



Ravana

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Ravana was a major character in the Ramayana. He was a great king. It is said that under his rule, even the poorest families in Lanka had gold vessels, meaning there was no poverty or starvation.

He was originally called Dasamukha, meaning ten heads, but soon he became known as Ravana. He kidnapped Sita, so he was killed by Rama. He had ten heads and twenty arms and was a Rakshasa.



Family

- Father: Vishravas
- Mother: Kaikesi
- Brothers: Vibhishana, Kumbhakarna
- Sister: Surpanakha
- Wives: Mandodari, Dhanyamalini
- Sons: Indrajit (Meghnadha), Atikaya, Akshaykumara, Devantaka, Narantaka, Trishira, Prahasta

Birth

There was a city called Lankapuri on Mount Trikuta. It had been built by Vishwakarma for the devas. But a group of Rakshasas led by the three brothers Malyavana, Sumali, and Mali and their sons had conquered it. These Rakshasas went around the three worlds harassing everybody. They committed many evil acts. The devas, tired of being harassed by these Rakshasas, went to Lord Shiva for help. Shiva told them to go to Lord Vishnu. When Lord Vishnu was told about the Rakshasas, he went and attacked the Rakshasas, who came out eagerly to attack Vishnu. First, Vishnu killed Mali. This made all the Rakshasas retreat. Vishnu directed his Sudarshan Chakra to go to Lanka every day and kill a few Rakshasas. When this continued, Malyavana, Sumali, and the other remaining Rakshasas left Lanka and retreated to Rasatala in Patala loka.

Kubera, the son of Vishravas and Ilavida, took the opportunity to rule the kingdom. For many years, Kubera ruled Lanka peacefully and prosperously. Meanwhile at Rasatala, Sumali and Malyavana wanted to take back Lanka. They now hated Vishnu for killing their brother. Once, Malyavana, Sumali, and Sumali's wife Ketumati decided to make a plan to take back Lanka.

"We have to do something about this," Sumali said. "Lanka is meant to be controlled by the Rakshasas, but that Kubera is ruling it."

"Kubera and the devas have more power than us. That is why they keep defeating us in everything," Malyavana said.

"We can't just have every single Rakshasa and Asura go and do immense penance and austerities. We need a more reasonable solution," Sumali said.

"Sumali, we have a daughter of marriageable age: Kaikesi. If she marries someone powerful, then we can gain power," Ketumati suggested.

Sumali liked the idea. He went over to Kaikesi and said, "I want you to marry someone very powerful. Not a king, someone more powerful. I want you to marry a sage who has become really powerful by his penance."

Kaikesi immediately listened to her father and started searching for someone. She went all over the Earth to look for someone. During her search, Kaikesi encountered Vishravas rishi, the son of Pulatsya. The moment Kaikesi saw Vishravas, she knew he was the person she was looking for. There was light coming out of the powerful sage. Kaikesi went up to Vishravas.

"O Great Rishi, I wish to marry you. I have been searching for a long time and I finally found the correct person. Please marry me, great sir," Kaikesi requested.

Vishravas opened his eyes, surprised. Vishravas then told Kaikesi to go away and come back tomorrow. But Kaikesi refused. Finally, Vishravas broke into a rage and screamed at her.

Kaikesi realized that he was angry, so she left. Kaikesi told Sumali about Vishravas. The next day, Kaikesi and Sumali approached Vishravas. "My daughter Kaikesi saw you yesterday and wants to marry you," Sumali said.

"So your daughter was the impatient one. I told her so many times to leave, but she didn't listen. I told her to leave because that time was an inauspicious one," Vishravas said.

Sumali apologized on behalf of Kaikesi. "Anyway, I can marry your daughter. But the children that are born as the result of our union will be unrighteous in their ways because your daughter was impatient," Vishravas said.

"It's fine, sir. I will myself handle the raising of them and make sure they don't stray from the path of righteousness," Sumali replied.

After much convincing, Vishravas agreed to marry Kaikesi. Three sons named Dasamukha, Kumbhakarna, and Vibhishana and a daughter named Surpankha were born to them. Later two other daughters of Sumali married Vishravas and more Rakshasa children were born. Dasamukha was named so because he was born with ten heads and twenty arms.

Childhood

Dasamukha was very intelligent, strong, and could grasp anything in an instant. Overall, he was very skilled and smart. But Dasamukha was very arrogant. He would get whatever he wanted and was disrespectful to people of all ages.

In order to prevent Dasamukha's arrogance from acting up, Vishravas kept Dasamukha occupied. He started teaching Dasamukha knowledge from the scriptures and combat. Dasamukha excelled at the art of warfare. Adding on to that, Vishravas taught Dasamukha the instrument Veena, which Dasamukha mastered.

But as Vishravas taught Dasamukha good things, Sumali told Dasamukha to become a king and defeat his half-brother Kubera. He told Dasamukha about how much wealth Kubera owns.

Doing Penance

Soon, Dasamukha and his brothers decided to conquer Lanka.

Dasamukha knew that physical power was not enough to conquer Lanka. He realized that he had to perform penances to the Gods. First, he chose who he wanted to please. Dasamukha had always felt uncomfortable around Vishnu, so it was either Brahma or Shiva. Dasamukha was a staunch Shiva devotee, but he decided to do penance to his great-grandfather Brahma. He knew that he would have a higher chance of getting the boons he wanted from his own great-grandfather.

Dasamukha started severe penance. He kept doing penance for years. Finally, Brahma came in front of him. Brahma sprinkled some holy water on Dasamukha, making him wake up from his deep meditation.

Dasamukha bowed in front of Lord Brahma. "My Lord, you have finally come!" Dasamukha said in delight.

Lord Brahma nodded. "What is the boon that you desire. I will give you anything you want," Brahma asked.

Dasamukha had already planned which boon he was going to ask for: immortality. If he became immortal, he would be invincible in all three lokas. "I want you to grant me immortality, my lord!" Dasamukha said.

Brahma was dismayed. "Sorry, Dasamukha. I cannot give you immortality. It is against the laws of the universe. Everybody is born and eventually, everybody dies," Brahma admitted.

Dasamukha was in a rage. He wanted to scream to Lord Brahma and tell him that **Indra** and the devas never die. But he knew that screaming at Lord Brahma wasn't a good idea. He tried to think of a way in which he would still get immortality without asking for immortality. Suddenly, Dasamukha had an idea. He said to Brahma, "My Lord, if you aren't going to give me immortality, then at least give me the nectar that makes the Devas immortal. Then I will be equal to them."

Brahma was hesitant. He feared that if he gave Dasamukha the nectar, Dasamukha would become evil. He would misuse the boon. But alas, Brahma had no choice. "Fine, I will give you the nectar," Brahma granted.

"I wish that you put the nectar in my stomach," Dasamukha requested.

Brahma nodded and held out his hand. Dasamukha felt the nectar surge into his stomach. Suddenly, he felt way more powerful than before. He felt strength race through his body.

Brahma was about to vanish from the scene before Dasamukha said, "Wait, Lord! I desire one more boon. Make it so that I am stronger than all the devas, yakshas, gandharvas, ganas, wild animals, asuras, sarpas, nagas, and rakshasas! Make it so that I rule over all of them."

Unwillingly, Brahma granted Dasamukha his second boon. Brahma then gave Dasamukha the Pinaka bow and two inexhaustible quivers. Brahma then vanished from the scene.

Conquering Lanka

Dasamukha went to Sumali. Sumali realized how much power Dasamukha now had, so he put the entire Rakshasa army under Dasamukha's commander. With their new army, Dasamukha, his brothers, and half-brothers now set off to conquer Lanka. They invaded Lanka and mercilessly killed many. Dasamukha was about to kill Kubera when Vishravas appeared there.

"Kubera, just leave from Lanka. Dasamukha will kill you if you do not leave," Vishravas said to Kubera. "I know you love Lankapuri, but you have to leave."

Unwillingly, Kubera left. Dasamukha, his brothers, and his Rakshasas rejoiced. While walking through his new city, Dasamukha found Kubera's Pushpaka Vimana.

Obtaining the Atma Lingam

Dasamukha was a great devotee of Lord Shiva. With all his constant devotion, Lord Shiva was pleased. He gave Dasamukha the Atma Lingam. This idol would make Dasamukha's kingdom prosper.

Ravana and Shiva

Dasamukha loved flying in his Pushpaka Vimana. Once, while flying over the Himalaya mountains, he came across a mountain that the Pushpaka Vimana just wouldn't fly over. To investigate, Dasamukha got out of the vimana and met Nandi: Lord Shiva's vehicle and a man with the face of a bull. Looking at Nandi, Dasamukha immediately started laughing.

"Ha, you look like a monkey. You look so funny," Dasamukha said, laughing.

Nandi looked at him angrily. "You arrogant man, you think I look like a monkey. For this insult, I curse you that monkeys will be the cause of your death.

"Who are you? Why can't I fly my craft over this mountain?" Dasamukha questioned.

"I am Nandi, the vehicle of Lord Shiva. This is Mount Kailash, the mountain of Lord Shiva. You can't fly your craft over this mountain because nothing is more powerful than Lord Shiva," Nandi said.

"I am powerful enough to do anything. I am more powerful than your Lord and I am more powerful than anybody else in the universe. Let me show you how powerful I am," Dasamukha bellowed in arrogance.

Dasamukha walked over to the base of the mountain. He started heaving and pushing up Kailash. On the peak of Kailash, Shiva and Parvati were resting. They felt the mountain moving. They both looked at each other and Shiva smiled. He pressed his toe firmly on the ground. Dasamukha had only lifted the mountain a few inches of the ground but immediately, as Shiva pressed his toe on the ground, the mountain fell back on the ground.

Dasamukha screamed as the complete weight of the mountain collapsed on his back. Dasamukha looked at Nandi and for a few seconds, he couldn't think. Then, Dasamukha realized how foolish he had been. He had tried to lift Mount Kailash, the mountain of his Lord. The Lord that he constantly worshiped. He had acted out of arrogance.

Dasamukha knew that Lord Shiva was the God of Dance, so he loved music. Slowly, Dasamukha made the hairs on his arms into strings and played them like he would play the veena. This went on for years.

Finally, Dasamukha felt the weight of the mountain out of his shoulders. He ran and took deep breaths. He went up to the peak of Mount Kailash and fell at the feet of Lord Shiva.

'Lord Shiva, please forgive me! I acted out of sheer arrogance! I am really sorry. Please, my Lord. Please!' Dasamukha started begging.

"You have paid for your arrogance. Next time, do not act of such arrogance. It could result in a consequence," Lord Shiva said. "When you screamed, you screamed so loud that you made the world scream. Hence, you will be called Ravana: the one who made the world scream."

Expanding his Empire

Ravana ruled Lanka. But just the small island of Lanka wasn't enough for Ravana. With his boons by his side, Ravana started conquering kingdom after kingdom. The kings of the kingdoms couldn't even stand up to Ravana. Ravana killed the kings, took all their wealth, and captured the woman he liked. His empire soon stretched from the southernmost tip of India to Janasthana in present-day Maharashtra. But Ravana kept conquering more and more.

Soon, he reached Kosala kingdom. The king of Kosala, Anaranya, put up a strong fight. But, like all other kings, he was defeated. Before dying, Anaranya cursed Ravana. He said, "You are arrogant. I curse you that your life and arrogance will be put to end by one of my descendants."

Meeting Narada

Narada watched as Ravana conquered kingdom after kingdom. Finally, he couldn't bear it anymore. He went to Ravana before he devastated another kingdom. "What do you want with me?" Ravana barked.

"I am just here to tell you one thing, Ravana. It is that you are making a big mistake by attacking humans constantly," Narada said.

"What are you trying to convey," Ravana asked, interested.

"Remember your boons. You had asked that even the devas cannot defeat you. Instead of attacking humans, why don't you attack devas. If you conquer the devas, people will truly know how powerful you are. And not just any devas, one deva in particular: Yama deva, the god of death. If you conquer death itself, then everyone will fear you," Narada said with twinkling eyes.

Ravana slowly smiled. He liked the idea.

Conflict with Yama

Narada left the place, smiling. Lord Brahma had given Yama the Kala Danda, a weapon that would kill someone no matter what boons they had.

Ravana immediately started marching towards Yamaloka with his army. Narada went to Yamaloka. "Oh great sage, greetings. What are you doing here?" Yama questioned.

"Oh great deva, I told King Ravana of Lanka to come attack you," Narada said.

Yama was confused. Who would ever dare attack Yamaloka itself? Whichever fool was doing so was literally marching towards their death. But he told his soldiers, "Be prepared! We are under attack."

Even the guards were confused, but they followed their orders. When Ravana arrived, he started slowly devastating the soldiers of Yama. Yama was really surprised. At last, he couldn't take it anymore. He took his Kala Danda and aimed it at Ravana. Narada was about to rejoice. Ravana would finally be dead.

But just as Yama was about to throw the Kala Danda at Ravana, Lord Brahma appeared there. Narada and Yama both bowed to Brahma.

"Please, Yama. Please do not throw your Kala Danda," Brahma begged. Narada and Yama looked at each other, perplexed. Yama thought this was some trick by Ravana, so he got ready to fire his weapon once again.

"No, please don't. I beg of you," Brahma pleaded.

"O Lord, we can kill Ravana. He has been killing king after king. He is unrighteous in his ways. We need to get rid of him. Why are you stopping us," Narada questioned.

"I will become a liar. I promised Ravana that he can't be killed by any deva. And Yama, I promised you that your Kala Danda will never spare its target. So if you throw your Kala Danda at Ravana, either he will survive or die. But either way, one of my promises will be broken.

Narada was irritated with his father Brahma, who kept making rash promises to everybody. Yama was angry because he couldn't kill Ravana. In anger, Yama, Brahma, and Narada all disappeared from the place. All this time, Ravana and his rakshasas had been frozen in time, so they didn't hear or see anything. When everybody disappeared, they came back into time and saw that Yama wasn't there. Ravana thought that Yama had fled. Ravana looked with pride at where Yama had been. He thought that he had defeated the God of death. Thinking that, Ravana and his followers left the place and went back to Lanka.

Marriage

Once, Ravana visited Mayasura's palace in Patala. Maya was the architect of the asuras. At Mayasura's palace, Ravana fell in love with Mandodari, the adopted daughter of Maya and his wife Hema.

"I love your daughter Mandodari. I ask for your daughter's hand in marriage," Ravana said to Maya.

Maya declined the offer. In a rage, Ravana forced Mayasura to marry Mandodari to him. Mandodari and Ravana soon had three children: Meghnadha, Atikaya, and Akshaykumara.

Later, Ravana married Dhanyamalini and an unknown third wife and had other sons, namely Trishira, Prahasta, Devantaka, and Narantaka.

Kartavirya Arjuna and Ravana

Ravana once came to the Narmada River with his ministers. Meanwhile, King Kartavirya Arjuna of the Haihaya Empire also came to bathe in the Narmada River with his wives. Ravana was more upstream than Arjuna.

“My Lord, you are very powerful. But I want to test your strength,” one of Arjuna’s wives said jokingly.

“What would you like me to do,” Arjuna asked.

“Stop the flow of the river. If you can do this, you are truly the most powerful person alive,” his wife asked of him.

Arjuna sat in the middle of the river and raised his arms. He concentrated hard. Soon, the river flow completely stopped. With the flow of the river stopped, the water level rose and the water started going on to the shores. The small islands started getting submerged.

Upstream, Ravana was praying on the shore. Suddenly, strong waves of water started washing onto the shore. They ran along the shoreline to find out the cause of this. They saw Arjuna sitting in the middle of the river with his arms blocking all the water. Seeing a thousand arms on the king, the ministers were slightly scared. They went back to Ravana.

Ravana opened his eyes from his prayers and realized the water rising. He looked at his ministers and saw scared expressions on their faces. He realized that this was the work of someone powerful.

“Why are you just standing there, you fools. Tell me what happened!” Ravana barked at his ministers.

“Your majesty. A th...thousand-armed king has stopped the river,” a ministers replied, pointing down the river.

Ravana immediately knew that it was Kartavirya Arjuna. He picked up his mace and got on his Pushpaka Vimana. “Forward!” Ravana screamed, commanding the vehicle to go to Arjuna.

Ravana saw Arjuna drying himself and bellowed. “Just because you can stop a river doesn’t mean you are powerful. If you’re actually powerful, then fight me!” Ravana bellowed.

“Ravana! I will fight you. Get down from your chariot, or are you a coward?” Arjuna said, smiling.

Ravana jumped down from his Pushpaka Vimana with his mace in his hand. Arjuna instantly grabbed his mace and met Ravana’s blow. The two continued fighting for a long time. Arjuna’s queens and Ravana’s ministers watched, horrified. After a fierce fight, Arjuna managed to make Ravana unconscious. Arjuna captured Ravana and took him back to Mahishmati. Arjuna imprisoned Ravana.

A few days later, Sage Pulatsya (one of the mind-born sons of Brahma and Ravana's grandfather) came to Mahishmati.

"Arjuna, I have heard that you defeated my grandson and you have him imprisoned here," Pulatsya said. "I am sure that he has learnt his lesson and will never pick a fight with you again. Please let him go."

Arjuna willingly let Ravana go. Ravana went back to Lanka on his Pushpaka Vimana after receiving many gifts from Arjuna.

Conquering Swarga

Ravana now decided to attack Swarga (heavens), ruled and inhabited by the devas. He rallied his brothers, sons, and his huge asura army, along with his top Rakshasas and asuras. Ravana and his asura army marched to Swarga. During the following war, Meghnadha and Indra encountered each other in a ferocious battle. Meghnadha soon defeated Indra and tied him up. Meghnadha dragged Indra to Ravana's court in Lanka, where Ravana and his courtiers made fun of Indra. Indra prayed to Lord Vishnu for help.

Lord Vishnu told Lord Brahma to go help out Indra. Brahma intervened and pleaded with Ravana and Meghnadha not to kill Indra. After a lot of convincing, they obliged. Brahma, who had been impressed by Meghnadha's fighting, told him to ask for a boon. When Meghnadha asked for immortality, Brahma said no and instead granted him invincibility in battle.

"I will grant you invincibility on one condition. The condition is that before you go into battle, you have to perform a yagna to become invincible. And if someone ever interrupts your yagna, they will be the one who will kill you," Brahma said.

Meghnadha accepted. Ravana and Meghnadha then released Indra and went back to Lanka. Ravana and his son Meghnadha, now called Indrajit, had now even defeated the devas in swarga. Ravana had become so powerful that he had conquered everything there was to conquer.

Ravana and Rambha

Once Ravana was travelling in his Pushpaka Vimana. Suddenly, he saw Rambha, the queen of the Apsaras. She was on her way to meet Nalakubera (the son of Kubera), who was her husband. "I must have her," Ravana said to himself.

He landed his Pushpaka Vimana, got out, and approached Rambha. "Dear lady, what is your name," Ravana asked.

"I am Rambha, the wife of Nalakubera. I know who you are. You are Ravana, my father-in-law's brother," Rambha

said.

“I do remember that my half-brother’s son had married an apsara. You must be that apsara. What was he thinking, marrying an apsara. Apsaras are meant to entertain Indra. All apsaras do is dance in Indra’s court and attempt to seduce sages to abolish their meditation,” Ravana said.

Rambha realized that Ravana was going to do. She tried to escape but she couldn’t overpower Ravana. Ravana forcefully raped Rambha and then went back to Lanka. Rambha was left there, mourning and sobbing on the ground. Rambha was crying because she was scared Nalakubera would now abandon after learning about what had happened.

Meanwhile, an anxious Nalakubera was hunting for his wife. They were supposed to meet at the river 6 hours ago. Soon, he found her sobbing on the ground. Nalakubera gathered Rambha in his arms and listened as Rambha told him what had happened. Instead of abandoning her, Nalakubera went to take revenge on Ravana. Ravana tried to lie and told Nalakubera that Rambha had seduced him. But Nalakubera didn’t believe this and cursed Ravana that if he ever touches another woman without her consent, his heads will explode and he will die a painful death.

Ravana and Vali

Ravana decided to hold a party for his success in defeating and capturing Indra. One of the people he invited to this party was Narada. While Narada was flying to the party in a chariot, he met King Vali of Kishkindha who was a vanara. Vali started telling Narada about his recent adventures.

After Vali finished, Narada hastily went to Lanka. “What delayed you, O great sage,” Ravana asked. “It was a Vanara by the name of Vali,” Narada replied. Ravana looked bemused: a vanara had delayed such a great sage.

“This Vali didn’t even care that I was going to your party. He just kept talking on about his own adventures. He didn’t even how powerful you are, great Ravana,” Narada said.

Ravana suddenly became enraged. Every single person was supposed to know how great he was. He told Narada to take him there at that moment. Ravana started preparing for a full-on battle and readied his army.

“You are going to bring a whole army to defeat one little vanara. That will tarnish your reputation as being the most powerful,” Narada suggested.

Ravana agreed with Narada and ordered his troops to stop preparing for battle. Ravana and Narada then got into the Pushpaka Vimana and started flying north. Soon, they neared a large mountain.

“Halt your Vimana, Ravana. This is the place where the vanara is,” Narada told Ravana.

Ravana landed the vimana on the ground and looked around. "Where is Vali?" Ravana asked Narada.

"Vali is not near the mountain. Vali is the mountain itself!" Narada said. Ravana was shocked. Vali was huge! He easily outsized all the other mountains in that area. Ravana trembled with fear, but he tried to not show it.

Ravana looked around and spotted Vali's tail. He went up to the tail and tried lifting it up. But the tail starting moved. Speedily it had Ravana tied up and Ravana was unable to escape. Struggling, Ravana looked around for Narada, but he had vanished. Ravana couldn't even reach for his sword.

Then, Vali started standing up. Frightfully, Ravana held on to the tail for his dear life. Vali seemed to reach even higher than the Sun, but Vali still respectfully bowed to the Sun.

Ravana tried to screaming at the top of his voice, but it was no use. His voice was puny for the giant Vali. Ravana was tired of being tied up in Vali's tail. After bowing down to the Sun god, Vali got ready to jump. Ravana realized this just as Vali jumped. He clinged on to tail as hard as he could. Vali's giant leap made him land straight into the water. Ravana was now soaking wet. Vali then offered prayers to Surya deva.



Vali had been doing this for the past few days. He had decided to go on a big pilgrimage. He went to each pilgrimage spot, jumped into the holy waters of that spot, and then jumped to the next place.

After a few hours, Vali finished his pilgrimage but still didn't know that Ravana was wrapped up in his tail. Vali returned to his palace in Kishkindha.

"Father, welcome back," his son Angada told him. "Wait a second, what do you have in your tail?" Angada was looking weirdly at Vali's tail.

"What, son," Vali asked. He looked back and saw Ravana squirming and wrapped up in his tail. "Oh no, I didn't mean that. When did that happen." Vali started unwinding Ravana from his tail. At that moment, Angada came back, having told everyone about Ravana. All the courtiers and ministers were laughing at Ravana. Ravana's ego was hurt and he tried to look brave.

But, the moment Ravana was free of his knots, he immediately ran out of the palace and sprinted to his

Pushpaka Vimana. He quickly got in and went back to Lanka.

Surpanakha Falls in Love with Rama

Rama was the son of Dasaratha, the king of Kosala, and his wife Kaushalya. But, Dasaratha's second wife Kaikeyi forced Dasaratha to send Rama into a 14-year exile and crown her son Bharata the king. Rama, his wife Sita, and Lakshmana (the son of Dasaratha's third wife Sumitra) were forced to go in exile.

While Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana were residing at a place called Panchavati on the banks of the Godavari river, Surpanakha (Ravana's sister) saw them. The moment she saw Rama, she fell in love with him. She went up to him and tried to seduce him, but Rama denied, saying that he was loyal to Sita.

Surpanakha then went to Sita and started harassing her. Lakshmana saw this and immediately picked up his sword. He went up to Surpanakha and cut off her ears and nose.

Kidnapping Sita

Surpanakha went back to Lanka and showed Ravana what had happened to her.

"You must take revenge on them. Look at what they did to me. Please, please," Surpanakha requested. "Also, that woman Sita is worth fighting for. She is beautiful and talented and if you obtain her, you can marry her."

Ravana went to Maricha, a powerful asura proficient in sorcery. Together, they made an ingenious plan to kidnap Sita. As per the plan, Maricha changed his form into a golden deer and came near the hut of Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita. Sita was mesmerized by the golden deer and wanted Rama to take it for her. Rama tried to catch it but the golden deer ran away. Upon Sita's plea, Rama chased after the deer after telling Lakshmana to protect Sita.

The golden deer was elusive and lead Rama deeper and deeper into the Panchavati forest. The deer took Rama farther and farther away from Lakshmana and Sita. Finally, Rama shot an arrow which pierced the deer's heart. The golden deer immediately transformed into Maricha and started crying out for Sita and Lakshmana in a perfect imitation of Rama's voice. Rama realized this was all a trick and started hastily going back to the hut.

Back at the hut, Sita and Lakshmana heard these cries of distress which sounded just like Rama's cries.

"Lakshmana please!" My Lord needs help. Please," Sita pleaded.

"I have strict orders from Rama to not leave you. I would rather die than disobey Rama's orders," Lakshmana said.

But Sita kept pleading. Lakshmana was now in a dilemma. Soon, he decided to listen to Sita and agreed on helping Rama. But before he left, he drew a line around the hut. This line was enchanted and no one could cross

the line.

“Sita, stay in this line. It will protect you. Do not cross the line under any circumstances,” he told Sita.

Lakshmana then went to search for Rama. As soon as Lakshmana left, a frail hermit approached Sita. He came begging for alms, water, and food. Sita went into the hut and brought some food and water. She gave it him graciously.

“I cannot reach the food. Can you come closer and give me the food,” the hermit said.

Sita was hesitant. She was not supposed to cross the line. But then she thought: What could a weak beggar possibly do to her. She also thought that the beggar didn’t mean to do anything bad. So, Sita crossed the line. Immediately, the beggar grabbed Sita’s hand and turned into his true form: Ravana. Ravana forcefully dragged Sita into his Pushpaka Vimana, which was hidden in the trees close by.

“My husband Rama will come. He will take revenge on you. His wrath will be intolerable and it will move the heaven itself. You will be destroyed, you sinner,” Sita screamed.

But Ravana merely laughed this off and they got in the Pushpaka Vimana. The Pushpaka Vimana rose from the ground and started flying towards Lanka. On the way, Jatayu, the vulture king and son of Aruna, tried to stop Ravana but Ravana cut off his wing. Ravana and Sita soon reached Lankapuri.

Marriage Proposal

Ravana held Sita captive in his gardens. He was pretty attracted by Sita’s beauty. He realized that if he married Sita, he would get a beautiful girl as his wife and would take revenge on Rama on behalf of Surpanakha. Ravana asked Sita if she’ll marry him but Sita refused.

“I will give you one year. If you don’t agree to marry me by the end of the year, I will kill you,” Ravana proposed.

Over the one year, Ravana tried to impress Sita often with his wit, charm, knowledge, and wealth. But every time he proposed marriage, Sita said no.

War and Death

Rama had been told by Jatayu that Sita had been taken south to Lanka by Ravana. Rama and Lakshmana started travelling south. Soon, they met Hanuman, Sugreeva, and all the other Vanaras. They were able to construct a bridge across the sea and reached the island of Lanka. Vibhishana decided to side with Rama because he realized Rama was divine.

Rama, Lakshmana, Hanuman, Sugriva, and their Vanara army besieged Lankapuri. The resulting war was a succession of sallies. One by one, Ravana sent his relatives. First he sent his army, but it perished. He then sent his brothers, sons, and nephews one-by-one, but they were all killed. Soon, even his son Meghnadha, who had defeated Indra himself, died. Demoralized and lonely, Ravana mounted his chariot and prepared to attack Rama's army.

Ravana got into the battlefield and immediately engaged in a duel with Lakshmana. This duel short-lasting as Ravana's arrows made Lakshmana unconscious. Finally, Ravana engaged Rama. Ravana looked frightening with his ten heads and twenty arms. Rama kept firing arrows at Ravana's head, but after every shot, they would grow back.

Rama started becoming anxious. He couldn't think of a way to defeat Ravana. Indra, who had been watching the fight from Swarga, ordered his charioteer **Matali** to go assist Rama. Rama got into Matali's flying chariot and kept firing weapons.

"Use the Brahmastra. It will certainly bring the end of Ravana," Matali advised.

Rama invoked the Brahmastra, which was given to him by Agastya Rishi. Saying Parvati's name, Rama fired the Brahmastra straight at Ravana's heart and Ravana fell dead.



Everybody rejoiced. The devas showered flowers from the heavens. Vibhishana refused to do Ravana's last rights, but Rama said that he deserved a proper funeral, so Ravana was given a funeral.