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Scarlet Rose

Sandipta Padhee

There...

Amidst the thorns in the abandoned park... There lied this scarlet red rose...

It was visible from my window... and owing to my boards next month.. I was not allowed any entertainment! So.. . May be just for the fun of it or for the love of it.. I used to day dream.. not very proud of that nor was I irritated by that.. Just the fact that I had the power to amuse myself and keep myself busy for hours made me have a dreaded mixed feelings of guilt and pride. I would sit down and dream of these beautiful worlds, situations times... When life would be just as I wanted it to be... all my problems all my issues were solved in that world, everything was sorted, I had EVERY single thing I wanted! hat daydreaming was the most wonderful, beautiful, scintillating experience in between those re-re-re-re-re-re-re-read history books those maps, those most boring chemistry lessons, those “miscellaneous” exercises of Maths!!! My day dreams were my omnipresent dates that never failed to woo me into their sensuous traps!!!

So that morning... from my 1st floor apartment and a very comfortable personal room, owing to the “boards”, I could see... one kutchra house, with a family, where there were 4 members, parents and a brother and sister. The girl was my age, and the guy seemed to be around 8-9 years older than me, adjoining that house was another asbestos ceiling house where our maid stayed, and in between there was this old abandoned park, where coz of being the “city kids” nobody played!... there were at first no plants or trees there but as my watch had become more and more frequent coz of my preparatory leave. I had made this tradition of looking at the park every morning from 6:10am to 6:15am, when dada came to wake me up! Around 7th feb I noticed a plant growing in the abandoned garden, this girl my age often watered that plant... but on the 11th I woke up to a lot of shouting and crying, I saw her mother shouting at her at the peak of her voice and as the basti environment is, she didn't refrain from use of profanity both in her language and the description of the so called “offence” that girl “neema” had committed. I realized, i didn't know her name up until that morning! All that I could gather from the unexpected wake-up call was that, may be Neema had a boyfriend! Well it's a big deal even in a city, for the people in such bastis.

Soon dad came and asked the maid to go stop the commotion as he thought it might disturb me and my tuition teacher study(that's another story for another day ;)) I was so rattled at all that happened that day... that my mind kept on making me go back to my window, or if I could withdraw myself from that , it would make me get into a series of daydreams, of what might have actually happened and what would happen next, and the plant she watered kept creeping in my head! And there is this issue with serious daydreamers that we in our anxiety exhaust all possible situations by imagining them, that the fun of it, the surprise in it, the ability of it to engross u once u hear about it, is lost with time, as this habit of daydreaming and the mixed feelings attached grow notoriously adding another feeling of irritation and topping it off with a

feeling of the mundane spirit of life, so much that u somehow want to get rid of it, but u just can't and that's when u realize, that u are now almost irrevocably addicted to daydreams.

That night I heard them having some guests over, but was too busy self-policing myself, to do what I regretted not doing for about 3-4 years from then and kept day-dreaming about for the next 3-4 hrs. next morning I get up as usual, and see... a bud on that plant Neema had planted, it was right below, my window so, I could also notice the unusual redness in its colour. That day, she came and sat near the plant, crying but didn't really seem any more sad than lost. She looked up and kept crying I saw a sense of helplessness on her face that made me itch towards at least trying to help her, but for that I needed two things first to know what was the real issue and secondly I needed time! Well as I was jumping at the second issue getting fulfilled, my dada was leaving for a bratopayana feast in his hometown, my tuition sir had his MBA exams and it was just me and maa at home. The maid informed at my mom inquisitiveness, "kya hua us ladki ka?" by telling us that her mom had fixed her up with some random friend of her brothers after knowing that she had a "mandu" in her school. Her mother blamed educating girls for spoiling their "future", the most irony that could have been filled in that one statement, it was! She ended by asking for a half day off the next day, as that girl was to be "engaged on the 14th". That night I day dreamt about the couple that was, and the couple that might me or is supposed to be trying to comprehend the meaning and the essence of all of it in the first place, when I was brought back with a mosquito bite accompanied by an upcoming physics test enlightenment. Owing to a;; that dreaming, I knew I had to wake up till late at night. So I did, but at around 3-3:30 at night I felt really drowsy, and to get rid of it, I decided I could go and look down the window, and by 4, I had seen the most thrilling real life even ever! I saw neema, outside in the cold at that hour at night . she was making rapid hand movements, silently and very cautiously moving into the abandoned park, in around, 2-3 minutes I noticed a jute bag in her hand and a scarlet red rose in the guys hand, he knelt down and offered It to her and as she accepted, they hugged each other and rejoiced in each others arms, I could feel the warmth in their smiles, the heat in their breaths and the passion they had for each other just by the look they threw at each other!

It was impossible what I was seeing, I saw them run away, like a dream (day dream) come true.

Next morning as I wake up I see, the scarlet red rose, fully blossom... I rejoiced at the happy ending my daily day-dream character had. I woke up with a sense of stress freeness in my breath. I felt awesome, the rose looked beautiful... just like the happily ever after they'll have!

In the morning my maa was cribbing about the silly reasons why the maid takes days off and how, I with confidence assured her that the maid will definitely come But to my surprise, the maid still took a half day off.

The same evening she comes and updates maa and the other aunties in the apartment about the amount of cosmetics and gifts neema had received from her in-laws, I asked why? She answered, "they got engaged" and I was just so shocked!!! Was it real?

I still ponder.... Was it, the eloping I saw that night rescinded by fright or was it another day dream of mine?