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Switch Bitch

Mahendra Waghela

“...this is the country where you serve your debt, no matter where you studied. This is the root place, the place of our illustrious ancestors and the place to earn your karma; the true seat of serene solemnity, this is where you belong. I want you to be back in India no matter what...”

This is how the bombastic email from learned judge Dhirajlal ('D' to close friends) to his son ended, with an air of forthright command, if not a subtle threat of a social ban. Hriday argued with his father on the phone and stalled his decision as he evaluated his options.

Like any other smart Harvard law graduate, Hriday accessed his prospects. This was 2008, with new winds of post 9-11 blowing in the shaky US job market. Despite his above average grades, the conservative law firm where he had interned and applied for job was less than keen to employ a foreigner on a longer term. With some difficulty, Hriday completed another fourteen months in a rival firm to get a headstart with some international clients.

After receiving his degree from Harvard Law School and a valid reference certificate from his reluctant employers, Hriday returned to India. The judge father had already sent the feelers to his friends in the closely guarded lawyers' community. Hriday started working at a Mumbai based lawyer firm. Within a year his time cost about 30000 rupees per hour to the clients; his stays in the upmarket hotels, his travels and buffets were billed too. Because of his US degree and niche competence in high profile corporate documentation and legal scrutiny, he was paid accordingly, enough to indulge his newly acquired fondness for designer watches, silk ties, hand-tooled leather accessories, and occasional bottles of Dom Perignon during weekends at nearby luxury resorts. Hriday had learned to live a life his father never could.

His father's reputation was carefully built over a decade as a cautious lawyer turned career judge who had worked his way up in the treacherous government hierarchy. He was known to walk the straight and narrow. The penny-pinching Gujarat High Court judge never stopped reminding the lawyer son that, thanks to his meticulous planning and connections, the son had received the finest law education in the world, and now held a job with a salary and career prospects the judge had dreamed all his life. The judge still wore homespun khadi shirts – no matter how impractical and difficult to maintain they were; khadi was the symbol of his unbending allegiance to Gandhian way of life. It was a common knowledge that he did not own a car of his own for he was saving diligently for his retirement years. His honourable lordship Judge Dhirajlal was recently promoted to the post of Chief Justice in the neighbour state while the son accepted a job transfer to the judge's home state. If the judge had any character defect some people knew about, it was his private smoking habit. His lawyer son had kept with up the habit, right down to same American brand – Marlboro Lights.

Now that the judge left for the elevated post in the other state, the son had the complete freedom to do whatever that pleased him in the huge government bungalow

with a policeman stationed at the gate. After two months stipulation, the son would need to vacate the government property and shift to the modest size apartment of his own.

Apart from his father's miserly, pontificating ways, the lawyer son hated the old man's high moral grounds and puritanical stance on other people's lifestyle. The judge rarely went on holidays and spent most of his spare time in his crammed library. He spent long nights studying and mulling over the old, cloth bound scripture and Upanishads. He remembered most of what he read and spoke in a thin, penetrating, courtroom-trained voice that rose and fell like rustle of sharp metal needles. Anybody within earshot would get a nauseating dose of his preaching and empty, irrelevant rants that originated thousands of years ago in one scriptures or other.

Every time Hriday caught his mother watching cheesy Bollywood romances on TV, he winced inwardly. There was little physical activity left for her because of a battery of fawning government servants within the six bedroom room bungalow surrounded by a sprawling garden and dozens of prancing peacocks. There were people to look after cooking, washing, laundering, ironing, housekeeping and gardening. He remembered the old days when his mother used to enjoy swimming and delayed everyone's dinner time because she used to love her evening walk in the front garden. Despite her short stature and plump frame, she was attractive, talkative and full of life till the son left for his college degree in the USA.

By the time Hriday returned to India, she had put on at least twenty kilos and looked ten years older than her age. Her face looked haggard and greyish as if she was permanently tired. Apparently, the Judge had no interest in her, as if he didn't have a sex life anymore.

"Enough! Enough!" Hriday muttered, stopped his train of depressing thoughts and returned to his present. It was Friday evening after a torturous and unending seventy hour week in the claustrophobic office. He ran his fingers through his thick, shiny hair and decided on some quick, earthy entertainment for himself. He used his fake email id and zeroed in on a top class call girl on the net. She claimed to be extra tall and of athletic build. Perfect! He paid via PayPal and secured an appointment after double checking the semi-naked photos for an hour.

It was April, still warm and a bit stifling when she showed up at the designated coffee shop. She was dressed in a midnight blue skirt, red silk spaghetti top and a delicate pair of ivory stilettos. Her perfectly coiffed hair shone under the dim lights as she picked up her glass with a manicured hand. She sipped the sparkling mineral water like a princess in her parlour. The waiters seemed to be extra attentive around her. Hriday almost mistook her for a charming socialite waiting for her companion till she answered his text message and looked at her watch as if she meant business. They climbed into his mammoth SUV and went to their temporary love haunt, the empty government bungalow.

The young and hungry lawyer poured vodka and offered one to her. He barely asked the girl's name and pulled her on top of his lean, gym-trained frame.

“I am Maya. Do you know what is Maya? The mythical illusion. I’ll show a few tricks you would never know on your own,” she said and pulled off her slinky top. Her creamy breasts bounced like a playful pair of tennis balls.

“Maya, all I am interested in right now is Kaya, the physical body,” the lawyer responded and gulped his drink. He yanked at his belt and waited for Maya to finish her drink. Maya blinked like an innocent doll as she took a delicate sip and pulled down his pants. “I am a true professional,” she said and went down to work on him with her juicy lips and experienced, wet tongue.

“You are a gifted genius, nobody has given me a boner like this!” The lawyer exclaimed, feeling an uncontrollable heat in his groin. He grabbed her skirt in a tearing hurry.

Hriday mounted the slim call girl and ravished her again and again like a raging bull till nothing was left inside himself. Maya, though seasoned for the worst customers, felt a sigh of relief when the spent lawyer went into bathroom for a shower. The cold jets of water sobered the lawyer in ten minutes. He felt full-on alert and rational again as he towelled himself.

Maya was ready with a relaxing cigarette and a large crystal ashtray when Hriday walked into the bedroom. Nothing escaped the lawyer’s sharp eyes as he smoked deeply.

“Something is bothering me, can I ask you a few question?” He couldn't help saying it.

Maya smiled and pulled on her skirt. “Mr Lawyer, always ready to cross examine? You get your answers after you give me my tip, if you choose to.”

“Certainly.” The lawyer opened his nightstand drawer and gave her a stack of 100s. “Ten thousand. Happy?”

Maya made a pained face in the hand mirror and placed the money carefully in her handbag. “Now you can ask your question.”

“Something knowing, almost intriguing about you!”

“Such as?” Maya found her stilettos and demonstrated her seductive hip swinging walk for future business.

The lawyer sat down calmly as his eyes narrowed in concentration. “You lead me into the house as I removed my shoes in the porch and you didn’t want to remove yours. I followed your gorgeous, swinging ass. We crossed the drawing room and you took the right, straight to the stairs, and not to the left which leads to the kitchen. As we climbed, you missed hitting your head at the landing even though the ceiling is abnormally low at the place. I still get bumped in the head, even after staying here for six months. Another thing. On the first floor, after the lobby, you headed straight to the right side door even if the left side room facing mine is identical in every possible way. How did you decide not to enter that room? And the final clincher - you picked this family heirloom ashtray from the outside cabinet as if knowing beforehand where it is kept.”

Maya, the crafty call girl drew on her cigarette and made a delicate ring in the air. “This is almost like a classic déjà vu for me. Your hunger and desperation, your thirst and thrust, your need to bend everything your way, exactly same as your dad’s. However, you couldn't match His Honourable Lordship’s tip.”

“What?” The lawyer son’s jaw dropped. He took a few seconds to recover before he asked a half hearted question.

“He? Old scripture-spitting rascal! How much tip did my dad give?”

Maya bent forward, her face and tone now levelling with the ambitious and hungry lawyer trying to be one up with the judge father.

“Ten times as much.” Maya laughed, all sharp teeth and fresh tomato lipstick. “Shouldn't you match it, if you can't not score a bit higher?”