

Reader's Theater Adaptation of the Ramayana, Scene 5

Narrator 1: Hanuman and an army of monkeys and bears began searching for Sita. After a month, they met an old vulture who told them that Sita had been taken to the island of Lanka's capital city. Hanuman wandered through the city until he found Sita alone in a grove of trees outside Ravana's palace. Sita was pale and weak, and she had given up hope of ever seeing Rama again. Hanuman dropped down beside her.

Hanuman: Don't be alarmed. I have been sent by Rama. He gave me this ring to give to you so that you will know this is not a trick.

Sita: (upset) But why has he not come? Ravana told me that if I do not marry him within a month, he will eat me. But I don't care. It is a wife's duty to be faithful, and besides, I could not live without Rama.

Hanuman: Rama doesn't know where you are, but he will come to rescue you soon. I must go now and tell him that you are here.

Narrator 2: Before Hanuman could escape the palace, however, members of Ravana's army discovered him. Hanuman fought courageously, crushing thousands of soldiers' skulls, but was finally captured and brought before Ravana. Proudly Hanuman delivered a warning.

Hanuman: I, Hanuman, son of the wind God, bring a message from Rama. Free his wife at once, or he will destroy you.

Ravana: (furiously) How dare you speak to me that way! I should have you killed, but it is bad luck to kill an enemy's messenger. *(calling out)* Guards! Set the monkey's tail on fire! *(to Hanuman)* I know how important your tail is to you. Your burned tail will disfigure you as my sister Surpanakha was disfigured.

Narrator 1: The guards tied rags soaked in oil around Hanuman's tail and set them on fire. They released the monkey, and Hanuman leapt from the palace and out over the city. Swinging his burning tail rapidly from side to side, he destroyed much of the city. Then he leapt back to the mainland where he reported to Rama that he had found Sita. Rama began preparations to attack Ravana. First, he began building a bridge to Lanka.

Ravana: (surprised) What is that I see in the distance? It looks as if a huge army of monkeys is building a bridge toward the island. Is that Rama leading the army? Guards—quick!—Wake my brother, Kumbhakarna. Tell him we will soon be attacked.

Narrator 2: The guards blew trumpets to awaken Kumbhakarna, a giant who slept six months of the year. He stumbled into the room.