

The Rock-Paper-Scissors Relationship

by
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Characters.

BEDREA a ghostwriter⁽¹⁾
LATIEF a SUP⁽²⁾ student and BEDREA's younger brother
KHALID a SUP student and LATIEF's colleague and bullier

⁽¹⁾ A ghostwriter is a professional writer who is paid to write books, stories, articles, reports, or other texts that are officially credited to another person.

⁽²⁾ SUP (State University of Putmud) is the national university of the city of Putmud.

I. First Act

Scene I

(Time: Evening. Place: Home: BEDREA's room. Enter LATIEF.)

LATIEF Bedrea? Are you decent?
BEDREA Yes. Come in. What's on your mind, bro?
LATIEF Um .. I just wanted to see how everything's going .. how's
 work?
BEDREA Boring as usual. What's going on, Latief? You don't usually
 ask about my work so tell me what's bothering you?
LATIEF Well ..
BEDREA What?
LATIEF Now that you mention it, I do need some money.
BEDREA What happened to your credit card?
LATIEF Maxed out. So can you lend me a few bucks?
BEDREA Maxed out? What happened? You're usually a careful buyer,
 Latief.
LATIEF Listen, I don't need you to play mom right now. Can you help
 me or not?
BEDREA You sound as if you're in trouble, Latief. That's not like you
 at all. Tell me what's wrong.
LATIEF Forget I said anything.
BEDREA Latief, wait. Talk to me. You know you can always talk to me,
 right?

LATIEF Can you lend me a few bucks or not?
BEDREA Yeah, sure. How much's a few bucks?
LATIEF Two hundred.
BEDREA Two hundred?! For what?
LATIEF Please, just trust me. Okay?
BEDREA Yeah sure. If you weren't Latief whom I know and trust I wouldn't give you a dime. But I know you, Latief, and know that you know better than to spend it on something that isn't worth its price.
LATIEF It is. Thanks.

(Exit LATIEF.)

BEDREA Oh, little bro, what is it that you are not telling me?

Scene II

(Time: Morning. Place: Campus: hallway. Enter LATIEF and KHALID.)

KHALID You got me what I asked for?
LATIEF Yes. Here you are. It's all in there.
KHALID Good boy. See, I told you we'd make a good team. You bring in the doe, and I don't hurt you. Come on. Smile. It's not that bad.
LATIEF Whatever you say. But we're done, right? You said if I bring you two hundred you won't ask for anymore, right? 'Cause you promised.
KHALID What? You mean our relationship makes you uncomfortable? Lighten up, dude. Life's a party, don't take it so serious. Besides, you ought to enjoy it. After all, you're paying for it. Later.

(Exeunt LATIEF and KHALID, each in a different direction.)

Scene III

(Time: Afternoon. Place: Café. Enter KHALID.)

KHALID Finally! An empty table.

(Enter BEDREA, bumping into KHALID.)

BEDREA Oh, excuse me. I didn't see you there.
KHALID No, it's alright. It's just that I've been searching for a table for a time now and now that I've found one ...
BEDREA Yeah, it is crowded today. But I did see this one first.
KHALID Well, I am in a hurry. I've got an afternoon class in an hour.

BEDREA And I've got a paper to write: welcome to the harsh world. Sorry, bud, but I don't think this is your day.

KHALID Well .. mind if we share?

BEDREA I suppose it would be alright.

KHALID Please, ladies first.

BEDREA Thanks. I hope you don't mind if I kept silent. I've got a deadline to meet so I'm just gonna finish my sandwich then leave.

KHALID Me two .. my burger, I mean. I hope that you won't mind me talking, though. I myself love to talk while I eat. To tell you the truth: eating alone bites. I always wished I had someone to talk to, but all my friends are busy sleeping around this time, so I come here alone to have lunch. But had I known I'd be having lunch with a wonderful woman I might've ditched them if they'd came anyways!

BEDREA You don't know me.

KHALID I'm sorry?

BEDREA You don't know me. How do you know I'm a wonderful person?

KHALID Sorry. I tend to make assumptions when I'm with beautiful women.

BEDREA This was a mistake. I should leave.

KHALID I'm sorry, have I offended you?

BEDREA No: I shouldn't be the one to leave. Get lost.

KHALID I really am sorry. I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable. Please, accept my apology. I'm stupid. Please don't send me away. I'll be good now.

BEDREA Fine.

KHALID Thank you.

BEDREA You mentioned you go to school? Any chance it's SUP?

KHALID Yeah? How'd you guess? Don't tell me you go there too!

BEDREA I finished college years ago – though I didn't go to SUP – but my kid brother goes there. Doubt you know him, seeing that it's a huge university and all.

KHALID Not that big. You should drop by sometimes. I could show you around. You could consider it as an apology for my behavior.

BEDREA Yeah? That'd be cool. I'd shock my kid brother.

KHALID Sure.

BEDREA I'm all done. You can have the rest of my sandwich if you want. It's turkey.

KHALID Nah. I'm a burger guy myself. But thanks anyways. Hey, listen. I really enjoyed our conversation together. Maybe we could do it again? And it sure beats eating alone.

BEDREA Maybe. I eat here around this time everyday. Maybe I'll see you around.

KHALID Definitely.

(Exit BEDREA. KHALID watches her leave.)

KHALID Definitely.

II. Midst Act

Scene I

(Time: Evening. Place: Home: LATIEF's room. Enter BEDREA.)

BEDREA Hey, Latief. You busy?
LATIEF Just getting ready for bed. What's up?
BEDREA I noticed that you've been acting a bit different lately.
LATIEF Nothing really. Just school stress. You know how it is.
BEDREA And the finance problem you've been having?
LATIEF I hate to have to lie, so please don't ask me.
BEDREA The way you're acting terrifies me, Latief. I'm worried about you and I want to help. So please let me.
LATIEF I'm just helping a friend, that's all.
BEDREA Does your friend now that you're more broke than he is? I mean you're borrowing money from me to give to him!
LATIEF Bedrea. I'm tired now. Please let me rest.
BEDREA Okay. Sleep well.

(Exit BEDREA.)

LATIEF I am sorry, sis, but you could never know about this problem. All others I've shared and don't mind having them shared. But this one is not as simple as it appears to be. It is not as black and white as one might view it. Getting help on this matter won't be the right thing to do as the right and wrong in this matter are only shades of gray. Doing one thing might resolve the financial predicament, but betray the heart. I beg you, dear Bedrea: forget about this. Leave this mess alone.

Scene II

(Time: Morning. Place: Campus: hallway. Enter LATIEF and KHALID.)

KHALID Hey dude.
LATIEF What do you want? I thought what I've given you should last at least a month.
KHALID Change of plans. You see, my friend, I've met someone yesterday. And I wish to treat her to a proper meal rather than a turkey sandwich and cider. But the only problem is: I'm a bit short for where I had in mind.
LATIEF And you want me to pay for your date.

KHALID Not unless you want to see this smile fade away. You know what they say: violence is never the answer, but it does work wonders. So, let's be civil, shall we?

LATIEF But I'm all out! I swear to you that I've got nothing.

KHALID That's what you said last time. And yet, you managed to get me three digits.

LATIEF That was my sister's. I swear!

KHALID Then go to her again. I don't care if you had to steal, cheat, or lie to get the money, but get it by tomorrow or you'll be seeing a whole new interface – an old side of our relationship, if you recall.

LATIEF Alright. No need to get physical. Just .. how much do you want?

KHALID Two large.

LATIEF Two thousands dollars?! Are you insane?

KHALID To pay for all the expenses, of course. Keep in mind that this is for a lady, otherwise I wouldn't be asking you.

LATIEF Two thousands dollars?!

KHALID Let's not get cheap now. Get the doe by tonight. I expect to see it tomorrow in cash. See you then, friend.

(Exit KHALID.)

LATIEF I know that feeding him would only make him ask for more, but I have no choice. If only it was simple, I'd tell someone and resolve this conflict. But it isn't. The conflict I'm facing is much bigger than the one I have with Khalid.

Scene III

(Time: Afternoon. Place: Café. Enter BEDREA and KHALID.)

KHALID Hey!

BEDREA Hey.

KHALID Is this seat taken?

BEDREA No. But there are other tables empty.

KHALID Yeah I know, but I wanted to talk to you again. Perhaps even buy you lunch.

BEDREA Already bought it.

KHALID Desert, then?

BEDREA I don't do desert.

KHALID Come on. Everyone likes desert! It completes a meal.

BEDREA Deserts are a luxury for those who have time to eat and the desire to enjoy it. I have neither.

KHALID Perhaps we can make time. Perhaps when you're not in a rush?

BEDREA Doubt it. I'm writing a novel and a couple of reports at the moment.

KHALID You're an author.
BEDREA More like a ghostwriter. Try googling my name, you won't find it.
KHALID But I will find your work?
BEDREA If you are interested. But they are credited to other people.
KHALID But it would be you. Because words can tell things. They expose the writer even if she were to hide behind another name.
BEDREA I'm not hiding. I'm working. Being a grownup and having responsibilities means that childish dreams must be put aside. Poverty sucks.
KHALID Being an author isn't a childish dream. It is a reality. Yours anyways. Your name might not be out there like other literary figures, but it is alive in the words you choose. An author's style is like her fingerprint – no matter how much one might try to conceal it, it remains strong.
BEDREA And you: are you a writer? You seem to have a lot to say on the subject.
KHALID No, I am not. Not unless you consider taking class notes being a writer. But you are right: I am talking too much on the subject, so how about we divert it once again to what I really want.
BEDREA Which is?
KHALID To take you out for dinner.
BEDREA Don't think so. Dinner time is the only time I have with my brother.
KHALID You two live alone?
BEDREA Yes. My parents live in the countryside, and since it is along way's drive from there to SUP, he came to live with me at my place. Only until he graduates, of course.
KHALID So now, you're like his mother.
BEDREA Something wrong with that?
KHALID No no. I think it's sweet. But I don't think it should stop you from living your life. How are you going to find some one and start a family if you shut the world out?
BEDREA Leave.
KHALID You can't be serious.
BEDREA I am. Leave now. I don't need anyone to judge me or tell me how to live my life.
KHALID Please.
BEDREA And next time, if you should see me, pretend you don't know me. I would do the same.
KHALID Come on.
BEDREA Or better yet, I won't come here anymore.
KHALID You're being irrational. I mean, here I am having a one-sided fight with a woman I've only met once!
BEDREA And yet offended twice.
KHALID I don't even know your name yet!

BEDREA And you never will.

(Exit BEDREA.)

KHALID What is up with her? She's more fiery than actual fire! Yet I cannot let her off my mind. To me she is old, rude, and crazed, yet I want her. I want her more than I wanted anything else in my life. And if she knew me, she would know that what I want, I usually get.

Scene IV

(Time: Evening. Place: Home: kitchen. Enter BEDREA and LATIEF.)

BEDREA Hey. I'm just about to make dinner. Anything particular on your mind?

LATIEF Not really.

BEDREA Pizza fine?

LATIEF Sure.

BEDREA What's a matter with you? I'm the one who should be burnt out today. The nerve of the man I met! Oh, I'm sorry, I'm being selfish when it is clearly you who are in trouble. Tell me what's wrong.

LATIEF Well. I need money.

BEDREA Again? What happened to the two hundred I gave you the other night?

LATIEF I told you not to pester me with stupid questions.

BEDREA I'm sorry, I just want to know that the money I'm giving you isn't being wasted on insignificant things.

LATIEF It isn't. Now are you gonna give me the money or not?

BEDREA Another two hundred?

LATIEF Well, yeah .. but has one more zero.

BEDREA What?! Two thousand? Latief, what are you doing with that kind of money?

LATIEF It's for a good cause.

BEDREA No, that won't fly, Latief. Not anymore. You've got to tell me what's going on?

LATIEF Nothing I can't handle. Now are you gonna give me the money or not?

BEDREA No.

LATIEF So you're saying I should either drive to mom and dad's to get the money, or steal it.

BEDREA What I am saying is that you should tell me the whole truth so I could really help you. For all I know, giving you the money might increase the problem.

LATIEF This conversation's over.

BEDREA Why? Latief you used to love to talk – to tell me everything. Please, what's going on?

LATIEF I told you this conversation's over. I'm not hungry; I'm going to bed. If I don't find the cash under my door tomorrow morning, I'll have to take care of it myself. Good night.

(Exit LATIEF.)

BEDREA This issue, whatever it is, is growing out of control. Whatever it is, it has to do something with school. Latief goes straight to school everyday and comes straight home. I hate to do this, but I will have to follow Latief to school tomorrow and find out what's draining my young brother's wallet and soul.

III. Final Act

Scene I

(Time: Morning. Place: Campus: hallway. Enter BEDREA, hidden.)

BEDREA Look at you go, little brother. You walk as if you carry no burden. But your appearance does not fool me. I know you too well. I can see you in torment. Now, show me what your eyes told me yesternight. Show me the cause of your misery.

(Enter KHALID.)

KHALID Bedrea?! What are you doing here?

BEDREA Huh?! I was just .. wait! How did you know my name?

KHALID Last night when you left in a hurry you forgot your notepad.

BEDREA You read my thoughts? What if they had been private?

KHALID I'm sorry, my dear. But the truth is: I am infatuated with you.

BEDREA O please.

KHALID And to show you my good intentions, I will give you my name. It's Khalid.

BEDREA No thanks.

KHALID Bedrea, I am in love with you.

BEDREA You said that already.

KHALID But it is true.

BEDREA Puppy love. You'll get over it.

KHALID I realize that you do not feel the same way as I do, but in time you will. Please, just give me a chance and I will shine greater than the sun ever did.

BEDREA Big words for a university student.

KHALID Big emotions are involved here. I feel as if we are star-crossed lovers.

BEDREA The world isn't plotting against us.

KHALID But you are. And the truth is: you are my world.

BEDREA How romantic.

KHALID Why the sarcasm? Is it because I am younger than you?
BEDREA No. It's because I don't feel the same way, and not sure that I want to. Besides, I am busy right now.
KHALID Busy? With what?
BEDREA Stalking my brother.
KHALID Why on earth would you do that?
BEDREA Because he's keeping a secret. A dangerous one, I fear.
KHALID Oh. And where is he now?
BEDREA In that classroom. His class would be over at any minute now.
KHALID Then I shall keep you company until then. What a coincidence: I too have someone in that classroom whom I'm awaiting.
BEDREA What a small world.
KHALID That it is.

(Enter LATIEF, leaving the class.)

BEDREA There he is.
KHALID Which one?
BEDREA The one with a miserable look.
KHALID They all look the same to me. But I do spot the one I wish to speak with. Excuse me.

(KHALID goes to talk with LATIEF. Reenter BEDREA.)

BEDREA Khalid! What are you doing? Why are you talking to Latief?!

LATIEF Bedrea!

KHALID You know her?!

BEDREA I thought I made it clear that I was stalking him! As in: I didn't want him to know about me being here!

LATIEF You're stalking me?!

KHALID You're stalking him?!

BEDREA Yes, Latief, I am! You left me no choice!

KHALID Wait! You're stalking him?!

BEDREA Yes! I thought I made it clear that I was following my brother.

KHALID He's your brother?! She's your sister?!

BEDREA Khalid, butt out. This is between me and him!

LATIEF You know Khalid?!

BEDREA Yes. Now stop avoiding the real problem and tell me what it is!

LATIEF If you know Khalid than you should know what it is!

KHALID Wait – you told her about us?

LATIEF No, I didn't. I swear.

BEDREA Wait – about you two? What's about you? What's going on?!

LATIEF Nothing.

BEDREA Khalid knows, doesn't he?

KHALID Um, perhaps I should leave.
BEDREA You're not going anywhere. Talk, Latief.
LATIEF I can't.
BEDREA Khalid. You seem to know about things. Tell me what's eating him.
KHALID I don't know. Maybe it's because I borrow some money from him every now and then?
BEDREA It's you?!
KHALID Who's me?
BEDREA You're the one who asked him for two hundred two nights ago, and another two thousand last night!
KHALID You did tell her!
LATIEF I swear I didn't.
BEDREA No, Khalid, he didn't. He played the perfect little wuss. I figured it out myself.
LATIEF I'm not a wuss. I was handling it!
BEDREA Obviously. How dare you, you sleazebag, terrorizing my kid brother!
LATIEF I wasn't terrorized.
BEDREA Stay out of this, Latief. Let me teach this tyrant some manners.
KHALID I'm sorry. I didn't know he was your brother!
BEDREA Oh and if he wasn't that would make it okay then, huh?
KHALID No. But I am sorry. You are right. I will pay back every dime I ever took.
LATIEF Bedrea, stop it!
BEDREA Not now, Latief. And apologize to Latief?
KHALID And apologize to Latief.
LATIEF No no no! This is not the way it was suppose to go!
BEDREA Latief, what's wrong? - Khalid, what did you do to him?
KHALID Nothing, I swear. I've told you everything.
LATIEF You don't know everything! Just leave me alone!

(Exit LATIEF, running.)

BEDREA Latief! Khalid, if you have anything else up your sleeves, I swear I'll –
KHALID No, nothing. I swear it.
BEDREA You better be telling the truth. For your sake.

(Exit BEDREA after LATIEF. KHALID followed.)

Exodus

(Time: Unknown. Place: Unknown. Enter LATIEF, alone.)

LATIEF Why did this have to happen?! Everything was fine until this day. I knew I should've skipped school today. Because of

coming to school, everything's messed up. Bedrea thought she was doing the right thing, but she messed everything up. And Khalid .. that idiot! Why'd he have to go and spill everything out. Now, our relationship is terminated. It might not have been perfect, but it was all I've got with him. It took me years to get this close to him. But now, I won't see him again. I could not see him again. Not he or my sister or any one else would know how I feel.

(Exit LATIEF.)

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