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Sweet Nargis

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She breathed words, and dreamed of ink, and the pen her master, slave and companion. She longed for the life of pen but if life was so simple, there would be no learning, no motivation, no fighting, the challenges listless, and finally a life devoid of understanding and revelation. For her life was a string of revelations. Amidst a life of mundane domesticity, her wish to write remained strong, in fact like the scorching rays of the noon sun. Nargis continued to live a borrowed life, one day dreaming of freedom from bondage, a life of other people's preferences driving her to rebel from the stereotype of a woman subjected to society's patriarchal tendencies.

Her education had equipped her with knowledge and she resolved to fight with courage and grace and show people with convenient thinking a clear mirror. She was yet unmarried, living with her extended family. An orphan but living with people, a brimming kaleidoscopic family. She was educated well because it was a literate family. The more she learnt, the more she realised that literacy and education are two things, like chalk is different from cheese.

She saw that her uncles, aunts were highly educated but their thinking was not different from people who were not educated. They preferred sons over daughters and when they married their daughters, they created a network of petty politics between their son's and daughter's families. Being at the margin made her sensitive, she understood that life is most of the times fake. Even the close relations sometimes are just based on economic benefits, convenience and one-upmanship of the strangest order.

She lived with her grandmother, an elegant, self taught lady who dreamed of becoming a doctor. Her zeal for education began from her. She read extensively highly complex stuff, she completely did not understand. Dealing with complexity early, flashes of these great works remained with her. She dug deep into these ethereal flashes to write, continuing on a journey of deep wells of ink, paper and pen. After completing her education, proposals of marriage started pouring in. She was told the strangest facts which she well knew was only fiction. Dictums like, marry early or the bloom of youth will fade away, don't take too long, proposals will stop coming. How will you bear children, if you don't marry sooner?

Nargis was smart because she was not just literate, she was educated. She just smiled, the sweetest of her smiles. This continued and family stopped bothering her for a while. She talked to herself: "Why will they not let me travel in the mind. There is so much to learn. What if things I was meant to learn will remain unlearnt? How will the temples of learning forgive me?"

Her sweet dialogue with herself continuously happening at the back of the mind. She wanted to remain true to this narrative, the narrative of her life. People talked to her, she smiled again, some thought she was absent- minded but who knew she had a narrative to follow, a pattern without a form yet, making her anxious sometimes. Why don't they know I am a writer?"

She smiled awkwardly at her friends and then realised that this has to stop. She has to get down to business of writing and stop day-dreaming. That day when she came home, they pressurised her again and she was convinced by the strangest, most bizarre logic. She the fighter, the dreamer gave in and a wedding date was fixed. Nargis was transfixed, an impending wedding meant she would have to stop. She would have to give in, and she will be thrown directly at war with the dad of patriarchal demon, marriage and most of all a life at a new station.

A new station because she had created a space for learning at a war footing at her place. She didn't know she was to go to war so soon. She smirked with an expression of a warrior and decided to face this storm with warrior like stoicism. She was married to Roshaan, the most handsome man she saw. That's what everyone told her. In fact he was handsome but Nargis was too much into her inner journey, learning had made her awry, she knew she was in danger zone.

She learnt of men from books and yet here was she face to face with the male species, ready to understand the phenomenon of maleness. Her thought process ironic, funny and enlightening. If somebody could just hear what she was thinking, they would die of laughter. Irony to irony, she found her husband sensitive to her passion for writing. He did not stop her. Bingo! She was surprised. She thought perhaps life was not so bad after all. Nargis kept on writing, short stories, poems, diary entries describing everyday life in poetic ways!