

Night of the Dead



Un estúpido idiotus

It was a cold gusty evening. You could feel the cold hands of the breezing wind touching you and every other naked part of your body. And every time it touched you, you quivered. The sky was clear as crystal and under the moonlit night sky, two of my friends and I decided to bend a little bit of the rules.

We were in 9th grade in a boarding-school. It was during the Holi festival – a festival where you mask other people’s faces and bodies with colors, or throw/splash water at each other because it is fun. Holi festival (Yaoshang in Manipuri/Manipur) - the festival that makes you realize how lonely and single you are and how timid and insecure you are. The festival that makes you swallow your own spit because someone else is holding your crush’s hands. The festival that makes you feel like you are a worthless insecure self-doubting piece of shit. Yeah, that festival.

My friend, who we also call Big Nose, (*his nose isn't that big, but we called him that anyway but I do know for sure that he's got something big down under*) and I decided that we should go out of the perimeter to watch the “thabal - chongba”- It's a “weird” traditional thing people do here where they would join hands, dance, kick the air, and go around in a circular pattern while a rather perturbing, ear-splitting music is being played. (*So weird right?*) And so, we snuck out of the campus. It was supposed to be the three of us but the other guy who is a fucking absolute stud decided to stay behind because he had a date and that he would rather talk the whole night through and get caught by the ‘Lethal Sniper’ with his “forever lover” than watch other couple dances. (*Is that what true-love is?*)

‘Lethal Sniper’ here refers to our Dean (Madam) who uses an ancient magical artifact known as the CCTV, mounted in every nook and corner of the hostel and in all the study rooms. She would ‘snipe’ down anyone who dares go against the rules of the institution. Blasphemous acts, such as bringing eateries into the study halls or the heinous crime of not studying or sneaking out of the campus are the top forbidden ground rules.

Wednesday 11:27pm

And there we go, the two of us: Big Nose and I. Do you know how hard it is to sneak out of a “*concentration camp*”? The security cameras, the wardens, how we had to prowl out of the dorm, more security cameras, climbing the walls, another camera at the gate, ‘Sniper’ at the top, it was so hard, arduous and troublesome. But somehow we did get ourselves out and in no time, we were already there, watching couples dance, another couple at your left, then another at your right, a couple of couples at your hind with all their romantic ‘I’ll-love-you-forever’ talks. There were couples everywhere, you could even smell it and yes, along with the non-stop loud eardrum-tearing music. We smoked. (*we thought smoking was cool and bad-ass. What an ingenious thought!*) We walked around a little but ended up agreeing that we should head back because it was only making us feel envious and stupid.

We screamed and sang at the top of our lungs, as we strolled back to the campus beneath the bromantic clear blue sky. Everything was going great so far. But suddenly, out of nowhere, my friend got bitten by something on his nape. It was a bat. Startled and confused, he grabbed it, slammed it to the ground, stomped on it, and ground it under his heel. But the bat flew away unharmed.

“Eh...?” He smiled, looking confused, scared, and nervous all at once

But before a minute had passed, he collapsed and stopped breathing. He was convulsing rapidly. I was petrified. I stood there frozen. I didn’t know what to do. We were in the middle of a deserted, barren field because we had taken a shortcut, and there was nobody there to help us or to call for. Two minutes had passed, and there was no sign of life. His chest remained motionless. He hasn’t breathed for two minutes! Helpless and scared, I pounded on his chest with all my might. A miracle happened. His chest heaved, and a faint breath escaped his lips. He grunted and snorted in pain. I sighed in relief, grateful that he was okay. But little did I know, my happiness wouldn’t last long. He stood up quick, his face to the ground.

“you ok bro?” I asked, kind of startled and shocked. He didn’t say a thing.

I asked him again this time shaking his body lightly with my hand gripping his shoulder. But he stood still, his face still onto the ground.

It was dark and the only thing illuminating us are the faint lights from the “thabal” venue which was like a kilometer away and the dim moonlight shining indolently above us. So, I tried to held his head up to have a clearer look at his face. I reached out my hand for his head. The moment my fingers touched his chin, he looked up to me, so sudden that I almost screamed, his eyes red as blood and his skin pale, like the one in Pee-Mak. (*Damn Davika is so f***king gorgeous... I would fight thirty thousand ants for her..*)

He went full aggro (*aggressive*). He tried to bit me but failed, but boy, he was fast.

“What the fu..” before I could finish my favorite go-to phrase, he growled and lunged at me his, claws raking across my face and scalp. Blood gushed down my temple blinding the left eye as I shrieked and screamed in terror.

“HELHP” I couldn’t even scream at the right tone. I was scared shitless. I screamed and called for help but in vain. I ran and he’s on my tail, his arms reaching out for me just 6 inches away from my shoulder. The moment I slow myself down, I’d be dead. So fucking dead or get turned into a creature just like him. But I had my wits, my adrenaline was pumping and I wasn’t about to let that happen. In a split-second decision, I ducked low, and his momentum sent him stumbling past me. I could see him falter. I seized the moment, sprinting forward across the open field, I superman-punched his jaw the moment he turned back to me. If he hadn’t been infected, he would have been dead from the punch. But luck favored this beastly creature ex-friend of mine.

We fought or more like me-stopping-him-from-eating-me for fifteen more minutes. But now that he’s not an ordinary human, he had a stamina like a beast, strength as strong as an ox (*and his breath fucking stank*) and so I was beaten into a pulp. Beat me up like I was a dude who ate dal every morning.

I fell to the ground, wrecked, tired and useless as always, hoping for a miracle to save me from this diabolical and terrifying life’s-about-to-end situation from my friend who’s now a Vampire...!?? But nothing happened. All hope just vanished.

I knew I had lost.

I wondered if all of this is real. I regretted why I snuck out with this idiot.

“Fuck! I’m gonna die single.” I uttered as blood spurted out of my mouth

I cried helplessly.

“Mama”

He then walked towards me, knelt down, pressed his unbrushed mouth to my neck, sucking the crimson red unhealthy blood off of me. However, to my surprise, I didn't feel a thing. But I sure do know that I was about to leave this peaceful yet controversial world for my senses were getting weaker every passing second.

My eyes got heavy. I could barely see the cloudless sky above.

I felt exhausted and I felt... sleepy....

And finally, my eyes they closed.

No. that's not what happened. I didn't die and Big Nose didn't turn into a Vampire. That was my dream from three weeks later. What actually happened was we got back into the campus and nothing happened. Nothing. Zero. Zip. Nada. But we did smoke a whole pack of cigarettes on the way and almost got caught by the Dean but fortunately, he failed to notice us.

When we got back inside, those two lovebirds were still talking, smooching, giggling romantically and God knows what. I suspected they were sinning.

There is a particular place in the building where the cameras are blind. And that is the place where all the lovebirds would go to make love or to break love or to talk love or whatever the fuck they do. In short, it is a secret dating corner for the hostellers. A funny or rather heroic thing about dating inside the “camp” is that you put yourself at the frontline of the greatest war humankind has ever seen. There is no going back to single-life even if the cost is far beyond redemption- declining marks, asses flogged every frisking day, and the worst; parents meet. The benefits of being in a relationship as a boarder is that you are respected (that's what they think), you feel proud for you have a partner who you'll get flogged in the asses together one certain day, you deprived yourself off of sleep because you have a date at 12' O clock at midnight while everyone else is asleep and sometimes you get biscuits from your so called “the-other-half-of-me” and so on. And the only demerits of being a lovebird as a boarder is- Your asses stripped, bent, in front of hundreds of eyes and flogged. They flogged you so hard that you forgot how to spell L-O-V-E and your thighs so swollen that it looked like you had been doing ‘leg-day’ your entire life.

It is beyond my brain capacity that I cannot understand the unfathomable wonders that they would exchange letters the next day expressing that they loved each other dearly and that they're the Romeo and Juliet, the Aladdin and Jasmine of the school. If my ass were to be beaten like that, I would forget what a 'girl' is. Or a 'boy' is, if I were a girl.

But the stud told me the next morning that neither of them lost their V-card that night and that he loved her really, which he basically said to every girlfriend of his. True Love.

I sighed and proceeded to sing the morning hymnal song.