



The  
Adventures  
of  
Rama

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Milo Cleveland Beach

*With Illustrations from a Sixteenth-Century  
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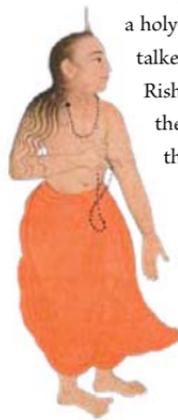
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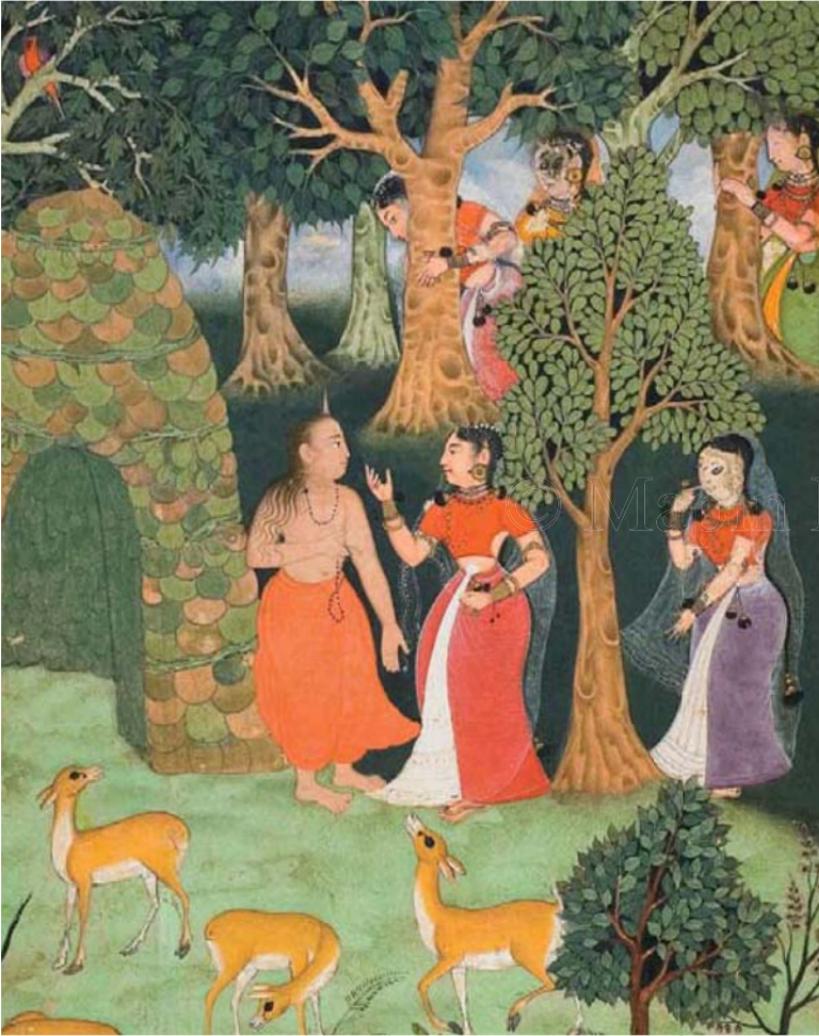


Ayodhya was the most beautiful city in all of India. Its wide streets were shaded by stately trees, houses were tall and spacious, and cool streams meandered through groves of mango and of trees that looked just like their name—Flame of the Forest. Peacocks roamed wild, and friendly monkeys raced through the overhead branches. It was an ideal, peaceful world, ruled by a wise and just king.

Nevertheless, unhappiness and worry were in the air. The king, Dasaratha, was an old man, and while he had several wives, he had no sons. In India, at that time, only sons could inherit the kingdom and protect its people. Dasaratha knew that finally he would have to ask the gods for help, but he needed a wise counselor, a holy man who knew how to get the gods' attention. He talked with many people and learned of a hermit named Rishyashringa, a young man who lived all alone, deep in the forest. His house was a hut of branches and leaves that he himself had built.



Except for his father, Rishyashringa knew no human beings; wild animals were his only friends.



the town was also praising and honoring their most important guests—the gods, who would be watching from the heavens.

When the ceremony finally began, Dasaratha, surrounded by his wives and his advisers, was seated in a special pavilion, built from fragrant woods and painted by the finest artists. There were soft pillows to lean against, and flower garlands hung overhead. Nearby, Rishyashringa and other holy men chanted hymns and placed offerings of flowers, fruits, and grain—things which the people valued—in a special ceremonial fire. Transformed into smoke, whatever was sacrificed rose to the heavens and was received by the gods.

Far above the earth, the three great gods—Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Shiva the Destroyer—sat quietly looking down on Dasaratha's ceremony, as they did every time a sacrifice was made. They noticed whether the chants and prayers were performed

