

The Houseboat a sorrowful life



G O P A L R O U T

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The night in the dungeon

“so you weren't involved in the bombarding”

“no”

“so how did you get into the case”

“How do I know?”

“what the hell will I present in the court”

“First of all I am dragged into these dungeons for some alien bombarding case then I am crosschecked by you, I dont know a single thing you're blattering about!”

“It will be my pleasure to inform you that I am advocate Leela Mathur your lawyer for this case”

“Who the hell you are? And which case you're talking about”

“Mr. Ahmed Junaid Butt you're accused of being a partner in crime in Rohtak blasts”

“Why the hell am I being accused of, wait I, in which blasts”

“Rohtak!”

“That means Iqbal..”

“Muhammad Iqbal Hakim was a terrorist and had links with terror organisations”

“How could he be a terrorist, he is a businessman and what do you mean by was”

“Umm! he has been shot dead in a police chase”

“What!! you're bluffing aren't you, please don't put that this is true”

“I am NOT BLUFFING! this really happened”

“He was a business man! and I was delivering his stabilizers”

“you were delivering three tons of RDX”

“NO WAY!!”

*“SO SHOULD I **SLAM** THE IB REPORTS on you’re face!!”*

“If.. if.. you’re true ... then what am I gonna do, I didn’t even know about the RDX and other stuff you’re talking about, I feel somewhat strange or kinda kafkaesque about this case”

“Dont panic I am here to summarize and simplify this for you, you just explain me the whole chapter to me”

“Ma’am ready to do any thing please save me from these false allegations”

“Well if you want me to be your saviour from these allegations, you might prove them false to me first”

“What exactly do you want from me?”

“The thing is simple you have to narrate your whole back story”

“As?”

“As you’re link with Iqbal and drastic emotional or economical changes in your life”

“As if you will write my biography, or make a documentary”

“What a bombastic fellow you’re!!, don’t you get that I need to understand you’re psyche and it is arguably important for this case, and if you want me to handle this fuss then you must obey me, otherwise take away you’re money”

“Money? Who paid that to you?”

“someone named Faiz Suleyman Butt, he mentioned that he is your uncle”

“Oh God! I am so grateful to you, can I... meet him?”

“Perhaps you can’t”

“Damn this case!!”

“well get back to the point, narrate me the whole story”

“But where do I start”

“Narrate me your link with Iqbal, because that is the need of the hour”

“Should I just start from the beginning, because Iqbal was my childhood friend”

“Just do start anyway you want, but be clear”



We grew in the valleys of Kashmir we were of same town Srinagar, we were toddlers back then. Time passed on Iqbal was now my best friend I chatted the untalkable and revealed him all my secrets, we were same aged, our age was now sixteen it had been a decade with him but life turned it's path suddenly Abbu got transferred to Delhi as he worked as a bank manager.

“Get ready quick we might miss the train” jolted abbu

“Just two minutes more” replied ammi

“Nafeeza hurry up! it's a thirty minute difference only”

“Why are you shouting junaid?”

“Ask me why not to?, we are moving to the capital”

“So what?”

“More money and better opportunity for our boy”

“Okay I God knows what this lad will pursue”

I had passed my SSC boards with exquisite score of ninety six percent, instead of this taunt I remained apathetic. I was the only child of my parents, but the contrast was that my father adopted one of my cousins 'Nigar apa' I never felt reluctant in embracing her as my own sister,

I was a shy bottled up small town boy, I was reluctant throughout my childhood on several things I didn't have any guts for doing specific things like programmes, annual fests or such other stuff. Most of the time it was me and my books. I was now told that I had better opportunities and career options, but honestly I didn't care much, I was happy, I was satisfied with my small world and parallel universe of books. But now it was the time to

open up, as the result of our typical culture I was made to realise that I was the scion of the family I was the one who has all the responsibility.

We entered the Srinagar station on platform no-6, I had traveled before in train infact I loved train journeys but this time it was a bit different.

As the journey went on a group of men in the neighbouring compartment were constantly misapplying my own community Kashmir Muslims.

“they can never be the part of our nation” said one

“All of them are traitors” erupted another, although I remained stoic their words carved me from the inside, I was taken aback, I was more confused than angry or disappointed.

“What’s the thing my lad?” asked abbu, I got more confused of what to offer him as answer

“Nothing serious abbu just imagining how city life will be” I hide my thoughts

“It will be perfect and pious” he replied in a cheery way

“You know I am a bit reluctant towards fancy lifestyle or extravagance”

“I know your are a bit cynic towards them but that is not a matter of worry for you, you must stay rejuvenative and care for life ahead”

“perhaps you’re right.”

It took one and a half day to reach the place, I was tired by then, we booked a taxi and headed towards our quarters. By the time reached our quarters it was half past midnight I was damn tired by then we rushed for the quarter but my excitement was turned into disappointment as I reached my to be home, I was stunned seeing the tiny quarter, how do I manage with such bland location it was hardly a corner of my BUNGALOW in Srinagar, besides there was not a single sign of nature, not even a tree, the air is filled with smog and extreme climate on top.



Time went on I got used to the city life but my nature still remained cynic and I was still enclined towards shyness more often. I had now entered a

university in Bengaluru through scholarship tests, I had waved Delhi a bye for three years now, these three were significant in my life.

As entered the campus a guy joined my walk “Newbie?” I asked

“No I am from second year, are you newbie?” he interrogated “Ya it’s my first day in the university”

“By the way what’s your name, I am Harsh”

“I am Ahmed, Ahmed junaid butt”

“Kashmiri?” his face frowned a bit “Yes, why?”

“Nothing” he blew his disgust and walked away

‘Indeed you’re HARSH’ I talked to myself



In university I faced many problems, drastic change from a scion of a joint family to a hostel student with roommates, I remained empathetic despite my uneasy digestion of this. But the real atrocity which was reasonable enough for thee were baseless stereotypes, mostly negative, sharp looks of people for no logical reason. Whenever some negative news regarding Kashmir I was judged, although the people remained silent in front of me but that silence felt like a death by a thousand cuts.

I often felt and faced discrimination, even in my academics, like professors would be ratting down at me for the tiniest mistake, many of them were extremely rude and hostile plus I was all disconnected from my family but there were some personalities who were different, one of them was Ramesh Yadav my roommate. He was an all cheerful overenthusiastic guy, his behaviour is kind of oxymoron for me, at one hand he was a bit orthodox but extremely tolerant towards me. Most of my neighbours were brahmins, to the contrast where they won’t touch thy books even, this guy shared meals with thee.



Despite the presence of Ramesh, I was still uneasy with the whole thing put together, people still gave me those looks, drastically my fellow students

studied sociology which was totally against their behaviour towards me. Because of the negative atmosphere and my shyness and reluctant nature I was more declined towards studies and more often was found deep inside my books, throughout my years of being in that hostel I couldn't really enjoy much of it.

In time of despair, when I would be alone in my room, sharp looks and foul comments would flash in front of me, tears would seep through my eyes. A few times I was caught by Ramesh, but he won't dare to console me. Most of the professors gave me those looks but there were some exceptions like Anjali ma, am, a humble but disciplined lady, scion of all students, she was hardly in her late forties. She considered me like her brother, whom she lost in a car accident, "I lost my beloved brother in a car accident, fate gave me another" these were her words regarding me. A certain day because of all frustration my thoughts became suicidal, I locked myself in a vacant class room and tried to poison myself with a pest repellant, she was my saviour that day, I was all broken that day, but with God's grace I was saved from a stupid death.



Except these people no one would ever support me, although I was talented and hardworking, but people still avoided me. First I thought it was solely the lack of communication skills as I was shy and reluctant in nature, gradually I understood that my shyness was a thing but it was also my ethnic background and especially a combination of my background and my faith, I remember once I was chatting with Ramesh and a guy approached me he shook with Ramesh and me then

"What's your name" he interrogated

"Ahmed Junaid Butt" I replied, with a disappointed but impathetic he face waved us and left to another path.

I was just astonished by his strange behaviour, while Ramesh laughed a lot. But this was not only him most of my fellow student's behaviour towards me was like that, I was confused that was it because religion or because of my ethnicity, some were disgusted while some showed sympathy, I was just deep in a farrago of thoughts.

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