

Cricket 148

Chapter 148

Aarav stepped into his hotel room, his body sore but his heart pounding with the excitement of victory. Two caps—one purple, one orange—sat proudly on the bedside table, a reminder of his dominant performance. He let out a deep sigh and ran a hand through his damp hair, fresh from the shower. The night outside was quiet, the city lights twinkling in the distance. It was past midnight, but sleep was the last thing on his mind. Instead, his fingers instinctively hovered over his phone.

Shraddha.

A small smirk crept onto his face as he clicked on her contact and initiated a video call.

The screen lit up, and after a few rings, she answered.

There she was, sitting on her bed, still wearing the Mumbai Indians jersey. Her hair was tied up in a messy bun, a few strands falling onto her face. The glow from her phone illuminated her soft features. Her eyes widened slightly as she saw him, and before he could say anything, she raised an eyebrow.

"Oh ho, look at the man of the moment! The boy who stole the show! Aarav Pathak, the history-maker! The first player to wear both the Purple and the Orange Cap together!" she teased, clapping dramatically.

Aarav chuckled. "And yet, the only thing I see is you still wearing that MI jersey after your team lost. Tsk tsk, Shraddha Tendulkar. Holding onto the past?"

She rolled her eyes but smiled. "Excuse me, mister! We may have lost today, but let me remind you—MI has the most trophies. Sitting at the top in history matters more than sitting at the top of the points table for a few weeks!"

Aarav leaned back against the pillow, shaking his head. "Yeah, yeah. Keep living in the past."

Shraddha folded her arms. "And you keep dreaming about trophies you haven't won yet."

He laughed. "Fair enough. But admit it, you were impressed by my performance tonight."

She sighed dramatically. "Fine! Yes, I was. 81 off 37 balls? Unbelievable. And then, three wickets in four overs? That's insane, Aarav. You're on another level this season."

His smirk softened into a genuine smile. "Coming from you, that means something."

She narrowed her eyes. "Oh, so my validation is what you're after now?"

He shrugged. "Maybe."

She shook her head, but her smile lingered. "I'm happy for you, Aarav. Just... don't let it get to your head. And more importantly, be safe. COVID is still around, and you need to be careful. Don't go hugging random people or taking unnecessary risks."

Aarav gave a mock salute. "Yes, ma'am. I'll keep my distance from unknown people."

Shraddha smirked. "Good. But that doesn't mean you can't celebrate. I hope you at least treated yourself to something nice tonight."

He gestured toward his bedside table. "Yeah, two shiny caps. That's my treat."

She shook her head. "You're impossible."

He grinned. "And yet, you're still here talking to me at midnight."

She paused for a moment, biting her lip. "Maybe I like midnight conversations."

Aarav raised an eyebrow. "Oh? Midnight conversations with anyone, or just me?"

She laughed, shaking her head. "Don't push your luck, Pathak."

He sighed dramatically. "Ah, crushed again. First by MI's trophy count, now by Shraddha Tendulkar's lack of interest."

She tilted her head. "Who said anything about lack of interest?"

For a moment, the air between them changed. The playful banter softened into something else—something unspoken but felt deeply. The silence stretched, and Aarav found himself staring at her a little longer than usual.

She noticed. "What?"

He shook his head. "Nothing. Just... you look good in MI colors. But you'd look better in RCB's."

She chuckled. "Not happening."

Aarav sighed. "A man can dream."

She smiled, her voice softer this time. "Dream big, Aarav. You've already made history. Who knows what's next?"

He exhaled, running a hand through his hair. "Yeah... who knows."

She watched him for a moment. "Get some sleep. You have more records to break tomorrow."

He grinned. "And you have more MI jerseys to cry into."

She threw a pillow at the camera. "Goodnight, idiot."

He laughed. "Goodnight, Tendulkar."

As the call ended, Aarav stared at his phone for a few moments longer. A smirk played on his lips as he lay back on the bed, staring at the ceiling.

Midnight conversations. Something more than friends. Something not quite lovers.

Whatever it was, he liked it.

Just as he was about to sleep, his phone buzzed. A message from Shraddha.

"Dream big, Pathak. And maybe one day, I'll switch teams. Maybe."

Aarav stared at the message for a long time, his small smile widening into a full-blown grin.

The next morning, Aarav woke up with the two caps—Orange and Purple—still sitting proudly on his bedside table. He grinned as he ran his fingers over them, still amazed at what he had achieved so far in the season. But before he could bask in his glory for too long, his phone buzzed with a message from the team management:

"Report to the RCB media room at 10 AM. You have a content shoot with Mr. Nags. Be prepared for some fun!"

Aarav groaned. Mr. Nags—RCB's resident troublemaker and the undisputed king of roasting players—was known for creating absolute chaos in every segment he hosted.

By 10 AM, Aarav arrived at the media room, only to see Virat Kohli, AB De Villiers, and a few others already there, laughing about something. In the middle of it all was Mr. Nags, dressed in his signature RCB Jersey of number 18, a mischievous grin on his face.

"Aarav! The man of the moment! The guy who stole both the caps! Tell me, how does it feel to be so selfish?" Mr. Nags began as soon as Aarav took his seat.

Aarav chuckled, shaking his head. "Not selfish, just efficient!"

Mr. Nags gasped dramatically. "Efficient? My friend, you are taking away opportunities from your own teammates! How will others shine when you are hoarding all the stats?"

Virat burst out laughing. "He has a point, Aarav. Leave some records for us!"

Aarav shrugged. "Blame the bowlers for not dismissing me and the batters for not playing my deliveries properly."

Mr. Nags clapped his hands. "Wah, wah! Humility ka statue! But tell me honestly, is it tough balancing both the caps on your head? Do you feel extra pressure?"

Aarav grinned. "It's actually quite comfortable. Keeps my head warm."

The entire room erupted in laughter.

RCB Social Media Fun Segment

The next part of the shoot involved some light-hearted challenges for RCB's Instagram reels.

First Challenge: Dance-Off

Mr. Nags challenged Aarav, Virat, and Finch to a quick RCB dance-off. The task? To copy the latest trending dance move and make it their own.

Aarav, never one to back down, gave it his all, trying to mix some Bhangra moves into the challenge. Virat, ever the competitor, went full-on Bollywood mode, while Finch just flailed his arms in every possible direction.

The results?

Aarav: Surprisingly good, but a little too aggressive.

Virat: A natural entertainer.

Finch: A hilarious disaster.

RCB's social media team instantly declared Finch the "Champion of Cringe" while fans spammed the comment section with "Aarav OP" and "King Kohli".

Second Challenge: Rapid-Fire Roast Session

Mr. Nags then pulled out a set of questions designed to put Aarav on the spot.

Mr. Nags: "Aarav, since you are hoarding both the Orange and Purple caps, do you plan to take over the captaincy as well?"

Aarav: "Nah, I'll leave that headache to Virat."

Mr. Nags: "If you could swap one of your caps for anything, what would it be?"

Aarav: "A lifetime supply of Trophies."

Aron Finch: "Man's got priorities."

Mr. Nags: "You've been scoring more than Bollywood heroes in romantic movies. Any dating plans?"

Aarav (smirking): "I'll let my bat and ball do the talking."

The crew burst out laughing, while RCB's Instagram team immediately posted a clip of the moment with the caption: "Aarav: King of Runs, Wickets, and Savage Replies."

As the team walked out of the media room, Aarav glanced at the two caps in his hands. They were his for now, but the real prize—the IPL trophy—was still out there. And he wanted it more than anything.

The sun shone brightly over the stadium as the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) prepared to take on Rajasthan Royals (RR) in another high-stakes IPL match. The RCB dugout was buzzing with excitement, but one player, in particular, was the center of attention—Aarav Pathak, the only player in IPL history to simultaneously hold both the Orange Cap (for most runs) and Purple Cap (for most wickets). His unique achievement had become a trending topic on social media, and everyone was eager to see how he would perform today

Virat Kohli and Steven Smith walked out to the middle for the toss. The coin was flipped, and Rajasthan Royals won the toss, electing to bat first.

The RCB players huddled together, strategizing their bowling attack. Aarav, wearing his Purple Cap, smirked as he looked around at his teammates.

Kohli patted Aarav's back. "Another three wickets today? Or are you aiming for five?"

Aarav grinned. "Five for sure!"

As Rajasthan's openers took their positions, the RCB team spread out on the field, ready to unleash their bowling attack. The opening overs saw tight bowling from Mohammed Siraj and Yuzi Chahal, but it was Aarav who provided the first breakthrough.

Aarav was handed the ball in the fifth over. He adjusted his Purple Cap, took a deep breath, and ran in with his usual aggressive pace.

First Wicket (Jos Buttler – 37 off 29 balls) Aarav bowled a perfectly disguised slower delivery. Buttler, expecting a quick bouncer, misjudged the pace and mistimed his shot. The ball went high, and Kohli sprinted forward from mid-off to take a stunning diving catch.

Aarav roared in celebration, punching the air.

Commentator 1: "What a wicket! Aarav continues his dream run in this IPL!"

Commentator 2: "His variations are causing nightmares for the opposition!"

Second Wicket (Steven Smith – 12 off 15 balls) Just two overs later, Aarav struck again. A fiery inswinging yorker crashed into Smith's middle stump. The Rajasthan's Captain stood there in disbelief before walking off.

Aarav simply pointed at his Purple Cap, giving a cheeky smile.

Commentator 1: "That's his signature move now! Every wicket, a nod to the Purple Cap!"

Third Wicket (Riyan Parag – 5 off 7 balls) A perfectly pitched length ball outside off tempted Parag into a drive, but the edge flew straight to AB de Villiers behind the stumps.

Aarav finished his spell with 4 overs, 24 runs, and 3 wickets at an economy of 6.0.

Despite Buttler and Mahipal Lomror pushing RR to 154/6 in 20 overs, it never seemed enough against RCB's mighty batting lineup.

As the players walked back into the dressing room, Aarav, still in his Purple Cap, smirked. "Alright, time to switch to the Orange Cap now."

Siraj laughed. "Hope Finch and Kohli leave some runs for you."

Aarav chuckled. "Or else I'll have to steal the cap back from them."

The RCB openers, Aaron Finch and Virat Kohli, walked in with confidence, knowing they only needed 155 runs to win. From the very first ball, they signaled their intent.

Finch started aggressively, smashing boundaries, while Kohli played his usual calculated innings. The Rajasthan bowlers had no answer to their brilliance.

Finch hammered a brilliant 71 off 52 balls, smashing five fours and three sixes.

Kohli anchored the chase, playing a flawless 84 off 63 balls, finishing with a trademark cover drive for four.

Aarav, still padded up in the dugout, watched helplessly as the scoreboard ticked over.

"I was supposed to switch to my Orange Cap when I bat," Aarav sighed.

Yuzi Chahal, laughing, patted his shoulder. "Maybe you should bat first next time!"

In the 18th over, RCB chased down the target without losing a single wicket, winning the match by 10 wickets!

As the players match ended, Kohli and Finch walked back to the dugout, both patting Aarav on the back.

"Too bad, champ. No batting for you today," Kohli teased.

Aarav sighed dramatically. "Fine. Guess I'll just keep the Purple Cap on for now."

At the presentation, Aarav was once again called up for his stellar bowling.

Interviewer: "Aarav, yet another fantastic spell! What's your secret?"

Aarav (grinning): "Just trying to make sure my Purple Cap doesn't feel lonely."

Later in the locker room, the RCB social media team was ready for some content creation. Mr. Nags, the face of RCB's social media entertainment, burst in dramatically.

Mr. Nags: "Tell me, how do you choose which cap to wear when? It's confusing!"

Aarav. "Simple. Purple when I bowl, Orange when I bat. Today, though... I guess just Purple."

Mr. Nags: "So, if you win the Best Fielder award too, will you wear a third cap?"

Aarav playfully pretended to think. "Maybe I'll invent a new category. 'Best Player of the IPL season.'"

The whole team burst into laughter.

The social media team wrapped up the fun interview, but before leaving, Mr. Nags had one final challenge.

Mr. Nags: "Okay, Aarav. Before we go, one task. Show us your best Virat Kohli impression."

Aarav stood up, cleared his throat, and in a deep voice said, "Boys, intensity! Energy! We play bold! Let's GO!"

Kohli, watching from the side, burst into laughter. "Not bad, not bad."

The room erupted into laughter once again as Aarav struck Kohli's signature intense pose.

As the night ended, Aarav leaned back in his locker, staring at his Purple Cap and orange cap.

"Still mine," he murmured with a grin.