

RAMAYANA

PART 8

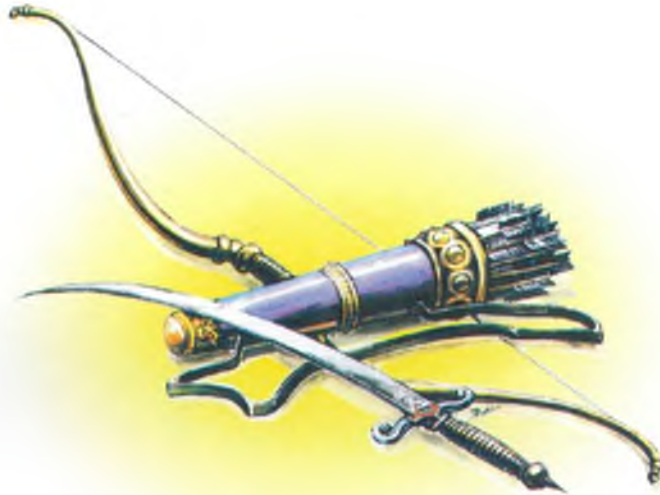


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RAMAYANA

PART 8 BATTLE EPISODE-I

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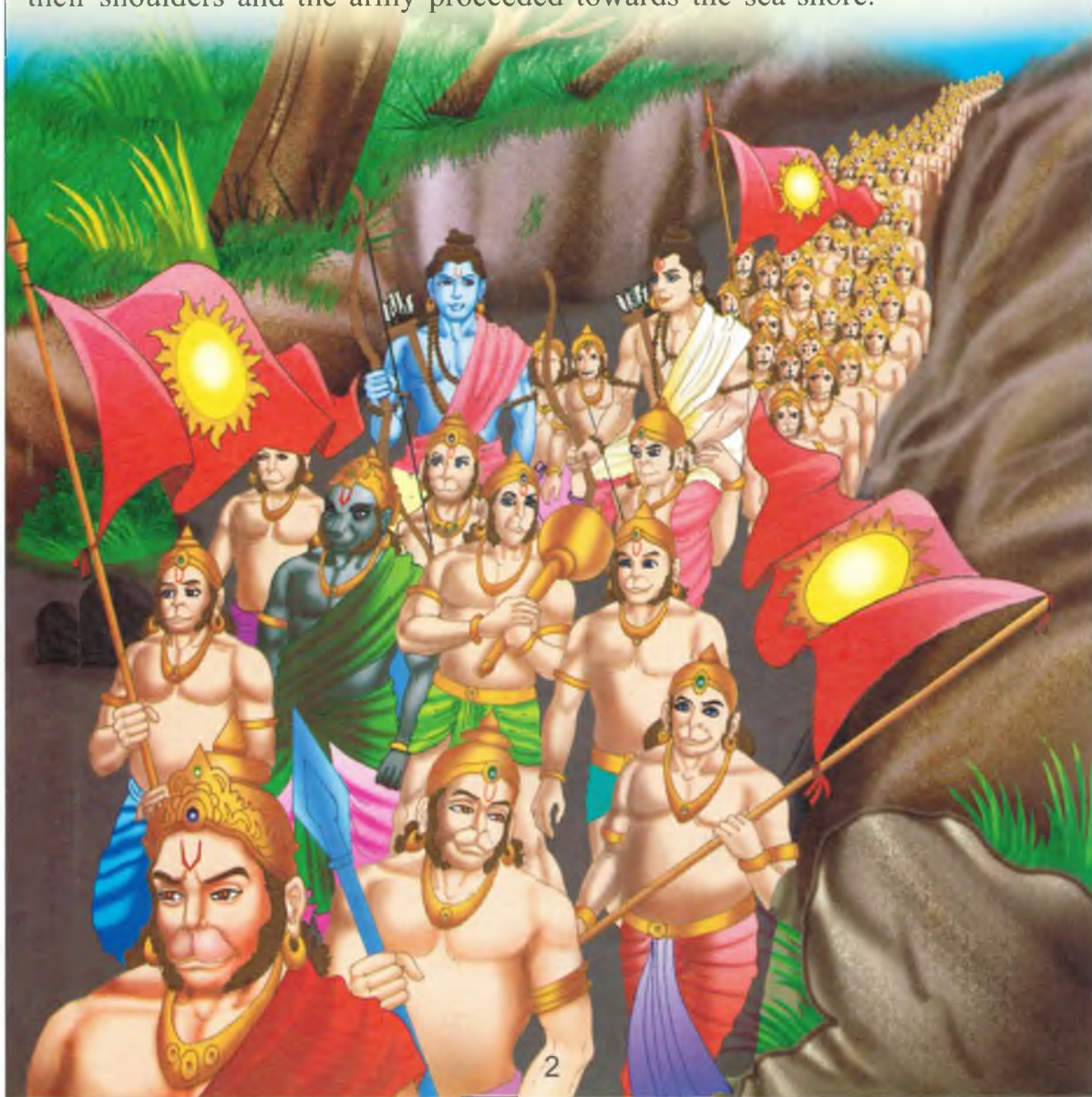
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Hanumana informed Rama of Sita's plight and said, "My Lord ! Sita wants that her honour can be kept up only if you yourself kill Ravana and rescue her." "Hanumana ! I shall march on Lanka and put Ravana to death without much delay." Saying so, Rama sent for Sugreeva and asked him to start preparations for making war on Ravana.

Hearing Rama's words, Sugreeva at once summoned his General Neel and ordered him to get ready for the march along with the entire Vanara army. Receiving the King's order, General Neel ordered the army to advance towards Lanka instantly. The Vanara soldiers lifted Rama and Lakshmana on their shoulders and the army proceeded towards the sea-shore.



Rama's encouraging suggestions kept the Vanara army in high spirits and surmounting all the difficulties, this large army reached the sea-shore.

Rama said to Sugreeva, "Friend, we have arrived at the sea-shore. Now we should find some way out to take our army across the vast sea."

"The day had ended and darkness had prevailed. The Moon-rise led to a fearful tide in the ocean and its waves looked so dreadful indeed. So, the Vanara soldiers camped there at the sea-shore with a strong enthusiasm to go across the sea as early as possible. The foaming sea with its frisking waves looked as if it were jumping in joy."



Just then Lakshmana caught sight of some demons in the sky. He got up with a start and said to Rama, "Brother ! look there. Some demons are roaming in the sky. We must be ready to face them."

But those demons had not come with any evil design. They had come with Vibhishana, Ravana's younger brother, who had been turned out of Lanka. He came down and coming to Rama spoke with folded hands, "I am Ravana's brother, Sir. I advised him hard to set your wife free and beg your pardon, but all in vain. Not only this, he expelled me from Lanka. Hearing Vibhishana's words, Sugreeva said, "I smell a rat in the matter. We must not be taken in by these demons. It is better to refuse him shelter." "But I can't refuse shelter to one who seeks it from me. It is a tradition with our dynasty," retorted Rama. So, Rama welcomed Vibhishana into his camp.



Rama held a long talk with Vibhishana and as a result, he came to know of the real power of Ravana. Vibhishana told Rama, "By virtue of a boon from Lord Brahma, *Ravana* is invincible for *Gandharvas*, *Nagas* and other creatures. Our brother Kumbhakarana is a great warrior, no less than *Indra* indeed. Ravana's general, Prahast by name, had defeated Kuber's General Manibhadra. Ravana's son Meghanada, when he puts on gloves made of the skin of a porcupine and an impenetrable armour, becomes invisible in the battle-field."

Hearing Vibhishana's words, Rama said, "However strong Ravana may be, I must kill him."



As suggested by Vibhishana, Rama decided to worship the water-god. He said, "I request you, O Water-god to give way so that my soldiers may get to the other shore."

Then sitting on a grassy seat and folding his hands, Rama kept praying to the god. He kept praying with utmost care for three days and three nights. But the Water-god did not appear.

Rama now lost patience and flew into a rage. He said to his brother Lakshmana, "Water-god is very haughty indeed. That is why he hasn't appeared despite my continuous prayers. It has been rightly said that peace, forgiveness, simplicity and gentleness do not yield any result when they are used with those who are ignoble."



Rama continued saying, “Brother ! peace and gentleness can achieve neither fame not victory in a battle. So, leaving the path of peace, I shall resort to violence. I shall kill all the sea-animals in the ocean. Their dead bodies will cover its entire surface.”

Saying so, Rama got up and moved his hand back to take out an arrow from his quiver and set it on his bow. Addressing the water-god, he said, “You have taken my patience to be my weakness. But now I shall dry up all your water so that the Vanara army may be able to cross you on foot. People say that you never lose balance of mind. But I shall force you to do that. I shall force you to violate all your norms today.”



As soon as Rama set his arrow to his bow, the Earth and the sky began to tremble. The mountains lost their equilibrium and darkness prevailed everywhere. The water-masses became turbulent and hundreds of meteors appeared in the sky. A huge thunder emanated from the clouds and lightning flashed violently time and again. Strong winds tossed the clouds hither and thither and also they uprooted trees and whistled dreadfully.

Seeing this, the water-god at once came out of the sea and stood before Rama. Then, he said in a sweet voice, "Be calm, My Lord ! you have Nala and Neela, two expert masons with you. Ask them to construct a bridge over me. I shall bear its burden." Saying so, the water-god disappeared.



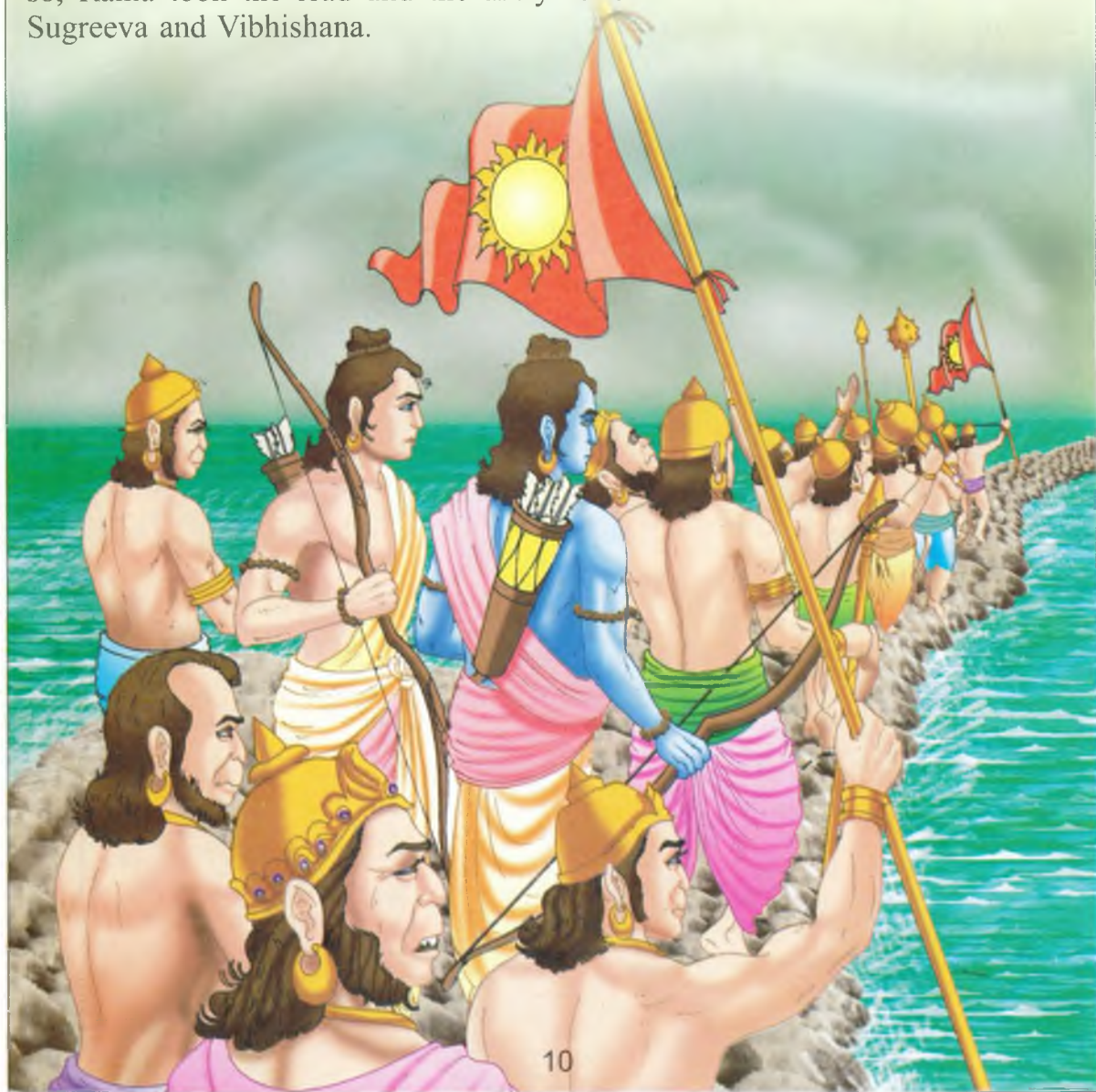
As suggested by the water-god, Nala and Neela constructed a bridge over the sea. The stones used by them began to float on the sea-waters. Seeing the bridge ready, Rama said to them, "What a nice bridge you have built ! I want to perform a sacred ceremony in order to pay homage to Lord Shiva and build a temple in his honour here before I take the Vanara army to the other shore of the sea."

Hearing this, Sugreeva sent for a large number of saints and hermits. They suggested that only Ravana was competent to carry out the sacred performance as he was a staunch devotee of Lord Shiva and great scholar as well. So, Rama sent for Ravana with due respect through a messenger. **Ravana** came and gladly carried out the performance. Then showering blessings of victory upon Rama, he returned to his Capital.



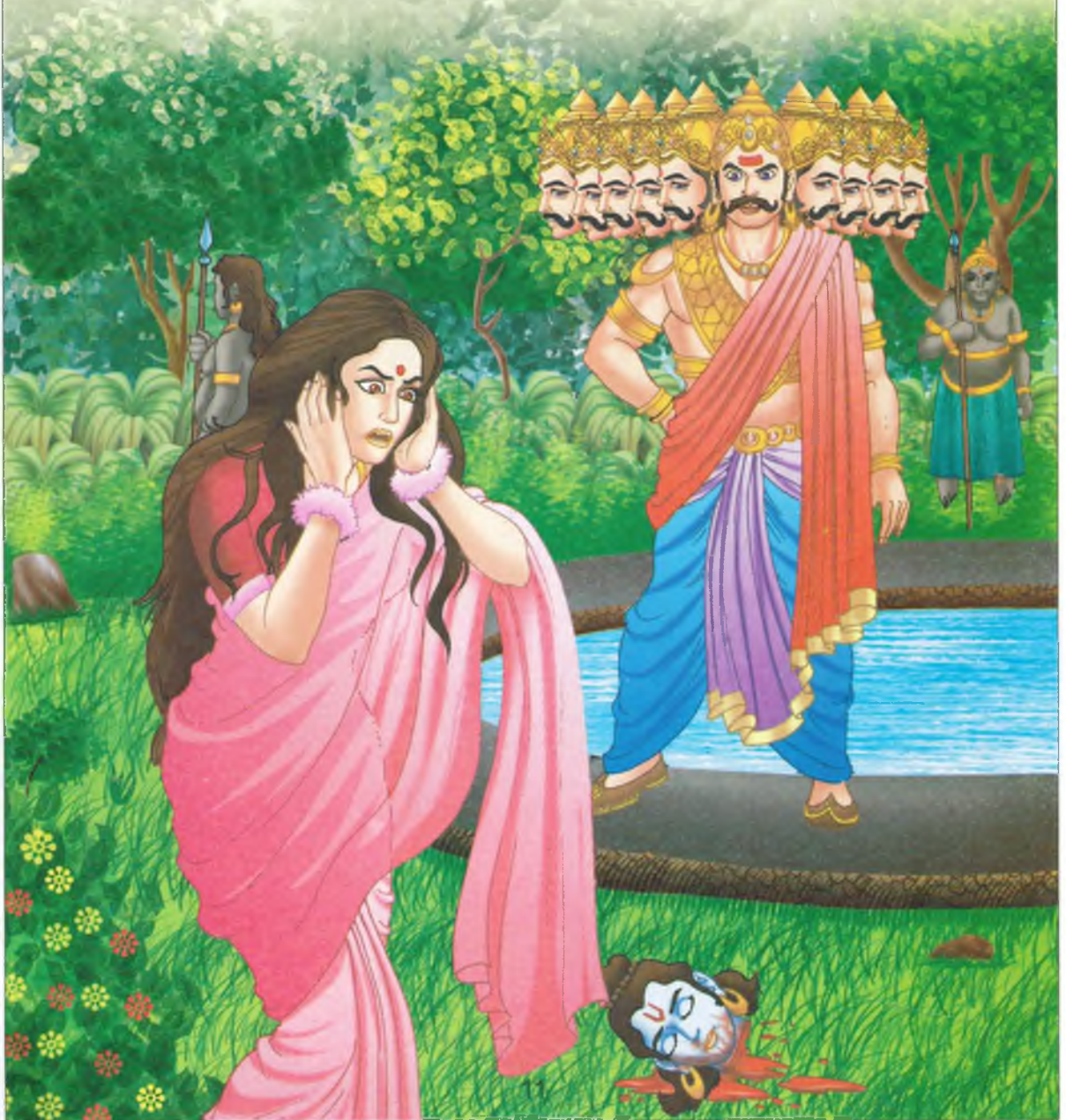
Now, the Vanara army started its march across the ocean. Some of them jumped into the sea and advanced forward leaning against the railings of the bridge. Some of them flew over the bridge. Most of them went over the bridge in a disciplined way. The noise and the war-cries raised by the large Vanara army shrouded the roar of the violent sea-waves even.

In due course, the Vanara army got to the other shore. Seeing the availability of water, fruit trees and other forest-foods, Sugreeva ordered his army to camp on the sea-shore itself. Then, Rama said to Sugreeva, "Friend ! we must lead an attack on Lanka with a strong contingent today itself." Saying so, Rama took the lead and the army followed him under the command of Sugreeva and Vibhishana.



Seeing Rama's army camping on Mount Suvela, the spies of Lanka ran to Ravana and said, "Your Majesty ! Rama has reached here with a very large and unconquerable army."

At this critical time, Ravana contacted Vidyujinha and requested him to exercise his magical powers and create Rama's head to be shown before Sita. Ravana believed that Sita would marry him after seeing Lord Rama's grafted head. Vidyujinha created Rama's head and bows and arrows. Ravana showed Rama's head to Sita. Sita fell senseless.



Placing the Rama's magic-created head before Sita, Ravana went away. Just then a she-demon, Sarma by name, came there and spoke to Sita in a consoling voice, "Be calm, O Sita. Don't be misled by Ravana's tricks. This head is not real but only magic-created. Your husband is camping near Lanka."

"Is it true?" asked Sita with a start, "You are so noble, Sarma."

"Certainly, dear. Ravana is bad at heart as well in thought and deed. He tried to win you over through magic. Don't worry at all. Rama and Lakshmana have reached here with a large army. I have seen them with my own eyes," replied Sarma.



Rama, with a view to conquering Lanka, ordered the sounding of war-bugles so that Ravana might know that attack on Lanka was imminent. Hearing the sound of the bugles, Ravana collected his courtiers and said, "I have heard about Rama's power, bravery and about his crossing the sea. But we are, by no means, weaker in any respect."

Hearing Ravana's claim, a demon, Malyavan by name, said to Ravana, "Your Majesty, tradition says that stronger kings should be won over by means of friendship. So, you must return Sita to Rama and make friends with him." "What ! do you consider Rama stronger than I ? He will not return alive from here. What can he do with his small Vanara army ?" retorted Ravana.



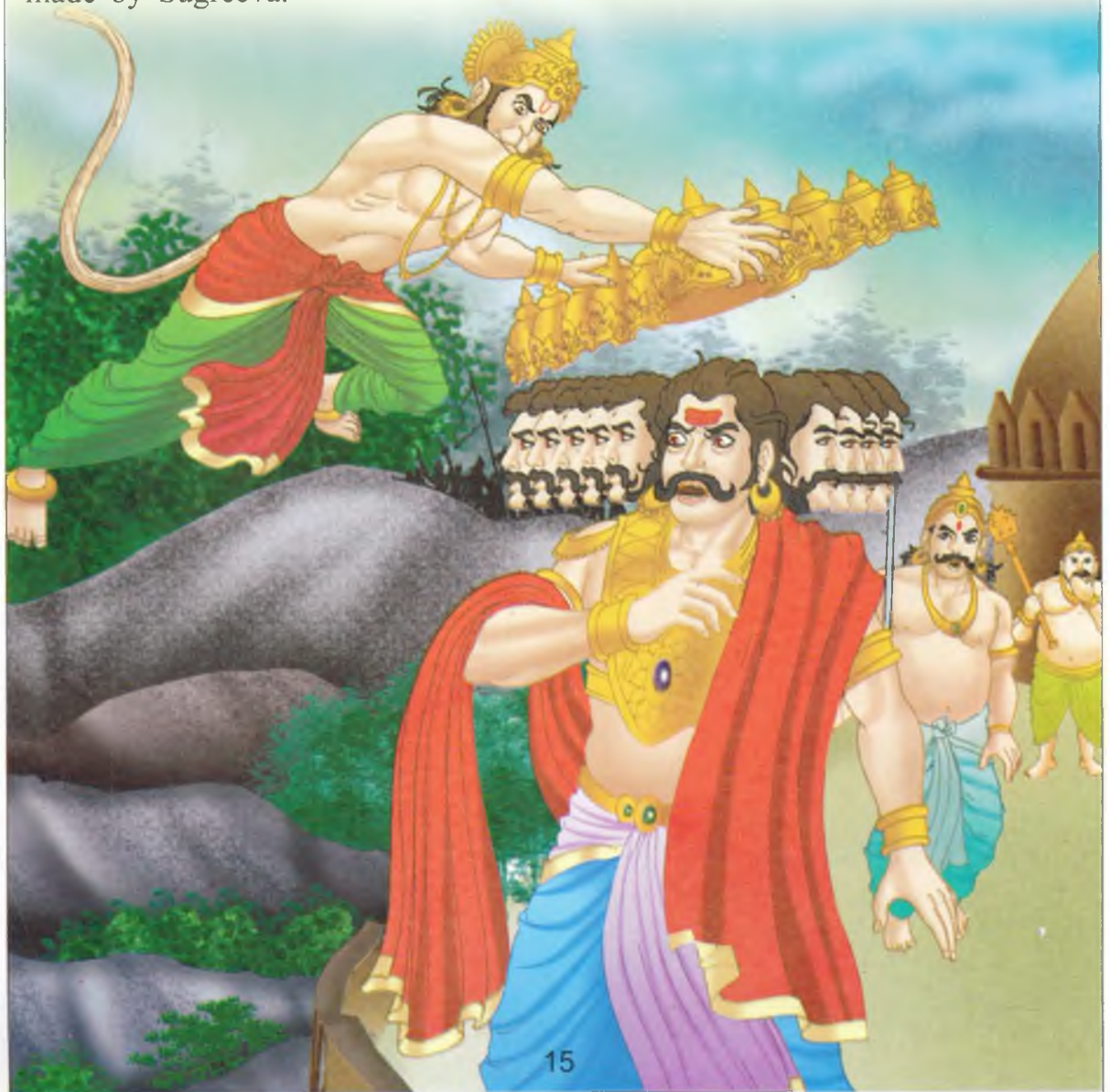
Wicked Ravana was heading for his ruin. So, he did not relish anything said for his welfare. He got enraged and said, "I, the ruler of demons, am the most powerful king. You will see how I rout the Vanara army and kill Sugreeva, Rama and Lakshmana."

Then Ravana had consultations with his warriors and made arrangements for the defence of Lanka. General Prahast was given the responsibility of guarding the eastern gate. The southern gate was placed under two brave warriors—Mahodar and Mahaparshva. The Western gate was left under the command of Meghanada. Placing the northern gate under two generals—Shuka and Sarana, Ravana decided to get to the roof of his fort in order to observe the strength of Rama's camp and its arrangements.



As already mentioned, Rama's army was camping on Mount Suvela. Ravana got to the roof of his fort and had a close look at Rama's camp. Seeing Ravana on the roof of his fort, Rama and Sugreeva climbed up the highest peak of Mount Suvela and Rama said, "Friend ! look at Ravana there. He is closely watching our army."

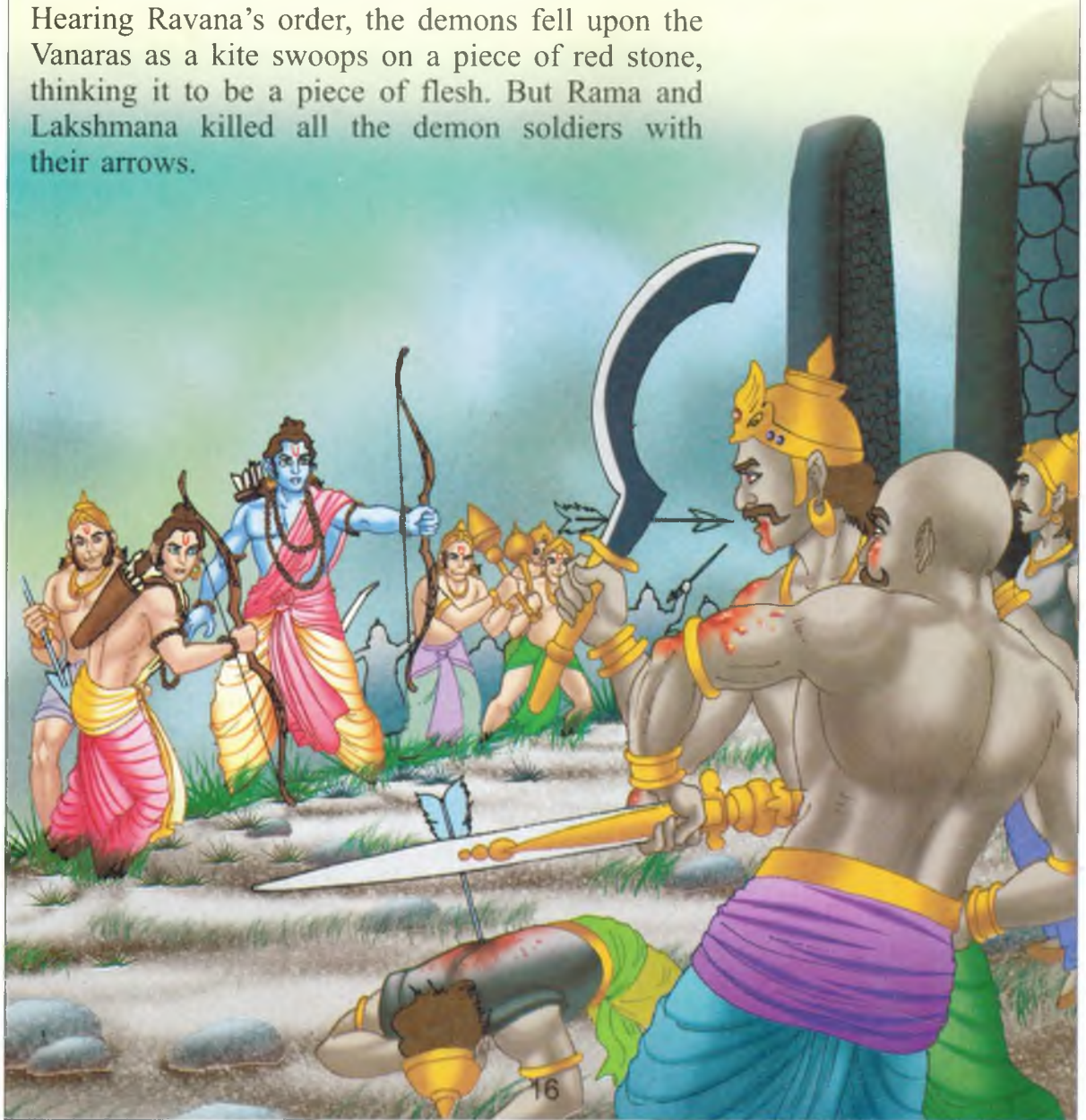
Seeing Ravana on the roof of his fort, Sugreeva could not control himself. In a fit of anger, he leapt from the mountain to where Ravana was standing. With one sudden stroke, he took off Ravana's crown and threw it down on the roof. Ravana was highly taken aback by this sudden attack made by Sugreeva.



After this skirmish with Ravana, Sugreeva returned to his camp. Then in consultation with Rama, he divided his army into four divisions and ordered that attacks be made on all the four gates of Lanka.

The Vanara army besieged Lanka on all sides and began to sound war bugles and raise war-cries—*Victory to Rama, Victory to Lakshmana* and *Victory to Sugreeva*. It sent a wave of fear throughout Lanka. So, Ravana summoned his generals and said, “God has sent us food here itself. Go and devour the Vanaras up.”

Hearing Ravana’s order, the demons fell upon the Vanaras as a kite swoops on a piece of red stone, thinking it to be a piece of flesh. But Rama and Lakshmana killed all the demon soldiers with their arrows.



In a short time, the demons ran helter-skelter out of fear as the clouds scatter away before a strong wind. Cries and bewailings were heard on every side. Children, women and invalid persons shouted in despair and abused Ravana holding him responsible for what was going on.

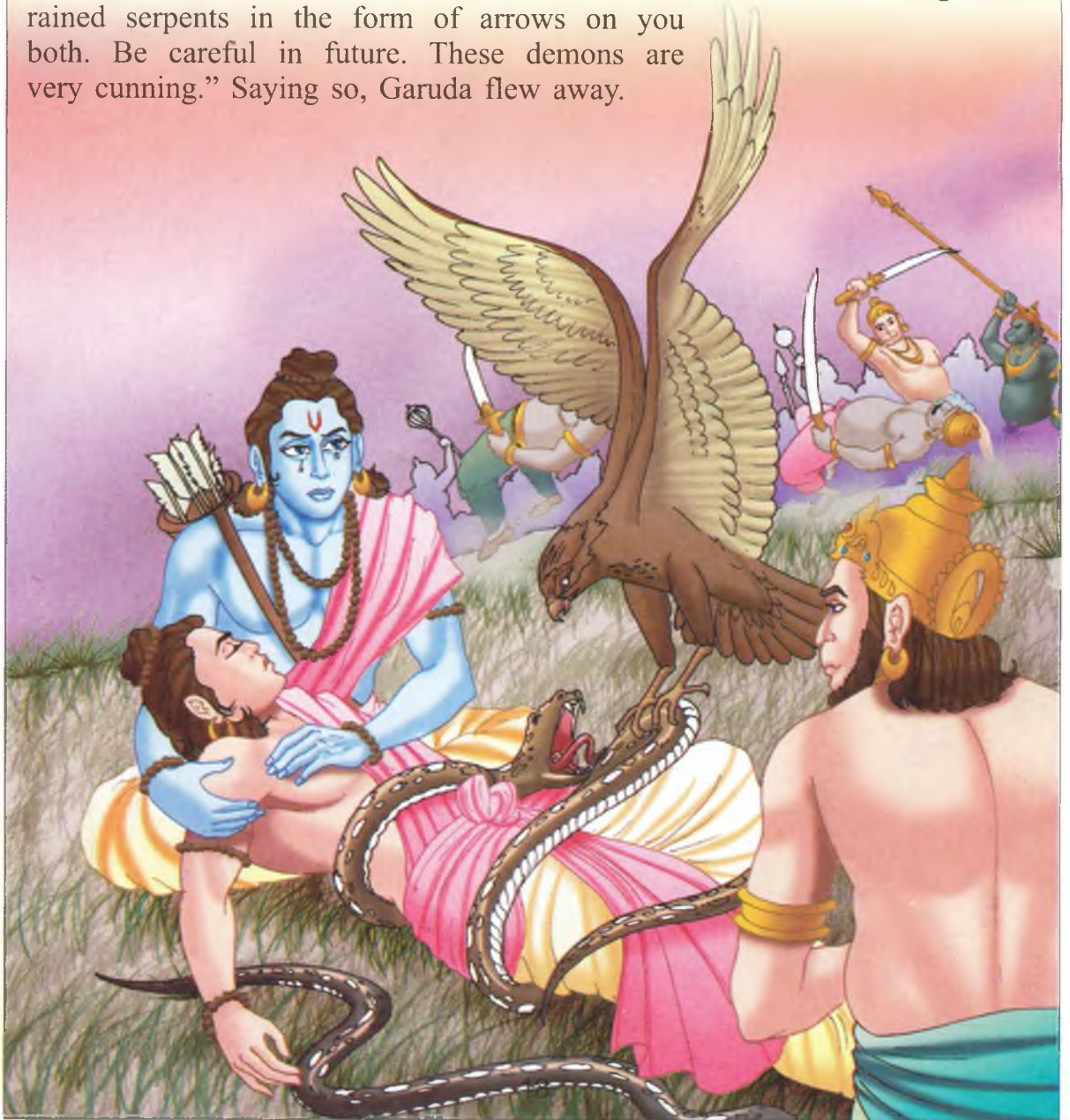
Then Ravana sent Meghanada to face Rama's army. The regiment under this son of Ravana fought with a renewed vigour but all to no use. Most of the demon soldiers fell fighting and Meghanada felt helpless.

Then using his magical powers, Meghanada made himself invisible and began to rain arrows on Rama and Lakshmana. Both the brothers fell down senseless on the ground.



Rama and Lakshmana were lying in pools of blood. The magical arrows shot by Meghanada had changed into serpents. Both of them were smarting under acute pain. The Vanaras felt hurt to see them in this condition. They began to shed tears and formed a cordon round them.

Just then, Rama regained consciousness. He remembered Garuda, the vehicle of Lord Vishnu. It came and ate up all the serpents. With the touch of its feathers, both the brothers became all right. Their wounds healed up as a result of this divine touch. Garuda told both the brothers, "Meghanada rained serpents in the form of arrows on you both. Be careful in future. These demons are very cunning." Saying so, Garuda flew away.



As soon as Rama and Lakshmana recovered, the war came to be resumed without delay. Ravana sent his two generals Dhumraksh and Prahasht to the battle-field. War cries raised from both sides resounded the sky. A bitter fight took place between the two generals of Ravana and the Vanara soldiers. Rama and Lakshmana were sitting on the shoulders of Hanumana and fighting the enemy. The Vanaras over-powered the demons and both the generals of Ravana fled away to save their lives. Uprooted trees had also been used in the fight.

Seeing his generals back, Ravana himself came to the battle-field and challenged Rama in a dreadful voice.



Hearing Ravana's challenge. Rama began to shower arrows on him. In a short time, Ravana's chariot broke down and its horses were killed along with the charioteer. Not only this, Ravana's bow was also broken and his crown fell down on the ground too.

Then like a true warrior Rama said, "I shall not attack you, O Ravana, as long as you take up new arms to fight with. You seem to be tired also. Go away ; I leave you alive." Hearing Rama's words, Ravana stood gaping for words in helplessness. Then bowing his head in shame, he returned to his camp. On the other hand, Hanumana chased the two generals—Dhumraksh and Prahasta. Catching them he hit either of them with his mace and they fell down dead then and there.



Having licked dust in the first encounter with Rama, Ravana summoned his courtiers and said, "I had to taste a defeat at Rama's hands. My strength, magic and my boons-all proved of no avail before powerful Rama. So, we must seek Kumbhakarana's help now. Go and wake him up."

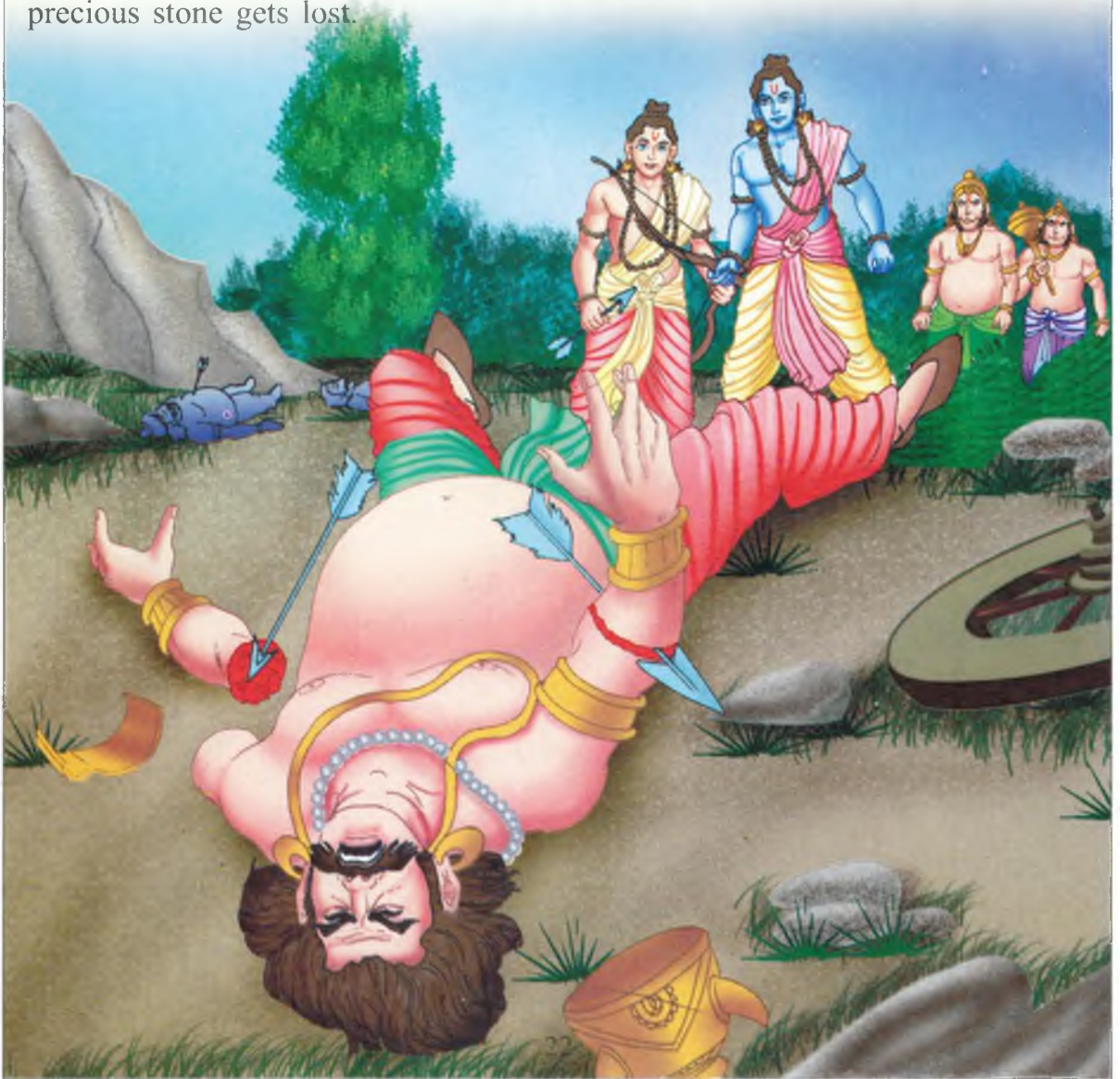
Kumbhakarana was Ravana's younger brother. He slept for six months in the year. Drums, shells and bugles had to be sounded in order to wake him up. So, the demon soldiers began to make efforts to rouse him from his slumber. In spite of their best efforts, Kumbhakarana did not get up and remained lying asleep. He looked like a vast hill. At last, elephants were brought. They tossed Kumbhakarana hither and thither with their trunks. It was only then that Kumbhakarana woke up.



Ravana sent Kumbhakarna to the battle-field to fight against Rama. He fell upon the Vanara soldiers and began to kill them ruthlessly. His onslaught routed the Vanara army.

Seeing the Vanara soldiers running in fear, Rama came forward to face Kumbhakarna. He started killing the demons with his arrows. Seeing this, Kumbhakarna thundered in anger and sprang at Rama. But Rama pierced his body with his arrows. Both his arms got severed from the body.

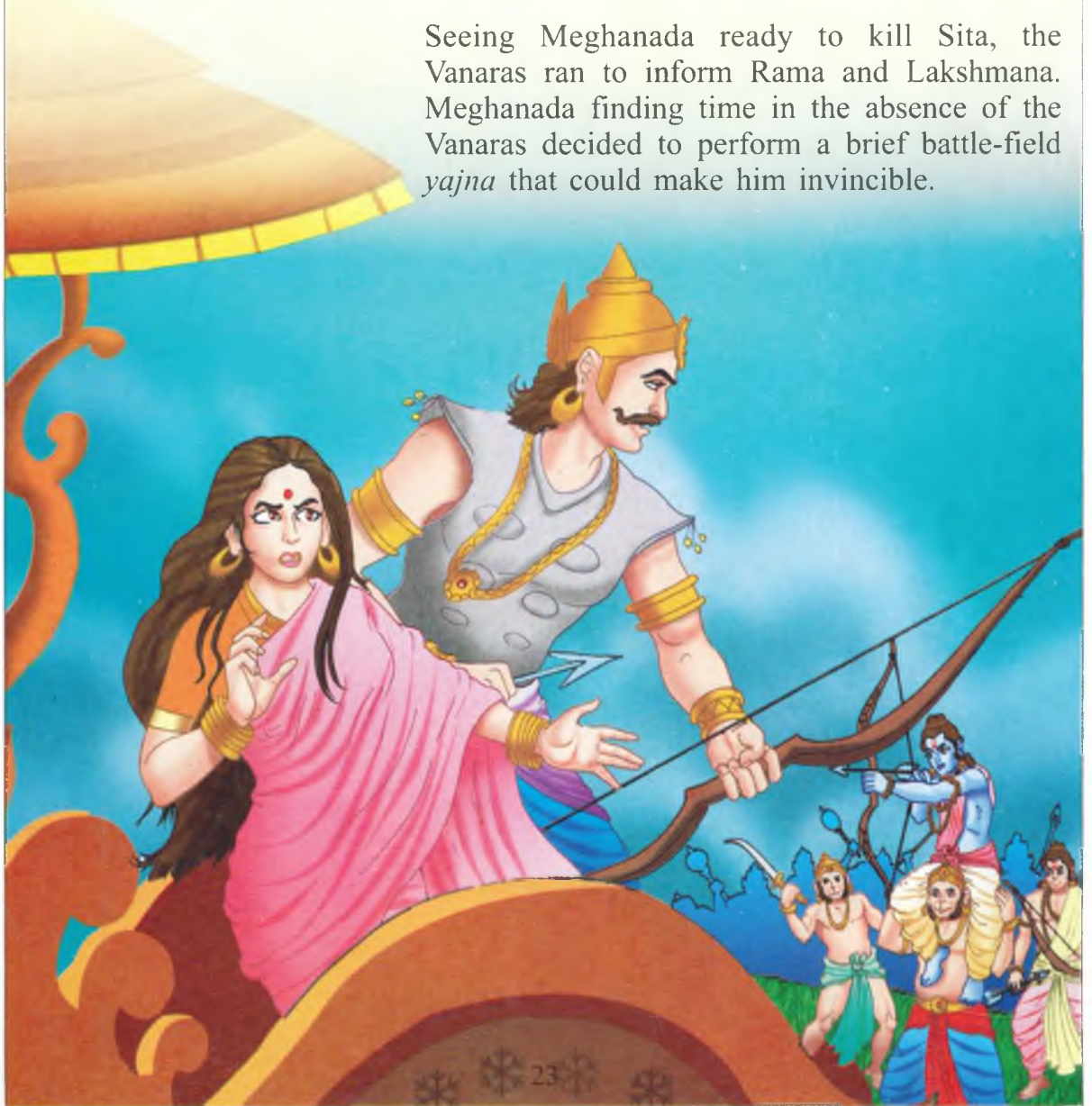
Next, Rama severed Kumbhakarna's head from his body with a fierce stroke. This head, flung away so fiercely, fell before Ravana in his palace. Ravana got mad to see his brother's head just as a cobra goes mad when its precious stone gets lost.



Kumbhakarana's death doubled the spirits of the Vanara soldiers and they fell upon the demons with a renewed vigour. Seeing the demons in dampened spirits, Meghanada came to the battle-field in a chariot with Sita sitting in it. It startled the entire Vanara army and they shouted, "Look there. Is she Sita ?"

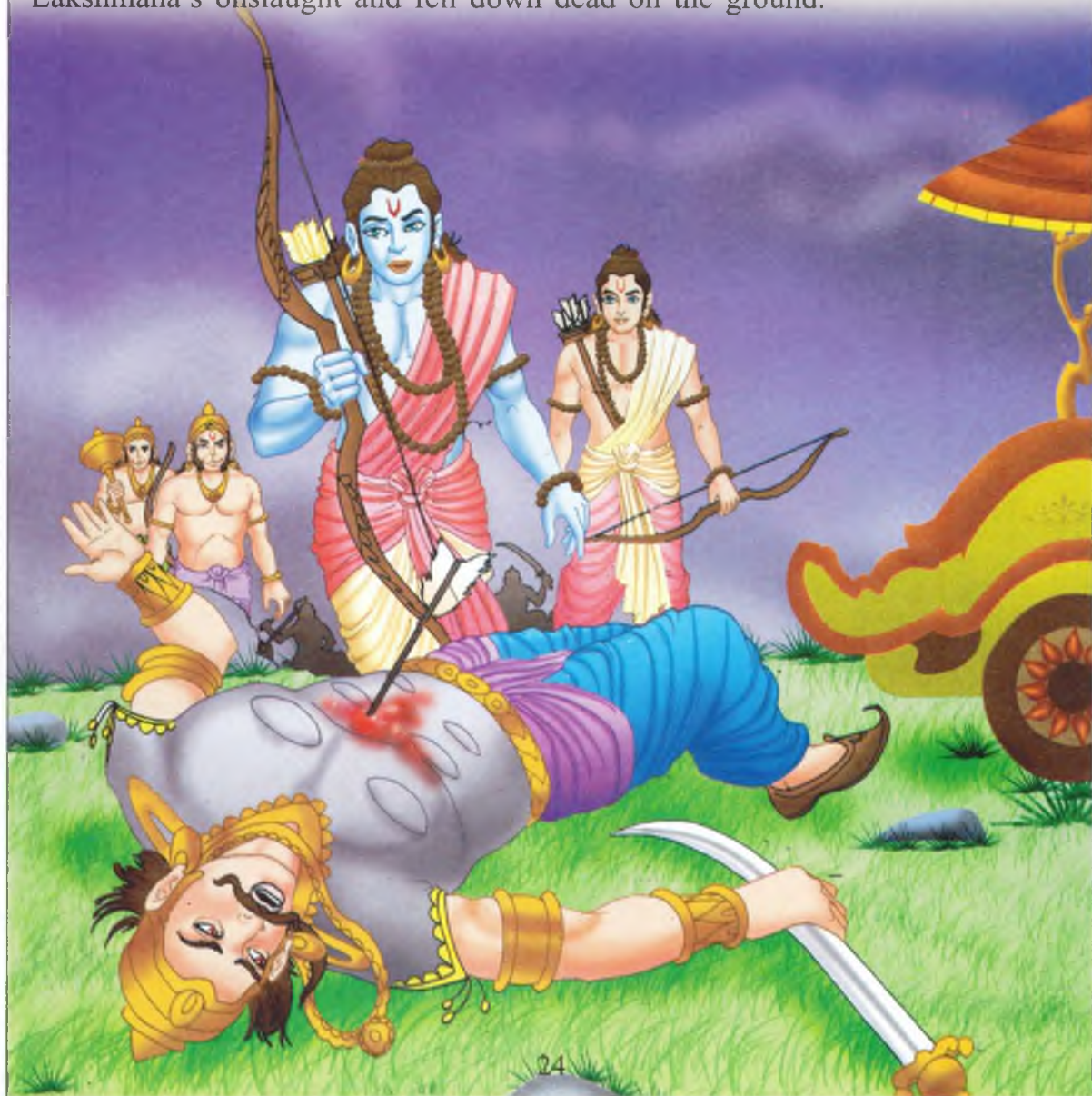
Shouting like that, the Vanaras fell upon Meghanada. Seeing the Vanaras advancing towards his chariot, Meghanada drew out his sword and said, "Stop short ! If anyone takes even one step further, I shall behead Sita here and now before your eyes. She is at the root of this battle."

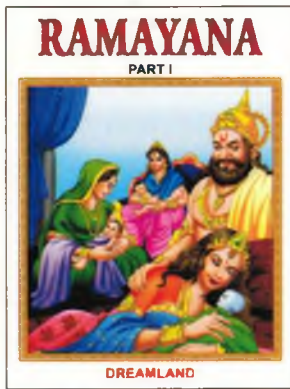
Seeing Meghanada ready to kill Sita, the Vanaras ran to inform Rama and Lakshmana. Meghanada finding time in the absence of the Vanaras decided to perform a brief battle-field *yajna* that could make him invincible.



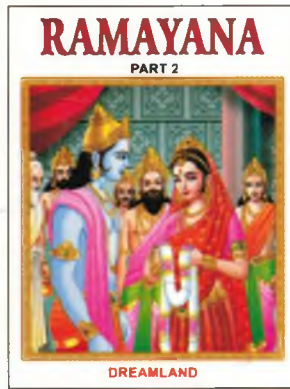
Hearing the news about Sita from the Vanara soldiers, Rama became unconscious. When he came to himself after some time, Vibhishana consoled him saying, “My Lord ! she was not real Sita but a magic-created one. He has played this trick to find time to perform a battle-field *yajna* that is sure to make him invincible. So, get up and kill him before he is able to complete the sacred ceremony.”

Hearing Vibhishana words, Lakshmana rushed to the battle-field and challenged Meghanada for a battle. Thus the *yajna* remained incomplete and Meghanada got up to face Lakshmana. But he could not bear the brunt of Lakshmana’s onslaught and fell down dead on the ground.

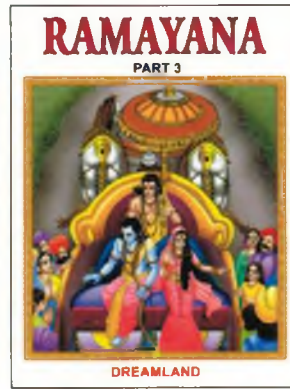




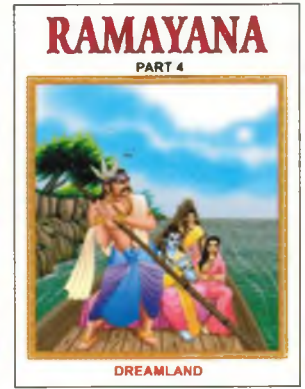
Childhood Episode-I



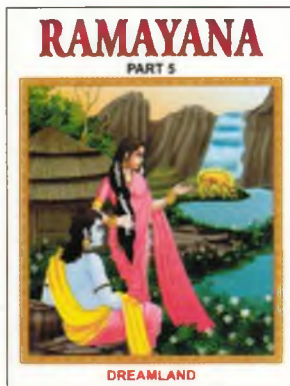
Childhood Episode-II



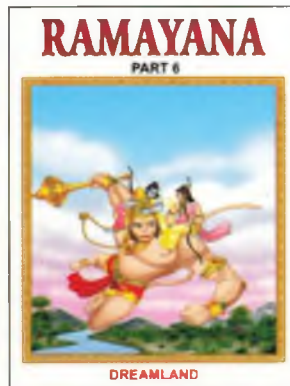
Ayodhya Episode-I



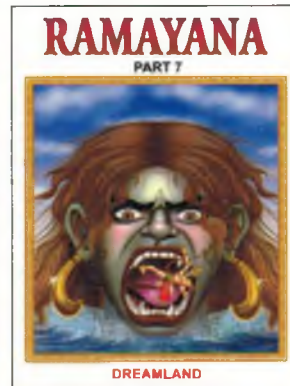
Ayodhya Episode-II



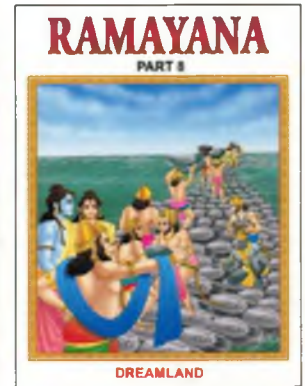
Forest Episode



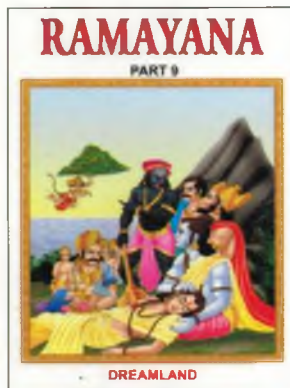
Kishkindha Episode



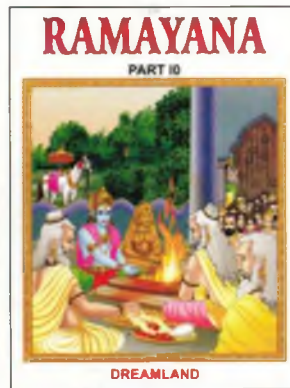
Fascinating Episode



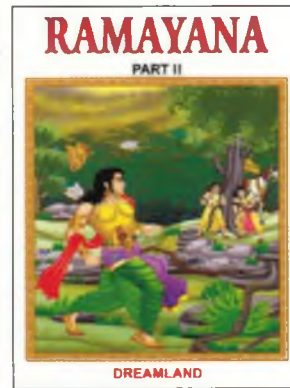
Battle Episode-I



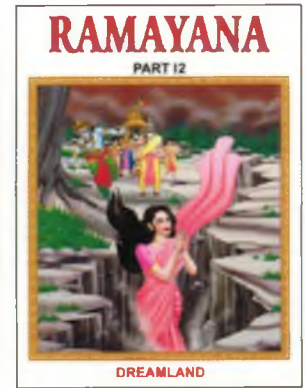
Battle Episode-II



Uttara Episode



Lava-Kusha Episode-I



Lava-Kusha Episode-II



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