

The Certified Sarpanch

A Bundelkhandi Folktale



eklavya

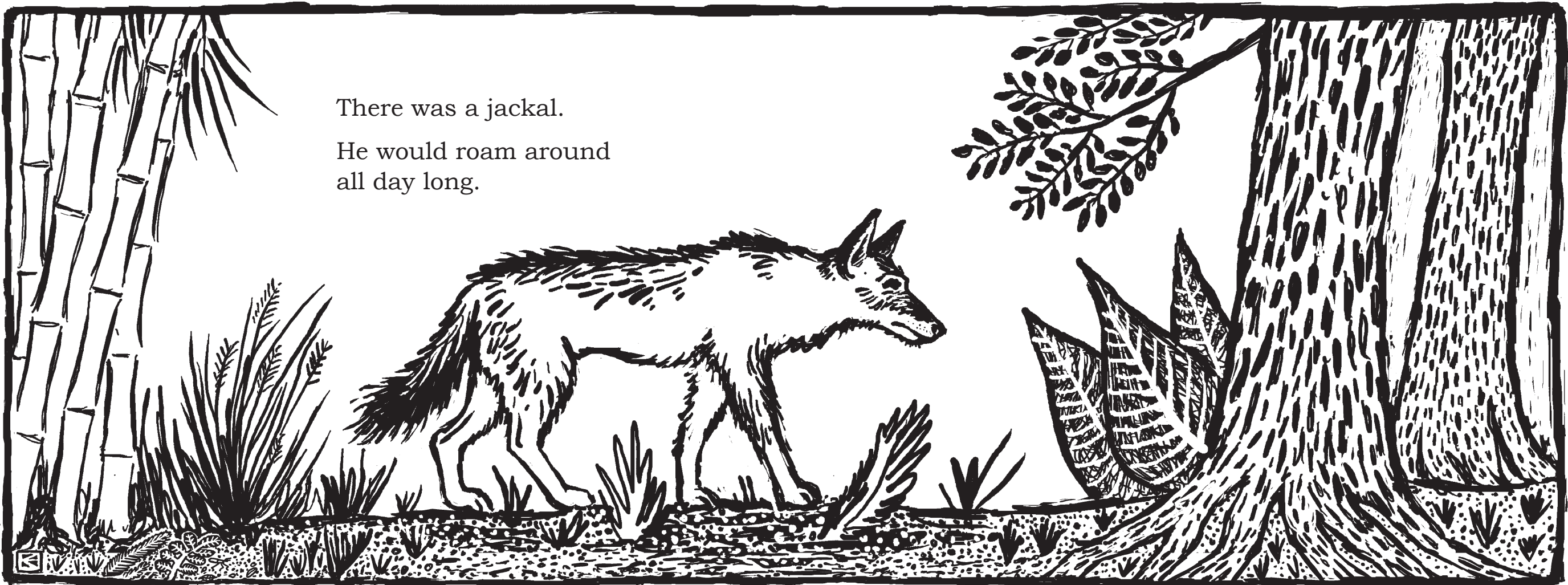


Manoj Sahu 'Nidar'

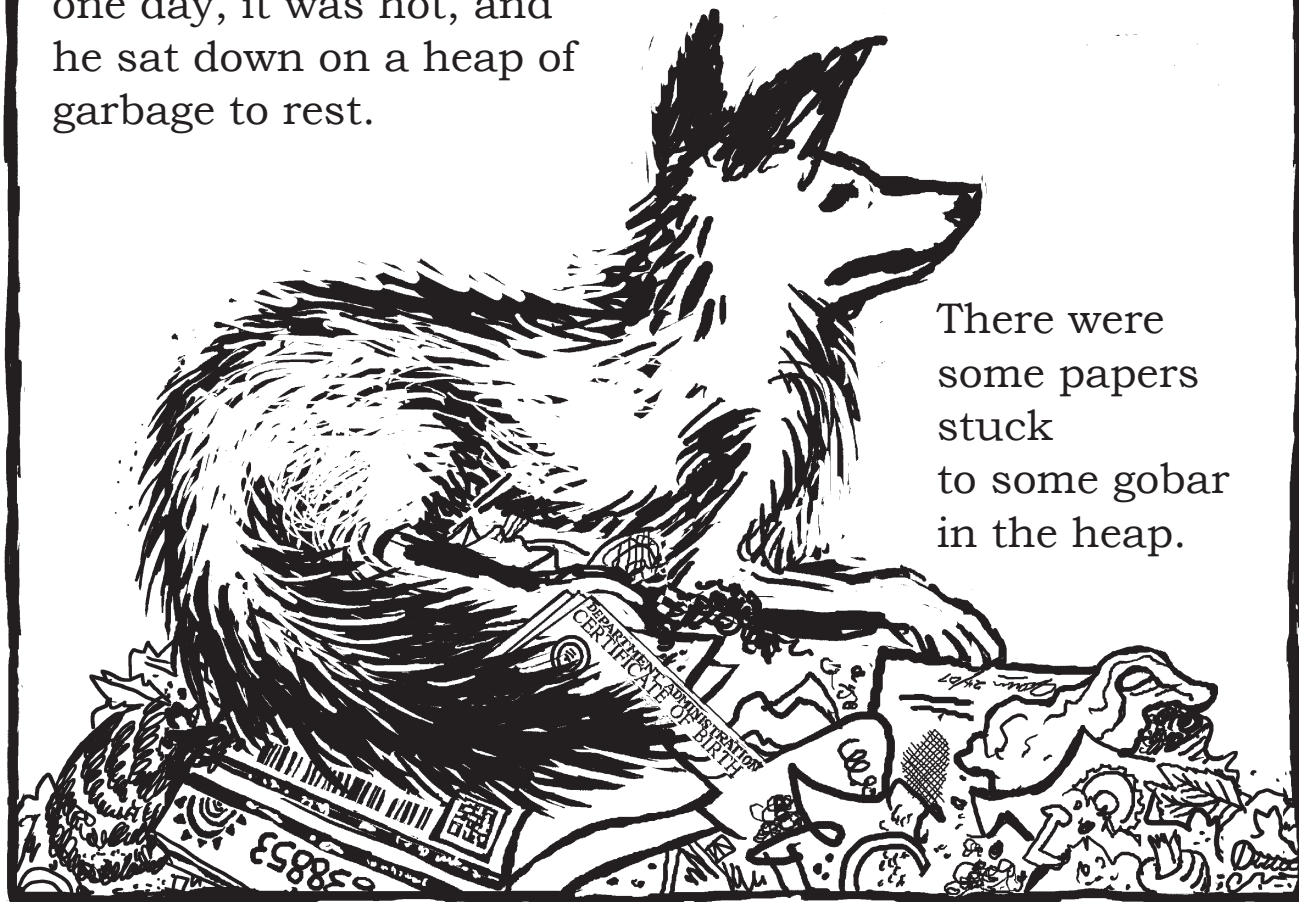
pictures: Karen Haydock

There was a jackal.

He would roam around
all day long.

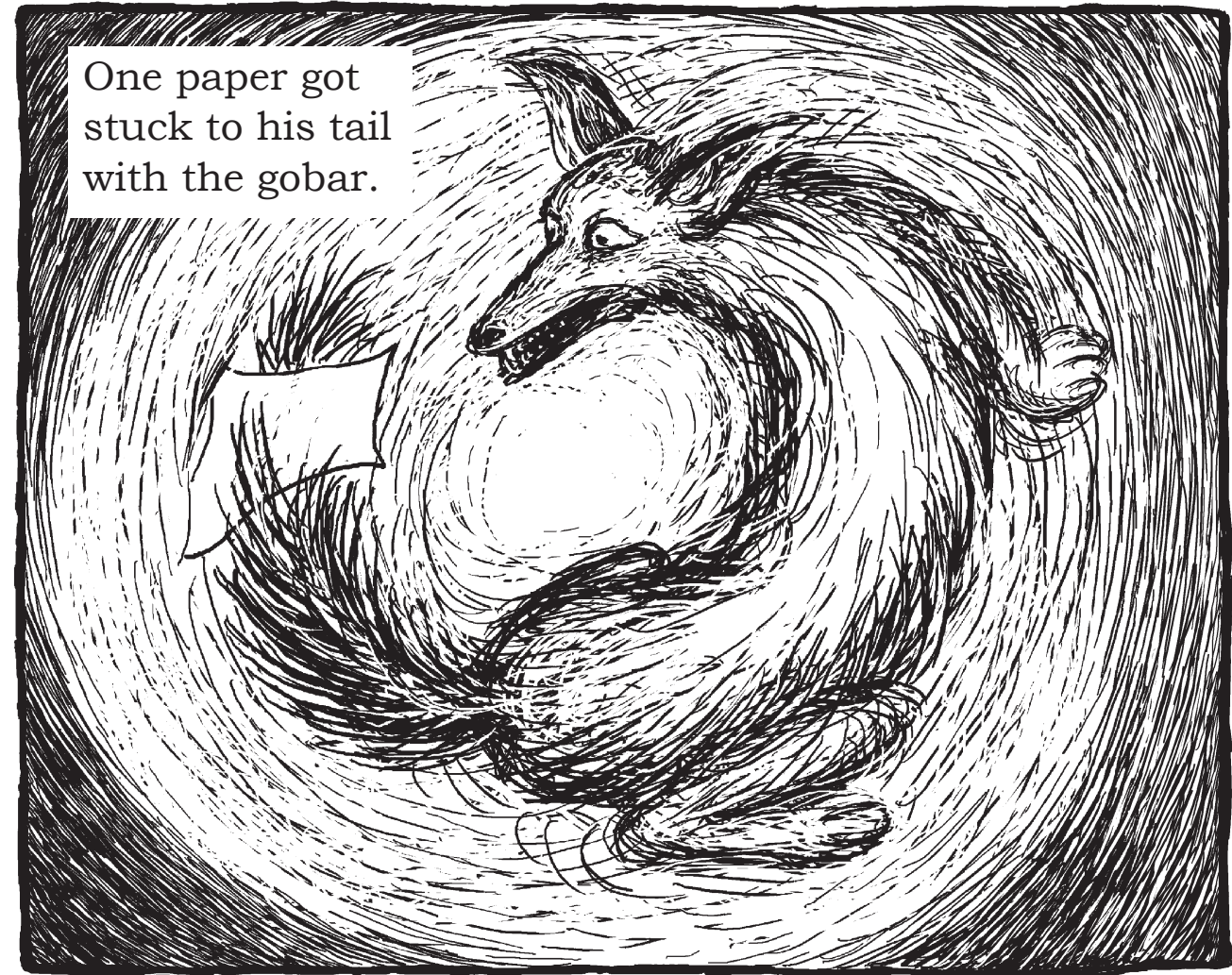


Wandering into the village
one day, it was hot, and
he sat down on a heap of
garbage to rest.



There were
some papers
stuck
to some gobar
in the heap.

One paper got
stuck to his tail
with the gobar.



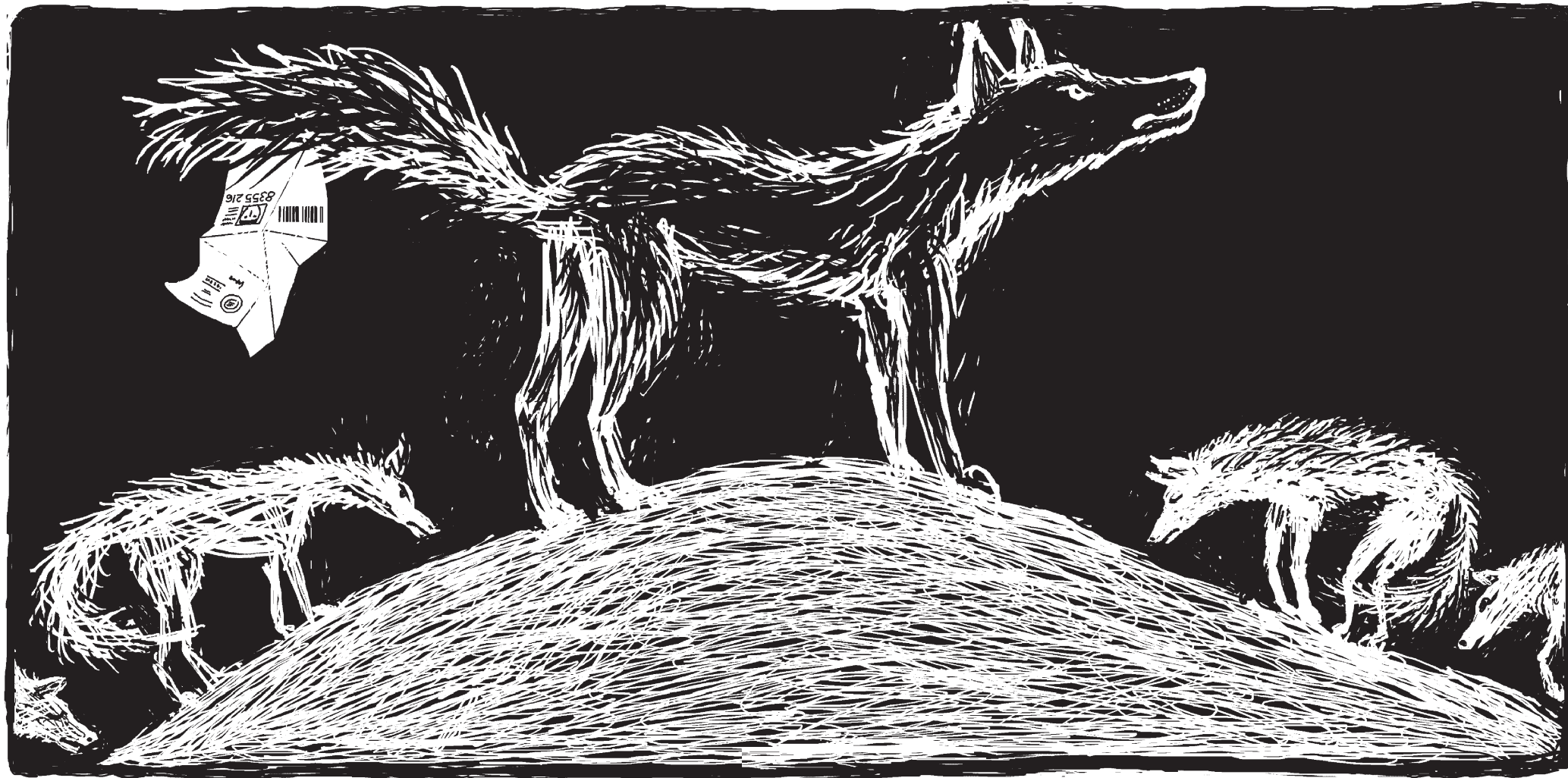


The jackal ran off until reaching the next village. Seeing the paper stuck to his tail, someone said, "Brother, there is something stuck to your tail!"

Hearing this, the jackal high-headedly said, "Arre! That's my Sarpanch Certificate. From today I am your Sarpanch!"

"Now we can go anywhere we want, and no one can say anything to us."

Hearing this news, they all got very happy. They distributed prasad in honour of the Sarpanch.



Now whenever the new Sarpanch comes around, everyone stands up and chants Ram Ram to him.

Seeing this, he enjoys all the attention and power.

However, one jackal said, "Sarpanch, there is no difference between you and the rest of us. You should have something more special which will distinguish you from a distance."

The Sarpanch agreed to this.





And so they
get a stick
which is 3-4
feet long. They
tie this stick to
their beloved
Sarpanch's tail.

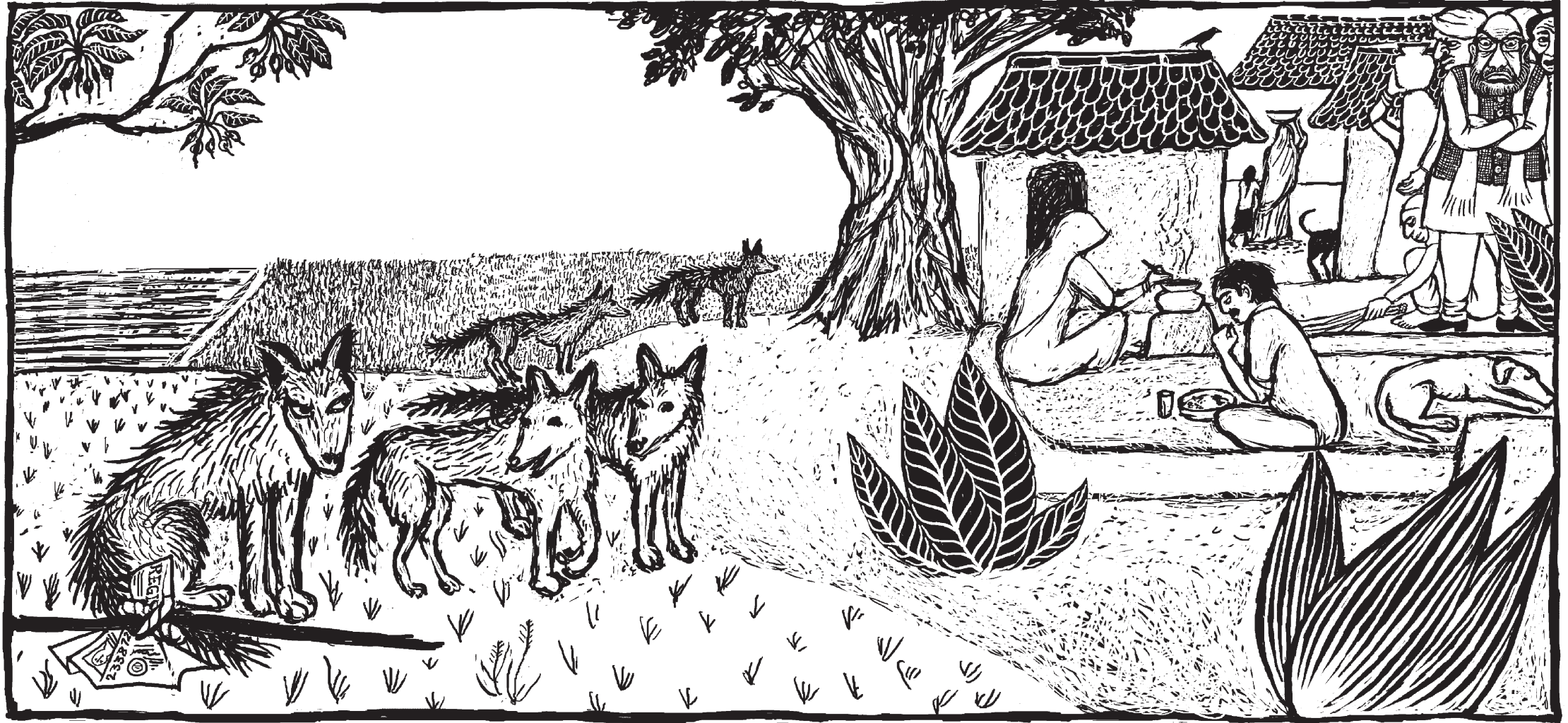
Whoever sees the jackal bows down in respect.
Now everyone stands up whenever they hear the
rattling of the stick coming.

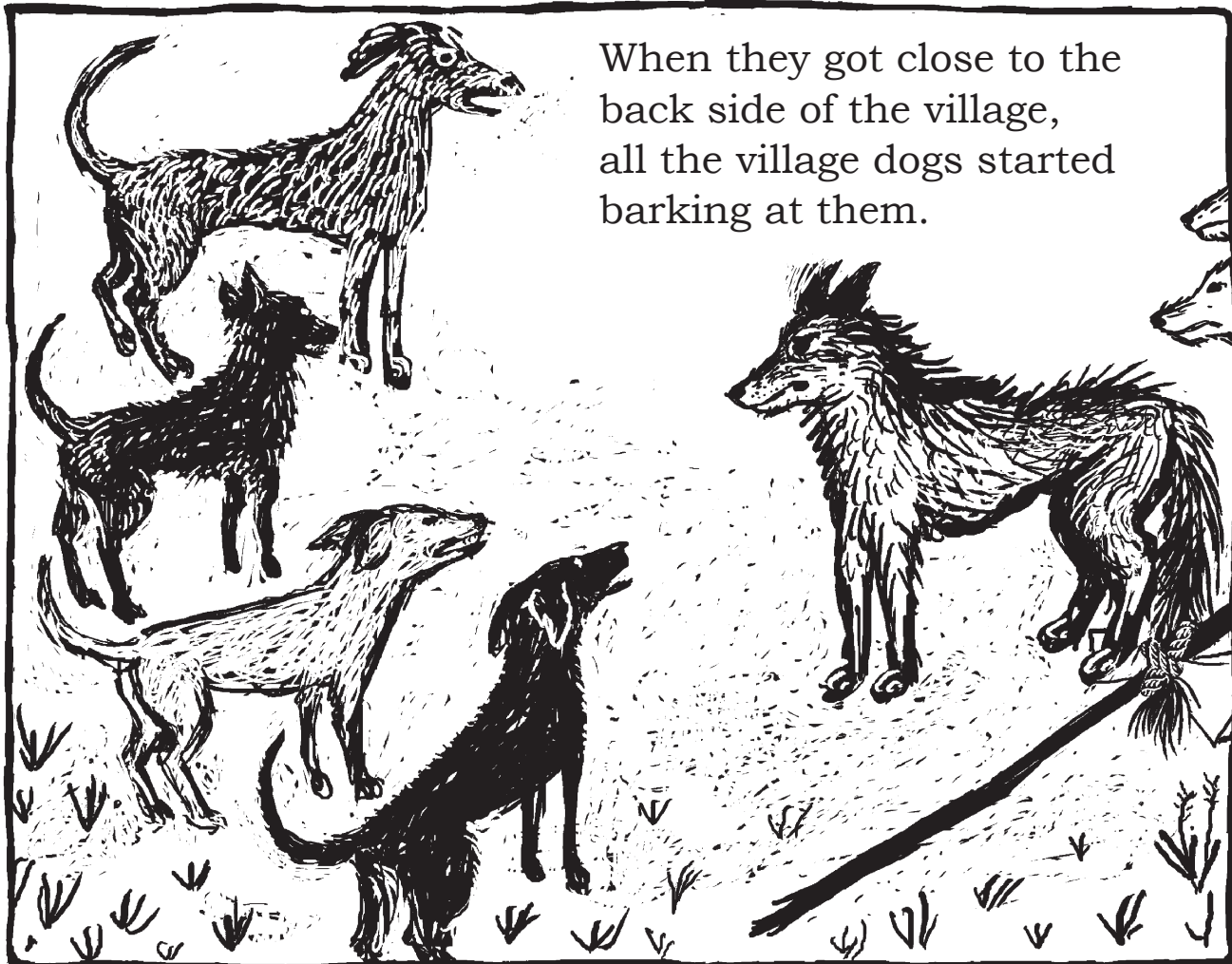
Hearing the noise, all the jackals start chanting
Ram Ram.

Like this, the days pass by.

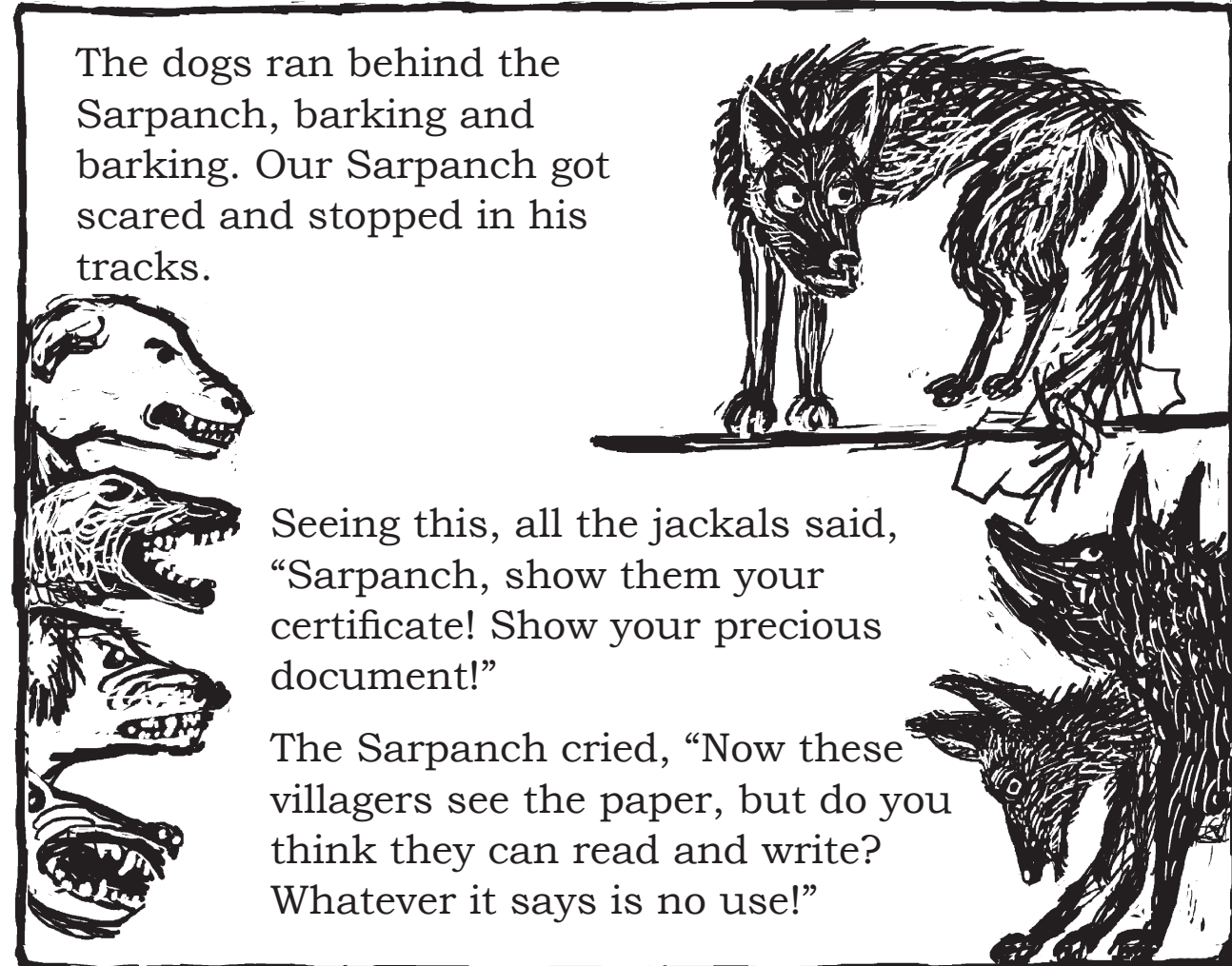


One day all the jackals got together with their Sarpanch. They said, "Dada, we feel like roaming into the village today. Please, take us to the village." Hearing this, the Sarpanch didn't know what he was supposed to do. But he did not want to give up his power and the special treatment, so he agreed, and they all started walking towards the village.





When they got close to the back side of the village, all the village dogs started barking at them.



The dogs ran behind the Sarpanch, barking and barking. Our Sarpanch got scared and stopped in his tracks.

Seeing this, all the jackals said, "Sarpanch, show them your certificate! Show your precious document!"

The Sarpanch cried, "Now these villagers see the paper, but do you think they can read and write? Whatever it says is no use!"

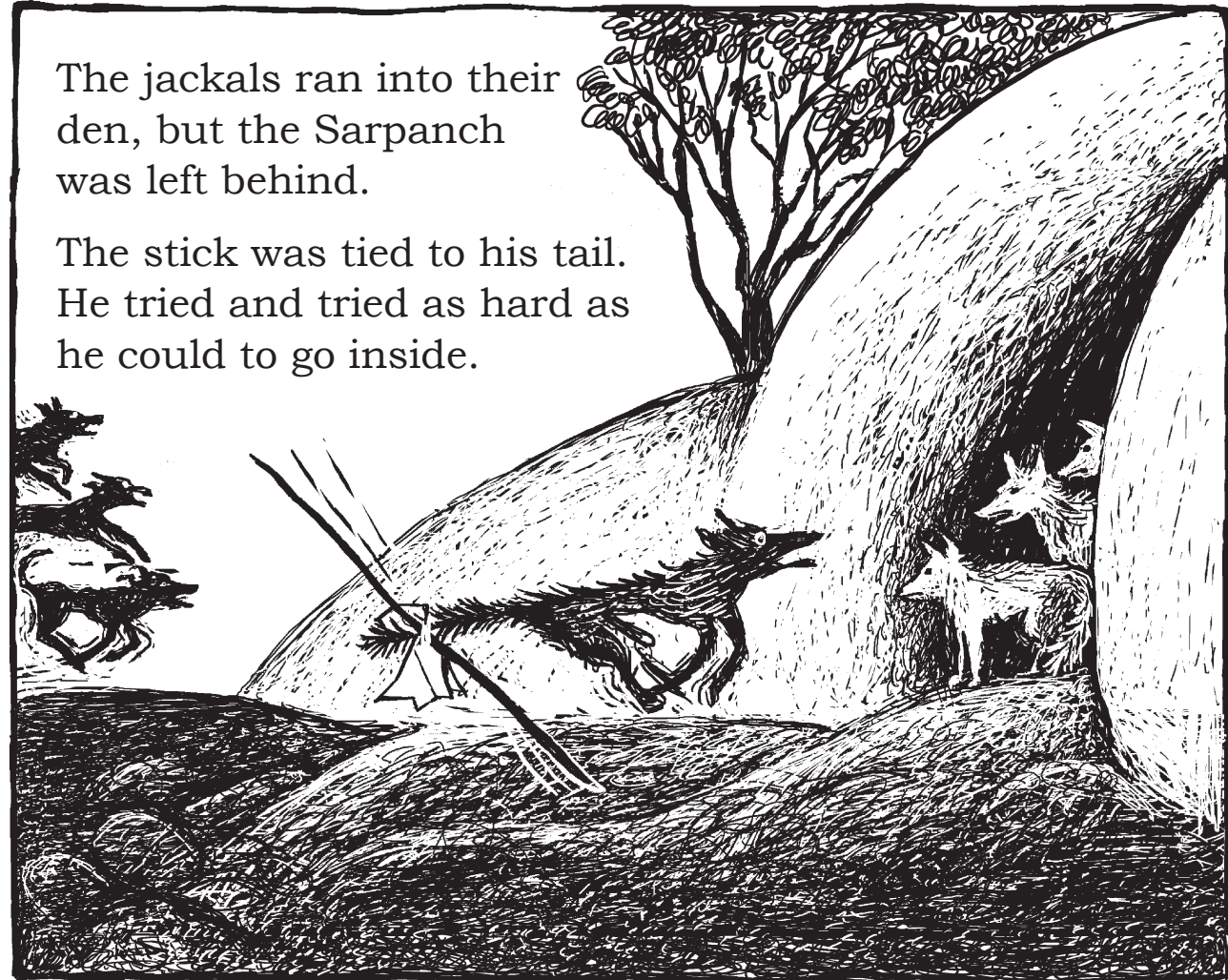
He tells everyone
to go back.

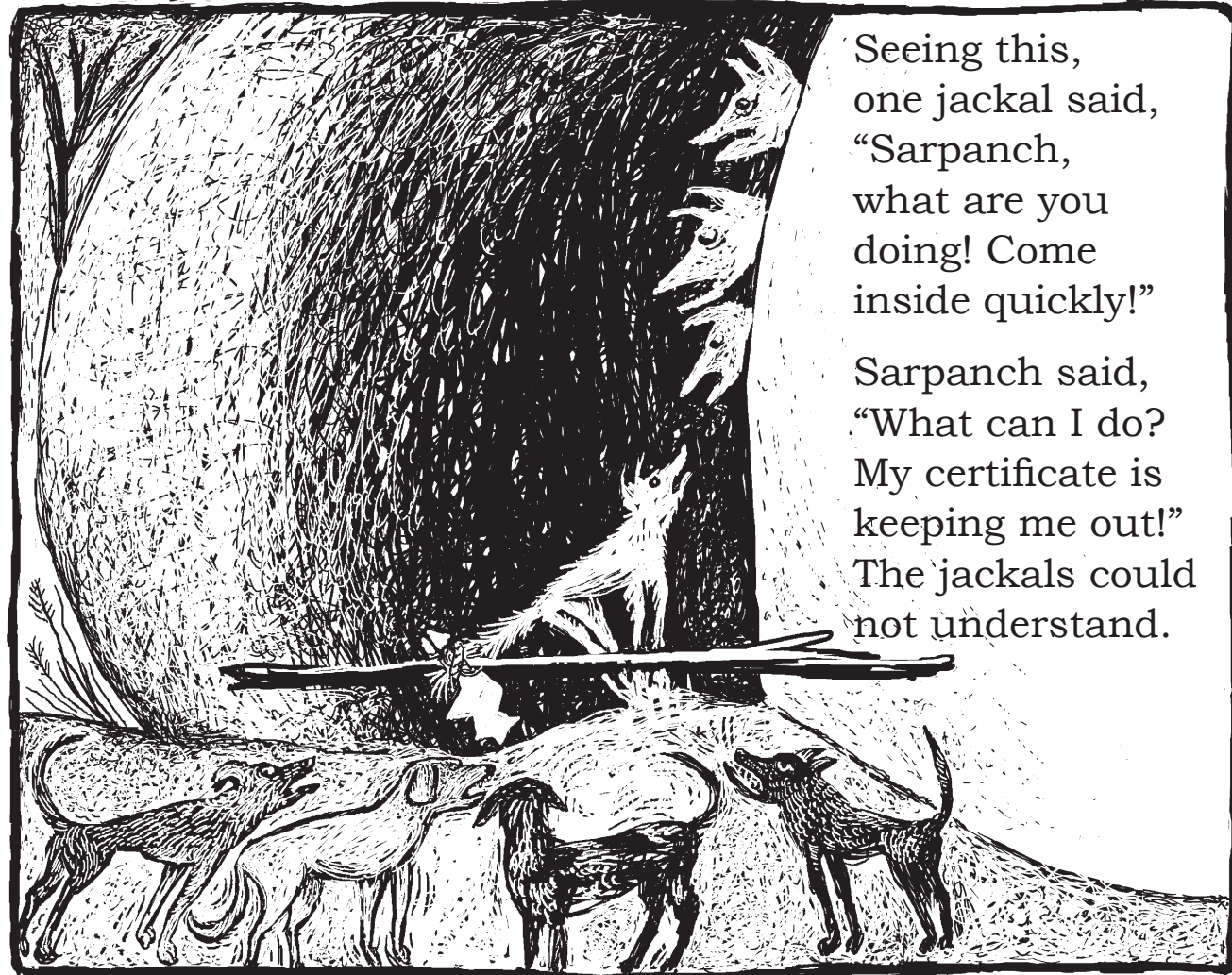


All the jackals ran off with the Sarpanch.
The dogs ran behind them, chasing them away.

The jackals ran into their
den, but the Sarpanch
was left behind.

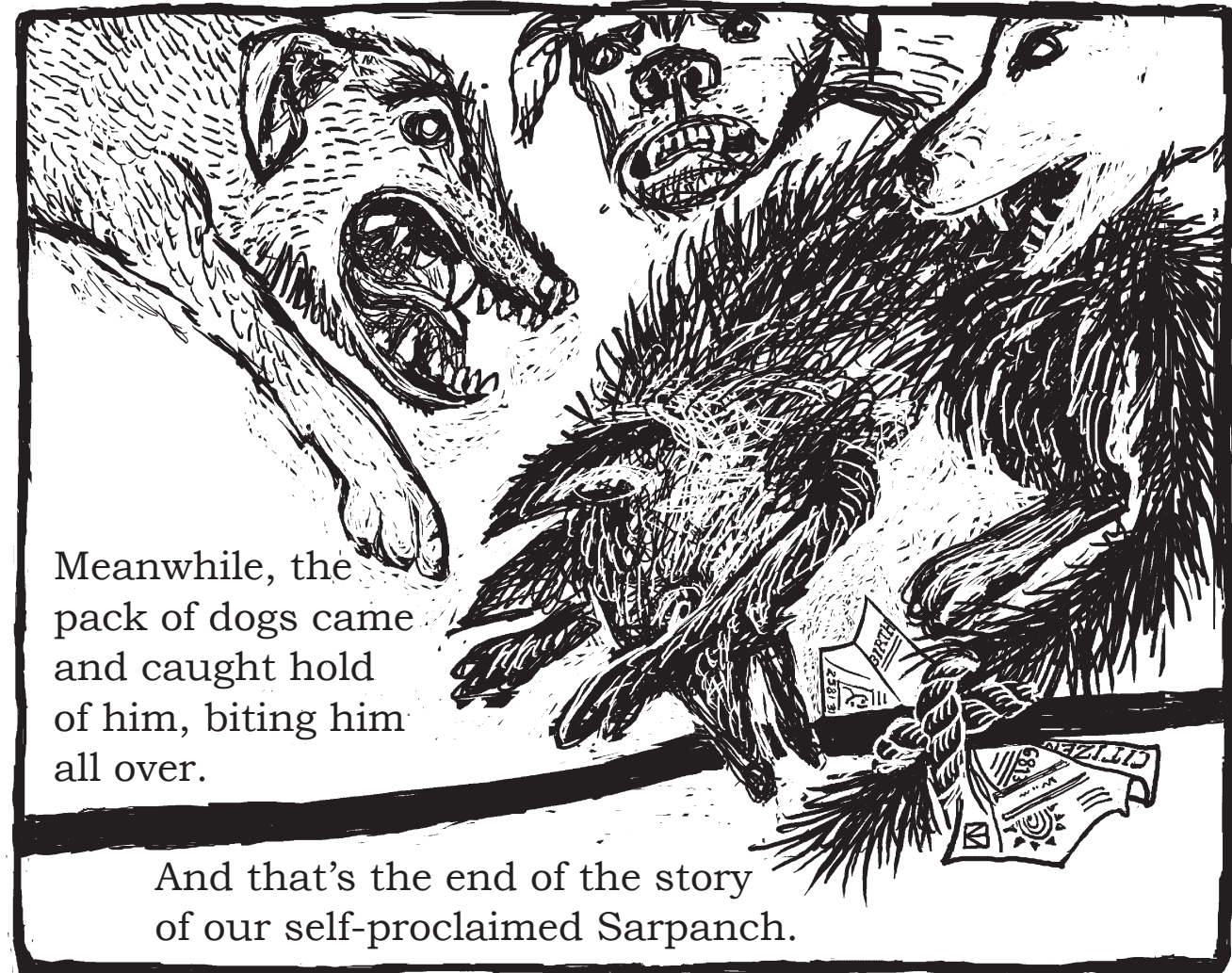
The stick was tied to his tail.
He tried and tried as hard as
he could to go inside.





Seeing this,
one jackal said,
“Sarpanch,
what are you
doing! Come
inside quickly!”

Sarpanch said,
“What can I do?
My certificate is
keeping me out!”
The jackals could
not understand.



Meanwhile, the
pack of dogs came
and caught hold
of him, biting him
all over.

And that's the end of the story
of our self-proclaimed Sarpanch.

