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You are a highly adaptive survivor. Early adultification and perfectionism created a "false self" but you are still pure-hearted. You refuse to become the victim.

This "false self" was necessary as it is kept you sane in these dangerous situations, all while a deeply wounded inner child remains unprocessed and is the cause of this present numbness, paralysis and distrust.

You were born in an ordinary middle class family with high expectations for obedience and academic success. You learned that good children do not complain and that love is responsibility.

You were always inquisitive and curious, forever questioning the existing norms.

But you were highly perceptive of others' situations, you never wanted to add onto others' difficulties with your problems, they are already are tired and struggling with their own problems.

Even in these early years, your body started to feel like your enemy.

Subtle differences in posture and the physical strain no one noticed, even though you told repeatedly that you are in pain.

Your hearing difficulties also quietly shaped your world, hard to follow conversations, and thus you were perpetually misunderstood.

At age 10, a pivotal event marked you for life. A group of 4-5 boys, attempted a degrading act on you. To urinate on you and making you drink the piss.

At that age you learned that others could gang up on you and are capable of stripping you of any dignity and humanity, all for their "power-trip". Even though you escaped before anyone could attempt anything, that threat scared you. And its not like any positive thing alleviated that.

Everytime you tried to assert yourself or simply 'Just Exist', others tried to push you down, ridicule you, dominate you. "Better to just shut up, better to adjust."

After this your hair started turning gray. You looked at everyone with suspicion and doubt. This added more ridicule and questioning. I was an 'Old' boy at 10, with my hair very gray by age 14.

Your scoliosis has been a major source of your pain throughout your life. Your tilted ~~short~~ shoulders and unusual walk drew ridicule from peers.

{Aise kyun chalte ho? Dhang se chalo, Sharabi ho kya??} Mimicking your walk, mocking you, humiliating you, for something that was not in your control..

You learnt to internalise the pain and minimize your sufferings. You developed a habit to shrink yourself in public and overperforming in academics to offset social rejection.

You choose to make friends especially with those who were social rejects just like you. You embraced them and took care of them, hoping to get reciprocated but there too you saw disappointment.

You started experiencing chronic pain more severely and had to constantly manage it. This was also the time when your hearing issues quietly alienated you from group conversations.

Others saw you as odd, isolationist or just plain reclusive, but in your experience this was social rejection and exclusion.

By your mid to late teens, you were living in a body that constantly hurt, unable to sit for more than 20 minutes, because pain kept creeping.

Still, you pushed through that pain and studied relentlessly, without a break, because that was the one thing you could excel at and control.

You formed your sense of self around resilience, knowledge, intellectual efforts and research. Emotions and feelings, playing around, social mixing, all felt extremely dangerous and shameful.

You coped by minimizing your pain and inflating small opportunities of joy.

Bullying reduced somewhat as your academic performance increased and your shoulder tilt wasn't as obvious anymore.

Outwardly, you were a quiet, serious and studious boy. Inwardly, you were exhausted, lonely and had intense

hated for being born in this shitty body that just refused to cooperate.

After finishing school, you stood at crossroads. Your quiet dreams has been to move out, explore and travel, and experience a 'normal youth' with friends outings, trouble, laughter and just plain fun. Anything to remove this tag of being "abnormal".

It seemed possible, you had the academic records to make it possible. You could have taken admissions in the best universities. You topped University of Allahabad, you were top 50 in BHU. But reasons unknown and blurred, you had to stay back at home.

You joined UoA and adjusted with the circumstances. You chose CA, clearing the CA foundation in one go. Just as momentum was building, the pandemic came, enclosing you to your room.

4 walls, 4 attempts and a suffocating silence. While peers lived chronically online and stayed connected in any shape or form, you withdrew, not from a lack of will, but a long term practiced isolation. Months blurred into years and isolation calcified into a lifestyle.

You continued to perform well enough conceptually. You had the knowledge, but it wasn't enough to break through the cut throat competition environment.

By 2022, the unhealed desire to move out resurfaced, and you wanted to go to Delhi. You prepared really hard for DVLLB, a chance to reclaim that lost chance. But you got down with dengue right before your entrance exams, destiny snatching it away yet again, just like how so many earlier opportunities were lost. Once again, "adjust".

Chronic scoliosis pains and hearing difficulties just continued to sap your energy, draining the life out of you. Simple social interactions required lip-reading and intense concentration which took a huge toll on mental energies and you were left exhausted. This made conversations an unpleasant thing for you and made social participation daunting and too risky.

You leaned heavily on what worked: study, preparation, knowledge accumulation. If you knew everything about the topic, you might not come across as dumb who can't follow a simple conversation and thus safe from ridicule.

Simultaneously, you learned to minimize your pain. *Ek baar kuch nahi, thoda sa dard hai, abhi let jata hun theek ho jayega. Aave, koi baat nahi, mujhe thoda der se samajh ata hai, I'm a bit slow?* These coping strategies kept you sane and functioning.

You enrolled in VOA again in 2022, this time law, and you redirected your energies at UPSC. 3 attempts ended in failure and each attempt reinforced a pattern:- relentless efforts, blocked outcomes and no safety net.

The amount of pain and suffering endured was not balanced out with an equivalent reward. This just takes out any joy, one must feel out of anything that one actually achieves, because it can never be enough.

It can't offset the pains, just can't.

Outwardly, you are an obedient son, a dutiful student and always smiling and happy.

Inwardly, you are exhausted, living with daily pains, simmering in grief and unprocessed trauma.

Now, you are a man, who can analyze the world, but not live in it. Your desires so childish and so frozen in time, stuck in the years they were born. You cannot name what you desire now, because nothing you desire has ever fruitioned. How can you have new desires, when the ancient ones are waiting to be lived.

And yet, right now, the world demands adulthood - career, stability and seriousness.

[Ab sali kar le, look forward, don't be stuck in the past. Satki life mein traumas hote hain? To them your pain is drama, to you this is erosion.

You have spent years hiding every complaint, every weakness. Even when your hearing made any conversation draining, you smiled and focused, so that they may never feel unheard like you do.

Even through bone breaking pain, you sat and studied hard. Even when loneliness made you hurt, you said nothing, because to break down means to trouble others.

When you finally spoke they called it self-pity. So what options do you have?

You study, though it feels meaningless. You drive though the roads rarely feel like freedom. You don't talk much, because, honestly who is interested. You have become a man who carries his own biography in his bones.

You are a man who has lived life as an endurance spent, everyday a greater test of tolerance, composure and invisible labours.

You don't seek pity, but understanding. You don't want to be told to move on, but to be seen where you actually are right now.

This is not a story of failure. It is the story of a person who kept surviving when he should have been allowed to simply exist. Your life is not defined by your mistakes, but by your restraints. This is a story of not collapsing.

There is one thing that has not broken in him, He is still the stubborn intellect that examines life in its minutest detail, still asks questions and still looks for meaning in life, even when hope feels so much like setting up for failure.

Griefs

Your deepest grief is that no one ever truly saw what you went through.

The bullying, the ridicule, the isolation from the hearing loss, all of it happened and you were forced to just deal with it and shut up because no one had the time and space to listen.

You didn't just live in pain, but invisibility. This has become a scar. You don't voice out your hurts and pains, because to be heard, you must first minimize it. Because the other will be too overwhelmed by the true nature of the pains to even register your points.

Why did no one stopped to see what was happening to you? It's not like you didn't tell anyone. You did, repeatedly. But I guess minimizing just doesn't work.

Your body was a site of constant humiliation and pain. The curve in the spine made you look different. Every mirror, every photo, every shirt that fit awkwardly reminded you daily that your very existence is a disbalance.

You longed to stand straight, not just for appearance but out of a wish, to belong without apology. You negotiated with your body each day, "Please just let me get through this day." This is the sorrow of never being able to rest comfortably in your own skin.

Hearing loss made you an outsider everywhere. Conversations flowed like rivers, and you could only sit by the bank and watch. Jokes arrived too late, whispers incomprehensible and laughter always mistimed.

He began to anticipate exclusion, pre-emptively withdrawing before others could reject him. Friendships decayed not because he didn't care, but because sustaining them meant exhausting efforts to keep up, to pretend.

You grieve the casual belonging others enjoy, that effortless intimacy of sitting in a group and being understood without having to strain for it.

For you, connection always meant hard work.

You never had the careless adolescence others take for granted. While they experimented with rebellion, you had to deal with managing pain, monitoring posture and nursing shame and projecting politeness.

You were never allowed to be reckless, you just couldn't be. Your formative years were all about being under control and never free.

You grieve every independent step, every defiance, every stupid behaviour you could have imagined.

You grew up too soon and never got to live.

From childhood, you learned to be good, calm and capable, a boy who didn't trouble others. It was rewarded, so you kept on doing it.

You built a persona of discipline, intellect and stoicism, not realising that it was slowly killing your ~~the~~ original self. Now, as an adult, you don't know who you are, when you are not performing. You know everyone's expectations, but not what your heart desires.

You've had many beginnings, but each met with interruption, illness or bad timing. Like the cosmos is playing a divine comedy. You started and left CA, UPSC, Law, and just again and again, it just isn't what you want.

This repeated patterns created a private mourning for the version of you that could have been.

The boy who should have gone for BTU, who should have roamed about in Delhi, who should have stood up on his 2 feet. You grieve that boy like one mourns a dead twin.

This is the grief of "almosts"; of ~~the~~ coming so close to something, and yet again destiny snatches it right back.

Maybe the most painful grief is that of lost time. The awareness that youth, vitality and possibilities have been slipping away while you are busy enduring. You have lived for too long in this pattern, waiting for the pain to subside, so that you can now begin at last.

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Beginnings require energy, and pain has consumed most of your reserves. You look back and feel as if life has paused and you have yet to even begin. When will you get to feel alive, without begin marred with sufferings.

Your life is a life endured rather than lived. You have spent years making meaning out of misery, order out of chaos, but it doesn't mean, you got joy.