

Sootputra: The Unsung Hero

Duryodhan got a lot busy after that. Naturally whenever he asked (which was most of the time) I had to go and spend my time at hastinapur being the advisor'nd, shit. He wanted to eliminate all of the pandavs, now that he knew where they were and how they were living.

But since doing that would attract attention and also might reveal the real identities of those brahmins, he decided not to do so.

There was also the fact that they now had a powerful ally in the name of panchal to rely upon. Pandavas were in a really good position fir him to attack on, so he just hid the fact that we even saw.

Pandavs too tried to remain hidden. They didn't revealed themselves after the swaymvar, the uneasy feeling me, duryodhan and mama were going through cannot be explained in simple words. 'What were pandavs thinking and why haven't they came back already?' was the only thing going in our minds.

Duryodhan didn't wait to find out, though . He always was the one to race with them, to be the first in everything. This time was also true. He wanted to seize the throne as soon as possible and also to ensure that his line was the one that had the most right to the throne.

He wanted to give the kingdom the eldest grandprince, so that when the time comes, his son will be not have to face the same fate his father did.

So, when the invite of the next swayamvar came he left for it wihtout even thinking twice. No matter the kingdom, no matter how the girl looked or no matter who the king was. He just wanted a queen.

That's why this time no one except me accompanied him. No even his brothers.

But this swayamvar also proved to be a little tricky.

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I didn't even know when the situation escalated so quickly. A few moments ago we were happily attending the small swayamvar in the palace of kalinga, famous kings like jayadratha, sisupal and even jarasandh were there. But now instead of attending the swayamvar they were all chasing us in their chariots with blood in their eyes.

I don't know what came over on Duryodhan when he abducted Bhanumati, the princess of Kalinga. He should've just gracefully accepted her rejection but instead he forced her to flee with him. I could still see her struggling over on the other chariot.

But there was no time to lose, others were closing in and Sisupal was leading in the chase.

“Shon, a little faster. Just don’t overtake Duryodhan.” I said and he slightly nodded.

I took the spear in my chariot and threw it on one of the horses in Sisupal’s. The abruption worked as he tumbled and struck a tree.

Duryodhan must have seen it as he was now increasing the distance between us. Now came the bow, I imbued an elemental spell and multiplied my arrows to several other, in mid air. AS they flew to the ground, they created a little tremor, it shook a little and then abrupted and rose, it was enough to stop most of the pursuers but there was still one following us.

“Jarasandh!

Shon! Slow down a little. Get me closer to his chariot.”

Jarasandh, The King of Magadh. He had smashed, the mud wall I created with his mace, and was pursuing us with a rage.

“Let’s go Bali.” Shon yelled as he stretched the lasso around the horse.

Jarasandh’s chariot was a heavy one, the sound of four horses hoofing and thumping the ground as they try to pull it to top speed. Including his heavy muscled body, and on top of the fact that he was clearly a skilled warrior carrying a large amount of blunt weapons. His eyes were full of rage and the sword he held was more like a scythe.

I knew I will only get one shot as he came closer and closer. I launched an arrow in his driver, he died on the spot. The chariot slowed, but that wasn’t going to stop him. Before he could take the reins of the horses, I threw the only mace I had, on the wheels of his chariot. I thought it cracked but was still revolving.

Jarasandh picked up the pace. He threw arrows, in retaliation. One had to be impressed by his resolve, he was controlling the horses and also fighting at the same time.

“I will kill you, meager king.” He shouted.

The arrows were zipping past me but I couldn’t let them through or they hurt Shon or the horses. So, I just cutted them in the air.

But he wasn’t just aiming for me or the horses. I suddenly felt a speed bump. Jarasandh was using elementals too. He had imbued the arrows with earth and was shooting them like heavy rocks. He couldn’t land a hit on me so he was aiming for the speeding vehicle.

“No, you won’t” I said as I laid an arrow in his shoulder. “Turn back, this will be the only warning I’ll give.

Don’t let it go to waste.”

“Coward, face me. Your just intent on running away.” He struck a cord with that sentence.

"I would've king. Believe me, I would not let a chance to fight someone as skilled as you, slip by. Had the circumstances been different, I would've pinned you down with everything I have. But today I have to protect my friend." The sound of gushing wind and roaring chariot's rang in ears. "Challenge me another time and I swear I will answer. My name is Karna, and I am the King of Anga."

The pursuit stretched on for a little more time, thankfully Duryodhan was already gone. And we had led Jarasandh on a false trail. At last the moment came which I was waiting for as his wheel gave in and he fell in the mud. We were now free of pursuer's.

But he was a persistent little demon, he let us go but not before throwing a final chakram at our horses, I had let my guard down at that instant. And had to take the blow of it on my legs to stop it. In just a second there was a gashing wound on my leg. The pain was immense, the calf muscle tendons were torn apart but I tried not to scream or Shon would've stopped the chariot right there. After about half hour, the wound started to heal.

Shon whipped the lasso and Bali ran like the wind. The blood had stopped and the gash was fully healed now. There was only a scar left by the time we left Kalinga.

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When we reached the capital's palace, all went silent. The street we had just crossed, was filled with confused eyebrow raised faces. Well, it was obvious to expect, after all despite the princess being with crowned prince, there was no grand escorts, no parade, no flowers, or soldiers marching down the main streets, Just two chariots with grazed men aboard, thumping along the street. One of them didn't even had their charioteer with them.

The sound of horses hoofing, and squeaking filled the air as we stopped right at the gates of the palace. My legs had taken a little toll, so I was taking it slow. While Duryodhan went ahead with the princess.

He roared while ascending the stairs, all the while yelling as if to fill every ears around him.

"We have won the swayamvar. We even beat Jarasandh. Look at the new princess..... No the queen. " he sounded grandiose.

Although due to his praises (and lies) soldiers all around started cheering for us both. But one quick glance at the new supposed queen would tell anyone the truth. Her silence and lifeless movement were louder than any cheers or yells.

I may have boasted about many of my feats on several occasions but that one, was the one of the few I rarely mentioned.

"you okay...." Shon asked. He was helping me through the stairs. I just nodded.

"Look...." Shon pointed towards the grand entrance. King and Queen themselves had come to welcome their new daughter-in-law. We were only just a few steps behind when...
"Come Karna...." Duryodhan's hand pulled at my arm.

There were only four people waiting for us at the entrance to the grand hall.... the limping Mama Shakuni, his blindfolded sister Queen Gandhari, the king Dhritarashtra himself and his helper Sanjay.

I was wondering where were the rest of the brothers and also where was Bhishma?

"Ma, he is the one I was telling you about.....
I would not have made it out alive if it was not for him. In fact if not for him,... I wouldn't have even attempted the swayamvar."

With help of his helper Sanjay, the King hugged me. His hands felt warm and drops of wet tears flowed down on my left shoulder.

" I never thought that Duri will ever have someone like you, in his life. He is very lucky. Don't leave his side Karna." the king wept. Almost like he was begging me to stay. His eyes looked the other way though.
I couldn't tell if the king was happy or in disbelief.

" I have vowed oh king, to always stay by him" I firmly said while touch his toe. (though the pain in the leg made it a little difficult)

While the king was embracing me, the queen was checking her new daughter. And I mean really checking her. Mama Shakuni was also standing beside here, smiling with his black chared teeth out. The blind queen, Gandhari's hands were all over her, they were on her face as if sculpting a clay figure. The nose, the ears, eyes, the lips.

"what a beautiful bride you have Duri."
Duryodhan was trying to stay stiff, but I could swear that I saw a little blush.

"Tell me oh, dear daughter. What is your name?" Gandhari spoke in a gentle voice. Her hand on the forehead of the princess.

She gulped before speaking, not making eye contact for even a single second. Her red lips were like fluttering leaves. "Bha.... Bhan.... Bhanumati, your grace.....

Bhanumati, Daughter of Kalinga"

"What an idiot child you've brought Duryodhan." Duryodhan and everyone was taken aback by Queen's statement, but none dared to speak to break the next silence, except.....

"So.. Sorry, your majesty. "

"that's the exact problem. I not your majesty, I am your mother.
Call me Ma."

Her voice turned from a hailstorm to a gentle pour of rain. The princess who had forgotten to breath let out a deep sigh, as the situation calmed.

Princess hands were squeezing each other so tightly that when she let go I could see the remained marks of her long nails on them. The shivering girl would have fainted if the Queen had said another word to her.

"And you....." and now the finger was at me. (or almost at me, she is blind, Remember.)

"I thank you for all you have done. "
Shakuni came forward, helping her sister to reach me. "Here....."
She reached for her waist and pulled out the golden waistband.
"I only have this with me right now, but don't worry. Ask how much you want and I shall give it to you."

"heh!..... I don't need it majesty."

"Sister! "

"Ma....." The crowned prince yelled.
"he is nit just someone. He is my friend. He is the one who saved me today.
He is the king if Anga."

"oh, no!....." the queen put both her hands to hee mouth. "what did I do....
I am sorry young king. I didn't knew, I thought that you were his charioter."

There were no words left fir me to say. I just placed the band back on her hand and turned back.

"No Karna, if anyone it should be mother.....
I think my new wife should spend some time with her new mother."

"Yes we will postpone the celebrations for tomorrow after the marriage ceremony. I think you both should talk."

"yes mama, that will be right....." they all left and we both headed for the biggest room in the palace, Duryodhan's one.

"I am so sorry for what Ma did Karna."
"it's alright" I released the clenched fist to a normal palm hand.

"I am used to it by now."
"That's the problem, you shouldn't be. Let me make it up to you. He whistled and a guard came rushing in. Then after hearing something in his ear, ran off not before giving me a side look."

Almost half hour later Shakuni came, and behind him came Dusashan with half a dozen of female servants, dressed in revealing clothes, holding plates full of delicacies, and booze.

The empty room buzzed with footsteps and whispers. Duryodhan clapped and all them started serving.

"choose any o' them and she will be yours for today. You can even do multiple if you want. As many as you want."

"Consider it an apology from us"

Dusashan said. Though I rarely think he meant any word he said. While Shakuni just stood and smiled squeakingly.

"Not today girls, from today onwards I belong to someone else..." Duryodhan stopped one of the approaching girl in her tracks "but this guy, whoever pleases this guy. I will give a pouch, no.... two pouches filled of gold coins. "

Well, what do you think should have happened. All of them except for one that Dusashan grabbed and a few that still served drinks, leapt on me like a hungry bands of lionesses. I tried to push them back but they didn't listened. But one among them caught my eye. The one that was serving, she was the prick in my eyes from the beginning.

She had not met my gaze from the moment she came in.

The other girls kept calling her Padmavati but I knew her with a different name,....

"Vrushali.....!?"

"so it is her you fancy, my, my I've got to say, you got taste." Shakuni said.

" I'll take her,..... only her" the rest stopped in their tracks. Vrushali saw me with a raised confused eyebrow, as if she was nit expecting it. But fir me she was the only safe bet.

Duryodhan laughed at the downed faces of the rest of daasis. I sympathize with them, but Dusashan's eyes sparkled.

"I believe she is one of the new ones."

I can't believe they don't know her, none of them realized that they have already met her.

"what's your name?"

"padma...." her voice was shrivelled up. Her muscles tense and her hands shaking. She coughed, probably due to a little tension.

"padma, take him to the guest room with the biggest bed, and do not disappoint.

And also he may be brave enough to defeat Jarasandh but when comes to this kind of matter he is still a newbie. Treat him gently."

"yes, your highness." she said, Now a little more confident than before.

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"what are you doing here?" locking the gate I asked her. "and why only this"

"what's the problem?" she slid her finger on my arm.

The room was filled with her flowery scent. The sound of her payal, mixed with the humming of night composed a rhythmic beat.

"Vrushali, take me seriously. Why are you here? Does your family, your father know?"

She was silent a moment "Let's not talk about that" the cool breeze felt on my skin with every touch of her. Then I saw that the breeze was coming from the extended balcony.

"Vrushaliiiii!....." she read my face and stopped. Her hands held both of her arms. The open revealing clothes left only a little to imagination.

Therefore as the spiky cool winds struck her fair smooth skin she started shivering. Her coal black hair flowed with the wind. She was rubbing her side arms to keep warm.

"thanks" she said covering herself with the warm blanket I put on her from the bed.

"Now sit and talk....."

She sat there for a bit, as if figuring out where to start.

"well this explains why both me and Shon were not able to meet you, in so many times we came here.

You were purposely avoiding us."

I folded my hands under my chin as we both sat down.

"the question is why?"

She finally spoke "its been more than a year since we last spoke. Tears started forming up."

And then she cried

"he is sick Karna, father is ill. We are barely getting by. I had to make a little more money. For him, for us."

"What are you saying, Satyase----" but as I spoke his name a realization dawned on me.

It was duryodhan driving his chariot when we came back.

"yes, him. I am ashamed to even call him my brother. It was long after I came from Anga. At first he and his wife were quite welcoming. I even played with their children. Father also seemed happy.

" oh god what have I done? " i whispered.

" Father was sick, so the harvest wasn't good this year. In fact almost none. The whole family was struggling to keep afloat with only Satyasen earning for us all. But it didn't lasted much long, he threw us out a few months ago and sold the farming land.

Ever since then I have been going here and there, seeking shelter, doing all sorts of work, finally settling on this. "

" if not for me father would've been dead. I am scared for him Karna. I am scared for us. "

" you should have come to me, you should have come to Shon. " I said

" To do what.... Beg. " there was a moment of pause, the whispers of air could be heard." Karna, it was clear where we left ourselves. I just couldn't face you after that. That's why I avoided you. "

I grabbed her soft cold palms and placed the small pouch I had on me in them. Also all the rings and the only bracelet.

"Sorry, this is what I only have on me right now. If we were at Anga I would have given more."

She chuckles "you were never one to wear much jewelleries, after all. Still....." she placed it back. "I can't take this."

"Why?"

"You already know why?"

A guilt was trippin me from inside. "Vrushali I am not doing this for you. I am doing this for your father. And also....." I stopped.

"please just take it. I promise I will not pursue and if you want, I will not show my face to you ever again. But please don't let Uncle suffer for this. Because if anything happens to him, you will never be able to forgive yourself. "

She slowly extended her hands and silently grabbed all the things back." I would like to see you again. " she said in a low soft voice.

" I would like that too. So shall I make you permanent. Exclusive only to me. "

Both of us chuckled. Except my laugh was a little fake.

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"so how was it" Duryodhan's room was dimly lit, thus time of the day. The lamps and torches had been on the verge of dying. It was the constant breeze that was beating them to submission.

"it was different....."

"Good different" he asked.

"yeah..... Good. Duryodhan if its not so much of a trouble, I would like to make her exclusive. Only to me.

Pay her what you do right now. But treat her like any normal servant....

But her other nightly services will be exclusive to me."

"A weird request" he puts his hand on his chin. His eyebrows are raised.

"why don't you just take her with you"

He caught me a little of guard. "ah... She.. She has her family here. She doesn't want to leave them."

"One could say you are infatuated with her"
"something like that" i said.

He laughs. "Fine I'll do it. Anything for Angraj. No one except you will lay a hand on her."

"thanks" I had to make a little lie to him to protect her. I had already seen the lust dripping from Dusashan's eyes when he saw vrushali in those clothes. He will not leave until he eats every portion of her skin.

At least this way even if he tries, she can try to escape or scream and duryodhan will handle the rest.

Still even after all that, the feeling of guilt didn't leave. I had hid the fact about leaving Satyasan behind from Vrushali. I don't know why I lost the courage to speak, but I just simply didn't.

What was happening with him in the kingdom of Kalinga. One part of me said that he deserved it for throwing Uncle and Vrushali out, but the other part knew that she will not see it that way. He is still her brother, a brother who she loved no matter what she said.

I just wished that he was on his way home, or the future is going to be grim for his wife and children.

.....
Leave him as soon as possible. He is like a parasite. He will only leech on you. Will turn you like him. Run away now before you don't get a chance.

Can you do it. When the time comes will you be able to leave the crown prince of hastinapur to die. To let the future of this kingdom turn to ash.

BHISMA laughs softly.

You know why they call me Bhisma, Karna. Every where I go. Everyone regards me as Bhisma, Gangaputra Bhisma. Even the young ones now a days call me Bhisma pitama, without even knowing what it means.

My name is Devdutt. My mother gave me that name because I was god given. It means part of God. Essentially a demigod, like Pandavs.

But still they call me Bhisma. Because of my vow, a vow that has become a curse on me. A self inflicted curse.

My father wanted a second wife after my mother left him. But the woman he chose, put forth conditions.

She was a stubborn one. All of her conditions were a little tricky
'my son would be the one to inherit the throne.
His line would be the one to continue the kuruvansh.'

My father rejected it, but he couldn't get her out of his mind, so I did what a son should.

I went to her, listened to all her conditions and when both my father and new mother were present, I took my vows,

1. Never to marry in my life.
2. Never to stake any claim on the throne, ever.

Those two vows forced me to a life of abstinence.

I thought that there was nothing left in Hastinapur for me. So I should just leave,

But then my father asked me for a vow that sealed my fate.

On the day of his marriage he asks me for a gift,
I told him to ask for anything, and I shall give it to him. You know what he said.....

"Don't leave me devdutt, don't ever leave your father, don't ever turn your back on this kingdom"

Then came my third vow and I was stuck here.

Forced to fight for a kingdom that never felt like home, that never accepted me as its own.

In my whole life I have never seen a worthy claim on the most powerful throne in Bharat. But when I saw a potential one. He was burned away.

Wiping his tears he continued.

Bhisma - it means extreme.

For my three extreme vows. Hence I was dubbed Bhisma.

I can't leave this kingdom. I am bound to it to death.

My situation is not so different from you. The only difference is, the person I gave my vow to is still alive. And as long as he is, I will die to keep it intact.

Cause my guru was as same as yours and we were both taught the same things, isn't it.

We both student brothers will regret it in the end. I can already see my death. Just don't know in which battle it will happen.

I chuckled.

Like I said my situation is not so different.

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"I told her to do that. "

"you...□ why? "

"well, not forcefully of course. "

"in the swayamvar her first gaze went out to you. She looked at you as if she already knew you. Her attention was all soaked by you.

I just diverted it a little towards the bhramin standing in the corner..

.

The rest was totally her decision. "

The remaining coagulated blood inside Karna boiled like lava as he heard those words . His face twisted. Tremendous amount of heat was going up from his body. With all of his remaining might he lifted his only hand but he couldn't even get it up to shoulders height . The strength in him was almost drained. He punched the chariot on which he was leaning on . The whole thing shook like it had been hit by a bull. His eyes narrowed as he bit the lips. He wasn't looking at keshav anymore. How could he after what he has just heard. Karna couldn't tell him what he felt. He feared that after hearing his honest thoughts keshav would take away his help that he desperately needed.

"you can cry you know.

You can shout, yell, curse. Whatever you want.

I will hear it all.

I told you I want to hear your heart. Your honest thoughts."

"You want to hear me.

You want to know what I have to say.

Then listen.... you son of a bitch.

You are the worst of the worst scumbag I have ever met in my life. And I have met Shakuni.

You are the reason for her suffering. If only you had let her choose as she wanted. If only she had married as her heart desired. She would have been happy.

She wouldn't have had to live in a hut.

Wouldn't have had to divide her love into shares.

Wouldn't have had to change rooms every year.

Wouldn't have had to spend 13 years in forest.

I wouldn't have insulted her. In fact she wouldn't have to face that situation at all.

You are the reason for her suffering,

for my suffering.

All this time, the anger, the hatred. I thought,..... I thought that it was because of her. Because she rejected me and chose him.

But it was all you, you bastard. You are the reason I nearly went insane. You are the reason she was disrobed.

You call yourself an avatar of the god. You say you know what's going to happen.

WELL DIDN'T YOU KNOW THAT? DIDN'T YOU KNOW THAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN WHEN YOU FORCED HER TO MARRY HIM.

This war. All the dishonourable deaths.
My friends loss. All the rules broken. Just to win a stupid war.

You wanted this war, just as much as he did.

What was it that you hoped to accomplish, huh? You say that you did it to prevent further deaths, well you created the biggest massacre in the history.

//this war will serve as the signal if the upcoming dark age. The kalyug. That age will be like this war. //

All because of you. None will know, no one will even care. But I know, these brave warriors lying on the ground know, you are the true villain in this whole arc.

Yet you portray yourself as the purest of them all. "

Huh....

" How easily you said I was the truest villain.
But have you even considered to think what I did to prevent this war.

I didn't wanted this war, my friend

I did come as a peace messenger you know.
I only asked for 5 villages. Not kingdoms, not capitals, not cities but 5 normal villages.

And what did you do. You chased me away. Tried to harm me. I knew that this war was inevitable, I just wanted more time. To delay the war as much as possible. "

"If this war was inevitable then why delay it at all. What would that have prevented? "

He smiles.

"Deaths!!

To make sure there were less deaths then needed.

To make sure that great warriors, people with righteousness mind fought for the dharma.

To make sure I had enough time to make them come to right side.

To make sure there were no rules to begin with that can be broken.

I told you I tried to save as many as I could, but in the end this soil still turned red. Mountains of corpses, so much blood, this soil will remain this way forever. "

Karna saw hari whisking the sand away from his hands.

" What about Panchali? How do you intend on justify her? "

" I won't, it's true that I made her saw the brahmin when every time her gaze went to you. It's true I wanted her to choose Arjuna instead.

But.... It was entirely up to her.

I left the entire fate of Bharatvarsh on the soft lips of an innocent girl.

Her words or the lack thereof will decide where the future will be.

It was upto her, choose her desire or her destiny.

She made her decision.

Remember the mountain, river and ocean "

" so your saying I am the mountain. "

" No, I am saying that Draupadi is the river.

She chooses whether to be still like a lake in a mountain or ever so flowing like a river towards the ocean.

And she spoke that day, brilliantly, but the mountain didn't took it well. "

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" I was always with her Karna. Because I knew that after her decision she would need me at every turn. I knew what was going to come to her, but I waited. Waited for a brave to stand up in that court. A great warrior, I waited..... for you.

I knew that if no one would, you would. Because you feel for her. Because you want to protect her. But I was shocked when you insulted her instead. That's when I knew that everyone sitting in that court have sealed there fates.

Draupadi needed me now, so I went to her. She was alone.

She is the only person in this epic that isn't on the battlefield but still is the most catastrophic weapon.

"

So maybe that look that day really was regret. After All she she was looking at me.

.

Then why change the decision? Why choose him than me?

" madhusudhan, if she really wanted me then why reject me. Why accept Arjuna?"

" Don't get it wrong Karna.

She loves Arjuna, in fact she loves him the most.

Somewhere deep in the corners is a spot occupied by..... Him. "

"Arjuna loves Subhdra, he hasn't been able to return Panchali's love so to fill that hole. In fact, none of them have, not fully. So to plug that hole she looks to you.

She fills her head with you, your approval, your appreciation.

It isn't love, it's just admiration or maybe lust. At least for her. "

"but why doesn't Arjuna love her. Who can't love someone like her? "

"Will you be able to love your wife when you know that she has more husbands.

She has to spend her nights away from you.

The day you won her, your brother took her away from you.

Even though you deserve her the most, but your eldest brother has the most right on her

And you will only get to even touch her one year in every 5."

If the question was love then for Karna the answer was simple.

"Yes! "

He widened his eyes looking towards Karna. Blinking his eyes as he analyzed Karna's swift response. He didn't expected him to answer so quickly but for Karna it was like a reflex. His eyes didn't even twitch as he looked to keshav. Like he was waiting for this question all along. For, a person Karna it was a daily scenario. Watching Panchali from afar knowing full well that he can't reach her no matter what. But still day by day desire her, the itching grows each time her image falls in his eyes. His heart always beats like the rapid footsteps of a mare in her presence. He knew he wanted her. He knew she is the only one for her. But he doesn't know why? Why he always felt so connected to her? Why it always feels warm whenever she is near? Karna always wondered the answers to these questions but like many in his life never found them.

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When comparing me, Arjun has always been the other wait to put on the scale. Whether the scale tilts to him or not, his arrows are fiercer or not, his aura is stronger or not. Not bheema, not Bhishma, not Drona, always Arjuna.

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“A single beautiful, Voluptuous princess is enough to break their Unity.

Come on, don't you think that after living so much time in the wild, and then a hot girl.. no.. a hot, beautiful and sharp woman comes into home ..and.. for just... only one brother.....hehehehhahah.

What do you think will happen? Apparently Aunt Kunti saw that too. She made her marry all five. And now she is no more than just a slut, a whore to them.

I just wonder does she even get to sleep. What position she uses? One by one, or all at the same time. heheh” Dusashan finished. He was chuckling. Something in me wanted to choke him to death.

I clenched my fist as hard as I could. Duryodhan saw that. He silenced him and changed the subject. But now I wasn't interested to hear anything more. So I left and not just for my room // Shakuni and karna first conflict // but for my kingdom.

All the way Shon kept bugging me with question of Draupadi and to make her apologize or something in an loud angry voice. But I was lost somewhere else to give him any heed. It was good that I left that day, I wasn't sure how would I feel when seeing her face again, and I didn't wanted to find out.

Upon reaching Anga I sent a maid for Vrushali. After only a little waiting she came in. She was going to say something or might have said something, I don't remember clearly cause I never gave her another chance. I just went for her.

I grabbed her by the waist tightly and lifted her a little. Our lips were locked. She was quite shocked and tried to repel me. I laid her down on bed.

“What—what happened?” Vrushali said.

“It's just a” I brokenly said.

“Vrushali, do you love me?” Her eyes were looking at me. I could see them so close to me. Her small soft breath, her cold skin, her sweet golden glow. Why didn't I noticed them before? Why didn't I fell for her? It could've been so much simpler. Not so chaotic like now.

“Of course” She said. Her messed up lips smiled, her arms raised for the back of my head.

“Then Show it to me.”

We both wrapped our arms around each other. I grabbed her smooth hair. She grabbed my back with her nails. She always smelled of flowers. But the scent was so strong now. We both were naked again in front of each other. The only difference was that we had finally crossed the bridge. We kept going at it for hours. Sometimes caressing for the other in between.

But in all that time she never asked me why. Why now? She just looked like the first day she came with me to Anga, Like the day we married. Happy? A faint guilt built up inside me. Like I was lying, betraying her. And the funny thing was that maybe she knew that. Still she didn't questioned.

.....

"You knew?" asking him my hands still joined.

"Of course I did." He said with a chuckle.

"No one would have been able to stand that brutal beating and bruises.

But you always seem to spring up the next day like nothing had happened.

While for a normal man it would take a great deal of time to recover.

Don't you think that I would notice something like that?" Acharya said his hand on my head. He was smiling.

"What took Bhishma, his entire childhood and teenage years combined. You did it in just 9 years." His head was held high in pride.

"Surya himself told me about you." Acharya picked me up with both of his arms.

Tears rolled from my eyes, but I couldn't feel them drop. Wiping them was not doing anything.

"Still, after knowing that." I said weeping.

"You still lied Karna. Your birth wasn't your choice but that lie was. Wasn't it?

I realized later about who you were, but when I took you in. I took you in as a Brahmin.

It was only after knowing your worth that I decided to continue to train you. You had so much potential."

"A lot good that did" I said in a depressingly sarcastic tone.

"What are you saying? I trained my best student in the form of you?" He said laughing but that laugh soon went away. He was now looking down.

"Karna, I apologize. But seeing you bleeding and just for me, it just.....it just pulled the lid of the pressure that had been built in me for so many years.

I regretted it the moment I spoke those words. My most worthy student and I became the reason for his demise."

"So why are you here?"

"To tell you that this will be your last battle, Karna.

If only you had chosen differently. This wouldn't have come to pass."

"What ?" I asked confused.

"Karna I'm here to ask you of my Gurudakshina. " That shook me to the core. Like someone had pulled a rug from under my feet. And I didn't even thought that was possible cause I was floating in the air.

"Ask away Gurudeva. Other than my best friend it was you who had any obligations on me. Please relieve me of those."

"Karna....K" his lips struggled. Suddenly his eyes filled up with water. I could hear him breath heavily.

"Ka..." He closed his eyes. "I want you to give me your ... Vijaya."

I was happy in that instant. Happy that I would be able to help My Guru for the last time. Happy that he didn't told me to commit suicide. I could still fulfill my promise to Duryodhan even if I didn't have that bow. He was letting me die like a warrior should. It was just a little sad to see my old friend go away.

I smiled. Looking at him like a student looks at his teacher.

" Of course, It belonged to you anyways."

I raised my hand. The streaks of blue light covered my right arm. Several of them were running the whole length of the arm making a blue line like painting or tattoo, and gathered around my hand. Suddenly then, my friend materialized. She was still shimmering like the first day I held her. The almost clear transparent crystal like structure formed and took the shape of a slender bow. It radiated in my hand. Light weight, perfectly balanced and my strongest weapon.

I kissed the girl for the last time, as I thought and reminisced our battles together.

I looked at the Acharya who was now extending his arms to receive the bow. From the beginning of the first day of this war, everyone from the mortals to the gods to even Avatars has been requesting me for something to give. Even on the last day of my last battle, someone is standing in front of me with his hands extended. And I will oblige as I have done every time, but that time a thought took shape in my mind. Did any of them think for even a second, how that made me feel? About my emotions? I am giving you the things that you want but what about the things that I want. What about the things that I need? The thought made me chuckle.

I handed the bow to him. He nodded with a slight satisfaction and the bow turned into very little star like glitters and slid through his fingers.

“This will be your last dream Karna. The last time you will get to see her.

I don't know if I can wish you victory but I do can wish you peace of mind.”

.....

I am not an addict Yudhister. The only gamble I play is with death, whenever I am on the battlefield. And I always bet on Victory.

.....

Ever since I could remember, I had that dream. The same one every time just altered in a few ways. It always made me uneasy. To this day I could never figure out who that woman is but one thing is certain, she feels very close.

“Angraaj?”

The male servant was here.

“What would you like today for lunch?”

“Make some paneer and make some extra as always.”

“Understood.” He left.

Ever since coming here in the royal palace I have lived with the luxury everyone desires. But I don't need these luxuries. I would've left for my home in the city, if Duryodhan hadn't commanded me to stay here close to him. After becoming the crown prince, the duties on his shoulders have increased significantly. So much so that he has to have lunch with the courtiers and king himself. Naturally I, despite being the advisor in the court of the king was left out, because my low born stature became the salt that many of them could not digest. If it wouldn't have been for Duryodhan , they would've thrown me out before I could even climb a single stair of this plagued castle. I don't mind that though, in fact I would love to avoid as much of them as possible. Because politics is not one of my strong suits. Duryodhan knows that as well, and that's why he keeps me out of it (for the most part).

So for lunch I seek the company of someone I know. My father. I go to him since Maa isn't here for the time being. So until she returns I have lunch with him. Though I think I have spoiled him enough and he

has become addicted to the royal food, specially the meat part. I think Maa would forgive(or so I hoped.).

.....

“In the end, none of them knew who I was. I just lived without any lineage and died without any.”

“That’s not entirely true.....” Keshav wandered his gaze into the stars. His eyes seemed to hold more and more secrets the deeper he digged. Whenever he thought that the end is near he opens a new mysterious door. The door that raised more questions than it answered.

“There were two of them, that had somewhat of an inclination to who you were, before the war was even planned.” He said.

“Who?” Astonished by his declaration Karna asked.

“The youngest pandav Sahdeva and the Eldest one.”

His eyes just looked at a thunder. The entire realm must be shaking as Karna felt tremors go down his numb body. His thoughts were at their limit as this blue man sitting beside him, jabbed his soul one after the other with the spears of secrets. Each one of them so painful, so breaking and so shattering that the entire realm stops for a second as Karna hears them. His life that he thought was so miserable, so nonchalant that he thought that it didn’t even matter that if he’d not existed at all. Turned out to be the most valuable, The one with whom everyone is linked in an outcome changing manner. Suddenly He realized that the protagonist maybe Arjuna but the story was his.

“You never considered yourself to be a pandav, That’s why I said The eldest one.

Except for Sahadeva, Yudhishthira only had a little inclination. A doubt you could say.

From the day at the arena, whenever a thought of war came to his mind, he saw you.

Every waking morning and in every nightmare he only saw you. He feared you, but at the same time.....”

Keshav stopped, Karna knew that he was going to say something that will hold his heart down again.

“I remember the day he told me this, he said that whenever he looked at your eyes, your feet, they somewhat looked familiar. I knew what he meant then.

But the hatred and fear in his heart, blinded him from pursuing the truth any further.”

“Or I guess he just feared what he’ll find at the end.” I said.

“You said except for Sahadeva. Did he knew more?”

He chuckled. “Ahhh, Sahadeva is special. In all of the sons he alone fulfilled his father’s last request.

....He ate some of his flesh.....

You know they call him the most intelligent in all of pandavs. But there is a reason for it.”

“What reason?”

Keshav looks at him with close eyes and a grin on his face.

“He cheats.

He has the ability to see past, present and the future. The ability he inherited from his father. Although he can’t control it and can only see few glimpses at a time. But he sure can know what is about to happen at certain events.

Like the day he knew what was going to happen at the sawayamvar, and also the death of abhimanyu.

He came to me one day, crying. Said he knows.

He has seen how kunti will weep with you in her arms. How yudhister will become suicidal after knowing that he had broken the dharma, he held most dearly to him.

How arjuna will give his gandiva to bhima to be broken.”

Karna realized what he previously didn’t. He knew why Sahadevas arrows lacked strength, why he was holding back. Why his gaze went down as soon as he was defeated. He didn’t even said a word like his brother he just stayed silent all the time. Perhaps Karna should’ve realized those eyes sooner. Those eyes weren’t of defeat they were of shame.

“He told me that when Pandavs try to cremate you, Duryodhan stops them saying that when you died you were his friend not their brother. Radheya not Kaunteya. He also told me that your wife jumps into the pyre out of dread.

Vrishaketu grows up orphaned, now that he has lost his parents, his kingdom. Everything. He becomes a soldier at the castle of hastinapur. And one day... He silently assassinates Draupadi.

Pandavs kill him after that. And mourn their wife for several days. ”

Karna horrified after learning the fate of his family. His soul like a mist dissolves in the pool of ____.

“Keshav, I beg you to save them. Don’t let the wheel of hatred spin anymore. Let it end with me. Break it. Save all of them.”

“What do you want me to do Karna?”

Karna was unsure of what to say. After some thinking his thoughts fluttered.

“You cremate me. Don’t let them. Cremate me in a secluded place, away from their eyes.

Also, don’t let Vrishaketu be alone, Please give him a family. Raise him yourself or make my brother’s raise him. Tell him about his true lineage. Teach him the same skills, me and his uncle have.

Don’t let any of them die, not Vrushali, not Yudhishthira, not Duryodhan and ... not... Draupadi.”

“Karna, I’ll try my best for you. But there are some things that even I can’t change. There are some fates that have already been sealed. Some deaths that have already been written. I can’t save all of them when even my day of death has already been decided.

But I promise you that I will save anyone I can, I will change the lives of those I can and I will not let this war go any longer. This feud, This hatred will end by sunset tomorrow.”

.....

Vrushali came against her father’s wishes.

.....

“Are you ready for it Karna? ”

“I think so, yes. ”

“It’s up to you to decide, if you want it or not.”

“What do you mean?”

“Answer me this Karna?

What difference does one life make?”

I was perplexed by the question. I knew that I was strong. But I had never killed any Human. Protected people. Killed Demons. Scared the gods but being responsible for lives. It was a new territory.

“I don’t ”

Couldn’t find a just answer. So, I just stuttered a bit.

“A great amount if that life is of a King.

Each decision a king makes affects hundreds, thousands.

How can he care for so much?

The answer is he can't.

Such guilt would break him.

He can't pity or sympathize with every soldier.

But he should always value their sacrifices.

That is the burden of kings.

They follow the path of victory.

And that path is bloody.

Now tell me karna, Are you a King?

Are you Angraaj?"

The thought had just awoken something in me. I knew what I had to do. The path was clear, even if it didn't worked I can't get demoralized, cause I'm king.

"General, Sent a letter to Jarsandh. Tell him Karna has accepted his invite. "

(Karna invites Jarasandh in his city with his army.

In front of his army he loudly challenges him to a one on one battle of his choosing.

Knowing well that if Jarasandh refuses his army would not recognize him as strong as they do now.)

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Chapter rice

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"Can't you ever be serious?" I said, mortified. "It's difficult," he said. "There's so little in life that's worth

it.”

For men, the softer emotions are always intertwined with power and pride. That was why Karna waited for me to plead with him though he could have stopped my suffering with a single word. That was why he turned on me when I refused to ask for his pity. That was why he incited Dussasan to an action that was against the code of honor by which he lived his life. He knew he would regret it—in his fierce smile there had already been a glint of pain.

.....

Karna fought jarasandh. He knew that in strength Jarasandh was greater than him. So he used his superior stamina and tired him enough to submission.

As he was going to kill him by splitting his body. Jarasandh pleaded for his life.

Karna felt remorse and empathy for the guy. He could visualize his hatred and pain cause he himself has felt it once.

The loss in swayamvar and the bride who you desired gets taken away by someone else. This was a feeling he knew all too well.

So Looking at him he saw a shadow of his own past self. Begging for his life. To live another day.

On any other day Karna would've killed him before he could plead but that day he let him go.

In return jarasandh offered his friendship and the kingdom Malini to Karna.

.....

.....

With all the dark and twisting paths in my life, with the destined end in my mind. I still walked on it knowing where it all will lead. Whether it occurs in this battle or other, I never backed out. I never thought of betraying or hurting Duryodhan. Cause in the end the last person to lift me up was him and only him.

They say that Friendship is a mutual relation.

He helped me once without asking and I have tried to repay without asking.

Even if he is wrong, good or evil.

He is my friend.

.....

The world was burning in the silvery fire of the moonlight only she was the calm and sooth that permeated in my eyes. The stillness that I needed came with her thought.

.....

Just ask me. I will help. I have always helped those who asked me. My hands won't care if it's my friend, my father or even my Guru. They will grab your arms and take you far from this court, away from all the pain, suffering and humiliation. Away from everything.

|| But she didn't asked and went away, then karna calls her a woman who can't keep her chastity intact. And Dusashan starts to disrobe her on the command of Duryodhan. ||

Look how miserable you are now. If only you have chosen right on your swayamvar. The husband that was right for you. That deserved you. You should've chosen a real man. A man that would.t have gambled you away.

The man who loved you,

still loves you.

.....

Couple of days before the Viraat Yudh

"You know I have to fight this war."

"No you don't bhai.

Duryodhan has done a lot for us but that doesn't mean we have to help him in his evil."

"I have to Shon. I have made a vow. I have given him my promise. My tounge.

I can't back out now.

Especially if the enemies are the Pandavs."

"That's exactly why you Don't Bhai.

Because your enemies are the pandavs." Shon said crossing my path standing in front of me.

"Look Bhai...."

He was wrapping his lips clearly looking for words to say.

"What happened 13 years ago was wrong. You have to know that.

The thing that happened to pandavs,

That was lying,

cheating.

Especially with Panchali and you were a part of it."

Every word he spoke was flexing my nerve.

Everyone was mute in that court, including you when that bastard disrobed the eldest daughter-in-law of the kingdom."

The scene that my mind was trying to suppress just crashed like a wave in my head. The saree and crying. Her sobbing, tears and pleading to every member in the court. Her loosened hairs and the grip on them. The silky hairs that shined in night like the reflection of a lake. Those hairs were now under Dusashans hands. I want to break those arms that hurt her but how could I? I was the one who directed them. My words, my anger was the reason for her despair. My heart kept denying the fact saying that the fault was of Dusashan who disrobed her. The fault was of Yudhister that gambled away his own wife like a property. The fault was of Shakuni who created this entire ensemble in the first place. The fault was of the elders who didn't spoke a word in retaliation.

But no, it was all me. My words, my actions could've stopped that horrific act that happened but.....

I don't have an answer for what I did. My mind keeps searching for a justifying reason for my actions but it can't find one. Was my revenge that important? Or was it just jealousy that took hold of me? I can't know for sure. The thought was putting a crease on my forehead.

"They deserve it, Bhai.

They have been away for 13 years,

Away from the kingdom.

Away from home."

"They are responsible for their own destruction.

Everything that will happen and is going to happen will be in direct result of that. "

My hands keeps on tightening with every passing second.

"But we don't have to be a part of it. "

Shon suddenly took the sword I was polishing from my hand,

My hands grabbed his and twisted him around. Then with a flips laid him on the ground with my hands on his neck. The rage was barely controllable. Even my armor had come on and covered my body.

"Bhai, Look at me..

You've changed in all these years.

My bhai won't do this.

He always sided with good, always believed in good.

He was Vasusena, You are King Karna.

The King Karna is not my brother."

He stood up and threw the sword on the bed.

"My brother always aimed to be the best.

He wanted to be the best archer.

He wanted to be acknowledged.

You just want to be better.

Better than Arjun.

He fought for recognition,

You fight for revenge.”

“SO WHAT IF I DO?

HUH?

WHAT IF I WANT SOMETHING THAT THEY HAVE?

WHATS WRONG WITH THAT?”

My fist clenched, my teeth gritted against each other. I wanted to destroy the room, the palace, the kingdom. The uncontrollable bull like rage was coursing through my veins.

“All my life, all our life. What have we learned? What have we seen?

Discrimination, low eyed views, cruel words, humiliation. In every turn they stole from me. So, what’s wrong that for once that happened to those bastards.

What’s it like to be humiliated in front of the world.

To be seen naked in front of the world.

When you know you are more than capable but you still can’t do a single thing.....

When you know you have the right but you still don’t get what you want....

I just wanted respect,

I just wanted Recognition, rights and.....

BUT EVERYTHING WAS GIVEN TO THAT ARJUN.....

So how am I wrong?

How is it evil to wish?

How is it evil to want something for you?

”

“Bhai, You know I have only met Krishna a couple of times.

It may seem like a coincidence but the first time I met him,

He said something to me, He said

That a mountain always wants the river but in the end river always belonged to the ocean.”

“Was he talking about the power of the ocean or the disability of the mountain?”

“He was talking about the destiny of the river.

You can’t help with what you get, Bhai.

But it’s in your hands what you give to the others.”

“Don’t need your sermon. I just want you ready for the battle that is coming.....”

“I will be but, know this that I will not be your brother in this battle, just your charioteer.”

“That’ll be enough, now go prepare.

Leave me alone.”

.....

Vrushali used to eat from the same plate as Karna.

.....

present

dead horse bali lying with Karna on the battle field reminding him of the time with Shon.

.....

I have seen those hands before.

They suddenly felt familiar for some reason. I couldn’t answer why.

.....

“I know how you think angraaj. I know what you want.

Don’t think I haven’t noticed How you sometimes leave the chambers in which Draupadi is in. Although everyone else keeps sitting. It is you who leaves.

Don’t I think I don’t know how you look at her.

How you size her up with your lustful eyes.”

My grip on his neck tightens. His eyes widens a bit more. He is gasping for breath. His hands and legs flap like a fish out of water. Seeing him in this agony, I loosened my grip.

“Cough...couhg

Wooh hoooooh”

He falls to the ground.

“Don’t’ ..cough hough...

Don’t think I don’t know why you spend much of your time here instead of the Anga, even though you can go back any time.

You just use Duryodhan as an excuse to cover your affection.

You want her...cough....

You desire her.....

A married woman and you want to sleep with her.”

His legs were shivering like a child scared of the bully in front of him. Picking him up by force I saw his face. Covered in sweat, lips tingling, eyes barely blinking but still a heinous smile to cover it all up.

“Don’t you fear me??”

“Ofcourse I do.” He raises his stick in ready. The stick was vibrating in the air. Just a wave of wind was enough to knock it down from his hand.

“Don’t you see how I’m trembling?

My whole body is scared of you.

Yet I know one thing for certain.

You are not a bloody killer. Not a murderer.”

“Don’t test that??” I said gritting my teeth. He was sweating but his face had confidence. It infuriated me.

“Oh, I don’t have to.

You see I know you.

Maybe not everything but this thing. This Armour can only belong to a noble.”

He suddenly poked me with the sharp end of his stick trying to pierce. But I manifested a little gold on my skin to avoid it.

You are not a Sootputra.

Why are you hiding that fact or you really don’t know. I can’t say for sure.

But That thing is a proof that you don't kill for pleasure. Without reason. Besides you won't do anything to hurt Duryodhan in any way."

Shakuni legs touched the ground again. My grip loosened and I walked away from him.

"You are a plague. A plague that will hurt everyone that's near you. Don't go near my friend. It's a warning.

If you try to influence him in any way. I will break your other leg."

"Fine I understand. You don't have to say it with those radiating eyes. I am literally hurting my eyes just to look at your aura. "

Turning my back I walked away from him.

"But angraaj, I have to confirm this.

Do you really desire her?" My legs just froze for a second in their tracks.

"Heheh....heheheh" Shakuni was laughing as he sat on the floor and I resumed my pace.

.....

Planning of Chausar game:::

"Let's just already go to the war.

Let's just destroy them." I said.

"we can and I don't have any doubt in your strength friend but they are pandavs.

Maybe many of my brothers can subdue Nakul and Sahdev together.

I can take on Bhima in mace fight myself.

You can defeat that brat Arjuna with your might.

And last but not the least, Yudhister. He can be immobilized by just a sermon on Dharma." Duryodhan said dodging my attack with stick.

I backed so as to avoid his counter attack. But he came forward ignoring my assumption.

"So what's stopping us. We can take them out now if we want."

"But can you say the same.....for Pitama Bhisma" Duryodhan had just said something that took my attention away. Using this advantage he swept me off the ground.

"This must be one of the rare times when I made you touch the ground."

“What do you mean by Pitama Bhishma.” I asked him.

“Don’t you already know the answer to that?” He picked me up with his hand. We were both catching our breaths.

“Let’s just take a break.” I said.

“Pitama Bhishma already doesn’t like me. Same is true for Drona, Vidur and many more of the courtiers.

On top of that he has sworn to protect Hastinapur till the end of his days.

So if a war breaks out between two factions of the same hastinapur.

Who do you think he will fight for?

Who do you think Drona will fight for?”

“And we can’t forget Madhav, .” Shakuni had just ventured in to the practice grounds.

“That Mayadhari Krishna will always side with those pandavs and he is the most powerful strength they have.” Shakuni came close limping on his legs.

“Yes. We can’t forget him.

It’s because of him, those pandavs have that palace.”

I was out of the loop here so I asked them to clarify their statement.

“Something I am missing here.” I said.

|

[\\ the](#) story of how the pandavs were able to build the Palace of illusion.

|

“And Besides why shed blood when matter can be resolved peacefully.” Shakuni said looking at Duryodhan.

“Looks like you have concocted something. ” Duryodhan said wiping the sweat off his face.

“Yeah, it looks like that.” I said narrowly burying my eyes within him. I hadn’t forgotten what happened to the pandavs during their stay in varnavart. The night on which I heard there plan. I haven’t been able to discuss that with Duryodhan yet. I didn’t know how to even start, Even if I gathered enough courage to talk to him. It had occupied my mind ever since the day I heard about it.

The day I threatened Shakuni. It seems it hadn’t had much effect. As he hasn’t even slowed a bit in his advances towards duryodhan.

“We can’t. It happens in battle or it doesn’t occur at all.”

“What are you bickering about? Let’s just at least hear him out atleast. If it prevents blood and participation from both Bhishma and Drona then I would definitely want to do it.”

“But ----”

“Seven!!!!” before I could say a word Shakuni threw his dice on the ground and sure enough together there were seven black dots on the two dices.

“What’s the meaning of this?” Duryodhan asked. I had also raised an eyebrow after witnessing his actions. Whatever it was, it was bad, but I could not say anything to dissuade duryodhan from shakuni’s grasp. He had already ignited the fire of curiosity within him. He always had a knack of inciting people and persuading them with his witty, clever and cunningness.

Limping his way he picked both the dices.

“Pandavs cannot be defeated in battle. They have made important alliances and have paramount dominance which gives them immense power.”

“We already know that, Mama. Tell us something we don’t.”

I knew and understood what he meant. I had already discussed the proposition of battle but Duryodhan had justifyingly rejected it.

“Yes. To defeat them, one has to use other means.

....Clever means.” Shakuni raised his dices in front of him.

“Yudhister loves gambling. You can say he is an addict. One just has to use his addiction. If the lordly king is challenged for a game of Chausar. He will not be able to resist that temptation.”

True, I had already witnessed Yudhishter’s addiction in our visit to their palace. Duryodhan and Shakuni both had lost all of their gold they brought and jewelries they had on them that day. The plan was sound but there was something missing. Thankfully I didn’t have to ask that question.

“But how do we ensure that we will win?

We had already lost to him in the palace.

I had to give everything to him, even my rings and necklace.”

“And for this plan to work, we need to put it in motion in advance. Or he will even deny to even play.” I said

“But that’s the thing Angraaj. I had already put it in motion.

It was essential that you lose that match, my dear nephew.

That was an ember, I left that will turn in a black flame to consume those Bastards.”

My eyes were looking at Duryodhan for answers but he too was as puzzled as me. His Mama was just rambling on and on about something none of us understood.

“Mama, you already know that I don’t like puzzles. Just get on with already.”

The demonic smile returns on Shakuni’s face. As if he was waiting for this question.

“Invite him. Invite him to your palace. You’ve recently been married to Bhanumati.

Invite them as a meet up for both the daughter-in-laws of the kingdom.

And leave the rest to me. Just make sure I’ll be the one taking the lead when the time comes.”

Lots of thoughts were racing in my mind. The pandavas have already endured so much, Varnavrat and Barren land as inheritance. Rajmata kunti andPanchali have no idea what’s coming to them. But for some reason my heart was not going against the plan. Even though I knew that the method being employed is not more than a cheat, deception and I just consoled myself saying that I have to stand by Duryodhan no matter what. My heart didn’t revolted, infact it took a little joy in hearing Shakuni’s devious plan. When have I changed so much? I was against their plan of Varnacrat. So why not this time?

On which turn I had took a wrong step. I didn’t realized it then.

“I still think we should go with the battle. ”

“We could battle any time we want, Angraaj.” Shakuni said.

“But this opportunity comes very rarely. ”

“Yes friend, After we take their wealth, their power. We could crush them anytime we want.

They will die like worms they are. We will make sure that they suffer like a fish out of water before they take their last breath. Before the final light leaves their eyes.

I will personally see to it that Arjun bends on your knees. You will have your battle with him.”

“And I will make sure that panchali becomes your daasi. Then we will see how she handles the same abashing situation.” Shakuniu said. He knew where to step. He always knew the weakest point. Never letting any chance go to remind me of the secret that he held deep within his mind.

“Yess, yess. Superb Mama. Very good.

Then she will know what a humiliation is.

Well, if she is not going to be a wife to a sootputra then she better be his daasi.”

Duryodhan's laugh echoed. I too pretended as much as I could to be happy in his joy but deep within I was broken. The thought of Mata Kunti mourning her sons reminded me of Maa Radha. How would she feel if either I or Shon died? Vrushali, how would she cry beside my pyre. The image of Vrushali sitting beside a burning pyre emerged in my mind. Wearing a white sari without any makeup or jewelry. Eyes heavy and dry as if every ounce of joy has been sucked out of it. My son still holding the torch in his small soft hands.

The visage then changes, a new woman has taken place of Vrushali. She too is crying, Her face is covered by her hands as she keeps on weeping. She is a little darker shade than Vrushali but her hair are more silky and smoother. The heavy jewelry on her head and on her neck were shining in the moonlight. Her golden bangles clanged as she shook her arms. The choli and royal red silky dress was familiar to me. I have seen it once before. As I leaned in closer, I smelled a familiar scent. The smell I haven't yet forgotten till this day. It is not something one can easily forget.

"Karna,"

She was calling my name. My son was still here. The pyre was still burning. Nothing had changed except for the girl who was repeating my name. Vrushali was nowhere to be found.

My hands touched hers. Her skin was still as smooth and without any impurities as I remember. Her face finally came into light. The moon made its beauty amplify tenfold. The black eyes met with the brown.

Draupadi, My draupadi. She was still here. Her soft cheeks. Seeing my face she smiled. We were both standing at the empty bed of the river. Her hands held mine. My lips touched her forehead. Her black hair flew in with the wind. The grumbling sound was getting stronger.

The woman on the bank was back. The boy in the basket was crying. Mother was ready to let the basket go in the river. The realization was the dream coming to an end made my hands tighter. My lips wanted to grab hers. She too closed her eyes.

The wave was here. They swept me away with it but she was still standing. The waves phased through her. Struggling to keep her in my sight for as long as possible I saw that She was still waiting with her eyes closed. Waiting for me to return the kiss.

||

My eyes were now open. It felt warm as Vrushali's breathing touched my neck. She was still sleeping soundly. Whereas my sleep was now over.....

.....

After Abhimanyu's death.....

"You just want destruction don't you?"

|

|

My anger was out of the bound

"You just don't want destruction for pandavs

You want the destruction of whole hastinapur.

The kingdom that destroyed yours.

You want to see it burning, in ashes.

You don't even care about duryodhan. You just pretend to.

You are lowest of the lows scum that I have ever had the pleasure of meeting in my life."

"What are you saying? I have always....."

"Don't !!! Don't!!!" my sword had just pierced his neck a little. A drop off blood from where the tip of the sword touched, was now finding the best way to reach the ground through his frail body.

"Don't even try to twist your words today Shakuni.

Or I swear that for the first time I might break my oath and betray friend.

Though you deserve dying I don't want to kill you like a dog. Like you were going to do to that boy today."

"Me? You're blaming me?

It was you who killed that boy. Drove a knife through his back."

My sword drove a little deeper in his neck. His eyes widend but then instantly got a confident look . It was like the first time I met him. He had the same look then too.

"Yes, yess.

What's wrong with it?

This entire kingdom. Everyone in this rotten hellhole. Every soldier. Every descendant deserves to die.

They are all to blame for the state of my sister and me.

Duryodhan had always been a sore spot. It's hard to look and see him die.

But if that's what it takes then.....

Then I will burn as many Duryodhan's as needed.

Specially I was delighted with pleasure when that Bhishma fell. That too in a disgusting manner.

Not befitting for a honourable warrior. A mahaan soul.....

Though he is still alive but not for long. Soon this war would end and there would be no heir left to sit on that glistening padded throne.

I don't care if it takes my life but I had accomplished something that none have.

I have destroyed the entire Kuruvansh without ever raising a dagger." His eyes looked at me.

"So take my life if you want. You will accomplish nothing, you soot.

Whereas I have accomplished everything I set out to.

Even more I have made sure that none of the kauravs and pandvas get to have heaven.

They have both committed sins that they can't forget. Can't meet their own eyes and say they are innocent."

The silent ire. The fluttering of the tent walls against the winds and my sword still boring down his throat.

"So what will it be, Soot."

Lowering my sword, I placed it back in it's sheathe . The sword had returned to peace once more. My gaze was down. The memories of the boy tormented by the countless slashing and beating of my friend and elders was still fresh in my head.

Tooth came flying out as I laid my punch on Shakuni. He dropped like a bag smashing into the support of his tent. His half of the tent had just come down.

"Your end is here Shakuni. You will die in this battle field and it won't be a glorious death.

You don't deserve that."

.....

After pandavs come back to palace with draupadi for the first time.

"How did this happened?" I asked Duryodhan.

But it was Dusashan that answered.

“The pandavs are incomplete without each other.

We can’t say for certain but the daasi I was talking to told me something while I treated her with care.”

A heinous grin was on his face.

“She told me about the thing she heard when she was serving the pandavas .

Apparently, It was kunti who ordered all of them to marry draupadi despite Arjun winning her hand in swayamvar.”

“You mean stealing her.” Duryodhan chind rested on his fist. His eyes and ears listening to Dusashan.

“I don’t get it.

Why would she do that?” I said

“A princess. One that is said to be the most beautiful in all the kingdoms.

Princess of panchali. The most influential princess of all.

You saw how everyone was mesmerized by her beauty in that swayamvar.

And Kunti was afraid of that.” Duryodhan stopped at this point.

“She is the mother of them after all.

That’s why I said they are incomplete without each other.

They need and depend on other. And a princess and one so beautiful at that is enough to break that unity.

She was afraid of the outcome. This wedding is the result of that fear. So the five husband for one woman.

She is now no more than a daasi that does all the house works and sleeps with every man in the home.

I just wonder what position they sleep in at night.

Do they share her one by one or all at the same time.

Either way it’s a fine punishment for that whore.”

“That’s a kul vadhu that you are speaking of.” My voice was building up.

“She is your bhabhi and above all she is a woman. You don’t have a right in any way to insult her.”

“Bhabhi?.....”

Dushahshan said smirking.

“What are you talking about?” My hands were clutching with every words he said.

“I don’t even know whom she calls her husband right now. It wasn’t me who divided her in five parts.

Besides all I did was tell the truth. What are you getting so angry about? She even insulted you in the swayamvar.”

“Dushasan stop. That’s enough.” Duryodhan stood up.

My anger was like an uncontrollable bull. Before it exploded I took my leave. I couldn’t stand to look and tolerate his face. Even a second more and I would break his nose with my face.

.....

“Karna I want you to promise me something?”

“Tell me friend. If it is within my reach I will even give you my life.”

“I don’t want your life. I just want your promise.”

“That you will never betray me, Never leave me, always be at my side.

With you at my side I can even win the world many times over.

You are my strength. I can stake any claim if you are there to support me.”

The sentence that he has just said were delightful to hear. The belief that was shown in me was another one of his generosity towards me. But there was also a hint of greed in them. I knew Duryodhan was not entirely right but I have to support him. His will is my will. I am his weapon and wherever he lets me loose I will conquer everything in that direction for him. This was my destiny. To be at the side of my best friend forever. This will be my karma and my dharma

.....

Karna tells duryodhan about his parshuram curse just before taking the reins of the battle.

.....

You know what this is. These dices that I keep with me all the time. They are father’s. They are made

from his bones. They are here to exact the revenge that I had been planning all these years. I will be the reason for the downfall of this kingdom. Like you were for mine.

.....

The king is weak, frail but as long as he is there, there is hope. Hope for my ascension as an emperor.

He is weak, bound by the suggestions his advisors give, suggestion Bhisma gives him. As long as Bhisma is there as an advisor Yudhister, the eldest of all the princes will be the king. And since he has the blessing of only dying when he wishes. The chances of him leaving the mortal plane is very slim.

Therefore for me to be king, the eldest pandu has to die. In fact if they are dying let them all die at the same time.

Then I will be the only eldest prince alive to take the throne.

.....

Earth apologises to Karna as he reminces the time when he crushed her to help a child

Karna also apologises to Earth for crushing her that day.

.....

I summoned the general to my court. It was time for our daily routine to go and walk in the kingdom in disguise. This was a regular method employed by us to monitor the state of the kingdom and the city. We often ventured out to random villages and cities in the kingdom to see the problems from their perspective while maintain our guise so that people be honest with us.

Today was a simple stroll on a horse back disguised as a merchant. The general was only a few paces behind me. The market through which we were going was quite lively. The crowd was quite large. I hopped off the horse to view some of the merchandise sold at the shops. The prices were a little high but it was to be expected considering the recent increase in the tax by Hastinapur and excess rainfall that happened a few weeks ago.

“ahhh....wahhh”

The sound was pretty high even among the commotion. People had gathered around in a circle.

"What happened?" I asked a person.

"There's some girl there." Was his answer.

I pushed through the crowd along with my general. In the center was a girl crying while carrying a pot with her one hand. She was wearing simple clothing with just a top and half pants on the bottom. Her hairs were all tangled and messy. Her eyes were all swollen from crying for a long time. A couple of men were trying to console her.

"What happened?" Asked the general.

"Don't know she won't stop crying to tell us."

I stepped forward. Stroked the girl on the head and true to their word the girl was not stopping her tears.

"Don't worry I'll take her to the king."

I said to the bystanders and sent them off to their work.

"Don't worry you can cry if you want to but let's just eat something first."

The parathans were not that good but enough but just enough to stop her crying. As I thought she was hungry.

"Now, Tell me your name."

"Sita" The girl said.

"Pretty good name. You know who sita was right."

"Yess. She was Lord Ram's only wife."

"Good"

She was still holding her pot very tightly. So much so that she was keeping it on her lap.

"What's in the pot?"

"Ghee. My mother gave it to me. We bought it from the market before I ... I....."

Her tears were back. She fell in them again.

"Don't worry! I'll take you back to her. I promise.

Do you know the way to home."

She nodded.

“Good then let’s go.”

I left my seat and signaled the general. He went to prepare the horses. I felt a little pull on my clothes. The girl with her teary eyes was looking up at me.

“Can I eat one more parantha?”

I giggled at hearing those innocent words.

“sure.” I told her.

“Now hold it tight okk.

The horse can get a little bumpy and it could fall off.”

I said to the girl, she was still holding her pot tightly with her chest. She was neglected to let it go for even a single moment, therefore I told her to sit in front of me on the mare while holding it with all she is got.

True to my word the road to the girls home was a little rough, It was full of wet mud and the horse were heavy a little difficult time crossing it without getting stuck. On the road I saw a cart approaching so I took my horse to the sides and let it pass through. The horse was barely able to comply by instructions. Then suddenly the worst happened. The cart got stuck in the mud. And the bulls pulling it startled by this development scared the mare I and the girl was sitting on. He took a leap and jumped forward to avoid any confrontation with the antsy bull. I reined my horse back in control and got down from the horse to help the cart from the mud. The general was with the girl while the owner of the cart helped me. With the two of us working together we got the cart out in no time. He thanked us and went his own way. But in all of this commotion I lost the track of the crying that was now echoing through the silent road.

The girl was on her knees on the mud. She was crying with her eyes out. The pot she was carrying had broken apart and all the ghee was now mixed with the muddy soil. She must be feeling sad. The general was offering her some gold to console but she pushed his hand back. I got to her without knowing how I will stop her tears. But I could do something she stood up and hugged my legs as tightly as a child can. Her lower legs was all covered with the grey clay mud while her face was with transparent crystalline tears.

“Don’t worry we will buy a new one.

Your mother won’t even know.

Let’s go back to the market, I’ll even buy you another parantha.

Come on.”

But she refused to move even an inch. I knew forcing her will only worsen the matter.

“What’s’ the matter?

Don’t you want the ghee?”

She was not stopping her tears but she spoke through them.

“My mother.....Maa.....(hssk, hssk)

Father will be angry, he worked hard for that ghee.....

Mother finally gathered the money to buy this much.....

I want..... I want

I want that ghee..... ” She cried on and on.

“But that is impossible now. That’s all mixed up in the soil.

We will buy new one. Your father won’t even know the difference.” The general spoke to her.

But it was to no avail. She kept crying and crying. She was keeping that pot so close to her chest only to drop it so near to her house. Her clothes were all dirty with mud now. But her tantrum was nowhere near dimming.

“Do we have another pot?”

I asked the general.

“No, but we have a silver jug.” He said while carefully studying my face. As if I have asked him something unheard off.

“Bring me that and also as many pieces of clothes as we have.” I said to him

He went and did what I asked while I cleaned the little on as much as possible.

“Thanks” I said to the general. He placed the girl on top of the mare again.

“Now it won’t be as much as it was before but it will be the same ghee.

Will that be okay?”

“hssk....yess.” she said.

“woohalright then.”

I placed the a cloth on the jug as a filter and tightened it to the sides. I took a fistful of the mixed mud and place it in another cloth. Then closing it inside my palms so that none of it can escape. Then the

tightening happened As I tighten My grip more and more the inside got crushed. Then the hard work paid off. The clear and transparent mix of water and ghee dripped through my fingers and I place it on top of the jug as it got filtered through the cloth. Seeing this both of them wowed but it was the general who got the Idea. He brought another jug and setup it in the same manner as me. But soon I saw the disappointed look on his face. No drops were coming from his cloth. I took the cloth from him and crushed it with all my power. The clear and shining drops dripped in the jugs through my hands. The only downside was that each time I had to change the cloth as it shredded under that immense pressure. Finally when I was done the small jug was almost full. I closed it off with another cloth and handed it over to the girl.

“Thank you.....” Her smile was as big as a horizon now.

Seeing her smile and laugh, the pain and callouses in my hand went away. I was just happy that she stopped crying.

She again hugged that jug tightly as she did the pot.

We had just reached the village in which her home was. It was within the view but before I could drop her off her mother came running. I helped her get down from the mare and handed her the jug that now belonged to her. It was a little sad seeing her go but at the same time was happy for her reunion with her family.

“Now, is the time for us too.

Let’s go home. ”

We turned our horses for the palace. On the way we again crossed the place where I had squeezed the ghee out for the girl. The area was now covered in blood. It was like a blood bath had just taken place there.

“YOU.....”

It was a voice like none other. Our mares were jumping all around. General was thrown off from his and his horse took off with lightning speed while mine was barely holding on without pissing himself.

“How dare You hurt me?

Only to impress a little girl you dare to hurt your own mother.

The one who has taken care of you since birth.”

“Who are you?” Till now I had had enough experience with my father to know what a divine deity’s voice is like. And her voice had the same appeal. Echoing heavy yet at the same time calming and brave. She was definitely someone strong.

“I am the place you call home.

The mother you all live on.

The one who gives you food, water and a place to sleep.

I am EARTH.

You dare to hurt me.

The pressure you used to force the ghee out of me was so much that it left a wound.

Look at the blood that you have shed just now.”

“I am sorry if you really are Earth then you have to understand that I had no other choice. I had to use that much force to help the little girl. ”

“That doesn’t justify your action angraaj. Many of my sons and daughter hurt each other, help each other, but none of them have ever used their power to specifically hurt me like the way you have.

You have to pay for it.

You will know what it feels like to be stuck in someone else’s grip one day.”

“I am sorry of kind mother,

Please forgive me I am your child please don’t hurt your son.”

“You ask for sorry now. You ask for permission now.

Where was this sense of duty when she was crying and I was in pain?

Angraaj, Tell me honestly do you regret your actions?

Will you do it in any other way if the girl asks you again?”

I knew what she was asking. She was asking me if I could forsake my principle to avoid hurting her. The principle by which I have lived till now. The vow I made with my Guru how can I break it now.

“Mata, it’s true that I regret hurting you but I don’t regret my course of action?

I had vowed that I will help anyone who asks me of help.

If that girl hadn’t asked me for my help, I might have done it differently but if she asks me again to give her the same ghee, I will gladly repeat my actions.” I said while bowing down to her. Cause I knew what was going to happen next.

“Then you are as stubborn as you father.

And then I also don’t regret my actions.....

Karna, I curse you.

You will know the pain I have known today. You will know how does it feels to be stuck in someone else's grip.

In an important battle I, Earth will grab the wheel of your chariot as hard as you have done today. The wheel of your life will be last one you ever lift and for the rest of your life you will live in the fear of the upcoming battle in which this curse will take effect."

With that said the atmosphere quiet down. The raging winds slowed down and the trees stopped their tilt.

"Mata, I gladly accept your curse. But I reject to accept the fear that you have bestowed upon me. As a warrior I live for battle. As a Sootputra the chariot is not my enemy but my friend. I have trained my whole life to be the best warrior there is, and if the death is written for me in a battlefield then that death is not a curse but a blessing, as knowing that I will die a glorious death." I said. Again bowing to her but no response came.

I gave my general my mare while I took The long way to the castle that day.

reminiscing after the swayamver

Keshav, did.....did she had any.....

no, nothing just forget it.

Oh you mean Panchali! Hmm..... I Knew that she had some kind of attraction to you. but I disregarded it thinking of it as just lust.{{{ But then after sometimes I realized that it may be more and so to verify it I put a test during their exiles in the Virat Kingdom.}}}}

{{{{{{{{But I didn't realize it. Not until I put it to the test that day.

Test?

which test keshav.

I will tell you when you reach that point Karna.}}}}}}}}

.....

chapter's name Danveer- when he gives his armor to Indra

you withstood bad mouthing from charioteer

.....

"A woman who has five husband can't possibly hope to keep her chastity preserved."

I wanted to stab myself the moment the words came out of my mouth. What have I done? The lips that wanted to protect her integrity had just become the reason for her abuse.

I wanted her to love me but how could she after that . I wanted to be the reason for her happiness instead I became the reason for her disdainment.

That day I realized how Acharya felt when he cursed me in his anger and celerity. He would've too felt the same things as I was feeling now. Disgusted, ashamed and enslaved to this abashment of royalty. I for the first time felt a little relived that I don't belong to these cowards categories. Who just make rules up to suit their needs and abandon when it becomes a barrier.

Her helpless eyes, now turned dry as all the tears she had were already drenching her clothes and cheeks. How can they call themselves her husband when she is crying, begging, asking for mercy from everyone including them. How can they stand still? I was honor bound by my marriage but she was thier wife? Even after agitating them with those piercing words. They do not move.

Still I was the one responsible. It was my words, (The words I will regret my whole life) that ignited the fire. If I had just controlled my anger. If only I was not-so short sighted. If only I had subdued my feelings for her, If only I had let go of that jealousy (of seeing her in another's arm). The upcoming disaster would have been avoided.

"Well said my friend.

The woman who has more than one husband is nothing more than a whore.

She is just an Slut." Duryodhan was signaling Dusashna to come.

"Disrobe this slut and show the world her true face." Duryodhan said.

Dusshana tore off Draupadi's clothes. She was covering her top with her hands. Dusashna then started pulling the saree. Boiling lava was flowing inside me. I would kill him even if it costs me my friendship. Even if I have to show my true feelings. I would burn everyone present here in hellfire, Destroy this castle to a ruin.

.....

exploring the illusion palace.

I felt an eerie piercing gaze locked on my face. I knew who it was from but I didn't acknowledge it knowing full well the satisfaction that it will give and disdainment in return I will receive.

.....

I felt a force on my back.

Someone was calling me, Someone wanted me to look back.

Was it her? I dared not to turn to confirm?

.....

Ashwathama suggested that Karna be the Commander of Kuru Army after Guru Drona's Death.

.....

You will be the eldest son of pandavs.

Every king including myself will be under your knees.

You will be the Emperor of this entire realm.

Kunti will be your Mother.

Draupadi....

She will be your wife too.

Being the eldest you will have the foremost right on her.

and most importantly.....

You will not only be known as greatest Kshatriya but as the greatest Emperor

"Oh Madhusudhan, You know my peril, my dharmasankat.

Tell me do you consider Devaki your mother or Yashoda?

The one who brought you to this world or the one who helped to live in it?

The one who never saw your face or the one who never let go a day before seeing it?

The one who abandoned you or the one who fulfilled your every need?

The one who you never knew or the one who was with you from first day?"

"I don't want them to bear the same weight I am bearing, It'll only hold them back.

Especially Yudhister. He will abandon the war to preserve his dharma.

I don't want them to bear the fear of fratricide. Don't want them to pity me.

Let them fight with their full might, I have already promised you, your five sons life. You will get them.

Just don't call me son before I die."

"You don't want your brother to bear the sin of fratricide but what about you?

Are you alright with bearing this sin? Killing your own brothers?

You will face the hatred of your brothers knowing well that they still detest you as their enemy."

"Haven't they already been doing that?

My life has been one suffering after another. What's--" My voice broke. I pretended it was mucus in my throat(but at this point she knew better).

"What's one more?

Let them fight like the warriors they are while I will do my duty as a warrior, as a friend,...

.....as a brother."

.....

the night before the day Karna was going to take the charge of the Army.

->After learning the truth about his birth and origin and after talking with Kunti

->Near the bed of arrows on which Bhishma was laying.

"Then why don't you confront her, Karna?

Tell her how you feel?" Bhishma said tilting his head up towards me.

"Don't make me say what you already know, Pitama.

She is someone else's now. I don't have any right on her, not after all that I have done to her.

Besides she still hates me.

Don't think of me less when I say this, Oh wise one.

I love my wives.

But she.....

She still occupies a special place in my heart.

I thought I could change my feelings. Make them to hate her.

But still after all this time.

Whenever I ask myself.

Do I still.....?

I only get one answer.....

Always..." I said barely controlling myself from breaking down.

"Sure, It felt like being struck by a lightning when I heard about my true brothers.

It felt like a mountain had just crushed my soul when I heard about my true mother.

But in all that revelations, My sense of duty and commitment towards Duryodhan didn't faltered a bit.

But when Lord Keshav mentioned her.....

When he said that she will become mine if I chose to,

....."

I didn't wanted to say the next words. But I knew that I won't get to say them to her again if I don't say it now.

"I went to the very edge Pitama,

I was about to lose it all,

My morality, My duty, My righteousness,

I was going to betray it all. I was going to betray the trust that my friend showed in me all these years.

All of it.

Just for Her."

The tears were out of control now. The sobbing was clear to hear for all. The weeping sound echoed in the calm of night.

But they weren't mine.

Then I heard the sound of Payals as they left the area. they were fast as the one wearing them was running away. The sound of sobbing and weeping became fainter and fainter. After few moments they became hard to hear and slowly faded away into the distance.

"Why didn't you stopped her?

You knew she was hiding there all this time, right" Pitamah said in a soft voice while laying his head straight, eyes closed and calmness on his face.

"Yes" I accepted. I knew it was foolish to lie to him.

" I didn't know she had come to visit you pitama.

But, I did see her from a distance as I was approaching.

and when I reached here, she had already went into hiding.

Though not very good at it she still tried her best.

I didn't know if I could face her. So I confessed all my feelings towards her through you.

because I knew this maybe the last chance I ever get."

Now bowing down on my knees.

.....

I know how duryodhan feels about you Karna.

He thinks of you more than his brothers.

If you come to us, He would give up his will to fight.

He won't be able to raise his hands against a man he cares for more than himself.

Karna, you can stop all this bloodshed right now. Stop any more brave men and just warrior's from dying.

The outcome of this war rest's in your hands now, my friend.

.....

forsake your true mother

Bhanumati became a good friend of Karna, and an insider in the courtly matters.

agitate my heart

.....

Yudhister was protected my Bheem while arjuna vowed to kill jaydratha

"Why

why do you hesitate now?

Don't leave me ashamed like an exposed animal.

Let me die like a warrior.

Finish what you've started you dog... or I'll never forgive you."

I wasn't looking in his eyes. I didn't had the will to show my true feelings. Instead, My back was facing him and my spear dripping the blood that didn't belonged to me.

"You once told me that as a sootputra I don't even deserve to stand on the same ground.....

Now look at you, beaten by a mere sootputra.

You all call yourselves warrior's.

Beating a disabled great Bhishma.

Breaking the rules of war at every turn.

And I thought you were on the side of Dharma."

Bheema fell silent. My words were sharp as a spike and cold as ice. For the first time he didn't retaliated to my conjecture.

"Go oh wrestler, a true warrior doesn't attacks a helpless,

Besides don't you have a promise to fulfill?"

I jumped down from his chariot and rushed to help Dronacharya.

.....

After Karna refuses krishan to change sides after hearing the truth about his birth.

Karna a needy has come to your doorstep.

Will the daanveer let a destitute go empty handed without quenching his thirst.

Keshav what can I give to the one who already has everything.

Still you are right I haven't broken my vow till now and will not do it today to.

Ask Keshav, I will give you anything that is within my power and that doesn't make me break my vows and principles.

Don't worry Karna I won't ask for the things that you can't give.

I just simply ask you for a promise."

"Depends on the promise Keshav"

"Karna I ask you to make a vow.

A vow that thou will never break during this entire war.

A vow to never use a Divine or celestial weapon twice.

"You always know where to hit keshav.

Will Arjun will do the same?."

"What do you think ?" Keshav said

"I think it's apparently clear that you know him well.

Fine, I give you my promise, my vow that in this war I will never use a celestial weapon twice."

.....

And even today you haven't come for me.

You have come for your five son's.

Even today you don't see me as yours

Even now you are that selfish bitch from that day, who left me on the mercy of the Ganga just to save yourselfand now your son's.

We have clashed many times oh mother.

At the tournament, at the swayamvar, at the virat kingdom but never once in all those occasion your love blossomed for me.

Never once in all those occasion you thought brother's killing each other.

But now, Now that the peril has truly came on your son's. Your love for me has suddenly awakened.

Karna, Today I have come as a Mother and as a Beggar.

I have heard that no one had ever returned empty handed from the doorstep of The Great Danveer.

Karna, don't let your mother leave without her son.

Don't send her with putting anything in her hands.

//Karna I ask that you don't take away any sons this mother has.

Don't let this mother be left without her sons.//

You know everthing about me, Rajmata.

You know I am cursed by a Brahmin, Mother Earth and by my own Guru.

Lord Indra has taken my Armor and my earrings.

And now Keshav and you have come to take my spirit, My sole determination, my will to fight.

You and all else have completely disarmed me now.

I feel like naked in front of the whole world.

I knew that with Lord Keshav on the other side we could never hope to win this war.

But Now I know that this war will be my last one.

This is the moment my Guru spoke of. ‘

My most vulnerable moment.

The war in which I will die.

But I still have to fight.

Because Kaunteya Karna may not but This Radhey Karna has some obligations he needs to fulfill.

I am bound by my own words, my vows.

You know a mother is the fore most in this world. Teacher, Aunt, and Even the gods are compared to a mother.

It is said that the gods couldn't be present everywhere so he created mother.

But in my case mother was nowhere but the god, my father was with me this whole time.

What right do you have to call me son.

Tell me one thing, One right that you have with which you can call me son.

One thing, one moment where you showed me your love.

One time that you saved me, one thing that you did that a mother should have done.

TELL ME, OH SO CALLED MOTHER.

WHY DO I ACCEPT YOU?

GIVE ME ONE REASON.

Please.

PLEAAAAASE give me one

Just one.....

Pleaas.....///

Even today instead of giving love you ask something from me.

Even today instead of sending me to the battle with a tilak on my forehead, you ask me to cower.

Instead of being proud on me, you are being selfish yet again.”

Kunti starts crying on hearing those words. She breaks down on facing the bitter, sharp and painful truth from someone other than herself.

“And that’s why you’ve come here because you are afraid.

Afraid that after the war you will have no sons to call your own.

Afraid of not me dying but afraid that one of your sons will.”

“You haven’t accepted me as your son

and I haven’t called you my mother.

That will continue till this war is on.

Still even After that, If you still want me as your son I will come to you,

But If not then I will continue to be known as Sootputra but this time proudly.”

Fine, I will give what you ask for.

I have never let anyone leave without at least giving anything in their hands.

Be it be known that at the time of need Karna even donated to his mother.

I, Karna vow that after the war the number of known Kunti's sons will not be reduced.

Number of Pandavs will remain the same.

Kunti's eyes were glistening with happiness now. Those eyes were as happy as they were the day she gave me birth. I was content with seeing her face so smiling and crying. I didn't wanted that smile to ever leave their place.

All your life you have thought of having only five sons,

The world have thought that you had only five sons.

After the war that fact will not change.

I, Karna , Suryputra, Vow that I will Not Kill my Brother Nakul, Brother Sahdeva, Brother Bheema and Brother Yudhisther.

"What about Arjuna."

My lips fell silent. I didn't had the courage to say what I thinking. How can I tell her that I despise Arjun the most. How can tell her that every time his face came in front I only wished death upon him. The one who has been the block my who life. The one who stole every hapiness from me. The one who stole my love.....

"For this war to be won Arjuna needs to die,

He is the will and the strongest pillar on which the Pandavs stand upon.

That pillar needs to be destroyed.

Once Arjun is gone Pandavs will be broken then both of my vows will be fulfilled.

To Duryodhan and

To you.

Will you accept me then?

The Murderer who has killed your son.

But Also the son who has returned after all these years.

Can you love me even after knowing that?

Will your feelings be the same?"

With this your debt on me for bringing me to this world is over.

You gave me a life once now I return you with five.

But with this we are even now.

You are not my Ma and I am not your putra anymore

No one will call me Kaunteya.

I will always be known as

Radheya Karna.

Adhirati Karna.

Sootputra Karna.

Suryaputra Karna.

But never a pandav.

.....

But now I would be remembered as the murderer of a defenseless boy.

.....

You will be the eldest son of pandavs.

The entire realm will be under your knees.

.....

I am also responsible for your misery Karna.

Had you been on the side that protected the dharma.

I would've been the one steering your horses on this blood soiled field.

The war would've ended on the first day then.

.....

Your blood has stopped dripping for a while now, I was just holding your soul till you finish your story and besides I still have something to convey to you.

you still haven't finished your duty karna, I promise we will meet again in another life, with other names and other duties.

When I'll be known as Kalki and you will be my elder brother.

.....

.....

“You are currently not fighting against us. You are not on the battlefield yet.

Hey Radhey, I request.....

Sit with us. Have dinner with us. Come to our camp for a day.

I sure Mata Kunti would be delighted to see her all sons eating together. The dream she had raised in heart her whole life. Help me make it come true, Oh Maharathi.”

It was just little after Dusk, Keshav was still standing on the Doors of my tent with his extended hand.

His smile was ever so subtle and soothing. He was not wearing his tradition helmet with the feather instead today his hair was all loose and touching his shoulders.

“Oh Madhav, I cannot erase the sins I have done in my life. The sins of lying, the sin of unknowingly killing, The sin of birth. “

My fear was almost see through. The apparent reveal of my identity has shook me from my core. It was hard to even breath for a few moments. Learning all my enemies were my family all along. Learning that the love of my life was my family. It had shattered me from inside.

“But in all those sins I have received an appropriate punishment in return. But the sin that haunts me to this day is the one that hadn't punished me till this day. The sin for which I should have killed myself. For committing that sin meant, that I had forgotten the very principles that I stand upon, I had broken my own dharma. The injustice I fought against , endured against, my whole life. I unleashed it all on other.

On her.”

I didn't know if I had the right to even call her or see her but now I had even lost the right to try too. How can I? The person that was supposed to protect his family was the one that wnted their death at every turn. The person that was supposed to care was the one that wanted to tear them apart.

“The hatred, the insult, the loss, it blinded me Keshav. My jealousy, my anger, my love, it all was so hard to control. All my life I have tried to earn my place through my hard work . To make the tag of Sootputra a worthy one. But by calling her a 'whore' I fell in the same trap of society I have been fighting all my life. I judged her when I shouldn't have. I trested her the same way the world has treated me my whole life. I questioned her, I insulted her, I lov.....”

I fell silent for a few seconds. My lips knew that they had broken a boundary they shouldn't have. Keshav will now know my weakness. My vulnerable side.

“In the end they all made me the member of this caste based shitherds. How am I different from them now, from all those people.”

I disgust myself now. The person that's supposed to protect his family, his brother's, his sister-in-law, was the one that wanted to brutally kill them. Was the one to make her mine. How Disgusting can I be.

I want that too you know. I deeply want to eat at least one meal with my mother. But the hatred that I have gathered for Pandavas my whole life can't be subsided with just one meal.

Oh Madhusudhan, there are many reason I can give you for not accepting your invite. But all of them will be just a facade. The real reason and the only one is that I cannot, Even if I want to I cannot, because I will have to face Draupadi there.

I can't face her now or ever in the future. The shame and pain would be enough to ruin my will to fight. It will strip me of my fake honor, my facade chivalry, my imposter expression, everything.”

I would have to lay down my weapons and betray the trust Duryodhan has placed on me.

.....

Isn't it simple I have found my goal again.

The goal with which I set out in the world.

The goal of change.

The goal of respect for all.

The goal of recognition by talent and hard work.

Along the way I stumbled, got lost and took a different direction.

But my mind is back now. I know who I am and what I wanted in my life.

This becomes peace in my mind.

Peace that gives me strength and calms me.

That's why my arrows and my decisions are sharp now.

It's the will and full perspective that shows

.....

Oh king of gods, I can give you what you desire.

But After that I will become vulnerable.

The next day could be my last.

Do you still desire it, Oh Lord of the gods

I am giving you my own self.

This armor, this brother has been with me my whole life.

He is me.

He is Karna.

.....

romantic scenes with wives

You radiate so much warmth and brightness but your face is still soothing like the beautiful head, with a face that resembled a lotus of a thousand petals.

That's how it is.

.....

Karna I can't tell you but

I can show you.

Here.....

Madhav handed me his feather that he was holding all this time in his hands.

I picked it up and started wondering what to do with it.

"What now?"

"Now I wait for you to return."

"What---"

But it was too late The world around me had started to change. The battlefield was now deforming, disintegrating. And in its place came a palace, a King's court. Decorated with gold and flowers. The court was fairly empty except for The King on his throne and a Brahmin in one of the advisors chairs.