

## Chapter 1151(1)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! After Drona had been killed, the kings, with Duryodhana at the forefront, were extremely anxious in their minds. They went to Drona’s son. They sorrowed and were dispirited because the infinitely energetic Drona had been killed. In their grief, they surrounded the son of Sharadvati.<sup>2</sup> For some time, they comforted him by recounting the reasons given in the sacred texts. However, once night arrived, those lords of the earth went to their own camps. But, in particular, the son of the *suta*,<sup>3</sup> King Suyodhana, Duhshasana and Shakuni could not sleep. In their camps, the Kouravyas and the lords of the earth found no cheer. They thought of that terrible destruction and could not sleep. Together,<sup>4</sup> they spent the night in Duryodhana’s camp and thought about the extremely fierce enmity that they had unleashed on the great-souled Pandavas. They had oppressed Krishna<sup>5</sup> at the time of gambling with the dice and had brought her to the assembly hall. They thought of that and repented. They became extremely anxious. They thought of the hardships the Parthas had confronted on account of the gambling match. O king! As they thought about these difficulties, the moment seemed to last for a hundred years. Then, the clear morning dawned and they went through the prescribed rites. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All of them performed these necessary tasks and having performed these necessary tasks, they were somewhat reassured. When the sun arose, they instructed that the soldiers should be yoked and departed. Karna was made the overall commander and the auspicious ceremonies were performed. The foremost among brahmanas were praised and given vessels full of curds, clarified butter, parched rice, golden coins, cattle, gold and extremely expensive garments. Bards, raconteurs and minstrels prayed that their victory and prosperity might increase. O king! In similar fashion, the Pandavas also performed all the morning rites. O king! Making up their minds to fight, they emerged from their camps. As the Kurus and the Pandavas wished to kill each other, a tumultuous battle commenced and it made the body hair stand up. O king! When Karna was the overall commander, the battle between the Kuru and Pandava soldiers lasted for two days. It was wonderful to see. After having caused a great slaughter of the enemy in the battle, Vrisha<sup>6</sup> was brought down by Phalguna, while all the sons of Dhritarashtra looked on. Sanjaya then went to the city of Nagasahvya<sup>7</sup> and told Dhritarashtra everything that had transpired in Kurujangala.’<sup>8</sup>

Janamejaya said, ‘Having heard that Drona had been killed by the enemy in the battle, the aged king, Ambika’s son,<sup>9</sup> had been overcome by supreme grief. O supreme among brahmanas! On hearing that Karna, Duryodhana’s well-wisher, had been slain, he must have been miserable. How could he sustain his life? The king’s hopes for the victory of his sons had been based on him. On hearing that he had been killed, how could Kouravya sustain his life? Even when there is a hardship, I think that it is very difficult for men to die, since, despite hearing that Karna had been slain, the king did not give up his life. O brahmana! That was also true of Shantanu’s aged son,<sup>10</sup> Bahlika, Drona, Somadatta and Bhurishrava. Many other well-wishers, sons and grandsons were also brought down. O brahmana! On hearing this, I think that it must have been very difficult for the king to remain alive. O one rich in austerities! Tell me everything about this in detail. I am not satisfied with hearing about the great conduct of my ancestors.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O great king! When Karna was slain, with a distressed mind, Gavaigana’s son<sup>11</sup> set out in the night for Nagapura,<sup>12</sup> on horses that were as fleet as the wind. He reached Hastinapura with great anxiety in his mind. He went to Dhritarashtra’s place, where, the number of well-wishers had declined.<sup>13</sup> He saw the king, who was overcome by lassitude and was devoid of energy. Joining his hands in salutation, he bowed his head at the

king's feet. He worshipped Dhritarashtra, lord of the earth, in accordance with the prescribed rites. He then spoke these words. "Alas! I am Sanjaya. O lord of the earth! Are you happy? You have confronted this state because of your own sins. I hope you are not confounded now. You did not follow the beneficial advice of Vidura, Drona, Gangeya<sup>14</sup> and Keshava. Are you distressed when you remember that? In the assembly hall, Rama, Narada and Kanva spoke beneficial words to you, but you did not accept them.<sup>15</sup> Are you distressed when you remember that? Remembering that the well-wishers who were engaged in your welfare, with Bhishma and Drona as the foremost, have been killed by the enemy in the battle, are you distressed?" Having been thus addressed, the king joined his hands in salutation before the son of the suta.<sup>16</sup> He sighed deeply. Oppressed by sorrow he spoke these words. "O Sanjaya! The brave Gangeya, who was well versed in the use of divine weapons, has been brought down. So has the great archer, Drona, and my mind is severely distressed. The energetic one<sup>17</sup> was born from the Vasus. The armoured one slaughtered ten thousand *rathas*. He has been killed by Yajnasena's son, Shikhandi, who was protected by the Pandaveyas. My mind is severely distressed. Bhargava gave supreme weapons to the great-souled one and when he was a child, Rama himself taught him Dhanurveda.<sup>18</sup> It is through his favours that the immensely strong Kounteya princes and many other lords of the earth became *maharathas*. Drona was a great archer and unwavering in his aim. On hearing that he has been killed by Dhrishtadyumna in the battle, my mind is severely distressed. In the three worlds, there was no man who was his equal in the sacred texts.<sup>19</sup> On hearing that Drona had been killed, what did those on my side do? Using his valour, the great-souled Pandava Dhananjaya dispatched the army of the samshaptakas to Yama's abode. The *narayana* weapon used by Drona's intelligent son was repulsed.<sup>20</sup> After this, and when the remainder of the army was slain and driven away, what did those on my side do? I think that they must have been immersed in an ocean of grief. When Drona was killed, they must have been like people on an ocean whose boat had been shattered. O Sanjaya! What were the facial complexions of Duryodhana, Karna, Bhoja, Kritavarma, Shalya, the king of Madra, Drona's son, Kripa, my remaining sons and the others when the soldiers fled? Tell me that. O son of Gavgana! Tell me everything, exactly as it happened in the battle. Tell me everything about the Pandaveyas and those on my side." Sanjaya replied, "O venerable one! On hearing what transpired between the Pandaveyas and the Kouraveyas, you should not be distressed. This is destiny and your mind should not be full of grief. Sometimes, what should not happen, happens to a man. And sometimes, what should happen, does not. Therefore, learned ones do not grieve over that which has not been obtained, or what has been obtained." Dhritarashtra said, "O Sanjaya! On hearing this, my mind is not distressed. I think this is because of what destiny has ordained earlier. Tell me what you wish to." '

## Chapter 1152(2)

‘Sanjaya said, “When Drona, the great archer, was killed, your maharatha sons became pale in their faces. They grieved and were bereft of their senses. O lord of the earth! All of them held weapons in their hands, but were silent. They were oppressed by grief and did not look at each other, or speak to each other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that they were so distressed, your soldiers were also miserable and glanced upwards, extremely terrified. O Indra among kings! The weapons of those who remained were smeared in blood. On seeing that Drona had been brought down, these dropped from their hands. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O great king! But some<sup>21</sup> still hung down from their hands and were seen to be like stars in the firmament. O great king! They were stationed there, dispirited and bereft of enterprise. On seeing his own army in that state, King Duryodhana spoke these words. ‘I am fighting on the basis of the valour in your arms. Depending on this, I have challenged the Pandaveyas to this battle. With Drona having been killed in the battle, I discern that you are distressed. All the warriors who are fighting in the battle are being killed. When fighting in a battle, there may be victory, or there may be death. What is strange about this? Face all the directions and fight. Behold the great-souled warrior Karna Vaikartana in the battle. The immensely strong and great archer is roaming around, possessing divine weapons. Dhananjaya, Kunti’s son, is frightened of fighting with him. He always retreats before that wrathful one, like small animals before a lion. The immensely strong Bhimasena possesses the strength of ten thousand elephants. But in a human battle, he was reduced to a miserable state.<sup>22</sup> The brave Ghatotkacha knew the use of maya. Using the divine weapon, the invincible spear, in the battle, he killed him and roared loudly.<sup>23</sup>

The intelligent one’s valour is difficult to cross. He is unwavering in his aim. You will witness the inexhaustible strength in his arms in the battle today. You will behold both the great-souled Radheya and Drona’s son act against the Pandu and Panchala soldiers. All of you are brave, wise and born in noble lineages. You will witness each other’s good conduct and skill in the use of weapons today.’ O great king! When the king had spoken in this way, the immensely strong Vaikartana Karna roared like a lion. As all of them looked on, he fought with the Srinjayas, Panchalas, Kekayas and Videhas and caused great destruction, releasing hundreds of showers of arrows from his bow. They seemed to be linked head to tail, like a flock of bees. The spirited one afflicted the Panchalas and Pandavas. He killed thousands of warriors and was brought down by Arjuna.” ’

## Chapter 1153(3)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O great king! On hearing this, Dhritarashtra, Ambika’s son, was seen to be overcome by great grief. He thought that Suyodhana had already been killed. He lost his senses and fell down on the ground, like an elephant that had lost its consciousness. That supreme among kings was senseless and fell down on the ground. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! A great lamentation arose among the women. That sound filled the earth, everywhere. The Bharata women were immersed in a great and terrible ocean of grief. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Gandhari approached the king. All those from the inner quarters<sup>24</sup> lost their senses and fell down on the ground. O king! At this, Sanjaya comforted those distressed ones. Miserable, copious quantities of tears flowed from their eyes. He repeatedly assured the trembling women. In every direction, they were like plantain trees that had been whirled by a storm. Vidura sprinkled the Kourava king, the lord who had wisdom for his sight,<sup>25</sup> with water and comforted him. O king! He slowly regained his senses and saw the ladies. O lord of the earth! The king seemed to be mad and stood there, silently. He reflected for a long time and sighed repeatedly. He censured his sons in many ways and applauded the Pandavas. He censured his own intelligence and that of Shakuni Soubala. He thought for a long time and trembled repeatedly. The king then used his mind to restrain himself. Resorting to patience, he asked Sanjaya, the suta who was the son of Gavalgana. “O Sanjaya! I have heard the words that you have spoken to me. O suta! Has my son, Duryodhana, already gone to Yama’s abode? O Sanjaya! Tell me everything accurately, even if you have told it to me earlier.” O Janamejaya! Having been thus addressed by the king, the suta replied, “O king! The great archer, Vaikartana, was killed, with his maharatha sons and brothers and so were the sons of other sutas.<sup>26</sup> In the battle, Duhshasana was killed by the illustrious and angry Pandava Bhimasena, who drank his blood.” ’

## Chapter 1154(4)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O great king! On hearing these words, Dhritarashtra, Ambika’s son, became anxious. His senses were overcome with grief. He spoke to the suta, Sanjaya. “O son!<sup>27</sup> All this is the result of my evil policy. My mind and my soul are overcome. On hearing that Vaikartana has been killed, the sorrow is tearing out my inner organs. He was skilled in the use of supreme weapons. This is like a stake and I wish to cross the ocean of grief. Among the Kurus and the Srinjayas, who are the ones who remain alive and who are dead?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! Shantanu’s son<sup>28</sup> was brought down. He was unassailable and powerful. He killed ten thousand Pandava warriors for each of ten days. The great archer, Drona, was invincible. The one with the golden chariot roamed around amidst the Panchala rathas and killed warriors. Thereafter, he was slain. Having slain half the soldiers<sup>29</sup> who remained after the slaughter by the great-souled Bhishma and Drona, Vaikartana Karna was killed. O great king! The immensely strong, Prince Vivimshati, killed hundreds of warriors from the Anarta region. He was then killed in the battle. Remembering the duty of kshatriyas, your brave son, Vikarna, stood stationed, facing the enemy, though he was without mounts and without weapons. Bhimasena remembered the diverse and extremely terrible hardships caused by Duryodhana and his own pledge and brought him down.<sup>30</sup> Having performed extremely difficult deeds, the immensely strong princes from Avanti, Vinda and Anuvinda, went to Vaivasvata’s abode.<sup>31</sup> O king! The immensely valorous Jayadratha was the foremost among those from the Sindhu kingdom. The brave one controlled ten kingdoms and he was always obedient to your instructions. Having vanquished eleven *akshouhinis* with his sharp arrows, Arjuna killed him.<sup>32</sup> Duryodhana’s son was spirited and invincible in battle. He followed his father’s instructions and was brought down by Subhadra’s son.<sup>33</sup> Duhshasana’s son was brave and possessed strength of arms. He prided himself in battle and was dispatched to Yama’s abode by Droupadi’s sons.<sup>34</sup> Bhagadatta was the lord of the *kiratas*<sup>35</sup> and those who dwelt along the shores of the ocean. He had dharma in his soul and was the revered and beloved friend of the king of the gods. That lord of the earth was always devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas. Through Dhananjaya’s valour, he went to Yama’s abode.<sup>36</sup> O king! The immensely illustrious and brave Bhurishrava, son of the Kourava Somadatta, was killed by Satyaki in the battle.<sup>37</sup> Shrutayu from Ambashtha was a foremost archer among the kshatriyas. He fearlessly roamed around in the battle and was killed by Savyasachi.<sup>38</sup> O great king! Your son, Duhshasana, was skilled in the use of weapons and was invincible in battle. He was brought down by Bhimasena.<sup>39</sup> O king! Sudakshina possessed many thousands of wonderful armies of elephants. Savyasachi slew him in the battle.<sup>40</sup> The lord of Kosala killed many hundreds of the enemy and through the valour of Subhadra’s son, was sent to Yama’s abode.<sup>41</sup> Having fought with many warriors and Bhimasena, Chitrasena, your maharatha son, was brought down by Bhimasena.<sup>42</sup> The handsome and brave son of the king of Madra increased the terror of his enemies. He wielded a sword and a shield and was brought down by Subhadra’s son.<sup>43</sup> The immensely energetic Vrishasena was Karna’s equal in battle. He was swift in the use of weapons and did not deviate from his aim. Dhananjaya remembered Abhimanyu’s death and the pledge that he had made and while Karna looked on, used his valour to send him to Yama’s abode.<sup>44</sup> Shrutayu, lord of the earth, was firm in his enmity towards the Pandavas. Reminding him of that enmity, Partha brought him down.<sup>45</sup> O venerable one! O king! Rukmaratha, Shalya’s son, was brave. He was the son of Sahadeva’s maternal uncle, but was nevertheless killed by his brother in the battle.<sup>46</sup> The aged King Bhagiratha and Brihatkshatra of Kekaya were brave and powerful, but despite their supreme valour, they were killed.<sup>47</sup> O king! Bhagadatta’s son

was immensely strong and wise. He was brought down by Nakula, who roamed in the battle like a hawk. Your grandfather Bahlika, with all the others from Bahlika, was sent to Yama's abode through Bhimasena's valour.<sup>48</sup> O king! Jayatsena was Jarasandha's immensely strong son. That descendant of Magadha was slain by Subhadra's great-souled son in the battle.<sup>49</sup> O king! Your sons, Durmukha and maharatha Duhsaha, prided themselves on their valour. Bhimasena killed them with his club.<sup>50</sup> Having performed excellent deeds, maharatha Durmarshana, Durvishaha and Durjaya went to Yama's eternal abode. The suta Vrishavarma was your adviser and was extremely valorous. Because of Bhimasena's valour, he went to Yama's abode. The king possessed the strength of ten thousand elephants and had a large army of ten thousand elephants. With his followers, he was killed by Pandu's son, Savyasachi.<sup>51</sup> O great king! There were two thousand Vasatis, skilled in striking and the brave Shurasenas. All these warriors were killed. The Abhishahas were armoured. They could strike and were mad with insolence. They were slain, together with the best of rathas from among the Shibis and the Kalingas. There were those who were reared in Gokula. They were extremely well versed in fighting. Many thousands of them arrayed themselves as masses of samshaptakas. All of them approached Partha and went to Vaivasvata's eternal abode.<sup>52</sup> O great king! The kings Vrishaka and Achala were your brothers-in-law and those brave ones fought in your cause. They were killed by Savyasachi.<sup>53</sup> O great king! King Shalva was famous because of his terrible deeds and his acts as a great archer. He was brought down by Bhimasena.<sup>54</sup> O great king! Together with Brihanta, Oghavan was valiant in the battle, for the sake of their friends. They have gone to Vaivasvata's eternal world.<sup>55</sup> O lord of the earth! In that fashion, Kshemadhurti was the best among rathas. O king! In the battle, he was killed through Bhimasena's club.<sup>56</sup> King Jalasandha was immensely strong and a great archer. He performed extremely great deeds in the battle and was killed by Satyaki.<sup>57</sup> Alayudha, Indra among the *rakshasas*, possessed charming asses as his mounts. Through Ghatotkacha's valour, he went to Yama's abode.<sup>58</sup> The ones descended from Radheya,<sup>59</sup> the son of the suta, and all his maharatha brothers and all the Kekayas were killed by Savyasachi. The Malavas, Madraka and Dravidas were terrible in their valour. O venerable one! There were the Mavellakas, the Tundikeras, the Savitriputrakas, the Anchalas, those from the east, north, west and the south. Large numbers of infantry and tens of thousands of horses were slain. When the horses and best of elephants were killed, chariots wandered around. There were those who were reared in noble lineages and made the best of efforts at the right time. They had standards, weapons, every kind of garment and ornament and were brave. O king! Partha, never exhausted in his deeds, killed them in the battle. There were others who were infinitely strong, wishing to kill each other.<sup>60</sup> In the battle, there were many other kings, with their followers. O king! They were killed in thousands. I will now tell you what you have asked me. Such was the carnage when Karna and Arjuna clashed against each other. It was like the great Indra against Vritra,<sup>61</sup> or Rama against Ravana. It was like Mura being brought down and slain by Krishna in a battle, or the brave Kartavirya, indomitable in battle, being killed by Bhargava Rama in an encounter, together with his kin and relatives, after an extremely great and terrible fight that is famous in the three worlds.<sup>62</sup> O king! In that fashion, in a duel, Karna, supreme among strikers and indomitable in battle, was killed by Arjuna, together with his advisers and relatives. He was the main cause behind the enmity and he was the one on whom the sons of Dhritarashtra depended for their victory. O king! The Pandavas have accomplished what they could not have contemplated earlier. O great king! However, your relatives who were your well-wishers had told you about this. That is the reason this great catastrophe has arisen now. O king! Your sons desired the kingdom and you concurred with their wishes. Ill action was practised and the fruits of that have arrived."

Dhritarashtra said, "O son!<sup>63</sup> You have so far recounted the names of those on my side who have been killed by the Pandavas.<sup>64</sup> O Sanjaya! Tell me about the Pandaveyas who have been killed by those on my side."

Sanjaya replied, "The sons of Kunti were valiant in the battle. They possessed great spirits and immense strength. Bhishma brought down their warriors, with their relatives and their advisers. In a battle, Satyajit possessed valour and strength that was Kiriti's equal. He was unwavering in his aim and he was killed by Drona in the encounter.<sup>65</sup> Virata and Drupada were aged and fought valiantly, for the sake of their friends. With their sons,



those kings were killed in the battle by Drona. Though a child, he was revered in battle and the lord was as unsailable as Savyasachi, Keshava or Baladeva. He was skilled in fighting and performed great deeds. Though he was alone, he was surrounded by six enemies who were rathas. They were incapable of withstanding Bibhatsu, but brought down Abhimanyu.<sup>66</sup> Though he was deprived of his chariot, the brave one remained established in the dharma of kshatriyas. O great king! Subhadra's son was killed by Duhshasana's son in the battle. Brihanta, the great archer, was skilled in the use of weapons and indomitable in battle. Through Duhshasana's valour, he went to Yama's abode. The kings Maniman and Dandadhara were unsailable in battle and fought valiantly for the sake of their friends. They were brought down by Drona. King Anshuman of Bhoja was a maharatha. Because of the valour of Bharadvaja's son, with his soldiers, he went to Yama's abode. Chitrayudha was wonderful in fighting and performed great deeds. He exhibited his valour in wonderful modes and was killed by Karna in the battle. The Kekaya warriors were firm in fighting and were Vrikodara's equals. Brother brought down brother and they were slain through the valour of the Kekayas.<sup>67</sup> Janamejaya fought with a club. That powerful one hailed from the mountainous regions. O great king! He was brought down by your son, Durmukha. The Rochamanas<sup>68</sup> were tigers among men and were like blazing planets. O king! Drona shot arrows into the sky and killed them simultaneously. O lord of the earth! There were kings who fought back valiantly. They performed extremely great deeds and went to Vaivasvata's eternal abode. Purujit Kuntibhoja was Savyasachi's maternal uncle.<sup>69</sup> In the battle, he won many worlds for himself and was killed by Drona's arrows. Abhibhu, the king of Kashi, was surrounded by many from Kashi. Vasudana's son made him give up his body in the battle. The valiant Yudhamanyu and Uttamouja were infinitely energetic. In the battle, those brave ones killed hundreds and were then themselves slain. O venerable one! Kshatradharma and Kshatravarma from Panchala were supreme archers. Drona made them go to Yama's abode. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Kshatradeva, Shikhandi's son, was chief among warriors and was killed in the battle by your grandson, Lakshmana.<sup>70</sup> Suchitra and Chitradharma were father and son and were maharathas. They roamed around with great valour and were killed by Drona in the battle. O great king! O great king! Vardhakshemi performed great deeds in the battle. O great king! He was brought down by the Kourava Bahlika. O great king! Dhristaketu was a foremost ratha among the Chedis. Having performed great deeds, he went to Vaivasvata's eternal abode. O father!<sup>71</sup> In that fashion, Satyadhriti performed great deeds. He fought valiantly for the sake of the Pandavas and went to Yama's abode. Suketu, lord of the earth, was Shishupala's son. The warrior killed many enemies in the battle and was then slain by Drona. The brave Satyadhriti,<sup>72</sup> the valiant Madirashva and the valorous Suryadatta were killed by Drona's arrows. O great king! Shrenimana fought valiantly and having performed great deeds, went to Vaivasvata's eternal abode. O king! Magadha,<sup>73</sup> the destroyer of enemy heroes, fought valiantly and powerfully and was killed in the battle by Bhishma. Vasudana performed extremely great deeds in the battle. Because of the valour of Bharadvaja's son, he went to Yama's abode. There were many other maharathas on the side of the Pandavas. They were slain through Drona's valour. This is what you had asked me."

'Dhritarashtra said, "O supreme among eloquent ones! The foremost of soldiers on my side have been killed. O suta! I think the remnants will also be destroyed. What is the point of remaining alive? You have told me about the names of the ones who have been killed. I think that the ones who are still alive will also ascend to heaven. That is my view."

'Sanjaya replied, "O king! Drona's son is still alive. He is a brave maharatha who is skilled and swift in the use of his arms. He is firm in wielding weapons and his fists are also firm. He is valiant and spirited. Drona, supreme among brahmanas, gave him many valuable weapons that are wonderful, sparkling and of four different types.<sup>74</sup> This includes divine weapons. He is still stationed, desiring to fight for your sake. Bhoja Kritavarma is skilled in the use of weapons. He resides in the Anarta region and is the son of Hridika.<sup>75</sup> He is a maharatha and is foremost among the Satvatas. He is still stationed, desiring to fight for your sake. O king! Sharadvata Goutama<sup>76</sup> is immensely strong and can fight in many wonderful ways. He possesses a wonderful bow that is capable of withstanding a great burden. He has grasped it and is stationed, desiring to fight. Artayani<sup>77</sup> does not tremble in the battle and is the first among the soldiers who are on your side. He has abandoned the Pandaveyas, who are the sons of his sister. The spirited one wishes to make his pledge come true, that he will sap the energy of the son of the suta in

the battle. This is the promise that he made to Ajatashatru earlier. Shalya is unassailable and is Shakra's equal in valour. He is stationed, desiring to fight for your sake. The king of Gandhara<sup>78</sup> is united with his own army, which comes from Sindhu, Kamboja, Vanayu, Bahlika and other mountainous and unnamed regions. He is stationed, desiring to fight for your sake. O Indra among kings! Your son Kurumitra is also stationed. He is foremost among the Kurus and is on his chariot, with a blazing complexion that is like that of the sun or the fire. He is as dazzling and resplendent as the sun. Duryodhana is immensely valiant and is with the best of soldiers. He is in the midst of an army of elephants. His chariot is decorated with gold and he is stationed in the battle, desiring to fight. In the midst of the kings, Chitravarma is blazing in gold.<sup>79</sup> He is brave among men and is resplendent. His complexion is like that of a lotus, or a flame that is without smoke. He is shining, like the sun emerging from clouds. Your sons, the brave Satyasena and Sushena, have swords and shields in their hands. They are cheerfully stationed in the battle, together with Chitrasena, and wish to fight. The princes of the Bharata lineage, Chitrayudha, Shrutakarma, Jaya, Shala, Satyavrata and Duhshala are modest. However, they are powerful and are stationed, wishing to fight. The lord of Kaitavya is proud of his valour.<sup>80</sup> From one battle to another, that prince kills his enemies. He is advancing with infantry, horses, elephants and chariots. He is stationed in the battle, desiring to fight for your sake. The brave Shrutayu and Shrutayudha<sup>81</sup> and the valiant Chitrangada and Chitravarma, foremost among men, are stationed. They are proud strikers, who are unwavering in their aim. Karna's son, the great-souled Satyasena, is stationed in the battle, wishing to fight. O Indra among kings! Karna has two other supreme sons who are dexterous in the use of their hands. They are stationed. They desire to fight for your sake and are at the heads of two large armies that are impatient. O king! These and others are the foremost warriors. They are infinite in their power. For the sake of victory, the king of the Kurus is stationed in the midst of an army of elephants, like the great Indra."

'Dhritarashtra said, "You have accurately described to me those who are still alive, on our side and that of the enemy. From this, I can understand what is obvious, about which side will triumph." '

Vaishampayana said, 'Dhritarashtra, Ambika's son, realized that the foremost among the warriors on his side had been killed and that only a little bit of his army remained. Having heard this and having spoken thus, he was overcome by confusion and sorrow and his senses were benumbed. He became unconscious for a while and then said, "O Sanjaya! Wait. O son! Having heard this extremely unpleasant news, my mind is anxious." The lord of the earth lost his senses and fell down.'



## Chapter 1155(5)

Janamejaya asked, ‘O foremost among brahmanas! On hearing that Karna had been killed in that battle and that his sons had run away, how was that Indra among kings assured and what did he say? Because of the great disaster that confronted his sons, he suffered from supreme grief. What did he say at that time? I am asking you. Tell me.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘He heard of Karna’s death, which was unbelievable and extraordinary. It was so terrible that it paralysed all beings, as if Mount Meru had moved. It was as if the senses of the immensely wise Bhargava<sup>82</sup> had got confused, or that Indra, the performer of terrible deeds, had been defeated and shattered by his enemies. It was as if the immensely radiant sun had fallen down from the sky onto the earth, or the unthinkable drying up of the waters from the ocean. It was as extraordinary as the earth, the sky and all the directions being destroyed. It was as if both good and evil deeds had become fruitless. Dhritarashtra, the lord of men, used his intelligence to skilfully think about this. With Karna killed, he thought that his side had been destroyed and came around to the view that all the other beings would similarly be destroyed. He was scorched by the flames of sorrow and his heart could find no solace. His soul was shattered and he sighed in distress. He was extremely miserable and lamented. O great king! Dhritarashtra, Ambika’s son, lamented in woe.

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! Adhiratha’s son was brave. He was like a lion or an elephant in his valour. His shoulders were like that of a bull. His eyes, gait and voice were like those of a bull. He was a bull and like a bull. He was young and was capable of withstanding the *vajra*. He did not retreat from a battle, even if the adversary were to be the great Indra. Because of his bowstring twanging against his palms and because of the shower of his arrows, chariots, horses, men and elephants could not stand before him in a battle. He was mighty-armed and without decay. He was the slayer of large numbers of the enemy. Depending on him, Duryodhana ventured to provoke an enmity with the immensely strong sons of Pandu. How could Karna, best of rathas, have been brought down by Partha in the battle? He was capable of withstanding valour that is impossible to counter. How could that tiger among men have been killed? Depending on the strength of his own arms, he never showed any reverence towards Achyuta,<sup>83</sup> Dhananjaya or the Vrishnis. ‘The wielders of the Sharnga and Gandiva bows<sup>84</sup> are undefeated. When they are together, on their divine chariot, I will alone bring them down in the battle.’ He always spoke these words to the wicked and evil Duryodhana, who was afflicted by desire for the kingdom and was confused because of his greed for what was undesirable. He is the one who defeated powerful enemies who were extremely difficult to vanquish—the Gandharas, the Madrakas, the Matsyas, the Trigartas, the Tanganas, the Shakas, the Panchalas, the Videhas, the Kunindas, the Kashis, the Kosalas, the Suhmas, the Angas, the Pundras, the Nishadas, the Vangas, the Kichakas, the Vatsas, the Kalingas, the Taralas, the Ashmakas and the Rishikas. In earlier times, using his strength, the brave one defeated all of these in battles. Just as Uchchaihshrava<sup>85</sup> is supreme among horses, Vaishravana<sup>86</sup> is supreme among *yakshas*<sup>87</sup> and the great Indra is supreme among gods, Karna was supreme among those who could strike. Having obtained and pacified him through riches and honours, the king of Magadha wished to fight with all the kshatriyas on earth, with the exception of the Kouravas and the Yadavas.<sup>88</sup> On hearing of Karna’s death in the duel with Savyasachi, I am immersed in an ocean of grief. It is as if I am on an ocean without a boat. I think that my heart cannot be shattered and must be harder than the *vajra*. I have heard about the defeat of my kin, matrimonial allies and friends. O suta! Other than an unfortunate one like me, which other man in the world would not have given up his life? I wish for poison, or fire. I desire to fall down from the summit of a mountain. O Sanjaya! I am incapable of bearing this misery and hardship.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! In prosperity, lineage, fame, austerities and learning, the virtuous ones regard you to be the equal of Yayati, Nahusha’s son. You are like a maharshi in your learning and are accomplished in your deeds. Find solace inside your own self. Do not give way to this sorrow in your mind.”

‘Dhritarashtra said, “I think that destiny is supreme. Shame on manliness, it is futile. Karna was the equal of Rama<sup>89</sup> and has been killed in this battle. He killed Yudhishtira’s soldiers and the Panchalas who roamed around in their chariots. With his showers of arrows, the maharatha scorched all the directions. In the battle, he confounded the Parthas, like the wielder of the vajra against the asuras. How can he have been killed? How can he lie down, like a tree that has been shattered by the storm? I do not see an end to my sorrows and seem to be in an endless ocean. My anxiety is increasing. It is terrible. The desire to die is increasing. I have heard about Karna’s death and Phalguna’s<sup>90</sup> victory. But I do not think that Karna’s death is believable. It is certain that my heart has the essence of the vajra. It is extremely firm. On hearing about the death of Karna, tiger among men, it has not been shattered. It is certain that, from earlier times, destiny has ordained an extremely long life for me. I am extremely miserable. But despite hearing about Karna’s death, I am still alive. O Sanjaya! I am without well-wishers now and shame on this life. O Sanjaya! I have been reduced to this reprehensible state today. I am wicked in my understanding. Everyone will grieve over my miserable state. Earlier, I used to be honoured by the entire world. O suta! Having been defeated, how can I bear to remain alive? O Sanjaya! I have faced hardships and have moved from pain to greater pain. There was Bhishma’s death and then that of the great-souled Drona. With the son of the suta having been killed in the battle, I do not see any remnants left. O Sanjaya! It was he who would have enabled my sons to tide over this great enmity. The brave one released many arrows and has been slain in the battle. When that bull among men has been killed, what is the point of my remaining alive? There is no doubt that the *atiratha*<sup>91</sup> was afflicted by arrows and fell down from his chariot. It was like the summit of a mountain, shattered by the vajra. There is no doubt that he is lying down, adorning the earth, blood flowing from his wounds. He is like a crazy elephant, brought down by another elephant. He was the strength of the sons of Dhritarashtra and fear for the Pandavas. Karna was revered by all archers and has been slain by Arjuna. The brave and great archer granted my sons freedom from fear. The brave one has been killed and is lying down, like Bala by Shakra.<sup>92</sup> Duryodhana’s wishes are now like a lame one desiring to walk, the wishes of a poor man being satisfied, or a thirsty man without drops of water. We thought of one thing when performing our deeds, but it has turned out to be something else. Destiny is powerful and time is extremely difficult to transgress.

‘ “O suta! What about my son, Duhshasana? When he was killed, was he running away? Was he weak, distressed in his soul and devoid of manliness? O son! Did he display inferior conduct in the battle? Was the brave one killed like other kshatriyas on our side have been slain? Yudhishtira’s words have always been against war. They were like diet and medicine, but the foolish Duryodhana did not accept them. Bhishma was lying down on a bed of arrows and desired a drink. The extremely great-souled Partha pierced the surface of the earth. O son! On seeing the fountain of water that was created by the Pandava, the mighty-armed one spoke about peace with the Pandavas. ‘Be pacified. Let there be peace and let the hostilities of the war end. With fraternal feelings, enjoy the earth with the sons of Pandu.’<sup>93</sup> My son did not act in accordance with those words and is no doubt sorrowing now. What the far-sighted one stated in his words has now transpired. O Sanjaya! My advisers have been killed and my sons have been slain. I have been reduced to this state because of the gambling match, like a bird without wings. O Sanjaya! Boys cheerfully grasp birds in sport and having severed their wings, let them go. But because their wings have been severed, they cannot fly away. I have been reduced to that state, like a bird without wings. I am destitute and weak in every way. I am without relatives and kin. I am miserable and have come under the subjugation of my enemies. Which direction will I turn to? For the sake of Duryodhana’s prosperity, the lord<sup>94</sup> conquered the earth. He was valorous, but has been vanquished by the capable and brave Pandavas. When the great archer, Karna, was killed in the battle by Kiriti, which brave ones surrounded him? O Sanjaya! Tell me that. When he was slain by Pandava in the battle, I hope he was not abandoned and alone. O brave one! Earlier, you have told me how the valiant ones were brought down. Bhishma, supreme among wielders of all weapons, did not fight back and was brought down in the battle by Shikhandi’s supreme arrows. Similarly, Drona, the great archer, cast aside his weapons in the battle and immersed himself in yoga. O Sanjaya! He was already pierced with many arrows and

Dhrishtadyumna, Drupada's son, raised his sword and slew him. Both of them were killed through a weakness, especially through deceit. That is what I have heard about the way Bhishma and Drona were brought down. Even the wielder of the vajra himself would not have been able to kill Bhishma and Drona in a battle, provided the fight took place through fair means. I tell you this truthfully.

‘“Karna must have unleashed many divine weapons. The brave one was Indra's equal. How could death have touched him in the battle? He possessed a divine spear that was as radiant as lightning. It was decorated with gold and was capable of killing the enemy. Purandara gave him that in exchange for the earrings.<sup>95</sup> Among the arrows in his quiver, there was a divine arrow, decorated with gold. It was lying there and was smeared with sandalwood paste. It had a serpent in its mouth and the slayer of enemies did not use it.<sup>96</sup> The brave one ignored maharathas like Bhishma and Drona and learnt the extremely terrible *brahmastra* from Jamadagni's son.<sup>97</sup> When the mighty-armed one saw that Drona and the others were afflicted by the arrows released by Subhadra's son, he used his arrows to sever his<sup>98</sup> bow. Bhimasena possessed the strength of ten thousand elephants and the speed of the wind. But the one without decay deprived him of his chariot and laughed at his brother.<sup>99</sup> He conquered Sahadeva with straight-tufted arrows. But having deprived him of his chariot, he took compassion on him and knowing about dharma, did not kill him.<sup>100</sup> Ghatotkacha, Indra among the rakshasas, used a thousand different kinds of maya and was crazy in the battle. But he destroyed all those and killed him with the spear that he had obtained from Shakra. For all these days, Dhananjaya has been frightened of fighting a duel with him. The brave one was like an elephant. How could he have been killed in the battle? His chariot must have been shattered. His bow must have been fragmented. His weapons must have been exhausted. Otherwise, how could he have been killed by the enemy? When Karna brandished his gigantic bow, who was capable of standing against him in the battle? In the battle, he released terrible arrows and divine weapons. Who could defeat that tiger among men? He was like a tiger in his force. It is certain that his bow must have been shattered. His chariot must have got stuck in the ground. Else, his weapons must have got exhausted, since you have told me that he has been killed. Without these being destroyed, I can see no other reason for his death. ‘Until I have killed Arjuna, I will not wash my feet.’ This is the extremely terrible vow that the great-souled one took. In the forest, Dharmaraja Yudhishtira was always terrified of him. The bull among men could not sleep for thirteen years.<sup>101</sup>

‘“When my son forcibly brought the wife of the Pandus to the assembly hall, he depended on the valour and bravery of the great-souled one. While the Pandavas looked on, in the midst of that assembly hall, in the assembly of the Kurus, he<sup>102</sup> had spoken to Panchali. ‘You are the wife of slaves. You think that arrows released from Gandiva have the touch of the fire. O Krishna! They are no longer your husbands.’ He said this while Partha looked on. O Sanjaya! Depending on the strength of his own arms, not for a single moment was he frightened of the Parthas, their sons, or of Janardana. O son! I do not think that he could have been killed even by the gods, with Vasava,<sup>103</sup> even if they had angrily rushed against him, not to speak of the Pandavas. When he touched the bowstring with his finger-guards, which man was capable of standing before Adhiratha's son?<sup>104</sup> It is possible for the earth to be deprived of the blazing rays of the sun or the moon. However, that Indra among men did not retreat from a battle and his death is impossible. The wicked one, evil in his intelligence,<sup>105</sup> obtained him as an aide and with his brother, Duhshasana, rejected Vasudeva's desirable proposal.<sup>106</sup>

‘“On seeing that Karna, with the shoulders of a bull, has been brought down and on seeing that Duhshasana has been killed, I think that my son must be grieving. On hearing that Vaikartana has been killed in a duel with Savyasachi and on witnessing the victory of the Pandavas, what did Duryodhana say? He heard that Durmarshana and Vrishasena<sup>107</sup> had been killed in the battle. He saw the army was shattered and was being slaughtered by the maharathas. The kings were unwilling to fight and were running away. On seeing that the rathas were routed, I think that my son must be grieving. He is extremely insolent and wrathful because of his childish intelligence. On seeing that the army had lost its enterprise, what did Duryodhana say? On seeing that Bhimasena had killed his brother in the battle and had drunk his blood, what did Duryodhana say? With the king of Gandhara,<sup>108</sup> he had proclaimed in the assembly hall, ‘Karna will kill Arjuna in the encounter.’ On seeing him slain, what did he say?

Earlier, having deceived the Pandavas in the gambling match, Shakuni Soubala had rejoiced. O son! On seeing Karna killed, what did he say? On seeing that Karna had been slain, what did the great archer, Hardikya Kritavarma, the maharatha of the Satvata lineage, say? Drona's son is intelligent. Brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas worship him, for the sake of learning about *dhanurveda*. He is young, handsome, qualified, beautiful and immensely illustrious. O Sanjaya! On learning that Karna had been killed, what did Ashvatthama say? O son! Sharadvata Kripa is the preceptor in dhanurveda and possesses supreme knowledge.<sup>109</sup> When Karna was killed, what did he say? Shalya, the great archer and the king of Madra, is the adornment of any assembly. It is destiny that he did everything so that Karna might be brought down. There were kings of the earth who had come to fight. O Sanjaya! On seeing that Vaikartana had been killed, what did they say? O Sanjaya! At the time when the brave Karna, tiger among rathas and bull among men, was killed, who were the leaders of the main divisions of the army? O Sanjaya! How did Shalya, supreme among rathas and king of Madra, come to be engaged as Vaikartana's charioteer. Tell me about that. In the battle, who protected the right wheel of the son of the suta? Who protected the left wheel? Who protected the brave one from the rear? Which were the brave ones who did not abandon Karna and who were the inferior ones who ran away? When all those on our side were united, how was maharatha Karna killed? How did the brave ones among the Pandavas advance against the maharatha, creating a shower of arrows, like clouds showering down rain? There was a great and divine arrow, with a serpent at the mouth. O Sanjaya! How was it rendered unsuccessful? Tell me that. O Sanjaya! When the best of soldiers on our side have been killed, I do not see any refuge for the dispirited ones who are left. Those two brave and great archers were supreme among those on the Kuru side. On hearing of the death of Bhishma and Drona, what is the point of my remaining alive? I cannot tolerate the thought of Radheya, the ornament of a battle, being slain. The strength of his arms was equal to that of ten thousand elephants. O Sanjaya! When Drona was killed, tell me everything that took place between those brave ones among men, between the Kouravas and the enemy and how the Kounteyas prepared themselves for fighting with Karna. In the battle, how was the one without decay killed by his foes and how did he find peace?" '

## Chapter 1156(6)

‘Sanjaya said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O great king! When Drona, the great archer was killed on that day, and the resolution of Drona’s maharatha son countered,<sup>110</sup> the Kourava forces were driven away there. Together with his brothers, Partha<sup>111</sup> arranged the soldiers on their side into a *vyuha*.<sup>112</sup> O bull among the Bharata lineage! On discerning that he was stationed in that fashion and on seeing that his own forces were running away, your son<sup>113</sup> used his manliness to restrain them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having stationed his own troops, he used the strength of his arms to fight with the Pandaveyas for a long time. The enemy had attained its objective and was cheerful, after having struggled for a very long time. However, since it was evening, the armies withdrew. The soldiers were withdrawn and entered their own respective camps. Having done this, the Kurus consulted with each other. They were on expensive beds, with supreme cushions and supreme beds. They were on supreme seats and comfortably lying down, were like the immortals. King Duryodhana spoke to them in conciliatory and supremely restrained tones. He addressed those great archers in words that were appropriate to the occasion. ‘O best among intelligent ones! All of you, quickly tell me what your counsel is. O kings! What should be done now? What is the supreme task?’ Having been thus addressed by that Indra among men, those lions among men, who were seated on their thrones, used different kinds of signs to indicate that they wished to fight. They were ready to offer their lives as oblations into the sacrifice of war. The king’s face was also as radiant as the rising sun. On seeing this, the preceptor’s son, who was intelligent and eloquent in words, spoke these words. ‘Passion, engagement, skill and policy—these are the means to accomplish objectives. That is what the learned ones have said. However, everything depends on destiny. We had foremost among men, maharathas, on our side. They were the equals of the gods. They had good policy and were devoted, skilled and faithful. But they have been killed. However, despite this, we should not lose hope about our victory. If we use good policies, destiny will become favourable in accomplishing all our objectives. Among all these foremost men, we should make Karna the overall commander. He is endowed with all the qualities. We will then crush our enemy.’ On hearing these pleasant words, Duryodhana was delighted. He thought that these auspicious and beneficial words were full of affection towards him.

‘ “O great king! Reassuring his mind because of the strength of his arms,<sup>114</sup> King Duryodhana spoke these words to Radheya. ‘O Karna! I know your valour and that you are my supreme well-wisher. O mighty-armed one! But nevertheless, I will address some beneficial words towards you. O brave one! Having heard them, do what pleases you. You have always been the wisest. You are my supreme refuge. Bhishma and Drona, both atirathas, were my commanders and they have been killed. You are superior to them. Become my commander. Those great archers were aged and were partial towards Dhananjaya. O Radheya! I revered those brave ones because of your words. O son!<sup>115</sup> In the great battle, for ten days, you saw that Bhishma, the grandfather, protected the sons of Pandu. Having laid his weapons aside in the great battle, Bhishma, the grandfather, was killed by Phalguna, who placed Shikhandi at the forefront. That immensely fortunate one was brought down and is lying down on a bed of arrows. O tiger among men! It was because of your words that Drona was placed in our forefront.<sup>116</sup> But because they were his students, he also protected the Parthas in the battle. Then, the aged one was swiftly killed by Dhrishadyumna. Thinking about it, I do not see any other warrior who is your equal, because of your infinite valour, even if I include those two foremost ones who have been killed. There is no doubt that you will be able to ensure victory. You know everything about what has happened, earlier, in the middle, and later. You should be our leader in this battle. You should be the leader in this enterprise. Consecrate your own self in all these soldiers, like Skanda, the undecaying lord, is the general of the gods. Like that, become the protector of the soldiers of the sons of

Dhritarashtra. Slay all the large numbers of the enemy, like the great Indra against the *danavas*. Knowing that you are stationed in the battle, the maharatha Pandavas, together with the Panchalas, will run away, like the danavas on seeing Vishnu. O tiger among men! Therefore, become the leader of this large army. When you station yourself and make endeavours, the Pandavas, with their advisers, the Panchalas and the Srinjayas, will be bereft of their senses. You will be like a rising sun that scorches with its energy and dispels the terrible darkness. Like that, you will drive away our enemy.’ Karna replied, ‘O son of Gandhari! In your presence, I have spoken these words before. O king! I will defeat the Pandavas, with their sons and with Janardana. There is no doubt that I will be your commander. O great king! Be assured. Know that I will defeat the Pandavas.’ Having been thus addressed, the immensely energetic King Duryodhana arose, together with the kings, like the gods with Shatakratu.<sup>117</sup>

‘ “He instated Karna as the commander, like the immortals did to Skanda. Desirous of victory, King Duryodhana and the other kings swiftly sprinkled water, according to the prescribed rites.<sup>118</sup> Golden and earthen pots were filled and mantras pronounced over them. The tusks of elephants and the horns of large bulls were filled with water. There were others<sup>119</sup> that were decorated with gems and jewels and with fragrant perfumes and herbs. He seated himself on a seat made out of the fig tree,<sup>120</sup> covered with a piece of silk. He was consecrated, in accordance with the rites in the sacred texts. ‘In the great battle, may you defeat Partha and Govinda, together with their followers.’ O bull among the Bharata lineage! These were the benedictions pronounced by bards and brahmanas. ‘Be like the rising sun, the destroyer of darkness through its fierce rays. May they, together with Keshava, not be able to look at your arrows. May those ungrateful ones look on them as the blazing rays of the sun. May the Parthas and the Panchalas not be able to stand before you. In a battle, you possess the knowledge of weapons and will be like the great Indra against the danavas.’ Thus was the infinitely radiant Radheya consecrated. In his resplendent form, he looked like another sun. Radheya was instated as the commander by your son and goaded by destiny, he thought that his task had been accomplished. O king! Having become the commander, Karna, the destroyer of enemies, instructed that the soldiers should be yoked and should wait for the sun to rise. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Surrounded by your sons, Karna looked dazzling there. He was like Skanda surrounded by the gods, in the *tarakamaya* battle.” ’<sup>121</sup>

## Chapter 1157(7)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! Vaikartana Karna obtained the generalship and was addressed by the king himself,<sup>122</sup> in those gentle and fraternal words. He instructed the soldiers to be yoked and for the sun to rise. O immensely wise one! What did he do next? Tell me that.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having ascertained Karna’s views, your son instructed that the soldiers should be yoked and that musical instruments should be sounded. O venerable one! When that long night was over, a great sound of ‘Array, yoke,’ suddenly arose. In the army, elephants and chariots were prepared. O lord of the earth! Infantry and cavalry were readied. The spirited warriors shouted at each other. There was a large and tumultuous noise that seemed to touch heaven. Karna, the great archer and supreme among rathas, was seen stationed on his chariot. His flags were white and his steeds possessed the complexion of the rising sun. His bow had a golden back and his standard bore the mark of an elephant’s housing. The army had quivers full of arrows and armlets. They wielded *shataghnis*,<sup>123</sup> bells, lances, spears, clubs and bows. In his chariot and flags, the son of the suta was seen, sparkling like a clear sun. O father!<sup>124</sup> He blew on his conch shell, which was decorated in nets of gold. He stretched his giant bow, which was embellished with gold. O venerable one! On seeing Karna, the great archer and supreme among rathas, stationed on his chariot, like a rising sun that drives away thousands of clumps of darkness, the Kouravas, tigers among men, no longer thought about Bhishma and Drona’s death. O venerable one! Urging the warriors with sounds from his conch shell, Karna made the Kourava army march out. Wishing to defeat the Pandava, Karna, the great archer and scorcher of enemies, arranged a vyuha in the form of a *makara*.<sup>125</sup> O king! Karna stationed himself at the makara’s mouth. The brave Shakuni and maharatha Uluka were at the eyes. Drona’s son was at the head. In the midst of his brothers and surrounded by a large army, King Duryodhana was at the neck. O Indra among kings! Kritavarma stationed himself along the left leg, with the narayana and *gopala* forces who were indomitable in battle.<sup>126</sup> O king! Goutama, for whom truth was valour, was at the right leg, surrounded by great archers from the Trigarta and southern regions. Shalya was stationed at the rear left leg, with a large army that had been raised from the Madra region. O great king! Sushena, unwavering in his resolution, was on the right, surrounded by a thousand chariots and a hundred tusked.<sup>127</sup> The brave brothers and kings, Chitrasena and Chitra, were at the tail, surrounded by a large army. O Indra among kings! Thus did the supreme among the best of men emerge.

‘“On seeing this, Dharmaraja glanced towards Dhananjaya and said, ‘O Partha! In the battle, behold the large army of the sons of Dhritarashtra. They have been arrayed by Karna and are protected by brave maharathas. The remnants of the large army of the sons of Dhritarashtra are bereft of brave ones. O mighty-armed one! It is my view that the remnants are feeble and like grass. There is only one great archer who is stationed there and that is the son of the suta. That supreme among rathas cannot be vanquished by the gods, the *asuras*, the *gandharvas*, the *kinnnaras*, the giant serpents and all the mobile and immobile creatures in the three worlds. O mighty-armed one! O Phalguna! If you kill him today, you will be victorious. The stake that has been in my heart for twelve years will be uprooted. O mighty-armed one! Knowing this, construct the vyuha that you desire.’ On hearing his brother’s words, the Pandava with the white horses arranged the soldiers in a counter-vyuha that was in the shape of a half-moon. O king! Bhimasena stationed himself on the left flank and the immensely strong and great archer, Dhrishadyumna, was on the right. Pandava himself was at the centre of the vyuha, with Krishna as his charioteer. With Dharmaraja, Nakula and Sahadeva were at the rear. Protected by Kiriti, Yudhamanyu and Uttamouja from Panchala protected Arjuna’s wheels and did not desert him in the battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The remain-



ing brave kings armoured and stationed themselves in the vyuha, according to each one's position, enterprise and spirit. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus did the Pandavas arrange themselves into a great vyuha.

‘ “The great archers on your side made up their minds to fight. On seeing the army in the battle, arranged into a vyuha by the son of the suta, your son and all the others on our side thought that the Pandavas had already been killed. O lord of men! In similar fashion, on seeing the Pandava soldiers arranged into a vyuha, Yudhishtira thought that the sons of Dhritarashtra and Karna had already been killed. Conch shells, kettledrums, drums, cymbals and other musical instruments were loudly sounded and the noise spread in every direction. O king! There was a loud noise in both the armies. Desiring victory, the brave ones roared like lions. There were sounds of the neighing of horses and the trumpeting of elephants. O lord of men! There were fierce sounds from the wheels of chariots. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing the great archer, Karna, stationed at the front of the vyuha, no one<sup>128</sup> thought of Drona's loss. On both sides, the soldiers were full of great spirits and the men and elephants were cheerful. O king! Wishing to kill each other quickly, they remained stationed in the battle. O Indra among kings! Karna and Pandava were resplendent in the midst of their soldiers and were extremely angry on seeing each other stationed thus. As they advanced towards each other, the two armies seemed to be dancing around. Wishing to fight, they emerged from the flanks and smaller segments. O great king! A battle commenced between men, elephants, horses and chariots and they firmly wished to kill each other.” ’

## Chapter 1158(8)

‘Sanjaya said, “Those two armies clashed against each other, with cheerful horses, men and elephants. That great encounter was like that between the armies of gods and asuras. In that great battle, elephants, chariots, horses and infantry struck at each other, mangling bodies and destroying lives. The heads of men who were like lions were strewn around on the ground and the faces of those lions among men who were killed were like full moon, the sun, or lotuses in splendour. The heads of the warriors were severed with broad-headed and razor-sharp arrows in the shape of the half-moon, swords, lances and battleaxes. They possessed thick and long arms and these were severed by others with thick and long arms. Those thick arms were severed and fell down, with weapons and armlets still on the hands. With those red fingers and palms, the earth looked resplendent. It was as if five-headed serpents had been fiercely killed by Garuda. Horses, chariots, elephants and brave warriors were destroyed by the enemy and fell down. It was as if residents of heaven had been dislodged from their celestial vehicles,<sup>129</sup> after their sacred merits had been exhausted. In that battle, hundreds of brave and braver ones were uprooted through thick and heavy clubs, maces and bludgeons. Rathas were killed by rathas and mad elephants by other mad elephants. As they clashed in that supreme encounter, horses were brought down by horses. Rathas were destroyed by supreme rathas, elephants by horse riders and foot soldiers. Horse riders and foot soldiers were killed and lay down on that field of battle. Chariots, horses, foot soldiers and elephants were destroyed by chariots, elephants, horses and foot soldiers. Chariots, foot soldiers, elephants and horses were destroyed by men, horses, chariots and elephants. Chariots, horses and men fought against men, horses and chariots and caused a great carnage, fighting with hands, feet, weapons and chariots.

‘ “While those brave soldiers were being slaughtered and killed, the Parthas, with Vrikodara at the forefront, advanced against us. They were with Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, Droupadi’s sons, the Prabhadrakas, Satyaki, Chekitana and the Dravida soldiers. They were surrounded by a large army from the Pandyas, the Cholas and the Keralas. They were broad in the chest and long in the arms. They were tall and handsome. They were ornamented and possessed red teeth. They were like crazy elephants in their valour. They were adorned in garments of many colours and were smeared with fragrant scents. They had girded swords and nooses in their hands. They were capable of countering elephants. O king! Prepared to die, they were stationed against each other in that army. There were quivers and bows in their hands and their hair was long. They were pleasant in speech. The foot soldiers from Andhra were terrible in form and valiant and were led by Satyaki. There were other brave ones from Chedi, Panchala, Kekaya, Karusha, Kosala, Kashi and Magadha and they dashed forward. There were many kinds of chariots, elephants, supreme horses and infantry amidst them and they could be seen to be dancing and laughing. Surrounded by supreme ones from the enemy, Vrikodara was in the midst of that large army. He was seated astride an elephant. That supreme among elephants was fierce and having been properly prepared, looked dazzling. It was like a palace atop Mount Udaya, illuminated at the peak by the rising sun.<sup>130</sup> His<sup>131</sup> supreme armour was made out of iron and he was adorned with the best of gems. He sparkled like the autumn sky, studded with stars. There was a fierce spear in his hand and it was beautifully adorned at the tip. Like the midday sun in autumn, he began to burn up the enemy.

‘ “Seeing that elephant from a distance, Kshemadhurti arrived, seated on another elephant.<sup>132</sup> He was cheerful and attacked and challenged someone who was more cheerful than he was. There was a clash between those two elephants, both of which were fierce in form. They clashed as they wished, like two mountains with trees at the top. Astride the clashing elephants, those two brave ones struck each other with their spears. The powerful ones were as dazzling as the rays of the sun and striking each other, roared. They then retreated and circled on their ele-

phants. Both of them picked up bows and struck each other. They slapped their arms and in every direction, there was the sound of arrows. As they roared like lions, they delighted all the men. Those immensely strong lords were on elephants that raised up their trunks. As they fought, the flags whirled around in the wind. Having severed each other's bows, they roared. They showered down lances and spears, like clouds pouring down rain during the monsoon. Kshemadhurti used great force to strike Bhima between the breasts with a spear and striking him again with another six, roared. Because of those spears, Bhimasena was resplendent in the field of battle. In that encounter, his body blazed with anger, like seven suns seven times.<sup>133</sup> Bhima carefully hurled a spear towards his enemy. It was made out of iron and possessed the complexion of the sun. It flew straight. The lord of Kuluta affixed ten arrows to his bow and shattered the spear. He then pierced Pandava with sixty more. Pandava picked up a bow that roared like a giant cloud and afflicting his enemy's elephants with his arrows, roared. Having been afflicted by the arrows of Bhimasena in the battle, the elephant did not remain there any longer, though one tried to restrain it. It was like a cloud dispelled by the wind. Bhimasena's elephant, the king of elephants, pursued it, like a cloud driven by a strong wind follows a cloud blown away by the wind. Having endeavoured to restrain his elephant, Kshemadhurti attacked Bhimasena and his elephant and pierced them with arrows. The bull among men used a razor-sharp arrow that was released well to sever his enemy's bow and oppressed his enemy's elephant. As if striking Bhima with a rod, Kshemadhurti used iron arrows to pierce the elephant everywhere in its inner organs. Before the elephant could fall down, Bhimasena descended and stationed himself on the ground. He struck down the enemy's elephant with a club. When that elephant was brought down, Kshemadhurti advanced with an upraised weapon. But Vrikodara killed him with his club. He was killed, with the sword in his hand, and having been brought down, lay down next to the elephant. He was like a lion killed by the vajra, alongside a mountain shattered by the vajra. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing that the illustrious king of Kuluta had been killed, your soldiers were distressed and fled." '

## Chapter 1159(9)

‘Sanjaya said, “In the battle, the great archer, Karna, killed the Pandava soldiers with his straight-tufted arrows. O king! In that fashion, in Karna’s presence, the maharatha Pandavas angrily killed your son’s soldiers. O king! The mighty-armed Karna killed the Pandava soldiers with iron arrows that had been polished by artisans and were like the rays of the sun. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The elephants were afflicted by Karna’s iron arrows. They roared loudly and were weakened. They lost their senses and fled in the ten directions. O venerable one! While the army was thus being slaughtered by the son of the suta, Nakula swiftly attacked the son of the suta in that great battle. Bhimasena advanced against Drona’s son, who was performing extremely difficult deeds. Satyaki countered Vinda and Anuvinda from Kekaya.<sup>134</sup> Chitrasena, lord of the earth, advanced against Shrutakarma.<sup>135</sup> With a colourful standard and a colourful bow, Chitra advanced against Prativindhya. Duryodhana attacked King Yudhishtira, Dharma’s son. Dhananjaya angrily attacked the large numbers of samshaptakas. When the brave ones were being killed, Dhrishtadyumna rushed against Kripa. Shikhandi attacked the undecaying Kritavarma. Shrutakirti<sup>136</sup> attacked Shalya. O great king! Madri’s son, the powerful Sahadeva, attacked your son, Duhshasana.

‘ “In the encounter with Satyaki, the Kekayas showered down radiant arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Satyaki also enveloped the two from Kekaya. In the great battle, those two brothers severely struck the brave one in the chest and it was like two elephants striking another elephant with their tusks. With their armour pierced by arrows, the brothers were resplendent in the battle. O king! But they pierced Satyaki, who was truthful in his deeds, with arrows. O great king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, Satyaki countered them and laughed. He shrouded them in every direction with a shower of arrows. Having been repulsed by the shower of arrows released by Shini’s descendant, they quickly enveloped the chariot of Shini’s descendant with arrows. In that great battle, Shouri severed their colourful bows.<sup>137</sup> In that encounter, he repulsed them with sharp arrows that were difficult to withstand. They then grasped other bows and giant arrows in their fists and roaming around with skill and dexterity, covered Satyaki. They shot giant arrows that were tufted with the feathers of herons and peacocks and were decorated. They were embellished with gold and illuminated all the directions. O king! Because of the arrows released, there was darkness in the great battle there. Those maharathas severed each other’s bows. O great king! Satvata, indomitable in battle, became enraged. In that encounter, he picked up and strung another bow. With an extremely sharp *kshurapra* arrow, he severed Anuvinda’s head. O king! That large head, with earrings, fell down on the ground, like Shambara’s head when he was killed in the great battle.<sup>138</sup> On seeing that he swiftly fell down on the ground, all the Kekayas grieved. On seeing that his brave brother had been killed, the maharatha<sup>139</sup> strung another bow and countered Shini’s descendant. He pierced Satyaki with gold-tufted spears that had been sharpened on stone.<sup>140</sup> The maharatha from Kekaya roared loudly and powerfully and asking Satyaki to wait, struck him in the arms and in the chest with arrows that were like the flames of fires. The wise and spirited Satvata was wounded in all his limbs by these arrows. O king! He was resplendent in that battle, like a *kimshuka*<sup>141</sup> with leaves. Having been pierced by the great-souled Kekaya in the battle, Satyaki laughed and pierced Kekaya with twenty-five arrows. In their excellent arms, they grasped shields that were marked with the signs of one hundred moons. Wielding the best of swords, they roamed around in that great arena. It was like the immensely strong Jambha and Shakra in the battle between the gods and the asuras.<sup>142</sup> In the great battle, they roamed around in circles and swiftly attacked each other, wishing to kill each other in the encounter. Satvata severed Kekaya’s shield into two fragments and in that way, the king also shattered Satyaki’s shield. Having severed the

shield that was marked with the signs of hundreds of stars, Kekaya whirled around in circles, advancing and retreating. Wielding the best of swords, Shini's descendant also roamed around in that great arena and striking sideways, severed Kekaya's head. O king! Still wearing his armour, in that great battle, the great archer from Kekaya was severed into two parts and fell down, like a mountain shattered by thunder. Having killed him in the battle, Shini's brave descendant, supreme among rathas and scorcher of enemies, quickly climbed onto Yudhamanyu's chariot. He then again ascended a different chariot that had been prepared properly. Using his arrows, Satyaki began to slaughter the large army of the Kekayas. The large army of the Kekayas was slaughtered in that battle. It abandoned the enemy in the encounter and fled in the ten directions." '

## Chapter 1160(10)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! In the encounter, Shrutakarma angrily struck Chitrasena, lord of the earth, with fifty arrows that had been sharpened on stone. The king of Abhisara<sup>143</sup> struck Shrutakarma with nine straight-tufted arrows and pierced his charioteer with five. In the forefront of the army, Shrutakarma became enraged. He struck Chitrasena in his inner organs with extremely sharp iron arrows. Using the opportunity,<sup>144</sup> the immensely illustrious Shrutakirti shrouded the lord of the earth with ninety arrows. Having recovered his senses, maharatha Chitrasena severed his<sup>145</sup> bow with a broad-headed arrow and pierced him with seven arrows. He grasped another bow that was decorated with gold and could strike hard. Piercing Chitrasena with arrows, he made him look colourful. The youthful king was adorned with colourful garlands and was made colorful by the arrows. He looked like an ornamented youth in an assembly. In that encounter, angrily asking Shrutakarma to wait, he pierced him between the breasts with iron arrows. In the battle, Shrutakarma was pierced by those iron arrows and began to shed copious quantities of blood, like a mountain exuding red minerals. His limbs were covered in blood and he was like a picture drawn in blood. O king! In that battle, he was as resplendent as a blossoming kimshuka. O king! Having been thus struck by the enemy, Shrutakarma angrily countered the foe and severed his bow into two. O best of the Bharata lineage! Having severed his bow, the immensely illustrious Shrutakarma pierced him with three hundred iron arrows. Swiftly, he severely struck him with another sharp and broad-headed arrow and severed the great-souled one’s helmeted head. Chitravarma’s<sup>146</sup> extremely large head fell down on the ground, as if the moon was wilfully dislodged from heaven and fell down on the surface of the ground. O venerable one! On seeing that the king of Abhisara had been killed, Chitrasena’s soldiers attacked with force. However, Shrutakarma, the great archer, angrily used his arrows to drive away those soldiers, like the wrathful lord of the dead<sup>147</sup> at the time of the destruction of all beings. Having driven them away, he roamed around there.

‘ “Prativindhya pierced Chitra with five swift arrows and having pierced his charioteer with three, brought down his standard with a single arrow. Chitra struck him in the chest and the arms with nine broad-headed arrows that were gold-tufted, sharpened on stone and shafted with the feathers of herons and peacocks. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Prativindhya used his arrows to sever his bow and then struck that ratha with five sharp arrows. O great king! He hurled a spear towards your son.<sup>148</sup> It possessed a golden handle and was difficult to resist. It was terrible and was like the flame of a fire. As it descended, Prativindhya severed it with his sharp arrows. It was like the vajra frightening all beings at the end of a yuga and on seeing that this spear had been destroyed, Chitra grasped a large club. It was decorated with nets of gold and he hurled it towards Prativindhya. In that great battle, it slew his horses and his charioteer. It struck his chariot with great force and crushed it down on the ground. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At this time, he ascended another chariot and hurled a spear that was decorated with golden bells towards Chitra. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As it descended, the great-souled Chitra seized it and flung it back towards Prativindhya. In the battle, the immensely radiant spear struck the brave Prativindhya. It pierced his right arm and fell down on the surface of the earth. Having fallen down, because of its radiance, like lightning, it lit up the spot where it had fallen down. O king! Prativindhya grasped a javelin that was decorated with gold. Wishing to kill Chitra, he angrily hurled it towards him. It pierced the armour on his body and his heart. It then swiftly penetrated the ground, like a snake entering its hole. The king was struck by that javelin and was brought down, extending his large and thick arms that were like clubs. On seeing that Chitra, the ornament of a battle, was killed, all those on your side powerfully attacked Prativindhya from all directions. They released many kinds of arrows and shataghni with bells. They quickly enveloped him, like the sun by a mass of clouds. But in that encounter, the mighty-armed one struck them with a net of arrows and drove away those sol-

diers, like the wielder of the vajra against the asuras. O king! In the battle, those on your side were slaughtered by the Pandavas. They were violently dispersed, like the clouds by the wind. The army was slaughtered and scattered in all the directions. Drona's son alone quickly attacked the immensely strong Bhimasena. A terrible and violent clash ensued between them. It was like that between Vritra and Vasava in the battle between the gods and the asuras." '



## Chapter 1161(11)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! Drona’s son possessed supreme speed. He displayed his dexterity with weapons and struck Bhimasena with an arrow. He then again struck him with another ninety sharp arrows in his inner organs. He was light in the use of his hands and had seen and was knowledgeable about where the weak spots were. O king! Having been struck by the sharp arrows shot by Drona’s son, Bhimasena was resplendent in that battle, like the sun with its rays. Pandava shot one thousand well-aimed arrows and enveloping Drona’s son, emitted a roar like a lion. O king! In the encounter, Drona’s son countered Pandava with one hundred arrows and smiling, struck him in the forehead with an iron arrow. O king! Bearing that arrow on his forehead, Pandava looked like a proud and horned rhinoceros in the forest. While Drona’s son was making his efforts in the battle, the valiant Bhima also seemed to smile and struck him in the forehead with three iron arrows. With those arrows stuck to his forehead, the brahmana was resplendent. He looked like a supreme mountain with three peaks, drenched during the rains. Drona’s son struck Pandava with one hundred arrows, but could not make him tremble, like the wind against a mountain. Drona’s son used hundreds of other sharp arrows in the battle. However, he could not make the cheerful Pandava tremble, like the wind against a mountain. The maharathas shrouded each other with many other showers of arrows. They were proud in the battle and roaming around on their chariots, the brave ones were resplendent. They blazed like a couple of suns that had arisen for destroying beings. Their supreme arrows were like rays and they scorched each other with these. In that great battle, they acted and counteracted each other. Without any fear, they made efforts to act and counteract. The maharathas roamed around in that battle, like tigers. The invincible arrows were like the teeth and the terrible bows were like the mouths. With nets of arrows on all sides, they became invisible. It was as if the sun or the moon in the sky was enveloped by a net of clouds. But in a short instant, those two scorchers of enemies became visible again, like the moon and the sun in the sky, freed from the net of clouds.

‘ “Drona’s son placed Vrikodara on his right and showered down hundreds of sharp arrows, like rain pouring down on a mountain. However, Bhima was not ready to tolerate signs of his enemy being victorious. O king! Remaining on the right, Pandava began to execute circular motions, advancing and retreating. In that great battle, there was a tumultuous encounter between them. In that spot, they traversed along various circular paths. They drew their bows back to the full extent and struck each other with arrows. The maharathas made the best efforts to kill each other. In that battle, they used their arrows to try and deprive each other of their chariots. Drona’s maharatha son released many great weapons and in that encounter, Pandava destroyed them with his own weapons. O great king! There was an extremely fierce battle with those weapons. It was as if there was a tremendous clash between the planets, for the sake of destroying beings. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those arrows were swiftly released and clashed against each other. They illuminated all the directions and the soldiers on every side. Because of the large numbers of arrows, the sky looked terrible. O king! It was as if meteors were descending to destroy beings. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As the torrents of arrows clashed against each other, sparks of fire were generated and those blazing flames consumed both the armies. O great king! The *siddhas*<sup>149</sup> descended there and said, ‘This encounter is superior to all other encounters. All other battles do not amount to one-sixteenth of this.’<sup>150</sup> Such an encounter has not happened earlier, nor will it happen again. These two lords are knowledgeable and terrible in their valour. Bhima is terrible in his valour and the other one is skilled in the use of weapons. They represent the essence of valour and great is their skill. They are stationed in the battle like two Destroyers. They are like two Rudras or like two suns. In this battle, those two tigers among men have terrible forms, like two Yamas.’ At that time, we repeatedly heard these words spoken by the siddhas. Among the assembled denizens of heaven, there were roars like lions, on witnessing the extraordinary and unthinkable deeds performed by them in that battle. O king! Having injured each other in that encounter, those two brave ones glanced towards each other,

their eyes dilated with rage. Their eyes were red with anger. Their lips trembled in rage. They gnashed their teeth in wrath. They bit their lips in ire. The maharathas enveloped each other with showers of arrows. In that encounter, the arrows were like rain pouring from clouds. The weapons were like lightning. The maharathas pierced each other's standards and charioteers. They pierced each other's horses and struck each other. O great king! In that great encounter, they picked up two arrows and swiftly released them towards each other, wishing to kill each other. O great king! At the heads of the two armies, those two arrows blazed and struck each other, with an irresistible force that was like that of the vajra. They severely wounded each other through the force of those arrows. Those two, who were extremely valiant, sank down on the floors of their chariots. O king! While all the kshatriyas looked on, knowing that Drona's son had become unconscious, his charioteer bore him away from the field of battle. O king! In similar fashion, Pandava, the scorcher of enemies, repeatedly lost his senses and his charioteer bore him away on the chariot." '

## Chapter 1162(12)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “Describe the battle between Arjuna and the samshaptakas and also tell me about the one between the others on my side and the Pandavas.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! Listen. I will describe the battle exactly as it happened. The brave ones fought with the enemy and this destroyed bodies and lives. Partha penetrated the mass of samshaptakas, which was like an ocean.<sup>151</sup> The destroyer of enemies was like a giant storm that agitated the ocean. Dhananjaya used his sharp and broad-headed arrows to slice off the heads of the brave ones. The faces were like full moons, with excellent eyes, eyebrows and teeth. He<sup>152</sup> quickly scattered these around on the ground, like lotuses devoid of their stalks. The faces were well formed and large and were smeared with sandalwood paste and perfumes. With weapons and armour on their bodies, they looked like five-headed serpents. In that encounter, Arjuna severed the arms of his enemies with razor-sharp arrows. With his broad-headed arrows, Pandava severed the best of charioteers, standards, bows and hands decorated with gems. O king! Arjuna shot thousands of arrows in that battle and dispatched elephants, horses and chariots, with their riders, to Yama’s eternal abode. The foremost of brave ones roared like angry bulls that desired intercourse. They roared and attacked. As they were being killed, they struck him with their arrows, like bulls goring with their horns. The battle between them and him was wonderful and it made the body hair stand up. It was like one between the wielder of the vajra and the *daityas*, for the conquest of the three worlds. With his weapons, Arjuna countered all the weapons of his enemies on every side. He swiftly pierced them with many arrows and robbed them of their lives. He shattered the poles,<sup>153</sup> wheels and axles and killed warriors, horses and charioteers. He shattered the weapons and quivers and brought down the standards. The yokes, harnesses, poles and bumpers of chariots were fragmented. The place became impassable because of the shattered yokes and the heaps of weapons. The chariots were scattered, like giant clouds by the wind. Everyone was astounded on seeing this and this, increased the terror of the enemy. Arjuna rivalled the deeds of one thousand maharathas acting together. Masses of siddhas, *devarshis*<sup>154</sup> and *charanas*<sup>155</sup> were satisfied. The drums of the gods were sounded and flowers were showered down on Keshava and Arjuna’s heads. An invisible voice was heard. ‘Keshava and Arjuna possess the beauty of the moon, the sun, the wind and the fire. They blaze in strength and are resplendent. Those two brave lords always dazzle. When those two brave ones are stationed on the same chariot, they are as invincible as Brahma and Ishana.<sup>156</sup> Those two brave lords are foremost among all beings and are Nara and Narayana.’<sup>157</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On witnessing this great wonder and on hearing these words, Ashvatthama controlled himself and rushed against the two Krishnas in the battle.<sup>158</sup>

‘ “He advanced against Pandava and attacked him with arrows that were like the destroyer Yama. Drona’s son laughed on his chariot. In his hand, he held up an arrow and said, ‘O brave one! A guest has arrived before you. If you think me to be deserving, with all your heart, grant the guest the opportunity of fighting with you.’ Having been thus challenged by the preceptor’s son, who wished to fight, Arjuna thought that he had been greatly honoured and spoke to Janardana. ‘The samshaptakas should be killed by me, but Drona’s son is challenging me. O great-armed one! Instruct me about which one I should do first.’ Having been thus addressed, Krishna drove Partha, like Vayu taking Indra to a sacrifice, towards Drona’s son, who had issued a challenge in the appropriate manner. Drona’s son was single-minded in his intentions and Keshava spoke to him. ‘O Ashvatthama! Be patient. Strike and bear the counter-strike. The time has come for those who live off others to repay the food they have received from their masters.<sup>159</sup> Brahmanas are subtle in settling disputes. Kshatriyas are coarser, resulting in victory or defeat. Because of your folly, you have asked for excellent and divine hospitality from Partha. Now be patient

and receive what you have asked for from Pandava.’ When Vasudeva had spoken thus, the supreme among brahmanas agreed. He pierced Keshava with sixty iron arrows and Arjuna with three. Arjuna became extremely angry at this and used three broad-headed arrows to slice down his bow. Drona’s son then picked up a bow that was more terrible. He strung it in an instant and pierced Arjuna and Keshava, with three arrows for Vasudeva and one thousand for Pandava. Carefully, Drona’s son shot a thousand arrows, then another one million and then ten million. He confounded Arjuna in the battle. O venerable one! He was knowledgeable about the brahman and arrows issued from his quiver, his bow, his bowstring, his fingers, his arms, his hands, his chest, his face, his nose, his eyes, his ears, his head, his limbs, his pores, his chariot and his standard. He pierced Keshava and Pandava with a great net of arrows. Drona’s son roared in joy, like the rumbling of a large cloud. On hearing the roar, Pandava spoke to Achyuta.<sup>160</sup> ‘O Madhava! Behold Drona’s son’s wickedness towards me. He thinks that since we have entered this chamber of arrows, we are about to be slain. But with my training and my strength, I will destroy his resolution.’ The foremost among the Bharata lineage shattered each of Ashvatthama’s arrows into three fragments. It was like the wind dispelling a mist.

‘ “Then Pandava used his fierce arrows to pierce the samshaptakas and their horses, charioteers, chariots, elephants, standards and large numbers of infantry. Everyone who was a spectator there, in whatever form, thought himself to have been covered by those arrows. Arrows of many different types were shot from Gandiva. In that battle, they killed elephants, horses and men who were within a distance of a *krosha*.<sup>161</sup> Broad-headed arrows severed and brought down the trunks of elephants that were mad with musth. They were sliced down, like trees in the autumn by an axe. After this, the elephants themselves, like mountains, were brought down, with their riders. It was as if the mountains were being shattered by the wielder of the vajra with his vajra. There were chariots that had been properly prepared and were like the cities of gandharvas. Well-trained and swift horses, indomitable in battle, were yoked to them. Dhananjaya showered down arrows on these enemies, ornamented horse riders, foot soldiers and horses. In that great ocean of the samshaptakas, Dhananjaya was like the sun that arises at the end of a yuga. They were difficult to dry up.<sup>162</sup> But with his fierce arrows that were like rays, he dried them up.

‘ “Drona’s son was like a gigantic mountain and swiftly, he again pierced him with extremely forceful iron arrows that were as energetic as the sun, like the wielder of the vajra against a mountain. At this, the preceptor’s son became wrathful and wished to fight. He advanced towards Partha, wishing to strike his horses and his charioteer with his swift arrows. But these were struck down. He<sup>163</sup> next released a multitude of arrows towards Ashvatthama, who was like a guest who had arrived in a house. Abandoning the samshaptakas, Pandava attacked Drona’s son, like a giver abandons the undesirable in favour of the desirable.<sup>164</sup> There was a clash like that between Shukra and the radiant Angirasa.<sup>165</sup> It was as if Shukra and Angirasa were clashing in the sky to enter the same *nakshatra*.<sup>166</sup> Their flaming arrows traversed the sky and scorched each other. They terrified the worlds with those rays, like planets that had been dislodged from their positions. With an iron arrow, Arjuna severely struck Drona’s son in the midst of his eyebrows and he looked as resplendent as the sun, with its rays extending upwards. The two Krishnas were also severely wounded by the hundreds of arrows shot by Ashvatthama. They looked like two suns that dazzled with their rays at the end of a yuga. Protected by Vasudeva, Arjuna released a weapon that was sharp on every side. He struck Drona’s son with arrows that were like the vajra, the fire, or Vaivasvata’s<sup>167</sup> staff. The performer of terrible deeds pierced the extremely energetic Keshava and Arjuna in the inner organs. These were arrows that were released well and were extremely fierce and forceful. Struck by these, even Death would have been pained. But Arjuna countered the arrows of Drona’s son and covered him with twice that number of well-tufted arrows.

‘ “Having enveloped that solitary and brave one and his horses, charioteer and standard, he struck the samshaptakas again. Partha shot arrows and severed the bows, arrows, quivers, bowstrings, hands, arms, weapons held in the hands, umbrellas, standards, horses, garments, garlands, ornaments, shields, armour, wishes and all the beautiful heads of his enemies, as they were stationed there and did not retreat.<sup>168</sup> Those brave ones made every endeavour, stationed on well-prepared chariots, horses and elephants. But they were restrained by the large numbers of Partha’s arrows and the foremost among men fell down. The heads of men were like lotuses, the sun and the full

moon. They were adorned with diadems, garlands and crowns. They were severed by broad-headed and razor-sharp arrows and arrows that were in the shape of a half-moon. They incessantly fell down on the ground. Brave ones from Kalinga, Vanga, Anga and Nishada wished to kill Pandava and rushed against him. They were astride elephants that looked like the elephant of the king of the gods. They were angry and insolent, as insolent as the enemies of the gods. Partha sliced down those elephants, their trunks and their armour and mangled their inner organs. He brought down the standards and flags, as if the one with the vajra in his hand was bringing down the peaks of mountains.

‘ “When they were routed, Kiriti enveloped his preceptor’s son with arrows that possessed the complexion of the rising sun. It was as if a rising sun was dispelling a large net of clouds created by the wind. Countering Arjuna’s arrows with his own arrows, Drona’s son covered Arjuna and Vasudeva with his arrows, as if the moon and the sun were being covered in the sky by a thundering cloud at the end of the summer. Afflicted by these arrows, Arjuna directed his weapons towards those on your side and suddenly made everything dark with his arrows. He pierced all of them with his well-tufted arrows. In that encounter, no one could discern when Savyasachi picked up an arrow, affixed it and released it. One could only see that horses, elephants, foot soldiers and rathas were slain and their bodies fell down. Swiftly, Drona’s son affixed ten iron arrows. He released them so quickly that they seemed to be a single arrow. They were released well and Arjuna was pierced by five and Achyuta by another five. Having been thus wounded, those two foremost of men, who were like the lord of riches<sup>169</sup> and Indra, began to exude blood. They were afflicted by the one who had completed his learning.<sup>170</sup> Some thought that they had been killed. The lord of Dasharha spoke to Arjuna. ‘Why are you hesitating? Kill this warrior. If you commit the error of ignoring him, he will cause great hardship, like a disease that spreads.’ Having been thus addressed by Achyuta, he was no longer distracted and sought to wound Drona’s son with his arrows. He severed the harnesses of the horses and pierced the steeds, which then bore him<sup>171</sup> a long distance away. The intelligent one did not return again to fight with Partha. The one with self-control knew that the victory of the brave one from the Vrishni lineage and Dhananjaya, the best of the Angirasa lineage,<sup>172</sup> was certain. Reversing, Ashvatthama withdrew his horses from the field of battle, like a disease is treated through mantras, herbs and remedies and withdraws from the body. Keshava and Arjuna headed in the direction of the samshaptakas. Flags were stirred by the wind and fluttered atop their chariot, which rumbled like the clouds.” ’

## Chapter 1163(13)

‘Sanjaya said, “At this time, a loud uproar arose towards the northern side of the Pandu soldiers. The rathas, elephants, horses and foot soldiers were being slaughtered by Dandadhara. Keshava reversed the direction of the chariot, but did not stop the swift horses, which were as fast as Garuda or the wind. He told Arjuna, ‘Magadha is extremely powerful and is on an elephant that can crush. He is like Bhagadatta in training and strength. Having killed him, you will then slay the samshaptakas again.’ Having completed these words, he bore Partha towards Dandadhara.<sup>173</sup> The foremost among Magadhas was foremost in wielding the goad, just as the brilliant planet is foremost among planets.<sup>174</sup> He was fiercely destroying the enemy soldiers, like a brilliant planet destroying the earth.<sup>175</sup> His elephant was the crusher of enemy soldiers and was like an elephant of the danavas. It had been prepared well and it roared like a giant cloud. He killed thousands of rathas, horses and large numbers of elephants with his arrows. The elephant also stood on chariots and quickly crushed horses, charioteers, rathas and foot soldiers. With its front legs and its trunk, it killed elephants, like a wheel of death. Men with armour made out of steel<sup>176</sup> and adorned in ornaments were brought down, with their horses and foot soldiers. As those supreme ones were crushed and killed, a sound arose, like that of reeds being crushed by the wind. There were the sounds of drums, kettledrums and many conch shells at the spot, mixed with the noise of bowstrings slapping against palms. There were the roars of thousands of men, horses and elephants.

‘“On his supreme chariot, Arjuna advanced against that supreme of elephants. Dandadhara struck Arjuna with twelve supreme arrows, Janardana with sixteen and each of the horses with three. He then roared and laughed. At this, Partha used broad-headed arrows to slice off his bow, with the bowstring and arrows attached, and brought down his ornamented standard. He next struck those who were protecting his feet and this enraged the lord of Girivraja.<sup>177</sup> His tusker’s temples were shattered and it was as dark as a mass of clouds. But it was also as swift as the wind and he wished to crush Arjuna with this. He shot arrows and hurled spears at Janardana and Dhananjaya. Pandava simultaneously shot three razor-sharp arrows and severed his two arms, which were like the trunks of elephants, and his head, which had the complexion of the full moon. He then struck the elephant with one hundred arrows. Partha’s arrows were decorated with gold. They struck the elephant, which was clad in golden armour. It looked like a mountain in the night, when herbs and trees burn because of a fire. Afflicted with pain, it roared like a cloud. It roamed aimlessly and then, with trembling steps, it tottered as it tried to run away. It was weakened and fell down, together with the driver. It was as if a mountain had been shattered by thunder and had fallen down.

‘“When his brother was killed in the battle, Danda advanced, wishing to kill Indra’s younger brother<sup>178</sup> and Dhananjaya. He was astride a tusker that possessed the complexion of snow and was garlanded in gold. It looked like a summit of the Himalayas.<sup>179</sup> He hurled three lances that were as bright as the rays of the sun towards Janardana and five towards Arjuna. Having struck them, he roared. Pandava severed his arms with extremely fierce kshurapra arrows, while they still held lances, were adorned with armlets and were smeared with sandalwood paste. They simultaneously fell down from the elephant’s back and looked as beautiful as two serpents that had fallen off a mountain’s peak. With an arrow that was in the shape of a half-moon, Kiriti severed Danda’s head and it fell down from the elephant onto the ground. It was covered with blood and looked beautiful as it fell down, like the sun setting in the western direction. The supreme elephant possessed a white complexion and Partha pierced it with supreme arrows that blazed like the rays of the sun. It shrieked as it fell down, as if the summit of a mountain had been struck down by thunder. There were other supreme elephants that were their equals<sup>180</sup> and wished to obtain victory. Like those two elephants, Savyasachi carefully brought them down and that extremely large army of

elephants was routed. Elephants, chariots, horses and large numbers of men dashed against each other and fell down in that battle. They were wounded and struck each other. They anxiously lamented and were killed. Arjuna was then surrounded by his own soldiers, like Purandara by the masses of gods. They said, 'O brave one! We were frightened of the enemy, who seemed to us to be like Death before beings. It is good fortune that you have killed him. We were immersed in terror and had you not rescued us, we would have been afflicted by the forces of the enemy. The enemy would have rejoiced. You have killed the enemy and we are now rejoicing.' Hearing these and many other conciliatory words spoken by his well-wishers, Arjuna was delighted in his mind. He then honoured the men, in accordance with what they deserved, and again headed towards the mass of samshaptakas." '



## Chapter 1164(14)

‘Sanjaya said, “Jishnu again returned, like the planet Angaraka<sup>181</sup> in its forward and retrograde motions, to kill large numbers of samshaptakas. O king! O venerable one! Men, horses, rathas and elephants were killed by Partha’s arrows. They wavered, wandered around, shrieked, fell down and died. Large numbers of charioteers and chariots were flung away. There were hands, with weapons still in the hands, and arms and heads. Pandava severed them with broad-headed and razor-sharp arrows, arrows that were in the shape of a half-moon and arrows that had heads like a calf’s tooth, as those enemy heroes fought against him in that battle. They fought, like a bull that desires intercourse fighting against another bull. Hundreds and thousands of brave ones descended on Arjuna. The encounter between them and him was extraordinary and it made the body hair stand up. It was as if the daityas were fighting with the wielder of the vajra for the conquest of the three worlds. Ugrayudha pierced him with three arrows that were like malignant snakes,<sup>182</sup> but he severed his<sup>183</sup> head from his body. All of them<sup>184</sup> became extremely angry and showered down many weapons on Arjuna, like clouds urged by the Maruts surrounding the Himalayas at the end of summer. With his own weapons, Arjuna countered all the weapons of his enemies. He used many well-directed arrows to kill all those who meant to injure him. The trivenus were shattered around their thighs. The *parshni*<sup>185</sup> charioteers were killed. The harnesses were torn and the poles, axles, joints and yokes of chariots were shattered. Using his arrows, Arjuna swiftly destroyed all their equipment. There were large numbers of chariots there, fragmented into pieces. They looked like the palaces of the rich, destroyed by the fire, the wind and the rain. Arrows that were like the vajra mangled the inner organs of the elephants and they fell down, resembling mansions on mountains destroyed by thunder, storm and fire. Persecuted by Arjuna, large numbers of horses and riders fell down on the ground. Their tongues lolled out. Their entrails were plucked out. They were weak. They were covered in blood. They looked terrible. Savyasachi’s iron arrows struck men, horses and elephants. O venerable one! They tottered, shrieked, fell down and died. Like the great Indra against the danavas, Partha killed the inferior ones with arrows that were sharpened on stone and were like the vajra or like virulent poison. There were brave ones, with extremely expensive armour and ornaments. They possessed diverse kinds of garments and weapons. With their chariots and their standards, they were slain by Partha and forced to lie down. They were the performers of pious deeds. They were distinguished and famous. Nevertheless, they were vanquished and died. They conquered heaven because of their deeds, but their bodies lay down on the ground. The brave ones on your side attacked Arjuna’s chariot. They were the leaders of many different countries and they, and their followers, were full of rage. They were on chariots and horses and the foot soldiers also desired to kill him. They quickly rushed against him, with many different kinds of weapons. Those warriors angrily showered down a large number of weapons, as if from a giant cloud. However, like the wind, Arjuna swiftly dispelled them with his sharp arrows. Using his own weapons as a bridge, Partha violently crossed that large and boatless ocean of weapons, horses, infantry, elephants and chariots.

‘“Vasudeva spoke to him. ‘O Partha! O unblemished one! Why are you toying with them? Crush the samshaptakas and make haste towards Karna’s death.’ Having been thus addressed, Arjuna swiftly struck the remaining samshaptakas. He powerfully unleashed his weapons and killed them, like Indra against the daityas. In that battle, no one could distinguish when Arjuna took out an arrow, affixed it and released it. He was that swift. As he goaded his horses, Govinda himself said that it was extraordinary. As they penetrated the soldiers, his arrows were like white and swift swans diving into a lake. The field of battle was full of the destruction of men. On seeing this, Govinda spoke to Savyasachi. ‘O Partha! A great and extremely terrible destruction of the Bharatas, the earth and the kings is going on. This is because of Duryodhana’s extremely evil deeds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage!

Behold the bows, with golden backs, of the archers. The large armour and quivers have been dislodged. The arrows have drooping tufts and the tufts are made out of gold. The iron arrows have been washed in oil and are like snakes that have cast off their skins. The place is strewn with colourful lances and bows that are decorated in gold. The swords have handles of ivory and are embellished in gold. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The armour and sheaths for the bows possess golden backs. The lances and spears are embellished with gold and are also decorated in gold. The giant clubs are tied in garments that are decorated with gold. The handles of the swords are made out of gold and the battleaxes are also embellished in gold. The handles of the scattered battleaxes are ornamented in gold. Lances made of iron and heavy bludgeons have fallen down. Behold the colourful shataghnis and the large maces. There are many chakras<sup>186</sup> and clubs that have been scattered around in this battle. There are many kinds of weapons that were grasped by the ones who desired victory. Their bodies have been crushed by clubs and bludgeons and their heads have been smashed. Behold the thousands of elephants, horses, chariots and warriors who have been destroyed. Men, elephants and horses have been struck with arrows, lances, swords, spears, scimitars, javelins, spikes, nails and bludgeons. Their bodies have been mangled in many ways and they are covered in blood. O destroyer of enemies! They have lost their lives and are strewn around in this field of battle. Their arms are smeared with sandalwood paste and adorned with armlets and sparkling ornaments. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The earth is resplendent with arm-guards and bracelets. The ornamented tips of the hands, with finger-guards, are scattered around.<sup>187</sup> The supreme heads sport gems on the headdresses and wear earrings. Those with eyes like bulls have been brought down and the earth looks dazzling. There are headless torsos covered in blood, since the heads have been severed from the bodies. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! They are scattered on the ground and it is as if the fiery flames of the fire have been pacified. Many kinds of chariots, with sparkling golden bells, have been shattered. Behold the many horses, covered in blood. The place is strewn with the white and giant conch shells of the warriors. As they lie down like mountains, the tongues of the elephants are lolling out. Sporting colourful flags of victory, warriors who fought on horses and elephants have been slain. There are excellent cushions, covers and blankets from the elephants. They are diverse and have been uprooted. So have the colourful and varied housings. Many bells have been broken, crushed by the feet of the elephants. Staffs and goads decorated with lapis lazuli have fallen down on the ground. Harnesses were decorated with gold and so were the tips of the standards that the riders possessed. They were colourful with many kinds of gems and were polished in gold. From the horses, cushions and covers made out of the skin of *ranku* deer have fallen down on the ground. The lords among men had gems on their headdresses and golden garlands. Umbrellas are scattered around and so are fans and whisks. The faces of the kshatriyas have beautiful earrings and are as beautiful as the moon or nakshatras. The brave ones are ornamented and their beards have been clipped. Behold. Their heads are scattered around on the ground, in the mire created by blood. Behold. The men who are still alive are lamenting in every direction. O lord of the earth! There are many who are honouring you and others have been killed by your weapons. With their relatives, they are repeatedly lamenting there. Though they have been routed, there are some spirited warriors with angry faces. Driven by anger and desiring victory, they wish to advance and fight again. However, there are other proud ones who are fleeing from the spot. Their relatives have fallen down and desire water from those brave ones. O Arjuna! Some have gone in search of water and there are many who have lost their lives. It can be seen that those brave ones have lost their senses and are retreating. Having seen water, they are rushing to the spot, shouting at each other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Behold the ones who have expired after drinking water and the others who are drinking. Others have abandoned their beloved ones, their beloved relatives, kith and kin. In the great battle, they can be seen to be running around, here and there. O foremost among men! Behold the others. They are repeatedly gnashing their teeth and biting their lips. O Arjuna! In the great battle today, these are the deeds that you have performed. The deeds performed by you in the battle are like those of the king of the gods, or those who live in heaven.' In this way, Krishna showed Kiriti the field of battle.

‘ “As they were returning, they heard a loud noise from Duryodhana’s army. It was mixed with the blaring of conch shells and the beating of drums and kettledrums and mingled with the fierce sound of weapons and roars of chariots, horses and elephants. Borne by horses that were as fast as the wind, Krishna penetrated that army and was surprised to see that your army was being crushed by Pandya. That foremost among warriors was using many different kinds of arrows. He was slaying the enemy, like Yama among those whose life has run out. The foremost

among strikers was mangling the bodies of elephants, horses and men with his sharp arrows and was robbing them of their bodies. With many weapons and arrows, he was piercing heroes among the enemy. Pandya was killing the enemy, like Shakra against the asuras.” ’

## Chapter 1165(15)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! You have earlier spoken about that great hero, famous in the worlds. But you have not recounted his deeds in the battle. Now, in detail, recount to me that hero’s valour, learning, power, bravery, expanse and pride.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “Drona, Bhishma, Kripa, Drona’s son, Karna, Arjuna and Janardana completed their learning of archery and you think that they are the foremost among warriors. But he thinks himself to be an equal of Karna and Bhishma and does not wish to be regarded as inferior to Vasudeva and Arjuna. Such was Pandya, foremost among kings and supreme among all wielders of weapons. He was like Yama and overcame and killed Karna’s soldiers. Stationed in the midst of that army of chariots, horses, foot soldiers and elephants, Pandya crushed them. He whirled them around like a potter’s wheel. Pandya’s arrows dispelled them, like the wind amidst a mass of clouds. The horses, charioteers, standards, rathas and warriors of the enemy were struck. Elephants were killed. Flags, standards and weapons were uprooted. The destroyer of enemies killed the elephants, together with those who guarded their feet. He killed horse riders, armed with spears, javelins and quivers. The Pulindas, Khashas, Bahlikas, Nishadas, Andhrakas, Tanganas, those from the south and the Bhojas were fierce and did not retreat from a battle. However, Pandya used his arrows to deprive them of their weapons and armour and robbed them of their lives. In that battle, Pandya used his arrows to slaughter the four divisions of the army.<sup>188</sup> He showed no fear. On seeing this, Drona’s son fearlessly advanced towards him.

‘ “As he seemed to be dancing around, he,<sup>189</sup> best among strikers, fearlessly challenged him and spoke to him in sweet words. ‘O king! O one with eyes like the petals of a lotus! You are foremost among those who are borne into a battle. You are known as someone who can withstand the vajra and you are foremost in strength and manliness. You have weapons in your hands and you are using your arms to stretch your giant bow. As you extend it with your arms, you seem to be like a large cloud. With great force, you are showering down torrents of arrows on the enemy. In this battle, with my exception, I do not see anyone who is your match in bravery. You have single-handedly crushed many chariots, elephants, foot soldiers and horses, like an extremely fierce and powerful lion kills large numbers of deer. The sky and the earth resound with the great noise of your chariot. O king! At the end of the monsoon, you are filling the earth and its crops.<sup>190</sup> You are taking out sharp arrows from your quiver and they are like venomous serpents. You should fight with me alone, like Andhaka fighting with Tryambaka.’<sup>191</sup> Having been thus addressed, he<sup>192</sup> agreed.

‘ “Asking him to strike, Drona’s son struck him and Malayadhvaja struck him back with a barbed arrow. Drona’s son, supreme among preceptors, smiled and struck Pandya with fierce arrows that were like the flames of fire and could penetrate the inner organs. Ashvatthama then released nine other sharp and iron arrows that were tufted with the feathers of herons and covered the ten directions. Pandya severed five of these with five sharp arrows. However, four swiftly struck his horses and robbed them of their lives.<sup>193</sup> Pandya, who was as radiant as the sun, severed the bowstring of Drona’s son with sharp arrows. However, Drona’s son, the destroyer of enemies, fixed another string to his bow and shot thousands of arrows at Pandya. He enveloped the sky and all the directions with his torrents of arrows. Pandya, the great-souled bull among men, knew that the arrows shot by Drona’s son were inexhaustible. However, he made efforts to cut down the arrows of Drona’s son and then used sharp arrows to rob the ones who were protecting his chariot wheels of their lives. On seeing his dexterity, Drona’s son stretched his bow into a circle and showered down arrows, like rain pouring from a cloud. O venerable one! That encounter lasted for an eighth part of a day.<sup>194</sup> Nevertheless, Drona’s son shot as many weapons as could be carried on eight carts, drawn by eight bullocks. He was like an angry Destroyer, or like the Destroyer of the Destroyer. Almost

every one who saw him there lost his senses. The preceptor's son showered down arrows like rain on the soldiers, like rain pouring on the earth, with its mountains and trees, at the end of summer. That shower of arrows released by Drona's son, who was like a cloud, was extremely difficult to withstand. Pandya swiftly countered it with a *vayavya* weapon<sup>195</sup> and roared like a gale. His standard was smeared with sandalwood paste and aloe and he looked like Mount Malaya. As he was roaring, Drona's son severed his standard and killed his four horses. He then killed his charioteer with another arrow. With an arrow that was in the shape of a half-moon, he severed the bow that thundered like a giant cloud and shattered the chariot into small fragments. Having countered his weapons with his own weapons and having cut down all his weapons, Drona's son found the opportunity to kill him in the battle. There was a supreme tusk that had been prepared well and its rider had been killed. As it was swiftly advancing towards him, as if against a rival, the powerful one<sup>196</sup> climbed onto it, roaring like a lion. Stationed on it, the lord of Malaya looked like a mountain with two peaks.<sup>197</sup> He swiftly urged the elephant forward. He picked up a spear that was as radiant as the rays of the sun and hurled that weapon with supreme force, care and anger. The lord of the mountains hurled this towards the preceptor's son and roared. The head of Drona's son was decorated with a diadem. It was decorated with supreme gems, jewels and diamonds and adorned with excellent cloth, garlands and pearls. It was as dazzling as the sun, the moon, the planets and the fire. Being severely struck,<sup>198</sup> it was shattered into fragments and fell down, like a large forest when it is struck by the great Indra's vajra, or when the summit of a mountain falls down on the ground. At this, he<sup>199</sup> blazed with great rage, like a king of the serpents that has been struck by the foot. He picked up fourteen arrows that were capable of killing the enemy and each of these was like Yama's staff. With five, he served the feet and trunk of the elephant and with three, the king's arms and head. With six, he killed the six splendid maharathas who were following the king of Pandya. The king's arms were long and smeared with the best of sandalwood paste. They were adorned with gold, pearls, gems and diamonds. Those arms of the king fell down on the ground and writhed around like serpents that had been killed by Tarkshya.<sup>200</sup> His head possessed a face with the complexion of the full moon. His eyes were coppery red with rage and his nose was excellent. With its earrings, the head fell down on the ground and was as resplendent as the moon between two Vishakhas.<sup>201</sup> The preceptor's son was accomplished in learning and when he completed this task, your son, the king, was delighted and surrounded by his well-wishers, honoured him, like the lord of the immortals honouring Vishnu after he had vanquished Bali."<sup>202</sup>

## Chapter 1166(16)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! When Pandya was killed, what did Arjuna do in the battle, especially when the brave Karna was single-handedly driving away the enemy? Pandava is brave and accomplished in learning. He is powerful. The great-souled Shankara made all beings subservient to him.”<sup>203</sup> That is the reason my greatest fear is from Dhananjaya, the slayer of enemies. O Sanjaya! Tell me everything that Partha did there.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “When Pandya was killed, Krishna quickly spoke these beneficial words to him. ‘Without looking towards the king,<sup>204</sup> the Pandavas are retreating. To accomplish Ashvatthama’s resolution, Karna is killing the Srinjayas. He is creating a great carnage there, amidst the horses, men and elephants.’ The extremely unassailable Vasudeva spoke these words to Kiriti. On hearing this and on seeing that his brother was facing a great and terrible calamity, Pandava asked Hrishiksha to quickly urge the horses. Hrishiksha advanced on that chariot against those warriors.

‘ “O supreme among kings! Yet again, there was a terrible encounter and clash between Karna and the Pandavas and it extended Yama’s kingdom. Wishing to kill each other, they swiftly grasped bows, arrows, clubs, swords, lances, spikes, maces, catapults, spears, scimitars, battleaxes, bludgeons, javelins, cutlasses, darts, slings and large hooks and descended. The whizzing of arrows and the sound of palms against bowstrings extended into the sky, the directions and the sub-directions. As they attacked, they roared and the earth resounded with the thunder of chariot wheels. Those great sounds of battle cheered them. Brave ones fought extremely terrible battles with brave ones, wishing to bring an end to the hostility. There were sounds from bowstrings, palm-guards and bows and the trumpeting of elephants. They were attacked and as they fell down, roared loudly. There were many sounds generated by the arrows and by the roars of brave ones. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing this terrible sound, some were frightened, turned pale and fell down. There were many among them who roared and showered down arrows. In the battle, Atiratha Karna crushed many of them with his arrows. With his arrows, Karna conveyed five heroes from Panchala, ten rathas and five others, with their horses, charioteers and standards, to Yama’s eternal abode. Many foremost and immensely valorous warriors from the Pandus swiftly attacked Karna in that battle and surrounding him from all sides, covered the sky with their weapons. Karna agitated the enemy soldiers with his shower of arrows. He was like the leader of a herd<sup>205</sup> plunging into a lake full of birds and lotuses. Radheya penetrated into the midst of the enemy. He brandished his supreme bow and using his sharp arrows, began to bring down their heads. The shields and armour were shattered and the bodies were deprived of life. There was no one among them who needed the touch of a second arrow.<sup>206</sup> The arrows that were released from the bow crushed armour and bodies. The bowstrings and palm-guards were shattered, like horses lashed with a whip. Whenever Pandus, Srinjayas and Panchalas came within the reach of his arrows, Karna quickly struck them in the inner organs, like a lion among large numbers of deer.

‘ “O venerable one! The son of Panchala,<sup>207</sup> Droupadi’s sons, the twins and Yuyudhana united and advanced against Karna. When the Kurus were severely engaged with the Pandavas and the Srinjayas, warriors advanced against each other, prepared to give up their lives in the battle. They were armoured well, with coats of mail, helmets and ornaments. The maharathas used clubs, maces and other kinds of bludgeons. They advanced fiercely, like the god wielding his staff.<sup>208</sup> O venerable one! They roared loudly and challenged each other. They struck each other. Struck by the others, they fell down. They vomited blood and lost their limbs, heads and eyes in the battle. Complete with teeth, but laced with blood, the faces looked like pomegranates. Though they had been brought down by weapons, they seemed to be alive. They struck each other with spears, swords, lances, catapults, nails, javelins and spikes. They were crushed and cut down by others. They also crushed and cut others down. They an-

grily killed and struck each other. They were brought down and killed by others. Losing their lives, they were covered with blood. They seemed to exude their own natural red juice, like sandalwood trees. Rathas were killed by rathas, elephants by elephants, men by the best of men and thousands of horses were brought down by horses. Standards, heads, umbrellas, the trunks of elephants and the arms of men were severed by razor-sharp and broad-headed arrows, arrows in the shape of a half-moon and other weapons. In that battle, men, elephants, chariots and horses were brought down. Horse riders slew brave warriors. The trunks of tuskers were severed. Flags and standards were shattered and brought down, strewn around like mountains. Foot soldiers destroyed elephants and chariots. Struck and killed, they fell down in every direction. Horse riders clashed against foot soldiers and were swiftly killed by them. In the battle, large numbers of foot soldiers were killed by horse riders and lay down. O greatly intelligent one! The faces and limbs of those who were killed looked like crushed lotuses and faded garlands. O king! The beautiful forms of elephants, horses and men looked like garments that had been sullied and therefore, became supremely hideous to see.” ’



## Chapter 1167(17)

‘Sanjaya said, “There were many excellent elephants that were urged on by your son. Wishing to kill Dhrish-tadyumna, they angrily advanced against Parshata. These were among the best who fought on elephants, from the east, the south, Anga, Vanga, Pundra, Magadha, Tamraliptaka, Mekala, Kosala, Madra, Dasharna and Nishadha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were skilled in fighting with elephants and united with those from Kalinga. Arrows, spears and iron arrows showered down like rain from clouds and in that battle, all of them sprinkled Panchala, who was like a mountain. Those elephants were violently urged on against the enemy with goads and with toes prodding the flanks. As they advanced towards Parshata, he showered down iron arrows on them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Each of those angry elephants was like a mountain and he pierced each with ten, six or eight arrows. He was enveloped by those elephants, like clouds covering the sun. On seeing this, the Pandus and Panchalas roared. They raised sharp weapons and attacked those elephants, the arrows making music on the bow-strings. Nakula, Sahadeva, Droupadi’s sons, the Prabhadrakas, Satyaki, Shikhandi and the valiant Chekitana advanced. The elephants were driven by *mlecchas*<sup>209</sup> and used their trunks to pick up men, horses and chariots and crush them with their feet. They pierced others with the tips of their tusks, picked them up and flung them down. Others were stuck to the tips of the tusks and looked terrible. Vanga’s<sup>210</sup> elephant was stationed in front of him. Satyaki powerfully struck it with a fierce iron arrow. Pierced in its inner organs, it fell down. Abandoning that elephant, he<sup>211</sup> was about to descend from the elephant. However, Satyaki struck him on the breast with an iron arrow and made him fall down on the ground. Pundra’s elephant was descending like a mobile mountain. Sahadeva carefully killed it with three iron arrows. It was deprived of its flag, its rider, its armour, its standard and its life. Having brought that elephant down, Sahadeva advanced against Anga.<sup>212</sup> However, Nakula asked Sahadeva to desist and himself attacked Anga. He struck him with three iron arrows that were like Yama’s staff and struck the elephant with one hundred. Anga hurled eight hundred spears that were as bright as the rays of the sun. However, Nakula sliced each of these down into three fragments. Pandava then severed his head with an arrow that was in the shape of a half-moon. Having been killed, the mleccha fell down, together with the tusker. The son of their preceptor was skilled in the technique of managing elephants.<sup>213</sup> When he was killed, the excellent ones from Anga attacked Nakula on elephants. The best of flags fluttered and the sides<sup>214</sup> were decorated in gold. They looked like mountains on fire and wished to swiftly destroy the enemy. There were those from Mekala, Utkala, Kalinga, Nishadha and Tamraliptaka. Wishing to kill him, they showered down arrows and spears. They enveloped Nakula, like the sun shrouded by clouds. At this, the Pandus, the Panchalas and the Somakas were enraged. A battle commenced between those rathas and the elephants. Showers of arrows and thousands of spears were released. These shattered the temples of the elephants and penetrated their inner organs in many ways. The tusks were pierced by iron arrows and seemed to be ornamented. Sahadeva quickly killed eight giant elephants with sixty-four extremely energetic arrows and brought them down, together with their riders. Nakula, the descendant of the Kuru lineage, carefully drew his supreme bow and used many straight-flying iron arrows to kill many elephants. Shini’s descendant, Panchala, Droupadi’s sons, the Prabhadrakas and Shikhandi brought down many showers of arrows on the mighty elephants. The warriors on the Pandu side were like clouds full of rain and the elephants of the enemy were like mountains. Slain by those showers of arrows, they fell down, like mountains shattered by a storm of thunder. Your elephants were thus killed by the Pandus, who were like elephants among men. The soldiers<sup>215</sup> were soon seen like a river with shattered banks. Having thus agitated the soldiers,<sup>216</sup> the soldiers of the sons of Pandu glanced towards them and again advanced towards Karna.

‘“O great king! While Sahadeva was angrily scorching your army, Duhshasana advanced against him and it was brother against brother. The kings who were there, witnessed a great battle between them and roaring like lions, waved their garments around. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Your archer son was angry and pierced Pandu’s powerful son in the chest with three arrows. O king! Sahadeva pierced your son with an iron arrow and again pierced him with seventy, striking his charioteer with three. O king! In that great battle, Duhshasana severed his bow and struck Sahadeva in the arms and the chest with seventy-three arrows. Sahadeva became wrathful and in that great encounter, grasped a sword. The foremost among warriors whirled and hurled it towards your handsome son. That great sword severed his bow, with an arrow still affixed to it. It then fell down on the ground, like a serpent that has been dislodged from the sky. The powerful Sahadeva picked up another bow and shot an arrow that was like death towards Duhshasana. That arrow was as bright as Yama’s staff and descended. However, Kourava severed it into two parts with a sword that was sharp at the edges. As that sword suddenly descended in the battle, Sahadeva cut it down with sharp arrows and seemed to be laughing.<sup>217</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that great battle, your son swiftly shot sixty-four arrows towards Sahadeva’s chariot. O king! In that encounter, many arrows descended with force. However, Sahadeva sliced down these with five arrows each. Having countered the great arrows that were shot by your son, Madri’s son released a large number of arrows. O great king! The powerful Sahadeva became angry and affixed an extremely fierce arrow that was like the Destroyer and like Death. He drew his bow back with force and shot it towards your son. O king! It penetrated his armour and his body with great force and penetrated the earth, like a snake entering a termite hill. O king! Your maharatha son lost his senses. On seeing that he had lost his consciousness, his charioteer, who was frightened and himself severely wounded with sharp arrows, quickly bore him away on the chariot. O Pandu’s elder brother! O king! Having defeated him in the battle, Pandava cheerfully began to crush Duryodhana’s army in every direction, like an extremely angry man crushing a large number of ants. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus did he wrathfully crush the Kourava soldiers.

‘“O king! While Nakula was violently destroying the soldiers in the battle, Vaikartana Karna repulsed him. Nakula laughed and spoke to Karna. ‘After a long time, because of the kindness of destiny, you have seen me. O wicked one! And in this battle, you have surfaced before my sight. You are the root cause of the evil, the enmity and the quarrel. It is because of your sins that those of the Kuru lineage are clashing against each other and are being destroyed. I will kill you in the battle today and become successful, devoid of fever.<sup>218</sup> Having been thus addressed, the son of the suta, who was himself like a prince and also an archer, replied to Nakula. ‘O child! Strike me in this battle. Let me see your manliness. O brave one! One should boast only after having performed deeds in a battle. O son!<sup>219</sup> Those who do not speak in an encounter, but fight to the best of their strength, are known as brave. Fight with me, to the utmost of your strength and I will destroy your pride today.’ Having spoken thus, the son of the suta swiftly struck Pandu’s son. In that battle, he pierced him with seventy-three arrows that had been sharpened on stone. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having been thus pierced by the son of the suta, Nakula pierced the son of the suta back with eighty arrows that were like venomous serpents. Karna severed his bow with gold-tufted arrows that had been sharpened on stone. The supreme archer then struck Pandava with thirty arrows. Those pierced his armour and drank his blood in the battle. They were like venomous serpents that drink water after entering the earth. O great king! Nakula, the destroyer of enemy heroes, became angry at this. He picked up another bow with a back that was embellished with gold. It was extremely difficult to resist. He pierced Karna with twenty arrows and his charioteer with three. With an extremely sharp arrow that was like a razor at the tip, he severed Karna’s bow. Having severed the bow, the brave one, who was regarded as a maharatha by the entire world, laughed and struck him with three hundred arrows. O venerable one! On seeing that Karna was thus afflicted by Pandu’s son, all the rathas and all the gods were struck by supreme wonder. Vaikartana Karna picked up another bow and struck Nakula between the shoulder joints with five arrows. With those arrows sticking to his chest, Madri’s son looked resplendent on the chariot, as if the sun was using its rays to shower radiance on the earth. O venerable one! Nakula pierced Karna with seven iron arrows and again severed the ends of his bow. In that encounter, he<sup>220</sup> picked up another bow that was even more powerful and enveloped Nakula and all the directions with his arrows. When the maharatha was suddenly covered with arrows released from Karna’s bow, he swiftly

used his own arrows to slice down those arrows. The sky was seen to be shrouded with a net of arrows and it was as if the firmament was covered with a large number of fireflies that were flitting around. Hundreds of arrows were released and covered the sky and it was as if it was full of a swarm of locusts that had been stirred up by the wind. Arrows decorated in gold descended repeatedly in an array and were as beautiful as an array of swans. When the sky was covered by the arrows, the sun was shrouded. O lord of the earth! No beings could descend and nothing could be seen.<sup>221</sup> In every direction, those large numbers of arrows obstructed their paths. Those two immensely fortunate ones were as resplendent as two young suns that had just arisen. The arrows released from Karna's bow slaughtered the Somakas. O Indra among kings! They were severely afflicted and pained by the arrows and lost their lives. In a similar way, Nakula's arrows killed your soldiers. O king! They were driven away in all the directions, like clouds dispelled by the wind. Those two sets of soldiers were slaughtered by their large and divine arrows and withdrew from that rain of arrows, remaining only as spectators. When the men there were driven away by Karna and Pandava's arrows, those two great-souled ones started to pierce each other with their showers of arrows. In that field of battle, they displayed their divine weapons. Wishing to kill each other, they violently enveloped each other. The arrows released by Nakula were tufted with the feathers of herons and peacocks. They seemed to remain stationed there, after having enveloped Karna. O king! Both of them seemed to be in a chamber created by arrows and could not be seen. They were like the moon and the sun, enveloped during the monsoon.

‘Karna became wrathful in that battle and assumed a fiercer form. In every direction, he shrouded Pandava with showers of arrows. O king! In that encounter, Pandava was enveloped by the son of the suta. However, like the sun covered by clouds, he felt no pain. O venerable one! At this, Adhiratha's son laughed in the battle and shot hundreds and thousands of nets of arrows. The arrows of the great-souled one seemed to cover everything in a canopy of shade. Those supreme arrows were like clouds that were descending. O great king! The great-souled Karna severed his bow. He laughingly brought his charioteer down from the seat on the chariot. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With four sharp arrows, he killed his four horses and quickly dispatched them to Yama's abode. O venerable one! Using his arrows, he swiftly shattered his chariot into tiny fragments and also destroyed his flags, the ones who protected his wheels, his standard, his sword, his shield that was decorated with the signs of one hundred moons and all his implements. O lord of the earth! His horses were slain. He was without a chariot. He was devoid of his armour. He quickly descended from his chariot and stood there, with a club. O king! That extremely terrible club was raised. However, using hundreds and thousands of arrows, the son of the suta shattered it into fragments. On seeing that he was without any weapons, Karna struck with many arrows with drooping tufts, but made sure that he did not hurt him grievously. O king! Nakula was defeated in that battle by someone who was powerful and was skilled in the use of weapons. With his senses afflicted, he suddenly fled. Radheya followed him, laughing repeatedly. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! He placed the string of his bow around the neck of the one who was running away.<sup>222</sup> Pulled by the string of the great bow around his neck, he was as resplendent as the moon in the sky, surrounded by white clouds and decorated with Shakra's bow.<sup>223</sup> Karna spoke these words to him. ‘The words that were spoken by you have been rendered futile. You have been repeatedly struck by me. Can you cheerfully utter them again? O Pandava! Do not fight again with those who are your superior in strength. O son! O Pandava! Fight with those who are your equals. Do not be ashamed at this. O son of Madri! Go home, or go where Krishna and Phalguna are.’ O great king! Having spoken these words, he released him. O king! Though he could have been killed, the son of the suta did not kill him. O king! He remembered Kunti's words and abandoned him. O king! Having been released by the archer son of the suta, Pandava was ashamed and went towards Yudhishtira's chariot. Having been tormented by the son of the suta, he ascended that chariot and sighed, scorched by grief, like angry snakes inside a pot.

‘Having abandoned him in the battle, Karna swiftly advanced against the Panchalas. He was on a chariot with dazzling flags and drawn by horses with the complexion of the moon. O lord of the earth! When they saw the commander<sup>224</sup> advancing against the Panchalas on his chariot, a great uproar arose among the Pandavas. O great king! The son of the suta caused carnage there. As the sun reached its midday spot, the lord roamed and wheeled around. The wheels of chariots were shattered. The standards and flags of others were torn. O venerable one! The son of the suta killed charioteers and shattered the wheels. We saw the dispirited Panchalas fleeing on their chariots.

Crazy elephants were terrified and roamed here and there, as if their limbs had been burnt by a conflagration in a great forest. The temples of elephants were shattered and they exuded blood. Their trunks were severed. O venerable one! Their bodies and armour were mangled, their tails were sliced down. They were like dispelled clouds, destroyed by that great-souled one. There were other elephants that were frightened because of the iron arrows and hundreds of spears. They advanced towards him, like insects towards a fire. We saw other giant elephants destroying each other. Blood flowed from their bodies, like water from the slopes of mountains. Horses lost their breastplates, the dressings on their tails and their silver, bronze and golden ornaments. Their coverings were destroyed and they lost their bridles. Whisks, spreads and quivers fell down. Brave riders, the ornaments of a battle, were killed. In that battle there, we saw supreme horses wandering around. O lord of men! We saw the best of warriors who fought on horses, with lances, swords and scimitars. They wore armour and headdresses. They were destroyed. There were chariots embellished with gold, yoked to swift horses. With the rathas swiftly slain, we saw them roaming around.<sup>225</sup> O venerable one! Wheels and poles were destroyed for some, wheels were shattered for others. There were others without flags and standards, or with their yokes destroyed. O lord of the earth! Deprived of everything, we saw rathas wandering around in every direction, scorched by the arrows and weapons of Surya's son.<sup>226</sup> There were those without weapons. And there were many with weapons, but they had been killed. We saw many foot soldiers from their side running around in every direction. They were adorned with colourful flags of many different hues, decorated with bells. There were other warriors with severed head, arms and thighs. We saw the arrows released from Karna's bow sever them. We beheld those warriors confront a terrible and great calamity. They were killed by Karna's sharp arrows. In that battle, the Srinjayas were slaughtered by the son of the suta, as they advanced towards him, like insects towards a flame. In every spot there, he consumed those arrays of maharathas and the kshatriyas avoided him, taking him to be the fire that comes at the time of the destruction of a yuga. The remnants of the brave Panchala maharathas were routed and retreated. Karna pursued them from the rear, showering arrows. They were devoid of armour and standards, but the spirited one pursued them. The maharatha son of the suta tormented them with his arrows. It was like the destroyer of darkness<sup>227</sup> scorching beings when it has attained midday.” ’

## Chapter 1168(18)

‘Sanjaya said, “Your son, Yuyutsu, was driving away that large army.<sup>228</sup> Uluka asked him to wait and quickly attacked him. O king! At this, Yuyutsu used an arrow that was extremely sharp at the edges to strike Uluka, like Indra striking a mountain with his vajra. In that encounter, Uluka became angry with your son and slicing his bow down with a kshurapra arrow,<sup>229</sup> struck him with a barbed arrow. When his bow was severed, Yuyutsu picked up another large bow that was more forceful. O bull among the Bharata lineage! His eyes red with rage, he pierced Shakuni’s son with sixty arrows. Striking his charioteer with three arrows, he pierced him<sup>230</sup> again. Uluka now became wrathful in the battle and piercing him with twenty arrows that were adorned with gold, severed his golden standard. With the pole shattered, that extremely large and lofty standard fell down. O king! Blazing in gold, it fell down in front of Yuyutsu. On seeing that his standard had been uprooted, Yuyutsu became senseless with rage. He struck Uluka between the breasts with five arrows. O venerable one! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! With a broad-headed arrow that had been washed in oil, Uluka violently severed his charioteer’s head. He then killed his four horses and pierced him with five arrows. Having been severely struck by that powerful one, he<sup>231</sup> departed on his chariot. O king! Having defeated him, Uluka swiftly advanced towards the Panchalas and the Srinjayas and began to slay them with sharp arrows.

‘ “O great king! Fearlessly, and in the twinkling of an eye, your son, Shrutakarma, advanced against Shatanika and deprived him of his horses, his charioteer and his chariot.<sup>232</sup> O venerable one! Though his horses were slain, the immensely powerful Shatanika remained stationed on his chariot and extremely angry, flung a club towards your son. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having reduced the chariot, together with its horses and charioteer, to ashes, it fell down with great force and shattered the earth. Those two brave ones, the extenders of the fame of the Kuru lineage, were both without chariots. They glared angrily at each other and withdrew from the battle. Frightened, your son ascended Vivitsu’s chariot.<sup>233</sup> Shatanika quickly advanced towards Prativindhya’s chariot.<sup>234</sup>

‘ “Angrily, Sutasoma<sup>235</sup> pierced Shakuni with sharp arrows, but could not make him tremble, like a wind against a mountain. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing his father’s supreme enemy, Sutasoma enveloped him with thousands of arrows. However, Shakuni was dexterous and colourful in fighting and wished to be victorious in that encounter. He severed those arrows with other arrows. In that battle, having countered those arrows with his sharp arrows, he angrily struck Sutasoma with three arrows. Your immensely valorous brother-in-law used his arrows to bring down his horses and his charioteer and shattered his standard into fragments. At this, all the people roared in applause. O venerable one! His horses were slain. He was without a chariot. His bow was severed. However, the archer<sup>236</sup> descended from the chariot, stood on the ground and picked up a supreme bow. He released gold-tufted arrows that had been sharpened on stone and enveloped your brother-in-law’s chariot. The shower of arrows released by the maharatha was like a torrent of insects. But on seeing this, Soubala was not distressed and remained stationed on his chariot. The immensely illustrious one countered those arrows with a storm of his arrows. On witnessing Sutasoma’s extraordinary deed of fighting on foot, while the king was on his chariot, all the warriors, and all the siddhas who were assembled in the firmament, were satisfied and honoured him. The king<sup>237</sup> then used sharp and extremely forceful broad-headed arrows that possessed drooping tufts to sever his bow and all his quivers. When his bow was severed in the encounter, he picked up a sword and roared. It possessed the complexion of lapis lazuli or a lotus and had an ivory handle. It was as radiant as the clear sky, and the intelligent Sutasoma whirled it around. It seemed as if he was Death himself. O great king! He had the strength and

learning of fourteen techniques<sup>238</sup> and roamed around, violently whirling his sword in thousands of circular motions. The valiant Soubala shot arrows at him. But as they descended, he quickly severed them with his supreme sword. O great king! Soubala, the destroyer of enemy heroes, became enraged at this and shot arrows that were like venomous serpents towards Sutasoma. However, displaying his learning, strength and dexterity, the immensely radiant one, with valour like that of Tarkshya,<sup>239</sup> used his sword to slice them down in that battle. O king! As he was roaming around and executing circular motions, he<sup>240</sup> used an extremely sharp kshurapra arrow to sever that resplendent sword. Thus sliced down, the large sword fell down violently on the ground. When the sword was severed, maharatha Sutasoma retreated six steps and hurled that part of the sword that was still in his fist. That fragment was decorated with gold and diamonds. In that encounter, it quickly severed the great-souled one's<sup>241</sup> bow and bowstring and fell down on the ground. After this, Sutasoma went to Shrutakirti's giant chariot. Soubala picked up another terrible bow that was extremely difficult to withstand. Using this, he attacked the Pandava soldiers and killed large numbers of the enemy. O lord of the earth! On seeing Soubala fearlessly striding around in the battle, a loud uproar arose amongst the Pandavas, when they saw that large, proud and armed soldiers were driven away by the great-minded Soubala. O king! It was like the army of the daityas being crushed by the king of the gods. In that fashion, the Pandava soldiers were destroyed by Soubala.

‘O king! Kripa countered Dhrishtadyumna in the battle, like a *sharabha*<sup>242</sup> in a forest, advancing and fighting against a proud elephant. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Parshata was checked by the powerful Goutama and could not advance a single step. On witnessing Goutama's form advancing towards Dhrishtadyumna's chariot, all the beings were terrified and thought that he<sup>243</sup> was confronting destruction. The rathas and riders were distressed in their minds and said, ‘The immensely energetic Sharadvata, supreme among men, is certainly extremely enraged at Drona's killing. He is intelligent and skilled in the use of divine weapons. Will Dhrishtadyumna be safe today from Goutama? Will this entire army be freed from this great danger? The brahmana will kill all of us together. His severe form is seen to be like that of the Destroyer. In this encounter, he will follow the footsteps of Bharadvaja's son. The preceptor<sup>244</sup> is light in the use of his hands and is always victorious in battle. He possesses the valour of weapons and is angry as well. It can be seen that Parshata is now extremely reluctant to fight.’ These and other words were spoken by those on your side and on the side of the enemy. O king! Kripa Sharadvata breathed angrily and enveloped Parshata, who was immobile, in all his inner organs. In that encounter, he was struck by the great-souled Goutama. He was supremely confounded in that battle and did not know what he should do. His charioteer said, ‘O Parshata! Are you fine? I have never seen you face such a difficulty in a battle. These arrows shot by that foremost among brahmanas are capable of penetrating the inner organs and are directed at your inner organs. It is sheer fortune that you have escaped. I will withdraw the chariot from the spot, like the force of a river driven back by the ocean. Your valour has been destroyed by this brahmana and I think that he cannot be killed.’ O king! At this, Dhrishtadyumna gently spoke these words. ‘O son!<sup>245</sup> My mind has gone numb and there is sweat on my body. Behold! My body is overcome by lassitude and my body hair is standing up. O charioteer! Abandon the brahmana in the battle and slowly go to the spot where Achyuta, Arjuna and Bhimasena are, so that I may obtain safety in the battle. In my view, that is what we should do.’ O great king! At this, the charioteer urged the horses towards the spot where the great archer, Bhima, was fighting with your soldiers. O venerable one! On seeing that Dhrishtadyumna's chariot was going away, Goutama followed it and showered hundreds of arrows. The scorcher of enemies repeatedly blew on his conch shell. He drove away Parshata, like the great Indra against Shambara.

‘The invincible Shikhandi was responsible for Bhishma's death. In the battle, Hardikya<sup>246</sup> smiled repeatedly and repulsed him. Shikhandi advanced against the maharatha from the Hridika lineage and struck him between the shoulder joints with five sharp and iron arrows. Kritavarma became angry and struck him with sixty swift arrows. O king! The maharatha smiled and severed his<sup>247</sup> bow with a single arrow. Drupada's powerful son then grasped another bow and enraged, asked Hardikya to wait. O Indra among kings! He shot ninety arrows that were gold-tufted and extremely forceful. But they were repulsed by his<sup>248</sup> armour. On seeing that they were repulsed and fell down on the ground, the powerful one used an extremely sharp kshurapra arrow to sever his bow. When the bow

had been severed, he<sup>249</sup> was like a bull with shattered horns and he<sup>250</sup> angrily struck him in the arms and the chest with eighty arrows. Though he was angry, Kritavarma was mangled by these arrows. The lord picked up another stringed bow and affixing arrows, struck Shikhandi in the shoulder with those supreme arrows. With those arrows sticking to his shoulders, Shikhandi looked beautiful. He was like a giant tree, with sparkling branches and sub-branches. Having severely pierced each other, they were both covered with blood. They were as resplendent as bulls that had wounded each other with their horns. Those two maharathas made supreme efforts to kill each other. They roamed around on their chariots, executing a thousand circular motions. O great king! In that battle, Kritavarma pierced Parshata with seventy arrows that were gold-tufted and had been sharpened on stone. In that encounter, Bhoja, supreme among strikers, quickly released a terrible arrow that was capable of robbing life. O king! Severely struck by this, he<sup>251</sup> quickly lost his consciousness. He suddenly lost his senses and grasped the pole of his standard. His charioteer took the supreme of rathas away from the battle. Tormented by Hardikya's arrows, he sighed repeatedly. O lord! Drupada's brave son was defeated. At this, the Pandava soldiers were slaughtered and fled in all directions.”



## Chapter 1169(19)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! The one on the white horses<sup>252</sup> killed your soldiers, like the wind scattering a mass of cotton in every direction. The Trigartas, Shibis, Kouravas, Shalvas, samshaptakas and the army of narayanas combined and attacked him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were Satyasena, Satyakirti, Mitradeva, Shrutanjaya, Soushruti, Chitrasena and Mitravarma. In that battle, the king of Trigarta was surrounded by his brothers and sons. They were great archers and wielded many kinds of weapons while fighting. In that battle against Arjuna, they released a storm of arrows. They attacked in that encounter, like waves agitated by the wind in the ocean. Hundreds and thousands of warriors attacked Arjuna, but all of them encountered their destruction, like serpents at the sight of Tarkshya.<sup>253</sup> O king! But though they were killed in that battle, they did not abandon Pandava. They were scorched, like insects in a fire.

‘ “In that battle, Satyasena pierced Pandava with three arrows, Mitradeva with sixty-three, Chandradeva with seven, Mitravarma with seventy-three, Soushruti with five, Shatrunjaya with twenty and Susharma with nine arrows. He<sup>254</sup> killed King Shatrunjaya with arrows sharpened on stone. He severed Soushruti’s helmeted head from his body. He swiftly used arrows to convey Chandradeva to Yama’s eternal abode. O great king! When the other maharathas endeavoured against him, he struck them with five arrows each. Satyasena became angry in that battle. He roared like a lion and hurled a giant spear towards Krishna. It was extremely terrible and was made completely out of iron. It pierced the great-souled Madhava’s left arm and penetrated the ground. O lord of the earth! Madhava was thus pierced by the spear in that great battle, and the whip and the reins fell down from his hand. However, the immensely illustrious one picked up the whip and the reins again and drove the horses towards Satyasena’s chariot. On seeing that Vishvaksena<sup>255</sup> had been pierced, the immensely strong Partha Dhananjaya struck Satyasena with sharp arrows. In the forefront of that army, with extremely sharp arrows, he severed the king’s large head, adorned with earrings, from his body. O venerable one! He then struck and killed Chitravarma with sharp arrows and used a sharp *vatsadanta* arrow to kill his charioteer. He angrily brought down hundreds and thousands from that mass of samshaptakas with hundreds of arrows. With a kshurapra arrow that was silver-tufted, the great-souled and immensely illustrious one severed King Mitradeva’s head. In wrath, he struck Susharma between his shoulder joints. At this, all the samshaptakas surrounded Dhananjaya. They angrily showered him with weapons and roared in the ten directions. Jishnu, who was like Shakra in his valour, was oppressed by them. The maharatha, whose soul was immeasurable, released the *aindra*<sup>256</sup> weapon. O lord of the earth! Thousands of arrows were released from this. In that encounter, standards, bows, chariots and their flags, quivers with their arrows, axles, yokes, wheels, harnesses, seatings, bumpers and whips were shattered. In that battle, rocks rained down, with a shower of lances. There were clubs, maces, lances and spears. O venerable one! Shataghnis with wheels and arms and thighs fell down, with necklaces, armlets and bracelets. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were golden necklaces and body armour, with umbrellas, whisks and heads adorned with crowns. O lord of the earth! A great sound could be heard there. There were heads ornamented with earrings, with faces like the full moon. They could be seen lying there, like stars in the firmament. The slain bodies could be seen on the ground. They had excellent garlands and excellent garments and were smeared with sandalwood paste. At that time, the fierce field of battle looked like a city of the gandharvas. Immensely strong princes and kshatriyas were killed. Elephants and swift horses were brought down on the ground. In that battle, they were heaped around like mountains and it became difficult to pass. As the great-souled Pandava slew a large number of the enemy and elephants with his broad-headed arrows, there was no path for him. As he roamed around in that battle, in that red-coloured mud, it was as if the wheels of his own chariot were sinking in distress. But though the wheels seemed to sink, his horses possessed great energy and



had the speed of the mind and the wind. They exerted a great effort and dragged along Pandu's archer son, as he killed those soldiers. None of them could remain stationed in the battle and most of them retreated. In that battle, Jishnu defeated large numbers of samshaptakas. O great king! He was resplendent, like a blazing fire without any smoke.

‘“O great king! Yudhishtira shot a large number of arrows and King Duryodhana fearlessly received him himself. On seeing that your immensely strong son was violently descending, Dharmaraja asked him to wait and pierced him. He<sup>257</sup> pierced him back with nine sharp arrows and, extremely angry, struck his charioteer with a broad-headed arrow. At this, King Yudhishtira shot thirteen arrows at Duryodhana. They were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone and possessed stone heads. The maharatha<sup>258</sup> killed his four horses with four arrows and with a fifth, severed his charioteer's head from his body. With a sixth, he brought down the king's standard; with a seventh, his bow; and with an eighth, his sword, on the ground. With five more arrows, Dharmaraja severely struck the king. With the horses slain, your son descended from his chariot. He was stationed on the ground and was in supreme danger. On seeing that he was overcome by this calamity, Karna, Drona's son, Kripa and the others collectively rushed there, wishing to save the king. O king! At this, all the sons of Pandu surrounded Yudhishtira in the battle and an encounter commenced.

‘“In that great battle, thousands of trumpets were sounded. O lord of the earth! As the Panchalas clashed against the Kouravas, a tumultuous sound arose. Men clashed against men and elephants against supreme elephants. Rathas clashed against rathas and horses against horse riders. O great king! Duels could be witnessed in that encounter. As supreme weapons were used, the sight was wonderful and unthinkable. They wished to kill each other and fought with great force, killing each other in that battle and following the vow of warriors. In that encounter, for a short while, no one attacked from the rear and it was beautiful to see. O king! But it soon became crazy and no one followed codes of honour. As they roamed around in the field of battle, rathas attacked elephants and dispatched them to Yama, using straight-tufted arrows. Elephants attacked horses and brought down large numbers of them there, fiercely driving them away. O king! Having driven away large numbers of horses, the elephants were intoxicated with their strength and gored them with their tusks or severely crushed them. In that battle, they pierced horse riders and horses with their tusks. Others picked them up powerfully and flung them down with great force. In every direction, there were elephants that were struck by foot soldiers in their weak spots. They uttered fierce woes of lamentation and fled in the ten directions. In that great battle, foot soldiers were violently driven away. In the field of battle, there were many who quickly discarded their ornaments. Having determined that this was a sign, the giant elephants picked up those expensive ornaments and pierced them.<sup>259</sup> Other elephants were severely wounded in their temples and the bases of their tusks by lances and spears. Others were sorely and fiercely struck along their sides with clubs hurled by rathas and horse riders. They were shattered and fell down on the ground. There were other giant elephants that powerfully brought charioteers and horse riders down on the ground, with their armour and their flags. O venerable one! In that great battle, some elephants assumed terrible forms. They approached rathas and picking them up, hurled them down violently. Giant elephants were killed by iron arrows and brought down. They lay down on the ground, like mountain peaks shattered by thunder. In the battle, warriors encountered warriors and struck each other with their fists. They dragged and seized each other by the hair. Others sought to use their arms and flung the foe down on the ground. They placed their feet on their chests and cheerfully severed their heads. O great king! With their feet, some kicked those that were already dead. Others used weapons to sever the bodies of those who were alive but dying. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that spot, warriors fought great fights with their fists. They fiercely seized each other by the hair and there were others who only wrestled. In that battle, there were many who were killed with weapons while they were fighting with another and were therefore ignorant.<sup>260</sup> The warriors were thus engaged in that frightful encounter. Hundreds and thousands of headless torsos stood there. The weapons and armour were red. And in that great arena, so were the garments. Thus did that great and fierce battle rage on and filled the universe with a sound like that of violent waves. O king! Oppressed by arrows, they could not distinguish those on one's own side from that of the enemy. O great king! Desiring victory, the kings fought as they should and killed those who advanced against them, whether they were from their own side or from the side of the enemy. As they advanced, the warriors on both sides were

anxious. O great king! The chariots were shattered and the elephants were brought down. The horses were brought down and the men fell. The earth was covered with flesh, blood and mud and became impassable. O great king! In a short instant, there were currents of blood. Karna killed the Panchalas and Dhananjaya killed the Trigartas. O king! Bhimasena killed the Kurus and their entire army of elephants. O great king! In this way, there was carnage among the soldiers of the Kurus and the Pandavas, as they clashed in the afternoon, desiring a great victory.” ’

## Chapter 1170(20)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! I have heard from you about many fierce and terrible sorrows that are difficult to tolerate and about the destruction of my sons. O suta! From what you have told me and from the way the war is going on, it is my firm view that the Kouravas don’t exist any more. In that great battle, Duryodhana was deprived of his chariot. What did Dharma’s son do then and what did the king<sup>261</sup> do in return? How did the battle that makes the body hair stand up rage in the afternoon? O Sanjaya! You are skilled. Tell me all this in detail.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “The soldiers fought in accordance with their different divisions. O lord of the earth! Your son resorted to another chariot. He was overcome by great rage, like a venomous snake. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing Dharmaraja Yudhishtira, Duryodhana quickly told his charioteer, ‘O charioteer! Drive and swiftly take me to the spot where Pandava is. The king is resplendent in his armour there and an umbrella is held aloft his head.’ Having been thus instructed by the king, in that encounter, the charioteer drove that supreme chariot towards King Yudhishtira. Yudhishtira was also angry and maddened, like an excellent bull. He instructed his charioteer to go to the spot where Suyodhana was. The best of rathas, those two brave brothers who were immensely valorous, clashed against each other, armoured and invincible in battle. In the battle, those two great archers mangled each other with their arrows. O venerable one! In that encounter, with a broad-headed arrow that was sharpened on stone, King Duryodhana severed the bow of the one who observed dharma in his conduct. Yudhishtira could not tolerate this conduct and became enraged. In front of the army, Dharma’s son cast aside that severed bow and, his eyes red with rage, picked up another bow and severed Duryodhana’s standard and bow.

He<sup>262</sup> picked up another bow and pierced Pandava back. Extremely angry, they showered down arrows on each other. They wished to defeat each other and were as enraged as lions. They struck each other and roared like bulls. The maharathas roamed around, glancing at each other. O great king! They drew their bows back to the complete extent and wounded each other. They were as resplendent as flowering kimshukas. O king! They roared repeatedly at each other, like lions. In that great battle, they made sounds with the slapping of their palms and the twangs of their bows. O great king! Those best of rathas blew on their conch shells and severely wounded each other. King Yudhishtira angrily struck your son in the chest with three arrows that were irresistible and had the force of the vajra. Your son quickly pierced the king back, using five sharp arrows that were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! King Duryodhana hurled a lance. It was sharp, made completely out of iron and like a giant meteor. On seeing it descend violently, Dharmaraja used sharp arrows to powerfully shatter it into three fragments and then pierced him with seven arrows. That extremely expensive lance fell down, with its golden handle, blazing like a giant meteor with trails of fire. O lord of the earth! On seeing that the lance had been destroyed, your son struck Yudhishtira with nine sharp and broad-headed arrows. The foremost among scorcher of enemies<sup>263</sup> was powerfully and severely struck and quickly affixed an arrow in Duryodhana’s direction. The immensely strong and valiant king affixed the arrow on his fierce bow and angrily released it at the king.<sup>264</sup> That arrow struck your maharatha son. Having robbed the king of his senses, it penetrated the ground. Duryodhana became angry at this and forcefully raised a club. He advanced against Pandava, wishing to bring an end to the feud.<sup>265</sup> With that upraised club, he was like Yama with a staff in his hand. On seeing this, Dharmaraja hurled a giant spear towards your son. It blazed and was immensely powerful, flaming like a giant meteor. As he<sup>266</sup> was stationed on his chariot, it pierced his armour in the great battle. Severely wounded and struck in the chest, he lost his senses and fell down.

‘Kritavarma swiftly approached your son, as the king was immersed in an ocean of hardship. Bhima also grasped a giant club that was decorated with gold and in that battle, powerfully advanced against Kritavarma. Thus

the battle raged between those on your side and the enemy.” ’

## Chapter 1171(21)

‘Sanjaya said, “Those on your side placed Karna at the forefront. They were invincible in battle and the encounter commenced again, like that between the gods and the asuras. There was the sound of elephants, chariots, men, horses and conch shells and that of many weapons descending. Elephants, rathas and foot soldiers, with their leaders, were cheered by this and descended and struck each other. The riders used arrows, battleaxes, supreme swords, spikes and many different kinds of arrows. In that great battle, there were elephants, chariots, horses, the best of men and the vehicles of the men. The ground was beautiful, strewn with the heads of men. The faces possessed the complexion of the lotus, the sun or the moon. The teeth were white. The mouths, eyes and noses were excellent. They were adorned with beautiful crowns and earrings. Thousands of elephants, men and horses were killed with hundreds of clubs, maces, spears, javelins, nails, catapults and bludgeons. A river of blood began to flow. The slain and wounded men, rathas, horses and elephants were terrible to look at. Because that large army was destroyed in the cause, it was like the kingdom of the lord of the ancestors<sup>267</sup> when there is a destruction of beings.

‘ “O god among men! Your soldiers and your sons looked like the sons of the gods, when, in the forefront of the battle, those bulls among the Kurus advanced against Shini’s descendant.<sup>268</sup> That army was extremely beautiful and was fierce in its sentiments. It was full of the best of men, horses, chariots and elephants. It was like the soldiers of the immortals or the asuras and made a sound like the salty ocean. The son of the sun<sup>269</sup> was like the lord of the gods in his valour. As a warrior, he was equal to the best among the thirty gods. He attacked the foremost among the Shini lineage with arrows that blazed like the rays of the sun. In that encounter, the bull among the Shini lineage quickly used many kinds of arrows, which were as resplendent as venomous snakes, and enveloped the supreme among men,<sup>270</sup> with his chariot, his horses and his charioteer. Vasusena<sup>271</sup> was oppressed because of the arrows of the bull among the Shinis, and the atirathas and well-wishers on your side quickly advanced towards that bull among rathas,<sup>272</sup> together with their elephants, chariots, horses and foot soldiers. That force was as large as the ocean. But it was quickly driven away by the enemy, the friends of Drupada’s son,<sup>273</sup> and there was a great destruction of men, rathas, horses and elephants.

‘ “The best of men, Arjuna and Keshava, performed their religious ceremonies and worshipped Lord Bhava<sup>274</sup> in accordance with the proper rites. They set their minds on killing the enemy and swiftly rushed against your army. The chariot roared like a cloud and the flags and standard fluttered in the wind. It was drawn by white horses. On seeing it advance towards them, like Death, they<sup>275</sup> were distressed in their minds. Arjuna stretched Gandiva and seemed to dance around in the battle. He showered arrows and covered the sky, the directions and the sub-directions. There were chariots that were like celestial vehicles, equipped with machines, weapons and standards. Using his arrows, he destroyed these, together with their charioteers, like a wind driving away clouds. There were elephants with triumphant standards and weapons and those who controlled these elephants. There were horse riders, horses and foot soldiers. Using his arrows, he conveyed them to Yama’s eternal abode. The maharatha was angry and unassailable, like Yama. Duryodhana advanced against him alone and struck him with his arrows. However, Arjuna used seven arrows to strike his bow, his charioteer, his standard and his horses.<sup>276</sup> With another arrow, he then brought down his umbrella. He then affixed a ninth arrow, with the desire of killing Duryodhana. However, Drona’s son shattered that supreme arrow into seven fragments. Pandava then used supreme arrows to destroy the bow of Drona’s son and also killed his horses. He then severed Kripa’s fierce bow. Having severed Hardikya’s bow and standard and killed his horses, he cut down Duhshasana’s supreme bow and attacked Radheya. At this, Karna abandoned Satyaki and struck Arjuna with three arrows. He then pierced Krishna with twenty arrows and struck

Partha with three more. However, Satyaki advanced against Karna and pierced him with sharp arrows, first with ninety-nine fierce arrows and yet again with one hundred. All the foremost among the Pandus oppressed Karna—Yudhamanyu, Shikhandi, Droupadi's sons, the Prabhadrakas, Uttamouja, Yuyutsu, the twins and Parshata.<sup>277</sup> The Chedis, Karushas, Matsyas, Kekayas and their armies, the powerful Chekitana and Dharmaraja, excellent in his vows—these rathas, horses, elephants and foot soldiers who were fierce in their valour—surrounded Karna in that battle and released many kinds of weapons. All of them devoted themselves to killing Karna and addressed him in fierce and eloquent words. Karna used his sharp arrows to cut down those numerous showers of weapons. He destroyed all of them, like a wind breaks down trees. One saw Karna angrily use his storm of arrows to destroy rathas, elephants and their riders, horses and their riders. The Pandu forces were slaughtered by Karna's energy. Most of them lost their weapons and their bodies were wounded. They retreated. Then, Arjuna himself countered Karna's weapons with his own weapons. He enveloped the directions, the sky and the earth with his showers of arrows. Those arrows descended like clubs and bludgeons. Some were like shataghnis and others were as fierce as the vajra. The soldiers, the foot soldiers, horses, rathas and elephants, were destroyed. They closed their eyes, uttered woes of lamentation and fled distractedly in different directions. In that battle, horses, men and elephants were destroyed. The soldiers were killed by the arrows and terrified, fled.

“Thus did they engage in battle, desiring victory. The sun approached Mount Asta.<sup>278</sup> O great king! In particular, there was darkness and dust. We could not see anything, favourable or unfavourable. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The great archers were frightened of fighting in the night. With all their horses, they therefore withdrew.<sup>279</sup> O king! When the Kouravas departed at the end of the day, the Parthas were delighted in their minds at having obtained victory and also left for their own camps. They showed contempt for the enemy by sounding many kinds of musical instruments, roaring like lions, dancing and praising Achyuta and Arjuna. When the brave ones and all the soldiers retreated, all the lords of men pronounced benedictions on the Pandaveyas. Having retreated, the Kurus and the Pandavas were cheerful. The lords of men went to their camps in the night and rested. Large numbers of yakshas, *rakshas*, *pishachas* and carnivorous beasts went to that terrible field of battle, which was like Rudra's dancing arena.”

## Chapter 1172(22)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “Arjuna killed all of us easily, as he wished. I don’t think Yama would have escaped, had he attacked him in a battle. O fortunate one! Partha robbed single-handed. Single-handed, he satisfied Agni.<sup>280</sup> He vanquished the earth single-handed and made all the powerful kings offer tribute.<sup>281</sup> Single-handedly, using his divine bow, he killed the *nivatakavachas*.<sup>282</sup> He fought single-handedly with Sharva, who was in the form of a hunter.<sup>283</sup> He protected the Bharatas single-handed and satisfied Bhava.<sup>284</sup> Fierce in his energy, he single-handedly defeated all those on my side. They<sup>285</sup> should not be censured. Tell me what they did next.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “They were killed, wounded and shattered. They were deprived of their armour and the vehicles that bore them in war. Their voices were distressed. Those insolent ones grieved and were defeated by the enemy. The Kouravas went to their camps and sought counsel and advice from each other. They were like serpents that had been defanged and had lost their poison, having then been trod on by the foot. Karna angrily spoke to them, sighing like a snake. He rubbed one hand against another hand and glanced towards your son.<sup>286</sup> ‘Arjuna is always firm, skilled and persevering. He understands and when the time is right, Adhokshaja<sup>287</sup> instructs him. We were deceived by him today, because of that sudden shower of weapons. O lord of the earth! But tomorrow, I will destroy all his intentions.’<sup>288</sup> Thus addressed by him, the supreme among kings gave his assent. Having cheerfully spent the night, they emerged to do battle. They saw that Dharmaraja had constructed an invincible vyuha, which the foremost among the Kurus had constructed according to the injunctions of Brihaspati and Ushanas.<sup>289</sup> At this, Duryodhana remembered Karna, whose shoulders were like that of a bull. He was in control of his soul and could counteract the deeds of others. He was Purandara’s equal in a battle and as strong as the masses of Maruts. Karna was like Kartyavirya<sup>290</sup> in his valour and the king’s mind turned towards him. The son of a suta was a great archer, and in a hardship, one turns towards a relative.

‘Dhritarashtra said, “In that miserable situation, your minds turned towards Vaikartana Karna. Did you look towards him, like those afflicted with cold glance towards the sun? After the retreat was over, the battle commenced again. O Sanjaya! How did Vaikartana Karna fight then? How did all the Pandavas fight there, with the son of a suta? The mighty-armed Karna could single-handedly kill the Parthas and the Somakas. It is my view that the valour of Karna’s arms is equal to that of Shakra and Vishnu. The great-souled one’s weapons and valour are extremely terrible. He saw that Duryodhana was severely afflicted by the Pandavas and he also saw that the sons of Pandu were extremely powerful in that great battle. Yet again, in the battle, the proud Duryodhana had relied on Karna to defeat the Parthas, their sons and Keshava. It is a great sorrow that the powerful Karna could not overcome the sons of Pandu in the encounter. There is no doubt that destiny is supreme. The consequences of that terrible gambling match have arrived now. Alas! These terrible miseries are the result of what Duryodhana did. O Sanjaya! I am bearing all these extremely fierce stakes. O son!<sup>291</sup> Soubala<sup>292</sup> was revered as one who knew about policy. O Sanjaya! Though this is named a battle, it is a gambling match that is going on. I am always hearing about my sons being killed and defeated. There is no one who is capable of countering the Pandavas in battle and they are immersing themselves, as if in the midst of a crowd of women. Destiny is certainly most powerful.”

‘Sanjaya said, “Those deeds have been done and you are thinking about them now. Those deeds should not have been done. But thinking about them brings destruction. The deeds that you did are long distant from memory. You did what should not have been done, and you did not think then about what would be obtained, and what would not be obtained, from those deeds. O king! You have been told several times not to fight with the Pandavas. O lord of the earth! But because of your delusion, you did not accept that advice about the Pandavas. You performed many

terrible deeds against the sons of Pandu. It is because of what you did that this terrible destruction of kings is taking place. O bull among the Bharata lineage! But all that has transpired. Do not sorrow about it. O one without decay! Listen to a detailed account of the terrible destruction that happened.

“When night was over and it was morning, Karna went to the king. Meeting Duryodhana, the mighty-armed one said, ‘O king! I will clash against Pandu’s illustrious son today. Either I will kill that brave one, or he will kill me. O lord of the earth! O king! Because of the many things that Partha and I have done, this clash between me and Arjuna has not taken place earlier. O lord of the earth! I am speaking these words in accordance with my wisdom. Listen to them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will not return without having killed Partha in battle. The foremost of our soldiers have been killed and I am the one who will be stationed in battle. Partha will attack me, now that I am without Shakra’s spear.<sup>293</sup> O lord of men! Therefore, listen to what is beneficial. The valour of my weapons is equal to the energy of Arjuna’s. Savyasachi is not my equal in fighting against great warriors, dexterity, shooting from a distance, skill and the use of weapons. My bow, Vijaya, is supreme among all weapons. Vishvakarma<sup>294</sup> constructed it for Indra’s sake. It was with this that Shatakratu vanquished large numbers of daityas. In the ten directions, the daityas were confounded because of its roar. Shakra gave that revered weapon to Bhargava and Bhargava gave that divine and supreme bow to me.<sup>295</sup> With this, I will fight against the mighty-armed Arjuna, foremost among victorious ones, like Indra fighting in a battle against all the assembled daityas. Rama<sup>296</sup> gave me this terrible bow and it is superior to Gandiva. It was with this bow that he<sup>297</sup> conquered the earth twenty-one times. Bhargava told me about this bow’s divine deeds and Rama gave it to me. I will use it to fight against Pandava. O Duryodhana! I will delight you and your relatives today. I will kill the brave Arjuna, foremost among victorious ones, in the battle. O king! The entire earth, with its mountains, forests, islands and oceans, will be yours, for your sons and your grandsons to be established in, without any opposition. There is nothing that I cannot accomplish today, especially if it is something that brings you pleasure, just as one who has controlled his soul and follows dharma is certain to obtain success. Like a tree against fire, he will not be able to stand against me in the battle. But I must certainly tell you how I am inferior to Phalguna. His bowstring is divine and his large quivers are inexhaustible. He possesses a celestial and supreme bow and Gandiva is invincible in battle. I also possess a supreme, great and divine bow known as Vijaya. O king! Therefore, in the matter of bows, I am superior to Partha. Listen to how that brave Pandava is superior to me. His reins are held by Dasharha, who is revered by all the worlds. His divine chariot is decorated with gold and was given to him by Agni. O brave one! It is impenetrable in every way and his horses are as swift as thought. His standard is divine and, with the resplendent ape atop it, causes wonder. Krishna, the creator of the universe, protects that chariot. Though I am inferior to him in these respects, I still wish to fight with Pandava. But this brave Shalya, the ornament of assemblies, is his<sup>298</sup> equal. If he acts as my charioteer, there will certainly be victory. Shalya is incapable of being resisted by the enemy. Therefore, let him be my charioteer. Let a large number of carts bear iron arrows that are shafted with the feathers of vultures. O Indra among kings! Let supreme horses be yoked to the best of chariots. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Let these always follow me from the rear. Through these, my qualities will be superior to those of Partha. Shalya knows more about horses than Krishna, and I am superior to Arjuna. Just as Dasharha, the destroyer of enemy heroes, knows about the minds of horses, maharatha Shalya also knows about horses. There is no one who is equal to the king of Madra in the strength of his arms. Just as there is no archer who is equal to me in weapons, there is no one who is equal to Shalya in knowledge of horses. In this fashion, my chariot will become superior to that of Partha’s. O great king! O scorcher of enemies! I have told you what I desire. Please do this. Let all these wishes of mine be satisfied. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You will then see what I accomplish in this battle. In every way, I will vanquish all the Pandavas, when they advance against me.’ Duryodhana replied, ‘O Karna! I will do everything that you have thought of. O son of a suta! Chariots, with implements and horses, will follow you. There will be many carts, bearing iron arrows tufted with the feathers of vultures. O Karna! We, and all these kings, will follow you.’ O great king! Having spoken thus, your powerful son went to the king of Madra and spoke these words to him.”



## Chapter 1173(23)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! Your son spoke these words to the king of Madra. He went humbly to him and spoke these affectionate words to him. ‘O one who observes truthful vows! O immensely fortunate one! O one who increases the hardship of enemies! O lord of Madra! O one who is brave in battle! O one who is terrible to enemy soldiers! O supreme among eloquent ones! You have heard Karna’s words. I am seeking you out among all these lions among kings. This is for Partha’s destruction and for my welfare. O best of rathas! O one with an excellent mind! You should accept the task of being a charioteer. There is no one in the worlds who is your equal in holding the reins. Protect Karna in every way, like Brahma protects Shankara. Krishna is Partha’s adviser and he is supreme in holding the reins. In that fashion, always protect Radheya. Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Karna, you, the valiant Bhoja, Shakuni Soubala, Drona’s son and I are our strength. O leader of an army! In that fashion, we were divided into nine divisions. The divisions of the great-souled Bhishma and Drona no longer exist. They slew my enemy, more than the two parts that were allotted to them.<sup>299</sup> But those two tigers among men were old and were killed through deceit. O unblemished one! Having performed extremely difficult deeds for us, they have gone to heaven. In that way, in this battle, many other tigers among men have been slain by the enemy. In that way, in this encounter, there are many on our side who have ascended to heaven, giving up their lives, striving to the best of their capacity and performing good rites. The mighty-armed Karna alone remains, engaged in our welfare. O tiger among men! And you are there, a maharatha in all the worlds. O lord of Madra! That is the reason my hopes of victory are still great. Krishna is foremost among those who hold Partha’s reins in battle. O king! In the battle, he is engaged in protecting Partha. You have witnessed the deeds that he has performed. Earlier, in an encounter, Arjuna has never killed enemies in this fashion.<sup>300</sup> O lord of Madra! But you have seen how he has killed and driven away in this battle. O immensely radiant one! Yours and Karna’s divisions are left. In the battle, unite with Karna and bear that share. O venerable one! Surya and Aruna are seen to destroy the darkness.<sup>301</sup> In that way, destroy the Kounteyas, with the Panchalas and the Srinjayas. Karna is foremost among rathas. You are foremost among men. When there is a clash, there is no one in the worlds who is your equal. Varshneya protects the Pandavas in every situation. In that way, in this battle, protect Vaikartana Karna. O lord of the earth! If you are the charioteer of the horses, he will be unassailable in a battle by Shakra and all the gods, not to speak of the Pandaveyas. Do not doubt these words of mine.’

‘“Hearing these words of Duryodhana, Shalya was filled with anger. His brows furrowed into three lines. He repeatedly whirled his hands around. His large eyes were red with rage. The mighty-armed Shalya was proud of his lineage, prosperity, knowledge and strength. He spoke these words. ‘O son of Gandhari! You are insulting me and it is certain that you suspect me. Without any hesitation, you have asked me to act as a charioteer. You regard Karna to be superior to us and have honoured and praised him. But I have never regarded Radheya as my equal in battle. O lord of the earth! Instruct me to assume a burden that is greater than my share. Having defeated them in battle, I will return to the place I have come from. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! I will fight single-handedly with them. As I consume the enemies in the battle, behold my valour today. O Kouravya! It is not proper for a man to advance with an injury in his heart. Do not doubt me and do not enjoin me in this way. You should not act so as to insult me in the battle. Behold my thick arms. They are capable of withstanding the vajra. Behold my colourful bow and these arrows, which are like venomous serpents. Behold my chariot. Well-trained horses that are as swift as the wind have been yoked to it. O son of Gandhari! Behold my club. It has been decorated with strips of golden garments. If I am angry, I can split the earth and shatter the mountains. O lord of the earth! I can dry up the oceans with my energy. O king! Knowing that I am capable of oppressing the enemy in this way, why are you instructing

me to be the charioteer of Adhiratha's inferior son in the battle? O Indra among kings! You should not employ me on such a lowly task. Since I am superior, I have no interest in following the commands of that wicked person. A superior person has arrived with affection and obedience. If one makes such a person subject to the commands of an inferior one, one commits the crime of confusing the inferior with the superior. Brahma created brahmanas from his mouth and kshatriyas from his chest. He created vaishyas from his thighs and shudras from his feet. That is what has been heard. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Because of mixture among the varnas, those who are other than the four varnas, *pratiloma* and *anuloma*, have been generated.<sup>302</sup> It has been said in the sacred texts that kshatriyas are protectors. They accumulate wealth and distribute it. Pure brahmanas act as officiating priests, study and receive.<sup>303</sup> Brahmanas have been established on earth for the sake of gratifying people. Agriculture, animal husbandry and donations are always the tasks of vaishyas. It has been decreed that shudras are the servants of brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas. It has been decreed that sutas are the servants of brahmanas and kshatriyas. They are not the servants of shudras.<sup>304</sup> O unblemished one! Therefore, listen to my words. I am one whose head has been consecrated.<sup>305</sup> I have been born in a lineage of *rajarshis*. I am famous as a maharatha and should be served by bards and minstrels. O destroyer of enemy forces! Since I am such a person, I have no interest in being the charioteer of the son of the suta in battle. Having been thus humiliated, I will never fight. O son of Gandhari! I am seeking your permission now, because I wish to return to the place that I have come from.' Having spoken these words, Shalya, tiger among men and the ornament of an assembly, was angry and quickly stood up in the midst of those kings.

'“However, your son restrained him, with affection and great respect. He spoke sweet and conciliatory words that were capable of achieving every object. ‘O Shalya! There is no doubt that it is exactly as you have said. O lord of men! But I have an objective. Please listen to it. O king! Karna is not superior to you and I have never doubted you. The king who is the lord of Madra will never do something that is false. Your ancestors, the best of men, always spoke the truth. It is my view that this is the reason you are known as Artayani.<sup>306</sup> O one who deserves honours. That is the reason, on this earth, you are like a stake to enemies.<sup>307</sup> O lord of the earth! That is the reason you are known by the name of Shalya. You have given away a large quantity of donations earlier. O one who knows about dharma! Therefore, for my sake, do what you have promised to do earlier. Radheya and I are not more valiant than you, that I am asking you to be the charioteer of those foremost of horses in the battle. Just as the world thinks that Karna is superior to Dhananjaya in qualities, the world thinks that Shalya is superior to Vasudeva. O bull among men! Karna is superior to Partha in weapons. And you are superior to Krishna in the knowledge of horses and in strength. The great-minded Vasudeva knows about the heart of horses. O king of Madra! But there is no doubt that you are twice as knowledgeable as him.” Shalya replied, “O son of Gandhari! O Kourava! Since, in the midst of the soldiers, you have said that I am superior to Devaki's son, I am pleased with you. Therefore, I will be the charioteer of the illustrious Radheya, while he fights with the foremost of the Pandavas. O brave one! It shall be as you wish. O brave one! But let this be clear to Vaikartana, what when the time is right, I will be free to speak disrespectful words to him.” O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Together with Karna, your son told the king of Madra that it would be this way.'

## Chapter 1174(24)

‘ “Duryodhana said, ‘O lord of Madra! Listen once more to what I am about to tell you. O lord! This is an account of the ancient battle that took place between the gods and the *asuras*. The great rishi, Markandeya, told my father about this. O supreme among rajarshis! I will recount it, without leaving anything out. You should listen to it, without doubting its veracity.

‘ ““The gods and the *asuras* engaged with each other in a mighty battle. O king! At first, there was the encounter known as Tarakamaya.<sup>308</sup> It has been heard by us that the daityas were then defeated by the gods. O king! When the daityas were defeated, Taraka’s three sons, Taraksha,<sup>309</sup> Kamalaksha and Vidyunmali, resorted to fierce austerities and established themselves in supreme control. O scorcher of enemies! They oppressed their bodies with austerities. O king! Because of their control, austerities and rules, the grandfather<sup>310</sup> was pleased with them and offered them supreme boons. O king! They were united in asking for the boon that all beings would always be unable to kill them. They wanted this from the grandfather of all the worlds. The god who is the lord and master of all the worlds told them, “O *asuras*! There is nothing like immortality and not being killed by anyone. Ask for any other boon that pleases you.” At this, they consulted among themselves for a long time and then, bowing down before the lord who is the master of the worlds, spoke these words, “O god! O grandfather! Please grant us this boon. With your favours, we will dwell in three cities above the earth and roam around in this world. O unblemished one! Once, every one thousand years, those cities will merge with one another and become one. O illustrious one! When they have merged, if a supreme among gods slays us with a single arrow, let that be the means of our death.” Having agreed to this, the god<sup>311</sup> left for heaven.

‘ ““Having obtained the boon, they were pleased and consulted each other about constructing the three cities. They asked the great asura Maya, who was accomplished in everything. He was without decay and was worshipped by the daityas and the *danavas*.<sup>312</sup> Using his own austerities, the intelligent Maya created those three cities, one of gold, another of silver and another of black iron. O lord of the earth! The one that was of gold was resplendent in heaven, the one of silver in the firmament and the one of iron on earth. They were such that they circled. Each was a hundred *yojanas* in length and breadth and possessed houses, mansions and many walls and gates.<sup>313</sup> The roads had many qualities and they were also spacious. There were many kinds of palaces, adorned with gates. O king! Each of those cities had a different king. The great-souled Tarakaksha possessed the expensive city of gold, Kamalaksha the silver one and Vidyunmali the iron one. Those three daitya kings swiftly attacked the three worlds with their energy. They spoke these words. “Who is the one who is known as Prajapati?”<sup>314</sup> There were no heroes to rival them and the foremost among *danavas* went and united with them, in tens of millions. They sought refuge in those three inaccessible cities, desiring great wealth. When they were thus united, Maya gave them everything they wanted. Resorting to him, all of them lived there, without any fear. If any resident of the three cities desired anything in his mind, using his powers of illusion, Maya immediately satisfied that wish. Tarakaksha had an immensely strong son named Hari. He went through supreme austerities and satisfied the grandfather. Having satisfied the god, he asked for a boon. “Let there be a lake in our city. When those killed with weapons are flung into it, let them emerge with life and greater strength.” Having obtained the boon, Tarakaksha’s brave son, Hari, constructed a lake there. O lord! It was capable of reviving the dead. In whatever form and in whatever attire a daitya was slain, once he was thrown there, he became alive in that form. Having obtained them back, those in Tripura<sup>315</sup> began to oppress all the worlds. They obtained success through their great austerities and extended the fear of the gods. O king! They never suffered from destruction in a battle. At this, they were over-

come by avarice and delusion and were bereft of their senses. They shamelessly uprooted everything that had been established. Everywhere, they drove away the gods and their companions. They roamed around at will, insolent because of the boon they had obtained, through all the celestial forests and other regions loved by the residents of heaven and the sacred and revered hermitages of rishis. The evil-acting danavas did not show respect towards anyone.

““O scorcher of enemies! All the gods united and went to the grandfather, to tell him about the depredations caused by those who were not *suras*.<sup>316</sup> They bowed their heads in obeisance before him and told him everything. They asked the illustrious grandfather about a means for their destruction.<sup>317</sup> On hearing this, the illustrious god told the gods, “The asuras are evil-souled and hate the gods. Those who commit crimes against you, also oppress me. There is no doubt that I am neutral among beings. But those who are against dharma must be killed. I am firmly telling you this. You elect Sthanu Ishana Jishnu, the performer of undecaying deeds.<sup>318</sup> O Adityas! He will save you and kill the ones who are not *suras*.” Having heard his words, with Shakra at the forefront, the gods placed Brahma ahead of them and sought refuge with the one who bears the mark of a bull. They performed supreme austerities and praised the eternal *brahman*. With the rishis, the ones who knew about dharma gave up all their souls to Bhava.<sup>319</sup> With eloquent words, they praised the one who grants freedom from fear in all situations that cause fear. He is the great-souled one who is the soul of everything. He pervades everything with his soul. They<sup>320</sup> knew special austerities and many kinds of yoga to control the soul. They knew about the techniques of *sankhya*, so that the soul could always be controlled.<sup>321</sup> They then beheld Ishana, the consort of Uma, in his mass of energy. He has no equal in the worlds. He is devoted to vows and is without blemish. He is the single illustrious one, though they had thought of him in many different forms. On seeing the form of the great-souled one, whom they had thought of in many different forms in their own souls, all of them were astounded and glanced at each other in great wonder. He is the lord who is in all beings. He is the one without origin and is the lord of the universe. On seeing him, all the gods and brahmarshis bowed their heads down on the ground. Shankara welcomed them with words of benediction over them and asked them to arise. The illustrious one smiled and said, “Tell me why you have come.” Having obtained permission from Tryambaka,<sup>322</sup> their hearts were assured. They told Bhava, “O lord! We bow down. We bow down before you. We bow down before the one who is the god of all the gods. You are the archer. You are the one who is supremely angry. You are the one who destroyed the sacrifice of Prajapati.<sup>323</sup> You are the one who is worshipped by all Prajapatis. We bow down before you. We praise you. We praise the one who is praised by those who are about to die. You are the one who is red. You are Rudra. You are the one with the blue throat. You are the one with the trident. You are the one who cannot be repulsed. You are the one with the eyes of a deer. You are the one who fights with the best of weapons. You are unassailable. You are the seed. You are the brahman. You are a brahmachari. You are Ishana. You are the one who cannot be measured. You are the one who controls. You are dressed in skin. You are always engaged in austerities. You are tawny. You are the one who observes vows. You are the one who is attired in skin. You are the father of Kumara. You are three-eyed. You wield the best of weapons. You destroy the afflictions of those who seek refuge. You destroy masses of those who hate brahmanas. You are the lord of trees. You are the lord of men. We bow down before you. You are the lord of cattle. You are always the lord of sacrifices. We bow down before you. We bow down before you. O Tryambaka! Fierce in your energy, you are in front of all the soldiers. O god! We worship you, in our thoughts and our deeds. Be pacified.” At this, the illustrious one was gratified and welcomed and honoured them. He asked, “Let the reason for your fright be dispelled. Tell me what I should do for you.” The great-souled one granted a boon to the masses of ancestors, gods and rishis. Brahma honoured Shankara and spoke these words for the welfare of the worlds. “O lord of the gods! Through your favours, I have obtained the status of Prajapati. Having been thus established, I have granted a great boon to the danavas. Because of that, they are transgressing all norms of respect. You are the lord of the past, the present and the future. Other than you, there is no one who can destroy those wicked ones. Show your favours to the gods and grant this to the residents of heaven. O lord of the gods! O wielder of the trident! Show your favours and kill the danavas.”

““The illustrious one replied, “All your enemies should be killed. That is my view. But I cannot kill them alone. Those who hate the gods are capable. Therefore, all of you should unite. Use the energy of my weapons to

fight against the enemy in battle. Unity offers great strength.”

‘ ““The gods said, “We think that their energy and strength is double that of ours. We think that we have already witnessed their energy and their strength.”

‘ ““The illustrious one replied, “Those who have committed crimes against you and are wicked must always be killed. Accept half of my energy and strength and kill all those enemies.”

‘ ““The gods said, “O Maheshvara! We will not be able to bear half of your energy. But with half of our united strength, you can kill the enemies.” ’

‘ “Duryodhana said, ‘O supreme among kings! The gods accepted what the lord of the gods had said.<sup>324</sup> All of them gave him half of their energy and he became superior. The god became the strongest among all the strong ones. From that time, Shankara came to be known as Mahadeva.<sup>325</sup> Mahadeva said, “Armed with the bow and the arrow, I will station myself on my chariot and kill the enemies of the residents of heaven. Therefore, all of you attend to my chariot and my bow and arrows. Behold, as I bring them down on the surface of the earth.”

‘ ““The gods said, “Let all forms be gathered from everywhere in the three worlds. O lord of the gods! Using that, we will construct an immensely energetic and resplendent chariot for you, which will be fashioned by Vishvakarma with his intelligence.”

‘ ““The tigers among the gods then constructed the chariot.<sup>326</sup> The goddess earth, garlanded with large cities and with mountains, forests, islands and all the beings, became the seat for the charioteer. Mandara<sup>327</sup> was the axle and Mahanadi<sup>328</sup> became the flank. The directions and the sub-directions became the entourage around the chariot. The flaming planets were the *anukarsha*<sup>329</sup> and the stars were the bumpers. Dharma, artha and kama united to become the *triveni*.<sup>330</sup> Many kinds of herbs and many trees, with flowers and fruit, became the seat for the charioteer. The sun and the moon became wheels of that supreme chariot. Day and night were the auspicious flanks, ahead and to the rear. The ten lords of the nagas, with Dhritarashtra<sup>331</sup> as the foremost, constituted the shaft. The sky was the yoke and Samvartaka and Balahaka were the leather coverings for the yoke.<sup>332</sup> Fortitude, understanding, permanence and humility were the staffs. The planets, nakshatras, stars and the colourful firmament were the leather coverings. The guardians of the world, the lords of the gods, the water, the dead and wealth,<sup>333</sup> were made the horses. Sinivali, Anumati, Kuhu and Raka, all excellent in their vows, were made the yokes and harnesses around the necks of the mounts, for use by the rider.<sup>334</sup> Action, truth, austerities and prosperity were made the reins. The mind became the base and Sarasvati<sup>335</sup> the track for the chariot. Many beautiful and colourful flags were whirled around by the wind. With lightning and Indra’s bow fastened to the chariot, it blazed in radiance. O great king! Thus was the supreme of chariots prepared there. O tiger among men! The gods prepared it, for crushing those who hated them. Shankara placed the best of his weapons on the chariot. Having made the firmament the flagstaff for his chariot, he placed the mark of the bull there. Brahma’s staff, Yama’s staff, Rudra’s staff and Fever became the protectors of the chariot and faced all the directions. The great-souled Atharvan and Angirasa became the protectors of the chariot wheels.<sup>336</sup> Rig Veda, Sama Veda and the Puranas were in the front. Itihasa<sup>337</sup> and the Yajur Veda protected the rear. Divine words and learning surrounded it from all sides. O Indra among kings! *Vashatkara*<sup>338</sup> was the goad there. O king! The syllable *Om* was at the forefront and made it look radiant. He<sup>339</sup> made the year, with its six seasons, his bow. He made the night that destroys men the undecaying bowstring. Vishnu, Agni and Soma were the arrows. Agni and Soma constitute the entire universe and it is said that Vishnu is the universe. Vishnu is the illustrious one’s soul and Bhava’s infinite energy. That is the reason they<sup>340</sup> could not bear the touch of Hara’s bowstring. On that arrow, the lord released his fierce and virulent fire of anger, generated from the intolerable wrath of Bhrigu and Angirasa. Nilalohita, Dhumra and Krittivasa looked terrible.<sup>341</sup> He blazed like ten thousand suns, amidst a mass of flaming energy. Hara is the vanquisher of those who can be defeated with difficulty. He is the slayer of those who hate Brahma. He is always the protector and the destroyer. He is the refuge of dharma and adharma. He was surrounded by large numbers of terrible and fierce beings who were horrible in form. Surrounded by large numbers of these, the illustrious Sthanu was resplendent. O king!

The entire world and universe is established in his limbs and all mobile and immobile objects were beautiful. It was a wonderful sight. On seeing that the chariot was ready, he donned divine armour and picked up his bow and arrow. He grasped the celestial arrows that were generated through Soma, Vishnu and Agni. O king! O supreme among kings! The gods instructed the lord of the wind to blow sacred fragrances. Mahadeva ascended the chariot and terrified the gods. When he ascended, the earth and heaven trembled. The granter of boons was beautiful, with his sword, arrows and bow.

““He smiled and asked the masses of gods, “Who will be my charioteer?” The gods replied, “O lord of the gods! There is no doubt that whoever you employ, will be your charioteer.” He told the gods again, “You decide who is superior to me. Decide this yourselves and make him the charioteer.” Having heard the words of the great-souled one, the gods went to the grandfather and having obtained his reassurance, spoke these words. “O god! We have done everything that you asked us to, for destroying the enemies of the thirty gods. The one with the bull on his banner is completely pleased with us. We have constructed a chariot and equipped it with many wonderful weapons. But we do not know who should be the charioteer of that supreme chariot. Therefore, let the best of the gods be appointed as the charioteer. O god! O lord! You should ensure that the words that you spoke become successful. O illustrious one! You told us earlier that you would do that which would be beneficial for us. You should act in accordance with that. The supreme of chariots has parts from all the gods. It is irresistible and will drive away the enemy. The one with the Pinaka in his hand is the warrior. He is ready and will strike terror among the danavas. The four Vedas have become the best of steeds. With all the mountains, the earth is the great-souled one’s chariot. The nakshatras have obediently become the ornaments. But we do not see a charioteer for that warrior. O god! O grandfather! When such are the chariot, the horses and the warrior, the charioteer must be someone who is special in every way, just as the armour, the weapons and the bow are. But except you, we do not see someone who can be a charioteer. O lord! You are the one who is superior to the gods in all the qualities. Ascend swiftly as a charioteer and control those supreme horses.” It has been heard, that in this fashion, the gods bowed down their heads before the grandfather who is the lord of the three worlds and sought his favours, so that he might become the charioteer. Brahma said, “O residents of heaven! There is nothing false in everything that you have said. I will control the horses when Kapardin<sup>342</sup> fights.” The illustrious god, the grandfather who was the creator of the worlds, was appointed by the gods as the charioteer of the great-souled Ishana. When he swiftly ascended the chariot, worshipped by the worlds, the horses, which possessed the speed of the wind, quickly lowered their heads and sank down on their knees on the ground. Maheshvara also ascended. The great grandfather of the three worlds successfully grasped the reins and urged those horses, which possessed the speed of thought and the wind. When the granter of boons<sup>343</sup> ascended and left in the direction of the asuras, the lord of the universe<sup>344</sup> smiled and said, “Excellent! Wonderful! O god! Go to the spot of the daityas. Urge the horses diligently. Behold the strength of my my arms today. I will slay the enemies in the battle.” At this, he<sup>345</sup> urged the horses, which were as fleet as the wind. O king! He went towards the city that was protected by the daityas and the danavas.

““Sharva<sup>346</sup> strung the bow and affixed the arrow. He affixed the *pashupata* weapon and thought of Tripura. O king! Having stationed himself there, he angrily stretched his bow. At that point, the cities united and became one. The three cities united and became one and a tumultuous sound of delight arose among the great-souled gods. All the masses of gods, siddhas and supreme rishis became full of joy and uttered words of praise, signifying victory. Tripura manifested itself before the one who wanted to slay the asuras, the god whose form was indescribable and fierce and whose energy was intolerable. The illustrious one, the lord of the worlds, drew his celestial bow. The one who is the essence of the three worlds released the arrow towards Tripura. He consumed the large numbers of asuras and flung them into the western ocean. Thus, Tripura was burnt and the remaining danavas scorched by the angry Maheshvara for the welfare of the three worlds. The one with three eyes then pacified the flames that resulted from his wrath and said, “Do not reduce the world to ashes.” At this, nature, the gods, the worlds and the rishis returned to their natural states and satisfied the infinitely energetic Sthanu with eloquent words of grave import. On receiving the permission of the illustrious one, all of them returned to where they had come from. Having accomplished their objective, the gods, with Prajapati at the forefront, were satisfied. Thus did the illustrious Brahma, the grandfather who is the controller of the worlds, control the horses, and you should do the same for the great-souled



Radheya. O tiger among kings! There is no need to debate whether you are especially superior to Krishna, Karna and Phalgun. O unblemished one! He<sup>347</sup> is like Rudra in a battle and you are like Brahma. Like the asuras, if the two of you are united, you can vanquish my enemies. O Shalya! Act so that Karna can swiftly oppress and slay Kounteya, the one with the white horses, with Krishna as his charioteer. Karna, the kingdom and our foundation is based on you.

‘ “There is another account I will tell you about. Listen to it. A brahmana who knew about dharma recounted it in my father’s presence. Hear these wonderful words, full of reasons, deeds and objectives. O Shalya! Do what must be done and do not reflect. The immensely energetic Jamadagni was born in the lineage of the Bhargavas. He had a famous son named Rama,<sup>348</sup> with energy and all the qualities. So that he might be able to please Bhava and obtain weapons, he performed terrible austerities. He was cheerful in his soul, controlled and restrained his senses. At this, Mahadeva was satisfied and pleased by his devotion. Shankara knew what was in his mind and showed himself. The god said, “O Rama! I am satisfied with you. O fortunate one! I know what you wish for. If you purify your soul, you will get everything that you want. When you become pure, I will give you all the weapons. O Bhargava! Those weapons burn down a person who is incapable and undeserving.” Having been thus addressed by the god of the gods who wields a trident, Jamadagni’s great-souled son bowed his head in obeisance and told the lord, “O lord of the gods! If you think that I am a person who is capable of bearing those weapons, you should give me those weapons, since I have always served you.” He performed austerities and resorted to control and discipline. He worshipped, offered gifts and sacrifices and honoured him with oblations and mantras. He worshipped Sharva for a large number of years. Mahadeva was satisfied with the great-souled Bhargava. In the presence of the gods, he spoke about his<sup>349</sup> many qualities. “Rama is firm in his vows and is always devoted to me.” The lord, the destroyer of enemies, was pleased and spoke about his qualities in many different ways, in the presence of the gods and the ancestors. At this time, the daityas became extremely powerful. Because of their insolence and delusion, they afflicted the residents of heaven. At this, all the gods united and made up their minds to kill them. They made every effort to kill the enemy, but were incapable of vanquishing them. The gods then went and spoke to Maheshvara. They pleased him with their devotion and asked him to kill the large numbers of the enemy. Having obtained a promise from the god that the enemies would be destroyed, the gods summoned Bhargava Rama. Shankara told him, “O Bhargava! For the sake of the welfare of the worlds and to please me, kill the enemies of the assembled gods.” Rama replied, “O lord of the gods! O Maheshvara! Without the weapons, what strength do I possess, that I should kill the danavas? All of them are accomplished in the use of weapons and are indomitable in battle.” The god said, “On my instructions, go. You will kill the danavas. Having vanquished the enemy, you will obtain many qualities.” Having heard these words, he agreed wholeheartedly. Rama offered benedictions and left in the direction of the danavas. He killed the enemies of the gods, who were proud, insolent and powerful. Bhargava struck them with the touch of the vajra. The danavas inflicted wounds on the body of Jamadagni’s son, supreme among the brahmanas. However, at Sthanu’s touch, all those wounds disappeared. The illustrious god was pleased at his deed and granted boons to the great-souled Bhargava, who was knowledgeable about the brahman. The god of the gods, the wielder of the trident, was pleased and said, “From the descent of the weapons, there are wounds on your body. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! These prove the superhuman deed you have achieved. As you desired, accept these divine weapons from me.” He obtained the weapons and all the boons that he wished for. Having obtained these diverse objects, Rama lowered his head before Shiva. The immensely ascetic one took the permission of the lord of the gods and departed. This is the ancient account that was told by the rishi.

‘ “Bhargava imparted all his knowledge of dhanurveda to the great-souled Karna, tiger among men, having been extremely pleased with him. O king! Had Karna not been a deserving person, the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage would not have given him those celestial weapons. I therefore think that Karna cannot have been born in the lineage of a suta. I think that he is the son of a god, born in the lineage of kshatriyas. The maharatha is long in his arms and possessed earrings and armour. How can a doe give birth to such a tiger? Behold his thick arms, which are like the trunk of a king of elephants. Behold his thick chest, capable of withstanding all enemies.” ’

## Chapter 1175(25)

‘ “Duryodhana said, ‘Thus did the illustrious god, the grandfather of all the worlds, become the charioteer, when Rudra was the ratha. It is a duty for the charioteer of a chariot to be braver than the ratha. O tiger among men! Therefore, you should control the horses in the battle.’”

‘Sanjaya said, “At this, Shalya, the lord of Madra, was delighted and embraced your son. He spoke these words to Duryodhana, the slayer of enemies. ‘O king! O son of Gandhari! O handsome one! If this is what you think, I will do everything that brings pleasure to you. O best of the Bharatas! I will perform whatever task I am thought to be fit for. With my entire heart, I will bear the burden of any task. For the sake of what is beneficial, I may speak words to Karna, pleasant and unpleasant. You and Karna should pardon all of them.’ Karna replied, ‘O king of Madra! Like Brahma for Ishana and like Keshava for Partha, may you always serve us for our benefit.’ Shalya said, ‘There are four kinds of conduct not followed by those who are *aryas*—self-censure, self-glorification, speaking ill of others and adulation of others. O learned one! I will speak words for your own good. They may be full of self-praise. But listen to them attentively. O lord! In knowledge, skills of medication, controlling and avoiding distractions,<sup>350</sup> I am like Matali, fit to be Shakra’s charioteer. O unblemished one! O son of a suta! When you are engaged in warring with Partha in the battle, I will guide your horses. Do not be anxious on that account.’” ’



## Chapter 1176(26)

‘ “Duryodhana said, ‘O Karna! This king of Madra will act as your charioteer. He is superior to Krishna and is like Matali, the charioteer of the king of the gods. Just as Matali controls the horses yoked to Hari’s<sup>351</sup> chariot, Shalya will control the ones that are yoked to yours. With you as the warrior on that chariot and with the king of Madra as the charioteer, it is certain that this foremost of chariots will vanquish Partha in the battle.’”

‘Sanjaya said, “Duryodhana then spoke again to the spirited king of Madra. ‘O king! Control these supreme horses in the battle. Protected by you, Radheya will defeat Dhananjaya.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage!

Having been thus addressed, he<sup>352</sup> agreed and ascended the chariot. When Shalya approached, Karna was delighted in his mind and spoke to the charioteer. ‘O charioteer! Swiftly prepare my chariot and equip it.’ That supreme and victorious chariot was like a city of the gandharvas. Having prepared it, the lord<sup>353</sup> brought it and said, ‘May you be victorious.’ Karna, foremost among rathas, worshipped the chariot in accordance with the prescribed rites. It had earlier been sanctified by a priest who was knowledgeable about the brahman. He circumambulated it carefully and prayed to the sun. The king of Madra was nearby and he asked him to climb onto it first. That great and supreme chariot of Karna’s was unassailable. The immensely energetic Shalya ascended, like a lion atop a mountain. O king! On seeing that Shalya was stationed, Karna ascended his supreme chariot, like the sun atop clouds tinged with lightning. Ascended on the same chariot, they were like Aditya and Agni together.<sup>354</sup> They were as resplendent as clouds in the firmament, tinged with Surya and Agni together. Those two brave ones, supreme among resplendent ones, were praised. They were like Indra and Agni, praised by priests and assisting priests at a sacrifice. Shalya controlled the horses. Karna stood on the chariot and extended his terrible bow, like the sun in its halo. On the best of chariots, Karna, tiger among men, with his arrows like rays, looked like the sun on Mandara.

‘ “The infinitely energetic and immensely brave Radheya was on the chariot and ready to leave. Duryodhana spoke these words. ‘O brave one! O Adhiratha’s son! Drona and Bhishma were incapable of accomplishing this extremely difficult task in the battle, while all the archers looked on. Accomplish it. I have always been convinced in my mind that maharatha Bhishma and Drona would kill Arjuna and Bhimasena. O brave one! They were unable to accomplish that valiant deed in this great battle. O Radheya! Like the one with the vajra in his hand, accomplish that task. O Radheya! Seize Dharmaraja, or kill Dhananjaya, Bhimasena and the twins who are the sons of Madri. O fortunate one! May you be victorious. O bull among men! Depart. Reduce all the soldiers of the sons of Pandu to ashes.’ Thousands of trumpets and tens of thousands of drums were sounded. The sound of those musical instruments was like the sound of clouds in the sky.

‘ “Accepting those words and stationed on the chariot, the supreme of rathas, Radheya, addressed Shalya, who was skilled in fighting. ‘O mighty-armed one! Urge the horses, so that I can kill Dhananjaya, Bhimasena, the twins and King Yudhishtira.<sup>355</sup> O Shalya! Let Dhananjaya behold the strength of my arms today, when I shoot hundreds and thousands of arrows shafted with the feathers of herons. O Shalya! I will unleash supremely energetic arrows today, for the destruction of the Pandavas and for Duryodhana’s victory.’ Shalya replied, ‘O son of a suta! Why do you disrespect the Pandavas? All of them are great archers and know about all the weapons. All of them are maharathas. They do not retreat, are immensely fortunate. They cannot be vanquished and truth is their valour. They are capable of generating fear in Shatakatsu himself. O Radheya! When you hear the twang of Gandiva in battle, like the tumultuous sound of thunder, you will no longer speak in this way.’ O lord of men! Disregarding the words spoken by the king of Madra, Karna glanced towards Shalya and asked him to proceed.

‘ “O scorcher of enemies! On seeing that the great archer, Karna, was stationed and ready to fight, all the Kouravas were filled with delight and let out a roar. There was the sound of drums and kettledrums. There was the

sound of arrows and the roars uttered by those spirited ones. Those on your side emerged to do battle, resolved to die, rather than retreat. As Karna advanced, the warriors were delighted. O king! The earth trembled and let out a mighty roar. The seven great planets and the sun seemed to be moving. Showers of meteors could be seen and the directions seemed to be blazing. Thunder descended and fierce winds began to blow. Large numbers of animals and birds kept your army to the right, signifying great fear.<sup>356</sup> When Karna advanced, his horses fell down on the ground. Bones showered down from the sky, portending fear. The weapons seemed to be blazing and the standards trembled. O lord of the earth! The mounts released tears. O venerable one! These, and many other ominous signs, were seen there. They signified the extremely terrible destruction of the Kouravas. However, because they were confounded by destiny, none of them paid any attention to these. On seeing the son of the suta advance, all the men on earth cried out for his victory. The Kouravas thought that the Pandavas had already been vanquished.

‘ “Vaikartana Vrisha, elephant among rathas and the slayer of enemy heroes, was stationed on his chariot. He thought of the deaths of the brave Bhishma and Drona and blazed like a fire. On seeing Partha’s unequalled deeds, he was consumed by pride and insolence. He blazed in anger and sighing deeply, spoke these words to Shalya. ‘When I am stationed on my chariot with my bow and enraged, I will not be frightened of the great Indra, with the vajra in his hand. On seeing that Bhishma and the best of others are lying down, do not be anxious. They<sup>357</sup> were like the great Indra and Vishnu. They were unmatched and unblemished. They were the ones who crushed the best of chariots, horses and elephants. It was as if they could not be slain, but they were killed by the enemy. Nevertheless, I am not alarmed in this battle. The preceptor was a bull among brahmanas and was knowledgeable about great weapons. On seeing the extremely powerful kings, with their men, horses, elephants and chariots, slain by arrows, why did he not kill all of them in the battle? O Kurus! Remembering Drona in the great battle, I am telling you this truthfully. Listen to me. Other than me, there is no one who is capable of withstanding Arjuna, when he advances in the battle, in the form of a fierce Death. Drona possessed learning, serenity, strength, fortitude, great weapons and good policy. When that great-souled one had to succumb to death, I think that all the others are distressed now. When I think about it, there is nothing in this world that is certain. Everything is always the outcome of action. When the preceptor has been brought down, who can proudly say with certainty that he will be alive till today’s sunrise?<sup>358</sup> There is no doubt that weapons, strength, valour, deeds, good policy and supreme weapons cannot ensure human happiness, since the preceptor has been slain by the enemy in battle. His energy was like that of the sun or the fire. He was equal to Vishnu and Purandara in valour. He was always like Brihaspati and Ushanas<sup>359</sup> in policy. He was extremely difficult to withstand, but weapons could not save him. Our women and children are weeping. The manliness of the sons of Dhritarashtra has been defeated. O Shalya! Know that I have to accomplish the task. Therefore, advance towards the soldiers of the enemy, where the Pandava king who is unwavering in his aim and Bhimasena and Arjuna are stationed. There are Vasudeva, the Srinjayas, Satyaki and the twins. Who, other than me, can withstand them? O lord of Madra! Therefore, advance swiftly in the battle, towards the Panchalas, Pandavas and Srinjayas. I think that I will kill those assembled ones in the battle, or follow Drona’s lead.<sup>360</sup> O Shalya! Do not think that I will not advance into the midst of those brave ones. I cannot tolerate this dissension among friends.<sup>361</sup> I will give up my life and follow Drona. Whether wise or foolish, when one’s life-span is over, one cannot escape with one’s life and advances into Yama’s mouth. O learned one! Therefore, I will advance against Partha. I cannot negate my destiny. O king! The son of Vichitravirya’s son<sup>362</sup> has always been kind towards me. To accomplish his objective and attain his end, I will give up my beloved pleasures and my life, which is so difficult to abandon. This expensive chariot is covered with the skins of tigers. Its axles don’t make a sound. The three frames are golden and the triveni is made out of silver. It is yoked to excellent horses. Rama<sup>363</sup> gave it to me. O Shalya! Behold the colourful bows, standard, clubs, arrows with fierce forms, flaming sword, supreme weapons and the white conch shell that has a fierce sound. It<sup>364</sup> has flags and clatters like the sound of the thunder. It is yoked to white horses and is adorned with superb quivers. Stationed on this chariot, I will use my force to slay Arjuna, bull among rathas, in the battle. Even if Death, the destroyer of everything, diligently protects the son of Pandu in the encounter, I will engage with him and kill him in the encounter, or follow the path to Yama,

along which, Bhishma has led. Even if Yama, Varuna, Kubera, Vasava, together with all their followers, unite to protect Pandava in this battle, I will defeat him. What is the need to speak more?’

‘ “On hearing the words of the one who was delighted at the prospect of battle and was bragging, the valiant king of Madra showed him disrespect and laughed at him. To restrain him, he gave him the following reply. ‘O Karna! Desist. Refrain from such bragging. You are delighted and are saying that which should not be said. Where is Dhananjaya, supreme among men? And where are you, an extremely stupid person? The abode of the Yadus was protected by Upendra.<sup>365</sup> It was like heaven, protected by the king of the immortals. Who other than Arjuna, supreme among men, could have violently abducted that beautiful lady, while he looked on?<sup>366</sup> He has a power and valour like that of the king of the gods. Where is the man, other than Arjuna, who at the time of the slaughter of the animal, could have challenged Bhava, the lord of all lords and the creator of the three worlds, to a battle?<sup>367</sup> To honour Agni, Jaya<sup>368</sup> vanquished asuras, gods, giant serpents, men, birds, pishachas, yakshas and rakshasas with his arrows and gave him the oblations he desired.<sup>369</sup> Do you remember how Dhritarashtra’s son was seized by the enemy and was freed by that supreme among men, using arrows that were as bright as the rays of the sun? In that wilderness, he killed large numbers of the enemy. You were the first to run away then. Do you remember how Dhritarashtra’s quarrelsome son was freed and the Pandava defeated large numbers of those who travel through the skies?<sup>370</sup> At the time of the seizure of the cattle, all of them, though they possessed large numbers of forces and mounts, were vanquished by that supreme of men. The preceptor, the preceptor’s son and Bhishma were also there. Why did you not defeat Arjuna then?<sup>371</sup> This supreme and excellent encounter has presented itself now, for the sake of your destruction. O son of a suta! If you do not run away, because of fear of the enemy, you will be slain today, when you advance to fight.’ The lord of Madra spoke many such harsh words cheerfully, praising your enemy. Vrisha, the leader of the Kuru forces, became supremely enraged and spoke these words to the lord of Madra. ‘Let it be that way. Even if it is that way, why are you praising him, when a battle is about to commence between him and me? If he defeats me in this great battle, will it be said that the words uttered by you have been spoken well?’ The lord of Madra agreed with this and did not say anything in reply. Wishing to fight, Karna asked the lord of Madra to depart. The ratha left in the direction of the enemy with the white horses, with Shalya as his charioteer. He killed enemies in the battle, like the sun destroying darkness. Karna was on a chariot yoked to white horses, covered with the skins of tigers. He left cheerfully. He saw the standards of the Pandavas and quickly asked about where Dhananjaya was.” ’

## Chapter 1177(27)

‘Sanjaya said, “Karna left, delighting your army. He told every Pandava soldier that he saw, ‘Today, I will grant the one who points out to me the great-souled one on the white horses, whatever boon he desires for. If he thinks that is not enough, I will again give a cart full of jewels to the one who tells me about Dhananjaya. If the man who shows Arjuna to me thinks that is not enough, I will again give him six carts full of gold, drawn by bulls that are like elephants. I will again give him one hundred ornamented women. They will be virgins,<sup>372</sup> with necklaces of gold, and skilled in singing and dancing. If the man who shows me Arjuna thinks that this is not enough, I will give him another boon of five hundred white horses. They will have golden harnesses and be decorated with bejewelled ornaments. I will give him another eight hundred well-trained horses. I will give the person who tells me about Dhananjaya a golden and sparkling chariot that is yoked to supreme horses from the Kamboja region. I will give him another boon of six hundred elephants that have golden harnesses and are adorned with golden necklaces. They have been born in the frontier regions and have been trained well by those who are skilled in elephants. If the man who shows me Arjuna thinks that this is not enough, I will give him another boon that he will desire himself. I possess sons, wives and riches. If he desires these, I will again give them to him. I will give the person who shows me Keshava and Arjuna all their riches, after having killed the two Krishnas.’ In the battle, having spoken these and many other words, Karna blew on his supreme conch shell. It had been generated from the ocean and produced a wonderful sound. O great king! Having heard these words of the son of the suta, which were appropriate to his character, Duryodhana and all his followers were delighted. At this, drums and kettledrums were sounded in every direction. Together with the musical instruments, there were roars like lions and the trumpeting of elephants. O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! These sounds arose among the soldiers. The sounds made by the delighted warriors mingled with these.

‘“The soldiers were delighted and Radheya, the afflicter of enemies, was about to plunge himself into the ocean of battle. The king of Madra laughed and addressed him in these words. ‘O son of a suta! When a man shows you Dhananjaya, do not, in your insolence, give him six golden bulls that are like elephants. Like a child, you are giving away riches as if you are Vaishravana.<sup>373</sup> O Radheya! Even if you do not make an effort, you will see Dhananjaya today. Like an extremely foolish person, you are unnecessarily giving them away. Because of your delusion, you do not realize the sins of giving to the undeserving. With the many riches that you propose to give away, you are capable of performing many sacrifices. O suta! Perform sacrifices. Because of your delusion and your intolerance, you desire to kill the two Krishnas. But we have not heard of two lions being brought down by a jackal. You desire what should not be desired. Clearly, you have no well-wishers, since they are not restraining you from swiftly falling into a fire. You do not know what should be done when. There is no doubt that you have been ripened by time.<sup>374</sup> A man who desires to be alive should not speak such words that should not be listened to. You are like someone wishing to cross an ocean with his arms, with a stone tied around his neck. Or you are like someone who wishes to fall down from the peak of a mountain. If you wish to ensure your own welfare, fight with Dhananjaya from the midst of this battle formation, with all the warriors, and well protected. I am saying this for the welfare of Dhritarashtra’s son and not from malice towards you. If you wish to remain alive, pay attention to the words spoken by me.’

‘“Karna replied, ‘I wish to encounter Arjuna in the battle on the basis of my own valour and not by relying on others. You are an enemy in the disguise of a friend and are trying to frighten me. No one is capable of restraining me from my resolution today, not even Indra himself, with an upraised vajra. What can a mortal seek to do?’”

‘Sanjaya said, “When Karna had finished speaking, Shalya, the lord of Madra, wished to provoke Karna further and again spoke these words to him. ‘Forceful arrows will be released from Phalgunā’s arms and unleashed from his bowstring. They will descend on you, sharp at the tip and shafted with the feathers of herons. It is then that you will regret advancing against Arjuna. Partha will grasp his celestial bow. Savyasachi will scorch the soldiers and oppress you with his sharp arrows. O son of a suta! You will regret it then. You are like a child supine on a mother’s lap, who wishes to touch the one who removes water.<sup>375</sup> Because of your delusion, you wish to vanquish the resplendent Arjuna today, who is stationed on his chariot. It is as if you are rubbing the extremely sharp edges of a trident against all your limbs. O Karna! Today, you are wishing to fight with Arjuna, whose deeds are extremely sharp. This is like the childish folly of a spirited but small deer, who wishes to challenge a large and maned lion. O son of a suta! Your challenge to Arjuna now is like that challenge. O son of a suta! Do not challenge that prince, who is extremely valorous and is like a lion. You should be like a fox in the forest, satisfied with some meat. Do not challenge Partha today and be destroyed. O Karna! Your challenging Partha in a battle will be like a rabbit challenging a mighty elephant with tusks like ploughs and with a shattered temple. You will be like a child, striking a cobra, with great poison and full sacs, in a hole with a stick. Your desire to fight with Partha is like that. O Karna! Pandava is a lion among men. Like a stupid jackal, you are shouting at a maned and angry lion. For the sake of its own downfall, a small bird challenges the spirited Suparna, Vinata’s son, supreme among birds.<sup>376</sup> O Karna! You are like that against Partha Dhananjaya. You wish to cross the terrible ocean, the abode of all the waters, on a raft, at a time when the moon is rising and its waves are turbulent and full of thousands of fish. He is a bull with sharp horns. His neck is as thick as a drum. He is a striker. O Karna! Like a small calf, you are challenging that Partha Dhananjaya to a fight. A large cloud makes a mighty noise and pours down desired rain on the world. Arjuna is like a cloud among men and you are croaking back at him, like a frog. From its own house, a dog barks at a tiger that is roaming in the forest. O Karna! Like that, you are barking at Dhananjaya, tiger among men. O Karna! Dwelling in a forest and surrounded by rabbits, a jackal thinks itself to be a lion, until it actually sees a lion. O Radheya! Like that, you think yourself to be a lion. But you do not see Dhananjaya, tiger among men, the crusher of enemies. You think yourself to be a tiger until you see the two Krishnas on a single chariot, like the sun and the moon. O Karna! Until you hear the roar of Gandiva in the great battle, till then, you are capable of speaking as you wish. You will hear that tiger<sup>377</sup> roar and make the ten directions resound with the clatter of his chariot and the twang of his bow. You will then become a jackal. You have always been a jackal and Dhananjaya has always been a lion. O foolish one! Because of your hatred towards those who are valiant, you have always seemed to be a jackal. Because of your own deeds and your strengths and weaknesses, you and Partha are known to be like a rat to a cat, a dog to a tiger, a fox to a lion and a rabbit to an elephant.’

‘Thus rebuked by the infinitely energetic Shalya, whose words were like darts to him,<sup>378</sup> Radheya became extremely angry and spoke to Shalya. ‘O Shalya! Qualities, and the absence of qualities, are known to those with qualities, not to those without qualities. You have always been devoid of qualities. How will you know the difference between qualities and the lack of qualities? O Shalya! I know about Arjuna’s great weapons, anger, valour, bow and arrows. You do not know their true nature. In that way, I know my valour and Pandava’s valour. O Shalya! Knowing that, I have challenged him to a battle. I am not like an insect that heads towards a fire. O Shalya! I possess this arrow. It is well tufted and will drink blood. It has been washed excellently in oil and has been decorated well. It is lying alone in this quiver. It is lying down in sandalwood powder and has been worshipped by me for many years. This is extremely poisonous and is a serpent.<sup>379</sup> It is capable of slaying large numbers of men, horses and elephants. It is powerful and extremely terrible and is capable of shattering body armour and bones. In my wrath, I can use this to shatter the giant Mount Meru. Listen to me. I am saying this truthfully. I will never release this at anyone other than Phalgunā and Krishna, the son of Devaki. O Shalya! I will use this arrow against Vasudeva and Dhananjaya. I will be extremely angry and fight with them. That will be an act that is worthy of me. Among all those of Vasudeva’s lineage, Lakshmi<sup>380</sup> is vested in Krishna. Among all the sons of Pandu, victory is vested in Partha. When those two advance, how can one retreat? Those two tigers among men are united and stationed on a chariot, and will advance against me, who is single-handed. O Shalya! Behold my good lineage then. They are unvanquished cousins, one the son of a maternal uncle and the other one the son of a fa-

ther's sister.<sup>381</sup> You will see them killed by me, like two gems on a single thread. Arjuna's Gandiva, Krishna's chakra and Tarkshya and the ape on the standards<sup>382</sup> only generate fear among cowards. O Shalya! They generate delight in me. You are evil in nature. You are stupid. You do not know about great battles. You are overcome with terror and have spoken a lot of words because of your fright. I do not know why you are praising them, perhaps because you have been born in a wicked country. Having killed them in the battle, I will slay you, with your relatives. You have been born in a wicked country and are evil in intelligence. You are inferior and the worst among kshatriyas. If you are a well-wisher, why are you frightening me about the two Krishnas, like an enemy? Today, I will be stationed in battle and either I will kill them, or they will kill me. I am not scared of the two Krishnas. I know my own strength. I will single-handedly slay one thousand Vasudevas and one hundred Phalgunas. O one who is born in a wicked country! Do not speak. Women, children, aged ones and those who have completed their studies often say something about the evil-souled ones from Madraka<sup>383</sup> and it has become a universal saying. O Shalya! I will tell you that saying. Listen. In the assemblies of the kings, this is what the brahmanas also recounted earlier. O foolish one! Listen attentively to this and then forgive me, or render a reply. A Madraka is always one who hates those who are his friends. One who always hates, is a Madraka. There are no good feelings in a Madraka. He is inferior in words and is the worst among men. A Madraka is always inferior in his soul. He always lies and is never straight. We have heard it said that wickedness exists among Madrakas. Fathers, mothers, sons, mothers-in-law, fathers-in-law, maternal uncles, sons-in-law, daughters, brothers, grandsons, kin, friends, others who have arrived, male servants and female servants mingle together. Noble women, according to their own wishes, mingle with men, known and unknown. In their homes, even the better ones always eat coarse grain and other undesirable food. They drink liquor,<sup>384</sup> eat the flesh of cows and dance and laugh. The songs don't have proper rhymes. They indulge in satisfying desire. They speak to each other, incoherent in desire. How can there be dharma there? Among those who have been ruined, the Madrakas are known as the performers of wicked deeds. It is said that one should have neither enmity, nor friendship, with Madrakas. One should not mix with Madrakas, because Madrakas are always fickle. Contact with Madrakas is futile, like purity among those from Gandhara, just as oblations proffered at a sacrifice are destroyed if the king is himself both the sacrificer and the priest. A brahmana who performs ceremonies<sup>385</sup> for shudras confronts destruction. Like that, one who hates brahmanas always confronts destruction. One who mixes with Madrakas is also destroyed, as if from the poison of a scorpion. I have pacified everything with mantras from the Atharva Veda. Wise ones who have been stung by a scorpion and have been afflicted by different types of poison, resort to medicines in this way.<sup>386</sup> This is seen to be the truth. O learned one! Keep quiet and listen to more of my words. Women who are intoxicated by liquor cast off their clothes and dance around. They do not follow restraints and indulge in sexual intercourse, following the dictates of desire. O Madraka! You are the son of one such. How can you talk about dharma? There are inferior women who urinate like camels and buffaloes. They are devoid of shame, and shamelessly do this everywhere. You are the son of one such person. How can you talk about dharma? If asked for collyrium, a Madraka woman scratches her buttocks and unwilling to give it, speaks these terrible words. "No. I will not give any collyrium. I would rather give my beloved instead. On every occasion, I will give up my son. But I will not give the collyrium." Madraka women are ignoble. They are large. They are without modesty and are hairy. They eat a lot and are without any purity. That is what is generally heard. I, and others, are capable of recounting many such things about them, from the ends of their hair to the tips of their toes. How can the Madrakas and the Sindhu-Souviras know about dharma? They have been born in a wicked country. They are mlechhas. They do not know anything about dharma. The most important dharma for a kshatriya is that he should be slain and should lie down on the ground, honoured by the virtuous. That is what we have heard. It is my prime wish that, in this release and clash of weapons, I should be killed and should go to heaven. I am also the beloved friend of Dhritarashtra's intelligent son. My life and the riches that I possess are for him. O one who has been born in a wicked country! It is evident that you have been bought by the Pandavas. That explains your action towards us, always like that of an enemy. Like a person who is knowledgeable about dharma cannot be dissuaded by an atheist, I am headed towards this battle and cannot be dissuaded by hundreds of people like you. Like a deer that is sweating, you are welcome to lament or thirst. But I am established in the conduct of kshatriyas and you are incapable of frightening me. My preceptor, Rama,<sup>387</sup> had earlier

told me about the ends obtained by the lions among men who gave up their lives and did not retreat from battle. I remember that. I am ready to save those on our side and kill the enemy. Know that I am established in this conduct, like the supreme Pururava. O Madraka! I do not see anyone in the three worlds who is capable of dissuading me from that objective. That is my view. Knowing this, why have you spoken such a lot, trying to terrify me? O worst of the Madrakas! I will not slay you now and give your body to predatory creatures. O Shalya! That is because of my friendship with Dhritarashtra's son, to avoid censure and because I am patient. Those are the three reasons that you are still alive. O king of Madra! But if you speak such words yet again, I will bring down your head with this club, which is like a vajra. O one who has been born in a wicked country! Today, people will hear and see either that Karna has killed the two Krishnas, or that Karna has been slain by them.' O lord of the earth! Having spoken these words, Radheya again fearlessly addressed the king of Madra, asking him to proceed." '



## Chapter 1178(28)

‘Sanjaya said, “O venerable one! On hearing the words of Adhiratha’s son, who delighted himself in battle, Shalya again spoke to Karna, citing an example. ‘You seem to be like one who is intoxicated with liquor. But whether you are like that or not, and irrespective of your intoxication, as a well-wisher, I will try to cure you. O Karna! I will tell you about the story of the crow. Listen to me. O wicked one! O worst of the lineage! On hearing this, do what you wish. O Karna! O mighty-armed one! I do not recollect a single taint in me, as a result of which you wish to kill an unblemished one like me. Had you known what was good for you, you would certainly have listened to my words, especially because I am your charioteer and the king’s<sup>388</sup> well-wisher. The even and uneven terrain, the strengths and weaknesses of the chariot, the fatigue and perspiration of the horses and the charioteer, the knowledge of the weapons, the cries of animals and birds, what is burdensome and what is extremely burdensome,<sup>389</sup> antidotes to wounds from weapons, the use of different weapons in battle and knowledge of portents—all of these are known to me. And I am familiar with this chariot. O Karna! Therefore, let me recount the example to you once more. On the other side of the ocean, there lived a vaishya and he possessed a lot of riches and foodgrains. He performed sacrifices, was generous and quiet and established in the deeds he ought to perform.<sup>390</sup> He was pure. He had many sons whom he loved and he was compassionate towards all beings. Without any fear, he dwelt in the kingdom of a king who observed dharma. His illustrious sons were young. There was a crow that lived there and it subsisted on many kinds of leftover food. The young sons of the vaishya always gave it meat, curds, milk, *payasam*,<sup>391</sup> honey and butter. The crow subsisted on the leftovers that were given by the young sons of the vaishya. It became insolent and showed no respect to birds that were its equal or superior. Once, it so happened that swans descended on the other side of the ocean. They were cheerful in their hearts and could go anywhere at will. Their speed was like that of Garuda. On seeing the swans, the young boys spoke to the crow. “O bird! You are superior to all the winged birds.” The one who was born from an egg was thus addressed by those who were of limited intelligence. Because of his stupidity and insolence, he regarded those words to be true. He asked those who could travel long distances<sup>392</sup> who among them was the swiftest in speed. The swans could travel long distances. But because of insolence and evil intelligence, the crow that fed on leftovers challenged that bird to a test of flight. On hearing these words of the crow, the swans that had assembled there, powerful and supreme birds, began to laugh. Those birds, which could go anywhere at will, spoke these words to the crow. “We are swans that roam the earth. We live in Lake Manasa. Among birds, we are always revered as those that can travel long distances. A swan is powerful. Its limbs are like a vajra. It can travel a great distance. O evil-minded one! You are a crow. How can you issue such a challenge? O crow! How will you fly with us?” They laughed and told him that. Because of the limited intelligence of its species, the stupid crow repeatedly questioned the words of the swans. Eventually, it replied, “There is no doubt that I will fly in one hundred and one different kinds of ways. I will fly each span of a hundred yojanas in a beautiful and varied way. I will rise up and swoop down. I will circle and fly straight. I will fly slowly and I will fly fast. I will fly diagonally. I will traverse slowly. I will whirl around. I will move gently and fast. I will then fly extremely fast and even faster than that. I will swoop down and rise up again. Forward, backwards and sideways, I will show many techniques of flight. I will show all these to you. Behold my strength.” Having been thus addressed by the crow, one of the swans laughed. The swan spoke these words to the crow. “Listen to me. O crow! There is no doubt that you will fly in one hundred and one different kinds of ways. I will however fly in the only way that all the birds know. O crow! That is the way I will fly, because I do not know any other. O red-eyed one! You fly in whichever way you think appropriate.” At this, the crows who had assembled there began to laugh. “How will the swan fly in only one kind of way and defeat flight in one hundred differ-



ent ways?" They began to fly, one in one technique, and the other used one hundred and one flying techniques. Powerful and swift in strength, the swan and the crow flew. The swan and the crow flew, rivalling each other. The one that could fly anywhere<sup>393</sup> flew. The crow also flew. Each flew so as to cause wonder in the rival and praised his own deeds. The crow flew in a myriad and colourful ways. On seeing this, the assembled crows were delighted and started to caw loudly. The swans laughed at them and uttered many unpleasant words. From one instant to another, they<sup>394</sup> repeatedly rose up and swooped down. Descending and ascending, they were on the tops of trees and on the ground. They uttered many kinds of noises, signifying their victory. O venerable one! With that single and gentle motion, the valiant swan continued to fly and for an instant, it seemed as if it had been defeated by the crow. Slighting the swans, the crows spoke these words. "The swan that rose up into the sky is clearly being defeated." On hearing these words, the swan flew in a westward direction. It increased its speed and flew over the ocean, Varuna's abode. At this, fear penetrated the crow and it lost its senses. It did not see any islands or trees, where it could descend and rest, when it was tired. "When I am tired, where will I descend in this ocean of water? This ocean is the abode of a large number of beings and is intolerable. There are many large beings that reside here and it is superior to the sky."<sup>395</sup> O worst of your lineage! The ocean is superior to everything in depth. O Karna! It is as limitless as the sky. The ocean is impossible to conquer. O Karna! Given its extremely long distance, what could a crow do? In a short while, the swan travelled a long distance. It could not leave the crow behind and glanced back at it. Having overtaken the crow, the one that could travel anywhere at will glanced back at it.<sup>396</sup> Seeing that it was exhausted, the swan wished to rescue the one who was sinking and remembered the vows observed by righteous people. It said, "You repeatedly spoke about many different kinds of flight. You should not speak about these techniques of flight. They are a mystery to us. O crow! What is the name of this pattern of flight that you are now being forced to fly? Your wings and your beak are repeatedly touching the water. You are touching the waters of the ocean with your wings and your beak. O crow! You are extremely exhausted and you will suddenly fall down."

' "The swan said, "O crow! You spoke about one hundred and one different techniques of flight. Earlier, you spoke about many techniques. All of those have come to nought now."

' "The crow replied, "O swan! Having fed on leftovers, I became insolent. I thought myself to be the equal of Suparna."<sup>397</sup> I showed disrespect to many other crows and all birds. I seek my life back from you. Take me to the shores of an island. O swan! Let me obtain assurance and let me return to my country again. I will never show disrespect to anyone again. Save me."

' "It was distressed and spoke in this way.<sup>398</sup> Devoid of its senses, it lamented. Submerged in the great ocean, it cawed. The crow was drenched in water and faced a great hardship. The swan picked it up with its feet and gently raised it onto its<sup>399</sup> back. O Karna! The swan made the crow, bereft of its senses, climb astride its back. They again quickly flew to the island where the match had started. Having placed the bird down there, it comforted it.<sup>400</sup> The swan, as swift as thought, then flew away to the country it wished to. This is what happened to the crow that fed on leftovers from a vaishya household. There is no doubt that you have subsisted on leftovers from the sons of Dhritarashtra. O Karna! That is the reason you show disrespect to all those who are your equal and superior. You were protected by Drona, Drona's son, Kripa, Bhishma and the other Kouravas in Virata's city. Partha was single-handed. Why didn't you kill him then?<sup>401</sup> All of you were distressed and vanquished by Kiriti, like jackals defeated by a lion. Where was your valour then? When you saw that your brother was defeated and killed by Savyasachi, while all the brave ones among the Kurus looked on, you were the first to run away.<sup>402</sup> O Karna! Like that, when you were attacked by the gandharvas in Dvaitavana,<sup>403</sup> you abandoned all the Kurus and were the first to run away. Partha killed and defeated the gandharvas, with Chitrasena at the forefront, in battle. O Karna! He freed Duryodhana and his wife. Then again, in earlier times, in the assembly of the kings, Rama<sup>404</sup> himself spoke about the power of Partha and Keshava. In the presence of the kings, Bhishma and Drona have always said that the two Krishnas cannot be killed. You have heard that. I have only told you a little bit about how Dhananjaya is superior to you in various ways, like a brahmana is superior to all other beings. You will soon see that expensive chariot and Vasudeva's son and Pandava Dhananjaya stationed on it. Those two bulls among men are famous among

gods, asuras and humans. They are renowned among men because of their radiance and you are like a firefly. O son of a suta! Know this to be your state. Those two lions among men, Achyuta and Arjuna, will destroy you. Do not indulge in self-praise.” ’

## Chapter 1179(29)

‘Sanjaya said, “Adhiratha’s son heard these unpleasant words spoken by the lord of Madra. But he was not pacified and spoke to Shalya. ‘Everything about Arjuna and Vasudeva is known to me. Shouri’s skill in driving Arjuna’s chariot, Pandava’s strength and great weapons are just as you have said and are known to me. O Shalya! But you have not directly seen this.’<sup>405</sup> They are invincible and foremost among the wielders of weapons. However, without being overcome with fear, I will fight with the two Krishnas. I am suffering from greater torment because of Rama. That supreme brahmana has cursed me. In earlier times, wishing to obtain a divine weapon from Rama, I lived with him, in the disguise of a brahmana. O Shalya! For the sake of Phalguna’s welfare, the king of the gods caused an obstruction there.’<sup>406</sup> He penetrated my thigh and entered my body in the distorted form of an insect. Because of fear of my preceptor, I did not move.’<sup>407</sup> On waking up, the brahmana saw this. The maharshi asked me who I was and on learning that I was a suta, he cursed me.’<sup>408</sup> “O suta! You have obtained this weapon through a deception. Therefore, when it is time to perform a task, it will not manifest itself before you.’<sup>409</sup> When it is the time for your death, it will go elsewhere.” The brahman can certainly not be present in a person who is not a brahmana. “O father!’<sup>410</sup> In this fierce and tumultuous battle today, I have forgotten that powerful weapon. The powerful and unfathomable lord of the waters dashes forward, to submerge many beings. The ocean is like a mighty mountain. But the shoreline repulses that immeasurable object. In this world, Kunti’s son is the foremost among those who stretch bowstrings. He will release a mass of arrows that can’t be resisted. They will be shafted and will penetrate the inner organs, slaying heroes. However, I will counter him in the battle. He is supremely strong amongst those who are strong. He possesses great weapons. He will shoot from an extremely long distance and will be like the fierce ocean. The kings will be submerged in his waves of arrows. But, like the shoreline, I will withstand Partha’s arrows. I think that he has no equal among men who wield the bow. But I will fight with him in the battle today, though he is capable of vanquishing the gods and the asuras in a battle. Behold my extremely terrible battle with him today. Pandava is extremely proud and desires to fight. He will advance against me with his superhuman and great weapons. In the battle, I will counter his weapons with my own weapons. I will bring down Partha with my supreme arrows. I will scorch like the rays of the sun. I will blaze like the illustrious one’s rays. Like clouds gather around the dispeller of the darkness, I will envelop Dhananjaya with my arrows. A flaming fire has trails of smoke. Its energy scorches all the worlds. But like clouds pacify that fire, I will quench Partha with my arrows in the battle. The fierce wind god is powerful and destroys with a storm. The angry and intolerant Dhananjaya is like that. But, in the battle, I will withstand him like the immobile Himalayas. He is skilled and knows about the circular motions of a chariot. He is always foremost among those who are borne in a battle. He is supreme among all archers in the world. However, I will withstand that Dhananjaya in the battle. I think that there is no archer who is equal to him among men. I know that he has withstood the entire earth. But today, I will encounter him in the battle. Savyasachi vanquished all the beings, together with the gods, in the region known as Khandava. Which other man, with me being an exception, can fight with him and seek to protect his own life? I will cheerfully speak about Pandava’s manliness in an assembly of kshatriyas. O stupid one! O one who has lost his senses! Why are you telling me about Arjuna’s manliness? Those who are forgiving always forgive an inferior and cruel person who speaks harsh and unpleasant words. I can kill one hundred who are like you. However, because I am forgiving and bearing the appropriate time in mind, I am forgiving you. For Pandava’s sake, you have spoken unpleasant words. You have censured me, like a stupid person who performs evil deeds. I did not deserve it. Yet, you have used your tongue to lash me. You are one who hates friends. One with whom one walks seven paces is a friend.’<sup>411</sup> The present time is full of death and is extremely terrible. Duryodhana has chosen this to ad-

vance in battle. I desire that his objectives are accomplished. But you act as if to counter them, as if you are one who doesn't love him. A friend delights a friend, and always does that which brings him pleasure. He frees him, honours him and shares in his delight. This is what the brahmanas have said earlier. Towards Duryodhana, I tell you that all these traits exist in me. An enemy always chastises and sharpens his weapons. He causes injury, makes us sigh and distresses us. These many harmful qualities are seen in an enemy and almost all of these exist in you. You are showing them towards me. For the sake of accomplishing Duryodhana's objective and for bringing him pleasure, for the sake of bringing glory to myself and for the sake of accomplishing what the gods want,<sup>412</sup> I will endeavour to fight with Pandava and Vasudeva. Behold my deeds today. Behold my supreme weapons today, brahmastra and other divine and human weapons. I will cushion the one whose valour is fierce, like a supreme elephant killing another crazy elephant. For the sake of victory, I will use my mental powers to hurl the brahmastra at Partha. It is unrivalled and is victorious. In the battle, he will not be able to escape from it, unless my wheels get stuck in uneven terrain. O Shalya! Know that I will not be frightened, even if Vaivasvata<sup>413</sup> with his staff, Varuna with his noose, the lord of riches<sup>414</sup> with his club, Vasava with his vajra, or any other assassin advances against me. Therefore, I have no fear of Partha or Janardana. Today, there will be a clash between me and those two enemies. However, a brahmana told me, "Your miserable wheel will be stuck in the ground and you will confront great fear in your heart, when you are fighting in a battle." Since then, I have greatly suffered from fright at the brahmana's words. O Shalya! The brahmana was a store of austerities and I had unconsciously used my arrows to kill the calf that had been born from his *homa* cow,<sup>415</sup> while it was roaming around amongst people. I gave that foremost among brahmanas seven hundred tusked elephants and hundreds of servants and servant-maids. But he was not satisfied with me. To obtain the favours of that supreme among brahmanas, I brought fourteen thousand black cows, each with a white calf. I offered him a beautiful house, with every object of desire, and all the riches I possessed. I honoured him with all this, but he did not wish to receive them. I had committed a crime and begged him, so that I might remedy it. However, he told me, "O suta! What I have uttered will certainly happen. It cannot be falsified. If I utter a falsehood, beings will be killed and I will commit a sin. Therefore, to protect dharma, I have no interest in speaking a falsehood. You must perform atonement for causing violence towards what provides a brahmana sustenance. There is no one in this world who can make my words false and you should accept them." Though you have censured me, because I am a well-wisher, I have told you this. I know that you are the one who is censuring me. But be quiet and listen to what I will tell you next.'"

## Chapter 1180(30)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! Radheya again addressed the king of Madra, the scorcher of enemies. He restrained him and spoke these words. ‘O Shalya! You have spoken to me about instances. However, your words are incapable of terrifying me in this battle. Even if all the gods, together with Vasava, fight against me, even then, I will not be frightened, not to speak of Partha and Keshava. I am incapable of being frightened by words alone. Know that the person you are capable of terrifying in a battle is someone else. O evil-minded one! You have spoken a lot of harsh words to me. That is the strength of inferior people. You are incapable of comprehending my qualities. O venerable one! Karna was not born so as to be frightened. I have been born for valour and for fame. O lord of Madra! Listen attentively to what I had heard in Dhritarashtra’s presence. Honouring Dhritarashtra, brahmanas recounted the ancient and wonderful accounts of many kingdoms and many kings. An aged one, foremost among brahmanas, recounted ancient tales and spoke these words of ill repute about those from the lands of Bahlika and Madra. “They are cast out from the region of the Himalayas and are despised in the region of the Ganga. That is also true of those who live in the central regions, around the Sarasvati, the Yamuna and Kurukshetra, the five rivers<sup>416</sup> and with Sindhu as the sixth. It is one’s dharma to avoid the impure Bahlikas, who are outside these regions. From the days of my youth, I remember that the kings of their lineage had a fig tree named Govardhana and a quadrangular spot named Subhanda near the gate.<sup>417</sup> Because of some secret work, I had to live with the Bahlikas then. Because I dwelt among them, their conduct is known to me. There is a city named Shakala, a river named Apaga that flows downwards and a lineage of the Bahlikas named Jartika.<sup>418</sup> Their conduct is severely censured. They drink liquor made from grain and molasses. They eat the flesh of cows, laced with garlic. They eat bread mixed with meat and fried barley that has not been sowed.<sup>419</sup> They are devoid of good conduct. Intoxicated, the women throw away their garments and laugh, sing and dance in the cities, and outside the walls, without garlands and unguents. Intoxicated, they sing many songs, in voices that are like those of asses and camels. They freely summon others.<sup>420</sup> When their husbands and lords are killed, they call out their names in intoxication and say, ‘Alas! Alas!’ However, those wicked ones do not observe sacred occasions and continue to scream and dance. A chief among the Bahlikas lived among those women who made such uproar, and then dwelt for some time in Kurujangala. Cheerless in his mind, he said, ‘She is large and fair.<sup>421</sup> She is attired in a thin blanket. When it is time for lying down, she must be thinking about the Bahlika who now lives among the Kurus. When will I cross the river Shatadru and the beautiful Iravati and go to my own country, where I will see those handsome women with large bodies? Those fair women have circles of red arsenic on their limbs and black collyrium on their heads.<sup>422</sup> Those beautiful ones are attired only in skins and are sporting. When will I obtain happiness among those intoxicated ones, who have the sounds of asses, camels and mules? There will be the sounds of drums, kettledrums and conch shells. There is joy in the forest paths there, full of *shami*, *pilu* and *karira* trees. I will live amongst those who eat cakes ground with wheat and coarse meal. When will I be prosperous and strong along those paths, which echo to the many sounds of our oppression and banditry?’<sup>423</sup> The evil-souled Bahlikas are inferior and outcasts in this way. Which man would like to and dwell amidst them, even for an instant?” Thus did the brahmana describe the Bahlikas, whose conduct is vile. Whether it is their good qualities or bad, you possess one-sixth of those. Having said this, the virtuous brahmana began to speak again. This is what he said about the ill-mannered Bahlikas. Listen. “In the large city of Shakala, a rakshasa lady always used to sing every night, on the fourteenth day of the dark lunar fortnight,<sup>424</sup> to the sound of drums. When will those songs be announced and when will I sing in Shakala again?<sup>425</sup> When will I satiate myself with the flesh of cows and drink the great liquor

made from molasses? Having drunk the liquor made from molasses, I will be with the large and ornamented women. I will wash my mouth after eating copious quantities of the meat of sheep, laced with onions, and also the flesh of boars, fowl, cows, asses and camels. Those who do not eat the flesh of sheep, are born in vain.” Drunk with liquor, thus do the residents of Shakala, young and old, cry out. How can there be good conduct among them? O Shalya! Know this and be surprised. I will tell you more. This is what another brahmana told us in the assembly of the Kurus. “There is a forest of pilu trees in the spot where the five rivers flow—Shatadru, Vipasha, Iravati as the third, Chandrabhaga and Vitasta. As the sixth, Sindhu flows outside that region. There is a country named Aratta<sup>426</sup> there, where dharma has been destroyed. One should not go there. The gods, the ancestors and the brahmanas do not receive offerings from those who are outcasts, those born from servants and those from the land of Videha,<sup>427</sup> who do not sacrifice. It has been heard that those from Bahlika have destroyed all dharma.” The learned brahmana also said this in the assembly of the virtuous. “Bahlikas eat from vessels made out of wood and clay, in which, coarse meal has been ground and which have been licked by dogs. They have no revulsion at this. They drink the milk of sheep, camels and asses. They drink and eat preparations made from these. Inter-caste sons are born there and those contemptible ones drink every kind of milk and eat everything. The learned say that the Bahlikas known as Aratta must always be avoided.” O Shalya! You are certain to know this. But I will tell you more. In the gathering of the Kurus, in the assembly hall, another brahmana said the following. “Having drunk milk in the spot known as Yugandhara, how can one go to the place without decay? Having bathed in Bhutilaya, how can one go to heaven? That is the spot where five rivers issue from the mountains and flow. A noble person should not dwell among the Aratta-Bahlikas for even two days. In Vipasha, there are two pishachas named Bahi and Hlika. They were not created by Prajapati, and the Bahlikas are their offspring. One must avoid those without dharma—Karashkaras, Mahishakas, Kalingas, Kikatas, Atavis, Karkotakas and Virakas.” He had gone on a *tirtha* and had spent a single night under a shami tree.<sup>428</sup> He was addressed by a *rakshasi*, whose hips were as broad as a mortar. “Those from the land known as Aratta, the people known as Bahlika and those who reside in the Sindhu-Souvira region are generally reviled.”<sup>429</sup> O Shalya! You are certain to know this. But I will tell you more. Listen with an attentive mind to everything that is spoken by me. On an earlier occasion, a skilled brahmana came to our house as a guest. Witnessing our conduct, the skilled one was delighted and said, “I have lived for a long time on a single peak of the Himalayas. I have seen many different countries, where diverse kinds of dharma are followed. But I have never seen a country where all the subjects act against dharma. All of them professed dharma to be what those learned in the Vedas have proclaimed it to be. I have always travelled in many countries, where different kinds of dharma are followed. O great king! However, having gone to the Bahlikas, I learnt the following. There, one first becomes a brahmana and then becomes a kshatriya. Thereafter, one becomes a vaishya, a shudra, a Bahlika, and finally a barber. Having become a barber, one once again becomes a brahmana. Having become a brahmana there, one is once again born as a slave. In every family, there is only one virtuous brahmana. Everyone else follows one’s desires. The Gandharas, the Madrakas and the Bahlikas possess limited intelligence. That is what I heard there, about the admixture of dharma. Having travelled throughout the entire earth, I heard about this catastrophe among Bahlikas.” O Shalya! You are certain to know this. But I will tell you more. These were the censorious words that another one spoke to me about the Bahlikas. In earlier times, a virtuous lady was abducted by some bandits from Aratta. They displayed adharma towards her. Consequently, she cursed them. “I am young. I have relatives. But against dharma, you have had intercourse with me.”<sup>430</sup> Therefore, all the women in your lineages will be ignoble. O worst among men! You will not be able to escape from the consequences of your terrible act.” The Kurus, the Panchalas, the Shalvas, the Matsyas, the Naimishas, the Kosalas, the ones from Kashi, the Angas, the Kalingas, the Magadhas and the immensely fortunate Chedis know about eternal dharma. In many countries, even those who have outwardly deviated know about virtue. Among the Matsyas, those from the lands of Kuru and Panchala and especially those from Naimisha and Chedi, the virtuous ones lived according to ancient dharma. But this is not true of the Madras from the land of the five rivers. They are false in their tongues. O king! Knowing all this about dharma, be quiet. O Shalya! Be like those who cannot speak. You are the protector and the king of those people. Therefore, you have one-sixth share in their good and evil deeds. Or else, since you do not protect them, you only have a share in their evil deeds. A king who protects the good deeds of his subjects obtains

a share in those good deeds. In earlier times, the eternal dharma was revered in all countries. But on seeing the dharma practised in the land of the five rivers, the grandfather<sup>431</sup> cried, “Shame!” They are outcasts. They are born from servants. They are the performers of wicked deeds. That is the reason the grandfather condemned the dharma in the land of the five rivers. Though they followed their own dharma and that of their varna, he did not honour it.<sup>432</sup> O Shalya! You are certain to know this. But I will tell you more. A rakshasa named

Kalmashapada<sup>433</sup> was about to be submerged in a pond and said, “Begging is filth for a kshatriya. Falsehood is filth for a brahmana. Bahlikas are the filth of the earth. The women of Madra are the filth among women.” When the traveller of the night<sup>434</sup> was being submerged in the pond, a king saved him. Listen to what he<sup>435</sup> said when he was asked. “Mlecchas are filth among men. Boxers are filth among mlecchas. Eunuchs are filth among boxers. Kings who act as officiating priests are the filth among eunuchs. Among kings who act as officiating priests, the Madrakas are filth. If you do not save me, all of that filth will be yours.” The rakshasa spoke those supreme words as antidote, when a person’s valour has been destroyed by the poison of a rakshasa. The Panchalas follow the brahman. The Kouraveyas follow their own dharma. The Matsyas observe truth and the Shurasenas perform sacrifices. Those from the eastern regions are like slaves and those from the southern regions are contemptible. The Bahlikas are thieves and those from Surashtra are of mixed breed. Shame on those from Aratta and the land of the five rivers. They are ungrateful and steal the property of others. They are addicted to drinking liquor and have intercourse with the wives of their preceptors. Those from Panchala, Kuru, Naimisha and Matsya know about dharma. The aged ones from Kalinga, Anga and Magadha follow the virtuous path of dharma. With the fire god at the forefront, the gods reside in the eastern direction. The south is protected by the ancestors and Yama, the performer of auspicious deeds. The west is protected by Varuna, who takes care of other powerful gods there. The illustrious Soma is in the north, along with Brahma and the brahmanas. The rakshasas and pishachas are there in the Himalayas and the guhyakas in Gandhamadana. It is certain that Vishnu Janardana protects all the beings in the world.<sup>436</sup> The Magadhas understand signs, the Kosalas from what they see. The Kurus and Panchalas understand even if the speech is partly uttered, the Shalvas understand only when everything is spoken. Those who live in mountainous and hilly regions are coarse. O king! The Yavanas know everything, the Shuras especially so. The mlecchas follow their own signs. Other inferior people understand nothing. The Bahlikas, and not just the Madrakas, are against anything that has been undertaken. O Shalya! You are like that and you should not venture to give me a reply. Knowing this, keep quiet. You should not try to contradict me. Do not make me kill Keshava and Arjuna after I have killed you first.’

‘ “Shalya said, ‘O Karna! Abandoning of the distressed and the sale of wives and sons is prevalent among those from Anga. You are the lord of that region. Bhishma enumerated the list of rathas and atirathas.<sup>437</sup> At that time, he recounted your vices and you were angry. Do not be angry. Brahmanas can be found everywhere. Kshatriyas can also be found everywhere. O Karna! So can vaishyas and shudras, and women who are virtuous and good in their vows. Men always sport with other men and laugh at them, trying to hurt each other. In every country, there are those who are addicted to intercourse. Everyone is always skilled in detecting another one’s faults. No one knows his own faults, or knowing them, is confounded.’”

‘Sanjaya said, “Karna did not say anything in reply and Shalya faced the direction of the enemy. Radheya smiled again and urged him to drive.” ’



## Chapter 1181(31)

‘Sanjaya said, “Karna saw the unmatched vyuha of the enemy Parthas, protected by Dhrishtadyumna. It was capable of resisting the arrays of foes. He advanced, roaring like a lion and making his chariot clatter. The earth trembled from the sound of musical instruments. That scorcher of enemies, irresistible in battle, seemed to be trembling in rage. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The immensely energetic one constructed a counter vyuha. He began to kill the Pandava soldiers, like Maghavan against the asuras. Placing Yudhishtira on his right, he advanced towards him.”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! How did Radheya construct a counter vyuha against the Pandavas? The brave Dhrishtadyumna was at the forefront and they were protected by Bhimasena. O Sanjaya! Who were stationed at the flanks and the extreme flanks of my army? How were the others divided and where were they stationed? How did the sons of Pandu construct a counter vyuha against us? How did that extremely extensive and extremely terrible battle commence? When Karna advanced against Yudhishtira, where was Bibhatsu then? In Arjuna’s presence, who is capable of attacking Yudhishtira? In earlier times, he single-handedly vanquished all the beings in Khandava. Wishing to remain alive, who other than Radheya is capable of fighting with him?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “Listen to the construction of the vyuha and how Arjuna arrived there. The kings on both sides arrayed themselves and fought the battle there. O king! Sharadvata Kripa, the spirited Magadhas and Satvata Kri-tavarma were stationed on the right flank. On their extreme flank were Shakuni and maharatha Uluka. Those soldiers were protected by fearless horse riders from Gandhara, armed with sparkling lances, and invincible ones from the mountainous regions. They were like a storm of locusts and as fierce-looking as pishachas. There were thirty-four thousand samshaptaka rathas who did not retreat. They were fierce in battle and protected the left flank. Your sons assembled together, wishing to kill Krishna and Arjuna. The Kambojas, Shakas and Yavanas were on their extreme flank. On the instructions of the son of the suta, they were there, with their chariots, horses and infantry, and challenged Arjuna and the immensely strong Keshava. Karna armoured and stationed himself at the head of the vanguard. His armour and armlets were colourful. He was garlanded and protected the front of the army. He was protected by his extremely wrathful sons, supreme among all the wielders of weapons. As he drew his bow at the head of the army, the brave one<sup>438</sup> was resplendent. Ready to fight, the mighty-armed Duhshasana was surrounded by soldiers and stationed himself at the rear of the vyuha. He was as resplendent as the sun and the fire. He was handsome and his eyes were tawny. He was astride a mighty elephant. O great king! King Duryodhana was himself behind him. He was protected by his brothers, Chitrashva and Chitrasena.<sup>439</sup> He was also protected by the immensely valorous Madras and Kekayas. O great king! He was as resplendent as Shatakratu, with the gods. Ashvatthama, the foremost maharathas among the Kurus, elephants that were always crazy and brave mleccchas stationed themselves behind that army of chariots and followed it. They looked like clouds that poured. There were standards that signified victory and supreme and blazing weapons. Stationed on horses, the riders were as beautiful as mountains covered with trees. Thousands of foot soldiers guarded the feet of the elephants. Those brave ones were armed with lances and swords and did not retreat. There were ornamented riders, chariots and elephants. That vyuha was as resplendent as one of the gods or the asuras. The learned leader arrayed it well, according to the norms of Brihaspati. That mighty vyuha seemed to dance, causing fear in the hearts of the enemy. Wishing to fight, foot soldiers, horses, chariots and elephants issued forth from the flanks and extreme flanks, like clouds during the monsoon.

‘ “On seeing Karna stationed at the forefront of the army, King Yudhishtira spoke to Dhananjaya, the single brave one who was capable of killing all enemies. ‘O Arjuna! Behold the mighty vyuha that Karna has constructed for this battle. The arrays of soldiers are blazing along its flanks and extreme flanks. On seeing this large army of



the enemy, adopt such measures as are decreed by policy, so that we are not overcome.’ O king! Thus addressed by the king, Arjuna joined his hands in salutation and replied, ‘Everything will be done as you wish. It shall not be otherwise. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will act so that they can be killed. I will act so as to destroy and kill the foremost among them.’

‘ “Yudhishtira said, ‘With that objective, you advance against Radheya, Bhimsena against Suyodhana, Nakula against Vrishasena, Sahadeva against Soubala, Shatanika against Duhshasana, the bull among the Shini lineage against Hardikya,<sup>440</sup> Dhrishtadyumna against Drona’s son and I myself against Kripa. Let Droupadi’s sons<sup>441</sup> and Shikhandi advance against the remaining sons of Dhritarashtra. Let the others on our side kill the enemy.’”

‘Sanjaya said, “Thus addressed by Dharmaraja, Dhananjaya agreed. He instructed his own soldiers and himself advanced to the front of the army. As that chariot advanced, it was extremely wonderful to behold. Yet again, Shalya spoke to Adhiratha’s son, invincible in battle. ‘The chariot with the white horses is advancing, with Krishna as the charioteer. Kounteya is advancing, slaying the enemy. He is the one about whom you had asked. The great and tumultuous sound of the axles of the chariot can be heard. A dust is arising and has covered the sky. O Karna! The earth is trembling because of the axles of the chariot. A large and violent wind seems to be blowing on both sides of your army. Predatory beasts are howling and small animals are emitting a terrible sound. O Karna! Behold. This is extremely horrible and gives rise to fear. The body hair stands up. A headless torso that is like a cloud has enveloped the sun. Behold. Herds of many different kinds of animals are howling in all the directions. Powerful and proud tigers are glancing in the direction of the sun. Behold. Thousands of herons and vultures have assembled together. They are seated, fiercely facing each other, as if they are engaged in a conversation. O Karna! The white horses yoked to your giant chariot have turned pale. The arrows are blazing and the standard is trembling. Behold. The horses are extremely large and possess great speed. But they are quivering, though they are as handsome as flowing Garudas in the sky. From these portents, it is evident that the earth will be covered with kings. O Karna! They will be slain and will lie down, in hundreds and thousands. The tumultuous sound of conch shells can be heard and it makes the body hair stand up. O Radheya! There are sounds of drums and double-drums in every direction. There are the whizzing sounds of many kinds of arrows and the roars of men, horses and chariots. O Karna! Listen to the sound produced from the bowstrings and palms of those great-souled ones. O Karna! Behold Arjuna’s chariot. It has been constructed by an artisan and is decorated with golden flags that have many hues. As they are stirred by the wind, they are resplendent. The flags are decorated with golden moons, stars and suns and are adorned with bells. They are like flashes of lightning in a cloud. There are other golden pennants that are being stirred by the wind. Those flags are on the chariots of the great-souled Panchalas. They are slaying elephants, horses, rathas, infantry and warriors on your side. The tips of their standards can be seen. The twang of their bowstrings can be heard. Today, you will see the brave one with the white horses, with Krishna as his charioteer. He will slay the enemy in the battle. He is the one about whom you had asked. O Karna! Today, you will see Vasudeva and Arjuna stationed on a single chariot. Those two tigers among men are red-eyed and are the scorchers of foes. Varshneya is his charioteer and Gandiva is his bow. O Radheya! If you are successful in killing him, you will be our king. He has been challenged by the samshaptakas and has departed in their direction. In the battle, that powerful one is creating a great carnage among the enemy.’ When Karna was thus addressed by the lord of Madra, he became extremely angry and said, ‘Look. The angry samshaptakas have attacked him from every direction. Partha cannot be seen and is shrouded, like the sun by the clouds. O Shalya! Immersed in that ocean of grief, Arjuna will perish.’

‘ “Shalya replied, ‘Who can slay Varuna with water or the fire with kindling? Who can grasp the wind, or drink up the great ocean? I think that causing hardship to Partha in a battle is equally tough. No one is capable of vanquishing Arjuna, not even Indra, with the gods and the asuras. Be satisfied with your words and be cheerful in your mind. No matter what your wishes are, you cannot be victorious in this encounter. There may be someone who can raise the earth with his two arms, or consume all the beings with his anger. That person may bring down the gods from heaven. No one other than him can defeat Arjuna in a battle. Behold Kunti’s brave son. Bhima is unsullied in his deeds. The mighty-armed one is radiant and is stationed like Mount Meru. He is perpetually angry, remembering the enmity that has endured for a long time. The valiant Bhima is stationed in the battle, desiring victory. Dharmaraja Yudhishtira is foremost among those who uphold dharma. The conqueror of enemy cities, the

performer of good deeds, is stationed against the enemy in the battle. Nakula and Sahadeva, the brothers who are tigers among men, have been born from the Ashvins. They are stationed in the battle and are extremely difficult to defeat. Behold the five sons of Krishna,<sup>442</sup> who are like five mountains. They are stationed, wishing to fight and all of them are Arjuna's equal in a battle. These are the sons of Drupada, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront. Those brave ones are stationed and are supremely energetic. Satyajit is the youngest among them.'<sup>443</sup>

‘“While those two lions among men were conversing in this way, the armies clashed against each other, like the fierce waters of the Ganga and the Yamuna.”’<sup>444</sup>

## Chapter 1182(32)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! When the arrayed armies clashed against each other, how did Partha advance against the samshaptakas and Karna against the Pandavas? You are skilled in narrating. Please tell me everything about the battle. I am never satisfied with hearing about the valour of the brave ones in battle.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “Because of the evil policies of your son, Arjuna created a vyuha as a counter vyuha, having seen that the large army of the enemy had been stationed. That large army<sup>445</sup> was full of horse riders, elephants, foot soldiers and chariots. With Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, its formation was magnificent. Parshata’s horses had the complexion of pigeons and he was as resplendent as the moon and the sun. With his bow, he was like Death personified. Droupadi’s sons were stationed next to Parshata, wishing to fight. With terrible bodies, they followed him, like large numbers of stars after the moon.

‘ “In the battle, on seeing that the samshaptakas were arranged in a formation, Arjuna angrily attacked them, stretching the bow named Gandiva. Wishing to kill him, the samshaptakas also attacked Partha. They were firm in their resolution of obtaining victory and preferred death to retreat. Those brave ones advanced against Arjuna and they possessed large numbers of horses, crazy elephants and chariots. The clash between them and Kiriti was tumultuous. We have heard about his encounter with the nivatakavachas<sup>446</sup> and it was like that. Partha sliced down the heads of thousands of the enemy and brought down chariots, horses, standards, elephants, foot soldiers, the leaders of rathas, arrows, bows, swords, chakras and battleaxes, in addition to arms with upraised weapons and other weapons that had not yet been raised. He was submerged in that large whirlpool of soldiers, like an eddy that swirls in the nether regions. The samshaptakas were delighted that his chariot was thus submerged and roared. But Bibhatsu slaughtered the ones who were in front of him, those that were further away, those that were to the rear, those that were to the right and those that were to the left. He was like an angry Rudra amidst animals.

‘ “O venerable one! The battle that commenced between the Panchalas, the Chedis and the Srinjayas and those who were on your side was extremely terrible. Kripa, Kritavarma and Shakuni Soubala were with soldiers who were cheerful, but extremely enraged. They were strikers who could bring down arrays of chariots. Those bravest of the brave were irresistible in battle and fought with the Kosalas, the Kashis, the Matsyas, the Karushas, the Kekayas and the Shurasenas. That fierce battle destroyed bodies and sins. Those brave shudras, vaishyas and kshatriyas obtained dharma, heaven and fame. O bull among the Bharata lineage! With his brothers, Duryodhana protected the foremost among the Kurus and the maharathas from Madra. In that battle, the Pandavas, the Panchalas and Satyaki fought with Karna, who was protected by the brave ones among the Kurus. Karna used his sharp arrows to slaughter that large army and crushed the best of chariots. He then afflicted Yudhishtira. He<sup>447</sup> severed the arrows, weapons and bodies of thousands of the enemy, thus ensuring heaven and fame for them and greatly delighting those on his side.”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! How did Karna penetrate the army of the Parthas, create that destruction of men and afflict the king? Tell me everything about this. Who were the foremost among the Parthas who fought against Karna and resisted him? Whom did Adhiratha’s son have to crush before afflicting Yudhishtira?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “On seeing that the Parthas, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, were stationed, Karna, the destroyer of enemies, spiritedly attacked the Panchalas. O great king! Like swans heading towards the giant ocean, desiring victory, the Panchalas also quickly rushed against him. There was the blare of thousands of conch shells, piercing the heart. From either side, there was the fierce sound of drums. There were the sounds of many musical instruments and the noise emitted by elephants, horses and chariots. The brave ones roared like lions and it became terrible. It was as if the earth, with its mountains, trees and oceans, the sky, with clouds tossed around by the wind,

and the firmament, with its moon, planets and nakshatras, seemed to be whirled around because of that sound. All the beings thought that the sound was distressing. Those that possessed limited spirit died and fell down. Karna was extremely enraged and swiftly released his weapons. He slaughtered the Pandava soldiers, like Maghavan against the asuras. He quickly penetrated the Pandava chariots and shot his arrows, killing seventy-seven of the foremost among the Prabhadrakas. The best of rathas next used twenty-five sharp arrows that were well tufted to kill twenty-five Panchala rathas. He used gold-tufted iron arrows that were capable of penetrating bodies to slaughter hundreds and thousands of Chedis. He performed superhuman deeds in that encounter. O great king! The Panchalas advanced on their chariots and surrounded him from all sides. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Affixing five arrows that were extremely difficult to withstand, Vaikartana Vrisha Karna killed five Panchalas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that encounter, he killed the Panchalas Bhanudeva, Chitrasena, Senavindu, Tapana and Shurasena. In that great battle, while the brave Panchalas were being slaughtered by the arrows, great lamentations arose among the Panchalas. Those lamentations covered all the directions and Karna swiftly killed them with his arrows. O venerable one! The protectors of Karna's chariot wheels were his invincible sons, Sushena and Satyasena, who were ready to give up their lives in the fight. Karna's eldest son, maharatha Vrishasena, himself protected him from the rear and guarded Karna's back. Wishing to kill Radheya, the strikers, Dhrishtadyumna, Satyaki, Droupadi's sons, Vrikodara, Janamejaya, Shikhandi, the brave ones among the Prabhadrakas, the Chedis, the Panchalas and the armoured Matsyas attacked him. They showered down many kinds of arrows and weapons. They showered down and oppressed him, like clouds pouring down on a mountain during the rainy season. O king! Wishing to save their father, the strikers who were Karna's sons and other brave ones on your side, repulsed those valiant ones.

‘Sushena severed Bhimasena's bow with a broad-headed arrow. He then pierced Bhima in the chest with seven iron arrows and roared. Having picked up another bow that was firmer, Vrikodara, who was terrible in his valour, strung it and severed Sushena's bow. He angrily pierced him with nine arrows and seemed to be dancing around. He swiftly pierced Karna with seventy-three sharp arrows. While all his well-wishers looked on, he struck Karna's son, Satyasena, with ten arrows and brought him down, together with his horses, charioteer, standard and weapons. His beautiful face was like the full moon. The head was struck down with a kshurapra arrow and was like a lotus severed from its stalk. Having killed Karna's son, Bhima again afflicted those on your side. He severed the bows of Kripa and Hardikya and oppressed them. He pierced Duhshasana with three iron arrows and Shakuni with six. The lord deprived Uluka and Patatri of their chariots.<sup>448</sup> He next picked up an arrow and said, ‘O Sushena! You have been killed.’ However, Karna severed this and struck him<sup>449</sup> with three arrows. At this, Bhima picked up another arrow that was well shafted and extremely energetic. He released this at Sushena, but Vrisha severed that too.

Wishing to save his son and cruelly desiring to kill the cruel one,<sup>450</sup> Karna again struck Bhimasena with seventy-three arrows. Sushena picked up another supreme bow that was capable of bearing a greater load. He struck Nakula, in the arms and in the chest, with five arrows. Nakula pierced him back with twenty firm arrows that were capable of bearing a great load and roared powerfully, causing fright to Karna. O great king! At this, maharatha Sushena pierced him with ten swift arrows and used a kshurapra arrow to quickly sever his bow. Nakula became senseless with anger and picked up another bow. In that encounter, he repulsed Sushena with many arrows. O king! That slayer of enemy heroes enveloped all the directions with his arrows. Having killed Sushena's charioteer, he pierced him with three arrows. Using three broad-headed arrows, he shattered his firm bow into three fragments. Sushena became senseless with rage and picked up another bow. He pierced Nakula with sixty arrows and Sahadeva with seven. That extremely wonderful and fierce battle was like that between the gods and the asuras. Wishing to kill each other, they quickly struck each other with arrows. Satyaki killed Vrishasena's charioteer with three arrows. With a broad-headed arrow, he severed his bow and struck his horses with seven. He shattered his standard with an arrow and struck him in the chest with three. Thus struck, he<sup>451</sup> became senseless on his chariot, but raised himself in a short while. Wishing to slay Shini's descendant, he rushed against him with a sword and a shield. Satyaki also swiftly rushed against Vrishasena and used ten arrows, with heads like the ears of a boar, to strike his sword and shield. Duhshasana saw that he<sup>452</sup> was without a chariot and devoid of weapons. He quickly picked him up on his own chariot and then made him ascend another chariot. Thus, maharatha Vrishasena sta-

tioned himself on another chariot. The invincible one fought for Karna's sake and again protected his rear. Shini's descendant struck Duhshasana with ninety-nine swift arrows. Having deprived him of his charioteer, horses and chariot, he struck him in the forehead with three arrows. At this, he<sup>453</sup> ascended another chariot that had been duly prepared earlier, and stationing himself within Karna's army, began to fight with the Pandus. Dhrishtadyumna pierced Karna with ten arrows. Droupadi's sons pierced him with seventy-three and Yuyudhana with seven. Bhimasena pierced him with sixty-four arrows and Sahadeva with five. Nakula pierced him with three hundred arrows, Shatanika with seven, the brave Shikhandi with ten and Dharmaraja with one hundred. O Indra among kings! These, and many other, brave ones desired victory.

“In the great battle, they struck the son of the suta, the great archer. The son of the suta pierced each of them back with ten arrows. The brave one, the destroyer of enemies, roamed around on his beautiful chariot and struck them back. O great king! We witnessed the valour of the weapons and the dexterity of the great-souled Karna. It was extraordinary. One did not witness a gap between the maharatha's picking up an arrow, affixing it and releasing it. The sky, the firmament, the earth and the directions were quickly enveloped by his arrows. It was as if the sky was covered with beautiful red clouds. With the bow in his hand, the powerful Radheya seemed to be dancing around. Everyone who struck him was pierced back with three times the number of arrows. Yet again, he pierced each of them, with their horses, charioteers, standards and umbrellas, with ten arrows each and roared. They had to yield and let him pass. The great archer Radheya, the afflicter of enemies, drove them away with his showers of arrows and without any hindrance, penetrated the king's<sup>454</sup> division. He slaughtered three hundred Chedi rathas who refused to retreat. Radheya then used sharp arrows to strike Yudhishtira. O king! The Pandavas, Shikandi and Satyaki wished to save the king from Radheya and surrounded him. And all the soldiers on your side surrounded Karna, the great archer who was irresistible in battle, in every direction. O lord of the earth! The roar of many kinds of musical instruments arose. The brave and unretreating ones roared like lions. Without any fear, the Kurus and the Pandavas clashed again. Yudhishtira was at the forefront of the Parthas and the son of the suta was at our head.”

## Chapter 1183(33)

‘Sanjaya said, “Karna penetrated the soldiers and attacked Dharmaraja. He was surrounded by thousands of chariots, elephants, horses and infantry. The enemy hurled thousands of diverse weapons at Vrisha. But without any fear, he used hundreds of fierce arrows to strike these down. He cut down their heads, arms and thighs. In every direction, they were killed and fell down on the ground. The others were shattered and fled. The Dravidas, the Andhakas and the Nishadas were again rallied by Satyaki. In that battle, wishing to kill him, they attacked Karna with their infantry. Struck by Karna’s arrows, they lost their arms and helmets. They fell down simultaneously on the ground, like a forest of *shala* trees that had been struck down. In this way, hundreds, thousands and tens of thousands of warriors lost their lives. Their bodies fell down on the ground and they filled the directions with their fame. In that battle, Vaikartana Karna was like Yama. The Pandus and Panchalas tried to counter him, like a disease with mantras and herbs. He repulsed them and again attacked Yudhishtira, like an irresistible disease that cannot be countered by mantras and herbs. However, though he wished to advance against the king, he was held back by the Pandus, the Panchalas and the Kekayas. It was like death not being able to conquer those who know about the brahman.

‘ “Yudhishtira, the slayer of enemy heroes, was some distance away from Karna, who had been checked. His eyes red with rage, he said, ‘O Karna! O Karna! Your eyesight is in vain. O son of a suta! Listen to my words. You have always sought to rival the illustrious Phalguna in battle. You have always devoted yourself to the views of Dhritarashtra’s son and have opposed us. Today, exhibit the strength, the valour and the enmity towards the Pandus. Based on your great manliness, display all of those today. In this great battle today, I will destroy the love you bear towards fighting.’ O great king! Having thus addressed Karna, Pandu’s son smiled and used ten sharp and gold-tufted arrows to pierce him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The son of the suta, scorcher of enemies and great archer, pierced him back with nine vatsadanta arrows<sup>455</sup> and laughed. In the battle, the brave and great-souled one then used two razor-sharp and straight-tufted arrows to slay the two Panchalas who were protecting his chariot wheels.<sup>456</sup> Those two brave ones had been resplendent along Dharmaraja’s flanks. Along his chariot, they had been like Punarvasu by the side of the moon.<sup>457</sup> However, Yudhishtira again pierced Karna with thirty arrows and struck both Sushena and Satyasena with three arrows each.<sup>458</sup> He pierced Shalya with ninety arrows and the son of the suta with seventy-three arrows. He struck each of the ones who were protecting his horses with three arrows each. At this, Adhiratha’s son laughed and brandished his bow. He pierced the king with a broad-headed arrow, pierced him again with another sixty arrows and laughed. Then, the brave ones among the Pandus rushed towards Yudhishtira. Wishing to save him from the son of the suta, they struck Karna with arrows. Among these were Satyaki, Chekitana, Yuyutsu, Pandya, Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, Droupadi’s sons, the Prabhadrakas, the twins, Bhimasena, Shishupala’s son, the Karushas, the remaining Matsyas, the Kekayas and those from Kashi and Kosala. These spirited and brave ones countered Vasushena. Janamejaya from Panchala pierced Karna with sharp arrows—*varahakarnas*, *narachas*, *nalikas*, *vatsadantas*, *vipathas*, *kshurapras* and *atakamukhas*.<sup>459</sup> Wielding many fierce weapons, chariots, elephants, horses and riders surrounded and attacked Karna from every direction, wishing to kill him.

‘ “He was attacked from every direction by the best among the Pandavas. At this, he invoked brahmastra and enveloped the directions with his arrows. The fire that was Karna had valour and anger and his arrows flamed greatly. Consuming the Pandavas, who were like a forest, he resplendently roamed around in that battle. The great-souled and wonderful archer repulsed all those great weapons. He laughed and used his arrows to sever the bow of that Indra among men.<sup>460</sup> In that battle, in the twinkling of an eye, he affixed ninety sharp arrows with drooping

tufts and penetrated the king's armour. That armour was decorated with gold. As it fell down, it looked dazzling, like clouds tinged with lightning and tossed around by the wind, when penetrated by the sun. Having fallen off the limbs of that Indra among men, the armour looked beautiful, like celestial clouds in the night sky, ornamented with gems.<sup>461</sup> Devoid of armour and wounded by arrows, Partha was covered with blood. He angrily hurled a lance that was completely made out of iron towards Adhiratha's son. While it blazed through the sky, he<sup>462</sup> cut it down with seven arrows. It was severed by the great archer's arrows and fell down on the ground. At this, Yudhishtira struck Karna in the arms, the forehead and the chest with four javelins and roared delightedly. With blood flowing from his body, Karna was enraged and sighed like a snake. He struck down Pandava's standard with a broad-headed arrow and pierced him with three more. He struck down his quivers and shattered his chariot into tiny fragments. With his parshni charioteers slain, Partha retreated. He was incapable of remaining in front of the evil-minded Karna. Radheya pursued him and touched him on the shoulder with his hand. O king! He laughed at him and spoke disparaging words to Pandava. 'You have been born in a famous lineage and are established in the dharma of kshatriyas. How is it that you are seeking to protect your life in this great battle and are abandoning this encounter with the enemy? I don't think you know the dharma of kshatriyas well. That is my view. You possess the strength of the brahman and are devoted to studying and the task of performing sacrifices. O Kounteya! Do not fight again and do not advance against brave ones. Do not speak unpleasant words towards them. Do not advance towards a great battle.' Having said this, the immensely strong one released Partha. He began to slaughter the Pandava soldiers, like the wielder of the vajra against the asuras. O king! That lord of men fled in shame. On seeing that the king was departing, the Chedis, the Pandavas, the Panchalas, maharatha Satyaki, Droupadi's brave sons and the Pandavas who were the sons of Madri followed the undecaying one. On seeing that Yudhishtira's army was unwilling to fight, Karna pursued them from the rear, together with the brave Kurus. There was the sound of conch shells and drums and the twang of bows. The sons of Dhritarashtra roared like lions.

'O Kouravya! Yudhishtira swiftly climbed onto Shrutakirti's chariot.<sup>463</sup> Dharmaraja Yudhishtira saw that his<sup>464</sup> strength was like that of Death and that he was slaying thousands of warriors. At this, he<sup>465</sup> became angry. Instructed by the king, all the maharatha Pandavas, with Bhimasena at the forefront, attacked your sons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The warriors raised a tumultuous sound there. Here and there, there were elephants, horses, chariots, foot soldiers and weapons. 'Arise. Strike. Advance towards death.' As they killed each other in that field of battle, these were the words the warriors spoke to each other. Because of the shower of arrows, it was as if the sky was covered by the shadow of clouds. The best of men clashed against each other and killed each other. In that battle, pennants, standards and umbrellas were brought down. Horses, charioteers and warriors were destroyed. Those lords were slain. They lost their limbs and their bodies and fell down shattered on the ground. Supreme elephants looked like the lofty summits of mountains. Their riders were slain and they fell down, like mountains shattered by the thunder. Armour, ornaments and bodies were mangled, shattered and dispersed. In thousands, horses fell down, with their brave riders. The limbs of warriors were scattered. Elephants, horses and rathas were slain. Thousands of arrays of foot soldiers were crushed by enemy heroes. Everywhere, the earth was strewn with the heads of fierce warriors. Their eyes were copper coloured and dilated. Their faces were like the lotus and the moon. As on earth, a sound could be heard in the sky. There were large numbers of apsaras on celestial vehicles and they sounded musical instruments. They welcomed the thousands of brave ones who were headed in their direction, after having been killed by the valiant enemy. The masses of apsaras made them ascend the celestial vehicles and bore them away. On beholding this great and extraordinary marvel in person, the brave ones were delighted in their minds. They desired to obtain heaven and angrily struck each other. In that battle, rathas fought a wonderful battle with rathas. Infantry fought with infantry, elephants with elephants and horses with horses. Thus did the battle continue, causing carnage among elephants, horses and men. The dust raised by the soldiers covered everything. Those on the same side slew each other. And those on the enemy's side slew each other. In the battle, they pulled each other by the hair. They fought with teeth and with nails. They fought with fists in an encounter that destroyed bodies and sins. Thus did the battle continue, destructive of elephants, horses and men. A river of blood was created from the bodies of men, horses and elephants. It carried away many fallen bodies of men, horses and elephants. There were the bodies of men, horses and elephants and there were men, horse riders and elephant



riders. That extremely terrible river had currents of blood and its mud was red. It bore along the bodies of men, horses and elephants and increased the fear of those who were cowards. Desiring victory, some went over to the other side.<sup>466</sup> There were others who were submerged in it and sank and swam. All their limbs were covered with blood. Their armour, weapons and garments became red. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Some bathed in it. Others drank the water and lost their senses. There were chariots, horses, men, elephants, weapons, ornaments, garments and armour of those who were slain, or were being slain. The earth, the sky, the firmament and the directions were generally seen to be red. Smell, touch and taste became red in form. Above this, there were the sounds raised by those who were engaged. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In general, the soldiers were overcome by great distress.

‘ “The soldiers, with Bhimasena at the forefront, and brave rathas with Satyaki at the forefront, again attacked your soldiers, who had already been routed. The great-souled ones descended with such great force that it was irresistible. O king! The large army of your sons retreated. The chariots, horses and men were scattered. Their armour and mail were in disarray. Their weapons and bows were dislodged. Your soldiers were agitated and driven away in different directions. They were like a herd of elephants, afflicted by lions in a great forest.” ’

## Chapter 1184(34)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! On seeing that your soldiers were being driven away by the Pandavas, your son loudly tried to rally them. In that battle, the flanks, the distant flanks, the even more distant flanks and the right wings of the the Kurus raised their weapons and attacked Bhima. O great king! On seeing that the army of the sons of Dhritarashtra was running away, Karna asked Shalya, the adornment of a battle, to drive towards Vrikodara, on the foremost of horses that possessed the complexion of swans. Those horses reached Bhimasena’s chariot and engaged. On seeing that Karna had approached, Bhima was full of anger. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He made up his mind to destroy Karna. He told brave Satyaki and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, ‘Protect King Yudhishtira, who has dharma in his soul. In my sight, he escaped from a great calamity. In front of me, for the sake of Duryodhana’s pleasure, the evil-minded Radheya deprived the king of all his garments.’<sup>467</sup> O Parshata! Today, I will bring an end to that misery. In the battle, I will kill Karna, or he will kill me. Either will happen in this extremely terrible battle. I am telling you this truthfully. Today, I am handing over the king in trust to you. Do not be anxious. But protect him in every way.’ Having said this, the mighty-armed one headed in the direction of the chariot of Adhiratha’s son. He roared loudly like a lion and this made all the directions resound.

‘“On seeing that Bhima, who delighted in a battle, was swiftly advancing, the lord who was the king of Madra spoke to the son of the suta. ‘O Karna! Behold the enraged and mighty-armed descendant of the Pandava lineage. He has conquered his wrath for a long time and certainly wishes to release it towards you. O Karna! I have never seen him in such a form earlier, not even when Abhimanyu and rakshasa Ghatotkacha were killed. In his ire, he is capable of resisting the three worlds. The form that he has assumed is like the resplendent fire of destruction.’ O king! While the lord of Madra was speaking these words to Radheya, Vrikodara, flaming in his anger, attacked Karna. On seeing that Bhima, who delighted in fighting, had thus arrived, Radheya laughed and spoke these words to Shalya. ‘O lord of Madra! O lord! There is no doubt that the words that you have spoken to me now about Bhimasena are true. Vrikodara is brave, valiant and angry. He is indifferent towards protecting his body and his life and is superior in strength. When he lived in disguise in the city of Virata, for the sake of bringing pleasure to Droupadi, resorting only to his arms, he secretly killed Kichaka and his followers.’<sup>468</sup> He is senseless with anger and armoured now. He is stationed in the forefront of this battle. He is roaming around in this battle, like Death with a staff, and wishes to do something. I have also harboured a desire for a long time, that either I will kill Arjuna in a battle, or Dhananjaya will kill me. Now that Bhima has advanced against me, perhaps that wish may come true today. If I kill Bhimasena or deprive him of his chariot, and Partha advances against me, that will be fortunate. Please do whatever needs to be done, quickly.’ On hearing the words of the great-souled Radheya, Shalya spoke these words to the son of the suta. ‘O mighty-armed one! Advance against the immensely strong Bhimasena. If you restrain Bhimasena, you may be able to reach Phalguna. O Karna! The desire that you have harboured in your heart for a long time, may well be accomplished. I am telling you this truthfully.’ Having been thus addressed, Karna again spoke to Shalya. ‘Arjuna will kill me in the battle, or I will kill Dhananjaya. Fix your mind on the battle. Drive. Drive there.’ O lord of the earth! Having been thus instructed, Shalya swiftly drove the chariot to the spot where Bhima, the great archer, was driving away the army. At this, there was the extremely loud noise of trumpets and drums. O Indra among kings! This arose as Karna and Bhima clashed.

‘“The powerful Bhimasena was extremely angry. He was invincible and drove your soldiers away in different directions, using sharp and sparkling iron arrows. O lord of the earth! O great king! That fierce battle between Karna and Pandava was tumultuous and terrible in form. O Indra among kings! In an instant, Pandava attacked Karna. On seeing that he was descending, Karna Vaikartana Vrisha angrily struck him between the breasts with an iron arrow. The one who was immeasurable in his soul again covered him with a shower of arrows. Having been thus

pierced, he enveloped the son of the suta with arrows. He pierced Karna with nine sharp arrows with drooping tufts. Karna used his arrows to sever his bow into two fragments from the middle. When he was deprived of his bow, he struck him between the breasts with extremely sharp iron arrows that were capable of penetrating all armour. O king! Vrikodara picked up another bow and struck the son of the suta with extremely sharp arrows that were capable of penetrating the inner organs. He roared powerfully and made heaven and earth tremble. Karna struck him with twenty-five iron arrows, like a maddened and proud elephant attacked in the forest with flaming torches. With his limbs mangled by the arrows, Pandava became senseless with rage. His eyes were coppery red with anger and intolerance and he wished to kill the son of the suta. His bow was extremely powerful and supreme and capable of bearing a great load. He affixed an arrow that was capable of shattering mountains. The son of the wind god<sup>469</sup> powerfully stretched the bow back, all the way up to his ears. Wishing to kill Karna, the great archer angrily released the arrow. Having been thus released by the powerful one, the arrow, with a sound like that of the vajra or thunder, struck Karna in that battle, with a force like that of the vajra against a mountain. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Thus struck by Bhimasena, the son of the suta, the leader of an army, lost his senses and sank down on the floor of his chariot. On seeing that the son of the suta had lost his senses, the lord of Madra bore Karna, the adornment of a battle, away on the chariot. When Karna was defeated, the large army of the sons of Dhritarashtra was driven away by Bhimasena, like an army of the danavas by Indra.” ’

## Chapter 1185(35)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! This deed performed by Bhima was extremely difficult to accomplish. He brought down the mighty-armed Karna from the seat of his chariot. There is only one person who can kill the Srinjayas and the Pandavas in the battle and that is Karna. O suta! That is what Duryodhana has repeatedly told me. On seeing that Radheya had been defeated by Bhima in the battle, what did my son, Duryodhana, do next?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! On seeing that Radheya, the son of the suta, was beaten back in that great battle, he<sup>470</sup> addressed the large army of his brothers. ‘O fortunate ones! Swiftly go and protect Radheya. He confronts a hardship and has been submerged in the fathomless ocean that is Bhimasena.’ Having been thus instructed by the king, they wished to kill Bhimasena and attacked him in great anger, like insects heading towards a flame. Shrutayudha, Durdhara, Kratha, Vivitsu, Vikata, Soma, Nishangi, Kavachi, Pashi, Nanda, Upanandaka, Dushpradharsha, Subahu, Vatavega, Suvarchasa, Dhanurgraha, Durmada, Satva and Soma<sup>471</sup> — these were valiant and extremely powerful. They attacked Bhimasena with chariots and surrounded him from every direction. They released a storm of arrows, of many different forms, from every direction. O lord of men! Your sons quickly descended on the immensely strong Bhimasena and attacked him. He killed five hundred rathas and fifty other rathas who advanced against him. He angrily severed Vivitsu’s head with a broad-headed arrow. It had earrings and a helmet and was like the full moon. O great king! Severed by Bhima, it fell down on the ground. O lord! On seeing that their brave brother had been killed, in that battle, all of them attacked Bhima, who was terrible in his valour, from all directions. In that great battle, Bhima, terrible in his valour, used other broad-headed arrows to rob the lives of two more of your sons in the encounter. O king! They fell down on the ground, like trees that had been uprooted by a tempest. They were Vikata and Soma, who were like ones born from the wombs of the gods. Swiftly, Bhima used an extremely sharp iron arrow to convey Kratha to Yama’s eternal abode. Slain, he fell down on the ground. O lord of men! Fierce sounds of lamentation arose there. O king! Your archer sons were being slain there. Agitating your soldiers in the battle, the immensely strong Bhimasena conveyed Nanda and Upananda<sup>472</sup> to Yama’s abode. Your sons were terrified and lost their senses. On seeing Bhimsena in that battle, like Yama the Destroyer, they fled.

‘ “On seeing that your sons had been killed, the great-minded son of the suta again went to the spot where Pandava was, on horses that possessed the complexion of swans. O great king! The king of Madra swiftly drove those horses towards Bhimasena’s chariot and powerfully engaged with him. O lord of men! O great king! The clash that ensued between Karna and Pandava was fierce. It was tumultuous and terrible in form. O great king! On seeing those two maharathas clash against each other, my mind was certainly anxious to know what would transpire today. O Indra among kings! However, Karna laughed and didn’t have to make a great effort. In a short instant, he deprived Bhima, whose deeds were terrible, of his chariot. O best of the Bharatas! Despite being deprived of his chariot, the one who was like the wind god, laughed. The mighty-armed one descended from his supreme chariot, with a club in his hand. O king! Bhima, the striker and scorcher of enemies, assumed a terrible form and violently killed seven hundred elephants. He knew about the inner organs and struck them at the base of their tusks, their eyes, their temples and their loins. Having severely struck them in their inner organs and killed them, he roared. They fled in fear, but were again rallied back by the riders. They surrounded him, like clouds around the sun. However, using his club, he killed and brought down seven hundred elephants on the ground, with their riders, weapons and flags, like a mass of clouds driven away by the wind. There were extremely strong elephants that belonged to Subala’s son.<sup>473</sup> In the battle, Kounteya again brought down five hundred and two of these. He fiercely crushed one hundred chariots and a hundred foot soldiers that belonged to the enemy. They were killed by Pandava in the battle, while your army looked on. They were scorched by the sun and by the great-souled Bhima. Your soldiers

began to shrink, like a strip of leather held above a fire. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those on your side were terrified because of their fear of Bhima. In that encounter, they were driven away by Bhima in the ten directions. There were five hundred other rathas. With shields and armour, they cheerfully and swiftly attacked Bhima, showering him with arrows from every direction. With his club, Bhima brought down all those rathas and charioteers, with their flags, standards and weapons, like Vishnu against the asuras. On Shakuni's instructions, three thousand riders who prided themselves on their bravery, advanced against Bhima, with lances, swords and spears in their hands. He was the destroyer of enemy heroes and spiritedly counter-attacked those horse riders. He roamed around in diverse motions and killed and brought them down. When they were thus oppressed by him, a great and tumultuous sound arose in every direction. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It was as if a clump of reeds was being severed with a sword. Having slain three thousand supreme horses that belonged to Subala's son, he ascended a chariot and angrily attacked Radheya.

‘ “O king! In that battle, Karna enveloped Dharma's son, the scorcher of enemies, with arrows and brought down his charioteer. On seeing that he<sup>474</sup> was fleeing from the encounter on his chariot, the maharatha pursued him and released swift arrows that were shafted with the feathers of herons. When the fleeing king was thus enveloped with arrows, the son of the wind god angrily covered heaven and earth with his net of arrows. Radheya, the destroyer of enemies, swiftly repulsed him. In every direction, he enveloped Bhima with sharp arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Karna was in front of Bhimasena's chariot. Satyaki, whose soul was immeasurable, placed himself at the side and attacked Karna, severely afflicting him with arrows. Those two bulls among archers<sup>475</sup> clashed against each other and spiritedly released colourful and dazzling arrows. O Indra among kings! Those terrible nets of arrows released by them could be seen to fiercely stretch out in the sky, like the red backs of cranes. Because of the thousands of arrows released by them, we could not see the radiance of the sun, the sky, the directions, or the sub-directions. O king! It was midday and the great radiance of the sun was scorching. But all that seemed to be dispelled by the storm of arrows that Karna and Madhava<sup>476</sup> shot.

‘ “On seeing that Soubala, Kritavarma, Drona's son, Adhiratha's son and Kripa were engaged with the Pandavas, the Kurus returned again. O lord of the earth! When they descended, a fierce sound arose. It was like the terrible sound made by oceans during the rainy season. On beholding each other in that great battle, both armies were anxious. But they were also extremely delighted at having engaged with each other. When the sun attained its midpoint, the battle commenced. Nothing like this has been seen earlier, nor heard of. A large army violently clashed against another large army in that battle. It was as if a large store of water was heading powerfully towards the ocean. There was an extremely loud roar as those two armies clashed against each other. It was as if the waters in the ocean were roaring loudly. Thus, those two armies powerfully clashed against each other. They became one, like two rivers meeting each other. O lord of the earth! A battle that was fierce in form commenced. The Kurus and the Pandavas engaged, desiring extremely great fame. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The Kurus roared out loudly to each other there and many different kinds of noises were heard. In that encounter, the warriors were heard to revile the fathers, the mothers, the deeds and the conduct of their adversaries. In the battle, they were seen to censure each other. O king! I formed the view that their lifespans had run out. On seeing the angry forms of those immensely energetic ones, I was overcome by a great fear about what would transpire. O king! The Pandava and Kourava maharathas began to wound and kill each other with sharp arrows.” ’

## Chapter 1186(36)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! The kshatriyas wished to kill each other. They bore feelings of enmity towards each other and slew each other in the battle. O great king! Large numbers of chariots, throngs of horses, masses of men and numerous elephants clashed against each other in every direction. There were clubs, maces, *kanapas*,<sup>477</sup> lances, catapults; and *bhushundis*<sup>478</sup> were seen to move everywhere. They descended in that extremely fierce battle. In every direction, showers of arrows descended like locusts. In the encounter, elephants clashed against elephants and killed each other. Horses clashed against horses, chariots against chariots, infantry against large numbers of infantry and large numbers of horses against horses. O king! In that encounter, foot soldiers, chariots, elephants, rathas, elephants, horses and elephants were seen to swiftly crush the other three kinds of forces.<sup>479</sup> The brave foot soldiers roared at each other. That terrible encounter was like a sacrificial spot for animals. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Covered in blood, the earth was beautiful. It was as if the earth was covered by large numbers of *shakragopa* insects during the monsoon.<sup>480</sup> The earth was as beautiful as a young lady<sup>481</sup> dressed in a white garment that had been dyed with saffron.<sup>482</sup> With the colourful flesh and blood, it seemed to be decorated in gold. Heads, arms and thighs were severed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Earrings and ornaments were dislodged. Golden necklaces and armour were dislodged from the bodies of the archers. With large numbers of flags, they fell down on the ground. Elephants engaged with elephants and gored each other with the tips of their tusk. Wounded by the tusks, the elephants looked beautiful. Their limbs were covered with blood and they looked like mobile mountains full of minerals, with red chalk flowing down their sides. The elephants destroyed many lances hurled by their opponents, including those that were still held horizontally in the hands. With their armour destroyed by iron arrows, those supreme elephants looked dazzling. O great king! They were like mountains deprived of clouds at the onset of winter. The best of elephants were pierced with gold-tufted arrows. O venerable one! They looked like beautiful mountain tops, lit with torches. Some elephants, as large as mountains, were struck by other elephants and fell down on the ground. They fell down in that battle, like mountains with wings.<sup>483</sup> Other elephants were struck by arrows and oppressed by their wounds. These fled. With their temples and frontal globes shattered, they shrieked and fell down in that great battle. There were others that emitted terrible roars like lions. O king! There were others that shrieked and ran hither and thither. Horses with golden harnesses and trappings were killed by the arrows and weakened. They screamed and ran in the ten directions. Others that were afflicted and rendered unconscious, fell down on the ground. Oppressed by the arrows and javelins, they screamed in many different kinds of ways. O venerable one! Men were slain there. They screamed and fell down on the ground. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Others saw their relatives, fathers, grandfathers and others running away from the enemy. On seeing this, they called out the names of their lineages and their own names and summoned each other. O great king! Bedecked with golden ornaments, their arms were severed and having fallen, or while falling down, were immobile or writhed. Thousands of these fell down on the ground and quivered. In that battle, they quivered powerfully, like serpents. O lord of the earth! Those arms were like the bodies of serpents, smeared with sandalwood. Drenched with blood, they were as beautiful as golden standards. A fierce encounter ensued in every direction. Without recognizing,<sup>484</sup> they fought and killed each other. Because of that descent of weapons, the earth was covered with dust. O king! Since everything was covered in darkness, one could not differentiate those on one’s own side from that of the enemy. A terrible and large river with currents of blood, fierce in form, was created there and began to flow. The severed heads were like rocks. The hair constituted weeds and moss. It was full of the best of bows and arrows and large numbers of bones. Flesh constituted the mud and mire. There were extremely terrible currents of blood. The river that was created there extended Yama’s kingdom. That river was fearsome in form and

conveyed them to Yama's abode. It generated fear in the minds of the kshatriyas who submerged and immersed themselves in it. O tiger among men! Carnivorous beasts roared in various places there. That horrible field of battle looked like the city of the lord of the dead.<sup>485</sup> In every direction, large numbers of headless torsos were seen to rise up. Satisfied with the flesh and the blood, large numbers of demons danced around. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They drank the blood there. They drank the marrow. Satiated with the fat and the marrow, crows, vultures and smaller crows were seen to run around. O king! In that battle, the brave ones cast aside all fear, though it is difficult to give that up. They resorted to the vow of warriors and performed their tasks without any fear. There were large numbers of arrows and lances on the field of battle and it was infested with innumerable predatory beasts. The brave ones roamed around there, displaying their manliness. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They made each other listen to their names and lineages. In the encounter, they recounted the names of their fathers and their families. O lord of the earth! In diverse ways there, the warriors made others listen to these. They attacked each other, with spears, javelins and battleaxes. An extremely terrible battle commenced, fearsome in form. The Kourava army was weakened, like a shattered boat on the ocean." '



## Chapter 1187(37)

‘Sanjaya said, “O venerable one! O king! While the kshatriyas immersed themselves in that battle, the tremendous roar of Gandiva was heard in that encounter, when Pandava was engaged in creating carnage among the samshaptakas, the Kosalas and the narayana army.<sup>486</sup> In that encounter, the samshaptakas were intolerant and desired victory. From every direction, they showered down arrows on Partha’s head. O king! However, the lord spiritedly withstood that violent shower. Plunging into the battle, Partha slaughtered the best of rathas. He assaulted that army of chariots with arrows that had been sharpened on stone and were tufted with the feathers of herons. In that battle, Partha approached maharatha Susharma.<sup>487</sup> The foremost of rathas brought down a shower of arrows on him and the samshaptakas did the same to Partha, who was stationed in the battle. Susharma pierced Partha with nine swift arrows and Janardana in the right arm with three arrows. O venerable one! O king! With another broad-headed arrow, he pierced the large standard that had been fashioned by Vishvakarma, with the best of apes astride it. At this, the ape let out a large and fierce roar. On hearing this, your army was terrified. O king! That beautiful army became immobile. It was like Chitraratha’s grove, full of many flowers.<sup>488</sup> O best of the Kuru lineage! Having regained their senses, the warriors drenched Arjuna with their arrows, like clouds on a mountain. All of them surrounded maharatha Pandava. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Swiftly and powerfully, they attacked his horses, his chariot wheels and his chariot and roared like lions. O great king! Some of them seized Keshava by his mighty arms, while others seized Partha, as he was cheerfully stationed on his chariot. In the field of battle, Keshava flung his arms around and brought all of them down, like an elephant against a wicked elephant. In the encounter, on seeing that Keshava had been oppressed on the chariot, Partha became angry. He attacked and brought down many maharathas and innumerable foot soldiers who had climbed onto the chariot. He covered all the warriors who were nearby with arrows that were meant for fighting at close quarters.

‘ “In that battle, he then spoke to Keshava. ‘O Krishna! O mighty-armed one! Behold. Those large numbers of samshaptakas wished to perform an extremely terrible deed against me and have been slaughtered in thousands. O bull among the Yadu lineage! With my exception, there is no man on earth who is capable of withstanding such a terrible attack, at close quarters, on the chariot.’ Having spoken thus, Bibhatsu blew on Devadatta.<sup>489</sup> Krishna blew on Panchajanya, filling heaven and earth. O great king! On hearing the blare of those conch shells, the army of the samshaptakas wavered. They were extremely terrified. Pandava, the destroyer of enemy heroes, repeatedly invoked the naga weapon and tied down their feet.<sup>490</sup> Partha tied down their feet in the battle. O king! With their feet tied down by the great-souled Pandava, they became immobile, as if they were made out of stone. The descendant of the Pandu lineage then slaughtered those immobile warriors, just as in ancient times, Indra had killed the daityas in the battle with Taraka.<sup>491</sup> Slaughtered in the battle, they abandoned the best of chariots and threw away all their weapons. O Indra among kings! On seeing that the army had thus been tied down, maharatha Susharma quickly invoked the Suparna weapon.<sup>492</sup> Suparna birds descended and devoured the serpents. O king! On seeing the birds, the serpents fled. O lord of the earth! Having been freed from the thongs on the feet, the army looked as beautiful as the sun, which warms all beings, when it has been freed from a mass of clouds. O venerable one! Having been freed, the warriors released large numbers of arrows and large numbers of weapons towards Phalguna’s chariot. Having used his own shower of great weapons to sever that shower of arrows, Vasava’s son, the destroyer of enemy heroes, remained stationed on his chariot in the field of battle. O king! Susharma used arrows with drooping tufts to pierce Arjuna in the chest and pierced him again with three other arrows. Having been severely wounded and pained, he sank down on the floor of his chariot. When he regained his senses, the one with the white

horses, immeasurable in his soul and with Krishna as his charioteer, quickly invoked the aindra weapon.<sup>493</sup> O venerable one! Thousands of arrows were created from it and were seen to destroy men and elephants in every direction of the battle, in addition to horses, chariots and hundreds and thousands of weapons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the soldiers were slaughtered, the large numbers of samshaptakas and gopalas were overcome with great fear. There was no man there who could fight back against Arjuna. While those brave ones looked on, that large army was slaughtered. Despite witnessing the slaughter and despite their valour, they remained immobile. In the battle there, Pandu's son killed ten thousand warriors. O king! He was resplendent in that battle, like a flaming fire without any smoke. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He killed fourteen thousand foot soldiers, ten thousand rathas and three thousand tuskers. At this, the samshaptakas again surrounded Dhananjaya. They refused to retreat, and had determined to set their minds on death or victory. O lord of the earth! There was a great battle there between those on your side and the brave and powerful Pandava Kiriti." '

## Chapter 1188(38)

‘Sanjaya said, “O venerable one! Kritavarma, Kripa, Drona’s son, the son of the suta, Uluka, Soubala and the king<sup>494</sup> and his brothers saw that the army was afflicted because of the fear of Pandu’s son. It was submerged with great force, like a shattered boat in an ocean. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, in a short while, a battle commenced. It generated fear among cowards and increased the delight of brave ones. In the battle, Kripa released showers of arrows that moved like locusts and shrouded the Srinjayas. Shikhandi was angry and quickly advanced against Goutama.<sup>495</sup> From every direction, he showered down a large number of arrows on the best of brahmanas. Kripa was knowledgeable about great weapons and destroyed that shower of arrows. In the encounter, he angrily pierced Shikhandi with ten arrows. Shikhandi became enraged in that battle. He severely pierced Kripa with swift arrows that were shafted with the feathers of herons. Having been severely pierced, maharatha Kripa, supreme among brahmanas, deprived Parshata<sup>496</sup> of his horses, charioteer and chariot. With his horses slain, the maharatha<sup>497</sup> descended from his chariot and grasping a sword and a shield, quickly advanced against the brahmana. On seeing him violently attack in the battle, he enveloped him with straight-tufted arrows and it was wonderful. What we witnessed was extraordinary, as if there was a torrent of rocks. O king! Shikhandi remained immobile in that encounter. O supreme among kings! On seeing that Shikhandi had been shrouded by Kripa, maharatha Dhrishtadyumna quickly counter-attacked Kripa. On seeing that Dhrishtadyumna was advancing towards Sharadvata’s chariot, maharatha Kritavarma powerfully repulsed him. On seeing that Yudhishtira was advancing towards Sharadvata’s chariot, together with his sons and soldiers, Drona’s son countered him. Your son received the spirited maharathas Nakula and Sahadeva and countered them with showers of arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, Karna Vaikartana countered Bhimasena, the Karushas, the Kekayas and the Srinjayas. O venerable one! Meanwhile, in the encounter, Sharadvata Kripa swiftly dispatched arrows towards Shikhandi, as if wishing to burn him down. However, with his sword, he<sup>498</sup> repeatedly sliced down all the arrows that were embellished with gold and were shot at him from all directions, while they were still in mid-air. At this, Goutama quickly shattered Parshata’s shield, which was decorated with the marks of one hundred moons, with his arrows. The men roared loudly. O great king! Deprived of his shield, he attacked with the sword in his hand. But he had come under Kripa’s control, like a diseased person in the mouth of death. The immensely strong one was afflicted by Sharadvata’s fierce arrows. On seeing this, Suketu,<sup>499</sup> Chitraketu’s son, spiritedly advanced. In the battle, he showered the brahmana with many sharp arrows. The one whose soul was immeasurable, dashed towards Goutama’s chariot. O supreme among kings! On seeing that the brahmana, devoted to his vows, was engaged in a fight with someone else, Shikhandi quickly withdrew. O king! Suketu struck Goutama with nine arrows, pierced him again with seventy, and struck him yet again with three arrows. O venerable one! He next severed his<sup>500</sup> bow, with an arrow affixed to it. With another arrow, he severely struck his charioteer in the inner organs. Goutama became angry at this and picked up another new bow that was firm. He struck Suketu in all his inner organs with thirty arrows. All his limbs were weakened and he wavered on that supreme chariot. He was like a tree, trembling and moving during an earthquake. His head was adorned with flaming earrings. It had a headdress and a helmet. While he was moving, he<sup>501</sup> brought it down with a kshurapra arrow. That head fell down on the ground, like a piece of meat being carried by a hawk. Thereafter, the head was dislodged and fell down on the ground. O great king! When he was slain, those who followed him were frightened. They abandoned the fight with Goutama and fled in the ten directions.

‘ “Kritavarma repeatedly asked Parshata to wait.<sup>502</sup> In the battle, there was a tumultuous encounter between those from the Vrishni and Parshata lineages.<sup>503</sup> O king! It was like a fight between a hawk and a vulture over a piece of meat. In the battle, Dhrishtadyumna angrily struck Hardikya, Hridika’s son, in the chest with nine arrows and afflicted him. In the encounter, Kritavarma was firmly struck by Parshata. In turn, he shrouded Parshata, his chariot and his horses, with arrows. O king! With his chariot enveloped by arrows, Dhrishtadyumna could no longer be seen. It was like the sun enveloped by clouds at the onset of the rains. Those large numbers of arrows were decorated with gold. O king! But having repulsed them with his arrows, though he was covered with wounds, Dhrishtadyumna looked resplendent in the battle. Parshata, the leader of an army, became angry and unleashed an extremely terrible shower of arrows towards Kritavarma. On seeing that violent and incessant shower of arrows descend in the encounter, Hardikya destroyed them with thousands of arrows. On seeing that the extremely irresistible shower of arrows had been countered in the battle by Kritavarma, Parshata advanced and repulsed him. He used a broad-headed arrow, sharp at the edges, to swiftly dispatch his charioteer to Yama’s abode. Slain, he fell down from the chariot. Dhrishtadyumna vanquished his powerful maharatha enemy. In the battle, he then quickly countered the Kouravas with arrows. At this, the warriors on your side attacked Dhrishtadyumna. They roared like lions and a battle commenced.” ’

## Chapter 1189(39)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing that Yudhishtira was protected by Shini’s descendant and by the brave sons of Droupadi, Drona’s son cheerfully attacked him. He showered large numbers of gold-tufted and fierce arrows that had been sharpened on stone. He displayed many different kinds of motion, his learning and the dexterity of his hands. The one who was learned in the use of weapons invoked his arrows with the mantras of divine weapons and surrounded Yudhishtira in the battle. Everything was shrouded by the arrows of Drona’s son and nothing could be seen. It was as if the heads of all the warriors were covered by arrows. The firmament was covered by a net of arrows and seemed to be shrouded by a golden net. O best of the Bharata lineage! It was beautiful, as if it had been covered with a canopy. O king! In that battle, enveloped by that radiant net of arrows, the sky seemed to be obstructed by arrows, as if by the shadow of clouds. Because of the arrows, the sight that we beheld there was extraordinary. As a result of the valour of Drona’s son, nothing could be seen to descend on earth.<sup>504</sup> O great king! On beholding the dexterity of Drona’s son, the maharathas there were astounded and were incapable of glancing at him. It was as if all the kings were being scorched by the sun.

‘ “Though Satyaki, Dharmaraja Pandava and the other soldiers made efforts, they could not withstand his valour. When the soldiers were being slaughtered, Droupadi’s maharatha sons, Satyaki, Dharmaraja and the Panchalas united, abandoning their fear of death and fiercely attacked Drona’s son. Satyaki pierced Drona’s son with twenty-five arrows with stone heads. He again pierced him with seven iron arrows that were decorated with gold. Yudhishtira struck him with seventy-three, Prativindhya with seven, Shrutakarma with three arrows, Shrutakirti with seven arrows, Sutasoma with nine and Shatanika with nine.<sup>505</sup> Many other brave ones pierced him from all directions. O king! He became angry at this and sighed like a venomous serpent. He pierced Satyaki back with twenty-five arrows that had been sharpened on stone, Shrutakirti with nine, Sutasoma with five, Shrutakarma with eight and Prativindhya with three arrows. He struck Shatanika with nine arrows and Dharma’s son<sup>506</sup> with seven. He struck each of the other brave ones with two arrows each. With sharp arrows, he severed Shrutakirti’s bow. At this, maharatha Shrutakirti picked up another bow and pierced Drona’s son with three arrows, following this up by striking him with many other sharp arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Drona’s son showered down arrows and covered the soldiers and the kings from every direction with arrows. Drona’s son, immeasurable in his soul, again severed Dharmaraja’s bow with three sharp arrows and laughed. O king! At this, Dharma’s son picked up another giant bow and struck Drona’s son in the arms and the chest with seventy arrows. In the battle, Satyaki angrily struck Drona’s son and used an extremely sharp arrow that was in the form of a half-moon to sever his bow. Having done this, he roared loudly. With his bow severed, Drona’s son, supreme among strong ones, hurled a lance and swiftly brought down the charioteer of Shini’s descendant from his chariot. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Drona’s powerful son then picked up another bow and enveloped Shini’s descendant with a shower of arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With his<sup>507</sup> charioteer brought down in the encounter, his horses were seen to run around here and there. With Yudhishtira at the forefront, they<sup>508</sup> powerfully attacked Drona’s son, supreme among the wielders of weapons, and showered down sharp arrows. In that great battle, on seeing that they were rushing to the attack and adopting fierce forms, Drona’s son, scorcher of enemies, laughed and received them. In that battle, Drona’s maharatha son used hundreds of flaming arrows to consume the flanks of the soldiers, like a fire burning dead wood in the forest. O foremost among the Bharatas! The army of Pandu’s son was afflicted by Drona’s son, like the mouth of a river by a whale. O great king! On witnessing the valour of Drona’s son, everyone thought that the Pandus had already been slain by Drona’s son.

‘ “Spiritedly approaching Drona’s maharatha son, Yudhishtira spoke to Drona’s son, anger and intolerance flooding his mind. ‘O tiger among men! Since you wish to kill me today, your name is not affection, nor is your name gratitude. A brahmana’s task is austerities, donations and studying and a bow should be stretched by a kshatriya. You say that you are a brahmana. O mighty-armed one! While you look on, I will vanquish the Kouravas in the battle.’ O great king! Having been thus addressed, Drona’s son smiled. He thought about what was proper and did not say anything in reply. Without saying anything, he showered arrows on Pandava and enveloped him in the battle, like an angry Yama against beings. O venerable one! Having been thus shrouded by Drona’s son, Partha abandoned that large army and swiftly departed from the spot. O king! Dharma’s son, Yudhishtira, departed. However, Drona’s great-minded son still remained stationed in that region. Thus, King Yudhishtira abandoned Drona’s son in the great battle and advanced against your soldiers, having decided to perform cruel deeds.” ’

## Chapter 1190(40)

‘Sanjaya said, “Vaikartana himself countered and restrained Bhimasena, supported by the Panchalas, Chedis and Kekayas, with his arrows. While Bhimasena looked on, Karna angrily killed many Chedi, Karusha and Srinjaya maharathas. Bhimasena avoided Karna, supreme among rathas, and advanced against the Kourava soldiers, like a blazing fire amidst dead wood. The son of a suta, the great archer, slaughtered thousands of Panchalas, Kekayas and Srinjayas in the battle. The maharathas caused great carnage—Partha against the samshaptakas, Vrikodara against the Kouravas and Karna against the Panchalas. O king! Because of your evil counsel, those three were like fires and consumed and destroyed the kshatriyas in the encounter.

‘“O foremost amongst the Bharata lineage! Meanwhile, Duryodhana was angry and struck Nakula with nine arrows, also piercing his four horses. O lord of men! Your son, immeasurable in his soul, again severed Sahadeva’s golden standard with a razor-sharp arrow. O king! Nakula became enraged and struck your son with seventy-three arrows in the battle. Sahadeva pierced him with five. Those two were the best amongst the Bharata lineage and the best among all archers. But he<sup>509</sup> angrily struck each of them with five arrows. O king! With other broad-headed arrows, he severed the bows of the twins and laughed, piercing them with seven arrows. Those two brave ones were resplendent in the battle, equals of the sons of the gods. They picked up other supreme bows that were as beautiful as Shakra’s bow. O king! In that encounter, the two brothers proudly fought against a brother. They showered down arrows on him, like two giant clouds on a mountain. O great king! Your maharatha son became enraged and repulsed Pandu’s sons, great archers, with arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the encounter, the circle of his bow could be seen. In every direction, arrows could be seen to whiz around. The two Pandavas were enveloped by his arrows and looked beautiful, like the sun and the moon in the sky, when covered by clouds and robbed of their radiance. O great king! Those arrows were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone. Like the rays of the sun, they covered all the directions. The firmament was covered by those arrows. The forms of the twins were like that of Yama, at the time of the destruction of an era. On witnessing your son’s valour, the maharathas thought that the sons of Madri had attained the presence of death. O king! At this, the great-souled commander-in-chief of the Pandavas, Parshata, went to the spot where King Suyodhana was.

‘“Abandoning the valiant and maharatha sons of Madri, your son oppressed Dhrishtadyumna with arrows. O bull among men! Your son, immeasurable in his soul, was intolerant, and piercing Panchala with twenty-five arrows, laughed. O lord of the earth! Your son, immeasurable in his soul, again pierced Panchala with sixty-five arrows and roared. O venerable one! In the battle, the king used extremely sharp kshurapra arrows to sever his bow, with an arrow affixed to it, and his arm-guards. Discarding his severed bow, Panchala, the destroyer of enemies, quickly picked up a new bow that was capable of bearing a great load. The great archer, Dhrishtadyumna, was covered with wounds. But he blazed violently because of his anger, with eyes that were red as blood. He looked beautiful. Dhrishtadyumna sighed like a serpent and wishing to kill the foremost among the Bharata lineage, shot fifteen iron arrows that had been sharpened on stone. Those forceful arrows were shafted with the feathers of herons and peacocks. They penetrated the king’s gold-decorated armour and entered the ground. O great king! Having been severely struck, your son looked dazzling, like a blossoming kimshuka dotted with flowers during the spring. His armour was shattered by the iron arrows. He was exhausted because of the blows. However, he angrily severed Dhrishtadyumna’s bow with a broad-headed arrow. O king! Having severed the bow, the lord of the earth swiftly struck him between the eyebrows with ten arrows. These arrows had been polished by artisans and with these, his<sup>510</sup> face looked beautiful, like a flowering *champak* tree visited by bees desiring honey.<sup>511</sup> The great-minded Dhrishtadyumna abandoned the severed bow and quickly picking up another bow, struck Duryodhana with sixteen broad-headed arrows, slaying his horses and charioteer with five arrows. With a broad-headed arrow that was em-



bellished with gold, he sliced down his bow. With nine broad-headed arrows, Parshata severed your son's chariot, his seat, his umbrella, his lance, his sword, his club, his standard and his colourful and golden armlet, sparkling with gems and the sign of an elephant.<sup>512</sup> All the kings saw that the standard of the lord of the Kurus had been brought down. In the battle, Duryodhana was without a chariot and deprived of his weapons. O bull among the Bharata lineage! His brother, Dandadhara, sought to rescue his brother. O king! While Dhrishtadyumna looked on, he raised the frightened king onto a chariot and bore him away.

‘“Having defeated Satyaki, the immensely strong Karna wished to save the king. In the battle, he advanced against Drona's fierce slayer.<sup>513</sup> Shini's descendant quickly pursued him from the rear, showering down arrows, like an elephant goring another elephant from the rear with its tusks. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The great-souled warriors fought extremely fierce and great battle in the space between Karna and Parshata. The Pandava warriors, nor those on our side, desired to retreat. On seeing this, Karna swiftly advanced against the Panchalas. O best among men! At that time, there was a destruction of elephants, horses and men. When the sun attained midday, this gave rise to great fear. O great king! The Panchalas desired victory and quickly attacked Karna from all sides, like birds flocking to a tree. Adhiratha's son was spirited and sought to angrily repulse them. With fierce arrows, he clashed against those who were at the forefront—Vyaghraketu, Susharma, Shanku, the fierce Dhananjaya,<sup>514</sup> Shukla, Rochamana, Simhasena and Durjaya. Those valiant ones advanced forcefully on their chariots and surrounded the best of men. They angrily released many arrows towards Karna, the ornament of a battle. Those brave and powerful kings of men fought there. But Radheya killed all eight of them with sharp arrows. O great king! O king! In that encounter, the powerful son of a suta, skilled in fighting, then angrily slew many thousands of other warriors—Vishnu, Vishnukarma, Devapi, Bhadra, Danda, Chitra, Chitrayudha, Hari, Simhaketu, Rochamana,<sup>515</sup> maharatha Shalabha and many other maharathas amongst the Chedis. While he was slaughtering them, the body of Adhiratha's son was smeared in blood in all his limbs and he looked like the great Rudra himself. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Many elephants were afflicted by Karna's arrows. Terrified, they fled in all the directions, causing greater destruction. Afflicted by Karna's arrows, they shrieked and fell down in the encounter, roaring in many different ways, as if mountains had been shattered by the thunder. In every direction, elephants, horses and men fell down and the earth became impassable because of the large numbers of chariots and horses. No other person on your side had performed such a deed in the battle—not Bhishma, nor Drona. O tiger among men! The son of a suta created a great destruction of elephants, chariots, horses and men. He was seen to fearlessly roam around, like a lion amidst deer. In that fashion, Karna fearlessly roamed around amidst the Panchalas. Just as large numbers of deer are driven away in diverse directions by a lion, in that way, the array of Panchala chariots was routed by Karna. On approaching a lion, a deer does not remain alive. In that way, on approaching Karna, the maharathas did not remain alive. People are usually burnt if they approach a blazing fire. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that way, in that battle, the Srinjayas were consumed by the fire that was Karna. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Proclaiming his name, Karna single-handedly killed many amongst the Chedis and the Panchalas who prided themselves on their bravery. O Indra among men! On witnessing Karna's valour, I thought that not a single one among the Panchalas would escape from Adhiratha's son in the battle.

‘“O venerable one! Having slain the Panchalas in the battle, the powerful son of a suta angrily rushed against Yudhishtira, Dharma's son. Dhrishtadyumna and Droupadi's sons surrounded the king. The destroyer of enemies<sup>516</sup> was surrounded by hundreds of others—Shikhandi, Sahadeva, Nakula, Nakula's son, Janamejaya, Shini's grandson and many Prabhadrakas. In that encounter, they placed Dhrishtadyumna at their forefront. Those infinitely energetic ones looked beautiful, as they attacked Adhiratha's son with weapons. In that battle, Adhiratha's son single-handedly descended on those Chedis, Panchalas and Pandavas, like Garuda on numerous serpents.

‘“In that battle, Bhimsena, the great and angry archer, single-handedly attacked the Kurus, Madras and Kekayas and looked extremely resplendent in the encounter. Elephants were struck in their inner organs by Bhima's iron arrows. With their riders slain, they fell down, making the earth tremble. Horses and their riders were slain and foot soldiers lost their lives. They were mangled and lay down on the ground, vomiting copious quantities of blood. Thousands of rathas fell down, their weapons dislodged. Those that were not wounded lost their lives because of their fear of Bhima. The earth was strewn with chariots, horses, charioteers, foot soldiers and elephants that were

destroyed by Bhimasena's arrows. O king! Duryodhana's army was afflicted because of Bhimasena's strength and though it remained there, it was dispirited and covered with wounds. In that great and tumultuous battle, it was seen to be immobile and cheerless. O king! It looked like an ocean when the waters are still. Your son's army had possessed the best of anger, valour and strength. But because of the arrows, it lost all that strength. It was covered in waves of blood and was drenched in blood. In the battle, the son of a suta angrily attacked the Pandava soldiers and the resplendent Bhimasena drove away the Kurus. There was a fierce battle there and it was extraordinary to behold.

' "In the midst of the army, having slain large numbers of samshaptakas, Arjuna, best among victorious ones, spoke to Vasudeva. 'O Janardana! This army, which was fighting, has been shattered. The samshaptaka maharathas are running away, together with their followers. They cannot bear my arrows, like deer cannot stand the sound of a lion. In the great battle, the large army of the Srinjayas has also been shattered. O Krishna! The intelligent Karna's standard, with the mark of an elephant's housing, can be repeatedly seen, resplendent in the midst of the king's soldiers. In a battle, I don't think those maharathas are capable of defeating Karna. You know about Karna's bravery and valour. Go to the spot where Karna is driving away our army. Abandon the battle here and advance against the maharatha son of a suta. O Krishna! Unless you are exhausted, do that, or whatever else you desire.' O great king! Having been thus addressed, Govinda laughed. He told Arjuna, 'O Pandava! Slay the Kouravas swiftly.' Urged by Govinda, those horses, with the complexion of swans, penetrated that large army, bearing along Krishna and Pandava. The horses were controlled by Keshava. They were white, with golden harnesses. They penetrated your army and drove it away in the four directions. When Keshava and Arjuna entered, that large army was shattered. Those two greatly resplendent ones were angry and dazzling. Their eyes were red with rage. They took delight in fighting and in that field of battle, were challenged by the enemy. They looked like the gods, the two Ashvins, summoned to a sacrifice by the officiating priests in the proper way. Since they were enraged, the speed of those tigers among men increased. In that great battle, they were like elephants enraged by the sound of slapping palms.<sup>517</sup> Phalguna roamed around the arrays of chariots and the numerous horses. In the midst of those formations, he was like Yama with a noose in his hand. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On witnessing his valour in the battle, your son again urged the large numbers of samshaptakas. At this, one thousand chariots, three hundred elephants, fourteen thousand horses and two hundred thousand foot soldiers and archers attacked him in the great battle. They were known for their bravery. They were skilled. Those maharathas attacked and enveloped those two brave ones.<sup>518</sup> Having been thus shrouded in the battle by arrows, the destroyer of enemy forces displayed his fierce self, like Yama with a noose in his hand. Partha slaughtered the samshaptakas and became a sight worth beholding. His arrows, decorated with gold, dazzled like lightning. Kiriti incessantly covered the sky with these. Mighty arrows were released from Kiriti's arms and descended. They covered everything, with the radiance of Kadru's offspring.<sup>519</sup> They were gold-tufted and fierce at the tip. They were arrows with drooping tufts. Pandava, immeasurable in his soul, was seen to shoot them in all the directions. The maharatha killed ten thousand kings. Kounteya then swiftly attacked the extreme flank of the samshaptakas. Having approached the extreme flank, protected by the Kambojas, Partha crushed it with the force of his arrows, like Vasava against the danavas. Using broad-headed arrows, he swiftly severed the arms, with the hands still holding on to weapons, and the heads of those among the enemy who wished to slay him. Limbs and bodies were sliced down. Deprived of weapons, they fell down on the ground. They were shattered, like trees with many branches broken by a storm. The storm that was Arjuna destroyed elephants, horses, chariots and infantry. Sudakshina's younger brother showered down a hail of arrows on him.<sup>520</sup> His arms were like clubs. However, with two arrows in the shape of a half-moon, he<sup>521</sup> sliced off those arms. His face was like the full moon. However, with a kshurapra arrow, he severed that head. He fell down from his vehicle, exuding blood, like the summit of a mountain, when it is struck by the thunder and exudes red arsenic. Sudakshina's younger brother, from Kamboja, was seen to be slain. He was tall. His eyes were like the petals of lotuses. He was extremely handsome. He was like a golden pillar, or a golden mountain, and was shattered. Thereafter, the battle continued and it was fierce and wonderful to behold. In many different ways, the warriors fought there. The Kambojas, the Yavanas and the Shakas abandoned their horses. O lord of the earth! All of them were covered with blood and everything seemed red. Chariots lost their rathas, horses and charioteers. The riders of

horses were slain. The riders of elephants were killed. The drivers of elephants were slain. O great king! They fought with each other and created a great destruction of men.

‘ “The great-souled Arjuna, foremost among victorious ones, destroyed the flank and the extreme flank.<sup>522</sup> Drona’s son brandished his great bow, decorated with gold, and swiftly advanced against him. He released many terrible arrows that were like the rays of the sun. O great king! The arrows released by Drona’s son descended in all the directions. They enveloped Krishna and Dhananjaya, who were stationed on the chariot. Bharadvaja’s powerful descendant released hundreds of sharp arrows and in that battle, immobilized Madhava and Pandava. On seeing that the protectors of the mobile and the immobile were thus shrouded by arrows, lamentations arose everywhere, amidst the mobile and the immobile. Large numbers of siddhas and charanas assembled there from every direction and began to reflect about the welfare of the worlds. O king! I have not witnessed valour like this earlier, as Drona’s son enveloped the two Krishnas with his arrows. The twang of the bow of Drona’s son generated great terror in the battle. O king! It was repeatedly heard, like the roaring of a lion. He roamed around in that battle, to the left and to the right. His bowstring was as beautiful as a cloud tinged with lightning. Pandava was swift in acting and his hand was firm. However, on seeing Drona’s son, he seemed to be overcome with great stupefaction. He thought that his own valour had been surpassed by the great-souled one. O king! In that battle, his<sup>523</sup> form was impossible to behold. O Indra among kings! In that great battle between Drona’s son and Pandava, the great strength of Drona’s son was seen to increase. On seeing that Kounteya was waning, Krishna was overcome with rage. O king! He sighed repeatedly with rage and glanced towards Drona’s son and Phalguna in that encounter, as if burning them down with his eyes. Krishna angrily spoke to Partha, though with affection. ‘O Partha! On seeing you in this encounter, I find it to be extraordinary. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Drona’s son is surpassing you today. O Arjuna! Is Gandiva not in your hand? Or are you not stationed on your chariot? Are your arms well? Is your valour still there?’ Having been thus addressed by Krishna, he<sup>524</sup> was enraged. At a time when speed was of the essence, he quickly used fourteen broad-headed arrows to destroy the bow and chariot of Drona’s son and also his standard, umbrella, flags, chariot, javelin and club. With vatsadanta arrows, he struck him severely in the shoulder joints. Having become completely unconscious, he<sup>525</sup> grasped the pole of his standard. To protect him from Dhananjaya, his charioteer bore him away from the field of battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At that time, Vijaya, the scorcher of enemies, destroyed hundreds and thousands of your soldiers, while your brave son looked on. Thus, as they engaged with the enemy, there was the destruction of your soldiers. O king! That cruel and terrible destruction was because of your evil counsel. In that battle, Kounteya completely destroyed the samshaptakas, Vrikodara the Kurus and Vasushena the Panchalas.” ’

## Chapter 1191(41)

‘Sanjaya said, “Krishna was advancing quickly and again spoke softly to Partha. ‘O Kouravya! Behold. The kings are advancing towards Pandava.<sup>526</sup> Behold Karna in this great arena, blazing like a fire. This Bhima is a great archer and has returned to fight again. With Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, the others have also returned and are following him—with the Panchalas, the Srinjayas and the Pandavas leading the way. The large army of the enemy is being shattered by the returning Parthas. O Arjuna! The Kouravas who were running away have been held together by Karna. His force is like that of Yama and his valour is Shakra’s equal. O Kouravya! Drona’s son, supreme among the wielders of weapons, is advancing there. In the battle, maharatha Dhrishtadyumna is advancing against him.’ In this way, the invincible Vasudeva described it to Kiriti. O king! Then, an extremely great and extremely fierce battle commenced. As the clash started, roars like lions’ were heard. O king! Both sets of soldiers preferred death to retreat.” ’

## Chapter 1192(42)

‘Sanjaya said, “Without any fear, the Kurus and the Srinjayas started to fight again. The Parthas had Yudhishtira at the forefront and we had Vaikartana at the forefront. There was a fierce battle between Karna and the Pandavas and it extended Yama’s kingdom and made the body hair stand up. That tumultuous battle created waves of blood. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Only a few of the samshaptakas remained. O great king! With Dhrishtadyumna and all the kings, the maharatha Pandavas rushed against Karna. They were cheerful and attacked in that battle, desiring victory. Alone in that battle, Karna received them, like a mountain receives a flood of water. Having clashed against Karna, those maharathas were shattered and beaten back in all the directions, like a flood of water against a mountain. O great king! The battle that commenced made the body hair stand up. Dhrishtadyumna angrily asked Radheya to wait and struck him with an arrow with drooping tufts. The maharatha<sup>527</sup> brandished Vijaya, foremost among bows, and severed Parshata’s bow with arrows that were like venomous serpents. He angrily struck Parshata with nine arrows. O unblemished one! The great-souled one shattered his gold-decorated armour and, covered with blood, they<sup>528</sup> looked as beautiful as shakragopa insects. Maharatha Dhrishtadyumna discarded his severed bow and picked up another bow. With seven straight-tufted arrows that were like venomous serpents, he pierced Karna. O king! In that fashion, Karna, the great archer, pierced Parshata, the scorcher of enemies and Drona’s enemy,<sup>529</sup> with sharp arrows. O great king! Karna angrily dispatched a gold-decorated arrow that was like Yama’s staff. O lord of the earth! O king! On seeing it suddenly descend, terrible in form, Shini’s descendant displayed the lightness of his hand and shattered it into seven fragments. O lord of the earth! On seeing that the arrow had been repulsed by arrows, Karna showered arrows from every direction on Satyaki. In that encounter, he pierced him with seven iron arrows and Shini’s descendant pierced him back with arrows that were decorated with gold. The battle that raged was fearful to those who saw and heard. O king! Though it was fearful in every direction, it was wonderful to see. O king! On witnessing the deeds of Karna and Shini’s descendant in the battle, the body hair of all the beings there stood up.

‘“Drona’s son was extremely strong. At that time, he rushed against Parshata, the destroyer of enemies who could rob the valour of the foe. Dhananjaya was still at a distance and Drona’s son angrily addressed him.<sup>530</sup> ‘O slayer of a brahmana! Stay. Stay. You will not escape from me with your life.’ Having spoken thus, the brave one swiftly struck Parshata and enveloped him with sharp arrows that were terrible in form and extremely energetic. The maharatha<sup>531</sup> strove to the best of his capacity. O venerable one! In the encounter, Drona’s son glanced towards Parshata and in that encounter, Parshata, the slayer of enemy heroes, also glanced towards Drona’s son. In the battle, Drona’s son was delighted to see Parshata, the slayer of enemy heroes. But he was not greatly delighted, thinking that his own death might be before him.<sup>532</sup> O Indra among kings! On seeing Dhrishtadyumna stationed in the battle, Drona’s brave son sighed with anger and attacked Parshata. On seeing each other, they were overcome with supreme rage. O great king! O lord of the earth! Drona’s powerful son swiftly approached Dhrishtadyumna and said, ‘O worst of the Panchala lineage! I will send you to death. On an earlier occasion, you committed an evil deed by killing Drona. O stupid one! You will regret that today and no longer remain hale, as long as you are stationed in the battle and not protected by Partha. I am telling you this truthfully.’ Having been thus addressed, the powerful Dhrishtadyumna replied. ‘I will reply to your words with my sword, which also answered your father when he endeavoured in the battle. You are a brahmana only in name. If Drona could be slain by me, why should I not use my valour and kill you in the battle?’ O great king! Having spoken thus, the intolerant Parshata, the commander-in-chief, pierced Drona’s son with sharp arrows. O king! In that encounter, Drona’s son became wrathful and enveloped Dhrishtadyumna from every direction with straight-tufted arrows. O great king!

Shrouded by thousands of arrows everywhere, the sky, the directions and the warriors could not be seen. O king! In that fashion, while the son of a suta looked on, Parshata enveloped Drona's son, the ornament of a battle, with arrows. O great king! Meanwhile, while everyone looked on from every direction, Radheya single-handedly countered the Panchalas, the Pandavas, Droupadi's sons, Yudhamanyu and maharatha Satyaki. In the battle, Dhrishtadyumna severed the bow of Drona's son. Abandoning that bow in the battle, he picked up another bow that was powerful and terrible. O Indra among kings! Using arrows that were like venomous serpents, he sliced down Parshata's bow, javelin, club and standard and in an instant, used his arrows to destroy his horses, charioteer and chariot. His bow was severed. He was without a chariot. His horses were slain. His charioteer was killed. He grasped a giant sword and a shield that blazed like the sun and was marked with the sign of one hundred moons. O Indra among kings! However, Drona's maharatha son was brave. He was firm in using weapons and light in use of his hands. Before he<sup>533</sup> could descend from his chariot, he swiftly severed these with his broad-headed arrows and it was extraordinary. Dhrishtadyumna was without a chariot. His horses had been slain and his bow had been severed. O best of the Bharata lineage! The maharatha<sup>534</sup> tried his best. But though he tried his best, pierced him with many arrows and shattered his weapons, he could not kill him. O king! When Drona's son could not kill him with his arrows, the brave one cast aside his bow and quickly advanced towards Parshata. O king! The great-souled one attacked and descended powerfully, like Garuda descending to pick up the best of serpents.

‘ “At this moment, Madhava spoke to Arjuna. ‘O Partha! Behold. Drona's son is making great efforts for Parshata's destruction and there is no doubt that he will kill him. O mighty-armed one! Free Parshata, the scorcher of enemies. He has reached the mouth of Drona's son, as if he is within the mouth of death.’ O great king! Having said this, the powerful Vasudeva swiftly urged the horses towards the spot where Drona's son was. Those horses possessed the complexion of the moon and were urged by Keshava. As they advanced towards the chariot of Drona's son, they seemed to drink up the sky. O king! On seeing that the immensely valorous and radiant Krishna and Dhananjaya were advancing, the immensely strong one<sup>535</sup> made great efforts to kill Dhrishtadyumna. O lord of men! On seeing that Dhrishtadyumna was being dragged,<sup>536</sup> the immensely strong Partha shot arrows towards Drona's son. Those arrows were decorated with gold and dispatched from Gandiva. They severely struck Drona's son and penetrated, like serpents entering a termite hill. Drona's powerful son was devastated by those fierce arrows. Afflicted by Dhananjaya's arrows, the brave one climbed onto his chariot. He picked up his supreme bow and pierced Partha with arrows. O lord of men! At this time, the brave Sahadeva picked up Parshata, the scorcher of enemies, on his chariot and bore him away. O great king! Arjuna pierced Drona's son with arrows and Drona's son angrily struck him on the arms and the chest. Becoming enraged in that battle, Partha used an iron arrow that was like death. It was like Yama's staff and he released it towards Drona's son. Immensely radiant, it descended on the brahmana's shoulder. O great king! In that battle, because of the force of that arrow, he lost his senses. Overcome by supreme lassitude, he sank down on the floor of his chariot. O great king! On seeing Arjuna engaged in the battle, Karna repeatedly brandished his Vijaya bow. In the great battle, he desired to have a duel with Partha. On seeing that the brave one<sup>537</sup> had lost his senses, his charioteer used his chariot to swiftly bear the destroyer of enemies away from the field of battle. O great king! On seeing that Parshata had been freed and Drona's son afflicted, the Panchalas were delighted and became hopeful of victory. Thousands of divine musical instruments were sounded. On witnessing such terrible and extremely wonderful deeds, they roared like lions. Having done this, Partha Dhananjaya spoke to Vasudeva. ‘O Krishna! Proceed towards the samshaptakas. That should be my next task.’ On hearing the words spoken by Pandava, Dasharha departed on the chariot that had many banners and possessed the speed of the wind or thoughts.” ’



## Chapter 1193(43)

‘Sanjaya said, “At this time, Krishna spoke these words to Partha, pointing out to Kounteya, Dharmaraja Yudhishtira. ‘O Partha! Pandava, your brother, is being swiftly pursued by the immensely strong sons of Dhritarashtra. They are great archers and wish to kill him. The angry Panchalas, invincible in battle, are also following at great speed, wishing to save the great-souled Yudhishtira. O Partha! Duryodhana is the king of all the worlds. He is armoured and is following the king with an array of chariots. With his brothers, the powerful one desires to kill that tiger among men. Their touch is like that of venomous serpents and they are skilled in all manner of fighting. Wishing to kill him, these elephants, horses, chariots and foot soldiers are also advancing. The sons of Dhritarashtra are after Yudhishtira, like those after a supreme jewel. Behold. They have been checked by Satvata and the lord Bhima. They are like daityas desiring amrita, but held in check by Shakra and Agni. However, many of them are again swiftly advancing towards Pandava. Those maharathas are like waters made turbulent by the wind, rushing towards the ocean during the monsoon season. They are roaring like lions, or like clouds at the end of the summer. The powerful and great archers are brandishing their bows. I think that Yudhishtira, Kunti’s son, has entered the jaws of death. The fortunate one has come under Duryodhana’s subjugation and is like an oblation poured into the fire. O Pandava! The army of the sons of Dhritarashtra has been prepared properly. Even Shakra will not be able to escape, if he comes within the range of their arrows. Duryodhana, Drona’s son and Sharadvata are brave. The force of Karna’s arrows can shatter mountains. Duryodhana is valiant and shoots a storm of arrows quickly. When he is angry, he is like Yama. Who is capable of withstanding his force in battle? The king, the scorcher of enemies, has already been forced to retreat by Karna, who is powerful, dexterous and accomplished, and skilled in fighting. Radheya is capable of oppressing the best of the Pandavas in the battle. In addition, the brave one is with the great-souled sons of Dhritarashtra. He<sup>538</sup> is controlled in his soul. When he fought with them in the battle, other maharathas robbed Partha of his armour. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The king is severely emaciated because of his fasts. He is established in the strength of the brahman, but he does not possess a great deal of strength of the kshatriya variety. O Partha! I do not think that Yudhishtira, the great king, will remain alive, even though Bhimasena is with him and is roaring intolerantly, like a lion. O scorcher of enemies! The sons of Dhritarashtra are roaring repeatedly. Desiring victory in the battle, they are blowing on their giant conch shells. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Pandaveya Yudhishtira will be killed. Karna will urge the immensely strong sons of Dhritarashtra towards Partha. He will shroud the king with *sthunakarna*, *indrajala* and pashupata and the maharathas will follow him.<sup>539</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is my view that the king must be in distress. At a time when speed is of the essence, the Panchalas and the Pandavas, supreme among all wielders of weapons, are following him. They are like powerful ones dashing to save someone who has been submerged in the nether regions. O Partha! The king’s flags cannot be seen. They may have been brought down by Karna’s arrows, while the twins, Satyaki, Shikhandi, Dhrishtadyumna, Bhima, the lord Shatanika and all the Panchalas and Chedis looked on. O Partha! In this battle, Karna is destroying the Pandava soldiers with his arrows, like an elephant among lotuses. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! The rathas on your side are being driven away. O Partha! Look at how the maharathas are retreating. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the battle, the elephants have been struck by Karna. They are shrieking and are running away in the ten directions. O Partha! Behold. Arrays of chariots are fleeing in different directions. They have been routed in the battle by Karna, the destroyer of enemies. In the battle, behold the chariot of the son of the suta roaming around here and there. He is stationed on it. He has the best of standards and it is marked with the sign of an elephant’s housing. Radheya is advancing towards Bhimase-  
na’s chariot. He is showering down hundreds of arrows and slaughtering your army. Behold the Panchalas being driven away by the great-souled one. He is like Shakra destroying the daityas in a great battle. This Karna has de-



feated the Panchalas, Pandus and Srinjayas. He is now searching around in all the directions for you. That is my view. O Partha! Behold. He looks beautiful, as he is stretching the best of bows. Having defeated the enemy, he is like Shakra, surrounded by large numbers of gods. On witnessing Karna's valour, the Kouravas are roaring. Thousands of Parthas and Srinjayas have been frightened in the battle. In this great battle, he has wholeheartedly terrified the Pandus. O one who grants honours! Radheya is addressing all the soldiers. "O Kouravas! Attack them quickly. Advance and drive them away, so that no one among the Srinjayas can escape from this encounter with his life. Act united in this way and we will follow you." Having said this, he is advancing behind them, showering arrows. O Partha! Behold Karna in the battle. He is under a white umbrella and is as radiant as the sun behind Mount Asta. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A white umbrella that is like the full moon and possesses a hundred spokes is held aloft his head in the battle. O lord of the earth! Karna is casting his glances around, looking for you. He will certainly make the best of efforts in this battle. O mighty-armed one! Behold him brandishing his giant bow. The immensely strong one is releasing arrows that are like venomous serpents. O one with the ape on the banner! Radheya can be seen to be headed in this direction. He is advancing for his own destruction, like an insect towards a lamp. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that Karna is alone, Dhritarashtra's son has turned his array of chariots towards him, controlling them so as to protect him. If you desire fame, the kingdom and supreme happiness, make efforts to kill him, with all the evil-souled ones who are with him. O bull among the Bharata lineage! You have controlled your soul. Glance towards your own self. Radheya is firm in his hatred for the great-souled Yudhishtira. Accomplish the end that Radheya has set for himself. O noble one! Set your mind on fighting and repel that leader of rathas. O supreme among rathas! Five foremost rathas are powerfully advancing towards you,<sup>540</sup> with hundreds of others. They are strong and fierce in their energy. There are five thousand elephants and twice that number of horses. O Kounteya! Ten thousand foot soldiers are also advancing. O brave one! Protecting each other, that army is advancing towards you. Reveal your own self to the son of a suta, the great archer. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Make the best of efforts and repulse them. This Karna is extremely angry and is attacking the Panchalas. Behold his flag in the direction of Dhrishtadyumna's chariot. O scorcher of enemies! I think that he will uproot the Panchalas. O Partha! O bull among the Bharata lineage! But I will tell you something that will please you. Kouravya King Yudhishtira, Dharma's son, is alive. The mighty-armed Bhima has returned and is stationed at the head of the army. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He is surrounded by the Srinjaya soldiers and by Satyaki. O Kounteya! In this encounter, Bhimasena and the great-souled Panchalas are slaying the Kouravas with sharp arrows. The soldiers of Dhritarashtra's son are retreating and running away from the field of battle. Slain by Bhima's forceful arrows, they are being routed. With blood flowing from their wounds, they look like the earth after a crop has been harvested. O best of the Bharatas! The army of the Bharatas<sup>541</sup> presents a miserable sight. O Kounteya! Behold. They have been forced to retreat. Bhimasena, the lord of warriors, who is like a venomous serpent, has angrily driven away the army. O Arjuna! Yellow, red, black and white flags, with the signs of stars, the moon and the sun, and many umbrellas are strewn around. There are golden and silver standards and those that are made of other metals. They have been brought down and are scattered around, and so are elephants and horses. Deprived of their lives, rathas have fallen down from their chariots. They have been slain by many-hued arrows released by the Panchalas, who are not running away. O Dhananjaya! The army of the sons of Dhritarashtra is without men, elephants, horses and chariots, and the Panchalas are spiritedly driving it away. O scorcher of enemies! The enemy's army was unassailable. But ready to give up their lives and seeking refuge with Bhimasena, they<sup>542</sup> are driving it away. The Panchalas are roaring, like clouds at the end of the summer. They are driving away the enemy in the battle and slaying them with arrows. O scorcher of enemies! Behold the greatness of heaven before the Panchalas.<sup>543</sup> They are angrily slaying the sons of Dhritarashtra, like lions against elephants. Every part of the large army of the sons of Dhritarashtra has been attacked. The force of the Panchalas is like that of swans that leave Manasa<sup>544</sup> for the Ganga. Kripa, Karna and other brave ones are severely trying to counter the valorous Panchalas, like bulls against bulls. However, the maharathas among the sons of Dhritarashtra are deeply submerged in Bhima's weapons. On seeing that the rathas in the great army of the sons of Dhritarashtra are distressed, the brave ones, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, are slaying the enemy in thousands. Behold. The elephants have been shattered by Bhima's iron arrows and are falling down. They are like summits that have fallen

down on the ground, after being struck by the vajra of the wielder of the vajra. Mighty elephants have been struck by Bhimasena's straight-tufted arrows. As they are running away, they are slaying their own soldiers. Do you not know Bhima's unbearable leonine roar? O Arjuna! Desiring victory in the battle, the brave one is roaring. Astride a supreme elephant, the Nishada<sup>545</sup> is advancing against Pandava. He is angrily attacking him with javelins, like Yama with a staff in his hand. Bhima is roaring and breaking down those javelins with his bare hands. He has then used ten sharp iron arrows, which are like the flames of the fire, to slay him. Behold. Having slain him, the striker has again attacked other elephants that are like blue clouds and are driven by skilled drivers. Vrikodara has slain those elephants, seven at a time, with spears and javelins and has brought down their victorious standards. They have been slain and mangled with sharp arrows by Partha's elder brother. Each of ten elephants has been slain by ten sharp arrows. The roars of the sons of Dhritarashtra can no longer be heard now. They have been forced to retreat by the angry bull among the Bharata lineage,<sup>546</sup> who is Purandara's equal. Three akshouhinis from the sons of Dhritarashtra united against him. However, Bhimasena, lion among men, angrily countered them.' On seeing that Bhimasena had accomplished that extremely difficult deed, Arjuna slaughtered the remaining ones with his sharp arrows. O lord! Large numbers of samshaptakas were slaughtered in that battle. Bereft of sorrow and filled with delight, they became Shakra's guests. With straight-tufted arrows, Partha, tiger among men, destroyed the fourfold<sup>547</sup> army of the sons of Dhritarashtra." ' "

## Chapter 1194(44)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “When Bhimasena and Pandava Yudhishtira returned and my army was slaughtered by the Pandus and the Srinjayas, when my army that was like an ocean was repeatedly distressed, what was done by the Kurus? O Sanjaya! Tell me that in detail.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! On seeing the mighty-armed Bhima, the eyes of the powerful son of a suta became red with rage. He attacked Bhimasena. O king! On seeing that your army had retreated before Bhimasena, the powerful one made great efforts to rally it. Having rallied your son’s army, the mighty-armed Karna advanced against the Pandavas, who were indomitable in battle. Radheya counter-attacked the maharatha Pandavas. He brandished his bow and showered down arrows on Bhimasena, Shini’s grandson, Shikhandi, Janamejaya, the powerful Dhrishtadyumna and all the Prabhadrakas. The Panchalas, tigers among men, angrily attacked your army from all sides in that battle, desiring victory. O king! In that fashion, the maharathas on your side wished to kill them and impetuously attacked the Pandava army. O tiger among men! The place was beautiful with chariots, elephants, horses, foot soldiers and standards and the armies were wonderful to see. O great king! Shikhandi advanced against Karna and Dhrishtadyumna against your son, Duhshasana, who was surrounded by a large army. Nakula advanced against Vrishasena and Yudhishtira against Chitrasena.<sup>548</sup> O king! In the encounter, Sahadeva attacked Uluka, Satyaki attacked Shakuni and Bhimasena the Kouravas. In the battle, Drona’s maharatha son made endeavours against Arjuna. In the battle, Goutama attacked the great archer, Yudhamanyu, and Kritavarma advanced against the powerful Uttamouja. O venerable one! Single-handedly, the mighty-armed Bhimasena countered all your sons, the Kurus, together with their soldiers.

‘ “O great king! Shikhandi, the slayer of Bhishma, roamed around fearlessly and countered Karna with his arrows. Countered, Karna’s lips quivered in rage. He struck Shikhandi between his eyebrows with three arrows. With those arrows stuck there, Shikhandi looked exceedingly beautiful. He was like a silver mountain with three peaks. In the battle, having been thus grievously struck by the son of a suta in the encounter, he pierced Karna with ninety sharp arrows. Karna slew his horses and charioteer with three arrows. The maharatha then brought down his standard with a kshurapra arrow. With his horses slain, the maharatha, the scorcher of enemies,<sup>549</sup> jumped down from his chariot and angrily flung a javelin towards Karna. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the battle, Karna cut that down with his arrows and then mangled Shikhandi with nine sharp arrows. Shikhandi, supreme among men and supreme among victorious ones, avoided the arrows released from Karna’s bow and retreated quickly.

‘ “O great king! Karna then scattered the Pandu soldiers, like a mass of cotton by the speed of a mighty wind. O great king! Dhrishtadyumna was afflicted by your son and struck Duhshasana between the breasts with three arrows. O venerable one! Duhshasana pierced his left arm with a sharp, gold-tufted and broad-headed arrow with drooping tufts. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus pierced, Dhrishtadyumna became fierce in his wrath and angrily dispatched an arrow towards Duhshasana. O lord of the earth! The arrow released by Dhrishtadyuma descended with great force, but your son sliced it down with three arrows. He then used another seventeen broad-headed and gold-decorated arrows to strike Dhrishtadyumna in the arms and in the chest. O venerable one! Becoming angry, Parshata severed his bow with an extremely sharp kshurapra arrow and people roared in applause. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Your son picked up another bow and showered a storm of arrows from every direction on Dhrishtadyumna. On witnessing the valour of your great-souled son, the warrior, in the battle, the large numbers of siddhas and apsaras smiled.

‘ “O scorcher of enemies! Thus the battle raged between those on your side and that of the enemy. It was fierce, as terrible in form as the destruction of all beings at the end of a yuga. Vrishasena pierced Nakula with five iron

arrows and stationing himself near his father,<sup>550</sup> pierced him again with three arrows. Nakula became angry and laughed at Vrishasena. He then pierced him firmly in the chest with an extremely sharp iron arrow. Having been severely struck by the powerful enemy, the destroyer of foes struck his adversary with twenty arrows and was pierced back with five. Those two bulls among men shot thousands of arrows at each other and, supported by their respective soldiers, enveloped each other. O lord of the earth! On seeing that the soldiers of the sons of Dhritarashtra were fleeing, the son of a suta followed them and powerfully checked them. O venerable one! When Karna had withdrawn, Nakula advanced against the Kouravas. In the battle, Karna's son also abandoned Nakula and swiftly went to the spot where Radheya was.

‘ “In the battle, the angry Uluka was checked by Sahadeva. The powerful Sahadeva slew his four horses and conveyed his charioteer towards Yama's abode. O lord of the earth! At this, Uluka, loved by his father, descended from his vehicle and swiftly joined the army of the Trigartas.

‘ “Satyaki pierced Shakuni with twenty sharp arrows and severing Soubala's standard with a broad-headed arrow, laughed. O king! The powerful Soubala became enraged in that battle. Having shattered Satyaki's armour, he again brought down his golden standard and pierced him back with sharp arrows. O great king! He<sup>551</sup> brought down his charioteer with three arrows and swiftly used other arrows to convey his mounts to Yama's eternal abode. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Maharatha Shakuni suddenly alighted from his chariot and swiftly ascended that of Uluka. He was quickly borne away from Satyaki, who was skilled in fighting. O king! In that battle, Satyaki attacked your soldiers with great force and shattered the formation. O lord of the earth! Your soldiers were enveloped by arrows shot by Shini's descendant and were quickly scattered in the ten directions. They lost their lives and fell down.

‘ “Your son<sup>552</sup> countered Bhimasena in the battle. But in an instant, Bhima deprived that lord of men of his horses, charioteer, chariot and standard. This satisfied the charanas. At this, he withdrew from Bhimasena's presence. Wishing to kill the single-handed Bhimasena, all the Kuru soldiers let out a mighty roar and attacked him.

‘ “Yudhamanyu attacked Kripa and quickly severed his bow. Kripa, supreme among the wielders of weapons, picked up another bow. He brought down Yudhamanyu's standard, charioteer, umbrella and bow on the ground. Maharatha Yudhamanyu withdrew on another chariot. Hardikya was terrible in his valour and Uttamouja suddenly shrouded him with arrows, like clouds raining down on a mountain. O scorcher of enemies! O lord of the earth! The encounter between them was extremely great and terrible. I have not seen anything like that earlier. O king! In that battle, Kritavarma pierced Uttamouja in the chest and he sank down on the floor of his chariot. His charioteer bore the best of rathas away on his chariot. O king! The Pandu soldiers were then quickly routed.” ’

## Chapter 1195(45)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! Surrounded by a large array of chariots, Drona’s son swiftly descended on the spot where the king<sup>553</sup> was. On seeing him violently descend, the brave Partha,<sup>554</sup> with Shouri as his aide, violently checked him, like the shoreline against the abode of makaras. O great king! At this, Drona’s powerful son became enraged and enveloped Arjuna and Vasudeva with arrows. The maharathas saw that the two Krishnas were afflicted. The Kurus saw this and were overcome by great wonder. Arjuna seemed to smile and invoked a divine weapon. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the battle, the brahmana countered it. Wishing to kill, whichever weapon Pandava used in the battle was baffled by Drona’s son, the great archer, in the encounter. O king! A terrible clash with weapons ensued. We saw Drona’s son in that encounter, like Death with a gaping mouth. Having enveloped the directions and the sub-directions with his arrows, he struck Vasudeva in the right arm with three arrows. Arjuna slew all the horses of the great-souled one and in the encounter, made the earth flow with a river of blood. Arrows released from Partha’s bow killed rathas and brought them down. Freed from their yokes, horses were seen to run around here and there. On witnessing the deeds performed by Partha, Drona’s son, the ornament of a battle, countered Krishna<sup>555</sup> in that encounter and covered him from every direction with sharp arrows. O great king! In the battle, Drona’s son used another arrow to strike Arjuna in the chest. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having been severely struck in the battle by Drona’s son, he picked up a terrible club and hurled it towards Drona’s son. That club was decorated with gold and descended. However, Drona’s son suddenly shattered it and people applauded. O king! Shattered into many fragments by the arrows of Bharadvaja’s son, it fell down on the ground, like a mountain that has been shattered by the wind god. In the encounter, Arjuna pierced Drona’s son with ten arrows and used a broad-headed arrow to bring down his charioteer from his seat on the chariot. Drona’s son, swift in his valour, controlled the mounts himself and swiftly enveloped the two Krishnas with arrows. We beheld that wonderful sight. He controlled and drove the horses and fought with Phalgun. O king! In the battle, all the warriors applauded this feat. When Drona’s son advanced before Phalgun in the encounter, Jaya<sup>556</sup> used a kshurapra arrow to slice down the harnesses that yoked the horses to the chariot. Driven by the force of the arrows, the horses fled. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A loud uproar arose amidst your troops. Having obtained victory, the Pandavas drove away your soldiers. Desiring victory, they released sharp arrows from every direction. O great king! The large army of the sons of Dhritarashtra was repeatedly routed by the brave ones, who were urged on by the prospect of victory.

‘“O great king! Your sons, colourful in fighting, Shakuni Soubala and the great-souled Karna looked on. O lord of men! But they were unable to rally the large army of your sons. Afflicted in every way, they no longer remained in the battle. O great king! The warriors fled here and there. On seeing this, the large army of your sons was terrified and, extremely anxious, ran away. The son of a suta repeatedly asked them to remain. However, slain by the great-souled ones, the soldiers did not stay there. O great king! Desiring victory, the Pandavas roared repeatedly, having seen that the army of the sons of Dhritarashtra was running away in various directions. At this, Duryodhana spoke these affectionate words to Karna. ‘O Karna! Behold. The soldiers have been severely oppressed by the Pandavas. Though you are here, they are frightened and are running away in every direction. O mighty-armed one! O destroyer of enemies! Knowing this, do what must be done. O bull among men! O brave one! Driven away by the Pandavas in the battle, thousands of warriors are calling out to you alone.’ Hearing these important words spoken by Duryodhana, Radheya, the descendant of the suta lineage, spoke these words to the lord of Madra. ‘O lord of men! Behold the valour of my arms and my weapons. In the battle today, I will kill all the Panchalas, together with the Pandus. O tiger among men! O lord of men! Drive the horses well.’ Having spoken these words, the powerful

and brave son of a suta, picked up Vijaya, his ancient and excellent bow. O great king! Having strung it, he repeatedly rubbed the string. He asked the warriors to return.

‘ “The immensely strong one with an immeasurable soul took a pledge of truth and invoked the *bhargava* weapon.<sup>557</sup> O king! In the great battle, thousands, millions, billions and crores of extremely sharp arrows issued from it. They were extremely terrible and blazed, shafted with the feathers of herons and peacocks. The Pandava soldiers were mangled and nothing could be seen. O lord of the earth! Great sounds of lamentation arose among the Panchalas. In the encounter, they were afflicted by the power of the *bhargava* weapon. O king! Elephants and men were brought down in thousands. O tiger among men! Chariots and horses were strewn around in every direction. O king! The slain were strewn around here and there and the earth trembled. The entire large army of the Pandavas was agitated. Karna alone was the foremost among warriors. He was like a fire without smoke. O tiger among men! That scorcher of enemies consumed the enemy and was resplendent. Having been slain by Karna, the Panchalas and the Chedis became unconscious. They were like elephants in a forest conflagration. O tiger among men! Those best among men lamented loudly. In the field of battle, loud woes of the terrified ones could be heard. O king! Terrified, they fled in different directions. There was the great sound of lamentation there, like that made by beings at the time of a flood. O venerable one! They were seen to be slaughtered there by the son of a suta. All the beings, including those belonging to an inferior species,<sup>558</sup> were frightened. The Srinjayas were slaughtered in the battle by the son of a suta and repeatedly cried out to Arjuna and Vasudeva. They were unconscious, like those in the city of the king of the dead, calling out to the king of the dead.<sup>559</sup>

‘ “At this, Kunti’s son, Dhananjaya, spoke to Vasudeva. ‘Behold the extremely terrible *bhargava* weapon. O Krishna! O mighty-armed one! Behold the valour of the *bhargava* weapon. There is no means of countering that weapon in a battle. O Krishna! Behold the angry son of a suta in the great battle. The brave one is like Yama and has performed a terrible deed. He is repeatedly casting extremely terrible glances towards me. I do not see any means of running away from Karna in this battle. If a man remains alive in a battle, there may be victory, or there may be defeat. O Hrishikesha! For the sake of victory, how can one be victorious if one is dead?’ O venerable one! Janardana wished to leave to see Yudhishtira and thought that Karna would be overcome with exhaustion in the battle.<sup>560</sup> Krishna told Arjuna, ‘The king<sup>561</sup> has been severely wounded. O best among the Kuru lineage! Let us reassure him first and you will kill Karna after that.’ Dhananjaya also wished to see the king who had been afflicted with arrows. On Keshava’s instructions, he abandoned the battle and quickly departed on his chariot. Kounteya left, because he wished to see Dharmaraja. Though he looked at all the soldiers, he could not see his elder brother anywhere. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having fought with Drona’s son and having defeated the descendant of Bhrgu lineage,<sup>562</sup> whom even the wielder of the vajra found difficult to withstand in battle, he departed. He defeated Drona’s son, the wielder of a fierce bow. He thus accomplished an extremely difficult deed.

‘ “Dhananjaya, irresistible to enemies, then glanced towards his own soldiers. The bravest of the brave, who were battling at the forefronts of their divisions, were delighted to see Savyasachi. They were famous because of their earlier deeds and he instructed the rathas to be stationed with their divisions. However, the garlanded Kiriti did not see the eldest of the warriors, his brother Ajamidha.<sup>563</sup> He quickly approached Bhima and asked, ‘How is the king? Where is the king?’ Bhima replied, ‘King Yudhishtira, Dharma’s son, has retreated. His limbs have been mangled by Karna’s arrows. I doubt that he is alive.’ Arjuna said, ‘Therefore, you should quickly go and find out about the king, supreme among the Kurus. Having been severely pierced by Karna’s arrows, there is no doubt that the king has gone to his camp. When it was night,<sup>564</sup> though he was severely and grievously struck by Drona, the spirited one remained, desiring victory, and waited until Drona had been killed. In the battle today, the generous eldest among the Pandavas, has faced a disaster because of Karna. O Bhima! Quickly go and find out about him. I will remain here and restrain the large numbers of the enemy.’ Bhima replied, ‘O magnanimous one! O bull among the Bharata lineage! You go and find out how the king is. O Arjuna! If I go there, these brave ones<sup>565</sup> will say that I am frightened.’ At this, Arjuna told Bhimasena, ‘The samshaptakas are arranged in a counter-formation against me. Without killing them, it is not possible for me to abandon these large numbers of the enemy.’ Bhimasena told Arjuna, ‘O brave one amongst the Kuru lineage! In this encounter, I will rely on my valour and fight

against all the samshaptakas. O Dhananjaya! Go.’ In the midst of the enemy, he<sup>566</sup> heard these extremely difficult words of assurance given by Bhimasena, his brother. Wishing to leave and see the best of the Kuru lineage,<sup>567</sup> he then spoke these words to the best of the Vrishni lineage. ‘O Hrishiksha! Drive the horses and let us leave this ocean of chariots. O Keshava! I wish to see King Ajatashatru.’ Before urging the horses, the foremost among the Dasharha lineage spoke these words to Bhima. ‘O brave one! For you, the task to be accomplished now is not at all wonderful. O Bhima! I am leaving. Slay these masses of the enemy.’ O king! O Indra among kings! Hrishiksha then went to the spot where King Yudhishtira was, urging the steeds that were Garuda’s equal to a greater and greater speed, having stationed Bhimsena, the scorcher of enemies, in the counter-formation and having given Vrikodara instructions about the fight. Those two, the best of men, approached the king, who was lying down alone. They descended from the chariot and bowed in obeisance at Dharmaraja’s feet.<sup>568</sup> On seeing that the bull among men was well, those two bulls among men, the two Krishnas, were filled with delight, like the two Ashvins on seeing Vasava. The king honoured them, like the fire god, the Ashvins, or the preceptor greeting Shakra and Vishnu when the great asura Jambha was killed.<sup>569</sup> Thinking that Karna had been killed, Dharmaraja Yudhishtira was delighted and addressed those two scorchers of enemies in a voice that was choking with joy.” ’



## Chapter 1196(46)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing the great-spirited Keshava and Arjuna arrive together, he thought that Adhiratha’s son had been killed in the battle by the wielder of Gandiva. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Kounteya, the destroyer of enemies, greeted them in extremely affectionate words and, honouring them, smiled.

‘ “Yudhishtira said, ‘O Devaki’s son! Welcome. O Dhananjaya! Welcome. I am extremely delighted to see Achyuta and Arjuna together. Since neither of you is injured, how was your battle with the maharatha?<sup>570</sup> He is like virulent poison in a battle and is skilled in the use of all weapons. He is the leader of all the sons of Dhritarashtra and is their armour and their mail. He was protected by the archers Vrishasena and Sushena. The invincible and immensely valorous one had learnt weapons from Rama<sup>571</sup> himself. He was the protector of the sons of Dhritarashtra and advanced at the forefront of their army. He was the one who killed enemy soldiers. He is the one who crushed large numbers of the enemy. He was engaged in Duryodhana’s welfare and was always ready to rise up against us. In a great battle, he could not be assailed even by the gods, together with Vasava. In his energy and his strength, he was like the wind and the fire. He was as deep as the nether regions and brought joy to his well-wishers. By killing Karna in the great battle, you have brought an end to my enemies. It is through good fortune that you have come to me, like two immortals after killing an asura. O Achyuta! O Arjuna! I fearlessly fought a battle with him today. He was like an enraged Yama, wishing to slay all beings. He brought down my standard and slew my parshni charioteers. While Yuyudhana looked on, I was rendered without a chariot and without horses. Dhristadyumna, the brave twins, Shikhandi, Droupadi’s sons and all the Panchalas looked on. O mighty-armed one!<sup>572</sup> Having defeated large numbers of the enemy, the immensely valorous Karna vanquished me in the great battle, though I strove to my utmost. He pursued me in the battle and spoke many harsh words. There is no doubt that he defeated the best among the warriors. O Dhananjaya! It is because of Bhimasena’s powers that I am still alive. There is no need to speak a lot. That humiliation was overwhelming. O Dhananjaya! I have been frightened about him for thirteen years. I was not able to sleep at night. Nor could I be happy during the day. O Dhananjaya! Because of my enmity towards him, it was as if I was burning. I was like a rhinoceros or an elephant, knowing that it was going to die.<sup>573</sup> O lord! I continuously thought about the time when he would go to Yama. How would I bring about Karna’s destruction in the battle? O Kounteya! Whether I was awake or sleeping, Karna was always in front of me. I saw him everywhere. The entire universe was full of Karna. O Dhananjaya! Wherever I went, I was frightened of Karna. And wherever I went, I saw him stationed in front of me. I was forced to run away from that brave one in the battle. O Partha! I was defeated, with my horses and my chariot and he let me escape with my life. What is the point of remaining alive? What again is the point of the kingdom? I have been shamed by Karna, the ornament of a battle. What was not obtained by me earlier in the battle with Bhishma, Kripa and Drona, has been obtained by me in the encounter with the maharatha son of a suta. O Kounteya! That is the reason I am asking you about your welfare now. Tell me everything about how Karna has been slain by you. His valour in a battle is like that of Shakra. His bravery is like that of Yama. He is like Rama<sup>574</sup> in weapons. How was he killed? He is famous as a maharatha. He is skilled in every method of fighting. Among all the wielders of the bow, he is the only man who is the foremost. O lord of the earth! He was always honoured by Dhritarashtra and his sons for your sake.<sup>575</sup> How was Radheya killed by you? O Arjuna! Among all the warriors, Dhritarashtra always used to regard Karna, bull among men, as the cause of your death in battle. O tiger among men! How was he killed by you in the encounter? O Bibhatsu! Tell me everything about how Karna has been killed by you. O tiger among men! In the sight of his comrades and well-wishers, did you sever his head, like a tiger against a *ruru* deer? In the battle, the son of a suta was searching for you and looked in every region and every direction. In the battle, Karna wished to give a

bull-elephant to anyone who pointed you out. Has he been brought down by your extremely sharp arrows shafted with the feathers of herons? Having been killed by you in the battle, is the evil-souled son of a suta lying down on the surface of the earth? Perhaps you have brought me supreme delight today, by killing the son of a suta in the battle. Intoxicated with his pride, the son of a suta looked everywhere for you. He prided himself on his valour. Having clashed against you in the battle today, has he been killed by you? For your sake, he was prepared to give others a golden chariot and the best of elephants yoked to that chariot.<sup>576</sup> He always sought to challenge you in an encounter. O son!<sup>577</sup> Has that wicked one indeed been killed by you in the battle? He was always crazy with insolence about his bravery and he spoke about it in the assembly of the Kouravas. He was always dear to Suyodhana. Has that evil one been killed by you today? When he clashed against you, were red arrows released from your bow, like birds? That wicked one's body has been mangled and he is lying down today. Has the arm of Dhritrashtra's son been broken? Full of insolence, he always prided himself in the midst of the kings, delighting Duryodhana. Because of his delusion, he said, "I will slay Phalgunas." Has that ratha been killed by you? The one with limited intelligence said that he would not wash his feet as long as Partha was alive.<sup>578</sup> He always observed that vow. O Shakra's son! Has Karna been killed by you today? In the assembly hall, in the midst of the brave Kurus, the evil-minded Karna spoke to Krishna<sup>579</sup> and said, "O Krishna! Why don't you abandon the Pandavas? They have fallen and are extremely feeble. They have been deprived of their spirits." For your sake, Karna took a pledge that he would not return without having slain Krishna and Partha. Is the one with wicked intelligence lying down, his body mangled with arrows? The clash between the Srinjayas and the Kouravas and the state I was reduced to then are known to you. Having clashed against you, has he been slain by you today? Have you released flaming arrows from Gandiva towards that extremely evil-minded one? He possessed earrings on his head, given to him by the sun god.<sup>580</sup> Has Savyasachi really severed that head in the battle? O brave one! When he released arrows in my direction, I thought about Karna's death. Have you today accomplished what I thought about, by bringing down Karna? Protected by Karna, Suyodhana was full of insolence and looked down on us. Having clashed against you today, has Suyodhana's valour been destroyed? In earlier times, in the assembly hall and in the presence of the kings, he called us sterile sesamum seeds earlier.<sup>581</sup> Has the evil-minded and intolerant son of a suta encountered you in the battle and been killed by you? In earlier times, when Yajnaseni was won by Soubala,<sup>582</sup> the evil-souled son of a suta laughed at us and, laughing at her, said that she should be brought. Has he been killed by you today? When the grandfather, the best wielder of weapons on earth, classified him as only half a ratha, the one with limited intelligence censured him.<sup>583</sup> Has Adhiratha's evil-souled son been killed by you? The fire of intolerance has always blazed in my heart and has been fanned by the breeze of humiliation. Having clashed against the wicked one, have you quenched it today? O Phalgunas! Tell me and pacify me."

## Chapter 1197(47)

‘Sanjaya said, “Having heard the angry words spoken about Adhiratha’s great-souled son by the king who followed dharma, the unassailable Jishnu, whose valour was infinite and whose spirit was never depressed, spoke these words to Yudhishtira. ‘O king! When I fought with the samshaptakas today, Drona’s son suddenly stationed himself in front of me and at the forefront of the Kuru soldiers. He released arrows that were like venomous serpents. On seeing my chariot, which was like a cloud, the soldiers from Ambashtha were ready to die. O foremost among kings! I killed five hundred of those and advanced against Drona’s son. He stretched his bow back all the way up to his ears and aimed many arrows. He possessed the strength of learning and weapons and showered down, like a dark cloud. In the battle, I could not distinguish between his affixing an arrow and releasing it. Drona’s son circled around in that battle, sometimes to the left and sometimes to the right. Drona’s son pierced me with five sharp arrows and Vasudeva with another five. In an instant, and without any gap, I struck him with thirty arrows that were like the vajra. Blood began to flow from all over his body. Those soldiers had been overcome by me and their bodies were overflowing with blood. On seeing this, he<sup>584</sup> entered the array of chariots that belonged to the son of a suta. The warriors were overcome and the soldiers were devastated. Warriors, horses and elephants were running away. On seeing this, Karna swiftly dispatched fifty supreme rathas against me. After having killed them and avoided Karna, I have quickly come here to see you. On seeing Karna, all the Panchalas are filled with fright and are like cattle driven away by a lion. The Prabhadrakas are being driven away by Karna, as if they have entered the mouth of a large fish. O king! Having clashed against Karna, the Prabhadrakas are like those who have entered Death’s gaping mouth. Come and see me and the son of a suta fight, striving for victory. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Desiring heaven and the worlds,<sup>585</sup> six thousand princes and rathas have immersed themselves. O foremost among kings! I will engage with the son of a suta in battle, like the wielder of the vajra against Vritra. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If you wish to see it, there will be a fierce battle today between me and the son of a suta. O king! I will engage in a battle with Karna and kill him today, together with his relatives. O lion among men! There are ends meant for those who

make a pledge and do not keep it. If I fail, let that end be mine. I am inviting you. Tell me that victory in the battle will be mine. In front of us, the sons of Dhritarashtra are about to devour Bhima. O lion among kings! I will slay the son of a suta today, together with all the large numbers of enemy soldiers.’” ’

## Chapter 1198(48)

‘Sanjaya said, “On hearing that the immensely valorous Karna was still alive, the infinitely energetic Partha<sup>586</sup> became angry with Phalguna. Tormented by Karna’s arrows, Yudhishtira spoke these words to Dhananjaya. ‘In Dvaitavana, you should have said, “O king! I am not interested in fighting with Karna.” O Partha! Had you said that, at the right time, we would have thought of other arrangements. O brave one! But you promised me that you would kill that powerful one. You have brought us into the midst of enemies and then you have shattered us by flinging us down on the ground. O Arjuna! We showered down many blessings on you and we expected many things that would be beneficial for us. O prince! All of that has been rendered unsuccessful, like an upper garment expecting fruits, but obtaining flowers instead.<sup>587</sup> Like a fish hook covered with flesh, or like impure food covered with pure food, I can only see worthless things in you. We desired the kingdom. But we are faced with destruction in the form of the kingdom. O evil-minded one! On the seventh day after you were born, an invisible voice spoke to Pritha<sup>588</sup> from the sky. “The son that has been born to you will be like Vasava in his valour. He will triumph over all the brave enemies. He will be infinitely energetic and will defeat large numbers of gods and all the beings in Khandava. He will vanquish the Madras, the Kalingas and the Kekayas and in the midst of the kings, kill the Kurus. There will be no archer who will be superior to him. No being will be born who will be able to defeat him. This noble one will bring all the beings under his subjugation and will accomplish all kinds of learning. He will be as handsome as the moon and as swift as the wind. He will be like Meru in fortitude and like the earth in forgiveness. He will possess the radiance of the sun and the prosperity of the lord of riches.<sup>589</sup> He will be like Shakra in his valour and like Vishnu in his strength. This great-souled son that has been born to Kunti will be like Aditi’s son Vishnu,<sup>590</sup> the slayer of all enemies. He will bring victory to his own and slay the enemy. He will be famous and infinitely energetic and will be the originator of a lineage.” This was heard from the sky, on the slopes of the Shatashringa mountains.<sup>591</sup> The ascetics heard the words that were spoken. This is what was spoken about you. But it has not come to pass. The gods have certainly uttered a falsehood. I heard words of praise spoken about you by the supreme of rishis and have always honoured you. I did not know that you were affectionate towards Suyodhana. Nor did I know that you feared Adhiratha’s son. You are borne on a vehicle that has been created by Tvashtra.<sup>592</sup> Its axles rattle. The ape sits astride your auspicious standard. You have girded a sword that is decorated with gold. Gandiva bow is as long as a palm tree. O Partha! Keshava drives you. How have you withdrawn as a result of your fear of Karna? O evil-souled one! Had you given the bow to Keshava and become his charioteer in the battle, then Keshava would have slain the fierce Karna, like the lord of the Maruts<sup>593</sup> bringing down Vritra with his vajra. It would have been better had you not been born in Pritha’s womb, but had been aborted in the fifth month itself. O prince! O evil-souled one! That would have been better than withdrawing from the field of battle.”’

## Chapter 1199(49)

‘Sanjaya said, “Having been thus addressed by Yudhishtira, Kounteya, borne on the white horses, angrily grasped his sword, wishing to kill the bull among the Bharata lineage. On witnessing his wrath, Keshava, who knew about thoughts, spoke. ‘O Partha! Why have you grasped your sword in this way? O Dhananjaya! I do not see anyone here with whom you need to fight. All the sons of Dhritarashtra have been devastated by the intelligent Bhima. O Kounteya! You withdrew to seek the king. King Yudhishtira is cheerful and well. You have seen that tiger among men, whose valour is like that of a tiger. This is a time for rejoicing. Why are you overcome by anger? O Kounteya! I do not see anyone here who should be killed by you. Why have you quickly taken up this large sword? O Kounteya! I am asking you about this. What do you wish to do? O one who is extraordinary in valour! You have angrily grasped this supreme sword.’ Having been thus addressed by Krishna, Arjuna glanced towards Yudhishtira. He sighed like a serpent and told Govinda, ‘If anyone asks me to hand over Gandiva to someone else, I will slice off his head. That has been my secret vow. O infinitely valorous one! You have heard what the king with the miserable soul told me in your presence. O Govinda! I have no interest in pardoning him. Therefore, I will kill the king who is always scared about deviating from dharma. I will kill that supreme among men and protect my pledge. O descendant of the Yadu lineage! That is the reason I have picked up the sword. I will kill Yudhishtira and repay my debt to the cause of truth. O Janardana! In that way, I will be without sorrow and without fever. Now that such an occasion has arisen, what do you think? O father!’<sup>594</sup> You know everything about the universe, its past and its future. I will do whatever you ask me to.’

‘ “Krishna replied, ‘O Partha! I now know that you have never attended to those who are old. O tiger among men! You have fallen prey to wrath at the wrong time. O Dhananjaya! No one who knows about the gradations of dharma acts in this way. Thinking something to be a duty, you are engaging in a task that is not a duty. O Partha! It is the worst of men who performs tasks that should not be performed. You should follow the dharma that wise ones have resorted to. They certainly spoke about this in detail to those who approached them.’<sup>595</sup> O Partha! The man who does not know about these decrees and about the determination of what should be done and what should not be done, is certainly confounded. You are acting in that foolish way. It is always difficult to clearly know what should be done and what should not be done. Everything can be known through the sacred texts, but you are not acquainted with them. Based on your ignorance, you think that you are following dharma and that you are acting in accordance with dharma. O Partha! You say that you are for dharma. But you do not understand that the killing of a living being is a sin. O son!’<sup>596</sup> Not killing living beings is the best course of action. That is my view. One can utter a falsehood, but one should never indulge in violence. The king, your eldest brother, is knowledgeable about dharma. How can you, like an ordinary man, kill that best of men? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It has been said that one must not kill someone who is not fighting, someone who is without weapons, someone who is reluctant to fight, someone who is running away, someone who has sought sanctuary and someone who has joined his hands in salutation. The learned do not approve of killing such people. O Partha! In earlier times, you took that vow of yours when you were a child. Because of that, you now wish to undertake an act that is full of adharma. O Partha! How can you rush to kill your superior? Remember dharma. The course of dharma needs to be reflected about. It is subtle and difficult to follow. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I will tell you about the mysteries of dharma. Bhishma told you about this and so did Yudhishtira, who knows about dharma, Kshatta Vidura and the illustrious Kunti. O Dhananjaya! I will tell you about the details. Listen. One who speaks the truth is virtuous. There is nothing superior to truth. However, it is extremely difficult to understand how one should base oneself on truth. Sometimes, truth should not be spoken. And sometimes, a lie should be spoken. When all one’s possessions

are being robbed, one should utter a lie. One should also utter a lie when one's life is in danger, or at the time of a marriage. Those are the times when falsehood becomes truth and truth becomes falsehood. A person who is always based on truth is but a child. A person who can differentiate between truth and falsehood can alone follow dharma. Isn't it wonderful that a man can become wise even after performing an extremely terrible deed? Like Balaka, he can obtain great merits, even though he has killed a blind being. And even though one strives for great virtue, one may commit a great sin, like Koushika, who lived along rivers.'

' "Arjuna said, 'O illustrious one! So that I may gain knowledge, tell me about these accounts, about Balaka and his connection with a blind being, and about Koushika, who lived near rivers.'

' "Krishna replied, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Balaka was a person who hunted animals. He went to kill animals for his son and his wife, not to satisfy any desire. He looked after his blind mother and father and other dependents. He was always devoted to his own dharma. He was always truthful and not malicious. One day, though he made a lot of effort to search for animals, he could find none. Finally, he saw a carnivorous beast drinking water, using smell for its sight.<sup>597</sup> Though he had not seen such an animal before, he killed it. Immediately, a shower of flowers fell down from the sky. Apsaras began to sing and charming musical instruments were sounded. Celestial vehicles descended from heaven, to take that hunter of animals away. O Arjuna! Because of its austerities, that animal had been granted a boon by the self-creating one<sup>598</sup> that it would be able to kill all beings, but would be blind. He killed the beast that had made up its mind to kill all beings. That is the reason Balaka went to heaven. The dharma of the gods is extremely difficult to comprehend. There was a brahmana named Koushika. He was an ascetic and extremely learned. He lived at a confluence of rivers, far away from villages. He had taken a vow that he would always speak the truth. O Dhananjaya! Because he always spoke the truth, he became famous. At that time, scared of robbers, some people entered the forest. The cruel robbers made every effort to follow in their footsteps. They approached Koushika, who always spoke the truth, and asked, "O illustrious one! There were many people. What path have they taken? You are being asked in the name of truth. If you know, tell us." Having been asked, Koushika spoke to them truthfully. "This forest has many trees, creepers and lantanas and they have entered it." Those cruel men sought them out and killed them. So it has been heard. Koushika committed great adharma by speaking what should not have been said. He suffered great hardships in hell, because he did not know about the subtleties of dharma. He was just like a foolish person who does not possess a great deal of learning and does not ask the elders about the divisions of dharma, so that his great confusion can be resolved. Such indeed are the signs and indications. Supreme knowledge is extremely difficult and some try to obtain it through arguments. There are many other people who hold that dharma is only what is in the sacred texts. I will not contradict this, but everything is not laid down there. The words of dharma have been laid down for the propagation of beings. Dharma is so called because it holds everything up.<sup>599</sup> Dharma upholds beings. Whatever has this property of holding up is certainly dharma. There are those who wish that it should be otherwise. For those who desire otherwise, free yourself from them, without speaking a lot. There is no need to speak to them. If you have to speak to them, or if they are suspicious if you do not speak to them, it is better to utter a falsehood. That will be like speaking the truth. When life is in danger, at the time of marriage, when the entire lineage or all the riches are about to be destroyed and at the time of amusements, it is better to utter a lie. Those who know about the true nature of dharma do not see any adharma there. When one takes an oath to free oneself from an association with robbers, it is better to utter a lie. That is like speaking the truth. If one can, one should never give up one's riches to them. If one gives riches to the wicked, it is the giver that is afflicted. Therefore, a falsehood uttered for the sake of dharma does not amount to speaking a lie. These are the signs and indications and I have instructed you about them properly. O Partha! Having heard this, tell me if Yudhishtira should be killed.'

' "Arjuna said, 'You have spoken like an immensely wise one! You have spoken like an immensely intelligent one. Your words are those that will ensure our welfare. You are like our mother. You are like our father. O Krishna! You are our supreme refuge and these words have been spoken by you. There is nothing in the three worlds that is not known to you. You also know everything about supreme dharma. I think that Pandava Dharmaraja Yudhishtira cannot be killed. At this point in time, please tell me what I should do. Listen also to something else that is going on in my mind. O Dasharha! O Keshava! My vow is known to you. If there is any man who tells me, "O Partha! Give your Gandiva to someone else who is superior to you in weapons," I must kill him. Bhima also said



he would kill anyone who called him an eunuch. O lion among the Vrishni lineage! In your presence, the king has asked me to hand over my bow. O Keshava! If I kill him, I will not be able to remain in the world of the living even for a short instant. O best among those in the world! O best among those who uphold dharma! O Krishna! Tell me how my pledge remains true and yet, Pandava remains alive. Provide me with the appropriate counsel.’

‘“Vasudeva replied, ‘The king was exhausted. In particular, in the battle, he was wounded by the large numbers of sharp arrows that Karna shot at him. O Partha! That is the reason he spoke harsh words to you. Karna is the stake in the battle today.<sup>600</sup> If he is slain, the Kurus will be vanquished. That is what the king, Dharma’s son, thought. When a person suffers great shame, it is said, that though alive, such a person is dead. You have always honoured the king, together with Bhima and the twins, and so have the foremost and aged men in this world. You should offer him a trifling insult. O Partha! Address the king as “tvam”.<sup>601</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having been thus addressed, a senior will be as good as dead. O Kounteya! Act in this way towards Dharmaraja Yudhishthira. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Adopt this path of adharma. This supreme learning has been laid down in the sacred texts of Atharva and Angiras.<sup>602</sup> Men must always follow this superior course, without thinking about it. O Pandava! Having been addressed by you as “tvam”, Dharmaraja will think that he has been killed. You can later worship his feet and speak soft and conciliatory words to Partha.<sup>603</sup> The Pandaveya king, your brother, is wise and will never be angered. O Partha! You will be freed from uttering a falsehood and will not have to kill your brother. You can then cheerfully slay Karna, the son of a suta.”’

‘Sanjaya said, “Having been thus addressed by Janardana, Partha applauded what his well-wisher had told him. And Arjuna used harsh words towards Dharmaraja, the likes of which he had never spoken earlier. ‘O king!

You<sup>604</sup> should not censure me about having withdrawn, since you have yourself been stationed more than one krosha away from the battle. You should not censure Bhima either. He is fighting with the foremost of the warriors. At this time, he has been afflicted by the enemies in the battle and has slain brave kings. He has killed more than one thousand elephants, emitting fierce roars like a lion. The brave one has performed an extremely difficult deed. You<sup>605</sup> have never done anything like this. He has jumped down from his chariot. With a supreme club, he has slaughtered horses, men and elephants in the battle. Using his supreme sword and broken parts of chariots and his bow, he destroyed horses, chariots, steeds<sup>606</sup> and elephants belonging to the enemy. Then again, intolerant and brave, he struck and killed with his feet and his hands. He is immensely strong and like Vaishravana<sup>607</sup> and Yama. He slew the enemy, as only he can. That Bhimasena has the right to censure me, but not you, who have always been protected by your well-wishers. Bhima is single-handedly agitating the sons of Dhritarashtra, their maharathas, elephants and the best of horses. That scorcher of enemies has the right to reprimand me. He is killing large numbers of the enemy, Kalingas, Vangas, Angas, Nishadas, Magadhas and is always as angry as a dark-blue cloud. He is like an elephant and has the right to speak to me. At the right time, he is riding on his chariot and brandishing his bow, with his fists full of arrows. The brave one is releasing a shower of arrows in the great battle, like a torrent of rain from a cloud. The learned say that speech is the strength of the best of brahmanas and strength of arms that of kshatriyas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You are cruel and your strength is in speech. You think that I am also like you. I have always sought to act for your benefit, with my wives, sons and with my own life and soul. And you have struck a person like me with the arrows of your words. Therefore, we will never be able to obtain any happiness from you. I have killed maharathas for your sake. But you lie down on Droupadi’s bed and slight me. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You are suspicious and cruel. Therefore, we will never be able to know any happiness through you. O lord among men! He<sup>608</sup> was always devoted to the truth and in the battle, for the sake of your welfare, himself told you about the means of his death. Protected by me, Drupada’s great-souled and brave son, Shikhandi, killed him. Since you are addicted to the vice of gambling, I am not delighted at the prospect of your winning back the kingdom. There are many sins associated with gambling and it is against dharma. You heard Sahadeva recount them.<sup>609</sup> But you have always been addicted to that practice of wicked ones and that is the reason all of us have been reduced to this hardship. O Indra among kings! It was because of your gambling that the kingdom was lost and our difficulties are due to you. O king! O unfortunate one! Therefore, do not anger us by using these cruel words against us again.’ Savyasachi, who was firm in his wisdom,

made him listen to these harsh words. But the son of the king of the gods repented this and sighed repeatedly, unsheathing his sword.

“On seeing this, Krishna asked, ‘Why have you unsheathed your sword, which sparkles like the sky, again? Tell me truthfully and I will give you an answer. I will tell you how you can accomplish your objective.’ Having been thus asked by the supreme of men, he was extremely distressed and spoke these words to Keshava. ‘I will kill myself, because I have acted in a wicked way.’<sup>610</sup> In an attempt to pacify Partha, the best among the upholders of dharma spoke these words to Dhananjaya. ‘O Partha! Tell him about your own qualities now. Thereby, you will kill yourself today.’<sup>611</sup> Dhananjaya, Shakra’s son, approved of Krishna’s words and, lowering his bow, spoke these words to Yudhishtira, supreme among those who uphold dharma. ‘O king! O god among men! Listen. There is no other archer who is my equal, except the god who wields Pinaka.’<sup>612</sup> I am revered even by that great-souled one. In an instant, I can destroy the universe, with its mobile and immobile objects. O king! It is I who vanquished all the directions and the kings there and brought them under your subjugation. The *rajasuya* sacrifice that you completed, with donations, and the divine assembly hall that you obtained, were because of my infinite energy.<sup>613</sup> The arrows have left marks on my palms, when I affixed arrows to the bow in battle. The soles of my feet bear the marks of arrows and a standard.<sup>614</sup> That is the reason someone like me cannot be defeated in a battle. I have slain those from the north. I have killed those from the west. I have restrained those from the east. I have destroyed those from the south. There are only a few of the samshaptakas who remain. I have destroyed half of the entire army. O king! The soldiers of the Bharatas, with an army like that of the gods, have been slain by me and are lying down. I will use weapons to kill only those who know about weapons. That is the reason I have not reduced the world to ashes.’ Having said this, Partha again spoke to Yudhishtira, supreme among the upholders of dharma. ‘O king! Know this. Today, Radha<sup>615</sup> will lose her son, or Kunti will lose me. O king! Be pacified and pardon the words that I have spoken. In due course, you will understand what I have told you.’<sup>616</sup> The foremost one pacified the king, who was capable of withstanding all enemies. He stood there, and then again spoke these words. ‘I will wholeheartedly try to kill the son of a suta and extricate Bhima from the battle. O king! My life is devoted to ensuring your pleasure. Know that this is the truth.’ Having said this, Kiriti, blazing in his energy, touched his feet and then stood up and said, ‘All this will come to pass very quickly and I will then return to you.’

“On hearing the harsh words of his brother, Phalguna, Dharmaraja Pandava raised himself<sup>617</sup> and with his heart filled with misery, spoke these words to Partha. ‘O Partha! I have not acted in a way that virtuous ones do. That is the reason we are confronted with this extremely terrible calamity. Therefore, sever my head today. I am the worst of men and the exterminator of my lineage. I am wicked and addicted to evil. I am stupid in my intelligence. I am lazy and a coward. I am a man who disrespects those who are superior. What is the point of following a harsh one like me for a long time? I am wicked and I will retire to the forest today. Without an inferior one like me, let all of you be happy. The great-souled Bhimasena is fit to be a king. What will a eunuch like me do with a kingdom? I am incapable of again listening to such harsh words, spoken by you in anger. Let Bhima be the king. O brave one! Having been insulted, what is the purpose of my remaining alive?’ Having said this, the king suddenly arose from his bed and prepared to leave for the forest. Vasudeva bowed down to him and said, ‘O king! You know that the wielder of Gandiva is devoted to the truth and is famous for Gandiva. Any man in the world who asks him to give Gandiva to another, will be slain by him and lose his body. You spoke such words to him. O lord of the earth! Wishing to preserve the truth of Partha’s pledge, I asked him to show disrespect towards you. It is said that disrespect towards one’s seniors is equivalent to death. O mighty-armed one! O king! I asked him to cross you and you should pardon both Partha and me. O great king! Both of us are seeking refuge with you. O king! We are bowing in obeisance before you and you should pardon us. Today, the earth will drink the blood of the wicked Radheya. I know this to be the truth. Today, the son of a suta will be slain. Today, the one whose death you desire will pass beyond his span of life.’ Having heard Krishna’s words, Dharmaraja Yudhishtira respectfully raised Hrishikesha and joining his hands in salutation, affectionately spoke these words. ‘It is exactly as you have said. I have been guilty of a transgression. O Govinda! I have been taught by you. O Madhava! I have been saved by you. O Achyuta! Today, we have been saved by you from a terrible calamity and fear. We were immersed in an ocean of hardship and you have been our protector. We were confused by our terrible ignorance today and have crossed it.

Both <sup>618</sup> of us were submerged in an ocean of grief and sorrow and your intelligence has been the raft. O Achyuta!  
We have an adviser. We have a protector and we have crossed it.” ’

## Chapter 1200(50)

‘Sanjaya said, “Having heard the words spoken by Krishna to the noble Yudhishtira, Partha became cheerless in his mind, since he had committed a wicked deed. Vasudeva laughed and spoke to him. ‘O Partha! How would you have felt had you, established in dharma, used your sharp sword to slay Dharma’s son? You have only spoken to the king and are overcome by this lassitude. O Partha! Had you killed the king, what would you have done next? It is extremely difficult to know dharma, especially by those who are stupid in their understanding. You are scared of dharma and there is no doubt that you would have suffered greater misery. Had you killed your elder brother, you would have gone to a terrible hell. The king is foremost among those who uphold dharma. He is devoted to dharma. Pacify the best of the Kurus now. That is my view. Once you pacify him devotedly, King Yudhishtira will be pleased. We can then swiftly advance towards the chariot of the son of a suta to fight. Karna is extremely difficult to defeat. But he will be killed by your sharp arrows. O one who grants honours! Dharma’s son will be filled with great delight. O mighty-armed one! It is my view that the time has come for this. Having accomplished this task, your objective will be attained.’ O great king! O unblemished one! At this, filled with shame, Arjuna touched Dharmaraja’s feet with his head. He repeatedly said, ‘O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Forgive me. O king! Pardon what I have spoken because of my fear about dharma.’ O bull among the Bharata lineage! Dharmaraja Yudhishtira saw that Dhananjaya, the destroyer of enemies, was prone at his feet and was weeping.

‘ “King Dharmaraja raised his brother, Dhananjaya. Having embraced him with affection, the lord of the earth wept. Those two immensely radiant brothers wept for a long time. Having overcome their sorrow, those two tigers among men became cheerful again. He affectionately inhaled the fragrance of Pandava’s head.<sup>619</sup> Filled with great delight, he smiled and spoke to Jaya.<sup>620</sup> ‘O mighty-armed one! O great archer! Though I made every effort in the battle, while all the soldiers looked on, Karna used his arrows to deprive me of my armour, my standard, my bow, my javelin, my horses and my club. O Phalguna! Having known and seen his deeds in the battle, I have been overcome with great grief and am no longer fond of remaining alive. O brave one! If you do not kill the son of a suta today, I will give up my life. What is the point of my remaining alive?’ O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having been thus addressed, Vijaya replied, ‘O king! O best of men! O lord of the earth! Through your favours, I swear on you, Bhima and the twins that I will slay Karna in the battle today, or be killed by him. I swear on my weapons that I will bring him down on the ground.’ Having spoken these words to the king, he spoke these words to Madhava. ‘O Krishna! There is no doubt that I will slay Karna in the battle today. O fortunate one! With your blessings, the death of that evil-souled one is certain.’ O supreme among kings! Having been thus addressed, Keshava spoke to Partha. ‘O foremost among the Bharata lineage! You are capable of doing this. O maharatha! This has always been my desire. I have always thought about the means whereby you can kill Karna in the battle.’ The intelligent Madhava again spoke to Dharma’s son. ‘O Yudhishtira! You should console Bibhatsu. With your permission, he will kill the evil-souled Karna today. O descendant of the Pandava lineage! On hearing that you were afflicted by Karna’s arrows, we returned here to ascertain your welfare. O king! It is through good fortune that you are well and have not been seized. O unblemished one! For the sake of Bibhatsu’s victory, console him.’ Yudhishtira replied, ‘O Partha! O Bibhatsu! O Pandava! Come and embrace me. You spoke beneficial words to me. You have been forgiven by me. O Dhananjaya! I give you permission to go and kill Karna. O Partha! Do not be angry at the terrible words that I have spoken to you.’ O king! O venerable one! At this, Dhananjaya bowed his head down before his elder brother and grasped his feet with his hands. The king raised the sorrowing one and embraced him.

‘ “He inhaled the fragrance of his head and again spoke these words. ‘O Dhananjaya! O mighty-armed one! I have been greatly honoured by you. May you again attain victory and eternal greatness.’ Arjuna replied, ‘Radheya

is evil in his deeds and insolent about his strength. I will approach him in the battle and slay him, and his relatives, with arrows. He stretched a firm bow and afflicted you with arrows. Karna will reap the terrible consequence of that deed today. O lord of the earth! Having slain Karna today, I will return to you. I will give you the good news and follow you. I tell you this truthfully. Without killing Karna today, I will not return I am touching your feet and telling you this truthfully.’ Having pacified Dharmaraja, Partha was cheerful in his mind. Prepared to kill the son of a suta, Partha spoke to Govinda. ‘Prepare the chariot again and yoke the best of horses. Let the great chariot be equipped with all the weapons. Get horse riders to cover the well-trained horses. Let all kinds of equipment quickly be arranged on the chariot.’ O great king! Having been thus addressed by the great-souled Phalguna, Krishna told Daruka,<sup>621</sup> ‘Do everything that Arjuna, foremost among the Bharatas and best among all archers, has asked to be done.’ O supreme among kings! Having been instructed by Krishna, Daruka yoked and covered the chariot, which scorched the enemy, with the skins of tigers. The chariot was yoked by the great-souled Daruka. He<sup>622</sup> sought Dharmaraja’s leave and the blessings of the brahmanas. With auspicious rites and benedictions, he ascended that supreme chariot. The immensely wise King Dharmaraja Yudhishtira blessed him, supremely delighted at the prospect of Karna’s death.

‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing the great archer depart, all the beings thought that Karna had already been slain by the great-souled Pandava. O king! On every side, all the directions sparkled. O lord of men! At that time, blue jays, *shatapatras*<sup>623</sup> and curlews circumambulated the descendant of the Pandu lineage. There were many other sacred and auspicious male birds.<sup>624</sup> They were cheerful in form and seemed to urge Arjuna to hurry to the field of battle. O lord of the earth! Herons, vultures, crows and wild crows advanced in front of him, wishing to devour,<sup>625</sup> and signified an ominous portent. The signs were good and auspicious for Partha. They signified the destruction and death of Karna’s soldiers. As Partha advanced, he perspired copiously. He was extremely anxious about how he would accomplish his objective.

‘On seeing that Partha was overcome with anxiety as he proceeded, Madhusudana spoke to the wielder of Gandiva. ‘O wielder of Gandiva! With this bow, you have defeated those in battle, whom no other man is capable of vanquishing. We have seen many brave ones, equal to Shakra in their valour. Having encountered you in a battle, those brave ones have attained the supreme objective. O venerable one! Whether it is Drona, Bhishma, Bhagadatta, Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti, Sudakshina from Kamboja, Shrutayusha and the immensely valorous Achyutayusha, none of them have been able to do anything against you. There is no one who can withstand you. You possess celestial weapons. You are dexterous and strong. O Arjuna! You aim, strike and hit the target with yoga. You are not confused in a battle and know about what must be done. You are capable of killing all the gods and asuras, together with everything mobile and immobile. O Partha! There is no warrior or man on this earth who is equal to you in a battle. There are kshatriyas who pick up bows and are invincible in battle. But I have not seen, or heard of, anyone like you among them, or among the supreme gods. Brahma, the creator of all beings, constructed the extremely wonderful Gandiva.<sup>626</sup> O Partha! This is what you use to fight and that is the reason there is no one who is your equal. O Pandava! However, I must speak words that are beneficial for you. O mighty-armed one! Do not think lightly of Karna. He is the ornament of a battle. Karna is strong and insolent. He is skilled in weapons and a maharatha. He is accomplished and colourful in fighting. He knows about time and place.<sup>627</sup> He is like the fire in his energy. He is like the wind in his speed. He is like Yama in his anger. The powerful one is capable of withstanding a lion. The mighty-armed one’s chest is one *aratni* in breadth.<sup>628</sup> He is extremely difficult to defeat. He is very proud and brave. He is extremely valiant and handsome. He has all the qualities of a warrior and is terrible to his enemies. He has always hated the Pandavas and has been engaged in the welfare of the sons of Dhritrashtra. Radheya cannot be killed by any enemy, even the gods, including Vasava. In my view, you are the only exception. Today, slay the son of a suta. All the warriors made out of flesh and blood, and even the gods, are incapable of defeating him in a battle, even if they were to unite. The evil-souled one is wicked in intelligence. He is cruel. His evil intelligence has always been used to bring injury to the Pandaveyas. He has opposed the Pandaveyas. Kill Karna today and accomplish your objective. He thinks himself to be brave, as does the wicked Suyodhana. He is the root of all wickedness. O Dhananjaya! Defeat the son of a suta.’”

## Chapter 1201(51)

‘Sanjaya said, “Keshava, immeasurable in his soul, again spoke these words to Arjuna, who, in every way, had firmed up his resolution to kill Karna. ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Today is the seventeenth day<sup>629</sup> of this extremely terrible destruction of men, elephants and horses. Those on your side possessed an extremely large army and so did the enemy. O lord of the earth! Having clashed against each other in the battle, only remnants are left on both sides. O Partha! The Kouravas possessed innumerable elephants and horses. Having encountered you as an enemy, they have been destroyed in the field of battle. All these Panchalas, the Srinjayas and the others are unassailable. They united and stationed themselves with the Pandavas. O slayer of enemies! Protected by you, the Panchalas, the Pandavas, the Matsyas, the Karushas, the Chedis and the Kekayas caused a great destruction of the enemy. O son!<sup>630</sup> In a battle, who is capable of vanquishing the assembled Kouravas, other than the maharatha Pandavas, who are protected by you in the encounter? You are capable of defeating the gods, asuras and men in a battle, even if the three worlds rise up against you, not to speak of the army of the Kouravas. O tiger among men! Who other than you was capable of vanquishing King Bhagadatta, who was Vasava’s equal? O Partha! O unblemished one! This large army has been protected by you and all the kings are incapable of even glancing at it. O Partha! It is because they have always been protected by you that Dhrishtadyumna and Shikhandi could bring down Bhishma and Drona in the battle. O Partha! Otherwise, in the battle, how could those two maharatha Panchalas have defeated Bhishma and Drona in an encounter? They were like Shakra in their valour. In a battle, who could have withstood Shantanu’s son,<sup>631</sup> Drona, Vaikartana, Kripa, Drona’s son, Somadatta’s son,<sup>632</sup> Kritavarma, Saindhava,<sup>633</sup> the king of Madra and King Suyodhana? They were brave and skilled in the use of weapons in a battle. None of them retreated. They were the leaders of akshouhinis. They were fierce, angry and unassailable in a battle. Many arrays have been destroyed. Horses, chariots and elephants have been exhausted. There were fierce and intolerant kshatriyas from many kingdoms. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were Govasas, Dasamiyas, Vasatis, Vratyas, Vatadhanas and the proud Bhojas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! That large army was destroyed in Brahmakshetra.<sup>634</sup> Having clashed against you, they advanced towards death, with their horses, chariots and elephants. There were Tukharas, Yavanas, Khashas, Darvabhisaras, Daradas, Shakas, Ramathas, Tanganas, Andhrakas, Pulindas, Kiratas who are terrible in their valour, mlecchas, those from the mountainous regions and those who live on the boundaries of the ocean. They were fierce and the performers of terrible deeds. They were insolent, delighted in battle and were strong, with firm fists. For Suyodhana’s sake, they angrily sided with the Kurus. O scorcher of enemies! Other than you, no one else was capable of defeating them in a battle. We saw the immensely strong formations of the sons of Dhritarashtra being destroyed. Without you as a protector, which man could have advanced against that? That army, covered with dust, looked like a swollen ocean. O lord! Protected by you, the angry Pandavas shattered and destroyed it. Jayatsena, the lord of Magadha, was immensely strong. Since he was killed in the battle by Abhimanyu, seven days have passed.<sup>635</sup> There were ten thousand elephants, terrible in their deeds, which followed the king.<sup>636</sup> Bhima killed them with his club. Using his great force, he destroyed hundreds of other elephants and chariots. O son!<sup>637</sup> Thus did the extremely fearful battle continue. O Pandava! Having encountered Bhimasena and you, with their horses, chariots and elephants, the Kouravas went to the world of the dead. O Partha! The vanguard of the army was destroyed by the Pandavas. O venerable one! Bhishma showered down fierce arrows. He was skilled in the use of harsh weapons and enveloped and killed the Chedis, the Kashis, the Panchalas, the Karushas, the Matsyas and the Kekayas with his arrows. Arrows issued from his bow and mangled the bodies of the enemy. Those gold-tufted arrows covered the entire sky.



Having followed the tenth direction, they slew horses, rathas and elephants.<sup>638</sup> Those arrows were released so that they avoided those nine undesirable directions. Bhishma slaughtered your troops for ten days. He emptied the seats of chariots and killed horses, elephants and steeds.<sup>639</sup> He showed a form in battle that was like that of Rudra or Upendra.<sup>640</sup> He afflicted the Pandava soldiers and caused great destruction. He slaughtered kings from Panchala, Chedi and Kekaya. He destroyed the Pandava army, which teemed with men, horses and elephants. It was as if he was rescuing the wicked Suyodhana, who was submerged in an ocean without a raft. He roamed around in the battle, scorching like the sun. The Srinjayas and the other kings were incapable of glancing towards him. Desiring victory, he roamed around in the battle. However, the Pandavas made every effort and attacked him violently. He single-handedly drove the Pandavas and the Srinjayas away in the encounter and came to be regarded as the only one who was brave. Shikhandi was protected by you and killed the maharatha, tiger among men, with his sharp and straight-tufted arrows. The grandfather was brought down in that way and is lying down on a bed of arrows. O tiger among men! Having encountered you, he was like a crow clashing against a vulture. Drona fought fiercely for five days, destroying the army of the enemy. He constructed a vyuha in the great battle and brought down maharathas. The maharatha protected Jayadratha in the battle. When fighting took place during the night,<sup>641</sup> he was as fierce as Yama and consumed beings. Bharadvaja's powerful and brave son clashed against Dhrishtadyumna and attained the supreme objective. Today is the second day after that. On that day's battle, had you not checked the enemy in the encounter, the son of a suta and the other rathas, Drona would not have been killed. You restrained the entire army of the sons of Dhritarashtra. O Dhananjaya! That is how Parshata killed Drona in the battle. Which other kshatriya would have been able to accomplish this in the battle? O Partha! That is also the way you accomplished the death of Jayadratha. You countered the large army and killed the brave kings. King Saindhava was killed through the strength of your weapons and your energy. The kings know that the death of the king of Sindhu was extraordinary. O Partha! But since you know that you are a maharatha, it wasn't that wonderful. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If all these kshatriyas clash against you, I think they will be tormented by you and killed on a single day. That is my view. O Partha! With the likes of Bhishma and Drona killed, this extremely fierce army of the sons of Dhritarashtra can be regarded as having lost all its brave warriors in the battle. The best of warriors have been destroyed. Horses, men and elephants have been killed. The army of the Bharatas is like the sky without radiance, devoid of the sun, the moon and the stars. O Partha! Because of Bhima's valour, the army has been devastated in the battle, like the army of the asuras through Shakra's valour in ancient times.

“Other than those who have been slain, only five maharathas remain—Ashvatthama, Kritavarma, Karna, the lord of Madra and Kripa. O tiger among men! If you kill those five maharathas today, you will destroy the enemies and give the kingdom, with its islands and cities, to the king. Let Partha,<sup>642</sup> whose energy and prosperity are infinite, obtain the earth, with its sky, waters, the nether regions, mountains and large forests. Just as Vishnu killed daityas and danavas in earlier times, you will give the earth to the king, like Hari<sup>643</sup> to Shakra. With the enemies slain by you today, the Panchalas will rejoice, like the gods when the danavas were slain by Vishnu. Do not honour your preceptor Drona, foremost among men, and show compassion towards Ashvatthama, or show mercy towards Kripa because of the honour due to a preceptor, or show excessive respect towards your relatives and honour your brothers,<sup>644</sup> or encounter Kritavarma and don't convey him to Yama's abode, or clash against your mother's brother, Shalya, the lord of Madra,<sup>645</sup> and not strike him down and kill him because of compassion. Karna is evil-minded and extremely injurious towards the Pandavas. O best of men! Kill him today with your sharp arrows. This is your supreme task and there is nothing wrong in it. We applaud this and there is no sin attached to it. O unblemished one! O Arjuna! Whether it was the attempt to burn down your mother with her sons in the night,<sup>646</sup> or whatever Suyodhana attempted towards you in the course of the gambling match, the evil-souled Karna was the root of all that. Suyodhana always thought that he would be saved by Karna and angrily tried to seize me too.<sup>647</sup> O one who grants honours! It is the firm belief of that Indra among men, Dhritarashtra's son, that Karna will certainly defeat all the Parthas in battle. O Kounteya! Though Dhritarashtra's son knew about your strength, he found pleasure in a conflict with you because he depended on Karna. Karna has always said, "I will defeat the assembled Parthas, Vasudeva and the kings in the great battle." The evil-minded one has encouraged Dhritarashtra's evil-souled son



and roared in the assembly hall. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Kill Karna today. In all the evil acts that Dhritarashtra's son has done towards you, in all of these, the evil-souled and extremely wicked Karna has been present. Subhadra's brave son had the eyes of a bull. We saw him killed by six cruel maharathas on the side of the sons of Dhritarashtra.<sup>648</sup> The brave maharatha made Drona, Drona's son and Kripa tremble. The maharatha made elephants and chariots bereft of men. His shoulders were like that of a bull and he brought fame to the Kuru and Vrishni lineages. He deprived steeds of horse riders and foot soldiers of weapons and lives. He destroyed the soldiers and maharathas. He conveyed large numbers of men, horses and elephants to Yama's eternal abode. Subhadra's son advanced, scorching the army with his arrows. O friend! O lord! I tell you truthfully that my limbs burn at the thought that even then, the evil-souled Karna attacked him. In that battle, he was unable to remain in front of Abhimanyu. He was mangled by the arrows of Subhadra's son. He was unconscious and blood flowed from his body. He blazed and sighed in rage. However, afflicted by the arrows, he retreated. He retreated and lost all enterprise. He gave up all hope of remaining alive. He was supremely unconscious in that battle and exhausted because of the blows. Hearing the appropriate, but cruel, words of Drona in the battle then, Karna severed his bow. When he was devoid of weapons in that battle, five maharathas, skilled in deceit, killed him with their showers of arrows. In front of the Pandaveyas and the Kurus, Karna spoke harsh and cruel words to Krishna<sup>649</sup> in the assembly hall. "O Krishna! The Pandavas have been destroyed and have gone to eternal hell. O wide-hipped one! O one who is sweet in speech! Choose another one as a husband. Enter Dhritarashtra's abode as a servant-maid. O one with long eyelashes! Your husbands are no longer there." He does not know about dharma and is extremely evil-minded. Those were the words that he spoke then. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Karna spoke those wicked and sinful words in your hearing. Those were the evil one's words. Arrows decorated with gold, sharpened on stone and capable of taking away life, released by you, will pacify those words and other wicked deeds that the evil-souled one has done towards you. Let your arrows rob him of his life and pacify those and other things today. Let his limbs be touched by terrible arrows shot from Gandiva. Let the evil-souled Karna remember the words of Bhishma and Drona. Let gold-tufted iron arrows, capable of killing the enemy and with the radiance of lightning, be shot by you. Let them pierce his inner organs and drink his blood. O Arjuna! Let fierce, immensely forceful and sharp arrows be shot by you and let them penetrate his inner organs. Strike Karna with great force and convey him to Yama's eternal abode. Let all the lords of the earth see Karna brought down from his chariot, oppressed by your arrows. Let them utter woes of lamentation and let them be miserable and distressed. Let all his well-wishers see Karna prostrate, deprived of his weapons. Let them be cheerless on seeing him shattered, drenched in his own blood and lying down on the ground. The standard of Adhiratha's son is large and is marked with the sign of an elephant's harness. Let it shudder and fall down on the ground, uprooted by you with a broad-headed arrow. When the gold-decorated chariot is shattered with hundreds of your arrows, with its warrior slain, let the terrified Shalya abandon it and run away. O Dhananjaya! Let Suyodhana see that Adhiratha's son has been killed by you and give up all hope of the kingdom, or of remaining alive. The Panchalas are being slaughtered and driven away by Karna's sharp arrows. O best of the Bharata lineage! But wishing to serve the Pandavas, the Panchalas, Droupadi's sons, Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, Dhrishtadyumna's sons, Nakula's son Shatanika, Nakula, Sahadeva, Durmukha, Janamejaya, Sudharma and Satyaki are succumbing to Karna. Karna is attacking the Panchalas in the great battle. O scorcher of enemies! Uttered by your relatives, a terrible roar can be heard. The Panchalas are not frightened. Nor are they unwilling to fight. Those maharathas, great archers, are not concerned about death in this battle. Single-handedly, Bhishma surrounded the Pandava soldiers with his torrents of arrows. But even then, the Panchalas clashed against him and did not retreat. The preceptor, Drona, was energetic and his blazing weapons were like the fire. He scorched all the archers in battle and was unassailable. Those scorchers of enemies<sup>650</sup> always tried to cheerfully defeat that foe in the encounter. The Panchalas will never be terrified and retreat before Adhiratha's son. The brave Panchalas spiritedly advanced against him and Karna is destroying them with his arrows, like insects before a fire. For the sake of their friends, those brave ones are advancing, ready to give up their lives. However, in the battle, Radheya is bringing destruction to hundreds of Panchalas. Karna obtained a weapon from Bhargava Rama, supreme among rishis in earlier times, and it has exhibited its extremely terrible and calamitous form. Its form is fierce and extremely terrible and it is scorching all the soldiers. Blazing in its energy, it has surrounded the

large army.<sup>651</sup> The arrows released from Karna's bow are traversing in the field of battle. They are tormenting those on your side, like a storm of bees. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having encountered Karna's irresistible weapon in the battle, the weak-spirited among the Panchalas are seen to run away in all the directions. O Partha! Bhima is firm in his anger and, surrounded by the Srinjayas on all sides, is fighting with Karna. However, he is oppressed by his sharp arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The Pandavas, Srinjayas and Panchalas, will be slain by Karna, like a body destroyed by a disease that has been neglected. Amongst all the warriors in Yudhishtira's army, with your exception, I do not see a single one who can clash against Radheya and return safely home. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Slay him with your sharp arrows today. O Partha! Act according to the oath you had taken earlier and obtain fame. O foremost among warriors! You are the one who is capable of defeating Karna and the Kouravas in battle, and no other warrior. I am telling you this truthfully. Perform the great deed of killing maharatha Karna. O Partha! O supreme among men! Be successful in your objective and be happy.'''

## Chapter 1202(52)

‘Sanjaya said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing the words spoken by Keshava, Bibhatsu cast off his sorrow and in a short instant, became cheerful. He quickly touched the bowstring and stretched Gandiva bow for the sake of Karna’s destruction. He spoke to Keshava. ‘O Govinda! Protected by you, my victory is certain. You are the lord of the past, the present and the future and you are pleased with me. O Krishna! With you as my aide, I can kill the three worlds and attain the supreme world in a battle, not to speak of Karna. O Janardana! I can see that the army of the Panchalas is being driven away. I can see Karna roaming around fearlessly in the encounter. I can see Bhargava’s weapon coursing in every direction. O Varshneya! It has been released by Karna, like the great vajra by Shakra. O Krishna! But as long as the earth exists, beings will talk about what will be done by me in the battle. O Krishna! Today, my arrows without barbs will convey Karna to the land of the dead. They will be released and shot from Gandiva and dispatched by my arms. Today, King Dhritarashtra will curse his intelligence, as a result of which, he instated Duryodhana in the kingdom, though he did not deserve the kingdom. O mighty-armed one! Today, Dhritarashtra will be deprived of his kingdom, his happiness, his prosperity, his kingdom, his city and his sons. Today, King Duryodhana will lose all hope of remaining alive. O Krishna! Karna will be slain. I am telling you this truthfully. On seeing Karna mangled by my arrows, the lord of men<sup>652</sup> will remember the words that you had spoken about peace. O Krishna! Today let Soubala know that my arrows are dice, Gandiva is the box used to throw them and my chariot the spread on which the game is played. In a battle, the son of a suta thinks that there is no other man who is equal to him on earth. Let the earth drink his blood today. Released from Gandiva, they<sup>653</sup> will grant Karna the supreme objective. Today, Radheya will repent the words that he spoke to Panchali. In the midst of the assembly hall, he spoke cruel words and cast aspersions on the Pandavas. They were described as sterile sesamum seeds then,<sup>654</sup> but will turn out to be sesamum today, when Vaikartana Karna, the evil-souled son of a suta, has been killed. He said, “I will save you<sup>655</sup> from fear about the sons of Pandu.” My sharp arrows will render his words false. He said, “I will kill all the Pandavas and their sons.” While all the archers look on, I will kill that Karna today. Resorting to his valour, the great-minded<sup>656</sup> son of Dhritarashtra, evil-souled and evil in his intelligence, always disregarded us. O Madhusudana! I will kill that Radheya Karna today. O Krishna! When Karna has been killed today, the sons of Dhritarashtra and the kings will be terrified and run away in different directions, like deer frightened of a lion. King Duryodhana will see the earth, with Karna killed by me in the battle today, with his sons and his well-wishers. O Krishna! On seeing that Karna has been killed, Dhritarashtra’s intolerant son will know me to be the foremost among all archers in a battle. O Krishna! Today, I will repay the debt I owe to all wielders of the bow, to my anger, to the Kurus, to my arrows and to Gandiva. Today, I will free myself of the sorrow I have borne for thirteen years. O Krishna! I will kill Karna in the battle, like Maghavan against Shambara.<sup>657</sup> Today, when Karna has been slain in the battle, the Somaka maharathas, who wish to serve their friends in the battle, will think that their task has been accomplished. O Madhava! I do not know whether Shini’s descendant will be more delighted at Karna having been killed, or at the prospect of victory. In the battle, I will kill Karna and his maharatha son and bring delight to Bhima, the twins and Satyaki. O Madhava! Having slain Karna in the great battle today, I will free myself of the debt I owe to Dhristadyumna, Shikhandi and the Panchalas. The wrathful Dhananjaya will be seen in the battle today, fighting with the Kouravas in the encounter and bringing down the son of a suta. In your presence, let me again indulge in self-praise. In the world, there is no one who is my equal in knowledge of dhanurveda. Where is the person who is my equal in valour? Is there anyone else who is as forgiving as me? There is no one else who is my equal in anger. With the bow in my hand and resorting to the strength of my arms, I can defeat the gods, the asuras and all the beings united together.

Know that my manliness is supreme among the best. With the arrows from Gandiva, which are like rays, I alone will consume all the Kurus, Bahlikas and Kashis, with large numbers of their followers, like the fire burning dead wood at the end of winter. The arrows have left marks on my palms. An arrow is affixed to the left of the bow. The soles of my feet have the marks of a chariot and a standard. When someone like me advances into a battle, he cannot be vanquished.” ’

## Chapter 1203(53)

‘Sanjaya said, “Their soldiers possessed large standards and advanced, swelling in numbers. Trumpets and other musical instruments blared in the vanguard, like large masses of clouds roaring at the end of summer. The mighty elephants were like clouds. There were the sounds of musical instruments, axles and the slapping of palms. The colourful weapons, decorated with gold, were like lightning. The giant chariots raised a mighty sound. Currents of blood began to flow with a great force.<sup>658</sup> It was full of swords and bore along the lives of kshatriyas. There was carnage of beings, cruel, like a shower at the wrong time that brings destruction. Chariots, charioteers, horses and elephants and all the other enemies were made to die by Partha’s storm of arrows. He killed horses with their riders and large numbers of foot soldiers. Kripa and Shikhandi clashed against each other in the battle and Satyaki attacked Duryodhana. Shrutashrava fought with Drona’s son and Yudhamanyu with Chitrasena. Uttamouja from the Srinjayas clashed against Karna’s son, the ratha Sushena. Sahadeva rushed against the king of Gandhara, like a hungry lion attacking a giant bull. The young Shatanika, Nakula’s son, attacked Karna’s son, the young Vrishasena, with a storm of arrows. Karna’s brave son struck the Panchala with many showers of arrows.<sup>659</sup> Madri’s son, Nakula, colourful in fighting and a bull among rathas, attacked Kritavarma. Yajnasena’s son, the lord of Panchala,<sup>660</sup> attacked Karna, the overall commander, and his soldiers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With the army of the Bharatas, extended by the arrays of the samshaptakas, Duhshasana attacked Bhima, supreme among wielders of weapons and unassailable because of his force, in the battle. The brave Uttamouja attacked Karna’s son and severed his head, which fell down on the ground. He then roared loudly and that sound echoed in the sky. On seeing that Sushena’s head had fallen down on the ground, Karna adopted a fearful form. He used extremely sharp arrows to sever his<sup>661</sup> horses, chariot and standard. Uttamouja used sharp arrows to strike Kripa and used a radiant sword to slay his horses and parshni charioteers. He then ascended Shikhandi’s chariot. Shikhandi was stationed on his own chariot.

On seeing that Kripa was without a chariot, Shikhandi wished to strike him with arrows. However, Drona's son repulsed him with his chariot. He saved Kripa, who was submerged, like a cow in mud. Meanwhile, Bhima was clad in golden armour and used his sharp arrows to torment the soldiers of your son. He was like the sun, at the auspicious time when it is midday.” ’

## Chapter 1204(54)

‘Sanjaya said, “While that tumultuous engagement was going on, Bhima was fighting alone and countering the army of the sons of Dhritarashtra. He was surrounded by large numbers of the enemy. In that situation of great fear, he told his charioteer, ‘O charioteer! Bear me swiftly on these horses. I will send all the sons of Dhritarashtra to Yama.’ Having been thus addressed by Bhimasena, the charioteer advanced with a fierce speed against the army of your son, that is, towards the army that Bhima wished to advance against. A large number of Kurus advanced against him from every direction and the enemy possessed elephants, chariots, horses and foot soldiers. With innumerable arrows, they powerfully struck the best of horses from every side. The great-souled one severed those descending arrows with his gold-tufted arrows. Those gold-tufted arrows were severed into two and three fragments by the arrows released by Bhima and fell down.<sup>662</sup> O king! In the midst of the kings on your side, elephants, rathas, horses and foot soldiers were slain by Bhima and roared loudly. O Indra among men! They were like mountains shattered by the thunder. The foremost among kings were shattered by Bhimasena, who was single-handed. In that encounter, they rushed against Bhima from every side, like birds in search of flowers heading towards a tree. When they attacked him, in the midst of your soldiers, he<sup>663</sup> exhibited a force that was greater than the greatest. He was like the Destroyer at the time of destruction. He was the like the one who exterminates all beings, with a staff in his hand.<sup>664</sup> In that battle, his speed was greater than that of the greatest. Those on your side could not withstand it. It was as if the one who destroys all beings, when the time of destruction has arrived, had descended with a gaping mouth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, the great-souled one scorched the army of the Bharatas. They were frightened of Bhima and fled in different directions, like large masses of clouds driven away by a great wind.

‘“The intelligent and powerful Bhimasena then spoke cheerfully to his charioteer again. ‘O suta! Chariots and standards have assembled and are advancing towards us. Find out whether they belong to the enemy or to us. Since I am engaged in fighting, I cannot make out. I should not envelop our own soldiers with arrows. O Vishoka!<sup>665</sup> I see the enemy on all sides and I am extremely anxious that the king<sup>666</sup> should not be suffering. Kiriti has not yet returned. O suta! That is the reason I am overcome by great sorrow. O charioteer! I am grieving that Dharmaraja has abandoned me in the midst of the enemy and has departed. I do not know whether he and Bibhatsu are alive or dead. That is the reason I am overcome with grief. However, I will assume a terrible form and drive away these soldiers. Once they have been destroyed, I shall rejoice. Stationed in the midst of the enemy, I will slay the assembled ones. Then, I will rejoice with you. Count all the quivers and arrows and tell me. How many arrows are still left on my chariot? What kinds are there and what is their length? O suta! Determine this and tell me.’ Vishoka replied, ‘O brave one! There are sixty thousand arrows, ten thousand kshurapra arrows and the same number of broad-headed arrows. O brave one! There are two thousand iron arrows. O Partha! There are three thousand *pradaras*.<sup>667</sup> O Pandaveya! The weapons that still remain cannot be carried on six carts pulled by bullocks. Release these and others in thousands. You possess clubs, swords, your arms and other stores.’ Bhima said, ‘O suta! Behold. In this awful engagement today, I will shatter all the kings with my speed and force. In the encounter, my fierce arrows will be terrible in form. The sun will disappear and it will be like the world of the dead. O suta! The kings will know this today, and so will their sons, that Bhima has been submerged in this battle and has single-handedly vanquished the Kurus in the encounter. All the Kurus will be destroyed in the battle, or let the worlds know about my deeds since childhood.<sup>668</sup> Single-handedly, I will bring all of them down or let all of them crush Bhimasena. There are those who pronounce benedictions on virtuous deeds. Let those gods bless me. Let Arjuna, the slayer of enemies, come here, like Shakra swiftly summoned to a sacrifice. Behold. The army of the Bharatas



has been shattered. Why are those Indras among men running away? It is evident that the intelligent Savyasachi, foremost among men, has shrouded the soldiers with his swift arrows. O Vishoka! Behold. The standards are being routed in the battle, and so are the large numbers of elephants, horses and infantry. The chariots are being shattered, afflicted by arrows and javelins, and so are the rathas. O suta! Behold. The Kourava soldiers are being severely slaughtered and destroyed. Dhananjaya's force is like that of the vajra, and his golden arrows, tufted with the feathers of peacocks and hawks, are devouring them. The chariots, horses and elephants are being driven away. Large numbers of foot soldiers are being crushed. All the Kouravas are confounded. The terrified elephants are running away, as if from a conflagration. O Vishoka! Sounds of lamentation are arising in the battle. Kings among elephants are emitting loud shrieks.' Vishoka replied, 'O Pandava! All your desires have come true. In the midst of the elephant arrays, the standard with the ape can be seen. Behold. Like lightning flashing amidst blue clouds, the bow is being extended there. Astride the top of Dhananjaya's standard, the ape can be seen from every direction. The celestial gem on the diadem is as radiant as the rays of the sun.<sup>669</sup> Alongside, behold the terrible and extremely loud blare of Devadatta, pale in complexion.<sup>670</sup> Janardana has the reins in his hand. He is driving through the army of the enemy. Behold. Next to Janardana is his chakra, increasing Keshava's fame. It is sharp at the edges and is like the sun in complexion. Its handle is like the vajra. It is always worshipped by the Yadus. O brave one! Behold.' Bhima said, 'O charioteer! Because you have pleased me greatly and given me good news, I will give you fourteen supreme villages, one hundred maidservants and twenty chariots. O Vishoka! You have given me news about Arjuna.'"

## Chapter 1205(55)

‘Sanjaya said, “In the battle, hearing the clatter of chariots and roars of lions, Arjuna asked Govinda to drive the horses quickly. On hearing Arjuna’s words, Govinda told Arjuna, ‘I am proceeding extremely swiftly to the spot where Bhima is stationed.’ The horses that were as white as snow, or conch shells, advanced. The harnesses were decorated with golds, pearls and jewels. It was as if the lord of the gods was advancing in great anger, grasping the vajra, desiring victory and wishing to kill Jambha.<sup>671</sup> There was a large number of chariots, horses, elephants and foot soldiers, accompanied by the whizzing sound of arrows and the clatter of hooves. The earth and the directions echoed with the sound. Angrily, they advanced against Jaya, lion among men. There was a great clash between them and Partha. That great encounter brought destruction to bodies and lives. It was like that between the asuras and the god Vishnu, supreme among victorious ones, fighting over the lordship of the three worlds. The diademed and garlanded one was alone. But he severed all their superior and inferior weapons. With sharp arrows that were like the razor and in the shape of a half-moon, he severed many of their heads and arms and also their umbrellas, whisks, fans and standards. Large numbers of horses, rathas, foot soldiers and elephants shrieked and fell down in diverse ways, assuming mutilated forms. They were like a forest shattered by a storm. There were giant elephants decorated with golden nets. They had been prepared for war, with standards signifying victory. They were mangled by gold-tufted arrows and looked like blazing mountains. With supreme arrows that were like Vasava’s vajra, he shattered elephants, chariots and horses. He then advanced swiftly, wishing to kill Karna, just as in ancient times, the lord of the Maruts had advanced to shatter Bala.<sup>672</sup> O scorcher of enemies! That mighty-armed tiger among men penetrated the army of the son of a suta, like a makara entering the ocean. O king! On seeing this, those on your side attacked Pandava, with chariots and foot soldiers and a large number of elephant riders and horse riders. As they advanced against Partha, they created an extremely loud noise, like the sound made by the waters of a turbulent ocean. In the battle, those maharathas were like tigers. Ready to give up their lives and abandoning fear, they attacked that tiger among men. They descended there, showering down arrows. However, Arjuna scattered those soldiers, like clouds dispelled by a strong storm. Those large numbers of rathas were great archers and strikers. They advanced against Arjuna and pierced him with sharp arrows. However, using his arrows, Arjuna dispatched thousands of rathas, elephants and horses towards Yama’s abode. In that battle, they were slaughtered by arrows released from Partha’s bow. As fear was generated in the maharathas, they started to melt away. Using his sharp arrows, Arjuna conveyed four hundred brave maharathas, who were endeavouring, to Yama’s abode. In the battle, they were slain by arrows of many different forms. In their fear, they abandoned Arjuna and fled in different directions. As they fled, a great uproar arose in the vanguard of the army. O fortunate one! It was like that made by the giant ocean when it dashes against a mountain. That army was severely routed and driven away by Arjuna’s arrows. O venerable one! Partha then advanced in the direction of the army of the son of a suta. There was a great noise when he advanced against the enemy. It was like that made in ancient times, when Garuda descended in search of serpents.

‘ “On hearing that sound, the immensely strong Bhimasena was extremely delighted, because he desired to catch sight of Partha. O great king! On hearing that Partha was advancing, the powerful Bhimasena became ready to give up his life and crushed your soldiers. He was like the force of the wind. He was like the force of the wind in speed. Bhima, the powerful son of the wind god, roamed around like the wind. O Indra among kings! O lord of the earth! Your soldiers were afflicted. O great king! They were whirled around, like a shattered boat on the ocean. Bhima showed those soldiers the dexterity of his hands. He released sharp arrows and conveyed them to Yama’s eternal abode. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the battle there, the warriors witnessed Bhima’s superhuman strength. He was like the Destroyer at the time of the destruction of a yuga. O descendant of the Bharata lin-

eage! They were afflicted by Bhimasena's terrible strength. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing this, King Duryodhana spoke these words, addressing the soldiers, the great archers and the warriors. 'All of you unite in this battle and kill Bhima. Once he has been slain, I think that all the remaining soldiers will have been killed.' Accepting the instructions of your son, the kings enveloped Bhima with a shower of arrows from every direction. O king! There were many elephants and men, desiring victory. O Indra among kings! There were also chariots and horses that surrounded Vrikodara. O king! O foremost among Bharatas! Having been thus surrounded by valiant ones from every direction, the brave one was as beautiful as the moon surrounded by stars. O great king! That supreme of men looked radiant and handsome in the battle, in particular, as beautiful as Vijaya was. All those kings released showers of arrows at him. They were cruel and their eyes were red in anger. They wished to kill Vrikodara. In that battle, Bhima drove away that large army with straight-tufted arrows and emerged, like a fish in the water coming out of a net. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He killed ten thousand elephants that refused to retreat, two hundred thousand and two hundred men, five thousand horses and one hundred rathas. Having killed them, Bhima created a river made out of blood and mire. Blood constituted the water and chariots were the eddies. It was full of crocodiles in the form of elephants. The men were the fish and horses were the sharks. Hair constituted the moss and the weeds. The trunks of the best of elephants were severed and many jewels were borne along. Thighs were alligators. The fat was the mud. It was full of many heads that were the rocks. The bows and arrows were like rafts. Clubs and maces were the flags. In the battle, a current of warriors were borne along to Yama's abode. In an instant, the tiger among men created a river that flowed downwards.<sup>673</sup> It was like the fierce Vaitarani, difficult for those who have not perfected their souls to cross. Wherever the spot where Pandaveya, supreme among rathas, advanced, in that spot he brought down hundreds and thousands of warriors.

'O great king! Having seen the deeds performed by Bhimasena in the battle, Duryodhana spoke these words to Shakuni. 'O maternal uncle! Defeat the immensely strong Bhimasena in the encounter. If the immensely strong Pandaveya is vanquished, I think that our victory is ensured.' O great king! At this, the powerful Soubala advanced, surrounded by his brothers, to engage in that great battle. In the battle, he rushed against Bhimasena, whose valour was terrible. He countered the brave one, like the shoreline against the abode of makaras. Though he was restrained by sharp arrows, Bhima did not retreat. O Indra among kings! Shakuni struck him on the left flank and between the breasts with iron arrows that were gold-tufted and had been sharpened on stone. O great king! Those golden arrows, tufted with the feathers of herons and peacocks, penetrated the great-souled one's armour and sank in. In the battle, Bhima was severely pierced by those gold-decorated arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He violently shot an arrow towards Soubala. O king! As the terrible arrow arrived, the immensely strong Shakuni, the scorcher of enemies, displayed the dexterity of his hands and shattered it into one hundred fragments. O lord of the earth! When it fell down on the ground, Bhima was enraged. He laughed and severed Soubala's bow with a broad-headed arrow. The powerful Soubala cast aside that severed bow and picked up another bow and sixteen broad-headed arrows. O great king! With four of those broad-headed and straight-tufted arrows, he struck Bhima's horses and his charioteer with a fifth. O lord of the earth! He severed his standard with one and his umbrella with two. With four more, Subala's son struck his four horses.<sup>674</sup> O great king! At this, the powerful Bhimasena became wrathful. In that battle, he hurled a javelin that was completely made out of iron, but had a golden handle. Released from Bhima's arm, it was like the flickering tongue of a serpent. It swiftly descended on the great-souled Soubala's chariot. O lord of the earth! The javelin had been hurled by the enraged Bhimasena and was decorated with gold. But he<sup>675</sup> seized it and hurled it back and it penetrated the great-souled Pandava's left arm. It then fell down on the ground, like lightning descending from the sky. O great king! In every direction, the sons of Dhritrashtra let out a loud cry. However, Bhima was not prepared to tolerate those spirited roars, like those of lions. In haste, the maharatha grasped a bow and strung it. O Indra among kings! In a short while, in that battle, the immensely strong one enveloped Soubala's soldiers, who were prepared to give up their lives, with arrows. O lord of the earth! He killed his<sup>676</sup> four horses and his charioteer. The valiant one swiftly severed his standard with a broad-headed arrow. With the horses slain, the supreme among men abandoned his chariot. His eyes were red with rage and he stretched his bow, sighing deeply. O king! He covered Bhima from every direction with many arrows. However, the powerful Bhimasena countered him with force. He angrily severed his bow and

pierced him with sharp arrows. O lord of men! Powerfully and extremely severely pierced by the enemy, the afflicter of enemies fell down on the ground, with only a little bit of life left in him. O lord of the earth! On discerning that he had lost his senses, your son bore him away on his own chariot, while Bhimasena looked on. On seeing that the tiger among men was taken away on the chariot, the sons of Dhritarashtra retreated. They suffered from great fear on account of Bhima and, terrified, fled in different directions. O king! When the archer Bhimasena had defeated Soubala, your son, Duryodhana, was shattered by great fear. Thinking about his maternal uncle, he fled on swift horses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that the king had retreated, the troops withdrew, abandoning the duels that were going on in different directions. On seeing this, all the atirathas among the sons of Dhritarashtra also retreated. Bhima quickly rushed at them, showering down many hundreds of arrows. Slaughtered by Bhima, the sons of Dhritarashtra withdrew.

‘ “O king! From every direction, they sought refuge with Karna, who was stationed in the battle. That greatly valiant and immensely strong one became like an island to them. O king! O tiger among men! It was as if mariners who suffered from a calamity and had a shattered boat found comfort on reaching an island. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In that way, those on your side sought refuge with Karna. O king! Having stationed themselves there, they cheered each other. They advanced to fight again, preferring to die rather than retreat.” ’

## Chapter 1206(56)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! When the soldiers were shattered by Bhimasena in the battle, what did Duryodhana and Soubala say? What about Karna, foremost among victorious warriors, Kripa, Kritavarma, Drona’s son, Duhshasana and other warriors on my side? I think that Pandaveya’s valour was extremely wonderful. Did Radheya Karna, the destroyer of enemies, act towards all the Kuru warriors in accordance with his vow? O Sanjaya! On seeing that the army had been routed by the infinitely energetic Kounteya, Radheya, Adhiratha’s son, remained the prosperity, the armour, the base and the hope of remaining alive. What did the warrior Karna do? What about my sons and the invincible maharatha kings? O Sanjaya! You are skilled in narrating. Tell me everything about all this.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O great king! In the afternoon, while Bhimasena looked on, the powerful son of a suta began to strike all the Somakas. The extremely strong Bhima also began to uproot all the soldiers of the sons of Dhritarashtra. On seeing that the intelligent Bhimasena was driving away the army, Karna asked his charioteer to drive him towards the Panchalas. The immensely strong king of Madra, Shalya, drove the white horses, which were extremely swift, towards the Chedis, the Panchalas and the Karushas. Shalya, the destroyer of enemy troops, penetrated those soldiers. He cheerfully drove the horses to the spot where that foremost one<sup>677</sup> wanted him to go. The chariot was like a cloud and was covered in tiger skins. O lord of the earth! On seeing it, the Pandus and the Panchalas were terrified. The loud roar of the chariot could be heard in the great battle. Its roar was like that of a cloud, or of a mountain being shattered.

‘ “Karna drew his bow all the way back to his ear and slew hundreds and thousands of Pandava soldiers with hundreds of sharp arrows. While he was performing that superhuman deed in the encounter, the great archers, the Pandava maharathas, surrounded him. Shikhandi, Bhima, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, Nakula, Sahadeva, Droupadi’s sons and Satyaki surrounded him and showered down arrows, wishing to kill Radheya. In the battle, the brave Satyaki, supreme among men, pierced Karna with twenty sharp arrows in his shoulder joints. Shikhandi pierced Karna with twenty-five arrows, Dhrishtadyumna with five, Droupadi’s sons with sixty-four, Sahadeva with seven and Nakula with one hundred. In that encounter, the immensely strong and angry Bhimasena pierced him in the shoulder joints with ninety arrows with drooping tufts. Adhiratha’s immensely strong son laughed. He drew back his supreme bow and released sharp arrows, afflicting them. Radheya pierced each of them back with five arrows each. The bull among men severed Satyaki’s bow and standard and struck him between the breasts with nine arrows. The scorcher of enemies wrathfully pierced Bhimasena with thirty arrows and struck his charioteer with three arrows. In the twinkling of an eye, the bull among men deprived Droupadi’s sons of their chariots and it was extraordinary. With straight-tufted arrows, he made all of them retreat. He killed the brave maharathas from Panchala and Chedi. O lord of the earth! In that battle, the Chedis and the Matysas were slaughtered. They rushed against Karna, who was single-handed, and struck him with torrents of arrows. The maharatha son of a suta struck those down with his sharp arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I witnessed this extraordinary deed performed by Karna. In the battle, the brave and powerful son of a suta was single-handed. O great king! However, despite those enemy warriors striving to their utmost in the encounter, he restrained the Pandaveyas with his arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the gods, siddhas and supreme rishis were satisfied at the dexterity shown by the great-souled Karna. The great archers, the sons of Dhritarashtra, applauded that best of men. Karna was best among supreme rathas. He was foremost among all archers. O great king! Karna consumed the army of the enemy, just as a large and flaming fire burns down dead wood during the summer. Thus slaughtered by Karna and witnessing Karna’s great strength, the Pandaveyas were terrified in the battle and fled here and there. In the great encounter, loud lamentations arose among the Panchalas, since they were slaughtered by the sharp arrows

that were released from Karna's bow. The large army of the Pandavas was frightened at the sound. In the battle there, the enemies thought that Karna was the only warrior. Thus Radheya, the afflicter of enemies, accomplished that supremely wonderful deed. He single-handedly countered all the Pandavas and no one was capable of glancing towards him. They were like a large mass of water that dashes against a supreme mountain and is driven back. In that way, the Pandava soldiers clashed against Karna and were shattered. O king! In the battle, Karna blazed like a fire without smoke. The mighty-armed one burnt down the large army of the Pandavas. O great king! With great agility and his light arrows, the brave Karna severed the heads, with earrings, and the arms of the valiant ones. There were swords with handles of ivory. There were standards, javelins, horses and elephants. There were the parts of chariots and many kinds of flags and whisks. There were axles, yokes, harnesses and many kinds of wheels. Karna observed his vow of a warrior and shattered these into hundreds of fragments. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Elephants and horses were slain by Karna. Because of the flesh, blood and mire, the earth assumed an impassable form. With destroyed horses, foot soldiers, chariots and elephants, one could no longer distinguish uneven terrain from plain ground. Nor could the warriors distinguish those on their own side from that of the enemy. The arrows generated from Karna's weapon created a terrible darkness. The arrows released from Radheya's bow were decorated in gold. O great king! In the battle, the Pandaveya maharathas repeatedly endeavoured, but were shrouded by Karna. O great king! The maharathas endeavoured and were submerged. They were like a herd of deer, driven away by an angry lion in the forest. The warriors who fought against Karna in the battle were greatly illustrious. But those soldiers were slaughtered, like a large number of smaller animals by a wolf.

“Seeing that the Pandava soldiers were retreating, the great archers, the sons of Dhritarashtra, pursued them, emitting fierce roars. O Indra among kings! Duryodhana was filled with great delight. He joyfully instructed that many musical instruments should be sounded in every direction. The great archers among the Panchalas, supreme among men, were shattered. But though shattered, those brave ones returned, preferring death over retreat. O great king! The brave Radheya, scorcher of enemies and bull among men, countered and repelled them in many different kinds of ways. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Twenty rathas among the Panchalas were slain there by Karna and so were one hundred angry enemy riders from among the Chedis. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He emptied the seats of chariots and the backs of horses. He brought down men from the necks of elephants. He drove away the infantry. The scorcher of enemies was like the sun at midday and was impossible to look at. The son of a suta assumed as cruel a form as Yama and roamed around. O great king! In this fashion, the great archer Karna, the destroyer of large numbers of the enemy, killed men, horses, rathas and elephants and was stationed there. The immensely strong one was stationed there like the Destroyer after slaying large numbers of beings. The single-handed maharatha was stationed there, after having slain the Somakas. However, we beheld the wonderful valour of the Panchalas. Though they were slaughtered by Karna, they did not forsake the field of battle. The king,<sup>678</sup> Duhshasana, Sharadvata Kripa, Ashvatthama, Kritavarma and Shakuni Soubala slew the Pandava soldiers in hundreds and thousands. O Indra among kings! The brothers who were Karna's sons were also true in their valour. Those powerful ones easily fought with the Panchalas, here and there. They created a cruel and great destruction among the horses there. Despite this, the brave Pandavas, Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi and Droupadi's sons were enraged and attacked those on your side. In this fashion, there was destruction among the Pandavas there and also amongst those on your side, when they clashed against the immensely strong Bhima in the battle.” ’

## Chapter 1207(57)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! Meanwhile, in that great battle, Arjuna divided up the enemy and glanced at the enraged son of a suta. He generated a large river of blood that bore along flesh, marrow and bones. The bull among men spoke these words to Vasudeva. ‘O Krishna! The standard of the son of a suta can be seen there. Bhimasena and the other maharathas are fighting there. O Janardana! Terrified of Karna, the Panchalas are being driven away. The radiant and white umbrella of King Duryodhana is there. Karna looks extremely beautiful as he is routing the Panchalas. Kripa, Kritavarma and Drona’s immensely strong son are protecting the king and are protected by the son of a suta. Those on our side are unable to kill them, but they are slaying the Somakas. Shalya is stationed on his chariot, skilled in handling the reins. O Krishna! He looks extremely beautiful as he guides the horses of the chariot of the son of a suta. My wish is that you should drive my chariot to that maharatha. Without killing Karna in the battle, I will not retreat. O Janardana! Otherwise, while we look on in this battle, Radheya will exterminate the maharatha Parthas and Srinjayas.’ Having been thus instructed, Keshava quickly drove the chariot towards your army, so that there might be a duel between Karna, the great archer, and Savyasachi. On Pandava’s instructions, the mighty-armed Hari departed, thus providing assurance to the Pandava soldiers in every direction. O venerable one! There was the loud clatter of Pandaveya’s chariot in the battle. It was like the sound of Vasava’s vajra or a giant flood. There was a great roar from the chariot of Pandava, who was unwavering in his valour. Vijaya, immeasurable in his soul, advanced against your army.

‘ “On seeing the white horses advance, with Krishna as the charioteer, the king of Madra spoke to Karna. ‘Behold the standard of the great-souled one. The chariot is coming here, with white horses and with Krishna as the charioteer. O Karna! He is slaying the enemies in the battle. He is the one about whom you had enquired. Kounteya is stationed there, touching Gandiva bow. If you can kill him today, that will be greatly beneficial for us. The army of the sons of Dhritarashtra is being routed in every direction. It is terrified of Arjuna, who is swiftly slaying large numbers of the enemy. Abandoning all the soldiers, Dhananjaya is hastening here. His body swelling with anger, I think he is coming for your sake. I do not think Partha is interested in fighting with anyone else other than you. He is blazing with anger because you have worsted Vrikodara. He has seen that you deprived Dharmaraja of his chariot and severely wounded him. Shikhandi, Satyaki, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, Droupadi’s sons, Yudhamanyu, Uttamouja and the two brothers, Nakula and Sahadeva, are looking on. O scorcher of enemies! Partha is advancing violently, alone on a chariot. His eyes are red with anger. In his rage, he wishes to kill all the archers. There is no doubt that he has abandoned all the other soldiers and is spiritedly advancing towards us. O Karna! Advance and repulse him. There is no other archer who can. I do not see any other archer in this world who is like you and can counter the angry Arjuna in a battle, like a shoreline. I do not see anyone protecting him, at the rear, or along the flanks. Behold. He is advancing alone towards you, with thoughts of success in his mind. In the battle, you are the only one who can withstand the two Krishnas in an encounter. O Radheya! It is your burden that you must fight against Dhananjaya. You are as accomplished as Bhishma, Drona, Drona’s son and Kripa. Drive your chariot against Savyasachi and counter Pandava. He is like a snake with a flickering tongue. He is roaring like a bull. O Karna! He is bent on destruction, like a tiger. Slay Dhananjaya. The maharatha sons of Dhritarashtra have been driven away in the battle. In their fear of Arjuna, the kings are quickly glancing at him. There is no man other than you who can dispel the fear of the warriors who are running away in terror. O descendant of the suta lineage! There is no one other than you. In this battle, you are an island of refuge to all the Kurus. O tiger among men! They are stationed here, desiring assurance from you. You have advanced against and defeated in battle those who are invincible, those from Videha, Ambashtha, Kamboja, Nagnajit and Gandhara. O Radheya! Exert yourself now and counter Pandava and Varshneya Vasudeva, loved by Kiriti.’



‘Karna replied, ‘O Shalya! You seem to be in your natural state now and amicable towards me. O mighty-armed one! It is evident that you are frightened of Dhananjaya. Behold the strength of my arms today. Behold my learning. I will single-handedly slay the large army of the Pandavas and the two Krishnas, tigers among men. I tell you this truthfully. Without killing those two brave warriors, I will not retreat. Or I will be slain by them and will lie down. Victory in a battle is uncertain. But I will be successful in my objective, whether I kill them, or whether I am killed. It is said that no one like him has been born in this world. He is supreme among rathas. That is what we have heard. I will fight against the Partha who is like that. Behold my manliness in the great battle. The foremost among rathas is advancing on his chariot. The Kourava prince is borne on swift horses. Perhaps he will convey me towards a calamity today and perhaps with Karna’s death, all of this will end. This prince’s hands do not sweat.

They are thick and large and marks have been created on them.<sup>679</sup> He is firm and accomplished in the use of weapons. He is light in the use of his hands. There is no warrior who is Pandaveya’s equal. He grasps many arrows tufted with the feathers of herons. He shoots them as if they were but one. They descend at the distance of one krosha and do not deviate from their aim. Where is the warrior on earth who is his equal? With Krishna as his second, the spirited atiratha Pandaveya satisfied the fire.<sup>680</sup> The great-souled Krishna obtained the chakra there and Pandava Savyasachi the bow Gandiva. The mighty-armed one, whose spirit does not wane, also obtained the chariot, with a fierce and loud roar. It is yoked to white horses. He obtained giant quivers that are divine in form and are inexhaustible. The bearer of oblations<sup>681</sup> also gave him celestial weapons. He slew the daityas in Indra’s world and destroyed all the *kalakeyas* in a battle.<sup>682</sup> He obtained the conch shell Devadatta there. Who possesses greater fame than him on earth? He faced the immensely generous Mahadeva himself in a battle and satisfied him.<sup>683</sup> He thus obtained the extremely terrible pashupata, the great weapon that can destroy the three worlds. The various guardians of the world assembled and gave him weapons that have no measure. The lion among men swiftly slew in battle the assembled *kalakhanja* asuras. In Virata’s city, alone on a chariot, he defeated all of us who were assembled there. He retrieved the wealth of cattle from us and robbed the maharathas of their garments. He possesses these qualities of a valiant one and the revered Krishna is his second in the battle. Keshava is infinite in his valour. He is Narayana himself in disguise and protects him. Even if all the worlds assembled together and tried for ten thousand years, they would be incapable of describing his<sup>684</sup> qualities. The great-souled one possesses a conch shell, a chakra and a sword in his hands. He is Vishnu and Jishnu and the son of Vasudeva.<sup>685</sup> On seeing the two Krishnas together on a single chariot, both fear and valour are generated in my heart. Both of them are brave and accomplished, firm in the use of weapons. They are maharathas who can withstand anything. Phalguna and Vasudeva are like this. O Shalya! Which other person is capable of advancing against them? I will bring them down in the battle, or the two Krishnas will kill me today.’”

‘Sanjaya said, “Having spoken these words to Shalya, Karna, the slayer of enemies, roared like a cloud in that battle. He approached your son and honoured him. He then spoke these words to the foremost among the Kurus who had assembled—the mighty-armed Kripa and the lord from Bhoja,<sup>686</sup> the king of Gandhara and his son, the son of the preceptor,<sup>687</sup> his younger brothers, the foot soldiers and the other horse riders and elephant riders. ‘Swiftly advance against Achyuta and Arjuna from every direction and restrain them, so that they are exhausted. O kings! Then those two lords will be severely wounded and I will be able to kill them cheerfully today.’ Those spirited ones agreed. Wishing to kill Arjuna, the best of the brave ones attacked, like rivers and streams full of water dashing towards the great ocean. Arjuna received them there in the battle. The enemies could not discern when he affixed supreme arrows and released them. They were oppressed by Dhananjaya’s arrows. Men, horses and elephants were slain and fell down. He was as radiant as the energetic sun that arises at the end of a yuga. Gandiva was like a circular disc and the arrows were like rays. The Kouravas were incapable of glancing towards Jaya. He was like a sun that hurts the eyes of people. Kripa, Bhoja and your son himself attacked him and shot arrows. They wished to kill him and were skilled. They shot supreme arrows in that great battle, making the best of efforts. Pandava swiftly severed those arrows and pierced each of his foes in the chest with three arrows each. Arjuna drew Gandiva back to a full circle and scorched them like the radiant sun. The arrows were like fierce rays and he was like the solar disc when it is midway between Shuchi and Shukra.<sup>688</sup>

‘ “Drona’s son pierced Dhananjaya with ten supreme arrows and then struck Achyuta with three. He struck the four horses with four and released many supreme arrows at the ape.<sup>689</sup> While he was extending his bow to its complete extent, Dhananjaya used three arrows to sever it and sliced down his charioteer’s head with a kshurapra arrow. Dhananjaya struck the four horses of Drona’s son with four arrows, his standard with three and brought him down from his chariot. He<sup>690</sup> became angry and picked up another bow that was ornamented with diamonds and other precious stones. It had excellent joints and was as radiant as the great and supreme serpent Takshaka, resting on a mountain. The great personage placed his other weapons on the ground and strung the bow himself. Drona’s son then afflicted those unvanquished and supreme men<sup>691</sup> with supreme arrows and pierced them from a close distance. Kripa, Bhoja and your son showered down torrents of arrows on the one who was like a sun.<sup>692</sup> Partha used his arrows to sever Kripa’s bow, with an arrow fixed to it, and struck his horses, standard and charioteer with arrows. He enveloped your son with arrows and severing his bow and standard, roared. The powerful one slew Kritavarma’s horses and severed his sparkling standard. He also slaughtered horses and charioteers, and destroyed supreme elephants, horses, chariots and their standards. Your large army was shattered, like an embankment devastated by water. Dhananjaya then swiftly advanced, like Shatakra for Vritra’s death. He was followed by other chariots that raised their standards again, prepared well and ready to fight with the enemy. Maharathas Shikhandi, Shini’s descendant and the twins followed Dhananjaya’s chariot, countering the enemy with sharp arrows, shattering them and roaring fiercely. The brave Kurus and Srinjayas killed each other in great rage, shooting extremely energetic arrows. They were like supreme gods and asuras<sup>693</sup> in ancient times. They desired victory or heaven. O scorcher of enemies! Elephants, horses and chariots fell down. They roared loudly and struck each other separately with arrows that were released well. In the great battle, the supreme warriors fought with each other. The great-souled ones created darkness because of the arrows. O king! The ten directions and the sky could not be discerned. The sun’s radiance was covered in darkness.” ’

## Chapter 1208(58)

‘Sanjaya said, “Dhananjaya saw that the foremost among the Kurus had attacked Bhimasena with great force and that he was submerged. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Wishing to save him, he struck the soldiers of the son of a suta with arrows. Dhananjaya conveyed brave ones amongst the enemy to the world of the dead. Some of his nets of arrows covered the sky. Others were invisible, but killed your soldiers. He filled the sky with arrows and they seemed to be like a flock of birds. O great king! Dhananjaya was like a destroyer of the Kurus. Partha used broad-headed arrows, kshurapras and sparkling iron arrows to mangle the bodies and sever the heads. Severed bodies, dislodged armour and heads were strewn around everywhere. Foot soldiers fell down and warriors were spread around. O king! Destroyed by Dhananjaya’s arrows, chariots, horses, men and elephants were on the field of battle and made it look like a giant Vaitarani river. As they fought, wheels of chariots were shattered, sometimes without horses and sometimes yoked to horses. With charioteers slain, or with charioteers, chariots were scattered around on the ground. The warriors wore golden armour and golden ornaments. They were on well-trained elephants that were also armoured. The wrathful drivers angered them by urging them on towards Arjuna. Kiriti slew and brought down four hundred of these through his showers of arrows. They were like the summits of large mountains, with living beings still atop them. Struck by Dhananjaya’s arrows, the elephants were strewn around on the ground. Arjuna’s chariot passed through them, like the sun penetrating a mass of clouds. Elephants, men and horses were slain and many chariots were fragmented. With their armour dislodged by arrows, warriors who were fierce in battle lost their lives. Phalguna crossed over that path of battle, which was strewn around in this fashion. He stretched Gandiva and it let out a great and terrible twang. The sound was as awful as that of thunder, resounding amidst dark clouds. Struck by Dhananjaya’s arrows, the army was routed. It was as if a large boat was tossed around on the ocean by a great tempest. Arrows and weapons of many forms issued out of Gandiva. They flamed like meteors and lightning and scorched your soldiers. It was like a grove of bamboos burning on a giant mountain in the night. That was how your large army seemed to blaze, oppressed by the arrows. Your soldiers were crushed, burnt and destroyed by Kiriti. They were killed and wounded by the arrows and fled in all the directions. It was as if a herd of deer was being devoured by a conflagration in a large forest. When they were consumed by Savyasachi, such was the state of the Kurus.

‘ “In the battle, they abandoned the mighty-armed Bhimasena. The army of the Kurus was anxious and all of them desired to retreat. Thus, the Kurus were defeated by Bibhatsu and routed. Having clashed against Bhimasena, they were made to withdraw in a short while. Phalguna approached Bhima and consulted with him. He told him that Yudhishtira’s wounds had been attended to. Having obtained Bhimsena’s permission, Dhananjaya departed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The earth and the sky resounded with the clatter of his chariot. Ten of your terrible sons, bulls among the enemy, and all born after Duhshasana, surrounded Dhananjaya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those cruel ones seemed to dance around and attacked him with their arrows, like an elephant with flaming torches.<sup>694</sup> Madhusudana guided the chariot so that they were on the right side. On seeing that Arjuna was advancing towards them, those brave ones retreated. Partha swiftly used iron arrows and arrows in the shape of a half-moon to destroy their standards, chariots and bows and bring them down. He then used ten other broad-headed arrows to sever their heads.<sup>695</sup> The eyes were red with rage. The teeth bit the lips. Fallen down on the ground, those faces looked like stars that had been dislodged from the firmament. Ten immensely forceful, gold-tufted and broad-headed arrows brought down ten Kouravas who possessed golden clubs. When they had been pierced, the slayer of enemies departed.” ’

## Chapter 1209(59)

‘Sanjaya said, “The one with the supreme ape on his standard advanced at great speed. Ninety brave Kuru rathas wished to fight with him and attacked him. In the battle, those tigers among men surrounded Arjuna, tiger among men. However, the white horses were extremely swift and were decorated in gold. They were decorated with nets of pearls and Krishna drove it towards Karna’s chariot. As Dhananjaya, the slayer of enemies, advanced towards Karna’s chariot, the chariots of the samshaptakas<sup>696</sup> also followed him, showering down arrows with a desire to kill. The brave Arjuna used his sharp arrows to swiftly kill all ninety of them, with their charioteers, bows and standards. Slain by Kiriti’s many different kinds of arrows, they fell down, like siddhas and their celestial vehicles from heaven, when their stores of meritorious deeds have been exhausted. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! O foremost among Bharatas! At this, the fearless Kurus attacked Phalguna, with their chariots, elephants and horses. They released weapons. Supreme and mighty elephants that belonged to your son’s large army obstructed Dhananjaya in the battle. The great archers, the Kurus, used lances, swords, spears, javelins, clubs, scimitars and arrows to envelop the descendant of the Kuru lineage.<sup>697</sup> The Kurus showered down weapons. However, Pandava used arrows that were like the rays of the sun to strike them down. At this, on the instructions of your son, mlecchas who were astride thirteen hundred crazy elephants struck Partha from the side. They used barbed arrows, hollow arrows, iron arrows, spears, javelins, spikes, *kampanas* and catapults to afflict Partha’s chariot. Having been struck by the shower of weapons released by the *yavanas*<sup>698</sup> on elephants, Phalguna smiled and severed those with his sharp broad-headed arrows and arrows in the form of a half-moon. All those elephants were struck by large arrows of many different forms. With their flags and riders, they were brought down, like mountains shattered by thunder. Those gold-tufted arrows afflicted and killed the giant elephants that had golden harnesses. They fell down, like mountains that were on fire. O lord of the earth! In that great roar, Gandiva’s twang could be heard. Men, elephants and horses shrieked and lamented. O king! The elephants were killed and fled in different directions. With their riders slain, the horses ran away in the ten directions. O great king! Chariots were without their rathas and so were the steeds. Thousands of them were seen, like the cities of the gandharvas. O great king! Horse riders ran hither and thither. They were seen there, brought down by Partha’s arrows. At that time, Pandava showed the strength of his arms. Single-handedly, he defeated the riders, the elephants and the chariots in the battle.

‘“O bull among the Bharata lineage! O king! Bhimasena saw that Kiriti was surrounded by a large army consisting of three kinds of forces.<sup>699</sup> O king! He abandoned the few remaining rathas who were left on your side and swiftly advanced towards Dhananjaya’s chariot. On seeing that Bhima was advancing towards his brother Arjuna, the soldiers who had not been killed were distressed and fled. There were some extremely fast horses that had not been killed by Arjuna. In the great battle, with the club in his hand, Bhima slaughtered them. It<sup>700</sup> was as fierce as the night of destruction and fed on men, elephants and horses. It was extremely terrible and could shatter walls, mansions and the gates of cities. Bhima used that club against the men, elephants and horses who were around. O venerable one! He slew many horses and horse riders. Pandava crushed men and horses plated in bronze armour and terrified them. He uprooted them with the club. Slain, they fell down with a great noise. He then ascended his chariot again and followed Arjuna from the rear. The army of the enemy was slain or devoid of spirit and retreated. Those soldiers were immobile and distracted. On seeing this, Arjuna shrouded them with arrows that robbed lives. As they clung to each other, there were severe woes of lamentation. At that time, your soldiers whirled around like a circle of fire. With the armour shattered by arrows, the soldiers blazed. Overflowing with blood, they looked like a flowering grove of *ashoka* trees. On seeing Savyasachi’s valour there, all the Kurus there lost all hope of Karna remaining alive. In the battle, they could not withstand the downpour of Partha’s arrows.

Having been defeated by the wielder of Gandiva, the Kurus retreated. Slaughtered by Partha's arrows, they abandoned the battle. They were terrified and fled in different directions, calling out to the son of a suta. Partha followed them, showering down many hundreds of arrows. The Pandava warriors, with Bhimasena at the forefront, were delighted.

“O great king! Your sons advanced towards Karna's chariot. They were submerged in fathomless waters and Karna was like an island to them. O great king! The Kurus were like defanged serpents. Because of their fear of the wielder of Gandiva, they sought shelter with Karna. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It was just as all beings, fearing death and because of their deeds, seek shelter with dharma. O lord of men! Karna, the great archer, was like that to your sons. Terrified of the great-souled Pandava, they sought refuge with him. They were overflowing with blood and severely distressed on account of the arrows, and Karna told them, ‘Do not be frightened. Come to me.’ He saw that your army had been destroyed because of Partha's strength. Wishing to kill the enemy, Karna stretched his bow and while Savyasachi looked on, attacked the Panchalas again. The lords of the earth possessed eyes that were as red as wounds. In a short while, Karna showered down torrents of arrows on them, like clouds pouring down on a large mountain. O venerable one! Thousands of arrows were shot by Karna. The supreme among all living beings robbed many Panchalas of their lives. O lord of the earth! In that battle, great sounds of lamentation arose among the Panchalas. To ensure the welfare of his friend,<sup>701</sup> the son of a suta, the slayer of enemies, slaughtered them.” ’

## Chapter 1210(60)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! The Kurus<sup>702</sup> were driven away by Karna, whose chariot possessed white horses. Using great arrows, the son of a suta slew the sons of the Panchalas, like a storm dispelling large masses of clouds. With an *anjali* arrow, he brought down Janamejaya’s charioteer from his chariot and killed his horses. He enveloped Shatanika and Sutasoma with broad-headed arrows and severed their bows. In the battle, he pierced Dhrishtadyumna with six arrows and slew the horses that were on his right flank. The son of a suta next killed Satyaki’s horses and also slew Vishoka, the son of Kekaya. When that prince was killed, Ugradhanva, the general of the Kekayas, attacked him. He used many arrows that were fierce and forceful and severely struck Karna’s son, Sushena.<sup>703</sup>

Karna laughed. Using three arrows that were in the shape of a half-moon, he severed his<sup>704</sup> arms and head. Having lost his life, he fell down from his chariot, like a decaying shala tree that is struck down with an axe. The horses of the foremost among the Shinis<sup>705</sup> had been slain. Sushena, the grandson of a suta, enveloped him with sharp arrows and seemed to be dancing around. However, he was struck by the arrows of Shini’s descendant and fell down. When his son was killed, Karna became senseless with rage and wished to kill Shini’s descendant, bull among men. He said, ‘O descendant of Shini’s lineage! You have been killed.’ He released an arrow that was capable of killing all enemies. Shikhandi severed it with three arrows and struck Karna with three more. Using large arrows, he<sup>706</sup> severed Shikhandi’s bow and standard and then pierced Shikhandi with six fierce arrows. He next severed the head of Dhrishtadyumna’s son. Adhiratha’s great-souled son then mangled Sutasoma with an extremely sharp arrow.

‘“O lion among men! While that tumultuous battle was going on and Dhrishtadyumna’s son had been killed, Krishna said, ‘O Partha! He is eliminating the Panchalas. Go and kill Karna.’ Thus addressed, that foremost of men laughed and advanced swiftly on his chariot towards the chariot of Adhiratha’s son. The one with excellent arms wished to save those who were frightened and were being killed<sup>707</sup> by that leader of rathas. He stretched Gandiva with a twang that was loud and terrible. He rubbed the bowstring fiercely. He suddenly created darkness with his arrows and destroyed elephants, horses, chariots and men. Bhimasena, the brave one among the Pandavas, followed him on his chariot and protected his rear. Those two princes quickly advanced on their chariots towards Karna, releasing arrows at the enemy.

‘“During that time, the son of a suta fought mightily, crushing the Somakas in the battle. He destroyed large numbers of chariots, horses and elephants and enveloped the directions with his arrows. Uttamouja, Janamejaya, the enraged Yudhamanyu and Shikhandi united with Parshata.<sup>708</sup> They roared loudly and mangled Karna with many arrows. Those five Panchala rathas attacked Vaikartana Karna extremely well, but were incapable of dislodging him from his chariot, just as the senses cannot overpower a patient and self-controlled person. Karna severed their bows, standards, horses, charioteers, quivers and flags with his arrows and struck each of the five with arrows. He then roared like a lion. As he struck them and there were the sounds of his bowstring, arrows, palms and the bow, all beings were distressed. They thought that the earth, with its mountains and trees, was being shattered. His bow was like Shakra’s bow. Using that, Adhiratha’s son shot fierce arrows. He was resplendent in the battle, like the blazing solar disc, surrounded by a garland of rays. He pierced Shikhandi with twelve sharp arrows and the ratha Uttamouja with six. He pierced Yudhamanyu with three sharp arrows and the sons of Somaka and Prishata each with three arrows.<sup>709</sup> O venerable one! In the great battle, those five maharathas were defeated by the son of a suta. They were rendered immobile by that scorcher of enemies, just as the senses are vanquished by one with a

controlled soul. They were submerged in the ocean that was Karna, like distressed merchants on an ocean. Droupadi's son rescued their maternal uncles<sup>710</sup> with well-prepared chariots, like providing boats on an ocean.

‘ “The bull among the Shini lineage used his sharp arrows to slice down the many arrows that Karna shot. He struck Karna with sharp and iron arrows and pierced his eldest son<sup>711</sup> with eight arrows. Kripa, Bhoja,<sup>712</sup> your sons and Karna struck him back with sharp arrows. However, the supreme one amongst the Yadu lineage fought with them, like the guardians of the directions fighting with the lords of the daityas. His bow roared continuously and he showered down extremely fierce arrows. Satyaki became invincible, like the midday sun in the autumn sky. Those rathas<sup>713</sup> armoured themselves well and again attacked, desiring to protect the foremost one from the Shini lineage. The rathas from Panchala united in that great battle, like large numbers of Marut surrounding Shakra, when he was afflicting the enemy. An extremely terrible encounter commenced between them and those on your side who were engaged in your welfare. It was like an ancient one between gods and asuras and destroyed chariots, horses and elephants. Afflicted by many types of weapons, chariots, elephants, horses and foot soldiers wandered around. They struck each other and wavered. They uttered loud wails of lamentation and fell down, deprived of their lives.

‘ “At that time, without any fear, your son, the younger brother of the king,<sup>714</sup> showered arrows and advanced against Bhima. Vrikodara spiritedly encountered him, like a lion leaping on a large ruru deer. The battle between them was superhuman and was like a gambling match, with lives as stakes. They attacked each other fiercely and angrily, like Shakra and Shambara in earlier times. They severely struck each other with extremely energetic arrows that were capable of ending lives. They mangled each other, like two mighty elephants that are overcome with sexual desire and seek to indulge in intercourse.<sup>715</sup> With two kshurapra arrows, Vrikodara severed the bow and the standard of your son. He struck him in the forehead with an arrow and severed his charioteer's head from his body. The prince picked up another bow and struck Vrikodara with twelve arrows. He controlled the reins of the horses himself and again rained down arrows on Bhima.” ’



## Chapter 1211(61)

‘Sanjaya said, “Prince Duhshasana accomplished an extremely difficult task in that tumultuous battle. He severed Bhima’s bow with a razor-sharp arrow and pierced his charioteer with six arrows. In an instant, the great-souled one then struck Bhimasena with many excellent arrows. Bhimasena hurled a fierce club towards him. It struck Duhshasana and flung him a distance of ten bow-lengths away, rendering him like a wounded elephant with shattered temples. He was struck and fell down, trembling. O Indra among kings! It <sup>716</sup> slew his horses and charioteer and having crushed the horses and the chariot, fell down. His armour, ornaments and garments were destroyed and, completely immobile, he shrieked in pain. The spirited Bhimasena remembered all the acts of enmity that had been performed by your sons. He jumped down from the chariot onto the ground and eagerly looked at him. He grasped an extremely sharp sword and placed it against the throat of the trembling one. He tore apart the breast of the one who had fallen down on the ground and drank the warm blood. He repeatedly savoured the taste. Then, excessively angry, he glanced at him and spoke these words. ‘This is superior to mother’s milk, honey, clarified butter, well-prepared liquor, celestial water and skimmed and churned milk. It is my view today, that the blood of my enemies is tastier than all of these.’ He again repeated these cheerful and eloquent words. Whoever saw Bhimasena in that state then, fell down in distress and in fear. When the men fell down there, the weapons also fell down from their hands. Others were terrified and glanced at him with half-open eyes, uttering loud lamentations of woe. All those who saw Bhima drink Duhshasana’s blood were terrified and miserable and ran away in different directions. They said, ‘This one is not human.’ In the hearing of the brave ones in the world, he <sup>717</sup> spoke these words. ‘O worst of men! I am drinking the blood from your throat. In great rage, you repeatedly called us cattle. <sup>718</sup> When I was asleep in Pramanakoti, you fed me poison and made me suffer the hardship of being bitten by serpents. <sup>719</sup> You burnt us down in the house of lac. You robbed our kingdom through a gambling match and made us dwell in the woods. We were robbed of the happiness in our homes and suffered from weapons in battle. There were many other hardships and we have never known any joy. Dhritarashtra and his son have always acted maliciously towards us.’ O king! O great king! Having spoken these words, Vrikodara, who had obtained victory, again spoke these words to Keshava and Arjuna. ‘O brave ones! I had taken a vow about Duhshasana in the battle. <sup>720</sup> I have accomplished that today. I will accomplish the second vow now too, that of killing Duryodhana like a sacrificial animal. In the presence of the Kouravas, I will press down the evil-souled one’s head with my foot and obtain peace.’ Having spoken these words, he cheerfully roared, blood streaming from his body. The extremely powerful and great-souled one danced, like the one with one thousand eyes <sup>721</sup> after Vritra’s death.” ’

## Chapter 1212(62)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! Ten of your sons were brave and maharathas. They did not run away from the field of battle. When Duhshasana was slain, those immensely valiant ones were overcome with great rage and showered Bhima with arrows. Kavachi, Nishangi, Pashi, Dandadhara, Dhanurdhara, Alolupa, Shala, Sangha, Vatavega and Suvarchasa united and attacked together, overcome with grief on account of their brother. They enveloped the mighty-armed Bhimasena with arrows. He was restrained in every direction by the arrows of those maharathas. Bhima’s eyes became red with rage and he looked like the wrathful Destroyer himself. Using ten immensely forceful broad-headed and sharp arrows that were gold-tufted and decorated with gold, Partha conveyed those ten to Yama’s eternal abode. When those brave ones were killed, your soldiers ran away, afflicted by fear of the Pandavas, while the son of a suta looked on.

‘ “O great king! On witnessing Bhima’s valour, like Yama amongst beings, Karna entered the great battle. O destroyer of enemies! On discerning what was going on in his mind, Shalya, the ornament of an assembly, realized that the time was right and spoke these words to Karna. ‘O Radheya! Do not be distressed. This is not deserving of you. These kings are being driven away, afflicted by their fear of Bhimasena. Overcome with misery and grief on account of his brother, Duryodhana is numb. The great-souled one has drunk Duhshasana’s blood. His mind is full of sorrow, and grief has robbed him of his senses. O Karna! Kripa and the others and the remaining brothers are tending to Duryodhana and have surrounded him from all directions. The brave Pandavas are unwavering in their aim. With Dhananjaya at the forefront, they are advancing towards you, stationing themselves in the battle. O tiger among men! Base yourself on your great manliness. Devoting yourself to the dharma of kshatriyas, fight against Dhananjaya. Dhritarashtra’s son has placed the entire burden on you. O mighty-armed one! Shoulder it, to the best of your capacity and the best of your strength. If you are victorious, you will obtain great fame. If you are defeated, heaven is certain. O Radheya! The wrathful Vrishasena is your son. Since you are confused, he is advancing towards the Pandavas.’ Hearing the words of the infinitely energetic Shalya, he came to the human conclusion that there was nothing to do but to base oneself well in the battle.

‘ “The angry Vrishasena was stationed on his chariot and wishing to slay the enemy, advanced against Vrikodara, who was like Yama with a staff in his hand, and with a club in his hand, was uprooting those on your side. Nakula, foremost among brave ones, was full of anger and attacked this enemy with arrows. He cheerfully attacked Karna’s son in the battle, like Jishnu and Maghavan wishing to kill Jambha.<sup>722</sup> Using a razor-sharp arrow, the brave Nakula severed his standard, which had the complexion of a conch shell and sparkled like crystal. Karna’s son possessed a colourful bow that was adorned with golden cloth. He severed this with a broad-headed arrow. Extremely quickly, Karna’s son picked up another bow and pierced Pandava. Wishing to show his respect to Duhshasana, who had lost his life, the one who knew about great weapons, then struck Nakula with divine and great weapons. The great-souled Nakula was enraged and pierced him back with arrows that were like giant meteors. Karna’s son was skilled in the use of weapons and pierced Nakula back with celestial weapons. O king! Karna’s son slew all of Nakula’s horses with supreme weapons. They were swift, delicate and pure, ornamented with gold, and were of the *vanayu* breed. When the horses were slain, he descended from his chariot and picked up a beautiful shield that was marked with the signs of eight moons. He also picked up a sword that sparkled like the sky. With these, he leapt up and roamed around, like a bird. He executed many wonderful motions in the air and sliced down the best of men, horses and elephants. They were struck by that sword and fell down on the ground, like animals at an *ashvamedha* sacrifice, struck by the executioner. There were two thousand warriors who found delight in battle. They were well trained and came from many different countries. They never missed their objective. The upper parts of their bodies were smeared with sandalwood paste. Quickly and single-handedly, Nakula

brought them down. While they were falling down, he<sup>723</sup> attacked Nakula and pierced him from every direction with arrows. Nakula was thus struck by those arrows and angrily pierced the brave one back in turn. Single-handedly, Karna's son struck men, horses, elephants and chariots. He pierced the brave one who seemed to be sporting<sup>724</sup> with eighteen arrows and was angrily pierced back in return. Wishing to kill him, Pandu's son, foremost among men, attacked Karna's son in that battle. In the great battle, Karna's son sliced down the shield, which was decorated with one thousand stars, with his arrows. The sword was extremely sharp, keen at the edges. It had been unsheathed and was capable of bearing a great load. It was extremely terrible and was being whirled around, used to sever the bodies of the enemy. It was as fierce in form as a serpent. With six sharp and extremely pointed arrows, he<sup>725</sup> shattered his enemy's sword. He then struck him again between the breasts with sharp and yellow arrows and pierced him grievously. Madri's son was tormented by Karna's son. His horses were slain. He jumped onto Bhimasena's chariot, like a lion leaping onto the summit of a mountain, while Dhananjaya looked on.

“Nakula's bow and arrows had been severed. He was without a chariot and afflicted by arrows. He had been mangled by the weapons of Karna's son. On discerning this, the five foremost sons of Drupada, Shini's descendant as the sixth, and the five sons of Drupada's daughter, all destroyers of enemies, swiftly advanced against those on your side and devastated the elephants, chariots, men and horses. Those supreme men were cheerful and were on swift chariots drawn by speedy steeds. Their flags fluttered in the wind. They used hundreds of arrows and other weapons that resembled the lords of serpents. The foremost of rathas on your side, Hridika's son,<sup>726</sup> Kripa, Drona's son, Duryodhana, Shakuni, Shuka, Vrika, Kratha and Devavridha speedily countered them. They wielded bows and were on chariots that roared like elephants and clouds. Those best of men countered the eleven brave ones<sup>727</sup> and used supreme and fierce arrows to strike and repel them.

“Those on your side were in turn countered by Kunindas who were on elephants that were fierce in force and were like the summits of mountains, with complexions like that of newly formed clouds. They<sup>728</sup> had been prepared well, were crazy and were from the Himalaya regions. Accomplished riders who desired to fight were astride them. The elephants were beautifully covered with nets of gold and looked like clouds tinged with lightning. Using ten arrows that were completely made out of iron, the son of Kuninda<sup>729</sup> severely struck Kripa and his charioteer. However, slain by the arrows of Sharadvata's son, he fell down on the ground, together with his elephant. The younger brother of the son of Kuninda then struck, using javelins that were completely made out of iron and were as radiant as the sun's rays. He hurled these at his<sup>730</sup> chariot and roared loudly. But the lord of Gandhara<sup>731</sup> severed his head, while he was still roaring. When the Kunindas were slain, the maharathas on your side were delighted. They loudly blew on conch shells obtained from the ocean and with bows and arrows in their hands, attacked the enemy. An extremely terrible battle commenced again between the Kurus and the Pandus and Srinjayas. Arrows, swords, javelins, scimitars, clubs and battleaxes were fiercely used and men, horses and elephants destroyed. As they attacked and wounded each other, chariots, horses, elephants and foot soldiers fell down here and there. It was as if clouds tinged with lightning were stationed in the sky and were dispelled with fierce winds. Bhoja struck Shatanika, the mighty elephants, the chariots and the infantry on their side. Using his weapons, Kritavarma brought down the horses and the elephants. At that time, three elephants belonging to the enemy were struck by the arrows of Drona's son. All of them were ridden by warriors and sported flags. They lost their lives, shrieked and fell down, like large mountains shattered by the thunder. The third son of the king of Kuninda struck your son<sup>732</sup> between the breasts with excellent arrows. Your son pierced his body and that of his elephant with sharp arrows. With the son of the king, that king of elephants fell down, with copious quantities of blood issuing forth. It was as if, at the onset of the moon, water mixed with red chalk was exuding from a mountain, when it had been struck by the vajra of Shachi's consort.<sup>733</sup> However, though struck, the son of Kuninda ascended another elephant and brought down Shuka, with his charioteer, horses and chariot. The lord Kratha<sup>734</sup> was afflicted by the arrows and fell down, like a mountain shattered by thunder. Seated astride an elephant, the invincible ratha from the mountainous regions<sup>735</sup> slew and brought down the lord of Kratha with arrows. He was brought down with his horses, charioteer and bow, like a giant tree struck by a mighty storm. Vrika used twelve arrows to severely strike the one who resided in the mountainous regions and was astride his elephant. However, using great speed in the battle, he

brought down Vrika, with his four horses and chariot. But that king of elephants was severely struck and brought down by Babhru's son, together with its driver. Devavridha's son was also struck, slain and brought down by Sahadeva's son. The elephant of the son of Kuninda was capable of slaying the enemy with its tusks and body. It impetuously rushed towards Shakuni, wishing to kill him. The lord of Gandhara severed its head. Mighty elephants, horses, rathas and large numbers of infantry on your side were slain by Shatanika. They fell down on the ground, crushed and immobile, like trees devastated through a storm raised by Suparna.<sup>736</sup> The son of Kuninda smiled and shot many sharp arrows at Nakula's son.<sup>737</sup> At this, Nakula's son used a razor-sharp arrow to sever his head, which was like a lotus, from his body.

‘ “Karna's son pierced Shatanika with three swift arrows and Arjuna with three more. He pierced Bhima with three arrows, Nakula with seven and Janardana with twelve. On witnessing that superhuman deed, all the Kurus were delighted and applauded him. But they also knew about Dhananjaya's valour and thought that he<sup>738</sup> was like an oblation that had been poured into the fire. Kiriti, the slayer of enemy heroes, saw that the best of men<sup>739</sup> was without his horses, which had been slain. In the battle, he attacked Vrishasena, who was stationed in front of the son of a suta. In that great battle, he descended, with thousands of arrows. On seeing him advance, Karna's maharatha son, fierce and foremost among men, also attacked, like Namuchi against Indra in ancient times.<sup>740</sup> The son of the son of a suta then pierced Partha with many wonderful arrows. The illustrious one roared loudly, like Namuchi in ancient times, after having pierced Shakra. Vrishasena used fierce arrows to again pierce Partha in his armpits. He struck Krishna with nine arrows and again struck Partha with ten sharp and fierce arrows. Kiriti became enraged in that field of battle and his forehead furrowed into three lines. The great-souled one shot arrows in the battle, designed to kill the son of a suta in the battle.<sup>741</sup> Kiriti pierced him violently in the inner organs with ten arrows. With four razor-sharp arrows, he severed his bow, his arms and his head. He was struck by Partha's arrows and fell down from the chariot onto the ground, deprived of his arms and head. He was like an extremely large and flowering shala tree, with a lot of leaves, which had been struck by a storm and brought down from the summit of a mountain. The son of a suta saw that his son had been struck by arrows and had fallen down from his chariot. He was tormented because his son had been slain. Powerfully and violently, he advanced on his chariot towards the ratha Kiriti.” ’

## Chapter 1213(63)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing that Vrishasena had been killed, Karna was overcome by anger and rage. Sudden tears of sorrow flowed down from Vrisha’s eyes. On his chariot, he spiritedly advanced towards the enemy. His eyes were coppery red with rage and he challenged Dhananjaya to a fight. Those two chariots were as radiant as the sun and were covered with tiger skins. When they encountered each other, it was as if two suns had clashed against each other. Those two men, scorchers of enemies, were like suns and were borne by white horses. Those two great-souled ones were as radiant as the sun and the moon in the sky. O venerable one! On seeing them, all the beings were astounded. They looked like Indra and Virochana’s son,<sup>742</sup> embarking on a conquest of the three worlds. There was the clatter of chariots, the twang of bowstrings, the slapping of palms, the whizzing of arrows and the blare of conch shells. As they advanced on their chariots, all the lords of the earth looked on. As they clashed against each other, the standards generated great wonder. Karna’s had the housing of an elephant and Kiriti’s the ape. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As the two chariots clashed against each other, the kings looked on. They emitted roars like lions and voiced loud words of applause. On hearing about the duel between them, the warriors gathered around there. They slapped their arms powerfully and forcefully waved their garments around. The Kurus assembled there. Wishing to cheer Karna, they blew loudly on their conch shells and instructed that musical instruments should be played. All the Pandavas also cheered Dhananjaya. They caused trumpets and conch shells to be sounded in all the directions. The roars generated a tumultuous sound everywhere. As Karna and Arjuna clashed, the brave ones slapped their arms. They saw that those two tigers among men, supreme among rathas, were stationed on their chariots. They grasped their giant bows, arrows, javelins, clubs and other weapons. They were armoured and had girded their swords. They were borne on white horses that were as beautiful as conch shells. Both of them possessed the best of quivers and were handsome. They were smeared with red sandalwood paste on their limbs and were as crazy as bulls. They were like venomous serpents and like Yama, the Destroyer, in their rage. They were as wrathful as Indra and Vritra and as resplendent as the sun and the moon. They were as cruel as mighty planets that clash at the end of a yuga. They were born from gods. They were the equals of the gods. They were like the gods in their beauty. Those two tigers among men, Karna and Dhananjaya, clashed and it was a sight worth seeing. Both of them possessed the best of weapons and both of them were exhausted from fighting. Both of them made the sky resound with the slapping of their arms. Both of them were famous for their deeds, their manliness and their strength. In a battle, both of them were the equals of Shambara and the king of the immortals. In an encounter, both of them were the equals of Kartavirya<sup>743</sup> and Dasharatha’s son. Both of them possessed valour that was like Vishnu’s bravery and both were Bhava’s<sup>744</sup> equal in a fight. O king! Both were borne on white horses and on supreme chariots. The charioteers of those immensely strong ones were the best. O great king! On seeing those two blazing maharathas, there was great amazement among the large numbers of siddhas and charanas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The sons of Dhritarashtra quickly surrounded Karna, the ornament of a battle, with their army. In similar fashion, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, the Pandavas joyfully surrounded the great-souled Partha, who was unmatched in a battle. O lord of the earth! For those on your side, Karna became the stake in the battle. In that way, for the Pandaveyas, Partha became the stake in the battle. The troops on both sides, and those who had assembled, were eager to witness the encounter. The stakes were determined and it was certain that there would be victory, or there would be defeat. Stationed on the field of battle, the gambling match between us and the Pandavas commenced, with the objective of victory, or its reverse. O great king! Those two, who were skilled in fighting, were stationed in the encounter. They were extremely angry to-

wards each other and wished to defeat each other. Like Indra and Vritra, they wished to kill each other. They assumed fearful forms, like planets trailing a lot of smoke.

‘“O bull among the Bharata lineage! As they took sides between Karna and Arjuna, there were differences, debates, dissension and arguments among those in the sky and among all beings. O venerable one! The directions and all the worlds also adopted different sides. When Karna and Arjuna clashed, the gods, the danavas, the gandharvas, the pishachas, the serpents and the rakshasas adopted different sides. O lord of the earth! The sky and the nakshatras became anxious on Karna’s account.<sup>745</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The extensive earth was anxious on Partha’s account, like a mother for her son.<sup>746</sup> O supreme among men! The rivers, the oceans, the mountains, the trees and the herbs took Kiriti’s side. O scorcher of enemies! The asuras, the *yatudhanas*, the *guhnyakas*, crows and others who travelled through the sky were on Karna’s side. The stores of all gems, the Vedas and accounts as the fifth,<sup>747</sup> the minor Vedas, the Upanishads, with collections of their commentaries, Vasuki, Chitrastena, Takshaka, Upataksaka, all the mountains, Kadru’s offspring and immensely wrathful and virulent serpents were on Arjuna’s side.<sup>748</sup> Airavata’s offspring, the offspring of Surabhi and Vaishali and the serpents were on Arjuna’s side.<sup>749</sup> The smaller snakes were on Karna’s side. O king! The wolves, jackals and all the auspicious animals and birds were on Partha’s side, wishing for his victory. The Vasus, the Maruts, the Sadhyas, the Rudras, the Vishvas,<sup>750</sup> the Ashvins, Agni, Indra, the moon god, the wind god and the ten directions were on Dhananjaya’s side, while the Adityas were on Karna’s side.<sup>751</sup> The gods, together with the large number of ancestors, were on Arjuna’s side. Yama, Vaishravana<sup>752</sup> and Varuna were also with Arjuna. The gods, the brahmanas, the kings and the large number of rishis were with Pandava. O king! The gandharvas, with Tumburu at the head, were with Arjuna. The descendants of Prava and Muni, the large numbers of gandharvas and apsaras,<sup>753</sup> wolves, predatory beasts, animals, birds, large numbers of chariots, different forms of clouds and winds, and sages assembled there to witness the clash between Karna and Arjuna. O great king! The gods, the danavas, the gandharvas, the nagas, the yakshas, birds, maharshis learned in the Vedas, the ancestors who thrive on *svadha* oblations,<sup>754</sup> austerities, learning and the herbs, in many different forms and attires, took up their places in the firmament and this created a great noise. Brahma, with the *brahmarshis* and the Prajapatis<sup>755</sup> and Bhava,<sup>756</sup> on his celestial chariot, also arrived at the spot.

‘“On seeing that Prajapati,<sup>757</sup> the self-creating one, had arrived, the gods spoke to him. ‘O god! Let this struggle for victory between these two lions among men be pacified.’ Hearing this, Maghavan<sup>758</sup> prostrated himself before the grandfather and said, ‘Let the entire universe not be destroyed because of Karna and Arjuna. O self-creating one! You had earlier said that Vijaya and the other one<sup>759</sup> are identical. O illustrious one! I am bowing down before you. Be pacified and let that be true.’ Brahma and Ishana<sup>760</sup> spoke these words to the lord of the thirty gods. ‘The victory of the great-souled Vijaya is certain. He is spirited, powerful and brave. He is skilled in the use of weapons and is rich in austerities. Great energy is manifested in him, especially in dhanurveda. Through his greatness, he is capable of overcoming destiny. He is capable of controlling and overcoming the worlds. When the two Krishnas are angered, no one is capable of standing before them. Those two bulls among men are truly the creators of the universe. They are the ancient and supreme rishis Nara and Narayana.<sup>761</sup> Those two scorchers of enemies control everything and cannot be controlled by anyone. Karna, foremost in the worlds, is a bull among men. Vaikartana is brave and valiant. But let the two Krishnas be victorious. With Drona and Bhishma, let him<sup>762</sup> obtain the great world of heaven and the worlds of the Vasus and the Maruts.’ Having heard the words spoken by those two gods of the gods and abiding by the instructions of Brahma and Ishana, the one with the one thousand eyes spoke these words to all the beings. ‘You have heard what the two illustrious ones have said for the welfare of the universe. It must happen that way and cannot be countered. Therefore, do not be anxious.’ O venerable one! O king! Having heard Indra’s words, all the beings were astounded and honoured him. The gods showered down many kinds of fragrant flowers from the sky and sounded divine trumpets. To witness the unmatched duel between those two lions among men, all the gods, danavas and gandharvas waited.

‘ “The two chariots were yoked to white horses. They possessed standards and made a loud noise. The brave ones from the world assembled and separately blew on their conch shells. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! So did the brave Vasudeva and Arjuna and Karna and Shalya. The battle that generated terror among cowards commenced. They rivalled each other in their valour, like Shakra and Shambara. The two clear and radiant standards were fixed to the chariots. As they angrily prepared to fight each other, they<sup>763</sup> were thick. Karna’s resplendent one was marked with an elephant’s housing. It was bejewelled and firm, like Purandara’s bow, and like a venomous serpent. The best of apes opened its terrible and gaping mouth on Partha’s. It was extremely fierce and difficult to look at, like the sun. Stationed on the standard of the wielder of Gandiva, it desired a fight. It roared loudly and flung itself on Karna’s standard. Having descended with great force, the ape used its nails and its teeth to destroy the elephant’s housing, like Garuda against serpents. The elephant’s housing was well decorated with bells. It was like Yama’s noose and was hard as iron. It angrily attacked the giant ape. As those two excellent ones challenged each other to a duel, the standards began to fight each other, wishing to destroy each other.

‘ “Pundarikaksha pierced Shalya with the arrows of his sight and he also glanced back at Pundarikaksha in a similar way. Using the arrows of his sight, Vasudeva defeated Shalya. Kunti’s son, Dhananjaya, also glanced at Karna with his sight and vanquished him. At this, the son of a suta smiled and told Shalya, ‘O friend! If through some means, Partha slays me in the battle today, what will you do after that? Tell me truthfully.’ Shalya replied, ‘O Karna! If the one with the white horses kills you in the battle today, I will slay both Madhava and Pandava.’ In that way, Arjuna also asked Govinda. However, Krishna laughed and spoke these supreme words to Partha. ‘The sun may fall down from its place. The earth may shatter into many fragments. The fire may become cold. But Karna will not be able to kill Dhananjaya. However, if this does happen, the world will be destroyed. Using my arms in the battle, I will kill Karna and Shalya.’ Having heard Krishna’s words, the one with the ape on his banner laughed. Arjuna told Krishna, the performer of undecaying deeds, ‘O Janardana! Karna and Shalya together are not sufficient for me. In the battle today, you will see Karna severed into many fragments with my arrows, with Karna’s flags and standard, with Shalya, the chariot and the horses, with his umbrella and armour, and with his javelins, arrows and bow. In earlier times, he laughed at Krishna.’<sup>764</sup> Today, you will see Karna uprooted by me, like a flowering tree brought down by a maddened elephant. O Madhusudana! After that, you will hear pleasant words today. Today, you will be able to comfort Abhimanyu’s mother and repay her debt. O Janardana! Kunti, your father’s sister, will be delighted. O Madhava! The tears on Krishna’s<sup>765</sup> face will be comforted today. You will be able to speak immortal words to Dharmaraja Yudhishtira.’” ’



## Chapter 1214(64)

‘Sanjaya said, “With nagas, asuras, large numbers of siddhas, gandharvas, yakshas, large numbers of apsaras, brahmarshis, rajarshis and groups of birds, the sky was beautiful in form. There were pleasant sounds of musical instruments. There were sounds of praise. There was singing and dancing. All those in the sky, and men, were spectators. The sky assumed a beautiful form. Cheerfully, the warriors on the Kuru and Pandava sides made the earth and the directions resound with their musical instruments, the sounds of arrows and weapons and leonine roars. With that sound, they began to slaughter their enemies. The field of battle had many horses, elephants and chariots and it was extremely difficult to withstand, because of the descent of supreme swords, javelins and scimitars. As they attacked, bodies were slain and it was red and beautiful because of the blood. As the battle commenced, Dhananjaya and Adhiratha’s son, supreme among wielders of weapons, used their sharp and swift arrows against the soldiers in all directions. They were armoured and showered these towards each other.<sup>766</sup> Because of the darkness that was created by the arrows, those on one’s own side could not be distinguished from that of the enemy. Since they<sup>767</sup> were terrified, they sought refuge with those two rathas, who were like the extending rays of the sun at the end of darkness. Those two countered each other’s weapons with their own, like the east wind clashing against the west wind. They were as radiant as two suns, dispelling the thick darkness after the sun has arisen. Each encouraged those on his side to take a stand against the enemy. The two maharathas were surrounded in every direction, like the gods and the asuras around Vasava and Shambara. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Drums, smaller drums and battle drums were sounded. There was the blare of conch shells. This mingled with roars like lions. Those two supreme among men were dazzling, like the sun and the moon amidst a thick mass of clouds. Both of them possessed large bows drawn into circles, like radiant solar discs, with thousands of arrows as the rays. They were extremely unassailable in battle and were like two suns that had arisen at the end of a yuga to destroy all mobile and immobile objects in the universe. They were both invincible and capable of destroying ill-wishers. They were accomplished and wished to kill each other. In the great battle, Karna and Pandava, supreme among brave ones, clashed, like Indra and Jambha. Those two great archers released great weapons and terrible arrows. As they sought to kill each other with supreme arrows, they slaughtered large numbers of men, horses and elephants. Terrified and afflicted again by those arrows, the Kurus and Pandavas sought refuge with those two supreme among men. Elephants, foot soldiers, horses and chariots fled in various directions, like residents of a forest out of fear for a lion.

‘ “Duryodhana, Bhoja, Soubala, Kripa and Sharadvata’s son— these five maharathas attacked Dhananjaya and Achyuta with arrows that could destroy the body. Dhananjaya used his arrows to destroy their bows, arrows, horses, standards, chariots and charioteers. Having countered and defeated them, he struck the son of a suta with twelve supreme arrows. At this, one hundred chariots, one hundred elephants, riders from Shakas, Tukharas and Yavanas and the best of Kambojas attacked Arjuna, desiring to kill him. However, Dhananjaya used razor-sharp arrows to swiftly sever the supreme weapons in their hands, heads, horses, elephants and chariots of the large numbers of the enemy who were fighting against him. The assembled gods in the sky were delighted and applauded by sounding their trumpets. Showers of beautiful and fragrant flowers were rained down. Auspicious winds began to blow. O king! Gods, men and beings who witnessed that wonderful sight were amazed. However, your son and the son of a suta certainly felt neither pain, nor wonder. Drona’s son grasped your son’s hand in his own hand and comforted him. He said, ‘O Duryodhana! Be pacified. Make peace with the Pandavas. There is no need for dissension. Shame on war. Your preceptor<sup>768</sup> was Brahma’s equal and knew about great weapons. He has been killed and so have bulls among men, with Bhishma as the foremost. I cannot be killed and neither can my maternal

uncle.<sup>769</sup> Together with the Pandavas, enjoy the kingdom for a long time. Restrained by me, Dhananjaya will withdraw. Janardana does not desire a conflict either. Yudhishtira is always engaged in the welfare of beings. Vrikodara is obedient to him and so are the twins. If there is peace between you and Partha,<sup>770</sup> all the subjects will be fortunate and that seems to be your desire too. Let the remaining kings return to their own cities. Let the soldiers refrain from hostilities. O lord of men! If you do not listen to my words, you are certain to be slain by the enemies in the battle and will repent. This universe, and you, has seen what the one with the diadem and the garland<sup>771</sup> has single-handedly accomplished. This has not been accomplished by the destroyer of Bala,<sup>772</sup> Yama, the illustrious Prachetas<sup>773</sup> and the king of the yakshas.<sup>774</sup> There are many other qualities that Dhananjaya possesses. He will not transgress my words. He will act so as to follow you. O king! For the benefit of the world, be pacified. You have always shown me great honour and I have reciprocated. I am your great well-wisher and that is the reason I am speaking these words. If you are inclined towards affection, I will restrain Karna too. Those who are learned say that there are four kinds of friends—those who are natural friends, those who are made such through conciliation, those who are earned through riches and those who are subjugated through power. Towards you, the Pandavas are all four. O brave one! They are naturally your relatives. Make them that through conciliation. O Indra among kings! If they are pacified and become friends towards you, it is certain that you should also act in that way.’ Having heard the beneficial words spoken by his well-wisher, he<sup>775</sup> thought for some time. He sighed and, distressed in his mind, replied, ‘O friend! It is as you have said. However, listen to the words that I will tell you. Vrikodara is evil-minded. He slew Duhshasana like a tiger, and laughing, spoke many words. Those are still lodged in my heart. They were uttered in your presence. How can there be peace? O son of my preceptor! O unblemished one! You should not speak to Karna and try to restrain him. Phalguna is overcome by great exhaustion. Karna will kill him in a short while.’ Humbly and respectfully, your son repeatedly spoke these words and instructed his soldiers, ‘Attack and kill those who seek to injure us. Why is the sound of arrows not heard and why is everything quiet?’”

## Chapter 1215(65)

‘Sanjaya said, “The blare of conch shells and the beating of drums became loud. Those two best among men, Vaikartana, the son of a suta, and Arjuna, borne on white horses, clashed against each other. O king! This was because of the evil counsels of your son. They were like two elephants with shattered temples from the Himalayas, attacking each other with their tusks in a desire for intercourse.<sup>776</sup> The brave Dhananjaya and Adhiratha’s son rushed against each other with fierce force, as they willed. It was like a cloud dashing against another cloud, or a mountain against another mountain. The twang of bowstrings and the sound of palms could be heard. The wheels of the chariots rattled. They clashed and showered down arrows. They were like large mountain tops, covered with trees and herbs and populated by many kinds of dwellers of mountains, dashing against each other. As they struck each other with great weapons, those two immensely strong ones were like mountains that had been dislodged. The clash between those two great ones was like that between the lord of the gods and Virochana’s son<sup>777</sup> in ancient times. Arrows mangled their bodies and those of their charioteers and horses. This was impossible for others to withstand. Blood began to flow like water. It was as if there were two large ponds filled with lotuses, lilies, fish and turtles and resounding with the calls of a large number of birds. It was as if they were being gently stirred by the wind. Those two chariots, with standards, were like that and they approached each other. Each of them possessed a valour that was like that of the great Indra. Those two maharathas were as resplendent as the great Indra. Their arrows were like the vajra of the great Indra. They attacked each other, like the great Indra and Vritra. Both armies possessed elephants, foot soldiers, horses and chariots. There were diverse colourful ornaments and garments. Everyone, including those in the sky, trembled and was astounded at the clash between Karna and Arjuna. The spectators raised their arms, with diamonds on their fingers. They were delighted and roared like lions. Adhiratha’s son attacked Arjuna, wishing to kill him, like a crazy elephant against another elephant. The Somakas roared and urged Partha on. ‘O Arjuna! Speed up. Pierce Karna. Sever his sparkling head without any delay. This is because of the greed that Dhritarashtra’s son has for the kingdom.’ In similar fashion, many warriors from our side exclaimed, ‘O Karna! Proceed. Advance. O Karna! Slay Arjuna without any delay. Let the Parthas again be banished to the forest for a long time.’

‘ “With ten great arrows, Karna struck Partha first. Extremely angry, Arjuna pierced him back in the flanks with ten sharp and fierce arrows. The son of a suta and Arjuna struck and wounded each other with extremely sharp arrows. So as to crush each other, they sought for a weakness in the adversary. Cheerfully, but fiercely, they attacked each other in the great conflict. In the great conflict, the great-souled Bhimasena became wrathful and intolerant. He squeezed his hands and bit his lips with his teeth. Dancing around like a musician, he asked, ‘O Kiriti! How was it that the son of a suta was able to pierce you first with ten great arrows? Do you remember the fortitude with which you defeated all beings and satisfied Agni in Khandava? Use that fortitude and kill the son of a suta. Otherwise, let me bring him down with a club.’ On seeing that Partha’s arrows were being repulsed, Vasudeva spoke to him. ‘O Kiriti! How is it that in every way, your weapons today are being countered by Karna’s weapons? O brave one! Why do you look like someone who is confused? The Kurus are cheerfully roaring. All of them are honouring Karna, knowing that all your weapons have been destroyed by his. In yuga after yuga, you have used fortitude to destroy the weapons of darkness and terrible rakshasas. You slew Dambhodbhava and other asuras in encounters.<sup>778</sup> Use that fortitude and slay the son of a suta. Or use this *sudarshana* chakra now and slice off his head. It is sharp at the edges and even the immortals cannot withstand it. It has been used by me earlier, like Shakra using the vajra to strike Namuchi. The illustrious one, in the form of a hunter, was pleased by your greatness and fortitude.<sup>779</sup> Resort to that fortitude again and slay the son of a suta, together with his relatives. Give this

earth, right up to the frontiers of the ocean, prosperous with its towns and villages, to the king.<sup>780</sup> O Partha! Having slain large numbers of the enemy, obtain unlimited fame.’ Having been thus urged by both Bhima and Janardana, he glanced towards his own self and remembered his spirit.

‘ “The great-souled one knew the reason for his birth and spoke to Keshava. ‘I will release a great and fierce weapon for the welfare of the worlds and for the death of the son of a suta. Let me have your permission, that of the gods, Brahma, Bhava and all the ones who are knowledgeable about the brahman.’ Having said this, he invoked the invincible brahmastra in his mind, in accordance with the prescribed rites. All the directions and sub-directions were covered by extremely energetic arrows. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Many hundreds of swift arrows were released from it. In the midst of this, Vaikartana also created many thousands of arrows. These descended on Pandava with a large roar, like showers of rain released from a cloud. He performed a superhuman deed and pierced Bhimasena, Janardana and Kiriti with three arrows each. Terrible in his strength, he then emitted a loud and fierce roar. Kiriti saw that Bhima and Janardana had also been struck by Karna’s arrows. He became intolerant and shot eighteen arrows again. He pierced Sushena with one arrow, Shalya with four and Karna with three. He then shot ten excellent arrows and killed Sabhapati,<sup>781</sup> who was clad in golden armour. The head and the arms of that prince were severed. He was without his charioteer, bow and standard. He was mangled and fell down from the chariot, like a shala tree sliced down with an axe. He again pierced Karna with three, eight, two and fourteen arrows. He slew four hundred elephants, stocked with weapons, eight hundred rathas, one thousand horses and riders and eight thousand valiant foot soldiers. Karna and Partha fought on. They were the best of the brave and the slayers of enemies. The spectators, who were assembled in the sky and on earth, controlled their mounts and watched what was going on in the battle.

‘ “Pandava’s bowstring was being drawn with great force and snapped, with a loud noise. At that moment, the son of a suta struck Partha with one hundred *kshudraka* arrows. He pierced Vasudeva with sixty sharp iron arrows that were washed in oil and were tufted with the feathers of birds. They were like snakes that had cast off their skins. At this, the Somakas ran away. Partha became extremely angry. His body was mangled by Karna’s arrows. He stretched his bowstring and swiftly countered the arrows of Adhiratha’s son. He made the Somakas return. The sky was darkened because of this release of weapons and birds were unable to fly. Partha pierced Shalya’s body armour with ten arrows and laughed. He pierced Karna with twelve well-aimed arrows and pierced him again with another seven. He was firmly struck by Partha’s forceful arrows. Those arrows were fierce in their power. His body was mangled and his limbs were wounded. Karna looked as beautiful as Rudra at the time of destruction. Dhananjaya was the equal of the lord of the gods. However, Adhiratha’s son struck him with three arrows. Wishing to slay Achyuta, he next shot five arrows that were like flaming serpents. They were decorated with gold and were aimed well. They pierced Purushottama’s armour with great force and passing through, entered the earth. Having bathed there, they returned to Karna. Quickly, with well-aimed and broad-headed arrows, Dhananjaya sliced each of them into three fragments and they fell down on the ground. They were mighty serpents that were on the side of Takshaka’s son.<sup>782</sup> The one with the diadem and the garland flamed in rage, like a fire that burns down dead wood. He drew his bow all the way back to his ears and shot many flaming arrows that were capable of bringing an end to the body. They pierced him<sup>783</sup> in the inner organs and made him waver. However, he was extremely patient and used that fortitude to withstand the grief. O king! Dhananjaya angrily covered Karna’s chariot, all the directions and the sub-directions with his torrents of arrows. These shrouded the radiance of the sun. The sky also seemed to disappear, as if it was covered in snow. On the instructions of Duryodhana, there were those who were guarding the chariot wheels, the feet, the front and the rear.<sup>784</sup> These were excellent rathas and the best. In the battle, Savyasachi slew all of them. He killed two thousand of the foremost Kurus, bulls among the Kuru lineage. O king! In a short instant, the brave one single-handedly destroyed all of them, with their chariots, horses and charioteers. They fled, abandoning Karna. And so did your son and the Kurus who were left. They abandoned those who were slain and wounded by the arrows, including lamenting sons and fathers. All the directions were emptied and devoid of Kurus, because they were afflicted by fear. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, on seeing this, Karna wasn’t distressed. Cheerfully, he attacked Arjuna.” ’

## Chapter 1216(66)

‘Sanjaya said, “They fled because of that descent of arrows. The soldiers of the Kurus were routed. However, they waited at a distance and glanced back, gazing at Dhananjaya’s weapons, which were descending like lightning in all directions. In that great battle, the angry Partha quickly unleashed a weapon to slay Karna. However, while Arjuna’s weapon was still travelling and roaring through the air, the brave one destroyed it with a great weapon that he had obtained from Atharvan Rama<sup>785</sup> and which was capable of destroying enemies. Having destroyed Arjuna’s weapon, he struck Partha with innumerable sharp arrows. O king! The clash between Arjuna and Adhiratha’s son assumed a great and dreadful form. They struck each other with arrows, like two fierce elephants goring each other with their tusks. Karna affixed an extremely sharp and flaming arrow that was capable of slaying the enemy. This had a serpent in its mouth.<sup>786</sup> That terrible arrow had been carefully preserved and washed well, protected well for Partha’s destruction. It had been worshipped and laid down on a bed of sandalwood paste. That immensely virulent weapon was lying down in a golden quiver. It was generated from the lineage of Airavata<sup>787</sup> and flamed. Wishing to kill Phalguna in the battle, he aimed at his head. On seeing that Vaikartana had affixed that arrow, the great-souled king of Madra said, ‘O Karna! This arrow will not be able to reach his neck. Fix and aim another arrow that can sever his head.’ With eyes that were red with rage, Karna affixed that arrow and told Shalya, ‘O Shalya! Karna will not affix a second arrow. Someone like me does not engage in deceit.’ Having said this, he released that arrow, the serpent which he had worshipped for many years. He said, ‘O Phalguna! You have been slain,’ and swiftly shot the arrow. On seeing that Karna had affixed the serpent, Madhava, supreme among strong ones, used his strength to press down on the chariot with his feet. The chariot sank down on the ground and the horses sank down on their knees.

‘“The arrow struck down the intelligent one’s diadem. The ornament that adorned Arjuna’s head was famous throughout the earth, heaven and the waters. In his anger and through the strength of his weapon, the son of a suta used the arrow to bring it down from his head. It possessed the flaming radiance of the sun, the moon and the planets. It was decorated with nets of gold, pearls and gems. Using his austerities and efforts, this had been crafted for Purandara by the earth’s son himself.<sup>788</sup> It was extremely expensive in form and generated terror amongst the enemy. It was fragrant and brought happiness to the one who wore it. When he killed the enemies of the gods,<sup>789</sup> the lord of the gods was delighted and himself gave it to Kiriti. It could not be destroyed by Hara, the lord of the waters or the protector of riches,<sup>790</sup> and by the *pinaka*, *pasha* or *vajra*<sup>791</sup> and the best of arrows. The supreme gods were incapable of withstanding it. However, using the serpent, Vrisha now destroyed it. The flame of the poison uprooted it from his head and brought the beloved crown, with flaming rays, down on the ground. Partha’s supreme diadem fell down, like the blazing sun setting over Mount Asta. The crown was decorated with many gems. The serpent forcefully tore it down from Arjuna’s head. It was as if an excellent mountain top, with shoots and blossoming trees, was struck down by the great Indra’s *vajra*. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The earth, the sky, heaven and the waters seemed to be whirled around by a tempest. Such a noise arose on earth then. Though they tried to control themselves, people were distressed and trembled. But Arjuna was not distressed. He tied the hair on his head with a white garment. The serpent released from Karna’s arms was extremely radiant, like the rays of the sun. That giant serpent was firm in its enmity of Arjuna. It struck the diadem and fell down. It told him,<sup>792</sup> ‘Know who I am. I am firm in my enmity of the two Krishnas, because they slew my mother.’<sup>793</sup> In the battle, Krishna then spoke to Partha. ‘The giant serpent is firm in its enmity. Slay it.’ Having been thus addressed by Madhusudana, the wielder of Gandiva, fierce in using the bow and arrow against enemies, asked, ‘Who is the serpent who is advancing against me of his own accord, as if into Garuda’s gaping mouth?’ Krishna replied, ‘In

Khandava, you satisfied the blazing one<sup>794</sup> with the bow in your hand. You killed his mother, taking her to be a single snake. However, though her body was destroyed by the arrows, he was in the sky, covered by her.' The serpent was falling down from the sky. Jishnu severed the serpent with six sharp arrows. Mangled in its body, it fell down on the ground.

' "At the time, Karna, foremost among brave men, glanced sideways at Dhananjaya and pierced him with ten arrows that had been sharpened on stone and were tufted with the feathers of peacocks. Arjuna drew his bow all the way back up to his ears and struck him with twelve sharp arrows. Those iron arrows were like venomous serpents in their force. He drew his bow all the way back up to his ears and shot them. They were released well. They shattered his supreme and colourful armour, as if they were robbing him of his life. Having drunk Karna's blood, they penetrated the ground, with the tufts smeared with blood. Vrisha became extremely angry at being struck by the arrows, like a giant serpent that has been beaten with a staff. He swiftly shot supreme arrows that were like giant serpents with excellent poison. He struck Janardana with twelve arrows and Arjuna with ninety-nine. Karna again pierced Pandava with terrible arrows and roared loudly. Pandava could not tolerate this joy. He was like Indra in his valour. He shot supreme arrows, like Indra energetically striking Bala. Arjuna shot ninety arrows at Karna and each of them was like Yama's staff. Those arrows severely mangled his body, like a mountain shattered by thunder. The crown on his head was decorated with gems and diamonds and he wore excellent earrings. These were severed by Dhananjaya's arrows and fell down. His radiant and excellent armour was carefully crafted by the best of craftsmen over a long period of time. It was extremely expensive. In an instant, Pandava shattered this into many fragments with his arrows. Having deprived him of his armour with those excellent arrows, he then angrily struck him with four arrows. Distressed and struck by his enemy, he was like a diseased person, suffering from bile, phlegm, wind and wounds. Arjuna spiritedly shot sharp arrows from the great circle of his bow. He made great efforts and struck with strength. Karna was struck by many supreme arrows and they penetrated his inner organs. Karna was struck by many of Partha's sharp arrows. He was severely wounded by those arrows that were fierce and forceful. He looked as beautiful as a mountain with red chalk, from which, streams of red water were flowing down the slopes. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Kiriti struck Karna and his horses and his chariot with vatsadanta arrows. Making every effort, he used gold-tufted arrows to envelope the directions. When he was struck in his broad chest by those vatsadanta arrows, Adhiratha's son looked resplendent. He looked like a blossoming ashoka, *palasha* or *shalmali* tree, or like a trembling mountain with many sandalwood trees. O lord of the earth! With those many arrows stuck to his body, Karna looked beautiful in the battle. He looked like a valley in a mountain, covered with many large trees, or like a giant mountain, with sparkling *karnikara* trees.

' "Karna also shot a large number of arrows from his bow. With those nets of arrows as rays, he looked dazzling. He was like the sun advancing towards sunset, red and with a crimson solar disc. Those arrows were released from the arms of Adhiratha's son and blazed like giant serpents in the sky. In all the directions, they clashed with the sharp and fierce arrows released from Arjuna's arms and destroyed them. At that time, the earth trembled and the son of a suta became confused in the battle. Because of the brahmana's curse, the chariot was whirled around in the encounter.<sup>795</sup> Because of Rama's curse, the weapons no longer manifested themselves. Unable to tolerate this, he whirled his garments and his arms around and lamented, 'Those who know about dharma have always held that that dharma protects those who place dharma at the forefront. But instead of protecting one who is devoted, it is now bringing me down. I think that dharma does not always protect.' While he was speaking in this way, his horses and chariot were dislodged and he began to waver because of the downpour of Arjuna's weapons. He was struck in his inner organs and was incapable of acting. He repeatedly censured dharma. In the battle, having been struck by three fierce arrows in the arm, Karna then pierced Partha with seven. Arjuna struck him back with seventeen straight-flying and energetic arrows. They were as terrible as Indra's vajra and like fire to the touch. They pierced him with great force and then fell down on the surface of the earth.

' "Karna trembled. However, he exhibited great capacity. Using his strength, he invoked brahmastra. On seeing this, Arjuna invoked mantras and released *aindrastra*. Dhananjaya also invoked mantras on the bowstring of Gandiva and the arrows. He released showers of arrows, like Purandara pouring down rain. Those energetic arrows issued from the immensely valorous Partha's chariot and were about to destroy Karna's chariot. However, when they arrived in front of him, maharatha Karna repulsed all of them. When that weapon was destroyed, the brave one

from the Vrishni lineage said, ‘O Partha! Radheya is destroying your arrows. Release supreme weapons.’ Using mantras, Arjuna released brahmastra. With those radiant arrows, Arjuna shrouded Karna. But Karna used extremely energetic arrows to angrily sever his bowstring. Fixing another bowstring, Pandava enveloped Karna with thousands of fiery arrows. In that battle, when Karna severed his bowstring, he fixed another one so quickly that no one could make this out. It was wonderful. Using his weapons, Radheya countered all of Savyasachi’s weapons. At that time, his valour seemed to be greater than that of Partha. Krishna saw that Arjuna was afflicted because of Karna’s weapons. He said, ‘O Partha! Go closer and strike him with the best weapons.’ Dhananjaya invoked an arrow with divine mantras. It was like a fire and the poison of a serpent. It was made completely out of iron. Kiriti united this with *roudrastra* and wished to shoot it. But, in that great battle, the earth swallowed up one of the wheels of Radheya’s chariot.

“Radheya wept in rage. He told Arjuna, ‘O Pandava! Wait for an instant. You can see that because of destiny, my central wheel<sup>796</sup> has got submerged. O Partha! Abandon the thought<sup>797</sup> that only befits a coward. O Arjuna! One should not shoot a weapon at one with dishevelled hair, at one who doesn’t wish to fight, at a brahmana, at someone who has joined his hands in salutation, at one who has sought refuge, at one who has cast aside his weapons, at someone who faces a calamity, at someone who doesn’t have arrows, at a person whose armour has been destroyed, or at a person whose weapons have been shattered and broken. Brave ones do not strike at such people, nor do kings and lords of the earth. O Kounteya! You are brave. Wait for a short while. O Dhananjaya! Let me extricate the wheel from the ground. You are stationed on your chariot. You should not kill me when I am on the ground. O Pandaveya! You and Vasudeva are not frightened of me. You are a kshatriya and you are the extender of a great lineage. O Pandava! Remember the instructions of dharma and wait for a short while.’”



## Chapter 1217(67)

‘Sanjaya said, “Vasudeva was stationed on his chariot. He said, ‘O Radheya! It is fortunate that you remember dharma. Quite often, when they are immersed in hardships, inferior ones censure destiny, but not their evil deeds. O Karna! When you, Suyodhana, Duhshasana and Shakuni Soubala brought Droupadi to the assembly hall in a single garment, did dharma not show itself to you? When, in the assembly hall, Yudhishtira, who was not skilled at dice, was defeated by Shakuni, who was skilled at dice, where did dharma go then? O Karna! During her season, Krishna<sup>798</sup> was under Duhshasana’s subjugation in the assembly hall and you laughed at her. Where did dharma go then? O Karna! Resorting to the king of Gandhara and coveting the kingdom, you challenged the Pandavas.<sup>799</sup> Where did dharma go then?’ When Vasudeva addressed Radheya in this way, Pandava Dhananjaya remembered all this and was overcome by great rage. Energetic flames of anger seemed to issue out from all the pores on his body and it was extraordinary.

‘“On seeing this, Karna again invoked brahmastra against Dhananjaya. He showered down arrows and tried to extricate his chariot. Pandava countered those weapons with his own weapons. Kounteya then released another weapon, beloved of the fire god, towards Karna. It blazed fiercely. Karna pacified the fire through a varuna weapon. He covered all the directions with clouds and it was as dark as a rainy day. Pandaveya was not frightened. While Radheya looked on, the valiant one used the vayavya weapon and dispelled all the clouds. The supreme one’s standard had the marks of an elephant’s housing. It was decorated with gold, pearls, jewels and diamonds. It had been crafted by excellent artisans over a long period of time. It was expensive and beautiful in form. It always inspired your soldiers and terrified and frightened the enemy. It was renowned in the world and blazed like the sun and the moon. Kiriti used a razor-sharp arrow that was gold-tufted and pointed. With that, he brought down the handsome and blazing standard of the great-souled maharatha, Adhiratha’s son. O venerable one! When that standard was uprooted, fame, dharma, victory and everything that was dear to the hearts of the Kurus also fell down. Great sounds of lamentation arose.

‘“To ensure Karna’s death, Pandava took out an anjalika arrow. It was like the great Indra’s vajra, or like a rod that was made out of fire. It blazed in its rays, like the one with one thousand rays.<sup>800</sup> It was capable of penetrating the inner organs and smearing itself with blood and flesh. It was extremely expensive and was like the fire and the sun. It could destroy men, horses and elephants and was three cubits long, with six tufts.<sup>801</sup> It travelled straight and possessed a great force. In its energy, it was like the vajra of the one with one thousand eyes. It was as difficult to withstand as predatory beasts. It was like the pinaka and Narayana’s chakra. It was fearful and destructive of living beings. He invoked mantras and affixed that supreme and great weapon to Gandiva. He loudly said, ‘I am grasping this great weapon, which is in the form of an arrow. It is extremely difficult to withstand and is capable of destroying the body. If I have tormented myself through austerities and have satisfied my seniors, if I have listened to what my well-wishers have told me, through that truth, let this arrow slay my armoured enemy, Karna, and bring me victory.’ Having said this, for the sake of Karna’s death, Dhananjaya released that terrible arrow. It was as fierce as rites performed by Atharvan and Angiras. It blazed and was impossible to be endured in a battle, even by Death itself. Kiriti cheerfully said, ‘Let this arrow bring me victory.’ Wishing to slay Karna, bring about his end and convey him to Yama, he released the arrow, which was as radiant as the sun and the moon. Cheerfully, so that he could be conveyed towards victory, the one with the diadem and the garland shot the arrow. It was as radiant as the sun and the moon. He harboured feelings of enmity and wished to slay his enemy. That weapon, blazing like the sun, was shot. Like the sun, it lit up the earth with its radiance. The head of the commander of the army was severed. Like the sun, with a red disc, it seemed to set. The body of the one who performed generous deeds was

always reared in happiness. Like a person who is reluctant to leave a house filled with great riches, the head parted from the body with great difficulty. Without the armour, the body was mangled by arrows and lost its life. Karna's body was severed and fell down. Blood oozed from the wounds, like red chalk flowing from the slopes of a mountain, when the summit has been struck by thunder. When Karna's body fell down, a flaming mass of energy arose and rose up into the sky. O king! When Karna was slain, all the men and warriors witnessed this great wonder.

‘ “On seeing that he had been slain and was lying down, with their soldiers, the Somakas roared in delight. They joyfully blew on their trumpets and waved their garments and hands around. Other troops danced around. They embraced each other, roaring in delight. They saw that Karna had been destroyed and was lying down on the ground. The ratha had been slain and mangled by the arrows. It was as if the untainted and extinguished fire was lying down in the expansive sky, after the end of a sacrifice. All his limbs were mangled by arrows and torrents of blood flowed from them. Karna's body was beautiful, like the rays of the sun in the firmament. He had tormented the soldiers of the enemy with flaming arrows that were like the sun's rays. The powerful Karna was like the setting sun, conveyed to death by Arjuna. When the sun sets, all its radiance also departs. Like that, the arrow took away Karna's life. O venerable one! It was the late part of the afternoon then. Severed by the anjalika in the battle, the head and the body of the son of a suta fell down. While the soldiers of the enemy looked on, it swiftly severed Karna's head and body.

‘ “The brave Karna fell down on the ground. Mangled by arrows, blood flowed out from his body. On seeing that he was lying down on the ground and seeing that the standard had been severed, the king of Madra withdrew on the chariot. When Karna was slain, the Kurus fled. They were severely struck in the battle and were afflicted with fear. They repeatedly glanced at Arjuna's great standard, blazing in form. He<sup>802</sup> had performed deeds like those of the one with one thousand eyes. His face was as beautiful as one with one thousand petals.<sup>803</sup> He was like the one with one thousand rays, at the end of the day. Thus did his head fall down on the ground.” ’

## Chapter 1218(68)

‘Sanjaya said, “In the course of the encounter between Karna and Arjuna, the soldiers had been mangled with arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing this, Shalya went to Duryodhana, who was glancing at the field of battle. Duryodhana saw that his army, with its chariots, horses and elephants, had been destroyed and the son of a suta had been killed. His eyes filled with tears and in great distress, he sighed repeatedly. The brave Karna had fallen down on the ground. His body had been mangled by arrows and blood flowed from it. It was as if the sun had fallen down from the sky. To see this, everyone came there and surrounded the body. There were those who belonged to your side and others who belonged to the enemy. Some were cheerful. Others were frightened. Some were distressed. Others were amazed. There were others who were completely overcome by grief. According to their natural traits, they looked towards each other. Karna had possessed armour, ornaments, garments and weapons. On seeing that he had been brought down by Dhananjaya and deprived of his energy, the Kurus fled. They were like a distressed herd of cattle, when the bull has been killed. By slaying Karna, like an elephant by a lion, Arjuna had struck them severely.

‘“On seeing that he was lying down on the ground, the king of Madra was terrified. He swiftly withdrew on his chariot. The lord of Madra was stupefied. He quickly departed on the chariot that was without a standard. He swiftly went to Duryodhana’s side and spoke these sorrowful words. ‘The elephants, horses and best of rathas in your army have been destroyed. It looks like Yama’s kingdom. The large armies with men, horses and elephants that are like mountain tops have clashed against each other and have been killed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There has never been a battle like that fought between Karna and Arjuna today. Karna clashed against the two Krishnas and others who are your enemies and has been devoured. Destiny flows according to its own rules. That is the reason it is protecting the Pandavas and weakening us. All the brave ones sought to accomplish your objectives. They have been slain by the enemy. Those brave ones were the equals of Kubera, Vaivasvata and the lord of the waters in power. They possessed valour, bravery and strength. They possessed large stores of qualities. Those lords of men were unslayable. They sought to accomplish your objectives, fought against the Pandaveyas and have been slain. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Do not grieve. This is destiny. There is no substitute for success. However, success cannot always be obtained.’ Hearing the words of the lord of Madra, Duryodhana was miserable in his mind. He thought of his own evil deeds and looked within his heart. He was bereft of his senses. In great grief, he repeatedly sighed.

‘“He reflected and was silent. He was extremely distressed. Artayani<sup>804</sup> spoke these words to him. ‘O brave one! Behold this fierce field of battle. It is strewn around with slain men, horses and elephants. Giant elephants have fallen down, like giant mountains. They have been sliced down. Their inner organs have been pierced with arrows. They are unconscious and anxious. Some have lost their lives. The warriors have dislodged their body armour and their weapons. They are like fragmented mountains, with rocks, animals, trees and herbs, which have been shattered by Indra’s vajra. The bells, goads, javelins and standards have been destroyed. They possessed golden harnesses, which are streaming with copious quantities of blood. Mangled by arrows, horses have fallen down. Some of them are finding it difficult to breathe and are vomiting blood. Some are shrieking loudly, with dilated eyes. Some are biting the ground with their teeth and neighing in distress. Warriors on horses and elephants have been struck. Some have a little bit of life left and others have lost their lives. Men, horses, elephants and chariots have been crushed. Like the great Vaitarani, the earth is difficult to behold. Elephants have had their trunks severed by the enemy. They are shrieking, trembling and falling down on the ground. There were illustrious elephants, chariots, horses, warriors and foot soldiers. Advancing against the enemy, they have been slain. Armour, ornaments, garments and weapons are strewn around. It is as if the earth is covered with many fires that have been

extinguished. One can see that the mighty armies have been struck by the force of the arrows and soldiers have fallen down in thousands. They have lost their senses and are trying to regain their breath again. The earth is beautiful, as if with fires that have been extinguished. Flaming and sparkling planets seem to have fallen down from the sky. The arrows, released from the arms of Karna and Arjuna, have shattered the bodies of elephants, horses and men. The weapons have quickly deprived them of their lives and have entered the ground, like giant serpents looking for an abode. In the battle, men, horses and elephants have been killed. Chariots have been shattered by the arrows. The earth has become impassable because of the bodies of elephants that have been killed by the arrows of Dhananjaya and Adhiratha's son. The best of rathas and warriors have been uprooted by the arrows. Chariots, horses, the best of weapons and standards are strewn around. It is impassable because of shattered and destroyed weapons. Wheels, axles, yokes and trivenus have been shattered. The chariots are without charioteers, who have been killed. It is impassable because some are without yokes, while others have had their yokes broken. The seats were decorated with gold and jewels and have been shattered. They are strewn around on the ground, like clouds in the autumn sky. The swift and ornamented horses were yoked to excellent chariots and with riders slain, are dragging them around. Large numbers of men, elephants, chariots and horses are seen to speedily run away. They have been routed in many ways. Clubs tied in golden cloth, battleaxes, swords,<sup>805</sup> bludgeons, spears, sparkling and unsheathed scimitars, and maces tied up in golden pieces of cloth have fallen down. There are bows, golden armlets, ornaments, arrows with colourful tufts made out of gold, yellow and spotless swords that have been unsheathed, javelins and scimitars with golden complexions. There are umbrellas, fans, whisks, conch shells and garlands of flowers, embellished with gold. There are housings, flags and garments. There are radiant crowns, garlands and diadems. The housings are scattered and strewn around. There are necklaces decorated with pearls from the waters. There are guards, armlets and excellent bracelets. There are golden collars and golden threads for the necks. There are the best of gems, diamonds, gold, pearls and other jewels. There are auspicious signs, good and not that good, on the bodies, which have been reared in great happiness. The faces on the heads are like the full moon. The bodies have given up pleasure and garments, objects desired by the heart and happiness. They have resorted to their own dharma and obtained great merits. They have ascended to the worlds that bring fame.' Shalya spoke these words to Duryodhana and stopped.

‘His<sup>806</sup> mind was overcome with great grief. Bereft of his senses, he lamented, ‘Alas! Karna! Alas! Karna!’ His eyes overflowed with tears. All the kings, with Drona's son at the forefront, comforted him and departed.<sup>807</sup> They repeatedly glanced at Arjuna's great standard, which seemed to be blazing because of his glory. The bodies of men, horses and elephants were covered with blood. The earth was covered with blood. It looked like a woman attired in crimson and golden garments and garlands, who would go to everyone.<sup>808</sup> O king! Their terrible forms were covered with blood and could not be recognized. The Kurus were unable to look at all those who had departed for the world of the gods and could not stand there. Because Karna had been slain, they were extremely miserable. They lamented, ‘Alas! Karna! Alas! Karna!’ On seeing that the sun had assumed a reddish tinge, they rapidly left for their camps.

‘“Gold-tufted and sharp arrows were released from Gandiva. Their tufts were smeared with blood. With those arrows on his limbs, Karna looked beautiful on the ground. Though slain, he looked like the sun, with its rays. Karna's body was covered with blood. It was as if the illustrious sun was showing compassion towards its devotee<sup>809</sup> and having touched the crimson form with its red hand, was proceeding beyond the ocean to have a bath. That is what the large numbers of gods and rishis thought. They returned to their respective abodes. The other beings also thought in the same way and left as they wished, to heaven or on earth. The foremost of brave ones among the Kurus had witnessed the terrible encounter between Dhananjaya and Adhiratha's son, destructive of lives. They were amazed. Now that it was over, they praised it and departed. The brave one's armour had been shattered by arrows. He had been slain in the battle. Radheya had lost his life. But his beauty<sup>810</sup> did not desert him. O king! He was adorned in many ornaments and his armlets were made out of gold. Vaikartana had been slain and was lying down, like a tree with branches and sprouts. He had the complexion of pure gold and blazed like a fire. With his son, the tiger among men was pacified by Partha's energy. O king! With his weapons and energy, he scorched the Pandavas and the Panchalas. Whenever he was asked to give, he always did and never said that he had nothing to give. The

virtuous always regarded him as righteous. This Vrisha was killed in the duel. The great-souled one gave everything that he possessed to brahmanas. There was nothing, not even his own life, which he would not give away to brahmanas. He was always loved by men. He was generous. He loved giving. He went to heaven. He took away with him the hopes your sons cherished for victory and their comfort and armour. When Karna was killed, the rivers stopped flowing. The sun was tainted and set. The blazing planets coursed in a diagonal direction. O king! Yama's son arose.<sup>811</sup> The sky seemed to divide into two parts. The earth seemed to shriek. Extremely harsh and forceful winds began to blow. The directions seemed to blaze fiercely, with a lot of smoke. The giant oceans were agitated and roared loudly. O venerable one! The groves, mountains and large numbers of beings were distressed and trembled. Brihaspati afflicted Rohini<sup>812</sup> and assumed the complexion of the moon and the sun. When Karna was killed, the directions were covered in darkness and could not be distinguished. The firmament and the earth seemed to move. Flaming meteors showered down. Those who travel during the night<sup>813</sup> were seen to be delighted. Karna's head was as beautiful as the full moon and Arjuna brought it down with a razor-sharp arrow. Loud sounds of lamentation were heard among beings in heaven, in the sky and on the ground. In the battle, Arjuna killed his enemy, Karna, who was revered by the gods, the gandharvas and men.

‘ “Partha was resplendent in his supreme energy, like the one with the one thousand eyes, after Vritra had been killed. That chariot roared like a large mass of clouds. Its radiance was like the midday sun in the autumn sky. With its standard and flags, it clattered loudly. It was as radiant as snow, the moon, a conch shell or a crystal. It was ornamented with gold, pearls, jewels, diamonds and coral. It possessed the speed of thought. Those two supreme among men, Pandava and the slayer of Keshi<sup>814</sup> were as resplendent as the fire and the sun in that field of battle. They roamed around, without any fear. Astride the same chariot, they were like Vishnu and Vasava. The one with the ape on his banner created a tumult with the twang of his bowstring, the slapping of his palms and the clatter of his wheels. He destroyed and killed the enemy with his power. With the one with a bird on his banner<sup>815</sup> with him, he showered torrents of arrows on the Kurus. They held their conch shells, as white as snow, in their hands. These emitted a loud roar and were decorated with golden nets. Their minds filled with delight, they blew loudly on these conch shells. Placing those best of conch shells against their lips, those best of men, simultaneously blew on them with the best of mouths. Panchajanya and Devadatta<sup>816</sup> roared. That sound filled up the earth, the sky and heaven. At the sound of those conch shells, the forest, the mountains, the rivers and the directions were terrified, as were the soldiers of your son. However, those two brave ones delighted Yudhishtira. As soon as they heard the loud blare of those conch shells, the Kurus speedily departed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They abandoned the lord of Madra and Duryodhana, the lord of the Bharatas. In the great battle, a large number of beings assembled around the radiant Dhananjaya. They joyfully congratulated him and Janardana, each dazzling like a sun. In the battle, having been struck by Karna's arrows, those two scorchers of enemies, Achyuta and Arjuna, looked beautiful. They were like the sparkling moon and sun, garlanded with rays, arising after darkness has been destroyed. Taking out those large numbers of arrows, those valiant lords entered their own camps, surrounded by well-wishers. They were like Vasava and Achyuta,<sup>817</sup> invoked by officiating priests. When Karna was slain in that supreme battle, the gods, the gandharvas, men, charanas, maharshis, yakshas and giant serpents honoured them greatly and hoped that their victories might continue.” ’

## Chapter 1219(69)

‘Sanjaya said, “When Karna was brought down, your soldiers fled. Dasharha joyfully embraced Partha and said, ‘O Dhananjaya! Through your strength, Karna, who was like Vritra, has been killed. Men will talk about the deaths of Karna and Vritra. The infinitely energetic one<sup>818</sup> used the vajra to slay Vritra in a battle. You have slain Karna with your bow’s sharp arrows. Your fame will be renowned in this world and will bring you glory. O Kounteya! Go and tell this to the intelligent Dharmaraja. For a long time, this death of Karna in the battle has been desired. You should go and tell this to Dharmaraja and free yourself of the debt.’ Having been thus addressed by Keshava, bull among the Yadu lineage, Partha agreed. The foremost chariot of the foremost among rathas was turned back. Govinda spoke these words to Dhrishtadyumna, Yudhamanyu, Madri’s sons, Vrikodara and Yuyudhana, ‘Remain here and carefully confront the enemy, until we have returned, after informing the king that Karna has been killed by Arjuna.’ Having taken their leave of those brave ones, they departed for the king’s abode.

‘ “With Partha, Govinda saw Yudhishtira. The tiger among kings was lying down on an excellent golden bed. Joyfully, they touched the king’s feet. On discerning their joy and the superhuman marks of wounds, Yudhishtira deduced that Radheya must have been killed and arose. Vasudeva, the descendant of the Yadu lineage, pleasant in speech, told him everything about Karna’s death. Joining his hands in salutation, Achyuta Krishna smiled a little and told Yudhishtira that his enemy had been killed. ‘O king! It is through good fortune that the wielder of Gandiva, Pandava Vrikodara, you and the Pandavas who are the sons of Madri are safe. You have been freed from the battle that led to a destruction of heroes and made the body hair stand up. O king! Quickly undertake whatever tasks must be done next. The cruel and immensely strong Vaikartana, son of a suta, has been slain. O Indra among kings! It is through good fortune that you have obtained victory. O Pandava! You are prospering through good fortune. The worst among men laughed at Krishna<sup>819</sup> when she had been won in the gambling match. The earth is now drinking the blood of that son of a suta. O bull among the Kuru lineage! With arrows mangling his limbs, that enemy of yours is now lying down. O tiger among men! Look at him. He has been shattered by many arrows.’ Delighted, Yudhishtira honoured Dasharha back in return. O Indra among kings! He joyfully said, ‘This is good fortune. It is fortunate. O mighty-armed one! O Devaki’s son! This is all because of you. With you as a charioteer, Partha was able to exhibit this manliness today.’ The best of the Kuru lineage grasped his<sup>820</sup> right hand, adorned with a bracelet, and addressed both Partha Arjuna, the upholder of dharma, and Keshava. ‘Narada had said that you were the gods Nara and Narayana. You are the ancient and supreme men, united in establishing dharma. The revered and intelligent Krishna Dvaipayana also told me this. O mighty-armed ones! The lord told me about that divine account. O Krishna! It is because of your powers that Dhananjaya confronted his enemies with Gandiva and defeated them, not retreating before any of them. Our victory is certain and their defeat is certain. After all, when Partha fights in the battle, you have agreed to be his charioteer.’ O great king! Having spoken these words, the maharatha ascended his gold-decorated chariot, which was yoked to horses with the complexion of ivory and with black tails. The tiger among men was surrounded by his own soldiers. The brave Krishna and Arjuna cheerfully followed him. Surrounded by many and conversing pleasantly with the brave and resplendent Madhava and Phalgun, he went to see the field of battle.

‘ “He saw Karna, bull among men, lying down in the battle. Arrows released from Gandiva had splintered all over his body. King Yudhishtira saw that Karna had been slain, together with his son. He praised those two tigers among men, Madhava and Pandava, and said, ‘O Govinda! Today, with my brothers, I have become the king of the earth. This is because you are our protector and we are sheltered by your bravery and your learning. On seeing that the proud Radheya, tiger among men, has been slain, Dhritarashtra’s evil-souled son will lose all hope today, both

about remaining alive and about the kingdom. Maharatha Karna has been killed. O bull among men! It is because of your favours that we are successful. O descendant of the Yadu lineage! You have ensured that the wielder of Gandiva is victorious. O Govinda! It is through good fortune that you have been victorious. It is through good fortune that Karna has been brought down.’ O Indra among kings! Delighted, Dharmaraja Yudhishtira praised Janardana, and also Arjuna, in many ways. The joy of the kings and the maharathas also increased. O great king! When the descendant of the suta lineage was killed, Nakula, Sahadeva, Pandava Vrikodara, Satyaki, the foremost rathas among the Vrishnis, Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, the Pandus, the Panchalas and the Srinjayas honoured

Kounteya.<sup>821</sup> They increased the desire of King Yudhishtira, Pandu’s son, for victory. Those strikers delighted in fighting and wished to accomplish their objective. With eloquent words, they praised and honoured the two Krishnas, the scorchers of enemies. Then, filled with great delight, the maharathas left for their respective camps. In this way, there was a great destruction and it made the body hair stand up. O king! All of this was the consequence of your evil counsel. Why are you grieving?” ’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! On hearing the unpleasant news, Dhritarashtra, the lord of the earth, fell down unconscious on the ground. Kouravya was overcome by supreme distress. Queen Gandhari, who was devoted to the truth and knew about dharma, also fell down. Vidura and Sanjaya raised the king and comforted the monarch. The women of the king’s household raised Gandhari. Comforted by them, the king regained his senses, but was silent.’

*This ends Karna Parva.*