

Crows and Cons

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Of all the troubles that plague Rafi's fourteen year old life, the most pressing one right now is the huge gaping rip on the pants around his knee. It was all going so smoothly, tiffin period was done and he had just thrown his bag over the wall. As he was just about to go ahead to the next step of this delicate procedure which is making that one tricky jump onto the top of the wall by using the tree branch as leverage, he heard the dreaded voice of a certain Mahbub sir. If the legend around the school was true then Rafi was sure that Mahbub sir can knock out Conor McGregor with one overhead chop. Not being much interested in proving that hypothesis Rafi knew he had less than 30 seconds to make that leap of faith.

And so he did. Brushing off all the times his classmates called him certain things regarding his weight, Rafi made it, with a glorious manoeuvre that would put the acrobatics team to shame. It was nearly perfect. The keyword here being 'nearly' as he started to feel the soothing monsoon wind near his knee after the jump and a battle scar on his pants that Rafi still didn't figure out how to explain to his mother.

Rafi had precisely 120 taka in his pocket. A sizeable amount for a boy his age. The possibilities felt endless. He could buy that fancy new ice-cream he saw the ad for, he can recharge that amount on his phone even though he has absolutely no one to call or he can save that money for something bigger and more sensible, perhaps that Avrovirus t-shirt he always wanted.

With all these things in his mind it was perfectly natural for Rafi to not notice the skinny looking crow wearing a monocle who was calling out to him. If it wasn't for the crow's persistence that had it fly straight towards his path he might have just walked past it. The crow had a raspy

voice that was in no way pleasant to the ear but the enthusiasm he put behind the delivery of each sentence would have anyone hooked. It was a type of fake enthusiasm that felt so earnest that you wouldn't mind falling for it.

"Hey kid. You. Yes you. I guess today's your lucky day." he grumbled as Rafi kept staring at him with a look of bewilderment. "Whatchu looking at me like that for?" he added frowning at Rafi's gaping mouth.

"Are you... talking to me?" Rafi fumbled with his words

"Boy you're a slow one aren't you. No wonder you got that C in that last maths exam," the crow shook his head.

"How do you know that and how are you even talking?" that last bit of insult finally shook Rafi out of his state of confusion. "Ooo look at me. I'm a human who walks on two legs and only I get to talk," the crow proceeded to do a human imitation that was too sincere to be comedic. "I'm not here to deal with your superiority complex kid. I'm here to make you a deal"

"And what on earth do you have to sell

me?" Rafi asked

"The solution to all your problems, this monocle. I'll sell it to you for 120 taka. Take it or leave it." the crow said like a man who can sell an igloo to an eskimo.

None of it made sense to Rafi at this point. How will the monocle save all his problems? How come it costs the exact amount of money he has in his pocket? Why is he talking to a crow? But Rafi also realised there isn't actually anything that he wants to spend that money on. Also that his escape wasn't as glorious as he had thought. He was pretty sure Mahbub sir saw his face when he jumped the wall. To add to that he still hasn't figured out how to explain the ripped up pants to his mother. And to be honest all the growing up business he had to accustom himself to these days made less sense than the shrewd crow eagerly sitting in front of him right now. So isn't the monocle a gamble worth taking?

As Rafi put the monocle on and watched the crow run away slowly gaining more of a human shape with each step he took, Rafi could feel his own stature diminish. The transformation was rather

quick and painless. His hands turned into wings and he could see a crooked beak right under his peripheral vision. Even though he felt a bit ripped off, he would be lying if he said he wasn't okay with this exchange. Rafi didn't worry about the schoolbag where he carefully hid his math paper in (between you and me, it's inside the social science book) anymore. He wasn't afraid of facing Mahmud sir the next day and test his tales of Goliath strength either. Explaining the large rip on the pants he was wearing to his mother was the least of his concerns. All Rafi knew is that he has a monocle that he needs to sell to a gullible soul, as if it was the sole purpose of his life. And as he flew past the busy Dhaka streets, Rafi realised he was oddly fine with it.

"Hey kid. Yes you. Boy do I have a deal for you."

Nuren Iftekhar is your local stray cat in disguise; he interacts with people for food and hates bright light. He got Hufflepuff 3 times straight in Pottermore so no walking around that one. Send him obscure memes at n.iftekhar18@gmail.com

