

THE ART OF BEING HUMAN — AGAIN

My mom once told me a story. I didn't try to understand — not because I didn't care, but because I was too busy growing up. She said, "Remember, one day you'll understand what it truly means to live — again."

Back then, it sounded like one of those deep, confusing lines moms drop before switching off the light. I nodded, pretending to get it — smiled, said goodnight, and went back to dreaming of being someone big. I didn't know she had just written the prologue of my life.

Years later, I'm here — coffee beside me, phone in hand, a to-do list longer than my dreams. I wake up to alarms instead of sunlight. My mornings begin with unread emails; my nights end with unfinished reels. There's always something pending — a message, a dream, a version of myself I haven't caught up to. Life feels like a race I never signed up for, and yet I'm running — afraid to stop, afraid to fall behind.

Every day, I scroll through perfect smiles, perfect homes, perfect lives — and then stare at my reflection. I feel like a museum of lives I don't belong to. It's not jealousy; it's distance — the space between who I am and who I thought I'd be by now. And by night, I don't rest. I recharge — just enough to survive another day.

I reply with the right words, emojis, and tone — yet when I put the phone down, there's that hollow echo in the room. It's strange how loud silence becomes once you stop pretending.

Now, everyone is running — not to live, but to prove. We chase more money, more likes, more validation — as if the louder the noise, the greater the worth. Success has become our self-worth, and kindness — a moment worth posting.

It's strange, isn't it? We live in a world that moves too fast and feels too little. Our minds are full like AI, but our hands — empty like deserts. We post quotes about compassion but hesitate to help a stranger. We record the rain yet never feel it. We treat a man in torn clothes as invisible, and one in a tailored suit as divine. Siblings fight for a piece of land; friendships break because one stopped being useful. We chose silence in real life and filters online. Even the heart of the nation trembled — not from the explosions, but from the silence of compassion.

People are working hard, yes — but not for peace or passion, for position. They've built bigger houses but smaller hearts. They talk endlessly yet listen rarely. They compare happiness through screens and measure success by what fits into a story or a caption. And somewhere, I became one of them — a human on autopilot. Between survival and success, I stopped being alive.

Then one night, the city went silent. A sudden power cut — as if the universe pressed pause on the madness around me. No buzzing, no Wi-Fi, no endless pings, no masks of perfection. Just silence... and me. The city outside stood still — like even it had run out of breath.

I lit a candle, made myself a cup of coffee, and sat by the window I hadn't really looked out of in years. The air was still warm from the day, but the sky looked peaceful. The moon looked familiar — like an old friend I hadn't texted back in a while. The stars shimmered faintly, unsure if anyone still looked up to them. I was trying to remember the last time I spent time with myself. And in that stillness, I heard something time had been holding for me.

From the house next door — a family that had moved in recently — came a tiny, cheerful voice: “Mumma... it's story time!”

Her laughter spilled softly into the dark, wrapping the night in a warmth I hadn't felt in years. For a moment, I wasn't here. I was there — a little girl again, sitting beside my mom, my head resting on her lap. The room was quiet, just the ticking of the clock. She ran her fingers through my hair and said, “Do you know who once owned the whole world?”

I blinked. “Who, Mama?”

She smiled softly. “Alexander — Alexander the Great. He won every battle, conquered almost every land, and people called him the owner of the world.”

I looked up, amazed. “Then what happened, Mama?”

Her voice turned gentle, almost like a whisper. “When Alexander was dying, he made three final wishes...” She paused, lifted her finger, and counted softly —

“First, he wanted his best doctors to carry his coffin. Second, the path to his grave to be covered with gold and jewels. And third, he wished for his hands to hang outside his coffin.”

I frowned. “But why would he want that?”

Mama looked at me and said, “The first — to remind people that no one can save you from death, not even the wisest or the richest. The second — to show that all the wealth in the world becomes meaningless when life ends. And the third — so the world could see that even the mightiest king leaves empty-handed.”

My eyes widened. “Did people understand, Mama?”

She smiled — the kind of smile that hides a truth too deep for a child. “Maybe some did,

sweetheart... maybe some still don't."

Then she said something I should never have forgotten — though, in truth, I had. "One day you'll realize — what you're chasing can't be taken along. The only real treasure is the good we do and the hearts we touch. That day, you'll understand what it truly means to live and to be human."

That memory hit me like a quiet storm. Because maybe that's what we've become — modern Alexanders. All these years, I'd been chasing things I couldn't carry — fame, goals, likes, applause. Collecting everything, feeling nothing. And one day, the universe pulls the plug — not to punish us, but to remind us what light really feels like. The story I once dismissed had become my reflection.

Maybe that's what my mom meant all along. Maybe what this world needs is to pause — to feel again. To remember that the goal of life isn't to own it; it's to live it. We click before we care, post before we feel, and judge before we understand. We have opinions louder than our hearts and connections weaker than our attention spans. We've built a world too smart to feel, too fast to pause, too proud to listen — forgetting that we all came empty-handed, but were born full — full of warmth, kindness, wonder. Somewhere, we just stopped using them.

That night, something inside me broke — or maybe, it healed. I realized I didn't want to just exist; I wanted to feel again. And that's when I understood — being human isn't about doing more; it's about feeling more. It's about noticing the small things — a laugh that's real, a hand that helps, a sky that waits for you to look up again.

As I sat there, the lights flickered back, the Wi-Fi reconnected, and the city began buzzing once more. But something inside me stayed still — gentle, warm, awake. Because maybe that's all this life ever asks of us: not to conquer the world, but to remember the hands we hold, the stories we carry, and the hearts we touch — before we, too, leave empty-handed.

With a warm heart and cold coffee, I wrapped my hands around the cup, smiled softly, and picked up my phone — not to scroll, not to post, but to dial. My mom's number.

She was surprised — I hadn't done that without a reason in years. At that moment, I wasn't an adult trying to prove something — I was just her little girl again. We laughed. We paused. We talked for one hour and twenty-six minutes — about food, about life, about nothing. But in that "nothing," I found everything.

Before hanging up, I said softly, "Thank you, Mama... for teaching me the art of being human — again." And this time — I truly meant it.