

RAMAYAN 2.0

Modern Fables from an Ancient Epic

by Vijayendra Mohanty

~ vimoh.co ~

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PREFACE

The Ramayana by Sage Valmiki is an ancient Hindu epic -- 24,000 verses spread over seven books -- that holds immense value in the Indian cultural context. Even millennia after its original composition, it has a powerful hold over Indian society. Even today, everyday conversation all over India is peppered with references to characters and events in the Ramayana. The epic's presence is all-pervasive.

These stories are based on the Ramayana, but they do not constitute a retelling of it. I have merely used the Ramayana as an envelope to contain my more or less contemporary messages. All due credit for composing the magnificent Sanskrit epic goes to sage Valmiki. I am only a descendant of his who, thousands of years after Valmiki, is putting up his two paise up on the world wide web for you to read.

Do let me know how you like it by email (blogger@vmohanty.com). Thank you for reading!

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DASHRATH AND DEMOCRACY

Dashrath held the grape against the light filtering in through the playhouse curtains. It looked almost transparent. After making sure he had the undivided attention of baby Rama sitting on his left thigh, Dashrath moved it to the young prince's mouth.

Rama opened his mouth wide. Dashrath quickly put the grape in his own mouth and chewed into it with an overdone show of relish. Rama gurgled with laughter.

The king took another grape and did the same, teasing Rama to the last moment and then throwing the grape into his own mouth. Rama laughed again and opened his mouth wide.

He was doing it a third time when Kaushalya walked in. "That is just cruel," she said.

"You don't get it," said Dashrath. He turned a bit so Kaushalya could see the baby's face better and did the whole thing again.

He turned to face her, "See?"

"I can't believe you just did that again," said Kaushalya.

Dashrath shook his head impatiently, "I tried this with Bharat some days past. After two times he hit me in the face with a toy or something."

Dashrath rubbed his nose and continued, "This one does nothing. Why?"

“I don’t know,” said Kaushalya and put a finger to her cheek in mock thoughtfulness. “We have a retard in the royal family?”

Rama carefully climbed down his father’s lap and started crawling towards his three cousins, sitting in the middle of toys at the centre of the large room.

“Stop joking around,” said Dashrath. “There is something about Rama that I can’t quite put my finger on.”

He noticed the confusion on Kaushalya’s face and added, “It is something innate. He is immensely patient. He will make a good king, for his patience will bring him his people’s respect.”

Perhaps because Dashrath never really got around to spending time with the children, Kaushalya felt these were not the words of a doting father. She swelled with just a little pride.

She looked at the children — already the darlings of the entire kingdom — playing with toys a fond carpenter family had gifted only a week ago. She didn’t think the carpenters cared much for Rama’s patience with grapes.

“I have been thinking,” she said. “Ayodhya has been fortunate to have had kings that have been much loved. The people have always loved the royal family.”

“And?” Dashrath raised a brow.

“But would they have chosen us if they had a choice?”

Dashrath pondered this for a moment, then said, “Who else would they choose?”

Kaushalya sat down next to him and explained, "Imagine there were contenders for the throne. Maybe more than two. And the people got to choose who would be the king. If one of those contenders was a prince, would they choose him?"

Dashrath wasn't entirely at home with the concept yet. "You are implying these other contenders would not be from the royal family?"

"Perhaps. Yes."

"But who?" Dashrath wanted to get this.

"I don't know. Merchants maybe. Noblemen or warriors even. Maybe even a sage. Gods know they are popular."

Dashrath nodded. They were quiet for a while. Some distance away, the princes conversed in uncomplicated monosyllables. Rama picked up a wooden elephant and shook it happily. Bharat stopped unhinging a wooden chariot's wheels and wailed at the top of his voice. The elephant was his.

Rama's face fell for an instant, then he smiled and extended the elephant towards Bharat, who took it. Shatrughan, scared silent by Bharat's wailing, pushed all his toys towards him and crawled away. Rama crawled in the other direction. Lakshman stayed where he was for a moment, then reached a decision and followed Rama.

Dashrath said, "I don't see how anything like that could come to pass. What if the people choose an undesirable, a criminal?"

"Why would the people choose a criminal? The noonday sun seems to be affecting your head," Kaushalya threw out her hands.

Dashrath shrugged and they were silent for a while again. Then he saw young Shatrughan sitting at the room's far corner with a panic-stricken expression. The attentions of the daasi weren't achieving much. Bharat was still crying and Rama and Lakshman were wrestling in the other corner.

Bharat crawled to Kaushalya and instantly calmed down when she picked him up. Dashrath went over to Shatrughan and dismissed the daasi. He waited a while to make sure the daasi was out of earshot before making an attempt at monosyllabic pep talk.

"Look Bharat," Kaushalya whispered to the stubborn prince. "There is a retard in the royal family after all."

KURUP AND RAMARAJYA

The goat chewed absent-mindedly as a small group on the other side of the stable made merry. A bull, flanked on either side by a brown horse, was saying, "Her skin was like milk and her neck was like marble." His friends approved of the direction the story was going in by mooing, neighing and bleating their general appreciation. The bull continued, "She nuzzled my neck, 'Mahabali, take me! Make me a cow,' she said."

"This is what Ayodhya is coming to," said a displeased voice from behind the goat. The goat turned and momentarily stopped chewing. A beautiful cow stood in front of him. There was hay in her mouth but she wasn't chewing. She looked holy.

"I am Kurup," the goat introduced himself and waited. Then he realised he was staring and resumed chewing.

"Suvarna," said the cow and her eyes finally came to rest upon Kurup. "Forgive my temper. But those beasts are talking about me."

The goat didn't know what to say. He had been listening to the bull for quite some time now. Now it started to appear distasteful.

"I haven't seen you here before," the cow said.

"I was purchased today... apparently," Kurup said and shrugged. He had realised over the years that it didn't help to dwell on the fact that he was someone's property. In any case, for all practical purposes, he was a free goat.

A great guffaw of laughter erupted from the other end of the stable again. If Suvarna heard it, she made no show of it. Kurup fidgeted on his hooves.

“It is alright actually. I guess I shouldn’t complain. This is Ramarajya after all,” Suvarna said and smiled. Kurup kept quiet. It would be a few months before the most beloved of Ayodhya’s princes returned from his 14-year-exile and claimed the royal throne.

“It is Bharatarajya actually,” he said matter-of-factly. Then he thought for a bit and said, “Actually, it’s just a pair of sandals.”

Suvarna burst into a laugh. Kurup took the compliment quietly. He chewed in silence till Suvarna’s laughter died. Then he looked up at her and she burst out laughing again. “You are amusing,” she said eventually.

Kurup didn’t think it was that funny. But he didn’t mind. Maybe she needed to laugh.

“I hope the prince and his wife are alive and well,” said Suvarna after some time.

Kurup nodded, even though he saw little chance of that. Dandakaranya wasn’t exactly a grazing ground. Every few weeks travelers brought news of hermits attacked and mutilated by rakshasas and asuras. Even able Kshatriyas like Rama can only do so much against such beasts.

They chewed in silence for a while. The muttering and rude laughter from the other end of the stable continued.

Kurup turned and yelled at the bull, “Stop your mooing you piece of dung!”

A wave of silence swept the stable. The bull moved, but realised he was tethered. "Are you talking to me goat?" he said, pretending to be calm.

Kurup's voice left him. He nodded but felt he couldn't nod properly either.

"You shouldn't have done that," Suvarna said.

"I know. He will probably stamp me to death the first chance he gets," Kurup was looking at his hooves.

"Not because of that. I just meant you were rude. There is a difference between him and you. Let it be."

Kurup didn't think there was a difference between him and the bull. Perhaps that's why he yelled.

"You are a dead goat! There is no hope for you!" the bull was saying. Kurup agreed in his heart.

Then the bull fell silent. Kurup looked around and saw him staring open mouthed at the patch of sky visible immediately above his side of the stable. Kurup couldn't see it. Nor could anyone else.

"Did you see that?" mooed the bull loudly, pulling at his tether in apparent panic, leaving inch-deep hoof marks in the soil under his feet. His cohorts scattered. None of them had been looking at the sky at that particular moment.

"See what?" asked Kurup, relieved to be hearing something akin to common conversation from the otherwise raging bull.

“Someone... something... flew over us just now. It was huge. And he... I think it was a man. He had a tail.”

“That is... very... interesting,” Kurup said and started moving towards the bull. “Did he have wings?”

“No... it... You don’t believe me do you goat? I am serious. It flew by so fast. Trust me.”

“I trust you,” Kurup lied. He was standing right next to the bull now, looking at the sky with him. The bull’s mates stood huddled in the far corner. Kurup grew convinced that prolonged exposure to the noonday sun had done things to the bull.

“...and he was holding a weapon of some kind,” the bull panted. “Also... He also had a mountain on his shoulder.”

“I wish I had seen him,” said Kurup, sounding his wistful best. He was actually quite happy. From where he stood, Suvarna looked holy.

LAKSHMAN HAS HIS DOUBTS

Lakshman had a bad feeling about this. He looked grimly at Vibhishan. If he were ever to be vocal about the way things were being done, he told himself, now was the time.

“So we throw rocks into the sea?” he asked in as measured a tone as he could manage.

“Yes my dear brother,” said Rama. He could see Sita already. “The mighty sea god Varun has assured me they will float.”

Float indeed, thought Lakshman. He could imagine his brother, himself, and bits and pieces of the vaanar sena crying out for help to each other as they floated away in different directions in the sea, all sitting on separate rocks.

“If I remember correctly, throwing rocks into the sea is exactly what we were doing a week ago,” Lakshman couldn’t help being louder than usual. Vibhishan shifted on his feet. There was no way of getting out of the tent without brushing against either of the brothers.

“I sense a lack of faith in you Lakshman,” said Rama. “Trust the devas and all will be well.”

“The devas couldn’t protect themselves when Ravana attacked them. We are to trust them to help us against Ravana? You sit hungry by the sea for seven days and seven nights and a deva tells you to throw rocks into water!”

Rama was silent. There was little one could do against the onslaught of reason. Faith fought in silence.

“Hanuman tells me they have siege weapons. Some of Lanka’s senapatis ride on giant lizard-like monsters that breathe fire. I have heard of those. Ravana must have brought them in from faraway China. The king of Lanka himself rides a flying chariot he took from his brother Kuber,” said Lakshman. “All we have is trained monkeys and rocks!”

Young Angad, nephew to the vaanar king Sugreev stopped short in his tracks just outside the tent. Lakshman saw him and froze. Angad looked into his eyes and smiled. Lakshman smiled back. Rama caught his stare and turned to look at Angad. Angad bowed to both of them, turned back and left.

Lakshman hung his head. Rama sighed. This was not the first time Lakshman had thrown political correctness to the wind. But he was just a boy. Rama smiled, ‘always a boy’.

He put a hand on Lakshman’s shoulder. “I am starving. Seven days and seven nights. Get me something to eat, will you?”

Lakshman walked out of the tent, his eyes still boring the ground.

Some distance away, he found Angad sitting on a rock with his face in his hands and couldn’t help grinning.

“What?” said the young vaanar, who had turned to notice Lakshman.

“You won’t believe what he is planning,” Lakshman said.

“Ya? What? Tell me.”

“We are SO dead,” said Lakshman and started walking towards the trees.

“Tell me what he is planning. Please tell me,” said Angad urgently and bounded behind Lakshman.

KASHYAP AND THE CRAB

Kashyap the tortoise slowly made the curve and stepped into the well-lit shallow waters just south of Bharatvarsha.

This side of the sea seemed calmer than the Lankan side, where his ancestral home was. Life there had been steadily growing harder to bear. He had found the bickering among the sea-serpents too much for his old heart to bear. The last straw came when some of the bulkier daityas took to living under water. As if the stench was not enough, they kept complaining about the salinity levels.

He saw a shadow extending towards him like an arrow from the direction of the shore. His keen eyes spied commotion at its tip and recognised the bridge the vaanars were building. The sea was rippling with talk about it. He thought it would be nice to walk in the bridge's shadow and started moving towards it. This way he would be able to surface in the middle of the vaanar camp and look around.

When he was almost about to touch the shadow's tip, a crab skittered into view. "Where do you think you are going shells?" he said.

"To the shore my friend," said Kashyap and smiled. The crab remained stone-faced, but Kashyap didn't mind it. It was well known that crabs couldn't smile.

"Don't 'friend' me Lankan. The likes of you aren't welcome this side of the ocean. This is the land of brotherhood and harmony," said the crab.

The tip of the bridge's shadow edged towards them as they talked.

"I have travelled long and you are the first to have objected to my being here. I am weary son. Let me go my way," Kashyap pleaded.

The crab grew agitated, “You will have to pass through me before you take one more step. I will not let you pollute Bharatvarsha soil. I will cut you to ribbons with my pincers if I have to.”

Kashyap sighed bubbles into the seawater. “I guess I will have my rest here. You proceed with the cutting. Good luck with my shell,” he said and withdrew into the shell.

“Show your face coward!” the crab yelled. “You came here to fight. Why do you hide now?”

Kashyap sighed inside his shell. Then he heard a loud thump and the crab was silent. Kashyap peered out of his shell and saw a large rock lying right next to him. The crab lay pinned under it, all but crushed.

Kashyap was quickly out of the shell. The crab tried to say something, but couldn't. Kashyap set his shell against the rock and pushed hard. No luck. The rock was three times his size. He needed something to wedge into the rock's side and lift it up enough for the crab to skitter free, that is, if the crab could still skitter. He found nothing. The seabed was bare except for swaying weeds.

The tip of the bridge was right above them now. Kashyap looked up and saw two vaanar figures silhouetted against the daylight. He found he could hear them if he tried hard.

“That's the third one you sank today!” said one to the other. “For Rama's sake vaanar, I thought you could spell at least.”

The other replied indignantly, “Give me a break, will you? I have been doing this since sunrise.”

Kashyap paid the rest of their conversation no attention and moved towards the pinned crab as fast as he could. The crab breathed faintly. Kashyap went around the rock to the other side. In front of him was written Shi Ram in Sanskrit. The diagonal line from the Shra alphabet was missing.

He set his shell against the rock and brought it down heavily, scraping against the rock. A moment and a sickening sound later, the line was drawn. The rock grew lighter, dislodged itself from the soft seabed and went up, flying faster towards the surface as it went.

The crab moaned. His shell was crushed and one of his pincers was useless now, but Kashyap was happy to see him alive.

“Come, I will take you to the land of brotherhood and harmony,” he said and hoisted the crab on to his shell. “You can show me around.”

THE VAANAR WHO FLEW

Hanuman sat up abruptly and realised with relief he was not falling from the skies. He had never been a light sleeper. Quite the opposite in fact. Until a few months ago, when life was predictable, even his afternoon naps had been legendary. Then the two princes turned up at Rishyamukh Mountain and things changed.

Ever since his leap to Lanka and back, he had been particularly twitchy. Even last night, he had woken up after an uncomfortable dream involving Singhika, the sea demoness he had to fight and kill on his way to Raavan's land. Besides, he always felt like a fool sitting up sweating and breathless in the centre of a camp full of snoring vaanars.

Taking care not to step on any of the leisurely spread out vaanar tails, Hanuman made his way to the edge of the cliff and sat down with his feet dangling down. He couldn't see Lanka from this distance, but he knew it lay that way.

As he stared at the black waters, his eyes glazed over and his mind went back to the amazing month immediately behind him.

They had arrived at the end of Bharatvarsha in their search for Sita. The good vulture Sampati had chanced upon them and had pointed across the sea in answer to their quest.

Then Jambavant of the bhallukas had freed him. In these early hours of the day, that afternoon from weeks ago seemed like a dream. Had he really done it? Had those limitless powers really been sleeping within him all his life? Or was it merely Jambavant's magic?

Truth be told, Hanuman still didn't feel anything more than vaanar. From what he knew, vaanars didn't fly – let alone leap across the ocean into island kingdoms populated only by rakshasas and (here he gasped)... fight them.

He breathed deep once and allowed himself a chuckle as memories of a burning city came to his rescue. There was no denying that he had really done it.

He dangled his legs to come to terms with his new reality. An early morning chill was beginning to set in. The cold wind whispered in his ears.

“Pranaam Pitashree,” he said gently.

Vaayu, his fabled father and the wind god, caressed his form fondly and told him he was special and he was loved.

Having the wind god for a father is unusual. He is an odd parent. Never around and yet always there. With a million things on his mind no matter when you call upon him. Like right now.

“Why can I fly father?” he asked and let the question hang. After a while, the wind ruffled his hair in answer.

Hanuman made a face, “Let me put it this way. Why can’t any other vaanar fly?”

The wind was still for a while. Then it asked why Hanuman thought they couldn’t.

Hanuman sat silent for a while before he spoke again, “Was it Jambavant? What did he do to me?”

In reply the wind lifted Hanuman off the cliff. He hung in his father’s invisible arms, slightly confused but happy nevertheless.

Then the wind spoke to Hanuman, “Jambavant told you you could fly. That is all he did. It was you who believed him.”

Hanuman considered this. He had always believed Jambavant, that most venerable of bears. He couldn't think of one thing he wouldn't believe if it was Jambavant who spoke it.

“So any vaanar can fly?” he asked.

“Up to them,” said the wind, and then it was gone. Like so many times before.

Hanuman was sitting at the cliff again. He got up and turned around to face his snoring army – each vaanar lost in fond dreams of his own.

“Raavan will never know what hit him,” Hanuman said to himself.

THE ANIMALS OF MOUNT HIMAVAT

Raghu the squirrel was old. He was older than most squirrels he knew, a fact that didn't rest easy on his heart. On the brighter side, the gods had blessed him with the monkey's friendship. The monkey crushed walnuts for him. Things worked out nicely.

There were parts of the day Raghu looked forward to. When the birds returned at sunset from their day's foraging, they told him of all the things they had seen as they flew over Mount Himavat and beyond. One of the younger birds came to him every day and stayed for hours, chirping away without a pause about her day.

When she tired, the squirrel told her many stories from back when he had been young and had roamed the land. She listened with patience (she preferred talking to listening) until her mother sang to her from above that it was time to nest for the night.

Raghu listened to her chirpy song grow fainter and fainter until it remained not much more than a sound of the night. Then he slept and dreamt of far away lands and strange creatures, as he had done every night of his life.

It was on a day warmer than usual that it happened. Raghu had just eaten and was thinking of napping in his hollow in the tree for the afternoon when he saw the birds returning. The sun had still a long way to go before it set. He was wondering what it might be about when the little bird fluttered to a clumsy landing next to him.

"Something is coming! Something big! Really big!" she chirped breathlessly. "It is flying towards us from the south." The earth shook and a rumble sounded all across the mountainside.

One of the elder birds sang shrilly from somewhere up and she winced. Then she said a silent bye to the squirrel and flew up towards her nest.

From a distance Raghu saw his friend the monkey returning. The monkey left the last vine in mid swing and landed in the clearing with an awkward thump. Then he ran the distance to the tree on all fours.

The earth shook again as the monkey got to him, harder this time.

“I saw it,” said the monkey. “It is one of those southern monkeys. Larger and hairier than us. But this one flies! And he is dressed as a human soldier.

“I saw him come flying in, borne aloft by the wind itself. He went running through the herb fields. I think he sought something particular there. Every once in a while, he screamed “SANJEEVANI!” and pulled out plants, chewed on them and spat them out. He even tried some of the intoxicating herbs and foul smelling shrubs that crowd that area. He spat it all out.”

The monkey giggled for a bit and said, “It was funny really. But I was soon disgusted. He spat half-chewed weeds all over the place and grew more infuriated as time passed. Then he yelled ‘HEAR ME HIMAVAT! I HAVE NO TIME FOR YOUR GAMES!’ and ran, bounding down the side of the mountainside like the wind.”

The monkey stopped for air. The earth shook again, harder than ever. Without warning, a fiery storm descended upon the clearing, threatening to blow away everything without roots. The monkey wrapped his tail around Raghu and held on to the tree.

The squirrel saw panic on the monkey’s face. Then the shadows shifted — the sun was behind them now.

Minutes passed like hours. Nests fell from trees. Some birds, including the little one, came and took shelter in the squirrel's hollow. Clouds flew past them in a blur above them. The sky changed colour with every passing minute. After what seemed like eons, the storm grew calmer and then stopped. Raghu thought he felt weightless for a moment. The earth shook again one last time and all was calm.

They were all silent for a time. Raghu couldn't breathe. He poked the monkey. "I am sorry," said the monkey, and eased his tail around the squirrel, still not letting go entirely.

The birds flew out to seek their loved ones. From somewhere far away, they heard shouting. It was happy shouting. Jubilant and full of hope.

Then, without warning, scores of monkeys swarmed upon the clearing. They all had baskets and bags with them. Some stopped and looked around, while most just bounded towards the fields. The monkey finally released Raghu.

One of the foraging monkeys saw the two panicked friends and came to them.

"Desperate times, these," he shrugged and smiled. "We are sorry for the inconvenience our friend Hanuman caused you," he said, a little embarrassed. Then he added, "I welcome you to the presence of Rama."

The monkey remained panic-stricken. The squirrel tried to smile.

"Come with us," said the forager. "I will show you."

They went out of the clearing, into the fields. Perched on the monkey, Raghu heard more cheery yelling, this time from all around them.

V FOR VALMIKI

It was one of the quieter afternoons. I realised there were more squirrels around than usual. Then I realised they were all looking at me. What I didn't realise was that there was an even larger number of them on the neighbouring trees. Every one of them was looking at me.

Most of them were not even from any place nearby. I knew pretty much all of the squirrels near my house. They usually sat on ledges and waited for biscuit crumbs. And there were only two of them, a couple by the looks of it.

One of the squirrels leapt at me. I instinctively moved my arm to block it and felt something sting me just above the elbow. There was a small white wooden cone stuck in my arm. I pulled it out and saw it was hollow and was dripping thick orange goo. The one that had stabbed me had leapt off and was standing in front of me.

"It won't last long," he said to the squirrel standing next to him. "Let's get this over with. We can't afford another injection."

I suppressed an idiotic gape. The injection was making me alert and somehow also making all this believable. My surprise quickly melted away.

"Who are you?" I asked.

I was answered by the one who had stabbed me. "I am Chimpu Kumar. Captain of the Sundarvan Sabertooths."

"Which Sundarvan are you talking about?" I asked.

“Sundarvan is everywhere!” they all squeaked in chorus. Apparently they were sentimental about this. I decide not to press the point.

“Sage Valmiki will now talk to you,” Chimpu Kumar informed me and backed away along with several others. A human-sized image flickered into clarity in front of me.

It was an old man, ancient even, dressed in white like an ascetic. If I didn't know better (it was some kind of hallucinogen-induced holographic projection), I could have sworn the image had been photoshopped. The man looked too clean for comfort.

“You would be the one that has been stealing from my epic,” he said, ancient and annoyed.

“Not really,” I said. “I... See it's not really...”

“Silence!” he roared.

“Listen... O sage Valmiki... may I call you Val?” I suggested, trying to break the ice.

“You most certainly may not,” said the sage sourly.

“Miki then?”

One of the squirrels came forward and stamped on my foot. It didn't hurt, but it was very insulting. Especially since several of them pointed at me and laughed derisively after that.

I kept my wits about me, “I am not the only one that did it. Your work has inspired hundreds of others all over the world. And besides, we write in different languages. You did verse, I do a blog.”

Valmiki raised an arm to silence the odd squeak from here and there in the crowd around us. Then he said, “Everyone will be held accountable. And you must stop any more of your retellings.”

The Sabertooths cheered. Already, my understanding of their talk was failing. I didn’t like this at all. Nobody tells bloggers what to do. Nobody!

But I knew I had little chance of bringing down Valmiki. He is immortal. And he used to be a bandit. The thing to do would be to distract him. Get him working on something that would keep him occupied for long.

Chimpu Kumar moved forward and said something. I didn’t get any of it. It couldn’t possibly have been anything nice, because they all laughed immediately afterwards. An idea came flying into my head from somewhere dark and nasty.

I lifted my leg and brought my foot down upon Chimpu Kumar, pinning down his right hind paw under my heel. His face grew contorted with pain and his eyes watered. I hated myself for doing this and tore my eyes away from the squirrel.

The rest of the Sabertooths were frozen in shock. Partly because they had not expected this from me, and partly because, murderous or not, they were still little squirrels. And then I saw the sage. He was as much in pain as Chimpu himself, perhaps more. His mouth was slightly open and his eyes were brimming with tears.

Then he started mumbling. I took a second or so to realise he was mumbling in Sanskrit. And it rhymed. It was a pity I didn't understand a thing.

The sage faded, flickered and vanished. Chimpu Kumar was gone from under my foot. Gone also was all of the Sundarvan Sabertooth squad. With any luck, Valmiki would get to work on his next epic and forget all about the Ramayan retellings. I imagined Lord Ganesh flexing his fingers and packing his bags for Sundarvan.

As for Chimpu Kumar, he would thank me someday. He and I would share footnote space in the new epic, like the Kraunchya bird and the hunter.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Vijayendra Mohanty is an Indian comic book writer. He has written stories and scripts for publications such as Comic JUMP and COMIX.INDIA. He is the writer and co-creator of Ravanayan, a comic book series based on the story of king Ravana of Lanka.

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