

THE CAT, THE GHOST AND THE UNFATHOMABLE MISERY OF A LONELY MAN





PREFACE (DISCLAIMER):

This book was written by me. (95% human 5% brainrot and 0% AI)

Although it started out as a serious writing project, very serious, but somewhere along the way I messed up the story. I tried to fix the story but it's just funny how much mess I have made.

So I added a cover, generated by ChatGPT.

And some capybara images I found on pinterest.

The story deals with a miserable man, as you might have seen on the cover, and his schizophrenic (kind of) delusions.

‘THE CAT, THE GHOST AND THE UNFATHOMABLE MISERY OF A LONELY MAN’

-by Bibhu.

The spoon that I used to eat today seemed inappropriately long. It was like I had never ever put my hands on it. Which was unordinary because I have been using all the spoons in our house without exception. Now this, inexplicable turn of events, creates a tension. What if a burglar broke into our house, brought his own spoon for that matter and ate all of our yogurt from the fridge and left the spoon by mistake. That, to say, is uncommon certainly but definitely not impossible. What if a cat, a really big cat of the notorious kind, stole the spoon from someone's house and dropped it at ours. Well then, I am the thief, or so it would seem to whoever's spoon the cat had stolen. Immediately now, this thought also strikes in mind, what if I am actually in the wrong house? What if this place is not at all my home but someone else's house where I have been trapped and consequently all the spoons here are new to me?

"What a foolish imagination", I thought to myself. Why, I must be crazy to think that I am in the wrong house when I know the inventory of this place by heart. For say, the living room has a weird two-faced clock, one of which has stopped working since a long time ago and the other shows a constant time delay by two hours. There are three forks in the kitchen out of which one is bent shaped from back when I tried to open a lid using that fork. There are exactly forty-three toothpicks left in the box which I make sure to tally every morning. I have known these two lizards for a long time now, that are accustomed so comfortably to one of these walls that I have barely ever seen them in motion. These lizards make me sick. I can never tell what they are thinking of or what they are talking about. Sometimes I try to make a guess at their conversation but I can only conclude that they are making fun of me. I despise these lizards. When I bath, I always complain to myself that the shampoo might just run out any day now. However, it never does. And lastly there is a dim lit space where I usually spend most of my time at. This place has my prints all over it, like my footsteps, that are sometimes spaced so unevenly distant, looking at which one could predict that a man has been pacing around in a nervous breakdown at this place. There are marks of my shadow as well and of my thoughts too. Sometimes at night I fear to sit alone in this place, afraid that I might succumb to my thoughts and perhaps do something to myself and not be able to tell anyone.

I live alone.

Coming back from my train of miserable thoughts into my small isolated room, I realise that time has passed too slowly despite of my incessant daydreaming. But my room has stayed the same. The books spread out like leaves all around, the window half open, half broken and a

slow cold breeze entering through it, the colour from the walls are starting to wear off and the mirror hung on the wall has my reflection- my sadness oozing from it. What is the reason for my sadness? Absolutely nothing. It has only become an addiction and I wish to get rid of it.

I storm out the door in a strange anger, tired of my own self.

"Today will be different. Today I will make a friend", I kept saying this inside my head as I walk on the road after so long.

I always feel that people are very difficult to look at when you walk on the road. And to talk with one of them is a bigger challenge. No one has the time to stop and ask me how I am doing. It's almost as if I am invisible to the eyes of people. And for the little amount of people that do notice me think of me as a completely wasted person. What am I doing wrong? Is it the way I dress? Should I consider changing it? Or do I give some foul smell? Are my eyes really drowsy? I feel so too sometimes actually. Maybe people hate me for my smile. How creepy it is for a person like me to be smiling in the middle of the road and that too while my conscience is almost always dissolved in a constant sense of misery. "Am I a bad person, even though I have no particular hatred nor attachment with anyone?", I keep walking further.

A little far down the road I was met with a cat. Cats play a very important role in my life. Honestly, I would rather save a kitten during an apocalypse than myself or any other species. These adorable furry creatures and their whiny attitude fills me with hope to live longer. I feel a lapse in my melodramatic monologue after seeing this kitten.

"Hello Miss", I say to the kitten in a high-pitched tone and extend my hand for the cat to come closer. The cat gets startled, and looks at me with her pupils drawing back deep into her eyes and her whiskers sharp as they get when cats are alert. Her tail, that was floating in the wind just then had become straight as if she had sensed a danger. There was a stillness in that moment and the cat looked wary of me. I was disheartened at this gesture by the cat. Am I so intolerable as a living being that even a cat cannot reciprocate my feelings?

"C'mon now. Don't be so angry at me so early in the morning?", I said smiling still, "A little handshake and I will be off"

The cat only hisses, baring his sharp canines at me.

I snapped.

"It's enough", I yell like a mad man in the middle of the street. I yell at the cat, "Not even you think of me as someone worth talking to, right? You think I am not fit to be existing here among these people, don't you? Well let me tell you, you bloody cat, neither are you fitting in this society. These people only feed you their leftovers and take pictures of you because either

your fur looks beautiful to them or your eyes do. Loose them and they will start treating you like they treat me, like you treated me."

The cat ran away. But I kept shouting still. It was just me shouting, screaming at the road for some time alone. Few people had stopped to see what a maniac I was, while few people were telling me to go away. By the time I came to my senses, I was embarrassed of what I had just done.

Shrugging my shoulders at everyone present over there, silently and embarrassed, I resume my journey.

After yelling so much, I was hungry. My hunger takes me waltzing through the city to a familiar place that I visit often to spend my time. This place is a bar of some kind, one with cheap alcohol and horny women in them. I only go there to eat-- but today, I also wanted to make a friend. I did not have tiniest of hopes that I'd meet anyone when I entered in there. But just as I stepped in, my eyes fell on an old man.

[Dear readers, you might think I am being crazy again. But what I am about to write, please read this with utmost seriousness and the following is NOT to be taken as a joke or a metaphor of any kind]

The old man I saw upon entering the bar was dead. Quite literally. He was laying on a table without any movement and the reason why I'm so sure that he was dead is because I could see that there was a ghost next to him.

I experienced a shock, as any other person would get after seeing a ghost. "How did I get drunk by just entering the bar?", I asked myself, unable to believe my eyes, "Or is this a dream of some sort?"

"It's real", said the ghost- in a ghostly voice.

"Khao maa kasam"

"God promise", said the ghost. And he called me near him. Sceptical, yet excited, I approached 'it'.

Until this morning I was a lonely man, living alone in my lonely apartment and lost in my lonely isolation. And now I am sitting in a bar, across the table to a ghost, and drinking beer as if I was destined to meet this ghost after all. "Well, what do we have to lose?"

The old man spirit looked tense for a moment. Before I could say anything, he started speaking,

"Like all old men, I was once young. But as you can see me, now I am dead(lol). And as per the ghost law, I must find a human and tell him all my worries before I can pass onto the afterlife."

So the old man just wanted someone to vent. Uninterested I say, "Speak then, I will listen."

"The world is a bitter and complicated place; its men are corrupt and corrupt in not one but many ways. People steal, cheat, murder each other and break other people's hearts. But worst of all, most people forget the need for understanding other people. I was once in love with a woman who failed to understand me. And that led to my death. See, boy, how dangerous it is in this world not to be misunderstood. Let me tell you first, who I am and how I died..."

I was patiently listening to whatever the old man was saying. I instantly felt a desperation in that man to speak his mind, a desperation that I have often felt but never been able to fulfil. So, I decided to stay silent and only listen.

"I was having an affair with another woman. And my wife found out and killed me. I tried to explain everything to her but she did not understand, clearly misunderstanding."

And here I was expecting this man to say something divine that could give me enlightenment but he turned out to be farce.

I felt my time was wasted there, even though I had nothing else to do.

I gathered my things and I left.

On the way back I noticed that the old man ghost was still following me. Irritated I asked, "Do you still have something to say to me?"

"Only one thing," told him.

"What?"

"I am old and you are young. You have not seen as much life as I have. So let me tell you- this world will never turn into a kind place. You can either adapt a facade to yourself and live a happy life just like everyone or you will always continue to be the miserable man that you are...", the ghost vanished from my sight.

Probably the old man just wanted a dramatic exit. But what he said at last stuck with me. I wandered for some more time through the city as the sun had started to set. Saw some kids playing together, a couple walking while holding hands and a group of friends returning joyously from a party.

"Life for them is different than what life is for me. I have not been a part of this society for a long time now, explicitly challenging its ways and only criticising happy people. To be honest, I am scared of being happy. For if someone points out that I am happy and asks me the reason for my happiness then I will not have anything to answer. I am afraid everyone, then, will just think of me as a fake persona with a sculptured giddiness. I do not need to be pitied. I am thus happy left alone from this world."

I reach my home again, now its night. The place is as sombre as it was when I had left in the morning. The walls are tired of hearing my voice and the person in the mirror is weary of playing my character. My bed looks better empty than when I'm lying in it and likely everything else is better in my absence.

"Alas! I find the world a bitter and complicated place and it too seems to think the same about me."

THE END