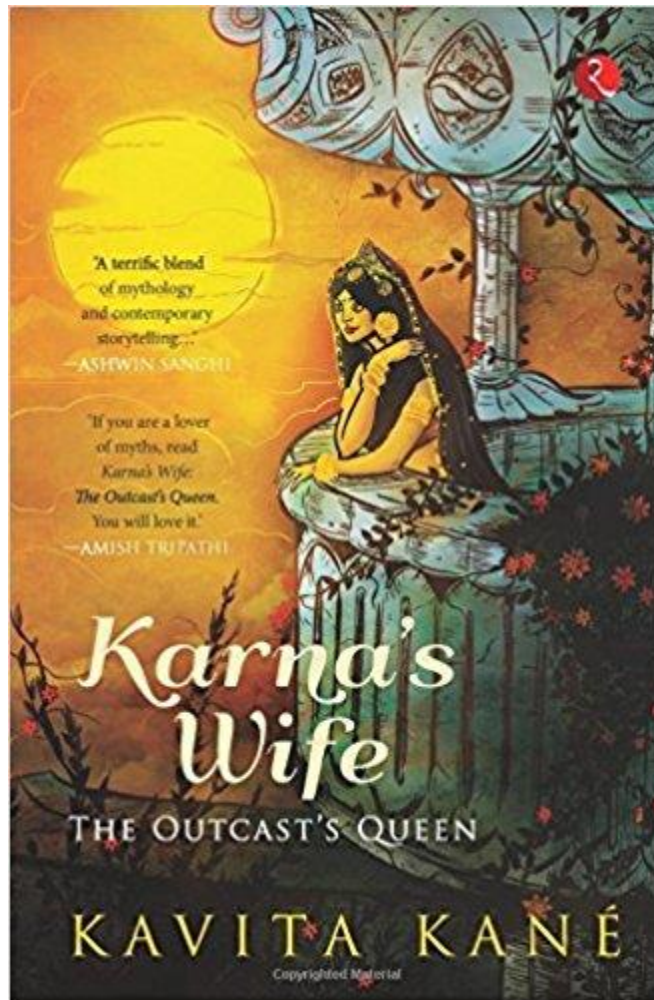


Retelling Myths: A Study of Kavita Kane's  
*Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen*

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**Kavita Kane**

Kavita Kane is an Indian writer well known for her writings on Mythology fiction. *Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen* is the story of Karna, on Uruvi's perspective, which is a unique narration. This novel is a splendid episode from the Mahabharata that brings all the majestic characters alive. Characters play a very important role as the writers use them as a medium to convey their ideas. Most of the writers use the characters to deliver some social

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messages to the readers. The images of women in epics are mostly in patriarchal perspective. In modern retelling the epic takes new avatars through the re-tellers' own standpoint like sociological, political, gender ideologies or prejudices.

### **Mahabharata Stories**

Every culture has its own Myths. It is through Myths a culture is being defined. Myths are long stories about great heroes and historical figures, which are in grand style where God, Angels and other divine creatures appear in earthly form. In India Myth is the base of the Hinduism. The Mahabharata is considered to be the world's longest poem and it consists of the episode of *Bahavat Gita* which is the sacred book of the Hindus. It encapsulates numerous legendary stories that are spinning around many controversies. The Mahabharata consists of stories about Gods, Demigods, and saints. It also speaks about cosmology, astronomy, architecture, reasoning and religion. The plot revolves around the vendetta of Kauravas and Pandavas, which gradually lead to the horrific war Kuruksetra.

The complex stories in the Mahabharata enlightens the readers with intricate philosophical ideas which are the seed of Hinduism, this also enriches the religion with the qualities like social obligations and religious standards. This work has greater influence on the fields of Indian arts and architecture. This article is about the fictitious character Uruvi, who is introduced to the readers as the second wife of Karna by the writer.

### ***Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen***

*Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen* doesn't revolve around male characters like in the Mahabharata. Instead it sheds light on the perspectives of female characters and their emotions towards their fellow family members and their surroundings. Kavita Kane emphasis to asserting the identity of Uruvi, who is an imaginary character created by the writer. She is the second wife of Karna, the King of Anga. In Vyasara's Mahabharata no description was given about other wives of Karna except for Virushali. Uruvi is the only daughter of the King of Pukeya. She challenged all social norms and tradition to marry her love Karna, an outcast, a charioteer's son.

As a young woman in love, Uruvi saw in Karna all the qualities of a hero who was not permitted to be one. His flaws made him more interesting. At Hastinapur's tournament when he had outdone Arjuna, he had been openly belittled as a charioteer's son and deprived of his right to duel with the Pandava prince. As the King of Anga, he was inglorious ruler, looked down upon by royalty and the princes. As a noble warrior, he was cast off for not being a kshatriya. As an eligible suitor, he was disgraced for being of a lowly caste, a Sutaputra- as princess Draupadi had pithily reminded him at her royal swayamwara. No, it was not only hard to fall in love with Karna, however unsuitable a suitor he was condemned to be. (13)

### **Love for Second Wife**

Being the second wife of Karna all she gathered was hatred from people around her. Being brought up as a fearless kshatriya woman she faces all her hurdles. She as an epitome of womanhood followed her husband in Kuruksetra war. She moved away from a typical wife and

remained as a moral support for Karna in the war field. She took care of wounded soldiers. It is Uruvi who was affected to the worst because of the tragic death of Karna.

*Karna's Wife: An Outcast's Wife* revolves around Karna and his love towards his wife Uruvi. Uruvi has been portrayed as a lady who is strong, and who builds her own style of life. She is characterized as a rational lady. She in order to give respect to her feelings and emotions, she rejects to marry Arjuna and marries Karna, as she was totally mesmerized by his elegance and simple attitude. She breaks all the social hierarchies to marry Karna. She is so much in love with him that she is strong enough to lose everything to marry him, "I love him. I want him. I'll do anything to have him and I will make him care for me! I'd even die for him ... there, Ma, now you know!" (24).

Karna marries her by winning the archery competition. Like every woman Uruvi had a great love and passion towards her husband but all she gained during first few months of her marital life was sleepless nights. Being second wife to a man from other class was a challenging task for Uruvi to survive in her husband's home. As Karna's first wife was soft and from the same caste of Karna she was adorned by his family. Uruvi unlike other women accepted the odd atmosphere of her husband's home. She consoled her mom, who was very much worried about her daughter's decision,

'Don't be sad for me, Mother,' Said Uruvi. 'I haven't failed, I have succeeded. You cannot imagine how I am looking forward to my new life. I shall live in the home of the man I love, looking after him and his family. There will be enough strength in me to be his wife and I shall be proud of that. I shall have him, I shall have his children. I shall have my work, my thinking and my other pursuits. I shall live my life simply. When I am old woman, I shall look back on a happy, peaceful life which I dared to choose and live the way I wanted to. What will I gain if I marry a man I don't love and lose my soul? With Karna, I will gain my life, my soul. I love him. I love him for what he is. I love him what he will be.' (21)

### **Brothers-in-law Attitude**

Karna's brother Satruntapa did not like Uruvi he considered her a royal blood and an outsider. "I am not against Karna bringing another bride home, but she's a kshatriya princess, a stranger, an outsider who will never be able to mingle with us. She is sure to disturb the peace of this house. Worse, she may take him away from us" (35). The strongest bond between Karna and Vrushali created a sense of discomfort in Uruvi. In the beginning of her marital life she didn't even know whether Karna loved her. But as days passed Karna and Uruvi grew a strong bond between them.

### **Uruvi - Modest Lady**

Karna's view on Uruvi grew unique he considered her a modest lady with great wisdom and knowledge. Uruvi warned Karna whenever he went against Dharma. She cursed him and quarreled with him when Kauravas trapped Panchali, for which she gained a bad remarks from Satruntapa. All these insults and hurts didn't turn her arrogant but she loved Karna even more. Uruvi showed her strength in being polite and remained soft throughout her struggles and insults becoming a good representative of twenty first century women community. She as Karna's wife

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protects him at the same time protests when he commits mistakes. She never dishonoured or left him even when at the times he didn't consider or respect her; instead she stood beside him in his time of crisis. She has been portrayed as a woman liberated in the novel.

### **A Strong Personality**

Kane has developed the character of Uruvi with a strong personality and not as a weak victim. She from the beginning protects Karna as a guardian angel, and does everything she could do, to make him walk in the path of Dharma. Kane has synthesized tradition and modernity to build a golden bridge to make the modern readers to relate themselves to the characters. Kane has given voice to the unknown character Uruvi. It is clear from this novel that the modern retellings help in bringing up the subjugated women voices which were muted for centuries.

This novel advises modern folks that it is wrong to uproot from culture in the name of modernity, for culture and tradition are the backbone of a good society. She through her creation of the fictitious character Uruvi has come forward to give voice to other wives of Karna, who were completely neglected and left muted by the writers of different eras.

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