

Series 1
Book 13

The Legend of
Ponnivala



The Book of Fate



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**THE BOOK
 OF FATE
 SERIES 1
 COMIC 13**

THE QUEEN OF
 PONNIVALA
 FINDS HERSELF
 ALONE AT THE
 GATES OF
 HEAVEN. THERE
 SHE
 UNDERGOES A
 TWENTY ONE
 YEAR RITE OF
 PENNANCE.
 LORD SHIVA
 TESTS HER
 DETERMINATION
 REPEATEDLY.
 BUT FINALLY
 SHE
 PERSUADES HIM
 TO CALL OFF
 HIS CURSE OF
 BARRENNESS.
 THE GREAT
 LORD THEN
 PLACES THREE
 MAGICAL
 CHILDREN IN
 HER WOMB.
 THE QUEEN
 RETURNS TO
 PONNIVALA,
 REJOINING HER
 HUSBAND ON
 THE WAY...



CELATTA, THE GODDESS OF PONNIVALA, HAS BEEN FOLLOWING THE RULING COUPLE'S JOURNEY ...

QUEEN TAMARAI AND KING KUNNUTAIYA HAVE MADE A LONG JOURNEY AND FACED MANY OBSTACLES TO DO PENANCE AT THE GODS' COUNCIL CHAMBERS.



IT HAS NOT BEEN EASY. THEY HAVE SUFFERED GREATLY.

THEY HAD TO CROSS DESOLATE AND DANGEROUS LANDS, PLUS RIVERS OF STONE, THORNS, OIL, AND FIRE!

ALL OF THIS JUST TO BREAK THE CURSE OF BARRENNESS PLACED UPON THEIR FAMILY.

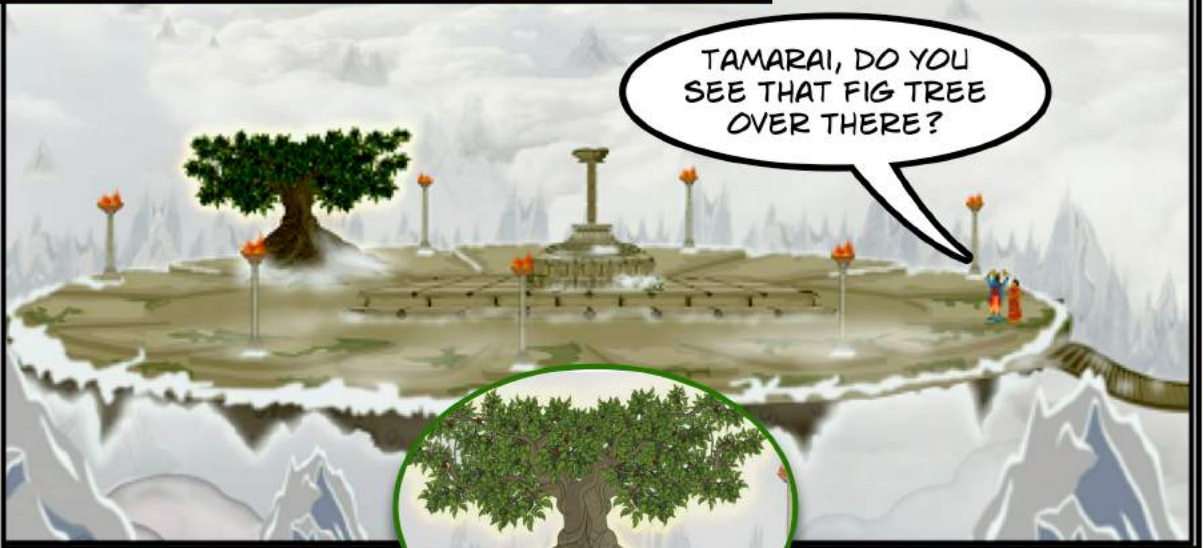
NOW, KUNNUTAIYA HAS BEEN TURNED TO STONE, AND TAMARAI MUST CONTINUE ON ALONE ...



MOREOVER SHE STILL HAS A 21-YEAR MEDITATION TO COMPLETE! I WONDER...CAN LORD SHIVA'S HEART BE SOFTENED?

VISHNU AND TAMARAI HAVE FINALLY REACHED THE END OF TAMARAI'S LONG JOURNEY. THEY ARE AT THE SPOT WHERE SHE IS TO MEDITATE.

TAMARAI, DO YOU SEE THAT FIG TREE OVER THERE?



INSIDE IT, YOU WILL FIND A SAFFRON BODY CLOTH...

A BEAD NECKLACE AND SOME SACRED ASH.

PUT THOSE GARMENTS ON, AND THEN COME BACK HERE.

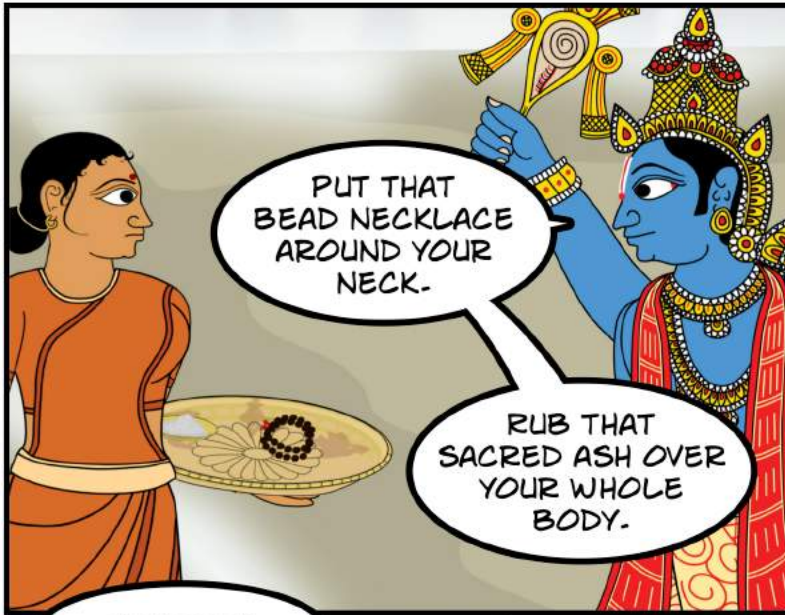


TAMARAI ENTERS THE FIG TREE AT ITS BASE.

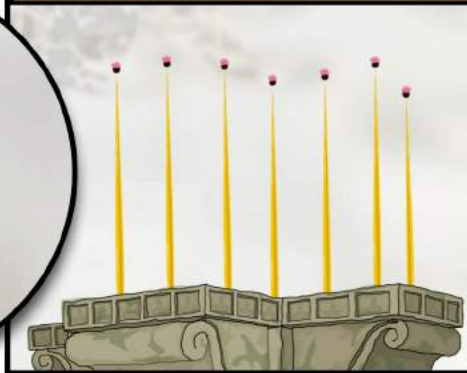
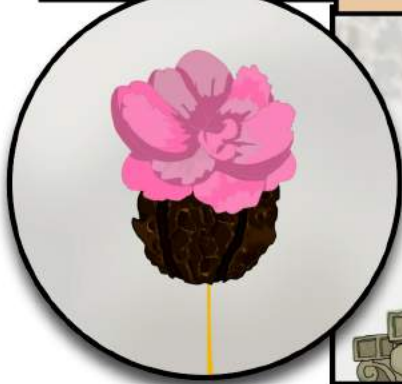


SHE FINDS THE CLOTH, AND EXCHANGES IT FOR HER CLOTHES.





AT THE TOP OF THE TOWER, SEVEN NEEDLES STAND TALL. ON EACH NEEDLE POINT, A FLOWER BLOOMS.





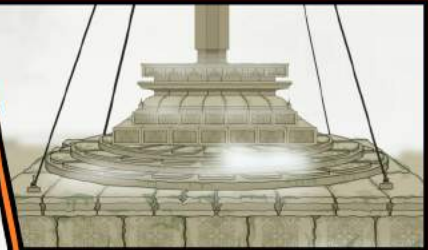
TAMARAI REACHES THE TOP OF THE TOWER, AND VISHNU USES HIS POWERS TO PLACE HER ON THE TIPS OF THE SEVEN NEEDLES.



TAMARAI'S HAIR MAGICALLY GROWS INTO FOUR LONG BRAIDS, ANCHORING HER TO THE BASE OF THE PILLAR.



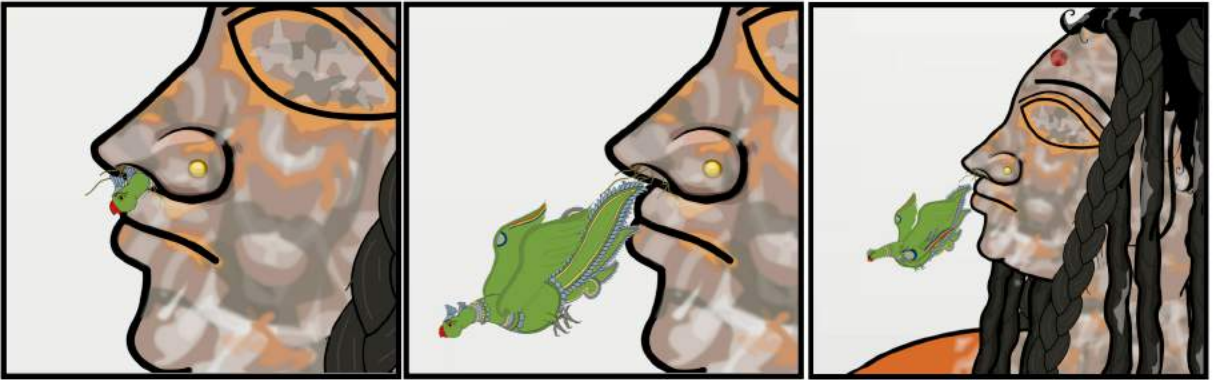
YOU ARE TO CONCENTRATE AND PRAY HERE FOR 21 YEARS.



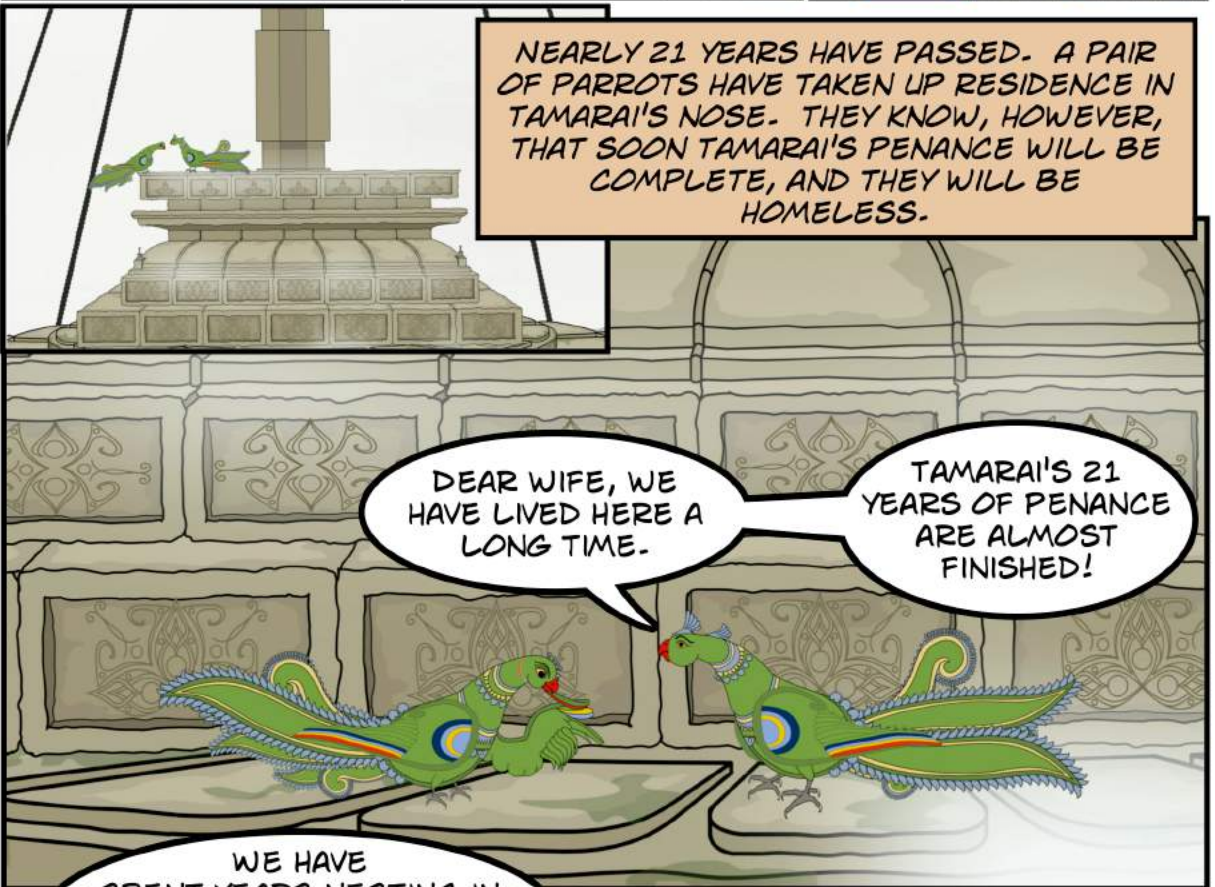
I WILL RETURN WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED YOUR LONG PENANCE.



WITH THOSE FINAL WORDS, VISHNU LEAVES TAMARAI TO PRAY ALONE.



NEARLY 21 YEARS HAVE PASSED. A PAIR OF PARROTS HAVE TAKEN UP RESIDENCE IN TAMARAI'S NOSE. THEY KNOW, HOWEVER, THAT SOON TAMARAI'S PENANCE WILL BE COMPLETE, AND THEY WILL BE HOMELESS.



DEAR WIFE, WE HAVE LIVED HERE A LONG TIME.

TAMARAI'S 21 YEARS OF PENANCE ARE ALMOST FINISHED!

WE HAVE SPENT YEARS NESTING IN QUEEN TAMARAI'S NOSE. WHAT SHOULD WE DO NOW?

I DON'T KNOW, BUT WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING.

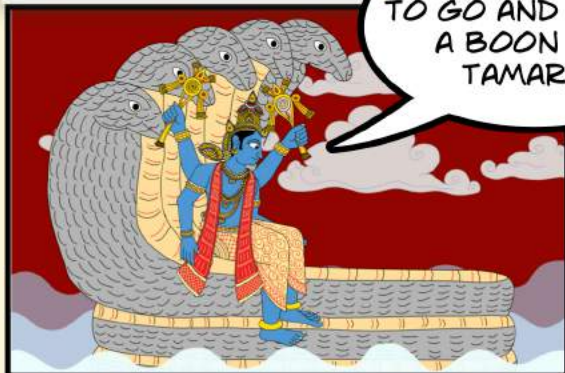
I HOPE TAMARAI GETS HER BOON FROM SHIVA.



NOW 21 YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE TAMARAI STARTED HER PENANCE.



IT IS TIME TO GO AND OBTAIN A BOON FOR TAMARAI.



I MUST GET MOVING. BUT FIRST, I SHOULD FIND OUT HOW SHE IS DOING.

LORD VISHNU NOW MAKES HIMSELF VISIBLE ...



OH, LORD VISHNU IS HERE!



BE GONE!

YOU DON'T BELONG AT THE GATES OF THE GOD'S COUNCIL CHAMBER!

YOU MUST GO TO EARTH AND SEEK REFUGE WITH THE VETTUVA KINGS

ONE DAY, YOU WILL BE WELCOME BACK TO THIS PLACE, NEAR THE ENTRANCE TO PARADISE.

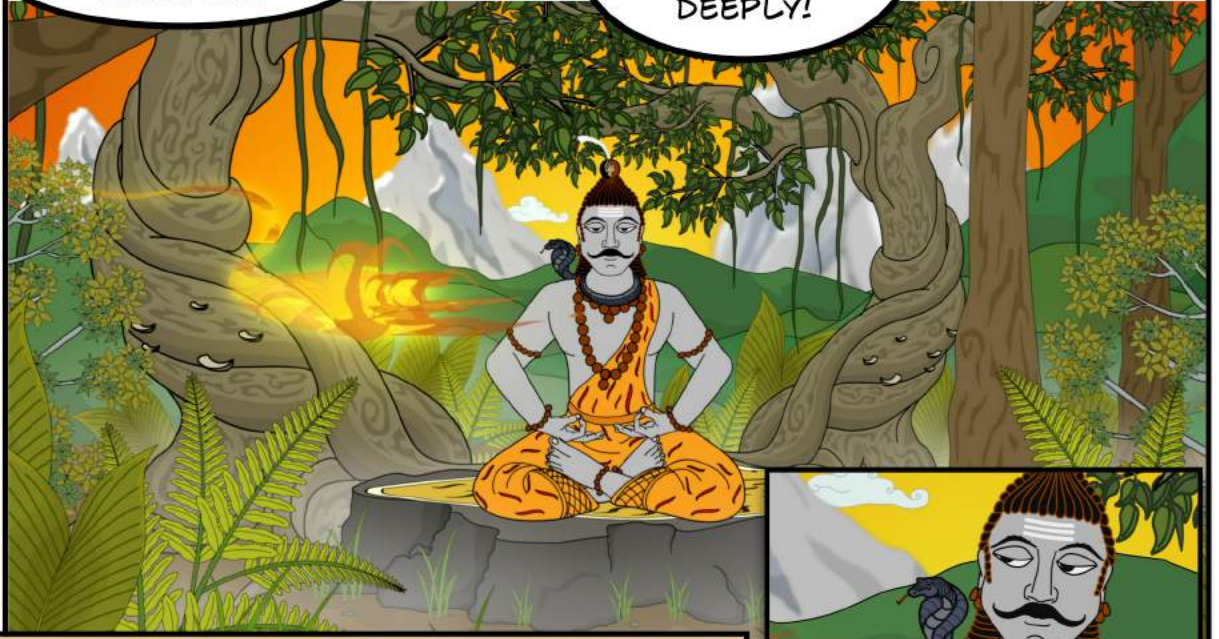
THE PARROTS DO AS VISHNU SAYS.

VISHNU THROWS SOME SACRED WATER ON TAMARAI, AND SHE AWAKENS FROM HER LONG MEDITATION.



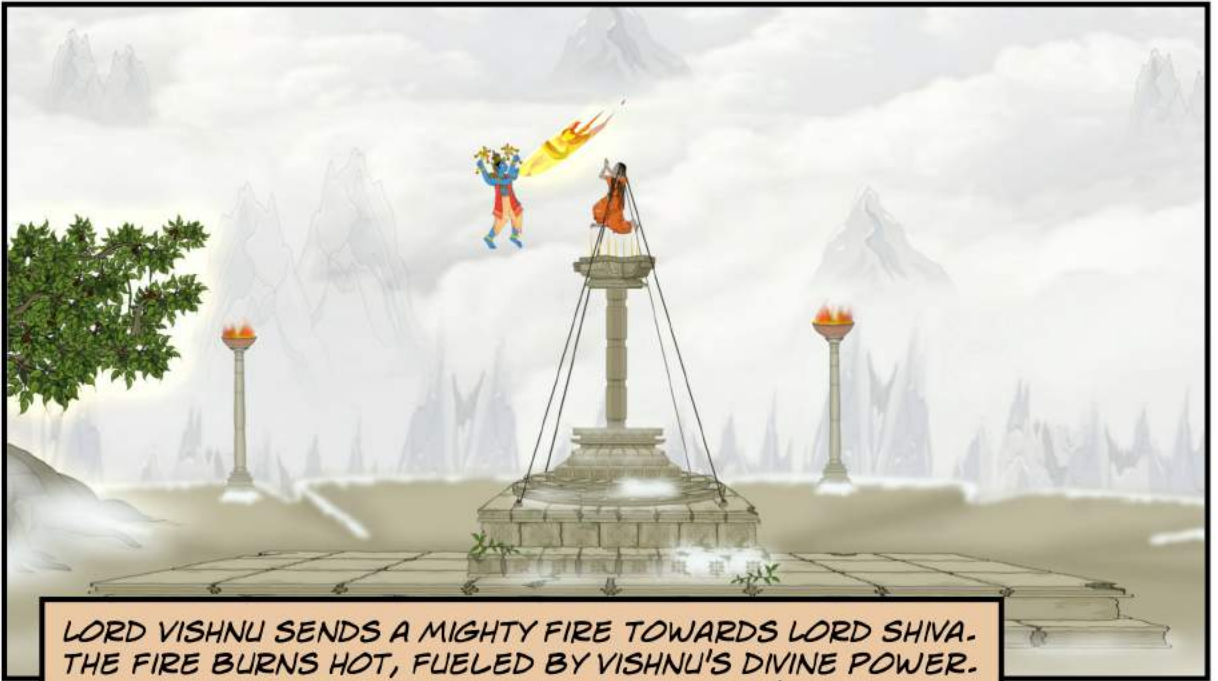
W...
W....WHERE AM I?
WHERE IS MY HUSBAND?

WHERE ARE MY CHILDREN?



LORD VISHNU CREATES A FIRE THAT REACHES LORD SHIVA IN HIS MEDITATION FOREST.



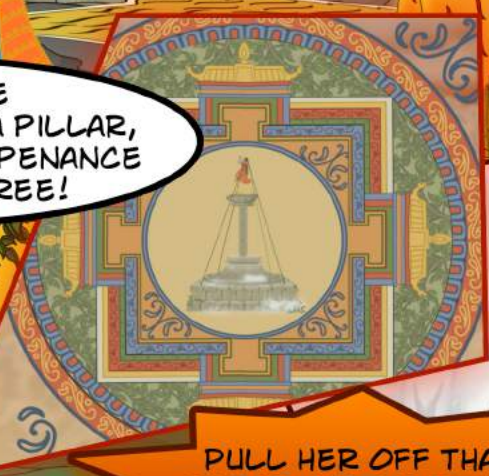


LORD VISHNU SENDS A MIGHTY FIRE TOWARDS LORD SHIVA. THE FIRE BURNS HOT, FUELED BY VISHNU'S DIVINE POWER. THE FLAMES DANCE AROUND LORD SHIVA'S HEAD.



SHIVA IS MEDITATING DEEPLY. THE MAGICAL FLAMES AWAKEN HIM.







MEANWHILE, THE PARROT COUPLE ARRIVE AT THE LAND OF THE VETTVUAS. THEY LAND ON A TABLE IN FRONT OF THE VETTVUA KING'S SISTER ...

OH LOVELY PARROTS! HOW SWEET YOU ARE!

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?



OH GREAT LADY, WE TWO ARE PARROTS FROM THE GODS' COUNCIL CHAMBER.

TAMARAI GOUNDACHI OF PONNIVALA HAS SPENT 21 YEARS THERE PERFORMING PENANCE.

WHILE SHE MEDITATED WE NESTED IN HER NOSE.



OH MY! THAT IS INTERESTING!

VISHNU CAME TO AWAKEN TAMARAI AND FOUND US ...

THE VETTVUA PRINCESS TAKES PITY ON THE POOR DISPLACED BIRDS. SHE WANTS TO SHELTER THEM.



HE TOLD US TO GET HELP FROM YOU.



WE ARE ASKING FOR YOUR PROTECTION.

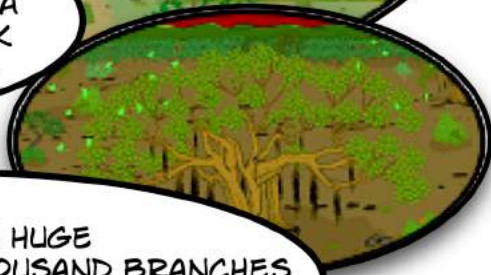


OKAY, WELCOME!
LISTEN TO ME.

JUST THIS SIDE OF
OUR FOREST, THERE IS A
LARGE IRRIGATION TANK
CALLED VELLYANKIRI.



NEAR IT IS A HUGE
BANYAN TREE WITH A THOUSAND BRANCHES
AND MANY AERIAL ROOTS. YOU CAN LIVE
THERE. IT IS A LOVELY SPOT!



ARE ANY OTHER
PARROTS LIVING THERE?



A THOUSAND COUNTRY
PARROTS LIVE THERE HAPPILY. YOU
AND YOUR FAMILY WILL BE SAFE
AMONG THEM.



AND IN THE
FOREST BEYOND
THAT, 5000
TIGERS!



I AM GOING TO
PLACE 5000 COBRAS IN THE
NEIGHBORING FOREST AS
GUARDS.



NO ONE WILL
BE ABLE TO
CAUSE YOU ANY
HARM!



THANK YOU,
LADY! WE WILL BE
HAPPY HERE.



THE PARROTS SETTLE
INTO THEIR NEW HOME.





SHIVA'S ORIGINAL CURSE SPECIFIED THE KING AND QUEEN OF PONNIVALA WOULD HAVE NO CHILDREN FOR SEVEN GENERATIONS. NOW, TAMARAI IS TRYING HARD TO ALTER THIS FATE.



SHIVA NOW SENDS TAMARAI TO THE HELL-PIT. SHE IS PUT THROUGH SEVERAL DIFFERENT DEATHS. SHE IS DEVoured BY AN ELEPHANT, AND HORSES TRAMPLE HER. STILL, SHE STAYS STRONG!

SHE IS BOILED IN A CAULDRON. SHE BURNS IN THE FIRES OF HELL. SHE ENDURES IT ALL, HOPING THAT AFTER SEVEN DEATHS, SHE WILL BREAK THE FAMILY CURSE OF BARRENNESS.



HELP!

OH VISHNU!



VISHNU SENDS MORE FLAMES TO BURN SHIVA, TRYING TO REMIND HIM OF TAMARAI'S SUFFERING. SHIVA CALLS FOR CITTIRAPUTRA AGAIN.



THIS WOMAN'S PENANCE MUST COME TO AN END!

ASK YEMAN'S ENVOYS TO CUT OFF HER HEAD!

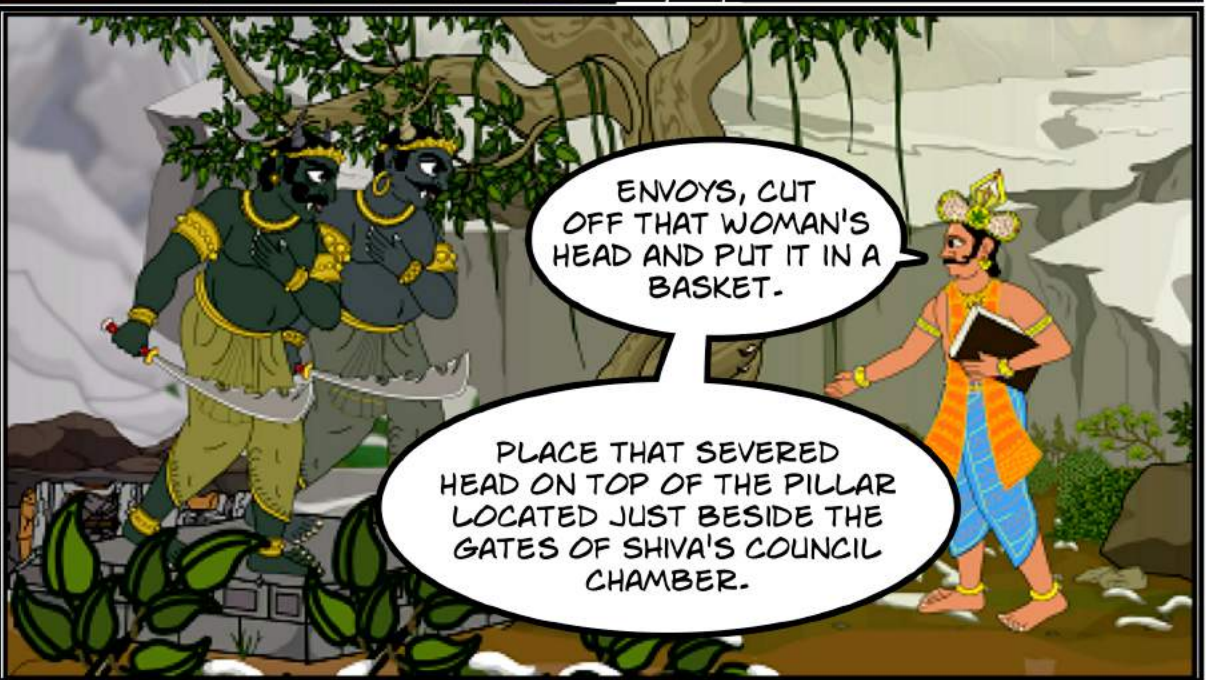
YES, MY LORD!

HEY ENVOYS! COME HERE.



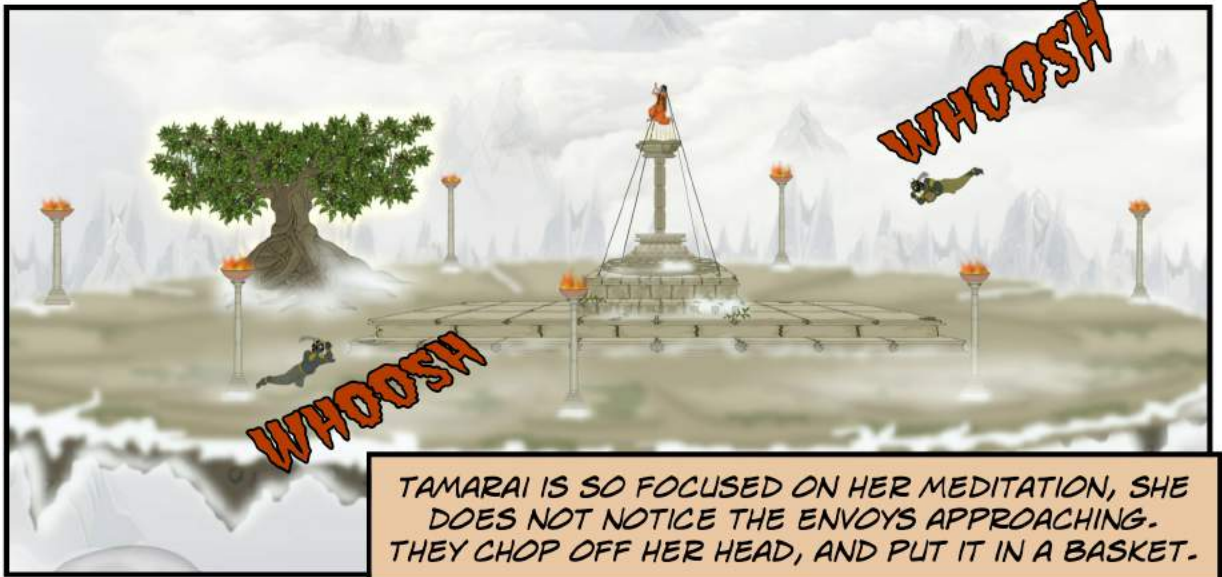
ENVOYS, CUT OFF THAT WOMAN'S HEAD AND PUT IT IN A BASKET.

PLACE THAT SEVERED HEAD ON TOP OF THE PILLAR LOCATED JUST BESIDE THE GATES OF SHIVA'S COUNCIL CHAMBER.



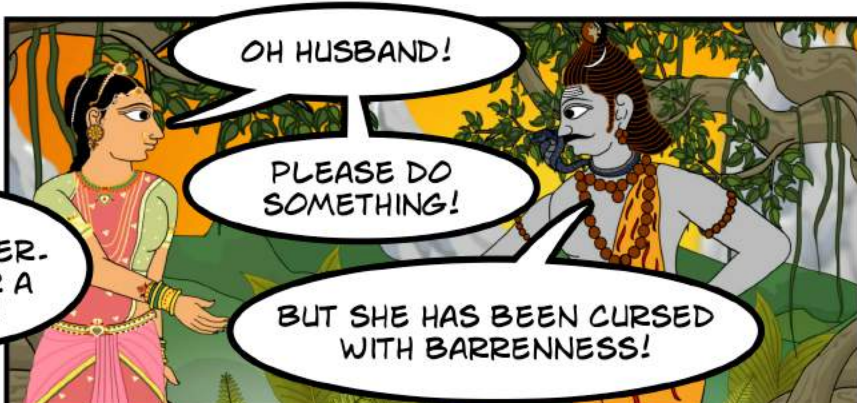
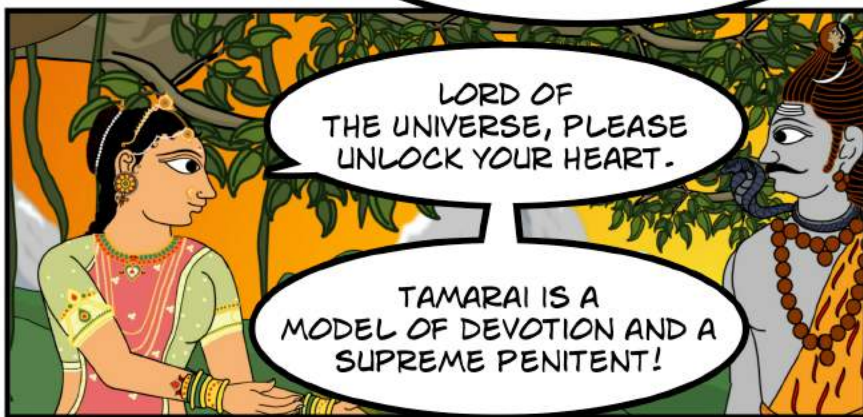
THE TWO ENVOYS OF LORD YEMAN ARRIVE, AND ARE GIVEN THEIR INSTRUCTIONS. THEY FLY OFF, HEADING TOWARDS THE PILLAR WHERE TAMARAI IS DOING HER PENANCE.





THE ENVOYS PLACE THE BASKET ON ANOTHER PILLAR, AND THEN FLY AWAY.





VISHNU MEETS SHIVA IN HIS COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

BROTHER-IN-LAW!

YOU GO TO YOUR SISTER AND CHARGE ME WITH A FAULT?

IT IS YOU WHO ARE BEHAVING BADLY!

I HAVE JUST BEEN TRYING TO MEDITATE.

YOUR FIRE HAS BEEN DISTURBING ME!

YOU HAVE NOT BEEN IDLE. YOU HAVE KILLED TAMARAI SEVEN TIMES OVER!

MY FIRE WAS INTENDED TO REMIND YOU OF ALL THE YEARS THAT THIS POOR WOMAN HAS SUFFERED!

OKAY...FINE...! YOU CAN TAKE HER HEAD FROM THE PILLAR.

TAMARAI WAS BORN OF YOUR CREATIVE POWER!

BUT YOU HAVE BEEN UNTHINKABLY CRUEL TO HER EVER SINCE HER MARRIAGE!



VISHNU GIVES TAMARAI BACK HER LIFE. SHE SOON AWAKENS



LORD,
WHERE IS MY
BOON?



TAMARAI! WE
WILL GO
TOGETHER AND
STAND BEFORE
LORD SHIVA.



TAMARAI IS TAKEN TO THE GODS' COUNCIL
CHAMBERS. SHE BOWS IN RESPECT.

YOU MUST
TELL HIM
HONESTLY WHAT
GIFTS YOU ARE
REQUESTING.



NOW, AT
LEAST, ALL MY
SUFFERING HAS
PAID OFF!

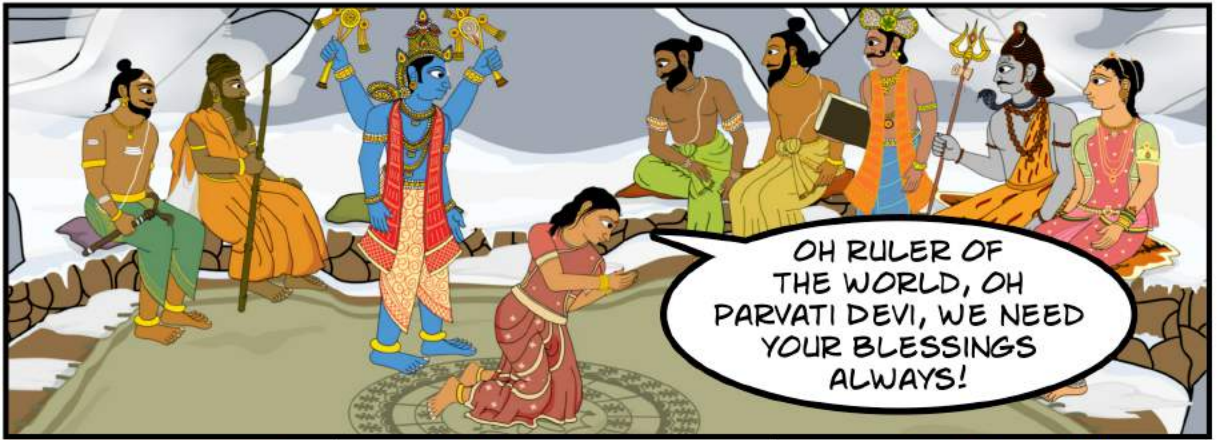
IT HAS TAKEN
ME 21 YEARS TO
COME HERE AND SEE
YOU.

OH LORD OF
THE UNIVERSE, HOW
CAN I EXPRESS MY
JOY AT THIS
MOMENT?



OH LADY! THERE
WILL BE NO DEATH IF YOU TAKE
REFUGE IN ME! YOU WILL LEAD
A LONG LIFE.





OH RULER OF THE WORLD, OH PARVATI DEVI, WE NEED YOUR BLESSINGS ALWAYS!

TAMARAI PAYS RESPECTS TO THE GODS. THEY THEN WANT TO KNOW HER REQUEST.

TAMARAI! OUR BLESSINGS ARE ALWAYS WITH YOU!

LADY TAMARAI, WHAT GIFTS ARE YOU REQUESTING?



LORD!

I WANT TWO STRONG SONS FOR THE LAND.

CITTIRAPUTRA, READ FROM THE BOOK OF FATE!



EACH HAS THE STRENGTH OF TWELVE ELEPHANTS

DHARMA'S TWO YOUNGER BROTHERS, BHIMA AND ARJUNA...

LORD, OF THE FIVE PANDAVA BROTHERS...



GOOD! BRING ME THE LIVES OF BHIMA AND ARJUNA!



THE LIVES OF BHIMA AND ARJUNA LIFT MAGICALLY FROM THE BOOK OF FATE.



SHIVA SENDS BOTH SPIRITS INTO TAMARAI'S WOMB, TO GROW THERE INTO TWO BABY BOYS.





LADY! WHAT OTHER GIFTS DO YOU WANT?



I NEED A DAUGHTER FOR THE PALACE.

THIS LOVELY GIRL MUST HAVE A FIREBALL IN HER BREAST!

WHICH LADY IN THE GODS' COUNCIL CHAMBERS CARRIES A FIREBALL IN HER BREAST?



LORD! THE VERY YOUNGEST MAIDEN OF THE SEVEN VIRGINS HERE HAS A BALL OF FIRE IN HER BREAST!



GOOD, BRING ME THAT MAIDEN!



THE YOUNG MAIDEN IS BROUGHT TO THE CHAMBER.



OH WOMAN! YOU ARE TO GO TO EARTH FOR A WHILE.



THERE YOU WILL BE BORN FROM TAMARAI'S WOMB.

WHEN YOUR WORK IS DONE, I WILL MAKE SURE YOU RETURN HERE.

NOTE DOWN THE FACT THAT ALL THREE OF THESE SPECIAL LIVES WILL REMAIN ON EARTH FOR 120 YEARS.

OH BOOK KEEPER!

Gasp!

Gasp!

BROTHER-IN-LAW!

HOW MANY YEARS OF LIFE DID YOU ASK CITTIRAPUTRA TO WRITE DOWN?

I ASKED HIM TO WRITE DOWN 120 YEARS!

THE GODDESS OF THE EARTH WILL NOT BE ABLE TO BEAR IT IF THESE THREE REMAIN DOWN THERE SO LONG.

YOU SHOULD ERASE THAT NUMBER AND INSTEAD WRITE DOWN 16 YEARS.

OKAY... I SEE WHAT YOU ARE SAYING... ALRIGHT, IT IS DONE!

NOW TAMARAI, WHAT ADDITIONAL GIFTS DO YOU WANT?



LORD!
THERE IS A POOR WORKING WOMAN IN PONNIVALA.



THIS WOMAN WANTS A MALE CHILD.
THAT BOY MUST HAVE THE STRENGTH OF 16 ELEPHANTS.



LORD!
IN THE MAHABHARATA, DRONA'S SON ASHWATHAMA HAS THE STRENGTH OF 16 ELEPHANTS!



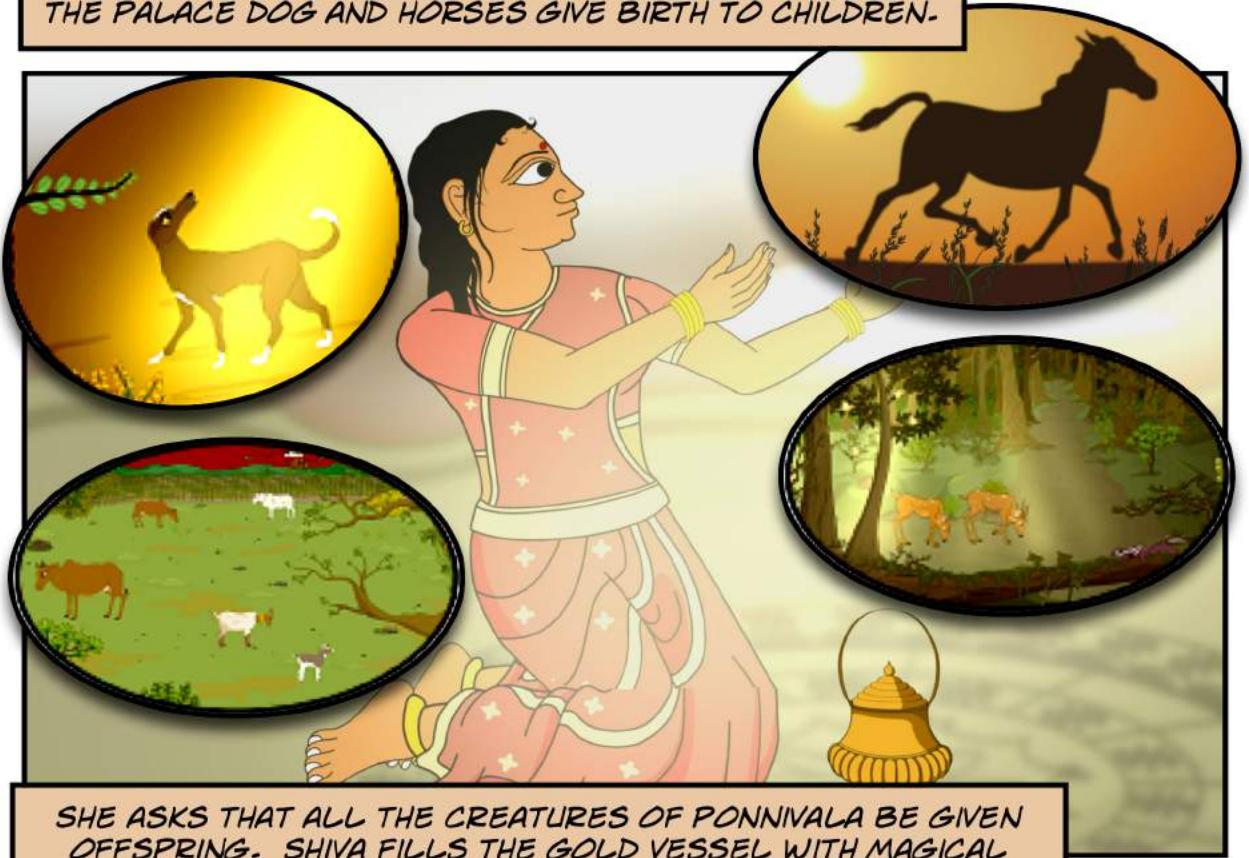
VERY WELL. BRING HIM HERE



SHIVA TAKES THE LIFE-SPIRIT OF ASHWATHAMA AND PLACES IT IN A GOLDEN VESSEL.



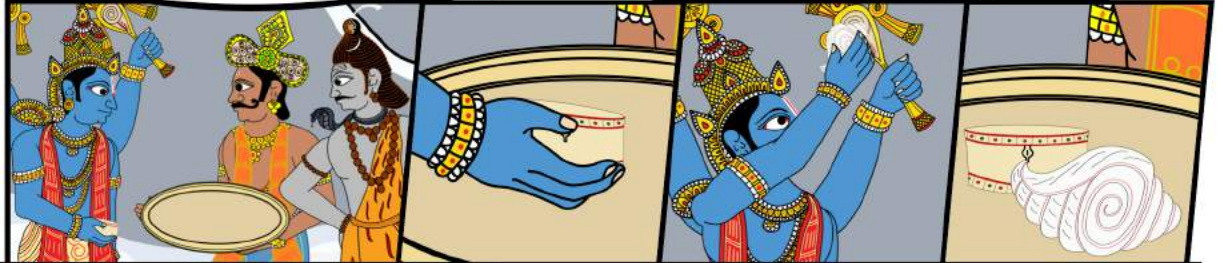
TAMARAI REQUESTS MANY MORE GIFTS. SHE ASKS THAT THE PALACE DOG AND HORSES GIVE BIRTH TO CHILDREN.



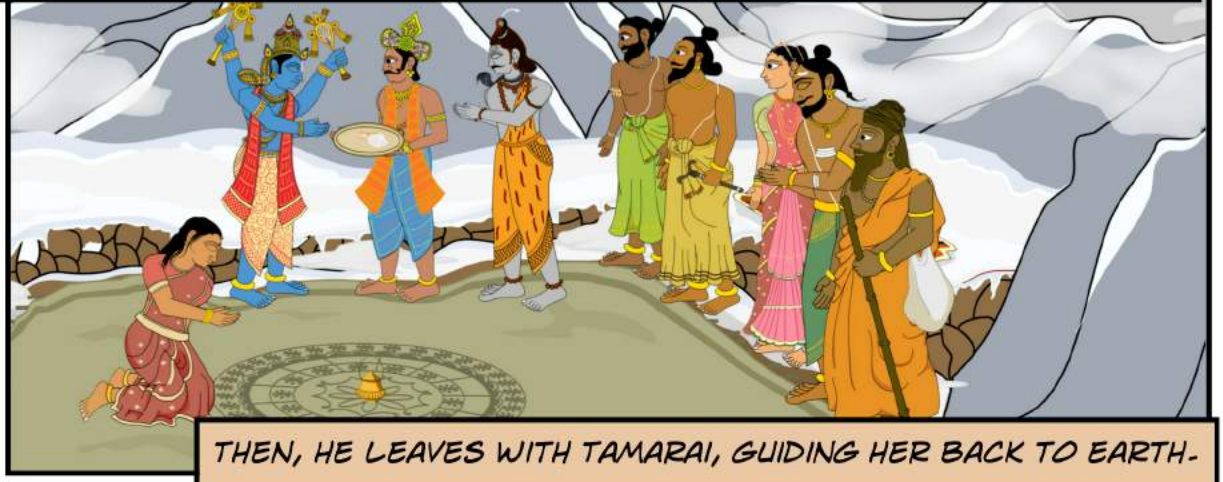
SHE ASKS THAT ALL THE CREATURES OF PONNIVALA BE GIVEN OFFSPRING. SHIVA FILLS THE GOLD VESSEL WITH MAGICAL WATER, SO THAT ANY WHO DRINK IT WILL BECOME PREGNANT.



LORD SHIVA GRANTS ALL HER REQUESTS, AND THE GODS BLESS HER.



RELUCTANTLY, VISHNU HANDS HIS POWDER BOX AND HIS CONCH TO SHIVA.





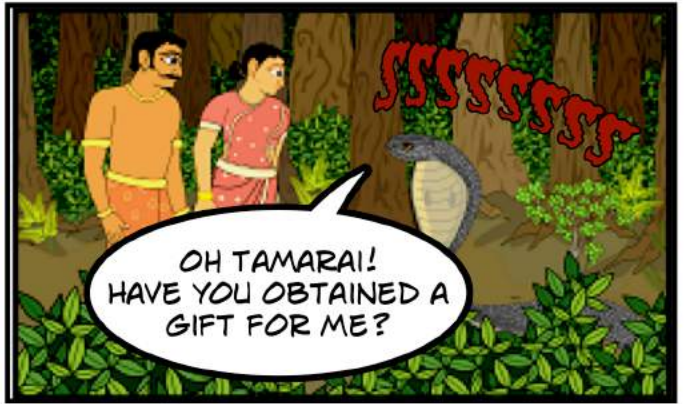
THE PAIR REACH THE LANDING WHERE THEY LEFT KUNNUTAIYA. HE IS FROZEN IN STONE.



VISHNU USES HIS POWERS AND RETURNS KUNNUTAIYA'S LIFE TO HIM.



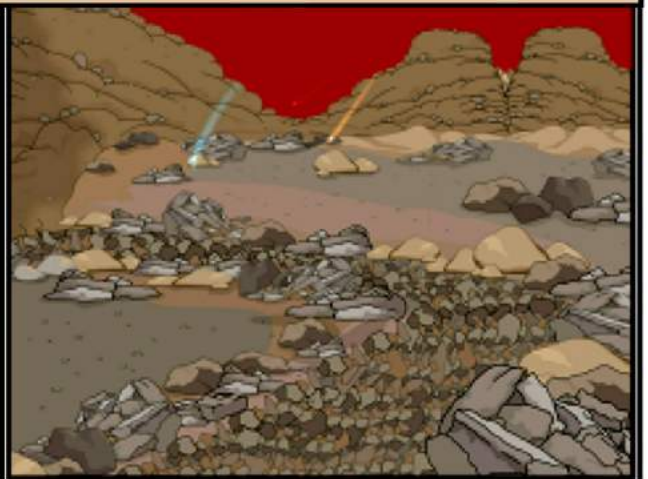
TAMARAI AND KUNNUTAIYA HEAD OFF TOGETHER TOWARDS THE RIVER OF FIRE. WHILE TRAVELLING, THEY RUN INTO THE FEMALE COBRA TO WHOM THEY PROMISED A GIFT. THEY GIVE HER SOME OF SHIVA'S MAGICAL WATER AND THEN CONTINUE ON THEIR WAY.



THE COUPLE SOON REACH THE EDGE OF THE FOREST, AND MEET VISHNU.



VISHNU TURNS THEM INTO FLIES, AND THEY EASILY PASS ALL FOUR RIVERS.

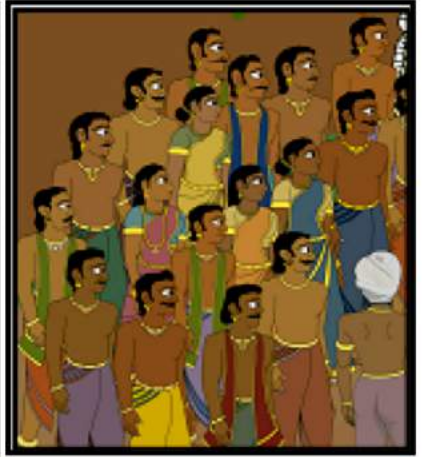
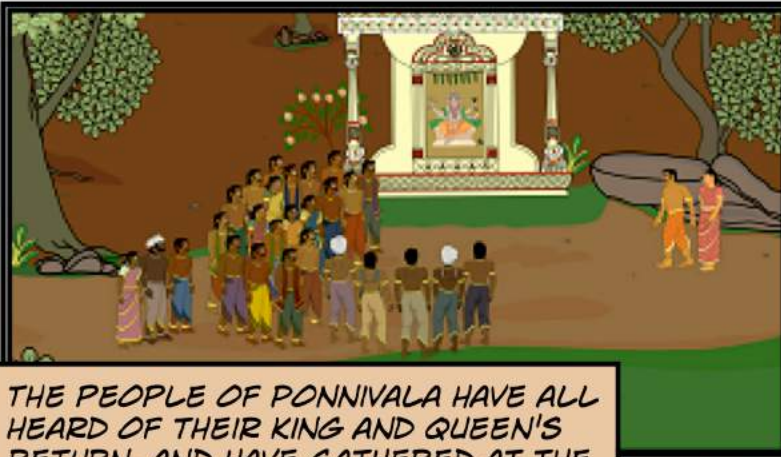




THEY CONTINUE THEIR LONG JOURNEY HOME



SLOWLY AND PURPOSEFULLY THEY MAKE THEIR WAY BACK TO PONNIVALA



THE PEOPLE OF PONNIVALA HAVE ALL HEARD OF THEIR KING AND QUEEN'S RETURN, AND HAVE GATHERED AT THE GANESH TEMPLE TO GREET THEM.



BLESSINGS TO YOU ALL!

LADY! HAVE YOU OBTAINED ANY GIFTS FOR US?



I HAVE COME WITH SOMETHING FOR ALL OF YOU!



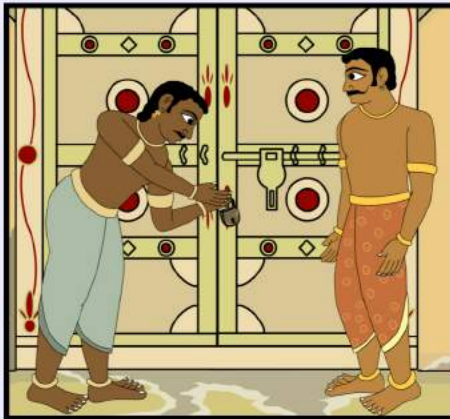
TAMARAI GIVES EACH WOMAN A SIP OF THE SACRED WATER.

THE RULING COUPLE THEN RETURN HOME.

OH LORD OF CONJEEPURAM!

TAKE BACK THE BEETLES AND WASPS THAT HAVE GUARDED OUR PALACE!

VISHNU HEARS TAMARAI'S PRAYER, AND REMOVES THE BLACK BEETLES AND WASPS.



MAIDS, CLEAN AND SWEEP THE PALACE WELL!

DECORATE IT TO CELEBRATE OUR HOMECOMING!



THE SERVANTS OF THE PALACE CLEAN IT UP QUICKLY AND THOROUGHLY. SOON IT IS A BEAUTIFUL HOME ONCE AGAIN.





THE RULING COUPLE HAVE RETURNED TO THEIR RIGHTFUL PALACE IN PONNIVALA. ALL THE PEOPLE AND ANIMALS THERE ARE NOW VERY HAPPY. SOON, THERE WILL BE THE SIGNS OF REBIRTH EVERYWHERE. BUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN QUEEN TAMARAI FINALLY GIVES BIRTH TO THE THREE MAGICAL LIFE-SPIRITS INSIDE HER WOMB? WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD IN STORE FOR THIS FINE LOCAL FAMILY?



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/comic13

The Legend of
Ponnivala

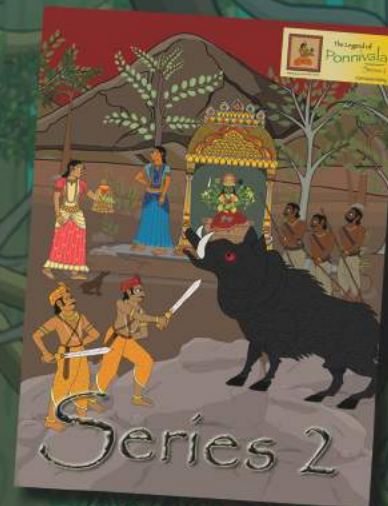
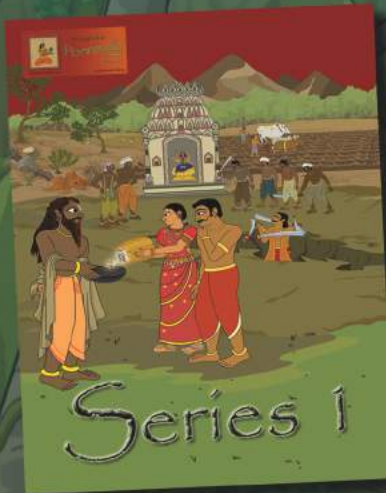
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