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SANJHEE GIANCHANDANI

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**Nine Yards**

Another story of an abused woman  
this time of epic proportions  
Was this where it started from?  
One cannot be certain

But women have always been wronged  
From History to Mythology  
chastity questioned; purity desecrated  
and taken to be a justified action!

From fire I was born and  
in flames was burnt my honour  
the moment I was asked to be wed to five  
'Share it with your brothers,'  
These words still echo in my ears  
and constantly burn me alive

Then I was gambled away  
In a dicing game so to say  
I could have died a thousand times  
When I received this news  
But accepted authority submissively  
Men gaped at my posterior  
No one bothered to see inside me  
For they would be charred  
To see my burning spirit, unclothed  
Only if they bothered to see  
beneath my exterior

My eyes were burning red  
Deeper than the tongue of *Kali*  
Seeking bitter revenge  
From each pair of hawk eyes

Pledging your wife in a gamble  
without any compunction  
Is that testament of real manhood?  
Dragged merely by my locks  
into the penetrating royal assembly  
Did you think of what my plight would be?

And how could you stake me for you  
were at stake yourself  
I am a woman first and a wife later

Would you have gambled away your  
mother too? Ask yourself.

Humiliation, helplessness, and anguish  
These were my nuptial rewards  
And yet my sisters today  
Worship you and pay obeisance  
As if being a man, makes you God.

They deflowered and defiled me  
But no one write of it as 'rape'  
Thousands of lecherous eyes  
like arrows from a thousand quivers  
pierced my heart, body, and soul

That pervert kept unclothing me  
But my saree proved more loyal  
It resisted for want of respect  
Wrapped my 'self' underneath it  
covering the shame, you conferred

Finally, I set 'you' free in my boon  
my righteousness proved far superior  
than your character and morals  
which were washed away in  
the river of tears I cried that fateful day

Women's dignity is sold cheap  
in societies where men trade  
but I was a noble queen  
or was it so only in my mind?  
History is theirs, we have bit and shards  
They have power and agency and  
we, just our faithful nine yards

#### BIO-NOTE

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**Sanjhee Gianchandani** holds a Masters' degree in English Literature from Lady Shri Ram College for Women. She is also a CELTA certified ESL trainer. Currently, she works as an English language editor in the K-8 space.

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