



FREE COMIC BOOK DAY

DEEPAK CHOPRA & SHEKHAR KAPUR PRESENT

Rāmāyaṇ RELOADED™

3392 AD



RAMA

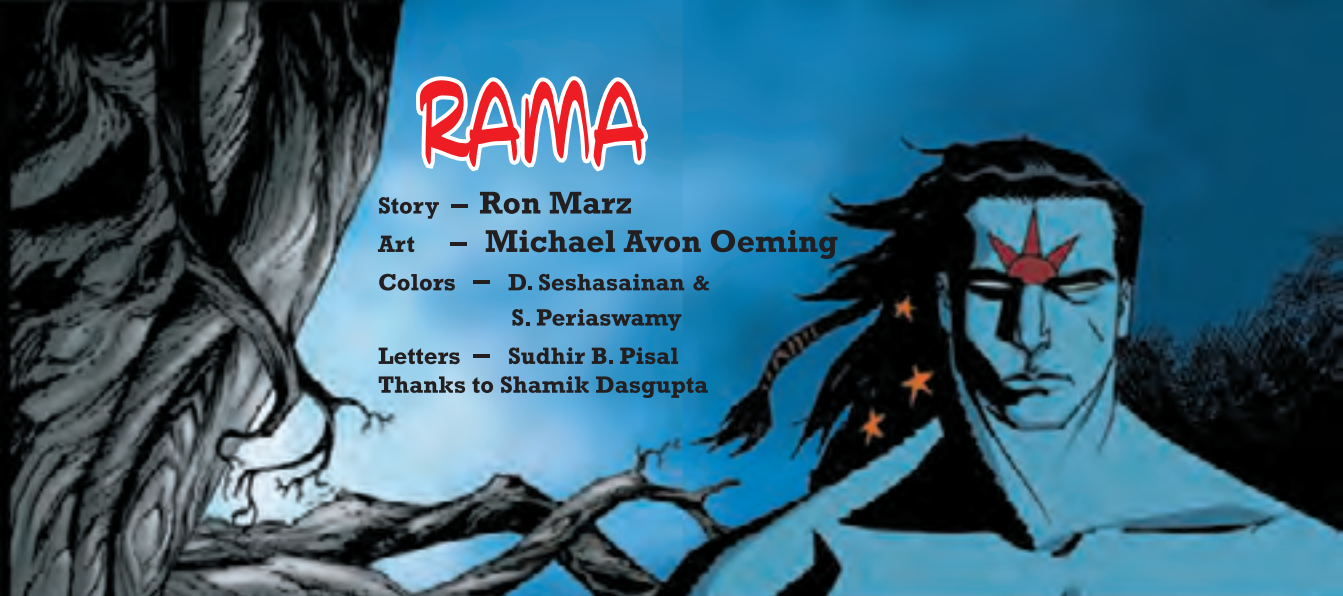
Story – Ron Marz

Art – Michael Avon Oeming

Colors – D. Seshasainan &
S. Periaswamy


Letters – Sudhir B. Pisal

Thanks to Shamik Dasgupta



IN ARMAGARH, BOYS OF A CERTAIN AGE WHO WISH TO ONE DAY BE *KSHATRIYA* WARRIORS ARE SENT TO THE PERILOUS FOREST OF *DANDAKARANYA*.

WHEN *MY* TIME CAME, MY BROTHER, RAMA, WAS ONLY A FEW YEARS MY ELDER, BUT ALREADY WELL ON HIS WAY TO MANHOOD.




EQUIPPED WITH LITTLE FOOD, AND ARMED ONLY WITH A PRIMITIVE WEAPON, THEY ARE EXPECTED TO PROVE THEMSELVES BY BRINGING BACK A *TROPHY* OR CAPTURED ANIMAL.



HIS OWN TRIAL BEHIND HIM, HE TOLD ME TO HAVE *COURAGE*...



...AND I SET OUT FOR THE WILDERNESS.



FOR DAYS I SEARCHED FOR A TROPHY THAT WOULD BRING ME GLORY, A WILD AND DANGEROUS BEAST THAT WOULD CAUSE MY FATHER TO SMILE UPON *ME* IN THE WAY THAT HE SMILED UPON RAMA.

BUT I FOUND *NOTHING*, ONLY A YOUNG AND PUNY *VANARA*. NOT MUCH OF A PRIZE, BUT IF I COULD CAPTURE IT, I AT LEAST WOULD NOT RETURN HOME WITH EMPTY HANDS.

BUT BEFORE I COULD *CATCH* THE CREATURE...

...MY CHANCES OF RETURNING HOME AT ALL BECAME SLIM.

THERE APPEARED AN *AJGAR*, BIGGER THAN ANY I HAD EVER SEEN. THE GREAT SERPENT SWEEPED ME UP IN ITS COILS, AND SOUGHT TO CRUSH ME AS WELL AS THE VANARA...

...UNTIL *RAMA* APPEARED.

THAT WAS THE *FIRST* TIME RAMA SAVED MY LIFE...

...THOUGH BY NO MEANS THE *LAST*.

HE OFFERED ME THE *AJGAR*'S HEAD, A SPLENDID TROPHY THAT WOULD BRING GREAT ACCLAIM, PERHAPS EVEN MY FATHER'S APPROVAL.

I ASKED MY BROTHER IF HE DID NOT WISH TO KEEP SUCH A RARE PRIZE FOR *HIMSELF*. BUT RAMA SMILED IN THAT WAY OF HIS...

...AND TOLD ME HE PREFERRED THE *VANARA*'S *FRIENDSHIP*, A THING THAT SOMEDAY MIGHT PROVE FAR MORE VALUABLE THAN A TROPHY MOUNTED UPON A WALL.

RAMA WAS NOT MUCH MORE THAN A *BOY* THEN...

...BUT THAT DAY
I GLIMPSED
THE *MAN*...

...AND THE
HERO...

...THAT HE
WOULD BECOME.



NEXT:
RAVAN