

Vol. 8, No. 1: CLRI February 2021 | p 225-238

Warrior Code - Society Priority

Sambit Patnaik

1

Life can always put you into dilemmas and force you to take tough decisions even if you are a champion. Martial arts bring with it discipline, positivity, a righteous attitude and a fire for victory. Joe, a fierce martial arts fighter since childhood, eventually possessed all those qualities of a true warrior as trained by his master - Phil. The risks he took to uphold his code, no ordinary man could take those.

At just twelve years of age, he won his first regional junior martial arts championship. It was a junior championship but it seemed as he would have been a tough task even for the best senior fighters. Not only a fierce fighter, he had always been a great person with a big golden heart. The prize money that he won in his first championship; he gave it as a gift to one homeless man he had met in the streets of New York City who had once been a shopping mall owner, but had ended up in the streets, thanks to the blessings of a big shot of the city. He presented the money to him anonymously after he had talked

to him once, a few weeks before his fight. This allowed him to lead a better life, away from the miseries of the fierce weather and heartless people out there, even more the sadness of hardly getting food once a day to eat. At such a young age, Joe had a great sense to understand the people's miseries and a will to help them. A true martial arts spirit it was.

Despite all these, Joe was unaware of the shots of the city. He was curious to know what were these shots; were they Cadbury diary milk chocolate shots or bullet shots or something else; he was all confused. He ignored these thoughts and focused on his chores.

The story in several fighting championships remained the same as his first. A few fighters could be of the level who could give a good competition to Joe; still it wasn't enough to defeat him. So by twenty-four years of age, he was known to be the best in USA by winning the official Thunder MMA championship where the best American fighters compete.

2

Joe was in the Twin City Bar one evening with a friend, Jimmy, to celebrate Jimmy's birthday. There was another group of pretty girls partying just next to them. Suddenly, a monstrous guy came to the group with some of his ghastly men, picked up one of the girls and dragged her towards the exit. She cried for help but her cries fell flat on everybody's ears. It looked as if a movie was half its way and a kidnapping scene was being shot. Not a single soul came forward to rescue the poor girl.

But Joe, a true warrior couldn't violate a warrior's code by taking his eyes off the evil act unfolding in front of him. He moved like a storm and gave a swift touch on the kidnapper's forearm. 'BANG...' his hand no longer held the girl and a part of it was hanging as if desperate to take rest now for to all the evil acts, the man had done with; it had become tired. The guy had lost his right arm and was not in a position to retaliate. Just then another slap on his cheek and his face was like a big red balloon. High Jimmy tried to puncture the balloon but an 'AAHHH stop' came out of its possessor's mouth. Jimmy realized it wasn't a balloon for the party.

The partners of the kidnapper tried to knock Joe out but none of their slow and lazy strikes could touch him. The storm which had stopped for a moment returned to devastating mode and encountered the loose men who fell on the ground with swollen faces and broken bones similar to their boss. Just a minute ago these fierce looking men wanted to kill Joe but now, were on their knees like beggars on the roadside begging for mercy.

Joe went back to his seat, sat down and poured into his mouth, his eighth peg of whisky and turned towards the girl to enquire of the situation. 'I don't know them. Please ask the guys' said the girl. Joe turned towards the leader of the kidnapper group with the broken arm and asked, 'Who are you? And what's your issue with this girl? Tell me the truth or else your other bloody arm's fate will be same as this stupid one's.'

'Sir, wait. I'll tell you everything. Hold yourself back, sir. ' replied the captain's throbbing voice.

'Yeah...now get started.' Joe spoke ferociously.

'Uncle Charles wanted this girl. He had seen her in this bar the previous night and had approached her as well. But this girl ignored the approach.'

'Who is this respected Uncle Charles?'

'Sir don't you know him?'

'No. Now tell me who that guy is.'

'He is the biggest gangster of New York City and we work for him.'

'So why were you kidnapping her?'

'Uncle Charles ordered us to get this girl to her bungalow tonight.'

'Ok, I see. Now get your ass up and rush to the hospital and back to your bloody Charles. And don't you dare do anything like this again. I am even bigger than your Uncle Charles and no one can save you from me.' Joe turned around, Jimmy in the meantime had settled the bill; they left.

This incident soon fell on Uncle Charles ears. He was curious to see the guy who claimed to be bigger than him. But none of his men could name him or figure out his looks other than a glass of neat whisky in his hands. Everything happened so quickly that they didn't dare to look at their basher's face.

'That guy must be some martial-artist; he broke an arm with a single strike...' Uncle Charles thought to himself. So in order to

find out the man, he organized a street fight, which were quite regular in New York underworld between the dons. The publicity of the fight was done in that very bar as well where Joe had thrashed Charles' men.

'Anyone who could defeat Shane, the fighter of Uncle Charles, will get a reward of ten million dollars in cash. Come test your strength tomorrow evening at Manhattan fight arena, NYC.'

Many budding and established street fighters thronged the arena to claim the reward. But Shane was undefeatable. While he fought, it seemed as some machine had been deployed to kill the opponent. Most of them were either half-killed or fully.

'NO NO NO... wrap this up. These self-proclaimed fighters are no match to my warrior.' Charles howled. Just then he got a call from a top minister of NYC contracting him to slay an officer who didn't comply with his orders. So, he decided to let go of the man for the time being and focus on the work at hand.

3

Joe had been shortlisted for a national level fighting championship and started preparing for it. The practice was on in full flow. While he hit the pads with his iron fists and shins, it sounded like the growling of thunder. While he was about to deliver another vicious kick to the pad, he tweaked his left ankle and fell to the Earth.

'Oh no!' exclaimed Joe with a painful groan.

'The ankle has swollen Joe; you may have to see the doctor. Hey, Dean... call the ambulance, quick.' shouted coach Phil.

Joe was taken to the hospital and admitted. After thorough check-up, the doctor said to Phil, 'I am sorry coach, but this guy has got a major sprain in his left ankle and may take about two months to recover.'

'But he has a fight and needs to get well quick.' charged Master Phil.

'That is not possible. He has an injury in his ligament and a minimum of two months is required to recover completely. Even then his movements may not be free and agile.'

'Fine then, he must be well taken care of.'

'Don't you worry; our staff will ensure his comfort. He has to be admitted to the hospital for three weeks, and then you can take him home.'

'Great doc. I'll meet him once and then leave.'

'Yeah sure! And kindly complete the paperwork at the reception before leaving.'

'Ok sir.'

Master Phil met Joe, informed him of the situation, completed the formalities at the hospital reception and left with Dean.

Joe was frustrated for not being able to compete in his fight but in two days, all his frustration was on its way to hell.

'Damn the nurse! Pretty as an angel. Talking to her is a must for me...' thoughts like these passed through Joe's brain.

The nurse with a white uniform, a white cap covering her short blonde hair, a shining cute nose, juicy lips and eyes as blue as the ocean depths, acted like a human trap. Joe became so

awestruck with the nurse's face that he couldn't notice her fantastically shaped body.

'Hello sir... Please take these medicines.' said the nurse to Joe in her voice which felt like rasgullas- the Indian sweet famous in the Indian restaurants of NYC.

Joe couldn't take his eyes off the nurse's face and followed her commands like a robot; his hands moved but his face was still.

'Yeah thanks. You seem to be new to my ward.' said Joe with his eyes fixed on the nurse's eyes.

'Yes sir, I have been assigned this ward from today. The previous nurse has resigned.

'What's your name?'

'Sara...Sara Brooke. And you're Joe.'

'Yeah spot on! And how old are you? The previous one was like an aunty to me...'

'Twenty-three sir.'

'Don't call me sir. It's Joe.'

'Ok sir...Oh sorry ... Joe.' Sara seemed to be interested for a conversation with Joe.

They talked about each other and their personal lives quite frankly until many days. They had become quite close to one-another, like best of friends or may be a bit more than that.

Joe had spent three weeks in the hospital and was about to get discharged. His master Phil completed all the paperwork and they were about to leave.

'Wait coach, I forgot something... I'll be back in a moment. Wait for me.' Joe rushed to Sara.

'Hey, I forgot to thank you... Thank you for everything you did in these three weeks in the hospital. You're too good.' Joe turned pink while saying this to Sara.

'Thanks Joe.' said the nurse blushing.

'Can I have your number?'

'What for?'

Joe started to feel nervous. He hadn't felt like that even in tough situations in his fights.

'We have become great buddies and I was thinking—'

'What were you thinking?'

'I was thinking we should meet up sometime.'

'I'll be busy.'

'No, whenever you're free.'

'You sure?'

'Yeah! Quite sure.'

'1102103148'

'Thanks a lot, and that's my number on your cell phone. Do remember.' Joe left after giving a call to Sara's mobile and a seductive look into Sara's eyes.

They met often after that and soon fell in love with one-another. After many romantic dates, finally Joe proposed Sara for marriage and they got married and started to lead a beautiful life.

Joe had rehabilitated well and took his fighting skills to a whole new level. Sara too had been doing great at her office. Everything seemed to be quite good and beautiful for the couple until that day when Joe's spirit was put to test.

One evening, an old man approached Joe in a road of Houston Street where Joe's residence was located. Joe had just got out of a shopping centre after buying the items ordered by his dear wife when this man blocked his path.

'Sir, I am desperate for your help. If you do not help me, I will die.' said the man with tearful eyes.

'Noble sir, what can I do for you? I'll be glad if I can be of some use to you. And your name sir?' replied Joe.

'I'm Robert and mah daughter Rachael has been kidnapped by the top shot of NYC. He wants a ransom of 10 million dollars or has set a condition- if I could find a warrior who can defeat his man, my Rachael is free. I'm a poor man and can't afford the sum. Even police hesitates to interfere.'

'And who is that bloody shot?'

'It's Uncle Charles.'

'And who's this man that I'll have to kill?'

'It's a fighter called Shane Brooke. He has defeated all the street fighters of the city and has won many assets and ladies for Charles. He claims to be the most deadly warrior of current time.'

Upon hearing this name- Shane Brooke, Joe's ears stood up. He was in a puzzled state of mind. Sara had mentioned about

a brother of hers, an expert fighter, who had left home and joined the underworld in search of money due to which she ended contacts with her but never told him that he had joined Charles' gang. He had heard Charles' name several times in NYC's bars but had never cared for it. And now he had to kill his brother-in-law to save Robert's daughter. He was aware of the fact that although Sara didn't have any contact with Shane, she wouldn't be happy on hearing this news. She would rather be devastated.

Confused and lost in these thoughts, he suddenly remembered the teaching of Master Phil- a true warrior's duty is to establish righteousness and help the needy, even if he had to pay the heaviest price for it.

'Ok sir, I'm at your service.'

'And your charges for this?'

'No charges sir. I'm grateful that you thought of me in these tense times of your family. I had lost my parents in my childhood itself and you're like my dad. Don't you worry noble sir; I'm at your service. Just send me the info about the date and time of the battle and I'll be there.'

'Thanks son. You are a gentleman and I'll never forget this favor. I'll inform that evil Charles that you're ready to ravage his bloody fighter. I'll send you the details. Good bye son.'

'No favors sir; good bye.'

Joe reached his parking lot, parked his bike and before entering into the paneled main door of his house, was trying to figure out how to tell the happenings of the day to Sara. Sara asked about how the day was for him and Joe, after much of thoughts, described in detail about Robert, his daughter- Rachael, Charles and Shane and his future course of action.

'No you can't just do this, Joe. He's my brother. Please don't kill him.' pleaded Sara.

'I'll have to do this. I've been taught not just to fight for money but uphold truth and righteousness. That's what Master Phil has taught.' Replied Joe rather sternly.

Sara tried out different weapons to change Joe's mind such as the weapons of love, anger, being stubborn etc. Joe's heart had become a battlefield; one army commanded him to kill Shane while the other one asked him to care about his lovely wife and say a 'no' to Robert for help.

Just then, he remembered another teaching of his master- a true warrior always upholds his words. So, he decided to end the battle in his heart and follow his words.

5

Joe reached Manhattan street's fighting arena at 9pm the following Sunday, as communicated by Robert. A fierce man stood before him in the ring, 6'5", big muscular body and a pair of eyes filled with blood. The crowd was highly enthusiastic and it seemed like it was there to witness just

another fighter getting destroyed by Shane's hands. Joe had faced many fighters in his career but still was a bit nervous in this fight for multiple reasons- this was his first street fight, he had to face his brother-in-law and this fight had to go on until one fighter's soul left his body. Joe wasn't scared to die off-course but still his brain cells disturbed him a bit.

The bell rang and the brawl began. Uncle Charles had taken his seat in the first row of the VIP stand and was keenly observing the warriors trying to take each-other's life.

'Boom...Whack...Thud...Swoosh...'sound like these were coming from the center of the arena. The audience could feel the pain themselves by just listening to the impact of the strikes. Both the fighters were injured, exhausted and the brawl had been on for about thirty minutes. This had been the longest battle of the decade in Manhattan fighting arena.

Uncle Charles just turned his eyes off the ring for a moment to get his whisky glass refilled, just then, an elbow landed on Shane's nose, a knee going inside out of his liver and then a kick on the back of his head; Shane lied on the ground lifeless, probably his soul had started its journey to hell. The fight ended.

Charles missed the climax but was shocked and scared of Joe now. He ordered his men to kill Joe. Joe was in such a bad mood after killing his brother-in-law that he wasn't just willing to let anyone go alive. The poor bouncers were down within a minute or two.

Charles tried to flee but was intercepted by Robert who was now full of confidence. He sent Charles into the ring with a hard kick of his own landing on the criminal's butt. Charles

begged Joe for his life but the ferocious man was in no mood to forgive. He delivered just one punch with his heavy fist to Uncle Charles' forehead; 'bang', his head cracked and the notorious guy fell down with blood rushing out of his mouth, ears and nose. The biggest gangster of New York City's underworld was no more.

Rachael was rescued; police arrived at the venue and arrested the bouncers, took away the dead bodies and thanked Joe for ending the evil's reign in NYC. Robert too was thankful and so was his daughter. Tensed Joe welcomed them for the thanksgiving and left.

Joe had to face his wife with the news of her brother's death. Sara broke down but was consoled by his loving husband. Joe had planned a holiday beforehand to a destination where Sara always wanted to visit. She was a lover of Indian culture and India was a dream destination for her. Joe took Sara all around India, showing her the richness of India's cultural heritage and the beauty of the country. Sara forgot all her sorrow and enjoyed her days in India; they visited places like Rajasthan, Agra, Karnataka, Odisha etc which had rich histories and witnessed the wonders of the land.

After two months of holidaying, they returned to NYC and were back to their respective offices. Sara had a fresh mind and was on with her work with a new energy. Joe had taken a lot of lessons from his past and started to prepare for his future opponents with a fresh spirit.

Sambit Patnaik

Sambit Patnaik is a student and an emerging writer.

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