

# Alibi

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~ Opening ~

The flickering candle lights, along with the soft ambiance of the dim lamps and light soothing western music at the multi-cuisine restaurant. Brojesh at the table along with his wife Trishna and little son Adrishya. Just when Brojesh was about to tear the crab's belly with his hand, more accustomed to eating with bare hands even though considered uncouth; the hard shell burst open and sprayed some spicy curry into his eyes. Brojesh jumped and gave a cry of pain from the stinging masala of the '*continental crab delight*'. His wife stared at him as if ashamed at the imbecility of the whole thing and kept nibbling nonchalantly, also stuffing some bits into her son's mouth, now and then. Just then an enormous expulsion of gaseous waste was heard, which sent the decibel counter tipping over and the lights went out. Due to the pungent cloud of multi-cuisine flatus, Brojesh felt a strong urge to bring out the crab that he had just forced through his palate. Just then lights came on and someone announced that they were sorry for the inconvenience caused and that a rotund lady, a famous mistress of the high society had just collapsed; perhaps due to excessive gorging thought Brojesh – and she had ensured with her ballast that she would make some more people collapse.

Just about to take a mouthful of French custard, he realized his wife was panicking and speaking to someone explaining “he was here just a minute before the lights went off”. True to his name he used to often disappear, Brojesh's son was missing as Brojesh realized and panic set into his already confused mind, as this meant trouble. As if by some chain reaction at a nearby table a waiter slipped and the pretty young lady sitting along with her sweetheart was drenched in the fresh lemon juice that the waiter carried. Her makeup had all come off and it had caused half of her face to transform into some Picasso or closer home M F Hussain masterpiece. The layers of makeup had created a nice punch and from a pretty young lady she seemed to have turned into some mutant straight out of one of those computer games. The culprit was none other than Adrishya, who had not only wet his own pants but also caused the embarrassing downfall of the waiter. The young dandy who sat along with the 'pretty mutant', now took a napkin and started wiping her once beautiful makeup with it. She seemed to have got infuriated and stormed out with her 'friend' closely following her. Brojesh decided he had had enough, picked up his son, called for the waiter, paid the bill and left in a hurry along with his wife who hardly ate anything; wanting to be so slim as to morph with the broom stick that she was so fond of. As soon as she reached home, she picked up the broom and started cleaning the room of invisible blobs of dust and dirt, that threatened to choke her and her family to death. After a while the lights went out and the household fell asleep. Then began the fun.

~ Arrival ~

The first time he had come into the world he had killed thirteen people and had been sentenced to a million years of death. This time white smoke came out of the

chimney as he was born and he was baptized in the blood of a dozen pigs and he started drowning, in the holy blood; he jumped up and sat in the bed it was late in the night and perfect silence prevailed along with of course the hum of centralized air conditioning – it was the year 2025 and he still had such nasty nightmares. He got up from the luxurious bed and flicked the red tracking device and spotted his wife was in the toilet – he had fitted a tiny RFID tag in her custom made Pavroski necklace to spot her anywhere in vicinity as he had an enormous sprawling house, three floors with lots of rooms and just in case ... The days were bad, you had to be sure where your wife was. So it was only a dream, but something seemed wrong he was feeling an omen and he tried to be awake and alert, opening his eyes wider, which were still smarting from the crab nutrition it received earlier. Someone seemed to be walking down the stairs. His device showed his wife coming out of the toilet, but that was at the end of the corridor. Who could be walking down the stairs at this time of the night ? He got up and made up his mind to take a look. He peeped into the corridor, saw his wife cleaning the ceiling with one of brooms, from her collection – she resembled a witch he sometimes felt a beautiful witch! He then felt reassured and turned around and the door to the bed room was ajar and there stood a man dagger in hand and frothing at the mouth as if aftereffects of a dose of some drug. As he saw the man fear gripped Brojesh. He started thinking of all types of things. Who would look after his wife and his little son; when the man started staring at something behind him. The man seemed to have doubled in his vigour, as he kept staring at the object behind Brojesh. Brojesh swiveled around to see his wife with a small-sized broom. She had not yet noticed the stranger with the dagger. She was about to tell something to him, when she noticed the 'dagger man', a sweet smile came across her face. Brojesh was even more bewildered by this than he ever was. His eyes narrowed in suspicion. He dashed and jumped to the bed to get the stun-gun that he had placed in the cabinet beside the bed. Now he stood pointing the gun at the stranger, when the two burst out laughing. He was being made a buffoon of, thought Brojesh. “What is this Trishna ?”.

“Don't you know who this is ?” retorted back Trishna.

Brojesh took a closer look and peered at the stranger and it seemed to him that he had seen this person somewhere. He just could not recollect who he was. He shook his head, giving up, lowering the gun.

“My God you are really forgetful, my dear, this is Sudesh, Suda, my cousin, we met just last month at the marriage”.

Now it dawned on Brojesh, he was a rock musician and this was his trademark dagger – he was also a famous DJ, a member of the quartet, 'Daggers and Petals'. He shook hands and explained that his friend was an expert in cryptanalysis and had managed to break the combination to his fully automated door locking system as he had promised when they met at the marriage last month. Now it all came back to Brojesh, how he had boasted for hours and he had challenged Suda.

“My friend who helped in this is also there downstairs”, said Suda.

They went downstairs and there was the cryptanalyst, it was difficult to say whether the person was a male or female.

As if on cue, Suda confirmed in a matter of fact manner, “Cyber just had a change”, referring to the trans-gender surgery his once female counterpart had undergone. Cyber was indeed a sight to behold. With locks of orange and violet hair and tongue and navel pierced, he was staring into a cool device glowing fluorescent.

“How ya doin”, he inquired, as a burst of hoary masculine voice came forth from Cyber, that surprised both Brojesh and his wife. They all smiled and shook hands.

“Whoa, I did it again”, he yelled at the gaming machine, he had apparently won a game on his little gaming machine.

They all sat down and enjoyed drinks till early in the morning and fell asleep in the morning, it was a Sunday.

## ~ Attack ~

There are certain myths such as a civilized and uncivilized societies, they are things of yore. The greying sky was flashing with thunder and lightning and the evening seemed to be passing into the night and the house was silent, the five members were missing, they had all gone out for participating in a reality show. The aim was to display your grit, courage and determination along with all the raw adrenalin. The aim was to protect your loved ones from any harm once you are put into a building with all types of dangers and mishaps – some of them could be fatal. These were a new set of participants, the cameraman named Venkataraman had a passing thought, two couples it seemed. In the last five stagings apart from one casualty no one had been gravely injured. The participants were made famous, as the program was telecast on the 'Adventura' channel the conglomerate that also controlled the famous 'Friends' channel, every week and this business was very lucrative here in India, as the youngsters were enthusiastic about such stuff.

The shooting ended for the first round with everyone unhurt - in the second round the rock-star was eliminated and in the third and final round the slim lady Trishna was eliminated and as a result the game ended '2 down' in the game parlance. Obituaries were put up the next day and the courage and adventurous nature was applauded by all members of the crew and widely telecast in the news and the adventure channel along with the shocking news that two other participants had agreed to marry.

The neighbours all participated and especially all the friends and family except the family of Trishna, as they sent out a warning fax saying that they would take this up at the local court as this was a crime and they were responsible in plotting the murder of Trishna. This was taken and publicized as an outdated mode of appeal; the appeal itself was discarded by the local court, on grounds that the deceased had taken part voluntarily in the event and then the family of Trishna appealed at the High court level. The high court refused to pass a judgement in a hurry and postponed the proceedings upto a month later.

Trishna's family hired a private detective from the famous detective agency called 'Y-Files' that had cracked very confusing and complex cases earlier. The duo of Buddhi Ghotok, the sharp detective and Mayalalita the plump secretary whose non-stop chatter would irritate and confuse everybody. Of the day we now speak, she was talking over the phone for the past fifty six minutes. They were assigned the task of investigating the 'Trishna Case'. Buddhi got red in the face and touched her arm and told her they had an appointment. She finally left and switched on the mobile that made some weird sounds as it tried to contact the station. "My friend from Paris" winked Maya, as she started her drivel again. Maya wore a perfect anti-radio helmet at all times to protect herself from the radio frequencies emitted by her mobile that she used close to 20 hours per day. All through the car ride she continued to chatter over the phone. When they reached Brojesh's massive mansion, western music blared out. They were having a party.

"Oh I had promised I would have an interview with you today right, I am a bit busy, anyway join us". He made them sit at a separate room that looked like a library. It had all types of magazines and art and picture collections. "I'll just be back, please feel comfortable", Brojesh said and went out. The two were staring at the interiors, walls and ceilings frescoed and painted with images from renaissance, when a servant brought in

coffee and biscuits. As the host never appeared Maya went up and tried to open a shelf which contained some rare old books; when all of a sudden she was embarrassed by a high pitched frequency, which was stopped later by Brojesh himself. After he finished fixing the alarm, he sat down and in a smug manner asked directly staring at Buddhi.

“So you still think I murdered my wife ?”

“No, we have just been told to look into all aspects of the case” said Buddhi coolly.

“Why after so many months, the courts have already given their decision. You should blame the reality show owners”

“That is another issue – we wanted to know the exact circumstances under which Madam Trishna met her death”

“Well what is the point going into the gory details- I have already given a summary to the police and at the courts”

“Just for the records – at least for our convenience”

“Well it was simple I tried to protect her through many obstacles of the game but at a certain juncture she actually rammed into a door that had a lever connected at the the front and as a result an arrow from behind pierced through her and I still remember the gushing crimson blood, as it flowed in torrents, it was all terrible ; it was all a game and she was a brave girl”

“But the post mortem had indicated injuries in the neck and head”, said Buddhi, as if he had caught Brojesh unawares.

“That was when she fell on a sharp axe that was placed at the wall so as to increase the effect – these reality shows are very accurate there is no chance of a mistake one mistake and you are eliminated”

“Eliminated, eliminated ” repeated Maya.

“So this was all an accident you think, did you not blame or see it as a fault from the promoters of the game”

“We had read the terms and conditions of the game very well – and it was clearly written that fatalities were a pure coincidence and the company would not be liable”

What he forgot to mention was that he was fed up of his wife manners and behaviour and had used this show as a premise to finish off the rest.

“Thanks Mr Brojesh”

~ Endgame ~

When the issue was conveyed as null and void as the alibis all stood for each other and Brojesh was exonerated from any charges of crime, he and Cyber had a great week at Paris and came back after a long honeymoon. Did I forget to mention Cyber had recently had a gender change again. The world was turning upside down and this was a fashionable trend. Soon there were arguments about Brojesh's earlier child, the maid was not taking proper care and was thrown out of the job; and Cyber refused to take care of the child. Later the days became sour and the two started quarreling, some times there were physical assaults, the whole thing fell apart. On another day Cyber hit Brojesh with a metal flower vase. Then one day it happened – Brojesh was sick and tired of everyday fights and in a fit of rage, he shot Cyber and himself and there they both lay, in a pool of blood. The little baby crawled in after a while and started playing in the blood of the two and started crying once it felt cold and ignored. The little Adrishya had everything; the lavish mansion, six odd luxury cars, all the finery, gadgets galore, security devices and cash; only there was no one to cajole him, no one to play with him, no one to look after him ...