

Cricket 105

Chapter 105

The living room was filled with tension.

The large screen displayed the India vs. New Zealand semi-final match at Old Trafford, Manchester. It was July 9, 2019.

My father and I sat on the couch, eyes glued to the screen. I could feel my hands sweating, despite the air conditioning.

This was a moment I had lived before. In my previous life, I had witnessed the heartbreak—Dhoni bhai's run-out and India's defeat.

But this time? I wasn't going to let it happen.

Earlier in the day, I had made a call that could change history.

"Hello, Dhoni bhai?"

His deep, calm voice answered, "Aarav! What's up?"

I took a deep breath. "Bhai, I had a dream last night... a really bad one. You got run out in the semi-final, and India lost the match."

There was silence for a second before he laughed. "Run out? Well, that's cricket, kid. Sometimes it happens."

"No, bhai. I'm serious. Please, just promise me you'll be careful. Don't take any unnecessary risks while running between the wickets. Please."

He chuckled. "Alright, alright. I'll be careful. But don't worry too much, okay? Just enjoy the match."

I hung up, hoping my small warning could somehow change fate.

The match began.

New Zealand batted first and put up 239/8 in their 50 overs.

It was a tricky total—not too big, not too small. But with India's batting lineup, it should have been chaseable.

But then... disaster struck.

India's innings started, and before we could even settle in, the scoreboard read:

4 runs for 3 wickets.

My father let out a frustrated sigh. "What is happening?! This is a semi-final! Where is the composure?"

I wasn't even listening. I had seen this exact script play out before.

KL Rahul – OUT! (1 run)

Rohit Sharma – OUT! (1 run)

Virat Kohli – OUT! (1 run)

All three of them gone, just like last time.

I clenched my fists. Even after my warning, nothing had changed yet.

Then Ambati Rayudu walked onto the field.

In this timeline he was picked for the 2019 team.

A small change. A different player, a different decision.

Could it make a difference?

I leaned forward as Rayudu joined Rishabh Pant at the crease.

"This is our chance," I muttered under my breath.

As Ambati Rayudu and Rishabh Pant continued to bat, they slowly began to stabilize India's innings.

The pressure was immense—the entire nation was watching.

Every run felt crucial, every dot ball felt like a mini heartbreak.

"Good, good," my father muttered, nodding as he saw them play cautiously.

I silently agreed. At least this was different from last time.

Then, in the 23rd over, just when it felt like India was back in control, disaster struck again.

Rishabh Pant went for a big shot... and got caught at 48 runs.

The stadium fell silent.

Even in our living room, my father sighed. "Why do they do this? Why take risks when we are stabilizing?"

But my eyes were on the field.

Something was different.

Dhoni bhai was walking out to bat.

And he was coming in before Hardik Pandya and Ravindra Jadeja.

This wasn't how it had happened before.

My heartbeat quickened. Was this my warning working? Was this a different timeline now?

Dhoni joined Rayudu in the middle.

The two played cautiously, blocking the good balls and rotating the strike.

They built a solid 60-run partnership, keeping the scoreboard moving without taking unnecessary risks.

Then, Rayudu reached his 50!

The crowd erupted in applause.

But the joy was short-lived.

In the 32nd over, Rayudu attempted a risky drive... and the ball flew straight to the fielder.

OUT!

Rayudu's face was filled with disappointment as he walked back to the pavilion.

I sighed. "He was playing so well."

My father shook his head. "That's cricket. One bad shot, and you're gone."

But at least, this was already a better performance than last time.

Next, Hardik Pandya walked in.

Pandya played aggressively but smartly.

He supported Dhoni well, scoring boundaries when needed.

Meanwhile, Dhoni reached his 50—cool, composed, calculated.

But then, another blow.

Pandya tried to clear the field in the 42nd over, mistimed it... and got caught for 32 runs off 44 balls.

The match was still hanging in the balance.

India needed a finisher.

And that's when Ravindra Jadeja walked in.

His eyes were fierce.

I knew what was coming next.

I smiled.

"Now, the real chase begins."

Here we go! Last over of the semi-final. 12 runs needed. MS Dhoni on strike. The entire nation holds its breath.

Matt Henry runs in... first ball...

It's a wide yorker! Dhoni watches it closely, leans in, and punches it towards cover. No run! He's calculating. He knows exactly what he's doing. Five balls left. 12 needed.

Henry charges in again... second ball...

It's another wide yorker! Dhoni reaches for it... connects! AND IT'S HIGH... IT'S LONG... IT'S INTO THE NIGHT SKY! SIX!!!

OH, TAKE A BOW! The crowd erupts! The Indian dugout is on its feet! The equation now—6 runs off 4 balls!

Henry wipes his face, takes a deep breath. He knows, he's bowling to a legend.

Here comes the third ball...

It's short! It's rising! Dhoni uppercuts it! The ball flies over the slip cordon... FOUR!!!

CLASS, PURE CLASS! He made that look so easy! India now needs just 2 off 3!

The pressure is unbearable. Henry walks back. He knows he's just one ball away from being taken out of the attack, from being the bowler who lost it for New Zealand.

Fourth ball... here he comes...

It's on a good length! Dhoni reads it early! He moves across... gets underneath it... SWINGS—

AND THERE IT GOES!!! IT'S ALL OVER!!!

SIX!!! INDIA ARE IN THE FINALS!!!

MS DHONI, YOU ABSOLUTE LEGEND! HE FINISHES IT OFF IN STYLE Again!!!

Look at that celebration! The bat raised, the arms wide open, and a billion hearts exploding in joy! This is what champions are made of!

India moves on to the World Cup Final 2019! The dream stays alive!

The World Cup Final – India vs England!

The grandest stage of them all. The ultimate battle. The moment that will be etched in history forever!

First Innings – England Batting

The English openers, Jason Roy and Jonny Bairstow, stride onto the field with confidence, the crowd roaring behind them. The Indian team, in their iconic blue, takes their positions. Mohammed Shami has the ball in hand.

The first over starts cautiously, but soon, England finds its rhythm. Roy is aggressive from the start, smashing anything loose, while Bairstow builds his innings steadily. The powerplay ends with England at 75/0 in 10 overs.

Then comes Kuldeep Yadav, and BANG! The first breakthrough! He traps Roy in front for 65 runs off 48 balls. The Indian crowd erupts!

But in walks Joe Root.. He starts cautiously, building a solid partnership with Bairstow.

Bairstow, batting fluently, reaches his century in just 89 balls! He raises his bat to the sky, acknowledging the roaring English fans.

Shami, India's strike bowler, comes back with a vengeance. He cleans up Bairstow with a lethal yorker! 100 off 95 balls, England 210/2 in 35 overs.

Then, Stokes shifts gears. He plays his signature power strokes, smashing the bowlers. A brutal 80 off 47 balls before Shami strikes again!

In the death overs, Buttler and Wokes provide the finishing touch, taking England to a mammoth 337/8 in 50 overs.

Best Bowler: Mohammed Shami – 5 wickets!

A stunning spell in the middle overs kept India in the game.

Second Innings – India Chasing 338

The chase begins with KL Rahul and Rohit Sharma.

Rahul starts steadily, playing his classy cover drives and flicks. Rohit, the 'Hitman', starts cautiously but soon finds his range, smashing back-to-back boundaries.

Rahul departs for 55 off 61 balls, edging Archer to Buttler. In walks the King – Virat Kohli!

Kohli and Rohit take charge. The partnership flourishes, as Virat plays his textbook flicks and drives while Rohit accelerates.

Rohit Sharma reaches a historic century! The entire stadium rises to applaud the man who delivers when it matters most! 102 off 97 balls!

Virat, not far behind, scored a magnificent 82 off 72 balls before being caught at deep midwicket.

Then came the cameos. Hardik Pandya – 22 off 12. Rishabh Pant – 18 off 9. Jadeja – 14 off 7.

But wickets started falling, and suddenly, India found themselves needing 25 runs off the final over.

And who's on strike? The legend himself – MS Dhoni.

Final Over – MS Dhoni vs Mark Wood

The equation: 25 needed off 6 balls.

The entire stadium is silent. The whole world watching.

Mark Wood runs in... first ball... dot!

Dhoni stays calm, reading the bowler.

Second ball... BANG! STRAIGHT SIX OVER THE SIGHT SCREEN!

The crowd erupts! 19 needed off 4.

Third ball... punched to cover, but Dhoni refuses the single.

Fourth ball... LAUNCHED INTO THE STANDS!

It's vintage Dhoni! 13 needed off 2.

Fifth ball... HE DOES IT AGAIN!

Six into the crowd! Now, 7 needed off 1!

Final ball... BOOM! IT'S A MONSTER SIX OVER MIDWICKET!

INDIA TIES THE GAME! WE ARE GOING TO A SUPER OVER!

MS Dhoni has done the impossible!

The man for the big moments has dragged India back from the dead!

Super Over – The Decider

India vs England. One over to decide the World Cup.

"Ladies and gentlemen, fasten your seatbelts! This is the Super Over of the World Cup Final! It doesn't get bigger than this! Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul stride out, cool as ice, while Jofra Archer steams in, nerves of steel needed here!"

First Ball – Archer to KL Rahul

"Here comes Archer... charges in... short of a length... OH, WHAT A SHOT! KL RAHUL GETS ON TOP OF IT AND PUNCHES IT THROUGH COVERS FOR FOUR! FIRST BALL AND INDIA ARE OFF TO A FLYER!"

Second Ball – Archer to Rahul

"Archer adjusts his line... steams in... full and straight... Rahul drives it down the ground... just a single! Smart cricket here! 5 off 2 balls!"

Third Ball – Archer to Rohit

"The Hitman takes guard now... Archer sprints in... banged in short... ROHIT GETS UNDER IT... PULLED AWAY... AND IT'S A MASSIVE SIX! STRAIGHT INTO THE CROWD! OH, THE BIG MATCH PLAYER DELIVERS ON THE BIGGEST STAGE!"

"India are on fire! 11 runs in 3 balls!"

Fourth Ball – Archer to Rohit

"Archer needs a comeback here... runs in... full and fast... oh, dot ball! Rohit gets beaten by sheer pace! England breathe again!"

"Still, India sitting strong at 11 with 2 balls left!"

Fifth Ball – Archer to Rohit

"Archer comes in again... on a length... Rohit works it towards square leg... just a single! Smart batting, keeps Rahul on strike for the final ball!"

"Last ball coming up, 12 on the board. Can Rahul finish it in style?"

Final Ball – Archer to Rahul

"Rahul takes a deep breath... Archer, under immense pressure... final ball of the innings... IN HE COMES... full on the pads... FLICKED AWAYYYYY... IT'S HIGH... IT'S HANDSOME... IT'S ALL THE WAY FOR SIX! KL RAHUL, TAKE A BOW! INDIA END ON 18 IN THE SUPER OVER!"

"That is ICE IN HIS VEINS! Calm as ever, Rahul flicks it into the stands, and the Indian dugout erupts! Pressure? WHAT PRESSURE?!"

"18 ON THE BOARD! IT'S NOW OVER TO BUMRAH TO DEFEND IT! THE WORLD CUP FINAL HANGS IN THE BALANCE!"

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THIS IS IT! HISTORY IN THE MAKING! JASPRIT BUMRAH STANDS AT THE TOP OF HIS MARK, THE CROWD ON THE EDGE OF THEIR SEATS! 18 RUNS TO DEFEND! ENGLAND HAVE SENT OUT JONNY BAIRSTOW AND BEN STOKES—TWO MEN WHO CAN CHANGE THE GAME IN A BLINK! HERE WE GO!"

First Ball – Bumrah to Bairstow

"Bumrah runs in... full and wide... Bairstow reaches out... OH, IT'S A THICK EDGE... AND IT FLIES PAST SLIP FOR FOUR! ENGLAND OFF TO A LUCKY START! The tension just got even higher!"

Second Ball – Bumrah to Bairstow

"Bumrah doesn't flinch... he adjusts his grip... steams in... AND THERE IT IS! THE PERFECT YORKER! CRASHES INTO THE STUMPS! BAIRSTOW IS CLEAN BOWLED! BOOM BOOM BUMRAH DELIVERS UNDER PRESSURE! VIRAT KOHLI IS PUMPED, SCREAMING AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS! THE INDIAN TEAM ERUPTS!"

"WHAT. A. DELIVERY! ABSOLUTE NAILBREAKER!"

Jos Buttler walks in. England need 14 off 4 balls.

Third Ball – Bumrah to Buttler

"Bumrah keeps his focus... charges in... bowls a hard length... Buttler nudges it to deep square... they'll take just a single! SMART BOWLING! 13 NEEDED FROM 3 BALLS!"

Fourth Ball – Bumrah to Stokes

"It's now or never for England! Bumrah steaming in... Stokes swings... AND OH, HE'S CONNECTED! IT'S A MONSTER HIT! SIX OVER LONG-ON! BEN STOKES KEEPS ENGLAND ALIVE!"

"WHAT A SHOT UNDER PRESSURE! THIS GAME IS NOT OVER YET!"

"Seven needed from two balls! Every heartbeat in the stadium is racing!"

Fifth Ball – Bumrah to Stokes

"Bumrah takes a deep breath... he knows he needs a moment of magic... here he comes... in full speed... length ball... STOKES SWINGS HARD... HIGH IN THE AIR... WHO'S UNDER IT?! IT'S RAHUL... AND TAKEN! TAKEN! STOKES IS GONE! INDIA ARE ON THE BRINK!"

"INDIA HAVE DONE IT! INDIA ARE THE WORLD CHAMPIONS! ABSOLUTE MAYHEM IN THE STADIUM! HISTORY HAS BEEN MADE! FROM THE DEPTHS OF DESPAIR TO THE HEIGHTS OF GLORY—INDIA HAVE CONQUERED THE WORLD!"

"The players rush onto the field, Rohit Sharma on his knees, Virat Kohli roaring like a lion, MS DHONI WITH HIS FISTS IN THE AIR! THIS IS A NIGHT TO REMEMBER! A NIGHT THAT WILL GO DOWN IN HISTORY!"

"INDIA LIFTS THE WORLD CUP 2019! REMEMBER THE DATE, REMEMBER THE MOMENT—THE MEN IN BLUE ARE CHAMPIONS OF THE WORLD!"

Virat Kohli's Victory Speech – Post World Cup Win 2019

"First of all, I just want to say... WOW. What a night. What a final. I don't think I have enough words to describe this feeling, but I'll try my best!"

"This team... this group of players, the way we fought, the way we held our nerves, the way we played for each other—this is what dreams are made of! To be standing here as the captain of this incredible team, holding this beautiful trophy... it's just surreal!"

"I want to take a moment to talk about one man—Rohit Sharma. What a tournament he has had! The way he batted throughout the World Cup, the way he led from the front with the bat, scoring centuries—RO, We are all so proud of you, brother!"

"Then there's KL Rahul, setting the stage with crucial knocks, Shami with his five-wicket haul today, Bumrah, the magician, handling the super over like a champion! , Bhuvneshwar took the wickets in needs with his swing, our spin duo KULCHA made the change when needed And how can we forget our man MS Dhoni? THE FINISHING TOUCH HE PROVIDE IN BOTH SEMIS-AND TODAY AT FINAL! Just vintage MS!"

"Jadeja, Hardik, Pant, Rayudu everyone played their part, and that's the beauty of this team. It wasn't just about one or two players—it was about India, about every single guy stepping up when it mattered the most."

"And I have to say... finally! Finally, I am standing here as a captain with a trophy! Not a trophy-less captain anymore! (laughs)"

"A huge thanks to the fans. The love and support we have received, not just in England but back home in India, it has been unreal! This trophy belongs to all of you! We did it together! CHAMPIONS."

Virat Kohli's Post-Match Interview with Harsha Bhogle

Harsha Bhogle: "Virat, take a deep breath, soak it in... WORLD CHAMPIONS! How does it feel, mate?"

Virat Kohli: "Harsha, I have no words right now, man. This is just... I don't know what to say. I think it'll take a while for this to sink in. We fought so hard, this team showed so much character, and to lift this trophy, it's just a dream come true!"

Harsha Bhogle: "Take us through the emotions when Bumrah bowled that final ball, and the direct hit sealed it?"

Virat Kohli: "Oh man, I think my heart stopped for a second. When the ball hit the stumps, I just lost it! I was screaming, running, I don't even remember what happened in those few seconds! I just knew that we had done it! The whole team was just... in a different world at that moment!"

Harsha Bhogle: "We have to talk about Rohit Sharma—he was sensational throughout the tournament. What do you have to say about his performance?"

Virat Kohli: "Rohit has been phenomenal. This was his World Cup! The way he batted, the way he carried the team, the centuries... it was like he was batting on a different pitch altogether! Absolute world-class. He deserves all the praise in the world!"

Harsha Bhogle: "And MS ,Talk about his finishing touch in this final!"

Virat Kohli: "What can I say about MS? That last over, those sixes—He has done it so many times, but to see him do it today became one of my best memories, it was just magical!"

Harsha Bhogle: "And let's not forget you, skipper! You played a captain's knock throughout this tournament. And now, you are a World Cup-winning captain!"

Virat Kohli: "Yeah, finally! No more 'trophyless captain' jokes, Harsha! (laughs) I can finally say I led India to a World Cup win. Feels good, man!"

Harsha Bhogle: "And a message for the fans?"

Virat Kohli: "To all our fans in India and across the world—this is for you! Thank you for believing in us, for standing with us. This victory is as much yours as it is ours! CHAMPIONS, BABY!"

"There you have it, folks! Virat Kohli and Team India, WORLD CHAMPIONS! SOAK IT IN, CELEBRATE, BECAUSE INDIA RULES THE CRICKET WORLD!"