

THE SUBCONSCIOUS MIND OF A JUVENILE KILLER

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Dedication

To My Family! 🌻

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Preface

Children Do Not Grow in Silence, They Break in It. Every book begins with a question. This one began with mine: *What happens when a child is never loved?*

Not ignored once, not scolded occasionally, but systematically stripped of tenderness, denied affection, dismissed when they cry, punished when they show weakness, and abandoned when they reach for comfort. The answer is uncomfortable. A child who is unloved does not simply “grow up fine.” An unloved child learns to survive without love. And when survival becomes the only lesson, violence is often the only language they know.

This book tells the story of such a boy. A boy who grew into a figure society would come to fear and hate. But before he was a criminal, he was a child. Before he was ruthless, he was wounded. Before he was killed, he was killed in smaller, quieter ways, every day, by neglect, by cruelty, by silence. This is not a story to entertain. It is a disturbing story. To force us to look at what happens when we, as families and as a society, abandon our children.

Science tells us that the human brain is most malleable in childhood. Experiences during these years shape neural pathways that determine how a person thinks, feels, reacts, and connects. When a child is hugged, their brain associates touch with safety. When a child is mocked, their brain associates vulnerability with shame. When a child is beaten, their brain wires pain into the meaning of authority. When

a child is ignored, their brain accepts invisibility as normal. These are not metaphors, they are literal patterns carved into the nervous system. Trauma is not only emotional, it becomes biological. The body remembers, the brain adapts, and the child learns to interpret the world through those scars.

So, when we ask, "How could a boy commit such a crime?" we must first ask, "What crime was committed against him first?"

Trauma in childhood is rarely recognized because children lack the words to name it. A five-year-old cannot say, "I am experiencing neglect," but their silence, tantrums, or aggression scream it in other ways. The tragedy is that society often mistakes these cries for misbehavior. A restless child is labeled naughty. A withdrawn child is called lazy. An aggressive child is branded bad. We punish the symptoms instead of treating the cause. What is worse, children internalize these labels. They believe they are "bad," "lazy," or "worthless." And when you believe you are worthless, you live as if you have nothing to lose, including your own humanity.

Every parent, teacher, and adult is a silent architect of a child's mind. Not through lectures, but through everyday actions. A father who ridicules his son for crying teaches that emotions are shameful. A mother who excuses abuse teaches that silence is survival. A teacher who humiliates a struggling student teaches that learning is unsafe. A society that tolerates domestic violence teaches that power belongs to the cruel. These lessons are not written in textbooks, yet they are the most lasting. They become the moral compass

of the child, a compass often pointing not north, but moving into chaos.

The boy in this book never received kindness as a compass. Instead, he received pain, humiliation, and neglect. His crimes, as horrifying as they are, cannot be understood without acknowledging the curriculum life gave him. Crime is not born in adulthood; it germinates in childhood. Every criminal we lock away once sat in a classroom. Once held a toy. Once asked for attention in the only way they knew. Some were ignored. Others were beaten into silence. A few were exploited in ways too dark to describe.

Studies consistently show that juvenile offenders often have one or more of these histories:

- Physical abuse at home
- Sexual exploitation
- Extreme poverty and hunger
- Neglect or abandonment
- Exposure to violence in the community

These patterns are not accidental. Crime is often the distorted expression of unresolved pain.

Does this justify their actions? No. But it explains them. An explanation is the first step toward prevention. One of the most chilling realities about children who grow into criminals is their lack of remorse. Society demands guilt. Courts ask for an apology. Families want regret. But how can a child feel sorry for a world that never showed them what love, care, or kindness is? Empathy is not innate, it is taught, modeled, and mirrored. If a child never experiences

it, they cannot give it. This is why many juvenile offenders appear cold or heartless. It is not that they rejected humanity. It is that they never learned it in the first place.

The boy in this story is one such example. His lack of remorse is terrifying, yes. But it is also revealing. It tells us what happens when society withholds the very ingredients of humanity.

No discussion about childhood is complete without addressing gender. From the earliest days, boys and girls are treated differently, often with devastating consequences. Girls are told to be quiet, obedient, and modest. They grow up silenced, clipped of freedom. Boys are told to be tough, aggressive, and unemotional. They grow up armored, unable to feel. Both are wounded. Both are cheated. The boy in this story is taught that masculinity equals dominance. That to cry is to be weak, and to control others is to be strong. These lessons, repeated daily by family, peers, and media, forge him into the predator he becomes. The tragedy is not just his crimes, it is that his story is not unique. We raise millions of boys under the same script, and then act surprised when some of them erupt in violence.

The juvenile justice system in India, like many across the world, was created with good intentions. It seeks to protect children from the brutality of adult prisons, to rehabilitate rather than punish. But intention does not equal impact. In practice, juvenile homes are often overcrowded, underfunded, and ill-equipped. Counselors are too few. The Psychological support is minimal. Education is inconsistent. The focus is on discipline, not healing. As a

result, many children leave these institutions angrier and more dangerous than before. Rehabilitation becomes a word written in reports, not lived in reality. The boy in this book is shaped as much by this systemic failure as by his family's neglect.

It is easy to say, "That boy was evil." It is harder to admit: "We made him." But the truth is that criminals do not emerge from nowhere. They come from our streets, our schools, our homes. Every time we excuse abuse as discipline, every time we ignore a child crying in pain, every time we allow poverty and hunger to define childhood, we contribute. We are all complicit, not as individuals, but as a society. When we deny children the chance to be human, we cannot be shocked when they grow up inhuman.

As you read this story, I want you to wrestle with these five most uncomfortable questions:

1. What makes a child's heart go dark?
2. What happens when love is replaced by humiliation?
3. How does silence become violence?
4. Why do we punish children for wounds they never asked for?
5. And most haunting: how many such children are we creating right now?

Parents are not perfect. No one is. But perfection is not what children need. They need presence. They need patience. They need love expressed not just in words, but in listening,

in protection, in guidance. If you are a parent reading this, I urge you:

- Notice your child's silences.
- Respect their emotions, even when they seem small.
- Do not punish curiosity; nurture it.
- Do not teach fear as discipline; teach responsibility with kindness.

Because you are not just raising a child. You are raising the future of society.

Teachers spend more time with children than many parents do. Schools are not just places of learning, they are sanctuaries, or they should be. But too often, schools become breeding grounds of humiliation. Mocked accents, shamed mistakes, and ignored bullying, all these cut deep. If you are an educator, remember:

- A kind word can rescue a child from despair.
- A cruel joke can scar a child for life.
- A safe classroom can be the difference between hope and hopelessness.

Teaching is not only about subjects; it is about souls.

Society must stop treating children as "someone else's problem." They belong to all of us. When a child begs on the street, it is not just poverty. It is a wound we ignore. When a child drops out of school, it is not just their failure. It is ours. When a child grows violent, it is not just their crime. It is our reflection. Until we embrace collective

responsibility, we will keep creating the very monsters we fear.

Governments cannot legislate love, but they can create conditions for healthier childhoods:

- Stronger child protection services.
- Mental health support in schools.
- Stricter action against child abuse and exploitation.
- Training for teachers and parents in child psychology.
- Rehabilitation programs in juvenile homes are rooted in therapy, not punishment.

Investment in children is not charity; it is prevention. It is nation-building.

This book is ruthless. It will unsettle you. It may make you hate the boy at its center. That is natural. But as you turn these pages, I ask you to look deeper. Beneath the hatred, see the child. Beneath the monster, see the broken boy. Beneath the crime, see the first crime committed against him, neglect. Because the child you ignore today may become the adult you fear tomorrow. And then think, *‘When does a child stop being a child?’*

Prologue

He was born under the scorching sun of June in a small, damp village on the outskirts of Kanpur. No one rejoiced at his birth. His mother lay unconscious in her blood-soaked saree, while his father smoked a bidi outside, cursing that another mouth had come to eat what they didn't have.

When Aarav first opened his eyes, there was no one to welcome him. Perhaps, if someone had held him, loved him, or whispered that his life mattered, this story would have been different.

But that never happened.

And that is why his story began where humanity ended.

CHAPTER 1

A Childhood Without a Childhood

Aarav's earliest memory was not of toys or lullabies. It was of screams. His father, Ratan, was a daily-wage labourer who drank away half his earnings and beat Aarav's mother, Arti, with the rest. Aarav would sit in the corner of their single-room hut, hugging his knees, watching his mother bleed. Sometimes he felt an urge to laugh seeing her wail like an animal. Sometimes he wanted to punch her to make her shut up. At age five, he had learned the art of dissociation: watching violence like watching television.

At school, he was a silent boy, always sitting in the last row. Teachers never noticed him because he never raised his hand to answer, never smiled, and never asked to go to the toilet. They thought he was "slow". But Aarav's mind was a whirlpool of thoughts, thoughts too dark for a five-year-old.

He enjoyed killing insects. First ants. Then cockroaches. He would catch them in a matchbox, pour kerosene, and set them on fire. He loved the way they squirmed, twisted, and finally lay still. That stillness gave him peace. At night, when his father came home drunk, Aarav would imagine lighting him up too.

But his mother never tried to save him from his father's beatings. When Ratan slapped Aarav so hard that his nose

bled, his mother simply wiped it off with the edge of her saree and whispered, "Stay quiet. Don't make him angry." He wondered why she never fought back. He wondered why she gave birth to him if she couldn't protect him.

By age eight, Aarav stopped crying. Pain became a normal part of life, like hunger or rain. When it rained, their hut leaked. When it didn't, his father rained fists on them. And in this silent rage, something inside Aarav grew. Like a tumour. Unnoticed. Unfelt. Until it was too late.

His First Crime

At age nine, Aarav committed his first crime. It was afternoon. The sun was hot, and the playground was empty except for one boy: Sameer, the son of a ration shop owner. Sameer had chocolate biscuits in his tiffin box. Aarav hadn't eaten since last night.

When Sameer refused to share, Aarav felt a cold rage rise from his stomach to his throat. His fists balled up. Before he realised it, he grabbed Sameer's neck and squeezed. Sameer struggled, his eyes bulging. Aarav pressed harder. Sameer fell silent.

Aarav quickly opened his tiffin, ate all the biscuits, and ran away. He didn't feel guilt. He felt satisfaction, like scratching an old wound that never healed.

Sameer survived. But he never spoke about it. Aarav never got caught. Teachers scolded Sameer for "making up stories" when he cried. No one suspected silent Aarav.

That day, Aarav discovered power. For the first time, he felt he existed.

Family Background: A Breeding Ground for Violence

His father died when Aarav was ten, liver failure from years of alcohol. His mother remarried a man who didn't want "baggage". Aarav was sent to live with his paternal uncle in Kanpur city.

Here began the true nightmare.

His uncle made him work at his small welding shop. If Aarav dropped a tool, he was thrashed with a wire coil. At night he slept on a torn mat near the bathroom, infested with mosquitoes. No one asked if he ate. No one asked if he dreamt.

He never dreamt. He only thought. He thought about death. About pain. About why everyone hated him. About why he couldn't make them suffer back.

Mental Health: The Brewing Psychopath

If a psychiatrist had examined Aarav then, they would have diagnosed him with Conduct Disorder, progressing rapidly towards an Antisocial Personality Disorder.

He showed all signs:

- Lack of empathy
- Aggression towards people and animals
- Destruction of property
- Deceit and theft
- Serious violations of rules

But no one examined him. No one cared. He was just another poor child in India, invisible until he became dangerous.

His Gruesome Turn

By age twelve, Aarav committed his first murder. It was a five-year-old girl, Neha, who lived two houses away. She often smiled at him when he walked to the welding shop. One day, she followed him to the community toilet. He lured her behind the water tank, covered her mouth, and slit her throat with his welding cutter.

She didn't even struggle much.

He dumped her behind the tank and went back to work. The news spread like wildfire. Her body was discovered two hours later. The police arrested two men from the slum who were drunk at the time.

Aarav sat on his mat that night, eating stale rice, watching his uncle abuse his aunt. He felt at peace. That girl's death felt like scratching a wound, deeper and deeper, until blood oozed out and the itch was gone.

He slept well that night.

The Satisfaction After Crime

For Aarav, murder was not about thrill. It was a relief. A way to transfer his pain to someone else, permanently. Each killing felt like exhaling poison from his lungs. When he kills, he feels godlike. Powerful. Alive.

Juvenile Justice: India's Loophole

When he was finally caught at age fourteen, after stabbing a shopkeeper's son to death for refusing him Maggi, he was sent to a juvenile home.

The judge looked at him with pity. "He is just a boy. He deserves reform, not punishment."

The boy they sent to be reformed became a monster inside. He beat other children, molested younger boys, and threatened staff. But the system called it "adjustment issues".

On his eighteenth birthday, he was released.

CHAPTER 2

The Home of Broken Souls

When Aarav entered the juvenile home, he was fourteen. The sun had just set over Kanpur, and the city was bathing in an orange haze of dust, sweat, and diesel fumes. The jeep carrying him rattled over potholes, its iron mesh cage casting dark stripes across his expressionless face.

The home looked like a school turned into a prison. Tall boundary walls topped with rusted barbed wires, a fading blue board reading “Bal Sudhar Griha”. Children’s Reformatory Home. But nothing inside ever reformed.

Two guards escorted him to the intake room where a fat warden sat chewing paan. He didn’t look up from his register as he asked mechanically,

“Naam?”

“Aarav.”

“Crime?”

“Murder.”

The warden finally looked up. Murder. He expected theft, pickpocketing, or assault. But murder at fourteen? He spat red paan juice into a steel spittoon and narrowed his eyes.

“You think you’re a big man now, haan? We’ll see.”

He signed the register, and the guards led Aarav to Dormitory 4.

First Night: Baptised by Violence

Dormitory 4 smelled of urine, sweat, and wet cement. Thirty metal beds were lined against the walls. Boys aged eight to seventeen lay on thin mattresses, staring at the ceiling, scratching lice, whispering in dark corners.

As Aarav entered, every pair of eyes turned to him. They saw his thin arms, small frame, and silent eyes. Some smiled. A new prey. A new form of entertainment.

Aarav was assigned Bed 27. He sat down without removing his slippers, staring ahead blankly.

That night, he didn't sleep.

Around midnight, four older boys surrounded his bed. Their leader, Rinku, seventeen, with a deep scar across his cheek, leaned close.

"You think you're a tough, killer boy?"

Aarav didn't respond. Rinku slapped him hard across his face. The sound echoed. Still no reaction.

Rinku's friends held him down. Rinku unzipped his pants. Aarav felt no fear, only an ancient numbness as his shorts were pulled down. Rinku violated him as others watched and whispered dirty jokes. When it was over, they left him bleeding and curled up, staring at the iron bed frame above him.

He didn't cry.

He didn't scream.

He simply memorised their faces.

Within a week, Aarav understood the laws of juvenile homes. There were no staff after lights out. The guards slept in their rooms, locked from inside. The dormitories became jungles, ruled by the strongest.

For the first time in life, he decided he wouldn't be the prey.

He started small, stealing food from weaker boys. When they complained, he punched them silently. Soon, he challenged Rinku. One evening, as Rinku sat with his gang, Aarav approached him with folded hands.

"Bhaiya, maaf kar do."

Rinku smirked. "Good boy. Come sit here."

As he pulled Aarav by the neck, Aarav stabbed him in the thigh with a sharpened steel spoon. Before Rinku could react, Aarav rammed the spoon into his other thigh, twisted it, and pulled it out. Blood spurted like a leaking pipe. Rinku howled in pain.

Aarav calmly wiped the blood on Rinku's shirt, leaned close, and whispered,

"Try touching me again."

That night, he became the new king.

Institutional Rot: Reform or Ruin?

Teachers at the juvenile home taught them alphabets and moral science. Aarav sat in the front row, scribbling nonsense on his slate. No one suspected he ran an extortion

racket inside, weaker boys were forced to clean toilets, polish shoes, and pay him a part of their food rations. If they resisted, they were beaten in the bathrooms with steel buckets.

Once, a social worker visited for counselling. She sat with Aarav, her eyes soft behind thick glasses.

“What do you want to become when you grow up?”

Aarav smiled politely. “Police officer, madam.”

She noted it down happily. “That’s wonderful. You’re so quiet and respectful.”

When she left, Aarav stole her pen and broke it open to draw skulls on the dorm wall. Reform, he thought, was for the fools.

Ruthlessness: The New Discipline

One day, an eight-year-old boy named Iqbal wet his bed. The staff slapped him repeatedly. Aarav watched silently as Iqbal sobbed, wiping his tears with his shirt sleeve.

That night, Aarav took Iqbal’s hand and dragged him to the bathroom. The boy resisted, trembling.

“Bhaiya, please... I will not do it again...”

Aarav slammed his head against the bathroom wall.

“You want to learn discipline?”

He filled a bucket with ice-cold water and forced Iqbal’s face into it, holding him down as the boy kicked and thrashed. When he pulled him out, Iqbal gasped and cried silently. Aarav leaned in, his voice flat.

“Do it again and you die.”

From that day, Iqbal never wet his bed again.

And Aarav learned that violence was the only effective teacher.

Mental Health: Deepening Psychopathy

If a psychiatrist had seen him then, they would note:

- Complete lack of remorse
- Grandiose sense of self
- Instrumental aggression (violence as a means to control)
- Sadistic tendencies

But no psychiatrist came. The government’s only therapy was yoga classes twice a week.

During yoga, Aarav would sit cross-legged, eyes closed, imagining slitting the instructor’s throat as he chanted “Om Shanti”.

There were no letters from home. His mother never wrote. No relatives visited.

NGO volunteers came to festivals to distribute sweets. Aarav would stand in line, head bowed, take the laddoo, and whisper thank you. They thought he was a reformed child, so polite and shy.

They never saw the darkness in his eyes as he bit into the sweet, thinking of his next victim.

The Satisfaction After Each Act

Each act of dominance, each bruise he inflicted, each sob he silenced, gave him the same satisfaction as his first murder.

- Like scratching an itch on rotten flesh.
- Like vomiting poison.
- Like reminding himself he was alive because others were afraid.

In two years, Aarav grew physically stronger. The warden wrote in his file, “Improved discipline, regular in prayer sessions, expresses desire to study after release.”

But what they didn’t see was that they weren’t reforming a child, they were sharpening a knife.

By the time he was sixteen, he had learned how to hide blades in his underwear, how to break a child’s ribs without external bruises, and how to smile in front of cameras.

One winter night, as cold winds rattled the broken window panes, Aarav lay on his metal bed staring at the ceiling. Rinku, now crippled and limping, lay on the floor mattress nearby, staring back with hatred and fear.

Aarav turned his head slowly, locking eyes with him.

In that silence, he smiled.

It was a smile of death.

CHAPTER 3

Freedom is a Loaded Gun

On the morning of his eighteenth birthday, Aarav woke before dawn. The cold concrete floor of the juvenile home pressed into his back as he lay staring at the ceiling. He felt no excitement, no anxiety, no sense of change. For him, freedom was simply another place to dominate.

At 9 a.m., the warden called him to the office. Aarav walked in, wearing the only set of clothes he owned, a faded blue shirt and torn jeans, both too small now for his growing frame. The warden handed him a polythene bag with his name scrawled on it in Hindi. Inside was an old Aadhaar card, half-eaten Parle-G biscuits from last night, and a 500-rupee note from the government's rehabilitation fund.

"Don't come back here," the warden said gruffly, not meeting his eyes.

Aarav nodded silently.

Outside, the sun glared down on Kanpur's dusty streets. The world was just as he had left it, dirty, chaotic, indifferent. He stepped out of the juvenile home gates with the same feeling he had when he slit that little girl's throat years ago. Freedom tasted like blood.

He walked aimlessly through the slums, observing hawkers frying samosas, rickshaw pullers sleeping under their carts, and stray dogs rummaging through garbage piles. Finally,

his feet stopped at a scrap dealer's shack. The owner was a hunched old man with trembling hands. Aarav watched him weigh rusted iron pieces for customers.

When the crowd thinned, Aarav entered.

"Kya kaam hai?" the old man asked without looking up.

Aarav picked up an iron rod from the floor, turned it in his hands, and before the man could react, smashed it onto his skull. There was a wet crunch as blood and grey tissue splattered onto the wooden counter. The old man collapsed instantly, twitching as a dark puddle spread under his head.

Aarav stood over him, breathing deeply. For the first time in two years, his lungs felt open. His chest felt light. His brain buzzed with clarity. He dipped his fingers in the blood and smeared two red lines across his cheeks like a tribal warrior.

He wasn't reborn. He had simply come home to himself.

He dragged the body to the back of the shack and covered it with gunny sacks. Then he rummaged through drawers, took ₹2,600 in coins and notes, and a rusted kitchen knife.

Walking out, he felt no fear. No guilt. No trembling. People brushed past him in the narrow lanes, not knowing that death had just walked by.

By evening, he reached the town where his mother now lived with her new husband and two young daughters. Their house was small, but concrete, better than the hut he was born in.

He knocked on the door. His mother opened it and froze. For a moment, they stared at each other. Her eyes welled up with tears, her lips trembled as she whispered, "Aarav... mera beta..."

He felt nothing.

Behind her stood his stepfather, Hari, scratching his belly, frowning at the stranger.

"Kaun hai ye? Kya chahiye?"

Aarav stepped in without permission. His mother tried to touch his face, but he slapped her hand away. Hari stepped forward to push him out. Without blinking, Aarav pulled out the kitchen knife and rammed it into Hari's neck. Blood sprayed in an arc across the faded green walls. Hari gurgled, clawing at the blade embedded in his throat before collapsing to his knees. His mother screamed, clutching her hair, wailing. Aarav looked at her with flat, dead eyes.

"Why didn't you ever protect me?" he asked quietly.

She sobbed incoherently, her saree soaked in her husband's blood. The two little girls watched from the doorway, trembling, wide-eyed, unable to scream.

Aarav didn't kill them.

He turned and walked out.

Because he wanted them to grow up remembering that day. He wanted them to live in fear, carrying his shadow forever.

Psychological Profile: Beyond Redemption

If any forensic psychologist had assessed him then, they would record:

- Complete affective empathy deficit (no capacity for emotional connection)
- Instrumental and reactive aggression combined
- Sadistic gratification
- No attachment to mother or family despite longing for protection in childhood
- Early onset Conduct Disorder solidifying into Antisocial Personality Disorder with Sadism

But no psychologist came.

Night of Gruesome Hunger

That night, he slept in an abandoned warehouse on the outskirts. Rats scurried in the dark. He slit one open with his knife, playing with its twitching guts until it lay still.

He didn't eat it. He just wanted to watch it die. Before sleeping, he whispered to himself in the darkness,

"I am God. I decide who lives."

The next morning, Aarav walked to a nearby Shiva temple. He washed his face at the pump outside. The priest gave him prasad. A woman sitting on the temple steps noticed his lost, innocent look. She was around thirty, in a yellow saree, waiting for her husband.

"Beta, tumhare maa-baap kahan hai?" she asked kindly.

Aarav sat beside her, his knife hidden under his shirt. He smiled shyly, leaning his head against her arm. She stroked his hair, calling him a poor lost child.

Within seconds, he plunged the knife into her ribs thrice. Her screams tore through the temple courtyard. People came running as he stabbed her repeatedly, blood spraying across the stone steps, across his face, dripping onto the brass temple bell beside them.

When her body fell limp, her eyes rolled back in terror, he stood up calmly and walked away. He didn't run. He just walked, his slippers sticky with blood.

Killing her was not personal. It was not revenge. It was simply an act to remind himself that power over life and death was his only godhood.

When the police caught him two days later, he was sitting at a roadside tea stall drinking chai. They handcuffed him as people watched in horror. An old woman spat on him. A young man shouted, "Hang him! He killed children and women!"

But Aarav simply smiled at them. A thin, lifeless smile.

At the police station, the inspector looked at his file.

"Juvenile home for murder at fourteen...released at eighteen...and now this?"

He shook his head, disgusted.

"They say juvenile homes reform children. All they do is breed demons like you."

Aarav leaned forward, his cuffed hands resting on the steel table.

“Do you want to know how it feels to watch the light go out in someone’s eyes?”

The inspector slapped him so hard his lip split open. Blood trickled down his chin. Aarav licked it and smiled.

That night, in his locked cell, he lay on the hard floor, staring at the flickering tube light above him.

His thoughts whispered:

“They will never understand. They will never stop me. I am not a monster. I am the truth they refuse to see.”

And he fell asleep with a smile.

CHAPTER 4

The Devil Behind Bars

They transferred Aarav to Kanpur District Jail under maximum security. As the police jeep rattled through the gates, dozens of prisoners gathered behind rusted grills to watch. News of his arrest had spread. They whispered among themselves:

- "That's him... the boy butcher..."
- "He slit a temple woman in broad daylight..."
- "He killed his own stepfather..."

Aarav stepped down, shackled, his eyes cold and empty. The guards pushed him towards Cell Block C, where murderers and rapists rotted away their sentences.

The superintendent, a bald man with sunken eyes, read his file with disgust.

"Barely eighteen, and already a serial killer. Your parents must be so proud."

Aarav said nothing, staring at the superintendent's jugular vein pulsing under his collar.

Cell Block C was hell on earth. Fifty men crammed into dark cells reeking of urine, sweat, and rotting food. As Aarav entered his cell, prisoners stared at him with curious disdain. Some saw a child, others saw a potential victim.

By midnight, three men surrounded his mat. Their leader, Raju, a tall, skeletal man with sunken eyes and meth scars, grinned.

“Kya re... chhote bacche... humko daraayega? (Will you scare us, little boy?)”

The others laughed. Raju pulled down his lungi, revealing himself, and grabbed Aarav’s hair. But before he could push him down, Aarav sank his teeth into Raju’s thigh, ripping out a chunk of flesh. Raju screamed in agony. The cell erupted into chaos as blood sprayed across the stone floor.

Aarav didn’t let go. He bit deeper, chewing and tearing until a guard arrived with a lathi, smashing his back repeatedly to pull him off.

Raju writhed on the floor, clutching his mangled leg. Aarav sat back against the wall, spitting out flesh, his mouth dripping with blood. He smiled at the guard through swollen lips.

“Don’t ever touch me again.”

Psychological Evaluation: The Manipulator

Two days later, a prison psychologist arrived to evaluate Aarav for court proceedings. She was a petite woman in her thirties, wearing a plain blue salwar suit and thin-rimmed glasses. She sat across the table from him in the counselling room, her pen poised over her notepad.

Psychologist: “Do you know why you are here, Aarav?”

He smiled politely, eyes downcast.

Aarav: "Because I am a bad boy."

Psychologist: "Do you feel bad for what you've done?"

He looked up slowly, locking eyes with her. His voice was soft, almost childlike.

Aarav: "Do you feel bad when you step on an ant?"

She felt a chill crawl up her spine.

Psychologist: "The court wants to know if you can be reformed."

He tilted his head, studying her.

Aarav: "Why do you care?"

Psychologist: "Because I believe everyone deserves a chance."

He smiled wider.

Aarav: "Then you're a fool."

She ended the session quickly, her hands trembling slightly as she gathered her papers.

His Fame Among Criminals

Word spread quickly. The prisoners began calling him "Chhota Shaitaan" - The Little Devil. Older inmates avoided his gaze. Even the most hardened rapists didn't sleep near him. They saw in his eyes something beyond madness - something pure and ancient.

The Triple Murder

One damp July night, it rained relentlessly over Kanpur. Water dripped through the broken roof into Cell Block C. Mosquitoes buzzed around prisoners trying to sleep.

Aarav sat awake in the darkness, staring at the ceiling, listening to the rhythmic drip... drip... drip...

Across from him lay three brothers, convicted of gang-raping a minor girl. They snored loudly; their mouths open like dead fish. Aarav watched them for hours.

At 3 a.m., he got up silently. He walked to their sleeping mat, squatted down, and took out the sharpened steel comb he had smuggled from the barber shop duty.

He pressed it against the first brother's throat and pulled hard. Blood sprayed, warm and thick. The man woke up gurgling, clutching his neck as life drained out of him. Before the others could react, Aarav stabbed the second brother in the eye repeatedly until the socket caved in. The third tried to run but slipped on the blood-soaked floor. Aarav grabbed his hair and slit his throat so deep his head dangled by skin.

The cell erupted in screams. Guards rushed in, beating him mercilessly with lathis until he collapsed unconscious, blood coating his hands like gloves.

Prison Interview After Triple Murder

When he awoke, shackled to the prison hospital bed, the psychologist visited again, pale and trembling.

Psychologist: "Why did you do it, Aarav?"

He turned to her slowly, his eyes calm.

Aarav: "Because I could."

Psychologist: "Do you realise you've ended three lives?"

He smiled faintly, licking the crusted blood from his lips.

Aarav: "I didn't end them. I just stopped them."

Systemic Failure: No Punishment, No Fear

Despite his crimes, his age at the time of the earlier murders made prosecution complex. Lawyers argued for his mental instability. NGOs petitioned for his rehabilitation, calling him a "traumatised boy deserving therapy and care".

Inside, Aarav watched these debates on the prison TV with mild amusement. They debated his future as if he were a stray dog to be rescued or euthanised.

They didn't understand.

He wasn't a victim.

He was a plague.

That night, back in his solitary cell, he lay awake on the cold stone floor, humming an old Bhojpuri lullaby his mother once sang.

In his mind, he saw his next victims. Their screams. Their last breaths.

And he smiled into the darkness.

Because life was meaningless.

And in meaninglessness, he found his peace.

CHAPTER 5

Conversations with the Abyss

After the triple murder in prison, Aarav was placed under constant surveillance. Yet, for legal requirements, psychological assessments continued. Dr. Meenakshi Rao sat across from him again, her eyes sunken with sleepless nights.

He was shackled at wrists and ankles, chains clinking softly each time he shifted.

Dr. Rao: "Good morning, Aarav."

He tilted his head, smiling faintly.

Aarav: "Morning, Doctor. You smell different today. New shampoo?"

She ignored him, opening her notes.

Dr. Rao: "We need to talk about the men you killed. Do you regret it?"

His face turned blank, eyes dull and heavy-lidded. Then his lips curled into a small smile.

Aarav: "Why would I regret cleaning filth from the world?"

She stared at him silently, watching his eyes – there was no flicker of guilt, anger, or even pride. Only emptiness.

Dr. Rao: "You called them 'filth' because they raped a child. But you killed your stepfather too. Was he filth?"

Aarav's smile widened, revealing crooked yellowing teeth.

Aarav: "He tried to throw me out. He thought I was weak. I showed him strength."

He leaned forward suddenly, making the chains rattle. Dr. Rao didn't flinch this time.

Aarav: "Do you want to know a secret, Doctor?"

She paused, pen poised.

Dr. Rao: "Tell me."

He whispered, his voice soft as breath.

Aarav: "When I kill... it feels like... touching God."

Fake Tears, Real Darkness

In the next session, he came in silent, slumped, with swollen eyes. When she began to ask, he broke down crying.

Aarav: "I am evil, Doctor. I know it... I... I don't want to be evil..."

His shoulders shook violently. Tears rolled down, dripping onto the table.

Dr. Rao: "Why do you think you're evil?"

Aarav: "Because... I like it... when they scream... I feel powerful... I feel... happy..."

He sobbed harder, choking on his words. Dr. Rao reached out, touching his cuffed wrist gently. His skin was ice-cold.

Dr. Rao: "You can change, Aarav. You can choose not to act on these thoughts."

He looked up at her, tears shining in his large eyes, a child's innocence painted perfectly over a bottomless void.

Aarav: "Will you save me, Doctor?"

In that moment, she felt a rush of maternal instinct. But deep inside, fear coiled in her belly. Because his eyes were too calm. Too clear. Too empty.

Interviews with Terrified Prison Staff

Warden Sharma, age 49

"He never yells or fights like others. He just... stares at you, as if he knows exactly how he would kill you if he wanted. I've dealt with contract killers and gang lords, but this boy... he is beyond them."

Constable Bhushan, age 35

"Once I found him sitting in his cell, talking to himself. He was saying, 'Blood is warm. Blood is truth.' Over and over. That night I couldn't sleep."

Prison Nurse Anita, age 32

"I had to dress wounds on his back after guards beat him for stabbing another inmate. When I cleaned the blood, he looked at me and said, 'Your blood will look nice on this floor.' I quit next week."

Temporary Release for Psychiatric Observation

The court ordered his transfer to Lucknow State Psychiatric Hospital for in-depth forensic observation. Under heavy guard, he was taken by prison van.

At the hospital, he appeared docile and polite. He greeted doctors with folded hands, thanked nurses, and prayed before meals. Notes read:

“Patient shows remorse, appears compliant, possible treatment responsiveness.”

But Aarav was rehearsing.

He knew this performance would make them lower their guard.

The Massacre

On the eighth night, during power maintenance, the security lights dimmed. Aarav lay awake on his thin mattress, staring at the ceiling fan barely turning.

He got up, walked barefoot to Room 12, and found two patients sleeping. One was an old farmer with dementia, the other a young schizophrenic man.

He slit the farmer's throat first, watching his blood spray onto the damp cement wall. The schizophrenic woke up screaming. Aarav forced him to the floor, raped him violently, then stabbed his chest repeatedly until the screams became gurgles, then silence.

He walked out, covered in blood, humming softly as he returned to his bed.

The Next Morning: His Philosophy

During the emergency evaluation, Dr. Rao sat across from him, her hands trembling as she wrote.

Dr. Rao: “Why, Aarav? Why do this again?”

He smiled gently, as if explaining something obvious to a child.

Aarav: "Because death is the only truth, Doctor. When I kill them, I free them from their lies."

Dr. Rao: "And the rape?"

He shrugged slightly.

Aarav: "Death ends their life. Rape ends their soul. I like complete endings."

She felt tears prick her eyes. But she forced herself to ask,

Dr. Rao: "What about God? Do you think he sees you?"

Aarav chuckled softly.

Aarav: "God? I am God. Only I decide who lives. Who dies. Who suffers."

He leaned forward, whispering so close she could feel his cold breath.

Aarav: "Would you like to see God too, Doctor? I can show you."

That evening, guards dragged him back to his solitary cell, his arms bruised from resisting. Inside, he sat cross-legged in the dark, eyes closed, chanting softly to himself:

"I am God.

I am death.

I am the truth.

I am free."

Outside his cell, a young guard shivered as he watched him through the bars, whispering under his breath,

“He is not human.”

And deep in the darkness, Aarav smiled.

Because he knew the guard was right.

CHAPTER 6

The Anatomy of Evil

After the massacre at the psychiatric hospital, Dr. Meenakshi Rao, along with three senior forensic psychiatrists, compiled his diagnostic report for court proceedings. It read:

Patient Name: Aarav

Age: 18

Diagnosis:

1. Conduct Disorder (Childhood Onset, Severe)

- Recurrent aggression towards people and animals
- Destruction of property
- Deceitfulness, theft
- Serious violations of rules before age 10

2. Antisocial Personality Disorder (Emerging, as per age transition)

- Pervasive disregard for the rights of others
- Lack of remorse
- Failure to conform to lawful behaviour

3. Sexual Sadism Disorder

- Recurrent intense sexual arousal from physical or psychological suffering of others

- Acts on these urges with non-consenting persons

4. Possible Psychopathic Traits (PCL-R indicative)

- Glib, superficial charm
- Grandiose sense of self-worth
- Pathological lying
- Lack of empathy and guilt
- Shallow affect

Interview Excerpt

In their final evaluation interview, Dr. Rao asked,

Dr. Rao: “Do you feel any guilt for what you’ve done?”

Aarav chuckled softly.

Aarav: “Guilt is for the weak, Doctor. Like love. Like hope.”

His Media Interviews: Manipulating the World

When news of his killings leaked, a national crime documentary team requested a supervised interview. The superintendent agreed under strict security.

The journalist, a middle-aged man with greying hair, sat across from him behind bulletproof glass.

Journalist: “Aarav, people want to know... why did you start killing?”

Aarav leaned forward, his dark eyes locked onto the journalist.

Aarav: "Because killing is the only honest thing left in this world."

Journalist: "And rape? Why rape your victims before killing them?"

Aarav's lips curled into a cold smile.

Aarav: "Because death frees them from pain. But rape... rape makes them live with it until their last breath. It's the purest way to own another soul."

The journalist shivered visibly.

Locked in solitary confinement, Aarav spent his days staring at the ceiling, mentally mapping the prison's shift patterns. He noted:

- Guard rotations every 4 hours
- Night staff: 3 men, mostly near the gate
- Blind spot near sewage tank exit

He spoke to no one. But at night, he whispered to himself, "Soon... I will be free. And the world will bleed for me again."

Every night, he imagined walking free under a starless sky, finding a lonely road, hitchhiking, reaching a small village.

He saw himself entering a mud hut at midnight, where a mother slept with her two children. He saw himself raping the mother while forcing her children to watch, then slitting her throat slowly so her gurgles echoed in their ears. Then he imagined killing the children one by one, whispering to them:

“Don’t worry. You’re going to meet your mother again.”

These thoughts calmed him. They gave him purpose. They were his prayers.

During a late-night evaluation session, Dr. Rao asked softly,

Dr. Rao: “What do you think of humanity, Aarav?”

He stared at her silently, then closed his eyes and spoke.

Aarav: “Humanity is a disease. You eat, fuck, shit, pray, and die. You pretend to be gods, but you’re all worms feeding on dirt. When I kill, I remind you of what you truly are – meat.”

She felt cold sweat trickle down her spine as his words soaked the sterile room with horror.

News channels screamed with outrage.

- “Is India’s Juvenile Justice System a Failure?”
- “This is what happens when children become monsters.”
- “Should child criminals be hanged?”

Activists demanded his lifelong psychiatric imprisonment. Others called for death penalty amendments for juveniles above sixteen.

But inside his solitary cell, Aarav felt neither fear nor regret. He sat cross-legged, eyes closed, humming softly.

In his mind, he saw gods kneeling before him, kissing his bloodstained feet.

Because in his world, he was no longer a boy.

He was Death Himself.

CHAPTER 7

The Final Hunt

The Escape

It was 2:47 am on a humid September night when Aarav escaped.

He had spent weeks observing guard patterns, memorising camera blind spots, and waiting for the monsoon thunderstorm that would drown out sound and flicker the old security lines.

The storm came, roaring like a thousand gods screaming in the sky.

As lightning split the darkness, Aarav pried open the loose metal grille near the sewage tank exit using a rusted spoon sharpened against concrete. He slipped through the rancid black tunnel, the stench of human waste curling into his lungs. Rats scurried over his feet, but he felt nothing. His mind was cold, focused, silent.

When he emerged near the outer compound wall, rain poured down his thin body, washing away sewage and blood memories alike. He scaled the crumbling brick wall using a broken drainpipe, tearing his palm open as he reached the top.

He paused there, crouched like a silent animal, watching the sleeping city through the curtain of rain.

And he smiled.

By dawn, news flashed everywhere:

- “Child Monster Escapes High Security Prison!”
- “Killer Rapist On The Loose, Uttar Pradesh Police Launches Statewide Hunt”
- “Lock Your Doors: Mass Murderer Aarav Escaped!”

Police blocked highways, searched slums, bus stands, and railway stations. But Aarav was a shadow. He walked barefoot through muddy village roads, slept under culverts, and stole stale food from temple kitchens.

His eyes remained dark and calm.

Because he was planning.

His Final Spree: Rape and Murder

On the third night after his escape, he reached Haripur, a quiet village near Sultanpur. Crickets chirped in dark fields. Dogs howled far away. No one noticed the thin boy walking through narrow lanes at midnight, barefoot, muddy, shirtless, with eyes glowing faintly in the moonlight.

He entered a mud hut where a mother and her two daughters slept. The husband worked night shifts at a brick kiln.

First, he gagged the mother with her dupatta, tying her hands with her own saree end. She awoke to his cold hands tearing her blouse apart. Her muffled screams turned to

strangled sobs as he raped her brutally, biting into her shoulder until flesh tore away.

Then he turned to her daughters, aged nine and six. He tied the nine-year-old's wrists to the bamboo cot frame and raped her as her mother watched helplessly, her eyes bulging with silent horror.

The six-year-old whimpered softly, hiding her face in her hands. He turned to her, his lips curling into a smile. He strangled her slowly, feeling her small, warm body tremble as she tried to breathe through his tightening grip.

Finally, he slit the mother's throat, watching her blood soak the dirt floor in black pools.

Before leaving, he dipped his fingers into her blood and wrote on the wall:

"God was here."

Psychological Breakdown Post-Spre

As he walked out into the dark fields, fireflies flickering around him like tiny souls escaping their bodies, his mind began to unravel.

He heard voices:

"Kill them all."

"No... I am tired..."

"Weakness is death. Death is purity."

"I am God... I am nothing... I am... nothing..."

He fell to his knees in the wet grass, screaming silently into the dark sky, rain and tears mixing on his bloody face.

Images of his victims swirled in his mind, their eyes wide with terror, their mouths frozen mid-scream, their blood spraying onto his chest like warm rain.

For a moment, he felt an emptiness so deep it burned.

At dawn, he reached the highway, covered in blood and mud. Truck drivers noticed him stumbling barefoot, shivering, eyes vacant. Police surrounded him within minutes.

He did not resist.

As they dragged him into the jeep, he whispered softly to the arresting officer:

Aarav: "Don't be happy, Inspector Saab. You are all dead anyway. You just don't know it yet."

His Haunting Monologue

In the interrogation room, he sat silent for hours. Finally, as the sun set, painting the cement walls golden-red, he looked up and spoke to the officers recording his statement.

Aarav: "Do you know what life is? It's a worm crawling in shit. You think you're special because you build temples and fly rockets. But inside... you're just meat. And meat exists to rot."

"I am not evil. I am freedom. I free them from their illusions. I tear away their skin so they can see who they really are."

He smiled softly.

Aarav: "One day, you will thank me."

That night, in his high-security isolation cell, chained to an iron ring in the floor, he lay staring at the ceiling, eyes wide open, unblinking.

In his mind, he saw a world burning, screaming mothers, dead children, temples collapsing into blood-soaked earth. And in the centre of it all, he saw himself standing naked, arms raised to the black sky, laughing as flames licked his feet.

Because in his universe, he was the god of ruin.

And ruin was the only truth.

CHAPTER 8

The Shape of a Monster

The House That Raised Him

The house Aarav grew up in was not a home. It was a battlefield without soldiers, a prison without guards.

The mud walls reeked of alcohol and sweat. The kitchen was a graveyard of empty bottles. His father was a shadow that came home drunk, wielding belts, sticks, or bare fists. His mother was a ghost, silent, eyes always lowered, a presence that vanished when he needed her most.

Every corner whispered neglect. Every room taught him that love was a myth child in other houses invented.

Memory Fragment 1: Hunger

Aarav was six when he went hungry for two days straight. His father had spent the week's wages on gambling, and his mother had hidden what little rice they had for herself.

He rummaged through dustbins behind neighbors' homes, searching for scraps. He found half a chapati covered in flies and chewed it slowly, savoring each bite like it was a feast.

That night, as his stomach cramped, he realized:

"Food is not given. Food is taken. Nothing in this world is free."

It was the first seed of his belief: to survive, you must steal, hurt, or kill.

Memory Fragment 2: The Friend That Wasn't

When he was nine, a boy named Sameer from the village befriended him. Sameer shared marbles, gave him half a mango, and even invited him to play cricket.

For two weeks, Aarav believed maybe friendship existed. Maybe someone could want him.

Then one afternoon, Sameer's elder brother cornered Aarav in an alley, mocking him:

"My brother plays with a dog. A thief's son. Filthy bastard." The boy spat on Aarav, kicked him in the ribs, and left him coughing in the dirt.

When Sameer walked past him the next day, he looked away, ashamed. Friendship dissolved.

That betrayal stayed sharper than his father's belt. It was proof:

"No one stays. No one cares. Everyone leaves."

Memory Fragment 3: The Uncle's Hands

At ten, he lived with his uncle, the man who reeked of alcohol and lust.

The first night, Aarav thought he was safe. A roof, a meal, a bed. The second night, he learned otherwise.

The uncle's weight pressed on him like a coffin lid. His breath was fire and rot. His hands explored places that

should never have been touched. Aarav's small fists beat against the man's chest, but nothing stopped him.

When it ended, Aarav lay curled up, silent, eyes burning with hate.

The uncle whispered, "Say a word and I'll throw you out like a dog."

Aarav didn't say a word. He never did. But inside, something split.

He stopped being a child that night. He was wounded.

Memory Fragment 4: The Broken Toy

He once found a broken toy truck discarded on the roadside. Its wheels were cracked, its paint chipped. Still, he clutched it as though it were a treasure.

When he brought it home, his father snatched it, sneered, and smashed it against the wall.

"Trash for a trash child," his father spat. Aarav stared at the shattered pieces. Something clicked inside him:

"If everything I touch is destroyed, then I will destroy it before it can be taken."

That broken truck was his first philosophy lesson.

Memory Fragment 5: The First Blood

At eleven, after another night with his uncle, Aarav sat by the river, staring at the moon. The rage inside him boiled until it had nowhere to go.

When a stray cat wandered near, meowing softly, Aarav pounced. He pinned it down and slit its throat with a shard of glass. Warm blood splashed across his hands.

The cat's final twitch, the way its life drained from its eyes, gave him a rush, no beating, no hunger, no abuse ever had.

For the first time, he felt in control. For the first time, he wasn't a victim, he was a victor.

He whispered to himself: "This is what power feels like."

Memory Fragment 6: The Festival of Ashes

During Diwali, he watched families light lamps, children burst crackers, and laughter filling the night. His own house was dark. His father lay unconscious in his vomit. His mother sat staring into the empty sky.

Aarav lit a small firework he had stolen earlier and watched it explode. The sparks reflected in his eyes, not as joy, but as prophecy.

"The world burns so beautifully," he thought. "Someday, I will make it burn with me."

The Gradual Death of Innocence

By the time Aarav turned twelve, he no longer thought of himself as a boy. He thought of himself as something else, an observer, a survivor, a weapon forged in silence.

He never cried. He never trusted. He never asked. He learned how to lie. He learned how to steal. He learned that silence was sharper than any blade. And deep inside, he

learned that love, kindness, and forgiveness were fictions, stories the weak told themselves to survive.

Years later, sitting in his prison cell, Aarav often revisited these memories. Not with sadness. Not with pain. But with a twisted pride.

He believed these were not wounds but badges. Proof that he was chosen to see the world without illusions. Remorse never grew in him because it had no soil. His childhood had salted the earth where empathy should have blossomed.

“If you want me to regret it, give me something to compare it with. Show me what a good man looks like. Show me what love is. I never saw it. How can I believe in something I never touched?”

For him, morality was a ghost. And he did not fear ghosts.

The Reader's Mirror

The reader of his story may feel disgust, anger, or even hatred. But beyond those emotions lies an uncomfortable truth:

Children do not grow into monsters alone. They are made.

Every beating, every silence, every act of neglect, brick by brick, it built him. Family was his first abuser. Society was his accomplice. Friendship betrayed him.

By the time he could choose, his choices were already poisoned.

Aarav sat in the shadows of his solitary cell, scratching at the wall with bloodied fingernails. His mind whispered the

voices of his past: the belt, the uncle, the hunger, the betrayals.

He smiled. "You gave me nothing. So, I became everything you fear."

The wall said nothing. But in the silence, Aarav's laughter carried like the echo of a wound that would never close.

CHAPTER 9

The Court of Shadows

The courtroom buzzed with electricity as Aarav entered, shackled and barefoot, escorted by six commandos. His ankles were bleeding from tightened iron cuffs. Cameras flashed wildly, capturing the boy whose name was now synonymous with evil.

The judge, an ageing man with trembling hands, avoided looking directly at him. Lawyers whispered urgently, scribbling notes for television interviews later.

Aarav simply sat, eyes dull and lifeless, staring at the ceiling fan spinning slowly above.

Family Testimonies: Voices of the Dead

Savitri Devi, mother of the raped and murdered sisters, took the stand. Her saree was drenched with tears and sweat. Her voice cracked like dry leaves in winter.

“He... he raped my baby... My six-year-old baby... How do I live now? I feed her ghost every day... because mothers feed their children... even if they are ashes.”

She collapsed mid-sentence, sobbing, clutching her chest as relatives held her upright.

Ramdeen, father of a psychiatric victim, spoke next.

“My son could not even recognise his own name. He called everyone ‘Bhaiya’. Why did this devil kill him? What justice exists for us poor when such demons walk the earth?”

His face crumpled, and he walked away silently.

Psychiatric Final Testimony

Dr. Meenakshi Rao stood next. Her statement was calm, but her hands trembled as she read.

“Aarav displays profound antisocial personality traits, sexual sadism disorder, and emerging psychopathy. He has no remorse, no guilt, and no capacity for emotional empathy. He is beyond conventional rehabilitation frameworks.”

She paused, tears brimming despite her professionalism.

“He is not insane. He is not delusional. He knows exactly what he does. He chooses it. Because for him, pain is worship.”

Aarav watched her silently. His lips curled faintly into a smile.

The judge asked softly, voice echoing in the silent courtroom.

Judge: “Do you have anything to say before sentencing?”

Aarav stood slowly, chains clinking against the floor. He looked at the crowded room – the weeping mothers, angry men, trembling guards, blank-faced lawyers.

He smiled gently, as if greeting old friends.

Aarav: "Do you know why you hate me? Because I do what you dream of doing. You want to hurt. You want to kill. You want to fuck without permission. But you don't... because you're cowards."

He turned to the crying mothers.

Aarav: "Your children died pure. They never grew up to be liars like you."

He turned to the judge.

Aarav: "You wear a black robe and call yourself justice. But you are just an old man waiting to die. I am death itself."

The silence was absolute, broken only by the sound of distant traffic outside the courthouse gates.

His Verdict

The judge read slowly, his voice shaking.

"Under IPC Sections 302, 376, 377, and POCSO Act, and tried as an adult under the Juvenile Justice (Amendment) Act 2015 for heinous offences, this court sentences you to life imprisonment till natural death without parole."

"May God have mercy on your soul."

Aarav smiled, tilting his head slightly like a curious child.

Aarav: "There is no God. Only me."

News channels erupted:

- "Monster Child Sentenced to Life – Is It Enough?"
- "Should Juveniles Above 16 Get Death Penalty for Heinous Crimes?"
- "Child Rights vs. Victim Rights: Nation Divided."

Debates raged. Some activists argued that executing a child violated human rights. Others screamed he deserved a public hanging. Politicians tweeted statements to gain moral mileage.

But none of it mattered to Aarav.

That night, back in his solitary cell, chained to an iron ring bolted into the damp concrete floor, he sat naked, knees to chest, staring into the darkness.

He began humming softly, the same lullaby his mother sang when he was a baby:

“Nindiya aaja, nindiya aaja,

Sapno ka dera basa...”

But his voice was cold, devoid of warmth. His mind saw no dreams. Only fire. Only blood.

In his vision, the world burned in red and black, and he stood amidst its ashes, barefoot and smiling, holding a severed head like a lantern.

Because to Aarav,

Death was not justice.

Death was not a punishment.

Death was the only truth left.

CHAPTER 10

The God in Chains

After sentencing, Aarav was placed in Block F – High Security Isolation. His cell was six by six feet, iron bars on one side, walls stained with mould and urine, and a dim flickering bulb above his iron ring shackle point.

His days became a ritual of silence and savagery.

At dawn, a guard slid his food tray under the bars – watery lentils and two stale rotis. Aarav ate slowly, smearing the dal across his face like war paint, smiling at his reflection in the metal tray.

He would then squat naked in the corner, urinating into the drain hole, whispering softly:

“Wake up, God. Wake up.”

He spent hours scratching words into the damp wall with his broken fingernails:

“Truth is blood.”

“Fear is worship.”

“God is the blade.”

The scratches bled his fingers raw. He would lick the blood off, humming softly, his eyes glazed with quiet ecstasy.

He sat cross-legged, eyes closed, imagining his victims’ faces – their screams, their last gasps, their blood spraying

warm onto his chest. Sometimes he moaned softly, his body rocking in small rhythmic spasms as he relived each kill.

Guards watched him from the observation window, shivering despite the humid air. None dared enter alone.

His Savage Rituals

On the third night, he tore a strip from his prison blanket, tying it tightly around his genitals until the pain burned through his abdomen like fire. He bit his forearm to stifle the screams, eyes rolled back in pleasure.

The next morning, a young guard vomited when he saw the blood-soaked cloth.

He collected cockroaches in a tin cup and crushed them slowly, one by one, whispering:

“You are free now. Free from your illusions.”

Then he smeared their entrails onto the wall, creating abstract, violent murals of lines and circles intertwined with blood and roach bodies.

Silent Killings Within the Cell

Despite being in solitary, one night a maintenance worker was sent in to fix the leaking pipe. Aarav sat silently in the corner as the man worked, eyes lowered.

In a sudden movement, he lunged, biting into the man's neck like an animal. Blood sprayed across his chest as the worker fell gurgling. Before guards arrived, Aarav had gouged out the man's left eye with his thumb and held it cupped in his palm, staring at it curiously.

Aarav: "So small... so useless... so human."

He offered it to the guards when they broke the door open, smiling faintly.

Final Psychological Breakdown

By the fourth month in isolation, Aarav began to unravel.

He stopped eating. He tore out his hair in chunks, scratching deep, bleeding lines into his scalp. His lips cracked and bled from silent chanting.

He wrote his final message on the cell wall in his own faeces and blood:

"There is no God. There is only me. I am the God that eats itself."

Dr. Rao's Closing Reflections

She sat before her computer, typing her last report with tears blurring her vision.

"Aarav was not born a monster. He was bred from brutality, neglect, and systemic failure. But the choice remained his own. He chose the darkest truth of humanity and became it fully."

"Perhaps there is no rehabilitation for some souls. Perhaps evil is not a disease but a choice repeated until it becomes worship."

She closed her laptop, whispering to herself:

"May his victims find peace. May his soul find nothing."

His Ultimate End

One humid dawn, the guard arrived to slide his food tray under the bars. Aarav sat cross-legged in the centre of his cell, naked, his eyes open and glazed with death.

He had bitten his tongue off in the night and choked silently on his own blood, eyes wide with ecstasy as he suffocated.

On the wall behind him, scrawled with his severed tongue's blood, was his final message:

"God is dead."

As his body was carried out, thin and bloodstained, prison staff sighed with relief. But some whispered silent prayers, terrified that even in death, his spirit lingered.

Because for those who saw him in his final moments,

He was not a boy.

He was not human.

He was the end itself.

EPILOGUE

The Silence After God

The World Reacts to His Death

When news of Aarav's death broke, television anchors screamed across channels:

- "Child Monster Found Dead in Prison Cell!"
- "Suicide or Black Magic? Police Investigate Death of Serial Killer Aarav!"
- "End of an Era of Fear – India Reacts to Devil's Death."

Some celebrated. Villagers burst firecrackers in Haripur. Mothers held their daughters closer, whispering silent prayers of thanks.

But in dark corners of society, some wept silently, the broken, the violent, the lost who saw their own darkness mirrored in him.

His Funeral

His body lay unclaimed. No relatives came forward. No priests chanted the last rites. Prison staff wrapped his thin corpse in stained white cotton, cremating it at dawn under silent grey skies.

As flames consumed his remains, a crow perched on the crematorium chimney, cawing loudly into the empty

morning. Some guards later said they saw his eyes in that crow – black, cold, alive.

Dr. Rao's Final Reflection

Months later, Dr. Meenakshi Rao sat at her desk, re-reading her final report on Aarav. Tears blurred the words as she whispered softly:

“You were born unwanted. Beaten. Starved. Raped. You became what you knew – violence.”

She paused, breathing shakily.

“But the choice was yours. You chose to become a worshiper of pain. You could have been more. You chose to become death.”

She closed the file, whispering one final prayer:

“May your victims find peace.

May your soul find silence.”

Society's Unanswered Questions

In Parliament, debates raged about revising the Juvenile Justice Act:

- Should juveniles committing heinous crimes be hanged?
- Does early trauma justify evil?
- Is rehabilitation truly possible for child psychopaths?

No answers came. Only anger. Only grief. Only fear.

Years later, in psychiatric classrooms, criminology lectures, and true crime documentaries, his name became a synonym for darkness.

Students read his psychological assessments with horror. Activists debated his human rights. Villagers told ghost stories about him to scare disobedient children.

But the truth remained unchanged:

He was not a monster born.

He was a monster made.

And in the end,

He chose to become one completely.

Final Scene: The Haunting Legacy

At the village well in Haripur, an old woman drew water one dusk. As she bent over, she thought she saw a thin barefoot boy standing across the field, staring silently, his eyes black pits of emptiness.

She blinked, and he was gone. But her heart raced, her hands trembling, as she whispered a silent prayer:

“God protect us!”

Because even in death,

Aarav remained.

In nightmares.

In the shadows.

In the silent scream within every human heart that knows, Evil is real.

And sometimes, it wears the face of a child.

AUTHOR'S MESSAGE

The Child You Ignore Today Becomes the Adult You Fear Tomorrow

1. A Heartfelt Beginning

Dear Reader,

As you close this story, you may feel disturbed, perhaps even horrified. You may wonder how a child, born innocent, could grow into a creature capable of such merciless brutality. You may think of Aarav, the boy in this tale, as an exception, a monster born out of the shadows, an anomaly in the human story.

But I must ask you to stop and reflect: Is Aarav truly an anomaly, or is he a mirror of what happens when we, as families, as schools, as a society, abandon our children?

Every child begins life with potential. A child is not born with hatred, violence, or cruelty etched into their hearts. They are born with hunger for love, with curiosity, with a capacity for joy. What they become, however, is deeply shaped by what they are given – and by what they are denied.

This message is not about justifying monsters. It is about preventing them. It is about facing an uncomfortable truth: the environment we create for our children today decides the kind of humans they will become tomorrow.

2. Understanding Child Psychology: The Foundation

The human brain is not static; it is a growing, breathing, shaping organ. Especially in childhood, the brain absorbs experiences like a sponge. Neuroscience shows us that the architecture of the brain is literally sculpted by early life, through words spoken, hugs given, fears instilled, and neglect suffered.

- A child who grows up in safety learns trust.
- A child who grows up in fear learns suspicion.
- A child who grows up loved, learns compassion.
- A child who grows up beaten learns cruelty.

Children mirror their environment. When we laugh with them, they carry laughter. When we strike them, they carry violence. When we ignore them, they carry emptiness.

This is not philosophy, it is psychology, proven across research. Childhood trauma alters not just memory, but the very structure of the brain's stress system. It teaches the child that the world is unsafe. It turns survival into obsession. It robs the child of the tools to become human in the fullest sense.

3. Trauma and Grief: Silent Teachers of Violence

Childhood trauma is not always visible. It is not always a belt across the back or a hand across the face. Trauma can be silent:

- The mother who never listens.
- The father who never smiles.
- The teacher who humiliates in class.

- The friends who exclude.
- The neighbors who whisper “worthless.”

Children carry these invisible wounds into their bones. And when grief is never named, never spoken, it becomes anger. When fear is never comforted, it becomes cruelty. When loneliness is never addressed, it becomes hunger for power.

Every violent criminal we fear in adulthood once sat in a classroom, once played on the streets, once waited for someone to notice their pain. Many were ignored.

4. The Role of Parents: The First Mirror

Parents are the first architects of a child’s humanity. A child learns what love is by watching how parents love them. A child learns what respect is by watching how parents respect them.

But too often, parenting is confused with controlling. Parents shout when they should listen. They beat when they should guide. They dismiss feelings with phrases like:

- “Don’t cry, you’re weak.”
- “Stop dreaming, life is cruel.”
- “Why can’t you be like others?”

Every such sentence chips away at the child’s sense of worth. Every such dismissal teaches them: ‘My feelings don’t matter. My voice doesn’t matter. I don’t matter.’

To parents, I say this: your child is not your property, your project, or your punishment. Your child is a person

becoming. Your role is to water the soil, not to crush the seed.

5. The Role of Teachers and Schools: Beyond Syllabi

A child spends more waking hours in school than at home. Teachers, therefore, are not merely instructors, they are sculptors of minds.

But our schools are obsessed with grades, rankings, and punishments. Rarely do we ask: How is this child feeling? Is this child safe? Does this child belong?

One insult from a teacher can scar for life. One act of encouragement can light a fire of hope.

Teachers hold immense power, the power to shame or to shape. The chalk in their hands can draw futures, or erase self-worth.

Schools must therefore embrace emotional education alongside academic education. We must teach empathy as much as arithmetic, kindness as much as chemistry.

6. The Role of Society: The Village That Raises the Child

There is an African proverb: It takes a village to raise a child.

But in our world, the village often wounds the child. We gossip about children who make mistakes instead of guiding them. We label them, “bad,” “lazy,” “useless”, before they even have a chance to define themselves.

Society must realize that every child belongs to all of us. The child on the street corner begging is not just their parents’

problem, they are a mirror of what we allow. The child bullied in school is not just their teacher's problem, they are our collective failure.

If we want peace in our streets, we must begin with compassion in our neighborhoods. If we want justice in our courts, we must begin with justice in our homes.

7. The Role of Government: Policy as Protection

Governments cannot wash their hands of responsibility. Children are not voters, but they are citizens. And the strength of a nation is measured by how it protects its most vulnerable.

Governments must:

- Strengthen child protection laws.
- Ensure every school has counselors, not just exam halls.
- Provide training for teachers in emotional intelligence, not just curriculum.
- Launch community parenting workshops.
- Fund shelters for abused children, where safety is real, not promised.

Every rupee spent on prevention saves a thousand spent on prisons. Build children, not cells.

8. The Role of Colleges and Higher Education

By the time a child reaches college, many scars are already present. But colleges can still be sanctuaries.

They must become spaces where young adults learn not just careers, but character. Where discussions of trauma, grief, and mental health are normalized. Where counselors are accessible without stigma.

If colleges produce engineers but not empathetic humans, doctors but not healers, lawyers but not just souls, then society fails again.

9. A Call to Every Reader: What You Can Do Today

Perhaps you are not a parent. Perhaps you are not a teacher or policymaker. But you are human. That alone gives you power.

You can:

- Listen when a child speaks, even if the words are clumsy.
- Notice the quiet child, the withdrawn one, the “problem” student.
- Intervene when you see abuse, instead of saying “It’s not my business.”
- Encourage dreams instead of ridiculing them.
- Model kindness, because children learn by watching more than by listening.

Every small act creates ripples. A single kind teacher can undo years of cruelty. A single caring neighbor can prevent a lifetime of loneliness.

10. Why This Matters: The Cycle of Violence

If we fail to care, the cycle continues.

A child abused becomes an adult abuser. A child ignored becomes an adult destroyer. A child mocked becomes an adult hungry for domination.

And then we, the society who failed them, stand shocked at their crimes, calling them monsters, demanding their death.

We ask, “How could this happen?” forgetting that we watched it happen, step by step, in their childhood.

The truth is cruel but clear: the monsters we fear are often the children we failed.

11. Breaking the Cycle: What Must Change

We must decide, collectively, that children are not secondary. That their psychology is not a luxury subject. That their feelings are not distractions.

We must invest in:

- Mental health education starting in primary school.
- Parental training programs accessible to all.
- Zero tolerance for abuse in homes, schools, institutions.
- Community systems of care where no child slips through cracks.

We must measure our progress as a society not by skyscrapers, not by GDP, but by how safe and nurtured our children are.

12. A Personal Plea

I wrote this story not to glorify violence, but to expose neglect. Aarav is fictional, but he is also real. He is stitched together from countless reports, from real cases, from children I have seen and you have walked past.

He is the boy you ignored on the street. He is the student who dropped out of your class. He is the neighbor's child you dismissed as "spoiled."

He is proof that silence kills as surely as violence. And if we do not change, there will be more Aaravs. Not in stories, but in headlines. Not on pages, but in prisons.

13. Gender: The Invisible Cage

When we talk about childhood, we often talk about food, shelter, and schooling. But one of the most powerful shapers of a child's destiny is gender.

From the moment a child takes their first breath, society places a stamp: boy or girl. With that stamp comes a set of invisible rules, expectations, and limitations.

- Boys are told not to cry.
- Girls are told not to dream too big.
- Boys are taught aggression as strength.
- Girls are taught silence as virtue.
- Boys are praised for risk-taking.
- Girls are praised for obedience.

This is discrimination disguised as culture. It creates two wounded halves of humanity. Boys grow up emotionally

stunted, unable to express tenderness. Girls grow up fearful, shrinking from their own potential.

Both are robbed. Both are broken.

And in some tragic cases, those broken pieces become dangerous weapons. The boy denied permission to cry finds release in cruelty. The girl denied a voice learns to accept violence as normal.

Gender inequality is not just unfair; it is traumatic.

14. Trauma Multiplied: The Girl Child

A girl born into discrimination carries heavier weights:

- She may be denied education.
- She may be forced into child marriage.
- She may experience harassment at school, on streets, even at home.
- She may grow up hearing, "Your brother matters more than you."

This constant devaluation tells her: you are less than human.

The consequences are devastating: loss of self-worth, fear of ambition, acceptance of abuse. For many, survival becomes the only dream.

And when society silences girls, it silences half of its wisdom, half of its compassion, half of its potential.

15. Trauma Multiplied: The Boy Child

Yet boys are also victims of gender expectations. When a boy is told, “Don’t cry, men are strong,” he learns to bury pain. When he is told, “Fight back or you’re weak,” he learns violence as a language.

He grows into a man who cannot admit fear, who confuses dominance with love, who mistakes cruelty for power.

Many of the violent crimes we fear are not born from boys who were inherently evil, but from boys who were denied the right to be human.

16. Breaking the Chain of Gendered Trauma

We must teach children that:

- Crying is human, not female.
- Courage is human, not male.
- Dreams are human, not gendered.
- Respect is universal, not selective.

Homes and schools must consciously break gender biases:

- Give daughters and sons equal freedom to play, explore, study.
- Allow boys to speak about fear without shame.
- Teach girls to lead without apology.
- Stop dividing toys, books, and futures by gender.

Because when a boy grows free of toxic masculinity, he becomes capable of tenderness. When a girl grows free of discrimination, she becomes capable of leadership.

Together, they become capable of building a humane society.

17. The Collective Role of Society

It is not enough to fix parenting. It is not enough to reform schools. Society itself must change the way it sees children.

Stop labeling: “bad boy,” “fast girl,” “troublemaker.” These are not identities; they are warnings we are engraving on their souls.

Stop gossiping: The whispered judgment about a teenager’s clothes or choices can wound deeper than a slap.

Stop excusing abuse: When we say, “It happens in every home” or “Boys will be boys,” we permit violence.

Society must become a place where children feel seen, safe, and valued. Otherwise, the society itself becomes the factory of monsters.

18. The Responsibility of Governments

Governments are not just law-makers; they are guardians of childhood. A government that builds roads but not protection for children is not building a nation, but a marketplace.

Policies must include:

1. Free and compulsory mental health counseling in schools, not optional, but mandatory.
2. Stronger juvenile justice systems, where rehabilitation is real, not paperwork.

3. Community centers for parents, teaching healthy parenting, emotional literacy, and gender sensitivity.
4. Media regulation, ensuring children are not constantly exposed to violence, toxic gender roles, and unrealistic expectations.
5. Scholarships for the girl child, education as both shield and sword against exploitation.
6. Vocational training for troubled boys, giving them purpose instead of leaving them to drift into crime.

Because every rupee invested in a child saves millions spent later on prisons, courts, and hospitals.

19. Practical Guidance for Parents

If you are a parent, you hold the power of shaping tomorrow. Here are small yet life-altering actions:

- Listen daily: Ask your child not just, “What did you study?” but “How did you feel today?”
- Apologize when wrong: Parents are not gods. When you admit mistakes, children learn humility.
- Respect boundaries: Knock before entering their room. Privacy teaches dignity.
- Encourage hobbies: A child with passion is less likely to seek destruction.
- Model equality: Share chores. Respect your spouse. Children copy what they see, not what you preach.
- Speak openly about emotions and gender: Normalize both sons and daughters expressing vulnerability and ambition.

Parenting is not about producing perfect children. It is about producing safe children who know what love feels like.

20. Practical Guidance for Teachers

Teachers hold futures in their hands. A single word of encouragement can save a life.

- Never humiliate a child in class. Criticism can be private; encouragement must be public.
- Notice patterns, the withdrawn student, the aggressive one. They may be carrying hidden trauma.
- Integrate life skills, empathy, and emotional awareness into lessons.
- Challenge gender stereotypes in class activities. Let girls lead, let boys nurture.
- Partner with counselors. You are not alone in this task.

The best teachers are not remembered for their syllabus, but for how they made children feel.

21. Healing a Society Through Its Children

If we want fewer prisons, we must build stronger playgrounds.

If we want fewer crimes, we must build more classrooms.

If we want fewer broken men, we must raise boys allowed to cry.

If we want fewer silenced women, we must raise girls taught to speak.

Healing society begins in cradles, classrooms, and conversations.

22. A Direct Plea to the Reader

Dear reader, you may close this book and think: This is sad, but not my problem. But it is your problem.

Every time you walk past a child being beaten and say nothing, you contribute.

Every time you tell a boy to “man up” or a girl to “be quiet,” you contribute.

Every time you laugh at sexist jokes, ignore bullying, or remain silent about abuse, you contribute.

You cannot change the entire system overnight. But you can change the world of one child. And for that child, the difference is everything.

23. Final Reflections: The Cost of Neglect

The story you read was fictional. But children like Aarav exist in every city, every village, every school. They exist in silence, in shadows, waiting for someone to notice.

Some will be saved by a teacher who cared, by a parent who changed, by a counselor who listened.

Some will not be saved and they will grow into the headlines we fear.

The cost of neglect is not measured in broken children alone. It is measured in broken societies, broken families, broken futures.

24. Closing Words: Build Humans, Not Monsters

As I end this message, I ask you to remember one truth:

No child is born a monster. We make them.

We make them when we ignore their tears.

We make them when we enforce silence.

We make them when we abuse, discriminate, and deny.

And yet, we can unmake this cycle. We can raise children with compassion, with equality, with safety. We can raise children who know how to love because they were loved.

This is not charity. This is survival. Because the child you nurture today is the neighbor you live beside tomorrow, the leader you follow tomorrow, the society you inhabit tomorrow.

If you want a safer tomorrow, build safer children today.

Always

Anjum J Parveen 