

The Archer's Heart

Excerpt

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The forest ruins smoldered. Only blackened roots and branches remained. A gust of wind shot hot sparks from the forest floor, filling the sky with dancing red lights.

Jandu looked at Keshan shyly. He lifted the inexhaustible quiver.

“I can’t believe he gave me this.” The pliant soft leather quiver was densely packed with arrows. He pulled one out, admiring their elegant fletching. To his surprise, his initials were already carved into each shaft.

“You deserve it,” Keshan said. His voice had gotten husky. “You fought magnificently today.”

“And you.” Jandu put Zandi and the quiver down on a rock and turned to Keshan.

The winds died down, and ashes no longer blew everywhere. All the animals and demons had disappeared. It was finally just them—alone in the small fragment of forest left to the world.

Jandu could smell Keshan, his earthy, coconut smell, mixed with the sharp tang of burning wood. Keshan placed his hands on Jandu’s arms, pulling Jandu closer.

Jandu's pulse beat faster. Keshan's touch brought a sleepy, rich fire throughout his body, like he had just downed several strong glasses of wine. Touching Keshan was inebriating.

The sky was completely dark. In the distance, Jandu heard a cockatoo calling its lover.

"When I look at you, I want you with such a longing that it drives all reason from my mind." Keshan's eyes were deep and languid. As Keshan pulled the two of their bodies together, a flare of pure longing burst through him.

"What are you doing?" Jandu whispered. Pleasure spread like warm oil from his hips where they made contact with Keshan's, down his legs, pooling in his groin.

Keshan leaned towards Jandu's face, and kissed him softly on the forehead.

"Expressing my love." Keshan kissed Jandu's left cheek, and then his right cheek. Jandu stood frozen, paralyzed between fear and desire.

Keshan leaned in and kissed Jandu on the lips. Jandu's eyes widened in surprise as Keshan pushed his lips harder against Jandu's, and then slipped his tongue into Jandu's mouth.

Keshan's tongue thrust deeper and Jandu moaned. He plunged his tongue inside, wanting to swallow Keshan whole. The feeling of pressing himself into Keshan's hot mouth sped the heady waves of liquid desire through his body.

This was not like kissing women. This was unlike any other kiss he ever experienced. It was like he was melting. He filled Keshan's soft mouth, feeling the hot explosion shake through him.

Keshan ground his hips against Jandu. Jandu's fear resurfaced. He worried what Keshan would think when he felt Jandu's erection. But then Jandu noticed Keshan's own hardness against his thigh, hot and thick, demanding attention.

"Don't worry," Keshan whispered, as if reading Jandu's mind. Keshan planted kisses along Jandu's chest, sliding down his torso, until he knelt before Jandu.

The wind picked up again, sending Keshan's jet black hair flying around his face. Keshan looked radiant and inhuman. Sparks danced through the air behind him.

Jandu's whole body shook as Keshan pressed his hands against Jandu's erection. Keshan undid Jandu's dejaru, pulled out his cock and wrapped his lips around Jandu. Shock flooded Jandu, and then embarrassment, and then all emotions but pleasure disappeared. Keshan teased the tip of Jandu's cock with his tongue, hot fingers gently massaging Jandu's testicles, each touch sending a thousand spasms of pleasure through Jandu's groin and up his spine. Jandu moaned aloud, unable to help himself.

Keshan opened his mouth impossibly wide and seemed to swallow Jandu whole. Jandu struggled to keep his legs locked. He rested his hands on top of Keshan's wild black hair.

"Keshan..." he gasped, afraid he would stop breathing at any moment.

This was the feeling he had been craving his entire life. Keshan upon him, pulling him inside. Jandu moaned again, feeling his knees buckle with the force of his ecstasy.

He longed to get Keshan out of his clothing. Jandu gently eased himself out of Keshan's mouth and knelt down.

"Let me touch you," Jandu said, surprised at the thickness of his own voice. He had never been so aroused he couldn't speak before.

Keshan smiled slowly, reaching up with his bangled hands and unbuttoning his vest. He undid the drawstring on his trousers and took them off carefully, each movement graceful and natural, like this was the most banal moment in his life, undressing for Jandu beside a smoldering forest.

Jandu's eyes feasted on Keshan's nudity. His body shone in the eerie moonlight like a pool of dark water. His skin seemed almost iridescent, and in the moonlight, appeared bluish. Jandu had never admired a man's body like this, with such carnal desire, but now the masculine scent of Keshan's flesh,

the heavy width of his sex, the chiseled plains of his muscles, they seared into Jandu's mind, making him tremble with need. Jandu ran his lips and fingers along Keshan's smooth chest, down the cleft of his abdomen, watching Keshan's stomach rise and fall with his rapid breathing. Jandu nervously touched the tip of Keshan's cock.

Keshan shivered in pleasure.

"Jandu," he said his name like a mantra. "Jandu..."

Jandu didn't know what he was doing, so he let himself go by feel. He touched Keshan as he would touch himself, slowly stroking, and then brought his cock to Keshan's so they brushed together. The sensation sent shocks of electricity along Jandu's spine.

Jandu leaned down and put Keshan in his mouth. He had only imagined this, so he was unprepared for the sheer heat of Keshan's skin. The soft, velvety flesh, so hard and warm, felt better than Jandu could have ever imagined. He loved the taste of him, a mix of salt and cloves and musky skin, he loved the feel of Keshan growing impossibly large in his mouth.

Keshan's body tensed. He gripped Jandu's shoulders and then he came, Jandu swallowing the fullness of it, the taste alluringly salty.

Keshan sat up and pushed Jandu down on the grass. He brought his mouth back to Jandu to return the favor. Jandu looked up and saw the stars and sparks and Keshan's eyes, and then felt his groin shiver. Jandu exploded in Keshan's mouth, a moan escaping his lips, unable to hold it in any longer, having to give in to the feeling.

Jandu lay back, feeling dead.

His body shook with aftershocks of pleasure. The wind against his exposed genitals sent tingles down his spine. Keshan draped an arm over Jandu's bare chest.

"Keshan," Jandu whispered. "I love you."

Keshan responded by leaning over Jandu's face and kissing him so sweetly, Jandu wanted to die from it. He could taste

himself in Keshan's mouth. As they dressed quietly, Jandu's mind raced again. What had they done? Surely it was wrong. Shame burned deeply inside him for what he did. He loved Keshan. Was that how he should have treated him? Allowed him to kneel and pleasure him?

Keshan appeared unconcerned. He had a deeply peaceful expression on his face. His lips looked slightly swollen from their encounter, and the sight only enflamed Jandu's passion further.

They harnessed their horses to the chariot and Keshan talked the entire way back, rambling on about his brother, about politics in Tiwari, and about his new school. He asked Jandu to come and teach archery there for a season.

Jandu could barely follow the conversation.

"So you will teach at the academy then?" Keshan asked. He had a slight smile on his face, as if he knew Jandu hadn't been paying attention.

"What? Sure." Jandu blushed furiously.

Keshan leaned towards Jandu, his lips right above his ear. "You'll have to stop blushing every time you look at me, Jandu."

Keshan surprised Jandu further by kissing him quickly and deeply. A moment later, their charioteer appeared on the road ahead, leading a search party. Jandu thought he could see Baram's armor among the gathered Triya and couldn't help closing his eyes in dread. They had obviously seen the fire from the palace and, knowing that Jandu and Keshan were out there, assumed the worst. First an attempted assassination, now a forest fire. Yudar wasn't going to want Jandu anywhere near Keshan now.

"I suppose I'm going to have to explain to Yudar what happened in the forest," Jandu remarked, thinking for the first time of what his brother might say of starting such a fire. "He won't be happy about it."

"Just focus on the gifts from Mendraz," Keshan suggested. He raised an eyebrow. "I wouldn't tell him about me sucking your cock though. I don't think he'd understand."

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Jandu stopped on the road, reeling from the obscene impact of Keshan's words. He steadied himself, concentrated on not blushing, then followed Keshan forward to meet his brother.