**The Immortal Perfume**

"Oh, have you seen the new Galloping Perfume Museum, it’s alleys have a two way wolf shaped structure that crawls rhythmically once you step on the tail of the wolf. Isn't it interesting? I have heard that they are going to build a flower cage too,” David said to Mania.

"No, I am scared of entering such horror sets," Mania said and squeezed herself in a chair, that would break sometime or the other. And this time, eavesdropping night stepped in as a wake up call for them to depart to their respective houses.

The Galloping Museum was the talk of the small town of Cloteye. It was a great project and the architecture itself was spell bounding. It was built near the National Dissolution Stadium that once upon a time, attracted visitors from all over the country. The museum contained all sorts of perfume vessels and they also had a section called camouflaged candles. The exquisite carvings and fifty shades of minimalist handcrafted mirrors with moodboard installations made it a must visit for the residents.

Mania's birthday was approaching and David thought it would be best to gift her favourite lavender perfume from the Fragrant Lives, a gift shop located inside the museum. Next day, as he entered the hallway of the museum, he was mesmerized by its wave. It was a broad hallway, as if a storehouse packed with exciting stories. The scene looked like a fantasy film, but this genre was an unknown, dark one. There were matchsticks kept at every angle and once you name the perfume preference, they would light up in that colour. The clouds were hanging from the ceiling and they looked like eddies of water that would fall upon you as if they were thirsty. And few red flowers glowed in between like torchlights.

As he entered inside, he saw that the museum guide was narrating stories to people regarding different fragrances. He blended the classic form of storytelling with the modern one which really excited David’s inquisitive mind and he soon joined the plethora of people, learning about the world of fragrances. The idea of potpourri, perfume roasters and the concept of making perfume in the olden times added new editions to his mind's collection.

Later, he wanted to explore the vintage section and see how the world of Mania's lavender perfume looked in the past. He had heard that the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans valued it for its unique scent and it added a charm to their wardrobe. So, he humbly asked the museum guide to help him find the way to the vintage section. He said to simply walk straight to reach the exhibit. But seeing David’s perplexed look, he told him to wait for some time.

“Just a second. l will call my friend to accompany you to the vintage vale section".

" Oh. Yes, sure"

David was simply staring at the magnificent scenery. But there was something strange about the air in there, for something smelled like a rotten thing, and this was not something that would be common in a perfume museum. While he was encapsulated by his thoughts, a voice peeped in between. It was another museum guide who told him to follow the wooden sticks railed up on the floor and that would lead him to the vintage vale section. He fastened his pace, tried to trace the steps of this unwelcoming museum guide but David noticed that the museum guide took a left turn instead of walking straight to the exhibit. The guide took out a silver key, turned the knob and the sight he saw next left him dazed.

This section had a life size installation of an alembic and the psychic photographs were erupting from the retorts. And the tube connecting the retort looked like the replica of a skeleton's hand. And next to it was a perfume bottle shaped like a Annabelle doll and it was crawling all over the place. Never had he known that a lavender perfume bottle would look like this! He was shaking like a leaf and decided to quickly leave the place.

But the moment he traced his steps backward, the red algae clinged onto his slippers and with a thud, he slipped on the floor, sailing through the bony pipeline into a room. He had barely grasped his breath that the strong wind swirled and the flying magnet locked the door. But not an inch inside the room changed, except the dark grey structure that had switched its place. Now, it was wobbling above his head, looking like him.

The structure laughed like an old man, the one parents remind of their kids at night. And that laugh was enough to send shivers across his malnutrioned body.

It glanced his body, revolved its pupils and its lips wore a crescent smile like a creep. Eyes can talk was no longer an old fashioned saying. On the other hand, an old tape recorder was ringing in David’s mind, transmitting only the songs of help. But there was no sign of any other voice that he could pull towards himself like gravity. Only the cacophony of his mind could be heard. David measured the distance between them. It was not like two stars separated by each other, it was like binary stars ready to form a constellation. He was glued to it - the thoughts, the weird imagination and his twin portrayal.

"So which perfume do you like? I can make anything for you", it touched his cheeks with its icy red fingers. It was like the touch he craved from Mania. But this was like the scene of a horror film.

His blood froze and his sockets were fixated at a place. Was this another version of himself? It looked like him but was someone else fitted inside a boy's body. A version he never wanted.

He tried to crawl as fast as he could. But only if he could slip away that easily! But no one knows what's the next move of a chess player?

The moment the grey structure flew to another corner, he quickly hid behind the pillar. Oxygen was finally entering into his body. He opened the back door and ran as fast as he could. This time the bony pipeline was not there. What was more stranger that not a single person was visible. Like the entire bottle of fragrance gulped everything.

Hastily, he restored his breath and ran faster than usual but slower for the structure to catch. He was in the hallway. And this time, the structure was not one but twenty five bodies, crawling, running on the ceiling, playing colour games. And there he was, yet again, pleading for his life.

Next day, the town of Cloteye was brimming with life. The first snowfall was forecasted today. Everyone, except two homes. "But why did David went to buy a lavender perfume for me. I know our tastes are similar. But wasn't my birthday last year?"

That day, the town of Cloteye didn’t witness the snowfall, instead hailstones of red colour. But the smell was that of a lavender perfume. The one you couldn’t forget, ever.

Legend has it that a flower who refused to be placed on a coffin had to bear the wrath of the Floral Identification team. It was cursed by the Floral Identification that until a boy chooses a perfume made by that flower, only then it can bloom in a garden. Otherwise, every night, the dead, the mysterious, the negative energy will call it to its place. And it can also make perfume from the body of one it loves, to spread the smell of forgotten identities. Forgotten, yet alive.