



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

The Wait

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He looked onwards at the sky. A long hopeful stare. As if the longer he stared into the beautiful blue sky, the faster she would be here.

All of a sudden, he felt a soft breeze whiff past his fatigued, yet hopeful face. The scorching sun was finally starting to become hidden behind a nice, gloomy overcast of grey clouds. Gloomy indeed, but it was definitely something he had been waiting for the whole time.

"This is it. She's almost here! I can feel her presence!" he muttered excitedly. He had been waiting for this for so long that he couldn't even help hide his elated excitement. The moment has come. She would finally descend from the skies for his sake. The heat would bother him no more.

Raju took a nice, long breath of the fresh air that was blowing past him. The nice, musty fragrance that always reminded him of her was in the air again. He loved it. He loved how the folks around him are easily made aware of her presence. He knew that the folks loved it too. How she would drench them in her beauty. How she

would satiate their thirst for some relief. How just her mere presence makes everyone's hearts light up in joy.

The world around him seemed to be growing darker. The winds were getting stronger. Cold, refreshing wind that he considered to be the appetiser. The wind felt to him like she was whispering, "Give me a minute, I'm almost ready". The overcast turned into a thick carpet of ominous-looking clouds. It was a beautiful sight to Raju. And he believed it was a beautiful sight to everyone around him too.

"She's almost here," Raju told himself. He took a good look around the rooftop, as if he was making sure that nobody would be peeking around in the corners. It felt like hours since he had been up there, waiting for her to come down.

It had been weeks since he'd last felt her touch. The touch that never failed to fill his tired old heart full of joy. Even in his late 70s, he would never fail to come up to the roof to bask himself in her presence.

His little cane chair had grown old with age, but he loved keeping it there, just in case he would grow tired

of frolicking around the roof whenever she arrives. He moved around a little while waiting on that old chair of his, making the chair let out a little creek. He loved listening to that little creek. The plastic chairs would never be able to give him that little joy.

Raju waited. And waited. And waited. He waited long enough for the strong winds to whiff past his scalp again, as if she was patting his old wrinkled scalp with all her affection. What if she doesn't exist in this world in her physical form anymore. She would always visit him every rainy day.

Oh how he loved watching her dance in the rain. He loved how she would look him in his eyes while dancing to the pitter-patter of the rain. It was as if she could see the music in Raju's eyes while she danced her heart out in front of him on the rooftop, just the two of them with Raju as her only audience. Their own little slice of heaven.

Of course he wouldn't miss her though. She'd always come to visit him when there was a heavy down-pour. Raju believed that she was the rain herself, always coming over to

give him even the slightest glimpse of her just to keep that little light alive in that old heart of his.

Raju still waited. And waited. And waited. He had been on the rooftop for long enough. He started getting impatient. Was it all a ruse? Do the skies really have rainwater in them? What's keeping her so long? He had waited weeks for this moment. He couldn't stand the tension.

The strong winds suddenly stopped. The world went silent just for a few seconds. As if there wasn't anything in the world that would ruin the moment for him. Raju wasn't tensed anymore. He was now sure that she was coming. He took one last look of the world around the rooftop. There was something beautiful of the grey-ness that had enveloped the place.

Out of nowhere, a small drop of rain fell right in front of where Raju was sitting. A warm smile spread around his now gleaming face.

"Priya!"

Aka is a tiny bleep on the world's radar, and he finds peace in knowing it. Ruin his peace by poking him on akaaraf@hotmail.com