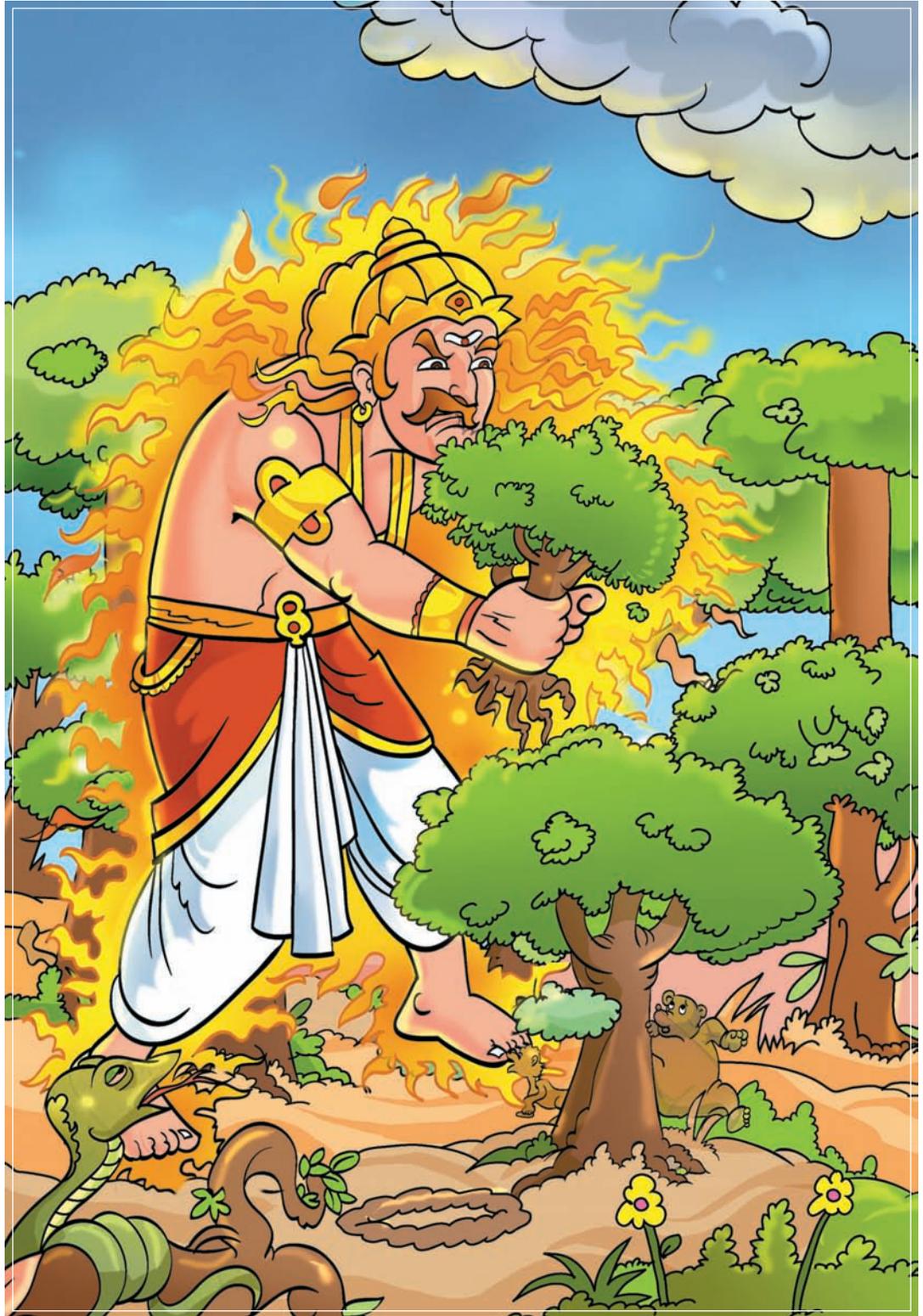


**The
Fire God's
Indigestion
and other stories**

*Retold by Chitra Shastri
Illustrated by Krishna Shastri*

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THE FIRE GOD'S INDIGESTION

In ancient times, there lived a king called Svetaki who spent all his time conducting yagnas. Growing fed up with this, one by one, all his priests left. They were sick of living in a permanently smoky atmosphere. So Svetaki prayed to Shiva for help. Feeling sorry for him, Shiva asked Sage Durvasa to help the king.

Svetaki and his new priest conducted yagna after yagna, pouring all sorts of things into the sacrificial fire. Food, ghee, milk, butter and curd were poured into the Fire God Agni's mouth without pause.

Naturally, after some time, the Fire God began to feel quite ill. Poor Agni had indigestion because he had been fed too much. His stomach ached. Agni moaned and groaned helplessly. His face grew pale and sickly looking, and he quite lost his fire. Agni was in agony.

The Fire God desperately went to Brahma.

"Sire, I can't bear it any more! Please cure me of my stomach upset!"

"Don't worry, " responded the great god, "I have just the cure for you. What you need is a herbal remedy. I suggest you consume the forest of Khandava. That should give you some relief!"

So Agni sped towards the forest, and began to eat it up in great mouthfuls.

But in the forest lived the snake Takshaka, who was a friend of the Sky God, Indra. Immediately, Takshaka prayed to the Sky God for a shower of rain that would put out the fire. At once, Indra helped his friend out. A terrific downpour stopped Agni in his tracks.

Agni was very upset. However was he going to rid himself of his terrible stomach-ache? Once more, he ran to Brahma.