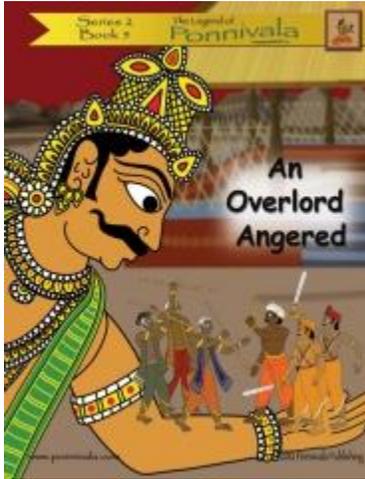


## Episode 18 – An Overlord Angered (Sub Stories a, b, and c)

**Resource Materials: Individual comic books, a graphic novel set, or 26 videos**  
**VISIT our SHOP: Choose the retelling that works best for you**



### 18-a The Twin Heroes Attack Their Rivals' School-age Sons

The twin brothers racing their horses towards the land of their clan rivals. Following on foot (with magical speed) is their powerful assistant. When these three men find the clansmen's village they quickly locate its single room school house. There they tie up the horses, enter the one-room building, and sit down at the back of the class. Of course, they are soon noticed. The children react with anger at the presumption of the visitors and a row begins. The younger brother, with help from the powerful assistant, wreaks havoc inside the school. But the elder brother stands to one side. After much beating and whipping, all the young boys in the class are tied together in sets of two. Then they are forced out the schoolhouse door and told to run home. Of course they can only hobble.

**SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES: Can you think of some modern stories like this where a school was attacked by an intruder and the kids were frightened? Do the modern examples we hear about differ from this old-fashioned one in important ways?**

**COMMENTARY:** An attack on a school full of children is not just a modern event. People in other cultures and during other times have thought of this terrible idea too. Attacking innocent children in a school is a very good way of upsetting parents and teachers, as well as directly hurting kids. It will likely start a much bigger row. The heroes of The Legend of Ponnivala can not be admired for having decided to start their “warrior” careers with this kind of violence. However, one can understand that a long-standing rivalry between the families of these kids (the hated clansmen of neighboring Tangavala) already existed. The clansmen and the heroes' own parents greatly disliked each other. The original episode, (as described by the village bard whose words lie behind the entire legend), is actually quite a bit more violent than what the video depicts.

In the un-expurgated version the attack is rather similar to some of the horrific school violence we hear about today. This small part of the larger story has been significantly “tamed down” in its retelling so as to make it easier to share with kids. However, the motivations of the attackers (modern and old) are not so different. Here, as in stories from present times, anger at imagined insults and/or a desire to “get even” with someone who has made the aggressor suffer in an earlier incident, seem to be common themes. In a nutshell, all these stories seem to have to do with a desire for “sweet” revenge.

#### 18-b **A Group of School Boys Are Humiliated And Their Families Exiled**

The school boys’ mothers soon notice a strange-looking group of kids running towards them. They call their husbands who have just returned from the fields for lunch. Everyone who sees the state of these poor children feels horrified and insulted. The men from each child’s family run to the school and try to attack the challengers with sticks. But they do not win. Instead, the heroes beat them back. As the situation worsens the heroes throw the entire set of residents out of their village. Forced into exile by the unwelcome visitors, these victimized families set out from their own village as refugees. They quickly develop a plan. They will find refuge with the overlord of the entire South (the Chola king). Then they will submit their complaint about mistreatment to him.

**SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES:** This episode resembles many refugee stories from modern times. What refugee story can you tell where a whole group of people were forced out of their homeland and forced to find shelter elsewhere?

**COMMENTARY:** This story will work well for discussing modern refugees and some of the crimes they have suffered. Being exiled is not a “new” kind of horror. Similar events have been a part of human history since at least time of written records, and likely long before. And exile is not new to this story. The heroes’ own parents were sent into exile by this same group just one generation back (Episode 15-a). The occurrence of a similar story here is thus a kind of “tit for tat.” And it also occurred once before that, when the heroes’ father was just a young boy (episode 3-a). In sum this is a recurring theme that underlies the entire Legend of Ponnivala in an important way.

#### 18-c **The Exiled Families Cleverly Enlist A Superior King’s Backing**

The clansmen find the Chola’s palace. As they meet the king, several spokespersons for the group cleverly remind the great monarch that the two young boy-rulers from Ponnivala have not delivered the traditional tribute to him even once since their parents’ death. Angered, the Chola sends an envoy to the twin brothers’ palace to demand immediate payment. But the envoys are stopped at the river by aggressive palace animals. Frightened, they leave their message with a maid who is filling water pots there, and return quickly to the Chola’s home territory. The palace maid brings the two king brothers news of the great Chola’s demands. But they disagree on how to handle this new challenge. The younger brother refuses to humiliate himself by taking a symbolic tribute payment to their overlord. By contrast, the elder feels it must be done. He agrees to go.

**SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS & EXERCISES:** Do you know of a story where a messenger got “frightened” during his or her mission and in the end had to pass the job to someone else to get it done? Do you think this made the message stronger or weaker when it was finally received?

**COMMENTARY:** The refugees are clever and find a way to get the king's attention. The monarch is unsympathetic at first but the clansmen find a reason why he should "switch sides" and support them rather than remain loyal to his old ally. After all it is the sons of that ally who beat up the visitors. Many politicians today use a similar tactic as a way to get members of parliament to