THE VOICE

Description

I could hear a *Voice* outside my entrance door. A few soft knocks as if to know if someone lives in or not. Iâ??m still not yet wake up but gazing and lazing at the ceiling, wondering who, at this early hour would want to disturb me. I own a house and a character that doesnâ??t encourage any callers at any time. Staying alone is my credo!

But the tapping on the door seemed now, annoyingly louder but *The Voice* calling my name I could faintly make it, appeared, deep and demanding. I got up and opened the door, unwillingly.

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A Voice, believe it or not, slowly walks in and settles on the sofa â?? face to face, as if prepared to dig out origins of my predicaments and my past. Getting down straight to business, assuming a tone of an interrogating agent; *The Voice* launched into a probing and piercing queries.

Hearing the intrusion enters Aditya my son, who stays and works at Hyderabad, visits me once in a while and is now worried about my fragile health and concerned about me staying alone after my wifeâ??s death recently. I could understand his concern at my sullenness, and could very well read my signature tension on my face!

I face my first question from *The Voice*, â??why anxiety is written all over your face, like a watermark, all the time.â?•?

I mumbled for myself an answer, â??my worried wrinkles carry an unspeakable traumaâ?•; started etching themselves mildly at first but as years piled up so were the furrows have become permanent contours of my expression.

As if sensing my confused moodiness, *The Voice*, soberly, altering its pitch, â??tell me about your introduction to this wrinkled and furrowed business into your lifeâ?•?

Stunned by that unguarded but hurtfully blunt inquiry into my past, rubbing my lazy eyes, I become at once alert. Beating my blues, I ready myself to tip a rejoinder.

Look for yourself to â??the hidden skeletons in our family closet.â?•And I went on,

â??I have started counting of beadsâ??the headaches, the disputes, disagreements,â?? like a stoical saint, on the thread of my life course very quickly after the demise of my father at an early age of fifty-five. This devastating event is my initiation into a thin foggy layer of emotional blackmailing unleashed by conflicts in my family that had spread over closely twenty-five years into my life: And all parceled out in yearly chapters by my two unassuming, relentless and incautious siblingsâ??.

The long and short of it I have relayed in one distressed breath, driving, for once, *The Voice* into an awkward silence!

As if sensing, perhaps, telepathically, I receive an overseas call from my daughter: â??Daddy, how is everything over thereâ?•? My camouflaged voice answers, â??Iâ??m fine,â??. And which Iâ??m not!

Collecting its balance and reasoning *The Voice* shoots at me one straight dart, â??â??tell me what that is distressing you about your family kinsfolk and as you complain, stay as pain in your neck all the timeâ??.

I always carry a mountain of complicated family-related issues that which never seen becoming moderate and amiable at any point in the last twenty-five years of the timeline. My â??down the memory laneâ?? tone takes the precedence and starts framing the words like this:

â??In the name of harmony, taking up my reconciliatory stance of keeping the family flock together, inferring, if that is what could save the educational enterprise that my father had built. I have willingly ignored my goals, set aside my priorities, my wife, and kidsâ?? interests, and shouldered the extra burden of tolerance to buffet the rising chorus of dissent. About financial and property matters and further to prevent not to allow any cracks of misreading appear within the family members.â?•

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The Voice, prods me again as if not convinced with my argument; â??you ought to have separated away, favoring your priorities and your wifeâ??s and kidsâ?•; and without pausing went on like, â??You are overly attached, and sentimental about the school isnâ??t; â??*The Voice* had dropped its tone now to a sympathetic hint.

â??Yesâ?? I replied with stress-ridden eyes, and as if to prove my point, I was quick to add â??Iâ??ll explain why I grew so emotionally involved with the school and its administration and activities holding close to my heart.â??

A soon I had completed my graduation, after marriage, at an early twenty-three years; I have developed an enthusiastic interest in the school started by my father. He was an epitome of discipline, a teacher extraordinaire, and dedication none can compete. Watching his genius in action as if like an osmotic being, I started absorbing and imitating his personality and following his teaching style â?? his way of dressing to his scholarly profoundness. From then onwards started my lifelong romance for teaching and sentimental attachment to the school founded by him.

Unfortunately, after his premature death; I at that young age found myself untrained, unskilled and inadequately prepared to carry forward the legacy of my father and at the same time to keep together differently poised and attitudinally uncooperative family group. It didnâ??t take that much time the unerasable blots to appear on the fabric I have wrapped around, with all carefulness, to keep the entire family unit well-balanced.

â??Donâ??t you consider itâ??s your short-sightedness, selective overconfidence that has landed you in a disaster trap you have always been fighting,â?• it was perhaps, one stinging question from *The Voice*.

â??I have failed, from my point of view, to identify and establish immediately after my fatherâ??s departure, the required legal framework for how Iâ??m to keep the school operational and its future securely supported. In a documented way to protect the assets upon which the school was built and appreciatively flourishing. Yes, it is my lack of proper experience I have to blameâ??.

Upon hearing my long reflective monologue, *The Voice* went further to ask me, â??why didnâ??t you call for an opinion, advice, and support of the friends, well-wishers or relativesâ?•?

I did, genuinely and earnestly; but the fact remains now and then that the parties who could help us to sort out the differences, and had the expertise to do so never sincerely held their brains together to solve the issue for good. And those who had the time and willingness has not got the negotiating and convincing skills and knack to convince my unbendable family members to work together to keep the school going. No amount of entreaties, reasoning would make them see the sanctity of protecting the temple like institute to stay alive and thriving.

â??Listening to your ranting and blame game I have no choice but to conclude that you have miserably failed; that is the bottom line finallyâ?• *The Voice* spells out its denouement.

Yes, I have to admit that all my unfaltering efforts, valiant contests were utterly useless and futile against the combined willfulness of my sibling gang. I couldnâ??t save myself, or the school started by my father. The twenty-five-year fight against their greed and my moral and legal helplessness have left me, in the end, exhausted and defeated. Iâ??m always a heartbroken spectator of their assault on the future and thus on my fatherâ??s cherished aspirations. And I couldnâ??t legally stop them while erasing one building structure after another, what could have been and continued as an indelible and glorious contribution to the society â?? one good school.

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Category

1. Uncategorized

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