

RAMAYANA

PART 5

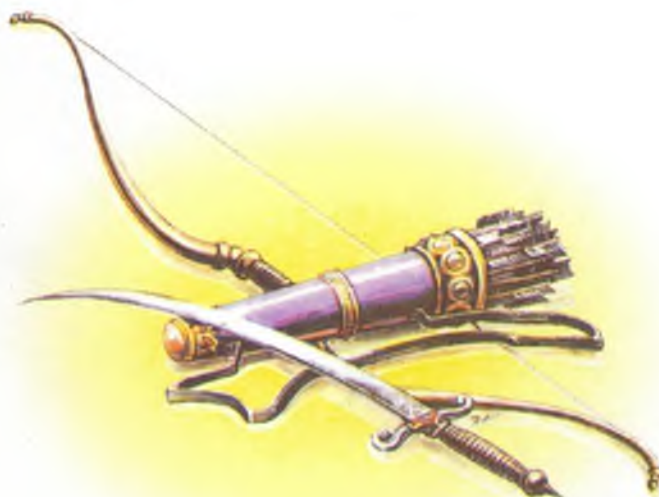


DREAMLAND

RAMAYANA

PART 5 FOREST EPISODE

Retold & Edited By:
T.R. Bhanot



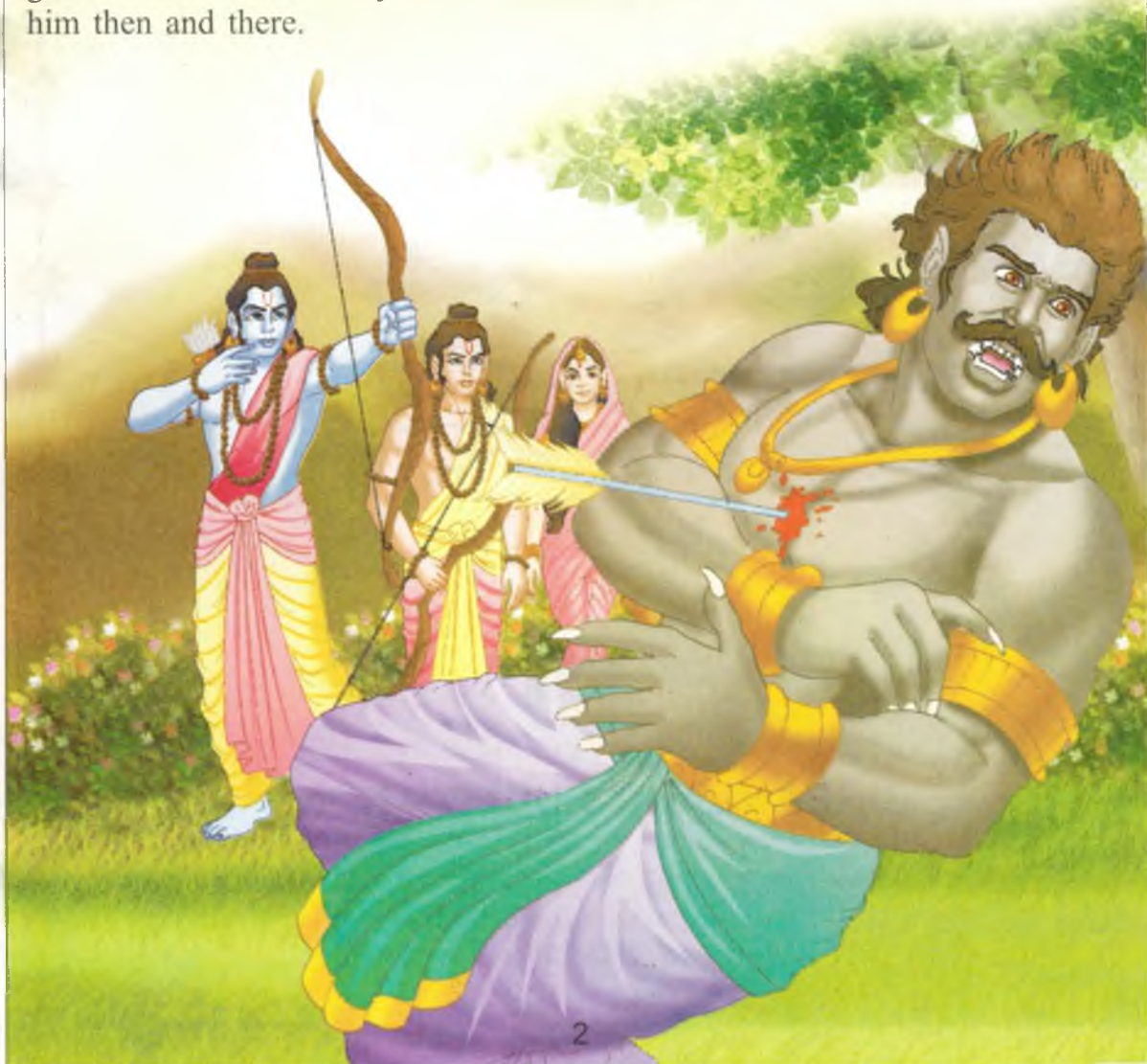
DREAMLAND PUBLICATIONS

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Having left Chitrakoot, Rama reached the hermitage of Saint Atri along with Lakshmana and Sita. The Saint and his wife Ansuya welcomed them warmly and entertained them as well as they could. Having stayed there for a few days, Rama asked for the Saint's leave to go elsewhere. The Saint said, "Rama, you are omniscient. How can I ask you to leave this place ?"

When Rama left Saint Atri's hermitage, a number of hermits accompanied him. On the way, they came across a pile of human-fossils. Rama felt very amazed to see them and he asked the saints about them. One of them said, "These fossils are of several Saints who lived around this place. The local demons ate them up and threw away their bones here." All the Saints requested Rama for protection against the cruel demons as well. Having gone a little further, they came across a demon, named Virad. Rama killed him then and there.

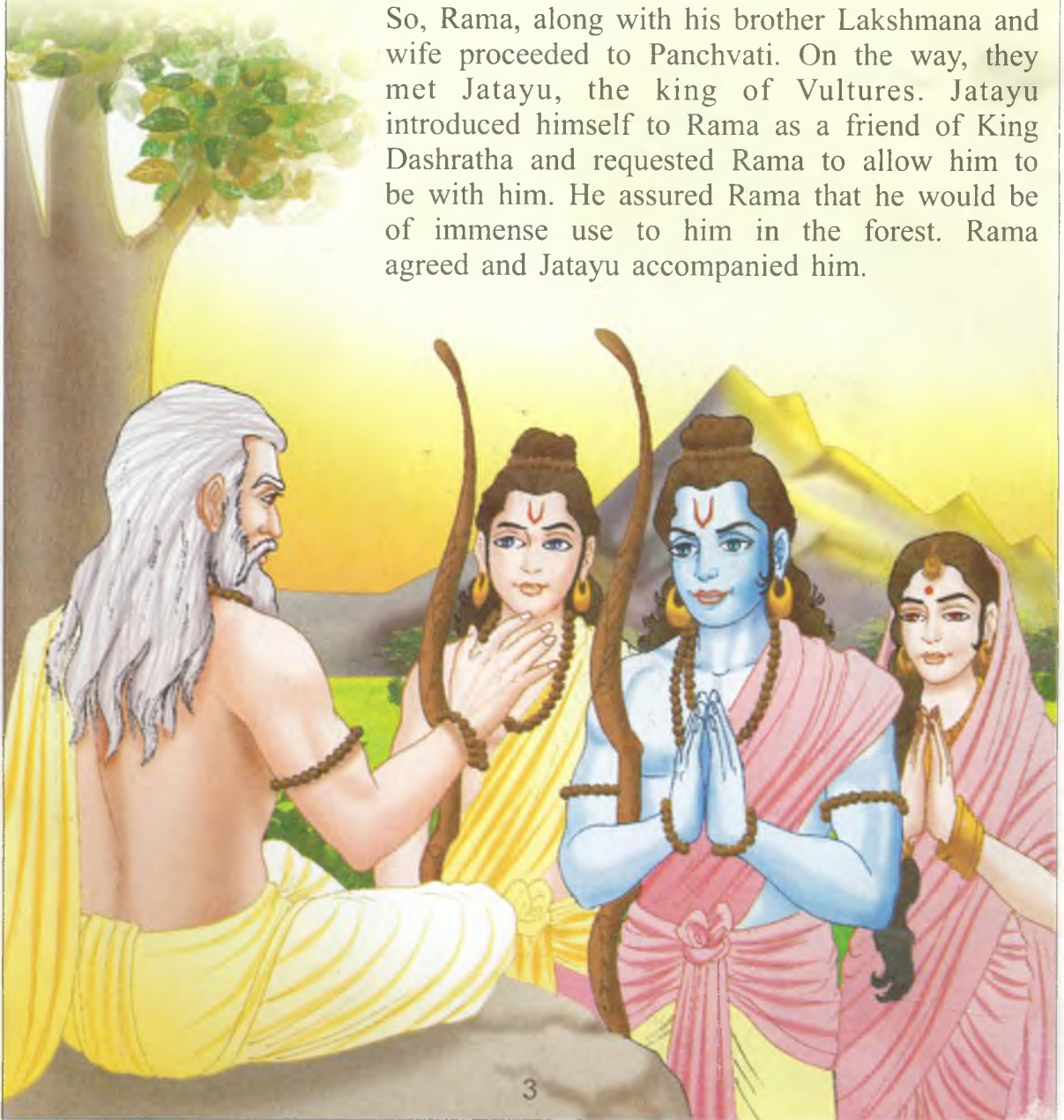


Now, Rama came to the hermitage of Saint Agastya and sought his blessings. The Saint gave him a few divine weapons as well.

Rama, then said to the Saint, "I am so grateful to you for what you have done for me affectionately. Be kind enough to suggest a suitable place to reside."

The Saint said, "There is a place Panchvati about four miles away. You can live there peacefully. You will be safe from every harm there."

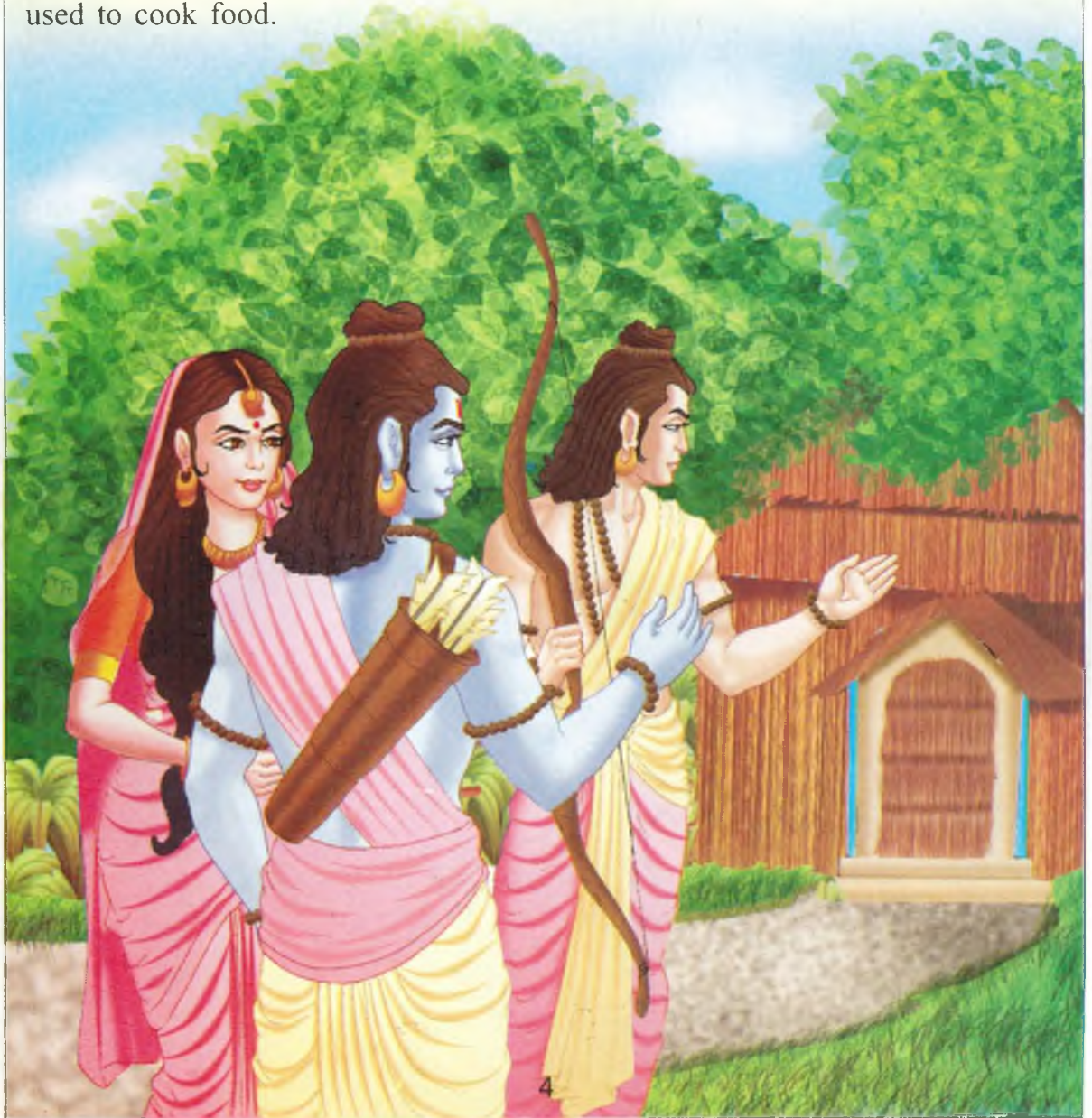
So, Rama, along with his brother Lakshmana and wife proceeded to Panchvati. On the way, they met Jatayu, the king of Vultures. Jatayu introduced himself to Rama as a friend of King Dashratha and requested Rama to allow him to be with him. He assured Rama that he would be of immense use to him in the forest. Rama agreed and Jatayu accompanied him.

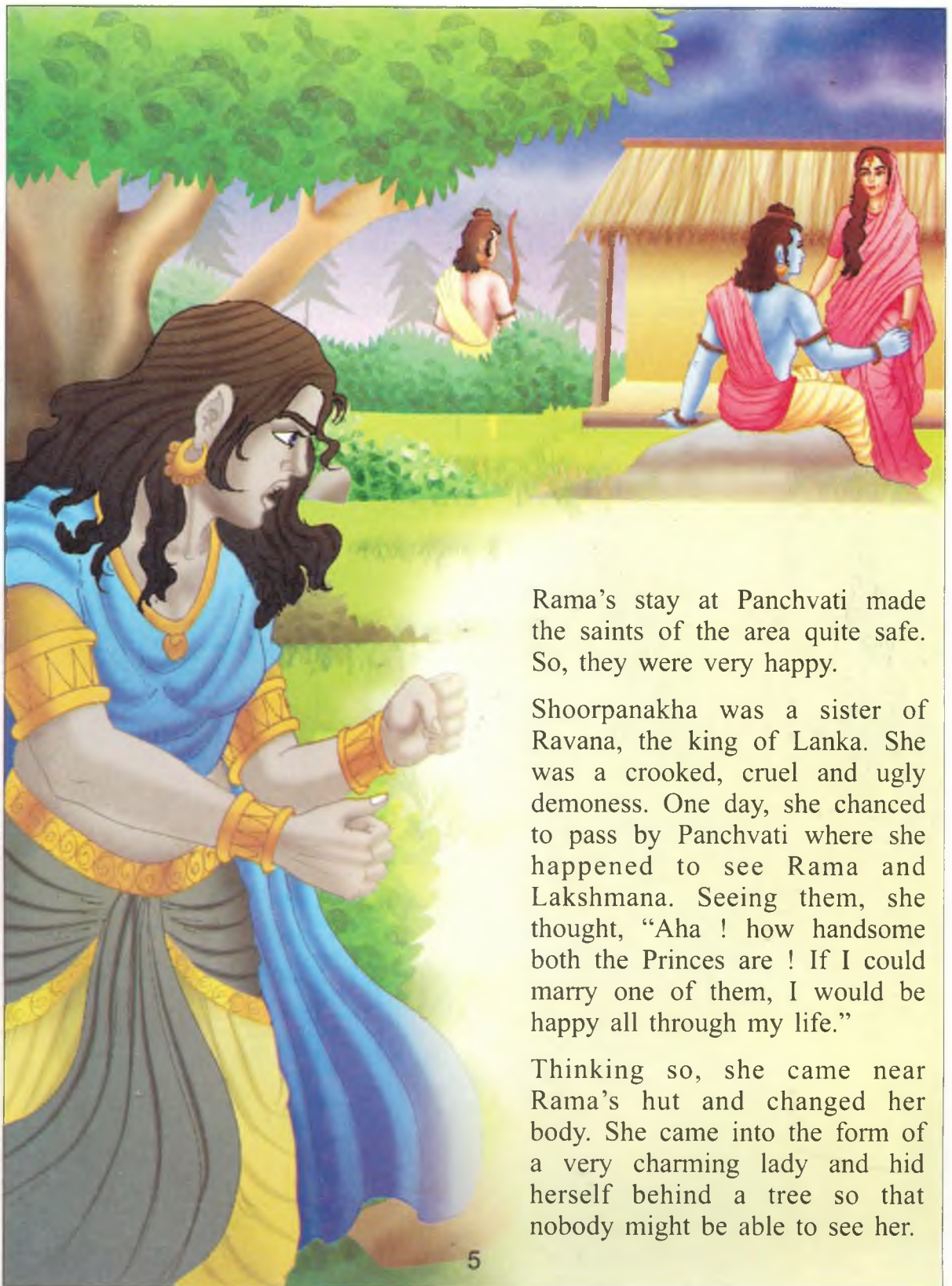


Reaching the Panchvati area, Lakshman chose a suitable site and built a hut for Rama and Sita to live in. Rama, when he saw the hut, was extremely happy. He praised Lakshmana a lot and suggested to him, "Let us collect some flowers and worship the gods in the hut before making it our home."

Both the brothers had a bath in the Godavari and then collecting a few lotus flowers, they worshipped the gods inside the hut.

The hut was spacious and comfortable as well. So, they began to live there in peace. Lakshmana used to bring fuel-wood from the forest while Sita used to cook food.





Rama's stay at Panchvati made the saints of the area quite safe. So, they were very happy.

Shoorpanakha was a sister of Ravana, the king of Lanka. She was a crooked, cruel and ugly demoness. One day, she chanced to pass by Panchvati where she happened to see Rama and Lakshmana. Seeing them, she thought, "Aha ! how handsome both the Princes are ! If I could marry one of them, I would be happy all through my life."

Thinking so, she came near Rama's hut and changed her body. She came into the form of a very charming lady and hid herself behind a tree so that nobody might be able to see her.

Now Shoorpanakha came to Rama and said, "Who are you, O young man ? What for have you come to this land of the demons ?" "I am the son of King Dashratha, the ruler of Ayodhya. I have been exiled for fourteen years. I want to pass this period here in peace. But who are you, O Gentle Lady ?" said Rama.

"I am Shoorpanakha, the sister of Ravana, the powerful ruler of Lanka. The Governors of the area are my cousin—Khara and Dushan. Both of them are matchless warriors. I want to marry you. I am, by all means, a suitable match for you," replied Shoorpanakha.

"But I am already married. Here is my wife Sita. Well, that young man is my brother. He is a nice match for you in every respect," Rama suggested by a way of joke.



Now Shoorpanakha went to Lakshmana and said, "I have not been able to find a matching life-partner for myself anywhere. Now, I have come to you. I see that you are the most handsome man and I am the most charming lady on this earth. God must have made us for each other. Let us marry and live happily." "You are a princess while I am a mere servant of that man. Is it proper for you to wed me ?" said Lakshmana.

"No," said Shoorpanakha. Saying so, she flew into a rage. She came back to her demoniac form and returned to Rama and said, "I see that you are not ready to wed me only because of this ugly wife of yours. So, I must devour her up and then, you will marry me." With these words, Shoorpanakha advanced towards Sita and pounced upon her.



Seeing the fearful demoness falling upon her, Sita exclaimed in fear, "Lakshman ! save me from her."

Hearing Sita's shouts, Lakshmana at once ran towards Shoorpanakha with a dagger in hand, and cut off her nose. He said, "Here is your reward for attacking Sita."

Shoorpanakha ran for her life and weeping bitterly, she came to her cousins Khara and Dushan. She burst out, "Down with your strength and power. Just see my condition. Can't you avenge my insult ?"

Coming to know of the entire story, Khara and Dushan marched towards Panchvati with a large army. Seeing the demons, Rama said to Lakshmana, "Brother ! Take Sita to a safe place. I shall face these demons."



Lakshman took Sita into a nearby cave. A messenger of Khara came to Rama and said, "My master Khara has ordered you to leave this place at once."

"We are warriors. We roam in the forest for game. We are always ready to face true warriors and never fear them. A true warrior, when he proceeds to the battlefield, never takes recourse to tricks. It is sheer cowardice," retorted Rama.

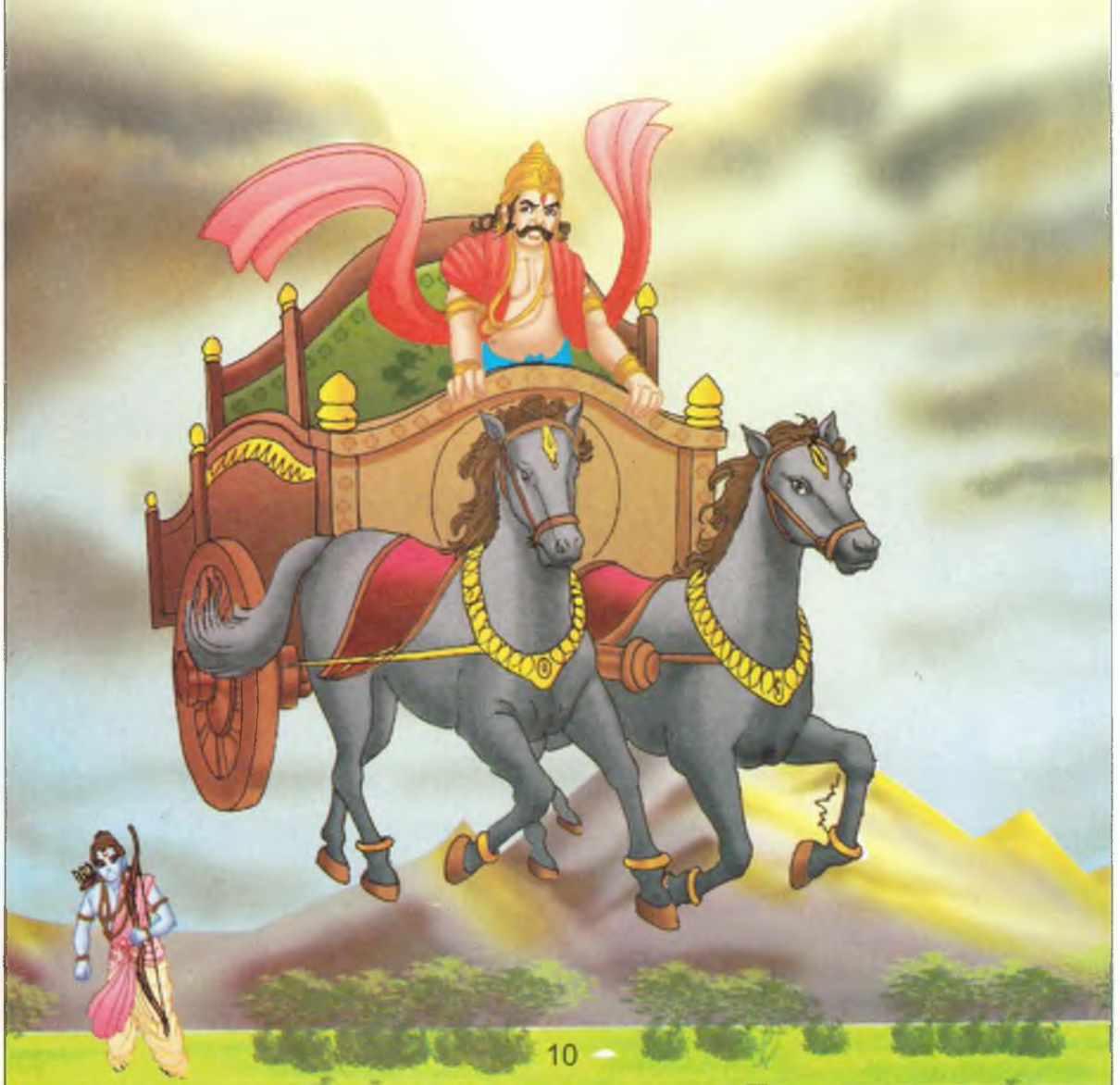
The messenger told Khara all what Rama had said. So, both the demon-brothers attacked Rama with a 1400-strong force of demons. But Rama made short work of them all except one demon named Akampan who fled away to save his life. Khara and Dushan were killed in the action too.



Rama's victory over the demons of Panchvati made the people living there quite safe and fearless. They had seen the battle between Rama and the demons. First of all, they had felt afraid thinking that one man would not be able to face such a large number of demons. But when they saw that the demons started killing one another, they came to believe that it was a miracle on the part of Rama.

Akampan proceeded towards the South in his aerial chariot. Rama saw him running from the battle-field, but did not shoot an arrow at him out of pity.

Meanwhile, Lakshmana came out of the cave along with Sita. They returned to their hut.



Akampan went direct to Ravana, the King of Lanka, and said, "Victory to Ravana, the Great ! But I am pained to inform that your brothers Khara and Dushan have been killed by a Prince of the Koshala kingdom."

Hearing Akampan's words, Ravana was startled and he said, "My brothers were killed by a man ! It is just impossible. If it is true, that Prince had signed his death warrant. I shall not allow him to remain alive."

Akampan at once retorted, "O Great King ! you are mistaken. Even gods cannot kill Rama. There is only one way to kill him and that is to abduct his wife whom he loves more than his life. So, I suggest to you to carry away Sita. Rama will die of the sorrow due to separation for her."

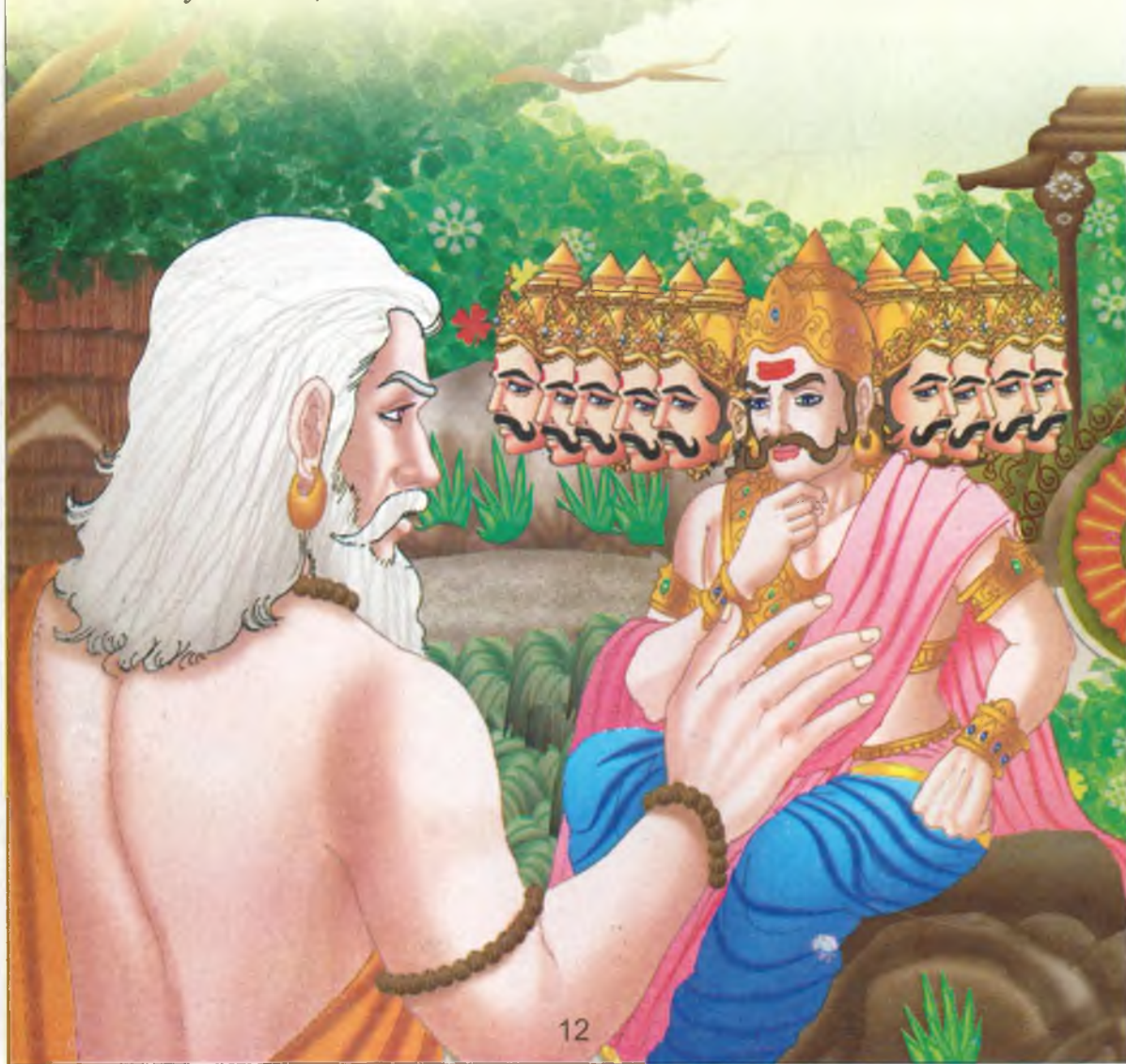
"All right ! I must do it then. I shall go to Mareech for help." Saying so, Ravana adjourned his court and went to his palace.



Next day, Ravana boarded his air-bus named Pushpak and went to Mareech who had turned an ascetic. King Ravana told him the entire story and explained to him how he was to help him. But Mareech said, "The friend who has incited you to abduct Sita is certainly your foe. So, I advise you not to invite enmity with Rama who is a true warrior. He kills demons as easily as he kills deer for game."

"I agree with you, Mareech," said Ravana. Saying so, Ravana got up.

"Go and rule in peace. Enjoy your stately comforts and give up the idea of enmity with Rama for ever. it is essentially good for you and for the welfare of your clan," said Mareech to Ravana who returned to Lanka.



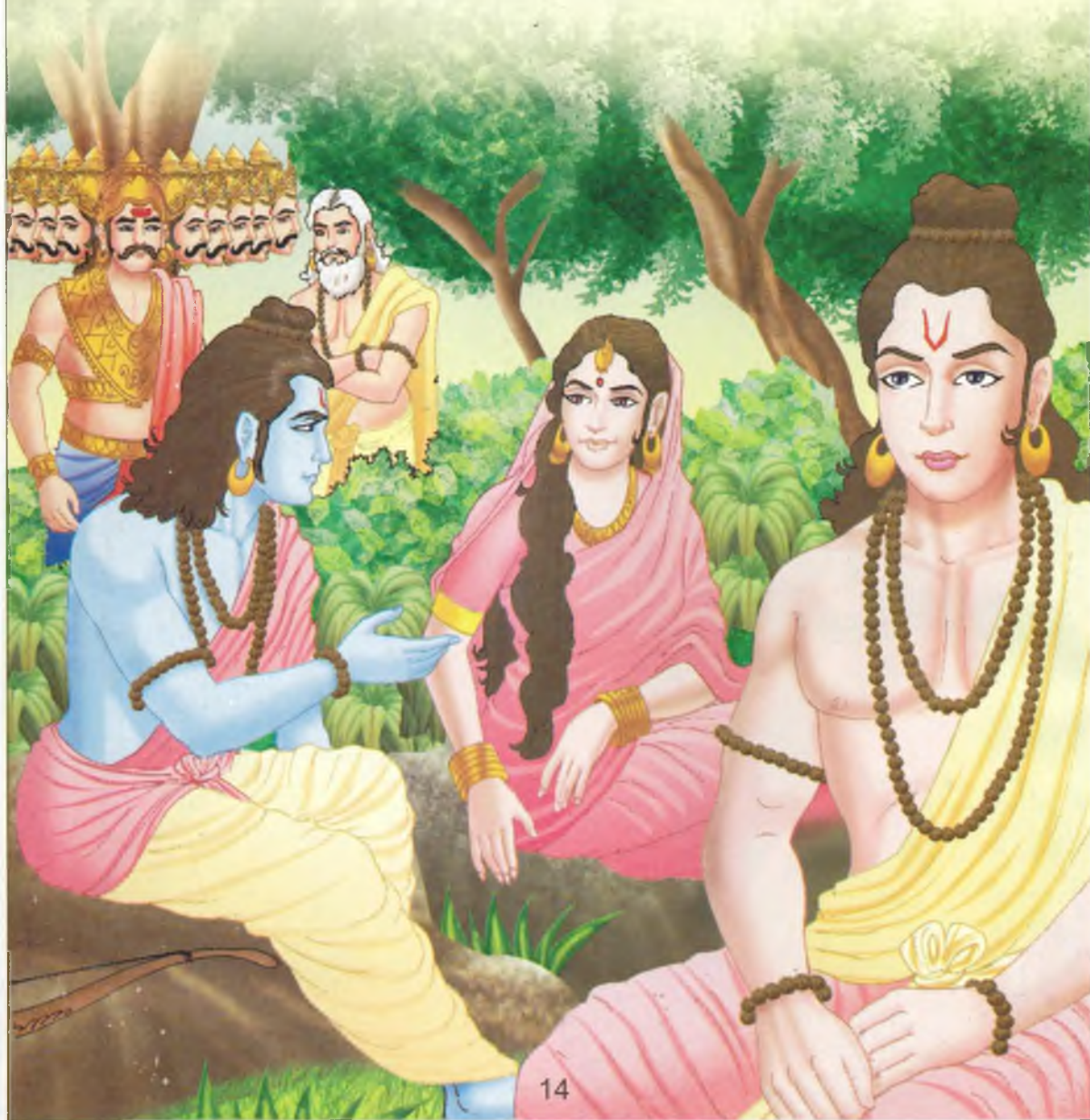
Hardly had Ravana stepped into his palace when his sister Shoorpanakha reached there. Bewailing bitterly she said to Ravana, "Just see; how I have been disgraced by the two Princes of Ayodhya. Not only this, they have killed your brothers—Khara and Dushan too. If you do not avenge my disgrace and the death of your brothers, men and gods will become fearless. But I am sorry to observe that you have ignored the welfare of your subjects, clan and kingdom. You are always drunk and lost in pleasure while your enemies are hovering around you."

Hearing these words, Ravana again flew into a rage and said, "You are right, sister. I must go to Mareech for help." Saying so, he returned to Mareech. Seeing Ravana coming again, he saw through the matter and said, "Ravana ! the biggest sin on this earth is to cast an evil eye on the wife of another person."



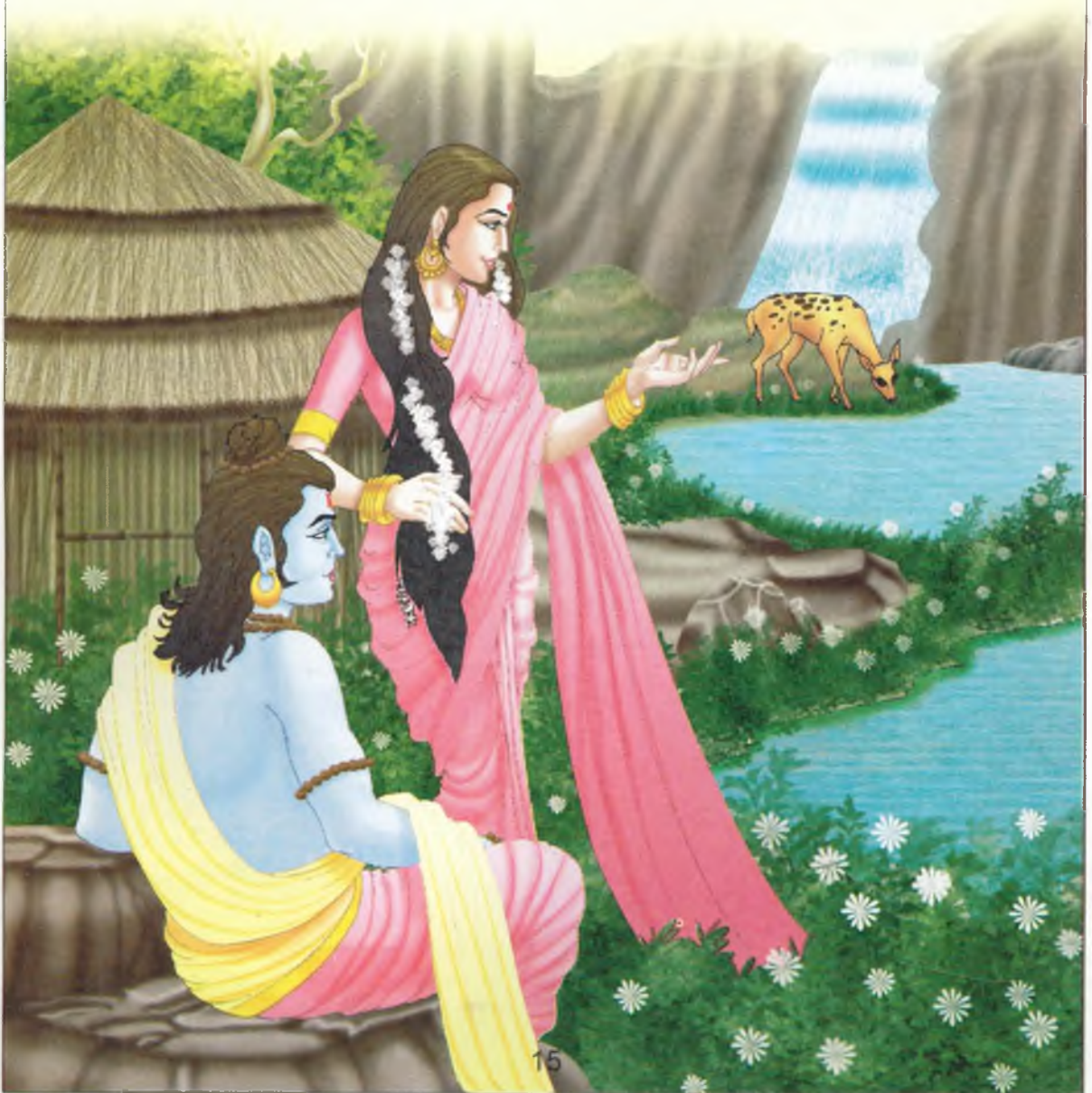
Hearing this, Ravana got mad in anger and roared, "You Fool ! how dare you advise me ? You have got to change yourself into a deer so that Rama feels allured to follow you and kill you. In his absence, I shall carry away Sita. Mind that if you do not help me, I will sever your head from your body just now."

Mareech saw that his death was sure in either case. So, he decided to be killed by Rama. He said, "All right, friend ! I am ready to help you." Rama, along with his brother and wife, was passing his days happily at Panchvati. Just then Mareech and Ravana came to Panchvati.



Ravana said to Mareech, "Your task is to attract the two brothers away from their hut." Mareech changed himself into a beautiful deer and began to roam near Rama's hut. Seeing the deer, Sita said to Rama, "Look at that deer. How beautiful it looks with its golden skin and horns !"

"Yes, the deer is certainly unique," retorted Rama, nodding in assent. Just then Lakshman said, "Brother ! this deer cannot be real. It must be a demon who has come here in the form of a deer to trick us one way or the other."



But Sita did not heed what Lakshmana had said. She insisted on having that deer dead or alive. Rama lifted his bow and arrows and ran after the deer that led him quite far away from the hut. As soon as Rama shot an arrow at the deer, it came to its real form. While falling down on the ground, Mareech cried, "Sita Lakshman !!!"

When Sita heard the cry, she felt uneasy and said to Lakshmana, "It seems that your brother is in some trouble. Go and help him at once."

Lakshmana was in a fix but Sita compelled him to leave the hut. So Lakshmana drew a circle round the hut and said, "Dear sister-in-law ! never come out of this line. I am going to look for my brother." Saying so, he proceeded into the forest.



Finding Sita alone, Ravana changed himself into a saint and went near the hut. Looking hither and thither, he advanced towards the hut with a view to begging alms. But when he got near the circle, he was startled. As soon as his foot touched the line, a fearful fire broke out of it. He withdrew his step at once and said, "Gentle lady ! we don't accept bound alms. If you are to give me something, come out of this circle ; otherwise, I shall return empty-handed." Sita was in a fix. But she came out of the circle with alms in her hand. Ravana at once grabbed her. Sita exclaimed in anger, "Who are you ? How dare you touch me ?"

"I am Ravana, the king of Lanka," said Ravana. Saying so, he came to his real form.



Ravana's chariot was standing at a distance. He lifted Sita and putting her in the chariot drove the chariot back along an aerial path. Sita cried for help, "Rama ! save me from this cruel demon."

"I am Ravana, the ruler of Lanka. I'll see who dares to come and rescue you from my grip," said Ravana.

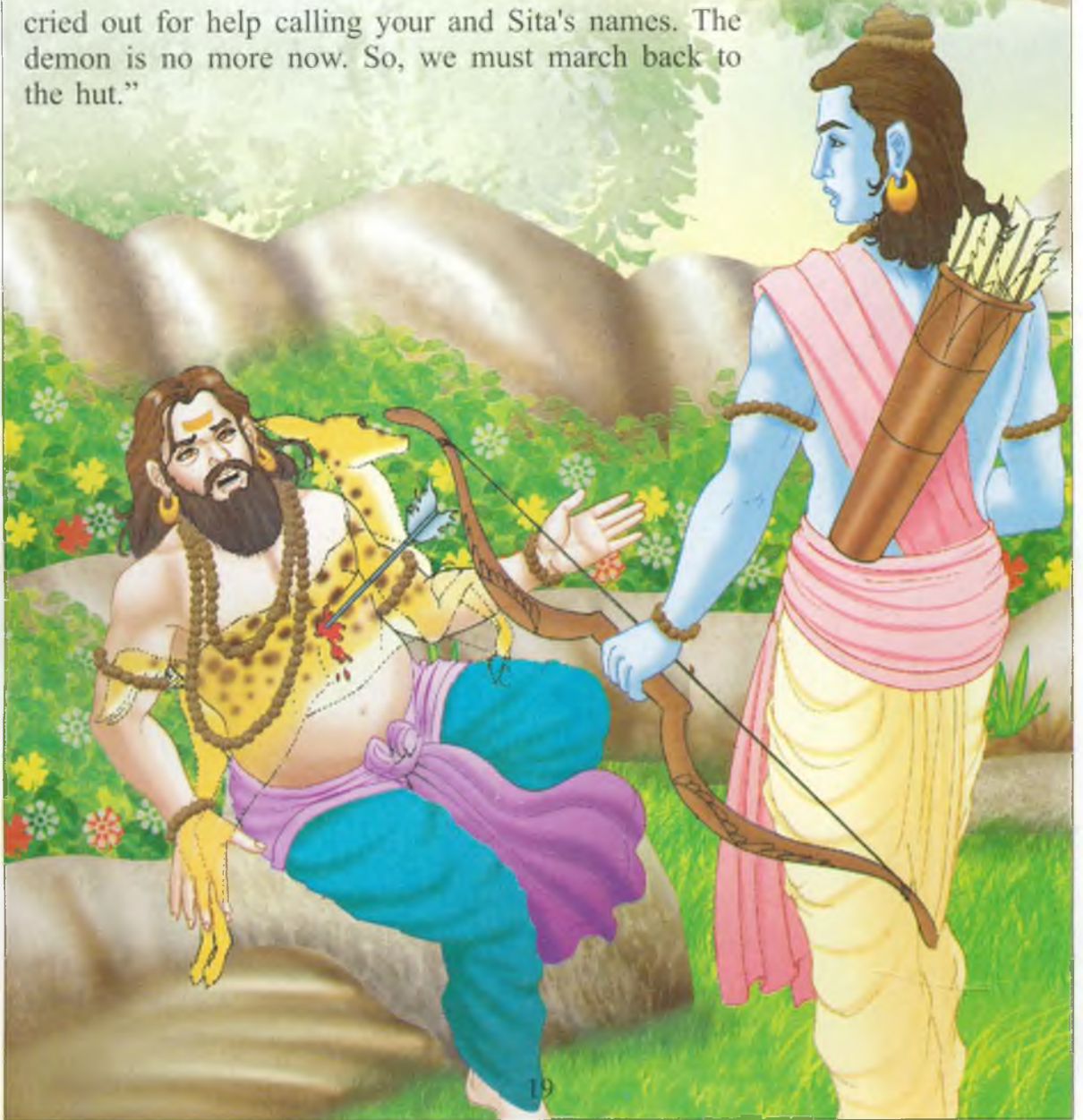
Sita was frightened and she began to bewail. Even trees and stones were moved to pity after hearing Sita's bewailings. Jatayu, the king of vultures, heard Sita's cries and recognising her voice, he said, "My daughter ! don't worry. I am here to kill this demon." Saying so, Jatayu pounced on Ravana and said, "You wretch ! stop your chariot at once. Don't you know me ? Stop if you reckon yourself a warrior."



Lakshman had been able to locate his brother in the forest. Rama asked him in surprise, "You ! here ! where is Sita ?"

"Brother ! we heard your cry for help. I had to come to your help on Sita's insistence," retorted Lakshmana.

"I never called out to anyone. Your doubt was correct. That deer was not a deer indeed. It was the dreaded demon, Mareech." Saying so, Rama said, "When I followed the deer, it ran with the speed of wind. I shot an arrow at it and it came to its real form of Mareech who cried out for help calling your and Sita's names. The demon is no more now. So, we must march back to the hut."



Rama and Lakshmana came to the hut but they found no sign of Sita there. They felt worried and went about looking for her but all of no avail. Rama felt extremely unhappy. So, Lakshman said, "Don't lose hope so soon, Brother. She might have gone into the forest or to the river. Let us go and see." Saying so Lakshmana, along with Rama, went southwards looking for Sita.

Going over a considerable distance they found Jatayu lying half dead on the ground. They ran to him and recognised him. He said, "Lakshmana ! he is Jatayu, our father's friend." Saying so, both the brothers sat beside the dying vulture.



Then Jatayu told Rama, "When I saw that Ravana was forcibly carrying Sita, I pounced on the cruel demon. Finding me as fearful as death, Ravana got plunged into worry and murmured, "Oh ! wherefrom has this cruel vulture come." I flew into a rage and dragged Ravana outside his chariot using my strong claws. Not only this, I pierced his body with my sharp strong beak. I rescued Sita and was about to move back with her when Ravana attacked me with his sword and cut off my wings. I fell down on the ground uttering your name.

Then, Rama asked, "Where has Ravana taken Sita to ? Let me know at once." "That I don't know," retorted Jatayu.

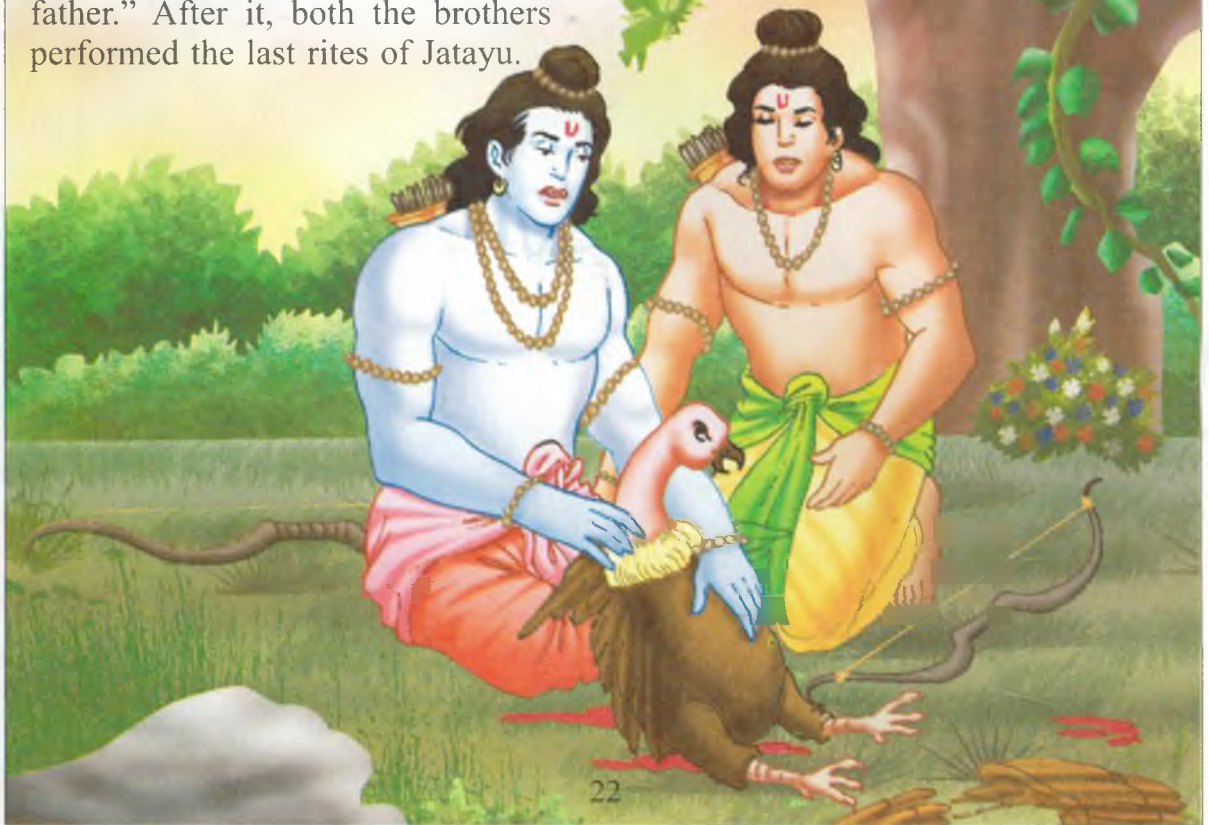


Relating the story of his scuffle with Ravana, Jatayu said, "Seeing me helpless, Ravana once again put Sita into his chariot and moved on. Sita went on throwing her bangles and ornaments on the ground."

"Who is this Ravana, after all. Let me know," asked Rama.

Jatayu was just on the verge of death. So he could speak a few words with difficulty. He said, "Ravana is the king of demons and Vishrava's son." Saying so, Jatayu breathed his last in Rama's lap.

Jatayu's death made Rama even more restless. He said, I salute you again and again, O Great Vulture. I revere you as much as I do my father." After it, both the brothers performed the last rites of Jatayu.





Rama and Lakshmana reached the Kraunch Forest in search of Sita. There, a demon named Kabandh rushed to devour them. Before long, Rama cut off his hands, killed him and burnt him to ashes. Amazingly enough, a man emerged from the fire. He said, "I became a dreadful demon under a curse. You have set me free. So, I'll let you know the way to find out Sita. Please locate Sugreeva the ruler of the Vanaras. He will help you to rescue Sita." Saying so, Kabandh disappeared.

Both the brothers reached the western bank of the Pampa Lake. There, they were received and entertained by a saintly old lady, Shabri, by name. She was an old lady, belonging to a jungle tribe. Seeing both the brothers coming towards her, she said, "My long-cherished desire is going to be fulfilled, Rama. I had been alive for this happy occasion only." Saying so, she went into the forest to bring wild berries for Rama and Lakshmana.

She came back soon with sweet berries. Giving them to both the brothers, she said, "Accept this humble fare, please. I have tasted them one by one. Not a single of them is sour. They are all sweet."

"These are the sweetest fruits on the earth, Lakshmana," said Rama. Saying so, Rama enjoyed them tastily though Lakshmana stealthily threw them away. Shabri breathed her last that very day.



RAMAYANA

PART I



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Childhood Episode-I

RAMAYANA

PART 2

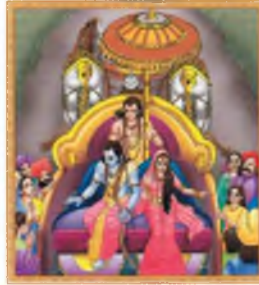


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Childhood Episode-II

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PART 3



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Ayodhya Episode-I

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PART 4



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Ayodhya Episode-II

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PART 5



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Forest Episode

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PART 6



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Kishkindha Episode

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PART 7

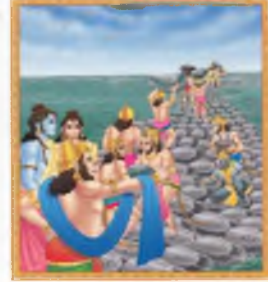


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Fascinating Episode

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PART 8



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Battle Episode-I

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PART 9

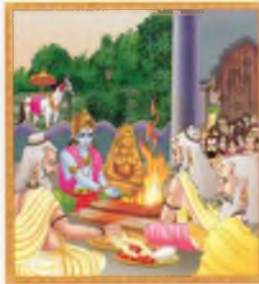


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Battle Episode-II

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PART 10

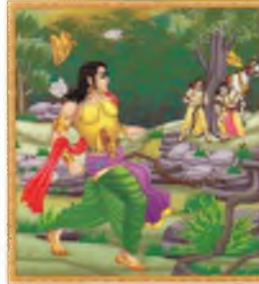


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Uttara Episode

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PART 11



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Lava-Kusha Episode-I

RAMAYANA

PART 12



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Lava-Kusha Episode-II



PUBLISHED BY

DREAMLAND PUBLICATIONS

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ISBN 81-7301-070-6



9 781730 107061

Price : Rs. 25