

Enemies

Sreyus Palliyani

The vultures are celebrating a feast today. The fallen lay in the blood soaked sand with eyes pecked off by the winged reapers. The scent of courage and sacrifice exude the scene even after the war is over. My brothers have been slayed, all because of our stubborn king's ego.

If I think about it, I couldn't blame him much either. If your prized queen sided with your rebellious general, there could be no greater insult to a man, let alone a monarch.

I too am fighting for the last moments of my life. This life, which I doubt if I have lived to completion in the meagre 23 years that I was given. Death isn't the end they say, well, I guess I'll find out soon. There's probably hell waiting for me, after the things I did, but then again, father always said a warrior killed in battle reaches the realms of heaven.

But, I am not quite yet ready to leave, because before me lies my greatest adversary. My arch rival, the man who I despise the most in this world, my half-brother.

We fight for the same banners. We don the same armor and yet I was always cursed to be second to him.

We grew up together, in the same house, after my mother died. Father took me in, and I was always the bastard in the eyes of my step mother. But not him. Not my brother.

He loved me. He loved me to the point that if I would ask him, he would give me his life. Although I despised everything that he stood for, there has been no man whom I have respected more.

We have fought, swords, fists, spears and with every weapon that we know of. He has constantly bested me.

We have fought many battles together. He has saved me from the edge of a sword countless times. If the battles were to be counted, I would be in his debt.

So here he lies before me. The man who I owe my life to-wounded and bloody. The two of us will not see tomorrow. But in these last moments, we are beside each other unable to die or let go of our fallen ambitions.

He smiles at me. It makes me question if he knows what I am thinking of right now.

Although I am unable to stand on my two feet, I am at an advantage. He can barely move anything apart from that smile of his the girls in our village used to die for.

And he continues to give me that very same smile that I've hated since the day I walked into that wretched man's house.

I could kill him. I could grab the sword next to me and pierce his heart right through. But where would be the honor in such a victory, if at all it is one. And this sword, it probably was in the possession of some lowly infantry soldier. It is not worthy to bear the blood of my brother.

Oh my brother, I doubt if there was ever a man whom I hated and loved as much as I have you.

I take the sword in my hands and crawl up to him. His smile doesn't lose its magnificence as I approach.

He stares into my eyes with the affection that would consume a nation.

My hands begin to shiver, and I doubt if it's the slash to my tendons or is it something else.....

My brain tells me to embrace the opportunity.

Here, he is finally subdued. He is weakened. This is my final opportunity in every sense to beat this warrior.

I hold his face in my hand as a tear drop rolls down both our faces.

I kiss his forehead with trembling lips.

As I look deep into his eyes, his charming smile turns into resolve and he nods at me.

I position the tip of the blade on top of his heart and I tighten my grip as his armor begins to cut open by the blade's wrath.

The blade is swift as it passes through. He does not shriek nor does he smile. He simply stares at me with sympathy.

He slowly raises his hands and caresses my cheek.

In an instant, his hands tumble to the ground as his soul parts him.

I fall back onto the ground moaning at the loss of my brother. Oh my brother, how I loved you.....
