

ings of the other side. A game
ms it is possible for both sides
situation of this type is called
winner and the loser may be
ather than fought. The duels
rticipants negotiate to decide
r threat purposes rather than
game theory is such that no
e games exists. Nevertheless,
ic concepts of individual and
is intuitively obvious and yet
volving the presence of more

TWENTY-TWO

Shooting the Bird's Eye

ELIZABETH SEEGER

Source: *The Five Sons Of King Pandu: The Story of the Mahabharata*. New York: William R. Scott, 1967, pp. 18-19.

[...] One day when their education was finished, Drona wished to test them in the use of the bow. He had an artificial bird set on the top of a tree as a target; then he called them all together and said, "Take up your bows and arrows and stand here beside me, with your arrows fixed on the bowstring, aiming at the bird. When I give the order, shoot at the bird's head. I shall give each of you a turn, my children."

He first addressed Yudhishtra, since that prince was the eldest. "Behold," he said, "the bird on yonder tree."

"I see it," answered Yudhishtra.

But Drona spoke again to the young prince standing bow in hand. "What else do you see, O Yudhishtra? Do you see the tree, or me, or your brothers?"

"I see the tree and you, my brothers and the bird," replied the eldest son of Pandu.

And Drona was vexed with him and said, "Stand aside! It is not for you to hit the target."

The master asked the same question of all the sons of Kuru, one after another, and of Bhima and the twins and the other pupils who had come to him from afar. The answer was always the same, "I see the tree and you, my comrades and the bird." They were all reproachfully told by their teacher to stand aside.

Then Drona turned smiling to Arjuna, saying, "You must hit the target; therefore turn your eyes to it with an arrow fixed on the string." Arjuna stood aiming at the bird as the master had commanded, and Drona asked him, "Do you see the bird, the tree, and me?"

"I see only the bird," answered Arjuna, "not the tree or you."

Then Drona, well pleased, said, "If you see the bird, describe it to me."

Arjuna said, "I see only the head of the bird, not its body."

At these words Drona's hair stood on end with delight. "Shoot!" he commanded, and Arjuna instantly let fly his arrow and struck off the bird's head. The master clasped him to his heart, exclaiming, "You will never be vanquished by any foe, and you will win everlasting fame."