



Soma | Samudra

## Soma

*(noun: the body as distinct from the soul, mind or psyche)*

I observed him carefully as he walked to the door. I knew that time was running out but suppressed the urge to check my watch. I took a deep breath and started counting in reverse under my breath. “Ten, nine, eight, seven..” and it ALWAYS ends the same way!

“Hmm.... Alright, Can you help me with more details?” asked my shrink, slouched on her comfortable ‘antique’ recliner, never looking up to see me, laying square on my back on the mattress that was surprisingly very soothing.

Well, it’s a dream Doc, and I don’t exactly recall anything more specific. We have spoken about this, haven’t we?

“Yes, we have indeed Mr. Niketan Rao and we didn’t exactly have a complete session yesterday, if I am right!” my shrink Dr. Alice O’Hanlon politely retorted. She was suggested to me by my boss at work, Mr. Kevin Decker and apparently she had about half a dozen of my colleagues as her client, all referred by Kevin of course. Sadly, I had later found out that she was in no way related to Virginia O’Hanlon.

It had been only my second year at our Texas ODC and perhaps being away from home and family was affecting the way I performed at work.

I had come highly recommended by my manager back in Bangalore, Mr. Padmanabhan Nair and I had finally completely understood the meaning of ‘Windfall’ when ‘they’ slowly broke down the details of the compensation and the perks I would be getting if I accepted the big move to the Land of dreams and opportunity, the Mecca for all techies like me.

It was all going fantastic! The usual long weekend trips to Universal Studios, Hollywood – Sunset Boulevard (yay! I even held my hand next to Arnie’s Star! And of course how could I forget Sin City!) with my ‘desi’ buddies kept me fairly occupied and I had felt so glad that I took the decision to move. Of course, I was also particularly proud that I could sponsor Amma and Appa’s first overseas trip and they were so very happy to see their son having ‘made it’. The only thing Amma complained was that I had to share my apartment with this ‘North Indian’ which she said as if she was subjected to a dose of a pungent concoction of hot bell peppers and garlic paste. She was referring to my roommate Arjun Jaisingh who was from Udaipur and it wasn’t even that much to the north.

Trouble in paradise started just about 3 months back when I had to move out of the apartment when Arjun got married and had to get his bride. I got a fairly good deal on this cosy yet modern studio apartment that I had looked up on the local classifieds. The studio was about 5 blocks away from Arjun’s apartment but was a little closer to work. The studio didn’t have a view to brag about but it had running water and a decent middle class mixed neighbourhood. The landlady granted me parking space for my Prius, all inclusive in the modest rent, maybe she liked my sweater or the fact that my name rhymed with Nicotine! I should have guessed it was the latter, when I had noticed the patch on her arm.

I had never been alone my whole life. Throughout my school and college and right until I moved out for America, I always had my parents for company and there was Arjun here until he decided to ditch me for his wife!

Guess I was confused and ignorant and didn't quite understand what I could do with so much time on hand. I was still too young to be married and I didn't have the courage or the patience to go girlfriend hunting in redneck land.

Setting up the studio kept me occupied a couple of weeks and I was finally able to conjure up a decent bachelor's pad, cable TV and all.

The neighbourhood gets eerily silent by the late evenings and I still haven't been able to get used to it. All I could hear through the evening and the night was the sound of a few cars driving by and the occasional woof of the dogs in the neighbourhood. My old apartment with Arjun was in a semi commercial district and was much more lively and noisy late through the nights.

"Man, how I missed my old apartment!" there wasn't a day I didn't lament over the loss.

"You say it's a recurring dream, Mr. Rao. Would it be possible for you to recall if you see the same exact details, I mean, the same door, the same watch in your dream or are they different each time?" My train of thought was derailed by Alice's poser that really put me into a quandary.

"Well I suppose so, I mean, they might have been the same every time". I could hear Alice scribble down something on her pad. Perhaps she was recording a medical term for 'on the verge of a mental breakdown / possibly trying to seek attention'.

I wasn't exactly lying to her.

Since our work place was full of *desis* I never felt the need to socialize with our fair skinned brothers and 'their' sisters. On the flipside, most of my Indian friends were married and older and were here to save and send back the money to their folks. My part time 'job' was being Arjun's wingman and help him 'win' a couple of *desi* girlfriends including the one he ended up marrying.

"Talking about the dream; more a walkthrough - like a first person shooter like in say – Half Life. I am pretty confident I am very much part of the dream, like an important character with a role to play. But each time I wake up startled after the countdown"

"How have you been spending your free time lately Mr. Rao, have you been watching TV a lot? Movies perhaps? Or reading up on a lot of books?"

"I watch a lot of TV, dozens of movies but I have not been able to finish reading any book that I started since moving in to the Studio."

"Mr. Rao; about the procedure that we had spoken about yesterday; Are you willing to take it further? You will be required to sign a few papers. I hope you have made your decision"

"Oh I shall be getting the results for the samples we had taken last week. Expect a call from me Mr. Rao" said Dr. O Hanlon as I walked towards the exit.

## Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

