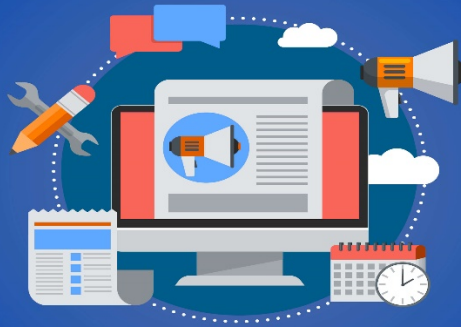


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The mall was filled with the rich colours of people wandering through various shops, some in pursuit of their materialistic needs while others to get a break from the monotonous routine of life. In the midst of a plethora of different expressions, a forlorn figure was found wandering with a camera in his hand, capturing people in their wide array of moods. Random clicks completed his day's work as a throbbing headache shot through his head. He returned to his studio where the light summer wind gushed in from outside and there came through the open door the heavy scent of the lilac, giving the place a surreal aura.

He set out to develop the pictures so that he can send them as soon as possible to his annoying boss who has been breathing down his neck for the past two days for the latest edition of the magazine. Photography was food for his soul and just by putting a camera in his hand, his senses awaken and he starts looking for beauty in the most chaotic places. But these days the camera seemed like dead weight on his hands. He failed to put a finger on the cause of his change in attitude, but he was convinced that something miserable happened in his life about which he had no clue.

Flipping through the photographs taken, he suddenly noticed a blurred image of a lady in all his pictures. The image struck a raw nerve and he started shivering violently. But he still couldn't figure out the source of his strange behaviour. Disillusioned, he tried to sleep but the blurred image of the lady visited him in his dreams and he woke up startled. He swore to put an end to his miseries and decided to go back to that mall the next day in search of that lady in his pictures.

But where can he find the lady in his image among all these people in the mall? It's surely a herculean task but he had no other choice. He was convinced that the blurred image had a strong connection to his unknown past which is haunting him now. Having no other option, he started clicking pictures of people, hoping to find the lady again. After taking at least a hundred pictures he rushed back to his studio like a madman.

He frantically started developing the pictures and finally he found the answer to his mystery. The image that was staring right back at him was his wife! His wife was missing for the past one year and he had no clue what happened to her. He started sweating profusely and his hands shivered uncontrollably. Suddenly he noticed something in the eyes of his wife. He enlarged the picture and what awaited there shook him to the core. Her eyes reflected an image of him holding a gun to her head. Suddenly he heard something moving behind him. There stood his dead wife with a gun in her hands aiming at his head. A gun shot was heard that shook the foundation of the building, and then the click of camera.

Author Bio:

Ruth Susan Mathew fell in love with words rather than numbers after a short stint in the field of Commerce. She is working as a Content Developer but her heart is set on academics. Her secret wish is to make a change in the world with her life.