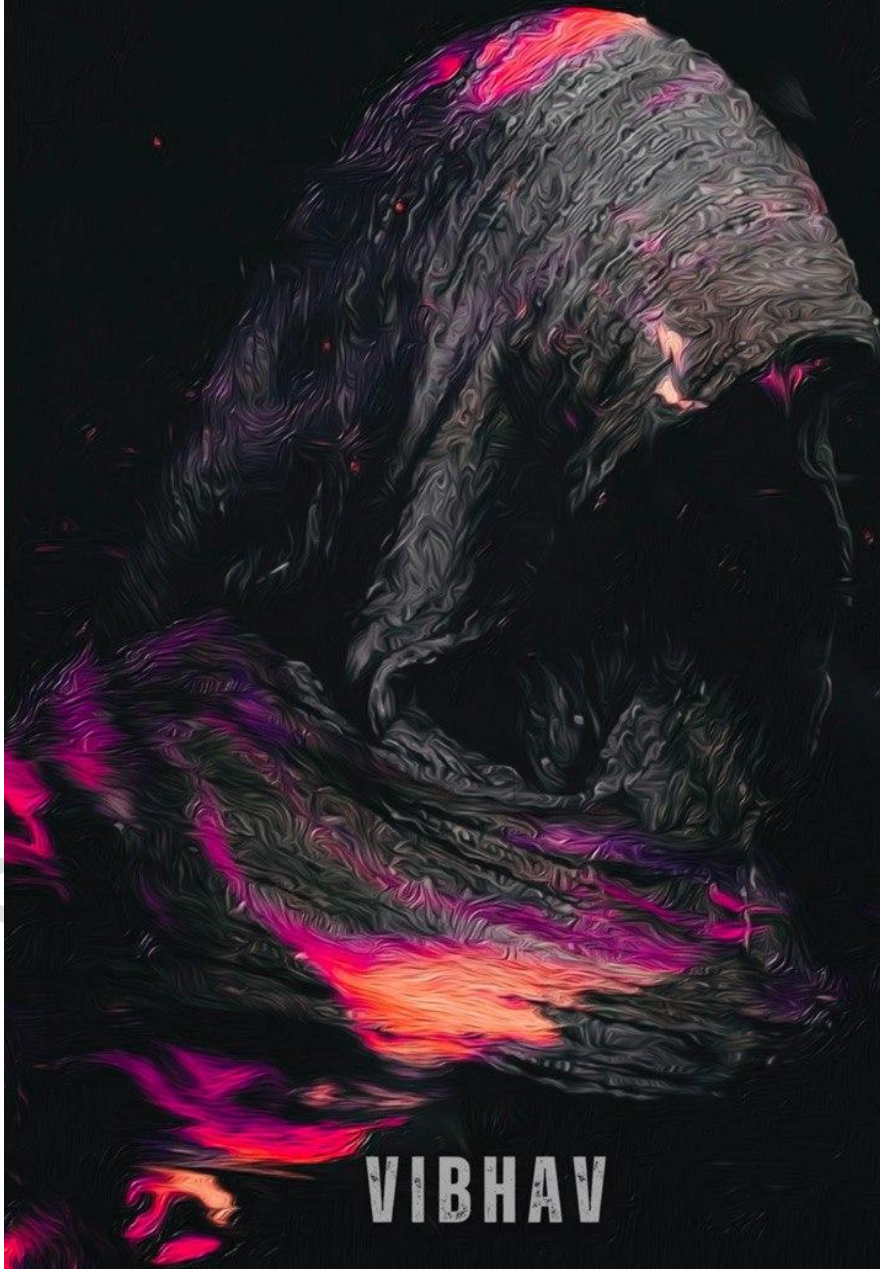


YATHARTH

THE SCENT OF YΔΔΔ

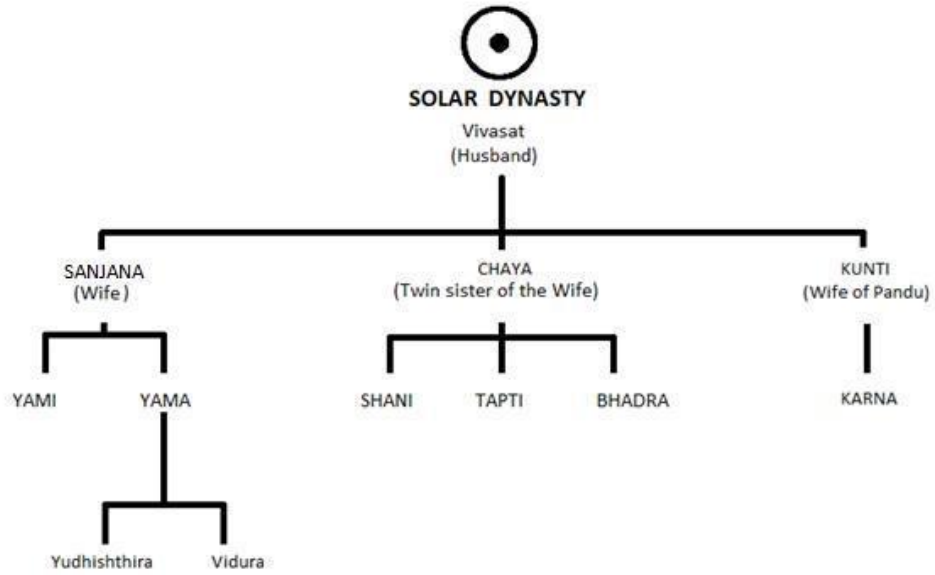


VIBHAV

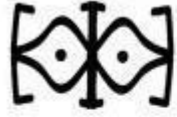
YATHARTH
The Scent Of Yama
VIBHAV
A Novel

*Thank you Death,
For always being on time*

FAMILY OF LORD YAMRAJ



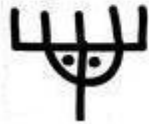
Symbols Of Lord YAMRAJ as per BRAHMI Script



He is the one who *sees*,



He is the one who *counts*,



He is the one who *kills*.

Sample mail

IN THE NAME OF LORD YAMRAJ

*Alone in this world I travel from dawn till the setting sun.
Not knowing where my task will take me, or when it is done.*

*As I walk the way I travel, the dead fall underneath my feet.
With one swing of my staff I reap their souls like the wheat.*

*Everyone that I have waited till their judgement day.
Have all begged me for mercy and let them stay.*

*Doesn't matter if as a person they are great or small.
I make sure to stay focused and take them all.*

*I have taken the great leaders and their smallest lads.
Never left a young or old, sick or healthy, or the good and the bad.*

*Even the mighty gods and the priest knelt before me to pray.
But I am a dutiful and have taken children in their play.*

*From eternity I have been doing this without been caught in the sight,
I am the soul collector, the death, the one and only Yamraj in the might.*

(A)

YAMA, the Unfortunate

The first word that a child hears from his father is anything but a curse.
The same was not true for Yamraj.

Sanjana, the daughter of Vishwakarma (the heavenly engineer and architect) grew to a marriageable age. Vishwakarma searched out for an appropriate groom, and approached Lord Vivasat, the current Sun-God to accept his daughter's hand in marriage.

Surya acknowledges and the marriage is solemnized.

A short time into the marriage and Sanjana is troubled, she can take it no more, the glare and warmth produced from Surya's glimmering aura have darkened her appearance and sapped her energy; she never again feels any affection for her significant other. Her colour now resembles the energies of night/sunset and the Gods offer her with another name – Sandhya.

At the point when Sanjana was pregnant with Yama and his twin sister Yami, she shut her eyes upon the look of her significant other, so enraged by this Surya cursed her unborn child.

"Since, O inept one, you close your eyes when I cast my looks on you accordingly will you give birth to a boy with the colours of rainy clouds, "Yama", the destroyer of creatures"

1

**“Certain things are fixed in a Man’s life like his name,
His stupidity and his death” Bhagavata Purana**



"We're losing him!" shouted the senior most doctor of The Heeralal Hospital. The two nurses who were assisting him had no idea what to do next. This unknown patient, who had ruined his clothes with gun wounds on his hand and leg was beyond saving, they knew.

“Don’t just stand, give him another shot of the painkiller” the doctor said, and the nurse followed his order. She pulled in the liquid from the bottle in a syringe and surged it into the patient’s artery but the painkillers didn’t work. It was as if the painkiller bottles had glycerine in them.

“He is falling!” The doctor yelled as he kept on utilising the defibrillator on him while attempting to prevent the bleeding from his body, but the pressure was too much to handle. The patient’s brain was going into shock. Everyone including the doctor knew that this nameless patient was beyond their reach, as he had lost too much blood before being brought to the hospital.

“Sleep peacefully” the doctor wished for the man as the cardiovascular screen gave a slow and unsteady beep which made him realise the moment had come. He gradually took a step back, “ॐ सूर्याय पुत्राय विद्महे महाकालाय धीमहि । तन्नो यमः प्रचोदयात् ।” The doctor repeated. He was addressing Lord Yamraj to come graciously and mercifully accept the soul of the patient who was about to die.

The younger nurse, who wasn't praying for this dying man picked up the clipboard, which had the patient status form, clipped to it.

After finishing the chant for nine times, the doctor lifted his hand, bending his elbow to see his Timex wristwatch. He frequently started moving his eyes in between his watch and the cardio monitor.

"Time of death...12 PM." The doctor said fixing his eyes on the dead patient. He took a deep breath and cursed himself for bringing his anniversary watch in the operation

theatre. More than a superstition it was his belief now, that every time he wears his late wife's watch to the operation theatre, someone dies.

Jai Chand suddenly woke up in an emergency, as if sleeping had become a dangerous thing. His heart beats were fast and there was a buzz inside his brain. Every thought was in high definition as his eyes took in the light rays and without a doubt he knew he had slept far too long.

He found himself surrounded by an old man and two chubby women. The man looked aged. He had a mask on his face and was in white uniform. A silver coloured name plate was attached to his pocket, which read "Dr. Solanki".

Behind the doctor stood two women, both were mask-less and were dressed in blue. He felt awkward because they all were constantly looking down at him like they were looking at a grave. Their eyes were full of regret. Had they done something wrong? Jai thought and realised himself lying on what felt like a hospital bed.

He was still dreaming. At least he thought he was dreaming. He sat up disturbed. It wasn't surprising for him to have such realistic dreams however he would typically wake up after he understood that he was still in a sleep. He pinched himself to wake up from this dream or nightmare.

Nothing.

Then, he pressed his eyes several times.

Still nothing.

A long beep sound grabbed his attention. He turned his head towards the cardio screen. It showed a straight line.

The younger-nurse with the nameplate, "Priya" kept the cardboard on the side shelf and switched off the monitor. The medical staff slowly walked out of the room. Jai stretched his arm grabbing the cardboard. The touch of the wooden cardboard felt real. Almost real, like the texture of the wood was different than usual, he never had such a realistic dream.

A form was clipped to the cardboard. "PATIENT STATUS", the name on the card was not filled. And the time of death was written as 12:00 pm. Jai immediately checked his watch; it showed 12:00 pm. He felt a little uneasy.

Jai carefully slid off from the hospital bed and touched the cardio screen, it felt real too. As real as the air, he was breathing. A chill ran over his spine.

Was it all real?

Jai took a few steps back and turned around, a fragment of fear poked in his chest. "What the Heck!" A body lay on the bed he had just gotten off from.

His body.

His body was motionless as if he suffered permanent paralysis. He saw a cut mark on his forehead that ran across the left side of his face. He also noticed maroon blood stains on his bandaged hands. Jai reached up to the body and carefully touched the arm. It was also real.

Jai immediately closed his eyes and shouted in anger, "Come-on Jai, wake up!"

He gently opened his eyes with a sheer expectation of waking up but the body was still there. He could feel the muscles around his heart, fixing and shifting the inner valves, mixing and diffusing the blood cells in the veins and arteries. He felt suffocated and caged; his heart started pounding faster and faster as if it would break the rib cage and jump out. Under typical situations, seeing a dead body possibly wouldn't scare Jai too much as he was one of the finest in the Delhi Police. However, these weren't typical situations. A dead body laid before him that looked like him.

Jai nervously touched his face realising his soft beard, his dried up lips and his Grecian nose. How could this be even possible? He remembered reading about astral projections and coming out of the body experience but the body would still be breathing, whereas his body on the bed was steady, no expansion and contraction of in the lungs, no twitching of the eyes or pulse-rate beneath the skin. It laid absolutely motionless.

He checked the tattoo on the body's chest, to make sure who it really belonged to? The tattoo had three concentric triangles. The outermost triangle represented him, the middle one his wife "Kavya" and the innermost, his daughter "Neer". This family tattoo idea was his wife's.

This was undoubtedly Jai's body only.

Was he dead? "No", this thought was too wild to be true.

If it was a dream then why weren't he dreaming of his wife Kavya and their daughter Neer, he wondered. They probably must be sitting and waiting outside, like a usual patient's family he thought and ran outside the room to the hospital's hallway. He could see other families praying, crying and comforting each other over the good and bad news. He searched for his wife and daughter but they were nowhere to be found. A sudden thought stopped his feet, maybe they didn't know he was in the hospital. It was 12 pm, his beloved wife would be teaching in the school and his beloved daughter would be attending her playschool.

His wife would shatter when she would hear about his death, Jai feared.

Kavya had been his college companion. They had married right after graduation and then three years later Neer was born.

Jai felt himself begin to tear up at the prospect of losing his family. He shook his head. "What's happening with me?", a tear fell from his eyes, "I shouldn't cry. This is only a damn dream! There's nothing to cry over" he motivated himself staring at the wall clock, thinking when he would wake up? Then he looked up at the families who were visiting. Where were Kavya and Neer?

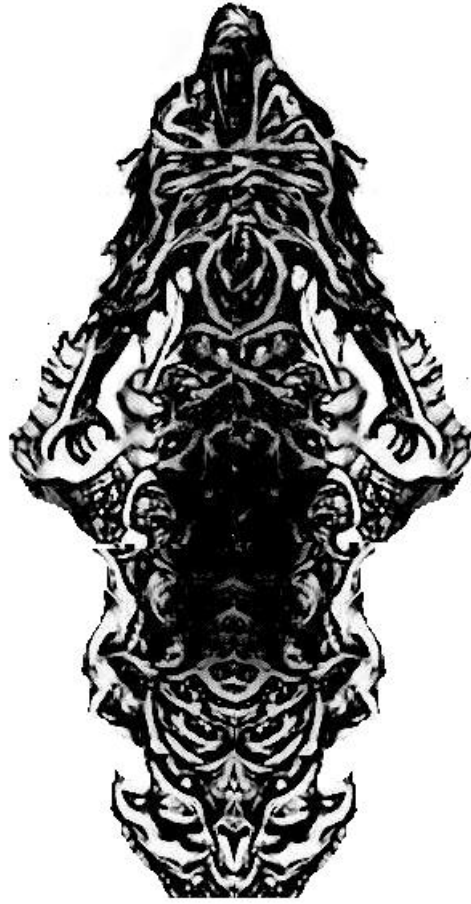
"Maybe they did not come to meet you Jai" a voice filled his mind. It was as though Jai could feel somebody conversing with him however he didn't really hear anybody. It was as if the voice was talking telepathically to him.

"Who is this?" Jai was glancing around, however, couldn't see anybody. The part of the hallway he was in was still faintly lit yet the rest was pitch black. The voice was definitely in his mind.

"People call me Autonomous, Authentic, Authoritarian and that's just the A's. I call myself the Singularity" the voice growled in Jai's mind.

"Are you the reaper?" Jai whispered hesitantly, gazing at the hallway where a tall figure emerged out of nothing.

"In your land, I am called Yamraj" the dark shadow came near him,



"Do you know why I am here Jai?"

Jai couldn't think of anything to say or maybe he was afraid to recognise that his dream nightmare had gone too far? "No need to be afraid, Jai. I have seen the gods born. And the devils die. I have seen the gods retire. And the humans rise", Jai was scared to see a dark shadow hovering in front of his eyes. Yet he was fascinated by the golden Staff that levitated alongside the shadow. The top of the staff had a skull of a bull that looked horrific. Jai was unsure how the Staff was being carried as he saw no hands, "I don't need feet to stand upon or mouth to talk with" the voice rose in Jai's mind, "now answer my question?"

"Am I dreaming?" Jai asked. He sensed laughter settling around him.

"Confused Mortal" the voice giggled, "It's been so long that I communicated with a mortal. A dream you asked. No, my dear Jai. This is not a dream. You are dead" Jai's legs began to feel weak making him difficult to hold onto the ground beneath him. "Da...da...Dead" Jai hesitated, "so..so it was really my body in the operation theatre. How did I die?"

"Dr. Arindham Solanki thinks you died because of his cursed watch"

"Is it?" At this point anything could be true, Jai reasoned.

"No silly. It is a mere coincidence that his patients die when he wears his wife Prisha Solanki's watch" Yama attached, "do you seriously don't remember how you died?" Jai felt surprised by Yama's question.

"No" Jai whispered, looking at the shadow.

"So, what do you remember?" Yama asked.

"I remember waking up in this hospital. Then I started looking for my family but couldn't find them. Where are they? Did they know what happened to me? Are they alright?" Jai, horrified enough, threw all the questions at Yama. Yama didn't respond to any.

"Please tell me if my family is okay. My body in the operation theatre didn't look good. How did I die? Did I meet any accident?" Jai pleaded for an answer.

"No, you did not meet any accident."

"Then what the heck happened to me?" Jai could sense his patience wearing off.

"You better mind your tone with me mortal," Yama's voice shivered through Jai's body.

"I apologise, but please you have to tell me how did I die?" Jai pleaded again. Yama could feel a sense of insecurity in his voice.

"I don't think you should know about your death. Something tells me you would not like the answer" Yama warned Jai.

"No... No. I beg you...please tell me"

"Are you really sure you want to know?"

"Of course, I am," Jai said looking at every inch of the flying shadow in front of him. He patiently waited for an explanation.

"Alright then, don't tell me I didn't warn you," Yama said, "You my dear Mortal, was shot dead".

(B)

YAMA, the orphan

Sanjana plots an arrangement for her escape. She makes a clone (maybe one of the primary archived cases of cloning). She calls her clone "Chhaya" (shadow). She introduces Chhaya in her place and teaches her not to leave Surya's presence under any conditions, and to obediently stay there till her arrival. Sanjana at that point comes back to her dad's home for some relief.

Surya does not see the distinction. He takes Chhaya to be his better half; he starts marital relations; Chhaya conceives and conveys a child – Shani (Saturn). Shani is conceived of a dull appearance like his mom, and furthermore acquires Chhaya's serious and grave face.

2

“Death is not so complex to understand. When you die you are dead”

Vishnu Purana.



"Sh... Shh...Shot dead?" Jai Chand couldn't accept what was going on. "Me? I was shot dead?"

"Is it really that difficult to acknowledge?" Yama remained before Jai, an unfavourable figure in the dark.

"So what am I now? A Ghost?" Jai asked with a heavy head..

"Ghost is only a *Bhoot*, which can peek into the *Bhoot-kaal*, that is the past. No you are not a Ghost, but a paramatma" Yama revealed.

"Paramatma!" Jai couldn't understand a thing, for that he only knew that Paramatma meant God. Was he truly a god? Maybe that's why Yama visited him personally, he thought.

"According to Amtanishad of Atharvaveda, there are four forms in an Atma. First form is *Sukshatma*- the tiniest part of Soul that contains its own signature, like the DNA of one's body. The second form is *Jeevatma*, Jeev meaning alive human and Atma meaning Soul. It resides in the embryo stage of a child who is being conceived in the womb of a mother. The third form is *Pretatma*, here the soul undergoes the physical pleasure of life. And the fourth and final form is *Paramatma*, when the atma has reached its potential and it no longer needs a body" Yama answered Jai's thoughts.

"So, are you here to take me to Swarga?" Jai inquired.

The giggling encompassed Jai once again, "Not precisely."

"I'm going to Narkha? I've been a pretty decent guy for that" Jai said thinking about his life and its result.

“First of all, my laws don’t work on the basis of “Pretty” and secondly Narkha isn’t a place but a set of punishment. I believe what you meant was Patala, *the hell*. No, I am not taking you to Patala, Jai” Yama said. Jai could feel laughter in his tone. But instead of feeling ridiculed he felt relaxed.

“You are not. Thank god” Jai expressed his gratitude.

“God? Which god are you referring to? I have taken many of your gods to Narkha”

“I referred it to you. The god of death” Jai answered in a jiffy.

“It has been years that someone called me a God. Mortals are only used to curse me”

“I think you are the only god who isn’t corrupt. You perform your duty well, you kill no matter what is one’s age, gender or wealth” Jai complimented.

“I am surely the greatest but if you think complimenting me would take you to Swarga, *heaven*, then you are painfully mistaken,” Yama said in a harmful tone, suddenly the hallway became colder and darker. Jai began to suffocate. The anger from Yama’s voice had strangled him.

“I am sorry” Jai managed to squeak, “You better be,” Yama said and let go of Jai’s neck. Slowly the pain faded away.

“What should I call you then?” Jai asked in a respectful tone, “King? If not god”

“There was a time when I used to rule the immortal realm, the land for everyone’s forefathers, the Pitru Loka, often called the Patala, located below the Garbhodaka Ocean, what you call the milky way here on Earth. And when Ravana the king of Lanka came to my land after his death he campaigned against me and won” for the first time Jai felt sorrow in Yama’s voice.

“Campaigned! As in democracy?” Jai asked

“Yes, politics is Patala’s oldest ceremony. Before me, there was a dictator called Bhairo. Bhairo in English means, ‘The Terrible’. He was the most furious being I had ever seen; he would not even grant mercy once a soul had completed its punishment. That is when I decided to kill Bhairo and take his throne.”

“But as you said that Patala is in the southern region of the Milky Way. Isn’t that far from here? I mean how can someone travel such a distance?” Jai was puzzled.

“A human body is a three-dimensional thing. It can only proceed in a single direction at a time. Whereas when that human dies he becomes a four-dimensional being called Atma, *Soul*. A soul can travel in all directions at once” Yama explained, “even interstellar”.

"Alright" Jai breathed out, listening to the insane theory that Yama gave him, "Alright then, I will call you "Sir" Jai asked, "okay?"

"Sir" is better. I like hierarchy" Yama said, "Now answer me, you don't remember who murdered you?"

"No" Jai replied in a low voice.

"What do you remember before meeting me?" Yama asked.

"Let me focus" Jai attempted to recollect however a dim emptiness was covering his memories. He couldn't recall a thing. He shut his eyes and thought about his wife and daughter. A picture of Neer's playschool appeared. Neer had a little plaster around her wrist and she was dressed as a fairy. Neer was constantly smiling at Kavya, who was being embraced by a brown-haired man. He couldn't see the man's face, only his back. Kavya was giggling and grinning up at the man who then inclined down and kissed her on the forehead, the memory was over.

What the heck?

Was Kavya taking part in an extramarital affair? That too in front of their daughter! Was the brown-haired man his killer? No chance! Kavya was his wife, his better half and she adored him. She could never hurt him or cheat him.

"I think you remembered something," Yama's voice penetrated Jai's thoughts.

"I saw my wife hugging another man. She appeared to like it. Does that have something to do with my murder?" Jai inquired.

"Maybe."

"She was doing it in front of my daughter!" Jai thought how hard it was to chat with somebody that didn't really speak. The messages being sent telepathically to his mind were somewhat creepy. Yama didn't have a face so it was difficult to read him. Jai just had his emotions to measure what Yama was trying to convey. On the off chance that he felt laughter, he knew Yama was making fun of him. In the event that he felt agony and suffocation, he knew Yama was angry with him.

"Usually I don't come to the mortal realm but since all the Yamdoots were busy due to the outbreak of CoronaVirus, I thought to come here myself. You are special Jai Chand, souls wait squillion year just to meet me and beg for mercy"

"I am special?"

“Yes, you are?” Yama replied, “Right now I want you to focus on getting back your memories or else you won’t be able to visit the immortal realm”

“So, my ticket to Swarga is through my memories?” Jai asked.

“In a way, yes “Yama halted, “till then you will help me to collect souls”

“Me? But why?” Jai was surprised.

“Because you are special”

“I am,” Jai said thinking he had always been mediocre. He never did anything extraordinary in his life nor earned anything that is significant enough to special, “Do I get to sit on your bull?” Jai asked remembering Ramanand Sagar’s Ramayana episodes where Yamraj was shown sitting on a bull.

Jai’s fingers started freezing and his lips turned blue. Cold seeped through his trousers and painfully began to spread across his feet as if he were standing on ice. “I was just kidding. Don’t get mad. I guess it is true that death is always serious”. Jai heard laughter around him.

“You are special Jai because you can hear me. With your help, I can communicate with the souls and help them in the crossover”

“Why do you want to communicate with the dead?” Jai asked.

“When the souls can’t hear me and they believe they are not dead thus it makes it difficult for the final transition”

“Are we talking about spirits? The leftover souls?” Jai questioned.

“Yes, Jai” Yama paused, “I can guide souls through my aura so communication is never needed, but there are always rebellious souls that defy my guidance. They choose to live between the mortals”

“Maybe they do not like to go because they are afraid of Narkha.” Jai expressed his view.

“No, according to me living among the living is the real Narkha once you are dead”

“Why would you say that Sir?” Jai was curious to know Yama’s point of view.

“You can see the people you love but they can’t see you. Eventually, they learn to live without you. They move on and find new meaning in life. They forget you and find new love. Slowly and slowly they replace you with someone else that too without even realising you might be looking at them. That you might be waiting for them. It is terribly painful. Something far worse than rotting in hell” Yama said.

Jai was silent not because he couldn't think of anything because he was thinking about Kavya. Was she really cheating on him? Had the brown-haired man killed him? His thoughts were destroying him, so he tried not to think but silence was a killer too.

Jai always knew dreams come true but he forgot to realise that nightmares are dreams too, and seeing his wife with some other man has been his worst nightmare.

"Okay, I will help you in communicating with the souls," Jai agreed. He wondered what would Yama had done if he had disagreed, "But I need a favour in return"

"Your kind is full of schemes. Do you really think you can negotiate with me?"

"It is a small favour. I want you to help me in knowing who is my murderer"

"Okay, I will try," Yama said.

"Not try" Jai said adamantly, "tell me it is a deal"

"I agreed to meet you due to a deal. Now you want to make another deal. Deals are dangerous especially with the dead" Yama replied.

"What deal?"

"You ask too many questions. Why are you humans so confused all the time? I will give you its answer later" Yama said in an irritated tone. "You saw your wife hugging a stranger with a brown-haired man right?" Yama asked and Jai nodded.

"And you wish to see the face of that man?" Yama asked and Jai nodded again, "Alright close your eyes." Yama said and brought Jai into the memory scene, Neer's playschool where his wife was being embraced by a stranger with brown hair. Jai witnessed the stranger kissing Kavya's forehead. She smiled and the brown-haired man turned around. Jai felt a shock as he saw the brown-haired man's face. He couldn't believe his eyes.

"The worst part about betrayal is that it never comes from unknown person" Jai murmured

"Do you know this man?" Yama's voice penetrated the memory sequence.

Jai nodded sadly. He was betrayed, "time spent together is no measure of trust" he said.

"Who was it?" Yama asked.

"My best friend"