



*'The writer is by nature,
a dreamer'*



DOOMED BY DECADENT DESTINY

Vikram Chandra Sekhar, reporting from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), essays a thought-provoking tale of an ill-fated homosexual man in 17th century England.

Arthur did not remember the last time he woke up before the break of dawn. This lanky man who used to start his day when the ginger cat yawned at noon was surprised to be up before the rooster heralded the morn. It did not take him long to get himself out of bed either, no more reluctant dragging of his feet or endless sighing thinking of the mundane day ahead. That morning was different from the rest, it was better, much better. He realized that he did not feel the need to gulp his brewed concoction of caffeine; a different kind of morbid energy was feverishly running through his veins. As he walked up to his ornate window and peered out at the sky, he was left speechless. Mother Nature in all her glory had painted the skies with the most scintillating hues of crimson and orange. For a usually drunk man who was agonized by the sunrise, as he grudgingly made his way back from the tavern, this was another intriguing spectacle, to say the least.

But like he said, this day was different. Arthur

Chestwood was not like the rest of his boisterous male counterparts. Though he drank like them, ate like them and even suffered the same diseases that they did; he was inherently different from them. Even as a young boy, when all his friends pulled the pigtails of the girls in class, Arthur never felt the urge to do so. When in the days of his youth he heard the ballads of Shakespeare, he still failed to understand as to how there can be such intimacy between a man and a woman. The very thought of placing his lips on another woman disgusted him to his bones. Yet, he just sighed and continued with his usual life, until that one fateful day.

Arthur sat in his usual place in the classroom, he still remembered it like it was yesterday, the 19th day of September, 1602, a date perpetually burned in his memory. It was the first and ironically the last day he saw that boy. Oh, that boy with his electric blue eyes, shimmering blonde hair and face blushed in a tangerine hue. Arthur was smitten; all the ballads and amorous sonatas made sense now. He understood what it meant to be at the mercy of another, of how he wished for just a few moments with this young boy. But fate, as it may seem had other plans. Arthur's mother died of cholera that very night and his father decided to take his only son and leave this

desolate town. Arthur grew up in the Nottingham, but he yearned to head back to Canterbury; not for the grey skies or the bland pies, but to meet that young boy once again.

Years passed in a blurred sensation and Arthur failed to remember them, nothing memorable seemed to happen in his life after that fateful day. Whether it was the death of his mother or the thought of never feeling what he felt that day; Arthur was not the same anymore, he just chose to exist instead of living. But everything changed when his master sent him back to Canterbury for an apprenticeship at his brother's abode. Arthur worked at his new master's clerical desk for a few days. Just when he thought that nothing better could come by him, everything changed. His world was literally turned upside down when he found that same boy, now a handsome man sitting next to his new master. As he walked back to his dwelling that day, he felt it again, the same warm feeling that swelled inside him and wreaked havoc to his senses. No, this was not the alcohol, it was something else; much stronger and alarmingly similar to what he felt all those years ago.

William Brown, he finally knew this person's name, after all those years. He put on his finest clothes, wore his church shoes and adjusted his tie a dozen

times. He had to be perfect; something mattered in his life, for once. He walked in to his master's house at Canterbury that day and with all his strength managed to utter a few words of pleasant gesture to young master Brown and with one smile from him Arthur watched his walls of inhibition crumble to dust. Words grew to sentences, for a few minutes at first and then for hours on end. Arthur and William were now inseparable. In a matter of few weeks, the friendship had blossomed to something beautiful. Neither of them ever spoke about it but they undoubtedly knew, they were both not like the rest; they were different. What were the odds they thought, that they were ever destined to cross paths and seek refuge in each other's arms when the world showered upon them with hate and misery. England was not welcoming of their kind, very few knew of their "difference", but those who figured would glance at the them with disgust.

But fate ordained that Arthur had had enough of happiness for this lifetime. As they both sat one night under the moonlight in the orchard, William told him his woeful tale. His father Christopher Brown, a wealthy merchant of the land had managed to convince him to a voyage to the newfound land of the Americas. His entire family was destined to leave the

country in a fortnight and this was perhaps the last few nights he had left with Arthur. Both sat in silence for a while, and then without uttering a word Arthur got up and left. He knew this was too good to ever last, he knew that destiny could never be this kind to him. Arthur refused to visit William for the remaining few days. He spent all his days in the tavern, drowning himself in liquor and sorrow. On the last day, however, he walked up to the shore and stood motionless, as he saw the ship unfurling its sails to embark on its voyage. He spotted William who looked no better than he did. His sunken eyes, unkempt hair and grey complexion were strikingly similar to what Arthur looked like. Just when the ship reached the last mile of eyesight, William turned at shore for one last time and he spotted Arthur. A brief second of eye contact were all they shared, but those few moments were enough to haunt Arthur for months.

The blurred transition of time continued and suddenly stopped. As he recollected his tale, he noticed that he had been standing at his window for almost an hour now. He laughed at himself, the first genuine laugh in years. The ship sent for the Newfound lands was on it way back and would arrive at shore this morning. Arthur checked his clock and

ran. Even in his night suit he knew William would recognize him, still adore him and get back to the good old days. But everything changed as he reached the shore, in William's arms there was a baby and next to him a woman. Arthur was in shock, after a mere seven years at sea, William was his no more. William walked across Arthur without the slightest hint of recognition, and just before he rode away in his carriage, he put an emerald necklace around his wife's neck, waved to the cheering crowd and sped away. That night, akin to the very necklace around that woman's neck, Arthur adorned his with a noose instead.



A FORCED LIFE

"Many of us crucify ourselves between two thieves - regret for the past and fear of the future.-Fulton Ousler." Reporting from the United Nations General Assembly - Disarmament and International Security (UNGA - DISEC), Urvi Jalan talks about forceful recruitments carried out by terrorist organizations.

Everyone was wearing black and were gathered around a man; a dead man named Faizal Sheikh who sacrificed his entire life being a part of the Islamic State of Israel and Syria (ISIS). Everyone thought of him as the bad person; a terrorist, but people never asked why he ever even thought about joining the ISIS. But one girl had; his daughter, Arua, who was silently mourning her father's death but could not gather the courage to see him away. He had sent her away to India, to her uncle Abram's place at the age of 10 for security reasons. She was now 16 years old and still remembers the time when she had asked her father as to why he ever got recruited in a terrorist group.

He was a worker at a bakery in Syria and lost his job due to the Civil War in Syria. He had a family of seven to feed, out of which only two men earned. Abram had decided to shift to India at the beginning

of the Civil War and the job he got there did not pay him enough for all of them to shift to India. Only four of them could go to India at that time and Faizal knew that if they did not hurry up, then they would not be able to escape this war. It was Abram who had a job offer ready in India and thus, it was decided that Abram along with his wife and sons would go to India and both the brothers would try to earn enough in a month's time so they could safely immigrate the remaining family members; Faizal, his wife and Arua to India. Abram along with his family left for India. Time flew by and the war started becoming more and more aggressive, but Faizal could not arrange for enough money. He was then introduced to the ISIS group by a friend of his, Aftaab, who was also a recruit in the ISIS. The ISIS promised to send Faizal's wife and Arua to India safely in exchange of him joining the ISIS. With no other alternative left, Faizal agreed to this but did not realize what all he would have to do to keep his family safe. Only after the rest of his family reached India safely did Faizal realize what he had gotten himself into. The ISIS ordered the recruits to commit murders for everything they found wrong and unacceptable.

As soon as Faizal was recruited in ISIS, he decided to wait for the right time to flee to India with the help of

the money earned by working for the ISIS. But he got caught when he attempted to run and this was unacceptable for the ISIS. Faizal was blackmailed that if he ever attempted to run away, his family would be in danger. He was then made to participate in almost all the terrorist activities like Brussels Bombings, Berlin Attack and many more. That had become his life; a life decided by ISIS that he had lost control over just because of one decision. He never knew if he regretted taking that decision or not.



UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

Shrishti Jalan, reporting from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) expresses the plight of the mother of a drug addict who died due to overdose.

And as she buried her only son

With an aching heart and tear filled eyes,

She kept thinking where she had gone wrong.

How did her little boy turn into a heroin addict?

How did her little boy fall down this fatal pit?

Why did she not notice that his innocent smile had turned into a sad one?

Why did she not notice how isolated he had become?

Nobody could answer these questions for her now.

Guess they would always remain unanswered.

A mind full of questions, many memories

An aching heart and tear filled eyes.

This was all she had left of her son now.

Edited by Anusha Mascarenhas and Anya Batra



WHAT WAS MY FAULT?

"Love is a song that never ends." Siddhi Agarwal, reporting from Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Council (SOCHUM) talks about ending discrimination and violence against the LGBTQ community.

14th November, 2018

Thursday

Dear diary,

It is very difficult to live in today's world. Each time I go out, people judge me and make me feel like a criminal. Every time I want to do something on my own, my family does not support me mainly because of the reason that I am different from all others around me. Am I not granted rights because of the choices I have made in my life? I just want to run away to a place where I will not be judged on the basis of my sexuality. It is a fact that I am different and that is how God has created me. There is nothing I can do about it other than accepting it. I want to run away from home, but then I think about my family who has always loved me no matter what. It just feels like I am one of the greatest mistakes of

God. I feel attracted to the same sex and it feels very abnormal. When I told the people around me about it, they started treating me as though I was never a part of their community. They stopped talking to me and soon started treating me as an untouchable.

These actions of the people around me forced me into isolation and depression. I stopped doing all the things I was always interested in. These events of life showed me that if I am not like the others, no one will ever accept me. It is very painful, but deep down I hope that I get some pure hearted friends who will not judge me on the basis of my sexuality and bring back some joy in my life.

Good night diary,

A lonely boy.



DEADLY CONFUSION

Reporting from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Shrishti Jalan expresses the dilemma of a drug addict through a poem.

The ecstatic feeling I get from the drug
Is something I cannot compare to anything
This kind of happiness, I have never felt before.
This kind of joy is an experience I cannot express.
The happiness may be short term, artificial even,
But it feels more real than most people around me.
The ones who really care,
Have asked me to stop
I have tried constantly
I have failed miserably
My body craves it even more now
I'm addicted to the drug,
It's as simple as that
But is it really simple?

Just the thought of the suffering that my body will
undergo,
Is a ghastly thought.
So, that's a thought I try to avoid

I can't stop now
Because even though I know I have to,
I don't want to

I want to continue
For I'm not strong enough to stop
I want to isolate myself
In a room, alone, I wish to lock myself
I want to knowingly poison myself
For the poison brings pleasure
I want to tie the noose for hanging myself
The time I have left, I want to live feeling like a
treasure.

The will to live is holding me back,
Holding me back from dancing down the road
The road that leads to my death

I sit in a corner and watch
The deuce and the angel battle
I don't know who will win
Sometimes I cheer for the devil,
Sometimes I cheer for the angel
Sometimes I feel that this confusion is killing me
more than the drug itself



A PANDORA'S BOX OF GUILT

'Your greatest downfall shall be the curse of thine own hand.' Vikram Chandra Sekhar, reporting from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), deliberates upon how the feeling of guilt can eclipse every other possible sensation of a sentient being.

Not a day had gone by without Benjamin lamenting about that fateful night. He stood at the veranda and gazed as dusk set in; the shadows gradually grew and devoured everything in sight. Yet, just like every other despicable night, the darkness outside was nothing compared to that within his soul; within every inch of his living body. He walked into his house and sat on his rickety chair, gazing into the picture of his son. He longed to reach out and hold his hand for just one last time, but he knew that he could never experience that joy; he knew he was beyond redemption. The boy's death had been a direct consequence of his actions, and his absence tantamounted to Benjamin's ignorance. Even tears refused to offer solace to him at this given point. He was alone in the dark, compelled to a suffering so profound that death would be a welcome respite.

Julian was Benjamin's only son, his very own flesh and blood and he loved him more than anything in

the world. He would pre-meditate his every request, shower him with oodles of affection and give him every possible comfort that a young boy would ever need. But now Benjamin walked into his son's room and realized that he would never be able to tell him every morning that he loved him, he couldn't tie his shoelaces or walk him to school. Here was a desolate man who had all the love in the world to give, but no one to give it too, no one that mattered at least. He walked out towards the balcony and stared at the moonless night, darkness seemed to follow him everywhere he went. But then, he looked down and in an instant it all came flooding back; the arguments, the fit of rage, the horrendous shriek and the pool of blood.

Julian walked home one evening. While the family sat around the table for dinner, he made his shocking revelation. He explained to his orthodox father that he was not like the rest of his friends, he did not want to converse with women and that he was homosexual. Benjamin remembered that it was blurred lapse of memory after that. The word 'homosexual' ignited so much fury in him that for the first time in his life, without uttering a word, he struck his son. He beat him repeatedly, no amount of pleading from his wife could pacify his rage. All the

hopes and dreams that he had built for his son came crashing down at that instant. He called his own boy a disgrace, bombarded him with a spate of abuses and hit him till his own hands felt numb. The man who used to lovingly caress his son at every moment, now spat upon his face and told him that from this day forth he was no longer his son. All this came as a shock for Julian, a boy who had never seen this venomous side of a loving father and left him shaken to the core of his being. He wailed and wept incessantly and then suddenly the crying stopped and then came the blood-curling shriek and a resonating thud.

Benjamin still could not believe what came over him that day. He still refused to believe that a mere sensation of anger would make him strike his own son. But what followed next was a jargon of pain and crushing sadness, those memories continued to haunt him till this day. Julian had jumped of the balcony on the 13th floor. By the time he reached the hospital he was dead. The blood which stained his hand was that of his son and as he held his boy's dying body in his arms, he was stricken with so much grief and guilt that his body turned to stone. He wailed and wept for weeks after that night, praying for another chance to make things right. But, nothing changed and

irrespective of what the world believed, his son's death was by Benjamin's hand and this guilt would perpetually haunt him for the rest of his life.

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