



You are the Best Wife

a true love story

My life is changing... What

it was and what it has

is making me write... I wish I

could go back and relive

all the beautiful moments

AJAY K PANDEY



About the author:

Ajay K Pandey grew up in the modest NTPC township of Rihand Nagar with big dreams. He studied Engineering in Electronics at the IERT (Allahabad) and MBA at IIMM (Pune) before taking up a job in corporate firm. He is currently working with Cognizant, Pune. He grew up with a dream of becoming a teacher, but destiny landed him in the IT field.

Travelling, trekking and reading novels are his hobbies. Travelling to different places has taught him about different cultures and people, and makes him wonder how despite all the differences, there is a bond that unites them. Trekking always inspires him to deal with challenges like a sport. Reading is perhaps what makes him feel alive.

You are the Best Wife is his debut book based on his life events and lessons.

Apart from writing, he wants to follow his role model Mother Teresa and make some contribution to the society. He aspires to start a charitable trust that would support aged people and educate special children.

To share your feedback and for more information, contact him at www.facebook.com/AuthorAjayPandey.

OceanofPDF.com

You are the Best Wife

a true love story

Ajay K Pandey



Srishti
PUBLISHERS & DISTRIBUTORS

OceanofPDF.com

SRISHTI PUBLISHERS & DISTRIBUTORS

Registered Office: N-16, C.R. Park
New Delhi – 110 019

Corporate Office: 212A, Peacock Lane
Shahpur Jat, New Delhi – 110 049
editorial@srishtipublishers.com

First published by
Srishti Publishers & Distributors in 2015

Copyright © Ajay K Pandey, 2015

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

This is a true story. The author has tried to recreate events, locales and conversations from his memories. He may have changed some identifying characters and details such as physical properties, timings, occupations, dialogues and places of residence of people mentioned herein.

The author asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this work.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the Publishers.

OceanofPDF.com

Dedicated to Bhavna's parents.

I will always be thankful to both of you for blessing me with such a loving wife.

OceanofPDF.com

There are two kinds of personalities. There are those who have everything and still complain as if they have nothing. And there are those who lose everything and act like life has given them everything. Sometimes both these personalities exist in the same soul. Kill the first one, I love the second.

–Bhavna

OceanofPDF.com

CONTENTS

Prologue

Ragging is a Criminal Offence

My First Interaction with Bhavna

Freshers' Party Preparations

Pioneer Computers and my Dreamliner Cycle

The Most Romantic Hour of My Life

It's easy to make friends, but difficult to keep them

How do I propose?

Love you, Bhavna

Breakup Day

Welcome to the crazy world of love

My struggle for placements

Hyderabad to Pune

Pune to Mumbai

Winning half the battle

My first tsunami

Operation Emotional Drama-1

Delhi to Raipur

Operation Emotional Drama - 2

My quilt and my guilt

Love you, everyone

My happiest video clip

The quality of life is what matters
A house turns into a home
Married life; bachelor friends
My colourful life
A loving daughter and a would-be-father
Bhavna's sleepless nights
Fight for your husband
You are the best wife
The world is beautiful
The world is beautiful...indeed!
The biggest truth of life
Her hurting presence
Love makes us secular
On behalf of Bhavna
Two broken people; one unbroken promise
The quality of life is what matters
The right thing for the right reason
I can forgive, but will never surrender
Acknowledgement

OceanofPDF.com

Prologue



28 November 2012

Fortis Hospital, Noida

Those memories still send a sharp, stinging pain through me.

I walked to the Fortis internal medicine ICU. My heart was racing and I was flooded with emotions. After a few minutes, I was standing outside the ICU door; Bhavna was behind a green curtain.

“Listen, you have to be brave and calm. I want to inform you that Bhavna’s condition is deteriorating further and we’re planning to put her on a ventilator,” the doctor said in a concerned tone and handed me a document to sign.

I felt numbed. As these icy words pierced me, it felt as if my blood was freezing.

“What are the chances of recovery?” I asked bluntly.

“Rare chance; once she is doing well we can remove her from that, but her condition is getting worse. The ventilator is not the problem, the infection is.”

“So, is she not on ventilator yet?” I asked. “Can I see her?”

“That is what I called you for. This ventilator will only be removed once she starts recovering or there are signs of improvement. She’ll be administered anesthesia which will make her unconscious so that the ventilator doesn’t cause any damage.”

“What if there are no signs of improvement?” I asked.

“Then, I’m sorry...” he sighed. “It is possible you’ll be talking to her for the last time.”

I went behind the green curtain. I thought I would hug her, but that would make her feel that something was wrong and she might break down completely. With a heavy heart and this dilemma in mind, I went to her. There was blood around her lips. She lay with her mouth open and her eyes closed. It was the most horrifying moment of my life. Watching her struggle to breathe made me insane. I wished I could have given her my breath and a part of my life, but I was helpless. I had never felt so disabled in my life.

With great difficulty I said, "I love you, Bhavna. And you are the best wife."

She collected her strength and whispered something with ragged breaths.

My life changed from that day onwards. What my life was before and what it became after, is something that forced me to write this book. I wish I could rewind time and go back and relive all the beautiful moments that we had cherished together.

OceanofPDF.com

Ragging is a Criminal Offence



There are three kinds of students: ones who are sure what they want and achieve it, ones who know what they want but never achieve it, and finally (the kind that I am) those who don't know what they want.

After completing my schooling from Rihand Nagar, Sonebhadra, UP, I was like all the others who took the age old path of engineering. There was no decision making involved in the choice; those who took maths would appear for the engineering exams, so I too joined the rat race.

I joined a coaching class for the IIT entrance exam. I wasted two years in the hope of gaining admission into an IIT. Being a brahmin by birth, I had always prayed to God at the top of my voice, considering him deaf. This time, the prayers were centred on just one thing.

“God, please let it be IIT, please let it be IIT.”

Sadly, IIT and IERT sounded alike to God and in this confusion, he gifted me IERT. It seemed as though God used BSNL operator services, which go down during the rainy seasons, and with the sounds of thunder around him, God heard IERT instead of IIT.

And so I landed up at IERT and finally realized that it was what I wanted. Nevertheless, I was not disheartened and accepted the same with love and respect. I was full of respect because when all the colleges had shut their doors, only IERT had accepted me.

August 2003

IERT (Institute of Engineering and Rural Technology)

Allahabad

I joined the IERT hostel on the second day of college and my father and I both received a warm welcome from the hostel warden at the reception.

“Welcome to one of the finest engineering colleges in the country,” he said with a sense of pride and achievement.

I looked at my father; his chest had swelled with pride at the warden’s warm welcome. My father and Sachin Tendulkar suffered from a similar disease: the ‘nervous nineties’. But in my father’s case, it was his weight that was always swinging between ninety and ninety-nine kilos. He certainly scored a century then as he watched his son entering the Rural Technology Institute. I was the first in the Pandey family to study engineering. My father had another reason to be happy. Finally, I had got admission into a college, which would mean an end to money grubbing by coaching institutes.

“Sir, is ragging a big problem for freshers?” my father asked the warden, concerned.

“Pandeyji, you don’t have to worry as the Supreme Court has declared ragging as a criminal offence.”

The manner in which he said this seemed to indicate that he was personally in touch with the Supreme Court judge who gave the verdict.

“Are the seniors staying in the same campus?” Papa asked in the same concerned tone.

“Yes, but their building is a different one,” the warden answered.

After sometime, when Papa had settled me into my hostel room, I sensed one of his ‘gyaan sessions’ was about to start.

“Sonu, you have to study seriously. You are at a very crucial juncture of life, as you have to handle everything by yourself from now onwards. No cigarettes, no alcohol, no bad company, and no girlfriends! We belong to a very middle class family, and you are our only hope.”

He sighed.

Sonu is my nickname. I was surprised by my father’s remarks. He had never had an opportunity to study at a professional institute. His words made me feel emotional but at the same time I felt overburdened by my family sins. Suddenly, I didn’t know why my hopeless family was searching for hope through me.

“Ok Papa,” I nodded, although I knew I would not follow any of his instructions. But I said this to stop him from repeating his old refrain. That day however, he was unstoppable.

“Now all the family glory is in your hands and lastly...” I felt relieved on hearing the word ‘lastly’ from him, ‘Remember, beta, you are my brave son.’”

With those inspiring words, he left for Rihand Nager.

His last words bewildered me. Why would he call me his brave son?



That evening at around eleven, I entered the common room to find many new faces. I met Arvind.

“Hi I’m Arvind Chaubey, computer science. I’m from Rihand.”

“Hello buddy, I am Ajay. In electronics, from Rihand Nagar, NTPC colony,” I replied.

Arvind frowned, “Just Ajay?”

“Oh it’s Ajay Pandey.”

In a place like Allahabad, surnames matter a lot. People may forget your first name, but not your surname. We both exchanged a half hug, or to be more precise, a manly hug. The sense of belonging to the same place seemed to have brought us closer instantly.

Before I go on, let me introduce all my hostel friends since their names will come up time and again:

Arvind Chaubey: We both came from the same town. He was a very simple, but often irrational man. Love and girls were all Greek to him. He was heavy set and we thought of him as a clone of Salman Khan.

Gaurav Singh: My roommate. He was cheerful, talkative, confident and confused at the same time. No one dared to talk to him as it meant only listening for the other side.

Dipendra Singh: I hate to say it but, he had been my junior at take to next line St Joseph’s School and he was a master at analyzing girls. I can’t even bear to mention the kind of things he would find out about them, things Google itself would fail at. He was a master at talking to girls with no hesitation. Sometimes, I felt he might have committed suicide if IERT was a ‘boys only’ institute. He was almost six feet tall, thin, smart and, yes, handsome, too. Because of him, I realized that looks matter a lot.

Sorry friends, but that is my description of you guys. If any of you are going to file a case against me, please remember: all the above characters are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental. Now I'm free to tear your undergarments, but you know the truth – I love you all.

At 11:30 p.m., I was lying in my boxers and was about to fall off to sleep. Suddenly, a group of half a dozen gregarious men started pounding heavily on every door, shouting like military men.

“Everyone assemble in the corridors! Move! Now!”

The shouting was very scary, but seeing everyone moving towards the corridor, I followed. We stood lining the walls of the corridor while the seniors stayed in the middle. They seemed like dacoits and we shivered like poor villagers.

“Third button! No eye contact!” one senior shouted at me. I hung my head like a war prisoner.

The introduction had a set pattern: full name, branch, and place of origin. We did this in a flash. Then one senior shouted in a horrible voice.

“Lights off,” he instructed one of his friends. I was a bit at ease and I raised my head a little, but it was just the calm before the storm.

“Remove all your clothes,” one senior shouted.

Everyone, including Gaurav, took off their clothes. I could make out their nude bodies even in the dim light. I could have never imagined such a sight even in my wildest dreams. Now I understood why my father had called me his brave son.

They switched the lights back on. Manav Bahadur and I were not a part of the exhibition, yet. We were still wearing our boxers since we had joined on the second day of the ragging.

“Do you need a special invitation?” one senior shouted at Manav.

“It is not possible, sir,” Manav said.

Five seniors jumped on him and forcefully took off his boxers. They started swinging his boxers in the air with pride, their laughter echoed in the corridors and our ears. A rape scene from an eighties Hindi movie flashed across my mind. By the time they had turned to me, I had taken off my boxers and was standing nude, hiding my family jewels with my palms.

Manav's dark ass had also joined the group of nude freshers. I mentally pleaded with all the known gods, hoping at least one would listen. *My turn,*

I thought. I was once again reminded of my father's words, *our family glory is in your hands*.

I thought to myself, *I don't know about the family, but yes, my glory is in my hands*.

"Give your introduction again!" a senior shouted.

"Ajay Pandey, Electronics from..." I was interrupted.

"Landey, he is also a Pandey. Handle him," the senior said while looking at one of the half dozen seniors. A creature with dark brown eyes and dozens of pimples on his face approached me. I had guessed his name was also Pandey. I was in a state of shock. *What if tomorrow my classmates start calling me Landey?*

While I was busy mulling over *Pandey* versus *Landey*, he neared me and started touching my chest. As his fingers inched towards my glory, I pleaded *Oh God, please don't let him be gay! And please have mercy! Hope he belongs to the same caste*.

"Please, Pandey sir," I begged. Thankfully the Pandey saga worked and he released me.

One senior shouted, "Juniors raise your hands." We obeyed; now our glory was visible to everyone.

I learnt a very important fact that day: one's glory is inversely proportional to one's build.

"Juniors, you have to scream in unison, '*Hammam me sabhi nange hain*. We were all nude.'"

I was puzzled but consulted with Gaurav who was standing very close to me. "What is '*Hammam*'? God?" I whispered.

"Shhh! '*Hammam*' means bathroom," he whispered back.

I felt humiliated again, but we shouted, with our glory hanging and our hands in the air.

"*Hammam main sabhi nange hain*."

It felt like we were provoking the enemy.

"Listen juniors. Yesterday, we explained the rules and today we are adding some more. No one is allowed to close their room doors before 2.00 a.m. Till then, you have to wear formal shirts and pants. No casuals are allowed. Whenever any senior calls you, you have to be as quick as a tiger and form a queue."

What crazy people! First they want us to behave like tigers and then like sheep, I thought to myself.

“Today we’re leaving you a bit early because tomorrow you have to report thirty minutes earlier for class at 8:30 a.m. You have to grab a seat right behind the girl you like the most. She’ll be your ‘maal’ for the future and the rest of the hostellers will help you. If there is any confusion or conflict of interest, bring it to our notice and we’ll resolve the same. Understand punks, day scholars should not have access to any maal, they should belong to the hostellers.”

We smiled mischievously. Our nude state only the word ‘maal’ could make us smile in such a terrible state.

“Any doubt, juniors?” one senior questioned.

“When will the ragging end?” Manav asked.

A senior came to Manav and caught his neck shouting, “This is ragging? You think this is ragging?”

“Explain to him why this is not ragging!”

The seniors pulled at Gaurav, but he remained silent.

“Listen, juniors, this is not ragging! It is training! We’re training you to make you stronger and smarter, and the training will end after the freshers’ party.”

His philosophy went over our heads. I was about to faint.

“Dress fast and start using deodorants,” the same senior screamed, covering his nostrils. “You guys are really rustic. Please make sure that you are clean shaven from now on,” he added, “including your faces.”



Gaurav and I both settled into our room. I checked my watch; it was 1.00 a.m.

“This is early? Are they idiots?” I cried in frustration.

“What happened?”

“It’s one o’clock at night and this is early for them! Moreover, we have to reach before nine tomorrow and choose a ‘maal’! Is this what we have come here for?” I shouted but Gaurav kept silent.

He ignored my questions and sank into his bed.

I closed my eyes and lay on my own bed, missing my school days and school crush, Ragini. Her short, cute hairstyle and smiling face were running through my mind. But when you are going through a tough time,

even your roommate will add salt to your wounds. Gaurav jumped on to my bed.

“What happened?” I asked, scared, wondering if he was also interested in taking my glory away from me.

“Yaar, Manav’s nude, black ass is flashing in front of my eyes.”

“So?”

“So, I can’t sleep. Please help me lighten up with a joke, so that a bit of today’s humiliation can be forgotten.”

Now I understood why a talkative person like him was silent. It was damned Manav’s black ass!

“You want me to crack a joke at one at night?” I asked in frustration.

He nodded, and said “Please.”

I thought for seconds and said, “You know the biggest joke at IERT? Ragging is a criminal offence.” We laughed.

OceanofPDF.com

My First Interaction with Bhavna



My first day at college was horrible. After the late night humiliation, I woke early in the morning and reached the assigned section ‘A’. The letter ‘A’ and the word ‘morning’ always excites me because all the movie halls run Grade A shows in the morning. But this day was different.

At around 9:05 a.m., girls started entering the classroom in small groups. *Why do girls always remain in groups?* I thought. Maybe because girls are fewer in number, and minorities always feel more secure in homogeneous groups.

Like all other engineering colleges, there were fewer girls than boys in the class. They could all be accommodated in one row.

In Allahabad and at the IERT, girls and boys sit apart. It felt like India and Pakistan. No one was allowed to cross the LOC. As instructed, all hostellers had settled down in the second row. We were yawning; mouths open wide like crocodiles and water running from our eyes with every yawn.

I settled in between Arvind and Dipendra, in the wild hope of getting some eye tonic. It would help us recover from the restlessness due to our lack of sleep. My jaw dropped on seeing the terrible dress code. All the girls looked like pathans; covered from top to bottom in grey kurtis and dark grey salwars, their chest enveloped by snakelike dupattas. I noticed that their hair was tied back with red ribbons. It reminded me of the model in the government advertisements for the Shaksharta Mission.

“Welcome to rural technology, Ajay,” Arvind whispered. I frowned and realized, two cunning friends always think alike.

Soon someone informed me that one of the rules of ragging was that the girls had to wear red ribbons. It was a great relief to know we were not alone in our misery. The girls were also undergoing similar humiliation. At least ragging does not have any gender bias.

The girls settled in the first row. A beautiful girl was sitting diagonally across to me. Surprisingly, she was not wearing a red ribbon which caught my attention.

She had short hair so she could not tie it back with ribbons. She had used at least half a dozen of clips to keep her hair from getting frizzy. Her short hair reminded me of Ragini. My mind had committed the cardinal sin of comparing two girls. *This new girl seems to be more beautiful than Ragini.* But my daydream was interrupted.

“Good morning, sir,” everyone screamed in unison.

“Good morning, students,” the professor replied.

A towering six-and-a-half foot professor with a pot belly and curly hair entered with a fake killer smile. With his heavy build and canvas shoes, Professor Bisht looked like a sports teacher.

He started to take attendance. Because no one knew their roll numbers yet, he started calling out our names. After fifteen names had been called out, he said the name Bhavna and the short-haired girl responded, “Yes, sir”.

She looked stylish, wearing spectacles that complemented her beauty like accessories would. Those spectacles made her look like a doctor. A smart doctor. She was smart but that does not mean she was not beautiful. I only want to imply that she was so smart that her beautiful looks were overshadowed by her smartness.

After fifteen minutes of a slow poisonous attendance round, Bisht sir wrote ‘Electrical Engineering’ on the board with a white chalk. It took him five minutes to draw circular orbits. He jabbed five times at a single point on the outer orbit with the piece of white chalk. An inch broke off his three inch piece of chalk and fell to the ground like a bomb. The electron he had drawn ended up looking like a spider stuck in its own web.

No one in the world could stop me from falling asleep in the face of the professor’s sluggishness. All the other hostellers were suffering in the same manner as they tried to keep themselves conscious. Our eyes watered with each yawn.

Contrary to his physique, Mr Bisht's voice was very thin; it was like the dacoit Gabbar Singh speaking with the voice of a bubbly twelve-year-old girl. We glanced at each other and smiled mischievously. Mr Bisht noticed this and stopped teaching abruptly, not uttering a single word. A deadly silence followed. Even the snails stopped crawling. He glared at us furiously. After a few seconds of silence, he flared his nostrils.

“Dear students, please try to understand if my blood boils, then you are not going to cook rice over it. That boiling blood will definitely harm you lethally.”

Everyone burst out laughing. The short-haired girl also smiled, and her cheeks dimpled.

What a great smile! I became an instant fan of her smile. I snapped myself out of it and putting a hand on my chest, mumbled, “Mr Ajay, please stay within your limits. You should not develop another crush.”



In the hostel, after dinner at around ten, as expected the moronic seniors returned. Our glory was at stake again but we did not feel embarrassed today. Maybe we were getting used to it. Because it was true that ‘hammam me sabhi nange thae’. We were all nude. We had assembled in the corridor again, with our glory hanging loose. The seniors began taunting us again.

No, no more, I prayed to the Almighty.

Perhaps the congestion in God's network superseded, and no one intervened with any help.

“Juniors, tell us the name of your targets. Hopefully you have chosen the one.”

“Akansha Singh.” As expected, Dipendra shouted first.

“Beena Mishra,” Arvind said.

“Parul Tripathi,” Gaurav said with a cunning smile on his face. His smile reflected the seriousness of his thoughts.

I was amazed to hear that these girls were in my class. Where were they? Why hadn't I see them? Finally, it was my turn.

“Bhavna,” I said. I had only noticed her.

“Oye, hero! What's her full name?” one senior shouted at me.

I was stuck and started looking for help anxiously. Dipendra jumped in as a saviour. “Bhavna...Pradhan.”

As expected, Dipendra was more aware about girls than anyone else present there. The senior left with this last commanding announcement.

“Juniors! You can be asked about your target at any time, so start paying attention.” That night, they ended their so called training at around two.



We had Graphics lab after a few days. Laboratory classes in Engineering were an opportunity for students to spend time together for three hours. The boys could flirt with their targeted ones during the time.

In order to accomplish my ragging task, I'd expressed my desire to sit behind Bhavna in class, but *maha tharki* Mr Dipendra had indicated his preference and settled himself between her and me. I went to Dipendra and whispered angrily.

“Kamine, she is my target. I've to collect points for ragging.”

“Show some maturity,” Dipendra retaliated. If someone mentions being mature, it means he thinks he has the license to act immature.

I glared angrily and whispered, “Speak softly and sit here. If you move away now she might catch on, saale tharki.”

We planned so thoroughly that we could have been RAW agents and the girls our secret assignments.

Why am I so desperate to sit next to her? I can pay attention to her even from a distance. Besides, I can say anything during the ragging. How'll the seniors figure out what is true? I was shocked at my own immaturity.

Until then, I'd been perfectly sure she was not my next love.

Mr Baloo Pandey, our graphics lab teacher, entered the class. I was excited because he and I shared the same surname. But he acted like Dipendra. He started explaining plans and elevations, paying great attention to the girls. In fact, he turned out to be an even bigger flirt than Dipendra.

Maybe girls need more attention during the labs, I thought to myself in frustration.

Mr Baloo had shown us one half cut diagram and we were made to draw its plan and elevation. All the students were struggling and glancing at each other's desk for help. I tried to reach my target twice, but Dipendra was still sitting between Bhavna and me. I didn't want my horny desire to

be recognized by anyone, so I remained seated where I was. I mentally abused him using all the curses I knew.

But Dipendra was already on top of it. Every few minutes, he turned to discuss something with Bhavna. What is an elevation? How do you draw a plan? These were Dipendra's idiotic questions. Anger erupted inside me. Finally, I burst when Dipendra went to Bhavna's desk and started measuring lines against her chart.

Why are you feeling bad, Mr Ajay? They can be friends. It's very normal in an engineering college. All the others are also talking and peeking at each other's sheets.

I shifted my anger to Baloo sir. The assignment he'd set was very simple. If I asked anyone for anything, it would give the impression that I was dumb.

My false ego had proved the biggest obstacle in breaking the ice with Bhavna. To prove myself a genius, I started explaining stuff to all the others unasked, as if they were dying to receive the much-valued consultancy of Ajay Pandey. I tried twice to reach out to Bhavna. But she looked as busy as a squirrel with its nuts. She didn't look my way even once. Dipendra came to me and said, "Ajay, at least try talking to her once."

"I'm not *ladki baaz* like you. I'm not a flirt who can talk with no reason," I replied egotistically.

"*Saale phattu*. Coward," Dipendra said, rightly. I didn't counter with an argument.

After an hour of continuous sitting, I had realized that I didn't have courage to talk to her and started focusing on the plan and elevation. I was busy with my sheet and about to complete the assignment when I suddenly heard a sweet, shy voice.

"Do you have any clue on how the plan of this diagram will...Oh, you already finished it."

I stared at the source of the melodic voice. A beautiful girl with killer looks was standing in front of me.

"Do you want any assistance, Bhavna?" I asked, making myself out to be the most intelligent person in the class. Seeing Bhavna, a few more girls started peeping at my worksheet.

My exhibition of smartness went on for a few more minutes and Dipendra was looking aghast and his lips formed the words, "*Saala ladki baaz*."



Bhavna crossed to my aisle when we were about to leave for the day. I decided to say bye to her. I waited desperately as she took tiny steps towards me and the moment she was near enough, I said, “Bye.”

“Bye, Ajay,” she called back.

We both smiled. I noticed the cute dimples on her cheeks from front for the first time. With that bye, customary drumbeats started rolling in my mind. I reasoned with myself, *Mr Ajay, please hold your horses*. The drumbeats settled down after five minutes of internal celebration.

That was my first interaction with Bhavna.

OceanofPDF.com

Freshers' Party Preparations



Sunday was the most dangerous day for freshers. The seniors took the opportunity to play with us throughout the day like we were toys. A special lunch was served on Sundays and the love of food kept us from venturing away from this hell, even on a holiday.

After feasting like dinosaurs that had been hungry for ages, I proceeded to take a nice long sleep. I was about to lie down in my bed when suddenly someone knocked on our room door.

“No, not at this time!” I whispered to Gaurav, in a state of terror, hoping it was not a senior. Gaurav proved to be an interesting character. In a fraction of a second, he was in his formal attire, which was the dress code we were supposed to adhere to until two in the morning. The knocking on the door was getting more and more intense with every passing second. I opened the door, gathering all my courage to face my fate.

“Oh, it’s you guys,” I sighed in relief. Arvind and Dipendra stood in front of me.

“Why are you sleeping, Ajay?” Arvind asked, pushing me away and entering my room like it was his own.

As soon as everyone had entered the room, I closed the door. Chatting was the most exciting and entertaining event of the day. Even sleep could be given up for this. Seeing Gaurav in formals, the other guys started making fun of him.

“Saale phattu. Such a coward you are,” teased Arvind. He smirked, “You change faster than Superman.” We all laughed and joined in pulling Gaurav’s leg.

“You guys ever had an affair?” Arvind enquired.

It was an interesting topic. We were filled with excitement and exchanged smiles.

“I have had six affairs,” I said. Everyone stared at me like I was a slut for a few seconds in the silence that followed. Before they could jump on me, I explained. “They were one-sided affairs. I never had the courage to propose to anyone.”

As expected, the subject matter expert Dipendra poked his nose into the conversation.

“*Abe fekku*. Liar. I can have one lakh one-sided affairs. What is the use of such an affair? Better call them crushes.” Everyone started laughing at me.

The word ‘crush’ crushed me totally. I had committed a blunder by mentioning the number six count in affairs.

Arvind showed me some mercy and remarked, “Yaar, Ajay, why didn’t you propose to anyone? You are quite good looking.”

It was impossible to control Dipendra when we were talking about anything related to the subject of girls. He had done Ph.D. in flirt technology. Dipendra interrupted with an expert theory.

“Girls are not interested in looks. I mean, looks matter but fun and interesting conversations tend to catch their attention. Your mindset should have the gravity of thoughts filled with humour. They always like guys with unique qualities. A rare quality attracts them a lot,” he explained like it was Newton’s law of gravitation.

“What unique qualities you are referring to?” Arvind asked, puzzled.

“You should be a sports captain or something like that. Like, the guy who wins the Mr Fresher title will definitely get more attention from the girls and is more likely to have a girlfriend in the near future.” Dipendra was opening this new treasure trove of gyaan for us. I thought, *Newton’s apple should have fallen on his head!*

Soon the light chit chat had turned into a group discussion and the worst part was that everyone’s thoughts were going off in their own directions. “Are you guys interested in the Mr Fresher title?” Dipendra asked.

“We’re not interested in such useless things,” Arvind and Gaurav replied in unison.

“I’m interested but I don’t have the talent. I can’t dance or sing,” I said. Talent at IERT meant dancing or singing.

“You can mimic people. Remember you had done it once in school,” Dipendra said.

Dipendra had been my junior at school. He knew how I’d once mimicked Shahrukh Khan. Apparently, Shahrukh Khan became important in my life. *Could this be called a talent?* This was the first time I had seriously thought about it.



Dipendra and I were among the top ten nominated for the final round of the Mr Fresher contest. Bhavna, Beena and Akansha were also selected from the Electronics Engineering batch to be among the top ten girls for the Miss Fresher title.

Being the first official event, all the freshers were excited about the freshers’ party. But the hostellers had their own reasons for happiness. We were happy because we thought that at last the militant ragging would come to an end and we could live peacefully.

Ten boys and ten girls were selected from the freshers’ batch and the final five boys and five girls were to be shortlisted based on talent. The final ten would then perform on stage and finally one boy and one girl would be chosen to win the Mr Fresher and Miss Fresher titles.

The competition had multiple rounds like a creative introduction section, question and answer round, behavioural assessments and confidence in speaking in public. All ten finalists assembled in a room. I was excited and tense since it was the first time my newly discovered talent would be evaluated. Bhavna was also there. My mind was making guesses. *Will she dance or sing?* No one in the college was thinking beyond the two categories they seemed to have picked.

“Whether we get shortlisted or not, we’ll definitely enjoy this talent hunt round,” I giggled to Dipendra.

“Yes, the girls are going to dance in front of us,” Dipendra said, expressing his lewd desire.

A jury of ten seniors had arrived. *Wow, what a proud moment!* I was lost in my own daydream which was interrupted by a loud voice. “Ajay Pandey, please come forward.”

My name starts with an ‘A’, so they called me forward first. There is always a first mover advantage in being first, but this theory was going to

be proved wrong in my case. I was standing in front of sixty pairs of eyes.

“What are you going to perform for your talent round?” one senior asked

“Mimicry.”

“Quite impressive,” the senior said. “Go on.”

I explained the situation:

‘This is a fight scene between Sunny Deol and Shahrukh Khan. Sunny threatens Shahrukh, saying that if he continues to stammer, Sunny will kill him with a heavy punch:

“Shahrukh, ye jo tum haqala rahe ho na, kahin dhai kilo ka haath pad gaya to haqlana bandh hojayega. Ye jo dhai kilo ka haath hai, jab padtha hai to aadmi uthata nahi... uth jata hai.”

There was complete silence in the room. No one had any reaction and my embarrassment grew. A senior asked “That was Sunny?”

“Yes,” I said but I hoped that was not funny.

“In the second dialogue Shahrukh asks Sunny why he is focusing on his hands. Doesn’t he have anything else to focus on?”

“Tum itana haath par focus kyo kar rahe ho, tumhare paas haath hi hai kya...kewal zindagi bhar tumne isi ka istamal kiya hai isiliye dhaai kilo ka ho gaya hai?”

The whole class burst out laughing, and I could see a pair of cheeks dimple. I left the room because the candidates were not allowed to stay there after their audition.

“The first candidate had to perform in front of everyone but the last one only performs in front of the seniors? It’s injustice,” I shouted in frustration once outside. My desire of seeing the girls dance was destroyed like a house of cards.

Why does my name start with ‘A’? It should have been Zandu, I cursed my parents.

But there was no end to my agony. The results came out the same evening and I was disqualified from the competition. Bhavna, Beena and Akansha were selected among the top five female finalists. But then, the worst happened when Dipendra was selected among the top five male finalists. His selection was more painful than my rejection. I was worried now, because he would eat my head and I would not be able to avoid the unbearable display of his talent for dance. I could have forgotten the insult of disqualification if Dipendra would have failed too. But after his

selection, I had to bear him till this function lasted. Every time he called me for his dance performance audit, it burnt my heart and soul completely.



September 2003

The Freshers' Party

Everyone finds their first college function exciting. We were all very cheerful and enthusiastic. The seniors would finally stop ragging us. We would be free birds and would be able to explore any part of the institute.

I had one more reason to be happy. From that day onwards, I would not have to witness Dipendra's humiliating and sucking dance. I was the only courageous human being who had dared to face his performance after being rejected in the preliminary round.

The seniors had set the last ragging task. All the hostellers had to sit together and cheer for Dipendra. It had been decided that after he had finished his performance, we would have to shout, 'Once more, once more!'

I entered the auditorium which was packed with five hundred students. I sighed, relieved, and thanked God that I had been rejected. I didn't have the courage to face a huge audience. I had been shivering in front of thirty people during my performance in the talent round. Assuming one thousand eyes, ears and five hundred mouths were staring at me even as a dream paralyzed me momentarily.

A few girls came in. Every one of the girls looked different and more beautiful. I was wondering how this transformation had taken place in one day. I received an answer on close observation; no one was wearing those red ribbons. That day I had seen the real engineering girls – no more red ribbons and no more the strange clothes. It was not ironical to say that on that day, my Rural Technology college had finally turned to Modern Technology.

Finally, Bhavna entered. Her blackish golden hair was not held back by clips and swung free. Two small golden earrings shone in her ears. She looked like Kajol from the film *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*. Now, I had two reasons why Kajol was my favourite actress and, ironically, neither had anything to do with her profession. The first, she looked like Bhavna, and

PRÉVIA GRATUITA · OFERTA POR TEMPO LIMITADO

Você chegou ao fim desta prévia.

Continue lendo "You are the Best Wife: A True Love Sto..."
e mais de 1 milhão de livros — de graça por 30 dias.

★★★★★ Mais de 1 milhão de leitores já aproveitam

Com o Kindle Unlimited, sua leitura não tem fim:

- ✓ Leia à vontade — explore mais de 1 milhão de títulos sem pagar por livro.
- ✓ Leve para qualquer lugar — baixe o app gratuito e leia onde e quando quiser.
- ✓ Em qualquer tela — celular, tablet, computador ou Kindle — você escolhe.
- ✓ Grandes autores — best-sellers e novos talentos, inclusive títulos em inglês.

COMEÇAR MEUS 30 DIAS GRÁTIS

Cobrança só após o período grátis.

- ✓ Pagamento seguro
- ✓ Acesso imediato
- ✓ Cancele quando quiser

Não precisa ter um Kindle: baixe o app gratuito e comece a ler agora.

Se não quiser ler no aplicativo Kindle, compre o livro [clikando aqui](#).