

THE YEAR BEFORE THE RAIN

A NOVELLA



ANOOP S. WARRIER

THE YEAR BEFORE THE RAIN

A NOVELLA — A LOOK INSIDE



ANOOP S. WARRIER

DREAM FICTION PRESS

A Note to Readers

Thank you for picking this up. Rather than hand you a raw slice of chapters out of context, I wanted to give you a real sense of what this book actually feels like to read — the questions it asks, the places it will take you, and a few lines that might stay with you before you’ve even started. If it pulls at you the way I hope it does, the full novella is a few days away.

— Anoop S. Warriar

The Story

Two fourteen-year-old boys, bored and unwatched, spend an afternoon being cruel to something that can't fight back. An old woman at a roadside shrine tells them they'll know what that feels like before they're grown. Hours later, they slip through a gap in a construction fence behind their school and come out the other side sixty years in the past — into a version of their town where the school hasn't been built yet, where their own grandfathers are children, and where nobody is coming to look for them.

There is a way home. But it isn't free. They took something from a creature that couldn't fight back, and now each of them, separately, will be asked to give something back to someone who can't fight back either. Nothing says the two debts will cost the same — or that both boys will be able to pay theirs in time.

Time travel with no machine in it — village folklore rather than physics. A gap in a fence, a lamp that will not go out, and a debt that has to be paid in kind. Obeyed, never explained.

What This Story Feels Like

This isn't a fast, plot-driven time-travel adventure. It's slower and quieter than that — closer to a long, aching look at who we become when no one is watching, and who we might become instead if someone finally is.

Unease, early. The opening chapters sit with real discomfort — the casual cruelty boys can fall into together, and how easily it happens when neither one has to be the one who started it.

Wonder, and then dread. The moment the boys realize where — and when — they've landed is written to feel less like adventure and more like vertigo: a floor that shouldn't be there, suddenly under your feet.

Tenderness that sneaks up on you. Watching each boy slowly get folded into a life he wasn't born into — a mason who believes him without asking why, a mother who feeds a stranger's child without being asked — builds a warmth that makes what comes later hurt more.

A genuine ache in the second half. As the two boys' paths diverge, the story asks a question it refuses to answer easily: what do you owe, and to whom, and what does it cost the people who love you while you figure that out.

A long, quiet exhale at the end. Not a twist ending — a settled one. The kind that makes you sit for a minute before doing anything else.

Why Read It



- ◆ You want a story about consequences that doesn't let anyone off easy — including the reader.
- ◆ You like fiction that treats family, memory, and kindness as things with real weight, not just sentiment.
- ◆ You're drawn to quiet, literary speculative fiction — closer to a fable than a thriller — where the strangeness serves the emotion instead of the other way around.
- ◆ You want something you can finish in an evening or two, but that will sit with you a lot longer than that.

A Few Lines from the Book



“The dog didn’t run. That was the strange part.”

“You like small things that can’t answer back.”

“He looked like he had been told to expect them.”

“‘Younger than us,’ Vikram finished for him. Neither of them laughed.”

“Cruelty is shared easily. Paying for it isn’t.”

“He is exactly as alive as the choice he’s making right now.”

Want to Know What They Each Have to Pay?

Vikram and Farhan go into the past together. Only one of them comes home. *The Year Before the Rain* is on its way.

READ IT ON AMAZON

Want to know when the next one lands? One email, no spam - nothing else, ever.
the-year-before-the-rain.netlify.app

Thank you for reading this far — and for giving these two boys a chance.

— Anoop S. Warriar

Two boys go into the past. Only one comes home.

Vikram and Farhan are fourteen, and they have spent a whole term doing what boys do when nobody is watching closely enough to correct them — skipping lessons, testing what they can get away with, learning how easily cruelty turns into a game when there are two of you and neither has to be the one who started it. It begins with a stray dog and a handful of stones. It does not stop there.

An old woman at the roadside shrine tells them they will know what it is like before they are grown.

That afternoon they slip through a gap in a construction fence behind the school and come out in the same yard sixty years earlier — in a village that has not yet built the school they were skipping, where their own grandfathers are children, and where nobody is coming to look for them.

There is a way back, and they are told what it costs. They took from something that could not fight back. They will each be asked to give to something that cannot fight back either. Separately. In kind. Nothing says the two debts will cost the same.

And sixty years ahead, in a town where a torch beam is moving across an empty schoolyard, two families begin the eleven months of not knowing.

Cruelty is shared easily. Paying for it isn't.