



World Harmony through Writing

SHARING STORIES

Writing Contests

Book Reviews

Short Stories

Poetry



Young India

Contest
Over 70 Entries



September 2020

Editor's Desk

*"Pan, who and what art thou?" he cried huskily.
"I'm youth, I'm joy," Peter answered at a venture, "I'm a
little bird that has broken out of the egg."*

— J.M. Barrie,

Young minds, curious and always ready to explore the world and find their own new methods of creating a world better than yesterday. Isn't youth one of the most precious human resources given to us by the Creator.

With one-fifth of the young population of the world in our Country, India stands up as one of the youngest countries. We have the potential of these young, energetic thinking minds bubbling with new ideas and vision. In this edition, we tried to bring together some of the young and vibrant authors, sharing their ideas and journey with the readers.

Every day with each sunrise, lots of dreams are born in young minds. However, only a few of them turn these dreams into reality with proper guidance, sheer dedication and determination. What is the magic ingredient which makes the things work for these achievers? Or this achiever syndrome is somewhere causing the harm to our young generation? Isn't it the reasonable demand of the time that the experience of the previous generation should be harmoniously amalgamated with the new ideas of the pioneers of the future? I would definitely love to know the take on these issues from our readers.

With each passing day, Sharing Stories is growing into a strong community of sensitive readers and writers who believe that words are capable of bringing out a change in the existing system, creating a better world for our future generation.

We are coming up with some really meaningful collaborative and content for our community members as well as readers. We are thankful to our authors who are generously supporting our vision of creating an exclusive library of Sharing Stories. 'Library Culture' is something which is fast getting eroded due to technical advancements and also fast paced lifestyle. Sharing Stories wants to create that 'Reading Nook', a special corner and space for the book lovers who can come and enjoy the books. At the same time this helps us in promoting the books authored by our community members. We have taken the first step towards it, and the way we are receiving books from the authors, I am sure this is going to be beautiful journey.

Sharing Stories believes in travelling together and growing in the process. Our collaborative partner #LetsMakeStoriesDino has recently launched their debut Anthology, 'Arising From The Dust'. Sharing Stories wishes loads of success to all the contributing authors and #LetsMakeStoriesDino for the same.

I always believe that sky is the limit when it comes to creativity. And in the skies of creativity, all the writers and artists can co-exist in peace forming varied rainbows with their distinct shades and hues. We can inspire and get inspired by each other sans any kind of jealousy and ting of competition, as each one of us carries within us a unique trait of creativity and style. That is the underlying theme which Sharing Stories wants to spread through its campaign, 'World Harmony Through Writing', which encourages 15minutes de-cluttering of thoughts through penning down our random musings about life and the world.

As always, this issue carries another magical bundle of poems and stories along with other regular segments. We try to curate interesting prompts to channelize the creative grey cells of yours through our writing contests. The overwhelming response to these contests makes us feel the warmth of our readers and writers support and love.

Even as, we are stuck in these times adjusting to the new normal, the locking and unlocking, I believe we all travel through our stories, sharing our moments and emotions through the written words. Though we have all learned so much during the Pandemic period, human memory often fails to keep the lessons learnt close to the heart. So we have our own Satya- The SS Superhero to talk about the food for thought in his frank and straightforward approach. I would love to wind up with a quote that aptly sums up the theme of Sharing Stories...

"The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking." — Albert Einstein

Happy reading, blissful writings...



Piya Gajbe

Feeds

- **@ Author Interviews**

- Himanshu Goel
- Kevin Missal
- Manali Desai
- Nishtha Shrivastava
- Yash Tiwari

- **# Love for Literature**

- Say it with an idiom
- Wordsmith's corner
- Short story
 - Rubik's Cube
 - M-Powered Tales
 - My India 2030
- Poetry
 - Peeking into 2030

- **& Partnerships**

- #letsmakestoriesdino
- @pristinebooks
- KathaOrg

- **\$ Contests**

- Word Impact Challenge
- Picture Prompt Poetry
- #1000WordsTales
- Winners August

- **! Giveaways**

- Arise from the Dust
- A rational Boy in Love



Sharing Stories grows to
900 members

Strong Family

NAMASTE

Yash Tiwari

Author & Motivational Speaker

As a motivational speaker, Yash Tiwari advocates “Belief in Self” and “Power of Positive thinking”, please tell our readers how can someone practice this and make it part of their lifestyle choice? What are the simple methods / steps to achieve this state of mind?

From what I've experienced in my own life, Believing in Yourself and Positive Thinking are two sides of the very same coin. Without having a sense of positivity within yourself, you cannot believe yourself. And without having belief and faith in yourself, developing positivity is impossible. Or at least, not sustainable, I'd say. So how does a person really does that? By understanding his/her individuality in this world. You need to remember that no matter how much support you have, or how big of a fan-base you might have - at the end of the day, what you do is on you. Unless you do not take a stand for yourself, no one else will. If you do or work upon yourself, then how can someone else do that for you? It all starts with 'You'. So if you don't even have a positive outlook on who you are as a person and have a sense of belief in yourself, how will you be able to stand tall with your head held high in this world? As I quoted in my Josh Talk, there a huge difference between Surviving in this world, and Thriving in this world. Now it's on you, which side of the story you step into. I think a clear thought-process like this is what helps a person in achieving the state of mind that we're talking about.

In everyone's life, there is a tipping point, what was that moment in your life which made you choose the path of a Motivational speaker for the Youth? What is your larger Vision?



Well, my journey as a professional public speaker and a Motivational Speaker in specific started exactly two years back - right after the release of my now internationally acclaimed and awarded Debut Novel, “A Celebration in Tribulation”. I was just 16, still navigating my way in this wide, wide world of ambitious and inspiring people who were creating a substantial positive change in this world, unbeknownst to the fact that one day soon I'd also be counted amongst them. So after my first novel started generating a great deal of global buzz, I was invited to deliver my first TED talk at TEDxHBTU. That, precisely, was the point that kick-started my journey as an International Youth Mentor and a Motivational Speaker. The vast impact that I saw my first TED talk generated on the masses all around the world made me realise that this is what I'd like to do in my life ahead - to utilise my voice and clarity of thoughts that I have for creating some form of social positive change in the world. That, eventually, is what my vision is at large and that is what the art of Motivational Speaking is all about as well! This is the reason, I believe, why I feel so much connected with this field.

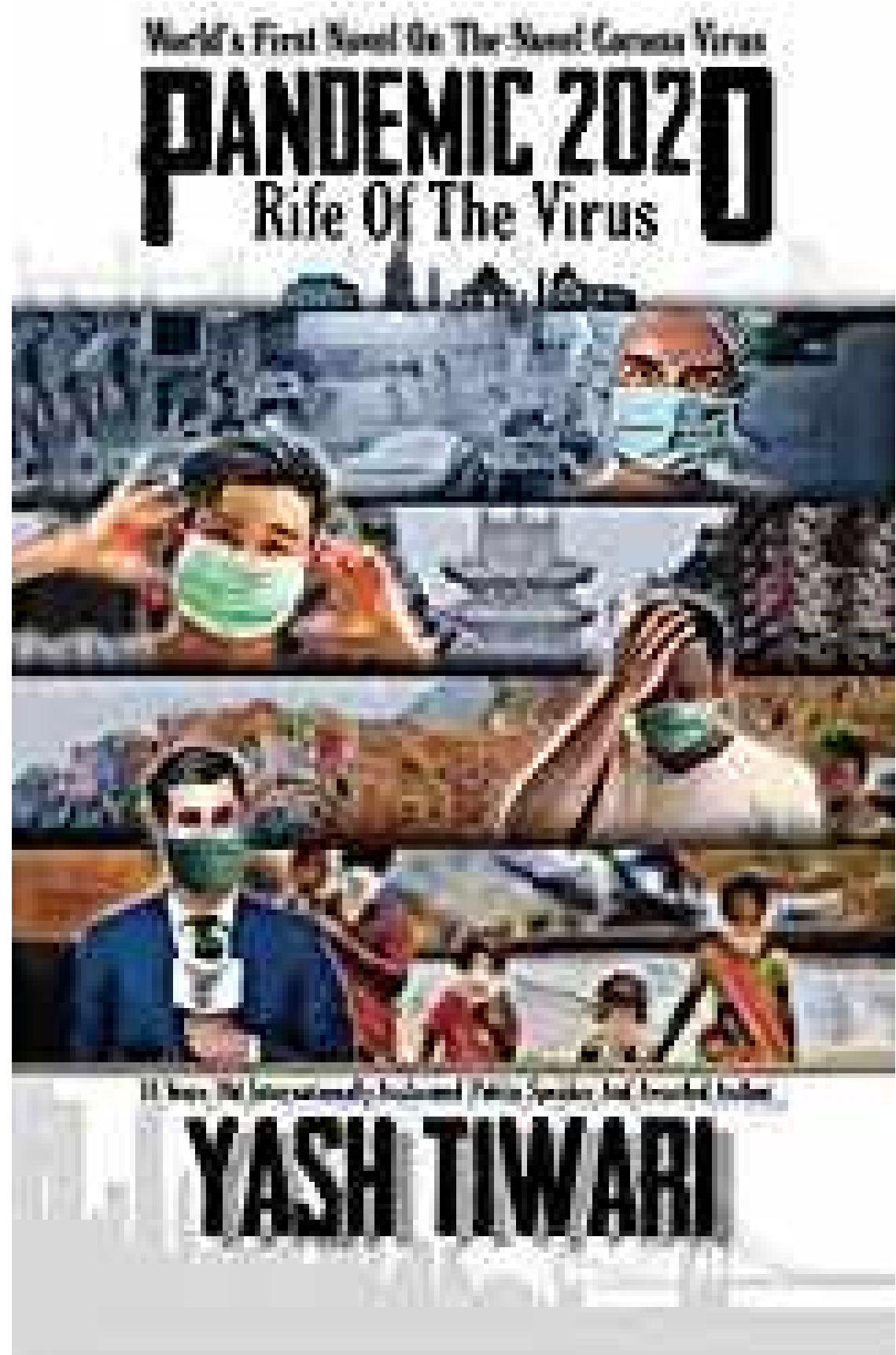
“Sometimes, we do not get a chance to thank each one who has helped us in our Journey.”

Let the readers get a chance to know about all the important people who have played a part in this fabulous Journey of Yours.

To begin with, my family of course. Whenever this question comes up, they're always the first one I pay my gratitude to. I've said this countless times that wherever I am in my life today at this young age of 18, and what all I've accomplished would not have been possible without them. My family has always been there to push me, support me, encourage me and appreciate me. Secondly, my best of mates have always been there for me as well. Now these friends already know who they are, so I needn't mention their names, haha! But seriously, the extremely appreciative friends that I've got are nothing less than a family away from family for me. Would also like to thank from the bottom of my heart, all those teachers and mentors I have had in the past eighteen years who sculpted me and contributed a great deal in building up my persona. Last but not the least, I'm extremely very grateful and will always be to those who might not have been directly very close to me or in my immediate circle, but still did support me, guide me, nurture me, and push me - right from the point when I was authoring my first novel at 16 to this point where I've delivered 4 TED talks and a Josh talk, with multiple awards and acclaims. Always grateful to my roots, and always in immense respect of where I come from. Thank you, forever grateful and humbled.

Can you share a few lines from your latest book, Pandemic 2020 and maybe give a bit of background?

An impoverished boy in China, a helpless doctor in the U.S., a stranded traveler in Italy, and a blooming journalist in India - PANDEMIC 2020- Rife Of The Virus, World's First Fiction Novel On The Novel Corona Virus Outbreak, provides a harrowing look at how the pandemic turned the lives of everyone around the world upside down. The story is a globally-interconnecting tale, intriguingly blending majorly affected regions around the world through characters facing the severity of one common pandemic, the Corona Virus outbreak.



As for some of the lines from the book, PANDEMIC 2020 - Rife Of The Virus itself, I'd like to quote what you'll get to read on the very last page of the first chapter of my book, titled Mayanagri.

“The thrill that I had on the previous day about a nationwide lockdown was turning into a chill of fear in my body - not about the severity of the issue growing rapidly, but about how much I or anyone will be able to do when the flu hits the city. I feared not its presence, but what it was about to do to the Mayanagri of crores and a country of billions that had already given passage to an incurable ailment - spreading rapidly with every second that passed by. Oh, and it was just the beginning.” - Yash Sharma, Chapter 1 - Mayanagri (PANDEMIC 2020)

Can you talk about any interesting character from your book?

So the forerunners of my novel, PANDEMIC 2020 - Rife Of The Virus, are four distinctly interconnected characters. Firstly, we have an ambitious journalist in India named Yash Sharma, who is navigating through the rights and wrongs during this worldwide outbreak. Then we have Alanna, a medical worker in the US, reflecting the helplessness of all the doctors and medical staffers during the COVID19 Pandemic. Thirdly, we have Huiqing, who is an impoverished boy in China and reflects the privations and sufferings of the poor ones during past few months. Lastly, we have Terrell, who is a stranded traveller in Italy with his partner who is pregnant. Overall, PANDEMIC 2020 gives us an exact creative account of what all went down, all around the world, in the past couple of months during this Corona Virus Pandemic.

According to you which are the 5 books everyone should read and also Who are your top 3 Authors?

Books - A Song of Ice And Fire by George R.R. Martin, The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle, The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho, 13 Reasons Why by Jay Asher, The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins. Authors in that order as well.

RAPID FIRE ROUND

Favourite

Place: Stages.

Person: Mummy for sure.

Food: Pizza.

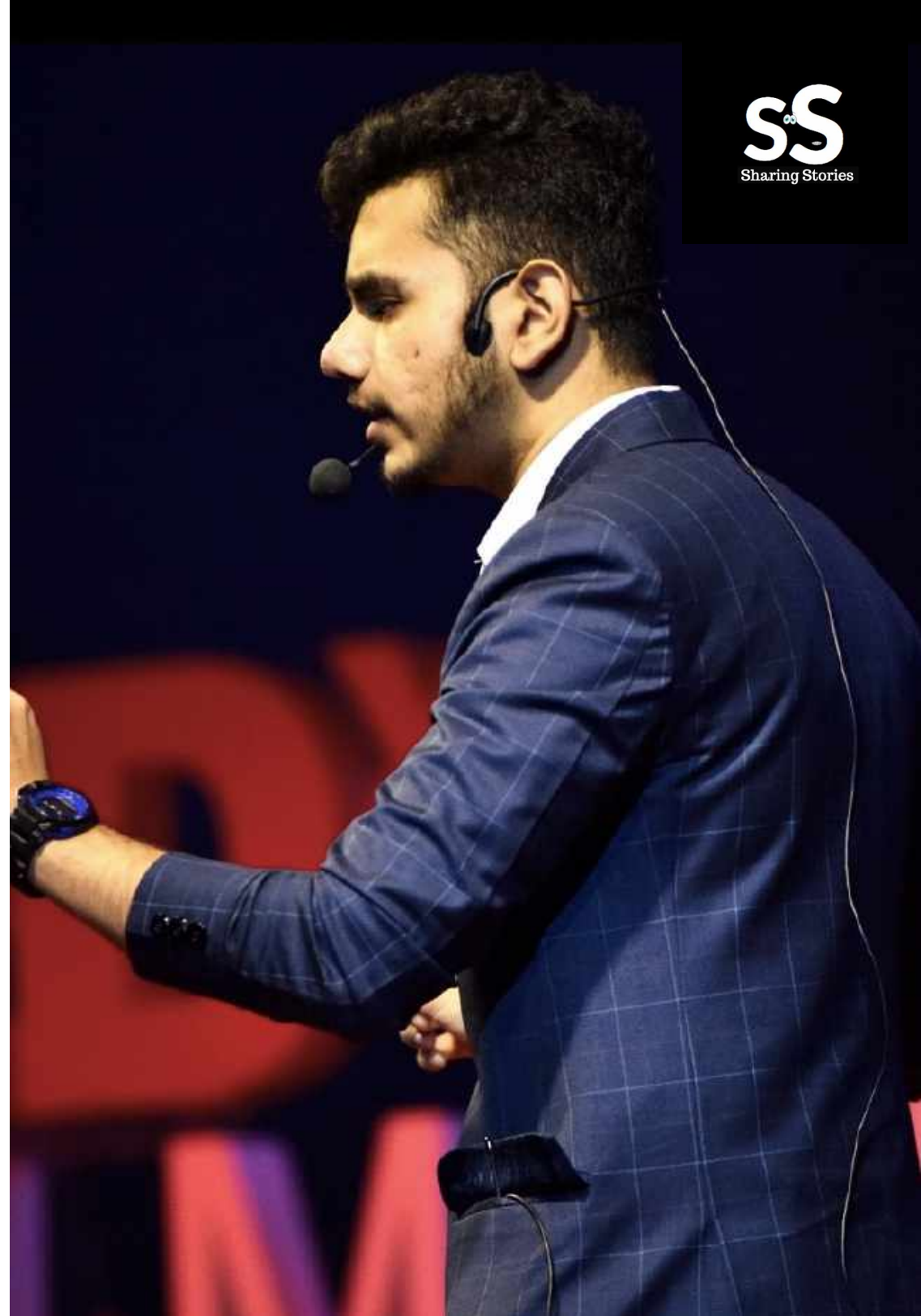
Beverage: Mixed fruit juice I guess!.

Your other Talents.... Sketching, and photography definitely!

Your Role Model..... I don't consider one specific person as a role model I'd say. I take inspiration from different things that different people do.

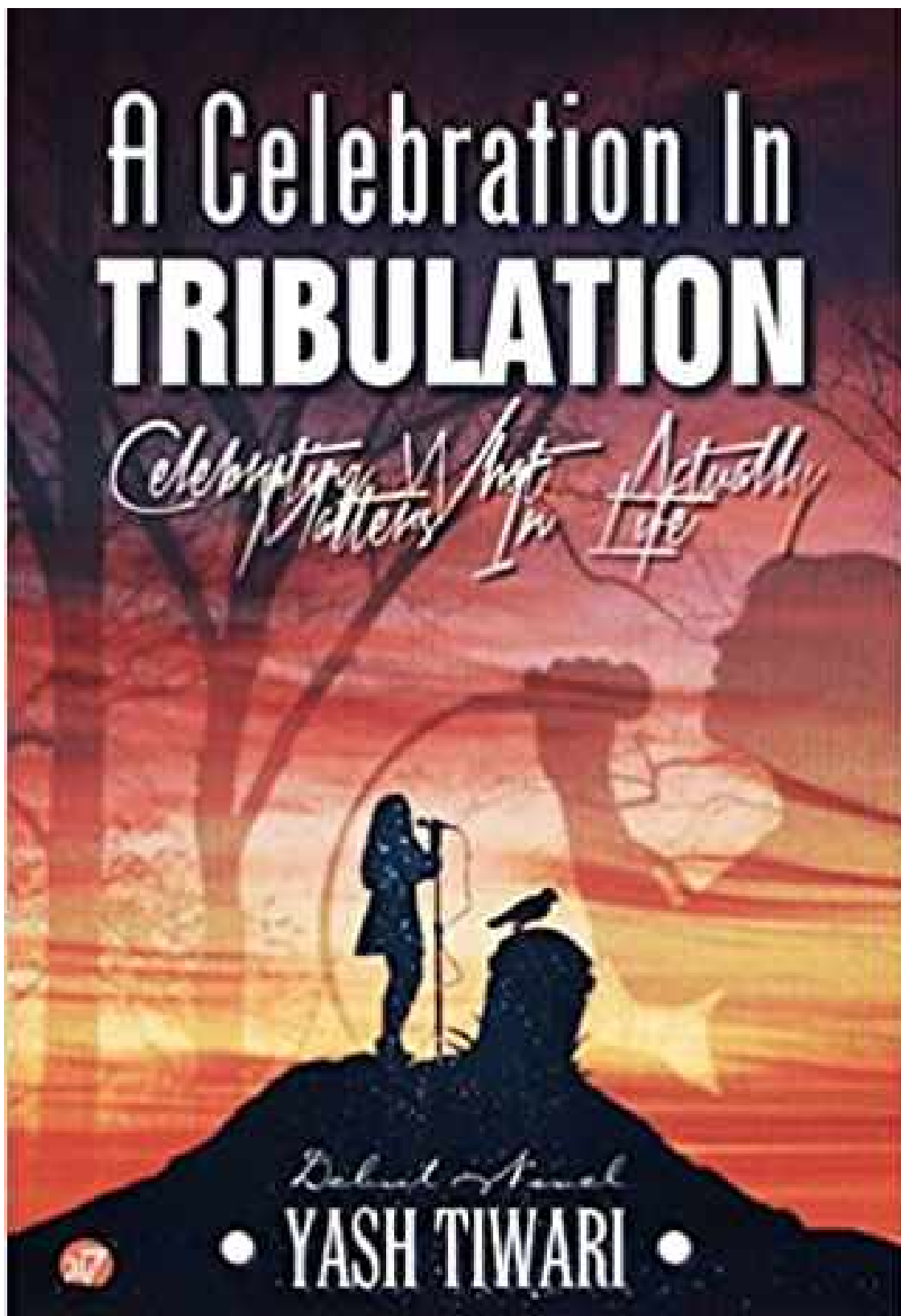
Favourite Quote...."Dream big and work hard, No matter what the odds are" (also written in my debut novel, A Celebration In Tribulation).

Favourite Character from a book...Daenerys Targaryen, from A Song Of Ice and Fire!



Could you share few lifestyle changes for Young people of your generation?

I think self-doubt is perhaps one of the greatest issues that the youngsters of today are burdened with, or end up burdening themselves on their own with. We have so many youngsters with so much potential. Yet, they doubt whether they're capable or good enough or not. And at the end, sometimes, they end up giving up on their own dreams and goals. As a youngster myself, I can assure you that our youngsters can do wonder. The best way to cope up with this self-created psychological issue is by trying- by taking that first step toward whatever you're passionate about, no matter how difficult it might seem like. Just try, take that first step, and don't look just at what was but more on what "Can Be" - what all you can achieve in life if you simply take begin working towards all your latent capabilities.



Reading helps people to learn from others experience, while writing helps in self-realization, our limitations, aspirations and strengths can be weighed against what I perceive to what I am as an individual. Shouldn't writing be given equal importance to reading? What do you think about sharing stories initiative of, "World Harmony Through Writing"?

Absolutely. Reading and Writing goes hand-in-hand. Like we say that whatever you get to learn or take in, you need to practically implement it as well. Just like that, I think the process of reading is all about taking in and the process of writing is all about giving it out. I myself am more of a writer, actually, than a reader. But still, I surely acknowledge the fact that both of these are equally important in our society today. This initiative of yours is really remarkable, and definitely the need of the hour. You're not just promoting literature, but also the torch-bearers of the literature of today. That is an excellent step being taken, and I wish the team of sharing stories all the very best for it!

Tell us a bit about your family, likes and dislikes as a person.

So I have 4 members in my family including myself. My father works in the Volleyball Association Of India. My mother is a homemaker. My sister is pursuing her MBA, and has previously been the university Gold Medalist not once, but twice. I come from a long-line of writers, some of whom were inclined towards literature like me, while others more so towards academics. My paternal grandfather had been in the Army, and was a renowned academician. My maternal grandfather, too, was a reputed academician but he's also an author of many acclaimed books and literary pieces of works. What I like as a person is, well, so much of work to do that I feel completely caught up all day long. Seriously, haha! Being busy and in action is what I like the most; to be on the stage, address huge gatherings, or creating an impact with my words and endeavours. What I do not like is sitting idle, and/or not doing anything. Even on the "relaxation-days" I try to keep myself busy with something or the other. That's how I am, so yeah!

WHAT IF ROUND

What if you had to live with only three things all your life, what would the three things be?

My mobile (provided that we have a internet connection, haha!), endless amount of Pizzas to munch on, and I guess a Diary to pen down all my thoughts.

What if you were given the power to change one thing from this world, what would you change?

Prejudice based on so many basis that's still prevalent in this world, be it based on Age, Background, Appearance, Gender, Orientation, and what not!

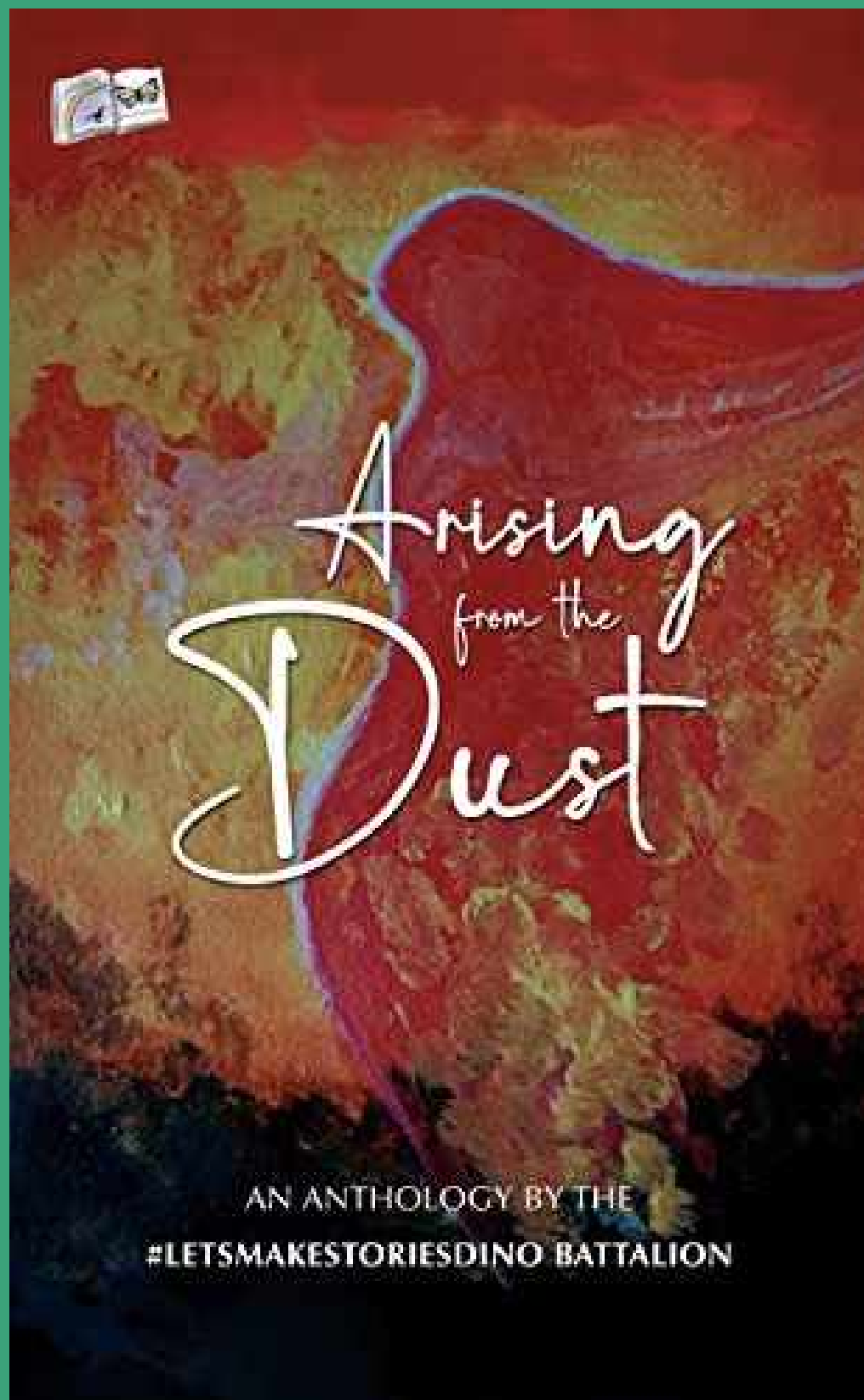
What if you had all the money in this world, what would you do first?

Search up a list of banks that provide the best interest rates, haha! I guess that should really be the first logical thing to do, no? But wait, if I already have all the money in the world, then how can interest even be generated on it? Woah, this is a brain teaser. Mind blown, no?

Arise from the Dust

SS
Sharing Stories

#AFTD



ANTHOLOGY

BY

#LETSMAKESTORIESDINO

**Buy
Now**

Arising from the Dust anthology is a combined work of 32 Dinowriters and presented to you by #LetsMakeStoriesDino, compiled by Meera V Barath, Foreword by Dr. Santosh Bakaya, Blurb by Ms. Lily Swarn, Curtain-raiser by Anupama Dalmia and Meera, Edited by Anju Darshini and Manas Mukul

How did, Arising from the Dust happen?

Arising from the Dust is a Phoenix moment, which we face in our day-to-day life. And our battalion of Dinowriters have roared this phenomena in their quills through their stories and poems. Through this book, are we aiming at changing the situations around us? Not necessarily! Because, challenges are like those dust particles. Either we clear it or allow it build an ant hill on us. Embracing the challenges and rising from any situation is all about, 'Arising from the Dust.' Every story or a poem shared is the writer's Arising from the Dust moment. Every word is an experience and we all are connected through words and experiences. Every quill may be a story or a poem which we have heard, but it's all about arising and letting our Souls rise like that phoenix!

Here's a Foreword written by Dr. Santosh Bakaya

"Arising from the Dust is a very inspiring collection of 32 stories of resilience, grit and a never-say-die spirit, epitomizing the dictum that when the going gets tough, the tough get going; and when they get going, they spring back into the maelstrom of life with a new ardour and a fresh spunk. It has stories about victims of domestic abuse, deceptively meek women, who turn out to be fiery and feisty, the homeless, the sex workers – all of us who have suffered delve into our hidden resources and spring back, strong-willed and rejuvenated, rising from the ashes of our lives, Phoenix-like, successfully carving snug niches in a firmly entrenched patriarchal society, smashing stereotypes and breaking glass ceilings. So what if their world came crashing down, these persevering folk – most of them women – rose up to create a new world all their own." As you wish to grab a copy for yourself, here's the link to buy



Amrita



Aradhna



Chandrika



Deepak



Madhumathi



Deepti



Dr. Sunil



Jayashree



Monalisa



Moonmoon



Moushmi



Mrinalinee



Nandita



Natasha



Neel



Preethi



Rashim



Rahmi



Rianka



Riddhi



Rohini



Sangeetha



Shakuntala



Sheetal



Shristee



Shweta



Shweta



Sonal



Sreemati



Srivalli

32 AUTHORS OF #AFTD



Tina



Vasudha



**MOONMOON
CHOWDHURY**

#100wordsquills

Title: Crust of peace and drizzle of smiles
Dancing to the rhythm of my heart
Singing my unique happy song
Basking in my serene synchronicity
Picking up pieces and making a whole.
I can't promise you scholarly words
Nor material riches galore
A simple and content soul I
am Unadulterated heart, my offering sole.
A crust of peace, a drizzle of smiles
The scent of home, the light of love.
When life is tough, and times are hard
You can count on me, I'll walk along.

#100wordsquills

Title: Touch of a Dream
The broken cemented floor,
crisscrossed with hope and adversity
her blackboard,
The star-spangled sky
her map,
if you lent your ears
to the restless, rustling winds,
they whispered
the deep wordless desires of her heart.
The young tribal girl,
dreamt of a life beyond the stars,
a life soaked in the fragrances
of honour, respect and self-worth.
She dared to touch
the king of heavens
for an elusive moment,
gloriously blazing
in the orange western sky,
with the pangs of her odyssey
stolen by brackish winds.

PAPIA PAL



NISHTHA SHRIVASTAVA

Author & Singer

Nishtha, tell us about how your writing journey began? What made you pick up the pen?

Conveying feelings and expressing what my heart always had was my building block towards writing. I always used to be full of thoughts, expressions and feelings. I started writing for my personal boundaries just to sketch the bursting thoughts within, because for any of us it's tough to keep everything of this long journey inside. And we always need a companion to share it all but in that case it cannot always be transparent, there will be certain modifications. But when I write, nothing makes me biased and gradually I started enjoying this.

It was once when I wanted to convey love to my mother, I decided to write a letter and when she read it, the two of us felt that it was never that special between us. I thanked her for everything that we usually never practice in verbal conversations.

In the times when genres like mythology and sci-fi are a big hit, you chose to write your book revolving around a very delicate relationship of Brother and Sister. What made you choose this topic?

This is to traverse each one of us back to the ground roots that I feel we are somewhat ignoring to pursue the modernized and superficial life of the present era. This might sound a little old fashioned to people but to me life is still attached with the roots of community, family, togetherness, relationships and love and so I thought to shake everyone again and tell them that we need to look in our houses too. Let's not be too selfish to satisfy our personal desires which may adversely affect the little ones around us and the future of humanity may loosen the roots.

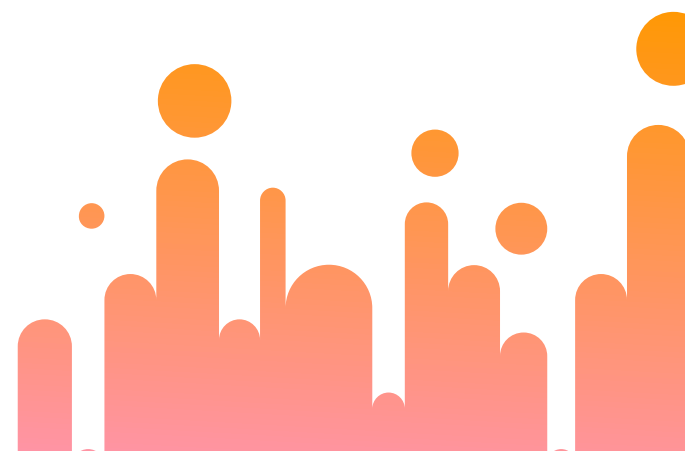


The bond of siblings that is illustrated in my book "Rakshabandhan" is a dark side of the brights that we only see and rather than understanding what actually is going around, we impose prejudiced theories. Inspired by true stories that I have heard often but never found anyone talking about it in public I decided to take the charge to deliver this topic with the most delicate forms of humanity.

What is your favorite part from your book, 'Rakshabandhan' and why?

"A small misunderstanding can turn things around but a small talk can heal it all"

This is my favorite crux of the book. Over this, I love the way Nisha learned from all the happenings of her life and fought with her situations and became her own teacher. Building yourself by your own experiences is a big step to be independent, strong and also builds the person to be an influencer which is a much needed plot in the present era. The world has changed rapidly in the past years and now people look out of their houses to build their world and that's when being strong from within is much needed.



“Sometimes, we do not get a chance to thank each one who has helped us in our Journey.” Let the readers get a chance to know about all the important people who have played a part in this fabulous Journey of Yours.

This is a much awaited opportunity. I feel that from the acknowledgement page of the book now the names have increased rapidly. But I always start with my Mom, Dad, brother and my grandparents as they were my support all throughout.

I then share it with “The pillar of this book”, Naveen. For Naveen I would say he really stood like a true friend. Though we have not been friends since ages but the depth of my story and my dream was understood by him and he was equally excited. Further it’s Gaurav, who has always motivated me when I used to get low about the journey of Rakshabandhan which was long and not easy too.

A very special person, Abhishek. I really want to thank him for being a silent motivator. And luckily Rakshabandhan has given me a chance to speak with him again, looking forward to have him as the first reader for all my upcoming works.

Kirti and Ritu, for their motivations and regular checks to cherish the happiness of my book. Archana Aunty and Sameer Uncle as they were out of those few people who cried on the launch day because they could feel my dream and are very enthusiastic about my work. Iqbal, who is my favorite author and an amazing individual and a big motivator. Suryansh, for his excitement and supporting hands which were eager and excited to shout my story to the world and make readers connected.

I have a long list of people but thanks to everyone who is reading it, feeling it and a special vote of thanks to those who are writing their reading experiences, there very innocent emotions that they are correlating with the book and the recent motivations of readers who already have shown their eagerness for my next work.



You are a young woman emerging author. What message do you want to give out to the young women who dream of writing a book someday?

If you have ever thought for it, just go for it. Life is full of engagements, unplanned surprises, diverse people and unwanted miseries but above all you are a life in yourself, and if you had ever thought of writing then you are going to touch a lot many lives. I would recommend ever young woman to unfurl her wings and take off for this journey. There will be a lot of hiccups in between but you have to realize the importance of this dream, feel it and only then all others will feel it.



**Indian
Art of
Strategy
Chess**

According to you which are the 5 books everyone should read and also who are your top 3 Authors?

Irrespective of what communities do we come from; I recommend 5 must read books to everyone to understand the roots and tips of life. I suggest everyone to read Gita, Ramayana for at least once in their lives as these are not just spiritual books but these are soul tales and touch our inner conscious well. Also I recommend everyone to read "The dairy of a young girl", "My experiments with truth" & "Wings of fire" as these three books show a very deep and broad vision towards life.

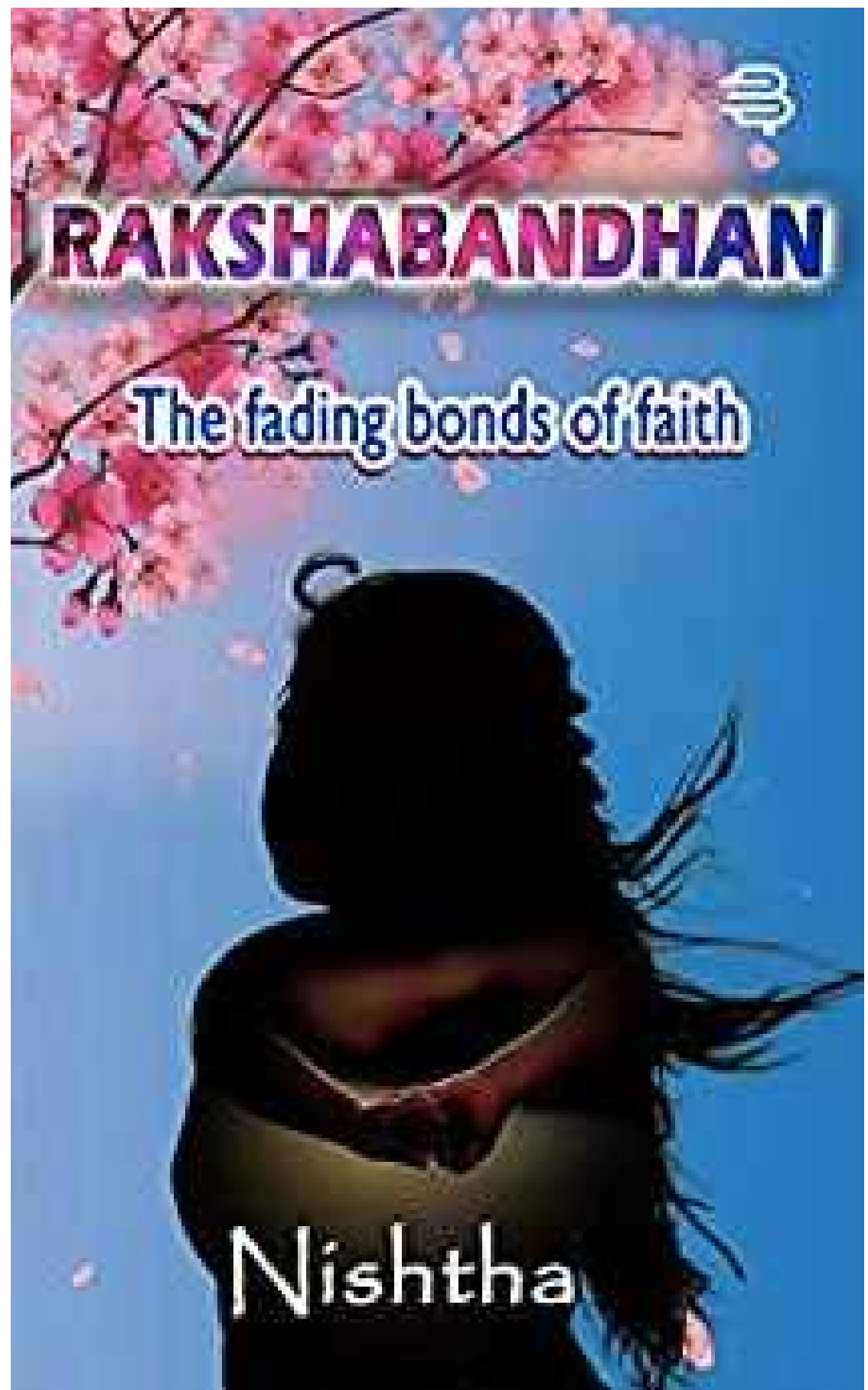
So in the list of my Top 3 Authors I have Amitav Ghosh at the first number, I really like his way of framing stories. Also I like reading Shashi Tharoor and Arundhati Roy.

Tell us a bit about your family, likes and dislikes as a person.

Being from a joint family, I am out of those few lucky people who always have happiness around. My grandparents, parents and my brother are my pillars of life. My parents are employed with the central government and we enjoy our middle class happy style family. I work for an IT Company and search for off hours so that I can write at all times. I like travelling, exploring, meeting new people and staying with them forever. I don't like things that detach me from my personal space of writing.

Could you share few lifestyle changes for Young people of your generation?

Get up again the way our ancestors used to. My fellow generation is a little less courageous as small events of life matter to them deeply and they start forgetting themselves. So I really look forward for this little change of ownership in our lives. The changing world is elevating towards a show off lifestyle wherein I would like if we all could get back to our real happiness beside the social media profiles too.



Reading helps people to learn from others experience, while writing helps in self-realization, our limitations, aspirations and strengths can be weighed against what I perceive to what I am as an individual. Shouldn't writing be given equal importance to reading? What do you think about sharing stories initiative of, "World Harmony Through Writing"?

Writing and reading both fall in the loop of necessity and urge to all our lives. I feel we all are writers as we all have that spark within us. Language may be a challenge sometimes but then the importance of reading and writing cannot be overlooked in either of the aspects. Readers have to be admired for what they render to writings and same goes for writers what they bless to the readers. I encourage this unique initiative by sharing stories team to actually bring harmony with this step. The web of writing and writers is deep and such admirable initiatives can actually enrich this small world.

WHAT IF

1. **What if you had to live with only three things all your life, what would the three things be?**

- Writing:** That's above all, I cannot breath for a day without doing this.
- Family:** They are my everything and I can leave the world to stay under the small roof with them.
- Me time:** The independent feeling that I carry in myself is my mandate companion.

2. **What if you were given the power to change one thing from this world, what would you change?** I would change the feeling of ego from everyone's heart. I have seen life getting upside down because of this.

3. **What if you had all the money in this world, what would you do first?** A solo trip with a lot of unknown travelers to the hills, woods, and places of peace.



Indian

Art of Healing

sushruta samhita



RAPID FIRE

Favorite Place....

Mathura- the peace of Krishna's existence is my magic.

Person As of now and forever it is Mun(my younger brother).

Food I simply love Japanese curry at all times.

Beverage A hot mug of chocolate shake drives me off.

Your other Talents.... Singing, Painting, being everyone's first point of contact in both good and bad times.

Your Role Model.... My mother.

Favorite Quote..... "Love those who love you"

First Love ...: Umh! That's just one forever,

Get Your Amazing



AUTHOR WEBSITE



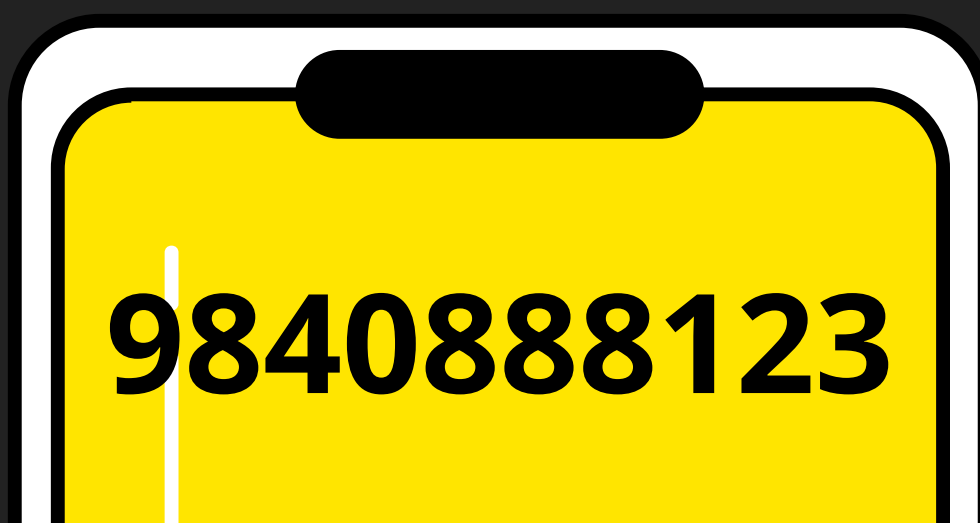
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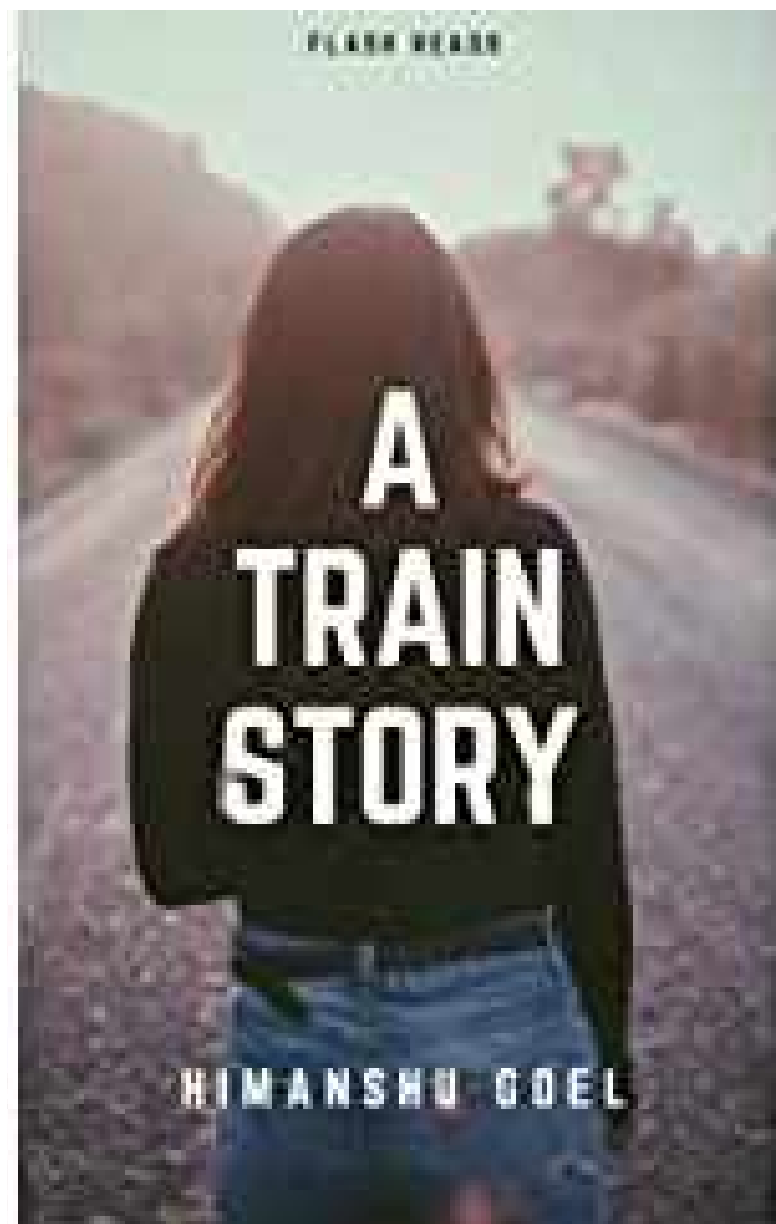
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52 laws of love



himanshu goel



Can you share a few lines from your latest book, '52 laws of love' and maybe give a bit of background?

It is said that the language of the universe is mathematics, that by one equation or law, Newton defined how the entire universe operates. If we can define the laws of nature in mathematics, why can't we define poetry in poetry. It is on this central idea 52 laws of love is based on.

According to you which are the 5 books everyone should read and also Who are your top 3 Authors?

I wouldn't recommend 5 books for everyone as different books suit different kinds of people. For my favourite authors, I love reading Charles Bukowski in poetry, Andrej Sapowski (The Witcher) in fiction and Hitchens in non-fiction.

WHAT IF ROUND

What if you had to live with only three things all your life, what would the three things be?

Health, a home and a 3D Printer.

What if you were given the power to change one thing from this world, what would you change?

I would give an ability for the world to change itself.

What if you had all the money in this world, what would you do first?

Maybe open a publishing house, and publish new writers, and my books as well of course.

Himanshu Goel

Author & Poet

Himanshu Goel, a poet, an insta-celebrity, an Author, tell us the story behind where all this began? Could you also share your first poem with our readers?

The first poems were written during my high school English classes when our teacher gave us assignments to write poetry. I naturally inclined towards the medium and wrote a few poems on my classmates.

Reaching 60k followers in Insta is no easy task, tell us about a bit about this journey and any interesting stories from your Instagram family members.

I am glad to have this reach for my poetry on Instagram. I never imagined so many people would read and enjoy them! It's still a surprise when I see people reposting my poems. It has been a long journey of around 4 years and it has helped me evolve my writing and poetry. Instagram is a heavily visual medium and I have adapted my poetry to be as aesthetically pleasing as possible, that's one advice I would give to anyone working on a poetry page on Instagram. They are plenty of interesting DMs and comments that I get. A lot of them are requests to write on a particular topic or about their lives, I always find them the most interesting to read through.

What does Poetry mean to Himanshu Goel? What change can Poetry reading / writing bring on to one's self?

Poetry like any other art form is a way of expression for me. I believe poetry is one of the most elegant and powerful forms of art that exists. A good poetry can stay with you for years and change the way you think or feel.

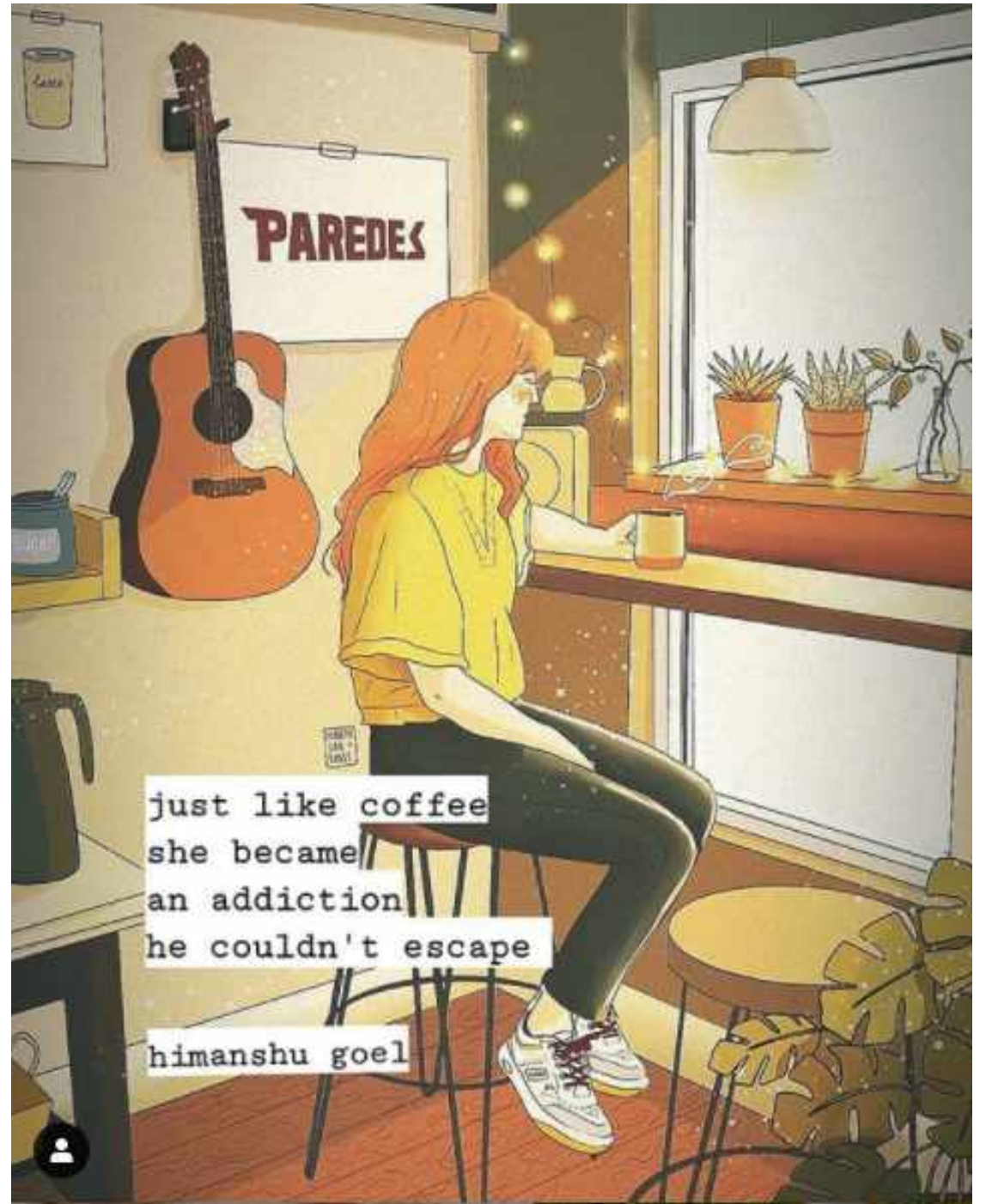
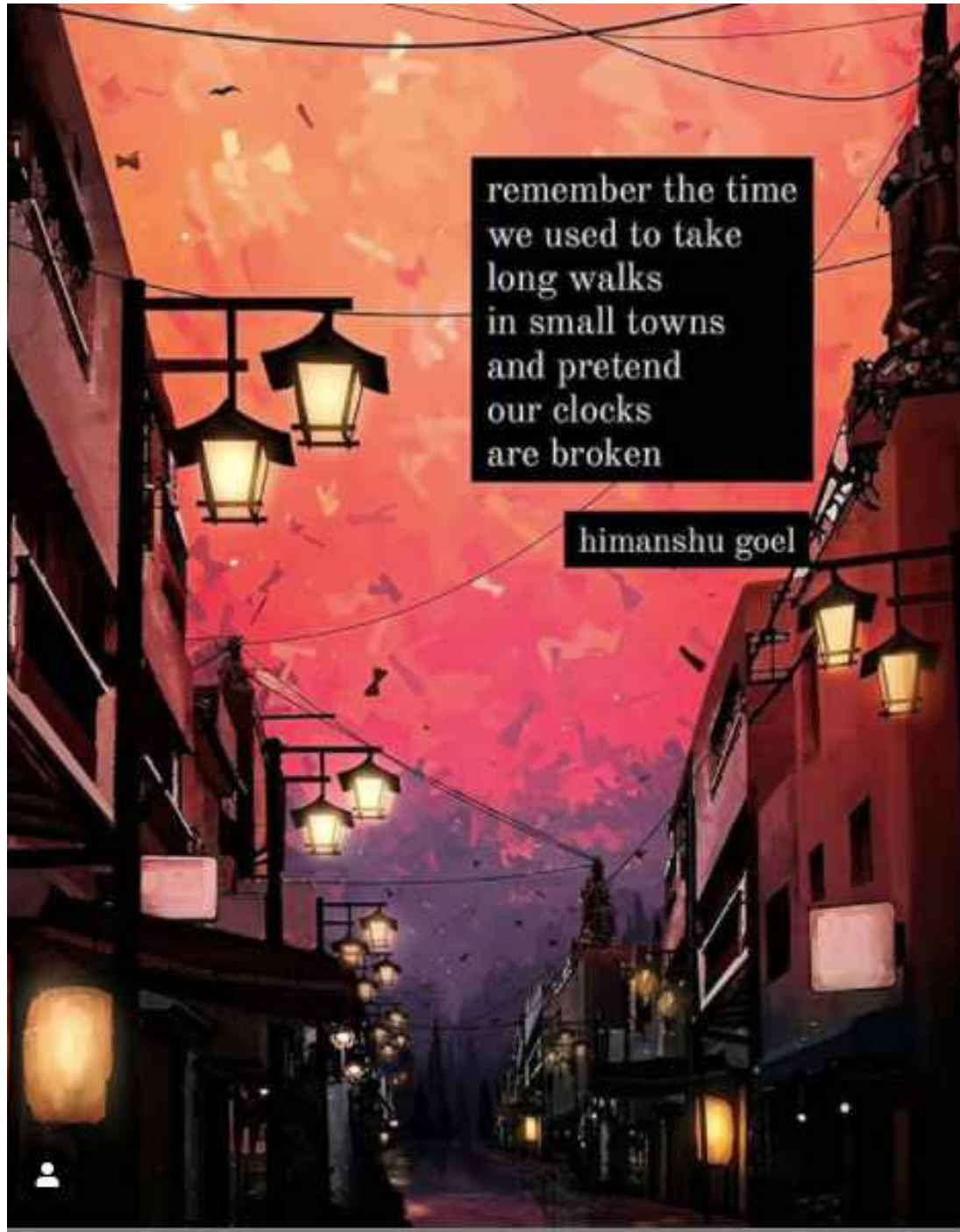


“Sometimes, we do not get a chance to thank each one who has helped us in our Journey.” Let the readers get a chance to know about all the important people who have played a part in this fabulous Journey of Yours.

I have been lucky enough to have the support of my family throughout my journey. I was doing my engineering and MBA while still writing fiction or poetry but I never felt the pressure to choose one for the other.

The illustrator for the poems also has played a big part in the popularity of these poems. Arushi Gupta, she is a Chandigarh based illustrator who has provided the artworks for my poetry collections. I often work with a lot of illustrators for my Instagram page as well that add so much more value to my poems.

Most importantly the readers who take their time to read my work and even share them with others, it wouldn't have been possible without them.





Reading helps people to learn from others experience, while writing helps in self-realization, our limitations, aspirations and strengths can be weighed against what I perceive to what I am as an individual. Shouldn't writing be given equal importance to reading? What do you think about sharing stories initiative of, "World Harmony Through Writing"?

Writing, whether it is poetry, fiction, journal or any form is an act of self-discovery. In the recent years, thanks to easier access to tools, we have seen new writers and authors come up in thousands and I am proud to be one among them. Sharing Stories is a great platform and I love the sound of World Harmony Through Writing. Sharing stories vision towards world harmony through writing.

RAPID FIRE ROUND

Could you share few lifestyle changes for Young people of your generation?

I think by far the most intrusive part of our lives in recent years has been the smartphone. We can't live one hour without the device or clicking on the Whatsapp or Instagram icon.

I would suggest to make a conscious decision to limit the use of social media to a maximum of 1 or 2 hours in day and try to spend more time focusing on other things. In the long run, you'll realise how much time you have saved by not wasting it on these apps.



Favourite

Place: Chandigargh

Food: Pizza

Beverage: Cold Coffee.

Your other Talents.... I love to game, play football

Your Role Model.... Elon Musk.

Favourite Quote..... Here come real stars to fill the upper skies, And here on earth come emulating flies, That though they never equal stars in size, (And they were never really stars at heart) Achieve at times a very star-like start. Only, of course, they can't sustain the part. Robert Frost, Fireflies in the Garden



SAY IT WITH AN IDIOM

Source: theidioms.com

THROW THE BABY OUT WITH THE BATHWATER

getting rid of something valuable while trying to get rid of something considered worthless

Example of use:

1. Janet quitting her job because her ex started working there is a classic example of throwing out the baby with the bathwater.
2. Amanda's habit of making hasty decisions makes her commit the error of throwing out the baby with the bathwater most of the time.

Interesting fact:

Origin: This phrase originated from a weird and unbelievable practice in the medieval times when there was scarcity of water. Due to water not being available, family members usually bathed using one tub of water and the father took a bath first. By the time the baby is bathed, the water is so dark and filthy that the baby might be thrown out with it when the tub is being emptied.

WORDSMITH'S CORNER

PANDICULATION

(NOUN)

[PAN-DIK-YUH-LEY-HUHN]

Meaning

This is what happens when you wake up in the morning and stretch. As you stretch, your muscles might go rigid for a short time, which can sometimes be uncomfortable. It also describes that wonderful, or terrible, combination of being extremely sleepy, stretching and yawning at the same time.

Word Origin

The ultimate origin is the verb *pandere*, to stretch. That verb has also given us *expand*, plus some other much rarer words.

Example Of usage:

Betty adorably gazed at her pet kitty who was engaged in her morning pandiculations oblivious about the world around her.

RUBIK'S CUBE

You know how there are some rainiest days of the year and more often than not, come on a totally unexpected time of the night.

But wait, I can see some light coming my way. This seems like the cab I booked.

"Thank you so much sir for not cancelling my booking", I said, gratefully to the cab driver.

"That's alright sir, please get in or else you'll catch cold.

"I thanked him while I got in.

As the cab drove through the alone street, the only sound I could hear in the car was those of wipers swishing at full pace.

The driver was a bulky guy, with a dark complexion and those round marks all over his face like chicken pox gone terribly wrong. I have to be honest it was a little intimidating at first.

Breaking through the silence, I announced - "My name is Sushant.

""Good to know sir", he replied.

"Were you going in the same direction as mine, you were my fifth attempt at booking cab while everyone else just kept cancelling."

"Yes sir. I have to move out of the city before the daylight.

"Could he sound any more fishy. I should check his name in the app.

Loading..... loading... loading...Why does the internet always betray when needed most

Booking cancelled!!!!!!!

Wait, did I board the right car? Is it even a cab?

"Sir, have you ever thought that Sometimes people do things beyond duty and still get misjudged?

You don't have to answer that. But let me share something with you. This is the longest straight road of the city, yet for people like me who travel down this every day, it still feels like a hostile stranger.

" I didn't know that little trivia.

"But why are you not wearing your company's uniform?" I inquired "

I drenched my uniform in rain. But If I was, would that make me equal to any other driver out there. In the end this ride ends with a few stars, just like a kid's notebook in appreciation, or an adult's dream through a telescope. From a film celebrity to the shoulder of the man on the line of duty.

I believe we never intend to find answers in our premises or maybe we conveniently define someone's journey with some stars, be it life or this cab ride."

"That was profound. But why are we talking about all this?" I asked

"Apologies if I crossed the line. I took you for a thinker." You have a rubik's cube in hand, It seems you like to run thoughts even while working on something else.

Sir, Do you mind me asking why you intend to be out of the city at this time?"

"That's rather personal but I can tell you that only if you tell me your name.""I am Alwin Sir."

"So my wife and I had booked a room in a resort out of the city to celebrate our anniversary for which I am clearly late as you can see."

"You seem like a loving husband Sir." He complimented.

"I believe so too. She is smart, fair, my age and funny." I beamed.

"Fair does look nice as people say. How about I ask you a question and If you could answer that, your ride shall be free." He said in a serious tone.

"Sure, why not!" I exclaimed.

"Ok, so here it goes:

What's illegal when paid, unknown in space Liked when 21, but loses in race.

"That's a tricky one. Let me run it in my head again: What's illegal when paid, unknown in space Liked when 21, but loses in race Is it teenager? No. Sex? No.

I kept talking to myself for a few minutes"

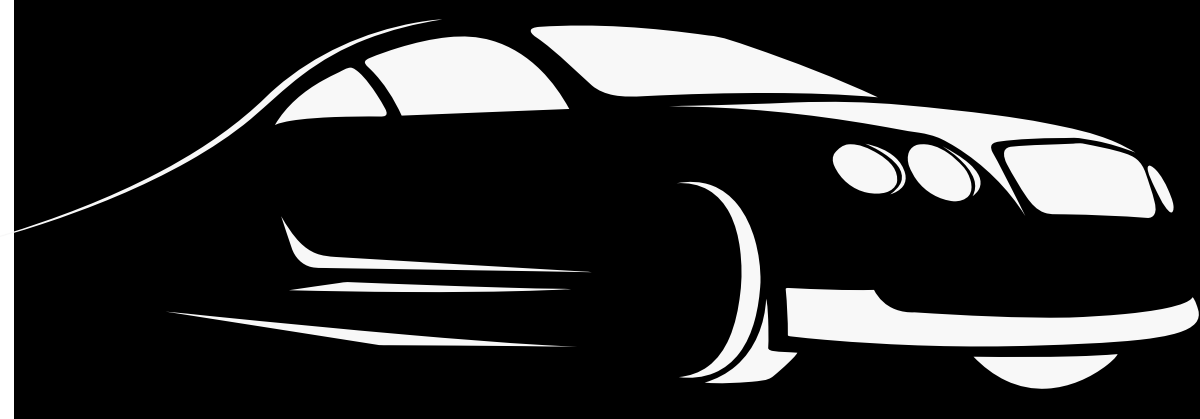
That's alright sir. You have time until this ride ends. Sir, you said all the cabs kept cancelling your bookings. Why do you think they did that? Was it because of rain? Distance or because it was dark?"

"It must be rain. See how city responds when it rains, it just halts as if people are scared of water."

"Well the same people spend hours thinking & contemplating in a hot shower. A fear maybe of same thoughts pouring down in public. Or maybe that's just me overquoting." Alwin said"

No, but I think more than rain its night that is bothering. Rain halts you, but night.... Night just stops you. When the visibility is low, silence like death, the fear of unknown. I am sure night is the reason."

"Sir if I may." Alwin interrupted, "Isn't night the most exposing, the most visible of all. The things & the people we fear are the same ones we cross paths with in the day. We all are a bit more of ourselves during the night. We choose to expose self when no one is watching. This is despite the fact that we spend our days showing ourselves off. The Night, sir, is the Absolute truth that there is. We don't fear dark, we just don't trust ourselves in the dark.



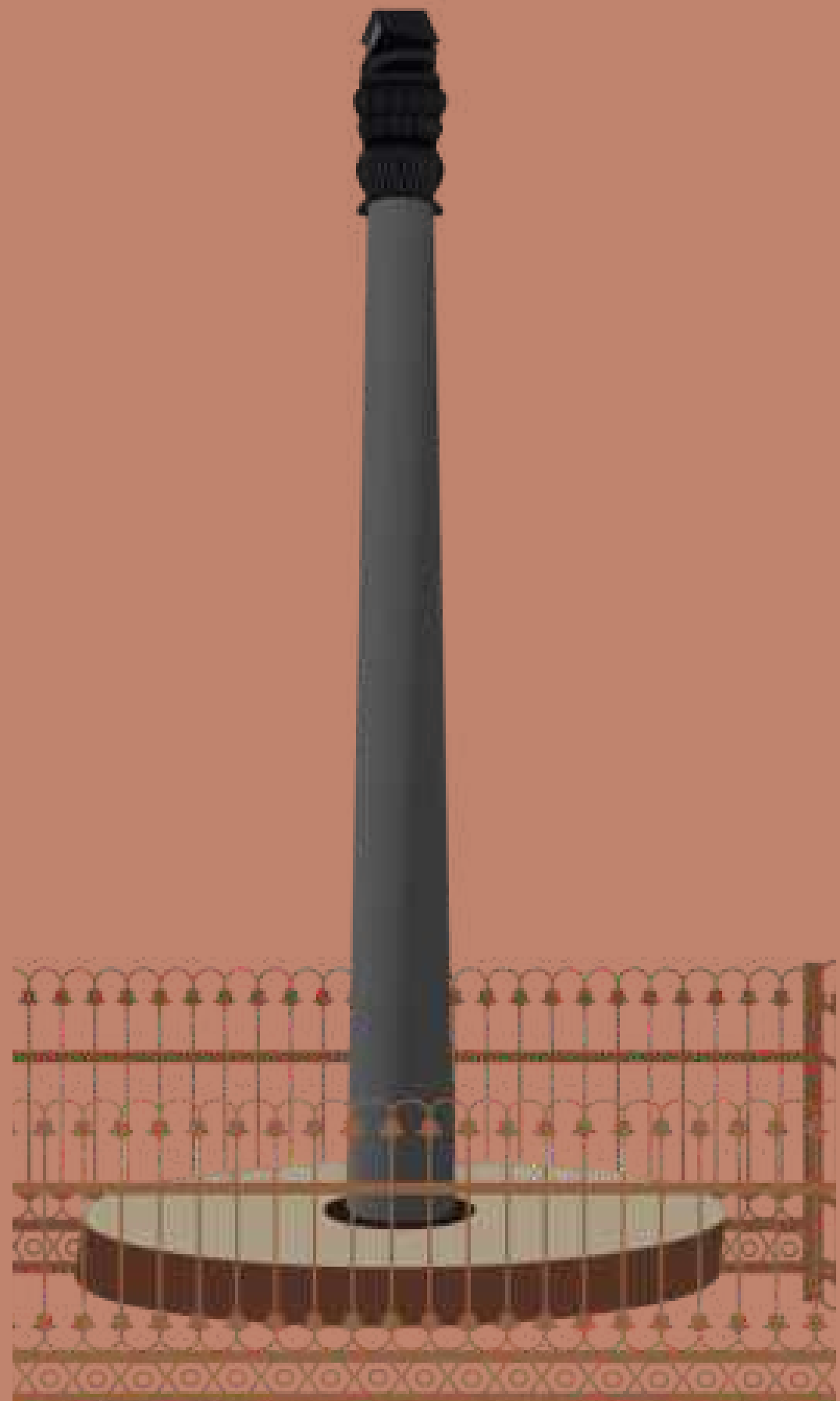
I apologize sir if I said too much.
Did you get the answer to the question I asked yet?"
"I get what you mean to say and how the colour demonization affects us.
Yes. The answer is "BLACK" and you kind of led me to the answer yourself." I had figured it out.
"That's correct sir and we are about to reach your destination"
"Thanks. But I want to give you an opportunity to earn your money back. In fact I offer you double the fare amount if you solve this Rubik's cube in 10 minutes after we reach.
I see you have your daughter's picture in your car, I am sure she taught you well.
"After reaching, Alwin took up the challenge. He spent more than 10 minutes but was nearly at it when I timed him up.
"Let me see that." I said, taking away the Rubik from him.
I realised Murthy had almost solved the cube. With each side with same coloured squares. I am sorry Alwin but you lost this one.
Not because your time was up, but you spent your time thinking of putting same colour squares on each side of the cube.

"You had the colour arrangement wrong like everyone else. Its more important to fill each side of the cube with squares of all colours there is. And that's how the world needs to see. Instead of wanting all skin colour given their respect separately, we need to give respect to all skin colour living together. Now since you have lost this one, I will ask you a personal question and you need to answer.
"I Accept said Alwin.
"Ok so tell me, what was the job you had to complete before daylight?" I asked
"Sir, I lost my daughter few months ago to a racist attack. She is put to rest in a graveyard outside city not far from here. She could never sleep without me putting her to bed. So I visit her each night since then to put her to sleep.
" Alwin drove off without his fare.

BY PARTH GOUR:

Indian Art of Engineering

Iron Pillar of Delhi



Kevin Missal



Author

Kevin, your debut book was published at the age of fourteen; you come across as the youth icon for the budding authors. Being one of the youngest authors and having written some brilliant bestsellers, how do you perceive your writing journey?

It's a tough, uncertain journey. Even when you know you have won with one book, the other book might not sell and you are back to square one. So with every book, you need to push as if it's your first book. Not many writers do it. They give up after their first few bestsellers, but some do.

Your Trilogy series, Mahayoddha Kalki, Meghnaad, Narsimha, the Mahaavatar, Raavanputr Meghnad and the recently released Hiranya Kashyap (The Narsimha Trilogy, book 2), all of these belong to the mythological genre. Can you share the reason behind the affinity towards this particular genre? Please share a few lines from any of your books and maybe give a bit of background too.

Initially, it was the need to do something different in the genre space in our country. Now it's because of my readers who want more mythology from me. And publishers, who like to sell them.

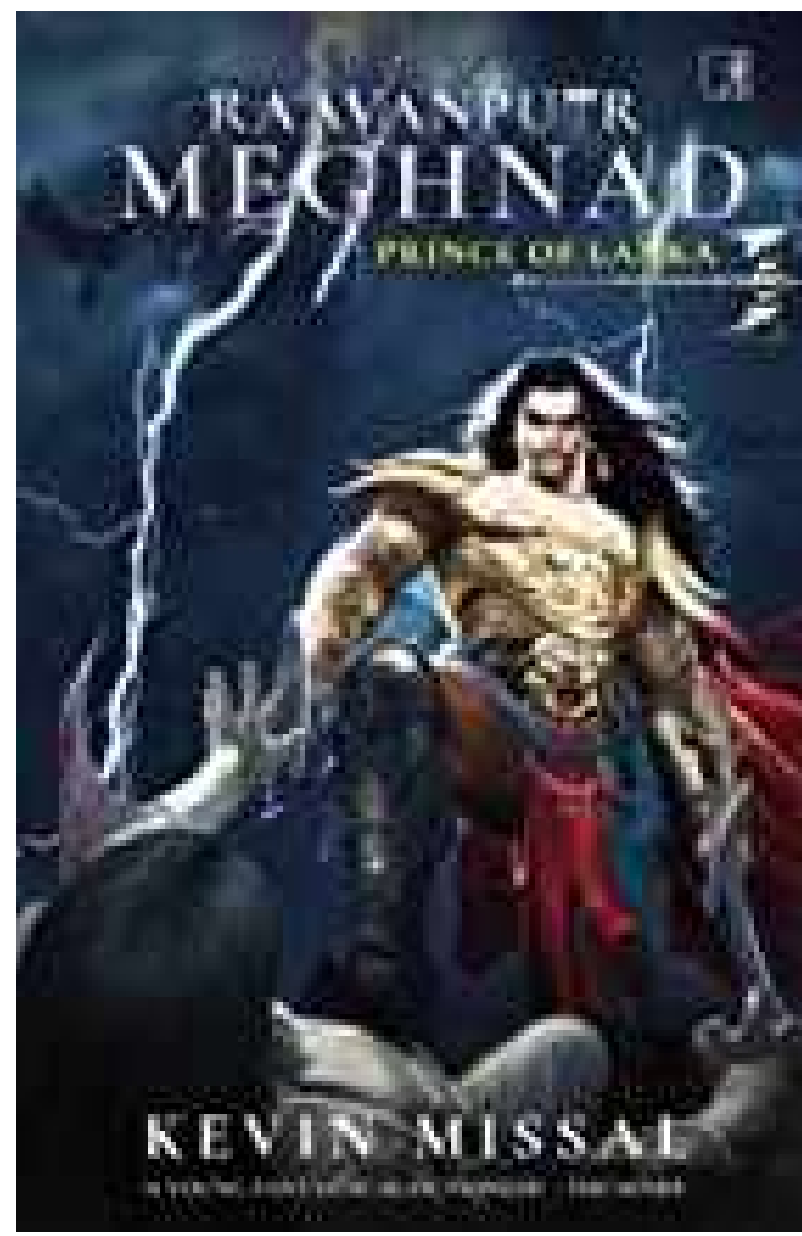
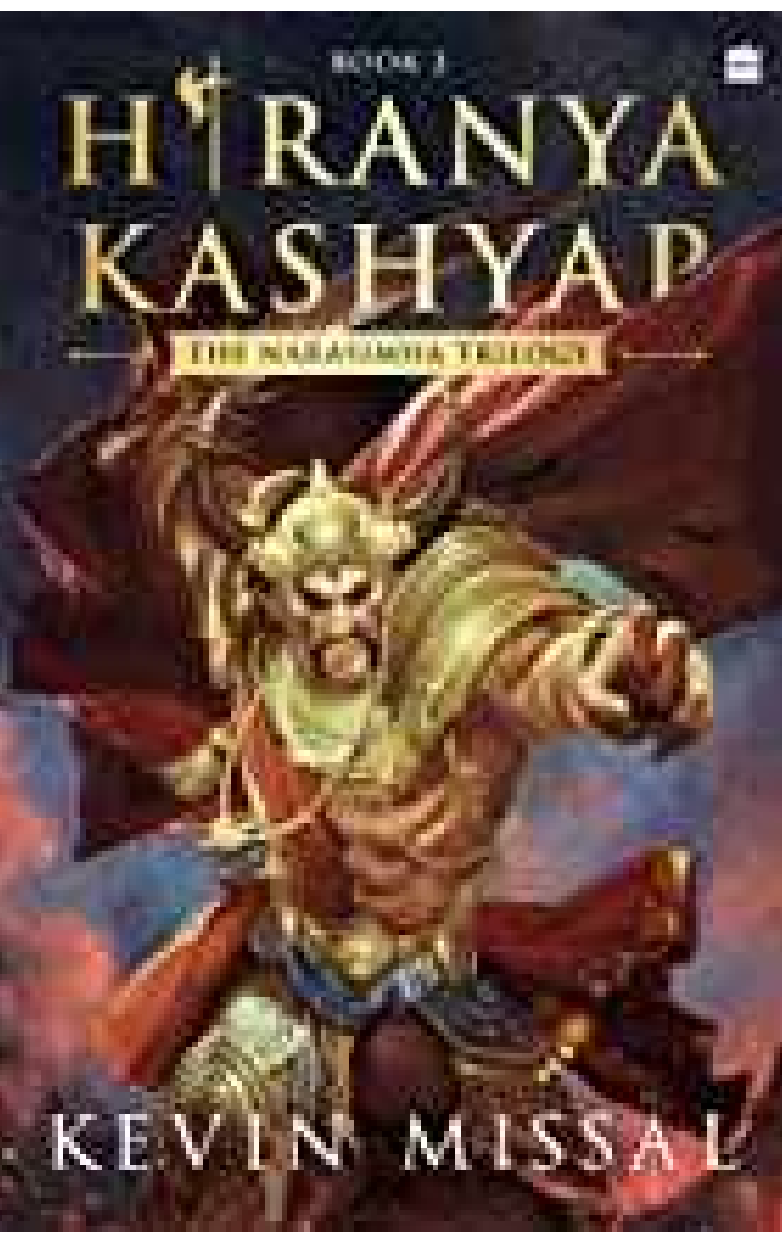


Do you think the youngsters, in this era of Social Media, can be hooked to reading? How can mythological stories change their perspective in these modern times?

I think they can. They just need to be given good stories and visual imagery. I had gone to one school and I asked why don't you all read? They said because it's words only and no image.

Who is the favourite character from your book, and why?

Arjan is. Because he has lot of character beats that I unknowingly wrote. His arc from being a studious brother who wanted to explore the world to a battle hardened soldier.



Are you working on anything at present you would like to share with your readers about?

I am working on something. It's um, I'm coming up with a website and soon an app which will feature unpublished stories of mine in episodic fashion, with visual art to imagine easily. I am currently working on those stories and I want to roll it out during the September October time.

Tell us a bit about Kevin Missal, the person. Is there a boundary line between Kevin, the young author and Kevin, the person. your family, likes and dislikes.

Not really. I try to be the same as I am in real life. Goofy, straight forward and not trying to be someone I'm not. I am a single child and I love playing games, reading graphic novels or novels and just enjoying a bit of TV and movies. I have a dislike towards anything that's related to sports which is opposite to what my dad is, who was quite athletic when he was my age.

WHAT IF ROUND

What if you had to live with only three things all your life, what would the three things be?

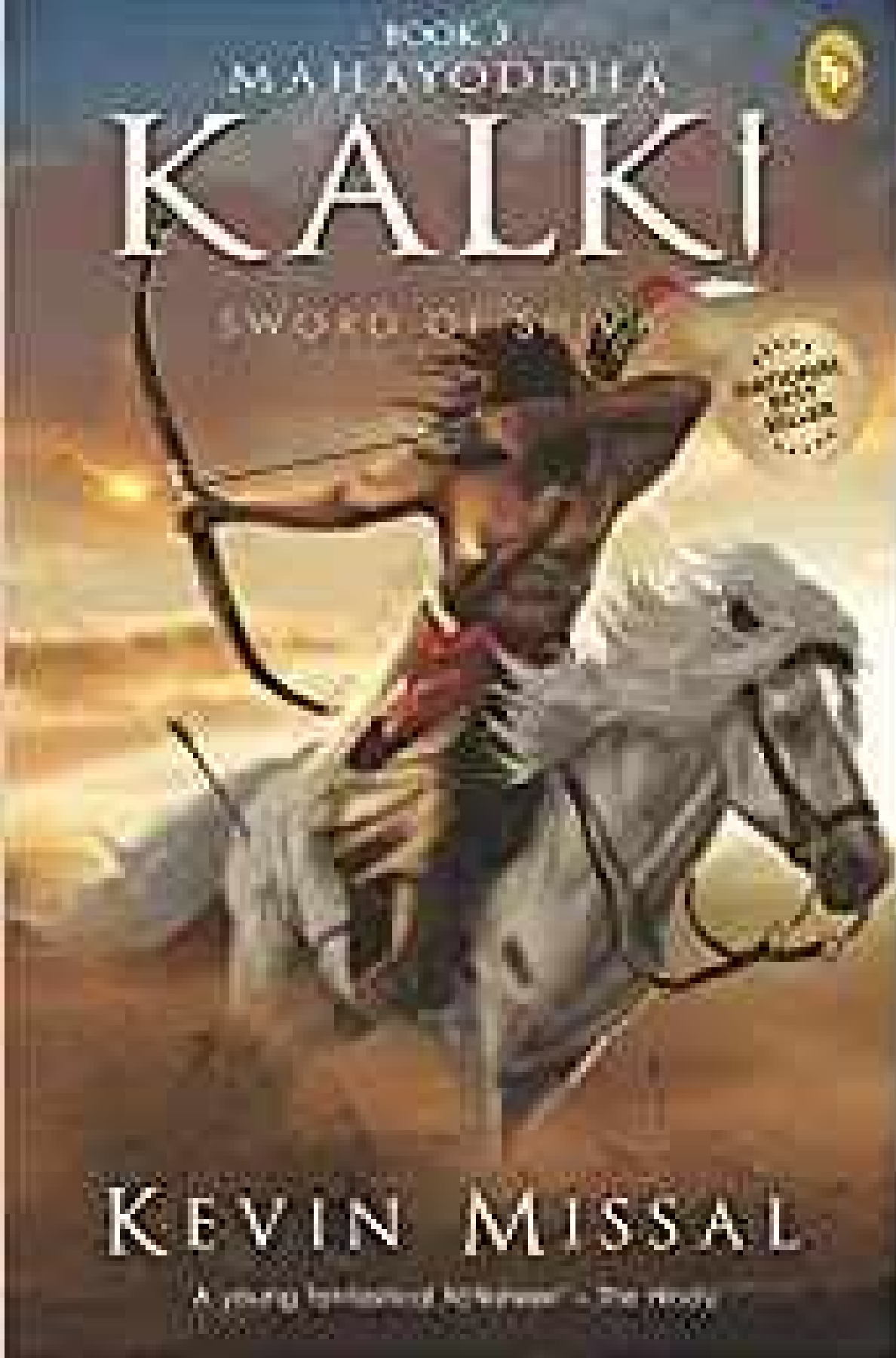
Books. PS4 & a Laptop with wifi.

What if you were given the power to change one thing from this world, what would you change?

I will change the reading habits of people. I want more people to read, so more people will be knowledgeable and then more people will do better things for the country and the world.

What if you had all the money in this world, what would you do first?

Wonder where this money came from.



According to you which are the 5 books, everyone should read and also who are your top three Authors and what impact they had in your journey as a writer?

Alchemist
Godfather
Seagull
The Devotion of Suspect X
The entire Percy Jackson Series

My top three writers are - Keigo Higashino who taught me deft plotting, Rick Riordan who told me how to write compelling original characters and James Patterson who made me realise readers have a short attention span, so grab it quickly.

Could you share a few tips for aspiring Authors from your generation?

Just save up your money because you might have to use it for marketing or investing in your brand. Also, read. Just read.

“Sometimes, we do not get a chance to thank each one who has helped us in our Journey.” Let the readers get a chance to know about all those important people who played a part in this ‘Author Journey of Yours’.

Um, obviously my parents, my agent, my first publishers Fingerprint. My digital agency people as well as my cover artists from Arthat or Sachin Nagar.

RAPID FIRE ROUND

Favourite

Place: Mumbai.

Person: I can't choose haha.

Food: Rajma Chawal.

Beverage: Orange Juice.

Your other Talents.... I am not good at anything else other than writing

Your First Love.... Books.

Favourite Quote..... “No, try. Do or do not. There is no try.” - Yoddha

Favourite Character from a book...Sherlock Holmes

'M'-Powered Tales

by Nipun Varma



The setting sun's apricot tint made everything around a sight to behold. The kid sped ahead on his brand new bicycle. He felt on top of the world. He took his hands off the handle- an art that he had mastered of late.

Up ahead was a sharp curve.

"How exciting it would be to take the turn with my hands off."- He thought.

He negotiated the curve well and felt proud about himself. Suddenly, an uninvited guest barged into his otherwise perfect twilight.

He heard the ominous growl of an engine and in a moment, he was up in the air. He landed on the merciless road with a thud.

His head was covered in a halo of red. The bicycle lost its shape and what remained was a bunch of metal pieces.

The sun shut his eyes, as if not wanting to witness the kid's plight.

When the kid opened his eyes again, he was in a hospital bed- his head covered with multiple stitches. His teary-eyed Mom sat near him. More than the physical pain, Mom's tears hurt him. He knew it was overconfidence that did him in.

He apologized profusely and promised that he would never ride a bicycle again. She didn't say anything but just held him close.

"Did you tell Dad?"- He asked. His Dad was abroad and he didn't want his Dad to know about this. "No, dear. Don't worry, we will manage"- She replied.

He was discharged from the hospital after two weeks. Back home, as he got out of the car, the first thing that he noticed was the bicycle. It was the same one but it looked exactly as it did before the accident. He looked at his Mom quizzically.

"I had it repaired so that it is ready by the time you are." She said.

"But..." "Come on, just go for a ride and come back, but this time, be safe." She said with a wink.

"I can't ride the bicycle. I will fall down again."- My daughter's pleading voice wakes me up from my reverie.

The over-protective Dad in me wants to pay heed to her plea, but between us stands the same old winking lady with steely determination in her eyes.

She says: "Honey, you are doing just great, much better than your Dad. Just try it one more time and you will be alright."

"Okay Grandma, but just one last try." Charged up, my kid gets ready for yet another expedition.

Mom looks back at me and smiles- the lady who empowered me even before I learnt the word empowerment.

The kid is still a kid at heart. As he rides through the twists and turns of the maze called life, he still keeps fumbling. But he never shies away from venturing out into unknown territories. Because, in his dictionary, confidence is a three letter word- 'Mom'.

My India 2030

BY VASUDHA PANSARE

We used to be proud of our heritage of secularism and democracy. We used to be proud of our freedom fighters, our great leaders. Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel and so many others laid the foundation of modern India and built this country brick by brick. And now this foundation is being demolished. Slowly we were prospering. But this prosperity is being converted into poverty. The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. Great educational institutions are being systematically attacked. Every democratic and autonomous institution has been compromised. Law and order is deteriorating. The media is controlled and has become a tool of propaganda. The beautiful India of our dreams is slowly crumbling in front of our eyes.

Fake news is abundantly created and spread. The assassin of the Mahatma is being glorified. When students protest they are put into prison. When journalists protest, they are shot dead. When teachers and writers protest, they are called anti nationals. When activists protest, they are arrested. When farmers protest they are completely ignored. This is not the India of our dreams.

We used to be a nation of great saints like Basavanna, Kabir, Meera, Gyaneshwar and Tukaram and many more. Now we have become a land of unscrupulous, fake gurus who have made a business of spirituality and have become wealthy and powerful. We can't be proud of such a country where honest people are harassed and the corrupt prosper.

The Constitution of India declares that our country is a secular, democratic, socialist republic. That should be our guiding principle. We need more schools and hospitals and not religious places and statues. We should become an equal society where there is no discrimination against any religion, caste, gender etc. We need a society which is safe for everyone, especially women and children. We need a society where hooliganism, mob lynching are completely eradicated. We need leaders who are rational, honest and have a scientific temper. We need leaders who respect our freedom fighters and our history and heritage. We need to go forward and not backwards.



Dreams are of no use if they are not fulfilled. And we can fulfill our dreams when the people have the power to bring about changes. At present we have become a dysfunctional democracy. We have to again become a vibrant and functioning democracy.

I hope by 2030, we will become a literate nation and every child will have the opportunity to get good education. I hope by 2030, every Indian will have good health care, clean drinking water and enough food. We must improve our infrastructure. We must eradicate corruption and crimes. We the people of India don't want a nation driven by hatred and violence. We want a tolerant peaceful country, because without tolerance and peace no progress is possible. Rajiv Gandhi once said, " I too have a dream of an India - strong, independent and self-reliant." This is the dream of all those who love their country.



Love for Poetry



Arundathi, 15, happily hung a cow bell.
Thankfully, they'd been delivered from Hell.
Her father a tea-stall owner,
Lost all in the Pandemic!
Timely government intervention,
Led to their salvation.
The ears of corn
Cast a golden glow.
Her dad was back to farming
In his ancestral home, 10 years ago.

Pankaj, patted his wallet,
And smiled contentedly.
Ten years ago, he was at wits end
Staring at the future, bleakly.
Fresh out of college,
His dreams of a start-up in tow,
The dreaded disease threw
a Spanner, in his plans, and how!
But he was funded by a scheduled bank,
His dreams were being realised
right now

Aarti wound up the meeting,
And took an early lunch break.
Made a quick call to hubby,
Who was with their infant
It was his paid paternity -break.

Thankful that she could work,
No maid was needed, none found.
Hubby dearest remained at home
Their infant, safe, with daddy
around. This is my India of 2030.
'Too much' do I hear you scream?
Well, to this I say...
I dare to dream.

Peeking into 2030!

© Natasha Sequiera



Manali Desai



Author

Manali Desai, from a full-time marketing job you took a plunge into the field of writing and went on to become an Author, tell us the story behind where all this began?

The professional journey of becoming a writer and an author has taken me through a long process of elimination. Not just a full-time marketing job, I have dabbled in more than a couple of full-time jobs right from marketing to teaching and then content writing too.

The good thing about all these jobs was that they had a writing task involved, some just a little bit and some, a major one. That's what made me realize my forte. Listening to my heart's call, I quit full-time jobs in March 2017 and have been a freelance writer and editor cum blogger since then. Alongside maintain my blog and taking up freelance writing and editing assignments, I have also authored three solo books and been a part of two anthologies. So, I guess, all's well that ends well, right?

You have written three solo books and a couple of anthologies too. Is writing short stories your favourite genre?

As a writer, my favorite genre is actually poetry. And I believe that's my forte too.

My debut book *A Rustic Mind* was a collection of poems, my second book *The Untold Stories* was a collection of microtales and my third and latest book *The Art of Being Grateful & Other Stories* is a collection of 8 short stories.

I have been contributing these genres to various online and offline portals and magazine since quite a while too. So, no, I don't believe short stories alone are my favorite genre to write. But yes, I do believe that the shorter versions of writing are my forte now. I'm yet to explore writing a longer text or a full-fledged novel.

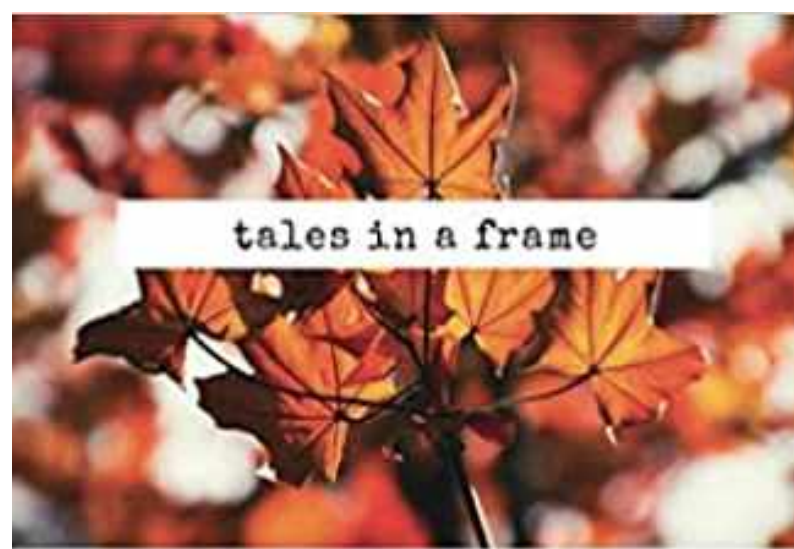


What is your favourite part from your book, 'The Untold Stories' and why?

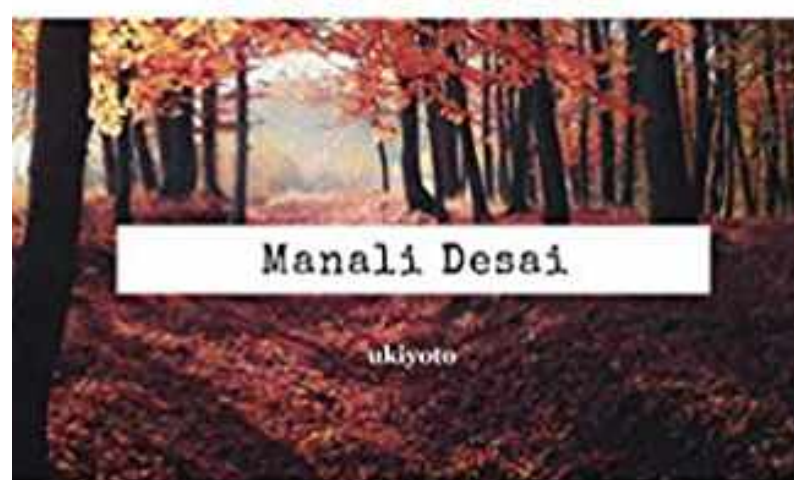
As a reader, my favorite part of *The Untold Stories* is that the microtales herein are truly inspired from real life everyday incidents.

As a writer, my favorite part of *The Untold Stories* is that it resonated with readers worldwide. I remember these two instances, where readers from USA and Ireland connected with me over email after reading it and said (something along the lines of) it being one of the most powerful books they had ever read.

"Sometimes, we do not get a chance to thank each one who has helped us in our Journey." Let the readers get a chance to know about all the important people who have played a part in this fabulous Journey of Yours.

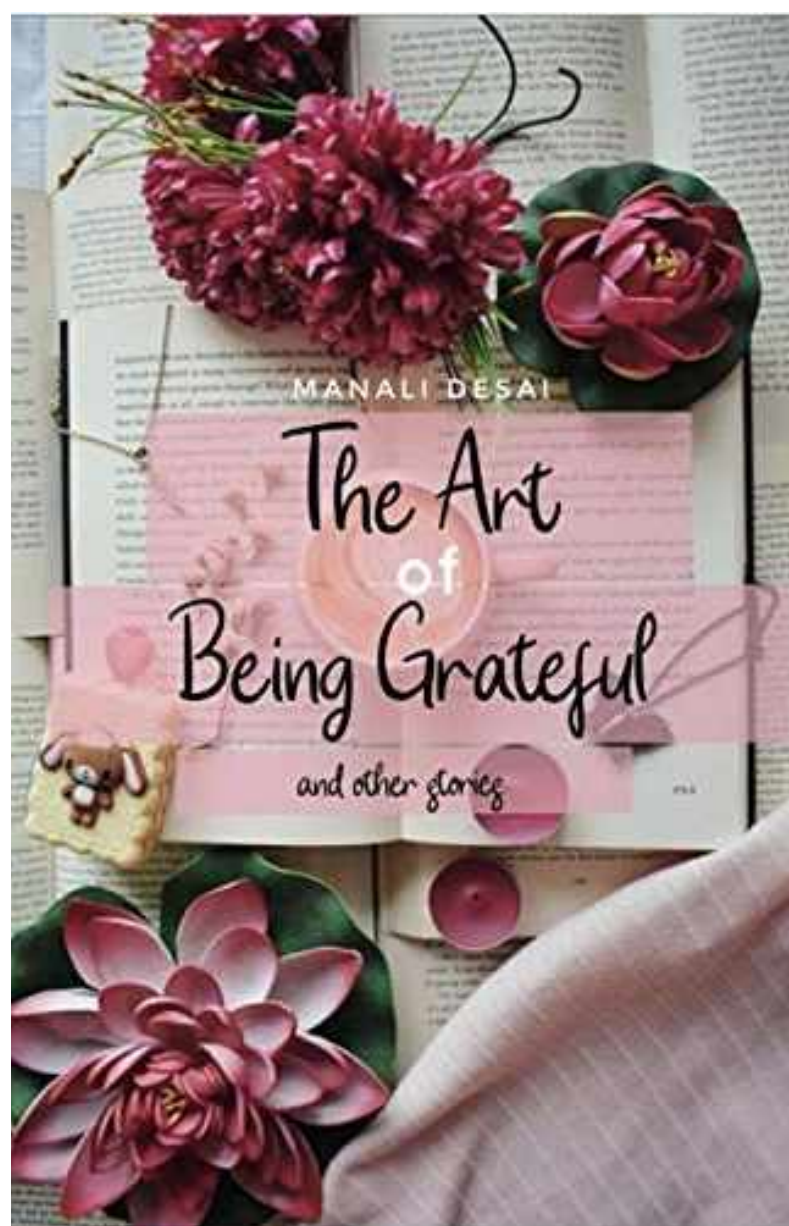


the untold stories



Manali Desai

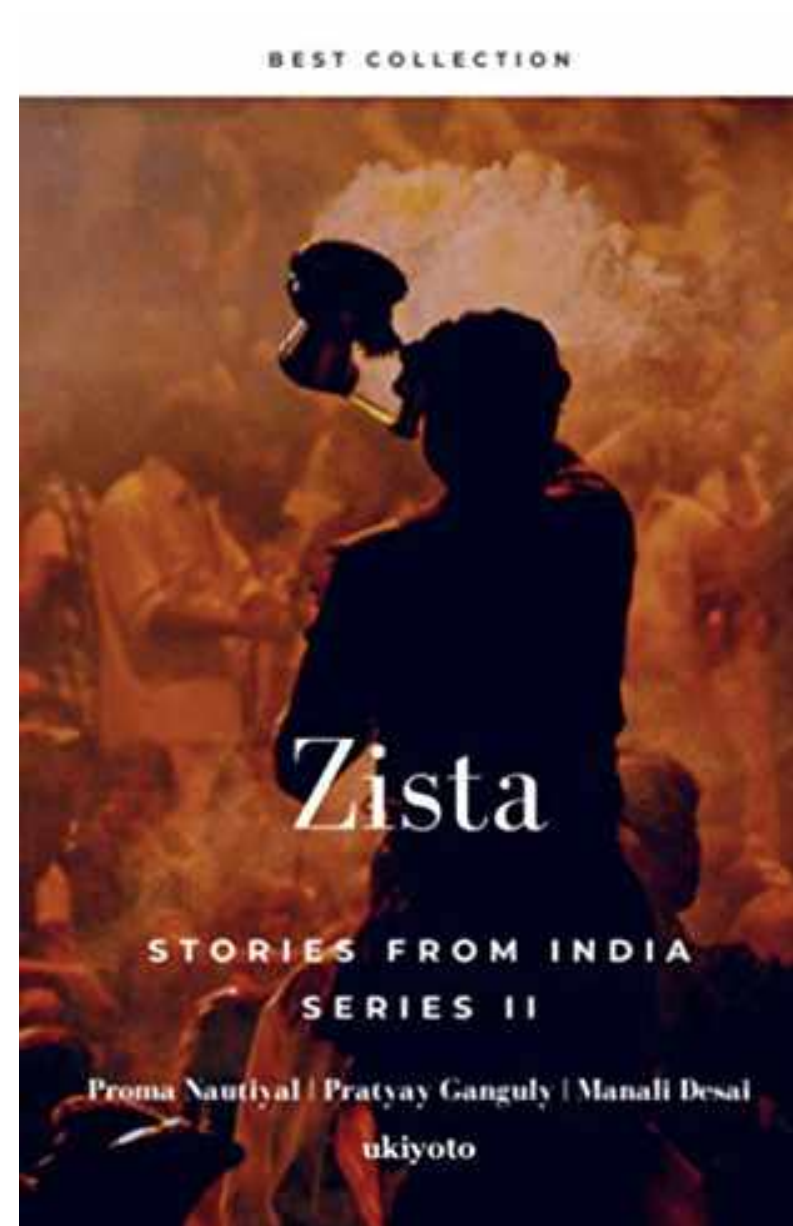
ukiyoto



MANALI DESAI

The Art of Being Grateful

and other stories



BEST COLLECTION

Zista

STORIES FROM INDIA SERIES II

Proma Nautiyal | Pratyay Ganguly | Manali Desai

ukiyoto

My mother who insisted on an English Medium education for my elder brother and me. Today, my whole identity (professionally at least) is based on that one decision of my mother to not to give up.

My father who never let things like 'Because you're a girl' become a hindrance for my unstable and erratic career choices

My husband who made me realize that doing a fulltime job would never give me 100% job satisfaction, neither will it let me live my full potential as a writer.

You have also been into teaching for some time. Did your experience as a teacher help or influences your now chosen profession of writing?

Haha! Yes, most definitely. How do you think editing works for me? It's no different than grading or correcting papers to an extent.

According to you which are the 5 books everyone should read and also who are your top 3 Authors?

5 must read books:

1. The Godfather by Mario Puzo
2. The Unbearable Lightness of Being by Milan Kundera
3. Shantaram by Gregory David Roberts
4. The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy
5. A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khalid Hosseini or Midnight's Children by Salman Rushdie

Top 3 authors:

1. J.K Rowling (purely for the HP series)
2. Arundhati Roy
3. Salman Rushdie

WHAT IF ROUND

What if you had to live with only three things all your life, what would the three things be?

Oh boy, that's a tough one! Okay, let me try... ummm..

- Lifetime internet access and power backup on my iPad with KU subscription (so I can read anywhere, anytime)
- Lifetime supply of homecooked food (without me having to cook)
- My laptop (with power back up and internet access) You asked for things; hence I haven't listed the people I'd like by my side

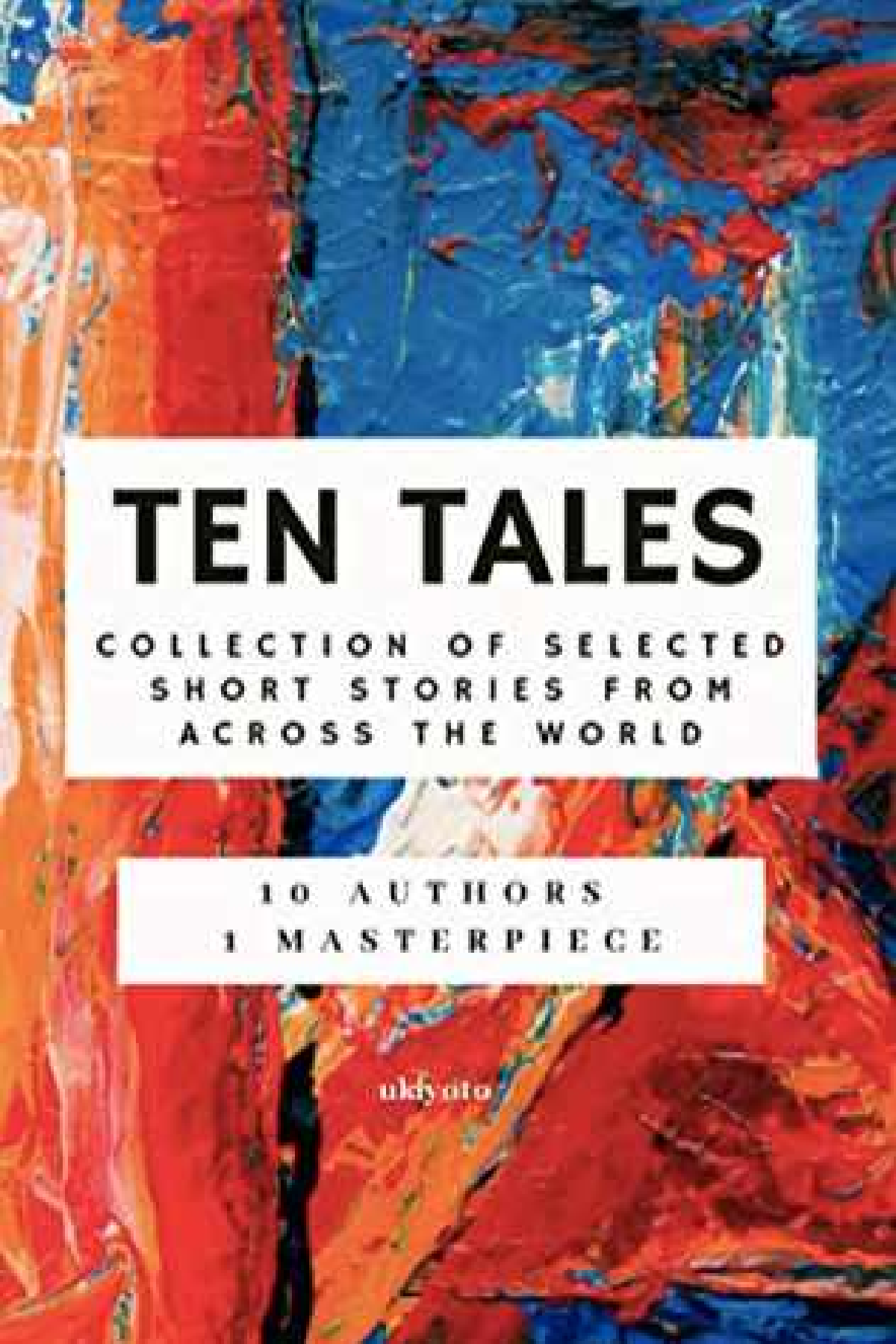
What if you were given the power to change one thing from this world, what would you change?

For people to be open to acceptance because what's not in our power can only make us feel better through the virtue of acceptance.

What if you had all the money in this world, what would you do first?

There are two things I'd do simultaneously if that happens:

- Give away as much as I can afford to for the causes that I believe in; education and skill development being a top priority.
- Invest a part of it in a venture where I have recurrent revenue each month



TEN TALES

COLLECTION OF SELECTED
SHORT STORIES FROM
ACROSS THE WORLD

10 AUTHORS
1 MASTERPIECE

Tell us a bit about your family, likes and dislikes as a person.

My father is a civil engineer, my mother is a school teacher and my elder brother is a civil engineer as well. Growing up, I was the only one out of the four of us who was slightly different, what with my interest in books (not the course books obviously) and my aversion to subjects like Maths and Science. Luckily, they never made me feel like I was an anomaly which motivated me to make choices which were different from what the society expected of me.

My likes include:

- A stack/room full of books wherever I am
- Bollywood music (especially from the 90s)
- Good food (nothing fancy, just basic dal chawal will also make me happy if it's delicious)
- Exploring new places and interacting with people from various backgrounds and ethnicity Give me a rainy day with some good books and music to give me company and I will be the happiest person on this planet!

Dislikes

- Pretentious people
- A badly written book/article (especially if it has a good story to tell but has not been edited well)
- People who don't understand feminism/gender equality
- Unsolicited advice givers
- When things don't go as per plan

Could you share few lifestyle changes for Young people of your generation?

Discipline is extremely important for a healthy outcome, personally and at a professional level. If you aren't maintaining a schedule or routine in your life, you lack focus and will always wind up unsatisfied, irrespective of what you're doing.

I'm not saying that you need to have a fixed chock-a-block schedule but having some clarity about what you want to do every day, definitely helps. And this includes both personal and professional tasks, like for instance my daily target is writing 2000 words, plus reading 200 pages. So, my work as well as my 'me time' is both taken care of.

After all, all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, remember?

RAPID FIRE ROUND

Favourite

Place: Wherever I have access to books.

Person: (at the risk of sounding self-obsessed) Myself (not because I am vain, but because I believe that if you can't love yourself, you can't love anyone else).

Food A homecooked meal, any day

Beverage: Hot chocolate/ Milk and Muesli

Your other Talents.... I can apply nail paint in a moving vehicle, does that count?

Your First Love.... Books.

Favourite Quote..... "Miles to go before I sleep"

Your Role Model: Each person who has helped me become a better person

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WE HUNT THE FLAME

by Hafsah Faizal

We Hunt the Flame is the first book in the series *Sands of Arawiya*. The world building draws inspiration from ancient Arabia, the meticulously described culture and aesthetics ranging from food, to clothes to architecture to customs paint a rich sumptuous picture for the reader. The cultural nuances proliferated by expressionism, vocalisation and history all come together for a treat that satisfies the mind and soothes a reader's soul.

The book is divided into three acts, the first act concentrates on the world building to give a feel of the surroundings. Gradually the characters are introduced with snippets into their back stories and their state of mind. The pace is quite slow which though seems like a put off is in truth just what is needed to get accustomed to the ongoing of the plot and the role the many characters play in it. The start of a mystery and the subsequent suspense will keep the reader hooked despite the slow pace. Most surprising is the anti-climactic scenes in act 1. Often in action sequence, we are used to blood and threats and twists with a dramatic ending to the scene but imagine killing a dragon with a song. It is nonsensical yet funny but on further contemplation, just perfect when magic is welded as a weapon, even if it is through a song. Act 2 really picks up in terms of story as well as pace. The slow suspense is gripping, making your breath stop in the moment. Not to mention the utter heart-breaking that ensures. As the story unfolds, you realise the importance of description that act one offered. The entire history of the place is explained in bits and pieces throughout, leaving the reading to piece together a story, but you do realise there is one twist up the sleeve that will finally complete the mystery that is Arawiyan history. Both act 1 and act 2 culminate in a gripping climax in act 3.

Now coming to the characters, there are two POVs' one of Zafira and another of Nasir. Nasir is a character, we know, how he's going to turn out. Sad, forlorn, distant, disturbed and suffering who finds a ray of hope and all that cliché. Well written but nothing new though. The plus point here is the journey from a brooding hated assassin to a man with a mission, with conscience. Zafira on the other hand is the kind of female heroine we all need. Fierce but vulnerable at the same time. She owns her vulnerability but pushes forward anyway. Often female characters dangle between damsels and knights when it comes to exhibiting their brave courageous sides, Zafira's USP is that she is fully aware of her potential as well as her limitations, she knows when to take the matter into her own hands and when to take the back seat, she is conscious of her feminine trait and wears it like a crown. Here is a female protagonist who is faced with a male much better than her in prowess, yet that doesn't offend her for she realises her strength may not match with that of Nasir but she has other abilities the Prince of Death doesn't.



Blurb

In a world where the people consider silencing women their birth right, Zafira disguises herself as a man, hunting in the cursed forest of Arz to feed her hungry people, fully aware of the consequences should the secret be revealed.

Miles away, Nasir is feared as the Prince of Death. His life is rife with assassinating anyone who dares to defy his father, the Sultan of Arawiya. If he refuses to kill, the Sultan will punish him in gruesome ways making him wish he was dead.

Both of them are legends, both of them wish to obscure their fame and live a normal life. But in a world where the cursed forest is creeping closer day by day and the survival is dire with every passing moment, who can say what normal looks like. Lured by a being as ancient as time itself, Zafira embarks on a journey to retrieve an artefact which can bring back magic to the land and stop the growing Arz. The Sultan sends Nasir on the mission too, but to kill the hunter and bring back the artefact. However, neither knows that an ancient evil is stirring and the history of the artefact they are going to retrieve is much darker than they can ever fathom.

Yasmin is another strong female very much like Zafira but her uncanny wit and presence of mind, not to mention a tongue sharper than sword is enough to make the patriarchy run with tail between its legs. She does not seek to rise to a certain level to compete; she is proud of her standing, her homely inclination, her acceptance of a need of a life partner and knows that no one can beat her in the things she excels.

Altair is the dream character. It's safe to say that readers will end up loving Altair more than Zafira and Nasir. He is sarcastic, witty, and funny at all the wrong moments; reminds one of Rhysand or Will Herondale. Altair is what we dream a man would be like, loyal, brave, smart, present, and sensible.

Deen, though doesn't occupy much story time, is an epitome of loyalty and one of Zafira's fierce supporters. Kifah and Benyamin are good too as supportive characters. Each with their unique style and history, proud of their culture and the values they believe in.

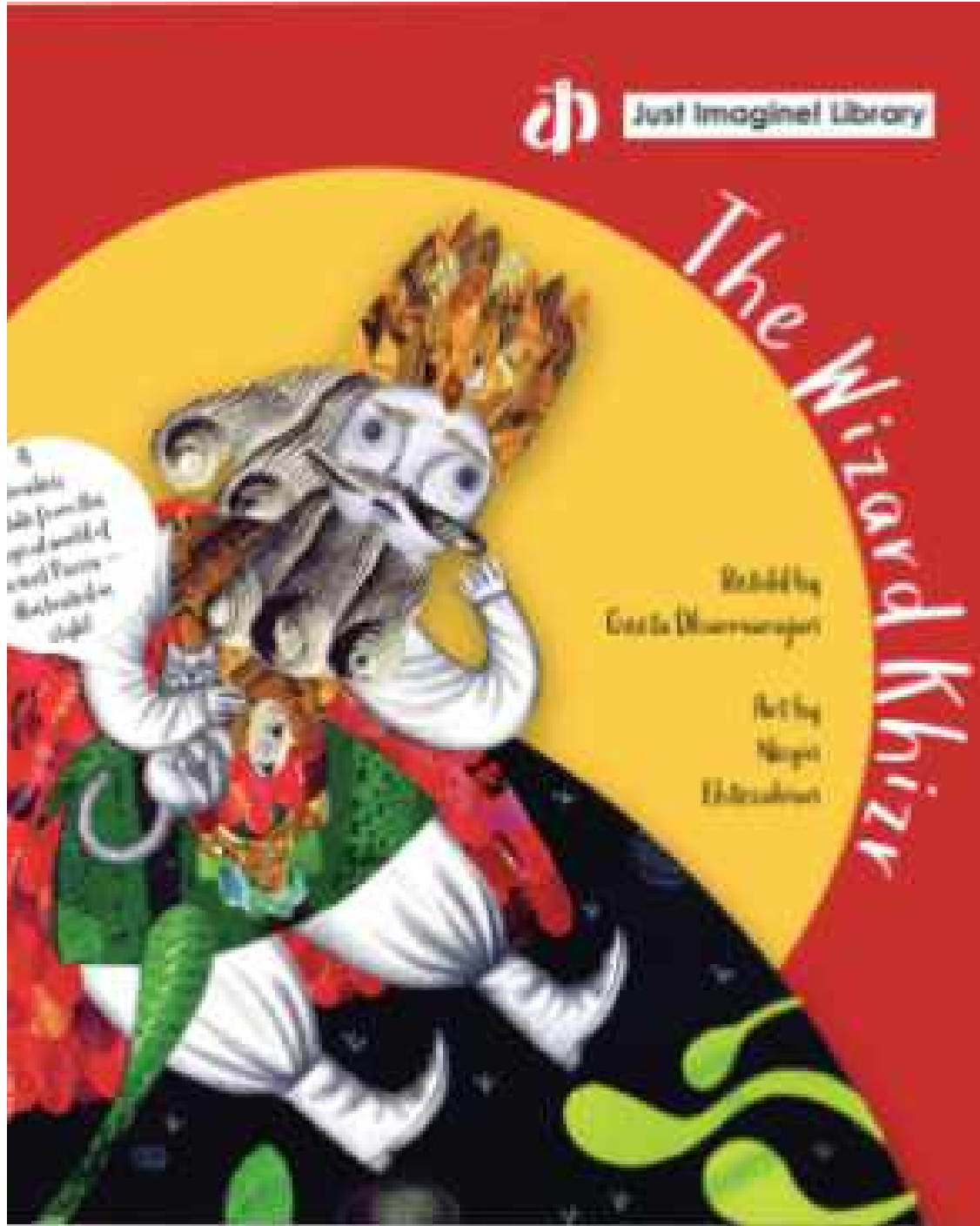
The best part of this entire story is that romance doesn't form the forte or exists in the background obscured by more important on-goings of the plot. Romance is described in a really sensual manner, sensual but not sexual. For fans of repressed romance the imagery in this book will be breath taking. The action scenes are not too exciting, it is streaming, slow and gradual, nor is it anything too dramatic. The plot is amazing, woven with mystery at every turn. Plenty of magic and sorcery. Rather dull picturesque but it was needed since they were on a dark island, literally. Even though the pace is really slow, there's this added excitement as to what happens next that makes the reader turn that page. But the end pages have some really damn good twists which will make the reader go "Hell! I did not see that coming!"

We Hunt the Flame is a deep thoughtful experience that makes one ponder about identity, loyalty, self-discovery, love and courage. Faizal's epic writing lies in making the tropes flawed, morally grey, yet coming up with fascinating individuals with dynamics between them while playing with moods ranging from crude anguish to casual humour effortlessly. The world of Arawiya is highly detailed and complex, the characters even more so, but the book is an engaging read full of magic and curiosity that delivers immaculately on both fronts of romance and fantasy.



Indian Art of Music





The Wizard Khizr

A timeless folktale from Persia, retold by Geeta Dharamraj

This is a folktale about the Shah of Persia and Wizard Khizr. The enemies of Persia always attacked and looted the land. Shah needed Wizard Khizr's help. He announced a reward of 1000 Tomans to the person who would bring the Wizard to him.

A very poor man from his Kingdom went to the palace and asked the Shah for the 1000 Tomans in advance and 40 days to bring the Wizard. But, with the money, the man paid off his debt and lived a good life for the next 40 days and didn't even try to find the Wizard. After 40 days, he went to the Shah and told him honestly about the money spent.

Does the Shah punish him for his Act or do they really find the Wizard Khizr?

To know the full story, you must read this wonderful book.

The story is interesting, easy to read and understand. There are colourful pictures which make the book really beautiful.

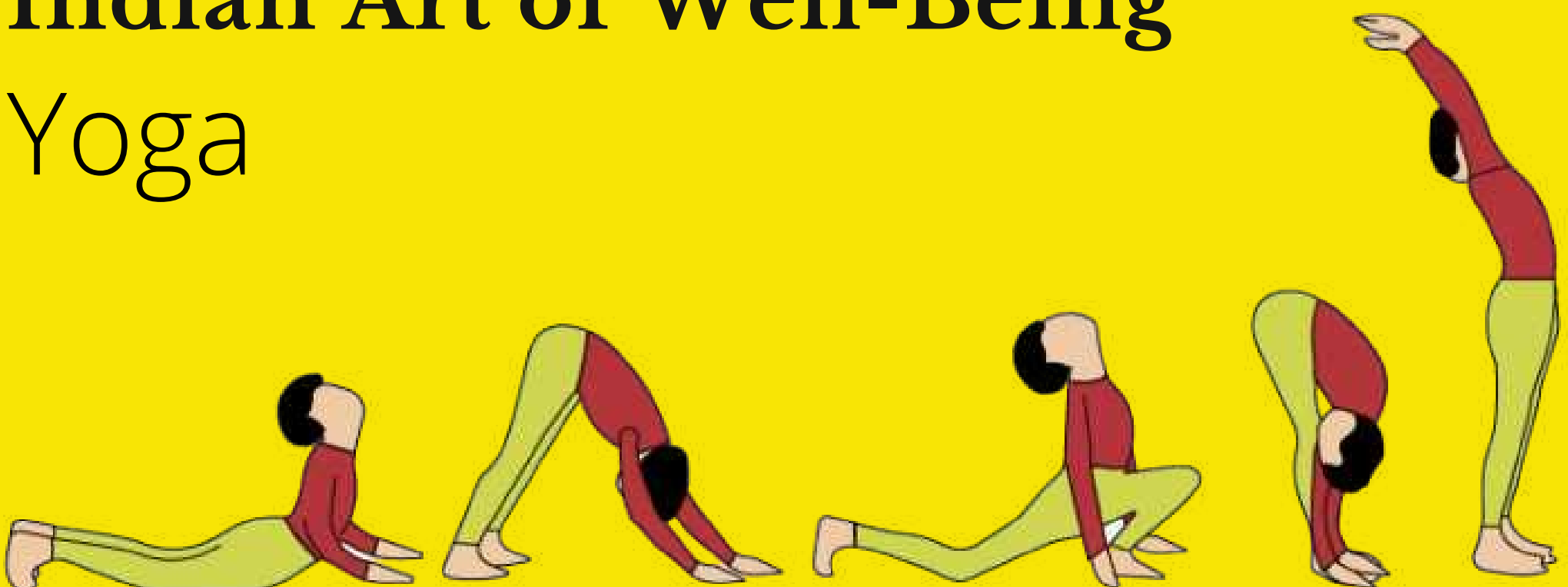
This story teaches us to be truthful and honest.

BY YASHAN GAJBE
(8 YEARS OLD)



Indian Art of Well-Being

Yoga





Satya.

Superhero from your Future

by Abilash Geetha Balan

Chapter 2.

01 September 2020, Mumbai, India.

5 years after the riots, Shahid had chills every time he gets reminded of that day. He was in his early teenage when the incident occurred. The entire city was on fire, dead bodies lied around the streets, people ran here and there screaming in pain. He had lost his entire family that day. The day his soul was murdered.

As a child Shahid was extremely good at studies and loved music, he always carried an Ukulele with him, played music for his friends and remained a calm kid. He lived in his own dream land, the kind of kid everyone adored. But, in the last 5 years, since the incident everything has changed.

He has been living in a tiny one room apartment for over 1 year now, he hardly left that room. He has been waiting for the day to arrive when Vivek would come back to the city after completing the 4 year jail sentence. Shahid had laid out a detailed plan to kill Vivek on the day when he was free from the Jail. Vivek was the local political member who led the riots which caused the death of Shahid's family.

Shahid lived on the top floor of his 25-story apartment with an open terrace in a tiny 8 x 8 store room. He had a clear view of Vivek's house from there, he has been watching and hearing all the activities at Vivek's house through the hidden camera and mike which he was able to place inside Vivek's house 3 months back during a pitch dark no moon day.

It was 11 am, Vivek's brother and wife had gone to the Mumbai central jail to pick up Vivek. Shahid had been getting all the information through the spy transmitter he had installed at Vivek's house. There were huge celebrations planned to welcome Vivek. Many political leaders had arrived at his place.

Vivek had killed Shahid's entire family, but, let the small 13-year old kid alone, his conscience did not let him kill a child.

Shahid waited patiently through the entire day watching Vivek's every move sitting at home. He waited for the crowd to leave; He knew the time was approaching. He set up his sniper ready and aimed at Vivek's bedroom window.

Time was approaching 8pm, Vivek's family had prepared a huge dinner. The family enjoyed some laughter and went about the dinner. Vivek seemed to be in a joyful mood, he did not have any remorse for his wrong doings. This made it easier for Shahid.

Around 11pm, everyone was tired, and ready to sleep. Vivek and his wife moved to well decorated bedroom. Vivek's wife had planned a romantic night for Vivek. She was longing for Vivek for some time now.

Both entered the room, and she locked the doors from inside and gave a luring look at Vivek who laid on the bed. She smiled and said, I have a surprise for you, just give me a minute. She said and rushed towards the washroom.

Shahid by now had a clear shot at Vivek, who picked up a magazine next to bed and was skimming through it; his body was at rest and barely moved which gave Shahid a clear aim. It was pitch dark at Shahid's end and the light inside Vivek's room made it easy for him to aim. Shahid aimed for a head shot through the window. He was focused and ready to pull the trigger. And then suddenly...!!!

He had a pat on his shoulder from behind. Shahid was startled as he quickly turned back. He could not believe what he witnessed. He was in utter shock.

Is it a Human or a bird?

There was something really strange apart from the long wings that were attached to his body. He tried to have a closer look; he was startled and took a few steps back in a shock. It appeared as if it was Shahid.

You look exactly like me, who are you? Shahid asked in a trembling voice.

There was no reply.

Shahid repeated the question, but this time aiming the gun at the man in front.

After a brief pause, He replied, 'I am Shahid, I am You.'

Shahid was restless as he was losing time, he turned back to check on Vivek. Much to his dismay, the lights in Vivek's room were switched off.

Shahid got furious and yelled, "What bull shit, who the hell are you? I am asking you for the last time, else , keep the answer to yourself."

Shahid pushed the man behind using his gun.

"Calm down Shahid, I am telling you the truth. I am You. I am you from your future.", He replied in a firm voice, and moved closer.

Shahid took out his phone from his pocket, turned on the flash and pointed it at the face of the man.

Yes. He was Shahid. Looked exactly like him.

..... to be continued.

Satya



LET'S
MAKE
SOME
NOISE



WINNING
ENTRIES

WINNERS



Writing Contests | August Edition

WORD IMPACT

Winning Entry

Preethi Warriar

Special Mentions

Ratna Prabha

Anita Sabat

Amrita Lahiri

Zainab



PICTURE PROMPT POETRY

Winning Entry

Chaitanya Ajit

Special Mentions

Amrita Malik

Ritika Agrawal

Chandra Sudeep

Ratna Prabha



@1000WORDSTALES

Winning Entry

Reshma

Special Mentions

Sudhan

Alipi Das

A few Select Entries will be featured in our website shortly....

Happy Place

I spotted her at our lavish French window, gazing into the twilight.

“They’ve sealed the building. Who’s infected?” Ma enquired.

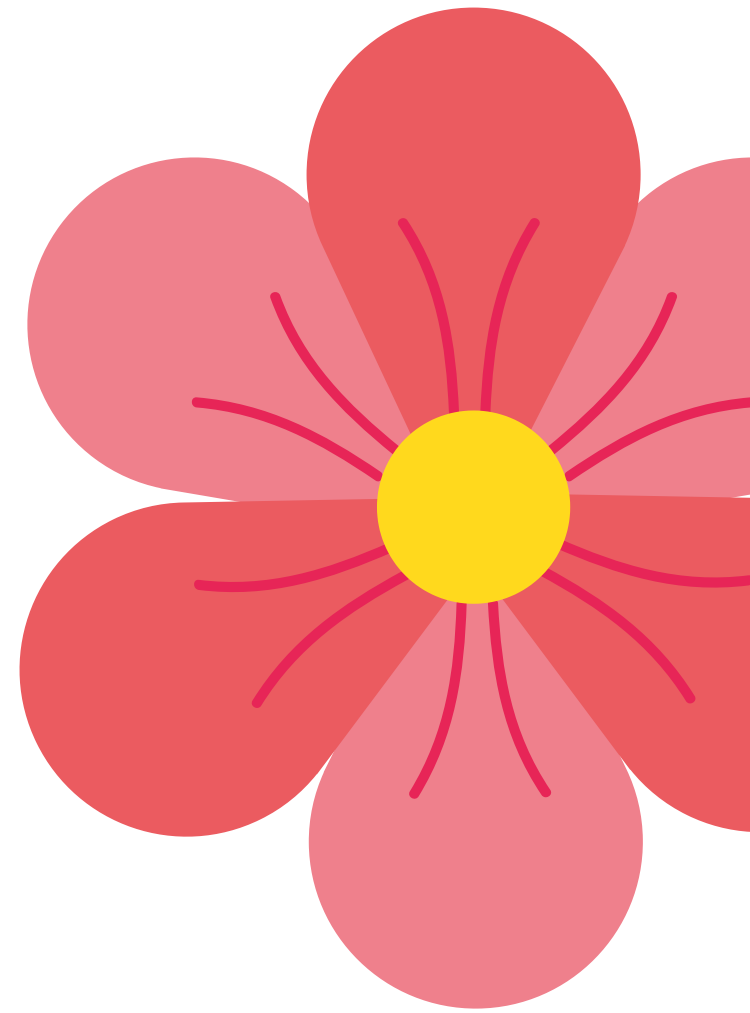
“Not sure. I hardly know the next door neighbours. Why’re you so lonely, when I’ve been here for months.” I jested.

But I read her mind, it was the passage. At the chawl, where I grew up.

Board games into the night, conversations across storeys, clandestine chats with teenage crush, discussions, celebrations, friendships, warmth...Those corridors reverberated with LIFE.

How I missed that clamour, home I once believed inferior.

“Luxury comes with a price Ma. Conceit, indifference.” I held her hands.



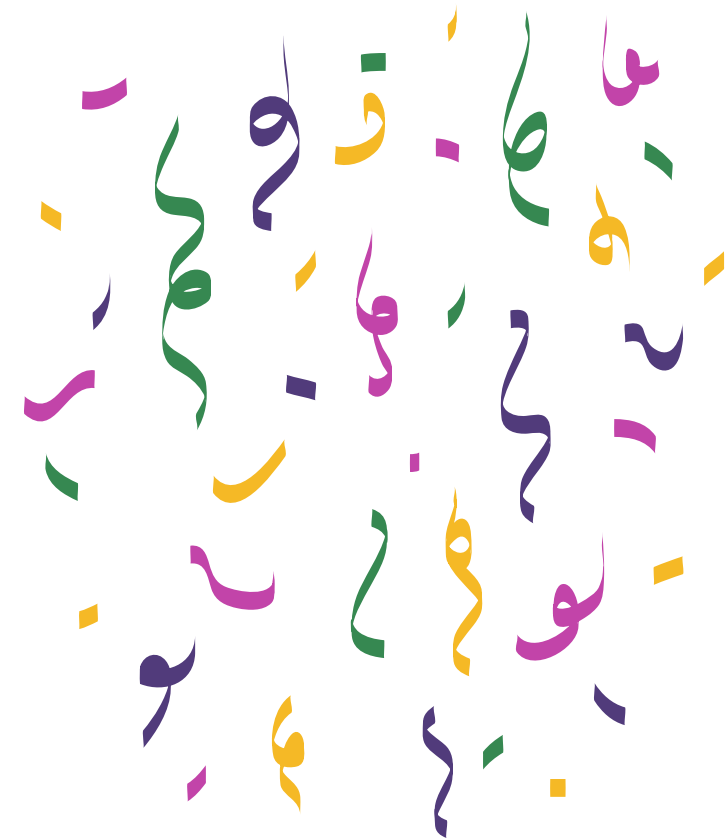
PREETHI WARRIER

has completed her Masters in Electronics Engineering and is an Assistant Professor at Shah and Anchor Kutchhi Engineering College, Mumbai. Apart from the technical stuff, she likes weaving stories out of some heart touching incidents she comes across. She has published three stories and one poem in the Induswomanwriting online magazine. Her work can be found in various Anthologies like Born Too Soon, She- The Warrior, Travel Diaries and Secret Diary. She is one among the winners of the TOI Write India Campaign Season-1, for the famous author Anita Nair. She is a regular blogger with Momspresso, Womens’ Web and Let’s Make Stories . She also won Third Prize at Asian Literary Society’s Gitesh-Biva Memorial Awards for her story ‘Orphaned For Good.’ Preethi resides in Mumbai with her husband and son.

Picture Prompt Poetry



*Her eyes as blue as her dress,
Her smile as innocent as a child,
And her ebony hair bounced,
in the rain, as she sang and vivaciously danced,
anticipating her beloved,
In the ecstasy of the solitude.
Concealed from her, I was in a trance.
As my dewy bloom fell on her,
She looked stunning like a rainbow.
Then she eagerly picked up her buzzing phone,
Her face turned ashen,
Before my stretched branches could console her,
She put up her umbrella and left weeping.
Since then, every rain reminds me of her.
I pray that she finds home in someone's heart.*



WINNING ENTRIES



CHAITHANYA AJIT

Chaithanya Ajit is an engineering student having a passion for writing. She derives inspiration from real-life experiences. She believes that words have the power to take the reader to a different world which is made by the author's imagination. Her recent work can be seen in

#1000wordstales



Situation :

The mayhem we saw in the past few weeks over a particular skin color and the discrimination makes us wonder how mere white, black, brown, yellow colors can classify humanity? Third Saturday of July is celebrated as 'Nelson Mandela International Day'. His fight against 'apartheid' needs no introduction. Even after these many years, we are still fighting the same demons.

CONFIDANTE

I struggled towards the flight ticket counter with the bulky pot of staghorn, an extemporaneous decision to carry it along, jutting out of my trolley. In my mind, I was assuring myself that I would get away with my plan of convincing the authorities to allow me to carry this pot as hand baggage, by employing my charm and diplomacy if needed. I wasn't ready to give it away as check-in-baggage, skeptical of it being mishandled or uprooted by the ground staff. Even the "fragile" tag didn't assure me of its safety.

Just as I had anticipated, the airline staff refused to allow this as hand baggage for security reasons. Damn, this bad, bad world for throwing trust away from our hearts, we have fashioned our ways of life in such a way that every object, every move, every intention is judged with scrutiny and suspicion. Mine was just a pot, so simple, so pure, such a beauty, what harm could it possibly do! Sadly, they dug a huge screwdriver into the pot, like a dagger through my chest, quite confident that they would unearth a bomb or maybe some gold bars, the action nauseatingly distressing to me. This bonsai plant was not used to such loathsome manhandling. For the past thirty years or so it had been natured with so much love and care that it bled now. It was a connoisseur's piece used to being shown off and winning accolades at flower exhibitions all over.

WINNING ENTRIES

It had earned the title of the "KOHINOOR" making its owner swell with pride. So, this transition is disturbing when this pot becomes a symbol of threat rather than beauty.

I had already begun to arouse the interest and anger of both the people around and the people in the queue behind me, waiting for their turns. The spark of controversy building just over a pot of staghorn. Shamelessly, I carried on with the arguments, they accusing me of breaking rules and I justifying it as an exceptional case, not the least bothered about the crowd this scene was attracting. Higher officials of the airline and security were called upon one by one, and I relentlessly tried to assure them that it was just a flower pot, within the permissible weight, and free from all terrorist and economic hazards, pleading them to dig no more, punch no more, scrape no more, please, "just let it be".

Eventually, they agreed to allow me to carry the plant not the pot, quite assured that I couldn't possibly separate the two and I would give up. But to their dismay, in a momentary decision I upturned the pot crookedly and gently patted it on top. Out came the moulded soil, the roots like shining veins entwined through it. It must be the adrenalin within me that gave it such a shimmer. "Here goes the pot" I said, as I cast it away. The naked soil was compactly held by the very old sturdy roots, making it possible for me to hold it just like that. I would stay static for the next few hours.

All through my journey, till I reached home, I knew I was attracting glances, causing a spectacle, but who cared? Not me! I had it my way and I was jubilant about it.

Here I had brought this bonsai to a different temperate zone, away from its natural habitat and its guardian or rather soul companion. I was acutely aware of my responsibility of keeping it alive, hale and hearty in its new home, it carried a legacy, was an heirloom jewel. As I sat down to repot it, I nursed its wounds the same way as I had nursed my father during his last days, with deep love, reverence and affection. Tears flowed unrestrained and I poured my heart out, unleashing the gravity of my loss. It stood firm; it did not droop nor did it lose its glister as if keeping up that promise made to my father to look after me. It had stayed his confidante for three decades and hence the loyalty was deep rooted. After weeks of nursing when I was sure of its survival, I placed it on a high chest of drawers near the window, in my living room where its requisite of the right temperature, the right amount of light and the right quantity of humidity would be met. It was one of those priceless artifacts that adorned my home and the cynosure of all eyes.

Each time I walk past it, its long ferns brush my arms like the way my father had patted me, bestowing his blessing. I have succeeded in bringing him near me and keeping him alive to be my very special confidante.

Indian Art of Medicine

Ayurveda



Rehma B. Dugar

Educator, writer and blogger Reshma B. Dugar enjoys writing articles that resonates with readers all over. She believes that her words will be instrumental in empowering people and with this mission in mind, she aims to succeed. Creative writing is her foray, in which she conducts classes and workshops for children of all ages. Her poems and short stories have been published in various magazines like Women's Era, Himalayan Times, The Darjeeling Chronicles, Siyahi, Toss The Sheet etc.

Creative Contest

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1.



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2.

Word Impact Series

"Entanglement"



Life is a mesh of entanglements. They can be beautiful or may be annoyingly stubborn at times. Sometimes it can be an entanglement with a person, or then maybe you get stuck with some prized possession or a dream

Pen down your thoughts/story/poem in 100 words around the feelings and emotions which the word 'Entanglement' brings to you.

3.

#1000

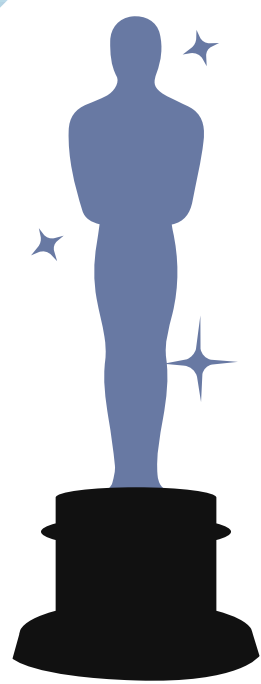
WordsTales

Situation:- "One morning you wake up to find that you are bestowed with a power to bring back any one dead personality from the past for a single day. Weave a story around the day spent, asking questions or having conversation with him/her which leaves you/protagonist with the answers you/ protagonist had been seeking for a long time.

You can use any personality, be it political, religious, scientist or any person from your own life's experience.

For example a writer can bring back Hitler to life and maybe ask him that how he felt that world could be changed through his policy of religious segregation or discrimination and violence? This is just an illustration. You are free to interpret the prompt the way you want to build up your story.

[Click Here to Participate](#)



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I M A G I N E

World Harmony

Through Writing