

## **THE YELLOW HOUSE**

“Whattt? Twenty five thousand rupees per month?” Abhi said, raising his eyebrows.

“Sir, this is Mumbai! You won’t get any good place to live in at a lesser price than this,” said the broker.

“But I can’t afford so much. The rent is just too high! And I am new to this place. Can’t I get any other place to stay, at a lesser price?” Abhi asked.

The man thought for a while. “I know a place. But I am afraid that you won’t like it,” he said and shrugged.

“How much?”

“Rs.7000.”

“That’s great! Can you take me there?”

“Yes, of course. But you won’t be getting many facilities over there. And the condition of the room is also not that good,” he added.

“Okay, let’s see.”

After travelling for about fifteen minutes, they entered a by lane and the broker instructed the driver to stop at the end of the road. The driver followed the instruction and the car stopped near a three storied building.

“Sir, you wait here, I will just go and get the keys,” the man said and entered the building. A few minutes later, a man came out of the house along with the broker.

“Is he the one?” he asked.

“Yes,” replied the broker.

“What is your name?” asked the man.

“Abhi Roy,” he replied with a smile.

“Hmmm... Here, take the keys,” the man said and handed the keys to the broker.

“Come, let’s go,” he said and both of them entered the next by lane.

“So, this is the only room you will get in your budget,” said the broker, as they entered a house that was painted yellow.

“Hmmm...” Abhi entered the house and looked around. The place was small and dark with only three windows. There was a drawing hall, one bedroom, kitchen and bathroom. It was the month of July and the weather was hot and humid outside. But strangely, it felt very cool inside that house.

“So, what have you decided?” asked the broker.

“The place is small but it's fine. I’ll adjust. Moreover, it’s near to my workplace,” Abhi said.

“So, you want to stay here?”

“Yes, of course. By the way, how much do I need to pay for the security money deposit?”

“You don’t have to pay any security money.”

“What? Seriously?”

“Why shall I lie? Here, take these,” he said and handed over the keys to Abhi.

Abhi was happy being able to find a house at such a cheap rate. He shifted to his new house that day itself and settled down.

It was almost 11.30 p.m. when he finished his dinner. He left the cutleries in the kitchen sink as he was too tired to do the dishes. He switched off the light of the kitchen and went to the bedroom. He checked the time. It was 11.50 p.m. He switched off the lights and went to sleep.

After a few hours, Abhi woke up with a jolt.

*Bad dream...* he thought. He felt thirsty and so he walked up to the kitchen.

Strangely, he saw that the door was open and the light was turned on.

*How come the light is on? I switched it off before going to bed... And I even closed the door... Abhi thought...*

He went to the kitchen and drank a glass of water. He looked around the kitchen for a few seconds and then switched off the light and shut the door behind him.

The next morning, as he was leaving for his office, he saw that a guy who was standing outside the gate, was staring at him. He smiled at him but the guy didn't respond. He just kept staring at Abhi. As Abhi closed the gate behind him, he saw that the other people who were present there, were also staring at him. Even a few passersby looked at him. Then he realized that everyone was staring at him, strangely. Abhi didn't understand what the matter was. He boarded a taxi and left for his office.

That night, something strange happened. As Abhi was asleep, he heard some whispers. He felt as if someone was whispering in his ears. He started twisting and turning in his sleep. The whispers eventually turned into loud voices but he was unable to understand the words. He woke up with a jerk and saw that he was sweating. He checked the time and it was 2.30 a.m. He got off the bed and walked towards the kitchen to fetch water for him. He was shocked to see that the kitchen light was on and the door was left open. Abhi slowly entered the kitchen and looked here and there. He looked outside the window but saw nothing. He quickly drank a glass of water, turned the lights off and walked back to his room. As he entered his room, he could smell something unpleasant. It smelt of something rotten. The smell was so unpleasant that it became intolerable for him. He started searching for the source of the terrible smell all around the room but couldn't find anything. He opened the windows of his room and sprayed some room freshener to get rid of the smell. He turned off the light of the room and lied down on his bed. He kept twisting and turning for some time and then fell asleep.

The next morning, again, he noticed that people were staring at him. He felt awkward as he could not understand the reason behind those stares. Gradually, the incidents started repeating every day. One evening, he bought home an idol of lord *Ganesh* and placed it on the table in his room. He burned some incense sticks and lighted a candle and placed it in front of the idol. Like the other nights, that night

too, he woke up around 2.30 a.m. He felt thirsty and drank water from the bottle that was kept on the table beside his bed. As he took some sips of water from the bottle, he suddenly noticed light rays coming from the other room. He turned on the light and stepped out of the room. He was shocked to see that the door of the kitchen was open and the light was on. Abhi freaked out as he could not understand what was going on. He went back to his room and lied down on the bed. He didn't turn off the light of his room that night. He kept staring at the ceiling fan, thinking of the events that was happening from the last few days. After sometime, he fell asleep.

The next evening, Abhi came home late. What he saw next, just horrified him. He saw that the idol of lord *Ganesh* was not on the table. In fact, it wasn't anywhere. He searched the entire house, but couldn't find it anywhere. It just vanished. He stood there, staring at the table and started sweating profusely. He couldn't believe his eyes. He sat down on his bed, wiping the sweat from his face. He became restless and started pacing from one corner of the room to another. After sometime, he lied down, staring at the ceiling fan. He closed his eyes and tried to sleep, but couldn't. He was thirsty but was unable to get off the bed. He felt dizzy.

Suddenly, the power went off. Abhi started sweating again. He opened his eyes and looked at the ceiling fan, again. To his horror, he saw that the fan was still moving. And then, all of a sudden, there were some loud bangs on the window of his room. Abhi woke up with a jolt and turned towards the window. He started shivering. He could see someone continuously banging on the window. He looked at the ceiling fan again. It was still moving and making a strange noise. It was then when he saw rays of light falling on the opposite wall. And after a few seconds, he saw a shadow. It seemed as if the shadow was of a lady. But the banging didn't stop. Someone was still banging on the window. His heart beat increased but somehow he managed to walk up to the window. As soon as he opened it, he blacked out.

The next morning, Abhi opened his eyes and found himself lying on the floor. He was unable to recall anything about last night. He felt dizzy as he was burning up with fever. He got hold of his phone and called a friend of his. A few moments later, he blacked out again.

Abhi could feel that someone was shaking him. He slowly opened his eyes and saw a blurry image of someone. He blinked his eyes a few times and then saw that it was none other than his friend.

“Hey, are you okay?”

“No, I am not. I am not feeling well...”

“Get up. We have to go to the hospital.”

As Abhi stepped out of the gate with his friend, he saw a boy standing outside and staring at him. It was the same guy whom he saw staring at him on the very first day. Abhi looked at him with an indifferent expression.

“Did you see someone inside?” asked the guy.

“What do you mean?” said Abhi, puzzled.

“You know very well what I mean,” he said.

Abhi looked at the guy for some time and then nodded.

“Why are you staying in that house?” asked the guy.

“Why? What is the matter?”

“Don’t you know?”

“Had I known, I wouldn’t have asked you.”

The boy looked at Abhi and his friend for a few seconds.

“A few years back, a married couple used to stay in that house. The husband was a drunker and often, he used to come home drunk and tortured his wife brutally. Unable to bear the torture, his pregnant wife committed suicide in that house by hanging herself. And strangely, two days later, the husband committed suicide by consuming poison. Till date, whoever stayed in that house, didn’t survive.