



# TWO ZEROES AND A HYPHEN

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a novel by  
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**T**hat day my father said that I am the most stupid son that has ever born in their family.

He always says so. Such things are in his blood. His blood group is O+.

Everytime he would try to become my father. Always using third degrees of adjectives for me. Otherwise he speaks in Punjabi, but whenever he drinks he starts fornicating the back of English.

Usually I keep listening because you know it is his breads that I am breaking. But you cannot keep listening all the time because after all there is something like self-respect in this world.

That night he started shouting even from outside.

The neighbors switched off their lights and came in the windows of their outer rooms to see the *tamasha*.

The reason was not big. I tell you. Actually I had to attend an interview somewhere. I needed a hundred rupees for fare. But I had nothing in my pocket except a leather purse full of bullshit visiting cards, fee slips and some passport size photographs. And you know it takes at least a week's time to make atmosphere to ask something from your father in case you are sitting at home after finishing your studies (*for instance, you start dusting his bicycle in the morning or you pick up his plate from the table after he has eaten up in the evening or anything like that*). But I had no time for this atmosphere making for the interview was going to be held on the next day. So in the morning I slipped a hundred rupees note out of his pocket in the full public-view of a smiling Mahatama Gandhi and in the evening when father came home, he did all that reality-show.

“Most bastard”

I told you already, always third degrees of adjectives.

“Come out, you donkey's dick, your mother's, come out.”

I was sitting on the table with daal and chapaatis in the plate. I jerked the table and said mildly in anger.

“I have not to eat.”

*Actually upto that time I had already eaten so much that my breath was not coming out. But you know at a moment like this you have to jerk the table and say, 'I have not to eat.'* Otherwise your self-respect dies. And I have seen, this works, this always works. Sometimes this works.

That day also it must have worked, if Father had not started speaking English.

“What a blunder I have done by begetting you? Get out of my home. I don’t want to see your bloody face again.”

These are his favourite phrases. He always uses them. He has got their copyright. I stood up and kicked the door with the back of my leg.

“Who like to live in your bloody house? Going. Hold your house in your hands. I’m going.”

I always say so. I started using this stuff even when I was in nursery.

I hurried out.

Outside it was so black as if the world of the blind. I kept looking at my back. I had hope that he would come to take me back and if he would not, at least Mother would definitely come. But nobody came. Not even a dog was behind me. On reaching upto the railway-track, I stopped and thought where I could go. I thought and thought and thought.

Before nine again I was back at my father’s bloody house

Like a dog who wherever you abandon returns home before you do.

My whole of the bloody self-respect got fucked.

Since that day I’m guzzling my meals separately in my room. Whenever he comes in, I start shuffling the pages of books and when he goes out, I tune to FM on the radio.

*HoHoHoHo Ho*  
*HaHaHaHa Ha*  
*LaLaLaLa La*  
*RuRuRuRu RaRaRaRa Ra*

Life is lalalalalala

Life is king-size, like a Gold Flake king-size cigarette, which only kings can afford to live.

And I am not a king.

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