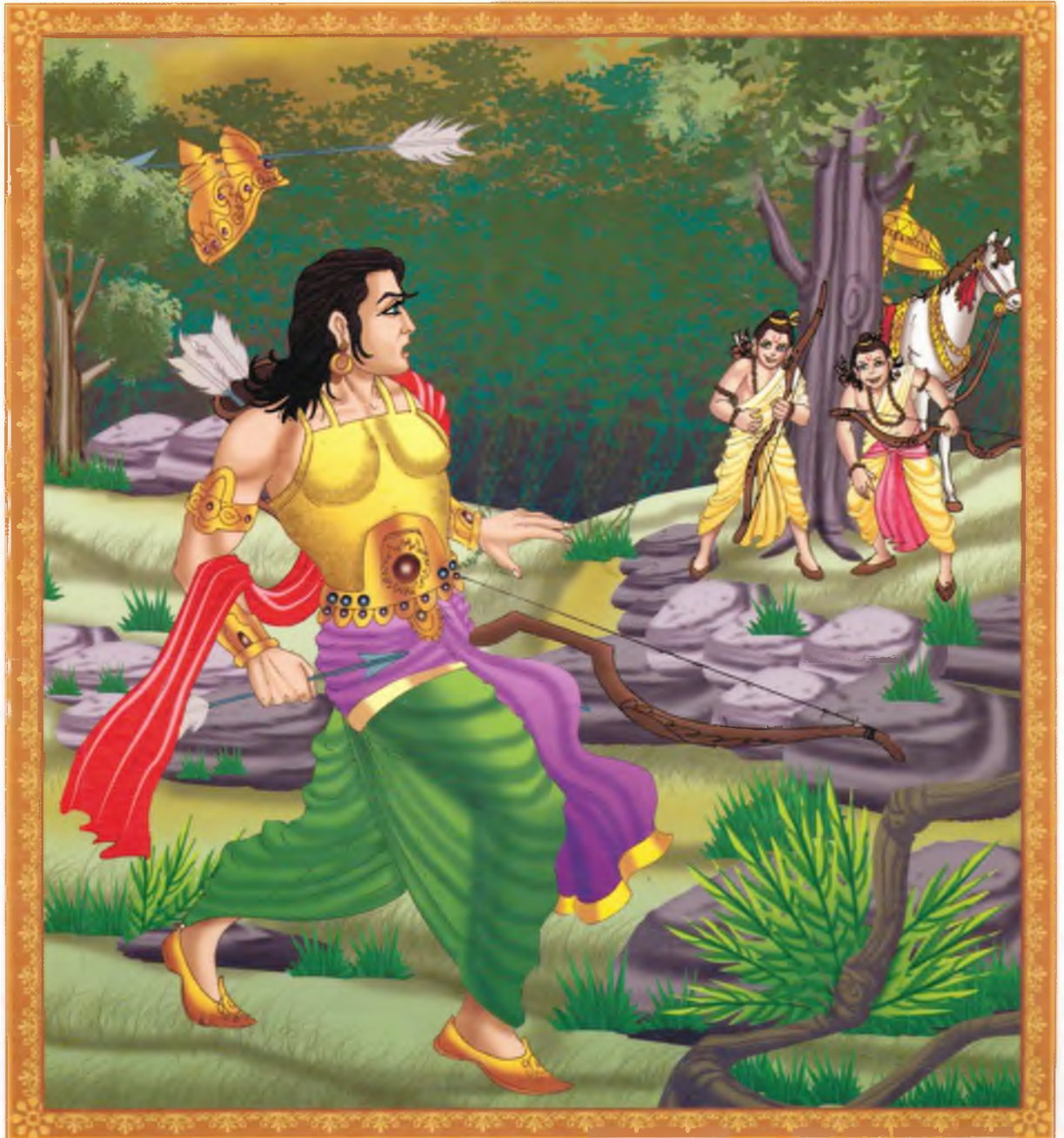


RAMAYANA

PART II



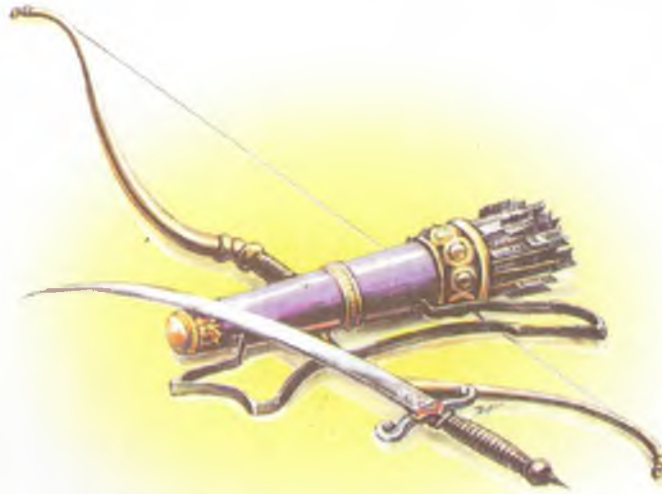
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RAMAYANA

PART 11

LAVA-KUSHA EPISODE-I

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When Shatrughna saw Lava and Kush, he was moved with pity. He advised them, "Children ! shed your rage and return our horse. I shall be grateful to you." Both the brothers asked him, "Your Majesty ! who are you and where is your Capital ? Why are you roaming in the forests with your army ? Why did you leave this horse and why was this declaration hung from its saddle ?"

Shatrughna told the twins all about the yajna and the horse. Hearing this, Lava said to him, "If you are afraid of a battle with us, leave this horse with us and return to your capital." Lava's words enraged Shatrughna and he raised his bow and arrows to chastise both the brothers. But before he could do anything, the twins showered arrows on his chariot and broke it.



Seeing his chariot broken, Shatrughna felt even more enraged and he began to shoot arrows on Lava and Kush. He ordered his soldiers to join the fight as well. But the twins kept facing them courageously.

Hearing Shatrughna challenging them time and again, Lava said to Kush, "Brother ! a brave king is challenging us again and again. He, perhaps, does not know that barking dogs seldom bite."

Kush replied, "Wait ! I shall teach him a lesson." Saying so, he rained volleys of arrows on Shatrughna and pierced his body. Having been badly wounded, he fell down senseless on the ground. Then, they turned to other warriors and killed most of them. Those who could not face them ran away to save their lives.



The run-away soldiers reached the Court of Rama and told him all about the twin brothers. He was very amazed to hear this. So, he called Lakshmana and said, "Brother ! march at the head of a strong force and bring the two jungle boys into our presence. But be careful not to kill them because they are the children of a Saint."

"Yes, brother !" Saying so, Lakshmana bowed low before Rama who blessed him. Then Lakshmana said, I will try my best not to kill them. But I doubt the fact that they are children of a Saint. Has anybody ever heard of a Saint's son who can catch a yajna horse and give such a fight to the armies of a powerful King ?"



Hearing Lakshmana's words, one of the run-away soldiers said, "Your doubt is unfounded, O Prince. They are very much the children of a Saint. But at the same time, they are the most dangerous warriors in the battle-field. Their arrows prove fatal to those who happen to be hit by them. Thus, they are embodiments of the Death-God himself."

"It will be a miracle indeed if your statement is true. We did not come across such warriors even when we had to face the demons," replied Lakshmana in amazement.

"Waste no time any more, Lakshmana. Go and bring them into our presence so that we may see those brave boys," said Rama to Lakshmana. So, seeking Rama's permission, Lakshmana marched to the field of battle with a strong army.



In due course, Lakshmana reached the spot where Shatrughna, having been defeated, was lying senseless. Seeing his brother wounded badly, Lakshmana flew into a rage. But when he saw the innocent lovable faces of Lava and Kush, his anger melted away. Advising them most affectionately, he said, "Children ! leave this horse and go home. Our dynasty *Raghuvansha* has always held the Saints and Brahmanas in high esteem." Hearing this, both the brothers burst into peals of laughter and replied, "It was you, perhaps, who left Sita helpless in the forest a few years ago. Dare you fight us ? You had better return to Ayodhya ; otherwise, you will meet with the same fate as your brother has met."

These insulting words enraged Lakshmana once again and he said, "My hands are not ready to attack you, O Children ! Send for a helper who can defend you like a warrior."



“A helper ! It is you who will need a helper, not we. Send for someone who can take you away when we have pierced your body with our arrows.” Saying so, Kush shot a fierce arrow at Lakshmana and his crown went rolling into air to fall down, at a large distance.

Lakshmana’s anger knew no bounds now. So, he started showering arrows at both the brothers. But they were far better archers. They shot arrows in such a manner that all the Lakshmana’s arrows were cut down half way to fall on the ground in the no-man’s land. Then, finding a chance, Kush gave such a hard blow to Lakshmana that he could not hold his own. Staggering violently, he felt embarrassed and accepted his defeat in his mind. Now Lakshmana remembered his brother Rama and plucking up courage, he shot such an arrow at Kush that he got wounded and fell down senseless.



Seeing his brother falling down, Lava felt worried. Placing his bow and arrows on the ground, he tried to bring his brother to senses. He remembered Saint Valmiki and moved his hand on the face of Kush who got up at once and said to Lakshmana, "You really look to be a warrior."

Seeing Kush all right again, Lakshmana got ready again and began to shoot dangerous arrows that he had used while fighting against Meghanada and other fierce warriors of Lanka. But Lava and Kush rendered them useless, cutting them down in the mid-way.



Lakshmana felt embarrassed indeed. The remark about Sita's helplessness in the forest had done away with his courage, though apparently he looked fighting.

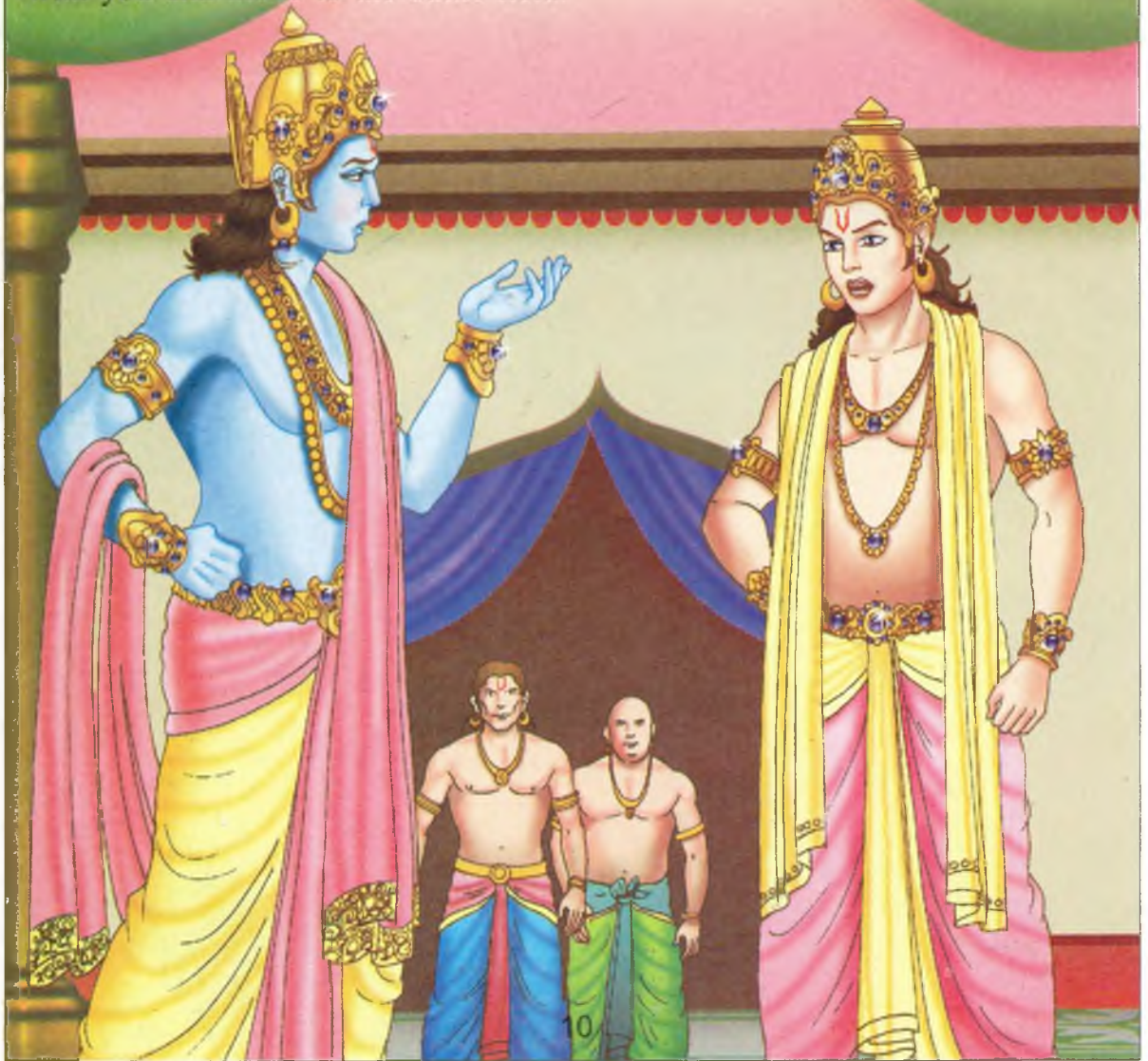
Now Lava set on his bow the arrow that Saint Valmiki had given him after infusing supernatural effect in it through his miraculous power. None in the three worlds could go unhurt when hit by this arrow. So, as soon as this arrow hit Lakshmana, he fell down senseless.

Lakshmana's defeat demoralised his army. Unable to face the arrows shot by the twin brothers, most of the soldiers fled away in fear. Reaching Ayodhya they informed Rama of Lakshmana's defeat and unconsciousness.



Now Rama sent for Bharata and told him the entire story. With a heavy heart he said, "Dear brother ! I feel it is happening only because of the unjust step of expelling my holy sister-in-law—Sita."

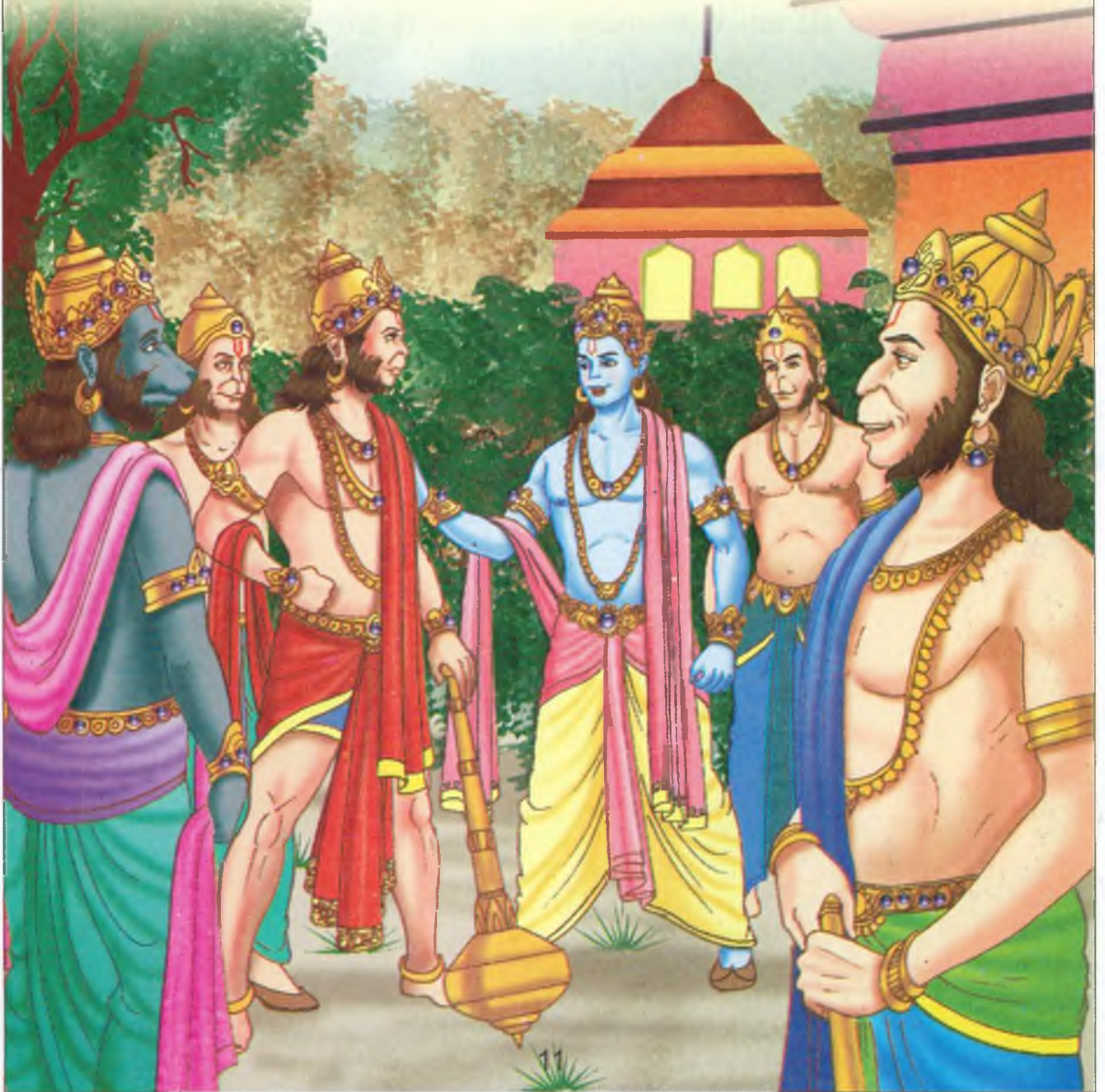
These words made Rama answerless and serious. He, then, said, "Bharat ! it seems that you fear to go to the battle-field. All right ; get ready my army of horsemen and war-elephants. I myself shall go to face the jungle boys. It seems they too, like Ravana, have got fed up with their lives. Go and defend the yajna with care." Hearing these words, Bharata felt very ashamed and said, "Excuse me, dear brother. You need not take this trouble. I will march to the battle-field, leaving the yajna to your care." Rama agreed and he said, "All right ; take Hanumana and other Vanara warriors with you and move to the battle-field."



So, Bharata sent for Hanumana, first of all, and conveyed him the order of Rama, "Friend ! prepare the Vanara army for a battle against Lava and Kush. Meanwhile, I shall get ready too."

"Certainly, friend ! I will do the needful in no time."

Saying so, Hanumana set about the task of collecting his army. Bringing Jambvant, Sugreeva, Dwivid, Mayand and Angad too with him, he informed Bharata of their arrival. Bharata too had got ready by now. He came there and inspected the Vanara army. Then taking permission from Rama, he marched to the battle-field at the head of his army.



Seeing a large Vanara army heading for the battle-field, Lava said to Kush, "Brother ! Rama's army is coming. It is said that this Vanara army put to rout the demon army of Lanka. How nice it will be, if we are able to put this army to rout !"

"A splendid idea indeed. Let the Vanaras come face to face with us." Saying so, both the brothers got ready with their bows and arrows. As soon as Bharata's army set foot into the battle-field, the twins began to shower arrows on his Vanara soldiers. Their arrows wounded all the chief Vanara warriors and most of them began to lick dust. Seeing this, Bharata felt worried and he did not know what to do. Not only this, even Hanumana was all praise for the young brothers, their skill in archery and their courage as well.



Finding his entire army badly routed, Bharata said to Hanumana, "I am moved with pity for these tender boys. So, I am not able to attack them. Go and bring them here."

Hearing Bharata's words, Hanumana advanced forward with his mace and started fighting against Lava and Kush. But they checkmated him. All his skills in warfare could cut no ice and he felt helpless before them. Seeing this, Bharata was beside himself with anger. He shot a fierce arrow at Lava who fell down unconscious on the ground. Unable to tolerate it, Kush shot a counter arrow at Bharata. It hit him in his chest and made him senseless.

Then Kush turned to his brother, Lava. He drew out the arrow from his body and nursed his wound. As a result, Lava was ready for fight again.





When the news of Bharata's unconsciousness and the defeat of Rama's army reached Ayodhya, Rama felt awfully hurt. So, leaving the defence of the yajna to the care of his courtiers, he raised an army. Vibhishana was also there at that time.

Rama marched to the battle-field at the head of his army in a chariot which moved with the speed of wind as if it were eager to come face to face with the enemy and see all the three Princes of Ayodhya, lying unconscious.

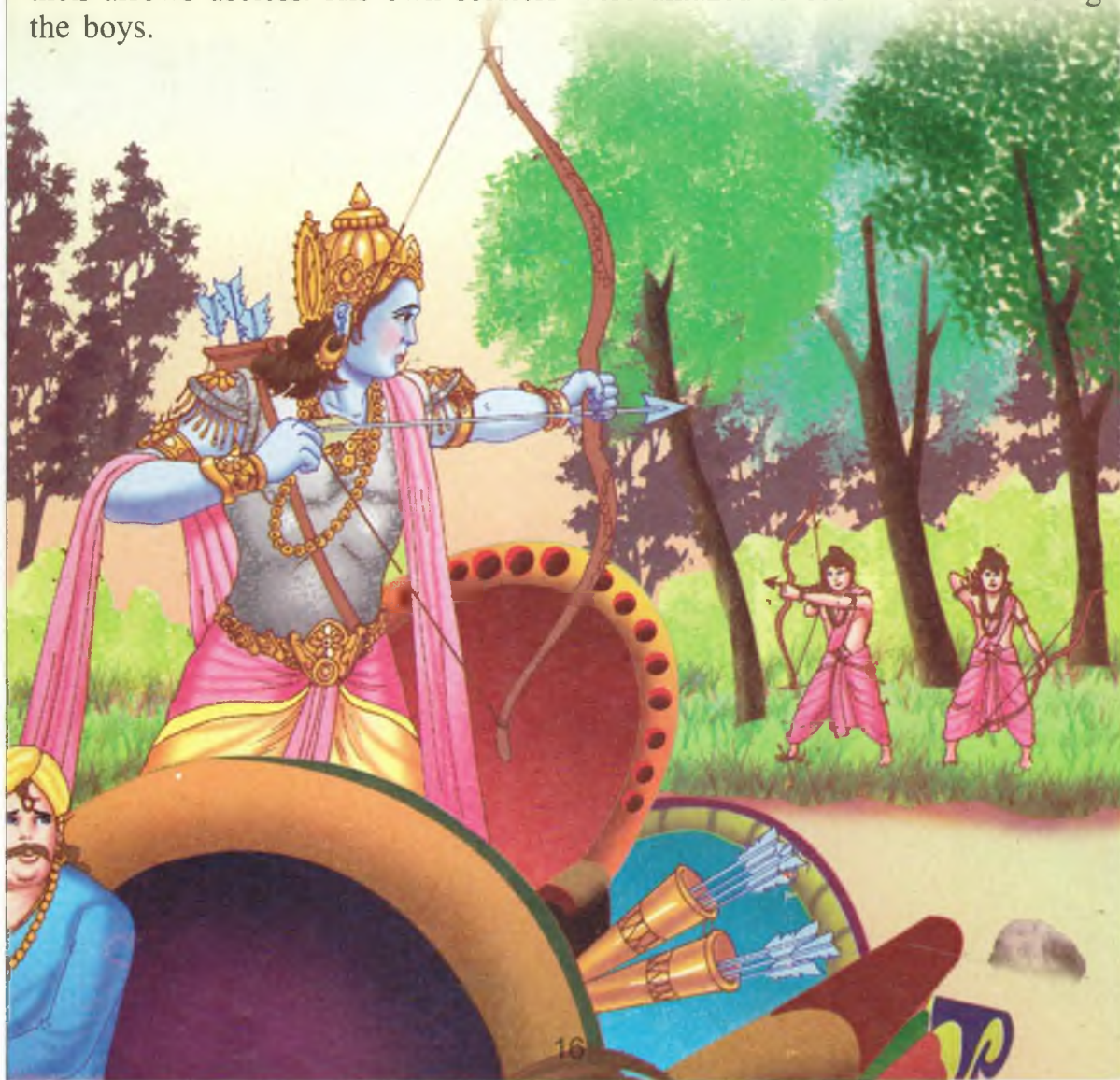
In due course, Rama reached the battle-field along with his army. Seeing the ruler of Ayodhya present in person there, Hanumana came running and stood before Rama with folded hands.

Seeing the faces of Lava and Kush, Rama said to the twin brothers, "Children ! who are you ? Who is your father and who is your mother ? You are really great warriors." Hearing these words, the twins said, "You will come to know of everything when you are sent to the land of the dead. Be ready for the battle." "No, dear ; not at all. I shall never shoot an arrow at you until and unless I have known your names and that of your dynasty," said Rama. The twins said, "Our mother—Vandevi—is the Princess of Mithila. Saint Valmiki has brought us up. We do not know the name of our father and that of our dynasty."



Knowing that the twins were his own sons, Rama felt overjoyed but he did not disclose this fact. Then Lava said, "Your Majesty, we have given you our introduction. Now lift your bow and be ready to fight ; otherwise, return to your land leaving this beautiful horse here for us. We never attack a running enemy."

Hearing this, Rama was beside himself with rage and he lifted his bow and arrows. A fierce battle began. All the arrows shot by Lava and Kush were cut down mid-way by Rama. But he himself did not shoot arrows on them. Seeing this, the twins were very surprised. Still they continued the fight and kept showering arrow at Rama. Rama, sitting in his chariot, kept rendering their arrows useless. His own soldiers were amazed to see him not attacking the boys.



Seeing Rama, not attacking the jungle-boys, Hanumana lost patience and he again jumped into the battle-field with his mace.

Seeing Hanumana again before him, Kush flew into a rage and he said, "You have come again. This time I shall defeat you in a wrestling bout."

So, a wrestling bout began between Kush and Hanumana. In a short time, Kush overpowered Hanumana and tied his hands and feet. Then, he asked his brother Lava, "What should we do with this Vanara ?"

"Let us take him to Vandevi, our mother. She will be much happy to see him," replied Lava.

So, both the brothers carried Hanumana towards their hut.



Leaving Hanumana outside the hut, Lava and Kush went inside and told their mother in joy, “Vandevi ! we have brought a fine plaything for you.”

“A fine plaything ! Where is it ?” asked Vandevi doubtfully.

“It is there outside. We’ll bring it here in no time.” Saying so, they brought Hanumana and presented him to their mother. Seeing Hanumana with tied hands and feet, Vandevi was non-plussed and frightened too. As for Hanumana, he bowed low before her and said, “Mother ! your sons had caught the Ashvamedha horse and it resulted in a battle. They have defeated Shatrughna, Lakshamana and Bharata and rendered them unconscious too. Now Rama has come in person to conduct the battle.”



Hearing these words, Vandevi trembled all over and she ordered her sons to untie the bonds of Hanumana. Seeing their mother in rage, they, at once, set Hanumana free and ran away from there.

Sita came running to Saint Valmiki and found both her sons there. Then narrating all about the battle, she said in a trembling voice, "What an unnatural event, O Fatherly Saint ! A battle between a father and his sons !"

"I know everything, my daughter. But why do you worry ? Everything will be all right in due course," said the Saint in a consoling voice.

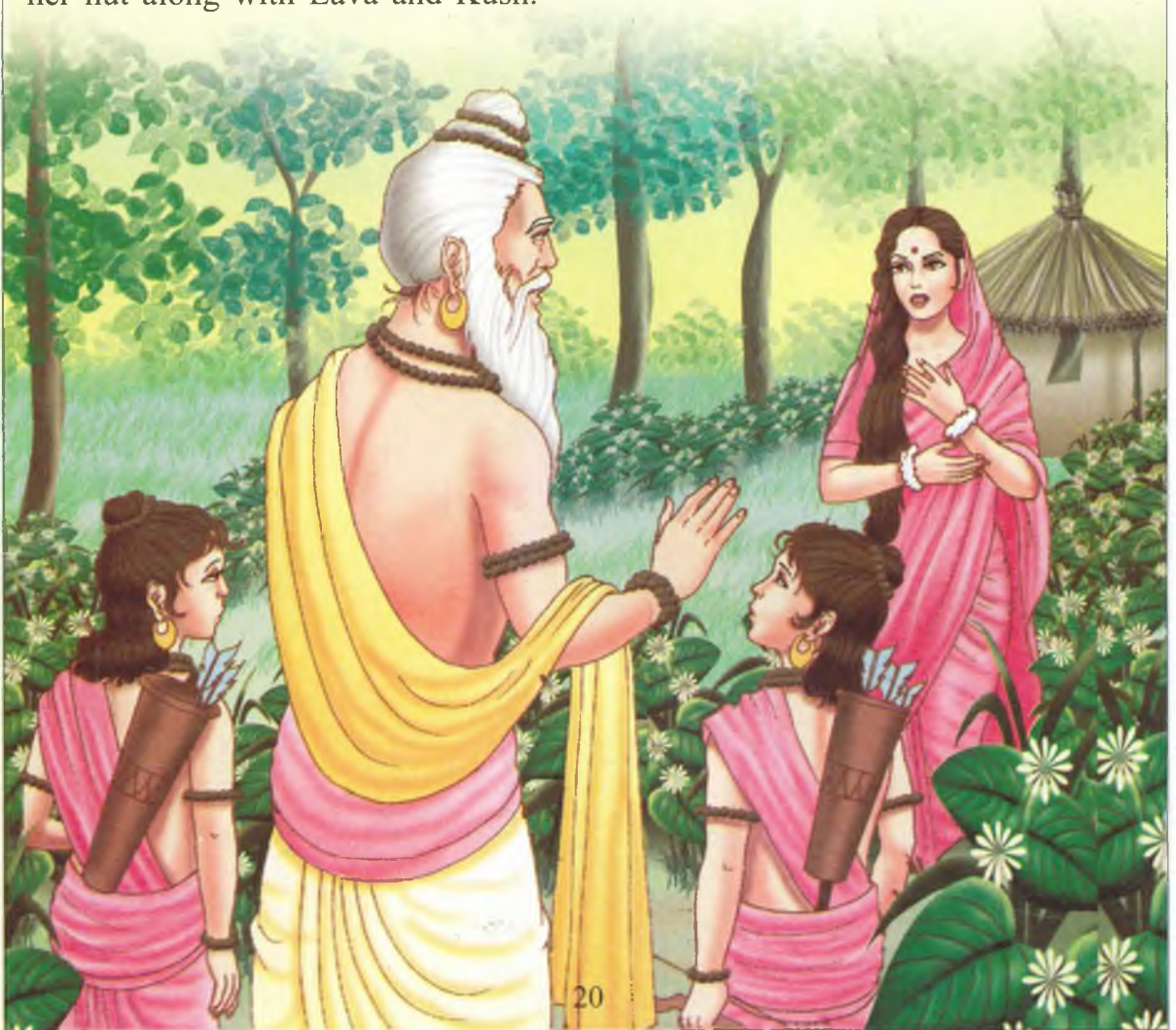
"How after all, father ? These sons have proved to be a slur on the fair name of their dynasty," said Vandevi in a faltering voice.



“They have done no wrong at all, my daughter. Your worry is unfounded. They have done exactly what befits the Kshatriya princes. They are the sons of a great powerful King, who had freed the Earth from demons and rescued you from the grip of Ravana,” said the Saint in a consoling and sermonising tone.

“He destroyed those who were unrighteous sinners and thus brought laurels to his dynasty. But these children have killed their own men to bring disgrace to the great dynasty of Raghu,” replied Sita.

“No, my daughter ; they too have won laurels for their dynasty. You will understand this point in due course.” Saying so, Saint Valmiki consoled Vandevi and asked her to go to her hut. Then he added, “I myself will visit the battle-field tomorrow.” Consoled at the Saint’s words, Vandevi made for her hut along with Lava and Kush.



Next day, Lava and Kush again came to the battle-field and the battle began as usual. Lava said to Rama, "If you fear to attack us, O King of Ayodhya, you should leave this horse here and go back to your Capital. Why are you up to meet with an untimely death?"

Hearing these words, Rama smiled and said, "You are just children so far. Such tall words do not befit you. So, follow my advice and return home. It will be in the interest of all of us indeed." "Fleeing the battle-field may be a principle with you. We are warriors. The warriors either defeat their enemies or fall fighting with grace. They never choose to show their backs in a battle." Saying so, Lava and Kush started shooting arrows at Rama once again. But Rama did not launch any counter-attack. He simply cut their arrows down midway and rendered them useless.



The battle went on for a long time. Suddenly, Rama lost patience and set his invincible arrow on his bow and said, "You are undoubtedly very rude and haughty, children ! If God wants you to die at my hands, what can I do ?" Saying so, Rama drew the cord of his bow with a view to shooting the arrow.

Just then the voice of Saint Valmiki reached Rama's ears, "Wait ! wait !! My Lord ; otherwise, something unnatural will happen."

The Saint's words caused Rama to hold his hand back from shooting the arrow. The Saint rushed to the spot and said, "Stop this battle, Your Majesty. It is in nobody's interest." "Why after all, Great Saint ?" asked Rama in surprise getting down from his chariot.

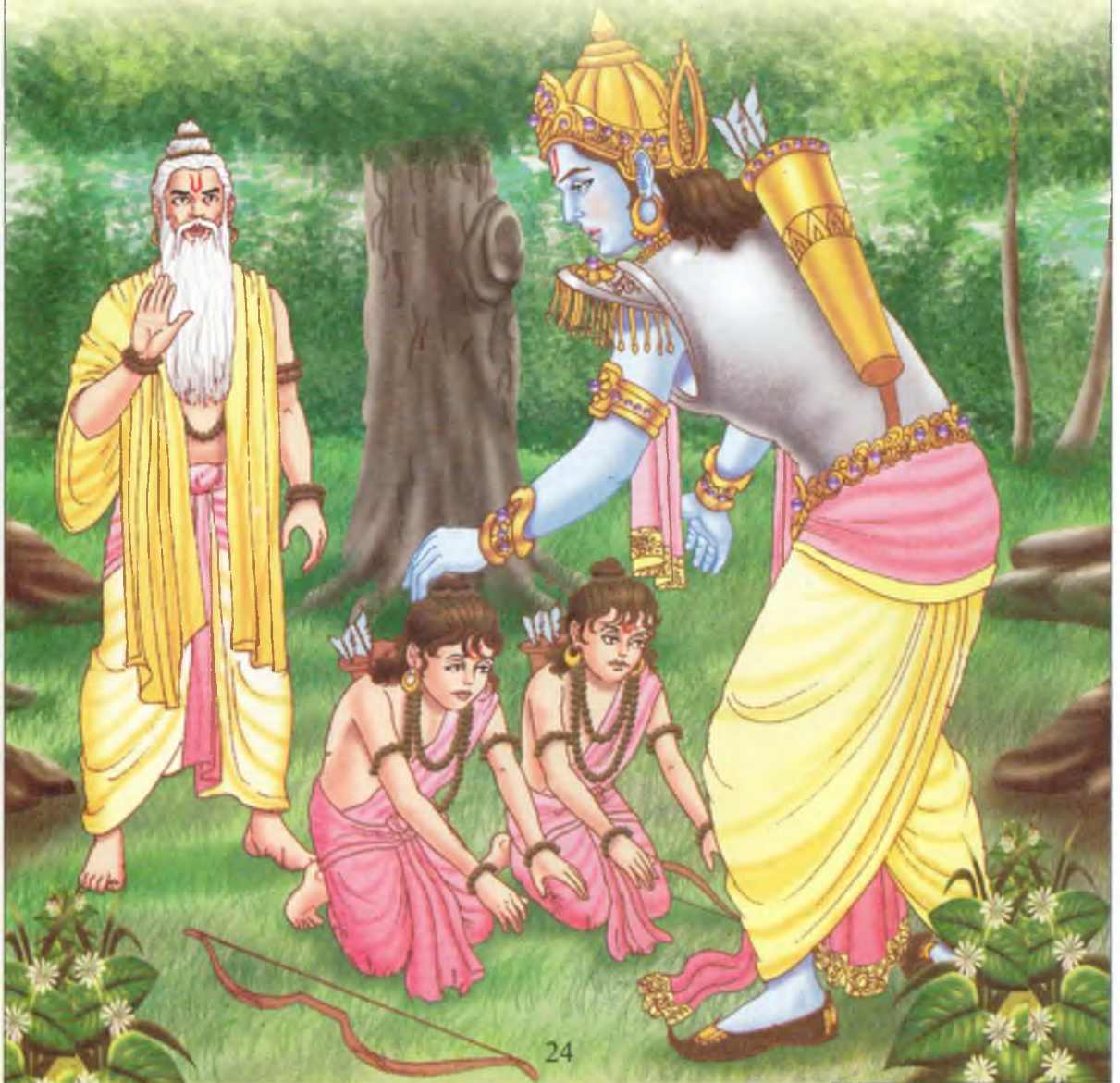


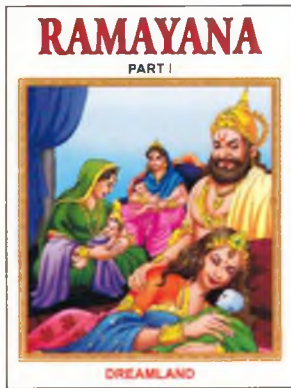
Rama, then, touched the holy feet of the Saint who after uttering a blessing on him said, “These two boys are none else but your own sons. How can there be a battle between a father and his sons ?”

“What ! they are my sons !” Rama asked as if he were ignorant of this fact. “Yes, Your Majesty !” said Valmiki. Saying this, the Saint narrated the entire story from the time since Sita was left in the forest by Lakshmana. He also told Rama about the birth of the twin brothers in his hermitage. Then, he said, “These two boys have your blood in their veins and they are equally powerful and great. Pardon them and hug them affectionately.”

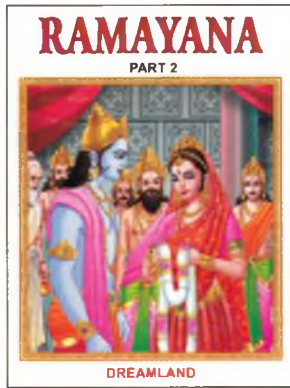


Then, Saint Valmiki called Lava and Kush and introducing them to Rama, he said, "He is your father, Rama. Go and touch his feet. Also beg his pardon for your rudeness." Directed by the Saint, Lava and Kush bowed low before Rama and asked for his pardon. Rama uttered many blessings on them and hugged them most affectionately. They were overjoyed to have their powerful father before them. The meeting between the father and his sons rejoiced the Saint and he sprinkled holy water on Bharata, Lakshmana and Shatrughna who were lying unconscious there. All the three got up and lay prostrate before the Saint. Then, they turned to Rama and bowed low before him. But they were amazed to see the twins in Rama's lap.

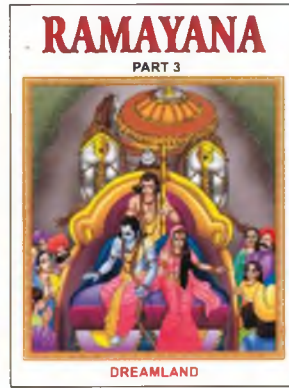




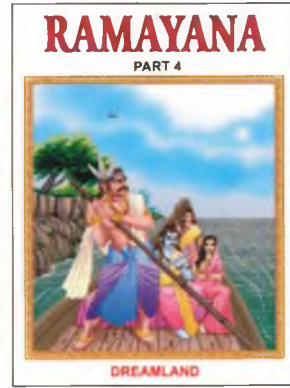
Childhood Episode-I



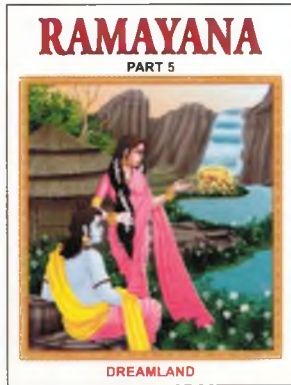
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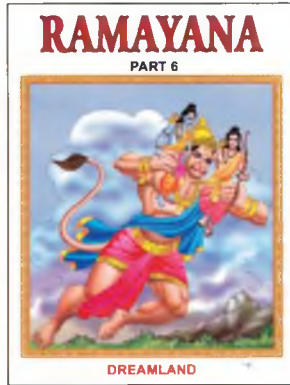
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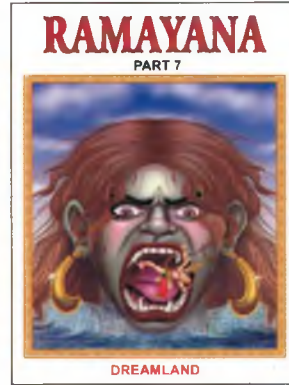
Ayodhya Episode-II



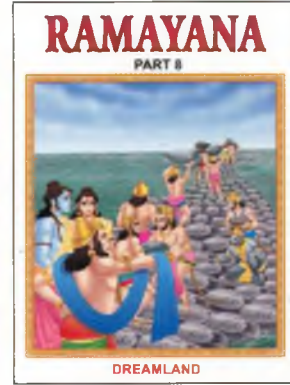
Forest Episode



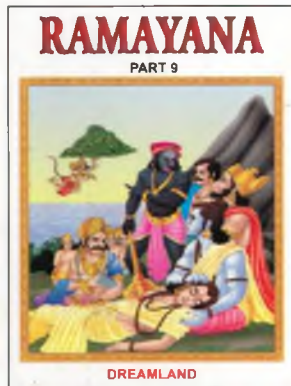
Kishkindha Episode



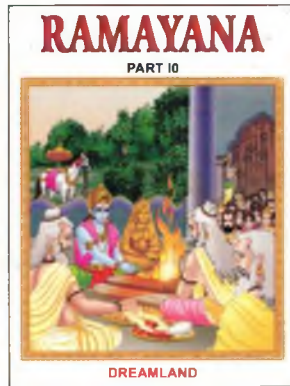
Fascinating Episode



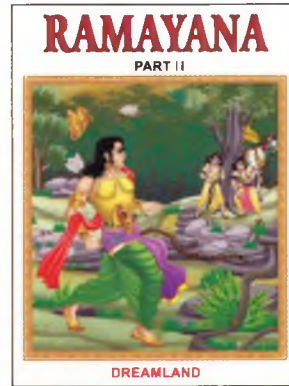
Battle Episode-I



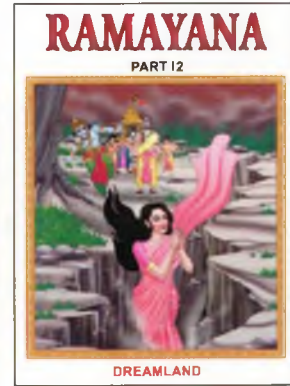
Battle Episode-II



Uttara Episode



Lava-Kusha Episode-I



Lava-Kusha Episode-II



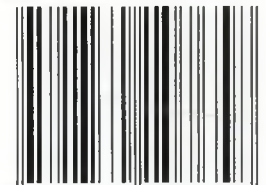
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