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Noble Stones

Waheed Mohiuddin

“Honour, honour what a hypocritical term, disgrace and infamy for me but prestige and nobility for him. Because we met, I became a shame, but he is still an honourable man. Chastity, what a game, when we play, I always lose, but he always takes the crown. Books made me a coward, I cannot lie neither die, but customs made him a noble man”. While standing in front of a mirror, Hafsa was searching for her soul.

The creaking sound of the opening of her room door cracked her thoughts too, and suddenly she came back to her new reality. She greeted Jamal, but he dragged her away rudely and sat on the bed, she silently joined him. She wanted to hold his hand, but she could not gather the courage. Although she was a university graduate, but customs were much stronger than her education and like millions of other women, she could not raise her voice in front of her husband.

Relationship what a weird puzzle, when she was a friend of Jamal, they had laughters together, they used to talk in the dark, cold nights of winter, she was presented with so many gifts and Jamal used to celebrate her birthday, the day when he saw her first time, new year and Eid festivals, but as long as she married with him, things changed altogether. He turned like a rude boss. There was no sharing and caring left now in their relation.

Due to this behaviour, Hafsa could easily feel that Jamal was hiding something dire.

Gloria Jean's Cappuccino and yummy fish mac of MacDonald's were her favourites. How hard is to understand the game of time that just a couple of years ago, Hafsa was in the final year of BS Honours and her blue eyes, dark and long naturally curled hair, fair complexion with diamond cut face was famous in the entire university. She was undoubtedly the beauty queen of the university campus and was always surrounded by friends who never miss a chance of having fun, but Jamal Hussain was something more than a fish mac. She felt more comfort in his arms and used to spend hours with him in the thick jungle at the back of the university campus.

She was the only child of wealthy parents, and in the typical Indo-Pak patriarchal culture, she had seen so many cases of honour killing. So it was not a sweet dish for her to convince her parents for her marriage with Jamal but time played a conspiracy, and her parents died in a terrorist suicide attack in Islamabad, she left alone in the company of six billion people, but Jamal was there for her, the only shoulder where she could shed her tears.

They got married, and their relationship entered into a socially acceptable and honourable contract. Time passed, and after a few months, Hafsa got pregnant. With the passage of time, her belly got bigger and hips wider.

In a luxurious room of a big bungalow, she used to sit for hours in an armed chair beside the window where she could see the beauties of nature, the tall trees, lush green mountains, dancing birds, moving clouds and silently flowing river. Every new day reminded her of the

old pains that she was carrying from the dawn of human life. “I am no one but a piece of chocolate cake or of a bar-be-que pizza or a wet tissue. I had been eaten, I had been used and then thrown in the bin” she talked to herself.

At mid night, rain drops of winter lead her mind to the winter of the previous year when she met Jamal. She remembered the lovely cold nights when she used to relax and feel the warmth of his love while sitting in his lap. His attractive promises and soft smiles often lead her to a fairy land where she became a queen, and the flowers needed her permission to dance and star to twinkle. What else a girl needed but a caring hand and lovely words.

In the morning, she prepared the breakfast before he wake-up, but when he woke up, he picked up his bag and umbrella, and without saying anything to her, he moved out. She wanted to ask him so many things, but the only words she could say in a shallow voice were:

“Breakfast is ready, please...”

He took a quick turn, looked at her with anger and went out.

She remembered the days of just a few months back when he used to come to meet her in the cold nights, and he used to take the same quick turn before leaving her, but this quick turn was entirely different. Now she could feel a fire in his eyes and anger in the silence.

From the wedding night, Jamal was totally changed. This change was leading her into a world of despair and anguish. His words had changed along with his attitude. She wanted to know the reason of this swift change.

She remembered his words when he unconsciously shouted at her one day and said: “Don’t ask me why I do not love you anymore because the girls of your kind always pretend like this...”

“Girls of my kind... What do you mean?” she asked in astonishment.

“I do not know whose sin is breathing in your womb, the light of my honour or the darkness of your wild desires. I do not know” he shouted.

“What..?” she said.

“Remember, you came to meet me in the jungle before marriage, how can I believe no any other man used to meet you - if you could meet me secretly then ...” anger and hate were lurking in his words.

These words pushed her into a strange world for a while where she met herself in a desert. She cursed herself for being a woman; she cried what a woman would say in her defence but the tears. She cried that she had to defend and prove her purity to the man from the beginning of the time. She met Seeta in the desert who told her that for the centuries long, she had been walking on the burning coals in front of Ram to prove her purity. She met Zulekha, who told her how she was being portrayed as a provoker for the thousands of years. She met some child brides, who told her how they had been forcefully married when they did not knew

what actually marriage was; In the end, she met Eve, who told her that she was being treated as the inspiration of sin from the birth of time, but no one asked a single question to the sinner. She met herself there and found that she had no right to love and to be loved. She jerked herself and came back to the hard reality.

She had nothing to say anymore, she sat in a corner and wiped the salty water dropping from her blue eyes. Jamal took a quick turn and left the room. She was not sure if Jamal would ever come back to home or not.

Three months had passed; Jamal used to come late nights and left the house in the morning. Sometimes he spent nights out and sometimes when he desired, he made her tissues wet, but they never had a chat. She felt that she was useless and her existence meant nothing in the universe.

Sometimes, she thought that she should get divorce from her husband and lead an Independent life but soon she came to reality that she had no direct right to give divorce to her husband, and if she took this step, Jamal may be exposed from the shell and turned violent to her and if she successfully got divorced, how could she exist in such a society where Eve is always wrong, how would her child grow up, and above all, with a woman the shadow of a man was a must need in her community. So many thoughts attacked her mind.

Whenever she made her mind to commit suicide and looked towards the ceiling fan, sharp knife, and electric switch board, the sweet movements in her womb changed her mind.

“How can I live in the pure world when I am not pure, how can I die when I have given another life, how can I be a beloved when I am a wife. Pity on me and shame to your traditions that judge purity through a little piece of flesh but the emotions meant nothing to you. I do not know who am I, the mistake of nature or a grudge?” she said, but there were no ears for her.

Sometimes she thought why not she could ask her husband, why he used to visit her before marriage if he was a chaste and how he could prove his purity. But unseen fears sealed her lips.

During the day when Jamal was not at home, she talked to her child, smiled with the cute baby, made a list of the proposed names, and waited for the time when she could see the child in her lap, but as soon as Jamal entered the house, she started to hate her child, she wished the baby to die and let herself free.

Sometimes, she thought that after delivering the baby, she would be a complete woman but how she could fill the hollowness of her soul?

She missed the loving words of Jamal, his romance and the caring promises at this stage. She was in extreme need of his love and care, but unfortunately she was alone in this critical period, and along with her loneliness, she was being oppressed, ignored and psychologically tortured by her Jamal.

On the same night, when Jamal entered the house, she collected all of her courage, remembered her university lecture room and asked him to give her divorce and let her free if he believed that she was not pure or live a happy life with her.

Jamal's face turned red with anger, and he slapped her face and shouted at her:

“You bitch, how you to talk me dare like this. I will never let you free and will teach you the lesson how to meet strangers in the dark nights to light the evil desires.”

She cried with physical pain this time and covered herself in the blanket.

After a short while, she noticed that Jamal had left the house.

She could not sleep for whole night. In the early morning, she was looking outside of the window, the sky was clear, sun rays were about to touch the trees, birds were chirping in the cool breeze of autumn. The tall trees were throwing the yellow leaves to the ground.

She was feeling that the stones were being thrown at her because she was not a chaste woman. She was feeling herself half buried in a grave, and her hands tied at her back, and the honourable men were throwing the noble stones at her.

Suddenly she cried when she saw a fallen autumn leaf that was flying towards her belly from the window, she screamed loudly.

In the mid night, when Jamal entered the room and saw that Hafsa was sitting in the chair, her hands were at her back, and she was looking outside. He noticed that she did not mind his presence; she did not even prepared the food but looking outside continuously.

After a short while, he shouted at her and ordered her to close the window as he was catching cold. When she did not notice him, he got up in anger and turned her face harshly.

He noticed that she was looking down at the autumn leaf on her belly and a few on the ground, her eyes were opened and breath was still, but a little pearl of her pure tear was still shining on her face.

About the author:

Waheed Mohiuddin (Pansari) is a Pakistani born author living in Ireland. He has completed Masters in English Literature along with the postgraduate degrees in Women Studies, and Social Policy from various universities of United Kingdom and Pakistan. He has published two novels, ‘The Chains; and Revenge’ and also presented his several research papers in international conferences. He always writes about human rights issues, child abuse, and violence against women, global peace and inter-faith harmony.