

OUR
DIFFERENT
PATHS
Book 1

M.B. MOHAN

OUR DIFFERENT
PATHS

By

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY

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Our Different Paths

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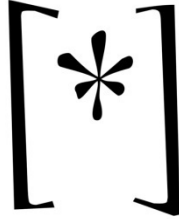
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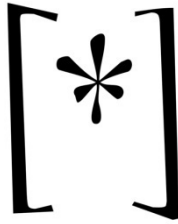


DEDICATED TO
T. NARASIMHULU,
BELOVED GRANDPA.

YOU MADE ME UNDERSTAND
WHY GRAND IS ADDED BEFORE THE WORD
'PARENTS'.

TO ME, YOU WERE MORE THAN A FATHER.
THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING.

YOU WILL BE LOVED
AND MISSED FOREVER.



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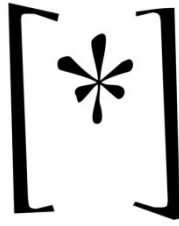
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PREFACE

Before you begin reading the book, I would like to tell you something. Thank you for buying the book and taking your precious time to go through this. Since childhood, I used to get fascinated by the stories I used to read and the movies I used to watch. My inspiration for storytelling came from the book "Trojan War" which I read in school. I hope that you will like this book and give your support for my future books also.

I would like to thank my grandparents and parents for their never-ending support and trust in me. I appreciate and hope I can give the same love they showered upon me. These people who I am about to say are the most important ones who helped me in the process of making this book. Without them, this book would not have been completed. My brother Nagarjuna Muthyala, my friend Chandu Rao, and my editor-cum-

cover illustrator Freddy Torres Vega, these people listen patiently to my never-ending stories and give their genuine feedback. I like to thank Freddy once again and Faerie for introducing me to the literary world through their "DigitInk Magazine" author launch program. I am grateful for all the friends who supported me from the time I said I wanted to become an author to the time of completion of this book.

This first book from the three-part series came from an idea of telling a story from the viewpoint of an anti-hero. I always wanted to know what these people think and what goes on in their minds. Not all of them will have same thoughts, and not all of them will be bad from the point of their birth. Sometimes people go through tough times and become the people who we never imagined. This book tells you about the life of Mike and John, right from their childhood. Experience their world through their eyes. Happy reading.

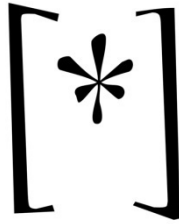


PROLOGUE

We were travelling in the Ford Mustang, the car I have always dreamed of having. "This is it," my mind told me. The soundless drizzle of rain fell on my face while the wonderful petrichor hypnotised me. I was resting my head on her lap and looking at her dimples which were playing hide and seek with her hair. It was an impressive sight to the mortals. "I am ill and yet you guys are making me drive and having fun at the back. I hope all our problems come to an end with the money we have," John said with a sigh and smiled while driving the car. "I hope so, and I also wish not to get struck by lightning on our path," Mamta said in a witty way.

I couldn't believe that we were finally moving to our destination. Our minds were full of peace, and we were leaving our anger and struggles behind us. We were celebrating and moving our bodies to the tunes of pop

songs in the car, and that's when "Wake up, baby" song started playing. I was baffled and asked John, "Where did you get this song? I don't have it on my playlist." "What song?" he replied unknowingly. I looked at the car stereo for the name of the song, to my surprise, it was a different song.



5 AM

(Continued from the prologue)

WAKE UP, BABY. WAKE UP, BABY; "Why am I keep on hearing this song?" I said to myself. I couldn't figure it out for a moment. I woke up suddenly and realised that the song which was playing, was my phone's alarm. For a second, I felt like DiCaprio in 'Inception' movie. At a particular stage in sleep, our senses carry messages to the brain and merge with involuntary imaginations. It was a pleasant dream, and I wanted it to come real.

"Let me sleep for 1 more hour, daddy," Mamta said while she was still in sleep. "She still feels that she is in her home," I said to myself. I came out of the room and noticed that John was not there in the house. I called his number a couple of times, but he did not pick up.

"That idiot might be still at our friends' house," I said to myself. I didn't want to wake her up, so I left a note

on the table near the bed lamp saying that, "Hello love, good morning. John isn't lifting the call, so I am going out to bring him home. I will be back before 7 A.M. Bye."

I took my bike, as our friends' house was 10 miles away from our house. Once I reached, I parked my bike. I rang the doorbell twice, but nobody opened the door. The door got opened as I pushed it a little. The room was filled with full of alcohol smell. All our friends along with John were sleeping in the hall. The room was messy, and each one of them was asleep in unusual sleeping positions. Pizzas were hanging on the wall, and the walls were so dirty with all the cheese and pieces of crushed vegetables.

I went near John and tried to wake him up. But he was drunk as hell. I didn't know that he drinks too. I slapped him two times and said, "John! Wake up; we are getting late." I took a water bottle from the refrigerator and poured some water on his face.

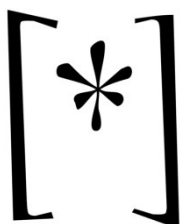
After 2 minutes, he slightly opened his eyes and said, "Hi Mike, sorry for coming late."

"No John, you didn't come. You are still at our friends' house. Now get up, we have got work to do," I said.

"Oh! Then sorry again, Mike. Pull me up, and take that bag which is on the table," he said.

I came out of the house with John and closed the door slowly. I made him sit on the bike and kept the bag on the front. He fell asleep again on the way. We reached our home by 6.30 A.M. I placed him on the couch, in the hall and decided to let him sleep up to some time, as he was still in the hangover.

I opened the bag which John told me to bring. I was shocked to see guns in it. "Guns! From where did John get them? But, why do we need guns to do a robbery, when I have the power?" I said to myself. I wanted to ask him, but I decided to wait until he wakes up.



THE TROUBLED CHILDHOOD AND THE FIRST MEETING:

My father, Danny Bradac and I used to live in an open countryside of a place called Agaara. It was an exquisite place to live which had a sea on one end and lush green forest on the other. I was 7-years-old, and it was a Christmas night. The whole streets were filled with children's playful screams and laughter. I was pouring wine into my father's glass, and my hands were trembling with fear. I lost my grip, and the bottle plummeted to the ground. The wine spilt all over the place, and it was flowing like blood. I was shocked, scared and stood there unmoving, looking at the broken pieces and crossed my fingers hoping that my father won't beat me or torture me. He slightly bent his head and took a deep breath out of frustration. The next minute he dragged me towards him and started strangling me. I tried to remove his hands from my neck, but I couldn't. All of a sudden

he stopped. He lifted me up furiously and threw me against the wall. "How many times do I have to tell you until you learn to do things right with perfection?" he said with a grim expression. The eyes of him turned red like lava. "You are as useless as this trash can," he shouted at me, pointing at the trash can in the corner.

The smell of wine engulfed the whole room. My father stood up and kicked the chair with full power. Father turned to his right and went inside the washroom. "He may have gone to wash off spilt wine, off his dress," I said to myself. I was leaning against the wall, and blood drops were falling one by one from my right temple onto the ground. I lifted my shirt up and wiped off some of it. A clattering sound came from inside, and it startled me for a moment. The door got opened with a thud sound, and my father looked like a beast. He brought a head of a toothbrush in his hand. The fingers of his left hand went through my hair slowly and caught my hair from their roots. He tightened the grip and lifted me from the floor. He stared at me like a falcon looking at its prey and ordered me to clean entire dirt in the house by placing that toothbrush head in my hands. I became speechless, and I didn't know what to do. That crazy man with no emotions made me his slave, and his destructive actions had no limits. Tears moved down from my eyes, and I fell on my knees. "Dad, no dad, please don't do this," I pleaded

with my hands around his legs. The rock showed no mercy and hit me in the face with his knee.

Though I was bleeding and sobbing, he didn't even care. The monster left, and I cleaned the whole house with that toothbrush head. The pain was unbearable. He did not just cause me physical scars, but also caused mental scars. Since I was four years old, every single day he beat me for one thing or the other, one day for the wine spilling and the other day for not having a haircut.

He was a 45-year-old medium sized man, but with strong arms and faded hairstyle, he used to look exactly like a military man. His eyebrows were thick and dark. He was a ruthless man with no sense of humour and a man of discipline. "We were a happy family until you came into this world," he used to say to me. Sometimes I think, maybe I am. My mother, Sarah left the family just after two months of my birth and my brother Bradley, left a year after. I do not remember his face, apparently. My father never revealed why my mother and brother left, but all I can guess was that my brother loved the mother, so much.

I spent most of the nights in my childhood, gazing at the stars, thinking that one of them might come down and save me from the evil. I believed that those stars were knights in silver armour protecting the universe against darkness. "The weeping

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