**I am Mareecha**

By Rohini Sreenivasan

I, Mareecha, was the brother of Ravana. My other siblings include Shoorpanaka, Kumbakarna and Vibeeshana. We were Rakshashas. In my opinion Vibeeshana was the worst rashasha ever. He wanted to be polite to the Gods; he thought being pure and good was important. My older brother Ravana, was a mighty rakshasha and the ruler of Lanka, the city of dazzling lights!

One day my beautiful sister Shoorpanaka was strolling in the forest when her eyes fell upon handsome Rama who was spending his exile in that forest. She said to him,” Oh, handsome man, please, take me as your wife.” Rama said, “I am already married”. She then swaggered to Lakshmana and said to him in a dramatic tone, “Oh, handsome man, will you marry me?” Lakshmana responded by saying, “I am a mere servant, working to Rama and Sita”. Shoorpanaka was disappointed, she tried over and over again to win his affection. Lakshmana lost his temper and pulled out his sword and severed Shoorpanaka’s nose!

Crying in pain, Shoorpanaka came running to Lanka and told us how she was humiliated. When Ravana heard what had happened, he ordered my to transform myself into a beautiful golden deer and draw Rama and Lakshmana away from Sita. The plan was that when Rama and Lakshmana were distracted, Ravana would kidnap Sita. We thought this would be a great way to teach a lesson to the people who were disrespectful towards our sister.!

Just as planned, I disguised myself as a golden deer and pranced around Rama’s hut long enough to get the attention of Sita. The minute she saw me, she asked Rama to capture me. Rama raised his bow and came after me. It was a long chase, finally an arrow from Rama’s quiver hit me. Just as I was about to take my last breath, I said, “Oh, Oh, lakshmana!

Well, not many people know why I was born as a rakshasha or why I was fortunate to be killed by Rama. I was born on Earth as a rakshasha because, I had at one time displeased Lord Vishnu and he had cursed me to be born as a rakshasha, however after I pleaded with the lord, he said that I would return to Vaikunta after being killed by Rama’s arrow.

Although I did help Ravana kidnap Sita, by being killed by Rama, the curse was removed and I was able to return to Vaikunta.