Karna’s wife – The Outcaste’s Queen By Kavita Kane

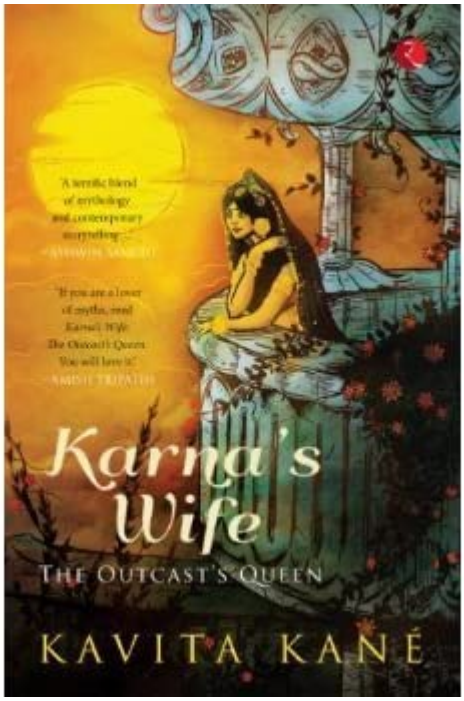
An Overview

Dr. Payal Trivedi

There are events in life we feel we have the RIGHT to change and there are those that make us powerless, Kavita Kane’s novel Karna’s wife – The Outcast’s Queen brings both these facets of life into prominence. As a primary subject matter, the audacity of princess Uruvi to choose Karna, the son of the sutaputra, the charioteer over the royal prince Arjuna as a valiant reformation and comes to the readers as a pleasant surprise. Nonetheless, her powerlessness as a wife to change her husband’s course of improper action is more than evident as Uruvi sees Karna meet the dire consequences of being susceptible to his dutiful adherence towards Duryodhana and his inherent disagreement with the Pandavas.

Despite all her wishful thinking that her husband would come to terms with the truth of being misguided by vengeance towards the Pandavas Uruvi is unable to deviate Karna from the path of his own destruction. This brings us to the acknowledgement of a woman’s opinion being of secondary or negligible importance in a man’s life in spite of it being true. At the same time, Uruvi’s strong denial to be subservient to her man’s choice of being indulgent in his decision of supporting the wrong is a defiance of the conformist notions that subject a woman to blindly consent to her man’s beliefs. When she leaves Karna and opts for a reclusive life away from all the obligations of being a dutiful wife, we see this as the author’s appreciable effort towards dethroning the regular assumptions of modernity towards traditional figures as essentially submissive.

The ending of novel does evoke a sense of resignation towards fate and undoubtedly seems to be a conventional approach towards understanding life. Krishna becomes a clairvoyant messenger in informing Uruvi that she cannot change the predestined fate of her son and cannot escape the massacre of war by just evading the truth of her being a warrior's wife and her son being the posterity of a royal clan – Angaraj. Nonetheless, this very conventional approach exposes the unspoken or often avoided truth of life as a preordained karmic cycle which is inescapable. While we know for the fact that individual reaps the fruit of one's own karma, the same fact leads us to acknowledge the fated destiny in case of Karna that brought him to his helpless death end. It is Karna's own choice that brings his downfall but that same choice was made not out of his own choice to be with the wrong doers. His unfortunate destiny of being Kunti's illegitimate child was instrumental in shaping up the course of events in his life; an undeniable truth. Kane adopts a more subtle but an effective mode of unravelling the fact of life being a perplexing arena of the constant feud between fate and deeds. This universally pertinent message makes this novel interesting, appealing and even mysteriously absorbing in its own regard.



THE LOCKDOWN LOVER that LOCKS YOU DOWN!



Lockdown Lover

A CRITICAL REVIEW By Dr. Payal Trivedi

Well, any theatre performance is meant to entertain is an understatement today because we have all come to terms with the fact that theatre is much more than simply a mode of refreshment. Investing our time and energy in beholding any performance ought to enable us enough food for thought not just by being didactic but by helping us realize our weaknesses, our flaws and misdemeanours that may have led us to falsely believe in the material notion of scepticism that seems to have crept in all our walks of life today. We tend to always engage in self doubt, of essentially questioning the

obvious and of incessantly negating all possibilities of giving stability to our lives. All that today's worldly compartments of propriety and impropriety have given us is a bizarre set of meaningless precepts. These we follow mechanically with the fear of being ostracized by the so called normal society or flout entirely as a means of blatant rebuttal against the stringent myopic framework that often surrounds rules made for whom we label the 'Normal Man'. The category of the 'normals' includes those that bear the onus of proclaiming 'acting' according to the stipulated socio-cultural norms as a mark of sanity. This excludes any kind of aberration which may disturb the so called normal setting of a 'settled home and family' we humans often propagate as an insignia of 'orderly mental health'. Unfortunately for us, anything anyone does different from having a perfectly settled home is conventionally considered unhealthy and the primary cause of mental illness.

Well, the message is simple and clear but is conveyed through an essentially 'vague' motivation towards choosing 'absurd' mode of theatrical performance that leads the motto of laying bare this extremely vital issue hay ways. First and foremost, the disorderly array of character shifting that we come across mars the charm of this rendition at its very onset. That stage cannot capture the nuances of facial expressions is a matter of common understanding and therefore, it is obvious that when the actor shifts from one character to another, the performance does not seem to deal efficiently with this change simply because it is not required prominently to showcase the difference. When there is an overbearing energy that tries to dominate or suppress the other and the explicit resistance of the other is being displayed with repressed tendencies, it obviously should impart a lesson of a 'toxic relationship and its repercussions' when in this performance it comes out as an 'enforced torture' upon the audience to make them forcefully assent to the 'failure of values'. This failure is so anointed with the cumbersome obsession of anomaly that can be seen in

the character using the ‘whip’ that acts as a paradigm of inexplicable violence that puzzles due to the lack of clarity. A more structured absurdism(If I am permitted to use this expression) would have made it intelligible rather than prolix one, the performance chooses to adopt the ‘heightened potency of absurdism’ that is needless and I feel is so overwhelming that it almost nullifies the importance of conveying at least, ‘some’ meaning.

I do feel that proportionate dose of the vaccine called ‘absurdism’ can boost our immunity but an overdose may completely lead to multiple organ failures and not being sarcastic at all as a viewer I definitely felt that is performance is beyond my level of comprehension. It is possible that this is ‘heightened intellectual apex that perhaps an ordinary theatre person as I may not be able to reach; definitely possible and I accept this with all humility!

A talented and popular theatre artist as Tathagata Chowdhury fails to cast a long lasting impression with his extraneous attempts to correlate absurd theatre with Indian bourgeois set up. This is simply because; the hypocrisy of today’s English speaking Indian families with ultra modern outlook ultimately boils down to having a settled home with children. This is not dual mindset I suppose but is an outcome of the age old Indian mentality of being culturally rooted to one’s customary adherence to tradition that seldom permits anomalous living. When Chowdhury tries to target the contemporary Indian society with its loopholes that disallow normalcy to them, he does not take into account the fact that the apparent aberration of tradition in India is equally a facade like its retention of its values is. That’s the reason that he cannot think beyond a ‘shattered morality’ tendency of the Indian modern class and is unsuccessful in his attempt to impress with his absolutely vague acting. In my opinion, it is a failed attempt of displaying absurdity ‘par excellence’ that gets ruined due to

the pressure of creating an intellectual feast that often becomes tasteless when the ingredients are overused. We get a feel of being LOCKEDDOWN by absurdity of this lockdown lover who seems to have lost completely his senses in the motif of explaining the senselessness that prevails in our lives today; a fact that certainly cannot be denied but such bizarre engagement with the theme? I leave it to the viewers anyways.

Finally, I do acknowledge that drama is a means of self analysis that forbids insinuating anyone under any circumstance. This review is simply meant to give an unbiased outlook towards a performance and does not intend to dictate any opinion. Rest assured, it’s simply my personal perception folks!