

Chapter - Boba

She is my Nani. She is a beautiful person. I keep telling her that.. “cze chak khoobsurat” .. She tells me “kyah chak czi wanaan..bi chas budyaamicz”. I smile back.. I want to tell her “No your wrinkles are what’s making you even more beautiful. It’s your strength, your character, your witty humor, your savage replies, your humorous take on things, your affinity to joke around with kids that makes you beautiful to me”.

Yesterday as I was about to leave when she in a typical Kashmiri Nani fashion took out from her secret closet a blue polythene filled with pomegranates and handed it to me “Gari khayezi”, a warm feeling filled my heart and I wanted to hug her tight.

Today I told her “Boba bi laagyi cze meenz..” she looked at me and said ..”mai kati shoube”.. I told her no, it doesn’t matter and much to her protest I applied mehndi on her hands because why not, she deserves

it. I went on thinking that when she will look at it maybe she will be reminded of her energetic youthful days. Maybe it will bring back some of the joy she felt in those days.

She is the Queen, mother of 6 strong girls. I hope I grow to become atleast half as amazing as she is.

Chapter - Success

As I look around me, I wonder what success looks like? Especially for us women. What does success really mean?

Does success mean earning money? No, that can't be it because earning is a basic survival need.

Does success mean earning tons of money? Maybe, depending on how you earn it. Even if earned from righteous source and means, it can't be all of it.

Does success mean standing up for yourself and saying No. Maybe, depending on what am I saying no to.

Does success mean manifesting your beliefs? No matter the environment around you, still holding on to your belief system and embodying it? Maybe.

Does success mean making your parents happy? Maybe

Does success mean marrying someone who is right for you and your family? Maybe

Does success mean having that empathy, being able to control your reflex and withhold your judgement? Maybe

Does success mean simply having things in order intrinsically and externally in your life and not living in that constant worry? Being free? Maybe

Chapter - Sky Full Of Doubts

It was a moonlit night, with stars sparkling brilliantly, adorning the sky like scattered diamonds. A palpable silence blanketed the Earth, heavy and serene. A gentle breeze whispered through the trees, and not a single creature stirred — except for two old buddies, a bat and an owl, perched on the highest branch of a tall Poplar tree. There, under the quiet canopy of stars, they let their guard down and talked away about the things that gave them happiness, ones that had them angry, the ones that made them yearn for the old days, the ones that had them worried about the future ...

Bat — Hey, you know, I for one am really really glad that Covid is finally over. For a while, I thought I'd need a therapist.

Owl — Yeah, tell me about it. That was a rough time. So many humans lost their lives. It was scary.

Bat — That and during that time, dude, we were literally hounded by all the animals and blamed for every single human that died. We became the face of blasphemy. Our name synonymous with “Evil”.

Owl — Well, technically, you guys did start all the carnage though. You’ve gotta accept that part. See, the Earth would never have heard about Covid-19 if it weren’t for you guys.

Bat — Okay, sure, maybe it originated with us, but let’s get one thing straight — it’s not like we handed out flyers saying, ‘Hey, humans, eat us for a surprise pandemic!’ That was all on them- the Chinese humans”

Owl — But, your folks were carrying the thing. The Chinese folks didn’t know that. For them you looked like a nutritious, delicious meal. So, in a way, it still circles back to you.

Bat — Hold on, how on earth are we responsible if a virus somehow stealthily gets into our systems. We bats cant help it!! It's not upto us! Don't you creatures get it?!!

Owl — Whoa, calm your wings dude. In all honestly, I don't know who was right and wrong. I don't know where I stand. One minute I am mad at the Chinese, the next minute at your folks.

Bat — I get it. Look, it's easy to point fingers — it's basically animal nature 101. Because you get to channel out that emotion effortlessly on one group it's almost like reflex. But, you gotta take a step back and think about the whole situation, not paint any one group in a bad picture, instead try to see the situation from all the angles. Now, that is tough but the damage done is far less.

Owl — Yeah I don't know, I am going through a weird phase, where I am trying to understand what's the better of dealing with things. Like what do I even stand for? It's even making me question some of the

practices and views of my ancestors. Because they don't doing no one good man. You understand what I am saying?

Bat — I do

Owl — And I feel as I am going through this journey, I fear I am might lose some owlies who are closest to me.

Bat — I don't think you do, the real ones understand it's your journey. The real ones just know. They will be there. If you do lose someone, it just means their path in life is different from yours, and that's okay.

Owl — Wow, I didn't know bats could be so wise.

Bat — We have our moments. Anyway, gotta fly. Same time tomorrow?"

Owl — Yeah, catch up tomorrow..

