



# EVOLUTION

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After the meteors robbed the earth of its glory, life decided to brew again with all its might. Organisms never gave in to destruction. The sun thought she would wipe away the ball of oceans and mountains that circled her. But the minuscule cells won against her fire. Life reemerged with its raging stubbornness.

I got to know of such rebirth and determination from my curriculum books. However, I couldn't witness such thing before me when the history was unfurling yet again. Where was the stubbornness of living organisms that I was made of?

The year is 3049, and the light in my room is a bright shade of teal. I'm swiveling on my leathered chair. The leather is a clean shade of white like that of a horse cruising through the English villages. Our adapted skins are of that exact shade now. I glance at the fern beside my wall-sized window, perched on a wire laced bowl of soil. It reminds me of the life earlier- how our kind was diverse, how humans with different coloured skins co-existed, how we had a sun and enough green as lifelines, and the list goes on. Now we've made a place for ourselves in a planet-less void for human brains are destined to weave wonders. Now we live among the stars and falling meteors that often crash right into the earth. We have drawn the remaining essence out of the earth for survival which is now a ball of dead soil- full of heat or lava, I don't know. We have become monochromatic- forgotten how it was like to boast a

darker hue.

"Spacecraft K21 is ready for a trip to Earth. Confirm?" a feminine voice wafts through the artificial, cold air of my room. The voice reminds me of my once breathing mother whose skin is now probably a part of the molten rocks. And the name "Earth" reminds me of the scorching heat blowing through the neighbourhood during summer, pervasive rainfalls, chilly winters, indigo oceans, godlike mountains, and of course, true air.

I reply with a yes, and the sensor inside my flesh-like all of our kind now- receives the signal and the same voice adds, "Initiating K21 in 3 minutes." Then I put on an oxygen mask to board the craft and wonder what an inferno of a place the earth might be right now.

I get in the spacecraft and witness mammoth masses of diamond-like stones aimlessly lingering in the void.

"Launching in 3,2,1," a voice radiates from the radio sitting on the dashboard while I contemplate how "Earth" is just a name now. So are the other things that I took for granted. I'm afraid my neurons will quietly forget all the feelings attached to those names someday. The warmth of the sun, the freshness of soil, the calmness of air, the touch of the ocean- all the sensations will be wiped off my modified neurons. I don't want my neurons to set them loose. I'm afraid.

How could stubbornness give in to destruction?

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# The Wolves

RASHEED KHAN

There were only two people in his life he failed to counsel.

The man was practically a genius in his field, honestly. He was praised by a countless number of people. There was something about him that just made him a wonderful person to open up yourself to, to tell him of your woes and the worries in life that either you can't talk about to anyone, or because no one else seems to be able to help you with it. It was well wondered if he could ever fail at what he did best.

The first was his wife. She had been viciously abused in the past, yet had managed to stay standing, somehow. However, the years withered her strength away, the sleeping dogs would not lie, and as she slowed, the wolves crept closer ever so slowly. Of course, she couldn't know that at first. They'd been too far away. As they came near, she could hear the faintest of howls, just at the bare edge of hearing, almost inaudible. The howls drew closer, grew clearer. A chill gradually seeped in, freezing. Next came the padding of their feet on the ground, and she kept slowing down. She could hear low growls coming nearer, the sound of their heavy breathing. And finally, as she lay, tired and worn out, they lunged.

That was the most painful bit, apart from realising that she was gone forever. All those years of comforting others, of helping them solve their

problems and he never properly noticed. He had tackled the others' wolves, all their demons, even though they were not with him. And she, the one person who stuck by him, and he somehow, God help him, somehow, he just never noticed the ones behind her. And now she and wolves are long gone, and where was he?

He heard their howling, now. It got louder as they drifted closer and no one could help him the way he helped others. His wolves were so much faster, so much stronger; the cold, so much more numbing, biting deep.

Tonight, he sat down on the edge of the rooftop, looking out at the city lights. The view was utterly beautiful, breathtaking, stars and comets on the ground instead of the sky. Somehow, he missed that too, but it was understandable. He heard the padding of their feet as he finally slowed, unable to move his heavy feet any further. Their growls drew closer and closer; he could almost smell their breath. He closed his eyes before they lunged and, at the same time, pushed himself off.

There were only two people in his life he failed to counsel. The first one was his wife.

The second one was himself.

*Rasheed Khan is a hug monster making good music but terrible puns and jokes where he's probably the only one laughing. Ask him how to pronounce his name at aarcvard@gmail.com*

