

Ramayana

(The story covered in the workshop in the Weston Discovery Centre is a short version of the simplified Ramayana outlined below).

The epic story of the Ramayana involves prince Rama who was married to a princess called Sinta.

When Rama's father wanted to stand down from the throne and hand the reign over to his eldest son Rama, he was reminded of two promises he had made to his second wife. He had promised her that their son Barata would succeed as king and that Rama was to be sent into exile into the forest for fourteen years. To help his father to make this difficult decision, Rama gave up the throne and willingly left going into the forest with his wife Sinta and his half brother Laksmana. Sadly, stricken with grief, Rama's father died.

Rama's half brother Barata refused to take the throne and went into the forest to look for Rama. Rama insisted on staying in the forest to lead a simple life so Barata returned to rule on behalf of Rama.

One day whilst in battle, a female giant fell in love with Rama. To punish the giant, Laksmana (Rama's half brother) cut off one of her ears and the tip of her nose. Upset and humiliated by this, the giant turned to her brother, Rahwana (the ten headed giant king) for help. Rahwana decided to kidnap Rama's beautiful wife Sinta in revenge.

Rama went in search of his wife Sinta and on the way met the king of the monkeys. The monkey king's wife had been seized from him by his own brother, so Rama came to an agreement with the king of monkeys. This agreement was that if he helped the king get his kingdom and wife back, the king would help Rama.

The monkey kingdom was attacked, the king's brother was defeated and the monkey king was reunited with his wife. To keep his promise the monkey king agreed to help Rama.

The monkey king sent his minister Hanuman, who had magic powers, to search Rahwana's land for Sinta. To prove he was helping Rama, Hanuman took Rama's ring.

Hanuman found Sinta on the island of Lanka and told her that Rama was coming to save her. At first Sinta did not believe Hanuman thinking he was a demon in disguise. Hanuman was able to prove he was telling the truth as he showed Sinta Rama's ring.

Sinta was very happy, but the demon Rahwana caught Hanuman and set his tail on fire! In the end, Hanuman managed to escape and went back to the forest to get Rama and Laksmana. They returned with the whole monkey army to attack the island of Lanka. The monkeys made a bridge over to the island and a terrible battle took place. Finally Rama killed the demon Rahwana and was able to rescue his wife Sinta!

When Rama found Sinta, he was worried that she may no longer love him. He thought she might have fallen in love with Rahwana while she was his prisoner. Rama made Sinta walk through fire to show that she still really loved him.

Finally Rama and Sinta, happy to be together again, returned to Rama's land with Laksmana. When they got there they were greeted by Rama's brother Barata who immediately handed the throne back to Rama.