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Fidoic  
India,J&K

### **The Abandoned Diary at the Coffee House!**

It was the darkest of the nights. It was darkest of the times. I sat sipping the same old coffee near the same old portico! Outside! The third time! The light of the loggia highlighted every breath I gave out. It was cold! Winter cold! The coffee was getting colder by the time. The steams have stopped coming out of the cup now. Inside my room, the lights were off, except the little table lamp I kept on the study table. It was an old wooden lamp my father gave me when I was preparing for my interim examinations. I had scratched my name with a pin in its base. The lamp was lightening up an open diary directly underneath it. The lines were shining. I know, when I came out, they were.

I couldn't write more so I left to make a coffee for myself. They say it's a healthy drink from china. And Alexander Pope once said coffee makes the politicians wise! I don't know if that was a satire or not. The coffee did not give me any strength to complete the diary. So I had to come out and sit here in the portico in this cold night. Colder and darker than ever! I was wondering what I can write in the diary. But then how can I, it does not belongs to me. I found this diary in the coffee house today. The table which I took, the chair besides it, there it was, on it.

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April sky has all the colours that a landscape lover dreams of, a perfect blend of yellow, orange and blue. At this time of the day the sun starts disappearing and the joggers and health freaks are abundant in the park. A lush green rose park in the south of Delhi, a refugee from day's pollution and extravagant noises of the traffic, is a small park, no more than a half a kilometre in radius. Most of this park is a spontaneous, uncontrolled growth of trees, not maintained by anyone other than the Mother Nature herself, a small section in the front is where the roses are, giving it the name of a rose park. The best thing about the park is the presence of peacocks which fly down from the adjoining Deer Park. The park is separated by a road from yet another park, famously known as the Deer Park, which is the home to a few hundred deer. It also houses three other small areas, one for ducks, one for rabbits and one for lovers. It is also just half a kilometre in radius, the path through these two parks connect Hauz Khas to Green Park. The road that separates the two parks leads to Hauz Khas Kila (Fort), an ideal place for lovers who find corners in the old ruins of the fort made during the Khilji Dynasty's reign. The park also hosts a lake, although weeded and dirty, but the back drop of the jungle area gives the lake a cool aura for sun gazers. At the intersection of these three places is a parking lot where people can park their cars and then there is a market full of café's and bars. In this overcrowded area there is a small place, an exhibition gallery where modern art is always on the display. It is a very less frequented area. This is a perfectly misappropriated place in such a romantic area. The paintings have been unchanged from last 6 months. Nothing new has been added except a few new books in the book section of the exhibition, which is cleaned every 5th day off the dust for not

even a single contact with the books is made. I had made it a habit of visiting this place every Friday evening and after having a look at the paintings I went straight to the Starbucks cafe for a coffee.

And it was the Starbucks where I found this diary.

It belonged to a girl. She was a nice little girl, dressed in pink frock, maybe 15 or 16; her hair fell up to her waist. Pink cheeks to match her dress and a round face like the little girl on the soap opera. Purple clips in her hair to hold them back from falling on her face. The pink colour was in strong contrast to the dullness of her face.

She sat in the Starbuck cafe, sipping her coffee and staring out of the window. The bloodstained knife lay next to her handbag, covered with her blue silk scarf. Her gaze was continuous as if waiting for something. The stained knife seemed an alien possession to her calm and serene composure. Her innocent beauty made it hard for me to take off my eyes from her face. For a moment our eyes met and she smiled at me, I obliged by the same.

As I sat on the softly cushioned chair with a cup of cappuccino, scribbling in my own journal, a burst of vitriol was heard at the entrance. The sweet and musical atmosphere of the Starbuck cafe evaporated, and the scarcely populated cafe, now was looking towards the treacherous person yelling and now searching for somebody in the cafe.

The then calm and serene girl now jumped at the sight of him, grabbed hold of the knife still covered with her blue scarf. After the person entered the cafe a couple followed looking horribly shocked. There were two policemen accompanying them and a lady police officer.

The couple ran towards the now frightened girl still hiding the knife behind her back. The man, might be in his early forties, slapped her and shouted a single word so loud that the whole cafe resonated with its sound; 'Why?' The woman stayed, leaning onto the round pillar, tears now perambulated her cheeks, gathered at her chin and then dropped to the wooden flooring of Starbuck. The little girl replied with a calm smile.

There was a moment of silence. Everything was still. The lady officer now came to the girl with handcuffs to which she politely brought her hands forward keeping the knife on the table and producing her hands to embrace her fate.

The other policemen now took all the things from her possession, her bag, her scarf and the blood-stained knife. As she was passing the lady she smiled, a smile that gave an air of winning, as if she had succeeded in something. A few moments later she was escorted out of the cafe, everything went back to normal, that's a metro life, you see and clap and enjoy and ignore and then get back to what you were doing.

Though the incident occupied my thought for quite a long time and made me look back to the place she was sitting, as if she was still there, sitting and smiling it soon passed. As I was done with my writing and coffee, I started to gather my belonging and go back home, when I saw a notebook lying on the chair, next to where the girl was sitting.

Curiously, I went to fetch it up. It belonged to the girl. It remained unnoticed to the policemen, who unknowingly left it there. The thought of giving it to the police didn't even cross my mind, and like a founders keepers object, I kept it in my bag.

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I took a metro home. It was a one hour journey. A lot of through processes amalgamated to a single unified stream of consciousness. I knew not who she was or what she had done but the contrast between her innocent appearance and the obvious peccant she had done was something distraught. I was now concentrating on the three smiles of the little girl. The first was the one she gave me, a smile so calm yet peregrine as if hiding something deep under, a mask to mask and at the same time instating careless forage towards the strangers. The second was her smile as an answer to the person who slapped her, it was a smile she held as if mocking the person, insulting his valour and injuring his pride. The third was to the women leaning onto the pillar, it was a smile that gave solace to the women, conveying the satisfaction of the deed she had committed and at the same time portraying the pride the little girl had.

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I was occupied in a lot of important thing, but my head came bouncing back to the girl. As an avid traveller I have developed a habit of meeting new people, knowing their stories and learning something new form every experience. This habit had made me curious enough to indulge into the life of others.

Three hours later I came home dropped the diary on the study table and went outside the room to have something to eat. A toast of butter clad bread with a cup of tea! And I read the slip posted on the fridge! "Honey, I'll be late take the dinner!" with nothing to do I went to surf the Pandora's Box I had found in the café. A diary! Of a young girl.

The first page was inscribed with "KEEP OUT! PERSONAL." And with the curiosity of a little kid who does what he is told not to do I flipped to the starting pages of the diary. And there I was reading her personal life. A story of 18 pages! A story of 11 days! With every new sentence I was more absorbed into her story. I could see what a nice little girl Alex was. I could feel her; I lived her life through her diary. And then her last page was incomplete and then I came to have my coffee!

I thought of completing it but couldn't find the words and this is my third coffee and my struggle for the words continues!

Her last page was....

....."and now I can't tell it to any of my friends. My parents have told not to tell it to anybody! They said, "What will the church think?" "Are you glad you didn't get pregnant?" "He is married, what were you thinking?" "Why did you stay there when you knew what would happen?" "It doesn't matter how you feel, he said he was sorry and it is over?" "Why didn't you just avoid him?" "Now go into your room and stay there"..... but they don't how much pain it is to be get raped!.....