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The Mahabharata is the story of a Great War (Mah?: Great; bh?ra: War) fought between two sets of cousins vying for the family s kingdom of Hastinapura. The winners, the Pandavas (sons of Pandu), consisting of five brothers and Draupadi, their wife-in-common, endured much abuse from their hundred Kaurava (descendants of Kuru) cousins before the final battle that engaged all South Asia. The Mahabharata war is usually considered mythical. The war described in it is most likely mythical - there are no archaeological discoveries that substantiate a war of the described scale and extent. Astronomical evidence internal to the epic has been used to indicate dates that range from before 3000 BCE to about 1200 BCE. References to foreign countries are either inconsistent or incredible. An oral tradition was put down in writing, possibly between 400 BCE (or earlier) and 400 ACE. These stories have been selected because they illustrate an aspect of human behaviour in response to a problem; and from the nature of the response, we can appreciate the condition of the world and of humanity in the past. The Selected Stories THE EDUCATION OF THE PRINCES The first story shows how their guru Drona enters the story life and how he tests them. The test is usually considered to show Arjuna s strengths. I ve varied the story slightly to show more than that. A KING S FRIEND Some background on Drona and how he is betrayed and humiliated by a childhood friend; his revenge that ends with professed renewal of friendship as equals; and, a vignette that shows that equality does not create friendship, but in this case, continues a cycle of revenge. KARNA...

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