

AKANT

Radivoj Bogičević



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Radivoj Bogičević

This edition published in 2014 by
Modesty Comics, London, UK
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Editor: Živojin Tamburić

Original title: **Akant**, Radivoj Bogičević
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Graphic design: www.omnibus.rs

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RADIOVOJ BOGIČEVIĆ – CLASSIC AUTHOR OF SERBIAN COMICS

The first comics book about Akant, *Abduction*, who was probably the most popular comics hero in the 1960s in Serbia, was issue number 12 in the edition "Never Enslaved". The second episode *Kublai Khan* was number 22, and then very soon the third episode, *Ogathai*, was number 27. The story *Amadoka* was number 39 and *Over the Abyss* number 59. In all these episodes, Akant's enemy was Barabash, who perished in the story *Barabash*, issue number 75. There was a long pause after this, and Akant appeared again in the story *Rilej Forest*, number 102, and then *Clash in the Steppe*, number 116, *Hitomaro*, number 141, *Freed Captive*, number 169, *Childhood*, number 181, *Abduction*, number 188, *Duel by the River*, number 195, *Comeback*, number 200 and the last episode *Ransom*, number 2 in a special edition "Drawing School". In all, in the "Never Enslaved" edition, Radivoj Bogičević produced 15 episodes of Akant, where he was the sole author.

Is Akant's the first episode *Abduction* the best comics book in the edition "Never Enslaved"?

This depends on your taste, but it is probably the truth. No doubt that some readers will prefer *Mysterious Knight* by Petar Radičević, some others *Oppressor* by Božidar Veselinović or *Brigand's Blood* by Ivica Bednjanec. However, the miraculous harmony between empathetic narrative and

unbelievably beautiful drawings exposed this master piece by Bogičević as the pinnacle of the whole edition, published by "Children's Newspaper", and its '*spiritus movens*', the editor, Srećko Jovanović.

Radivoj Bogičević created great classics for Serbian comics in the 1960s and 70s.

His stories about a young Slav's warrior Akant belong at the climax of Serbian and Yugoslavian comics of that era.



Fascinating sense for dynamics

Vasa Pavković, writer and comics critic

RADIVOJ BOGIČEVIĆ - CHASING A DEAR

Radivoj Bogičević entered the comics world in December 1963 on the pages of the newly founded publication "Never Enslaved", which was publishing stories from the history of Yugoslavia's nations. This was an inaugural story from the series which described the heroic warfare of Serbian people during the First World War, from the perspective of three fearless and dedicated warriors Novica, Branko and Buca. In January 1964, Bogičević started his second series which was set in Serbia in the second half of the 15th century, in the time of the despot Đurađ Branković. In April and May, two more of his comic books were published, one book from each of the series, and then in August of the same year, *Akant* appeared, set during the time of the Old Slavs, where he was the sole author. The inspiration for *Akant* he found, according to his own words, in the novel *Under the Free Sun* by Franc Finžgar, written in 1906-1907, where the bravery and kindness of the Old Slavs was described in depth. This book was translated into many languages and published in many publications.

His parallel work on these three series was a hard task for an ambitious youngster. Because of that, and encouraged by the success of *Akant*, Bogičević produced just three more episodes, one about three warriors and two about a middle-ages love story, and handed them over to his colleagues, and devoted himself completely to *Akant*'s adventures.

The great popularity that *Akant* gained from his readers opened the doors for him into other publications from the publisher "Children's Newspaper". All in all, from 1963 to 1971, Bogičević created about twenty episodes of *Akant*, different in length and format. "I was working on *Akant*", he wrote some fifteen years ago, "spontaneously, gladly and easily. Without any enforcement, almost subconsciously, like breathing or walking upright."

Radivoj Bogičević was born on 16 May 1940, in a docile village in Slavonia, Sremske Laze. He finished elementary school in his birthplace, and continued his education in Vinkovci and Belgrade. He inspirationally described the adventures of his youth in an autobiographical novel *Chasing a Dear*, which obtained a reputable literary award by "Politikin Zabavnik" as the best book for young people in Serbia in 2003.

He was a restless soul, very talented, and he did not see comics as the only way of expression, but as a one of many opportunities. He was a rider for some time in the horse club "Aleksa Dundić", he was a member of the race car club "Academic" and a member of the fencing club "Yugoslavia". In "Flag Movies", he was an animator and assistant director for three and a half



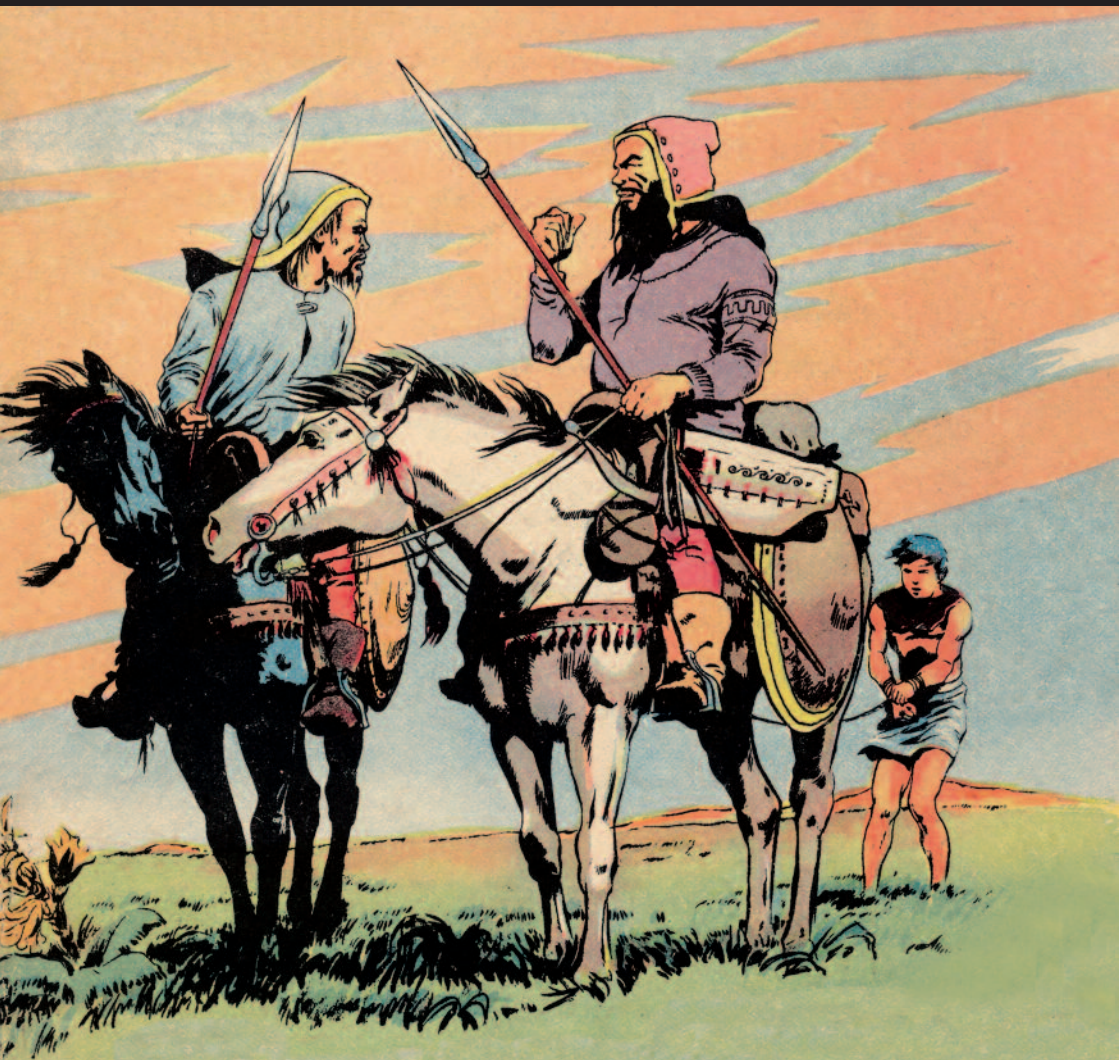
Announcement for Akant

years. In 1971 he directed an animated movie *A Device for Central Regulation of the Air Pressure in Tyres*. After this, he worked in production of music LPs at "Radio Television Serbia" where he created music videos and 3D animation. He went into retirement as a graphic editor of all publications at RTS. After a long pause, he published a comic album *John Peoplefox*, inspired by a radio drama by Dušan Radović in 1953, proving that he can draw in the grotesque style as well. In this period he also produced some comic strips for "Politika for Children" and illustrations for "Politikin Zabavnik". After this, he illustrated several children's books for "Nation Book" and then he made connections with the publishing house "Eurogiunti" with whom he still collaborates.

Zdravko Zupan, comics author, historian and editor

AKANT

Episode 1: ABDUCTION





ABDUCTION

Episode 1

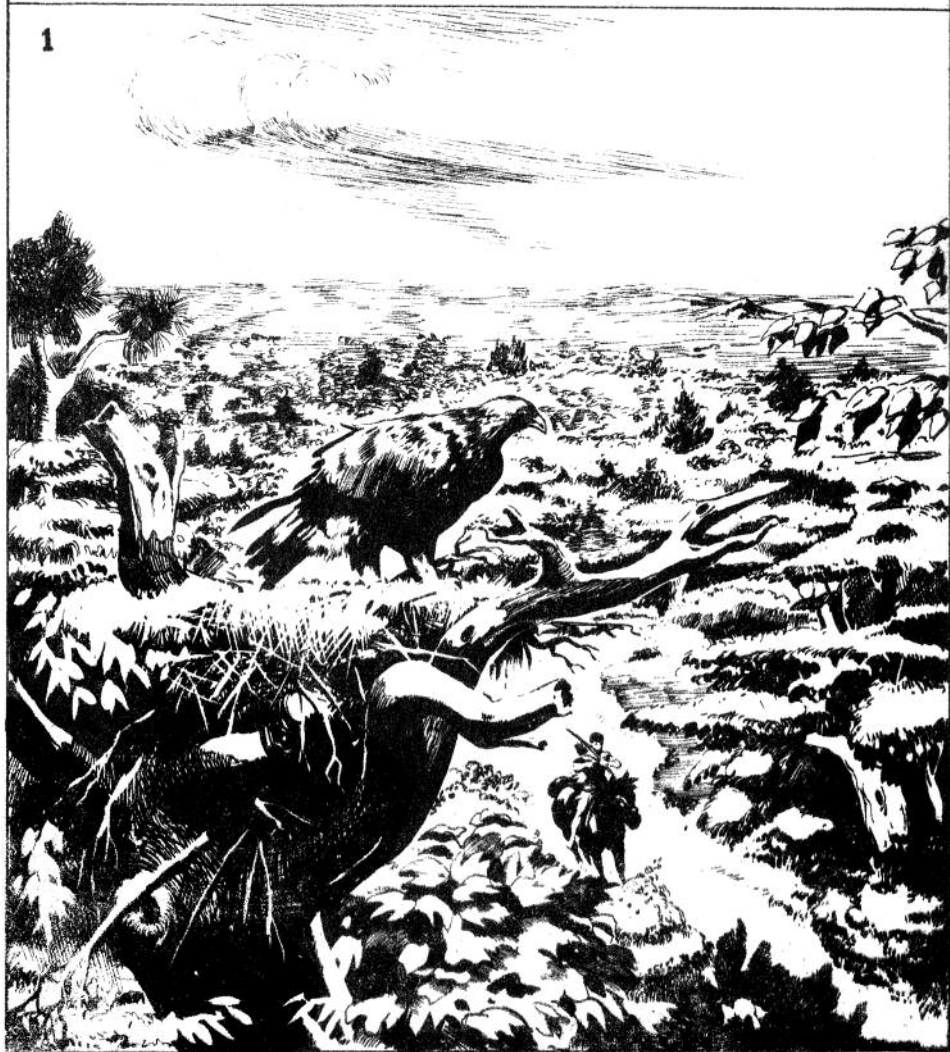
AKANT

~

Radivoj
Bogicevic

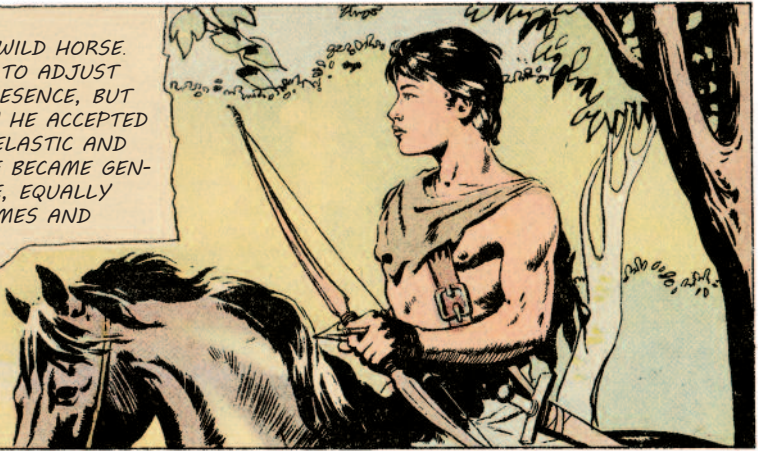
FROM THE TIME HE'D TAMED THE BLACK HORSE, AKANT STOPPED MAKING TRAPS FOR FISHES. BY RIDING THE HORSE, HE WAS ABLE TO START MANY SERIOUS HUNTING ADVENTURES, WHICH HE ENJOYED ENORMOUSLY AND IN WHICH HE FOUND PROOF OF HIS MASCULINE MATURITY.

1



STORM WAS A WILD HORSE. HE STRUGGLED TO ADJUST TO AKANT'S PRESENCE, BUT ONE DAY WHEN HE ACCEPTED TO CARRY HIS ELASTIC AND WORM BODY HE BECAME GENTLE AND NOBLE, EQUALLY PLAYFUL IN GAMES AND HUNTING.

2



AFTER HIM,
STORM!



SUCH A LONG
LEGGED BEAUTY! HE
IS FIGHTING WELL
FOR HIS SKIN...

JUST A BIT MORE,
STORM!



ON THAT DAY, HUNTING THE DEER, HE REACHED THE STEPPE, CLOSE TO BLAGUN'S SETTLEMENT.

HA, HA...
HE IS OURS,
STORM!

3

HE WANTED TO RETURN WHEN HE HEARD THE SONG. HE STOPPED AND LISTENED. THE MELANCHOLY SONG, WITH SOME SPORADIC HOWLS FROM WARRIORS, WAS ABOUT THE BRAVERY OF HIS FATHER...

BY THE GODS...
AM I DREAMING?

HE KNEW SO LITTLE ABOUT HIS FATHER AND YET THEY SANG ABOUT HIM. THE SETTLEMENT WAS IN FULL MOVEMENT. AT DAWN, HE SAW WARRIORS AND SHEPHERDS WHO, AVOIDING THE SWAMP, HURRIED THROUGH THE STEPPE TO THE SETTLEMENT. THERE WAS SOMETHING THERE, BEAUTIFUL AND IMPORTANT, WHILST HE STAYED, LONELY, IN THE SWAMP.



HE WAS JUST ABOUT TO ENTER THE STEPPE AND CONTINUE TOWARDS SETTLEMENT, WHEN HE SAW STRANGE WARRIORS AND HE HID FROM VIEW AND WAITED FOR THEM TO PASS.



THEY DIG THE EARTH, RIDE UNSADDLED HORSES, AND FIGHT WITH POLES! CRAWLERS AND BARBARIANS!

BUT SLAV'S GIRLS...

HM... KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT, ASUR.

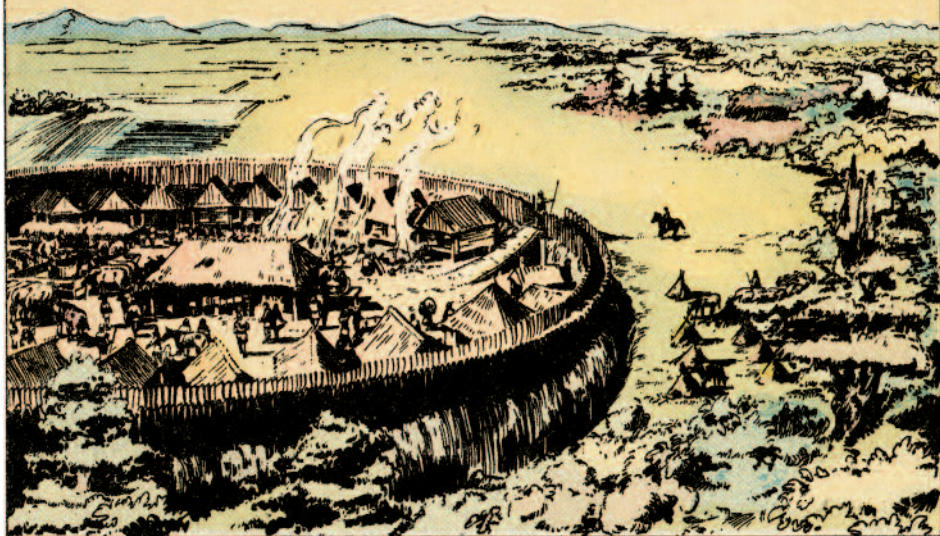


HE TURNED THE HORSE AND RUSHED THROUGH THE SWAMP, UNNOTICED BY THE STRANGE WARRIORS, THAT HE DIDN'T LIKE.



THE SETTLEMENT WAS TOO SMALL TO ACCEPT ALL THE GUESTS AND SOME OF THEM STARTED BUILDING TENTS ON THE OUTSKIRTS. AT DAWN, GIFTS TO THE GODDESS VESNA WERE GIVEN - WHITE LAMBS AND FRAGRANT FLOWERS. THE SPRING CELEBRATION WAS IN FULL SWING WHEN AKANT STOPPED IN FRONT OF THE BRIDGE AND ASKED THE GUARD WHETHER HE COULD ENTER.

6



THE GUARD TOLD HIM, WITH THE MILD SMILE, THAT HE COULD, AND HE STEPPED ON THE BRIDGE.

WHAT A CROWD!





WHEN HE GOT OFF THE BRIDGE, HE COLLIDED WITH THE CROWD, WHICH WAS MOVING AND SHOUTING: "GAMES! GAMES!"



WHEN BLAGUN AND OTHER ELDERS APPEARED ON THE WALLS, THE CROWD CALMED DOWN. BLAGUN WANTED TO SAY SOMETHING IMPORTANT BUT MURMURED SOMETHING ABOUT THE HONEY BRANDY HE HAD DRUNK, AND SHOUTED.

7

THE GAMES CAN BEGIN!



AT THAT MOMENT, THE CROWD SHOOK AND ONE YOUNG VOICE SAID...

LOOK! THE GUESTS ARE COMING!



THE GAMES STARTED.
FIRST THE WRESTLING.
THE LOSER IS THE ONE
WHO FIRST TOUCHES THE
GROUND WITH HIS BACK.

THEN ON THE
FIELD ENTERED
FIGHTERS WITH
POLES. THE HITS
WERE ALLOWED
FROM SHOULDER
TO HIP. THE REF-
EREEES STOPPED
THE FIGHT WHEN
IT REACHED
THIRTY HITS.

9

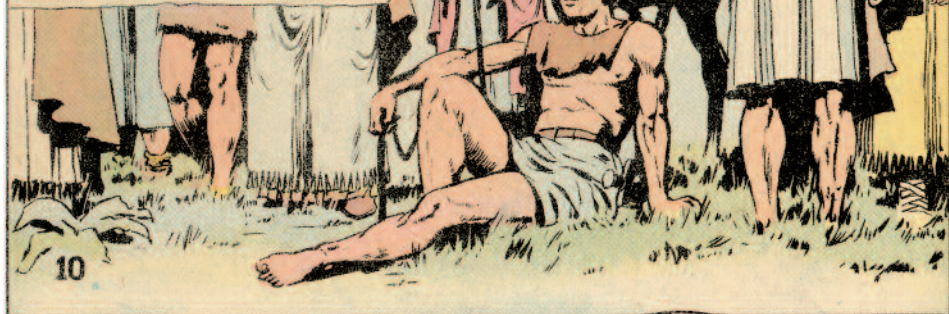


THE ARCHERS WERE AIMING AT PUMP-
KINS ON POLES. EVERY CONTESTANT
HAS FIVE ARROWS. HITTING THE POLE
DID NOT COUNT FOR ANYTHING.

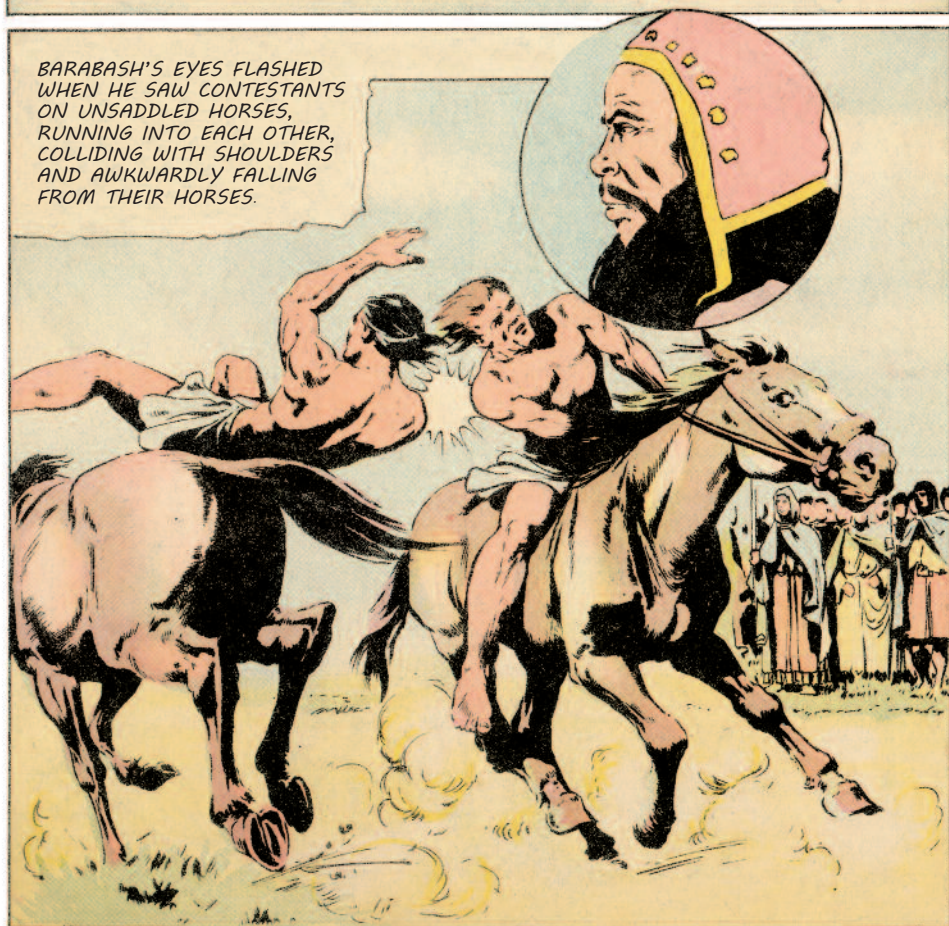
BARABASH WAS EATING ROASTED
YOUNG GOAT WITH A LOT OF
HONEY BRANDY. IF BLAGUN HAD
DRUNK LESS HE WOULD'VE NOT-
ICED THAT BARABASH WAS NOT
INTERESTED IN GAMES AND
LOOKED AROUND, IN
PARTICULAR TOWARDS
HIS DAUGHTER
SPARKLET.

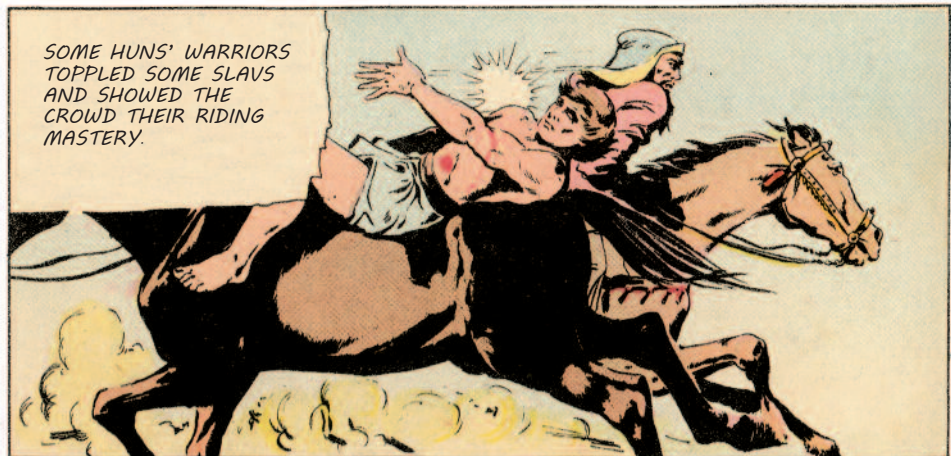


AKANT WAS DELIGHTED. HE DIDN'T KNOW HOW MUCH HE HAD MISSED THE COMPANY OF HIS PEERS AND OLDER WARRIORS.



BARABASH'S EYES FLASHED WHEN HE SAW CONTESTANTS ON UNSADDLED HORSES, RUNNING INTO EACH OTHER, COLLIDING WITH SHOULDERS AND AWKWARDLY FALLING FROM THEIR HORSES.





BARABASH TURNED TO
BLAGUN. ALTHOUGH HE
TRIED TO SOFTEN HIS
VOICE, HIS REMARK WAS
TOO SARCASTIC AND OF-
FENSIVE FOR BLAGUN TO
TAKE IT LIGHTLY.

SORRY, CHIEF. MY
WARRIORS SEEM
TO HAVE TAKEN
YOUR GAMES TOO
SERIOUSLY.



BLAGUN WAS ANGRY WITH HIM-
SELF. HIS HEAD WAS HEAVY AND
SLOW FROM HONEY BRANDY, BUT
HE SENSED THAT THIS TRAMP,
THIS BLABBERING BARABASH WAS
UP TO SOMETHING...

YOU TALK TOO MUCH,
WARRIOR! YOU ARE
SKILFUL WITH HORSES,
I SEE! DON'T FORGET
THESE ARE ONLY
GAMES! I THINK THAT
MY SON HAS FIRMER
THIGHS. LET'S SEE!



LADAN STEPPED ONTO THE
FIELD. THE CROWD CHEERED
LOUDLY FOR HIM. HE SLOWLY
AND CASUALLY RAISED HIS
ARM AND SHOUTED CONFI-
DENTLY, ALMOST BRAZENLY...

BARABASH!
CHOOSE
YOUR BEST
WARRIOR!



THE CROWD WAS SHOCKED WHEN THEY SAW BARABASH SWIFTLY JUMPED ON HIS HORSE AND WITHOUT HESITATION, IN A WILD GALLOP, RUSHED TOWARDS LADAN.

13



AKANT WAS WATCHING THE GAMES CAREFULLY. HE WAS THE ONLY ONE TO NOTICE THAT THE SADDLE HELPED THE HUNS. HE WAS ADMIRING THEM SINCE HE COULD NOT IMAGINE HIMSELF SITTING IN ALL THESE STRAPS AND HARNESSSES, BUT HE HAD TO ADMIT THAT IN THIS GAME IT WAS OF HUGE HELP. HE WAITED ANXIOUSLY FOR THE OUTCOME.



WHEN HE SAW THAT LADAN WAS DOWN AND BARABASH WAS STILL ON THE HORSE EVEN AFTER BEING STRONGLY HIT, AKANT WAS SURE THAT THE SADDLE HELPED BARABASH.

