



Kojagiri Magic

School janitor, Babulal likes to play football in his spare time to keep himself fit. His other hobby is to write poetry. He has been helping his mother in janitorial work at the school since he was 8 years old. After his mother passed away when he was 14 yrs old, he continued the work to earn a living.

The school staff was kind and taught him to read and write since he was 8. Looking at his eagerness to learn and hard work, the staff taught him proper subjects like languages and math. He would keep the school clean during the day and study by night.

Couple of days after his mother passed away a strange thing happened one night. It was a full moon night. It was not an ordinary full moon night. It was Kojagiri Poornima !! Babulal was fast asleep, when his three most beloved possessions - broom, ball & pen came to life. They all admired Babulal for taking good care of them through the years, his hard work to become someone in life and decided to do their share from now on to help their master.

The broom made sure it almost cleaned the school hallways at night when Babulal fell asleep after his studies. Almost clean.... so that Babulal had some work during the day to keep him occupied but not get tired.

The soccer ball made sure it would stay just out of Babulal's reach when he played with nearby youngsters in the evening so as to keep him fit.

The pen a gift from his mother from her Diwali bakshish at work ensured it



gave finishing touches to his poetic words. The pen at night would write some interesting words on his notepad. Babulal would read them next day wondering when he wrote those words but would ignore it thinking he must have wrote them on the side as ideas while composing his poetry. He would sometimes sit at the end table in the school canteen by the window in the evenings to compose a few lines over a cup of tea.

One day a former student of the school was visiting his alma mater after many years. This student was none other than Prashoon Joshi, now one of the renowned lyricist and screenwriter in Bollywood. The school had planned a grand function to felicitate their former student. Babulal had been busy for past two days helping prepare for the function but was upset that he had misplaced his poetry notebook. Babulal loved the songs Prashoon Joshi had written for the movies Fanaa and especially the song "Maa" in Tare Jameen Par and hence requested the school principal to give him a chance to take Mr. Joshi's autograph. The principal said he could try but only after the function and only if there was time.

After the function, Prashoon requested if he could have his tea at his favorite lunch table by the window like old days. The school principal was more than happy to oblige. Babulal was there cleaning up after the function. When he saw Prashoon sitting at the table chatting with some staff members he again requested the principal for Prashoon's autograph. The principal asked Prashoon if he would give Babulal his autograph. Prashoon was happy to do so but did not have a pen. Babulal gave him his special pen and a piece of paper. When Prashoon was about to hold the pen, it slipped from his hand and went under the table. Prashoon bent down to pick it up and noticed something stuck between the table leg and the wall. He reached over and saw it was a notebook. Babulal immediately exclaimed the it was his notebook which he had misplaced and thanked Mr. Joshi for finding it.

Prashoon asked what it was and after knowing that it was Babulal's poetry



notebook asked if he could have a look. Babulal could not believe his good luck that someone like Prashoon Joshi would one day look at his poetry notebook. Prashoon was awestruck by the poetic lines and thoughts Babulal had written. He praised him for his work and said he would contact him soon.

10 years later.....

Babulal is now a respected lyricist in Bollywood. He still remembers the day 10 years ago when Prashoon Joshi had praised his work and promised to contact him. Prashoon had kept his word and a few weeks after their first meeting had invited Babulal to his office and introduced him to his fellow writers and film industry friends, who were also impressed by Babulal's poetic compositions. Babulal got his first break a year later, when he composed the lyrics of a movie song, which topped the charts for several weeks. In the past 10 years, Babulal has won 4 Filmfare awards for best lyrics and recently had composed a song for a Hollywood movie by Woody Allen.

Till the present day Babulal has preserved his 3 most beloved possessions - broom, ball & pen. They are now kept in a nice glass cabinet in his study and help him keep mentally grounded as they are constant reminder of his past and where he came from. On every kojagiri poornima night they come to life and chat about their master's achievements and pray for his continued success.

- Rajesh Pendurkar (Charlotte NC)