

In The Beginning



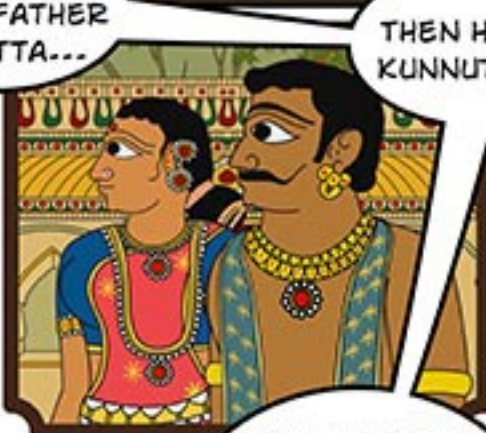
GATHER ROUND! I AM GOING TO TELL YOU THE STORY OF A GREAT FAMILY OF RULERS.



IT WASN'T IN OUR TIME, BUT LONG AGO, DEEP INSIDE SOUTH INDIA. IT WAS THE TIME OF THE GREAT CHOLA KINGS.

THIS FAMILY RULED THE LAND OF PONNIVALA, A LUSH, FERTILE AREA WATERED BY THE KAVERI RIVER.







The Legend of Ponnivala



FIRST I MUST
PAY HOMAGE TO
LORD GANESH AND
THE GODDESS
SARASWATI.



NOW, I WILL TELL
YOU THE STORY...



OUR STORY BEGINS ONE
FATEFUL DAY, WHEN THE GREAT
GOD SHIVA AND HIS WIFE PARVATI
WERE SITTING TOGETHER.





LOOK AT THAT
BEAUTIFUL FOREST
DOWN THERE!

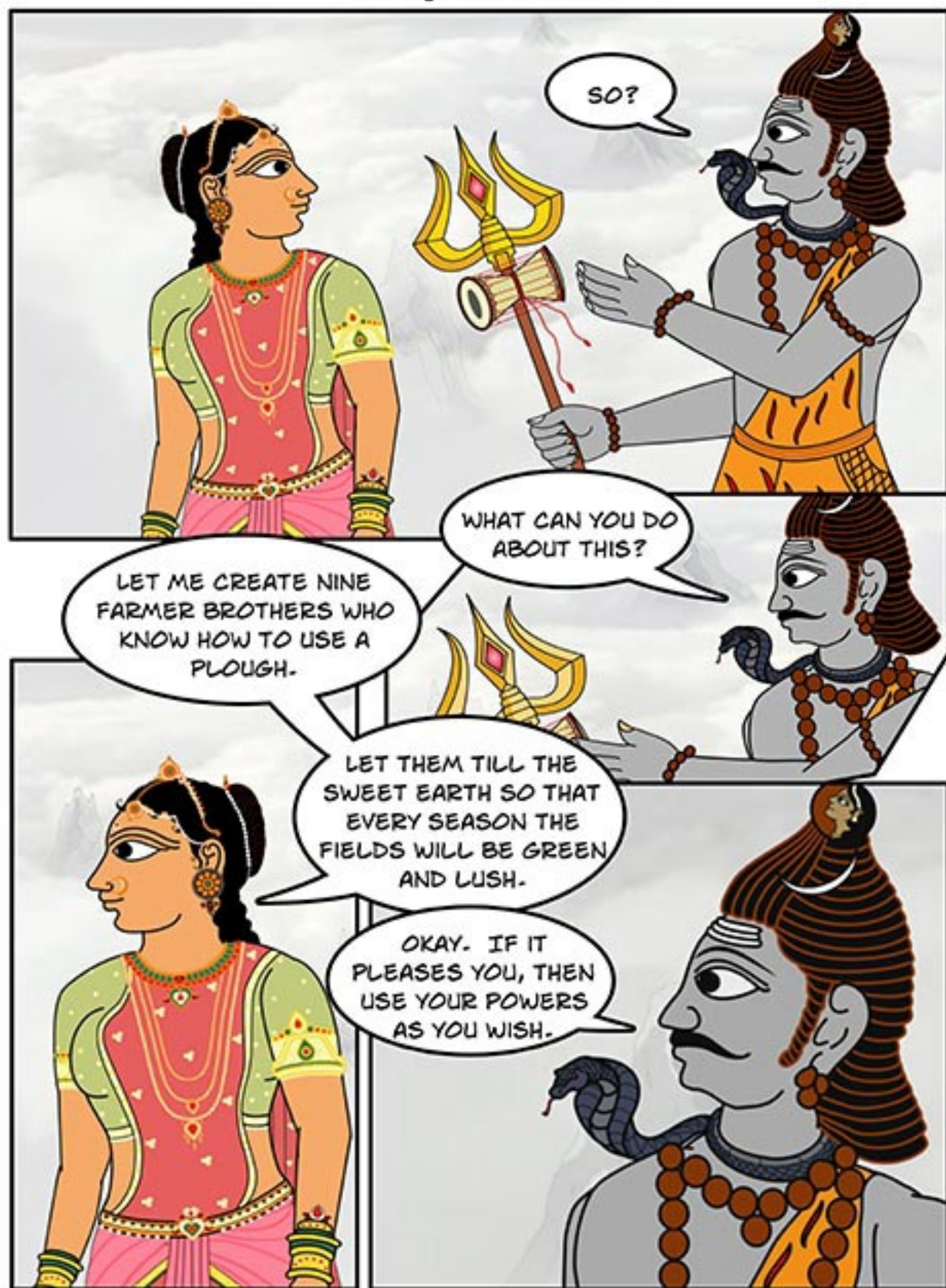


IT IS BEAUTIFUL, BUT I
DO NOT SEE ANY PLOUGHED
FIELDS! THERE ARE NO
CROPS BEING GROWN.



I WANT TO SEE THIS
BEAUTIFUL AREA BECOME
BOUNTIFUL.





AND SO PARVATI STEPS FORTH AND SUMMONS HER GREAT POWERS.



SHE BRINGS FORTH NINE FARMERS. THESE NINE MEN APPEAR NEAR THE LOCAL TEMPLE. PARVATI CALLS TO THE BROTHERS FROM HEAVEN.




I HAVE PLACED YOU IN AN
UNCULTIVATED AREA.


I WANT YOU TO
ESTABLISH STRONG
FARMER FAMILIES THAT
WILL EXPAND AND
FLOURISH.



The Legend of Ponnivala



TAKE YOUR WIVES FROM
THE FARMERS OF VALAVANDI.
UNDER YOUR CARE, I WANT
THIS LAND TO PROSPER.



OH FINE GODDESS, THANK YOU
FOR YOUR BLESSINGS! MY EIGHT
BROTHERS AND I WILL CARRY
OUT YOUR WISHES!

In The Beginning



THE FARMERS DO JUST AS PARVATI INSTRUCTED. THEY LABOUR HARD TO PRODUCE PROSPEROUS FARM LAND. EVERYONE FEELS GOOD ABOUT THE WORK THEY ARE DOING. THE NINE BROTHERS EACH TAKE A WIFE AND NEW FAMILIES ARE STARTED.

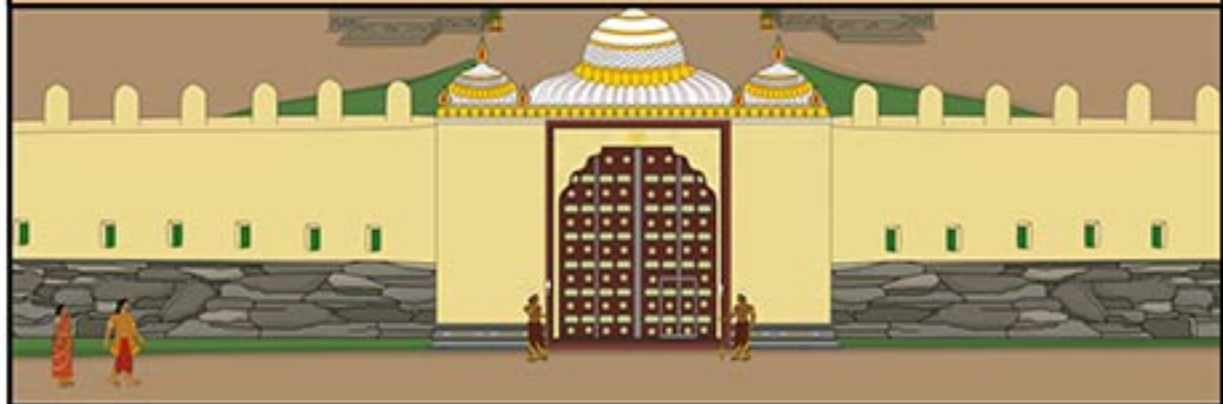


BUT THEN A TERRIBLE THING HAPPENS. IT DOES NOT RAIN, AND SO A GREAT FAMINE SPREADS THROUGH THE AREA. THERE IS NO FOOD LEFT ANYWHERE. KOLATTA, THE ELDEST BROTHER, HAS BECOME DESPERATE.





AND SO KOLATTA AND HIS WIFE ARIYANACCI SET OFF FOR THE CHOLA KINGDOM, HOPEFUL OF FINDING WORK.



THE THREE GREAT KINGS, CHOLA, CHERA, AND PANDIYA, WERE TOGETHER FOR A MEETING.

GREETINGS TO YOU!
WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

MY NAME IS KOLATTA, AND I AM FROM THE LAND CALLED VELLIVALA.

OUR FIELDS HAS BEEN STRUCK BY A TERRIBLE DROUGHT, AND I AM UNABLE TO FARM ANY LONGER.

YES, I HAVE HEARD OF THIS FAMINE. IT IS A TERRIBLE THING!

WE DID NOT KNOW THERE WERE FARMERS IN VELLIVALA!

IF YOU WISH, WE HAVE WORK FOR YOU HERE. WE CAN PAY 20 MEASURES OF GRAIN A MONTH!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS, GREAT KING!



ALTHOUGH KOLATTA HAS FOUND WORK IN THE CHOLA KINGDOM, HIS EIGHT BROTHERS ARE STILL STARVING IN VELLIVALA. THEY WONDER WHERE THEIR ELDER BROTHER HAS GONE.



WE HAVE NOT HEARD FROM OUR ELDER BROTHER IN SO LONG!

PERHAPS HE HAS GONE TO WORK IN THE CHOLA KINGDOM?

LET US GO AND FIND HIM!



BLESSINGS TO YOU ALL! WHO ARE YOU?

GREAT KING, WE ARE FARMERS FROM THE VELLIVALA REGION. OUR LANDS HAVE SUFFERED A TERRIBLE DROUGHT!



YES, I HAVE HEARD!



OUR ELDER BROTHER LEFT A WHILE AGO... AND WE WERE WONDERING IF HE HAD COME HERE?



SO KOLATTA IS YOUR
ELDER BROTHER!
YES, HE IS HERE...

SERVANT!
GO AND FETCH
KOLATTA!

OH KOLATTA, ARE THESE
EIGHT MEN YOUR YOUNGER
BROTHERS?



YES, WE
BELONG TO ONE
BIG FAMILY!

VERY WELL THEN.
WILL YOU EIGHT
MEN ACCEPT WORK
FROM ME?

I WILL PAY YOU AT
THE SAME RATE AS
YOUR ELDER
BROTHER.

YOU SHALL EACH GET
20 MEASURES OF
GRAIN A MONTH!



OH KING!
THANK YOU FOR
EVERYTHING!

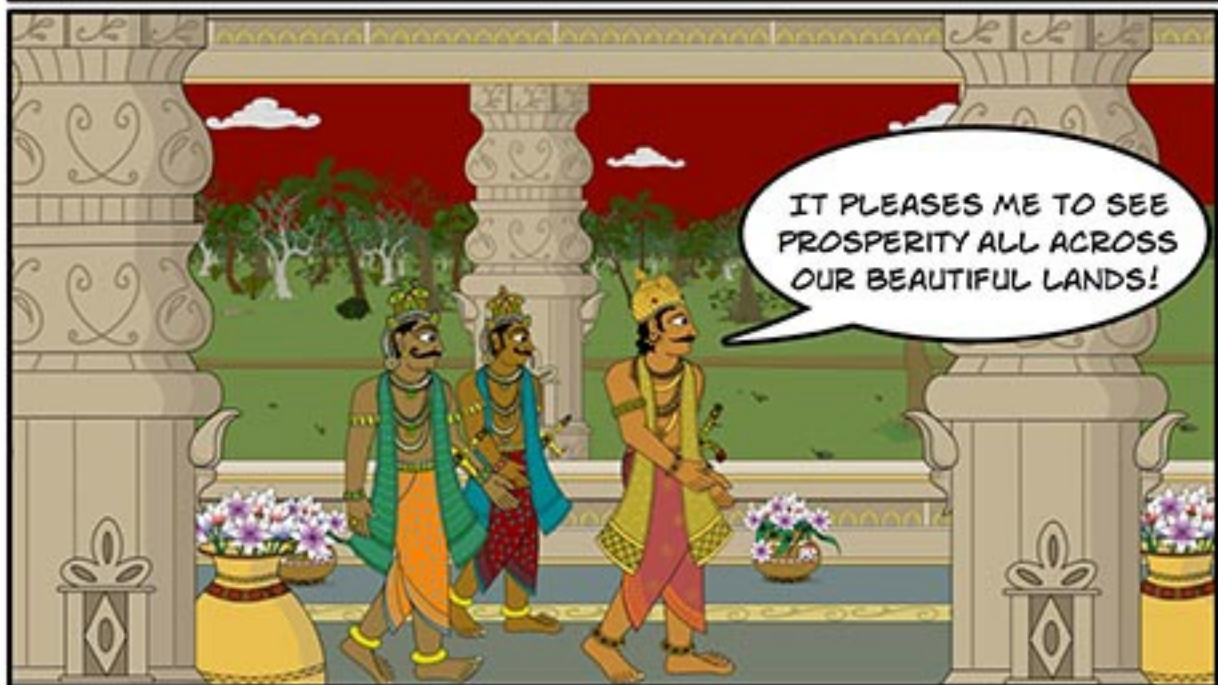
The Legend of Ponnivala

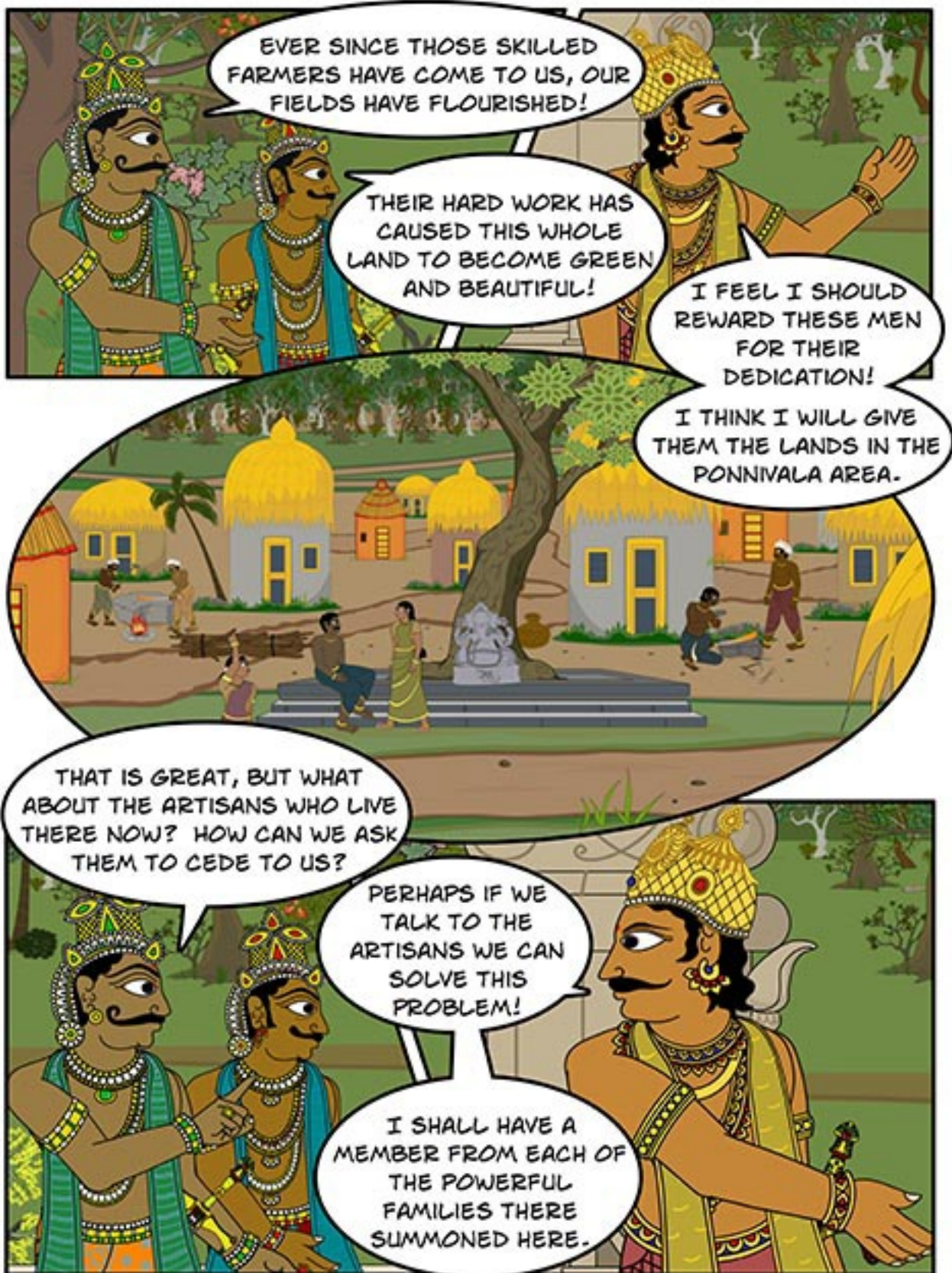


TIME PASSES AND IT CONTINUES TO RAIN WELL. THE LANDS OF THE CHOLA MONARCH PROSPER.



THE NINE FARMERS WORK HARD AND NO ONE GOES HUNGRY. THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHOLA KING IS RESPECTED.









WE HAVE WORKED
AND LIVED IN
PONNIVALA FOR SO
LONG.

WE CANNOT AGREE
TO CEDE OUR RIGHTS
IN THIS LOVELY AREA,
TO OUTSIDERS!

THE DEBATE LASTS FOR DAYS, AND NO VERDICT IS REACHED. FINALLY, THE CHOLA KING LEAVES THE PALACE AND CALLS ON LORD VISHNU.



OH GREAT VISHNU!
RULER OF THE
UNIVERSE!

WE NEED YOUR HELP IN
DECIDING AN IMPORTANT
MATTER!



VISHNU HEARS THE PLEA...



AND FLIES DOWN TO HELP!



Whoosh!



THE NEXT DAY,
EVERYONE
GATHERS FOR
THE
CEREMONY.
THEY CALL
UPON VISHNU.

OH LORD! OH VISHNU!

OH VISHNU! LORD
OF THE UNIVERSE!

BLESSINGS TO
EVERYONE!

ARTISANS! THE CHOLA
KING HAS ASKED YOU TO
HAND OVER THE LANDS OF
PONNIVALA TO THESE NINE
FARMERS.

OH LORD, WE
WILL NOT GIVE UP
OUR HOME!

BUT YOU HAVE
REFUSED!

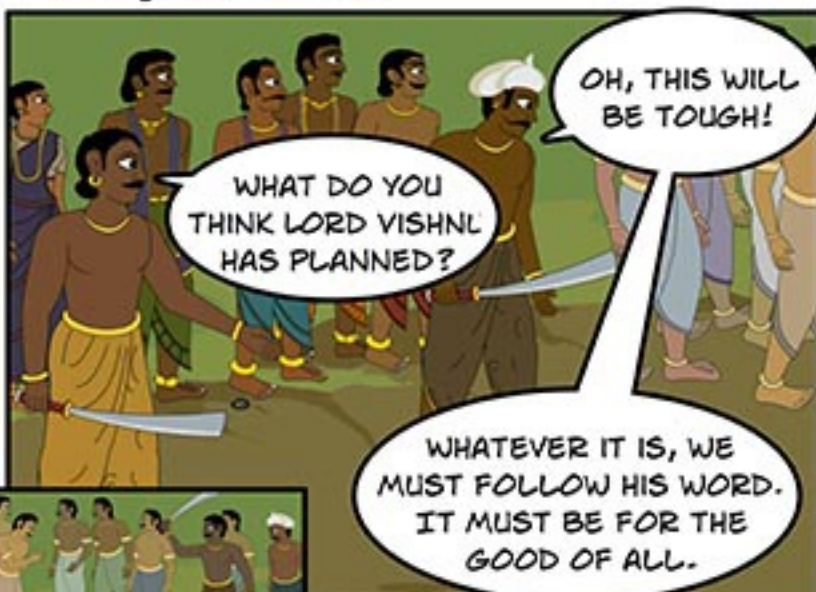
I WILL CREATE A
CONTEST WHICH WILL
DECIDE THE OUTCOME
OF THIS MATTER.

THERE WILL BE A
PUJA OF 18 OFFERINGS.
THEN I WILL MAKE THE
ELDEST OF THESE
FARMERS RISE UP FROM
THE LAND.

THE BEST FIGHTERS
AMONG YOU WILL HAVE
ONE CHANCE TO SEVER
HIS HEAD.

IF YOU SUCCEED,
CONTROL OF THE AREA WILL
REMAIN YOURS. IF YOU FAIL
THE LAND BELONGS TO THE
FARMERS.

THE ARTISANS AND FARMERS AGREE TO THE TERMS AND THE ARTISANS CHOOSE THEIR FOUR BEST FIGHTERS. EACH MAN STANDS, READY. VISHNU MAKES A HOLE IN THE EARTH FROM WHICH KOLATTA WILL RISE.



VISHNU CAUSES KOLATTA TO RISE. THE ARTISANS THROW THEIR SWORDS STRAIGHT AT HIS HEAD!



FWOOP!
FWOOP!
FWOOP!

BUT THE SWORDS MAGICALLY STOP WHEN THEY REACH KOLATTA! THE ARTISANS KNOW THEY HAVE LOST.





ARTISANS, I DECLARE THAT YOUR CHALLENGE TO THE FARMERS HAS FAILED. THE FARMERS WILL NOW OBTAIN THE RIGHT TO PLOUGH IN PONNIVALA.

FURTHERMORE, I SHALL SET THE EXCHANGE VALUES BETWEEN YOUR TWO COMMUNITIES.

ONE PLOUGH SHALL BE WORTH FOUR MEASURES OF GRAIN. THE ASSEMBLY OF A PLOUGH IS WORTH THREE.

AN ARTISAN SHALL ALSO BE DUE ENOUGH DAIRY PRODUCE TO SUSTAIN HIS FAMILY COMFORTABLY, AND HE MAY CLAIM THREE EXTRA MEASURES OF GRAIN A YEAR AS A RETAINER.

YES LORD. YOU ARE THE ONE WHO KNOWS EVERYTHING. WE WILL OBEY YOUR WORDS.

THIS MATTER HAS BEEN DECIDED! BLESSINGS TO YOU ALL!



THE LANDS OF PONNIVALA ARE GRANTED TO KOLATTA, THE ELDEST FARMER BROTHER.

KOLATTA!
TAKE CARE OF
PONNIVALA!

BE SURE TO PRESENT
AN OFFERING AT THE CELATTA
TEMPLE THERE, THREE TIMES
EACH DAY.

I BELIEVE THIS LOVELY
GODDESS HAS NOT RECEIVED
ANY OFFERINGS FOR AT LEAST
THREE GENERATIONS.

TREAT HER WELL, AND
SHE WILL HELP YOU IN
TIMES OF NEED.

YES, OH KING! WE WILL
DO AS YOU SAY!

HIS YOUNGER BROTHERS INHERIT THE
NEIGHBOURING REGION KNOWN AS TANGAVALA.

A STONE IS ERECTED TO MARK THE
BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE TWO REGIONS.

KOLATTA REMEMBERS THE KING'S WORDS. HE PERFORMS A PUJA THREE
TIMES EACH DAY. SOON THE COUNTRYSIDE OF PONNIVALA IS GREEN AND
LUSH. FINE CROPS GROW EVERYWHERE.





BUT SOON HARDSHIP FALLS ON THE CHOLA KING. A SERIOUS FAMINE ERUPTS ON HIS LANDS, AND THE EARTH IS SO DRY, HIS WORKERS CANNOT BREAK IT WITH THEIR PLOUGHS. AS A RESULT, THE KING CANNOT FIND ENOUGH FOOD TO FEED HIS 12 FAVOURITE COWS.



OH SERVANT, CALL MY SCRIBE!

SCRIBE! WRITE DOWN THESE WORDS!

"THIS COW BELONGS TO THE CHOLA KING. IT IS HUNGRY AND HAS BEEN SET LOOSE DUE TO A GREAT FAMINE ACROSS THE LAND. IF YOU FIND IT, PLEASE FEED IT AND CARE FOR IT WELL."

NOW MAKE 12 COPIES OF THAT MESSAGE AND ATTACH IT TO THE HORNS OF EACH OF MY COWS! THEN SET THEM LOOSE TO WANDER WHERE THEY WILL.

YES, MY LORD!



FAREWELL, MY BELOVED ONES! I SHALL MISS YOU!

THE COWS WANDER IN SEARCH OF FOOD, AND SOON FIND A SUGARCANE FIELD IN PONNIVALA.



SISTERS! THE OWNER OF THIS FIELD WILL BEAT US IF HE FINDS US CHEWING ON THESE SWEET STALKS.

LET US HIDE OVER THERE IN THE FOREST. WE CAN RETURN AFTER DARK TO EAT OUR FILL!



THE COWS REST IN THE FOREST UNTIL DUSK FALLS. THEN, THEY MAKE THEIR WAY BACK TO THE SUGARCANE FIELD. THERE THEY EAT THEIR FILL.



AT DAWN, THE COWS RETURN TO THE FOREST.

Cock-a-doodle-doo!

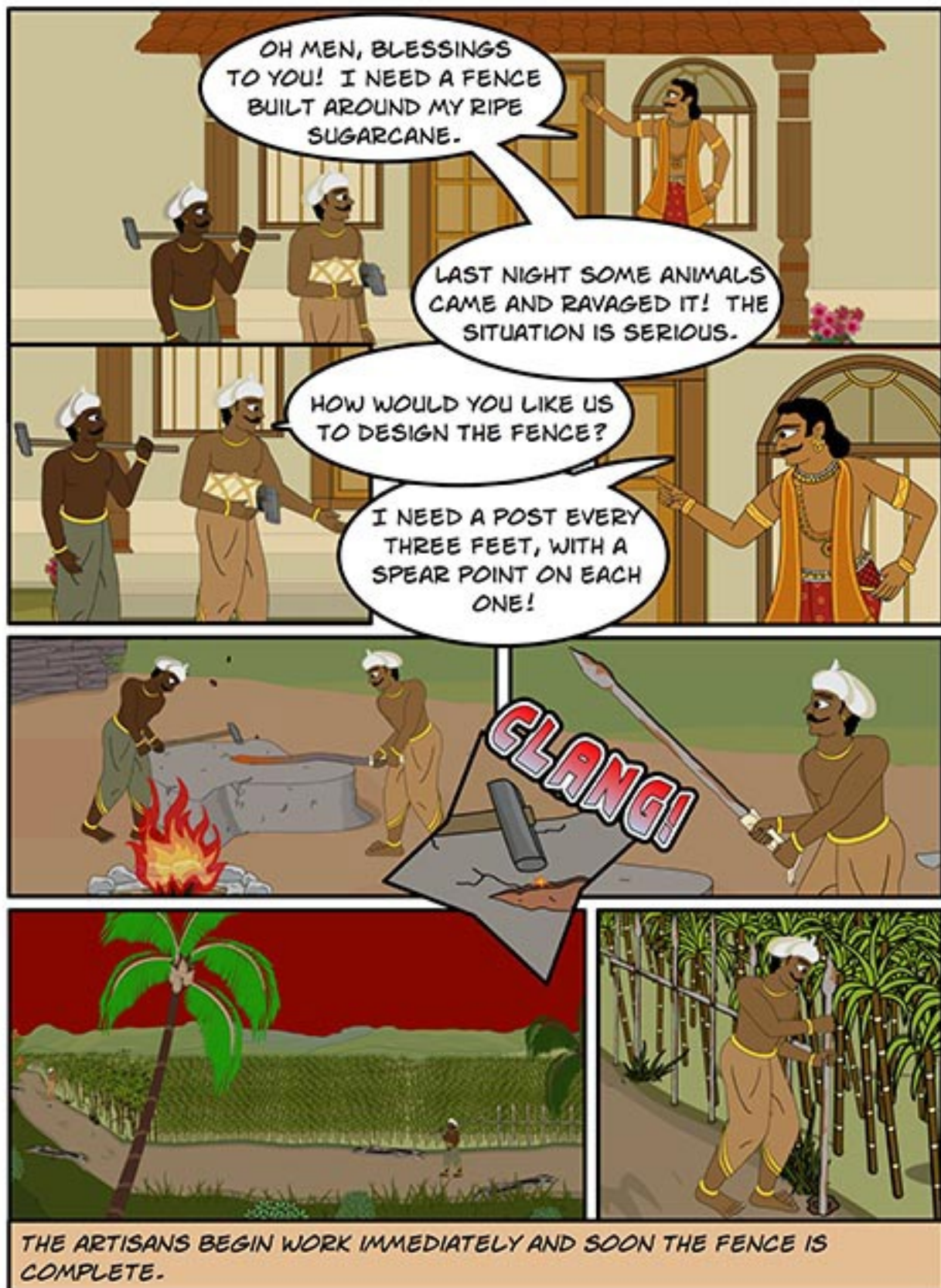
OH MY!

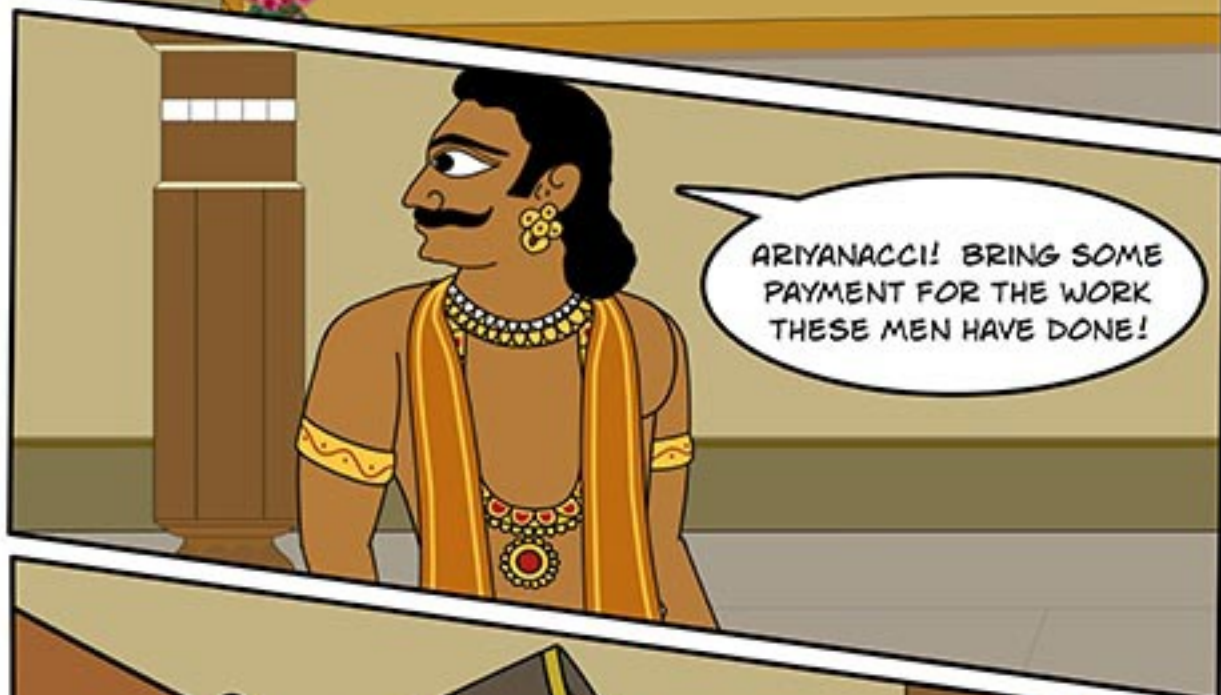
LOOK AT MY FINE
SUGARCANE FIELD! IT HAS
BEEN HORRIBLY TRAMPLED!
WHAT KIND OF ANIMAL COULD
HAVE DONE THIS?

WATCHMAN! GO TO
TANGAVALA AND BRING
THE ARTISANS HERE
IMMEDIATELY!

I NEED A
FENCE BUILT!

OH ARTISANS! THE KING OF
PONNIVALA HAS ORDERED YOU TO
BRING YOUR TOOLS AND COME
TO HIS KINGDOM.

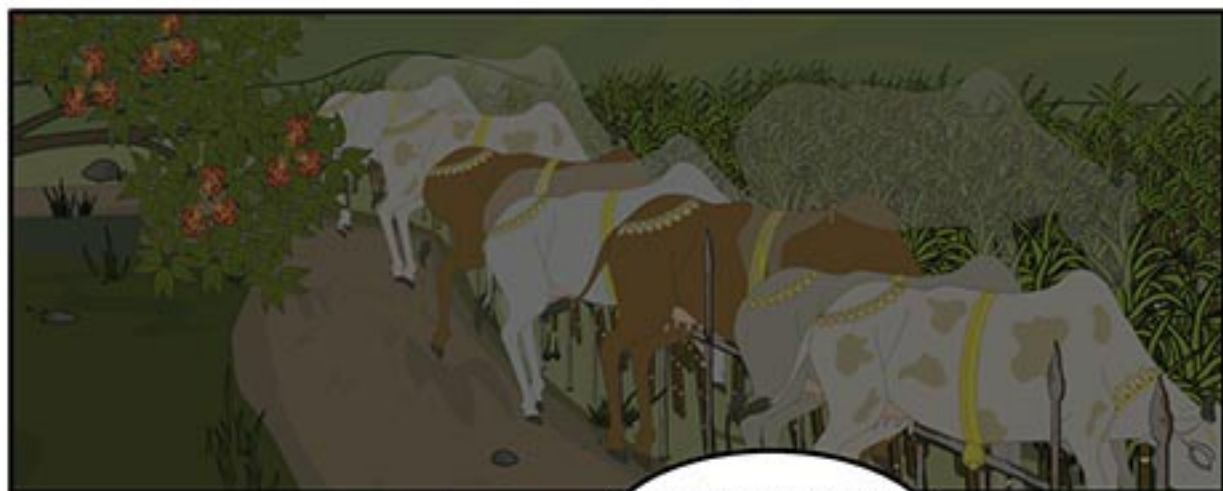






AS EVENING FALLS, THE COWS RETURN TO THE SUGARCANE FIELD. THEY ATTEMPT TO JUMP OVER THE NEWLY-BUILT FENCE, BUT THEY DO NOT MAKE IT. EACH ONE DIES ON THE SPIKES.





OH COWS! WHY HAVE YOU COME TO SEE ME?


WE WERE FEASTING ON THE SUGARCANE FIELDS OF PONNIVALA. BUT THE FARMER THERE BUILT A FENCE MADE OF POINTED STAKES!

WE WERE SO HUNGRY, WE TRIED TO JUMP INTO THE SUGARCANE...BUT WE ALL DIED!




OH! I AM SO SORRY.






WHAT A HORRIBLE
THING TO HAVE
HAPPENED TO YOU!




CITTIRAPUTRA! LOOK IN
THE BOOK OF FATE AND FIND
OUT WHO IS RESPONSIBLE
FOR THIS!

OH LORD! KOLATTA,
THE ELDEST OF THE NINE
GOUNDER BROTHERS OF
PONNIVALA AND TANGAVALA, IS
THE ONE WHO DID THIS!



I AM GOING TO CURSE KOLATTA
FOR THIS SIN OF COW-KILLING!

FOR SEVEN GENERATIONS...



NO CHILDREN SHALL BE
BORN OF THE WOMBS OF
WOMEN IN HIS FAMILY!



YEARS PASS IN PONNIVALA, AND STILL NOT A SINGLE CHILD'S VOICE CAN BE HEARD THERE. KOLATTA AND HIS WIFE BECOME WORRIED ABOUT THE FUTURE.



THE QUEEN WEEPS AT THEIR MISFORTUNE. HOW SHE LONGS TO HOLD A CHILD IN HER ARMS!

