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*The Criterion*



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## Truth & Lie

Nandan Dutta

*I am Truth, walking with the light, illuminating the whole world, radiating people's lives with knowledge and understanding. The felonious fear me, for I am their annihilator, flashing their felony; the innocents embrace me, for I am their savior.*

Declared *Truth*, majestically, radiating her aura around herself; the gathered awed in her magnificence; the enormity of their ovation filling every corner, feeding every bit around.

*I am Lie, I walk in the dark, creep in the shadows; I am loved by mankind when I am needed most, for I do not discriminate between felonious and innocent, coward and courageous; I come whenever I am called; my glory is in my ignominy.*

*Lie* narrated, face down - slowly, humbly, like a confession of the guilty. No awe was heard, no hands clapped, no mouth whistled, not even an ordinary thank came from any one, the gathered on that day heard him with stern and strained face as if listening to a convict in the courtroom as *Lie* narrated his version.

Like every year, there was a huge gathering in the party on that day, all the people gathered, suited in their best, ornamented with most precious; members had arrived from all over the world, from every corner of the planet. *Speech* and *Whisper*, as usual had arrived the earliest; then gradually the hall began to be filled with others, *Emotions Couple* had arrived with their many children, *Anger*, *Happiness*, *Sorrow*, *Fear* and *Anxiety* being the prominent and most talkative and thus dominant among them; *Truth*, dressed in a magnificent dress arrived with *Reason* and *Sanity*; *Lie* had appeared last, as expected, like a lethargic, dressed like a vagabond, along with *Insanity* and *Unreason*, both of whom looked like had just been harassed in the hand of police. But they were always like that, master of their own, they didn't mind what people said, and thus people had stopped commenting having their indifferent attitude in mind. There were many others too, enhancing the magnificence and elegance of the party, but for the sake of our own story, their names are irrelevant, however, we would be pulling out one or two names from the crowd later if the need be. Oh, and one more thing that we must not remain oblivious is that the party had, like always, been hosted by *Wisdom*, an old man along with his wife *Knowledge*, an equally old but cheerful lady, not like her husband who would remain silent every time being outweighed speaking. But let's not waste any more time in introduction.

A public discussion had been endearing in the party on that day, the era of *Reason* and *Sanity* had spread among the mankind, and *Reason* and *Sanity*, present in the party with their elegance, shined like white snow under the reflection of bright light. But then *Lie* entered in the party, with

shuffled hair, looking like just had been beaten by a gang of drunk, and then the attention got diverted to him.

“Here comes the king,” *Truth* said sarcastically which made everyone grin. “Oh..” she continued, “What is that in your head, is that your crown?” she said pointing at *Lie*’s golden hair making everyone laugh.

*Lie* didn’t mind, as always, he was used to the mockery thrown at him all the time, but it was different for everyone else, the jest from *Truth* had become irritating recently, for he held a soft corner for her in his heart, but his ‘love’ remark would have always gone unattended as they would never have been believed by anyone, and thus having the idea of his nature of untruthfulness, he never expressed his feeling for her. But that did not mean he would leave her unmarked.

“If I would have been the king,” he said, turning his head at *Truth*, “you would have been my maid; I would have made that sure; and there would not be those precious jewellery on your neck.”

*Truth* gritted her teeth.

But then *Wisdom* interfered, “But even then she would have remained the queen of your heart, won’t she, *Lie*?”

*Lie* fumbled at this remark, he had found *Wisdom* always mysterious; like him, *Wisdom* too never took sides, but his uncanny ability to know all used to generally be astonishing and sometimes embarrassing. But even at such moment *Wisdom* never left anyone unarmed, he used to become his/her savior too, for *Wisdom* came in *Lie*’s rescue here too when people started exchanging startled look.

“Now,” *Wisdom* said looking at others, “don’t you take so seriously an old fool like me.”

“Looks like Mr. *Wisdom* is losing his mind more and more every day; the other day he was saying we all should at once abandon our clothes for the sake of truth and then find out whether that makes *Truth* look more glorious,” *Whisper* whispered.

Everyone laughed; there was, however, one person who did not take *Wisdom* literally, that was his wife *Knowledge*; she knew her husband too well, and found herself astonished in the discovery of this new information, which she did not see before at all, for which she cursed herself for not possessing the eye to visualize. Nonetheless she kept quiet, only beaming mildly as if what mysterious memory was running in her mind.

*Anger* took a dramatic entrance into the conversation suddenly. “I don’t know about *Truth* or anyone else, but if anyone would have spoken to me in a tone like *Lie* did with her, I would have burned him into ashes by a simple stare of rage,” he declared raising his fist. But his vanity

threats were so common that it hardly used to come in anyone's attention, everyone was too well accustomed with his rages, sometimes he grinded someone into dust, or, sometime he crushed someone in his palm like an ant, but mostly he burned into ashes. In fact his threat recently had become a topic of fun in the public, making some to smirk at him, which made him angrier but he could not burn them into ashes with his stare but give more threats, "Laughing, are you?" he said looking at *Anxiety*, "I will make you forget your name with a single slap." That seemed to work for *Anxiety* stopped grinning.

"Well....but," now *Wisdom*, ignoring *Anger* and *Anxiety*, stood up from his easy-chair, which was very rare, and held *Lie* in his left arm and *Truth* in his right and declared, "in the event of clash of these two young and brilliant titans, we would, tonight, in this party, give both of them the chance to prove themselves, and unlike other time when I judge the debate, as I did between *Sanity* and *Insanity*, or, *Reason* and *Unreason*, this time the judge would be you all," he said looking at the crowd.

The clap and applause that emerged from the crowd showed nothing but their whole hearted approval of the proposal. *Truth*, delighting childishly and turning pink by the wishes she received from almost all from the crowd, except few like *Insanity*, or, *Unreason*, and the crowd's natural and visible inclination towards her, left *Lie* disgruntled. But he felt a warm tap in his back, it was *Wisdom's* hand, but it did not help to raise his spirit. Why did *Wisdom* left the final decision on the crowd, mob is always inclined, mob is mindless just like society is soulless. And he was always impartial, no one would have denied his decision, then why did he have to leave it to the crowd's hands, and that too in his case? It was beyond his comprehension what was there in the mind of *Wisdom*. *Knowledge*, like before, kept smiling. Other than *Insanity* and *Unreason*, whose wishes and useless promises were no more than crossing a busy street holding the hand of a blind, the only person who wished *Lie* in addition to *Truth* was *Hope*, an old lady, loved and admired by all in any situation no matter what; like *Wisdom*, she also did not take side.

Anyway, having a tingling in the stomach, both *Truth* and *Lie* stood in the middle of the gathering, amid the wishes and applauses of all they started their journey towards their glory with an introduction; that we have seen earlier.

"Mankind does not love you," *Truth* snapped, "they only take your help when in crunch."

"If you say so, but can you deny I do help them when they are in trouble," *Lie* defended himself.

"Oh No, your help by lying, though provide them with an instant relief, it actually drags them to deeper trouble. Once one takes your help, he or she have to keep repeating that mistake again and again, become more and more dependent as the time passes. It is then I," *Truth* said, raising her hand, "who save them from the disaster, which might be a bummer temporarily, but in the long run that is what saves them from your ruinous hand, you take it or not."

A big round of applause emerged from the crowd.

When the sound of clapping and hoorah subsided, *Lie* began, in a faint attempt to defend, “Don’t you think there is little vanity in your claim?”

A curt smile appeared in *Truth’s* face. “Your fear is talking. I don’t blame you; this is the way things are, for your existence depends on me.”

“This is not exactly true, Unlike *Dark*, who is simply absence of *Light*, or, *Unreason*, simply absence of *Reason*,” *Lie* said, in which both *Dark* and *Unreason* groaned, but he continued, “*Lie* is not the absence of *Truth*; I have my independent existence.”

“Really? What ‘lie’ is if not absence of ‘truth’? Why then do you flee running when I appear, like *Dark*, you must see him the way he runs when *Light* arrives.” A shy smile appeared in *Light’s* face, *Dark*, on the other hand was sitting in the corner looking at completely opposite direction; apparently was groaning in anger.

*Lie* knew he was fighting a losing battle, the enraged voice and undefeatable logic *Truth* was throwing at him was too much for him to bear, but yet, he kept trying, no matter how meekly, “What I mean is, unlike *Dark*, *Lie* can exist in presence of *Truth* sometimes, if not always. Look at the history writers writing past glory of human kind, in the description of historical events of one historian from one part of the world is condemned as a stark lie by another historian from another part. It has happened time and again, in the history of World Wars between the historian of Axis power and Allied powers, or, Allied powers and Central powers; in the history of Cold War between historians of Capitalist block and Communist block; in the writing of politicians of two enemy countries like India and Pakistan, or, North and South Korea, or, China and Taiwan, or, so many. It is in these cases lie does exist along with truth, because the idea of truth and lie in human mind, without which we have no existence of our own, depends on their perception, the angle the look at it, the point from which they comprehend it.”

The crowd now looked at *Truth* removing their gaze from *Lie*, the debate was growing heated in every passing minute; while *Wisdom* kept seated in his arm-chair, closing his eyes, *Knowledge* was enjoying the chit-chat, which was gradually growing matured enough, with the mystic smile glued on her face and kept watching the quarrel of two young birds.

“It is human weakness, the weakness of their rivalry, the weakness of their blindness, the weakness of their arrogance, which makes them deny the truth, or, projecting a truth as a lie, or, a lie as a truth. But moving beyond, they know, and even you know, there is, was, and always will be the *Truth*, admit it or not. But you have always taken the advantage of those human weaknesses and fear, just the way you are taking today,” *Truth* argued, her lips shivered a little.

“Look,” *Lie* continued, “no one’s denying your superiority over me, including me, truly, we all know the heaven and hell gap between you and me, it is already known, we don’t have to debate to establish that, you are a twinkling star in the sky while I am like a disgusting insect on the ground, but what my point here is, while you are a shining sword in the hand of the courageous,

the cowered need something to hold onto, no matter what, even if that is a deceit, even if that is hollow; I become their friend in that moment. I wish I could tell them to reject me and instead embrace you, the truth, but they are not strong enough to do that, I just save them from complete break-down, even if that is temporary; they do realize that eventually, don't they?"

"True friends do not show an easy path, they fight with the odd along and side by side," *Truth* said, "you are even worse, you do not show an easy and short path, you show the path to complete ruination, do you have any idea how many millions of innocents have lost their lives because of the infectious poison of lie you spread? And you call yourself the friend of humanity, what a tragedy."

*Lie* could not find an immediate reply. A dead silence followed, and then he quietly said, "You think the world is better off without me, don't you?"

*Truth* remained silent, evidently exhibiting her approval; the haughtiness in her attitude irked *Lie* more. "Let's make it clear then," he said, outrageous now, perhaps for the first time, "I shall prove it, you may be far greater than me in any way, but the world, the humanity needs me too. The humanity is not ready to live with truth alone. I will show it to you."

"What do you propose, *Lie*? How are you going to prove it?" *Knowledge* asked, not letting *Truth* to speak up.

*Lie*, with his tensed eyes, considered a while, biting his lips. "I," he said, "shall remain at a distance from the humanity for a week, a week *Truth* has, to make the world a better place, a week she has to make humanity more human, without any challenge or confrontation from me. And after one week, the crowd, the jury is there to decide."

"All right, sounds good. Of course only if *Truth* agrees to take up the challenge, but I believe," *Knowledge* continued, looking at her, impishly smiling, "she won't miss a chance like this, would you?"

"No, I would not," *Truth* said, looking at *Lie*, arrogance in her eyes, as if she was telling him 'What a blunder you have made by offering this opportunity, I shall tear you down, back off when you have time, or, suffer massive defeat.'

*Wisdom* and *Hope* were occupied in a low voiced conversation in one corner; now *Wisdom* drew the public attention, as if he had come to a decision after an intense and thought provoking consultation with *Hope*. "What would be the prize then? If it's a competition, there has to be a prize, right?" He looked at *Truth*. "What would you be ready to sacrifice in case you are defeated?"

*Truth* stared at *Wisdom*, as if he was, despite huge omniscience, was talking something impossible. Nonetheless, she decided, taking a while. "My freedom, I would remain his slave forever; that is what he wanted, right?" She said looking at *Lie*.



“That’s a huge price she is willing to pay,” *Wisdom* said, looking impressed, but was it by *Truth*’s confidence or stupidity, he did not express. Now he looked at *Lie*. “What about you Rootless Boy? What do you have to offer?”

*Lie* saw *Wisdom* and *Hope* to look at them with narrow eyes, as if penetrating his mind, but then he found it were not only them who were looking at him, everyone present in the party on that night had fixed, at that moment, their gaze upon him; he felt an undeniably huge weight; he had to offer some price too, and that could not be something less than *Truth* had already offered, and she had already offered a huge price, her freedom, or else he would be defeated in his own game himself, although he had a very good idea there was a negligible chance for him to win this game, if it was a game at all, it was, honestly, a gamble not a game, where he would sit idle; if there was a player in the game it was only *Truth*, she was holding all the key to victory, but still, he could not just accept his defeat without even fighting, could he? This was his last hope; he could see *Hope* looking at him with a twinkling in her eyes. Then he closed his eyes, made up his mind. “My existence, in case of defeat, I shall sacrifice my existence among you, I shall remain outcasts and would be banished once and for all.”

Everyone gasped, the competition, which began just as friendly gesture, a cordial debate between two, had now converted into a serious war, where hostility ran over the roof, where even the existence of one came under serious question. But it was done, as if it was irreversible, some voice of protest emerged but could not materialize into solid opposition, for *Wisdom*, the eldest and most admired, supported by *Hope*, approved of it. Now there was no smiling face among the crowd, there was no clap, no applause, no wish; now there was only pray, and the pain of waiting with patience for the moment to arrive, and nobody had, or, could have any idea what was waiting, for time was beyond their reach.

The game began and the world, the humanity witnessed a different world the next morning, and they were completely unprepared.

When the mankind woke up in the next morning, everything was as usual, but twist began as soon as someone – anyone tried to give false statement, in any form, be it verbally, or, in writing, they found they could not tell even a tiniest form of lie, speaking truth whenever they opened their mouth, as if like they didn’t even know how to lie. It was the world’s greatest liars, the lawyers, who realized their inability to do their work properly first, gradually it spread.

The first day, millions of pending cases were solved in the courtroom worldwide, the guilty confessed; criminals were convicted; innocents were acquitted; the justice delivery, in the world, had never seen more glorious days in human history. Back in the party, the wave of a big round of applause passed for *Truth*, who had, in her usual vibe, exhibited her corollary. And as *Truth*’s face brightened in glee of triumph, so *Lie*’s face kept darkening.

After earth shacking victory in the courtrooms, next came under the attack of rage of Truth was the corrupts - politicians, bureaucrats, leaders, businessmen, celebrities, and so many, all on a

sudden, caught up themselves in between the urge to hide their black-money in deep secrecy and their inability to keep those secret places: vaults, foreign accounts, *hawala*, ghost companies and many other out of public gaze, leading to the day of near end of corruption in the world. If the perplexity of wondrous victory of truth in the court shook the whole world, the latest one, which sent corruption and black money into limbo, turned the world upside down.

As everyone in the party witnessed the magic of *Truth*, transforming the world, *Lie* kept seated, wordless, hand in hand, paralyzed. His grim face was not unnoticeable to anyone.

“Looks like,” *Knowledge* said, observing the development, “time is approaching for *Lie*’s banishment.” She looked upon him. “You should be prepared, unless of course....” she paused. Everyone gazed upon her. “Unless *Truth* falls in love with *Lie* and grants him mercy, but I guess that is one thing which we can expect highly improbable, or, is it probable?” she stared at *Truth*.

“Come on, Mrs. *Knowledge*,” *Truth* said, reflecting her ignorance towards *Lie*, “could you possibly imagine me to slip down so low to spend my life with someone like him, someone like a devil in the guise of a friend, an infection in guise of vaccine, a deceit in guise of rescuer. Death is far more reverent than the humiliation to be his companion, to be taunted by others and haunted by my inner-self the whole life.”

“Well,” *Knowledge* said, hiding a sigh mixed with melancholy under her breath, “the question is settled then.”

“Yeah, but...,” *Truth* said, looking a little troubled, “I don’t have to be his girlfriend to grant him mercy, I can do that out of my generosity of my heart too, you know.” She, the mighty *Truth*, oblivious to everyone, beyond the gaze of every eye, had found herself deeply disturbed the moment *Lie* had declared his offer in case of his defeat, which was, in almost every opinion, pretty obvious. She smiled before every face, particularly in her victory, but deep inside, a hammer started pounding on her heart; her face brightened but her soul sank into deep; her hands raised in triumph but her legs began shaking in fear; and above all her failure to comprehend this sudden turn in her condition left her more anxious, but somehow, kept hidden from everyone.

Now it was *Lie*’s turn, ego reflected in his eyes. “Who told you I would be ready to accept your mercy, it is as equal humiliation for me as yours to be my girlfriend.”

*Truth* fell silent, not finding an immediate counter argument, leaving her dark faced. The sudden question raised by *Knowledge* had made her take a glance deep inside herself, and what she found devastated her, after which she refused to take another look, endeavoring to convince her own mind of just a temporary anomaly which would, in time, be fixed of its own. Nonetheless, she kept shivering imaging the result of total exposure of the truth, the love, real love she felt with *Lie*, what a disgrace she would be to herself, a smear to her family; everyone, on revelation of truth, would look at her disrespectfully; the contempt in their eyes, the curtness in their speech, the cunningness in their smirk would not and could not be tolerated by her. The same



very *Lie*, whom she had hated most, mocked most, fought most, antagonized most, discredited most, stood before her, today, armless, wordless, and yet like a great wall, impossible to be penetrated. But if, at that very moment, had she taken a deep and proper look inside herself, she would have found her heart to be narrating a completely different story. Despite her disgraceful and pitiless speech about *Lie*, the small and innocent girl in her kept repetitively pleading inside 'please don't hate me.'

While this kind of game was being played there in the party, another, completely different, game was being played in the arena of the world, where humanity faced a strangeness they had never faced before. Most were happy; some were, as expected, very disappointed. But time remembers none but the great events; individuals are like puppet in the hand of time to be played with and who cares what was happening with the puppets afterwards as long as the story is being narrated comprehensively.

Next the kind among humanity to face the rage of truth was politicians, particularly in democratic countries. The hollow promise, election rhetoric, and propaganda which were the basis of game of power in democracies, completely broke down. The reality began to be revealed with its dark face. There was no more vanity talk, no more false accusation, and no more projection of selfless sacrifice for the human welfare. If there was something, it was the starkness of truth, and the nudity of reality. Eventually the whole society began to come under its grab. The theologians, on whom people had blind faith, left exposed of their godless acts; the political parties, whom the people had elected to the power, remained revealed of their unsocial moves; and many elder, on whom many had tremendous trust, went on disclosing their selfish deeds and demands, left the whole society, in every corner of the world, bewildered. The absurdity of reality was too much for human emotion and acceptance of mind. Riots broke out in some places, government fell, revolts occurred, revolution took place and then failed; the era of tyranny of crowd began.

Meanwhile, when a four year old girl asked her mother how a baby is born, the self description of sexual intercourse in her mother's reply left her head spinning; a certain Mr. and Mrs. Kapoor's thirty year old marriage suddenly ended when Mr. Kapoor came to know that their only son was not his son but his brother's; a cancer patient died with acquaintance of his true condition though he could have lived few more years. Children's confession of stealing money from their parents' purse, or, cigarette from father's pocket, or, a bottle of liquor from family collection; husbands, or, wife's admittance of their extra-marital affairs; Guru's acceptance of taking advantages of the faith of their devotees; elder's admittance of their vulgar gaze towards the minors; people's exposure of the filth hidden deep in their mind; and so forth, left the society tottering in its legs, knowing not how to face the unrealized reality, the unexpected corporeality. Human started fearing another human's presence; the open declaration of the hatred, jealousy, anger, meanness, lust, greed, anxiety and fear that were stored in human mind remained an utter failure to be compensated by love, affection, pity, honesty or generosity that were there, falling massively short. Long relations broke; old friendships came to an end; men and women fell

apart; old and young moved away; husband and wife separated; all those moments came to be revealed when the husbands wanted to say 'yes' but said 'no', or, the wives wanted to say 'no' but said 'yes'; the moments when the mankind smiled outside, but wept inside; or, were silence outside, but screamed inside; they said they were 'fine' outside while they were devastated inside; they were cool outside but furious inside, or, they exhibited their gratitude outside when filled with jealousy inside. The society moved at the verge of collapse, the world slid down to the brink of another World War. The inability of the world leaders to justify their act of double standardness in handling world affairs and their tremendous criticism mounting sky high in several platform of United Nation, or, International Criminal Court, or, International Court of Justice, or, WTO Dispute Settlement body and so many, accelerated it, and came revealing the actual number of nuclear weapon, or, other form of secret weapons stored, secret places of their deployment, secret labs and so on. The confidential files came to be exposed one by one, souring the relation between communities, bittering the relation between nations.

Back in the party, the turmoil in the world had suddenly caught everyone in its grip making everyone very busy except perhaps *Happiness*, and of course *Lie*, in addition to *Wisdom*, *Knowledge* and *Hope*, who knew how much they were going to be required in future. The *Emotions* ran high; *Anger* accompanied by *Insanity*, having a tendency to be accompanied with one another in human mind, seemed to be maximally occupied. *Wish* and *Prayer* were visiting by every mouth in the human world; *Anxiety* had suddenly become an important personality; *Unreason* was jumping every now and then without reason; *Dark* and *Light* played heavily getting involved in a tough contest; and if someone seemed the most satisfied it was *Fear*. But in the midst of all these *Truth* suddenly felt a blaming stare on her from most, a certain teeth of accusation, especially among *Emotions*, as if she was the sole reason for all the turmoil.

“Out of my way you stupid ass. You wanna fly? My kicks are ready,” reddened *Anger* could be seen shouting. *Happiness*, who was always happy, stood sadly now with *Sorrow*, who was happy to be sad. *Dark* could be witnessed running behind *Light*, scaring her by wearing horrific mask; while *Insanity* kept mocking *Sanity* by mimicking her walk and *Unreason* kept laughing. *Reason* on the other hand kept herself seated tight lipped, looking furious over *Unreason*.

At certain times *Wisdom* would speak up in her defense. “Making a better world requires first the end of the old world, which at certain time can become muddy and dirty; you just need to have the conviction and guts to stick your hand into that.”

*Lie*, on the other hand, sitting in desolation in one corner, found himself in an unexplainable melancholy mood despite the sudden turn of events which visibly had made his side strong. Looking at *Truth*, restless and troubled, did not give him the self-pleasure or amusement he had expected when he had a burning desire to defeat her. But now, looking at humanity, he was not so sure.

In the world of humanity, now stories and novels were ceased to be written, for there was a sense of falseness in fiction too; songs were stopped being sung, dramas were stopped being played. People stopped living in society, going back into the wild, into the woods, returning to their origin.

“Humanity is not ready to embrace the absurdity the naked truth present before them,” *Lie* had said, now echoing in *Truth’s* ears; she was sitting beside the large window, wondering whether *Lie* was right about them. *Lie* had said more, “our privacy depends on our ability to lie, to hide; those emotions, lust, fantasies, both love fantasy and sex fantasy, greed, jealousy, envy which we think we are not ready to share, which the society tends to reject despite the fact of their certain existence in every individual mind. Society is soulless, it does not feel, does not realize, does not understand; it only judges, commands, with negligible comprehension it has, and the human soul has to be protected of the crude and cruel damage the society may, or, does inflict, human mind has to be given the ability to lie.”

On the other side, right opposite to where *Truth* was lost in her thought, there were *Wisdom*, *Knowledge*, *Hope* and *Lie* involved in an intimate discussion.

“You do understand,” *Wisdom* said, in a voice so heavy, looking at *Lie*, “that the turmoil is not her fault as much as it is your creation, don’t you?”

All other three gazed at *Wisdom* with surprise.

He had expected it. He needed not to be asked. “Lie is like a poison, an addiction; it takes human into the world of deceit, which has no existence, where he either destroys himself or become the cause of destruction of others, either way it is ruination of one or the other.” He paused; took a deep sigh and then continued, “The addiction part is more dangerous; once they fall in the trap of ‘falsehood’; it becomes very difficult to get rid of it. The mankind has become so much addicted to falsehood that they even have forgotten who they are; they have let the human part go away from them, turning themselves into an entity of self-satisfaction alone. Gaggling the voiceless, exploiting the helpless, murdering the defenseless, and so many have emerged to be so normal that one can only wonder whether the humanity is there at all among the human which separates them from other. The greatest crime of untruthfulness is in the murder of humanity among humans. So don’t think for a second her defeat is your glory. Your victory, maybe; but definitely not glory,” he said looking at *Lie*.

*Knowledge* nodded. “Every war is a result of conflict, every conflict is a result of conspiracy, and every conspiracy is a result of ‘Lie’.”

“The poison of lie,” *Hope* said, “breaks a family, then a village, and then the whole society, eliminating all hope to rebuild them.”

“And the saddest part, mankind has accepted lie even after full knowledge of the infectiousness. In fact they have become so much dependent on it that the sudden withdrawal of the ability to lie has made the whole society paralyzed, because in presence of lie, in presence of an alternative, they have learned, or, even accustomed to ignore the truth surrounding them. When the naked truth came crashing before them, they began to break down,” *Wisdom* concluded.

When *Lie* looked around, he found the whole crowd around, intently listening to them. But his eyes looked for only one person in the crowd: *Truth*. But she was not there. He remembered his time with *Truth*, growing up together, playing hide and seek, the quarrel, the fight, the mockery, the taunt they had been throwing at each other all their life; he remembered what had happened since that night in the party, the world that had slipped into chaos and disorder, and because of what? Because of the poison of ‘lie’ he had spread in the society, he had infected the humanity. Perhaps the world was truly better off without him, without his dark hand, and if that was true he should better be away from the world of humanity.

He made up his mind, ready to say his farewell, he might have emerged victorious, might have proved his points, but he, undeniably, had remained the sole reason for the collapse of human society, degeneration of human mind, unknowingly or unwittingly; human mind, without which, they had no existence of their own, might have embraced lie at certain times, or, even perhaps most of the times, but were and would always be aware of the truth all their life, fearing for it to emerge, panicking for it to come crashing on them. For so many millions, he had remained the reason of destruction, desolation, exploitation, corruption, infection leading to grief, languishment, bereavement, and finally despair. There was no greater defeat. His eyes looked for *Truth* once again; see the only person he had loved; loved so dearly, so deeply, despite his animosity, despite his antagonism. But he could not find her. He took a deep sigh, ‘Good Bye’, he said in his mind and stepped forward in his journey away from all. But then, suddenly, out of nowhere, *Truth* emerged, sobbing, and came running, threw herself in the arms of him, breaking all barrier, losing all bounds, tearing down the invisible thread that had kept her confined. Love of her life was leaving her forever, now was not the time to shy away, to be afraid, to be humble.

“Don’t know about humanity,” she said, sobbing, “But I...I ne....need you,” she stammered. She could not believe she was saying what she was saying; she seemed as if she was not herself, as if she was under the spell of someone else. The girl she was before: arrogant, proud, hauteur, and prude was not needed anymore. The girl she was now: pleasant, lovable, concerned, amiable, and cuddling needed not the permission of others to love her love, to desire for her companion. She was losing her strength, rapidly, excessively; arrived at the verge of extinction of her might. But she needed to say something, something she had wanted to tell him so many times but could not tell out of her own bounds, her own volition; something she had lied about so many times out of her own shame, of her own infamy. But not anymore, she tried to draw her strength; it was failing her; she tried again, her lips moved but no sound came out; she had to do it or else she would never be able to tell him; she tried again, one last time, conjuring every bit of her might that was left. “And yes, I lied, I, the *Truth*, lied about you. I...I...love you.” She fell silent, kept

sobbing, hiding her face in his chest. She could not feel her legs, her arms, her body, but only her soul. She felt the pleasantness, the gentleness and nothing else, neither did she want to.

*Truth is beautiful, Lie* uttered, more to himself. The realization came to him like a sudden blow of breeze, filling and feeding his mind, illuminating his inner-self. He realized how important it was for the 'truth' to be spoken, to be known, to be heard; deception could never save the world; despite its mischievous power a 'lie' was always a lie, a deceit, a distort to this beautiful world. A time arrives, for everyone, even for professional liars, even for *Lie* himself, when the truth is required to be told, to be heard; and it was the time for *Lie* in that moment. "We both need each other, we are incomplete without the other," he said quietly, running his fingers through her hair. "And I love you too....and that is a Truth."

That was not the end of the party. Normality, the old, usual world returned on earth. But there in the party that was the night dedicated to *Truth & Lie*, for their union, for their existence.