

"Silly Ocean"

Before the time when many a men walked on this earth, an explorer seeking to measure the width of the lands came up against the ocean. He looked at the ocean carefully for a while and then suddenly exclaimed, "I know what you are. I have heard about you. You are the ocean. Hey Ocean! Why do you senselessly crash against these jagged rocks? It is such a stupid thing to do."

All around there was the shimmering noise of the waves thrashing the rocks. An effervescent smell wallowed from the deep. A smell reminiscent of hope mixed with a lonesome sigh.

The ocean paused for a moment, disturbed by this man, and then continued smashing onto the rocks.

The man again boasted, "Oh! Silly Ocean, you are so pathetic!" The man waited impatiently for a retort and kept throwing slights at the ocean. "Don't you see Ocean? This is just futile! No one would do such a silly thing. Why do you keep breaking your self against these mighty mountain cliffs? Look at the mountain's enormity. Don't you see that it is insurmountable?"

At this the ocean finally broke its peace and remarked, "Why do you say so? I have been doing this for ages. Don't you see that I will ultimately surround these mountains and reduce them to pebbles?"

"Ha! Pebbles you say? How can you possibly make these giant boulders with vicious brawns get reduced to pebbles when I can clearly see that every time it is YOU that keeps breaking into foamy bits and pieces?"

"Look below your feet oh human. Look at those pebbles and the sandy beach most pebbles ultimately withered into. It is all brought back into me and then I crush those sand particles into finer dust. And much deeper in me some of those minute particles become pearls while the rest are compacted back into mountains within me. And as the earth bellows, the mountains rise again. Only to be reduced to dust once more."

"Preposterous! You are so full of yourself! And even if what you say is true these pebbles are so useless. And this sand is so messy. What good is any of this? And this pearl that you speak of, what is it?"

The ocean produced at the man's feet a black pearl that was of the size of a small hail stone and surrounded it with many smaller rice grain like pearls so that the man could spot the black one easily.

"These are called pearls" said the ocean.

"Ah! These are interesting... and specially this black one. It is darker than the night... yet it glimmers so majestically. However, it is so small and these pearls are so few. These white ones are also beautiful but I'd rather that they be bigger."

So the ocean produced an orange-sized white pearl at the man's feet.

"Good God! Did the moon just fall out of the sky!? I can't believe how white this is. This is remarkable... and I can even see my reflection in it. But... it is just a single one. Don't you have more of these?"

"No, I don't" sighed the ocean. "It is the only one of its kind and the biggest one possible."

"What?" cried the man. "This is the biggest one? This isn't even the size of my head. And it is the ONLY one you have? Pah! You are so lame! You claim... that you can reduce all these heroic mountains to dust. You claim... that you can squeeze them into pearls of lust. You claim... that you can even bring these smashed mountains back to their seat. And you claim... that all of this through the ages, is no remarkable feat. Hah! Then pray explain... why does such drudgery produce unrequited gain?"

"It is the only way I know how. And even that pearl in your hand won't last long whether you requite me for it or not. It will get swallowed by the earth and get melted or smashed back into dust."

"Ufff! You are such an imbecile! Why do you waste your time and effort in making things that simply get destroyed? You should do something better. Look at the noble clouds. So elegant and free they roam. They don't bother to crash against the mountains. They just fly over them. Hah! And look at the benevolent rivers. So gracious and sonorous they flow. They don't bother to crash against the mountains. They just flow around them. Ha hah!"

The ocean rumbled in a marooned voice, "It is I in those clouds and it is I in

those rivers. I chip away at the mountains bit-by-bit and I ultimately bring every tiny bit back into myself. In all ways I can possibly conceive I battle with the mountains I create."

"Ugh! You must be delirious! What do you mean by being in the clouds and in the rivers? I can clearly see that you are bound to a slave's toil with no wages due to your arrogance, over ambitiousness and genuine stupidity! You are nothing like the noble clouds. I don't see you rising towards the sky and sheltering me from the sun that stings me. You are nothing like the benevolent rivers. I don't see you flowing through the lands, irrigating my crops that feed me. All I see YOU doing is fastidiously bashing against these rocks and creating noise with your breaking waves. You know what you should do... you should make yourself more useful to me. For instance, look at the vast lands that produce umpteen food for me to eat."

Hearing this, the ocean produced a fish at the man's feet.

"What is this frantic thing? Why did you give me this?"

"This animal will provide you nourishment. You did ask for food."

"Animal? Eat an animal? Are you crazy? I only eat clean food, like vegetables and fruits. Animals are unclean! Look at how scaly this thing is. Ugh!"

Hearing this the ocean produced some sea weed at the man's feet.

"What is this slimy thing? Why did you give me this?"

"This plant will give you sustenance. You did ask for food."

"Plant? I don't eat just any plant! Are you crazy? Not all plants are clean. Look at how smelly this thing is. Ugh!"

The ocean didn't know what more to say so it continued its chore of beating against the mountain. The man stood by with his eyebrows pinched into a tight frown.

"You are really a waste. You have produced practically nothing useful. How can you keep on existing like this? All that you produce is few in quantity, small, meek and smelly. At least look at how the land supports

animals that I can ride when I get tiered. Look at my horse. See how beautiful and strong it is?"

Hearing this the ocean produced a giant blue whale at the man's feet.

"Aaaaaaaa! What is this hideous monster? Make it go away! Make it go away!"

So the ocean took the whale back and said, "You could have traveled on board that animal across my body to reach lands you have never seen before."

"Don't be ridiculous! I would never ride atop such grotesque creatures. They would have certainly eaten me alive. And there is no such land that I haven't seen before. I am the smartest and greatest of all and I have now seen all there is to be seen. I can only conclude that at the ends of this earth lies a senseless, distasteful mass of water that is of no use to mankind or even to itself. I now bid you farewell ocean. May someday you come to your senses and adopt a vocation or craft that is worthwhile and of apt service to humanity."

With that, the man retraced his path to his home in the far off valley behind the mountains. And the ocean continued to toil at the mountain that eventually became a hill that overlooked a nation below the sea level... a nation that had succeeded the all knowing man.

~ Sameer A Khan
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