

# **Twists 'N' Turns**

## Short Stories

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***My sincere thanks to all those who made this book happen.***

# Short Stories

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## INTRODUCTION

This ebook contains a collection of wonderful short stories with tightly woven narratives. Most of the stories are written through the eyes of the main character. All the stories are based on fabulous fictitious imaginations and are stuffed with unexpected twists and turns. The stories reflect the twists that the fate plays in the life of a common man and how the 'end result' changes into something that is unexpected.

Happy Reading!

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# The Guest

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Once upon a time, I used to market shirts for my living. That was the time, I used to think in such a way that the whole world has been there for me to sell my merchandise. In that context, on one day, I happened to meet one of my friends in a shopping complex. In conversation, I told him that I am marketing shirts and showed him a few designs. He was impressed by the designs and told me that his neighbour's son is going to get married, the marriage date is also nearby and why not I visit his home so that he would introduce me to his neighbour so that I could grab an opportunity to make a few transactions if they like my goods. I was thrilled and immediately said YES. Then we departed planning to meet each other on the coming weekend at my friends' place.

The weekend came and me being determined to make a few sales, went to my friends' place by morning 7 am. When I knocked the door, my friend's wife opened the door, invited me inside, and told me that my friend was still sleeping. I told

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her not to wake him up and decided to go for a walk for an hour hoping that my friend would wake up in the meantime. I came out, breathing the fresh morning air, I was trying to loosen up a little bit. At that moment, I saw a guy coming out of a house, which was located just beside my friends' house. He was looking so simple and innocent. As part of marketing, studying people and their moods was also became my part of job. When I saw this guy and studied his face, my marketing instincts told me that this is the right time to deal with him to make a killing. My adrenalin rushed, my grey cells started working fast making plans, and my body automatically moved toward this guy.

THIS GUY is short with not so developed physique with little bald head in the front part of his scalp. His eyes are small and when he saw me moving toward him, they become smaller thinking who the hell I was. Grasping what has been going on his mind by reading his face, still I pushed myself toward him and extended my hand to him for a handshake with a big smile on my face. Instincts forced him to do the same and I am happy that my first move has become successful. I

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introduced myself and told him that I am friend of his neighbour and told him that my friend used to tell them quite often about how good his neighbours are. After I said the last phrase, I saw a friendly flashy smile on his face for one second but it disappeared in the next. Judging his move and reading his mind, I understood what he has been thinking in his mind at this juncture about me. Immediately, I told him about my business and myself. Then I saw the confusion getting evaporated from his face by reading his facial expressions. His expression is cool now and even his handshake grip become tightened a little bit after all these explanations. Taking this as a cue, I pushed myself little close to him and with a friendly expression; I asked him very politely what he does for living. He smiled and told me that he works in a nearby factory and he is the relative of the owner of the house whose son is going to get married next month. I am excited by listening to his last sentence. I congratulated for my socializing skills and marketing instincts which helped me to earn a marketing lead without my friend's help. I become confident about my moves now.

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Sensing the opportunity at hand, I decided to move my next step. I started discussing slowly about the marriage boy and his would be relations. Because the matter is new to him also, taking advantage of the situation, I started to behave in such a way that I know all those people and have good contacts with them by taking their names during the conversations and adding extra matter whatever he has been telling to me. At this moment, I am seeing my guest's face is delighted and he started telling me so many things about the marriage, without knowing my intentions. Then I sensed that the time has come to make a killing. While my friend is still in his own world, I suggested him why not we go for a small cup of tea/ coffee to the nearby restaurant. He happily agreed and we started toward the nearby restaurant.

This restaurant is famous for its tea recipe. I asked my guest what he wanted. Since the time is still 8 am, my guest ordered for a puff with one hot cup of tea. I got the bill for what my guest wanted and soon we both started enjoying tasty puff with hot cup of tea in the fresh silent morning. Being a salesman myself, I promised to myself that I will try



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to sell my goods to all the people whoever I come across; at least I try. Therefore as per my promise, I decided first to sell some of my shirts to my guest before I sell the same to his relatives for the marriage session. Slowly, I tried to drive the conversation toward shirts.

Just to be double sure that my guest is in good mood, I started talking about his aunt (old lady) in whose house, my guest has been staying. I started telling him how I know her, what are all the topics we discuss whenever we meet, and how she struggled all her life to bring the family to this level and praised God at last that he has listened to her finally (all this without knowing her!). My guest has been curiously listening to me without uttering a word and that started boosting my confidence levels makes me feel happy that finally my guest is listening to me and giving me an opportunity that I can convert the guest relation with him into a customer relation.

After sensing the happy look in my guest's face, I wanted to delight him by talking more about his aunt's family. Then slowly, I turned the conversation to his uncle (aunt's

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husband). I told him that I know his uncle very closely. My guests curiosity levels rose again and he is leaning forward on the table toward me in such a way that he wants to listen to my each word so attentively. By seeing his facial expression, my marketing instincts told me that I am in the right path and near to make a killing. Determined to make a deal within the next 10 minutes, I started telling rapidly with a happy face to my guest how close I was with his uncle. Then I told him that whenever we all met at a family gathering, I used to play chess with his uncle and told him how his uncle used to defeat me with so much knack in every game without blinking an eye. My guest has been attentively listening and suddenly stopped and asked me when I met his uncle recently. Thinking that my guest almost had fallen in my trap, without giving much thought about what he has asked for, I told that I met him just some 1 week back. Then my guest looked at me in surprise and slowly relaxed in his chair. All his curiosity which he displayed earlier had disappeared suddenly. The questioning expression on his face has been replaced by serious one. Sensing all these new developments of my guest, my mind was eager to know what would have

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happened. Without reducing the pace of my uncle speech and without changing my happy facial expression, I asked my guest whether 'all is well'. Then, my guest, after taking a second to response, took a deep breath, leaned forward on the table toward me, and told that his uncle died some 10 years back and he was no more.

Suddenly, after listening to his words, I was dumbstruck and not knowing what to do and started cursing my instincts and overconfidence which silently pushed me into this muddle; I stood up, told sorry to my guest and left the place without looking back.

# The Customer

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Marketing is such a kind of profession which teaches you how to survive in life. As per my experience, even if a layman, who does not anything about even something, if brought into marketing, then after 6 months period of time, you will see him turned into someone who can coolly deal with the society at his own pace. All your sharpened edges will be smoothed and all your opinions, stereotypes, etc, which you have about the society will be brushed aside and you will gain lot of knowledge and as a result, your breadth and depth of thinking now increases along with the intensity and scope.

Having said all this, I need to accept that after my joining into marketing, even my grey cells also triggered and my thinking scope also increased a little bit; at least that is what I think.

After started my shirts business and started earning money, I got a little bit confident and decided to spread my business. As part of this plan, I took a new apartment for lease where I

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kept all my newly ordered shirt stocks. Since I took a new apartment, I thought of throwing a party to my friends on that day and invited all of them for the party. We pushed around the shirts stocks to a corner and made some place for the party purpose. And the party started and everybody is in full swing. At that time, a man in his 30's entered our apartment, standing at the entrance, and started looking eagerly here and there. Me and my friends suddenly alerted by this new man's presence. THIS guy is dressed neatly and with trimmed hair and moustache. I immediately guessed that he might be my neighbour. Since anyway, I decided to expand my business, I want to start that from my house itself. Therefore, I thought, this is the right time to do that and decided not to let the opportunity go out of my hand.

I planned to sell the shirt to him. When he looked at me, I gave a friendly smile and said 'Hi!'. In my mind, just like every time, many questions are raising. My mind started guessing under which category this customer falls into so that I can set my price bands. Whatever it may be, I decided to sell the shirt for a good price. Usually, I sell at 100% profit means if a

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shirt costs Rs. 100, I sell it for Rs. 200. Whenever I come across a 'good' customer, I try to sell the same shirt for Rs. 300. Here also, after seeing my customer, I thought he falls under 'good' category so the price should be high.

The guy who introduced me to marketing told me a few basic fundas. One of those fundas is that you need to treat all the people in this world as your customers. And any good is a saleable good. There is no such thing as non-saleable good. Every product has market somewhere on this planet; as a marketer, you need to just find where the market for your goods and try to sell them there. It is as simple as such.

I found these fundas very easy to understand and in one way, I found that whatever he said in the form of fundas applies to so many aspects of our life also if you think from different point of view. As I joined in the marketing domain, I religiously started using these fundas in my life and so far, I got success. Here also, when I saw this guy, I have seen in him "My Customer". Immediately, I responded by wishing him and with a handshake though by that time I don't know him. When I saw my customer trying to peep inside the room

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above my shoulder, my mind told me that this is the right time to pull him into my ring. I got the cue and immediately, I invited him into my room with a big smile on my face. I wanted to show my friends that how easily I can do sell goods unlike them. My customer hesitatingly stepped inside the room. I showed him a vacant chair and requested him to sit. He obliged.

Without wasting time, I immediately started telling about myself; this is one more marketing funda. You should never put questions to your customer if you are really desperate to make a sale. The logic is that you should talk and your customer should listen. Do not give him a chance to say more than maximum one or two words. And to make your customer feel that he is intelligent compared to you, willingly try to show that you are a muff by deliberately doing or telling some funny things about you. This strategy really works if you do it perfectly. Customers when they come to buy something that point of time their minds are so alert and they are always guarded thinking that the salesman is there only to cheat them by pricing high rates for cheap goods. A

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smart man cleverly makes the customer feel like king; once the customer starts feeling that his sales guy is not that smart then he slowly opens himself and starts feeling and behaving normally. Then this is the right time for a clever salesman to implement his strategies and get what he wants from the customer easily.

Remembering the above funda, I started implementing it; that means, I started telling about myself to my customer. To make the discussion little bit spicy, I told him a few jokes about myself. Throughout the discussion, my customer has been attentively listening, slowly nodding his head, looking at me deeply with his dark black eyes, without smiling. I thought that my customer is a clever guy. Whatever trick I have been playing, he is simply not responding to any of them. Then I told himself, why not I bombard him by showing all the new shirt designs that I have in my stock and tempt him to buy a few.



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Slowly, I turned the conversation to my business and showed him my new stock of readymade shirts. MY CUSTOMER eagerly took one after another shirt into his hand and started looking at them intensively. Sometimes, he is taking more than one shirt into his hands and other times, he is trying to reach the shirt located at the farther corner. I am happy. At last my marketing funda started working on my customer. By the way, he is looking at those shirts, I decided that he will take minimum 4-5 shirts; all this just within a few hours of joining a new house. I am blessed, I thought in my heart. My confidence levels shot high and I am beaming with happiness.

For the past 10 minutes, my customer has seen so many shirts. He is turning up and down the whole stock. I am not seeing any sign of him selecting one shirt so far. I am still seeing that intensive look in his eyes. Judging that my customer is really bombarded by the latest designs of the shirts, I decided to help him. Again I started talking about the designs, colours, cloth quality, brands, etc, in an effort to help my customer to make a fast decision. In marketing, in

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how many minutes you closed the deal also does matter. A good salesman never takes more time to close a sale. And I think I am a good salesman!

I picked up a few designs and asked my customer to look at them. He took those shirts from my hand and started shuffling them but looking at them with an intense gaze. From his look, I am getting an impression that my customer wants all the shirts. I am thrilled; at last my effort is showing me results. I handpicked all these designs from the manufacturer based on my experience and keeping people's tastes. Now, after seeing my customer in confusion regarding the selection of the designs, my heart is dancing with joy. I got full confidence in my customer that today he is going to give me a huge business.

Finally, my customer took all the shirts; I have given him to look at, in both of his hands and looked at me. I am thrilled. HE IS holding some five shirts. Now, I became more sure about my instincts. Even after getting what he wanted also, I am not seeing any smile on my customer's face. Then I realized that he is serious because he might have come

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empty handed without realizing that he going to buy shirts. But what is the problem? This guy is my new neighbour only, right? So, why worry! He can give me money once he goes his home also, right? And as per business rules, a clever salesman always should keep in his mind a bigger picture. IF THIS Guy starts wearing these shirts, then he becomes an advertisement for me in the whole complex. Then there is a serious chance that other people of complex will come and buy shirts from me. Therefore, why unnecessarily kill the goose who can lay the golden egg just for the sake of some paltry sum.

Thinking all the above, I smiled at my customer and told him, “No problem, no problem! You take all those shirts with you and pay me later. I can understand.” And packed all the shirts neatly in a cover and gave them to my customer. All the packaging time, my customer has been intently watching the whole process. I smiled and handed over the packet to my customer and again shook his hand happily and said ‘good bye’. My customer looked at me and without saying a word,

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left my premises with carefully holding the packet with both the hands just like children holds the dearest things to them.

I am so happy that night. My friends who have been watching the whole transaction very interestingly, praised me for my business acumen and, now, I am feeling at the top of the sky.

Next day evening, an old man knocked my door. I opened the door and with a huge smile, asked him what I can do for him. Then he hesitatingly asked am I the new neighbour who sells shirts. I am thrilled once again. I praised my business acumen. Things are happening exactly as I predicted, I thought. With full confidence, I told the old man that he is talking to the right person and he is at the right place. Then the old man politely asked me whether he can come in for which I said Yes and invited him inside my front room of my apartment and shown him a vacant chair. He sat and looked around and then looked at me. Slowly, he increased the volume of his voice and started telling me that he is my neighbour and the guy, my yesterday's customer, is his son. I EAGERLY ASKED HIM whether his son has worn my shirts. He

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nodded his head and I again asked him whether he is happy with the designs of the shirts; for this question also, the old man nodded and said that his son has wore all the shirts. I am surprised and enquired “all the shirts in one day?” For which the old man said ‘YES’. And then he told me that his son is a mentally deranged persona and recently discharged from the mental hospital after a year’s treatment. But still he could not become normal. And the old man spent a hell lot of money on his son’s treatment and he is financially broke now. Therefore, the old man requested me that whatever shirts I had given him yesterday, whatever maybe their value, he is not in a position to pay them but he will pay at least something for those shirts. Then the old man fumbled his pocket and took out RS 200 and shoved them into my hands and warned me that he should never sell any shirt to his son though he asks for it. I am dumbstruck with whatever has happened and there is no marketing funda which I know is there to guide me out of this crisis!

# The Appraisal

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After roaming for lot of days without any job, finally, one fine day, I become an employee. I got a job as a proof reader in a big multinational company which gives more importance to the talent rather than previous experience. The day I joined the office, I was given the company identification card along with a few papers to sign. After I completed all my formalities, I was taken the hip-swinging HR to my department where I am supposed to work. After reaching the department, the first thing what I realized was that 90% of my co-workers are ladies including my Supervisor and most of them are unmarried. My heart started thumping and my mind started giving me some innovative and mind boggling suggestions about how I can use expertly and deftly use my precious bachelorhood time by staying among these spinsters.

Before I joined this new company which is in Mumbai, I was told by my well-wishers that Mumbai is a fast place where

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any thing can happen. Means, I have to fast forward myself a little bit to survive the fastness of the place and also increase my alertness and consciousness by an ounce. Friends told that I would be bombarded by beautiful girls everywhere, which was not a normal scenario in the place where I was born and brought up. Well-wishers told that I need to improve my existing skills by a step to tackle the work pressure that was expected out there in my new workplace. Parents told me that wherever I stay, I should strive to bring name and fame for my family surname by remembering all the do's and don'ts listed and written with my grandpa's old fountain pen by my father.

Mumbai is the financial capital of India. Daily, so many people come here with a hope that this is the place where they can realize their carefully built dreams. How many out of them gets success, God only knows! On the whole, Mumbai has its own magic. It has charisma. People here behave in a very positive manner compared to other parts of India. Though life is fast but you can still see people sticking to old traditions. Yes, I agree that because of foreign cultural

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influence, this place and people have changed a bit in last 100 years but you can still see that the roots of Indian tradition are still intact here.

After I decided to join my new Mumbai company, all my relatives felt that I am leaving them forever and started advising my parents not to allow me to go there with bachelorhood status; means, they all wanted me to relinquish my bachelorhood and get married to a known traditional girl before I even dream of stepping out my small town. After listening to the powerful suggestion from my relatives, my parents were in dilemma; I told my parents that all this kind of thinking is rubbish and there is no need to follow the advice of my relatives. But, I made my best to convince my parents telling them that being their son, I have the resoluteness in me to stick to family rules, principles, and discipline, wherever I stay. I promised that I never marry a girl anytime and anywhere without getting their acceptance for the same. Finally, my parents agreed to move to Mumbai after getting all the promises from myself to their utmost satisfaction.



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Once I joined the new company, I started working hard following the mindset of an average newcomer who works hard to get name and recognition within a short span of time. Though I am surrounded by beautiful girls in beautiful skinny attires, sharp features, short skirts, and huge assets with bubbly tones and sexy voices, I tried my level best not to look at or think about them in any angle other than a co-employee. When everyday and every minute you are greeted by beautiful girls who challenge the control of your physical senses, it becomes very difficult to control your Godspeed thoughts that race like mad race horses. But by the virtue of my gifted patience, I could able to control my slippery thoughts and focused my concentration on the work given to me.

As I already told you that my supervisor in the new office is a lady. She is a spinster but her age is almost 30+. She used to dress from top to toe in a single dark colour. Most of the times, she used to come in different varieties of fashionable dresses. And she never fails to greet me whenever my eyes meet hers. Just like a normal employee, who wants to

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impress the Boss and get an appreciation, I used to put stress on myself to give more work output. As a result, the authorities apart from my lady supervisor recognized my contributions and had given me a “Star PERFORMER Award” for that year. I felt that I had become successful in achieving what I wished for before coming to Mumbai. My authorities while giving the award told me that I should continue my work in the same appreciable manner into the future also. I happily received the award and promised myself that I would strive hard with discipline to keep getting this kind of awards in future also.

After I got the award, the whole scenario changed. People who refused to recognize me so far started recognizing me and the way they used to speak to me had also shifted toward positive end. Suddenly, I started realizing that life is a cakewalk.

Then one day, my supervisor called me into her cabin and started praising my work. She showered me with compliments and because of that my joy knew no bounds. She told me that I would be given some important tasks from

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today onwards and to do those tasks I need to sit with her since she personally look after those tasks to their logical conclusion. Since my confidence levels boosted after receiving the award, I am ready to take-up any job which challenge my mental and physical abilities at this point of time. I happily agreed to what she said and dedicated myself to do those tasks.

My regular place got shifted to supervisor's cabin. Now, I am sitting just beside her and we work on a same computer. While working we discuss about things which we do not understand and used to clarify each other's doubts. Slowly, these official discussions within a week's time had shifted to personal discussions and we started coming to know each other's likes and dislikes. The intensity of the discussions had started growing day by day and the passion and curiosity levels also increased to a considerable extent. Then suddenly, one evening, my supervisor got a mail from her superior asking to do my appraisal. She conveyed me the same and I was totally confident that she will do her best and give me

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good appraisal. And I told her that I believed in her. My supervisor smiled at me and I become so happy.

The next day when I came to office, my supervisor asked me whether it is possible for me to accompany her to a nearby restaurant. I gladly accepted her invitation. In the evening time, after office hours, we both went to the restaurant. The restaurant bearer, thinking that we are a couple, offered us one cosy corner where we can sit peacefully without fearing about our privacy. So many thoughts are running in the back of mind regarding my appraisal; this time I want to go home after winning a promotion and I decided that I should achieve what I want through this appraisal.

Life is full of surprises. What is in store for us, nobody knows until they face it. My supervisor, who came to the restaurant in her new fancy dress, sat opposite to me and started staring at me, as if she is reading something out of my face without uttering a single word. Since I was also giving a deep thought about the appraisal, I decided to stay calm and answer only when she asks me any questions. Breaking our silence, when the bearer came for order, we both suddenly

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came out of our own worlds and ordered our respective dishes.

Once the bearer left, we both smiled at each other and slowly my supervisor started telling about her personal details like childhood, college days, about her parents, etc. At first, I wondered why on the earth she is telling me all these things. But, since she is my supervisor and my appraisal is in her hands at this point of time, I simply decided to say YES with a smiling face to whatever she tells and says to me. Then she started telling me about how her career started and why she joined her present company, etc, details. I was not questioning anything, I am simply nodding my head as if I am listening keenly to whatever she is telling me. Then she started telling me about her marital status and why she is desperate at this point of time to get married. And bit by bit, she begin telling about the expectations what she was looking in her would be husband. Now, after telling each detail, she asked me what I think about her expectations. Since I already decided to say YES to whatever she asks to please her in every manner, I sounded positive to her

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question. She smiled satisfactorily at me and took my hand into her hand and asked me whether I am interested in marrying her.

I got dumbstruck for this sudden nature of unexpected question from my fashion fanatic supervisor. Frankly, I could not able to make neither head nor tail of the whole situation happened there. I got confused and started fumbling for words, because, here, my stored answer YES can really put me into problems. Not knowing what to do and realizing the gravity of the situation, I smiled at her. But my smile did not satisfy her. She was looking for a definite answer. Then slowly, in a low breaking voice, I asked her whether I need to answer this question immediately. She gave a stern look at me for 1 second and immediately changed her facial expression and then smilingly told me that I can answer this question by tomorrow morning.

After the meeting is over, I left the restaurant in hurry and came to my room. Without thinking even for 1 second about my supervisor's proposal, my appraisal on hold and my future career in the present company, I decided to leave

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Mumbai by the late night train forever. After I caught the train, while travelling, slowly I realized about the foresight of my parents, relatives, and well-wishers and decided never to overlook their suggestions.

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## The Job

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Life is like a suspense novel. Just like you do not know until the end who is the culprit, life also does not let you know in advance what is there stored for you in future. But there is one thing in life; if God's blessings are there with you, even if you are dumb, yet you can get what you wish for in life though you do not have the potential or capacity to get it. That's why they say that you should always expect the unexpected from life. This story is about a person who is looking for a job and finally becomes something in life which he never expected to become because of some unknown person.

I am a small town graduate who is desperately looking for a job. I am almost 30 and so far, just like most of the Indian graduates, only now, I realized that I have to do something in my life. So far, my parents are feeding me and I never has the experience about how to earn a single penny. However, no issues! I always counted my life with those happy days where



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I enjoyed with my unemployed yet intelligent friends. Life is all about enjoyment, one of my friends used to say this sentence quite often. But, recently, the pressure from my parents has been increasing and they want me to get a job as quickly as possible so that they can sell me in the market to a bride for a premium price. Yes, it is true! Taking dowry is nothing but you are selling yourself to someone who can buy you, right! All this OK for me, except one worrying point, that is about how to get a job.

Since I belong to a small town, and as you all know that towns in India are still not in a position to provide sufficient resources for the people who stay there, I decided to go to the nearby city to find a job. After I told this decision to my parents, they become so happy and wished me good luck.

I came to Mumbai in search of a job. But, I need some place to stay. I thought about this problem before I come here; one of my dearest friends has given a reference about his dearest friend, who is staying in Mumbai. Once I got the address of my friend's friend, I was so happy. After I alighted at Mumbai, the first thing I did is to search my friend's friend

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stays in this big city. It seems God's grace is there on me; finally, I got the address. I reached the said address and knocked on the door of my friend's friend room, which is nothing but a 'chawl'. Somebody opened the door and I asked for my friend's friend. The guy looked at me suspiciously and without answering my question, he in turn asked me whether I came here to join as a room partner. For one second, I got confused not knowing what to say; then I said, 'sort of'. His face immediately got serious and shouted at me by opening the door fully and questioning me "where do you stay here, on our head?" I saw some 6 people inside a small 10 X 10 room sleeping on the bare floor and there is not even small space to walk around in the room. I don't know what to say but I have nowhere to go. I told the same thing to the person who was guarding the door; he gave me a more irritable look and murmuring and muttering something, he opened the door for me and but told me that I have to look for another place within 1 week. There is nothing to say or to do because I came to know that my friend's friend is also one of those 6 members who is sleeping at that moment on that naked floor.

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I don't have any option but to pray God; so far getting a job itself is a difficult goal but now, there is one more; to get a room also. At this point of time, I really do not know how I can get achieve my immediate goals. Without losing time, I prepared different kinds of resumes with fake experiences and registered the same in all the job sites. I started getting calls from job consultancies slowly and they started asking me to attend the pre-interview tests. Three days are already over; now, only 4 days left. The tension has been shooting up and so far, nobody selected me even for sweeper post.

After coming to Mumbai for job search, I realized that I started late in my life. Most of the people realized in their 20's itself that they have to get a job for the settlement of their life. I was not even thinking about job while I was at their age. Now, with my not-up-to-the-mark qualification, butler English, and day after day increasing age, I am struggling in this heavy competition world to get a small job. Not knowing how to crack this problem of mine, I am becoming restless and started going to net café as frequently

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as I can just to see whether any new suitable job is there for me out of those thousands of displayed jobs.

The fifth day is already over. I am losing hope. If I don't get a job within 2 weeks, I have to go to my hometown because I cannot even stay in this 'chawl' as I was already told that I could stay there only for 7 days. After thinking about my deadlines, I suddenly realized the gravity of the situation I was in. There is no other go or no way where I can escape this situation. While I was worrying like this, my phone started vibrating and I attended the call. That was an interview call from some company who wanted to interview me the next day for a writer post. I was already fed up of this kind of interviews in the last few days which ends nowhere. Now, I am really looking for some sure-shot job. I just do not want to waste my precious time in Mumbai like this attending some petty interviews just for the sake of experience. But, what can I do. Because I don't have any strong recommendation with me and I have to get a job on my own, there is no alternative left for me but to attend the interview. I decided to attend the interview on the next day.

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I went with my fake resume to the concerned company which called me for the interview and told the receptionist that I was there for the interview purpose. She politely asked me to sit for a few minutes in the nearby sofa and called the concerned HR who is looking after my interview process. I am not confident that I would clear this interview and get the job; however, the rebel inside me what to attend the interview and get the job. While I was wandering in my own thoughts, suddenly, I heard somebody calling my name. I came out of my thoughts and realized that it was none other than the receptionist who was calling me. I went to her and she told me to go and sit in a glass-walled room and wait for the HR. I gladly obliged.

I was waiting for the HR and she came after 5 minutes. She entered the room saying sorry so many times for keeping me under waiting for such a long time. Politely, with a beautiful smile on my face, she asked me whether I brought my resume. I nodded my head positively, unzipped my file, and gave a Xerox copy of my resume to her. She glanced it and told me that she would be back within a few minutes and

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disappeared from the room. My pulse rate started rising. Since my childhood I have this kind of habit to get tensed unnecessarily. But, what to do, God has coded my genes that way.

After 10 minutes, a hefty man with a paunch who in his 40's entered the room and wished me by calling my first name. I said 'Hi'. He introduced himself and sat in the opposite chair across the table. Actually, he was not sitting in the chair; I can say he was relaxing himself in the chair by sitting in a semi-sleep position. He started going through my 2 page resume keenly reading line by line loudly and making him understand what I had written in that. Now, I started realizing that there were so many mistakes in my resume only after he started reading it. I wondered how come I had inserted that many mistakes. But, what to do, whatever has not to happened , has already happened. Now, I cannot change it.

Suddenly, he stopped reading my resume, looked at me for a fraction of a second, and asked me do you know for which job you come for? Actually, for that question, my frank answer was to tell him, "Sir, I am ready to do any job; my

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present position is like that. Whatever you give, I give my best.” But, I could not say that. My mind has modified my answer and told like this, ‘Yup! I am here for a writer position.’ He looked into my eyes and asked me, ‘do you write on your own?’ for which I replied, ‘Yep. I do.’ Hmm! Can you show us some of our writings, please!” he asked me inquiringly. I was shocked. I never expected that I would be asked like this. What to do??

As I already told you that somewhere my rebel streak is pushing me from inside to go for this job. Suddenly, I got a brilliant idea and told him that he could see my writings in Net. He expressed surprise and asked me ‘how?’ For which I replied, I write for websites. ‘Ok, then. Show me the website for which you have written the content’ he asked me pushing the keyboard toward me. The computer is Net connected and my grey cells started passing signals through my hands motor nerves at the speed of light and I started typing. First, I opened Google and then typed ‘time’ and pressed Enter. Google showed me lot of websites and I clicked on one of those links, the website opened. I started browsed here and

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here; all this when my interviewer was watching me. Suddenly, I showed him a page and told him that that page was written by me. He carefully went through the writing on the page; I also started reading the page, because, in reality, I did not write it and it was new to me also. After reading for 3/ 4 minutes, my interviewer asked me whether I can explain about that. I said 'No. I write this kind of so many pages in my daily life and every piece of writing is about a different topic. In other words, I write and forget. That's all!' The interviewer gave me a puzzled look and said "yes, yes! I know, I know".

After 2 minutes of silence, he asked me what kind of domains I write for. "I don't put restrictions to myself, I write for all the domains", I said without wasting time. There is a strategy in answering this question. If I tell him that my writing is restricted to certain domain, then he may think something else which can end up as a negative point in my case, which I don't want. That's why I answered like that. Satisfied with my answer, the interviewer proceeded further.



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“How you become a writer?” he asked slowly adjusting himself in the cushion chair as if he was preparing himself to listen to a story from me. After hearing this question, my heartbeat increased. I want to tell the truth that I do not have any experience in writing and so long I am faking it. But, could not do that and at the same time, I do not have answer for his question also. Not knowing what to do, I wanted to divert the attention of my interviewer.

I asked him for a glass of water and told him that the day was so hot and I travelled a long distance to attend the interview. He rang the bell and told the peon to bring a water and tea for both of us and turned to me and asked, where I stay? I told him a long address which took him some 3 minutes to understand what I was saying. He tried to decipher it but he could not. Meanwhile, the peon brought water along with tea and biscuits. My interviewer diverted his attention for the first time after the interview started from my resume toward the biscuits. Before he eat a biscuit, looks at it for one full second, and starts eating it. In other words, he is really enjoying himself in eating those biscuits. After seeing him, I

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also started eating biscuits and sipping hot tea at my own pace. We both forgot that we were in interview for a few minutes. Then, suddenly, just like a bolt from the blue sky, my interviewer ejected another question about my technical skills. I smiled and told him that how he can think that one can become a writer without having technical knowledge. For this answer, my interviewer bit his tongue thinking that he had asked a very silly question. He immediately said, 'ya, ya! I am just checking. Take it easy.'

I am so happy inside because my strategy worked and I could able to escape this question also without a scratch. My heart was thumping with joy at the way I am answering the questions. The biscuits in the plate were over. My interviewer started sipping the remaining hot tea left at the bottom of his glass. After he had his last sip, he looked at me for 1 second keenly, and asked me are you interested in working here. I immediately said, YES. He looked into my eyes again for a few seconds and asked me to go meet the HR. I said Ok and left the room.

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I met the HR after some time and she congratulated for clearing the interview and gave me the offer letter. I did not believe what is happening to me. I pinched myself and realized that everything was true. But, there were so many unanswered questions like, How all this happen? What the interviewer asked and what I told? What is happening?

I joined the company and started working as a writer. After working for 3 months, I came to know what are all the qualifications a writer requires to accomplish his tasks and also about the required technical qualifications. All these 3 months, I did not see my interviewer anywhere in the company. All these months, I was also busy with trainings, meetings, and tasks. And I was also reporting to a manager who was not my interviewer. After 3 months, I was made permanent by the company. I was happy. But, I want to meet my interviewer, who has given me this rare and unique chance. I went to HR department and asked about the person who interviewed me. They looked puzzled and told me that he left the company one day after my interview happened. I am shocked!

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It seemed to me that my interviewer was there just to hire me. I do not know about others, but for me, he is my life-giver. 'I am always indebted to my interviewer throughout my life,' I told to myself and came out of the HR department with a feeling of thrill in my heart.

# The Relieving Letter

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After working for 3 years in a company, you may come to know a lot of things which does not prove positive for your career. Knowing all those things, you decide to leave the company for your own good. And it is not that much easy to do that because you realize that there are so many nice things that are also happening simultaneously and they weigh more than anything else. But, the few bad things have the capability to destroy that good feeling. If you remove those few bad things from your life at that moment, then it seems that nobody can scuttle your happiness.

I joined a company, which has a long history on planet Earth. Before joining, I checked about this company with my friends who have more knowledge in jobs, companies, etc. After getting their positive feedback, I decided to join. A job, nowadays, represents not only your status in the society but also the pay and perks which you get from the company, allow you to continue your present living standards. Getting a

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job itself is a big deal these days. But, there are some people for whom getting a job is like a piece of a cakewalk. They do not mind much about changing the jobs. They are like Spiderman. They won't and can't stay in a single company for more than 1 year. Staying long period in a company, from their point of view is looked upon as inefficiency. But, yes, there are other people who think that staying with a company for long period represents stability of the candidate. Whatever people's opinion is, when circumstances force you out of a job, what else you can do, nothing but start looking for a new job. I was also facing the same kind of scenario.

In my case also, this kind of situation came because of my Boss. As it happens everywhere that Boss is always right, in my case also, I sincerely followed this line throughout my career so far. And, this axiom proved correct in so many instances. But, this time, in my case, this axiom proved wrong. And you know who proved this axiom wrong ... my Boss! Yes, my Boss is also like just an ordinary Boss who believes in authority and giving mindless instructions to his

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team members. He displays so much passion and gusto in chasing his team members so that they follow his orders without disobeying them. To implement this, he treats the whole team in the same way as British treated India and applies “Divide and Rule” and “Carrot and Stick” policies in order to bring them fall in his lane.

Life after joining this company went for a toss. Everything looks so cool from outside. But from inside, it is like a smouldering dormant volcano, which nobody knows when it erupts. One can see employees’ egos, passions, and interests, getting boiled and disappeared in the huge lava of company interests dictated by rotund bosses with selfish motives. The sacrifices that the employees make to resolve issues will not mean anything at the end of the day. The promises made at the time of joining are easily forgotten by the management and appear only on the paper even after three years but never get implemented. Sometimes, it looks like the whole world is moving very fast in terms of innovation, creativity, and development, and we are still sitting and travelling on the same bullock cart, thinking that we are a great company

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and have a fantastic product, and looking at those jets which are roaming around in the unachievable heights of those skies.

I am a petty employee and have been working in this company for the past 3 years. I think that I did hell lot of service to this company but the management thinks otherwise. All my achievements are undermined by my so called Boss and because of that the management even does not know about them. The process I designed to reduce everyday prints and save the printing paper in turn was thrown into dustbin by my Boss. He does not feel that I am capable of doing all these things. In this company, I am OK with all the things except my Boss. Since he is the person through him I need to process anything which can benefit me in my long run, I could not able to achieve not much success so far.

Coming office on time, doing what Boss instructs me thinking I am a dumb ass, following his documented steps in a highly disciplined manner, and leaving the office after my Boss leaves the office is my daily schedule at the company; no



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more, no less. I have been following the same routine for the past three years and now, I am frustrated. I feel that I am in a cage since a long time and just like all a caged bird who always looks for ways to escape, I am also looking for an escape from the clutches of my Boss. I came to know about the person who used to serve my Boss in the same capacity went straight into psychological trauma after serving him for three years; now, you might have understood from what I have been trying to escape from!

Since I have been employed here for a long time, I know most of the employees in our company. I meet them daily after office hours and they all know my plight. But, what is the use. They tell me all that what I do not want or need but cannot give me a practical readymade solution for my one and only problem - my Boss. Sometimes, I think that why God made my Boss; I mean the reason behind my Boss existence on this planet. Unable to bear my Boss torture everyday and in a bid to escape from it, I consulted so many astrologists who made good money by feeding on my plight again without giving me a practical solution. What to do!

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Sometimes, I think God made me to suffer in the hands of my Boss like this because of my previous birth sins. Whatever it is, I decided that there will be no end to my suffering until I leave my Boss.

I started looking for new job. I updated my resume and eagerly started waiting for the interview calls with my mobile switched ON all the time (24 X 7). I started getting calls slowly after 5 days of my sincere waiting. That day I was seriously working on a complicated task given my Boss, studiously. Then a HR from a renowned called me to ask whether I am interested in working with their company. I am just waiting to listen for that kind of question. And when I heard it, without thinking about anything, I said YES. I could not able to control the decibel level of my voice and it resounded across the whole floor. Everybody including my Boss turned toward me and I looked like a stupid to them who screams for no reason. The call continued and the HR asked me that they would conduct an interview with me on the coming weekend, for which I said YES.

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I was so happy, may be for those few days, I was the happiest man of this world. Inside of my heart, the beats were fast and the blood was getting pumped double the normal speed. Outside, my face was beaming with happiness and I could not able to control it. I started speaking with all the employees fearlessly in front of my Boss though I know he never liked that. Just before the interview day, my guts pushed me to such an extent that I cracked a joke on my Boss behind his back with my colleagues. This event marks the heights of my guts in this company so far. I attended the interview and came out with flying colours. They offered me double my present salary and most of all when I met my future LADY Boss, I felt so happy because she was so cordial with me and I was so happy with the way she spoke to me during my interview. Slowly, I thought, my sufferings were coming to an end.

On the next weekday, I came to office with brimming inspiration and oozing confidence. As usual, my Boss called me inside his cabin and asked about the work status of the complicated project which he gave me a few days back to

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work on. As I was preparing for the interview, I could not able to focus myself on the task and because of that I could not able to complete it. But, I cannot say all these things to my Boss. Therefore, I simply said, NO. With this curt reply of mine, my Boss became furious, in the same usual fashion, and started yelling at me about the importance of the project. He started pinpointing my lack of skills and after listening to all this rubbish from my Boss, I got infuriated and told my Boss that I would complete that project by that day evening and left his cabin with a huff straight to my desk and started working on the project. I continued working like that for next 10 hours without a break and finally, I completed it. I don't know how I completed the task because my mind was overflowing with all the negative thoughts about the project and my Boss and by the time I came out of my thoughts, I was writing the last summary line of the task. I did not even review it because of my frustration and I mailed the task to my Boss and left the office dejected.

Next day, I went to office, emailed my resignation to my Boss, and directly went to HR department and told them that

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I am resigning the same day. They had given me a few documents to complete and asked whether my Boss knows it already. I said that I emailed him my resignation and there is no need to worry about that. The HR lady was a cool one with understanding attitude and she just gave me a beautiful smile which refreshed my mind. She told me that she would conduct my Exit interview post lunch and now, I could go to my desk and complete my unfinished business, if any. I said OK but did not go to my desk; instead I went to cafeteria and sat there in a chair after grabbing a hot tea. I slowly started sipping the tea and do not know when I pushed myself into my own thoughts.

Somebody shook me and I am out of my slumber. Suddenly, I realized that I was sitting in the office cafeteria and slowly tried to look at the person who woke me up from my day dream. She was the lady HR who told me that day morning that she would take my Exit interview that day afternoon. Again she gave me a 1000 volt smile to me and I was refreshed again. I followed her to into a glass cabin and she offered me a vacant seat and seated herself opposite to me

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across the table. She took a paper and started reading contents out of it to me, which is nothing but formality sake. After she read the contents, she looked at me and told me that she would be asking a few questions for which I need to answer correctly. I said OK and her first question was why I wanted to leave this company. For which, I told everything I could, and she realized that my present Boss was the reason behind my leaving the company. She asked me that but for my Boss, everything was fine, for which I said YES and went a step ahead and told her, to emphasize my point how much I suffered in the hands of my Boss, if I did not have this Boss problem, I was happy staying in this company. She noted the point. At the end of the interview, she praised me for my efforts I put in so far for the company, which my Boss never did in the past 3 years, and I was so happy that at last somebody realized my efforts.

After the interview was over, she told me that I will get my relieving papers by 5 'O' clock that day evening and left the room. I was so relieved. Even before I got those papers in my hands, I started feeling so happy. I decided that once I join

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the new company, I would take leave for one week and go for a vacation to a foreign country, refresh myself, then come back and start work in the new company. I did not go to my desk again. It was already 4.30 pm and I decided to meet few of my friends who know me very well and never failed so far to empathize with me. I was planning to wind up the discussion with my friends by 5 pm when somebody shouted my name from my back. I turned back and saw the lady HR with some papers in her hand and waiving at me as if she wanted me to come over there. I took leave from my friends and promised them I would meet them in the next week at our evening club for a drink and went toward the lady HR. Now, she was not smiling; this was the first time, in the whole day I saw her without smiling. She asked me to follow her and we went sat in the same old glass cabin where I sat this morning. Her face was grim and she looked into my eyes and told me that my resignation was not accepted by the management.

After listening to her, my blood rushed into my veins and my mind stopped thinking. There was no reason to ask her who

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did this. The answer was so simple. My Boss did not want me to leave a peaceful life and he never ever wanted me to release from his clutches. For a second, he looked like a Dracula who was habituated to sip the blood oozing out of my frustrated and wounded soul. Inside my mind started screaming NO, NO and suddenly, I heard somebody calling my name loudly. The lady HR, who was earlier sitting in front of me across the table, now stood up and was seriously looking at me. I realized that her call brought me into this world again. I controlled myself and asked her politely the reason behind the non-acceptance of my resignation by the management. She took a second and told me that after going through your Exit Interview responses, the management took that decision. I got irritated. Annoyed, I asked her what I said in the interview that forced the management to act like this. She looked into my face and told me that because of the reason, which I told her.

“This is heights” I told myself. Frustrated, I asked her, could you please tell me clearly what happened? She smiled and told me that your Boss got kicked out of the company by the



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management half-an-hour back as he screwed up an important project lately. Because of that company lost a fortune. And since you mentioned in your Exit Interview that your Boss was the only reason behind for you leaving this company, and since he already left, the management decided not to accept your resignation. Now, you are still the employee of this company and, shortly, you will be working under a new Boss.

She stood up and extended her hand and said Congratulations, our company needs sincere employees like you and gave me again that 1000-volt smile and left the cabin.

Oh God!! I thought. Now, I came to know about which project the lady HR was talking about. It was the one which I worked upon recently. It seems that my Boss did not review that and sent the same report to the client.

Jesus!! I am a real stupid, I started scolding myself. In my mind, only one thought kept on repeating again and again, why I took this much time to do screw the project?

# The Blind Date

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I saw her in the office corridor, again today. Her beautiful face is only the most inspirational item in my life, these days. After having slapped by bad times, repeatedly, my mind became numb; as a result, all my inspiration and its related activities have become subdued. I stopped showing interest in either materialistic or physically exciting stuff these days. After a gap of six months, today, suddenly, I am seeing her again. Exactly, I do not know in which department she works in our office. Nevertheless, we used to meet every day, in the corridor, during my coffee outings. At least once in a day, I used to get the opportunity of seeing her beautiful face and chiselled physical features. However bad the day may be, her flirtatious looks explodes cupid volcanoes inside my mind and excite me for a couple of seconds before she vanishes into the other side of the corridor, along with her colleague. I do not know exactly why she disappeared this many days. Again today, she resurfaced again, after a gap of six months, with the same looks and grace. As usual, she glanced at me while I

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am walking toward her. I still see the same spirit dancing in her eyes when she glances at me as six months before. Although the “greetings through eyes” episode is there for the last 8 months between us, the matter has not proceeded further due to so many obstacles.

Most of the times, we both are with our colleagues when we greet each other in silence. Lack of time, and hectic schedule, bad boss, and bugging buddies, etc, collapsed the spirit of the tower of love that we build every day through our side-glances at each other. Time, as they said, never waits for anybody. Missed opportunities hardly come back. Although I know all these things since my birth, yet, I am unable to proceed further on my part. As I already told you that, there are hundred reasons on my part in not doing so. However, after I realized how much I missed her in the last six months of her absence, I concluded that I indeed liked her very much and felt a desperate urge to express my feelings to her. Now, when I see her, my heart is beating fast and my mind is spitting hundreds of ways and thoughts that I can use

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instantly to tell her what is there on my mind. Without my knowledge, my legs started moving toward her direction.

At this moment, she is talking to her colleague, slightly bent toward her, while giving furtive looks at my side. Finally, I put myself, in front of her; in other words, I blocked her way, physically. Sensing my presence as an obstacle in their path, her colleague whispered in her ear something, which is barely audible to me. They both stopped a few feet away from me. Her facial expression changed a little bit. A normal facial expression has replaced her smiling expression now and she started looking straight through me though I am trying to look into her eyes. Her colleague, wearing a question mark expression with a wrinkled forehead, started staring at me. For a second, tension started building in the air. To clear the air of anxiety and to make my position clear, I cleared my vocal cords and without batting my eyelids, straightaway looked into her eyes though she is not looking into mine, hesitatingly and gingerly asked her, “Do you ... me?” Her normal facial expression slipped into a confusing one and she slightly parted her lips to say something but

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stopped from doing so. Her colleague took a fraction of a second to understand what is going on, relaxed her facial muscles, looked at me coolly, and gave me a nasty look that says she witnessed and experienced this kind of situations before and knows how to tackle them, clearly and precisely. She stepped forward, leaned a little bit toward me, and whispered into my ear saying, "She is blind. She cannot see you."

Her words exploded a volcano in my mind; an emotional one. The impact of the volcano sent shudders through my spine, paralyzed my whole body, and brought tears into my eyes. After she said this to me, she looked into my eyes for a second, stepped back, held 'her' hand in a guiding manner, and moved away to the other corner of the corridor, slowly.

# The Un‘forget’table Love

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“Hmmm ...” I don’t think she likes this ... But, what about this one; a beautifully decorated fresh red colour cut flower bouquet. Now, I am sure that she would like this. I am confident that I know her taste. Not only that, but, I have this idea that I can read her mind, given a chance! After dating her for the last five years and having exchanged incredible intimate notes about each other in our ‘so called’ exclusive meetings, I feel that I know her very much. In other words, I am sure that she also thinks the same about me. I am thankful to God for what he did to my life at this moment; he blessed me a ‘second life’ by bringing her into my life.

After roaming in foreign lands on a business trip for three years in a row, I just landed here a few minutes back, went to airport shopping lounge, and bought an exclusive bouquet for ‘her’. I came here to make it up with her about what has happened between us earlier and surprise her with my marriage proposal. That’s why, after my flight landed, the

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first thing what I did was to switch-on my mobile to call her. Unluckily, her mobile was switched off.

No issues! It happens some time, but I am not complaining. I think this kind of moments really increase the liking between two souls. The main thing that I respect and adore her is the loyalty factor towards me. Although I stayed away from her for three hard years, we have been in touch with each other through mails and phone calls, until recently; I mean, up to two months back. A small misunderstanding came between us and she took it to her heart and emotionally exploded on me. I apologized to her so many times to calm her but of no avail. She was in no mood to pardon me. I tried calling her after that fighting episode but she was not picking my calls.

Well, all this happens in everyone's love life, right! Life is not bed of roses and everybody knows about that. However, people cannot accept or digest thorns in their life. Nevertheless, I don't think that is a big issue. She has been not talking to me for the last two months but I have been way from her for the last three years. So, in one way, she might got frustrated internally, in an emotional way, about

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my “staying away” from her and might have expressed the same when she got a chance to do so. I am OK with all her disturbed feelings. Instead, I like her longing feelings for me.

After roaming different places and meeting people with different cultures and behaviours, unconsciously, I developed some understanding and patience. In this case, we know each other for a long time and a small disturbance like this definitely creates some yearning for each other, which in turn nurtures our romantic emotions; at least that’s what I feel. I love these feelings! “Tring, tring”! Sorry, my mobile is receiving some signal. One of my old friends is calling.

I received the call and said ‘Hi’. I heard a sudden burst of happiness on the other side. All my friends are so excited about my career and me. They like me very much. Suddenly, his voice went down. He started speaking with a sympathetic voice. I asked him, what happened? He was silent for a second and blurted that ‘she’ is getting married today. “What?” I yelled out. All the nearby passengers in the airport have turned their attention towards me. For a few seconds, I was not in my senses. I did not know what is happening



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around me. My whole world has become topsy-turvy. All my dreams of last five years went down the drain.

The 'gift of my life' that God had given me was taken away from me, but why? Can 'two months of silence' has that much power to create such a big chasm between us, forever? Then, what about all those sweet nothings we had shared all those five years? Did not they have any value or power over her? Was that all I could expect from this relationship after patiently waiting for this many years? I was devastated for a few minutes. Then slowly, my mind started regaining its consciousness and busily started charting out my path about what I have to do. After a lot of internal debate, it decided that I should go back to the place where I came from. In other words, it has decided that there was nothing for me here. Sceptically thinking about what has happened, I pushed myself to the ticket counter to book my return ticket.

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# Hi Gentlemen!

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It was almost 2 pm and my companion and I were walking along a 3 km deserted road on a Saturday afternoon. “I am so hungry” my companion blurted while briskly walking along with me. We already walked 2 kms and were yet to go another 1 km more. This place, where we are walking right now, is in the outskirts of the city and we are here for an interview in one of the companies in the newly constructed IT Park. After the interview was over, we were going back to our respective places. The IT Park was located far away from the main road and, unfortunately, neither we have transport of our own nor there transport facility which could take us up to the main road so that we could catch public transport from there to go to our respective places. “This place is like a desert,” he said derisively while mopping the sweat on his forehead with his new hanky. I nodded my head agreeing to what he said and pointed to a ‘dhaba’ located at some 100 metres away from we were standing now. My companion excitedly said “Hurray!” and almost jumped with joy. We

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both increased our pace and tried to reach the dhaba within as much short time as possible.

The dhaba's name is "KARMA" and it is a 2-storey building with a/c restaurant in the second floor. The moment we entered the dhaba, somebody very politely greeted us with "Hi Gentlemen!" We are surprised to be greeted like this because, frankly, we both do not belong to that league. In fact, just 2 hours back, during the interview, we have outsmarted each other by lying to the interviewer about our achievements and years of experience and made them believe what we told them. We looked at each other sheepishly and smiled to acknowledge that we got a "sitting duck" here for our supper. We walked into the floor, and to our surprise, nobody was there. We looked around and heard the voice again from the corner of the room "Hi! Gentlemen!" Slowly a middle-aged figure with 4-feet height and rotund shaped belly got up from a corner and showed us the way to the a/c restaurant. My companion asked him, why nobody was there at that point of time. For that question, he smiled and replied that people would start trickling in within

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a few minutes for supper just like us. We kept quiet and promptly followed him to the second floor.

He brought us the menu and in the first glance itself, we could say that the rates were similar to a 5-star hotel and they were too high for a restaurant like this. He switched on the a/c, served potable water, and stood beside our table eagerly waiting to take our order. We took our time in going through the menu; after a long discussion of what we would have and not, keeping the exorbitant prices in consideration, we made a few meticulous calculations and finally arrived at a decision, which we thought the best ones, and ordered our supper. Our man (the steward) also chipped in some tips about the dish combinations and told us what is best at that restaurant to help us to make decision quickly. As per our calculation, since the prices are steep, by default, the quantity would be more. My companion is dreaming about hot buttered 'parathas' and 'chicken 65' which he ordered for supper. After the morning interview and this long walk, he was visibly looking tired. I ordered spicy 'biryani' along with 'raitha' for my own consumption. Nobody was there

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except three of us. After our man left, we started gossiping about our man regarding how we can manage him to give us something extra like cool drinks, etc, with no cost. We were so happy at that moment because there was no one else except us in that restaurant and we were feeling blissful for finding out such a calm and peace place at that hour and place. We were so tired at that moment and we do not want to get disturbed either by sound or somebody else physical presence. Moreover, this place was really serving us what we want at this moment.

Within 10 minutes, our man brought the order. He covered the dishes with white cloth just like how they do in the 5-star hotels. We were so thrilled by the way he brought our order. And we thought that for those steep prices, at least we must be treated this way. He neatly arranged all the ordered dishes on the table in front of us and removed the white cloth, slowly. Seeing the dishes, we were shocked!

The quantity of the food served was aptly suitable for children of some 7-8 years age. My companion, who was taken aback, by this ghastly act of our man, was about to

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broke into tears. The hot buttered 'parathas' he was dreaming about, remained as a dream only. In reality, he was served with two small cold parathas with no butter. Moreover, the chicken 65 which he ordered along with parathas was served in a small plate; only four small chicken pieces were there! And coming to my 'biryani', it was served in a small round plate with little depth. The 'raitha' was also served in a small cup. Overall, we got exactly opposite of what we had been dreaming for 5-star hotel prices. We both looked at our man in shock and surprise. He slyly smiled at us and said, "Gentlemen! We should eat to live, not live to eat", and shoved the bill in my hand, gently! We could not eat the food because it was cold and the taste was bad. Puzzled by what happened and shocked by the steep food bill slapped for a pity amount of cold food served to us, we were stunned and slowly hit the road again to continue our remaining journey relying on our old energy levels.

# The American Way of Doing Things

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America! The name of this country itself is enough for so many people in the third world countries to go day dreaming. To lead the lifestyle of the people in America is an unachievable dream to so many world citizens. In this scenario, everything that is American attracts attention. Even a small event, if conducted in America, has the potential to nuke this world 'N' number of times back and forth.

Consider a small event like crossing a 3-feet distance between two separate buildings; if this event happens in a third world country like India, people take it very lightly and may not pay much attention to it. If you call a person who is walking on the street to take up this challenge of jumping the gap of 3-feet between two separate buildings, if s/he accepts the challenge, they may not give much thought to it but simply come, jump, smile, and leave; because, for most of them, they might have already done such kind of things in

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their life. It is very easy to do from their point of view and does not weigh much neither in terms of opportunity nor challenge to them. But, if the same event is conducted in America, God knows, what not happens!

If you call a person in America who is going there on the road to come and take up the challenge of jumping a 3-feet gap between two separated buildings, then from the next minute onward, the momentum of this small event gets changed. This whole raconteur is about how America commercializes even a small event like the above one, how they do it, and what the consequences they face because of this unstoppable commercialization.

If you call America's Sam (fictitious name) to jump the 3-feet gap between two separated buildings, then the first thing Sam does after accepting the deal is to call his home, sweet home, where his wife, who is on the verge to decide to give divorce to Sam because of his peculiar ways, along with his kid resides! So, Sam calls his wife and tells her that he accepted this life-threatening challenge just to show her that he can do anything to re-attract the love of his irritated wife



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and his ONLY child. Sam's wife realizes this and gets emotional when Sam tells her what he is going to do, forgets every bad thing about Sam for a few seconds, tells him that she too loves him. She desperately kisses the phone microphone 'N' number of times with tears rolling from her eyes to make Sam know that she still loves him after the bitter last night quarrel. Sam gets inspired and asks his lady love to permit him to talk to his cute kid for one last time before he goes for the challenge. Now, kid takes the call from mama and talks to his dad. Dad gets emotional and kisses the kid through phone and tells 'Sorry' for his past mistakes and sincerely tells him that his mama is right in so many ways and desperately asks him to listen to her throughout his life. The kid, who does not understand what his dad is saying, just listens to him and finally says 'Good day dad!' and hangs the phone.

Sam, now, is mentally ready to take the challenge of jumping the 3-feet distance between two separate buildings. He decides to go to sports shop, next. Why? You may ask! It is to buy required gear, which can protect and help him to

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complete the event. He sits and make a list about what to buy. His list includes strong nylon ropes, waterproof backpack, water bottle, hand gloves for grip, aluminium buckles, jacket, track suit, spike shoes, head gear like helmet, night lamp, etc. But before he goes to buy all these things, he makes one more call; but this time, he calls to a local TV channel. He tells them about the event, the challenge he accepted, and asks them whether they are willing to cover this lifetime event where an American citizen decided to save the prestige of the whole American society by accepting this kind of challenge as a true American patriot and has decided to go for it without thinking about his closely knitted family and friends.

The TV channel goes abuzz. They want to be the first TV channel in this world to cover this event. Immediately, they accept his call and on the phone itself, they enter into an agreement with Sam for the exclusive rights of the whole event. Sam is delighted for the surprising offer he got from the TV channel. The moment Sam said YES, the TV channel starts broadcasting Sam's event as BREAKING NEWS. The

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other TV channels, who got the news about Sam's feat, makes deal with this local channel and enter into a pact with it for a few exclusive shots to be taken from certain angles.

After 1 hour Sam agreed to do the jump, all the TV news channels are buzzing Sam's event throughout America, now. Every channel is talking about Sam and his challenge. The anchor's are making their best to describe and represent Sam as an American idol. Some other channels started digging about Sam's childhood and personal details to tell their viewers exactly who Sam is, where from he comes, what he does exactly for living, was he a good student or not in his school days, who are his teachers and what they say about him, who are Sam's parents and where they stay, is Sam a 100% American or a Mexico migrant, what Sam did in his college days, how was his athlete life, what his parents and wife has to say about his accepted challenge, etc. A few other channels went to Sam's school and started interviewing his childhood teachers and asked them for Sam's childhood pictures, started collecting Sam's childhood details from his friends, who belong to that period.

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While Sam is collecting his gear for the feat, he gets a call from some insurance company public relation officer asking whether he would like to represent their company after the event. Sam surprised! And the insurance company quoted a figure for which Sam cannot say No. Sam is thrilled by the contract. Meanwhile, the media went to Sam's house and started interviewing his wife and only child. They started putting questions to Sam's wife and started collecting information about Sam's hobbies, tastes, and how Sam met Sally (Sam's wife), how they fall in love with each other and then what happened, etc, details. Sam's daughter has become the centre of attraction for the media and someone from the media when asked her "who is the strongest person among your parents?", she replied, "My Daddy is the strongest". All the TV channels started replaying again and again Sam's daughter statement about his father as Breaking News.

Throughout America the corporate offices are buzzing with the event. All the conference rooms are full and the public relation officers of those companies are brainstorming about

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how they can squeeze maximum gain from Sam's event. The advertisement campaigners are sketching their plans to bring the best of their product with Sam as their advertiser. All the consumer goods companies are vying for Sam's attention to advertise their goods. Because of these things, Sam's life, at once, started buzzing with opportunities galore to mint money, and now he became a busy man with so much responsibility on his shoulders.

Sam came to the event place with all the required gear to do the feat. By that time, the local police cordoned off the area, where Sam decided to do the event. Helicopters are hovering around the place and numerous TV channels are broadcasting Sam's live show to the world public. Sam is busy attending calls of various sponsors and companies who want Sam to do something for them. Sam has grown from an unknown man to a public figure within a few hours of his decision to do the feat.

Sam's event has rocked the whole world. Europe has been waiting for America's declaration about Sam's event and Russia, as usual, is suspicious of Sam's event. UK, as

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always, came forward and declare that they are with uncle Sam in whatever they does and America is like a big brother for them. All the third world countries' statesmen are busily discussing about America's event and started wondering whether they can ask Sam to help them to get aid from first world countries. Sam's event has impacted the world citizen. India's Prime Minister arranged a press conference and declared that all Indians love Americans irrespective of whether Americans love Indians or not. All the parties other than Prime Minister's immediately started questioning his declaration in front of the press regarding Indians' love issue with America. Finally, all the political parties unanimously declared that Indians loves America only when Americans loves India. And there won't be one-side love from India.

Finally, the American President decided to take the call and called Sam. He appreciated Sam's daring and dashing nature and told him that he has to be successful in this event so that America can hold its head high in the world community. Sam got emotional and declared to the President, "come what

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may, I will make sure that I will make this event a success without any glitches”.

While all this buzz is happening, in some remote place of the world, some people are planning to destroy the Sam’s event - the terrorists. These guys want to tell America that it cannot do whatever it wants just like that and it cannot have its way in whatever manner it wants. In one line, they want to make America feel insecure. And these terrorists decided that by destroying Sam’s event, they tell the whole world along with America about what they can do and show the world how much potential they have. America’s panic-stricken FBI, who always dreams about terrorists and nuclear bombs even in those places where it is not possible to train and manufacture them, already thought about this kind of terrorist activity can happen with Sam’s event and took precautions by employing metal detectors, forensic experts, trained dogs, experienced psychologists who can read terrorist minds, etc, in the place of the event. Now, they even started controlling what Sam drinks and eats just out of precaution.

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Now, the scheduled time for the event is going to start. Sam, in a bullet proof track suit, came to the top of one of the buildings with his gear. All the TV channels are showing Sam's now. The whole world cheered looking Sam on TV. He tied his nylon rope to one end of the building and thrown the other end on to the other building so that it can be tied both the ends. He wore all the protective gear and buckled himself to the nylon rope, which was already tied between two buildings, and finally became ready for the jump. Just before he is about to start for the jump, he called his wife, kissed her on the phone itself and told her that if anything happens to him, she has to take care of their one and only daughter. Tears started rolling from the rosy cheeks of Sally and she assured Sam not to worry about his child and everything would be taken care of. And she passes that phone to her daughter so that Sam could talk to his child. After giving the final kiss to his daughter, Sam's hangs out his phone and declares himself that he is available for the jump.

The whole world has been watching Sam for the past 3 hours. They all are finger crossed about whether Sam can do



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this event successfully or not. A few bookers in renowned clubs started booking bets against the success of Sam's jumping feat.

Slowly, Sam started walking toward the 3-feet gap between the two buildings. Slowly, the walk became jog and jog became run. By the time, Sam came to the 3-feet gap, he was running at his best speed so that he could lift himself in the air to cross the 3-feet distance while his buckle was tied to the nylon rope for safety reasons. Within a fraction of a second, Sam was airborne and was in the air crossing the 3-feet gap between two separate buildings. The whole world stood, unknowingly; they all were holding breath for that 1 second, and finally, Sam successfully stepped down on the other building. The moment he landed himself on the next building, the whole world clapped with joy and excitement and thanked God for supporting Sam in his feat.

American President who has been intently watching the whole episode, immediately called Sam and conveyed Congratulations on behalf of the whole nation. Russia, who is eagerly watching the whole event decided that it will also

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carry out the same kind of exercise. The third world countries are abound with joy and they all started sending congratulatory notes through their respective representatives to the American President and Sam on this event.

The average American's self confidence has grown like snow Himalayas once again. Whole America is beaming with joy. Within 4 hours, Sam's name has become a household name in America. Sam's mobile is buzzing with calls from different people throughout the world. The TV channels are broadcasting Sam's wishes and statements in their respective channels. Sam has no time to call his wife, right now. He is busy with giving away autographs to whoever asked. Sam himself is quite happy for his achievement, also for becoming the world renowned person, and becoming American idol within such a short span of time. He is invited by Oprah to her show. In one sentence, the whole world is chanting Sam's name with ecstasy.

On that night, Sam is sitting with his wife beside the swimming pool in his house, savouring the beautiful

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moonlight after his terrific successful day. His wife, in her low neck designer night wear, is comforting Sam with an intimate tight hug. Both of them are in their own sensual intimacy world. But somewhere from among the bushes behind the swimming pool, a camera is flashing rapidly and taking the intimate pictures of Sam and his wife to publish in the next day's tabloid front page as hot and breaking news - the paparazzi!

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