

Doctors Chamber

Both the Doctor and Rohan are hunched over the chess set. Rohan makes his move. The Doctor takes his time over his move. Meanwhile he asks 'You still write to her?'

Rohan says 'Every day.'

'Ever get a reply.'

'No.'

'Then why write?'

Rohan is about to speak when the doctor says it for him 'You need to.'

Rohan nods

The Doctor says 'You need to write to her. You need to cling to her. You need to believe that she understands, that she's here with you every moment. You're the one who's needy. This time around you're the one who's locked within walls and made a world all of your own.'

'What's wrong with that?' asks Rohan

The Doctor tells him 'Look around you. Look at the other people who are in here. They've all made their own worlds haven't they? Beautiful worlds. Happy worlds. Where love is forever. And that is where they live. It's called madness.'

Rohan stares blankly at the chess board. The logic has gone home.

'When your crutch becomes a need you cannot let go of... when your fantasy becomes so real, you can no longer tell it from reality...you're in trouble.'

The doctor makes a move on the board and says 'Checkmate Rohan.'

Rohan continues to look down on the board.

The doctor says 'You fold paper birds. And you don't understand the message they carry for you.'

Rohan looks up at him

The Doctor says 'Those that I love I would set free - even from me.'

Rohan says nothing, but there is sadness on his face. 'Let her go?'

The Doctor says 'Let her go. Look at the men around you. And let go.'

Recreation Hall

Inmates are sitting in large circles on the ground. One inmate is in charge of each group. Rohan is in charge of his group. He has given each of them a bit of paper and is trying to teach them how to fold a paper bird. 'It's very simple. Just watch me. You fold this over here...'

But each is doing exactly as he pleases with the paper. Someone is tearing it. Someone had put it in the mouth and is chewing on it. Another had torn out eye holes and is wearing it like a mask. Rohan is trying to get them to do it right 'Come on - just a fold here. That's all. Come on you can do it!' Abu is concentrating fiercely.

Suddenly it becomes very important that they do this. Rohan goes from inmate to inmate explaining, demonstrating, virtually begging. He stops at Abu. Abu listens closely to him, but when he tries to fold, he makes a mess of the paper. He crumples it in frustration and throws it away.

Rohan says 'Alright. 'Okay let's try a paper plane. That's simple enough. Come on. Three folds. That's all it is. Come ON!' Rohan demonstrates and again tries. But he has lost his audience. Each is doing what he pleases. Rohan stops and sits back. A voice in his ear says 'Give up. They're crazy. You can't get them to do anything.' Rohan gives up and sits down, defeated. The guard squats next to him. His name is Indal. 'These are a bunch of hopeless cases. They're never going to leave this place.' Rohan looks at him appalled 'Some of them must be leaving this place. Getting okay.' Indal laughs 'Some of them do. Not this lot. And nobody ever is okay after they've been in here a while. You spend enough time in this place as a guard and you get to be an expert on madness. Bet I know more than the doctors they got here.' Indal grins as he offers Rohan a cigarette. Rohan declines. 'I'm an expert. I can catch the first whiff that tells you a man's brain is going rotten.' He eyes Rohan speculatively 'You've lasted a long time'.

Rohan says 'eleven months and twenty seven days'. Indal nods. 'Tere pe satta laga rahe hain.' All the guards are betting on how much longer before Rohan begins to lose it. Rohan asks 'You bet on people going crazy?' Indal shrugs and says 'Why not? Have to occupy yourself or you'll end up like these.'

Rohan asks why they think that he is going to lose it. Indal laughs and says that he's overdue. No one's ever lasted this long before. Indal leans closer as he says he has put hundred rupees down on Rohan staying sane till the end of his sentence. Rohan absorbs this in silence. Then he asks 'Why do you think I'll last that long?' Indal grins. 'Not seeing things are you?' Rohan shakes his head 'Not starting to have conversations with yourself are you?' Rohan says 'No'. Indal looks him up and down. He says 'I think you'll last.'

Indal tells him the guards are all cheats. The commonest way of cheating of course is to send a man too often to the shock rooms. But he's forbidden them to do that. No shocks. But they're going to try to push him and break him. If anyone hassles him, he is to come to Indal.

Rohan looks a long moment at Indal and then says 'No'. A slow grin spreads over Indal's face. He has come to like Rohan a lot. He says 'Tu khiskela hai. Pagal nahin - bus khiskela.' He taps his head and then points a warning finger at Rohan. He is to remember the bet and remain sane. Rohan nods.

Corridor

All the inmates are being herded back to their cells. Rohan goes to enter his cell. A guard slams it shut before he can. Only Rohan is left out in the passage. All the other inmates come to the bars and stare at him. They all know something is up. The guards have done this often enough. Rohan turns around. All the guards are lounging against the walls. Indal is missing. It is his night off duty.

One of the says 'Oi Majnu.' Another joins in. They taunt him, telling him he is in here because he is a madman. Some woman left him and he went mad. Crazy.

Rohan just stands there. He doesn't say anything or attempt to retaliate. A guard shoves him from behind. He staggers across the circle the guards have formed. All the other inmates watch silently through the bars.

The ragging escalates. Rohan is shoved around, and taunted. 'Hear you burnt her house down Majnu' 'Hey, ever get a reply to your letters?' They are waiting for him to retaliate. One of them says 'Go on Majnu. Why don't you say anything?'

Rohan ends up slammed against the bars of his cell. Abu's white frightened face stares at him through the bars. He pats Rohan's hands, very anxious and not sure what to do to help.

Rohan turns around to face his tormentors. One of them says 'Speak Majnu. Why don't you speak?'

Rohan says 'Will you understand?.'

A guard says 'Of course we'll understand. Even we've loved. The best. Three hundred for one hour.' All the others roar with laughter.

Rohan says 'A man can give his life to many things. To making money, fame, earning respect. But when he dies there is only one question worth asking - did he love?' Rohan turns to the guard beside him and says 'Have you? Really?' The guard begins to make a joke and Rohan cuts him short 'No. Really.' The guards is completely thrown out. Rohan turns to the others 'Have you loved? Have you touched a woman and thought - without her my life will be empty? Have you looked at another human being and felt yourself shaken with the strength of your feelings? Have you thought that you will bear anything for her - Bars. A cage. Madness surrounding you day in and day out. Taunts. Anything at all - just as long as she breathes and wakes and sleeps somewhere in the world?'

There is silence. Rohan looks at the guards. He says 'When you die and they ask 'did he love? Did he know love?' will you be able to answer 'Yes'.

There is silence.

We travel around the listening audience - the guards, and the inmates behind bars.

Rohan says softly 'Yes. Yes. Oh yes' he is smiling 'YES!' it is a joyous shout. It echoes around the corridor.

We travel down the row of cells. In one a madman is whispering 'yes'. In another a man is nodding his head and saying 'Yes. Yes Yes.' In another a madman triumphantly says 'yes!' The whispers echo around the corridor and die down.

Rohan finishes speaking. He walks back to his cell. No one stops him. He steps inside.

One by one the guards leave.