Twitter Thread by Ramki



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A watchman in our society, on an average, lasts 3 months. Just when we get a hang of each other's eccentricities, he disappears. So you have to start all over with the new man. 'Don't ever ring my bell twice... I carry my bags myself, thank you... '. And so on. +

Rakesh was different. He looked 16, though he was 21. Wide eyed, eager, sincere to a fault. He would magically get to the gate before you could honk, he'd never miss a courier, the water tank never got empty on his watch, the cars he washed sparkled. +

Before Rakesh, we had a run of disastrous men. He was like Kapil Dev walking in at 17 for 5. In a couple of days, we knew we had a keeper. Like those animated drops of lubricant in Castrol ads, Rakesh was everywhere at the same time, keeping our Society humming efficiently. +

Residents competed with each other to offer him a snack, a cup of tea, a t shirt from a sales conference, an old mobile phone. They all made small talk with him. Like writers on a talent show production, they discovered his back story. Jaunpur. Sick father. 2 sisters. Cows. +

He worked days in our society. And nights at another. He had no home in Mumbai. Yet he showed no signs of fatigue. Even Mrs.Menon had no complaint. That's saying something. Her last complaint was, '..the watchman makes loud noises brushing his teeth... unacceptable..' +

The society spoke to Rakesh's body-shopping bosses and made him our 24x7 watchman. That's when we discovered that he also studied by night. BCom via correspondence. Good Lord, did this man escape from a Bollywood screenplay and land at our doorstep? +

He obviously bathed and washed discreetly and at unearthly hours, because we never came across him (I quote from one of Mrs.Menon's written complaints about prior watchmen) '.. walking around half naked in his towel... indecent fellow...ladies in the society..unacceptable...' +

He washed 10 cars, including mine, in our society. To make additional money to send back to Jaunpur. A service station couldn't do a better job. Everything would be spotless. Inside and out. He'd hand me back the keys of my SUV, my pride and joy, exactly at 8.15 every a.m. +

I could go on about the legend of Rakesh. But you have places to go and things to do. Suffice it to say that all good things come to an end. Watchmen will suddenly disappear and drop out of your lives. To the list of Mangal, Manoj, Babloo, Yadav, and Gurung, was added Rakesh. +

It was a Monday. I remember that clearly. The water ran out. People were calling out for Rakesh from their windows and balconies. Had the poor lad worked himself to the bone? Was he ill? I went down to check. +

There was no sign of Rakesh. He had vanished.
And so had three cars. Including my beloved SUV.

ANTHE.