has never done me any good. No one had defended me against him, I thought petulantly. No one had told him he was a dishonourable heel. Not my husband, not my parents, not my sister, who knows him, not anyone. A feeling of complete aloneness came to me and I felt cold. But I did not open my eyes, and then I let out a deep breath. I forced myself to start thinking about his good qualities. Yes, everyone has good qualities, I thought. Even my President is funny sometimes usually not on purpose but he has strong entertainment value.

I started recounting in my head what this fellow's positive traits were and a miracle occurred. Maybe it seems I am exaggerating but I know there are quite a few among you reading this who have people in your lives, work colleagues, family members, can anyone say mother-in-law? With whom you would not want to be stranded on a desert island. So please don't pretend we cannot learn a lesson in forgiveness. Now back to the miracle. It was this: I suddenly felt badly for him and not myself. He was under so much pressure from his family, namely mother, to make money, to be the big man in the room. He was constantly being compared to others who made more money. He must (I believed at that moment) have felt a tremendous urgency to make his mark in some way.

People are not all bad or all good, life would be markedly less interesting if they were and I do believe that some people have more good in them than bad and vice versa. He was, in my opinion, a person who was weak and succumbed to the pressure of being a big shot. It could not have been easy for him, I thought as I inhaled the night blooming jasmine. And just like that my loathing started ebbing away. This was the miracle. He almost cost me my work, and I hated him for the manipulation he had exacted on me in an effort to gain the upper hand for two years, but at that moment I could see clearly his pain, his inability to do the right thing because so many expectations were placed upon him. We all put so much pressure on ourselves to attain some nebulous idea of success that is those of us who have the luxury to do so. There are quite a few people, some of whom are standing next to you right now possibly who are just thinking about when next they will eat. And somehow our humanity, the true essence of who we are runs away from us or we walk away from it. Whatever the reason, though I had a massive breakthrough moment in regards to this situation, I still have a long way to go because as soon as I inhaled the incense a second time, I started coughing and the image of my punching him in the face popped into my head and God forgive me, I smiled.

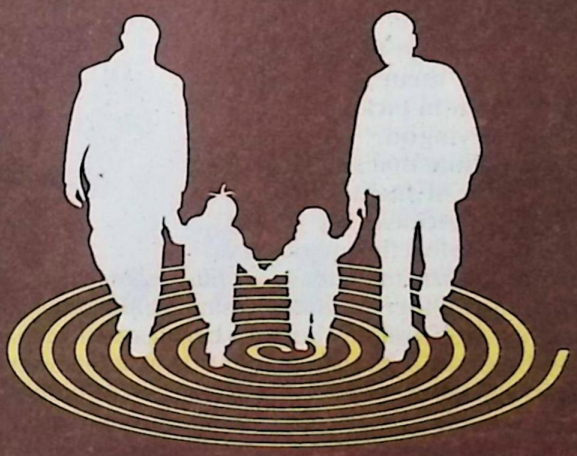
Well Rome was not built in a day. ■

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