



THE DAME
WHO
DARED TO
DREAM -
PERFIDY

Nisha Sadasivan



Nisha is an avid reader, who loves to read Thrillers and Mysteries. The lives of women around her are the main inspiration of her work.

Karthika is a fresher at college. Being a wallflower, she finds it difficult to make friends. Finally, she not only finds a friend, but also falls in love, which is unfortunately, not reciprocated. As years roll-by, Karthika, who is a budding writer, tries her best at online competitions from time to time. When she finally wins one, she is unable to enjoy the fruits of her labour - simply because she is a woman!! To add to her misery, her marriage is arranged with a guy who demands huge amounts of dowry. Being an educated woman, she is unwilling to be sold out this way. What will happen? Will she be able to convince her parents not to pay dowry? Will she be able to make her educated fiance understand that receiving dowry is a criminal offense?

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This book is a work of fiction. The names, characters, places, organizations, events and incidents are either the products of the author's imagination or, are used fictitiously, and are not to be construed as real. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, organizations, events, or locales is purely coincidental.

“Sudhandhiram Mattum Illamal Sorgamey Irundhum Yenna Payan?”

-Poet Vairamuthu

(What is the use in having heaven itself, if the only thing not available there is “freedom”?)

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Introduction

Not all scars show, not all wounds heal. Sometimes, you can't always see the pain that someone feels.

-Lisa French

Every woman dreams of marrying a handsome, smart and independent guy, with a brain of his own, who will fall on his knees to court her, and who would do anything to win her heart.

And yes, I found my man! Aravind is the name!

I've been crying uncontrollably for two weeks now (July 15th, 2015), trying to figure out why Aravind called off the marriage with me a day after we were engaged.

The engagement was scheduled on June 29th, 2015.

The mehendi function happened two days earlier. Mom was moistening my hands with lemon water. I was so excited!!

This was the first step to the rest of my life with Aravind. I was already dreaming of long drives with my sweet heart, kissing him all the time, late night movies every other day, my brain could not contain all the reveries.

But now, he was no longer mine. Why? Was I not beautiful enough for him? Was I not intellectually exciting enough? Why me? I love him like no one else, and I know I will marry no other man... No one else but him...

Chapter 1: Welcome to Planet Earth..

If you follow the crowd, you will likely get no further than the crowd. If you walk alone, you're likely to end up in places no one has ever been before.

- Alan Ashley-Pitt

Here's the template of a typical Indian society:

You go to school, study, study, study and study. Are you good at sports, acting, oration, anything? Forget it. Don't give those a damn, because even if you do indulge yourself in any such things, it's a waste of time, for you will ultimately land up only studying. That's the way it works. All you need to know here is swallow and vomit books – ranging from Tamil/ Hindi, English, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, History and Geography.

You won a state-level athletics gold medal? Bravo!! So what? You failed in three subjects, just pass in the rest. Oh, you're totally worthless and unfit for society.

The society calls you a success only when you score a 100% in everything, or at least the first rank in class.

In your 11th/12th, did you happen to choose Nutrition or Home Science, Commerce, or absolutely anything other than Maths with Biology or Maths with Computer Science?? There you are!! "Loser!! Loser!! Loser!!". You would be branded forever. The moment you choose any of the non-engineering/ medicine subjects, the world knows you are going to be a loser. Of-course, of what good is an accountant or a chef?

If you are the best of the best students, you ought to become a doctor; else obviously you are an engineer. If you try to become anything else, oh, of course, you are a loser!!

According to the so-called-society, a doctor or an engineer can earn more money than any other profession – and may be its true. But ask the medical students why they have chosen this career, and their response will be only this: A doctor can save lives... (But no one wants to say that you can practice in 4 to 5 hospitals at a time, and earn equal amount from all hospitals, private practice excluded!!)

Well, if you were so interested in saving lives, you could also become a nurse, there are so many accidents around, you could provide first aid and save lives.. You could become an ambulance driver - saving lives is the true motive!! No!! No one will accept it. Money!! yes!! It's all about money! But it's just that they won't name it so!!

Free Will does not exist. Oh yes, it exists on the dictionary, nowhere else. You have no right to choose your own religion. You belong to the religion you were born into. If you denounce religion, you are labeled "ignorant" and if you switch religions, you are a "disgrace" to the family and the religion's sanctity.

Well, the concept of castes and communities exist, but to what good? Oh, to play politics, what else!! What is the purpose of castes? Why can't we abolish them? There is a small group always asking this question, but there is a bigger group to emotionally play you down, to rouse everyone's blood for a caste that means nothing. Do it, and then they call you "normal human".

A woman does not have the right to choose when she wants to get married or have babies. If she tries to make her own decisions, they would simply call her an “ill brought up brute, unfit and useless for the society”

Well. Life long, everyone has the responsibility of meticulously following their predecessors and never to think out of the box. Thinking out of the box is a taboo. Mind it!!

And this being the state of affairs, I dream, every day, of being different. I want to be different. I want to think different. I want to live different. I do not want to do what every Dick and Tom and Harry does. I do not wish to do something any Dick or Tom or Harry can do. I want to be myself. I want to build my own world. Neither do I wish to compare myself to anyone, nor anyone to compare themselves with me, something this world is incapable of. Individualities have neither place nor respect. I desire to follow none, and demand none to follow me. I want to do something no one has ever done before, something that's unique with its own signature!! I know I belong to utopia. I wish utopia existed. I belong there, better than anywhere else. When I do something different, the world wants to know “why” I do things differently. I say “Why not?”, and they call me a “fool”. What they don't realize is all progress that had ever happened on earth was because of “visionary fools”, and the crowd that is busy following the crowd, is always meticulously following the crowd.

Chapter 2: This is ME!

Fashion is about dressing according to what's fashionable. Style is more about being yourself.

- Oscar de la Renta

Hi,

This is Karthika. I am different – I wear glasses and am easily the shortest in a group of people. Oh yes, I look different (always proud of my height). I just joined into a prestigious engineering college in Chennai. Yes, you guessed it right. I am second-grade, unfit to become a doctor. But wait. I didn't get it all through luck. I got it through management seat. My parents have paid 1 lakh INR for the registration and first year fees, and every year, they need to pay 1 Lakh. That makes the worth of my degree 4 Lakhs other expenses excluded!

My cousin, Divya, entered into this college too. Same age, same year, same department, same class. Now, we don't share a great relationship, and both side parents keep comparing us for every other thing. I wanted to keep away from her as much as possible all through my school days. But as fate would have it, I am locked up with her for four awful years.. **four aaaaaaaaaaaaaaawful**

years!! I can't imagine living four long years with her around my back. 4x245x8x60x60 seconds of my life had to be spent with her.

I often imagine my mom's lamentations:

1. Divya got this much marks!
2. Divya scored more than you
3. Teacher appreciated Divya!
4. How much did Divya score?
5. Divya would be studying now. You are watching TV
6. Divya got a better score in this test
7. Divya will never waste time. Look at you. Sleeping!!
8. You scored slightly more than her this time. Good. Keep it up!
9. Will you score more than Divya at least this time?

OMG!! Endlessly it's going to be the same boring stuff. The very thought of it sends shivers down my spine

We are both day scholars. Luckily, I stay at Mandaiveli, and she at Ambattur. So, at least, we will be taking different route buses from college! At least a small respite for the tortured mind.

I am a very good dreamer with no clear goals. I myself hate for it to this very day. I dream of French. France! Paris! The Eiffel Tower, Nice, Cannes, oh, the list is endless..

I want to be as fluent in speaking French as the French people themselves. For what reason? Don't ask me that. I love French beyond words and that is a craziness that rages within me day-in

and day-out as an eternal flame. I want to learn French at any cost, no matter what. Incapable of pursuing my dream, I am one vain creature sitting with my Engineering Graphics drawing.

Bharati - my elder sister - was a topper all her life. She has graduated from the best medical college in Chennai.

My parents are extremely disciplined people. My dad is a professor of Statistics and my mom, Botany.

Almost, all my school days, I had been compared with my sister and rebuked openly by my parents and teachers alike:

“How could you be Bharati’s sister? She never got such horrible marks in all her life. What a shame to your sister’s name”,

And now I was getting all set to be snubbed alongside my cousin. Heights of irritation! Whenever was I going to be free of all this nonsense in all my life?

I wasn’t particularly a last ranker. I used to hit the first five ranks somehow. Now, the point is that, Bharati was one person, who, if given a chance between giving up first rank and her life, she would gladly choose the latter. Hence, compared to her, of course, I was “hopeless”.

Thus, I was understandably, the useless brat, born ‘out of place’ and raised without another choice.

Not to forget, my most inspiring mind did the trick most of the time saying, “Of course, you are worthless. Your parents don’t allow you to study French. You know for sure you are never ever going to study French again. Already you would have forgotten almost

all the basics you learnt in the first level. It's no use anymore. Go become a software engineer like everybody else. Like every Dick and Tom and Harry. No other way!"

I was sure if I ever died that way, I would be one of those unsatisfied spirits roaming around the earth, waiting to fulfill an unfulfilled desire(if one such concept truly exists). Oh how I wish it does!!

I am an amateur Chess player. I won a chess gold medal sometime way back in school. I enjoy playing the game, but for the fact that I know nothing more than which directions the pieces move.

The most horrible part of my life is its mundane, nothing changes at all, it's the same yesterday, today and forever. Oh! I loathe it.

And, I love reading books. I read a lot of books, some interest me, many don't. I am a fan of Agatha Christie. I sound old-fashioned, don't I? I want to one day write a book that I would enjoy reading every day of my life. No, this book will not be written to make money, not to become a best-seller, but to be enjoyed by me, to be enjoyed by someone who enjoys my taste. For no one else. It's definitely not for every Dick and Tom and Harry. It would be for someone special – for me!!

I dreamt of visiting France, the Champs-Élysées, the tour Eiffel, the Louvre, Arc de Triomphe, the Seine, the Bateaux Mouches, Luxembourg Gardens, Palais de Versailles, Marseilles, French Riviera.... Oh!! Dreams are divine!!

Chapter 3: How I met my friend

Friendship at first sight, like love at first sight, is said to be the only truth.

- *Herman Melville*

College was nothing less than a “prison”, as it was fondly called by all. As any engineering college in Chennai, boys and girls are not allowed to speak to one other.

I am generally a loner who does not bother about friends as I am mostly incapable of finding my kind of person. I am neither the mingling nor the flirting type – as I told you, I don’t belong to this world. The ordinary doesn’t excite me. It’s only bizarre that does.

I like to be on my own, minding my own business. I had a couple of bad experiences in school, with friends who had cheated me. So, I promised myself, that in college, I would be on my own, without getting too close to anyone, boy or girl, whoever it be. What are lessons in life for, if you cannot learn from them?

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