

FACE OF STRANGER

Akhand Singh

Author's Corner

About Me:

I am an engineer craving to be to a writer and an artist trying to get his work on your mind.

Born in a middle class family where you don't have much money but plenty of emotions, I grabbed the pen when I was quiet young. Diaries and notebooks were my partners and since then the words begin to flow as soon as I get my hands on something to write, be it the old school way of pen and paper or the new age way of PDF's, MS word or Google docs.

Writing is more than a hobby for me, I write most of the times and even when I am doing other things I will keep thinking about "what next to write".

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Message:

"You have only life, grab the pen and write about it. Write about everything you dream and everything you see. Someday your story would be heard and read louder than you would ever imagine. May be it will give hope to someone, may be it will scare someone and may be it will spread love."

CH1: The Face

I met her while I was flying from Berlin to London, the stranger with a face. She saw me the very moment I boarded the plane and walked down the aisle towards my seat. I sat next to her; no matter how hard I tried, I could not resist noticing the pretty face.

I smiled and said hello to her

"Hello" she replied with a smile as well.

My eyes were stuck on her; every adjustment she was making to sit comfortably on the seat was obviously seeking my attention.

"Do you need my pillow?" I asked her noticing that she was trying to find something to support her back.

She nodded yes and said, "thanks, you are so sweet"

My eyes were sparking, cheeks were red and I could not hide the blush on my face. She was definitely holding a strong eye on me.

Later with the snack, I asked for a wine for myself and then I looked at her, how could I miss a chance? I thought, so I asked, "Would you like to have some wine?"

She smiled and nodded "yes"

We drank and drank until I started feeling little high and when I guessed she was high too, "I am sleepy," I said. She looked at me "seriously, you get a girl drunk just to sleep?" she laughed

"Well I mm" I didn't know what to say, I never had any intention to get her or myself drunk, I was just enjoying the opportunity given to me.

She slipped her hands on mine, then the head on my shoulder, the warmth of her breath aroused me, and I felt so touched after so long. In few moments, sleep acquired my dreams.

With the voice of airhostess, I woke up. "We are about to land sir" she said. I tried to open my eyes but the hangover was definitely kicking me now, eyes were heavy just as the head.

"Can I have a bottle of water?" I asked her. "Sure, I will be right back" she said and left.

I looked around and then beside me, she was still sleeping with her eyes cover hanging down to the neck. "Is that mine?" I thought. I checked my neck and there it was same color, same texture, same brand and hanging in the same manner.

"Wake up" I said pushing her hand gently. She wakes up; with the big eyes, she looks at me. Her smile carves my heart with enthusiasm and makes me feel the lost love, experience the lost happiness and breath.

Later she holds my hand tight, nervousness and fear on the same time I guess when the plane lands. Maybe it could have been the fear of separation, I didn't care about what exactly it was but the feeling of holding

hands was making me happy. After the plane landed, we walked to the terminal together; I helped her carry her luggage. "I have to use the restroom," I said.

"Ok, I'll wait here" she smiled.

I went in and walked to the fountain, took some water on my hand and splashed it to my face. Just when I raised my head, I saw her standing beside me. "What are you doing in a men's toilet?" I busted

She kept quiet.

"What are you doing here?" I asked again.

She kept quiet.

"Whom you talking to?" the Janitor asked.

"What you mean," I turned towards him and said "I am talking to her" I turned back and found nobody. I stood there shocked and then ran outside, I could not find her, and she was not there.

Janitor confused and worried about me came running outside after me "Are you ok sir?"

"Did you see her leaving?" I turned around and busted.

"You were talking to nobody sir, I didn't see any lady," he said.

Confused, worried and shocked, I walk towards the exit, thinking if I really was imagining everything and imagining her.

To be continued ...

Ch2: Old Soul Heart

I searched her throughout the terminal but there was no sign, as if she ever existed. Running through the crowd, I was so afraid and kept thinking of what could have happened to her until I bumped to an old woman trying to carry her luggage and we fell on the ground.

“Sorry, I am so sorry ma’am” I said

“Are you blind or what?” she yelled

“I am really sorry Ma’am, I just didn’t see you coming,” I say.

She stares at me "what a fool this guy is "she thinks and then she smiles and says it’s alright.

I quickly help her pick up her luggage and place it in order on the trolley hiding the guilt that I just pushed an old woman. Her expressions changes for good, I guessed she realized that I was not just some ass hole in the end. She might have seen the civilized men sitting behind my eyes.

“I am going to the exit; I can assist you if you are also going that direction” I said.

“Oh! That would be so nice of you” she replies. There grabs me something about her eyes, the lucent eyes were like talking to me, like I knew them, I have seen them somewhere before.

While walking towards the exit, my mind kept looking for the girl I met on the airplane. The tension on the eyebrow accompanied with the unstable eyes was so much obvious to the old woman that she could not resist asking, “What happened? Is there a problem?”

At first I thought, I can just ignore her question and do not answer it for the very fact that I did not know her and why would she be interested in my personal life. Then the inner self shouted aloud and I sang like a child. “I am trying to find the girl I met on the airplane,” I said.

“Where is she?” the old woman asked.

“What a stupid question? That’s why I don’t communicate with old people,” I thought

Later I replied, “She was with me until we came out from the gate and then I went to the restroom and she disappeared”, for obvious reasons I didn’t tell her what the janitor said, preventing any chances of her to think that I am crazy, not that I didn’t think that she was already sure of me being crazy.

“She disappeared? What do you mean?” she asked again.

“Seriously, who asks such stupid questions?” I screamed inside my head.

Later she asked again “What did you mean when you said she disappeared?”, something about the old woman was assuring me that I can tell her what happened and she would believe it. So I finally told her what happened, I described the girl I met on the airplane, I told her how attractive she was and how I felt so much of similarity between her and me. I skipped about the wine and about getting drunk just to be sure that she

does not think I was high or something. After a long walk towards the exit, she still did not say anything about this girl or she did not even say anything to me at all. Like the story did not have any effect on her, she seemed so calm.

“Why do you think?” she paused. “Why do you think that you two have similarities?” later she asked.

“I don’t know, but there is something about her, like the eyes were same color as mine, lips were same structured as mine, she had the same eye cover as I had, she almost talked like I would talk to myself” I tried to explain but then I paused realizing the very fact that the eyes of the old woman I was talking to were the same color as mine, she also had the same lips structure. For a moment I felt like losing my tongue, I could not feel it at all. “How could this be happening? Am I dreaming?” I thought

Later realizing that it was all real, I looked at the old woman and noticed that she had all the looks of that girl I met on the airplane. I was freaking out, as I was talking to myself. I looked at her while she was staring at me like I was some crazy and so I kept quiet and started walking.

We walked for another two minutes, “wait” she screams.

“What happened? Are you ok?” I asked her when suddenly she stopped, her face was all red and the eyes were white as if she had a heart attack. I hurried to hold her in my arms and slowly helped her sit on the ground.

“Water” she whispers

“Hold on, just wait here” I ran towards the fountain nearby to grab some water.

While running to get water I bumped into a man, “sorry sir, can you take care of the old woman sitting on the ground there?” I pointed.

He turns back “what woman?” he asked.

“The old woman who is sitting on the ground” I say and turn back.

“Where is she?” I shout

“There is nobody there buddy,” the man says.

“What is happening to me? I just saw her, she was right there sitting on the ground” I said.

“There is nobody there sir, are you ok?” he asked.

He asks around and everybody denies of seeing an old woman sitting on the ground. The voices of denial suggested me that I am going mad. I quietly start walking.

“Are you ok bro?” the man asks again, I simply ignore him and keep walking to the exit.

To be continued...

CH3 – The Little One

Something horrible was going on with me, as it was a bad dream.

I kept walking to the exit and as soon as I crossed the gate, I looked around for a cab. After I noticed a cab driving towards me, I waived my hand. [The cab](#) stopped and as the [driver](#) helped me by taking my [luggage](#) and putting them on the trunk, I jumped in the cab.

"Take me to the [Marriott](#) please," I [asked](#) the driver.

"Yes sir" he says and drives.

I stare outside the window, cars everywhere, people walking with peace. There is something about [London](#) that always attracted I, the huge, old buildings always held a kind of gravity on my eyes. Nevertheless, even with all the beauty and serenity around, my head still hurts because of the terrifying experience I just had. I met two women, both disappeared suddenly, and nobody else saw them except me.

"Sir, Can you see that lady there?" I asked the driver.

"Yes, she is pretty; do you want me to pullover?" He smiles.

"No, just take me to the [Marriott](#) please?" I request being happy that I am not going crazy, driver could see the same I could.

"Sir, could you see the boy standing there?" I asked again just to confirm.

"Yes sir, I can see the boy," he says.

"Are you ok sir?" he asks, probably noticed the tension, restlessness and [tiredness](#) on my face.

"Yes I am fine" I replied.

We drove for around twenty minutes; sleep caught my eyes for a minute or so when tiredness took over my body.

"Wake up sir, we are at the Marriott" driver says.

I open my red eyes and got out of the cab, body felt so heavy that I almost faint.

"Are you alright sir?" driver asks again, with a nod he just brings out the entire luggage and walks with me to the reception.

"Welcome to Marriott Sir" the [receptionist](#), says.

"How are you doing?" I ask.

"Good and you?" He says.

"I already have a reservation" I reply.

"Let me check? May I have your photo id please?" he says.

I hand over my [passport](#) to him and meanwhile I pay to the [taxi driver](#) and give a good tip considering he helped me this much and then turn back to the receptionist.

"Thank you sir" driver exclaims with joy standing at the door and waives his hand to me. I reply with another wave, something about his happiness just made me happy.

"Here is your passport sir" receptionist interrupted and handed my passport to me.

"You are staying on the room 1310 as you asked, it faces [River Thames](#)," he says.

"Your luggage would be sent to your room, have a great stay," he says again.

I hop on the lift to go to the 13 Th floor, the attendant shows me my room and help me carry my bag-pack. He opens the door and checks everything just to confirm if I was happy with the room. Later he leaves after showing me how I can reach for reception if I need anything.

I remove my shoes and shirt and then simply jump in the bed, the warmth of the comforter aids in the sleep and within moments I go into depth of sleep wonderland.

With the noise of [glass](#) breaking, I wake up, look around but I find nothing, not even a single piece of broken glass. I get out of the bed and walk to the porch, the river seems so soothing, I slept throughout the day and now sun was about to set. Streets lights glimmering and warming the streets looked so beautiful; it enthralled me. I stood there for a while and then came inside when I felt little cold.

"Hello I am speaking from room 1310, I need a [Johnny](#) Walker green label on my room please" I call the reception.

Fifteen minutes later, the attendant knocks to my door with the bottle, a glass and an icebox filled up with ice, in addition, he leaves. I open the bottle and pour the whisky on the glass, take a sip and keep it back on the table. Later I pick it up and walk towards the glass door on the porch, slide on the chair kept next to it and lift my legs up and throw them on the table. The thought of the girl I met on the plane and the women I bumped at the airport just makes me stressed. There was something about both of them, constantly reminding me of myself. I was not able to run away from those eyes, their concerns and care. They held me through my heart.

A knock on my door brings me back from the daydreaming and I walk to open the door. It amazes me to find a little girl standing on the door. I look around, the corridor was empty, there was no one except this little girl, dressed in white t-shirt, pink skirt and pink shoes, she looked so adorable, I guessed she aged around seven or eight.

"Hello Sir" she says.

"Hello kid, what you doing here?" I ask.

"I am looking for my Dad," she says.

"Are you lost?" I ask

She keeps quiet and runs into my room, "wait what you doing?" I shout. She does not listen to me and jump onto my bed.

"She looked just like me, her eyes were same, if I ever had a daughter I could have said she could be my daughter but she is not I just met her, right?" I question myself.

"Where are your parents? Are you staying on this hotel?" I ask her.

She just nods and does not say anything. I hurry to pick up the phone and make a call to the reception, and as I dial, she starts crying. I put the phone back and try to make her smile again. I reach out to my luggage and take out some chocolate that I bought at [Berlin](#) airport and hand it over to her. That soothes her down for a while and then she starts crying again.

"What happened? Why are you crying? Do you need more?" I ask her

She does not say anything and keeps crying, I do not understand anything until I see blood coming out of her nose. I hurry and help her lay down on the bed but the bleeding does not stop.

"Where is your Dad? Tell me which room are you staying?" I shout.

"You are my dad?" she says and cries louder.

To be continued...

CH4- True Face

Blood runs from her nose to her neck, unaware what is going on I run up to call reception for help.

"I have an emergency, there is a little girl who is bleeding in my room," I yell

"I am her dad? What is she talking about? How could that be possible? I never had any kid, how can I be her dad," I think

"Dad, come here, please don't leave me alone" she cries and I go to her, hold her hands into mine and sit next to her.

"Ambulance will be here soon kid, just hang in there" I assure

"Dad, why did you do that? Why did you kill me?" She asks

"What are you talking about kid? I don't even know you" I say, confusion and [worry](#) over rules my soul and I seem to stand in a court room for trial over an unknown crime.

Her eyes were blinking like she was telling the truth, sweat drops from my hair to my hands and then her pain becomes the tears rolling down to my chin, drawing a line on my face marked with worries ,confusion and moreover the concern for this young lady who is lying on my arms and still bleeding.

"Do you love me Dad?" She asks, I pause for a moment and then I reply, "[Yes](#) kid, I love you".

"No you are lying," She screams.

"I am not lying kid" I assure.

"No you are lying! You hate me and that is why you killed me?" She screams with eyes wide open.

"I didn't kill you," I say

"No you are lying! You killed me, you killed me," she repeats with anger and pain.

"What's going on, why is she blaming me? I don't even know her" I remain confused and worried.

"Where the hell is ambulance?" I scream.

"Dad, I am going to die" She says, her hands grab mine firmly, the emotion and thought of losing her also grabs me now, there is so much of innocence on her face, love on her eyes that was beyond anything I ever felt before. I realized that she had held me so tight that my heartbeat was going through its own difficulties; it was becoming tough to breathe.

"Why did you kill me Dad?" she asked again.

I kept quiet, with no idea what to say my mind grabbed a low height of silence and then wandered around the past trying to delve that one moment where I could have lost my control and would have to lead to moment

of becoming a dad. But why would I ever kill someone? Why would kill a child, my own daughter? Questions were haunting me just as she was draining out of her blood.

"You don't remember do you?" she looks at me and asks.

"I don't remember what kid?" I say

"You don't remember killing me?" She asks again.

"I never killed anyone kid" I reply

"No you did, you killed me when I was in Lisa's womb" she says.

The very words choke my heart and I slip in nostalgia.

About 4 years ago, I was sitting on my desk in my apartment, it's been a long day, struggling to find the job have been the only life story. Holding on the pencil and staring at the blank sheet in front of me, I was just thinking if I was really a good cartoonist, would I even a make a career out of it and the stress of unemployment was definitely burdening my fingers and the curves that I was drawing seemed rough.

"Honey, I am home" She says.

"I am here on my desk Lisa" I say.

"So here is my baby, come to me" she says and jumps on me, the touch of her skin soothes me down, stress seems to disappear and I feel all brand new again.

"How was your day?" she ask

"Same old, they didn't hire me, I don't even know any more if my works really worth's something" I say

"Don't say that, I know you are very talented, you will find a good job, somewhere where your talents would definitely be recognized" she says, the very comfort and confidence on her voice have been helping me to go on since this long.

"What would I do without you?" I hug her, the young heart tapped upon her heart beat and then we made love. Lisa and I have been living together since 3 years now, we plan to marry each other but only after I got a job and can pay for the living. She works in a flower shop, that's where I first met her, the lucent eyes held me so tight that I couldn't resist falling in love with her. We were living happily until one day when she broke the news that she was pregnant with my child.

Just like night slips into the canvas and draws out the day, the news changed the course of our lives for the next few months. It wasn't that I was not happy but the fear of having a child when I don't even had money to feed myself drew me out as some daemon and I forced her for abortion.

"Are you serious? I can't do this, it's our baby" she yells,

"We don't have any choice baby, we can't raise a child right now" I say

"I can't do this, I won't do this" She cries and runs to her room.

Four days later, after her abortion I bring her back to our house and as she steps into the door she breaks so bad that her tears won't stop. I take her inside to the bedroom and help her to lie down. I hold her hand just as I was holding right now, wipe her tears and help her sleep. But something changed since then, Lisa was no longer the woman I knew, she was always lost and crying and with time our relationship died.

I have been alone since then, love didn't happen twice moreover I never wanted it to, still holding the hope of us to be together and feeling the guilt for what I have done I have always kept my distances. Since then I have never talked about Lisa to anyone until now.

"Why did you kill me Dad?" She asks again.

"I had no choice kid, I was afraid that I would not have been able to raise you" I said, guilt on my eyes burdens the eyebrows and the tears wash away the dirt lying on the truth.

"I could have survived Dad, why did you gave up on me?" she asked

Noticing my silence she says again "I could have grown old to become the lady you met on the airplane, I could have find the right guy for me, fall in love and get married, I could have grown to be the old lady you met on the airport and would see my grandchildren to be as old as you" she kept saying. Her words became the very shackle of guilt and truth; I was ashamed of myself as the past stood in front of me.

"I am so sorry" I cried loud

"I am so sorry that I was afraid, I was selfish" I said.

"It's ok Dad, I am dead anyway" she says and hold my hand.

My tears roll out until the eyes drain themselves; I hold her face into my arms and wipe the blood that runs through her nose. I wipe the tears from those innocent eyes and hug her tight as close as I can to my chest.

"It's ok Dad, I forgive you" she says again,

I look into her face and the blood disappeared, she seemed perfectly fine to me just as the girl who knocked to my room.

"I forgive you Dad" she says again.

"I am sorry, tell me what I should do to try to mend things I have done wrong" I speak

"Go to Lisa and ask for forgiveness" she says and then she stands and walks towards the porch. As the night steps up to disappear and sun climbs to knock on the horizon, a miraculous light appears around the kid. Within a flash she turns into this beautiful lady wearing the red dress, curls rounding up on her shoulder and smile seizing the very moment as a miracle.

"Who are you?" I ask

"I am an angel, I came here to help you John" She says

"Help me?" I ask

"Yes, I know you have been dying of the guilt and the loneliness, and you need a second chance to survive, there is good in you and that why I am here to help you" she says

"Go to Lisa, seek her forgiveness and start your family so you can live happily" she says again and as the sun climbed up she fades with the light into the light.

I open my eyes and find myself lying down in the hospital, doctors around me with the smell of blood and medicine. My eyes flashes and I slip into the sleep again. I wake up in an empty room, with small observations I realize that I am in a hospital and I shout for the doctor.

"Don't get up, you are still weak" nurse says and hurries to help me lie down.

"What happened?" I ask.

"We found you in the hotel room, seemed you have been bleeding for hours, doctors had to perform a surgery for your brain tumor, it had been three days that you have been sleeping Sir" She says.

"Three days? I need to see Lisa, I need to talk to her" I say.

"Sir your girlfriend is here, she has been waiting outside" she says

"Lisa? How did she know I am here?" I ask

"Doctors called me, they found my contact in your wallet John" Lisa enters the room.

"I am so sorry Lisa" I yell

Nurse leaves the room considering the privacy and the moment for a couple.

"I forgive you John" Lisa says and hugs me tight.

It's been 3 years and we are married now, but every day I remember the moment I met the girl, the old woman, the kid and the angel who changed my life.