

Intermission by Tejvir S. Mann

“What the hell is this?” the father said, looking at what seems to be a pancake shaped alien meteorite on his plate. He was flumped in the kitchen after a long day of work, with his stomach grumpling. “It’s pizza. I made it from scratch this morning. The doe crust is infused with turmeric powder,” said the mother, throwing a flour-covered towel over her shoulder. “I can’t eat this!” the husband growled, “where is the naan and dal like every other day?”

“Eat it. It tastes great, right son!” She looks at her son sitting on the couch with the pizza, without a single bit taken, nodding with approval.

”You pay that bill, or have you been too busy making pizza all day?” asked the father.

“Go to hell.”

“AND THIS IS WHY I AM NOT GOING TO THAT DINNER RECEPTION!”

”FINE DON’T, I DON’T WANT TO BRING A POOR MONEY STEALING PIG ANYWAY, GO BACK TO PUNJAB! KUTHI SARRIA!”

”GO AWAY! THIS IS MY HOUSE! THERI PAN! BANDERI!”

The son sits on the couch, and enjoys the only show he ever manages to get front row seats too. He can’t move. Only his tears seemed to run. Like the last hundred times, his foot begins to quake, and the plate of triangular inedible mass begins to bob up and down.

As if in a trance, the sons teary eyes lock on to his parents, too blind with rage to notice. The huge lump of guilt he'd been hiding under the rug quickly joins him on the couch. His own thoughts of the past paralyze him. He sees his dad grab his mom by the hair, his mom almost stabbing his dad, and only hears the screaming of his parents while they think he’s asleep. A victim of his own imagination, he has become, all because

 mom
forgot
self-rising.
 flour.

the

He continued to watch.

*I am not a fool.
The actors act, but keep breaking the script.
The director is furious, but pardons.
As, actors aren't perfect.
Take one million.
"You're fired"
"bye"*

He stood up, walked upstairs, and, for the first time, didn't wait for intermission.

In the truest sense, what is an epiphany? Yes, it is whatever happened to the son, but what happened? Many have defined an epiphany as an instant where pain or confusion is washed away, leaving a person, like the son, in utter clarity. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as, "A moment of sudden and great revelation or realization."

If it helps, the word epiphany originates from the 14th century, starting out as the name of a church festival in remembrance of the arrival of the three kings, paying homage to the birth of Jesus Christ. As it is taught, three wise men, or magi, are travelling from the East to meet Jesus on the day of his birth. Referred to in "Epiphany in a Dark Time," a sermon by Professor Francis X. Clooney, of Harvard Universities School of Divinity, the wise men followed the biblical Star of Bethlehem, as it was their only source of direction in the vast desert is a rising star. And in following this star, they were able to finally be shrouded in the light of Jesus Christ.

"Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the Light of life." (John 8:12). The word epiphany originates from the idea of seeing light in the darkness, and can be used similarly as the word 'enlightened.' In Herman Hesse's novel, *Siddhartha*, like the wise men, Siddhartha goes on a journey of his own through the lands of India. He starts out as a scholar, then a beggar of the Samanas, a businessman, and ends up as a ferryman. He is shrouded in the light, through realization. "Dreams and restless thoughts came flowing to him from the river, from the twinkling stars at night, from the sun's melting rays. Dreams and a restlessness of the soul came to him."

Siddhartha says, "Most people...are like a falling leaf that drifts and turns in the air, flutters, and falls to the ground. But a few others are like stars which travel one defined path: no wind reaches

them, they have within themselves their guide and path.” Hesse is referring to have very few of us choose to go on our journey. He is referring to how, just like the wise men, we all have a journey begin and mountaintop to reach. We all have a guide and path to reach the light, to reach that epiphany. But not everyone follows that path, or star, so they will never reach the light, and become enlightened.

Hesse is referencing Santiago and the shop clerk in Paulo Coelho’s, *The Alchemist*, where the shop clerk decides to stay and work on this shop, giving up his dream, but Santiago decides to continue his journey to the Pyramids of Giza, to later realize that the journey matters more than the destination.

Just like the wise men. Just like Siddhartha. Just like Santiago. The son saw the light. The son understood that in order to move off the couch, he had to stop being a fool. To stop forgiving who he loved the most. To be free, and take a breath of fresh air. His journey had finally ended.

Wrong.

It had only begun.

“Oh god, please let me go. PLEASE. I’ll do anything. Just, sir, please let me go.”

“I’m sorry”

“God dammit, just let ME GO! Please, no, kggskkg!”

“ ... ”

Samuel Little did not start out as a bloodthirsty serial murderer. However, he has ended up as one. Timothy Williams of the New York Times in November of 2018 reports that Mr. Little had been escorted from a Texas jail center to an interview room everyday for weeks during his life sentences. He had admitted to killing over ninety different women. Without remorse, he would run through his daily routine. How he “picked up vulnerable women from bars, nightclubs and along streets and strangled them to death in the back seat of his car.” With remarkable clarity, we would describe each victim’s face. “The way he gets sexual gratification is during the strangulation,” the officer said.

What would drive someone to do this? Like many others, Mr. Little responded, “God made me this way, so why should I ask for forgiveness?”

In the truest sense, what is an epiphany? Yes, it is a moment of sudden and great revelation or realization. It eliminates all confusion leaving him or her in an utter state of calm. Yet, this revelation does not necessarily lead people to enlightenment, and can lead them in the opposite direction, towards evil. Why does Williams want to murder? Why did that girl on the news slit her wrists? It is because an epiphany is enticing, and can be an illusion disguised as truth, taking advantage of our desires, in order to look more and more like the answer.

A breath of fresh air, isn’t really a breath of fresh air. You may only perceive it to be.

Yes, most of us are not psychotic serial killers, hopefully. But to some degree, we are all insane. We all have desires, so we are all in some level of illusion. Thus, an epiphany may not be the truth, but simply a lie in disguise.

The three wise men were wise, yet they all weren’t free of what the Sikh coin as *maya*, or desire. Some contend that their journey could just have easily been influenced through desire, leading them away from the light, Jesus Christ. For all we know, the wise men could have been lead off a cliff never to be seen again.

Desire is like a tornado that spins you around causing confusion, disorganization, and danger. We have to watch out, otherwise, well, we might get hit by a cow. Overall, It stops us from

seeing clearly. When we see a way out of this tornado, an open door per say, that leads to a room, you walk in because you desire to stop spinning, and to eliminate confusion. However, because of your desire, you ignore that the room is on fire.

To believe that this new room you've jumped into is the truth, is laughable.

A man is racing up a mountain, and gets stuck, he needs another foothold. There are many options that he can pick from. If we treat epiphanies like every single one is a message from God himself, regardless of paying attention to our vices, he may choose the unstable foothold, and it will lead to our demise.

Sally the Tree is struggling to grow, and hasn't had any water for months. Sally's roots dig deep and finds some water. She begins to drink, and doesn't notice that the water is toxic. If only Sally the Tree hadn't quickly drank that the first water she found. If only she would have dug a little deeper, she would have found pure water. Unlike Sally, we should take every epiphany with a grain of salt, because as long as we are controlled by desire, the truth will be hidden.

An epiphany is like a salesman. Playing your emotions like a fiddle, it entices you. It sees every single vice, and exploits it. How? Because the salesman is really us, we are selling to ourselves. We end up selling ourselves a bomb that looks like a delicious cake.

The son felt the bomb. Many years later, the son is laying in his bed. He is crying so hard that he begins to cough. He doesn't know why this is happening to him. He is completely oblivious.

He gets up the next morning, and gets ready for school. Passing his dad down the stairs, they don't even notice each other. He gets downstairs, and begins to watch TV. His mom asks what he wants for breakfast, like she does every day, because she still loves him. Without looking away from the TV, he walks to the kitchen, makes his own breakfast, eats it without saying a word, and goes to school. He comes back, goes to his room, and doesn't doesn't talk to a single person.

He hadn't looked his dad in the eye in two years. His mom asks him if everything is ok? Half the time he doesn't respond. When he does, it's a low grunt.

“..meh.”

Now when he looks at his parents, he is no longer paralysed by the fear of their fighting. He is now enjoying his own show, where by some luck, he is given front row tickets to. The son lays in his bed and runs through all the time where his mom and dad taught him how to bike. He used

to say, "Good night dad, I love you." He used to say, "Bye mom. I'm going to go play outside." But now, all he says is..

‘..meh.’

In the truest sense, what is an epiphany? Yes, it is a moment of sudden and great revelation or realization. It eliminates all confusion leaving us in an utter state of calm. Yes, they aren't the truth, and may even lead you astray. They play on our vices, and biases.

Most importantly, they are gifts we receive from God that help aid us on our journey through life.

In the book *Siddhartha*, Hesse creates a scene where Siddhartha meets the Buddha, Gotama himself. Siddhartha asked him how he become so enlightened. The Buddha looked at him, smiled, and said that it cannot be described in words. Famous Martial Artist Bruce Lee once said, "Understanding is deeper than information. There are many people that know you but there's a few who understand you."

We are all students. It is impossible to understand the test, if you are taught nothing.

In order to understand the truth, to see what is at the mountaintop, we need to go there ourselves. The journey, what life is all about.

In his 2018 Interview, famous Artist Kanye West said it best, "...you look at this mountaintop and at the top of the mountain is all these tools for life. So, you proceed ... You say, "I need these tools in order to win at life." So you proceed to climb up the mountain, but you - you need tools in order to get up the mountain to climb up... your collecting tools and stuff. By the time you get to the top of the mountain, you've got more tools than was at the top."

Siddhartha did not have only one singular epiphany. He had many, throughout the experiences of his life. He continued to learn and unlearn. He was a scholar, a beggar, a businessman, and finally a ferryman. Through the many gifts of pleasure and pain within his life, he gained all the tools he needed. No matter how painful, how hard the gift, he thanked god because they are what are responsible from bringing him there.

We are all students. We should be happy that the teacher decides to teach us.

When climbing the mountain, yes, the man chose the wrong foothold. But it did not lead to his demise. Yes, he was set back. However, the man learned a valuable lesson through this gift of pain he was given by God. And through his epiphany, he gained a valuable tool.

The son sits on the couch and begins to look around. He sees his mom and dad. They are both sitting together watching a show their favorite film. While he stares at them, his mind wanders. It goes into a place where he didn't want to go. He sees is paralyzed by the past. He can't stop watching his favorite film, called love. The son began to feel hopeless. He began to have an urge to quickly dash up the stairs. But for some reason, he stayed still. He kept staring at them.

"Hi"

"Howdy"

I am a fool.

I am no director.

I messed up the script.

But one less than yesterday.

I forgive me.

The son asked his dad, "Hey dad, how was your day today?" The dad said, "It was fine, how about you?"

The film went to intermission, and I stayed.

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