

Colour Fool

By

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EXT. CITY STREET/METRO STATION- DAY

VIKRAM, 35, Walks with a slight stoop. Dressed in an anonymous grey suit. Carries an old-school laptop bag.

Hordes of people walking into the station, any working morning, sunny and clear. One of them is Vikram who does not stand out.

Follow VIKRAM walking into the station, head down, looking at his phone. Looks at the weather forecast, it is Friday, sunny with 21 degrees. Scrolls across for Saturday and Sunday. Cloudy days.

INT. METRO- DAY

Vikram is on the metro and finds a seat. Its busy with the city bound commute. Sitting on the 3rd seat, still staring at his phone.

Vikram's POV as he checks his phone. Calendar opens on the phone. 3 meetings. Home page. Youtube open. Scroll through suggested videos. Mostly TEDTalks on random topics. Opens Whatsapp and a group called Friday Night party. Types "Guys, what plans for tonite?" but then erases it without sending. Home page. Weather forecast. Youtube. Whatsapp is opened again and the message is sent.

SERIES OF SHOTS- VIKRAM'S WEEKEND

VIKRAM'S POV- Black and white images. Melancholy music playing in the background.

A) INT. VIKRAM'S APARTMENT NIGHT 3 whiskey glasses being filled.

B) Ice box being emptied.

C) Crisps being poured on a plate.

D) Takeaway boxes opened.

E) Legs sprawled while sleeping on the sofa.

F) INT. VIKRAM'S APARTMENT DAY Mess in the kitchen.

G) Aspirin in water.

H) Bowl of instant noodles.

I) Legs sprawled while sleeping on the sofa.

EXT. METRO STATION/ESCALATOR- DAY

Tight on Vikram's face who is on the escalator. Staring into infinity. Gets off the escalator, looks at his phone again and walks off into the light.

FADE TO WHITE.

INT. "VICTORIA" CAFE - DAY

Waiter's POV. Puts cocoa powder over two just-made cappuccinos.

WAITER, 23, is a chirpy young man, long hair, wears a bandanna. A foreigner.

It is a small cafe with maybe 12-15 chairs. The decor is quite hipster friendly with blackboards with white chalk, fake orchids in the windows, trendy artwork on the wall. The lighting, though is a bit dodgy- looks like an old cafe trying hard to be a modern one. Few chairs on the terrace. Warm, Sunny day outside. Two MIDDLE AGED MEN sitting on the terrace engaged in a business-like discussion. Mid-morning is not a busy time in the cafe. Waiter carries out the order of 2 cappuccinos to the only people sitting on the terrace outside. Rest of the cafe is empty but eager.

Waiter leaves the cappuccinos on the table turns around to see Vikram walk into the cafe. Vikram is unsure of what he needs to do because he does not see anyone. Waiter walks in behind him.

WAITER

Good morning, sir. How are you doing today?

Vikram startled and looks around to see the waiter.

VIKRAM

Huh..alright. How are you?

WAITER

(as he cleans the espresso machine and dumps the coffee ground)

Fantastic. Just had the funniest man come in some time back for a takeaway coffee. He was talking on the phone on his headset, texting and trying to wave at the menu for a coffee at the same time. I just completely ignored him until he got off the phone. Its always funny to make these people feel guilty. By the way, his name was Isaiah. Grand name

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WAITER (cont'd)

for a guy looks like a penguin. I couldn't even spell it out correctly. Took me 3 tries to get it right, you know. Anyways, what can I get you?

VIKRAM

Can I have a tea?

WAITER

No problem sir. Take a seat.

Waiter walks to his counter and behind the till.

VIKRAM

No, you know what make that a cappuccino. Or forget the coffee just get me a Coke.

WAITER

Ok. Bad day, huh?

VIKRAM

Not really. I just need to kill an hour here. Someone cancelled a meeting I was supposed to have.

WAITER

No problem, boss. Pick your seat.

Vikram walks to a table near the window with 4 seats. But gives an unsure look around, finds a 2-seater in a sufficiently quiet corner. Avoids being next to the windows. Sets out his laptop from the bag and starts to look busy.

WAITER

Your Coke! Anything else? Something to eat?

VIKRAM

No, I'm good for now...can I have like a croissant or something?

WAITER

Croissant? OK sure.

VIKRAM

Can you make that a sandwich? Thanks.

WAITER

What kind of a sandwich? Let me do you a ham and cheese roll.

VIKRAM

Yeah...sure. Thanks.

As Vikram continues staring at his screen, NEW GUY walks into the cafe. Same age as Vikram, could easily have been his brother. Looks much more confident. No slouch, energetic. Hipster-like dressed, trendy glasses, trendy khakis and jacket. Walks over to the counter where the waiter is making a sandwich for Vikram.

WAITER

Good morning! Can I help you, sir?

New guy is reading the display board behind him.

NEW GUY

Yes, you can. Give me a minute. You need to get a better colour for your display, man! Its hard to make out what's on there.

WAITER

Really? Must be these blackboards. These days blackboards are trendy, right? I told my boss- this is not the kind of place folks want to see chalk and blackboards on! But no one listens to people on the ground. Its always the same everywhere. You can use this menu, if you want.

Waiter hands him a paper printed menu.

NEW GUY

OK, can I have a cold coffee with cream. Not ice-cream, yeah? Just cream. And some sugar on the side. Also, avocado on toast without any salt.

WAITER

Hold on...Iced coffee+cream, avo on toast, no salt. OK cool.

Vikram is staring at him listening to his order, slightly amused, but also impressed. Looks down into his screen as soon as he turns to around to avoid staring.

New Guy turns around to look for a seat. Freezes with a look of horror on his face. Stares for a moment at Vikram with his back to the waiter.

WAITER

You can take any table, sir.

NEW GUY

Yes sure, sure....no problem.

New guy goes and sits on a table where he is sideways to Vikram. Gives a couple of glances sideways but a look of disbelief on his face. Buries his face in his palms. You can see his pulse throbbing on his temple. Vikram has noticed his distress but avoids any eye contact. New guy looks up from his hands to Vikram and does that again. Gets up to go out. Speaks to the waiter.

NEW GUY

Will be back in a second.

WAITER

Okay

Walks out. Waiter brings the sandwich out to Vikram

WAITER

Your sandwich, sir.

VIKRAM

What happened to our friend there?

WAITER

No idea, boss. We get all kinds in here.

VIKRAM

Hehehe.....Hope he is alright.

WAITER

No problem, boss! I have worked in these kind of places for a long time. I say 3 years in a cafe is more than 10 years outside it.

Vikram is getting uncomfortable with the conversation and losing patience.

VIKRAM

If you say so, mate!

WAITER

No, seriously, you see a lot of crazy stuff happening when you are working in a cafe. But honestly, I've had the best time when I was working as a security guard at a jewellery shop.

VIKRAM  
(Immensely disinterested)  
OK I am sure

Waiter shrugs and walks away. New guy walks back in. He has composed himself. A quick stolen stare at Vikram. Vikram catches his gaze and gives him a weird smile to say hi. New Guy looks away. Goes back to his seat.

Vikram admires the sandwich before him. Busies himself re-arranging the coke and the sandwich around his laptop.

New Guy is trying hard to not look at Vikram. Waiter brings out his iced coffee.

WAITER  
Your iced coffee and sugar. Toast is coming up.

NEW GUY  
Thanks.

WAITER  
You OK?

NEW GUY  
Yes. That's all for now.

Vikram looks up to the New Guy.

VIKRAM  
Hi there

NEW GUY  
Hi

VIKRAM  
You OK?

NEW GUY  
Yes. Fine

VIKRAM  
I am Vikram, by the way.

NEW GUY  
Oh ok...nice to meet you.  
(Vikram waits for his name, but nothing)  
I am sorry did I freak you out?

VIKRAM  
No. I was just thinking if you are feeling alright.

(CONTINUED)

NEW GUY

It is fine.

(Moves over with his  
glass to Vikram's table)

It is really strange.

VIKRAM

What?

NEW GUY

I mean strange for me. You know. You saw I was telling him to change the colour of the menu. Actually, I am colour blind. It is sometimes difficult for me to read stuff on dark colour boards.

VIKRAM

Oh Ok..Yeah, they should have better colours for the displays, I guess.

NEW GUY

Hmmmm...

VIKRAM

But you can read the printed menu?

NEW GUY

Yes, that was fine. It was white and black, right? That usually works.

VIKRAM

Hmmm

NEW GUY

Sorry, are you working now? Don't want to disturb you.

VIKRAM

No, that's OK. Just killing some time here. So you work around here?

NEW GUY

Oh yeah. Just round the corner. I mean, this colour blind thing, right. You are not colour blind, are you?

VIKRAM

No, Why?



NEW GUY

Know any colour blind people?

VIKRAM

No one that I can remember now.  
Why?

NEW GUY

Just checking. I have been  
colour blind since childhood, you  
know. But I was freaked out just  
now...

VIKRAM

Yeah, I saw

NEW GUY

I don't want to freak you  
out. But you seem like a nice  
guy.

VIKRAM

What happened?

NEW GUY

Today is the first time I  
saw colour. Just now. I mean-  
when I turned around to look  
around the cafe, I could see  
colour.

VIKRAM

What? What do you mean?

NEW GUY

Really, man...I am not kidding.  
I have no idea what is  
happening...Usually, I am  
completely colour blind. All  
greys.

VIKRAM

Boss, hold on. What do you  
mean? That cannot be true. You  
must be imagining stuff.

Waiter walks in with the toast and leaves them on  
the table.

WAITER

Your avocado toast-no salt. All  
good for you?

NEW GUY

Yes

Waiter walks away.

(CONTINUED)

VIKRAM

There's a mistake. I am wearing a grey suit here. You can't see me in colours.

NEW GUY

Not just the suit. I mean you as a whole. I can see you in colours. Never seen anyone in colour before.

VIKRAM

What are you talking about? I am not in any colour, man.

NEW GUY

No. You don't understand. It is really difficult for me. Maybe I should just leave. But this is really special, you know.... I'll tell you what? Today's the first time I can see what colour skin is.

VIKRAM

You know it must be that you are imagining stuff. I knew this guy once who used to get these visions, right. He used to see himself as an old Indian king in his palace. And then he found out that there is actually a real palace exactly the same as what he used to see.

NEW GUY

No, but it is not....really?  
(Interested)

VIKRAM

And he swore that he had never been anywhere near that place. He honestly believed that he was seeing his previous life.

NEW GUY

Yeah, that is something called cryptomnesia. I've heard about it. It is a condition caused by you forgetting about a memory and then thinking of it is as a new vision.

VIKRAM

You, a psychologist or something? You seem to know a lot about these things.

(CONTINUED)

NEW GUY

No. I read about it. Have you read Peter Pan? It happens in there.

VIKRAM

No. Or may be I have and forgotten about it. I should get one of those Crypto whatever things as a vision now.

NEW GUY

You know in that story Peter Pan loses his shadow and Wendy attaches it back to him. But, he believes that it was he himself that attached it back.

VIKRAM

Attached the shadow?

NEW GUY

Yeah

VIKRAM

Weird. This is all weird. By the way, if you are colour blind, why were you reading Peter Pan? I thought it was all about crazy colourful places and stuff.

NEW GUY

I know. I said I can't see colours, I can still read about them. Fun fact, Yellow Submarine is another one of my favorites.

VIKRAM

Oh, Beatles fan? Aren't you a bit young for Beatles?

NEW GUY

What's wrong with that?

VIKRAM

Nothing. I mean ...so have you seen the video of Yellow Submarine?

NEW GUY

Yes. And it does look all grey to me.

VIKRAM

So all TV looks grey?

(CONTINUED)

NEW GUY

Why can't you believe me? Its all just completely grey.

VIKRAM

So how do you watch TV?

NEW GUY

Just like you do, man. I mean at home I tend to push the contrast up very high. Makes the shapes stand out more. But the rest is exactly the same as you. Literally, today is the first time I am seeing anything that is in colour. I can see your brown skin. I mean, I see your skin and I am assuming that because you are Indian, it must be brown.

VIKRAM

You got that right.

NEW GUY

Another wow for me today was how different is the colour of the lips from rest of the face. Have you noticed that before?

VIKRAM

No..never really thought about it

NEW GUY

Can I tell you something more?

VIKRAM

Yeah

NEW GUY

You are the only thing I can see in colour.

VIKRAM

What? What do you mean?

NEW GUY

Yes. Now listen here. Everything else, the laptop, sandwich, the table, it's all grey for me. You are the only one I can see in colour. See, why I got freaked out? We have something special here, man. I think you can help me. Can you tell me what colour is the waiter?

(CONTINUED)

VIKRAM

What? What are you saying?

NEW GUY

No,no.no. I mean is he of the same colour as you or different? I need to memorize all the colours now that I can see you. This is really exciting!

VIKRAM

Not that...what do you mean I am the only coloured thing?

NEW GUY

Yes. This is so cool, man. I can look at you and you can tell me if the waiter is the same colour as you. Then I will know what colour everyone is. In fact, you know what, we can also do the same with other stuff. Like this sandwich, right. Is the bread almost the same colour as your skin or is it something else? And I can see the blue veins on your hands.

VIKRAM

(Looks down to his hands)  
They are not blue, they are more greenish.

NEW GUY

See. That's what I am talking about. This is so cool. I never knew what greenish was.

VIKRAM

Hey, relax, man. This cannot be right.

NEW GUY

Its OK. (Deep breath) I am just getting a bit over-excited, you know.

VIKRAM

Look, I think there is something wrong here. You should go to the doctor or something. (Standing up) Look, I need to leave now. So, cheers.

Gets up and walks to the Waiter.

(CONTINUED)

VIKRAM

My bill?

WAITER

Give me one second.

Waiter walks away.

NEW GUY

See, I am sorry to have freaked you out like this. I know it is really strange.

VIKRAM

No, its fine. But I just remembered. I need to go now.

NEW GUY

Oh sure. Do you work in this area?

VIKRAM

No, not really.  
(Does not want to give him any more details)

Gets up and packs in his stuff. Walks over to the counter.

WAITER

It is 12.50 for you, sir.

VIKRAM

There you are.

Walks back to the table and finishes his last gulp of the Coke. Pulls out a dark blue tie from his bag and starts tying it up.

VIKRAM

See, I think you might be getting some colours back in your eyes. You should check with your doctor or something.

NEW GUY

Hmmmm....but really I can't see any colours anywhere else. Listen, can we catch-up again some time? I mean, just generally, coffee or lunch, whenever you have time.

VIKRAM

Huh?

NEW GUY

I mean, I just want to be sure, if this is going to help me get better.

VIKRAM

(very clearly lying)

No, you know. I live and work in another city and I was just here for today. So don't think that will work out. But you should definitely go and see your doctor.

NEW GUY

Can I please have your number? Can we at least do a Skype or something? I think that might help me.

VIKRAM

Look, I am sorry about this but....

NEW GUY

(Anxious, pleading)

Can you help me out here, please? At least let us go to the doctor together? There has to be way to make this work. Here, at least, take my card. Call me if you can. (Hands out his business card)

VIKRAM

(Clearly intimidated, unsure as always)

I already said I am sorry but I can't really get involved in this. This is for your doctor to sort out.

(Takes the card)

Good luck, man!!!

New Guy's POV in black and white as Vikram almost runs out through the door.

EXT.STREET OUTSIDE THE CAFE- DAY

All in Black and White. Vikram comes out of the cafe, looks at his phone, scrolling for a second, then at the New Guy's business card. But then puts them away. Starts walking. Walks past people on the street. Woman talking on the phone. Old man waiting for the light to cross street. An athletic-type out for his run. An office worker lady who is clutching a file and late for a meeting. Everyone is looking past him, no one wants to make any eye contact, in fact, try to avoid that. Gradually moves faster and

breaks into a run. Runs into a store on the side of the pavement. We wait outside the store. Its a clothing store.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE STORE- DAY- MINUTES LATER

Still waiting. Vikram emerges. Wearing a garishly bright, red tie. He starts walking towards us looking directly at us. We see him smiling for the first time. Confident, unflinching look. Freeze as he comes closer.

CREDITS ROLL.

THE END