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Everything Will Be Alright

By Mahi Hossain

I am sure it is very sunny outside; I can feel the heat.
Not that I can see it of course! I have lost the sunlight long
ago. The process of losing it was gradual and in very small
chunks, *drop by drop, grit by grit*. Just like the creation of an
ocean, only in my case, it was the process of leaking away. Just

like an ocean that has a leakage at the bottom and somebody did not care to call the plumber.

Most of them(chunks or grits or drops or whatever you call them!) are lost in oblivion, I can not recall them even if I want to. Because I do not know what to recall. Some of them I remember like a passerby who does not have a face but like a shadow, only made of flesh and blood. But one of them I will always remember; when for the first time I saw her, *the girl on my reading table*.

It was past midnight. And I was lying awake in my bed because I was too afraid to go to sleep. Not of ghosts but of voices. The voices that came from our small living room. The voices that did not have teeth or did not have an empty eye socket or did not bite or kill, but just came and went, rose and fell and stopped abruptly. Not that I did not know what ghosts were, I was perfectly aware of them and their mischiefs. But I knew scarier and bigger mischievous things than ghosts.

So when I saw her sitting on my reading table looking outside of the window; I was not really afraid. And since I was at the right age of being afraid of voices but not of ghosts. I asked her, "What are you doing sitting on my reading table?"

She looked at me with her big eyes and said beaming, "You can see me!? Ohh!!... That's wonderful! Now we can play together again!"

I was really surprised because nobody wants to play with me. What's more, I do not like to play with anybody! And told her so,

"But I don't want to play with you now! I want to sleep.

Besides, you are older and older people are boring!"

I said with a conviction in my voice.

"That's fine with me!"

She said, smiling.

"I am just happy that you can see me! And you are right, they are extremely boring!"

I actually could not find any more words so I became sulky and did not push the conversation any further. Instead, I again lay down. And turn away from her.

I knew she had not changed her position because I could still feel her sitting there looking out of the window. It was one of those feelings when you know someone is behind you without actually looking behind. And with that feeling still lingering on my back I fell asleep only to wake up shortly after by *the voices*.

It came just like it did, suddenly. I woke up and listened. I listened until it stopped abruptly just like a sneeze that did not come but wanted to. It was silent now.

"Are you afraid?" The girl on my reading table asked.

Was I?

I didn't know. The only thing I know was that I will feel really sleepy tomorrow and I am not looking forward to it.

"You know, you should not have told that to Mom." She suggested. "They can not really handle the truth very well. But they will always ask you the truth anyway! Adults!" She made a face while saying it.

I really did not understand what she was talking about. She talked like an old person, much much older than she was. But it was spontaneously coming from her. As if she had to talk like that! In what way she could talk other than that, silly!?

"But I had to tell her..."

"Why?!"

"I dunno, I was really feeling bad. And I thought she would take care of everything..." I sort of mumbled.

"And then everything will be alright?" She asked.

I said nothing. I lay on my back and looked at my ceiling as if that would suffice as an answer.

"If you feel like telling me something, you can tell me. I promise I will listen." She said very slowly but in a way that ensured that she was telling the truth. "And won't ask any question." She added.

"But I don't want to! I feel bad already!" I almost shouted.

"Ok...Ok!!! No problem! Calm down now!" Her voice was very soothing, like Mom's, when she used to talk to me with a soothing voice.

I lay quiet for some time. Something about the way she talked prodded me. Almost demanded that I talk more. Still, I fought back the urge. At that time she started humming something. The tune was as natural as the wind singing. It hung in the air very comfortably then filled everything in my little room. I feel very relaxed. The bad sensation at the pit of my stomach suddenly dissipated. I felt very safe and something somewhere told me whispering, *everything will be alright!* It was at that point I sat up and started telling her everything.

I told her why my father was scarier than any ghost in the world. How on my last birthday he had beaten my Mom till she was bloody and unconscious then with great satisfaction in his eyes he told me how one day he would kill me too. Though I did not know how it felt to be killed yet I felt very lonely and felt as if everything inside my belly was gone and now it was empty. I told her how I felt helpless when my Mom told me that I was the reason for my Dad's beating and it was me asking for my birthday gift that had made him angry. Then I retold her what I told my mother earlier that day. I told her that I saw my father kissing our housekeeper, both of them naked. Something

inside me told me that this scene "dad naked with a woman" was somehow wrong, so I asked my Mom about it. And after I told my mom everything, I regretted and felt that something very bad is going to happen though I did not know why I felt that! I told her that I think, a few moments ago when the fighting between my Mom and Dad stopped abruptly, that was most probably because he had beaten her to unconsciousness. And I felt bad because Mom will blame me tomorrow. And I finally answered her previously asked question, *Yes I was very afraid!*

All the time I told her these, she listened to me very intently and anxiously. I saw that she was very sad and there were tears in her eyes. After I had finished telling her all those there were to be told, there was silence in the room. It hung like a flag without any wind, not very comfortable. Then very slowly she climbed down from my table and very carefully as if she would break something very fragile, sat beside me on my bed and hugged me and told me, *Everything will be alright.* We stayed that way for I do not know how long. Then I broke the silence by saying,

"You know, I don't go near our garden pond anymore."

Pausing I added, "The one we used to play around..."

She said nothing but I think I saw new tears in her eyes. Suddenly I felt restless, feeling an urge to speak again.

"Mom cried a lot that day, you know?" Indeed she did, that is how Mom lost her soothing voice. Now she only speaks with her blame voice.

"I used to be very annoyed by you! With all your elder sister nonsense! Your stupid friends and your stupid books!" I looked at her face for any reaction. I found only tears. So I felt obliged to continue, "But that day when I found you..."

In the pond floating, as white as a dead fish.

I thought.

"I felt, if I had not been annoyed by you that much, maybe you would be still around."

I finished.

"I'm always around, silly!" She said now rumpling my hairs. It felt good. At that moment I forgot all my worries and all my fears. I felt as if I could sleep peacefully and dream like a child that I was. Not knowing, I hugged her. She felt

very normal. Her warmth was very present and comforting. As if it was whispering, *Everything will be alright!*

After sometimes we let each other go.

"Let's play outside!"

She said, excitement in her voice.

"Just like the old days!"

She stood up and went straight through the window. I opened up the window and squeezed through it. I landed on the wet grass. They felt cold and slippery. She held out a hand for me and I took it. We started walking towards our big garden pond, for playing around. Just like the old days.

The End