

THE TRUTH WARRIOR

Written by

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EXT. CANYON ROAD - DAY

Blinding sunlight.

SATYA (O.S.)
Ffffuuuuuuuccccckk

A torn, age-old PLASTIC BAG under a small rock. Cacti. Dusty road. Dead shrubs. BEER BOTTLE TIPS OVER. ROLLS AWAY. Palette of green and brown. Like dried-up infectious sputum.

REVEAL: Indian-American male (30s). FLIP FLOPS. Stars & stripes shorts. CU: Cracked lips. Bare torso. Sunburned. This is... SATYA SENA. **A Bengal tiger domesticated for the circus.**

He turns the bend to a road littered with BROKEN GLASS. Satya puts his flip flops on his hands. His feet instantly aware of the hot earth. He sweeps a path forward with his flip flops.

The sun flares. Beating down like an overseer. Sweat drips. Satya stubs his toe. Stumbles and falls. Skinned knees. Blood and dust. Broken flip flop.

SATYA (CONT'D)
Fuck fuck fffuuuck.

Satya looks... At the road ahead... At the sun above... Back up the incline. Closes his eyes. He BREATHEES DEEP...

Satya drags his feet with the broken flip flop. Backtracks to the PLASTIC BAG under the rock. Fabricates a makeshift solution to his flip flop using the torn plastic bag.

SIDE OF A BIGGER ROAD - LATER

CU: The repaired flip flop. PULL OUT TO Satya hobbling along.

In the distant background, dust kicks up. A CAR. Engine HUMMING like a white savior. Satya frantically waves.

The car slows down as it gets closer. Rolls to a stop. But then, ZOOMS past Satya as if the driver recognizes him.

Satya ambles on. The sun gets low. POLICE LIGHTS IN THE DISTANCE. SIREN GETS LOUDER as the COP CAR PULLS UP. ENGINE IDLES. CAR DOOR OPENS. An uniformed cop.

SATYA (CONT'D)
Deputy...

Moment of uneasy silence. The deputy's hand on the holster.

CAHUILLA (O.S.)
Sheriff...

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

A messy desk lined with paperwork, photographs and intricate origami. Among them, in the center... A piece barely started.

Satya applies aloe vera and calamine lotion to his sunburnt nose. Gingerly rubs some on his arms as well. *Effectively whitening his skin. Albeit, temporarily.*

Unbuttons his shirt. Bares his shoulders. Burnt and peeling. Satya grits his teeth as he rubs some of the mixture on them.

Satya TURNS ON a TV. Cold Case rerun. Flips channel. CSI.

SATYA

Oh, c'mon... A DNA test won't tell
you anything if all the suspects
live at the scene of the crime.

New channel. Talk show discussing the "Me Too" movement.
Next. NEWS. Children being separated from parents by ICE.

Flips channel. Entertainment News. "Celebrity death threats."
Next. Local channel. Chyron reads, "Native Unrest at
Reservation." Next. Dragnet rerun. Mouths Joe Friday's lines.

SATYA (CONT'D)

Just the facts, ma'am.

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE

Hollywood set. The whole nine yards. Old Mathews 10Ks.
Painted backdrop. Satya as Sgt. Friday. FLASHBULBS GOING OFF.
A beautiful NEWS REPORTER interviewing him.

NEWS REPORTER

What do you have to say about the
divide between the law and justice?

Satya opens his mouth. Nothing comes out. He tries again. His
mouth is sealed shut. The paparazzi and the news reporter are
all laughing at him. A blinding reflection.

NEWS REPORTER (CONT'D)

Told you not to trust 'em...

The news reporter's voice starts to morph.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

CAHUILLA

Why don't you listen to me? Told
you not to trust 'em.

At the doorway... APENIMON CAHUILLA (30s), Native-American. Deputy. A visible old scar on her left arm. **A lone wolf who refuses to run with the pack.**

She's the uniformed cop we saw rescue Satya earlier. She drags in a perp twice her size. Cuffed. Satya throws his shirt back on quickly.

SATYA
I'll be fine. All wounds heal.

CAHUILLA
At what cost?

Satya tries to avoid looking at her scar. Cahuilla walks the perp over to her desk. No frills here. The bare necessities, meticulously organized. Only one personal item on her desk...

A single framed photo of an older Native-American gentleman.

SATYA
In the parlance of your people, I was trying to bury the hatchet.

CAHUILLA
Know what your problem is?

Satya and Cahuilla exchange a look.

CAHUILLA (CONT'D)
Your vanity makes you think you're not an outsider to them. You think they'll like you if you act like them, talk like them.

SATYA
You know what your problem is? You won't let anyone be on your team.

The perp LAUGHS. Cahuilla throws shade. He shuts up. Fearful.

CAHUILLA
Maybe... But I didn't forget the cardinal rule.

SATYA
Which is...

Cahuilla busies herself with paperwork. She milks the moment before she plunges in the dagger of truth...

CAHUILLA

You might be pale enough to burn.
But you're never gonna be pale
enough to be one of them.

Satya heads out the door...

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