**THE LAST TRIP**

-Varnika Jain

MURDER REPORTED.

A DEAD BODY HAS BEEN FOUND IN THE ABANDONED LAKE HOUSE. HEINOUS CRIME! BODY PARTS ARE CHOPPED INTO PIECES. WEAPON USED WAS A CHAINSAW. HE WAS RISHI, THE SON OF FAMOUS BUSINESSMAN MR. ROSHAN.

2 days later:

It was an ice-cold room with no sign of warmth. There was a single white bulb dropped down the ceiling and Detective Jai was sitting right under it when Sahul entered. Sahul was handsome young man in his mid-30s, anyone could have been entranced by a glance at him. He sat on the chair placed in front of Jai.

Detective asked him if he’s comfortable in telling the whole scene that happened couple of nights ago. “Yes” replied Sahul. He was staring on the floor with desolated face. Jai took out his diary and asked the first question How are you connected with the victim? Sahul took deep inhale and said he was my best friend. We were in the same class from the commencement of college. He was a popular kid and every other girl was fond of him.

Jai asked What happened on the sight of murder? From everything you could recall would you explain every bit of it in detail? Sahul after straining on his mind began expounding the whole scene.

Rishi was planning a trip with all of us on the occasion of huge profit of his company in his lake house. We all went there and were having a great time. One day over dinner, we were recollecting college memories. Our friend Shayan, was looking a bit occupied in his own. He said with dejected expression since we were reminiscing memories, it reminded him of the day when Rishi got to know about him being gay and he behaved as if he was attracted to Shayan. Rishi was handsome so Shayan was captivated by his beauty. One day after getting drunk, they stared at each other for a while. Shayan was nervous so Rishi hold his hand and took him to the restroom where they had their moments of kissing and cuddling. Shayan felt this sense of pleasure for the first time in his life. The next day when Shayan moved towards Rishi to hold his hand, Rishi exasperatedly said that it was just for his own amusement since he was bored of having it all with the females. In fact, he revealed to everyone about Shayan’s identity and it left him in depression for a while. Listening to this, Rishi immediately apologized for his unscrupulous etiquettes.

Jai offered him a glass of water when he saw Sahul coughing. And he noticed that one of his left-hand fingers was missing. His arms were full of deep cuts and had a bruised neck as well. Jai due to his habits pitied his condition and made him drank water from his own hands. Sahul after a minute continued the story.

To Rishi’s response, Akshat his hostel roommate who was sitting on the corner of table jeered that Rishi was one heck of a rich brat but he envied him because Rishi never made it to the academic excellence award. He asked Rishi if he remembers his so-called exhilarating experience of stealing the question papers from dean’s office and then used them to get his grades ameliorated. But to Rishi’s fate, that year yet again he won the award but what he could never had anticipated was that out of greed and jealousy Rishi would make him his pawn to win this award over him by lying to the authorities that they were stolen by Akshat. Rishi grievingly replied that he had apologized over and over again for his pathetic behavior and still regret it.

To lighten the situation, I stood up and cracked a silly joke on which everyone chuckled and we went into the forest to enjoy the scenery. Keshav who was walking abreast with Rishi asked him of how his father coping up with the tuberculosis to which he replied, “better than before”.

Keshav and I shared a deep emotional connection since college and I had an idea that he for some reason abhorred Rishi. He once shared that his father works in the Roshan’s corporation under Rishi’s father. He never promoted or acknowledged Keshav’s father for his adroitness and finesse. He also retracted his father’s transferring letter to some other company in interest of his own company. Rishi’s father revealed one day that Keshav’s father belong to a bourgeois class and he could never let a lowborn to prosper and lead the high born. Because of being paid so low Keshav’s father could not provide well for his family and was indebted to several underground hooligans and at last committed suicide. This overwhelmed Keshav and left him suffered for months till he got the scholarship for Master’s degree. He always wanted to take his vengeance and had forethought about it for several years. Rishi had not had a mere idea about all this.

Now they all went deeper into the forest when a snake attacked Shayan and left him wounded. We all panicked and pulled out our phones only to see that the signal was not there. So, we went different pathways to find the signal, Rishi and I on one and Akshat on another while Keshav stayed with Shayan. On our way, back we found out that Shayan was dead. This was enough to traumatized us and we mourned. Akshat hadn’t come back for the past 15 minutes and it began to frighten us even more. We went to look for him and found him nowhere.

We decided to come back again for him once we reach Lake house. Keshav was walking behind us and in a moment of shock he stabbed Rishi and then again and again. Rishi tried to fight but it was futile. I stopped Keshav from committing a murder but his rage was so high that he pushed me so hard, my head thumped down the trunk of tree and left me stupefied. On waking up, I found myself covered in pool of blood. It was a horrifying scene; the body parts are lying everywhere with Rishi’s head placed on a branch of tree right in front of me. The look on his face indicated that he whined a lot before his death. Keshav was nowhere to be seen. I got up and scurried towards Lake house from where I called the emergency number and concomitantly, I got thrashed by a rod that came from my behind and found myself in a hospital ward.

Sahul shuddered at the thought of crime scene, sighed and a tear came down his eye after he completed telling the whole incident.

Jai was noting it all down and before he could enquire Sahul further, he discerned that Sahul was whimpering with face down and teary eyes. Jai saw him trembling in the icy room, called it a day and asked him to depart for home and take rest for a while. Jai left him alone in the chamber.

When he left, Sahul smirked feeling proud of the story he just articulated and thinking about what actually happened there. But the smirk didn’t last for even ten seconds. He looked heart-broken and dejected and started to think of the murder reality.

Rishi hadn’t planned any trip and he was there to spend some idle time. Sahul met him by chance in the countryside after 10 years and instantly recognized him. His heart started throbbing, raging through fire as if the feelings suppressed in his past had been re-ignited and asking for a revenge but he maintained tranquility in front of Rishi.

He was Shayan whose feelings got betrayed by Rishi and had to face humiliation because of the revelation of being gay, from that day he despised Rishi. He was the roommate of Rishi who got entrapped by the authorities and his dwindling image in front of everyone got even worse after the false allegation. He wasn’t as powerful as Rishi so had to bear it all alone.

He was Keshav whose father passed away because of the mistreatment and torment done by Rishi’s stereotypical father and he could never forgive the mental murder of his beloved father whom he admired and idolized in his life. With so much of suffering and gloominess all round he decided to murder Rishi and take his revenge.

He sneaked in Rishi’s lake house, seeing him Rishi got flustered. Sahul being more robust hold and smacked him. Rishi was lying on the floor, Sahul dragged him out. Took him in the forest and tied him to the tree. After regaining consciousness, Rishi saw a chainsaw and a knife in Sahul’s hand when he confronted him with all the sins Rishi committed.

Sahul told him that he’ll not show mercy and eventually kill him. He said grievingly that he never harmed a single entity in his life but he could never forgive Rishi for his misdeeds and constantly bullying him in the college. Rishi tried to manipulate him by saying that how could he perpetrate such a heinous deed now?

At this, Sahul took out his knife and started piercing his ankle joints and shouted, “this is for the betrayal”. He loved Rishi more than himself but in return he only received hatred from him. Rishi screamed so loudly but there was no one who could hear him.

Frightened, Rishi pleaded for his life and before he could utter a word Sahul started his chainsaw and his one hand was gone. He whined as blood spilled down his hands. Sahul came near Rishi and kissed him on his cheeks but Rishi took the advantage of the closeness and with the other hand took chainsaw and sliced Sahul’s pinky finger. Sahul lost his temper and chopped off Rishi’s another hand. Rishi was screaming to death. He stopped the chainsaw and sat in front of him, wailing and shouting over Rishi.

He sobbed and repeatedly asked Rishi that why he loathed him so much that even after being so powerful he chose to terminate Sahul by false allegations. He had nowhere to go. Everything was taken from him. Rishi begged and begged for his life. Sahul got up and tried to start the chainsaw but the batteries were dead and it left him in a dilemma to kill him or not.

Now Rishi had lost his temper and without second thoughts he lay hands on the aching nerve of Sahul saying he despised him from the very beginning because he was a low born and like father like son Sahul would eventually commit suicide like his father did. This infuriated Sahul and he took the huge knife and began chopping his legs. The crackling sound of bones made Sahul puked.

In another minute, both of his legs were gone too. There was a pool of blood all over there. After moments of tormenting Rishi, Sahul finally smashed his head relentlessly shedding tears of blood till he died and dangled it across the branch of tree.

His motive was accomplished. He had taken his revenge but he was not delighted after punishing the wrong doer because now in his eyes he was a murderer and could never be able to forgive him. He left the room smiling with tears. The tears were more of guilt rather than the pleasure. He no more knew how he should be feeling because he was entrapped under a burden for his whole life that can never be alleviated. At night he left the city and went away to an anonymous place carrying his guilt forever.

THE END.