



Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati  
Department of Design

## **Master Thesis Project**

The Tale of Toola and Teja:  
Adaptation of an Assamese Folktale

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M.Des 4th semester  
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Examiner 1 .....

Examiner 2 .....

Examiner 3 .....

Examiner 4 .....

Guide .....

# Acknowledgment:

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Prof. Sheetal Gokhale for enormous support and guidance throughout the project. This project would not have been possible without her insightful discussions, constant encouragement, and the freedom she had given while working. Her knowledge and support have helped me throughout the project and I cannot thank her enough for everything. I would like to mention the book 'Oral Tradition and Folk Heritage of North East India' written by Lalit Kumar Barua, which has a collection of north eastern folktales, one of which is the inspiration for this project. I would also like to thank the faculty members, Department of Design for their highly stimulating inputs at each stage of progress of this project.



# Abstract:

The Assamese nation comprises of several sub nationalities, and each of these sub nationalities brought with them various forms of folklore which is collectively known as the Assamese Folklore.

However these folklores are not only used for amusement, they teach us morals and introduce us to the rich cultural heritage of Assam.

However, the art of storytelling comes with metamorphosis in its nature to indulge today's readers, keeping in mind their expectations and the current social structure.

Thus the objective of this project is to adapt a traditional folktale and visually represent it in a manner which would appropriately cater to a certain group of audience.

First, one folktale was selected considering the characters and the scope of exploration. Second, in order to retell the story, narrative structures were studied and two of them were selected based on which the adaptation was written. Third, characters were designed and art forms were explored. Fourth, the layout was defined and multiple iterations of storyboards were made which would lead the way into making the final illustrated book.

The result of this project would be a graphic novel based on a folktale called 'The Tale of Toola and Teja' which has been taken from a book named 'Oral Tradition and Folk Heritage of Northeast India' by Lalit Kumar Barua.

Thus this meaningful adaptation of an Assamese folktale will not only interest a young reader in present times but also give him or her a glimpse of the traditional beliefs of Assam in earlier times.

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# 1.0 Introduction:

The word 'folk' means relating to, originating from, traditional to the common people of a country or region and typically reflecting their lifestyle. It can refer to traditional customs, tales, sayings, dances, or art forms preserved among a particular group of people.

Folktale or folklore is a story which originates from native culture and then passed on by word of mouth. It is a tradition based on an expressive behaviour that brings a specific set of people together, resulting in a custom which commits it to cultural memory.

Folktales are expressions of national life, autobiographies of a nation. Folktales have been an eternal part of every community since ages. It can be used to stimulate interest in children to understand how close human beings are to nature and need for their conservation.

But oral tradition always gets deconstructed when the stories tread down from generation to generation. While retelling the stories, the narrator would almost always alter it according to his or her interpretation and the audience.

Northeast Indian folktales is an intangible part of the history as they fulfil the responsibility of being one of the most significant forms of literature representing the land. The subject of these tales revolves around the origin of the world, human existence, the creation of Nature and so on.

This region is the homeland of a rich socio-cultural heritage of the country. It has the second-largest concentration of the most diverse tribal population in the country. These tribes with their wide socio-

cultural diversity in language, traditions and way of life make a unique cultural collage.

So it is important to collect and preserve the folktales of these regions because these help us to discover the roots of these distinctive communities, their past, the commonality of varied cultures and their ethnic identities.

## 2.0 Aim and Objective:

### 2.1 Aim

The aim of the project is to preserve the tradition of representing a folktale to introduce a set of audience to the conventions and beliefs of a particular community of indigenous people from the Northeastern parts of India, and also to motivate them to explore this domain further.

### 2.2 Objectives

The two objectives of the project are:

- To recreate a Northeast Indian folktale in a manner which would appropriately cater to a certain group of audience in present times, in order to appeal to their expectations.
- To visually represent the story.

## 3.0 Literature Study (Phase 1):

In the first phase of the literature study, the meaning of each of the terms, folk, folktale, fairytale was understood and their significance in preserving the cultural heritage of the country was studied. Apart from that, both global and national trends were explored in the field of evolution, narration and adaptation of folktales.

### 3.1 History of folktales

In the past, common people were usually illiterate. Due to the lack in literacy, their stories were orally transmitted.

Thus it is impossible to trace the historical origins and evolution of folktales to a particular time and place, it can date back to the period as early as when humans developed the capacity of speech.

Dan-Ben Amos in his Essay 'THE IDEA OF FOLKLORE: AN ESSAY' tells that, "As these narratives rarely stood the tests of common sense and experience, folklore also implied irrationality: beliefs in ghosts and demons, fairies and goblins, sprites and spirits; it referred to credence in omens, amulets, and talismans." The triumvirate of attributes — traditionalilty, irrationality and rurality — dominates the concept of folklore. In many preliterate cultures, folktales rely heavily on myths, since, especially in tales of tricksters and heroes, they presume a background of belief about tribal origins and the relation of

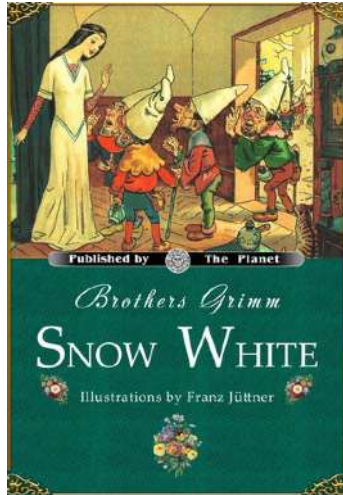


Figure 3.2.1. 'Snow White' book by Brothers Grimm and illustrated by Franz Jüttner



Figure 3.2.2. 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' movie by Walt Disney (1937)

men and gods. Animals are found here whether in their natural form or anthropomorphised so that they seem sometimes men and sometimes beasts. Other common subjects were adventure stories, exaggerations, world journeys, and narratives of marriage or sexual adventure, usually between human beings and animals. ("Folk literature - Folktale," n.d.) With the advent of literacy and print, the folktales have been frozen in print and thus the literary tale or fairytale was born.

## 3.2 Adaptations of folktales

The original tales can be traced back to as early as 1550 when Giovanni Francesco Straparola, an Italian author, published *The Facetious Nights*. Some other examples are Gianbattista Basile's collection of fifty Neapolitan tales, the *Pentamerone* (1634 - 36), Charles Perrault's *Contes de ma Me're l'oye* (1695-98), and the counts d'Aulnoy's *contes des Fees* (1697-98). The translated editions of the great oriental story folktales, the *Panchatantra*, the *Arabian Nights*, and the adaptation of the Aesopian fables folktales also became popular.

The authors Charles Perrault as well as the Grimm Brothers saw the merit in previously published works and decided to bring these folktales to a new audience by adapting and garnishing certain aspects of the stories to ensure it would be agreeable with society.

By the 18th century, the justification of a folktale depended on its ability to provide moral teaching. Fairytales, in those times, included



Figure 3.2.3. 'Mirror Mirror' movie by Tarsem Singh (2012)



Figure 3.2.4. 'Snow White and the Huntsman' movie by Rupert Sanders (2012).

violence, bloodshed, adultery and often other disturbing contents.

Thus the Puritan section of the society heavily criticised these.

Parents were warned about the danger of such tales as they threatened children's minds. Due to the obvious opposition, fairy tales were still made available in the 18th century but mainly reduced to chapbooks, a less 'respectable' form of literature. (Lang, 2015, p. 1)

Then in the 20th century, Disney adapted these inappropriate stories and presented them in a form that appealed to both children and their parents. Disney adapted the stories of Perrault or the Grimm Brothers just as they adapted their versions from Straparola and Giambattista Basile. These adaptations were pertinent with the standards of both entertainments as well as moral principles.

Thus, just like oral culture, the process of creating a fairy tale in written form also goes through an evolution as the content is often reshaped in order to intrigue a specific audience. The Disney version of a tale may not be as gripping or violent as the original from which it is derived from, but the underlying essence of the story is always intact. (Lang, 2015, p. 1)

'The Old Deccan Day\*' is the first collection of Indian folktales. In 1868 Merry Frere collected these stories and published. It was followed in 1879 by M. Stokes. In that year he published another Indian Fairy tale collection. Another collection of folktales from Punjab published in 1884 by Flora Steef and R.C. Temple. With this humble beginning, a tradition of folktale studies has continued in India.

Folklorist Kirin Narayan gives emphasis on the art of storytelling in her book *Mondays on the Dark Night of the Moon* (1997). Her early insight expanded into 'Performance Oriented approach' elegantly

encapsulated in Richard Bauman's verbal Art as Performance. The performance approach stresses that folklore texts emerge through creative performance in a specific, situated socio-cultural context. Besides the collection of the tales some analytical studies also have been attempted in this field in the last fifty years. ("THE CONCEPT OF THE FOLKTALE AND ASSAMESE FOLKTALES," n.d., p. 1) Figure 3.2.1, Figure 3.2.2, Figure 3.2.3 and Figure 3.2.4 shows some of the adaptations of the story of 'Snow White'.

### 3.3 Northeastern Folktales

Folklore is an important source for the writing of history, particularly of the northeastern region of India, which comprises of seven states namely Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur, and Tripura and inhabited by numerous tribal communities such as Adi, Apatani, Angami, Rengma, Nyishi, Garo, Khasi, Synteng, Mizo, Bodo, Missing, Dimasa, Nepalese, Tripuri, etc. Due to lack of written documents, archaeological and other evidence from these regions, folklores are considered to be an alternate source to understand the societal norms, cultural diversity and minority culture, especially those of indigenous peoples and marginalised social groups like the peasantry, labour, ethnic tribes, and women. (Deka, 2011, p. 174) In 1903, G.A. Grierson collected a number of Assamese tales in his report, The Linguistic Survey of India Vol-III.

Lakshminath Bezbarua is the first collector of Assamese folktales. He is also known as the brother Grimm of Assam. In 1910, he collected two folktales in his short storybook 'Sadhukathar Kuki' and in 1911, his first compilation of tale called the 'Burhi Aai Sadhu' was published. Bezbarua's other folktale collection 'Kakadeuta aru Natilora' was published in 1912 which has twenty-nine folktales in it.

After Lakshminath Bezbarua, Sarat ch. Goswami, with the help of Taranath Chakrabarty, collected Assamese folktales in his book Asamiya Sadhukatha which was published in 1929.

Trailokeswari Devi Baruani collected some other Assamese folktales in the books Sadhukatha and Sandhiyar Sadhu, Sadhukatha is the collection of seventeen Assamese folktales and it was published in 1934. In Sandhiyar Sadhu there are twenty-two Assamese folktales. This collection was published in 1937.

By this way, many other scholars collected some tales from different parts of Assam throughout the twentieth century and its study started in Assam. These tales are carried by both men and women folks as a teller and listener. ("THE CONCEPT OF THE FOLKTALE AND ASSAMESE FOLKTALES," n.d., p. 1)



## 4.0 Current Scenario:

### 4.1 Conferences

There are several international and national folklore conferences held across the world. These conferences aim at giving researchers worldwide the opportunity to share, discuss and engage with a range of aspects relating to the nature and role of folk in literature study. They encourage comparative folklore studies which results into community development. These initiatives help spread knowledge about cultural diversities and identities. The conferences also look into folklore fieldwork with developmental issues and folklore advocacy with public programming events.

Some of these conferences are

- Conference on "Belief Narratives in Folklore Studies: Narrating the Supernatural" organised by The ISFNR Belief Narrative Network.
- Indian Folklife, a quarterly newsletter from the national folklore support centre, NFSC. National Folklore Support Centre (NFSC) is a nongovernmental, non-profit organisation, registered in Chennai dedicated to the promotion of Indian folklore research, education, training, networking and publications.

- International Conference on Cultural Exchanges through Narratives: On Folkloristic overview by Kolkata society for asian studies
- A two-day national seminar was held on 'The Dynamics of Indian Folklore' in commemoration of the 42nd Indian Folklore Congress (IFC) in Manipur
- International Ethnic Folklore Festival - 2020, a mega World Folklore Celebration with a tag line "Let's Dance for World Peace" is hosting its Sixth edition from Oct 08 - 13, & Seventh Edition from November 18 -23, 2020 in Delhi-NCR, India.
- National Conference on Culture and Aesthetics in Indian Folklore organised by Department of English, University of Delhi

## 4.2 Academic courses

Through medieval Indian literature to the 20th century, we see the reality of Indian literature holding up for oral traditions contrary to popular perception. The most recent example of this phenomenon we can see in the effort of famous Rajasthani folklorist, Sri Vijay Dan Detha.

In modern democratic India, folk literature is pursued both within the academia and outside it, unlike many other cultures. Efforts of Sahitya Akademi and other similar organisations form part of this collective attempt to preserve and disseminate Indian folk literature.

The Sahitya Akademi also promotes Indian folk literature in all possible ways — it gives away literary awards; organises conventions

and promotes languages without scripts, it encourages tribal languages; they publish folktales in their journals, publishes folk literature books and has centres to preserve and promote oral traditions in India.

There are numerous Indian universities like Central University of Jharkhand, Karnataka University, Mysore University, University of Calicut, Ambedkar University Delhi and others which offer a masters course in folklore studies.

Birinchi Kumar Barua was the pioneer of modern studies in Assamese folklore. After Praphulladatta Goswami, Birendranath Datta took charge of the Department of Folklore Research. Under his guidance, the M.Phil course in the department was introduced. This aided the training of future folklorists as well as the creation of a large database of local folklore materials. Birendranath Datta outlined areas like commonality, ethnicity of folklore materials in North-East India, folk Ramayana and many more. He encouraged functional studies of folklore, and folklore in the context of society and politics in North-east India. (Dutta, 2008)

## **4.3 Folklore museums**

Other initiatives to preserve folk culture includes museums which bring ethnographic collection of indigenous items to people. They give a clear picture of the lifestyle of a specific group of people and their beliefs. Some of the well-known folklore museums are Museum of



Figure 4.4.1 Koodiyattam. (Source: [www.thenational.ae](http://www.thenational.ae))

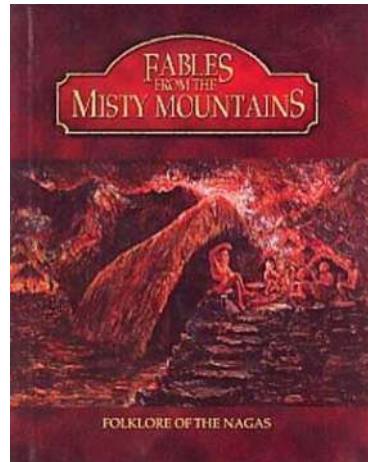
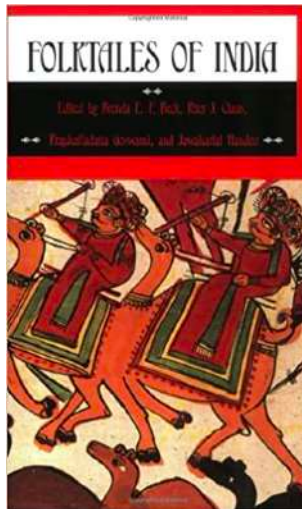
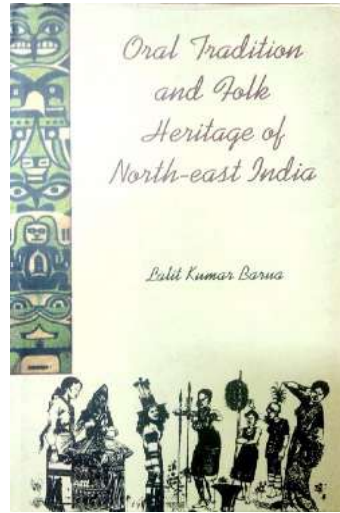
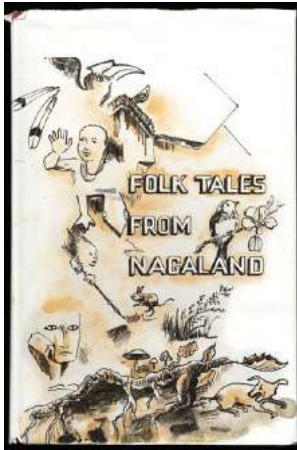


Figure 4.4.2. Ankiya Naat Bhaona (Source: <https://abhikipedia.abhimanu.com>)

International Folk Art (Santa Fe), Global Village Folk Museum (Seoul), American Folk Art Museum (New York), Kerala Folk Museum, Folk Art Museum of University of Mysore and Jaisalmer Folklore Museum.

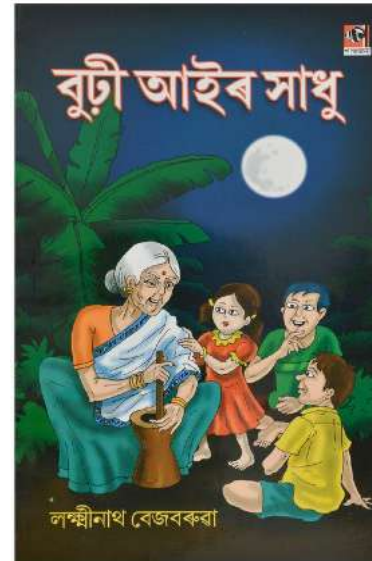
## 4.4 Folk Theatres

Folk theatre is a fusion of music, dance, drama, stylised speech, costumes and other embellishments with deep roots in local identity and native culture. India has a prolong, opulent history of folk theatre. In ancient times, Sanskrit dramas were staged at festivals and special events. Some of these forms are Koodiyattam, Yakshagana, Ankiya Naat, jatra, Therukoothu etc. The influence of folk theatre can be found in the works of several drama-writers like Bhartendu Harishchandra who combined folk conventions with Western theatrical forms. One of the folk performers of Bengal who are known as the bauls are mentioned in several of Tagore's plays. (Pal, 2016)



## 4.5 Books

### 4.5.1 Without illustration



The most common way of telling a story, and in this case, helping the folk culture of a place reach an audience far and wide is a book. As discussed above, since the emergence of print media, the oral tales have been recorded and preserved in written formats. Internationally, nationally and regionally, umpteen number of books exist on folklore.

Very few of these examples are Aesop's fables, Folktales from India by A.K.Ramanujan, Folktales of India edited by Brenda E. F. Beck, Peter J. Claus, Praphulladatta Goswami, Jawaharlal Handoo, Oral Tradition and Folk heritage of North-east India by Lalit Kumar Barua,

Fables from the Misty Mountains: Folklore of the Nagas by Rahul Karmakar, Folktales from Nagaland, Buri Air Sadhu by Laxminath Bezbarua.

(Clockwise):

- Figure 4.5.1.1. 'Folk Tales from Nagaland' published by the Directorate of Art and Culture, Nagaland ;  
 Figure 4.5.1.2. 'Oral Tradition and Folk Heritage of North-east India' by Lalit Kumar Barua;  
 Figure 4.5.1.3. 'Burhi Air Sadhu' by Laxminath Bezbarua;  
 Figure 4.5.1.4. 'Fables from the Misty Mountains' by Rahul Karmakar;  
 Figure 4.5.1.5. Folktales of India' published by University of Chicago Press.



## 4.5.2 With illustrations



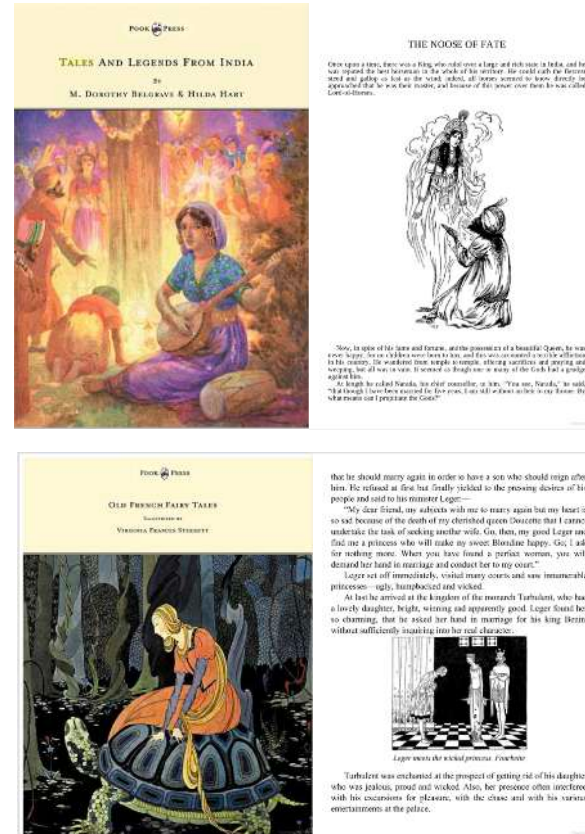
There are some books which have illustrations in one whole page, one or two illustrations per story, but the story is majorly in textual form.



(Top to Bottom)

Figure 4.5.2.1. *The World Treasury of Fairy Tales & Folklore: A Family Heirloom of Stories to Inspire & Entertain* by W. Gray, J. Gilar And R. Williamson;

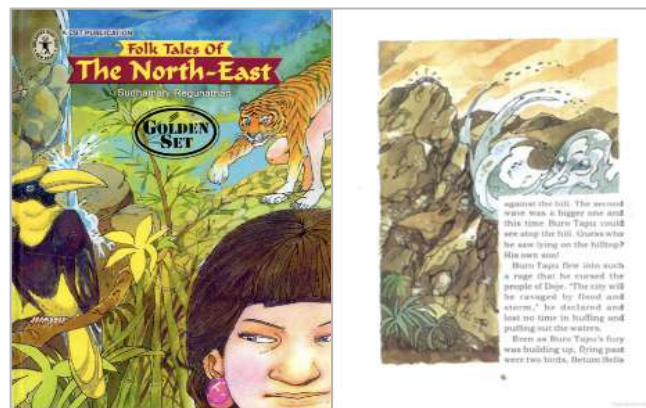
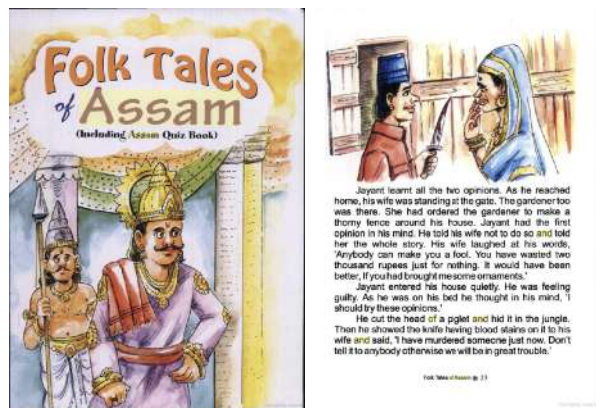
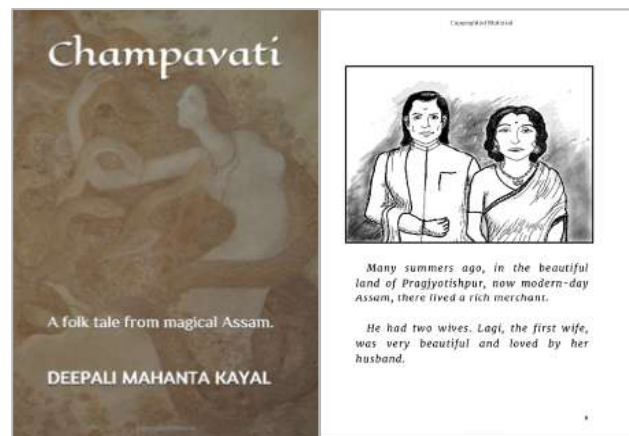
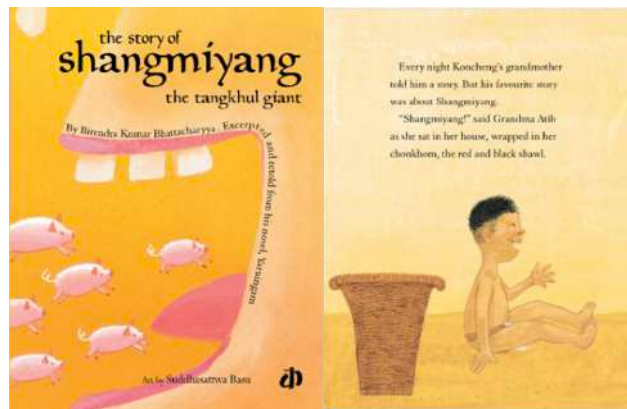
Figure 4.5.2.2. *Tales of India: Folk Tales from Bengal, Punjab, and Tamil Nadu* by Svabhu Kohli, Viplov Singh;



The other kind of books have a few smaller illustrations along with texts. These also have stories in mostly textual form.

Figure 4.5.2.3. *Tales and Legends from India* by Hilda Hart and M. Dorothy Belgrave;

Figure 4.5.2.4. *Old French Fairy Tales* - Illustrated by Virginia Frances Sterrett and written by Comtesse De Segur



The images on the left shows some of the illustrated books on North Eastern folktales. It has been observed that most of the books have both text and illustrations to portray a story.

(Clockwise)

Figure 4.5.2.5. *The Story of Shangmiyang - the tangkhul giant* by Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya, illustrated by Siddhasattwa Basu;

Figure 4.5.2.6. *Champavati: A Folk Tale from Magical Assam.* by Deepali Mahanta Kayal and Rajkumar Kayal;

Figure 4.5.2.7. *Folk Tales of The North-East* by Sudhamahi Regunathan;

Figure 4.5.2.8. *Folk Tales Of Assam* by Rachna Bhola Yamini.

## 5.0 Need for the project:

Folktales essentially draw a picture of a specific community of people, of how they live and their habitat. So while texts provide a room for imagination, images are easier to comprehend, especially for children. (Hinchman, Appleman, & Alvermann, 2017, pp. 1–3). Moreover, graphic novels are grabbing the interest of readers from all across the world. While text can be used to cater to only those audience who are able to read the language the book is written in, a graphic novel can often be read through the sequential art provided in it. According to Judy Lavender Nicholas, “Children today are more graphically oriented than any other generation in modern history. Students in our society expect the immediate experience of pictures and images in almost all learning they encounter.” (Nicholas, 2007) Also, many a time, especially for reluctant readers, illustrated novels add the extra support they need to help them through a text. (Maniace, 2014) Since, the scope of graphic novels or books having sequential art has been little explored in the field of Indian folklore, especially the Northeastern folktales, this project will explore the possibility of representing a Northeastern folktale through a graphic novel.



## 6.0 Target Audience

Adolescents.

According to Erik Erikson, this is the stage where people go through identity exploration, trying out different roles and engaging in different experience.

- Moral values are still forming
- Exciting narration will intrigue them
- Something where the protagonist is active
- Graphic novels or comics are popular among these readers

## 7.0 Literature Study (Phase 2):

This phase of study is done in order to select a single folktale, learn about story structures which can be used to rewrite a story and learn about sequential art techniques to depict the story in an appropriate way.

### 7.1 Selecting a story

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#### 7.1.1 List of all stories

The following are the list of all the stories that were studied:

1. Longkongla
2. The Beautiful Damsel
3. The Story of Pfukha and Sikha
4. The Greedy Man and the Water Spirit
5. The legend of Sopfunuo
6. The Devil and Momola
7. The Widower and the Goddess
8. The Orphan
9. How Tigers came on this Earth
10. A Cruel Step-Mother

11. Kaso Apfu
12. Kirumbe and Deibile
13. Nayungsungmo and her Mysterious Lover
14. Panilenla and the Water Spirit
15. Two Beautiful Daughters
16. Bodo Kachari- How the Rivers were made
17. Khasi- What Causes the Eclipse
18. Garo- The Staircase to the Moon
19. Karbi- Story of Harata Kunwar
20. Madu and the Gullible Tiger
21. A Brother and Sister who turned into Monkeys
22. The Tragic end of Lovers: Vikho and Senyu
23. How Leilem had chosen a wife among his wo lovers
24. How Tigers began to eat Human Flesh
25. Tejimola
26. The All-Knowing One
27. The Tale of the Kite's Daughter
28. Toola and Teja(Assamese)
29. The Brahmin and His Servant

---

## 7.1.2 Description of the most preferable stories

The five stories that were selected with brief description:

- **The legend of Sopfunuo**

A beautiful girl named Zenyuu had a dream of being seen by everyone. She got married and was happily till her husband drove her away. She eventually died with her child and they turned into stones. The stones can be still be seen in Rukhroma village.

- **How Tigers began to eat Human Flesh**

A woman exchanged her daughter for a gourd with a tiger. The tiger and the girl get married and have a daughter. But the tiger tortured his child and so its wife decided to run away. In a tugging incident, the wife gets killed. The mother of the wife cooks her and gives it to the tiger.

- **Tejimola**

Tejimola is the story of a teenager. After her mother's death, the father married again. Being a merchant, the father had to set sail on a long venture for business. In his absence, the stepmother set trap to prove Tejimola guilty and inflicted inscrutable punishment on her till she breathed her last.

- **Toola and Teja(Assamese)**

A farmer has two wives and three children. The younger wife turns the older wife into a tortoise out of jealousy. She tortures her step daughter, Teja and her stepson. When Teja marries the king, she sends her own daughter Toola instead of Teja to the palace. The king, realising her trick, kills Toola and sends her in pieces to her mother who eats her own daughter without knowing.

- **Khasi- What Causes the Eclipse**

A beautiful girl names ka nam was abducted by a tiger who wanted to eat her. A mouse saved her and brought her to a magical toad who again tried to imprison her. Finally the girl escapes to the sky, marries the son of the sun. The giant toad gets angry and tries to attack the sun.

---

### 7.1.3 Selection of a story

Finally the story of **Toola and Teja (Assamese)** from the book 'Oral Tradition and Folk Heritage of Northeast India' by Lalit Kumar Baruawas, was selected because of the following reasons:

- Strong characters with women in pivotal roles
- Lot of stumbling blocks, making the story twisted
- Glance at the Assamese cultural and supernatural beliefs
- Complex storyline, thus room for explorations
- The characters of Toola and Teja can be made stronger

## 7.2 Studying Story Structures

### 7.2.1 Story structures with brief description

#### 1. Three Act Structure

Syd Field, in his famous book called 'Screenplay,' introduced the three-act story structure which has three acts, in the first act (Setup), the hero lives in an ordinary world until the villain comes. (Field, 2005, pp. 1–3) This act is used to introduce the characters, setting up the stage and the inciting incident is an incident that propels the story to the second act. In the second act (Confrontation), the hero comes in contact with the villain. Here there is a midpoint which comes as a surprise to the audience, mostly in a good way. The third act (Resolution) has the final battle and the climax.

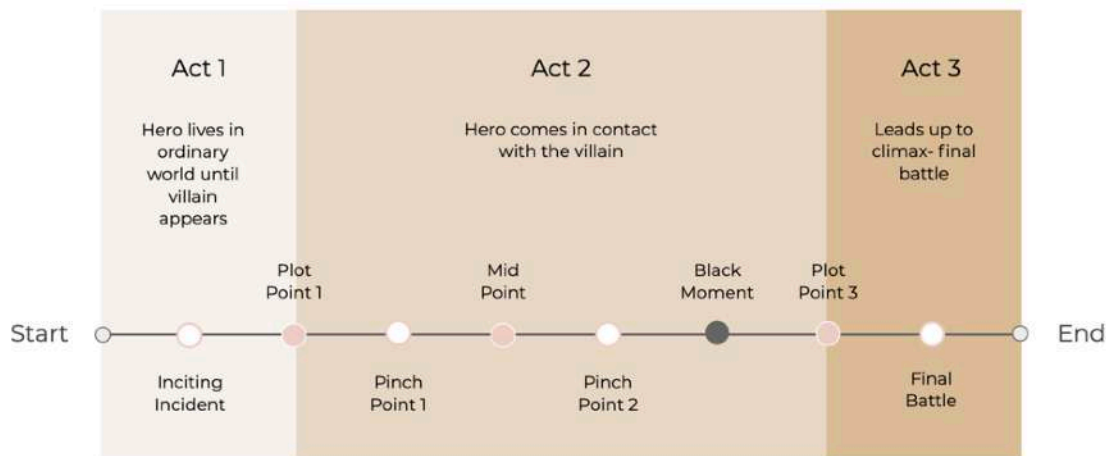


Figure 7.2.1.1. Three Act Structure

#### 2. Vladimir Propp's Morphology of the folktale with 31 functions.

In the book 'Morphology of the Folktale', Vladimir Propp, a soviet folklorist, shows that almost every folktale can be divided into basic 31 elements which he named 'functions'. He further said,

“Thus the functions of the dramatic personae are basic components of the tale, and we must first of all extract them.

In order

to extract the functions we must define them. Definition must proceed from two points of view. First of all, definition should in no case depend on the personage who carries out the function. Definition of a function will most often be given in the form of a noun expressing an action (interdiction, interrogation, flight, etc.). Secondly, an action cannot be defined apart from its place in the course of narration. The meaning which a given function has in the course of action must be considered.” (Propp, Scott, Wagner, & Dundes, 1968, pp. 167–172)

The nature of functions can be articulated in the following points:

1. Functions of characters are the fundamental components of a tale. They act as building blocks of a story irrespective of how they are fulfilled and by whom.
2. Every fairytale has a constant number of functions.
3. The functions always appear in an identical sequential manner.
4. Thus all fairytales can be grouped under a single type considering their functions.

### 3. The Hero's Journey by Joseph Campbell

Joseph Campbell, a mythological researcher, is the author of the famous book called *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Through research, Campbell came up with a basic structure of a story which is used commonly. It has a journey through which the hero goes. He calls this common structure “the monomyth”. Famous examples of scripts which have used this structure are *Star Wars*, *Lord of the Rings* etc

#### ARCHETYPES APPEARING IN THE HERO'S JOURNEY

Joseph Campbell also mentioned a few archetypes— which are character patterns found in myths in various cultures:

- **Heroes:** These are the central characters of the story. Every character is a hero is his or her own story.
- **Shadows:** These are the villains or the enemies who stand against the hero. These could also be the enemy within the hero or his or her potential for evil.
- **Mentors:** The hero's guides.
- **Herald:** A person or an incident that brings the call to adventure.
- **Threshold Guardians:** These entities stand in the hero's way at turning points, they can be hero's own fear and doubts also.
- **Shapeshifters:** shapeshifters can change their forms like werewolves. They can also mean change in essence.
- **Tricksters:** mischief-makers.
- **Allies:** Hero gets help from these characters.
- **Woman as temptress:** a femme fatale who acts as a danger.

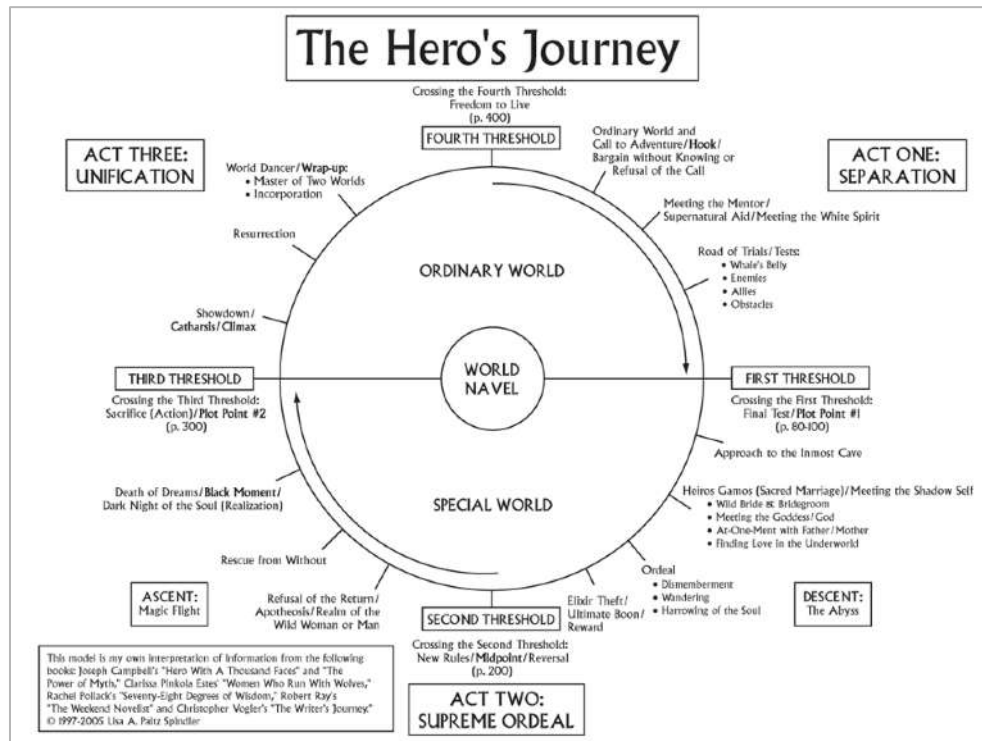


Figure 7.2.1.2. Hero's Journey ([http://wiki.phalkefactory.net/images/9/92/Myth\\_quest\\_model.gif](http://wiki.phalkefactory.net/images/9/92/Myth_quest_model.gif))



#### **4. Lester Dent's Master Plot formula**

Lester Dent was a well-known pulp fiction author who wrote numerous stories among which is the famous superhero series called “Doc Savage.”

He introduced the master plot formula for writing mystery novels.

A brief description of the formula is given below:

- In the first part, the cast is introduced. There is a hint of mystery and a little bit of trouble. At the end of the first part, there is a plot twist.
- In the second part, the trouble is increased for the hero. There are a physical conflict and another plot twist.
- In the third part, the hero makes progress and corners the villain but this part ends in a setback (a negative plot twist).
- The last part begins with the hero being buried in troubles where all seem lost. The remaining mystery is cleared up. But it ends with a big twist, a final surprise.

## 5. Story Engineering by Larry Brooks

Larry Brooks is an author of psychological thrillers who also teaches instrumental writing techniques. In his book, 'Story Engineering,' he says, "The list of things a writer needs to understand and execute is long and complex, but that list can be grouped into six separate yet dependent categories.

I call them the Six Core Competencies." (Brooks, 2011, pp. 102–103)

THE SIX COMPETENCIES ARE:

- Concept
- Character
- Theme
- Structure
- Scene Execution
- Writing Voice

He further mentions that there are four contextual parts of a story namely setup, response to the hero's new journey, attack on the problem and resolution.

THERE ARE FIVE MOMENTS A STORY DEPENDS ON:

- the opening hook
- the First Plot Point
- the Midpoint (context-shifting transition)
- the Second Plot Point
- the ending

## **6. Mirror Moment by James Scott Bell**

According to James Scott Bell, at every midpoint, there is a moment where the hero faces himself in the mirror and decides whether he will accept the change or die. That is in that instance, the main characters realise that if they don't change themselves, they might die a physical, psychological or professional death. The characters strive to become something else.

## **7. Unifying Theory of Storytelling**

The unifying theory dwells on the principle that instead of giving the audience '4,' the author should give them '2+2' and let the audience add it up to '4'. This makes the story more interesting to them because the audience is born problem solvers. As William Archer says, "Drama is anticipation mingled with uncertainty."

## **8. Six Stages of Character Development**

There are six main stages of character development in a hero's journey. They are:

- Stage 1: The hero exists in their identity. This is the first ten percent of the film.

- Stage 2: In the next fifteen percent, the hero is introduced to a new situation and he also gets a peek of how it would be to live life in his essence.
- Stage 3: For the next part, the hero is balancing one foot in the new situation and one foot in his old life.
- Stage 4: Now the hero crosses the point of no return, embraces the new and as a result, the new world starts to come to him.
- Stage 5: This is where the hero goes into self-doubt where he feels that the new situation is not suitable for him.
- Stage 6: At the end, the hero accepts the change and lives on as the new person that he has become. (Indie Film Hustle, 2016, 03:15–05:21)

## 9. Four Act Structure by Adam Skelter.

This is a story structure where the story can be divided into 4 Acts and each Act has 6 Plot Points each. A series of plot points is called Sequence.

Brief description of each act and major plot points(PP) is given below:

### ACT 1:

This act is used to introduce the world and its rules. The initial context of the story is given and the characters are introduced in their own elements. This act also creates drama, show extreme scenarios in later PPs.

PP1: Hook: This plot point is used to grab audience's attention.

ACT 1		ACT 2		ACT 3		ACT 4	
1 Hook	4	7	10	13	16	19	22
2	5	8	11	14	17	20	23
3 Inciting Incident	6 Central Conflict	9	12 Mid Point	15	18 Low Point	21 Climax	24 New World

Figure 7.2.1.3. Four-Act Structure

PP3: Inciting Incident: This is a threat/opportunity/change/ introduction to a problem which propels the main character into turmoil.

PP6: Central Conflict: This is the dramatic question around which the whole story revolves.

ACT2:

Here the character feels like they are climbing the hill of success and they will smoothly reach their goal.

PP12: Mid Point: But this is a low point where the character realises that their tactics are not enough. They are disillusioned.

ACT3:

This act is the reactionary act of Act 2. The character is frantic and scrambled. His or her will is broken further in this act.

PP18: Low Point: Major Setback in the journey of the character where the character feels that he or she has hit rock bottom.

ACT 4:

This is an act where the character is enlightened, transformed, the stakes are clear. A risky plan is set to motion. Tension arises, fears are faced and a brutal truth is revealed.

PP21: Climax: This is what happens at the end, this should impact the character in an irreversible emotional way.

PP24: New World: Glimpse of the new world, post the conflict where the character is changed forever.

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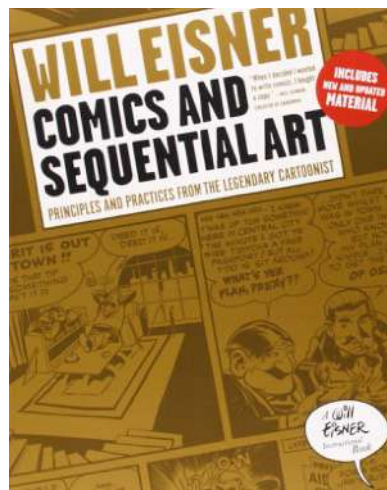
### 7.2.2 Selection of a structure and why

‘Toola and Teja’ is a complex story where there are multiple events occurring and the storyline is non-linear. The perspective of the story changes back and forth from the hero to the villain. The story also has numerous plots and subplots.

Thus after studying through all the above story structures, the Four Act Story Structure was selected as it appropriately fitted the original folktale.



Figure 7.3.1. *Making Comics* by Scott McCloud



7.3.2. *Comics and Sequential Art* by Will Eisner

## 7.3 Studying Sequential Art techniques

After deciding on the story structure, it was time to study the techniques of sequential art. Mainly two books were consulted which were ‘Comics and Sequential Art’ by Will Eisner and ‘Making Figure Comics’ by Scott McCloud. (McCloud, 2006, pp. 1–60)

“The format of the comic book presents a montage of both word and image, and the reader is thus required to exercise both visual and verbal interpretive skills. The reading of the comic book is an act of both aesthetic perception and intellectual pursuit.” - Will Eisner (Eisner, 2008, pp. 10–12)

### THE REGIMENS OF ART:

Perspective,

Symmetry

Brush stroke

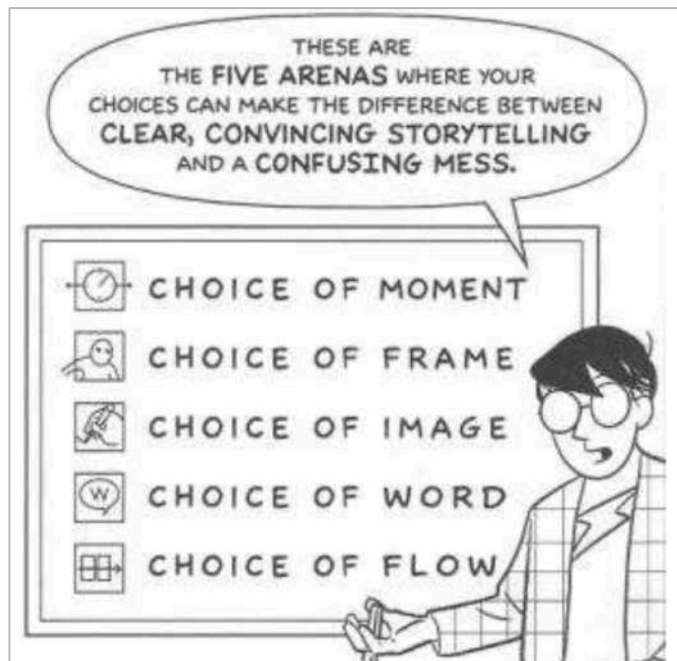
### THE REGIMENS OF LITERATURE:

Grammar

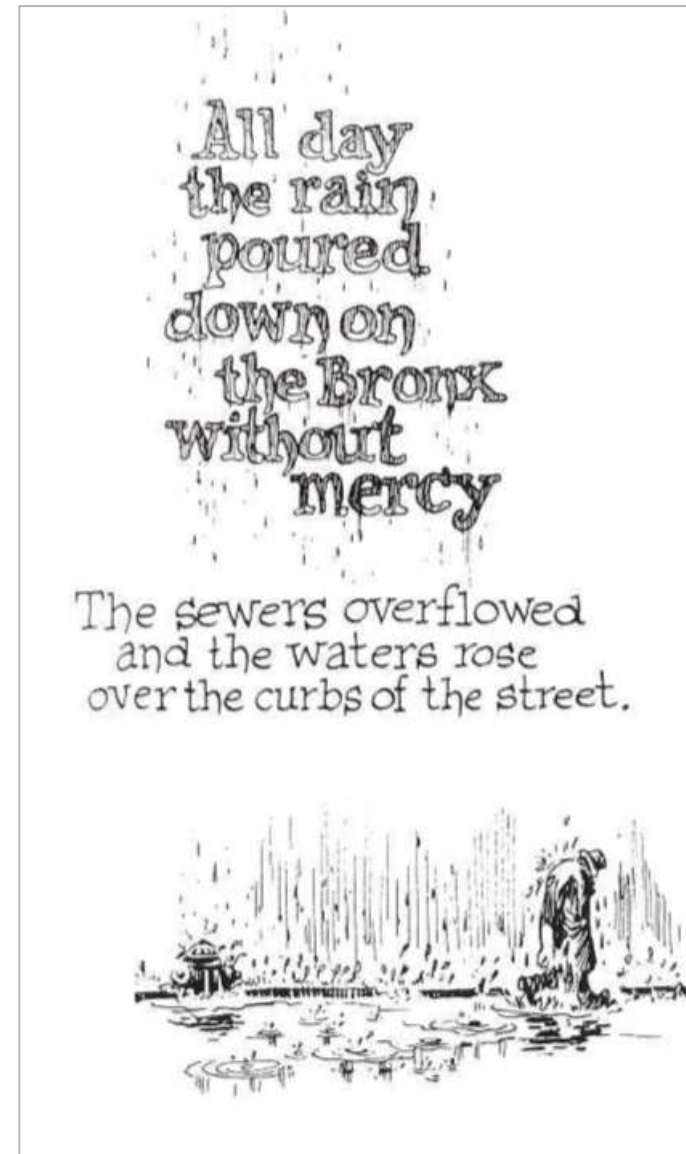
Plot

Syntax

Some of the interesting insights gathered from the books are demonstrated below:



7.3.3. Insight 1 : Choices of story telling



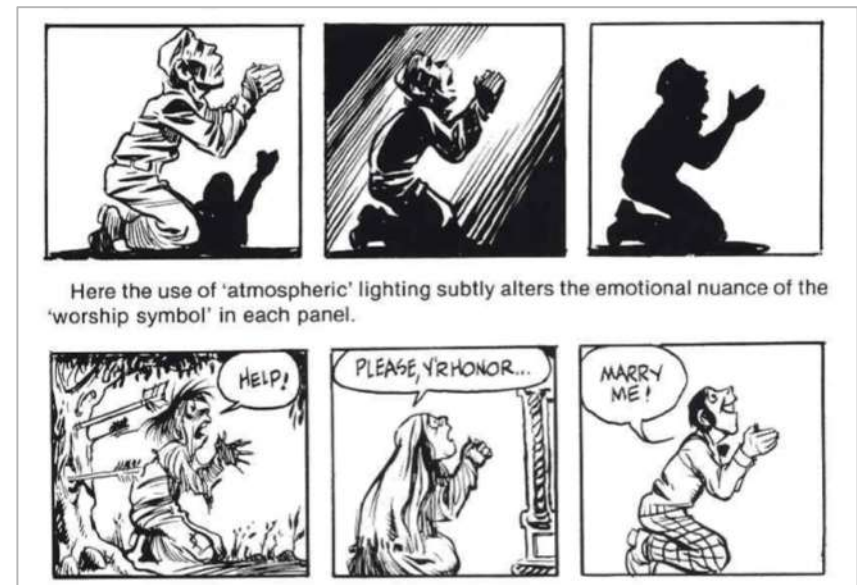
7.3.4. Insight 2 : Lettering, treated 'graphically' and in the service of the story, functions as an extension of the imagery.





7.3.5. Insight 3 : Moment to Moment

Through lighting or 'atmosphere' the act of worship could be modified in emotional quality.  
Finally, coupled with words, it would form a precise message to be understood by the reader.



7.3.6. Insight 4: lighting techniques

IN UNDERSTANDING COMICS, I IDENTIFIED A FEW DISTINCT CATEGORIES OF WORD/PICTURE COMBINATIONS.\*

- 1. WORD-SPECIFIC**  
WORDS PROVIDING ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW, WHILE THE PICTURES ILLUSTRATE ASPECTS OF THE SCENE BEING DESCRIBED.
- 2. PICTURE-SPECIFIC**  
PICTURES PROVIDING ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW, WHILE THE WORDS ACCENTUATE ASPECTS OF THE SCENE BEING SHOWN.
- 3. DUO-SPECIFIC**  
WORDS AND PICTURES BOTH SENDING ROUGHLY THE SAME MESSAGE.
- 4. INTERSECTING**  
WORDS AND PICTURES WORKING TOGETHER IN SOME RESPECTS WHILE ALSO CONTRIBUTING INFORMATION INDEPENDENTLY.
- 5. INTERDEPENDENT**  
WORDS AND PICTURES COMBINING TO CONVEY AN IDEA THAT NEITHER WOULD CONVEY ALONE.

7.3.7. Insight 5 : Word-Picture Combinations



7.3.8. Insight 6 : Panel Timing

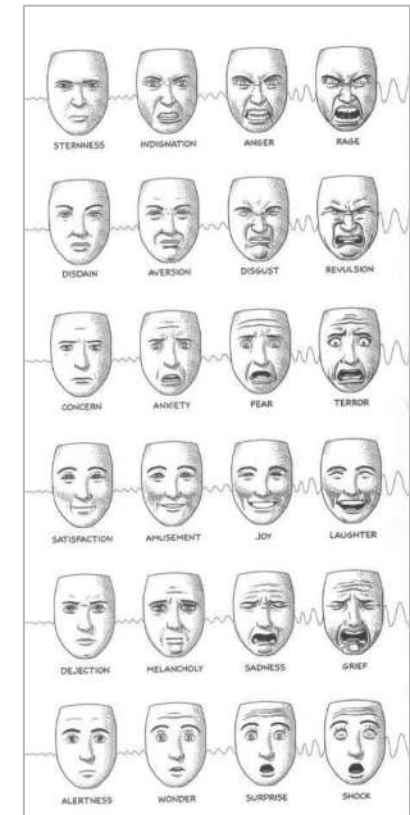
Long narrow panels that create a crowded feeling enhance the rising tempo of the panic.

The size of the box or the panel indicates the way to judge the illusion of time.

**A MEASURE OF TIME**

Morse Code or a musical passage can be compared to a comic strip in that it employs the use of time in its expression.

7.3.9. Insight 7 : How to show time



# 8.0 Design Direction

## 8.1 Step-Outline Exploration

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### Step Outline 1 - Original Story (with modifications)

Act1:

1. Father goes to the old mother's house to have food. New mother sees him. She gets angry.
2. Toola, Teja and Kanai are playing together.
3. Toola's mother wants the best for her own daughter. Toola is well fed and taken care of. Teja's mother is poor. The father is helpless.
4. Toola's mother asks Teja's mother for fishing.
5. They reach the great pond.
6. The new mother pushes the other woman into the water and curses her.

Act2:

7. Teja and Kanai can't find their mother. They think she is dead.
8. They are made to work. They are not fed properly.
9. One day they find out that their mother has become a tortoise.

10. The tortoise feeds them. They get healthy. Toola's mother gets to know.

11. She plots against the tortoise mother.

12. The tortoise is killed.

Act3:

13. Years later, Kanai and Teja meet a king. He promises to marry Teja.

14. The king marries Teja. They live happily.

15. Teja comes back to her home. Toola's mother wants the same happiness for her daughter.

16. So she curses Teja. Teja turns it into a mynah.

17. Toola's mother convinces her that it is best for her and so she goes to the king.

18. The king doesn't recognise her and they start living together.

Act4:

19. But Toola had brought a mynah with her to the palace. She decides to tell everything to the King.

20. Toola is torn between doing the right thing and saving her mother.

21. Toola finally tells everything to the King. The curse is removed. But the king orders his guards to kill Toola as well as her mother as a punishment.

22. Teja begs the King to spare her sister's life and tells him she is the one who had saved her.

23. Toola's life is spared. The mother is killed.

24. Toola goes back to her village. Teja and the King live happily ever after.

---

## Step Outline 2 - In modern times, devoid of supernatural

Act1:

1. A night. A city asleep. A woman pushes another woman off a building.

Title Page.

2. Rewind to a few days ago. Husband drops his older daughter to his former wife. They talk. She invited him over for dinner.
3. The dinners are getting frequent. A woman stands by the window when he leaves. Rage overpowers her whole body.
4. Lots of arguments. The younger daughter watches.
5. New wife lies to the former wife about the husband's birthday planning. Brings her to an old building. Pushes her.
6. Mother did not return again to Teja. Teja suspects something. But there's nobody.

Act2:

7. Teja moved in with her father. Their stepmother is not fond of her. Toola is also cruel with her stepsister.
8. Police calls. Their mother is found. She was saved that night. She was recovering.
9. Teja takes care of her mother. The mother is supposed to tell what had happened to her that night.

10. Toola offered to help Teja with her mother. Teja accepted.
11. The mother's food is poisoned.
12. She dies.

Act3:

13. Teja is now sure that Toola and her stepmother are responsible for her mother's death. But she is too young and afraid to do anything.
14. Years later, a wealthy man falls for Teja. She gets married and lives happily.
15. Teja comes to visit her parents, Toola and the stepmother are jealous of her happiness.
16. They conspire against Teja and Teja doesn't go back to her husband.
17. Toola is sent by her mother to Teja's husband.
18. Teja's husband is drugged into thinking that Toola is the wife.

Act4:

19. Toola enjoys her falsely married life. But there is a kind of fear in her happiness.
20. The guilt and the gravity of the mistake slowly eats her up and she goes into an eternal state of depression.
21. She confesses everything in a letter- how her mother had murdered her stepmother and how she herself was slowly drugging her husband.
22. Toola sends it to Teja and ends her own life as a final act of atonement.
23. Teja goes to confront her stepmother but she had already lost her sanity by then, after the death of her own daughter.
24. Teja forgives her and returns to her ailing husband.

---

## Step Outline 3 - Science Fiction based in future

Act1:

1. Sometime in future. A night. A dark alley. A woman disappears into thin air.

Title page.

2. Rewind to a few days ago. Husband drops his older daughter, Teja, to his former wife. They have a laugh. She invites him over for dinner.

3. The dinners are getting frequent. A woman stands by the window when he leaves. A porcelain vase shatters on the floor.

4. Lots of arguments. The husband perhaps regrets his own creation sometimes, Toola. Toola is the most advanced female AI based robot he has created. The lab let him keep her.

5. Toola follows the wife for some time. She was quieter than a mouse. When no one was around, she took out a small object from her coat, often called the 'touch of evanescence' by the people in the lab. She pointed it at the woman.

6. The mother never returned to Teja. They said she had left her for a better life. Teja never believed it.

Act2:

7. Teja moved in with her father. Toola's inhospitality was making Teja suspect that she might have something to do with her mother's disappearance.



8. Teja suddenly hears her mother's voice one-day. It was coming from a small object in her father's cabinet.
9. Teja realizes that her mother's body has disintegrated but her soul was trapped in the 'touch of evanescence'.
10. Teja comes to know about everything from her mother. She promises to avenge her mother.
11. Teja decides to tell her father about it and somehow bring her mother to life.
12. But Toola finds out about it and she destroys the 'touch of evanescence' along with the mother's soul inside it.

Act3:

13. Teja tries to tell her father. But he says the bot was never programmed to kill a person and the 'touch of evanescence' was still under testing.
14. Teja leaves home and promises to come back only to destroy Toola.
15. Years later, Teja comes back to fulfil her promise. Her father is very happy to get his daughter back.
16. She finds out that her father has unknowingly upgraded Toola to such an extent that now she has become invincible.
17. Teja tries to strike and shut Toola down only to realise that Toola can only be shut down by herself.
18. They have a fight. Teja is badly struck when Teja's father tries to stop them but loses his own life amidst Toola's fury.

Act4:

19. Toola realises that she has killed her creator and all of this had started in order to get his undivided attention.

20. The guilt and the gravity of the mistake slowly eats her up and, to Teja's utter surprise, she goes into an eternal state of despair. Teja did not know a bot could experience such a vast array of emotions.
21. And Toola realised that there was no need for her anymore and she looks at Teja one last time before shutting herself off as a final act of atonement.
22. Teja knew it was Toola's way of apologising and she had never looked more human before.
23. Teja took Toola's lifeless body in her arms.
24. With her parents gone, and no one to call her own, the thought of reprogramming Toola to make her a companion might have crossed her mind even if it was for once.

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## Step Outline 4 - Essence of supernatural folktale

Act1:

1. Hook - Shadows of two women. One curses a deadly spell on the other one. The second woman vanishes in the depths of the great pond.

Title page.

2. Two little girls are playing. One mother comes and snatches away the younger girl. Toola wails from her mother's arms while Teja watches.
3. Inciting incident - The villagers are fond of Teja's mother for her kindness and good manners while they are scared of Toola's mother. Toola's mother finds out that her husband sometimes eats with his other family instead of hers.
4. She comes back to her hut, her body shook in rage and jealousy.
5. She takes Teja's mother to the great pond for fishing. She tells her how she wants the husband and all of his love for herself and her own daughter.
6. She curses Teja's mother, who falls into the great pond, from where no one is known to return.

Act2:

7. Teja and her father look for the mother. They accept that she had died.
8. Toola finds out that her mother is a witch and she has magical abilities. She tries to tell this to Teja but her mother threatens her.
9. Teja finds her mother by the great pond. The river deity has turned her into a tortoise in order to save her life. The tortoise tells her everything.
10. Teja and Toola visit the tortoise everyday. The witch finds out about it. She decides to kill the tortoise at once.
11. The witch visits the pond and kills the Tortoise.
12. Teja finds her mother dead.

Act3:

13. The river deity appears and tells her everything, how her mother died and asks her to avenge her mother's soul. He asks her to get help from the forest deity too. They said Teja was destined to kill the witch.
14. However the witch had her own allies-she summons the darkest spirit of the land. She asks for help to kill Teja in order to save her own life.
15. Dark clouds cover up the whole of the village. The villagers and Toola gets scared. In order to save the village and his kingdom, the prince agrees to help Teja her get justice with his army of strong magical warriors.
16. Toola senses something unusual about her mother. Toola comes to Teja as an ally and tells her that she would help her older sister. The deities tell them that the witch is protected by enchantments, the locket she wears.
17. Teja plans out a strategy - She along with Toola go to the witch to get the locket from her. They get the locket.
18. But while escaping, one last curse is thrown at Teja which turns her into a mynah.

Act4:

19. The mynah returns to her base. It breaks everyone's spirit. But the forest deity performs a difficult ritual and Teja gets back her human self again.
20. Teja realized that her stepmother's weakness is her jealousy. She tells everyone that she is going to marry the prince, live a happy life and

- not pursue vengeance anymore. When the witch hears that, her heart succumbs to envy and she decides to kill Teja immediately.
21. Climax - While the witch sends all her forces to kill Teja, Teja finds the witch vulnerable and attacks the witch. All the curses of the witch failed as Teja had, with her, the protective stone that Toola had given her as an act of atonement.
22. Teja allows the witch to accept her crimes and ask for an apology for her mother's death. But the witch being too proud chose death over humiliation.
23. As soon as the witch is killed, the evil spirits leave the mortal land. The enchantments on the villagers are revoked.
24. New world - Finally Teja having achieved her goal, reunites with her father and Toola. The prince promises to marry her as soon as they come of age and take her to the kingdom of clouds. The deities return to their abodes. Their tiny village is restored to its former peaceful state.

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## Step Outline 5 - Step Outline 4 with modifications

Act4:

19. The mynah returns to her base. It breaks everyone's spirit. But the forest deity performs a difficult ritual and Teja gets back her human self again.
20. The witch sends all her forces to kill Teja. According to plan, Toola pretends to be Teja and the prince stays there to protect her. But the troops succeed in defeating the prince and kills Toola instead of Teja.

21. Teja attacks the witch with the powers she was given by the deities. As they are fighting, the evil troops bring Toola's head thinking it to be Teja's to the witch. Both the witch and Teja look in shock at Toola's severed head. Teja at that precise moment gets the locket from the witch.
22. The witch, free from the evil spirit, realises how her crimes caused the death of her own child and before Teja could understand anything, the witch takes a shard lying nearby and puts it through her own heart.
23. Teja destroys the locket. The enchantments on the village are revoked.
24. Teja rescues the young prince. The deities return to their abodes. Their tiny village is restored to its former peaceful state.

---

## Step Outline 6 - Final Story

Act1:

1. Hook - Shadows of two women. One curses a deadly curse on the other one. The second woman vanishes in the depths of the great pond.

Title page.

2. Two little girls playing - Toola and Teja. A woman, Kuheli, comes and snatches away the younger girl. Toola wails from her mother's arms while Teja watches.
3. Inciting incident - The villagers are fond of Teja's mother, Bimala, for her kindness and good manners while they are scared of Toola's mother. One night Kuheli finds out that her husband secretly visits his other wife, Bimala.
4. Toola's mother's body shakes with rage and jealousy. She makes a plan.
5. She takes Bimala to the great pond.
6. While Bimala has her back turned towards her, Kuheli throws a curse at Bimala. Bimala loses her consciousness and falls into the great pond, from where no one is known to return.

Act2:

7. Teja, Toola and their father look for Bimala. Having found no trace of her, they believe that she had died.
8. The witch tortures Teja everyday.
9. Teja finds her mother by the great pond in the form of a tortoise. The tortoise tells her how Kuheli had attacked her but she was not aware what she exactly did.

10. Teja and Toola visit the tortoise everyday. The witch finds out about it. One day when the father is gone on a trip, she decides to kill the tortoise at once.
11. The witch visits the pond and kills the Tortoise. But Toola watches the whole thing. Kuheli drags Toola away to the house.
12. While coming back, Toola tries to warn Teja about her mother. Teja runs to the pond only to find her mother dead.

Act3:

13. The river deity appears and tells her how Kuheli has magical abilities, how she had cursed Bimala, how he had saved Bimala the first time, and asks her to avenge her mother's soul. He asks her to go to the northern forests and ask for the forest deity's help. He also asks her to take a part of her mother to offer to the deity.
14. Teja immediately starts her journey to the northern forests. Kuheli finds it out. She is worried about the daughter, she did not anticipate this. A demon appears in front of Kuheli and asks her to kill the girl before she kills her. Toola is locked up in the house, but she sees everything through a crack in the wall.
15. Kuheli sends dark warriors after Teja to kill her. But a stranger appears in the forest who fights the warriors and disappears. Teja tries to find out who that was but it was too late. She continues



her journey to the centre of the forest, where the deity is believed to reside. But she finds nothing but a huge stone. Having lost all her hope, she lies on the foot of the stone, keeping her mother's shell on the stone and cries till she falls asleep. At night when the moon shines right above the stone, the massive silhouette of the deity appears before Teja. She asks Teja "why should she help her in her vengeance? It brings nothing but loss"

16. In the meantime, Demon is disappointed in Kuheli because Teja got away. Now they can't even locate Teja with her magic. The demon says she is getting protection from things which are not mortal. Kuheli, in rage and humiliation, performs a darker magic - enormous clouds cover up the whole village with deafening thunder. Trees fall on huts, fierce winds destroy the fields and everyone's life comes under danger. Teja hears the familiar sound of the horse coming towards them - the cloaked stranger who had saved her before. The stranger removes his veil to reveal a handsome face which says, "It's not just her battle anymore. The whole village is under attack, Great mother. She needs our help."
17. The forest deity agrees, she turns the tortoise shell into a ring, asks Teja to wear it always and sends her half-human son, Aranya, with her. Now that Teja is untraceable with Aranya's powers, the demon asks Kuheli to lure Teja with the one thing they had, Toola. Teja would do anything for her sister. Kuheli first denies thinking of her daughter's safety. But then she obliges.

18. Teja journeys back to the village when one dawn, while Aranya goes off to sleep, Teja hears Toola's cries nearby. She runs towards the voice and Kuheli traps her and curses her. But the ring tones down the curse and she turns into a mynah instead of dying. Kuheli cages her and takes her home.

Act4:

19. Aranya comes back and realizes Teja is missing. He starts to look for her everywhere. He reaches the spot where Teja was attacked, finds the ring and realizes Kuheli must have been there.
20. He goes to the house that night to find Teja. Toola tells him that the bird is Teja. The three of them escape. Toola tells the rest that the demon is helping Kuheli and it resides in her locket. They decide to destroy the locket to put an end to all the destruction. To transform Teja back into her human form, Toola takes the curse upon herself.
21. Kuheli is furious that the children fled. The demon warns her about the son of the deity who is protecting them. He asks her to wait for them to come to her. Teja decides to confront her stepmother alone, but Aranya insists on being with her.
22. Teja asks the mother to give the locket, Kuheli denies. They have a fight. Kuheli curses Aranya. But Kuheli realizes she is not able to kill Teja. The demon tells her it's the ring that is protecting her.

Kuheli takes away the ring. Kuheli is about to bring her final blow when Toola intervenes and takes the curse upon herself.

23. Teja's tiny motionless body falls on the ground before everyone. Kuheli is shocked to see her daughter dead and her motherly emotions overpower her rage. Kuheli, breaks free from the demon's manipulative grip and realizes what she has done. She takes Aranya's sword and kills herself as an act of atonement.
24. Aranya wakes up from his unconsciousness and runs towards Teja. Teja destroys the locket with his sword. Teja holds on to her dead sister, while the storm stops outside.

## 8.2 Step-Outline Selection

Step-Outline 6 has been chosen as the final step outline for the project because of the following reasons:

1. This step-outline has the spirit of a folktale in it in the form of fantasy and old world charm.
2. Teja, the protagonist stands up for herself against injustice and expresses the will to fight back. In contemporary times, both men and women should be encouraged to voice their protests and not just endure any pain and suffering coming their way.
3. Toola, Teja's step sister has a significant role to play in the story justifying the title.
4. Kuheli, the antagonist of the story has a spectrum of emotions which starts with anger, jealousy and ends in repentance for her deeds.
5. In the original story, it was observed that Teja's brother's character had no significant role to play. So his character is entirely removed to eliminate any unnecessary complications in the plots.
6. The story has mentions of supernatural deities which are common in folktales, especially Assamese folktales.
7. In accord with all folktales, this one also has a familiar moral that in the end, the good wins over bad but it also has a hint of another lesson underneath: "An eye for an eye will leave the whole world blind."



# 9.0 Art Explorations

## 9.1 Study of Graphic Novel Styles

A graphic novel can also be called "a comic-strip novel" or "an illustrated novel". The difference between a comic book and a graphic novel is that a comic book is published in issues while a graphic novel is a complete story in itself with a beginning, a middle and an end.

Just like how every storyteller has a unique way of telling a story, every illustrator also has a unique way of illustrating one. Graphic novels have come a long way from the first novel, 'THE ADVENTURES OF OBADIAH OLDBUCK' by humorist Rodolphe Toffler, being published in 1842 to 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid' which was published in 2007.

A few mentionable Indian graphic novels are Corridor by Sarnath Banerjee, Delhi Calm by Vishwajyoti Ghosh, Kari by Amruta Patil, The Aghori by Ram V, Gaurav Shrivastava and Vivek Goel.

(Clockwise)

- Figure 9.1.1. 'Sauptik Blood and Flowers' by Amruta Patil;
- Figure 9.1.2. 'Bloom' by Kevin Panetta and Savanna Ganucheau;
- Figure 9.1.3. 'They called us enemy' by George Takei;
- Figure 9.1.4. 'Kari' by Amruta Patil.



## 9.2 Study of Assamese landscapes and lifestyle

This section of the report contains the observation of Assamese landscapes, their clothing and household objects.



(Clockwise)

*Figure 9.2.1. Landscape 1*

*Figure 9.2.2. Household item 1*

*Figure 9.2.3 Landscape 2*

*Figure 9.2.4. Household item 2*



(Clockwise)

Figure 9.2.5. Kothanodi : Scene i

Figure 9.2.6. Kothanodi : Scene ii

Figure 9.2.7. Kothanodi : Scene iii

Figure 9.2.8. Tula aru Teja : Scene i

Figure 9.2.9. Kothanodi : Scene iv

Two movies which are based on Assamese folktales are studied to understand the culture in a better way:

1. Kothanodi (The River of Fables), directed by Bhaskar Hazarika, 2015

This movie is a collection of four well-known Assamese folktales namely Tejimola, Champawati, Ou Kuwori and Tawoir Xadhu. These four fables have come to life under Hazarika's unusual dark approach which arguably justifies the grim nature of Assamese folktales.

2. Tula aru Teja, directed by Junmoni Devi Khaund, 2012

This movie is an unaltered depiction of the original folktale. The characters, their clothings and sets painted an authentic picture of how Assam and Assamese culture looked in the bygone era.



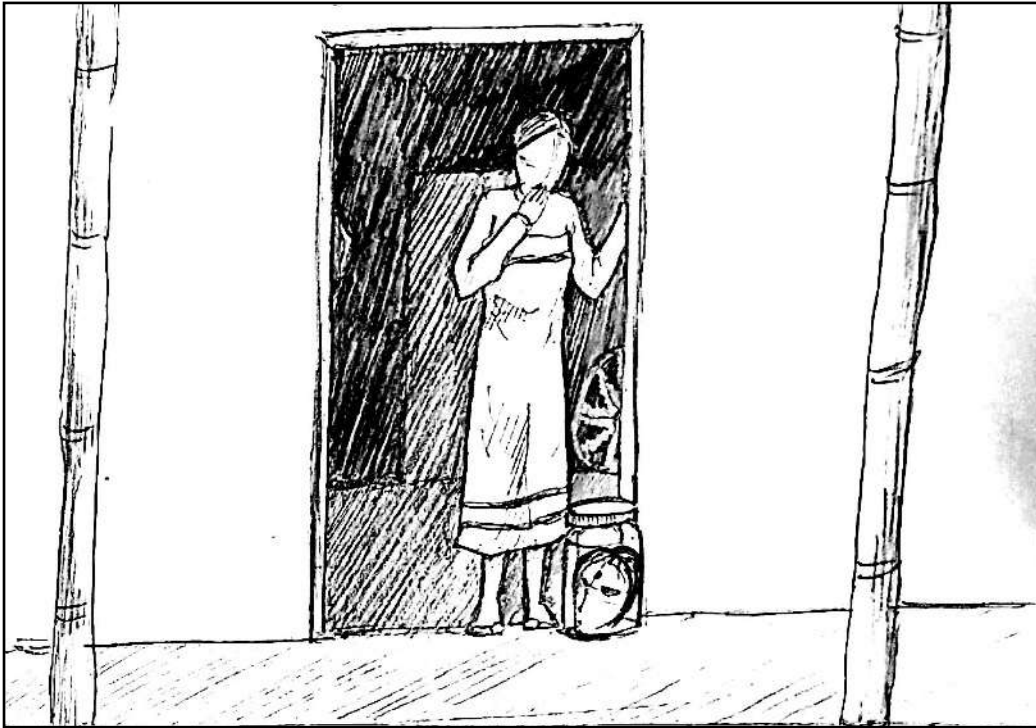
*Figure 9.3.1. Sketching Exploration 1*

## 9.3 Art Style Explorations

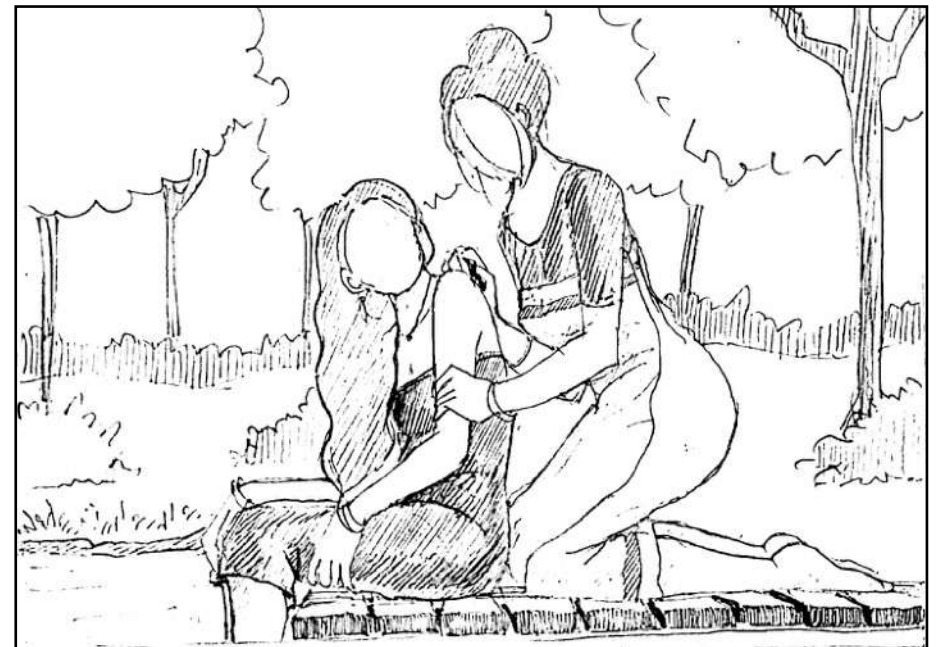


*Figure 9.3.2. Sketching Exploration 2*





*Figure 9.3.3. Sketching Exploration 3*



*Figure 9.3.4. Sketching Exploration 4*



Figure 9.3.5. Sketching Exploration 5



Figure 9.3.6. Sketching Exploration 6

## 9.4 Landscape Explorations



*Figure 9.4.1. Landscape Exploration 1*



*Figure 9.4.2. Landscape Exploration 2*



## 9.5 Character Design Explorations



Figure 9.5.1. Character Exploration Teja: 1



Figure 9.5.2. Character Exploration Teja: 2

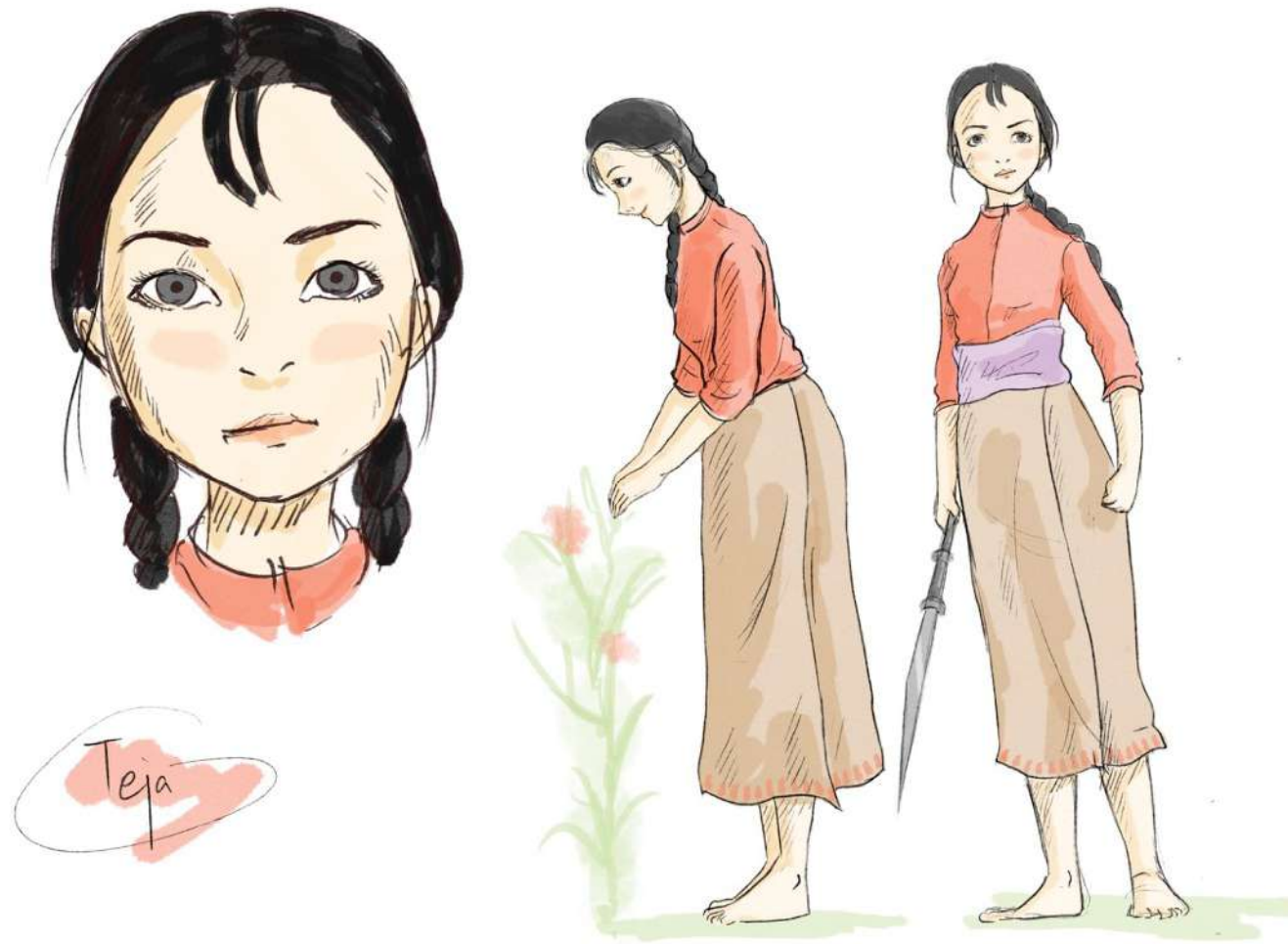
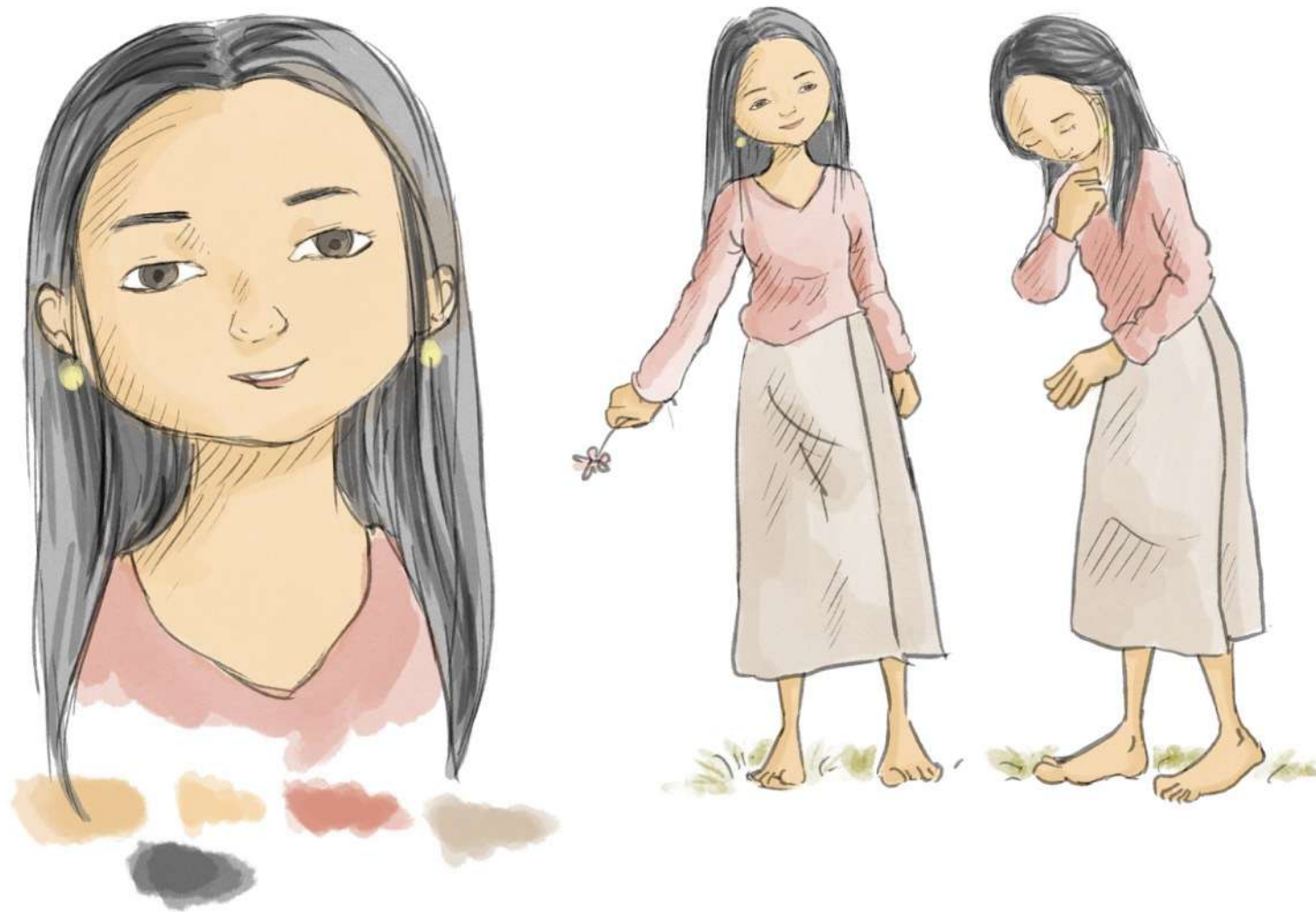


Figure 9.5.3. Character Exploration Teja: 3



*Figure 9.5.4. Character Exploration :Toola*



Figure 9.5.5. Character Exploration :Bimala



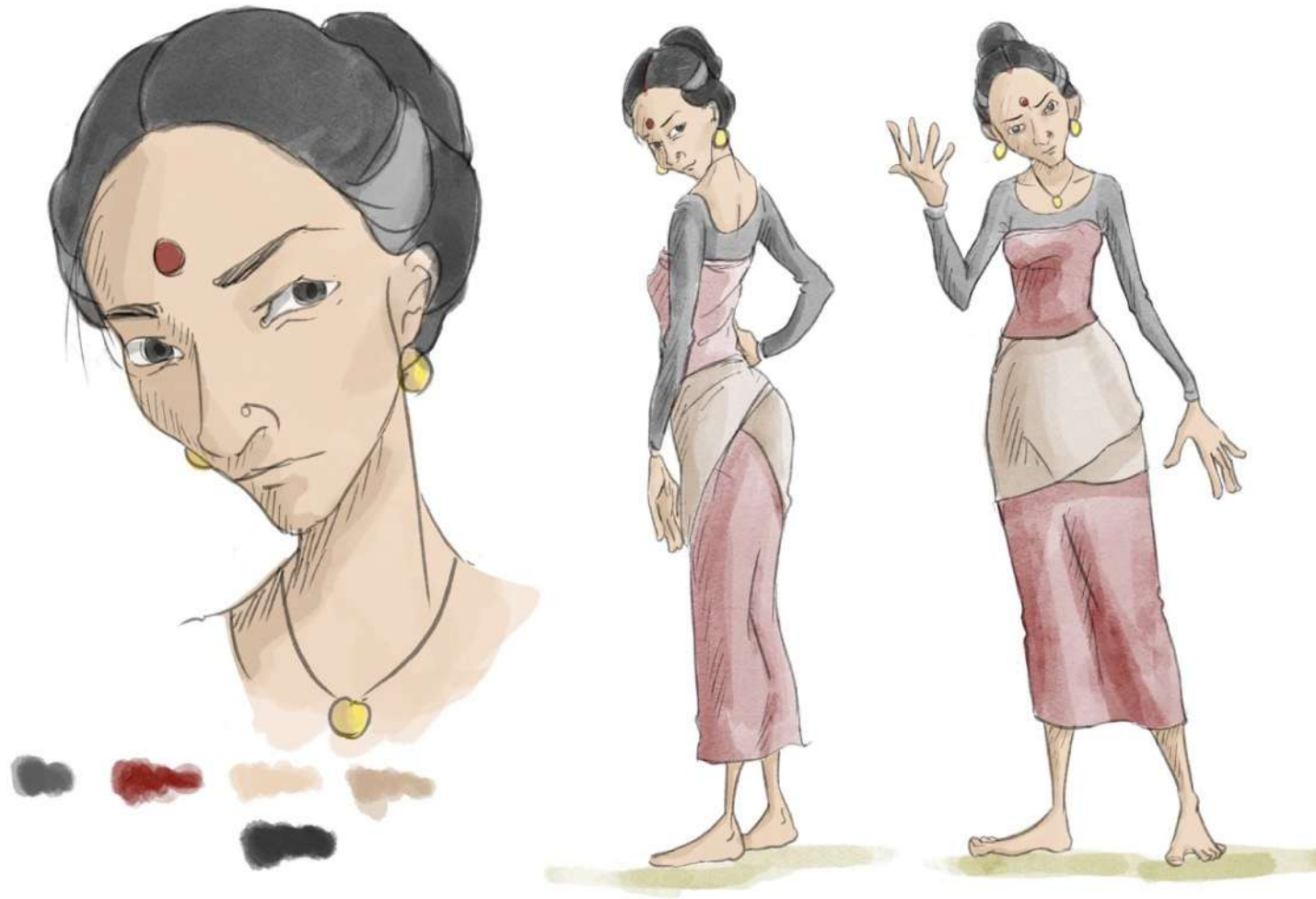


Figure 9.5.5. Character Exploration :Kubeli

## 9.6 Storyboarding Explorations

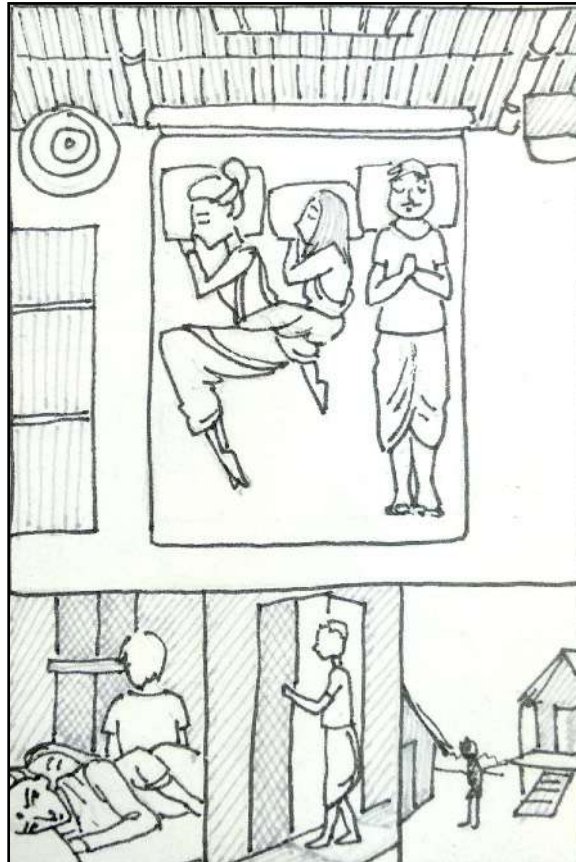


(Left to Right)

Figure 9.6.1. Storyboard Exploration 1

Figure 9.6.2. Storyboard Exploration 2

Figure 9.6.3. Storyboard Exploration 3



# 10.0 Final Concept

## 10.1 Story, in brief

Each story is a string of promises made by the author to the audience. This one is no different.

Our story starts long way back. In a forgotten land, one that has not stood the test of time.

It's about a small village behind those great mountains where people still worshipped the supernatural, for nature and men were one and the same; divine resided among the mortals.

In our village lived a farmer - he had two wives. His first wife, Bimala, was a good-natured lady - caring and loving of all who came by. Kuheli, his second wife, was not liked by many because of her jealous nature.

Their daughters, Teja and Toola, found themselves bonded by innocent unconditional love, but at the expense of Kuheli, being what she is, didn't like it.

One day, Kuheli came to know that her husband was still visiting Bimala and Teja. She was enraged at this, and cursed Bimala to fall into the great pond, from where none comes back.

Everyone thought Bimala has died, but Teja found out that her mother has been magically transformed into a giant tortoise under the surface of the pond, and was alive.

Naturally, when Kuheli came to know this, she was beyond herself with anger. This time, she made sure that Bimala was gone for good.

The river deity told Teja that Kuheli was actually a witch, and a grieving Teja swore to avenge her mother. She asked help from the forest deity, whose son Aranya agreed to help him.

Kuheli, on the other hand, was taken over by an evil spirit. She started a rampaging storm which started destroying her village, and when Teja came to stop her, Kuheli transformed her into a mynah.

Toola took the curse from Teja. Teja went to confront Kuheli in a final battle, which led Toola getting caught up in between and getting killed. Losing her daughter broke Kuheli's heart, and the evil grip of the spirit was also broken. Realising what she has done, Kuheli took her life to atone for her daughter's death.

Teja destroyed the evil spirit, and held on her dead sister, while the sun shone on the little village after days.

## 10.2 Character Design

---

### 10.2.1 Teja



- 13 year old
- Kind
- Determined
- Brave
- Wants to do the right thing

Figure 10.2.1 Character Design: Teja



## 10.2.2 Toola

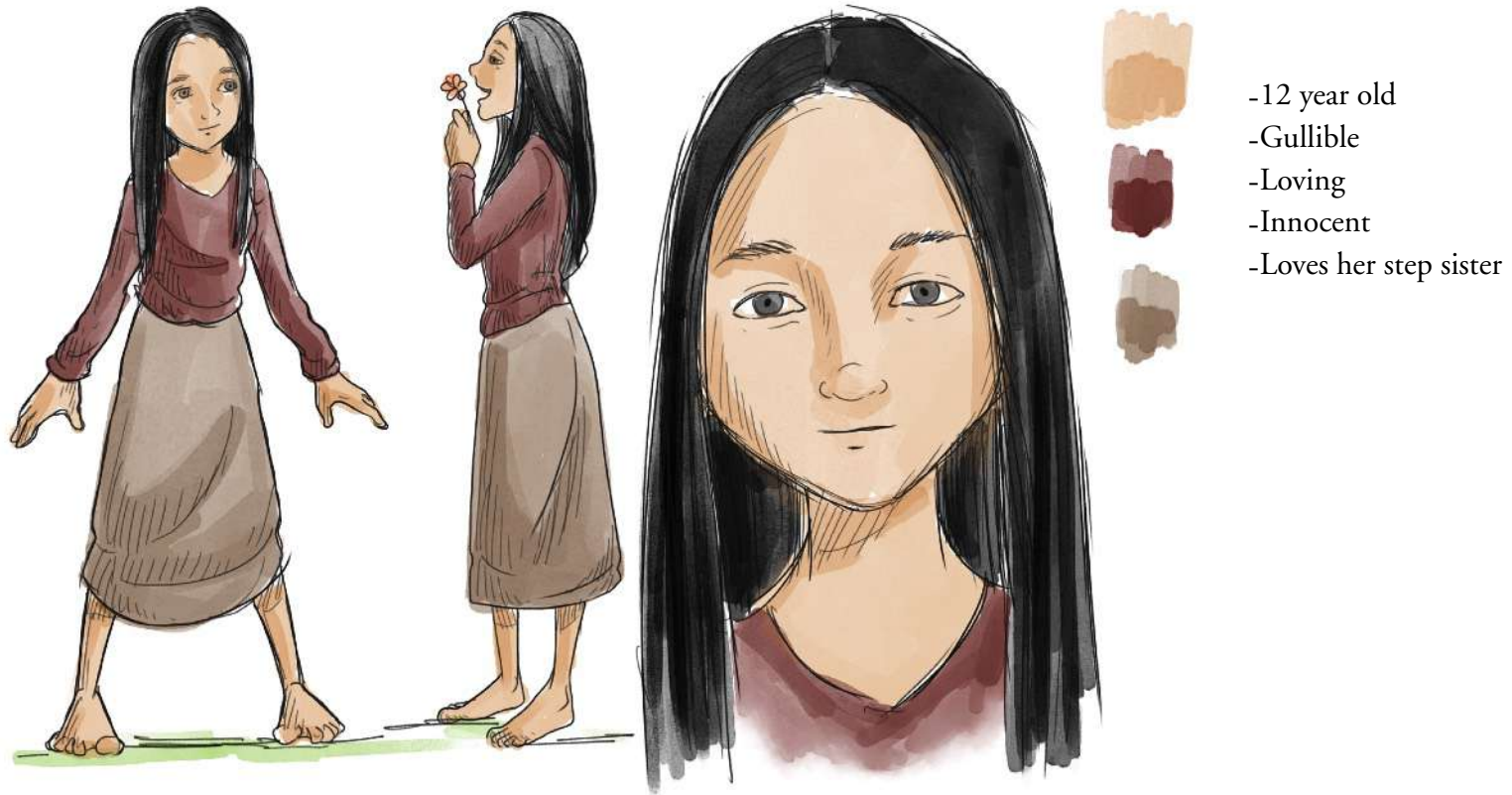


Figure 10.2.2 Character Design: Toola

### 10.2.3 Kuheli



Figure 10.2.3 Character Design: Kuheli

## 10.2.4 Bimala



Figure 10.2.4 Character Design: Bimala



---

### 10.2.5 The father



- Village farmer
- Hardworking
- Has two wives, Bimala and Kuheli

*Figure 10.2.5 Character Design: The Father*

## 10.2.6 Aranya

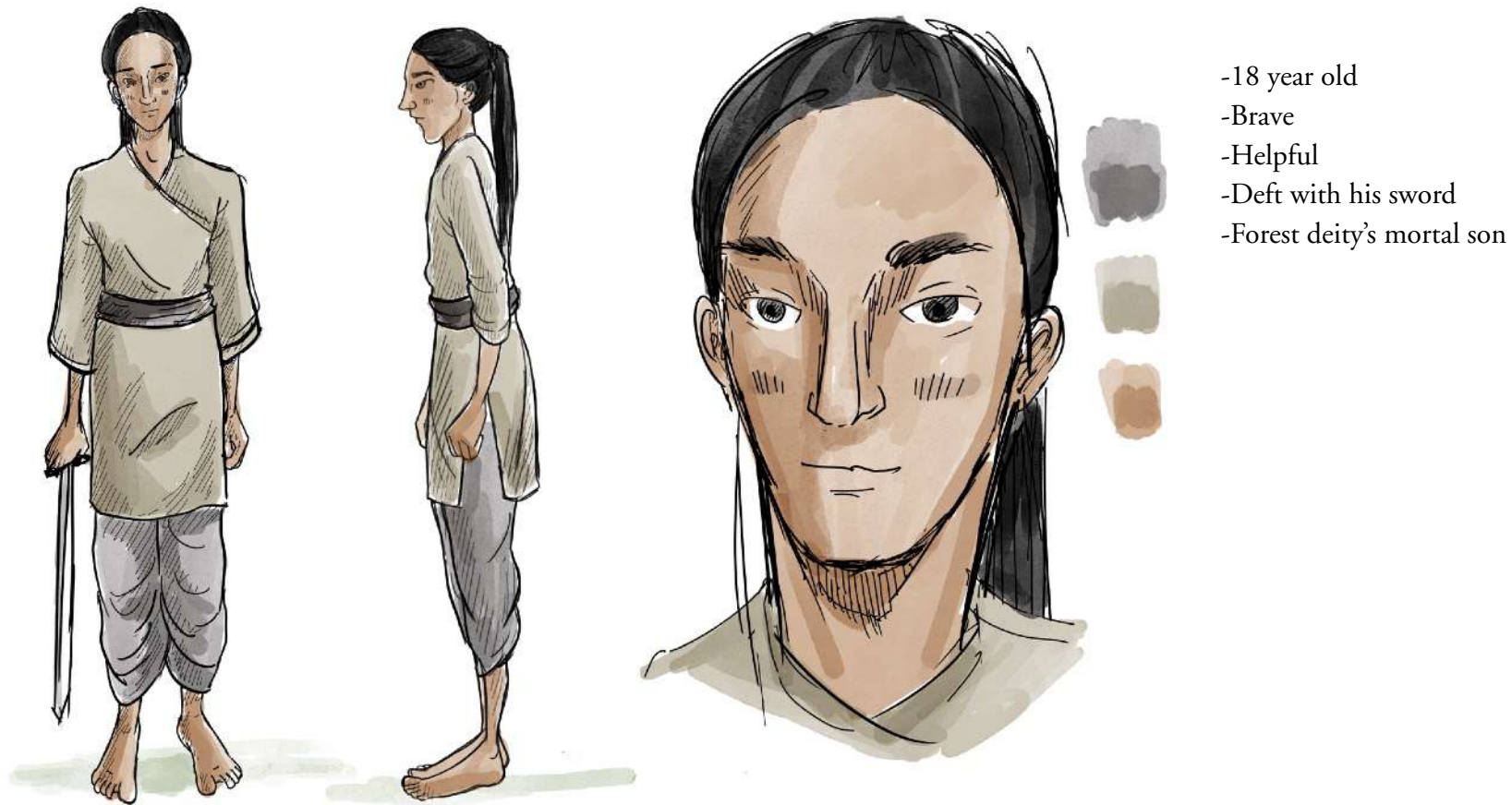
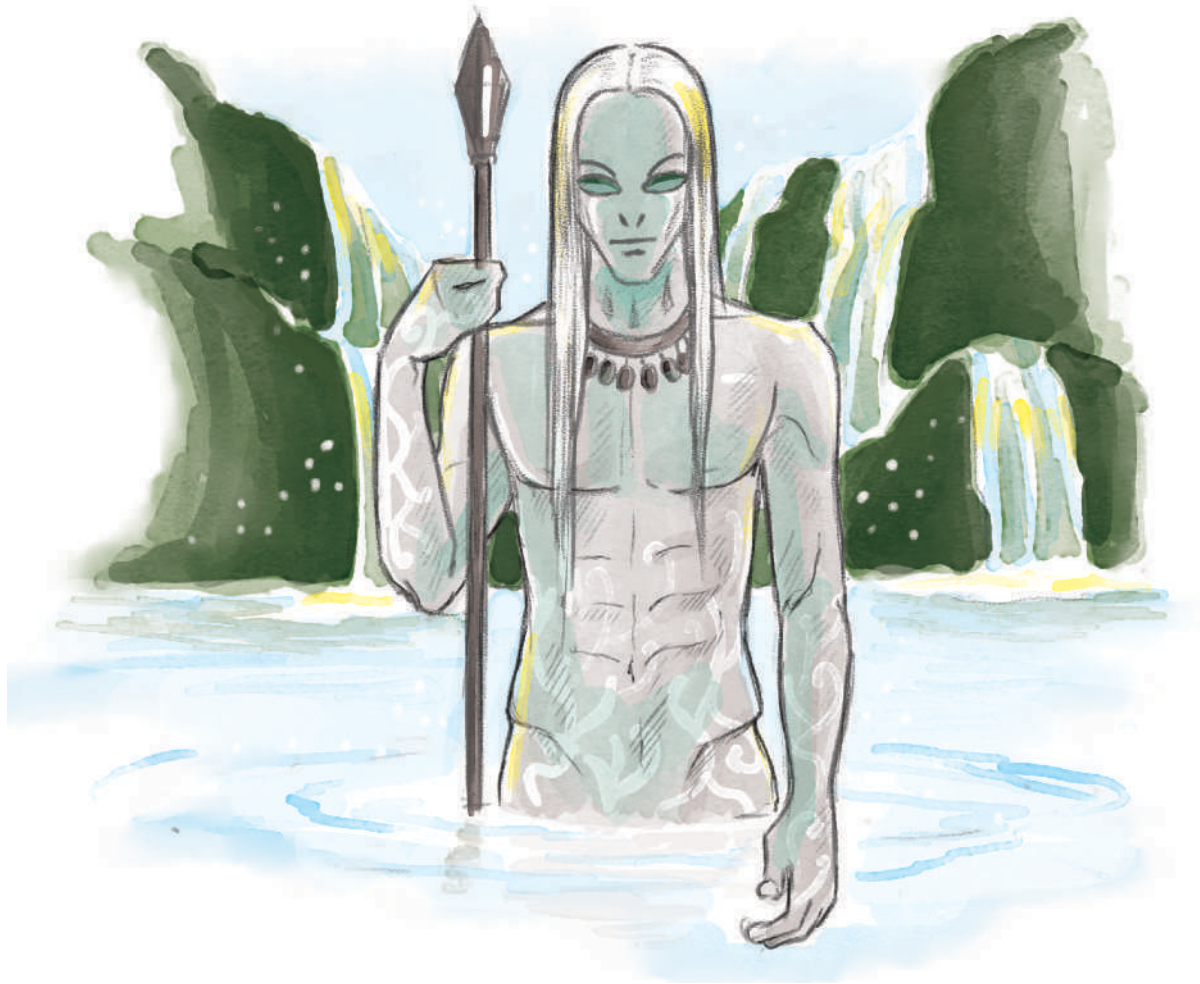


Figure 10.2.6 Character Design: Aranya

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## 10.2.7 River Deity



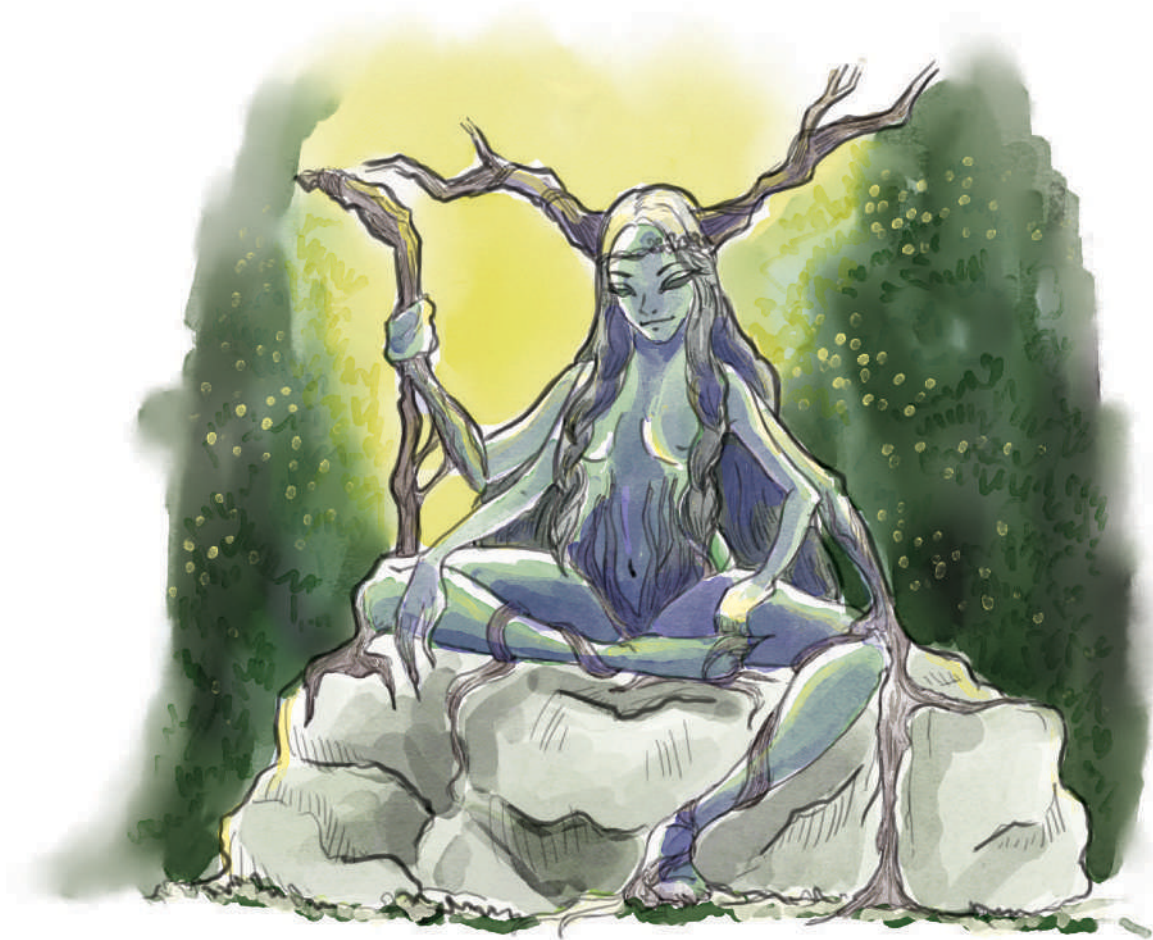
- Male
- Fish-like Skin
- Lives in the water
- Rescues the innocent
- The one who advices Teja

*Figure 10.2.7 Character Design: The River Deity*



Figure 10.2.8 Character Design: The Forest Deity

## 10.2.8 Forest Deity



- Female
- Gigantic
- Kind but stern
- Serene
- Lives in the forest
- Aranya's mother

---

## 10.2.9 Evil Spirit



- Male
- Scary
- Floating body
- Manipulative
- Resides in a locket
- Latches onto a soul that succumbs to anger and jealousy

*Figure 10.2.9 Character Design: The Evil Spirit*

## 10.3 Storyboarding

### 10.3.1 ACT1

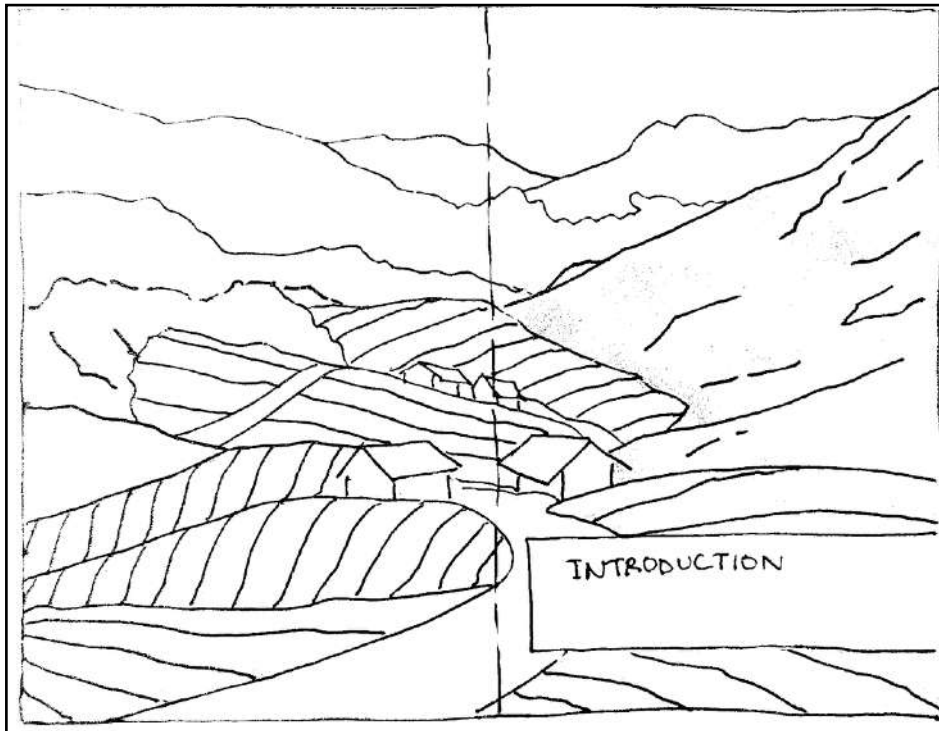


Figure 10.3.1.1 Introduction

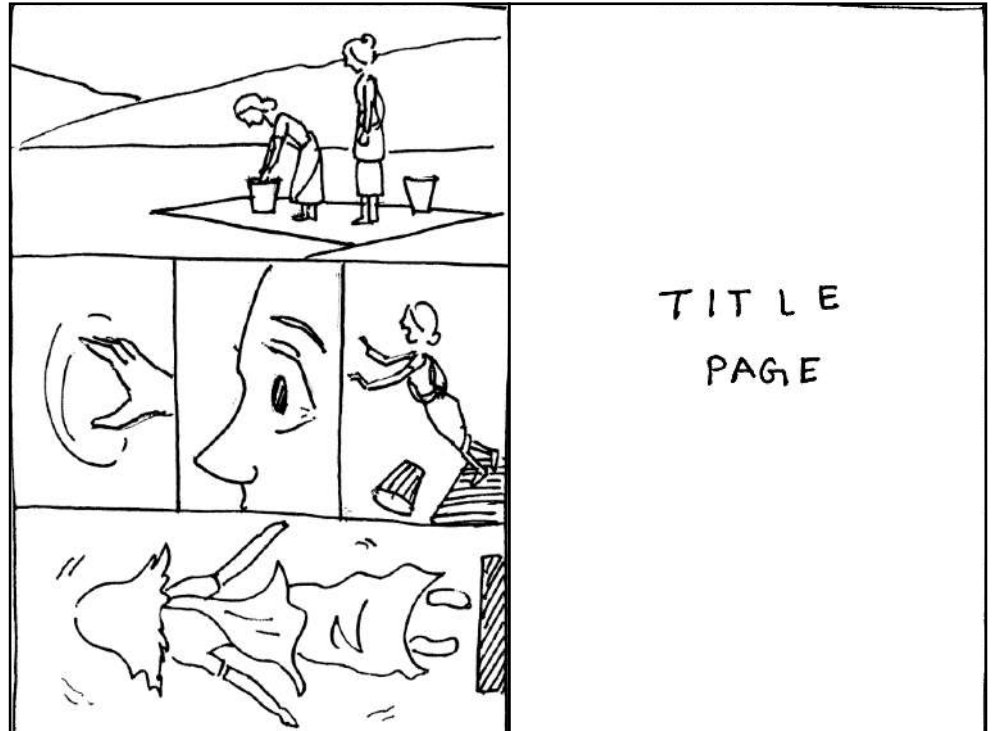


Figure 10.3.1.2 Hook - a woman drowns



Figure 10.3.1.3 Teja, Toola, Kuheli introduction

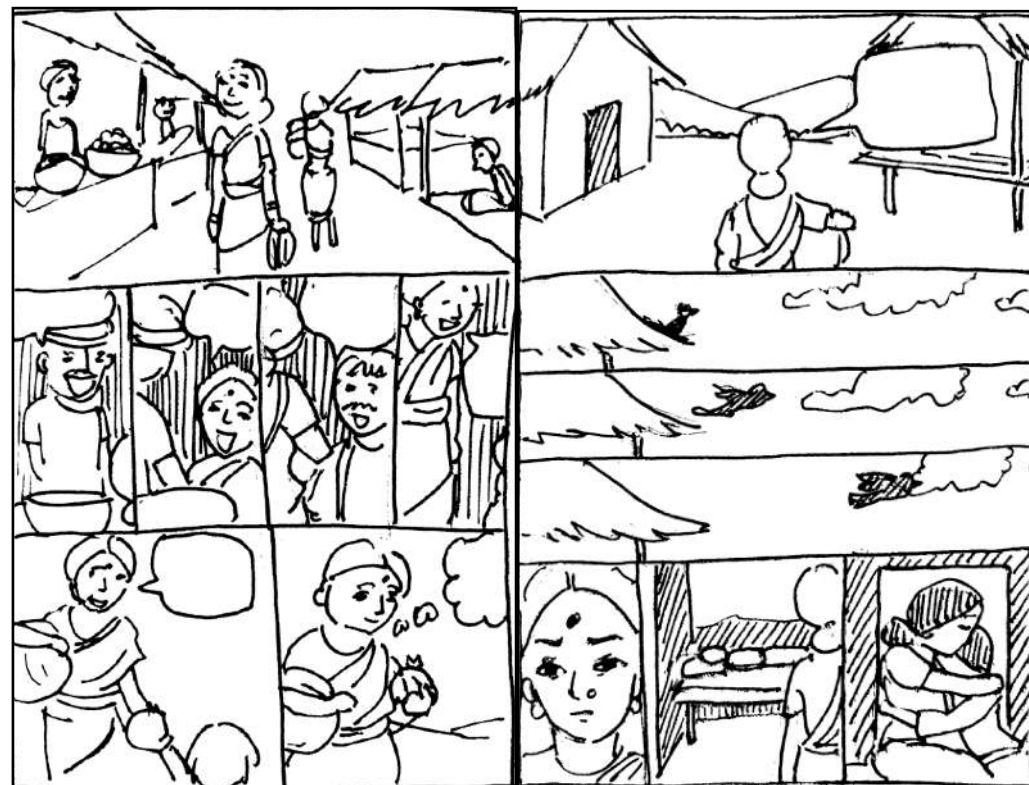


Figure 10.3.1.4 Bimala introduction

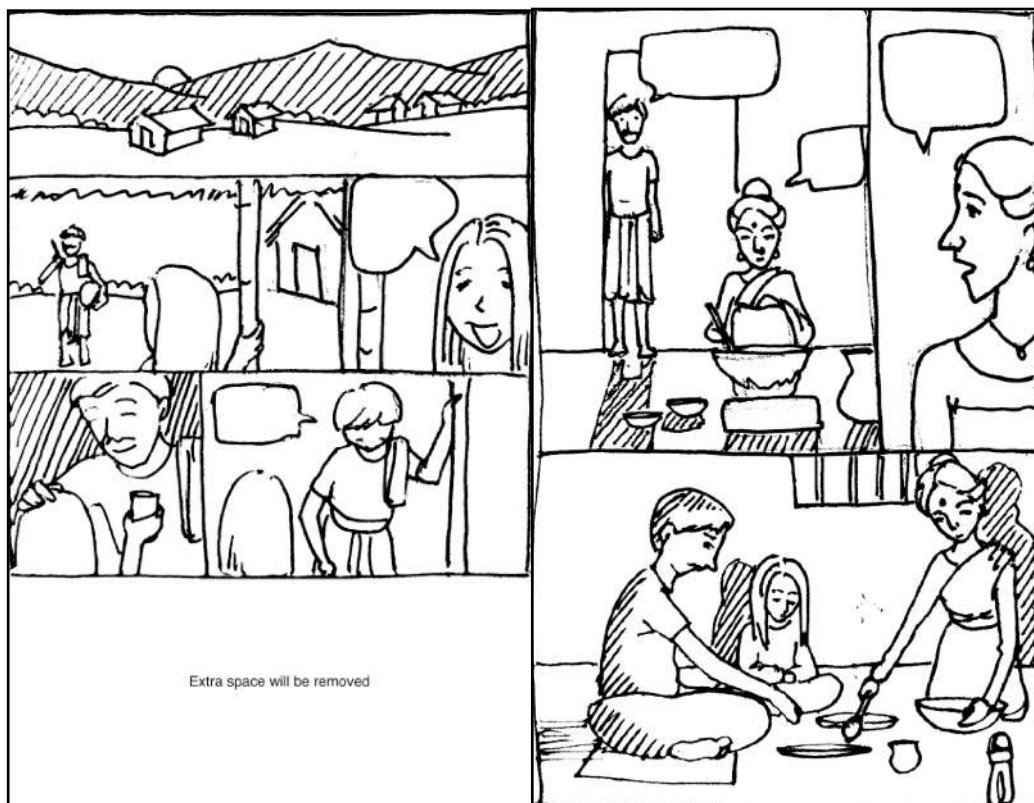


Figure 10.3.1.5 The father

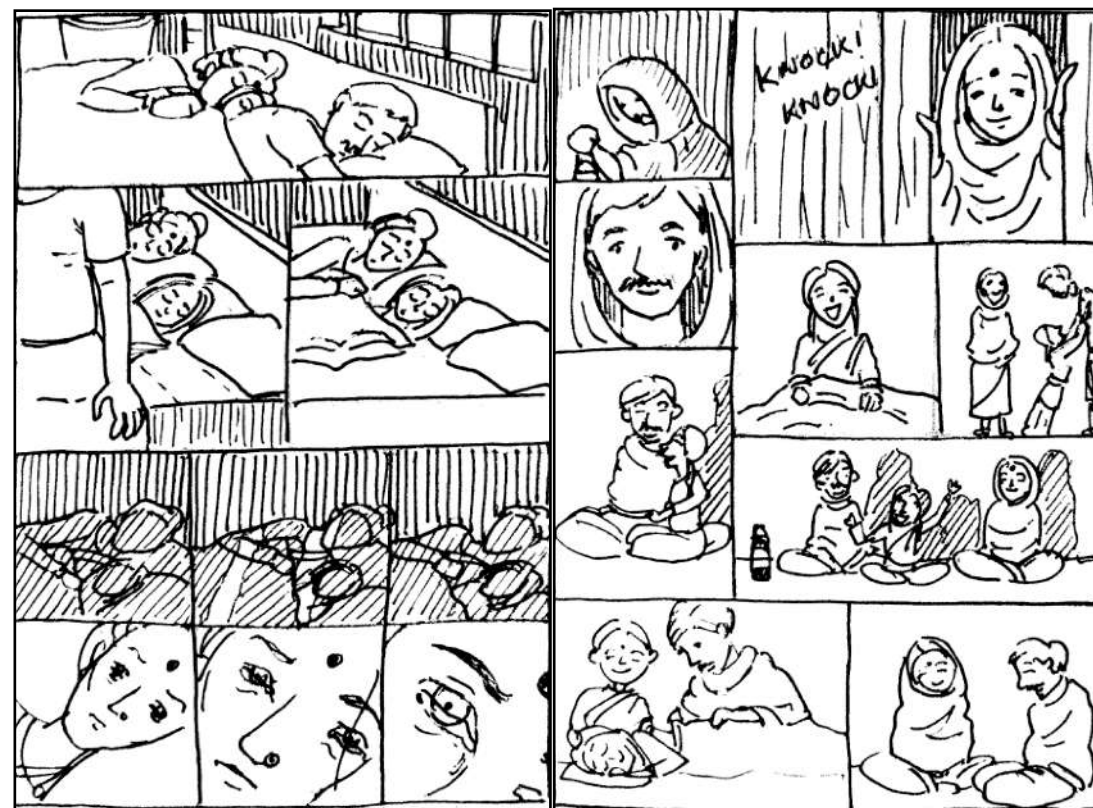


Figure 10.3.1.6 Inciting - Kuheli finds out



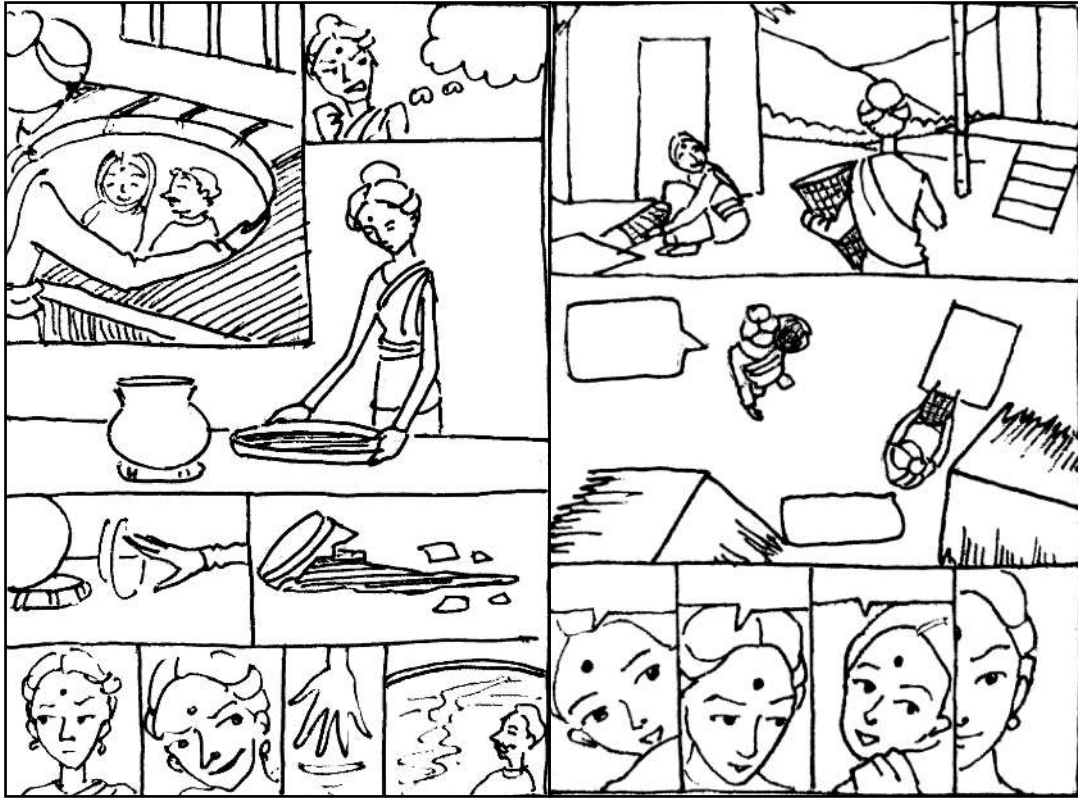


Figure 10.3.1.7 Kuheli plans



Figure 10.3.1.8 Kuheli curses Bimala

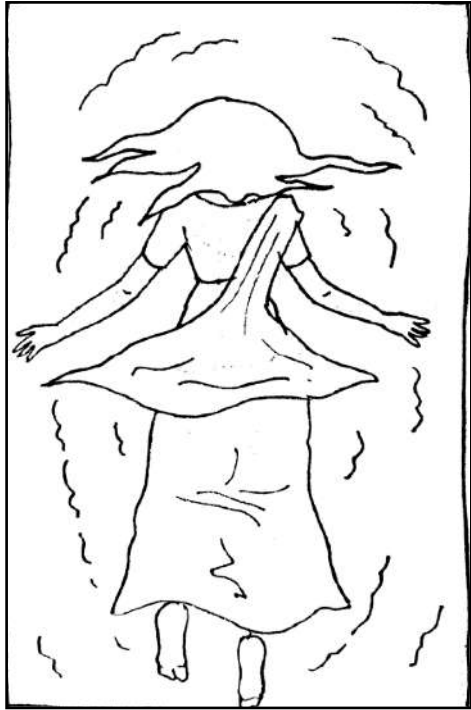


Figure 10.3.1.9 Bimala drowns

## 10.3.2 ACT 2

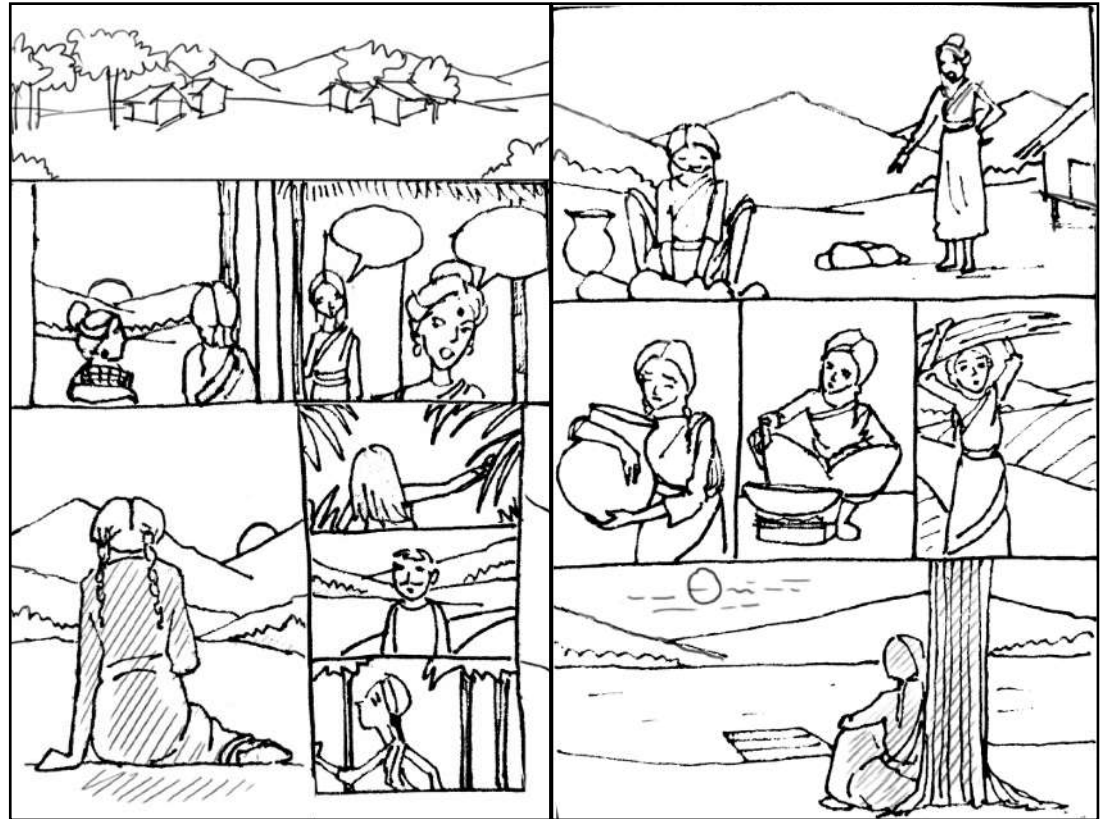


Figure 10.3.2.1 Teja works

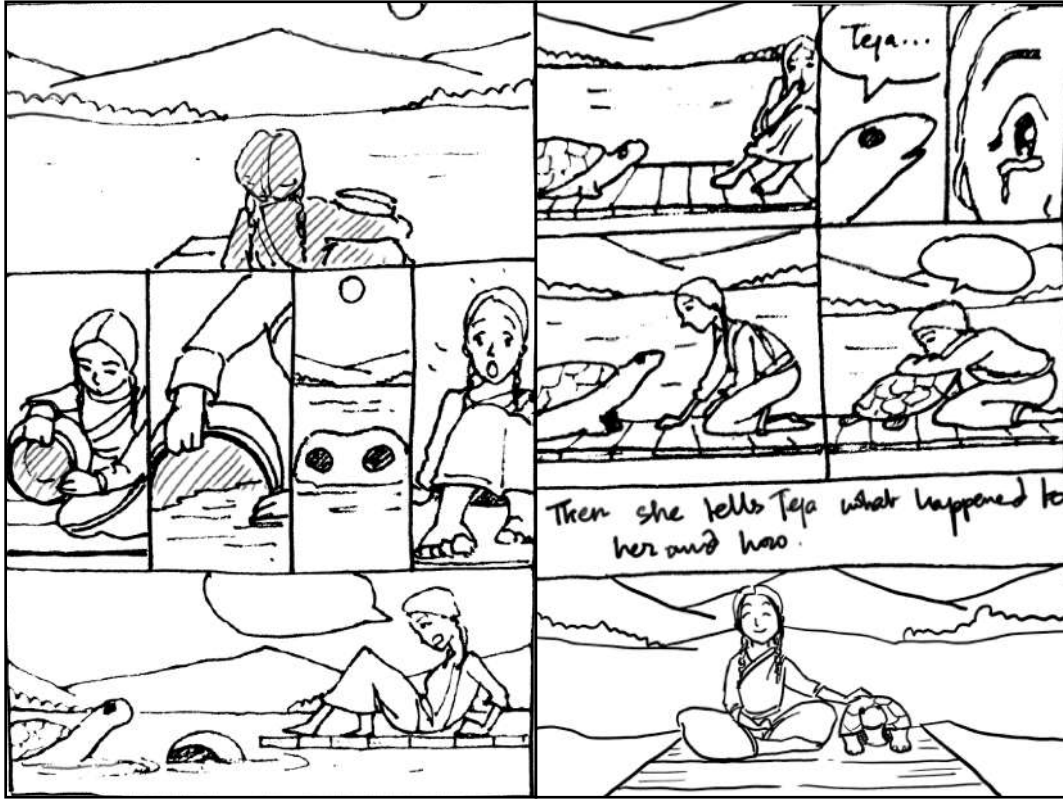


Figure 10.3.2.2 Teja gets mother back

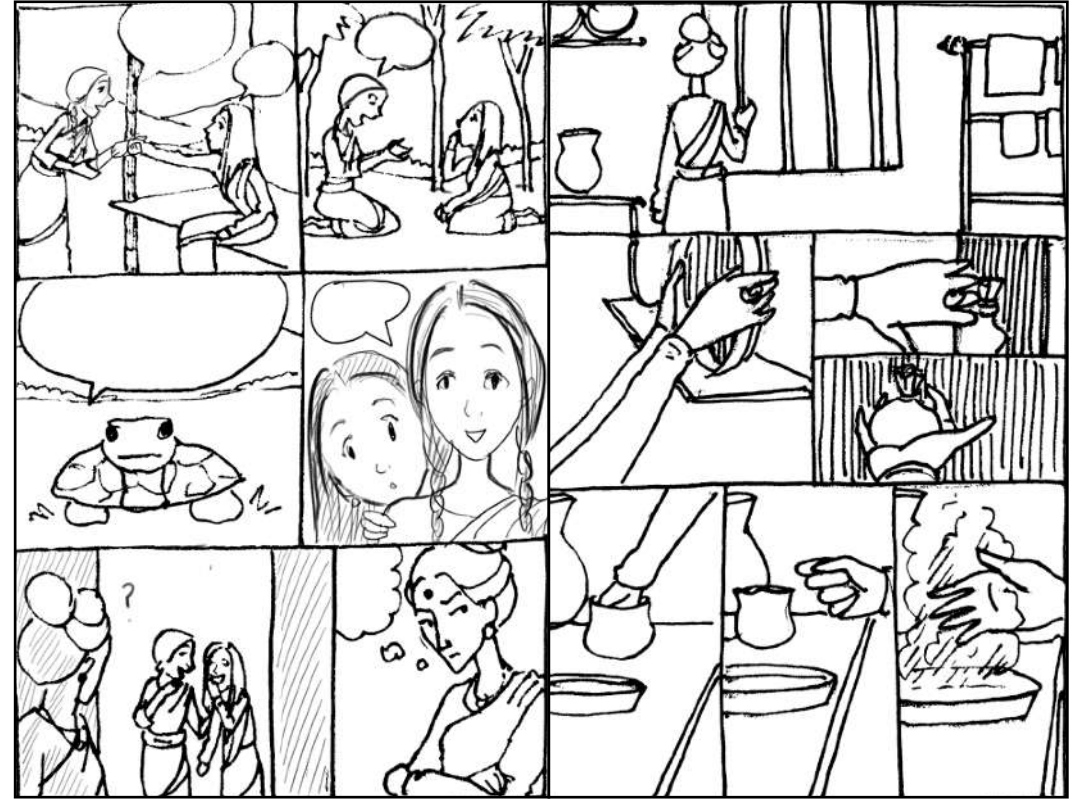


Figure 10.3.2.3 Kuheli finds out

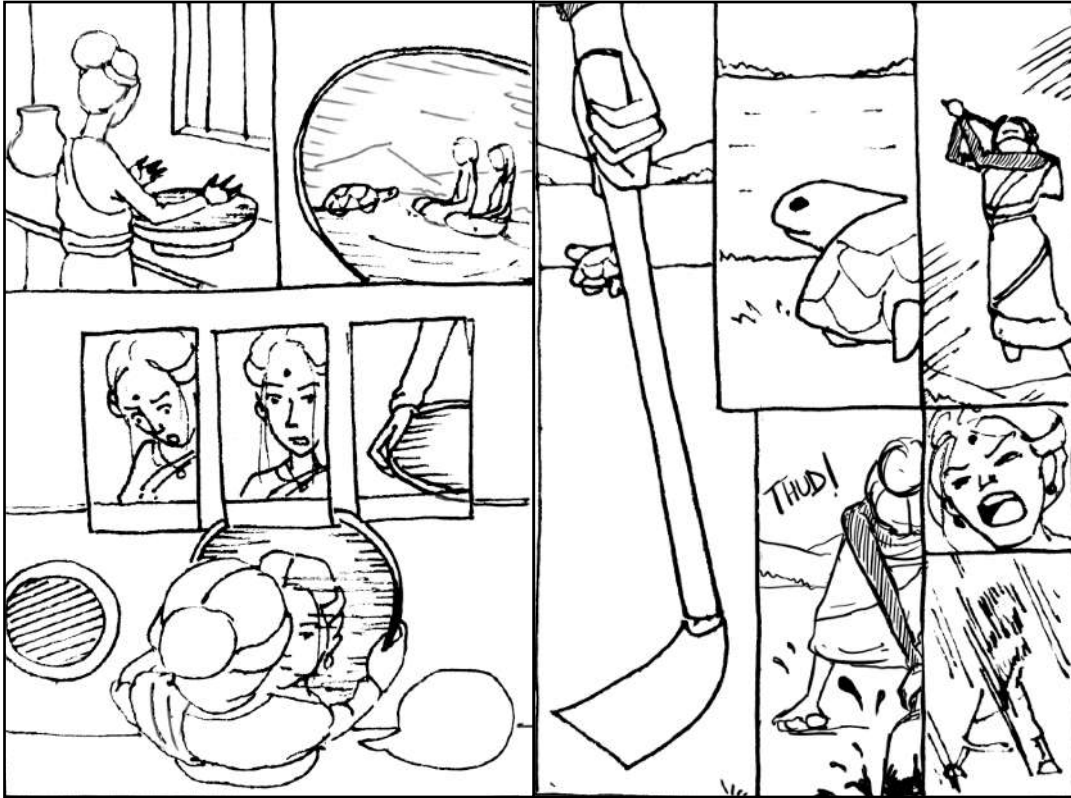


Figure 10.3.2.4 Kuheli kills Bimala



Figure 10.3.2.5 Toola watches

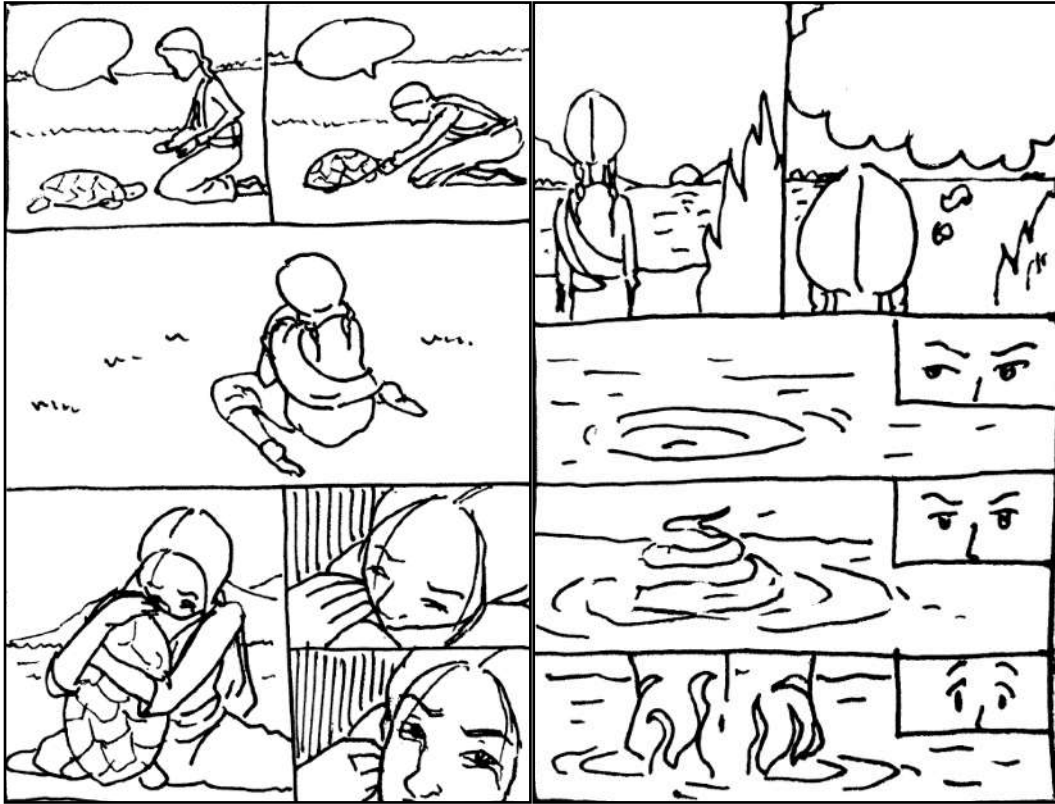


Figure 10.3.2.6 Teja loses Bimala

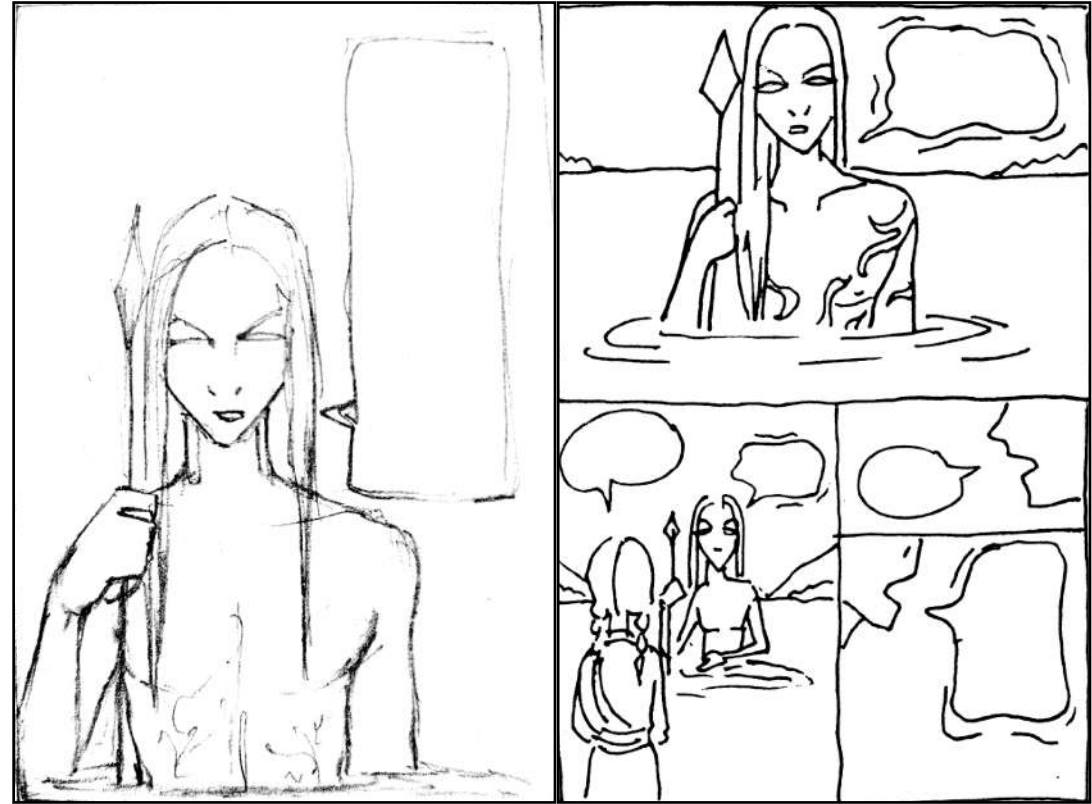


Figure 10.3.2.7 River Deity appears

### 10.3.3 ACT 3



Figure 10.3.3.1 Tēja's revenge

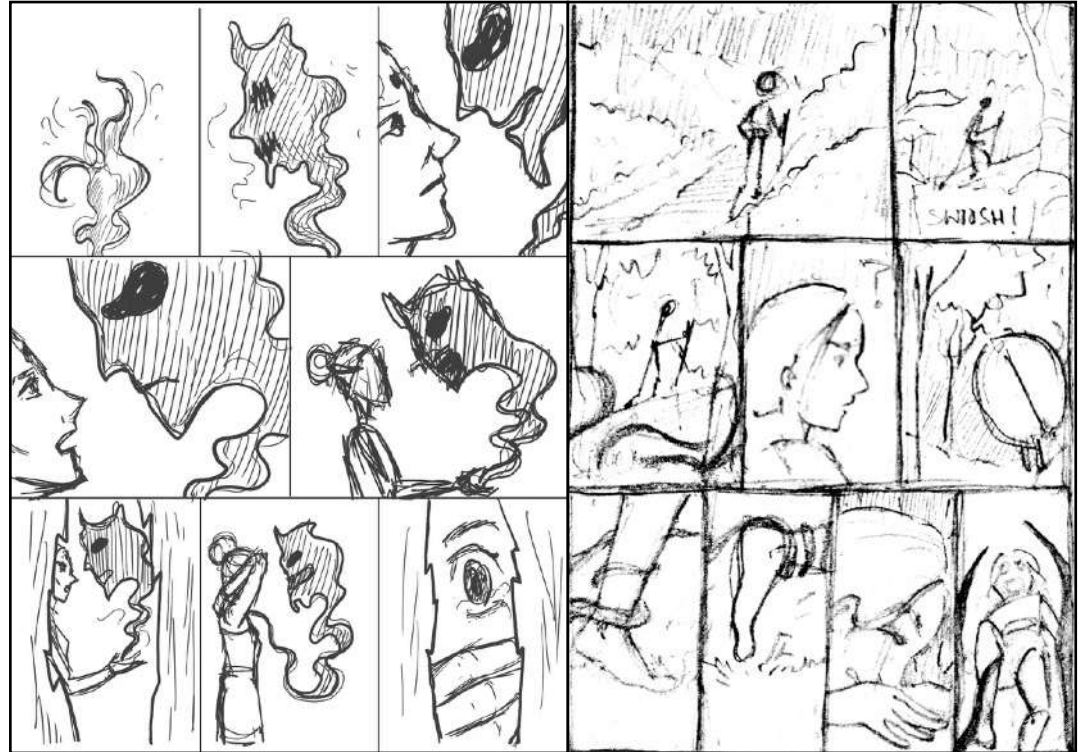


Figure 10.3.3.2 Evil Spirit



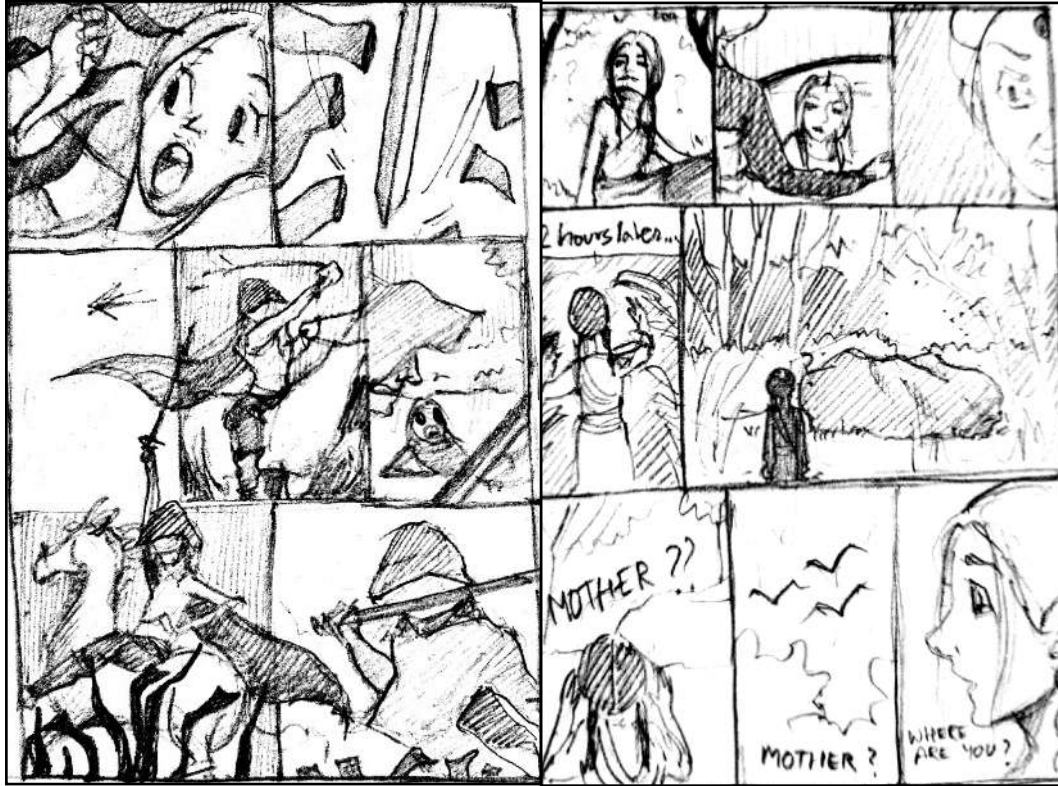


Figure 10.3.3.3 Aranya saves Teja



Figure 10.3.3.4 Forest Deity appears



Figure 10.3.3.5 Kuheli's storm

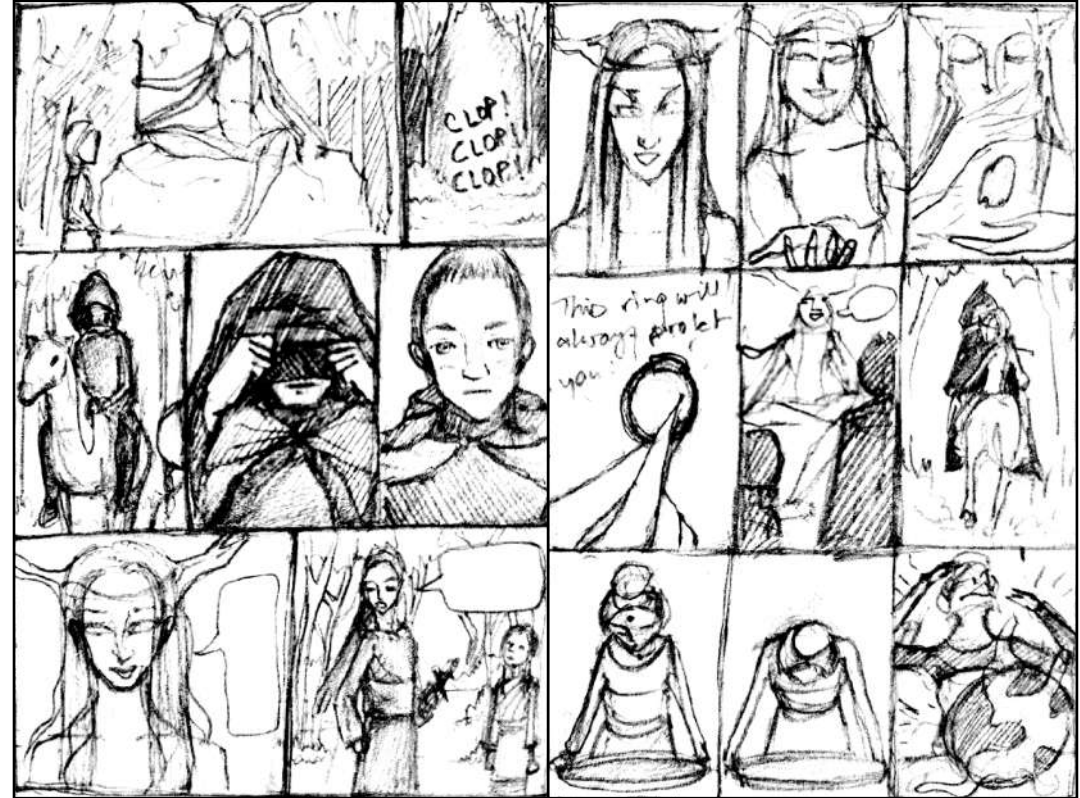


Figure 10.3.3.6 Aranya introduction



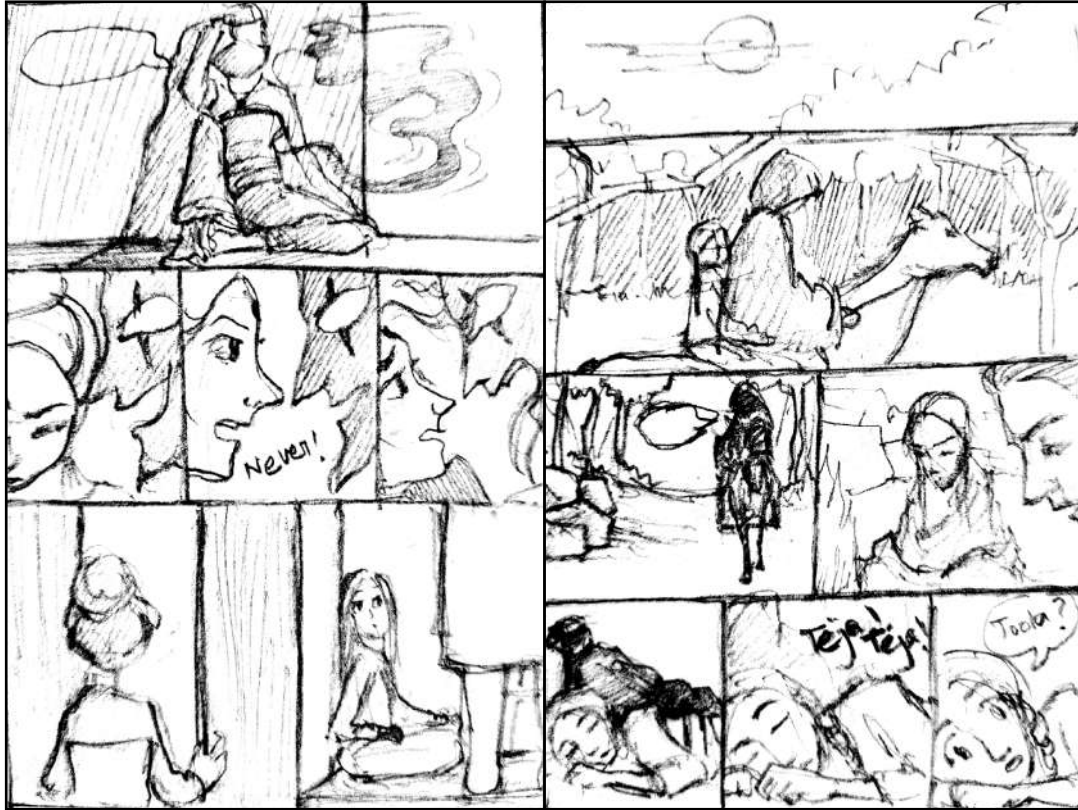


Figure 10.3.3.7 Toola as bait



Figure 10.3.3.8 Teja disappears

### 10.3.4 ACT 4

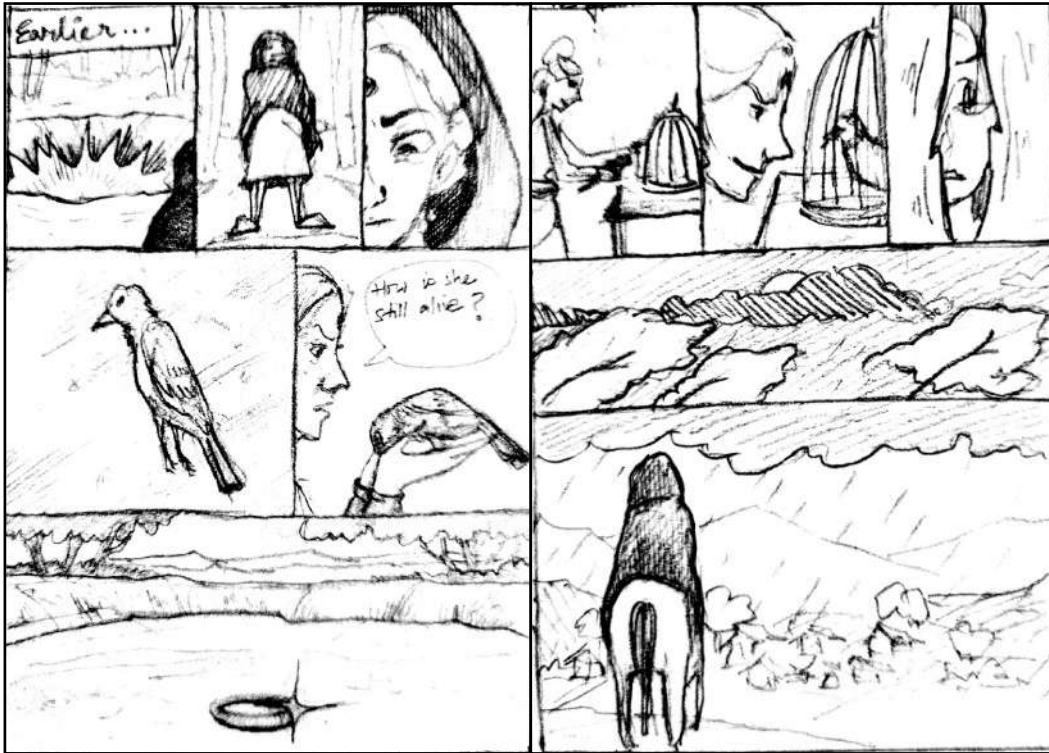


Figure 10.3.4.1 Teja is a mynah



Figure 10.3.4.2 Aranya rescues



Figure 10.3.4.3 Toola sacrifices



Figure 10.3.4.4 Teja back to human



Figure 10.3.4.5 Kuheli's locket

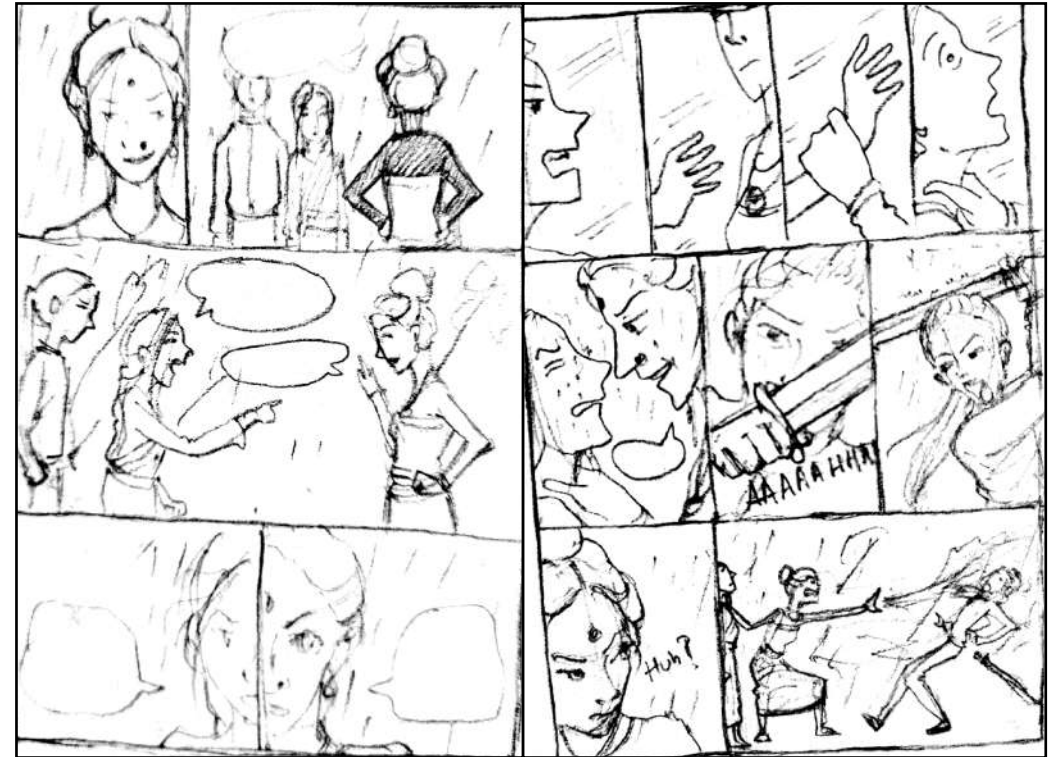


Figure 10.3.4.6 The battle



Figure 10.3.4.7 Kuheli takes Teja's ring



Figure 10.3.4.8 Toola dies





Figure 10.3.4.9 Kuheli repents

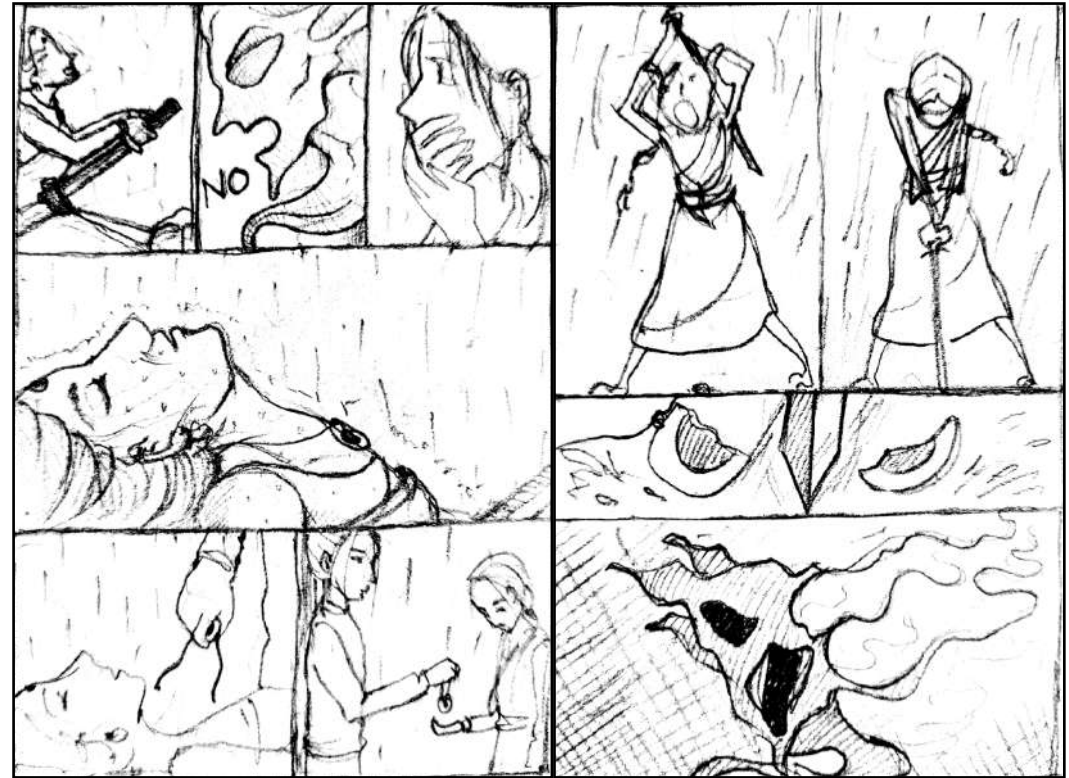


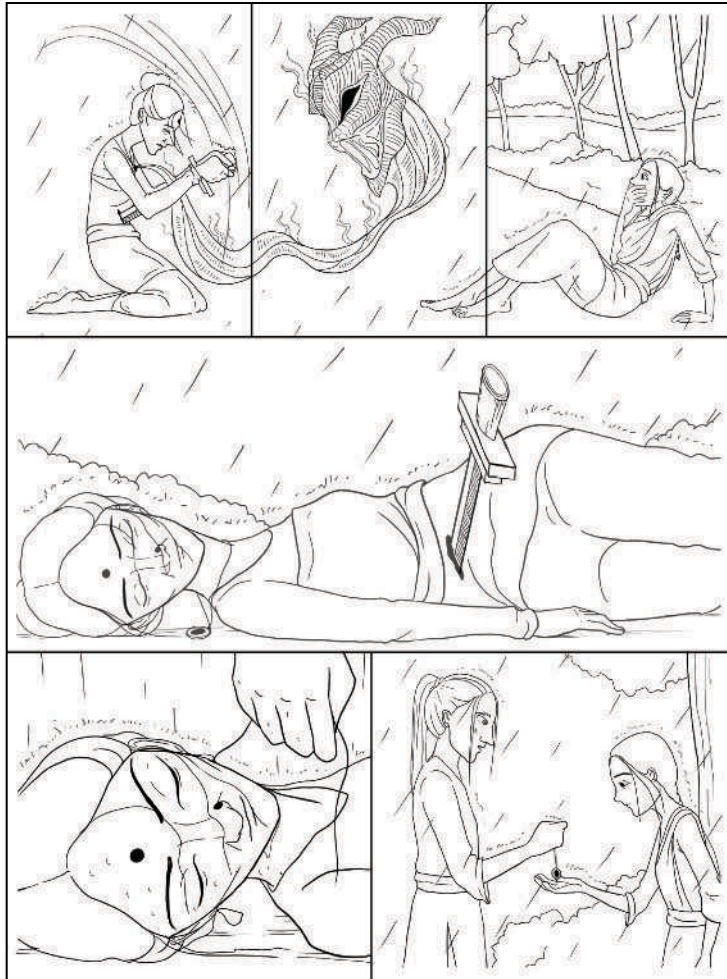
Figure 10.3.4.10 Evil spirit destroyed



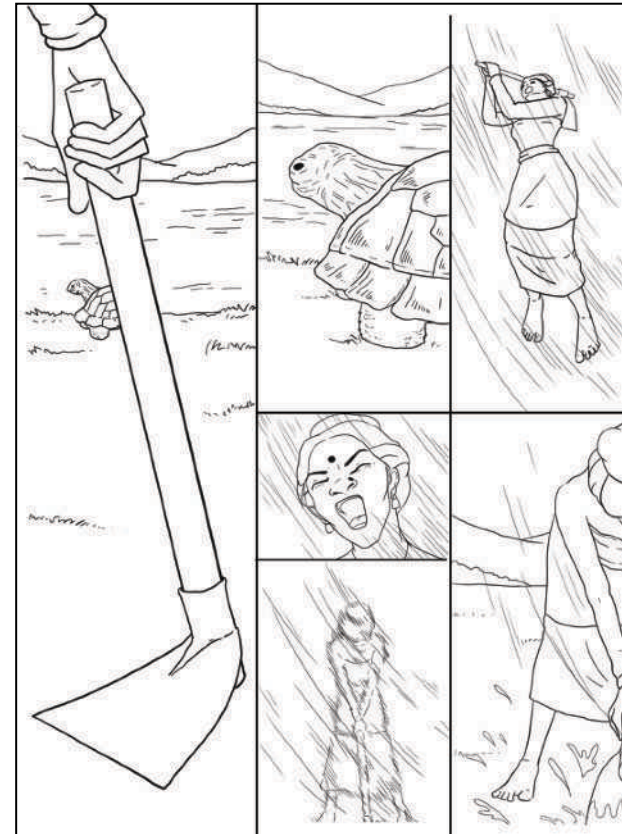
*Figure 10.3.4.11 New world*

## 10.4 Inking Process

These are a few examples of the inked pages which have been done digitally. Please refer to 'MTP Inking.pdf' for all pages.

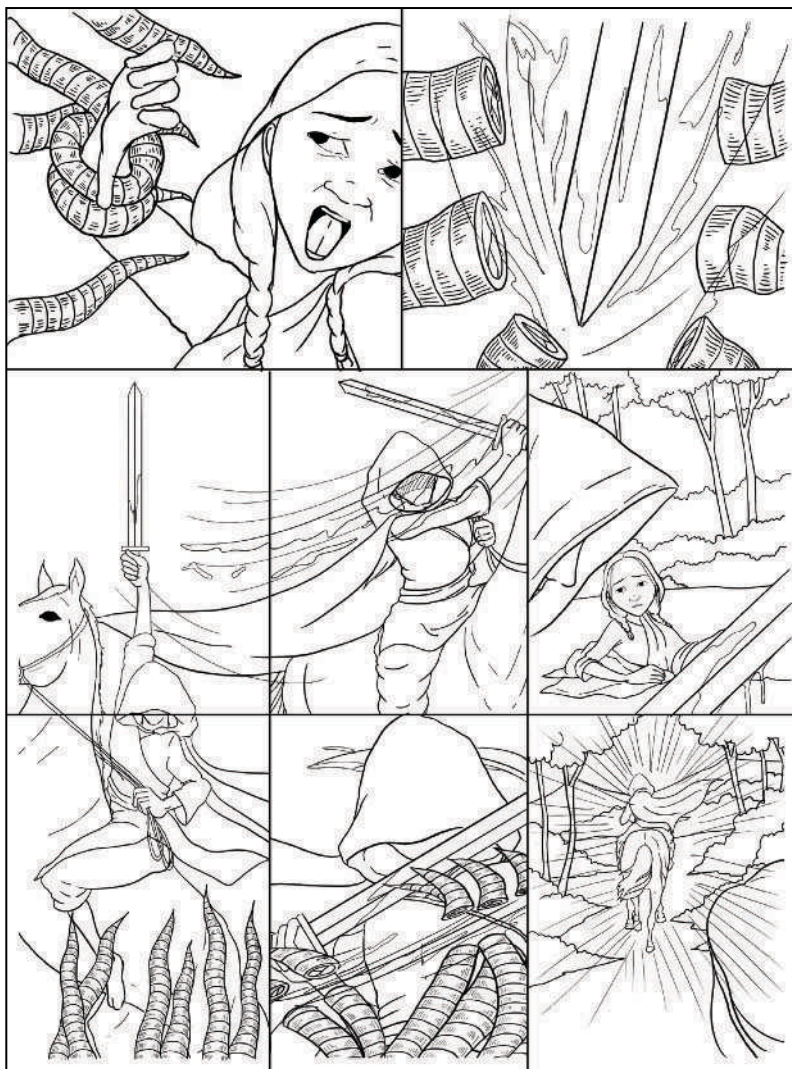


10.4.1. Kubeli's death



10.4.2. Kubeli kills Bimala





10.4.3. Aranya rescues Teja.



10.4.3. Teja meets Forest Deity



10.4.5. Toola sacrifices for Teja.



10.4.5. Toola's death





*Figure 10.5.1. Colouring Style 1*

## 10.5 Colouring Explorations

Multiple styles of colouring were explore before deciding upon one. These colourings are done digitally.

Style 1 uses a desaturated colour palette and traditional watercoloring style is used.

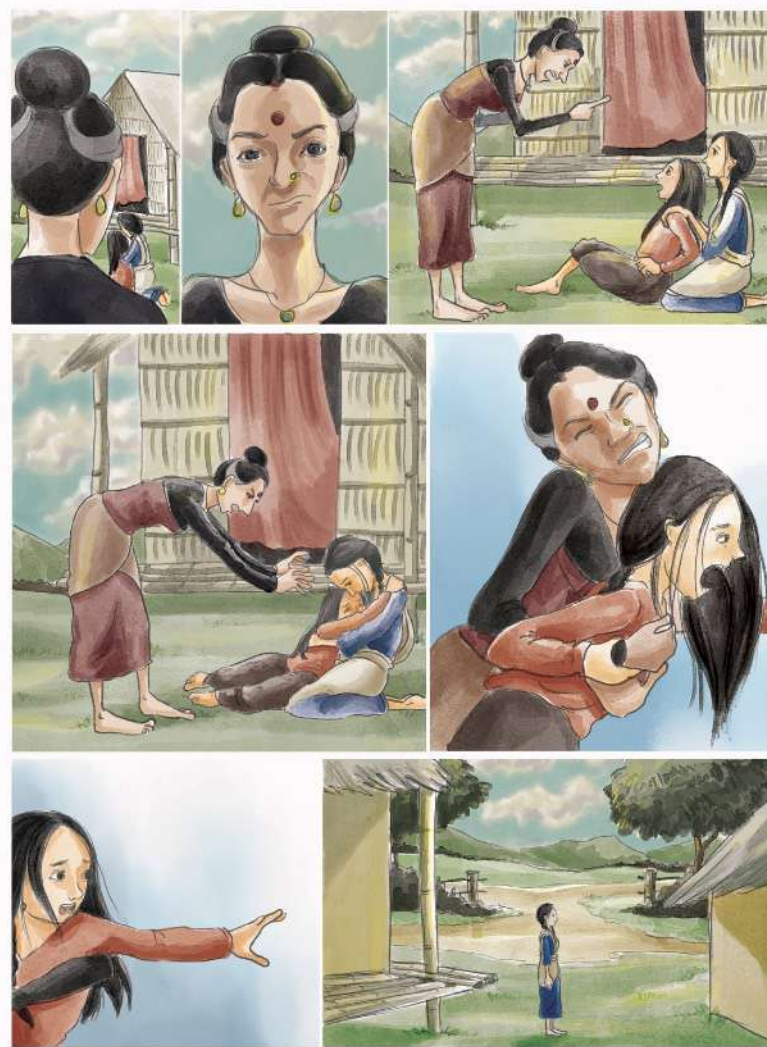


Figure 10.5.2. Colouring Style 1





Figure 10.5.3. Colouring Style 2



Figure 10.5.4. Colouring Style 2

Style 2 uses flat colouring technique and tones and shades of orange and purple for day and night scenes respectively.



Figure 10.5.5. Colouring Style 3

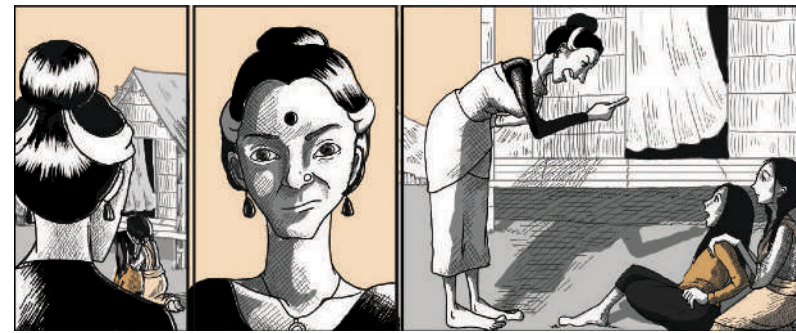


Figure 10.5.6. Colouring Style 4

Style 3 uses tones of grey and orange.

Style 4 uses cross hatching to create shade.

Style 5 uses a monochromatic colour palette and hatching to create shade.



Figure 10.5.7. Colouring Style 5





Style 6 uses watercoloring technique and tones and shades of orange and purple for day and night scenes respectively.



Figure 10.5.8. Colouring Style 6

## 10.6 Book Cover Explorations



Figure 10.6.1. Book Cover Exploration

Five concepts of book covers were explored and a combination of the first and the fifth one was finalised based on discussions.

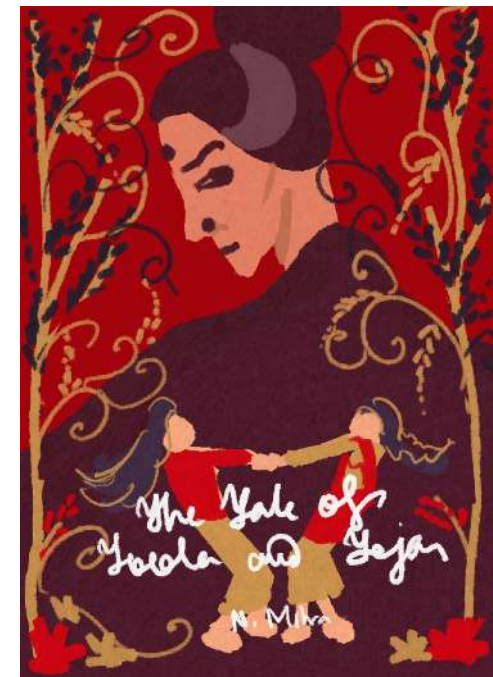


Figure 10.6.2. Final Concept



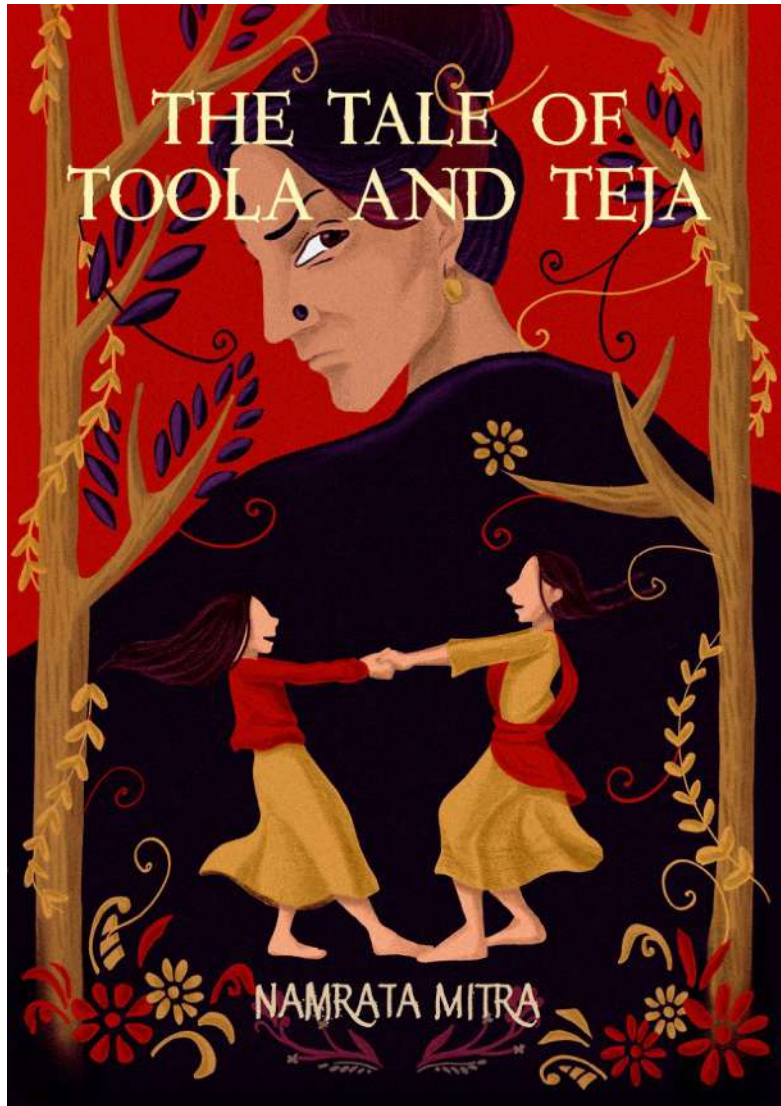


Figure 10.6.3. Final Iteration 1



Figure 10.6.4. Final Iteration 2

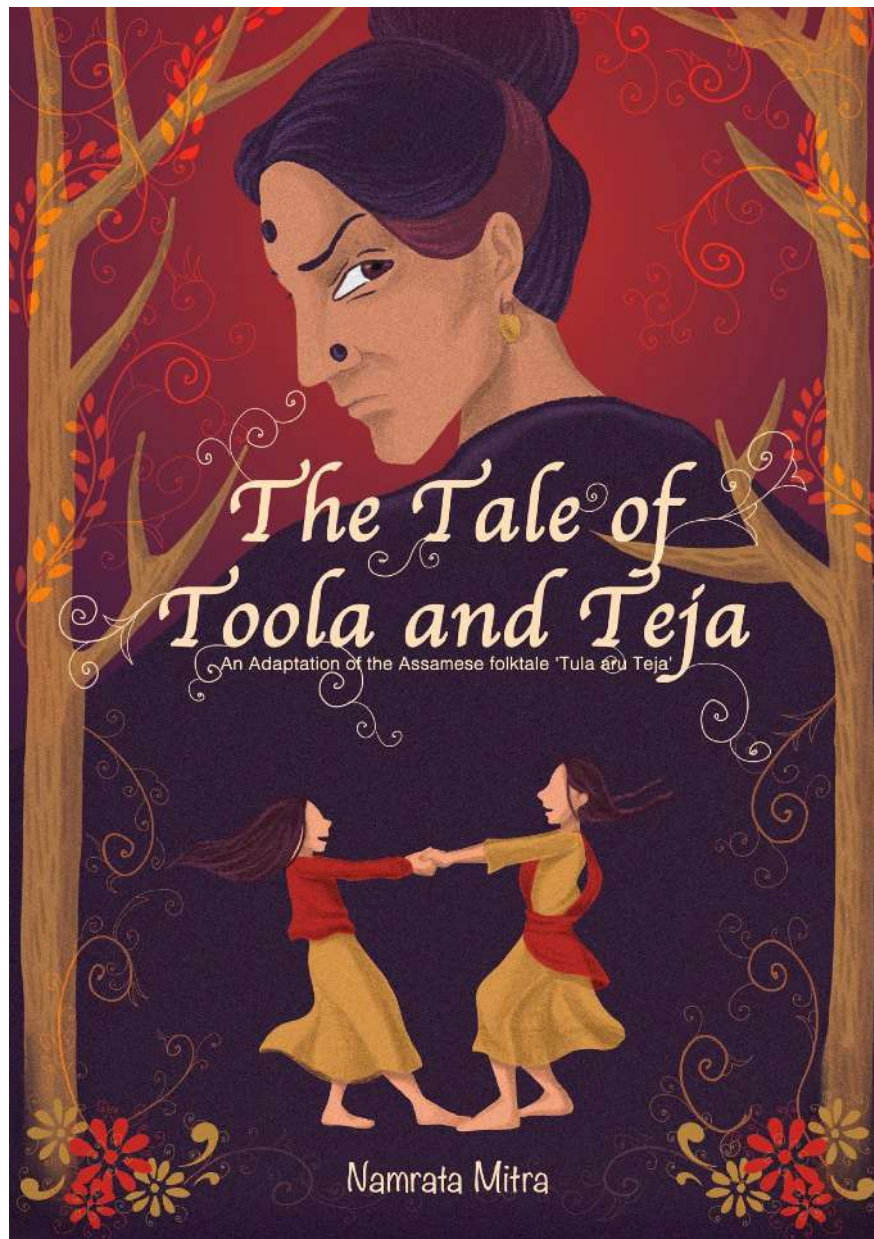


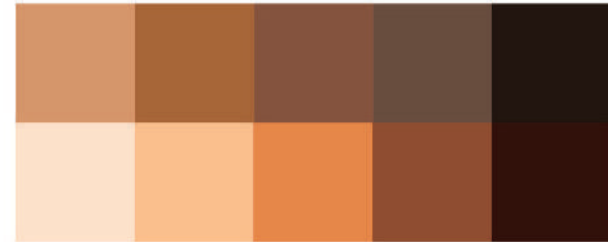
Figure 10.6.5. Final Book Cover

The cover art was selected for the following reasons:

1. This cover gives a hint of the story with the main protagonist characters shown here.
2. The negativity of Kuheli's character is portrayed through her eyes and gesture, while the playful figures of Teja and Toola depicts the innocent relationship between the two sisters.
3. The red colour creates suspense, excitement while the contrast attracts the eye quickly.
4. The branches of the trees are used to evoke a sinister feeling.
5. The leaves and the flowers suggest the supernatural and magical element in the story.
6. The colours red and golden are also used majorly in Assamese clothes and hats.

## 10.7 Colour Palette and Font

For Day Scenes,



*Figure 10.7.1. Colour Palette 1*

For Night Scenes



*Figure 10.7.2. Colour Palette 2*

These colours are used for most of the book except for 4 pages where no specific colour palette has been used.

Fonts used are:

1. Roof Runners by PressGang Studios (for dialogues)

*ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ*

2. Badaboom BB by Blambot (for onomatopoeias)

***ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ***

3. Marker Felt by Dieter Steffmann (for onomatopoeias)

***ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ***

4. Apple Chancery by Apple (for cover)

*ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ*

5. Noteworthy by Vernon Adams (for cover)

*ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ*

6. Helvetica by Max Miedinger (for cover)

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ**



## 11.0 Final Book, a glimpse

This section only contains some panels representing important events in sequence from the book to explain the story. Please refer to 'The Tale of Toola and Teja.pdf' for the whole book.

The book is not entirely coloured, it is a work in progress.

The story starts with shadows of two women standing against the drooping afternoon sun until one disappears into the depths of the great pond.



*Figure 11.1 Two women standing*



*Figure 11.2 Woman Drowns*



Like every story that starts with a promise, our story starts a long way back, in a forgotten land, one that has not stood the test of time. It's about a small village behind those great mountains where people still worshipped the supernatural, for nature and men were one and the same and the divine resided among the mortals.

Figure 11.3 Landscape introduction

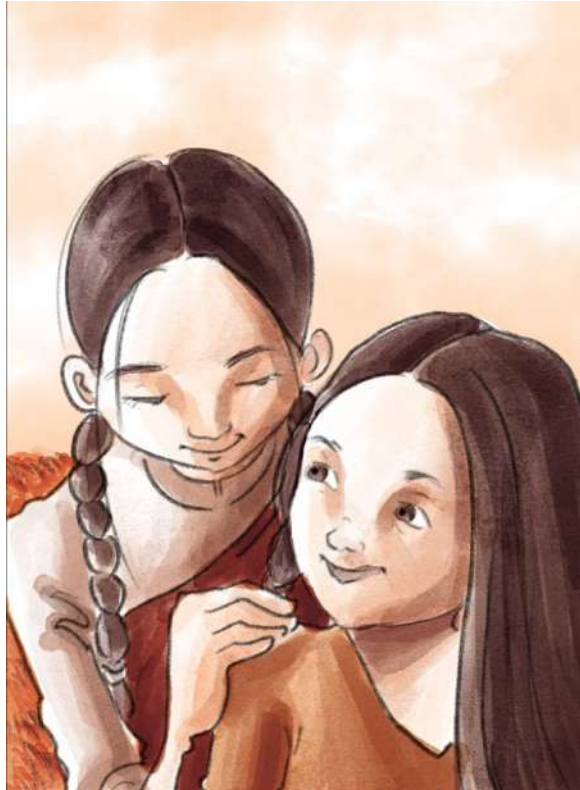




(left to right)

*Figure 11.4 Bimala*

*Figure 11.5 Teja and Toola*



In our village lived a farmer — he had two wives. His first wife, Bimala, was a good-natured lady — caring and loving of all who came by.



*Figure 11.6 Kuheli scolds Toola*

Kuheli, his second wife, was not liked by many because of her jealous nature. Their daughters, Teja and Toola, found themselves bonded by innocent unconditional love, but at the expense of Kuheli, being what she is, didn't like it.



Figure 11.9 Kuheli



(Top to Bottom)

Figure 11.7 Kuheli finds out

Figure 11.8 Father meets Bimala and Teja

One day, Kuheli came to know that her husband was still visiting Bimala and Teja. She was enraged at this and cursed Bimala to fall into the great pond, from where none comes back.



Figure 11.10 Kuheli curses Bimala





*Figure 11.11 Bimala drowns*



Everyone thought Bimala has died, but Teja found out that her mother has been magically transformed into a giant tortoise under the surface of the pond, and was alive.

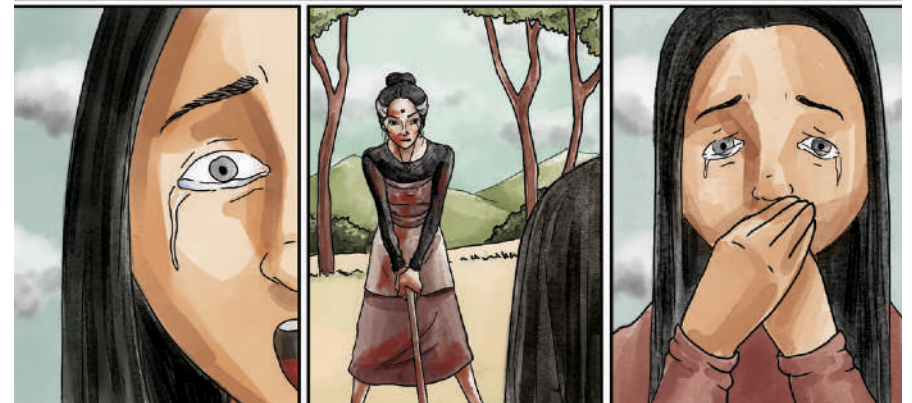
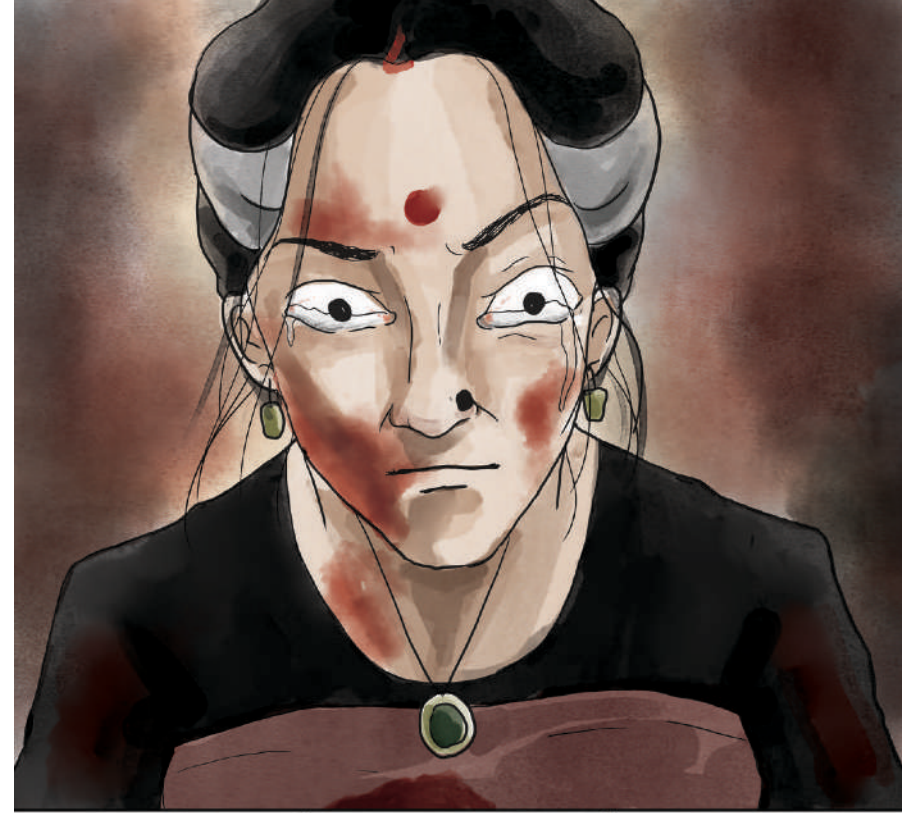
Naturally, when Kuheli came to know this, she was beyond herself with anger. This time, she made sure that Bimala was gone for good.

(Clockwise)

Figure 11.12 Teja meets tortoise 1

Figure 11.13 Kuheli kills tortoise

Figure 11.14 Teja meets tortoise 2







*Figure 11.15 River Deity*

The river deity told Teja that Kuheli was actually a witch, and a grieving Teja swore to avenge her mother.

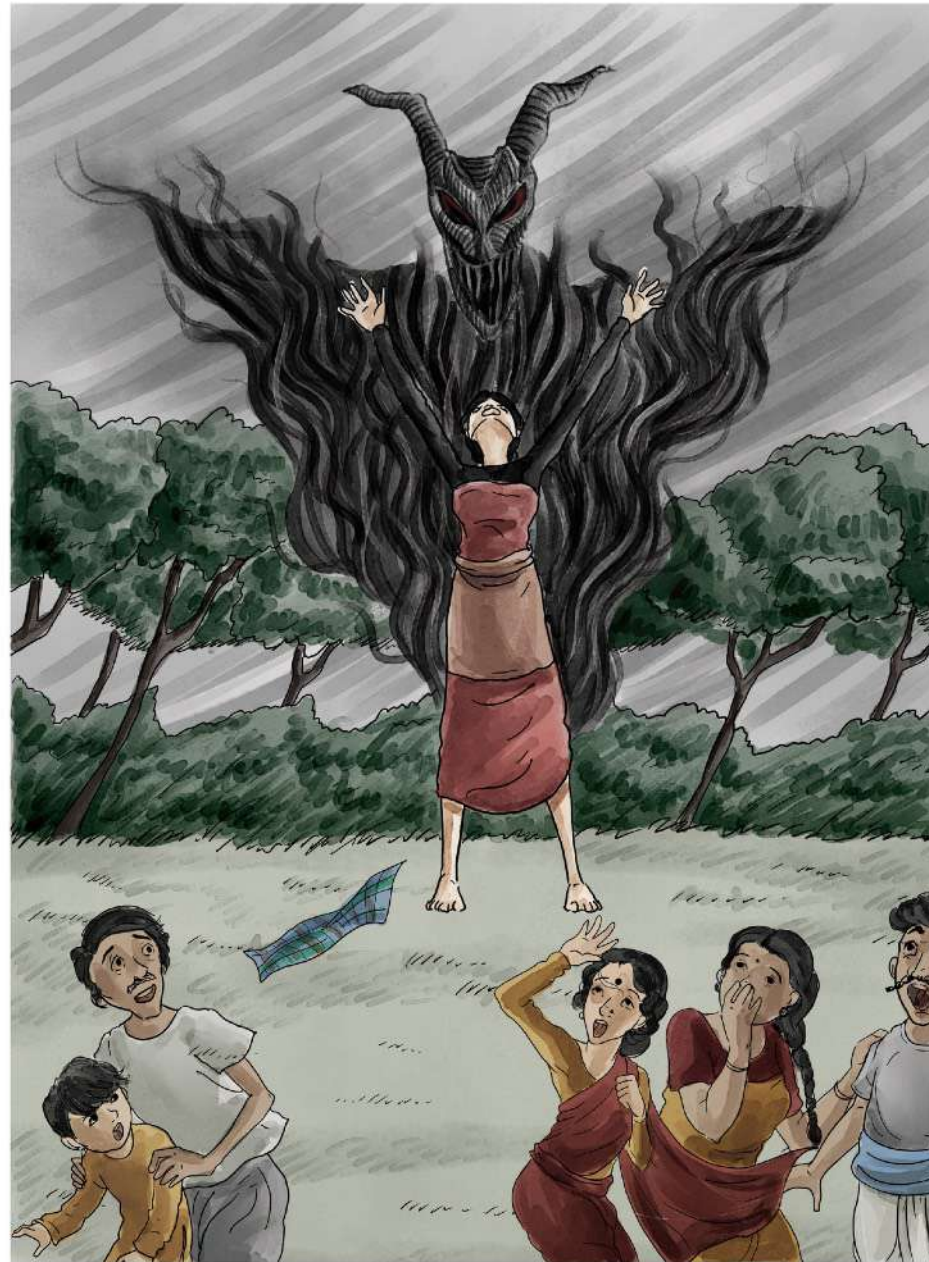


*Figure 11.16 Teja meets Forest Deity*



*Figure 11.17 Aranya and Teja*

She asked help from the forest deity, whose son Aranya agreed to help him.



*Figure 11.18 The storm*

Kuheli, on the other hand, was taken over by an evil spirit. She started a rampaging storm which started destroying her village.





(Clockwise)

*Figure 11.19 Teja and Kuheli*

*Figure 11.20 Toola's death*

*Figure 11.21 Kuheli's death*

Teja went to confront Kuheli in a final battle, which led Toola getting caught up in between and getting killed.

Losing her daughter broke Kuheli's heart, and the evil grip of the spirit was also broken. Realising what she has done, Kuheli took her life to atone for her daughter's death.



Eventually, Teja destroyed the evil spirit, and held on her dead sister, while the sun shone on the little village after days.

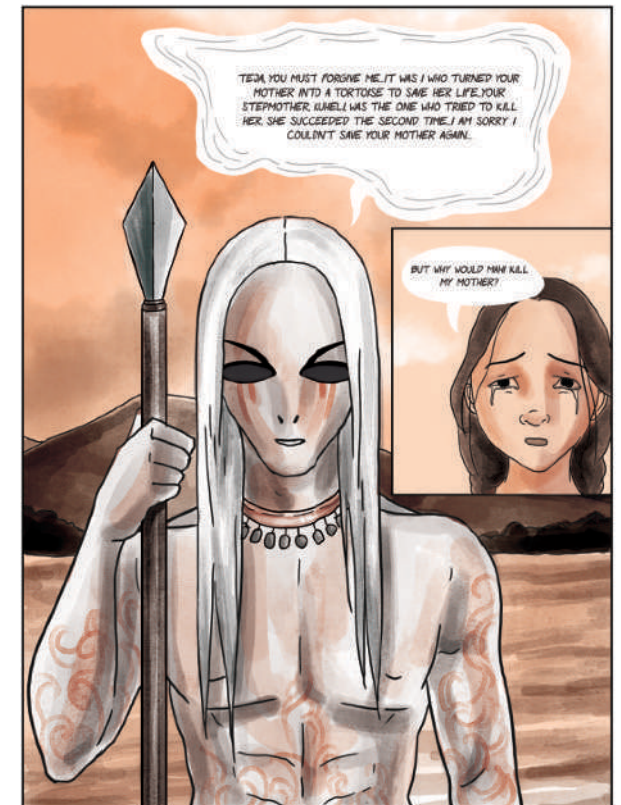
(Clockwise)

*Figure 11.22 Teja Destroys locket*  
*Figure 11.23 New world*  
*Figure 11.24 Evil Spirit*





Some sample pages from the book are as follows:

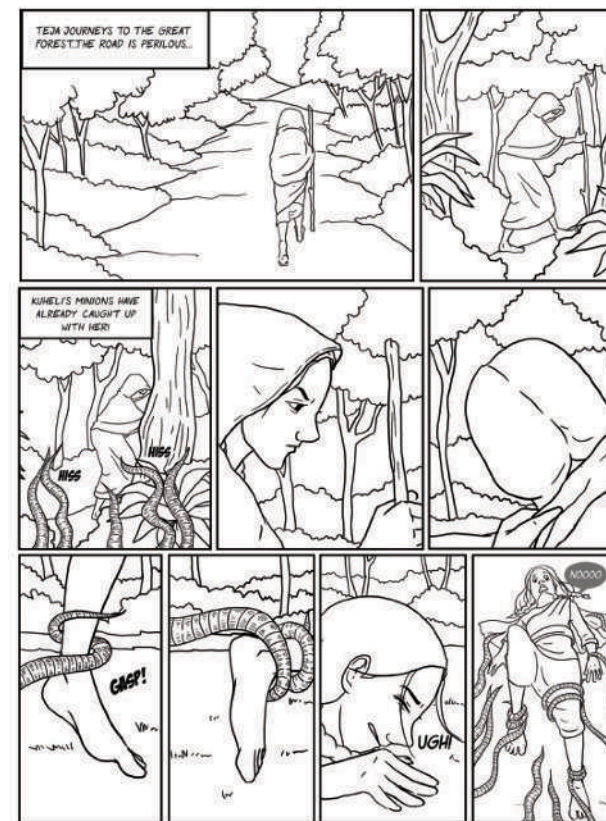


(Left to right)

Figure 11.25 Kubeli's anger.

Figure 11.26 Bimala in village market.

Figure 11.27 River Deity.



(Left to right)

Figure 11.28 Bimala is missing.

Figure 11.29 Forest Deity.

Figure 11.30 Teja's journey.



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