

Surpanakha: Why is she an important woman in Ramayana?

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People usually talk about men like Rama, Hanuman, Dasaratha, Ravana and many others, but women also played a very important role in Ramayana. For example, there is not much of a story in Ramayana without Sita. Sita was an ideal wife, she loved Rama very much and always trusted Rama. The main story of Ramayana is also not possible without Kaikeyi and Manthara. Manthara convinced Kaikeyi to convince Dasaratha to send Rama away to the forest for fourteen years. She wanted Bharatha to be the king of Ayodhya. Sabari was one other woman who was a true devotee of Rama. She waited for years for Rama to come so she gets a chance to serve Rama. There was also another woman who played a very important role in Ramayana. Surpanakha, the sister of Ravana, was responsible for convincing Ravana to kidnap Sita.

Surpanakha was married to an asura called Dushtabuddhi. Initially, Dushtabuddhi and Surpanakha were two of Ravana's favorites in his court. After some years, Dushtabuddhi started making some secret plans to get more powerful. This made Ravana very angry and he got Dushtabuddhi killed. Surpanakha was very mad at Ravana for killing her husband. After her husband's death, Surpanakha spent half of her time with her family in Lanka and the rest of the time with Dushtabuddhi's family and relatives in the forests of south India. In the forests, Surpanakha saw Rama, Lakshmana and Sita. She wanted to marry Rama but Rama said that he is already married and does not want another wife. Then Surpanakha wanted to marry Lakshmana. But Lakshmana said that he does not want to marry her. And then, she got very angry at Rama and Lakshmana because she thought Rama and Lakshmana were making fun of her and she attacked Sita. Lakshmana then cut off her nose and ears and sent her back to Lanka. Surpanakha went to her brother Khara who sent seven warriors to fight Rama. All of the rakshasa warriors were killed easily by Rama and Lakshmana. Then Khara and 14,000 warriors went to kill Rama and Lakshmana. Rama killed everybody except a warrior named Akampana. Surpanakha then went to Ravana and told him that she saw a lady who was very beautiful and very good. She also told him that her name was Sita. She also told Ravana that he should marry her. Ravana listened to Surpanakha and that is how the battle of Ramayana started.

If there is no Surpanakha in the story, Rama would be living in the forest happily for fourteen years and Ravana will be living happily with no Dushtabuddhi. If there was no Kaikeyi and Manthara, then Rama would be the king of Ayodhya and living happily and Ravana will get Dushtabuddhi killed and Surpanakha may find a different person to kill Ravana. So, Surpanakha is more important than even Kaikeyi and Manthara in Ramayana.