

ME MY SON AND THE BRUNO

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(Self-isolation prompted by twenty-one- days of national lockdown gave me a chance to study a change in myself. I have not known that there is so much ease in my character to adjust, to look keenly at my thirty-one-years young sonâ??s zeal and mildness and the needs of the pet dog Bruno that has become feeble and overwhelming.)

The phone alarm rings much louder than the regular days. I check the time on the blue screen, 5.30 in the morning; in a jiffy as if someone shoved, I jump out of bed, reminding myself, â??no time lazying its lockdown days,â?? in the mind the awful threat hit like a flash. In less than three hours, I have got to rush for the provisions from local makeshift markets.

The entire world has become an intensive care unit of cosmic dimensions falling prey to the invisible corona virus. Lakhs of people in peril scampering into ICUâ??s â?? a makeshift medical sanctuary to guard against the apocalyptic crisis.

Wherein, like a speck in the millions herding for safety, I too in good faith braced for a twenty-one-day self-isolation.

Read the relating soliloquy, swearing the deadliest man-made disaster as the background.

I check the TV screen; in one corner, itâ??s blinking nine more days to go.

But then my bodyâ??s rhythm took an unbelievable recasting as I tottered into the twelfth day in complete isolation, felt I had to have a long skeptical look at myself, â??do I have an adjustable frame of mind?â?? Hopefully, I think I have.

The first day or two, I kept vacillating around the fact how much I could handle the domestic toil. I ran over hunting for the small stuff and tools, which Iâ??m not sure I ever bothered to take on them, anytime, about my house? Like locating brooms parked in the farthest corner, washroom material stowed in another, sugar and salt and lighter in the kitchen, the dog food, and also bolting the windows

at night, flicking on the lights twice a day, overseeing the filling and levels of the water tank by pushing the right switch. Though sounding funny, for a while, imagined if I were a smaller version of Robinson Crusoe.â??

Stumbling out of bed, every day, I look down, like it or not, at two desperate eyes as though pleading, wagging the tail waiting at the edge of the door, Iâ??m hurled into an unusual dilemma, â??he or me firstâ?? I mean the business of purgation. Iâ??m assured of a liver-friendly, bowel friendly body; hence I walk the Brownie, the pet dog, over to the terrace.

He searches for spots and corners for relieving without qualms letting out groans of pleasure he seemed to enjoy. For a while, he goes sniffing around; in the meantime, standing back, I gulp in the fresh air, watching the deep orange horizon announcing the crack of the Sunrise. As if we have an understanding, he leads me, now with easy eyes, down the steps to the place, a corner in the hall and slump in as if announcing, â??better prepare for another day of delighting me.â??

Even though Iâ??m not his regular caretaker, I couldnâ??t believe how the thirteen-year-old Pomeranian had taken to the life of adjustment like a matured soul. He started listening rather than tiring me with misbehavior. Perhaps the canine instincts seem too sharp to follow every melancholic debate blasting on the TV relating to the deadly coronavirus. Hence, he stayed subdued. Lucky me!

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The announcement without any warning of the nation in lockdown has caught many in a twilight zone, like my son. He planned a dayâ??s stopover with me, subsequently scheduled to go to in-lawâ??s place, fetch the two-year-old kid and wife, and return to his working place, Hyderabad. Now gotten summarily wedged, he neither could spend time with his family nor sink in professional chores but left with no choice but ought to stay with his dad â?? to co-exist for twenty-one-days in self-isolation.

The term millennial legitimately fills in my sonâ??s personality, who grew on an unrestrained diet of smartphones, computers, and TV, and fast food. Even his fashion statement sorrily limited to shorts and gaudy T-shirts, which are unacceptable for me to get along. Iâ??m afraid it isnâ??t for a day, I have to endure for the next twenty-one -days as he fancily parades day in and day out as if I were invisible. But Iâ??m aware any advice will â??blow hotâ?? behind me.

I entertained a mild suspicion at the initial day or two that we have to sit staring at each other. But honestly, instead, I have found my son mostly crouched on the sofa keenly staring at the computer maneuvering the digital graphic designs.

The lockdown rules arenâ??t too harsh; there is a window of three hours in the mornings to conduct the daily bargains to replete the provisions. Here is the pinch; I found myself shockingly stiff, for a task hitherto never witnessed by salt and pepper head hiding my sixty years of age. Unashamedly must confess, I had never stood with a bag haggling before a vegetable vendor nor put up with a queue, now, minding the social distancing rule waiting to pick up the provisions. â??Have never done these housekeeping tasks,â?? would sound snobbish, but thatâ??s the way I have lived my whole length of life, so far my house never remained unattended having none to perform the household duties. But then, the extraordinary crisis seems demanding a streak of greater flexibility in personal adaptations.

I know Iâ??m never the same these days; I came off a tad mellowed after my wife passed away three years back.

I drove with an odd sense through the local market crowds milling around the carts, slackly dressed as if they jumped out of bed, picked up a bag walked straight to market. I could make out the hurriedness in their gait, anxiety written on faces perhaps made them unmindful of the manner they walked to wrap up the bargains while minutes were clicking in every mind the limited break closing hurriedly.

Three bags full of fruits, vegetables, packed food, sachets, dog food, bread, biscuits â?? a weekâ??s perishable load, up to this point have managed well, but canâ??t figure out, who the hell will carry this cargo up to two floors.â?? This is the point where my caring ceases, and irritability kicks in â?? yes, towards my son.

I find his room shut while I have moved out, attempted to wake him up with a knock, and a shout, but have received no hint of a reply, and I have just pushed off on my morning junkets. Fearing his moodiness, I wouldnâ??t want to push him much to come to my help, I made out I could manage.

However, I attempt to lift the cargo to two floors, on my own, rasping and panting, giving a minute for my fragile lungs a breather at the landing all the time cursing my son and helpless Bruno.

Six decades of wisdom prompted me to think, no matter how much we love and care, how much restraint exercised, these minor hiccups between the generations are unavoidable. As a parent at this extraordinary situation, fear running from all sides, itâ??s the solemn responsibility to care for my son and the Bruno, the aging companion for thirteen years.

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Iâ??m very well conscious we are passing through the hardest phase, and I felt it as a learning experience to get a closer picture of my son breezing together in uninterrupted bonding. Iâ??m convinced; the days of isolation had a cathartic fulfillment as I take a look at the reformed mirror!

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1. Uncategorized

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