

"FROM THE JOURNALS OF USER DIED"

I Wish
I Could
HEAR MY Name

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Published in India by Prowess Publishing,
YRK Towers, Thadikara Swamy Koil St, Alandur,
Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600016

ISBN: 978-81-943988-0-6
eISBN: 978-81-943988-1-3

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication

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CHAPTER 1

13th September, 2014

After my high school, I started working as a freelance content writer and I stabilized my work in ‘result awaited’ period of time.

It had been two months when I got admission in Ramjas. In the first month, everything was chaotic, but till the end of the second month of the first semester, everything became stable once again.

“450 is the maximum I can afford. I have to buy whole other section stuff too in limited funds. Students are not participating and it’s killing my job.” Jaydeep Bakshi, one of my freelance employers, told me.

He was a faculty member of Mumbai’s Distance Learning University and he was looking for some writers, when I found him online, who could write for their annual magazine and online alumni section on their portal to show that they have a bunch of talent.

Generally, he asked me to write English poetry for 250 bucks for 5–6 stanzas, consisting 6 lines each. But that day, a writer who was supposed to write an article on the 51st year of the university, did back out due to sickness and he asked me to do it. 450 bucks for 2 pages was very less. Initially, I asked for 600.

The date for our departmental official fresher’s party was announced and it was due in next month and I had to arrange money as much as I could.

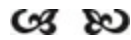
But it seemed like I belonged to 90% man’s category that don’t have bargaining quality. Besides that, I doubted whether I would be able to write or not. Anyhow, we agreed to the agreement and I was given two days for it.

Later that day, I went to college specially to submit my accountancy assignment. The batch consisted of around 120 students and that’s why there

were two class representatives and one of them was, ‘Tarasha Arora’.

I was very fond of ‘Old English Text’ font back in those days. So, I made the cover page of the assignment in that font only which impressed her, a lot, because her own writing was more likely to a doctor’s prescription.

That day, it was my first interaction with her.



15th September, 2014

Two days later, I submitted my article to Jaydeep. He was pretty much impressed with my work. I received my money with another project proposal.

His niece was running a publishing house and she needed some freelance writer for her client’s work. Rather than hiring all full time employees, she decided to go for some interns and freelancers. Just like any other entrepreneur, cost cutting had been her first motive.

I received a call after my Business Law lecture. It was almost late mid-afternoon.

“Hi, Am I talking to Sharvil?”

“Yeah, who’s this?”

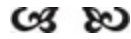
“It’s Harshini Bakshi. I got your number from my uncle Jaydeep Bakshi. He recommended your name as a freelance editor and content writer. Is this a good time to talk?”

“Yes, please go on.”

“So, Sharvil, as uncle told you I am currently operating a publication house and I have certain clients, who would like to get some project done on payment basis. If you’re free this evening, you can visit to my office Bakshi Publication house in Mayapuri, behind PVR Naraina, Tower 2, 2nd Floor.”

“Okay, sure. Time?”

“Off timing is 7 pm. So you can come any time before that.”



I reached there around 5 in the evening. A boy of my age welcomed me and asked me to wait for her. I made myself comfortable on an uncomfortable wooden chair.

A lady in her late twenties appeared from the main door. She was 5'6" tall with fair oval shaped face and lean body. She came forward and extended her hand for a handshake.

“Hi, I’m Harshini.”

“Hi, Sharvil.” I answered her handshake.

She led me to her cabin and which was full of papers, books, magazines. She started the conversation with the introduction of the house. When the publishing house was started, how she started it, what kind of clients they had and how her uncle recommended my name.

For the first five minutes such one sided conversations went. Then she told me what exactly work I had to do. Basically, she had links with students of UK, USA based universities and high schools. They were lethargic enough to do their assignments, so they outsourced their assignments to Harshini’s firm on payment basis and she forwarded them to her freelancers. Fortunately, her business gradually grew very large and that’s why she looked for more freelancers.

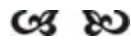
I didn’t know how much she charged from the clients, but she promised me to pay 12 dollars per assignment which was roughly around 650–700 in Indian currency. 2 assignments in a week and they were enough to take care of my weekly pocket expenses.

During that week I received two assignments, one was related to accounting, which included practical problems of depreciation and goodwill analysis. Luckily, similar questions I did in my college assignment so it was easy for me. The second one was related Business Management which included case studies of techniques for brand management.

The major issue I faced in writing theoretical answers was plagiarism. It had to be null at any cost otherwise my work would not be eligible for submission. Wherever plagiarism was detected, Harshini advised me to change the words and apply active or passive voice, in order to avoid

plagiarism.

That was the method of making a machine fool.



30th October, 2014

It was the day of official fresher's day celebration. I was able to save enough for a new pair of shoes, denim and a white shirt.

The day started at 7 in the morning, with a morning tea and a text from Harshini. I was promised weekly payment and she told me that my last assignment was not up to the mark and I would not be getting paid for that and it made me very upset. The resentment wasn't about the money, it was my first failure in working life and besides that she had to apologize to the client for my mistake.

It was really, a bad start to the day. I didn't talk to anyone apart from greeting. I tried hard to indulge myself in solving accounting problems related to 'Hire Purchase' accounts.

There were only 2 lectures in the morning and the party was about to start around 3 in the afternoon. All the people who were living in PG and hostels went back to their rooms. My house was 21 km far from the college, so I couldn't afford to come back to house, get ready and then go back to the college. It would be very time consuming and that is why I went ready in the morning. So did some others who came from afar.

There were two girls among us named Ruchi and Sharika Gangadharan. While we were having a conversation, Ruchi told us that Sharika was a singer. Her wardrobe was full of certificates and trophies. Sharika disclosed the exact figures, which were 72 trophies and 125 certificates till date.

She gained everybody's attention, especially mine. My jaw was dropped. Music was my life; moreover, it was my way to escape emotions. We asked her to sing for us but, she didn't sing.

It was understandable, with all the new faces, hesitation won.

A few minutes later, the class went empty and there were only 5 people in the room. I requested her one more time and this time, she agreed. But she requested me not to make any recordings. I promised I won't and I didn't.

Then, she sang the song 'Sun Raha Hai Na Tu (female version)'.

It felt like we were listening to Shreya Ghosal, herself. Same melody, same notes, same tones, same voice, same touches to the words, everything was just fabulous. The day started badly, but it was not going anymore. Then we requested her to sing one more song and she sang another song, 'Tujh mei rab dikhata hai' and this time she allowed me to record it.

At 3 PM, the party was started. The event was divided in three parts. First one was to choose Mr. and Miss Fresher; second was lunch and third was a dance party, for which, we all were majorly waiting.

First part began; some guys and girls went to the stage for the participation. Taraasha also took participate. There was a task to show their talent and impress the audience. When her turn came, she sang 'Main Tenu Samjhawan Ki' song. After hearing Sharika's voice, her voice was just unbearable to the ears. To be very honest, she was a very horrible singer.

But the thing which hit me was her shaking legs, closed eyes in between of changing lines, her clutch of fingers to the microphone & her emotions.

I realized she had a heartbroken story, which might make me interested in listening to her.

When she came back to us I wanted to ask her but I recalled a promise that I made to myself, 'no more indulging in anyone's story'. Because in the end, people move on and left me with their untold stories with the promise from me that they would be remained unsung forever. It cost them nothing but for me, it cost a cage for a piece of heart.

But fortune is a bitch. The very next day, we had a quiz competition in Lady Shri Ram College and Taraasha and I were the team. I named the team 'Sober Evil' which was my pen name.

We were the first team to reach there. One of the volunteers led us to the auditorium and asked to wait there. For the first 15–20 minutes, we went through certain online quiz sessions for the sake of practice. Then we took a 5 minute break and her broken heart popped out.

“Can I ask you something?” She asked while poking my shoulder. I knew the moment was there. I was about to know for whom she sang that song.

“What?”

“Can someone leave just because of different caste?”

“I can’t tell until I know the story.”

Then she began. How AJ used to stalk her and how the stalk slowly slowly started dragging her attention. How they came into a relationship and how AJ left her by giving an excuse of different castes. She was a Punjabi and he was a Baniya.

“See. To be very honest, you were in a relationship for a year and when the sweetness evaporated, he left with an excuse. When this sweetness would develop again, he would come back.”

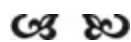
“Are you sure?” she asked. Was I sure? No, I just threw words what came to my mind at that time. I was no expert in love advices. I already failed it, twice.

“No, I am not. But I’ll pray.” I said it with a mild smile.

“That’s so sweet.” She said with a curvy smile. I could see the desperation in her eyes to be with him.

That’s my weakness. I said to myself.

(There is always one guy in every class who knows everybody’s secret. That guy was me. Boys in my school didn’t have much secret, but girls’ secrets were been wild. I knew them and promised no one would know about it. I acted as a friend, but in the end, I was always bullied for being around them. Last bullied time was a physical one, horrible for me and that’s why I made a promise to myself ‘no more indulgent’ in other’s story stories.)



14th December, 2014

I stopped my content writing job for a month because of exams.

After my semester term-end exams were over, I contacted Harshini again to check if she had any work for me. I was earning enough to take care of my own expenses. Moreover, I celebrated my birthday with 4 different groups. One cake was cut with my family, second was cut with my college, third was with school group and the fourth was with me, alone.

I received a text from Harshini asking me if I was interested in writing stories.

Well, a few days before, I had started writing my first book. I even completed first chapter of it, which was consisted of 12 pages. Till that point of time, I had in my mind 'A piece of Cake: No one tasted' name for the book. The story explained the reason behind why did I cut the fourth cake alone.

I responded positively to her and responding to my response, she invited me to a group meeting of 2–3 people at TEE DEE Café in Tibetan Refugee Colony at 10 in the morning. She had her apartment in Model town that's why she chose the nearest location to her. It was my first visit there and she guided me to the route keenly.

At first, that place looked very scary to me. Congested streets, narrow roads, unknown diversions, the uneven structure of the colony, all the refugees, people with different outfits, different language, but as I reached the Buddhist Temple, I started finding it beautiful. It wasn't feeling like I was in India, it was like I was roaming in Tibet itself. After it, I didn't face any hurdle to reach TEE DEE café. It was roof top café and just like the one I always fantasized to own.

Beautifully decorated, marvelous interior, perfect combination of chairs, couches & tables, their outlet, everything was just awesome.

I was on time, but it seemed the others were late.

I sat down on the chair and waited. The waiter came with over pouring smile on his face and asked what I would like to order. He was wearing dark green t-shirt and black denim. There was a logo (Thread made sketch of leaves in yellow color and below it, TEE DEE was quoted with red thread) of the café on the left hand side of the chest.

"Tea", I said.

"Which one," he asked and told me 10–12 different types of 'Tea'.

“Ginger Tea.”

“Okay Sir! Anything else, Sir?”

“No, that’s it. Thanks.”

I found I was the only customer there and that’s why I was the center of attraction of two people. Where I was sitting, from there, the whole view of the market could be seen. It was relaxing to sit silently and watching the people moving.

Since, I had to wait for an unknown amount of time, so I opened my notebook and decided to write ‘Chapter 2’ for my book.

After writing a paragraph about Burkha incident of my life, I realized my tea hadn’t arrived yet. I turned to the waiter. He was talking to a waitress in a weird way. He was using his hands too much while explaining. I could see her back only.

It took me a minute to realize that he was using sign language to communicate. It took me another minute to realize why he was doing that.

When their discussion ended, she turned.

I saw a face. Massively fair, not even a single black spot was on it. I saw the face of Eirene. Her serenity was dragging me towards her. She had unusual light-slim pink lips, which gave me interpretation she wasn’t in the habit of talking too much. And guessing the sign language, I concluded why her lips were so light and pink. Her eyes drew my attraction specially. They were dark black, secretive just like mine. It was not like love at first sight.

I found myself at the stage where beauty attracted the attention. Could be called crush stage.

She was wearing the same dress code that the entire staff members were following.

She came to me. I wanted to talk to her. Sign language made me curious to communicate with her. I realized this was my only safe chance and I could not blow it off.

“New Job”, I asked. She moved her neck up and down, which was a ‘yes’ an answer from her side.

“How many months?” I asked.

She showed her index finger.

This clarified she was not deaf then why the hell the boy was using sign language, I questioned myself. He could simply talk to her.

“So, scolded on your fifth day of work?” I asked further.

I was trying to drag the conversation as long as I could, which I realized was a big mistake. She did so many signs in reply which went far above my head.

The boy returned back to us, assuming that there was some issue going on the table.

“Any problem, Sir?” He asked.

“No, I was just asking what you were saying in sign language. To which she replied, but it completely bounced over my head.”

“I was asking her to take feedback from you so that we can post it online on our page.”

I asked him from where he learnt sign language and then he told me it was just a reflex, not a sign language. Every time he talked to her, his hands came into actions. This became habitual to him.

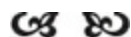
After both had gone back to the kitchen, I took the first sip of it.

It brought me my soul back. Perfect combination of tea, sugar, milk and ginger juice with the perfect number of boils. It was not a tea, it was a magic of potion to revive a dead soul.

15 minutes later I called Harshini. She told me there was a change in plan; meeting got cancelled. Client put the project on hold. She told me she would contact me later to discuss about the story writing thing.

At first, I was furious at her for not informing that in advance. But what could I do now. I should have had called her before leaving the house. Anyhow, the day wasn't that bad going.

I filled the feedback as requested by them and came out.



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