

THE EXILE OF LORD RAMA

Dum, Dum, Dum.....(Drum playing)

ANNOUNCER DRUMS: Listen, Listen, Listen! Oh fortunate citizens of Ayodhya. On the order of Guru Vasistha, on behalf of all the citizens, Maharaja Dasarath shall install Sri Rama as Prince regent of Ayodhya at sunrise tomorrow. All the residents of Ayodhya are hereby invited for the auspicious Coronation Ceremony of Sri Rama.

Again Dum, Dum, Dum,.....And goes away.

CURTAINS OPEN

(PALACE OPENING AND FESTIVE MUSIC)

[Kaikeyi's palace chamber, Kaikeyi looking at herself in the mirror and maids decorating her hair with flowers]

MAID I: (Smiling in a very joyous mood)
My dear queen, all the streets in Ayodhya are adorned with beautiful fragrant flowers and brilliant colourful lights are making night appear like day.

KAIKEYI: (in the mirror only) Really!!!

MAID II: And the crowds of people are moving like waves along with numerous decorated elephants, horses, and chariots.

KAIKEYI: Take this, you have brought great joy to my heart.
(Gives her some jewellery from her person)

MAID II: All Glories to you Oh! Queen.

KAIKEYI: Chant the glories of my son Rama! (Turning to the other maid) And this, this is for you!!

MAID I: Thank You.

KAIKEYI: Go and pray for my dear Rama. Tonight is the fulfillment of my innermost desires.

[Second Maid walks out and Manthra bangs into her]

MANTHRA: Oh! My dear Manthra, My favourite Manthra – where have you been so Long? I have been waiting for you. Look! Manthra, Look at this priceless Necklace. I have kept it aside just for you. Come, let me put it on you with my own hands. Be happy and rejoice! Let the whole world rejoice! After all my dear Rama is to be crowned King tomorrow.

[Manthra throws away the necklace]

KAIKEYI: What has happened to my dear Manthra today. Has someone ridiculed your ugly form?

MANTHRA: Huh!

KAIKEYI: You look terribly disturbed over something. Is everything all right with my dear Rama? Is Maharaj Dasarath well Manthra? Tell me Manthra; tell me, is everything all right with everyone.

MANTHRA: Yes! Everything is all right with everyone except with you.

KAIKEYI: With me!

MANTHRA: I am shocked to see that you can express such joy on the eve of disaster.

KAIKEYI: What are you talking about Manthra?

MANTHRA: Are you so deluded by your husband's sweet words that you do not realize what is happening before your very eyes.

KAIKEYI: Why do you speak like this? You are ugly to look at, but at least speak good words, Manthra.

MANTHRA: My dear Queen. You are a poor creature. Can't you see how deceitfully your husband has acted? He has deliberately sent Bharat away so that he can install his pet son Rama on the throne in Bharat's absence.

KAIKEYI: That's not true.

MANTHRA: Yes! It is true; and that's not all. Rama has always been envious of Bharat. You don't know because you are blinded by affection, but I see these things. Rama knows that Bharat is superior to Him in all respects. Passing over Bharat

to choose Rama should be a great insult to you.

KAIKEYI: Nonsense Manthra! Your mind is polluted.

MANTHRA: Huh!

KAIKEYI: Rama loves Bharat more than his own self. They are best friends. They love each other dearly.

MANTHRA: You may imagine that you are Dasarath's favourite queen, however in truth it is Kaushalya whom he adores. Don't you feel cheated? You imagine that you are happy, but it will be Kaushalya who prospers. Once Rama becomes King you will be compelled to act as Kaushalya's maidservant and your Bharat will be forced to be Rama's slave. And you, at best, you will be just a second class woman. Dasarath will mistreat you, abuse you and neglect you.

KAIKEYI: Manthra! Manthra! Manthra! [Hold and shakes Manthra.] Please be quiet, why are you bent upon poisoning my mind in this way. What will you gain by doing this?

MANTHRA: Gain, Huh! Everyone is not selfish in this world. What difference does it makes to me whether Rama becomes King or Bharat, I am not going to be queen of Ayodhya. But you will suffer; your son will suffer. And that is my only concern.....

Can't you see my dear Kaikeyi? It is devious, envious, conspiracy against you and Bharat. Just think about it my innocent queen. Just think about it! Dasarath didn't even allow you to have the faintest idea about his wicked plan. Wake up Queen, Wake up before it is too late.

[Kaikeyi's mind change + War + Manthra's plot + Change of expression + Change of music]

KAIKEYI: Perhaps, you are right Manthra! But, but is there anything we can do now?

MANTHRA: Yes! Between today and tomorrow there is one full night. Listen carefully my dear Queen. Do you not remember, many years ago, when Maharaja Dasarath was engaged in a fierce battle and fell unconscious. You then removed him from the battlefield and saved his life. Out of deep gratitude Maharaj offered you two boons. However you said you would ask for them sometimes in the future.....Now, Now is the time to ask for those boons.

KAIKEYI: Oh! My dear Manthra, [very happily] Now I can see how in this whole city of Ayodhya, there is no one who cares for me except for you. Whatever you tell me I will do. Whichever path you will show me, I will take.

MANTHRA: Then do as I say. With the first boon ask [Heavy Music] Bharat and not Rama be installed as Kings of Ayodhya.

KAIKEYI: And with the second?

MANTHRA: With the second demand that [Heavy Music] Rama be banished to the forest for 14 years.

KAIKEYI: Banished to the forest? But why?

MANTHRA: Do not get softened by affection. Rama's absence will give Bharat opportunity to establish his popularity amongst the citizens.

KAIKEYI: Manthra ! Perhaps you are right. Rama's must be banished.....
But please tell me how I can accomplish this.

MANTHRA: Listen further my dear Kaikeyi. Go to the sulking Chamber and cast off your costly ornaments and royal dress, prepare for sulking chamber blackout. Put on dirty clothes and lie on the cold floor. When Darsarath comes, remain silent. Being his favourite queen he will do everything to pacify you, but do not settle down for anything less than your son being installed on the throne. Simply remind him of the two benedictions he has promised.

KAIKEYI: My dear Manthra, although hunchbacks are generally sinful, you are wise and honorable. The entire science of diplomacy must be residing within your hump. When Bharat is installed as her apparent I shall garland your hump with a chain of pure gold and when Rama is exiled to the forest I shall smear your hump sandalwood paste. Thank you so much Manthra, Thank you so much.

[During this conversation Kaikeyi starts removing and throwing her jewellery and puts on a black chuuni and lies on the floor.]

MANTHRA: [While going off stage]
Oh! Queen; just do as I have said. Be firm and soon you and your son shall enjoy the kingdom of Ayodhya.

[Manthra exits and after sometimes Dasarath enters in a very happy mood.
Lights are dim to give sulking room appearance. Remove the mirror.]

(During Blackout in the Background)

DASARATH: Where is Maharani Kaikeyi? Why is she not in her room?

MAID: Maharaj! Maharani Kaikeyi is in the sulking chambers.

(No music, lights come on)

DASARATH: Kaikeyi My dear Kaikeyi.....

[Abruptly stops seeing the strewn jewellery and gives a worried look]

DASARATH: [In a different worried tone]

Kaikeyi.....Kaikeyi.....

[Sees Kaikeyi lying on the floor and goes to her and sits besides her]

DASARATH: What is troubling you my beautiful queen! What is the cause of your despondency?

KAIKEYI: Huh!

DASARATH: Please speak something Kaikeyi. Today is a day of rejoicing. Has someone done something to anger you my dearest one?

KAIKEYI: Huh!

DASARATH: Please know, I am under your control. I could never avoid pleasing you. Speak freely my queen. I will give you anything.

KAIKEYI: Do you mean it, that you will give me anything.

DASARATH: Of course, I have always done anything for you. You are more dearer than life itself. Ask Kaikeyi Ask! But I cannot tolerate your silence.

KAIKEYI: Do you make a vow?

DASARATH: I make the vow in the name of my beloved Rama, the dearest object of my love. And you know Kaikeyi, that after Rama there is no one more dearer to me than you. I promise to execute whatever you order.

KAIKEYI: How do I believe that you will keep your promise?

DASARATH: Are you doubting a descendant of the Raghu dynasty? I make a vow in front of the sun and the moon and all my forefathers of the Raghu dynasty.

KAIKEYI: Maharaj, do you remember offering two boons to me when I saved your life.

DASARATH: Yes! Of course Kaikeyi!
[Heavy boons]

KAIKEYI: My illustrious lord, the follower of dhrama and adherent to truth. My first boon is this (Heavy music) with the paraphernalia you have arranged to coronate Rama, let Bharat be installed as heir apparent to the royal throne.

[Dasarath's expression changes – shocked expression]

KAIKEYI: And the second boon is that (Heavy music) you banish Rama to the forest this very day to live in exile for next 14 years, wearing only tree bark and deer skin.

[Dasarath stumble back and falls on the bed, continuously staring at Kaikeyi]

KAIKEYI: Why are you looking at me like this, Oh! best amongst the Kshatriyas! Why do you look stunned with bewilderment and why are your limbs trembling in this way?

DASARATH: (With stretched hands) Kaikeyi.....(can't speak further)

KAIKEYI: I only asked for my two boons. If you don't want to give then don't give. Break your vow..... But then, (angrily) never again allow the name of dharma to come on your tongue.

DASARATH: Do you know what are you asking for?

KAIKEYI: Yes! I know very well.

DASARATH: No,.....No, but how I can give these boons?

KAIKEYI: Then on what basis did you proudly say - Ask, Ask Kaikeyi, Ask". Did you think I would ask for some figs? Huh!! I am the daughter of a King, the wife of a King. What less than a Kingdom could I ask for.

DASRATH: You vicious woman, why are you determined to destroy my entire dynasty. What offense has Rama ever committed against you? He loves you more than his own mother. Rama is the embodiment of all virtues. He is kind, forgiving, truthful, gentle, fixed in His duty and the well wisher of everyone. Oh! Misguided woman from whom did you learn such shameful wickedness. Please take back all that you have just said.

KAIKEYI: That is not possible.

DASRATH: .If you insist I will certainly install Bharat as heir apparent. But could never think of banishing Rama to the forest. As for any other benediction. I am ready to give you the entire earth, not this.

KAIKEYI: Never!!!

DASRATH: Then I will not be able to sustain my life Oh! Heartless woman. This world can exist without sunlight. Fish can live without water, but without Rama, Dasarath cannot live, Dasarath cannot live.

KAIKEYI: Ha! Ha! Ha! Maharaj your weak heartedness makes me laugh at you.

DASARATH: Why only you, the whole world will laugh at me, everyone will ridicule me saying, "There goes the lusty old King who was so attached and enslaved to his wife that he sent away his righteous son into exile..... Rama..... Oh! Rama....."

I fall at your feet Kaikeyi, please! (Holds her feet)

KAIKEYI: (Pushes him away angrily) Enough of everything! But know that if you do not keep your promise I shall drink poison this very day and you will be known throughout history as a murderer and the destroyer of the dignity of your entire dynasty.

DASRATH: Oh! Evil hearted wretched woman, on this very day I disown you as my wife and I regret I had any connection with you. (Falls to the ground unconscious) (Dim lights and gradual blackout)

[Narration and Music]

NARRATION: Maharaj Dasarath lay there all night trying to reason with Kaikeyi but it was utterly futile. The next morning Rama was summoned to Maharani Kaikeyi's palace.

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[Rama's entry and Kaikeyi and Dasarath]

RAMA: What is it my dear father?

DASARATH: (No response, can't even look into Rama's face)
Mother! Why will my father not speak to me? Why is he not happy to see me? What has happened to make him so distressed?

KAIKEYI: Your father cannot speak to you because he fears that by doing so, he will hurt you.

RAMA: My dear Mother! I am surprised that there is any doubt in your minds that I would unflinchingly carry out my father's wishes. Please tell me mother, what my father wants.

KAIKEYI: Formerly, your father had offered me two boons. Now I is to utilize them. Firstly, I have asked your father to install your brother Bharat as heir apparent to the throne. Secondly, I have asked that you be exiled to the forest for 14 years to live as an ascetic.....

RAMA: (Without change of expression, with a big smile)
Is that all!

DASARATH: Rama.....Rama.....

KAIKEYI: Rama since your father does not have the heart to tell you, it is your duty as a son to ensure that he does not go back on his word of honor and thus tread the path of unrighteousness.

RAMA: I will give my life to uphold the dignity of my father. It is m foremost duty.

DASARATH: (Shaking his head) Rama.....Rama.....

RAMA: Please do not be sad and aggrieved in your heart father. My only wish

is you and my mother (Looking at Kaikeyi) may always look upon me favorably.

(Rama to Kaikeyi) Is there anything else you would like me to do mother?

KAIKEYI: (Surprised at Rama' reaction, hesitatingly) Uh!..... Uh!.....
No.....That's all...

RAMA: It grieves me that my father has not ordered me himself but I am ready to depart for the forest with your command alone.

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DASARATH: Rama.....Rama.....

(Rama bows down and exits)

(Blackout - small change in placement of furniture)

(Kaushalya's happiness + crying)

(Full lights on, Kaushalya sitting on the bed, with
Maid 1 standing next to her with plate in her hand.)

(Enter Maid 2)

MAID 2: Maharani Kaushalya! Sri Rama has come to see you.

KAUSHALYA: Oh! Rama has come?

(Rama enters)

KAUSHALYA: Rama, today is the happiest day of my life. Today you will be installed as successor to the throne. Come sit here my child, for let me sanctify your body with auspicious articles.

RAMA: No my dear mother, it is now time for me to sit on Kusa grass.

KAUSHALYA: (Laughter) Will you ever stop joking with me Rama.

RAMA: I am not joking my dear mother? Please do not allow yourself to be overcome by grief at what I must tell you now, for this news will bring terrible - terrible pain to your soft heart.
(Change in music - Heavy music begins and Kaushalya's expressions

change)

Because of 2 benedictions that my father had formerly promised. mother Kaikeyi, Bharat will be coronated as King of Ayodhya tomorrow and on this very day I shall leave Ayodhya to dwell in the forest for 14 years.

(Kaushalya faints)

MAID I: Maharani Kaushalya! (Rushes and holds her)

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RAMA: Mother.....?

KAUSHALYA: No my child this cannot be true, tell me this Rama, this is not true, this is not true.

RAMA: No, mother, this is true.

KAUSHALYA: **No, No, (crying) why has death not come to me instantly on hearing this calamity. What greater misery could befall me then this. It would be better if I would remain childless. (crying again.....)**

RAMA: Mother it is not possible for me to disobey my father. Therefore, you must give me your permission so that I may depart for the forest at once.

KAUSHALYA: Oh my son! If you are so determined to execute your father's command than I will also follow you into the forest, just as a cow follows its calf.

RAMA: No dear mother, you cannot accompany me. The foremost duty of a chaste and virtuous wife is to never leave her husband under any circumstance. This is the verdict of the scriptures.

(In a pacifying tone)

My dear mother 14 years will pass away in the blinking of an eye.

KAUSHALYA: All right. Go and fulfill your father's promise. If I remain alive then I shall see you after 14 years.

(Sita sadness)
(Sita enters)

SITA: Mother, Mother, what is this I have just heard. Is it true?
(embraces Kaushalya)

KAUSHALYA: Yes my child, the will of Providence is supreme. Now is the time to send off Rama.

SITA: I have also come to you for permission.

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KAUSHALYA: (shocked) To go where, To your father's house? No, No, please don't, I will be left here alone.

SITA: No not to Janakpur, to go to the forest with my Lord.

RAMA: Sita!

SITA: Yes my Lord, if you are going to the forest, then I am coming with you. A wife shares the fortune or the misfortune of the husband. If you do not take me with you then I will end my life by taking poison.

RAMA: Oh! Delicate lady, do you know what it means to live in the forest? There are no soft beds to lay on. All there will be to eat is roots and berries. There will be excessive heat and cold, thorny bushes, wild ferocious animals and dangerous man eating Rakshasas. My dear Janki! You must stay back here in Ayodhya and serve our mother and father in my absence.

KAUSHALYA: Rama you were just telling me about the duties of a virtuous wife. What about those duties for Sita? You must (affirmatively) take her with you.

RAMA: All right Janaki then make preparations to leave immediately.

(Laxman entry to blame Kaikeyi)

LAXMAN: Brother, Brother, is it true that Mother Kaikeyi has taken away the

Kingdom from you.

RAMA: Laxman, do not speak in this way. I do not blame mother Kaikeyi, for she is only an instrument in the hands of Providence.

LAXMAN: But our father has become senile and a plaything in the hands of wicked Kaikeyi.

RAMA: Mind your words Laxman. Do not increase my grief by opposing my desire to honor my father's command (Sita sadness). I will not be swayed from my duty.

LAXMAN: (Holding his feet)
Forgive me Oh! Brother, but allow me to accompany you. Just as a shadow cannot be separated from its object, Laxman can never be separated from Rama.

RAMA: No, I can't take you, what will mother Sumitra say?

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SUMITRA: What will mother Sumitra say, don't you know that Raghunandan? If Sita and Rama are going to the forest, there is no place for Laxman in Ayodhya.

RAMA: All right Laxman, prepare to leave.

CURTAIN CLOSE

(Narration and Music)

NARRATION: Thereafter in order to keep the promise of His father intact, Sri Rama in a mood of perfect renunciation, left behind the royal opulence of Ayodhya and wandered barefoot in the Dandakaranya forest along with his chaste wife Sita and devoted brother Laxman. In the mean time at Ayodhya, Maharaj Dasarath, unable to tolerate the pang of separation from his beloved son Rama, gave up his life air and returned to the spiritual abode. Being bereft of their King, Bharat and Shatrughna were summoned to

Ayodhya immediately.

(Narration and Music)

CURTAIN OPENS

(Kaikeyi and Bharat)

MANTHRA: Kaikeyi! Kaikeyi! Prepare to welcome your son! King Bharat is coming. He will definitely want to go and meet his father first, but I will bring Him straight here. You prepare to receive Him.

BHARAT: (Shocked to see his mother in white. He goes one step behind and his bow falls off his shoulder)

What happened mother? Why are you wearing these clothes? Why does the whole palace look so desolate? Where is my father? Why do I not find him in his room?

KAIKEYI: My son, whoever is born, has to leave one day. Your father has left us and attained that abode where all pious and heroic men go.

(Bharat falters back and sits down on the throne and cries piteously)
(Manthra is on stage, exhibiting varied expressions)

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BHARAT: The whole way back to Ayodha my heart was trembling. Those bad dreams..... those ill omens..... Oh! Mother my worst apprehensions have come true. My father is no more, My father is no more..... (cries for sometime) That loving father who caressed me, that father who taught me so many things throughout my life. He, who was my best well wisher, friend and guide. He has left me He has left me.

KAIKEYI: My dear Bharat, please do not become overwhelmed by sorrow in this way.

BHARAT: But mother I am so unfortunate, I could not even have a last look at my dying father. Definitely before dying he must have asked for me. All of you were present with him.....Only I was not there. Tell me mother,

Tell me, did he ask for me?

KAIKEYI: (In a straight tone) He was only calling out for Rama all the time.

BHARAT: Rama..... But was he not there with him? Atleast you must have **been there.**

KAIKEYI: No, even I was not there. He left his body in Kaushalya's palace.

BHARAT: What? Where were Rama and Laxman?

KAIKEYI: In the forest.

BHARAT: **But.....But why in the forest.**

BHARAT: Banished! But for what? No! This punishment is given to the worst of criminals. My brother Rama is the most righteous amongst men. He is completely sinless and pure. What does all this mean mother? I cannot understand anything.

KAIKEYI: (Takes a sigh) That's a long story. For now you take rest. You have just returned from a long journey. You have to shoulder many responsibilities now. After performing the last rites for your deceased father, you have to take charges of the throne of Ayodhya. This is not time to shed tears. You have to do your duties.

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BHARAT: You are right. I have to do my duties. I think some evil-minded person has done a big conspiracy to destroy our entire dynasty and spread poison in our loving family. So my first duty is to punish this person who has caused the death of my father, the person who has caused my brother to be banished. Whoever that sinful person is I will never leave him alive, never leave him alive.

KAIKEYI: then, will you give him a death sentence?

BHARAT: Of course! Even if it is death personified.

KAIKEYI: Then you will have to give that punishment to me.

BHARAT: **You!**

KAIKEYI: Yes me! In your absence Kaushalya wanted to take advantage of the situation and make her own son King of Ayodhya. But I did not allow this to happen. No one can deprive you of the throne of Ayodhya while I am still alive. With the 2 benedictions your father owed me, I asked for Ayodhya's throne for you and banishment for Rama to the forest for 14 years.

BHARAT: (Completely shocked and speechless.....)

KAIKEYI: And Sita and Laxman followed Rama without any difficulty. Now your path is clear. Poor Manthra, she helped me all the way, she opened my eyes, she suggested all these ideas. Now my son, the Kingdom is yours to enjoy. The citizens of Ayodhya need a King. Perform your duties and rule the world.

BHARAT: (Looks at Manthra with eyes burning with rage - smiling Manthra, now looks scared. Bharat keeps looking angrily at Kaikeyi with a steady gaze) (After sometime Manthra slowly slips out into the wings)

KAIKEYI: Why are you looking at me like this Bharat?

BHARAT: You cruel.....

KAIKEYI: Whatever I did, I did only for you, Bharat.

BHARAT: (Very angrily).....Wicked woman! What have you done? Do you actually have the insane mind to think that I would accept the throne by murdering my father and banishing my brother who is dearer to me than life itself? I could never even dream of usurping the

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throne from Rama, for I consider myself to be only his menial servant, that is my natural position.

KAIKEYI: What are you talking about Bharat, why don't you understand that.....

BHARTA: You must be the Goddess of universal destruction. Are you so hard hearted that you cannot understand how Mother Kaushalya must be

feeling in the absence of her only son?

KAIKEYI: Bharat.....

BHARAT: Oh! inful lady, why did your tongue not break into pieces before sending Rama to the forest. That RaIna who loved you more than his own mother, that Kaushalya who loved you more than her own sister. Did your heart not scream before sending away her only son to the forest? Why did your tongue not melt before asking for such cruel boons?

KAIKEYI: Bharat, why don't you understand? Every mother has the greed to see her own son in the best position.

BHARAT: Greed, that is the root cause of all sin. Greed makes one blind and one loses the power of discrimination. You are not a woman; you are a merciless rakshasi.

KAIKEYI: I am your mother, Bharat, I am your mother.

BHARAT: No, from today you are not my mother, today I disown you. I prefer staying in hell birth after birth before calling you my mother. Maharani Kaikeyi, if you were not a woman, then with these very hands I would have strangled your neck and cut you to pieces. But I assure you that I will never see your wicked face again. After today I will never ever enter this palace again.

KAIKEYI: And I assure you that I will never allow you to fulfill your selfish ambition. Not only will I bring Rama back from the forest but instead I will spend 14 years in exile to keep my father's promise intact

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KAIKEYI: Bharat my son..... (Falls do n crying)
Please forgive me Bharat. (Again starts crying)

(Bharat is on his way out when suddenly Sumant, Vasistha and Kaushalya enter. Bharat bows down to them and cries)

CURTAIN CLOSES

(Narration and Music)

NARRATION: As news of Bharat's desire spread, everyone became joyful. The ministers summoned many engineers and laborers to construct a broad highway into the forest. They built bridges across the streams. After the construction was completed, the citizens who were all feeling hopeless and dejected in separation from Lord Rama, immediately felt relief. In great jubilation they all followed Bharat into the forest, being delighted at the prospect of seeing Rama.

The entire party, after passing through Maharaj Guha's kingdom, crossed the Ganges and arrived at the ashram of Bharadvaj Muni. After confirming Bharat's intentions, and being convinced of His devotion and humility, Bharadvaja Muni directed them towards where Lord Rama was residing with Sita and Laxman at the Chitrakoot Mountain.

(Narration and Music)

**FOREST SCENE
CURTAIN OPENS**

(Forest opening scene)

(Sita, Rama, Laxman on stage. Laxman tying a bundle of sticks in front corner)

RAMA: With you and Laxman with me, I have no reason to be aggrieved, for we are together residing in this lovely and peaceful place.

SITA: Yes my Lord, because you are with me, I am not missing the royal Pleasures of Ayodhya.

(Laxman's anger forest + Ram, Bharat milap + Bharat's sadness)

LAXMAN: Brother, Brother, he has come! He has come! He has brought his army. It's time to pick up our weapons.

(picking up his bow and tying his quiver on his chest)

Good that he himself has come here. Today I will not leave him alive.

RAMA: What happened Laxman? Who has come?

LAXMAN: (Sarcastically) Your dear Bharat.

RAMA: (Very happy) What? Bharat has come!

LAXMAN: Yes, with an army to attack you and kill you, so that He can be assured of unrivalled sovereignty. He thinks you are helpless in the forest but He does not know that Laxman is still beside you. Today, I shall slay Him and if necessary the entire army of Ayodhya. After taking His life, then we shall watch Kaikeyi suffer for her sins.

RAMA: Laxman, never speak like that about such a noble personality as Bharat. Bharat loves me as much as you do. In his mind he could never think of harming me. Bharat had nothing to do with his mother's plans..... In fact, I am sure He is coming to beg me to return to Ayodhya and accept the throne.

(Bharat enters with Shatrughna and Sumanta)

BHARAT: Oh Rama, my dear brother (and falls at his feet)

RAMA: Bharat my brother (Lifts Him up and goes to embrace Him.....but Bharat moves back saying.....)

BHARAT: No, you should not embrace a sinner like me, because of whom you have to endure these hardships in the forest. You who deserve to be sitting on the throne as a King of the world are now forced to sit on the hard ground. You who deserves to be wearing royal garments of a King are now clad in tree barks.

(Laxman and Shatrughna also embrace)

LAXMAN: Obeisances unto you brother.

BHARAT: (picks up Laxman) No Laxman. Do not speak this way, I am sin personified.

LAXMAN: Please forgive me, brother. I doubted your motivations and picked up my bow to shoot arrows at you.

BHARAT: Then why didn't you release those arrows, Laxman. You would have done a great favor to me.

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RAMA: Bharat, I see our father's royal elephant. I see the white umbrella on top of it, but I don't see our father. Where is he?

BHARAT: (Silent)

RAMA: Tell me Bharat, where is our father?

BHARAT: While repeating your name....., drowning in the ocean of separation
from you, our dear father gave up his body.

RAMA: (Staggers behind and holds Laxman and embraces him and Shatrughna) (Sita cries)

SHATRUGHNA: Now we have become orphans.

SUMANTA: Please hold yourselves, the mothers and Gurudev have also come.

(Enter Vasistha and 3 mothers)
(Rama, Laxman and Sita touch Vasistha's feet)

VASISTHA: May you live long!

(They bow down to the 3 mothers)

BHARAT: Oh Rama, my mother's intrigues were carried out without my knowledge. In the dynasty of Ikshvaku, every great ruler of the past has enthroned the eldest son as the King. Therefore please come home I have brought the entire paraphernalia for your coronation here. Practically the whole of Ayodhya has come to a standstill. Everyone is weeping and crying for you to return. Please satisfy our hearts and accept the royal throne.

RAMA: Bharat, as much as it is my duty to follow our father's orders, it is your duty too. You should not talk in this manner.

BHARAT: Our father is no more and it was a vow based on immorality and cruelty. It did not come from his heart. It was due to merciless pressure.

RAMA: You are a Mahatma Bharat. Is it appropriate on our part to give up our father's instructions after he has left his body? Should we prove him false? Tell me Bharat, what is our duty at this time? He wanted that one son should stay in the forest and one son be the King.

BHARAT: Alright, then I will stay in the forest and you go back to Ayodhya.

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RAMA: That is not possible Bharat. Please try to discriminate the right from wrong.

BHARAT: Oh Rama at this time I cannot think, what is right and what is wrong. I only know that my brother Rama loves me so much that he will never disappoint me.

RAMA: Let us rise above these sentiments and be fixed in our duty Bharat.

BHARAT: Alright, then you follow your duty and I will follow mine.....
Sumanta, spread Kusa grass in front of Rama's cottage. I will sit right here until Rama relents and accepts the royal throne.

RAMA: Bharat.....

(Kaikeyi intervenes slowly)

KAIKEYI: Rama!..... I know, I am unqualified to speak anything, but today I beg forgiveness from you all, your father had made that promise to me, but today, today I free you from the obligation of this bondage.

RAMA: It's too late now mother. Only my father has the right to take back his words.

SHARTUGHNA: My dear Gurudev, please resolve this endless conflict, otherwise the entire world will drown in Bharat's pure love.

VASISTHA: (Looks at everyone's face and then speaks)
Dharma is the biggest strength in the 3 worlds,..... but love is such a thing that dharma is powerless before love.....
Your love is victorious Bharat. (Happy music)..... But remember one thing, the real power of love is in its being selfless. Selfless love does not ask for anything. It only seeks the pleasure of the beloved..... Therefore see what you can give Rama.

BHARAT: There is nothing dearer than one's life. I will give my life for Rama.

VASISTHA: It is easy to give one's life, but sometimes it is more difficult to live for the beloved. If you are a true devotee, then sit down at Rama's lotus feet and ask Him what he wants you to do.

BHARAT: Oh Gurudev, you have removed the fog of ignorance covering my eyes and have shown me the true meaning of love.

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(Bharat goes to Rama and sits at His lotus feet)

BHARAT: (folded hands) Order me brother, what do you want me to do.

RAMA: Rama has lost before your love, Bharat.
(picks Him up)

I accept the kingdom of Ayodhya. (Happy Music - all people smile) ...

But for 14 years, you take care of the Kingdom, and after returning, I will ask my Kingdom back from you.

BHARAT: (Looking straight into Rama's eyes)
Alright, but remember, if after 14 years, you delay returning even by one more day, then I swear on your lotus feet, you will not see your Bharat alive.

RAMA: Bharat.....(Embraces Bharat)

BHARAT: If I ask for something will you give it to me?

RAMA: I will give my life for you Bharat.

BHARAT: Then give me your sandals. In your absence they will sit on the throne for 14 years. Everyday I will rule the Kingdom as a representative in the mood of a servant of these sandals. And for myself, I will mat my hair and put on tree barks and live in a, hermitage, just like yours outside the city of Ayodhya.

VASISTHA: Mahatma Bharat, May you always be glorified.

RAMA: Laxman get my sandals.
(Laxman gets sandals from the hut and gives Bharat)

BHARAT: (Puts sandals at Rama's feet)
Oh Rama, please step into these sandals once so that I can coronate them as King of Ayodhya.

(Alaap – Bharat lifting sandals)

(Rama steps into them and Bharat with great love puts them on His head and starts walking out of the stage followed by others.)

CURTAINS CLOSES