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# A DREAM TO TOUCH – A SHORT STORY

*Right now, the only thing separating the two was a couple of inches of sand...off the coast...the waves did not quite manage to reach their footprints left by their bare toes...*

**T**HE wind in their faces... they could detect a faint trace of salt in the sea air...lovely in its flavour... especially at this time of the night. The stars were out... individually nothing but specks of dust among the infinite black. Yet, together a complex work of art capable of inspiring imagination personal to each as well as giving a chance to collectively ponder on certain things... and ponder they did.

Both of them... they were meeting after a while... quite a few years later to be vaguely precise. Old school mates... they shared the same bench... went to the same classes... they used to give each other company during their morning jog... the exercise did them good... as did each others company. They never used to speak much... but merely enjoyed each other's company. Both of them never needed to say much to talk to each other... unlike others, they could understand each other quite well without much to carry the message. Think it's called a semantic gap... what the hell was that?

Right now, the only thing separating the two was a couple of inches of sand... off the coast... the waves did not quite manage to reach their footprints

left by their bare toes... but then it was trying really hard imploring the moon to wax further... the waves, periodic in its voice...and yet abstract in its path. Not very much unlike the both of them... they weaved their own paths along their lives... yet, they thought along the same wavelength... they resonated well together. They were... the best of friends.

The moon came out from behind a cloud at this moment... sudden dark shadows traced their way behind their backs and just managed to kiss their car... soft music playing...

"Hey...I think you should not worry about this too much!" said he...

"But how can I not? This is too tough a thing to endure... it's not happening for the first time too... what is wrong with me?"



Her hair was billowing about in the breeze... hiding her eyes... she sounded stable... he thought he heard a faint sob... he looked out into the horizon... nothing but an infinite slit among the darkness. He was thinking now... the horizon seemed to broaden his own thoughts...

"Hmmm...I think you should try harder...its not as easy as it sounds but you got to give it a decent shot. Think back now, from what happened between you two...do you think it happened out of chance or were you able to see it coming?"

"Well...I...I don't know!! The first time I was taken by surprise at the way he reacted...but the second time...hmmm...no, I was still surprised!"

*"That might mean that you are still the same person...now this might not be true but why is he seeing you in a different light now? Did you do anything which changed things between you two?"*

*"No...nothing which can't be classified as daily eccentricities. In fact, its one of the things that he likes about me...I really am lost now. I did not see us arguing like this...it was...horrible. I felt like killing myself after that..."*

He put an arm around her shivering shoulders...her hair brushed his face...

*"Hey...hey...relax. It's ok...how many years have you two been together...almost 3 years right! It's time which is the enemy here...for the 3 years, have you ever felt a need to change the plane of your relationship? Did you need that to carry on?"*

*"No...We pretty much have the same fire or whatever you call it between us...but there is something else now...is it caused due to our familiarity with each other? Damn...I don't feel any different towards him now than I felt that day when I told you about how I love him...I still remember that day so clearly...you had come to town for your final semester holidays and I called you as soon as you landed. Poor you...I am so sorry for not giving you much time to get settled...But I had to tell this to someone...and I could think of only you at that time!"*

His reply was slow... measured... supporting...  
*"Of course...anytime..."*

She turned to look at him now...his face still had its old

aura...blunt nose, slightly curved lips, long hair flopping over his eyes, dark skin...but he looked a little tired now. The lines around his eyes were a little deeper...of course, he had a job now...he always seemed to work least and yet achieve the most in school. No wonder he breezed through the exams and went on a scholarship for his studies to the best college in the country. She thought she was always the dumb one...how much he used to help her with her studies...all the times during which he patiently sat with her under that banyan tree in their school yard...all the times when he still managed to help her while he was back in town on holiday...it was almost like she did not need to ask him for his help...he just is there for her. She smiled in spite of her hurt...she inched a little closer and leaned onto his shoulder...

He continued staring out onto the ocean...he saw a single ship sailing west...the moon ducked back behind a cloud now throwing the entire beach into darkness.

*"I think this is part of the process of a relationship...there is little meaning in a relationship if you live in a dream world all the time. Sometimes we have to come down to earth and experience*

*life with our loved ones...that deepens the feeling and prepares you for the future. Its only a matter of time until you can realise this...I hope you can do so sooner than later..."*

She gripped his arm tighter now...a cold wind just ran across the empty beach...he did not flinch. Rock steady...as he has always been...she realised the meaning of his words...thought about it for a while...

*"You know what...it still amazes me how you say the right things at the right time. I...I have been living in a dream world all this while...I think I can see it now..."*

*"Do you love him?"*

*"Yes...yes..."*

*"Then just pack your bags, get back on that train and go back. Surprise him the way you surprised me by landing up without any announcement. Believe me, if he is anywhere close to having a level head on his shoulders, he would have realised what he just let go...Believe me, any guy...any guy...who has spent time with you would want you...would want you back!!....."*

She was expecting him to continue with what he was saying...but he did not...the ship in the horizon was almost beyond its edge now...the wind let down its enthusiasm...it was warmer...she felt warm inside. She looked up at the stars...then at his still profile...she thanked all the stars above thinking how lucky she is to have him as her friend. He is always a pillar of support during hard times and is always happy for her when good times pass by. She remembered the happiest day of her life. The same day she recalled a while





ago...she proposed to her lover the day before...and he accepted! After she told him about her new found love, he was so happy at hearing the news...although he couldn't stay for long...it was her fault for rushing him into the news before he was settled down...he had to run to meet an uncle of his! She remembered wishing that he stayed longer...

*"Thanks a lot!"*

He just nodded his head...as always...a man of few but valuable words.

*"Think we better get going now...your train back should be early next morning...you don't want to call him up at an unearthly hour. Maybe its better that you surprise him with something...a home cooked meal maybe..."*

*"Wow...what will I do without you!! This really means a lot to me...thanks!"*

*"I just want you to be happy! No need for any thanks and all that crap...I am here and you know it...C'mon, let's go!"*

They got up together...she started walking back to the

car...he went up to the shore to pick up their slippers which the waves managed to reach now...he picked them up and stood still for a second...breathing in the night air...he always liked this spot. He used to come here whenever he

needed to think...or reflect...or ponder...or just whenever he needed not to think about anything. The peace that this place afforded him was invaluable...especially considering that he has been visiting this spot quite often in the last 3 years...

The moon came out from behind the clouds...it was almost a full moon. The moon is quite intriguing...you think you know it well...after all, you have been seeing it since you were a kid. But there is always the dark side...which never reveals itself...mysterious...void...cold...brooding. He chuckled at the irony of it all...

How he dreamed that day when he landed in town...how he dreamed about how to tell her what he truly felt...how he dreamed about that moment for the last few months...how he bought a single red rose which he had tucked inside his coat...how he practiced for hours in front of the mirror on one knee...how, many years after being the best of friends, he realised something which he almost knew all along...how he never ever in his wildest thoughts expected what she told

him as soon as he met her...how he had to endure the pain inside and yet appear normal...how he managed to do one hell of a job acting like he was happy for her...how he muttered some reason and rushed off into the dark cold night...how he almost felt like killing himself...how much he cried...how he came to this exact spot and remained here throughout the night...how much he sacrificed... how much he cried...how much torture he had to go through to go back to being her friend...how well he did one hell of a job of that as well... how much he cried...how he is still acting in patches...how he is still unable to stop feeling for her...how he is still shedding a tear each day for her...how he is still in love with her.

He looked back...there she was...her dress tracing out her divine form in the moonlight...her hair shining like a silver cascade flowing along her back...her eyes shining now with glee at what's to come...her childlike enthusiasm...her elegance and composure...her eccentricities which makes her wonderfully unpredictable...she was his dream woman in his strained reality...unrealisable...a dream...yet a dream that can be touched, felt and held close to oneself.

He made a mental note of the new restaurant a while up road...he wouldn't mind a beer or two while he is here tomorrow night...he slowly started walking back...the waves won finally...but his footprints will be back to challenge them for a while...

