

BHOOFTA

GAPPA

7 Short Horror
Stories

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justutter



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KILL: THAT WAS JUSTIFIED

*“Revenge is the courage
that overpowers
injustice”*

It was a little past midnight, and there was a power outage in Kandarpur, a small village in Derabish Tehsil in Kendrapara district of Odisha State, I had decided to sleep on the cot spread over my grandparents' terrace.

It was a moonlit night, with tall coconut trees looking down at me, while they tried to get my attention over the stars. The neighborhood had come to a standstill, with a constant hustle in the highway right next to the house, still ongoing but slightly lesser than usual.

Suddenly, I heard a distant jingle noise of bangles coming from a woman's hand, while walking.

I thought who at this mad hour is taking a stroll. The highway with a lot of trucks traveling all night long was right next to our entrance pavement and the other side of the road was quite blurry as sometimes the streetlights just didn't want to work.

Due to the power outage, it was very dark on both the housing areas of the road, but the light coming from the trucks and buses in the highway was the only way where I could see something visible and worth making sense of.

I got up and went to the edge of the terrace.

I could very vaguely identify a woman walking by and thought she is the one who must be wearing those bangles.

The next day I was woken up by a huge thud on the ground next to our terrace, it was a couple of ripe coconuts that fell off from the tree. I ran down to check with my grandmother and grandfather about last night.

While heading out the living room door, I met the helper – “Nanda Bhai” who used to come to my grandfather’s ranch to milk the cows and help in delivering calves and preparing nutritious diet for the cows.

I asked him about last night and if he knew any lady or family who loves to take strolls past midnight.

He was unable to give me any sort of clarity, as he said he hardly is aware of knowing anyone in the neighborhood, who venture out that late, that too right next to the highway, which is quite dangerous to start off with.

Enquired the same with my grandmother, who was prepping her betel quid while sipping her morning tea, and she gave me a strange look, with one eyebrow raised as for a woman going on a walk at that hour of the night was a concerning news for her.

The next night, I thought of shouting out louder to warn the woman, of the atrocities she might face while walking beside a highway filled with heavy vehicles.

Just recently my grandfather was telling me the incident of how in the neighborhood a calf met with an accident on the highway. Calves when they are born tend to run a lot compared to a human baby, as they fumble and are unable to stand on their own, but still try their best to outrun the world behind them.

But she seemed to pay no heed to my words, and looked to be in hurry and her bangles jingle were rushed through.

*“Fires have busted lanterns
and yet the broken glass pieces
have resisted melting away...”*

*Fire has charred fingers
that still have pointed the wrong way
they have burned with smokes floating in air
they have learned to mix chokes with empty flare
If you happen to look at Fire, it has an empty stature...
but the flames rise to take the shape of a staunch posture...*

Fire never speaks of the weak...

Fire just takes darkness to its peak...

In losses it reeks of the oblivion masses.”

A pyre of holy fire, burning and I can see myself sitting in-front of it and pouring oil, as the flame rises and touches

the sky with black smoke. I could see someone beyond the darkness, I leave the pyre and go behind chasing them. But unfortunately find myself in the middle of a dark forest with the holy fire being far away from my reach. I get pushed by a pair of hands, and I start falling, I want to get up, but I am unable to. Can someone wake me up, can I shout?

I opened my eyes, sweating all over. I got up and went down the staircase to grab some water. Everyone in the house was asleep. It was around 4:00 am on the clock.

This was the second night with no power in the village, but frankly speaking with the cool breeze blowing, no one needed an air conditioner as we were sleeping, eating, and living just fine. Let me immerse you through the experience that I have lived to remember through the rest of my life. The summer holidays, where we used to come to the paradise build by my late grandparents (Ajja & Aaee in Odiya)

The Story of An Untold Paradise: Kandarpur (my grandparents' abode)

The picture of a tall sturdy body, a straight cut face, covered up with broad brown specs usually hiding the wide eager eyes behind it...

Leaning by the side of the tall white gate...since dawn peeking now and then, so that he doesn't miss out the moment...

The White Gate

Quality - Helped us swinging ourselves from one side of the end to the other.

Quantity - More than one kid at a time.

Special Factor - Made us believe all of us had the mighty talent to become Spider-Man one day.

His face used to brighten up at the sight of our incoming auto-rickshaw, when slowly it trudged down the hill, where his amazingly beautiful ranch was situated...surrounded by tall coconut trees, a huge pond, a cow shelter, heaps of hay, a highly nutritious kitchen garden, acres of farm lands where you can just run all day long...will get into deep analysis as I go further....

*The land of my Aija (Maternal Grandfather) and Aaee (Maternal Grandmother), “**Kandarpur**”, The Paradise, which I would be talking about was called “**BHAWANI-BHAWAN**”. My Aija named it in the loving name of his lovely wife, my Aaee “Bhawani”.*

The ranch was situated just by the highway, an uphill raw road from the ranch made its way to the highway. The uphill road was surrounded by tall coconut and date trees on one side and the other side was a small pond where wild flowers sometimes made a magnetizing sight to look at.

I will come back to it later, first let me complete our pompous arrival to “BHAWANI-BHAWAN”. The auto- rickshaw usually agreed to come down the hill even though our baggage was quite heavy for the 15-day long summer vacations. Ajja, excited since morning used to grab the bags and call out for his son’s to help him out...Munnu...(Munna- The name of his youngest son, whom he used to call Munnu) and Babu...

(The name of his eldest son, younger to two of his sisters, my mother and her sister

*Meanwhile, Mom used to bow down and take her dearest father's blessings, tears rolled down my mom's eyes when she touched her father's feet with gratitude, which she used to wipe it off as soon as possible, but I always caught a glimpse of it. Happiness is all over the place while a daughter visits her home after she is married off. My Mom is the eldest of all her 4 siblings, with 2 sisters and 2 brothers. Being the eldest, she was the favorite of her father, he called her "**The Engine**", to which all the rest of the bogies followed in the track of life....*

My brother and I rush inside after taking our Ajja's and Mamu's (Uncle- Mom's brother) blessings, to meet our beautiful and charming Aaee. My mother comes along with her dad and brothers talking to each other. Though I was a kid, I remember Ajka always asking mom "Maa tu theek achu???" (My dear daughter hope you are doing well in your life)...

The ranch covered a large area, so the house, "Bhawani Bhawan" had 2 entrance doors, one for the guests and one for us. We used to rush through the surrounding garden, the cow shelter, the huge pond and many trees to get into the second door. Just adjacent to the pond, was the door on a high cemented altitude having a bench with Ajja's walking stick kept beside the door and we can see the vast kitchen garden attached to it. Attached to the kitchen garden was a small tin door which was the entrance to the endless farm plots.

The moment we entered the door, our eyes would be glittering with happiness. I don't have any specific reason for

that ambrosial feeling. Rushing inside...a strong aroma from the tea boiling in the tea kettle...

Aaee had a routine to sleep till 10 'o' clock, but the day we reached we used to bug her and at times even she used to wake up looking at her tiny tots...and her daughter.

Back to that night....

Suddenly I heard a sudden screech triggered by a brake taken by a truck driver on the highway after which I could hear people from adjacent houses gathering up in their patio.

I quickly rushed downstairs and woke up my grandfather, and he accompanied me through the entrance gate.

There was a huge crowd stalled at the highway, and as we went closer, we could see a dead body filled with blood and a crushed head, I turned around as I couldn't bear the sight and instantly my eyes fell on some red bangles scattered all over that spot.

At first, I thought it was the woman, who got killed, and felt guilty as I should have said something. Later I got to know that apparently there was an incident of a newlywed woman who got killed by her husband and in-laws by being pushed out of a moving vehicle, and now it was her husband who was lying dead at the same spot.

No one knew what he was doing here at this hour, that part was still unexplained, but after that night I did not get to see the woman nor hear bangles jingling past midnight anymore.

Luckily after that incident, the next day the power was back on, and it was good to stay indoors, watching back-to-back cartoon series after 3 long days.

I preferred to sleep indoors until the end of my summer holidays that year.

“In Dussehra Lord Ram killed his own inner demons depicted in the form of Ravana’s 10 heads, which were jealousy, pretenses, anger, temptations, revenge, arrogance, wickedness, restlessness, dubiousness, and bitterness.

That made him win against all odds resulting in a supreme force to light the pathways for the ones that had been yearning to go home uniting him with his family. So, let’s kill our inner demons and spread the light yet again amongst folks who have caught up in a storm of misfortune cause kindness is life changing...”

But I am sure if revenge is not kept in order, the soul of even the kindest being can go through major discomfort. After a couple of years, I lost it all and was thrown to the dungeons of darkness amongst 7 others, fighting the same battle of loneliness.

That was the story of **Shloka**, my sister who doesn’t talk much. As she lost her voice, in an accident that changed her whole life.

* * * * *

SHADOW: SOMEONE'S FOLLOWING

*"I release my yesterdays to scintillating shadow that reflects
a mirage of emotions,
from which I learn to stay
away from while carving a realistic tomorrow..."*

This is the story of my youngest brother **Viansh**.

I had the funniest childhood, born to someone, who didn't want that I should know them at all. Discarded outside a temple, the people around started to call me "Viansh", that meant part of God.

Until one day, my spiritual father decided to get rid of me, by donating me to an orphanage. I never thought being in an orphanage was going to be such a heavenly experience, alongside 6 other siblings and a loving father and a charming mother. I was reborn on the very same day and couldn't be more thankful to the one who made this possible. Somehow, that day I felt like a part of me just had to spiritually connected to him in some way for this miracle that pulled me in as a family.

But since childhood, I had a weird problem of being bothered by nightmares, quite realistic and dramatic. I would be pulled into battles, pushed through tall buildings, left to

burn on pyre, or chased by wild animals. I had woken up to find myself heavily bruised some days but haven't given that much of a thought as I know for sure, I can't be killed in my sleep.

I will share one such dream with you...

It was around 9:30-10pm, I was heading back from my friend's place. I had preferred to walk that day, as my cycle was in the repair shop. Just then I sensed someone walking right behind me.

Sometimes when you walk at night, where the streetlights aren't cooperating, you end up getting startled by your own shadow. So, at first, I felt like the same thing was happening to me, where I was misinterpreting my own shadow.

But soon I realized that wasn't the case. It seemed to be something real. The road suddenly got dark; my heart had started to thump faster. The moon wasn't clear that night, and it was starting to get absolute dark suddenly.

"What is it?"

"Who is this following at this hour?"

"Why is that person not talking?"

It was getting harder to breathe. My armpits were filled with sweat, and both of my ears were unusually warm.

I could somehow now feel it closer, right behind, smelling my hair. I was getting numb, speechless, stopping my every movement, to cease existence. I had absolutely no courage to look around.

Finally, I turned into a street, where there were some streetlights blinking vigorously. Something inside me pushed me to give up the nervous act and show some valor. I turned back, and as soon as I did that, a shadow flew right across the street and stuck to the branch of a tall banyan tree.

While I looked at it, it was a strange sight as it looked like a bat with legs dangling upside down. I didn't have the courage to verify what I was seeing, but it very much looked like a person, staring back at me with bloodshot eyes.

I didn't give it another thought and started running, as fast as I could, and for a while, it seemed as if it was running behind me. But I lost its trail when I reached home. I opened my eyes, and it was daybreak, but for some reason I saw sweat stains all over my bed sheet and pillow covers.

*"I hear a howl
Look out of the window
Find a shadow that calls
Closed my eyes shut
Stay steady
Breathing heavy...
Trying to flee while the howling haunts
Gathered courage
Starting to walk into the dark
Where all things except you talk
It's like the trees are staring down
And the roads push you backwards*

*So, no matter how much forward you go
You find yourself back at the same place
Am I even walking right?
Your heart beats louder than the noiseless night
Some car screeches at the background
Echoing through the vacuum
Is someone hurt?
There are looks in the dark
That only books have spoken about
There are looks behind you
That only sniffing can rat you out
The thought of being followed
The thought of seeing the shadow of someone
you don't want to...
Keep looking
Don't be afraid
Says the mind
While your heart keeps saying
Go home, and stay blind throughout the rest of the night..
Speak to no one until asked
Coz weak is never alone to be tasked
The door closes on you
Wondering why it chose to do so
The logic is off*

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