

Name of Student

Instructor's Name

Course Title

Date

Creative Story

The room was covered in the deafening silence as the loud raindrops were desperately tapping on the window pane, struggling to break the voiceless vacuum; while two figures sat in front of each other; one with empty eyes and mind and the other filled with empathy and determination.

“Good to see you again Asma. Can you tell me how you feel today?”, the lady clad in white overalls took the first step to break the ice in the room.

Feeling? The word sounded alien to Asma who just sat there with an unfocused gaze; eyes desperate to find an anchor of interest. No matter how hard she thought, she was unable to remember the last time she felt something. It was as if she was trapped in a limbo where chaotic screams were buried, desperate to surface yet not even a single wave of emotion was there to disturb the sea of emptiness inside her.

“I don't remember”. It was a struggle, even to voice words now.

“Don't remember what?”, the lady questioned with furrowed brows as if she was unable to catch the context of her words.

“I don't remember how I feel doc. I don't even remember why I am here”, Asma replied with a confused voice as if she was trying to make sense of her surroundings.

“You know that you can always talk about anything with me. Right? I am here to help. Please let me help you”, the lady’s voice was sincere with a hint of desperation. It has been months with them sitting in front of each other, every other week, with silence being their constant companion.

Asma was not ready to talk, and the doctor was not willing to give. Both were stubborn in their own way.

“How can you help me doc, when even I am not sure of what’s wrong with me?” Asma gave her a skeptical gaze with a hint of annoyance in her voice.

“You’d be surprised how sometimes others are better at understanding the pains that we ourselves are unable to acknowledge”, the lady replied while giving Asma’s hand a gentle press, an assuring gesture to keep going.

Asma flinching and harshly rejecting her physical gesture was not what something she had expected. It was the very first time they ever had a physical interaction, and the doctor was to surprise to see the ragged breaths and hysteric eyes of the person, who always showed up with empty gaze.

“Asma, dear! Can you hear me. Focus on my voice. Calm down”, she tried to coax the hyperventilating woman in front of her, careful not to touch her. But Asma was no longer there with her in the room. The sea of thoughts was no longer calm. The emptiness that had enveloped her for months abandoned her without any warning and she was left with gasping for air, trying to get rid of the dirty touches and hushed whispers that was all over her suddenly.

Her mind took her back to the nightmare, she desperately wanted to forget. Loud horns, bustling cars, empty roads, black and yellow stripes, “it will be 150 Rs”... her ears were ringing with untamed voices that she desperately wanted to tune out. Unfortunately, the remote control was no longer in her hands.

Was that her mistake? Dreaming? Thinking about her life? The nights can be cruel, and the vultures that lurk during that darkness can be vicious. Maybe that was why she failed to capture the dark gaze lurking for too long, in the rearview mirror. How did she not notice the rattling breaths as the car sped... not to her destination but towards her nightmare.

The skin is sensitive, they say but physical scars are easier to heal. What about the wounds left open and burning on one's sanity? How to cure something that cannot be seen and too intangible to touch. What's there to fight over when the battle was never fair to begin with? How to continue existing when breaths no longer carry any weight of life?

"..ma, Asma? Focus on my voice dear. Break out it. Look at me dear", the desperate voice of the psychologist invaded her nightmare as she slowly started breaking free from her trance.

"You are here. Breathe. Pay attention to my voice for the moment and nothing else. I know you can do this", the doctor demonstrated deep breathing to encourage her to follow her steps.

"There you go. Keep breathing", the lady encouraged Asma who was slowly coming back to her sense.

"Are you with me now?", the lady questioned Asma with concern visible in her voice.

"Y..yes. I am sorry for earlier", Asma replied with shaky breaths, her body softly trembling from the aftershocks of her sudden breakdown.

"It's okay if you do not want to talk about it for now. But know that unless you won't let go of the pain, you will stay trapped in it", the lady assured with a gentle smile.

"what's the point of letting go, when there is nothing else left for me to seek?" Asma replied in a broken voice.

"As long as you are breathing, there is always a purpose in it. Meanings don't present themselves willingly. You must actively seek your reason to live", the lady continued, "If you

think there is no reason for you to live in life, become someone's reason to live. If you think you cannot pick yourself up, help someone else to stand. Brave are the hearts that help others, before they even help themselves."

"How can be of any help to someone when I myself am broken beyond repair?" Asma questioned the doctor with confusion evident in her voice.

The doctor gave her a gentle smile and replied, "That is for you to figure out my dear. I am sure you are smart enough to figure that out yourself. I am hoping to see you soon, till than find a reason yourself to make your heartbeat again."

And with that the doctor turned her chair around and went to stood by the window that was still withstanding the intruding efforts of the falling rain. She slightly opened the window pain as a gust of wind entered the room, creating goosebumps on Asma's skin.

Was it too soon to give up or is there still a reason out there somewhere to continue? Guess it was for her to find out.