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Ugly truth & veritable reality

AN OBLATE'S REDEMPTION

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Act 1

Scene 1: - Curtain rises. A sound of Bomb blast is heard. Dark stage except at bottom right corner, from where flames are coming out. We first hear several cries for help, but soon they slowly vanish and we hear dialing of phone. A female voice can now be heard.

Riya

(V.O)

Hello. Air Station 1. Yeah I am here at Area 54. A blast has occurred. May be it's suicide bombing. What ? Off course I know. It was definitely suicide bombing. Its a federal building.(she enters the stage from right corner. She is has average height and looks sheepishly beautiful.) What? What was I Doing here? How dare you ask me that? Well Its true. I was on vacation. A girl needs to do what she needs to do, manicure waxin.. (furious) Wait. Why on earth I am telling you this? Who the hell are you? Janitor? Janitor? If you are a janitor, why did you pick up the phone? Transfer it to the studio now. Go and do your janitting or what ever you do.

Suddenly a solar light appears from top left corner. Its light is falling on the site of blast, at bottom right corner. Unaware of it, Riya continues roaming around the place.

RIYA (CONT'D)

Hey Glen, its Riya, send a squad to Area 54. A federal building has just been bombed. (Excited) At least 500 or 600 must be dead. (Gloating) This is big, you know I would certainly get promoted after this. Hey send Rashid, he is our best cameraman. And listen fire that janitor....

Riya goes off the stage from right corner. From the bottom right corner, souls of the deceased are going up towards the solar light. (In the form of white cloths.)

From the flames, the suicide bomber comes out, he is in white like other white clothes going up. He looks up at the solar light and tries to fly up there but fails.

SUICIDE BOMBER

Why aren't You taking me? What's wrong with You? I died for You. (Frustrated) Take me, take me now. We had a deal. Remember.

Suddenly the light diminishes in a flash.

Its dark. While looking up he kneels down and started crying.

SUICIDE BOMBER (CONT'D)

This wasn't supposed to be like this. You promised.

Lights fade out for a moment then fade in. A tall man enters from the bottom left corner. He has a husky commanding voice. The flames at the right corner and all the commotion of blast disappears. Suicide Bomber is now in formal cloth and is standing beside a wall. Stage is still dark.

MASTER

Some times silence has the loudest voice. Listen this is what God's garden would be. May be more transcendent and sorrowless.

He holds suicide bomber's face up.

MASTER (CONT'D)

Remember your dead father and sister are waiting up for you. Son this your ticket to paradise.

Suicide Bomber stands up and walks away from him.

SUICIDE BOMBER

I want to kill every one of them. But, master, some times I am scared. I am scared of the

day to come. I don't know what the future has stored for me? What if God refuse to take me in, even after I succeed?

MASTER

Scared? You are a soldier of God. He would welcome you with open hands. Remember those who died. Our innocent brothers and sisters are dead because some bastard want to expand his oil empire. They are dead because some one thinks that we could be oppressed and ruled. Son, you would be a martyr. You would be welcome by white light.

The flames and commotion of the blast reappears on the right side and the left side fades away. Riya with a camera man reenters from the right side. Suicide Bomber is now again in whites and he is still in kneeling position. Riya and cameraman Rashid crosses him and Suicide Bomber Realizes they can't see him. Rashid is tall and looks tense.

RIYA

Can you believe them. (Irritated) For six hours I burn my butt down for this coverage. (Takes out a cigarette packet. Its empty, so she throws it in front of her. But it hits Suicide Bomber, who is not visible to her.) It must be biggest blast this place had ever seen and they said they would not increase my pay. C'mon people I was on vacation. Than also I came.

RASHID

Damn! What a day. (Sad) They are saying at least 800 died. The onlookers said a white van drove into the building. They believed suicide bomber was a young 30 something male.

Riya takes out a chewing gum and throws the empty wrapper on Suicide Bomber. Furious at her the Suicide Bomber tries to pick up the wrapper but fails to fetch it. His hands passes wrapper as if they are of air.

RIYA

Off course 800 died. It was prime time. The suicide bomber was clever enough.... Hey wait a minute. No body has done his profile. Lets do a report on Suicide bomber. If I might uncover something I would definitely get a raise.

RASHID

But where would you get that information. And that is a diminishing act and cops wouldn't allow you

RIYA

What are you a pussy? Its profiting gig. Leave everything to me.

The Suicide Bomber was listening to their conversation since the moment Riya mentioned him. So he follows both of them.

Lights fade out.

.....

Act 2

Scene :- The lights are dim. Its a ghetto vicinity. At the centre of the stage there is a house. There are no furniture or any remote sign of prosperity. At the side of house we can see an old woman cooking on a stove. The only things visible among the old woman and stove are pile of books. The old lady is wearing a saree. She must be in her fifties.

Riya and Rashid enters from left corner. Riya as always looks selfishly zealous and Rashid has the pragmatic look of Buddha. Suicide Bomber follows them, he is inquisitive.

RIYA (CONT'D)

(furious, after stepping into some crab)

OOOH EEEE What kind of place is it?

Rashid giggles, but stops when she stares at him. Suicide Bomber breaks into laughter.

RIYA (CONT'D)

Don't say a word. Sooner I will get that psycho's profile sooner I will be the new chief reporter. O.K. Where is the door bell?

RASHID

(sarcastic)

Try Knocking.

While Riya knocks at the door, Suicide Bomber tries to peep inside.

The old lady opens the door. Seeing her Suicide Bomber gets excited.

RIYA

Hello. We are..... We are....(looks At Raashid)
We are your son's friend. We heard what happened, so we came to help. Can we come in?

SUICIDE BOMBER

(furiously excited.)

She's my mother. My mother. O hh yes. My mother is alive, mother is alive, my mother...

Suicide Bomber's screaming overlaps with the conversation between Riya and his mother. They all enters the place. Riya seems disgusted at first but soon controls her emotion. Suicide Bomber who was first excited now seem stunned when he sees condition of his house.

SUICIDE BOMBER (CONT'D)

What happened here? Liars, They told me my mother was in asylum. They didn't even give her the money they promised. How can my mother is living like this?

He tries to hug her but fails. Furiously, he kicks the wall, but falls on the other side.

MOTHER

Come sit down, make your self comfortable.

RIYA

(to Rashid)

Comfortable? How? Is there a decent place?

Rashid ignores her.

MOTHER

I know its not a nice place. No one lives here except me.

RIYA

(overjoyeously)

That shows (to Rashid). No, no Aunty this place is great. Awesome.

RASHID

(candidly)

Really. Truly you have kept it well

The Suicide Bomber is inspecting the place closely.

MOTHER

O! you kids are being modest. Will you have some bread? I could make some tea, but I have to get some milk for it.

Riya looks at bread with sore eyes.

RIYA

Oh no no I am fasting.

Rashid stairs at her as if his eyes are telling her to stop behaving in such an impolite way.

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MOTHER

Than I must go and buy some milk for you.
You look

On seeing her get up, Rashid hurriedly stops her.

RASHID

(courteously)

Oh don't please. I can have some bread. If you
may please.

MOTHER

Off course you may. Don't be so humble. Why
did God made mothers for? We are here to
nourish kids like you. My children were like
you only. So shy of eating... (tears starts
dropping from her eyes) oh God! It has been
so long time but memories keeps haunting you.

Riya gets excited and Suicide Bomber also turns
towards her.

RIYA

Children? What happened to your son? Tell us
about him. I didn't know if you had a son. But
you should have had a son. Who don't have
sons? Sons are lovely.... Aaaaa!

Rashid steps on Riya's feet to make her stop talking.
She cries and jumps out of her chair.

RASHID

Don't worry about her. Its genetic not
contagious. We are sorry. If I may, can you tell
us what happened to them?

Suicide Bomber comes toward her and sits beside her.

SUICIDE BOMBER

Tell them mother. Tell them what their
government had done to your husband,
daughter and you. (shouts) Tell them the truth.

MASTER

(V.O.)

She can't say even if she wants. She is a damn
secularist.

Master enters from right side. He is wearing black
cape/cloth

What our Brightest Youngsters think!

MOTHER

They died in an accident.

SUICIDE BOMBER

Accident! They killed him. Raped her. You are
saying accident. What's wrong with you?

RIYA

And your son. What happened to him? Did he
went to college?

SUICIDE BOMBER

(Furiously at Riya)

I was an Iitian. I topped in my class. For God
Sake, woman I did MBA.

MOTHER

He went to IIT. Coming first was natural to him.
His professors believed he would shook the
world.

RIYA

He certainly did.

MOTHER

Could had gone to abroad after he did MBA.
But stayed and joined IPS. He always wanted
to do something for the nation.

SUICIDE BOMBER

Well you got that right. Don't you feel it was
an accident to? A minority kid getting so much
marks. They all hated me. They never believed
I was a good human being. Good I killed all
those -----

MASTER

Why are you furious at her? She is a believer.
Democracy and secularism have survived in
this nation because of people like her.

Suicide Bomber Looks at him and runs toward him
like an angry bull. But fails and fall down. Voices of
Riya, Rashid and mother fade out. Now there are only
S.B. And master at the right corner.

SUICIDE BOMBER

Democracy, secularism you are talking about them. You told me they didn't exist. They are lied government tell us to remain oppressed.

Master laughs.

SUICIDE BOMBER (CONT'D)

What are you laughing about? You filthy Pig.

MASTER

Look at the door. Look who came to meet your old lady.

Voices of Riya, Rashid and mother fade in. Mother opens the door. DCP north Elan comes in. He is tall, masculine but polite; he greets the Mother.

ELAN

Aunty you must leave. The government has issued a warrant against you. They would punish you for your son's crime. A mob is.... What are you guys doing here? (to Riya and Rashid)

RIYA

We are his friends. Aunty's son.

ELAN

Hey Rashid (greeted him, Rashid does the same) I didn't know you had any friends, Riya. I thought you only Starved for money. Aunty, you should come with me mob is coming here. (to Mother)

SUICIDE BOMBER

What mob? What they would do to my mother?

MASTER

You should know, they are coming because they know she is a suicide bomber's mother. That's why God made Mothers, to repay their sons sin.

SUICIDE BOMBER

What has got into you? Sins? What have you become a Mahatama? You are the one who told me that it was a path to God. He didn't even take me in.

MASTER

Did I? Look at her how calm she is.

He walks toward them away from the Suicide Bomber

MOTHER

No son, I wouldn't leave. Its my house. Born here and God wish would die here. Elan you would have some bread? You must have it. Its freshly made.

ELAN

Aunty, you aren't understanding. The mob is crazy. No one can control them.

RASHID

How do you know aunty so well?

RIYA

Yeah. Tell us did you know her son? Was he born terrorist? Did he bomb any other places?

SUICIDE BOMBER

What's wrong with her? Why she is trying to demolish me?

MASTER

Its not her fault. Its called globalisation.

ELAN

Yes I knew him.(To Rashid) No, he wasn't. (To Riya) He was a polite and friendly. I don't know what happened. He was ACP with anti terrorism squad. After uncle and his sister died, he became melancholy. Government said it was an accident.

SUICIDE BOMBER

(furious)

It wasn't an accident.

ELAN

Every one knew it wasn't an accident. Uncle was a strong believer of Mahatama. He believed in non violence and peace; a secure nation for all people. You can call him an Idealist. He knew he could make our nation a better place. He was a vanguarding a

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movement against the government. The government didn't like it. It was a massacre no one had seen before. The U.N. Report said 3000 humans were burnt alive.

Suicide Bomber is staring at Elan, he starts crying. Master was beside him.

ELAN (CONT'D)

Government report said 40 died. They called it an accident. He was heart broken of uncle's death, even more because of his sister, who accompanied uncle. He countered the Government's report. Nobody knew, what happened after that. He disappeared. Last I heard he came in contact with some violent rebellious group. I intervened but he blamed of being a mole. He thought Uncle and his sister were killed because they were minority.

SUICIDE BOMBER

Yes, I am even right today. They were killed because of the language they speak, the God they pray, they were burnt because they had blood other than theirs. Tell them master. You only told me this. Tell him..

MASTER

Have I told you that? Think son, do I even exist or I am a riddle of your brain.

SUICIDE BOMBER

What are you talking about? You always told me that they had made me inert.

MASTER

Were you ever inert? You went to best institution in the country nobody stopped you. You were the highest ranked officer. Nobody fired you. You resigned yourself.

RASHID

Oh God! I didn't believe he went through all that mess.

RIYA

Oh c'mon Rashid. Life is a bitch deal with it.

What our Brightest Youngsters think!

MASTER

Till the moment time was right. You were a good and respected law abiding citizen. When a time came when situation was a bit hostile, you became a minority.

SUICIDE BOMBER

That's not the truth and you know it.

MASTER

Than, what is the truth? Yes there were oppressors and there will be oppressors. And your father knew it. He wasn't fighting for any minority, he was fighting for all nationals. He was fighting against a cruel government. Among 3000 dead there were humans not of single group but of all sects, they were all one countrymen.

SUICIDE BOMBER

You told me something else. Why did you lie to me?

Elan looks out and close the gate. Voices of a mob now can be heard.

ELAN

Oh no they are here. We should go from here quickly. The government's mob has come. Auntie (goes to the kitchen)

RASHID

There is no other way. There are hundreds of them. Is there any other way?

MOTHER

Elan you should eat some, its fresh just like he loved.

ELAN

Auntie we should go. They will not leave us easily.

MOTHER

(starts crying)

Elan, you knew him. He wasn't a bad boy. He loved his sister and father very much. (Breaks down) Oh God forgive him for his sin.

Master moves closer to the Suicide Bomber, he looks him in the eyes.

MASTER

Did I lied ? I never encouraged you or said anything to you. I didn't even trained you. You were a trained police officer, weren't you? Son, I never existed. You created me to take revenge of your father and sister's death. I was born out of your anger, pain and agony. I am your revenge. You were a Police officer; a hand of the government. You were the part of that oppressed government, till the death of your father. Suddenly, in a moment from oppressor you became oppressed. Everything you did was for you. Did you think that killing 800 people would buy you a place in God's garden? You know, the building you blew up had a kindergarten.

There were small kids, who didn't even know how to speak? What is religion? Leave aside revenge. People die everyday. There are draught, floods and God know what. Instead of increasing the mortality rate. Why not save those, who could be saved. Life is not always black and white, son. If you could had controlled your anger, it would had startled the cruel government.

Suicide Bomber kneels down and starts crying. Suddenly, Riya opens the door and runs out. Rashid cries her to stop. Mob is coming towards the house.

RIYA

Don't shoot me, I am from your community. Shoot them they are....

RASHID

Riya no, don't go.... Ohhhh

Bang Bang (gun shots)

RASHID (CONT'D)

They killed her. They thrashed her down. We will all die.

Elan moves toward the door. For a second he thinks than takes out his revolver.

ELAN

Rashid, take aunty and move from back door. I can't stop them for long. Aunty please go with him.

Bang bang.

Firing mercilessly he goes out. Mother follows him to stop, rashid accompanies her. Suicide Bomber Gets up after hearing commotion. He moves towards to stop them.

SUICIDE BOMBER

No don't go. God please stop them

BOOM (Blast)

There is smoke everywhere at right stage. Only Suicide Bomber Is visible, places where Mother and Rashid was standing, there are white clothes. Master is not there.

SUICIDE BOMBER (CONT'D)

Oh God I am sorry. I shouldn't had done had killed those people. Why my Mother had to die because of my sins? Punish me I committed heinous crimes, not her.

He kneels towards the white cloth of his mother and sobs.

SUICIDE BOMBER (CONT'D)

Punish me, don't punish my mother. Why can't we see things as they are? Why we have to criticize things as they please to us? Why can't we believe there is one God for all? And He is in every form, in every idol, in every soul telling us to love every one and live our life in peace. He ask us to fight, but not with sword or gun in our hand but with truth in our heart.

God forgive me, forgive me, forgive us.

The solar light reappears, now with full throttle, illuminating the entire stagea.

The End

Dedicated to Bombay Blast victims.