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METAMORPHOSIS OF MEENAKSHI TO SUPARNKHA; A STUDY OF THE VILLAIN OR VICTIM

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Abstract

Surpanakha, Ravana's shady sister, is more disliked than disdainful. Surpanakha is generally seen as revolting and barbaric, merciless and audacious. One whose nose was cut off by Lakshman. She is projected as the lady behind the war. However, she was a culprit or merely a sufferer is what's going on certainly with my paper. Do you know the original name of Surpnakha? Have you ever think who was Surpnakha? Beside a powerful king's sister? This paper unfurls the reality of Meenakshi, also is known as Surpanakha. Growing up like an unrecognized youngster, eclipsed by her siblings, again confronting an existence of dismissal. Even the name itself has a purdah (veil) to her birth name Meenakshi, which means a girl with gorgeous eyes. But she is projected as a horrible character in all the manuscripts. The paper is a genuine attempt to show the real misery of the Princess, who faces barbarous treatment by the patriarchal society. The paper will arouse some considerable questions like- Is Meenakshi was truly the only culprit of war? Is she a villain or a sufferer? Is it correct to say that she was Lanka's princess, who faced rejection throughout her life? And Why was she angry with the world?

Keywords – Indian Mythology, Feminism, Kavita Kane, Ramayana, Surpanakha.

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Introduction

For a long time, in India, and all over the planet, men ruled the artistic space. From sacred writings to legends, stories, to fables. Not exclusively the male creators center around the accounts of extraordinary, ideal, and influential males, however, they likewise removed the chance at any wonder from the females. The female characters when described by men were agonizingly rearranged. They were either depicted as goddesses or evil presences or nearly secondary characters, that moved, as per the series of the story, their jobs characters are never completely advocated. Though, male characters were written with more intricacies, elaborateness, incredible background history. But today multiple modern women authors are reincarnating the female characters from Indian Mythology because female characters deserved an adequate narration. By retelling their stories, Kavita Kane's novels explore the unheard voices of the marginalized female characters from India Mythology.

This paper concentrates on Surpankha, from Kavita Kane's most popular novel "*Lanka's Princess*", it is a retelling of the story from the point of view of Surpankha, which means the girl who has long, pointed, and sharp nails. But how many of us know that her birth name is Meenakshi, which means the girl who has beautiful, fish-formed eyes. Meenakshi spends childhood in the shadows of her siblings (Ravana, Kumbhakarna, and, Vibhishana). who were bound to win wars, popularity, and notoriety. But Meenakshi is always considered with wretchedness and vengeance.

She is blamed for controlling bad happenings among Rama and Ravana, which finished in a grisly conflict which ruined her family. Surpankha is regularly the most misconstrued character in the Ramayana. *Lanka's Princess* portrays the story from the vantage of this lady, who is more abhorred than contemptuous. Kavita

Kane tries to affirm that both, males and females can have the characteristics or factors like valiance, strength, boldness, dominance, zeal, love, compassion, tenderness, forgiveness, temperament, self self-representation, self essence, and freedom as these characteristics are human attributes and can be common to either men or women.

PORTRAYAL OF SURPANAKHA AS AN IGNORED CHILD

The original novel opens with the assertion, "It's a Girl!" Despite having three boys as children, Kaikesi, Meenakshi's mom, is frustrated to realize that she gave birth to a girl child. This is because Meenakshi was an unwanted daughter. Also, she was not as beautiful as her mother Kaikesi, who had incubated Lanka back from her stepchild, Kuber. Meenakshi's father, sage Vishrava named her Meenakshi as she had fish-shaped eyes. As in Sanskrit Meena means Fish and Aksh means eyes, therefore, Meenakshi. Whereas her mother named her Chandranakha, as she had curled nails. As in Sanskrit, Chandra means Moon and Nakha means Nails therefore, Chandranakha.

She was neglected by her mother, father, and brothers, she was never much loved by her parents, also her brothers didn't understand her. She was only loved and supported by her brother Kumbhakarna and grandmother Tarka. Such an overlooked behavior and cold words by her mother on her had developed a gap between her and other family members. As a five-year-old, Meenakshi gets into a battle to save Vibhishan. Nonetheless, rather than being applauded, her mom rages at her by saying, "Vibhishan is a boy, and he is more established than you. He didn't need your protection!". Thus, consistently, in her family, Meenakshi is seen as the weak and 'other'. Although, her siblings, Kumbhakaran and Vibhishan are defensive towards her in any case. But they even jointly can't hold fast against the hunger for

power in Ravana, who despises his sister and infers unreasonable delight in denying her of bliss. This goads Meenakshi which causes her to understand that she must be solid and confident. While trying to advocate for herself and look for equity for the killing of her pet cat by Ravana, Meenakshi hooks at him with her long, curved, and sharp nails. This was the day when Meenakshi protected herself on her own and feels the power of her nails and anger. This prompts her changing of her name, is from Meenakshi to Shurpanaka. When Ravana got this news he thinks that Surpanakha is an appropriate name for her, not Meenakshi because she sees her as an evil woman, which mirrors the man-centric fear of a solid, arrogant lady.

Surpanakha also thinks that this new name is nonetheless, an appropriate name for her, as her real power is in her nails. "Assuming this could secure me, then, at that point, indeed, I am Shurpanaka." Further, she says, "OK, I am a beast!". In this way, however, an endeavor was made all of the time to stifle her voice.

Shurpanaka generally figured out how to root herself as a solid and confident person. This can likewise be found in the frequency where, Kuber, her stepsibling, attempts to show his power by focusing on her gentility to impel her siblings, particularly Ravana. Yet flops wretchedly when she retaliates as opposed to capitulating and fights back emphatically with her weapon, her nails. This demonstrates her character with complete acknowledgment of what her identity is.

This underestimated and disregarded Surpanakha. But soon she observes love and acknowledgment in Vidyujiva. A strong adversary ruler, who cherishes her not really for her unpredictable dull magnificence but rather for her keenness and brilliance. He values her and addresses her as my tigress. He underlines Surpanakha's psychological strength just as, her sexual and self-assuredness. This is interesting, with her mom's mocking

comment, "She's gaunt and a lot more obscure than me... How is this dim monkey going to bring us favorable luck? Nobody will at any point wed her." However, Ravana, dubious of Vidyujiva's thought processes and plots his murder for his political security. This killing, where practically the whole family is involved, triggers Shurpanaka's torment outrage. Which changes into her intense scorn towards Ravana and drives her towards looking for retribution against her own family. She no resembled a tigress. Assuming that she saw an exit plan, she would have run. Yet, she was caught in her sadness which was stirring with wrath. She thought that her vengeance would be her reprieve. She guarantees herself that, she will make life as hellfire for every single one of her relatives and makes a vow to not set in jewel to look for comfort through vengeance. Shurpanaka controls the occasions in Ravana's day-to-day existence. And slowly turns it into the focal point of Ramayana by demonstrating her predominance and stepping away from the edges. To accomplish this, she prepares her child, Kumar to battle for her vengeance. Tragically, Kumar's strange demise drives her to plot Ravana's defeat because of Ram and Laxman. A physically confident lady, Shurpanaka attempts to draw in the siblings with her charming illusion of excellence yet is restrained for it.

Shurpanaka is treated as the 'other' lady who is seen as a danger to the man-centric society and along these lines, by ruining and distorting her, man-centric society demonstrates its discipline. This adds fuel to the furious fire of Shurpanaka's vengeance. She, subsequently, encapsulates the voice that is raised against the family which underestimates her, in addition, the general public that attempts to tame her. Looking for vengeance, this insightful lady plans to utilize her distortion to impel Ravana against Rama which she accepts will bring her comfort.

Accordingly, follows the kidnapping of Sita prompting the destruction of Ravana and his whole tribe. This whole plot of Shurpanaka turns into a two-sided deal wherein, she loses a large number of her friends and family like Meghnad, Kumbhakarna, and many others, yet stays unaffected by it as her vengeance stands eminent, notwithstanding her solitary love for her family. She considers, "I didn't need Kumbha to bite the dust or his young twin children to, I don't need my Meghnad killed too. It had been Ravana alone who should bite the dust on the front line. However, he would be the last to kick the bucket. Before him, every one of those whom I had once cherished would be forfeited."

In her younger days, she notices that her family members are not looking as ugly as she is, she finds that they all are charming and likable in some manner except her. But her maternal grandmother Traka explains to her that, beauty lies in one's head and heart, and most importantly one has to love, oneself first. she told Meenakshi that love has the mysterious supernatural powers of influencing one's heart and mind. But people always tell her that, she is a monster, Surpanakha.

Tarka, explains to her that she had to be aware of her hidden weapons, Beauty, and her Brain, she explains to her that, her Wit and her Words will become her weapons. Meenakshi loves and respects her father a lot and hated lying to her father. she always tried never to disappoint him. But Vishravas never bothered about her. He always paid attention to Vibhishan more than any other child.

One day, when Ravan was captured by Kartaviryarjun, and Vishravas sought help from his father Pulastya to free Ravan (as Kartaviryarjun never refuse a great sage Pulastya), Pulastya said to Vishravas, 'All your children but for vibhishan are more Asura than Rishis, even that daughter of yours!' That time Pulastya said that Meenakshi is having the same furiousness and passion as Ravan. One day both Ravan

and Meenakshi started a great horrible war. Pulastya predicted that she will be responsible for the unseen turn of events.' she would be as deadly as Ravan.

One day when Kuber found that his half brothers that are Ravan, Kumbha, and Vibhishan are doing Tapasya and prayers to their great grandfather Bramha for more divine powers to get the throne of Lanka back from Kuber, he tried to kidnap Meenakshi, to safeguard Lanka (the golden city). He wanted Meenakshi to live with him till he gets an assurance that Ravan will not attack Lanka. Kaikki and Vishravas tried to stop Kuber, but he gripped her wrist.

That was the day when Meenakshi again protected herself with her long-curved nails. She stabbed her nails into the flesh of Kuber, s fingers, bare arm, and shoulders. Everyone was shocked to see the face of Meenakshi. Kuber yelled in pain, blood spurting through his skin. She freed herself and roared, ' I am known as Surpanakha!!'.

Meenakshi showed that she can protect herself, she's not weak. It was the first time her mother Kaikesi was proud of her, they hugged each other, it was a mother-daughter moment.

It is her requirement for equity for abuse and obliviousness during her adolescence, the demise of her significant lover and child which channelizes the feeling of vengeance in her, defaming her and finishing her change from the excellent fisheye look of Meenakshi to the long, sharp-nailed Shurpanaka.

Conclusion

Kavita Kane's novel, 'The Lanka's Princess' investigates the unheard voices of the minimized female characters from Indian folklore with the case of Surpanakha.

As even the actual name has a purdah to (veil) her original name Meenakshi, which implies a young lady with flawless, fish-like eyes. However, she is projected as a shrewd soul in every composition of the

great epic Ramayana. The paper is a real endeavor to show the genuine desolation of the Princess who faces barbaric treatment by the man-centric culture.

Surpanakha signifies women as always unshakable. who appeared to be brought into the world as Meenakshi—the one with astounding, fish-shaped eyes. Encountering youth in the shadows of her kin, who will undoubtedly win wars, prominence, and reputation. As she, in light of everything, diagrams up away and stacked up with awfulness and seaways. Faulted for controlling happening scenes among Ram and Ravan, which completed in a frightful struggle and annihilation of her family, Surpanakha is routinely the most misinterpreted character in the Ramayana.

Kavita Kane's *Lanka's Princess* relates the story from the vantage of this woman more detested than disdainful.

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