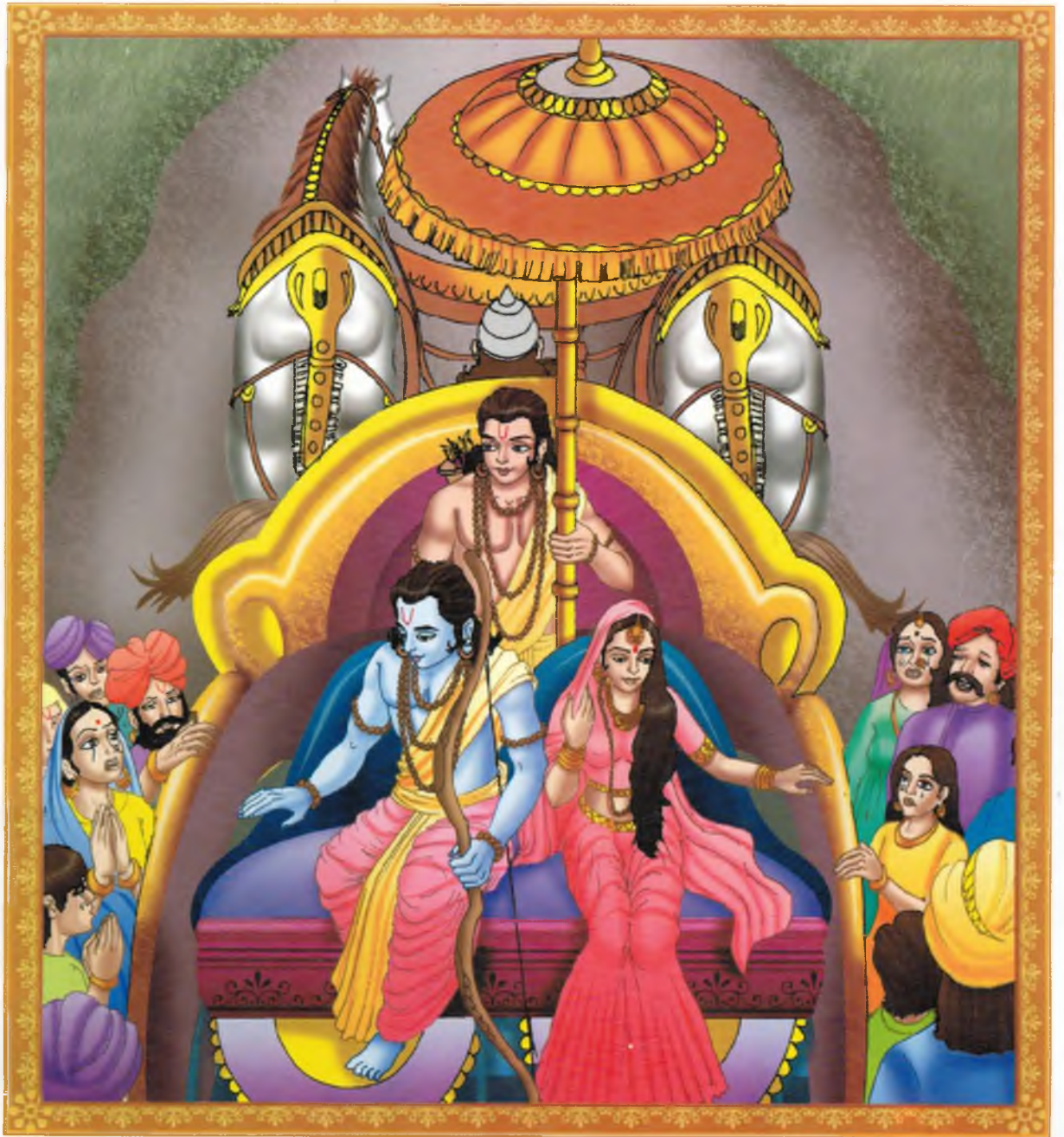


# RAMAYANA

## PART 3

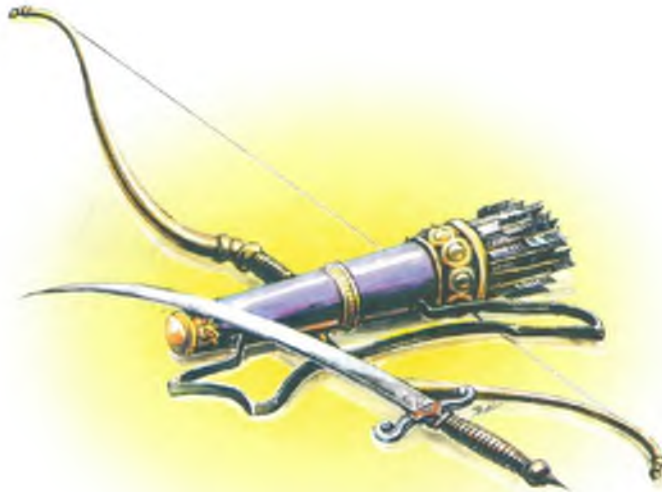


DREAMLAND

# RAMAYANA

## PART 3 AYODHYA EPISODE-I

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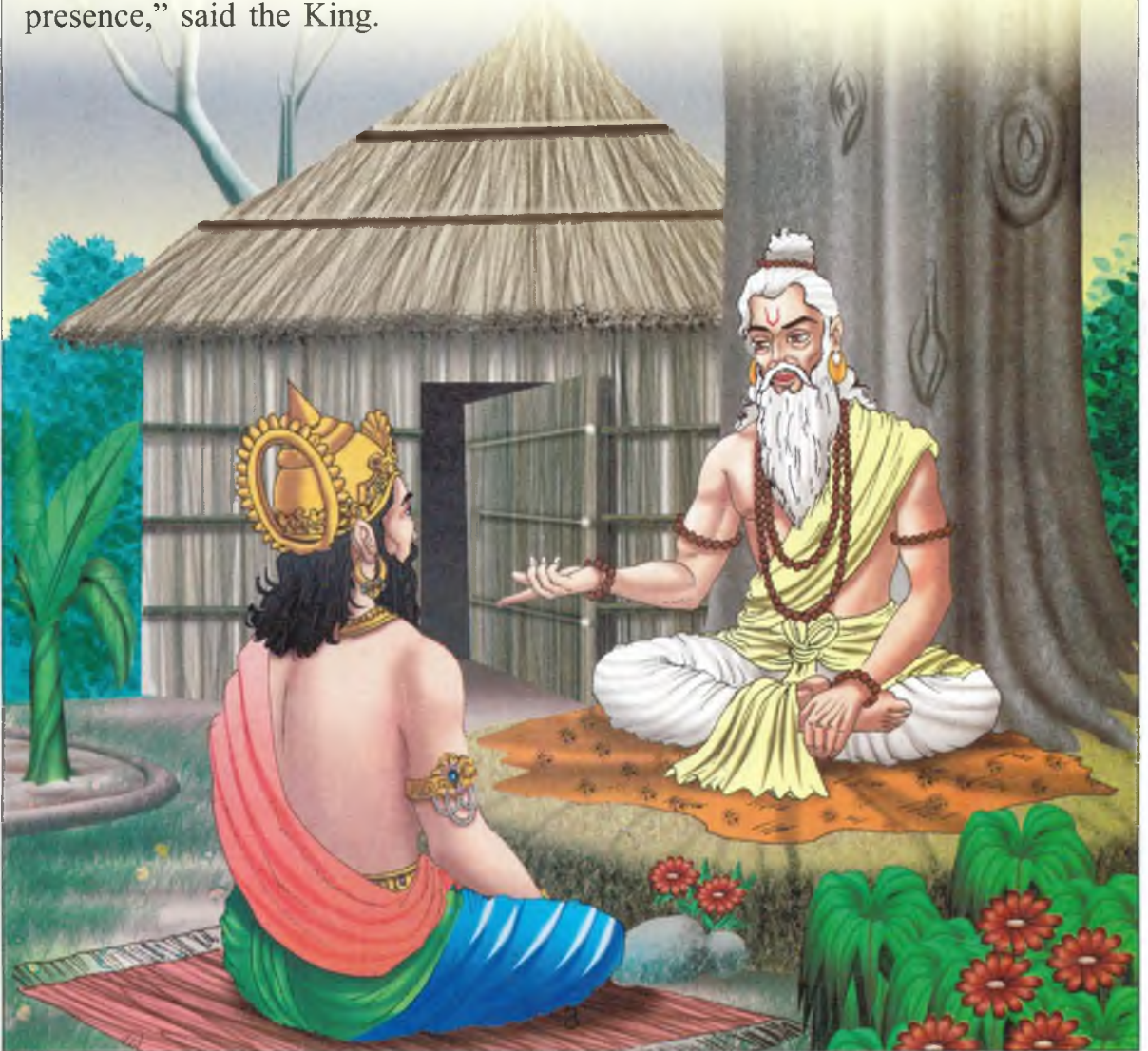
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Ayodhya was profusely decorated with a view to welcoming all the new-weds-Princes and their Brides. Merriment and rejoicings went on for about a month. After a few days, Bharata's maternal grand-parents sent an invitation to Ayodhya. So, Bharata and Shatrughna went to see them. One day, King Dashratha, while wearing his Crown before a mirror, chanced to see a few grey hair on his head near his ears. It plunged the King into deep thoughts and he felt as if his old age had been goading him saying, "The evening of your life has set in, O Great King It is high time for you to abdicate the throne and lead a life of renunciation and austerity so that you may be able to set your mind to meditation. Your son-Rama-is now capable of taking the reins of administration in his own hands. Moreover, he is popular with people and God-fearing too. You should crown him King in your place."



Amidst these reflections, King Dashratha proceeded to the hermitage of Vasishtha, the family Preceptor, with a view to seeking his advice on Rama's Coronation. Approaching him, he said, "I have come to seek your advice on a very important matter, O Revered Saint. I feel that Rama is, by all means capable of shouldering the burden of the administration of my kingdom. Shouldn't I get rid of all worldly responsibilities after handing over the throne to him and lead the remaining life in penance?"

"What a splendid idea indeed! But any decision concerning the coronation can be taken only after consulting the nobles and other respectable persons of the kingdom," retorted the Saint. "It is by all means desirable. I would return to Ayodhya and convene a meeting of the courtiers to take a decision in this regard. I implore you to come and bless us all with your esteemed presence," said the King.



The very next day, King Dashratha summoned a meeting of his nobles. Saint Vasishtha, too, was present there. The King addressed the courtiers and said, "I have been running the Government of the kingdom in keeping with the traditions, laid down by my revered forefathers as good as I was able to do. But I have grown old. So, I want to put the responsibility of the State-affairs on the shoulders of Rama, my eldest son. This meeting has been convened to know the opinion of all of you. If you feel it to be advisable and if you support my suggestion, I would declare Rama as my successor and he will be crowned the King on an auspicious day."

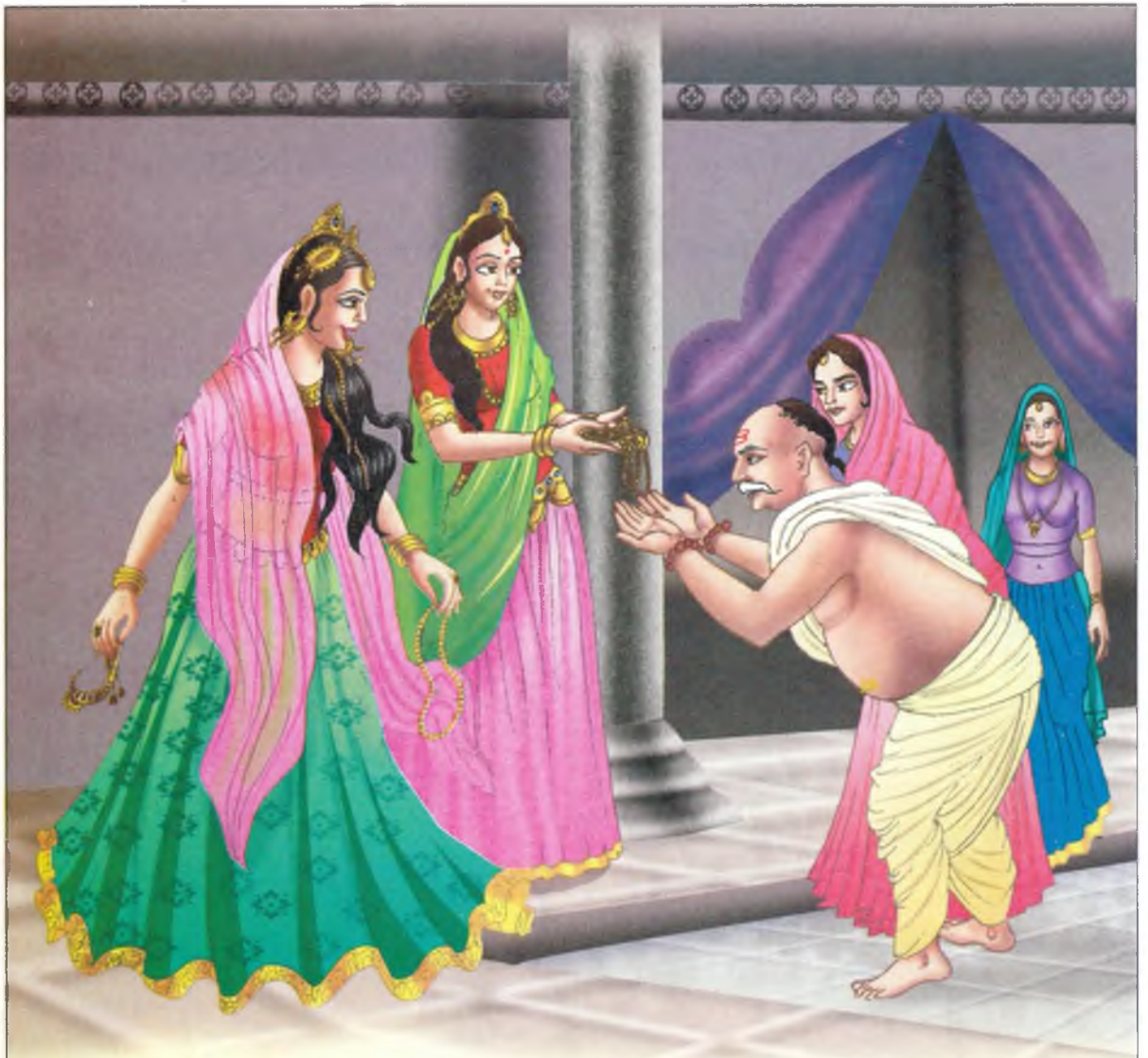
"We all second your decision, O King." The Royal Preceptor-Vasishtha-also supported the decision saying that Rama was tolerant like the Earth, wise like god-Vrihaspati and as brave as god-Indra.



Having obtained the assent of his courtiers, King Dashratha sent for Rama and expressed his decision before him. He said, "My Son ! I am growing old and weak. I want you to shoulder the responsibilities of the State affairs now."

"I bow to your will, O dear father," replied Rama and he bowed low before the King who embraced him in affection. At the same time, the King requested saint Vasishtha to suggest an auspicious day for Rama's Coronation. "The day after tomorrow is the most auspicious day for this purpose," suggested Saint Vasishtha who explained to the King how to perform the rites concerning the coronation. After this, the meeting dispersed amidst good wishes from all quarters.



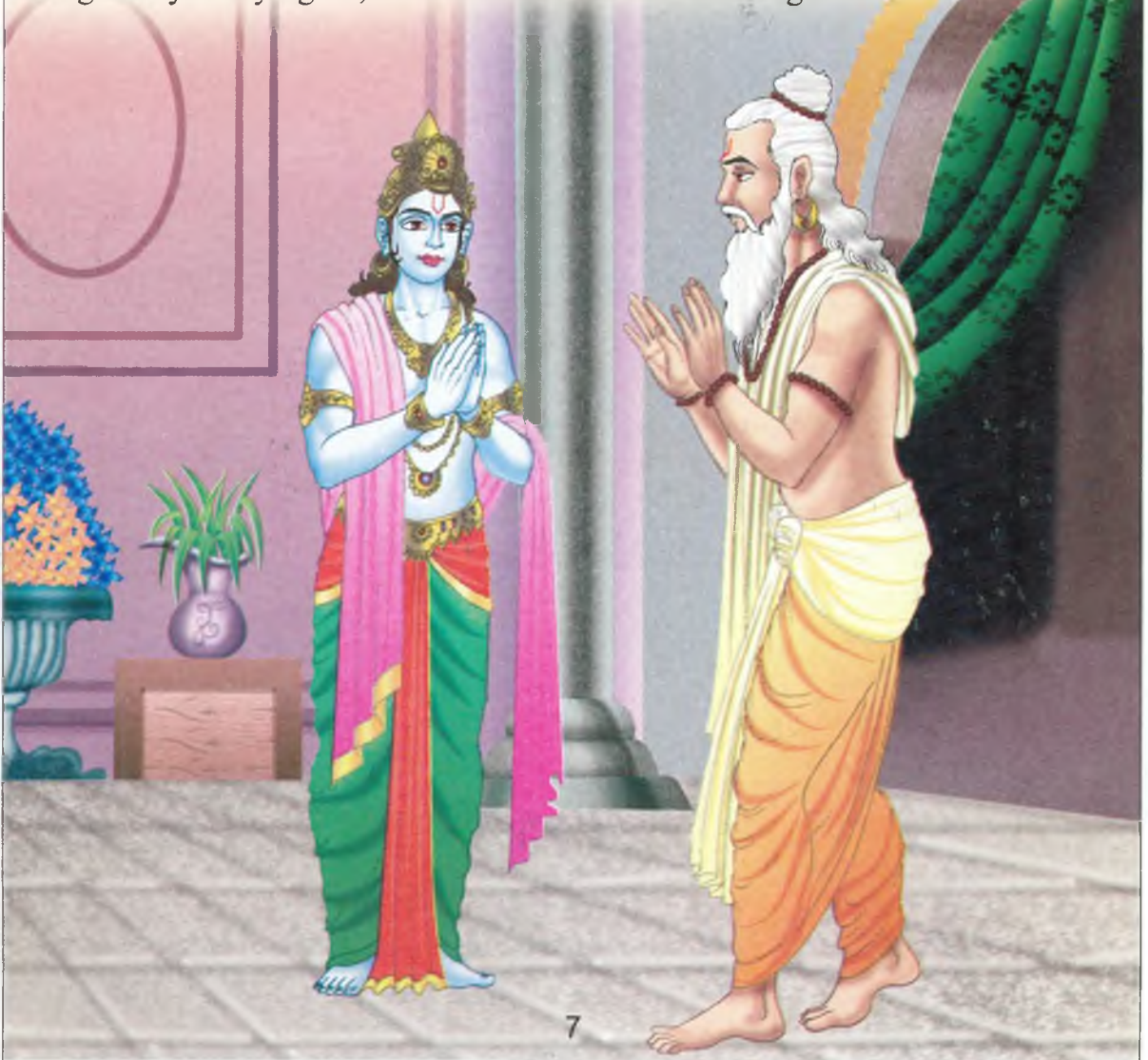


The news of declaration about Rama's Coronation spread like wild fire. The people shouted the slogans-Victory to *Rama* and *Long Live Rama*. The three Queens of King Dashratha were virtually beside themselves with joy. Sumitra, the middle Queen distributed precious stones among workers of the Palace while Kaushalya, the eldest Queen gave lavish gifts to the Brahmins.

The King implored Saint Vasishtha to administer Rama proper instructions for the forth-coming event. Knowing that the Royal Preceptor had come, Rama came out to welcome the Saint and took him inside. He, along with his wife Sita, entertained the Saint in the most befitting manner.

Rama requested Saint Vasishtha with folded hands, “A master’s visit to his servant’s house is certainly a matter of great delight as it removes all his sorrows. Even then, O Great Saint ! you could have sent for me and ordered me to fulfil your wish. Keeping your greatness aside, you have chosen to take the trouble of coming to me. What other favour can I expect from God ? Your visit has sanctified my abode indeed and I am feeling awfully flattered. Order me your wish, Sir, and I am here to carry it out. I am convinced that any thing done to please you will benefit me.”

Vasishtha said, “You know, Rama, that your father has declared you as his successor and the preparations for your coronation are going on. I advise you to exercise reservedness and self-control till the great event is over delightfully.” Saying so, the Saint left for his hermitage.





Kaikayee, the youngest Queen of King Dashratha, also came to know of Rama's forthcoming Coronation through her maid-Manthra. She felt highly delighted and giving her necklace to the maid, she said, "Here is your award for bringing the good news. How happy I am, indeed !"

Wicked Manthra threw away the necklace and said, "This time is not to feel delighted for you, O Queen. In a few days, Rama will be enthroned the King. But as for Bharata, he will be no better than a slave of the new King." "So, what ? Rama is as dear to me as Bharata," said Kaikayee.

"How short-sighted you are, O Queen ! Why should they crown Rama king in the absence of Bharata ?" retorted the maid.



“When Rama comes to the throne, he will consider Bharata as an eye-sore. In order to get rid of your son, Rama will either exile him or have him killed,” the maid continued.

“No, never ; Rama is not that type. I know him well. He loves Bharata most dearly,” argued Kaikayee. But the maid went on with her wicked suggestions. She kept poisoning the Queen’s ears. She said, “Kaushalya, not you, will be the Queen Mother after Rama’s coronation and you will have to obey her.” The maid’s words had the desired effect because Kaikayee had always been jealous of Kaushalya. She said, “I agree to your suggestion.” “Then you have to act wisely with a view to clearing the way for Bharata’s enthronement,” Manthra suggested further.



“But how ? Will the King agree ?” asked the Queen.

“Why not, if you act wisely ? Have you forgotten about the two boons that the King promised to you,” reminded the maid.

“Oh yes ! they can be immensely useful,” accepted the Queen. She decided to act upon the maid’s counsel and went into her Protest Chamber where she lay in tears after casting off all her fineries. When the king reached Kaikayee’s apartment, he felt amazed to hear that she was in the Protest Chamber. At the same time, he was horrified to think of some forthcoming calamity. His feet staggered while approaching the offended Queen to find her lying on the ground sobbing and shedding tears.



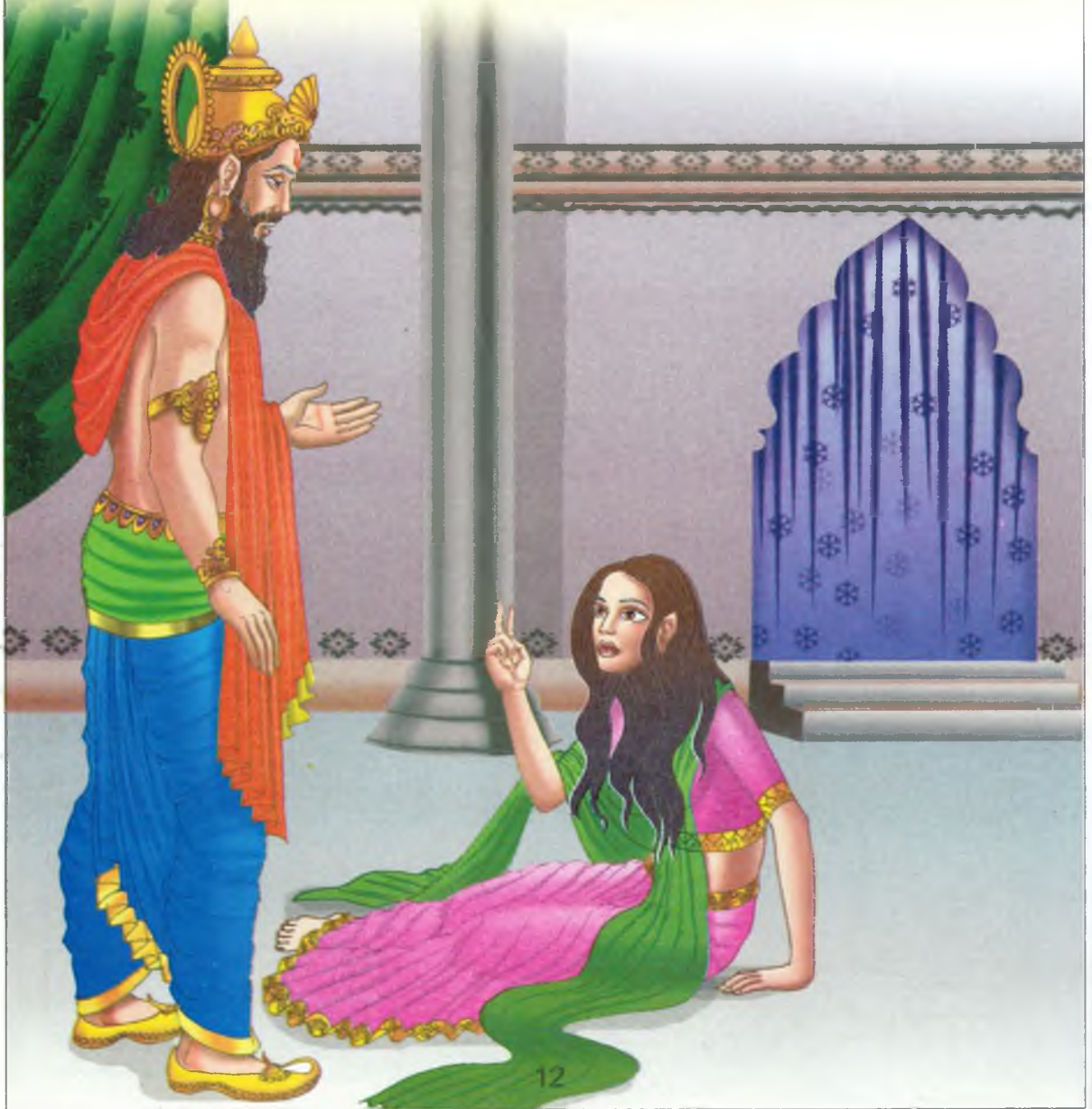
Seeing the Queen in that miserably lustreless condition, the King felt stunned. Anyhow, he controlled himself and said, "Let me know the reason of your protest, O Queen. I am ready to do what you desire. Say whether you want some beggar to be a master of riches or a millionaire to be a beggar. Rama's coronation is to take place the day after tomorrow. Get up and be cheered. Your anger does not behove on an auspicious occasion."

Hearing the King's words, Kaikayee trembled in fear at first. Then, concealing her desire so cunningly, she smiled and got up. King Dashratha could not see through her trick, though he was a past-master in politics. In fact, the character of a woman is such an unfathomed sea that no man can gauge its depth.



Kaikayee spoke lovingly but cunningly, “Darling ! you keep insisting on granting my wishes but never give me anything. Do you remember, having promised me two boons ?” “Yes, I do. You never asked for your boons. So, I forgot about them.” “All right ! I’ll ask for them now,” retorted the Queen.

“Without hesitation. We the descendants of Raghu, the Great, never go back on our promises, even if we have to stake our lives.” Kaikayee smiled and said, “As the first boon, I ask for the throne for my son Bharata and as the second boon I would like Rama to be exiled for fourteen years.” These words of the Queen proved like a bolt from the blue and the king turned pale to hear them.



The Queen said, "Do you remember your battle with the demons. I was also with you. You fought bravely and killed a number of demons. But suddenly an arrow hit you and having been wounded, you fell down inside the chariot. Finding your life in danger I drove the chariot out of the cordon of the enemy and brought you to safety. You promised me two boons at that time. I agreed to ask for those boons when I needed them. Now is the time for me to have my boons. If you believe in truth and honesty, you must agree to what I have asked for." King Dashratha stood dumb like a statue gazing at Kaikayee.



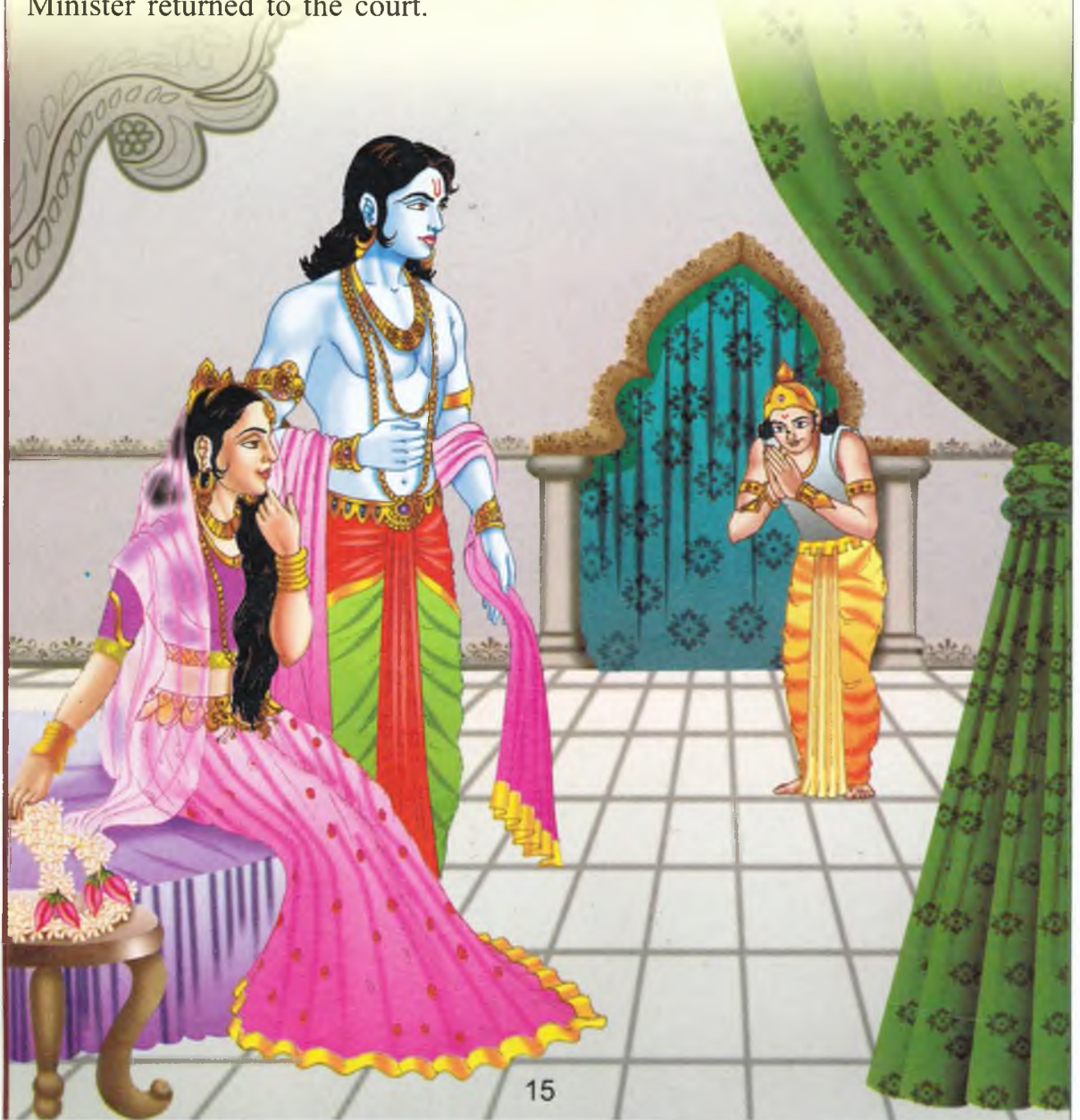
Seeing the King stunned and speechless, the Queen said, “Is Bharata not your son ? Am I not your legal wife ?”

“Darling ! Don’t speak words that hit at mutual love and are against the norms of behaviour. Both Bharata and Rama are my eyes. I will send for Bharata and Shatrughna through a messenger and crown your son Bharata King of Ayodhya. Rama has no longing for the throne. Say goodbye to your anger and get up cheerfully. I’ll make arrangements for Bharata’s Coronation in a few days,” said the King. Then touching the feet of Queen Kaikeyee, he said, “But take back your second boon as it is undesirable. Let me know Rama’s fault. He is no less than a Saint.” “However hard you may try, your trick cannot be successful. Either grant me my boons or earn defame for yourself and for your dynasty. I don’t like hypocrisy,” retorted the Queen sternly.



When the Prime Minister reached Rama's apartment, a messenger came there with a word from the king and said, "Victory to the Heir-apparent ! your revered father, the King, wants to see you at once. He is in the palace of the youngest queen and wants you to be there."

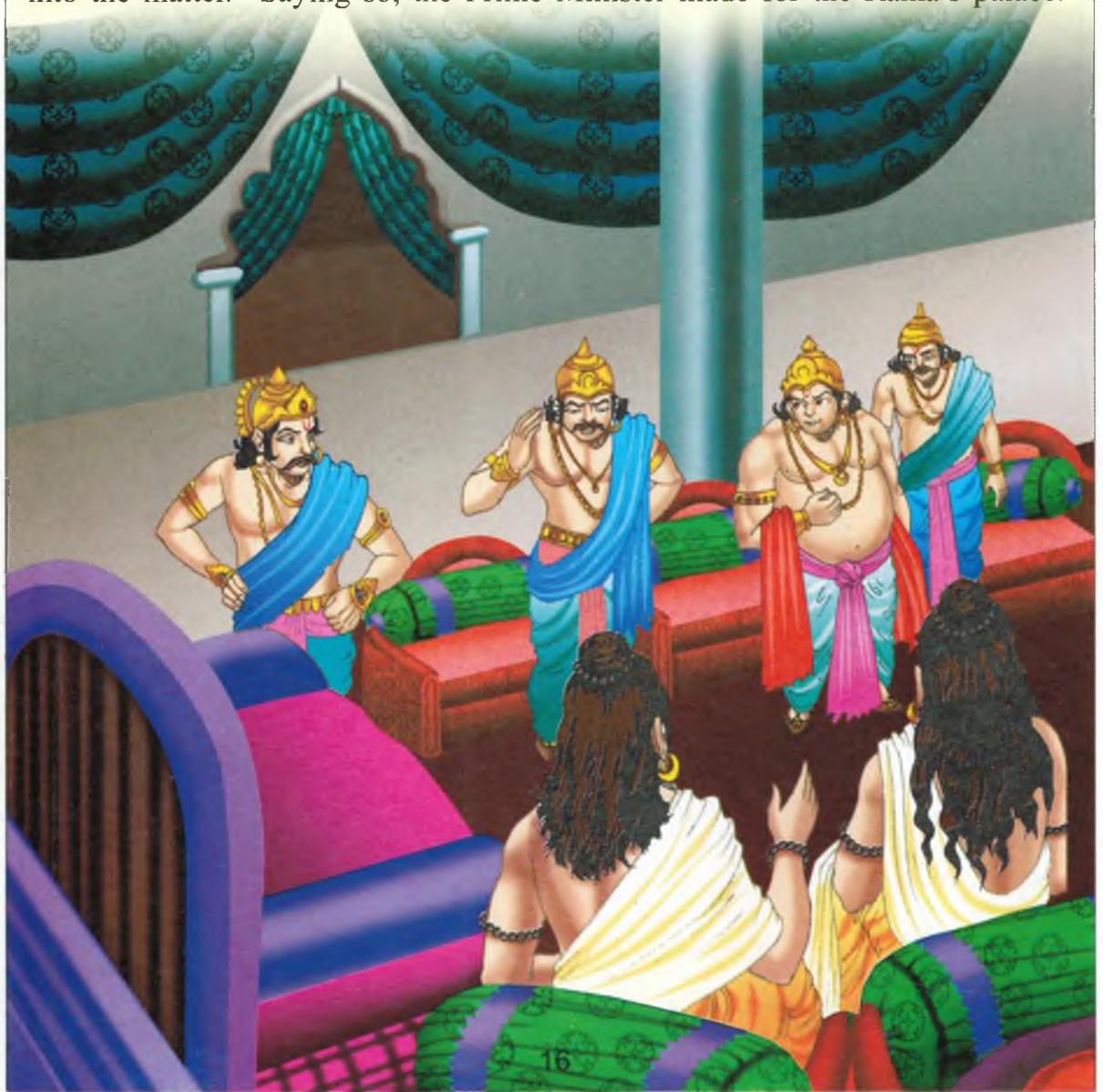
"Here I go." Saying so, Rama spoke to Sita, "Darling ! mother Kaikayee is very liberal and affectionate. She must be discussing my Coronation in detail with dear father. That is why he has sent for me. I must be there in no time." Saying so, Rama made for Kaikayee's Palace. Sumant, the Prime Minister returned to the court.





Preparations for Rama's Coronation had been complete now. All the Nobles and Ministers were present in the court. One of the Nobles asked Sumant, the Prime Minister, "Sir, the preparations for the coronation have been done. But the king and his Heir-apparent Rama are not seen anywhere. Where are they after all ?"

"Let us hope that they are all right," said another Noble. Then, a Minister said, "The auspicious moment for Coronation is going to slip away. But our King has not turned up. Go and see what the matter is. What is the reason of this delay ?" "All right ; I am just going to Rama's apartment to inquire into the matter." Saying so, the Prime Minister made for the Rama's palace.



When Rama got to Kaikayee's Palace, he found his father plunged in worry and sorrow. Seeing mother Kaikayee standing by in rage, she suspected something ominous and felt horrified. Bowing low in respect before both of them, Rama said, "Dear Mother ! let me know the reason of dear father's sorrow so that I may do something to redress it."

"Rama ! your father promised me two boons which I have asked for. This is the only reason of his sorrow because the granting of these two boons will surely hurt you," retorted the Queen in a stern voice. "Mother ! really lucky is the son who fulfils the wishes of his parents with devotion," said Rama.



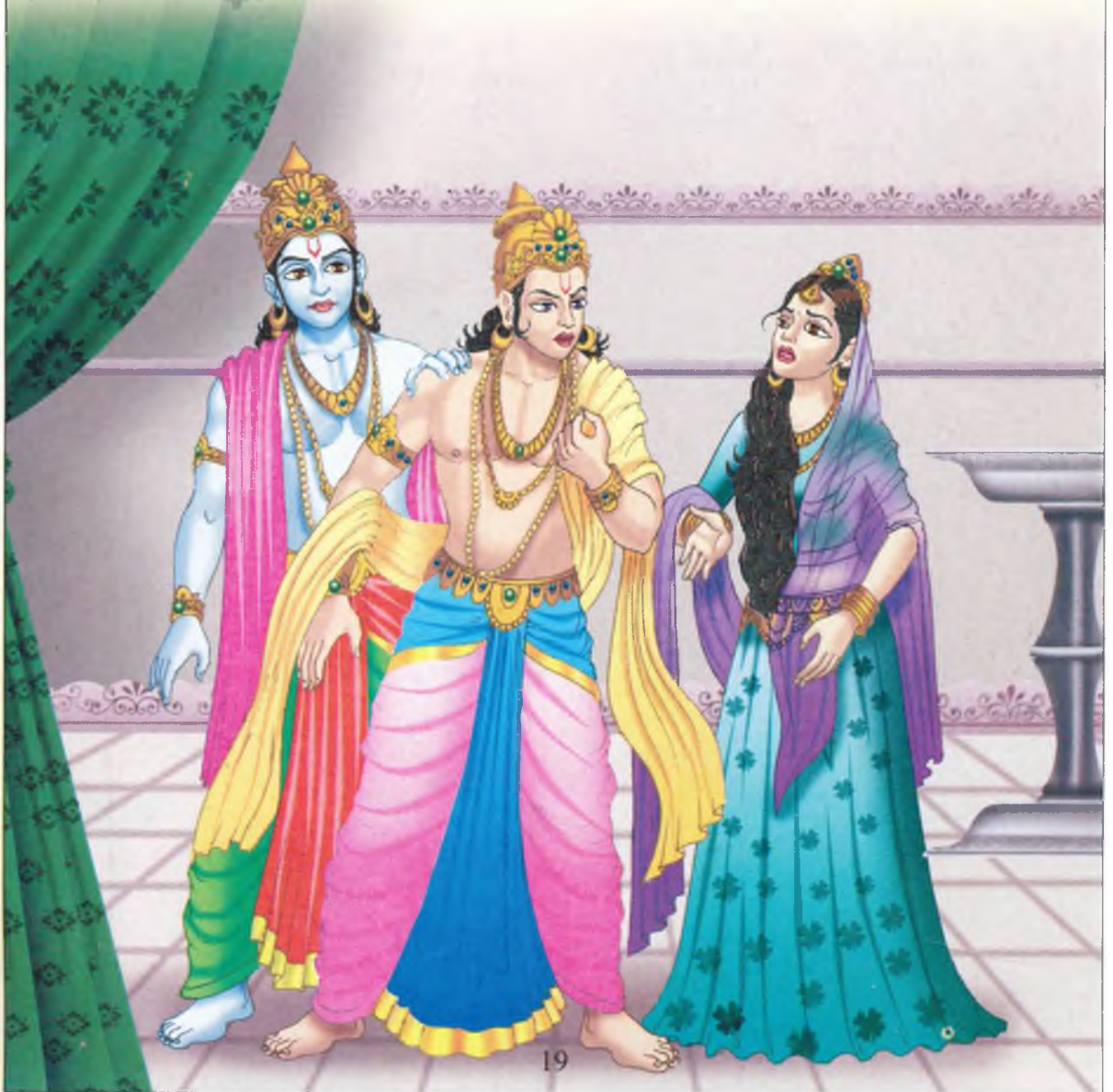
Saying so, Rama asked his mother Kaikayee, "Mother ! be kind enough to let me know about those boons. I shall fulfil them even at the risk of my life." "Hear then. My first demand is that Bharata my son, should be made the King in your place. My second demand is that you will have to go into exile for fourteen years," said the Queen.

Rama smiled and said, "I am ready to fulfil the boons given by my father, dear mother. It is all for my best. I shall have the chance to see a number of learned Saints whose sermons will help me to exalt myself mentally as well as morally." Then, Rama went to his mother Kaushalya and told her of the boons granted to Kaikayee by the King. Kaikayee felt upset to hear her son's words. She burst into tears.



Lakshman was also present there. When he came to know about the King's boons, he turned red in rage and said, "It looks our father has gone mad due to old age ; otherwise, he would not have deprived Rama of his rights and ordered him to go into exile. Brother ! declare yourself to be the King of Ayodhya. Whoever dares to oppose you, will be set right by me."

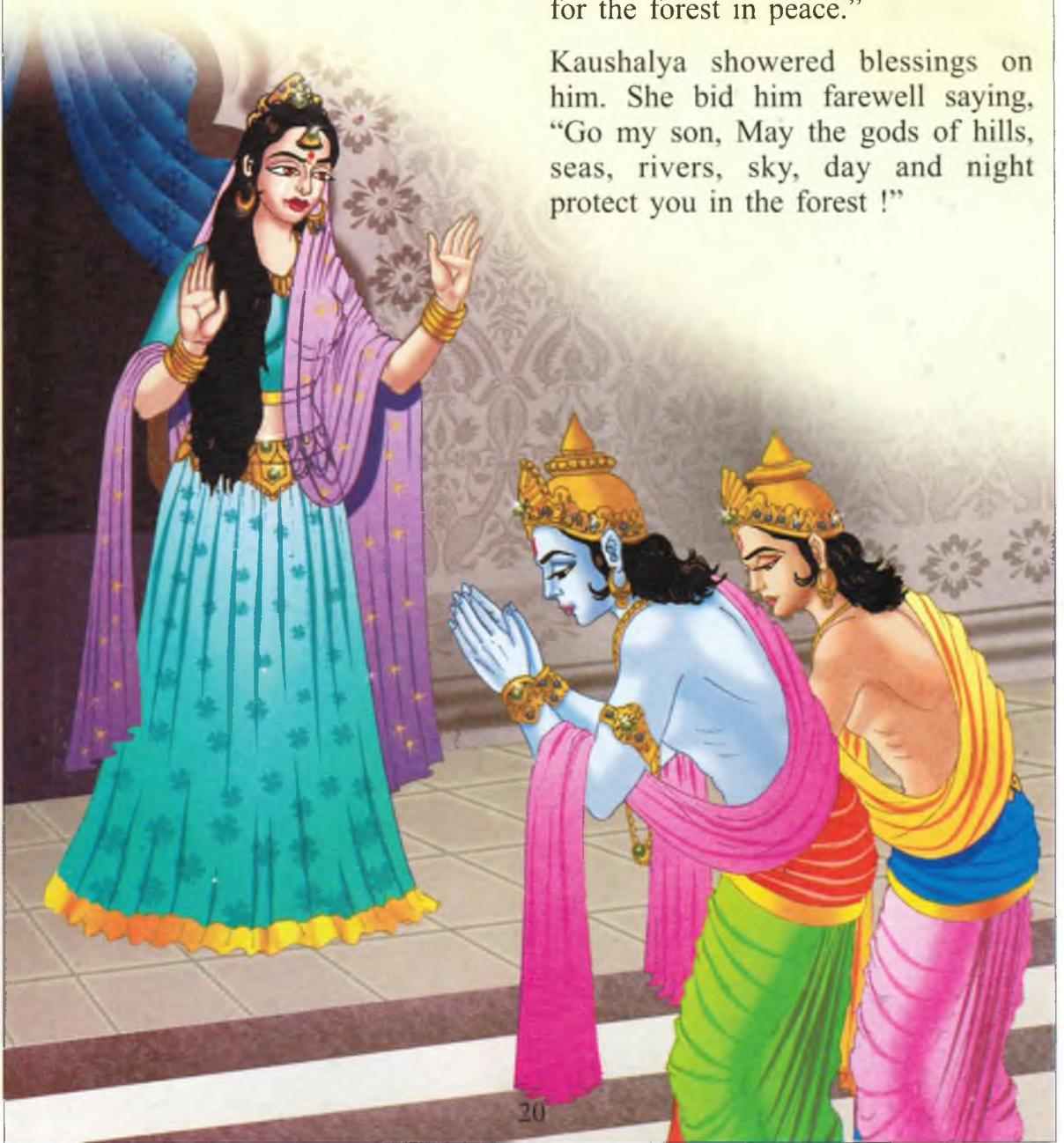
"No, no, never ; one must be patient on such a critical occasion. We must observe our duty towards our parents. Let us not take a recourse to violence. It is shameful for me not to fulfil these boons," said Rama. "All right, I must go to the forest with you. I'll kick a seat even in heaven without you, dear brother," retored Lakshman.



“Most gladly, brother ! your company will be a solace indeed.” Saying so, Rama asked for his mother’s leave to proceed to the forest. Seeing her son’s firmness, Kaushalya said, “Son ! Take me also with you to the forest if you cannot change your mind. Separation from a son is far more pinching than being without a son.”

Rama replied, “Mother, dear father is in sorrow. If you leave him, he will surely die. You must stay here to console him. Bless me so that I may leave for the forest in peace.”

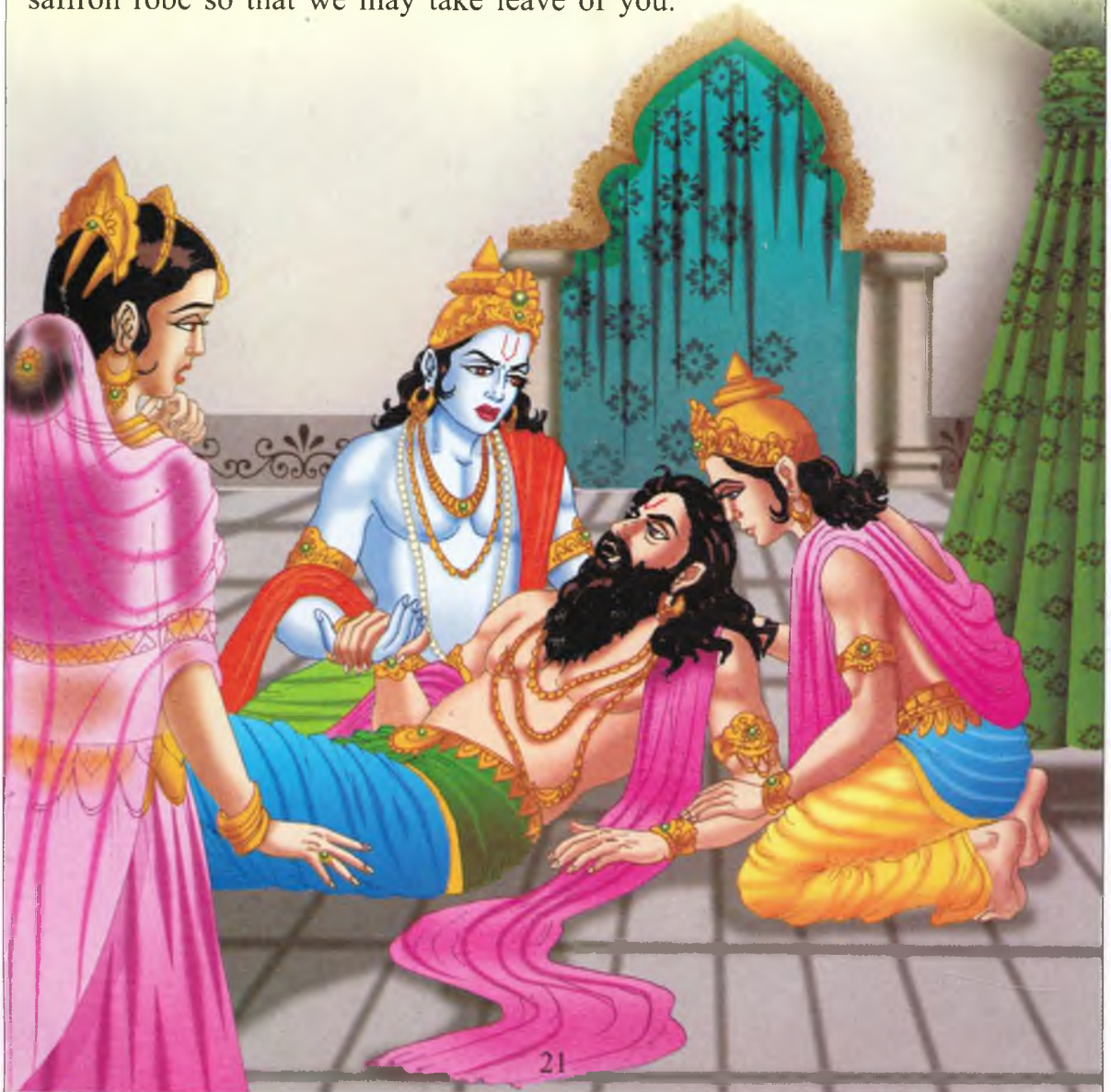
Kaushalya showered blessings on him. She bid him farewell saying, “Go my son, May the gods of hills, seas, rivers, sky, day and night protect you in the forest !”



Having taken leave of his mother Kaushalya, Rama came to his wife Sita and told her all that had happened. Sita said, "Darling ! I too shall accompany you to the forest."

Rama, Lakshman and Sita went to Dashratha who tried to get up but, fell down. So, Rama lifted him up in his arms and put him in the bed. Coming to his senses, the King said, "Rama, Kaikeyee has taken me in her talks. Take away all my belongings and my subjects with you. You will have your kingdom wherever you settle."

"No, never, dear father. What for do I need money in the forest. Get me a saffron robe so that we may take leave of you."



Hearing Rama's words, Kaikayee went in and soon came with three saffron robes for them. She said, "Here are the robes that you are to wear in the forest." "Yes, dear mother." Saying so, both the brothers put on the new saffron robes. But Sita didn't know how to wear her new dress. She said, "Dear mother ! I don't know how to have these clothes on. Kindly help me wear them."

"Come on, dear." Saying so, Manthra, the wicked maid, took Rama's wife Sita inside the room and helped her wear the forest dress. This done, the three asked for the permission of Queen Kaikayee and King Dashratha and they left the Palace.



Rama, Lakshman and Sita came out of the Royal Palace in the guise of saints and took their seats in the chariot. The King, stricken with grief remained speechless and kept gazing at the departing chariot. He said to himself, "How strange ! the innocent are being punished for the faults of others." Thinking so, he fell down unconscious once again. The thing that pinched him the most was Sita's departure to the forest.

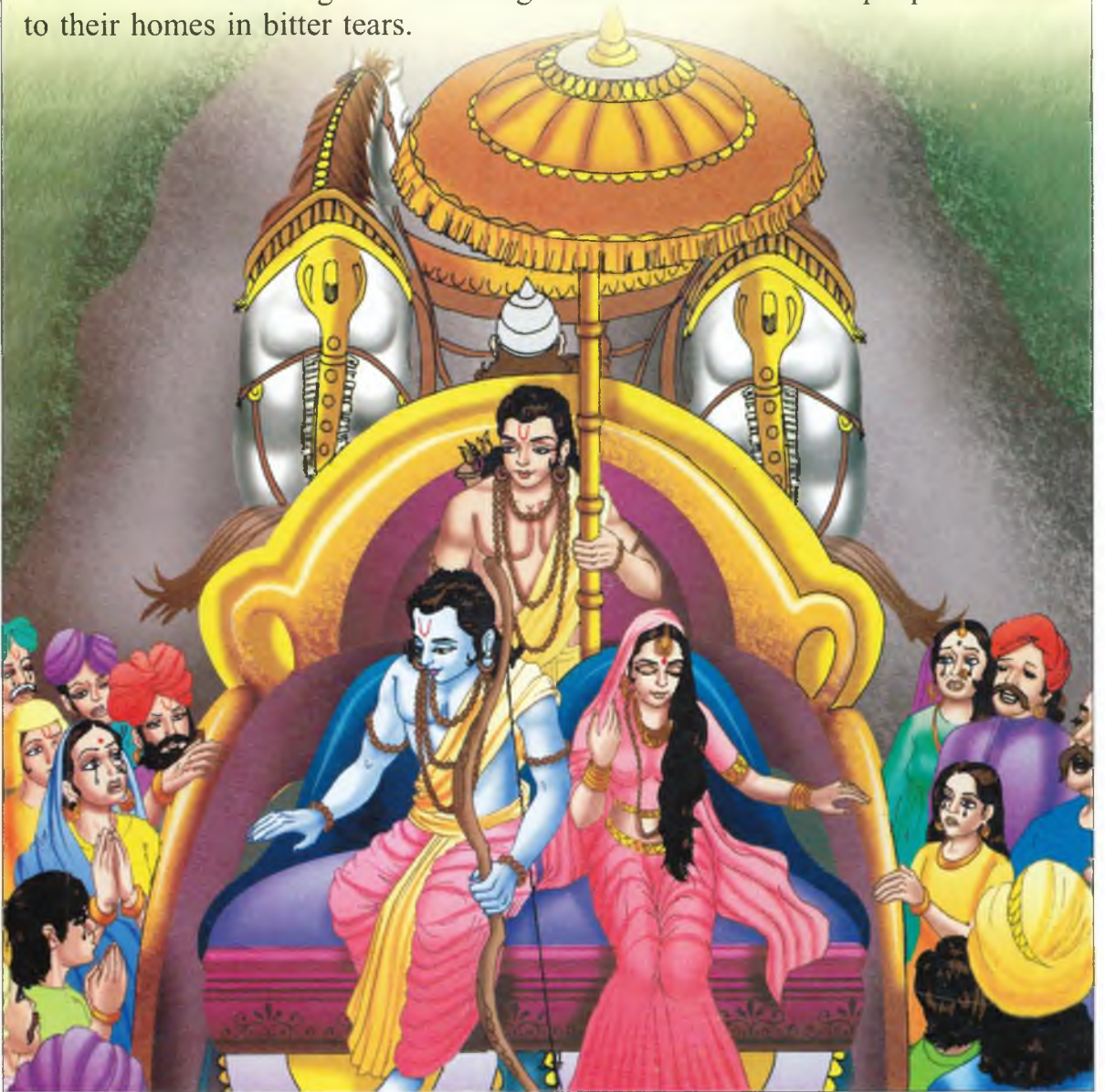
Everyone tried to dissuade Sita from going to the forest. She was reminded of comforts of the Palace life in contrast to hardships of the forest life. But she did not budge an inch from her stand. The comforts of there royal life could not allure her to stay back. Also, the hardships of forest life could not desist her from accompanying her husband.





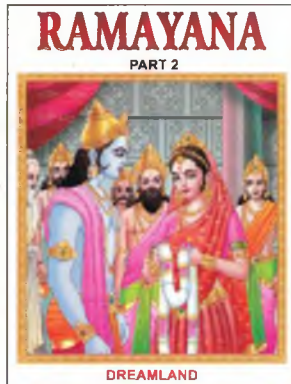
The people of Ayodhya, when they saw Rama leaving for the forest, began to shed tears. One of them spoke while weeping bitterly, "Formerly Rama was followed by a four-winged army, but now only his brother and wife are going with him."

"Did we make all preparations to banish our prince ? Rama is righteous and gracious. How much self-control he has ! Why has our King sent him into exile ?" another Noble expressed his doubts. All present were gripped by sentiment. They spoke in one voice, "Let us all accompany our dear Prince leaving our homes and hearths." So, most of them began to follow the chariot that was taking the exiled dignitaries. The rest of the people returned to their homes in bitter tears.

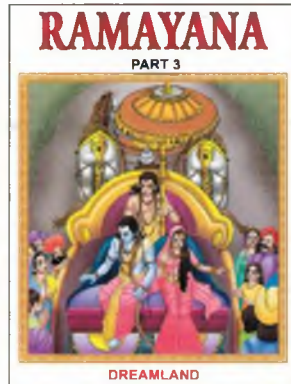




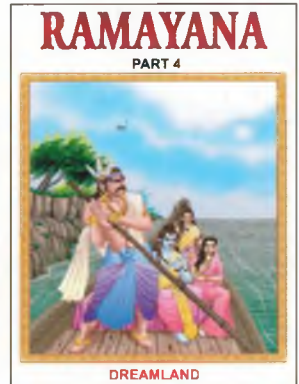
Childhood Episode-I



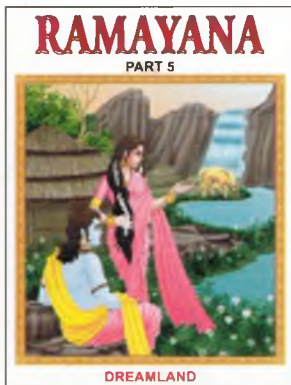
Childhood Episode-II



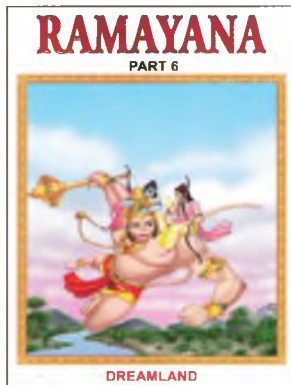
Ayodhya Episode-I



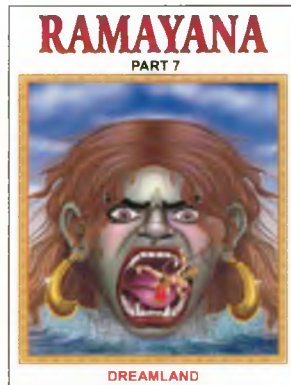
Ayodhya Episode-II



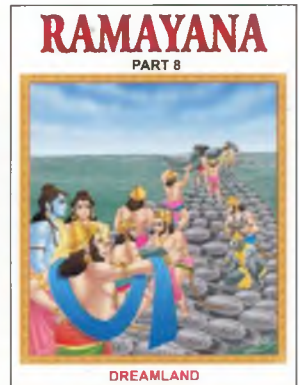
Forest Episode



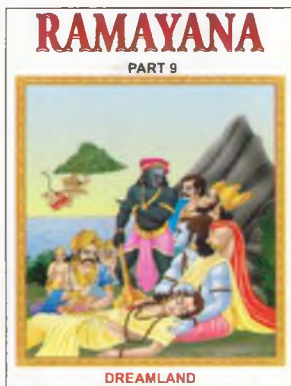
Kishkindha Episode



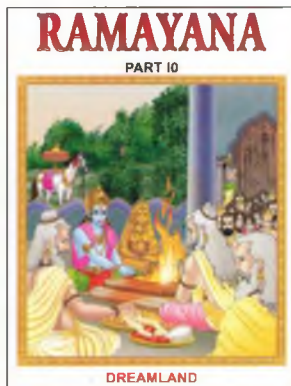
Fascinating Episode



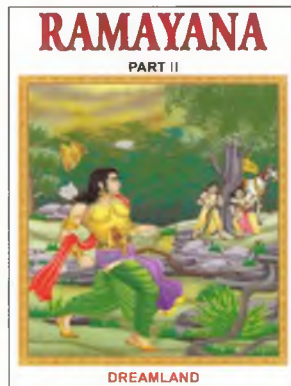
Battle Episode-I



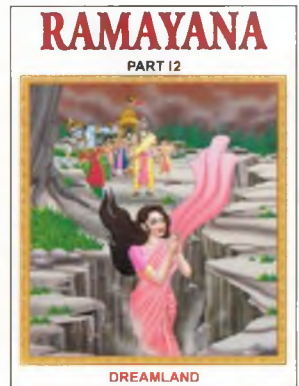
Battle Episode-II



Uttara Episode



Lava-Kusha Episode-I



Lava-Kusha Episode-II



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