



Item Code:

951

Participant Code:

107

TOPIC - The horse of HOPE street.

### THE RIDE HOME

The car came to a halt in front of the girl. Her Lissom hand sticking out, asking for a lift. Zen rolled down his car window

"Get in miss" he motioned to her. He observed the girl sitting uncomfortably in his backseat through the rear mirror.

The girl seemed to be in her late twenties. Her long black hair sticking out, her cheeks flushed in contrast to her pale complexion. She looked worn out, as if she was running all day.

"Where would you like to be dropped?" Zen asked.

She looked out the window and said "Home".

"Umm, miss, I wouldn't know where it is unless you tell me" Zen shrugged.

The girl blinked "Im sorry. Just drop me near the hope street".

Zen nodded "I didn't catch your name" he said.

"Sam" her reply was short.

"Im Zen Lorenzo by the way. So what were you doing at this hour?" Zen pondered.

She was standing all alone in the middle of the deserted highway past midnight. It was normal to feel something was wrong.

"Are you perhaps running away from home" Zen smiled.

"If I was, wouldn't I be carrying atleast something with me?" The girl frowned

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Zen let out a chuckle " I have a daughter your age you see. So I was just curious."

Sam relaxed herself in the seat. " Apologies, I would like to rest for sometimes.

He nodded in understandment and gave her his waterbottle. She gulped it all as if she has been dehydrated for days.

To ease up the air around them, Zen placed his mobile phone on the holder. The voice of the news reporter filled the emptiness.

But everything took an abrupt turn when Zen heard what the reporter was talking about.

" A mentally unstable ~~women~~ <sup>patient</sup> named Lara has escaped the XX Asylum in 10 this evening.

She is notoriously known for her violent nature and also had an attempted murder case charged against her. "

The photo of the same girl <sup>sitting</sup> behind his car was clearly displayed through his tiny screen.

" If you see or come into contact with her, please call the number below" The reporter said.

Zen looked at the mirror and his heart skipped a beat when he saw her big eyes already eyeing him.

She leaned closer to his ear and whispered. " You have two options mister. You either hand me back to them or let me escape. The choice you make could either end or revive my life.

Zen's hand clutched the steering wheel tightly " why should I help out a lunatic like you?"

" You cannot believe every word that comes out of the mouths of these reporter. They are lying.

Im not insane" Lara cried.

" You have already lied to me about your name. Give me a good reason to believe you"

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Zen's volte was calm and calculated.

Jumping back into her seat, Lara continued "Please listen to my story then you could judge".

And she began her tale.

Lara was an ordinary young woman who worked hard to look after her sick mother and her little sister Daisy who has Down Syndrome. After her father's death, she was compelled to take his role. But she never complained. She loved her family of two dearly and spending time with them in their ~~same~~ old, small home made her feel complete.

The sick mother would go in and out of hospitals frequently and her little sister would always keep the mother company.

Due to her work, <sup>Lara</sup> she couldn't always be there for them, but she always makes sure to spend time with them.

But one day, things changed. While the sisters were spending quality time in each other's company, Lara noticed marks on Daisy's body. On further investigation she realised her poor sister has been sexually assaulted.

So Lara saw red. She was petrified. Her heart was filled with ashame and rage.

"Who did this to you" Lara ~~she~~ screamed holding Daisy close. After a lot of persuasion, the little sister finally spoke. "Dr. Ian did it" she said, a smile plastered across her face.

"He said it is to help me become smarter".

Lara couldn't stop her tears from flowing. Dr. Ian was the one treating her mother.

To think he would do such <sup>vile</sup> things to her sister. She was ready to get justice for her sister.

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She lodged complaints after complaints. Tried to sue the hospital. She tried to do everything she could in her power.

But the results were bitter. Her voice was smoothly ignored. She was just a poor girl.

People like her are always suppressed and shut down ignored.

But she was not ready to give up. Her stubbornness was unbeatable.

During this time, she was fired from her job. The reason was something trivial. And after a while, she lost her mother too.

The doctors said that it was to be expected as her condition was getting worse.

But Lata knew it wasn't a natural death.

The timing was too peculiar to be a coincident. And the way smile of Dr. Ian gave her the answer.

Her losing her job and her mother was done by the superiors. It was a threat. A warning, telling her to back off and to shut her up.

The sisters couldn't bear the sudden loss around them. They mourned for their dear mother.

Their house has now lost one of its beautiful flowers.

Now Lata wasn't ready to give up yet. She barged into Dr. Ian's office.

"Please stop ruining our life and admit your mistake." She pleaded and cried

Cries turned to arguments. Arguments turned physical.

And while trying to protect herself from the vicious hands of the so-called Doctor, she accidentally ended up piercing his abdomen with a knife she found on his operation table.

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61<sup>st</sup> Kerala State School Kalolsavam - Jan 03 To 07, 2023  
Kozhikode

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Words got out about this brazen girl who tried to kill the holy doctor. People were enraged. They never digged for the truth but believed whatever news they squeezed off others. Lara was the evil one in their eyes now. She ~~was then~~ ~~senten~~

For people's fortune, Dr. Ian survived. And Lara was sentenced to 2 year prison for attempted murder.

Lara was devastated. She implored and begged to let her free. She told the true story but in her side she had no one.

Who was she to fight against men with so much power in their hand.

She thought about leaving her pure sister with a brain of a ten year old in this corrupted world haunted her. She didn't have a choice but to pray and reunite them together.

The innocent now rote in jail while the savage beast lived down freely.

Years passed. Lara was finally free. She rushed back home to see her dear sister. But from there she came to know that her Daisy has said goodbye to this world.

"She was met with an unfortunate accident." The neighbours informed the shocked girl.

Lara weeped and smashed in their tiny home. The last bit of hope she had, she lost it too. She had nothing to lose now. She now swore on her life that for her ~~mother~~ the humiliation, and injustice her mother and sister has gone through, she would get revenge.

She was set out to avenge her family.

Using her quirkiness and brain, she slowly started collecting evidence of the horrific and brutal things happening in that hospital.

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Lara was smart and quick. But the hospital people in here, had in their hands, dominance and power. When they came to know me <sup>genius</sup> smart Lara was pulling, they were quick to take actions against her.

They caught her in and diagnosed her as mentally ill. and threw her into the xx Asylum. Everyone knew that wasn't the truth. But she didn't have anyone to ask for help. She didn't have anyone to take her in. She was alone and her disappearance did nothing to the surrounding around her. The world still continued to live on as if nothing happened.

Lara has escaped that hell now. For once, she felt free.

↳ hearing her story, Zen was speechless. This girl has gone through a lot of torture and yet she wasn't afraid to look death in the face.

"For all I know, this could be a made up story." Zen said in a dilemma.

"Do I look like I'm lying?" Lara asked, her voice thick with tears.

He examined her face again. She looked drained, her lips were pale but her big brown eyes glistened with something he couldn't understand. Her small face had a glimpse of fear in them.

She looked like any girl you would find on the street.

But Zen knew better than to judge a book by its cover.

"Will you help me Zen?" Lara asked.

There was silence. Ice cold silence.

The <sup>silence</sup> was narrowly broken as Zen commanded her to duck down.

Lara was confused. Then she saw police standing in the sideways.

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Lara quickly did as he said, hiding behind the seats. Away from any eyes.

Her heart filled with hope " He is going to help me" She thought.

The car stopped for a few minutes then took off. As she was rising from there, her bare

foot touched something cold and metallic. She squinted her eyes to get a better view of the

thing in the darkness. She started groping around until she caught it in her hands.

" What are these?" She asked slowly, rising up.

Zen saw her holding his hammer, a shovel and other unnameable tools. with a mixture of melancholy and confusion across her face.

" Those are my working tool. Keep them away please." Zen said, his face void of emotion.

Lara felt weird and decided to keep it back until she noticed dry blood on the hammer.

" B-blood?" She shuddered. Her head started getting dizzy.

There was silence. Then a chuckle escaped Zen's head. mouth.

" Its true when they say, as times pass by, you become more careless and confident" he started snickering. " I was trying to keep a low profile.. I thought you would be an easy easy catch."

A shiver ran down her spine. She felt something off about him.

" who are you?" She demanded. " Do you kill human beings?" Her words were stuck in her throat

Zen let out a laugh. A loud and malicious laugh. " Thats a funny way to put it but yeah.

Technically my hobby is to kidnap hitchhikers like you. Mostly all of them homeless" he mocked with his fingers " and use them for my pleasure and dispose them after!"

Lara's stomach twisted with disgust. The way he said it so casually. He was a sick monster.

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Her mind was a mess. Her body felt useless.

"Did you spike the water?" Lara asked now figuring his actions slowly.

"Oh yeah! You're going to die tonight. I'm sure the police would thank me" He sneered.

Lara couldn't believe the man she's seeing right now. He looked so kind and generous before.

A gentleman. Now he was unrecognisable.

Lara couldn't move her body now. She felt weak. Yet she never lost her hope. She had to get back home and bring a closure to everything.

"For people like you, misfortune comes after misfortune. A never ending loop of agony" Zen continued. "But some are so lucky they get off anything they do. Like me!"

Lara tried to move. Her life flashed before her eyes. She was not ready to die like this.

"Okay now time to end this game" Zen was about to hit the brake when Lara, with all her remaining strength lept at him and swiftly turned the car into a nearby cliff.

"It's true, that people like you end up <sup>losing</sup> your own game because of your confidence and carelessness" Lara huffed, as the car flew out of the cliff.

Zen's eye widened at the sudden end turn of event. The car came crashing down.

Twisting and turning. Loud screams could be heard. And then silence.

The car lay upside down. Lara was still alive. She painfully dragged her body away from the car.

She looked back. The car was crushed, yet she survived. Zen's body was covered in blood and was crushed against the car's weight.

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Her breath hitched. Tears started flowing down her cheeks. She was crying, loudly and her head up in the sky.

She knew God would never let her right lose. The wicked one will always get the punishment they deserve one day.

She felt proud of herself for not losing hope during all these time.

She knew nothing is more unfortunate no misfortune is more punishing than the simple act of waiting. She has done that. And now God send her her answers, reward

for the world might not know it but she has saved many more living life that were to be lost in the hands of the vicious human crushed under the car.

She wasn't able to avenge her mother and sister yet, but now she has hope. It

She will be a hero that people never knew of.

Her eyes slowly started closing. The sedatives were taking its toll on her body. But she knew she'll wake up soon. Living in the Asylum, her body has grown immune to them.

She'll wake up and go back home and ~~come~~ come back stronger than before, ready to fight all the storms thrown in her way.

And she will carry with her the one thing she lives for.

Her old, rusty home and the hopes inside it.