



BRAHMA  
DREAMING

John Jackson

Illustrated by  
Daniela Jaglenka Terrazzini

# BRAHMA DREAMING

Legends from Hindu Mythology

## INTRODUCTION BY THE ILLUSTRATOR, DANIELA JAGLENKA TERRAZZINI

I consider the work I did for *Brahma Dreaming* to be some of the best of my career so far – a fact which I put down in no small part to the huge creative freedom and trust that my collaborator, John Jackson, generously granted me.

I didn't feel bound to take inspiration from the way these stories are traditionally viewed or perceived – and in fact they belong to a tradition that has been subject to endless permutations in different times and places.

So while Hindu deities are commonly depicted in bright, almost garish colours, I chose to work in simple pen, brush and black ink. It might seem a stark choice for such rich and magical material, but my instinct was that absence of colour would allow me to focus on the atmosphere and light of each scene, bringing the human dimension of these stories to the fore.

I have also adopted a graphic, decorative style that allowed me to think outside the rules of perspective and realism and work in a more abstract way. I felt free to serve the fantastical mood of these tales without slavishly following the laws of physics.

I know that John subscribes to the view that while myths may originate in a particular time and place, they contain within them fundamental truths relevant to us all. Few could deny that the stories within *Brahma Dreaming* have a universal appeal – and each individual imagination will respond to them in a different way. The fact that the figures don't look particularly Indian, for example, simply reflects that I myself am not Indian, and when I visualised the stories in my mind, I did so in a way that was natural for me.

The hardback edition of *Brahma Dreaming* contains over 50 fonts and illustrations, but for this PDF I have chosen 15 of my personal favourites, which I think give a good overview of the whole.

When I am working, I decide the scene I'd like to depict on the basis of what catches my imagination the most in the story. I decide which aspects would be the most visually powerful: what would be the best things for the readers to see, and not to see, in order to fire their imagination.

Generally I like to choose a moment that has some dramatic tension, but not necessarily an action shot (in fact, usually

not an action shot). I often choose the moment just before or just after something dramatic happened. Rather than the action itself, I prefer to focus on the tension between the characters which will give rise to the action, or the feelings they experience in response to the action. I choose a moment that feels like it's extending in time – that lasts more than that split-second when an event takes place.

The dark and ominous 'The Lie' is an example of an illustration where I felt I was really able to capture a specific mood. It makes me feel like I'm in a dark windswept field in which I can see no further than the immediate foreground – which is unnerving. It's like floating in the middle of the dark blue ocean at night. And I love the idea of the black shiny baby snakes holding onto the tail, squirming darkly, not immediately visible.

Another of my very favourites is 'Sati'. I love the idea of these two outcasts – Lord Shiva, powerful but not appreciated nor liked, and Sati, misunderstood by her father, with unusual tastes and manners too meek for her rank – having found each other, but also themselves in their deep love for one another.

Others, like Uma, appeal to me because of their surreal landscapes and characters. We cannot fail to admire Uma's determination in awakening the life and love in the mourning, frozen Shiva. Similarly, in the tale of 'How Uma became Parvati', I love the unapologetic power of Uma's rage and the darkness of her transformation; the blood dripping from her hands, the third eye, her rage. I wish I could do that when I'm angry!

During our work on this project John and I were always motivated to make this material – which many readers will not be familiar with – as widely accessible as possible. The publication of digital and audiobook editions was therefore always integral to our plans.

Readers of each edition will encounter *Brahma Dreaming* in different ways. Listeners to the audiobook edition have the good fortune to experience the stories read in John's resonant voice – but this PDF should ensure that the visual aspect is also central to their enjoyment.

**Daniela Jaglenka Terrazzini, September 2013**

# Tales of Creation





The Beginning



The Milk Ocean



The Lie



The Fish

# Tales of Destruction





Sati





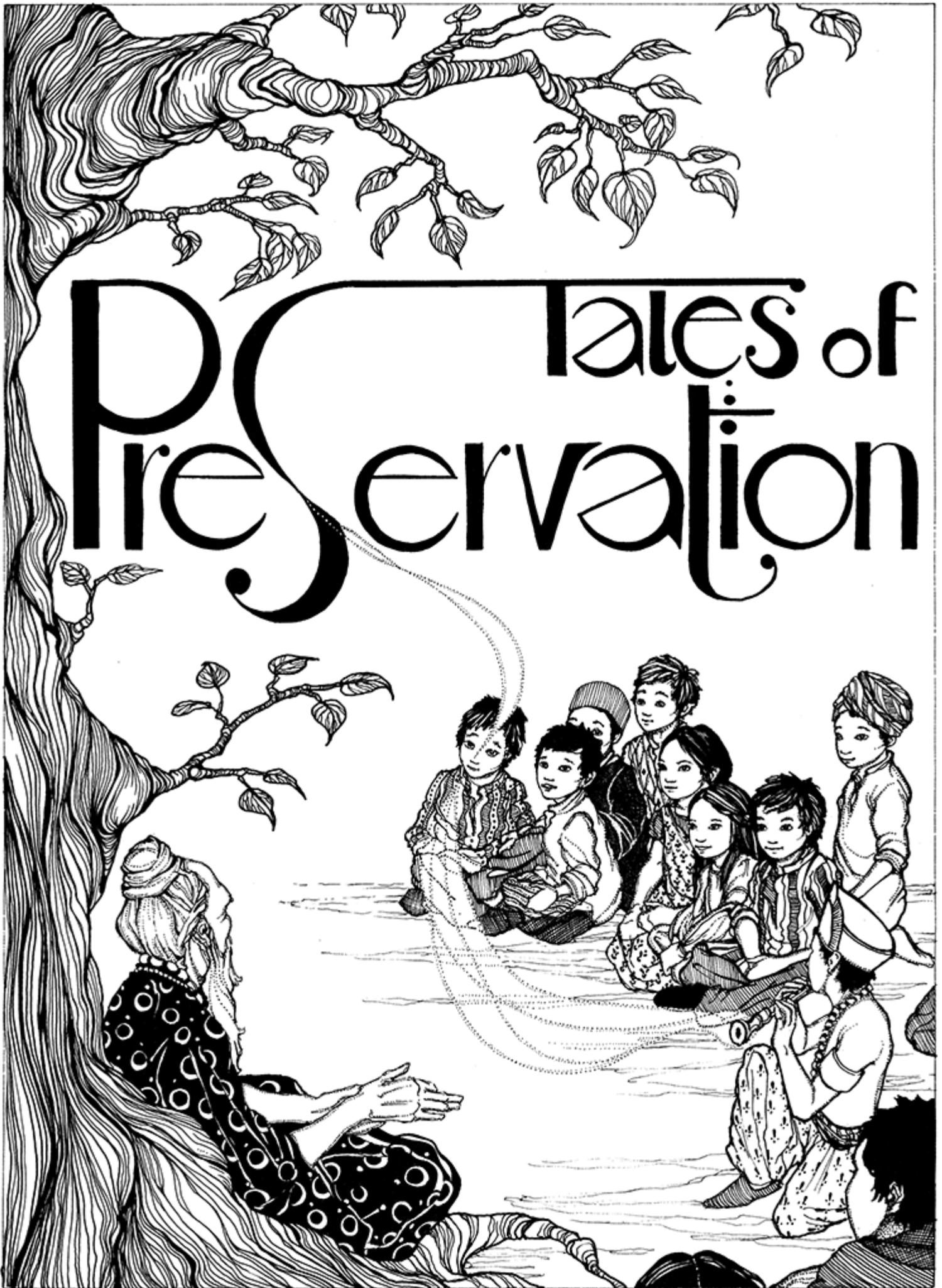
How Uma Became Parvati



Hanuman

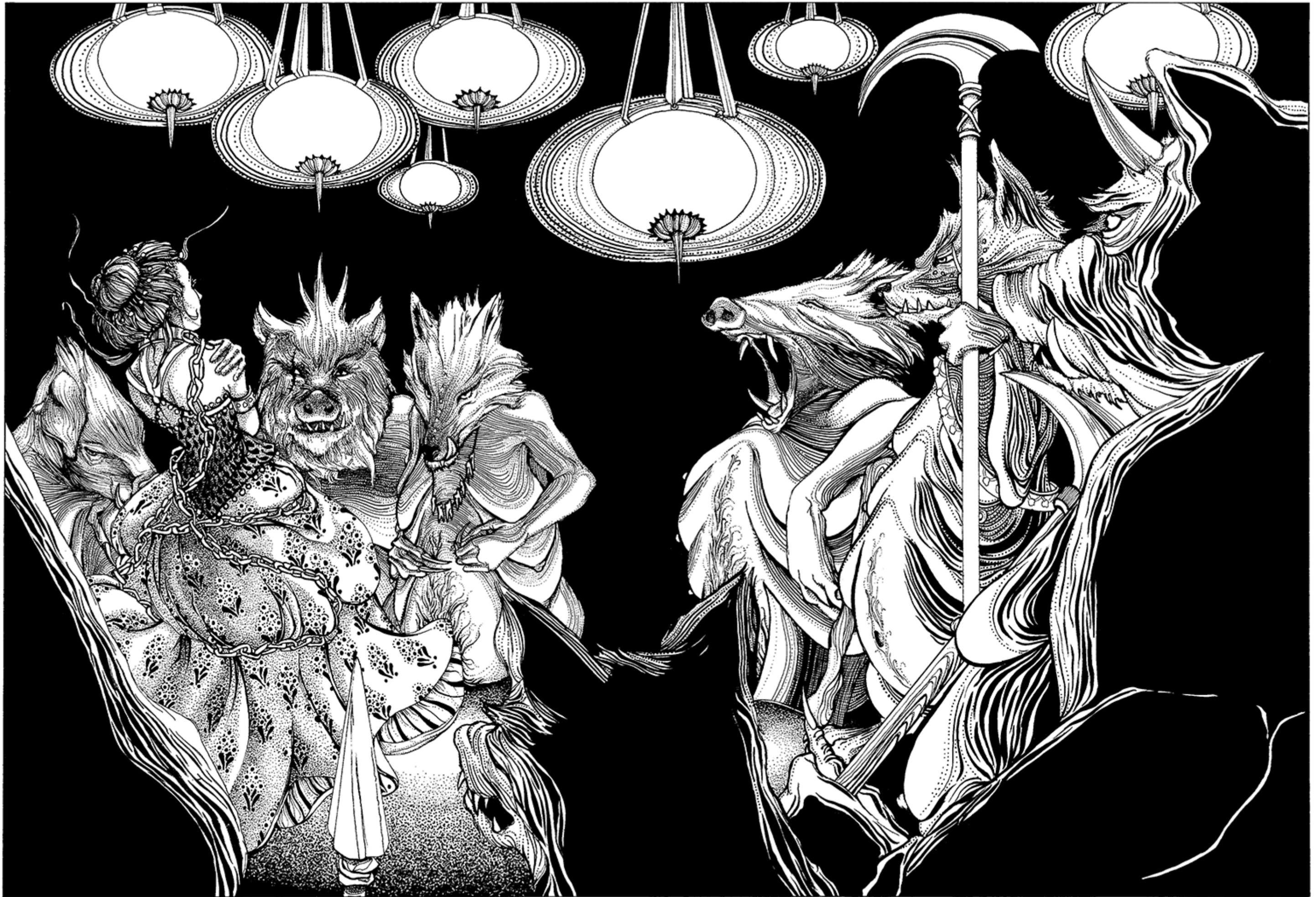


Chandra's Shame

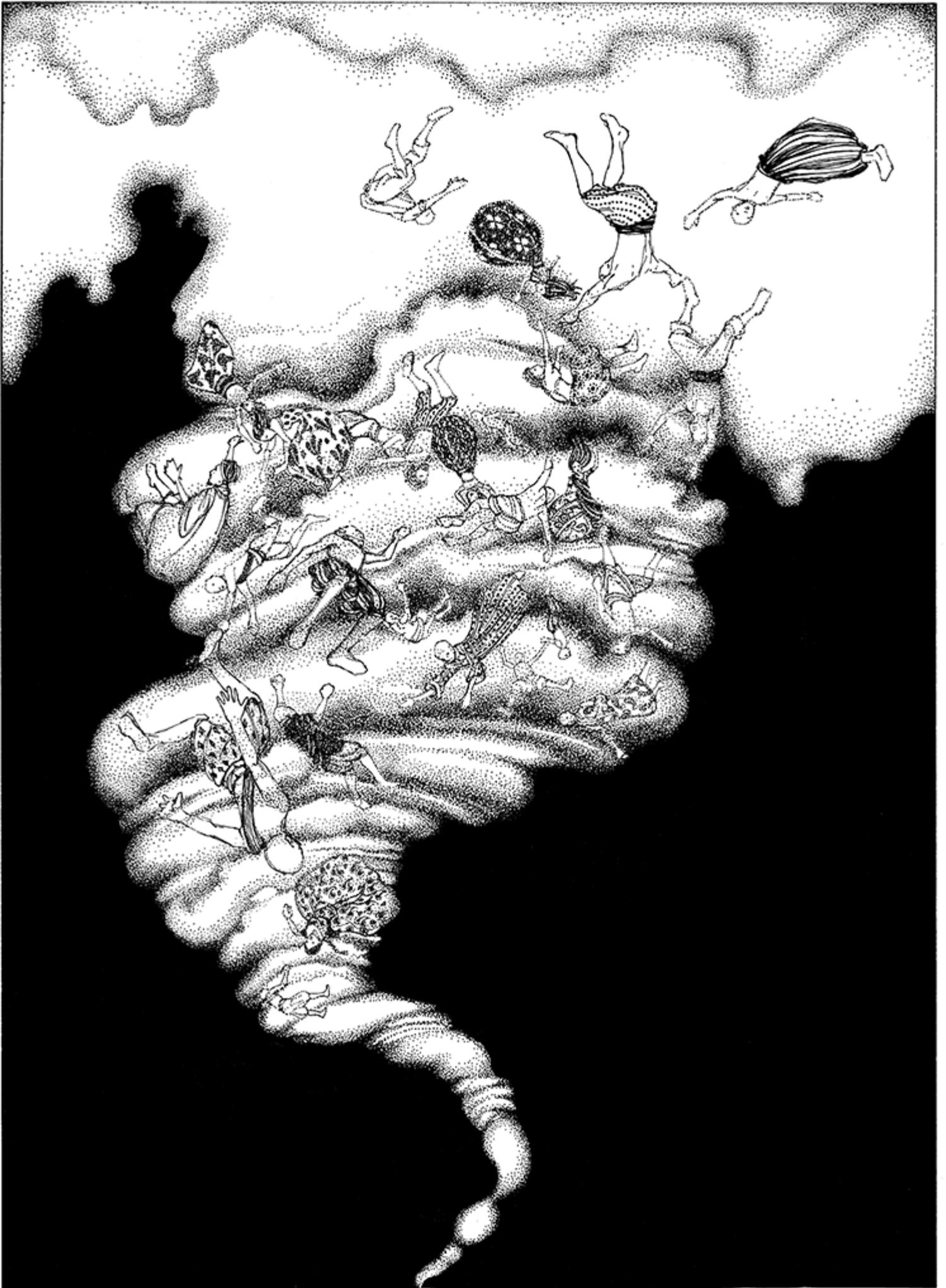




The Loves of Queen Pritha



Rama and Sita



The Iron Rod