

Imperfect Am I

DIHAAN KHAN

Problems come and go, opinions differ,
 Sunsets dive and sunrises revive, tell me what you prefer.
 The truth, which is so sweet and sour,
 Or a lie, which gains more power.
 Do tell, where'd you get your heart?
 So virtued and merited but so torn apart,
 Talent can't be much good for you
 Since it gives, but it takes back too
 Do tell, where'd you get your mind?
 So practical and acerbic but yet so kind,
 Choices are not arbitrary but decided
 Since your reward is surely not undivided.
 Human nature can't be good for you
 Since you give much, but more it wants too.
 Do tell, where'd you get your sense?
 You're the everyone for everything, yet without pretense.
 The world is cruel, I know, its inhabitants make it.
 You toil and turmoil but still you don't deem fit,
 Kind people are not made for this world.
 For at them most obstacles are hurled.
 To keep your head high, you have to keep your doubts nigh,
 Difficult it is, but bear you must,
 Because now the hunt begins for people you can trust.
 Do tell, where'd you get your resilience
 Since with it you shine with brilliance.
 Most envy you, most love you not,
 Since they live in your shadow, since next to you they're unsought,
 You're everything they want to be, so they despise you so.
 This rhyme came out of oblivion, so I'm leaving it her.
 Remember to love those you adore, and those you fear.

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STRAY

SUBAH NUZHAT HUSSAIN

A gaunt figure emerged from the shadows wielding a hefty cane. The man walked with a slight limp, favouring his left side. As he moved, the occasional street lamp revealed suspicious dark brown stains on the ferrule of his cane.

The figure lumbered towards a tall lank man wearing a coat with sleeves that were too short for him. As he saw the figure approach, the tall man sidled into a nearby alley, shrouded in darkness. The figure followed.

Away from prying eyes, the figure stood with his back straight and his shoulder squared as if he hadn't been limping a few seconds ago.

"What's that Ravi, picking up strays again?" drawled the figure, as he lazily inspected his cane.

Ravi picked at a thread on his sleeves, before replying, "Found him near the construction site, starved and an inch away from death..."

He continued to pick at the thread, looking left and right, silently praying that he didn't may the wrong decision, "... I gave him some bread and he's been following me around since then. I couldn't leave him behind so..."

"You brought the kid with you," the figure cut him short.

Sweat prickled at the back of his neck. Ravi could sense the displeasure coursing through the other man. He knew that the man standing in front of him disapproved of such shallow generosity. Ravi couldn't keep the wretched little thing with him. He could barely make ends meet.

"Why did you bring him here?"

"Asir..." began Ravi. "I thought that you could,

umm, use some company, and I mean, umm..." Ravi stammered while wringing his hands, sweat pooling at the base of his neck.

Asir shifted his attention from Ravi to the solemn brown eyes peering up at him. He slammed the end of his cane into the ground. Startled, Ravi lost his footing and fell. The brown eyes didn't waver.

Asir sat down on his haunches and stared into the deep reflective pools of brown. In its depths, he could not see sorrow or fear. The browns didn't falter. He could see that this one was resilient. There was promise in this little one, he could sense it.

He stood up, brushed off his coat, and went to Ravi.

As he saw Asir approach, Ravi felt his blood run cold, he quivered, drew his knees closer to his body, closed his eyes, and began to pray again. He felt the cold touch of the ferrule on his cheek. Ravi gritted his teeth and braced himself.

"I'll take him."

"What?"

Ravi opened his eyes in disbelief, as Asir withdrew the cane from his face. "I said that I'd take him. You can hardly fend for yourself. You won't be able to take care of him."

Asir gave Ravi a wry smirk, looked back, and whistled. He disguised his gait and ambled out of the alley.

It trotted after the figure, out of the alley, wagging its tail, with a little more sprint in its steps.

Subah has all the time in the world, yet she has none at all. Reach out to her on Twitter @hussain_subah

