

THE VIRATA PARVA

-THE COSMIC CRICKET GOD-

RAVISHANKAR S S

Published by
SARASWATHI SAHITYA SAMPADA

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Karnataka, Bharat-561203

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DISCLAIMER & AUTHOR'S NOTE

This is a work of fiction. I wish to make it absolutely clear that all characters, institutions, events, legal proceedings, and situations described in this novel are creations of my imagination or have been used only in a fictitious context. Names such as Virata Parva, Camay, Anishka, and every other character in this story are entirely fictional. If at any point they appear to resemble actual persons, living or deceased, or real incidents, that resemblance is purely coincidental and unintentional—unless I have explicitly used them as fictional representations in the public interest.

The events narrated here—including the idea of a honeytrap operation in South Africa, the personal and romantic life of a cricketer and his celebrity wife, intimate moments, an arrest, a stampede at a fictionalized version of the Chinnaswamy Stadium, courtroom proceedings, and subsequent legal reforms—are all dramatized creations of my storytelling imagination.

In this book, I do refer to real issues, such as a stampede, government offices, and positions like the Chief Minister and Home Minister of Karnataka, the Prime Minister, Home Minister, External Affairs Minister of India, and Leader of the Opposition, as well as global organizations such as the World Health Organization. I also touch upon pressing social issues

like surrogate advertising, tobacco and liquor use, addiction, gambling and public health policy. But these references are used only for context and narrative strength—they do not imply any association, endorsement, or criticism of any real person, institution, or authority.

The laws that appear in the novel—the Honeytrap Regulation Act, 2026, and the Surrogate Advertisement Prevention and Control Act, 2026—are completely my inventions. They do not correspond to any real legislation unless such laws are officially enacted in the future.

Where I have portrayed romantic or emotionally sensitive scenes between fictional married couples, they are created within the ethical limits of literary expression. They are not inspired by, nor do they represent, the private lives of any real individuals.

Through this work, my intention is to meaningfully contribute to public awareness about the dangers of nicotine addiction, alcohol consumption, and the manipulative effects of surrogate advertising, while also exploring how fictional citizens and advocates can inspire reforms in law and society.

As the author, I bring to this novel my 14 years of experience as an Advocate practicing before the High Court of Karnataka. Over the years, I have been engaged in practice of law across diverse fields, public interest litigation, including tobacco control, environmental protection, media ethics, law reforms, and constitutional rights. It is my continued endeavor to link law, public health, and social change—through advocacy as well as through literature.

My earlier work, *The Half Shadow*—an epistolary narrative titled *India's Brutal British Connect*, addressed to Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India—reflected my deep commitment in consolidating and strengthening India's Defence Forces under the larger umbrella of nationalism, pride, sacrifice, and belonging.

Virata Parva, my present novel, continues this vision through a blend of legal imagination, fictional drama, and narratives rooted in public interest.

This book is not a documentary or a legal manual. It is a work of creative literature and must be read as such—an exercise of artistic freedom, written in the spirit of national interest and social reflection.

- Ravishankar S.S.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ravishankar S. S. is an author, poet, and advocate, whose writings in both English and Kannada span the vast terrains of love, life, law, justice, politics, and even the laws of the cosmos.

As an advocate practising before the High Court of Karnataka and other courts, he has led crucial Public Interest Litigations in areas that shape the nation's future—environmental protection, cultural heritage, tobacco control, public health policy, and constitutional law. Each of these efforts reflects his deep commitment to national well-being, legal reform, and civic responsibility.

A keen observer of society, governance, and law, his first English novel **The Half Shadow** took the form of an epistolary addressed to Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, suggesting ways to instill unadulterated patriotism in the Defence Forces of India.

With his latest work, **The Virata Parva**, Ravishankar S S, steps into new literary terrain, blending realistic fiction with contemporary issues. Cricket, celebrity culture, honey traps, love, lust, corporate crime, surrogate advertising, politics, public health, and legal reforms are all woven into a narrative that challenges readers to reflect deeply on the society around them. In doing so, he breaks conventional literary boundaries, using storytelling as a mirror of truth and a catalyst for change.

In every courtroom he enters and every page he writes, Ravishankar S. S. carries the same conviction—that law and literature together can awaken a nation, and transform justice from a distant promise into a living reality.

(This author profile has been collectively written and endorsed by representative members of Living Law (United Lawyers Forum), a Facebook group of legal professionals and social thinkers dedicated to advancing dialogue on law, justice, the right to life and public responsibility.)

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KISS OF THE SPIDER

Chapter-1

“In her Madagascan web, every kiss was a thread, every touch a trap—and he never stood a chance.”

Seven Years Ago – Johannesburg, South Africa

The night was still alive in Johannesburg.

The stadium lights had dimmed, but the city pulsed with aftershocks of thunderous applause. From the Wanderers to the velvet-draped corridors of elite clubs, one name rode the electric wind—Virata Parva. He had dazzled with a 137-run masterclass, a symphony of cover drives and cold precision. For cricket lovers, he was no longer just a player; he was prophecy dressed in cricket whites.

But away from the green turf and adoring fans, he was just a man.

Vulnerable.

Unarmed.

And he didn't know it yet—but in the nights to come, he was bowled.

The post-match gala shimmered like a dream forged in diamond dust. Chandeliers blinked like constellations overhead, violins played jazz versions of old Indian melodies, and champagne fountains glittered beside golden statues of past cricket legends.

Virata stood near the bar, relaxed but alert. That was when she appeared. Camay.

She moved like poetry, with elegance sharpened by intent. Hair perfectly curled, dress as red as forbidden fruit, eyes like embers behind frosted glass. She was the daughter of

South African business titan Reginald D'Silva, an immigrant settler whose empire covered everything from mining contracts to media monopolies. But none of that mattered in the moment. What mattered was the way she looked at him—as if he wasn't a star, but a mystery to be solved.

Virata, who had seen admiration a thousand times, was unprepared for curiosity.

They talked. They laughed. He listened. She listened harder.

By the end of the night, her voice was tattooed across his mind.

What began as coincidences became calendar entries. Lunches. Dinners. Rooftop confessions under the African moon. Camay listened in a way others didn't. She asked about pressure, about privacy, about being worshipped and still feeling hollow. Virata found in her the silence between two chaotic innings.

The black iron gates parted like the entrance to a sacred realm. Virata's car glided down the gravel path, flanked by marble statues and moonlit hedges. Before him, Camay's villa emerged like something out of a forgotten legend—elegant, precise, and far too perfect to be real.

Inside, the air hummed with curated silence. The chandeliers caught the light like frozen constellations, each crystal hanging with intentional beauty. Gilded sconces illuminated rare tapestries and ancient artifacts sealed behind glass—items that whispered of empires, betrayals, and long-lost fortunes. The floors were so pristine, it seemed not even dust dared enter.

Virata, a man who had walked through war zones and power corridors with the same cold calm, felt something shift in him as Camay's voice lured him deeper into her lair.

"This way," she said, her words smooth as velvet and just as dangerous.

She led him to the heart of her sanctum—a private room that pulsed with luxury and life. The air was warm, scented faintly with gardenia and heat. A small, temperature-controlled pool gleamed in the center, its water glowing soft blue beneath in-floor lights. Lush green plants bloomed in ornate pots, their leaves alive with color and story. On the walls, paintings of bold strokes and intimate shapes echoed untamed desires. Everything here was designed to disarm.

It worked.

And then—came the moment.

She whispered,

"Do you ever wish you could just stop pretending?"

Virata, who had spent his life behind armor—cricket, emotional, personal—paused.

"Every single day," he said, not knowing this truth would cost him.

"O love, of beauties rare you are the one,

A masterpiece beneath the sun.

Your nose, so gentle, a sculptor's delight,

Delicate grace in the softest light."

She smilingly replied

"And my lips... what do they seem to be?"

He said

"They are roses, cherries, fruits to me.

From one glance rosy—like petals in bloom,
From another, cherries with vibrant perfume,
And then like ripe fruit, full and sweet,
A treasure no words could ever repeat.
Soft, plump, radiant, alive—
The very breath that makes love thrive."

She teased

"Still you compare me so endlessly?"

Taking no time he said

"Your cheeks then—rosy, youthful, divine,
Bursting with life, forever mine.
Your skin, a silk no hand could weave,
Flawless beauty that makes me believe.
Your neck, a curve of elegance rare,
A graceful arc beyond compare.
And your eyes... ah, they undo me still,
They quiet my storms, they bend my will.
Gazing there, I lose all fight,
Pulled to your soul, bathed in light."

She softly

"And what of these tresses, do they please your sight?"

He replied

"Your hair, dark rivers of shining night,
A crown of charm, a symbol true,
Of all that is radiant, all that is you.
And your form—sculpted in harmony's grace,
A perfect rhythm, a goddess's face.
I say again—more exquisite by far,
Than all of the world's fair beauties are."

She stepped closer, silencing him with a kiss

"No more, my love. Let silence speak."

He whispers against her lips

"Then take my surrender, strong yet weak.

I am Virata, who never would yield,

But before your beauty, my heart is sealed.

In love's great battle, I lay my pride,

Forever conquered—forever at your side."

That night, beneath silk sheets and unsaid promises, he surrendered.

The world outside disappeared—the weight of cricket, loyalties, identities. In that room, there was only breath, skin, and the illusion of freedom.

But what Virata could not see—what the darkness hid and desire blurred—was that he had not fallen in love.

He had fallen into a trap.

Outside the villa, cameras hidden like shadows caught the forbidden story—zoomed lenses capturing what the world was never meant to see.

Each touch, each word, each whispered confession—archived, framed, weaponized.

And Camay? She lay beside him with a soft smile on her lips.

Not of affection.

But of victory.

The Trap

Weeks later, Camay presented a favor. Just one shoot. "It's not alcohol," she assured. "Just a premium soda brand. A lifestyle image. Class, not vice."

The set was luxurious. Satin backdrops. Designer glasses. A bottle—Majestic Changers Mineral Water—placed just so. Elegant. Harmless.

But Virata didn't know that behind the veil of legality stood an army of cigarette and liquor syndicates eager to cloak poison in sparkle. His image—smiling, holding the bottle—became an underground anthem. Parties printed his face. Lounges played his ad like a hymn. Youngsters mim-icked not his shots, but his sips.

He realized too late.

He refused the second offer.

And that's when Camay returned—with a new smile, sharper this time.

She dropped the folder on the table. Photographs spilled like acid across his conscience—every angle of inti-macy, framed in betrayal.

“This is just business now,” she said. “Step out, and this becomes every front page in India. Your fans, your family, your wife-to-be—what will they see?”

Virata felt his pulse cage him in.

There was no negotiating with a noose.

The Deal with the Devil

The contracts kept coming. Under shimmering names—Majestic Changers, Majestic Square, Square Life-style—he became the most powerful surrogate brand ambassador on the continent. Legally clean. Morally corroded.

Inside, he was drowning.

Outside, he soared—his cricket transcendent, consistent, radiant.

Money flooded in. His image towered over cities. But guilt haunted the mirror.

He married Anshika, the only truth left untouched. Their love was unshakable, gentle, fierce. She asked about the endorsements once—why a man as successful as him needed surrogate glamour?

He only replied, “It’s legal, and that’s all I’ll say.”

He wanted to confess.

He couldn’t risk breaking what was real.

And Now... Seven Years Later in 2026

The Narendra Modi Stadium roared.



BENGALURU EXPLODES Chapter-2

The Narendra Modi Stadium stood trembling in its own heartbeat. Nights in June rarely carried such fever, but tonight Ahmedabad had turned into a cauldron where every cheer shook the granite pillars and every gasp clawed the silence. Ninety-one thousand voices—some scarlet for Punjab Crown, many crimson for Majestic Changers Karnataka—waited as destiny stitched its patterns under the blinding floodlights.

Virata Parva, captain of the Majestic Changers, stood on strike. His eyes, sharp as flaming embers, glanced back at the giant screen flashing 19.5 overs, 187/9 chasing 190. The Crown's bowler, the young firebrand Nayan Wadhera, clutched the ball with knuckles white. He knew: one good yorker, and the trophy may still glitter in Punjab's colors. But Virata—Virata had written too many finales in his ledger of cricketing gospel to falter here.

The roar of the crowd thinned in Virata's ears, turning into a tunnel of stillness. He looked up at the stands. Far away he could spot a crimson banner unfurled: "Majestic Changers never kneel."

Two runs needed. One ball to seal eternity.

Nayan charged in, desperate, veins shuddering. A full toss—slipping too wide. Yet fate cannot hide when destiny hunts. Virata's bat sliced through the humid air with a roar louder than the stadium itself.

CRACK!

The ball flew clean, majestic, like a comet ripped from earth to pierce the sky. It soared straight over cover, slicing through the neon glare. For a heartbeat, time froze—the nation holding its breath. And then, with an almost divine precision, the ball cannoned into the massive 40Ft x 20Ft Light Emersion Display hoarding beyond the boundary.

The screen fizzed, sparked, and then bloomed in light.

There, across glowing pixels, was the advertisement fate herself had conspired to script—Virata, immortalized, holding a chilled bottle of Majestic Changers Mineral Water. Everyone knew what lay beneath that surrogate sparkle: the whiskey of champions, masquerading as purity.

The struck hoarding glittered, the bottle in Virata's advert almost toasting the shot he had just played. Cameras zoomed, broadcasters gasped, millions across continents froze screens and whispered: "He's done it again."

The stadium erupted. Fireworks tore into the night. Red and gold confetti cascaded like a storm as teammates stormed onto the field. Joe Shepherd was the first to lift Virata on his shoulders as drums, chants, and horns drowned every mortal thought. The scoreboard, now screaming MCK Wins: Majestic Changers Karnataka are 2026 Champions! was only a reminder of what eyes had already believed.

Punjab Crown stood scattered, bewildered, stripped of their iron resolve. Their captain shook his head, almost laughing at destiny's stubborn grip. The trophy was no longer theirs to chase.

But beyond the stadium, beyond the final score, the story was only beginning.

Bengaluru Explodes

That night, the city did not sleep.

Bengaluru's veins turned crimson with victory. Fireworks rained over Bengaluru like Deepavali. MG Road, Church Street transformed into an endless carnival, and the pubs of Koramangala bled dry of Majestic Changers whiskey before midnight.

Young adults, dressed in crimson jerseys, spilled out of dance floors and into the streets. They climbed atop cars, waved glowing bottles like holy relics, and poured amber liquid down their throats as if drinking Virata's courage it-self. Strangers became brothers, lovers became poets, and even the traffic lights seemed to blink in rhythm with the chants:

“Changer! Changer! Never kneel—Virata is our flame of steel!”

The city roared in a single, drunken chorus.

What began as cricket celebration melted into something bigger—a ritual. Clubs opened their rooftops, DJs spun remixed cricket chants into anthems, and projector screens endlessly replayed that one frame: Virata's six shat-tering the hoarding, the glowing bottle of Majestic Changers Mineral Water raised like a chalice of destiny.

But beneath that shine lay the truth. Everyone knew “Mineral Water” was only a veil. Beneath the surrogate

shimmer, it was Majestic Changers Whiskey that had won the night. And it was not just whiskey.

Every corner pub that evening carried a tray of Majestic Square Premium Cigarettes, offered like badges of loyalty. Advertised as a “Square Lifestyle Accessory,” but wrapped in golden filters, these smokes moved through the crowd like medals of the modern warrior. Young men lit them with trembling hands, girls puffed into the air with laughter, and the smoke itself became a halo circling the crimson mob.

Posters, neon screens, and holograms fed the fire:

—Virata’s silhouette holding a glowing Changers bottle.

—A billboard of the Majestic Square Chocolate pack glowing with slogans: “Celebrate the Majestic Way. It was a indirect advertisement to Majestic Square Cigarettes”

—Advertisements on giant screens near MG Road whispering: “Victory Tastes Better with Majestic.”

The surrogate campaigns—born under the excuse of “water,” “chocolate,” “accessories,” “lifestyle”—had that night transformed into what they always meant to be: deadly brands of liquor and tobacco selling themselves as glory, as celebration, as love.

The young did not see.

How could they, when the fever of ten years of waiting for a trophy had exploded in one night? To them, the burn of whiskey was the taste of triumph; the drag of a cigarette was the breath of victory.

No one thought of lungs that would blacken. No one thought of livers that would drown.

Health warnings were drowned by DJ beats, and the ash of a hundred thousand cigarettes curled into the sky as though Bengaluru itself was exhaling.

A girl, barely twenty, raised a Majestic Changer's glass and shouted into the night:

“Virata gave us wings tonight!”

She lit another Majestic Square, laughing as the smoke blurred the fireworks overhead.

Around her, thousands followed. Some coughed, others stumbled, many danced—but none cared. The night was not about tomorrow. It was about burning everything—youth, lungs, money, innocence—into one endless flame of frenzy.

And yet, in the cracks of dawn, when Bengaluru's skyline was veiled in haze—not just of fireworks, but of smoke—an unspoken truth lingered. Victory had been glorious, yes. Virata had carved his legend, yes. But as the Majestic Parade was announced and banners promised another day of madness, the city had also been chained by another crown—the invisible crown of addiction, marketed in crimson sparkle.

The Crown had shattered in Ahmedabad.

But in Bengaluru, a new crown was forged—not of gold, not of silver—but of glass bottles, cigarette ash, and a billion young lungs singing in blind joy.

Some victories carve legends.

Some advertisements carve graves.



SUNDOWN STAMPEDE

Chapter-3

It was jubilant evening June 4, 2026, city had waited over a decade to witness this. The infamous “trophyless” tag that clung to Majestic Changers Karnataka like an unwanted relative was finally, spectacularly, shattered. MCK were champions. And at the heart of it all stood one man—Virata Parva.

The air buzzed with electric joy. Banners, scarves, fireworks—MCK’s red-and-gold bled across the skyline across Bengaluru. Hundreds of thousands descended upon Bengaluru’s central districts. Two grand celebrations had been planned:

- The first: a victory parade at Chinnaswamy Stadium, organized jointly by the MCK franchise, Don Entertainment Pvt. Ltd., and New Karnataka Cricket Association.
- The second: a felicitation event at Vidhana Soudha, arranged by the ruling state government, eager to wrap itself in the glow of Virata’s towering popularity.

Both events featured the same headline act—Virata Parva, the beating heart of Indian cricket.

But by the time the clock struck 5:00 p.m., the day of celebration was already teetering on the edge of catastrophe.

The Bengaluru police had prior intelligence. According to internal briefings, nearly two lakh fans were expected at the Chinnaswamy stadium and surrounding areas. Additionally, over fifty thousand party workers, government employees, and political aides were expected at Vidhana Soudha. It was to be the biggest mass gathering the city had seen in years.

But preparation? Pitiful.

With a total police force of 25,000, including 18,308 police and 6,999 armed reserve police personnel, Bengaluru was no stranger to managing large events. The police were equipped with 111 law and order stations, 53 traffic stations, cybercrime units, women's protection units, and even rapid-response vehicles like Hoysala and Cheetahs.

Yet for this twin-event chaos?

Only 1000 constables were stationed near the stadium and about 500 near Vidhana Soudha venue.

Zero paramilitary support was requisitioned.

Barricades were feeble. No alternate crowd-routing plan. Traffic police were overwhelmed within the first hour. The Commissioner of Police was nowhere in sight. His deputies were locked in "coordination calls"—bureaucratic shorthand for doing nothing in real time.

By 5:30 p.m., Gate 3 at Chinnaswamy Stadium was a pressure cooker. Fans clung to barricades. Children perched on shoulders. People scaled lampposts, chanting for Virata.

One constable shouted hoarsely over the crowd, "Back! Please move back!"

A woman on the railing cried, "Just one glimpse of him!"

Near Gate 2, Inspector Ravi stood drenched in sweat under his helmet, fuming. "Who the hell approved this crowd size?"

A junior constable replied, "Sir, people say Virata posted on X yesterday inviting everyone."

"That Post didn't give us permission to be stupid," Ravi growled. "Call the control room. We need backup now."

But it was too late.

At 6:18 p.m., as the MCK team bus turned the corner and the first glimpse of red-and-gold inside the tinted glass flashed, the crowd surged.

Steel barricades groaned and snapped.

People screamed.

Feet stumbled. Bodies fell.

A father tried to lift his son. “Breathe, magaa! Breathe!”

A woman’s saree was caught under a metal railing as she collapsed.

“Help! Someone help us!”

The chant of “MCK! MCK!” morphed into shrieks of dread of terror.

By the time armed reserve units managed to force their way in and clear a corridor for paramedics, it was over.

Twenty people lay dead.

Over a hundred injured.

Dozens were in critical condition—trampled, crushed, or suffocated.

A day that was meant to go down in history as triumphant had turned into a black chapter.

Meanwhile, the scene at Vidhana Soudha was no better—only more polished in its chaos.

Politicians in crisp kurta-pajamas and ministers in designer Nehru jackets jostled for selfies with Virata. Some shoved their way to the dais. Others attempted to hand him bouquets so oversized, they could’ve passed as furniture.

The stage buckled as over 200 people swarmed it—VIPs, Chief minister, Ministers, MLA’s their families, party workers,

and photo-hungry aides. Personal security around Virata formed a human ring.

At one point, the pressure pushed Virata dangerously close to the edge of the platform.

His security detail had to physically yank two men back to prevent a potential fall.

Had his guards faltered, India might have woken up to a national trauma.

Despite the chaos, Virata smiled. Shook hands. Thanked the crowd. But behind the calm, his eyes scanned the swarm—he knew something was wrong. Something bigger than usual fan frenzy. But even he couldn't imagine what had happened across town.

As soon as the felicitation ended, he quietly slipped away and boarded a 9-00 pm night flight to Mumbai.

By midnight, the disaster had exploded across television screens and social media feeds.

"MCK's parade ends in horror," blared one headline.

"Twenty dead in celebration stampede—who is to blame?" screamed another.

NB News' anchor thundered on screen, "Was it mismanagement? Was it celebrity arrogance? Or was it that viral Post from Virata Parva that summoned a tidal wave of fans?"

The Karnataka Government, blindsided by the fallout, convened an emergency press conference at dawn.

Their preliminary report stunned the nation:

"The viral X Post of Mr. Virata Parva inviting fans to Chinnaswamy Stadium significantly contributed to the

unexpected crowd surge, which ultimately led to the stampede."

Just like that, the blame was neatly packaged and passed to the one man who had brought glory to the city.

The police higher-ups quietly shielded their failure to deploy even a fifth of their personnel.

The political leadership deflected from its vote hunting parade at Vidhana Soudha.

And the event organizers vanished behind corporate jargon and statements of "regret."

No one spoke about the lack of:

- Crowd control protocols.
- Emergency medical services on standby.
- Coordination between event venues.
- Deployment of paramilitary reserves.

In a city with over 25,000 Police personal, the absence of even 5,000 at a mass gathering was nothing short of criminal negligence.

Bengaluru police weren't unaware.

They weren't uninformed.

They were unprepared.

Internal briefings had warned:

"Expect two lakh fans at the stadium and surrounding areas. Another fifty thousand at Vidhana Soudha. Anticipate overflow into adjoining streets. Prepare for congestion, stampede risks, potential crowd clashes."

They had the numbers.

They had the history.

They had the intelligence.

But the top cop didn't have the will to prepare.

Of the city's 25,000-strong police force—18,308 police officers, 6,999 armed reserves, plus cyber, women's protection, and rapid response units—only:

- 1000 were assigned to the stadium.
- 500 to the government function.

Zero paramilitary reserves.

Zero coordinated medical units.

Zero mobile trauma response.

Zero alternate routing plans.

All said and done, the narrative was set—Virata Parva, national cricket icon, was now the accused.



SILENCE AFTER THE ROAR Chapter-4

The rain had just begun to patter gently against the windows of the Virata's residence, as if the monsoon itself had chosen this night to arrive—quietly, respectfully, almost in mourning.

Virata stepped through the carved wooden doors of his home, his shoulders still heavy with the weight of triumph. His eyes were red—not from sorrow, not yet—but from exhaustion. From the tears that had come in the dressing room, the hugs shared with teammates, the long, winding road of years finally finding its destination. His phone buzzed repeatedly in his pocket, but he didn't check it. Not yet. He wanted to live in this moment—just a little longer.

Anshika met him at the threshold of the living room, barefoot, her face pale. Her eyes searched his, already knowing something he didn't.

“You haven't seen your phone?” she asked, voice low and strained.

Virata blinked. “No, I—what's wrong?”

She hesitated, and in that pause, something inside him twisted. Her eyes brimmed not with joy, but with dread.

“There's been a stampede,” she said quietly. “At Chinnaswamy. Twenty are dead. Over a hundred injured.”

He froze.

Words died in his throat. The silence that followed wasn't quiet—it roared.

Anshika stepped closer, her voice trembling as she tried to explain, to soften the blow even though there was no way

to. “They were celebrating... after the win. Your location was leaked online. People thought you’d show up at the stadium. They rushed the gates. The barricades gave way. Security was overwhelmed.”

He didn’t speak. He couldn’t. His hand moved automatically to pull his phone from his pocket. The screen lit up with missed calls, news alerts, frantic texts from his team manager, from senior BCCI officials, from news anchors he hadn’t spoken to in years. Headlines stared back at him:

“Chaos in Chinnaswamy: Stampede Claims 20 Lives During MCK Celebration.”

“Virata Parva’s Post in X Draws Crowd; Bengaluru Mourns.”

“Cricket’s Darkest Hour: Celebration Turns Deadly.”

He dropped onto the velvet couch, shoulders slumping under the weight of each word.

“No... no, this... this can’t be real.”

He scrolled blindly—videos of people screaming, blood on the pavement, children separated from parents. A boy no older than ten, unconscious, being carried over a barricade. Fans clutching MCK flags, soaked not in rain, but in chaos. One voice stood out in the background of a clip: “We just wanted to see him...”

Virata's breathing became shallow.

Anshika knelt beside him, placing a hand on his knee. “Virata.... you didn’t ask for this. You didn’t cause it.”

But he wasn’t listening. His hands trembled. “They were there for me. Because I won. Because I Posted. Because they thought I’d come.”

He buried his face in his hands. The cheers from just hours ago, the glittering lights, the trophy lift—all of it crumbled in an instant, crushed under the weight of twenty silenced hearts.

And in that moment, the bungalow that had moments ago pulsed with celebration held its breath.

A silence unlike any other crept through the walls, thick and suffocating. It dulled the once-vibrant corners of the Parva residence—corners that had, just minutes earlier, glowed with life and light. The shift was imperceptible at first, like a change in air pressure before a storm. But as the news settled, the very foundation of the home seemed to quiver.

The grand chandelier, suspended like a crown above the living room, still glittered—but its glow felt cruel now. Each refracted beam that once danced playfully across the marble floors now looked like sharp slivers of truth, piercing through the illusion of joy. The glass crystals trembled faintly, catching echoes of the tragedy, no longer sparkling in celebration but flickering like ghost lights at a vigil.

The grandeur of show lights, engineered with precision to highlight every aesthetic detail, seemed to lose their warmth. The golden hues faded into cold amber, and the shadows they once cast—so dynamic, so theatrical—now stretched long and mournful, like grief draped across the furniture. They no longer enchanted the space. Instead, they exposed its emptiness.

The air inside the palatial home, once filled with the scent of fresh lime and polished teak, was now heavy—tainted by disbelief. It clung to the silk curtains, lingered in the stairwell,

hung low in the high-ceilinged foyer. Everything felt paused, as if the home itself was waiting to exhale, mourning with its inhabitants.

Virata sat beneath that chandelier, the championship trophy untouched in its pristine glass case. It stood in the corner like a relic from another life—glorious, yes, but unworthy.

Anshika remained beside him on the floor, silent, grounding him. But even her presence, steady and warm, couldn't soothe the storm inside him. The home that had been designed to offer sanctuary—warm lighting, soft upholstery, a seamless blend of opulence and intimacy—now felt like a hollow stage. Ornate, but lifeless. Familiar, but foreign.

The walls, once alive with laughter and music, now seemed to sag under the weight of headlines, the cries of families, the unanswered question echoing in every gilded corner: Why?

The grand staircase, once proud and sweeping, slouched in silence. The dining room, prepared for a quiet post-match dinner, remained untouched. Plates sat cold. The champagne now looked absurd in its festivity. Even the glasses seemed ashamed to sparkle.

In the hallway, the framed photographs of Virata's cricketing milestones watched in mute disbelief. A timeline of greatness, now darkened by a single night. Each smiling image felt hauntingly naïve, like snapshots of a man who never imagined his dream would come at such a cost.

And at the end of the hall, as always, hung the black-and-white portrait of Prem Parva.

The portrait had seen it all. Every heartbreak. Every comeback. Every century and fall. It had always offered Virata a quiet place to anchor himself. But tonight, under the mournful lights, it looked different. The glass shimmered under the chandelier's reluctant glow, casting a faint shadow beneath his father's eyes. In that moment, it didn't feel like a portrait. It felt like a mirror. A reflection of a man who no longer knew how to carry what he had achieved.

Virata stared at it, willing it to speak. But it said nothing. Because tonight, the house itself was grieving.



THE MORNING AFTER

Chapter 5

Next morning, the doors of Bowring and Lady Cur-zon Hospital groaned under the weight of a silence so heavy, even the crying seemed to pause. The sun had risen like any other day, but it bore no warmth. Not today. Not in this place where 20 lives had just been extinguished in a chaos no one had foreseen—trampled under joy, smothered under celebration turned stampede.

Inside the mortuary, steel trays bore names now carved into the memory of families forever altered.

He was only seventeen.

Pradeep's school bag lay untouched near the entrance of the mortuary, carried there unknowingly by his uncle. His mother, Meenakshi, had clung to it like it was him. Her voice had long since gone hoarse from screaming.

When the white-sheeted body was wheeled out, Meenakshi collapsed with a thud so sudden, the attending nurse stumbled in fear. Her husband, Rajanna, stood motionless—his son's half-open eyes haunting him. "He was just going to watch the match," he whispered over and over, his knuckles white from clenching his shirt.

"I told him not to go," Meenakshi sobbed, once re-vived. "He didn't even take his lunch."

A junior doctor in the corridor pressed her palms against her ears. She had assisted in the postmortem—her first stampede case. She'd seen injuries before, but not like this. Not on someone who had ink stains on his fingers and doodles in his pocket.

Sudha had henna still dark on her palms.

Just twelve days married, she had walked into the stadium with her husband Narendra, glowing in love and excitement. Now, she sat on the hospital bench, blood from her forehead staining her saree where she had fainted on hearing the news.

Inside the mortuary, Narendra's body lay with broken ribs and scratches no one could explain.

“They said we were lucky to get tickets,” she whispered to no one, rocking back and forth. “I didn't want to go. He said we should start our life with a memory.”

Her father, a stoic man from Chamarajanagar, stood beside her, unable to bear her cries but unsure what to say. Her bangles shattered during the fall—now sharp red shards clinging to her wrists.

Chandrappa—The Pillar Falls

A sob louder than the others erupted as the body of Chandrappa was carried out.

His wife, Mallamma, flung herself onto the stretcher before the sheet was even pulled back. “How will we live?” she shrieked. Her three children—aged 12, 9, and 6—stood huddled nearby, frightened not just of death, but of the future.

Chandrappa's aged mother let out a high-pitched wail and collapsed, her hands trembling as she slapped the ground, calling her son's name. He had gone to the stadium to work overtime, covering for a fellow worker. All for an extra ₹500.

The family had no savings. No fallback. The hospital offered compensation—but no one even had the strength to discuss it.

Ajeeth—Gone Before Inheritance

They say money shields you. But it doesn't bring back a child.

Ravichandran, a businessman worth over 500 crores, fell to his knees beside his son's body, his voice cracking with helplessness. "Take it all," he muttered. "Take every paisa. Just give me back my boy."

Ajeeth, 20, was to fly to London in a week. His passport, still tucked in his back pocket, was now stained with dried blood.

His mother had not spoken a word since the call. She simply stared at her son's feet, as though willing them to move. Reporters had begun gathering outside, whispering about the irony of such wealth paired with such loss.

One nurse refused to assist with Ajeeth's autopsy. "He looked like my brother," she said, walking out with tears streaming down her face.

Annappa, The Guardian Lost

He was not even there to watch the match.

Annappa, aged 50, was on duty—assigned to Gate 3, where the crowd had pressed too hard against the barriers. In trying to hold back the rush, he fell. Crushed under the weight of hundreds.

His colleagues stood silent outside the hospital, heads bowed, security caps pressed against their chests.

His wife, Devamma, refused to believe he was dead until she saw the body. Then came the sound no one forgot—a long, guttural moan that turned into a scream so raw it felt like it cracked the air itself.

“He gave his life protecting others,” the constable said quietly. But Devamma only repeated one thing: “They said he’d be home by 8.”

Madhur—Too Small to Die

Fifteen-year-old Madhur was last seen with a popcorn in hand.

His body had no major injuries. It was suffocation. The doctor wept quietly after signing the death certificate.

His father sat beside the stretcher, rocking his son’s body gently like he had when Madhur was a toddler. “He wanted to see Parva. Just once.”

When the sheet slipped, revealing Madhur’s face still half-smiling, a woman fainted beside him—her own child had survived, but the guilt of survival crushed her.

The Waiting Room of Sorrow

Inside the hospital’s waiting hall, grief had different shapes. Some cried. Some sat still. Some raged at fate, at God, at authorities, at themselves.

One father begged the doctors: “No more cuts. Please. Let him go as he is.”

A priest tried to offer prayers. No one listened. Everyone just waited—for names to be confirmed, for faces to be revealed, for a nightmare to end.

Outside, a young journalist stopped taking notes. She had just watched a mother kiss her son’s broken forehead and whisper, “I’ll meet you in dreams.”

Doctors Without Armor

Dr. Asha had seen deaths before—road accidents, burn victims, even suicides. But that morning, as she stood with

her gloves soaked, and forms needing autopsy details filled out, she felt her own heart was being dissected piece by piece.

Each body she examined felt like a betrayal of life it-self.

When Pradeep's mother begged her not to "cut him again," Dr. Asha had to step away, her hands trembling. "He looked like my nephew," she told a colleague in the corridor. "He had a notebook in his pocket."

In the staff restroom, junior pathologist Dr. Ravi cried silently while changing his stained apron. "These are not just numbers. They were people waiting for tea after the match."

The hospital's senior surgeon stood at the gate, refusing media interviews. "We're not heroes today," he said. "We failed 20 families. And we'll carry this for the rest of our lives."

Mourning in Mosaic

The corridor floors had been mopped three times that morning, yet still carried the smell of formalin and loss.

A middle-aged woman broke into uncontrollable sobs when she recognized her brother's ring on a stretchered hand. A father identified his son from a bloodied jersey with his name stitched by his mother only two weeks ago. Another man, whose son had been declared missing, waited with a trembling phone in his hand, opening and closing photos on WhatsApp, hoping someone else would walk out instead.

A priest walked through the hallway, murmuring Sanskrit verses. Some clung to him. Others cursed God.

A group of young boys, friends and team mates of Madhur, stood quietly by the exit, carrying their cricket kits, unsure if they'd ever play again without him.

The Room of Denial

In Room 14 of the hospital, a mother refused to leave the side of her deceased child. "He'll wake up," she insisted, eyes wild with denial. "He always takes naps like this."

No one had the strength to remove her. Even the nurses let her sit, hour after hour, whispering lullabies into the still air.

A hospital attendant finally sat beside her, not to convince, but simply to cry with her.

The Gathering Outside

Outside the hospital gates, reporters stood shoulder to shoulder with grieving families, police officers, and volunteers from NGOs.

A government official began reading names aloud from a list, but was interrupted when a grandmother screamed: "You don't read them. You call them back."

Inside a van nearby, Sudha—newly widowed—sat staring at her blood-soaked wedding photo, now folded in half. She had taken it out to show to the morgue staff for identification. The photo's creases now mirrored her broken future.

The Unclaimed Phone

A ringing phone echoed from a black backpack beside one of the bodies.

The screen lit up with "Appa calling."

No one answered. The doctor picked it up gently and silenced the ringtone. When the family arrived, the phone was handed over silently. The father unlocked it with trembling fingers. The last selfie: Ajeeth, grinning in his cricket cap, with the crowd behind him.

The father dropped the phone, unable to bear it.

A Voice in the Crowd

Among the onlookers stood Suresh, a passerby who had dragged three people out during the stampede. He hadn't saved any of them, but he couldn't forget their faces.

"I held his hand," he murmured, pointing to one of the bodies. "He kept asking where his mother was."

Nobody had told Suresh to stay. He just did. Helping hand over paperwork, comforting strangers, even standing in for relatives too broken to collect the bodies.

"I didn't know them," he said. "But I know they mattered."

The Final Farewells

As evening set in, the bodies were finally released to families. White cloths, makeshift coffins, and rows of ambulances lined up like a procession of grief.

Cries rose again—renewed, deeper.

A grandmother slapped the ground, calling her grandson's name. A wife refused to let go of her husband's hand even as it turned cold. A boy asked why his father wasn't waking up.

Each vehicle carried more than a body—it carried a lifetime of memories lost, futures collapsed.

The media broadcasted these raw moments repeatedly, fueling anger against Virata.



GRAVEYARD OF DREAMS

Chapter-6

Even as funeral pyres still smoldered and garlands still wilted at fresh graves, the blame game began—quietly at first, in the corridors of power, and then loudly, explosively, across television debates and newspaper columns.

The city of Bengaluru, once the proud host of legends and leagues, had become a graveyard of dreams. Twenty dead. Countless injured. Thousands traumatized.

But instead of answers, the people got accusations.

The First Press Meet

It began at 6-30 p.m. two days after the tragedy. The Home Minister sat before a row of microphones, flanked by the Police Commissioner—now visibly worn, his shoulders slouched.

"There appears to have been a miscommunication between the Stadium Management and Law Enforcement agencies," the Minister began, as though reading a grocery list. "We are looking into lapses, but we urge the public to remain calm."

The reporters leaned in.

"What about crowd control? Why was there no barrier between the Vidhana Soudha function and the stadium exit?"

A pause. Then: "There were security arrangements. But unexpected developments... such as the sudden Post by Virata Parva confirming his presence at both events... led to an unmanageable surge."

Murmurs began.

A Post in X?

The Silent Stadium Officials

At the New Karnataka State Cricket Association office, the officials had already begun damage control. A statement was hurriedly released.

“We had shared crowd projections and requested adequate police support. Our role was limited to managing the internal stadium premises.”

An insider leaked a conversation.

“Let the police take the heat. We sent them all the required protocols. It’s not our job to manage fans running to Vidhana Soudha. We’re not traffic control.”

And just like that, the stadium authorities stepped back from responsibility—as if the concrete bleachers and steel fences could stand on their own without any coordination.

The Commissioner Falls

The public wanted heads to roll. So the government gave them three.

First, the Commissioner of Police was suspended, then two of his deputies. The Home Minister visited the hospital for a photo op with folded hands and said:

“We have taken strict action. Those responsible have been suspended.”

But to the grieving families, the gesture was hollow. No one asked why the command structure failed. No one explained why the crowd from the stadium was funneled directly into another crowd at the government function. No one took responsibility for having just 1000 police personnel for an event that drew more than 2,00,000 people in total.

The BCCI's Cold Shoulder

The BCCI, when pressed, simply distanced itself.

“We organize the matches, not the security at state-level functions. We mourn the lives lost, but the operational aspects fall under the jurisdiction of local administration and law enforcement.”

Their statement was clinical. Sanitized. A press release without empathy.

No one from BCCI visited the hospital.

Diverting the Fire

The government’s media advisors had a problem. Public anger was growing. Social media exploded with hashtags #JusticeForPradeep, #BengaluruStampede, and #WhoIsResponsible.

Protests erupted outside the stadium. TV anchors grilled politicians live. Even international outlets picked up the story.

That’s when the spin began.

Whispers turned into news scrolls: “Did Virata’s Post trigger the deadly rush?”

Targeting the Icon

Virata Parva had posted a short, innocent post on his X Account in morning of the event:

“Excited to be back at Chinnaswamy today. And later at Vidhana Soudha to meet my fans! Love you all ❤”

He had no idea he would become the perfect scape-goat. Suddenly, headlines screamed:

- “Virata’s Post caused chaos?”
- “Did stardom fuel the stampede?”

- “Could the disaster have been prevented if Parva hadn’t posted?”

TV panels raged on for hours. Half-baked theories filled primetime debates. Virata’s PR team issued a statement, shocked:

“Virata is devastated by the loss of lives. His presence was coordinated with government protocol. To imply otherwise is unfair and irresponsible.”

But the damage had been done.

The Public Distracted

With Virata now in the eye of the storm, the real questions faded:

- Why weren’t separate routes created for the two events?
- Why were there no contingency plans?
- Why did the government host a celebratory event on the same day as a high-stakes match?

Instead, the narrative changed:

- Was Virata warned about Posting in X?
- Should celebrities be more responsible?
- Should fans learn to behave?

And just like that, the officials responsible took a breath of relief.

The spotlight had shifted.

The Grieving Speak

Pradeep’s father stood in front of a news camera.

“My son didn’t die because of a Post,” he said. “He died because no one cared to protect him.”

Sudha, her voice quiet but sharp, posted a video.

“Stop using our pain for your politics,” she said. “Virata didn’t build the barricades. Virata didn’t fail to plan police routes. You did.”

The video went viral.

Truth, Buried but Breathing

Though investigations were ordered and committees formed, the truth was buried under bureaucracy.

The real story? A combination of arrogance, poor planning, negligence, and political greed and majority of Executive failure.

But in the pages of the media, what remained was the smear on a national icon—and a tragedy reframed into controversy.

The families still mourned. The children still cried at night. And the city, though returned to routine, had learned how quickly loss can be turned into distraction.



THE POLICE COMPLAINT Chapter 7

The city awoke to headlines soaked in tragedy. The images from the stampede flooded social media: people scrambling over each other, bodies on stretchers, flashing sirens. The jubilant victory parade now stood shadowed by one question: Who was responsible?

Amid the chaos, a familiar voice emerged—Ritika Das, a well-known social activist and head of a high-profile NGO. Known more for her lavish lifestyle and social media appearances than grassroots work, Ritika had long positioned herself as a champion of public safety at large events. Her organization, often backed by generous grants from companies eager to greenwash their image, excelled at projecting concern rather than implementing real change. As reports surfaced of the complete lack of crowd control and the absence of emergency exits near the stage, Ritika was quick to act in anticipation of future prospects of brokering financial gain.

Morning by 10 A.M June 6th, Ritika Das arrived at Cubbon Park Police Station. In her hand was a well-planned and neatly printed complaint in crispy papers, the outside show not the inner worth, naming Virata Parva, the event organizers (DNA Entertainment Pvt. Ltd.), and MCK's management as responsible for the mismanagement that led to the fatal stampede.

The officer on duty reviewed the complaint, eyebrows furrowed. “You’re naming Virata Parva himself?”

“He incited the crowd,” Ritika das said flatly. “He waved them forward. He beckoned them. There was no consideration of safety. That kind of influence, untempered by responsibility, can be deadly.”

The stampede near Chinnaswamy Stadium had thrown the state into chaos. News channels continued to run frantic loops of the carnage, and public outrage crackled like a live wire across the airwaves. Inside the corridors of power, anxiety was mounting—sharp, suffocating, and unmistakably political.

The police, long accused of being the government’s obedient arm, knew exactly what was expected of them. Self-preservation came first—of the force, of the state machinery, and most urgently, of those perched at the top. Within minutes of compliant filed by Ritikadas, an exclusive hotline buzzed to life. Behind thick doors and under the veil of secrecy, a high stakes conversation unfolded between the Director General of Police, the Chief Minister’s political advisor, and the Advocate General. Voices were clipped, decisions urgent. The message was clear: the narrative had to be seized before it spiraled beyond control.

A complaint had to be filed—not because justice demanded it, but because the state needed it. Someone had to go under the bus, and quickly. The FIR would be their shield, their performance of accountability. And so, the complaint was registered with remarkable speed, almost theatrical in its precision.

Though the law offered no rigid deadline for filing an FIR, procedural norms demanded promptness, especially in

the face of serious cognizable offenses. But this wasn't just about legal diligence. With the opposition now baying for blood and calling for the resignation of both the Home Minister and the Chief Minister, speed became political necessity. There was no room for hesitation. Exactly fifty-eight minutes after the complaint was logged, the FIR was typed, signed, and dispatched before noon.

The charges were loaded, damning: Section 105 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita—culpable homicide not amounting to murder. Followed swiftly by Sections 107, 108, and 109—endangering life, causing hurt, grievous hurt by negligent acts. But beneath the surface of legalese lay a far more cynical calculus. Every line of the FIR pointed at one man—Virata, his Post and for name's sake the event organisers.

He wasn't just a target; he was the perfect scapegoat. High-profile enough to make headlines, yet dispensable enough to sacrifice. For an administration teetering on the edge, holding someone accountable—anyone—was far easier than confronting its own web of negligence and failed protocols.

In the echo chamber of the secretariat, the FIR was viewed not as a legal document, but as damage control—crafted with precision, coated with urgency, and driven by the unspoken panic of a regime desperate to survive the political storm it had helped create.

One of the DNA Entertainment's directors was arrested by the evening at the Nada Prabhu Kempegowda Airport. Virata Parva's was anyway at his Mumbai residence.

On the other side, in the emergency meeting room of the Karnataka State Secretariat, the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah sat stone-faced, as senior bureaucrats read out the internal report.

“There was no formal disaster management coordination. Crowd control was severely understaffed.”

The Home Secretary added quietly, “The Commissioner ignored three written warnings from the joint security committee.”

Outside, reporters swarmed. The opposition demanded resignations of the Chief Minister and the Home Minister, the both had shared dias in Vidhana Soudha event. Public fury was spilling onto the streets.

The Chief Minister turned to his Principal Secretary. “Police Commissioner and two of his deputies are suspended. Public needs a head to roll.”

“And after that, sir?”

The CM paused. Then: “We need a bigger target. Someone famous. Someone emotional. Someone... distracting.”

That afternoon, in a discreet conference room inside the Home Department, a plan was quietly hatched. Top legal advisors, senior IPS officers, and political aides gathered.

“He waved the crowd forward,” said the Intelligence Officer, replaying drone footage on a large screen. “That gesture alone caused a human wave.”

“Public perception is enough,” said a political strategist. “Pin it on him. File a *Suo moto* complaint. The courts will accept it. We shift the conversation.”

“But he’s not an organizer,” one officer objected.

“He’s a face,” the Minister said coldly. “A face people won’t forget. Let them debate the morality. Meanwhile, we survive the week.”

On June 6, the police officer Ravi who was the witness to tragic stampede, on orders of his senior officials initiated an *Suo Moto* FIR based on his own knowledge and observation,

Cognizable Offenses:

These are offenses where police can arrest without a warrant, and often include serious crimes like murder, rape, etc.

Direct Filing:

If a police officer is directly involved in or witnesses a cognizable offense, can file an FIR at the police station, and it's not necessary for a victim to file it.,

The FIR alleged:

“Virata Parva, despite warnings and visible crowd tension, engaged in behavior that incited a dangerous human surge, contributing directly to the fatal stampede. His influence, unchecked and exercised recklessly, constituted a gross act of public endangerment that led to 20 deaths and injured over 100.”

The court, under mounting public pressure, accepted the complaint and ordered an inquiry.



ARREST AND UNREST

Chapter-8

On 4th the fourth day after the deadly incident of stampede, in the morning loud knocking echoed at Virata's Mumbai residence.

Anshika opened the door to find Bengaluru Police officers standing with an arrest warrant.

"We have orders to take Mr. Virata Parva into custody for questioning in connection with the stampede case," said the inspector stiffly.

Virata walked to the door, calm but pale.

"I'll cooperate," he said softly, turning to Anshika. "Take care of everything here. I'll be back soon."

As Virata stepped out, cameras flashed furiously. News reporters swarmed the area, shouting questions.

"Virata, do you accept responsibility for the deaths?"

"Did your Post trigger the tragedy?"

Virata paused briefly, looking straight into the nearest camera:

"I am heartbroken for every family who lost someone. But to my fans—I beg you, don't protest, don't fight. Please, no more blood for me. Let me face this legally."

The police van drove off, leaving behind a stunned Anshika and a nation divided between outrage and sympathy.

The police van hummed steadily as it sped along the highway toward the airport. Virata Parva sat in the back seat, flanked by two artificially stern-faced officers. His hands weren't cuffed, but the weight of the situation felt heavier than iron chains.

He stared out of the tinted window, watching most familiar Mumbai sahar road as though new, leading to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, in Andheri East. His mobile was seized by the police during an arrest at Virata's home as it is deemed by police as relevant evidence, in the absence of mobile only his thoughts kept him company enroute.

"Twenty lives lost... their families grieving... because they wanted to celebrate my victory," he thought bitterly.

One Police officer who was somewhat decent approach to the law, sensing Virata's silent turmoil, finally spoke, his voice softer than procedure allowed:

"Sir, I'm a huge fan... My kids worship you. I know you didn't mean for this to happen."

Virata turned his head, meeting the officer's eyes.

"Tell that to the parents who lost their children," he replied quietly.

The officer looked away, as it was not his situation to have spoken.

Airport Chaos

At Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru, hundreds of reporters and angry sponsored protestors waited. Barricades lined the terminal entrance as police struggled to maintain order.

The moment Virata stepped out, camera flashes blinded him. Microphones were shoved at his face.

"Virata! Did you knowingly provoke fans to attend the parade?"

"Will you apologize to the victims' families?"

Virata didn't respond, simply lowering his head as officers guided him into a police SUV. But before ducking into the vehicle, he turned slightly toward the cameras and spoke in a firm voice:

The cameras flickered for a moment before settling on Virata's weary face. He sat under the unforgiving lights, lips trembling with a mix of exhaustion and resolve.

"Please... to all my fans—don't protest, don't fight. No more violence in my name. Please go home."

The words echoed through television sets, phones, car radios—anywhere people could still tune in. His voice cracked, as if carrying the weight of a nation's gaze. The silence that followed the broadcast wasn't just auditory—it was cultural. For a brief moment, the chaos froze.

Ritu, a university student and a longtime admirer of Virata, sat huddled with her friends in a dim café. The live stream ended, leaving a hush.

"He doesn't want us to fight," she whispered.

They had skipped classes, made banners, joined peaceful marches. But after the plea, something shifted.

"I believe him," said Aarav, her friend. "He looked... broken."

"But if he's innocent," Ritu replied, "shouldn't we do something?"

Their loyalty now twisted into doubt—not about Vira-ta, but about their own powerlessness. Some deleted angry Posts.

Others stayed offline. Most just walked home in silence, unsure whether obedience was respect or betrayal.

Pranav, Virata's so-called business partner in marketing, watched the broadcast from the rooftop bar of an upscale hotel. He swirled his drink, grimacing.

“What a fool. Could’ve ridden this wave,” he muttered.

He knew the value of outrage, had already drafted press releases aligning himself with Virata’s “vision,” crafted hashtags. But now?

The plea made things messy. Public anger was supposed to be fuel. Now it was a liability.

He texted his PR team:

Back off. No more statements. Wait and see how this plays out.

For Pranav, it wasn’t about justice. It was about optics—and Virata’s decency had just ruined the script.

There were few complaints on Virata, Anjali Rao, a tireless advocate for civil rights, had filed one of the complaints—not out of vendetta, but out of principle. She believed in accountability.

Watching the broadcast from her office, she leaned forward, elbows on the desk. “He’s not deflecting,” she murmured.

Her colleague, Sunil, looked up. “You think he’s innocent?”

“I think he’s scared,” she said. “And that means there’s more to this.”

They had called for investigation, not incarceration. But the system had moved fast—too fast. His plea raised

uncomfortable questions: Was justice being used as a tool for silencing? Had they miscalculated?

Virata was taken to a special investigation room of Cubbon Park police station in Bengaluru, for preliminary questioning. The room smelled of stale old wood. The Cubbon Park Police Station in Bengaluru is over a century old, the name board put up outside the police station prominently show it was built in 1910. It was established as a guard post to protect the Queen Victoria statue and later became a police station. Old smelling stale wood was perhaps an representation of long British history of custodial abuse, carried forward by the Indian Police till date, Virata observed three lock up cell adjacent to each other, two were occupied, one of the accused in the cell looked beaten badly, he had sustained third degree injuries, apparently he was accused in cyber-crime hacking, in the other cell was a man in his late thirties accused of shoplifting.

Deputy Commissioner Jagadish, who was also overseeing the magisterial inquiry, sat across from Virata, flipping through the preliminary report.

"Mr. Virata Parva, your Post in X was seen by Seventeen lakh people. Do you deny it influenced the crowd size?"

Virata looked straight at him, his tone calm but firm:

"I Posted to thank my fans, not to invite chaos. Did you verify if those 17 lakh viewers even attended the parade? Did you request their data from the social media platform? Or is it easier to just blame me?"

Jagadish avoided his gaze for a moment.

"Public pressure is enormous. We need answers, Mr. Virata Parva."

Virata leaned forward, his voice low but cutting:

"Answers or scapegoats?"

The room fell silent.

According to law, the police could not detain him beyond twenty-four hours without the explicit authorization of a magistrate. That line in the legal sand wasn't just procedural—it was constitutional. The magistrate's role was pivotal, to scrutinize the detention, ensure due process, and prevent abuse of power under the guise of investigation. In the crowded courtroom, as murmurs filled the air, it was clear this wasn't just about one man—it was a test of the system itself. Virata, though surrounded by police and media frenzy, was not alone. Constitution of India, stood to his support, Article 22(1) of the Constitution of India which states: *"No person who is arrested shall be denied the right to consult, and to be defended by, a legal practitioner of his choice."* And Article 21 – Protection of life and personal liberty: *"No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law."* The Supreme Court has interpreted this to mean that the procedure must be fair, just, and reasonable—which includes the right to be heard.

To the police time was running out, Virata was a VVVIP, he was produced before the magistrate, sent to judicial custody, placed in Parappana Agrahara Prison, Bengaluru for 15 days.

Later that evening, Anjali issued a cautious statement:

“We stand by our commitment to due process. But we reject violence, from any side. Let the facts speak.”

Dev Mehra had made a career out of mocking people like Virata. “Populist garbage,” he’d said on his podcast the day before the arrest.

Yet as he rewatched the footage alone that night, something snagged in his mind.

“No more violence in my name.”

There was a rawness that no PR team could fake. And that bothered Dev. Not because he sympathized, but because it disrupted his narrative.

What if, he wondered, Virata’s greatest crime wasn’t what he did—but who he threatened?

The episode he’d planned—“The Fall of the Phony Hero”—remained unrecorded.

Across streets and screens, assumptions bloomed like wildfire:

- “He’s just scared. He must be guilty.”
- “He’s too noble for this mess—someone’s framing him.”
- “This is how the state punishes dissent.”
- “Even good people must pay for their mistakes.”

Each viewer saw their own fears, hopes, and biases reflected in Virata’s trembling eyes.

The plea didn’t settle anything. It only made it harder to pretend.

The protests didn’t end overnight.

Some fans returned home. Others stood quietly, holding candles instead of signs.

The media machines slowed, searching for new angles.

And Virata, behind the walls of his holding cell, didn't know if his plea had changed anything—only that he had to say it.

Because sometimes the truth isn't about innocence. It's about choosing who you are, even when the world decides who you're supposed to be.



WHEN HERO BECAME GOD Chapter 9

The sky over Bengaluru was a more than dull that early evening of Virata's arrest, as if the city itself was uncertain whether to mourn or simply wait. On the 20th floor of a glass-and-steel corporate tower in Whitefield, 26-year-old Jeetu Rao stood barefoot on the edge of a rooftop ledge.

A software engineer by profession and a poet in silence, Jeetu had always lived quietly—no rebellion, no drama. But today, the world around him felt louder than anything he had ever known. Loud with news alerts. Loud with betrayal. Loud with pain.

Virata Parva, his hero, had been arrested.

For Jeetu, it wasn't just a headline. It was an emotional earthquake. A collapse of identity.

He opened his phone, shook hands fumbling with the record button. The red light blinked on.

In a calm, eerily measured voice, Jeetu began:

“If you’re watching this, I’m probably gone. I’m not doing this out of madness. I’m doing this out of love—pure, unconditional love. Virata Parva is not just a cricketer to me. He is the reason I kept waking up, kept trying, kept hoping. His passion, his fight, his hunger—I saw myself in him. I learned how to be a man watching him fight back trolls, critics, injuries... life.

And now... he seems helpless! they’re trying to lock him up? For a tragedy he didn’t cause?

If my life can make the world see that this is wrong—then let it be my last contribution.

My love for cricket, the way Virata plays it... it's big-ger than my life."

Then he stepped forward.

Silence followed.

He fell—twenty stories—into a world that never gave him the tools to separate admiration from identity.

When police unlocked his phone, the video was waiting. A co-worker had seen him sitting quietly on the rooftop and assumed he was just taking a break.

By the time they reached him, it was too late.

In Hubballi, 400 kilometres north of Bengaluru, the air in Sampreethi's hostel room was still, almost reverent. Nineteen years old, a first-year psychology major, she was bright, playful, often lost in her own daydreams of designing a future where she could work in sports psychology—ideally for Team India, just to be around her idol.

But that afternoon, something broke inside her.

The news channels wouldn't stop.

“Virata Parva in Judicial Custody.”

“Virata Parva Under Fire.”

“MCK Star Blamed for Tragedy.”

Sampreethi's heart began to race. Her roommate had gone home for the weekend. She was alone. And with every second that passed, the lines between reason and emotion blurred. How could they arrest him? Why were they dragging his name through mud? Didn't they know what he meant to people like her—people who had no one else to look up to?

She opened her diary and scribbled a message with trembling hands:

“He didn’t ask for this. He gave us everything. I can’t breathe thinking of him behind bars. My life feels meaningless if this world can treat Virata Parva like a criminal.”

Then she tied a dupatta to the ceiling fan and stepped into eternity.

Her body was found hours later. The television was still on. Virata’s face frozen mid-frame, a news ticker scrolling beneath.

Two young lives. A city sky and a hostel ceiling.

And all for a man who never asked to be worshipped.

The media ran both stories with the same hungry rhythm it always did—BREAKING SUICIDES LINKED TO PARVA ARREST. But what no one said was what mattered most:

These were not isolated events. They were symptoms.

A deep, festering societal illness where celebrity became religion, and emotional literacy was left to rot in the shadows.

Psychologists tried to raise red flags.

- These youth weren’t mentally ill in a clinical sense.
- They were emotionally unequipped.
- They had built their entire sense of self around a cricketer.
- And when that cricketer stumbled, they collapsed with him.

In India, heroes aren’t admired—they’re deified.

And when gods fall, so do their believers.

Jeetu and Sampreethi never met. But their stories now shared the same orbit—videos, screenshots, scribbled notes circulating across social media. A brief flicker of national guilt

followed. Politicians Posted condolences. Influencers posted black screens. But the conversations never went deeper.

No one asked: Why didn't anyone teach these kids that it's okay to love someone and still let them be human?

In school, they were taught equations and capitals and history wars. But never how to process disappointment. Never how to separate your hero's identity from your own. Never how to feel grief without collapsing.

Their fandom wasn't toxic by nature.

But it was uneducated, unguided, and unseen.

In a country where cricket is the only language that binds all regions, class lines, and castes—the player becomes more than a player. And for the lonely, the isolated, the emotionally fragile, that player becomes everything.

And when “everything” goes wrong, they feel like nothing.

The twin tragedies sparked no long-term change.

There were no national campaigns on emotional education. Certainly, there were no demand for effective school curriculums on mental health and there were no announcements or discussions in the media urging youth to build identities outside of fandom.

And in quiet bedrooms, other Jeetus and Sampreethis watched. And waited. And loved with a dangerous intensity that would never be interrupted by reality.

But the mass media, as always, turned the wrong way. Instead of demanding national campaigns on emotional education... instead of inviting psychologists and grief counsellors to prime-time panels... instead of pushing for

school curriculums to teach emotional independence and resilience... the channels chose drama. They debated who cried harder—Jeetu’s mother or Sampreethi’s sister. They speculated on whether Virata would “finally break his silence.” One anchor even questioned if these suicides were “genuine love or staged stunts,” sparking hashtags and outrage cycles. In their desperate hunger for TRP, the networks didn’t just fail to guide the grieving youth—they exploited their deaths for viewership. Not once did anyone look into the camera and say: “It’s time we teach our children how to survive disappointment.”

Virata learned of the suicides—Jeetu’s fire, Sam-preethi’s silence, and the ripple of attempted deaths across the country—he broke down in the confines of a dim room. In a trembling voice, with eyes rimmed in red, he begged the authorities to let him make one public appeal. The next morning, a short video was released through official channels. No dramatic lighting. No background music. Just Virata—barefaced, hollowed by grief, speaking from his heart:

“Please... I beg all my fans... don’t get emotional. Don’t take extreme steps. Don’t violate the law. And above all... please, don’t die for me. I never wanted this. I never imagined that my arrest could mean the end of your lives.

You must understand—your life is larger than cricket... and certainly larger than me.

I’m just a player. A small man in a big game. But you... you’re irreplaceable to the people who love you.

If I’ve ever inspired you, let it be to live—not to leave. Please... stay.”

That short video was shared over a billion times. But for those who were already gone, it came too late

“A society that raises heroes without teaching how to live without them, builds gods on graves.”



HEARTS ON FIRE

Chapter X

By evening, the nation was in uproar—but it was Karnataka that bled the most.

Though protests erupted across Delhi, Mumbai, and other major cities, it was in Bengaluru, Mysuru, Hubballi, and Mangaluru that the fire burned brightest—and the crackdown hit hardest. Karnataka, the epicentre of both the tragedy and the outrage, bore the brunt of a politically motivated response from a government desperate to contain the fallout.

The arrest of Virata, following the stampede near Chinnaswamy Stadium, had divided public opinion like a sharp blade.

On one side, angry citizen—egged on by television panels—demanded accountability.

"Why should a celebrity be allowed to incite a stampede and walk away?" thundered a ruling-party lawyer.

"This is nothing but a cover-up. Virata is being sacrificed to shield political failure!" fired back a retired judge from Bengaluru, his voice shaking with barely concealed fury.

On the other side, Virata's fans—legions of them—rose up in protest. Across India, thousands took to the streets, but in Karnataka, it became something more: a movement, a revolt, a spontaneous rebellion.

In Bengaluru, crowds surged through MG Road, Brigade Road, and Town Hall. In Mysuru, protestors filled the historic avenues near the Palace. In Hubballi, students walked out of classes in solidarity, while in Mangaluru, activists and fans

formed human chains, chanting "Justice for Virata!" and "Don't Frame Our Hero!"

The government responded with force—and it was relentless.

By late afternoon, MG Road resembled a battle-ground. Tear gas canisters exploded among crowds of mostly young protesters. The tear gas—2-chlorobenzylidene malononitrile gas, deployed in dense volleys—filled the air with a stinging fog. The effects were immediate and merciless.

Eyes: Protesters screamed as their vision blurred, their eyelids seared by burning pain. Some collapsed, blinded by tears.

Lungs: Coughing erupted like gunfire—dozens choking, gasping for breath as their chests tightened, the air becoming a poison.

Skin: Exposed arms and faces developed rashes, red and raw from the chemical assault.

Nose and Mouth: Burning, swelling, streams of mucus, saliva, and panic.

Neha, a 19-year-old student from a local college, fell clutching her throat. Her friend tried to carry her but stumbled as gas tore through his lungs. Another boy, holding a national flag soaked in milk to filter the fumes, collapsed against a barricade, eyes red like blood.

And yet they didn't back down.

The lathi charge followed.

Police in riot gear advanced like a wall. Batons flew through the air with mechanical precision. Protesters were beaten black and blue. A software engineer from Whitefield

was struck five times on the back as he tried to protect a schoolgirl crying for her mother. In Mysuru, a local journalist filming the chaos was dragged away and assaulted. In Mangaluru, university students were cornered in a lane and thrashed without warning.

In Mandya and Mysore districts, water cannons rolled in—massive armoured trucks retrofitted with high-pressure hoses capable of discharging water at over 150 Pounds per square inch. The blasts knocked people off their feet. One youth hit a streetlamp headfirst, crumpling instantly. Others slipped, hit the pavement, and were trampled in the confusion.

The water was cold, dirty, and punishing, intensifying the burns already caused by tear gas. For some, the trauma would linger far beyond the bruises—panic attacks, respiratory complications, anxiety. Doctors at various Hospitals reported that dozens with long term damage. Those with asthma or skin conditions suffered more severely, especially the elderly caught in the wrong place at the wrong time.

And while Karnataka's youth screamed and bled on the streets, the government maintained its line.

From behind the safety of microphones and media briefings, ministers praised the police for their “measured and disciplined response.” A senior spokesperson dismissed the outrage as the work of “fringe elements.” Not once did anyone acknowledge the grief that had turned into fury—the pain that had turned into protest.

But to many, it was clear: the crackdown wasn't about restoring law and order. It was about silencing dissent before

it could take shape. Karnataka had become a lesson—an example of what would happen to those who dared challenge the narrative.

Virata's arrest was inevitable. But the suffering that followed? That was manufactured—calculated by a regime unwilling to admit its failure, even as it watched its own people suffer on their soil.

And for Karnataka, the price had already been paid—in broken bones, blistered lungs, and a broken trust that would not heal easily.

But as the smoke began to lift and the water dried on the bloodstained streets, a deeper question lingered in the air: Why had they come?

Why had thousands of young people—students, techies, small-town fans—abandoned reason and rushed to the streets with such ferocity, as if defending not a man but a messiah?

The answer lay not just in Virata's stardom, but in what he represented.

To many of them, Virata wasn't just a cricketer. He was rebellion wrapped in discipline, rage wrapped in elegance—a rare public figure who straddled two worlds: the tradition-bound roots of small-town India, and the fierce, modern aspirations of a youth constantly told to wait its turn. His victories were their victories. His anger, their frustration. When he raised a bat, they saw themselves striking back against the system. When he smiled, they felt they had finally won something.

So, when he was arrested—paraded as the face of a tragedy triggered by the state's own lapses—it felt personal. It felt like betrayal.

They came not to destroy, but to defend. Yet in their blind devotion, they overlooked the cost of chaos. The protests were spontaneous, unorganized, without leadership or legal approval. That left room for escalation, and ultimately, for bloodshed. And the worst part? Many didn't even understand how dangerously close they were to turning the victim into the villain.

In college hostels and canteens across Karnataka, de-bate gave way to agitation. Student groups mobilized not with strategy, but with raw emotion. "This is injustice!" they shouted. "Virata is our voice!" But few stopped to ask: What if we're wrong? What if we're being used?

The truth was uncomfortable—they weren't equipped to ask those questions.

For years, the social system had fed young minds a myth—that heroes were flawless, that fame equalled moral authority, that standing by a celebrity was as good as standing for justice. No curriculum had taught them the difference between admiration and obsession. No civic lesson had warned them of the risks of turning a public figure into a personal cause.

The gap between hero and fan had narrowed dangerously, not because the heroes asked for it, but because the society failed to define boundaries. Pop culture blurred into politics. Opinion blurred into fact. When Virata's face appeared on hoardings, magazine covers, cereal boxes—they

believed they knew him. But in truth, they only knew the version the system had sold them.

Blind hero worship, in its most dangerous form, disables critical thinking. It demands loyalty over logic, allegiance over awareness. And when that devotion is challenged—especially by an arrest, a scandal, or a narrative shift—it doesn't die quietly. It explodes.

And explode it did.

The protests, though ignited by pain and loyalty, soon spun into a storm of misplaced anger and unintended consequences. Public property was damaged. Innocents were hurt. Businesses shuttered. And still, many of the protestors couldn't comprehend what had gone wrong.

They believed they were defending justice.

In reality, they were unknowingly walking into a trap—a government waiting to weaponize their chaos, to justify its crackdown, to silence the real questions under the noise of broken glass and burning banners.

And thus, the cycle repeated: celebrity, crisis, confusion, and control.

Karnataka, more than any other state, had paid the price. Not just in bruises and burn marks, but in a collective loss of clarity. It was no longer just about Virata's arrest—it had become about the system's failure to raise citizens who could love a hero without losing themselves in the process.



THE ANGEL IN THE STORM Chapter 11

The room was stark, clinical. Just a table for the jailer, few old wooden chairs, and a ticking wall clock that refused to let time pass quietly. But when Anshika walked in, the coldness retreated. She brought with her something that neither the guards nor the lawyers could—home.

She sat beside Virata and placed her hand over his. Her touch was firm, not trembling like his.

"You didn't cause this," she said, her voice low, yet resolute. "And when the truth comes out, everyone will see that."

Virata looked down, shoulders hunched with the weight of headlines, hashtags, and his own spiraling doubt.

"Honey... I spent my life chasing records, trophies... I never thought how much influence I truly had over people. Maybe I should've been more careful."

She leaned closer, brushing a strand of hair from his forehead like she used to before he walked out to bat.

"We can't change the past, but we can face this with dignity. And when this is over, maybe... maybe you'll do more than just play cricket for them."

There was silence. But it wasn't empty. It was thick with grief, love, and something new—purpose.

Then Anshika straightened in her chair. The softness in her eyes remained, but her tone sharpened with practical precision.

"Listen to me carefully, Virata. We don't know what's ahead. But you need to be prepared. Not just mentally—but physically, emotionally, spiritually."

Virata blinked, surprised. "You sound like... my coach."

Anshika gave a half-smile. "Maybe I am. Your crisis coach."

"First of all," she continued, "do not trust everyone who acts kind in here. Be polite. Be quiet. But never too open. Watch. Listen. But don't reveal."

Virata nodded slowly. This wasn't the Anshika he saw at premieres or post-match dinners. This was someone carved from steel.

"You need to build a routine, even in jail. Wake up early. Breathe. Meditate. Do Pranayam. I'm arranging a permission letter through the lawyers to send in a few essentials."

He raised his eyebrows. "Pranayam?", the Prana looks to be trouble! You mean I will be here for months?

She gave him a look. "Do you want to stay sane or spiral? Your breath is your best ally right now."

Then she paused, eyes softening again.

"People will say awful things. Some fans will turn on you. Your 'friends' will vanish. Don't chase their approval. Don't even react. Just endure. That's your power now."

Anshika checked her phone.

"Two of the top criminal lawyers—Mr. Siddarth Hebbal and Mr. Mohan Shingavi—are arriving in about 30 minutes. I've already paid them ₹50 lakhs each as advance. They'll start working on your bail plea immediately."

Virata stared at her. "Fifty lakhs... each?" and Hebbal, it was he, the one who drafted advertisement contracts between me and corporates, he has already fixed me for ten years in those surrogate advertisements, and now!

She looked directly into his eyes. That was the past, "You think I'm going to cut corners when it comes to getting you out of here?" I am informed that these two advocates are ruling the courts and are known to you as well, they are identified in the higher circles of judiciary, they have displayed their recent capacity in getting bail in critical case, for diamond business man Mehta who was caught in money laundering racket.

She said, we had no other options either.

He swallowed. There was no point arguing.

"I also made sure the media doesn't find out who's representing you until the filing is complete. We don't need any leaks right now."

He studied her face. Her calm. Her clarity.

"Honey... when did you become this—this fierce?"

She laughed quietly. "I've always been. You just never saw me with gloves off."

As the guard knocked to announce the lawyers' arrival, Virata took a deep breath.

"You're right," he said. "I have to stop thinking like a cricketer in an off-season. This is war, isn't it?"

Anshika nodded. "A war that you win by not letting it change who you are."

He looked at her, his eyes less clouded now. "You're not just my wife," he whispered. "You're my fortress."

She smiled, but there was a flicker of sadness there too. “Just promise me one thing.”

“What?”

“When this is all over—don’t just return to the pitch. Return wiser. Return for a purpose. You’ve got more than a bat in your hand now. You’ve got people.”

As the door opened and the lawyers entered, Virata stood tall. Not because he felt invincible—but because Anshika had reminded him he didn’t have to be.

Not all battles are fought with fire.

Some are won with breath. With stillness. With the quiet conviction of someone who knows that even a fallen hero can rise—if someone believes he’s still worth saving.

And in that sterile, suffocating room, it was clear who was holding the match to light his way.

The heavy iron door groaned as a guard poked his head in.

“Ma’am, your time’s up. The lawyers are on their way inside.”

Anshika stood slowly. Her hand lingered over Virata’s one last time before she withdrew it. No tears. No dramatics. Just a final, anchoring gaze that said you’re not alone.

Virata’s fingers twitched, reluctant to let go. “You’re not staying to meet them?”

She shook her head gently, brushing invisible dust off her kurta, more to collect herself than clean anything.

“No. You need to speak to them with your own voice—not through me. You’re not just a husband caught in a

scandal, Virata. You're a man whose name has shaken a nation. Take ownership of that."

He nodded slowly, absorbing the weight of what she said. She wasn't shielding him—she was handing him the sword.

She stepped toward the door, then turned.

"One more thing," she said, pausing under the harsh ceiling light. "If anyone in here, including the advocates arriving here, tries to make you feel small—remind yourself: you've already survived the world's judgment. This... this is just a room."

Virata stood. "Honey..."

She looked back. "Hmm?"

"I don't deserve you."

She smiled. Not proudly—but tenderly, as if hearing a child admit fear. "Then earn me. Every single day. Starting now."

A guard opened the door. She walked through it without turning back.

The door clanged shut. Her footsteps faded down the hallway.

Virata remained standing, staring at the place where she'd stood.

A new sound began approaching—shoes tapping fast against cement, papers rustling, formal voices preparing legal arguments.

The lawyers were arriving.

But something inside him had already shifted.

For the first time since the arrest, Virata didn't feel like a victim.

He felt like a man preparing for the innings of his life—no audience, no scoreboard, just a fight for truth.

Because she believed in him.

And right now, that was enough.



VAKALATH OF TRUTH

Chapter 12

In the jail meeting room, the two designated senior advocates arrived like diplomats. Well-tailored, perfumed, and speaking in polished arrogance, they didn't waste time on sympathy.

"Virata, thank god we are there, without us, you're done," Habbal began, smirking.

"We've already spoken to a few people," Shingavi added smoothly, "The right ones. The kind who don't wear robes, but run those who do."

Their tone was more boardroom than courtroom. They spoke not of strategy or law—but of connections, leverage, and power plays. They name-dropped senior ministers, hinted at judicial influence, and listed past clients like medals.

"What matters is not the law, Virata," said Hebbal with a grin. "What matters is who holds the pen behind the bench."

They made it clear: they weren't here to defend Virata. They were here to own his case—and him.

Virata nodded politely. But something inside him recoiled.

He had faced fastest bowlers all his life. This—this felt worse. It wasn't a contest of skill. It was a market. And he was a commodity.

As the two titans exited with smug satisfaction, prison jailor Ashok hesitantly whispered, "Sir, one more advocate is waiting. Young man. Name—Maharshi."

Virata raised an eyebrow. "He's not on the list, is he?"

"He insisted. Says he was on the list."

Curious, courageous, Virata agreed.

Maharshi entered—a lean but with powerful eyes, man in his late twenties, carrying new legal file along with few Vakalathnamas and the confidence of someone who had nothing to lose. He was unpolished, unfunded, unknown. But the fire in his eyes made Virata sit up.

They were granted five minutes.

Maharshi wasted none.

“Sir,” he began, without preamble, “I came not to flatter you, but to represent you. And not in public, but in court. You’re not a criminal. You’re a victim of political deflection. What happened was a tragedy—but the law is being twisted to make you the scapegoat.”

Virata leaned forward, saying nothing.

“I’ve studied your FIR. The arrest memo. case summary. Everything points to executive failure—willful ignorance, negligence, mismanagement, nondeployment of readily available adequate police personnel, lack of crowd control, improper barricading, zero emergency exits. Above that politricks. But you... you’re the face. So they picked you.”

His voice didn’t rise—but every word rang with quiet power.

“Criminal law,” Maharshi continued, “is not a game of influence. It is the most dynamic, volatile battlefield of justice. I’ve studied the new Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita-2023, the Evidence Act amendments. I don’t need political power. I have legal clarity.”

Virata was stunned—not by Maharshi's knowledge, but by his genuineness. There was no ego, no name-dropping. Just a sense of mission.

“I tuned in with those two biggies speak to you, out of legal interest,” Maharshi added as an afterthought, “They're brokers in black coats. You deserve an advocate, not dealers. I can get you out on bail in two days. If you trust me—sign this Vakalath.”

He placed the form gently in front of Virata.

That late evening,

The iron gates of Jail No. 18 creaked open, their heavy echo rolling down the stone corridors like distant thunder. Virata stepped through, flanked by a young officer whose name he didn't catch. The air inside was thick—not just with the scent of old stone and sweat, but with something else. Tension, perhaps. Or time.

The officer led him through a maze of shadowy halls until they reached a courtyard bathed in the orange hue of the dying sun. In the center, a simple wooden stage had been erected. No lights, no fanfare. Just a row of plastic chairs and a gathering of inmates and guards.

Virata had been skeptical when invited to the inmate-organized music program. A prison wasn't the place he expected to find art or music. But as the first beats of a lone drum echoed across the courtyard, his curiosity gave way to stillness.

From the shadows emerged a tall, wiry man with intense eyes and a grizzled beard—Udaya Ravi, the legendary Kannada revolutionary poet, now a under trial prisoner.

Udaya's story was known, even beyond prison walls. Once a celebrated voice of nationalist poetry, he had fallen from grace after a heated argument with a communist leader named Dabehsi Basu turned deadly. A single slap to the temple during the quarrel—one driven by Udaya's rage at an insult to India—had ended Basu's life. It was not premeditated, but it was irreversible.

Now, stripped of his public platform but not his spirit, Udaya stood before his fellow inmates with nothing but his voice and a drumbeat behind him.

He looked out at the crowd. Then, as if conjuring something from the very soil beneath him, he began to sing.

Bharata – The Soul of India

Is love for India just in name?
Or do we feel her sacred flame?
She's more than lands or flags unfurled,
She's the heartbeat of this world.
Not just in thrones or soldier's might,
Not just in battles bold and bright,
She lives in hearts so pure and wise,
In silent prayers that touch the skies.
Oh Bharata, my Motherland,
With truth and peace you proudly stand,
From ancient light to futures new,
Your soul forever shining through.
Oh Bharata, we sing your name,
In every breath, in every flame,
You are the hope, the guiding star,
Oh India, how great you are!

She lives in temples, in the chants,
In knowledge deep, in sacred grants,
In yogis' calm and sages' grace,
In every peaceful dwelling place.
In dreams of youth, in farmer's toil,
In every hand that loves the soil,
In kindness shared and voices raised,
In selfless acts that leave us amazed.
Oh Bharata, my Motherland,
With truth and peace you proudly stand,
From ancient light to futures new,
Your soul forever shining through.
Oh Bharata, we sing your name,
In every breath, in every flame,
You are the hope, the guiding star,
Oh India, how great you are!
From Himalayas crowned in snow,
To oceans where the soft winds blow,
From holy Ganga's whispered song,
She leads us as we march along.
O Bharata, eternal flame,
The world shall echo with your name,
The land of love, the land of light,
Forever bold, forever right.
You are the truth we'll always see,
You are the soul of you and me,
O Bharata, our shining star,
My India, how great you are!

As the final line echoed across the courtyard, silence followed. A charged, electric silence—one not of absence but of presence. Something sacred had passed through them all.

Virata's skin tingled. The raw drumbeat still throbbed in his chest, but it was more than the music. It was the message, the emotion, the conviction.

Then Udaya stepped forward again—not as a performer, but as a teacher, in his poetic but strong voice.

“True patriotism,” he said, voice deep and deliberate, “is not in screaming slogans or waving flags only on certain days. It is in how we treat each other. In how we work, how we protect, how we remember. It is in speaking truth, even when it costs us. It is in love—a fierce, uncomfortable, active love—for this land and its people.”

In a closing he said ‘Not all inmates of this Prison are Criminals and not all outside this prison are honest’ Jaya Bharata.

Virata had never thought of it that way.

As the inmates dispersed and the sun dipped below the high prison walls, Virata sat still—anchored by something deeper than thought.

He had come expecting an hour of forced entertainment.

He left with his beliefs stirred, his heart unsettled, and the echo of a revolutionary’s voice that would haunt his conscience for times to come.

Coming back to his cell, Virata barely slept. Not because of fear—but because of clarity. For the first time in days, his gut was louder than his mind.

Influenced by poet Udaya Ravi meaning the ‘Raising Sun’, he replayed the two conversations of Advocate Hebbal and Shingavi—one full of power, politics, promises and corruption; the other Advocate Maharshi filled with simplicity, integrity, and fire.

By morning, his mind was made.

When the prison official returned for confirmation, Virata simply said:

“I don’t intend to meet Advocate Hebbal and Shingavi. I’ve signed with Advocate Maharshi.”

The Jailor’s eyes widened. “But sir... they’re...” such famous advocates duo, who represent most corrupt politician and business men giants, came to meet you in the Jail, in my service this is the first time, I have seen them here to meet you but you have not, he paused!

Virata smiled for the first time in days. “Exactly. They’re not what I need.”



THE LAW ABOVE ALL Chapter 13

On the other side of the day, the courtroom bustled, bursting with noise, tension, and flashing cameras. But hundreds of meters away, in a secure chamber inside the Bengaluru Central Jail, a screen flickered to life.

It was 10.30 AM, Virata Parva sat stiffly in front of the video conferencing terminal. His wrists resting on the edge of the metal table, eyes fixed on the monitor. No stadium lights. No applause. Just a flickering connection and a voice that gave him hope.

On screen, Advocate Maharshi stood alone—his frame dwarfed by the Mayo-Hall courtroom's colonial walls and the prosecution's numbers.

But when he spoke, even though the digital feed, Virata felt the weight of silence.

“Your Honour,” Maharshi began, “My client is not charged with intent, violence, or incitement. He is a symbol, not a perpetrator. And this court is not a theatre for political spectacle—it is a crucible for facts.”

Virata leaned in.

For the next forty-five minutes, he watched Maharshi dismantle the prosecution's arguments with scalpel-like precision.

No criminal record.

No direct evidence.

No provocation.

Case law after case law, from Kedar Nath Singh (1962) to Shreya Singhal (2015), framed the defense.

"Your honour, today we seek not just justice for the accused, Mr. Virata, but clarity on what truly constitutes criminal negligence when it comes to mass gatherings in India. The tragic incident at the MCK fan event, while horrifying and heartbreakng, must be examined in the full context of our nation's recent past and relevant history—particularly, the Mughal Garhi stampede in Uttar Pradesh on July 2, 2024." In which case,

"The prosecution argues that Mr. Virata must be held culpable simply because he was the face of the event. But legal accountability must rest not on perception but on administrative fact. Let me direct the court to the Hathras Satsang Stampede (People vs. Suraj Pal alias Bhole Baba, 2024), where 121 people died and over 150 were injured."

"In that case, it was proven that the organizers sought permission for 80,000 attendees, but over 2,50,000 people appeared—more than triple the allowed capacity. Despite the massive death toll, the UP-State Inquiry Panel found no direct criminal liability on the spiritual leader, Bhole Baba. Instead, the panel squarely blamed the failure on local intelligence, lack of venue inspection, and a failure to predict and manage overflow crowd behavior."

"Even after 11 arrests and public outrage, Bhole Baba was not arrested nor accused. In fact, the specially constituted panel stated it was an 'intelligence failure' and a 'systemic lapse'."

Argument: Disproportionate Liability and Preventable Oversight

"Your honour, if the principle of parity is to be followed, where 121 deaths did not lead to the arrest of the event's symbolic head in Hathras, how can 18 tragic deaths—caused again by unexpected turnout—warrant the judicial custody of Mr. Virata, who neither controlled logistics nor was present at the command center?"

"The police and BBMP (Bangalore municipal authority) had prior alerts about increasing social media buzz and ticket scalping. Yet, no crowd restriction reinforcements were made, nor were entry protocols updated."

"The responsibility to monitor crowd projections and respond to real-time escalations lies with state intelligence and civic administration, as outlined under Section 5 of the Karnataka Public Events Regulation Act, 2011."

"If the Post of Virata was responsible for pulling the huge crowd, what about the ruling government, which invited general public to Vidhana Soudha venue to celebrate MCK victory and Facilitate Virata on the same day in a gap of one hour, which is also a considerable factor for crowd surge as thousands of party workers, Virata fans, thronged the venue, which is less than half kilometer from Chinnaswamy stadium?"

Prayer for Bail

"Therefore, your honour, it is unjust to remand Mr. Virata further while actual systemic and administrative gaps remain unexamined. He has cooperated fully, has no criminal history, and poses no flight risk. Given the clear precedent in the Hathras stampede—where over 100 lives were lost

without implicating the figurehead—I humbly pray that bail be granted."

"Your Honour," Maharshi concluded, "If silence, restraint, or being popular are now crimes—then we should all prepare for sentencing. Because none of us will survive such justice."

The prosecution lawyer — Advocate Ramesh Kulkarni, seasoned but now visibly under pressure to defend the state's stand, by this case — stiffened in his spot. He had wrapped up a strained attempt to hold Virata solely responsible for the stampede outside Chinnaswamy Stadium. His argument had leaned heavily on phrases like "public influence," "reckless Posting," and "celebrity responsibility."

"Your Honour, it is our firm belief that the unfortunate incident at Chinnaswamy Stadium, which led to the stampede, could have been entirely avoided had Mr. Virata exercised just a bit of restraint on social media. As a public figure with millions of followers, he should have known that any message he posts — even one as seemingly harmless as announcing his surprise appearance — carries tremendous weight.

Now, some may argue that the police or the authorities should have anticipated the crowd. But why put the burden on the system when the spark clearly came from Mr. Virata Parva himself? His Post in X acted like, um... a matchstick in a dry forest. People got excited, they rushed, chaos followed. Surely, Your Honour, he must bear total responsibility.

He may not have intended harm, but isn't recklessness also a form of negligence? He should have known better. After all, he's not just anyone — he's Virata. That X Post,

Your Honour, was unnecessary, ill timed, and — illegal — was certainly irresponsible for the stampede deaths. Therefore, Section 125(1)(2) of BNS – culpable homicide not amounting to murder, Sections 132, 121(1), 190 R/w 3(5) of BNS – endangering life, causing hurt, and grievous hurt by negligent acts are fastened. Allowing him on bail, and for someone of his stature, will send wrong signals to the society that the rich and powerful can do and undo things in the society, he can bring sufficient influence on the system to derail the investigation of the case.

We submit that his actions, though digital, had physical consequences. The stampede was unfortunate, yes, but preventable — if only Mr. Virata had not Posted what he did.” And finally, he is not above the Law, he shouldn’t be granted Bail.

But the judge's eyes narrowed now, not with anger — but something worse: expectation.

You have not countered the point the defence has raised on the role of state government, “While you blame Mr. Virata’s social media post for the crowd surge,” the judge continued, tapping his pen slowly on the bench, “are you suggesting the government played no role in this?”

Ramesh’s mouth opened, but no sound came.

“Because as per records before this court,” the judge went on, “the ruling government organized a massive victory celebration for MCK at outside of Vidhana Soudha complex — a public event, widely publicized, formally announced, with open invitations to party workers and citizens alike.”

The room was still. One could hear the distant rustle of paper or the shuffling of a journalist's pen on a notepad.

“Would you deny that Vidhana Soudha and Chinnaswamy Stadium are within walking distance of each other?”

Ramesh tried to speak. A word formed. “Yes—” then “I mean—” but nothing held. The sweat at his temple had now carved a trail down his cheek.

The judge leaned in just a little more.

“So, Mr. Kulkarni, help this court understand: If both the Post and the official government program were known to draw thousands... why is only one man — Mr. Virata — sitting in the dock, appearing via video conferencing? Why have no questions been raised, no responsibility assigned, to those who sanctioned, organized, and promoted the mass public gathering at Vidhana Soudha that very same day?”

The weight of the question didn't just fall on Kulkarni — it collapsed the entire scaffolding of the prosecution's case.

He looked around as though expecting someone to stand up and object, to rescue him. No one did. Even the junior counsel at his side had gone still, clutching her file like a lifebuoy.

“Your Honour,” Ramesh Kulkarni finally managed, voice cracking like dry wood, “the situation escalated... beyond what was expected... Mr. Virata's Post, in that moment, had a kind of — um — virality that, while the government program was sanctioned, the scale of response was different—no stampede took place at Vidhana Soudha event”

“Are you saying the government’s failure to anticipate the crowd at their own rally is excusable, while a single Post by a private citizen is criminal?”

The question hit harder than the last.

Ramesh gulped. His hands trembled as he adjusted his notes, now clearly shaking. “I... I cannot say that, Your Honour... I—only represent the facts as presented—”

“Indeed. And the facts are incomplete.”

The judge leaned back at last, the moment of crossfire closing like a storm that had passed. But the damage was done.

A pause. Then the judge’s words rang out—clear even through the screen’s tinny speaker.

“The accused, Mr. Virata Parva, is granted conditional bail... to be released by evening after formalities.”

It is a settled law “Bail is a rule for the accused and Jail is an exception”

Virata didn’t move. He just blinked once. Slowly.

Then he exhaled.

For the first time in two days after meeting Virata, he allowed himself to feel a fragment of relief.

By 6:00 PM, the sun had begun to fall behind the Bengaluru skyline. But the crowds were only rising. Hundreds of reporters, fans, and spectators gathered outside the prison gates. Security barricades were pushed to the limit.

#VirataBailGranted had already crossed 2 million Posts. News anchors breathlessly narrated every movement:

“Convoy seen entering prison compound...”

"High possibility of a direct statement..."

But there would be no statement.

Because at 6:30 PM, the iron gates creaked open—and Virata stepped out, head bowed, flanked by guards.

He walked straight to Maharshi.

And shook his hand with both of his own.

"You didn't just win my bail," Virata said. "You reminded me what justice should feel like."

Let me know, your professional fees, howsoever big, I will happily pay.

Waiting just beyond the barricades was a black SUV. From its rear door stepped Anshika, dressed in muted grey, her expression composed but her eyes scanning for him like radar.

Their eyes met—briefly, powerfully. She moved forward instinctively.

Reporters surged. Cameras flashed like lightning.

"Virata! What do you have to say about the charges?"

"Are you still claiming innocence?"

"Anshika, how do you feel standing by him?"

The couple didn't stop.

Anshika placed one hand on his back, gently steering him toward the car. Virata nodded once in acknowledgment to the crowd—but his face was unreadable.

They slid into the vehicle as the security team formed a human shield around them. The door shut. Sound disappeared.

For a long moment, neither of them spoke.

Then Anshika reached across and took his hand.

“You came out with your head up. That’s all that matters right now.”

Virata looked at her, voice still hoarse. “I thought... I’d forgotten how it feels to be seen without judgment.”

She half-smiled. “Get used to it. You’re going to be judged for everything now. Even how you breathe.”

They both chuckled—quiet, tired laughter. The kind shared only by people who’ve passed through fire together.

Outside, the roads were choked. Bikes followed their car. Drones hovered above. Reporters chased the convoy like it was a motorcade. But inside, they remained silent.

The world screamed around them.

But inside that vehicle was stillness.

And resolve.

Virata wasn’t free yet—not from the trial, not from public opinion, not from the scars.

But he was homebound.

And sometimes, that’s the first kind of freedom that counts.

The car pulled into the Kempe Gowda Airport, the flight at 7:30 PM, by 10:00 they landed at Mumbai, by 11 they reached their residence.

No paparazzi had been allowed this far in. The iron gate closed behind them with a final, echoing clunk, as if the world outside had been locked out—at least for tonight.

The house was dimly lit, on purpose. No grand welcome. No family gathering. Just stillness.

Virata stepped out of the BMW slowly, the air heavy with the scent of rain. He looked around like he hadn’t seen this

place in years, even though it had only been days. Yet everything looked different—quieter, realer.

Anshika followed behind, quietly giving instructions to the house staff to retreat for the night. No photographers, no statements, no servants hovering.

"Go up," she said gently. "She's will be awake. She's been waiting."

Virata hesitated outside his daughter's room. The soft glow of a nightlight spilled into the hallway.

He pushed the door open.

There she was—Sharmika, 6 years kid, curled up in bed, a stuffed Virata in one arm, her eyes wide and sparkling.

"Papa?" she whispered.

Virata's throat closed. He couldn't speak at first. He just stepped in and knelt beside the bed.

She sat up, sleepy but alert, and reached out.

He took her in his arms carefully, almost reverently. Her little arms wrapped around his neck as if they were pick-ing up from a conversation paused, not broken.

"You were in the TV," she mumbled. "Mumma said you were fighting with words."

He pulled back, just enough to look at her.

"I was," he said softly. "But I'm home now. For good."

She touched his cheek, then giggled. "You didn't shave."

He laughed—a real one, the first in days.

"I know. Should I shave tomorrow?"

She nodded seriously, then yawned and leaned back against his chest.

"Okay, but you sleep here first. Just today."

He glanced at the door. Anshika was standing there, watching silently, arms folded, a soft smile playing on her lips.

He kissed Sharmika's forehead, then lay down beside her on the small bed, one arm around her tiny frame.

The room dimmed again. The house went still.

And for the First Time in Days...

There were no police.

No noise.

No questions.

Just the steady rhythm of a child's breathing and the quiet ache of a man who had just remembered what truly mattered.



JUDGEMENT DAY

Chapter 14

It was just one month of obtaining bail for Virata, the spotlight had shifted—not to cricket fields or endorsement panels, but to Courthall-12 of the Karnataka High Court, where Advocate Maharshi prepared to fire the final salvo.

It was Monday morning.

The air outside the court complex was thick with reporters, placards, and black-suited clerks threading between corridors like ink running through parchment. But inside Courthall-12, silence sat like a judge before the judge arrived.

At exactly 10:00 AM, the court assembled.

A single bench presided—Justice Gopala Dixit a seasoned. Sharp. And, more importantly, unafraid to speak against power if justice called for it.

Advocate Maharshi, dressed in crisp black robes, rose slowly. His file was thin—surprisingly so. But his mind was not.

“May it please Your Lordship,” he began. “I appear on behalf of the petitioner—Mr. Virata Parva—and I move this Hon’ble Court under Section 528 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, seeking the quashing of FIR No. 146/2026 registered at Cubbon Park Police Station.”

The judge leaned forward.

Maharshi didn’t pause.

“Your Lordship, this case is a study in disproportionate liability. The petitioner is accused of offenses under Sections 105, 107, 108, and 109 of the BNS—a cocktail of criminal

negligence, culpable homicide not amounting to murder, and endangerment.”

He turned a page with deliberate calm.

“But the fundamental test under Section 528 is this: Does the FIR disclose a cognizable offense? Or is it a manifest abuse of the legal process?”

Justice Gopala dixit interjected, “You are asking this court to invoke extraordinary powers, Counsel. On what grounds do you say this FIR is unsustainable?”

Maharshi nodded. “The prosecution's entire edifice is built on one Post in X—a message by the petitioner confirming his appearance at an MCK fan event. He was not the organizer. He was not present at the control center. He was not briefed on crowd safety or exit protocols. The event permits were sanctioned by BBMP. Security was overseen by the local police.”

“The petitioner's Post, which the state calls a matchstick, is an expression of presence, not provocation. We cannot punish fame, Your Lordship. Or else, every artist, every celebrity who steps into the public sphere will live under the threat of incarceration for the actions of others.”

He paused, letting that hang. He continued,

“I invoke judicial parity. In the Hathras Satsang Stampede case—People vs. Suraj Pal alias Bhole Baba—121 lives were lost. A formal inquiry blamed state machinery. The spiritual head, Bhole Baba, who was the sole draw for the crowd, was not arrested. The courts upheld that causation must be established through conduct, not mere association.”

Continuing his arguments, Maharshi, handed the court, a case study paper on 'The Hillsborough Foot Ball Disaster-1989. Which clearly held the Police responsible for the stampede, and the Britain Prime Minister apologized on behalf of the government to the families of bereaved.

Then continued.

"I refer, The Hillsborough disaster, which was a fatal crowd crush at a football match at Hillsborough Stadium in Sheffield, South Yorkshire, England, on 15 April 1989. It occurred during an FA Cup semi-final, between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest in the two standing-only central pens within the Leppings Lane stand allocated to Liverpool supporters. Shortly before kick-off, police match commander David Duckenfield ordered exit gate C to be opened in an attempt to ease crowding, which led to an influx of supporters entering the pens. This resulted in over-crowding of those pens and the fatal crush; with a total of 97 fatalities and 766 injuries, the disaster is the deadliest in British sporting history. Ninety-four people died on the day; one more died in hospital days later, and two more suffered irreversible brain damage on the day and died in 1993 and 2021 respectively. the Hillsborough Independent Panel which was instituted in 2009 by the British government to investigate the Hillsborough disaster, to oversee the disclosure of documents about the disaster and its aftermath and to produce a report. On 12 September 2012, it published its report and simultaneously launched a website containing 450,000 pages of material collated from 85 organizations and individuals over two years.

In the years after the disaster, the Hillsborough Family Support Group had campaigned for the release of all relevant documents into the public domain. After the disaster's 20th anniversary in April 2009, supported by the Culture Secretary, Andy Burnham, and Minister of State for Justice, Maria Eagle, the government asked the Home Office and Department of Culture, Media and Sport to investigate the best way for this information to be made public. In April 2009, the Home Secretary Jacqui Smith announced she had requested secret files concerning the disaster be made public.

In December 2009, Home Secretary Alan Johnson said the Hillsborough Independent Panel's remit would be to oversee "full public disclosure of relevant government and local information within the limited constraints set out in the disclosure protocol" and "consult with the Hillsborough families to ensure that the views of those most affected by the disaster are taken into account". An archive of all relevant documentation would be created and a report produced within two years explaining the work of the panel and its conclusions.

The panel was chaired by James Jones, the Bishop of Liverpool. Other members were, Raju Bhatt, human rights lawyer, Christine Gifford, expert in the field of access to information, Katy Jones, investigative journalist, Bill Kirkup, Associate chief medical officer in the Department of Health, Paul Leighton, former deputy chief constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Phil Scraton, expert in criminology, Peter Sissons, broadcaster (media), Sarah Tyacke, former chief executive of the National Archives

The key Findings were,

That on 12 September 2012, the Hillsborough Independent Panel concluded that no Liverpool fans were responsible in any way for the disaster, nothing mention about the players or organisers, and that its main cause was a "lack of police control". Crowd safety was "compromised at every level" and overcrowding issues had been recorded two years earlier. The panel concluded that "up to 41" of the 96 who had died up to that date, might have survived had the emergency services' reactions and co-ordination been better. The number is based on post-mortem examinations which found some victims may have had heart, lung or blood circulation function for some time after being removed from the crush. The report stated that placing fans who were "merely unconscious" on their backs rather than in the recovery position, would have resulted in their deaths due to airway obstruction. Their report was in 395 pages and delivered 153 key findings.

The findings concluded that 164 witness statements had been altered. Of those statements, 116 were amended to remove or change negative comments about South Yorkshire Police. South Yorkshire Police had performed blood alcohol tests on the victims, some of them children, and ran computer checks on the national police database in an attempt to "impugn their reputation". The report concluded that the then Conservative MP for Sheffield Hallam, Irvine Patnick, passed inaccurate and untrue information from the police to the press.

The panel noted that, despite being dismissed by the Taylor Report, the idea that alcohol contributed to the disaster proved remarkably durable. Documents disclosed confirm that repeated attempts were made to find supporting evidence for alcohol being a factor, and that available evidence was significantly misinterpreted. It noted "The weight placed on alcohol in the face of objective evidence of a pattern of consumption modest for a leisure event was inappropriate. It has since fuelled persistent and unsustainable assertions about drunken fan behavior".

The evidence it released online included altered police reports.

Subsequent apologies were released by Prime Minister David Cameron on behalf of the government, Ed Miliband on behalf of the opposition, Sheffield Wednesday Football Club, South Yorkshire Police, and former editor of The Sun, Kelvin MacKenzie, who apologised for making false accusations under the headline "The Truth". MacKenzie said he should have written a headline that read "The Lies", although this apology was rejected by the Hillsborough Family Support Group and Liverpool fans, as it was seen to be "shifting the blame once again."

In this present case of stampede at Chinnaswamy Cricket Stadium, it was clear the lack of police control that lead to stampede, such being the facts of the case.

Therefore, I submit this case involving Virata be quashed, immediately in the interest of justice and equity.

Justice Gopala Dixit said. "We are aware of that ruling in both the cases. You say Virata's case mirrors that?"

“It’s lesser, my lord. Eighteen tragic deaths. A state-organized connected celebration nearby. No control over attendance or infrastructure. And yet, this man—because he is visible—for political reasons, is scapegoated.”

Justice Dixit tilted his head. “And the government event at Vidhana Soudha?”

Maharshi smiled faintly. “Precisely. The same day. Less than 500 meters away. An open call by elected government’s chief representatives for public celebration. No FIR. No accountability. No arrests. The petitioner is treated differently. Not because of guilt. But because of glare.”

He raised his voice a notch. “This FIR is not a document of law. It is a political reflex. A fire blanket thrown on public outrage to show that someone is being punished.”

My lord, Maharshi progressively advanced “voice unwavering, “with what the police were meant to do—and did not.”

“The Karnataka Police Act, 1963, the BNSS of 2023, and the Karnataka Public Events (Regulation) Act, 2011, and proposed bill the Karnataka Crowd Control (Regulation of Public Gatherings all clearly assign police the duty to protect public safety, especially at large gatherings. It also cast duty of the organisers to seek permission before the event” in this case the Virata was not part of organiser committee, the organising committee had taken permission”

“My Lord, where was the risk assessment? Where was the intelligence gathering from social media or local channels? Where was the pre-event coordination with BBMP, traffic control, and disaster response teams?”

Maharshi paused, letting silence answer for the absent action.

“My Lord, the Model Police Manual and national guidelines from National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) spell it out clearly:”

- Assess expected crowd size
- Coordinate with civic authorities
- Confirm maximum capacity and set control limits
- Deploy adequate personnel and create barrier-cordon flow
- Use CCTV, drones, and surveillance tools to monitor density
- Ensure real-time communication and entry restrictions

“None of these critical steps were followed. Instead, the authorities sat back and watched the numbers swell, Post after Post, minute after minute.”

He tapped the document in front of him.

“This isn’t just oversight. This is dereliction.”

“My lord, let’s talk logistics. The police have one of the most sacred responsibilities in a democracy: to protect life.”

“But who allowed thousands of fans to crowd the already congested area near Chinnaswamy Stadium, when there was also an officially sanctioned, government-led MCK celebration outside Vidhana Soudha—barely half a kilometer away?”

“This wasn’t coincidence. It was total administrative disaster.”

He paused to read from his notes.

“It a general rule that the local police are solely responsible for monitoring crowd projections and adapting response mechanisms in real-time. This was not done.”

Then came the quiet moment—the shift in tone.

Maharshi turned to the screen, where Virata once again appeared via video conferencing, his face calm but lined with sleepless gravity.

“Your Lordship, all that Mr. Virata Parva did was announce a public appearance—something his sponsors, fans, and management had already known. He was not part of the command chain. He neither organized nor controlled the event. He wasn't briefed on capacity.”

“And let's be honest—if a Post could cause a stampede, and a government event couldn't, then what we're witnessing is not justice. It's targeting.”

“I ask this Hon'ble Court. Is the law now a shield for the State and a sword for the politics?”

“Because the only thing Mr. Virata Parva is guilty of—is being famous.”

“The police were meant to regulate entry and exits. They were supposed to stop the surge when it began. They were supposed to have contingency plans, first-aid booths, fire exits, and quick-response teams.”

“Instead, they had... cameras. And excuses.”

Maharshi's voice dropped to a near whisper.

“We do not come here today to demand leniency. We demand truth.”

“We invoke Section 528 of the BNSS because continuing this prosecution is not just unsustainable—it is a mockery of justice.”

“If the State wants to restore faith, let it investigate those who failed in duty, not the one who simply showed up.”

My lordship, the suspended Police Commissioner and his two deputies, are back on duty!

The State’s Aggression

On the other side, the State’s Advocate General Sri Dolla — stood, his voice firmer with his arguments.

“My lord, the petitioner’s influence is not in doubt. He commands 250 million followers online. One post can shift markets. Is it too much to expect him to understand that a post can also shift a crowd?”

“My Lord, I do not come before you today with emotion. I come with a timeline. A timeline of cause and effect.”

He picked up a thin file and gently opened it. One sheet. One Post.

“The Post from Mr. Virata Parva read: 'See you at the gates of Chinnaswamy! Let’s make today unforgettable. ❤️👉 #MCKForever'. This exactly led to huge surge in fans rushing to Chinnaswamy stadium”.

“Yes, we can debate crowd control. We can blame barricades and BBMP. But to pretend that this message—by one of India’s most followed men—was not a trigger, is to deny basic logic.”

He turned now, slowly, facing the bench.

“My Lord, we live in a nation where celebrities wield more influence than politicians. With a single Post, Virata

Parva can sell cars for the company, shift stock prices, or launch a thousand memes.”

“Should we then accept that this very influence becomes weightless the moment tragedy strikes?”

“No. Because the law cannot blink when the country stares.”

He paused, then added:

“With great power—comes great accountability. And Mr. Virata Parva had both. What he lacked... was restraint.”

“The FIR that is sought to quash today, was not filed in haste. It was filed because the consequences were real. Because the families of those 20 victims did not bury their loved ones in theory—they buried them in grief.”

“Sections 125(1)(2), 132, 121(1), 190 R/w 3(5) and so & so” of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita have been invoked not because we believe Mr. Virata Parva is a criminal—but because we believe that celebrity must not become a shield against causality.”

“He did not intend harm. But he failed to foresee it. Negligence is not always about what we do. Sometimes, it’s about what we don’t stop.”

“My lord, let us not be too quick to use Section 482 as an eraser for responsibility.”

“The quashing of this FIR—without a proper trial, without investigation—sends a message far beyond these walls. That fame not only creates exception... but exemption.”

“We must investigate. We must trace whether warnings were given to Mr. Virata Parva. Whether his PR team coordinated with the police. Whether crowd projections were

shared with him. Whether his message was coordinated—or careless.”

“If the FIR is quashed prematurely, we lose the opportunity to ask these vital questions. We lose the trail of responsibility. We allow the system to breathe out and say: Let it go, he’s too big to blame.”

He paused and looked up—not at the judge—but at Virata’s image flickering on the screen.

“If this case is dropped now, we won’t just fail 20 families. We’ll fail the very idea of equal justice.”

“Your lordship, we do not seek to imprison. We seek to investigate.”

“We do not want to vilify Mr. Virata Parva. We want to understand the anatomy of this disaster—so it never happens again.”

“Let the process play out. Let evidence be tested. Let statements be recorded.”

“The moment we quash this FIR; we close the door on accountability—and we lock it from the outside.”

Justice Dixit interrupted, “We are not denying influence. But is it criminal? That’s the distinction you must clarify.”

What you have to say on the 2 case laws submitted by the Petitioner’s Advocate?

Dolla tried. But failed to draw a line from influence to culpability.

Justice Dixit leaned forward. His pen was still. His eyes were not.

“Mr. Maharshi,” he said, “what you have argued today is more than legal. It is moral.”

Then turned his attention to the government counsel.

“And Mr. Dolla.

“We find no criminal intent, no actionable negligence, and no justification for this FIR.”

The words came like thunder—but they came with calm precision.

“The FIR No. 146/2025 registered against Mr. Virata Parva is hereby quashed under Section 482 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023.”

“However, this Court expects the petitioner to exercise greater public caution in the future, given his influence.”

“The State Government is directed to initiate an internal review into the failure of pre-event planning, coordination, and crowd control, with a report to be submitted within 30 days.”

“Let not the innocent be sacrificed in the name of optics.”

The detailed order of 20 pages followed.

Outside the Court, the news hit like a monsoon.

#Virata Cleared began trending within minutes. Outside, fans burst into cheers. Across newsrooms, anchors scrambled for graphics. But inside Virata's apartment in Mumbai, there was only a single exhale.

He had watched the verdict live, sitting with Anshika but eyes fixed on the screen.

He didn't smile.

He just nodded.

“I'm not celebrating,” he said quietly. “I'm just... learning.”

That night, Virata sat by himself and opened his tab. No cameras. No team.

He began to type—an open letter.

“To my fans, friends, and fellow citizens—

*I am grateful to the Court for upholding the truth.
But I will carry the weight of that day’s tragedy in my
heart forever. No legal relief can bring back the lives lost.
I wish I had said less. Or said more—differently. But I
have learned.*

*Fame is not freedom. It is responsibility. And from
today, I will live up to it better.”*

Outside, the world shouted again.

But inside, he was preparing a new kind of innings.

One not judged by runs...

But by restraint.



THE UPRISE OF ADVOCACY Chapter 15

In the days that followed the quashment of FIR, the country didn't sleep.

Headlines screamed about justice and celebrity. Prime-time debates split along predictable lines: Was the court swayed by popularity? Should icons be treated differently?

But underneath all the noise, something quieter, more potent began to move.

Not in boardrooms.

Not in political offices.

But in courtrooms, cafeterias, WhatsApp groups, and dusty law chambers across the country.

Because while the legal elite measured influence by retainer fees and reputation, the youth saw something else.

They saw Maharshi —standing alone, not against the state, but beside the Constitution and for the purpose of Constitution.

The legal fraternity was stunned by what had unfolded in Bengaluru Sessions Court and then in High court of Karnataka at Bengaluru.

Two of India's top senior advocates—Sangaavi and Hebbal, both titans of litigation, with considerable political clout to do and undo things, with decades of Supreme Court appearances—had been slated to represent Virata at trial court.

They had been ready, even eager. Of course, for achieving the illegal hidden intent of rolling Virata for more

unethical and surrogate advertising. Which Virata could sense.

But Virata made an unexpected move—he declined them.

He chose Maharshi instead.

Some thought it was sentiment. Others assumed desperation. But what followed shocked even the most cynical.

Because on that historic day of Bail and later on quash of FIR, the courtroom belonged to Maharshi.

Not due to flair. But fact.

Not with arrogance. But with accuracy.

The senior advocates, watching Maharshi, felt something rare:

They were shown their place—not with disrespect, but with relevance.

Across law schools from Jodhpur to Kochi, discussions shifted. Not about the case—but about who carried it.

“He wasn’t even wearing a designer robe.”

“No entourage, no assistant. Just law.”

“He quoted precedent better than Sangaavi ever did.”

Young lawyers, who had long felt invisible in a profession where pedigree outweighed principle, suddenly had a symbol.

Not a rebel. Not a radical.

But someone who did it right—and won.

Virata Posted “That day, I didn’t just sign a Vakalatnama. I signed a new chapter of belief.”

He had fought for something greater than his image. He had chosen truth over influence, and in doing so, he proved something uncomfortable to many:

Virata Parva—more than an icon—was now a man who chose principle over protection, yes, he had conveyed the world what he was a champion time and again, even in the times of crisis.

And Maharshi wasn't just his lawyer. He was now a beacon.

Back in the Bar and Bench, the impact was swift—and quiet.

- Law firms revised their intake policies, valuing court work over connections.
- Bar Councils across states reopened ethical conduct guidelines.
- Interns asked for case exposure, not AC chambers.
- Law students started quoting *Virata v. State of Karnataka (2026)* in moot courtrooms as a model of individual integrity in state litigation.

• Judges changed their attitude towards young lawyers.
Uprightness was suddenly fashionable again.

Dignity was no longer mocked as impractical.

Fearlessness was no longer a luxury—it was a demand.

Overnight, Maharshi became a symbol.

Not of rebellion, but of restoration.

Not of revolution, but of redemption.

Stickers reading “Truth is Enough.” with his face were seen on law college noticeboards.

Clerks spoke his name with newfound respect.

Even senior advocates, though most bruised in ego, quietly admitted:

“The boy knows his law. And more importantly—he knows its purpose.”

For the public, too, something shifted.

No longer were lawyers viewed as deal-makers, delay-experts, or fixers-for-hire. For the first time in years, people saw an advocate not as a functionary—but as a guardian.

As someone who could protect, not just litigate.

Maharshi didn’t become famous.

He became respected.

And in India, that’s rarer.

In a silent ceremony two weeks later, at a Sheshadripuram Law College, Bengaluru, Maharshi was asked to speak.

He said only this:

“The law isn’t a tool to win. It’s a promise to protect.”

“If you forget that, you may succeed. But you won’t matter.”

And from that moment on, students didn’t dream of just reaching the Supreme Court.

They dreamed of being like Maharshi.

He hadn’t just won a bail argument. He had quietly shaken the foundations of a legal ecosystem saturated with ego, factions, politics, power and corruption.

But fame is never silent.

His office phone, once forgotten under papers, rang day and night.

Corporate houses wanted him for compliance work.

Politicians wanted him for optics.

TV panels wanted him for sound bites.

Publishing houses sent contracts—“Your memoir will sell in six figures.”

And yet, Maharshi walked to court every morning with the same bag, the same leather case file, the same black coat pressed of course with perfection.

He walked into the Karnataka High Court a week later, and young lawyers—ones who’d barely nodded at him before—stood as he passed.

Senior advocates, once dismissive, now greeted him with forced warmth:

“Ah, Maharshi! Still taking up the little cases, are you?”

He smiled politely.

But behind the sarcasm was unease. Because he had done what they hadn’t:

won without compromise.

The offers kept coming.

One firm sent a retainer cheque for ₹2.5 crores per year, just to have his name on letterhead.

A central government official hinted at a nomination to a policy committee.

“Your kind of idealism could go far. We’ll give you a podium.”

He declined.

In quieter moments, the doubts crept in.

At night, he sat alone on his terrace, chai in hand, staring at the Bengaluru’s polluted skyline and wondering:

“Did I do the right thing? Or did I just become a symbol I can’t live up to?”

Because when the world sees you as a banner of hope, you stop being allowed to fail.

One evening, Virata came unannounced. No media. No cameras. Just a hoodie and quiet gratitude.

They sat in Maharshi’s study, surrounded by important case-books and unpeeling oil paint.

“They think I’m the one who won,” Virata said. “But I just chose right. You stood right.”

Maharshi didn’t respond. He just looked out the window.

Virata added, “They’re saying you changed everything.”

“No,” Maharshi replied. “We reminded them what was always supposed to be there.”

Both had become friends so close in such a short span!

A week later, a junior lawyer approached him in the High Court canteen.

“Sir, I want to fight for justice like you. What should I read?”

Maharshi stirred his tea, then said:

“Read the Constitution. Then read your client’s eyes.

One will teach you the law. The other will teach you why it matters.”

He never joined TV panels.

He never signed the book deal.

But in every courtroom across the country, when a young lawyer stood up to make their first argument—not with connections, but with clarity—they carried a silent badge:

“I believe in what Maharshi reminded us.”

And just like that, an advocate became a legacy.

Not carved in marble.

But in minds.

And in the rediscovery of dignity.

The moment the High Court quashed the FIR, news channels across India went into overdrive.

“Virata is free – Inquiry Ordered Against Govt Agencies!”

“Is Virata the Victim of a Political Conspiracy?”

“Maharshi – The Young Lawyer Who Silenced the Government!”

Fans poured onto social media, trending hashtags like #JusticeForVirata and #StopTargetingParva.

But not everyone was convinced. Some channels fuelled skepticism:

“In a world full of brokers, sometimes, a believer walks in—and the system remembers its soul.



WHO HAS WON THE TIME? Chapter 16

A single book lay on the table—its brown paper wrapping carefully torn, waiting for Virata to be ready, he picked it up, his fingers brushing across the matte cover embossed with a simple name in elegant Kannada script: Udaya Ravi.

He remembered the moment he'd first heard that name—not in a literary magazine or award list, but inside the echoing walls of Bengaluru Central Prison.

It had been a dim evening in the prison. The prison warden had allowed an inmate led music program, a small balm for bruised souls. The courtyard was filled with rusted benches, and prisoners—many hardened, some broken, some merely forgotten—sat shoulder to shoulder as a few stepped forward to sing or recite poetry.

Then came Udaya Ravi, another undertrial, a man of quiet fire and steel in his voice. No one had expected what followed. He stood bare-chested in a worn-out dhoti and began singing—not just a song, but a soul-cry, a patriotic verse that spoke of betrayal, truth, sacrifice, patriotism and the land that bled for its people.

The prison fell into an impossible silence. Even the most cynical inmates stopped to listen. And Virata... Virata was no longer a cricketer, no longer a public figure accused of negligence. He was just a man among men, sitting on a concrete bench, tears stinging his eyes, listening to words that shattered something in him and built something new in its place.

That night, Virata had understood, "Udaya Ravi. Poet. Activist. Wrote things some people didn't want written."

From that moment on, Virata had followed the poet's name like a guiding light. After his release on bail, the first thing he ordered online—quietly, anonymously—was Udaya Ravi's collection of poems.

It arrived in simple packaging, marked with no fanfare. Just a title: "Ashes and Arrows"—twenty-five poems written, each one a firebrand.

Virata sat at his desk, a storm rising quietly inside him.

He opened the book.

The first poem was titled simply: "Time."

Time by 'Udaya Ravi'

Who has defeated Time?

None has ever won.

Who has stopped Time?

None has ever done.

Time neither yields to victory,

Nor bends before defeat.

Kings of valor, emperors of might,

Seers of wisdom, sages of light,

Scientists, seekers, masters of lore—

All have vanished, none are anymore.

Time flows, unmoved, supreme,

Turning glory into a fading dream.

The earth and sky, mountains and seas,

All thinkers, poets, and devotees,

The brave who held the sword so high,

The gentle who sang lullabies—

All passed away into the night,
Time alone stood, eternal, bright.
Chariots of war and wheels of peace,
Armies vast and victories fierce,
Rulers who built empires grand,
Perished like castles built on sand.
Even gods of might and rage,
Heroes sung on every stage,
Sank into Time's endless sea,
Bound to eternal destiny.
Men are born, they grow, they fade,
Dancers vanish, warriors laid,
Sinners, saints, both alike,
All are swallowed by Time's strike.
Hands that built, eyes that dreamed,
Hearts that loved, voices that screamed,
All dissolve in silent rhyme—
None can ever conquer Time.
Who has defeated Time?
None has ever won.
Who has stopped Time?
None has ever done.
Time neither yields to victory,
Nor bends before defeat.

What began as a casual reading soon turned into a full-body ache. Each stanza pressed into him like a truth he'd been avoiding. The grandeur of kings, the silence of the dead, the futility of power—all meaningless before Time. And then

came the final verses, the added reflection, urging change, repentance, a mending of moral wounds.

If you do not change for good,
Time will change as bad.
For the river of days runs one way,
It will not return what you had.
Use Time to change for better,
For repentance, for correction,
For healing wounds of your blunders,
For mending every imperfection.
For in the end, when Time recalls,
Not riches, not battles, not towers tall—
The hours you spent in repentance true,
Will be the only treasure remembered of you.
Thus, rise with courage, seek what's right,
Turn your darkness into light.
For none can conquer Time's vast sea,
But you can change what Time makes of thee.

When he finished reading, he sat still, the poem trembling in his hands.

Something inside him quivered, as though a dam long hidden beneath the surface had begun to crack. His throat tightened, his chest ached with a pressure that words could not hold back. With a surge too human, too sacred to suppress. It was not merely that he *felt like crying*; it was as if the very soul within him demanded tears, as though the heart itself had grown too heavy to carry its silence any longer.

Not from guilt. From clarity. The words of Udaya Ravi's poem lingered in the air like incense, each syllable pressing

again and again against his chest with a weight he could no longer contain.

He had heard speeches, slogans, and commentaries all his life, but this was different experience.

The poem '**TIME**' had not spoken to him; it had spoken through him—stripping away the armor of fame, pride, and denial he had carried like a second skin. His eyes burned and the first tear slipped down. He turned his face away, ashamed at the sudden fragility. But the dam had cracked. Wave after wave broke loose until his shoulders trembled. This was not the polished Virata the world knew—the cricketer who had faced fire on the pitch. This was a soul unclothed before itself. And yet, in that nakedness, he felt the strange release of chains falling away.

Each tear was more than salt and water—it was repentance made visible. His heart thudded slower, his breath steadied, as though some buried spring of calm had been unlocked within. The pain he had buried in silence, the guilt he had mocked away, the loneliness he had drowned in applause—all of it found escape through those trembling sobs. For the first time in years, he did not resist the flood. He let it come.

Virata remembered the lessons of his childhood, when his life giver father had advised that true strength was not in striking back but in bowing to truth. He had laughed at it once. Now he understood. Crying was not weakness—it was divine strength, the body and spirit joining hands in surrender. His mind cleared, and in that clarity, a small flame of resolve flickered to life.

When he finally raised his head, his eyes swollen but his chest lighter, it was as though some door within had opened—a door he did not know existed. Behind it lay a new world: a call to respond, to heal, to lift others rather than himself. Humanity was no longer a word he heard in speeches; it was a pulse he felt beating in his own heart.

Virata didn't see himself anymore in terms of news headlines, fan support, or legal arguments. He saw himself as a man who had been given the chance to choose what Time would make of him.

He rose from his chair slowly, the poem still echoing in his chest.

He turned to Anshika, standing at the door, eyes searching his face.

He said, his voice low but certain. "I have to go back. To every home. To every parent. I have to tell them I'm sorry, seek their pardon—not just because I should, but because... if I don't, I'll never be free."

"Even if it means more backlash?" she asked gently.

Virata nodded.

"Even if it means going back to prison. Even if it means walking alone. It doesn't matter. This... this is the only thing that does."

"I'm going to meet the families of those who lost their lives."

Anshika looked at him with concern.

"Virata, are you sure? It could be risky... the media will follow you everywhere, and some might still blame you."

Virata shook his head firmly.

"They deserve to hear from me directly. Not as a cricketer, not as a celebrity—just as a human being who's mourning with them."

Virata met Maharshi, expressed his intent of meeting the families who lost their loved ones in the stampede, Virata studied him for a moment before nodding.

"Then we'll go. But I'll arrange security. We need to have crowd management plan, pre-arranged security by police arrangements, I will get it rolled"

The first house they visited was a modest two-room home in Rajajinagar. A young boy's cricket bat leaned against the wall, untouched since the day of the stampede. His mother, her eyes swollen from crying, looked at Virata with a mixture of anger and grief.

Virata knelt before her, his voice low.

"I'm so sorry. I know nothing can bring your son back, but please believe me when I say I never wanted this. If there's anything I can do—anything at all—I will."

The woman stared at him for a long moment before tears streamed down her face. She placed a trembling hand on his shoulder.

"He loved you, Virata. He would have given anything to see you play just once. Just... make sure no other mother goes through this."

Virata swallowed hard, his own eyes moist.

"I promise you. I will spend my life making sure this never happens again."

At another house, an elderly father broke down completely, clutching Virata's hands.

"My son died wearing your jersey. He believed you were invincible, that you'd win every fight. Please... win this fight too, for him."

Virata hugged the old man tightly, tears finally breaking free.

"I will. I swear I will." And I am there for you as your son, tears rolled

The images of Virata consoling grieving families quickly went viral, shifting public perception even further. For the first time, people began to see him not as a celebrity accused of negligence, but as a grieving human being standing with his fans.

Every meeting was heart-warming.

What help Virata gave to the families were closely guarded secret, he didn't like any publicity in that.



GITA AWAKENING

Chapter 17

The sun had long dipped beneath the horizon, casting a quiet amber glow over the outskirts of Bengaluru, where the city's chaos gave way to the hush of open land and whispering trees. In a modest guest house tucked amid a grove of mango trees, Virata sat alone, his face still damp from tears that had flowed not from grief alone, but from the over-whelming tide of love and sorrow he had witnessed that day. The faces of the families—grief-stricken yet reverent—haunted him, not with accusation, but with a weight far heavier: faith. Their trust in him, unshaken even in the wake of tragedy, struck a dissonant chord deep within. He had not prepared for this. His mind was a blur, unanchored, spiraling. And just as the silence threatened to consume him whole, a knock came at the door—soft, measured. Maharshi entered, his white robes catching the last flicker of twilight. In his hands, he carried no answers, only a slender, book—the Bhagavad Gita, beautifully bound book wrapped in saffron cloth. Without a word, he placed it before Virata, and in that moment, silence found meaning.

"The Bhagavad Gita a Gift of Greatest Wisdom to the mankind."

"This is for you, Virata. The Mahabharata, translated into simple English with commentary on the Bhagavad Gita. I keep reading time and again and have found answers to life's complicated questions, I'm sure you'll find the answers you're looking for here."

Virata ran his hand over the embossed golden letters, his curiosity piqued.

"I've heard the stories since childhood, Maharshi, but I've never really... read it."

Maharshi's voice was calm, almost reverent. You are a born winner,

"Read it now, its right time. Virata. As a mirror to our human flaws and strengths. Especially the parts on gambling and dharma. You will see how history repeats itself when men choose greed over duty."

Virata nodded, accepting the book as though it were a sacred responsibility.

The Fall of the Pandavas:

That night, sitting alone in his study table with only a single lamp glowing, Virata opened Bhagavad Gita, next to was his life changing book of poetry by poet Udaya Ravi.

As he read the infamous dice game episode, his chest tightened.

"The Pandavas—noble warriors, protectors of dharma—lost everything because of a gambling trap," Virata murmured aloud to himself, his eyes scanning the verses.

He read how Yudhishtira, despite knowing better, could not resist the temptation, how his one weakness led to the humiliation of Draupadi, the exile of his brothers, and ultimately the great war of Kurukshetra.

Virata whispered, almost as if confessing to the book.

"Isn't that what's happening now? Betting... gambling... ruining lives. Families losing everything because of advertisements I and celebrities like me endorsed. *I was no*

better than Shakuni in this game, tempting people for profit."

He closed his eyes, guilt washing over him again, but this time it felt different—it was no longer just guilt; it was awakening.

The Voice of Krishna:

Virata read the conversation between Krishna and Arjuna. The words struck him like lightning:

"Karmanye vadhi karaste ma phaleshu kadachana..." – You have the right to perform your duty, but not to the fruits of your actions."

Virata whispered the words, letting them sink in.

"So that's it... I shouldn't do things for money, fame, or what I gain. I should act because it's right."

He imagined Krishna speaking to him directly, as if across centuries:

"Rise, Virata. A warrior's duty is not to serve his own desires but to protect dharma, to serve the people. True victory is not on the cricket field but in the hearts of those who trust you."

Virata felt a strange calmness wash over him, as though a heavy burden had been lifted.

While, While Udaya Ravi's book of poetry had rekindled in Virata a burning sense of patriotism, honesty and uprightness and the call of humanity in the living, the *Bhagavad Gita* opened before him the deeper mystery—the God factor, the eternal voice of Krishna. In its timeless counsel, he felt the summons to duty without anticipation of reward, the

meaning of the divine dictum revealed through the avatar of Krishna. And in that revelation, Virata touched what could only be called Greater Wisdom—a wisdom lifted beyond intellect, elevated by compassion, purified by selflessness, and guided by a higher vision of life, virtue, and the realms that lie beyond. Thus the book of poetry by Udaya Ravi and Bhagavad Gita, gave Virata Parva a divine intervention, a powerful unstoppable force, the god particle having centered, making Virata parva something like an '**Avatara Purush**'.

Next day Virata smiled gently before Anishka.

“As my wife, you gave my life meaning,” he whispered, “and as a friend, Maharshi gave it direction—made it rightful. The poetry of Udaya Ravi stirred me awake, giving me a purpose beyond myself. My people, with their unconditional love, gave me strength, made my life powerful. And this book...” he lifted the Bhagavad Gita, pressing it against his chest as though it were a heartbeat, “...this book made my soul blissful.”

He paused, his gaze soft but resolute, and continued, “These five blessings are not mere influences—they are my Pancha Bootha, the five sacred elements that have shaped me, secured me from the shadows of my past, and given me the dignity to rise again. Without which, there would be no Virata standing before you today.”.

Anishka could not hold back the tears that welled in her eyes. She drew him into her arms, not as a wife consoling a broken man, but as a companion embracing the rebirth of his soul. In that quiet moment, with love and faith entwined, the

past seemed to dissolve, and a new chapter of their life—dignified, purposeful, and unafraid—silently began.



THE LOOPHOLE OF LAW Chapter 18

“Guest Lecture on surrogate advertising”

The classroom was alive with chatter—casual laughter, rustling notebooks, and the hum of youthful curiosity. But all of it fell silent the moment Advocate Maharshi walked in.

Tall, lean, and composed like a mountain, he carried with him an aura of quiet intensity. His sharp features, wrapped in serene expression, were marked not by pride, but by conviction. His calm but piercing eyes scanned the assembly hall once before he placed a thin, leather-bound file on the desk—no PowerPoint, no entourage, just words.

The students at the National University of Legal Studies had been waiting for this moment.

After the sensational legal victory alongside Virata Parva—a case that not only shattered the nexus of surrogate advertising but also reignited conversations around celebrity ethics and corporate accountability—Maharshi’s name had become synonymous with fearless advocacy.

He had not merely won a case.

He had dismantled a carefully constructed illusion.

In the days following the victory, the nation hailed Virata for his unprecedented moral stand, but it was Maharshi’s deft courtroom brilliance, his unwavering integrity, and his refusal to bow to political or corporate pressure that had stunned legal circles. The respect towards the advocate fraternity increased multi-fold, not seen since the days of constitutional legends.

He was now more than a lawyer. He was a symbol of what law could achieve when wielded with courage and conscience.

It was no surprise, then, that the prestigious National University of Legal Studies had invited him for a guest lecture—to inspire, to provoke thought, and most importantly, to promote the idea that advocacy is not merely a profession, but a social responsibility.

And now, standing before some of the brightest young minds of the country, Maharshi began to speak in a voice deep and deliberate.

“There’s a poison in our system,” he said without any preamble, his eyes sweeping the room.

“It wears a smile. It sells you dreams. It tells you what success looks like. And when it’s done, it rots the very foundation of the nation.”

He paused.

“My dear friends, today I will not speak to you as a lawyer bound by precedents, but as a fellow human who has seen the law wrestle with deception.”

Again paused, allowing the weight of his words to settle.

“We live in a society where death often comes smiling. Not with a knife, not with a gun, but in a glossy advertisement—a smiling celebrity holding a bottle of water, a music CD, or even a fashion accessory. You clap at the glamour, but behind it lurks liquor, tobacco, and poison disguised in respectability.”

The Illusion of Harmlessness

Maharshi’s voice grew firm.

“You have all seen the banners — Miracle Music Nights, Silver Soda, Majestic Moments Lifestyle. What are these? Do you really believe a billion-rupee empire survives by selling mineral water or CDs? No. They are shadows. They are masks worn by alcohol and tobacco barons who laugh at the law while millions fall prey to addiction.”

He walked across the hall slowly.

“Statistics proclaim truths we don’t want to hear.— Every year, India buries 14 lakh lives stolen by tobacco — not soldiers fallen in battle, not victims of sudden natural disaster, but ordinary men and women who could have lived, loved, and worked for decades more. These deaths strike hardest at the nation’s most productive age groups, robbing families of their happiness, breadwinners, children of parents, and the nation of its strength. It is a silent recurring massacre — preventable, yet relentless.

The toll is staggering: more than 1% of India’s GDP is swallowed by cigarettes, beedis, and gutkha. Hospitals overflow with patients gasping for breath, bodies weakened by cancer and heart disease, while families sit helplessly outside, counting the last of their savings. What begins as a small indulgence ends as a financial catastrophe. A man who once stood tall, earning for his family, is reduced to a frail body tethered to oxygen, while his wife mortgages jewelry and sells ancestral land to pay hospital bills that rise into the lakhs — five, ten, twenty, even fifty. The price of survival is bankruptcy; the cost of death is destitution.

The suffering is beyond imagination. Cancer is not just a disease — it is a slow descent into hell. Pain burns through

bones like fire, sometimes constant, sometimes striking in waves so sharp that patients scream until their throats go dry. Eight out of ten people with advanced cancer experience this agony, and even the strongest painkillers cannot always silence it. But worse than the physical torment is the invisible suffering — the confusion as the brain clouds, the breathlessness as lungs collapse, the restless anxiety that grips the dying when they know death waits at the doorstep. Fear, despair, and unanswered questions haunt them in their final hours. Many do not beg for life; they beg only for relief, for dignity in death.

And when death finally comes, it does not take just one life. It destroys five more. The average Indian family of five is pushed onto the streets, stripped of savings, stability, and hope. A son drops out of school to earn. A widow takes loans she cannot repay. Properties, built over a lifetime of labor, are sold for a fraction of their worth. Cancer kills the body, but it also strangles the family left behind. Poverty tightens its noose around them, dragging the middle class into ruin, crushing the poor beyond recognition.

Even those who survive cancer rarely escape its shadow. They live half-lives — weak, dependent, scarred by surgeries, unable to return to work or normality. Their survival is not victory; it is existence stripped of vitality, a daily reminder of the life tobacco stole.

This is the true cost of tobacco — not merely statistics of GDP loss, but the silent destruction of human resource, of dignity, of dreams. Every puff carries the echo of future screams in hospital corridors, every packet sold carries the

weight of a child's lost education, a family's broken home, a nation's fractured strength.

I'm the witness, I have seen how my father, who smoked tobacco, suffered due to lung cancer, his trauma, pain, agony, helplessness, guilt of pushing his family to difficulties, later his death and after his death the suffering of my mother and myself, I pray God every day, such deaths should not come to any family.

India is bleeding from within — lakhs of its people dying preventable deaths, lakhs of its families shattered. And unless the chain is broken, this deadly nicotine trap will keep consuming lives, year after year, leaving only grief, poverty, and ashes behind.

Yet, the tobacco brands remain immortal, engraved in the young mind by surrogate advertisements, depicting smoking as heroic, all of you would have certainly seen in every film of big banner, with big hero and star cast, smoking is glorified, all that are surrogate advertisement, that are not even supposed to exist.”

All that is because of Loophole of Law

Maharshi opened his file.

“Though our laws are not blind, it is made to sleep. Put to sleep, the Nicotine in tobacco is established poison, an addictive, habit forming substance.

The battle is not in the courts alone. It is in our streets, in our homes, in the minds of the young who are daily bombarded with illusions of top film stars and cricket stars

who are directly and indirectly promoting tobacco as its ambassadors.”

The Human Cost

Maharshi’s tone softened.

“I once met a boy, just 19, in a de-addiction center. He said, ‘Sir, I never touched alcohol until I saw my hero on TV promoting that cool soda. I thought it was safe, but soon I was curious about the real drink behind it.’ Today, that boy’s liver is gone. His parents sit outside the hospital with eyes that will never smile again.”

The hall was silent. Some students lowered their gaze, shaken.

A Call to Duty

Maharshi straightened.

“My friends, when companies play this dangerous game, they are not just breaking a law, they are breaking trust. They are planting seeds of addiction in young hearts under the fragrance of glamour. And if law graduates like you do not rise, the future will be bought and sold by advertisements of lies.”

He leaned forward, voice deep as thunder:

“Remember — when a surrogate advertisement flashes on a bill-board, it is not just selling water or music. It is whispering: Drink, smoke, destroy yourself — we will still smile in illegal profit. Will you let the law remain a silent spectator?”

The students sat frozen, their pens motionless.

Maharshi closed his lecture with a solemn vow:

“Let us not be fooled by the masks of commerce. Let us sharpen the sword of law and cut through the veil of surrogacy. For every fake soda bottle on screen, a real family may drown in grief. And the law — our law — must be the lighthouse that saves them.”

The hall erupted in applause, not of excitement, but of conviction. The students had just seen the face of law not as a dry textbook, but as a living guardian of society.

“We have to unmask the trick: when a law bans the advertisement, the that advertisement wears a mask. That mask is the ‘brand extension’—club soda for whisky, bottled water for rum, mouth freshener for gutkha. Same colors, same typeface, same jingle, same celebrity smile. It’s the old product’s aura poured into a ‘permitted’ bottle.”

He steps closer. “The law isn’t blind. India’s COT-PA—Section 5—bans direct and indirect advertising of to-bacco. And the Cable TV Rules—Rule 7(2)(viii)—ban ads for alcohol and tobacco on TV. But there’s a narrow corridor: if the extension is a genuine product with real registrations, distribution, and sales, its advertisement will pass.” He pauses. “Actually it must Not.” There can’t be any Genuineness. Proportionality. Proof, in products under surrogate advertising.

“In court?” he continues. “Surrogate advertisement disputes don’t live in theory. In TV Today Network Ltd. v. Union of India (2023), the Delhi High Court noted the precise Rule 7(2)(viii) bar and the limited window for genuine brand extensions—reminding broadcasters that regulators

can demand explanations when ‘soda’ looks a lot like ‘scotch.’ And in *Struggle Against Pain v. State of U.P.* (2019), the Allahabad High Court underlined that promotional speech for harmful products—direct or oblique—doesn’t wear a constitutional halo.” He nods to the front row. “Our classic anchors still matter: *Hamdard Dawakhana* (1960) said commercial advertising isn’t high-value speech; *Tata Press* (1995) later recognized that truthful commercial speech enjoys protection—but it can be restricted for public health. That’s exactly where surrogate ads meet their limits.”

He turns the story personal.

A hallway conversation that changed a life

Abeer, first-year law, loved a cricketer. He never saw the cricketer hold a bottle, but he saw the colours, the crest, the anthem—all over a “soda” that no shop near his hostel actually stocked. At a fresher’s party, “soda” became “shots.” “If my hero’s brand is everywhere,” he told himself, “it can’t be that bad.”

“But it isn’t just alcohol,” Maharshi says softly. “It’s nicotine—the poisonous alkaloid that the tobacco leaf hides with a smile. Nicotine is highly addictive; in high doses it’s toxic; and in the developing brain it rewires attention, learning, mood, and impulse control. Adolescents can slide into dependence quickly—sometimes before daily use feels ‘real’ to them.” He lets that hang. “That’s why youth-aimed gloss—however indirect—matters.”

What the facts refuse to ignore

Global toll: Tobacco kills over 8 million people each year; 1.3 million are nonsmokers breathing other people’s smoke. WHO calls

tobacco a major risk for cancer (20+ types), heart disease, stroke, and COPD.

India's bill: Tobacco cost India INR 1.77 lakh crore (2017–18) in health expenditures and productivity losses—an economic drag measured in hospital beds, widowed households, and lost classes.

Second-hand smoke: Those 1.3 million global deaths aren't abstractions; they're grandparents with failing hearts and children with inflamed lungs.

Maharshi draws two circles—heart and lungs—and fills them with ordinary words: breathlessness, chest pain, fatigue. “The science is unromantic,” he says. “But the suffering is not. COPD means climbing stairs like climbing a mountain. Lung cancer means cough, blood, and a calendar cut into chemotherapy cycles.” WHO’s palliative-care brief adds a sting: most patients worldwide still can’t access adequate pain relief, so a tumour’s pain is felt raw.

He turns to a grim, practical question from the back row: “Sir, what if a baby swallows a cigarette butt?”

“Even one discorded butt holds concentrated nicotine,” he answers. “Small children can develop nausea, vomiting, pallor, lethargy, and in severe cases seizures. It can bring even death. Poison-control data and pediatric guidance say: this is an emergency scenario for infants and toddlers—seek medical help immediately.” He adds, “Newer ‘nicotine pouches’ have triggered a sharp rise in pediatric exposures worldwide.”

He looks back to Abeer. “Our student didn’t start with a cigarette. He started with surrogate glamour.”

The other twin: alcohol, and the quiet wreckage

“Alcohol is legal, but not harmless, it’s again a restricted product” Maharshi says. WHO estimates 2.6 million deaths in 2019 from alcohol—liver disease, cancers, injuries—and flags the disproportionate harm to young people and families. In India, harmful use fuels crashes, violence, lost earnings, and intergenerational poverty. Surrogate advertisements turn a risky commodity into a lifestyle badge—exactly why Rule 7(2)(viii) exists.”

The third mask: pan masala and areca nut

“Some pan masala includes tobacco; some doesn’t. Either way, areca nut—the hero ingredient in many mixes—is carcinogenic (Group 1) and linked to oral submucous fibrosis and oral cancers that disfigure faces and steal speech.” He slows his words. “These are the tumours we meet in clinic corridors outside district courts.”

A hand shoots up. “Sir, where does this leave us as lawyers?”

Your brief for the future (and your client is the public)

1. Read the fine print like an auditor: If a brand extension is advertised, ask for the paper trail—GST/FSSAI/TM registrations, distribution maps, independent sales audits, and whether ad spend \approx turnover. Disproportion screams “surrogate.”

2. Match the semiotics: If the ‘soda’ borrows the whisky’s palette, crest, tagline, and celebrity, you have look-alike intent. Courts and regulators take notice.

3. Know the statutory lattice: COTPA Sec.5 (tobacco), Cable TV Rules 7(2)(viii) (tobacco & alcohol), and the ASCI

Code (self-regulation recognized under Rule 7(9))—together, they convert a loophole into a compliance tunnel.

4. Protect the young by design: Any campaign skirting kid-safe norms, gaming influencer culture, or targeting campus festivals with ‘extensions’ should trigger complaints to ASCI and notices to regulators.

He lowers his voice. “When nicotine takes hold young, it isn’t a ‘habit,’ it’s a hijack—dopamine circuits retuned to crave, attention narrowed, mood tethered to the next hit.” He looks at Abeer. “Advertising isn’t neutral when it nudges children toward a lifetime of disease.”

The ledger of suffering (what the advertisement never shows)

Cancer: lungs, oral cavity, larynx, esophagus, pancreas, bladder—and more than 20 types overall.

Heart & brain: coronary disease, stroke—where seconds decide futures.

Lungs: COPD—air hunger that turns sleep into a siege.

Pregnancy & infants: second-hand smoke harms fetal growth; homes fill with invisible risk.

Children: ingestion of butts/pouches → nicotine poisoning; exposure to smoke → ear infections, asthma flares.

Nation: hospital bills, lost workdays, and premature funerals add up to hundreds of thousands of crores—money not spent on schools or startups.

He lets silence stretch. “Now, imagine you’re drafting a petition,” he says at last.

Your facts will be WHO’s.

Your law will be COTPA, the Cable TV Rules, and the ASCI Code.

Your story will be Abeer's—and the toddler who swallowed a butt, and the bus driver with COPD, and the widow in the oncology queue.

“Surrogate advertising,” Maharshi concludes, “is not clever marketing. It is shorthand for avoidable funerals. As future lawyers, your job is to make sure a ‘soda’ is really a soda—and that a nation’s children aren’t taught to drink or chew by a logo in disguise.”

The lecture hall was full when a young law student, Ravi, raised his hand. His eyes carried both innocence and curiosity.

“Sir,” he asked, “people say the government survives on the huge taxes collected from tobacco companies. They argue that this revenue helps run welfare schemes for the poor. Is it true that tobacco is indirectly helping the nation?”

The question sent a wave of murmurs across the hall. Maharshi smiled faintly, leaned forward, and began—his voice calm but edged with steel.

The Myth of the Golden Goose

“My dear friends,” Maharshi said, “this is the most dangerous myth ever sold to the people. Tobacco companies proudly declare that they are the golden goose of the exchequer, paying excise, GST, and cess in thousands of crores. Yes, on paper the numbers are large. But let us see the other side of the ledger—the side they never show.”

He pulled a sheet from his file.

“According to government and WHO studies, the economic cost of tobacco use in India—that is healthcare

expenses plus productivity losses—was about ₹1.77 lakh crore in 2017-18 alone. That's nearly 1% of India's GDP."

The students leaned forward.

"And do you know the total revenue from tobacco taxes that year? It was far less than this staggering economic burden. In other words, every rupee earned in tax from tobacco is lost two to three times over in the cost of treating cancers, lung diseases, heart attacks, and the productivity lost when people die prematurely."

He paused. "So tell me, is this a goose laying golden eggs—or a vulture feeding on our future?"

The Human Ledger

"Let me take you beyond numbers," Maharshi continued. "Imagine a poor farmer's son diagnosed with throat cancer. In a government hospital, the waiting list is endless. In a private hospital, the treatment costs upwards of ₹10-15 lakhs—with no certainty of cure. Imported patented drugs cost ₹1-2 lakhs per cycle, medicines beyond the dreams of an ordinary family."

He lowered his voice.

"There are thousands of fathers sell their land, mothers pawn their jewelry, children abandon education, only to pay bills for one more month of chemotherapy. And in the end, the disease still wins. Do you see the cruelty? Tobacco companies manufacture disease, and multinational pharmaceutical companies manufacture the medicine. It is like two blades of the same scissor, cutting lives and pockets together."

The hall fell silent. A few students clenched their fists.

The Legal Question – Polluter Pays

“Now,” Maharshi said, lifting his finger like a judge, “this raises a profound legal question: Why should innocent taxpayers bear the cost of treating diseases caused by tobacco? Why shouldn’t the tobacco industry, the very polluter, be made to pay?”

He wrote on the board: “Polluter Pays Principle.”

“This principle is already recognized in Indian environmental law. Industries that pollute rivers, forests, and air are forced by the courts to compensate victims and restore damage. Then why not extend this doctrine to health? If tobacco causes cancer, COPD, and heart disease, shouldn’t tobacco taxes be ringfenced into a National Tobacco Disease Fund to pay for treatment?”

He looked around the hall. “If such a law were passed, tobacco companies would collapse under their own weight—because their taxes would not be profit for the state, but repayment for the destruction they cause.”

A Call for Lawyers and Doctors Together

“My friends,” he said warmly, “this is where your generation comes in. Lawyers and doctors must work hand in hand. Doctors know the suffering; lawyers know the law. Together, you can argue for policies where the polluter pays, the victim is healed, and society is protected. If tobacco companies were forced to bear the true cost of their poison, they would either reform—or perish.”

He straightened, his voice rising.

“Remember, revenue from tobacco is not charity to the nation—it is blood money. And no welfare scheme should be

painted with the tears of cancer patients. The true duty of law is to ensure that justice, not poison, funds our future.”

The hall erupted—not with the usual applause, but with a roar of conviction. The myth had been shattered. And the truth: tobacco was never a benefactor of the poor, it was their executioner.



I AM NOT FOR SALE

Chapter 19

The rain was pouring over the city of Bangalore. In-side a dimly lit auditorium, Advocate Maharshi stood silently, watching rows of banners flutter in the artificial wind of ceiling fans. They read:

“Together for a Tobacco-Free India”

“NGOs United Against Cancer”

The hall was filled with men and women in designer suits, sipping imported coffee. A fleet of luxury cars stood outside. It was supposed to be a “Public Health Summit” organized by an NGO claiming to champion tobacco control. But Maharshi’s eyes were sharp; he knew these banners were masks.

The NGO Game

In his years of practice, Maharshi had seen the pattern. Few NGOs indeed worked selflessly, rescuing the vulnerable, fighting for clean air, free medicines, and awareness. But in the shadows, dubious NGOs thrived—flourishing not on sacrifice, but on sponsorships, CSR funds, and quiet deals with the very industries they pretended to oppose.

These NGOs would parade in front of cameras:

Filing Public Interest Litigations (PILs) against tobacco advertising.

Publishing glossy reports condemning liquor and pan masala companies.

Attending international conferences with heavy words like sustainability, youth protection, health equity.

But behind closed doors, their files were blank, their projects inflated, their reports recycled, their accounts riddled with holes.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) money, instead of building rehab centres or awareness campaigns, was routed into villas, cars, and overseas trips.

Collusion in the Courtroom

Maharshi recalled one bitter PIL filed by a so-called “Coalition for Public Health.” The petition looked righteous—seeking a ban on surrogate advertisements. But weeks later, whispers began. A senior officer in the registry hinted:

> “The petition will not survive. Don’t you see? They filed only to withdraw it later, after a settlement.”

It became clear: the NGO had never wanted to win. The PIL was merely a bargaining chip to armtwist corporations into funding them under CSR “partnerships.”

The greatest tragedy? The law, the court, the very instrument of justice was being toyed with—like a coin flipped for profit.

The Corporate Offer

One evening, as Maharshi prepared for a lecture at the law college, two suited men walked into his chamber. They spoke smoothly, with the confidence of those who had purchased many consciences before.

“Sir,” one of them began, “your passion is admirable. But let us be practical. The tobacco and liquor industry—whether you like it or not—runs half the economy. You cannot fight

it alone. Why not join hands? We can ensure that you are rewarded for your... silence.”

The second man slid a file across the table.

Inside: documents showing transfer of equity shares in a multinational liquor company, disguised as a “corporate legal consultancy fee.” The figure was staggering—₹25 crores in today’s share market value.

They smiled. “All we ask is that you temper your voice. No need to fight openly. Just... let the system flow.”

The Temptation and the Thunder

For a moment, Maharshi looked at the file. In another man’s eyes, greed might have flickered. But Maharshi’s eyes blazed with something else—a fire forged in years of seeing the poor buried under addictions, children poisoned by nicotine, families destroyed by alcohol, and justice mocked by false champions.

He closed the file slowly, his voice steady, but heavy with authority.

“Gentlemen, I am not for sale. Not for 25 crores, not for 250 crores. Your shares are shares in sorrow, and your money smells of the ashes of lungs and the tears of widows. Take this file back before it burns your hands. And hear me clearly—if you do not mend yourselves, if you do not clean your books, if you do not stop corrupting PILs and buying silence, then you will face me in court. And there, truth will be my only client.”

The room shook with his words. The two men paled, gathering the file quickly, realizing they had tried to buy a mountain with a coin.

The Righteous Stand

News spread quickly. Students in the law college repeated his words with reverence. Honest NGOs rejoiced—finally, someone was unmasking the pretenders who gave their sector a bad name.

But the tobacco and liquor lobbies grew restless. They had always bought their way out of PILs, using NGOs as puppets. Maharshi was different. He was incorruptible, and that made him dangerous.

For the first time, the industry realized: they were not facing a negotiator, but a warrior.

Advocate Maharshi's Message

At his next lecture, Maharshi addressed his students:

“My young friends, beware of masks. Not every banner of public health hides honesty. Many NGOs serve the people, but some serve only themselves, thriving on CSR funds while doing nothing for the common man. The collusion between such NGOs, corrupt officials, and corporate lobbies is a disease as dangerous as tobacco itself.

But remember this: one honest lawyer, one righteous citizen, one voice of truth can cut through the smokescreen. Do not bend, do not sell your conscience, for once you sell your honesty, you have sold the very soul of law.”

The hall erupted in applause. Not because they saw a lawyer. But because they saw a lighthouse in a storm.

Thus began Advocate Maharshi's greatest battle—not just against corporations, but against the masked traitors within society itself, who sold charity in exchange for champagne.



OPERATION DESERT BLOOM Chapter 20

December 10, 2026

New Delhi – Ministry of External Affairs

10:00 AM

The office of the Minister of External Affairs no longer resembled the age worn corridors of bureaucracy most imagined. Bathed in quiet light from floor-to-ceiling smart glass that adjusted tint with the sun, the space exuded a blend of gravitas and quiet innovation. A translucent touchscreen desk flickered softly as the minister moved between virtual briefings, diplomatic cables, and real-time translation feeds, all projected seamlessly onto an interactive wall behind. Beyond the minister's suite, a modular open-plan hub buzzed with quiet efficiency—teams huddled in AI-synced pods, switching between in-person and holographic meetings with global envoys. Notifications, color-coded by priority, flowed through personalized dashboards designed to enforce the Pomodoro method and Eisenhower Matrix principles, ensuring no time was wasted on the unessential. A central neural system triaged diplomatic requests, parsed social sentiment across continents, and prepared re-sponses before most had finished their first coffee. This wasn't just a government office—it was diplomacy reengineered for the velocity of a shifting world, where power didn't speak — it listened.

Advocate Maharshi, clad in his modest white shirt and navy-blue coat, stood unshaken across the table from Shri Jayashankarji, India's most formidable statesman, now

over-seeing both the Ministry of External Affairs and Home Affairs, entrusted with the country's most sensitive files.

In front of them lay a folder stamped in red:

“Project Desert Bloom – TOP SECRET: Urgent Classified Operations Brief.”

Maharshi didn't blink as he spoke.

“Sir, what we are looking at is no longer blackmail. It is a full-fledged assault on our democracy, our institutions, and the moral compass of a generation. What began as a scandal involving one cricketer, Virata, is merely the tip of a glacier hiding below the surface. We are talking about systematic honeytraps targeting public figures — designed, executed, and monetized by international criminal syndicates.”

Jayashankarji, ever calm, opened the folder. Inside were dossiers stamped from RAW, CBI, and IB. He scanned the images — screenshots of chats, intercepted audio clips, server blueprints from South Africa — and paused at one memo:

“Twelve Indian politicians (names redacted), high-profile athletes, and senior bureaucrats compromised via covert honeytrap operations run from Cape Town and Durban. International corporate links confirmed.”

A grim silence followed.

Maharshi leaned in.

“They almost broke Virata Parva, sir. They lured him in with Camay — glamour, subtle manipulation, a moment of weakness. Then came the threats. Videos. Photos. And then the demand, act in surrogate liquor and gambling ads again — or the world sees it all. And he... he nearly gave in, out of fear.”

“But he didn’t,” Jayashankarji said, locking eyes. “Because of you.”

Maharshi said nothing.

Flashback: A Week Ago

Inside Virata’s farmhouse in Bengaluru, he had sat slouched on the floor, not in his jersey but in silence. Anshika, pale-faced, held his hand.

“Maharshi... they threatened Anshika now. Said my image campaigns are hurting billion-dollar markets. Told me to keep quiet or else—” he paused, “—everything goes online.”

“They told me to mind cricket... not truth.”

Maharshi had said only one thing:

“If you surrender, they win forever. If we fight, they lose the weapon. Let me do this. As your lawyer. As your friend.”

Back to the Ministry: The Strike Plan

Jayashankarji put the file down. “What’s the plan?”

Maharshi stood straight, his words now rhythmic, rehearsed, and razor-sharp:

Formal FIR registered by Virata at Delhi Cyber Crime Cell.

MLAT (Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty) invoked with South Africa.

CBI and Interpol coordination initiated.

Four locations identified via cyber-forensics and geo-tagging:

Camay’s luxury villa in Clifton, Cape Town

A remote data vault in Pretoria

A film studio in Durban

Offshore server farms near Port Elizabeth
Jayashankarji nodded, then dialed the PMO.

Within minutes, India's Prime Minister, informed through a classified intel brief, approved Operation Desert Bloom.

“National sovereignty is at stake,” the Prime Minister said. “You have my go-ahead.”

Simultaneous Raids: December 31, 2026 – 2:30 PM IST / 11:00 AM SAST

As the sun pierced the South African skyline, four locations across the country fell under coordinated raids.

Cape Town:

SAPS Cyber Intelligence, flanked by Indian intelligence observers, stormed Camay's villa. Hidden under the wine cellar, a digitally locked vault contained 12 terabytes of encrypted files. Videos. Photos. Email trails. Names.

Durban:

Camay and her father were caught mid-burn — SIM cards, hard drives, a shredded international passport. Arrested on spot.

Pretoria:

In a nondescript office, agents found a blackmail dashboard — software tracking emotional and political pressure points of 42 VIPs.

Port Elizabeth:

The offshore server room — lined with illegal mirror servers for global upload — was disabled with help from Interpol and Google's cybersecurity division.

Within hours, all material was seized under SAPS control. Digital forensics teams locked and preserved evidence. A press conference from the South African Minister of International Affairs followed:

“We regret such crimes occurred on our soil. We will cooperate fully with the Government of India to prosecute these networks that threaten the dignity and democracy of both our nations.”

The Honeytrap Act, 2027: A Law is Born

Two weeks later, the Parliament of India echoed with a rare sound: unanimous agreement.

Backed by Prime Ministerial will, Jayashankarji’s resolve, and Maharshi’s blueprint, the Honeytrap Act, 2027 was tabled, debated, and passed in a single historic session.

The law was born out of Maharshi’s white paper, titled:

“The Weaponization of Consent: Honeytrap Crimes and the Threat to Democratic Integrity.”

Highlights of the Act:

Defines Honeytrap as a crime of coercion using romantic or sexual manipulation for blackmail, influence, or commercial exploitation.

Life Imprisonment for honeytrap conspirators in cross-border or state-targeted operations.

Special Fast-Track Courts for trial and victim protection.

Right to Be Forgotten digital protection enforced by court order.

Corporate Accountability clause punishing agencies and advertisers who benefit from blackmail.

Whistleblower Protection for insiders who expose such rings.

Back in Virata's farmhouse, the air had changed.

Maharshi entered silently. Virata, waiting in the prayer hall, looked up, rose, and walked forward.

Without a word, he embraced him.

"I always thought cricket made me a hero," Virata said. "But what you did... you protected my wife, my daughter, my dignity thereby my soul. You gave me back the right to walk into a room without fear."

Anshika, tearful, clasped Maharshi's hand.

"You're not our lawyer. You're our family. My brother."

Outside, bells rang in a quiet temple. Inside, the storm had passed.

But what Maharshi had done would ripple across decades.

He didn't just defeat blackmail.

He defended dignity.

He upheld the Republic.

He rewrote the law — and the legacy of a nation betrayed in silence.



THE PRICE OF GREED Chapter 21

The Mumbai traffic was slow that morning, choking on its own noise, heat, and restlessness. Virata sat silently in the backseat of his tinted Rolls-Royce Cullinan, the most popular and costliest SUV available in India, quite opposite to traffic disorder of Mumbai. It's a pinnacle of luxury and exclusivity, enroute to a panel discussion on youth wellness—ironically. The city outside moved like a film reel, but what he saw now felt like a personal reckoning.

At every signal, on every street, above every shop—his face stared back at him.

Not as the cricketer who had brought glory to a nation. Not as the man who was trying to rebuild himself. But as the shining ambassador of surrogate tobacco and liquor brands, plastered across hundreds of hoardings.

"Virata trusts us," said one.

"King's Choice—be bold like Virata," claimed another.

Outside paan shops, grocery stores, mobile recharges stalls—thousands of bunting and danglers hung like flags of conquest.

He winced.

Children passed by them with school bags, giggling. A group of college boys clicked a selfie under a billboard that had him, arms folded, posing next to a liquor company's 'mineral water brand.'

He felt sick.

It wasn't just a few ads. It was everywhere. Shops, malls, autos, railway stations. In toothpaste and chicklets. In

chocolates and notebooks. A bottle of cola with a logo that matched a brand of whisky. The same name, same font, dancing from lunchboxes to TV commercials. Even inside schools, the companies had found their way—donating water tanks and sanitation kits, but all stamped with the same logo that stood for death in disguise had reached nook and corner of entire nation Bharat.

They had called it Corporate Social Responsibility.

Virata felt his breath tighten.

"They used me."

No—that wasn't true. They hadn't just used him.

He had allowed himself to be used. For the money. For the power. For the glamour. For the thrill of being seen shaking hands with men in tailored suits and five-star lounges. For the fake identity of being a 'corporate icon.'

Now, every smile in those hoardings felt like a slap. Every raised arm, every wink, every word he once agreed to say—it screamed betrayal. Of children. Of trust. Of the dreams he once carried.

He clenched his fists. His voice was barely a whisper.

"What have I done...?"

Back home, Virata walked into his study like a man returning to a battlefield. The book lay there again—"Ashes and Arrows" by Udaya Ravi.

He picked it up with trembling hands, flipped past the poem Time, and stopped at the second one. The title stared at him like a mirror:

The Price of Greed

Yes—

God gave you what crores could only dream,
Power in your hands, a fire that could redeem.
He clothed you in passion, in brilliance, in might,
He crowned you with fortune, with love's burning light.
The people chose you, they called you their own,
Millions followed, you stood on a throne.
They gave you their trust, their cheers, their name,
And the world bowed low to your wealth and fame.
But what did you do with blessings divine?
You bartered your soul for money and wine.
You mingled with merchants of sickness and lies,
With corporate criminals in glittering disguise.
You shook hands with poison, you danced with decay,
Sold dreams for profit, led millions astray.
Tobacco, liquor, games of chance—
You fed the world death in a shining glance.
Don't you see? A tsunami you've made,
Your kin, your blood will be swept away.
No wall of gold, no fortress tall,
Can save your children when shadows fall.
This world believes what the adverts show,
They're blind to the dagger you hide below.
Yet you, who had all, turned blind with greed,
To women, to power, to wine's dark need.
Yes—you may be a star, a leader of men,
A hero adored in stadiums, in pen.
But the day will come, as it always must,
When gold turns to ashes, and thrones to dust.
For Karma waits—unseen, unheard,

Sharper than sword, swifter than word.
You may win in court, deceive the crowd,
Yet justice arrives, silent, proud.
Better you change, while the hour is near,
Repent for the lives you've shattered in fear.
Lighten the weight of your sins, confess,
Redeem your soul from this wilderness.
For fame will fade, and riches decay,
But truth and virtue alone shall stay.
Choose now—before it's far too late,
Change, or be crushed beneath your fate.

Virata sat still. The poem blurred as his tears began to flow freely. They fell onto the page like ink bleeding from a wound.

He read the poem again. Then again. He didn't know how many times.

He didn't cry out of fear of punishment. He cried because he had finally seen the truth of his own actions. Not just the stampede, not just the lawsuits. But this—this quiet destruction of hope, health, and innocence, carried out in boardrooms with champagne and signatures.

And he had been their poster boy.

A new silence fell over him. Not empty—but full of resolve.

“I cannot erase what I've done,” he whispered.

“But I can decide what I do now.”

Something was changing inside him—a death of an old self, a shedding of skin. It wasn't just guilt. It was deeper. It

was like what Siddhartha must have felt under the Bodhi tree—a painful rebirth.

He picked up his phone and called Maharshi.

"Cancel all endorsements. Every single one linked to tobacco, liquor, betting—anything."

"Virata... are you sure? That's a huge financial—"

"I'm sure. And tell legal to issue public apologies. No more hiding."

There was a pause on the line.

"You've changed," Maharshi finally said.

"No," Virata replied, voice calm.

"I've finally started becoming who I should've been."

Anshika, from his behind had cried too, in pride, looking at the massive change of her husband.

He sat on the balcony with Anshika, watching the city lights.

"Honey, I promised those families I'd fight for them. But this is bigger than just proving I'm innocent. This is about changing how things work."

Anshika smiled softly, resting her head on his shoulder.

"And you will. You've always fought for what's right, Virata. This time won't be any different."

Here in Bengaluru, inside, Maharshi stood by the window, staring at the night sky, his mind racing. He knew the next phase wouldn't just be legal—it would be warfare of reputation, influence, and survival.

"Let anything happen- “dairayam sarvatra sadhanam” he whispered to himself. "We' should be ready."

The Cruel Mirror & the pledge

The room was dimly lit. Evening sun filtered through the curtains of Virata and Anshika's home in Mumbai, painting the teakwood floors in gold and rust. The air was heavy—not with silence, but with the weight of truths too long ignored.

Virata sat at the edge of the sofa, elbows on his knees, head bowed. A dossier lay open on the table—World Health Organization reports, death statistics, economic costs on the nation, and the cold, clinical reality of lives destroyed.

Across from him, Maharshi stood still, the only sound in the room was the creak of the ceiling fan and the soft rustle of Anshika flipping through the printed reports.

Maharshi finally broke the silence.

“14,00,000, fourteen lakh painful deaths. Every year. That’s what tobacco is doing to India, Virata. One every 24 seconds. Dreams, children, fathers, mothers... gone. And alcohol—another 300,000 miserable deaths a year.

Virata didn’t look up.

“I read it all,” he murmured. “₹1.77 lakh crore in economic loss. And yet, they keep selling it—in glitter, in disguise. And I... I was their face.”

He lifted his eyes—red-rimmed, hollow.

“God help me, I was their face.”

Maharshi stepped closer, setting down a new folder.

“These are reports on surrogate advertising. During the last ICC World Cup alone—41.3% of all surrogate smokeless tobacco ads featured you. Not just you—others too, but you were the icon.”

Anshika’s voice was barely above a whisper.

“We knew about the loophole, but since it was legal... but we never saw this. Not this much. Not the children.”

She held up a photo—a street boy chewing pan masala, staring wide-eyed at a poster of Virata in full glory, holding a mock ‘mouth freshener’ that looked suspiciously like a tobacco tin.

“He’s what, ten? Eleven? He sees you... and he believes it’s okay. It’s cool. It’s safe.”

Virata’s hands shook as he reached for the report again.

“You know how it started?” he asked, his voice cracking. “It wasn’t even about money in the beginning. It was ego. Fame. We were in South Africa for a match... the night after we won, there was this party.”

He closed his eyes.

“A baron introduced me to this international model. She laughed like she owned the sky. There was champagne. Applause. The media. I was high on myself. Then came the offers—‘mouth freshener,’ ‘mineral water,’ ‘celebrity mixers’—all innocent names. All... lies.”

He looked at Maharshi, then at Anshika.

“And I said yes. Again. And again. Because it paid. More than endorsements. Because it made me feel invincible.”

Maharshi folded his arms, eyes dark.

“And now?” he asked quietly.

Virata exhaled. A tremor ran through him.

“Now I see what they did with my face. They turned me into a weapon. A tool to reach children. Families. Every advertisement, every smile I gave them—killed someone, somewhere.”

Anshika reached for his hand, squeezing it tightly. Her eyes welled up.

“They still love you, Virata,” she said. “Even now. When you were arrested, do you know how many people fasted for your release? How many offered their lives? It was devotion... but it was misplaced. They didn’t know. But we did. And we let it happen.”

The room went quiet.

“Their love...” Virata whispered, “...was the cruelest mirror. Because that love gave me the power to betray them.”

Tears finally broke free.

“I can’t live with this, Anshika. I won’t.”

Maharshi stepped forward, quietly placing a letter on the table.

“You can fight back. Not with slogans. But with sacrifice.”

Virata nodded, rising from the couch.

“Then let’s begin. Not tomorrow. Today.”

He turned to Anshika. She stood up beside him.

“No more apologies without action. No more hiding behind lawyers or silence.”

Together, they spoke.

“We will serve the nation. Not with fame. But with healing.”

Maharshi nodded.

“What’s the plan?”

Virata took a deep breath and began listing each point like a vow.

“First—a foundation. To support survivors of tobacco and alcohol-related diseases. Their families. Their children. Free treatment, counselling, rehab. Dignity.”

“Second—public campaigns exposing surrogate advertising for what it is. No filters. No corporate soft-pedalling. I’ll use my voice to rip the veil off the poison.”

Anshika added softly:

“Third—a personal pledge. Every rupee earned from new honest endorsements... will be donated to health and anti-addiction causes. And from now on—Virata refuses any promotion tied to harmful industries.”

Virata looked at Maharshi.

“Draft the public statement. Sign it with my blood, if it helps them believe.”

He turned to the window, watching the dusk deepen over the Mumbai skyline.

“This country gave me everything. I gave it pain. But now, I’ll give it back with the rest of my life.”

Anshika leaned on his shoulder, eyes glistening. Maharshi stood quietly, watching a new man—the real Virata—begin to rise.

Maharshi spread out documents on the table, his voice measured but intense.

“First, we’ll hold a press conference. But not a defensive one—we attack. We’ll expose how these corporate lobbies pay politicians, media houses, film stars and sports stars to push surrogate advertising. You will admit your past mistakes openly before the nation—because truth will make you stronger than denial.”

Virata wasn't surprised.

"Yes I will admit I was wrong?"

Maharshi said.

"It will make you a rare angel from human. People forgive honesty. They don't forgive lies. And once you declare that you're returning every rupee earned from these surrogate ads, the lobby loses its biggest weapon against you."

Anshika's eyes widened slightly.

"But that's more than 200 crores, Virata. Are you ready for that?"

Virata didn't hesitate.

"That money was earned at the cost of public trust, I don't want it."

Maharshi nodded approvingly.

"Good. Once we make that announcement. That will shift the narrative entirely."

Virata exhaled deeply, determination replacing his earlier despair.

"Alright, Maharshi. Let's do it."

"Draft the public statement. I will Sign it with my blood, if it helps them believe."

He turned to the window, watching the dusk deepen over the Mumbai skyline.

"This country gave me everything. I gave it pain. But now, I'll give it back with the rest of my life."

Anshika leaned on his shoulder, eyes glistening. Maharshi stood quietly, watching a new man—the real Virata—begin to rise.



THE NATION SHAKEN

Chapter 22

The conference room at the Indian Press Guild in Mumbai was packed wall to wall. The air buzzed with murmurs, camera clicks, and the rustle of notepads. Journalists, activists, youth groups, and civil society members had gathered—drawn by headlines that had already started burning across digital banners:

“Virata to Return ₹200 Crores; Calls for National Crackdown on Surrogate Advertising.”

The room fell silent as Advocate Maharshi stepped up to the podium. His frame wasn’t imposing, but his words always were. To his left, Virata sat—his face no longer hiding, no longer selling. Beside him, Anshika, calm but resolute.

A senior journalist from a leading national daily stood up and asked the question based on information pamphlets that were distributed to media personal who had assembled in the conference. That strait question hung heavy in everyone’s mind.

“Advocate Maharshi, with these shocking figures—1.35 million deaths from tobacco every year, rising alcohol fatalities, children hooked by surrogate marketing—why is the government so quiet? Why haven’t stronger laws been enforced? Why is there silence where there should be sirens?”

The room leaned in.

Maharshi didn’t blink. He placed both hands on the podium and spoke—not just as a lawyer, but as a citizen fed up with manufactured silence.

“That’s the question, isn’t it? Why the silence?

Let me tell you the truth. Not a theory. A fact. The tobacco lobby—the alcohol giants—they are not in the shadows. They’re in the room. In the very rooms where laws are written, policies shaped, and decisions made that affect your children, your families, your future.

These corporations fund political campaigns. Quietly. Generously. They make sure the people in power stay in power—as long as they don’t bite the hand that feeds them.

They don’t just lobby lawmakers. Sometimes... they write the laws themselves. Drafts are passed through backdoors, with clauses watered down, language made vague—all de-signed to protect the killer, not the victim.”

He scanned the room. Faces watched, stunned and still.

“When independent scientists raise the alarm, the industry discredits them. Funds bogus research to muddy the waters. You think there’s debate? No. There’s deception, fractured doubt is their deadliest weapon.

And the worst of all... they manipulate public opinion. Through surrogate advertising—gutka disguised as pan masala, whiskey posing as soda, death hiding behind celebrity smiles. They invade your homes through cricket, cinema, chocolate wrappers, and school notebooks.

And when activists rise? They send front groups—organizations that look like public voices but are puppets of industry—saying bans hurt livelihoods, that regulation is elitist, that tobacco is tradition.”

He paused, then let the next words hit hard.

“This is not silence. This is complicity.”

The audience was still. No one moved.

“They exaggerate their tax contributions. Threaten job loss. They claim they’re too big to fall. And so, year after year, 14,00,000 Indians die from tobacco. Over 300,000 from alcohol. That’s nearly 4,650 Indians—every single day—whose lives are lost for profits from unethical profit.

The WHO has named the tobacco lobby one of the greatest threats to public health worldwide. And here in India, they’ve crawled into our schools, our rural homes, our TVs, Mobiles, our cricket stadiums… until someone says, enough.”

He looked toward Virata.

“Today, he said enough. Today, we stand not to request justice—but to demand it. For the lives lost. For the children targeted. And for a future where no corporation can use a celebrity’s smile to sell a child their death.”

Applause erupted—raw, emotional, spontaneous.

Maharshi stepped back. Virata rose.

And for the first time, the room didn’t see a cricketer.

They saw a citizen who had crossed the bridge from guilt to courage.

As Virata started, the room instantly fell silent. The flashes of cameras stopped for a moment as everyone focused on him. He looked around at the packed hall, and took a deep breath.

“Good morning, everyone.”

His voice, though steady, carried a weight that silenced even the restless reporters.

“there’s something I need to say—not as Virata the cricketer, but as Virata the human being.”

He paused, his eyes glancing briefly at Anshika, who nodded encouragingly.

"Yes, I have endorsed brands in the past. Some of those brands, I now realize, were part of surrogate advertising for liquor, gambling, and tobacco-related products. At that time, I justified it to myself, I knew it was not illegal —I thought I was just doing my job."

His voice grew heavier.

"But after the stampede... after meeting the families of those who died, I started questioning myself. I looked in the mirror and saw not just a cricketer, but a man who indirectly influenced millions. Whether I wanted it or not, people trusted me."

The room was so silent that even the scribbling of pens had stopped.

Virata's voice cracked slightly, but he continued.

"I cannot change the past. But I can change what I do next. That's why today, I'm announcing that I will return every single rupee—all ₹206 crores that I earned from such endorsements—to the companies who paid me. And from this moment, I will never endorse anything that harms the health, dignity, or financial well-being of our people."

Cameras started flashing again wildly, reporters whispering in shock.

"This is about clearing my conscience."

Virata's eyes burned with a rare fire as he continued, his voice rising with passion.

"From today, I pledge my life to ensuring that no sports star, no celebrity, and no corporate house misuses the trust of

ordinary Indians. I will work to establish strict regulations against surrogate advertising, and I will personally fund awareness programs to educate young fans about the dangers of gambling and alcohol abuse."

He leaned closer to the microphone, his tone sharp and resolute.

"To those who think they can silence me with lies, smear campaigns, or political pressure—I want you to know this: I faced bowlers who tried to break me, I faced injuries that nearly ended my career, and I fought back every time. This fight is bigger than cricket... and I will not back down."

In the Emotional Peak, Virata's voice softened, becoming almost a whisper.

"To the families who lost their loved ones in the stampede, I have met every family personally I have tendered my apology, once again through the media I state deep from my heart — I'm sorry. From today, every run I score, every step I take will be for you. I can't bring them back, but I promise you — I will make sure their deaths were not in vain."

He stepped back from the podium, his hands trembling slightly, his eyes glistening. For a moment, the entire hall remained in stunned silence.

Then, reporters jumped to their feet, shouting questions, flashes blinding him. But Virata raised a hand, shook his head gently, and walked away from the podium without answering a single one.



THE NATION REJOICES

Chapter 23

Within minutes, the speech went viral.

“Virata Parva – The Man Who Returned 206 Crores for His Conscience.”

“A Rare Celebrity Who Chose Morality Over Money.”

Fans flooded social media with emotional posts:

“This is why we love you, Virata. You’re not just our cricketing hero; you’re our moral hero now.”

“Returning 206 crores? Which celebrity has ever done that before? Respect!”

Even some critics softened, acknowledging the rarity of such an act in modern India.

For years, the country had followed him with unmatched devotion.

But on that day—it wasn’t a cover drive or a World Cup century that made India cry out his name.

It was truth.

The press conference had barely ended when mobile notifications began popping across the nation. By the time Virata’s car had reached the gates of the venue, every phone screen from Kashmir to Kanyakumari lit up with the same line:

“Virata Parva Returns ₹206 Crores; Declares War on Surrogate Advertising.”

Social media erupted—not in rage, but in a flood of awe.

“He gave up 206 crores? For his conscience? Who does that anymore?”

“He was our hero on the field. Today, he’s become a hero off it. *A real Avatāra Purusha.*”

By dusk, the hashtags were trending globally:

#VirataReturnsForIndia,

#RealHero,

#NoMoreSurrogates,

#BharatJagrukHoRahaHai

That evening, something extraordinary began.

Across cities and villages, people lit lamps. Tiny diyas shimmered on rooftops and window sills—not for victory in a cricket match, but for victory in conscience. In towns like Varanasi and Udupi, entire temple complexes lit up. In slums of Mumbai and Delhi, children held candle marches with Virata’s name on hand-made placards. It was being called the “Satya Deepotsava”—Festival of Truth.

“He gave up fortune to protect our children,” said one father lighting a lamp at the gate of his house.

“He gave back his money to give us back our faith,” cried a woman in Bhopal who had lost her son to chewing tobacco.

Young fans danced in the streets, waving flags with slogans like:

“Say No to Poison. Say Yes to Virata.”

Educational institutions held emergency assemblies the next morning—not to issue circulars but to honour a new kind of role model.

“From today, we will no longer celebrate only achievements in sports and cinema. We will also celebrate moral courage,” declared the principal of a school in Ahmedabad, as students stood for a two-minute silence for

to-bacco victims, followed by a thunderous pledge: “We will never promote poison.”

Public health associations, NGOs, doctors, and activists had found a new voice. For decades, their warnings had gone unheard. But now—now they had Virata Parva. They had a face of transformation.

Inside the air-conditioned boardrooms of tobacco and liquor giants, the celebration outside sounded like war drums.

Executives stared at TV screens showing millions marching with placards and slogans. Prime-time anchors were relentless:

“Will other celebrities return the crores they earned from surrogate ads?”

“Should the government now take legal action on these industries?”

A chill ran through India’s glamorous elite. Several top film stars and sporting icons cancelled their public appearances. PR teams scrambled to wipe Instagram posts, delay ad releases, and draft hasty apologies.

But the media didn’t spare them.

“You remained silent when a nation’s youth was being sold death,” one channel shouted.

“Now that Virata’s conscience speaks, what’s stopping yours?”

Some celebrities tried to escape scrutiny by launching philanthropic campaigns overnight—but they were too late. The public had seen the difference between reaction and redemption.

As public anger surged, corporate giants pushed back.

Tobacco companies released statements dripping with legality and deflection:

“We are law-abiding businesses. Our products are fully licensed by the government. All advertisements are within legal boundaries. What Mr. Virata Parva chose to do is his personal decision. We stand by our constitutional right to conduct business.”

They insisted surrogate products—mouth fresheners, soda bottles, event sponsorships—were “brand extensions,” not deception.

“Consumers are educated and aware,” one tobacco spokesperson added. “The law permits brand recall.”

They pointed fingers elsewhere—at the unorganized sector, which sold illicit tobacco with no taxation or oversight.

“We pay some of the highest cigarette taxes in the world,” said a senior executive, citing WHO data showing India as one of the most unaffordable cigarette markets globally.

“We contribute billions in excise duties. Without us, states would collapse financially.”

The liquor lobby echoed similar sentiments:

“We are legal entities. We have no connection with surrogate marketing. Our brand promotions are meant for packaged drinking water, soda, music, and festivals. It is unfair to accuse us of wrongdoing when we follow every rule.”

But their rehearsed lines sounded hollow in the face of a roaring nation.

And Then There Was Silence...

The online betting companies? They made no statement.

They retreated into shadows, hoping the storm would pass.

But it didn't.

Because now, Virata had passed the torch to the people. And they weren't letting go.

Street murals began appearing overnight. One in Bengaluru showed Virata holding a diya, standing between a schoolboy and an old man, with the words:

"The light he lit... was not just for us. It was for generations."

TV channels ran documentaries. Colleges organised awareness weeks. State governments began to reconsider their brand licensing policies. For the first time in decades, public pressure overwhelmed corporate power.

Back in their car, Virata finally allowed himself to relax. He sat back, exhaling deeply.

"Did I do the right thing, Maharshi?"

Maharshi looked at him, his voice calm but filled with respect.

"You didn't just do the right thing, Mr. Parva. You changed the entire battlefield. Today, you stopped being a defendant. Today... you became a leader."

Virata smiled faintly, gripping Anshika's hand.

"Then let's win this fight—for them, for the fans, for the country."



SECOND FIRST NIGHT Chapter 24

Virata stood on the balcony, the Mumbai skyline glimmering below, bathed in the golden glow of countless diyas. It felt as though the stars had descended to the earth. The air smelled of fresh jasmine, sandalwood, and the soft, warm breeze carried faint echoes of chants, laughter, and distant conch shells.

Behind him, Anshika stepped out quietly, wrapped in a soft cotton saree the colour of twilight. She didn't speak at first—just placed her palm gently against his back, tracing a slow, reassuring circle.

He turned, and their eyes met.

There were no words. Only silence, full of meaning. A silence where regret had made space for redemption. Where love wasn't loud, but profound. Where forgiveness bloomed like a white lotus after a long, dark night.

“You didn't just return money,” she whispered. “You returned hope.”

Virata's eyes shimmered. Not from guilt anymore, but from peace. And love.

“This... this is the real match I had to win,” he said softly, his voice barely rising above the breeze.

She smiled and leaned her head onto his shoulder.

And for a long moment, they simply stood there—two souls who had walked through the fire and come out forged, purer, lighter.

Later, in the stillness of their room, the warm light from a diya flickered on the wall, casting gentle golden shadows.

The room didn't need decoration; their hearts were already adorned with something rarer than gold: moral courage shared together.

Virata reached for her hand again—not hurriedly, not out of desire, but from a reverence that felt almost sacred.

Anshika met his touch with a softness that was both familiar and new. There was a tenderness in her gaze he hadn't seen since their earliest days—a kind of awe. Not for the cricketing icon, but for the man who had chosen truth over power.

"I feel like I'm meeting you again," she whispered, her fingertips resting gently on his chest.

"Maybe... this is our first night again," he replied, brushing a stray lock of hair from her cheek, his touch reverent, delicate.

Their embrace was slow, unhurried—more a communion than passion. A healing.

A coming together not just of skin, but of conscience. Of purpose. Of two hearts realigning on a path bigger than themselves.

Every kiss was a vow.

Every breath, a prayer.

Every movement, a language of gratitude—for having one another, still.

She kissed his forehead. "Only now, your ideals are scarred and strong. That's the kind I love more."

She beside him now, curling up close. Her head rested on his shoulder.

"Can I confess something?" she asked.

“Only if I get to kiss you after,” he teased.

She smiled. “Deal.”

Then she turned serious. “In the press meet, when you were speaking... I fell in love with you again. Not with Virata-the-hero. But with Virata-the-human. The man who stood naked before a nation—not in shame, but in honesty. I wanted to embrace you right on the stage, hold you and be you.”

“I wish you had,” he murmured, brushing her fingers with his lips. “You were all I was thinking of.”

“Liar. You were thinking of the press, and trolls, and sponsors dropping you.”

He smiled, then leaned in, closer.

“No. I was thinking—if I fall... would you still be there to hold me?”

She looked into his eyes, serious and loving.

“Always. Even if you fall a hundred times. But to-night... you flew.”

A quiet pause.

The city slept. But their hearts stayed wide awake.

Then she whispered near his lips, her breath warm and trembling:

“Tonight feels like our first night again.”

“It is,” he said. “The night we didn’t just love each other... we became each other.”

And slowly, gently, their lips met.

There was no urgency, no frenzy. Just a soft, sacred moment where everything unspoken was finally heard. Their fingers laced. Their souls exhaled.

And as they lay in each other's arms beneath the fading light of the diyas, Virata kissed the top of her head and whispered:

“Let's never chase the world again.”

“Never,” she replied. “Let's build a better one in stead.”

And that night, love didn't just awaken their bodies—it ignited their future.

Anshika smiled, tears catching on her lashes.

“We didn't marry just to share a name, Virata. We married to share a journey. And this... this is the one we were meant for.”

Outside, the lamps flickered softly—each flame a heartbeat of a nation awakened.

And inside, in that sacred romantic night, two lovers rediscovered their love—not through escape, but through truth.

The music system in the corner, in a low tone played on in repeat mode — softly, tenderly, unaware that the lovers had already drifted into sleep, their hearts entwined in a peace deeper than dreams:

♀When you touch me, my soul unfolds,
Like sandalwood blooming in midnight's hold.
Your eyes—like flute notes in moonlight play,
I'm your Radha... lost in your sway.

♂Let me weave a dance within your arms,
You're my breath, my calm, my storm.
The stars bow down, the heavens hum,
When you whisper, “I'm your one.”

♀♂With you, I become Vrindavan,
A garden of love where dreams have begun.
This body, this heart, a sacred fire,
You're my worship, you're my desire.
You be Krishna, and I your grace,
Together, we'll dance in a timeless space.
This love, not just kisses or gaze,
But soul to soul—in holy blaze.

♀In your heartbeat, I hear my name,
Like melodies in a veena's frame.
You bring me dreams on your gentle sighs,
Like Krishna's glance beneath Vrindavan skies.

♂Your beauty becomes the words I speak,
A poem I write in silence deep.
This night, this wind, this sacred light,
They witness our love, glowing bright.

What Radha and Krishna once became,
Let us become, through joy and flame.
You live in me, and I in you,
That is love—and that is true.

♀♂With you, I become Vrindavan,
My every breath, your sacred song.
Not just passion, not just touch,
But a love that burns, pure and much.

You are my prayer, my peace, my fire,
My temple, my truth, my one desire.
This isn't just romance—it's divine,
When your heartbeat echoes within mine.

————★·☆·★————

NATION FIRST

Chapter 25

Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi

Event: National Youth Ethics Summit –
Commemorating the Passing of the Honeytrap Act, 2027.

Chief Guest: Sri Virata Parva – Former Indian Cricket Captain, Advocate for Digital Dignity.

The auditorium was at full capacity. Every seat filled. Every breath held.

India's most watched youth icon was about to speak — not about cricket, but about courage in silence, truth under threat, and redemption in action.

Virata stepped onto the stage under a wave of silent respect. Gone was the celebrity glow. What remained was a man who had been broken, blackmailed, rebuilt — and now stood unafraid.

He faced the audience — students, lawmakers, athletes, ministers, judges — and with eyes that had seen fame, fall, and fire, began:

“I’m not proud of how I fell. But I am proud of how my country chose to rise with me.”

A silence heavier than thunder followed.

“You know me as Virata the cricketer. But today, I speak to you as Virata the citizen. Virata, the husband. Virata, the once-ashamed, now-awakened soul.”

He paused.

“When I was honey-trapped and blackmailed, it wasn’t just my career at stake. It was my silence. And it almost won.

I was told to act in surrogate advertisements again — or face public humiliation. I was told to choose fear... or ruin. I almost gave in.”

“But then... someone reminded me who I truly was. Advocate Maharshi. He didn’t just defend me in court. He saved me from myself.”

Virata looked over to the front row, where Maharshi sat stoically, eyes lowered, hands folded, as if the applause wasn’t for him. But everyone knew it was.

“But this isn’t just a personal story anymore. The traps laid for me... they weren’t just about me. They were part of a global network. A business of shame. A machine that eats integrity and spits out obedience. And I wasn’t the only victim.”

The audience now leaned forward, completely entranced.

“But this great nation — our nation Bharata— responded like no other. It rose. Our democracy spoke, not in debate... but in unity.”

Then, Virata lifted his gaze toward the gathering of political leaders seated behind him.

“From the depths of my heart, I offer my crores of thanks to the Honourable Minister of External Affairs, Shri Jayashankarji, who showed unflinching resolve, vision, and international leadership.”

“To the Honourable Home Minister, Shri Amitji, whose command and swift coordination made Operation Desert Bloom a silent victory against an unseen enemy.”

“To our Honourable Prime Minister, who approved a mission not for headlines, but for truth.”

“And to the Leader of the Opposition, Shri Rahulji, whose support for this bill reminded us that when the nation’s dignity is on the line, party lines do not matter.”

“To every Member of Parliament, ruling or opposition, who passed the Honeytrap Act, 2027 with one voice — I bow to you.”

A standing ovation broke mid-speech. But Virata gestured gently, asking them to sit. His voice now shook with raw honesty.

“You didn’t just help a man. You saved an idea. The idea that fame must serve the nation, not enslave it. That sportsmanship is not just about winning matches... but winning character.”

“I have known stadiums that erupted for my sixes. But this... this moment, this law, this unity — this is India at its finest.”

His voice cracked.

“To the youth of India... I failed once. But I stood up again. So will you. Be bold. Be stylish, Be modern, Be famous. But be honest. And when they come to trap you with flattery, with vanity, or with fear — remember me. Remember that truth is heavier than shame, and more powerful than any blackmail.”

He stepped back, voice softer now:

“They told me to shut up and sell poison to youth. I chose to speak up... and serve a nation instead.”

Nation is first

“Jai Hind.”

The hall rose as one.

Not a single hand clapped — yet.
People stood first. Some wept. Some saluted.
Then came the thunderous applause — not for a speech,
but for a man who turned his fall into a flag.

Virata, once just a cricketing legend, was now a symbol
of reclaimed truth — and India's youth had found not just a
hero, but a mirror.



RETURN OF 206 CRORES Chapter 26

The Grand Round-Table Confrontation

Two weeks later, a historic meeting took place in a private conference hall in Mumbai.

Present at the massive round-table were top executives from some of the biggest liquor, gambling, and tobacco corporations in India. Their faces were a mix of arrogance and irritation.

At the far end sat Virata Parva, flanked by Maharshi, who carried a thick folder of legal documents.

The head of a major liquor company smirked.

"So, Mr. Virata Parva, you've dragged us here to give us back money? How noble. But legally, you can't just cancel signed contracts."

"Virata Parva's advertisement contracts cannot be cancelled. The law is clear—without a mutual agreement, or a unilateral cancellation clause, these contracts must stand."

A murmur of assent swept across their side of the table, lawyers nodding, executives smiling smugly.

But then Maharshi rose. Calm, deliberate, and armed not with noise, but with the power of law and conscience. His voice was measured, yet it sliced through the air like a blade.

"You are mistaken," he began, eyes steady, tone unwavering. "You argue on the strength of clauses—mutual consent, cancellation provisions—but you forget something far greater: the very legality of the contract itself."

The lobbyists shifted in their chairs. Maharshi spread open the battered copy of the Indian Contract Act, 1872, his fingers pressing firmly on Section 23.

“Gentlemen,” he continued, “a contract with an unlawful object is no contract at all. The statute is explicit—if the object or consideration of an agreement is unlawful, the agreement is void. It is not merely voidable, waiting for one party to act. It is void ab initio—null from the very moment ink touched paper.”

He let the words sink in, his gaze sweeping across the round table.

“Now tell me—what greater unlawful object can exist than that which is anti-national? Any contract that undermines the well-being of this nation, that strikes at its dignity or security, is not a contract—it is a fraud against the law itself. Such agreements, no matter how artfully drafted, lack the breath of legality.”

The corporate side muttered, one of them protesting: “But without a cancellation clause, you cannot—”

Maharshi cut him short, his voice now ringing with force: “Cancellation clause? Do you not understand? A void contract does not require cancellation. It never existed in the eyes of law. No clause, no consent, no signatures can give life to a corpse. The moment its object is unlawful, it collapses upon itself.”

He struck the table lightly with his palm for emphasis.

“That is the principle of public policy. That is the mandate of the Act. And that, sirs, is the answer to your claim. If these contracts are not cancelled, then by the force of law

itself—they already stand cancelled. No party can enforce them. No party can recover under them. They are dust, nothing more."

Silence fell. The once-smiling lobbyists, their advocates were now shifting uncomfortably, their confidence unraveling. The executives who moments earlier leaned forward in triumph now leaned back in uneasy surrender.

Maharshi's eyes softened, but his words struck with the finality of a gavel:

"Mark this well. No business, no advertisement, no paper—however gilded—can rise above the sovereignty of this land. Any bargain that offends the nation's soul is void in law, void in conscience, void in history."

The round table was no longer divided. The argument was over. Maharshi had not just defeated them—he had dismantled the very ground they stood upon. The tobacco company advocate Mr. Hebbal scoffed.

"You'll be sued for breach of contract, young man. Do you think your reputation can handle dozens of lawsuits?"

Maharshi's lips curled into a faint smile.

"You're welcome to try. But remember, if we go to court, these contracts become public records. The media will tear you apart. You've been paying celebrities to indirectly promote restricted products that are detrimental to public health for years. That's unconstitutional, anti-national. Do you really want that exposed now, when the entire nation is angry about surrogate advertising?"

The room fell silent. The corporate giants exchanged nervous glances.

Maharshi leaned forward, his tone now razor-sharp.

"Here's the deal: You cancel every endorsement contract with Virata, accept the full refund of ₹206 crores your respective payouts to respective contracts, and sign a mutual cancellation of contracts, that looks decent and saves some face values. Or we fight this out in court under the full glare of the public."

The liquor tycoon slammed his hand on the table.

"This is blackmail!"

Maharshi didn't flinch.

"No. This is justice. The choice is yours."

After several tense minutes of hushed discussions among the executives, one by one, they reluctantly nodded. They had no other option or way out.

"Fine. We accept."



THAT EVENING

Chapter 27

The Press Conference

That evening, Virata Parva faced a packed hall of reporters. Cameras flashed as he stood at the podium, a large symbolic cheque of ₹206 crores displayed prominently behind him.

His voice was steady but emotional.

"I endorsed products that I now realize hurt society. I took money for it. That was my mistake, and today, I return every rupee I earned from those endorsements."

He paused, his eyes moist.

"I want to apologize to every fan who bought those products because they trusted me. I failed you then, but I promise you—I will never again endorse anything that harms people. From today, my only endorsements will be for health, education, and sports."

The hall erupted in applause. Reporters shouted questions, but Virata raised his hand, signaling silence. His next words came from a place deeper than fame or image.

"And I want to speak of grace... because this change in me didn't happen alone."

"I stand here today because I was protected and guided by Five inseparable super elements in my life."

"First, my wife Anshika—who stood beside me when I was too blind to see myself."

"Second, my god-sent friend and advocate, Maharshi—whose courage, clarity, and moral compass shattered the illusion I was living in."

"And third, a book of poetry that entered my life like a ray of light in the darkest tunnel—'Udaya Ravi'. A book not just of verses, but of transformation."

He paused, holding the book in his hands.

"Fourth the love and prayers of crores of my fans and fellow countrymen—became the wind that carried me out of my fall. Their unconditional love is what's refining me, filtering me, helping me become human again.

"These four elements made me understand, the fifth element i.e., Dharma. It is only by this grace that I now strive to walk the path of dharma."

He then opened the book of poetry by 'Udaya Ravi', his voice trembling with emotion as he read aloud one of the poems that changed him:

"Return to Light"

Rise, O Fallen Soul

(A Song of Awakening and Redemption)

*"When the night has sung its final song,
And the heart knows what is right from wrong,
Let the voices rise from every land—
It's time to break from a deceiver's hand.
They chased the gold, the lust, the name,
Built castles high on silent shame.
But what is wealth when truth is lost?
The soul will cry, and count the cost.
O wanderer lost in halls of gold,
Where fame is loud, and hearts are cold—
You drank from cups of poisoned wine,*

And called the bitter sweetness divine.

*Rise, O fallen soul, break the chain,
Turn from the fire, the pleasure, the pain.
The world deceives with a shining face,
But truth alone can heal this place.
From poisoned joy and fatal lies,
Let hearts awake, let spirit rise.
Into the ocean of love we'll run—
Toward the light, toward the sun.*

*See the masks, so finely worn,
Smiles of steel, their hearts are torn.
They trade their peace for fleeting fame,
And pass to children guilt and shame.
But truth is not a gem to wear,
It lives where minds and souls are bare.
Come home, O soul, unmask your face,
Return to love, return to grace.
The wine is sweet, the dice may shine,
But every thrill will rot in time.
The soul cries out beneath the show,
A silent scream the world won't know.*

*Rise, O fallen soul, break the chain,
Turn from the fire, the pleasure, the pain.
The world deceives with a shining face,
But truth alone can heal this place.
From poisoned joy and fatal lies,*

*Let hearts awake, let spirit rise.
Into the ocean of love we'll run—
Toward the light, toward the sun.*

*The chains you wear were forged by lies,
That danced like stars in greedy skies.
But stars that burn from stolen fire,
Will fall in ash, not rise in pyre.
Where is the joy in hollow gain?
What's left but echoes, dust, and shame?
Repentance is the only door,
To cleanse the soul and rise once more.
Awake, arise, the time is near,
Let conscience sing, let silence hear.
The richest man is he who gives,
And in the truth of others—lives.*

*Rise, O children of earth, arise!
Burn down the thrones built on lies.
Lift the banner of truth unfurled—
We're here to heal a wounded world.
Let greed be gone, let love remain,
Let peace be planted in our pain.
The time has come, the chains must fall—
Rise in truth, rise one and all!*

*From city streets to village skies,
A song of hope shall surely rise.
No joy in lies, no peace in shame—*

But hearts redeemed shall light the flame."

Virata closed the book gently.

"That poem," he said, "was the mirror I couldn't look away from. And now, I choose to live by it."

He looked directly into the cameras, his voice now charged with determination.

"This isn't about me being a hero. This is about doing what's right. If I can do this, so can others. I appeal to every celebrity in India—put people before profit. Let us inspire—not just with talent—but with truth."

For a moment, silence. And then, as if moved by one soul, the entire room stood and applauded—a rare standing ovation.

Outside, the sun had just begun to set. But inside, a new dawn had already begun.



PIL BARGAIN

Chapter 28

Back in Bengaluru, the Advocate brand Maharshi was in demand to give guest lectures at several law colleges, educational institutions, self-help citizen groups, Maharshi had accepted for a guest lecture in an amalgamation of self-funded citizen groups under the umbrella of *'Bengaluru parade'*

That day, monsoon rain had draped Bengaluru in a silvery melancholy. Streets glistened under streetlamps, and the smell of wet earth mingled with the buzz of a city restless beneath its calm. But inside the hallowed auditorium of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, something extraordinary was taking place—a gathering not of elites or policymakers, but of citizens. Citizens who had had enough.

Rows of chairs filled gradually, not with celebrities or bureaucrats, but with retired school teachers, small business owners, doctors, engineers, civil servants, artists—a tapestry of ordinary people who formed the heart of the Bangalore Parade: a coalition of self-funded citizen chapters from across Karnataka, united by a singular belief—that they were stakeholders in a progressive society, not just spectators.

They had seen the rot. They had felt the betrayal. And now, they were here to listen.

The rain thinned as Advocate Maharshi took the stage, a silent force of gravity. No slides. No podium clutter. Just him, a file in his hand, and the weight of truth on his shoulders.

He looked around—into faces that were alert, hungry, and quietly hopeful.

Then, he began.

“Thank you. I stand before you not as a hero, nor as a reformer. I am simply a lawyer—a servant of the Constitution, a citizen like you.

But what I’m about to share today is not legal theory. It’s a truth many know, but few dare speak aloud: The hijacking of public good... by private greed.”

The auditorium was silent.

“In recent years, especially in the fight against tobacco, alcohol, and cancer, we’ve seen the rise of NGOs—Non-Governmental Organizations—who parade as warriors of public health.

They hold banners. They hold press conferences. They hold gala fundraisers.

But many of them... hold nothing else.”

A murmur moved through the room.

“Yes, there are NGOs that work in trenches—rescuing addicts, treating the poor, spreading awareness.

But others have become what I call ‘the smiling poison’—wearing the face of compassion while living off corporate compromise.”

He paused, letting the words land.

“Let me take you inside a ‘Public Health Summit’ I attended recently in Bengaluru.

The banners said: Together for a Tobacco-Free India.

But outside, a row of luxury cars. Inside, designer suits sipping imported coffee. And the organizers? Backed quietly by the same industries they claimed to fight.”

A few heads turned toward one another in shock.

“They publish glossy reports. File PILs. Attend WHO summits. Speak of youth protection and health equity.

But behind closed doors, their files are blank. Their rehab... centers? Ghost projects. Their accounts? Questionable.

Their real job? To create the illusion of resistance, while brokering deals behind the curtain.”

The PIL That Was Never Meant to Win

“Let me tell you a courtroom story.

A PIL was filed by a group calling itself Coalition for Public Health. On paper, they demanded a complete ban on surrogate advertisements for tobacco and liquor.

Noble cause, right? But a few weeks in, I heard whispers in the registry.

The petition would be withdrawn.

Why? Not because of legal failure, but because a ‘settlement’ had been reached.”

A few in the audience gasped.

“This is the new currency of corruption—not bribes in envelopes, but PILs as bargaining chips.

They file petitions not to win, but to scare corporations into CSR deals. Once the cheque arrives, in various forms of shares, properties, business deals, fund transfers, the activism disappears.”

The File of Shame

Maharshi stepped forward, holding up a file.

“This,” he said, “is a copy of the so-called ‘consultancy contract’ I was offered—right after my principled and now well-known friendship with Virata Parva. Of course, it was

not a gesture of respect, but a veiled bribe, offered in exchange for my silence and submission to their unethical demands.”

He opened it slowly.

“Inside: ₹25 crores in equity shares. All under the garb of legal advice to a multinational liquor conglomerate.

The condition? That I stop opposing their surrogates. That I remain ‘cautiously silent’ in future hearings.

A polite way of asking: ‘What’s your price?’”

He looked up.

“I gave them their answer.”

The audience leaned in.

“Your shares are shares in sorrow,’ I told them. ‘Your profits drip with the tears of widows and the blood of addicts.

I am not for sale. Not for ₹25 crores. Not for ₹250 crores. Take your offer money and leave before it burns your hands.’

Applause thundered across the hall. But Maharshi raised a hand. The applause subsided.

The Virata Effect

“Let me tell you this—Virata Parva’s decision to re-turn ₹206 crores in endorsement deals shook this country not just because it was rare.

It shook us because it reminded us:

What’s right is not always profitable.

But what’s right is always powerful.”

Nods across the room.

“His act created a wave of caution, yes. Of moral unease.

But also of unbeatable inspiration. It has pushed star film heroes, heroines, sports champions, artists, politicians and yes, even activists, to rethink their alignment.

It told every citizen: You are not powerless. Your conscience is currency. Spend it wisely.”

A Call to Citizenry

Maharshi’s voice grew firmer.

“This is why I am here today. Not to expose criminals. But to awaken stakeholders. You.

The Bangalore Parade is not just a name. It is the beginning of something bigger. A march—not on the streets, but into the heart of society.

Let the media mock you. Let the cynics call you naïve. But understand this:

When ordinary people choose honesty over helplessness, a republic is reborn.”

He pointed gently at the crowd.

“A retired teacher speaking truth at a panchayat has more value than a paid expert on a panel.

A small entrepreneur refusing blood money is stronger than ten marketing teams.

The parents raising their child with awareness is more powerful than any CSR slogan.”

Final Words

“My young friends, and my elders,

Beware the smiling poison.

Not every banner of charity is clean. Not every NGO is holy.

But not every citizen is helpless either.”

His voice dropped to a softer, steelier tone.

“The law has its warriors. But society must have its sentinels.

And you—doctors, engineers, retired officers, homemakers—you are that shield.

We don’t need 10,000 NGOs.

We need 2 honest brave citizens in every lane.”

The silence that followed was not of passivity. It was charged. Electric. Ready.

And then, the applause came—not just loud, but lasting. Not just out of admiration, but out of commitment.

Outside, the Rain Had Stopped.

Bangalore was still damp, but the clouds had lifted.

And inside Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, a movement had been born—not funded by grants, not backed by brands, but birthed by truth.

Thus began Advocate Maharshi’s true revolution—not just against tobacco or alcohol—but also against the invisible betrayal of charity.

And by his side now, stood not courts or celebrities—but the Himalayan power of Virata Parva his friend.



POLITICAL EARTHQUAKE Chapter 29

The Parliament in Uproar

Two days after Virata Parva's explosive press conference, the Indian Parliament, otherwise accustomed to the cacophony of electoral blame-games and budgetary squabbles, found itself caught in the whirlwind of something no one had foreseen—a cricketer's moral rebellion.

The Lok Sabha came alive not with routine legislative debate, but with fire and fury over a headline splashed across every national newspaper and television screen:

"Parva Returns 206 Crores, Slams Surrogate Advertisement Lobby!"

MPs roared, fists banged on desks. The Speaker struggled to maintain order. But order was a luxury in the wake of Virata's truth bomb.

"If a sportsman can take such a moral stand, why can't the government act against surrogate advertising?" thundered an opposition leader, waving a copy of *The Indian Standard* above his head.

"The government has failed not only in crowd control but now scapegoats a cricketer for its incompetence—shame!" cried another.

The ruling party attempted a weak defense, citing existing frameworks, regulatory bodies, and upcoming reforms. But it was too late. The damage had been done—not by the opposition, but by a straight-talking batsman who had stepped off the pitch and into the conscience of the nation.

Virata's virtuous act came as a shock, particularly to those who lived in the fortified towers of power. In a political landscape where image is everything and silence is bought in crores, no one—no one—had anticipated that a national icon would walk away from ₹206 crore, all for a moral principle.

This was unheard of. Unseen. Unthinkable.

In the annals of Indian sport—or even global sport—no one had ever made a decision quite like Virata. He hadn't merely rejected the money; he had rejected the entire machinery of compromise that fed the corporate-political nexus.

And the people noticed.

Virata's popularity, already towering, now soared beyond measure. He was no longer just the nation's cricketing hero—he had become its moral compass. From small towns to metropolitan chatter, from tea stalls to digital townhalls, Virata was everywhere. His name was invoked in protest slogans, in college debates, in WhatsApp forwards and morning prayers. The masses saw in him something they had long lost faith in—conviction.

This spontaneous surge of support placed the two central political parties—the ruling and the opposition—in an uncomfortable spotlight. For once, they weren't leading the narrative. They were reacting to it. Worse, they were left behind by it.

A truth none of them would say aloud was now clear: Virata Parva was more popular than any living politician in the country.

Behind closed doors, panic buttons were being pressed.

In corporate boardrooms, election fund contributors—many from industries built on surrogate advertising: tobacco, liquor, and betting—demanded answers.

Why hadn't the political class managed to silence him?

Why wasn't Virata made to fall in line?

The political parties found themselves squeezed between two impossible pressures: the funders who expected compliance, and the people who were rallying behind a man they could finally believe in.

In whispered meetings and secure backchannels, political leaders debated how to respond. Publicly, both parties put on a face of cautious support, praising Virata's 'personal choice' and 'moral clarity'. But behind those lip-serviced tributes, strategy memos were drafted.

The question wasn't how to honor Virata.

It was, how do we contain him?

Meanwhile, inside Parliament, a second day of fiery debate took shape. The Speaker granted a special session to discuss the impact of surrogate advertising and ethical celebrity endorsements—a subject that, until now, had only lived in dormant legislation and ignored committee reports.

For once, the debate had real electricity.

An MP from the South warned, "This is not just about one cricketer. This is about an entire system that expects silence in exchange for comfort."

Another countered, "If this government is serious, ban surrogate advertising entirely. Not symbolic gestures—laws."

The Prime Minister, usually a vocal participant on key issues, remained notably silent during the debate. He

listened—calmly, thoughtfully—his fingers interlocked, elbows resting on the desk. Though his expression was unreadable to the chamber, inside him something stirred.

He had not seen this coming either. But he under-stood what it meant.

In the privacy of his chamber that evening, after the session, he stood before the window overlooking the South Block, hands behind his back. The sun was beginning to set, casting long shadows over the capital.

He thought of Virata—not the sportsman, but the man who had done what most elected representatives could never dare.

He smiled faintly.

“A new era of Bharat will be written,” the Prime Minister thought.

“We’ve got Virata.”

Even the World Health Organization (WHO) had taken note. A spokesperson in Geneva issued an unexpected statement: *“India’s cultural icons have the power to influence global health narratives. Virata Parva’s decision is an inspiring example of social responsibility.”*

The world was watching.

And in India, the tremors continued—across politics, corporations, and civil society. A tectonic shift had begun, not with a policy, not with a vote—but with one man’s refusal to be bought.

The question that now lingered in every political corridor, boardroom, and dinner table was no longer Who will win the next election?

It was: What will Virata do next?



MODI'S SWADESHI DOCTRINE Chapter 30

Late into the evening, the corridors of 7, Lok Kalyan Marg were hushed. The usual flurry of aides, security personnel, and policy advisors had died down to a quiet hum. Inside the Prime Minister's private study, the large screen flickered with the replay of Virata Parva's press conference—the moment that had already begun to etch itself into India's collective memory.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi sat alone, his gaze steady, his fingers lightly tapping the armrest of the chair. The room smelled faintly of sandalwood incense sticks lit before the idol of lord Shiva---and loads of paper—files on national development, pending reforms, global briefings neatly stacked around him and laptop.

On the screen, Virata's voice echoed:

“I cannot, in good conscience, endorse a product that misguides my people—especially the youth. I've returned the ₹206 crore that I was paid for my surrogate endorsements. And I stand by this decision.”

There was no grandstanding. No theatrics. Just conviction.

The Prime Minister didn't move for several seconds. Then, slowly, a faint smile broke across his face.

“He has done what even seasoned politicians hesitate to do—returning money for a cause. That takes courage,” he murmured.

It wasn't admiration out of sentiment. It was respect born out of clarity. Modi—who had risen not through lineage

or privilege, but from the dust of India's by lanes, through the ranks of the '**Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh**', the upright nationalist organization with over a crore dedicated volunteers—recognized the rare fire in Virata's eyes.

This wasn't just an act of renunciation.

This was revolution.

Virata had succeeded in a way that neither politicians, nor social reformers, nor even the mighty **RSS** itself had managed, to touch the conscience of the people by a singular, visible act of integrity. No speeches. No manifestos. Just an action.

And the action had spoken louder than politics ever could.

As Modi stood, stretching his back from hours of deliberation, he thought to himself:

“In a way, what Virata has done... it is Swadeshi. It is dharmic. It is in perfect harmony with the soul of the RSS. He has repelled the cultural and economic invasion of few wild multinational vultures, hiding behind surrogate advertising. That too, alone.”

It stunned him. The RSS, with its tireless Swayamsevaks, with its patriotic zeal and unmatched network—had spent decades advocating for Bhartiya values, Swadeshi industry, national cultural pride. But here was a young man, a cricketer, not trained in ideology, who had instinctively lived those values in a single, spectacular moment.

“Even the RSS through its representatives political or otherwise hasn't done what Virata just did.”

Modi whispered. “A single man has achieved what organizations of lakhs have not. That’s the power of moral clarity.”

His thoughts drifted for a moment to the political reality..... And yet, his greatest enemy had never been Pakistan or China. It had always been the system—that dense web of corruption and compromise that strangled genuine change.

He had ministers with cases against them, allies who couldn’t be trusted, donors who bought silence, and lobbies more powerful than some nations. And yet, through it all, he had pushed forward.

And now, Virata Parva, not a minister, not an ideologue, not a bureaucrat—but a sportsman—had done something truly disruptive. He had shown that real patriotism means standing alone, if need be.

Virata had even admitted his past mistakes in the press conference.

“Yes,” he had said, “I have appeared in advertisements that were questionable. I regret it. I was younger, naive. But I’ve grown. And with growth comes responsibility. I now choose to be accountable to my people.”

That moment—of repentance and course correction—had struck Modi more than anything. Because only a true patriot could confess publicly, and still emerge taller.

The Home Minister, more a friend like figure for prime minister knew him in and out, entered quietly to the room, cleared his throat.

“Ji, if I may speak freely...”

Modi turned to him with a nod.

“Supporting Virata openly might... unsettle certain quarters. Our corporate donors won’t like this. Especially the liquor, tobacco and betting lobbies. They’re angry. There’s talk of withholding contributions to the party fund.”

The Prime Minister’s eyes narrowed. The room, for a heartbeat, went still.

“A leader doesn’t worry about donors when the moral compass of the nation is at stake,” he said, his voice low but unwavering.

“Virata has forced the entire country to look at its conscience. It’s time we do the same.”

He turned to the window. Delhi’s monsoon rains pattered softly on the glass. Somewhere beyond the mist, he imagined a young Virata batting in the mud-soaked gullies of West Delhi, unaware that one day he would shake the corridors of power—not with a bat, but with truth.

“Prepare a draft,” Modi ordered.

“We’re going to revisit the Surrogate Advertising Regulation Bill. It’s been gathering dust for too long. If a cricketer can ignite change, the government cannot sit idle.”

The Home Minister, his close aide nodded, surprised but relieved. This was one of those moments that history would not forget.

As the Prime Minister returned to his desk, he picked up an old RSS booklet on Swadeshi Vichar. He flipped through the brittle pages, then set it down with a thoughtful gaze.

“Virata hasn’t opposed us,” he said softly to himself.

“He has become one of us. He has lived what we preach. There is no difference between him and the Sangh. Only difference is—he did it with the whole world watching.”

That night, the Prime Minister wrote a personal note—just a few lines on a blank notepad.

“When truth walks alone, even empires must stand aside.”

He didn’t sign it.

He didn’t need to.

“Alongside, People of Bharat, have unwavering trust and immense faith in the leadership of Narendra Modi, People worship him, as savior Bharat and sculpting of modern Bharat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi—a leader seen as the Bhagiratha of modern times. Just as the ancient sage brought the sacred Ganga down from the heavens through sheer penance and will, Modi carved a path for a nation long caught in the mire of corruption, inertia, and complacency.

Surrounded by a system steeped in dishonesty, he chose not to bend, nor to be swallowed by its weight. Survival itself was a test, but survival with integrity, with an unwavering commitment to the nation, was the greater triumph. Against every challenge, he fought tooth and nail—struggling not for himself, but for Bharat.

From the depths of economic paralysis, he worked to awaken the country, initiating reforms that touched every soul. Education was reshaped to meet the needs of a new century, digital governance brought transparency and efficiency, sanitation became a mission of dignity, skill

development empowered the youth, and defence was fortified to secure the nation's future. Colonial chains in the form of outdated laws were broken, and when a once-in-a-century pandemic struck, his leadership held the country steady through unprecedented trials.

Yet the milestones of his journey are not merely reforms and policies—they are historical shifts. The abrogation of Article 370, long considered untouchable, restored full integration of Jammu and Kashmir with the nation. The Citizenship Amendment Act extended shelter to the persecuted, affirming India's ancient tradition of compassion. The Ayodhya Ram Mandir settlement healed a wound carried for centuries, and the abolition of Triple Talaq upheld dignity for Muslim women long denied justice.

Through all this, he waged an unrelenting battle against corruption, often from within the very system that resisted his every step. To build, to reform, to lead amidst decay—that is no ordinary feat. And so, Modi stands as a wonder among leaders, a force not merely of politics, but of destiny.

His vision is no smaller than making Bharat a global leader—not as a shadow of others, but as the resplendent torchbearer of civilization it once was, and can be again. In his journey, history itself seems to whisper: leaders may come and go, but a Bhagiratha is born only once in an age.”

The people of Bharat, knew, Narendra Modi will secure the values put forth by Virata before the nation and Virata the positive energy of the nation will be protected and used for the sake of the overall welfare and wellbeing of Nation.”



THE GREAT ESCAPE

Chapter 31

The Assassination Attempt

Three nights after his usual evening fitness session, Virata stepped out of the Virata cricket academy, unaware that fate had already chosen that night to test the very limits of courage, loyalty, and survival.

The floodlights behind him flickered as he walked toward the parking area, flanked by a few security guards. The air was still, heavy, as if holding its breath. The academy, known for training underprivileged young cricketers, had become his sanctuary—a place where raw dreams were shaped with discipline, where broken childhoods were rebuilt with bat and ball.

Then came the screeching tires.

A black SUV burst into the lane, its engine growling like a predator unleashed. The vehicle slammed to a halt mere feet away from entrance gate. Two masked figures leapt out—one wielding a metal rod, the other brandishing a pistol, his eyes scanning Virata with assassination intent.

The moment cracked open like lightning.

Before the pistol-wielding man could take his shot, a blur darted from the side. Arjun—just fourteen, lean and fast, one of Virata's youngest trainees—threw himself at him. With a cry that cut through the chaos, he shoved Virata out of the bullet's path.

The shot exploded.

It struck the wall behind—exactly where Virata had stood a second ago.

He crashed to the ground, dazed but alive. Dust rose around him. Instinct took over. He rolled, seized a chair with his left hand, and pulled himself upright, bracing for impact.

The second attacker was already upon him, rod swinging. Virata barely lifted the chair in time. The rod glanced off his side, but before another strike could fall, a security guard tackled the man from behind, slamming him into the ground. Even as pain flared in his ankle, Virata's eyes scanned the compound. What he saw next stunned him.

His trainees—boys with no Armor, no training for violence—were not running.

They were rising.

“Inside the hall! Take cover! Now!” Virata’s voice thundered across the compound. It was a command, not a plea.

But many of them didn’t budge.

Vikas, tall and broad-shouldered, with a batsman’s brute power, picked up his bat. With a roar of defiance, he hurled it at the SUV’s windshield. The glass shattered in a spiderweb of cracks. The driver flinched, panicked, and tried to flee—but two security guards and a wave of young cricketers swarmed the vehicle.

Another trainee jammed a stump into the exhaust pipe. Rahul, usually timid and soft-spoken, slammed his shoulder against the SUV door, preventing it from closing. Imran, the sharp-witted wicketkeeper of the batch, took charge of the younger kids, guiding them swiftly into the safety of the hall, securing the doors like a battlefield general.

It was no longer a training ground. It was war.

These boys were not soldiers.

They were not trained for combat.

They were cricketers.

But the very game that had taught them patience, focus, and boldness now forged them into warriors of instinct and will.

The attackers were outnumbered, outmatched in spirit. One was restrained, the other disarmed. The SUV lay disabled, wheels spinning helplessly. The police arrived minutes later, sirens slicing through the dark. Officers sealed off the area and completed the legal formalities, questioning witnesses and collecting evidence.

In the days that followed, heightened security blanket-ed the academy. Additional guards were stationed. Surveillance cameras were extended in number outside the campus covering the entry and exits of road. Though many parents arrived in fear and distress, the academy didn't witness any significant drop in attendance.

Trust remained.

And Virata knew it was his duty to protect it.

His team implemented strict safety measures: identification protocols, rapid-response drills, medical support, and a direct helpline for parents. But in his heart, he knew that it wasn't the security system that had saved him that night.

It was the spirit of the boys.

The security team had acted with trained efficiency—but that was expected. They were professionals. Hired. Paid. Prepared.

But the trainees—those young, vulnerable boys—had acted with something far greater than training: raw instinct and fearless loyalty.

It had been a moment of horror, yes. A night dipped in the ink of violence.

But beneath that ink burned something unbreakable.

Cricket had taught them more than how to play a game. It had sharpened their minds, hardened their resolve, and lit the fire of fearlessness in their hearts. That night, it wasn't just about escaping an attack—it was about standing together, choosing bravery over fear, unity over panic.

Virata often replayed that moment when Arjun hurled himself into the line of fire. That one motion, reckless and pure, had changed everything. It had saved his life. It had sparked the resistance.

And deep inside him, something shifted.

A renewed purpose emerged—a blazing clarity.

This cricket academy was not just a field with nets and pitches.

It was a crucible where courage was forged.



Y GRADE SECURITY**Chapter 32**

The sun had barely risen when the first waves of news began to ripple across the nation. By mid-morning, it was a storm.

"Who Is Trying to Silence Virata?" blared headlines across newspapers, channels, and social media timelines.

The questions were sharp, furious, and relentless.

Was it a corporate vendetta, a dirty political move to erase a rising influence?

Was it the international betting mafia, threatened by his anti-corruption stance in sports?

Or was it something deeper, more insidious—a global conspiracy to silence a voice growing too strong, too fearless?

The country was on fire—not with violence, but with outrage. From Delhi to Dhanbad, from Chennai to Chandigarh, protests surged. People flooded city streets with posters, banners, and burning questions. They lit candles outside the academy gates. In schools, colleges, and cricket clubs, young players wore black armbands in solidarity.

Across digital platforms, one phrase trended all day:

"Cowardly Attack Sparks Nationwide Protests."

And at the heart of it all stood Virata—wounded, recovering, and yet more unshakable than ever.

Swift Response from the Top

The response from the government was immediate and decisive. The Prime Minister himself issued a strong statement:

"This is not just an attack on an individual, but on the values that Bharat stands for—freedom, courage, and integrity. We will find the perpetrators. And we will protect those who serve the nation through truth and fearless work."

Soon after, the Home Minister and the Chief Minister of Maharashtra arrived at the academy in person. Their visit was not symbolic—it was a signal. They met with Virata, sat with him in the same hall where his trainees had taken shelter just nights before. Cameras captured moments of quiet conversation, solemn nods, firm handshakes.

"Your courage has moved the nation," the Prime Minister on mobile said to Virata, his voice low but deliberate. "You will not stand alone. From today, you are under **Y Grade security cover.**"

Understanding the Y Grade Security cover allocated to Virata Parva:

The Y Grade security cover isn't offered lightly. It's a rare designation within India's elite protection system, overseen by the Ministry of Home Affairs and executed through central armed police forces like CRPF, NSG, or CISF, depending on threat assessment.

"A senior officer from the SPG unit sat down with Virata to explain the structure in detail, Sir, listen to me with attention, we are here to secure you, we are total of 11 personnel assigned to you to form, Y Grade security cover, 2 to 3 personal security officers will be with you, including close-combat trained officers. 2 armed commandos rotating shifts at your residence and at cricket academy. A pilot vehicle and escort vehicle will accompany you during transit.

Surveillance, electronic counter-surveillance, and real-time communication with central command are constantly active.

"We train for all threat spectrums," the officer said.

Urban ambushes, sniper threats, close-quarter combat, even biological or drone-based threats. Your safety is now our mission."

Security drills began that very night. Access to the cricket academy was streamlined. ID-verification turned digital. Even the cricket trainees were introduced to new protocols. A new perimeter was established, patrolled round-the-clock.

Yet, amidst the silent whir of encrypted radios and the sudden precision of movement, Virata's world had changed in other ways too.

He was no longer just a mentor, a cricketer, or a public figure.

He had become a symbol.

A Message from the Heart

Two nights later, after silence and recovery, Virata took to his X account, watched by millions.

He appeared simple, dressed in a plain kurta, no makeup or lighting crew—just the quiet dignity of a man who had survived something brutal and was still standing tall.

To all my brothers and sisters of Bharat... I speak to you tonight with deep emotion and unshakeable resolve.

I am safe, I am secured, and I am comfortable. The Y Grade security personnel around me are dedicated, and their professionalism has touched me.

But what secured me the most... was you.

Your voices, your protests, your prayers, your love—it built an unbreakable wall around me. The attack I survived was not just aimed at me, but at something much larger. And your response was the answer that darkness never expected.

Many wonder why I feel such a strong bond with this land and its people. They believe it's because of cricket. Yes, cricket gave me a stage, a path. But my affection, my love... runs deeper.

Perhaps it comes from something we cannot explain. Perhaps it's carried forward from a past life, a cumulative karmic thread of all I've been and all I've loved. This land... its soil, its people... feel like a memory older than time.

I stand with you. I walk with you. And I will never stop fighting for what's right."

He paused then, and for a moment, said nothing—letting the silence carry the emotion that words could not. Millions watched with moist eyes. The comments poured in. Even the harshest critics were silent that night.

Virata sat back. Outside his window, security lights cast long shadows. But he knew the real light didn't come from them.

It came from the people of Bharat.

And in that truth, he found strength not even death could shake.



THE PROBE

Chapter 33

The smell of charred rubber still lingered in the air. The bullet mark on the academy wall had been cordoned off, and security personnel scanned every inch of the grounds. But beyond the shattered glass and yellow tape, a darker web was beginning to emerge—one that stretched far beyond the quiet campus of the cricket academy.

The initial investigation, handled by the Maharashtra State Police, moved swiftly in its first 72 hours. CCTV footage, eyewitness accounts, and mobile tower data triangulated the attackers' movements. Forensics teams examined the weapons, the impact points, and the SUV that had become the vehicle of destruction.

It was a Mahindra Thar, recently painted black to conceal its original red color. It had been purchased just a day before the attack from a small second-hand car dealership in Navi Mumbai—for ₹7 lakhs, paid in full and in cash. The paperwork was hurried, suspiciously clean.

The three assailants, captured alive during the attack, had remained mostly silent under interrogation—trained to avoid slips, or perhaps too afraid to speak. But the intelligence network began to trace their identities.

Two of them were found to be from districts along the West Bengal border, while the third was a Bangladeshi national, having entered India under the radar, without formal documentation. Their names were withheld from public knowledge—officials claimed it was to protect the integrity of the investigation and avoid public panic. But in truth, the

threads they uncovered pointed to something far more sinister.

All three had been hired, not driven by personal vendetta. The money trail suggested a hefty sum—₹5 crores—paid in hafta-style cash transactions. The origin? An under-world don based in Nepal, long suspected of running illicit operations through a web of shell businesses and betting cartels. His name, too, was kept under wraps—sealed in the confidential files of national intelligence.

When the investigators sat down with Virata, they expected leads, names, or at least a suspicion. But what they received was something else entirely.

"Do you suspect anyone behind this? Any group, any individual you've had conflict with?" one senior officer asked, cautiously.

Virata's gaze remained calm, unshaken.

"I don't know," he replied softly.

"I don't have enemies. I only have friends... They could not have become enemies. If they have—let your investigation discover if any friend has turned foe."

Then, as if brushing off the weight of the assassination attempt, he stood up, walked past the investigators, and turned his focus back to his trainees. He had work to do—not revenge, not politics, but the pursuit of something larger.

To rebuild cricket as a game of honor.

To shoulder his social responsibilities that demanded resilience, not retaliation.

Transfer to the CBI

Though the state police had acted swiftly, the magnitude and complexity of the conspiracy led the Government of India to issue a notification transferring the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The order came through within ten days of the attack, under provisions of national interest and interstate criminal involvement.

How the System Worked

Role of State Police (Initial Investigation)

In the early stages, the state police followed standard crime investigation procedures:

1. *Securing the Crime Scene: Ensuring the site was protected from tampering.*
2. *Forensic Evidence Collection: Gathering fingerprints, bullet trajectories, weapons, tire tracks.*
3. *Eyewitness Statements: Trainees, security guards, nearby shopkeepers.*
4. *CCTV Footage Retrieval: From academy premises and nearby roads.*
5. *Mobile Tower Dump Analysis: Identifying all numbers active in the area at the time.*
6. *Interrogation of Suspects: Using both direct and behavioral analysis methods.*
7. *Vehicle Ownership Tracking: Verifying transaction details and ownership of the Mahindra Thar.*
8. *Liaising with Intelligence Agencies: Once the Nepal and Bangladesh connection was discovered.*

Transfer to the CBI

When a case is transferred to the CBI, the State Director General of Police, formally hands over all files, evidence, and suspect custody to the central agency. The CBI then re-registers the case under its jurisdiction, often under sections Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, if terrorism links are suspected.

Role and functioning of CBI

The CBI operates under the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) in the Ministry of Personnel. It has its own specialized units, forensic labs, cyber cells, and interrogation teams.

In Virata's case, their work included:

- *Rebuilding the crime timeline using forensic reconstruction.*
- *Tracking the money trail – identifying who paid the ₹5 crores, through what channel, and from where.*
- *Uncovering the mastermind behind the hiring—most likely part of the underworld, potentially tied to political or international interests.*
- *Coordinating with foreign intelligence (especially Bangladeshi security agencies) to trace the un-documented assailant's entry.*
- *Monitoring suspects' communication patterns, possibly requiring digital surveillance.*
- *Undercover operations in betting circuits and financial networks in Mumbai.*

Judicial Oversight and Role of Courts

As evidence is collected and the chargesheet prepared, the CBI Special Court would preside over the case. The arrested attackers are produced periodically before the court under judicial custody.

*If high-profile individuals are implicated, sealed evidence and *in-camera* hearings may be allowed. The court's role includes:*

- *Approving remand durations for questioning.*
- *Ensuring human rights compliance in custody.*
- *Examining evidence chains to prevent tampering.*
- *Conducting a fair and neutral trial once charges are filed.*

The court's final judgment would rest on the CBI's ability to prove conspiracy, motive, and involvement beyond reasonable doubt."

Virata, however, remained distant from the legal machinery. He gave his statement as necessary under law before investigation authorities, and then returned quietly to his daily routine.

He had no interest in who tried to kill him.

He had interest only in who stood by him.

And that number... was in the millions.



TRIDEV MEETING

Chapter 34

*Modiji-Amiji-Jayashankarji**Fortnight before Virata's Meeting with the Prime Minister*

The room was stark and quiet, but not lifeless. Behind the 12-inch-thick bulletproof glass windows of the South Block Strategic Operations Hall, the Home Minister Amit Shah sat surrounded by classified folders, projection screens, and a cup of unsweetened tea.

Beside him was Dr. S. Jayashankarji, the country's shrewd and seasoned External Affairs Minister, the man who knew how to read global winds before they blew.

Across the table, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sat with folded arms, listening intently — eyes calm, but razor-sharp.

Amit Shah cleared his throat. The LED panel on the wall flickered to life with a glowing slide titled:

“Project Suraksha:

Anti-Surrogate Law – A Constitutional Blueprint for a Healthier Bharat.”

The Briefing Begins

"Narendra Bhai," Amit Shah began, "tomorrow's meeting with Virata Parva will change how this nation looks at fame, responsibility, and public health. But before we get there, you must see the full battlefield. This isn't just about banning surrogate advertising — this is a war on invisible enemies."

He clicked a remote. A new chart came up:

The National Cost of Inaction (Annually):

Tobacco-related deaths: 15 lakh lives lost.

Liquor-related deaths: 3 lakh lives lost.

Betting addiction (unofficial online apps disguised as talent or knowledge games): 3 crore young users exposed monthly. Depression & bankruptcy cases rising by 29% YoY.

"These are not just numbers," he said gravely. "This is our human capital bleeding out silently. And most of these deaths are preventable."

He walked over to the screen, pointing to the stats.

"Every cigarette stick sold in India — 7 out of 10 — is owned by a single American multinational. Every puff is profit for a foreign entity, and disease for our people."

The Constitutional Intent

"We're proposing," he continued, "a watertight, constitutionally aligned Anti-Surrogate Advertising Law. It will:

Prevent disguised marketing of tobacco, alcohol, and betting through soft drinks, music albums, sports leagues, or so-called talent platforms.

Place legal accountability on brand owners and endorsers.

Incentivize Swadeshi businesses by freeing consumer space from manipulative global giants.

Improve public health, reduce medical expenditure, and boost social consciousness.

Embed CSR responsibility for addiction-prevention campaigns.

"It will be the first law globally that defines and penalizes surrogate marketing as a public health hazard and economic sabotage tool," Shah added.

The International Backlash

Jayashankarji, sitting with a leather dossier on his lap, took over with his trademark composed intensity.

“But this move will not go unchallenged, Prime Minister ji.”

He opened a folder marked CONFIDENTIAL – D.C. CABLES.

“80% of India’s cigarette market share is controlled by foreign companies, A T Holdings Inc and M P Inc., .. Their influence on Capitol Hill is deep. We’ve intercepted early signals — they will lobby the White House. President Trump, already under domestic pressure, may retaliate.”

The screen changed again, now displaying a flowchart titled:

Possible Diplomatic Retaliation from USA:

Threat of sanctions on Indian pharmaceutical and mobile exports.

Increased tariffs on Indian goods entering U.S. markets.

Delays in tech transfer, particularly in AI & cybersecurity cooperation.

Suspension of joint military tech initiatives under Indo-Pacific framework.

“And worse,” Jayashankarji added quietly, “they may spin this as economic nationalism, and accuse us of breaching WTO obligations. We must be prepared for a full-spectrum diplomatic engagement.”

The Strategic Response: A Three-Tiered Plan

Amit Shah turned to Modi again.

“We're not walking blind. Here's our shield.”

He handed the PM a classified dossier with a saffron-red seal stamped: "Tiered Strategy: Bharat First Response."

1. Economic Realignment

Increase trade bandwidth with EU, ASEAN, African Union.

Launch 'Swadeshi Surge' initiative to promote domestic health-conscious brands.

Strengthen India's logistics partnership with France, Israel, Japan — non-aligned powers.

Set up "Public Health Sovereignty Fund" to support Swadeshi alternatives to tobacco & liquor firms.

2. Diplomatic Offensive

Jayashankarji to begin back-channel diplomacy with U.S. Secretary of State to preempt escalation.

Mobilize WHO and UN Health Council support — use tobacco death data as moral high ground.

Prepare white paper to share with friendly nations to frame Bharat's move as a global model for responsible policy.

3. Public Health & Moral Foundation

Announce nationwide campaign: **“Swachh Mann-Swasth Bharat”** (Clean Mind-Healthy Bharat) led by national icons like Virata, likes of Virata and civil society.

Publish data on cost of preventable diseases to Indian economy.

Estimated ₹1.6 lakh crore spent annually on tobacco-related treatments.

₹54,000 crore on liquor-related accidents, violence, and medical care.

Highlight loss of productivity from young deaths — average age of victims is between 22 and 39.

The Final Word

Modi didn't speak for a long time. He stared at the charts in front of him, then at the dusk falling outside the window of South Block.

Finally, he stood up.

“I've seen our nation break its chains. This isn't about business — this is about Bharat's moral compass. If standing for health, truth, and future generations means a few powerful men frown, let them.”

He looked at Jayashankarji.

“Engage the Americans. Show them the data. Tell them Bharat is not banning trade, only blocking disease.”

Then turning to Amit Shah, he added with quiet intensity:

“Tomorrow, Virata will walk in as a cricketer. I will walk out with him as a soldier for public good. And history... history will remember that this was the moment Bharat chose life over profit.”

Outside, the Ashoka Tree rustled in the evening wind — a silent witness to a decision that would echo across the borders of nations and generations.



PRIME MINISTER'S CALL Chapter 35

The Unexpected Call

It was a quiet evening at Virata's home. Anshika was helping their daughter with her school project, humming softly to ease the tension of the day. Virata sat in the living room with Maharshi, sifting through the thick pile of legal notices filed against those behind the smear campaign. The atmosphere was calm but heavy — the kind of stillness before a storm or, perhaps, a revelation.

Suddenly, Virata's phone buzzed on the table.

"Restricted number."

He frowned. A beat passed. He picked it up.

Maharshi looked up. "Spam?"

Virata shrugged and answered, "Hello, Virata Parva here."

A voice came through. Low. Firm. Deeply familiar.

"Virataji, this is Narendra Modi."

Time seemed to pause.

Virata's spine straightened. His heart skipped, then pounded like a drum in his chest. A wave of goosebumps swept over his arms. Anshika immediately looked up, sensing something extraordinary. Maharshi's eyes narrowed with interest.

"P-P-Prime Minister ji?" Virata stammered, suddenly aware of the enormity of the voice on the other end.

The Prime Minister's voice was rugged, mature, and weathered by years of leadership, yet it held a striking undercurrent of genuine concern and unmistakable warmth.

"Yes, Virata. It's really me."

There was a brief pause. Virata couldn't find the words. It felt surreal — the voice of the nation speaking directly to him.

Then came a soft chuckle from the PM.

"Relax, Virata. Main koi Decision Review System review toh nahi maang raha."

Virata let out a surprised laugh — part relief, part disbelief. The tension broke like sunlight through clouds. Anshika smiled gently, watching her husband's face light up.

"I watched your press conference," the PM continued, his tone turning serious again, "and I saw how you stood tall after that attack. You've shown this country that integrity still has a voice. India needs people like you — who put truth above comfort, and principles above personal gain."

Virata felt something stir in his chest. His hand gripped the phone tighter. The Prime Minister's words hit somewhere deeper than expected — not flattery, but belief. The kind of belief that few people in power ever voice with such conviction.

The Prime Minister's voice softened.

"Virata, I want to meet you. Come to Delhi tomorrow. Let us talk — as patriots, not just public figures. This is bigger than cricket."

Virata's throat tightened. His eyes welled up before he could stop them. The sound of Narendra Modi, the most powerful man in the country, not just acknowledging him, but inviting him — as an equal, a fighter, a fellow son of Bharat — it overwhelmed him.

"I... I don't know what to say..." Virata whispered, his voice catching.

There was silence on the line for a moment.

"Then don't say anything," the PM said gently. "Just come. India stands with you. And I do, too."

Virata wiped his eyes. Anshika placed a hand over his shoulder, her expression tender.

Maharshi leaned in, his voice low. "Say yes."

Virata nodded slowly, still overwhelmed.

"Of course, Ji. It would be an honor," he said, his voice trembling with emotion.

The Journey to Delhi

The next morning, the nation awoke to headlines that electrified the atmosphere:

"Virata Parva flies to Delhi for Closed-Door Meeting with Prime Minister Modi!"

Outside the airport, crowds gathered in thousands, waving flags and holding signs that read:

"We Trust You, Virata"

"Clean Cricket, Clean India"

"Voice of the People"

Inside the plane, Virata sat by the window, eyes fixed on the passing clouds. He was calm on the surface, but the memories of the phone call, the gravity of the meeting ahead — it all surged within him like a rising tide.

Maharshi sat beside him, speaking in a quiet, focused voice.

"This is bigger than any press conference. If the Prime Minister backs you publicly, this movement becomes

national. The bill will gain momentum. But remember — you're not begging for support. You're standing for millions."

Virata nodded slowly, fists clenched on his lap.

"I'll speak from the heart, like always. No scripts. Just truth."

Across the aisle, Anshika gave him a gentle, reassuring smile.

"That's why people believe you, Virata. You don't perform — you feel. That's your power."

He smiled back faintly, then looked out the window again, whispering to himself:

"For the game I love. For the country I serve. For the truth they tried to bury."

The plane soared toward a historic meeting — one that would change more than just laws.

It would change India's conversation about integrity, truth, and the cost of standing up when it's easier to stay silent.



MEETING PRIME MINISTER Chapter 36

The Meeting at Lok Kalyan Marg

The sun had just dipped behind the horizon as Virata's car turned into 7, Lok Kalyan Marg, the official residence of the Prime Minister of India. The drive had been quiet — reflective. As the gates opened, what lay beyond was both majestic and deeply rooted in Indian simplicity.

The grounds stretched wide with immaculate Mughal gardens, centuries-old trees standing like guardians of history. The residence itself, though grand, carried an aura of minimalism over opulence. It was a place of quiet power — where decades of policy, crisis, and national resolve had taken form.

As Virata stepped out, Maharshi by his side, security personnel moved with precise silence. The corridor to the Grand Conference Hall was lined with handwoven carpets, brass lamps, and artwork showcasing India's civilizational journey — from Vedic astronomy to Gandhi's charkha.

Inside the hall, Prime Minister Narendra Modi rose from his seat as Virata entered. There was no delay, no aide announcing names.

“Virataji, welcome.” the Prime Minister said warmly, stepping forward.

In a gesture that broke all protocol, he embraced Virata, a firm yet affectionate hug that caught the cricketer off guard.

“I’m extremely happy to receive you, speak to you, and spend this time with you, young man,” Modi said, his eyes gleaming not just with pride, but genuine happiness.

Virata, dressed in a simple white shirt and black trousers, bowed his head respectfully before sitting across the table. Maharshi took the chair beside him.

There was no formality, no stiffness. The Prime Minister's simplicity was on full display — dressed in a hand-spun khadi kurta, his signature half-sleeve jacket, and brown leather Kolhapuris. A soft, natural scent lingered in the air.

Modi noticed Virata's curious expression.

“You like the fragrance?” he asked with a small smile. “It's Timur. From the Timur tree that grows in Uttarakhand. I was impressed the first time I used it. Now I use nothing else.”

He chuckled, adding with a wink:

“I've publicly endorsed it too. We have class-apart products in Bharat, Virataji — excellent quality, rooted in nature, and supporting our farmers. I believe it's my duty to promote Swadeshi.”

He leaned in slightly.

“By the way, what perfume do you use?”

Virata smiled sheepishly.

“*Clive Christian No.1 Imperial Majesty*,” he admitted. “But... Timur is much better, honestly. I'm turning Swadeshi... step by step.”

The Prime Minister laughed, a deep, rumbling sound full of warmth.

“Using Swadeshi doesn't mean I hate Videshi. In today's world, every nation is interdependent. But Bharat... Bharat is predominantly self-dependent. I've checked it, confirmed it

— not just in perfume, but in dharma, science, technology, defence — name anything.”

His voice grew firmer, filled with vision:

“We are on the path to becoming the model nation for the world. But people like you must shoulder the responsibility. To fill the gaps. To make Bharat vibrant.”

Virata felt a lump in his throat. This wasn’t just a political leader — this was a man who believed in the soul of the nation, and was now trusting him to help protect it.

The moment grew more intense as the Prime Minister’s tone shifted again.

“You have done something no celebrity in modern India has dared to do — returning ₹206 crores to send a message to the people. That act has inspired millions. Now tell me, Virata, what do you want from the government?”

Virata drew in a deep breath, his voice steady but burning with emotion.

“Sir, I want nothing for myself. But I want something for this country.”

He looked the Prime Minister in the eye.

“Surrogate advertising is destroying our youth, our families. Untraceable Betting apps, liquor under soda brands, tobacco under cardamom packets — it’s all a lie wrapped in legality. Sir, if we don’t stop this now, we’ll lose the next generation.”

Modi’s expression turned grave as Virata continued.

“I’ve met mothers who lost children in the stampede. I’ve seen kids hooked on products they can’t even name. I’m willing to spend my own money, travel to every state, speak

to every college. But we need a strong law. One no corporate giant can twist.”

A long silence followed. The faint hum of the air conditioner was the only sound in the hall.

Then, Modi smiled — not as a politician, but as a father, a son of the soil, and a statesman with purpose.

“You remind me of the true spirit of Bharat — sacrifice and moral courage. And you’re right. The time has come.”

We will introduce ***‘Surrogate Advertising Prohibition Bill, 2027’***. it in this winter Parliament session. Make it water-tight. No loopholes. No exceptions.”

“This government serves the people, not the lobby. Remember Lincoln: ***‘Democracy is of the people, by the people, for the people.’*** If a honest cricketer can take this stand, why can’t we?”

Virata’s eyes welled up. He tried to speak but emotion choked his words. The Prime Minister noticed, his tone softening.

“You’ve done your duty, Virata. Now let your country do hers.”

The Moment That Went Viral

Though the meeting was meant to be private, by evening, the PMO released a single, powerful photograph:

Modi and Virata standing side by side, clasping hands firmly, eyes lit with shared purpose.

The caption read:

“For a Cleaner Future – Together We Stand Against Surrogate Advertising.”

It spread like wildfire. Social media exploded with emotion:

“A new chapter in Indian activism!”

“Modi and Parva! No its Modi’s Parva— icons for integrity!”

“This is how change begins: with courage and conviction.”

Major international news outlets — BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera — picked up the story. Even WHO officials posted in support, praising Virata’s moral stand and India’s leadership.

In a single day, a cricketer became a citizen leader. A Prime Minister became a partner in a people’s movement. And the nation — for once — stood united not in rage, but in resolve.

The historic stage was set.

And Bharat... was watching.



THE BATTLE**Chapter 37****The Spark Becomes a Wildfire**

Within days of Virata's historic meeting with Prime Minister Modi, a nationwide wave of peaceful protests and candlelight marches swept across India.

From college students in Delhi University to fisher-men in Kerala, from farmers in Punjab to IT workers in Bengaluru, people held placards reading:

“Ban Surrogate Advertising!”

“Virata is Fighting for Us – We Stand With Him!”

“Clean Sports, Clean Nation!”

What began as a cricketer's moral stand had turned into a citizen's movement.

Virata, true to his word, travelled across India, holding public talks, meeting ordinary people, and urging them to maintain peace.

At one rally in Mumbai, standing on a makeshift stage, he spoke passionately to a crowd of thousands:

“This fight isn't against any person. This fight is against greed, against those who think our health and future can be bought. But remember—we will not give them an excuse to call us violent. Our strength is our discipline, our unity. If we stay calm, we win.”

The crowd roared back: “We win!”

The Parliamentary Battle Begins

The much-awaited day arrived. The Surrogate Advertising Prohibition Bill was tabled in the Parliament.

Television channels aired live coverage, with commentators calling it “The Most Important Social Reform Bill in Recent Times.”

The ruling party MPs spoke strongly in support:

“This bill is not just about advertisements; it is about protecting our children, our families, our future!”

The opposition benches, influenced by corporate donations, tried to oppose it:

“Why are we targeting industries that provide jobs and revenue? This is just populist politics stirred by a celebrity!”

A heated exchange followed. One MP shouted:

“If Virata Parva is so concerned, let him sit at home and play cricket! Why is he interfering in politics?”

Another retorted sharply:

“When a sportsman shows more courage than elected leaders, maybe we should be ashamed of ourselves!”

The Speaker struggled to maintain order as both sides shouted over each other.

The Conspirators’ Last Stand

Inside the luxury club, the conspirators watched the Parliamentary debate live. The liquor tycoon’s face was red with fury.

“If this bill passes, we’re finished. We need chaos—NOW!”

The political middleman made a few quick phone calls.

“We’ll spread rumors that the government is banning all liquor and shutting betting houses overnight. That will anger thousands of workers and customers. We’ll push them to

protest violently. If there's blood on the streets, Parliament will hesitate to pass the bill."

The PR strategist smirked.

"And we'll leak fake videos showing Virata urging people to attack shops. Once the public sees that, he'll look like a dangerous agitator."

The plan was set into motion.

The Riots Erupt

Within hours, in several cities, violent mobs suddenly appeared—stones thrown at liquor shops, betting dens set on fire. The conspirators' hired goons mixed with genuine workers protesting job losses, turning the demonstrations into riots.

News channels flashed disturbing visuals: "Virata Parva Supporters Turn Violent!"

Some channels, fed by the corporate lobby, aired doctored clips showing a deepfake of Virata allegedly saying: "Destroy these shops! Teach them a lesson!"

Virata's Nationwide Appeal

Virata was in Chennai when he saw the news on TV. His face turned pale with shock.

"This isn't us... this isn't what I wanted!" he said, slamming his fist on the table.

Maharshi, calm but visibly worried, said,

"This is exactly what they wanted—to turn public opinion. We need to counter it immediately."

Without wasting a second, Virata went live on every major news channel and social media platform. His face was tired but his voice burned with determination:

"My fellow Indians, I am begging you—STOP. Do not fall into their trap. This is not our way. We are fighting for truth, not revenge. Every stone you throw helps the very people we are fighting against. Believe me the Government stands with us, that's exactly is the Bill"

He paused, his eyes glistening.

"I have met the families who lost loved ones in that stampede. I have promised them justice, not chaos. If you believe in me, if you trust me—put down those stones and go home. Protest peacefully. Show them we are better than them."

The Turning Tide

Within hours, the mood shifted. Peaceful supporters began forming human chains to stop rioters. In many cities, Virata's fans confronted the hired goons, chanting: "Virata said peace, no violence!"

Videos of ordinary people hugging police officers, cleaning damaged streets, and holding candlelight vigils replaced the earlier chaos on news channels.

The conspirators' plan had failed miserably. Instead of weakening Virata, it had made him look like a national leader calling for unity in crisis.

The Historic Vote

Two days later, the Parliament reconvened. The public pressure was now overwhelming. MPs who had opposed the bill earlier were forced to support it, fearing backlash from their own voters.

The Speaker finally announced:

"The Surrogate Advertising Prohibition Bill has been passed by both Houses of Parliament with a two-thirds majority!"

The chamber erupted in cheers. Outside, lakhs of people celebrated across India, waving the tricolor and chanting: "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" "Modiji Jai" "Virataji Jai"

The Quiet Celebration

Maharshi placed a hand on Virata's shoulder.

"This is only the beginning. But today, history will remember you not as just a cricketer, but as a man who made the impossible possible."

Virata looked out the window at the cheering crowds, his voice soft but firm.

"This is for them. For Bharat."

The Nation Reacts

The next morning, newspapers hailed it as "The Greatest Act of Celebrity Accountability in Indian History."

Social media trended with hashtags: #ProudOfYouVirata, #RealHero, #ParvaReturns206Crores.

WHO and UNICEF issued statements praising Virata's act as a "global example of ethical responsibility." The UN General Assembly even invited Virata to speak at an upcoming international health summit.

The Conspirators Defeated

At the luxury club, the conspirators sat in sullen silence. The liquor tycoon muttered bitterly,

"We lost. The man has turned into a saint in the eyes of the public. We can't touch him now."

The political middleman slammed his glass on the table.

"It's over. The lobby's power is broken. The government will tighten regulations further now."

For the first time, the room was filled not with anger, but fear—the fear of becoming irrelevant in a changing India.



PRIME MINISTER'S HISTORIC SPEECH Chapter 38

The Grand Celebration

It was a day that would go down in Indian history. The iconic India Gate lawns in New Delhi were decorated with tricolor flags fluttering in the summer breeze. Thousands of citizens gathered, chanting slogans of unity and hope.

The government had organized a national felicitation ceremony to honor Virata Parva for his unprecedented moral stand and his contribution to social reform.

The stage was grand yet simple—adorned with the Indian tricolor, a large banner reading:

“Bharat for Dharma: Celebrating Ethical Responsibility.”

Among the dignitaries present were Union Ministers, social reformers, WHO representatives, and even foreign ambassadors. But all eyes were on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Virata Parva sitting side by side.

Virata, dressed in a plain white khadi kurta, looked humbled as he folded his hands to greet the cheering crowd. Anshika sat beside him, tears welling up in her eyes, proud beyond words.

The Prime Minister's Historic Speech

As Modi stepped to the podium, the crowd fell silent, anticipating his words. His voice carried warmth and conviction, resonating across the vast grounds.

"My dear fellow Indians," he began, raising his right hand in greeting,

"Today, we are not just honoring a cricketer; we are honoring a son of Bharat who chose dharma over dhan—righteousness over wealth."

The audience clapped loudly.

"In a time when many run behind fame and profit, Virata Parva showed the courage to say, 'Enough.' He returned two hundred and six crores of his earned money because he felt it was not clean. Tell me, my brothers and sisters, have we ever seen such honesty in modern times?"

The crowd roared in unison: "No!"

"Some might say he is just a sportsman. But I say—today, he is a teacher for every politician, every businessman, every citizen. He has taught us that true patriotism is not just waving a flag on Independence Day; it is standing for what is right, even when it is difficult."

Modi's voice grew stronger, almost emotional:

"When I first met Virata after his decision, I saw not just a cricketer, but an Arjuna guided by dharma. Like in the Bhagavad Gita, where Krishna says, 'Yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati...’—whenever dharma declines, a hero rises to protect it. Virata has become that hero for millions."

The crowd erupted with chants of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai!"

The Prime Minister raised his voice even more, his right fist clenched with determination:

"And today, standing here, I declare: This is the new Bharat! A Bharat where celebrities will think twice before promoting harmful products, where corporate greed will be

challenged, where democracy truly becomes for the people, by the people, and to the people!"

The audience stood, clapping, cheering, some even crying with pride.

Global Praise and WHO Recognition

As Modi concluded his speech, a special video message from Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), played on giant LED screens:

"On behalf of WHO, I congratulate Virata Parva for his exemplary moral courage. His decision to return endorsement earnings and fight against surrogate advertising sets a global precedent. India has become a model for public health advocacy, thanks to this movement."

The UN Secretary-General, in another recorded message, added:

"This is not just India's victory. This is a victory for humanity."

Virata's Emotional Response

When Virata stepped up to the podium, the cheering grew deafening. He stood silently for a few seconds, letting the applause fade before speaking in his steady, humble voice.

"Prime Minister Modi ji, my dear countrymen, and my brothers and sisters from across the world... I don't deserve all this praise. I only did what my heart told me was right."

He paused, his voice breaking slightly.

"When I saw families broken because of gambling and addiction, when I saw mothers cry holding pictures of their children lost in that stadium stampede... I couldn't sleep. I realized I was part of the problem."

The crowd listened in absolute silence.

"The Bhagavad Gita taught me that true success is not about runs scored or trophies lifted; it's about serving dharma. And today, I promise you all—every breath I take, every match I play, every endorsement I choose—will be for the betterment of this nation."

The audience chanted: "Virata! Virata!"

A Symbolic Gesture

As a final gesture, Virata walked to the Prime Minister, bent down, touching the feet of Modiji with both hands, then placing his palms on his forehead—a gesture of respect to the Modiji a great selfless soul.

The cameras captured the emotional moment, and millions watching live on television and social media felt goosebumps.

The Global Impact

The very next day, international headlines read:

"India Sets Global Example: PM Modi has recognized Virata Parva as an ambassador of India for Ethical Sports and Public Health."

"From Cricketer to Global Reformer: Virata Parva Honored Worldwide."

WHO invited Virata to lead a Global Campaign Against Surrogate Advertising. Several countries, inspired by India, began drafting similar bills to ban harmful product endorsements.



POLITICAL TEMPTATIONS

Chapter-39

The Temptation Turns Ugly

As Virata refused party after party, the offers turned into veiled threats.

One close aide of opposition leader called him angrily over the phone:

"You think you're untouchable, Parva? Remember, fame doesn't last forever. Don't make enemies in politics."

Virata's reply was sharp but calm:

"I've already faced bullets. You think I fear your threats? My loyalty is to my people, not to politicians."

The call ended abruptly.

The Public Declaration

A week later, Virata called for a secured public gathering at Ramlila Maidan in Delhi. Thousands attended, curious about what he would say.

Virata stood on the stage, dressed in his usual simple khadi kurta, and addressed the crowd with fire in his eyes:

"My fellow Indians, in the past months, many have asked me to join politics. Some offered me power, some threatened me. But listen carefully—I will not join any party. My only party is Bharat."

The crowd erupted in thunderous cheers.

"I will continue to build sports academies, fight against harmful advertising, and work for health

awareness. But I will never endorse a party flag. Because when you hold a party flag, you divide people. And I want to unite them."

He paused, looking at the sea of faces.

"I am a cricketer, a son, a husband, a father—but above all, I am an Indian. And my service will always be for the nation, not for politics."

The chants of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai!" shook the ground.

The Prime Minister's Reaction

Back at his office, Prime Minister Modi watched the speech live on television, smiling faintly. He turned to his aides:

"He made the right choice. Sometimes, staying out of politics makes you more powerful than any minister."

The Growing Global Influence

Meanwhile, WHO officially appointed Virata as Global Ambassador for Ethical Sports and Public Health, and the United Nations announced he would address the World Leaders' Summit on Health and Sports in Geneva.

International media began calling him "The Moral Athlete of the Century."

The Mystery Message

That night, after returning from the rally, Virata sat in his study reading letters from young fans. Among them was an unmarked envelope with no sender details.

Inside was a single sheet of paper with a handwritten message:

"You may have defeated us once, but the game isn't over, Parva. The real power you've challenged is much bigger than politics or advertising. We will meet again—on a different battlefield."

Virata's eyes narrowed as he read the ominous words. He folded the paper slowly, his face calm but determined.

Anshika entered, noticing his serious expression.

"Everything okay, Virata?"

He smiled faintly, tucking the letter into the Mahabharata lying on his desk.

"Yes, Anshika. But something tells me... this is just the beginning."



HISTORIC UN RECOGNITION Chapter 40

The vast hall of the United Nations stood bathed in golden light, its tiered galleries filled to the brim with world leaders, diplomats, scholars, and journalists from across the globe. Every corner of the chamber vibrated with expectation. For once, the debates and disputes of nations were silent, subdued before a single question: how to confront the growing scourge of tobacco, intoxicants, and their deceptive shadows of surrogate advertising.

At the heart of the stage stood Virata Parva, dressed not in regal finery, but in a plain dark suit, his chest adorned only with a small tricolor pin. He stood tall, yet humble—an emblem of a nation's struggle and spirit. Behind him, banners of WHO fluttered, bearing the slogan: "Breathe Free, Live Free."

Before him, a procession of voices had already spoken. Experts, doctors, and scientists from around the world had laid out facts—grim statistics, chilling research, undeniable truths. Social scientists spoke of shattered families, ruined economies, and stolen childhoods. Then came the resonant voice of Dr. Thomson Wood, America's most relentless anti-tobacco crusader. His eyes sparkled with emotion as he hailed Virata's crusade:

"Today, the world must learn from Bharat. From the courage of one man Virata Parva has lit a torch, and the conscience of a nation and its leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has displayed the world its concern for the public health. I urge every country represented here—follow

this flame before millions more lives are lost to lies, to smoke, to poison.”

The hall reverberated with applause. And then, as if destiny itself had arranged it, silence returned when Virata approached the podium. He paused, looked around at the sea of faces, and spoke.

“Honorable delegates, friends from around the world . . .” His voice was calm, steady, but each word carried the weight of his journey. “I stand before you not as a politician or a diplomat, but as a sportsperson—one who once lost his way. Yes, I endorsed things I should not have. Yes, I stayed silent when my voice could have mattered. But I have learned. Sportsmen hold power—not just over games, but over hearts, dreams, and choices. And with that power comes responsibility.”

For a moment, his voice softened. “To apologize for past sins is not a weakness—it is freedom. I have shed my guilt. My heart is feather-light today as I stand before you.”

The silence in the hall was complete. Not even the shuffle of a chair could be heard.

Lifting his eyes, Virata’s tone grew resolute:

“Bharat, my beloved nation, has shown the world that sports can be more than entertainment. It can be an instrument of public health, of ethics, of national pride. We have banned misleading surrogate endorsements with stringent laws. If we, a vast and diverse nation, can do this, then so can the world. Let us prove that humanity is greater than greed.”

The hall thundered. Applause erupted like waves striking the shore. Delegates rose one by one, then in unison, until the entire assembly stood—clapping, cheering, many with tears in their eyes. The sound echoed like a verdict of history itself.

When Virata stepped back, the Secretary-General himself walked forward, grasping his hand firmly. “Mr. Virata Parva,” he declared, “you have inspired a new chapter for global sports ethics and public health. Bharat is not only a nation today—it is a model for the world.”

And then came a moment never before witnessed in the annals of the World Health Organization. At Virata’s request, the hall rose once again—not for applause this time, but for a song. On the giant screens appeared the words of revolutionary poet Udaya Ravi. The music swelled, firm and unyielding, yet filled with hope. The anthem rang out across the chamber:

“BREATHE FREE, LIVE FREE.”

[Chorus]

Breathe free, live free—no ashes in the sky,
No smoke to steal tomorrow, no more tears to cry.
Together we are stronger, together we can be,
A world without tobacco—our pledge, our legacy.

[Verse 1]

A burning stick, a fleeting flame,
But hidden inside is death and shame.
It scars the lungs, it steals the song,
It breaks the body before too long.

[Verse 2]

Cancers rise where love should stay—
The mouth, the throat, the breath decays.
Eight million voices silenced each year,
A silent war the world must hear.

[Chorus]

Breathe free, live free—no ashes in the sky,
No smoke to steal tomorrow, no more tears to cry.
Together we are stronger, together we can be,
A world without tobacco—our pledge, our legacy.

[Verse 3]

Children orphaned, dreams destroyed,
A family's laughter—gone, a void.
Survivors suffer, weary and torn,
Living each day with breath forlorn.

[Verse 4]

Work abandoned, futures denied,
Hope extinguished, love has died.
The price of smoke is life itself,
A stolen treasure, wasted wealth.

[Verse 5] (sung softly)

It's not just you who pays the cost,
It's every heart, each love that's lost.
Secondhand shadows, silent cries,
A world in mourning beneath grey skies.

[Chorus]

Breathe free, live free—no ashes in the sky,
No smoke to steal tomorrow, no more tears to cry.
Together we are stronger, together we can be,
A world without tobacco—our pledge, our legacy.

[Final Verse 6]

So rise today, let the fire end,
Be your own savior, the earth's true friend.
Swear by your breath, by those you love,
Break free below, lift hope above.

[Final Chorus – repeat twice, with rising power]

Breathe free, live free—no ashes in the sky,
No smoke to steal tomorrow, no more tears to cry.
Together we are stronger, together we can be,
A world without tobacco—our pledge, our legacy.

It was the first time in history that WHO had adopted an anthem—a hymn against tobacco, a pledge of life itself. And it was born not of policy papers, but of conscience, poetry, and courage.

As the last note faded, the delegates stood in silence, bound together by a strange, unforgettable certainty: this was no ordinary session. This was the beginning of a revolution.

And at its center, one man stood—Virata Parva—no longer just a sportsman, nor merely a representative of Bharat, but a voice of humanity.

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THE ASSASSINATION

Chapter 41

The city lights of Mumbai flickered like restless fireflies as Virata Parva's motorcade sped through the night. From the airport, the roads had been lined with people—men, women, children—shouting his name, throwing petals, their eyes shining with pride. The man who had dared to challenge the global empire of surrogate advertising, the man who had been hailed in Geneva as the “UN Global Representative of Health,” had returned. His very presence felt like a victory, like the dawn of a new age where health triumphed over greed.

But not all eyes sparkled with admiration. Somewhere, hidden in silence, eyes of hatred tracked him with deadly patience.

On the crumbling terrace of an old Navi Mumbai apartment, the sharpshooter settled into position. The rifle gleamed beneath the faint moonlight—a Gunwerks, a beast of precision usually meant for high-altitude hunts in Nepal. Tonight, it would hunt history itself.

The SUV appeared, sleek and steady. Virata, ever the man of the people, rolled down the window, leaning slightly out to wave at the cheering crowd. For a heartbeat, joy filled the air. For a heartbeat, it felt like hope was indestructible.

Then the silence shattered.

The first bullet cut through the night like lightning, slitting the air before tearing into his chest. Virata gasped, his hand still mid-wave, crimson spreading across his kurta as though the very nation bled through him.

A second shot followed, tearing into the security officer at the back. The SUV lurched violently, the crowd screamed in terror, and chaos swallowed the celebration.

Inside the car, panic reigned. Security men pressed against Virata's chest, shouting into radios, as the driver floored the accelerator towards Leelavati Hospital. The man who had survived storms of politics and mafias now lay gasping, fighting the storm inside his own heart.

Doctors swarmed upon arrival. The words spoken were grim: penetrating cardiac trauma... massive damage... highly fatal. The beeping of machines filled the sterile air, each note a desperate measure of time running out.

Meanwhile, on the terrace, the assassin had vanished, leaving behind only the Gunwerks and spent cartridges—silent signatures of a ghost who had written his deed in blood.

Across the nation, televisions lit up, breaking news flashing like fire: "Virata Parva critical after assassination attempt... Nation in shock... World in suspense." Outside the hospital, thousands gathered with folded hands, candles flickering in the night, prayers rising into the uncertain heavens. Would the heart that carried a billion dreams still beat tomorrow? Or had greed, at last, claimed its prize?

The story closes on the image of Virata, pale and still upon the hospital bed, machines keeping his rhythm alive. The world holds its breath, caught between despair and hope.

And then—darkness.

The answer will come, but not today.

To be continued...

