



Prologue

A great war just came to an end, a war that involved things beyond anyone's imagination. Kison stood in the middle of the war zone wearing his golden battle armour which looked unharmed and shined bright, not a single bruise on his blue tinted skin. A gentle wind wiped away the single drop of sweat that ran down his face, the peacock feather that decorated his headgear waved along with the blow. Kison looked at his chariot that was broken into pieces. He looked around him and all he could see was death and destruction. Dead bodies, dead elephants, horses, people with 100 arrows pierced into their bodies, slit throats and dismembered bodies. The soil had turned red with the blood of the fallen. A sight one could never forget, a sight Kison had to remember for the rest of his life.

"I couldn't stop it!" he whispered in disgrace.

"I have to fix this, I will fix this. I will try again!" he exclaimed as he clenched his fists, and looked towards the sky with anger, frustration, but mostly shame.

He screamed and in that very moment, there was a flash of light across the sky.

Somewhere else...

Kison stood in a dark room, a small oil lamp was placed at a distance. Hardly anything was visible in that room. He kept looking around to find something familiar. He looked above him and saw many temple bells. He could smell joss sticks; the aroma calmed him down. It looked like a Hindu Temple. There was a huge window with a view of the entire city. He walked towards the window and found the place where he was standing was on top of the tallest building. He peeped outside to get a better view and witnessed hovering cars and people riding on creatures that he had not seen in his world. He looked further and noticed a building being robbed and many more crimes happening.

“What brought you here Kison?” a female voice asked from the other end of the room.

Kison didn't utter a word. He just hung his head in shame.

“You failed again, didn't you?” the voice whispered.

“Yes”

“You cannot fix the inevitable Kison. What's done is done!”

“If I wanted to, I could have stopped it. I should learn something from you. You saved the entire world. You are the reason why this world is still alive, Kalki,” Kison said with his head still hung in shame.

Kalki came out of the darkness. Her eyes glowed, it

wasn't just her hair that hovered but she was 3 inches off the floor. She was the epitome of beauty- she looked weak and her skin had slight wrinkles- and her grace was unmatched, her glowing eyes made her look ethereal. She wore a white saree that had golden embroidery across, also, a peacock feather was hanging on the necklace she wore. The saree looked dusty but it was well draped. Kalki had beautiful lips and a sharp nose. She didn't look like an ordinary woman.

"I wasn't alone Kison, I had to take help from Guru Saheb, Prophet Ali, and Chris. We managed to stop the destruction of the world but at what cost? I lost them, it wasn't even their war. I came here to save the world, but I couldn't do that," she whispered as she looked outside the giant window.

"Still the world lives, the humans breathe," Kison replied.

"My purpose of recreating the world couldn't be fulfilled, our job was to destroy the Adharma, but if I had to do that, it meant I had to let the destruction of the world happen. And after me, there was no one who would raise the humanity. I am the last one," Kalki said as she walked near the window.

"We can change this, I need your help. We can stop this Kalki," Kison said as he walked towards her.

"And how exactly are you planning to do that?" she inquired.

"Give me five of your best men from this world. Let them fight the war of Kurukshetra, let's win the war and let's change this ugly future," he replied.

Listening to this, Kalki quickly turned around, "The rules of time travel are no different for us Kison"

"I know, but this is the only way to rebuild the world and stop this future. You don't have to go through the eternal pain and the other Gods don't have to die," he said, as he looked into the glowing eyes of Kalki.

"How does it feel to manipulate your future self, Kison?" she muttered.

"I have no options left. I have tried infinite possibilities and now this is all I have got," he replied as he looked away trying to avoid looking into her eyes directly.

"I hope you are aware that you want to change the events of the past, past that took place thousands of years ago. Past that has important layers of present and future on it, right?" she asked him.

Kison nodded.

"That means if you succeed, everything that happened after you till today will be wiped out and a whole new world will be formed," she said as she landed on the floor.

"Yes!" Kison replied.

"Kison! If that happens, the ugly future will be saved but another future will take place which we haven't designed, which we haven't foreseen or where we will have no idea what to do. Are you prepared for that?" she asked him in distress.

"What are the odds? At least we can try," Kison said, looking more like a helpless human than a God.

Prologue

“I am tired of providing energy to this world. I am exhausted of balancing the universe. This is our last shot. If we fail, everything our incarnations have done so far will fail and the world will cease to exist. But I am willing to take this chance,” she said as she raised her hands.

“I won’t disappoint you or anyone else,” he replied.

Kalki raised her hands in the air and a huge light came from behind her.

“Don’t let your efforts be just another ripple in the sea of time, may you cause a tide. You have my word, you will get the best five from my era to protect yours and do the impossible. With this, there will be other branches that will come out in the tree of time and it’s your responsibility to do the needful,” she said as her voice faded away.



Chapter 1.

F.A.T.E.

– Force Against Terror and Extra-Terrestrials.

Year: 3025

Location: F.A.T.E. Headquarters.

Time: 3:35 AM

Nakul was sleeping in his bed, wearing matching pajamas, when suddenly a gadget of which the screen was placed up-side down on the table, besides his bed chimed.

“No, Please! I don’t wanna eat tomatoes,” he yelled out as he woke up with a jerk.

He looked at the gadget and muttered, “Oh, just a dream. Phew! I despise tomatoes, man!” and he picked up the gadget to check what had interrupted his nightmare of tomatoes.

He touched a button, and a hologram popped out of the gadget and projected a man’s silhouette.

“Report to the mission room in next 5 minutes...”

He looked at the clock that displayed the time as 3:36 AM.

“Man, they really got to have some regards for people’s

off duty hours," he said as he stretched his fatigued body and got off the bed.

As soon as he stepped his foot on the ground, it illuminated with soft light. He had a badge on his right chest that looked like a part of him. He double tapped it and semi-solid particles rushed out of the badge. They looked like tiny black pebbles that were soft and sticky yet firm. Within a second, they covered his body, and his night clothes turned into a black skin suit. It was tailored perfectly to accentuate his physique and also protect it, with heavy padding around the knees, elbows, and shoulders. It made him look battle ready. The badge glowed with the sigil of 'F.A.T.E.'

He walked towards his locker and pulled out a drawer. As he opened it, there was a small container that had finely crushed crystals in it. He looked at it for a moment and forcefully shut the drawer. He left with a huge sigh.

Nakul walked to the door and it automatically opened, he marched towards the mission room. The lights in the hallway were dim; each of them got brighter as he walked past the previous one. He walked in a rather funny manner and hummed his favourite song.

Nakul seemed like a very carefree and happy person. He believed in enjoying each moment with a constant smile along with a twinkle in his eyes. He was a handsome fellow with features that could match a God. His pale white skin, perfect jaw, and nose could mesmerize anyone. His spiked hair looked alluring with his strong face.

Soon he reached the mission room and noticed that

Bheem and Deva were already present over there. Both of them wore the same suit as Nakul.

Bheem looked at Nakul and said, "You are late."

"Yeah man, I took a few seconds to recover from my nightmare of tomatoes," he said as he walked towards Bheem.

Bheem had a muscular body, unlike Deva and Nakul his body wasn't fully covered, his suit was more like a vest. His huge muscular biceps and the cuts on it were easily visible. He had a body like a bull, enhanced by his height and broad shoulders. His dreadlocks reached his muscular back, and he had the perfect French beard that suited his jawline. Although dusky, his skin was smooth and beautiful.

Deva, on the other hand, was skinny and short. He was the tech guy. He was a nerd, but they loved him for it. He was holding a cube in his hand that projected information in the form of a holograph. Deva had drooping shoulder and a hump in his back. The dark circles around his eyes clearly meant that he worked late hours and focused very less on his fitness.

A huge screen lit up, and the man's silhouette appeared again.

"Alright warriors! There is a situation which has to be addressed urgently, I have sent the mission details on your badge, you can check it out on your way. However, I would like to inform you that this is a tough mission and has to be executed immediately."

Deva tapped his badge which was on the right side of his chest, promptly a holograph projection was in front of him.

It displayed :

‘Mission Details:

Mafia Ruban is smuggling forty-six hundred kilos of liquid helium.

A convoy of 5 fully equipped hovering trucks and five levitating bikes are providing utmost protection.

Extract the helium and arrest Ruban, unharmed.

Location: Sector 400610’

“Isn’t that Yudhraj’s territory? Shouldn’t we inform him?” Deva prompted.

“No! Do not involve him, this is a covert operation and nobody should know about this,” the man on the screen instantly commanded.

“Alright people! Let’s do this!” Nakul screamed with enthusiasm.

Before anybody could move, the man on the screen continued “However, there is a small complication. Mafia Ruban has a bounty of Rs.45 crores on his head...”

“No, don’t say it, please don’t say it,” Nakul interrupted even before the man could finish his sentence.

“Yes, he has a bounty on his head, and our ex-warrior Arjun has taken up the contract,” he continued.

“Scammy Kammy! We are screwed,” Nakul exclaimed.

“So what is our primary mission?” Bheem asked.

“Your mission is to locate Mafia Ruban, extract the helium from him, stop Arjun from killing him, and bring Arjun to the headquarters.”

Suddenly Nakul laughed out hysterically.

“I would rather eat tomatoes. No way the three of us can capture that maniac. We need a force to execute this mission. Forget the mission, we need a force just to trap Arjun, let alone locating the mafia and extracting the helium from his tight security,” and continued laughing.

Deva, who was engrossed in his deep thoughts, broke the chain of his calculations and instantly said, “Where is Karan? Shouldn’t we have him if we are going against Arjun? I mean it’s not a good option to have a mongoose and snake fight, but practically speaking this is a very complicated mission.”

The man on the screen left a sigh and said, “I am aware, but Karan has not returned from his previous mission yet. He will be joining you shortly. Also, do not engage Karan with Arjun. I don’t want destruction in that peace-loving sector governed by Yudhraj.”

Bheem cracked his knuckles as he heard the man

“Alright team. We got to hold the fort until Karan arrives. Let’s go,” he said.

Everyone turned around in sync, and suddenly some rock and roll music faded in.

“What’s that?” Bheem asked as he was surprised to hear the music.

Both of them looked at Nakul who was playing a song on his device.

“Man, we need a good background score for such moments, this seems appropriate,” he said as he grooved to the drums.

Bheem ignored him and everyone walked out.

Sector 400610:

It was still dark; the sun had not graced its presence yet. A man sat on the edge of a tall building, monitoring something with his advanced binoculars. He spotted a convoy of 5 trucks far away from his location within a few moments. He pressed a button and the binoculars retracted into a small frame.

He got up and flexed his muscles. His body was agile and strong. He was wearing a white and grey armour. His gloves had some heavy mechanism and looked like something could pop out of it. In the centre of his palm, he had a horizontal handle and a button right next to it. He pressed the button, and a bow retracted out of his glove. It was a foldable bow that he could carry anywhere. A bow without a string.

He too had a badge of ‘F.A.T.E.’ on his right chest, but the sigil was scribbled off. He tapped the badge, raised his right hand and clenched his fist. He looked at it, and the semi-solid particles came out of the badge and covered

his right hand. In moments it started glowing and emitting bright blue light as if his arm had turned into a thunderbolt. Its glow broke the darkness of the night.

He placed his bow in front of him and brought his shining hand near the bow. As soon as his hand came near the bow, a string made out of energy came out and connected both the limbs of the bow, he pulled the string. As he did so, an arrow was produced out of the bright blue energy. The arrow was emitting the same energy as his right hand. He gripped the bow, moved it towards the sky, dragged the string and shot the arrow. A ripple was caused in the air as the arrow was shot. The arrow paced at the speed of light, illuminating the sky. It went and hit one of the trucks from the convoy and caused a huge blast.

All the other trucks stopped instantly.

A dozen men wearing advanced armour and holding guns came out of one truck and surrounded the small vehicle that contained the liquid helium. The smoke cleared. The same man was standing in front of them. The heavily armed men moved a step back as they saw the man with his lightning arm staring right at them.

“I don’t want to cause any harm, I need the helium and also the head of your boss. Let me have it, and we can leave peacefully,” he said in a calm voice.

The door of the vehicle opened, and a fat man stepped out. He was bald and wore a white three-piece suit. The infamous Mafia Ruban.

“Oh, Arjun! I saw this coming, but unfortunately, you aren’t getting either of the things you demanded,” Mafia Ruban said.

“Alright then, let’s do it my way,” Arjun said as he raised his bow.

“OPEN FIRE!” the mafia exclaimed and jumped back into his car.

All the heavily armed guards started shooting laser beams towards Arjun.

He sprang from his position and ran to take cover.

Within no time a dozen more heavily armed men gathered to shoot him down.

He peeped to understand how many men he had to shoot. He dodged the lasers and bolted towards the other side of the street while firing his energy arrows towards the men. The arrows caused a lot of damage to the men and the surrounding, but that wasn’t enough. He decided to move but realised that he was cornered by the men. He steadily got up, and his arm stopped glowing.

“Put your bow down,” an armed man said.

“Can’t!” he replied.

“Everybody fire!” the armed man exclaimed.

All of them pulled their trigger at once and innumerable lasers were blasted towards Arjun.

Suddenly someone plunged in front of him, and Arjun was unharmed.

He saw a tall and perfectly built man stood in front of him, holding a shield made out of energy. The dust cleared, and Arjun saw that the man threw something on the ground; small fragments broke out of it that bounced straight towards the armed men, electrocuting them and causing them to fall on the ground, grunting in pain.

He pressed a button on his wrist, and the shield went off, he looked back at Arjun and said-

“Dare you cause any disturbance in my territory.”

Arjun looked at him as he saw him looking straight into his eye.

“I could have handled it. Your assistance wasn’t needed Yudhraj.”

Yudhraj was the governor of this sector. The most deserving candidate, a person who topped the Community Leadership Program of F.A.T.E. and became the ruler of one of the biggest sectors in the world. There was something about him that made him look royal, definitely not the looks but the vanity he possessed. His fair skin and blue eyes added to the essence, his wavy hair defined his supremacy.

“Yes, I could see that,” Yudhraj said as he looked at the armed men lying on the ground.

Before Yudhraj could say anything else, Arjun hurtled towards the mafia.

“This man won’t listen,” Yudhraj muttered and ran after Arjun to stop him from causing any more damage.

Arjun tapped his badge, and his arm lit up again, as he pulled the string of his bow and shot another energy arrow towards the vehicle, where the mafia was hiding.

The door exploded, and the mafia fell on the ground!

Arjun pointed the energy arrow towards him and said, "There are two options, either you tell me where the liquid helium is and then I kill you or first I will kill you and then find it. The choice is yours."

"You think I came unprepared?" the mafia asked with a grin on his face and quickly pressed a button on his watch.

As soon as he pressed the button, many armed robots popped out of one of the trucks.

Arjun saw this and sprinted back towards Yudhraj.

"Now might be a good time for you to actually help me," Arjun said as he unclasped his bow and tapped his badge.

"Sure!" Yudhraj said as he retracted his sword and shield made out of energy.

They both moved and stood in front of the army of armed robots.

Arjun heard a loud whooshing sound behind him, he looked up in the sky and saw a ship approaching them. A spotlight was projected over both of them.

"Need some help?" Nakul announced from the P.A. of the ship.

He placed the mic back in its place and looked at Bheem.

“Can I please do a superhero landing, please?”

Bheem left a sigh and said,

“Do whatever you want but do something,” and he opened the base door of the ship.

Nakul with a broad smile ran towards the base door and jumped out, he did a dramatic landing with his right knee on the ground and stood up in slow motion.

“How much would you rate that?” he asked with his eyes opened wide out of enthusiasm to get in combat.

Followed by that even Bheem jumped casually on the ground, as he jumped, everyone felt a slight tremor. He held an advance mace in his hand, instead of the globe it had a cylindrical top which was made out of the same energy as that of Yudhraj’s shield.

Everyone ignored Nakul’s question as Bheem passed by him.

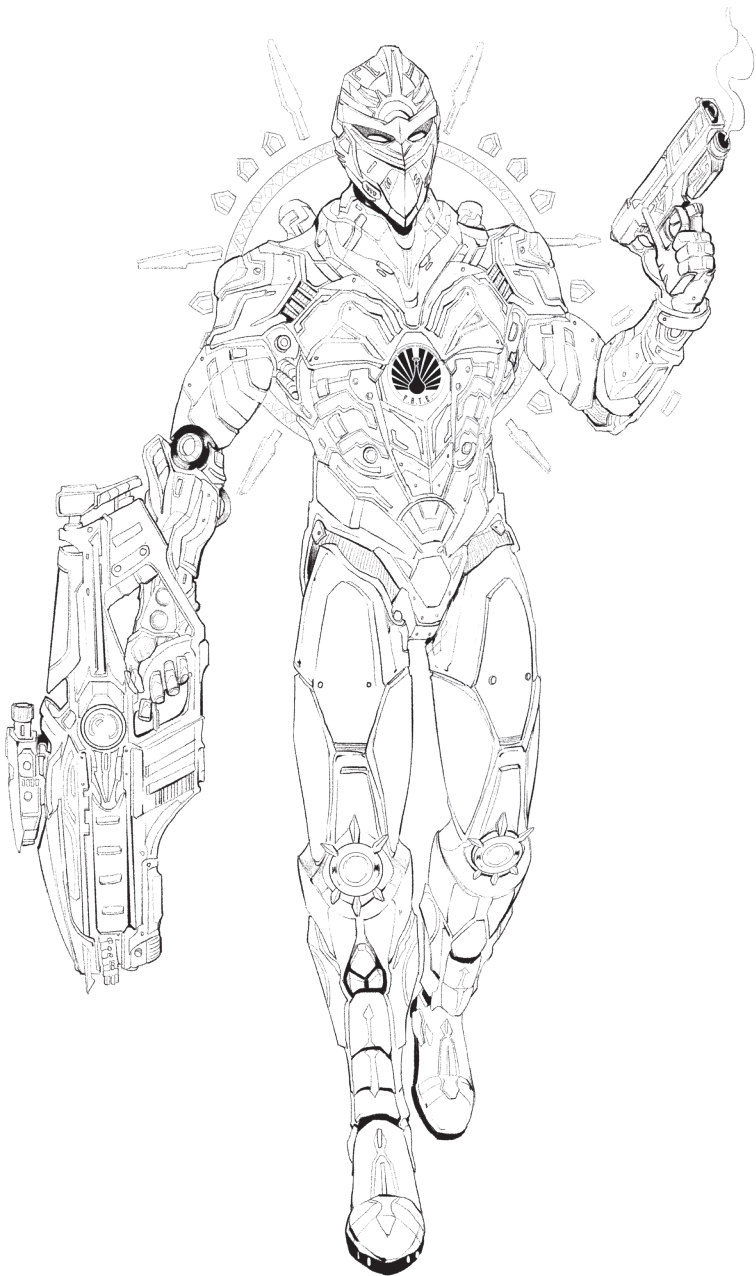
He looked at Yudhraj and said, “Sorry for the destruction caused; the organization will take care of it.”

Deva chose to stay on the ship, providing them insights and a bird’s eye view of the entire situation.

All four of them were ready to fight the armed robots. Bheem took the lead and charged towards the robots while swinging his mace. Even before others could attack, he thwacked the robots into scrap with his mace.

He did the optimum utilization of his muscle power.

With a lot of zeal, Nakul stabbed the robots with his



spear. The head of the spear had a red colour rare crystal that had sharp edges which made it look majestic.

After a brief fight when dozens of robots turned into trash, all of them stopped to catch their breath. They stood in a circle with their backs to each other.

The first ray of the sun hit the ground, making everything visible.

The number of robots that came towards them didn't stop.

Bheem looked at the ship, touched his coms that were placed in his left ear, and said, "Deva! I think you should inform the headquarters and call for back-up."

Arjun approached the robots and shot each one of them with arrows; he didn't know the word 'stop.' He was at the peak of his stamina and power.

Suddenly a huge sonic wave was shot from the sky that destroyed half of the robots.

Everyone looked at the sky and saw someone diving down. He came down with great speed, while he glided down, he had a hologram projecting from his back that looked like the sun. He landed straight on his feet effortlessly. Everyone looked at him as his golden mask shrunk down into an ear piece, making his face visible.

"Karan! My man!" Nakul exclaimed.

Karan was the personification and epitome of perfection. He wore a bright golden armour that covered his entire body. The armour had golden light running across it that looked like energy. Karan's smart looks were unmatched,

his physical features were incomparable. He looked like the best of God's creations. As he stood, the holograph of the sun behind his back made him look even more majestic.

Karan and Arjun shared a glance, for a second they forgot everything and stared into each other's eyes with rage, they shared a look like that of sworn enemies. It seemed like they would leave everything aside and have a hand to hand amongst themselves.

"Focus!" Yudhraj screamed out.

"I want this mess out of my sector," he added.

With a collective effort, they managed to destroy the army of robots; the entire road turned into scrap as Yudhraj looked around.

"Should have come sooner," Bheem said as he looked at Karan.

"Sorry! I had to travel across the galaxy to finish a mission. I am not as lucky as you guys who get to beat up tin men," Karan replied as he mocked the team.

"Wait! Where is he? Where is Arjun?" Karan asked as he looked around in distress.

Karan noticed that Arjun was driving away the truck that contained the liquid helium. He ran towards the truck that had almost gained momentum. As the truck took a little speed, Karan dived right in front of it. Arjun, instead of applying breaks, accelerated towards him.

Karan stood in front of the truck with his chest out, the

truck bashed into Karan, but he remained unharmed. The armour he wore was so strong that the impact caused no harm to him, instead the truck's bonnet was crushed. The impact had knocked out Arjun.

Karan pulled him out of the truck and cuffed him.

He dragged Arjun where the rest of them were standing, "Alright! Let's go to the headquarters."

They safely collected the liquid helium and transported it to the headquarters.

Mission Room:

The screen turned on, and the same man appeared on the screen.

"Good job team," he congratulated everyone.

"Arjun, you are about to be imprisoned for a very long time under every possible charge," he added.

"You think the security of the F.A.T.E can hold me?" Arjun said with his chin thrust out while he was on his knees and his hands were cuffed behind his back.

The man took a pause and said, "Karan! You have to deliver this helium to Sector 59 facility of F.A.T.E. and come back to report to me. You will depart immediately."

"Yes Sir!" Karan roared and prepared to leave the room. Before he could leave the room, he looked back at Arjun and coldly said, "When I come back I will personally attend to you," and the door shut automatically.

The man cleared his throat. Only his silhouette was visible on the screen.

“Attention everyone! I have a mission for you. This is the biggest task assigned to us in the history of F.A.T.E. A mission where nothing can go wrong. No questions to be asked, only orders are to be followed. This is a mission that I have been asked to execute by the supreme authority,” he said.

Everyone listened carefully to what the man on the screen said.

“Uncuff Arjun,” he commanded.

Yudhraj narrowed his eyes and said, “But sir!”

“I said, only orders to be followed.”

“Arjun! We have got a tip about the whereabouts of Abhimanyu,” the man said in a very serious tone.

Arjun gasped as he heard the name Abhimanyu, it got back all his attention as he stood on his feet.

“Do not stoop so low that you have to bring in my dead son,” Arjun yelled at the screen.

“Arjun, even you don’t know for sure if he is dead or alive, but I have got a piece of information which might be helpful for you.”

“How do I even trust you? This whole organization runs on a flawed system, and since Dronaji and Bhishmaji are gone, I wonder how all this is still running. Fate my foot!” Arjun exclaimed.

“You can get your son back, Arjun,” the man said, ignoring him.

“If you want my services, simply pay me. I shall do it but don’t talk about my dead son,” Arjun repeated.

The screen got divided into half, and a photo of a young boy was displayed on the screen, it wasn’t clear, but it was detailed enough to moist Arjun’s eye.

Yudhraj placed his hand on Arjun’s shoulder,

“This is good news, we can find him. Don’t worry,” assuringly, he comforted.

With his moist eyes, he looked back at Yudhraj.

The screen changed to what it was earlier and the man continued.

“This is an inter-dimension mission; you have to travel to a different dimension, probably a different time zone. This is a primitive era and all of you will have to participate in the mission. Everyone will be rewarded heavily and also with the ranks,” the man said.

“Yudhraj, we would like to hire your services as you still belong to F.A.T.E. Your sector will be looked after by our security,” he added.

Yudhraj gazed at Arjun who was suffering from mixed emotions and quickly looked back at the screen.

“You have been given an order not a choice,” the man said in a sharp voice.

“Yes sir!” Yudhraj exclaimed.

Nakul who wasn’t expected to stay quiet for too long interrupted and said,

“You mean we are gonna time travel? That is so freaking cool!”

The man on the screen continued.

“I hope everyone is ready for the mission.”

“But? What exactly is our mission?” Bheem inquired.

“You will get all the details, a man named Kison will be waiting for you at the Rendezvous point, your ship is equipped with platinum grade weapons and essentials. You have to depart immediately. All the best for the mission,” the man said and the screen turned off.

Arjun was quiet as he remembered the picture of his son.

Yudhraj stood in front of them and said,

“Alright everyone! If we have been given a mission that is so important, we should execute it. It’s not just about us anymore,” he said as he looked at Arjun.

“Everyone, we will meet at the launch pad in 30 minutes!” he exclaimed.

Chapter 2.

KISON

The five men embarked on their journey towards the unknown. Arjun sat in his chamber near the window that displayed a splendid view of the space outside. He gazed at the shining stars and meteors that travelled at high speed. Arjun wasn't exactly staring at the marvellous colourful stars and moons; he was lost in deep thoughts. Thoughts of his son and his whereabouts played in his mind.

The door buzzed open and Yudhraj walked inside the chamber.

"I know this can be hard on you, but going to a mission without knowing anything about it is equally dangerous. We are not here just for credit points, but we all want Abhi to get back to you," Yudhraj said as he walked towards him.

"Yes, so that I can owe you all?" Arjun murmured as he still kept looking outside the window.

"I am here because of the promise that my sector will get allowances and will be given proper treatment. Nakul and Bheem are here because they have been ordered to do so. I am not enjoying this either, but we have to do what we have to."

Arjun didn't pay attention to what he said and got up.

"I don't need a pep talk as of now; we are heading towards a mission none of us have ever encountered. Let's save some energy for any unforeseen events. Okay?" Arjun said and signalled the door to open, implying Yudhraj to leave him alone.

"As you wish Arjun," Yudhraj said and left the chamber.

AFTER SOMETIME.

After traveling at enormous speed and several worm holes to travel across time, they finally reached a planet that looked like earth but much greener. The ship landed at the location, which was a dense forest, and it was pitch dark. As the ship approached the landing spot, heavy winds broke loose, and the temperate forest suddenly woke up. The winds seemed to calm down but the night seemed anything but. Wolves could be heard howling at a distance, and the sky was lit up with a million stars that only made the forest look more eerie and uninviting.

Everyone stood facing towards the exit. Arjun held a wooden bow in his hand and carried a quiver full of arrows.

Yudhraj looked at him and asked, "Going too old school?"

"Obviously! According to the mission report, I guess we are in the copper age, technology is far fetched for them. So the first rule of time travel is to 'blend'," Arjun replied as he adjusted the strap of his quiver.

Everyone tapped their badges, and their clothes turned into the black skin suits which had their sigils on it, except Arjun.

Yudhraj looked at Arjun's sigil and said "I see you have scribbled your sigil, too much hate towards the organization?"

"Not hate, Yudhraj, I don't hold any pride in being part of the academy anymore. Let's focus on the mission," he replied in a dry tone.

The ship's ramp slid out of the exit door and thudded on the ground, the door buzzed open, and the light from the chambers streamed out. The pale white light wasn't enough for them to clearly see their surroundings.

"Let me go first," Arjun said as he saw Yudhraj moving towards the door.

He nodded and let Arjun walk out.

Arjun walked out and carefully monitored everything possibly he could see in the dark, he was quiet and observant, he left no stone unturned while doing so.

"Clear," he exclaimed from the outside.

Listening to this, the remaining four came out as well.

As Nakul stepped out on the grass, he yelled out 'Fresh!'

He took a deep breath and added, "Man, this place is so pleasant. The air is so rich."

"Keep it low," Bheem muttered as he looked around.

There was a sudden movement in the nearby bushes; everyone heard it, ready to be engaged.

Arjun pulled an arrow out of his quiver, placed on his bow and stretched the string.

Kison walked out of the bushes; he was steady and looked at the five men.

Arjun pointed the arrow towards him and exclaimed, "Stand down."

Kison raised his hands in the air and said, "You are from F.A.T.E. if I am not wrong?"

As soon as Arjun heard the word fate, he lowered his bow.

Yudhraj approached him with a smile, "You must be Kison, we were asked to meet you. Hope we are on time."

Kison rested his hand, smiled back at Yudhraj, and said, "Time, time is a vague concept. The fact that you had to travel here means that you are too late, but the fact that I am meeting you states that you are on time."

Everyone had a confused look on their face as they heard him breaking the time travel theory.

Nakul approached Kison with his arms wide open and hugged him tightly, "Kison, my man! It's so nice to meet you. I know we are late, but I am glad we are on time! Please tell us what our task is."

Kison tried to free himself from the firm grip of Nakul.

"You must be Nakul?" Kison asked him.

"Oh, yes, I forgot to introduce myself. I am Nakul," He said with a wide smile.

“Allow me to introduce you to my buddies,” he added. “To start with the guy who almost fired an arrow at you, his name is Arjun. The guy standing behind, yeah the guy who has a super duper muscular body is Bheem, the guy next to him is Deva, he looks malnourished but he just spends a lot of time researching and last but not the least, our royalty, our Highness, King Yudhraj,” he introduced.

“I want to thank you all for coming on such short notice. I assume you had a long journey. You can rest here for the night, and we will meet tomorrow morning, is that fine by you all?” Kison inquired

Arjun looked at Kison and said, “Okay! We set camp here; this seems to be a perfect location for us to function. The river is 500 meters south from here and there are no dangerous animals around except for the porcupines that have their hubs behind the rocks that are 22 inches thick; these rocks should be around west 1 kilometre away from this spot, so we are safe. The closest human dwelling is two kilometres east away from here, but that seems like it’s an empty house or just a single person stays there. The sun here sets in the east and the entire east patch is covered with thick, dense oak trees, so it’s going to get dark quickly, that adds up to our advantage. So we set up here.”

Kison smiled and thought, “Arjun, you never fail to impress.”

Nakul looked at Arjun from a distance and said to himself, “Wish we had him at our thick and thin times,

Arjun being the kind of freak could have helped the organization so much," as he smiled.

"Alright then, you all can rest now, and we will gather tomorrow near the river."

Arjun nodded in agreement and everyone returned to the ship.

Kison left them as they prepared for the night; he walked towards the outskirts of the jungle only a short distance away from the ship into a small hut. It was his home. The shed was made of mud and had a stone roof. He got inside the house and sat on the hemp mattress that was on the floor.

He looked at the plain wall and said to himself, "What I am about to do is going to change everything. Everything has changed already. Regardless of the outcome, is it our victory or our defeat? Everything is changed now. I am not even sure if this is the right thing to do, but this one is for the future," soon he fell asleep with a heavy heart.

SUNRISE

That night everyone slept inside the ship.

Arjun was the first one to wake up. He picked up his bow and quiver and left the ship. It was foggy outside because of the cold; the sun was only partially visible from behind the enormous hills.

Soon he arrived at the river.

The water was reflecting the sun rays and looked

yellowish. Birds were chirping nearby. Everything was very scenic, unlike the night before.

Arjun stood there for a while as if waiting for something; he took a deep breath and said, "You don't have to spy on me Yudhraj," as he looked at the river.

Arjun looked back and saw Yudhraj getting out of the bushes nearby.

"I wasn't spying on you," he hesitated.

"I am not going to abandon you like I did last time; I am doing this for a reason. If there is even a slight chance that Abhi is still alive, I want to take it," Arjun said as he gazed at the ripples on the river.

"We will find him and you don't have to worry," Yudhraj replied in a low tone.

Yudhraj looked at Arjun and said, "Sometimes I envy you a lot Arjun. You have no rules, no regulations, a free man, a man of his own will. You don't have to report to anyone either. How does it feel after living a long life at F.A.T.E. and turning into a man like this?"

"There was a reason why I was a part of the organization; without that reason, I could no longer stay there. I had to do what I needed to do. I had to live and earn. I could have taken up any job, but I trained hard to gain my skills. My life has been hard on me, so I don't care how anyone else's life turns out to be after what I do to them," Arjun replied in a cold tone.

"If someone says they don't care, they are lying. We all

care about things, but the human inside us doesn't know to express," Yudhraj said in a mild tone.

Both of them were helpless in their ways, both had no options but to survive with whatever they had.

They both stood near the river bank and looked at the sun changing its color.

Arjun heard footsteps and saw Nakul, Bheem, and Deva walking towards them.

Kison helmed on his boat and stopped when it reached the bank. He swiftly jumped out of the boat and approached them.

"You are late, man," Nakul said.

"No! I was on time. I was securing the perimeter," Kison said as he looked at Nakul.

"So what do you want us to do now?" Bheem asked as he came forward.

"Let's start with a little friendly fight?" Kison said with a smile.

Bheem scoffed and looked at Yudhraj.

"So, who goes first?" Nakul asked with much enthusiasm.

Kison looked at him and replied, "All of you."

Deva was shocked "What? Whoever you might be or however strong you might be, you cannot fight all of us at the same time".

"Oh, Come on!" Kison said in his unassuming voice.

Bheem marched towards him with speed and punched him as hard as he could; Kison instantly blocked his punch with his forearm. As soon as Bheem's blow hit Kison's forearm, he was thrown back with an incredible force.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Deva with amazement and a little fear.

Nakul jumped towards Kison and attacked his legs, Kison backflipped and dodged Nakul's attack. He went a step back and saw Bheem was still trying to get up; he instantly jumped on Nakul and dropped a punch on his face. This made Yudhraj angry, he headed towards Kison, and both of them started a hand- to-hand combat. Kison punched him in the stomach and in return Yudhraj punched him in the face. Nakul charged back at him while Bheem was getting back to his senses. Kison jumped in the air and kicked Yudhraj.

Yudhraj fell a few feet away. And before Nakul could finish his attack, Kison caught him in mid-air with his hands and threw him down.

Kison nailed him against the ground and got up. As soon as he moved, Arjun's arrow came flying towards him and without even blinking he caught the arrow. Arjun was shocked. Kison threw the arrow back at him with thrust so intense that it was a blur. He quickly jumped and dodged the arrow.

"Alright, stop!" Deva exclaimed.

Everyone stood up, and Kison was standing in the center. All of them were breathing heavily.

Deva looked at Kison and said, "You proved your point. We figured you are stronger than all of us combined."

Kison stood there casually as he didn't even break a sweat.

Yudhraj walked towards Kison and said, "If you are so strong and know everything, then why did you call us here?"

Kison looked at him and said, "Because I cannot fight this war. If I do, it will do more damage to the future than it would do in your absence."

Deva tried to understand his cryptic words, while the others stood silently attempting to make sense of what had just happened.

Chapter 3

The Kingdom

“I can’t speak of it, I cannot be part of this war and I cannot pick up a weapon against anyone in this war,” Kison said as he looked at their confused faces.

Nakul quickly stepped in front of him and questioned Kison “Okay, so the thing is you were able to beat us down because we are using these primitive weapons or no weapons at all? Do you have any idea of what we have in the ship?” dusting off the dirt over his suit.

“A man’s strength doesn’t lie in his arms, but the way he uses his arms. Give a man who has courage- a stick to fight with, and he will defeat an army. It’s not what he fights with but how he does that matters the most,” Kison replied.

Yudhraj walked towards Kison, “Okay, you need to sit down with us and tell us everything. We got the orders from the topmost authority and we were told that the authority owes you.”

“Although I wonder, how can the final authority owe anyone anything?” He added.

“Let’s take a tour of this place. Let me introduce you to this world and how things are here,” Kison said as

calmly as he could with a smile on his face and turned towards the dwellings.

Yudhraj whispered to Arjun, "I don't know if we should trust this guy."

Arjun looked at him and said, "We don't have an option here. You know who has asked us to do this job. However, I still don't know why we were asked to carry 'Grade Platinum' weapons with us. This place seems like they don't even have electricity, let alone the infinite energy source."

Everyone followed Kison. He walked towards the ship and stopped abruptly. He was indeed an odd character.

"I think you should probably change your clothes. I am sure you have the outfits with you," Kison said as he looked at the almost invisible ship although Deva doubted it was invisible to him.

Nakul came ahead and with an excited voice said, "Oh! Damn yeah! Can't wait to rock those semi-naked clothes, man! it's messed up at our place. We can't wear such clothes there," and he quickly got into the ship. The other four followed him with much less excitement.

All of them came out wearing traditional Indian clothes. They wore white dhotis just like Kison's, but had their upper body covered with a folded cloth that went across their torso.

"Man! I thought these would be comfortable. How do I walk in these baggy pants?" Nakul said as he tried to walk while holding onto the flare of his Dhoti. It was like looking at a toddler.

The Kingdom

Kison smirked at him, "You will be here for a long time, you will get used to this."

None of the others complained about the outfits and everyone was trying to blend in with the surroundings, as it was entirely new for them. Kison started walking and everyone else followed him. They walked a few miles through the jungle until they reached the kingdom.

It was a very different place. Everyone was dressed in traditional clothes. People were traveling on the backs of horses and bullock-carts. People were selling wooden toys, fruits, fresh vegetables, earthen pots, simple things that looked wondrous to them.

"Apples? Are those apples? Nakul was jumping all around the place and he could not believe he was looking at the very symbolic fruit that they had only ever heard about.

Kison looked at Nakul and said, "Yeah, go ahead taste one," and he looked at the stunned fruit-seller who had never experienced such enthusiasm for his wares.

Nakul dashed towards the cart, picked one, and took a big bite, "Delicious..."

Arjun hung his head.

Yudhraj murmured to himself, "Nakul was put in our team so that we could have some stupidity as well."

Bheem said, "Should I bring him back?" as he fidgeted with his Dhoti and was barely even looking at Yudhraj. Which further irritated Yudhraj, as he felt that he was in-charge of a bunch of over-grown kids.

“Never-mind,” he said under his breath.

Kison looked at Bheem and cheerfully said, “Its fine! Let him enjoy it. Even you should taste some,” although he meant it for Yudhraj.

Meanwhile, Nakul had devoured two apples and had already picked another one. He ate them with so much relish that the juice of fruit was dripping from his face.

Deva left a sigh and said, “Apple! It makes the perfect alcoholic beverage, but that doesn’t justify this childish behaviour. Sometimes it feels like it’s not me but him who is the youngest of all.”

Kison looked at Nakul and said, “Okay, that’s it, I’ll save him from some embarrassment,” and went walking towards him.

Nakul meanwhile finished his third apple and looked at the seller. He was an old guy with wrinkled skin and was shocked to see Nakul’s appetite.

“Can I get some more?” Nakul asked the old man.

Kison came from behind, kept his hand on Nakul’s shoulder, and said, “I think it’s about time we leave.”

Nakul looked back at Kison with a mouthful of apple, as he gestured about payment.

The old man’s eyes popped out and he froze as he saw Kison in front of him.

Nakul looked at the man and was confused to see what happened.

“Umm, is everything alright?” he asked as he wiped his

mouth with the back of his hand. Some of the apple bits were falling out of his stuffed mouth.

“Yeah, let’s leave from here now,” Kison said as he pulled him away.

Everyone else observed this from a distance. Yudhraj went near Arjun and whispered, “Did you see that? That’s not normal.”

Deva got close to Yudhraj and with a very reassuring tone said, “It is fine. I think we are over thinking here. They are from the same neighbourhood, so maybe he didn’t take money from him.”

Arjun looked at them sheepishly, “It’s about time we did what we were supposed to do and not use our brains.”

Kison came back with Nakul and joined them.

“Man! Those apples were real. They were real as air! There were seeds in it, the outer skin was real, and it had juice in it which contained sugar. Amazing, right?” Nakul said and smelled like an apple himself.

Everyone ignored him and started walking along with Kison. People started making way for them as they walked. It felt strange, yet somehow surreal.

Moments later, the people just stood still and looked at Kison who lead the way for the five men. The ordinary people looked as if they were praying.

Arjun calmly observed everything around and said to Yudhraj, “Now, this is strange. This doesn’t feel right.”



“Very few things about this man feel right,” Yudhraj muttered as they followed Kison.

As they walked on, a couple of people joined their hands and bowed their heads in respect when Kison passed them.

“Wow! Now this...” Yudhraj exclaimed to Arjun without looking at him.

They all kept following him until they reached a huge structure. It looked like a fortress but not like the usual one. It wasn't tall, it was spread across the landscape, like a maze. It had walls that were hardly 20 feet tall. Guards stood above them. It looked like it had several compartments, almost a hundred. Right in the middle of the Fortress, there was a pole that hoisted a flag. The flag was huge and had a symbol on it. It looked like the imprints of a bear claw.

Kison took a halt and all the five men stopped too.

He turned back at the men, pointed at the Fortress and said, “This...This is the Fortress of Rule.”

“Nothing like a huge fortress,” Nakul replied, emphasizing on the word fortress.

He turned towards Nakul and said, “Yes! Not like the usual fortresses, it's not tall, nor on a hill. It's built precisely in the centre of this kingdom.”

Arjun kept looking at the Fortress and asked, “What's with dividing it into compartments?”

Kison smirked and said, “It's a long story; let's keep walking. I will tell it to you.”



Yudhraj cleared his throat and said, "Hey Kison! We appreciate your hospitality and this tour, but we need answers and we aren't co-operating until you give them to us."

Everyone else seemed to agree.

Kison left a sigh and said, "Not the right time..." before he could finish his sentence, a stone came flying towards him and hit his head hard.

Everyone was shocked.

A humongous man got off a horse and came walking towards Kison. A couple of more people were on horses behind him. He was a bald guy with a dense beard. He looked fierce; the tiger fur around his shoulder added to his personality.

Kison touched his head and found there was blood flowing from where the stone hit him. "Dushan," Kison whispered as he looked at the bald man.

Bheem took a step ahead towards Kison, Arjun quickly stopped him from getting involved.

"Kison, the great Kison! The warrior, the mastermind, the manipulator, and what not, you got guests coming with you?" Dushan said sneeringly as he walked close to Kison.

"Yes!" Kison said as he wiped the blood with his hand.

Dushan looked at Kison and in a very sarcastic tone he said, "Oh, did it hurt? This will hurt more!" and he punched Kison in the stomach.

Kison dropped on his knees and started coughing.

“Men!” Dushan exclaimed at his soldiers, and they all came running towards Kison and started hitting him one by one. They kicked and punched him.

The five from the ship stood watching the scene in shock and confusion.

Yudhraj whispered to Arjun, “This gets weird after every second.”

After a while everyone stopped, Dushan looked at Kison who looked like a hundred horses had trampled him.

Dushan said, “You deserve this, you might have won the trust of others, but I am not as blind as my father. I see through your game, and I know one day you will betray us.”

Kison got up with a lot of struggle and said, “He might be blind, but you can’t even see what’s in front of you now,” and he scoffed.

Dushan ignored what he said and walked towards the fortress.

Kison looked back at the five men.

Yudhraj hesitated to speak looking at Kison’s current condition, “We are going to the ship now, and we want to know the entire story or else we are going back.”

“Alright,” Kison said in a soft tone.

They walked back where the ship was. Kison sat on a nearby rock, and everyone looked back at him.

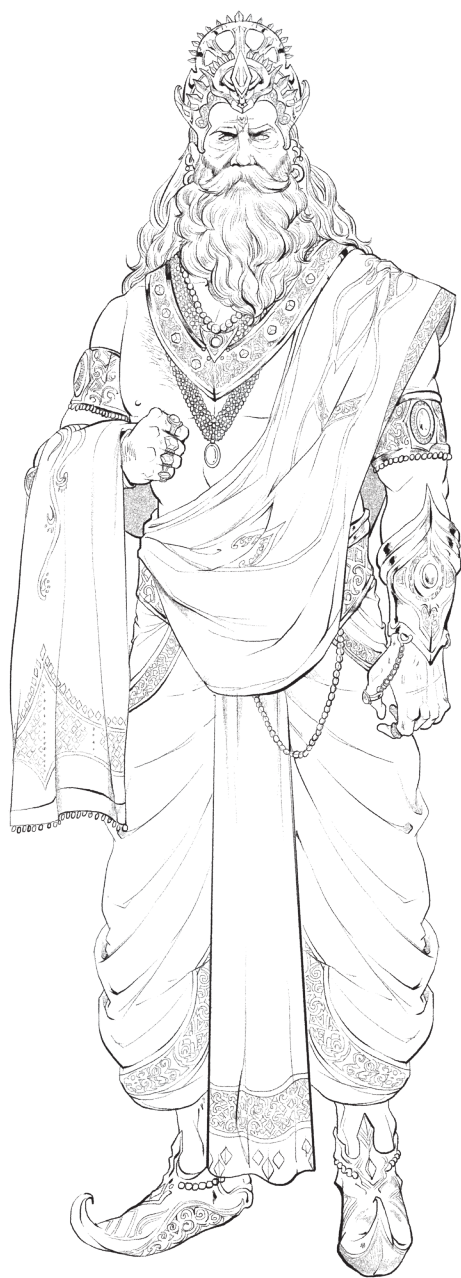
“You alright, buddy?” Nakul asked.

“I apologize, I should have told you everything earlier itself,” Kison said as he pressed his palm against his swollen chin.

Yudhraj looked at him and said, “This is pretty strange, you effortlessly beat us down, but you get bashed by some normal soldiers? We need to know who you are and what this is about. We want to help you, but you have to tell us everything.”

Kison looked up to him and said, “You can achieve things before time but what’s not on time is never valued, be it early or late. Now is not the right time, but I can tell you whatever you are meant to know.”

Yudhraj looked back at him and said, “Sure, we are listening.”



Chapter 4

The 100 Children

Kison wearily sat down on a rock and looked towards the five men.

“This kingdom, it is called ‘Yugprasth,’ meaning something that is famous across the globe,” Kison said as he stopped massaging his chin.

Arjun stared at him sharply, “Keep talking, we are listening.”

Kison continued, “I don’t know if in your world there is any good vs. bad or such a thing as evil, but I would like to start from there. This place is ruled by the Karvas- The family that has 100 princes. The name of the emperor is King Duta, he is blind...” before Kison could finish, Nakul interrupted by saying, “I think that baldy mentioned this blind guy, but how can a blind guy be a King?” he asked as he scratched his head.

Kison replied, “Yes! He is blind, but he is the King because his father was one. He is the namesake King. His half-brother Vidurm handles everything from behind the throne.”

Yudhraj looked confused as he asked Kison, “So why didn’t Vidurm become the King? He is anyway handling the kingdom, so why not be King instead?”

Kison smiled and looked at Yudhraj and said, "Everything I am going to say now has a long story; you will have tons of questions, but please be patient. The answers to these questions are not understandable to you right now."

"Okay, continue," Yudhraj whispered.

"Do not underestimate him because of his blindness. He is a competent human being, but less than his brother and yet fate had a different plan for Vidurm- his skin colour is red...." and once again he was interrupted by Nakul.

"Red? Are you serious? Like the colour? What's going on here? He is red, you are blue..." and he abruptly paused as he remembered that he was not supposed to ask questions.

Kison smiled at him and continued, "No one married Vidurm for the same reason, but he never let that affect his administration or his love for his brother. Vidurm doesn't have a great physique, but his mind is sharp as a knife. He knows to use weapons efficiently, but believes that the war can be won by using the strongest muscle of the body- the brain. So that's Vidurm for you."

"Who would marry a blind man?" Nakul whispered almost to himself.

"Good question. But aren't we all blind in our own ways, some can't see what's lying in front of them while some can't see anything at all," Kison replied.

Arjun was shocked to see that Kison grasped what Nakul said even when nobody else could hear him. Doubts rose in his mind as it was the second time Kison heard someone whisper under their breath.



Kison ignored Arjun and continued “King Duta has a wife, and her name is Gundhi- she is no ordinary woman. She is smart; she is strong and knows all the combats and usage of weapons. Want to know something even more shocking? “ Kison asked.

Everyone nodded with rapt attention.

“As her husband is blind she decided to blindfold herself for the rest of her life too,” Kison replied.

Everyone was shocked to hear this.

Kison continued, “It has been 44 years since their marriage, and she is still the way she was on the second day of her marriage.”

Deva broke his silence and said, “That’s magnificent. She won’t lose her eyesight, but the day she decides to see will be something no one can look away from.”

Kison looked at Deva and said, “You are the smartest, and you are the only one who is figuring out everything. You have probably figured out everything so far, haven’t you?”

“You know quite a bit about us; please continue. We want to hear why we are here!” Deva said shyly.

Kison smiled as if he knew that Deva would say this and he continued, “Now, King Duta and Gundhi have hundred sons, before you ask me how, let me tell you the story,” and he looked at Nakul.

Everyone was curious to understand this weird story that had brought them here.



“It is said that King Duta and Gundhi couldn’t conceive a child for a long time, years passed by, yet there was nothing. That’s when King Duta decided to seek help from the kul-guru, sage Vyaan (Family priest) to do something about the impossible. The Sage called an Aghori who lived outside the kingdom. People say that he is there since the beginning of the time and will be there till the end of it,” Kison said and stopped to regain his breath.

“Fascinating!” Deva whispered again.

Kison continued, “Almost everyone who knew astrology warned King Duta to not go ahead with the plan that he chalked out, but he didn’t listen to anyone. He could not let the throne pass outside his blood-line.

“That night he asked the Aghori to perform the ritual; he stood in his huge balcony. He couldn’t see but he felt everything. That night the wind didn’t blow, the wolves howled the loudest, the crickets were silent and there were no stars in the sky. Even the moon was hiding. The unnatural chill in the air blew through the kingdom. Even the children knew something was deeply wrong.”

Kison noticed that everyone sat on the ground and were totally engrossed in the story, he almost smiled and continued, “It wasn’t like King Duta was not aware of the consequences but he was blind in many ways. Queen Gundhi was a strong woman. She knew something was going to happen that might change everything forever, but it looked like she was much more willing to do this than anyone else. A woman who makes sacrifices is

the strongest of all. Nothing can stop her. Nothing can break her. King Duta was a little scared, but a King is not allowed to show his emotions, especially fear.”

“The time for the rituals arrived, the strange Aghori was in the palace. Strong winds blew as he stepped inside the gates, plunging the entire place into darkness.”

Everyone was sitting on the grass and listening to Kison when Nakul suddenly questioned: “Oh, this is pretty dramatic, did this really happen?”

Kison nodded his head and got back to the story.

“The guards immediately lit a few lamps. They couldn’t light all of them, but there was sufficient light in the palace to guide the way to the Queen’s room. Every maid in the palace hid as they saw the Aghori walk in with the Sage.

The Aghori was tall; his entire body was covered with what looked like ashes. He had drooping shoulders and his eyes were dull, yet they looked like they knew a million secrets. He wore nothing but a small saffron cloth around his waist. He had long dreadlocks which were tied in a bun, had a very long beard and he was very skinny. The strange part was that his body had several scars. He had long and unmaintained nails. He carried a small side bag made out of hemp; it looked like a lot of things were stuffed in the bag. He entered the Queen’s room; there was a small place for the yagya to be performed. He didn’t pay attention to the King or

the Queen. He sat near the woods kept in the yagya and burnt them. He then opened his bag and pulled out a few things, they looked like liquid, ashes, and small pieces that looked like flesh. The King and Queen stood silently as they could not see what the Aghori was doing.

Kison stopped again and saw that Sun was about to set, he looked at everyone and said, "I think we should stop here for today, it's been long since I have been talking. We should rest."

Yudhraj got up and blocked Kison's way even before he could move, "We are not done yet. Can we skip to the point where you tell us why are we called here?" Yudhraj questioned in a very firm voice as he stood inches away from Kison.

Kison didn't move but cleared his throat, "Okay if you want to hear more, then allow me to continue," he said.

"The Sage looked at King Duta and the Queen and asked them, "This is the last chance to withdraw. Are you sure you want to do this?"

King Duta replied, "Sage Vyaan, We are pretty sure of what we are doing. This is not just for us but also for the future of Yugprasth...Continue," he commanded the Aghori."

Deva interrupted Kison and asked, "Who was this sage Vyaan guy anyway?"

Kison looked at him and said "Sage Vyaan was not an ordinary sage, he is a great visionary. He left his parents at the age of six to meditate in the forest. People say he achieved enlightenment through meditation and that his

soul has been to heaven and is blessed by gods. This is the reason why he stays in the royal palace. He is a great advisor to the King.”

Deva tried to comprehend whatever Kison was saying.

Kison got back to narrating what happened that night.

“The Aghori whispered a few Mantras and burnt the woods and began the yagya. He kept on pouring the things that he carried with him.

Usually, the flames burn bright yellow, but there was nothing normal about this fire. This flame was dark red and the flames were uncontrolled as if chained demons wanted to break free. After a lot of mantra chanting, the fire settled a bit. The Aghori put his hand in the burning yagya and cupped a little flame in his hand and dashed hurriedly towards the Queen who was standing at the corner of the room. Her room was pretty huge, so he had to pace towards her. The Queen was terrified as the Aghori stood just a few inches away from her. She couldn't see him but he was so close that she could smell the ash on his body. He had the burning flame in his right hand. He grabbed the Queen's mouth with his left hand, the Queen screamed, and as soon as she opened her mouth, the Aghori stuffed the flame inside and covered her mouth. Her screamed echoed in the entire palace.

Hearing this, Vidurm kicked open the door and ran into the room. He saw the Aghori near the Queen; it took him a few moments to understand what was happening. He didn't give it much thought and pulled his sword out and went running towards the Aghori. King Duta had no

idea what was happening, yet he pulled his sword out. Vidurm almost reached near the Aghori and swung his sword to behead him; suddenly, Sage Vyaan yelled out, 'Stop! Don't do it, King Vidurm. Let him do whatever he is doing'. Unaffected by the things that were happening around, the Aghori held the Queen's mouth, tightly.

Vidurm was terrified; he looked at Sage Vyaan in distress.

"What is happening?" King Duta asked frantically.

Queen's mouth was muffled by the Aghori's hands, and she started panicking. The Aghori who looked weak had surprising strength as he held the Queen. "Gulp!" he exclaimed out loud to the Queen, in a rather commanding tone.

The Queen finally stopped panicking and fell on the ground, she wasn't hurt, but she was scared, very scared. She didn't move at all, she wanted to see what happened, but the vow of staying blind stopped her.

Everyone in the room was terrified. King Duta was still unaware of what was happening.

Sage Vyaan walked towards the King and said, "It's all right! It's been done," he said sourly as he looked at the Aghori.

Vidurm stood there, clueless, with the sword in his hand. The Aghori went walking towards the fire, sprinkled a pinch of brown powder in it and the fire went off instantly. The Queen sat on the ground, terrified. Vidurm ran towards the Queen, picked her up, and asked her if she was fine.

The Aghori looked back at all of them and jeeringly said,

“I will come back after 100 days, till then the Queen doesn’t step out of this room and eats nothing. She won’t be hungry; no one meets her, no one talks to her and see to it that she is not exposed to the sun,” and walked away from the room. The entire room was consumed by silence. Sage Vyaan went near them and said, “It’s done my King...” with a voice that was covered with regret.”

Kison looked around and saw the surprise on everyone’s face. The Sun had already set, and it started to get dark. The swifts made noise, yet no one was moving or paying attention to the surrounding. Kison took a deep breath and continued the story.

“Everyone followed what the Aghori said, the Queen was locked in her room, no one went in, nor did she come out. The windows were sealed so that the sun rays don’t enter the room.

Those hundred days were the darkest for the entire kingdom, the crops didn’t grow well, the kids were sick, the animals behaved strangely, the nights were longer and it was just ominous.

One hundred days were over, and finally, the night had arrived. The Aghori walked into the palace again and stood outside the room. King Duta, Vidurm and Sage Vyaan stood there waiting for him. Aghori stood in front of the door with ashes in his hand and commanded the Sage to open the door.

The Sage gathered all of his courage and opened the lock of the door. As soon as the door opened an utterly pungent smell spread across the palace. It smelt like a

dead body was in the process of decomposition. The Aghori threw the ashes towards the room and the smell reduced a bit.

“Wait outside, do not enter unless and until you are asked to,” he commanded as he walked into the dark. The room was huge and there was no source of light inside, it looked like a dark cave. The Aghori went inside, and after a while, he lit the oil lamps. Aghori came out covered with sweat, “I need three maids to come and help me,” he said, breathing heavily. Vidurm quickly arranged for the maids and asked them to assist the Aghori.

They went inside and saw that the Queen was laying on the bed with her eyes closed and had an inflated stomach.”

Kison paused for a second to check the reactions of the men. Everyone was under shock, but he could see the hunger for more in their eyes. It was getting really dark.

Kison continued.

“The Aghori held the Queen’s hair with a firm grip, pulled her head up, and poured some liquid in her mouth. A few moments later, her eyes suddenly opened, and she cried out in pain. She held her stomach and kept screaming and groaning. She was in labour. The maids were clueless as this was surprising for them too.

The King who was standing outside was stressed. The screams of the Queen stopped, but he couldn’t hear the cry of any baby. King lost his patience and walked inside the room along with Vidurm, as he stepped in, the maids ran out screaming, they looked pale.

“What happened?” the King asked as he heard the screams and could sense the maids running past him.

Vidurm drew out his sword and went inside the room. What he saw shocked him, he froze in fear, he felt as if the land below his feet was slipping and he couldn't understand what he saw. He was losing his grip on reality. He felt chills all over his body. He dropped his sword on the floor. King Duta was even more stressed and tried to understand what was going on.

Vidurm saw what the Queen had delivered and it wasn't a baby, it wasn't even anything close to human. It looked like a huge piece of flesh. It was thick and black in color. It was on the bed and it moved as if it was inhaling and exhaling. Something slimy came out of the cracks on the piece of this flesh.

Sage Vyaan came running inside hearing the thud that was caused due to the falling of the sword on the ground. Sage Vyaan looked at the piece of flesh, and his eyes popped out. “What have I let happen?” he whispered to himself in utter disappointment.

The Queen got up steadily and sat on her royal bed. “What...what happened? wher...where is my child?” she asked, trying to use her voice after so many days. Vidurm and Sage Vyaan looked at each other and had no idea what was to be done next. The silence again consumed the room; they both looked at the piece of the flesh on the bed. It lay there, struggling to move at its place, trying to breathe in air and left out something toxic. The slime that came out of the flesh was burning the cloth of the bed.”

The Aghori smiled wickedly and picked up the huge piece of flesh and kept it on the ground. He held the sword that was dropped by Vidurm and mercilessly chopped the piece of flesh. As he chopped a lot of slime squirted out of it resulting in burns on his hand and body but he still didn't stop. His blows were strong and powerful, with each blow the blade dashed on the ground, sparks came out, and the flesh absorbed the sparks.

Vidurm and Vyaan were disgusted to see what the Aghori was doing. He finally stopped. Vyaan looked at the Aghori and saw that he had chopped the flesh into many pieces.

The Aghori halted and he was panting, "Bring 100 vessels and one huge pot filled with water," he commanded Vidurm. Vidurm ran out and asked the servants to bring what was asked for.

Soon the 100 vessels along with the huge pot were kept in the room. The Aghori picked up all the 100 pieces one by one and placed them in the vessels. He got up and dragged the Queen towards the pot. With the same sword, he cut her a little on her left hand. She cried in pain, blood started dripping from her hand as soon as that happened.

He then pushed the Queen away and pulled out a jar from his bag; it had something semi-liquid. He opened the jar and poured the semi-liquid into the huge pot that contained water. It started boiling, and after a while, it stopped. With the same jar, he collected the liquid and poured in all the vessels that had the pieces of flesh in it.

He was done after a while,” and Kison stopped.

Everyone was disgusted to hear the story. The stars came out, and the owls started hooting. “Please finish the story,” Nakul said with amazement in his eyes yet with the frown of disgust.

“If you say so,” Kison replied as he continued to speak.

“The Aghori went walking towards the door, he stopped and looked back. He looked at the King and said in a deep voice, “Greed makes you desire what is not yours, it takes you away from what you truly deserve. I have done what you have asked me to but remember this is not how Humans are born... Jai Shambho,” and he left from there.

Everyone in the room was either clueless or disgusted with what had happened. Unaware of this procedure of giving birth.”

And Kison stopped again.

Deva’s wandering mind had thousands of doubts, but he chose to speak out loud the most obvious, “This is not exactly how it happens at our place, but similar steps are followed when a child is not born. We call it a test tube baby, it is not possible that humans knew about this for centuries and people didn’t implement it from the start.”

Kison gave half a smile and said, “There are many such things that people from your place aren’t aware of, centuries might pass, but some secrets will remain secrets. There are many things you are about to see, things you might have only read in the books or maybe things you

might have never even heard of,” and he stopped and looked at the peacock that was far from where they were sitting.

It had been Nine months since the night the babies were placed in the vessels. It took exactly nine months for the lifeless pieces of flesh to turn into babies, and they looked almost human. Stronger and bigger than human babies, but they were human.

The storm settled and people accepted the fact that whatever their King did wasn't right and it was going to haunt them. The mistake of one is punishment for all.

The Aghori came back to the palace after nine months when the babies could move and respond to sound and light.

He entered the room where all the children were kept in their cradle. The King, along with Vidurm, was also present in the same room. The babies were crying, and suddenly, when the Aghori entered, they fell silent, and all the babies had a pleasant smile on their faces.

He walked towards the King and said, “You are greedy; this greed is not good. You wished for 100 children and Lord Shiva has given you 100 children but beware, there are things you will have to face because of this,” The Aghori said as he stood in front of the King.

“What do you mean?” The King asked.

“Ask Sage Vyaan,” the Aghori replied as he moved

away from the King and turned towards the healthiest baby of all.

Vidurm and The King looked at Sage Vyaan, who was standing next to the Queen.

Sage Vyaan came walking towards the King and said, "My King, the way he brought these babies to life is not natural. If the beginning of a thing is not natural, its end will be no different. That's all I understand," and he turned towards the Aghori who held a baby in his hand. He held it in his hands and brought him near the King.

He handed the baby to the King. As the King held the baby in his hand, he realized that the weight of the baby was not normal; he was too heavy for a new-born.

Aghori looked at the King and said "He is the strongest of all, he will be the leader and the next King."

The King couldn't see his child, but he felt the warm blood of the child running through his veins, the skin was soft, the muscles did feel tender, but it had the potential to become rock solid.

"I will name him Diyohan. The strongest of all," The King announced.

Aghori looked at Sage Vyaan and said, "There is something I need to tell you about these babies," and both of them walked towards the corner of the room.

Aghori looked around and whispered to the sage "There are only five babies in the room that are real and rest all of them are clones. The other 95 are just a moving piece of flesh. None of them can be Kings or

of a higher authority; however, they are powerful and undefeatable, but they lack the most important part within them.”

Sage Vyaan looked scared and fumbled, “The soul?”

Aghori scoffed and said, “They aren’t human souls they are something different. The souls of the five main babies are pulled from the deepest corners of hell.”

Sage’s eyes popped out as he asked, “What have you done?”

Aghori looked back at Vyaan and said, “What? You are the one who asked me to do this! You asked me to go against fate and do this atrocious task. I am merely someone who performed it. Remember this is going to come right back to you someday. If not you, it’s going to be the whole world.”

Sage Vyaan was terrified to hear the prophecy of the Aghori. He looked at the babies nervously. He was unable to understand what to do next.

He walked towards Vidurm and asked to speak in private. They both went outside the room, and Vyaan told him what the Aghori had warned him about.

“What? This is what he said?” Vidurm asked Sage Vyaan as he was scared too.

“Yes! What should we do? The fate of the whole world lies in front of us. We aren’t capable of handling such

a huge responsibility,” Sage Vyaan said as he saw King Duta playing with one of the babies.

“We have to kill all the babies,” Vyaan said in a heavy voice.

“Do you even hear yourself Sage Vyaan? How are you going to do this? And how are you going to convince the King to do so?” Vidurm asked as the colors on his face drained away.

King Duta walked and stood next to them.

“I am aware of the consequences, I know what we have done is unforgivable but that’s something I will have to worry about after two decades or so but meanwhile let the kingdom celebrate and let me be happy about the fact that the throne will have someone from the royal family and not someone who doesn’t belong to the royal blood.”

King Duta turned his back towards Sage Vyaan and Vidurm. He couldn’t see his kids, but he could hear and feel more than anyone else could.

Chapter 5

Naming ceremony day

The entire kingdom gathered in the royal court. People whispered things; people knew how the children came to life. They were terrified, yet they plastered their faces with fake smiles because their King had called them to celebrate. The King knew the five babies that the clones were modeled on. Just like a father knows his children.

The first one was named, 'Diyohan.'

The second one was named, 'Dushan.'

The third one, Virakanna.'

The fourth one as, 'Dushalya.'

And the last one as, 'Yutsu.'

They were the future of the kingdom, and it was obvious that Diyohan was going to become the King as he looked like one; he was born with the aura of a King. He was strong even before he could walk, he was smart even before he could understand. He was born to rule, and everyone could see why.

The kingdom celebrated the ceremony with a lot of funfair even though the citizens were half scared to death. The music was in the air, yet the heaviness of fear hung above the kingdom like dark clouds.

Naming ceremony Day:

That night the King stood in the huge balcony of his palace. Queen Gundhi came walking towards him. She stood next to her husband and asked him, "What are you thinking about? It was a long day. Don't you want to sleep?"

"Not sleepy yet, there are questions in my mind that won't let me sleep," he replied softly.

"What questions my King?" She probed.

The King left a sigh and said, "The things we did to get these children, I hope that doesn't lead to something that is irreversible for mankind. Sage Vyaan suggested we should kill them before they realize their powers and what they are capable of..."

He was interrupted by the Queen who had turned red and spoke in a high pitch "Are you out of your mind? It took us so many years and still we couldn't conceive a baby. Just because the sage says something, are you going to listen to him? You are the King and you decide things. These are our children, and we will raise them to be the best warriors and Kings of the future."

"I am blind, but you aren't, this is selective blindness Gundhi. You are turning a blind eye towards the fact that this involves a bigger risk and we aren't ready to take one right now."

The Queen had lost her patience by now. She wanted to be a mother, and when she finally became one, her husband spoke of killing her babies. It made her furious. "So what? I don't really care what the future has got

for us, but for me right now my children are the most important thing in the world. I have given birth to them and I will decide what is to be done with them. I have made sacrifices for this family, not just a life of blindness but also locking myself in that miserable room for 100 days. One hundred days of being alone, not speaking to anyone, not uttering a word, crying to the emotionless walls and 100 days of not knowing what is happening to my body.”

The King could not see her face, yet he knew not to push her further. So he kept quiet even though he was feeling what the rest of the kingdom knew already.

Years later...

The royal court was filled with people. The King, Queen Gundhi, Vidurm, Sage Vyaan, Dushan, Virakanna, Dushalya, and Yutsu were holding court. The other clone-sons were somewhere in the palace guarding the royal family.

One of the guards came running into the royal court; he had wounds all over his body. They looked like he was attacked by an animal, he was covered with his own blood and his uniform was shredded in places.

Vidurm, who was sitting next to the King, quickly got up and questioned, “What happened? These wounds, who did this to you?”

He stood before them and said breathlessly, “My King, I



was with prince Diyohan. He wanted to hunt. We went deep into the woods, and we lost our way when a tiger attacked us..."

As soon as the King heard this, he got up from his throne and screamed, "What? Is he fine? Why are you here instead of protecting him?"

Vidurm immediately walked towards the guard, "Forget it! Take me there now."

The guard stammered and said, "I thought that the man-eater tiger was going to attack me, when Prince Diyohan saw this and jumped right in front of the tiger. He started wrestling the beast with his bare hands. I was scared, so I ran away."

The King was shaking with fury as he yelled at the cowardly guard, "How can you even leave him like this. Go with Vidurm right now and help him! GO!" and collapsed on his throne.

Vidurm and the guard rushed towards the jungle.

Yustu, who was sitting next to his mother, leaned in to ask her, "What is it, mother? Aren't you worried for brother Diyohan?"

Queen scoffed and said, "I am worried for the tiger. Your brother is stronger than any man alive. By the time Uncle Vidurm and the guards will reach them; your brother will have torn the tiger into pieces."

Yutsu was surprised to see his mother's confidence.

Yutsu wasn't the warrior kind; he believed that violence

Naming ceremony Day:

wasn't necessary and things can be handled differently. He also believed that being just and kind is the way to rule. He wasn't like his brothers, he was different even when he learnt the same things his brothers were taught. He was an excellent swordsman.

In the forest...

The guard rode the chariot while Vidurm was sitting behind. He kept his bow and arrow ready.

"We are almost there," the guard said while belting the horses.

Suddenly they heard a huge roar from somewhere in the west. The guard immediately turned the chariot towards the commotion. Vidurm clutched the nock of the arrow and pulled it with a string. He aimed towards the direction they were headed in.

The chariot stopped and Vidurm didn't fire the arrow; instead, he pulled the arrow away from the bow. He stared ahead in shock and fearful awe.

Diyohan sat on a nearby rock, as the tiger fell lifeless in front of him. He had torn the jaw of the tiger by pulling it apart. The tiger was stabbed at many places and he had pierced his entire sword in its back.

Diyohan was panting as he looked at his uncle. Diyohan was now a young man, who was not only powerful but also ruthless. He was of wheatish complexion; he was tall and had an extremely muscular body. He had long hair that he kept open, half of his face was not visible due

to his long messy hair and the other half was covered in the tiger's blood. Rather his entire body was covered with the blood.

Vidurm jumped out of the chariot and went running towards Diyohan.

"Are you okay?" He asked his nephew.

"What can happen to me?" Diyohan said with a sense of narcissistic pride.

"Let's go now! Your father is worried about you," Vidurm said as he turned towards the chariot. Vidurm sat inside the chariot but before he could settle down, Diyohan pulled Vidurm's sword and stabbed the guard who was riding the chariot.

"This was for leaving me alone to fight this tiger," Diyohan said as he twisted the sword deep in the guard's stomach.

Vidurm was taken aback to see his nephew behaving like that, but he didn't say anything.

The guard died within a few moments. Diyohan pulled back the sword and pushed the dead guard aside and the dead body fell on the ground with a thud.

He put the sword in his scabbard and sat in the rider's chair and rode the chariot.

They reached the royal court. Vidurm and Diyohan walked inside.

Everyone was shocked to see the blood covered Diyohan.

Naming ceremony Day:

Vidurm said, "My King, we are back. The prince is safe."

King walked towards Diyohan and said, "My son! Please don't do this again!" and he held him by his shoulders unable to see him covered in blood. As soon as the King hugged him, he felt the sticky warmth of the blood.

Dushan and Virakanna came walking towards them. Dushan looked at him and said, "Brother! It seems like you literally tore the tiger apart," and laughed hard with hands on his stomach.

Virakanna looked around and asked him, "But brother, where is the guard?"

The King too asked him the same question, to which Diyohan replied, "I was fighting the tiger when uncle Vidurm reached there. The guard didn't think for a moment and just came running towards the tiger. He fought bravely, but he died. If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be alive today," he said in a solemn voice.

Everyone was silent in the courtroom; the Queen had a smirk on her face while Yutsu who was seated beside her, looked curiously at his mother and said "Mother, this is not what you predicted."

"I know my son better than anyone. But yes, if he says this is what happened then let's believe it," she said and giggled. She knew what had happened, but she decided to speak nothing. Although, she looked self-satisfied.

Diyohan was the commander of the entire army; they didn't need an external army as the brothers were

sufficient to fight a war. Diyohan was an all-rounder and he led the entire army. The prophecy of him being the almighty was true. He was a ruthless warrior who did not know the meaning of defeat.

Dushan was the one who looked after the fitness of the army. He was bald and was blessed with broad shoulders. A body that was always combat ready; the tilak on his forehead made him almost regal. His dense beard gave him a fierce look. He gave more importance to his fitness than anything else. He spent hours and hours in training for combat. He could stop an elephant with his bare hands. He killed a tiger when he was just 16 years old. Since then, he wore the tiger's fur around his body as a mark of pride.

Virakanna was the one who wielded and designed weapons that could kill anyone and anything. He always carried three swords with him and they all weighed more than five kgs. He made different kinds of swords, used mechanism that was never used before; like pipes that fired multiple arrows at a time, automatic ground weapons that could be placed in the war zone, armours for the animals that served the army and many more such things. He was blind from one eye as he hurt himself while trying to make a weapon that could fire arrows straight into a person's eyes while in combat. It was a weapon that shot out arrows straight at the height of a man's head, something that could directly kill and not leave a chance for recovery.

Dushalya was a motivator, he motivated the entire army when needed, trained them to be as hard as a rock and to

Naming ceremony Day:

be the best. He, along with his brothers, was emotionally strong enough to ruthlessly kill someone and not break a sweat. Dushalya excelled the art of oratory, he could manipulate anyone to do something they never wished to. Just like his other brothers, he was physically fit and had appealing looks. He had a graceful moustache that he twisted often. A Sharp nose and perfect jawline. He wasn't as tall as his brothers, but he was perfect in his own ways. He had long hair that fell to his shoulders. He could live without food and water for days. It is said that he once ate mercury by mistake and still survived.

Yutsu was a very emphatic person. He looked after the people of the kingdom and he was more into administration than war. He wanted peace and he believed in equality, but he couldn't let anything happen to his brothers. He was the chief of the advisors for their army and had a contingency plan for everything. He grew-up but did not grow old. He stopped aging and looked like a boy in his early 20s, A young boy with clean shaved bare face and shiny beautiful hair.

The five brothers stood in front of the King and were ready to take on anything head to head to save the kingdom. The King was proud of them. They all were young and smart, almost ready to rule the kingdom.

Almost''.

Chapter 6

The Perfect Warrior

Kison looked at the moon, realizing how late it was. He was exhausted, but the others looked at him with intrigue. "It's too late now, I must leave," Kison said as he got up and stretched his body that was stiff from sitting on a rock for so many hours.

Yudhraj too looked visibly tired, he yawned and stretched his body as he responded to Kison.

"We will talk tomorrow morning; for now you have given us enough to think about."

"There are many things yet to be told. I will see you in the morning," Kison said as he turned towards the jungle.

Nakul looked at him walking towards the woods and asked Yudhraj, "It's so dark, how would he find his way? Should I go with him?"

Yudhraj looked at Kison disappearing in the woods and said, "No, I think he can manage, he seems to know this entire kingdom like his house, but there is something quite strange about him."

Arjun turned towards the Ship's door and touched a rectangular plate which looked like a biometric or

fingerprint scanner. As soon as he placed his hand over it, the machine beeped. He moved his hand away, and the machine said, "Identity confirmed. Commander Arjun, Badge Number 15071995. Squad - Heroes of Wars."

The door opened and a ramp slid out of the entrance of the Ship and made way for Arjun to enter. He calmly walked inside the ship and looked over his shoulder at his teammates and found that everyone was looking at Kison disappearing into the woods. He didn't think much of it.

At a point, Arjun was one of the most regarded students from the F.A.T.E. Academy. He was good at everything, be it combat or planning a strategy. Every mission leader asked Arjun to accompany them for the perfect execution. Arjun became a part of the academy quite late, but he caught up well. It seemed like he was born to be the warrior. Things that took years for other students, Arjun learned it within days.

Arjun was very mysterious; his tragic past might have something to do with it. He spoke rarely and only spoke when required. He was one of the very few people from his world that had the knowledge of Archery. Out of numerous lethal weapons, Arjun decided to stick to his bow and arrow. Arjun could turn anything into a weapon if required. His aim was perfect, his every punch was perfect and his every move was well-calculated for perfection. He was the- "Perfect Warrior."

Arjun was trained by the two best teachers from his

world, Dronaji and Bhishmaji. The entire Squad - H.O.W. was trained by them, but Arjun was paid the most attention by his teachers and had special training sessions with them. He wanted the list to begin with his name when it came to the best warriors of all times. Dronaji was responsible for giving him lessons that made him mentally strong, Dronaji believed that a strong body could win you a battle, but a strong mind can win you wars.

Bhishmaji took up the responsibility to teach him the art of weaponry. Under the guidance of Bhishmaji, he learned to use every weapon that ever existed.

Arjun couldn't settle for anything; every day he wanted to be better than what he was yesterday, he knew of no limits. He could not be stopped. But the hunger for being the best made him the most insecure man in the world too. His focus got divided, he was distracted in keeping a watch over people who were getting to his level, of course very few did reach that benchmark but whoever did, Arjun would do his best to beat them. Arjun fought about hundreds of wars over his lifespan. Each time he stepped into the battle, the enemy knew it's going to rain arrows on them. Arjun was undoubtedly the best, but he knew that the other four are unbeatable. He knew that nobody could defeat them, at least not when all of them are together, so the man who never settled for anything settled for just one thing, to be part of this team and that decision made a huge impact on the entire world. The world got a squad of invincible warriors called, 'Heroes of Wars'.

He had quite a reputation in the academy until one fateful day, the day when the pillars of the academy shook. One

fine day, everyone got to know that Bhishmaji and Dronaji had gone missing, to his surprise the academy did not carry out any search operation. The case was closed. Arjun knew something was wrong, he started digging into things on his own, finding evidence, searching for proofs. He was aware that the F.A.T.E. did get their major funding from the corporate giants, but he believed that they had nothing to do with his mentors going missing. He knew the system was flawed, but the only reason why he was part of F.A.T.E. was because of his teachers. The fact that his teachers were not there anymore became his reason to part with F.A.T.E. He gave up his commander badge and got into the world to find his mentors on his own.

As a commanding officer of F.A.T.E. Army, he had ruined lives of several intergalactic criminals, who now had him in their world all alone. Cutting ties with the F.A.T.E. not only put him in the list of fugitives but also left him vulnerable. Even so, he wasn't afraid. As years passed, Arjun turned into a bounty hunter; his need for survival took him to dark places. The darkness was not just on the outside but now in the inside too. However, he had his personal rules of never hurting children or mothers. His tough life made him ruthless!

IN THE SHIP

The Ship's door was left open as he walked through its hallway. The Ship had fine L.E.D. lights across the hallway to guide the person walking. It was dark. He reached the Assembly Hall which was basically the cockpit too. The

Assembly hall had a huge circular table that projected holographic images. It displayed some infographics that included the time, date, location, surveillance footage of everything happening within 1 km radius. The Assembly hall was linked to the eight different paths that lead to the other chambers.

Arjun went up to the holographic table, and as soon as he was near it, he was greeted by a robotic voice.

“Hello Arjun, how can I help you today? How was the city tour? You took more time than estimated.”

“Yes. Thanks for asking. We had some work.”

“Very well, is there anything you need from me?” the voice asked.

“Yes, Archisa, please show me the surveillance footage of the last 10 minutes.”

Archisa was the name of the A.I. of the ship. She was named Archisa by Yudhraj, as it meant the ‘ray of light.’ They had been through the darkest places in the universe, and the ship had provided them with utmost assistance. She was programmed to help them with everything they needed from an A.I. Though she was programmed, she understood the men very well.

“Here they are,” Archisa said and the holographic images were projected in front of him. It displayed many footages running at the same time

Arjun kept scanning the surveillance footages, looking for something he could not find. He heard the footsteps

of his teammates approaching the ship, and he quickly pressed a button and the footage was gone.

He could hear Nakul's voice fading in.

"Man! I am very hungry but I think we had a lot for today. How greatly entertaining these stories were, right Deva?"

"I am trying to understand a few things happening here, especially the climate. It is affecting our body in a way that we can notice," Deva said, ignoring Nakul's stupid questions.

Yudhraj looked at Deva with agreement while he shared his observation, "I think just like other planets, we might take some time to adapt here, but this feels very much familiar to what it feels like at home. Except for the fact that this place feels rich," and he looked at his hands.

Bheem touched his arms and said, "Yes, this makes sense."

Bheem had a muscular body, and it seemed that hardly anything could penetrate that thick skin. He spent the entire day working out or either munching on something.

Arjun walked towards the hallway that led to his chamber; he stopped at the entrance of the hallway and looked at his comrades.

"Team! I think we should sleep. Let's wait for Kison to come here tomorrow and let's ask him a few more questions," and he retired to his room.

Bheem went towards the pantry and opened some packed food and started hogging. Everyone was soon in their own chambers.

Arjun entered his chamber and the door automatically closed. He went near the wall and it automatically opened from the centre. It was his personal arsenal; there were many arrowheads and shafts. Along with numerous amount of guns and grenades. He placed his bow at the corner of the arsenal and mounted his quiver on the wall.

He turned his back towards the arsenal and the door closed. He went walking towards a huge cylindrical shaped object that was lying horizontally on the ground with a lot of wires connected to its sides. It looked like a sleeping pod. It had a small rectangle glass at the top.

He tapped the badge on his chest and the text read- 'Sleep-Mode'. Many tiny particles came out of the badge and covered the clothes he wore. Within a few seconds, it formed a body-hugging suit, yet it seemed very comfortable, and it looked stretchable. The lid of the sleeping pod opened and Arjun lay on the comfortable bed which was inside.

The pod closed. There were white lights inside the pod and the glass was right in front of his face. Arjun tapped a button which was near his finger and Archisa spoke, "Hello Arjun, what time would you like to get up tomorrow?"

"5:00," He replied.

"Noted, do you want the emergency alarm to go off if something goes wrong? Or you want strict D.N.D. action?" She inquired.

Arjun took only a second and said, "No! Let the alarms go off and wake me up."

“Alright! Commander Arjun.”

“Don’t call me that, I am not the commander anymore. That’s the past, and it’s gone, just like the moment that just passed away. If it’s bad, forget it; if it’s good, relive it. In this case, I would like to forget it.”

“For me, you shall always be the most important part of the organization,” she replied in a rather pleasant voice.

“Goodnight, Archisa,” Arjun said, ignoring her praises and decided to sleep.

An invincible warrior who turned into a criminal, Arjun had a story one could only imagine in their dreams.

Chapter 7

Empathy, Courage, and Strength

The next morning.

Alarms went off in the ship.

Arjun woke up with a start and the lid of his sleeping pod popped open. He raised both his legs in the air and jumped out of the pod. He rushed towards the arsenal and picked up his bow and quiver. He tapped his badge and it read 'Outdoor.' The particles covered his body and turned into a black body-hugging suit. He went running towards the assembly hall. Bheem, Yudhraj and Deva quickly joined him.

"What happened?" Bheem asked Archisa!

"It's a distress call from Nakul," Archisa quickly replied.

Yudhraj grimly looked at the screen and said, "Connect us to his coms, right now."

"He left his coms in the ship, but I have sent his location on your badge," and the holographic image of the map popped out in front of everyone.

"Let's go!" Yudhraj exclaimed as he briskly walked towards the exit door.

Everyone hurried towards the location which was displayed in the holographic map. Though Arjun was

the one with perfect physique, Yudhraj ran just next to him. Arjun looked at him from the corner of his eye. This didn't give rise to his competitive feelings; he knew what gave Yudhraj the strength to run faster than the perfect warrior. He ran behind Yudhraj and was followed by Bheem and Deva. Yudhraj drove his energy from his emotions. He was not as proficient as Arjun, but he had enough strength to fight against an army and not break a sweat.

Yudhraj was a just and honest ruler. He was not only the ruler but a friend to every person living there, a son, a brother and a watchful guardian. His position never gave him a sense of pride; instead, it made him feel more responsible for the betterment of society. Yudhraj topped the Community Administration Program in F.A.T.E and opted to look into the peaceful governance of the people. Yudhraj was second to none, and nobody understood people like he did.

In his young age, Yudhraj lived on the streets with few other boys. As the orphanage he belonged to was destroyed, he had nowhere else to go. Yudhraj could have easily gone into any other orphanage, but he realized that there are other children along with him and he felt that it was his responsibility to look after them, voluntarily. Every day he looked at the cadets of F.A.T.E marching out for daily drills and wished to join the organization someday. He hustled daily to keep the others happy and alive.

One day Bhishmaji stepped out of the academy campus and decided to see what's going on with the local people. He hovered on his bike and saw that a young boy, 11 or

12 years old, was being chased by a group of men. He decided not to get involved but quietly spectate. He was impressed to see how the little boy dodged six full grown men; he apparently stole some food from a restaurant and was running away. The kid blindly entered an alley, but he was out of breath and had to slow down. As he did, one of the men finally caught hold of the little boy; grabbed him by his collar and nailed him against the wall. The little boy held the packet of food tightly. He wasn't strong, nor did he have a healthy body. If someone punched him, he probably wouldn't even get up for a day. His bones were visible and he wore ragged clothes.

"You bloody thief!" One of the men exclaimed.

The little boy struggled hard to run away, but he was surrounded by the men.

Bhishmaji didn't interfere yet. He kept on looking at the scene from the top a building.

"Let me go!" The little boy exclaimed.

"You know we can hand you over to the authority for theft and you are never getting out," Another man said as he rolled his sleeves and stood in front of him.

"No! Let me go!" he exclaimed though he wasn't in a position to be demanding,

The man who held him by his collar said, "I don't believe in the law, I would rather take it in my hand and serve justice," and slammed the little boy on the wall.

One of them slapped him with force; the blow was strong enough for the kid to make him cry. The man who was holding him threw him on the ground, and everyone took turns to kick the little boy. Bhishmaji still didn't intervene. He saw that the little boy gripped the packet even harder. Someone pulled out a laser saber from his back pocket and lit it up.

Bhishmaji had seen enough, he jumped from the top of the building to the wall of another one that was very close to it and back to the first building's wall closer to the ground and landed on the floor.

"Enough! Gentlemen," Bhishmaji said in a calm yet deep voice.

Everyone looked back as the voice echoed in the alley, Bhishmaji stood in front of them. He looked like he was in his late thirties and had an exceptionally fit body.

A perfectly groomed salt and pepper beard and hair. The slight wrinkles on his forehead didn't take his charm away, nor did the scar on his right cheek. He wore a white coloured skin suit which had padding at various places; he wore an overcoat just so that people don't see his uniform. The skinsuit which he wore was the uniform of F.A.T.E. The black suit was for the warriors and the white suit for the heads of the academy.

"Leave the kid alone, now!" Bhishmaji commanded as he walked towards the men.

"Stay out of this! This is none of your business. He stole from us," The man who slapped the little boy said.

“It’s okay, He is just a kid and he made a mistake. Let him go,” Bhishmaji said as he looked at the boy struggling to get up.

One of them came near Bhishmaji, looked him in the eye and said, “I think it’s your time to leave, we will take care of this.”

Bhishmaji didn’t move.

The man went near the boy and slapped him again.

Looking at this, Bhishmaji instantly paced towards the men, he jumped in the air and side kicked one of the men. The man fell miles away. Bhishmaji landed on his legs and looked at the other men

“Let’s make this a fair fight, shall we gentlemen?” Bhishmaji said as he was ready to take them on.

Three of the men looked at each other and went running towards Bhishmaji.

“Apologies for the ‘to-be-broken bones!’” Bhishmaji whispered as he nodded his head.

One of them swang his hand and threw a punch at Bhishmaji with force. Bhishmaji swiftly ducked and moved sideways below him and punched him with an uppercut. The punch landed on the man’s chin and it hurt him pretty bad. Bhishmaji quickly got up and noticed that another man barged towards him with a laser saber in his hand, the man swung his hand in the air, moving his saber towards Bhishmaji. Bhishmaji blocked his hand effortlessly by holding his forearm and twisted his wrist

making the saber drop on the ground. Bhishmaji twisted his wrist more and turned him around, folded the man's hand behind his back and kicked him in his knee pit. The man yelled in pain and fell on his face.

Bhishmaji charged towards the other two men. With the momentum, he punched another man. He was quick in his movements and punched the last man with his left hand by going one step ahead.

Everyone was on the ground now, grunting and coughing. He looked around and saw that the boy had fled away. Even after fighting five men single handed, Bhishmaji was not even huffing. He went towards the other side of the alley and saw the boy running across the street. Bhishmaji followed him.

A while later the boy reached an old woman, she was weak and leaning against a huge dustbin.

"Here! This is for you, have some food," the little boy said as he stood in front of the lady.

Few other boys came and sat beside the old lady, there wasn't enough food, but he managed to split it amongst everyone except for himself.

"What about you?" one of the boys asked.

"Ah, I ate a lot today. Brought some for you. Have fun," the little boy said as he left from there.

He went walking towards the end of the alley and stopped abruptly; there was a loud grumbling voice in his stomach. He felt weak and dropped to his knees.

“Since how long have you been hungry?” A voice came from behind.

The little boy didn't have the strength to even turn around, he dropped on his back and saw Bhishmaji standing next to him. His eyesight was blurry and he felt weak. The little boy couldn't speak as the weakness was already eating him up.

Bhishmaji bent down and made him sit on the floor.

“Three days,” the boy whispered.

“Three days? And you gave all the food to other people?” Bhishmaji asked as he held his little palm.

“Yes! They needed it more than I did. I am the eldest, and it's my responsibility to feed them.”

“Why are you being so hard on yourself?” Bhishmaji asked.

“Responsibilities. When you acknowledge them, they give you extra courage,” he replied in a soft voice.

“How old are you?” Bhishmaji asked him listening to him talk in such a mature manner.

The little boy couldn't even speak properly, stammering he said, “Ele...Eleven.Eleven years”

Bhishmaji had a slight smile on his face as if he could relate to the misery of this child.

“What's your name, son?”

The little boy had a smile on his face, and with pride, he said, “Yudhraj,” and he fell unconscious....

Chapter 8

The Coronation

Yudhraj was galloping and soon the others were quite behind. He reached the place which showed Nakul's location.

He was huffing and looking around to spot Nakul, everyone else was there soon enough, and they just stopped as they saw what was in front of them.

They all saw Nakul playing with a puppy!

"What the hell?" Arjun said, trying to catch his breath.

"Oh here you guys are, look what I found," Nakul said rather playfully as he rubbed the belly of the puppy.

"You just gave the ship a distress call; do you understand what that means?" Arjun exclaimed.

Nakul figured he had messed up, he got up from the ground slowly, embarrassed.

"Ugh! I forgot my coms in the ship and I thought this was the best way to call you guys here," Nakul muttered as he scratched his head.

Bheem from behind said, "Is that the offspring of a 'Canis lupus familiaris?'"

Deva went near the puppy but maintained a safe distance from it; he observed its behaviour for a while. The puppy sat on his two legs and kept looking at Deva with his shiny eyes.

“Yes! He is, it is called a pup! They exist here,” Deva said as he saw him calmly sitting on the ground.

Yudhraj walked towards Nakul, looked him in the eye and said, “Be a little responsible Nakul, this is not a joke,” Yudhraj was not happy with what Nakul did. Before he could get any more mad at Nakul, he felt something near his toe.

The puppy was licking Yudhraj and wagging his tail. Yudhraj picked the little puppy in his arms and looked at it.

“Be careful, they are very delicate,” Deva exclaimed as he saw Yudhraj picking up the puppy. He looked happy as it settled in the strong arms of Yudhraj.

“See? He likes you,” Nakul said.

The puppy suddenly looked towards the other side and his ears stood up. Everyone looked towards the direction the puppy looked at. They heard someone approaching them, Yudhraj stepped back as he held the little puppy in his arms.

From behind the bushes, came Kison!

“Oh! It is you!” Nakul said as he heaved a sigh of relief.

“How did you even know we were here?” Arjun asked Kison!

"I saw you running in this direction and I just followed you."

"Also it looks like you made a new friend," Kison said as he walked near Yudhraj.

Deva was curious to know more about the dog; he went near it and asked Kison, "Well! Are they really kind and loving?"

"Yes," replied Kison as he touched the head of the puppy. The puppy instantly calmed down and closed his eyes.

"So are you ready? We have to go to the kingdom of Yugprasth today. Why? I will tell you while we walk towards the kingdom," Kison said as he pointed to the route that lead to the kingdom.

Yudhraj kept the puppy on the ground, he looked at Kison and said, "Sure, Let's move."

Everyone turned the dial of their badge and their suits turned into the standard traditional wear. They were now wearing dhotis and short kurtas. They all followed Kison and started walking away. Yudhraj looked back at the puppy and smiled at him as he wagged his little tail.

"We are going to the Palace. Today is the coronation of the Prince," Kison said as he walked away expecting the others to follow him.

Nakul ran behind him and said, "Damn, that's cool. This world is new for us! I am glad we are getting to be part of this ceremony."

“A big part,” Kison corrected him.

“Stop!” Arjun exclaimed.

“Yes?” Kison replied

“What do you mean by a big part? If we have to assassinate someone, you have to tell us now! If we have to attack the Palace, you still got to tell us now! We are fed up of surprises and we want to know the real purpose,” Arjun said as he stood in front of Kison.

“Purpose? You will only know your purpose when the right time arrives. Wait for it, Arjun. Wait. You have nothing to know now! Please, relax Arjun. I am just taking you to the ceremony. I don’t mind telling you what your mission is, but that’s too early for now and I want you guys to adapt to the surroundings first, RELAX!” Kison said as he emphasized on the word relax and slightly touched Arjun’s shoulder.

“Also, you should keep your bow and arrow back in the ship,” he added. Arjun could not look away from Kison and slowly nodded at his words.

Kison always had this calm tone like everything was under his control and as if he was aware of every consequence that might take place.

“So we are heading towards the Palace now, where the ceremony is taking place. You are going to thoroughly enjoy the ceremony,” Kison reassured them.

They walked out of the jungle and entered the kingdom,

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the streets were empty, the houses were closed and it was all just vacant.

Deva looked around and asked Kison, “Hey? Where is everyone, if today is the coronation, then everyone should be celebrating, right?”

“Everyone is in the palace; the celebration is taking place over there,” he replied.

After walking a few miles, they finally reached the Palace. The entire Palace was decorated with flowers and garlands. It was raining rose petals everywhere. They heard the music of dhols and mridungum from far and it looked like the entire kingdom had descended to the Palace.

“Scammy Kammy! That looks sick!” Nakul exclaimed.

He started walking quickly as he was mesmerized with the beauty of the Palace.

They all stood in front of a huge gate of the Palace that spread across acres; the vast floor was covered with various colourful flower petals. The huge door was open and was covered with garlands. They walked past the open lawn as they continued towards the royal court where the ceremony was set to happen.

It was a huge lawn and at the end, was the entry for the royal court. The lawn was surrounded with gateways that lead to a different part of the fortress, above each gateway, there were two storeys built. It looked like one big structure. The storeys had huge balconies and

a couple of guards were stationed over there. A few had spears and others had bow and arrow with them. Each one of them was extremely alert and in a ready to kill position. Arjun observed each of them keenly. His pace reduced as he was engrossed in observing the formation of the guards.

Deva slowed down a bit and walked beside Arjun

“Hey! Is everything alright?” Deva asked as he knew that Arjun is not the kind of guy who would waste his time on something that didn’t matter.

“This formation and the way these men are stationed seems very familiar to me. Something I would do if I had to set the security for something so big. The strength of an army is not in the number, but in their positioning. This seems like the work of a specialist,” Arjun replied while he was observing the tight security.

“Yes, the security is way too tight, but this is expected. It’s the King’s Palace and today is their big day. Not like we know a lot about this place, but that’s all I understand,” Deva said as they walked towards the royal court.

They finally reached the royal court; it was vast and magnificent. All the hundred brothers were present, and rest of all the other members were sitting in the court. There was a magnificent throne at another end of the court. The court was divided into two parts with a huge space that looked like an open ground. The common people gathered on both sides. A huge stairway was connected to both sides of the royal court. Behind the Throne, there were hundred and one Brahmins doing

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yagya for the success of their future King. On the outside of the court, ox and goats were sacrificed for the wellbeing of the kingdom. On the floor above, there were many guards present who had a complete watch over everyone.

Kison, along with the five, entered the courtroom.

“So, you guys can stand there,” Kison pointed towards a place which had an empty chair and walked towards the crowd. That place had seating for the members of the royal court and a barricade divided it from the standing area of the common men.

All of them were clueless about why he specifically asked them to stand there. They all made their way towards the place where Kison had shown them.

“Don’t lose yourself in the crowd Nakul!” he said to himself.

They all walked towards the chair and found Kison sitting on the chair.

Everyone was confused to see Kison sitting on the chair meant for the members of the royal court.

Deva left a sigh and said to himself, “I am sure this is going to get even weirder as time passes.”

Bheem looked at him and said, “Well, I am prepared.”

Suddenly loud trumpets blew and all the musicians started playing louder. The trumpets, the Dhol and the Nagadas echoed in the royal court.

Everyone looked at the grand stairway where they saw The Blind King, the blindfolded Queen and Diyohan walk down towards the Throne. Following him were his four brothers and then the remaining 95 clones joined them.

Diyohan walked between the King and Queen. They reached the middle of the royal court and were welcomed with great applause. The Queen wore a heavy embroidered dress that caught the eye of every lady present there and the King was in his royal suit that had diamonds studded on it. Diyohan too wore the same royal outfit and had a sword on his waist. They walked till the Throne and the Queen sat on the royal chair that was stationed right next to it. The King sat on the Throne and Diyohan was standing next to him. He was all excited for his big day and his happiness knew no bounds. The King was sure about the fact that he will be the next emperor and nobody out there had the courage to fight Diyohan and win against him.

The King raised his right hand in the air and the entire hall fell silent. Everyone was excited for their new King. Sage Vyaan joined them and stood next to Diyohan. He came forward and announced with a voice that was loud and filled with pride, "Today is the day when Yugprasth gets its new King. After five decades of leadership under King Duta, his eldest Son Diyohan will take over the throne and rule the kingdom. He will bring success and prosperity to all of us."

The applause was even louder this time.

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The King got up and said, “My people! I have served you each and every day for the last fifty years, gave my blood and sweat for this kingdom. In spite of me being blind, we have managed to build a great kingdom. My blindness has not come in the way of my leadership, but I am sure we could do with more vision for the future. Today my eldest Son, who is the master of all, takes the throne and becomes the King. May I present to you the future of Yugprasth,” he then removed the crown off his head and handed it over to Sage Vyaan to coronate Diyohan.

Diyohan sat on the throne, he was visibly delighted.

Before sage Vyaan could coronate him, he looked at the crowd and announced.

“If anyone thinks he/she can be a better leader than Diyohan, they can step forward now. Now is the time to speak up.”

Everyone was quiet; no one uttered a word.

Diyohan looked at Vyaan and said, “Sage Vyaan, no one is going to come forward to challenge me. Let’s do this already.”

He then walked towards Diyohan to coronate him.

“I OBJECT!” A voice echoed in the entire Royal Palace.

It was Kison.

The King was taken aback when he heard Kison’s voice.

“Kison! What is wrong? Are you planning to challenge Prince Diyohan?” The King asked instantly.

Deva looked at Arjun and Yudhraj, "Here we go; I knew that Kison was up to something."

Kison got up from his chair and stood in front of the throne. Everyone started whispering amongst themselves. Diyohan was really angry by now, he waited for this day for years and now when he was inches away from achieving it, Kison was going to spoil it.

Sage Vyaan was shocked to see this; he walked a few steps towards Kison. Diyohan saw the crown going a little far from him; he got up from his throne and looked at Kison with rage, his eyes turned red.

Sage Vyaan held the crown in his hand and approached Kison, "what are you doing Kison"? You cannot challenge him. With the powers you have, no man can stand against you, you therefore cannot challenge the throne."

Kison smiled and said, "Right, I cannot..."

And he pointed towards the five men!

"I challenge you on behalf of them, they will fight you, and one of them will be the Ruler of this kingdom," Kison said, and there was utter silence in the royal court.