

BY Oshani Chanika Amarasena

A SICK READER

Scene I

(Nihal enters the library in a hurry to go home)

Kapila: Halo Nihal, how is it going?

Nihal: Nothing to complain of, what about you?

Kapila: Well, you know, life goes on....

Nihal: I see, I'm here to borrow a copy of Macbeth. (in a hurry)

Kapila: Oh... good. Go ahead, then.

Nihal: Okay, I'll catch up with you later. (goes to the literature section and finds the book and then goes to the librarian) I can't find a copy of Macbeth here; do you happen to know where it is?

Librarian: Oh...let me help you. It must be in the literature section...

Nihal: I checked there too, but I couldn't find it.

Librarian: Here it is.

Nihal : I want to borrow it, huury up please I need to catch the bus.

Librarin: you're not borrowing anything else?

Niha: No, Just this.

**Librarian: Okay, can I have your membership card?
...alright, here is the book.**

Scene II

(Nihal Walks into the room where he is boarded)

Amal : Nihal, aren't you early today?

Nihal: yes, I am. I was very hungry and didn't have enough money to buy anything. Besides I cooked in the morning. Did you eat?

Amal: Yes, I did. You must be hungry, help yourself then.

Nihal: Yeah, I'm having a headache too, I was walking from the library. It is really hot out there, man.

Amal: I know, well then eat. I'm going to have a nap.

Nihal: Okay (washes his hands, gets the book out of the bag and keeps it on the table. Gets the food in to plate and try to turn the pages in the book)

(Nihal finds it difficult to read and keeps the plate of food away)

Nihal: (to himself) Why can't I read it? Am I going mad? May be because I am hungry. Should eat first.

(Finishes eating and washes hands and settles down in a comfortable chair to resume reading the book)

Nihal: What is wrong with me today? I cannot read this book, I don't understand a word. All I can see is bunch of English letters. Amal, wake up man.. (shouts out in panic.)

(goes to Amal 's bed and wakes him up.)

Nihal: I cannot read this, help me out,
please, have I gone insane?
Tomorrow is the literature paper.

Amal: What's wrong with you?
Go away, why are you shouting like a little kid?
Let me sleep.

Nihal: I can't read this book. All I see is letters.

Amal: Alright then read those letters!

Nihal: But they don't make any sense to me!

Amal: Oh, man are you sure?

Nihal : Yeah, men, what's wrong with me?

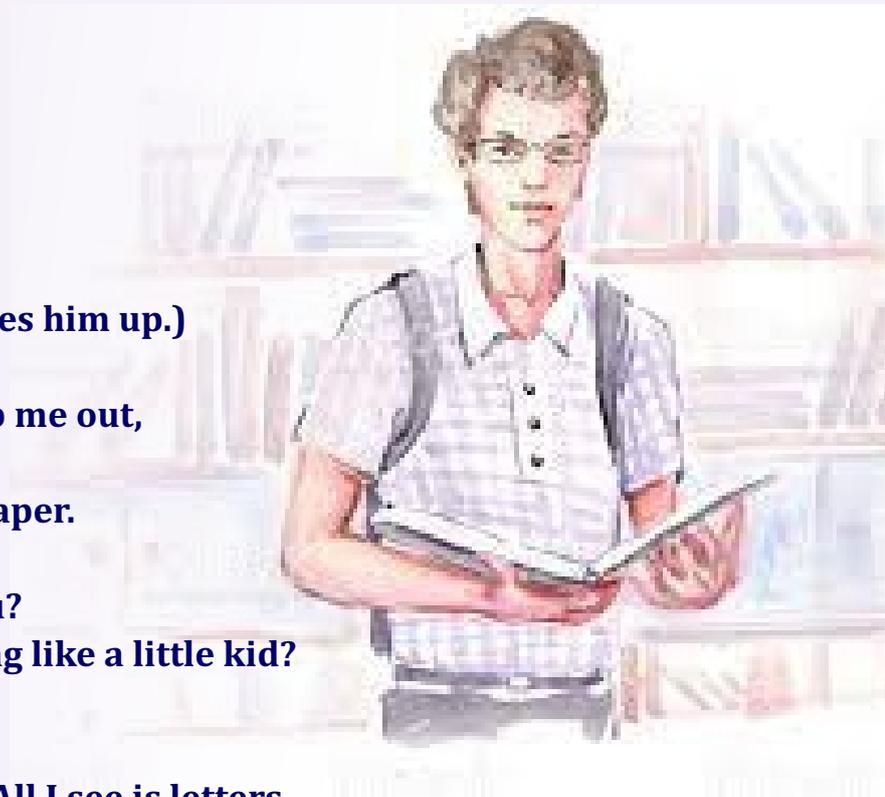
Amal: Ok, let me think, Mmm.... Do you have anybody in your family
with a similar kind of problem?

Nihal: What do you mean?

Amal: I've watched in movies about people who suffer from reading
disabilities. It could be hereditary, I think it also could happen
suddenly.

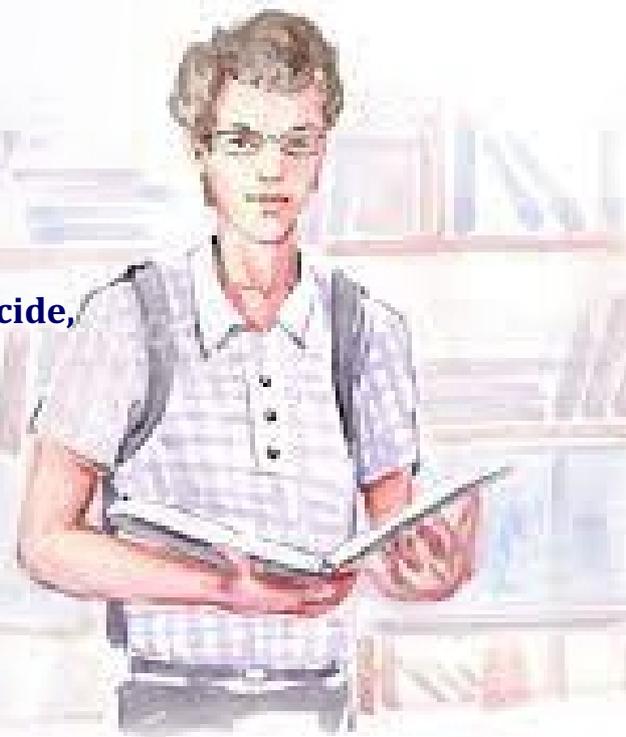
Nihal: are you sure ? I' ve never heard of anything like that. Please
please, Help me , if you are a good friend.

Amal: Ok, Ok, now relax. Let's search in the internet. Here , here it's
called dyslexia. I think we should see a doctor. When you have
dyslexia you can't put the letters together and read.



Nihal: Oh my god! I feel like committing suicide, the exam is round the corner and here I am suffering from dyslexia and I can't read!

Amal: I said relax man, we will see the doctor in the evening, he will refer us to another specialist, if needed. Now relax and let me have a nap,



Scene III

(Nihal is seen telephoning home telling his parents the terrible news)

Nihal: Amma, it's no joke, all of a sudden I found I can't read.yea... I see letter. No no nothing is wrong with my eye sight.

Ok..... Ok I will go to see the doctor in the evening.

Amma... you have any idea that we had anybody who could not read I mean who had dyslexia, in our family, because it could be hereditary. Say what ? there were? Oh my god.. Oh my god! Are you kidding?

..... what bullshit amma, I don't mean illiterate people who had no education . I am talking about educated people who lost the ability to read? yes, yes please ask appachchi. I need to search more about this, I will call you later.

(Nihal is seen looking at the computer screen going through some article)

Nihal: Amal, Now get up man we need to see the doctor, I found something more about it on internet. It says with time it could get worse.

Amal: (waking up from his nap) You got the information from youtube?



Nihal: No, just googled.

**Amal: say what? You googled?
You said you can't read?**

**Nihal: Ah! Yea,
that's amazing I've got the ability
to read back again , I can read I can read,
Oh! This is a miracle.**

**Amal: Not a miracle man,
you give me that silly book! Let me see ,
even I can't read this book , something must be wrong with the book.
You return this book tomorrow itself.**

Scene IV

Nihal: (to the librarian) Hey, what's wrong with this book, I cannot read it.

Librarian: What? How come? That was one of the latest books we received as a donation.

Nihal: Who the hell donated this?

Librarian: Don't shout here, this is the library after all. Calm down.

Nihal: whoever it is, you check this silly book and donate it back to the donor.

Librarian: let me see..... Oh... I think this is the German version of Macbeth. We got some books from the German embassy as a donation last week. I am sorry. Let me give you the correct book.

Nihal: My god. I thought I have lost my ability to read.. Please, give me the correct book this time and be more careful next time. I freaked out thinking I lost my ability to read for good.

(they are seen leaving. The curtain closes)