

THE EMPEROR'S LOST LOVE

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A Play in One Act


by

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Cast of Characters

<u>Emperor Amarendra Bahubali:</u>	30s, the most powerful monarch in Asia, dresses and behaves in an opulent fashion; grieving after the recent loss of his wife.
<u>Lord Krishna:</u>	100, an avatar of God who advises people toward divine wisdom; eventually becomes EMPEROR BAHUBALI'S guide.
<u>Prime Minister:</u>	60s, is EMPEROR BAHUBALI'S main advisor.
<u>Minister of Economic Affairs:</u>	40s, advises EMPEROR BAHUBALI on economic affairs
<u>Minister of War:</u>	20s, advises EMPEROR BAHUBALI on his war strategies

Scene

Various locations in Emperor Bahubali's kingdom.

Time

3101 B.C.E.

ACT IScene 1

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## SETTING:

We are in the throne room of EMPEROR BAHUBALI'S palace. The vast wealth of his empire is apparent through the design and construction of the throne room. There is a golden, grand throne with red velvet cushions and an umbrella-esque object hovering over the throne, as if protecting the EMPEROR through divine intervention. There are 2 rows of golden chairs with red cushions (mini-thrones) facing each other and lead up to the throne. These are for the ministers. On all of the walls and pillars there are intricate carvings and studded with precious stones. Overall, the room impresses upon all who visit an intimidating air of opulence and power.

## AT RISE:

EMPEROR BAHUBALI is pacing in front of his throne in an erratic manner; sometimes he is strongly marching and sometimes he is sullenly pacing. His PRIME MINISTER is watching from a side of the throne room, thinking of how he can help his Emperor.

PRIME MINISTER  
(with arms outstretched)

Oh, my Emperor.

(Pause, as if the PRIME  
MINISTER had all the  
time in the world.)

My liege, please tell us how can we help.

EMPEROR BAHUBALI

(He suddenly turns his  
head around to look at  
the PRIME MINISTER.  
A look of anger is  
visible on his face which  
then morphs into sadness.)

Help? Oh, how can you help me? I am broken...useless.

PRIME MINISTER  
(Nears the EMPEROR  
with his head slightly  
bowed and arms/hands  
folded like in a prayer.)

Please Your Majesty, tell us. We are here for you, always.  
Remember, as your advisors we will always support you,  
remaining true to the oath we swore when we started our  
service.

(All MINISTERS nod in  
agreement.)

Is the loss of your wife, our dear Queen, still causing you  
anguish?

EMPEROR BAHUBALI

(Turns his whole body  
to face his ministers.)

Yes indeed, Prime Minister. Her death was like the Sun  
being swallowed into a black hole. (Pause) All of the  
brightness in the world va...vanishing. My sleep is still  
disturbed by her ghostly presence and her absence from my  
bedside.

MINISTER OF WAR

You know what you need, my Emperor, is a distraction. Yes,  
sir! A distraction is what you need to steer your mind away  
from the Queen and make it feel better. And do you know  
what the best distraction is?

(Pause. Looks, with a  
grin, at the other

MINISTERS and the  
EMPEROR for an answer.)

A good ol' fashioned bloodbath. Nothing more distracting than people's guts spilling all o'er the place, ya know?

PRIME MINISTER

How dare you make a comical display out of death? Can you not see the Emperor is still in mourning?

MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Now now. Before we can even conceive of engaging in war, we must first examine the state of our industrial capacity to support the war effort. And, Your Majesty, I have been suggesting this for a while, we need more labor. Our economy is being bottlenecked by a lack of workers, and we should...

MINISTER OF WAR  
(Interjects)

...go to war! It is a fantastic way to get more people to work. Just think about it folks. A hundred thousand of our spears, elephants, chariots and swords. It's more than enough to make the low-class people from the Bihar region do our bidding.

MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Hmmm, that might just work.

MINISTER OF WAR

See, you can solve anything with war.

EMPEROR BAHUBALI

If it takes my mind off of my dear wife, then I suppose it is worth it but I want her to come back. Simply not thinking about her will not fill the gap in my soul.

PRIME MINISTER

Yes my liege. We should focus on helping you overcome the grief you experienced and not simply distract you. Also, you must not go to war unprovoked. It is forbidden in the most ancient of texts.

MINISTER OF WAR

Who cares?! Do they not also dictate that a king must provide for his people first? Clearly, Your Majesty, you must go to war. Look after your people!

EMPEROR BAHUBALI

(Continues his pacing in deep thought. He is feeling conflicted. On the one hand he must get his Queen back and on the other he just wants to be distracted from his pain.)

I believe I should go to war as it will distract me for some time while our best minds can work on a method to bring back my dear wife.

(Pause. PRIME MINISTER looks very disappointed while the MINISTER OF WAR is happy and the MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS wears a neutral expression. The MINISTERS are now circling the EMPEROR.)

We will go to war! So let it be written, so let it be...

(There is a sudden flash of white light and thunderous sound that shocks everyone. Smoke emanates from center stage. Ethereal flute music can be heard. This signals the arrival of a perfect being, LORD KRISHNA. He emerges from the smoke, His arms raised from His side. There is no question of His divine nature.)

LORD KRISHNA

Stop! Stop I say! Behold, the embodiment of righteousness has arrived to prevent His Majesty from making a terrible mistake. I urge you to erase your malicious intent at once!

EMPEROR BAHUBALI

(Falls to his knees, and with arms outstretched toward KRISHNA, in a lamenting tone)

Oh Krishna!

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 2

SETTING:

We are on one side of a lake opposite a waterfall. The waterfall's motion creates a magical rainbow. Soft sounds of nature can be heard and in fact it appears all of the natural sounds are somewhat muted, even the waterfall. This unnatural effect emphasizes the uniqueness of this place. There is a rather large rock which protrudes from the lakeside. It is covered, in random spots, with moss and lichen. There are intricate carvings on the rock that imbue a sense of mystery.

AT RISE:

EMPEROR BAHUBALI is pacing in front of LORD KRISHNA, who is sitting cross-legged in a meditative pose. The EMPEROR is clearly impatient.

EMPEROR BAHUBALI

How much longer must we wait here? You promised that you would help resurrect my dear wife but here you are just sitting.

(LORD KRISHNA continues meditating, unresponsive to the EMPEROR'S complaints.)

Listen to me! I command you to take us to the Himalayas now, like you promised. Can't you just teleport us there with your powers?

(LORD KRISHNA finally opens his eyes and calmly looks at the EMPEROR.)

LORD KRISHNA



Be calm, O Impatient One. Even avatars become tired from the immense energy required to host this Divine Spirit. I do not have enough energy left to teleport us to the Himalayas.

EMPEROR BAHUBALI  
 (He stops pacing  
 and looks down at  
 LORD KRISHNA.)

Oh, come on. You are an avatar. You should have unlimited energy and be able to do anything.

LORD KRISHNA  
 Even gods become tired, O Foolish One. In order to reach the summit of the Himalayas, you must be extremely conscious of how you expend energy. If you rush to get there, then you will fail to reach the summit. And if you fail to reach the summit, then I cannot impart in you the knowledge you need to bring your dear wife back. Then how will you feel?

EMPEROR BAHUBALI  
 Well, I suppose that I will feel even worse than I do now. All hope of regaining my wife will have faded like the Sun disappearing under the horizon.

LORD KRISHNA  
 Yep, that is correct.

EMPEROR BAHUBALI  
 So, what do we do now? How can we travel all the way to the Himalayas without your teleportation skills?

LORD KRISHNA  
 (Stands up in a  
 leisurely manner  
 and places his  
 hand on the  
 EMPEROR'S shoulder  
 in a comforting way.)  
 No worries. Through my meditation, I have called the Great Chariot of Rama. It will be here shortly and will deliver us to the foot of the Himalayas with great haste.

EMPEROR BAHUBALI  
 Oh, that would be lovely. Thank you, my Lord.

(As the EMPEROR  
and LORD KRISHNA  
board the chariot:)

LORD KRISHNA

Wow, that is the first time you have called me "Lord"! I  
sense the goodness growing in you, O Improving One.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 3

SETTING:

We are at the base of the Himalayas. There is a series of mountains in the background with snow-covered peaks and sides. One of the mountains has a trail leading up towards the summit. There is an abundant distribution of greenery at the base. Bird calls can be heard and their sound is soothing. The trail head is marked with the symbol, ॐ (om).

AT RISE:

LORD KRISHNA and EMPEROR BAHUBALI have disembarked from the chariot and are at the trailhead. They look full of energy and are animated.

EMPEROR BAHUBALI

Well, my Lord, we have arrived at the place. The place of my hopes and dreams to bring back my dearly departed wife. Please tell me if this will work, will I finally be happy?

LORD KRISHNA

You will eventually be happy, O Gloomy One. Happiness is a state of mind that has nothing to do with the external world.

EMPEROR BAHUBALI

Yes, I completely agree! (Softly) That is why I want my dear wife to return to me; she makes me happy because of our shared love. Love is internal and...and will surely make me happy again. I don't want to have to declare war or continue to accumulate wealth to be happy. All I need is my dear wife to come back to me.

(LORD KRISHNA  
beckons EMPEROR  
BAHUBALI to walk  
with him. They  
both continue along  
the trail. The

backdrop reflects  
 this change in  
 scenery by changing.  
 Thus, LORD KRISHNA  
 and EMPEROR BAHUBALI  
 are not really walking  
 off-stage or significantly  
 on-stage.)

LORD KRISHNA

O Needy One, you lament the loss of your wife. You feel that you cannot be happy without her, you cannot function without her, you can be noone without her. But have you considered how she feels? Would she want you to bring her back?

EMPEROR BAHUBALI

Well, of course! I have been a great husband. Just look at all of the things I have given her: a palace, gold and jewels, thousands of servants, power, and most importantly my unconditional love. (Pause) Oh, the..the thought of her not being with us now (starts to sniffle)

LORD KRISHNA

Keep a steady mind, O Sniveling One. My friend, why do you lament for the physical presence of your wife when it was always destined to perish? Your body, my body, this pine tree, that deer right there, we will all perish one day. Instead, focus on their souls. Your soul and the souls of the tree and deer will all be born again in a different body, and this will continue forever and ever and...

EMPEROR BAHUBALI

(Rudely interrupts)

Hold on, hold on! You mean we'll keep returning to *this* place for eternity? What is the meaning of this? And why did you not mention your soul returning with us?

LORD KRISHNA

(With a smirk)

Please do not interrupt me, O Juvenile One. I will not have to be reborn along with you lot because I have indeed

reached enlightenment. I will be joining the Ultimate Reality for a long time and I will see your wife because she is now a part of that Ultimate Reality as she attained enlightenment just before Death claimed her as its own.

EMPEROR BAHUBALI  
 (worried about  
 never seeing his  
 wife again, with  
 voice slightly  
 shaking and choked)

Well, my Lord, maybe I can also attain enlightenment and see my dear wife then. That way, I can be with her forever and not have to be reborn again and again. Please tell me, how can I achieve this?

(LORD KRISHNA and  
 EMPEROR BAHUBALI  
 have both now stopped  
 walking and LORD  
 KRISHNA now beckons  
 the EMPEROR to sit.  
 They sit cross-legged,  
 as is the custom,  
 opposite from each  
 other. Both have  
 their backs to  
 trees but are not  
 leaning on them.)

LORD KRISHNA  
 O Seeking One, you must embody the qualities of one who is in divine consciousness. Be not disturbed by the constant changes of this world. Be beyond dualities like those of success and failure, profits and losses, pleasures and pains. Be free from the constant flow of desires which come and go like the oceanic tides. Be free from fear and anger. Be restrained in your senses. Be moderate in eating, speaking, sleeping, and working. See all beings with equal vision and act for their welfare, seeing Me dwelling patiently in their hearts as their Companion.

(Seeing the confused  
 look on EMPEROR  
 BAHUBALI'S face,  
 LORD KRISHNA  
 elaborates.)

O Stupid One, just be a virtuous person and not give in to any extremes no matter where they come from.

EMPEROR BAHUBALI

So, how long will this method take to achieve enlightenment?

LORD KRISHNA

Well, given your disposition and attachments to this material world and its paradigms, I would approximate 32.478 lifetimes or rebirths.

EMPEROR BAHUBALI

But by that time my dear wife may have forgotten me and I may have forgotten her. That simply won't do, my Lord.

LORD KRISHNA

O Desperate One, then you may simply recognize my characteristics, call me by my true name and then you may enter my Eternal Abode, that one Ultimate Reality.

(Taking pity on  
EMPEROR BAHUBALI,  
LORD KRISHNA sprinkles  
dust over the pair of  
them and as if in a  
trance, EMPEROR BAHUBALI  
starts reciting:)

EMPEROR BAHUBALI

My Lord, you are life in all life and the ability of all beings. You are beginning, the middle, and the end. You are the guide and the goal. You are the Word, the primeval sound and vibration of the Universe. You are the death who brings all to an end, and yet you are seated in the hearts of all. My Lord, you are our shelter and our most dear friend. Truly, you are the way, the truth, and the reality.

(Pause. With hands folded in prayer)

O Supreme Refuge, please accept me and liberate me from this suffering on Earth!

LORD KRISHNA

(With his hands  
in the blessing

gesture)  
O My Disciple, so let it be.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF ACT)

(END OF PLAY)