Jatayu

By Prayag Sreenivasan

Slash! Lakshmana severed Shoorpanaka’s nose!

Shoorpanaka was a demoness. She immediately ran to her brother Ravana, a powerful rakshasa. Hearing that Lakshmana had attacked his sister, Ravana set off to abduct to teach him a lesson. When he reached Panchavathi, where Rama, Lakshmana and Sita were living during their exile, Ravana saw beautiful Sita all by herself. Ravana came to know that Rama and Lakshmana had gone hunting. Ravana disguised himself as a sadhu and approached Sita for food. He insisted that she step out of the hut and offer the food. In doing so, Sita was yankedoff her feet and abducted by Ravana!

Sita cried for help as Ravana made his way to his kingdom. Jatayu, the king of birds, and Rama’s devotee, heard Sita’s cries for help. Jatayu rushed to Sita’s rescue. Just as Ravana threw off his disguise, Jatayu shot towards Ravana, attempting to peck him to death! Ravana brandished his sword and struck the brave bird on its wing! Inspite of being hurt, Jatayu fought with all his might. Finally Jatayu crashed head first down a steep hill.

He lay there bleeding, trying to stay alive. The next morning, He heard Rama’s voice. Rama and Lakshmana were heading back from their hunting trip. When Rama saw the wounded bird, he and Lakshmana were startled. They learnt from Jatayu all about Sita’s abduction. Jatayu explained that he tried really hard to save Sita but he had failed. Very soon after this, Jatayu took his last breath.

Rama hugged the great bird that had sacrificed its life for him.