



THE LAST SILVER

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The story is a historic cum science fiction. This story is not intended to hurt anyone or their feelings. It is not based on any true incident, facts or record. Hope all will enjoy the story as it is; also not meant to be personal or influence the thinking and perception.

PREFACE

Its a simple story from a fictional city ,around fifteen century. Historical and science fiction lovers will surely be connected with the story. It has all elements of twists,suspenses and will take you into the world of it.It will definetly entertain you with different characters.You can feel excited to read the story.

Enjoy reading.

PROLOGUE

With little moonlight merging with darkness engulfed,a women entered sneakingly into the cave.“So what place I’m in?A cave,so dark”,Dwambika said to herself gasping her breathes.She leaned by the side of a rock and slept there ,the whole night.Next day she found some tribal people by her side,waking her up.They were humble and one among them spoke,”Are you feeling good?Here have some water.”

Dwambika was surprised to see that the cave had some metal hanging here and there.She pointed to it and asked them,”Do you know what they are?

They said,”Yes,it always hang here and there.We use this cave for protecting ourselves from any danger .We always pray here, this serves as a magical resource.”

She said,”But,its a ...”.Another woman said,”You could come with us,you are not safe to be here for long time.There are some poisonous insects out here”.

Dwambika was then taken to the nearby cottage by them. She spend some days helping them in their chores.She started narrating her past to them.Meanwhile she explored the entire landscape and travelled to nearby cities.

All the way she met small family tribes living in groups,here and there.When she reached the borders,she found that borders of that place were perfect in protecting the city from invasions.The nature seemed quiet with forest wealth and mountains.

That adventure of travelling across the forest,made her

more confident that she could spend her rest of the life there. She came to know about other cities from there.

Dwambika discovered that this metal was very rare among all the nearby cities that only here they had it. She, with the help of locals, studied about the metal. They gathered details from all the nearby cities and found that this was silver.

Within few months she brought some scientists and labours from the nearby city to extract the metal. They also made useful articles and incorporated this into their daily life activities. She started trading this with all the cities.

There were many long distance neighbours who bought their metal. In return she got more valuable goods, gold and diamonds. She proposed to the locals about the idea of building a city with this wealth.

At first they feared but, later accepted it and made her as the queen of the city. They decided to name the city relating to silver. Dwambika suggested that, the sound when two silver swords striking against one another was similar to the word Rithvabhor, so they named so.

Once the city was named, though it was under half construction, many neighbouring cities were invited. There was a grand ceremony and people celebrated.

The entire city was spanned between the mountains, forest and rivers in the north. The neighbouring cities in the north were Hithar, Genijhal and Dheegadra. Another city was also under development, that was Kiyash. To the south they had plains low lying areas. The neighbouring cities to the south, were consisting of small villages.

Year passed with Rithvabhor consistently being the most economically developed city among others. It was more civilised with central halls, bazaars. Moreover their wealth which was silver was extracted from the cave and they had separate sites for purification. There was a secret Cage called, Cage for protection, which they used to protect the silver.

Many years later, Unable to withstand the growth of Rithvabhor, The king of Dheegadra, immediately arranged a meeting with the scientists Biajig and Biajigi. They were the renowned scientists and experts in executing the plan. The twins, were also great warriors.

Biajig was charismatic, aggressive and wise. While Biajig was equally brainy and had acumen. The two were assigned with a mission to dwindle the Rithvabhor's wealth. They were asked not to reveal their identity.

As part of their mission, they went to Kiyash. There the king Saroop Bhagog agreed with them and made partnership with them. They stayed there for a while and started researching about the silver from the Rithvabhor. They were shocked to know some secrets about the silver they researched.

CHAPTER - 1

Rithvabhor, a name sounded heavily among the other kingdoms for nearly a century, was blessed with silver to the astonishment of the people. They called themselves as Soldiers of Silver (clan name). They protected their wealth and safeguarded it. Though they protected their wealth, they also traded a small proportion of their excess wealth in exchange for gold and diamonds. But their king, Tauroor Mare (a tall figure with a puffed face, his attire bright, always with dazzling jewels), was not happy with the people's view of protecting the wealth in a cage and rather thought to make it as a currency for other kingdoms. He wanted the people to accept his idea and also sell it to other kingdoms in order to increase their business deals. He also had a great desire in accumulating more wealth for him.

Rithvabhor's people were asked for their opinions at the next day's public meeting with the king. So all decided to form a meeting among themselves to discuss the issue and give their decision once and for all on the next day. Deeptini (mother of Nivriniya and a great leader who had worked hard to rise to her position as the clan head) started the debate among the gathering that night. All looked confused whether to further safeguard their wealth or to make it beneficial for their growth. Everybody voiced their opinion and it was the clan head's turn to give her final say on the issue.

Deeptini, after hearing the heated debate, said, “I am of the view that we should be thankful to the God that he has blessed us with the treasure in our soil. We have used this wealth for our utensils, ornaments, medicine, military equipment; yet, this wealth didn’t drain up. So we could very well use it for our currency and also to sell to other kingdoms. We have no point in guarding it without being benefitted by it.”

Dhaneer, the (staunch scientist whose job was to research the science behind all the natural phenomena; he was middle-aged, stout with fiercely dense curly hair but his looks met the requirement of a science freak), scientist further argued that this was their forefather’s blessing who had protected it for generations, so why should they not give the same blessing to their upcoming generation. Some people agreed with him, which seemed to display conservation and an aspect of futurist ideas.

Rivambishu, a complete erudite, the epitome of a disciplined teacher, was in his late seventies, unmarried and had sacrificed his life for worldly wisdom. The scholar said, “Indeed it was our blessing, but to keep it with ourselves might pose a danger of theft. So let us keep a portion of it for our future and the rest could be used as the king says.”

Deeptini agreed with the scholar’s decision and concluded that the remaining silver would be used as currency for their benefit and also for other kingdoms.

The gathering dispersed silently with a hope of development for their city and Deeptini conveyed their decision to the king. Tauroor Mare became happy with the decision and envisioned a plan to invite kings and queens to the kingdom.

CHAPTER - 2

A month later, people celebrated their age-old Dwambika festival. Dwambika was the one who had founded Rithvabhor and made a settlement and established a kingdom to civilise it as a city. This festival was celebrated for three days. On the first day, all the people gathered for Dwambika ritual. They worshiped in front of the rock where Dwambika had breathed her last and was laid to rest in peace. People garlanded the rock, the flowers scented with different aromas, different colours, lighted lamps, which scintillated the entire area.

They sang songs, praising Dwambika for uniting the small tribes around, establishing and ruling the kingdom. They made special food with milk and fruits to offer as a feast. They made a huge silvery necklace weighing like a rock but meticulously designed to decorate another rock; they used it as a symbol to signify her as the forerunner. Rithvabhor's people's belief was that she would always safeguard the city.

Meanwhile, kings and queens of neighbouring kingdoms were also invited for the festival. All started to discuss how they were going to procure the silver currency. They came to a conclusion that they would compete with each other in order to determine who should get how much share of the currency. They occupied their own private meditation cabins

to find out who among them could meditate for a long time and would be conferred them with the highest share of silver.

Tauroor Mare supervised their meditation. On the other hand; people continued their second day of the festival. On the second day, they performed dances, plays depicting their way of living, how Dwambika founded the city and under what circumstances they had made such establishments. Their clan dance was called the silver dance and the songs narrating their clan's history of settlement.

For their third and final day of celebration, they hosted competitions like running, climbing mountains, swimming, cooking, etc. The very first competition was fencing and Deeptini participated, regardless of her age. She fought bravely and holding on to her saber, she brilliantly gave a tough fight to her opponent. Her fierce blows were hard and defeated all the opponents with two to three defensive shots. So she won easily against all, irrespective of their age and skills.

She was preparing herself for the scaling up the mountain as part of competitive events. She looked tough and rigid in her appearance. People cheered for her not because of her position in the city but due to her copious talent and spirit for her age. On her way to the competition, she found that Tauroor Mare had compromised with some of the kings and queens and agreed to give them a bigger share of silver currency before they completed the meditation.

When King Saroop Bhagog completed the meditation after a very long time, he was told that he was the winner so he would get a bigger share of currency coins. So he signed the agreement that he would be receiving a greater share, but the truth was that it was less than the others. When the king was discussing with the officials about these, Deeptini heard everything. Deeptini, who was loyal to the king, was

disappointed by the king's behaviour. She further got to know that she would get a diamond crown in return.

King Saroop Bhagog somehow got to know the king's foul play and regretted breaking friendly relations with him for the sake of a diamond crown. He planned to take revenge on the king by proclaiming war on the kingdom. Deeptini, after hearing the war news, went to discuss with the king but found that the king was in ill health and breathing his last.

Deeptini was very confused as there was no one to lead their kingdom (Tauroor Mare was childless and his wife had died years back). The entire city was filled with sorrow at the demise of the king and were helpless on tackling the war situation. King Saroop's army was huge in numbers; Rithvabhor army was no match for them and Saroop's army was furiously marching towards the leaderless army. Then suddenly arrived the audacious twins, Biajig and Biajigi, separately on their armed war horses. They stood by the kingdom and said they were ready to fight for them in return for their demand. Deeptini represented the people's wish to fight back for their kingdom as they didn't want to lose their kingdom.

The war fought between Saroop Bhagog and the twins was an hour long and came to an end with a smart move. Biajig fought with Saroop, while Biajigi managed to capture his horse. He seemed to lose his confidence and fought with a single sword. Biajigi gave a heavy blow by tricking him with her sword positioning. She kept a right position and switched it to her left hand to give a blow on his head. He got injured and surrendered. The war came to an end as the king was not in a position to continue fighting.

Deeptini was very much thankful to the twins. At the same time, she was anticipating that they would demand something big in return for fighting the war. Biajig looked aggressive,

autocratic and charismatic while Biajigi was opposite to her brother, with acumen and clever. Deeptini called her daughter Nivriniya to summon the people. Amidst their meeting entered Biajig followed by Biajigi and said, "The people of Rithvabhor are fortunate that I and my sister fought for your kingdom. This is indeed a selfless act but in return, we need some special powers to give orders for you to obey. The first being—"

Dhaneer interrupted, "You are our saviour and we will always remember you for your timely brave act. This does not mean that we would be your slaves obeying your orders."

Rivambishu said, "Yes, we are not your slaves. Though we have no one to rule us, we have our clan's head who would give you a befitting reply."

Thus spoke Deeptini, "We accept your courageous act for fighting for our kingdom, we won't forget what you have done for us. If you expect something in return, we may give you the kingdom to rule as our king for safeguarding our city. Lead us in a better way than Tauroor Mare so we become well developed and more civilised."

Biajig was pleased with their decision. Biajigi said in a whisper, "Biajig, be aware of our plan and be shrewd as to what you are going to reply."

Biajig nodded to her secretly and said to the people, "As you wish. I am very eager to rule your city."

People said that he should be an able ruler so that he would continue as their king; otherwise, he would be renounced of his kingship by their clan head.

CHAPTER - 3

Days passed with Biajig as their king and Biajigi as their chief defence soldier. To keep up their image, they brought about many changes for the growth of the city. The city celebrated Farmer's Enchantment Week. In that week, people honoured the farmers for their healthy produce of vegetables, fruits, pulses, cereals, etc. People served food to the families of the farmers.

People worshiped Dwambika and the sun with their produce of the land. King Biajig, whose first celebration in the city after being throned as king, enjoyed the celebration. As a move to impress the farmers, he announced subsidised materials required for agriculture. He and Biajigi together announced a new order to the people that farmers of the land would fix the value for their produce and the traders and vendors could only increase the value but would not be able to reduce below the value fixed by the farmers.

Then, tax for the land should be collected according to the seasons and climatic conditions during the produce. If the produce was less owing to climate and calamities, the tax should be less according to the produce. If the produce was more, then landlords could collect proportionate tax with compensation for less tax collected due to poor produce.

Farmers were granted special time to meet the king for

complaints about their difficulties and beneficial measures needed for them. These orders brought a rapid change in people's view about the king and Biajigi. The twins didn't stop the revolutionary measures in agriculture alone but also in other spheres of the people's day-to-day life.

For the art and craft community, a new order was propagated that their ideas and creations would be displayed in front of the king and the best would be given rewards and would be supported in selling their work to the people. There was a change in the entire city with daring measures taken by Biajig and Biajigi.

People always gathered to speak about the king's measures and the training given to the soldiers by the head soldier. Most of the people benefitted by the king's orders. They faced a steep increase in their trade and their commodities became more and more in demand in other kingdoms.

To further increase their trade business, the king ordered the release of more pamphlets to other kingdoms regarding their city's produce and commodities. The pamphlets reached many kingdoms including the Genijhal kingdom. In that kingdom, their queen Ishiya Dyaanhi came to know about the wealth and development of Rithvabhor through the pamphlet. She decided to stay in Rithvabhor and learn about their way of living. She was very curious to know the reason behind their growth.

Meanwhile, in Rithvabhor, Deeptini met the king and spoke about her decision. She said, "I am much pleased about our kingdom and its day-to-day growth. As we came to a conclusion that we would sell our wealth as currency to other kingdoms, you as our present king should make us able to sell our wealth by giving your moral support. We would be very much happy if you would lead us in selling our wealth and also protecting the rest in an effective way."

Biajig replied,“Yes, indeed, I am also happy to see our growth and I would definitely lead in selling silver currency to other kingdoms with the best deal.”

Deeptini was very much happy with the king’s reply and she shared the same with her daughter Nivriniya. She asked her to be with the king in discussing the trade-related issues.Nivriniya was a charming girl, well learnt, the city’s lovable face for her brilliant loquacity and always stood for righteousness even at her young age.She was an official in the courtroom and sceptic about the twins from day one—their entrance into the kingdom.She promised her mother that she would safeguard their wealth and be handy in the king’s trading issues.

However, Nivriniya didn’t reveal her view regarding them to anyone, even not to her mother.The sun took a break from its routine and there was a cloudy atmosphere prevailing. The rain-bearing clouds deigned to rain atlast.

Biajig,holding a well-decorated umbrella, moved alongside the palace pathway to meet his sister fora secret meeting and said,“Oh great, my sister, your plan has somehow made the people believe that we are actually ruling them in a better way as they think.”

Biajigi laughed and said,“Don’t become over smart, there is still an impending danger awaiting us.”

“What happened, my sister?”said Biajig in a shocked tone.Biajigi revealed the plan of Ishiya Dyaanhi who was eager in coming to Rithvabhor. Biajig said,“Together we plan,we execute and win it in our way.”

CHAPTER - 4

*J*shiya Dyaanhi, the queen of Genijhal, made all the required preparations for her stay in Rithvabhor. She decided to stay there for a month or two. She left her kingdom in a horse-cart with her baggage of clothes, gold ornaments, diamond jewels and some eatables for her journey. It took two days to reach the Rithvabhor kingdom. The border of Rithvabhor was populated with dense forests and rivers flowing from their guardian hills to the eastern plains down. It was settled with nature having hills, rivers and forests lying all along the border of it, which shielded it from the kingdoms in the north and northeast.

On her way, she encountered many challenges owing to climate conditions. When she neared the city, everything was totally different. She felt a chilled climate and humid weather. She saw a beautiful scenery of bluish mountains surrounded by serene trees with overhanging gardens here and there. She reached Rithvabhor early in the morning when the sun and moon played hide and seek between the mountains. There was a light delightful drizzle. She pulled her curtains down in her small make-shift cabin in the horse-cart for a glimpse of the city. She witnessed a group of people toiling hard in the paddy, wheat and barley fields.

The people were singing:

The crops we cultivate made us smile at them happily,

They said, “We love to sing in the wind by dancing and waving through them,

We love to live in your pleasant and enriched soil,

We love to absorb your pure and selfless water,

We love to see the sunrise and set, we always become happy at their sight.”

They told us, “We love to be seen as green and brown as we give air to breathe.”

The crops we harvest made us smile at them happily,

They told us, “We love to be eaten by you as you gave us life.

We love to be reborn, as same as we were, we love to live the life as you give once again.

We remembered our life through your song,”they said happily.

She also saw some people at the rear side of the fields domesticating animals, fishing and some washing clothes. There was a separate pond of water for bathing that had a board at the entrance to it, which read, ‘City bath tank’. There, people were taking baths and children were enjoying swimming and catching fish joyfully. The city looked busy but also disciplined and peaceful. People looked gracious by their appearance and pleasant in the way they conducted themselves. They seemed to have a humble attitude with some hustling in their bargain with vendors. They were dressed in a simple and elegant manner. Both men and women were moving towards their destination for their day’s work. She saw an appealing welcome even for unannounced guests through the city’s clean and eminent signboards for

directions.

She was delighted by the sight of the city and she wanted to start a conversation with the people. Among the locals, she met Taaruradhi who was at a flower shop. She first introduced herself to Taaruradhi, who humbly replied, "I hope that you are the one our king is waiting to receive at the palace. Let us first move towards the fort. I will take you to our palace."

Ishiya Dyaanhi replied, "Thank you, my little sister. I will always remember you for your kind gesture."

Both headed towards the fort and then to the palace. King Biajig happily invited Ishiya Dyaanhi and thanked Taaruradhi for accompanying Ishiya to the palace. Biajig interrupted, "My respect to you, my queen, Ishiya Dyaanhi, I have heard lots and lots about your bravery and courageous deeds. Your stay in Rithvabhor is indeed a prestigious occasion for us. We are happy by your presence."

Ishiya said gratefully, "Oh my bonded sister, I am pleased with your welcome, I would happily stay here and also learn more from your kingdom."

Biajig thoughtfully said, "I think you must have had a tiring journey. I will order my officials to take you to your room."

Ishiya moved to her stay room. Biajig and Biajigi both nodded their head calmly, hoping that everything will go by their plan. Taaruradhi left the palace and went to her shop. On the way, she met Nivriniya and held a small conversation with her about leaving Ishiya to the palace. Nivriniya enquired about Ishiya Dyaanhi and her character. Taaruradhi spoke good about her and continued with her about their day-to-day talks. Nivriniya conversed with her; however, her mind was hooked about Ishiya's intentions. She thought to make a friendly move towards her to know about her whether she was nefarious to the kingdom.

Next day, she made a timely conversation with Ishiya Dyaanhi when she was about to leave the palace to tour the city. Nivriniya introduced herself, “My respect to you, queen, I’m a friend of Taaruradhi and a court official in the palace.”

Ishiya acknowledged her and said, “My dear friend, I have heard about you and your mother, the head of the clan, Deeptini. You both are more than saviours of this city. I am thankful for your welcome. I wish during my stay in Rithvabhor, I learn more from you too.” By her friendly approach and innocent behaviour, Nivriniya judged her intention would somehow be non-affective to the kingdom. Both decided to visit the city and Nivriniya offered to help her in explaining about the city. They were later joined by Taaruradhi on their way.

Ishiya was a curious learner and asked her probing questions. She asked about the people’s nomenclature. Both Nivriniya and Taaruradhi answered her questions with their knowledge regarding the city. The three stopped near an eatery shop for some snacks. They enjoyed their plate of tri colored vegetable salad with some hot potato fries and juicy watermelons. Then they headed towards the city’s most important place, the Dwambika Temple at the heart of the city from where it spread its length and breadth.

The temple was big and laid with rocky stones. At the front stood pillars carved with wild animals and some steps leading to the centre stage. There was a huge rock in the place where Dwambika was believed to have breathed her last. The rock had fresh flowers and garlands. There was a bronze lamp lighted and musical instruments were by its side.

Nivriniya started by saying, “You could worship our goddess who founded this city. It is said that she fought many warriors from her treacherous kingdom and finally reached

here. When she came here, she found a peculiar and naturally occurring metal from the cave, a little far south from here. With her knowledge and other kingdom trading, she came to know that it was silver.”

Ishiya was about to ask her more about the metal, when Rivambishu entered the temple. He joined their conversation by first welcoming the queen. Taaruradhi introduced him as the city’s scholar. Then Rivambishu explained their ritual customs and beliefs. He said, “Our city founded by Dwambika was named Rithvabhor as it was related to the sound made by two silver swords fought or beaten against it. In our city, the people’s names are mostly according to the preaching of our great mother goddess Dwambika.”

On hearing about her, Ishiya developed a great respect for the goddess and she offered her prayers. Nivriniya showed Ishiya their first transformation of silver from the soil, which was maintained as their age-old traditional custom. Ishiya was shocked to see that it was a curved deep vessel for collecting rainwater.

They explained their stages of development in using the metal based on their civilised mindset. First, they had used it as a vessel for collecting rainwater, then as cooking utensils, then as armour and swords for their protection, then in medicine and finally as ornaments.

Taaruradhi said, “Now we are in the stage of producing currency and also selling it to other kingdoms so they could also make currency according to their economy. Our present currency is still bronze, copper and gold as different scales of valuing our goods. Our food-related commodities would be numbered with copper and bronze; for household goods, we use gold, and for trading, we use silver to other kingdoms. In return of our silver trading, we get gold, bronze and diamonds. We follow a circle of supply in our economy to maintain

balance in our wealth, which is silver.”

Ishiya grasped their circle of supply and noted it in her pamphlet. She took notes of the carvings, sculptures, paintings and inscriptions in the temple. Then they headed towards the city's 'Cave of Silver', nearer to the border of Rithvabhor, north of the city.

Rivambishu stayed back in the temple to offer his prayers. The other three took a bullock cart to the Cave of Silver. Nivriniya told her, “Our scholar Rivambishu and our predecessor king, Tauroor Mare, were of the idea to scale measurements to make it as currency and also to sell it to other friendly kingdoms, to follow the currency scales to make our trade easier. We planned to sell our currency to ten nearby kingdoms.”

Ishiya, on hearing about scales of measurement, asked her how they measured their currency.

Nivriniya replied, “We planned to produce our currency with Dwambika's portrait and below it, the value of that currency inscribed on it. Rivambishu decided that the scale of measurement would be on the count of ten, to signify the members of friendly kingdoms. So our commodities would be priced in the range of ten, twenty, thirty, etc.”

Ishiya got to know about the shape of the currency, amount of silver used for it and their methodology to produce silver. Taaruradhi and Nivriniya patiently answered her doubts. Their time passed with the play of questions and answers. (Time was measured using a sun clock that used the position of the sun to count time and a sand clock to measure time passing for the position of the sun, mostly used to compare and compensate time.)

It was time for their lunch. They stopped in Nivriniya's cottage. Deeptini welcomed the queen with florets and

garlands. She was grateful for her visit to their cottage. Ishiya Dyaanhi thanked Deeptini for her kindness and for her food. She ate a cupful of rice with lentils and pulses soup, vegetable salads, some fries and sweetened milk porridge. The three were delighted with their food and took some rest in the cottage till evening.

In the evening, in the same bullock cart, they reached the Cave of Silver. They were also joined by Dhaneer. After their friendly conversation, they entered the Cave with stickfire. They followed each other as it was a narrow trail with encroachments of thorny bushes all along. On the way, they had to walk through that narrowed path with both sides filled with many tiny insects and small wild animals hanging and crawling through the bushes. Though their path was a little challenging, their eyes sparkled with the sight of silver hanging here and there along with soil. They considered it as an initial form of silver, hence called as Lithya Billam. Dhaneer explained their methodology of how they separate silver and transform it into different forms. Due to moonlight darkening their journey, they left the Cave and made their way back to the palace.

CHAPTER - 5

The next day, the trio planned for a trip to the hills on the outskirts of the city. They developed respect for each other and had a strange friendship that blossomed in a single day. They spent time by speaking about each other. Ishiya asked about the story of Dwambika. Nivriniya started to tell the story.

“Dwambika was the princess of Dheegadra kingdom. I think you might have heard about her, your fore families might have heard them as they are near to your kingdom in the far east direction of your holy lake.”

Ishiya interrupted, “In my childhood, I have heard about many kingdoms but not about Dheegadra kingdom.”

Taaruradhi said, “Ishiya, that’s because they had immense treasures and wealth in their kingdom and they didn’t want other kingdoms’ helping hand or trade or friendship. They were more than happy because of their wealth and natural resources with fruits, vegetables, trees and ever filled lakes and rivers.”

Nivriniya added, “You might be surprised to hear that Dwambika was the only daughter in their village at the time when King Prishu was ruling. So she was called Daughter of Goddess. Everything changed after her birth, more girl children were born. They started to trade with other

kingdoms,they started conquests.Dwambika learnt the skill of horse-riding,fencing,sword fighting and climbing mountains.She was trained to become their queen.But her fate changed after her marriage.”

Ishiya curiously asked,“Why did she end up here in this city when she was nurtured as a queen for her kingdom?Was it because of willingness of conquest?”

Nivriniya said,“I could only say that it was her fate that her kingdom turned against her and started to hunt for her when she ran away far from there.”

Taaruradhi, knowing their oath to the kingdom not to share with anyone other than their kingdom subjects regarding Dwambika’s reason for her kingdom having vengeance for her, took their conversation to their travel to the Cave of Silver.She took them down the memory lane to their courageous fight with tiny insects and small animals they could otherwise have stepped on them.She distracted them with how they had passed time by tackling those insects and animals.They started laughing hilariously and snacked on some pishads(a potato snack that they burnt, salted,added some sweetening and sourness to produce a blend of all).

Ishiya said,“I am enjoying my stay here, your care for my stay makes me more comfortable.I think I am going to have a long period of restful stay and by that, I may even forget my responsibilities in my kingdom.”

Taaruradhi cracked a joke by saying,“Queen, you are going to forget your subjects and start to rule our subjects,from my point of view, both of them are calling you queen.”

Ishiya had a long laugh and replied,“I wish this should not happen.”She became quite serious and said,“I will have a meeting with my officials to get to know about my kingdom’s manifestations.”

Nivriniya tuned a song for them to come back to their joyful outing time. They spent some time after their various talks and at last they started to leave the place.

Ishiya held a meeting with her court officials in her stay room and she was busy in hearing about the happenings in her kingdom and deciding about her court matters. Biajig, who was always having a bird's eye-view on Ishiya's stay and travel, thought to consult with his sister in order to make a decision on her. Biajig met Biajigi and said, "You are here feeding the birds. I thought there would be a growing concern for Ishiya Dyaanhi. You seem to be without worries for our plan."

"Brother Biajig," Biajigi said in a consoling tone, "don't panic for the future; let Ishiya stay as long as she wishes."

Biajig looked confused and said, "How are we going to execute our plan when she is here; she will start to support the people and she may even protect them."

Biajigi stopped feeding the birds and started to draw a plan for the days Ishiya was going to stay in the kingdom. Biajig looked up, not to get blessings for their plan, but said, "The rays are too scorching in this garden. I am unable to grasp your plan; I might now need even a gallon of water."

"Brother Biajig, let us hold our plan for sometime till the stay of Ishiya; you take care of meeting with King Saroop Bhagot," said Biajigi, looking all around to ensure no one was nearby them. Her eyes rolled like a spinning ball and looked at Biajig for his reply.

Biajig took his crown down from the head, still reeling from the effect of the sun, nodded his head with half knowledge on what to do next.

Nivriniya entered a moment later after the twins' exit

from the birds' feeding arena in the garden. However, she was unable to understand that both had had some secret conversation; she assumed that they were talking about their family as she saw Biajig with his crown on his right arm and then once again on his head. She knew that kings would take down their crown when talking about their family issues and daily talk with their family members. Nivriniya thinking these thoughts, entered directly into Ishiya Dyaanhi's room unknowingly. Ishiya welcomed her with a friendly heart but Nivriniya realised her mistake.

Nivriniya apologised for her absent-mindedness, but Ishiya said, "Now we are more than friends and in fact, I don't even have a friend who is as close as you and Taaruradhi are; have a look at this portrait with the three of us in it."

Nivriniya took a look at their portrait and she confirmed her thought that Ishiya was perfectly not the one whom she had mistaken for wrong intentions for her stay. She appreciated her painting and suggested having lunch with her. Ishiya accepted her offer and then the two moved to Nivriniya's cottage, with Taaruradhi joining them on the way.

Deeptini started with her busy schedule for producing their first silver currency. She met all the officials and working communities to envision a detailed plan for bringing out the best ever currency. She allocated duties to the officials, though it was a job assigned to the Wealth Planner and Chief Silver Sculptor. They left it to her to start with the work to respect her position. She also marked the D-day for the public meeting to give a final call for the silver currency production.

She was cautious enough in retaining more than half of their produce of silver in the Cage of Protection (which was a secret known only to her, Rivambishu, Dhaneer Biray (Rithvabhor's eldest person) and Veerarkil Mare (Tauroor Mare's uncle). She decided to meet the king with the pamphlets she had

prepared regarding all the details of the work. The D-day arrived and people crowded at the palace to hear out the declarations by the king. In spite of knowing that Nivriniya was busy with Ishiya's official trip to the bazaar central of the city, she wanted her to be present in currency discussions as she thought she might have forgotten about the public meeting with the king. She met a boy from Rivambishu's hermitage. He was not more than thirteen, neatly shaved head with a little hair at the centre pulled back for a tiny ponytail. She went near him and said, "Could you do me a favour, my little charm?"

"Yes indeed, head mother, myself Brinari, would be blessed to help you. What should I do, order, my head mother?"

Deeptini asked him to call Nivriniya to the palace and said that she needed her immediate presence in the palace. Brinari, one of the disciples of Rivambishu, immediately headed towards Nivriniya, knowing her visit to the bazaar central. Brinari was a very disciplined, charming and brilliant little boy. He was a known face for most of the people of the city as he delivered milk at each house and was also a studious disciple of Rivambishu.

Nivriniya, in the busy bazaar central located to the west of the palace, was standing along with Ishiya. She seemed to remember something her mother had said at the morning; at the same time, she was explaining, "I might give you an enlarging mirror to see Lithya Billam for a closer look."

Both were jointed in a serious conversation regarding the silver. She was suddenly pulled by her sleeve; she saw little Brinari standing behind her, who informed her about what the head mother had said to him. Nivriniya gave a knock to her forehead and said expressively, "This was the one my memory searched and scratched for, thank you, Brinari, for your timely intermission."

Ishiya requested her to go and said that she would be able to get back to the palace with the help of the people of the city after a short span of time. Nivriya hopefully left Ishiya there and reached the palace with her pet horse she had left at the shop. At the palace, the courtroom was filled with all the officials. The panel included city economy protector, chief silver sculptor, wealth planner, the official for recording courtroom discussions, friendship of kingdom bridging translator cum well-wisher and kings and queens of friendly kingdoms.

The king arrived with bells ringing all around, people singing Biajig, the king, Biajig, the king. He was well aware that this was an important event for him to decide all issues relating to silver currency production. He waved his hands to the people all around the courtroom and silently sat on the kingdom's maiden chair. Biajig started to speak, "My people, my court's noble persons, friendly kings and queens, my welcome to you all. This gathering for deciding silver currency is an important decision for our greater growth and is a historical occasion." He took a special pause in his oration.

His memories flashed at him and he remembered his and Biajig's decision of spending three by fourth of the silver wealth without retaining much in that year's production of silver. He continued his oration by giving a false cough to adjust his time gap. He said, "My people, I am happy to announce that we are going to spend our wealth in making silver currency. I hereby give the proclamation of giving consent to produce silver currencies officially. Also, I order to give all the people free tensilver currency of value ten."

People cheerfully appreciated the king's oration. At last, he said, "I would also add that at least three by fourth of the

wealth (Silver remaining after using in utensils, armours, swords, vessels and medicines was considered as wealth.) will be spent in making currencies.”

Deeptini, who was present there, was shocked after he announced that three by fourth quantity would be used. But she remembered what Rivambishu had said at first in their debate that the more they retained it, that would pose a threat for them. She was convinced by the king’s decision but she turned her head towards Rivambishu who sat next to her. He too understood her look and said, “King told me that this measure would protect us and also help in developing our city’s trade.”

Deeptini took a deep breath and nodded her head. Ishiya came in between the discussion and she was late. However, Nivriniya helped her out with the missed part of the oration. The discussion got over and people continued with their work. Biajig thanked god that the day had gone according to his wish. In the city, all sculptors and silversmiths took the king’s orders for starting their production for silver currency. The entire city was in a delightful mood and enjoyed the fact that they were going to receive ten silver currencies.

CHAPTER - 6

Ishiya's mind was quite frequently hooked with Dwambika's fate in ending up finding this city. She decided to ask that little boy who had spoken to Nivriniya before. She searched for him, knowing that he was a disciple of Rivambishu. In the milieu near Rivambishu's hermitage, he was fetching water for rituals to the gods present around the garden. She interrupted him, "I think you know me; I'm a friend of Nivriniya's."

He kept his earthen pot down on the ground and said, "Yes, of course, your majesty, you are queen of Genijhal kingdom. Our scholar has taught about your kingdom and how valuable you are to your kingdom."

Ishiya, pleased with his words, said, "You have a great respect for elders and you are knowledgeable enough to grasp your learnings. Then you must have known about your city's finder, your goddess."

Hearing about the city's finder, he at once closed his eyes and said, "Yes, for sure, how could a child be born without knowing about our goddess? He opened his eyes immediately and said, "But I remember taking an oath that I would not spell a word to people of other kingdoms regarding the vengeance of her kingdom Dheegadra against her."

Ishiya further enquired of him,“Why an oath?Do you have any chance to break your oath?”

He replied smartly,“I don’t know how to break my oath,but I know certainly if anything should be kept a secret then I would take an oath so that I would not break it at any time.”

Ishiya accepted this, but the story of Dwambika was unfinished in her mind.She was used to hearing complete stories so she started to think how to solve the issue. Meanwhile, he chanted mantras,offered prayers for the gods and her mind collected the known facts related to Dwambika’s history.Of all the information,three words gave her ahint: Breathed her last.

Immediately,she left the hermitage without uttering a word to him.She entered the Dwambika temple, scampered slowly towards the rock and tried to move the rock,but it was futile. There was a silent observer throughout watching her keenly.Through the dim light, Veerarkil Mare showed his elderly figure to Ishiya.She noticed him and asked, “May I know who you are and I know your mind is laughing at my efforts.”

He introduced himself as King Tauroor Mare’s uncle and the city’s most respected person.He said,“You are searching for our secret that no one is revealing due to their oath.You forgot that there is a person to whom everyone took an oath. That person might not have taken the oath.”

She quickly asked if it was him.Veerarkil Mare leaned his trembling skinny body against the wall and gazed around to maintain privacy and then started to narrate the story.

“She was a skilled warrior.She could fight even thousands and still stand tall.She was an obedient student but raised questions for each and every custom and subjects she learnt. Everything changed when her child died before birth.This

was not known to her. But her family members considered it as a misfortune and were misinformed that she herself took poison to kill the baby.

“They tried to kill her .So She ran from there. Her family’s vengeance didn’t drain as they lived with the same information that had come from their kingdom’s advisor. I can hardly remember the name, but I am certain to have heard that he had a purplish stone emblem in his diamond ring. That was his lone identity, which was said to be gifted to him for his remarkable skills.

“Wise men played a tough role in parting the family and the kingdom declined. Dwambika didn’t utter even a word about the culprit behind all these vicious deeds and crooked behaviour.” His eyes filled with tears when he ended the story.

Ishiya felt the tears and her eyes too started overflowing with tears. But the stone emblem and her childhood story both started lingering in her mind and she began to think about it. She helped him to his cottage nearby. Then Ishiya recalled her childhood story in which it was said that her forefathers had committed a sin by infiltrating their officials in a kingdom in order to destroy their kingdom. This sin consumed their development and so, their kingdom also started to decline, generation by generation.

She was taught not to fight with the weakness of an enemy kingdom but to fight bravely in front of them. She knew she had conquered some small kingdoms with her courage and bravery and not by wicked and crooked plans. She connected the same recollected story with the peacock emblem ring, which she was also wearing. A sudden jerk made her realise how fate had decided her stay in Rithvabhor. She now knew that she owed a lot of apologies, which she could not convey at present but all that she could do was to ensure that Dheegadra kingdom would unravel the truth and rejoice in

the pride of Dwambika.

She packed her belongings for an immediate journey towards Genijhal kingdom and from there to Dheegadra kingdom. She met Nivriniya and Taaruradhi and bid them farewell hastily. She told them that she was needed in the kingdom and had to go there at once. She informed Biajig that she had some important issues to solve in her kingdom and her presence was quintessential to decide on some important measures.

Biajig understood her situation and made arrangements for her journey. Ishiya Dyaanhi took the same path where she had first seen in excitement the people and their style of living. She cherished all the happy moments in Rithvabhor, especially her time spent with Taaruradhi and Nivriniya.

Back at the palace, Biajig felt sceptical about Ishiya as he came to know that her last visited place was Dwambika temple. Biajigi came with sword swinging in the air as she had just completed her day-long training to the soldiers. "Biajigi, are we losing our tight hold on the kingdom?" he asked her.

She looked puzzled and said, "Are you thinking that I have fought a war and entering? It is just the training, some soldiers may not be up to our speed and skilled. But I am sure they will perform better every day with continued practice."

Biajig said worriedly, "I am not speaking about the performance of soldiers, I am speaking about Ishiya and her last visit to Dwambika temple. She left just now by saying that there is a need of her presence, which she hadn't felt these days during her stay, which was prolonged for a month."

Biajigi ignored his information regarding Ishiya and said, "How did your meeting go with Saroop Bhagog? At first, we fought a friendly war with him in order to make

people believe that we are there to protect them. But we are the ones who instigated to stage a war. Our friendship with King Bhagog is now needed the most.” She looked at him and waited for him to reply.

He said, “I thought you are ignoring the fact that Ishiya acknowledged the truth behind her kingdom, but you made me understand what I should do next.” He said loudly, “Together we plan, we execute and win it in our way.” He called his secret official and ordered him to arrange a meeting with King Saroop Bhagog.

“Biajigi, now we should be planning to wage a war for our good, we need to be anticipating anything from now on,” said Biajigi in a commanding tone.

Biajigi gave a villainy laugh and said, “You take responsibility to ask the favour of Saroop Bhagog to be with us at any time needed. You must be careful with him; don’t leak our entire plan, but make him understand that what we are returning to him is a huge treasure which he may not even have an idea about.”

Both gave a hand to hand cheer and each walked the opposite way. After which, the lighted lamp on the wall got swept off by the rushing air. That night brought a deep silence for all, including Nivriniya and Taaruradhi who missed their dearest friend.

CHAPTER - 7

Mountains were alight with sunlight and a little fog fought with the mountains and disappeared. Ishiya in her horse-cart felt sorrowful but also happy for her duty of protecting it if she could not rewrite the history. Now her fight was in protecting both her kingdom as well as Rithvabhor. She entered her kingdom and met her mother to reveal everything. Her mother encouraged her decision to persuade Dheegadra Kingdom to believe Dwambika and her deeds.

It took Ishiya nearly five days to reach Dheegadra kingdom. After reaching their palace, the people invited her without knowing that she had come in support of Dwambika. She moved through the palace where she saw portraits of kings and queens and in the corner, her eyes tried to glimpse something. There hung the portrait of the twins—Biajig and Biajigi—and below was written ‘Kingdom’s gifted scientists and great warriors’.

She thought she would spend some time in knowing about the twins whom she doubted for wrong intentions for ruling Rithvabhor. She was welcomed by the king and queen of Dheegadra. They offered her a tour of the palace as a token of honour. But she immediately revealed everything related to her purpose of visit. They didn’t believe her but she tried to convince them with her proof of portraits from her kingdom. The king was stubborn with his hatred of Rithvabhor.

She started to sing a song to depict Rithvabhor, with all her known facts of the city she had learnt during her parochial stay. She sang of the kindness and generosity of the people of Rithvabhor. Their pure heart and high knowledge that had been taught by Dwambika, and took her song to the exact verses she had learnt from Rivambishu. She then ended the song with, “The mother who was blamed as misfortune for a single child is the mother who has given an entire kingdom who are her descendants.

“The mother who was blamed for killing her own child is the mother who is revered for her ruling.” She took a deep breath and said to the king, “When she was not proved of taking poison, she proved herself by having a family, establishing a kingdom, amassing wealth of silver not just for her kingdom but for all her friendly kingdoms.” She quickly recollected the facts she had learnt from Rivambishu regarding how Dwambika had united small tribes surrounding the city to establish it as a single kingdom.

She praised how she had tackled the economy to use their wealth of silver and the introduction of circle of supply to develop her kingdom’s growth. She ended her monologue with a soft tone and said, “I stand here to plead apology for my ancestor’s mistake but you are standing without realising what you have done to your ancestor.” She took a pause to see his reaction.

She was about to begin her next monologue when the king began to speak, “Your Highness of Genijhal, I accept all your praise and justice for Dwambika. But I was told that she took poison to kill her own child. It was said that our forefathers decided to speak to her and make her understand the wrong deed. They even forgave her. But she ran away from our kingdom and made us ashamed. So we waited for

generations to make her pride fall by sending our kingdom's renowned scientist to dwindle Rithvabhor's wealth."

Ishiya explained to the king and queen that Dwambika was feared of being killed. Ishiya, imagining the real reason for Rithvabhor people's oath, started to narrate, "After some days, Dwambika found the Cave of Silver, where she discovered the metal. She united small tribes as a single kingdom and remarried. She started her new life and ruled the people and developed their standard of living. People started liking her and she taught them all the skills and made them civilised.

"At the same time, she traced the advisor and her husband to know the truth. She came to know the crooked plan of our kingdom. As she had remarried, she feared that was against the traditional custom; she was not able to explain her plight and truth to Dheegadra kingdom. So she decided to hide the entire history of her life in Dheegadra."

The king realised the dharma in Dwambika's decision. He now understood how badly he and their kingdom had been manipulated by their enemy kingdom. He also felt the same dharma in Ishiya Dyaanhi's heart to enlighten him with the truth and realised his mistake that he had again decided to take revenge on Rithvabhor by sending Biajig and Biajigi. He wiped his tears and immediately ordered his officials to arrange for his travel to Rithvabhor. He and his queen extended their friendly heart to Ishiya Dyaanhi and she too accepted. She thought that she had now alleviated a mountain from Dheegadra kingdom's heart and also corrected Genijhal kingdom's initial wicked spell.

CHAPTER - 8

While Rithvabhor was busy with the production of silver currency, Dheegadra celebrated the success of Rithvabhor. Ishiya shed cheerful tears with the king's changed perception about his ancestor Dwambika and Rithvabhor. To punctuate the celebration, he ordered the preparation of sweets that were special to his kingdom, like Satoor (a sweet made from milk and fruits, dried in sunlight and fried in oil to make it crunchy), Jijal (sweetened milk extracted from a seed variety with sweeteners like sugarcane juice, jaggery and honey added), some deep-fried snacks and some juicy sweet rice made out of ghee. These were prepared in big giant vessels for Rithvabhor. He had a musical orchestra along his journey to Rithvabhor.

When he entered the city, the welcoming song made by the musical orchestra and their instruments attracted the attention of the people. They gathered in a crowd and looked towards the large bullock carts with sweets. He came out from his cart along with his queen and Ishiya. He introduced himself to the people and distributed the sweets.

People were at first shocked to see a Dheegadra king visiting their city. They had all known it only as a treacherous kingdom whose ancestors had tried to kill their own daughter and believed false theories. But they got cajoled by the king's humble and magnanimous nature.

Then they started to happily enjoy their sweets said to be distributed to celebrate his birthday. This news reached the ears of Biajig and Biajigi who abruptly ended their discussion with Saroop Bhagog. They asked him to immediately depart for his kingdom and told him that he might be needed in the near future. After he left the palace, they went to receive Dheegadra's king and queen.

Biajig saw the king distributing sweets generously. He was shocked to see the changed attitude of the king. He and Biajigi welcomed the king and said, "Oh! Years have passed since your first visit to Rithvabhor. We would be honoured if you come to our palace and give your public oration to the people."

The king, without revealing their identity and continuing their drama, said to the people, "King Biajig and chief defence soldier Biajigi, I am pleased to give a royal visit to Rithvabhor. I came here with Ishiya Dyaanhi, the great queen of Genijhal, who also insisted that I visit your kingdom."

Ishiya, having a great sense of humour, was holding her laughter on seeing the drama performed by both, and enhanced their drama by saying, "I thank both the kingdoms for accepting my stay in both kingdoms and taking care of me. So I thought we three should meet together to develop and extend our friendship."

They gave a royal hug and went to the palace. Biajig and Biajigi knew that they were in command of the situation they were going to face. Ishiya though was sceptical about Biajig and Biajigi but was cleared of her doubt when Dheegadra's king said, "Let us keep this hidden history within our king and queen's secret affair and make people aware that our three kingdoms are friendly forever. I would make Biajig and Biajigi find a rightful king or queen for Rithvabhor, as they

earlier accepted my strategy only on the condition that they would be temporary and then get back to Dheegadra once they complete my plan. Since I have realised my mistake, it is time to call back Biajig and Biajigi and handover the kingdom to an able ruler to flourish further.”

The twins, who were listening to the conversation, asked about their discussion. There was a high dramatic gesture by the twins as if they didn't know what had happened between Ishiya and the king. They had come to know everything through their secret spy. They were made clear about what had happened and what was their next role to accomplish by Dheegadra's king.

Ishiya suggested a plan for the time being and it was accepted by all. She immediately visited Deeptini's cottage with an expectation that they too would be convinced with her imminent decision. She made Deeptini and Nivriniya aware of the entire plot from her visit to Dheegadra until her plan that she had decided in the palace. Deeptini initially hugged Ishiya for her priceless deed and then accepted her plan. Nivriniya was nearly in another world as she was chosen as the next ruler. She got excited and she feared whether everyone in the city would accept her as queen and consider her as exemplified for that high position.

She asked Ishiya, “Do you think I could fulfil my responsibility as queen?”

Ishiya, rather than a queen took the side of being a friend of Nivriniya and said, “My friend, you are skilled, you know better about the people as you live along with them and you are the rightful leader to rule them. As said earlier, you and your mother are more than saviours of the city. At this young age, you have won the hearts of many as a court official.”

Taaruradhi came in between the conversation and got to

know what had happened from Ishiya. She felt great for her friends and she encouraged Nivriniya. She praised Nivriniya how the locals respected her and made her believe that she was worthy enough to rule Rithvabhor. Nivriniya got blessings from her mother and started to think herself for the queen title.

As per Dheegadra's king had planned, people were informed that King Biajig and Biajigi had decided to move to their homeland to take care of their own people. They were given pamphlets regarding their next ruler and were summoned to give opinions regarding the next ruler who was said to be chosen by the twins. That evening, people gathered at the courtroom and pondered their opinions. Some were pleading Biajig and Biajigi to stay back to rule though they liked their new ruler. Some accepted their decision and supported Nivriniya.

After a long debate and argument, people welcomed their new ruler and gave cheers for her. Rivambishu was given the responsibility of counting the supporters of the new ruler. He decided that majority was supporting the new ruler and concluded that Nivriniya could very well be coronated as their new queen. Brinari, who was present among the crowd, pushed himself through them and reached Nivriniya and gave her the garlanded bouquet as a token of appreciation.

"You are my source of inspiration in this city. I wish to grow up and achieve like you."

Nivriniya accepted it, gave a smooth pat on his head, rose his hand along with hers and waved them to express her gratitude to all who supported her. Rivambishu fixed the date for the ceremony and the public gathering ended.

Biajig and Biajigi, still seated in their palace, waited for everyone to disperse and started interacting with each

other about how the day had passed. They ensured that all were out and the hall was empty except for them. Biajig said huskily, “We manipulated Rithvabhor’s people as if Saroop Bhagog proclaimed war on them as he was disappointed. At that point, we made Tauroor Mare a lame duck who was cheap before the eyes of the people as he showed partiality for the diamond crown in return. We got some kingdom’s partnership earlier to share our inventory research wealth. So they betrayed the king by asking more wealth of silver and assured him a diamond crown.

“Saroop also played well in our drama as if he had been betrayed by Tauroor Mare. We fought an unintended revenge war where we were made to win and actually fooled everyone. Dheegadra’s king ordered us to live with them and slowly dwindle their wealth by giving false theories. But nature favoured our drama as fortunately, Tauroor Mare died due to ill-health. Again, nature favoured us by giving us the kingdom, making us set our stage clearly for our play.

“Until the capture of the kingdom, we did whatever Dheegadra’s king ordered us. After taking our roles, we only did what was in our plan. But now, as we anticipated, he is asking us to return and seek the growth of the city.”

Biajigi was listening to him keenly and waiting for him to finish and said, “Together we plan, we execute and win it in our way.”

CHAPTER - 9

On the day of the coronation, the whole city was decorated, people were busy dressing themselves for the big day. The city was lighted all over, flowers were used to decorate the walls and ceilings. People prepared all the sweets and snacks they could prepare for the big day like Satoor more specifically. They performed their silver dance before the palace and sang their clan song.

King Biajig was asked to maintain the coveted reason behind Nivriniya becoming the sudden queen. He gave his final oration as the king: “People of Rithvabhor, I am pleased to have served as your king even though it was short-lived. You must have been informed that my presence is needed now at my kingdom. Though I am half-hearted to leave your kingdom, I am sure I would always be remembered for my ruling and diplomacy. I would end up my speech by giving back all my gratitude for all of you and you will be always memorable in my life.”

People cheered for him and some got emotional at his speech. Then Nivriniya walked towards the podium. She took the oath of responsibility before the public, which stated: “Myself, the queen of Rithvabhor, have responsibility to take care of the welfare of Rithvabhor. I will always stand for righteousness and justice for truth. Selfless deeds, ensuring growth and development and at last protecting Rithvabhor’s

name and fame are my prime duties as the queen.”

She repeated the oath after Veerarkil Mare and placed the crown on her head. People blessed her with flowers, Taaruradhi cheered by clapping hands. Ishiya was present, silently and at the same time maintaining her stage manners as a queen. Dheegadra’s king was happy for Ishiya for ending the wrath of hatred on a smooth victorious tone.

Deeptini gave blessings to her and thanked Biajig and Biajigi for accepting her as queen. The ceremony came to an end with Ishiya and Dheegadra’s king’s departure towards their kingdoms. The twins had told their king that they would stay there for a few days to ensure there was not any new threat. But their stay didn’t alarm people that they were their new threat. People in fact welcomed their stay and Nivriniya thought they would help her in the kingdom’s affairs but did not sense the danger.

Nivriniya appointed Biajig and Biajigias court officials temporarily and they too accepted their position for the time being. They were spending most of the time in their secret inventory and research room. Nivriniya as the new queen retained the same measures introduced during Biajig’s rule. She made slight changes in the taxation rate with a little increase from their usual rates. This was due to the reduced production due to the rainy season. People understood the reason and weren’t affected that much.

The twins went through their research work, gathering the details regarding the total wealth of silver in Rithvabhor and also the annual amount of extraction of silver. They took their time in executing their plan. They thought time would give them an advantage in executing their plan. Nivriniya gained confidence and started ruling phenomenally. Her style of ruling inspired many in the kingdom and people started speaking of her administrative capabilities.

Biajig, in the inventory and research room, whispered to Biajigi, “We know that Rithvabhor is the correct place for our research and invention. So we acted according to our plan without hinting that we are actually aiming for their wealth. Do you think our research until now will support us in our deal we spoke of with Saroop Bhagog?”

Biajigi gave her usual pat to him and said, “Everyone knows that Saroop Bhagog’s military power is an epitome for valour. He has the largest ground as well as boat army. Now we need to think about our deal to make it implementable.”

Biajig nodded to her and folded his research work kept on the nearby shelf. Both came out of their room and headed towards the palace to have a look at Nivriniya. It was a more urging duty for them to make their presence in the courtroom, as nearly ten days had passed with their absenteeism. Nivriniya was busy with her day-to-day affairs.

She took a minute’s time to welcome the twins. Biajig spoke his usual words for paying respect to the queen and Biajigi said, “We apologise, my queen, for our absence; we had already informed the court’s affair keeper regarding the reason for our absenteeism.”

Nivriniya knew the reason that they were busy in receiving the wife of Biajig, Methia, and accepted their apology and asked them to continue with their work in court. Methia, an innocent wife, had joined them after spending months in her maternal kingdom near to Dheegadra. She knew about Dheegadra king’s plan and was not happy with their decision, so she stayed away from them. After coming to know about recent manifestations, she decided to join hands with the twins.

Biajig happily spent time with his wife and at the same time continued with his research works without revealing

his plan to Methia. In the city, there was a usual pattern in rainfall, which showered its fullest capacity in the morning. People enjoyed their time in the rain and saved it for their future use with their big silver vessels. Everything seemed to go as usual and production of silver currency was delayed for some time due to rain.

People started feeling something disturbing their daily life. That was their increased tax; it kept increasing on a monthly basis. People faced their first difficulty in their entire life in Rithvabhor. They thought this was due to Nivriniya's lack of experience in handling the economic strains of the city. Their representatives gathered in the court to complain about their problem. Nivriniya pacified them by explaining the reason that as their silver currency production had resumed after months of raining, it had consumed a large share. So they needed revenue to run their production smoothly.

She assured them that once the currency was traded with other kingdoms, their economy would be back in full bloom. People accepted her assurance, but expressed their discontent regarding this measure. They were requesting a speedy recovery measure for the time being. Nivriniya was perplexed with the situation and sought the help of the twins.

Biajig asked her to use some of the wealth of silver as grants to people to cope up with their financial loads. Nivriniya however was not of the view of taking the saved wealth. She immediately summoned Rivambishu to suggest some remedies. He suggested to introduce newer professions for the people like leasing their antique collection by displaying them in the city's museum so that they could be paid for it and they would use it for paying taxes.

Nivriniya was happy with his decision but asked him how the pumping of economy could be possible for the museum, which was a public place administered by the kingdom. He

explained that kingdom could fuse economy by opening up the museum for other kingdoms to pay for their visit to museums. She put forth the orders for opening up the museums for other kingdoms and encouraged people to choose this way of earning if they were not able to pay their taxes.

This spread like wildfire and people began displaying their antique collections, vessels used by ancestors and uniquely designed articles in the museum. There was relaxation in their economic strains and people were managing their financial loads somehow. Nivriniya thought that there was a slight disturbance in the administration of the kingdom that had not been present during her initial rule.

She thought that she should have a talk with her friend and mother to get clear about her ruling. So she headed towards her cottage. Her mother, who was still living in the cottage, welcomed her daughter with special decorations. She insisted her mother avoid such special arrangements and said that she would like to be treated only as her daughter and not as the queen of Rithvabhor. She also invited Taaruradhi along with her. They dined together and spent some time chatting with each other. Taaruradhi and Nivriniya enjoyed their friendly dining after a pretty long time.

Deeptini looked towards Nivriniya, held her hands to her forehead and said, “Your father, Tvagu Hiadeer, would have been more pleased to see his princess becoming the queen of Rithvabhor. His knowledge on silver and his scientific temper could have helped your ruling further.”

Nivriniya, who had never seen him since her birth, wiped her tears. She managed by changing the topic to praise about the dinner. Taaruradhi enquired about her newer reforms in the kingdom. She was busy explaining to her; meanwhile, Deeptini took a break from their conversation and went inside.

She was deeply lost in thoughts about how her husband had died and the secret she had kept to herself. She decided that it was the right time to reveal the secret to her daughter. She quickly came outside, took Nivriniya to the side and showed her an old box. She started by saying, “My sweet daughter, I think this is the right time to reveal the grave truth about your father.”

She stood up and said, “What are you saying?”

Deeptini said, “Your father, as you know, was knowledgeable about silver and supervised the process of its extraction and transformation to vessels. He simultaneously did research on silver formation in caves. He discovered some threat in the silver formation in the near future. So he alerted the people, but some were against his research and blamed him for spreading misinformation. He was not able to bear the burn of blame; he became ill and subsequently died before your birth.”

Deeptini burst out in tears with agony. Taaruradhi consoled her. Nivriniya, after a short span of time, questioned her mother about how she became the clan head in spite of her father’s blame. Deeptini told Nivriniya that it was due to her hard work and acceptance by the same people who had forgiven her husband’s misinformation. Deeptini pleaded her not to have any vengeance for those who had blamed her father but insisted to prove herself as an able ruler.

Nivriniya promised her mother that she would rule only for the betterment of the people and at the same time assured her mother that her father would get justice, though people had forgotten him. Taaruradhi witnessed moments of emotional conversations and thought to change the mood by praising her reforms in the city. They got back into their joyful chats and slept outside by enjoying the starry night.

CHAPTER - 10

Nivriniya summoned the court after her short stay in the cottage. Everyone was present in the court. The twins were also present and were watching keenly what was about to happen. Nivriniya welcomed the gathering and thus spoke, "I hereby declare that Dhaneer's prediction that we are nearing drought with shortage of food production. Each year, we have faced such a situation and have raised from difficult times in our production. We have compensated our production's shortage by switching to other food crops such as wheat. We would have traded it from other kingdoms. But this time, we have already sought the help of other kingdoms for opening up of the museum.

"So we will not be able to trade, for which we will need a lot more spending of wealth. We have already used three by fourth in silver production. This year seems to have been tougher on the economy."

She took out a pamphlet and handed it to the city economy protector and asked him to read out the order. It stated: "People are hereby ordered to conserve their food resources for their future benefit. The kingdom has sought the help of Dheegadra and Genijhal kingdoms. They have agreed to lend their crop seeds that they use for drought season. But they are also concerned with their shortage and demands, so they have agreed to give ustentins of seeds each.

However, our city's scientist had already invented a blending of different varieties to yield greater produce per blended crop. This will meet our short-term demands."

People praised Dhaneer for his smart innovative idea. At the same time, the city economy protector said, "Our queen was happy with both the kingdoms but was not with the view of accepting their help without compensation. So we sought the help of the twins who suggested to mortgage ornaments which could be gotten back once ten tins of seeds are returned. Our kingdom has decided that we would mortgage seven tins of ornaments. For this, the people need to contribute. Now vote for this arrangement made by our queen."

The entire crowd was silent and unable to bear still more expenditures. One among them spoke, "Your Highness, we are already paying higher taxes to the kingdom and so we were told to lease our silver articles. Now we are facing annual drought but this year, we need to mortgage our ornaments, which is our saved wealth. These measures seem to burden us and it is totally new to us." He bowed to the queen and asked, "Are we really facing this due to the silver currency production? If so then why don't we resume it when the climatic conditions sound good."

Nivriniya had expected such a question, which was in her mind too. But when she had discussed the same with her officials, including the twins, they had persuaded her that silver currency production would compensate their losses. So she gave the same assurance to the people.

She held an official meeting with important personnel such as economy protector, wealth planner, city's petitions recorder, chief silver sculptor and temporary officials, Biajig and Biajigi. She discussed with them regarding using their one-fourth wealth of silver to compensate for the remaining

revenue needed for the production of silver currency.

The chief silver sculptor complained that he was in the need of many gallons of water for initial extraction of silver (Lithya Billam). Nivriniya already knew that people had petitioned regarding the scarcity of water resources. Problems seemed to pile up in her kingdom and she was thinking about a perfect solution to all.

Dhaneer, who was present among them, was not of the view of using one-fourth of silver and argued that problems would subside within two months when season changed to autumn. He explained to Nivriniya the pattern of seasons experienced by the city and this peculiar pattern would heal the sufferings of the city. So he advised the queen to delay the production of silver currency.

She disagreed to delay the production and ordered her officials to use the remaining silver wealth to solve the issue of revenue needed for silver currency production. As she wound up the meeting, an idea clicked and she headed towards her cottage. After entering the cottage, she silently took her father's research work and started glancing at it. Her mother had just left to go to the nearby grocery shop to purchase, which kept her secret visit safe but not for a long time.

Deeptini entered the cottage and she saw Nivriniya waiting for her as if she had just entered. She said, "I didn't expect that you would come again within a short span of time. Are you okay? You seem to be perturbed."

Nivriniya replied, "Mother, I just thought to visit as I came this way to meet Rivambishu. It was just an official meeting and I thought to have a quick brunch here."

Deeptini happily said, "Wait for a minute and I will be back with your favourite pishads." She served them and being the clan head checked on the measures unveiled by

her daughter. By that time, Nivriniya was surprised to see Rivambishu just entering her cottage who was eager to meet her regarding her decision on silver currency production.

Deeptini welcomed Rivambishu with pishads and he declined. He turned towards Nivriniya and saw that she was about to reveal something to him with an old box held tightly in her hand. Nivriniya thought to reveal the secret she had found and first apologised to her mother for taking her father's research work without her permission.

She then explained to both that her father's research work stated that silver was changing its composition from the period when there was an earthquake in the city nearly two hundred years ago. The research work traced the earthquake and its effect on the formation of silver in the native form. She briefed the research saying that silver with its composition was slowly transforming into a newer metal that looked like silver.

She said, "In the work, it was written as a conclusion that exactly after the fiftieth extraction, two more tins of extraction would result in half the amount of new metal in the silver composition." Both were shocked to hear her saying that what they thought to be silver was actually occurring along with some other metal in minute traces. Now it will start to occur in half its composition after some more extractions.

Rivambishu took a breath and said, "This work is an epitome of your father's sacrifice for his scientific temper, but how do you think that everyone will believe it when it was questioned years ago when he himself explained?"

Deeptini agreed with him and said, "He is right; myself and Rivambishu were the only ones who supported his theory. All took it as misinformation and baseless findings. I think it is of no use to once again dig the same issue."

Rivambishu pacified them and complained to Nivriniya

that people are facing a new problem of water scarcity. After hearing this, Nivriniya encountered a strange belief that her father was right with the prediction as he had stated in his work that this composition required a special combination of chemicals and also needed more heat than required for silver. So it may consume more water, wood and coal in the extraction process.

She was able to connect these issues with the impact it created for worsened drought. She thought that she needed some clarity on her understanding of the work. So she asked both to accompany her to meet Dhaneer. They went to his house and found that he too was about to reveal to them about the water scarcity and said, "With my findings, I could very well say that nowadays, the silver extraction process is consuming lots of water. Previously, we got more quantity of silver but this is reducing. I think there is some fault in the extraction process."

Nivriniya gave a gesture that signified her satisfaction for her doubt. She immediately handed the old box with her father's research work to him and asked him go through the work to give suggestions. He opened the box, took out the pamphlets and glanced at it once. He promptly said, "I have heard about this work that served the downfall of your father's life. I will surely conduct research on it to find out the truth. But I need some time, about two to three days. This needs detailed study and I will get the help of Rivambishu with the reading of this pamphlet, which is complex in its literary sense."

Nivriniya nodded confidently and said, "Let us make sure that this is not revealed to anyone other than us, so we can bring to the limelight a justified solution for our present sufferings. I have a strong belief that once this is verified, I can fix all the issues in our city, which look interconnected

with one another.”

Rivambishu and Dhaneer promised that they would not utter even a word about it and began their work. Deeptini too helped them with interpreting the work with her knowledge on her husband’s writings.

CHAPTER - 11

Nivriniya left from there and on her way she saw the twins heading towards the Cave of Silver. She thought that she should follow them to know about the purpose of their visit as she already knew that nowadays, they were not engaged in court issues seriously. They spent most of their time in their private room.

The twins were conversing and were headed towards the Cave of Silver and Nivriniya followed them quietly. Biajigi noticed her and cued him; she changed their topic to Methia. Though this conversation was unnecessary at that point, they continued to gather time for her arrival. Biajig laughed loudly and said, "Sister, we think the city should extract the remaining silver, which needs perfection in extraction."

Biajigi replied, "You are right, our research for the process of fine extraction without waste would help the city."

Nivriniya understood from them that they too had done research on the extraction process and thought that they might have found the truth about the new metal. She conversed with them genuinely by reasoning her visit as an official tour to all parts of the city, which was part of the manifesto promised after swearing in as the queen. She also enquired about Methia's health and asked about their sudden visit.

They replied together, “We just arrived to check out the remaining silver in the Cave to implement our researched way of extracting.”

Nivriniya became sceptical about their research and questioned herself that why they should be so concerned to research the silver extraction, that too abruptly when they were about to leave the kingdom. She asked them, “You are so generous to help us out in our extraction process when you are spending time in our kingdom beyond your agreement with Dheegadra’s king.”

The twins gave a quiet gesture and said, “We stayed here to ensure that there is no threat and also help in every aspect in our short stay. So we thought to use our knowledge to find a noble extraction process that would add more silver to your wealth status and reduce the waste silver quantity. This could now also help you out in enhancing your extraction process to grab more silver than now, which helps in your currency issue.”

She thought this idea would surely help her out in verifying her father’s work and also to find out whether they were aware of it. She immediately questioned them regarding their studies on silver.

Biajig explained to her, “If you can see here, there is clear evidence,” pointing to samples taken from the cave, “One by hundredth of silver goes waste while scratching from the cave. After which, some one by thousandth goes waste when it is heated as it remains unburnt.”

Biajigi joined her brother by saying, “This is the correct point where we need to make changes to our extraction process. What is your say on this, my queen?”

Nivriniya was confused as to whether to reveal her father’s research work and decided that she would let them

know once it was confirmed. She continued the conversation and asked them about their research. Biajig showed her the extraction process with his pamphlets, which depicted different methods of extraction. He gave her the research work for her reference and said, “Your city is really blessed to have this wealth on surfaces hanging and occurring along with soil. The cave also seems to bear perennial sources due to the salt content beneath the city. But you need to extract more as there is again some forming within the same year. This might now help you out rather than waiting for the year-end extraction period.”

Nivriniya agreed with them by saying, “You are absolutely right that now in this strained period, we should go on for another extraction. I will discuss this with court officials. I personally have lots of questions to be answered on this. Let’s discuss this tomorrow in the courtroom.”

They started to head towards the palace for rest. On their way, Biajig and Biajigi got suspicious by the visit of Nivriniya and her unannounced visit to the cave, that too without other officials.

On that night, there was a terrible downpour, giving a big relief to the people of Rithvabhor. Nivriniya took out a worn-out pamphlet, which she had found in her father’s old box. In it was written, “Either live for the future or let your legacy live forever.”

An inspirational quote from her father’s work and she held it tightly and gave a pat on her back. She got a feeling that she would fulfil her dream of being a saviour of Rithvabhor at all cost. Next day, the rain continued and the sun seemed to hide behind clouds. She woke up to the harmonious song of screeching and chirping of birds. Taking the pamphlets given by Biajig, she started reading keenly. It explained the present extraction process where the entire

setup for extracting was picturised neatly with their concepts explained here and there. First the steam boiler, where water was heated with the help of wood, then the steam was blown through a pipe with a large cross-section at one end and a small hole at the other end, from which gushed steam from a small bladed wheel. These blades were curved inwards, the forced steam rotated it. At the centre, it was connected with a rod that at other end rotated another chopper knife wheel placed upright, chopping the wood and coal to make small fine pieces.

This wheel had a sharp knife spaced widely; through the gap, the wood, coal and other materials for burning were fed inside it. Under it was a slope that collected all the finely chopped particles to the big furnace. In this furnace, very high temperature was attained, it was curved inwards and made of ceramic.

Inside the furnace, the crushed silver obtained from the cave was placed and heated along with fine river soil. After which, the molten silver was poured to cool and solidify. Nivriniya then read their proposal for obtaining all the silver without any leftovers. They suggested to first crush all the silver, then to heat it with less temperature and then heat it with coal and filter it at the molten state by pouring the molten silver through a circular small-holed rod to filter out the coal pieces.

Then, the collected molten silver could be solidified. This reduced the waste and improved the purity and quantity of silver. The important conclusion that briefed their calculation for more quantity of silver stated for three to four extractions with a three-month gap within a year to get more silver than expected. It gave proof that if extracted only during usual extraction time period, the silver would sometimes blacken and may disseminate after years. So it would be safe to

extract and keep as much quantity as now than fixing a time period for its extraction.

She got some inputs for the extraction process but was confused over the repeated extraction process. One point made her realise that their work didn't mention anything about the new metal and overall, they concentrated only on two points: to add charcoal to heating and then to carry out repeated extraction process.

She wanted this to be known to Rivambishu and Dhaneer, which could help them further. On her way to the courtroom, she met the twins. They asked her about the decision and she told them she was in a hurry to head towards Dhaneer's cottage. So she assured them she would soon take necessary steps for another round of extracting silver. This confirmed their suspicion that Nivriniya was hiding something from them.

Biajig said, "Sister, my suspicion is true that Nivriniya came to the cave only to know about our visit. She should have met Dhaneer already, whose cottage is on the way. Even now, she is meeting him that too without officials. I think she is hiding something from us. Might be she knows about the new metal from her father's research. She is intelligent enough to connect it with the problems surrounding her and has sought help from him to confirm it."

Biajigi nodded to her brother and continued, "You are right; by this time, she must have known about her father's work. We were lucky enough to know every secret of the city through the records we found in the king's private affairs collection. This enabled us to plan well in advance to proceed with our plan. This is the right time to start our play. As of now, let us just follow her."

Nivriniya shared everything with Rivambishu and

Dhaneer;after listening to her, they suggested for first gathering proof of her father's work.While conversing with them, she noticed that the twins had stationed themselves on the bullock cart near to the cottage and were inspecting the shop nearby.She felt that they had followed her and her sceptic attitude from the beginning of their ruling was proved;their intentions in ruling had been for good till their research work on the extraction process made her believe that they were concentrating on the silver wealth, not the people of Rithvabhor.She thought of spying on them immediately to know about their stay.After reaching the palace, she ordered an official as a spy on the twins.

CHAPTER - 12

A few days later in the city, the chief silver sculptor (in charge of the extraction process) was in need of meeting the queen to complain about the shortage of water sources for his work. She, after hearing the petition, ordered an immediate stop for silver currency production. The court officials were surprised by her decision. There occurred an instant silence among all present in the courtroom.

One of the officials spoke, “Your Highness, the decision seems to come as quick as lightning. It is my humble request that we should think on it again; in silver currency production, we have almost extracted all the metal and we are in the stage of its purification. What will we do with all of that without making it as currency? Moreover, our crisis can be uplifted only when our trade is finished smoothly at the scheduled time.”

Nivriniya said sternly, “What I have now decided is final. There will be a public meeting soon to elaborate on this decision. As of now, implement what I have ordered and there is going to be no questioning on this further until I meet the public in our courtroom shortly.”

This news spread like wildfire and people gathered to argue about it. They felt that she had broken her assurance that would reduce their burden of taxes, drought and water

scarcity. Taaruradhi also got agitated by her move and she immediately went to the palace. The twins had now confirmed their suspicion from Nivriniya's decision and started to enact their plan.

As a first step, they thought to manipulate the common people to turn everyone against her, which would gather time for their plan. They accidentally saw Taaruradhi and called her to start with her. Biajigi said, "I thought you might have known the reason behind the queen's sudden decision. In my point of view, she is manipulating the people."

Taaruradhi got confused by her statement and said, "I am aware about the decision but not the reason. Why Nivriniya should play mind games with her very own people? I do not understand your point."

Biajigi patted her and said, "You should have known that she was the one who raised the tax amount. We suggested to her to only give the silver wealth as grants to the people. But she didn't want to take it from the silver wealth and wanted people to pay taxes by leasing their articles. She rather used the remaining silver wealth in revenue needed for currency production. This time, she has made the trade of silver more than our city's demand. But after all these expenditures, she has stopped the entire production. There is also now extreme drought due to her negligence on hearing the petitions. She is playing a double game to prove something in her mind."

Taaruradhi got taken aback by her comments on Nivriniya whom they had supported initially. She replied, "Are you serious about your allegations on our queen? You are turning everything against her. How could I believe in you?"

Biajig said, "Taaruradhi, you are thinking from the point of being a friend to her. But you forget that your city is facing unusual crises since her coronation. I have heard from your

locals that her father succumbed to death because of the blame of misinformation. She is trying to prove that misinformation is indeed right and bring justice to her father.”

Taaruradhi recollected Nivriniya’s words on that day when she went along with her to the cottage. But she further argued that circumstances made her take those decisions.

Biajigi interrupted and said, “You are so strong on your friendship but have forgotten that while we ruled, your city was flourishing, which brought the Genijhal queen to our kingdom. Within a short span, these many crises wouldn’t have been raised without proper planning by the queen.”

She said thoughtfully, “Though I believe that everything occurred shortly, Nivriniya got to know about the reason for her father’s death recently, to quote it correctly, a day before the last public summon.”

Biajigi held Biajig’s hands secretly to answer her in a manipulative way, “Oh dear, why don’t you think that she might have known it from the city, but would have acted due to your presence? We are not here to say that she is evil, she is, of course, your city’s saviour, fighting for the good of city. At the same time, she wants her father’s justice, so she is trying to make people believe his theory—the misinformation.”

Taaruradhi was in a dilemma to believe their way of presenting the situation. She immediately thought to meet her friend to sort this out. The twins gave a hand on hand after her disappearance.

Taaruradhi searched for Nivriniya, she ran to every place but was unable to find her. She began think in the way taught by the twins. Everything seemed to coincide; she saw her mother coming by that way. Without thinking what to do, she shared with her the conversation of the twins. She wiped her tears out of helplessness.

Brinari came that way running towards her and he called out her name. She gave him some water and relaxed him; he said, “Our queen has asked me to convey some important message. She is on an immediate tour to the nearby seaside town, Hithar. She said that she was in need of some commodity from them. She said that there is some great secret to share with you concerning the twins. So she asked you to beware of them and to conceal her absence from the people.”

He conveyed the message and ran with the same speed towards his cottage. He was happy that he had completed the assigned job by his queen. Now Taaruradhi was being bombarded back to back from both honourable sides. She should now believe either one of them to fix her doubts. She felt sorry for her friend that she had doubted her in the first place. With that in mind, she searched for her mother to clarify all this to her.

CHAPTER - 13

In the city, Taaruradhi's mother spread the essence that Nivriniya was fighting for justice to prove her father's theory and making everyone believe that. People, who were already angry at her for the stoppage of the currency production, got intensified by hearing this. Everywhere, people started to protest. They started to march towards the palace to clarify the reason for the stoppage. The twins saw everything and started to pack their necessities for their travel to Kiyash, Saroop Bhagot's kingdom.

Methia, who was a silent observer until their packing, began to speak, "I had keenly observed all your activities and your conversations. I also came to know about your evil plan. What you are doing to this kingdom is unfair."

Biajigi raised his voice, "What you observe is unrelated and we are not in need of your royal advice; we also have no time to listen. We are on our way, we neither need you nor don't care if you turn loyal to leak out our plan."

Methia gave him a warning, "You are avoiding me but at the same time you are fuelling our relationship. Now this is the time you ought to answer for my life."

Biajigi turned towards Methia. "In law, don't forget that he is your life and you are his soul. You need not confuse

this with your life. He will soon come for you with a most luxurious life to lead happily. Don't get worried for us, whatever we do is for our good."

Methia interrupted, "Now you take from me that, what I need is not a royal life but a simple honest life. I realise my mistake that I supported your very first staunch research work for the sake of your science proclivity. I came to know that you are aiming for the new metal to study it and make money out of it, as you become the only one to trade this metal. But when your greed for name, fame and wealth hides everything else, I have no point in living with you."

Biajigi pacified her, but Biajig pushed her away and turned towards Biajigi and said, "Don't waste time on her, let her take any decision on her will. We have no time resolving this now; by this time, we should have moved to Kiyash. We have made a great deal with them and we also need to procure the metal for proclaiming scientific status in the Royal Science Society as inventors of a new metal. We will give her the time to recount her false decisions."

Biajigi gave a final look to Methia to bid her farewell. But Methia was not looking towards them and she quickly rushed towards the palace entrance to pursue the people. The twins immediately took their cart and travelled on their shortcut path to reach Kiyash within three hours.

There in Hithar, Nivriniya traded a few tins of their rare chemical, which they had prepared as a by-product of their extraction of iron in the city. They called it green salts (present day green vitriol). She was told to get those at any cost in order to separate the silver from the new metal. She made a deal with that city's traders and this could be paid by exchanging resultant blue stone crystals (present day copper sulphate) from their extraction process.

She had no time to explain to them detail how they would get those from their extraction process, but simply said they were in need of green salts found in their city. They also accepted the deal as they were in need of them for their preparation of inks and fertilisers. They thought this was their fortunate deal as they no longer needed to prepare it in their city.

She was on her way again to Rithvabhor with some tins of green vitriol. She knew that this left out options of methodologies practically possible as of now to separate silver and the new metal. When she met Dhaneer to get to know about his conclusion on the interpretation of the research work, he confirmed that he was confident enough to follow every instruction as per her father's work. He proved the theory with the selected samples to confirm the presence of the new metal. Her father had mentioned that he was certain to produce two different metals separately in pure form with possible combination of chemicals and salts to obtain the final separated pure metal.

Dhaneer explained to her the easiest and more plausible method to separate. He stated that first, the green vitriol was to be heated in an iron jar that was long-necked with a small opening, specially designed for it. Then the resultant oil (sulphuric acid) was boiled in a big ceramic vessel and crushed metal pieces extracted were added directly. The pure new metal would settle at the bottom, which looked like silver. After collecting those, some copper was to be added to the left over liquid, in scraped form so that blue crystals would appear, then collect the silver settled at the bottom.

Those blue crystals were collected by scratching and used for agricultural purposes. The obtained silver was to be further purified as before by heating it in the crucible. The new metal, which was quoted rare, was to be heated to

a higher temperature than silver. In this process, the metal would be purified.

He explained how her father had also presented ideas to conserve the fuel and some purification methods to get highly purified metal. She was so happy that her father's work was useful to unravel the truth behind the crises of the city and he would finally be believed now. She felt great gratitude towards Dhaneer and Rivambishu for proving the research work and explaining to her so that she could take quicker decisions.

Nivriniya entered Rithvabhor and the twins reached Kiyash simultaneously. The twins were welcomed by Saroop Bhagog. They were in haste to quickly draw a plan of their attack on the city and asked him to head his army towards Rithvabhor. They planned to make blocks after entering the city at all parts of the border to stop other nearby kingdoms from helping them.

They knew that Rithvabhor would now be resolving their anger against Nivriniya and so would have no time to perform any drills before the attack. Their sole and cunning strategy was to borrow some time while they would first seize their borders, then the already weak military power would be attacked by armed soldiers and horse parade led by the twins. They knew all the details of their military power, so had planned each stage of the attack.

Saroop Bhagog had already made a deal with them to get half of the metal wealth present in the city and also an annual share as compensation. He was happier than ever now that the rare new metal will be added to his wealth status. The twins were happy too as they would finally acclaim a special status in the Royal Science Society for the discovery of a new metal and would also lead a kingdom—Rithvabhor.

Their only concern was that how would they face the people with the same charisma as before. Their prediction was that by now Methia would have revealed their true intentions in ruling the city. People would have understood that they were interested in their wealth for their own selfish motives.

Biajig was sure that they would win any way and people would have no choice but to obey them. With this in mind, they started to head towards Rithvabhor with the war conch shell ringing all the way.

After entering Rithvabhor, Nivriniya witnessed people protesting against her. She was taken aback with everyone's sudden reaction. She could hardly see her way out to enter the palace. She ordered the bullock cart with tins to immediately reach Dhaneer's cottage where all three stayed back. She saw people turning back to her and started shooting questions about her manipulative mind games. They demanded an explanation for her connection with the crises following her swearing in as the queen.

She tried to convince the groups by revealing the truth regarding the reason for their crises. But none seemed to listen; she looked here and there and everyone was pointing at her. Methia looked at the flooded people in front of the palace. No one noticed her presence but she created a thundering sound by banging on the drum kept beside her.

"Everyone, listen to me with patience. The reason behind everyone's problems is a great impact of both culprits—Biajig and Biajigi. Now I will start numbering their manipulative and wicked actions. First, they were not good rulers. He put forth many reforms in order to divert your attention from extracting your wealth and trading with their friends. He knew every secret of your kingdom and they planned their plot to manipulate you against Nivriniya. Your increased tax was due to their increased trading secretly done, your water

crisis was also due to this repeated extraction of silver. They plundered your wealth slowly and gained good neighbours for their military support to conquer any land of their choice. At last, to warn you, I say you are their maiden kingdom that they are targeting to conquest. They may come to you at any time from now unveiling their other face, which was secret to you until now.”

The Rithvabhor people realised their mistake of blindly believing the twins and saw how they had vanished silently when they were bemused with unexpected problems. There was a cacophony of people screaming their question of the hour—What else is happening, what are the remaining manifestations that we are yet to encounter? How do we believe you, you may even still play the game against us.

Methia stood unanswerable to all their questions, but sighed and said, “You can believe your queen.”

People muttered amongst themselves and looked towards Nivriniya for the final call. She looked towards Methia, her eyes expressed both concern for her state of mind due to her parted family and relish for revealing everything in a nutshell. She saw her coming to her and gave a hug and apologised for her family’s foul play to enmesh everyone’s life. She gathered courage and spoke, “What Biajig and Biajigi have done is unfair and betrayed not only Rithvabhor and Dheegadra but also me. They fooled me by saying that they were working only to develop your kingdom. You should have by now known about my negligence of official knowledge. I suspected their motive only when they spent more time in their secret inventory and research room, which should have not been secret otherwise.”

Nivriniya exclaimed, “Thank you for the ingenuous revealing about the twins!”

Methia held her hands, "They have gone to Kiyash, now it is too late."

"I came to know about their motives in capturing our kingdom and their plan from espionage by my official," said Nivriniya in a more acumen gesture. She was able to draw their plan in her mind and had found out the truth before hand. A while later, Deeptini reached the protesting arena and informed all about the great war awaiting them with the arrival of the largest army. Every little murmurings here and there became silent, at once every head present turned towards Nivriniya. Methia joined her hands with Nivriniya expressing her support and said, "May the truth win."

Nivriniya took out her sword from her back, raised it to the top and pointed it to their victorious flag. She looked towards the people and said, "Let's fight now, whatever be the army, let our fight out number them."

People stretched their hands and gave a tight punch to the air fiercely, they started cheering for Nivriniya. Their disbelief of her fled and people understood her true spirit in protecting the city. She sensed a great relief and was joined by Dhaneer and Rivambishu. They conveyed that they were successful in separating the metal with the help of green vitriol.

Dhaneer said, "You might be surprised to know that the twins had used a similar method in separation. I sneaked into their inventory and research room to watch out for any left overs where I found some chemicals they had used for the separation of the metal.

Rivambishu said, "Past is always past, how are we going to face them?"

Nivriniya answered bravely, "Why not; we have our strength in discovering their weakness. We need to use our brains in learning about it." She ordered the soldiers to

immediately be well equipped to fight.

Taaruradhi felt happier that the people were enlightened by the truth of the twins. She sighed that her mother's efforts had yielded only good results.

CHAPTER - 14

The entire army, along with Saroop and twins, was an hour away from seizing the borders of Rithvabhor. The army consisted of horse force, bullock carts, soldiers and some grounded guarding those parades and main leads. Everyone was well armoured and had two swords crossed at their shield back. All looked gigantic, experts in war as throughout the year, they were trained to fight at any time. This was due to the greed and desire for more share of silver and annual share of rare metal, which until now no kingdom had possessed.

In Rithvabhor, soldiers prepared themselves but they had not enough time to bring out a strategy to fight. When everyone was anticipating the fast approaching war, as expected the war conch started to be blown, the army stationed at the borders took their position.

Biajig took a few steps ahead with his well-trained, milky-white blue-eyed horse, legendary and sleek with his overflowing fur. It was pampered by him only for war fights. Its twin was equally adorable yet formidable, muscular and dark, possessed by Biajigi. On seeing Biajig moving forwards, she took her horse to the same position. They both turned back; the army was so large that their vision boundaries were filled with their men.

Biajig gave a final speech, “Now we are going to face the enemy within minutes. Be prepared and don’t underestimate

your opponent. It's a war now to capture the city by making themselves surrender. Use all your tactics taught to you and play the strategy well. Let us accomplish our victory."

He gave a hand on hand cheer to his sister and said, "Together we plan, we execute and win it in our way."

Biajigi nodded confidently and took out her well-sharpened magical long sword from her waist pouch. She raised her voice high to say, "War for war, till the victory no stepping back. Move!"

Half the soldiers led by Saroop started to take positions at borders, the other half and the twins entered the city. Nivriniya was waiting with her army, she had come to know about their strategy of surrounding the borders and fighting with nearly half the soldiers. She used the tin designed as speaker to be heard at long distances (a small hole in one side at the centre and a wide opening at the end to amplify the sound produced) and said, "Twins, you made a double betrayal, your plan has come to light. We all know how you fooled us by plundering our wealth for your benefit and what you have planned for the city after the capture. You have played a big mind game but now we have woken up. You won't be spared even for your little goodness."

Biajigi replied with the same pitch in sound, "Do you think I am less prepared to handle such a situation? We have planned it to together, it consumed years to come at this stage of our destiny."

Biajigi said, "Prove yourself that you can protect your city or be at our feet for at least we would spare you."

Nivriniya, to signify the start of war, hoisted their war flag and blew the war conch shell. Both sides signalled their soldiers to enter the battlefield. This was near the outskirts of the city but away from the city borders, located near the

entrance of their fort. Taaruradhi too took part in the war to help her friend though she was not well trained militarily.

Saroop Bhagog's half soldiers still outnumbered Rithvabhor's entire army and guarded the border. They were all grounded having a lone sword and armour shield to fight with.

Meanwhile, Nivriniya sought the help of Dhaneer, Rivambishu and Deeptini to help her with framing strategies to tackle situations scientifically. She presented to them that she was going to seek the help of Ishiya Dyaanhi to support her army troops. So they were planning how they will bring the army secretly without the border force stationed by the opponent knowing this.

Deeptini said, "All our trust is broken, now we are helpless. We should protect our city even at the cost of our lives. But not let these pernicious creatures to rule our land; they would sell our wealth and rule it in unethical ways without progress."

Rivambishu agreed with her, "You are right, they have at least now revealed their true identity, now it's our turn to show how defensive we are. Dhaneer, I know by now your brain would have cooked up a scientific plan."

Dhaneer quickly went inside and brought out his rock dweller. He had designed this for dwelling the rock in the cave. They asked how the dweller was going to help them. Dhaneer explained to them, "This dweller will break rock from caves; now, if we dig a tunnel here, we could clear the path until we reach the riverside plains. From there, we have profoundly dense bushes that will hide their soldiers from entering into our city. Then they just need to cross the river after which they could enter via a tunnel hidden behind bushes."

Deeptini patted Dhaneer for his timely invention. The dweller was made of iron, it was curved inwards and at

notches fully hooked with blades to dwell the surface. This was completely operable with ropes knotted to a wheel that rotated to dwell the surface. If we rotate it clockwise and anticlockwise, the dweller would crack the surface and carve it to clear the surface.

Some workers were immediately commissioned for the job and the tunnel leading to the riverbank was started. Using the dweller and taking account of the riverbank soil with silt, it was easy to dig a big manhole horizontal underneath the surface.

Above, the twins started to take on Nivriniya; the other soldiers found it easy to offend Rithvabhor's soldiers. Nivriniya with the help of Taaruradhi made every defensive move to buy time until evening. Both the fighting parties agreed to freeze war from evening as there was not enough light source for them and they used it as strategy framing time.

Rithvabhor's soldiers found it difficult to fight groups taking on each one. They got injured miserably, with some sustaining life-threatening injuries. Even then, Saroop's army was merciless and gathered momentum in decimating Nivriniya's army. Nivriniya gave a tough fight to the twins, handling them with both her hands simultaneously. Then she exhibited a switch technique that she had learnt from them during their fight with Saroop Bhagog.

She tried to give a left blow to Biajig and right blow to Biajigi after switching her hands. The twins, who were exceptional in it, single-handedly created an obstacle with their shield and knocked her down with the shield. She absorbed the blow on both sides and bent upright to the level of her legs and once again raised to oppose them. She was straight and now tried a different technique taught by her mother.

She asked Taaruradhi to pass her the shield while she made a round with her swords, while swirling left one sword and held

the shield from Taaruradhi. So that one of the offensive swords of the opponent could be defended with the shield and the other offensive side holding the sword on one hand to oppress the other opponent. This managed to keep them at bay, but they started to become furious in their approach. Meanwhile, dusk started to pervade. As agreed, both sides came to a temporary halt. Dhaneer was also successful in digging the manhole leading to the riverbank behind the bushes.

Through the hole, a messenger sneaked quickly to reach Genijhal with a pamphlet explaining the plight of Rithvabhor. That night, Nivriniya was extremely tired; in spite of it, she inspected the wounded soldiers and made sure they were nursed properly. She had already lost half of her soldiers but her opponent had sustained only minor injuries. Deeptini informed her regarding the manhole they had dug for the entrance of the other kingdom's soldiers.

Nivriniya thanked Dhaneer and said, "You have done an incredible job, now we need more of your help."

Rivambishu said, "Queen, our soldiers have already become weak, we need to attack them tactically and that too applying our knowledge to suppress them."

Nivriniya replied, "That's what I was thinking, we need to buy time still Genijhal's arrival."

Deeptini said with vindictiveness, "We are ought to protect the city and at the same time, make the twins pay for their perfidy."

Nivriniya shook her head in pride and said, "To well learn about my enemy, we made mistakes. I gave a single message to my army that while committing mistakes, be careless but careful to study them by keeping them near to you. Mother, this was the strategy the twins used against us initially."

Dhaneer said, “But we got decimated, we are left out with few.”

Nivriniya replied, “Don’t worry about the injuries and numbers. Though we have greatly suffered, our soldiers didn’t waste their efforts.”

Rivambishu said, “I am totally confused; what have we learnt, what are we going to do?”

Nivriniya said, “Cool your nerves, our strategy is also named so.” She took out a bigger plan material and spread out on their table. She grabbed their attention and said, “If you can see, they have a strategy that we should not get help from other kingdoms. So they spent most of their army numbers in guarding our borders, especially from Genijhal, Dheegadra and Hithar who are our recently bonded neighbours. Their next step was to attack us in groups as they knew that our soldiers were not trained for group attacks on a single soldier.

“Their final strategy is to finish the war as quickly as possible as they have immense confidence in their troops.” She turned towards the soldiers and said, “They have now learnt the art of tackling the group and their repeated sword tactical signature moves. We will now be facing them both as warriors and as brainy persons.”

Dhaneer sighed and said, “To attack them with brains, I will take care.” All three then spent time in encouraging and energising the army. The messenger was fast enough to reach out to Rithvabhor and Genijhal borders. He was also given the task of reaching Dheegadra from Genijhal so as to bring their army to Rithvabhor as soon as possible. He was at a great pace to reach Genijhal within the stipulated time predetermined by the queen as she had planned her entire strategy based on time consumption. That night passed with both sides practicing their stunts.

CHAPTER - 15

The morning looked breezy and tranquil but suddenly the war troops appeared, one side led by the twins and the other side by Deeptini. Later, Saroop too entered the war field to accompany the twins and accomplish their single mission of defeating them before dusk. Nivriniya, Rivambishu, Taaruradhi and Dhaneer planned their “Cool Your Nerves” strategy. According to this, the groups were first disbanded by a scientific trick. Then the distracted soldiers would be captivated in nets. After some time, they would struggle to come out of the trap; in the meantime, Dhaneer’s inventionary formula for itching and making the opponent tired would be sprayed on them. This would for certain render them without energy and Nivriniya’s army would find it easy to handle them even in groups.

Moreover, they knew all their moves that they repeatedly used to attack the opponent. So they perfected their defensive and offensive stunts to give a tough fight. Nivriniya was confident enough that her strategy would enable them to be more aggressive but in total aplomb. She went to Dwambika temple to offer prayers and was accompanied by Brinari. Nivriniya said to Brinari, “You are contributing by supplying milk to our soldiers and offering prayers to god. You are much grown up for your age. I appreciate you for your dedication and you are always my favourite among the locals of the city.”

Brinari said, “I am blessed for your concern, my queen. I admire your administration skills right from you becoming the queen. I am always at your beck and call to help you.”

Both offered prayers to Dwambika and rang the bell to signify their belief that it would be heard by Dwambika. Nivriniya feared that her city was now facing real war, not like the one fought between Saroop and the twins. It was not drama anymore and it was more serious that they win in order to protect the city. Brinari, after completing the rituals, distributed flowers and sacred holy water to Nivriniya. She took the blessings and had little of the flowers, sacred water sprinkled on to her head and got new confidence that she could win the day.

On her way back, she met Methia, dressed up in armour and holding her sword upright; she gave a gesture that she was ready to fight. She said, “Let me join hands with you, least I could do is to favour you for my family’s deeds.”

Nivriniya accepted her favour and while covering the distance to the war field explained the outline of her plan.

After the time of start of the war commenced, both the sides began to fight. Biajig took on Nivriniya, Biajigi took on Deeptini, Taaruradhi and Methia took on Saroop Bhagog. They tackled for some time and Nivriniya’s army began to implement their strategy. First, all soldiers pulled their swords, which were tied to a rubber bag filled with gas obtained from the agricultural soils. This gas called laughter gas was obtained in Rithvabhor’s agricultural fields where they used animal manure in the fields. They collected the gas in rubber containers and it caused a laughing effect when inhaled (present day nitrous oxide).

At the sound of their war conch shell, they pierced the rubber bag and circled the group gathered around them

with the sword and half-pierced rubber bag. The gas spread around the opponents' faces and they began to inhale it but Nivriniya's soldiers quickly covered their noses and mouths with the cloth mask around their necks.

The gas seemed to show its effects; everyone who inhaled it started to laugh incessantly. Some inhaled a lot of it and their swords and armours were disengaging from their protracted jerking and shaking bodies who were laughing aimlessly. They felt so exasperated that hours passed like seconds. Nivriniya and gang managed to keep the twins and Saroop Bhagog busy without knowing all this. They fought with them and slowly drifted them far apart from the war field.

The already funnily laughing soldiers were then trapped within the meticulously fabricated net and it was hard to cut through. It took them nearly hours to realise that they were caught inside the net. Dhaneer and Rivambishu made arrangements for spraying the itching liquid. This was a special blend of extracts from different plant varieties found by Dhaneer. As the rain soaks the body, the liquid was drizzled over them and they got drenched in it. The moment laugh therapy drained, the itching therapy started and they had horrific adverse reactions to it. Meanwhile, the twins thought to somehow showcase all their efforts to defeat the opponent but in vain.

The sun set on hysterically funny scenery as the cloud with a curved mouth like figure formed in the sky and took a perfect position at the rear of the sun. Made the sun reflect like a funny face settling after the uncontrollable laughter. Nivriniya took the time to thank the scenery for enjoying her strategy and sighed as the war conch shell was blown for the pause of the war.

The messenger reached Genijhal and ran straight to the palace to convey the information. He met Ishiya and bowed

with his right hand extending the pamphlet. Ishiya Dyaanhi, wearing a heavy silk dress decorated with matching jewels, descended down from her throne. Her brownish curly hair came flowing to her front with a shawl well knotted at her back. She spun her hair and took a look at the pamphlet. Going through it, she at once confirmed her nagging thought about the twins and came to know about their real intentions. Ishiya thanked the messenger for reaching the kingdom on time. Then he conveyed that he was heading to Dheegadra to inform them about the current situation in Rithvabhor. Ishiya ordered her army to leave for Rithvabhor immediately and prepared herself with all equipment to fight.

Nivriniya looked towards her mother and said, “We need another day’s time to bring Genijhal here; until that, we need more of this strategy.”

Deeptini replied, “Are you sure that Genijhal will reach here promptly without delay?”

She assured her that their army would have chosen the shortcut path through the mountains to reach Rithvabhor within a day. Dhaneer interacted with Rivambishu and interrupted the conversation between Deeptini and Nivriniya to inform them about the status of the injured soldiers. Nivriniya enquired about the recovery time of soldiers and summoned the officials. She said to them, “I am of the view that we need to make people aware of some of the facts we have discovered from my father’s research.”

One of the officials asked, “Queen, our collective opinion is that it is not safe now for a public gathering. What else people should be made aware other than the entire foul play by the twins?”

Nivriniya replied, “There is an important issue in our city regarding our future that has to be made public as soon as

possible.”She gazed around and said, “Assemble the people in Dwambika temple. I will explain what is about to happen.”

That night seemed to witness various twists and turns with each side of the city tracking different stories trying to entangle at the same point. The wind swirled around and brought a peaceful rainy breeze. The lightning flashed many times with thunder breaking the silence then and there.

Biajig was more tensed and felt bad for the inept soldiers in his army to counter the Rithvabhor army’s unexpected tactics. Biajigi, with a glass of water, sat by his side and said, “It was not our fault. They only managed for a day. There is more time left for us. What makes you upset?”

Biajig quenched his thirst and said, “You are seeing it in another way. They didn’t manage without fighting or buying time. They are learning our strategy at the expense of their valuable time.”

Biajigi who was acumen in all aspects could not guess their strategy and so she clarified with him. “How are they learning from our strategy when we do not have one?” asked Biajigi.

Biajig saw the exhausted soldiers who all through the day had become puppets at the hands of Nivriniya’s strategies. He replied to Biajigi, “You are right, we don’t have a strategy, we just fight. But they knew about our weapons and our fighting style. So they have learnt our moves and would experiment with newer attacking styles. See how they fight tomorrow.”

Nivriniya entered the Dwambika temple and she saw people accumulating in large numbers. Each had a face of uncertainty as to whether they would win the war or not. She was able to read their mind from their faces; she worshiped Dwambika and offered the flowers she had brought. Ringing the bell heavily, she said, “I am aware that you are scared about the war, but there is some pressing issue we need to resolve.”

They looked at each other expressing what else their city was waiting to reveal to them. Nivriniya took a piece of metal bar in her hand and proclaimed, "There are some shocking truths that everyone must know. That what we have thought as our wealth is not consisting of only silver but another similar looking metal but with different properties."

Everyone cried out in surprise and were interested in knowing more about it. Nivriniya had to keep in mind her time constraints left for the public meeting. She quickly made her explanation to the point and said, "As of now, we have named it as Sister silver metal and we are still researching on the new metal to know its full potential. We are sure this is a rare occurrence and it is not found in our nearby kingdoms. This is even more precious and is priced higher than gold but less than diamonds according to our inverse availability scale criteria for valuing goods."

Everyone thought this to be a blessing and happily cheered. She silenced them by saying, "The problem awaiting us is yet to be spoken of." People stopped their murmurs and listened to her keenly. She continued, "This drastic change in the composition in silver was due to an earthquake two hundred years ago. To correct it, nearly a hundred years before our city was discovered. It has undergone changes in the composition for years and finally has reached half the amount as silver. Nature is repeating once again. Yes, we are going to face another earthquake this year."

"What was given will be taken. Since this time the earthquake, for certain, will gradually decimate both metals in a year or two. I may soon meet you with the proper scientific validation but only after tomorrow. We need to focus on the war; we are already less in numbers. We need to make miracles for the day awaiting. Now you may disperse peacefully, whatever

challenges us, we need to be united to face it.”

Everyone had a long face and was anxious about what would happen. Shortly after the meeting, she summoned her army to discuss with them regarding the war. Dhaneer, Rivambishu, Deeptini and Taaruradhi were discussing seriously about the plan for tomorrow’s fighting. Nivriniya was looking at the old worn-out pamphlet in which was written: “Either live for the future or let your legacy live forever.” She flipped it to the other side and there was a note titled ‘A legacy for the future’.

The opposite side, Biajig and Biajigi, also summoned the soldiers to discuss with them about tomorrow’s action plan. Both sides had a simultaneous meeting with their armies.

CHAPTER - 16

Genijhal's entire army marched towards Rithvabhor, which consisted of horse parade, led by Ishiya Dyaanhi. Her reason to support Nivriniyawas to protect the city from the twins who were intentionally trying to capture the city for their own good. She was encouraging her soldiers to be at a higher pace and set a target to reach Rithvabhor within the next day's sunset. Their journey was tireless and all through her path, she was recalling the time spent with her friends.

She remembered how she had unveiled the dark secret involving the three kingdoms and how she had played a vital role in developing friendships with them. She knew for sure that if she fought for her friend, she would receive the same support in future from her friend. If not for that reason, she would get another opportunity to correct the sin committed by her ancestors. This time, she would be able to protect both the people and their wealth.

Nivriniya was holding the pamphlet tight, her eyes filled with silent tears, unnoticed by anyone. She showed the pamphlet to the soldiers and said, "Now this is no more a note but a legacy left by my father. We are entangled in some unique problems, which we haven't seen since the establishment of our city. As of now, let me just brief about the plan and discuss what I found from the pamphlet left by my father sooner. The opposite side we are facing will

be very strong tomorrow as they know that Genijhal is on their way to Rithvabhor. One of our spies disguised as their warrior shared the information with us that our strategy with which we planned to win the war was known to Biajig and Biajigi. The spy also informed me that there is a meeting about to happen with the soldiers.”

The head of the defence interrupted, “Your highness, it was our prime strategy to learn their fighting techniques and implement our counter attacking style to enmesh them in our techniques. Now if that is also known to our opponent, how are we going to fight their huge army?”

Nivriniya said, “Yes, we did practice newer styles with new weapons like elephant tusks, spherical swords and thorny balls. We also planned sudden attacks from trees and the underground. But most of our plan was known to Biajig. He had already made epigrammatic organised plan for tomorrow’s face off.”

She gathered everyone and silently whispered her plan and cheered everyone to be hopeful for yet another day of the war. She knew that she could not count on Ishiya for her arrival in time. So she discussed with them some backup plans if Ishiya failed to be on time in the field.

Biajig confirmed his plan to his soldiers and encouraged them to be awake throughout the night. They secretly opened their boxes of new-age weapons they had brought in elephant carts. But it had reached only now, as they were slow in travelling. The spy in Biajig’s army was asked to leave silently for the risk of his life. So he was not able to keep an eye on the arrival of the weapons. On both sides, there was a sleepless night, each protecting their secrecy from each other.

The sun woke up to the deadly silence of the arena with miniscule dewdrops all the way shining in its pristine rays.

The war was about to begin. Nivriniya stood along with her army knowing that this day was more challenging and crucial for their survival.

Biajig's horse made thundering sounds running through the parade stationed on both sides of his entrance pathway. Biajigi handed him the sword, the longest and sharpest ever used in the army. She courageously held her sword, which was thin but twice stronger to pierce and lift a person with it. Both nodded their heads and commenced to progress the war.

Nivriniya signalled her army to move ahead to face their rivals bravely with a pinch of shrewdness in executing the plan. Though fewer in number, they were engaged in different formations. They aligned themselves in pyramid formations, swirling cyclone formations and squared formations.

On seeing their approach, the opponent too assembled to counter attack the formations. For dismantling the pyramid, they formed a semicircle engulfing the pyramid from top to bottom. The swirling cyclone was enclosed with a full circle of soldiers. For the squared formation, they encountered them with sudden attacks from above in order to break the square from inside.

The lead fighter, Nivriniya, held her sword, which was reputedly magical and two-edged, and was riding on her galloping horse. She decided that this day was going to be a tit for tat, also she must execute her plan at the right time.

Saroop was guarding the border, as he was alerted on seeing the manhole near the riverbank. Half of the army was stationed along with him. In the battlefield, Biajig took on Nivriniya and Biajigi took on Deeptini. Taaruradhi and Methia were helping Dhaneer execute their one last final plan.

Dhaneer explained to both, "This is the right time to execute

our plan, as both sides have started to fight ferociously.”

But Methia interrupted, “Do you think this would decimate the opponent’s army?”

Taaruradhi was about to ask the same and hence nodded her head in acceptance with Methia. Dhaneer replied to them confidently, “If they fight till noon, my plan could be well implemented.”

Rivambishu entered the room by saying a secret code, ‘Mission’, which was known only to Nivriniya and her close associates. Taaruradhi and Methia were unaware of it as they did not hold any position in the courtroom, but they didn’t heed it much.

“Where is our key tool in implementing our plan? Are the fireballs ready to be hurled?” he asked Dhaneer.

He replied immediately, “You are still thinking that our first plan would work?”

Rivambishu said confidently, “What’s wrong in trying it out once?”

Methia exclaimed, “In the field, to experiment is a drastic step. I knew about the first plan, Taaruradhi had explained it to me. There will be false alarms of stampede in one direction and in that chaos, we would reign fireballs from the opposite direction.”

Rivambishu said, “You are quoting it as the first plan, so is there yet another plan?”

Methia and Taaruradhi gave a puzzled reaction as they knew about the final plan only after hearing it from Dhaneer that morning. Dhaneer got his nerves tensed on hearing their discussion and said, “Might be you were not present when we decided about our plan during late night. But isn’t it

unimportant to have this discussion now,when we are left out with only numbered hours?”

Rivambishu was about to explain about his sudden headache that had made him leave for his cottage earlier. Dhaneer immediately made a rough sketch on a map and said,“If you could see here, this is how exactly our army is currently fighting.”

He pointed to the map in which he had drawn distorted shapes of pyramid,rectangle andcircle representing the current status of army formations.He said, “If the noon arises,according to my predictions, the shapes will be further distorted and each formation would be left with the core. In the core, our dramatic troop’s wooden human-like dolls are stationed alternatively with real soldiers.These wooden mannequins are dressed like soldiers,so at a distance they appear to be a human soldier standing.After the opponent army are near the centre core,they will recognise it as wooden mannequins,so they will just break it or pass on to the next soldier.”

Taaruradhi said, “I knew about it. I was present with dramatic troops who dressed up all the dolls as soldiers.”

Methia interrupted, “Both Biajig and Biajigi knew about the army,their strength and weakness but they don’t know that there are some trained personnel who will be fighting only in war times.When are we going to use them in our war?”

Dhaneer knocked a mannequin stationed as a model with his hand and said, “If they pass on the human-like doll,then the hiding soldier in it will attack from the back.If they try to break the wooden mannequins,the springs present at the back will help the hidden soldiers bounce back and attack unexpectedly.”

After thinking for a while, he then turned towards Methia and said, "They are secretly present within the army as the human dolls. The rest of our army are fighting along with the queen and with Deeptini."

In the war field, Nivriniya gave a fierce upswing with the sword to Biajig and Biajigi suffered an unexpected hit from the thorned ball by Deeptini. Both the twins initially sustained injuries but then started to perform stunts with their long swords.

Biajig, holding to the sword, tightly pressed it upon on her sword to take it close to cut through her neck; it was nerve-racking. Nivriniya could not sustain the vibrations from the sword; she immediately passed the shield to her hand and gave a blockade to it. She slowly gathered momentum in tackling each offensive move by Biajig. Deeptini, much more experienced than Biajigi, gave Biajigi a tough fight to prove that fighting her would have been the toughest riddle that Biajigi could not even think to solve.

Her age was just a number before her fitness and her handling of the sword was a dance she had perfected over years. Biajigi tried every possible way to defend herself but as time passed, she became more phenomenal and in order to resist her, she sought the help of other soldiers nearby.

A group of ten soldiers altogether attacked Deeptini, but she gave them one punch by swirling her sword; they defended it hard with their arm shields. Then she somersaulted with the help of her horse, landed on her legs with her one hand holding the thorny ball and the other hand the sword. The group at once all positioned their swords covering her around. She swung the thorny ball around the legs of the soldiers. They suffered hard and were reeling from it. She immediately polarised the group, piercing their armour with the sword, scratching and staining their body armour with blood.

Nivriniya commanded the soldiers accompanying her to attack Biajig, but he single-handedly dealt with them with his sword, injuring most. Nivriniya looked more acrimonious instigated by her injured soldiers; she threw her sword, her shield flew high and fell apart and she took her armour out and threw it away. She gathered a greater pace and approached Biajig with bare hands.

At Ishiya's camp, the soldiers looked weary and tired of their incessant journey. They seemed so exasperated that they pleaded an hour's rest. Ishiya immediately said, "Soldiers, at the strike of the noon we will again start, we are needed there by at least before sunset."

The soldiers were quick enough to fetch water and started refreshing themselves with the available eatables from the nearby forest. Ishiya was thinking deep, when her minister interrupted, "Queen, you are looking too exhausted, why don't you have some rest?"

She replied, "I don't know what else a city should face when they are already fighting a war."

A puzzled minister further asked, "Queen, what do you mean by saying what else?"

Ishiya replied, "The city is going to face a natural calamity soon as per their predictions, by which they are going to lose all their wealth." She drank some water and sat on the rock; she held her sword in one hand with its sharp end pressing on the surface.

The minister asked, "But my queen, the war is after all for that wealth, then why are the twins wasting their time or why is Rithvabhor's queen waging war without revealing the truth to escape the war?"

Ishiya replied, “I came to know from the pamphlet by the messenger that she wants to win this war for the sake of the city’s future and she has decided another plan for tackling the disaster.

“She mentioned, ‘Ishiya, my friend, I am in trouble, our city is facing one such disaster by which our wealth would be drained. We would be deprived of wealth for many years in future, our city would become a normal city. This is yet to be known to our people or other cities. We had already faced a similar disaster before the establishment of the city. That disaster altered the composition so the silver we traded until now had minute fractions of another rare metal. But after the arrival of the twins, their repeated extractions made the silver composition half with the rare metal and another half with silver. So now we are just months away from the disaster; our entire wealth will be decimated to nothing. More than this situation, we are facing war from our enemies, the twins. They are actually self-motivated for plundering the wealth, ruling our city and gaining higher status in the royal society for discovery and possession of a rare metal. The disaster is not known to anyone as my father had used advanced techniques to predict it and how many years it would take for the occurrence of the wealth in the city again. Meanwhile, I had to tackle this war and also find out a solution to protect the remaining wealth before the disaster. I would eagerly wait for your arrival at the earliest to protect us.’

“This was written in the pamphlet but I do not know what is the rare metal and how the city will protect their wealth from disaster.”

The minister after hearing this said, “Queen, if we help them, would we receive a portion of their wealth as compensation?”

Ishiya rose and said, “We are not fighting for the wealth but

for friendship. We may receive wealth or may not, but not as compensation but as to return it when they are in need of it in the future. Remember that we are fighting only to strengthen our friendship and to protect the city that was formed because of the sin committed by my ancestors. I would always stand for it to rewrite its fate whenever needed.”

Nivriniya without thinking much regarding how to attack, got down from the horse midway. She gave one blow to his leg by hitting hard on it and kicking him from the horse. He fell miserably on the ground by the unexpected attack. His sword went flying from his hand and his head's cover shield banged on the surface. He was quick enough to stand, he took position with his hands and his eyes tracking her moves. She moved her right leg forward and left backward, and balanced her hands by enclosing her fists and positioning her hands corresponding to her legs.

Her face was getting cleansed with her sweat running from the forehead; she just wiped her face and looked towards him and nodded her head to start the fight. He came running and caught her waist to lift her. She made a strong hit at his back and drew her knife from the pouch she had hidden inside her pyjama. She at once stabbed him in his stomach so that it went an inch deeper and took it out. She said, “This is for the manipulative game you played. I could still crush you from inside. But you need to be alive to earn the life of imprisonment for your selfish deeds.”

He started to bleed and tore a piece of cloth from his hanging shawl to bandage his wound. His voice was quivering but he said aloud, “You think I would spend my life in prison; once I take your city, I am no longer a common man. I will be your king, my quest for conquering would expand to bring more kingdoms at my feet. Even if you kill me, I have my sister to avenge me. Beware that she isn't a normal woman;

she sacrificed her life to build an empire. We won't be futile in our efforts, you better see how your city is going to lose the battle."

Nivriniya was distracted by the cries of her injured soldiers; some were being assaulted, some were fighting with their life. Her eyes became watery to see them suffer. Biajig gave a quick punch to her mouth, she turned her face and counter-attacked him with squeezing her arm. He continued to fight with her holding his bandaged stomach with one hand.

Both sides, the soldiers fought vigorously. The opponent soldiers were powerful and smart enough in injuring Nivriniya's army and at the same time breaking their formation. The square, pyramid and cyclone formations were somehow distorted and reached the centre core. From a distance from the centre core, they viewed with their binoculars and identified that some mannequins were alternatively stationed. At first, they started laughing but then they thought this was stationed to increase the number of soldiers to fool them.

So that from a distance, they might think to plan the attack with more soldiers. But they just didn't get fooled and approached the centre with the rest of the soldiers and some were stationed at a distance a far in case of emergencies. When the opponent reached the centre, some just ignored, some pushed them to the ground. The mannequins that were pushed bounced back with the help of springs attached on it. From all the mannequins, the hidden soldiers broke open and assaulted the soldiers from the back unexpectedly.

Many of the opponent soldiers were injured due to this tactic. The opponent army's one third of the soldiers sustained injuries. The stationed soldiers immediately approached the centre core, but soldiers fighting along with Nivriniya and

Deeptini started to fight them on their way. They riposted with great aggression that the remaining soldiers were also injured terribly. On seeing this, Nivriniya felt a great relief and excitement that her plan had worked out, and gave a quick blow to Biajig's head with her forehead.

Already bleeding, Biajig suffered a blackout from the blow on his head. When he opened his eyes, Biajigi was fighting Nivriniya more ferociously. He slowly stood up, leaning against a tree where he was laid to rest by Biajigi. After tackling some of the soldiers, Deeptini accompanied Nivriniya. She said, "Your brother got his share of treat from us, now it will be your turn."

Biajigi vividly poisoned the sword by rubbing it against a cloth that hung at her back. She tried to distract them by replying, "Clan head, don't even think of it. We will surely conquer your land and rule it in our way."

Deeptini spun the sword and drew her other sword from her back scabbard, she scratched both the swords and said, "You selfish, don't be judgmental, you cannot defeat us."

Nivriniya tried to pounce on Biajigi, while the latter escaped by sliding under her legs and without thinking, she stabbed the poisoned sword on Deeptini's torso. Deeptini couldn't contain her pain and she pushed Biajigi to the ground. Biajigi reached for the ground with her hands protecting her head; she turned towards Nivriniya and said, "Blood for blood, this is how it feels for me."

Nivriniya cried loudly by holding her mother in her lap and she tried to stop the profuse bleeding from the stabbed torso with her cloth. Deeptini staggered to rise up and leaned against Nivriniya's hands. She grabbed the hands of Nivriniya with her bloody hands. Her eyes expressed the fear of the last breath and said, "You should be there for Rithvabhor. I may

even become a martyr but I should not survive to see my city getting defeated.Fight for the city.”

She slowly lost her consciousness and her pulse started to drop.Nivriniya screamed for help and Dhaneer came running with the first aid box.He took her from the battlefield to the cottage nearby by bullock cart.Nivriniya was more aggressive now than before. The sunset was so accurate that Nivriniya was only able to glare at her, but Nivriniya’s mind was hooked with the thoughts of her injured soldiers.She said to herself, *Tomorrow you will be my target, either you die or I accept my failure.*

CHAPTER - 17

Biajigi rushed to see the condition of her brother who was taken to the doctor's tent. He was nursed for his injuries, he was sitting upright to get stitches for his cut. Biajigi took a healing cloth to wipe his wounds on the head and said, "Are you okay? I was very much worried for your health."

She massaged his face with that cloth and started to shed tears for his stitched mark running all along his gut.

"You don't need to worry about me, you gave a good lesson for that little annoying girl who played a spoilsport in our entire plan," he said, consoling her.

Biajigi said, agreeing, "Yes indeed, we wouldn't have needed to fight a war if she hadn't found the discovery of the new metal from her father's research work."

She pulled the mattress over the sheet, the water jar fell down, shattering to pieces. The cloth bag holding the diary got smashed on the wall. The pamphlets from it got detached and flew all over the room.

Biajigi strained himself to cool down Biajigi and said, "Why are you soaring anger over our research diary?" She collected the pamphlets from all around and sat on the floor.

She said to him in a deep voice, "It was not that easy for

us to gain this position.Are we slackening our pace?”

Biajig replied, “No,not at all.I will be alright by tomorrow. Why are you losing hope? Just think about the path trodden by us to reach here.” He began narrating their way of planning and executing.

“When we first came to know about this city from our king, we got samples of the silver from here.Then with our intuitive researches, we found the occurrence of a special metal with the silver in small proportions.We extrapolated its monthly occurrences and found that exactly after the fiftieth extraction, the composition would result in half the amount of the new metal along with silver.We ruled the city and at the same time we executed many extractions of the metal to benefit out of it to make alliances with other kingdoms and achieved the exact half the amount of silver and new metal composition. The Dheegadra king too accepted our plan as we had manipulated him that in this way of extraction, their wealth would dwindle.”

Biajig choked for a while and made himself comfortable with the cushion and said, “As he was enlightened the truth by that selfless queen Ishiya,we thought of a different strategy. First was to complete our researches for that new metal that we would name as sister silver and would present it to Nivriniya.Second would be to once again play a manipulated war with Saroop Bhagog that he would come again for the city for that new metal, which in fact we planned to portray as if he knew of the metal by stealing our works.We were confident that Nivriniya would seek our help to fight the war and also to guide the city with the extraction of the new metal.We never thought she would follow the legacy of her father. We mistook that people had forgotten about his research works.But Nivriniya was wise enough to connect the problems of the city to her father’s researches.”

“Are you still thinking we will not be victorious? We have faced all the tough times, now be energised to just win it in our way.”

Biajigi absorbed the confidence from her brother and said, “Together we plan, we execute and win it in our way. I will proceed with strategizing for war; you take rest.”

Biajigi shook his head and patted her shoulder.

The room in the cottage was dimly lit, with each one's face expressing anticipation. All were shedding their tears, Nivriniya couldn't contain her pain, she was leaning against the door to escape the view of her mother lying on the bed. Deeptini was grappling for her breath as the chief doctor was applying anaesthesia and feeding her some medicinal pills to eradicate the spread of the poison from her wound. Rivambishu came rushing and stopped at the room's entrance to console Nivriniya.

Methia came near to her and said, “They have fully grown evil, their intentions are worsening, they are single-minded in their vision. I don't know how I could be pardoned for not having warned them for their misdeeds.”

Nivriniya dried her tear-filled eyes with the piece of cloth she held and said, “You knew their insidious plans only now, you are innocent and you are helpless for your life.”

Methia pressed her hands to Nivriniya's hands and said, “Might be you are true, but I was not able to bring a change in their hearts, they were too adamant and steadfast in their goals.”

Dhaneer interrupted them and said, “I think our clan head will fight back and once again lead us as before; just have hope and your faith will make her heal fast. Now for our tomorrow's day, what is left for us to survive the war for yet

another day?”

Nivriniya said confidently, “Hereafter, we are not going to count our days, but fight. I will spill their blood on this ground for every deed they have committed.”

A spy at the borders gave her the news that Ishiya Dyaanhi and her army had camped near to the borders and were ready to fight the border force of Saroop at any time. Nivriniya got overwhelmed with the helping nature of Ishiya and her courage to fight without preparations.

Deeptini regained consciousness after her torso got enough stitches for her stab wound. She was kept in a room with a ventilator for her respiration. They had used an oxygen-filled cylinder with a hollow tube taking the air to a nose mask. Inside the nose mask, another tube collected the exhaled gas to outer space. Pressure to pump the air was maintained by a balloon attached to the cylinder that was inflated when the air was inhaled and deflated when exhaled. Her pulse was constantly checked by the doctor. She was given some juices then and there to keep her hydrated.

Nivriniya was informed by the doctor that Deeptini’s condition was gradually getting better and she was out of danger. Dhaneer and Rivambishu discussed with her about the effectiveness of their strategy that had made the army escape injuries. The chief defence soldier also reported the injuries of the opponent army and the impact they had suffered from their strategy.

Taaruradhi served them the dinner and everyone enjoyed the food on the happy note that Deeptini was improving. Nivriniya was yet constantly thinking how to defeat the twins and win the war.

Biajigi, after collecting the details of the injured soldiers, approved their compensation amounts. She was also busy

communicating with the border forces to alert Saroop regarding the arrival of Ishiya. Biajig was looking towards the flower vase kept at the side that he carried everywhere along with him.

Biajigi was able to understand what he was feeling on seeing the flower vase. She neglected it at first but then she asked him, “So atlast you are suffering the pain of separation. You better speak to her and make her understand that your love is true. No matter we might be as bad as she thinks, but your love for her is always pure and unadulterated.”

Biajig watered the vase gifted by Methia and said, “I could only keep the flowers alive but our love died when she decided that I was unethical as a ruler and betrayed the kingdom. What could I do, when she has a point in her anger against me.”

“We did no harm to anyone when we ruled, we only aimed for the wealth. Throughout our childhood, we had seen only our parents fighting for recognition as scientists. They sacrificed a lot to foresee a better future for us. We were afraid that we should not struggle like our parents. We carved out an identity for us as scientists in Dheegadra, but waited for an opportunity to have a settled and prestigious life. Rithvabhor was one such gateway to make our future a heaven. We spent our time well planning out strategies for various possibilities and assumptions. Together, we planned, we executed but only an inch closer to victory. If we win, we will rule the city as we wish, we will become the wealthiest and also receive the highest credentials in the Royal Science Society as inventors and unique possessors of the new metal,” Biajigi said, recollecting their sojourn right from Dheegadra to Rithvabhor.

Biajig on listening to her suddenly felt the pain from his damaged bruises and bumps on his skin. It was unnoticed as

it was hidden under his sleeves. Immediately, he was treated with some pain relievers and dressings for the wounds. He started to fall asleep as his pain was alleviated by the pills. Biajigi left for her temporary private room in the nearby tent. She arranged for a quick meeting of important officials, the chief defence soldier and war coordinator to discuss the plan for tomorrow's fight.

She started the meeting by declaring, "Tomorrow must be the final day of the war. Though we didn't take them lightly, we are struggling to fight back their tactics."

The war coordinator interrupted her, "Your highness, I would like to remind you that most of our soldiers are injured, some have succumbed and some are on their death bed. So we are left with soldiers totalling to one third. We were decimated widely by their mannequins strategy, our soldiers misinterpreted it. We need to increase our army by strengthening its number by borrowing some soldiers from the borders."

Biajigi, feeling the heat of the situation, raised her tone and said, "Then we also need to fight Ishiya, who is ready to fight at any time. If she enters the city, then surely Rithvabhor will gain more support. We must delay her entry and at the same time fight their army with our remaining soldiers."

Meanwhile, she sent a message for Saroop with details of the soldiers who had lost their lives and who were suffering injuries. She also mentioned that they were in grave danger if they didn't win the war tomorrow.

Nivriniya was flipping the old pamphlet left by her father and was very grim. She didn't notice that Rivambishu was repeatedly shouting at her, "Are you alright?"

She swiftly kept the old pamphlet at her side underneath the shawl and replied, "Yes I am, but something disturbs me

then and there.”

He was flummoxed that Nivriniya was hiding from him and remembered what she had told already regarding a pamphlet from her father. He thought for a while whether it would be the right time to discuss about it and hence said, “Don’t trouble your mind by wandering with the thoughts. Tomorrow is the final day of the war. Shortly, we will also be facing an earthquake and then our wealth will perish. Hope is living in our hearts to survive all these turbulent manifestations. So have the same in your heart too and face everything courageously. Now sleep for the remaining time to give peace to your mind.”

She sighed and said, “We will soon overcome our problems and flourish as always. But my concern is that if my father’s work had been given a chance to be proven, our city would not have faced these many complications all together. All these manifestations were for our wealth, when we didn’t know about its true potential. But now that we have been made aware of the hidden truths with the help of Dhaneer, our staunch fight for protecting our city is much more victorious than expected.”

Rivambishu recollected the past and said, “Nivriniya, your father should have gotten all the recognition for his research tantamount to the present day support for his theory. Poor Tvagu, his research was tacit for the major period of his life. He had the fear that he must be accurate with his predictions. When he finally presented the theory to the king, Tauroor Mare, he didn’t believe it. There was strife between the king and Tvagu over the conclusions of the theory and for its proof. Though Tvagu was headstrong with his theory, he was unable to prove it.”

Nivriniya anxiously asked, “Why so? If Dhaneer could prove it now, why was my father not able to prove it then?”

Rivambishu answered with a little sore throat as he felt pity for Tvagu and said, “We earlier mentioned that, during your father’s period, Lithya Billam was the majorly occurring metal and sister silver, the new metal, was only traceable. So he was not able to differentiate that new metal from the silver extraction. At that time, they also lacked some advanced chemicals and equipment we possess now.”

Nivriniya was intrigued with that fact and hence asked, “Then how did my father initially find that new metal and was knowledgeable enough to even state its separation procedures and the uses of that metal and its properties?”

He nodded his head and said, “This is the question Tvagu could only answer. But in my perspective, he was fanatic with inquisitiveness and always had great imaginations for science.

“He might have somehow sensed some unique behaviours with the metal and researched it based on some assumptions and extrapolations of his findings. I believed him because he always supported the theory that gives him all the possible answers for his curious questions. But people were not able to understand his theory and also denied it without standard proof. When this theory was submitted to the Royal Science Society, they also didn’t take that much efforts to prove it as they had many other pressing issues. He succumbed to his illness due to the castigations he faced for his research. After his death, everyone forgot him and his theory. Both didn’t make an impact as it has now.”

Nivriniya dried her tears and said, “Will I be able to bring him accolades for his work at least now?”

Rivambishu said, “Definitely; see for sure you will prove yourself as an able leader and as a daughter not just to your father but to the entire city. I have seen you right from your childhood. You are unique like your father, you are ambitious too. You have emerged as an eminent and impeccable person

who leads us in all difficult conundrum situations.”He gave a gentle pat on her head and said, “Your father will get justice and recognition. Your ruling will always continue as Rithvabhor’s most successful queen.If I could be cleared for one doubt I have, you could very well leave for your room to take rest.”

Nivriniya bobbed her head and said, “Yes, you can ask me.”

“What are we up to tomorrow?”

She held a smile on her face and said, “We have already decimated their army,now we need to just fight for that one day and win it in our way.”

Rivambishu could not believe that she had no plan for tomorrow’s war.So he asked again, “This means that we have no plan for tomorrow.”

Nivriniya heldhis hands and said,“You can believe me, if we just fight, we will win.”

Dhaneer was busy with arranging medicinal facilities for Deeptini and hence was less involved with war discussions. Nivriniya and the chief defence soldier were interacting about the soldiers’ health.Nivriniya enquired, “So from your report, it is clear that all our soldiers, even those who were injured previously, are now ready to fight the war?”

He said by bowing to her, “Yes, your highness.We have also increased our strength from the trained personnel of the village who fight only for war times.Tomorrow, we will be proportionate to their numbers.”

Nivriniya took a deep breath and said, “Then we are winners already.”

The chief defence soldier was feeling bizarre for her immediate change in the approach of the war. He mumbled

to himself, *What happened to her suddenly, she would be the first one to come up with clandestine plans.* He asked curiously, “We haven’t fought them without any plans, you know very well that they are stronger and well equipped now. In that case, how could we ever win the war?”

Nivriniya paused before replying to him and turned towards the clock and said, “It’s late; tomorrow I wish to have a short pep talk and then we could very well be present in the war field to finally fight for victory. Have a good sleep. Be sharp at half past to sunrise. I need all the soldiers to be present in the meeting.”

Nivriniya left from there and entered the room where Deeptini was taking rest. She thought she could get her blessings before going to bed. As Deeptini’s condition was improving, her ventilation was removed. She was administered some medicines to recover from poisoned portions on her torso. She remained unconscious on her bed. Nivriniya slowly knelt by her side and said huskily, “If you can listen, then bless me for tomorrow’s battle.”

She heard no response from her mother but she could feel that her mother was listening, her facial expressions revealed that. She held her mother’s hand softly and said, “You are listening, you cannot speak, but I hope you will bless me with courage to solve the concurrent problems.”

Deeptini’s eyes seemed to have rapid movements and was struggling to gain consciousness. She was grappling with her breathing and her fingers were raising gradually to grab support. Nivriniya, after noticing this, extended her hand to hold hers tightly and said, “Mother, I am near you, are you awake?”

Deeptini moved her head slightly and tilted it by her side and lifted it up to the cushion height. She gently opened her

eyes and was struggling to speak, but said, “Nivriniya, is it you?” She swallowed some water fetched by Nivriniya and said, “I was listening to you. You will soon solve all our problems. But...” She took some time to remain conscious and then continued, “But promise me that you will not fail to save Rithvabhor.”

Nivriniya held Deeptini’s hand tightly and said, “I promise you, Mother, I will save Rithvabhor prior to any other crisis.”

Deeptini then, due to the effect of her medicines, closed her eyes to sleep. Nivriniya looking at her mother said, “Mother, sleep, soon you will see us jubilantly living our lives as before.”

She pulled the curtains of her bed and blew off the candle. She walked to her room to take rest finally.

CHAPTER - 18

The darkness was slowly consumed by the rising sun and exactly at sunrise, the birds took off on their flight. The flowers started to blossom and honey bees were busy sucking the nectar. A squeaky noise, then the door opened for that tiny blazing orange ray to irradiate the feet of Nivriniya. She came out wearing her fabric stretched to her length with a distinguished upper garment and lower pyjama. She tightened her leather boots and covered her body with armour. Her sword went perfectly into the sheath after swinging in the air with some warm-up movements.

She saw soldiers gathering in front of her, all well prepared to fight. But they unanimously had the doubt of how they would fight the war without strategy.

Meanwhile, Biajig with the speedy recovery from the injury was ready to fight the war. He held a small discussion with the war coordinator and chief defence soldier. Biajig was both surprised and happy to see Biajig back onto the field. She was initially reluctant for Biajig fighting from the front and wanted him to fight only at position three after herself and the chief defence soldier. But Biajig said, "Biajigi, I am perfectly alright, I have full confidence that I can fight. Let me know what you have planned."

Biajigi shared with him the sketches of their formation

to tackle the larger army at Nivriniya's side. He made some alterations to perfect their attacking plan and then he gathered the soldiers. He spoke to them, "My soldiers, you are closer to the victory. As discussed, we will form three graded squares and we leaders will occupy the key positions to guide you. You need to fight till the very end of victory and it has to be your prime of life."

Biajig and Biajigi as usual took their positions and they had only sometime left before the commencement of the war. They were determined to win the war and so they were planning some tactical stunts to perform.

Nivriniya took a deep breath and told the soldiers, "The warriors of Rithvabhor, you are going to be the heroes of our history. We are fighting not just for our city but also for our identity. So far we have fought to protect the city but now you will be fighting for your identity. Will you?"

The soldiers who were a little bewildered over her statements replied in a slow pitch, "Yes, we will."

Nivriniya was able to understand the reason for their expression. Dhaneer was fast approaching her. He came up with a plan sketch of using some advanced weapons for the war. He quickly spread the pamphlet with his hands catching the sides. He said to her, "Queen, I was spending some time last night to draw out initial formations and collaborations of weapons to counter-attack them." He outlined a drawing on the first pamphlet and said, "This weapon is designed by merging the knife and spikes to make it sharp and long. Our defence equipment developer is all set with the weapon."

He was about to turn over the next when Nivriniya folded those pamphlets and kept them aside. She said, "We are not in need of any more plans. Our only plan is to face them and contemplate our victory."

She took out the old pamphlet of her father and read the first line from it, 'Either live for the future or let your legacy live forever'. She waited for a moment to gain even more silence to make everyone grasp it in their mind. She repeated, "Either live for the future," a pause for her next sentence, "or let your legacy live forever." She continued, "I hope you understand hitherto. In brief, if you live worrying about the future, all your present gifted moments will be wasted in the thoughts about the future. But if you live all your moments so as to make your life as a legacy to leave behind, you will be living eternally in the name of the legacy you left."

Among the gathering were some villagers peeping here and there. Public was restricted as the war was in progress, but a few had somehow trespassed the barriers by climbing trees and gathered on rooftops. Dhaneer, who was busily calculating the number of personnel for all the formations he had planned, suddenly bent his ears to listen further.

Rivambishu by the side of Nivriniya nodded his head expressing his sign of acceptance. Taaruradhi and Methia became more and more solicitous on hearing Nivriniya giving her first oration to the army since her swearing-in as the queen.

Nivriniya, after feeling the sincere attention she was receiving, continued further, "Now if you fight thinking about your future concerning whether we will win or whether we will survive the war, all your efforts would be futile. But if you fight the war with the question 'When do I?', you are certain to create a legacy for yourself. My empirical explanation for it is that you first came to this world as a child with the identity borrowed from your parents. They brought you up and nurtured your skills. You pursued your knowledge by learning and experiencing. You chose your occupation according to your capability and wish.

"Right now, in front of me you as soldiers are so just the

way I said. You did no differently to land in here. You will fight as one among the parade and fight till your fate. After this, in future, you will repeat the same in another war. It will continue so, as long as you are alive. But this life after its end will be forgotten by time. You would have lived for future to be alive. This is defined as living for future but if you live the present moments to make it as memorable for future, that's your legacy. So ask the question, 'When do I?'; you will come up with the next question, 'When do I live my life to the fullest? When do I achieve the impossible? When do I be a person for my name?'"

She took out the old pamphlet by her father and said, "As I said, this was my father's legacy left years back when he was castigated for his work. Now this is proved by our scientist and scholar. Very soon, it will be demonstrated before the people to get public consent for its inclusion into our records of discoveries."

Her hands rose up to the level of Dhaneer who was standing beside her and said, "Why not to mention even Dhaneer is a living example for legacy. Throughout his life, he came up with timely inventions and discoveries to help our city develop. He didn't stop with it, he wrote many books to impart his knowledge to others. These serve as a best example for his life. Then Rivambishu who has trained most of our villagers and guided them to lead their life. Time will have passionate memory for him as a revered scholar. Our goddess Dwambika is a legend who established our kingdom. She inspired us by her legacy which we praise her as a goddess. Her life is a legacy for us to enlighten the path to follow."

There was utter silence but each soldier's heart pounded heavily as if they had lifted tons of sand bags with their hands. Their eyes didn't even blink and their fists were enclosed in unison to show that they were ready to cheer for

her speech. Some got goosebumps and some were hearing out the heart's rhythm after hearing her speech.

So living the life to leave behind something is the greatest achievement anybody could ever think of.

Her hands banged on the big drum and she raised her voice above the banging sound. She loudly said, "Now if you fight all the moments you encounter as a legacy to leave behind, to define your identity for your name, you are the history creators of our time. So let your legacy speak for you. Now say, will you?"

This time, the soldiers came up with a ferocious reply and said, "Yes, we will."

She felt the understanding the soldiers had this time and she repeated, "Will you?"

They raised their hands with their fists closed and said in chorus, "Yes!"

CHAPTER - 19

Ishiya and her army reached the borders where the opponent army was waiting to fight. She rode her horse a few steps ahead and cued the chief defence soldier to advance further. They came running towards Saroop's army. His army too started charging them. Ishiya was so skilful that she at first used a sword. She tried to give fierce blows and was also tackling a group of soldiers simultaneously. Her army and Saroop's army were almost equal, so the soldiers were fighting one-on-one.

Nivriniya and her army assembled at the battlefield and her parade were on their position to fight. They were waiting for the consent of their queen to prove themselves.

Biajig and Biajigi were determined to win the war and they had no other option. Biajigi led their army and Biajig on his white legendary furry horse took courageous steps forwards following Biajigi. Her dark muscular horse just stopped before Nivriniya's horse. She moved still further and holding the handle of her shield, she pulled it over and drew her sword out. She took position by raising from the seat of her horse.

Biajig appeared behind Biajigi and at the same time, Methia emerged behind Nivriniya. He was shocked at the sight of Methia, who had no experience in fighting and had never

been to a battlefield. Biajig came near her neglecting the prevailing tensions and said, "Methia, you are against your family. It should not be this way."

Methia raised her sword in front of Biajig and pointed it towards him. She said, "I am fighting for righteousness. Moreover, I don't need family when they have no time to heed my words."

Biajig pulled his sword and said, "Still, you are obstructing my way. Let's see who will win this fight."

Methia was confident enough to fight as she had so far practiced some crucial moves with Deeptini. Nivriniya gave a hard blow to Biajig on her shield, which she held to resist Nivriniya's sword.

Ishiya unexpectedly threw her first use weapon and took out a small double-edged knife. Saroop was quick enough to cut through her knife with his sword. It went flying to the ground. He was thinking the exact words told by Biajig, "You have fought in this city twice, once for our sake and now for yours. If you win, you will have an annual share of the new metal and also half of the present metal wealth. This deal makes your kingdom wealthier and also our friendship; after annexing Rithvabhor, we will help you further in protecting your kingdom. Think of all the benefits you will have after winning the war."

Saroop became more pleased to think about the future awaiting him and didn't notice that Ishiya was running rapidly towards him with her hands piercing the air with her knife. She first deceived him by a punch then later went for a direct attack with her knife. In no time she stabbed him in his chest, an inch away from his heart. He started bleeding profusely and was immediately taken to the first aid centre. Most of his soldiers too suffered heavily without their leader. At last,

Ishiya successfully defeated them and ordered her soldiers to enter the city.

Meanwhile, Biajig was emotionally blocked to fight with his wife. But Methia gave him tough moves so that Biajig would not be able to combat her. Methia, swinging her sword, said, “Your heart is not changed yet, how can you aim at the city that saw you as its leader?”

Biajig tried to defend her and said, “You are not in a state of mind to understand the richness that the wealth of the city presents, rather you don’t interfere in this.”

Biajigi attacked her with the modified weapons, but Nivriniya was so determined that she tackled all the moves. Her army fought bravely, each one perfecting their shots to thwart their opponent. Their minds were continuously triggered with Nivriniya’s words.

Biajigi’s army was trying out different formations and were not successful to attack their opponent. They fomented a bigger loss as Nivriniya’s army used the same formation by the opponent to render them ineffective.

Biajigi sustained minor injuries and Nivriniya seemed to gain confidence over her. Biajigi tried to grab her shield and swept her sword near Nivriniya’s face. She counter-attacked by stepping forwards; she bent her back and bounced by, lowering Biajigi’s sword with hers. She twisted Biajigi’s foot, taking the sword to her neck and plucked the shield from her. She threw it away and cornered Biajigi with her sword positioned sharply at her neck. Biajigi, left with no weapon to defend herself, surrendered.

Biajig could not protect Methia further so with a change in his heart, he started to attack her with grave heart. Then Methia said to him, “You should hear me now, your research is absolutely correct that the new metal is attaining half

the composition as you calculated. It will increase all your wealth, your status in the scientific society. But—" Biajig gave her a scratch on her left arm, but not noticing it, Methia curled her sword to entangle his sword inside hers.

She continued, "But you failed to predict the earthquake that is waiting to come soon to this city."

On hearing this, his hands trembled and he had no command over his sword. It slipped from his hands and he stood stunned without expressing anything. She caught him at his shoulders and said, "You planned every single moment here in Rithvabhor, but nature won over you and your plan."

Biajig was more perplexed that on what grounds should he believe Methia's words.

Nivriniya finally looked up at the sky; the sun was directly over her head, glittering with clouds trying to hide it. She spun her sword to her side and stretched it towards the ground. Both the twins were losing ground; their horses and weapons were seized and they were summoned to the court.

Their army along with Saroop also surrendered and extended an apology as an act of escaping further hardships. He quickly changed his mind and offered to keep a good relationship with Rithvabhor. Nivriniya however ordered him to the court.

Nivriniya thanked Ishiya and Methia for their prominent roles in the war. She offered them victorious bouquets and said, "You two supported me in spite of all your difficulties. Never in my life will I forget you or your courageous help."

She entered the room where Deeptini was taking rest. Deeptini was asleep so Nivriniya didn't disturb her. She touched her mother's feet, felt her blessings and said, "Mother, as you said, I have accomplished one big task of

winning the war. The other task of protecting Rithvabhor from its fate is the one I am anticipating to take action soon.”

Her mother pulled her head and woke up gently and asked, “Nivriniya, what happened to our city, is everything fine?”

Nivriniya supported her mother against the cushion and said, “Mother, we won.”

Deeptini, with tears welling from her eyes, said, “You proved yourself, but what about the disaster? How much time do we have?”

Nivriniya felt proud that she had made her mother cry joyful tears. She replied, “Mother, as yet I have not proved this, until the city is safeguarded from the impending disaster. I should take a decision on the fateful dearth of our wealth.”

Deeptini, with her hands across benign stitches on her torso, said, “It’s worth a victory,” sighed deeper and continued, “I am perfectly alright, you will have me behind you from now onwards.”

Nivriniya was about to ask, “What should I do with those culprits who not only did injustice to you but also manipulated Rithvabhor’s minds to extract the wealth?” when Dhaneer came running, holding his breath. He knocked on the door waiting for the permission of Nivriniya. She insisted Dhaneer to avoid formalities and let him in.

He conveyed his wishes and said, “Doctor informed me that Deeptini is recovering, her health is much improving.”

Nivriniya said to him, “Yes, I can see that. May I know about the final report you have prepared to present before the people?”

Dhaneer took out some pamphlets from his bag hung over his shoulders and said, “They are in the final stage of draft and

am working on it to make it understandable by the people.”

Nivriniya gazed at them and said, “We will soon have a public meeting regarding this.”

Dhaneer nodded his head and said, “I have presented you the situation we are enmeshed in and also the plausible solutions to overcome it. Your words will be ours.”

Deeptini, after hearing their conversation, said to them, “By this time, you should have decided how we are going to protect the wealth and the people.”

Nivriniya held her hands softly and said, “Mother, I will, but first I am entitled to solve the enmity of the twins towards our city.”

Dhaneer thoughtfully said, “Queen, our days are numbered for encountering the disaster. You might have little time left for a public summon.”

Nivriniya rose and put her shawl on top of her war suit and said, “This is my dictum that I will let my legacy live forever, the legacy of protecting Rithvabhor at the right time and leading it on the right path.”

Dhaneer stepped back to give way for Nivriniya to move forward.

Ishiya along with her parade reached the borders to leave the city. Nivriniya and Rivambishu were present to give them a royal send-off. She received the token of a gift from Nivriniya, which was an intricately designed sword. Nivriniya said to her, “Ishiya Dyaanhi, the queen of Genijhal, you and your army did a splendid fight. Your support for our city is integral to the protection of the city. We won’t forget your help. Our kingdoms should continue this friendship forever.”

Ishiya adjusted the sword into her rest case hanging

around her waist. She had some nagging questions on her mind like the strange mystery about the new metal, how they could predict a natural disaster such as an earthquake and how they will protect the wealth. She just thought to ask one so she said, “You have emerged as the able ruler protecting your city from the wrong hands, but how will you save it from nature?”

Nivriniya with a radiant smile said, “We are waiting for that disaster; as per the predictions by our scientists, it will only be a minor movement underground. But the impact is that the compositions of the metal will be altered scientifically. Our scientist is still working on it to obtain greater conclusions. We will let you know about it soon.”

She took her father’s pamphlet from the bag she wore crisscrossed over her torso and said, “We all are believing the legacy left by my father, Tvagu Hiadeer. Certainly, this is going to save us.”

Ishiya was curious to know about it in depth, but her time was running out as she had to be in her kingdom within a week. She just thought to give her confidence and bid farewell to her. So she said, “Nivriniya, you are a true saviour of this city. Let all the good be showered on you to make you happier always. We will meet in future.”

She climbed on her horse and grabbed its reins tightly. She waved her hands and pulled the reins backwards to start her ride.

Nivriniya looked towards Rivambishu and said, “A good friend, moreover a righteous person. She and her kingdom should prosper. Isn’t it?”

Rivambishu so far thinking about the words Nivriniya had uttered, asked her, “Nivriniya, according to Dhaneer’s research, he had mentioned that the earthquake is certain and

that due to eruptions of some chemical solutions from the sea bed, the metal would dwindle slowly. Then how are you so confident that you will save our wealth? What is in that old pamphlet you have mentioned on several occasions?"

She replied, "These questions will be answered at the public meeting shortly. As of now, we shall proceed to the court. We have another important duty to fulfil."

CHAPTER - 20

The entire courtroom was filled with the public, those who had cheered for the twins were yelling at them. Some held boards with short writings: Twins, run from here or else we will throw you out of the city"; "Twins, you are selfish, you will fail terribly in your efforts."

A group among the public hurled black powder at them as an act of protesting against them. The twins came with both hands tied at their back, a solid rope tight at their wrists. All started shouting, "Twins, we abhor you, go away."

Biajig and Biajigi stood in front of the queen, who was seated on the maiden chair. She was discussing with all the officials regarding the punishment of the twins. The twins were looking around to see the hatred around the courtroom.

Biajig slowly leaned towards Biajigi and said, "Is it for all this we worked hard all these years? All the adverse reactions have happened."

Biajigi put her head down and said to him, "I am still thinking how we lost in spite of the sufficient army."

Biajig frowned and said, "So, how long will you think of that, squeeze your brain for the rest of the time we have to escape."

Biajigi cued him that court proceedings were about to start.

Nivriniya read out loud the official pamphlet signed by her and other officials. It stated: "Biajig and Biajigi of Dheegadra first entered the city manipulating both Dheegadra and Rithvabhor to fulfil their personal motives. They planned well to make us believe that they are ruling the city towards development. They are culpable of carrying out nearly repeated ten extractions to achieve the composition of the new metal as half the amount. They, with their own research, successfully separated the new metal and traded with more kingdoms. By this, they were gaining partnerships with other kingdoms and also more economical returns, which were not recorded in the wealth procurement of officials. They have also been recognised in the Royal Scientific Society for their discovery of the new metal and its separation methods."

Nivriniya paused there and looked at them and asked, "Until here, are you accepting these accusations?"

Biajig and Biajigi felt that they had to surmount some aghast against the truths unveiled about them. Biajigi broke the silence and said, "We accept the accusations, but we would like to remind you that your clan head was the one who made us rulers. So why the blame only on us, we just orchestrated the circumstances according to us."

Nivriniya thought for a while and said, "I will consider your acceptance but the argument you put forth is baseless; at that time, we had no other option so we asked you to rule."

She turned the pamphlet over and continued: "The city's drought was primarily due to the environmental impact manifested by the extractions carried out. You also hired some secret officials of your choice to work for you. Your ultimate plan was to acquire our kingdom through war. By this, you would have had command over the wealth. You

planned to attain the highest status in the society as a unique possessor of the new metal. This would have increased your wealth. And then you thought to trade with more kingdoms and with their help expand the kingdom. So that you would become a prominent ruler for all. All would have obliged with your orders and your fame would fly on a high peak.

“You never thought for the people or for the development of the city. It was only self-motivated goals to have a better future for yourselves.”

Biajig justified himself by saying, “Though we ruled for a short span of time, during our reign, the city developed manifold. We made the trading business achieve new heights.”

Nivriniya was annoyed with their justifications for their deeds and said, “If you stop there, I will come back to all your justifications after completing the final judgment we have decided.”

The courtroom erupted with screams here and there, “Imprison them, betrayers!” Nivriniya, as a gesture to silence them, cued the guards to ring the bell once. After hearing the long bell, the people fell into silence.

She said in a commanding tone, looking at the twins, “The justifications you have provided are not worth to pardon you. You inflicted our city with a series of losses. Your repeated extractions, which otherwise we would have carried out annually, consumed a huge amount of charcoal, wood and furnace oils. This has driven our city to drastic drought. The wealth annually accommodated reduced in levels terribly as you traded this with other kingdoms secretly to gain their support for kingdom expansion. You bribed some officials in order to lend you help. Under your reign, the currency production, which used three by fourth of the wealth, was not in progress. You delayed the production as you were in need

of the site for the separation of the new metal and silver.”

She took out the final pamphlet of judgment and said, “All your reforms were brought in order to make people believe you. Manipulations, betrayal, selfishness and belligerent deeds, all these are the accusations against you for which you will be serving prison terms for altogether twenty years.”

Biajig put his head down out of desperation; Biajigi was thinking to herself, What went wrong in the entire plan? We were not meant to be here.

She quickly noticed Biajig murmuring to himself. He sniffed heavily, also frustrated with his tied hands. She said in a husky tone, “Are you—”

He immediately turned towards her and uttered intensely, “Plan at least now to escape, there is something mysterious about the wealth. There seems to be an earthquake occurring very soon, which is going to wipe out the wealth.”

Nivriniya received the signed judgment pamphlet by her officials. She confirmed it and sealed her final royal stamp on it. The people all over cheered for her, “Nivriniya, our queen, victory for Rithvabhor!”

There was another messenger to reach Dheegadra to inform the king about manifestations after the war. Nivriniya ordered for the court to disperse and she left with her guards. The twins were taken into custody by the prison officials. They took them to the prison underground the court.

CHAPTER - 21

Deeper and darker, hence was a dungeon, unattractive with iron bars and old unused utensils. At the top, a window through which dim light passed, suffocating the dusts hanging around.

Biajigi had thoughts about the earthquake. She undid her scarf around the neck so as to check whether the guards were watching her. They seemed to have not noticed the slight movement. She maintained that pace and said to him huskily, “Were those true?”

Biajig nodded his head. She was not able to question him further. The guards opened two diagonally opposite prison cells to lodge them separately.

The twins entered with uncertainty and disbelief that they were going to spend twenty years of their life here in this dungeon. Biajigi looked at Biajig; he was perplexed thinking something. She said to herself, *I will not let our hard work all these years result in us here as prisoners. Together, we plan, we execute and win it in our way. She entered her cell and started gathering ways to escape.*

Nivrinia gave a quick visit to check on the improving conditions of her mother. The doctor gave her assurance that her mother would be able to walk after a week's rest. She,

along with Dhaneer and Rivambishu, then headed towards the Cave of Silver.

Dhaneer took out some pamphlets and presented them to Nivriniya. Rivambishu said, “Nivriniya, you are believing in your father’s work. Then what is this legacy you are talking about?”

Dhaneer also had the same nagging question about the legacy pamphlet left by her father she had mentioned more in recent times. He held his long face with uncertainty. Rivambishu was waiting for her reply.

She sighed, unwound her knotted pocket and flipped the pamphlet. In it, ‘A legacy for the future’ was written boldly. Under it, quickly scribbled notes were written haphazardly. Dhaneer and Rivambishu together peeped into it to take a look.

Nivriniya held the hammer nearby and snatched some pieces of the metal in hand. She speared it in her hand and said, “Legacy of my father will definitely be a deciding factor on the future of Rithvabhor.”

Dhaneer started to present his conclusions from the valuation and verification of Tvagu’s research. He said to Nivriniya, “Queen, out of your father’s work, there are three most important interpretations. They are, first, the earthquake is expected to occur within this year, to be accurate, exactly within six to eight months from now.”

Rivambishu interrupted, “This is a nerve-racking find by your father. He should be honoured for his prediction. He used a new advanced method for it.”

Nivriniya asked, “Is it so? Could you explain how he predicted it?”

Dhaneer picked up the first pamphlet to show his

conclusions and explained to her, “At the earliest, samples of silver metal and the occurrence of silver was at high proportions, this was evident with some solubility tests. For example, silver is soluble with some chemicals obtained from rock salt. There occurs some precipitations, the unsettled impurities were less at the beginning. So here comes the second prediction, which is the discovery of the new metal.”

He took the metal pieces from her hand and dissolved it in the iron jar, which contained some boiling chemical solution. He filtered the solution for collecting the impurities. Taking some with the metal prongs, he showed it to her. “The impurities were found to be a new metal he termed as sister silver. According to his studies, we are at present carrying out separation of the two metals at the metal purification site.”

Rivambishu held the pamphlets open with his hands spread wide holding the corners. Dhaneer depicted the sketches and pointing, he explained, “The third prediction is that, how the earthquake dwindles the wealth. This shows the upward curve of silver and new metal composition. When it is at its peak, it is certain to come down due to the earthquake. The reason for it is that the first occurrence made some chemical alterations to the composition. This pattern continued for years; the composition reached the peak and when the earthquake will repeat itself after years, it will sweep the metal occurrence. The chemical reaction that happens after the earthquake drains some chemicals needed for the formation of the metal and some intrusions of other chemicals, which will have a great impact on metal formation in the future.”

Nivriniya checked the pamphlets and she cross-verified her father's researches quickly to check for the facts and asked, “But how did he predict the earthquake?”

Rivambishu folded the pamphlet. With a puzzled look on

his face, he said, "That was tricky even for me to understand. It involves scientific temper. Dhaneer was the perfect one to interpret it and also to prove it."

Dhaneer grabbed some sand from the ground. "This sand you see is present in this cave. But years before our establishment here, it was a riverbed. Might be centuries ago. Tvagu Hiadeer, once after finding the occurrence of the new metal, started to research on the reason for its occurrence.

"He had spent years on sampling these specimens to know more about the properties. What he found from his repeated sampling and analysis was amazing. The soil—"

A sudden thunderbolt rattled up high in the sky and the rainy clouds started to bombard more rapidly. There was an immediate gushing of rain as an aftermath effect.

Rivambishu said to them, "Are we locked up here? Anyway, we need to wait for the rain to subside."

Nivriniya torched the lamp kept at the side using a firestick. She said, "We shall wait. But tell me at least your conclusions. We need to announce it to the public."

Dhaneer said, "To put it in simpler terms, the chemical analysis of metal specimens and the soil revealed that the river once formed was overwhelmed with minerals. These minerals came to the surface as the river over time got drained due to environmental effects."

Rivambishu took out the pamphlet containing the sketches Dhaneer had drawn out of Tvagu's work. He opened it widely and said, "You can see that here are some sketches to indicate how your father arrived at the facts."

Dhaneer torched a firestick near to the pamphlet. He picked a twig from the ground and stretched it along the

outline of a picture. He said, “A river, beneath it minerals, this was the status before the occurrence of the earthquake.”

His pointer outlined the picture that had a curve running across and under the curve some minerals depicted with dots in different colours. He flipped the pamphlet to show her the other side. He continued, “These minerals came to the surface simultaneously as the river was drained. The only way these would have come to the surface is that by heat fluids, which would make this mineral-containing fluid solution move upwards and cool at the surface.”

He added, “The soil with these metals occurring on the surface when tested contained some hot fluid samples. This proves that this was the reason for the metal formation.”

Nivriniya said, “How is that connected to the earthquake?”

Dhaneer, taking out the next pamphlet, said, “Here you can see how an earthquake occurs. First the plates of the boundary lines move rapidly, then it transforms into an earthquake when the plates indulge in rapid and frequent movements.”

There were some scientific pictures depicting the formation of plates and their movements. Then Rivambishu said, “We need to be cautious as this is going to repeat now in another six months.”

Dhaneer said, “Yes; first Tvagu was so intelligent to arrive at the conclusion that this earthquake is the only natural phenomenon that occurs under the crust, which should have caused the path for hot fluid.”

Rivambishu immediately drew the firestick towards the opening gate and pointed it outside to check the weather. He said, “Now the rain is slowing down in its pace. So far, being with Dhaneer, I have learnt to talk scientifically as he

does.”He winked at both and they too giggled for a while.

Dhaneer quickly turned serious to make her clear about the conclusions of her father. He said, “The proof of this is that the constituents of the metal and the basic science that says that core present in the deep underground has hot fluids. This might be tricky, but for him and me, it’s part of an imagination we perceive in our minds.”

He took the metal piece again and said, “As I said earlier, the impurities of the metal contain some chemical solutions that have counter effects on the production of the metal. He just separated the chemical and made it react with the silver and sister silver. He was shocked to find that this chemical was the reason that dampened the silver and made sister silver unaffected. After an earthquake, both metals are prone to destruction because of the intrusion of more chemicals.”

He paused for a while to show some proofs of it, which he had recorded in the pamphlets by picturising the experiments he had carried out.

Nivriniya looked at it thoroughly. He continued with his explanation, “The chemical, which is lower in proportions to affect the sister silver, made it occur more unaffected. Again, the chemical could find a way only through the cracks below, which would occur by plate movements.

“He extrapolated all the interpreted proportionate occurrences of the metal composition to arrive at the fact there is more intrusion of chemicals, which means rapid movement of plates. This means an earthquake is certain to occur.”

Nivriniya looked at Rivambishu for his opinion. He quietly rubbed his temple. He mumbled to himself, *What occurred once will always find ways to occur to test our expertise and also to show that it is inevitable.*

She asked him, “So are you expressing something?”

He said, “If something is inevitable, how will we protect the wealth?”

Dhaneer said, “Yes, in his last days, Tvagu, after spending time to prove it to others, researched how to protect the wealth. Before its completion, he left us.”

Nivriniya was stuck with a yet another nagging question. “Are you certain that this would not affect the people?”

Dhaneer said, “According to your father’s conclusions and my verifications, when its vibrations occurred initially, it didn’t create major destruction. So, that pattern is expected now. Moreover, it is uncertain about nature. We are aiming only for our chances. The rest is always unpredictable.”

Rivambishu nodded his head and said, “We will pray for the least impact, but which legacy other than this could ever protect the wealth?”

Nivriniya, knowing that the reply will be no, asked Dhaneer hesitantly, “Are you confident that we will survive this earthquake with our wealth too?”

Dhaneer said with the same hesitation, “With respect to our research, this will not have a major impact on us; rather, it will target our wealth. Even when it causes life-threatening destruction, we can escape by our exodus to our friendly kingdoms beforehand.”

Nivriniya thought for a while and then said, “I too thought about that option. But before it, we need to face another pressing issue. I will open it up at the public meeting.”

Rivambishu thought to himself, *She has found a way out to protect the wealth. So far, the legacy she has spoken of must have given her a solution.*

He was the first to sense the cool breeze prevailing after the rain. He took a deep breath and said, “We will relish this moment as we are leaving our legacy of spending hours in the cave just to have a conversation.”

Nivriniya and Dhaneer together said, “Today, you are too jovial.”

Dhaneer said to him, “What about the legacy you left for your followers?”

Rivambishu answered loudly, “On behalf of themselves, they have already left their legacy for having learnt on their own without their teacher who was busy with a brainy person.” His tone softened and his heart melted. He said, “The person who interpreted, proved and finally submitted the work to the Royal Science Society for acclaiming laurels for Tvagu.”

He wiped his merry tears and said, “I am grateful to you, indeed you have such a great heart to prove the work of Tvagu.”

Nivriniya repeated the words of Rivambishu, “Yes, you did great. I too am grateful to you; you have proved my father’s work. His soul will now rest in peace.”

Dhaneer was so glad that he bowed to both, expressing pleasure, and said, “I owe it as my responsibility to bring laurels for the work of Tvagu. He deserves it. I also regret at times that he should have earned it when he was alive. Sometimes, I rather take it that I am destined to prove his work. I am privileged to do so for such a great scientist. Moreover, my legacy—”

Rivambishu patted Dhaneer to encourage his spirited words. “Speaking of legacy, what about the twins? They will

think how to escape and re-enter the city to capture it. Be safe with them,” he said to Nivriniya.

She replied, “They are always unreliable. Their minds will now calculate how to escape from the prison. But the cells in which they are lodged have sound absorbents such that nothing is heard outside the cell. All the possible paths leading to outside such as underground paths or the roof are locked and secured.”

Rivambishu alerted both and said, “Let’s move before getting drenched in another shower of rain.”

The trio came out of the cave and headed towards the palace. The cart, after taking stops at Dhaneer and Rivambishu’s cottage, went straight to the palace carrying the queen. Her official came running to inform her about the visit of Methia to the prison.

She said to the official, “Let her visit. It’s not dangerous. She needs to vent her emotions to them.”

It was a deep cold dark. The already dark dungeon was still scarier amidst the howling winds. There were little stars lit up in the sky and the moon was dazzling white. Then and there, silent thunders for a brief time shook between the fighting clouds.

Methia wailed for a while along with the rhythm of the winds. It seemed that the howling winds were trying to cajole her. Only for the arrival of the visitor, the prison was lighted up.

She wiped her tears and looked into the cell. She was terrified by Biajig’s appearance behind the well caged bars. He came near her, “Why are you awake? You need to take rest. Tomorrow morning, we three by this time will be heading to Kiyash.”

Methia understood that they had found a way to escape from the cell. She said to him, "I am fooled even now. I thought you would have realised your mistakes and would be guilty for yourself. But still you are the same."

Biajig aggressively said, "The queen has made us prisoners. She thinks if we are separate, we can't plan. Look here, she has placed many sound absorbents." He pointed towards the thick jute mats covered all around and metallic articles hanging here and there. He said, laughing sarcastically, "We talk just by banging on the bars. We have planned. This time, we will execute it absolutely with no fault."

He clanged on the bar once. In return, from the diagonally opposite cell, Biajigi clanged onto the bar twice. Biajig then clanged on the bar heavily. With a gap, he banged slowly on the bar. Biajigi, who understood what he was about to say, banged on the bar slowly.

Methia caught his hands to stop his banging language and said, "I know that you just now spoke about my presence. She too understood that. I have seen you speaking with dots and dashes in your research times to keep your work secret. So far being with you, at least I can understand your emotions in your language."

Biajig pulled his hands away and said, "Don't interfere in our plan, it's unnecessary for you. Just do what we say. You are coming with us."

Methia just shouted, "Stop there. Hereafter, unless you apologise, I won't live with you. Only when you introspect your deeds, you will have the heart to care for me."

She cuddled her bumpy stomach. Biajig noticed and his eyes welled up with tears. He said in a cheerful tone, "You are carrying our baby. From when?"

Methia leaned on the cellbars. She said, “Atlast you care for me.”Her voice had a fed-up tone. “When I was about to reveal to you on that day when you left me here,you gave me no time to speak.I thought you would atleast notice when I fought against you.But you didn’t.Finally, after being defeated and lodged in prison, you are feeling for me now.”

Biajigheld her hands through the gap between the bars and said, “Be with us.We will have a bright future.Otherwise, I will be here locked inside this dungeon for twenty years.I will not be able to see our child.”

She released her hands from his hold and said, “Pay for your stubbornness,I am not leaving anywhere.Forget us.” She walked off from there.

Biajig shouted, “No,we won’t target this city.We have a new plan. Just come back.I can’t live without seeing my child.”

Biajigi heard Biajig shouting, “Come back.I want my child.” She was in a confused state, so she banged on the bar lightly thrice.

Biajig was not able to reply to her.He was distressed thinking about Methia’s condition.Biajigi incessantly banged but heard no reply.So she stopped and thought about Methia.Suddenly, she remembered that Methia earlier had been fighting with one hand and the other hand resting on her abdomen.A quick flash of Methia fighting carefully with Biajig made her realise that she was carrying a baby.

As soon as she left,the guards blew the lamps off. The dungeon was still darker and silent.Both slept on the rough bed thinking about their future.

Methia came running into the palace and entered her

room, weeping all the way. Nivriniya, who was watching this from her balcony, thought to herself, *She must not be punished. Her child should have a better future.*

She decided that she would speak to Methia about pardoning the twins on the condition that they promise the city that in future, no threat would be imminent from them.

CHAPTER - 22

Morning mist covered the city;the people were busy decorating the city.Even before sunrise,the Dwambika temple had worshippers thronging to offer their prayers.

Taaruradhi, after selling her flowers sooner than ever before,took her gift basket with special flowers to present to Nivriniya as a token.Nivriniya came out of the palace and wasseated on her cart,about to head to Dwambika temple.

As per traditions for victory celebration of the kingdom,there was mass prayer offered to the Dwambika goddess.There was also a public summon shortly after the prayers.Nivriniya's attire was meticulously designed for a queen for the traditional prayers.It was brownish red with art work beautifying its dazzling glow.She made her ornaments simple—a silvery necklace, ear studs and some bracelets made of sister silver.

Taaruradhi met Nivriniya on the way and presented her the gift.She whole heartedly accepted it andalso offered her a ride along with her to Dwambika Temple.

People gathered around the temple where a centralised platform had been built for the ceremony.Rivambishu was the one preparing for the rituals.His disciples were reciting the epic slogans praising and greeting Dwambika.

People were showering flowers and cheering together. From the cart, both stepped onto the platform. Nivriniya sat on the opposite plank well decorated for the queen to be seated. Deeptini was sitting on a wheelchair accompanied by the doctor to check her conditions. Taaruradhi was also beside Deeptini.

Rivambishu gave Nivriniya some hand-cleansing liquids before performing the rituals. An hour-long ritual ended with everyone singing their clan song. As part of the celebration and invoking the blessings of Dwambika, the dance crew performed their clan's silver dance.

All enjoyed the food served with their favourite satoor. They relished the food and assembled in front of the temple for the public summon. Nivriniya stood on the dais arranged for her. There were many sound amplifiers in front of her speaking stand. She looked towards her mother. Deeptini took her hand near to the heart and whispered, "Speak from your heart."

Though it was not audible to her, she understood that she should follow her heart. She nodded her head at her. She started, "Victory to Rithvabhor!"

Biajig and Biajigi ate the food served to them. Both were thinking about their life in Dheegadra. Biajig was not able to complete his food. A thought was disturbing him terribly. *What if I failed in my expertise. We were able to plan everything. We also researched about the metal, its properties and purification. But we failed in that there is going to be an earthquake that will destroy the metal.*

Biajigi was also not able to eat completely. She cleaned her plate and kept it aside. She started questioning herself. *Is that true, an earthquake and then metal wealth dwindles. How are they so certain? Why were we not able to analyse it?*

Biajig and Biajigi together raised a single question to

themselves that made them introspect—Have we failed as scientists amidst the suffocation of our selfish goals?

Biajig was still guiltier. He started to weep and said, “I even failed that I didn’t notice my life in her. Yes, then I have failed in my life as scientist and as father.”

Biajigi cried louder and shouted, “I failed as a scientist and as a sister. I should have led him on the right path. But I myself turned to murder Deeptini who did no harm other than believing us.”

Both sat in the corner wailing in guilty realisation of their mistakes. They had themselves foiled their plan with each not initiating steps to implement it.

Dhaneer, after adjusting the faulty sound amplifiers, checked for its audibility. Nivriniya again stepped on the dais. This time in a louder voice, she said, “Victory to Rithvabhor!”

People too cheered, “Victory, victory.”

Nivriniya said, “Rithvabhor, as I said earlier, what is given will be taken back soon. The earthquake is about to happen within six to eight months. All the research materials have been sent to the Royal Science Society for acclamation.

“As soon as they approve and recognise our research, the city’s scientist, Tvagu Hiadeer, will be honoured for his work. His legacy will help us protect our wealth.”

Everyone murmured, “Tvagu Hiadeer, his work is going to protect us. We are blessed.”

Some whispered, “He was earlier castigated for all these predictions. But when it is true, we need to thank him. He is a real saviour.”

But some questioned the authenticity and said, “How

could we believe his predictions?What if it goes wrong?”

Nivriniya said, “The earthquake is certain to happen.Due to this, a chemical alteration would cause both the metals to dwindle.

For you to understand,Dhaneer,who researched and verified the theory, will read out his conclusions.”

Dhaneer came in front of the speaking stand.He was nervous to face the crowd.He gathered his courage and spoke, “The earthquake is certain to happen,as we have tested various samples of the metal for the presence of a chemical.It proved that the earthquake is about to happen in six to eight months.The proofs have been submitted to the Royal Science Society for approval.

“Further,for your reference,the drought was derived out of extraction of the metals.So it was not natural.But the new metal,which is called sister silver,made the fuel exhaust sooner.

“The work of Tvagu helped us to a great extent that his separation methods helped us separate the metals.We have sent those samples too to get recognition as the possessor of the new metal.

“Chances of the predictions going wrong are very low,as the testing and analysis has made us obtain results that support the theory.”

He turned towards Nivriniya for taking over the dais.He stepped back for Nivriniya.She took out the old pamphlet from her pouch. She raised her hand to show them the pamphlet.

“You can see this.It’s a note left by my father. I found it in his possessions. He had scribbled some notes during his last days.But this is the one, a legacy by him and this will save us.”

Rivambishu was eager to hear it out finally.He looked at

her curiously. Everyone held the same expression. They were excited to hear what she was about to say.

“I know, you may think how is that possible. You might remember what I spoke about legacy. Now this is the legacy left by him. I will read out the exact words. It might sound clumsy. But just hear what he has to say.”

“I spent my days researching on how to protect the wealth from the chemical alteration. But I could not accomplish it. I am dying of poor health. I won’t live longer. Yes, I will prove to the people that I am correct. They will believe me when the composition attains half and then when it deteriorates after the earthquake.

“I am unable to write, but on my death bed, I thought to write this. The metal, when it is half, increases rapidly twice, three by four, in two months. The earthquake, four months, more new metal. Chemical won’t disturb new metal. But more after earthquake, new metal decrease. Lot of flow. But after new metal. Reverse. Hundred years.

“First silver, chemical intruded, new metal came. Now after new metal, chemical become mixed with it. Do not disturb silver formation. More silver forms rapidly. Reverse. Extract to the last silver. Make it again to repeat.”

With a spark in her eyes, she asked enthusiastically, “Did you get it?”

Dhaneer was the only one who understood and said, “Yes, it’s possible.”

Rivambishu scratched his head and said to himself, *So he says something... reversing and repeating. If that helps us protect, then it is truly a legacy.*

People looked at each other and asked among themselves,

“Did you understand?”

Nivriniya finally said, “I knew you would not understand these last written words. I will explain it now from my understanding. Before the first earthquake, the silver was with a higher composition. The chemical intruded was lower in concentration, so it least affected the new metal. Now if again the earthquake occurs, if the silver metal is in the least composition (if more new metal is extracted within four months, so new metal in higher composition, silver in least composition) and new metal is in higher composition, chemical that would now start affecting the new metal, the silver though in least composition will start forming rapidly. This would attain the higher composition over a period of time.”

Those who grasped it asked, “What will happen to this in future? Is this a cycle?”

Nivriniya immediately answered, “Future is always uncertain. We need to wait for time to research on this further. But even if it happens, we could repeat this balance. More accurately, yes, it’s a cycle. We could follow this strategy.”

People started cheering as they understood that there was a solution to protect the wealth. They were happier than ever and everyone felt relief.

Nivriniya said in a commanding tone, “For the safety of earthquake protection, we will conduct drills to save yourself. Some rehabilitation centres are also under construction. People are welcome to stay in nearby cities during the earthquake-prone months. We will announce it soon.

“To finish my oration, I am going to propel one order. Extract the metal to the last silver. Extract rapidly. Soon, sister silver will occur in a higher composition. Hence, when the earthquake occurs, over time, it will affect sister silver. Gradually, silver will start to form once again. So we will

again be blessed with silver all together.”

Deeptini, with the help of Taaruradhi, stood up and gave her a standing ovation. Rivambishu said loudly, “Yes, to the last silver.”

Dhaneer praised Tvagu for his incredible work and said to Nivriniya, “This is truly a legacy.”

Nivriniya raised her hand and said, “We will together leave the legacy for protecting the wealth in spite of all odds. So let’s extract it to the last silver.”

People cheered her and said together, “We have left our legacy to live forever.”

EPILOGUE

After a few months

Many kingdoms surrounding Rithvabhor were using the currency from Rithvabhor. Most of their economic activities were dependent on it. The currencies were valued highly. Also ornaments, artilleries and defence equipment were on high demand from Rithvabhor.

Suddenly, one afternoon, Brinari came running to the palace. He went straight to the courtroom. He saw Nivriniya busy with her officials. He just shouted, “Queen, I saw silver hanging in the cave.”

Everyone including Nivriniya looked at him curiously. He further said, “I saw the silver hanging down.”

Biajig and Biajigi, who were among the officials seated with Nivriniya, looked at her excitedly. Deeptini came to hug her daughter. Nivriniya just thanked her father and prayed for a while to Dwambika silently.

People in Rithvabhor started gathering near the Cave of Silver. Nivriniya, along with Dhaneer, came outside with a metal piece in their hands. They shouted, “Victory to Rithvabhor!”

The End, But the Legacy Continues...

