

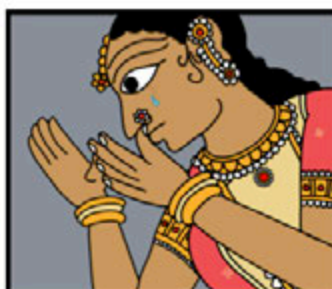
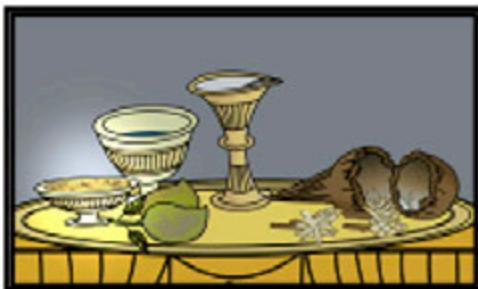
Series 2
Book 13

The Legend of
Ponnivala



An Epoch Ends

The Legend of Ponnivala



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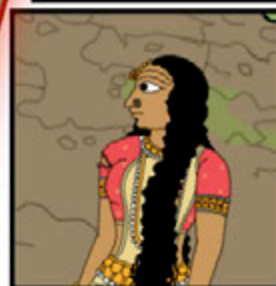
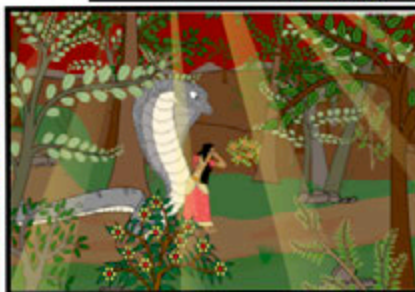
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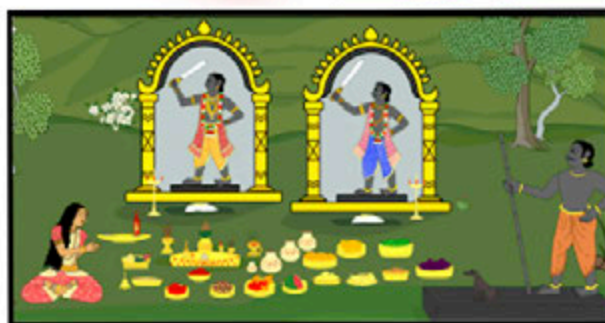
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AN EPOCH ENDS
SERIES 2 COMIC 13

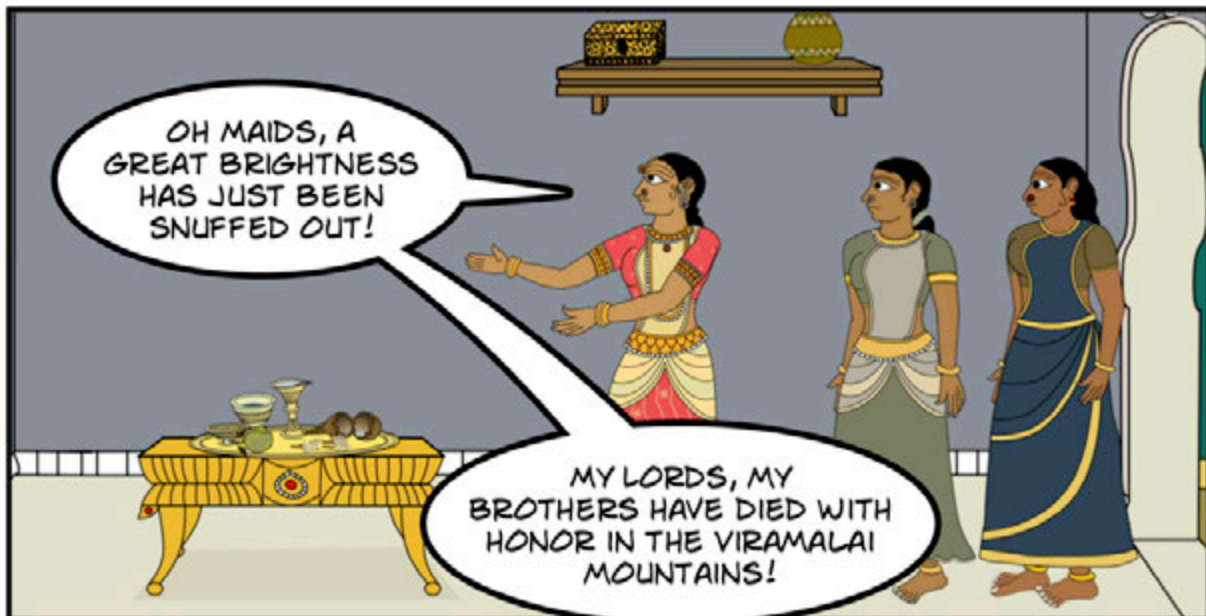
THE TWO RULERS OF
PONNIVALA LIE DEAD
AFTER A GREAT BATTLE.
THEIR SISTER READS THE
SIGNS THEY LEFT AND
KNOWING THEY HAVE
GIVEN UP THEIR LIVES,
SHE BURNS THE PALACE.
SHE THEN SETS OFF ON A
TO FIND HER BROTHERS'
BODIES. WHEN SHE
DOES, SHE REVIVES THEM
BRIEFLY FOR A LAST
CONVERSATION.
MEMORIAL PAVILIONS ARE
BUILT. THEN ALL THREE
RISE UP TO FIND A PLACE
BESIDE LORD SHIVA IN HIS
WORLD ABOVE ...





IT IS A SAD DAY! ALL THE SPECIAL SIGNS MY BROTHERS LEFT ARE TELLING ME THIS! THE JASMINE FLOWER HAS WILTED! THE MANGO HAS GONE ROTTEN! THE COCONUT HAS SPLIT IN TWO





OH MAIDS, A GREAT BRIGHTNESS HAS JUST BEEN SNUFFED OUT!

MY LORDS, MY BROTHERS HAVE DIED WITH HONOR IN THE VIRAMALAI MOUNTAINS!



THE SIGNS SAY THAT THEY ARE NOW WORSHIPPING AT THE FEET OF LORD SHIVA!



LET US GO QUICKLY AND FETCH MY SISTERS-IN-LAW! THEY ARE THE ONES WITH RIGHTS IN THIS MATTER.

TANGAL AND HER TWO MAIDS ARRIVE AT THE PALACE WHERE HER BROTHERS' WIVES LIVE.

OH LOVELY SISTERS-IN-LAW! OH WIVES OF MY BROTHERS! COME TO YOUR PALACE DOOR AND MEET ME!

I BRING YOU IMPORTANT NEWS! A TERRIBLE THING HAS HAPPENED!

MY TWO BROTHERS HAVE DIED, AFTER HUNTING A BOAR IN THE MOUNTAINS!

OH LADY! YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN TO OUR LONELY HOME BEFORE!

COME AWAY FROM THE WINDOW, SISTER! SHE MUST BE LYING! OUR HUSBANDS ARE PROBABLY ALIVE AND WELL. THEY WILL KILL US IF WE LEAVE THIS PALACE JAIL!

THIS IS NO TIME FOR JOKING! MY BROTHERS LIE DEAD IN THE VIRAMALAI FOREST! WE MUST GO PERFORM THEIR FUNERAL RITES!

The Legend of Ponnivala





WE REFUSE TO CONDUCT THE TRADITIONAL FUNERAL RITES FOR OUR HUSBANDS!

THEY NEVER DID ANYTHING FOR US!




OH SISTERS-IN-LAW, PLEASE RECONSIDER! IN MY DREAM, I SAW YOUR WEDDING JEWELS FALL FROM YOUR NOSES AND CHESTS!

WE WILL NOT RECONSIDER! NO OTHER WOMEN HAVE BEEN FORCED TO SUFFER AS MUCH AS WE HAVE!

TANGAL KNOWS THAT HER SISTERS-IN-LAW WILL NOT HELP HER. SHE LEAVES THEM, FEELING DISTRESSED.

The Legend of Ponnivala



THE THREE WOMEN RETURN TO THE PALACE. ONCE THERE, TANGAL INSTRUCTS HER SERVANTS TO EMPTY THE PALACE OF ALL ITS VALUABLES.



OH PALACE GUARDS! OH MAIDS! EACH OF YOU GET A BASKET AND TAKE WHATEVER WEALTH YOU LIKE FROM THIS PLACE!

RAID THE GROUNDS! TAKE HOME ANYTHING YOUR HEART MIGHT FANCY!



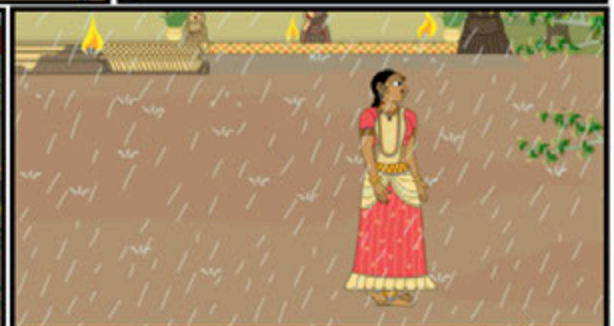
THE SERVANTS QUICKLY STRIP THE PALACE OF ITS VALUABLES, AS BEST THEY CAN.



NEXT TANGAL PRAYS TO LORD VISHNU-



OH LORD OF CONJEEPURAM!
SEND ME YOUR GREAT
FIRE BALL!

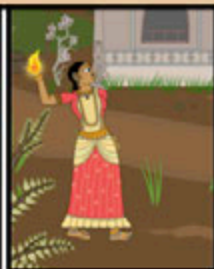


TANGAL THROWS THE FIRE BALL ONTO HER PALACE HOME. IT QUICKLY GOES UP IN FLAMES AND BURNS TO THE GROUND, LEAVING ONLY ASHES. THE HEAVENS THEN OPEN, AND RAIN FALLS, DOUSING THE FIRE WELL.



The Legend of Ponnivala

THEN TANGAL GOES TO THE PALACE OF HER SISTERS-IN-LAW. AGAIN SHE PRAYS TO LORD VISHNU AND RECEIVES A SECOND FIRE BALL FROM HIM.



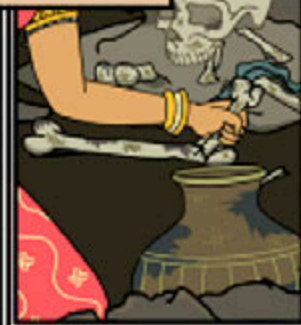
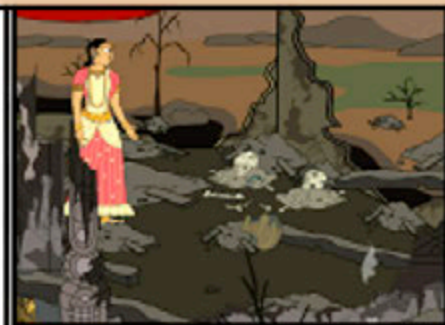
SHE TOSSES THE FLAME ON THE PALACE ROOF, WITH THE TWO WOMEN STILL INSIDE!



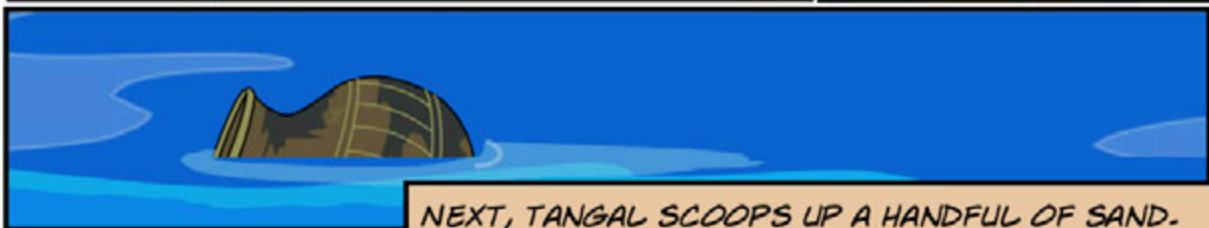
RAIN FALLS AGAIN, PUTTING OUT THE SECOND FIRE.



TANGAL ENTERS THE CHARRED RUINS, AND GATHERS THE BONES OF THE TWO SISTERS-IN-LAW. SHE PLACES THEM IN A POT.



TANGAL CARRIES HER IN-LAWS' BONES TO THE RIVER. SHE RELEASES THE REMAINS IN THE WATER (A COMMON RITE FOLLOWING CREMATION), AND LETS THE POT FLOAT AWAY. THEN SHE WASHES HER HAIR.



NEXT, TANGAL SCOOPS UP A HANDFUL OF SAND.



SHE TOSSES THE RICE TO THE CROWS. WITH THIS TANGAL COMPLETES THE REQUIRED FUNERAL RITES FOR HER SISTERS-IN-LAW.



NOW TANGAL LEAVES FOR THE VIRAMALAI HILLS.

TANGAL NOW BEGINS THE SEARCH FOR HER BELOVED BROTHERS. SOON SHE IS DEEP IN THE WOODS.

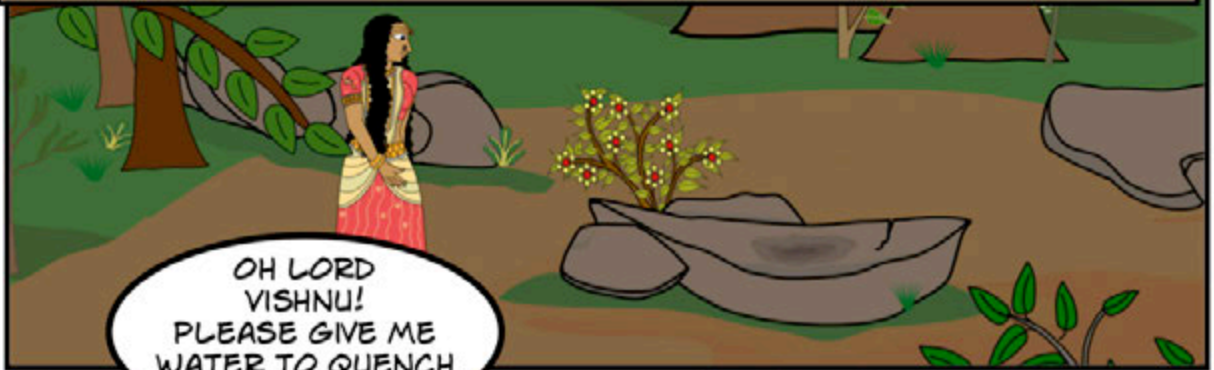


BEFORE LONG THE POOR, TENDER GIRL IS LOST. HER HAIR IS IN TANGLES, AND HER SARI IS RIPPED!



SHE DOES NOT KNOW WHERE TO GO, BUT SHE KNOWS SHE MUST FIND HER BROTHERS!

TANGAL COMES ACROSS A ROCK WITH A SMALL DEPRESSION IN IT. SHE PRAYS TO LORD VISHNU, AND THE DEPRESSION FILLS WITH WATER.



OH LORD VISHNU!
PLEASE GIVE ME WATER TO QUENCH MY THIRST!



ALL OF A SUDDEN, A COBRA APPEARS, WITH ITS HOOD RAISED! AT FIRST TANGAL IS FRIGHTENED...



OH!

DO NOT BE AFRAID, LOVELY LADY!
THE GIFT THE GODS GAVE YOUR MOTHER CAUSED MY OWN MOTHER TO GIVE BIRTH ALSO

LIKE YOU, I WAS BORN FROM THAT GIFT AND SO IT IS MY DUTY TO HELP YOU!



ALL THE CREATURES OF PONNIVALA WANT YOU TO FIND YOUR BROTHERS!

THE COBRA SHARES SOME OF TANGAL'S WATER, THEN THE PAIR SET OUT!

TOGETHER, TANGAL AND THE COBRA MAKE THEIR WAY ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS. THE COBRA USES ITS LARGE HOOD TO PROTECT PONNIVALA'S PRINCESS FROM THE RAIN AND SUN.



AFTER MANY, MANY HOURS OF WALKING, TANGAL IS EXHAUSTED. SHE WEEPS, FEELING DISTRAUGHT. FINALLY THEY REACH THE PLACE WHERE A SUN MAIDEN NAMED ARUKKANDI IS DOING PENANCE!

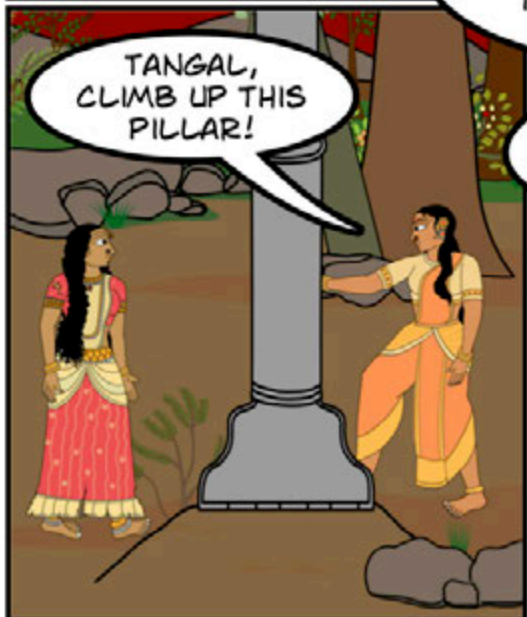
VISHNU WATCHES THE SITUATION FROM HIS COBRA COUCH. HE SEES AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP TANGAL, SO HE QUICKLY FLIES TO EARTH.



OH ARUKKANDI! LEAVE YOUR PLACE OF PENANCE FOR AN HOUR!



LET TANGAL CLIMB THE PILLAR IN YOUR PLACE! SHE NEEDS TO OBTAIN A BOON FROM SHIVA!



SHIVA AGREES, SO LORD VISHNU DESCENDS ONCE MORE AND GIVES TANGAL THE GREAT NEWS ...



OH LADY TANGAL!
THE GREAT LORD WILL
GRANT YOUR WISH!

THINK OF SHIVA AND ASK
FOR HIS GOLDEN WAND! YOU
WILL NEED IT TO REVIVE
YOUR BROTHERS!



TANGAL THOUGHT OF SHIVA. INSTANTLY, A GOLDEN WAND
MATERIALIZED IN HER HAND! TANGAL THEN CLIMBS DOWN THE
PILLAR TO SPEAK TO THE SUN MAIDEN, AND ASK FOR HER HELP.



OH BEAUTIFUL
ARUKKANTI! I NEED RITUAL
SUPPLIES FROM YOU!



OH LADY, YOU
WILL HAVE TO GO TO
VIRAPPUR AND GET A SET OF
SEVEN TIERED VESSELS
FIRST!

TANGAL SETS OFF IMMEDIATELY, AND IT ISN'T LONG BEFORE SHE REACHES THE HOME OF A POTTER IN VIRAPPUR.



OH POTTER!
PLEASE, I NEED
YOUR HELP!

CAN
YOU PLEASE
GIVE ME SEVEN
TIERED POTS?

LADY, YOU WILL HAVE
TO PAY FOR THIS. I
WORK HARD TO MAKE
THESE POTS!

BUT SIR, I HAVE
NO MONEY! PLEASE,
TAKE PITY ON A POOR
DESTITUTE WOMAN!

NOTHING IN
LIFE IS FREE

GET
OUT OF
HERE!

TANGAL GOES STRAIGHT TO THE LOCAL TEMPLE AND PRAYS TO LORD VISHNU.

OH GREAT ONE!
YOU MUST CREATE ENOUGH
RAIN TO DESTROY ALL THE
VIRAPPUR POTTER'S FINE
WORK!

THE GOLDEN WAND IN TANGAL'S HAND SENDS THREE RINGS INTO
THE AIR. WHEN THEY STRIKE A CLOUD, RAIN BEGINS TO FALL.
SOON ALL THE POTTER'S WORK HAS COMPLETELY MELTED AWAY!

NOOOOO!

THIS MUST BE A
CURSE FROM THAT LADY
WHO JUST VISITED ME! I MUST
FIND HER AND BEG HER
FORGIVENESS!

PLEASE, OH
LADY, FORGIVE
ME!

HMMM.....
OK! I WILL SEE
WHAT I CAN
DO.

IF YOU MAKE THIS RAIN
STOP AND PUT MY POTTERY
BACK TO THE WAY IT WAS,
THEN I WILL GIVE YOU A
SET OF POTS!

THE RAIN STOPS AND ALL THE POTTER'S WORK RETURNS TO NORMAL. IN THANKS, HE GIVES SEVEN TIERED POTS TO TANGAL.

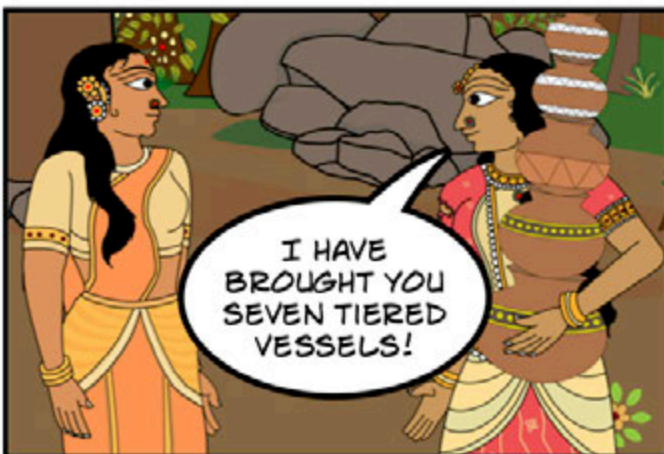


HERE ARE THE POTS!



THANK YOU!

SHE TAKES THESE POTS BACK TO ARUKKANTI.



I HAVE BROUGHT YOU SEVEN TIERED VESSELS!



GOOD LADY! LET ME FILL THEM WITH THE RITUAL SUPPLIES I PROMISED YOU!

ARUKKANTI THEN BEGINS TO FILL THE VESSELS WITH RITUAL SUPPLIES...



THANK YOU,
OH ARUKKANTI!

AFTER HER WORK IS FINISHED, ARUKKANTI CALLS FOR HER GOLDEN BIRD.



OH LOVELY ONE! TAKE THIS WOMAN TO THE PLACE WHERE HER BROTHERS SPEARED KOMBAN!

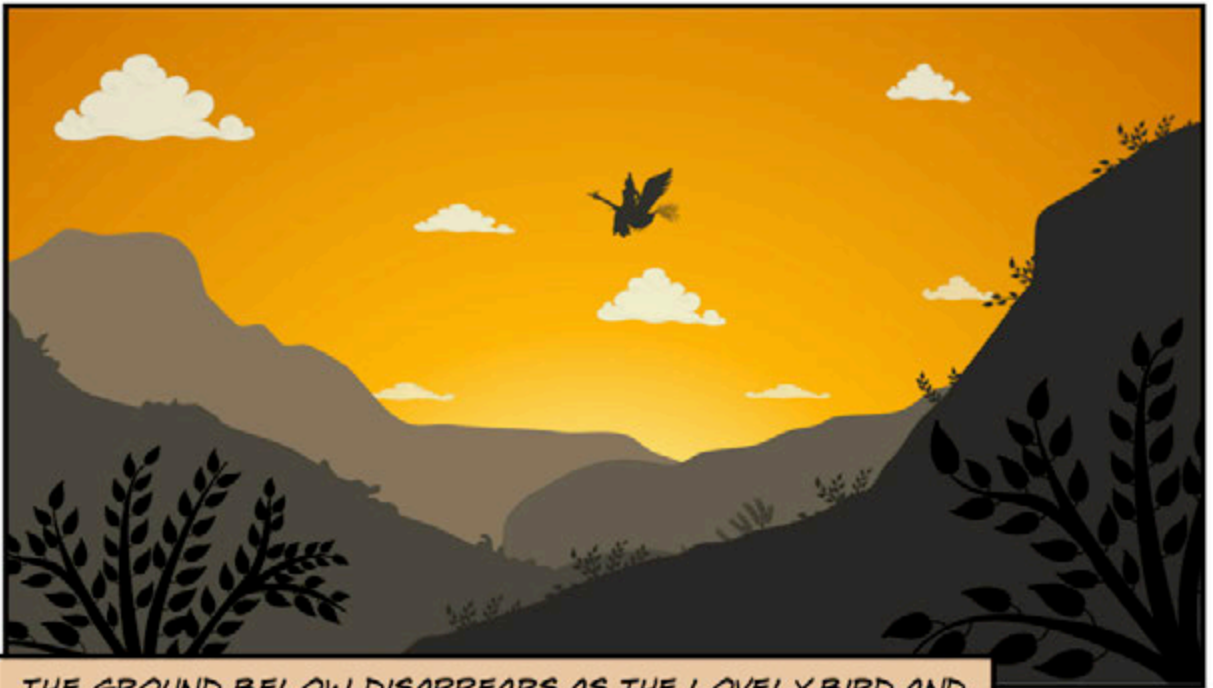


MY BEAUTIFUL BIRD WILL TAKE YOU SAFELY TO YOUR BROTHERS! GOOD LUCK!



TANGAL CLIMBS ONTO THE BIRD, AND OFF THEY FLY!





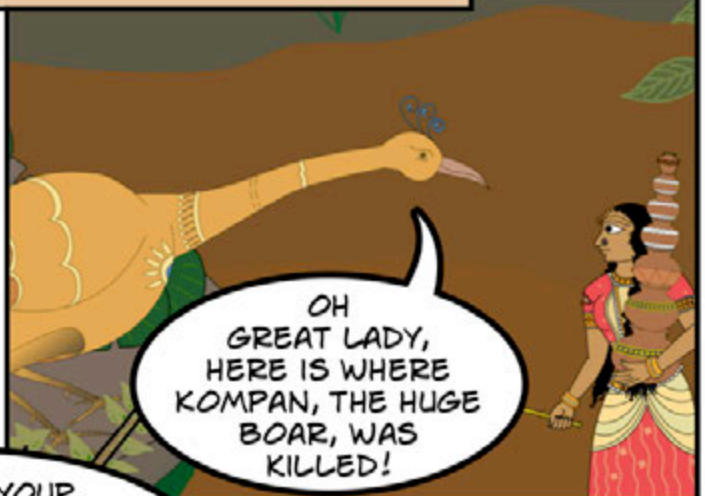
THE GROUND BELOW DISAPPEARS AS THE LOVELY BIRD AND ITS BEAUTIFUL PASSENGER FLY HIGHER AND HIGHER



THEY FLY OVER TREES- AND MOUNTAINS! THEY ARE ALMOST THERE NOW!



FINALLY, THE BIRD ALIGHTS IN A CLEARING. IT SETS TANGAL DOWN IN THE PLACE WHERE THE SACRIFICIAL BOAR MEAT HAS BEEN SEPARATED INTO SEVEN PORTIONS.



OH GREAT LADY, HERE IS WHERE KOMPAN, THE HUGE BOAR, WAS KILLED!

THERE IS YOUR DOG PONNACHI! TALK TO HER - SHE KNOWS WHERE YOUR BROTHERS' BODIES LIE.

I WILL LEAVE YOU NOW, SO THAT I MAY RETURN TO MY MISTRESS ARUKKANTI!



THE GOLDEN BIRD FLIES BACK TO THE SUN MAIDEN ...

... AND TANGAL HAS WORDS WITH PONNACHI.



PONNACHI,
WHERE ARE MY
BROTHERS?



YOU ARE THE ONE
RESPONSIBLE FOR
THEIR DEATHS!

OH PRINCESS,
WHAT WAS I TO
DO?



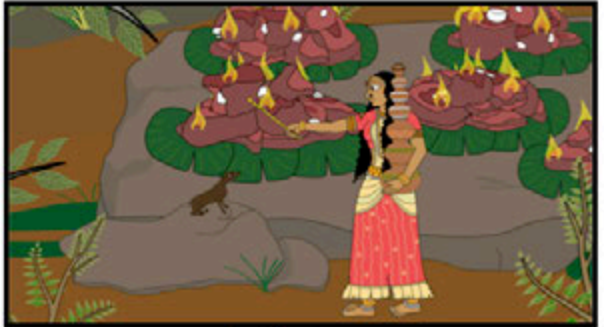
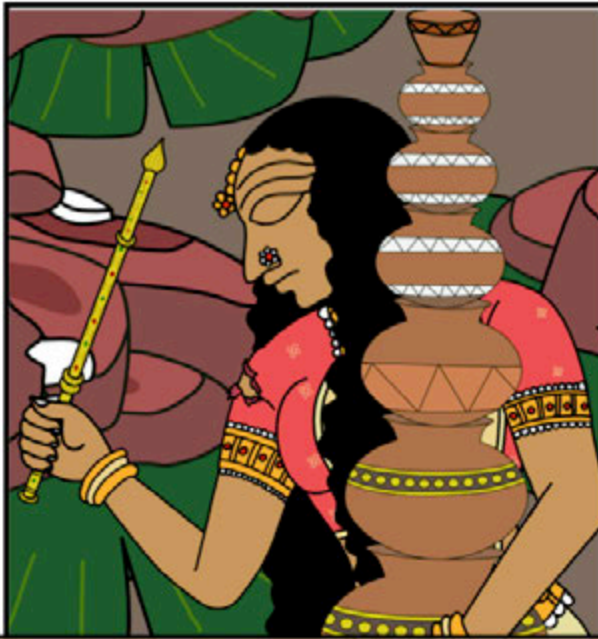
YOUR
BROTHERS LEFT
ME TO GUARD THIS
MEAT.

ALL
RIGHT,
PONNACHI!

SOMEONE MIGHT
COME AND EAT IT!
HOW CAN I LEAVE?



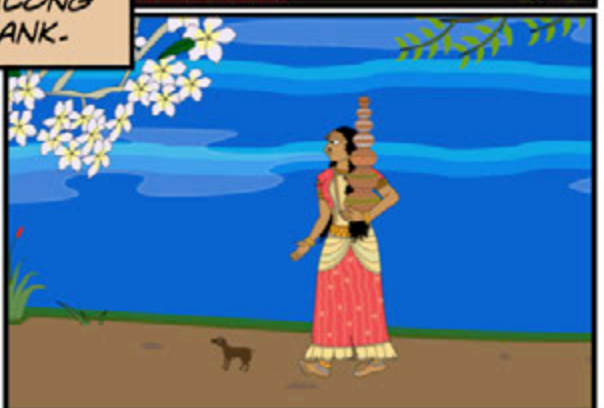
LET ME
TAKE CARE OF
THIS!



TANGAL USES SHIVA'S WAND AND CAUSES THE MEAT TO CATCH FIRE! SOON IT HAS ALL BURNED AWAY.



PONNACHI LEADS TANGAL FURTHER ALONG THE RIVER AND THEN UP ITS LEFT BANK.



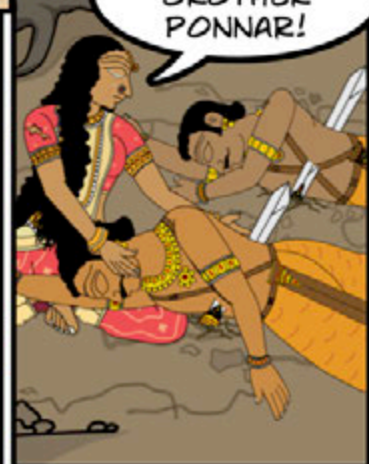
WHEN THEY REACH A ROCKY HILLOCK, THEY FIND THE BODIES OF THE TWO KINGS, AND OF THEIR LOYAL ASSISTANT!



TANGAL IS UPSET AT THE SIGHT OF HER BROTHERS' BODIES. TEARS RUN DOWN HER CHEEKS.



OH SHANKAR!
OH, MY BRAVE
HERO!



OH, KIND
BROTHER
PONNAR!



BROTHERS, I
MISS YOU TERRIBLY! I
HAVE COME WITH A BOON
FROM SHIVA, TO AWAKEN
YOU BOTH!

TANGAL PERFORMS A SPECIAL RITE TO BRING BACK HER BROTHERS' LIVES. SHE SINGS WHILE SPRINKLING WATER ON THEM, AND ON SHAMBUGA.



THEN SHE CLUTCHES SHIVA'S WAND IN HER HAND, AND PRAYS TO VISHNU. NOW SHE WATCHES AT THE MEN'S SPIRITS RETURN TO THEIR BODIES!





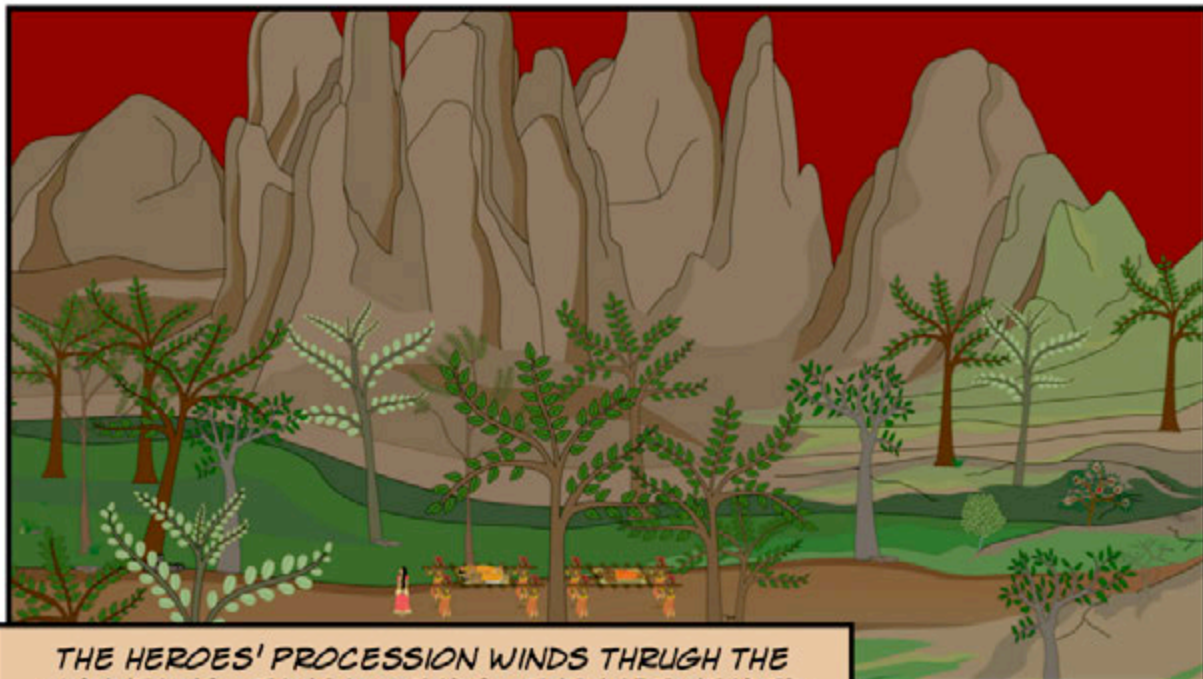


TANGAL CONVINCES HER BROTHERS TO LET HER BUILD PAVILIONS FOR THEM IN VIRAPPUR. THEN SHE SUMMONS SOME HEAVENLY ASSISTANTS.



LORD YEMAN ARRIVES AND TAKES THE THREE MEN'S SPIRITS AWAY ONCE MORE. THE HEAVENLY ASSISTANTS CARRY THE BODIES OF THE BROTHERS AND SHAMBUGA AWAY





THE HEROES' PROCESSION WINDS THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS. TANGAL LEADS. THEY ARE HEADED FOR VIRAPPUR. FINALLY THE LOAD IS SET DOWN.



LORD VISHNU!
PLEASE CREATE A
BEAUTIFUL FUNERAL BIER SO
THAT MY BROTHERS CAN BE
PARADED THROUGH THE
TOWN!





VISHNU CREATES A BEAUTIFUL FUNERAL PALANQUIN FOR THE TWIN KINGS, AND THE HEAVENLY ASSISTANTS PARADE THEM THROUGH THE TOWN.



WHEN THE KINGS ARE RETURNED, TANGAL PRAYS ONCE MORE. FIRST PONNACHI AND SHAMBUGA ARE TRANSFORMED TO FORM A STATUE.



The Legend of Ponnivala



THE BROTHERS' HORSES RUN DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN TO JOIN THEIR MASTERS. THEY TOO ARE TURNED INTO STONE FIGURES.



FINALLY, IT IS THE TWIN MONARCHS' TURN. TANGAL PRAYS, AND THEY TURN TO STATUES AS WELL. THEN THE LOYAL SISTER CONDUCTS A PUJA FOR HER BROTHERS.



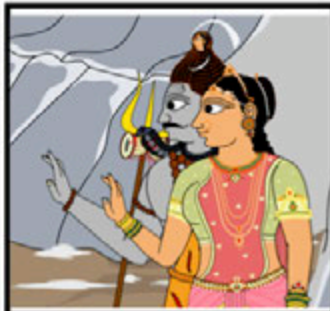
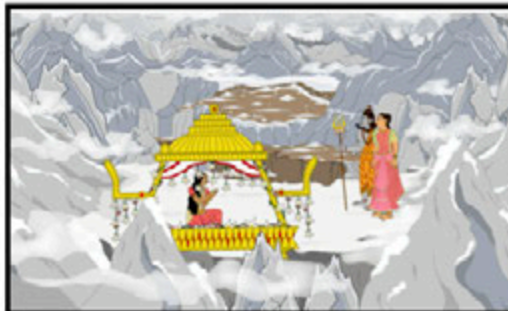
LORD SHIVA AND HIS WIFE PARVATI WATCH THESE EVENTS FROM HEAVEN.



HMM...NOW THAT TANGAL'S WORK IS FINISHED, IT IS TIME TO BRING HER BACK TO MY COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

YES, LET US SEND A PALANQUIN FOR HER RIGHT AWAY!

SHIVA SENDS A FLOWERED PALANQUIN TO EARTH, AND TANGAL CLIMBS INSIDE. THE PALANQUIN RISES STRAIGHT TO HEAVEN!



TANGAL RECEIVES THE BLESSINGS OF THE GODS. THE DIVINE PARROTS, WHO HAD LIVED ON EARTH FOR A TIME, RETURN TO THEIR HOME IN HEAVEN.




THE ERA AND REIGN OF THE GREAT FAMILY OF PONNIVALA HAS NOW COME TO AN END.



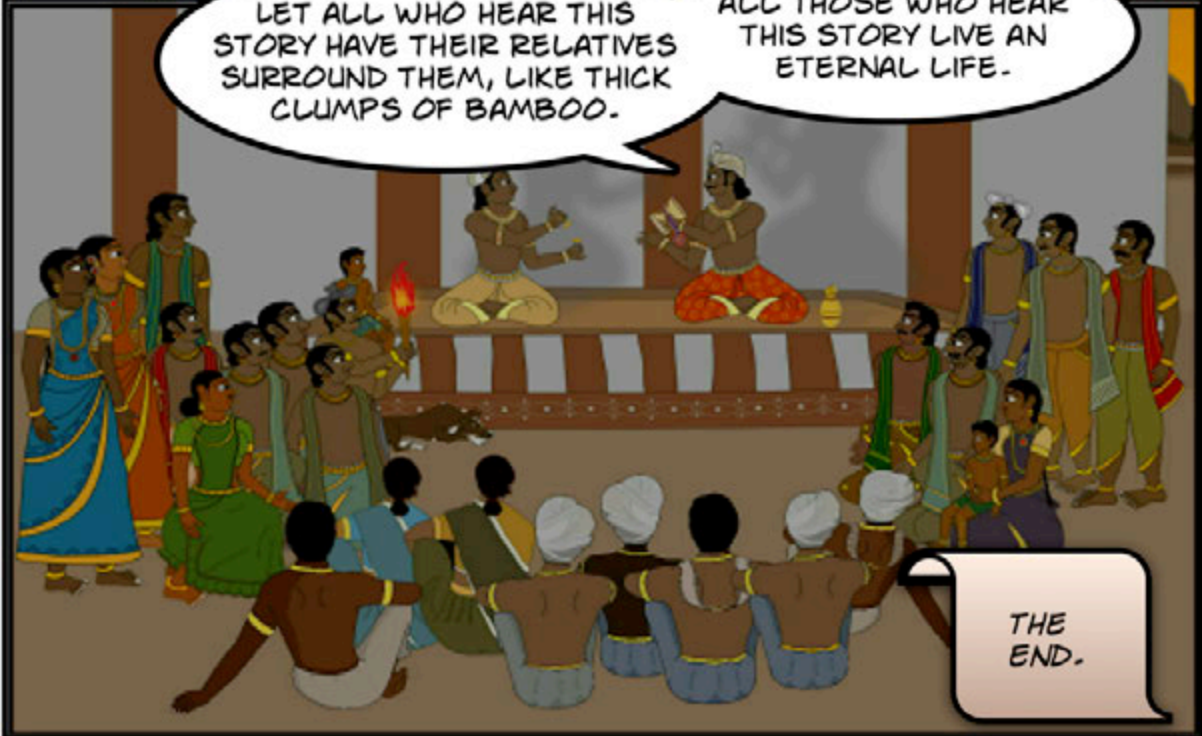
LET THEIR FAMILIES BE WELL-ROOTED, LIKE ARUKU GRASS.



LET THEIR OFFSPRING PROSPER LIKE A FINE BANYAN TREE.



LET ALL WHO HEAR THIS STORY HAVE THEIR RELATIVES SURROUND THEM, LIKE THICK CLUMPS OF BAMBOO.



AND...LET ALL THOSE WHO HEAR THIS STORY LIVE AN ETERNAL LIFE.

THE END.

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/comic26

The Legend of
Ponnivala

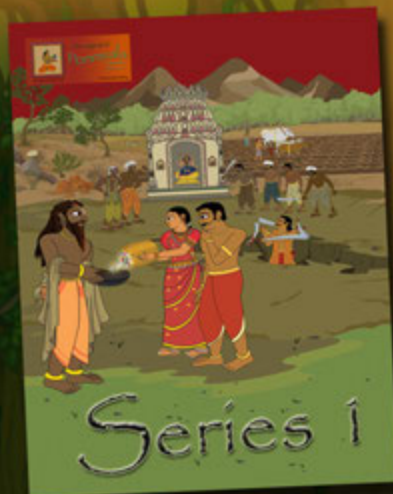
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