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Monsoon Slumber

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As I was reclining on a roadside bench on a cloudy evening this monsoon, lost in a scrumptious slumber, vehicles zipped past my eyes, forming an incessant chain of suffocating smoke, overwhelming noise, and blinding lights. There were grating syllables of everyday life fluttering haphazardly in the air. Mixed-breed aromas travelling from different corners were tickling the orifices of my nose. As I was sinking deeper into my amorphous dream, a bang within a hundred meters away shook every inch of me and brought me back to reality. For a few moments, I was clueless as to where I was and what was happening around me. Then I realized that there was an accident on the middle of the road and people were huddling around the accident spot. Someone behind the bench shouted, “These rich brats will never get to learn how to drive safe.” I cursed all the people involved in this hullabaloo for they had spoiled my evening siesta. I got up and started walking down the road. I stopped at a bakery and ordered patties.

“What happened over there, *bhai saab*?” asked the owner very inquisitively.

“I don’t know exactly. Maybe some rich brat has knocked over some poor chap,” I replied.

“Didn’t you bother to know who that poor chap was,” a person standing beside me interfered.

“*Arre yaar*, if you are that concerned, why don’t you go and check?” I shot back in anger.

As soon as I came out of the bakery, it started drizzling. I looked around for some shelter, but I didn’t stop and started walking back home. My phone buzzed.

“Yes, dad?” I received the call.

“Akshay, I got a call from Sunil uncle. He is badly hurt in a road accident on the Express Road. He is unable to move. I am stuck in a meeting. Go and help him,” he replied very seriously.

“Yeah, there is an accident here on the Express Road. I didn’t know it was uncle. Don’t worry, I will handle the situation,” I said and disconnected the call.

As I ran towards the accident spot, my phone buzzed again. It was Rishabh— one of my best friends.

“*Bhai*, I call you later. There is an emergency,” I answered the call.

“*Arre Akshay bhai*, just forget everything. I am stuck in a very bad situation. My motorbike skidded sideways and collided with another motorbike near the bench where we hang out on the Express Road. This unruly uncle is a little hurt, but he is acting up. He wants compensation;



otherwise he will call the police. He has kicked up a storm here. Your father is an influential person. Come and call him,” he reeled off.

“Goddamn, I am screwed! Let’s see what I can do,” I rejoined.

Now the situation was crystal clear. But I couldn’t decide who the poor chap was between the two. No, I was the poor chap who was going to handle such a tricky situation. I knew both the persons very well. Rishabh was in habit of performing stunts on the road and bumping into other vehicles. Sunil uncle was very well known for losing temper and creating furore at the slightest provocation. I was scratching my head as I was clueless as to what to do.

I rushed to the spot and found people huddled around two motorbikes which were lying on the ground. I knew nothing could be done as far as my intervention was concerned because both the warring parties were looking for the same person to bail them out. And unfortunately, it was me! I walked away and sat down on the same bench where I had first heard that bang. I found myself helpless. At last, I closed my eyes and tried being oblivious to the surrounding area. And surprisingly, I sank into my amorphous dream again.