

Till Debt Do Us Part

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Till Debt Do Us Part

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Introduction: The Infinite Ledger

Time is not a straight line; it is a relentlessly spinning wheel, grinding the souls of the living into the dust of their own past choices. We walk through our modern lives under the illusion of autonomy, believing our anxieties, our sudden aversions, and our inexplicable obligations are simply quirks of psychology. We do not hear the scratch of the unseen accountant's charcoal across the infinite pages of the cosmic ledger. We do not smell the ancient, dried blood buried beneath the pristine asphalt of our cities.

There is a spiritual economy to the universe, a cold, mathematical certainty that governs the transmigration of souls. Every stolen coin, every drop of spilled water, every agonizing cry ignored in the pursuit of greed leaves an indelible stain on the fabric of existence. The universe demands balance. It does not punish out of malice, nor does it reward out of kindness; it simply collects what is owed. When a life ends with a ledger bleeding in the red—when a soul is crushed by the unpaid debt of another's cruelty—death is not an escape. It is merely a temporary pause.

Centuries can pass. Empires of stone and wood can crumble into dust, replaced by empires of glass, steel, and fiber optics. Yet, the soul remembers. The mind forgets the blinding desert sun, the suffocating damp of the royal oubliette, or the sharp scent of arsenic mixed with honey, but the soul carries the scars across the threshold of rebirth. It pulls the debtor and the creditor back together, drawn by the invisible, inescapable gravity of unfinished business.

The ten stories chronicled here are not tales of romance. They are the brutal, inevitable audits of the soul. They unfold in the sprawling, neon-lit arteries of modern Sydney and the suffocating, humid confines of Parramatta flats, far removed from the ancient courts, sun-baked villages, and colonial mansions where the original sins were forged. Here, the ancient tyrants have returned as modern spouses, their historical greed manifesting as manicured gluttony, their royal cruelty reduced to sharp, domestic abuse. And their victims have returned as husbands trapped in a terrifying, inexplicable devotion, bound by the heavy, suffocating chains of karmic debt.

To the outside world, these are simply unhappy marriages. But beneath the veneer of suburban domesticity, the scales are tipping.

The universe is preparing to settle the accounts, exacting its toll in the currency of modern tragedies—a misplaced step, a shattered glass, a failing heart.

These are the final days of the cycle. Listen closely to the quiet hum of the city, and you might hear the heavy book snapping shut.

Chapter 1: Puja and Surya

The hollow, cavernous ache of absolute starvation was a ghost that Surya carried deep within his marrow, a sensory echo from a dusty, sun-scorched village lost to the centuries. In that forgotten life, he had been a daily wage laborer. His world was painted in the blinding, unforgiving yellow glare of the midday sun and the dull, cracked brown of parched earth. He smelled perpetually of dried sweat, coarse burlap, and the metallic tang of the heavy iron tools he swung from dawn until dusk. Puja had been the village grocer, a woman whose wealth was built on a foundation of ruthless extortion. Her shop smelled intoxicatingly of roasted cumin, raw golden wheat, and sweet jaggery—scents that tortured Surya's perpetually empty stomach. She manipulated her prices, adding a crippling five percent monthly interest into a heavy, leather-bound notebook. The soundtrack of Surya's misery was the dry, scratching sound of her charcoal stick adding to his impossible debt, and the heavy, mocking clink of copper coins she hoarded in her wooden till. When a devastating accident crushed Surya's legs, the smell of his own spilled blood in the dirt was his final scent of labor. Unable to work, he crawled to Puja's shop, begging for a handful of rice. She refused, her eyes cold, clutching her ledger. Surya died slowly in the suffocating heat, his body consuming itself, his final vision the golden mounds of grain he could not touch. Puja passed away shortly after, her heart giving out not from grief for a dead man,

but from the bitter, toxic stress of a debt she could no longer extract.

The universe, with its meticulous, unforgiving irony, balanced their ledger by casting them into a cramped, aggressively modern two-bedroom rented flat in Parramatta. The grueling physical labor of the sun-baked fields was replaced by the exhausting, mental grind of the Sydney IT sector. Surya was a senior software professional at InfoCys, working brutal twelve-hour shifts. His days were illuminated entirely by the harsh, unyielding blue glare of his dual monitors. His world smelled of ozone, burnt coffee, and the recycled, sterile air of the corporate office.

Puja had returned as his wife, and the universe had enacted a cruel reversal of their dynamic. The woman who had hoarded food and starved him to death was now defined entirely by her gluttony, while Surya was the one trapped in a cycle of endless, unrewarded provision. The Parramatta flat was a claustrophobic monument to her idleness. The living room was perpetually bathed in the rapidly flickering, multicolored glare of the massive television screen. The air inside the flat was thick and heavy, smelling nauseatingly of stale, reused frying oil, cheap milk chocolate, and the sharp, artificial cheese dust of the potato chips she consumed by the carton.

Surya lived in a state of profound, bone-deep exhaustion. The soundtrack of his life in Sydney was the rapid, frantic clicking of his mechanical keyboard as he desperately tried to meet software deadlines, constantly interrupted by Puja's booming, abrasive voice demanding to be taken to the beauty parlor, the shopping mall, or the cinema. He longed for the soft, warm sounds of a baby crying, yearning for a child to bring life into their sterile existence, but Puja refused. She showed no interest in reducing her weight or

abandoning her endless parade of fried snacks. Surya often stood on their small balcony, looking out at the glowing amber streetlights of the Great Western Highway, wondering what terrible, unspeakable sin he had committed in a past life to be burdened with this massive, cruel woman who offered him no affection, only demands.

The karmic contract expired on a suffocatingly humid Thursday night. The air in the flat was stagnant, smelling overwhelmingly of the greasy, heavily spiced roasted half-chicken Puja was gorging herself on. Surya was in the tiny study, his eyes burning from the blue light of his laptop, his shoulders aching from a twelve-hour coding sprint.

Suddenly, the relentless noise of the television stopped, replaced by an angry, high-pitched screech from Puja. "Surya! The Netflix is broken! Fix it right now!" she bellowed.

He closed his eyes, taking a slow breath of the stale air. He walked out into the living room. The TV screen was stuck on a glowing, loading red circle. Puja was sitting heavily on the sofa, her fingers slick and shining with chicken grease. She hurled a barrage of vile, piercing abuses at him, screaming that he was useless, that he paid her no attention, that he was a pathetic excuse for a husband.

Looking at her—her face flushed red with irrational anger, a massive piece of roasted chicken gripped tightly in her greasy fist—a strange, bubbling sensation rose in Surya's chest. The sheer, absurd misery of his existence suddenly struck him. He let out a short, sharp laugh. It was a dry, hollow sound that echoed strangely in the small room.

The laugh infuriated Puja beyond reason. With a feral, guttural yell, she lunged forward off the sofa. Her greasy hand shot out, grabbing