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Full Story Of Mahabharata In English

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The Eternal Epic: Understanding the Full Story of Mahabharata in English

The **Mahabharata**is not merely a story; it is an ocean of wisdom, a philosophical treatise, and a historical chronicle all woven into one grand narrative. For centuries, the full story of Mahabharata in English has captivated readers across the globe, offering profound insights into duty, righteousness, ambition, and the human condition. This ancient Indian epic, attributed to the sage Vyasa, remains the longest poem ever written, containing over 100,000 verses. More than just a tale of a family feud, it is a mirror reflecting the eternal struggle between good and evil, dharma and adharma. Let us embark on a journey through this magnificent saga, unraveling its key characters, pivotal events, and timeless lessons.

The Origins: The Kuru Dynasty and the Birth of the Rivalry

To understand the full story of Mahabharata in English, one must first explore the lineage of the Kuru dynasty. The story begins with King Shantanu, a ruler of Hastinapur, who fell in love with the goddess Ganga. They had a son named Devavrata, who would later be known as Bhishma. Bhishma took a terrible vow of celibacy and lifelong servitude to the throne of Hastinapur, ensuring that his father could marry Satyavati, a fisherwoman. This vow, while noble, set the stage for future complications.

Satyavati had two sons: Chitrangada and Vichitravirya. Both died young, leaving the dynasty without a direct heir. To continue the lineage, Vyasa, the sage and son of Satyavati, was called upon to father children with the two widows of Vichitravirya. Thus were born Dhritarashtra, who was blind; Pandu, who was pale; and Vidura, who was wise and born to a maid. Dhritarashtra, despite being the eldest, could not be king due to his blindness, so Pandu was crowned.

The Pandavas and the Kauravas: The Two Branches of the Family

Pandu had five sons through his two wives, Kunti and Madri. These were the **Pandavas**: Yudhishthira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva. They were divinely born, each possessing unique strengths and virtues. Dhritarashtra, however, had one hundred sons, the **Kauravas**, led by the eldest, Duryodhana. From their childhood, a deep-seated rivalry simmered between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Duryodhana, consumed by jealousy and ambition, could not bear the thought of his cousins inheriting the throne.

The full story of Mahabharata in English is incomplete without highlighting the role of Lord Krishna, who was a cousin to both families and an incarnation of the divine. He was a close friend and guide to the Pandavas, especially to Arjuna, and his wisdom would prove crucial in the events to come.

The Conspiracy and the Escape: The Wax Palace

Duryodhana's hatred for the Pandavas grew with time. With the help of his cunning uncle, Shakuni, he devised a plan to kill the Pandavas. They built a beautiful palace made of lac and other flammable materials, known as

the "House of Wax," and invited the Pandavas to live there. The plan was to set the palace on fire while they slept. However, the Pandavas, warned by their uncle Vidura, escaped through a secret tunnel. They fled into the forest, disguised as Brahmins, leaving Duryodhana to believe they had perished.

Draupadi's Swayamvara: A Union of Destiny

While living incognito, the Pandavas heard of the Swayamvara (a ceremony where a princess chooses her husband) of Draupadi, the princess of Panchala. The challenge was to string a mighty bow and shoot a fish target while looking only at its reflection in the water. Many mighty kings failed, but Arjuna succeeded. The five brothers returned home with Draupadi, and due to a misunderstanding, Kunti asked Arjuna to share whatever he had brought with his brothers. Bound by their mother's words, Draupadi became the common wife of all five Pandavas. This unique marriage was a defining moment in the full story of Mahabharata in English, strengthening their bond and their claim to power.

The Division of the Kingdom and the Game of Dice

Upon the Pandavas' return, a conflict seemed inevitable. To avoid war, the elders of the family divided the kingdom. The Pandavas received the barren land of Khandavaprastha, which they transformed into the magnificent city of Indraprastha. Yudhishthira performed the Rajasuya Yagna, establishing his supremacy. This success infuriated Duryodhana further.

Shakuni, a master of dice, challenged Yudhishthira to a game of dice. Yudhishthira, despite his wisdom, had a weakness for gambling. He accepted the invitation. One by one, he lost his kingdom, his wealth, his brothers, and finally, himself. In a final, terrible turn, he staked and lost Draupadi. The Kauravas dragged Draupadi into the court, and Dushasana, Duryodhana's brother, attempted to disrobe her in front of the entire assembly. It was at this moment that Draupadi prayed to Krishna, who miraculously protected her honor by making her sari endless. This event, known as **Draupadi's Cheer Haran**, is one of the most pivotal and emotional episodes in the entire saga.

Enraged, Bhima took a vow that he would drink Dushasana's blood and break Duryodhana's thigh. The elders, horrified, forced Dhritarashtra to intervene. He returned everything to the Pandavas, but Duryodhana called them back for one more game. The terms were set: the losers would go into exile for thirteen years, and the thirteenth year must be spent incognito. Yudhishthira lost again.

The Exile and the Incognito Year

The Pandavas spent twelve years in the forest, enduring hardships and gaining strength. They met sages, fought demons, and collected celestial weapons. The full story of Mahabharata in English during this period is rich with philosophical discussions and moral dilemmas. In the thirteenth year, they lived incognito in the kingdom of Virata. Bhima killed a powerful demon, Arjuna taught dance to the princess, and they served in various roles. Their true identities were nearly exposed, but they managed to complete the year successfully.

The Negotiation for Peace: Krishna's Mission

After the exile, the Pandavas sent an ambassador to Hastinapur to demand their rightful share of the kingdom. Krishna himself went as a peace envoy. He asked for just five villages for the Pandavas, but Duryodhana refused, saying he would not give them even a needle-point of land. War was now inevitable.

The Kurukshetra War: The Bhagavad Gita

The war of Kurukshetra is the climax of the full story of Mahabharata in English. It was a war between good and

evil, dharma and adharma. On one side were the Pandavas, supported by Krishna, and on the other were the Kauravas, supported by great warriors like Bhishma, Dronacharya, and Karna.

The Bhagavad Gita: The Song of the Divine

As the armies stood facing each other, Arjuna was overcome with grief and confusion. He saw his grandsire Bhishma, his teacher Dronacharya, and his cousins on the opposing side. He laid down his bow, refusing to fight. At this moment, Krishna imparted the divine wisdom of the **Bhagavad Gita**. This conversation is the spiritual heart of the epic. Krishna taught Arjuna about the immortality of the soul, the nature of duty (dharma), the paths of devotion, action, and knowledge. He said, "You have a right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions." This teaching transformed Arjuna, and he rose to fight.

The Great War: Eighteen Days of Carnage

The war lasted eighteen days, each day filled with incredible feats of valor and tragedy. The full story of Mahabharata in English describes these battles in vivid detail:

- Bhishma's Fall: On the tenth day, Bhishma, invincible by his own vow, was brought down by Arjuna with the help of Shikhandi. Bhishma lay on a bed of arrows, waiting for the auspicious moment to die.
- Dronacharya's Death: On the fifteenth day, Dronacharya was killed by Dhrishtadyumna after Yudhishthira uttered a half-truth about the death of his son, Ashwatthama.
- Karna's Death: On the seventeenth day, Karna, the son of Kunti and the Sun God, fought Arjuna. While Karna was trying to lift his chariot wheel from the mud, Arjuna killed him, following Krishna's advice.
- Duryodhana's End: On the eighteenth day, Duryodhana was killed by Bhima in a mace duel. Bhima struck him on the thigh, fulfilling his vow.

The war ended with the complete annihilation of the Kauravas. Only the five Pandavas and a handful of others survived. The grief and destruction were immense.

The Aftermath: Ashwathama's Curse and the Rule of Yudhishthira

After the war, Yudhishthira was crowned king. However, the victory felt hollow. He performed the Ashwamedha Yagna and ruled wisely. The full story of Mahabharata in English does not end with a happy ever after. It shows the heavy price of war. Even the victors were haunted by guilt and sorrow. The epic teaches that while dharma eventually triumphs, the path is often paved with immense suffering.

The Final Journey: The End of the Pandavas

Years later, the Pandavas, having renounced the world, embarked on their final journey towards the Himalayas to attain salvation. One by one, they fell on the way. Draupadi fell first, then Nakula, Sahadeva, Arjuna, and Bhima. Only Yudhishthira and a dog reached the top. The dog was revealed to be Dharma, his father. Yudhishthira was then taken to heaven, where he was initially shown the Kauravas sitting on thrones, while his brothers were in hell. This illusion was a final test of his devotion and righteousness. He passed the test, and the entire family was united in the celestial realm.

Why the Mahabharata Still Matters Today

The full story of Mahabharata in English is more relevant today than ever. It is not just a historical or religious text; it is a guide to life. It teaches us about:

- The complexity of Dharma: Right and wrong are not always black and white. The Mahabharata shows that moral choices are often difficult and require deep contemplation.
- The consequences of greed and ambition: Duryodhana's jealousy and ambition led to the destruction of

his entire family.

- The power of truth and humility: Yudhishthira's adherence to truth, despite his flaws, ultimately led to his salvation.
- The value of divine guidance: Krishna's role as a mentor and friend highlights the importance of spiritual wisdom in navigating life's challenges.

The Mahabharata is also a source of some of the most profound philosophical concepts in Hinduism, including the law of karma, reincarnation, and the nature of the self. The Bhagavad Gita, which is a part of this epic, is revered as a universal scripture that transcends religious boundaries.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the full story of Mahabharata in English is a timeless epic that encapsulates the entire spectrum of human experience—love, hate, greed, sacrifice, duty, and redemption. It is a story that has been told and retold for millennia, yet its power to inspire and teach remains undiminished. Whether you read it for its thrilling narrative, its deep philosophy, or its moral lessons, the

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