

Phantasy

By

Marlowe

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Critical Acclaim for Phantasy and Marlowe on Amazon.com:

"This was a wonderful adventure, kind of a Lewis Carroll journey into the imagination."

"A fantastic adventure. I wish there were more stories like this."

"This tale reminds me of C.S. Lewis' Narnia books. It is a joy to read and so much fun I couldn't put it down."

"Pretty crazy story from the beginning to the end. . ."

"If you love Tom Robbins (Half Asleep in Frog Pajamas; Still Life with Woodpecker; Another Roadside Attraction), you'll love Marlowe."

"If you want a fun read that you can't put down, get a copy of this book and escape into the madcap world of PHANTASY."

DEDICATION/ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Dedicated to my friend and ever-reliable advisor Renee Benzaim, who encouraged me to pursue this path!

I am also deeply grateful to The Times of India and BBC news for publishing their excellent articles full of information which helped me write this book!

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

NOT recommended for minors! Content may offend some people (read below)!

While reading this book, please remember that suspension of disbelief is a must! After all, a lot of the things that you are going to read in this book are not even remotely realistic!

The characters of this book are absolutely fictitious - bearing NO relation to any person, either living or dead! As such, any resemblance of this book and/or its characters to any actual event and/or person, place, locales, businesses, etc., is purely coincidental! Although the book is written in first person, the reader should assume that the author and the narrator are completely DIFFERENT individuals with NO relation to each other!!

Readers are hereby warned that the content herein may contain explicit sexual content, profanity in language, as well as sexist, anti-religious and atheistic overtones. Therefore the author suggests that this book be read only by open-minded, thinking adults of 18 years or above: in other words, only people with BRAINS should read it! Prudish people and those who are overtly conservative about their religion/ideology are advised not to touch this book at all! People who get turned off by profanity in language should not read this piece either - for profanity has been used in abundance here! The author won't be responsible for those who choose to read this book in spite of the warning and get offended as a result.

Nonetheless, the author has no intention of spreading any kind of communal/cultural hatred, any sort of anti-religious or chauvinistic feelings among anybody. The author has merely attempted - in the most honest way possible - to bring out the true nature and character of an asocial and morally corrupt human being - whom many of the 'normal' people would consider to be utterly despicable and unredeemable. The author hopes that the readers would understand that in order to do full justice to such a character, it is necessary to use words and phrases that might be offensive to some people or religious communities.

Readers are requested to report any and all errors pertaining to spelling - they would be corrected in future editions!

As a final note, the author has nothing against Pink Floyd! The author is actually their huge fan!

By reading the book, you confirm that you understand all the above clearly!

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HELPFUL TIP FOR THE READER:

Several portions of this book are italicized. The italicized parts represent the character's (protagonist's) dreams, nightmares, fantasies, flashbacks, internal monologs, etc. (you can draw your own conclusions depending on the given context). The text in the 'normal font ' represents all that is ACTUALLY happening at present, in the 'normal' world as we know it!

Chapter 1 - The First

THE MEETING

"I never thought I would see you like this!"

It is dusk and the market is bustling with activity: on one hand there are Durga puja shoppers around, doing their usual shopping because the puja is very near - you just cannot miss the crowd, even if you are blind, because they would block your every step with their obstinate presence...on the other hand, there are roller-coasters - the Ferris wheel types - wooden, looping - and carousels, with adult couples sitting on the former and children on the latter - at the nearby park...Plus you've got the sound of automobiles plying on the adjacent street to tackle! This place hardly ever witnesses any kind of emptiness; it is so full of life - quite unlike me - always happy and gay. I have never witnessed this city to stop. It does not even know the meaning of 'stopping' I guess! Of course, if you visit the city during daytime, it would appear kinda dumb; it is only at night that it actually comes to life!

She: "Why not?"

Me: "Well actually it is quite surprising you know...yeah I know I've seen you on TV and all that...I would confess I don't watch much TV though..."

She smiles!

Me: "...I have not watched any of your movies...MIND you...but I feel in my gut you are a good actress!"

She: "Thank you...I am here to buy some stuff for someone special..."

I guess she means her boyfriend. Virtually everyone has got one sticking with them these days - sticking like a lizard, wherever they go - boy or girl, you would never see anyone alone here...well, - except ME, that is!

She: "So tell me...uh...[she is more attentive toward sorting the stuff she is buying than to me - in fact she spares just one quick glance at me and then resumes her work] what do you watch then?"

Me: "Well mostly I watch Hollywood stuff... you know?...I think they are more real...real-istic! No offense but I guess our movie business has a long way to go..."

She: "It is not easy to get in there though...in Hollywood I mean...I only had a few contracts...leftovers you might say...well, for whatever...I decided to stay here because I am the top billed one here...so I figured I am much better off here anyway...in Hollywood, I would probably be reduced to nothing...bit roles, if I get lucky enough!"

Me [unsure of what to say]: "Yeah...well, I guess the competition must be pretty stiff there. Well... [I force a smile on my lips as I decide to walk away from her, seeing that she is showering virtually no attention to me, as if talking to herself! What an INSULT!] I'll see you around soon! Bye!" I am about to go, because I am afraid I would blurt out something in anger that I would regret later, so it is best to end the conversation here. She looks a lot like how Jacqueline Bisset looked way back in the 70s - especially in terms of looks, facial features and her blonde 'straight' hair style, but...no, of course she is not as tall as her! She is wearing a white shirt with pink flower prints on it, and a black pant!

She [in low voice]: "You are good at talking...but not staying with?"

Me: "Nope...actually that was not what I meant...I guess...we could go for uh...some coffee then? Well...ahem...I don't know many shops here by the way, letting you know just...I kinda new here so...ya know!"

She: "I know a good one here actually!"

CUT TO: Afternoon, Another Place:

As I walk with her in the middle of the empty street - in a circular fashion - I am looking at the shops and the tall buildings around - with wonder - and before I can say anything, she points me out to a coffee shop at the corner of the street - she pointed her left hand's index finger with such a pleasant smile and enthusiasm that you'd think she is a regular here!

CUT TO, Evening, Inside The Restaurant:

No windows, no air from outside, just yellow light bulbs, curtains on windows and tables and chairs! The tables and chairs are all well-varnished...the top of the table is decorated with glass! We are seated opposite each other...in the middle of the wooden table there is a flower pot of cream color with green flower prints on it - it is filled with the green stamens of some flower I don't know nothing about...could be lily...there is also a water jug - made of steel - at one corner of the same table! The waiter asks me what I'd like to have. I ask for the menu. A big book is then handed to me by him. I guess that she would know this restaurant better than me because...is not she a regular here? So, I flip over the menu book toward her, to let her decide.

She: "What for...[smiles again]Oh! Well, uh, you can order whatever you like!"

Me: "Well... [I pretend to browse the menu] uh...well what you think are the best foods here?...That we can get?"

She: "I don't know really! Actually, I have never had any stuff here, so...!"

Me: "Oh, I see. I thought you were a regular here...okay, never mind!"

She: "Oh no no no no! I just believed this is a good place to have a chat with. A quality place, that's all! So...you can order whatever you want to!"

Now I actually start browsing the menu - though after a deep sigh. Oh well! The menu is huge and so are the prices of the dishes listed there, and I knew it even before opening the big book - just judging by the looks of the hotel...the foods are...well most of them anyway, are quite simply quite out of my pocket's reach. I hunt and hunt over, with water in my mouth, and each time I turn over a page, I run my palm inside my breast pocket. She is watching me all the time...so I cannot really keep doing it for long...I have to decide on something very soon, failing which I can always excuse myself for the restroom and then run away for life! I was hoping that if she'd ordered the items, she would be more willing to pay the bill. I knew when we entered that this restaurant is out of my pocket: you can tell such things well from the glitz and glamour here! I am quite used to feeding myself with the cheap stuff found at the sidewalk-based food stalls near my office, and so are my colleagues. The food we most frequently have is chowmein - the Chinese version of spaghetti - well that is the only decent thing you can get there for cheap anyway!

I gesture at the waiter with my right hand's index finger, asking him to come over, now that I have finally decided upon...found something I could order for her and me without burning a deep hole in my pocket!

Me [in a little loud voice so as to come across as person of authority, even before the waiter could come very close to me]: "2 cappuccinos please!"

She [visibly astonished]: "] Just coffee?? Is that all you want to order? I thought maybe..."

Me [a bit shaken and feeling embarrassed...didn't expect her to reach this way]: "Yeah well... [I pretend to cough a bit to gain back my composure] I don't find any of my favorite foods here, so... [in a more confident tone, with a forced smile on my lips] and hey by the way I love cappuccino anyway! YOU can order whatever you want" and then I turn over the menu to her side once again, but she just smiles and sets it aside...does that indicate her steadfast insistence on ignoring my requests...or her silent consent to whatever I order. I have just lied to her - though I love coffee but I would any day love to have a free lunch here, and I have seen plenty of my favs on the menu but none cheap enough for

me! The coffee arrives before we could even exchange a couple of words - I gotta say this hotel is... looks like it is really ultra fast with the orders lol!

Me [trying to change the topic of conversation, as I am a bit embarrassed that I could not feed her with my money as wanted to]: "So, what is the latest movie you are doing? Tell me!"

She: "You want to know?" she smiles, "Well there is this movie I currently plan on doing...shooting starts around mid-November...I play this call girl who is also involved with the gangsters...she seduces gullible men and then helps the gang folks extract money from him...You know...extortion!"

Me: "Must be quite a big and...uh, tough role for ya!"

She: "No actually...well it sounds quite fun to me [chuckles] ...yeah I guess it IS!...TOUGH, as you speak...till date I have only played those goody-goody roles of the girl-next-door! I just want to do something different this time!"

ME: "Oh...Yeah I guess it gets tired after a while...you want to re-invent yourself, I suppose? Is that..."

She: "Yup and who doesn't? Every actor worth his salt would like a change. Then again, there are not so many women-oriented roles offered here...women are usually offered bottom-of-the-barrel roles so...whenever you get one meaty, you would want to do it BEFORE someone else takes over! Too many girls vying for the...Anyway...so I have got a month to do some puja shopping and...I plan to stay with my parents here in the city - I won't get to do that once my shooting starts! I hardly get to meet my family due to my career!"

Me: "Then you would fly to Mumbai I think? ... In mid-November?"

She: "That's the plan anyway!" she takes her third sip from her cup!

Me: "Well. It must be quite a hectic life for you I suppose?"

"I LOVE IT [she says it just the way Jack Nicholson said this about the Overlook hotel in The Shining movie]! The pay is good."

Me [sighing - a bit disillusioned about my current job]: "Yeah, well I suppose... [with a bit of jealous anger] where else after all can you earn a million bucks within a month or less?"

She: She smiles "Now, my pay as a matter of fact, depends on the budget of the movie of course, but still...tell you the truth, I would not want to settle for anything else. I love acting, besides."

Me: "Yeah sure I guess..." I take my first sip now. My coffee is already half cold, but I am less enthusiastic about drinking coffee than talking with her. Coffee is just an excuse for chatting with her for a while - well as long as I can, as long as she's here...and it is cheap excuse too - economically speaking, that is!

She: "How much you earn anyway?"

Me [I am so embarrassed to answer that ONE question I would like to avoid, so]: "Not much...I would any day love to dig into your profession honestly speaking...if offered the chance [forcing a wry smile on my lips]."

She [enthusiastically, as if she would love to jump off her seat in joy]: "CHANCE!...chance is the right word to use...but is so hard to get..."

Me: "The chance, you mean?"

She: "Yep"

Me [sarcastically - I just think she doesn't want to help me at all so making excuses]: "Too much competition eh?"

She: "That and, you got to handle your newfound fame, which can be tough especially in the first few years. When people you have known you for years start treating you differently just because you are...it is tough to be in the showbiz...not everyone's cup of tea, I would add"

Me: "PURE jealousy, I think!"

She: "Yeah I guess so...and anyway, who knows how things would have turned out if I were not an actress!"

Me: "If you were not an actress, then...can you sing?"

She: "I gotta go...thanks for the coffee...this one's is on me"

Me: "No no...I got it - I got it [I brush my left hand's palm on my breast pocket to make her feel confident in my financial abilities, then I show her the tips of a couple of small currency notes - twisted and soiled out of shape - emerging from my pocket!]"

She [getting up from her chair]: "O-kay" she smiles once again as I add "you've got a beautiful body I must say!"

She [nonchalantly]: "Thanks!"

Me: "You work pretty hard on it huh?"

She: "What? Movies?"

Me: "The body, I mean!"

She: "Well - the diet is there and of course then my fitness trainer helps...you cannot be fat and wobbly and hope to stay in the show business, now, can you? [chuckles] ...Not unless you are a MAN. I can drink very rarely due to my work's nature...am on a, sort of...what should I say - uh, forced diet, heh...although I'd love to drink more often! HONEST!"

Me: "I see... what you drink by the way?... I mean, what you like to drink...I think it is these beautiful women men love to look at you, you know, when they watch a movie!"

She is in a hurry I guess - I don't think she has heard the last bit of my conversation, for she does not reply...I used 'these' instead of 'you' because I didn't want to make her feel too conceited about her looks, although I like her goddamn face... she walks hurriedly out of the hotel, leaving me on the table to feed on my own thoughts...I don't think she has even heard my last comment, or she would have commented back, would not she?...But why would she? Why does she care...why would she?...I am too tiny a creature for her! It was nice to see her, though I don't have any hope for any such permanent relationship. Besides the fact that my pay is too low for her... I guess...she's got a boyfriend too...she did not say it but I can guess!...These rich people get what they want in life...VERY easily - even a fuck or two!"

I sit for sometime more on that same table, alone...but how long can I? I must sleep soon. I feel sleepy right after eating a stomachful, but today I had nothing except coffee...why then...? I wonder. My house is not here in this city unlike her...well just a wild guess but don't all rich people live in big cities only? Why would they live in small towns anyway - where you get absolutely no facilities?... I got a train to catch...quite unlike her who probably has her car parked somewhere around I suppose! I get out of the restaurant too, at last, disappointed - looking longingly at the white-and-red signboard of the place I feel like I have spent a lifetime of happiness at, and then as I come out of that posh hotel I take a look at the dark sky! It is already ten past six!

I walk on the street to reach home. Life has really got to suck! I mean, you got to get up every morning, do the same damn job AGAIN, then hear all kinds of rough words from your parents! What kind of life is that? Nobody cares for you...nobody...nobody here you could love and feel for! There is just NO SUCH PERSON in my life. Nobody gives a shit about me. Some crap this life is! I gotta hurry. I gotta hurry!

Year: 2012

October 2, 8:15 AM: Me At Home, in Bed:

Mom [in a husky, belligerent tone]: "HEY IT IS ALREADY 8 IN MORNING - ASSHOLE! WHEN YOU GONNA WAKE UP?"

I wake up...I could hear mom's shouting even in my sleep..."I had so many unasked questions for

that....that girl! I hoped she would take me in... I hope...she takes me to her home and let me fuck her...HARD, VERY hard...I hoped she would let me have dinner...then maybe fuck her?...But she went out so unceremoniously! All hopes DASHED to pieces! I would like to marry her soon. We could have a nice family...now, nothing's gonna happen. I have lost her...perhaps forever! I would not be able to meet her anytime now...well, unless luck is favorable to me, which it rarely is! I wish the meeting had lasted little longer...too bad it snapped too soon!"

Mom: "HEY I GOTTA CLEAN UP THE BED ANYWAY, OKAY, WHETHER OR NOT YOU GET UP! YOU SLEEP WAY TOO LONG! I HARDLY GET TO CLEAN THE BED COZ OF YOU. You can say the last time I could do it was about TWO DAYS AGO...AS YOU DO USUALLY, SLEEP LATE, WAKE UP LATE...but... IT NEEDS CLEANING EVERY DAY! UNCLEAN BED IS BAD FOR THE HOUSE...BRINGS BAD LUCK...!"

Me: "*Bad luck...like anyone herein is having any good luck, hah! Bad luck - which I already have, or else I would not be staying here with you, fucking bitch! You and your stupid superstitions! I wish you were not here in this house to bother me from dawn to dusk and...I could have proposed to her...but the meeting ended up so soon...coz OF YOU! I would have gone down on my knees for her...!"*

As I still sit on my bed, my mom impatiently walks around with a broom - unsure for sometime - then forcibly starts to broom the bed even in spite of me sitting on it -

Me: "*Knowing damn well I would get up now due to the fear of getting hurt by the broomstick, huh?...And even if I don't get hurt but the broom touches me only slightly, she would still make me trample the broomstick twice with both of my feet...or else I could get unknown diseases, ya know - SHE says so! THE FUCK!...like, I am not diseased already...having a thin frame that people look at to express their sympathy than love and admiration...I could see that in their eyes - thAT sympathetic look! I just HATE that kind of look! I really HATE it! I hate sympathy...it makes me look really weak in my eyes...but that sympathetic look is so piercing that I cannot help but notice it all the time, no matter how nonchalant I pretend to be! I would do anything to avoid that look but...I can't!...don't know what to do, truth to be told...it is the kind of look you'd hate if you are a man... but I cannot force people to do anything. I cannot make them stop looking at me that way!"*

Mom [cleaning the bed]: "TOLD YOU TO GET UP DIDN'T I? I AM ALREADY RUNNING LATE. CAN'T WAIT FOR YOU TO GET UP OKAY?"

Me: "*I am quite tired and fed up with this kind of shitass life - speaking honestly, I think life sucks - looks like a big deal now. I have no intention of getting up. I would like to sleep again....it is much more pleasant for me...the ONLY pleasant thing in my life...I know that when I get up I would have to go through the same hell again...same old life. I really HATE that life, but it nonetheless seems to love me enough to stick with my ass all the time. I have not known any change in my life for YEARS! It is like I have been living alone on an uninhabited sea coast...like that Tom Hanks character in the Castaway movie - with not a life to care for him. I have got two people in my family, but the word 'family' exists only in NAME! They are more or less dead for me...and I am dead for them too! I live here because I got no place else to go to! I don't have the capacity, the ABILITY to buy a separate house...my finances don't permit me....I have so...therefore, no option but to...I wish I could get to meet her once more. I would definitely... then...prop-ose!"*

THE BLACK MAIL - Part 1

October 3, 11:30 AM:

Me: *"The office is even worse than my home: this is the place I dread to visit. YET I GO THERE! I don't like my job - no doubt about it! YET just HAVE to do it - EVERY fucking DAY, the same old goddamn job - I have to do! I feel like a mechanical device all the time - pulled by strings and forced to do what I DON'T WANT TO DO! And then - I have got to face that bitch TOO everyday who snubbed me...yep, I have to see her goddamn face every day! It's like TOTAL HELL! I hope she dies soon, because this is quite a nightmare for me - with her presence in this office. My mind would be a bit eased then - hopefully, if...if I don't get to see her here no more! The way she looks at me - I feel like she is mocking me in a rather proud and haughty manner. I remember those days very well... it was the time when I got attracted to her...STUPID that I was...asked her if she could like to go to the coffee shop. I know I have not spoken to a young woman in maybe years...I had to muster a lot of courage for that one. I had to think hard for days before finally deciding on what to do...and this is what I got from her in spite of all my hard work! I say CRAP!..."*

[CUT TO: ANOTHER TIME IN THE PAST - AFTERNOON, AT ANOTHER ROOM - IN THE SAME OFFICE!]

..."Sure...and I suppose after that you would like me to get undressed and have sex with you right?"

[CUT BACK TO: PRESENT TIME]

Me: *That was quite a bolt of lightning for me. Sure that is what I intended to do with her...but, how did she know? Is she psychic? Can she read only MY mind or all men's minds?*

[CUT TO: THAT TIME IN THE PAST]

"No...I just was saying that..."

She: "Well look pal, I don't fuck around with my colleagues...and certainly not people like you. I have got my preferences. So you can now go and fuck yourself if you want to!"

[CUT BACK TO: PRESENT TIME]

Me: *"Wow what a veteran she is in the 'job' of sexual adventure - if such a job really existed, that is! Barely months after that, I heard from Lou -*

[CUT TO: SOMETIME AFTER THAT TIME IN THE PAST - EARLY MORNING, AT THE CURRENT ROOM - IN THE SAME OFFICE!]

Me: "I don't see Jennie around today. Where is she?"

Lou: "With the boss - who else you think?"

Me: "The boss? She with the boss? WHAT THE HELL SHE DOING WITH HIM?"

Lou: "Easy!...They are out for lunch...I don't believe that either of them is going to return to office today anyway. Heh! Good for me - I might skip my hours, leave early, ha ha! You know how these things usually go...first lunch, then...they ain't coming, you can get on that!"

Me: *"Yeah - gone for sex, right?...But what about her work here? Who'll do that?"*

Lou: "Well the boss has got someone else to take care of that. Look over there", he points me to a nerd wearing spectacles made of round glasses - feverishly punching the keys of his keyboard, as if he has got all his energy and desperation accumulated just for that. "He's kinda new here so they are making him work hard. With women things are not that hard, ya know. You bone the boss and you can

rest easy...you can be assured that life would be really smooth sail for you [chuckles], know? A good paycheck for no work at all! Come on, what you think of that? Life doesn't get any easier! Sometimes I wish I were a woman too, hah!"

Me [pretending to be surprised, although I expected nothing else from that slut]: "She boning the boss? What the fuck!!!"

Lou: "Don't tell me you don't know it. The entire office knows about the affair. This has been going for months!"

Me: "Months? Oh!...*Maybe that is why she snubbed me!* Did she have an affair with the boss during the last year?...Winter? *That was when she had snubbed me!?*"

Lou: "I really have no idea. What you think? Do I look like I work in the secret service, huh? LOL! Maybe I should though...at least the payout there is better than the shit I get here for all my month-long hard work!"

October 9, 11:30 AM:

I walk inside the office with very slow steps -

Me: "*As if measuring my steps with a pedometer! I am walking with my head down - "ashamed of facing anyone here. The way she...she talked to me...RIGHT INSIDE THIS building - virtually the whole office could hear...sure, everybody might have forgotten that episode...or maybe not...but not me...I don't forget things quite easily!...that a bane I have - I have a hard time forgetting anything unpleasant that happens to me. I think that is like a curse on me - I would really like to forget if I could...!"*

BOSS: "There you are! You've been on a leave for 5 days pal, no??"

Me: "Yep, just joined. How are you sir? How's the work going?"

BOSS: "Okay...fine thank you. I wonder what was the reason, though? "

Me: "For what?"

BOSS: " For such sudden leave?...I mean, the loooong leave you just had...!"

Me: "Well it was really not that long sir I think...considering I was really sick...the doctor had advised me to stay home longer, but well...anyway, here I am!"

BOSS: "I see...so what sickness did you have this time?"

Me: "*I can tell from his facial expression that he is not taking me seriously!* Fever sir!"

BOSS: "Oh, I see! You get s-ickK quite often don't you?"

SAME DAY, 11:45 AM:

I look the other way and start walking toward my desk.

Me: "*I feel like punching that scumbag right on his fucking face...and BREAK his fucking nose... BON-ing her, were ya?...It is none of your business, fucker! I can get SICK whenever I WANT TO! You are nobody to tell me!"*

October 15, 11:30 AM - SAME PLACE:

BOSS: "But you just took off 5 days pal!"

Me: "I know...but my condition has worsened over time...so...uh I need some extra leave sir! Sorry! I would take those files with me and finish them at home. I hope that's okay with you? I'd like to...with your permission..."

BOSS: "Okay but...well, thank you. I would ask my secretary to look into this for you. You know I would not entrust these files to anyone else, and also...they are important...I am short on time...I need them done by the weekend! Think you can handle that?...Or am I asking for too much [chuckles impishly]?"

Me: "Very well sir. No it would be alright with me sir. I am sure I can do that. If it is okay for you

... if I mail you the files - how 'bout that? I mean, just in case I cannot make it to the office after those 5 days, I mean!"

BOSS [with a smile, you could tell that it is fake]: "Well I definitely hope you make it but yes, that would be just as fine. There is no need for you to come in person. I hope you are seeing a good doctor though. I can recommend you one, just in case you need to..."

Me: "No thank you much, but my current doctor knows my health history well...*I feel I am lost for the right words...quite well acquainted you can say...picture of Jennie clouding my mind...more days pass by, the more I detest coming here, as if some demon is waiting around to bite me!*"

BOSS [nonchalantly, without looking at me anymore - now fixing his desk calendar]: "Yeah okay okay..."

Me: "I mean...uh...he knows me inside out actually...he's been treating me for years now, so...knows all history..."

BOSS: "Yeah yeah I understand. Not a problem. I hope you get well soon!"

Me: "So do I! Thank you...very kind of you sir...*what a relief...good riddance for five days next at least!!*"

October 23, 11:30 AM - SAME PLACE:

BOSS: "Ano-ther 5 days!! What the heck is the matter with you? I don't see any sickness, but... LOOK, if you are not really feeling well I think maybe you should go to a doctor before things get out of hand..."

Me: "It is nothing serious sir...I am just a bit tired...I just don't feel up to it, sir!"

BOSS: "Well, maybe you should go to a doctor anyway - in fact I would say...I certainly hope you don't end up losing your job due to this [pressing his teeth in anger] SICK-ness of yours!"

Me: "You are certainly more concerned about my job sir, I must say!"

October 23, 7:30 PM - Me At Home:

Mom: "WELL SOMEONE HAS TO, SINCE YOU SEEM TO BE SO CALLOUS ALL THE TIME. I DON'T EVEN CONSIDER YOU HUMAN ANYWAY! YOU DON'T SLEEP IN RIGHT TIME...EAT IN RIGHT TIME. NO WONDER YOU ARE TIRED ALL THE TIME! What you do? Sit and sleep all the time. A little walking around the house even ... even that minimum would help you! But no, you won't! HOW MANY TIMES I HAVE TOLD YOU NOT TO...!"

Me: "*You have nothing to do but nag all day, as long as you get me at home, that is...who else is gonna tolerate your nagging anyway! When I am not at home, I am slogging away at my office. Oh well, home is the lesser evil anyway!...I don't consider you my mom either!*"

October 25, 9:30 PM - Me At Home:

Me: "*I am gonna send a letter to my boss. Fuck him! I guess I could get...sure why not? If Jennie can get her pay intact...she has her advantages but - SO HAVE I! He trusts me...won't give anyone else these files, so why should I settle for less? Just because I am on leave does not mean that...*"

I am writing a letter on my desk -

"Dear Sir,

Greetings! I hope everything is alright with your family and at home. I am quite grateful to you for granting me the extra leave. I am not quite well fully but am recovering fast, and hope to join the office back at the expected time. Meanwhile, while I am at home I am working on your files, so rest assured, you will get them on time just as promised!

I just got a letter from you! I must say, however, that I am quite shocked to find out that you have

made a considerable cut on my pay of this month. I am not sure why you did this - I assume that it is probably an oversight on your part, or a mistake on the part of your secretary. If it is a penalty for my leave-taking then I certainly do not appreciate this. I regret to inform you that unless my pay is restored to the former level, I would not be able to work on your files anymore! I have worked very hard and quite sincerely over the years to serve you (while I have evidence to prove that you take certain a partial stance in favor of certain employees in your office, to the extent of paying them even for no work at all), so this kind of cut is quite unwarranted on your part I believe.

If you are worried about your files, let me assure you that I am working as hard on your files as I would at your office!

Awaiting your reply, which would, hopefully, help me decide whether to continue working on your files or send them back to you!"

Me: *"Of course I am hardly working 'hard' on the files - that's a lie - I am working on them whenever I feel the need to...there is no reason for me to hurry, I know!"*

SAME DAY - 11: 30 PM:

Me: *"Sir, to be honest I have been quite inspired by your speeches and ideas. That is why I have come to you from so far."*

Hunting for him is not exactly what I would call an 'easy' task. For days on end, I have been asking every goddamn passer-by across the esplanade area ... about his whereabouts.... I even stood on the sidewalks and in the middle of the street whenever I found either of these deserted ... just so I could get more people to ask. It has been a harrowing experience, to say the least, but it is all fulfilling when you finally achieve the desired result! I remember having my black sling bag hanging from my shoulder - that is where I keep my pen, notebook, and some loose papers; that is probably all I need to conduct the interview anyway - all the while looking for this old professor of our college.

I remember those days when this man stood for the students' rights. There was too much of bullying of freshmen by their seniors and - teasing and molestation of women - going on in our college campus for months... the principal was helpless - well he appeared to be so, anyway - and many of our professors preferred to choose the 'silent' route than protest in unison. Finally it took this man...he had great strength and vigor...of mind, I mean. It is amazing ... the amount of support he had garnered from all the students. I was one of them...then in my third semester, with just a few months left before the university exams begin...I felt like I have got nothing to lose - so... I joined! As far as I remember, his protests bore some fruits in those days - to what extent, I cannot say for sure, my memories are hazy - it's been years since I left college for good, but all I know is that this one English daily I used to read back then had stopped publishing news about these malpractices going on inside the college...I assume then, that they have really stopped for good. I have never been a part of the college union... never active in college politics... if you want to get wind about the happenings of the college, though, you cannot afford to know all that merely by sitting inside your classroom - listening to the boring lectures and...

I know - I remember - in those days I would bunk my classes at every opportunity I got and would sneakily listen to what this professor has to say. He was my inspiration - I looked up to him...I used to hope one day I too would become as strong! Shortly after, he took a voluntary retirement, vanished as if into thin air - virtually nobody from the college I am acquainted with knows why. It's such a shame that he'd choose to hide his face this way all of a sudden! Everything started so suddenly and ended so abruptly - he was like a storm that blew everything it possibly could with it, and then there was like an eternal lull...!

Old man [with white beard and white hair all over - he opens the door and enters]: "Mister, I don't think I recognize you. If you could give me a little hint..."

Me: *"No, we have never met...face to face, I mean...you know I used to sneak around to listen to*

your lectures...in those days...bunking my classes!"

Old man: "I see..." his face brightens up with a smile, "Come inside...[I walk two steps with them and stop - hesitating a bit] Please!"

Me: "It's been a bit hard finding you...you know...but it is okay now that...!"

Old man: "Yes I understand!"

The old man asks me to enter a small room inside his home, then goes out. The whole home has got just tiles for roof - cheap, red tiles, some of them being broken or cracked at places - especially at the corners. The room I am shown in has got the kind of look that is hard to describe: I have never lived in such a house in my life...NEVER! Though...I have seen many of them in the remote villages in this country. The best way to describe the entire house is that it more or less resembles an old-fashioned wigwam: the type that's probably still found in the remote areas of North America - except that these are not quite domed in shape - these are more of rectangular shapes instead! The walls are made of woven mats or birch marks - well I am not totally sure on that - these walls are fitted inside long bamboo frames for support and...the roof is made up of red tiles - tiles made of burned clay, not the ceramic ones. Inside is a wooden structure resembling a Japanese futon but in dilapidated condition - looking like a bare plank of wood with multiple splits and cracks on its surface - probably four or five - or more - it stands on four thick wooden feet - there is not even a piece of linen on it! It is the kind of 'bed' that would start hurting your butt or back if you sit or sleep on it for hours. Nonetheless, I guess the interview will be hopefully over in a couple of hours - at most, so I guess I'd be okay here I think! I decide to sit on it anyway, finding no other choice!

A couple of minutes later, a short girl - of dark...dusky skin, wearing a frock with flowery prints on it - the color of the prints I can't understand well - she comes hopping into my room! I figure that she is probably slightly lame of one foot - sure, she is not using anything - I mean, any kind of external support to help her walk - such as a crutch or wooden stick, but judging by the weird way she walks... you could tell that one of the legs of her feet is shorter or otherwise deformed than the other...probably due to a birth defect or ...deformity at a later stage... or perhaps, her leg got amputated due to injuries she got resulting from a case of severe beating...then again, who would beat her like that and why... well I really don't know - I see her for the first time, and...cannot say if it is infatuation or love, but I do kinda seem to feel for her. She offers me tea and biscuit ... and... a wide smile - the kind of smile I find hard to generate from myself these days - then she hops out of my room! I like her face: kind of long and rounded - she doesn't look like she is on some weird diet - her health is good except for her feet... she is probably not dieting, thank goodness!...Or else she would have looked extremely bony, the kind of skinny bod I hate of women. Her parents seem to be sensible enough to let her keep SOME fat on her body...on one hand, she is sorta plump, but then again, you cannot really say that she is fat! She is not too thin either - just looks healthy, if you can ignore her leg, that is! Very soon, my main man - the old man - comes back into that room! He's wearing the traditional white pajama and kurta made of cotton.

Old man: "So what business do you have here, Mister? [With a broad, silent smile] Would you mind elaborating?"

Me: "Yeah, I am gonna...I, uh...[swallowing the saliva in my throat] I wanna conduct an interview!"

Old man: "INTERVIEW?? With me? [He looks genuinely surprised at first - twitching his temple a bit - then makes an expression of a wry face and pursed lips - all the while having his right hand's index finger pointed at his chest] On what?"

Me: "You remember? - Many years from now, you had protested against the rampant bullying of freshmen ... in our college... mostly boys... and the molestation of girls in and around the campus. I think the crimes were then reduced to some degree. But then you left the college suddenly... you remember, right?"

Old man [looking at the door first, and then at the wall of his house]: "I'd like to forget that

episode of my life - if I could!"

As he unbuttons his kurta, I can see old scars, scratches and bruises on his back...well, due to the way he is sitting, I can see only the right side flank of his body. He then changes into a white A-shirt - the kind worn by athletes.

Me: "But I thought you'd be proud of the moment..."

Old man: "Proud? There's nothing to be proud of, BOY! [He then mumbles something to himself that I can't hear] I've been stupid...I am sorry boy, but if you have come here to interview me on that harrowing time of my life, you better leave NOW...I'm sorry to disappoint you, but..."

Me: "But I've come from so far...just for this...I had a hard time finding where you live...searching for you not an easy job..."

Old man: "I am sorry really, Mister. If there is anything else I can do for you...ANYthing but that...I would not like to talk about it please!"

Me: "But...could you not please..."

Old man: "I said: I CAN'T talk about it...YOU HEAR? GOT IT? I would like to take leave of you, unless you have anything else to...!"

I sit there, silent, in deep contemplation! I cannot believe he's the same guy! I used to look up to him as my role model, but now... Has his brain become befuddled or dysfunctional due to aging? But he could not be more than fifty or fifty-five years old now, at the most! Or, has he switched his convictions? Extremist became moderate hah? Doesn't he want to live up to his old ideals and convictions he worked so hard to stick to in those good ol' days? Or was he bullied into - silence?...Well...she was probably not exactly hopping. Probably the correct word to use would be 'limping?' I think!

October 29, 10 AM - ME AT HOME

Mom [scowling, then shouting loudly] "I DID TELL YOU...DID NOT I? [I shudder hearing her loud voice] NOW IT HAPPENED WHICH WAS TO HAPPEN...YOU DON'T HAVE ANY JOB ANYMORE NOW...AND I WON'T COOK FOR YOU NO MORE...YOU HEAR?", my mom throws a folded paper right at me, and...I pick it up, read it, and I wince back temporarily out of shock!

I take a look at this letter again...this time I look at it real HARD, with rage, then I shred it to pieces with my hands!

THE BLACK MAIL - Part 2

October 29, 10 AM - AT OFFICE - ME ENTERING THE BOSS'S ROOM

Me [in a low voice]: "I would like to have a word with you, sir" [the boss is reclining in his cushy, executive chair with five caster wheels].

BOSS [loudly]: " 'bout what?" [He leans forward on his desk and rests his arms there in crossed manner, then looks at me, "Didn't you get my letter? Or WHAT? I thought the letter was CLEAR ENOUGH! And by the way, 'tis none of YOUR business who I treat what, understand?? You are just an EMPLOYEE here, NOT the boss...just an EMPLOYEE!"

Me: "No, it wasn't sir!...I know what I am sir. But I am not apologizing for that letter. I think what I said was...fair enough!...I really don't want him to get away with this - without offering me any explanation!"

BOSS: "You ain't eh? Doesn't matter...Well then let me tell you in PLAIN English then: You are NOT needed here no more! GOT IT?"

Me: "I would like to know the reason sir. Was that it?...Was it me...or did I make any mistake while working here? If so, I think it is rather one drastic action on your part...not offering me a chance to...!"

BOSS: "It is none of your concern. I have fired many in the past, and did not bother to give them a REASON, so why should I now...!"

Me: "No it is...it concerns ME...if you still refuse... [he looks unconcerned] I could create a scene here you know!"

BOSS: "Black mailing seems to be in your blood eh? Do your other family members make a living by blackmailing people too, I wonder!"

Me [getting furious]: "HEY cut the crap and let us get real about this OKAY?"

BOSS: "Okay, you really wanna know the truth? I found a better man... okay? A SINCERE man!...A MORE SINCERE THAN YOU!"

Me: "I wasn't sincere enough I guess?"

BOSS: "You WERE - until last year. Since this year you have been taking leave after leave, off and on, WHENEVER YOU WANT! LIKE THIS PLACE'S OWNED BY YOUR FATHER AND NOT ME! I need to run a BUSINESS here. I am not in here for charity. I need to make PROFITS OKAY? If an employee chooses to be lazy, I gotta cut back on his paycheck. And then you threaten me about not sending my important files back, knowing damn well that I would cower down to any length for those files. You really thought I was a fool, didn't you? Well, if I were then I would not be sitting on this chair, okay? I'd be standing up there, just like you, LOSER!"

Me: "*I am getting a bit angry due to his last word*", but nonetheless, I purse my lips hard and continue: "Why would you cut on my pay when I was working on your files...be it at home or office, how does it matter?"

BOSS: "Nope...if you really were working on them as you claim then I would have gotten enough hints about that from my people. And if - as you say, you have been working REALLY hard on those files then I believe you can fetch me the completed files within the next six hours...your home isn't that far from here, I know! If you do that, I'd look into whether to...restoring your position...umm, though I'd be having second thoughts about it sure...I can guarantee you that...about reinstating you, I mean!"

Me: "That's impossible! You ain't getting no files YOU HEAR! Coz you treat me like SHIT! Have always treated me that way! *See if you can use the girl you FUCK - to get those files from me, ha ha!*"

BOSS: "Well then you are out man. In my office, nobody can expect to get paid by slacking on their duties!"

Me: "Yes somebody does...somebody else..."

BOSS: "Who you talkin' about?"

Me [totally pissed off by now]: "Jennie does!"

BOSS: "Oh yeah? And which of your rel-iable friends told you that? What proof do you have? Besides, don't compare yourself with her...she's got TA-LENT!"

Me: "Sure she does...the talent of fucking the boss HARD...The whole office knows about it - before you throw those silly questions at me again!"

BOSS: "Well, if you really want to get personal...down and dirty talk, let's do it...I don't give a fuck about you any more...yeah, I fuck her every day, I FUCK HER and I ENJOY it! Coz I AM THE BOSS HERE! I hear that you had a little romantic inclination toward her...hee hee that she snubbed you. Ha-ha! Smart that she is! No smart girl would like a fling with losers like you right? Let me tell you something...you will NEVER reach my position ...and you'll NEVER get to fuck hot women like Jen! You'd just look at her...just keep looking at her, desiring her, like a hungry wolf and...!"

Me: "*I guess it is time for the fists to start working...well maybe not yet but...I feel some kind of mild pain in my eyes and think they are not quite steady at the moment...and I am having a hard time keeping myself in control...I am almost shuddering with anger - so, you probably got a guy like that nerdy Peter to replace me as well. Making him WOR-K like a donkey I suppose!*"

BOSS: "NOW!...THIS IS certainly NONE of your business, I believe! What's it to you man who I hire for what huh? You forgetting something...you forget one thing", he swings his chair toward the left, so as to face the wall, instead of me, "You FOGGET...that I'm the BOSS here!", then swings back his chair to the former position and starts fiddling with his glass paperweight using his right hand.

Me: "*Yeah right...sure you're one motherfucker boss I've ever seen... I am really feeling bad enough to make me land a fist of fury on his face, but then, I am afraid that if I linger any longer here, he may as well throw that heavy piece of glass on me! He's the B-O-S-S here - nobody would say a damn thing in my support. People want to stay on the side of silence...like... like that old professor! Because in a world where might is considered right, that is the safest side!*"

BOSS: "Personally, I don't give a shit about you no more. I don't think anyone else does... either!...Hehehehehehe"

Me: "*I gotta go... his impish laugh is irritating me so much... so I hurriedly exit out of the room with a heavily panting heart and slam the door behind me because I have got nothing else to vent on anger on, leaving that motherfucker still laughing uproariously! I hope one day I become my own boss too and have my revenge. That would be THE DAY!...[a fist is formed involuntarily with my right hand, and I beat the door with it twice] that would be the day when I would beat this guy black and blue!...Ignore him, heh, for now! What else can he do to you? He can't do worse! He thinks I am dumb! He's probably laughing because he is stupid himself! Ha-ha!...I gotta work hard on that...will burn those goddamn files first, and send him the flames, [I laugh at myself] probably am laughing more on my pitiable condition...very soon, even my mom would laugh at me...I know, ha-ha...if I could mail flames, I would definitely...hope he burns in hell...godammit - I lost my job!...That piece of shit took away my job - can't believe it!...That cunt must be on cloud nine now - she never liked me anyway!*"

LAZY RAMBLINGS OF A DREAMY DAY

November 1 - Me On A City Street - 11 am:

I am walking through the main street as the sidewalk is too heavily crowded with peddlers encroaching illegally -

Me: "*They're ALL OVER THE PLACE. You've got fruit peddlers, cloth peddlers, you name it - goddammit!*"

I suddenly come across a young man...

Me: "*Of my age I guess!*"

...walking along the sidewalk, with a young girl...

Me: "*Probably his girlfriend?*"

- she's wearing a tight blue jeans -

Me: "*Ah! Those round fatty legs! Making me heart go weak! I'd love to smooch 'em...yummy!... Bite 'em. Yummy!!!*"

- and a top of flowery print - she's walking beside him. She asks him "That restaurant offers any fish dish? You know?...You sure?" I keep looking at her, just looking and looking at her -

Me: "*SHHHHIT!...I live such a crap life - never had nobody like her walking with me. I wish I could have her. And I wish I could fuck her too!*"

I keep looking, and almost get my leg inserted accidentally into a pretty large chuckhole in the middle of the street...well, I narrowly escape plunging my feet therein!

Me: "*I never met her again...that marketplace was as if the end of her!...Wish I could see her for real... I've been to that same place PHYSICALLY - so many times - been to the same market place,*

waited for her...for HOURS, even skipped office for that, but - NEVER got to see her face once!"

4:30 PM, Me At Home:

I am reading the newspaper now, and this is what I see on the very first page!

Argentine footballer's girlfriend delivers a healthy baby boy

Me: *"That would never happen to me. Because I ain't got no girlfriend...Nobody to fuck!...He fucked her hard surely!...He fucked her hard...VERY HARD...It pays to be rich...Rich like that boss!...Sure thing!...You never won't get nowhere unless you got that proverbial: DOLLAR!...Nowhere...Yeah, you don't get...get to eat in a good restaurant even! He was right calling me a loser!"*

November 2: 12:30 PM: Another Place - Me At A Suburb, Though Nearer To My Home Than The City:

I am walking toward a pretty quality hotel - quite a bit far from my home.

Me: *"That is the only good one in this area, father used to tell me...Of course, father has no opinion of his own. He forms his opinion after that of someone else's. In this case, someone who worked at a level higher than him at his office recommended this hotel to him - he is a native here, so...- he told him not to enter ANY other hotels here as they are crap...so, it is supposed to be the best one in this whole goddamn area, huh? Personally, I prefer to go the city if I can, but...am too tired right now...cannot walk much; this one is not that far from my house - still far enough to not fall in the 'next-door' category!..."*

...Father has never dined here. He was probably afraid of getting less food or paying up more...may be a bit of both. He preferred to eat at his office's canteen. He bought this vegetable chop from that canteen once for me and mom and it just sucked big time - both of us hated it, though mom was more vocal in criticizing...I being very young at that time and shy, as always....really, it sucked! I mean, be it the stuffing inside those chops or the spices used in the stuffing - both seem to have undergone some kind of fermentation and to top them all, there was too much chili pepper in it. Not my kind of food, really! Father said he ate it every day, regularly! But how could he! Well, probably his tongue doesn't work right!..."

...This restaurant is pricey no doubt - been here once before...of course, you cannot expect get to get good stuff for cheap price - anywhere. NO WAY! Quality comes at a price - after all! I once remember having this Chinese dish here: they call it 'Special Prawn'...I would like to have it again today, but probably won't be able to...they made it taste just like their 'Chili Chicken' dish, except that you get prawn here in place of chicken. Anyway, at that time, I had that fucking job too, so...I ordered that one...it still burned quite a hole in my pocket no kidding! I only ate here once - once, at THAT time...and, that was it!..."

...I was so afraid of not paying the bill that...I spent several minutes doing my math before ordering so I know that I am ordering within my budget. Yeah, the waiter as a courtesy asked me if I want anything more, and I said 'NO', secretly thinking in my mind that - with the high cost of food in here that you have, how could you even ASK in first place? I really cannot afford to order more, even if I might have some empty space left in my stomach; and you are asking about more orders? Really? You can't be serious, are you? Really? Are you kidding me!..."

...Thankfully, I didn't have to pay tips to the waiter...probably you won't have to if you don't want to - unlike a lot of other restaurants - nobody either asked or forced me to offer a tip! Personally, I believe that specially in the restaurants where the prices of foods are so high, one should not be asking for tips anyway - I mean come on, don't they get good money already as salary every month? Sigh!...Ah well, the world does not go by my logic. I don't have much cash left in my pocket - I hope I

still get a good meal here!...

...Oh my god! Those rickshaws are back again today! ...How am I gonna cross to the other end of the street - to get to the restaurant? ...I guess I can't - I better walk by this side for now...It is not easy to even enter here...no, not the restaurant...I mean, this street itself! First...once you get down from the train to the station you have to walk across a narrow lane to come toward the street...there - just at the point where the narrow, muddy dingy lane meets the broader street - you gotta face rickshaws, bicycles and motorcycles, all joined with one another as if in a jigsaw puzzle, or more specifically...well it is hard to describe the intricacy of this mess! Calling it a trap would be an understatement - it is more intricate than that - unless you know how to penetrate it, you may be trapped into it forever. In that respect, I think...it perhaps resembles the intricacy of the lotus-shaped Chakravyuha formed by Dronacharya during the thirteenth day of the mythical Mahabharata war! Yeah, that's it!...

...Anyway, that's not the end of it! FUCK! Once you get past that, there is lots of inbound traffic rushing toward you: again mostly consisting of bicycles, rickshaws and motorcycles - ALL OF THEM rushing toward you like vultures, and...they are worse than even vultures - you must be quick enough to rush to a corner of the street or you would have a very narrow chance of... escaping - from getting hurt by this incoming traffic - or maybe none, no chance at all! "It is a MESS around here, to be precise!...A MESS! Wish I could get outta this country forever, coz it just SUCKS!...

...And just when I get past rickshaws, I get these flyer-carriers to deal with!...DAMN! These people are standing ALL OVER THE PLACE! No matter which corner you sneak in through you just CAN'T avoid them - You gotta face these assholes too -they - distributing flyers of the education institutions offering - some even GUARANTEEING - JOBS - that these institutes won't possibly be able to offer even after you would've completed the education or 'training' you get with them there...Get a better job, will ya? ANYTHING beats distributing handbills like that!...If only it were that easy, the rate of unemployment would not be as high as 3.8% in this country! These institutes are growing like mosses everywhere in here...If somebody asks me I would say it is just another money-grabbing technique - no more no less...I have never been even into ONE of them, NOT one - but know so many who they joined them and still wander like fucking jobless idiots...I mean, why would I? It is easy to see - if only you use your BRAINS a little - that they are after your wallet period - plain and simple! Offering a guarantee that you could not possibly fulfill maybe illegal in advanced countries like United States, but here, they are all 'legal' - pretty much all illegal activities are legal as long as you have got the necessary cash to spare - money you can cough up at ANY point to pay those corrupt bureaucrats...because there is really no one to point them out as such - no one to enforce the laws in this country - however archaic they may be. Law enforcers here being mostly - SOLD OUT!"

As I walk, I notice this ad on the wall of a house here:

'Wanna earn more with less work?

Acquire the ability to fly sky-high - Make your dreams come true - How else could you do all this without money?

For details, call us at...'

Me: *"I don't know if anyone actually fall for that shit but...I would call that a dumb ad myself. It might well work for its target audience but am too mature for that. Well maybe someday I would call up that bastard to see what stuff he's made of, but the ad honestly does not make me quite gung-ho about this whole shit thing...I know it is probably just another scam!...*

Anyway, so, as you walk across the street, these fucking flyer holders would extend their hands - holding a flyer - toward your way, and if you wanna ignore them, then your only way out is to even go

further than their hand could possibly extend and continue walking...the ones in the city are even worse; they throw flyers even through the windows of the buses - the windows through which the bus passengers peep out - possibly due to getting tired and bored of holding the flyers in their hands all day long with no one to give a shit about them...these people just wanna 'deliver' those flyers by whichever means possible because - coz they HAVE TO - either throw them or distribute them to real people - they are going to get paid either way - as long as they can show their empty hands to their employers - I guess!...Wonder what's gonna happen if I confront one of these asswads sometime - being frustrated! Ha-ha...will teach them a lesson, give 'em a piece of my mind maybe! Maybe I would...

Me: 'Yeah! So why don't you read it yourself than give it me? You would get that BETTER job then, won't you?'

Flyer Guy: 'Well, what you think? I already HAVE...if I had money to invest I would!' he smiles!

Me: 'Well READ IT AGAIN, and then AGAIN...if you are finished, then read it again and again, and then again! NEVER STOP - reading!...Maybe in that case you must not assume I have money either...you should ask every one you hand out these handbills to, in fact -Hello, are you rich?'

The flyer guy keeps smiling, 'That's not possible...and why do you fly off the handle? There's no reason to get...'

Me: 'Yeah? There IS! IF, as you show it - getting a job is that easy as getting into this goddamn institution of yours that you are advertising...!'

Flyer Guy: 'Yes, it IS!'

Me: 'Then there would not be so many jobless people around here, okay? You think I am an idiot?...Oh wait, maybe they don't have money either, right? Maybe I have got all the cash in the world!'

Flyer Guy: 'But, it IS...you didn't even join, how come you know so much? It might be different than you think...And why are you after me huh? If you don't want it...I am not forcing anybody here!'

Me: 'Oh yeah? No I didn't, but I KNOW still, I KNOW, I don't have to get scammed in order to KNOW a scam, ya know? I got my BRAINS inside, you motherfucker! If you have so much faith the how about signing your name on that flyer you are offering to me...yeah, sign your name, and ADDRESS too, and your phone number...you bother me, that's why - I am after you! I don't like you!'

Flyer Guy: 'It comes with a guarantee..., well, then, not much of a choice you have I guess though, except - DON'T take what you don't like...but, the world won't go by your rules!...This street isn't yours - everybody has got the right to sell what they PLEASE - it's FREE!'

Me: 'No it won't go...but I won't spare anyone who bothers ME, wastes my time, DISTRACTS me from my destination, BLOCKS my way unnecessarily...and that's my RIGHT! GUARANTEE MY ASS!...Write and sign and then I would be convinced - write that you guarantee a job to me if I join...then I would know how much YOU have faith yourself in that fucking institute!...so that, if I don't get one after paying the 2k or 5k or whatever that I spent to get coached here, I would walk straight to your house and shout the hell out of it...!'

Flyer Guy: 'You may continue walking. I'd rather not...'

Me: 'Yeah, you would rather not give me your goddamn flyer now, right? Because NOW you are afraid ... that someone knows your SCAM inside out...you are afraid that...and, you possibly know this damn well in your mind that you are simply advertising a fraudster!'

Flyer Guy: 'I'd rather not waste time on you - is what I wanted to say! You're always welcome to my house if you want a free lunch sir!'

He passes me by and now it looks like I am the one following him!

Me: 'TAUNTING me, huh? Do I look that IMPOVERISHED to you? I CAN invest but that doesn't mean...why I would even invest a penny in your institute IS my question - why would I? Free lunch? No thank you. I don't visit any house for lunch or anything else. You know, once you get that free lunch, it comes with obligation - you become obligated to do just about anything they ask you...just

because they fed you once...so I don't go nowhere!

Flyer Guy: 'No, that is not how things are at ours...'

Me: 'Yeah, right, you LIAR! NO WAY I WOULD GO...you're LYING even about your institute!...I WON'T go, I won't...join, even if you follow me for eternity. If you have got strength then take me to your institute forcibly...let me see how strong you are...I WON'T COW DOWN TO YOU JUST BECAUSE OF MY THIN FRAME! You think am WEAK?'

Without a further word, the man continues to walk before me, flyer in hand!

Ha ha, seems like I did him in after all, eh?

I start following him to make it to the END - as I have planned - to FINISH HIM OFF verbally!

Me: 'I know...I KNOW - you are doing this coz you would get some compensation in return. I know EVERYTHING! I know THAT TOO...it's quite obvious ain't it? Selling your soul for money that's what! I know THAT much! Do you think that whole world is foolish? I am EDUCATED! I am not a fool! I KNOW stuff. Does your job suck so bad that you are down to this: DEFRAUDING PEOPLE IN RETURN FOR QUICK CASH EH? Or do you even have a job at all? Ha ha ha! You are doing this to make money but I AM NOT ONE TO GET FOOLED - by getting myself fed at yours? NO WAY I would give in to my appetite thus! Coz once I give in you would tell me to join that scamster, right? What good is it to me if I have to help fill your belly in return? By letting you fill YOUR belly, I won't be able to fill mine later - in return, now, would I?'

And before I realize, I find myself near that restaurant - King's Restaurant!

I enter the restaurant -

Me: "That doorman here - heh, he slides the door back to let you enter the restaurant and then slides it forward to shut it down as soon as you have entered it. I find it pretty funny... I think - this is probably the only restaurant I know with such a weird entrance system - and, I have been to so many! I can only imagine they did it to ward off trespassers: not just humans, but also the roadside cats and dogs which roam here in plenty, thanks to the inept municipality here! I never asked him the reason though - never had the courage! What if he fires back 'Why? IS that any of your concern? I am letting you enter all right, right? Why do you have a problem with what I DO here...?'" Or maybe he'd say instead 'This is my job...that is just what I am instructed to do...!' ...Yeah well, then I would say - leave your fucking job lol - this ain't no REAL job...some sort of SLAVERY it is! LOL!...What a useless job to keep someone for!...Guess that's why the food prices of this restaurant are so pricey: it has too much manpower employed here - THAT's why, and that AC too - again a simple fan would satisfy me...and those too who greet every new customer with a 'Hello, how are you today?' Again funny - all customers want I think is good food and good customer service, they don't come here for...not for those superficial gestures...they don't come to no restaurant to satisfy their egos...they come to feed their aching bellies!"

I am yet to finish climbing all the stairs -

Me: "The restaurant being on the second story!"

- when a boy -

Me: "Perhaps employed for that specific purpose!"

- asks me if I want to eat here or take the food packaged with me to my home - I say I'd eat here... and then he asks me whether I am single or...then he points me the row of seats they have for the single customers here. -

Me: "Again an useless employee lurking here to have to pay to. All these adds up to the food prices, what else? Hell, if I want to package foods and take home, won't I say so to the manager here - with my MOUTH? DON'T I have a mouth to speak? ...Of course, I am already acquainted with this place; but maybe he is not with me...Hmm, maybe he has never seen me here before!...I don't want luxury, I just come here for good food, so just gimme that, let me part with my cash - things that REALLY matter okay? - And leave me at that! What a BOTHERSOME...! I don't want those fake gestures! I would instead like to have the food prices to be LOWER!"

As I sit there, they hand me over a menu. The menu has more than four pages - all neatly laminated - but the lamination is so new that the pages seem to stick together rather than stay separated! I do not even know there are more than two pages in the menu booklet - until that boy points it out to me! So anyway, I start browsing the items here!

CUT TO: A DAY IN THE PAST - ABOUT A WEEK BACK, 12:30 PM, AT HOME:

Me: "The total cost of the groceries - ALL, including my toffees - is around Rs. 208!"

Mom: "YOU HAD TO BRING TOFFEES TOO EH? WHY DID YOU BRING TOFFEES? WHAT GOOD ARE THEY FOR?"

Me: "*For EATING - you bitch!*...Nope, the toffee costs only Rs. 2. Otherwise the total cost would have been Rs. 206 anyway!"

"Oh...okay then!"

CUT BACK TO - CURRENT DAY, 1:30 PM, AT THE SAME RESTAURANT:

As I browse through the menu, my eyes fall on that "Special Prawn" dish...

Me: "*DAMN! This one is still that SAME pricey! This is the one I had ordered...in this same restaurant...sometime ago...I hope they would still make it as good! Coz I see everywhere things changing over time, so am not really sure about it. One thing never changes, however: the fact that cost of a product is only gonna go up and up - it NEVER goes DOWN!*..."

...I remember at that time I praised that dish so much at home - saying that the prawns they gave me here were much bigger and more robust than - what father usually buys for cheap- from the market, and that these bigger and quality prawns cost a lot of money than what father buys prawns at! Father got offended at that remark that he argued he could get bigger prawns for the SAME price - and then my mom argued in turn that whenever he had bought larger prawns they were always either totally without heads or with broken heads and that this is why he can procure them for so damn cheap...that he never brought the quality ones coz he was not willing to spend enough for them! Assuming mom was on my side, I also shot back at him 'You cannot expect to get quality stuff for such cheap price!'...father buys prawns for less than Rs. 200/kg, while the going price of good quality prawns in the city is around Rs. 400/kg minimum... Father still argued that he could get big prawns at SAME cheap price and mom told him that he could bring them if he wanted to but if he brought headless or broken crap as usual, instead, then she would make him return all the fishes for a refund - upon which father said 'Well, - so? See? - The problem is YOURS, not mine! YOU don't like them - I don't mind them!'...

...One can't expect to win the argument against either of my parents as they are quite good at that ONE THING...they always run short on fuse - the more you argue with 'em - the more they shout back, without following or accepting any kind of the logic offered by you... it is as if they have been bestowed by a higher power with the authority to have the ultimate word on everything - as if what they say is all that matters to them - your logic does NOT! So, your only recourse at the end is to recoil back and accept defeat in order to put an end to the quarrel - EVEN IF you know you are right. So, after a moment, I stopped arguing, letting him believe whatever he always wanted to believe - that I agreed with him and all his opinions wholeheartedly - and that it was the reason why I was no longer arguing!..."

I brush my fingers through my breast pocket several times. But, NO...I count the money three times but...SAME RESULT!

Me: "*I'd like to order that same special prawn dish again this time too. But...nope not...in my*

pocket I don't have much money now - TOO BAD!!! I was expecting some miracle to happen by my third count...oh, well - no miracle for me, just HARD LUCK!"

Still browsing the menu as -

Me: "I dunno what else to order that is cheaper and would suit my taste!"

Waiter to me, as I am approaching the finishing line with my current course: 'Would you like to have something else sir?'

Usually I shake my head with a 'No thank you' quickie as a signal of refusal and he goes after bowing - but NOT SO EASILY LETTING YOU GO YOU THIS TIME! 'Hehe, right now, ya know pal, I have to foot a Rs. 155 bill - for the little I ate anyway... so, the question of more does not even arise!'

Waiter: 'Is there any problem sir? Should you have any question about the bill, it is all right here' as he hands over the bill to me - he has it ready!!!, and continues 'You can check everything yourself sir - if you feel something is wrong you can express grievance at...!'

Me: 'No, not that, quite...in fact...!' thieves pretending to be gentlemen EH? O How I HATE that!

Waiter: 'Don't you have the money right now, sir, then?'

Me: 'Why? So if I say 'NO' would you make a special consideration for me - let me go without payment? I don't think so...or would you then tell me the - "you can pay later" bullshit - like the others - if I don't have it now? I know you are not the type of guys who would do that! Our local veggie sellers do that, but they are different, ya know!'

Noticing the argument, the old man - that manager...he who sits at the reception table - I always thought he is the owner or manager - he comes in to intervene as the mediator, 'Is there any problem?'

Me: 'Nope, no problem at all. I was just telling him that with the expensive dishes that you people have here, the point of eating MORE does not even arise...so he should not ask that bullshit every time I FINISH my ordered food here! He was asking if I'd like more, ya know! He should STOP doing that nonsense...tell him to...'

He smiles: 'We ask that to all our customers...out of courtesy...as for food price...now...well you certainly don't expect us to serve quality stuff at cheap price now, do you? The price of fish you are eating is around Rs.250 (3.8 USD) per kg so...cheap is just not possible. I am sure you...'

Me: 'Courtesy my ass! Yeah yeah now don't tell me the price of fish - I KNOW it, goddammit! Don't I go to the market myself? When did I say anything like I have problem with the prices? My MAIN objection is...the point is why do you people PRETEND that your food is cheap is my point exactly! Why ask me if I would want to have more? That is just bullshit, and I HATE that!'

Old man: 'As I said, we do it as a courtesy...it is not done just for you, specifically...'

Me: 'Well DON'T! -Just for ME, okay? DON'T! I find it very stupid...VERY VERY stupid - quite unlike what I'd expect from you...WELL-EDUCATED people like you, I mean! Yeah, if I exceed the bill at any point...at any point at all - I mean, if I eat more than the cash in my pocket and am unable to pay you, you guys would surely make me keep my belongings here while letting me fetch money from home - treat me like some prisoner maybe...if at all you let me go from here instead then you would then also insist that I make the payment TODAY only! I know you rich people very well! Rich bastards! You'd force me to leave my groceries over here in YOU hotel - and my watch too, and - EVERYTHING - before you even let me fetch money from home...!'

Old man: 'No don't treat customers that bad. You are perhaps confusing us with someone else - I am sure...'

Me: 'No, I AM NOT confusing ANYTHING. I had just this happen once in a city hotel...I failed to pay up and...!' Well it did not really...I made that up to win the case...but actually I fear something like that would happen definitely if...I fail to pay up...EVER!...My mom says that rich hotel owners don't spare people easily if they don't pay up for food - and father used to say that they could even go to the extent of dragging you to the police station like some thief!

Old man: 'No we are different...and besides this ain't no city so we are not a city hotel...like I said you are perhaps confusing...!'

Me: 'Well you are all the same anyway!'

Old man: 'No we are NOT...Now if you won't mind paying the bill...'

'Yep, yep, THE BILL, THE BILL. That's all that MATTERS to you right? Customers don't! What else do you think I've been thinking about all along - just when I could escape from this dimly lit restaurant of yours! I have been making the calculations all the time when eating...here you GO!...even while eating customers won't have peace of mind here, it seems!' I hand over the money to them!

Old man: 'Well excuse me sir but nobody forced you go come here I am sure...and...we cannot offer you the change of Rs.5 (0.07 USD). Would you kindly have...'

Me: 'NO! I don't have it either!'

The waiter intervenes: 'Well but I see a Rs. 5 in your pocket!'

Me: 'THAT IS MY BUS FARE you FUCKTARD! DO you now want me now to walk back to my home? WHAT THE HELL! The bus won't give me any change; they never do! If you don't have change, then give me the extra Rs. 10 banknote back and I would make a change for you by buying something from outside... something that I don't even need at this point, perhaps - just for the sake of making THE CHANGE!' Can't shout at home with mom shouting all time, so feels good shouting it out here, at least!

Old man: 'No, we cannot give you the extra note as you ask. You must pay us the Rs. 5 THEN take the Rs. 10 note back from the money you just paid!'

Me: 'Nope, I won't entrust you with the extra note as I go out to make the change. You might later on tell me that I've paid less than what I actually HAVE! You can make any claim you want if I leave the spot. If YOU don't trust me enough, WHY SHOULD I TRUST YOU? - YOU THINK I AM SOME STUPID KID? The problem is yours, not mine. I offered you more money than what your bill says - it is your problem you cannot offer me a change...!'

Old man: 'Nope, we cannot offer At ANY time so much amount of change!'

'It is not THAT much dammit! Just Rs.5, for Christ's sake! You people HAVE the change, but ain't giving me. You think I don't know? You HAVE it, and you won't give it to me. You have plenty of people eating here - you have got plenty of income, so you must have plenty of change too...!'

Old man: 'Well if so then neither do you...you too have that Rs. 5 note...'

Me: 'Oh My God! My G-OD! I have to catch a bus man - I TOLD YOU. I TOLD YOU! What argument do you have now? You don't have a bus to catch. You all rich dudes have your cars... probably parked somewhere...!'

Old man (smiles): 'Hehe! Do I look rich to you? What made you think that? Did anyone tell you that...?'

Me: 'Hey, NOW LOOK...' I point my index finger at him in frustration '...STOP kidding me ALL RIGHT! It is evident that you are rich, VERY rich...VERY OBVIOUS it's! Nobody needs to tell me nothing. I CAN tell...from the special style in which you dress... ironed shirts and pants, wow!...Do you see my shirts and trousers ironed like you? NOPE! Do you see my hair combed neatly like yours? NOPE!...And by the way - the way you look, the way you talk, that shining glow on your face - MORE THAN ENOUGH SIGNS to tell me. Try kidding the fools here with your horshit - NOT me...I am NOT one...NOT A FOOL I AM! I don't need anyone to tell me who's who. I can tell that by reading the person's face...seeing his appearance! Now, if you'd said this waiter is poor, I'd still believe it, although I doubt it...but certainly NOT you!...' The waiter smiles and goes away with his empty tray in hand.

'Okay, we would excuse you the change this one time', the old man smiles, 'But please don't come to our hotel again in future, we request. Please don't come here again okay?'

'Ooookay! You don't need to tell me! I don't NEED to come into your fucking hotel anyway!...I won't EVER COME here...NOT EVEN IF YOU BEG ME later on when your mood changes! You think I'd lose, huh? NOPE, YOU would lose...YOU need my money, that's what you opened it for...I DON'T NEED YOUR FUCKING HOTEL...there are PLENTY of them out there - MUCH, MUCH BETTER

THAN YOURS! So...YOU make sure you MEAN it JUST AS YOU SAY IT, okay? Coz I ain't coming back! I am as good as my word. Don't you follow me on the street some days later...' I doubt he'd though - he is too rich to even bother - but I am adding weight to myself here, 'Forgetting all about this episode, and ask me why don't I visit your restaurant anymore' like the people in this village do - they forget the time when they say all the bad stuff to their neighbors...and then next day...they forget all the animosity in just twenty-four hours and try to talk friendly with you - as if nothing had happened between them!, 'MIND YOU, I am as good as my word, I tell you...so better be careful when you tell me not to come! If I promise you SO then I definitely won't come... I won't! I keep my word! Just YOU make sure you keep YOURS, okay? Then...it would be fine then!'

2:00 PM - ME STILL SITTING INSIDE THE SAME RESTAURANT:

I continue browsing the menu to the VERY end...of the booklet, and then, with a little disappointment, leave the table with a sigh - when I realize that there is no one around to ask me why...

Me: *"I sneak away, like some thief - so that I am not embarrassed by their looks of mockery. I do not think anybody would ask me though, but anyway...I do not want to take any chances!"*

As I walk past all the people eating at their respective tables, I see THAT same beautiful girl again

Me: *"I had noticed her before - immediately upon finishing the stairs of the hotel's stairway in order to enter the restaurant...seen her enjoying her meal and smiling - with her man...boyfriend or brother, I am dunno but he...he who is sitting opposite her, enjoying, the pleasure of seeing her beautiful face..."*

She is wearing a salwar khameez.

Me: *"Oh well, surely her boyfriend is rich enough to feed her here, while eating himself as well! Not like me who can't even feed himself...guess that's why I never had any girlfriend - I was never rich enough!...I never met her again, never - that marketplace woman...sexy marketplace woman...one day I read in the newspaper that she was married to some rich businessman. Lucky dude...would get to fuck her all day and enjoy it too, like the way the boss fucks Jennie and ENJOYS it as he says!... getting FUCKED - in life, nothing else really matters - that my NUMBER ONE aim in life...getting FUCKED, that's what! I don't even know the enjoyment of fucking, coz I've never been fucked...not even ONCE!"*

As I descend the stairs of the hotel's stairway, the doorman slides the door - to open it for me...and as I exit, he does it again -

Me: *"Probably he closed it now, I guess! I don't even spare a look at him or the door - too embarrassed for that - but I can tell it from the way he works...am familiar with this place!...Only someone born as a king can dine there, for sure! True to its name!"*

SHE COMES...AND SHE GOES

November 2 - 1:00 AM - Me At Home:

Me: *"YAWNNNNN!...I AM here now! Guess I'm feeling sleepy early today! Oh well! Couldn't get much work done but just CAN'T do a thing with a pair of droopy eyes can I?"*

I go to the same marketplace this afternoon...by now, several years have passed since I've last met her...I see her coming there...she's changed quite a bit though!...Her hairline has receded a bit further...I guess she's just getting old. I'm getting old too but have stopped counting the years since I got fired from my office...I guess I have been a dead man since...more or less...I am a walking shadow

now. She has gotten a bit fudgy as well!...I guess she's not been exercising - did she - ever? ...She used to have such a svelte body though...maybe she is eating too much nowadays - I don't know! Noticing her, I gesture her to come to me and... before I know it we are in that SAME restaurant - the one where we had first chatted. I am hesitant to talk to her as it's been a while...but - she opens up with an artificial smile:

She: "Hey!...Haven't seen you for a while! How are you?"

Me: "Yeah me neither! I mean, I haven't seen you for a long time ...I read in newspaper that you got married...the last thing I read about you, I guess..."

She: "Yeah...it's been four years!"

Me: "FOUR YE-ARS! My god! Time flies so quick, don't it?"

She smiles!

She: "So..." she's fiddling with the menu booklet, with the kind of smile that tells me she's mocking my financial status, "What are you gonna order THIS time? I wonder!"

Me: "Umm, we will see...how about Lasagna?"

She: "Oh! I just LOVE Lasagna! How did you know?"

Me: "How do WHAT I know?"

She: "That I love Lasag-"

Me: "Oh...I didn't...I just - uh, well I just - guessed...I did not know you'd love it...I guess I hit the bull's eye - you can say, then?"

She smiles again.

Me: "So...you happy? With your married life, I mean?"

She: "It is...good...", then with a bit more stress on the words and adding the weight of her confidence on them, "It IS good...yeah!..."

Me: "What do you mean? You seem to be telling me a lot more through the words...than the words mean by themselves! I'm sorry - I can't read between the lines. Don't have THAT knack, sorry!...So...you'd have to excuse me about that please and tell me clear-cut..." she smiles again "Look, all I am asking is...is it a cozy life with your husband?...Or is it not what marriage is all cracked up to be?", I think I am being sarcastic, feeling jealous - being denied of the pleasure of FUCKING!

She: "Well, any relationship has its ups and downs...what you think?...Anyway, married or not, life is seldom perfect..."

Me: "Oh yeah! You have made quite a philosophical statement right there...kinda hit a bull's eye I guess, ha-ha" she smiles, baring all her front teeth - upper and lower, "For instance, hey, look at this - I thought you and I...we are supposed to get m...we're made for each other, I thought...but then things took different turn - you married this guy and...well - I suppose that is just fine - as long as you are happy I am happy too!", I probably didn't mean the last sentence!

She: "You NEVER ASKED me, matter of fact...how am I supposed to know you'd feelings? ...NEVER PROPOSED TO ME ONCE...I guess you did not even talk much...!"

Me: "Well I thought you didn't like me, but...hey, all that's past! LOOK! I did not say a thing. I just said...Besides, you would not have been probably happy with me...I mean, who knows!"

She: "Maybe...To tell you the truth...when you first marry you tend to think differently - you have this and that dreams...DREAMS, ya know? So, such and such is gonna happen, you think...and you don't know it but they ARE gonna GET SHATTERED at some point...then - in time you learn to compromise on your dreams and uh...move on...TRY TO move on, I mean!"

Me: "Dreams!...Yeah, well...ANO-ther valuable comment you got - RIGHT UP THERE...", UP your ass, you liar - I think - how could you say such dumb comments when you had the pleasure of getting fu..., "...Have you been reading a lot of philosophy of late or what...?...Guess I should not be

surprised - ya know? A lot of girls...uh, WOMEN, I mean...a lot of them used to read that subject in my college...I was never interested in it though!"

She: "No, not really...life teaches you well enough so..."

Me: "Factually speaking, you never studied philosophy in school? Or college?"

She raises her eyebrows - now getting all serious "NO...Of course NOT! WHY?"

Me: "I guess!...Well, so...your husband is not quite what you expected him to be?", for I think that it is MY opportunity to make fun of her - so what if I hadn't said a thing to her? How could I? She did not even look at me once back then, or our eyes could have done the talking...as they say in movies!, "...Is that it?... Not quite THE man, I suppose?"

She smiles wryly: "You married?"

I can tell she is more interested in wanting to change the topic than in my marriage!

Me: "Nope!"

She: "Don't want to?"

The conversation is now getting a bit tedious - for me!

Me: "Well...now look, marriage is not the beginning or end of a life cycle, is it? You know it, I know it! I would marry when I FEEL the time is right...find the RIGHT person, that is...as they say!"

She: "They who?"

Me: "Well...I guess I never told you but...I used to read a lot of your interviews...back when - you were probably not married yet...Remember? You got asked repeatedly about when you would marry and settle down, and you would then talk about waiting for a special someone, etc....the right person... THAT one I talking about..."

She: "I see", she smiles again, though now more artificially!, "...Well you know it's weird they ask those kinds of silly questions you know!...I feel stupid at times and...I kinda feel that they are stupid as well for asking such silly stuff rather than about my MOVIES... I wish they knew how silly it sounds...", now she smiles that old beautiful smile again - oh what I would not give to see her smiling forever - **THUS!**

I think - guess they already KNOW how silly it sounds but they don't care - they need MONEY, ya know, just like YOU!

Me: "Then, as you got married...settled down...then those interviews became less and less!"

She: "So...you found any one special then?"

Me: "Well...", I think, it is none of your business bitch....since you NEVER cared for me anyway...if you did then you would have been with me...and I could've got to FUCK you...instead of that scoundrel you got married to..., "I found one and she's gone now...so, now I am still searching...!", how funny that I am basically telling her about herself only!

She smiles again!

Me: "Besides, I don't have my job no more...you know...I got fired!"

She, in a panicky voice: "WHY?...Boy, I am sorry to hear that!"

Me: "Nah!...Actually...it was good in one way. I am now MY OWN MAN" I think - actually, you know - I am just trying to fake it how happy I am being single, though truth is just the OPPOSITE, "...as matter of fact, I love my freedom...I am enjoying it..."! I think - YOU HEAR ME? FOR THE FIRST TIME...I AM ENJOYING IT GODDAMMIT!, "...No more being ruled by THE BOSS..."

She: "So you have your own business now? I suppose?"

Me: "That was the plan anyway but...NO...I am still not quite sure what I want to do...I tried the writing profession once but...oh well..."

She: "Why? What happened?"

Me: "Nothing HAP-PENED - really! I just got rejected that's all...probably in favor of someone else, I think...I don't know...I guess...at the end of the day, you need money, lots of it, to BE or DO anything YOU want. If you want a decent job, or a decent girl, you need money...no matter how much TALENTED you are!...Or how GOOD you look...talent and looks aunt got no value these days,

sigh!...You have got deep pockets? Fine! You are in!"

She: "I would have agreed with you until you mentioned - decent girl"

Me: "Yeah, so? Am I wrong?"

She: "Oh yes, a girl does not always look for money. The wrong girl does but the right one... uh... one who is right for you is looking for love I think...!"

Me: "Yeah? So, tell me, why is it that I rarely see a rich girl falling for a poor guy...except in movies of course?"

She: "You are just looking at it from your narrow angle...think about it...love is all about coincidence and...!"

Me: "AND MONEY...So...you telling ME that it is a coincidence that a rich girl would always fall only for a rich dude?...Is that it? I guess it is also a coincidence that that you fell for that rich businessman dude, right?...Sorry! I guess...Too many coincidences at work here - can't keep up with 'em!"

She: "Getting a bit too personal here, aren't you? I married for LOVE, for your kind information!"

Me: "Sure sure...why not? You LOVED a rich guy only...NOT any poor guy - if you had then I would have convinced otherwise...I would have believed you...let me tell you what I think about your so-called "got married for love" crap: well this LOVE thingy is all just BULLSHIT, you know - that's it - if you ask me...I loved you...but you NEVER, NEVER even looked at me ONCE! I guess you can use any number of lame arguments now to save your ass, but better keep them for your stupid fans only okay? I am a THINKING guy - I can see RIGHT THROUGH YOU, so they won't work for me!"

She: "Look...I guess it's better that I..."

Me: "NEVER...you NEVER even LOOKED at me ONCE!"

She gestures to get up from her seat...in fact, she actually DOES get up - before I even realize it! Then I start, in a much nicer, lower voice "...Where you going? C'mon...our first meeting ended so abruptly...let us not do the same thing this time as well!...Look, I never meant to be rude or anything...come on, finish your lasagna at least...!"

She does not stop, does not reply either...she walks - hastily walks...no - almost RUNS out of the restaurant's gate!

The waiter bows toward me a little, holding a huge black salver in his right hand: "What happened sir? Is there any problem?..."

Me: "Nothing HAP-penned...uh, could you please fetch me a glass of water?"

Waiter: "Right in a minute, sir!"

I've just sent the waiter on an errand because...I think...I feel like I gotta get out of here...that fucking lasagna cost me Rs.100...I had hoped that at least this time...she would pay the bill at least. I only had money for two cups of coffee...I guess before he comes back - I must sneak away...I did not know she would depart so soon...that is kind of strange with her...she always seem to come and go - NEVER STAYS - in my life! My life is such a mess - all BECAUSE OF HER!

I run after her...but she seems to have gone already...I DID hear the sound of a car engine firing up though, but after that I don't know what happened - as if everything that followed next happened in a flash...I guess I would never get to meet her again - my gut feeling says so!...I wish I were a bit nicer to her...I just could not avoid thinking that my life would have been better...no, just perfect, with her by my side...just PERRFECT...But again, I guess, I can be wrong maybe? She just chose that goddamn businessman - I HATE IT - that's such a shame! I could have gotten to fuck her as much as she wanted...I am quite lonely now...no job...no Jennie...I guess...I feel like I should eat some sleeping pills and put an end to all these miseries...a PERMANENT end!

November 3 - 9:00 AM - Me At Home, in Bed:

Mom [I hear her voice in my sleep]: 'I TOLD HIM SO MANY TIMES NOT TO SLEEP SO

MUCH...SLEEPS ALL DAY, EATS NOTHING...KIND OF SICK!...LIVES UNRULY LIFE, LIKE AN ANIMAL...! SO MANY TIMES I HAVE TOLD HIM TO...HE BUT SIMPLY DOES NOT JUST LISTEN!

Father [His voice is heard, then, albeit lower than my mom's previous voice]: 'Like you say...a stupid type of work he does...that 'on-line job' - as he says - hardly pays him enough I think...sleeps very late at night coz of it ...so sleeps until late in morning...hardly any earning...but still would keep doing it...Bogus job if you ask me...[pause follows] justttt - BOGUS work - that he does!'

Mom [Her voice is now lower]: 'Shhh! Don't say anything now...he may be wake up anytime now who knows...he would hear you...get mad...'

Father [His voice remains same in terms of tone and pitch]: 'No I meant...actually you say it to him yourself many times not to do that dumb job, so...don't you? So...I was just...'

Mom: [Her voice now louder]: 'SO WHAT? Who told you to say what I say? It's between him and me...well but I ain't saying it NOW, am I? And he too says a lot of things to me as counterpunches - don't you SEE THAT too?...I have to bear all his words...you won't!...You won't be able to - you would fly off the handle if in my shoes...anytime he says something bad to you - you blow a fuse - shout like mad...'

Father [in an even lower voice, as if mumbling]: 'No, actually you tell that to him that is why...I was... I was just saying that...'

Me [I open my left eye - partially at first, then fully - then open my right eye fully too]: "*Not a man he's but...his wife's slave he is, that's what he says what his wife says ha ha!...I guess it must be past 9 in the morning now...mom does not start her big mouth unless I sleep past that time period...but why shouldn't I? What have I got to hurry for, now? I don't have a job...not even girlfriend...nothing, so WHY would I...? And what's it to you man? Whether my work makes me any money or not? You don't help me one damn bit with my work anyway, neither does mom...all you two do is to taunt me, judge me, at every passing opportunity you GET!...I don't consider you a man anyway - you ain't one - you are wife's slave heh! You parrot whatever wife says, ha-ha. What the fuck is it to you? I WORK AND PAY MY INTERNET BILL, NOT YOU!...I did not care 'bout anything back then...I don't care for any much now... matter of fact - I care even LESS now...I guess I don't even have anything to live for...I would like to sleep...it is the only thing I like to do...just sleep - sleep forever!"*

I wake up a little while later when things have cooled off my in household, check the clock in my room, then go back to sleep again!

Chapter 2 - The Beginning

THE BEGINNING OF AN END

November 5 - 10:30 AM:

Mom [while sitting on a chair and munching on puffed rice, holding the steel container with one hand and eating with the other]: "IT IS NO LONGER THE KIND OF DAY OR AGE WHEN YOU COULD GET FREE LUNCH WITHOUT DOING ANY WORK...EVERYBODY WORKS, HAS TO work, these days, WHY DON'T YOU? YOU GOTTA WORK NOWADAYS FOR FOOD GOT IT?...GOTTA WORK FOR FOOD...EVERYBODY WORKS...SO DO WE, YOU SEE!...EVERYBODY WORKS THESE DAYS...CAN YOU ALWAYS EXPECT TO GET FREE FOOD WITHOUT ANY WORK?... WE DON'T PAY ALMS TO ANY BEGGAR THESE DAYS -

THERE ARE SO MANY OF THEM COMING - EVERY DAY WE SEE LOTS OF BEGGARS VISITING US - CAN WE PAY EVERYONE?...YOU'VE YOUR LIMBS STILL INTACT...so WORK! WHY DON'T YOU WORK?...CAN YOU REALLY GET FOOD FOR FREE IN THIS DAY AND AGE?...WHAT YOU EXPECT - IN SUCH DIRE ECONOMY?...YOU HAVE GOT A CHILD IN TOW AS WELL...YOU SHOULD REALLY BE WORKING...EVEN HARDER THAN OTHERS...I am EATING NOW...CAN'T GIVE ANYTHING...COME LATER!"

Me: "*A beggar? Umm...wait, is she, really?*"

She does not identify herself as one though...she asks for some (monetary) 'help'...actually, she puts it in a different way, to paraphrase her - "I need some money to feed tea to my baby...need to feed tea to baby...please help me please!"

Me: "*I am pleasantly astonished...before - I mean, never before - has a beggar come with such a pathetic excuse for money. The woman looks like a beggar though!*"

...She is tall and extremely thin... looks kinda malnourished. Her skin is pitch dark, she's holding a ladies umbrella in one hand and a school bag made of canvas in the other - the bag is open at the top - and hanging from her back...

Me: "*I guess it contains her child??*"

She still keeps waiting at our door in spite of my mom's admonishing and keeps saying "Please gimme something please..." but seeing that mom is not offering anything, the woman then goes to another house located just opposite that of ours.

Mom: "Check if that other house's owner paid her anything at all - I doubt he will!"

Me: "I guess...I think he's paid...uh, he seems to have paid her a coin but AFTER lecturing her a lot. *If it were me I would leave his house without taking any money than listen to boring lectures! He doesn't need to teach me anything DAMMIT! - For I already know what I need to know...either gimme what I want or fuck off!*"

Mom: "Yeah! I know that man. He won't spare a penny without a long lecture...What's that man is telling her??"

Me: "Well I can't exactly hear what he is saying - he speaks in such low voice that...*the scriptures say sometimes even God comes in form of beggars so you must not turn away HIM or you'd be cursed for eternity...but I guess even if God came in the guise of a beggar - as it happens in mythical stories - you could care less - for you are eating and you won't give a penny to any one...to any one begging - while you're eating - coz...I know - coz you believe that it would bring bad luck upon the entire house!...even I don't care much for 'em anyway- for one, I no longer control the finances of the house - since losing my job...you handle it all - and as you say - one could care less if a non-handicapped woman goes away without getting her alms. These days, everybody has started getting lazy and most of them prefer to either beg or steal rather than work hard. Does anyone even offer ME a free ride? NEVER!...I can't - can't ASK for something - some kind of help - ANY kind of help...can't bow down and beg, I just can't...can't stoop that low...got my prestige to take care of dammit! - Wish it were not so - wish I could get rid of this fucking prestige...just like these people!...Nobody likes to work these days - I mean - frankly, who the heck gave me a penny without making me work for eight hours a day like a donkey? I think...I doubt anyone in our office is ever offered a free ride...well except...*

...*Jennie of course - that is coz she possesses such a BIG ASS...and great assets she has - large breasts, vagina, what else is needed to please a man?!...Looks even sexier than Camille Coduri...which hot-blooded male wouldn't want to fuck her...who knows how many times she's gotten her kit off in front of that pussylicking slimebag boss - to seduce him into favors...she has got THE HOLE, after all! - That would sure take her places - even if not in this office then somewhere else - she would always keep getting free lunches no matter how DIRE the economy is...*

...*Now if...maybe...if this black woman takes to prostitution she would sure be earning WAYYYYY more than she could by begging - but I doubt she would - I guess her superficial morals are too high for that - it's okay for her to beg but not do to whoring I think... her hypocrisy it IS - that probably tells*

her that it is better to be a beggar than a whore - better to extend hands for begging that use her vagina to her advantage...doubt she could be in that business for long though, even if she wanted - she is soooo ugly!... I doubt she would make any decent amount of money at all in this 'fucking business'... then again, I see a lot of ugly whores lurking around near the whorehouses - waiting for their male victims...err, wolves, I mean, who would love to POUNCE on them and eat their pussy like hungry wolves - sort of...I don't know how in the name of the God these ugly women ever find any client though...as for myself, I would rather stay UNFUCKED all life than...I'd probably vomit in my pants just on seeing their goddamn faces...not that I need a beauty queen for a date but come on, she has to look decent at least... at least like me!"

Mom [some time after that female beggar has left]: "SHE IS PROBABLY A BIHARI you know? I think so -judging BY HER LOOKS...THESE BIHARIS ARE REALLY OBSTINATE...YEAH, VERY MUCH SO...SHE WON'T GO AWAY THAT EASILY I KNOW...LET HER KEEP BABBLING...SHE WOULD GO IF WE DON'T RESPOND AT ALL!"

Me: "*As far as I saw, after she collected alms - and that free piece of advice - whatever it might be that I could not hear it as that man does not talk loud enough for me to hear - she was quickly heading to another direction anyway - I SAW that!...Her question of lingering around here does not therefore even arise!...Unless... has she come back?... [Peeping out of my window] NOPE, I can't find her!"*

Mom: "Now...when the government used to look after us, we looked after them...we paid those beggars. Now the government has turned a blind eye toward us, so...it doesn't look after us no more, so we don't look after those almseekers either, simple! - They can't now say a thing in protest... government is getting tighter on the production and release of small change coins - EVERYONE knows it...we are showing the beggars the same the government is showing us - the DOOR!...By the way, did not that beggar in the train abused the giver a lot - remember? He said - 'You giving me a 50 cent coin? How COULD you? Don't you have CONSCIENCE? Does this coin even have any value these days of inflation? Even the government has banned this coin long ago for that reason...How CAN you even think of...!' after which he hurled a lot of expletives on the giver, hehe - he thought that he was getting a 50 cent coin while he actually had got a newly introduced smaller coin of Re. 1 - a higher value coin...coz he was blind, cannot see, so...hehehehe!"

SAME DAY, 12:30 PM:

Me: "I've been drinking tap water almost all my life...what trouble we had then? Did we get admitted ourselves into any hospital for that, huh? ...Yeah sure - now we do have one so we use it but...that does not suddenly make drinking tap water bad!"

Mom: "ONLY that you used to have it boiled...in case you FORGOT!"

Me: "Yeah right I did.....no I did not forget...I never forget nothing...*of course I'd indeed forgotten - it's been a long time!"*

Mom: "Times have changed...now they are broadcasting - advising people - the need of getting a hepatitis B vaccine as soon as possible...over the mic...playing stereos inside autorickshaws to make the broadcast you see!...Everywhere, you hear the same announcement..."

Me: "So?"

Mom: "So? What...What if we contract Hepatitis B as a result of drinking tap water...that could be it - maybe that's why they are doing all this broadcasting stuff to alert people against drinking tap water, who knows...it is not okay to drink tap water, matter of fact - unless it is boiled...but who would boil it for you? Who has got that FREE time huh? You don't do nothing...just stick with your computer all day long...I do all the chores here...drinking the tap water in un-boiled state is akin to attracting death!...Which is why we drink tube well water now!"

Me: "*You're funny...the fucking newspaper has really fucked up your brain a great deal! You don't seem to be able to think straight now...THEY DON'T specifically say drinking tap water makes you*

contact the disease...that's preposterous assertion...who the heck supplies us the tap water but the municipality!...You think they got no responsibility for the community? We're not the only ones living in this block, all right? So...just because the municipality has chosen to announce something that is important...it probably feels that alerting people of this disease is necessary - regardless of what WE think...does that mean that their water is polluted? If their tap water were so polluted...and since so many people drink it...would not there be an epidemic?...You think the municipality guys would RISK that by supplying contaminated water? Would not there be a pandemonium inside the municipality's office? *Do you think people here are THAT so sheepish as not to take action for something serious as this?* The municipality is just doing its job of promoting a social cause...that's it!"

Mom: "We don't know for real what is happening elsewhere to whom...we are not going to other people's houses after all - INQUIRING! If something serious like that happens to you we don't have money for treatment...we would have to check into a hospital and they are extremely bad in treating people!"

Me: "*Yep I know - those 'doctors' are more of experts in killing people and gouging their eyes out than treating people right...sure ...you don't have money for treatment...you don't even have money for treating yourself...you have BUT money to put in the bank...you put money in there - you say you save for the purpose treating some highly malignant, unknown disease we may get infected in some distant future...of course you never mention any specific disease you are saving up all that goddamn money for, EXCEPT cancer - you casually mention frequently how much a cancer treatment costs - quoting from that damn newspaper...may be ours is gonna be a worse disease - as your bank balance has already crossed the 'cancer treatment cost' limit, ha ha...I think...YOU - who is not letting money to be withdrawn for her OWN treatment - not going to the hospital for her OWN treatment - unwilling to spend money on her OWN medicine - where is proof that you would provide for others' treatment in future anyway??"*

Mom: "My treatment ain't that important...Besides...even vaccinating yourself against Hepatitis B is not foolproof..."

Me: "*Then what else is? Sitting inside the house - cooped - doing as you say - would that WORK better!? - That is what you do anyway. You hardly go out so don't know about the outside world much. Getting vaccinated is not a bad idea though...that is why they are saying in that broadcast that anybody could get free vaccination from the municipal camps!*"

Mom: "Yeah and even then there is no guarantee that you won't be contracting that disease again in future...besides...who knows what side effect a particular vaccine would bring?...You know what a simple booster injection did to you, don't you?"

Me: "*People who go to the free municipal camps are of course, extremely poor and needy people...does not mean you have to do that too - you are not poor after all - just pretending to be poor...you could go to a big shot clinic instead!...Well, we could go to a better place instead if we want - get ourselves vaccinated there...ask them regarding the right time for...and whether our body is suitable for the injection or not... what are the necessary conditions to fulfill, etc....well whatever - the clinic folks would help...what happened to me was because in spite of being warned by my neurologist of the negative repercussions - father went ahead and gave me that fucking injection...lots of people get injured daily and they ALL get...they all do just fine with a simpler TET-VAC option!*"

Mom: "Doctors are no good these days...quality doctors are few and far between...your father gave booster injection because it is customary to give that injection to children up to the age of 5 years...TET-VAC is more for the adults!"

Me: "Well I have seen lots of kids getting the TET-VAC as well...in that doctor's chamber!"

Mom: "He went by what a stupid doctor told him...he preferred to go by his suggestion rather than the neurologist's - quite the opposite of what I had suggested him - for he was afraid he would lose a day's work in office...he was more interested in his job than you...besides, there were no good doctors there - back then..."

Me: "Well if the city does not have good doctors - given that we used to live right up there in a posh locality - *government housing apartment* - for Christ's sake - then I don't know where is!"

Mom: "There ARE good doctors there but all of them charge high fees...very high fees... we were not living in a good place anyway...just ordinary government quarters...you father was poor as a beggar - always... poor and a bum...he squandered money left and right...never spared a thought for his family!"

Me: "*Yeah right...how would you know if they charge high or low fees when you did not even visit them, bitch? And that place was MUCH MUCH better than the fucking place you live in now, okay?*" I can't... for a moment...look at her straight, eye to eye, as we are talking...I prefer to look the other way..." *Well it's like father said - some astrologer told him it is all inevitable - that such and such bad things would happen to me - FATE's hands at work!*"

CUT TO - ANOTHER DAY IN THE PAST, 11:30 AM:

Father: "Yes yes of course you'd say that...I know - as usual you are gonna blame me for everything...it's just your habit like that...you may choose to blame ME for everything - but fact remains that...as that professor told me once - these bad things are going to happen - that my wife would blame me for everything - that my issue would be forever ill - for life, etc. If you forcibly deny all these valuation predictions there's nothing else one can do...of course, you would blame only me and - ME only! - Who else? - I have got no grudge against you for that...you are, after all, just an outsider - so what do you know anyway!...Outsiders won't know - they would...they are going to blame ME for everything...what else?...For they can't see FATE's hand at work here...but...believe me or not, it is all FATE's doing!"

Mom: "Yeah yeah - do use that fatalistic logic when people ask you what job your son really does...because as far as I am concerned - I don't know myself what he does! His job is just indescribable...far as I am concerned, at least...his work, in one word, that is!...Frankly speaking, you cannot even tell people what it is about...if his work were of any real weight then we would have married him off by now...but without a solid income he would probably get a loose character ...wife of loose character - she would first lay hands on whatever bank money we have accumulated for him...and his future, I mean...then invite her relatives - ask them to come here and take TOTAL control of all our possessions...that is what is gonna happen...and this IS WHY...you have made your son so abnormal - THAT IS WHY it would happen..."

Father: "I have NOT made him abnormal...as I said...it was all inevitable...it was predicted!"

Mom: "Yeah keep saying the same old shit to me ever since...maybe you should have better listened to your OR-acle and not married at all...would have been good for both of us!"

Me: "*Maybe not just you two but...it certainly would have been good for me too...for sure I have not made any profit - by coming to this earth at all... I live a shitty life here - in a shithole like this - constant quarrels are the order of the day here! And, I did not tell you to accumulate all that money mom...in your bank...I have repeatedly asked you to treat yourself by a doc or something...YOU only keep shrugging it off with all the excuses you can get...you've probably accumulated as many excuses for not spending your OWN money - as the amount of the money itself - that you have got in your bank account...I don't NEED your money...and - I won't take a penny from it either unlike what you think... so much peace has been broken in this house due to this MONEY crap -I simply hate this bank money now!*"

November 4 - 10:00 AM:

I am pumping the tube well...our own one...

Me: "It is more frequently used by our tenants than us - due to logistical reasons! We only use it

once per day to fetch our drinking water...it is supposed to be 'pure' but is actually full of 'iron particles' - my mom says it is so because of one less filter inside the tube well...the shopkeeper father purchased the filter from - he allegedly recommended to father that an extra filter would be only counter-productive - and he believed him...so...! But the plumber who fitted this tube well told him the opposite: that a second filter would have helped purify the water more! But father was too lazy to go back to the shop to buy a second filter so he told the plumber not to bother!...

...I got my own style of pumping...I push the handle of the tube well only as much downward as necessary - but no more than that...on the other hand, *mom has her on dictating ways...she dictates our tenants about how to use the tube well properly - much to my amusement...nowadays she dictates ME too...I used to think that I was immune to her lecture - being a SON instead of some ordinary tenant but...she keeps telling to the tenants that if they don't handle the tube well 'properly' it would not last long and she would have to pay a heavy rice to get it fixed as before...but now...now that I have started using the tube as well - now the tenant has got a new excuse to support their arguments against my mom - that if I could use the tube well so 'roughly' then why could not they? - I being the landlord's son...if I can flout the rules, that is - they mean to say that, I think...I don't get it though - if I won't be flouting rules then who would - THEY, the fucking tenants? Heh, I am SUPPOSED to flout the rules - am I not the LANDLORD'S son goddammit!...Anyway, so...they think that they have got a valid point to defend themselves against mom's loud outbursts!"*

Mom: "HEY THAT IS NOT HOW TO PUMP A TUBE WELL OKAY?...LOWER IT FURTHER...LOWER THE HANDLE FURTHER DOWN...LOWER... LOWER IT...LOWER IT FURTHER...FURTHER DOWN...FURTHER, FURTHER!"

Me: "Now you have REALLY started getting on MY nerves too, you know! Why don't you limit yourself to bugging the asses of your tenants huh, you bitch! Matter of habit I guess: you just can't get rid of it - even if you want to...you just cannot let go of her Hitler-like attitude: you're so used to it after all!...But then, you don't know me well either...don't CONFUSE me with your tenants okay? ... Don't just mistakenly assume that I'd listen to whatever you say...I ain't your tenant, after all - I am the SON of this house! NO...I'd do it this way...it is much more preferable to me...saves me time...the way you suggest would take me hours probably...I have got other things to do...!"

Mom: "It does NOT take a long time...I used to do it once...now I cannot...that is why all these problems..."

Me: "Yeah so? You used do it? Once maybe, then what? You quit, citing your 'weight' problems! I have to do the same goddamn thing DAILY - big difference! You did it for only one or two days...I have been doing the same shit daily...that is one hell of a BIG difference!"

Mom: "ONE USELESS PIECE OF WORK THIS LAD HAS LEARNED...FROM GOD KNOWS WHERE - SOME 'ONLINE' WORK - HE SAYS SO!...IT HARDLY BENEFITS HIM, LET ALONE ME...I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT MAKES IT WORTHWHILE FOR HIM TO KEEP DOING THE SAME SHIT EVERYDAY...SPENDS ALL HIS TIME THERE, DOESN'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING ELSE...SKIPS ON THE MORE IMPORTANT TASKS...WASTING TIME ON IT!"

November 4 - 16:00 PM - As I Wake Up From My Afternoon Nap:

Mom: "THAT IS NOT THE RIGHT WAY TO USE A HAND-PUMP TUBE WELL GOT IT...THE WAY YOU DO IT ISN'T THE WAY...IT WOULD DAMAGE IT BEYOND REPAIR...YOU DON'T EARN A PENNY YOURSELF...NOT AT LEAST TO PAY ME FOR THE DAMAGES - TO GET THAT THING REPAIRED...YOU NEVER PAID ME A CENT FROM FOR ANYTHING ANYWAY - WHATEVER IS IT YOU EARN - AT ALL...WHO WOULD PAY IF THE TUBE WELL GOT DAMAGED, HUH?...YOU CAN'T - BEAR THAT IN MIND! LAST TIME IT WAS DAMAGED I HAD TO PAY FOR EVERYTHING - EVERY FUCKING CENT - I HAD TO... NO ONE ELSE - I, HAD TO PAY!"

Me: "Yeah but that happened NOT due to my 'incorrect' way of using tube well...it happened long before that...*it was because some dumbass crow preferred to sit only one our tube well...skipping out on the scores of roadside tube wells out there...and dropped a date seed into the hole where the water is drilled from - I think!* The only thing that is affected by 'rough' use of a tube well is that - the tin foil cover we have fitted on top of the hole to keep crows from throwing any more stone-like hard stuff into the drilling hole - that cover sometimes slides down the handle from time to time...it is not much of a chore really...just a matter of putting it back in its place...!"

Mom: "YOU CANNOT use our tube well according to your whims YOU HEAR?...Either you follow the PROPER techniques or don't use it at all...the tenants told me last night that I should instead teach my son how to pump a tube well properly...HOW EMBARRASSING!"

Me: "Yeah but that is coz you were arguing with them - teaching how to handle the tube well - telling them to stop handling tube well roughly - THAT'S WHY, they said that...you don't say a thing and lemme then see if anyone says anything to you then...they would not say anything either, if you don't...you were teaching THEM how to use tube well so no wonder they gave you that shit...*you try to teach everybody, huh? BIG shot teacher, are you? You don't even have much of a straight brain to think beyond what your fucking newspaper says anyway, and you come to teach ME, huh! ...ME? ... You tried to teach the tenants...now dare come to teach ME as well?...You feel audacious enough to teach everybody eh? You consider yourself so fucking talented eh?...You think so? If you think I would bow to your dictatorship you are plain wrong...I won't dance to your whims...I won't be a WO-MAN's puppet like father!*"

Mom: "I am not asking anyone to dance to my whims...the tube well ought to be used properly...the way you use it - that's no way of using it -...you cannot always choose YOUR preference in all matters...there are what we call best practices...and...EVERYBODY follows them...helps keep the tube well running fine..."

Me: "*Everybody who? I see different people handle the tube well differently, even worse than me!* And who tells you what is best?"

Mom: "The plumbers who repaired it told us how not to pump a tube well - like... [Pause] no to do what you are doing..."

Me: "Well I was not present when the masons said all that? *How do I know you ain't lying to win your argument huh? You are a habitual liar and manipulator after all!* I was right at home when they fixed it...who knows if you are telling the truth or...there are lots of different ways to pump a tube well...I see people pumping tube wells like me in public places all the time - just like me - just the way YOU hate it...then there are others who push the handle down to its bore...the "BODY"...you even object to that when the tenants used to do that, remember?"

Mom: "The plumbers said to US, OKAY?...They won't wait for each individual to come to them and repeat what they have to say...it is none of your business, besides, as you did not pay a penny then...how would you know what's going on here anyway - since I always see you sticking your neck to your PC - realistically speaking - how could you know about anything going in this house at all...!"

Father: "You don't have to push the handle right up to the body... she never said nothing like that! But you could push the handle at least halfway can't you? How difficult is that?...But you were not pushing down the handle at all...just pumping from the top...!"

Me: "*I KNOW WHAT SHE SAID...NOW, YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME...but I just don't believe it would destroy a tube well if I pump it the way I do...and you don't even know a thing about it...how would you know? You were not even there! And now you are reiterating what my mom says huh?* [To mom] If I don't push down the handle at all water how is the water coming out then?...come and show it to me how is that possible - if as you say I don't push down it well...actually - the fact remains that even if I do the right thing you would always pick one bad aspect or other *simply because you just HATE me.....if you say that this is proper and that is not - not proper...I just won't believe you! I don't like you, and I won't go by your rules...Better that I simply stop drinking tube well water*

altogether...there's no need...you two manage the thing as your wish, pump it as you like, I WON'T - whatever way you handle the tube well is up to you...I don't want any more of this crap...I won't turn into a king overnight by drinking tube well water anyway...*I WON'T dance to your strings bitch - no matter the limit you push me to...I would do what I think is best, not what YOU think to be 'best'... because...I know...you are such a moron - you dunno how to decide what is best for me...either I would have my way or I would not do it all...I would much prefer drinking the tap water provided by the municipality...much easier on my nerves...that way!"*

Mom: "I AM DOING THE ENTIRE HOUSEWORK HERE - I LITERARY CARRYING THE WHOLE HOUSEHOLD ON MY SHOULDERS...ME! NO ONE ELSE! I DON'T KNOW WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED TO YOU PEOPLE IF NOT FOR ME...NOBODY, NOBODY DOES A DAMN THING HERE, NO ONE, NOT A SOUL HELPS ME OUT...AND I DON'T COMPLAIN ONE BIT...ALL I SEE ONLY YOU COMPLAIN...AND YOUR FATHER COMPLAINS ABOUT HAVING TO DO - ANY KIND OF WORK - ALL THE TIME - ONLY I DON'T COMPLAIN! WHEN IT COMES TO WORK YOU TWO JUST SEEM TO SHRIVEL...WHAT I DO IS 'NORMAL'...WHAT YOU TWO DO IS JUST ABNORMAL!..."

Father [He looks the other way]: "Yeah, right...right you are there!"

Mom: "[to me]...FROM HENCE...NOW YOU WOULD ONLY LIVE BY YOUR FRUITS - WHICH IS WHAT YOU PRIMARILY EAT ANYWAY, INSTEAD OF MY COOKED STUFF - I WON'T BE DOING ANY OF THE EXTRA COOKING I DO FOR YOU...IF YOU CANNOT EVEN FETCH YOUR own WATER - JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE GONNA SPEND ALL YOUR TIME THUS - ON THAT 'WORK' OF YOURS! YOU SPEND ALL THE TIME IN THAT SHITTY WORK OF YOURS...WHICH DOES YOU NO GOOD!...YOU'VE BEEN DOING THIS SHIT FOR EIGHT YEARS...HOW MUCH MONEY HAVE YOU ACCUMULATED SINCE THEN - FOR REAL?"

[Father goes to the other room after a moment!]

Me: "Yeah right...so you better carry forward the threat okay? *Let it not be another empty one - trying to intimidate me!* If you are gonna threaten me...you better have the guts to do it all RIGHT up to the end...okay? *You and your THREAT - HUH!...That is not what you do though - you change your mind every fraction of a second; that's why I am saying this - YOU...you better stick to your guns this time around! Right from THIS moment I am not gonna eat anything of YOUR cooking at all. Except FRUITS. I would eat NONE of your cooking. I don't want to listen to your rants all day for the small amount of cooking you do for me - that's why I don't eat your stuff much. I am much better off without it...it does not help fill my stomach much either... your words do however aid in my indigestion! Besides your cooking tastes crap - to me anyway...You used to cook only so much for me and then would also complain that I don't aid you in it - but why should I? Cooking ain't a man's job - it is a WOMAN'S job after all - and also why should I help a bitch like you anyway - I just don't feel like helping you at all...coz you are so...BAD - INSIDE AND OUT!...AND...I won't travel with you either...to ANY place...don't tell me that 'I purchased train tickets for you so why you did not go' OKAY?...Yeah right, I would go alone, wherever I like...NOT with insane people like you!"*

Mom: "Small amount of cooking!!!...what you saying...I do this and that for you" [then she goes on to make a verbal list of everything that she cooks for me!]

Me: "You do all these for me on your own accord...I don't tell you to do them...I don't tell you to do ANYTHING At ALL, in fact - except maybe... *if you think you could make me dance like a puppet by virtue of your 'cooking'...just like you do with father - that you could BUY my head...you have got it terribly all wrong. I am NOT like that! I am the SON of this house, not your tenant, you fuck...don't confuse ME with them...they may sit and stand according to your desires - I WON'T... don't confuse ME with them...coz I just WON'T! You teaching ME how to handle the tube well!!!...Really? How DARE you!...I guess I gotta take 5HTP tonight thanks to this bitch and the stress she has loaded me with now...can't take this shit no more...I am really having a hard time living in this place these days...first lost this job then...and now this...fuck that Jennie cunt too...this is really driving me*

crazy...if I don't take a couple of 5HTP capsules I am sure soon I would soon land in some fucking mental hospital - VERY soon, yeah!...WON'T eat mom's food AT ALL...DETERMINED DECISION I HAVE MADE NOW! ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! ENOUGH OF THREATS AND INTIMIDATIONS, TIME TO FORCE THEM GIVE ME PROPER RESPECT IN THIS HOUSE!"

November 5 - 9:00 AM:

Mom [in an unusually warm voice that she preserves only for special occasions]: "How long are you gonna stay without food...you would die, you see...Look it is not okay to drink municipal water like you are doing okay?...Don't do that...it is like killing yourself...you can pump the tube well the way you like...only don't do it in front of the tenants...else they would then tell me that 'your SON damaged the tube well by is doing this and that, and NOT US!' I won't be able to say a thing to them then, you see...it has taken a great deal of money for me to create this tube well. I won't be able to re-do it again...the tenants don't pay a penny for such repairs...anytime the tube well becomes defunct they simply complain and come to us...it is then up to us to repair it!...What of them? If you don't repair it for them, then they would no longer pay the rent! Simple remedy they've in their hands!...They would go - leave the house - go elsewhere, maybe...so you would need to repair it even if you don't use it for yourself!"

Me: "Well that is my WHOLE point...why even scold them?...You don't scold them, they won't say a thing and won't bring up that point about me...I am quite sure...people say a lot of stuff during the course of an argument - just to win it - *just like you do* - but these are not necessarily meant like that always...not all the time anyway...and anyway, they did not say anything to you until you started shouting at them that night...!"

Mom: "Yeah well...that other tenant is just fine otherwise...but there was a time she too used to pump it just like you...but she has reformed now due to my nags... anyway, she does not stay here much ever since her daughter got married...so, our main issue is with this Bihari tenant only...this is a Bihari family so very rough with everything they handle...they are rough with handling the tube well too...on top of that they also use it way too much...too much handling, too much water pumping, too much of pressure on the poor tube well...they need just way TOO MUCH of water!"

Me [nonchalant]: "Yeah whatever...I haven't seen any tube well being broken - not in my life - just because of 'POOR' handling - as you call it! I mean...there are so many public tube wells out there - they would all have been broken if that were the case...only when you willfully break or damage them with a hammer maybe then would they...now that's a different thing altogether...a lot of people, as I see, use tube well just the way you call 'bad handling' or whatever!"

Mom: "Well you handle it the way you choose, I said it...I think maybe you can do it this way - one day you fetch the water and maybe on the next...or you can maybe alternate it with your father... your father may do the fetching on the other day. You have got your work to do as well so it won't be feasible for you spend a lot of time in drilling up water anyway...back when he was away we did not need so much water and ...back then...you used to handle the tube well really well I think...it is only of late that...I guess it is because it is getting tedious for you to fetch the water from outside EVERYDAY - as it has now become a matter of EVERY day - with your father too drinking tube well water...I know it can get tedious!"

Me: "*Huh! Strange! I thought I ALWAYS handled the tube well this way. Maybe you were too blind to notice?*"

November 5 - 12:00 PM:

Now I am pushing the handle of the tube well a bit lower than usual!

Me: "*I hope that satisfies mom's needs?! She no longer watches me though as how I handle the*

tube well - though! She did it only once and knows what happened after that, hehe!"

November 5 - 18:00 PM:

Mom falls into the bathroom...

Me: *"It is getting extremely moist by the day...uh, DAMP - I must say - a lot of algae have made it their habitat...consequently... won't you slip and fall if you go to such a bathroom wearing rubber-soled shoes...won't you?...Even IF you are pretty thin...and mom is in fact rather FAT!...Anyway,..."*

...My mom refuses to eat analgesics due to fear of spending money on them...hmm? Never heard of that one - I have seen lots of frugal people in my life but none of them probably hold a candle to mom - pretty sure of that I am! She would rather blame father for not maintaining the bathroom well - blame him of making the bathroom of really large size due to his poor planning - blame the poor drainage system we have - blame blah blah blah...than do the needful - buy medicines!"

November 5 - 14:00 PM:

Mom: "Why don't you wear your shoe when going to the bathroom?"

Me: "It maybe always moist but certainly NOT I would call 'wet'! No need to wear my rubber-soled shoes...!"

Mom: "You would catch a cold dear...I have told you soooo many times...YOU JUST DON'T LISTEN TO ME AT ALL!"

November 5 - 19:00 PM:

Me: "The reason was...as you can see...I did not do what you told me to do then coz...I know now I would've been in the same situation as yours - if I would've worn that rubber-soled shoe per YOUR suggestion...it is only common sense, ain't it? *That is what I would keep telling you from now on - whenever you ask me to wear my shoes to the bathroom - now that you had your lesson of life, heh... glad I had the last laugh in this case...now I have got a valid point in my defense... "*

Mom: "Yes you were right dear...you were right in not wearing it...you shouldn't...as your bum father cannot be bothered to keep the bathroom well-maintained..."

November 7 - 19:00 PM:

Me: *"She has not asked me to do the same thing to wear my shoes to the bathroom. Heh, I guess she has learned her lesson well. She is not willing to give up her on her old thin-soled shoe and buy a new one either...the reason is same again - MONEY!..."*

...Maybe 'falling down' has been part of the family luck throughout the last two days. A couple of days ago, when fetching water from our tube well my feet almost slipped but managed to avoid the fall by clutching on to the handle of the tube well, as a reflex...Yeah right, again coz of wearing those goddamn rubber-soled shoes! I reported that to mom, saying that the place has got really slippery - I reported it so that she knows about it - it would be helpful to her just in case she decides someday to go there herself in order to fetch water from the tube well - by herself ... besides I know it is her tenant's doing - due to their pure carelessness - so who better to report it than to mom - so that she can complain to them about getting it fixed...and as expected mom then ordered one of the tenants - the one she shouted at during the previous night for mis-handling her tube well - to do the needful. At first he refused, saying that he won't be able to find time for it until next Sunday - it being a holiday, he

would be free from his usual job and have some spare time...but then...when mom nagged further, saying that Sunday is a long time to come, he agreed and a little later scrubbed the area well with a bunch coconut husks!...Well! I sure never knew about THIS particular utility of the coconut husks - until this day!...

...The other time - yes, on that SAME day - when coming home from the market, I almost slipped on the street - I guess it was nature's way of telling me that even my shoe needs a change, I guess... good that I had gone to my local market wearing that shoe instead of to the city which is very far away...anyway, I quickly saved myself by holding on to the bamboo stick that formed one of the four frames supporting an illegally-constructed roadside vegetable shop there - again as a reflex...I did not tell mom about it - She always gets so overprotective about me...and sentimental - all the time...I HATE that attitude of mom...as if it is a big deal...like if I am some four-year old kid huh! It is THIS behavior of hers that has made me socially inept...inept enough to be unable to make any meaningful relationship with the opposite sex...no wonder then that I don't have a friend with benefits...quite unlike all the others out there of my age!"

A MOMENT OF LEARNING

February 9 2013, 7:30 PM:

A hard knock is heard at door. All the three of us are sleeping together; this is an extension of our afternoon nap. The weather is still usually somewhat cool in this month, if not cold -

Me: "*Not the kind of weather that encourages me to get up from bed. Usually none of us actually manage to get up from bed until late at night, and that too, purely due to pangs of hunger...well for me, it is the hunger of my computer work mainly...Anyway...*"

- The knocking is so hard that my mom gets up - sorta jumps from bed - and opens the window - NOT the door -

Me: "*This is her usual habit: she wants to make sure who it is before opening the door to strangers!...*"

- It is all dark outside -

Me: "*It has been like this since yesterday!...*"

- The lamp posts are all lying defunct)!

She opens window, peeps out and shouts: "WHO IS IT?"

The voices of two men are heard in unison: "We are from this XXX club. We are here to collect the subscription for Saraswati puja"

Mom: "But I NEVER heard of XXX club before?? Where is it?"

Unseen authoritative voice: "You can go there yourself - just...take a turn left and...[he starts offering directions but mom cuts him abruptly]"

Mom: "Is it some newly created crap or what, huh! There seems to be a new one coming up every day as we get closer to the puja date..."

Unseen authoritative voice: "It ain't no crap, auntie. How would you know anything at all if you don't mix well with your neighbors huh?"

Mom: "Mix for what? Nobody comes to our aid EVER! You all come to me only to ask for puja subscription and then vanish into thin air like you don't even know me!...I KNOW it well...nobody can be found in times of need...I get NO HELP from you people: NEVER!...It is always just like this...I only get to see your faces during pujas...it works like that...ALWAYS!"

Another unseen voice: "Unless you tell us about your sorrow how could we come?"

Mom: "Yeah yeah convince that to someone else okay? I know ye all very well, so don't try to teach me got it? I am done knowing ye all! I know EVERYTHING! Tell me first - have you collected the subscriptions from any other house in this neighborhood at all or came to my house only first of all...just to see if...how much did anyone pay you at all, I wanna know. Coz I don't think anyone would pay you!"

Unseen authoritative voice: "No we went to ALL the other houses here and came to yours at LAST...lots of people here pay us auntie - this one house paid us Rs. 31 (\$0.5)...that other man who lives with his two daughters - they paid us Rs. 61 (\$1)..."

Mom [in a voice of disbelief]: "Paid YOU Rs. 61 for a mere Saraswati puja eh? I doubt it very much. You bluff somewhere else okay? I know how much people can give here...the financial status of people here - I KNOW quite well...such rich people won't be living here surely...only ordinary poor people like us live here...!"

Unseen authoritative voice: "Look fuck all that! Tell me if you would give us Rs. 21 (\$0.35) at all..."

Mom: "No, first I would like to see if I paid you the last year or not. My rule is I ain't paying nobody who I did not pay last year. There can be one hundred clubs growing each year - am I supposed to pay them all? Certainly I can't pay them all!"

Unseen authoritative voice: "We are not newly created. We have been conducting this puja for the past 10 years...it is another matter if you don't remember us..."

Mom: "Remember!!! You talk of remembering! I remember VERY well! I never heard of your club's name before, and I am damn sure never paid you people either! Why don't you show me the bill of the previous year if indeed I paid you at all as you say [she turns on the light bulb of the gate outside, then abruptly opens the door]...Here! Let me see who the heck you guys are...I would first check if I have paid you last year and THEN ONLY I WOULD PAY...show me the bill of previous year...only that is proof that I paid you last year!"

Fat man [this is the one with the 'Unseen authoritative voice']: "Fogget all that. We are gonna ask you one last time - how much are you gonna pay us?...Or we don't need...won't waste another minute here..."

Mom: "At Most I can pay you Rs. 5 (\$0.08). That is only fair...considering I pay at most Rs. 51 (\$0.85) for Durga puja to our local club here - THAT is one BIG puja - much BIGGER, costs more, lasts longer - for 5 days straight - and is way more expensive than a Saraswati puja, beside the fact that it lasts only for one day..."

Fat man: "Forget it! [And as he turns to go away] And for your information, the funds we are collecting are not just for puja expenses but also to buy books, exercise books and pencils for poor needy kids...don't pay but... [then, as the fat man begins to walk away further from our house, he mumbles] you did not do a fair thing though, mind you - not paying us...staying in our locality and not paying the local boys is not a nice thing!"

[Both of them exit, and mom slams the door behind them!]

Unseen authoritative voice [as he passes by the street adjacent to our house]: "Just about EVERY GODDAMN HOUSE IN THIS AREA IS BAD AS I SEEING..."

Me: "*I don't think mom heard it though, or she surely would have commented on it - maybe I am the only one to hear it! I won't tell her - what is the use?*"

Mom: "**Needy poor kids'** huh? My ass! LIES, BIG LIARS...Even if true - if they cannot educate themselves with their own money then why need any education at all! Make them WORK instead: much better for their families than education! Huh! Bullshit! [She goes into the bedroom where father is lying half-awake in bed] They claim that she paid this and that other house's man paid that...we got to verify the accuracies of these statements UNDERSTAND?"

Father: "There is no need for any kind of verification...they refused to show you the counterparts

of the bills given to those houses - that's enough proof!...Did not they? That is proof enough!"

Me: "*Said it right dude! Thank goodness father is having some SENSE in his head finally...he should have done this long time ago! Time to stop being a wife's slave!*"

Mom: "They did NOT refuse anything...I could not recognize in the dark who was it and they merely mentioned the amounts to me...I didn't turn on the light bulb at first coz who is gonna pay all the power bill but ME!...I did not tell them to show me the bills..."

Father [still nonchalant and not fully attentive]: "Well they refused did not they? That's it then!"

Mom: "DO YOU EVEN LISTEN WELL?...IT IS COZ THE MALE IN OUR HOUSE IS SO INEPT THAT WE ARE SUFFERING SO MUCH [She lies a little further beside father, but only for a couple of minutes] At other times this guy goes out all by himself to talk with these women and when YOU ask him to do something, he just sulks...'there is no need' huh? Talking with women is not needed but he talks with them anyway - KEEPS ON talking endlessly, but that's okay! You tell him to do something but he won't for you! [Father is still laying on bed in same position, silent - Mom wakes up, then turns her face toward father] Okay I am going to their homes myself...I don't need anybody...I can go on my own...but later if I ever see you talking with these women again I would give you ONE TIGHT SLAP!... You will see, then!...TIGHT SLAP...since you are not going now...giving ME the short end of the stick huh? I will SHOW you then...[She then walks in and out of the veranda several times]

Me: "*She's perhaps trying to eavesdrop the talk between those two guys and her neighbors, but she can't hear anything obviously or else - she would have informed us of what she have heard in the same loud and clear voice in which she was talking with father a moment ago!*"

Father [Now startled] -

Me: "*I can tell that his sleep is now totally disrupted!*"

Father: "What the hell is the matter with you? I said I would go in morning okay? What do you want now? That I go out right NOW at night? NOW?"

Me: "*I am really disappointed in you that you gave in to mom's demands and failed one given chance to correct yourself... probably your last chance to be a MAN! SHIT! If I were you I would never lose this chance!*"

Mom: "In morning everybody would be away for work in their respective offices and then they would forget everything...one should visit them while the incident is still fresh in their minds...YES right time to go out is NOW!...It is coz we don't mix with others in this neighborhood that people find it so easy to take advantage of us...they know damn well we won't go out to verify their statements so they can tell us whatever lies they want..."

Father: "What's the use of asking them? No one here wants to tell anything that is truth...if at all, lies are what they tell me!..."

Mom: "What is there to TELL? All you have to ask them is if these subscription-grabbers came to their homes and if they actually took the amount of money they claim they took. That's it! Simple enough! If they don't tell you even this little - then what is the use of befriending them anyway?...You are shameless that's why you go to their houses, talk with them and...to chat! If I were you I would not befriend such people who refuse to answer even simple things like these...it is coz you are such an a-hole that you still go about talking and chatting with them so often...!"

Father [Feebly]: "No of course they would answer me - why would not they? Of course they would...!"

Mom: "Just now you said they don't...how many diametrically different things do you say at the same time!"

Father: "Well actually...[He gets up from bed, prepared to go] Okay I am going then... Well [Looking for a couple of minutes at his blue sarong and contemplating] I think there is no need to change my clothes...[In an indecisive tone] or NO [Mom doesn't reply. Without waiting for a reply from her, he opens the door hurriedly and exits]"

Mom [as father exits and slams the door shut behind him]: "No of course not!...Why change clothes?...[To herself] What does he do at home? NOTHING! Just rubs his teeth with loads of tobacco paste and sleeps all day...that all - NOTHING ELSE BUT JUST THAT!...That's all he does, nothing more...is that all a man of a house supposed to do? Inactive bastard! Goes to chat when not required and now? 'I won't go!' Huh! WHY YOU WON'T GO? I forced him to go, ha ha, scumbag! GO, DO AS I SAY, GO GO! HA HA! Trying to be smart with me eh? I would wipe out all the fucking smartness out of you...This is why people dare so much to take advantage of us...they think we're feeble...how else would they dare to take advantage of us!...They know well we don't mix with neighbors here so it is quite easy to bluff here they want to...since we won't verify anything - they are goddamn sure...it is important to verify these matters first hand...why delay till morning? What guarantee is there of the morning? Everybody would be out to work then...he would find no one at home and come back home like an asshole...too much delay and they would forget all about the event...correct time to go is right NOW! Right now MUST verify...huh? Yeah! That's it!...Should have told those fuckers that Saraswati puja is supposed to be sponsored by little kids - school students...LITTLE KIDS, NOT ADULTS like you!...You grown up people are fathers of kids yourselves - how come you doing this puja huh?...No sense of shame or what?...It is a puja meant to be done by KIDS ONLY...not for old people like you...you seem to be fathers of kids yourselves...What a crazy place we live in - people here do whatever they want...I should have told them that thing right away, but it did not strike my head at that time...nothing strikes me at right time...everything strikes my head LATE!...Club created 10 years ago and we don't even know? How come that possible? BIE lie, that's what!...How the heck is that even possible that we won't know...LIARS!...Puja is just an excuse to have a feast: they wanna have a picnic at the expense of others: meat, fish - they would eat everything...Pack of hungry wolves!...BEGGARS! ...Otherwise a Saraswati puja should not incur so much expenditure...I doubt they would help the poor kids as they claim...maybe they would help THEIR OWN kids instead...yeah right...THEIR kids would be helped...They say whatever they want to say and expect me to believe them, huh! Like I am some idiot!"

Me: "*Saraswati is the goddess of learning, and even though I don't believe in gods and goddesses, one thing I learned today is that if you moo like a cow all your life in front of your woman she would crawl all over your body like a crab, and then, when you have had enough of her, you won't be able to bellow in front of her like an ox - not even when you want to! That is why it is important to be an ox with her right from the start! It is important to be a MAN, keep the woman under your feet - that is where her rightful place is! If it were me I would flat out refuse to do her bidding...let her threaten me as much as she wants - I won't...I DON'T give a shit. She can't intimidate me no matter how much she attempts! No one can treat me like shit unless I allow them to - that's all I know. She's threatened both of us probably a million times by now - in so many creative ways only she knows to come up with - but never had the ability to make any of her threats good... all she can do is to bully us - the weak - with her empty threats...that's it! Nothing better to do she has...It is the LIMIT of her...her abilities end there...THE LIMIT!...I know I gotta DO something to escape from this RUT...but what? Write a book maybe? But...what about???"*

SAME DAY, 12:30 AM:

Me: "*A couple of my friends - all unemployed - they all advised me that writing has helped them chalk out a career for themselves with good income...so I think why not me? I am gonna giving it a try and seeing if it works for me as well! I used to write after all...have poems etc...none published...never had that much luck...always got a BIG REJECTION...but I am think I am getting warmed up all over again...but what should I write about?...Something original it must be... but I don't think any original ideas are left for me... original it HAS to be, but I think that's just not possible...all the talented men who came and went before me created great novels out of some of those ideas, while Hollywood*

created awesome movies with the rest...hard for me to come up with something ORIGINAL like that, that people would like...But there must be SOMETHING...at least some...at least ONE theme, that hasn't been done to death before...but what should I write about anyway?...For ideas, I've got...

...What? My boring life? No...NO WAY!...Who the hell would read that?...I don't have no other worldly experience...I guess, maybe I should write something that is about any other world BUT this one...THIS world and its people just suck big time!...Maybe, maybe I should create a world of my own, where I can become an almighty power, do as I wish, create the kind of characters I want, I like...nobody would then be able to do a thing there without the permission of my fingers...I would operate them kinda like a puppet...what kind of a world would be it?...What genre to fit me in? Lemme think...I think the science fiction genre is a good one but what to write about? I have never been good in science, didn't even manage to score anything more than - a bit more than pass marks in all my science exams...but something about wild imagination of human being that knows no bounds...umm wait, science fiction is not just about science, it is a fantasy world set in a...a futuristic time period!... Why don't I write something based on...

...My own fantasies? ...Not, my fantasies for women are just too shallow, perhaps boring and... maybe considered obscene...people may react to such fantasies badly...I would instead write about the FUTURE? How's that?...Create a world of my own where my rules get abided by my characters, created by ME!...ME ONLY!...I command they do, they DO NOT have any say in this except where I put it into their mouths...I would write a long prolog before starting the actual story...it would be a world devoid of bad people...where morally corrupt people like Jennie the whore, and that pussylicking BASTARD...dysfunctional people like my parents - NO! They won't even exist in my world...they would all be NORMAL people, but living in an abnormal world...abnormal how? In the sense that there the proverbial golden age still exists...people are still simple-minded...where peace still prevails...I would create a world like that...what would I name it though?...

...How about FANTASY as the title?...Nah! Too obvious and commonplace word, won't get my book noticed - level of curiosity is required, ya see, level of CURIOSITY!...Perhaps a thousand novels with that title even exist already...nah , I want something UNIQUE for my novel...A ORIGINAL novel must have a unique title right? Or people would consider me some kind of rip-off artist, ha ha...I need to find some synonyms for that 'fantasy' word [I look up an online thesaurus] Oh! There is so many other words for fantasy...Can't believe it!...Phantasm...NOPE!...Phantasy...yeah, that's it! Phantasy!...'Phantasy' sounds good to me...sounds quite unique enough...I'll take that...Haven't come across any book with that name yet...I think I am gonna use THAT as my book's title!...YAY!...Kinda wrapped up in my online job but will sure even skip it if I have to write my fucking book...something in me tells that I HAVE to write it SOMEHOW!...Well, I'll see...Fuck the boss and fuck my online job too...none of them pay me enough to warrant much labor...I should spend time on Phantasy instead... thinking about it, thinking what to write... Who knows! Perhaps - this NOVEL will rrrrock, maybe? ... Will make me RICH and...happy too, maybe?"

Chapter 3

PHANTASY 1 - INTRO

Novel title: PHANTASY

Novel subtitle: About a creature that's worse than an earthquake, emerges from the

underground...and threatens to turn the whole world upside down!

Me: "*I write...*"

***** In a distant era, about 3000 years ago from now, a certain queen lived in a place called Gresimbo. The queen was named Marioke. Gresimbo, as a place, resembled Egypt as it was at the time of Cleopatra - only that there was no desert or anything over there. The country of Gresimbo was rich in fresh water lakes and fertile plains. The country had only one river, the Gresimbo River; it was almost the size of the Mississippi River and was instrumental in creating the fertile plains of the country.

There was only one mountain, to the knowledge of the folks here - but of course there were several short hills and hillocks. People would often visit there with their love-mates and loved ones - for some recreation and fun. The hillocks and the beautiful parks alongside those hillocks were a favorite place of merry makers; people used to come here regularly for picnic - the old school type (not the crap we know now that goes in the name of picnic) - no meat, no liquor, rarely there were any fights or quarrels, except those due to racial reasons; it was just plain and innocent fun - frolicking, cooking and eating!

Waterfall: There was a waterfall which is said to be the source of the Gresimbo River. The water descending from the waterfall was of pale-blue color, the same color of the river water (but of course - that is only what people here say - as you might know, water has really no color at all)! Anyway, a lot of young girls would often bathe in the waters of this waterfall. Boys didn't even come near them because a guardian of each girl would always be not far away from that falls...either the fathers or brothers of the girls would be there - keeping an eye on their girls from a safe distance. As you can well imagine, this was not a fit place if a girl was looking to make love to...or elope with her lover...just in case you were thinking!

The waterfall was flanked by two huge cliffs - both of them belonging to the Gresimbo Mountain (the river was actually named after this mountain), the one and only large mountain of this country. The waterfall was often called The Gresimbo Falls! The color of the mountain was of brown color, but in winter it would of course turn white, thanks to the snowfall! This country received far less snowfall than the other cold countries of the world, but the people here were so cocooned and introverted that they did not know about that fact - unless of course they happen to be world-weary travelers, ha ha (as a matter of fact, not many of them were like that, though) and tell the others living there about it!

Animals: Cows were one of the most oft-seen animals here. The people there used cows for milk, and after their death their hides were used for leather. Before the PETA people think that folks back then had no morals, they did not kill cows for meat - as we do now! In fact, as I said, they were NOT meat eaters at all! They would eat mainly natural fruits and vegetables: all that Nature offered them willingly - as part of their diet!

The buffalos, far fewer in number compared to the cows: looked a bit like the African Buffalo in that they had robust bodies with broad shoulders; they had huge horns which were of crescent shaped and extremely thick! The skin color of the buffalos was a cross between black and blue: that is, the color resembled a deep dark bluish color! These buffalos were extremely violent in temper which is why they were generally hated around here...of course they were never domesticated and believed to be the messengers of Grevil.

Houses: The houses were mostly built of bricks - unless you are a poor man or woman, in which case, you would most likely build your house with clay, bamboo sticks and straws. Having said that, the number of poor people here was not quite considerable, thanks to the ruler here! The country was quite prosperous under the reign of the queen Marioke. Bricks were made in brick kilns (which were also used for the purpose of pottery); in that respect, the civilization bears some resemblance to our own!

The houses were located in such a way that they would surround the street/lane (where they are

located) in an egg-like fashion. In other words, the roads/streets were surrounded by houses in such a way that the roads/streets would appear to be elliptical - and then there were houses behind houses - each house built in such a way that the difference between the walls of any two different houses is of a minimum of six feet. So, say if you want to build a house behind that of mine, you must make sure that you build it at a distance of at least six feet from the wall of my house, or you are violating the law of the land, ha ha!

People, Their Religion and Superstitions: Regardless of whether one had a courtyard or not, the base of the edges of the houses always had two limestone slabs - in other words, the houses were built on two limestone slabs - topmost slab being smaller than the bottommost one! To elaborate that further, the larger slab was below the smaller slab, so as to resemble the two steps of a short stairway! The difference between the widths of the two slabs was not more than two inches - meaning that the larger slab is at most only two inches wider than the smaller slab! You would not believe the precision with which these slabs were built! These slabs would often be colored with the same color as the primary color of the house! People took such care in the construction of the slab that...you won't find a house here without these slabs underneath them! The rule is so strict that you basically can't have a house built here without those slabs, unless you wanted to be a social outcast, that is! *****

Me: "*Umm, wait! It's getting boring!...Hey, what are ya doing? Not everything can be good even in this world! To sparkle interest in the story, I must introduce the 'BAD' - who would be the villain of this piece!*"

***** The slabs were supposed to protect the house from the influence of the evil powers outside, and anyone who did not have those slabs at the bases of their houses were considered to be the apostles of the great evil power called Grevil, or worse - incarnations or offsprings of Grevil himself!

Grevil is the devil of this country! They actually fear Grevil a lot less now than they used to in the older times - during the reign of Marioke! It is actually wrong to assign any sex to Grevil though - for He is believed to be asexual - neither male nor female! However, I do not know how to describe any other gender, so I would continue to refer to him as a male here. Grevil is believed to be immortal - He, or even his offsprings can at most, be defeated - temporarily - but never be killed forever, and He was supposed to be the source of all the evils, ills and sufferings of the world. He is believed to incarnate in this world at different times under the guise of different individuals - or avatars - and fool/mislead people in order to wreak havoc on their lives. People here also believe in ghosts and spirits!

During the reign of Marioke and before that, people hated the very idea of sacrifices, and that of killing animals for sacrifices. They used to believe that sacrifices were not only futile - that killing animals was such a horrible sin that you would forever be burning in the eternal Hell, which they called Grevilis, the abode of Grevil!

People revered Nature! For them, Nature was the Almighty God! Therefore, the people of Gresimbo used to worship the Nature: the fruits, the trees, the flowers, the river, the mountain, as well as the sun, as a way of appeasing their 'God', so as to ward off evil: err... keep Grevil away from their homes - as well as to thank Him for what they already have! Most people living here had - at the very least - a small patch of garden attached to their homes! The richer people of course had bigger gardens. People often used these gardens to grow flowers and fruit plants - these were then used for the purpose of nature worship, consumption charity, etc. People would often distribute the fruits to the poor after using them for nature worship - it was believed to be a good thing to do and that such acts would help add to the 'virtue points' of the giver - eventually bringing him nearer to eternal, spiritual bliss and further from Grevil! To them, Nature was the ultimate God, and doing anything to harm nature in any way was akin to incurring the wrath of God upon themselves! *****

Me: "*How would Grevil demonstrate His power over men? It is useless to have a villain if He doesn't do a thing! Well, lemme introduce HATE here!*"

***** Appearance: Speaking of color, as far as the indigenous natives were concerned - there were no white people there - only black, yellow and brown. The black people were hated both by the

brown and yellow people here, while the brown people in turn were hated by the yellow colored people. People didn't even trust those of the other colors! Which was why people would only befriend those of the same color as theirs; it was believed that this would provide them with the much-needed strength - to help them protect themselves in case one or more families belonging to the other colors declared open war on them!

In fact, such fights used to be quite common before the reign of the queen Marioke! However, the queen, being extremely strict, was equally revered and feared by the most across the whole country, which was why most people would try their best to suppress their hatred until the final inevitable outburst would come - that time when they could bear it no more - by which time, they would challenge one another to an open duel outside the borders of the country, which was believed to be beyond the realm of the queen's authority. Most of the time, neither fighter came back alive; very rarely would one be killed and the other get severely injured and maimed for life; due to fear of the strict queen here, who used to punish the killing of any human being with throat-cutting - thought to be a fitting punishment for a heinous crime - the surviving fighter would spend the rest of his life in anonymity, travelling to unknown countries, etc., and NEVER returning to this country at all! You can call it - a life in exile!

Whenever possible, alliances with people in the positions of power - that is, people who have a clout within the society or are directly related to the royal family, were preferred as opposed to ordinary people with no clout.

The hatred among the folks here was primarily due to the difference in skin color; people of one race was rarely seen to mingle with those of other races; yes, if you are open-minded enough to do that, you would not be punished with Grevilis, but you would have fewer friends in the society, and you would be looked upon with suspicion, especially by the elders!

How this hatred even came into existence...of its origins, I know not even one thing. However, a theory can be deduced here: maybe, people, somehow believed that people of the other 'inferior' skin colors were in some way inferior to them in stature...or maybe they believed that those people were sinners and were therefore punished by Nature with ugliness!

In Queen Marioke's time and even before that - people believed that...well, Grevil was supposed to hate the smell of rotten potatoes and apples; in other words, it was believed that if you keep these rotten fruits outside the walls and doors of your house, Grevil would run away and never be able to get anywhere near your home. It was also believed that the various diseases and illnesses that people suffer from, even something as innocuous as flu and fever - were the results of the afflictions brought upon that person by Grevil! Therefore, if someone in a family would get seriously ill, rotten potatoes and apples would be immediately placed outside their house to prevent the situation from getting out of hand or to keep other members from becoming ill as well. I haven't found any information of how far or if the remedy worked at all! If the remedy was not immediately available at home, the rotten fruits would be borrowed from a neighboring house, and this was the only time when the differences of color and race were forgotten or ignored! As a matter of fact, this country produced the highest amount of potatoes and apples in the world - perhaps, due to this reason?

There were certainly differences in color and height, but one thing that was common to all the men was that they all used to exercise regularly in gymnasiums made of bamboos - and eat a lot of fresh fruits (mostly plucked from their own individual gardens; sharing food with one another was neither very common nor quite uncommon, the only implied stipulation being that it should be done between people of the same color) as part of their diet - which is why you would rarely notice any man here getting annoyingly pudgy. Of course again gymnasiums for people of each color were separate! As far as food was concerned, women were allowed a little indulgence during pregnancy so as to help them make a healthy baby, and as a result, they would grow a bit pudgy at that time and then keep growing pudgier after childbirth; the men used to believe that it was ordained to be so by Nature and therefore, there was little one can do about it - the 'women growing pudgy during and after pregnancy' thing, I

mean!

Thus, while younger girls would look sexy as hell, older women who had become mothers would often appear to be a bit plumper - you would know right from their appearances that they are no longer virgins! Rarely did any woman make any effort to emulate the dietary and lifestyle habits of her husband; it was not encouraged, and unless the woman herself was rich and belonged to a higher class beyond the peasantry, she would not usually indulge in it anyway; there was no need to, after all, because their husbands did not hate or ignore them in any manner just because of the addition of a bit of extra flab to their bodies; on the contrary, a lot of men believed that it only enhanced the beauty of their wives! It was common for mothers to tell their young, virgin daughters: "You are already so beautiful... imagine how beautiful would you become when you have a child!"

Both men and women had very little hair on their head; women had two strings of thick, strong black hair while men would have just one string of the same kind of hair on their heads; so much so that, the hair would appear to be black spots on a barren, round surface when looked at from a distance!

Garden: Most houses here did not have a porch or courtyard of their own, but they certainly had at least a patch of garden to compensate for that inadequacy; family members belonging to the same household would often stroll outside in the garden at night, and even the neighbors would sometimes join in. If you are one of the unfortunate few to not own a land of your own, you could always buy land for cheap or even get it on a loan - all you had to do is to appeal to the queen (of course, the queen herself did not read all those applications; her ministers and advisors did; there was one minister who was supposed to exclusively look after such land-related applications or appeals)!

The gardens here were mostly privately owned; to keep away thieves, these gardens were heavily fenced using bamboos and iron sticks; thieves were few though, thanks to the efficient rule of the queen, but they WERE present nonetheless; theft, if caught, was punished with the maiming of either of the right limbs, because the right limbs of a man were believed to be the source of almost all of the strength of a human, and those limbs therefore were believed to be often manipulated by Grevil to His advantage; the left limbs were believed to be extremely weak and hence Grevil would not bother to use them, it was thought. Oh and... did I tell you - the thieves were supposed to be the evil minions of - Grevil, obviously!

The gardens - a majority of them anyway, used to grow fresh flowers, fruits - as well as certain varieties of beautiful shrubs which, although useless for they could not bear either fruits or flowers - were planted just for the sake of their beauty - hence, they were often known as 'beauty plants'. The grass was pruned regularly using a sickle made of wood and iron: the handle of the sickle was made of wood, while the sharp curvy blade was made of iron; rich people would often use lawn mowers to do the same job... or to get it done by someone else - of course who else but only someone who is poorer in comparison would do it! The mowers were still human-powered, driven by pedals - they looked the same as the pedals which power a modern bicycle - there were no motors or anything like that back at that time! The mowers looked like cylinder mowers, with the handle and the wheels made of wood, while both the pedals and the sharp blade were made of iron.

Metals and minerals: Till date, iron was the most used metal in this country; steel was not yet invented!

Conveyance: Carts were the primary modes of conveyance here. Bullocks were not used to pull carts - quite unlike what you would think - because those animals were considered to be extremely unreliable and once angry, the bullocks could topple the cart, taking all its passengers down, and then maul them under the wheels of the cart! This old, derelict man I met in Gresimbo some years ago who told me all these - he also told me that this had happened a few times in the long past, which was why they had started using horses exclusively for the pulling the carts; aside from being more temperate in moods, these horses could run much faster than bullocks! Horses were also used for the purpose of traveling on horseback, either for the purpose of hunting (this was usually undertaken by kings or people belonging to the royal family) or a mere leisurely travel!

I don't believe this theory myself: I told him too, that I always thought bullocks, as far as disposition was concerned, were much more reliable than horses! But maybe things were different in this country? Maybe the bullocks were not castrated that's why they were amorously wild, which posed problems for the travelers? Or maybe the person who told me all this was one big ignorant fella? He kept his mouth shut to all these questions (except the last one which I didn't ask him, of course) put forth to him by me one by one. I believe - it is possible that bullocks fell out of favor primarily due to reasons of speed rather than temperament: irrespective of country or region, horses CAN run faster than bullocks, no kidding about that!

Note that animals belonging to this country were NOT hunted, as that would not only violate the law of Nature but also the law of the land; therefore, those who would want to hunt would have to appeal to the king or queen of another country beyond the borders of Gresimbo, who would then offer them a royal pass - a kind of special seal, which in turn would enable them to hunt in that country! Very rarely would a king or queen refuse such request however, because they were afraid of offending and inviting the wrath of the powerful monarch of Gresimbo (the monarch, be it king or queen, was believed to be the most powerful in the entire world; at least - at that time)! And usually, as far as Gresimbo was concerned, only people belonging to the royal family would indulge in hunting!

It did happen once though. The king of Portlanda, a neighboring country, refused to offer the permission of hunting to a royal team from Gresimbo...he was probably a distant relative of Queen Marioke! The argument of the king of Portlanda was that, when he or his people would not be allowed to hunt in the land of Gresimbo - this being against the law of that country, why would he allow the same practice in his country? He even called the queen a hypocrite, snobbish and spiteful woman who always thought lowly of everyone else!

He knew that the queen would soon invade his country anyway due to his misdemeanor - after all, who would tolerate such an open challenge to Gresimbo's power and position! He knew it all, which was why he adopted an offensive strategy by invading Gresimbo on his own; he wanted to take the queen by surprise so that she would not be prepared at all to defend her country; as I told you, the monarch of Gresimbo was considered very powerful, due to the huge size of its army, and therefore, the king of Portlanda did not want to take any chances.

Therefore, he attacked the country when it was least expected - suddenly and during the midnight; the army first tiptoed around the fortress of Gresimbo and only a few of them (formerly belonging to the queen of Gresimbo, but now, having switched loyalties) carried wooden torches with themselves; they did this to reconnoiter the arrangements of the enemy a bit, looking for anything that looks suspicious or dangerous, etc.

Then, very soon, other torch bearers too arrived on foot - er, tiptoed around the area to join the previous torch-bearers - they thought that a fast gallop on horseback would arise suspicions due to the heavy steps of the horses' feet - which even a half-deaf man could not ignore! For the same reason the torches of this second and bigger unit's soldiers were NOT lighted at first; they lighted it by borrowing fire from the previous torch bearers! The army of Gresimbo did not suspect anything at first - hell, even their spies failed to report anything suspicious, as the King's army had used a deep forest as their route - apparently after being advised so by those traitors of Gresimbo (in spite of the fact that there was a cleanly pruned, open field which separated the two countries - you could use it to traverse between the two countries, and in general, most people used that route to come and go to and from Gresimbo - the route of the dense forest being unknown to most; therefore, while that open field area was heavily guarded with specially trained armed soldiers of Gresimbo, in contrast, the dense forest was not expected to merit any such defensive strategy - it being believed to be unknown and impenetrable - except to a few) - a route that was largely underused - and therefore, the number of Gresimbo's soldiers guarding in and around that area were few and far between and most of these soldiers were already killed anyway by the sly general of the king of Portlanda and his approaching army - long before they had reached the fortress of Gresimbo!*****

Me: "*Phew! One chapter is finished. I got started on it alright! I am a bit tired now and my eyes are swollen due to lack of sleep. Now I need to take a rest today - I guess! The rest of the story - about those 'funny rumors' - can wait for another day!*"

TALE OF A DAY AND BEYOND IN THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER!

November 14, 12:15 pm - Me Inside A Train, Going To The City:

Me: "*I see HER in this girl...she has everything my marketplace woman wears...those same tight jeans, same kind of t-shirt, dark sunglasses, etc. Even her haircut is the same one: that short, bob cut. Her figure is extremely...voluptuous...only difference is that her skin color is of darker complexion than my girl's!*"

She is sitting to the seat opposite to me in the train, smiling with an older woman who is sitting just beside her, wearing a sari and also the same kind of black sunglasses -

Me: "*She must be her older sister???"*" -

That jeans-wearing girl looks kinda same as the sari-wearing one - except that the latter's body seems to have a bit more flab than that voluptuous girl -

Me: "*Well, well, well, sister or not! She cannot really be her mother for sure, LOL! She is not THAT old!...The voluptuous girl has got the perfect figure to kill for...she I guess must be working out a lot! Just the way she carries herself -by looking at the way she carries herself -seems like she has got a certain zeal, a special kind of enthusiasm for life in general, always smiling, chatting - something that is not really my specialty!...*"

...She hardly seems to notice me at all, though, so what even if I am sitting only to her seat's left seat! USELESS to sit there! Of course her left eye vision is partially blocked by her older sister's body who is sitting on her left and to my right, and her right eye is blocked by her long black hair tied at her neck's position with a black barrette studded with some red and green jewels - real or false - so what's she gonna see huh? Her older sister - or whoever she is - at least she is smarter - she has a pageboy haircut held by a simple black hairband - so she can at least SEE people dammit, not like this fucking bitc...not as attractive as that girl either...But still, could that long-haired girl not she have looked at me even once?...

...But then, I guess...I guess, women don't make love with people on the run - they don't make out with total strangers, I read that somewhere in some online forums I can't remember now - not unless you are working in the same institution as they are - so the trust woman has in that institution is also passed on to you since you work at the same place. I have read these things somewhere online: those pseudo- 'dating experts' as they call themselves - they write shit like that. Dunno how much truth there is in it...

...But never mind all these impediments - they ONLY are there for ME ONLY - there are people who seem to be able to seduce almost every goddamn woman no matter what, and then there are people like us who merely think and think and cannot act, cannot make our moves, cannot seduce even ONE woman! Shame on men like us! We are even worse than women, I think!...I mean, look at Arnie guy with big muscles...come on, that bastard got to fuck THREE women at a stretch - he fucked his wife, fucked his maid, and fucked some other sexy gal too...

...NO why should I feel sorry for him that his wife left him? Are you kidding? - No, of course not, I don't feel sorry for him at all -I feel rather happy - after all, he got his due - he had it in coming - but conquests he made as well! Not bad! After all, how many men have such luck: fucking a tall voluptuous actress, while also fucking the wife and then the maid...DAMN! Maybe women get seduced by big

muscles - I have none of it, meh! I would give anything for that kind of life even if it happens just once...but what have I got to give anyway...?? No money...no good job...no good looks no good body - NOTHING! So no women in your life either - shouldn't that be OBVIOUS to YOU HUH?!!"

November 14th, 2:15 pm - Me Walking The Street, Heading For The Market:

Peddlers-cum-encroachers sitting or standing on both the left and right sidewalks - shouting at the top of their lungs to sell their wares - shouting at every passing pedestrian in the hope of making that elusive sale! Also, several cars are parked the extreme left and right of the street. Each of the sidewalk is blocked by a row of multitudinous parked cars in such a way that you have to literally look for 'loopholes' - meaning, the narrow space between any two parked cars - to enter the sidewalk from the street beside it, or exit from the sidewalk on to that street! Most of the cars are parked vertically, while the rest are parked in a horizontal manner! Now, while there are indeed spaces between all the parked cars, many of them are too narrow to allow even one slim human body walk through them!

Me: *"It is hard to walk through these sidewalks because the majority of the space on those sidewalks is being occupied by these encroachers! It is even harder to walk through this busy street, given that you have very limited space left to walk in-between the queue of parked cars on the left and the speedily moving automobiles on the right of the street...It is like literally carrying your life in your hands - you make a small slip, just a small, very small mistake - and you lose your life!"*

I am walking past the crowd of early Diwali shoppers in the city - alone - with my head down - not looking at anyone eye-to-eye, not raising my head unless when I see fewer people around and feel there're no sexy girls walking around in tight jeans!...

Me: *"The sidewalks are all crowded with illicit hawkers so I must use the street to walk - all the time - but with caution because..."* -

- Buses and other cars are plying on the same street too and occasionally, I narrowly miss getting knocked down by them!

Me: *"It is not easy to walk through the city especially on the day before the Shashthi of Durga Puja, or the day before Diwali: on one hand you have got hordes of folks who have just arrived to the city from abroad...they work abroad - not necessarily out of the country but certainly out of this state - they have got JOBS, ya know! - They come to meet their families ...and on the other - there are also scores and scores of city-based residents who are out on the street shopping for lamps, candles, gifts, clothes, jewelry, and what not! Then you have got those lottery ticket shops - they are usually were fakes - as far as I know - what else? ...I don't believe in them because I never had any luck with any lottery ticket - neither my father made any fortune with the few he'd bought in his youth..."*

...Of course, I maybe, have bought one or two at most, but I were fated to get a windfall I'd have even with that! ...I am pretty serious these days about where I put my money - my luck won't get any better with even one thousand lottery tickets, I am sure as hell 'bout that! ...If it were that easy then that expensive 13-carat red coral stone ring I had purchased with my hard-earned cash would have worked for me too...but even after its purchase nothing changed in my life - what changed was that I added an extra weight on my finger and on top of that, things only got worse from the day I got it - so I eventually abandoned it! Father did not have any luck either: he had purchased lottery tickets perhaps twice or thrice...it is just that people have a lot of money in their hands when they are out for Diwali shopping and so, these fake lottery ticket sellers want to rake in the moolah, I think - that's all!...

...On Diwali a lot of people actually gamble inside their homes ...Buying lottery tickets is also a minor form of gambling isn't it? I think so... - gambling with your FATE, that is! Maybe you could win, maybe you could lose! Sigh! Well, I don't know, I have mostly been a loser all my life! Some people have even lost their minds because of these lottery tickets; no kidding!"

CUT TO: November 14th, 9:20 pm - Me inside my home:

Mom: "WHY THE HELL DID YOU BRING THAT COCONUT? DID I TELL YOU TO...? WHY DID YOU BUY JUST ONE COCONUT WITH SO MUCH MONEY? DOES IT SUIT US? IT DOESN'T! WE HAVE TO KEEP OUR FINANCES UNDER TIGHT CHECK OR ELSE...FOR YOU - WE WOULD'VE TO GO HUNGRY HALF THE MONTH - PLAINLY DUE TO YOUR LAVISHNESS...I even told your father for this reason not to buy any coconuts at all now - even though he gets them cheaper than what you...!"

Me: "Well, you always just...you know!...I know father gets them cheap but he also gets rotten coconuts sometimes...that is my main concern...Why don't you mention THAT too? I just thought to buy a couple of coconuts and...hopefully they are not rotten - at least, I hope...that is my main concern..."

Mom: "You cannot that way identify whether a coconut is rotten or...not THAT easily - you cannot know if it is rotten or good inside just from just looking at its shell...it is just not possible! Only when you break it into two halves..."

Me: "Well, there must be at least some way...obviously I cannot bring a split coconut from the market...they don't sell 'em...you know no one would sell a broken coconut - moreover other issues are there too - first, my bag would be filled with that oily substance of coconut, and second, it may get rotten through contact with the external moisture - even if it is not already - who knows!...I KNOW they are pricey, but if they are of good quality then I think it is...[pause, then with hesitation] WORTH IT, I think...you don't get good quality things for cheap after all!"

Mom: "We don't NEED good quality OKAY?...we are okay with the cheap ones...at least that saves us some money...we would rather buy readymade sweets from sweetshop than invest money in your high-price coconuts - after all, so much work goes into cooking 'em, grating 'em, then only you get the naru...EVERYTHING HAS TO BE DONE BY ME, TOO!...NEITHER OF YOU moves a muscle...You buy stuff like THAT! - You are some goddamn rich man's kid or what?"

Me: "Readymade 'sugary' sweets - literally like gulping boatloads of table sugar!"

Mom: "So what? You ain't eating them! What do you care?"

Me: "Well all I just wanted to make sure that...that I know I can identify good coconuts from bad ones - reason why I bought these! Just wanna see if they're good stuff or not! That would mean even I can buy these when need to...just like father..."

Mom: "No one's is asking you to BUY coconuts OKAY? If you buy pricey stuff from the city they are BOUND TO BE GOOD without a doubt...that's NO BIGGIE...however, we need to cut coat according to our cloth, you got that? So...I don't really understand why did you BUY these coconuts in the first place...I never told you to...you want to learn? Hehe! For what? Do you think your wife would grate and cook coconuts for you? Make narus for you? Hah! Keep dreaming! You can be goddamn sure that she won't...today's girls don't work...they prefer to stroll and chat...neither can you cook nor grate 'em yourself!"

Me: "*Ha ha ha! I don't HAVE a wife! Would I have one? Ever? Not as long as this bitch and her bitchiness is here!...You haven't ever mentally prepared me for a wife anyway, forget my low finances...If father is the one who only is allowed to buy coconuts in this house, he would be the ONLY one ALWAYS...Make sure of that, YOU...I suppose you can go without coconuts for the rest of your life when he dies someday, hah bitch? Coz you'd HAVE TO if you go on like THIS! He's getting old - you seem to forget that!*"

Mom [sarcastically]: "He he ha ha! You DON'T NEED TO WORRY FOR US SO MUCH OKAY! YOU DON'T NEED TO THINK HOW I WOULD...I never told you to bring coconuts on the first place - THAT'S my point!"

Me: "Even your sugary sweets cost more than this coconut! You don't talk about that!"

Mom: "But at least I don't have to MAKE THEM with my hands! [pause]...so, now you have taken over to making financial calculations for me eh? On my behalf? Maybe you should try to manage

the budget then too, for me, as well...I would be HIGHLY RELIEVED then! I will tell you one LAST TIME, DON'T BRING THOSE EXPENSIVE COCONUTS AGAIN... if you do...

Me: "*In spite of YOUR injunction, that is - fucking dictator you - why don't you add that phrase at the end!*"

Mom: "...you pay them with YOUR OWN bank money from hence...not me! I am running at a financial loss now because of this big purchase made by you!"

Me: "*Coz of just ONE 'big' purchase? Hah! Ridiculous! You want me to believe that?... Loss? Heh! Talk about being hyperbolic! The coconuts cost less than Rs.20 each for fuck's sake - the price of one day's readymade sweets which YOU buy! While the narus you make with just ONE such Rs.20 coconut lasts more than one day! You really DO NEED me as an accountant, coz you are too dumb for the job. You can't even make such easy calculations on your own!!! You can only shout -EASY thing to do, after all!!*"

Mom: "...I have to be VERY much prudent in managing the budget...if your father had brought such pricey coconuts I would have said same things to him! It is only because he brings them cheap that I don't mind his bringing of coconuts...I work HARD to make them, grate them...otherwise, I would rather buy sweets from the sweet shop! Better buy such pricey coconuts when you have a wife and she would cook for you okay?... [In a tone mixed with doubt and sarcasm] MAY BE - IF she WOULD at all do those nicey narus for you that I make...would she EVEN BE ABLE TO?"

Me: "*There are tonnes of sarcasm pervading your entire speech - I can feel it! Don't think I am too stupid to get that, OKAY? But again, isn't that the way you REALLY ARE? You just HATE ME...I know!*"

CUT TO: November 14th, 4 pm:

I am back on the same street now - walking - carrying those heavy coconuts in my hand...I am carrying those coconuts inside a plastic packet... carrying them with my right hand, and when the right hand sometimes gets painful due to the weight of the luggage I switch the packet to the left hand, and vice versa!

Me: "*Motherfucker bus driver! That bus I was in took such a long time to reach the destination...it probably showed me the whole goddamn city just to take me from one place to another, so much so that...*" -

CUT TO - November 14th, 3 pm:

One bus passenger starts mumbling to himself: "Is this bus driver gonna show me the whole city to just take me to the Esplanade area? What a crazy driver!" After mumbling thus for some time, he gets up from his seat, approaches the bus conductor and asks him where the bus is actually heading to and how they plan to take him to his destination - he gets calmer after some explanations from the bus conductor that I cannot not hear.

Me: "*The bus could, sure as well, taken a much shorter route... even from the little I know of this city, I know THAT much! So does the driver, I'm sure - it is all trickery - bid to get more passengers, and even MORE...*"

Several fellow passengers suggest the same several times, but each time the bus conductor simply replies that the route they are talking about is currently a 'no-entry zone'!

Me: "*Oh what an outright lie! But then, what else you expect from such filthy bastards, huh? I can see damn well several small cars plying through those SAME 'no-entry zone' routes - HOW COME? ... The driver is as usual taking the longest possible route for a special purpose: the longer the route, the more traffic crossings and traffic jams they would get into, which means the bus would have to stop*

several times along the route, and the more it stops, the more passengers it would get - something that may not be possible if it takes a shorter route! I know these greedy bastards just too well! To even bother talking to them is just a waste of time and energy!!"

CUT TO - November 14th, 3:39 pm - Me still in Same Bus:

I get up from my seat when I feel that I am somewhat nearer to my destination, and ask the conductor to notify me when my destination comes -

Me: *"I sure as hell don't know this part of the city THAT well...I am not expected to, I don't live here! Do I travel that much less in this area anyway?"* -

He tells me to 'get down here' and -

[10 minutes later]

Me: *"Darn! This place is sooo far AWAY from where I want to go! Fucking conductor told me this is my destination! LIAR! Trying to empty his bus by lying...so he can lure even more passengers by showing them empty seats! Huh! All they care about is your wallet and then they just have to dump you someplace they want without any care for the passenger's plight, that's all! Now I have to walk a loooooong distance to reach my destination. LIAR! I have to carry along those heavy coconuts as well - in my hand - that, compounded with the weight of two kilos of apples I have just purchased, is really telling on me! My back aches! CRAP! I must be carrying more than 4 kilos of weight without even knowing it! Guess I should have never bought these goddamn coconuts in the first place...I never knew I would be in such a mess to begin with!"*

November 15th, 6:20 pm - Me At Home:

Mom is grating one of the coconuts I had bought in order to make narus:

Mom: "This coconut is a nice one though...very smooth...very easy to grate...not like those low quality crap your father brings from the clowns here - they're too small ones - takes much longer to grate 'em...they not as smooth as this one...!"

Me: *Yeah bitch but remember you ain't prepared to pay the price, right? So am not gonna bring you anymore of these!... Well, good no doubt, but then it also costs Rs.20 each. You gotta think about THAT...TOO! NO?...Now it is MY turn to taunt and pass sarcastic comments hah!"*

Mom: "No but...there's also not too many cracks on the finished naru's surface, see? [Shows me a naru] Unlike with those I make from your father's coconuts...there is not that much of husk either on the shell of this...very clean job...the city people are surely the experts in everything...!"

Me: "Yeah the kernel is thicker too...you actually probably get more out of this one coconut than two of those smaller ones father brings. If you pay me Rs.20 then I would definitely...consider...no problem for me bringing them if you pay...Of course I am only paying lip service to highlight mom's miserly attitude...I won't bring any after how you treated me you bitch!"

Mom: "No no, of course not! Without a doubt, these coconuts are out of our budget! Very expensive you see! We cannot buy these types of coconuts ever!"

November 14th, 7 pm - Me At The Railway Station:

Me: *"Tomorrow is Diwali, and...you just gotta take a look at the crowd in this station here. God! Too much, just too much this is!...Every time I go to catch a train that I perceive as empty from a distance - it soon fills up to the brim - with people even hanging - leaning out from the train's entrance*

-There is not even enough space to insert a hair inside the train I suppose! That is because every time I go to catch a train, thousands of people go there running - ALREADY - well before me, and even as I walk toward that train, I am surrounded and crowded by another thousands, resulting in too much of pushing and jostling!... I can hardly walk a foot or two without getting shoved by the crowd at least once or twice - 'C'mon, c'mon, move on, move on...hurry up, hurry up!' - Well this seems to be the common refrain of the people behind me, no matter who it is!...

...Almost everybody here seems to be in a hurry to reach their home at any cost - about by ANY MEANS - the precious time of others don't matter to them - I get that you are in a hurry, but...did someone tell you that I am not also? My time don't matter to you eh?"

One woman complains about being shoved by a young lad when she's walking through the same crowd...the lad is about two feet away from me...she seems to believe that it is a case of molestation and shouts at him "WHY YOU MISBEHAVING WITH ME. HOW DARE YOU! I WILL TEACH YOU A LESSON YOU SEE!"... the perpetrator hardly seems to care however, and continues to shove people away in order to move forward, along with the rest of the crowd -

Me: *"All in order to catch the train, as if - if he misses this train he won't be able to get back home at all! As if there is no more train after this one! Huh!... You just cannot stand idle in this railway station at all...you must keep moving forward...and forward... and forward...even if you want to stand and talk to someone, the crowd behind you won't let you be...No WAY! It would make sure that you keep moving - by pushing you all the time!"*

Then another man - a middle-aged man, with white beard -

Me: *"He probably has attempted to pickpocket that younger man but got caught red-handed"*

- I see that young man is shouting at him "IS THIS WHY YOU COME TO THE STATION HUH? TO DO SUCH THINGS?"

Me: *"But did he actually do that? He might have...No doubt pickpockets are huge here, so I won't be surprised if he is really one..."*

The bearded man leaves in a hurry without a word of protest!

Me: *"Guess that means he is really one of them...got caught, so running away now to save face huh! Were he innocent, he would have...I had to skip three trains for this reason. I wonder whether I would be able to reach home at all. This station just SUCKS! Too many people here - gives me a headache every time I come. You can't move here anywhere freely. Always have to be on your alert! If nothing else, a porter might just blindly ram into you with his huge baggage! Guess I should have never gone to the city just the day before Diwali. Lesson learned! Never again...NEVER!..."*

...Guess I would forever be carrying heavy luggage myself, all my life...I would not get married ever...NEVER...my mom is neither interested in my mental development nor my well-being, or I would have been married off by now and hadn't stayed a bachelor...THE UNFUCKED ONE too - at that!...Forever it would be carrying loaded baggage for me! That's all! Like these apples and coconuts today, something else tomorrow there would be! There would be no one at my home waiting for me...noo one, eagerly...not someone who loves me...no, I don't mean these crazy parents of mine - they don't love me at all - I know they only pretend to...someone who would make my home coming after so much tribulations worth it - I wish I had someone like that...if only...then all the struggles I have to go through here to reach home would have been worth it...then, it all would've been worth the struggle!"

November 14th, 5:30 pm - Me at the sweet shop:

Me: *"There is just too much crowd in here...this sweet shop in the heart of the city. In this air-conditioned shop, you have to stand in a queue and wait hours for your turn, at which time you make*

the payment, get a receipt, then go to the other counter, wait again hours for your turn...thank goodness today there's no queue at all!...How quickly you would get served at that other counter depends on how long your hand is - just extend your hand containing the receipt so as to grab the attention of the guys at the counter - and they would then deliver the goods, err, sweets, to you! Seems like the number of staff working here is less than one-third of the crowd of customers it has!"

[After I am finished telling the list of sweets I want - to the first counter's guy sitting with a laptop on his desk]

Me: "How much?"

The counter guy: "And nothing else? Only this much?"

Me: "Yep! *What the fuck you think I'm rich?*"

The counter guy: "Need any carry bag? Extra Rs.2 (0.03 USD) applies for that!"

"Nope, none needed. I have got carry bag! *Fucking thieves! Charging even for plastic carry bags...and getting AWAY with it even! Just tell people they are eco-friendly recyclable bags as mandated by the government - and that making them is getting expensive, and charge customers anything you want, right? Aren't your sweets too expensive already? Rs.225 for only 14 sweets! Goddamn! And charging Rs.2 too on top for such small bags you should give way FREE! This country seems to suck more and more with every passing day! EVERYONE is becoming a hardcore capitalist here! Where would the POOR go if everything, all the good stuff starts to cater to the rich guys only?"*

The counter guy: "Okay then...pay total Rs.225 (3.7 USD)"

[10 minutes later]

I see one customer at that other counter asking: "Would you ever deliver the goods to me at all?" and one among the red-and-white uniform-wearing staff frustratingly but nonchalantly nods at him with his heading in a slant position - it seems to me that he is neither looking at the customer at his back nor the wall on his front, but somewhere in-between - and replies "Please wait some time!" and then the customer shoots back "I have BEEN waiting here since ages..."... The staff, however, does not wait to listen to him and goes inside a cabin, apparently to deliver another customer's order! A second customer tells another member of the staff: "Please make sure all the rasogollas you deliver me are all newly made!" and he shoots back "WHEREFROM YOU THINK I WOULD GET OLD RASOGOLLAS FROM?" -

Me: "*I guess he wants to say that they have so many sales that stocking up old stuff here is an impossibility!...Heh, charging high prices and treating customers in such shabby and rude manner. Now, ain't that true customer service?...Well customer's fault really. They don't protest, they don't claim their rights, they accept everything like stooges! THAT'S why this country is going down the toilet!*"

November 14th, 10:00 am - At Home:

Me: "*There was some talk between my mom and father about getting a monthly ticket done at a big discount. Someone - a former employee of the railways promised that to father - they both, being retired - he empathized with father - or so, father thought! Father wanted the monthly ticket for himself really, so he could resume going out more often as he used to - which my mother had postponed due to... MONEY issues! Father has always been more interested in spending than saving money, as a matter of fact! Father eventually said that maybe the monthly ticket would be more suitable for me coz I have to go out to the city a lot more often for essential shopping; mom agreed to that!...*

...There is of course one main reason why father befriended this guy - even if accidentally! He was

only a bit younger than father - judging from father's descriptions...I have never seen the man with my own eyes - and at first father said he claimed to have been divorced...After all, father had a divorce too, many years ago, so he possibly has sympathies for this newfound 'friend' of his...father could empathize with this man easily! He would talk to us about his divorce thing for several days after he first met this man - about how his wife - allegedly - cheated on him and befriended a neighbor in the same Muslim community, slept with him, blah blah, and subsequently she asked for a divorce from this man, etc....All that same old talk for days on end used to drive my mom crazy, so that one day she shouted in disgust: 'Now how many times do you think you have to tell me the SAME story over and over again! I am bored of hearing it. Better keep it to yourself!'"

As I enter the house - returning back from my shopping, I can hear some talk going on between 'em already.

Mom: "No that is a downright lie. You can't do that! You neither worked at a factory nor you get so little amount of pension. Your pension is much more...if there were any such VALID schemes for retired government clerks like you then it were okay then...no, but that is like downright fraud...what would happen once they get to know the real thing...your pension would be cancelled totally, that's what!...And all for a monthly ticket! Why did not you tell him straight 'I thought you were talking about a legit scheme, not this...!' You befriend this guy because you had a case similar to him, BUT that's between just you and him! I won't be doing anything with fraud, nor let anyone do it!"

Father: "Hey, do let me complete my statement at least! You keep cutting me off midway!... I didn't befriend him. You are talking stupid...shooting in the dark without knowing incidents fully. HE befriended me on the contrary!"

Mom: "Yeah? What! I know damn well what you are going to say!"

Father: "NO...listen...he says that there is a 99% chance that the officials won't be verifying any of these details with us...or of their asking any documents from us for that matter...now, just IN CASE they do, I got to tell them that I used to work in a factory and that now my son goes to work in the same factory...that's all to it, and that he commutes by train so he needs the discounted monthly ticket - that's all!"

Mom: "But that is not the truth! Neither of you has anything to do with working in a factory!"

Father: "Well, chances are that - as he said - we won't be grilled about it at all!"

Mom: "Tell him that we don't need anything by duping the government. Don't need his favors through illicit methods! IF you get caught, it would be DISASTROUS FOR US...YOU KNOW THAT?"

Father: "You are getting hyper unnecessarily!"

Mom: "NOPE. I only want the truth to be told. If you don't then...then I would tell...I would go by myself at the railway office and tell them all - the whole truth...if there is any such legit scheme of discounted monthly tickets for the poor government employees like you, let it be offered based on FACTS - why speak falsehood?"

Father: "Well, okay...I would tell him then that we don't need this discounted monthly railway ticket, okay? I would tell him that, no problem!"

Me: "I agree. If it were me, I would just say 'NO' to him right away on his face. It is not okay to do things by fraud...they don't last!...*Sure, rich people may get richer by duping the government and do so with impunity, but the poor people seldom get rich by committing fraud and even if they try to, they always get caught - RED-handed!*"

Mom: "Yeah, that's what I was telling your father... I think he should just tell him that we don't need anything to be done by fraud - that such an offered had already been made by another fellow to us - and that's the truth also - that we had refused him for SAME reason: it was in fact from him only that I became aware of a scheme of discounted monthly ticket offered by the railways - long before your father told me today...it's nothing new, but it is available only to people working at the small-scale factories here!"

Father: "As a matter of fact, I or you don't even need to tell THIS MAN anything at all!...I think he won't be actually doing our monthly ticket for us anyway...he has only SUGGESTED me to go to such and such department in the railway office which is where the monthly ticket would be made available to us, he said - after going through the necessarily formalities - whatever they may be... they would ask us all the details probably anyway, and then, at that time...I know they WOULD for sure!...We can tell the truth there and then to them I think...how does that sound?"

Me: "Yeah, that sounds sensible enough to me. There is no need to tell anything to this fellow!"

Father: "Yeah, if you ask me we can entirely ignore this fellow. Let him babble whatever he wants to, from now on; we don't need to lend any ear to him...he's crazy you know, just plain crazy...Don't bother with his silly talk!...Just you think about it - first he told me he does not pay any alimony to his ex-wife at all and now he says that he's been paying alimony for the past eight years to her and there's now also a new lawsuit filed by her paramour and his family in order to raise the amount of alimony...naturally then there's no need to give him any kind credence - to his TALK!...He's got a disturbed mind you see, in all probability! We can go to the railway office ourselves, can't we?...On our own FEET - without letting this fellow even get any hint of our doings - and tell them the whole truth. If after listening to the whole thing, they make the scheme available to us, so be it!"

Me: "*What is this 'US' all about? He would be babbling to you only if he does so again, not to me or mom!...How does 'WE' come here huh? He approached first YOU only, idiot that you are, to believe in just about anything anyone tells you BUT us...he approached no one else among us!*"

November 14th, 9:10 pm - Me At Home:

Father [in a non-serious tone]: "Well, heh let us stop this argument, shall we! At least he has brought a couple of nice coconuts for us...he works a lot hard for us you see...brings us a lot of goodies by going to faraway places...we gotta to appreciate that...the coconuts look good, from what I can tell!"

Me: "*Are you being sarcastic or what - I wonder??!!*"

Mom: "YOU SHUT UP! You'll ALWAYS be greedy whenever you spot any good food! How much did you ever earn from your job anyway huh?"

November 14th, 11:00 pm - Me At Home:

Mom: "My father never would buy railway tickets...you know - never bought ONE, ever...he would board a train without a ticket...he did like that his entire life...every time a ticket checker would catch on him, he would reply with the same tired...'I am a retired railway staff!' But that was NOT TODAY! THIRTY YEARS AGO! Maybe even MORE! Things may not be same now! He might have gotten off the hook THAT easily if it were now!"

Me: "Retired railway staff?"

Mom: "Yeah...my father used to work in the railways long back...did you not know?"

Me: "Well...yeah, you told the story...so...and he then quit it for becoming a schoolmaster right?!"

Mom: "Yeah...FOOL that he was...just like your father is one fool, mine was another - he used to get so many perks while working for the railways...he foolishly quit such a cushy job... we would have been much better off, much richer if he hadn't quit...anyway, once it happened that this ticket collector, perhaps the only one to do that - he actually refused to let him get away with that excuse and took him to his superior officer - so that he could instruct him 'bout what to do with his man!"

Me: "So they got him eh? Then they took him in the lock-up?... So he got caught huh?"

Mom: "No...listen, the superior official got embarrassed when my father told him the whole story about his past job and...my father also said that he could verify all the details if he wants to - about his being an ex-railway employee - if he wants to...he can call anyone he wants for the sake of verification - even his former office boss..., etc....then the official got embarrassed and told the ticket collector: 'SHIT! What have you done! What the hell you have done for God's sake! He's an old man - a RETIRED man. Everybody has to retire one day! Everybody's day comes - even WE would be retired

at some point...then someone else would hold us up for same reason too...how would that look like you think? We would then be in the same position as this man! So my father was let off after that and he never got caught again in life...until his death! But then he was an ex-railway employee, so he got spared so easily...your father ain't one, so they would definitely not treat him that leniently...and maybe they would get you too, and put both of you in the lockup - soon as they nail down this fraud method through which your father was trying to prepare this discounted monthly railway ticket... the railways are pretty strict otherwise...once this man boarded a long distance train and when the ticket collector asked why did not he have the proper ticket, he told the ticket checker he could not buy the proper railway ticket as he was getting late and was afraid that he would miss the train - then the ticket collector replied 'So, that means out of fear of missing the train, you'd board a first class compartment when you actually have an ordinary compartment's ticket? That what you mean?' And then he was fined a biggie - RIGHT THEN AND THERE!"

Me: "Yup, I know...er, I guess I was there too...yeah I think I can recall..."

Mom: "Father had a good job still - even his school teacher job wasn't that bad. We had good veggie and fish markets over there, pretty good fishes we could get there ya know?...Coz he got a lot of students coming to his home for group coaching - he was a GOOD student himself after all! So his income was good! But then my sister's hand got injured terribly - when she was coming to the bathroom on ground floor - we were tenants on the first floor in that house, but had no bathroom in that room...the steps were also bad - they had no railings either left or right...IMAGINE A LITTLE KID LIKE HER GOING THROUGH ALL THOSE STEPS, DAY AFTER DAY AFTER DAY! How could she...I was even younger...that day was just...she fell off the steps...she SLIPPED...so her hand broke. We had no good hospitals there, so the whole family had to relocate to the far-off city temporary...THAT'S why it is important to live near to the city - the nearer, the merrier! My father had to literally forget about his school job due to this mess. That was how his job was gone - lack of attendance!"

Mom: "Your father is such an IDIOT! If someone someday inquires about this whole thing someday he would tell the truth that he's a retired pensioner, rather than an unemployed guy...not that anyone would believe that such an old man can be unemployed - unemployed FOR SO LONG! Huh! Who'd believe THAT! Still you're young so at least if you say you're unemployed that sounds more convincing!...He would probably ask your father 'Sure you have no job now but you USED TO DO something didn't you?' He would then spill the beans. The inquiry team might sit RIGHT inside the railway ticket counter, WHO KNOWS! Who knows, his pension maybe canceled automatically! Then what? Why take the risk for such small thing? He cannot even fake it convincingly. When he fakes it, everyone can see the truth!"

Me: "Not that anyone ever inquires about anything, in this country! Or it would have gone places!"

Mom: "CAN YOU GUARANTEE THAT?"

Me [bewildered]: "What?...No...yeah but who knows about the future, yeah, you're right! I had it from the railway counter guys that this monthly ticket is only for the lower order employees...you know, people who work for trifling amount of wages...THOSE people are only eligible...which cuts out retired or even unemployed...New monthly ticket costs Rs.160 (2.56 USD) per month, by the way, the UN-Discounted one of course - they told me!"

Mom: "Wow! Rs.160!! DAMN! See how ALL prices keep shooting UPWARDS?"

Always!...STILL the unemployed COULD be given some consideration. They would understand... BUT A RETIRED PENSIONER CANNOT BE CALLED UNEMPLOYED!"

November 15th, 9:30 am - Me At Home:

Father: "You shouldn't take note of these things like that...you are only counting the number of coins (small change coins) I paid to others...not the number of coins I brought in...NOW THAT'S JUST

PLAIN UNFAIR - you know...you are talking about the number of coins I gave away for buying stuff, but not the ones..."

Mom: "Whoa! So what? My son brings in MORE small coins than you...but he does not spend them like that...like you...you gave that man EIGHT coins and he did not even give you ONE coin - did you notice that?...That's the difference between you and others...you give but others don't give you...and in fact that was how you used to spend away all those small coins on your OWN purchases and then you would conveniently blame it on our shopping practices and whatever we asked you to buy for us...when it was actually YOUR OWN FAULT...total MISMANAGEMENT!"

Father: "Dear I KNOW there's a crisis regarding the...shortage of small coins - I know that...if is not that I don't know that but if I don't pay him those coins then he would ask me to let him keep the change and then it would be on me to make sure I get it back from him by buying something else in future...coz he would NOT remember anything - he never remembers, I know that for sure...nobody remembers nothing - they all expect YOU to remember everything!...Anyway, forget it! Small matter! People don't usually take note of such small things - but you do...and since you do...nothing can be done 'bout it!"

Mom: "Small matter to YOU maybe! EVERYBODY takes note - EVERYBODY - except you. See? He did not give you ONE SINGLE SMALL COIN...see that?"

Father: "I said, forget it! Let's leave it at that! People usually ignore such things...but since you don't, what can be done!"

Mom: "I AM trying to leave the argument but then you keep starting it all over again...don't think I'm gonna keep my mouth shut and listen to just about whatever crap you tell me - without me shooting you back okay!"

[Father leaves the room in haste, goes into another room!]

November 15th, 8 am - Me At Home:

I am sleeping on bed - inside a mosquito net!

Mom: "Why you wrapping that towel over your head? Feeling cold, hey? Poor fella! You put your body through too much torture anyway...UN-countable tortures!"

November 15th, 9:30 am - Me At Home:

Mom: "HEY - YOU EMPTIED THOSE BUCKETS???...YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO FILL THEM UP! DID NOT YOU SEE THEM EMPTY? DO I HAVE TO DO THAT TOO HUH? EXPECTING ME TO DO THAT TOO? I HAVE TO DO EVERYTHING IN THIS HOUSE...EVERYTHING...NOBODY DOES A DAMN THING HERE...NO BODY MOVES A MUSCLE...EVERYTHING HAS TO BE DONE BY ME ONLY...DID NOT YOU SEE THOSE EMPTY BUCKETS? YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO REPLENISH THEM BACK WHEN THE WATER SUPPLY CAME!"

Me: "*As if I am gonna wait, sitting inside my bathroom, wait for that special hour when the water from municipal supply comes, do nothing in the meantime, right? Yeah I would fill them up when I am done with my current online job okay? And you better not show much attitude to me or I will do NOTHING AT ALL...not even what I CAN!*"

November 15th, 1 pm- Me At Home:

Father is pruning and plucking the grass from the lane just beside our house with a sickle. An old lady wearing a white sari - one of our neighbor's tenant -

Me: "*With whom we ACTUALLY talk - well, all except me, though father speaks to her more often than my mom...*"

- She starts passing comments:

Old Lady: "You seem to be doing this quite often I see!"

Father [starts to pluck out grass with bare hands]: "Well...this is not something that you can do once and then forget about doing it right? It is just like beard: it grows even AFTER you had a shave... it keeps growing and growing no matter how many times you shave in a day...but the beard would stop growing when the person is dead...likewise, since these grass and shrubs are very much alive in spite of my pruning and cleaning, they keep on growing...so, someone has to do it, you know!"

Mom: "After all, you don't use this lane as much as we do...so it is in OUR best interests to keep this place clean, for convenient walking...or it would soon become a haven of insects and snakes you know!"

OLD Lady [dimwittedly - with an air of uncertainty]: "Yeah...well I suppose you and I could go to the councilor...ask him to send some of his men to do this for us, here? Maybe?"

Father: "What would happen with just two people complaining? He won't care for just the TWO of us! The WHOLE neighborhood has to go - WOULD IT? If that were possible then maybe...but who would go with us?...Who would? You tell me! With us? Can you persuade [pointing his right hand's index finger at all the neighboring houses] all these people to go along us too? And appeal to the councilor for this place to be cleaned? It is their job, there's no doubt, but they are not doing it, so I have to! Or else the alternative is that...if someone would pay up... even Rs.10 (0.16 USD) per household would be enough to hire men for this job...but nobody would do that either as far as I know!"

Old lady: "Well I will pay...Rs.10 isn't asking for too much really!"

Father: "But AGAIN, only you and I would pay, I know - that just won't cut it! Who else would? What about the others here? Would others pay as well? Can you guarantee that with any kind of surety? Else what would happen with such a small amount? At least 50 people need to donate that SAME amount for this job to get done!"

Old Lady: "Well I just see you doing it quite often so that's why..."

Father [stops plucking grass and turns his head at her, irritated]: "No NOT often...I certainly don't do it as often as you say...I do it just when I NEED to!"

The old woman turns right and goes inside her house without a word.

Mom: "I don't really understand why this old woman is fussing so much when she does not even use this lane to come or go to her house...it is US...it's us who have to use this route all the time to get out or get in our house...it is WE who have to walk through those annoyingly long blades of grass under our feet! We are justified in cutting them for good!"

Father: "Actually...[plucking out some more grass with bare hands] the real story, you see, is different! Ever since I have refused to clean her place - by cutting a grassy overgrowth...there was a lot of grass there at her place - but why should I clean it for nothing...you ought to hire men yourself if you want your place to get cleaned, ain't that fair?...I refused her saying that I have no time...since then I think she's grown crazy, irritating...more so now because the landlord has asked her to move out since he would be selling off the house soon!"

Mom: "I believe differently! Truth is that she and her family used to all throw all kind of rubbish, disposable items in this lane - hiding them all is so easy under that dense grassy undergrowth...if this place not cleaned up, and remains like a dense forest, then it would be easy for her and her folks to keep throwing crap like that without getting noticed or suspected. But they cannot do that same thing if this place remains clean...it is not anyway necessary for you to reply or take heed of what she says, YOU HEAR!...Let her say what she says, just keep your mouth shut and ignore her...let her babble whatever...!"

Father: "Yeah right...you're right! I would do that from now on...that is the best option I think, for she could start babbling like that again in future - I know that she WOULD, GUARANTEED - every time I'd clean this place, cut away the grass here...you are right...therefore it is best not to reply her back..."

Me: *"Heh, you and not replying back!!! Doubtful that would EVER happen! I HIGHLY doubt it! Anyone who knows you well would know that you simply cannot resist the temptation of talking...you actually like to keep talking, talking at length...you just LOVE to talk...nor can you keep yourself from replying back to whatever anyone says, even if it is just trash talk!...Do you EVEN HAVE the ability to differentiate between quality and trash talk anyway, to begin with?...Hence, this cycle would go on - am quite sure of that!..."*

Father: [after a pause, to mom] "I have been trying to figure out for a while why my back is itching continuously...then I opened my vest and took a look at its inner part and I saw a shiny hologram sticker there, he he...guess that's what was making me uncomfortable...I plucked it out and now the discomfort is gone!"

November 15th, 11 am- Me At Home:

Mom [to me]: "See what your father has done...this is what I keep picking from this room...here and there, everywhere, there are just...see? [Showing me a nose pick] SHIT! I think I have to wash my hand now with soap...he does not believe me if I tell him that he does this...now you saw it too, right? THIS IS the type of man he IS! Got it? I CLEAN the WHOLE house and he KEEPS making it dirty all the time, dammit! He does not help me clean it...on top of that, he makes it dirtier every time he can!"

November 14th, 7:45 pm - Me At The Railway Station:

Loads of idols of goddess Kali are being unloaded from the train which I had boarded for returning home.

Me: *"Guess that is what has added to an already overcrowded train! Worthless idols...stupid idol worship that everybody indulges in here...would you believe these mere fucking idols would turn 'holy gods' once they are 'worshipped' with flowers...heh! Idolatry makes me cringe!"*

November 14th, 8:15 pm - Me Approaching Home:

I am walking through a narrow lane and am almost near home. Some homes here have lighted candles on their porches...

Me: *"It is Diwali, but rarely I see diyas burning these days...guess it is because ghee has only gotten costlier during the last few months, so much so that people hardly get to eat enough ghee, let alone spend them on lighting Diwali lamps! And then...argh! Look at THIS house - perhaps out of the all in the whole neighborhood - these people have spent probably the least amount of money possible! Hah! They have put on just a huge garland made of tiny, cheap plastic bulbs on their porch, but even with so many of them, these bulbs...seems that they don't emit enough light to even light the tiny porch of the house, let alone this lane adjacent to their house! Otherwise at least it would have helped lighten this dark lane for me - even if for just this ONE day!"*

November 14th, 11:30 pm - Before We Are About to Sleep:

Mom [at the sound of loud crackers being dropped close to our house, by we don't know who - the bursting of crackers seems continuous and refuses to stop]: "NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES THE NEWSPAPERS HAVE REPORTED CASES OF SOUND POLLUTION, INJURY, DEAFNESS AND WHAT NOT! ALL DUE TO THESE CRACKERS - THE MORE THEY REPORT IT, THE MORE THESE PEOPLE KEEP BURSTING THESE CRACKERS IN HUGE NUMBERS - NON-STOP! THEY NEVER LISTEN TO ANYTHING...NEVER TAKE HEED ANY ADVICE! THEY DEFINITELY GOING TO GIVE OLD PEOPLE HERE A HEART ATTACK IF THEY KEEP ON

DOING THIS SHIT LIKE THIS!"

November 15th, 10 am - Me At Home:

Mom: "The narus have become very smooth too...they know when it is right time to pluck a coconut, don't they?...Those city people...The people here - in contrast - ripen the coconut too much and pluck it in its last old stage, so they don't make very smooth narus... the narus from local coconuts always seem to be broken or cracked at places!"

Me: "Yeah, and these narus are very tight too, don't you see!...Yumm...tastes good as well!...*You saying it as if the city-based seller I bought them from actually plucked those coconuts heh! They get it from village farmers LOL! DO I have to tell you that too?*...And quite hard as well, but not too hard that you can't even bite - just like a REAL naru should be. I haven't had such narus ever since our huge tree stopped offering us those nicey coconuts...these crappy ones that father buys from the local market are cheap and low quality coconuts...you're right - that's why hence they make low quality narus. But then again you won't pay me Rs.20 so...or else I could bring two such coconuts for you next time I...!"

Mom: "No no...of course we cannot afford such expensive coconuts I told you. We are very poor, you know! [pause]..."

Me: "*Yeah right, 'poor' in the mindset and a miser at heart - that is the best way to describe you!*"

Mom: "...Besides, you eat so many expensive sweets already anyway, why do you need to eat narus on top of that? You don't need to eat narus...not in spite of such expensive sweets you bring home frequently [pause]...These narus can be eaten much faster too!"

Me [tauntingly]: "Why not! The more you pay up, the better quality you get always! *Oh, I don't need to eat narus right? Okay! I WON'T eat them at all, then! Only YOU would eat them from now on! I got my pride okay? YOU make and YOU ONLY eat them - that would sure make you happier! Then you will know what it is to fuck with me like this!...Shit! I wish I could just stay true to my decision...but I know I won't be able to...I would break my vow, as usual, and start eating those nice narus again after just a couple of days of forced abstinence! I KNOW it, for the temptation too hard to resist!... Can't even buy such newly made, sticky, nice narus form the market at any price! But I won't tell her that, else she would get even more obnoxious... You think she doesn't know already? HAH! She is not as idiotic as father!!"*

PHANTASY 2 -RUMORS

Me: "*Oh! Shit! It is time again for me to write that goddamn novel again! No idea what I would write today about! It is like now I just HAVE to write something I know - on EVERY fucking day from now on...even if I don't feel inspired...even if my idea bank is blank!*"

***** In Gresimbo, one day, during the magic hour, an old man reportedly saw this when passing by the area walking on a stick - four men were seen walking up to a distance - from where Queen Marioke's huge golden palace could be seen but was about thirty feet away. The palace had four huge pillars at the entrance: pillars which looked like the pillars of Bassai's Temple Of Apollo but were golden in color! Adjacent to the palace was the queen's garden - on the front side of the palace's building.

Three of the men were wearing white caps with brown stripes; the other man was wearing the same kind of cap but with black stripes! All these caps were conical in shapes and tartan in patterns. They were all made of woven wool! Man1, Man2 and Man3 had brown skin color; Man 4 had black complexion! Legend has it that this short, hunchbacked old man perceived something fishy in such a weird meeting of people of different skin colors and decided to hid himself for eavesdropping - behind

a tree which was about four feet away from that place, and then he passed on this news to his sons when he got back home, and that was supposedly how everybody came to know of it - when those four sons of the old man spread this news like wildfire throughout the whole country - in all the four directions!

Man1: "So, you think that now, would not the war happen?"

Man2: "Does not seem like it would!"

Man1: "What really happened? Did the queen play a trick on that king or what?"

Man2: "I believe...maybe...she did - MAY be...the rumor has it that the king has fallen in love with the queen...!"

Man1: "Ha-ha-ha...very funny indeed!...Funny piece of rumor...I wonder how much truth is in it..."

Man2: "Well I don't really know...but if there is any..."

Man 3 [interrupting Man2]: "Then it can at least explain why the war has not been waged yet, otherwise it would've been...were the king imprisoned, one would have guessed something else but...my sources say the king is seen roaming freely with the queen in the garden! Now that should tell any intelligent man something anyway, right?"

Man1: "Well...I certainly hope that she does not become a political ally of the king. I mean - I certainly would not want that king to be our godhead, come what else may. We love our queen, don't we? She is gentle and kind! Who knows what the king is like...he sure does not seem to be a good man to me!"

Man3: "Yes I am with you on that! If that ever happens you can bet your home's slabs that I would leave this country forever and go far - far away...but I certainly hope it does not happen...I hope so! Let's all hope together for the better, alright?"

Man2: "AND then again the rumor may be false after all...perhaps they are having a political discussion about how to amend the situation...some kind of *reconciliation* talk maybe? Who knows, perhaps the king has realized his folly and apologized to our queen...maybe she is returning the favor by showing him her kingdom - in and around...she is very kind indeed!"

Man4: "She is just a bit of a snob that's all...very spiteful woman...she is probably getting her fill by showing the king her beautiful kingdom... way to demean the king in his own eyes!"

Man1: "I humbly disagree with you...as far as I know - the queen is not anything like that...I believe you must be mistaken!"

Man4: "I do not think so...but if you are right, then I am obviously wrong!"

Man3: "What is the matter with you? Do you have a problem with...do you have any gripe to settle with the queen or what? If you have got a personal problem then don't vent your anger on the queen...!"

Man4: "I haven't got any personal problem...maybe YOU have...NO, it is just that..."

Man1: "We all love our queen...if you don't, we would report you to the queen if you linger any further here...we consider it treason to speak against the queen...especially a GENTLE queen - at that!"

Man4 [smiling sardonically]: "Well well well - 'gentle' queen, now, is she? Yes, right! I did not know that certainly!"

[Man4 goes away]

Man2: "Some fellow huh! Just look at him in his eyes! He must be trying real hard to impress upon us by disagreeing with us...these black colored people always have got blackish minds for sure!"

Man1: "No doubt...color mirrors the mind!"

Man2: "Ha-ha-ha...yes, very well said!"

Man3: "My guess is that perhaps one of his family members got punished by the queen for some crime...so, that would explain why he might be harboring a grudge against the queen...But anyway, I am only guessing...!"

Man2: "It is not okay to make blind allegations like that...have you got any proof of the same?"

Man3: "No...But you are also judging him saying he has got the same mind as his skin color...do you think that is a nice comment either? You then accuse ME of...talk about hypocrisy!"

Man1: "Black people are always bad...there's not an iota of doubt...everyone knows it! There is a reason why we don't mix with them!"

Man3: "And have you got PROOF of that one too or just it is a 'BLIND ALLEGATION' as he says, ha ha!?"

Man2: "Look!...I really don't get it why we are arguing among ourselves...I think we were discussing the point of the queen...let us all get back on to that topic now, shall we? I think we were discussing about..."

Man1: "Yes, we were discussing about why the war was suddenly postponed!"

Man2: "Yes, right...until that black bastard came along and disrupted us! But of course it is good... very good if the war does not really happen! I just hope that it is not like a short lull before an impending storm!"

Man3: "Well now that he is gone, that we can resume our discussion I believe, right?"

Man2: "Very well so...but is there anything else left to say at all? No point in rambling endlessly: we've all got our chores to do after all - I sure have...don't know about you people..."

Man1: "By the way do you know what happened to the queen's husband? I last saw him alive before I went abroad for an important personal task of mine!"

Man2: "As far as I know...he was not a very nice king..."

Man1: "Yes, I know that, but what I really want to know is..."

Man2: "What you really want to know is what happened to the king..."

Man1 [smiles]: "Yes right - exactly! I see you remember quite well, ha ha!"

Man2: "Well...to be honest...I don't know much about it either..."

Man1: "Well...please tell me just about whatever you know it is...anything at all, please...just go on...I am very curious...I have not been here that long, you know, which is why I am wanting to know..."

Man3: "Yeah, I am also interested in getting the whole truth. Till date I have known only half-truths!"

Man2: "Ha ha...And what makes you think I know all the FULL truths, huh? Well anyway...as far as I know, the queen and king did not have any child for a long time. Then, one fine day, I heard that she was pregnant - ALL OF A SUDDEN - you get that? I...in fact I believe we all subjects were very happy for the couple though, thinking that finally...the throne has finally got an heir and would not thus be delivered to the foreigners upon the death of the king and queen. Well that was not to be! The king suspected the queen to be having an affair...of course he had his reasons...the king was away for a considerable period of time...away, on some war - that was when she got pregnant...so...anyway...it was just suggested...I don't know the whole truth..."

Man3: "So what really happened to that child...? Was he never born?!"

Man2: "No, of course not! He was not born. He was killed in the womb, they say. The king forced the queen to do so! Using some special rituals of some sort I heard!"

Man1: "How? And what rituals?"

Man2: "I really don't know the details...no...no idea...but I am sure that...as far as I can remember...People say that Grevil was involved in it in some way!"

Man3: "What?? Grevil!"

Man2: "Yes, but to be honest, I really don't know much about it...it was some very bad rituals...some very dark, very dark and awful stuff I think!"

Man1: "I see...must be what they call black magic in Kemet!"

Man2: "Oh! That desert country? How did you know about them? Ever went there?"

Man1: "Yes sure I have been there a couple of times in the past...people there practice it a lot...But I never really understood why or what is the point of it...BUT now I know!"

Man2: "Well I go to go now...so I better go...I have to clean my house tonight! You see, my better half - she has gone on a special tour abroad...so...it is totally on ME to do the housecleaning and stuff!"

Man1: "Hey wait! Please you don't leave the story incomplete. What happened to the king? How did he die? Pray tell!"

Man2: "Look, I promise I would tell you the rest of the story tomorrow sometime - as far as I know about it, at least. But now I need to rush really!"

[As Man2 tries to walk away, Man1 and Man3 grab both the arms of Man2, as if begging him to stay, and refusing to let him go away!]

Man2 [shocked]: "Well what now?...You won't let me go? Look I got work, I TOLD you guys!"

Man1 and Man3 [in unison]: "NOOOOOOOO! Story first must be first done with!"

Man2: "Okay, okay...[reluctantly] well it is all hearsay really, I warn you, so don't exert too much brain on what I am saying, got it? I already told you, I don't know anything more about the queen. What I DO know is that the minister with whom the queen allegedly had an affair - he later on killed the king by sneaking into his bedroom one night...and then he killed himself - too! I think he did that out of remorse for his heinous deed and also out of sorrow...word is that he had hoped his illegitimate child would be the future king - that the queen would somehow manage to fool the king into believing that the child is his blood...but, after all these happened, all hope was obviously lost! Since then the queen is leading the life of a lonely widow...a loveless life, I believe, if you ask me."

Man3: "Alright! Now...can someone explain to me how...the unborn child could really be killed by Grevil? Exactly what ritual..."

Man2: "I am not exactly sure if Grevil was directly involved with the ritual but...so is what people here say...[with some hesitation] I think that, with Grevil, anything is possible, really! [pauses to think] Well, but again I am not fully sure if that black magic thing has anything to do with Grevil. What ritual was it I don't know! I am only telling you what I have heard from the folks here!...How did they make that connection though, between Grevil and the killing?"

Man3: "You said it!"

Man2: "Oh...I DON'T say anything at all...I said that people say so...maybe you don't hear so good sometimes..."

Man3: "Well I thought you said that...I think they tend to habitually attribute just about anything bad, black or devious to...they believe that such things have obviously got to be having something with Grevil, don't you think so, anyway? I mean - who else? What do you think?"

Man1: "So what do YOU think?"

Man2: "About what?"

Man1: "I mean about the war...?"

Man2: "Oh...[after a pause] What I think? Okay! I will tell you what I think...Like I said, it doesn't seem to be happening anytime now...I think the war is going to be called off now...there is going to be a truce, hopefully...We can hope for the best, but of course, only time will tell..."

Man3: "Yes, right you are...only Time knows everything...we mere human beings can only make wild guesses!"

[Man5 enters - he's of brown color]!

Man5: "As long as the queen has her charm and the king got his desire...how can they fight at all? IMPOSSIBLE! They have no reason to - is it not so?"

[Man5 exits. Man2 rushes toward Man5 but the latter has already vanished into nowhere, so he stops after running a couple of feet!]

Man2: "Hey wait, here, here, wait...what did you just say now? Say that HERE, IN FRONT OF US, YOU HEAR? Are you afraid of confronting us? Too scared to tell it in front of us, are you? Right? WHY ARE YOU GOING AWAY? STAY HERE, you cheap bastard!"

Man1: "You all better forget about him my friends...there will be always people like him who are jealous and spiteful of others...no matter how good the king or queen may be!"

Man3: "Yes very true!"

Man2 [coming back close to Man1 and Man3]: "Well I would now want to take leave of you, my

friends!"

Man1 and Man3 [in unison]: "Very well then...farewell my friend...May Nature be with you, and the sun may guide your way - always!"

Man2: "Thank you for your kind wishes, my friends. I am really grateful for that!"

[Man2 exits first, alone; Man1 and Man3 exit subsequently - together]

Nowadays, nobody cares to remember these trivial things which were once a rage - back then. Only the old people seem to know or care about them. For the rest, this incident forms just another page of the history book! *****

Me [with droopy eyelids]: "*Sigh! Ah well, so far so good. The story is moving along well I think! I hope it stays that way! I hope I am able to finish the next chapter soon as well - about THAT dark night! For now, I gotta get some sleep!*"

YET ANOTHER LONG DAY OF NOVEMBER...AND BEYOND!

November 15th, 11:30 am - Me inside a train:

I am travelling in train - on yet another day.

Me: *"Holy fuck!...Journey is boring, too long...life has to be boring too, for me! Yet another day that seems to be rather toiling for me. Same old thoughts bothering me still! I have been working for various odd companies online but no substantial income yet!...Quite fed up of leading a lonely life!"*

The train moves swiftly and I am often looking at the railway lines:

Me: *"I wonder how painful could it be to end life there...after all so many already do I read in newspapers almost daily basis...that voluptuous chick could have been mine...it must not be certainly as painful as life itself...life just sucks! But then again, I guess I am too much of a coward to even be able to find it out! I am scared of not being able to finish the job...scared of not dying - afraid of being badly hurt instead, or suffering even worse fate - being maimed for life! Worst thing to happen to a MAN is to become a handicap. He then CEASES to be a man at all!"*

Just opposite to me is sitting a young man - right inside that same compartment!

Me: *"He has got thick mustaches...his hair is thick too - actually, it is somewhat thick and curly - kinda like the comb over style - it is as much thick as that!...I doubt this guy has got a bald head issue, he looks like he is probably in his late 30s at minimum - I mean, judging from the fact that both his hair and mustache are still of fully black color, he cannot be older but - doesn't seem too young either...now, unless he has dyed the hair and mustache, that is...but no, they don't look dyed, they look like natural hair color to me and usually men don't get bald THAT early anyway, as far as I know! I hope I don't get bald at all ever!"*

By his side is sitting an older man -

Me: *"Much older than him really - probably about 70 years or more! He is bald with very little white hair on his head, and his mustache looks like it is cleanly shaved...he is sitting with his head facing a bit downward - the footboard of the compartment...he looks fatigued..."*

- After resting there like that for a few minutes he whips out his snuff box and takes a pinch of snuff from it - he takes the snuff between his thumb and index finger, puts it into his nostrils and sniffs it with a sharp noise.

Me: *"I hope I don't start sneezing now...I am kinda allergic to stuff like this - snuff, tobacco, everything that belongs to their class...[10 minutes later] Well, thank god didn't!"*

Young man [jokingly, with a naughty half-smile]: "How long you are gonna keep doing stuff like that you think? That thingy? You sniffed only a couple of hours ago - I know...you were with me then...I remember!"

Old man [replying in joke]: "Long as am alive...[pause] well, certainly at least until I reach 100!"

Young man [sarcastically]: "IF you live until that long...that is!"

Old man [nonchalantly]: "We will see. We will see. So...[enthusiastically] how now, what 'bout you? What about your affairs?"

Young man: "My affairs? [chuckling] Same ol' shit, ya know. I ain't budging from my land though, you know! I have only said that I would budge from there on only ONE condition - that he brings in a few prospective realtors who are interested in buying that patch - or at least until I get permissions from him to bring in a few of them there myself, to sell off the plot. It is a very rich one as you might know...the plot's position is very good...you can get right to the main street with just a few minutes' of walk! The street is not far, you know, don't you? [Old man nods in agreement] I won't be budging from there without a concrete solution...am I a fool they think?!"

Old man [continuing in the same lighthearted tone]: "So...in other words, it's like 'I wanna profit from your profit...or, if you wanna make some profit I would help you make a big profit...and I want a

share from it too'? Is not that what you exactly want to tell this landlord of yours? Heh! Why suppress the truth from us? Ha ha! You don't need to...I know you well... we are friends...I know you quite damn well!"

On hearing this, the young man bursts into laughter, so much so that for a moment he almost tumbles on to the backside of the train seat due to the impact of his laughter, while his fellow passengers also join in the laughs - although they laugh more subtly in comparison!

Young man [regaining his composure, still half-smiling]: "Well, we all have to make a living by doing something anyway, now, don't it? Like I said, I ain't leaving that plot of land anyway without...it is quite justified I think...my stance...after all, I've worked so hard to acquire it!"

Old man [in a sarcastic tone]: "What did you do? You stole it? Or what? From your landlord?"

Young man [still quite composed as before but looks a bit more serious now - still he emits a wry smile from his lips, nonetheless, and half-reclines on to the corner of his seat in that compartment]: "Well...[pause] in a way...yes! Actually, a couple of years after I rented a house here, I realized how valuable that patch was...the one adjacent to my house, you know?...You seen it! That's why I decided to take control of it!"

Old man [curiously]: "And then what?"

Young man [with an air of pride, making bigger eyes while looking at the old man]: "And then what? One day that son of a bitch came to my home and...he asked me to LEAVE, man! Just like that! Like it's gotta be that easy to get rid of me, ha ha...that landlord I mean, you know! I first politely refused to do his bidding, but then when I saw that he started threatening me with dire consequences - that this and that would happen if I don't leave, etc., he said - if I don't leave - then I too stayed adamant. I ain't leaving at all - told him straightaway, I AIN'T - said that with a lot of guts ha ha. Next day, I reached my home in a drunken state but instead of entering my home, I went straight for the landlord's, you know! There, I just merely had to touch his young daughter's shoulder a bit - just touched his daughter a bit, in my drunken state, and...he seemed to have shuddered. He - then and there - cowed - begged me not to do that...promised me also that he won't bother me again. After that, the following day, when I returned home, uh...[trying to remember] I found it locked - and a huge lock was hanging outside the door! I sure as hell knew that scumbag had done this mischief so...I returned, went to the bar, got heavily drunk, then came home again, and broke open the lock with my mere fists! Ha ha! Can you believe that? With my bare fists! Ha ha!"

Old man [jokingly, pretending to be underwhelmed]: "Meh...[looking the other way, then looking at the young man again] you don't let off people very easily, heh...do you? Ha-ha!"

Young man [in a half-serious tone - his half-smile coming and going]: "Listen!...No, actually, a couple of days later, several cops started banging heavily on my door and...actually, they did not even ask me or talk to me about anything. They simply barged into my house at about 3 am midnight - no prior warning or anything - by breaking open my door... before I could ask anything two cops dragged and carried me out of the house holding my hands and feet...they didn't even let me dress up for god's sake! I was in my casuals at home, about to go to bed - just wearing just a white vest and a checkered blue sarong, that's all! They did not speak even a word with me...I guess they did not feel any need to, maybe...anyway, I was taken by surprise when I was wrapped with a large blanket by them...actually, they threw that heavy blanket over my body and then suddenly they started beating me with their heavy sticks. This went on for maybe fifteen or twenty minutes perhaps...I was shouting in pain but my shouts were drowned by the cheers of those gloating, overjoyed cops who were having a great time no doubt...so, ultimately, I became...I was so much beaten - black and blue - that I only remained capable of groaning and moaning at the end of my ordeal! Then, when they felt I was not capable of moving on my own limbs at all, they took me from there - carried me in same manner - I could not even stand on my feet, after all - and they threw me into a lock-up! When I came to my senses there...no, actually, few days later when I was out of the lockup - I learned how the landlord had paid a big amount to the who is in-charge of the police station to do all that shit on me - who in turn assured help to him...that's

why all this beating - and MORE on top of that was to follow me in the lockup. Later on, I was charged with misbehavior and sentenced to one hundred days in prison. Yeah, for this land I have spent ONE HUNDRED goddamn days in jail! Just think of that! Yet, I DID NOT LET IT GO even then...once I was out I again took control of it! You could go through this, you think? Could you?"

Old man [in a more serious tone now]: "Well then...then I think in that case your actions are fully vindicated...fully justified. After all, you have been polite at first but after they treated you this way - like SHIT...so then they obviously left you with little choice...except to retaliate...you had no choice - NONE! Sorry I did not know about this whole thing. In that case, what you did was absolutely right!"

Young man [also in a serious tone, unbuttoning his shirt a bit so that part of the white A-shirt he is wearing inside is visible]: "Just look at my shoulder...you see - just look - wound there and here... some of the wounds I got from the police beating have healed but these black scars remain" [he then prepares to open his shirt fully but the old man stops him]!

Old man: "There's no need...you think we don't believe you?!"

Young man: "You see I went through so much pain just for a piece of land. If you were me, would you be able to want to or...tell me...can you at all keep control of the land after going through so much of torture? Would you EVEN BE ABLE to go through so much? Tell me!"

Old man: "No, not at all, absolutely not! That is why I applaud you!"

The train soon reaches its last stop. Both then get down from the train and part away - to their respective ways!

Me: "*And I then know my time's approached too...no peace, no rest I will have...now I must get down from the train too and head toward my destination!*"

On my way, I meet an old man with white scruffy beard, asking me if I could lift his luggage on top of his head!

Me [hesitating and unsure if I could carry out the job given my thin body frame]...Well...umm, well I am not sure I could lift that heavy luggage though...I wish I could but...*I am afraid of my thin frail frame would not be enough to...*"

Old Man: "My daughter has gone away for a while. Someone else was supposed to come along with me to help me with this luggage but...he just told me to stay here, wait here and I don't know he vanished where. I am waiting since...I need to go ASAP...cannot wait here for much longer...if you could please!..."

Me: "*Okay but...well if I do that, would you let me fuck your daughter? Ha-ha! No of course not... I know I am only kidding myself I know!...Of course you won't...I know some fathers fuck their daughters even, but never read or heard anything about father letting a stranger fuck his daughter, heh! But what about asking for a helping hand? C'mon now - that's a different ballgame altogether! Strangers can be called for, in this country - for that kind of things! I haven't even seen her, but I guess she must be good looking...any woman looks good in youth...and looks desirable! I guess I would coz I would like to help people if I can! Don't want to be called a coward, an escapist, blah blah!!*"

After a few moments of hesitation and contemplation, I help him lift his luggage - with both my and his hands joining for help as he says "Wait you won't be able to do this alone...let me help!" and I manage to do the job!

Me: "*Wow...isn't that kinda surprising? I am able to DO it!...With the relative ease with which I could manage it, I can't believe it!...I mean, sure he helped me - I could not have done it alone, sure - NEVER, but still...I was not so sure about my strength before this happened. Now I feel better by doing this...looks like what a great accomplishment to me...hardly I get chance to help anyone! Profit or no profit - people don't do always everything for profit, right? ...It feels at least great to do someone some good and...then too that becomes profitable - that is more than any money can make you!...*

...I read about all those hot shot celebs making big charities...giving away large sums of money...I always wished I could do that...now, it seems that I too am on an equal footing with them because I TOO helped someone! It really feels great...I feel more energetic and enthusiastic about my life..."

I continue walking toward my destination!

Me: "*That old man must be thanking me a lot, probably telling his daughter about me...Huh! You're fool! How could you think that? I doubt he'd do that! Ever seen yourself in mirror? No father would want a thin son-in-law like you!...Well maybe someday, through a chance stroke of good luck I would meet her face to face...and she would be floored when I introduce myself to her, and...!*"

November 15th, 10 pm - Me At Home:

Me [exasperated]: "I just don't see what's the big deal here! Only a couple of days ago I saw a man buying both a food packet AND a bleaching powder packet together and...JUST a couple of days ago...I SAW him putting both of them in the same bag - I don't really see what is the problem here, as the bleaching powder comes sealed inside a box. It is not sold LOOSE, after all...so??!!"

Father: "No, it is still poisonous stuff and its crappy smell can be gotten from even outside the box. SMELL the box with your nose and SEE! You'd know...If you don't believe me! Besides, I am usually the one who buys this one, not you... there is a reason for that! Not everything can be purchased by you. Highly poisonous stuff it is; has to be brought with special care!"

Mom: "Yes, your father always buys it, so...why not let him? You only buy what you have been buying for us, and let your father do the rest!"

Me: "Okay then, if this is so it is fine but I won't be buying it EVER AT ALL for you...even... NOT even if you ask me to - someday...not even if father is not here to buy, does not want to buy, not even if he is able or unable to buy...then, at THAT time... if you want me to buy it for you, regardless of the circumstances, I would instead tell YOU to buy it yourself...I won't care how busy you are, I won't care what important task you are doing at that time...I ain't gonna help you buy this stuff at all EVER!...If not now, NEVER!"

Mom [taunting me]: "Ha! See? If not now, never! See! ha-ha! You seem to be hell bent on buying this, eh?"

Father: "Well if he is so enthusiastic about buying it then let him buy it...he seems to have set his mind on bringing it from the market, so let him buy it for us once...what else can I say! It is not fair to prevent him from buying it if he wants to...it is not good, I think...but he must wrap it well inside a separate plastic when bringing it - the way I do...you tell him to do that...it must not be kept along with the other food packets...I mention it specifically since he prefers to take only ONE carry bag with himself, usually...NOT THREE NOT EVEN TWO BUT only ONE...so, that's an issue there...I always carry the bleaching powder box in a separate carry bag...that's why I was insisting that...it's...highly poisonous stuff that it is, you know!"

Me: "YOU PEOPLE MAKE SUCH A FUSS OVER SUCH A NON-ISSUE LIKE THIS THAT IT IS EVEN LESS THAN SILLY! IS IT ANY WONDER THAT I DON'T WANT TO TRAVEL WITH YOU PEOPLE ANYWHERE? SOME M-EN-TAL...*IDIOTS!!!*...YOU PEOPLE HAVE GOT NO BRAINS AT ALL!" My mom is so busy talking to father in a loud manner, as has always been her habit, that - luckily for me - she, or even father fails to hear me!

Mom [to father]: "NO! I just don't think he would be willing to go through so much fuss in order to bring just a fucking bleaching powder box. Besides, c'mon, they are soaking the nearly-rotten vegetables into poisonous fabric colors to make them look fresh...and to think that we EAT that shit on DAILY basis!....[to me] And...he is making such a big fuss over your buying a bleaching powder box, you see!"

Father [shrugs]: "Okay okay, whatever suits you people best...do whatever suits you best! I got nothing more to say on this!" [He puts his head down and starts dozing].

Mom: "Look! I tell you what - you put all those food packets..."

Me: "*Oh they are all SEALED, for fuck's sake!*"

Mom: "...that you would be buying - you keep them all in a separate carry bag okay?...I would

give you a very large plastic carry bag for that...and then you can put that bleaching powder box in another plastic carry bag, got it? And then put those two carry bags into the cloth carry bag you usually take with you when buying stuff...that way, the bleaching item would be kept separate from the foodstuff okay?...Anyway, I don't think I would let you buy the packet of puffed rice though...the bag I'd give you is not big enough to accommodate that big puffed rice along with all those veggies you would be buying tomorrow...but it is the biggest bag I have!... anyway, your father is the one who eats puffed rice mostly so it is only fair that he brings it himself, carries its weight!"

Me: "*Well...sigh! I am on the verge of giving up. I mean - really?! I was just trying to make their life a bit easier but it seems like they are hell bent on doing otherwise...okay then, let them be...I am quite tired now arguing with them...both the puffed rice shop and the bleaching powder is bought from the same grocery shop... is it necessary for two people from the SAME family to go to the SAME shop when only one of them can be just enough for the job? Makes any sense at all? Not to me!...I was going to that shop for my own shopping needs anyway and that's why only I had said I could also buy that bleaching powder box as well if they wanted to...!*"

Father [to mom]: "Yeah, I am okay with that arrangement too. I would buy the puffed rice packet as you said and...and...well, and he can buy the bleaching powder box! That sounds good enough to me! And [to me] lad! LOOK! There's two kinds of packets of bleaching powder - remember that well - one general and one 'special'. The 'special' one is expensive...costs more, okay? We don't buy that one...make sure you buy the general one only! You got it?"

Mom [to father]: "Yeah, yeah, he sure got it don't you worry [to me] listen to him well okay?...[to father] Tell that to him again and again lest he forgets. He seems to be always hell-bent on spending money on the most expensive stuff he can get...[to me] so don't buy the 'special' one okay? Don't repeat the coconut mistake again now okay? We can't afford that...carefully listen to what your father says!"

Me [when father is gone]: "Hehe, if I buy expensive stuff, father always buys cheap crap ya know! We working on two DIFFERENT EXTREMES..."

Mom: "Yeah you two are no good. Only what *I* do is perfect. Too bad I am always busy doing these fucking shitty chores all the time - housecleaning, house-maintaining, clothes washing this and this and that, EVERYTHING...so where is any more time I got?"

Me: "Expensive but QUALITY stuff!...*I know well you are hinting at my coconut purchase thing of the other day...I ain't no fool like what you might think...you want quality but don't want to pay the price, MISER! I KNOW! You think I don't know? I didn't want to be woken up early morning with your shouts that I have brought in a rotten coconut, like you tell father WHENEVER any of his cheap ones turns out to be bad...but that is exactly what you get for cheap okay? If you don't want to pay the price don't expect to get the good stuff!*"

Mom: "*Everybody knows that one can get good quality stuff if they spend lot of money on it...it is no rocket science after all...even getting crappy stuff, as you put it, for cheap, is nothing unknown. But I would rather keep up with crap than buy expensive stuff. I have to maintain my budget intact you know! You don't run the house for me - although you should...you are old enough to be fit to do that! Your expenses seem to be only increasing day by day bit by bit - but your father's pension ain't increasing any more - KEEP THAT IN MIND WELL! Got it? It is getting GOOD quality stuff for cheap that requires special kind of skills - that neither of you have! If only I could go to the marketplace myself you bet I would show you how you can get good stuff even without spending the whole purse on it!*"

Me: "*Yeah? So maybe you should start fucking doing it!*"

Mom: "*Maybe you should then start managing the house, the CHORES, for me!*"

Father [comes back home from someplace else]: "WHY AREN't yoU gOinG To AjMer With US anYway? YOu WouLD HavE FeLT GOOD AbOut it...what WOULD YOu do siTTinG AIL ALONE In your house - loCKED uP, NOT goinG aNyWHERE? YOU aLwAys weNt with Us...nObODY said aNyTHiNg To yOu...NoBodY of Us TOLd YOu one RUDE woRd...I am JuST NOt suRE WHy yOu

arE Not ReaLLy goinG with uS tHiS...wHAT IS yOuR problem?...we have always been travelling together as a family, right?"

Me: "*Heh, you talk in such a pitiable, emotional and desperate tone that alternates between high and low pitch that one would think how gentle you are and their heart would melt away...UNLESS they know the REAL chameleon that you are, that is - your real nature that changes like a chameleon...you should have been better off as an actor perhaps...I suppose no matter where I travel to, I sure as hell won't be able to stay there for too long - after all, where would I be able to live and how, without my music collections...and movies? I love them so much - to death! I have neither a laptop nor an iPod! I am really DESTITUTE! We - ALL THE THREE - ARE IMPOVERISHED!*"

November 16th, 10:22 am - Me At Home:

[After I have brought home a box of the bleaching powder]

Me [a bit nervously]: "Could you check if...when you got time...coz I can't get any such smell as father was telling me of...you really believe such a doubly-wrapped box - wrapped in plastic - can emit smells as father had said? I sure can get no hint of any smell like that!"

Mom [nonchalantly, without even looking at the packet] "Yeah but...you and your father's talk, ya know? Your father is saying so. What can do if he says so!"

Me: "*Huh!! AMAZING! I shocked truly! This kind of 'doormat talk' is hard to believe to come from you who's anything but submissive!*"

November 16th, 10:00 am - Me At Home:

I am coming home after having completed my shopping - straight from the vegetable market.

CUT TO: November 16th, 9:00 am - Me At VEGETABLE MARKET:

I am picking and choosing the peas here, before I buy them!

Middle-aged saleslady [looks to be old enough to be my aunt]: "Well bro...no picking and choosing man...they I buy from don't let me pick and choose any stuff. No picking and choosing dear!"

Me: "*I...or anyone else for that matter, really cannot afford not to! Too many bad peas here...On one hand the price is too high, and on the other, if I let the seller choose for me, they would give me at least 50% of rotten products! I HAVE seen all that long ago! It's called - EXPERIENCE! Really! On the other hand, not everyone would let me pick and choose stuff like this either... usually I skip buying from such sellers coz that right away tells me that the seller is trying to dup me into buying crap! She is not among one of them though...but today she too..."*

I ignore her and continue to pick and choose.

Me: "*Well then - if you have problem with my picking and choosing veggies I buy then I won't be buying them from you...I don't need it ...thank you...there are plenty of other sellers here who would let me do it... "*

I stop picking and choosing, and start leaving form her shop.

On hearing that, she smiles and says: "Well they don't let me, that's why I was saying...hey where you going? You know they don't let me so...besides, mine are all good quality stuff...you really no need to pick and choose know?"

Me: "*Yeah maybe but...maybe coz it is YOUR stuff so you are saying so? I still need to choose in spite of what you claim here... I don't trust you, nor any other seller, here... if I take crap home then my parents would shout at me for being irresponsible and make me look like stupid - they won't say*

one damn thing to you...you are not on the line here, I am...besides you are not selling these for very cheap anyway you see and if I let you pick and choose then you would sell me half amount of rotten peas for NO LESS price which I believe is like double-cheating...since you won't charge any less for the rotten ones either...so why I would I buy rotten stuff from you at such high price? Better not to buy at all... mom won't spare me at all if I do...the other day I had brought carrots which were a bit more expensive than usual and angrily, she forbade me from ever buying carrots at all, even as she started pinpointing to me...SHOWING ME the parts of the carrots that were bad and which parts were not, etc. - bothering me when I was trying to concentrate on my online job...she was telling it more so because they were pricier than she imagined them to be!...Sure when you are buying stuff from the wholesale market they don't let you pick and choose but most probably you pay half the money you charging me for these items - compare the PRICE you ACTUALLY paying with what you are CHARGING me here...well maybe they cost you a bit more than that, but in no way the price that YOU charge me...I am not buying at cheap wholesale prices you see, I am buying them on HIGH prices - at RETAIL - from you...had you sold them to me at the same price you bought them for, then maybe I would forego picking and choosing...I MUST pick and choose, whether you like it or not!"

CUT TO: November 16th, 10:00 am:

A decent crowd has accumulated near my house.

Me: *"Turns out that - as I learn from my mom - that the crowd is accusing my neighbor's teenage son - neighbor...well actually, they live as tenants at a neighboring house here - both the house and the tenants are pretty new here, really - the allegation happens to be of sending lewd SMSs to other teenage girls he acquired cell phone numbers of - the allegation is that he calls each of these girls and tells them that he would embrace them in public if they don't...as if the girls themselves are fucking innocent eh?...And that then he does the same thing to their boyfriends, by SMSing telling them he would embrace and kiss their girlfriends in full public view if they don't accommodate his demands...he is also accused of passing one friend's secret rancorous talk to the other friend who the friend is talking about - in order to set them off against each other...what for? So that the two end up fighting and this boy has fun in the process - for having ruined a seemingly 'good' relationship??..."*

...Well, I dunno if this is something to make a big fuss about though - like they doing here. I mean...I think these things - such as sending lewd SMSs to girls by boys - are rather common out there in the city...but, since this is a VILLAGE, people get very nosey here: which is both good and bad. Good in case of this boy coz hopefully after being warned by the people here he won't repeat the feat again...bad when these same neighbors get so nosey even in your personal affairs as to be annoying - affairs that are of no concern to them in the least!"

Father [hears one of the accusers telling the mother of the boy and he relates this to us in turn]:
"This is what happens when you give cell phones to kids!"

[Boy's mother, to the gathered neighbors]: "This is the boy I trust with maintaining my house when I am away...and now, look at what he's done!"

Father [to my mom]: "So what would he call an old man I wonder? Young man, I guess? If he calls a teenage boy a kid, then anything is possible! Stupid people!"

Me: *"Look to this mom her kid is not bad to her...though she seems to trust what they telling her about the kid...and there is MY mom who must think I am the baddest in the globe, why else would she shout at me all the time...must be one of a kind of mom I think - not even worth that 'mom' title...I don't give a fuck - I mean, you know, there's no smoke without fire I believe...I think most of the time women who invite these kinds of lewd remarks are not of good character themselves either... if they were women of CHARACTER then these boys won't have the audacity nor inclination to...!"*

November 16th, 11:35 pm - Me At Home:

Mom is reading a booklet that I had bought long time ago with my own money: '101 Handy Tips For The Homemaker':

Mom [reading the booklet]: "It says here that if you put garlic at the mouth of the sewers then snakes won't enter your house!"

Father [sitting on the floor of our house]: "I say BULLSHIT!...Well, I dunno, it might work as it says - or it might not...I don't trust anybody or anything these days...people are soooo full of shit you know - so are the stuff you get from the shops here...everything and everyone is full of bullshit these days as I see things daily...so I don't trust anything or anyone anymore...people these days say something but do something else - they don't walk the talk...Most of them anyway! Who knows how credible this writer even is!"

Me: *"I don't usually coz you make such stupid comments...but I gotta agree this time with you...even I don't believe in something until I see it proven in front of my eyes...more importantly, the writer happens to be a WOMAN - and I know what kind of creatures they generally are: mentally unstable, or crazy - like mom, or plain liars - PRETENTIOUS creatures - like mom pretends she does ALL the household work and we do nothing, sit around idle! So even I don't believe in whatever the book says. I bought it on a whim back when I was younger and dumber...but if it were today I definitely won't buy it...I know better now...I never even read it!"*

Mom: "HmMMM!..." [she switches to reading the newspaper, contemplates on something for some time, then goes off to bed after sometime, at which point, father gets up from his floor-seat and takes to reading the newspaper aloud]!

Father [reading newspaper frontpage]: '**Scientists Talk of Hopes of Finding New Signs of Life on The Red Planet**'...Hopes? My ASS! Just as people cannot live on the moon they cannot live on Mars. Anyone who claims otherwise is just an idiot, what else! If people could really live in such places then why would all humans be living only on earth for centuries you think? It is all bullshit! These scientists are just there to delude and mislead the common people...and make their bucks anyhow any means...they are no better than the doctors here who offer more false hopes to the patient than the right medicines they ACTUALLY NEED...they wasted a lot of money on exploring the moon and now they're doing it again with Mars! Worthless, if you ask me, waste of money it is - ALL OF IT...poor taxpayers share the burden all the time! How could anyone could live on moon where there is no air water or light. There is NO gravity...you would be floating in its atmosphere and be able to drink only droplets of water. Fucking shitty news!"

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