



Ganesha





Illustrated Classics From India

GANESHA

No traditional Hindu will launch a new undertaking without invoking Ganesha, who as *Vighneshwara* - the remover of obstacles, clears the path to success. The *Sarvajanik puja* or public worship of Ganesha is popular in Maharashtra and Orissa. Contributions are collected from the neighbourhood and a huge idol of Ganesha is installed in a public space. Every evening, assembled devotees worship the deity and this is followed by a variety of entertainment. The idol is later taken in a procession and ceremonially immersed in water.

The legends surrounding the birth and exploits of Ganesha are many. Every *Purana* narrates a different version of the same incident. Our story is entirely based on the *Shiva Purana* version.

On the heights of Mount Kailasa, the divine household of Shiva and Parvati stood divided. For Shiva entered and left whenever it pleased him. His intrusions irked Parvati as it invaded her privacy. From this divine dissension was born Ganesha, who rose to become perhaps, the most lovable deity in the Hindu pantheon.

His profile is familiar - song, story and ritual have led to this. An elephant head with the trunk curled gracefully over a generous potbelly. His four arms bearing his distinctive emblems of godhood and his portly figure mounted on a tiny mouse, which is his chosen vehicle. There are many interpretations of this unique combination. The most popular is that the deity embodies the power and wisdom of the elephant and the mobility of the agile mouse.

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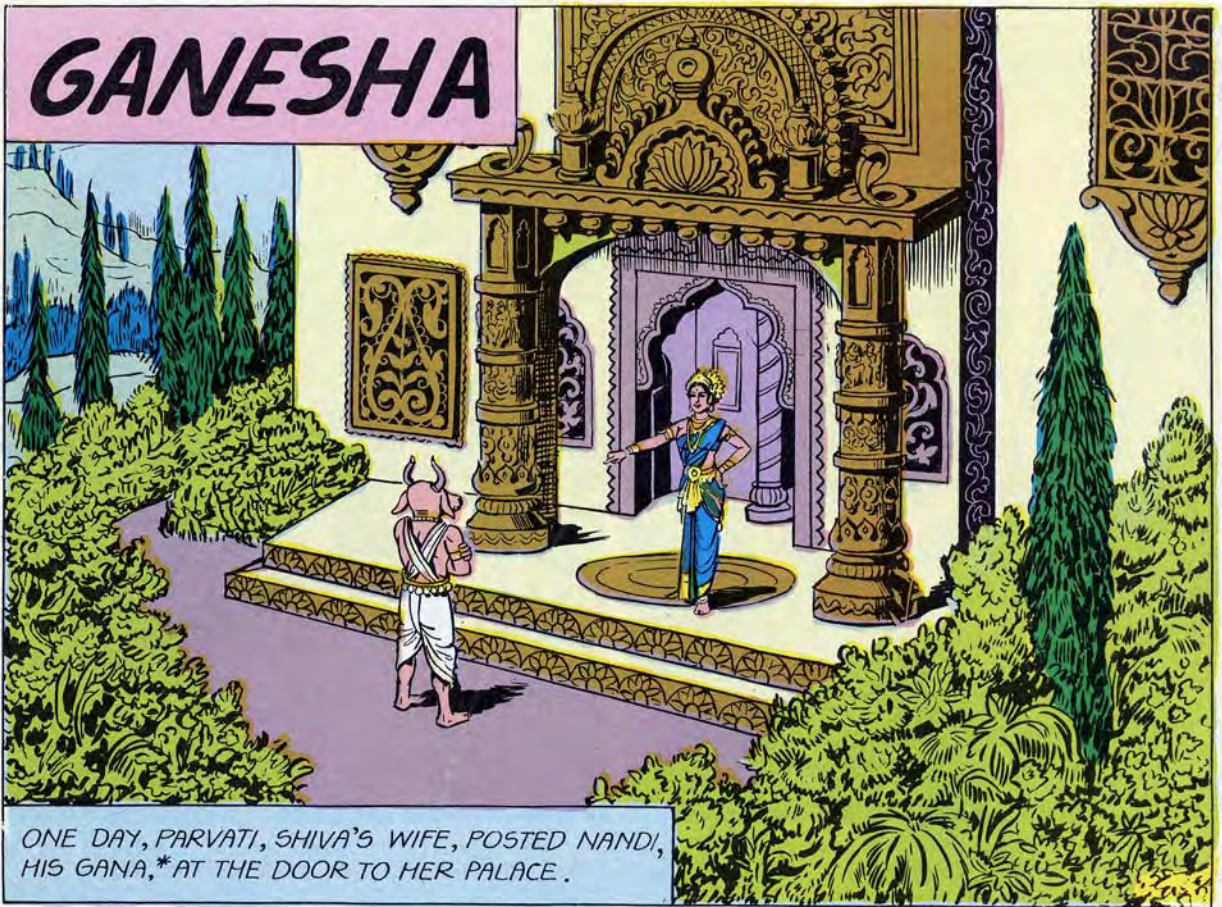
Cover: C. M. Vitankar

No. 509 • Rs 30

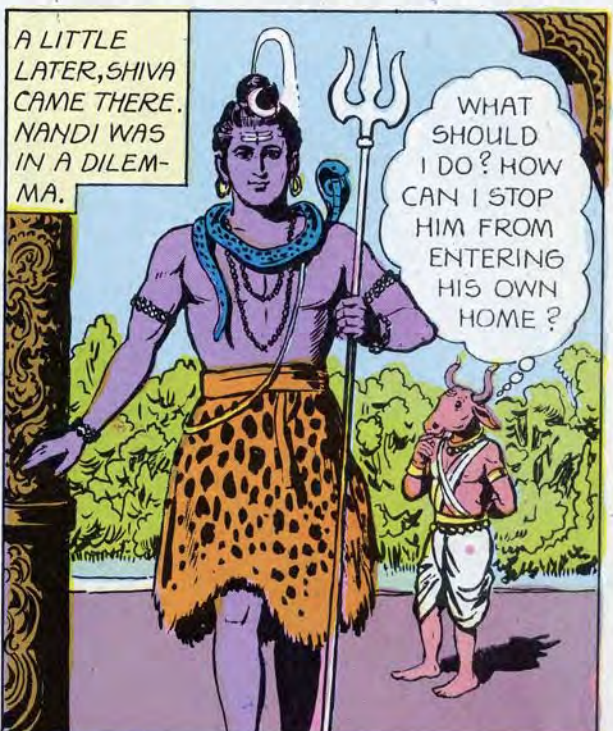


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GANESHA



ONE DAY, PARVATI, SHIVA'S WIFE, POSTED NANDI, HIS GANA,* AT THE DOOR TO HER PALACE.



* ATTENDANT.

SHIVA ENTERED THE PALACE AND STRODE INTO THE INNER ROOMS.



NANDI HAS DISOBEYED ME. YOU MAY BE MY HUSBAND BUT HE HAD NO RIGHT TO LET YOU ENTER!

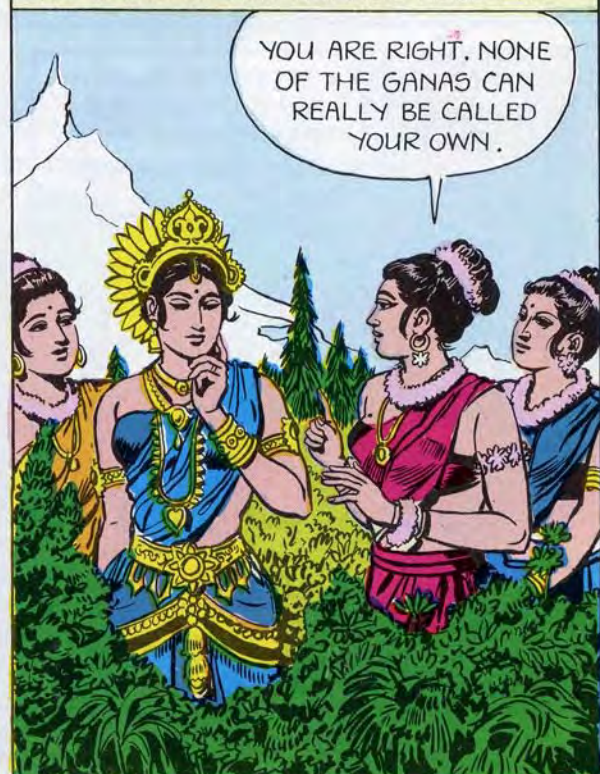
HA!
HA!



SHIVA WAS AMUSED BUT PARVATI WAS ANNOYED.



SHE SPOKE TO HER FRIENDS ABOUT IT.



ONE OF THEM HAD AN IDEA.

WHY DON'T YOU CREATE
A GANA WHO WILL OWE
FIRST ALLEGIANCE
TO YOU ?

A GOOD
SUGGESTION.
I SHALL.



SHE GATHERED THE SAFFRON PASTE
FROM HER OWN BODY AND CREATED A BOY.



WHEN SHE FINISHED, SHE GAZED IN ADMIRATION AT HER OWN CREATION.

HOW HANDSOME
HE IS! HOW
STRONG HE
LOOKS!



SHE DECKED HIM WITH ORNAMENTS AND BLESSED HIM. THEN —

YOU ARE MY SON — MY VERY OWN SON. I HAVE NONE ELSE TO CALL MY OWN.



COMMAND ME, MOTHER. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

TAKE THIS STAFF AND FOLLOW ME.



SHE LED HIM TO THE DOOR.

STAND HERE AND LET NO ONE ENTER WITHOUT MY PERMISSION.



A LITTLE LATER —

WHO COULD THAT BOY BE? I HAVE NEVER SEEN HIM BEFORE.



TO SHIVA'S ASTONISHMENT, THE YOUTH
BARRED HIS WAY.

HALT! NO ONE ENTERS
WITHOUT MY MOTHER'S
PERMISSION.

SHIVA WAS TAKEN ABACK.

FOOLISH BOY! DO
YOU KNOW WHO
I AM? MOVE OUT
OF MY WAY.

WITHOUT UTTERING A WORD, THE YOUTH
STRUCK SHIVA
WITH HIS STAFF.

SHIVA WAS FURIOUS.

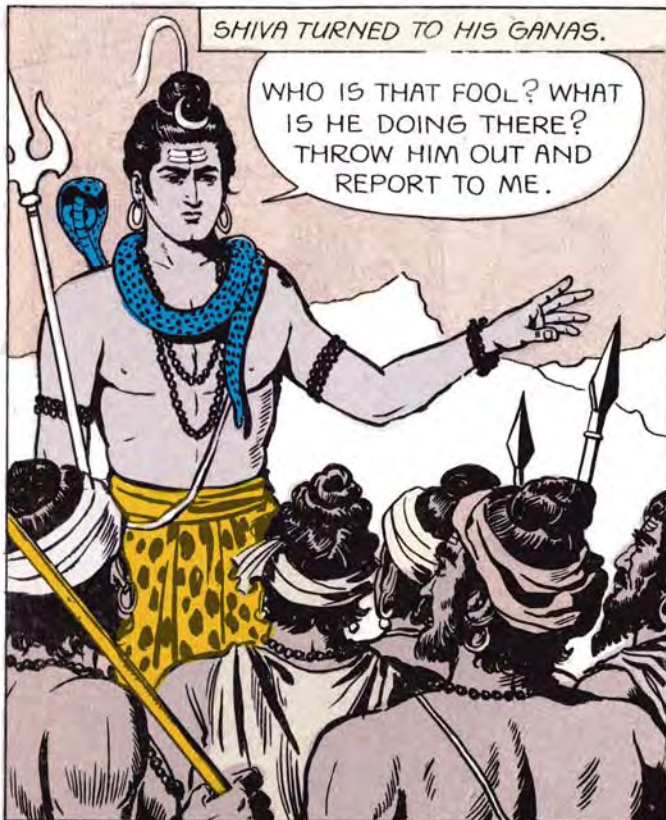
FOOL! I AM
SHIVA,
PARVATI'S HUSBAND.
HOW DARE YOU
FORBID ME TO
ENTER MY OWN
HOME!

BUT THE YOUTH ONLY RAISED HIS STAFF AND HIT SHIVA ONCE AGAIN.



SHIVA TURNED TO HIS GANAS.

WHO IS THAT FOOL? WHAT IS HE DOING THERE? THROW HIM OUT AND REPORT TO ME.



SHIVA LEFT AND THE GANAS TURNED UPON THE YOUTH.

GET AWAY WITH YOU OR YOU WILL RECEIVE A TASTE OF MY VALOUR.

YOU GET AWAY FROM HERE, IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE.

YOU SEEM TO FORGET THAT WE ARE SHIVA'S GANAS.



THE YOUTH STOOD STILL FOR A WHILE. HE WAS PUZZLED.



MEANWHILE, INDOORS PARVATI HAD HEARD THE COMMOTION. SHE SENT HER FRIEND OUT.

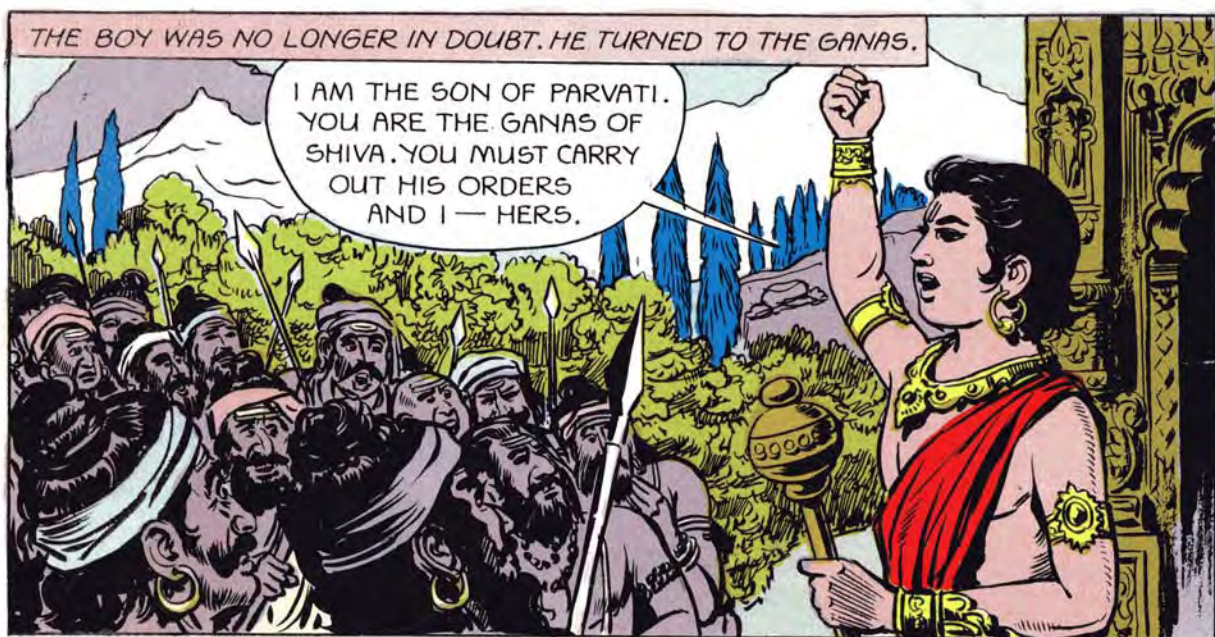
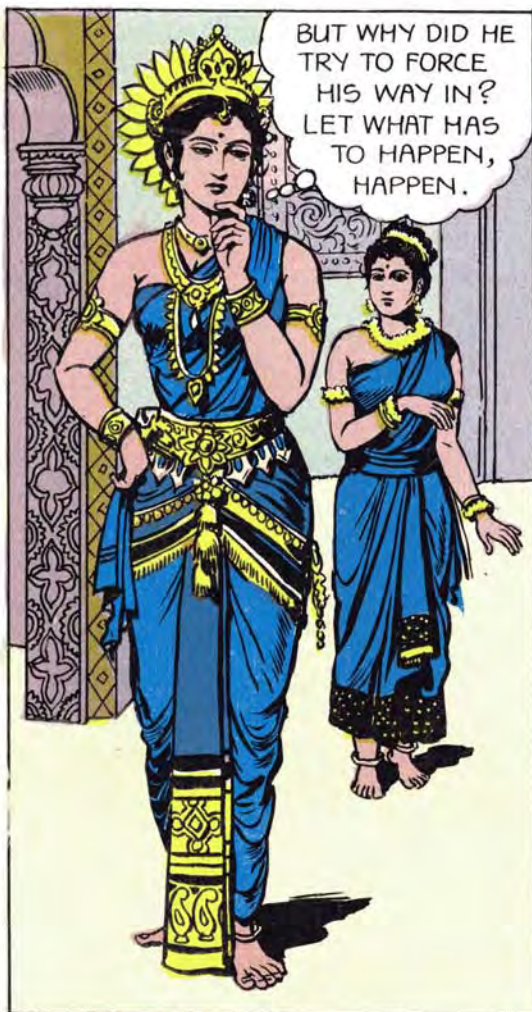


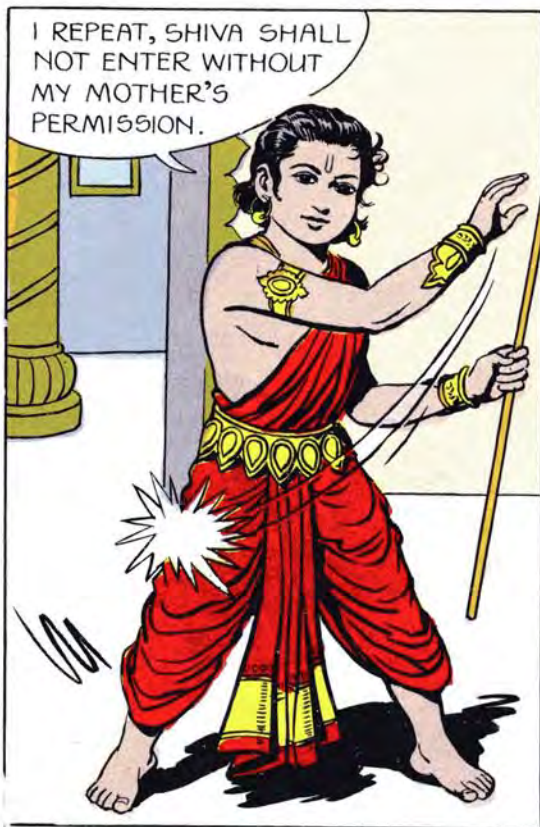
THE FRIEND SOON RETURNED.



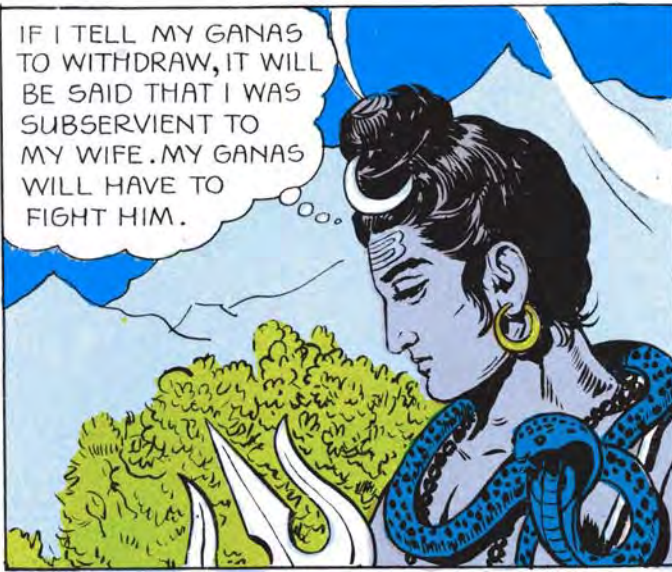
PARVATI HESITATED FOR A MOMENT.







IF I TELL MY GANAS TO WITHDRAW, IT WILL BE SAID THAT I WAS SUBSERVIENT TO MY WIFE. MY GANAS WILL HAVE TO FIGHT HIM.



HE TURNED TO HIS GANAS.

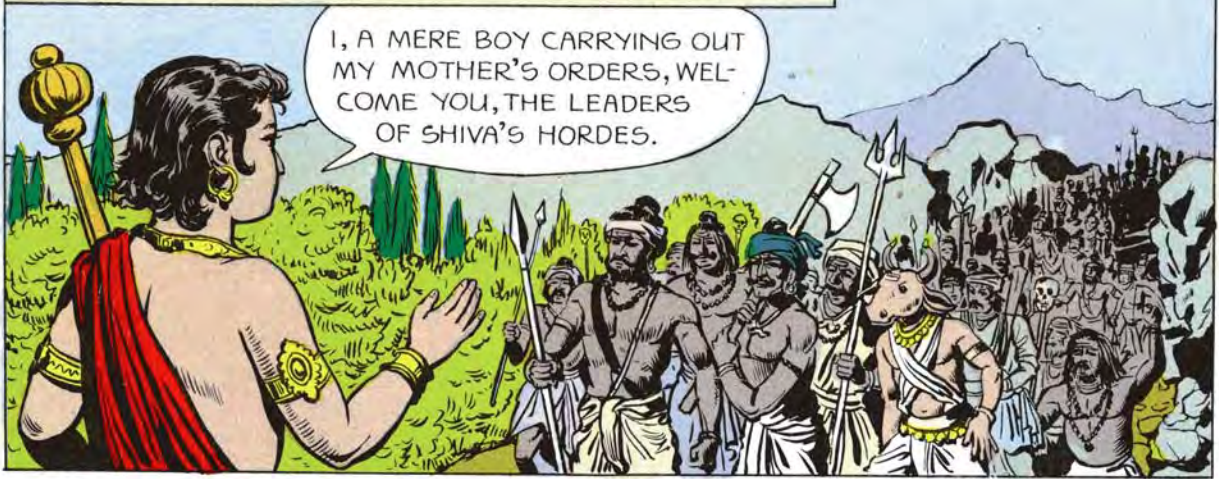
ALL OF YOU ARE MY OWN, INCLUDING PARVATI'S SON. SO A BATTLE MAY NOT SEEM PROPER TO YOU.



BUT IF WE DON'T ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE, WE MAY BE MISUNDERSTOOD. GO! FIGHT AND DEFEAT HIM. IT SHOULD BE EASY.



SO THE GANAS, FULLY ARRAYED FOR WAR, WENT BACK TO THE BOY. HE WAS AMUSED WHEN HE SAW THEM.



THE GANAS RUSHED AT HIM.



NANDI GRABBED HIS LEGS.



BUT —



THEN THE BOY SEIZED AN IRON CLUB AND WHIRLED IT ABOUT.



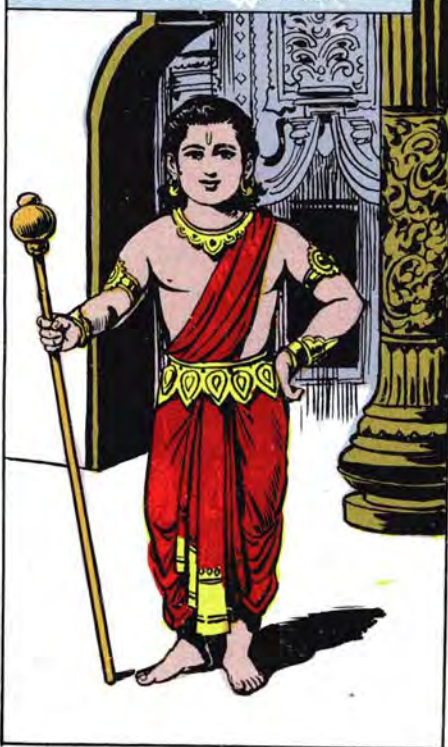
MANY OF THE GANAS FELL.



THE REST FLED AS FAST AS THEY COULD.



THE BOY ONCE AGAIN TOOK HIS POST AT THE DOOR.



MEANWHILE, WHEN BRAHMA, VISHNU AND INDRA HEARD THE UPROAR, THEY TALKED THE MATTER OVER WITH SAGE NARADA.



THEY WENT ACCORDINGLY AND BOWED BEFORE SHIVA.

LORD, WE ARE
HERE TO DO
YOUR BIDDING.



SHIVA TOLD THEM ALL.

... AND HE DARES TO
PREVENT ME FROM
ENTERING MY OWN
HOME.



O BRAHMA, GO
THERE AND TRY
TO BRING HIM
UNDER CONTROL.



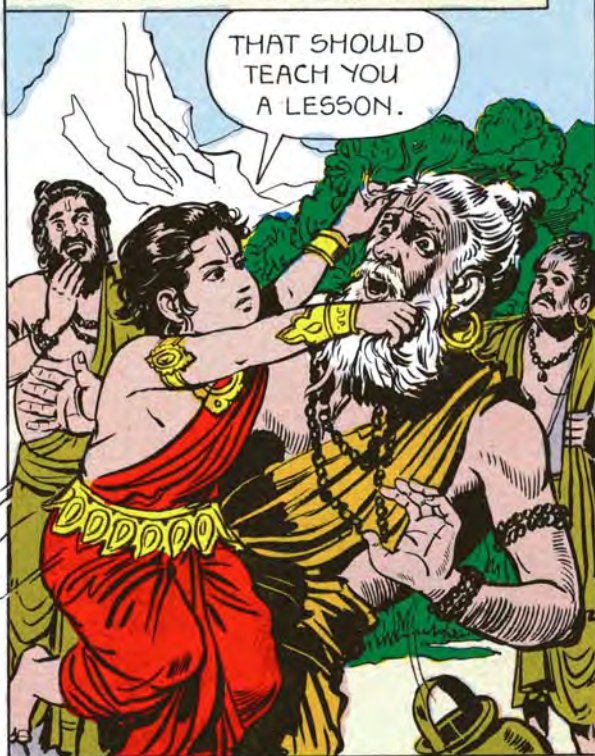
I SHALL GO
DISGUISED AS
A BRAHMAN.

ACCOMPANIED BY MANY SAGES,
BRAHMA LEFT ON HIS MISSION.



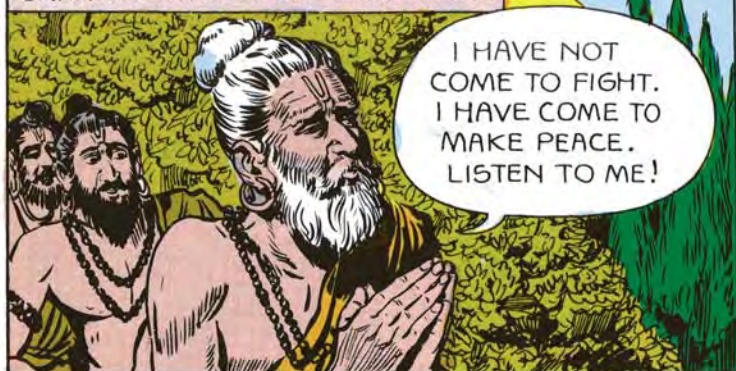


AS THEY NEARED HIM, THE YOUTH
SUDDENLY JUMPED FORWARD AND —



THAT SHOULD
TEACH YOU
A LESSON.

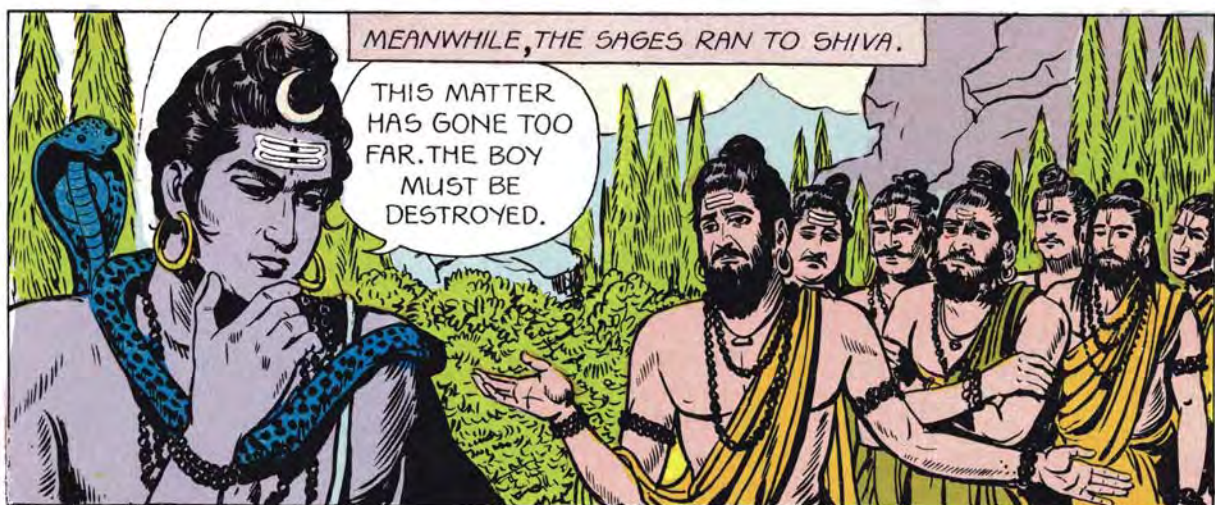
BRAHMA WAS TAKEN UNAWARES.



I HAVE NOT
COME TO FIGHT.
I HAVE COME TO
MAKE PEACE.
LISTEN TO ME!

FOR AN ANSWER, THE YOUTH
LIFTED HIS CLUB MENACINGLY.





THE DEVAS, LED BY INDRA, AND THE GANAS, BY KARTIKEYA, FELL UPON THE BOY FROM ALL DIRECTIONS.



BUT THE BOY FACED THEM VALIANTLY.



MEANWHILE, PARVATI LEARNED OF ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED. SHE WAS FURIOUS.



HOW DARE THEY HARASS MY SON!

THEN AND THERE SHE CREATED THE TWO SHAKTIS, KALI AND DURGA.



KALI STOOD
BETWEEN THE
BOY AND THE
ENEMY. OPENING
HER MOUTH
WIDE, SHE
SWALLOWED
THEIR WEAPONS...



...AND HURLED THEM BACK.

DURGA TOOK THE FORM
OF LIGHTNING...



...AND DESTROYED THE ENEMIES' WEAPONS
BEFORE THEY COULD REACH THE BOY.



BETWEEN THE TWO OF THEM THEY
DID NOT LET A SINGLE WEAPON
COME ANYWHERE NEAR THE BOY'S
SWINGING CLUB.



INDRA AND HIS DEVAS WERE COMPLETELY ROUTED.



EVEN KARTIKEYA, WHO HAD KILLED THE INVINCIBLE TARAKASURA, WAS HELPLESS.



THEY HELD COUNCIL.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

LET US GO BACK TO SHIVA.





UNPERTURBED BY THE SIGHT OF SHIVA, THE BOY ATTACKED!
ALL THE CHIEF GODS. ONE BY ONE THEY FELL.



AS SHIVA WATCHED HIM
FIGHT, HE WAS AMAZED.



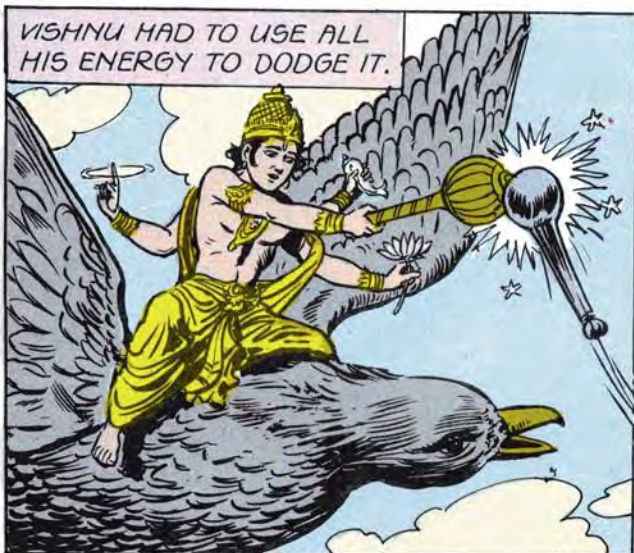
HE IS INVINCIBLE.
HE CAN ONLY BE
KILLED BY CUNNING.
I MUST WATCH FOR
AN OPPORTUNITY.

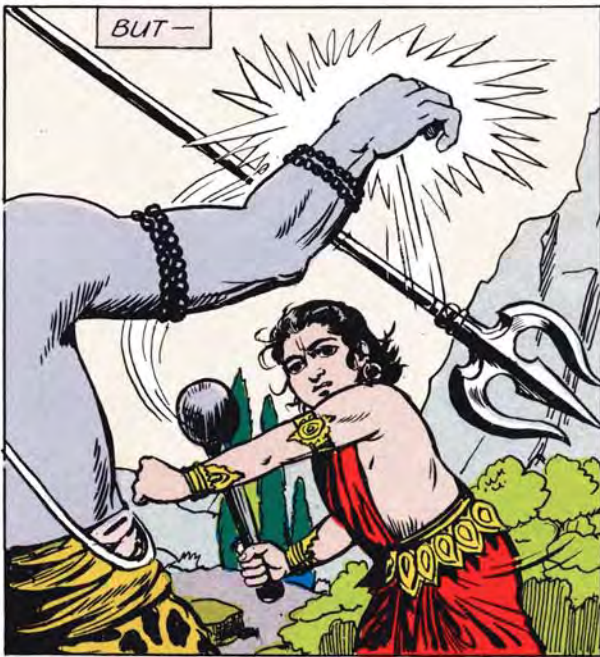
THE SAME THOUGHT HAD STRUCK
VISHNU TOO. HE SPOKE TO SHIVA.



I SHALL USE MY
POWERS OF
DELUSION TO
FIGHT HIM, IF
YOU PER-
MIT ME.

YOU MAY.
THAT IS THE
ONLY WAY.





THE BOY LIFTED HIS CLUB...



...BUT IT WAS CUT IN TWO BY VISHNU'S DISCUS.



THE BOY HURLED THE PIECE THAT WAS LEFT IN HIS HAND...



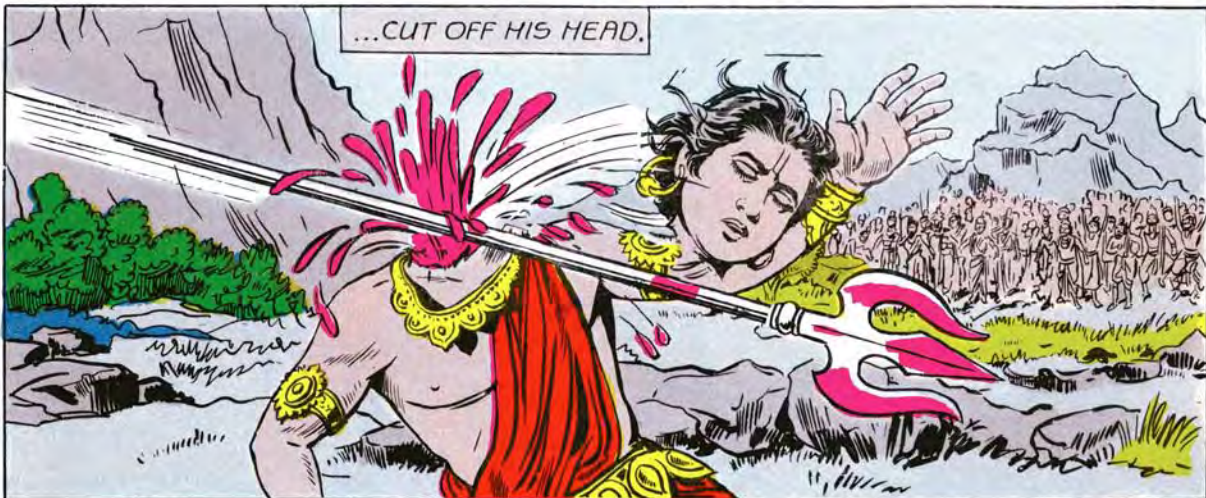
... BUT VISHNU'S MOUNT, GARUDA, CAUGHT IT AND PROTECTED HIS MASTER.



THEN, AS THE BOY PICKED UP HIS STAFF TO HIT VISHNU, SHIVA CAME UP FROM BEHIND AND...



...CUT OFF HIS HEAD.



FOR A MOMENT ALL ON THE SCENE STOOD STILL, THEIR GAZE FIXED ON THE VALIANT HERO.



THEN THE DEVAS AND THE GANAS BECAME JUBILANT.



BUT SHIVA WAS TROUBLED.



MEANWHILE, WHEN PARVATI LEARNT OF HER SON'S DEATH—



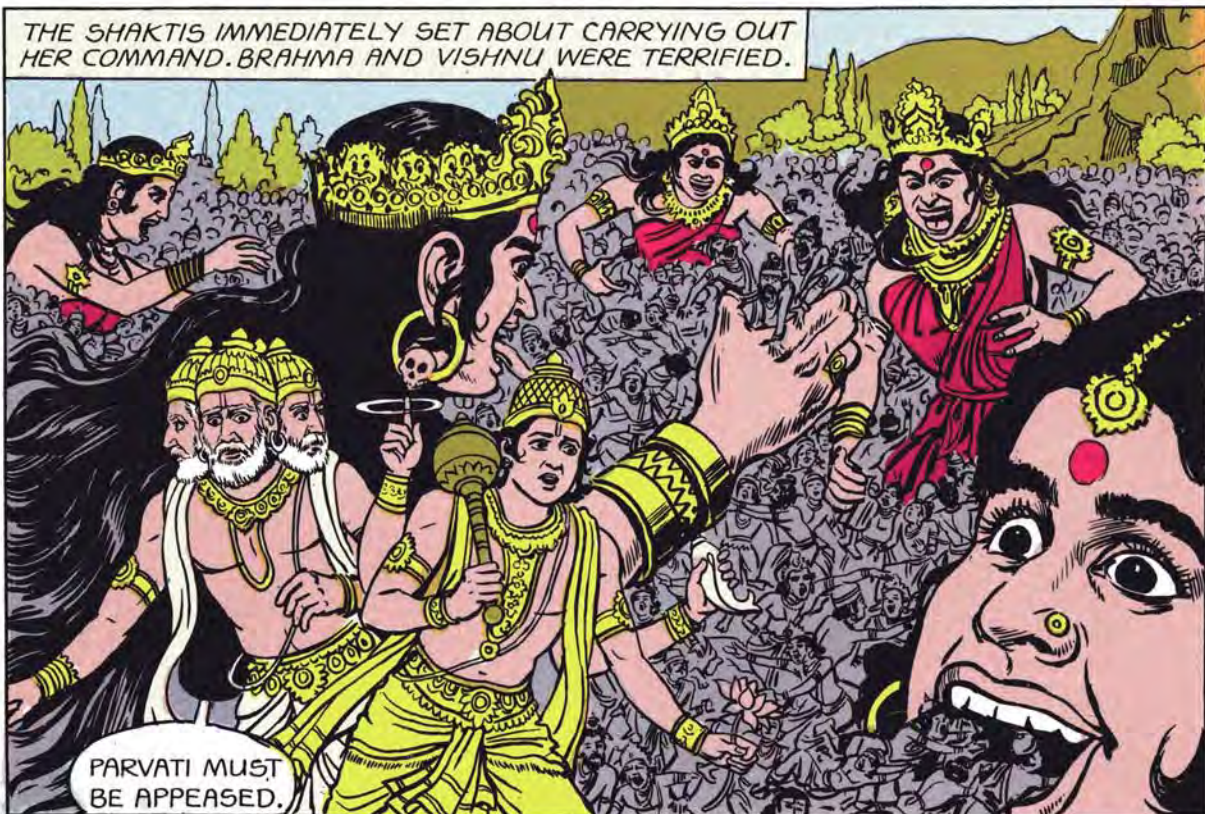
OUT OF HER FURY, SHE CREATED HUNDREDS AND THOUSANDS OF SHAKTIS.



O MOTHER, WHAT
IS YOUR COMMAND?

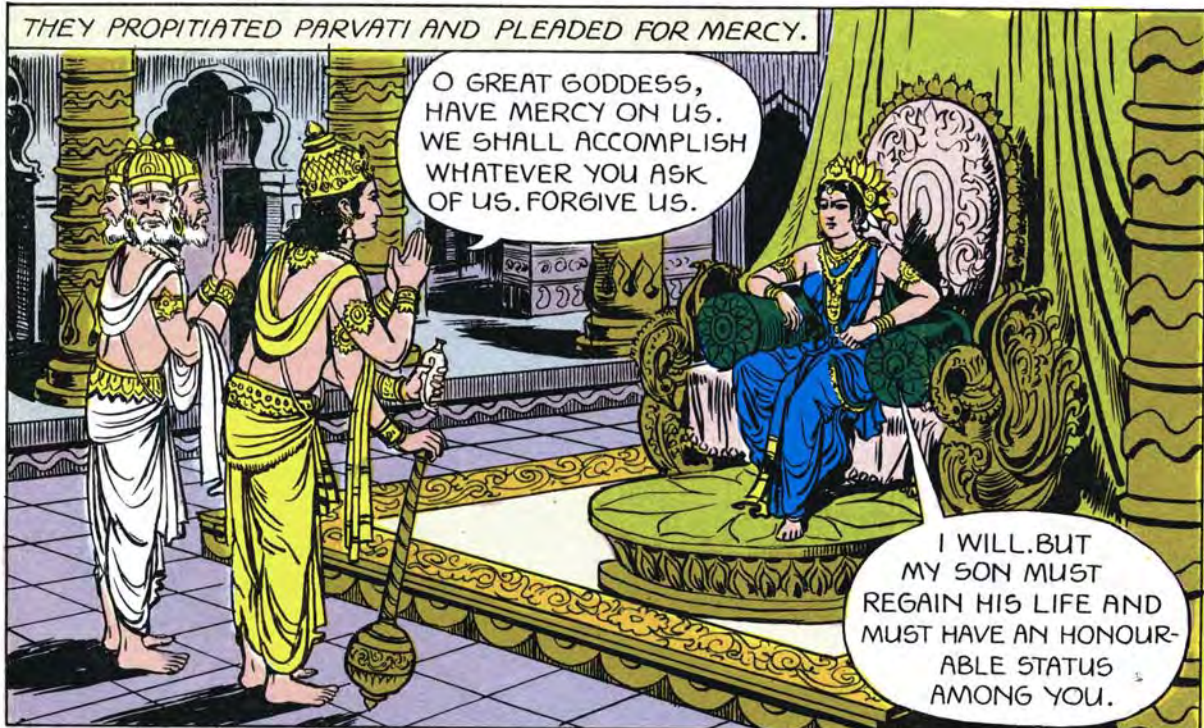
DESTROY ALL THE
DEVAS AND GANAS.
DEVOUR THEM.

THE SHAKTIS IMMEDIATELY SET ABOUT CARRYING OUT
HER COMMAND. BRAHMA AND VISHNU WERE TERRIFIED.



PARVATI MUST
BE APPEASED.

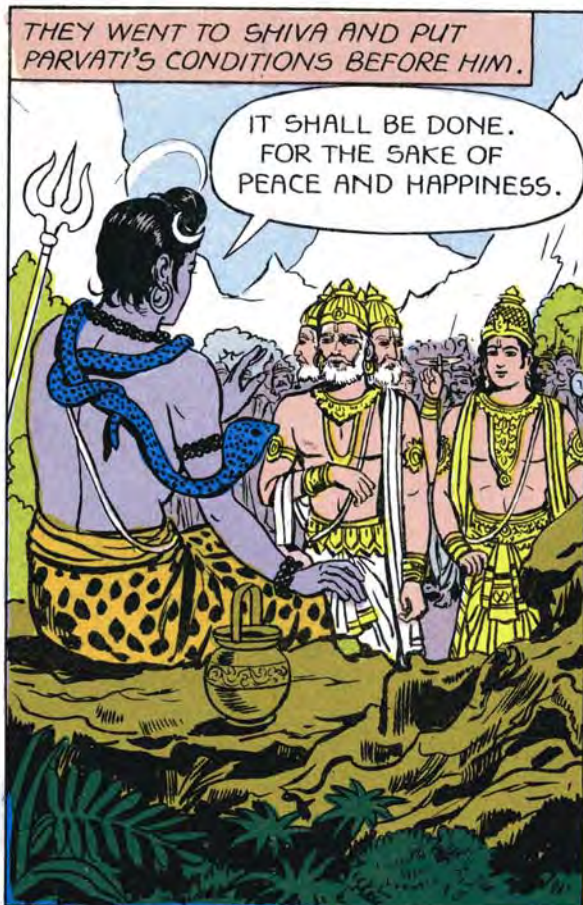
THEY PROPITIATED PARVATI AND PLEADED FOR MERCY.



O GREAT GODDESS,
HAVE MERCY ON US.
WE SHALL ACCOMPLISH
WHATEVER YOU ASK
OF US. FORGIVE US.

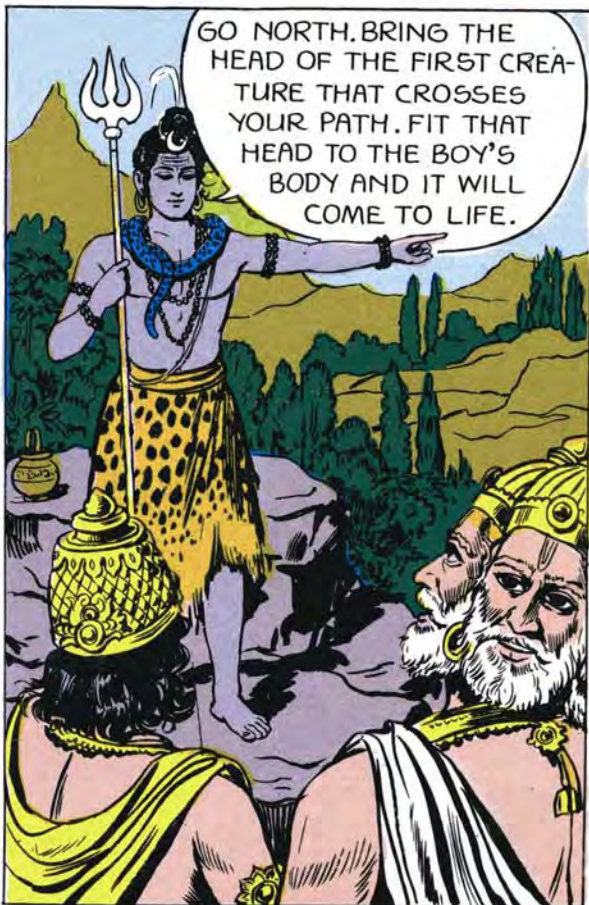
I WILL. BUT
MY SON MUST
REGAIN HIS LIFE AND
MUST HAVE AN HONOUR-
ABLE STATUS
AMONG YOU.

THEY WENT TO SHIVA AND PUT
PARVATI'S CONDITIONS BEFORE HIM.



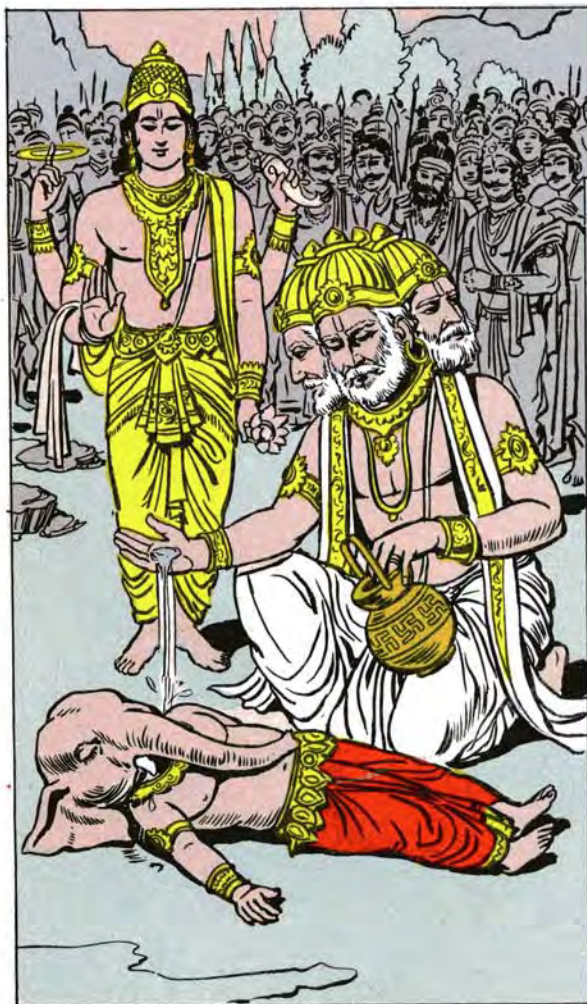
IT SHALL BE DONE.
FOR THE SAKE OF
PEACE AND HAPPINESS.

GO NORTH. BRING THE
HEAD OF THE FIRST CREA-
TURE THAT CROSSES
YOUR PATH. FIT THAT
HEAD TO THE BOY'S
BODY AND IT WILL
COME TO LIFE.





IT WAS A SINGLE-TUSKED ELEPHANT THAT MET THEM.



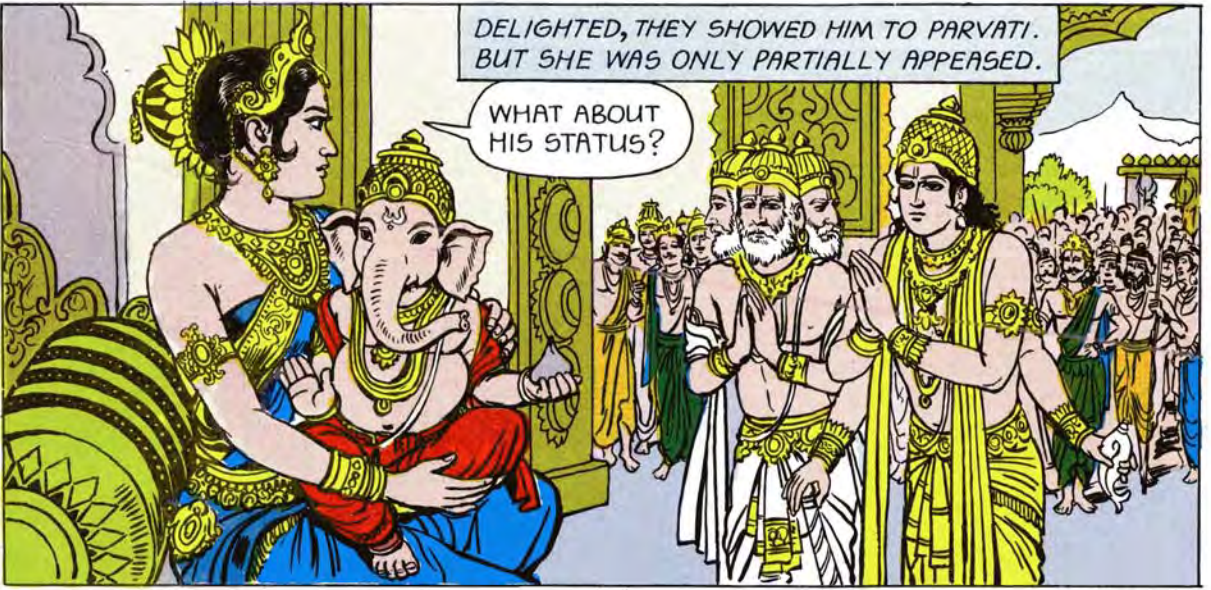
THEY BROUGHT THE HEAD BACK AND FITTED IT TO THE BODY OF THE BOY.



THE BOY SAT UP.

DELIGHTED, THEY SHOWED HIM TO PARVATI.
BUT SHE WAS ONLY PARTIALLY APPEASED.

WHAT ABOUT
HIS STATUS?



AT THAT MOMENT INDRA AND THE
OTHER GODS LED SHIVA TO HER.



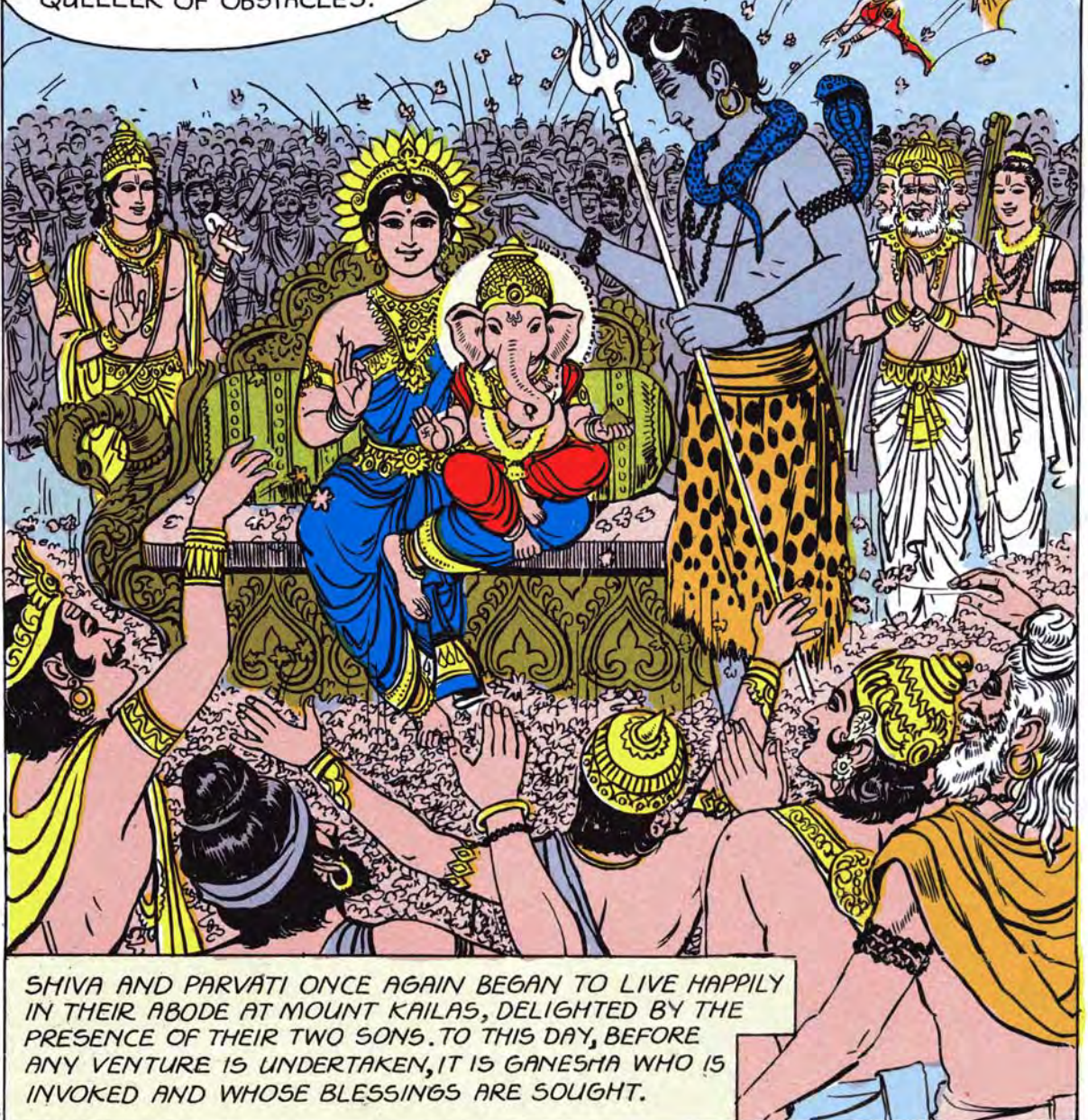
SHIVA BOWED BEFORE PARVATI.

FORGIVE ME, PARVATI.
ARROGANCE IS CHARACTERISTIC
OF THE MALE. THIS VALIANT
YOUTH SHALL BE
ANOTHER SON OF
MINE.



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THEN SHIVA PLACED HIS HAND ON THE BOY'S HEAD.

EVEN AS A MERE BOY YOU SHOWED GREAT VALOUR. YOU SHALL BE GANESHA, THE PRESIDING OFFICER OF ALL MY GANAS. YOU SHALL BE WORTHY OF WORSHIP FOREVER. YOU SHALL ALSO BE CALLED VIGHNESHWARA, THE QUELLER OF OBSTACLES.



SHIVA AND PARVATI ONCE AGAIN BEGAN TO LIVE HAPPILY IN THEIR ABODE AT MOUNT KAILAS, DELIGHTED BY THE PRESENCE OF THEIR TWO SONS. TO THIS DAY, BEFORE ANY VENTURE IS UNDERTAKEN, IT IS GANESHA WHO IS INVOKED AND WHOSE BLESSINGS ARE SOUGHT.