



The Pianist

MAISHA NAZIFA KAMAL

Eyes closed, with a breath of ice,
Her fingers glide upon the ivory keys.
Soul adrift, with emptiness inside,
She plays the piano in her own realm.

She weaves a symphony,
With the twisted damasks of untold stories.
She brews a sad melody,
With the broken tunes of ingrained memories.
Each tune, each chord,
Is a masterpiece, a revolution on its own.
Each time you hear her play
Cotton clouds of tears will haunt your day.

But sometimes, with a change ever so slight
You will see her strike those opalescent keys.
Like a mad cackle of insanity
Will follow her nextnote; tunelessly amplifying.
Delicate fingers will then be caked with blood,
As she harps on the wordless cacophony.
You won't bear it, yet you won't stop listening
You are too drawn to her epiphany.

For the pianist plays for her life;
Not for your coin, or your praise.
She channels her thoughts, her passion inside
Into the slow, powerful tempo she builds.
Gracelessly, she will make you sway,
Make you wonder how far this madness will go.
You can't imprison her for words she never said,
But be sure to listen to their echoes as she plays.

Maisha Nazifa Kamal is on a highly confidential mission to defeat all Muggles in procrastination. Join forces with her at 01shreshtha7@gmail.com

Family and others

SAMIN SABAH ISLAM

Shafkat shifted uneasily on the stiff wooden armchair. The sorry looking floral fabric wrapped around it may have looked welcoming on its early days but was now ratty and frayed. The only other furniture in the room was a small moth eaten desk and a leather chair, not that the room could hold anymore furniture. The water stained eggshell walls looked as if they've seen better days and Shafkat couldn't help fidgeting as the hanging clock screamed that he was late for his meeting.

Just as he was about to call out for someone, a middle aged man with a fluttering mess of greyish hair strode in with a blue file in hand. Shafkat cursed himself for not being able to recall his name.

"Mr. Ahmed, sorry for making you wait", he said shaking Shafkat's hand.

"I only came to drop the bills really, I'm in a rush. I would have sent it through my driver but I was told on the phone that some important matters needed to be discussed?"

"Yes, we wanted to inform you about your father's conditions. His dementia seems to have worsened since his last check-up. His doctor suggested..."

"If you need to me write a check for treatment or medicine, I have my check book right now. But I really must leave for my meeting."

"That won't be necessary Mr. Ahmed, the bills cover his medical expenses. His doctor said at this stage it would be better if he spends some time with people he used to know to keep his memory refreshed. Since you're his only child..."

"I don't think that'd be a good idea", Shafkat abruptly interrupted, "I haven't seen him in ages really. He probably doesn't remember me anyways."

"If you spend a little time with him, maybe talk to him and show him some old photos, it might really help jog his memory," the man urged.

Shafkat shifted awkwardly, running out of excuses. "It's not very convenient. I'm cramped with work on weekdays and charity work on weekends. He doesn't really recognise me anyways so it won't really make a difference right?" He said laughing uneasily.

The man held Shafkat's gaze speechlessly, making Shafkat feel like a miscreant under his disapproving stare.

Hoping to rectify his words Shafkat looked around and suggested, "I could write a check for donation. This place looks like it could use some renovations."

"That won't be necessary," he finally said standing up.

"Do you have children Mr. Ahmed?"

Taken aback by the curiosity Shafkat mumbled, "Two sons."

"I wish you nothing but good luck," he said, showing Shafkat the way out.

The man sighed as he watched the successful businessman sprint out the door, already phoning someone. He himself exited the room, approaching the elevator. Riding up to the fourth floor he thought about Shafkat and men like Shafkat.

He stopped when he saw 'Room 402' etched on a wooden door. Smoothing out his hair he twisted the door to let himself in.

"Who's there?" questioned a frail, hoarse voice, "Do I know you?"

The man flashed all of his 32 whites, "It's me abba, your son. I was here yesterday, remember? I read you the newspaper."

"Shafkat?" the elderly man's eyes sparkled, yet still looking hesitant, "Were you the one who brought me the new pillows yesterday?"

"Yes, abba."

"They're too soft son, I need harder ones. And that cane..."

