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Opening extract from
**Chronicles of a
Soldier**

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It was a normal peaceful day. The world was peaceful with itself. There was no cause of alarm or panic. Nothing seemed unusual. Everyone recorded this day as being normal. It was dawn, with crowing cocks, bleating goats in the background. This morning was comfortable and not dull. People exchanged gifts amongst themselves. They welcomed strangers in their homes and gave the starving gifts, they provided the wild beasts with food and meals. The birds of the feather were given all nature of food and no one was starved. People called on each other to feast and argued that if all days were similar to these days then this day of all days they said their world would turn to paradise. Everyone was happy and none assumed that they would come to any danger. The forest welcomed new visitors and it provided food and shelter to the young. The young played with asps without any harm. They played with lions in a lions den and nothing harmful befell them. The young carried the world on their shoulders and never became tired. Peace belonged to the inhabitants of this joint and place. The good news came to them in the hour of suffering. People had toiled and now that burden seemed far-fetched. There was need to satisfy the needy. The disabled looked after the able ones in their joints. This was a birth of a new dawn but something strange came to overshadow the peace of the world. There was a great noise and a rapid interruption which upset the system and

tradition of the world. People had lived in peace for five million years. There was no war in the land as far as people could recall and people never imagined war and it was not told in any stories for the young. There was peace and something seemed to be different this time round. People had enjoyed five million years of peace and freedom. There were never any murders in the land, no bloodshed and massacres or pogroms. There was never genocide in the land. People celebrated five million years of peace. But now there were roaring lions in the joint and there was a moaning of birds to herald a new age of chaos and plunder.

When we heard a thunderous noise and a rapid stirring noise in the yard. We never knew where it came from and how it emerged around our villa. We couldn't make out and understand the meaning this stirring and disturbing noise. We debated and argued about the noise. We were also disturbed physically and mentally. We were totally at a great unease, and discomfort occupied our minds, it was very unsettling, worse than childbirth sevenfold and a thousand and one fold. We couldn't work out what had led the joint to come to this devastation, which awaited us. We were mates and Bombit loved his wife Mombit very much. They were inseparable. We hadn't fully woken up as it wasn't time for us to get up. We embraced and Mombit prepared breakfast and returned to bed where we were upset that the joint was swarmed by a great change. We were not prepared for the change. Bombit had met his fiancée at a town carnival and she was a far different person she was now. So many changes occurred in the last five years since they were married. She was now kind, simple and Bombit found her hard to deal with. She was rude and she had mustered or controlled him as if he were a child. Mombit was bitter that he never followed her advise and instructions. She had set-up rules that he should follow and she

pinned them on the wall and if he broke any of those rules he had to be lashed and starved. He was commanded to fetch water from a contaminated well which was a long distance away. If he failed to arrive on time, he was canded and pilloried in the town centre. He felt like running away but was deterred from following his ideas. This was because he loved Mombit. He never hurt her but was very merciful to her and he thought that she was correct in all her life. He knew that she provided him with love and he was there for her and no one else. He loved her just as his life. He never raised a finger against her but was neither strict with her. For her hurt he remained calm. He was always thinking of her. Wherever he went he thought of her. When he went to the village and town dance he was delved in thoughts about her. He moaned for her and he suffered for her. He was less privileged to remain without her. He knew that she had brought him fortune and privileges. Mombit told him that he shouldn't indulge in loving her and this was very difficult for him as it was; was he to hide away from her or was he going to run the gauntlet of trying to find another lover. Their relation and romance was as hard as it came, as if it was between a rock and hard place. Bombit assumed the impossible that if he offered her his love then she would return her love. She had locked him out and he became homeless and without any shelter. He lived with the wild. He was without any mistake or he was not in danger of his life. He wanted to reunite with her and he was in hot soup which was hard to digest. Bombit was profoundly disturbed. He was lonely and wanted to be rescued by her. She never knew where to find him and he was not hiding from her. He wanted to love her as before and reminisced of the time they walked together in love, their hands clasped between each other. There was no denying that he loved her. Their love was like the love a father has for his child and the love a

mother has for her baby. It was true love which had to exist for the good and benefit of the world. Their love exceeded all opinions and beliefs. It was love made from hell that had been strengthened by heaven. The truth of their love lied in the world and it was as peaceful as the whole world. Their love was strained because Bombit complained that his wife was an attraction to the whole world and he was uneasy about it, he was not defensive about her, people insulted him in the streets and he was abused for being with her. He had nowhere to hide. Every person wanted to love her and take her as a wife. People informed Bombit that if he wanted his freedom and peace he should let go of his wife.

But he was steadfast and unwilling to give into pressure or to handover his wife to strangers. People didn't know what he had gone through to love her and he informed all people that he loved her. They stressed that they wanted to take his wife Mombit. He told them that they should try and live through his past experience to gain love from her. Then they should undertake to live through what he had gone through throughout his life, from when he was being breastfed to adulthood. They should step in his footsteps. She was a jewel in the crown and he couldn't handover that crown of love to anybody. He became optimistic about his love to her. We lived in peace for five million years and death didn't stalk us in our quarters. Like everywhere we worked we found that it was in vain. The gates to our prosperity were soon closing. The days of our fortune were being blocked. The life we had was becoming lost as if it was like a lost ship which was drifting into turbulent seas. Where there was no help. We had to improvise with the least we had and what we had stocked for the sea journey, was now incomplete and was already spent to the point that we could not make love until we had been rescued. We waited for provisions which we had not called for and people went on hunting for my

Mombit. People spoke to her in whispers and no one revealed their feelings to anyone. We were really lost for words and action. We couldn't restore what was lost. We loved the weather as we loved the present and the past. We loved each other as we loved the weather. It was noticeable that we were deeply in love of freedom. We believed in our love. We never threw away our love to the wind. It was love filled with wisdom and with her being present our love was secure and it could not wear out as a garment. It was solid love and profound love which would be found in a land where there was life and privilege. Bombit was scared to loose his wife of so many years. He would live to love Mombit and suffer to love her if at all he was in great spirit. He would walk on hot coals in order to love her. He would walk the breath of the world to see himself loving her. Even though he became blind he would still love her. Nothing would stand in his way and even though war arose against him he would not fail to love her. Even though a thousand men came against him he would still love her. Possibly it was death that would decide his fate. Bombit was uncertain of any action to take to keep his wife. He was to hide her in a fox-hole and preserve her fortune in a piggy-bank. He wanted to build her a house which revealed her beauty. There was less he could do. He was very excited when Mombit declared that she loved him more than herself. She loved him as one loves the gods of the earth. We hadn't woken up as it was not yet time for us to do so. But we came out of bed to listen to the great uproar that had gathered in front of our door. We didn't understand the noise and cause of the great disturbance that had approached our front door. We ran in different directions, we began to put on our garments which had gathered dust since the age of the comet. We had no plan in hand but we were glad to be alive.

‘Open the door you rascals,’ a rebel soldier shouted out.

We knew the world between us had come to an abrupt end. We didn’t know what to do or how to react. We tried disguising ourselves under the covers of the bed but we couldn’t fit. We cried out for help but it was far-fetched. We were trapped like two rats in a mouse-trap. There was constant thumping and pushing at the door which we had bolted in the night. We usually left the door open as it was safe but for some reason the night before we had bolted the door to keep out the flies and mosquitoes. We knew that if we called for help then we would have help at hand. Gunshots were heard in the background, there were people screaming in the background, cattle hoofs pounded the wet ground and they were being rounded up and people were crying in the village. Five million years of peace and freedom had come to an abrupt end. There was war to upset the peace that existed. No one knew what to do, everyone was in pain and lying in vain. Rebels were circling the village for goods and spoils of war. They went on to pillage the village. Plundering the village from bottom-up. A ragged tagged army of troops who declared that they wanted their form of wisdom and peace, they wanted to establish a militancy regime to replace the freedom and peace that people had come to witness and which they took for granted had now come to an end. Bombit and Mombit were trapped in their villa. We heard the shifting movements of chaos and the door was dislodged from its edges and frame and the soldiers knocked down the door, firing into the air a volley of rounds which amounted to thousands. They fired indiscriminately and destroyed everything in their path. There were water buckets thrown out through the window, and Bombit and Mombit hadn’t any time on their hands to hide but made a separate escape, both had different escape routes and they separated without making

any arrangement where to meet, they had no rendezvous and both became lost in the process. We ran for our lives, Bombit was looking for Mombit but they had all separated and they left behind all their world possessions.

Gunshots rang out. We thought that it was our most peaceful morning, which had turned into a fateful day, which we had never anticipated. We called on the world to assist us, and we thought that our fate could happen to another individual, as no one wants fate to fall on one's shoulders. We had not failed to live but the war had failed us this morning. We were desperate that war had emerged on our doorstep. We never knew that war had come to haunt the world. We never liked to discard away peace for war. We began searching the world for peace but were unable to arrive at a conclusive piece of peace. All that remained in our land was a disruption of peace. Everyone was running for their lives. We were hostages to war. We never knew why there was war and whether it was indispensable to have war in our backyard. We woke up half in deep sleep and we were desperate to stay in our house. We had separated from the point they attacked our house. Everything was upset and we couldn't recover what we had lost. Mombit was half dressed and she wanted to return to her house to get dressed but was unable to return. She cried in pain and she was disgusted with the war. She desperately tried to locate her husband. She was bitter she could not find him. Looking for him was like looking for a needle in a haystack. She tried asking people who had run away, but she was very disappointed that he was not available. Her world had changed for the worse. Where in the world would she find him.

People were escaping the war. People were carrying all their world possessions and belongings. Some carried their domesticated animals with them. All their world possessions were

being gathered by this tremendous exodus of the war weary. They were war beaten and defeated by the scope and intensity of the war. Some people looted goods from shops which were emptied of all stocks. Everyone took the law in their hands in turns. Some people fought over what they had looted. The war spread to all corners of the village. Peace was completely destroyed. The clock couldn't be turned back. The scale of the war was significantly worse than hell. The earth had turned to hell. Where there was no one to rescue. Bombit too looked for his wife. He went to ask and inquire from the throng about his wife. He was told that she had drowned in the lake, so he hurried to search for her by plunging and diving in a small lake, his head bobbing up in intervals. He saw a body underneath the water and swam deeply into the lake catching her by the hand. He was excited that he had found his wife Mombit. She was lying deep into the lake that her immovable body was still and lifeless. She was not breathing. Bombit swam to the top to gain breath and to gain strength to rescue his wife. He came up several times before he plunged back into the lake.

'I must get her and save Mombit. Why did she end up in the lake?' Bombit screamed as he floated over the lake stroking the water in a splash.

He was deeply worried that he hadn't managed to get her.

'She must be dead.' Bombit stressed.

'There she is... she's dead,' many people shouted pointing to the location where she was lying in the pool of water.

The currents washed her body deeper into the lake where she was in a sinking position. Bombit followed the vicious currents which were crashing into several intervening waves. There was a storm which had gathered strength and which lashed against the coastline. He was interrupted by the storm. He could no longer