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Dying Hope

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It was two hours after the Morning Prayer in the morning. It was the season of spring which is one of the better seasons in Kashmir. Spring in Kashmir brings back life in full activity. It fills the heart of the people with hope and recharges their bodies which have been uncharged over a long gape of six months. After the arrival of spring, it appears as if Kashmiri people are born again. Everything comes into movement. People start coming out of their houses where they spend the months of cold season. Old men and women give up their beds of which they have been remained glued all these months. They come out and sit on the outer places of the houses, receiving the rays of the sun over their feeble bodies. Sun's blindness also gets vanish. The clouds that keep the sun veiled with utmost care like a mother who keeps her baby delicately cloaked from any untoward eventuality. Birds too return in the spring season. They start making their nests and every nook and corner of the valley looks vivacious again. Houses outside and inside appear alive with the pleasing noise of children. Parents wake up early with an intension of sending their wards early to school. Spring is a welcome season for everyone. Farmers visit early in the morning their fields. Laborers go out to their working sites. Government employs go out in their best suits with a pen clipping to their front pockets and leather bags clinging on their shoulders. Everybody is seen in a state movement. At the same time the spring season brought Nostalgia to Nabi. It reminded him of the old golden days that he had spent in Kashmir. He found himself in a khaki suit ready to go for a work. Suddenly he got up from a nap and opened his weary eyes slowly. Although he did not want to open his eyes and wanted to sink into his glorious past. But he could not resist for a long. Nabi was a bed story teller for his children; his mind was often overflowing with manifold tales of Kashmiri ghosts in a snowy season. His children were passionately waiting for the evening time. These tales brought profound love in them for Kashmir and persuaded their father to take them to their motherland. Nabi often promised them and with a hope they fell asleep.

One day Nabi really told them that they are going to Kashmir within a few days. The news brought joy into the lives of the twin sisters. Asma was the elder daughter and much loved by her father. She with her sister Uzma was preoccupied with packing since the announcement made by the two big brothers who became the rival after the partition. Asma was much eager to visit Kashmir and the concept of homeland got her a strange feeling. Now she did not want to spend a single moment in the adopted land where they were living for 20 years. Her father had a good job there and meeting the family needs up to their expectation. Her wife was happy with her husband's income. Both Asma and Uzma were studying in reputed schools. Nabi had never let them feel inferior to others. But all the bounties lost the importance since the word of visiting home came from the mouth of Nabi.

On the first day of October, 2014, Nabi with his family sat on a bus from Peshawar to Srinagar. It took them several hours. After a long tedious journey they reached the village with cheerful faces. Nabi along with his family was received with warm welcome by his parents and other relatives. The days passed with utmost care. The children were overjoyed. Few months passed in the state of happiness. But who could deny the crude reality of nature that happiness and sadness are twin souls. By the passage of time the pages of the book of sadness about Nabi's family got penned down. It took no time to reveal the real nature of the parent's of Nabi. His parent's fake affection towards Nabi's family day by day got revealed. It came to the forefront on the day when Nabi's sister-in-law scolded and abused Asma for writing with her pencil on the wall. She thrashed and pulled her hair so strongly that she felt unconscious. Uzma on seeing Asma in such a state she screamed and shouted so loudly. The fearful shriek frightened Nabi who was picking apples in the nearby orchard. He left the unfinished task there and ran hurriedly inside the home and found Asma lying on the floor. Nabi shouted Asma, Asma...wake up. But Alas! Asma could not wake up. Her soul had transported into another world where from she was unable to come back. After her funeral, Nabi wanted to know the reason behind her death but in return the family of Nabi blamed Nabi, that you were responsible for her death. They narrated a cock and a bull story that Uzma was suffering from the heart disease that could be treated, Had Nabi taken pains of her health, she could have been saved. People who gathered there too blamed Nabi. The support of the village people opened a gateway for parents of Nabi to expel Nabi's family. When Uzma restrained to leave, her aunt held her long hair and pulled and dragged her up to the main gate of the road. They showered wicked remarks upon Nabi's family like Nabi's sister-in-law

explicitly said, “You don’t belong to this land. You polluted our home and homeland, go back where from you come.” These words gave Nabi headaches and tears started dripping down from his eyes. He could not resist any longer and moved towards his miserable family shamefully and put his head in the lap of his wife. He did not want to show her his disappointing face. At the same time his feeble mind transported him into his life in the adopted land which he now missed so desperately and he knew that it’s was his idea of coming back here. Her wife had firstly denied him to come. On the other hand homesick Nabi was too optimistic from his nature and did not pay heed to her words. His love for his daughters could not resist him from their wishful longing for their motherland. Their wish was to reconnect with their roots which they had left during the peak year of militancy in 1989. In the meantime, Nabi came into a conscious state; he ashamedly took off his head and pointed his grieved family towards the unfair world outside his parent’s home. Nabi’s grieved family was forcefully thrown out of the house. It was a catastrophe that befalls on the innocent family of Nabi. They were forced to shift in a windowless cowshed. Usma could not believe what was happening. It seemed to her like watching a T.V serial. First she lost her sister Uzma and now they were roaming outside in search of protection. Uzma was entirely dejected from such an unexpected turn of life. Tears were drenching down from her almond sized eyes. She held the finger of her mother who was sobbing and shrieking like a child. Nabi along with his family wanted to hide from the eyes of the spectator’s chiefly from the village head and other officials known for justice. But could not, at last the night came into their favor and hid them under her blanket and instantly they slept with dreams of hope in the alien land.