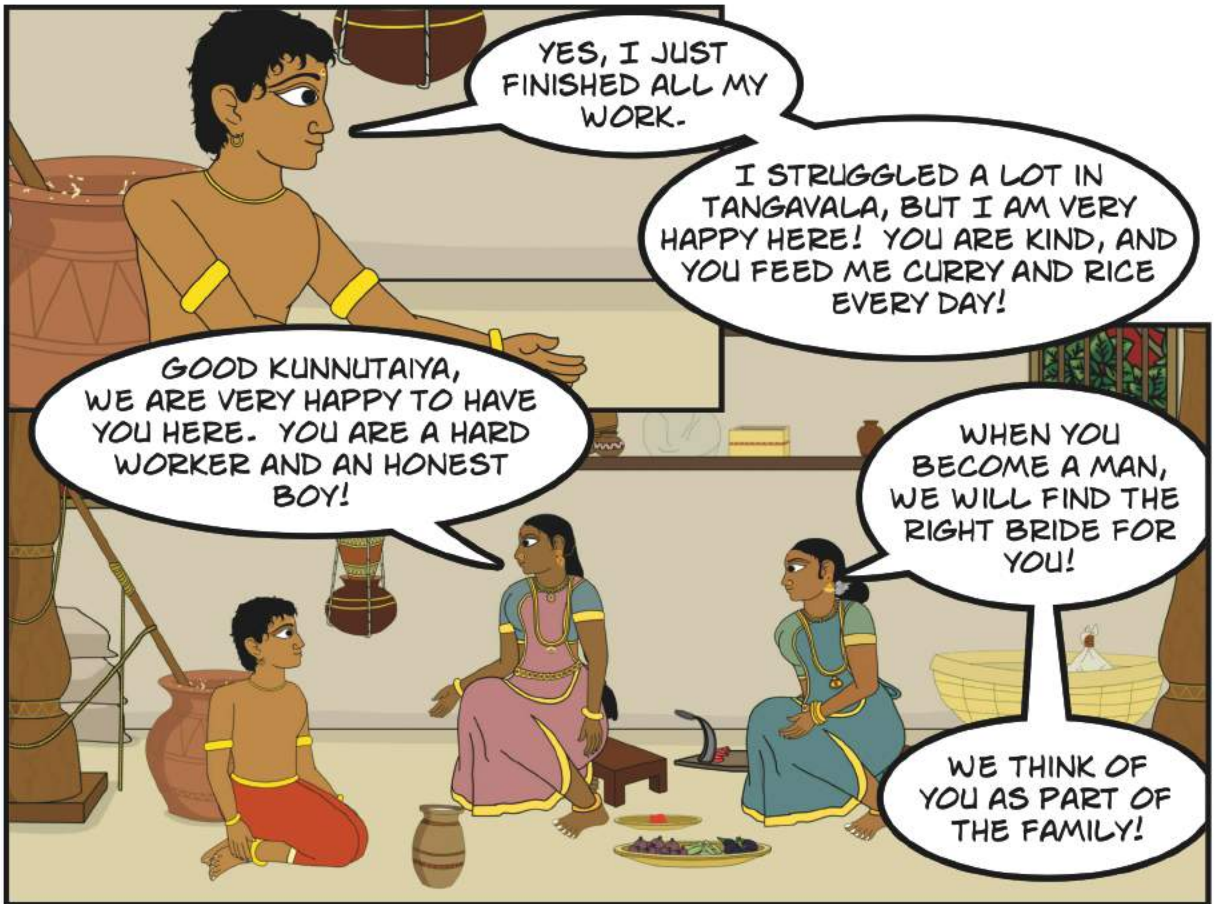
EVERY DAY, KUNNUTAIYA WORKS VERY HARD. HE ADMIRES THE LITTLE GIRL IN THE SWING FROM AFAR. EVERY DAY, HE DOES HIS DUTIES WITHOUT FAIL. THE FAMILY OF LANDOWNERS HAS GROWN VERY FOND OF HIM.



HE MILKS THE COWS, AND BRINGS THE MILK TO THE LANDOWNERS' WIVES.

KUNNUTAIYA, DID YOU FEED THE COW IN THE BACK SHED YET?





YES, I JUST FINISHED ALL MY WORK.

I STRUGGLED A LOT IN TANGAVALA, BUT I AM VERY HAPPY HERE! YOU ARE KIND, AND YOU FEED ME CURRY AND RICE EVERY DAY!

GOOD KUNNUTAIYA, WE ARE VERY HAPPY TO HAVE YOU HERE. YOU ARE A HARD WORKER AND AN HONEST BOY!

WHEN YOU BECOME A MAN, WE WILL FIND THE RIGHT BRIDE FOR YOU!

WE THINK OF YOU AS PART OF THE FAMILY!



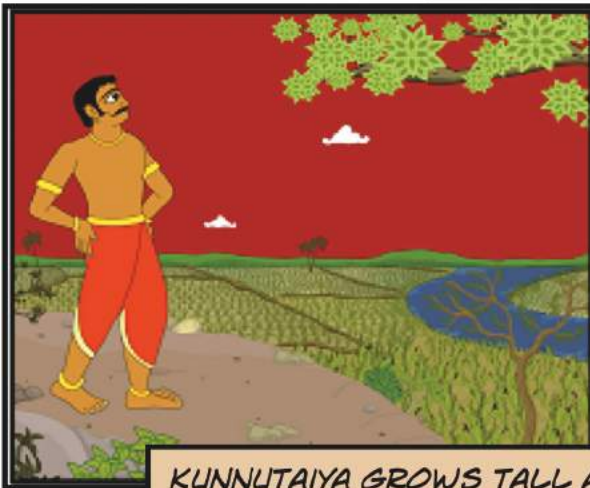
KUNNUTAIYA! COME OUT AND PLAY WITH ME!



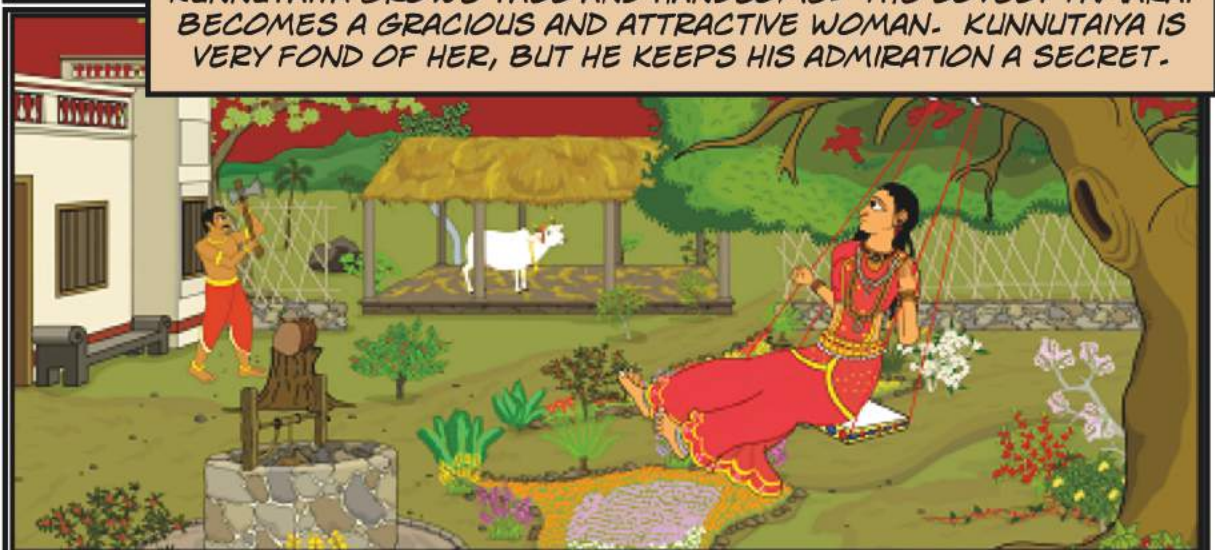
GO, KUNNUTAIYA! GO PLAY WITH OUR LITTLE SISTER!



MANY YEARS PASS LIKE THIS. IT RAINS WELL, AND VALAVANDI PROSPERS.



KUNNUTAIYA GROWS TALL AND HANDSOME. THE LOVELY TAMARAI BECOMES A GRACIOUS AND ATTRACTIVE WOMAN. KUNNUTAIYA IS VERY FOND OF HER, BUT HE KEEPS HIS ADMIRATION A SECRET.



MEANWHILE, THE CLANSMEN ARE ENJOYING THE RICH LAND AND BOUNTIFUL HARVESTS OF PONNIVALA. BUT THEY NEGLECT TO WORSHIP CELATTA FOR 25 YEARS.



MY BEAUTIFUL PONNIVALA HAS AN ENORMOUS PADDY FIELD. IF WATERED WELL, IT CAN PRODUCE THOUSANDS OF MEASURES OF RICE.



WHEN KOLATTA GOUNDER WAS ALIVE, HE USED TO CELEBRATE THREE PUJAS A DAY IN MY NAME. NOW, THOSE STINGY CLANSMEN HAVE NOT EVEN KEPT MY TEMPLE CLEAN!

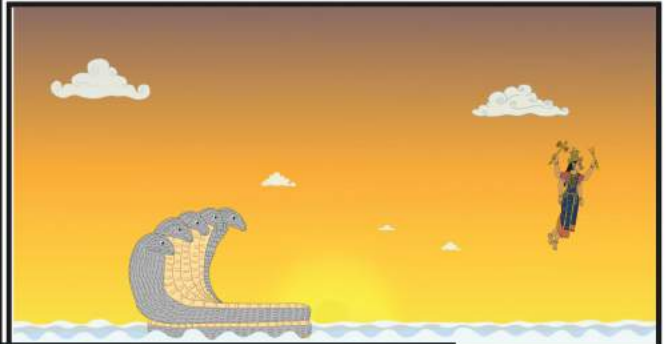


WHERE IS KUNNUTAIYA? HE WOULD TREAT ME BETTER THAN THIS.



LET ME GO AND ASK MY BROTHER VISHNU WHAT HE KNOWS ABOUT ALL THIS!

A Love Match



CELATTA SEARCHES FOR VISHNU. SHE FINDS HIS COBRA COUCH ON THE MILK SEA, BUT HER BROTHER IS NOT THERE.



SO SHE CONTINUES ONWARD, AND EVENTUALLY FINDS HER BROTHER SLEEPING IN A LOVELY GARDEN NEAR SHIVA'S COUNCIL CHAMBERS.



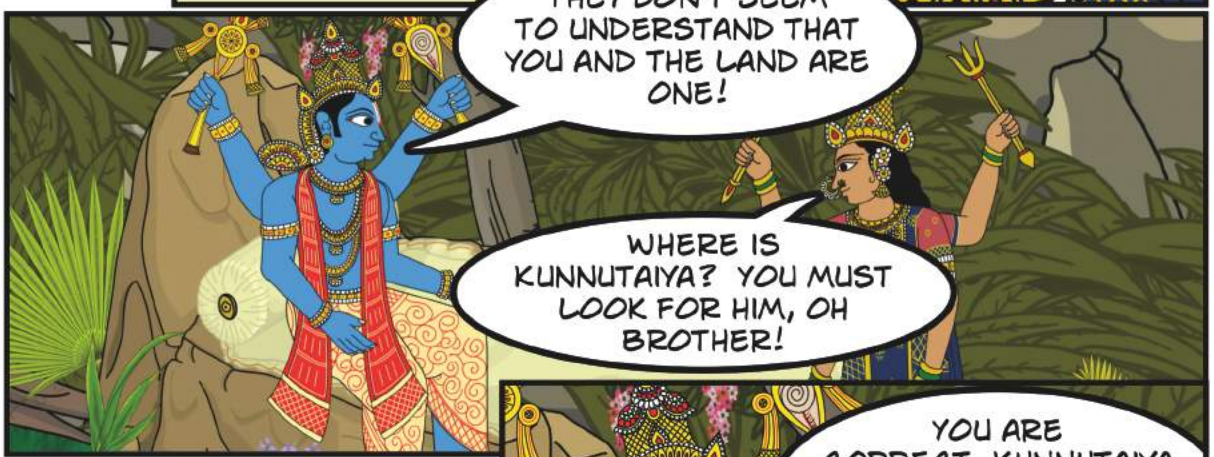


DEAR SISTER,
HOW ARE YOU?

I AM FINE, BUT MY
TEMPLE IN PONNIVALA
IS NOT!

KOLATTA GOUNDER
USED TO GIVE ME THREE PUJAS
A DAY, BUT NOW THAT HE AND HIS
WIFE ARE DEAD, I HAVE BEEN
FORGOTTEN!

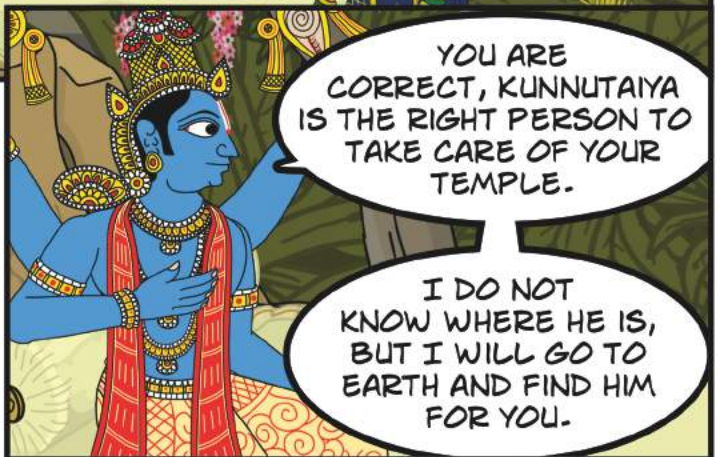
MANY YEARS HAVE PASSED,
AND NO ONE HAS SO MUCH AS
CLEANED MY TEMPLE. THE CLANSMEN
ENJOY THE LAND, BUT WITHOUT
GIVING THANKS TO ME!



THEY DON'T SEEM
TO UNDERSTAND THAT
YOU AND THE LAND ARE
ONE!

WHERE IS
KUNNUTAIYA? YOU MUST
LOOK FOR HIM, OH
BROTHER!

CELATTA TELLS HER STORY,
AND VISHNU PROMISES TO
HELP. HE KNOWS THAT IT IS
NOW KUNNUTAIYA'S TIME TO
RECLAIM THE LANDS OF
PONNIVALA, AND TAKE HIS
RIGHTFUL PLACE AS RULER
THERE. CELATTA RETURNS
TO HER HOME IN PONNIVALA.



YOU ARE
CORRECT, KUNNUTAIYA
IS THE RIGHT PERSON TO
TAKE CARE OF YOUR
TEMPLE.

I DO NOT
KNOW WHERE HE IS,
BUT I WILL GO TO
EARTH AND FIND HIM
FOR YOU.

A Love Match

MEANWHILE, VISHNU MOUNTS HIS GARUDA BIRD AND FLIES DOWN TO EARTH. IN NO TIME, HE FINDS KUNNUTAIYA ASLEEP IN THE CATTLEFOLD OF VALAVANDI. THE LORD NOW TAKES THE FORM OF A WANDERING MENDICANT. HE CALLS OUT KUNNUTAIYA'S NAME.





I FOLLOWED A ROAD LEADING NORTH AND IT LEAD ME HERE.

VISHNU, DISGUISED AS AN OLD MAN, SITS DOWN IN THE CATTLEFOLD WITH KUNNUTAIYA. HE STARTS A CONVERSATION. VISHNU KNOWS HE MUST GAIN THE MAN'S TRUST IF HE WANTS KUNNUTAIYA TO LISTEN TO WHAT HE HAS TO SAY.



I WAS ON MY WAY TO VALAVANDI WHEN PEOPLE TOLD ME KUNNUTAIYA GOUNDER KNEW THE PLACE AND COULD GIVE ME DIRECTIONS.

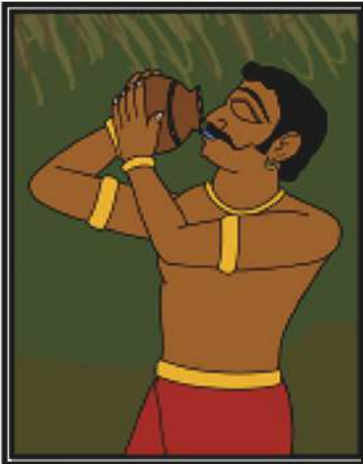


IF YOU PASS THROUGH AN OPENING IN THE BUSHES OVER THERE, YOU WILL FIND THE ROAD TO VALAVANDI.

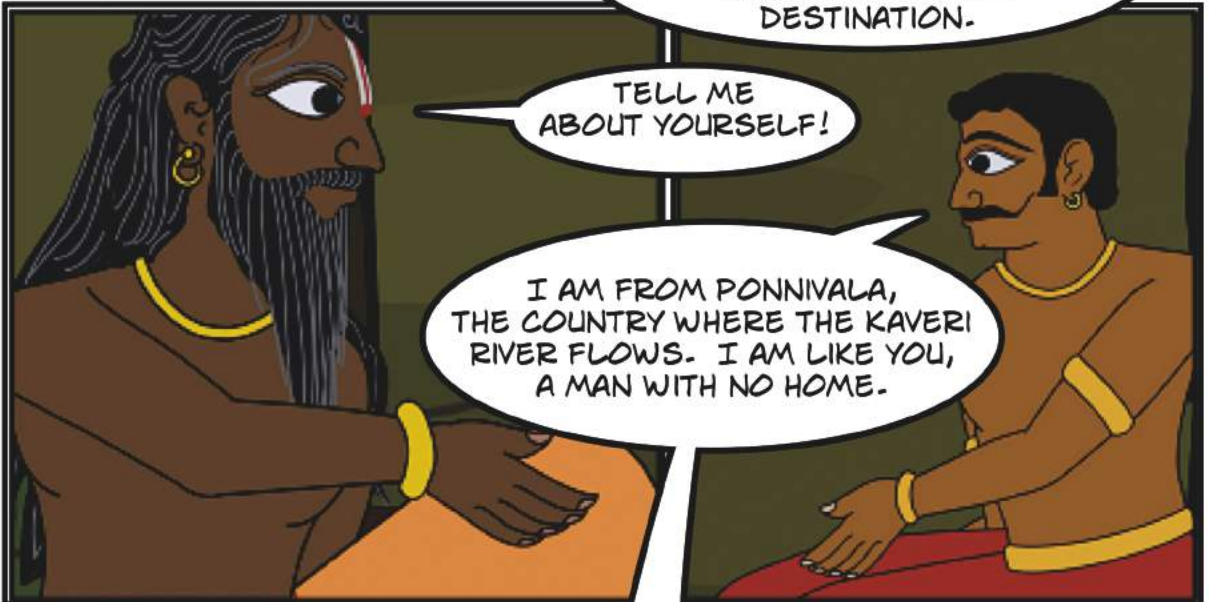


THE WALK HERE WAS HARD AND I AM TIRED. I WILL REST HERE A WHILE AND THEN GO.

THE OLD MAN LIES DOWN IN THE CATTLEFOLD, KEEPING UP HIS PRETENSE OF BEING TIRED.



I FOLLOW MY FEET WHEREVER THEY GO. I HAVE NO HOME OR DESTINATION.



I AM FROM PONNIVALA, THE COUNTRY WHERE THE KAVERI RIVER FLOWS. I AM LIKE YOU, A MAN WITH NO HOME.



I SERVE AS A SHEPHERD AND A LABOURER FOR THE TWO BIGGEST LANDOWNERS OF VALAVANDI.

WHAT A SURPRISE! ARE YOU WORKING FOR YOUR OWN UNCLES?



WHAT DID YOU SAY?

VISHNU REVEALS THE SECRET THAT HE HAS BEEN KEEPING FROM KUNNUTAIYA FOR 25 YEARS. KUNNUTAIYA HAS NO IDEA WHETHER OR NOT HE SHOULD BELIEVE THE STRANGE OLD MAN.

THEIR FATHER WAS YOUR MOTHER'S BROTHER.

THAT MEANS THEIR SISTER CAN BECOME YOUR WIFE!

CAN THIS BE TRUE? I HAD NO IDEA THAT THE MEN IN THIS GREAT HOUSE WERE SONS OF MY OWN MOTHER'S BROTHER! I CAN MARRY HER?



THAT GIRL YOU PUSH IN THE SWING EVERY DAY IS YOUR RIGHTFUL BRIDE!



The Legend of Ponnivala



THE SECRET IS NOW OUT - KUNNUTAIYA IS ELIGIBLE TO MARRY THE WOMAN HE LOVES! BUT SOCIALLY, SHE IS FAR ABOVE HIS CURRENT POSITION. HOW WILL KUNNUTAIYA'S TWO RICH MASTERS REACT WHEN HE ASKS FOR THEIR BEAUTIFUL SISTER'S HAND IN MARRIAGE?

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/comic4

The Legend of
Ponnivala

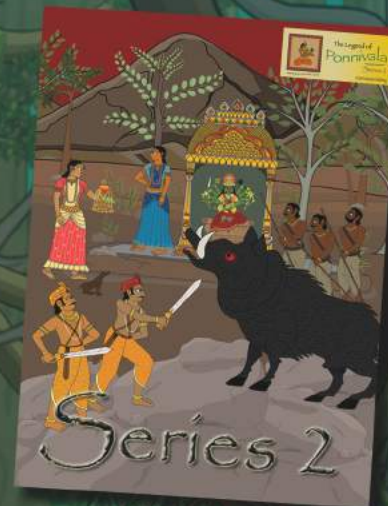
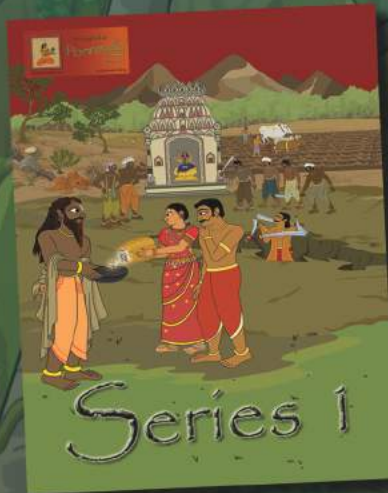
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