

Sample Chapter: Part Three of A4T4

CH. 83: HACHININ NO SAMURAI

Where Warui-bo acknowledges the bravery of our eight-strong Force by naming them the Hachinin No Samurai'; where Amanat challenges Warui-bo by thundering at him in that voice, 'You shall fail!'; where we learn of the connection between Usain Bolt, Hussain Bolt and Uddan Bolt; where Aura blesses Warui-bo and all concerned, twice; and where a number of goons go from numbers to numbed.

WARUI-BO and his bad-bos arrived at the holding area, as did Vikathor, Nilajja and the two busloads of goons.

They were met by a phalanx of the Forces of Good. Our AdvenChaar were there, flanked by Ooki-bo and Kirei-bo on either side; who, in turn, were flanked by Shotaku-san and Himiko-san. Aman and Aura had drawn their *katanas*; as had the two Nichirobo stalwarts.

Eight against a hundred and more goons *and* six 'dressed-to-kill' bad-bos!

Warui-bo bellowed out loudly in amusement:
“*Hachinin no Samurai!*”

However, he bowed deeply from his waist, a gesture that was echoed reverently by his bad-bos, paying true respect to the bravery of the ‘eight *samurai*’ in front of

him, who were arrayed in front of the enemy with attitudes that demanded to be challenged.

A gruffly-voiced benediction wafted towards Warui-bo. “Bless you!” *she* said, to consternation on the part of the giant android; to laughs from the other AdvenChaar; and grins from the other members of the *Hachinin*.

I am quite sure, and I am sure you are quite sure as well, that it was an instinctive reaction to what Aura presumed was Warui-bo sneezing, rather than any desire to confer a blessing on the Evil One.

Then, she looked around at the other ‘*Shichinin no Samurai*’ and gave a wide grin.

Did she know that she had pulled a fast one? You never really know with Aura...

Meanwhile, on the other side of the field, Vikathor and his goons were amazed at this temerity on the part of the AdvenChaar and their supporters – facing overwhelming odds with such unseemly bravado – and at the reactions of Warui-bo and the bad-bos.

Warui-bo saw the Nichirobo duo and said: “Greetings, Shotaku-san and darling Himiko-san! I had hoped not to meet you again, and definitely not in this fashion. However, fate cannot be denied.”

Then his sights took in Ooki-bo and Kirei-bo. “So, it was you two all along! If I had known that it was you, Ooki-bo, I would have prepared better.

“However, we six are enough to send you two to where Psycho-bo and Shock-u-bo have gone. Where is that despicable Sensei-bo of yours?”

Neither of our Freebos deigned to offer any comment or a reply.

Turning to Vikathor, the giant android sneered: “While we won’t fight humans as there is no honour in that, I am sure that your hundred and more leading in front of you should be enough for those six. Stand up and fight, you coward!”

It was then that Aman took a few steps forward and requested a parley.

On receiving Warui-bo’s assent, he said with certainty in his voice: “Warui-bo-*san*, Mr Vikathor, and all you other folks ... This is a sincere appeal to all of you. We have no reason to fight. Yet, we have always fought injustice. The same is the case here.

“You tried to take what rightfully belongs to somebody else. You tried and failed. Also, you know it and we know it, we will prevail in the end. You can’t win here. This is my honest declaration to all of you. So, why don’t we just call it all off? Let’s make peace and shun violence.”

Aura had the bad grace to look a question at Aman.

She would, wouldn’t she?

... (*text elided*)

After Amanat's plea had ended, Amanat stepped up and added: "Let's call it quits here and now. You go your way and we will go ours – because if you persist in fighting with us, let me tell you ..." she began ...

And then she thundered in *that* stentorian voice of hers: "... **NONE SHALL PASS! YOU SHALL FAIL AND THEN YOU WILL FALL!**"

That dire proclamation roiled around the holding area, shaking the earth like distant thunder would – this time, it preceded the lightning – and like a groundswell, radiated outwards, going even so far as the Western Ghats. I can attest that they shook, just a little bit.

This *is* Amanat we are talking about.

Khamboo-ji, who was still running, somehow heard that growl under his feet and, feeling the earth move – somehow, nobody would ever know how – found that fear lent him another pair of wings.

From a poor clone of Usain Bolt, he turned into 'Uddan Bolt' (Flying Bolt) (Some even named him the 'Uddan Boltola' = Khatola). Maybe, he would even go on to become India's very own Forrest Gump, inaptnly named 'No-rest *Khamb*'!

He would have gone on to beat Hussain Bolt in every category at the next Go-lympics, if only he had stopped running. ...*(text elided to keep some parts of the tale secret. You need to read Part Two before this part is made known.)*

With all this notoriety attached to our Serene One, you would think the *Goonda Gardi* would perform the effigy-portrait-pins-and-needles spiel based on Amanat in their Hall of Infamy, wouldn't you?

They wouldn't dare!

They needed to sleep at night, leave alone sleep peacefully, and if they had even dared think evil of Amanat, *they* would have had *Amanat-mares* each and every night.

They advised Amanat, in triplicate, that they had no evil intentions towards her, but would she accept that they make an effigy of hers, just so that the goons of *Goondom* would sleep peacefully at night?

It was right and proper for them to harbour festering hatred towards Aura – for every reason in the book; towards Ayelan for his tongue-lashing skills; and towards Aman's prowess with weapons – any weapon; but the *Goonda Gardi* drew a line where Amanat was concerned ... in triplicate.

That was a *Lakshman Rekha*, done in triplicate, which neither *Goonda Gardi* nor goon would cross.

On receiving their petition ... in triplicate (the *Goonda Gardi* were sticklers to convention), Amanat advised them that effigies would be okay, provided they did not exceed a certain size and that they were used only strictly for the purpose of warding off *Amanat-mares*.

So, yes, effigies of a sort of Amanat have been created, but they were not just used to assuage guilty consciences who had thought badly about Amanat.

No, they became devotional focal points.

In fact, these effigies were revered every so often, especially when the goons who possessed them wanted to ward off any ill-intentioned moves from Aura.

These effigies were allowed to be attached to each copy of *Bhaggu's Book of Cowardice* and the soon-to-be-sold-out *Bhaggu's Book of Bhaago!*

Goons would fervently chant the '*Jai Amanat!*' ten times followed by the '*Om-anat!*' for an equal number of times before heading into such acts as only goons do; hoping that Aura was focusing her attentions on another set of goons; any other set of goons.

You don't know the '*Om-anat*' yet? You should, by now! Khumboo-ji does!

What would these goons not do to avoid a drubbing?

Vikathor smirked at the temerity of these youngsters – who were screaming defiance in the face of such immensely overwhelming odds.

Warui-bo let out a booming laugh that appeared to reverberate from the heavens and bounce back onto the field, making the goons cower some more.

However, if it were a battle between voices, his voice would already have thrown the towel into the ring on having heard *that* voice.

Warui-bo had just had occasion to hear it and had not been surprised to understand why others would quail at that voice. Even something visceral inside him had quailed, had expressed a fervent desire to obey *that* voice.

However, the Evil Giant had forced that instinct down. He looked at the smirking Vikathor and sneered: “That’s what *bushido* is, not your inane, idiotic smirk! That’s what honour on the battlefield is like. Learn from them!”

Then, he cast an appraising glance at the forces spread out in front of him.

He looked at Shotaku-san and Himiko-san and said: “Do you agree with these presumptuous youngsters?”

“Do you really, truly believe that they will prevail over such numbers, leave alone over us, who are at least a hundred times more powerful than any one human being?”

Shotaku-san stepped forward and said: “Warui-bo-san! I don’t know what will happen on this field today. However, I am sure that all of us will give a good reckoning of ourselves. As to who will prevail, why don’t we match weapons and find out?”

Warui-bo looked wistfully at Himiko-san and his eyes asked her the same question.

She, sword raised and at the ready, was a study of impenetrable Japanese poise.

The Evil One looked around him in mock-frustration and said to his cohort: “It seems that everyone has been

caught up with the feel-good factor of the AdvenChaar being unbeatable. Let's change that, shall we?"

A delightfully heartfelt and extremely loud "Bless you!" spoken by a growling voice greeted this declaration from the Evil Giant.

This uncharacteristic response stunned him into a momentary silence, let me tell you, and drew a very, very, very mock frown from Amanat. This, sadly, was followed by, I – and only I – felt, a very incongruous giggle and a mock-stern stare at You Know Who.

Oh dear! The battle lust had got to our Normally Serene One as well, it appeared.

Meanwhile, *she (You know who I mean!)*, the one casting the truly-meant benediction this time, was dreading the fact that somehow, by some warped twist of Fate, the Good and Evil Ones would accept to call off the fight.

She wanted none of that!

Truthfully, she wanted *all* of that which was waiting for her on the field.

It was as if a table-load of delectable dishes was arrayed out in front of Amanat and somebody, foolishly, threatened to deprive her of this feast.

A mother lioness, ten mother lionesses, in fact, whose progeny had been threatened, would have found it difficult to match the ferociousness that such

foolhardiness would bring upon the head and body of the culprit.

There was a battle-load of goons in front of Aura, and Peace might just take them away from her, Can you picture her shaking her fist, both her fists, and screaming: ‘Damn you, Peace!’ while all this was going on? I can!

Nobody else from *that* side dared even twitch a muscle in Aura’s direction.

All through the preamble and parley, she had been continually asking no-one in particular and everyone in general: “Can we fight now?”

Each utterance by anyone else had been punctuated by this particular question: ‘Can we fight now?’ It was very much akin to a persistent and pestilential kid on a road trip demanding of his parents every five minutes: ‘Are we there yet?’

“Yes! We fight now!” said Amanat.

“Bless you!” *she grrrrrowled* a third time.

Third time’s a charm, it is said.

On the opposite side, barring the bad-bos, everyone else’s eyes had been on Aura all along.

On hearing those welcome words from Amanat, *her* gleeful face sported a wide smirk and that hand, *that* one she used for the AU-RA-KA-DHO-SA, extended towards Evil, palm outwards and one finger beckoning all concerned – yes, *all* those 100-plus goons, Vikathor *and* the bad-bos – inviting them into her spider-web.

That could not bode well, was the unanimous augury among the goons.

That glint of sarcasm on the thrumming *katana* and in the eyes of Aman also did little to encourage them.

Then there was that insult-laden tongue-lashing that Ayelan could give ... That could turn a 'brave' goon into a simpering, whimpering idiot.

Yes, they themselves were numerous in number, but they feared they would be 'numb and number' when *she* and, to a lesser extent, the other AdvenChaar, were done with them.

Further, those Japanese did not look to be easy prey, either. In fact, they were looking at the goons as if *they* were easy prey.

What was the world coming to? When goons were being treated as if they were so much cannon fodder?

One only saw that in Bollywood films, not here, in real life!

They were re-learning the meaning of fear! They knew why Bhaggu had written those books and why '*Ayee re! Bhaago!*' was such a popular warding-off mantra amidst goons. They hadn't yet learnt of the '*Jai Amanat!*' x ten times followed by the '*Om-anat!*'

They would do so by the end of the day!

... (*text elided*)

Meanwhile, overwhelming odds were just another challenge to our AdvenChaar. They would fight and fight well ... they might not win, but that outcome was not a

‘given’. What was a ‘given’ was that they would fight, and give all they had ... and take down most of the bad guys – if not all – in the process.

Warui-bo’s face took on a pensive look. He knew steely, unflinching determination when he saw it.

He also saw, really saw, what the other two kids were holding in their hands. Those were not just any *katana* and *wakizashi* ... those were the dreaded weapons that had belonged to ... ‘No! Let me not think of that now!’ he told himself.

“Our sheer numbers should take care of this rabble, however brave they may be. They will definitely take down a handful each, but we shall prevail,” he thought to himself in answer to Aman’s and Amanat’s challenge and set his sights on Ooki-bo.

There would be no backing down, and no quarter would be given.

In fact, I wouldn’t give even a *chavanni* (a four-anna coin; 25 paise; a quarter of a Rupee) for the fate of the goons.

