

1 OCTOBER – STORY TO READ

Arjun : The Boy Who Saw with One Eye, but Dreamed with a Thousand

Bulandshahr's narrow lanes were always buzzing with noise—vendors calling out, children running barefoot, temple bells ringing—but in Arjun's home, silence ruled. Silence that was not peace, but the silence of swallowed tears, the silence of shame.

Arjun had been born with vision in only one eye. From the very beginning, his existence invited whispers. Neighbors bent over their balconies, murmuring, "*Kya hoga iska? Aadha andha paida hua hai. Yeh toh bojh banega.*" His parents pretended not to hear, but each word was a dagger. They could not silence the world; they could only pray their son would not hear. But children sense what adults try to hide.

Arjun did hear. And he remembered.

The Early Wounds

In school, he was teased endlessly. Other boys called him "*kana*" and imitated the way he tilted his head while reading. On his walk home, pebbles were sometimes thrown at him by older boys who shouted, "*Aadha doctor banega kya?*" His mother wiped his tears but could not erase the feeling of being different.

At his cousin's house, the humiliation deepened. Meals were served unequally. His plate always had fewer rotis. Once, when he reached for an extra helping of sabzi, his aunt snapped, "*Ek roti zyada kha lega toh ghar ka bojh ban jayega.*" The cousins laughed, their bellies full, while Arjun shrank in silence.

On festivals, the difference was sharper. His cousins flaunted new clothes; he wore hand-me-downs. His father, earning little from his shop, could not afford more. But it was not

poverty alone—it was the way relatives sneered, “*Tumhare ghar mein toh kabhi barakat hi nahi aayegi.*”

Arjun clenched his fists. He told himself: one day, he would build a house so tall that no one could look down on them again. A two-storey house in Bulandshahr—that became his private vow.

The Forced Dreams

When Arjun finished school, his maternal uncle came storming in one afternoon with forms in hand.

“NEET ka form bharo. Doctor banoge. Humne sab tayar kar diya hai.”

Arjun stared. His heart rebelled. *Doctor?* He wanted to write, to lose himself in Hindi Sahitya, to carve beauty out of pain.

He whispered, “Mujhe doctor nahi banna.”

The uncle's face darkened. His aunt spat, "Apahij hone ke bawajood zidd kar raha hai. Shukar kar quota hai. Wahi se rasta banega."

But Arjun stood firm. His mother tried to intervene, "Bacche ko apna rasta chunne do." She was silenced with a glare.

When Arjun tore the NEET forms quietly that night, it was not just paper he destroyed—it was his relatives' dreams of controlling his life. The next day, insults rained like arrows: "*Nakara... aalsi... bevakoof.*"

But deep inside, his resolve hardened.

The IBPS Pressure

A few years later, another chorus rose. Friends, relatives, even neighbors said the same thing: "*IBPS PO likh lo. Sarkari naukri mil jayegi. Quota ka fayda uthao. Zindagi ban jaayegi.*"

One afternoon, his cousin mocked him loudly in front of others: “Tere se poet banega? Ja quota pe bank mein naukri kar. Shayari se ghar nahi banta.”

Arjun’s father sat quietly, ashamed. He did not want to force his son, but he feared for his future. His mother wept silently at night, torn between her child’s passion and society’s expectations.

But Arjun refused. “Main quota pe zindagi nahi jeeyunga. Main apni kahani likhunga.”

The family’s shame grew, but so did his conviction.

The Cruel Rejection

Then came the deepest wound. Arjun had secretly loved a girl from his college. She admired his poetry at first, smiled at his verses, and for months, he dreamed that perhaps his heart could heal in her presence.

Finally, one evening during a college gathering, he confessed his feelings. He stood with trembling hands, heart pounding, as everyone waited for her reply.

She laughed—a cruel, ringing laugh. And then, in front of dozens of students, she said:

“Main ek blind pati nahi chahti. Mujhe ek andha aadmi nahi chahiye.”

The words echoed like a slap across his soul. Friends tried to hush her, but the damage was done. Arjun felt the blood drain from his face. Laughter rippled through the crowd. Some looked away in pity, others smirked.

That night, Arjun sat alone on the terrace of his small rented room. He wanted to scream, but only tears came. *“Kya meri zindagi sirf ek aankh tak simat gayi hai? Kya main bas ek joke hoon?”* He thought of his parents, their years of shame, their bowed heads at weddings and gatherings. And he swore: if the world only

saw his defect, he would show them his depth.

He started writing mails to newspapers, magazines and influencers to showcase his talent

He waited.

A month later, the rejection emails began trickling in.

“Aapki bhavnaayein sacchi hain, par humein zyada mature lekhan chahiye.” — Hans Patrika

“Language is raw. Needs polishing.” — Kadambini

“We appreciate your honesty but we do not publish emotional disability-based writings.” — Nai Dishayein

But one reply stung like acid.

From **Editor Raghav Sethi** of *Sahitya Prakash Monthly*:

“Hum charity ka kaam nahi karte. Agar aapko sahitya mein naam banana hai toh sympathy pe nahi, kaabil hone pe banega.”

He read that line again and again. **“Hum charity ka kaam nahi karte.”**

Was that what the world saw him as? *A pity project?*

He almost stopped writing.

The ONE YES

Two weeks later, an envelope arrived by post. From **Lok Abhivyakti Patrika (Aligarh)**.

Hands trembling, he opened it.

“Aapki kahani ‘Do Aankhon Se Aage’ is mahine ke ank mein chhapi jayegi. Kripya apna lekhak parichay bhejein.”

They had accepted his story.

He sat still for minutes. Then tears fell — not from pain this time, but relief.

That issue reached **Professor Meera Kaul**, a senior Hindi lecturer at **Aligarh Muslim University**, known for spotting fresh talent. She called him personally:

“Beta, tumhara lekhan sirf shabd nahi, pukaar hai. Kya tum mere sahitya seminar mein apni kahani sarvajanik roop se sunane aaoge?”

He stammered yes.

First Stage, First Silence

At the **“Yuva Sahityakaar Sammelan 2019”**, inside the AMU auditorium, people murmured as he stepped on stage. Some whispered, *“Arre, yeh wahi kana ladka hai?”*

But when Arjun began reading *“Do Aankhon Se Aage,”* about a boy who saw the world more clearly with one eye than others did with two —

the hall fell quiet.

Not out of politeness — but *respect*.

At the end, there was **pin-drop silence for three seconds**.

Then the applause rose like thunder.

From that day, he wasn't just a rejected writer.

He was **Arjun Sharma — Bulandshahr ka Ek Aankh Wala Lekhak**.

'The House of Dignity'

Years later, the vow of his childhood took shape. A two-storey house rose in Bulandshahr, brick by brick. Neighbors who once mocked now gawked in silence.

Relatives who once denied him food now extended fake smiles.

On the day of *Grih Pravesh*, Arjun stood on the balcony with his parents. Tears glistened in his mother's eyes as she whispered, "*Beta, ab koi humein neecha nahi dikhayega.*"

Arjun looked at the sky, one eye blurred, the other sharp, and thought of every insult— every half roti, every NEET form forced upon him, every taunt of “*kana*”, every laugh at his proposal.

And he smiled. *“Yeh makaan un sab gaaliyon ka jawab hai. Yeh mere shabdon ka saboot hai.”*

The Poet of Bulandshahr

Today, Arjun’s name echoes across Hindi Sahitya. His books sit in libraries, his poems recited on stages. Critics say he is a writer who turned pain into power, blindness into brilliance.

But for Arjun, success is not in awards. Success is in his parents walking proudly through Bulandshahr, heads held high. Success is in that two-storey house where no one eats half a roti.

He knows the world may always remember him as the boy with one eye. But he has written himself into history as the man with a thousand visions.

Closing Image

On a quiet evening, Arjun stands again on his balcony. The lanes below buzz with life. The same neighbors who once whispered now wave respectfully. He runs his hand over the railing, remembering.

The insults had blinded one eye. But his pen had opened another—the eye of the soul. And through that, he saw not shame, but victory.

His story is not about disability. It is about defiance.
