

BOOKWAVE



E-MAGAZINE

VOL 1 ISSUE 2
JULY 2026

**THE FUTURE OF
STORYTELLING**

Exploring Next-Gen Reading

WWW.BOOKWAVE.NET

EDITORIAL

BookWave – Issue 2

Growing Together Through the Power of Stories

Dear Readers,

With immense happiness and gratitude, we welcome you to the second issue of **BookWave**.

The response and encouragement received for our first issue have filled our hearts with joy and renewed our responsibility. When we started this journey, we had a simple dream—to create a platform where imagination, creativity, knowledge, and emotions could come together.

Your love and support have shown us that every good story deserves a place, and every creative voice deserves an opportunity to be heard.

The success of our first issue is not just a milestone for BookWave. It is a reminder that readers still value meaningful content, inspiring journeys, beautiful thoughts, and stories that touch the heart.

A magazine is not created only with pages and designs.

It is created with dreams.

It is created with the passion of writers who put their thoughts into words. It is created with artists who bring imagination alive through their creativity.

It is created with readers who encourage and appreciate every effort. BookWave belongs to this beautiful community of dreamers and readers.

In this second issue, we continue our journey with the same enthusiasm and commitment.

You will find stories that inspire, ideas that motivate, and creative works that celebrate the talent around us.

Every person carries a story within. Some stories speak about success.

Some speak about struggles. Some speak about love, relationships, dreams, and human values.

But every genuine story has one thing in common—it connects one heart with another.

That connection is the true power of storytelling.

Today, the world is changing rapidly. Technology has transformed the way we read, learn, and share ideas.

But one thing remains timeless:

The human desire to express and connect.

Books, magazines, and stories continue to remind us of our emotions, our experiences, and our shared humanity.

At BookWave, we believe that creativity should not be limited by boundaries.

A young writer with a beautiful thought, an experienced author with years of wisdom, an artist with a unique vision, or a reader with a valuable perspective—everyone has a place in this journey.

As we move forward, our aim is to make every issue more enriching and inspiring.

We will continue bringing:

- Heart-touching stories
- Creative expressions
- Inspirational journeys
- Knowledge-sharing articles
- Opportunities for emerging writers and artists

Our journey has just begun.

The first issue was a small step. The second issue is another step forward.

With every issue, we hope to build a stronger community where creativity flourishes and dreams find their wings.

I sincerely thank every reader, writer, contributor, and well-wisher who supported BookWave.

Your appreciation gives us energy. Your feedback gives us direction.

Your encouragement gives us the confidence to dream bigger. Together, let us continue nurturing this beautiful garden of creativity.

Because every great book begins with a thought.

Every great story begins with a voice. And every great journey begins with one small step.

Welcome to the second issue of **BookWave**.

Let us read. Let us create. Let us inspire. With warm regards,

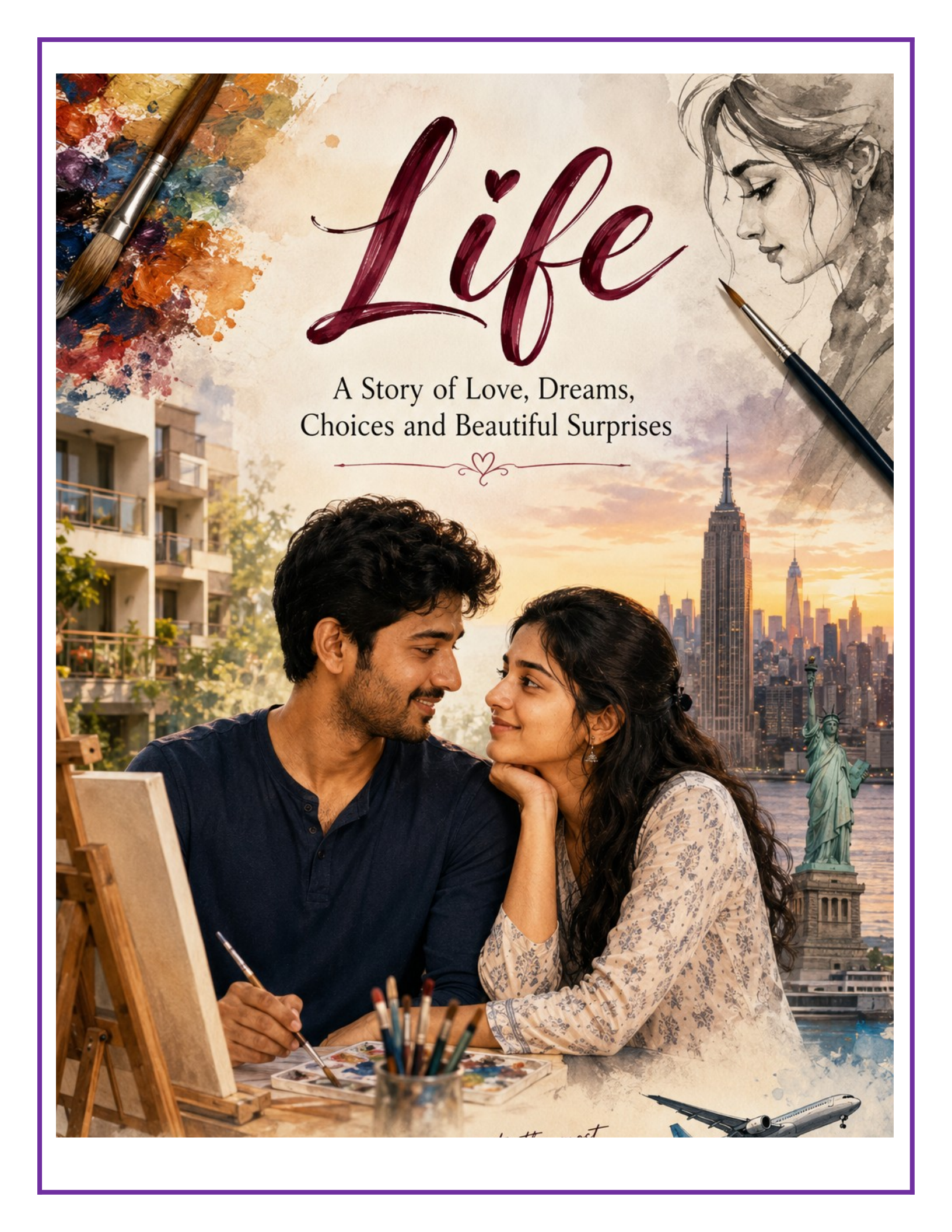
Editor
BookWave

www.bookwave.net

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. EDITORIAL	:	PAGE 2-5
2. STORY – LIFE	:	PAGE: 6-21, WRITTEN BY: ADMIN-BOOKWAVE
3. STORY – WAVES	:	PAGE : 22-35,WRITTEN BY: TOUCHINGWAVES
4. STORY - LIFE BEYOND WHITE COATS	:	PAGE : 36 – 47, WRITTEN BY: ADMIN: BOOKWAVE
5. STORY – DAUGHTER	:	PAGE : 48 – 58, WRITTEN BY: RAVI KUMAR
6. STORY – DRIZZLE	:	PAGE 59 - 71 WRITTEN BY: VINOD
7. NOVEL - THE SWEETEST OPPORTUNITY: WRITTEN BY:	:	PAGE 72 – 220 WRITTEN BY: TOUCHINGWAVES
8. CHILDREN ZONE	:	PAGE 221 - 226

www.bookwave.net



Life

A Story of Love, Dreams,
Choices and Beautiful Surprises



Kishore went to one more interview and came back. He was very anxious about results. It will be there for another 48-72 hours.

Mean while he received call from Sravanthi.

He was expecting call from her because she was very much tensed more than him. He lifted the call and told her that he did the interview very well and this time he will succeed surely.

She asked him again "Is it sure?"

He said, "Yes, this time surely we will get good news".

She said, "I have been waiting for the good news from a long time. God knows when it comes".

Kishore called her on to terrace where they usually meet and talk.

She went there on to terrace. The terrace has been sole spectator of their love story.



Both met on terrace.

Kishore said, " Sravanthi, This time I will get the job surely. That auspicious of moment of you becoming my bride would come soon."

Sravanthi got little smile, I wish it should be happening soon”.

They spoke few other topics and some combined future plans. After that they left to home.

Three days passed. But Kishore did not get call to join in job. Sravanthi was too much disappointed.

Kishore knew the reason for her disappointment and upset mood. He knew how much she was waiting for his success. In fact she was waiting for his success more than him.

If we want to know why, we have to go back to 18 years back. Their journey started 16 years back when he was 8 years old and Sravanthi was 5 years old.

Sravanthi's parents purchased flat in the same apartment and shifted where Kishore and his parents were living.

Kishore was 3 years older than Sravanthi when Sravanthi's family shifted.

Both families were living in same apartment which is a 6 floors apartment in the city out skirts.

Both were neighbors and Kishore was watching Sravanthi from childhood. He was observing her and she was observing him. It was not like too much rapport there between them.

Both were simple and doing their work.

When she was around 18 years, one day Sravanthi went to Kishore's home to give some sweets as they did some special sweet items for festival.

Her mother told her to go and give to Kishore's mom and come back.

Kishore was not there in home that time.

She met his mother and she was on some phone call.

Sravanthi had to wait in the hall for some time. She saw some beautiful paintings in the hall fixed to walls. She liked them very much. They were really good and eye catchy. She told the same to her mother.

Kishore's mother said, “ Sravanthi, Kishore is a painter and he paints little well. All those paintings were painted by Kishore only”.

Sravanthi really liked Kishore's painting skills and said, “Really nice paintings aunty. I never really expected that Kishore is such a good painter”.

Kishore's mother was pleased to hear good words about kishore.

Kishore's mother took her into his room and also showed the painting which he was doing.

It was yet to complete. Only final touchings were pending.

It was a painting of mother trying to hold her daughter who was taking her first steps of life.

It was a nice painting in which there was a good combination of colors.



Sravanthi liked that painting too. Ever since she saw his paintings some kind of respect feeling started in her on Kishore. It increased with her age and became love.

On the other hand Kishore used to see and observe Sravanthi from backend.

He saw her many times going to temple. Unlike many girls, she used to dress in traditional attire more than the modern fashions. She looked something special among other girls.

Both were having feelings on each other but not able to express to each other.

Days were passing. One day Kishore's mother fell down on road when she and Kishore's dad were going to market. She had been admitted in hospital as her right hand was fractured.

Some POP bandage was done to her hand for recovery. After 3 days she came back to home with a POP bandage to her right hand, it was difficult for Kishore's mother to handle house holding activities specially cooking. She was worried about house holding activities and food preparation as there were exams also to Kishore during those days.

Sravanthi's mother visited her along with Sravanthi being neighbors. Sravanthi's mother told her not to worry about cooking. She will be preparing food in their home and sending as she was not well. People should help each other when tough time comes.

Kishore's mother felt very happy on Sravanthi's mother for being good at heart. Kishore also liked Sravanthi's family due to their support. As assured, Sravanthi's mother sent home food to Kishore's family every day till Kishore's mother recovered.

Kishore's family felt that they were really indebted to Sravanthi's mother for her help in their tough time. Kishore's feeling on Sravanthi increased with the help their mother did to his family. In fact he liked her whole family.

One day Kishore was on terrace and reading his subject book. Sravanthi also came to terrace and met Kishore there. Kishore told thanks to Sravanthi and her family for big help they did. Sravanthi told being neighbors helping should be there among the people. Their conversation started from thanks but lasted long to too many talks.

She expressed him how much she liked his paintings and how much beautiful they were. Kishore felt happy for her appreciation. He liked her company very much.

They used to meet on the terrace often in the evenings. They liked that terrace which was a good place to meet, sit and talk. It used to be at a very height place where especially their building was the taller one. From that terrace when any one sees, only sky was visible.

Both Sravanthi and Kishore used to like that place as they could see only clouds in front of them and the cool breezes were touching them delicately while talking to each other. Both used to speak to each other every now and then and fell in love with each other.

Days were passing. Sravanthi studied engineering and joined in a software job. She got opportunity to go abroad to USA also as part of job but she intentionally missed it. She did not want to go far from Kishore.

On the other hand Kishore did CA INTER and completed article ship also. He wrote his CA final exams but could not go through first time and 2nd time is due to write exams. It was in between and he started to join a job because of love he wanted to win.

Kishore did not want to miss Sravanthi in life. So he wanted to get a job and settle in career so that he can approach her parents and ask for marriage with her.

But No good job was coming to him as he was about to write exams. He learned few courses also but not getting good opportunities. With every job interview he was getting de motivated. Sravanthi was encouraging and giving good support to him for every interview but nothing was going in favor of them.

One day Sravanthi made a phone call to Kishore. She was crying over phone.

Kishore asked her what happened?

Sravanthi was crying only. He got tensed very much and again asked her what happened?

She said "Everything is over now. Nothing is left for us. Forget me. Our marriage will not happen. Forget all our dreams, ambitions". She was sobbing.

He asked her again what happened "She told him to go to terrace and wait for her. She will come there and speak".

He went to terrace and sat there and was waiting for Sravanthi.

After 15 minutes Sravanthi went to terrace. She started crying more as soon as she saw him.

She said "Gone, everything is gone now. Nothing left for us. Our dreams, our ambitions, our future plans everything are going to collapse". He asked her again what exactly happened.

She started to tell "Kishore, dad started to look for matches to me. He really wants me to get married someone soon. Now I really can't stop him to postpone it. It is now becoming very difficult to stop him in this regard. Till now I tried to post pone it but now it seems I can't stop him for his efforts towards my marriage with someone else". She was crying actually while telling these words.

Kishore became silent. He was a young guy like many boys but character wise he was little different. He used be silent, he used to be calm. He is a person with good attitude. Because of his attitude only Sravanthi fell in love with him at an early age. Whatever may be the age, any love would be so strong and long when it is established on the base of good attitude.

She said again, "I can't imagine someone in place of you. I really can't bear the punishment of some other person holding my hand and kissing me with a right of being my husband. I do not know what you do. Get that offer letter immediately which was standing between us from a long time and instruct me to get ready as a bride to marry you. I have been waiting for that golden moment from long time as you are aware".

She also said, "I really want to feel the Starting of our marriage rituals, cousins and friends teasing me about you, mom and dad getting tension about the marriage activities, my little brother moving here and there as part of marriage works, these are the things I really want to see and I really expect these things happening to me at the earliest possible. You really can't imagine how much weight I have been lifting. I am feeling like 100 atom bombs are there in my heart and they all will blow at a time".

She looked into sky and said, "oh love do not enter into any ones heart. You will really give the weight and burden of 100 atom bombs for sure. Can't really travel with them and can't really leave them too either".

Sravanthi told Kishore to close his eyes. He closed his eyes.

She came near to him in front of his face and started telling by looking his face, "I do not know what to say but I can say that my every moment of life I just want to spend with you. My every moment of life should be spent around you. It gives me lot of strength and security. It gives me lot of positive energy in life. I really can't give any explanation for it why I would like to be with you ever. I think when one can't give any explanation or reason, that feeling only is love it seems". She said so much beautifully with tiny lines.

After her words, she told him to open his eyes but He was still closing his eyes and reminding those beautiful lines what she said few minutes back. He loved the way she expressed those beautiful lines. He also liked those beautiful moments in which he was very near to her face where he could sense her exhale and inhale. That air which was coming out of her exhale was very worm and it gave so much nice feeling to him.

She started again "You will come into my dreams. You will come into my heart. You will stay in my inhales and exhales. You will stay in my breath. Your presence makes my heart weak. Your presence gives me immense mental support. Your presence fills my life with joy. Your presence gives me completeness. Without you life will be like a sky without rainbow. Like a shore which has no waves to touch every now and then. Your thoughts will not let me sleep. The thoughts of you will be touching my heart like waves hitting the shore again and again. Neither they will not go away nor do they stay back".

She took his right hand and got it very near to her lips and kissed it. She liked his hand by which he used to paint his paintings.

Kishore did not understand what exactly was happening.

Sravanthi became very shy and she immediately went to home from there. She could not control herself that day and felt she was crossing some limits before marriage. So to control herself she escaped from terrace by scolding herself a million times.

Kishore sat there only for some more time. For him also it was like a dream things happening. Not really knowing how to react. He filled those golden moments in his heart and went to home.

Kishore thought very much about how to proceed further and approach Sravanthi's parents and convince them for marriage. He just wanted to present himself in front of them and convince them. He thought that no more delay should be happening in approaching her parents specially her father who was more eager for her marriage.

For some good things, solutions will come by finding address some times. The same thing happened to Kishore and Sravanthi. From many days Kishore was planning to display his paintings in an art exhibition and that exhibition was confirmed and about to start in few days. He thanked god for this opportunity.

He sent all his paintings for display in that exhibition to coordinators one day before and ensured that they will be arranged surely in exhibition.

He informed Sravanthi to send her father somehow to this exhibition. He will meet him at this exhibition and speak to him. Sravanthi showed the invitation to her mom and told her to convince her father to go there. Luckily on that day Sravanthi's father was in city and he went to that art exhibition. There he saw many paintings. He was very much impressed with so many good paintings at a place. Being a writer himself he was getting so much content to write many stories. Each painting was so special and unique. Each painting was beautiful than one another and competing with each other. Few people were interacting with the painters and telling how beautiful the pictures were.

Mohan, Sravanthi's father saw Kishore at a corner place. He was talking to few people and explaining about his paintings. He was shocked to see Kishore there. He checked once again and confirmed. It was Kishore only.

Mohan again went to the paintings and checking which were painted by Kishore.

Previously he saw paintings but not checked painter's name carefully. Now he was checking carefully every painting, specially where Kishore's name was mentioned.

He stopped at one of Kishore's a painting. It was a painting of a sun rise. It was so beautiful. In that painting the sky was in a mixture of orange and black color and sun was rising from the earth was looking like as he was coming from the earth in real. The color combination really felt so beautiful and realistic. In that painting a caption was written "Every sun rise brings a new day, new hopes, new dreams and new beginnings. Make it purposeful".



Mohan liked that comment very much.

He went further to see Kishore's another painting. It was a painting of mother and child. In that painting a mother was welcoming her child who was taking her first step in life. Mother stretched her hands and inviting the girl child and the child was like putting steps one by one and reaching the mother's hands. It was also beautiful with good color combination. First steps of a daughter of her life are always so precious moments to capture for any mother. Kishore painted those beautiful moments in a beautiful way in that painting. Again a caption mentioned on it. "A child's First steps in life will be always towards his/ her mother because the child knows it that his/her mother will be always there to hold and give support not to fall down".

Mohan went to another painting. It was a painting of sky covered with stars. The sky was there with a mix of black and light blue color and the stars were in white color, which were twinkling as if they were real stars. Again the painting was very beautiful indeed. And caption mentioned, "The sky is infinite, as infinite as thoughts. Thoughts should be like glittering stars to be raised to the heights of stars which should make life beautiful as beautiful as those stars make the beautiful sky".



He went further to another painting. It was a painting of a river which was flowing continuously. It was flowing by making route between the rocks.

Yet again good color combination used and an equally beautiful caption mentioned. "A river never stops because of rocks. It finds a new path. Success belongs to those who keep moving."

What Mohan liked in Kishore's paintings were the captions. Good painting with a good caption made the paintings even more beautiful.



He checked Kishore from a corner of eye. He was very calm and speaking to the people so gentle. Mohan was thinking about Kishore, "Is he the same person whom he saw many times playing some cricket game and sometimes listening to some music with ear phones in the ears". Mohan was admiring Kishore very much Not only for his paintings but also for his thoughts.

In Mohan's view now Kishore's image is very high.

He went further to another painting. It was a painting of a garden with so many flowers and plants. It was also looking beautiful with multi color flowers. He read the caption, "Life is like a garden with good plants and weeds. Always remove the weeds and nurture good plants of good thoughts. They will surely make life beautiful and obviously spread the Fragrance of Love, Care and Friendship".

Mohan was really mesmerized with the thoughts of Kishore. He really admired Kishore very much internally. He was going further to another painting. Kishore came to Mohan and wished him. Mohan also wished him back.

Mohan spoke to Kishore and said the same what he felt in his heart, “Young man, every painting is wonderful one with equally good caption. The caption really doubled the beauty of your paintings. Wish you good luck. You will definitely have a wonderful and good life ahead”.



Kishore said thanks to Mohan for admiring his paintings. Mohan’s heart was filled with happiness. It was really a beautiful day in his life. He was about to leave the exhibition hall and Kishore started conversation with Mohan. “Uncle, I studied many of your stories which were published in various magazines. They were also really good. Never really able to meet you and tell these words to you. Now only I got the opportunity to speak to you”.

Kishore also said, “Your work is also very good uncle. In one of your stories you mentioned very good lines, which really motivated me in moulding myself in a good positive way in life”.

Mohan was astonished and asked “what are those lines?”.

Kishore said, “Life is not a Profit and Loss account to calculate Profit or Loss earned rather it is a Balance Sheet which is to be balanced with love and career and bonds with responsibilities. Those great words really gave me an inspiration, motivation and a direction in which life has to be planned”.

Kishore also said, "Thankyou very much for such beautiful and inspiring words."

Mohan was very much delighted.

It is natural that if any one praises, it always give a nice feeling but here this young man giving all his career success to him for some good lines which he wrote in one of his stories.

He was like in clouds.

Now Kishore's image is at peaks in Mohan's view. They spoke some more admiring words mutually and departed.

Mohan went to home. He started speaking to his wife about Kishore and admiring Kishore very much.

Sravanthi was in another room. She heard her dad's words.

Sravanthi was really not knowing what was happening. She did not see her dad admiring any one so much but today he was admiring Kishore very much.

It was like chanting Kishore's name. She was in her room and doing some work on laptop and the door was closed but she could hear their parents' conversation. She was very happy and delighted that Kishore got good image in her father's view. She thought that all the hurdles which were there in between her and Kishore were gone.

She came to balcony and called Kishore and told to be there on terrace. She really wanted to speak to him immediately.

Kishore went to terrace and waiting for Sravanthi. She came there almost running and almost hugging him. He stopped her and said wait till marriage to hug him.

Sravanthi was very happy and almost like crying with happiness. She said to him how much her father was admiring him and asked him,

She also asked, "What is the magic you have done on my father. He is chanting your name almost every time. He really liked you very much".

Kishore started telling "I won your father's heart with the same art which you liked. It was my paintings which said everything about me and I presented myself with those paintings in front of your dad. Not only that I also gave credit to your father how his words really gave him motivation to develop a good character and attitude. I read your father's writings which were very good indeed and had good impact on me to mould myself in a good manner". She was astonished.

She asked, "How did you know about my father's writings?"

He said, "Your mother used to tell my mother that in some magazine your dad's story published in that magazine one story is published. She almost gave all information about his stories when and where they are published. I listened to all those words. So I surfed internet and studied all of your father's writings".



e-magazine

She said surprisingly “Kishore, you did not tell me this any time”.

Kishore said, “You never told me that your father is a writer and he wrote stories. Hence I did not think to discuss with you”. Kishore further said, “An artist only knows the greatness of another artist and an artist only can inspire another artist whether it is music or poetry or any music instrument playing or writing stories or drawing or painting”. Hence I appreciated his work when I met him”.

She said, “I knew that my father writes stories but never really knew that they will be an inspiration to many people”.

Kishore said to her, “An artist always need a motivation and recognition especially from home so respect an artist always my dear”.

“Ok my dear would be, I learn this from you now on wards”. She said. Both laughed.

There was silence for some time and after few minutes she told Kishore to meet her father and ask permission to marriage with her as this is the great time to speak to her father and mother about their marriage.

He assured her that he would certainly come to their home and speak to her father about marriage on coming Sunday.

Sravanthi was very happy as all the things were going in positive way. She went home and studied her father's stories.

Those stories were really good and she said to father, "Dad, your stories which are published are very good indeed. Your work is very great dad".

He said thanks to his daughter as she read them now at least. He also said "I would have been lot more happy if you have read them in the past itself. Nevertheless you studied and appreciated me. You started recognizing an artist. It is a great thing to me". All three people laughed.

Sunday came and Kishore called Mohan and he said he wanted to meet him personally.

He said to Kishore to come in the evening.

Kishore made a phone call to Sravanthi and told her that he will be meeting her father in the evening and told her not to be in home at that time. He said her to go to some temple nearby or visit her friend. She said "ok".

In the evening Sravanthi went to temple and her parents were waiting for Kishore. Kishore went to Sravanthi's home and met her parents. All sat in the living room.

Kishore started his words, "Uncle, I do not know how to start it but somewhere and somehow I should start. I read all your writings and got good direction to mould myself. Your writings are very good indeed. They are also an inspiration to my paintings as I said earlier. I liked Sravanthi very much. It is not that we are in love with each other from long time and telling you now rather we hardly met and spoke to each other. In that less time I could understand her soft character and good attitude. I really liked her very much. If a good person like Sravanthi stays with me life long, then life would be a great gift. Moreover she is a daughter of good parents who nurtured her in a good manner. She will be a great gift to any person. I just want to become that lucky person to get that gift. I am sure that life with her and with your blessings will be great one to me. I can't ask any better things in my life. If you feel that only Professional development is the only criterion to win her, professionally I did CA intermediate already and in another 6 months my final exams there. If I pass my CA finals, I would be a chartered accountant and you know how many good opportunities are there for a chartered accountant. This time I would be definitely passing my CA finals for sure".

Kishore sat some more time there. He further said, if they give consent, his parents would come and talk other formalities and went back to his home.

Sravanthi's parents were in shock. They did not know what was happening. Kishore went to them said everything in 10-15 minutes.

Sravanthi's father came out of shock first and he discussed with his wife and gave his consent. He actually very much liked Kishore. He was like a dream son in law. He was only thinking about Sravanthi's marriage with Kishore and how to planning how to proceed further, Kishore himself came and asked Sravanthi's hand for marriage. So Mohan was happier and accepted to Kishore and Sravanthi's wedding.

Sravanthi came back from temple. She saw her parents very happy. She asked her mother innocently, "What happened". Her mother said to her whatever happened when she went to temple. She said all things to her, how Kishore came and spoke about her and how he requested for marriage with Sravanthi.

She asked, "What is the dad's opinion?"

She said with smile “Dad has given consent. Moreover dad himself was thinking about your marriage with Kishore. Now Kishore himself came and requested for marriage with you. He is very much delighted and gave consent”.

Sravanthi was on cloud nine when she heard that her father gave consent. Tears rolled from her eyes. She never expected all the things will be happening so fast and their marriage will be soon on the cards.

She called Kishore and said about the green signal from her parents. She was very happy indeed.

Kishore expressed his wish to his parents about marriage with Sravanthi. They also accepted his decision. 8 months completed and Kishore completed his CA final exams. He passed those exams and became a qualified CA. Kishore also got a good offer letter too from a Multinational financial consulting firm. Both the parents of Kishore and Sravanthi were happy and started marriage proceedings.

Everything was smoothly going and their engagement was scheduled and completed on one fine day. After engagement, on that day evening, they sat on their regular place on the terrace. Both were putting hands in one another.

Sravanthi was telling, “ Kishore, it still feels that I am in dream like. I never really thought that these happy moments will come so soon”.

Kishore said, “ I was always confident that these happy moments will come for sure”. They spent some more time there and went back to respective homes.

Another month passed and their marriage also completed with all the formalities. They became husband and wife. After 2 days of marriage they went to terrace again first time as a couple and sat there. Both discussed their journey of life from their childhood to till the marriage once again and became very emotional.

Both became silent for some time.

After some time when they were talking, one flight was travelling in the sky. He showed that flight to her and said, “Pretty soon we are going to America in the flight obviously holding your hand in my hand with a right of being a husband”.

She was astonished and exited and asked “really?”

“Yes” he said.

She again asked “Why and how this happened?”

He said, “He won a ticket to go to USA along with spouse in the painting competition and his painting of mother and child won the privilege to be displayed in the international painting competition which would be held in America. So it is a double bonanza for both of us”. Sravanthi was very very happy indeed. After some time, they left to home. They looked beautiful as couple.

After 10 days Kishore along with Sravanthi started to airport to board flight to America.

The cab reached air port. Both got down from cab and going to check in.

Kishore said, to Sravanthi, “you missed America flight for me. It became my responsibility to make you aboard USA flight”.

Sravanthi said, “ I wanted to aboard USA flight along with you.” Hence I missed it.



After some time flight announcement came.

In some more time both went into flight and they were sitting side by side.

Sravanthi held his hand in her and closed her eyes. For her it was still like a dream.

Kishore was watching outside of window. Clouds were moving and they were like cotton yarns.

He reminded those special words in his heart yet again which were really inspired him due to which he is in such a good position now,

“Life is not a profit and loss account to calculate profit or loss earned rather it is a balance sheet which is to be balanced with love and career and bonds with responsibilities”.

Comments can be sent to : info@bookwave.net

Waves

A story of loss, love,
and the waves that never stop



Sindhu really loved waves when she was very young as a child. But when her father has been swallowed by the waves on one fine morning, she started hating them. She became like a shocked person. She was stubborn due to her father's death.

When her father was alive, she along with her father used to go for a walk in the beach and used to sit for some time there after walking for some time. They used to sit in a position in the sand in such a way that every wave was touching their feet and going back. It was really a nice feel to get.



Sindhu used to count the waves along with her dad for some time before going home. It used to be their daily practice.

One day in the morning Sindhu was suffering from fever and she did not go with her father. After an hour message came to her mother that Sindhu's father was attacked by few big waves and those waves took him away into the deep sea. His body was missing. Next day his body was recovered from sea at shore. The little Sindhu's world became topsy-turvy with her dad's death. The day sindhu came to know her father died was the painful day of her life.

All the proceedings were happening in front of her and she was like a doll at that time due to shock. It was a tough situation to an 8 years old girl to be in that worst situation. Her mother Yamini took her to bedroom and told to be in that room itself as she can't see and bear the funeral proceedings.

3 days passed. Relatives were coming and going and giving their condolences to her mother. From 4th day his absence was getting felt more as the relatives coming was reduced.

After Sindhu's father's death, Sindhu became like a dead body. She was like a doll with no happiness. Her all happiness was gone from life. She loved her dad very much. It cannot be expressed in words how much she loved her dad.

After her father's death she along with her mother was in that city of beach and in the same home but she never visited the beach again. She was not going to school much also. She was like a mental girl. Her mother understood her position but not put much pressure on her to come out of the panic situation. The death of father was not digested by the poor girl Sindhu. Sometimes she used to cry in the midnight and some times in the mid day. Sometimes she used to cry with big noise and sometimes she was sobbing. Her mother situation was also nearly same but she could manage and do day to day activities. She was controlling in front of Sindhu but when she was alone, she also used to cry. Their lovely family was shattered. Their happy life suddenly became like a nightmare.

Million times she thought it is a dream and her husband will be coming back to home in some time But it did not happen like that. 15 days passed very heavily. Sindhu was in deep depression. She used to check her dad beside her, she used to ask her mom to bring dad home back. She used to ask why dad is not speaking to her. It was very difficult to Yamini to control Sindhu. She used to see her dad's photo and cry, sometimes with big noise, sometimes small noise and Sometimes sobbing.

After some formalities Yamini got her husband's bank job and she started working. Luckily her working bank was 2 km distance only. So she was visiting home twice a day and used to see Sindhu and go back to bank.

Yamini's sister's family also used to stay nearby. They also took care of Sindhu for whenever needed. Days, weeks, and months were passing but not much improvement was there in Sindhu's situation. She used to sit in the room where her dad spent more time with her. She was missing her dad very much. She used to recollect those happy moments which she spent with her father. She used to tell Yamini that dad did like this and dad did like that. Little girl was really missing her dad very much.

Yamini Also used to get tears many times with Sindhu's words. For any girl it is really tough to grow without father's presence and his existence.

Five Years have been lapsed very heavily but not much improvement came in Sindhu's situation. She could complete studies only by writing exams. Yamini's sister suggested to change the place to another city so that they both can get some refreshing environment to come out of the thoughts of ram, Sindhu's father. She suggested that it is only the best option to come out of sorrows she said.

Yamini felt the same and tried for a transfer to other place and she luckily got transferred to one of Hyderabad branches. She started to shift all her belongings with all luggage with the help of some good packers and movers to Hyderabad. Sindhu first tried to avoid their coming to Hyderabad as she did not want to miss her father's memories in that house. But after long and strong trials from Yamini and her sister's family Sindhu could not avoid shifting to Hyderabad.

Sindhu took a promise from her aunty that her father's home would be there as usual permanently and it will not be demolished at any point of time.

Sindhu was arranging her father's shelf of books and his things to take with them. She wanted to take them as they would give the feeling to her like her dad is with her. She found some books and certificates,

some medals, some appreciation letters. She packed all the things of her father in a box and packed it with a great care. She put that box upfront when they were shifting to Hyderabad.

Yamini asked Sindhu, "what was it?"

Sindhu said, "They are dad's belongings and gifts to me and they are my precious things. I need to carry them with me wherever I go".

Yamini understood Sindhu's love towards her dad and not said anything. She told to carry them carefully. Precious things need to be carried with utmost care whether they are things or the memories specially when they are given by or belong to special people.

After shifting to Hyderabad, Yamini decorated house neatly. Sindhu helped her a little bit. It took 3 days time to settle there and to adjust in new home. Sindhu opened her dad's box and adjusted them on her study table. She found one book. In that book he had written some poetic lines she felt.

She opened first page. On that paper it was written about Waves...

Waves...

"I like the waves. I like them very much. I do not know why but I like them very much. For some feelings, there will be no reasons. Many times, we will be short of words to explain. When the sun rising or setting, the whole sky becomes into orange color like a canvass as if it was ready to be painted for a beautiful painting, while watching it, sitting at that coast in a place where every wave would touch my feet and going back to their home. Next wave was coming with little more enthusiasm and hitting my feet with little more love and again going back to their home. Wow what a great feeling it is indeed. It is certainly an emotional feeling. That time everyone will be forgetting his/her sorrows, thoughts and tensions surely. If Waves are not there, I am sure the earth would not have been such a beautiful place to live on it."

Sindhu was crying little bit. She again remembered her father. She thought, How beautifully her dad written those words. He liked waves very much and they took him into them. Sindhu was sobbing very much.

One more page she turned. In that page he wrote about rain.

"I also like rain very much I don't know why? When the raindrops dropping from sky and touch any one, it would be taking him/her to another world. Especially the drizzle will give immense feeling of happiness. Not only that after the drizzle, the beautiful rainbow which appears in the sky from one corner to the other corner of sky is always a beautiful thing to watch and enjoy. Oh Nature so many beautiful scenes and beauty are hiding in you. The only thing is that the person needs to have a heart to see, observe and enjoy it. Life is such a great gift to enjoy these beautiful moments. I really thank god for giving me this beautiful life".

Sindhu closed that book and sobbing again. She did not know that her father was such a nice person who used to be very happy for such little things of nature. She was missing her father really very much.

Sindhu said about her dad, "oh dad, how much beautiful person you are and how pure you are at heart. Why did you leave us so early and gone from this beautiful world? I have really not spent much time with you in life yet. I have not really felt a father and his love. Why you had so much hurry to go to god's lap".

Sindhu asked god, "Oh god why did my dad give me such a big punishment. What big mistakes I did in my life to have this big punishment. It is a big punishment which any girl would not like to have in her life. It is

punishment which any girl would not like to have in her dreams also. I do not really know why I was the one who really got this punishment.”

Sindhu also said, “ Oh god, forgive me. Please forgive me for mistakes whatever I did. Please send my dad back to earth. Send him back to our home. We needed him very much. Without him our home is empty. Without him our life is empty, please send him back”. She was crying all the time saying these words.

Yamini heard that sound and went near to Sindhu. Sindhu hugged Yamini and crying.

She said “Mom, tell dad to come back to home. I will listen whatever you and he tells me. I will never ever create problems to you or him. Please mom, tell dad to come back. I am missing him very much. I am missing his affection, I am missing his emotional support, I am missing his presence in the home. Please mom, bring him back to earth. God listen your words. You request god mom, please mom, please”. She was crying and sobbing very much.

Yamini was not able to control Sindhu. She also started crying. She was controlling all her pain in front of Sindhu but her pain also was very much. Missing her loving husband, missing a life partner before not much life spent together was really a bane.

Both were in the same situation for another 30 minutes. After that, slowly Yamini made Sindhu to sit on the bed first and later she laid Sindhu on the bed.

Sindhu went into sleep while chanting her father’s name.

Yamini came out side from that room and sat on a sofa. This kind of situation was not new to her. She looked her marriage photo which was there on the wall and closed her eyes. She could not stop her tears. Sometimes when the tears come out, heart will become light. So she let the tears come from the eyes.

Yamini and Sindhu actually shifted to a flat in a gated community Hyderabad. Yamini wanted Sindhu to mingle with some people and spend time with them to come out of depression. God’s grace, there were 2 girls Sreya and Shruti of same age like Sindhu. As soon as Yamini came to know about this, she was very happy as there is a great scope for Sindhu to mingle with these girls and come out of her father’s absence.

Though, Sindhu came to Hyderabad she used to be in dull mood only by thinking about father’s absence. Few days passed. Sreya and Shruthi came to meet Sindhu and felt happy to meet Sindhu who was of their same age.

Initially Sindhu was a little rigid to mingle with them. But after some days she mingled with them very well and started spending some potential time with them. Sindhu was feeling loneliness occasionally. Few years passed and she completed her graduation. Sreya and Shruthi played a vital role in Sindhu’s life in overcoming the vacuum which came due to her father’s death.

After graduation with B.Com, Sindhu applied for jobs and she got a very good opportunity in a private company. Sreya also got opportunity in same company.

Sindhu joined as a trainee accountant in an advertising company. Her work was to post all financial transactions into accounts. In that company Akash was working as a creative director. He was young and talented.

Sindhu joined that company but was not much enthusiastic. She was just casual in her work. She was getting some orientation training.

Akash was sitting in conference room and was thinking about the advertisement he had to make. As he had a good talent, the responsibility of delivering a good ad was put on his shoulders. Previously also he was given good responsibility and he fulfilled it with great work. He did few ads but out of them 3 ads were a very big hit. Now yet again he wanted to put all his dedication into this work as it is a prestigious contract from a very big company and if the ad hits, their company would get more attention in advertising field.

4 months passed. Akash started liking Sindhu. Sindhu's soft attitude and traditional behavior unlike the present generation girls attracted Akash very much. Her mindset, her character also impressed him a lot.

Sindhu was part of all the team discussions as far as ads concept discussions and budgets planning.

She came across Akash few times as part of discussions and she used to give her ideas to develop ad concepts.

They were liked by Akash too. Both became good friends. Sreya was also part of this team.

Meanwhile Akash got another prestigious project. He made a draft of concept and explained the concept to his team mates.



Sindhu and Sreya also heard it. Sindhu gave few suggestions.

Everybody appreciated his work and Sindhu's suggestions.

It was decided by all the team mates that except Sindhu all team mates will be going to shoot the ad at Vizag's Rushikonda beach.

Akash was very much excited as he was about to see the beach and waves first time. He told Sindhu that they were going to Vizag for ad shoot. The shooting is also at a beach.

But Sindhu got depressed as soon as she heard it.

The words Beach and Waves sent shivers in her.

Ever since her father died due to waves, she was getting fear with those words Waves and Beach. She was very much down at heart.

She came to home from office in upset mood.

That evening she went on to terrace and called Akash and said, "Akash, do not go to Vizag for ad shoot"

Akash said, "Sindhu, It is a good place to visit as it has beautiful beach. Since child hood it is my dream to see a beach and feel the waves touching our feet delicately."

Sindhu said, "Akash, They will be beautiful from far only. But when they reach near to us, they will swallow us. They are very cruel. They are very dangerous. I know them how dangerous they are. I know very well about these waves and the wounds they give to human beings".

She was crying when she was telling those words.

Sindhu again said, "I am requesting you again not to go near to them please". Few tears came again out from her eyes as her father's image came in front of her.

He said, "Hey anything worst experience you have with them or what. Nobody told me like this about waves till now like this. They will be very beautiful. I have seen them in movies. I just want to see them once in my life. Do not stop me please". He also requested Sindhu.

Sindhu: "Akash, do not go please". She almost begged him.

Akash: "Sorry Sindhu, I need to go compulsory not for a site visit to beach but as part of my duty I need to go. This advertisement needs some beach and waves background. But I promise you that I will not go nearby beach to see the waves".

Sindhu: "Akash, No please, do not go there. I do not believe your words if you go there you would be definitely tempted to visit beach. That feel you are very near to a coast will not stop you to visit the beach and waves. Please do not go. I do not want my friend getting hurt by those cruel waves".

She was almost persuaded him.



Akash: "Sorry I need to go as part of my duty and I promise you I will come back from Vizag safely to know about the mystery of your hating for beach and waves". He disconnected the call.

Sindhu was very much upset and tensed. She did not want him to go and see the beach and waves she really do not wanted anyone who is close to her to go near by the beach or waves. But now Akash, her close friend is going there. She tried to stop him. But he was neither listening her words nor stopping.

She was very much depressed and not in a good mood. She came back to home and laid on the bed and closed her eyes. She switched off all the lights in the room. It was complete dark in the room. Whenever her mood is not good she stays in complete dark. Her mother knew it. She let her in that state for half an hour and then entered into Sindhu's room.

By the time Yamini entered the room, Sindhu was sobbing very much. After a long time she is watching Sindhu sobbing.

She asked, "Sindhu, my angel, what happened my dear, I have seen you after a very long time like this. What happened my dear angel, my beautiful daughter, most part of life you have been crying and sobbing only. And I really do not want see you like this anymore. I was feeling happy that you are coming out of dad's absence. I was feeling happy that you are coming back to life again. But what happened now, what happened to my little angel now".

Yamini used to call Sindhu an angel before ram passed away. Now after longtime she addressed her as an angel.

Sindhu told everything about Akash and how much she was trying to stop him from going to Vizag and its beach.

Sindhu said “Mom, Many days back I lost my father. Still that pain is not leaving my heart. Still that vaccum is there in my heart. Now, Akash is going to the same place where dad had gone and disappeared. I am tensed very much mom”.

Yamini understood Sindhu’s concern and fear. To increase her confidence she said “Do not worry angel. Every time and with everyone it may not happen the same thing. Akash will come back safely. Do not be upset angel. Do not give too much fear to my angel’s beautiful heart dear”.

She teased Sindhu and tried to make her smile. Sindhu did not smile she was tensed still.

Yamini told to Sindhu to come out for dinner and went to kitchen for arranging dinner.

For increasing Sindhu’s mental strength and emotional support, Yamini told positive words to Sindhu. But internally she was also afraid about Akash visiting Vizag and beach. She also knew what dangerous wounds the beach and waves can give as she was also the victim of it besides Sindhu.

Ever since ram died she also tried not to hear those words beach and waves. Those words were giving shiver in Yamini too.

Yamini prayed god, “oh god, let everything go fine and Akash return back to Hyderabad safely. Do not punish my angel again. Do not give punishment to her again”.

Yamini arranged dinner on table for both and waited for some time. But Sindhu was not coming out for dinner. She waited for some more time and had dinner alone and sat on sofa. It was usual for her. Whenever Sindhu’s mood is not good, she and Sindhu will have dinner alone and sleep. Yamini went into sleep after some time in that sofa itself.

With the sounds of birds from outside, Yamini opened her eyes in the morning and checked dining table. The things on the table were in same position as she kept. She observed that Sindhu did not do dinner and slept without having dinner. It was not new to her. Whenever Sindhu is upset, she skips dinner.

Yamini cleaned the dining table and got little freshen up and went to Sindhu’s room to check Sindhu.

She called Sindhu by name, Sindhu was not awaking. She put her right hand on Sindhu’s forehead. It was little hot. It was indeed little excess hot that day and felt abnormal temperature. Yamini feared as it was little abnormal fever. It was usual that

Sindhu gets fever whenever she cries more but this time it was very abnormal temperature she felt. She tried to wake up Sindhu.

But Sindhu was too weak.

Yamini again called Sindhu and told her to put leave that day to office and she brought cloth with cool water and she kept wet cloth on her forehead and again in water. She did like that few more times for half an hour. After some time, the temperature got little better for Sindhu.

Sindhu woke up and sent leave message to office and switched off the phone. She never wanted to on the phone for 3 days till Akash reaching back to Hyderabad. Sindhu was weak and in upset mood only. She got brushed and had a coffee. She had some bread also and had a Paracetamol tablet to reduce fever.

She told sorry to her mom Yamini.

Yamini said, "Ok".

Yamini was sitting on sofa. Sindhu went to mom and slept in the sofa by putting her head in Yamini's lap.

Yamini was smoothly moving her hand on Sindhu's forehead.

Sindhu asked, "Mom Akash will be safe isn't it. I am tensed about him".

Yamini said, "He will be fine. Every time accidents may not happen. Be strong angel".

Sindhu felt little positive and said, "Surely he will be ok na mom".

Yamini said, "Yes surely he will be ok. Angel do not think too much".

Sindhu said, "Mom ever since dad left us, I am getting shiver with the words beach and waves. I am getting a feeling that they will do harm only to everyone, Hence feeling little panic".

Yamini again consoled her to be positive.

Sindhu said "ok". She laid some more time in her mom's lap. After some time she went to her room.

Yamini had a holiday that day to her bank and she also did not go to bank.

She was observing her daughter every now and then.

Sindhu did some work for some time and after two hours, she had early lunch that day and slept again. She was thinking that sleeping only better to forget fear and tension.

Sindhu was trying to pass the time of these 3 days and expecting the time to run as soon as possible but the time was not running fast as she wanted it to run. With the passage of time her heart was becoming heavy. She was thinking about Akash and praying that he must be safe. She was murmuring in sleep also the same words.

Yamini went into Sindhu's room and saw her. Few tears came out of her eyes when she saw her daughter.

She thought about Sindhu, "Unlucky girl, How much she was happy when her father was alive and now how much tensed she is. When Sindhu was small and she was roaming in home it was like angel staying in home. She used to laugh, she used to smile, and she used to play with her dolls. She used to move here and there in home talking to her and her dad". That was the beautiful time.

Ram also used to tell "Sindhu, My little daughter, you are an angel, you must be happy always. You should be happy ever. You should be always surrounded by happiness".

But contrary to his words, in most of her life, she was unhappy and crying only. Her all happiness was gone with her father only.

But ever since Sindhu joined office, a she has been watching Sindhu happy and laughing. She learned laughing. It was a great thing to Yamini.

Yamini did not disturb Sindhu and came back from her room.

Sindhu woke up in the evening. But she did not switch on her phone. She was not getting enough courage to switch on the phone. She was getting fear that some bad news may be coming from someone about Akash.

She was in upset mood only all the time. Yamini prepared dinner and asked Sindhu to join for dinner.

Sindhu did not come for dinner. Yamini had dinner and went to Sindhu room. She again tried to console Sindhu that no bad news will come about Akash and not to worry. But Sindhu was getting tensed all time.

She once again told to her daughter to have dinner. Sindhu said her that she will do surely after some time and told her to dine and sleep.

Yamini went and sat on sofa after some time she slept on sofa that day also.

Sindhu was tensed only but she had a small dinner fearing about her mom. If she does not do, she will scold her really. She did not want to upset her mom. Very rarely she thinks about her mom's happiness.

After small dinner she went back to her room and slept. Her sleep was not a great one. Thoughts of Akash's safety were troubling her really. That night lapsed and the sun rise happened.

Yamini woke up and saw that the dining table was neatly cleaned. With it she could sense that Sindhu had some dinner. She went to Sindhu's room and checked Sindhu's forehead. It was abnormal fever again.

She scolded Sindhu innerly, "What a silly girl she is. Without a reason, she feels tensed". She prayed god, "oh god, please ensure that she is happy ever".

Yamini again brought wet cloth and took care of Sindhu. After half an hour her temperature came to little normal.

Yamini told Sindhu again do not be tensed all will be fine and Akash will be starting today night from Vizag to Hyderabad and by morning he will be in front of you. Sindhu told I wish that it should happen.

But Sindhu's heart was sensing some kind of negative feeling. She wanted to switch on the phone and speak to Akash. But she was not getting courage. She wanted to speak to him only after he comes back to Hyderabad next morning. The whole day passed heavily and that Sunday night arrived. Akash's bus was late night on Sunday. She thought of switching on the phone and talk to him once. But she was again not getting the courage to speak to him.

Yamini again told Sindhu to do dinner. She said ok but she did not do. Sun rised again. Yamini woke up and came to Sindhu's room and tried to wake up Sindhu. Sindhu's health was bad again. She was trying to wake her up. In the same time, she heard someone knocking the door.

Yamini came out of Sindhu's room and opened the main door. Sindhu's friend Sreya came in by crying. She was sobbing too much in fact.

Yamini feared to see Sreya and asked her what happened. Sreya said "Akash was missing from yesterday evening as he went to beach with 3 of his colleagues. He tried to save his colleagues from waves. He could

save his 2 colleagues but he was pulled into those waves along with one more colleague. His body was not traced yet”.

Yamini felt that the earth under her feet was getting cracks. She also felt like the earthquake was starting from the place where she stood. She became like a rock. She became like a doll. The only news what they do not wanted to hear, the incident which they do not wanted to happen again, the tragedy which they do not wanted to get repeat in their life was happening again.

Yamini was dumb and speechless. If she herself is like this, she can easily assume how Sindhu would react to this news.

Sreya started tv and opened a news channel. In that news channel anchor was telling how that incident happened to Akash. There were 3 colleagues walking and playing in beach near to the waves. Akash sat little far away in sand. All of a sudden a big wave hit and 3 colleagues were attacked by it.

Akash tried to help his friends. He was successful in saving his 2 friends but he himself could not escape and one more person was also missing. Two colleagues who survived were crying and explaining how the incident happened. Yamini could not see more and she switched off the tv. She told to Sreya to go home. She herself will tell this news to Sindhu. It will be very difficult to handle her now she thought.

Sreya also said to Yamini, “Aunty, Akash liked Sindhu and her attitude and he wanted to marry Sindhu. After coming from Vizag he was about to come here and ask your permission for marriage with Sindhu. Meantime this tragedy happened”. Tears were coming from Sreya’s eyes.

Yamini’s concern increased more. Her angel daughter who was about to become a bride is now going face the disaster.



Yamini told Sreya to go home. She will only tell this to Sindhu and try to manage Sindhu as nobody can handle her now. Sreya understood the situation and went back to her home.

Yamini left alone in the hall and sat on sofa. She was really getting fear to enter Sindhu's room. She knew how difficult to handle Sindhu now. How much pain she is going to get with Akash's death is beyond the imagination.

Yamini was crying very much and asking god, "oh god, what have you given to Sindhu, My little angel. A big punishment yet again she is going to get. She was recovering from her father's absence and about to start a wonderful new life. Again she was getting thrown into the same situation. Can't you show some mercy on her?. Oh god, what a tough time you are giving to my little angel again. You are really mercy less".

Yamini was crying all time and the tears were not stopping from her eyes.

They are tears like waves or waves like tears not really able to distinguish.

She closed her eyes for some time.

Half an hour it passed.

Sindhu did not wake up yet. Yamini sat on chair thinking deeply.



Another half an hour passed.

Yamini got up and made her heart brave. She prepared herself to console Sindhu.

No matter how many years it may take. Even if it takes another decade she was ready to handle her daughter. She is a mother and she can't give up her child in tough situation specially a daughter.

Yamini was going to enter Sindhu's room.

Few words which the anchor was telling in tv were resounding again in Yamini's ears, "Waves are very dangerous. They are dangerous as much as beautiful they are. In a second they can touch anyone delicately and in another second they may be absorbing the same person into them".

Signing off this story here itself as it is beyond the expression in words about Sindhu....

Comments can be sent to : touchingwaves@gmail.com



— DREAMS, DEDICATION & DESTINY —

LIFE BEYOND THE WHITE COATS

From Classrooms to Promises Forever ♥



Some journeys change your future.
Some people change your *life*.

The first day at Gandhi Medical College in Hyderabad always felt like controlled chaos.

Freshers carrying heavy bags wandered through long corridors while parents gave endless advice. Some students looked terrified. Some looked overconfident. Some already behaved as if they were future surgeons.

Among them, stood a quiet boy named, Uday.

He wore a neatly ironed light-blueshirt, carried three textbooks even before classes began, and avoided unnecessary eye contact with everyone around him.

While students introduced themselves loudly inside the lecture hall, Uday quietly occupied the last bench near the window.

He preferred silence.

Not because he disliked people, But because he feared being noticed.

During school, people often called him, “too serious,” “too shy,” or “boring.” Overtime, he accepted those labels and built walls around himself.

That morning, while the Anatomy professor explained how difficult medical life would become, Uday simply listened quietly and wrote notes carefully.

Halfway through the lecture, someone entered late, a girl.

She apologized politely before searching for an empty seat.

The only vacant place nearby was beside Uday.

“Excuse me... is this seat free?” she asked softly.

Uday nodded immediately without looking up.

She sat beside him.

Her name was Niharika.

Unlike many students trying hard to appear modern or impressive, Niharika carried herself with unusual simplicity. She tied her hair into a plain ponytail, spoke gently to everyone, and smiled without pretension.

During lunch break, several students formed groups quickly.

Uday remained alone.

While opening his lunchbox quietly near the college garden, he suddenly heard a familiar voice.

“You didn’t even introduce yourself properly.”

He looked up.

Niharika stood holding two cups of tea from the college canteen.

"You're Uday, right?"

He nodded.

"I'm Niharika."

"I know."

She laughed lightly.

"That's the first full sentence you've spoken today."

Uday became awkward instantly.

But strangely, Niharika never made him uncomfortable.

Over the next few months, medical college became exactly what seniors had warned them about.

There were Sleepless nights.

There were endless Practicals and Cadaver dissections.

There were internal exams, combined studies, Stress and Pressure.

There was Fear of failure too.

Students who once looked confident now appeared exhausted permanently.

Yet amidst the chaos, friendships slowly formed.

Uday and Niharika started spending more time together because they were assigned to the same dissection group in Anatomy.

While many students avoided the dissection hall initially, Niharika approached it with calm and curiosity.

One day, Uday accidentally dropped his scalpel while dissecting.

His nervousness was obvious.

Niharika quietly handed it back.

"Relax," she whispered. "The cadaver won't complain."

For the first time in weeks, Uday laughed openly.

Their friendship began there.

Slowly, Niharika discovered that beneath Uday's silence existed remarkable kindness.

He always shared notes with absent classmates.

He stayed back after practicals to help weaker students.

He spoke respectfully to lab attendants and ward boys.

During community postings, he treated poor patients with genuine patience.

But Uday lacked confidence.

Whenever professors asked questions in class, he knew answers yet remained silent.

Whenever presentations were assigned, he panicked.

During second year, their Pathology professor announced a group seminar presentation.

Unfortunately for Uday, he was chosen to present first.

That evening, he looked miserable.

"I can't do it," he muttered while staring at slides in the library.

"You can," Niharika replied.

"No. I'll forget everything."

"Then I'll help you remember."

For the next three days, Niharika sat with him after college hours preparing the presentation.

She corrected his posture.

She taught him how to maintain eye contact.

She simplified his slides.

She even forced him to practice speaking loudly inside an empty classroom.

Whenever he became nervous, she encouraged him patiently.

"Don't try to sound perfect," she said. "Just sound honest."

Presentation day arrived.

Uday's hands trembled while standing near the podium.

But from the second row, Niharika gave him a reassuring smile.

And something changed.

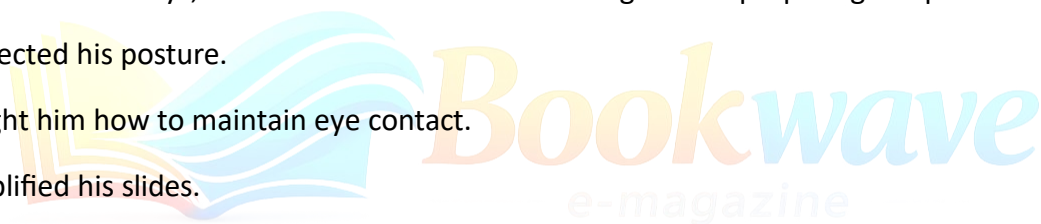
He spoke.

Not perfectly,

But sincerely,

By the end, even the professor appreciated him.

"Well explained, Uday."



The compliment stayed in his heart for days.

After class, Niharika grinned proudly.

“See? Doctor material.”

From then onward, she became part of every important phase of his growth.

She encouraged him to participate in discussions.

She helped him improve communication skills.

She pushed him out of isolation slowly, carefully, patiently.

Meanwhile, Uday started observing Niharika more deeply too.

Not her appearance. But it is her character.

During clinical postings, she spoke gently with frightened patients.

She bought medicines secretly for poor families who could not afford prescriptions.

She never mocked weaker students.

Even during stressful exams, she remained grounded.

Once during third year, heavy rains flooded parts of Hyderabad.

Their college organized a free medical camp in affected areas.

Most students participated because attendance was compulsory.

But Niharika worked with genuine compassion.

For twelve straight hours she checked fever cases, distributed ORS packets, and comforted crying children.

Late that night, exhausted students rested inside a temporary shelter.

Uday watched Niharika quietly serving food to elderly patients before eating herself.

Something inside him shifted permanently.

He realized he admired her not merely as a friend.

He respected her deeply.

And respect slowly became love.

Medical college years passed rapidly.

First year fear transformed into final-year pressure.

Students who once struggled with anatomy now discussed surgeries, diagnoses, and future specializations.

Friendships strengthened through shared suffering.



Night duties became normal and subject discussions followed. Patient checking's were also combined.

Coffee replaced sleeps.

The hospital corridors became a second home.

Uday and Niharika were inseparable by then.

Everyone in class noticed.

But neither openly spoke about love.

Perhaps both feared damaging what already existed beautifully.

One evening during internship postings, they sat near the old staircase outside the casualty ward.

Ambulance sirens echoed faintly outside.

Niharika looked exhausted after a difficult pediatric case.

"Do you ever think we're growing up too fast?" she asked.

Uday smiled faintly.

“We stopped being children the day we entered medical college.”

She leaned back against the wall.

“Five years... feels unreal.”

Uday looked at her quietly.

He remembered every phase.

The shy introductions.

The anatomy halls.

Shared notes.

Night study sessions.

Canteen tea.

Her encouragement.

Her kindness.

Her presence in every important memory.

He realized something terrifying.

He could no longer imagine life without her.

Meanwhile, classmates constantly teased them.

At farewell rehearsals, one student joked loudly:

“If these two don’t get married, we’ll lose faith in love itself.”

The entire class laughed.

Even professors smiled knowingly.

Niharika became embarrassed instantly while Uday looked down silently.

But somewhere deep inside, neither disliked the idea.

The final MBBS exams arrived like a storm.

Students disappeared into libraries.

Stress reached unbearable levels.

Some cried after viva examinations.



Some survived on caffeine and panic.

During those difficult weeks, Uday and Niharika supported each other constantly.

Whenever she felt anxious, Uday reminded her how brilliant she was.

Whenever he doubted himself, Niharika restored his confidence.

And finally... results day arrived.

Everyone gathered near the notice board.

Students pushed through crowds desperately searching for roll numbers.

Then suddenly screams of happiness erupted.

All passed.

Some with distinction,

Some barely surviving,

But everyone celebrated as if they had conquered war itself.

That evening, the entire class organized a farewell gathering on the college terrace.

Fairy lights decorated the walls.

Music played softly.

Students clicked endless photographs wearing formal clothes instead of white coats for once.

Some laughed.

Some cried.

Some silently wondered how five years had disappeared so quickly.

Uday stood near the terrace edge holding a cup of tea.

His heartbeat felt unusually heavy.

Tonight, he had decided something.

Niharika walked toward him wearing a simple blue saree.

For a few seconds, Uday forgot every prepared sentence.

"You're unusually quiet," she teased.

"I'm always quiet."

"Not this quiet."



Wind moved gently across the terrace.

Below them, Hyderabad glittered with lights.

Uday finally spoke.

“Niharika... do you know what changed my life in college?”

She smiled softly.

“Passing anatomy?”

He laughed nervously.

“No.”

Then he looked directly into her eyes.

“You.”

Her smile slowly faded into silence.

“For five years,” he continued, “you believed in me before I believed in myself. You changed how I speak, how I think, how I face people... even how I see life.”

Niharika’s eyes became emotional.

Uday’s voice trembled slightly.

“I used to think love means dramatic things.

“Big speeches”.

“Grand gestures.”

He shook his head gently.

“But then I met someone who stayed after class to help me practice presentations...someone who respected everyone equally... someone who made difficult years feel beautiful.”

The terrace around them seemed to disappear.

Only silence remained.

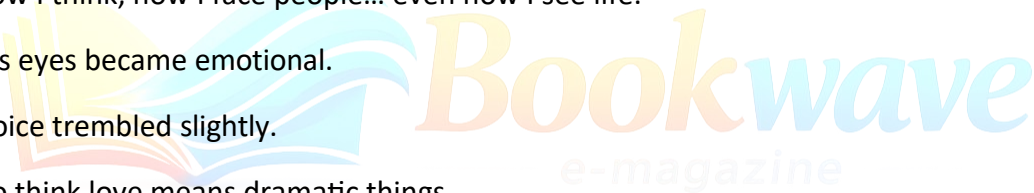
Uday took a deep breath.

“I don’t know what kind of doctor I’ll become in future. But I know one thing.”

He paused.

“I want every future version of myself to have you beside me.”

Tears gathered slowly in Niharika’s eyes.



“Uday...”

“I love you.”

His voice was quiet but steady.

“And if you’re willing... I want you to share your life with me.”

For a moment, she could not speak.

Then she laughed softly through tears.

“You know,” she whispered, “for someone who feared presentations...that was a very long speech.”

Uday smiled nervously.

Niharika stepped closer.

“When I first met you,” she said, “I liked that you were different from everyone else. You never pretended. You never tried to impress anyone. You were kind even when nobody noticed.”

Her eyes glistened under terrace lights.

“Somewhere along the way...I started waiting for your messages, your opinions, your presence.”

She smiled gently.

“I think I fell in love long before you did.”

Uday looked stunned.

Before he could reply, loud cheering suddenly erupted behind them.

Their classmates had secretly been watching from a distance.

“I told you!” one shouted.

“Finally!” screamed another.

Someone started clapping dramatically.

Even their usually strict class representative laughed loudly.

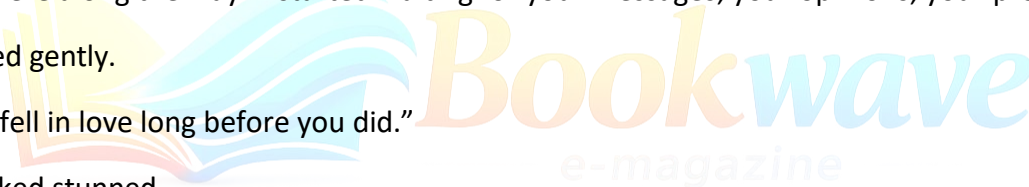
One friend pointed at them and declared:

“This is officially the best couple in our batch.”

Everyone agreed immediately.

They both came together.

Uday kept his hand around her giving the support indicating that he will be supporting her all throughout life.





Niharika hid her face in embarrassment.

But for the first time in his life, he did not fear attention.

Because beside him stood the person who had taught him how to face the world.

Later that night, after the celebrations ended, both walked slowly through the empty college corridors one final time.

The anatomy halls,

The lecture rooms,

The library,

The canteen,

Every place carried memories, At the entrance gate, Niharika stopped walking.

Five years ago," she said softly, "you barely spoke one full sentence to me."

Uday smiled.

"And now?"

She looked at him lovingly and said, "Now I think I can spend my entire life listening to you."

Under the yellow glow of the medical college gate, surrounded by memories of sleepless nights,
Shared dreams, and growing love, two young doctors quietly began the most important journey of their
lives.

Not merely as classmates. Not merely as lovers,

But as two souls who had healed each other long before they learned how to heal the world.



Comments can be sent to : info@bookwave.net

A story of Dreams, Strength & Unconditional Love...

A daughter.
A dream.
A destiny.

She chose
respect over
attention...

Some left,
when they
couldn't accept
her values.

Some wanted
her to leave
everything
behind...

But she never gave up.
She chose her path.
She became her own strength.

One stood by her
dreams, and
walked with her
with respect.

DAUGHTER

Not just a role.
A legacy of love.

She returned
not just as a
daughter...

But as a blessing
to the ones who
believed in her
forever.

Amar Sharma was a normal above middle class person. He was surviving with wife and daughter Sameera. He was working as a lecturer.

His life was simple. Going to college delivering lectures in college and comeback to home and spend time with family. He was very happy with his little family. He worked hard in his life to come to that position.

He gave his daughter, Sameera a good education. He encouraged his daughter in all aspects of life.

Sameera had a very good character and she was very good with everyone in their group be it a school or college or office, she was liked by everyone

Sameera was also a gem in studies and lived her father's dreams and expectations. She completed her B.Tech from a reputed college and secured a good job in a multinational company through the campus placements.

Sameera was working hard in her job. She was also offered USA opportunity for 2 years due to her hard work. But she did not go to USA as she wanted to take care of her parents in India and rejected the offer.

Amar Sharma also tried to convince her to go to USA .



Amar Sharma: "Sameera – my dear daughter, every father dreams of seeing his daughter fly high. If the USA is where your future shines, don't let us become the reason you give it up. We raised you to chase your dreams, not to sacrifice them for us."

Sameera - with tears in her eyes said, "Dad... every dream I have began with you and Mom. How can I leave the two people who gave me everything?"

Sameera was indeed rigid on this and never really wanted to leave her parents.

Amar sharma tried to convince her by telling her they became old and not to worry about them. They can take care of themselves.

But Sameera did not listen to her father's words and stayed back in India.

Sameera moved on concentrated on her work.

Her team leader Anand was very much impressed by her character, attitude and behavior with everyone. He really did not want to miss her in life.

Anand proposed to her one day on a group outing to a dinner describing her why he liked her.

Sameera did not say anything. She was a lone daughter to her parents and she wanted to look after her parents. So she was some kind of rigid to get into any relationship. She was more worrying whenever her parents also getting marriage proposals besides she getting direct marriage proposals from young men.

She could not give any answer to Anand.

Instead, she said, "Anand, meet my parents once and ask their consent to marry me. As I am a girl I really can't talk about marriage matter to my parents. Alternatively, if you come and speak to my parents, it would be better".

Anand did not expect this answer for his proposal.

He was little egoistic fellow and he did not like to visit her parents for their consent. He suggested Sameera to speak to her parents and convince them by herself.

She said, "Anand, I am the lone daughter to my parents and I need to be looking after them even after her marriage. It is my ambition".

Anand was little disappointed with her words, he started maintaining some distance with Sameera then onwards.

He was not moving with her in the same manner. Sameera could notice it. She is not that immature to understand the attitude of boys.

She thought everything was going in her favor only and involved more in her work.

Days were passing.

Suddenly on one fine day morning Sameera's father got heart attack and suffering with chest pain. Luckily Sameera was in home only she was getting ready to office and stroke came to her father.

She was panic for some moments and immediately reacted fast and called for ambulance and was taken hospital. She was worried very much.

She became very weak mentally as her father was not in good stage.

Ever since she took birth, her father was beside her. In every good and bad situation, her father was her beside. Her father used to give good analytical solutions to her for her every problem. So when he was in hospital and not in speaking stage, she was very much down mentally.

Sameera remembered her father's words, "Betí, life is a challenge always. Sometimes it will be good and sometimes it will be very tough. It will be testing you always. Never panic in bad situations. They will come to test your patience, strength and mental toughness. Be balanced every time. Be like a balanced ship, A ship is a thing which will be stable when reasonable weight is put on it. If weight is less, it will be moving in wind direction and when it is over loaded, obviously it sinks. Only a balanced ship will be travelling against the big waves, by bisecting them. So always be balanced even in toughest situations".

She reminded her father's words. She closed her eyes for 2 minutes and came back to sense. She was like rejuvenated by reminding her father's words.

Mean while doctor came and said, " Miss. Sameera. We need to make a surgery and some formalities need to be completed to start the procedure.



Sameera said, "Doctor, do any better thing needed and all formalities will be done by me as I am the lone daughter to my parents and it's my responsibility to stand by them".

The doctor looked at her for a moment, visibly touched by her words,

"Young lady," he said with a gentle smile, "I've met thousands of families during my years as a doctor. Sons often take charge of these responsibilities, but it is rare to see a daughter stand with such courage and conviction."

He paused before continuing.

"Your father is fortunate to have a daughter like you. Don't worry. We'll do everything possible, and I believe he'll recover soon."

Sameera folded her hands in gratitude and said,

"Thank you, Doctor."

She took her mom also to hospital. Both were in hospital and looking after her father.

Sameera's mother became mentally weak to see her husband in hospital in such position. But Sameera increased her confidence to be positive and everything will be fine.

Sameera took a week of leave from office and along with her mom she took care of her father. Relatives and friends were coming and visiting her father. Few relatives were telling her "Any help needed they can do".

She smilingly rejected other people help. She alone with her mother got surgery done and also other required treatment to her father and in few days time; she came back to home along with her father in a good healthy condition.

Sameera was very happy when her father came back to their home with good health.

She thanked her father for his motivational words to be strong even in toughest situations. He also appreciated his daughter for being very much balanced in toughest situations.

Sameera was back to work and met Anand once again. On the other hand Anand got good reason to make more distance from Sameera. She spoke to her on phone only about her parents but never really went to meet them to ask good and bad when they were in hospital. He said that he did not like the hospital environment and fears with it. Her other team mates visited hospital and gave some moral support to her.

Sameera actually did not like Anand as he was maintaining some distance and also he did not come to hospital to give moral support to her. When the tough time was there to her, He escaped from the situation by telling he did not come to hospital as he did not like hospital environment.

Sameera felt like, "Anand is a person who escapes from responsibilities. He cannot give moral support to a woman in tough situations too. Small gestures of a person give good indications about a person's character". She did not like Anand's character.

She wanted to avoid Anand.

Anand was not much thinking about it and he never pressurized Sameera for marriage again.

For some questions time only will give solutions.

Sameera got solution from time and she too was forgetting the episode of Anand in her life.

Anand could not work freely in front of Sameera and he shifted his job to another city and went.

Sameera also felt relieved when Anand left to another city.

Two months lasted.

New manager Krishna joined in Sameera's company as her team leader in place of Anand.

Krishna started working with Sameera and other team mates.

Krishna could estimate how much effective Sameera is in their team. He used to get done much of the work from Sameera only. He did not have much work to see in depth of his work as Sameera was doing it so perfectly.

Two months passed.

Krishna and his team were performing very well. Everyone knew Sameera was only the key in their team's good performance. Krishna also liked Sameera's work, dedication, nature and her abilities in coordinating the team performance, Uniting the team whenever needed. With her support only he could get best performance from his team mates. These special attributes of Sameera made him like her very much.

One more month passed. Krishn's feelings were increasing day by day on Sameera. One fine evening Krishna proposed to Sameera. But Sameera really did not want to marry against their parents wish.

To test him, she said to Krishna, "Krishna, you speak to my parents about marriage with me. I actually fear to speak to my parents. My parents are very rigid. It is tough to convince them".

He said, "He will plan for one day and visit them".

Krishna said it casually that he will visit Sameera's parents but he was not interested to speak them. He used to post pone his meeting with Sameera's parents.

He told her one day that he loves her very much but He can't speak to her parents in this regard. In the other way, he was insisting Sameera to convince her parents somehow and if they do not accept, come out of her home to get married to him and in 1- 2 years her parents will change their mindset and come back to her.

Sameera was never interested to go with Krishna due to this kind of irresponsible nature. She was actually wondering about the new generation guys. One was shirking the responsibilities and the other one was shirking bonds. How can a girl leave her parents and elope with her boy friend especially when she is a lone daughter. One may be there in ten thousands but she was not that one out of ten thousand girls.

Sameera was really upset with both Anand and Krishna. She tried to forget all her bitter experiences of life. She started to concentrate on her career and life. She was living very happy with her parents. But it was little tough to her to get rid of the bitter experiences with Anand and Krishna.

Sameera studied some motivational books. She discussed the same with her parents.

During that time her parents gave her good mental support to put concentration on her work. She thought to change her goal and concentrate very much on her new goal.

Sometimes some diversions needed in life which surely leads to success. New goals, new directions give the feeling of starting the life newly and freshly.

Sameera thought very much about her new goal. She thought to watch some news channel for some time. She switched on the tv. In that tv some interviews were coming of some students who were successful in UPSC exams. She was really motivated with their success stories.

Sameera also thought to prepare for UPSC exams and set her goal to clear CIVIL SERVICES and wanted to become a civil servant.

She told her aim to her parents. They encouraged her. She quit her software job and started working very hard on her goal to become an IAS officer.

Some people criticized her why she is taking risk by quitting a settled job. It was not needed at all. Many people have no jobs and she is quitting her job to do new things. Some people, who knew her, encouraged her very much. She took everything in a positive way.

She reminded great quote, **"Be silent and let your success make noise"**. She decided to follow it.

Sameera closed the door behind her, she took a deep breath. For a few moments, disappointment filled her heart.

Then, a quote she had once read echoed in her mind.

"Falling down is not always in our control, But how quickly we rise after the fall defines our strength."

She wiped away her tears and smiled.

"This is not the end of my journey," she whispered to herself. "This is the beginning of the life I was meant to live."

She joined a coaching center and started really working hard.

With attending classes and discussions with other aspirants, Sameera could easily come out of previous bitter experiences of life. She thought that at correct time she took correct decision.

She also remembered one quote **falling down may not be avoided but it is the ability that is counted always that how soon you get up from the earth after falling down.**

IAS Coaching and interviews of other IAS officers changed her view completely towards people and society.

Her thoughts, her vision completely changed to constructive approach towards life. She wrote her exams but she could not cross first level. She was very much down with the failure.

Her parents supported her and told to prepare again in a good effective manner.

Her dedication increased and she started to prepare for 14-16 hours per day.



She wrote the exam 2nd time. 2nd time she could clear her written exams but could not succeed in interview.

She was down again. Her parents supported her again.

Sameera took it like a challenge and prepared again. She analyzed her mistakes and corrected them. She saw the success stories of other IAS officers and motivated herself again. She increased her confidence and wrote the exams again.

The 3rd time she could crack her UPSC exam. She could clear all the levels in the exam so effectively and efficiently. She got good rank thanks to some good guidance from other seniors and motivational videos.

Sameera told in her interviews when she was asked, “My success secret is my parents’ cooperation and their continuous support. Their trust on her made her stronger and made me to achieve my target. She also said

that parents should be the strength of children and they should always inspire and motivate them towards success”.

Sameera’s friends and relatives, other people around her appreciated her on her success in UPSC exams. Even the people who discouraged her previously they also congratulated her for her success.



Sameera took the blessings of her parents. She became a district collector in same state as she got good rank.

Many news papers and channels took her interview. She gave credit to their parents.

She was invited by a school to address the school students and tell some motivational words.

She went to the school and addressing a meeting in a school to motivate the younger generation. She said to them whatever her dad told to her when she was very little child.

“Beti/Beta always put concentration on your studies. Your studies will be your identity one day. Because of your studies and qualification you will get recognition and value in society. Study is a weapon to prove yourself. The more you study, the more your knowledge will be, The more the knowledge, the more your wisdom and your vision, The more the vision, the more the mental maturity, the more the mental maturity, the more understanding of the society, life, people and the environment. The more you understand the

society, the more you improve yourself, The more better person you are, the more your successful you will be. So never neglect your studies. Enjoy your studies and gain more knowledge”.

She took some break to have some water and started again.

“So many obstacles and things will come in your way which may distract you from your goals and ambitions. Be careful during those times and stick to your goals. Your hard work will definitely give results one day. She concluded with great quote, be silent and patient and let your success make noise. Wish you best of luck”.

She ended up her speech. Every one admired her speech. It was indeed very great motivational speech.

The school management wanted to felicitate her but she got the felicitation done to her parents.

Time was running and she became busy with her activities. Two years completed in her service. Another IAS officer Prakash who was working in a good designation observed Sameera and her work for one and half year.

Prakash observed her work in Women education and Women development in Social Education and in women empowerment. She also came across him as part of work. Both have got good opinions on each other.

Prakash expressed his intention of marrying her she asked him to speak to her parents as always.

Before Prakash meeting Sameera’s father, Sameera spoke to Prakash and said all about her past life. How exactly she had bitter experience and her life and how exactly she became a civil servant.

Prakash really appreciated her efforts. Many people leave their efforts in between for small reasons but inspite of some disturbances in life; she could come out of those situations and succeeded in tough exam like UPSC. He appreciated her very much and said she is really inspiration to people.

Prakash with an increased respect on Sameera, approached her parents and told them that he liked Sameera and her work. He would like to share his life with her. He wanted to marry her with their consent.

Prakash also admired Sameera’s parents for encouraging her in all aspects of life. Not many parents would do it actually. Encouraging a boy child is ok but encouraging a girl child is rarely seen.

He said the same to Amar Sharma and his wife gave accolades for being such a great parents.

He also said his journey of struggles and how he became an IAS officer. Being from a poor family and with limited opportunities, he could achieve success and reached this position.

Sameera’s parents liked the Prakash talking in a polite manner and also liked his attitude and character of and gave consent for marriage with Sameera.

Sameera’s father told Prakash that to love someone is very easy. But it will be tough to accept responsibilities which come along with that love. Any person will give her daughter’s hand to a responsible person surely and we do not see any point to reject you.

Sameera also spoke to Prakash and told how her parents developed her being the only child and how smoothly and efficiently she has been developed as a great woman. She also told about her responsibility of her parents to look after them even after marriage.

Sameera was very much particular in this issue before giving consent to Prakash.

Prakash assured her that she can fulfill her responsibility as a daughter towards her parents as she is the only daughter to her parents. So all the hurdles have been disappeared and Prakash and Sameera got married.

All were happy after Prakash and Sameera's marriage. Both became busy with their works.

Both used to encourage each other in their works. Prakash helped her a lot in her activities. Another 2 years passed and a Sweet daughter came into the life of Sameera and Prakash. Sameera looked and took her daughter. She was crying in a low voice.

She put her baby in the lap of her father and said, "Daddy from now onwards she is your responsibility. She will be growing in your hands. Nurture her like me. We will be little busy with work and may not be able to give time to look after her. So looking after the child is your responsibility of both of you".

Sameera also said, "Dad, when I was born, you held me in your arms and taught me how to walk through life. Today, I place my daughter in your arms. Teach her the same values that made me who I am."

Sameera's father looked at his grand-daughter. As soon as she was placed in his palms and she stopped crying indicating that she liked her grandfather.



Perhaps she felt that she is in safe hands to grow and develop.

Comments can be sent to : kumar.ravichn2010@gmail.com

A STORY OF FRIENDSHIP,
TRUST AND A **LOVE** THAT BLOSSOMED LIKE THE FIRST RAIN.

Drizzle

Some bonds
begin with a smile...
and stay **forever** like
the rhythm of rain.

Two **hearts**...
one drizzle...
a **lifetime** together



Rohit completed Engineering and joined in a software company. He worked hard and pretty soon he became team leader in group. 2 years he worked hard and in 2 years itself he became team leader. For others it normally takes 4 years time.

Rohit actually liked very much few nature things. Few of them are The Rain, The Drizzle and Rainbow which comes after the rain.

Whenever it used to be raining in night time, He usually goes to top of the building before the rain starting, and used to enjoy the drizzle which comes before the speedy rain.

He usually stands in that drizzle and keep his head upside to the sky like watching into the sky and used to get little wet in the rain droplets. When the thin rain drops fall from the sky and they touch the face so delicately, the whole body gets a small vibration due to the cool water droplets touching the skin. That feeling was millions worth to him. It is indeed a great feeling.

Rohit liked this feeling very much and likes to be in the drizzle whenever he gets chance. He usually become like a child and enjoys the drizzle in his own way every time.

In the day time when he is in office, when the drizzle comes, He usually goes to office balcony and try to stand in the drizzle and enjoy in the same way.

Sometimes few colleagues saw Rohit and used to tease you are still a boy and enjoying the drizzle. He used to give reply, "Age is a number when it comes to enjoy the nature. Irrespective of the age, one should enjoy the nature's beauty". Some people liked his opinion and some not agreed with him.

Some times Rohit used to get cold and fever due to cold weather yet he liked getting wet in the drizzle very much. Many times he tried to stop himself to go into drizzle but he was helpless to control his heart.

Heart never goes with mind many times.

Life was going like this.

Ramya joined his team as a trainee. Ramya was good looking girl and equally talented girl. She was also very sharp and used to understand complicated things also easily. She was performing greater than 3-4 years experienced people. Rohit started liking Ramya very much.

She is jovial person too and with the passage of time Rohit's feelings on Ramya were increasing. It was like one sided love.

Ramya used be jovial with everyone. But Rohit was feeling a little possessive about Ramya. Whenever she used to talk to any other person he was feeling little jealous.

Days were going like this and one day evening after the meeting when everyone started going to home, suddenly the sky became cloudy and it started drizzling.

Rohit's heart was telling to enjoy the drizzle but he was stopping himself as Ramya not yet left and she was booking a cab to go to PG. All other people went by booking cabs and in cars helping each other.

Rohit was waiting for Ramya's exit from office as he wanted to enjoy the drizzle.

He was waiting for her going. In some time Ramya also went as cab booked. She went down and in some 4-5 minutes time she came back to office again to collect her mobile charger as she forgot it at her desk.

By the time she came back to her desk, she saw Rohit enjoying himself in the drizzle in balcony



Ramya first laughed at Rohit for being childish and told to him enjoy.

She also asked him, "Don't you know that you can be affected with cold and fever and it is childishness to get wet in the drizzle".

He replied to Ramya, "I like to enjoy nature. Age is a number as far as enjoying the nature is concerned. If enjoying the nature is childishness, I like to become a child quite often and enjoy the nature".

Rohit's words impressed Ramya very much.

Next day he was caught with cold and light fever. Yet he attended office as it was an important meeting.

He was not able to lead the meeting.

Ramya took the initiative and lead the meeting. It went successfully.

In the evening before leaving office, Ramya told Rohit, "If you had not stood in drizzle, you would not have got attacked with cold and fever".

He told Ramya, "We behave 95 times as our brain says. Only few times we follow our heart. Yesterday was like that and I felt to listen to my heart and he could not control myself and I followed my heart to enjoy the drizzle".

Ramya liked that phrase to do the things as heart says some times at least.

Many times she avoided doing many things though her heart reminded to do some activities which would have given her happiness. After listening to Rohit's words she followed his words few times and did the things as her heart said.

She felt very happy after doing the things as her heart liked. She watched sunrises few times by waking up early in the mornings and went to art exhibitions and saw the paintings and sketches of the artists. Met the painters and spoke to them too. She tried painting also 1-2 times. They did not come as beautiful drawings but it was ok. She was happy at least she tried.

She went to orphanage and spent some time with the orphans and arranged them food one time. She felt absolutely very happy after completing these activities.

These were things she had in her heart but she used to postpone them due to some unknown fear. She told the same to Rohit how she was inspired by his words and how she fulfilled her wishes.

From then onwards she started calling Rohit "Guru ji" when no one was there around them.

One day Rohit planned a trip to Kullu Manali by putting 3 days leave. 3 days leave with a weekend it was total 5 days. It was his dream to tour Manali and Kashmir. He was trying from many days but could not go to either place. He tried to go with any one of his friends but he never really got any one confirmed for the tour. Tours with friends often get cancelled and many times delayed. It is universal fact.

Contrary to that Universal fact, this time one of his friends confirmed to accompany him to Manali as he feared to visit Kashmir.

Rohit felt happy at least one of his dreams he can fulfill and went to the trip and came back. Five days completed like span of hours.

Rohit enjoyed the Kullu Manali trip very much. He enjoyed the mountains, He enjoyed the snow falls. He enjoyed with snowballs. He enjoyed para gliding. Some of the dreams he could fulfill in his Kully Manali trip.

Rohit told the same to Ramya when they were having coffee during a tea brake. Normally he never shares but Ramya was excited and asked him and he told his tour experiences.

Ramya also wanted to see Manali and the snowfalls. It was her dream too.

Ramya was in her arrangements to go with her friends or colleagues. 6 months completed but not able to make it. Rohit suggested Ramya to take her parents and tour Manali.

Rohit said, "So much we get from our parents but we will not give much to our parents. Try to give some happiness to your parents".

Ramya liked his words. Ramya planned for tour to Kullu Manali with her parents.

Rohit guided her over phone right from scratch. He guided her in booking tickets to Delhi and from there by bus to Manali. He said to Ramya to give surprise to her parents and do not tell them where they are going. Just tell them that they will be going to tour for five days and you will be taking care of everything.

As instructed by Rohit, Ramya said to her parents the same. Ramya's dad said he may not get time of 5 days leave.

Ramya insisted to take 4 days leave compulsory this time. He never took 4 days continuous leave in his life time. But this time due to Ramya's strongness he took leave for 4 days and with Sunday it will be 5 days time.

Rohit helped Ramya Right from flight tickets booking, to the itenary checking, the Hotel booking, site seeing plans, cabs arrangement whenever needed.

The day of travel arrived. Rohit told to Ramya to keep it secret that they are going to Manali that too by flight to Delhi and from there by cab.

Ramya did not tell her parents anything where they were going. Ramya's father thought that they might be going to some Vizag tour for 4 days by train and some days at least he can spend time with his wife and daughter.

All boarded cab. Ramya told the cab driver to go to airport. Ramya's father shocked to hear airport. He thought they might be going by train but he never expected that Ramya will book flight tickets for tour.

Narayana was little orthodox and he really do not wanted to spend his daughter's earnings for flight tickets as they are expensive than train tickets.

He said to Ramya, "Beta train tickets you should have booked. They were cheaper than flight tickets. We could go easily to Vizag by train". Ramya was smiling little bit and said to her dad to be silent for some time.

The cab reached airport and all went to domestic departures.

Ramya was checking flight to Delhi on display board. Narayana checked flights information about vizag and said, "There is no flight now to Vizag. It is in the evening it seems".

Ramya was smiling and told her father, "Dad, we are going to Delhi. Not to Vizag".

Narayana felt little astonished and asked to Ramya, "What Ramya, are you joking, are we going to Delhi, is it true? We have never really gone to north India that too you are taking us in flight. Why are you taking this much big steps for us"?

Narayana was completely In disbelief.

Ramya said, "Dad, You have done very much to me in life. I just wanted to do something to you and mom in my life. Manali and its surrounding places are very beautiful places to visit. I just want to see those beautiful places with two beautiful people of my life. So please do not think much about the spending and enjoy the trip".

Narayana kept quiet and he thought to enjoy the travel as his daughter said. Meanwhile Delhi flight announcement came. Ramya holded tickets and she was in front of her parents and doing all the necessary activities to go into flight.

Narayana started fearing a little bit as it was first time to him to aboard flight. In his dreams also he never thought he would be travelling by flight to any place. Vijaya' situation was also the same. She also started fearing with flight journey.

Ramya understood their feeling and said to both, "Mom and dad, Do not worry. We will land safely in Delhi. It is a matter of 2 hours only. So forget everything and enjoy the flight journey".

Narayana said to Ramya, "Beta at least you should have told that we are going by flight. We would have prepared mentally about flight journey".

Ramya said again, "Do not worry dad. Now a day, for flight journey's no mental preparation needed. Sit in the flight seat and close the eyes. By the team you open your eyes; you will be in your destination. Take it easy dad".

Though Ramya was telling good words, Narayana was feeling fear very much.

He checked his wife Vijaya's face and body language. She was not feeling fear at all and she was very much excited and enthusiastic about flight journey. She herself was checking seat nos, She herself was checking others movements. She did not fear at all. Instead she only told her husband "Husband, I am excited very much". It is my dream becoming true moment.

In some time all sat in the flight in their respective seats and the flight was about to take off.

Narayana was watching Ramya. Ramya was talking to Rohit on phone and she was telling him how much their parents were shocked and astonished. She again told thank you for suggesting about the tour with her parents.

The flight took take off in another 2 minutes. Narayana and Vijaya holded their hands mutually when the flight was going high into the sky.

Ramya told her dad, "Dad, look down. How beautiful the land is looking".

Narayana was not getting courage to see downwards. He started praying god by closing eyes.

20 minutes journey completed. Narayana told Ramya to hold her mother as Vijaya may fear.

Ramya laughed and said, "Dad mom is enjoying the flight journey. She is watching down and sides. You also open and enjoy the beauty outside".

Narayana could not believe Ramya's words; he opened his eyes slowly and saw his wife Vijaya.

Really she was not fearing and looking confidently outside from window. She was checking the locations on earth confidently.

Ramya teased her dad, "Dad, I thought you are braver than mom. But you fear more than mom".

By watching Vijaya, Narayana got some courage and he also started enjoying the view from flight.

He really enjoyed whole view. He liked clouds passing nearby,
He liked cotton like pure white clouds.



Suddenly few tears came from Narayana's eyes.

Ramya asked, "Dad, what happened?"

Narayana just wiped his tears and said, "Nothing beta. I never thought that one day I would aboard flight and see the clouds so closely. It took almost 60 years to me to feel these clouds from so near. I used to like clouds very much and used to wonder how pure white in color and cotton like clouds travelling from one place to another. Now I could see and enjoy them from so near. I am watching their movements from very near distance. Now only a window is in between us. Oh god, what a beautiful moment it is for me. It was my childhood dream to feel the clouds from so near. My dream is fulfilled because of you".

He spoke like a child almost.

Narayana asked Ramya again innocently, “Beta can I touch the window and feel the clouds little more near”?

Ramya got tears in her eyes due to her father’s innocence. She reminded Rohit’s words and said, “Dad enjoy the nature. Age is a number as far as enjoying the nature is concerned. Feel the nature as your heart says”.

Narayana said, “Very great words you said beta” and involved in enjoying the clouds view.

Ramya told thanks to Rohit innerly. What great words he spoke to her to tell his father.

Another 15 minutes passed. It started drizzling.

Ramya’s father was excited again, he was watching rain drops in the sky around 30,000 feet above from earth. He was very happy to see the rain before they reach the earth. That feeling was indeed giving happy moments to Narayana.

He vested his hands again to the flight windows as if he is touching them”.

While watching her dad Narayana, Ramya looked the drizzle from the window. She got reminded to Rohit. She became little shy as soon as she thought about Rohit.

Ramya also admired Rohit very much as he only suggested to book day flight to Delhi so that her parents can enjoy the view of earth from the sky. She really did not expect that the day time flight journey would be a feast to her parents”. She thought to tell thanks to him as soon as she lands in Delhi.

Ramya checked the time. It was another 25 minutes there to land in Delhi. First time she felt the time is running slowly. She saw her parents who were enjoying the view and smiling. Both were telling to each other to see that side and this side. It was really a wonderful moment to her.

She admired Rohit once again.

Flight landed and they came outside. As soon as they came outside, the cab was ready for them to go to hotel for check in. Rohit spoke to cab driver already and gave instructions where to go.

Cab went to hotel and they checked in. As soon as they went into hotel, Narayana took Ramya’s hand in his hand and kissed her palm and said, “Thank you very much beta for this wonderful gift. I really enjoyed flight journey and its view. My 60 years dream fulfilled”.

Ramya said to her dad, “Dad, you gave me so much in life to us. Should I not give some happy moments in life?. It is my responsibility being your child. No formalities please. Enjoy the trip”.

Ramya was eagerly waiting to call Rohit and tell him thanks.

She called him and said Thanks so many times. He said ok and also told to enjoy the tour with family.

Ramya's mother was very happy to go to Kullu Manali. Her husband Narayana never got time to go out due to his work, now both could go to Manali together and spend time with sweet daughter Ramya.

As they travelled through winding mountain roads, every turn revealed a masterpiece painted by nature itself.

Towering snow-covered peaks kissed the sky while lush green valleys stretched endlessly below. Crystal-clear rivers danced beside the roads, singing melodies that only the mountains could compose.

The cool breeze carried away years of stress and replaced them with smiles that refused to fade.

Every destination offered something magical. They wandered through colorful markets filled with handcrafted souvenirs and warm local smiles.

They tasted delicious Himachali cuisine, sipped steaming cups of tea in the chilly weather, and admired the simple beauty of mountain villages.

Every photograph they captured became more than just an image—it became a page in the album of unforgettable memories.

The mornings were fresh with the fragrance of pine forests. The evenings were painted in golden hues as the sun disappeared behind majestic mountains. Every sunrise felt like a blessing, and every sunset whispered gratitude.

They laughed together like children.

They walked hand in hand through peaceful valleys.

They admired the sparkling waters of mountain streams.

They watched fluffy clouds slowly embrace the snowy peaks.

For the first time in many years, time itself seemed to slow down.

There were no office schedules, no household responsibilities, no daily worries—only family, love, and the endless beauty of nature.

Her parents often looked at each other with quiet smiles, silently thanking destiny for this unexpected happiness.

Deep inside, they knew their daughter had given them something far more valuable than a vacation. She had gifted them the moments they never thought they would experience.

One evening, as they sat together watching the mountains glow...

The snow fall started.

It was first time all saw the snow fall.

All played with snow like children.

Ramya's mother made snow balls and hit Narayana and Narayana also hit Vijaya.

They played some time in snow fall.



while playing in snow falls, under the setting sun, her father softly said,

“We spent our lives building your future. Today, you have given us memories that will stay with us forever.”

Her mother held her daughter's hand with tears of happiness in her eyes. Words were unnecessary. Love spoke louder than any sentence.

The five days passed far too quickly.

Yet every journey leaves behind something precious. While their suitcases returned carrying woollen clothes, souvenirs, and photographs, their hearts came back carrying peace, gratitude, laughter, and unforgettable memories.

While returning from Manali, all three sat in flight. Ramya's father Narayana was looking into clouds again. Unexpectedly few tears came from his eyes again.

Ramya asked her dad, “What happened dad?”

He said to his daughter Ramya, "Thank you very much beta for making us to come for this Kullu Manali tour. My Whole life I spent in Hyderabad itself. Not went to anywhere except to Bangalore once. Now I could see these beautiful places, Kullu Manali and its surrounding places too and filled their beauty in my eyes and heart too. All was possible because of you”.

He paused for a moment and said again, "I am happy that I saw it with your mother. I really wanted to visit some places with her but could not do in my life. I really could not make her see some part of the world. But today with your efforts we together could see some part of beautiful world with you. Thank you very much my dear daughter. I could fulfill one of my dreams because of you".

Tears also came from Ramya's eyes too. Ramya thought about her father, "Whole life he spent his time for me and my mother but never spent time for him". She felt very happy that she could give some happiness to him and her mother in life"

Ramya said to her dad, "Daddy, It is my responsibility to give some happiness to my parents".

Narayana felt happy to listen to Ramya's words that she spelled that doing some things for parents is her responsibility.

He thought, "Daughters really changing in the new era, besides accepting challenges of working and competing with the men, they are sharing and fulfilling the family responsibilities too". It is indeed he never expected when he took Ramya in his palms when she was born.

The moments of Ramya's birth he reminded, He started telling to Ramya, "Ramya, When you were born and when I took you in my palms, you were smiling. I looked at your smile and prayed god only one thing. Oh god, Give me some smooth life so that I can fulfill the dreams of my little daughter and she keeps smiling always. She should be surrounded by happiness always. Today I see my daughter fulfilling my dreams. Nothing more I expect in my life than this".

He also told, "Bless you beta. May your all dreams fulfilled and be happy forever. Wherever you step in that place should be surrounded by happiness".

Ramya told, "Thank you very much dad and I will be happy ever till you and mom with me". Flight landed in Hyderabad and all went to home.

Even after returning home, they found themselves revisiting those moments again and again. Every photograph brought back the sound of the flowing rivers. Every smile reminded them of the snowy mountains. Every conversation returned to Kullu and Manali, where they had experienced not just a holiday but a celebration of family.

Ramya realized something profound during the trip. Success is not measured only by professional achievements or financial milestones. True success is being able to see genuine happiness reflected in the eyes of those who sacrificed everything for us.

Ramya called once again Rohit and told thank you from the bottom of heart as he only gave this idea to her.

Ramya thought once again,

'Life moves quickly'.

'Parents grow older'.

'Opportunities pass'.

But the memories we create with our loved ones remain forever.

The five-day journey to Kullu and Manali was not merely a vacation. It became a beautiful reminder that the greatest luxury in life is spending meaningful time together. It proved that love is best expressed not through expensive gifts, but through thoughtful moments shared with those who matter most.

Long after the mountains disappeared from view, their beauty continued to live within their family.

Ramya was very happy and she thanked Rohit(Guru ji) very much for his support and guidance for the tour.

Days passed and seasons melted. He inspired her in few other aspects also.

Their friendship also blossomed. Spring season came yet again.

Now Ramya also started liking the drizzle thanks to the friendship of Rohit.

One day in the evening they were having a cup of coffee. It started drizzling. Rohit went into drizzle. He watched the sky and took long breath. He gathered some courage to express his love.

Rohit called Ramya into drizzle. She also went.

He felt that it is the beautiful moment to express his love.

He took a ring from his pocket and kept in front of her and asked Ramya, "Will you let me get wet in the drizzle of your love for ever in life"?



Ramya could not deny his love as the rain of love on him already started in her.

She answered him, "I am already wet in the drizzle of your friendship and I just do not want to get out of it. I do not want to stop the drizzle of friendship turns into the drizzle of Relationship" She also told beautifully.

Their love advanced into wedding.

After wedding....

Their life was as beautiful as a rainbow which comes after a drizzle.

5 years completed in their life.

One Sunday evening all sat in living room and watching tv.

Suddenly it started drizzling.

Their 3 years old daughter tried to go into drizzle to enjoy it.

Ramya said to her daughter pinky, "Dear, do not go into drizzle. you are small. You will get wet and get cold and fever".

Pinky said to her mom, "Mom, let me enjoy the Nature. Dad told me to enjoy the nature and Age is a number to enjoy the beauty of Nature".

Ramya looked at Rohit.

Ramya tried to hit Rohit on his shoulder. Rohit got up and ran into drizzle and invited her.

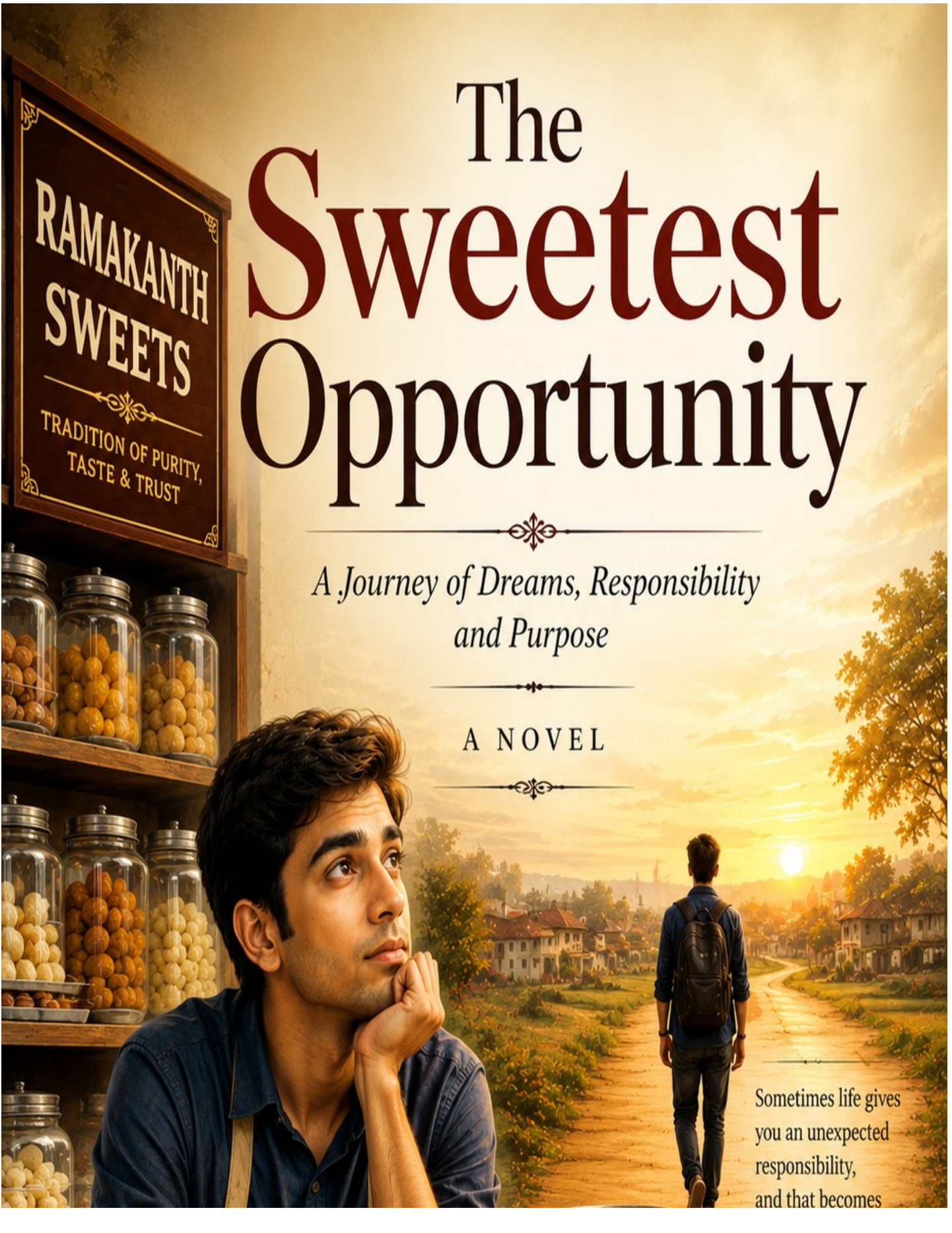
Ramya not showed interest initially to go into drizzle.

Rohit requested few times to come into drizzle.

After his continuous request Ramya also went into drizzle. They got wet again in that drizzle...

The Drizzle continued in their life.....

Comments can be sent to: vinodkesamudram@gmail.com

The book cover features a composite image. On the left, a man with dark hair and a blue shirt is shown from the chest up, resting his chin on his hand and looking thoughtfully towards the right. Behind him are shelves filled with glass jars of various sweets, including round, orange-colored ones. A wooden sign above the jars reads 'RAMAKANTH SWEETS' in a stylized font, with 'TRADITION OF PURITY, TASTE & TRUST' written below it. On the right side of the cover, a man with a backpack is seen from behind, walking away on a dirt path that leads through a small town towards a bright sunset or sunrise over hills. The sky is filled with soft, golden light and clouds.

The Sweetest Opportunity

*A Journey of Dreams, Responsibility
and Purpose*

A NOVEL

Sometimes life gives
you an unexpected
responsibility,
and that becomes

Chapter 1

The Boy Who Dreamed Beyond the Village

The first rays of the morning sun slowly spread across the small village of Venkatapuram. Dewdrops sparkled on the green paddy fields, temple bells echoed through the cool air, and the aroma of freshly prepared sweets drifted along the narrow streets.

Long before the village awoke, one shop was already alive.

A brass vessel bubbled with golden sugar syrup.

Fresh ghee melted gently over a traditional stove.

Large trays of warm Mysore Pak cooled beside perfectly shaped laddus.

The familiar fragrance reached every corner of the village.

Everyone knew what it meant.

Ramakanth Sweets had begun another day.

For more than thirty years, Ramakanth had followed the same routine.

He unlocked the shop before sunrise, swept the entrance himself, lit a small oil lamp before the image of Lord Ganesha, folded his hands in prayer, and softly whispered the same words every morning.

"May everyone who enters this shop leave with happiness."

To outsiders, it was merely a sweet shop.

To Ramakanth, it was his life's work.

To the villagers, it was part of their celebrations.

No wedding was complete without his laddus.

No festival began without his Kaju katli.

No child forgot the taste of the tiny sugar candies he slipped into their hands for free.

Ramakanth believed one principle more valuable than profit.

"Customers remember kindness longer than they remember prices."

That simple philosophy had earned him something no advertisement could buy—trust.

Not far from the shop stood a modest two-bedroom house with a tiled roof and a small courtyard where jasmine flowers bloomed every evening.

It was here that Manish had grown up.

As a little boy, he loved watching his father prepare sweets.

He would sit on an upside-down bucket, swinging his tiny legs while asking endless questions.

“Why do you stir the syrup so much?”

“How do laddus become perfectly round?”

“Why does everyone call you ‘Ramanna’ instead of Ramakanth?”

His father never became impatient. Instead, he smiled.

“One day you’ll understand.”

Every evening after school, Manish would run into the shop, proudly wearing a tiny apron stitched by his mother.

His responsibilities were simple. Arrange sweet boxes. Hand paper bags to customers.

Count empty trays. Sometimes he would secretly eat a piece of fresh Mysore Pak before anyone noticed.

Or at least he believed nobody noticed.

Ramakanth always noticed. But instead of scolding him, he laughed.

“If my own son doesn’t enjoy my sweets, who will?”

Those childhood memories remained precious. Yet as the years passed, Manish’s interests slowly changed.

When he entered high school, the world became much larger than Venkatapuram. His science teacher introduced the class to computers.

For the first time, Manish saw how software could solve problems, connect people across countries, and create entirely new businesses. He was fascinated.

While other students dreamed of government jobs, farming, or continuing family businesses, Manish imagined himself working inside a modern software company.

Glass buildings, Air-conditioned offices, Computers on every desk, Teams discussing ideas and International clients.

The dream felt exciting.

Whenever relatives visited from Hyderabad, Bengaluru, or Pune and described their lives in the IT industry, Manish listened with shining eyes.

One evening he quietly asked his father,

“Have you ever wanted to do something else?”

Ramakanth looked up from preparing jalebis.

“I have always done what life needed me to do.”

“But didn’t you have dreams?”

His father smiled.

“Every father has dreams.”

“What were yours?”

Ramakanth gently placed another jalebi into the hot oil and said, “I wanted my son to have choices I never had.”

The answer puzzled Manish. He didn’t fully understand it then. Years passed quickly. Manish excelled in school.

His teachers admired his discipline. His parents sacrificed every comfort to support his education.

There were months when Ramakanth postponed buying new clothes so that he could pay coaching fees.

His mother quietly sold a few pieces of old jewellery to help with college admission expenses.

Neither parent ever mentioned those sacrifices. To them, investing in their son’s education was never an expense. It was a hope.

When the engineering entrance results were announced, Manish earned admission to a respected engineering college in Pune.

The entire village celebrated. Customers visiting the shop congratulated Ramakanth.

“Our village engineer!”

“One day he’ll work abroad.”

“You’ll soon become the father of a software officer.”

Ramakanth smiled proudly.

But inside his heart lived another emotion. His son was leaving. The morning Manish departed for Pune, the village bus stand was unusually crowded.

Friends gathered to wish him well. Teachers blessed him. His mother tried to hide her tears by adjusting his backpack again and again. Ramakanth placed a small box of sweets into his son’s hands.

“For your hostel friends,” he said.

“They should know what real sweets taste like.”

Manish laughed.

“I’ll become a software engineer, Dad.”

“I know.”

“And then I’ll buy you a big car.”

Ramakanth smiled.

"I don't need a big car."

"I'll build you a huge house."

"I already have one."

Manish looked confused. His father gently placed a hand on his shoulder.

"My home is wherever my family is."

For a brief moment, neither spoke. Then the bus arrived.

As it disappeared down the highway, Ramakanth remained standing long after everyone else had left.

He whispered quietly,

"Fly as high as you can, my son." Pune welcomed Manish with noise, speed, and endless possibilities.

Towering buildings replaced green fields. Busy traffic replaced quiet village roads. The engineering campus looked like another world.

Students from every corner of India filled the classrooms. Hostel life was exciting. Friendships formed quickly.

Late-night study sessions turned into endless conversations about careers, technology, startups, and dreams.

Manish loved every moment. He worked hard indeed Very hard. While many students spent weekends exploring the city, he enrolled in additional programming courses.

He learned new coding languages.

Built software projects. Participated in hackathons. Prepared for aptitude tests. Practised interviews.

His classmates often joked,

"Manish, are you planning to become the CEO on your first day?"

He laughed.

"No."

"I simply don't want to waste my parents' sacrifices."

His determination earned everyone's respect. Every Sunday evening, he called home. His mother always asked the same questions.

"Are you eating properly?"

"Are you sleeping enough?"

"Do you need money?"

Ramakanth asked different questions.

“What new thing did you learn this week?”

Those conversations lasted only a few minutes. Yet they became the strength that carried Manish through difficult semesters. Sometimes, after ending the call, Ramakanth quietly stared at the silent shop.

Customers continued coming, Festivals continued arriving, Life moved forward.

But one corner of the shop always reminded him of his little boy who once arranged sweet boxes while stealing pieces of Mysore Pak.

He smiled to himself.

Children grow,

Dreams grow,

Perhaps that is how life should be.

As Manish entered his final year of engineering, campus placements dominated every conversation. Companies would soon begin visiting the college. Students polished resumes.

He attended mock interviews.

He solved hundreds of coding problems.

Competition became intense.

One evening, sitting with his hostel friends, someone asked,

“Manish, what if you don’t get placed?”

He answered without hesitation.

“I will.”

Everyone laughed. His confidence wasn’t arrogance.

It was determination. His future, he believed, had already been planned.

After graduation...

A software job,

A successful career,

A comfortable life.

He had no idea that destiny was quietly preparing an interview of a very different kind. One that would not test his programming skills...

But his courage, His vision,

And his heart.

Chapter 2

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The overnight train from Hyderabad rolled into Pune Junction just as the morning sun began to brighten the city.

For Manish, it was more than the beginning of a college journey. It was the beginning of a dream.

As he stepped onto the crowded platform with a suitcase in one hand and a backpack on his shoulder, he looked around with curiosity. People hurried in every direction. Some were students like him, while others rushed toward offices, factories, and businesses. The city moved with remarkable speed.

He smiled.

"This is where my future begins," he whispered.

The engineering college stood on the outskirts of Pune, surrounded by green hills and modern buildings. The entrance gate proudly displayed its motto:

"Knowledge, Innovation, Integrity."

Freshers walked through the campus carrying admission files and nervous smiles. Parents looked around anxiously, asking for hostel directions. Senior students greeted newcomers with cheerful laughter.

Everything felt new. Everything felt exciting. After completing the admission formalities, Manish was shown to Hostel No. 5.

Room 217.

As he opened the door, he found two boys already arranging their belongings. One of them immediately stood up with a broad smile.

"Hi! I'm Ravi from Bengaluru."

The second boy waved casually.

"I'm Sameer... from Nagpur."

Manish smiled.

"I'm Manish... from a small village in Andhra Pradesh."

Ravi laughed warmly.

"Then we've come from three different worlds."

Within minutes, the strangers became roommates. Little did they know that these friendships would shape some of the most important decisions of their lives.

The first few weeks passed in a whirlwind.

Orientation sessions, Laboratory introductions, Library registrations, New teachers, New subjects and New Assignments.

The campus buzzed with youthful energy. Every corridor echoed with conversations about technology, innovation, and future careers.

Manish loved every moment. He had always been a disciplined student, but now his determination became stronger.

He woke up before sunrise every morning. After a quick jog around the campus, he spent an hour revising programming concepts before classes began.

His classmates often wondered where he found such motivation. One evening Ravi asked him directly.

"Manish, why do you study so much?"

Manish closed his notebook.

"My parents."

Ravi looked puzzled.

"What about them?"

"They've sacrificed too much for me to waste this opportunity."

He paused.

"My father still stands in front of a hot stove every day making sweets."

"My mother has never bought anything for herself without first thinking about my education."

"I owe them."

Ravi remained silent. For the first time, he realized that ambition was sometimes born not from greed...

...but from gratitude.

As semesters passed, the three roommates developed different personalities. Ravi dreamed of working for a multinational software company in Bengaluru, Sameer wanted to pursue higher studies abroad.

Manish simply wanted one thing, A good software job, nothing more, nothing less. Late at night, while most students slept, the lights in Room 217 remained on.

The three friends solved coding problems together. Sometimes they argued, Sometimes they celebrated when one of them finally solved a difficult algorithm.

During exam season, the room transformed into a battlefield.

Coffee cups filled every table, Books covered every chair, Whiteboards overflowed with formulas and flowcharts.

Yet somehow, amid all the pressure, laughter never disappeared. During his second year, Manish joined the

college Coding Club. There he met Nisha.

Unlike many students, she wasn't interested in placements alone. She loved entrepreneurship. Her dream was to build products rather than simply work for someone else.

One afternoon after a seminar, she asked Manish,

"What do you want to become after engineering?"

He answered confidently.

"A software engineer."

She smiled.

"And after that?"

"I'll grow in the company."

"And after that?"

He laughed.

"I've never thought that far."

Nisha folded her notebook.

"That's the difference between a career and a vision."

Her words stayed with him. Although he disagreed at the time, he secretly admired the way she thought.

Back in the village, life followed its familiar rhythm.

Every Sunday evening, Ramakanth waited for his son's phone call before closing the shop.

Lakshmi always prepared Manish's favorite sweets whenever he was expected to visit during holidays.

Though he lived hundreds of kilometers away, every success of his became a celebration in the village. Whenever customers visited the shop, someone inevitably asked,

"How is your son?"

"Doing well?"

"When will he finish engineering?"

Ramakanth's eyes sparkled with pride and said, "Next year."

"Our engineer will soon become an officer."

The villagers smiled. Many believed Manish would be the first young man from their village to secure a prestigious software job.

Ramakanth never corrected them. Deep inside, however, he cared less about the job title.

He only wanted his son to live a life of dignity, happiness, and purpose.

The years passed quickly.

By the beginning of the final year, the atmosphere across campus had changed completely.

Conversations about movies and cricket gave way to discussions about campus placements.

Every notice board displayed company recruitment schedules.

Training sessions became more frequent. Mock interviews were conducted every weekend. Students polished their résumés with meticulous care.

One evening, the placement officer addressed the final-year batch.

“My dear students,” he began, “opportunity favors preparation.

The companies visiting our campus will not simply look for marks.

They will look for confidence, communication, problem-solving, and integrity.”

The auditorium fell silent. Everyone understood.

The next few months would shape their futures. Manish became even more focused.

He enrolled in additional online programming courses.

Solved hundreds of coding challenges, Improved his communication skills, Practiced interviews in front of a mirror.

Sometimes he imagined the day he would receive his appointment letter.

He pictured himself calling his father.

“Dad...

I got the job.”

He imagined Ramakanth smiling proudly inside the sweet shop. That dream motivated him through every late-night study session.

One Friday evening, the three roommates sat on the hostel terrace watching the sunset. The city lights slowly appeared below.

Sameer broke the silence. “Where do you see yourself five years from now?” Ravi answered first.

“In Bengaluru... probably working for a big software company.”

Sameer smiled and said “I’ll hopefully be doing research in Germany.”

Both looked toward Manish. He answered without hesitation.

“I’ll be working as a software engineer.”

“And then?”

He looked toward the horizon and said, “I’ll make sure my parents never have to worry about money again.”

No one spoke for several moments. The breeze carried the distant sounds of traffic. None of them realized that life was quietly preparing a different answer.

Far away, in his peaceful village, Ramakanth continued serving customers with the same warm smile.

He had no idea that fate was about to test not only his strength... ..but also his son’s dreams.

The semester moved closer to the festival holidays. Students eagerly discussed their travel plans.

Train tickets were booked weeks in advance.

Hostel rooms slowly emptied.

Manish packed his suitcase with excitement.

“It’ll be good to spend a few days at home,” he said.

Ravi smiled.

“Enjoy the sweets while you can. Next semester we’ll all be busy with placements.”

Manish laughed.

“I’ll bring enough sweets for everyone.”

As the train pulled out of Pune Station the following morning, he leaned back against the window.

His mind was filled with coding interviews,

placement dreams,

and the joy of seeing his parents again.

He had no reason to believe that this festival vacation would become the turning point of his life.

Sometimes destiny does not announce itself.

It simply waits at the next station.



Chapter 3

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The train slowed as it approached Manish's hometown. Outside the window, the landscape began to change.

Tall buildings disappeared. Crowded highways gave way to winding village roads. Green fields stretched toward the horizon. Coconut trees swayed gently in the breeze. The sight filled Manish's heart with warmth.

No matter how much he enjoyed Pune, nothing felt quite like home. As the train stopped at the station, he quickly grabbed his luggage and stepped onto the platform.

Before he could look around, a familiar voice called out.

"Manish!"

He turned and smiled.

Ramakanth stood a few feet away, waving enthusiastically.

His father looked exactly as he always had—simple white shirt, neatly combed hair, and a smile that instantly made every worry disappear.

Within moments, father and son embraced.

"How was the journey?" Ramakanth asked.

"Good." Manish said.

"Are you eating properly? Or not?" Ramakanth asked again.

Manish laughed and said, "Looks like Amma has trained you well."

Ramakanth grinned.

"After twenty-two years of marriage, some habits become permanent."

They both laughed as they walked toward the bus stand.

Back home, Lakshmi had been waiting since morning. She had prepared nearly every dish Manish loved, Mango pickle, Pulihora, Garelu, And of course, his favorite sweet—fresh Mysore Pak. The moment he entered the house, she rushed forward.

"My son!"

Her eyes immediately examined him from head to toe.

"You've become thinner."

"Amma, you say that every time."

"Because every time it's true." Ramakanth chuckled.

"He gained weight compared to last year."

Lakshmi shook her head. "Mothers don't measure weight with machines."

They measure it with worry. The three burst into laughter. The house instantly felt complete again.

The village was preparing for the annual festival. Colorful decorations appeared on every street. Children practiced cultural performances. Families cleaned their homes. Shops displayed festive banners.

The entire village buzzed with excitement. For Ramakanth Sweets, festival season was the busiest time of the year.

Customers poured in from morning until late evening. Orders arrived continuously. Wedding functions, Temple celebrations, Community gatherings, Special family events followed.

Every occasion required sweets. Every occasion seemed to require Ramakanth's sweets.

The next morning, Manish accompanied his father to the shop. The familiar fragrance instantly transported him back to childhood. The aroma of Fresh laddus, Hot jalebis, Golden Mysore Pak.

The aroma filled every corner. Customers greeted him warmly.

"Our engineer has returned!"

"When are you finishing college? We'll soon see you in a big software company!"

Manish smiled politely. The villagers had followed his journey since childhood. They genuinely cared about his future.

As the day progressed, Manish observed something he had never noticed before. His father seemed to know almost every customer personally.

He remembered their names, their families, their children's achievements, Even their preferences.

One elderly customer entered the shop. Before the man could speak, Ramakanth picked up a packet.

"Half-kilo sugar-free sweets for your wife."

The customer laughed and asked, "You remembered again." Ramakanth smiled.

"Good customers should never have to repeat themselves."

The man turned to Manish and said "Your father has the memory of a computer."

Everyone laughed. Yet the incident stayed in Manish's mind.

His father wasn't simply selling sweets. He was building relationships. That evening, after closing the shop, they sat outside their house under the stars.

The village was unusually peaceful. A gentle breeze moved through the trees. Somewhere in the distance, devotional songs played softly.

Manish looked at his father and said, "Dad, have you ever thought about expanding the business?"

Ramakanth smiled.

“Many times.”

“So why didn’t you?”

His father remained silent for a few moments and said, “Expansion requires investment, Risk, Time and people.”

“I focused on giving you a good education instead.”

The answer touched Manish deeply. He knew how many sacrifices his parents had made. But hearing it directly felt different.

For the first time, he wondered how many dreams his father had quietly postponed. The festival arrived.

The village transformed into a sea of color. Women wore bright silk sarees. Children ran through the streets carrying balloons and sweets. The temple glowed with lights. Music filled the air. Visitors arrived from neighboring villages.

Business at Ramakanth Sweets reached record levels.

Workers barely had time to rest. Even Manish joined the packing process. By midnight everyone was exhausted. Yet nobody complained. The happiness of the festival seemed to energize everyone.

The next morning, Ramakanth woke up early despite the previous day’s workload.

Lakshmi noticed his tired face and said, “You should rest today.”

“There are too many orders.”

“You’ve been working continuously.”

Ramakanth smiled.

“Festivals come only once a year.” She shook her head.

“You never listen.” He laughed.

“That’s why we have remained married for twenty-two years.”

Lakshmi tried to look annoyed but couldn’t stop smiling.

Around noon, Ramakanth left the shop to collect a special ingredient from a supplier in a nearby town.

It was a routine trip he had made dozens of times before. No one thought much about it. Manish remained at the shop helping customers. Hours passed. Then his phone rang. The number was unfamiliar.

“Hello?”

A worried voice spoke from the other side.

“Are you Ramakanth’s son?”

“Yes.”

“There has been an accident.”

For a moment, time seemed to stop.

The sounds inside the shop faded. The customers disappeared from his awareness. Only those words remained.

“There has been an accident.”

Manish rushed toward the hospital with Lakshmi. Neither spoke during the journey. Fear filled every moment.

Questions raced through their minds.

How serious was it? Was he conscious?, Would he recover?

The hospital corridors felt endless. Finally, they found him.

Ramakanth lay on the bed with bandages on his arm and leg. Thankfully, he was conscious. A vehicle had hit his motorcycle while taking a sharp turn.

The injuries were painful but not life-threatening. The doctor reassured them.

“He’s fortunate. There are no major internal injuries.”

“But he must take complete bed rest for several weeks.” Lakshmi closed her eyes in relief. Tears rolled down her cheeks.



Manish sat beside his father and held his father's hand. For the first time in many years, he felt truly frightened. He enquired how the accident happened and other details.

Ramakanth assured Manish that he will recover soon as they are fractures only and not to worry.

Manish ensured proper care taken in till father is in hospital. A few days later, Ramakanth returned home.

The village came together to support the family. Neighbors visited regularly. Customers called to inquire about his health.

Many brought fruits and flowers. Some offered help. Others simply came to express concern. The affection touched the entire family. Yet another problem soon emerged. The shop remained closed.

One day, Two days, Three days...

Orders were cancelled. Customers returned disappointed. Workers sat idle. The familiar aroma that once filled the street had vanished. The closed shutters seemed strangely depressing.

On the third evening, Manish stood outside the shop staring at the signboard.

RAMAKANTH SWEETS

For the first time in his life, he felt responsible for it. Not as a son, Not as a visitor, But as someone who needed to protect what his father had built. That night, he sat beside Ramakanth.

"Dad."

"Hmm?"

"I think the shop should reopen tomorrow."

Ramakanth looked at him carefully.

"You have your studies."

"I know."

"This is temporary." His father remained silent.

"Are you sure?" Manish nodded.

"I'll manage."

For several seconds, neither spoke. Then Ramakanth smiled. It was a smile filled with gratitude, pride, and perhaps a little hope.

"Tomorrow," he said softly, "you'll sit behind that counter for the first time."

Neither of them knew it then. But the next morning would begin a journey that would change not only Manish's future... but the future of an entire village.

Chapter 4

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The next morning arrived earlier than usual. Long before sunrise, Manish was awake.

Sleep had visited him only in brief moments during the night. Thoughts of his father's health, the closed shop, and the responsibility waiting for him kept returning again and again.

He stepped quietly into the courtyard. The cool morning air carried the fragrance of jasmine flowers planted by his mother years ago.

The village was still asleep. Only the distant sound of a temple bell broke the silence. Lakshmi walked toward him with a steaming cup of coffee.

"You hardly slept," she said gently.

Manish smiled faintly.

"I kept thinking."

She looked at him with the affection only a mother possesses.

"When you were a little boy, you used to run into that shop every morning because you loved the smell of fresh sweets."

She paused and said, "Today you're going because your father needs you."

She placed her hand on his shoulder. "Whatever happens... remember one thing."

"What, Amma?"

"You don't have to become your father. You only have to be yourself." Those simple words gave him unexpected confidence.

By six o'clock, the shutters of **Ramakanth Sweets** slowly rolled upward.

The familiar sound echoed through the quiet street. A few nearby shopkeepers looked up in surprise.

"So the shop is reopening!" One by one they smiled.

"Good."

"It didn't feel like our street without Ramakanth's shop."

Inside, the workers had already arrived. Most of them had worked with Ramakanth for more than fifteen years.

To them, Manish was not the owner's son. He was the little boy who once sneaked laddus from the kitchen.

"Good morning, Anna," they greeted him warmly.

One elderly sweet maker, Subba Rao, folded his hands respectfully.

“Don’t worry.”

“We’re all with you.”

Those words lifted a burden from Manish’s heart. He realized he wasn’t facing the challenge alone.

Before opening the cash counter, Manish noticed something hanging beside the framed photograph of Lord Ganesha.

It was a small wooden board with handwritten words. He had seen it hundreds of times as a child but had never really read it.

It said:

‘Quality is remembered long after price is forgotten.’

Below it was another sentence in smaller letters.

‘Every customer who enters this shop is a guest in our home.’

He smiled.

“So that’s your secret, Dad,” he whispered.

The first customer arrived only minutes later. It was an elderly farmer named Venkatesh. He removed his slippers before entering, as he had done for years. Instead of asking for sweets, he looked around anxiously.

“Where is Ramakanth?”

“He is recovering at home, Doctor has advised complete rest.” Manish replied.

The old man sighed with relief.

“Tell him not to worry. We’ll wait. He must become healthy first.”

Then he smiled.

“And give me one kilogram of boondi laddus.”

As he left, he turned back.

“Your father has attended every happy moment in my family.”

“My daughter’s wedding; My grandson’s naming ceremony, My wife’s sixtieth birthday. His sweets were present in all of them. “I’ll pray for his quick recovery.”

Manish watched him leave. The words touched him deeply. Soon another customer entered.

Then another, within an hour, the shop was filled with people. But something unusual happened. Almost every conversation began the same way.

“How is Ramakanth?”

“When can we meet him?”

“Please tell him we are praying for him.”

Many customers bought sweets only after making sure his father was recovering well. No one seemed to be in a hurry.

Everyone genuinely cared. Around noon, a school teacher entered the shop. His neatly pressed white shirt and calm smile immediately caught Manish’s attention.

“Good afternoon.”

“I’m Raghavaiah.” Manish folded his hands respectfully.

“I know you, Sir.”

“You taught mathematics in our school.” The retired teacher smiled.

“And today I have come to see my favorite student’s family.” He purchased a small box of sweets. As Manish packed it, the teacher looked around the shop.

“Do you know why this business has survived for three decades?”

Manish shook his head.

“It is not because your father makes the best sweets. It is because he treats every customer with respect.”

“There are many shops. But very few have relationships.”

The sentence echoed in Manish’s mind long after the teacher had left. Throughout the day, customers shared stories.

One woman recalled how Ramakanth had delivered sweets to her home late at night because unexpected guests had arrived.

Another spoke about the time he had refused to take payment from a poor family during their daughter’s wedding.

An elderly man remembered how Ramakanth personally visited his house every Deepavali because he was too weak to walk.

Each story revealed another side of his father.

Not just a businessman, A compassionate human being. For years, Manish had believed that his father sold sweets.

Now he understood. He had been building goodwill, one act of kindness at a time.

Late in the afternoon, business slowed. Manish opened one of the old account books. The pages were carefully maintained.

Every order, Every payment, Every customer's details, Everything was written neatly by hand.

He smiled.

Then another thought crossed his mind. "There must be an easier way." He looked around the shop.

No computer. No billing software. No digital records. No online presence. No home delivery. No QR code, No website, No social media, yet the business had survived purely because of trust.

He leaned back in his chair.

"What if trust and technology worked together?"



Sometimes life gives you an unexpected responsibility, and that becomes the sweetest opportunity of all.

The idea flashed across his mind like lightning. He quickly took out his notebook. On the first page he wrote:

Ideas for Improving the Shop

He began listing them. Digital payments, Online orders, WhatsApp catalogue, Google Maps location, Home delivery, Festival pre-bookings, Customer database, Printed invoices, Gift packaging, Loyalty discounts,

He stopped writing. A smile slowly appeared on his face. "This isn't just a sweet shop."

"It can become something much bigger."

That evening, after closing the shop, Manish returned home carrying the day's collection.

Ramakanth was sitting on the veranda with his leg supported by a pillow.

"So..."

"How was your first day?"

Manish placed the cash box beside him. "Business was good." His father smiled.

"And?"

Manish remained silent for a few moments. Then he looked directly into his father's eyes.

"Dad..."

"I think I never really understood what you've built." Ramakanth looked surprised.

"What do you mean?"

"I thought this was only a sweet shop."

"It isn't."

"It's a place where people come because they trust you."

"They don't just buy sweets."

"They buy your honesty."

For a moment, neither spoke. Ramakanth's eyes became moist.

"My father taught me one lesson when I opened this shop."

"What was it?" Manish asked softly. He smiled.

"If your sweets are good, customers will come once."

"If your character is good..."

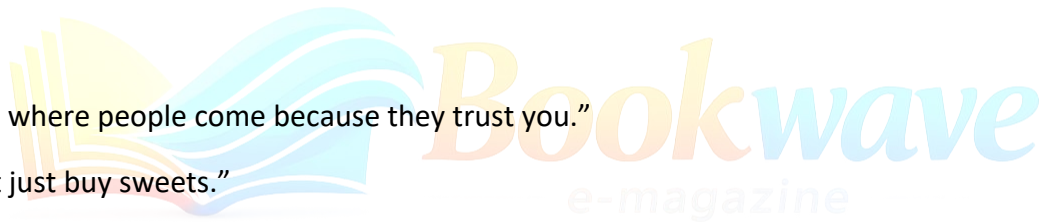
"They'll return for a lifetime."

Those words settled deep inside Manish's heart. That night, sleep came easily. But before closing his eyes, one thought returned again.

Technology could help businesses grow. His engineering education had taught him that. His father had taught him something equally important.

Technology could attract customers. Character would keep them. And perhaps...

the future belonged to those who understood both.



Chapter 5

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The village woke to another peaceful morning. As always, the first sound on Market Street was the gentle rolling of the shutters of **Ramakanth Sweets**.

Manish folded his hands before the small brass lamp placed beneath Lord Ganesha's photograph. Just as his father had done every morning for the last thirty years, he lit the wick carefully.

The warm glow spread across the shop.

He looked around. He found Rows of neatly arranged sweets, the polished wooden counter, the old weighing scale, Copper vessels that had served thousands of families.

The shop looked exactly as it had for years. Yet, in Manish's mind, everything had changed.

He no longer saw a sweet shop.

He saw possibilities. The morning customers began arriving. An elderly woman bought a quarter kilogram of laddus.

A schoolboy came for two samosas before class. A farmer stopped by for a box of Mysore Pak on his way to visit relatives.

Everything moved as usual. But this time, Manish observed every detail like an engineer studying a machine.

How long did customers wait?

Which sweets sold the fastest? How many people asked for items that were unavailable?

How much time did workers spend searching for boxes? How often did customers ask the same questions?

He quietly wrote everything in a small notebook. Subba Rao, the senior sweet maker, noticed him.

"What are you writing all the time, Anna?"

Manish smiled.

"I'm trying to understand the shop." Subba Rao laughed.

"It has been here for thirty years."

"What is there to understand?" Manish looked at him and replied gently,

"Even the oldest clock can tell us something new if we listen carefully."

That afternoon, Lakshmi brought lunch to the shop.

As they ate together in the small storeroom, she looked at her son curiously.

"You've become very quiet."

"I'm thinking."

"About your father?"

"About the shop."

She smiled knowingly.

"When you were little, you used to say this shop was too small." Manish looked embarrassed.

"I remember."

"And now?" He looked around the room.

"I think I was wrong."

Lakshmi gently placed another chapati on his plate.

"Sometimes we see only the size of a place."

"We don't see the size of the love inside it."

Her words settled silently in his heart. Later that evening, a young couple entered the shop.

"We came from Mallapur," the husband said.

"We heard your sweets are excellent."

Manish packed their order. Before leaving, the woman hesitated.

"Do you deliver to our village?"

"I'm sorry," he replied. "Not yet."

"Oh..."

"We wanted to order sweets for my brother's engagement next month."

"It's difficult for us to travel here again."

After they left, Manish stood still. A large order had quietly walked out of the shop. Not because the sweets weren't good, but the service didn't reach the customer in time.

He quickly wrote another sentence in his notebook.

'Customers should never lose an opportunity to buy because of distance.'

That night, after dinner, he opened his laptop. The internet connection in the village was slow, but it worked.

He searched for successful sweet shops across India. Some had websites. Many accepted online orders. Several offered home delivery. Some even sold sweets across the country.

He spent hours reading articles about small businesses that had grown by embracing technology.

One article caught his attention.

It described how a family-owned bakery had doubled its sales simply by becoming easier to reach. Manish leaned back in his chair.

“The world has changed,” he whispered.

“Why hasn’t our shop?”

The next morning, he visited three nearby shops.

A pharmacy, A grocery store and A bakery.

He spoke to each owner.

“How do customers pay?”

“Mostly through UPI now.”

“Do you keep digital records?”

“Yes.”

“Do you advertise?”

“Mostly on WhatsApp.”

He thanked them and returned thoughtfully. His engineering education had taught him an important principle.

Every system can be improved.

The question was not whether improvement was possible. The question was where to begin. That afternoon, an unexpected visitor arrived.

It was Raghavaiah Master. He carried an old cloth bag filled with books.

“I thought I’d find you here,” the retired teacher said.

Manish smiled warmly.

“Please sit down, Sir.”

After a few minutes of conversation, the teacher noticed the notebook on the counter.

“What is this?”

“My observations.”

He handed it over. The old teacher adjusted his spectacles and began reading.

Customer waiting time, Home delivery, Digital payments, Festival bookings, Packaging improvements, Customer database.

The teacher looked up.

"I see an engineer."

Manish smiled.

"I haven't become one yet."

Raghavaiah Master gently closed the notebook.

"No, Manish."

"You already are."

The young man looked puzzled. The teacher continued.

"Engineering is not about machines."

"It is about improving life."

"If you can solve people's problems..."

"You are already living your education."

Those words struck Manish more deeply than any classroom lecture ever had. That evening, as the workers prepared to close the shop, a little girl entered quietly.

She couldn't have been more than eight years old. She carefully opened a tiny cloth purse. Coins rolled onto the counter.

"I want two laddus."

Manish counted the money. It wasn't enough.

He smiled.

"Who are the laddus for?"

"For My grandfather. It's his birthday today."

"He always buys sweets for me. One day I wanted to buy them for him."

Without saying another word, Manish packed four fresh laddus.

The little girl looked confused.

"I only paid for two."

He smiled.

"The other two are my birthday gift to your grandfather."

Her face lit up like the morning sun. "Thank you, Anna!"

She ran out of the shop holding the packet tightly against her chest. Subba Rao watched everything from the kitchen. He quietly walked over.

“You know...”

“Your father has done things like that for years.”

Manish looked toward the road where the little girl had disappeared.

“I think I finally understand why people love this shop.”

That night, he sat beside Ramakanth on the veranda. The moon hung high above the village. Crickets sang softly in the fields.

“Dad...”

“Hmm?”

“If you were opening this shop today instead of thirty years ago...”

“What would you do differently?”

Ramakanth thought for a long moment. Finally he smiled.

“I would ask you.”

Manish laughed.

“I’m serious.”

“So am I.”

“You understand today’s world better than I do.”

“I understand sweets.”

“You understand the future.”

He placed his hand on his son’s shoulder. “Don’t be afraid to change things.”

“Just don’t change the values that built this place.”

Those words became the bridge between two generations. Tradition... and innovation. One had built the foundation. The other would build the future.

As Manish looked once more at the familiar signboard outside—

RAMAKANTH SWEETS —an idea began to take shape.

Tomorrow, he would not simply open the shop. He would take its first step into the digital world.

And with that step...

the destiny of the little sweet shop would begin to change forever.



Chapter 6

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The morning sun painted the village in shades of gold.

As always, Ramakanth Sweets welcomed another day with the lighting of the brass lamp. The fragrance of ghee floated through the market street.

Workers busied themselves preparing fresh batches of Mysore Pak and laddus. Everything looked exactly the same.

But inside Manish's mind...

Nothing was the same anymore. The notebook lying inside his pocket contained twenty-three ideas.

Twenty-three possibilities, Twenty-three small changes that could transform a thirty-year-old business.

He smiled.

"Every big journey begins with one small step."

Business was steady until noon. Around one o'clock, the shop became quiet. Manish opened his laptop on the counter.

Subba Rao stared at him.

"Anna..."

"Are you going to study engineering here?"

Everyone laughed.

"No."

"I'm going to teach our shop something."

The workers exchanged puzzled looks. The internet signal flickered. Sometimes it disappeared. Sometimes it returned.

After several attempts, the screen finally loaded.

The first thing Manish searched was:

"How to register a business online."

Hours passed. He patiently read every instruction. Business profile, Address verification. Phone number, Business category, Opening hours, Photographs, Customer contact, He wrote everything carefully. That evening, he returned home carrying excitement instead of tiredness.

Ramakanth was reading the newspaper.

"Dad..."



"I need your help."

"My help?"

"Yes."

"For what?"

"I want to put our shop on the internet."

Ramakanth lowered his newspaper.

"Our shop is already on Market Street." Manish laughed.

"I mean... on mobile phones." His father looked completely confused.

Lakshmi, listening from the kitchen, smiled.

"Explain slowly."

Manish picked up his mother's smart phone. He opened a map application.

"Suppose someone from another village wants sweets."

"They search..."

He typed slowly.

'Best Sweet Shop Near Me.'

Several shops appeared. "Our shop isn't here."

Ramakanth leaned closer.

"So?"

"So people who don't know us..."

"...can't find us."

Silence filled the room. Then Ramakanth asked quietly,

"Can they really order sweets through a phone?"

"Yes."

"Without coming to the shop?"

"Yes."

Lakshmi looked surprised. "The world has changed so much?"

Manish smiled.



“Yes, Amma.”

“And it’s still changing.”

The next morning became unexpectedly busy. Instead of opening only the cash counter...

Manish opened a camera. He began taking photographs.

Fresh laddus, Golden jalebis, Kaju Katli, Badusha, Mysore Pak, Ariselu, and Bobbatlu.

Subba Rao laughed loudly.

“Anna!”

“Are the sweets getting married?”

“Why so many photos?”

The workers burst into laughter. Manish grinned. “People eat with their eyes first.” Nobody understood.

But everyone enjoyed watching him crawl around the shop trying to capture the perfect picture.

Around noon, Ravi called from Pune.

“How’s uncle?”

“Recovering.”

“When are you coming back?”

“In about two weeks.”

“Campus placements start next month.”

“I know.”

There was a brief silence.

“So...”

“Still managing the sweet shop?”

“Yes.”

Ravi laughed.

“Don’t become a professional sweet maker.”

Manish smiled.

“Maybe software engineers can also sell sweets.”

“Only you can think like that.”



After the call ended, Manish looked around the shop. For the first time...

The joke didn't sound impossible. That evening he travelled to the nearby town. There he met a young photographer named Ajay.

Ajay owned a tiny studio beside the bus stand.

"I need good photographs."

"For a wedding?"

"No."

"For sweets."

Ajay looked confused.

"Sweets?"

"I want people to feel hungry just by looking at them."

The photographer smiled.

"I've photographed politicians..."

"Brides..."

"School children..."

"But this is my first sweet shop."

The two laughed.

For nearly three hours they photographed every product. It included Fresh steam rising from hot jalebis. Silver leaves shining on kaju katli. Golden boondi laddus stacked like tiny suns.

Even Ajay couldn't resist tasting them.

"I've photographed them..."

he said,

"...now I understand why they're famous."

The following day, Manish sat with Lakshmi to write descriptions.

She read slowly.

"Pure Ghee Mysore Pak."

He stopped her.

"No."



She looked surprised.

“What happened?”

“We’re not only selling sweets.”

“We’re selling memories.”

Lakshmi smiled.

“What will you write then?”

Manish began typing.

‘Prepared with pure ghee, traditional methods, and three generations of trust.’

She looked at him with admiration.

“That sounds beautiful.”

“It sounds true.”

Over the next two days, he completed the shop’s digital profile. Business timings, Location, Phone number, Menu, Photographs, Payment options, Everything was finally ready.

Only one button remained.

PUBLISH

His finger hovered above the screen.

Subba Rao stood beside him.

“So...”

“What happens if you press it?”

Manish smiled nervously.

“I honestly don’t know.”

“Then press it.”

With one gentle tap...

Ramakanth Sweets entered the digital world. Nothing happened. No music. No celebration. No fireworks.

The screen simply displayed:

Your business profile is now live.





Manish completed the same process in both food service platforms swiggy's and Zomato.

The workers looked disappointed.

“That’s all?”

One asked.

Manish laughed.

“Now we wait.”

Hours passed.

Nothing happened.

The next morning...

Nothing.

Another day...

Still nothing.

Subba Rao teased him.

“Maybe the mobile phones don’t like laddus.”

Even Ramakanth smiled.

“Patience.”

Lakshmi served tea and said gently,

“Seeds don’t become trees overnight.” Although everyone encouraged him, Manish felt slightly disappointed.

Perhaps the idea had failed. Perhaps village businesses didn’t need the internet. Perhaps he had been overconfident.

That evening, while closing the shop, he quietly looked at the silent phone lying beside the cash counter.

No notifications. No messages. No orders. Only silence. The next morning began like every other day. Customers came and went. Workers prepared sweets.

The village bustled with life. Around eleven o’clock...

A sharp notification sound broke the silence.

TING!

Everyone looked toward the counter. Manish picked up the phone. His heartbeat quickened. The screen displayed a message.

NEW CUSTOMER ENQUIRY

For several seconds...

he simply stared.

Subba Rao leaned closer.

“What is it?”

Manish looked up slowly. His eyes sparkled.

“I think...”

“Our first online customer has found us.” The entire shop fell silent.

Even Ramakanth, sitting on a chair because of his injured leg, looked toward the phone.

One message, one customer, One tiny notification. None of them realized...

That this single sound would one day change the future of an entire family.

Chapter 7

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The notification sound echoed through the shop. For a brief moment, everyone stopped working.

Subba Rao held the large ladle in mid-air. The helper arranging sweet boxes looked toward the counter.

Even Ramakanth, resting on a chair with his injured leg supported by a stool, leaned forward.

Manish slowly unlocked the phone. His fingers trembled. The screen displayed a message.



Customer Enquiry

Name: Meera Sharma

Village: Mallapur

“Do you deliver sweets to Mallapur?”

Manish smiled.

Mallapur.

The very village from where a young couple had visited the shop a few days earlier. He immediately typed a reply.

"Yes, we can arrange delivery."

Within seconds another message arrived.

"Wonderful. My parents are celebrating their 30th wedding anniversary tomorrow. I need 5 kilograms of assorted sweets."

Manish looked at the amount again. Five kilograms.

It was the shop's first online order. His heart raced. He looked toward his father.

Ramakanth smiled.

"Congratulations."

Their first customer had arrived without stepping inside the shop. The entire afternoon passed in excitement.

Manish personally selected the freshest sweets. Every box was packed with extra care. Lakshmi tied a small ribbon around each package.

Subba Rao insisted on preparing a fresh batch of kaju katli.

"If this is our first online customer," he said proudly, "she should taste our very best."

Everyone worked with unusual enthusiasm. By evening, the order was ready. Only one problem remained.

The Delivery.

The shop had never delivered sweets outside the village. There was no delivery system.

No vehicle. No trained staff. No experience. After a brief discussion, Manish borrowed his cousin's motorcycle.

"I'll deliver it myself," he declared.

Ramakanth looked concerned.

"You've never delivered such a large order."

"I'll manage."

Early the next morning, Manish carefully tied the sweet boxes to the motorcycle. Lakshmi handed him a bottle of water.

"Drive slowly."

Ramakanth added,

“And don’t rush because it’s your first order.”

Manish nodded.

As he started the engine, Subba Rao called out loudly,

“Bring back good news!”

Everyone smiled. The journey to Mallapur began.

The roads between the villages were narrow. Fresh rain during the previous night had left patches of mud.

Manish drove cautiously. Halfway there, he noticed something unusual. One of the boxes had tilted.

He immediately stopped. When he opened it, his heart sank. Several pieces of Mysore Pak had broken.

The ribbon had loosened. The sweets no longer looked presentable. For a moment, panic gripped him.

“This is terrible,” he whispered.

He could either deliver damaged sweets...

or return home and disappoint the customer. Neither option felt right. Then he remembered something his father often said.

“When in doubt, choose what protects the customer’s trust.”

Without wasting another second, he turned the motorcycle around. Back at the shop, everyone was surprised.

“What happened?” Lakshmi asked.

“The packing failed.”

Subba Rao examined the broken sweets.

“It happens.”

Manish shook his head.

“Not to our first customer.”

He quickly repacked the order using stronger boxes and additional support. The workers suggested wrapping the boxes with soft paper to prevent movement.

It took another hour. Finally, the order was ready once again. This time, Manish left with greater confidence.

When he reached Mallapur, he was already late. A beautifully decorated house stood at the end of the street.

Guests had begun arriving. Meera welcomed him warmly.

“You came!”

“I was worried.”

Manish apologized sincerely.

"I'm very sorry for the delay."

"The first packing wasn't good enough."

"I returned and packed everything again."

She looked surprised.

"You drove back?"

"Yes."

"So the sweets would reach you in perfect condition."

She smiled. "Very few businesses would do that."

As she opened the boxes, her face brightened. Everything looked fresh. Beautiful, Perfectly arranged.

"You were right to return," she said.

"Thank you."

That evening, after the celebration ended, Meera posted several photographs online. The beautifully packed sweets decorated the dining table. Family members smiled beside them.

Below the photographs she wrote:

"Wonderful quality. Fresh sweets. Honest service. They delayed the delivery only because they wanted everything to be perfect. Highly recommended."

Manish never expected what happened next. The post began spreading. Friends shared it. Relatives commented.

People from neighboring villages asked where the sweets had been purchased.

Within twenty-four hours...

six enquiries arrived. The shop buzzed with excitement. Subba Rao proudly announced,

"Our mobile phone has become another salesman."

Everyone laughed. Ramakanth quietly observed his son.

He saw something changing. Manish no longer looked like a visitor helping temporarily. He had begun thinking like an owner.

A few days later, another online order arrived, Then another, Business slowly increased.

But success brought a new challenge. The phone rang constantly. Customers wanted to know prices.

Delivery charges, Festival offers, Available sweets, the workers struggled to answer every call while preparing sweets.

One evening, Lakshmi sighed, "This phone rings more than the temple bell."

Everyone laughed. Yet the problem was real. The business needed a better system. That night, Manish sat alone in the shop after everyone had left.

He looked around thoughtfully, the old account books, the ringing phone, The handwritten bills, The growing number of enquiries.

He smiled and said, "This shop doesn't need harder work and smarter work."

He opened his notebook once again. On a fresh page he wrote:

Next Improvements

- ✓ Better packing
- ✓ Delivery system
- ✓ Customer records
- ✓ Printed menu
- ✓ Dedicated order phone
- ✓ Digital billing

Then he paused. Another thought appeared. One that would change not only the business... but also the lives of several young men in the village. He slowly wrote one more sentence.

"Why not create a delivery team?"

He stared at those words for a long time. Outside, the village streets had grown silent.

Inside the little sweet shop... a new dream had just been born.

The following morning, as the first rays of sunlight entered the shop, Ramakanth noticed his son's notebook lying open on the counter.

He read the final line. ***"Create a delivery team."***

He looked toward Manish and smiled quietly.

"My son..."

he thought,

"...you are no longer thinking about selling sweets."

"You are building a business."

Neither father nor son realized that this simple idea would soon create employment, transform neighboring villages, and become the foundation of everything they had dreamed of.

Chapter 8

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The notebook lay open on the counter. The last sentence Manish had written the previous night seemed to stare back at him.

“Create a delivery team.”

He read it again. Until now, he had been solving one problem at a time. But this was different. This idea wasn't just about delivering sweets. It was about delivering trust.

That morning, Ramakanth watched his son pacing outside the shop.

“You've been walking in circles for ten minutes,” he said with a smile.

“Something is bothering you.” Manish sat beside him.

“Dad, we've started getting more orders from nearby villages.” Ramakanth nodded.

“Yes.”

“But every delivery depends on whether I can leave the shop.”

“That's true.”

“And if I return to Pune?”

His father remained silent. The question hung in the air. Finally, Ramakanth asked softly,

“What are you thinking?”

“I don't need one delivery boy. I need a system.”

That afternoon, Manish rode his motorcycle through the village.

He wasn't going to buy ingredients. He wasn't meeting customers. He was looking for people.

Not workers, People, Young men who wanted a chance.

The first person he met was **Suresh**.

They had studied together in the village school years earlier. Suresh had completed his degree with good marks, but after graduation he had returned home.

Jobs were scarce. His father had passed away three years earlier, leaving behind debts and responsibilities.

His widowed mother stitched clothes for neighbors to support the family. Suresh now spent most mornings by helping in the fields and most evenings searching job websites on an old mobile phone.

When he saw Manish, he smiled warmly.

“Our engineer!”

“When did you become a businessman?”

Manish laughed and said, “I’m still learning.”



After a few minutes of conversation, he came to the point, “I have an idea.”

Suresh listened carefully. “I need someone to deliver sweets to nearby villages.”

For a moment, Suresh looked disappointed.

“Delivery?”

He had imagined an office job.

A formal position, something matching his degree. Manish understood the hesitation.

“This isn’t just about carrying boxes, It is about serving customers, Managing routes, Building trust.”

"If the business grows, you'll grow with it."

Suresh remained thoughtful. Before leaving, he said,

"Give me one day."

"I'll think about it."

The second person Manish met was **Rafi**. Rafi worked as a mechanic in a tiny roadside garage.

He repaired punctures, changed engine oil, and occasionally serviced motorcycles. His hands were always covered with grease, but his smile never disappeared.

Unlike Suresh, Rafi owned one valuable asset. A well-maintained motorcycle.

When Manish explained the idea, Rafi's eyes lit up.

"You mean I'll ride every day..."

"...and get paid for it?"

Manish laughed.

"That's one way of looking at it."

Rafi immediately extended his hand.

"When do I start?"

The third person was **Kiran**. He was younger than the others. After completing Intermediate, financial difficulties had forced him to stop studying. Since then he had taken odd jobs—painting houses, unloading trucks, helping at construction sites.

Nothing lasted long.

"What if I make mistakes?" Kiran asked nervously.

Manish smiled.

"You will."

Kiran looked shocked.

"And so will I."

"What matters is that we learn from them."

Those words gave the young man confidence.

"I'll join."

That evening, the three young men gathered inside the sweet shop after closing time.

Ramakanth watched quietly from his chair.

Lakshmi served tea.

Subba Rao arranged stools in a circle. The atmosphere felt less like a business meeting... and more like a family conversation. Manish stood before them.

"I don't want employees."

"I want partners."

The three exchanged surprised glances.

"If this business grows..."

"...everyone here should grow."

He placed a large sheet of paper on the table. At the top he wrote:

RAMAKANTH SWEETS DELIVERY TEAM

Below it, he added four words.

Respect. Punctuality. Honesty. Care.

"These," he said, pointing to the words, "are more important than speed."

Rafi raised his hand.

"What if a customer is angry?"

"Listen first."

"What if we're late?"

"Tell the truth."

"What if sweets get damaged?"

"Never hide the mistake."

Subba Rao smiled proudly.

"Sounds exactly like Ramakanth."

Everyone laughed. Training began the very next morning. It wasn't about riding motorcycles.

All three already knew that. It was about understanding customers.

Manish demonstrated how to carry sweet boxes carefully, How to greet customers respectfully, How to collect payments politely, How to confirm every order before leaving the shop.

He even insisted on one unusual rule. "Never hand over a sweet box with one hand."

The boys looked puzzled. He again said "Always use both hands."



"It shows respect."

Raghavaiah Master, who happened to be passing by, overheard the conversation.

He smiled.

"The Japanese have a similar tradition."

Manish turned toward him and said, "I didn't know that, Sir."

The old teacher nodded.

"Respect is understood in every language."

Within a week, the delivery team had become familiar faces across the neighboring villages. Children waved as they rode past.

Customers appreciated receiving sweets at their doorstep. The motorcycles, each carrying neatly packed boxes with the shop's name, became moving advertisements.

Business slowly increased. But something even more beautiful began happening.

One afternoon, Suresh came to the shop carrying a small packet.

"What is this?" Manish asked.

Suresh smiled shyly.

"My mother's first new saree in four years. I bought it yesterday."

He lowered his voice and said "I purchased it with my own earnings."

Lakshmi's eyes filled with tears. She quietly blessed him.

A few days later, Rafi arrived unusually early. He had washed his motorcycle until it gleamed in the morning sunlight.

"Looks brand new," Manish remarked and Rafi smiled proudly.

"I took a small loan."

"For what?"

"I want to buy a delivery box that protects the sweets better."

Manish looked at him with admiration. The young mechanic was no longer thinking like an employee. He was thinking like an entrepreneur. Even Kiran had changed. The shy boy who once feared making mistakes now confidently handled customer calls.

He learned village routes by heart. Customers began asking for him by name. One elderly woman even said,

"If Kiran is bringing the sweets, I know they'll arrive safely."

The compliment meant more to him than the day's wages. For the first time in years...he felt trusted.

One evening, as the shop closed, Ramakanth called Manish to the veranda. The market street was slowly becoming quiet. Only the soft glow of streetlights remained.

"I've been watching those boys," Ramakanth said.

"They laugh more now."

Manish smiled and said, "They're earning."

His father nodded and said, "Money brings comfort."

He paused.

"But respect brings confidence."

He looked toward Suresh, who was helping Lakshmi carry empty trays inside.

"You didn't just give them work. You gave them dignity too."

Manish remained silent. His father's words touched him deeply. had started the delivery team to solve a business problem. He hadn't realized it would begin solving life's problems too.

Late that night, after everyone had gone home, Manish opened the account book. The numbers showed a modest increase in sales. Nothing extraordinary. Not yet. But then he looked at another page.

Three names, Three salaries, Three families with hope.

He smiled.

Some achievements could never be measured in rupees. As he closed the notebook, his phone vibrated.

A new message had arrived. It wasn't an order. It was from a customer in a village nearly twenty kilometers away.

"We've heard wonderful things about Ramakanth Sweets. Can you prepare sweets for a wedding with 800 guests?"

Manish read the message twice.

Eight hundred guests.

It was the biggest enquiry the shop had ever received. He slowly looked toward the dark, silent shop.

Tomorrow morning, the brass lamp would be lit once again.

But tomorrow...

The little sweet shop would face its biggest challenge yet.

Chapter 9

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The message remained on Manish's phone.

"Can you prepare sweets for a wedding with 800 guests?"

He read it again, Eight hundred guests.

Never before had Ramakanth Sweets received an order of that size. His heart beat faster.

This wasn't just another sale. It was an opportunity. And it was also a risk. The next morning, before opening the shop, Manish gathered everyone.

Ramakanth sat in his usual chair. Lakshmi brought tea for the workers. Subba Rao stood with his apron tied around his waist.

Suresh, Rafi, and Kiran arrived with notebooks in hand.

Manish placed his phone on the table and said, "We've received an enquiry."

"For how many people?" asked Subba Rao.

Manish smiled and said, "Eight hundred."

For a moment... the room fell silent. Then everyone spoke at once.

"Eight hundred?"

"Did you hear correctly?, That's impossible!"

Ramakanth simply looked at his son and asked, "What do you think?"

Manish took a deep breath.

"I think..."

"...we should accept it."

The customer, Srinivas, visited the shop later that afternoon. He was organizing his younger sister's wedding in the neighboring village of Chandrapur.

"I've heard wonderful things about your sweets," he said.

"But I'll be honest."

"This is a large function."

"I can't afford mistakes."

Manish nodded.

"I understand."

Srinivas looked around the shop.

“You seem young.”

“How long have you been managing this business?”

“A few weeks.”

The man looked doubtful. Before Manish could reply, Ramakanth spoke.

“My son may be new to the counter.”

“But he has been learning honesty from this shop since he was five years old.”

The room became quiet. Srinivas smiled.

“That’s the answer I wanted.” He extended his hand.

“The order is yours.”

As soon as the customer left, the real work began. The kitchen became a hive of activity.

Subba Rao calculated the quantities.

“Two hundred kilograms of sugar.”

“One hundred liters of pure ghee.”

“Dry fruits...”

“Gram flour...”

“Cashews...”

Every item was written carefully on a large board. Lakshmi checked the stock room.

“We need more packaging boxes.”

Rafi measured his motorcycle carrier. Suresh began planning delivery timings. Everyone had a responsibility.

Everyone understood that failure was not an option. Three days before the wedding, disaster struck.

The supplier called.

“Manish...I’m sorry.” “The truck carrying your pure ghee has broken down. It won’t reach until tomorrow evening.”

Subba Rao looked shocked.

“Tomorrow evening?”

“We begin preparing Mysore Pak tomorrow morning!” The shop grew tense. Without a pure ghee... there would be no sweets. For the first time since taking over the shop, Manish felt truly helpless.



He stepped outside. The afternoon sun was blazing. He looked toward the road, hoping an answer would appear. Instead, he remembered his engineering professor's words.

"Every problem has more than one solution."

He quickly took out his phone. Within minutes, he had contacted suppliers in three nearby towns.

The first had no stock. The second demanded an unreasonable price.

The third had enough—but the warehouse was thirty kilometers away. Without hesitation, Manish turned to Rafi.

"Can your motorcycle make the trip?"

Rafi grinned.

"It has been waiting for an adventure."

Within minutes, he was on his way. Late that evening, he returned with the precious tins of pure ghee tied securely to his motorcycle. The entire team applauded as he walked into the shop.

Subba Rao laughed.

"Today, you didn't deliver sweets."

"You delivered hope."

Work continued through the night. The kitchen glowed under bright lights. Huge vessels bubbled gently.

The aroma of roasted gram flour filled the air. Golden streams of hot ghee shimmered like liquid sunlight.

Lakshmi carefully tasted each batch.

"No."

"A little more cardamom."

Subba Rao adjusted the recipe. Again.

She smiled and said, "Perfect."

Ramakanth watched quietly.

His eyes reflected pride. The shop was no longer dependent on one person.

It had become a family of committed hearts.

The wedding day arrived. The delivery team loaded every box with extraordinary care.

The vehicles moved slowly toward Chandrapur. Dark clouds gathered overhead. Suresh looked at the sky.

"I hope it doesn't rain."

Almost as if nature had heard him... the first drops began to fall.

Within minutes, heavy rain lashed the roads. The motorcycles slowed. One village road became slippery.

A delivery van ahead got stuck in the mud. Traffic stopped. Time ticked away. Rafi looked worried.

"If we're late..."

Manish remained calm.

"No."

"We'll find another route."

Using the map on his phone and the local knowledge of Kiran, they took a narrow village road through the fields.

It was longer. But it was clear. An hour later... they reached the wedding hall exactly on time.

As the sweet boxes were arranged on the serving tables, the bride's father walked around inspecting everything.

He opened one box, Then another, Then another, Fresh. They were beautifully and perfectly arranged..

He looked toward Manish and said, "I've attended hundreds of weddings. But I've never seen sweets packed with such care."

Guests praised the taste throughout the evening.

Children returned for second servings.

Several visitors asked for the shop's phone number. Others scanned the QR code printed on the new business card tucked inside every gift box.

By the end of the function, Manish had received five new enquiries.

Without spending a single rupee on advertising... the wedding had become the shop's biggest promotion.

Late that night, after returning home, everyone gathered in the courtyard. Nobody spoke for several minutes.

They were simply too tired. Lakshmi served hot tea. Subba Rao raised his cup.

"To our biggest order!"

Everyone smiled.

Then Ramakanth slowly stood up. His leg had almost recovered. He looked at each member of the team.

"When I started this shop, I thought success meant selling more sweets."

He turned toward Manish and said, "My son has taught me something new."

"Success is creating a team that stands together."

His eyes rested on Suresh, Rafi, Kiran, Subba Rao, Lakshmi, and finally Manish.

“No one won today.”

“We all did.”

Silence followed. Not an awkward silence. It is a proud one.

The kind of silence that comes after people achieve something they once believed impossible.

Later that night, unable to sleep, Manish walked back to the shop. The market street was quiet.

The brass lamp inside had almost burned out. He gently added a little more oil. The flame became bright once again.

He looked around the familiar room. Only a few weeks ago, he had seen this place as his father’s business.

Today...

he saw it as his life’s greatest classroom. He smiled softly and said, “This shop is teaching me more than any engineering textbook ever could.”

At that very moment, his phone vibrated.

A new notification appeared.

It wasn’t another wedding order.

It was something completely unexpected.

An email came to his mail id.

The sender’s name made his heart skip a beat.

Campus Placement Cell – Pune Engineering College

The placement season had officially begun. Manish stared at the screen.

The future he had dreamed about for four years...

Had just knocked on his door, But now...

Another dream was already waiting inside his heart.



Chapter 10

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The email remained open on Manish's laptop.

Campus Placement Cell

The words seemed simple.

Yet they carried four years of dreams. The placement schedule had begun. Leading software companies would soon arrive at the engineering college in Pune.

For years, Manish had imagined this very moment. Now that it had arrived... he wasn't sure how he felt.

The next morning, the sweet shop opened as usual. The brass lamp glowed beneath Lord Ganesha's picture.

Fresh batches of laddus were arranged in neat rows. Customers came and went.

But Manish's mind was elsewhere.

Every time his phone vibrated, he hoped it was an order. Every time it rang, he feared it might be another placement notification. For the first time in his life...

two dreams were pulling him in opposite directions. That afternoon, Ravi called from Pune.

His voice was as energetic as ever.

"Manish!"

"Where are you?"

"At the shop."

"The first company has announced its recruitment."

"Everyone is preparing. You have to come back immediately."

Manish remained quiet.

Ravi continued and said "This is what we've worked for all these years."

"I know."

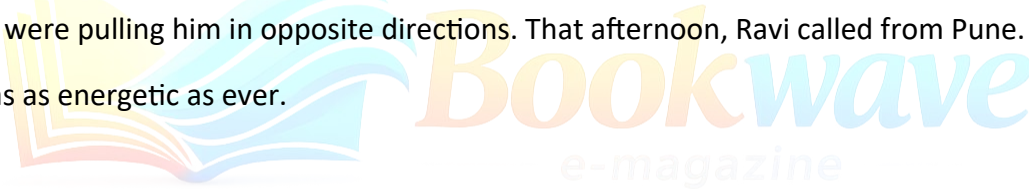
"So book your ticket."

"I'll think about it."

There was a brief silence.

Finally Ravi laughed.

"Don't tell me you've fallen in love with making laddus."



Manish smiled.

"I've fallen in love with solving problems."

The answer puzzled Ravi. He didn't understand.

Perhaps...

Manish himself didn't understand yet.

That evening, Lakshmi noticed her son sitting silently in the courtyard. The dinner plate in front of him was untouched.

She sat beside him.

"Your mind isn't here."

"No, Amma."

He handed her the placement email.

She read it carefully.

"So..."

"Your dream has finally arrived."

He nodded.

"But another dream arrived first."

Lakshmi looked toward the sweet shop across the road. Its signboard reflected the soft light of the streetlamp.

"Tell me honestly."

"If there were no sweet shop..."

"What would you choose?"

"A software job."

"And if there were no placement?"

"I'd continue growing the business."

She smiled gently.

"So the problem isn't choosing."

"The problem is that you love both."

Manish looked at her in surprise.

She continued,



“Sometimes God doesn’t test us by giving us difficulties. Sometimes He tests us by giving us choices.”

The following day, Ramakanth called Manish into his room. He had almost recovered completely.

Only a slight limp remained. He held the placement email in his hand.

“I read it.”

Manish lowered his head and said “I’m sorry.”

“For what?”

“I don’t know what to do.”

Ramakanth smiled.

“My son...”

“When you were born...”

“I promised myself something.”

“What was it?”

“That one day you would have choices I never had.”

He looked directly into Manish’s eyes.

“So don’t stay here because you feel guilty. If your dream is software...”

“Go.”

“I’ll manage.”

The words were spoken calmly. But Manish noticed the emotion hidden behind his father’s smile.

For years, Ramakanth had built this shop with his own hands. Yet he was willing to let his son walk away if it meant fulfilling his dream. That realization made the decision even harder.

A few days later, Manish travelled back to Pune.

The train journey felt different this time. When he had first travelled to the city years ago, his suitcase had been filled with ambition.

Now...

It carried uncertainty. As the train rolled through the countryside, he looked out of the window.

Villages passed by. Fields stretched endlessly. Children waved from level crossings.

He wondered how many of them dreamed of leaving their hometowns. He had once been one of them.

Now, for the first time... he wondered whether success always meant leaving.

The college campus was buzzing with excitement. Students hurried from one training session to another.

Formal shirts had replaced casual clothes. Resumes were being printed. Mock interviews filled every classroom.

Ravi welcomed him with a broad smile. "There you are!"

"We thought you had become a full-time businessman."

Sameer joined them.

"How's Uncle?"

"Much better."

"And the shop?"

Manish smiled.

"Growing."

The three friends walked toward the hostel canteen.

For a while, everything felt normal again. They laughed about old memories and Discussed with professors.

Complained about difficult subjects, Yet deep inside...

Manish felt different.

That evening, he visited the placement office. Students sat nervously outside the interview rooms.

Some revised programming concepts. Others practiced aptitude questions. The atmosphere was filled with hope and fear.

The placement officer smiled when he saw Manish.

"Good to see you."

"I've heard you're helping your family business."

"Yes, Sir."

"That's admirable."

He paused.

"But don't miss these interviews. Opportunities like these don't come often."

Manish nodded respectfully. The words stayed with him. Later that night, he stood alone on the hostel terrace.

The city lights stretched endlessly before him.

The same terrace, the same skyline, the same dreams, Yet everything felt different.

His phone vibrated. He checked his phone. It was a photograph from Lakshmi.

The delivery team stood outside the shop, smiling proudly after completing another day's work.

Below the photograph she had written only one sentence.

"Everyone is asking when you'll come back."

He looked at the picture for a long time. Then he looked toward the towering office buildings visible in the distance.

Two worlds, Two futures, One heart.

The next morning, the first campus interview began. Students entered the hall one by one. Ravi adjusted his tie. Sameer revised his notes.

Manish held his resume. Suddenly...

his phone rang. It was Suresh. He rarely called during working hours.

"Hello?"

"Anna..."

There was tension in his voice.

"We have a problem."

"What happened?"

"The delivery app has accepted twelve festival orders from three different villages."

"Everyone wants delivery tomorrow. We've never handled so many orders at once."

Manish closed his eyes. For several seconds, he didn't speak. Inside the interview hall...

His dream of becoming a software engineer was waiting. Hundreds of kilometers away... another dream was calling for help. The placement volunteer opened the door.

"Mr. Manish?"

"You're next."

At the same moment... Suresh's anxious voice came through the phone again.

"Anna..."

"What should we do?"

Manish stood frozen between two doors. One led toward the career he had imagined for years.

The other... toward the life he had never expected to choose.



Chapter 11

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The placement volunteer looked directly at Manish.

"Mr. Manish?"

"It's your turn."

Inside the interview hall, representatives from one of India's leading software companies waited to meet the next candidate.

Outside, his phone was still pressed against his ear.

Suresh's worried voice continued.

"Anna... please tell us what to do."

For a few seconds, everything around him disappeared. The noisy corridor... The students... The interview room...

All he could hear was the sound of his own heartbeat. Two dreams stood before him. One he had chased for four years.

The other had quietly entered his life only a few weeks ago. Neither was wrong.

But at that moment...

Only one needed him.

Manish closed his eyes. Then he spoke calmly.

"Suresh..."

"I'm with you."

"Don't panic."

His voice immediately became confident.

"First, write down every order."

"Separate them village-wise."

"Don't promise delivery times until we plan the routes."

"Call Rafi."

"Ask him to fuel both motorcycles."

"Kiran should contact every customer and confirm the address."

"I'll call you again in fifteen minutes."

Suresh took a deep breath.

"Okay, Anna."

"We'll start immediately."

The call ended.

The placement volunteer smiled politely.

"Mr. Manish?"

"The interview panel is waiting."

Manish looked toward the interview room. Then toward the window. Beyond the campus buildings, he could see the endless skyline of Pune.

He smiled softly.

"Please tell them..."

"I won't be attending today's interview."

The volunteer looked stunned.

"What?"

"You've worked so hard for this opportunity."

"I know."

"Are you sure?"

Manish nodded.

"Yes."

Without another word, he turned around and walked down the corridor. Every step felt heavy. Yet strangely...

His heart felt lighter. Ravi came running behind him.

"Manish!"

"What are you doing?"

"You just skipped one of the biggest interviews of our lives!"

Sameer stood speechless. Neither of them could understand. Manish sat quietly on a bench beneath an old banyan tree.

"I didn't skip an opportunity."

"I chose a responsibility. Ravi frowned.



"A responsibility?"

"It's just a sweet shop."

Manish looked at his friend.

"No."

"It stopped being 'just a sweet shop' the day it became the livelihood of several families."

The words surprised even Manish himself. For the first time...

he had spoken aloud what his heart had been trying to tell him. That evening, he boarded the earliest train home.

He didn't tell his parents. He wanted to surprise them.

Throughout the journey, he kept coordinating with the team over phone calls.

"Rafi..."

"Deliver the Chandrapur orders first."

"Kiran..."

"Don't leave until the customer checks every box."

"Suresh..."

"Keep a written record of every payment."

The more he spoke... the more confident his team became.

Leadership, he realized, wasn't about standing in front. Sometimes it meant guiding others from miles away.

Back in the village, the shop was buzzing with activity. Festival orders covered every table.

The phones rang constantly. Workers hurried from one task to another. When Manish entered the shop, everyone looked up.

"Anna!"

"You came back!"

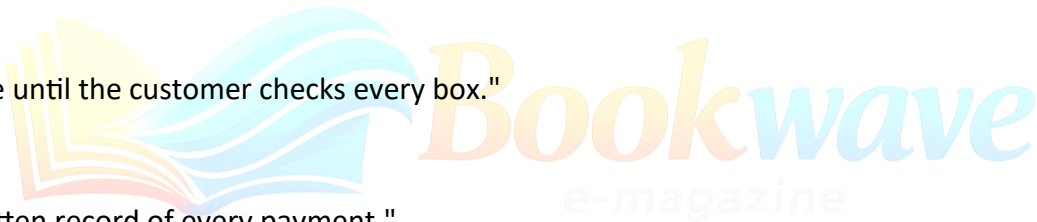
Suresh's face lit up with relief.

"We managed the morning orders. But the evening deliveries are ready."

Rafi laughed.

"You reached just in time."

Manish rolled up his sleeves. "Then let's finish the day together."



For the next six hours, the shop became a whirlwind of movement.

Boxes were packed. Invoices were checked. Delivery routes were updated. QR-code payments were confirmed.

Customers were greeted with warm smiles. Despite the pressure, no one raised their voice. Manish had introduced one simple rule.

"No matter how busy we are..."

"...every customer deserves our full attention."

Late that evening, an elderly man entered just before closing time.

"I'm sorry," he said softly.

"I know it's late."

"My granddaughter's birthday is tomorrow. I forgot to buy sweets."

Subba Rao looked toward Manish.

The workers were exhausted. The shelves had almost emptied. Without hesitation, Manish smiled.

"You came before we closed. That means you're not late."

The old man's eyes filled with gratitude. As he left, Ramakanth quietly whispered,

"That's exactly what I would have done."

The next morning, the team gathered to review the previous day's work. For the first time, Manish placed a large chart on the wall.

At the top, he wrote:

What We Learned Yesterday

The workers looked curious. He continued writing.

- ✓ **Confirm every order twice.**
- ✓ **Pack according to travel distance.**
- ✓ **Start deliveries earlier during festivals.**
- ✓ **Keep one emergency stock ready.**
- ✓ **Every mistake is a lesson.**

Subba Rao smiled.

"In thirty years..."

"I've never attended a meeting in a sweet shop." Everyone laughed.

"But I like it."

That afternoon, Ramakanth called Manish aside. They sat beneath the neem tree outside the house.

A gentle breeze carried the scent of freshly prepared jalebis from the shop.

"I heard something."

Manish looked at him.

"You missed your interview."

He nodded quietly.

"I'm sorry."

Ramakanth looked disappointed for a moment. Not because of the missed interview. Because he knew what it had cost his son.

"My dream," he said softly, "was to see you become an engineer."

Manish smiled.

"I am an engineer."

Ramakanth looked puzzled.

"I just happen to be engineering a different future."

For a long moment, father and son looked at each other. Then Ramakanth laughed.

"You always find the right words."

"No, Dad. You taught me the right values."

A week later, Ravi called again. This time, his voice carried exciting news.

"I got selected!"

"Congratulations!" Manish said with genuine happiness.

"The package is excellent."

"I knew you'd do it."

There was a pause. Then Ravi asked gently,

"Do you regret your decision?"

Manish looked around. Subba Rao was teaching a young worker how to prepare perfect Mysore Pak.



Lakshmi was arranging gift boxes. Suresh was helping an elderly customer. Rafi and Kiran were loading delivery boxes onto motorcycles.

Ramakanth stood at the entrance, smiling as customers greeted him. Manish smiled too.

"Not for a single moment."

That evening, another message arrived on the shop's phone.

It wasn't an order. It wasn't a customer enquiry.

It was an invitation came from the organizers of the **District Food and Traditional Products Exhibition**.

They had heard about the growing popularity of Ramakanth Sweets.

The message ended with a simple question.

"Would you like to represent your village?"

Manish looked at the invitation.

His eyes sparkled.

This wasn't just another opportunity.

It was a chance to introduce their little sweet shop to an entire district.

He slowly folded the phone and looked at the signboard above the entrance.

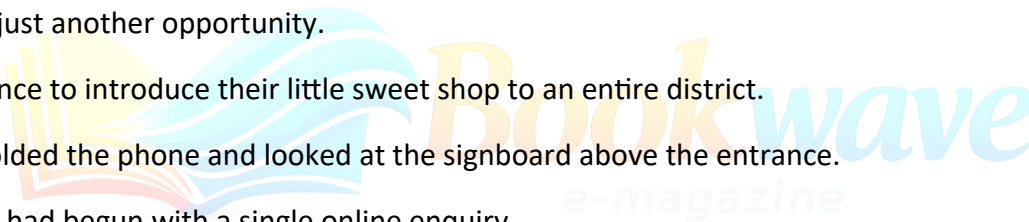
The journey had begun with a single online enquiry.

Now...

the world outside the village was beginning to notice.

The next chapter of their story...

was waiting beyond the village borders.



Chapter 12

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The invitation lay neatly on the dining table. Printed in bold letters were the words:

District Food and Traditional Products Exhibition

For three days, food entrepreneurs, home-based businesses, farmers, and artisans from across the district would gather to showcase their products.

At the bottom of the invitation was a sentence that caught Manish's attention.

"Celebrating Tradition Through Innovation."

He smiled. "It feels as if this invitation was written for us."

That evening, the family gathered in the courtyard. Ramakanth adjusted his spectacles and read the invitation once more. Lakshmi looked thoughtful.

"Will there be many visitors?"

"Hundreds," Manish replied.

"Maybe thousands."

Subba Rao scratched his head.

"Thousands?"

"How many laddus should I make?"

Everyone laughed.

Ramakanth folded the invitation carefully.

"I've never attended an exhibition."

Manish looked at him.

"Then this year.....we'll go together."

For a moment, Ramakanth remained silent. A childlike smile slowly appeared on his face.

At sixty years of age, he was about to represent his village for the first time. Preparations began immediately. The team worked with unusual excitement.

This wasn't an ordinary order. It was an opportunity to introduce **Ramakanth Sweets** to people who had never heard of the shop.

Manish gathered everyone.



"This time," he said, "people will judge us before they taste our sweets."

The workers looked puzzled. He continued.

"They'll see our stall, Our name, Our packaging, Our presentation."

"First impressions matter."

The next morning, he travelled to the district headquarters. He visited printing shops. Packaging stores.

Signboard manufacturers. For hours he compared designs, colors, and materials.

Finally, he chose a simple cream-colored gift box. On the lid was printed:

RAMAKANTH SWEETS

Since 1996

"Prepared with Tradition. Served with Trust."

When he showed the sample to Ramakanth that evening, his father gently ran his fingers across the printed logo.

He didn't speak immediately. Finally, he said,

"I never imagined seeing my shop's name printed like this."

His eyes shimmered with quiet pride. Lakshmi had her own idea.

"Why don't we wear matching uniforms?"

The suggestion surprised everyone. Subba Rao laughed.

"Uniforms? We aren't police officers."

Lakshmi smiled and said, "No. But we represent our family."

Within a week, simple cream-colored shirts embroidered with the shop's logo arrived.

When the team wore them for the first time, they couldn't stop smiling. Rafi looked at himself in the mirror.

"I finally look professional."

Kiran grinned.

"My mother will frame this photograph."

The shop echoed with laughter.

Two days before the exhibition, Raghavaiah Master visited.

He carefully examined the new packaging, the uniforms, The brochures and The business cards.

Finally, he looked at Manish and said, "You've prepared everything."

"I hope so."

The teacher shook his head gently.

"No."

"You've prepared the business. But have you prepared yourself?"

Manish looked confused and asked, "What do you mean sir?"

The old teacher smiled.

"People won't only buy your sweets. They'll buy your story."

Those words stayed with Manish. That night, he stood before a mirror. He practiced introducing the shop.

He spoke about Ramakanth's thirty years of honesty.

About traditional recipes, About fresh ingredients, About the delivery team, about serving customers with respect, By midnight, he realized something.

The sweetest story wasn't about laddus.

It was about people. The exhibition grounds buzzed with excitement on opening day. Colorful stalls stretched across the large hall.

Some displayed pickles. Others sold spices, handcrafted chocolates, millet snacks, organic honey, and homemade papads. Bright banners fluttered above every stall. The aroma of food filled the air.

Ramakanth looked around in amazement.

"So many businesses...So many ideas..."

Manish smiled and said, "And every one of them is trying to win a customer's heart."

They arranged their stall carefully. Fresh sweets sparkled beneath warm lights. Gift boxes were stacked neatly.

Business cards stood beside the cash counter. Lakshmi placed fresh marigold flowers near the entrance.

Subba Rao quietly adjusted the trays until every sweet looked perfect. At exactly ten o'clock...

The exhibition opened.

Visitors began walking through the aisles.

Some glanced at the stall and moved on.

Others stopped briefly.

A few tasted the free samples. One elderly gentleman smiled after eating a piece of Mysore Pak.

"This tastes exactly like the sweets my mother used to make."

Manish smiled.

"That's the greatest compliment we could receive."

The man bought three boxes. Soon more customers gathered. Children pointed excitedly at the colorful sweets.

Families asked questions.

Several people scanned the QR code and followed the shop online.

Business slowly gained momentum.

Around noon, a beautifully designed stall opposite theirs attracted a huge crowd. Its name was **Royal Delights**.

The owner, Prakash, was a successful businessman from the district headquarters.

His stall had bright digital displays, elegant packaging, and dozens of employees. For a brief moment, Manish felt intimidated.

"Our stall looks so small," he whispered.

Ramakanth gently placed a hand on his shoulder and said, "Don't compare your beginning..."

"...with someone else's journey."

The words calmed him instantly.

Later that afternoon, something unexpected happened.

Prakash himself walked over to their stall.

He picked up a piece of Kaju Katli and tasted it. He closed his eyes for a moment. Then smiled and said

"Excellent."

Manish thanked him. Prakash looked around thoughtfully.

"You've got wonderful products."

"But may I give you one suggestion?"

"Of course."

"Don't sell sweets. Sell your identity."

Manish listened carefully and Prakash continued.

"People remember stories. Your father's journey...Your village...Your tradition..."

"Those are your biggest strengths." He handed Manish his business card.

"When you build your brand.....never lose your soul."

As he walked away, Ramakanth quietly said, "Even competitors can become teachers."

The second day of the exhibition was far busier.

A local television reporter stopped at the stall.

"What makes your sweets different?"

Instead of speaking about recipes, Manish smile and said, "We prepare sweets with pure ingredients."

"But what truly makes us different..."

"...is the trust our customers have placed in us for thirty years."

The reporter nodded appreciatively. Nearby, Lakshmi looked at Ramakanth.

"Our son speaks well. He speaks from the heart." Ramakanth smiled proudly

By the final evening, nearly every box had been sold.

The visitors had not only purchased sweets... they had remembered the name.

Ramakanth Sweets.

As the team packed their remaining items, the exhibition organizer approached them. "You've received excellent feedback." He handed Manish a certificate.

Best Emerging Traditional Food Enterprise

For a moment, nobody spoke.

Then Subba Rao clapped loudly. Soon the entire team joined in. Manish went on to the stage and received award.



Ramakanth held the certificate with trembling hands.

"I never imagined..."

"...that our little shop would receive an award."

Manish smiled and said, "This award belongs to every person who believed in us."

On the journey home, the van was quieter than usual. Everyone was tired. But it was the satisfying tiredness that follows a meaningful achievement.

As they entered the village, people noticed the certificate through the window. Children ran alongside the vehicle.

Shopkeepers waved. Neighbors gathered outside Ramakanth Sweets. News travelled quickly.

"The shop has won an award!"

The village celebrated as if the victory belonged to everyone. Because in many ways...

it did.

Late that night, after everyone had gone home, Manish placed the certificate on the wall beside the old wooden board that read:

"Quality is remembered long after price is forgotten."

He looked at both. One represented the values of the past. The other represented the possibilities of the future.

As he stood there, his phone vibrated. A message appeared from an unknown number.

"Hello, Mr. Manish. I own a supermarket chain in the district. I'd like to discuss stocking your sweets in our stores."

Manish stared at the screen. His village had become a district.

Now... the district was opening the door to something even bigger. He smiled.

"The journey has only just begun."

Chapter 13

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The certificate from the District Food Exhibition had found a special place on the wall of Ramakanth Sweets.

Customers who entered the shop would stop for a moment, read it, and smile. Many congratulated Ramakanth.

Some praised Manish. But Ramakanth always gave the same answer.

“This award belongs to every hand that works in this shop.”

Those words slowly became part of the culture of the business. No one claimed success alone. Everyone celebrated it together.

Three days after the exhibition, the phone rang.

“Good morning.”

“This is Anand Varma.”

“I own **Fresh Mart Super Stores.**”

“We met through the exhibition.”

“I would like to visit your shop.”

Manish immediately recognized the voice. The owner of a growing supermarket chain. His heart skipped a beat.

“Certainly, sir.”

“We’ll be happy to welcome you.”

The following Sunday, a white SUV stopped in front of the shop. Children playing nearby paused to look at it.

Anand Varma stepped out, accompanied by two managers. He greeted Ramakanth with folded hands.

“I’ve heard about this shop for many years. I’m glad I finally came.”

Ramakanth smiled and requested, “Please come in.”

Lakshmi served them hot coffee. Subba Rao proudly arranged fresh samples on silver plates.

The visitors tasted each sweet carefully. No one spoke for several minutes. Finally, Anand nodded with satisfaction.

“The quality is excellent.” Then he looked directly at Manish.

“I have a proposal.”

Everyone became attentive.

"I have six supermarkets across the district. My customers are asking for authentic traditional sweets. I want your products on my shelves."

For a brief moment...

Silence filled the room. Six super markets. It sounded like a dream.

Anand continued. "I'll need fresh supplies every morning."

"Proper packaging, Barcode labels, Expiry dates, Consistent quality, And timely delivery."

He paused.

"Can you handle that?"

Before Manish could answer, Ramakanth spoke gently.

"We have never promised something we cannot deliver."

The supermarket owner smiled. "That's exactly why I'm here."

He handed over a file. Inside were the expected weekly quantities.

Manish's eyes widened.

The order was nearly equal to an entire week's sales at the shop. After Anand left, excitement filled the room.

"This is huge!" Rafi exclaimed.

"We're going to become famous!" Kiran imagined their sweets in supermarket shelves.

Even Subba Rao looked excited and said, "We'll need bigger vessels!"

Everyone began discussing possibilities. Only Ramakanth remained quiet. That evening, after dinner, Ramakanth called Manish to the veranda.

The village was peaceful. A cool breeze rustled the neem leaves.

"You look worried," Manish said.

Ramakanth nodded slowly.

"I am."

"Why?"

"Because success has started knocking on our door."

Manish smiled.

"Isn't that a good thing?"

"It is."

“But success can also make people impatient.”

He looked toward the shop.

“For thirty years...”

“I’ve never allowed a customer to take home sweets that weren’t perfect.”

He turned toward his son.

“If we start chasing numbers...”

“...promise me we will never lose our standards.”

Manish remained silent. His father’s concern wasn’t about business. It was about values.

“I promise.”

The next morning, Manish gathered the team. Instead of announcing the supermarket proposal immediately, he asked a question.

“What is the reason customers trust us?”

Subba Rao answered, “Our taste.”

Lakshmi smiled. “Our honesty.”

Suresh added, “Our service.”

Kiran said, “Our packing.”

Rafi laughed. “Our delivery.”

Manish nodded and said, “Exactly.”

“If we lose even one of these.....we lose everything.”

Only then did he reveal the proposal. The workers cheered. But they also understood the responsibility.

For the whole next week, the shop transformed into a planning center. Manish drew diagrams on a whiteboard. One section was titled:

TODAY

Another:

TOMORROW

Under “Today” he wrote:

- Daily production
- Walk-in customers



- Online orders

Under “Tomorrow”:

- Supermarket supplies
- Quality inspection
- New equipment
- Staff training
- Packaging unit

Subba Rao scratched his head.

“Anna...”

“You make the sweet shop look like an engineering project.”

Everyone laughed. Manish smiled and said, “Engineering taught me one thing.”

“A good system produces good results.”

A few days later, Anand Varma returned. This time, he walked through every corner of the shop. He observed the kitchen, The storage room, The packing area, The delivery section. Finally, he sat beside Manish.

“You have something many businesses don’t.”

“What is that?”

“Trust.”

He leaned forward. “But trust alone won’t help you grow.”

“You now need systems.” He opened his notebook and drew three circles.

Quality, Consistency and Capacity

“If any one of these fails.....the business suffers.”

Then he smiled.

“I think you have the ability.”

“You only need the structure.”

Those words stayed with Manish long after Anand left. That night, unable to sleep, Manish walked into the shop.

The lights were off. Only the small brass lamp near Lord Ganesha continued to burn.

He looked around slowly. The old wooden shelves, the weighing scale his father had used for decades, the handwritten account books, the familiar aroma of roasted gram flour. Everything carried memories.

Then he imagined something else, A modern kitchen, Stainless steel work tables, A dedicated packing room, Uniformed staff, Delivery vans, A training center for village youth.

His dreams were becoming larger. But one question echoed in his mind.

“Can we grow without losing who we are?”

The answer came the next morning. Not from a businessman, not from a consultant but it came from Lakshmi.

She was preparing fresh laddus in the kitchen. Without looking up, she said, “Do you know why your father tastes every batch himself?”

Manish smiled.

“He doesn’t trust anyone?” Lakshmi laughed softly.

“No.”

“He trusts everyone. But he trusts the customer even more.”

She gently shaped another laddu. “Machines can help, Technology can help. More workers can help. But never stop tasting your own sweets.”

“That is how you’ll know whether success has changed your business.”

Those simple words struck Manish deeply. Quality wasn’t a department. It was a habit. By the end of the week, the decision was made. They would accept the supermarket partnership. But with one condition,

The first agreement would last only **three months**.

“We’ll grow step by step,” Manish explained.

“If we maintain our quality, we’ll continue.”

“If not...”

“...we’ll pause and improve.”

When Anand heard the proposal, he smiled.

“I was hoping you’d say that.”

“You aren’t chasing business. You’re building a brand.” He extended his hand.

“Welcome to the next chapter of your journey.”

As the agreement was signed, everyone in the shop applauded.

It was another milestone, another beginning.

But while everyone celebrated... an elderly man stood quietly near the entrance.

He had been watching the entire conversation.

His name was **Venkatesh**.

He owned the oldest sweet shop in the neighboring town.

For years, his family had been the biggest name in the region.

He looked at the new agreement then at the growing crowd inside Ramakanth Sweets.

A faint smile appeared on his face. But behind that smile... was concern.

For the first time in decades...

He had found a competitor worthy of his attention.

Manish did not notice him.

He was busy celebrating with his team.

He had no idea that a new chapter of his journey was about to begin.

Not against failure...

But against the competition.



Chapter 14

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The agreement with FreshMart brought a new rhythm to Ramakanth Sweets.

Every morning began an hour earlier. Fresh batches of sweets were prepared before sunrise.

The packing team checked every label twice. Suresh updated delivery schedules. Rafi carefully loaded supermarket orders into the delivery vehicle.

Kiran confirmed receipts with every store manager. For the first time, the little sweet shop worked with the precision of a growing company.

Yet one rule never changed. Before a single box left the shop, Ramakanth tasted one piece from every batch.

Some habits were too valuable to replace. The first week went smoothly. Fresh Mart managers called to appreciate the quality.

Customers left positive reviews.

Some even drove to the village after tasting the sweets in the supermarket. One Saturday afternoon, a family entered the shop.

"We tasted your Mysore Pak at FreshMart," the father said. "We wanted to see the place where it is made."

Lakshmi smiled. "Welcome to our home."

Those words touched the visitors. To them, it was a shop. To Lakshmi, it was still a home.

Business continued to grow. But growth brought unexpected pressure. Subba Rao wiped the sweat from his forehead.

"Anna," he said, "we are working harder than ever."

Manish nodded.

"And earning more than ever."

"Yes."

"But we need another sweet maker."

Ramakanth listened quietly. "Don't hire in a hurry," he advised.

"Skill can be taught, Character cannot."

The team agreed.

Finding the right person would matter more than finding the quickest one.

That afternoon, a familiar figure appeared at the entrance. He was dressed in a spotless white kurta.

His silver hair was neatly combed. His eyes were calm, observant, and filled with experience.

It was **Venkatesh**.

The owner of **Venkatesh Sweets**, It is the oldest and most respected sweet shop in the neighboring town.

The shop fell silent. Everyone recognized him Subba Rao whispered,

“What brings him here?”

Ramakanth immediately stood up. A smile spread across his face.

“Venkatesh!”

“It’s been years.”

The two men embraced warmly. There was no tension. There Only mutual respect. Manish watched with curiosity.

“You know each other?”

Ramakanth laughed.

“Know each other?”

“We’ve known each other for almost thirty years.” Venkatesh smiled.

“When your father first opened this shop, he came to my store.”

Manish looked surprised.

“For what?”

“To buy sugar?”

Everyone laughed.

“No,” Venkatesh replied.

“He came to ask me how to make better Mysore Pak.”

Ramakanth smiled shyly. “And he spent an entire afternoon teaching me.”

Manish was speechless. He had never heard this story before. Lakshmi brought coffee.

As they sat together, Venkatesh looked around the shop. “It has changed.”

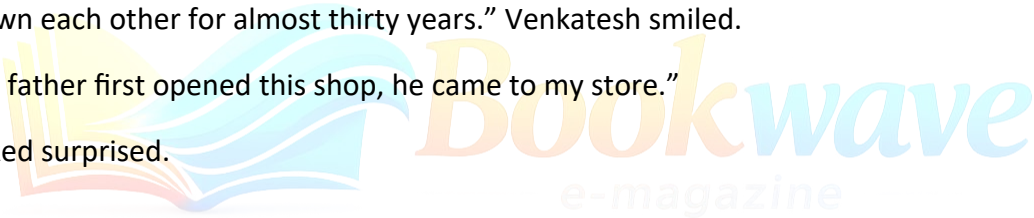
Ramakanth nodded and said, “My son has changed it.”

Venkatesh turned toward Manish and said, “I’ve been hearing your name everywhere.”

“People say you’ve brought technology into a traditional business.”

“I’m only trying to improve what my father built.”

The older man smiled.



"A good answer."

After a few moments, Venkatesh stood up. "May I see your kitchen?"

"Of course," Manish replied and he showed him every section.

The preparation area, The packing room, the storage shelves, the quality inspection table.

Venkatesh examined everything carefully.

He asked questions. Not to criticize, to understand.

Finally, he stopped beside the new packaging station.

He picked up one of the gift boxes., Simple, Elegant, Strong.

He smiled.

"You've respected tradition..."

"...without being afraid of change."

As they walked back toward the counter, Venkatesh noticed a framed sentence on the wall.

'Every mistake is a lesson.'

He stood there for a long moment.

"Who wrote this?"

"I did," Manish replied.

The older man nodded. "I like it."

Then he added quietly, "Let me tell you something."

"When I was your age..."

"I thought success meant never making mistakes".

He smiled.

"It took me twenty years to discover that success comes from learning faster than everyone else."

Manish listened carefully as it is another lesson, another teacher. Before leaving, Venkatesh bought five kilograms of assorted sweets.

Subba Rao looked surprised.

"Sir, these are our sweets."

Venkatesh laughed.

"I know."



"I've tasted my own sweets for forty years."

"Today..."

"I want to taste yours."

Everyone smiled. As he reached his car, he turned back.

"Manish."

"Yes, sir?"

"Next month is the Regional Traditional Food Competition."

"The best sweet makers from across the state will participate."

He paused.

"You should enter."

Manish looked uncertain.

"We're still a small shop."

Venkatesh shook his head gently.

"Never measure yourself by the size of your shop."

"Measure yourself by the quality of your work."

With that, he drove away. That evening, the team couldn't stop talking about the visit.

Rafi laughed.

"I thought he came to inspect us."

Kiran smiled. "I thought he came to compete."

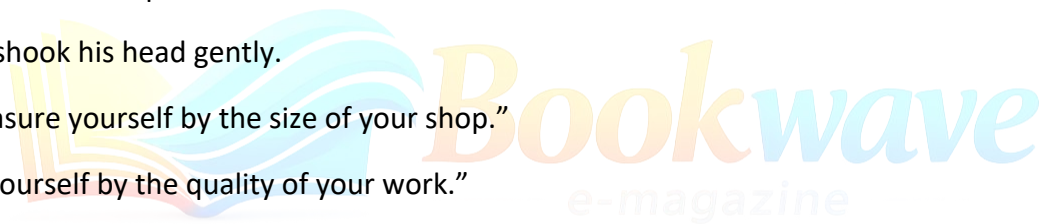
Ramakanth looked at his son.

"He came because he was curious."

"And because he respected your work."

Manish remained thoughtful. Respect from customers felt wonderful.

But respect from someone with forty years of experience... felt extraordinary.



Later that night, Manish sat alone in the shop. He opened his notebook. On a fresh page, he wrote:

Lessons from Venkatesh

- Never fear competition.
- Respect experience.
- Learn from everyone.
- Improve every day.
- Protect quality above all else.

He looked at the final point for a long time. Then he added one more sentence beneath it.

“The goal is not to become the biggest sweet shop.”

He paused. Then completed the thought.

“The goal is to become the most trusted.”

He smiled.

For the first time, he understood what kind of business he truly wanted to build.

The next morning, a courier arrived. It contained an official invitation.

Regional Traditional Food Competition

Venue: Hyderabad.

Participants expected from every district in the state.

The winner would receive not only a prestigious award but also an opportunity to supply sweets to major retail chains.

The team gathered around the letter. Everyone looked excited, except Ramakanth.

He quietly folded the invitation.

“Before we decide...”

he said,

“There’s something I need to tell all of you.”

His voice was unusually serious. The smile disappeared from Manish’s face. He had never seen his father hesitate like this.

Whatever Ramakanth was about to reveal... had remained hidden for many years.

Chapter 15

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The invitation lay on the wooden table.

Regional Traditional Food Competition – Hyderabad

No one spoke. Usually, an opportunity like this would have filled the shop with excitement.

Instead...

Everyone looked at Ramakanth. His face had become unusually serious.

He gently folded the invitation and placed it beside the brass lamp.

Then he looked at Manish.

“Come.”

“Let’s go home.”

That evening, after dinner, Ramakanth asked everyone to gather in the courtyard.

The moon shone brightly above the neem tree. A gentle breeze carried the familiar aroma of fresh ghee from the shop.

Lakshmi sat quietly beside him. Subba Rao leaned against the old stone pillar.

Suresh, Rafi, and Kiran waited respectfully.

Manish sensed that something important was about to be said. Ramakanth looked at the invitation once again. Then he smiled faintly.

“I’ve been to this competition before.”

Everyone looked surprised.

“You have?”

Manish asked. Ramakanth nodded slowly.

“Twenty-six years ago.”

Silence settled over the courtyard. “I was only thirty-four.”

“Our shop had completed its fourth year. I had the same excitement that you’re feeling today.”

His eyes drifted toward the dark sky.

“I believed my sweets were the best. So I entered the competition.”

“What happened?” asked Kiran softly.

Ramakanth smiled.

“I lost.”

No one expected such a simple answer. But Ramakanth continued.

“I didn’t lose because someone else’s sweets were better. I lost because I lost confidence.”

He looked at his hands.

“I became nervous. I rushed. I forgot the very lessons my father had taught me.”

He laughed gently.

“I even added sugar twice to one batch.”

Everyone smiled softly. Subba Rao shook his head.

“I remember that day.”

“We both tasted it.”

“We didn’t need judges to tell us it was too sweet.”

The group laughed together. For a moment, the heaviness disappeared.

“But something happened after the competition.”

Ramakanth continued.

“Something that changed me.”

He paused.

“The winner came to me.”

“He tasted my Mysore Pak.”

“And he asked...”

‘Who taught you to make this?’

“I told him...”

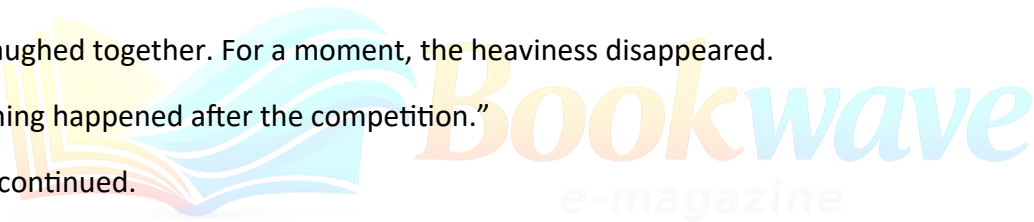
‘My father.’

The winner smiled and said,

‘Then your father taught you well.’

‘I didn’t defeat your sweets today.’

‘You defeated yourself.’



The words stayed with me for years.”

Ramakanth looked at Manish.

“From that day...”

“I stopped dreaming about awards.”

“I decided that if customers returned to my shop with a smile...”

“...that would be my prize.”

He smiled gently.

“And for thirty years...”

“I’ve never regretted that decision.”

The courtyard fell silent. Manish had always admired his father.

Tonight...

He understood him. Awards had never mattered to Ramakanth. People did. Trust did. Character did. That was the true inheritance he had received.

Lakshmi quietly broke the silence.

“You’re only telling half the story.”

Ramakanth looked at her and smiled. She turned toward the others.

“After he came home from that competition...”

“...he made another promise.”

Ramakanth lowered his head.

Lakshmi continued.

“He said...”

‘I may never win a trophy.’

‘But one day...’

‘Someone from this family will stand on that stage.’

Everyone looked at Ramakanth. Even he seemed surprised that Lakshmi still remembered those words.

She smiled warmly.

“I never forgot.”

For a long moment...

no one spoke. Finally, Manish stood up.

He walked toward his father.

Then, without saying a word...

he bent down and touched Ramakanth's feet. Ramakanth immediately lifted him.

"What are you doing?"

Manish's eyes were moist.

"I've received many lessons from engineering college."

"But the greatest education..."

"...I received from you."

Ramakanth placed both hands on his son's shoulders.

"My son..."

"If you go to this competition..."

"Don't go to fulfill my dream."

"Go because your work deserves to be there."

The following morning, preparations began. But something had changed. Earlier, everyone wanted to win.

Now...

Everyone wanted to do justice to the shop's values. Subba Rao refused to prepare sweets in a hurry.

"If we're late..."

"So be it."

"But every piece must taste perfect."

Lakshmi personally checked every ingredient.

Rafi cleaned the delivery vehicle until it sparkled.

Kiran organized product information and customer testimonials into a neat presentation folder.

Suresh prepared a digital slideshow showing the journey of Ramakanth Sweets—from a tiny village shop to a trusted regional name.

Everyone was preparing. Not for a competition but for a responsibility.

That afternoon, an elderly customer entered the shop. He had been buying sweets from Ramakanth for over twenty years.

He noticed the invitation lying on the counter.

“Going to Hyderabad?”

Manish smiled.

“Yes.”

The old man nodded.

“I don’t know anything about competitions.”

“But I know this.”

He picked up a piece of laddu.

“I’ve celebrated every happy moment in my family with your sweets.”

“My daughter’s wedding.”

“My grandson’s naming ceremony.”

“My wife’s sixtieth birthday.”

He looked at Ramakanth.

“You’ve already won.”

The old man paid for his sweets and quietly left.

Nobody spoke for several moments.

Sometimes... the greatest awards came without trophies.

Two days later, the team assembled before sunrise.

The vehicle was packed. Boxes secured.

Presentation materials arranged carefully. Ramakanth stood at the entrance of the shop.

Before leaving, he lit the brass lamp. He folded his hands before Lord Ganesha.

Then he turned toward everyone.

“Remember one thing.”

“If we return with a trophy...”

“...we’ll be happy.”

“If we return without one...”

“...we’ll still hold our heads high.”



“Because we never compromise.”

The team nodded.

Those words became their silent promise.

As the vehicle began its journey toward Hyderabad, the first rays of sunlight spread across the fields.

The village slowly disappeared behind them.

A new challenge awaited,

A bigger stage.

More experienced competitors,

State-level judges,

Thousands of visitors,

For the first time...

Ramakanth was not travelling alone. Beside him sat his son.

Not just as an engineer.

Not just as a businessman.

But as the keeper of a promise that had waited twenty-six years to be fulfilled.

Far ahead, beyond the highway, beyond the rising sun...

Hyderabad awaited them.

So did destiny.



Chapter 16

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The journey to Hyderabad began before sunrise. The highway stretched endlessly before them.

Inside the vehicle, no one spoke much. Each person was lost in their own thoughts.

Ramakanth quietly looked out of the window. Lakshmi held a small steel container filled with homemade lemon rice.

Subba Rao checked the sweet boxes every few minutes, as if they were precious treasures.

Suresh reviewed the presentation on his laptop. Rafi polished the display boards with a soft cloth.

Kiran carefully arranged brochures in alphabetical order. Manish sat in silence.

His hands rested on the steering wheel, but his mind was somewhere between excitement and responsibility.

By afternoon, the skyline of Hyderabad appeared. Tall buildings, Busy flyovers, Endless streams of vehicles.

For the younger members of the team, everything felt enormous.

Rafi laughed.

“Our entire village could fit inside one of these parking lots.”

Everyone smiled. Even Ramakanth couldn't hide his amazement.

“So many people... So many businesses...”

Manish looked at his father.

“And today... We're one of them.”

The exhibition grounds were magnificent. A huge convention center buzzed with activity.

Hundreds of colorful stalls lined the spacious halls. Traditional food producers had come from every corner of the state.

Some specialized in famous regional sweets. Others displayed handcrafted chocolates, millet delicacies, organic products, bakery items, and festive gift hampers.

Large digital screens showcased promotional videos. Professional chefs demonstrated recipes before eager crowds. Television cameras moved from stall to stall. The atmosphere was electric.

For a moment, the team simply stood there in awe. Their assigned stall was in Hall B.

It wasn't the largest. Nor the smallest one either. Manish looked around carefully.

“Remember what we discussed.”

“We're not here to impress people with decorations. We're here to impress them with honesty.” Everyone nodded.

Together, they began arranging the display. Lakshmi placed fresh flowers near the entrance. Subba Rao carefully arranged every sweet. Rafi adjusted the lighting.

Suresh connected a television screen that displayed photographs of the village, the shop, the delivery team, and smiling customers. At the center stood a framed photograph of the original shop taken nearly thirty years earlier. Below it was a simple sentence:

“From One Village... With Endless Gratitude.”

Visitors stopped to read it.

Some smiled before tasting a single sweet. The story had already begun speaking. As the exhibition opened, the crowds flowed through the aisles. A young couple paused at the stall.

“What makes your sweets different?” the husband asked.

Instead of immediately offering samples, Manish smiled.

“May I ask you a question first?”

The couple nodded.

“What sweet reminds you most of your childhood?”

The wife answered instantly.

“Mysore Pak.”

“My grandmother used to make it.”

Manish handed her a small piece. “Then I’d like you to taste this.”

She closed her eyes after the first bite. For a few moments, she didn’t speak.

Finally, she smiled. “It tastes like home.”

Manish didn’t try to sell another box. He didn’t need to.

They purchased four kgs.

Across the aisle, Venkatesh watched quietly. He smiled to himself.

“Good,” he whispered.

“He’s learned that people buy memories before they buy products.”

As the day progressed, judges began visiting each stall.

There were five of them. A celebrated chef, A food scientist, A hotel owner, A retail expert and an elderly woman named Savitri Devi, known throughout the state for preserving traditional recipes.

When they reached Ramakanth Sweets, they didn’t begin by tasting.

Instead, Savitri Devi looked at Ramakanth.



“How long have you been making sweets?”

“Thirty years.”

“And who taught you?”

“My father.”

She smiled.

“And who taught your son?”

Ramakanth looked proudly at Manish.

“Life.”

The judges exchanged appreciative glances. The tasting began. Each judge sampled different sweets.

They examined texture, the Freshness and the Presentation, the Balance of flavors.

One judge asked,

“Do you use preservatives?”

“No.”

“Artificial flavors?”

“Never.”

“What if the shelf life becomes shorter?”

Manish answered calmly,

“Then we prepare fresh sweets more often.”

The chef smiled.

“That’s an expensive decision.”

Manish nodded.

“But trust is more valuable than profit.”

One of the judges quietly wrote something in his notebook. The afternoon brought an unexpected challenge.

A famous television food presenter stopped at the stall for a live interview. Bright studio lights switched on.

A camera focused on Manish. Thousands of viewers would watch the program.

The presenter smiled.

“Young man...”



“You studied engineering.”

“You could have chosen a corporate career.”

“Why are you standing in a sweet shop?”

For a brief moment, the hall became silent.

Manish looked toward his father, Then toward the camera.

He smiled.

“I didn’t leave engineering behind. I brought engineering here.”

The presenter looked intrigued. “What do you mean?”

“I learned technology in college. My father taught me values. When technology works without values...

...business grows. When technology works with values... ...people grow.”

The audience applauded. Even nearby stall owners turned to listen. Later that evening, something unexpected happened.

A little girl wandered into the stall holding her grandfather’s hand. She looked at the colorful sweets with wide eyes.

But she didn’t ask for any. She simply stared. Lakshmi bent down and smiled.

“Which one do you like?”

The little girl pointed shyly at a bright orange laddu. Lakshmi gently placed one in her tiny hands.

“No charge.”

The grandfather tried to pay. Ramakanth folded his hands.

“Please.”

“Let us have the joy of gifting it.”

The old man’s eyes grew moist. “You remind me of the shops from my childhood.”

He quietly wrote something in the visitors’ feedback book before leaving.

Later that night, Manish read it.

“Businesses sell products. Good businesses create customers. Great businesses create memories.”

He looked at the words for a long time, then carefully closed the book. The exhibition hall slowly emptied as night approached.

The judges disappeared into a conference room. Results would be announced the next evening.

The team gathered around their stall. Everyone looked tired. But content. Subba Rao smiled.

“No matter what happens tomorrow...”

“...this has been worth every effort.”

Ramakanth nodded.

“We came here carrying sweets.”

“We’re returning with lessons.”

That night, in the hotel room, Manish couldn’t sleep.

He walked onto the balcony.

The city lights shimmered endlessly below. His phone vibrated.

It was a message from Ravi.

“Congratulations! I saw your interview on television. Everyone from college is talking about you.”

Manish smiled. Life had a strange way of surprising him. The dream he once chased through engineering...

Was now cheering for the dream he had discovered by accident. He looked toward the stars.

Quietly, he whispered,

“Thank you, Dad.”

The following evening, the main auditorium overflowed with participants.

Hundreds of entrepreneurs sat waiting. A large stage stood beneath brilliant lights. The master of ceremonies stepped up to the podium.

“Ladies and gentlemen...”

“It is time to announce this year’s winners.”

Manish glanced at Ramakanth. His father smiled calmly.

Whatever happened next...

They had already won something far greater than a trophy.

The presenter opened the sealed envelope.

He looked at the first name.

Then he paused.

The entire hall held its breath.

Chapter 17

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The grand auditorium fell silent.

More than five hundred entrepreneurs, chefs, food manufacturers, and business owners waited eagerly.

The master of ceremonies held the sealed envelope in his hands.

Every heartbeat seemed louder than the applause that had filled the hall only moments before.

Manish looked at his father. Ramakanth smiled peacefully.

He wasn't praying to win. He was simply grateful to be there.

"The Second Runner-up Award goes to..."

A famous confectionery from Visakhapatnam. Applause echoed through the hall.

"The First Runner-up Award goes to..."

A renowned traditional sweets manufacturer from Vijayawada.

Another round of applause followed. Now only one award remained. The hall became completely silent.

"And the winner of the Regional Traditional Food Competition is..."

Sri Lakshmi Heritage Foods, Hyderabad.

The audience erupted in applause. Cameras flashed continuously. The winning team walked proudly to the stage.

Manish clapped sincerely. So did Ramakanth.

There was not the slightest trace of disappointment on his face. Lakshmi looked at her husband.

"You really meant what you said yesterday."

Ramakanth smiled.

"We came here to learn."

"We've already received more than I expected."

Just as everyone thought the ceremony had ended, the master of ceremonies returned to the microphone.

"Ladies and gentlemen..."

"The jury has unanimously decided to present a special recognition this year."

The audience looked surprised.

"This award is not presented every year."

"It is reserved for an enterprise that represents the true spirit of traditional entrepreneurship."

A large screen behind the stage began displaying photographs.

A small village, A modest sweet shop, Delivery boys smiling beside their motorcycles.

Customers gathered outside the store, Ramakanth preparing sweets, Lakshmi packing gift boxes, Subba Rao stirring a giant vessel of hot ghee.

Finally...

a photograph of Manish standing beside his father. The entire team looked at one another in astonishment.

The announcer continued.

"For preserving authentic taste, embracing innovation without sacrificing tradition, creating employment for rural youth, and proving that values remain the strongest ingredient in every business..."

"The Special Jury Recognition for Traditional Excellence and Community Impact is awarded to..."

RAMAKANTH SWEETS

For a moment...

No one moved. Suresh looked at Manish.

"Anna..."

"I think they're calling us."

Subba Rao wiped his eyes. Lakshmi folded her hands in gratitude.

Ramakanth remained seated. His eyes had become moist.

Manish gently held his father's hand.

"Dad..."

"This is your moment."

The entire auditorium stood up For A standing ovation,

Not because they had won first prize, But because everyone had witnessed the sincerity behind their journey.

As father and son walked together toward the stage, the applause grew louder.

The award was presented by Savitri Devi.





She smiled warmly while presenting award and said,

“Young man...”

“You reminded us that recipes can be inherited...”

“...but values must be lived.”

Then she turned toward Ramakanth.

“You planted the tree.”

“Your son is helping it bear fruit.”

Ramakanth could barely speak. He simply bowed his head respectfully. The audience expected the ceremony to continue.

Instead...

Something extraordinary happened.

The winner of the competition, Mr. Ramesh Rao of Sri Lakshmi Heritage Foods, requested permission to speak.

The organizers nodded. He walked to the microphone carrying his gold trophy.

He looked at it for a moment. Then he turned toward Ramakanth.

"I have received many awards in my career."

"This trophy will certainly occupy a place in my office."

He paused.

"But today..."

"I witnessed something more valuable."

He pointed toward Manish and Ramakanth.

"A father who built trust for three decades."

"A son who chose not to replace tradition..."

"...but to strengthen it."

He smiled.

"We won the competition."

"But they won our respect."

The hall burst into applause.

He continued.

"Business is not a race."

"If one honest entrepreneur succeeds..."

"...our entire profession becomes stronger."

Then, to everyone's surprise, he walked toward Ramakanth.

He placed his own gold medal around Ramakanth's neck.

The audience rose once again. Many had tears in their eyes. Even the photographers stopped clicking for a moment.

Some moments deserved to be remembered... not merely photographed. Outside the auditorium, journalists surrounded Manish.

"Sir..."



"How do you feel?"

He smiled.

"I feel responsible."

One reporter looked puzzled.

"Responsible?"

"Yes."

"When people appreciate your work..."

"...they also trust your future."

"I must now work even harder to deserve that trust."

The reporters nodded. It was an answer they had not expected.

Meanwhile, another journalist approached Ramakanth.

"You've received recognition after thirty years."

"What is your secret?"

Ramakanth smiled gently.

"I never prepared sweets to win awards."

"I prepared them so that families would celebrate life's happiest moments."

"If an award comes..."

"...accept it with gratitude."

"If it doesn't..."

"...continue preparing good sweets." The interview was broadcast across the state that evening.

Thousands watched. Many remembered those words.

The next morning, before returning to the village, the team visited the exhibition grounds one last time.

Workers were dismantling stalls.

Banners were being removed. The excitement had faded.

But one thing remained. Visitors continued stopping near the empty Ramakanth Sweets stall.

Some took photographs of the banner. Others asked where the shop was located. One elderly woman smiled.

"I couldn't buy your sweets yesterday."



“But I’ll visit your village soon.”

Manish realized something. Awards last a day. Reputation lasts much longer. On the journey home, nobody spoke for nearly an hour. Each person quietly reflected on the experience.

Finally, Subba Rao broke the silence.

“Ramakanth...”

“Remember twenty-six years ago?”

Ramakanth laughed softly.

“I do.”

“You came home without an award.”

“And today...”

“...you returned with one.”

Ramakanth looked out the window.

“No.”

“I returned with something even greater.”

“What is that?”

He smiled.

“My son’s confidence.”

As the vehicle entered the village, they noticed an unexpected sight.

The road leading to the shop was decorated with colorful rangoli.

Flowers hung across the entrance.

Villagers lined both sides of the street.

Children waved little flags. Someone had written on a large banner:

WELCOME HOME, OUR PRIDE

The team looked at one another in disbelief. Word had already spread.

The village wasn’t celebrating an award. It was celebrating one of its own.

As Ramakanth stepped out of the vehicle, an elderly farmer came forward. He held the old man’s hands firmly.

“You didn’t just make sweets famous.”

“You made our village proud.”



Ramakanth looked toward Manish.

Neither father nor son spoke. They didn't need to. Their smiles said everything.

Late that night, after everyone had gone home, Manish stood alone in the shop. He placed the Special Jury Award beside the District Exhibition Certificate.

Then he noticed something. Above both awards hung the old wooden board his father had written decades earlier.

"Quality is remembered long after price is forgotten."

He smiled.

The board had been there before the awards.

It would remain there long after them.

He switched off the lights. As he stepped outside, his phone vibrated. It was an email from a software company.

"Congratulations! You have been shortlisted for the final round of recruitment. Please confirm your attendance within seven days."

Manish stood still.

The road he had once left behind...

Had quietly returned to meet him,

The biggest decision of his life...

Was waiting...



Chapter 18

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The celebration in the village lasted long into the evening. Children danced in the streets.

Neighbors visited Ramakanth Sweets carrying bouquets and garlands. Customers congratulated the entire team as though each one had personally won the award.

But amid the laughter and celebration...

Manish remained unusually quiet. Inside his pocket was the email from the software company.

A dream he had pursued for four years had returned and this time...

it was waiting for his answer. Late that night, after everyone had gone to sleep, Manish opened his laptop.

The email was still there.

Congratulations!

You have been shortlisted for the final round of recruitment.

The company offered an excellent salary, Training in Bengaluru, Career growth and International opportunities.

Everything he had imagined during his engineering days. He closed the laptop. Yet the words continued to echo in his mind.

The next morning, Ravi called.

"Manish! I heard about the award. Congratulations!"

"Thank you."

"And I also heard you've been shortlisted."

"Yes."

"So... when are you coming?"

Manish remained silent. Ravi laughed.

"You still haven't decided?"

"No."

"My friend," Ravi said gently, "do you remember our first year in college?"

Manish smiled.

"We used to dream about working in glass buildings."

"We wanted identity cards, laptops, and office cabins."

"We wanted to prove ourselves."

Ravi paused.

"Your chance has arrived."

"Don't ignore it without thinking."

"I won't."

"But I need time."

"I understand."

"Whatever you decide..."

"...I'll respect it."

For the first time in many months, Manish walked alone through the village.

He crossed the old banyan tree where children played cricket. He passed the government school where he had studied. He greeted farmers returning from their fields. Everywhere he went, people smiled warmly.

Some thanked him for creating employment. Others praised the online delivery service.

One elderly woman stopped him.

"My grandson works with you."

She folded her hands.

"Because of that job..."

"...he didn't have to leave the village."

Those simple words stayed with him.

That afternoon, he visited Raghavaiah Master. The retired teacher welcomed him warmly.

"I knew you'd come."

"You did?"

"The eyes of a confused student never change."

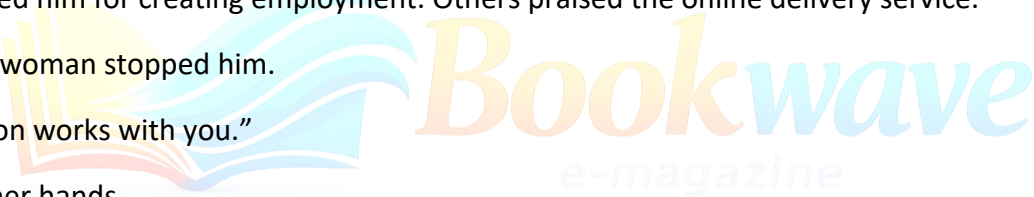
Manish laughed.

"You can still read them?"

"I've spent forty years teaching."

"I've learned to recognize questions before students ask them."

They sat beneath the mango tree in the teacher's backyard.



Manish explained everything.

The job.

The business.

The opportunities.

The responsibilities.

When he finished, Raghavaiah Master remained silent for several moments.

Finally, he asked,

“Tell me something.”

“When you solve a difficult engineering problem...”

“...how do you feel?”

“Proud.”

“And when one of your delivery boys tells you he can support his family because of this business?”

Manish lowered his eyes.

“I feel... useful.”

The teacher smiled.

“There is a difference.”

“Pride comes from achievement. Purpose comes from contribution.”

He leaned forward. “Only you can decide which one matters more.”

That evening, Manish visited the sweet shop after closing time. The lights were dim. The shelves were almost empty after another busy day.

He walked slowly through every corner. The old weighing scale, the brass lamp, The account books, The new packaging unit, The framed awards.

Every object told part of the family’s story. He imagined another future, A modern software office, Air-conditioned meeting rooms.

Computer screens filled with code. Professional challenges, Innovation, Growth, It was a wonderful future.

Then he imagined this shop five years from now.

There will be a larger kitchen, Hundreds of customers, Young people finding employment, traditional sweets reaching cities across India, Training programs for rural entrepreneurs.

Both futures were meaningful. Both were honorable. The question wasn’t which career was better. The question was...



Where could he create the greatest impact?

The following morning, Ramakanth noticed his son sitting quietly outside the shop.

He carried two cups of tea. Without saying a word, he handed one to Manish. They watched the sunrise together.

Finally, Ramakanth spoke.

"I know about the email."

"You do?"

"I saw the smile disappear from your face."

Manish sighed.

"Dad..."

"I don't want to disappoint you."

Ramakanth looked surprised.

"You never could."

"But if I leave..."

"You won't."

"If you stay..."

"You still won't."

Manish looked confused.

Ramakanth continued.

"My dream was never that you should run this shop."

"My dream was that you should become a good human being."

He smiled gently.

"Whether you write computer programs..."

"...or prepare laddus..."

"...never forget that."

The words settled deep inside Manish's heart. He realized something important.

His father wasn't waiting for an answer. He was waiting for his son to choose freely.

That freedom made the decision even more meaningful.



The next day, the entire team gathered for their weekly planning meeting. Business had grown rapidly.

FreshMart wanted to increase its orders.

More online deliveries arrived every week. Two nearby towns had approached them for franchise enquiries.

Everyone looked at Manish.

“What should we do next, Anna?”

He looked around the room. Each face carried hope. Suresh, Rafi, Kiran, Subba Rao, Lakshmi, Ramakanth.

These weren’t just employees and family members.

They were people whose futures had become connected. That evening, Manish returned to his room.

He opened his laptop once more. The email awaited his response. His fingers rested on the keyboard.

He didn’t type immediately. Instead, he opened another document.

At the top, he wrote two headings.

Software Career

Under it he listed:

- Excellent salary
- Global opportunities
- Technical growth
- Personal achievement

Then he wrote:

Ramakanth Sweets

- Employment for village youth
- Growth for the family business
- Preserving tradition
- Innovation through technology
- Service to society
- Building something that lasts

He stared at both lists for a long time. Then he smiled. One list described a career. The other described a mission.

The following morning, Manish walked into the shop carrying a neatly folded envelope.

Everyone sensed that he had made his decision.

He looked first at his father, then at his mother,

Then at every member of the team,

Finally, he spoke.

“I have decided.”

Before he could continue...

his phone rang.

It was Anand Varma from FreshMart.

His voice sounded unusually excited.

“Manish!”

“I’ve just received an offer from a national retail chain.”

“They want traditional sweets from trusted regional brands.”

“If you’re interested...”

“...this could take Ramakanth Sweets across the entire state.”

Manish looked at the envelope in his hand.

Then at the faces before him. Life had placed one final question before him.

Would he choose the certainty of a prestigious job...

or the uncertainty of an even greater dream?

His answer... Would shape not only his future, but the future of everyone who believed in him.

Chapter 19

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The morning sunlight streamed through the front windows of Ramakanth Sweets.

Customers came and went as usual. Fresh laddus were arranged neatly on polished steel trays.

The familiar aroma of pure ghee filled the shop. Everything looked normal.

But for Manish...

Nothing was ordinary anymore. In his shirt pocket rested two envelopes.

One contained the appointment letter from the software company. The other contained a handwritten business expansion plan.

Two futures, one choice. The entire team had gathered before the shop opened.

No one spoke.

Even Subba Rao, who always found a reason to joke, remained unusually quiet.

Manish stood before them. He looked at his father first. Then at his mother, finally at every member of the team.

"I have made my decision."

The room became silent.

"I am not rejecting my engineering career."

"I am postponing it."

Everyone listened carefully.

"I will dedicate the next six months completely to Ramakanth Sweets."

"If, after six months, I believe this business can create a greater future for more people..."

"...I will continue."

"If not..."

"...I will accept the software job and leave with complete peace of mind."

For a moment...

no one reacted.

Then Ramakanth slowly stood up.

He walked toward his son.

Without saying a word, he embraced him.

It wasn't an embrace of victory. It was an embrace of trust. Lakshmi smiled through tears.

"You've chosen with honesty."



“That is enough.”

Suresh clapped first. Soon the entire shop echoed with applause. The six-month journey had begun.

That very afternoon, Manish called Anand Varma.

“Sir.”

“I’ve made my decision.”

“I’m staying.”

Anand smiled on the other end.

“I was hoping you’d say that.”

“But remember...”

“The market won’t reward emotions.”

“It rewards discipline.”

“I understand.”

“And that’s why I believe you’ll succeed.”

The next day, Manish gathered everyone around a large whiteboard.

At the top he wrote:

MISSION – 180 DAYS

The workers looked at one another curiously.

“What is this, Anna?”

“Our roadmap.”

He drew six columns.

Month One

Build Strong Systems

Month Two

Increase Production

Month Three

Expand Delivery Network



Month Four

Reach Nearby Towns

Month Five

Develop Catering Services

Month Six

Measure Results and Decide the Future

Subba Rao smiled.

“This looks like an engineering project.”

Manish laughed.

“Exactly.”

“Only this time...”

“...our project is our dream.”

Every department received responsibility. Lakshmi supervised ingredient quality.

Ramakanth focused on customer relationships.

Subba Rao trained young sweet makers, Suresh handled digital orders, Rafi managed logistics, Kiran coordinated deliveries and customer feedback.

For the first time, everyone understood that they were not merely doing jobs, They were building an organization.

One week later, Manish announced another idea.

“We’re going to meet every customer who places large orders.”

Suresh looked surprised.

“We’ll visit them personally?”

“Yes.”

“Why?”

“Because businesses grow through relationships.”

The team began travelling to nearby villages. Instead of simply delivering sweets, they listened. Wedding organizers shared their problems. Temple committees explained festival requirements.

School principals discussed annual celebrations. Small function halls described last-minute difficulties.

Manish returned with pages of notes. He realized something important.

Customers rarely complained about sweets. They struggled with planning.

One evening, he gathered the team again. "I've found our next opportunity."

"What is it?" asked Rafi.

"We're not just going to sell sweets."

"We're going to solve problems."

The workers looked puzzled and Manish continued.

"If someone has a function..."

"They shouldn't have to call five different people."

"We'll provide sweets."

"Gift boxes."

"Return gifts."

"Delivery."

"Live sweet counters."

"And eventually..."

"...complete catering."



Subba Rao stared at him.

"Anna..."

"You're dreaming very big."

Manish smiled.

"No."

"I'm listening very carefully."

Within days, a beautifully designed brochure was printed.

Across the top were the words:

Celebrate Every Occasion With Ramakanth Sweets

Below it were services never before offered in the region.

✓ Traditional Sweets

✓ Festival Gift Boxes

- ✓ Wedding Sweet Counters
- ✓ Corporate Gift Packs
- ✓ Bulk Orders
- ✓ Home Delivery

At the bottom appeared one sentence.

“From Preparation to Celebration – We Are With You.”

The response was immediate. Wedding enquiries increased. Birthday orders doubled.

Temple committees began placing advance bookings. Even customers from villages nearly thirty kilometers away started calling.

The delivery motorcycles were no longer enough. Sometimes Rafi made three trips in a single day.

One evening he laughed,

“Anna...”

“My motorcycle knows every village better than I do.”

Success also brought pressure. The kitchen remained busy late into the night.

Subba Rao noticed everyone becoming exhausted. He approached Manish.

“We need more hands.”

“I know.”

“But not just hands.”

“We need good people.”

The next Sunday, Manish organized something no one expected.

A recruitment meeting,

Not in a city. Not through newspapers,

But in the village community hall.

Young men and women from nearby villages attended. Some had completed school.

Some had left college due to financial difficulties. Some were unemployed despite working hard to find jobs.

Manish stood before them.

“I’m not offering employment.”

The audience looked confused.

"I'm offering an opportunity to grow with us."

He spoke about honesty. Discipline, Respect, Learning.

Then he smiled and said, "Skills can be taught. But Attitude cannot."

By evening, six young people had joined the team.

Ramakanth watched quietly. His eyes reflected immense pride.

Years ago...

He had struggled to build one small shop. Today... his son was creating livelihoods.

As the first month came to an end, Manish called everyone together.

He erased the words **Month One** from the whiteboard.

Then he wrote in bold letters:

COMPLETED

The team applauded.

"It may look like one word," Manish said.

"But behind it are hundreds of hours of hard work."

He looked at each member. "No one succeeds alone."

"This milestone belongs to every one of you."

That night, Ramakanth sat beside Manish outside the shop. The village was peaceful. Only the soft hum of crickets filled the air.

"You know," Ramakanth said quietly,

"I spent thirty years building a respected sweet shop."

He looked toward the workers locking up for the night.

"You are building something much bigger."

Manish smiled.

"I'm only continuing what you started."

Ramakanth shook his head.

"No."

"I built a business. You are building a future."

Just then, Suresh came running from inside the shop.

“Anna!”

“You need to see this!”

Manish hurried inside.

The online order dashboard was open.

A new notification flashed across the screen.

Large Bulk Order Received

Customer:

Sri Venkateswara Grand Convention Centre

Estimated Value:

₹8,75,000

Delivery Date:

Thirty Days

Everyone stared at the screen.

It was, by far, the biggest order in the history of Ramakanth Sweets.

The room fell silent. Subba Rao whispered,

“If we complete this successfully...”

“...our future will never be the same.”

Manish took a deep breath.

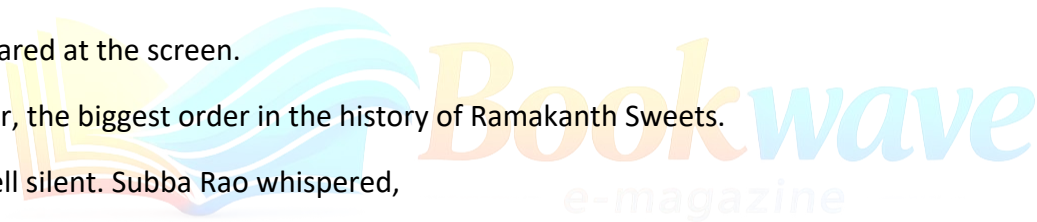
He looked at the order.

Then at his team.

The six-month journey had truly begun.

And destiny...

had just raised the stakes.



Chapter 20

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

One Order at a Time

The order confirmation remained open on the computer screen.

Sri Venkateswara Grand Convention Centre

Order Value: ₹8,75,000

No one in the shop spoke for several moments. It wasn't merely a large order.

It was larger than anything Ramakanth Sweets had ever attempted. Subba Rao quietly broke the silence.

"Can we really do this?"

Manish looked around the room.

"I don't know."

The team looked surprised. Then he smiled.

"But I know one thing."

"We'll prepare for it so well that success becomes our only option."

The next morning, instead of beginning production immediately, Manish called a meeting.

He drew a large circle on the whiteboard.

At the center he wrote:

THE CUSTOMER'S TRUST

Around it he wrote six words.

Quality

Planning

Teamwork

Discipline

Cleanliness

Timing

"This order," he explained, "is not about making sweets."

"It is about protecting trust."

The work was divided carefully.

Ramakanth met the convention centre manager personally. He discussed every requirement in detail.

Lakshmi prepared a checklist of ingredients. Nothing would be purchased at the last moment.

Subba Rao trained the new recruits on maintaining consistency.

“Every laddu should look as if it came from the same pair of hands,” he reminded them.

Suresh built a digital production schedule. Each batch had a time slot. Each delivery vehicle had a route.

Each worker knew their responsibility. For the first time, Ramakanth smiled and said,

“Our shop now runs like a well-planned orchestra.”

The days passed quickly. The kitchen came alive before dawn. Fresh ghee melted slowly in large vessels.

The aroma of roasted gram flour spread through the building. Young workers measured ingredients with precision. Older craftsmen guided them patiently.

Whenever someone made a mistake, Subba Rao never scolded.

He simply said,

“Today you lost a laddu.”

“Tomorrow, don’t lose a customer.”

Those words became another lesson written on the whiteboard.

One evening, a new worker accidentally spoiled an entire batch of Kaju Katli.

He stood silently, expecting anger.

Instead, Ramakanth walked over. He tasted the sweet and Smiled gently. Then said,

“This batch won’t reach our customers.”

“But it will teach us something.”

He turned to everyone.

“Write down why it happened.”

Suresh noted every detail.

Ingredient temperature.

Cooking time.

Mixing speed.

The mistake was documented.

The lesson was shared. No one repeated it.

The day before the convention order, rain clouds gathered over the village.

By midnight, heavy rain lashed the roads. Electricity went off. The kitchen fell into darkness. The younger workers panicked. Rafi rushed inside.

“Anna! The power is gone!”

For a moment, everyone looked worried. Then Ramakanth quietly lit the old brass lamp.

He smiled.

“Do you know how we prepared sweets thirty years ago?”

“Without electricity.”

Within minutes, emergency lights were switched on. A generator borrowed from the village panchayat arrived. Neighbors volunteered to help.

One farmer even brought his tractor to transport supplies through the muddy roads. The entire village stood behind Ramakanth Sweets.

Watching everyone work together, Manish realized something profound. They weren’t running a business alone. They had become part of the community’s pride.

Morning arrived. The rain had stopped. Rows of beautifully packed sweet boxes filled the loading area.

Each carton carried a small message.

“Thank you for making us a part of your celebration.”

Lakshmi smiled when she saw it.

“Customers will remember this.”

“That is the idea,” Manish replied.

The delivery reached the convention centre ahead of schedule. The event manager carefully opened one box.

He examined the sweets. Perfect. He tasted one, closed his eyes. Then smiled.

“I was worried because this was your biggest order.”

He looked at Manish.

“I needn’t have worried.”

The wedding was attended by nearly two thousand guests. Throughout the evening, compliments poured in.

“The Mysore Pak melts in the mouth.”

“The laddus remind me of my grandmother’s recipe.”

“The packing is beautiful.”

By the end of the function, the convention centre manager approached Manish.

“I have one request.”

“What is it, sir?”

“From today onward...”

“...you’ll be our preferred sweets partner.”

He extended his hand.

“This is only the beginning.”

Within weeks, similar orders followed. Wedding planners began recommending Ramakanth Sweets.

Temple committees booked festival supplies months in advance and Corporate offices ordered festive gift boxes for employees.

The delivery vehicles travelled farther than ever before. Soon, one motorcycle was no longer enough. Then two were not enough. Finally, Manish purchased a small delivery van.

When the keys arrived, he didn’t keep them. He handed them to Rafi.

“You’ve driven for us through sunshine and storms.”

“This belongs to the team.”

Rafi looked at the keys with trembling hands.

“I’ve never owned anything this valuable.”

Ramakanth smiled.

“You’ve earned it.”

As orders increased, customers began asking another question.

“Can you also arrange food for our functions?”

Initially, Manish hesitated. Catering was a different business. It required planning, chefs, equipment, and logistics.

That night, he discussed it with Subba Rao.

“What do you think?”

The old sweet maker smiled.

“If we can prepare sweets with love...”

“...why can’t we prepare meals with the same love?”

The idea was born. Not out of ambition. But out of listening.

The first catering assignment was for a village wedding.

Only three hundred guests. The team was nervous. Every dish was prepared with care. The service was organized.

The guests appreciated not only the food but also the cleanliness and discipline. When the bride's father thanked Ramakanth personally, he said,

"You removed half my worries."

Those words were worth more than any advertisement.

Months passed.

The whiteboard slowly filled with achievements.

✓ FreshMart Expansion

✓ Convention Centre Partnership

✓ Catering Services

✓ Six New Employees

✓ Four New Villages

✓ Customer Satisfaction Above Expectations



One by one, every goal was crossed off. The team celebrated each milestone with a simple tradition.

Not a party. Not speeches.

Just sharing a fresh laddu together. Because success tasted sweeter when everyone enjoyed it equally.

Exactly six months after Manish had written **MISSION – 180 DAYS**, the accountant arrived carrying a thick file.

He adjusted his spectacles and placed the financial statement on the counter.

Ramakanth looked at it nervously.

"I've never understood these big reports."

The accountant smiled. "You only need to understand one number."

He slowly turned the final page. Everyone gathered around. The accountant looked at Manish.

Then at Ramakanth. Finally, he spoke.

"Congratulations."

"This financial year..."

Ramakanth Sweets has crossed a turnover of ₹3 crore.

Silence.

No one shouted. No one celebrated immediately.

Ramakanth removed his spectacles. His eyes filled with tears. He remembered the tiny shop he had opened with borrowed money.

The sleepless nights, the slow days, the uncertain beginnings, He looked at his son and said, "You promised me six months."

Manish smiled.

"Yes."

"You've given me thirty years of happiness in just six months."

Father and son embraced. Around them, the entire team applauded.

Not for the ₹3 crore.

But for the journey that had made it possible.

Late that evening, after the shop had closed, Manish walked alone through the quiet village.

The stars glittered above. Six months had passed. The promise he had made to himself had been fulfilled.

Now another decision awaited him. The software company had sent a final reminder.

They still wanted him. He stopped beneath the old banyan tree where he had once dreamed of leaving the village.

He smiled.

Sometimes...

the place we dream of leaving...

becomes the place where we discover who we truly are.

He looked toward the softly lit signboard of **Ramakanth Sweets**.

The answer had become clear.

Tomorrow...

he would tell his father.

His decision would not only shape his own future—

it would shape the future of many others.

Chapter 21

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The morning sun bathed the village in golden light.

Inside Ramakanth Sweets, the day's work had already begun.

Fresh batches of Mysore Pak cooled on steel trays.

The aroma of cardamom drifted through the kitchen.

Customers greeted Ramakanth with the warmth of an old friend.

Everything appeared exactly as it had for years.

Yet, for Manish, this morning carried a significance unlike any other.

Today, he would make the decision that would shape the rest of his life.

After breakfast, he requested everyone to gather.

Ramakanth.

Lakshmi.

Subba Rao.

Suresh.

Rafi.

Kiran.

The six newly recruited workers.

Even the accountant, who had come to finalize the quarterly reports, remained.

Everyone sensed that something important was about to happen.

Manish placed two envelopes on the table.

One was the appointment letter from the software company. The other contained the six-month business review.

He looked at both. Then slowly picked up the appointment letter.

Without speaking, he folded it carefully. He placed it back inside its cover. Then he looked at his father.

"Dad..."

"I've made my final decision."

The room fell completely silent.



"I will not be joining the software company."

No one moved.

"I am choosing Ramakanth Sweets."

He paused.

Then continued.

"Not because it is our family business."

"Not because I feel responsible."

"And not because I couldn't get a good job."

He smiled gently.

"I am choosing this path because this is where I can create the greatest difference."

Lakshmi quietly wiped away a tear.

Ramakanth looked down, unable to hide his emotions. Manish walked toward the whiteboard. He erased the words:

MISSION – 180 DAYS

Then he wrote something new.

OUR PURPOSE

He turned toward everyone.

"If we think we're only making sweets..."

"...our business will remain small."

"But if we understand that we're helping families celebrate their happiest moments..."

"...our work will never become ordinary."

The room remained silent.

Every word settled deeply into every heart.

Subba Rao smiled.

"I've been making sweets for thirty-five years."

"Today..."

"I finally understood what I've been doing."

Everyone laughed warmly. Manish continued.



"From today..."

"I don't want anyone here to think of themselves as workers."

"You are partners in this journey."

Suresh looked surprised.

"Partners?"

"Yes."

"Each one of you carries our reputation every single day."

He looked at Rafi.

"When you deliver an order on time..."

"...you protect our promise."

He looked at Lakshmi.

"When you reject poor-quality ingredients..."

"...you protect our values."

He looked at Subba Rao.

"When you teach a young employee patiently..."

"...you protect our tradition."

Finally, he looked at Ramakanth.

"And when you smile at every customer..."

"...you remind us why we exist."

No one spoke. There was nothing left to say. That afternoon, Manish called everyone into the office once again.

"I have another announcement."

The workers looked curious.

"Beginning next month.....every employee will receive health insurance."

The room erupted in surprise.

Rafi looked confused.

"For us?"

"Yes."



“And every child of our employees who scores well in school...”

“...will receive educational support from our company.”

Lakshmi smiled proudly and said, That’s a wonderful idea.”

Manish nodded.

“If our people grow...”

“...our business will grow.”

A week later, another change arrived.

Instead of interviewing only experienced workers, Manish began recruiting young people from nearby villages.

Some had never worked in a professional environment.

Others lacked confidence. He welcomed them all. On their first day, he stood before them.

“I won’t ask where you failed.”

“I’ll ask where you want to go.”

The young recruits looked at one another. No employer had ever spoken to them that way.

He continued.

“We’ll teach you everything. But I expect honesty, “I expect discipline. And I expect respect.”

“Everything else...”

“...we’ll learn together.”

One evening, Ramakanth quietly watched the new recruits working. He turned to Lakshmi.

“Do you remember when I struggled to find one helper?”

Lakshmi laughed softly.

“And today...”

“...our son is training a team.”

Ramakanth smiled.

“He didn’t simply expand the shop.”

“He expanded our family.”

The following Sunday, Manish visited the government school where he had studied as a child.

The classrooms looked exactly the same. The old playground remained unchanged. Children played beneath the banyan tree. The headmaster welcomed him warmly.

“We’ve all been following your journey.”

Manish smiled.

“I came here for a reason.”

“What is it?”

“I want to sponsor a small library.”

The headmaster looked pleasantly surprised.

“A library?”

“Yes.”

“I don’t know how many children will become engineers.”

“Or doctors.”

“Or entrepreneurs.”

“But I know one thing.”

“If they begin reading...”

“...their world becomes larger.”

Within weeks, books began filling the shelves.

The books varied from Business to Science, Literature to Biographies and Inspirational stories.

Every book carried a simple stamp.

Built with Gratitude by Ramakanth Sweets.

The library inauguration was a modest event.





Children clapped enthusiastically. Teachers thanked Manish. But the most touching moment came when an elderly villager approached him.

He gently held Manish's hand.

"When your father started this shop..."

"...he fed people's celebrations."

"You..."

"...are feeding their dreams."

Manish stood speechless.

Those words became one of the greatest compliments he had ever received.

Months continued to pass. The business remained busy. FreshMart increased its orders again.

Catering assignments became more frequent. Festival seasons broke previous sales records.

Yet, despite the growth, one tradition never changed.

Every morning before opening the shop, Ramakanth still tasted the first laddu.

One day, a young employee asked,

“Sir...”

“Now that we have quality systems...”

“...why do you still taste every batch?”

Ramakanth smiled.

“Because machines can measure weight.”

“They cannot measure love.”

The young worker never forgot those words. Neither did Manish.

Late one evening, after closing the shop, father and son stood outside watching the quiet village road.

Ramakanth broke the silence.

“You know...”

“I once dreamed that you would become a successful engineer.”

Manish smiled.

“I became one.”

Ramakanth laughed.

“Yes.”

“You engineer systems.”

“You engineer opportunities.”

“You engineer hope.”

Then he placed his hand on Manish’s shoulder.

“But above all...”

“You engineer people.”

For a long moment, neither spoke. The stars shimmered above the village.

A cool breeze carried the sweet fragrance from the kitchen.

Manish looked at the familiar signboard.

RAMAKANTH SWEETS

He realized something. Buildings grow old. Machines become outdated.

Businesses change. But values...

if protected...

can outlive generations.

Just then, Suresh came running from the office.

“Anna!”

“You need to see today’s report.”

Manish smiled and asked, “What happened?”

Suresh handed him the latest sales summary.

Across the top was a note from the accountant.

“Current annual growth rate indicates that, if maintained, Ramakanth Sweets is on track to cross ₹8 crore within the next two years.”

Manish folded the report.

He didn’t smile because of the number. He smiled because he knew what it represented.

More employment,

More opportunities,

More dreams.

The business was growing.

But something even greater was taking shape.

A legacy.

Chapter 22

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The calendar on the office wall changed slowly.

Summer became monsoon.

Monsoon gave way to winter. Festivals arrived. Wedding seasons returned.

Every month brought new challenges. Every challenge brought new learning. Two years never passed so quickly.

Yet, when people spoke about Ramakanth Sweets, they no longer said,

"It's a sweet shop."

They proudly said,

"It's the pride of our region."

The business had grown beyond anyone's imagination.

The small kitchen where Ramakanth once worked alone had transformed into a modern production unit.

Stainless steel worktables gleamed under bright lights.

Separate sections were created for laddus, Mysore Pak, kaju sweets, and traditional snacks.

A quality inspection desk welcomed every batch before packing.

The old blackboard on which Ramakanth wrote daily expenses had been preserved.

Manish refused to remove it. One visitor asked,

"Why keep this old board in such a modern facility?"

Manish smiled.

"Because success should never erase humble beginnings."

The delivery area looked completely different now. Three delivery vans stood proudly outside.

Eight motorcycles carried the familiar logo of **Ramakanth Sweets**.

Each vehicle bore the same message:

"Delivering Happiness... One Celebration at a Time."

Rafi, who once managed every delivery alone, now supervised the entire logistics team. One afternoon, a new driver asked him,

"Sir, what is the secret to delivering on time?"

Rafi smiled. "We don't deliver sweets."

"We deliver someone's special day."

The young driver nodded. He never forgot those words. Inside the kitchen, Subba Rao had become a respected mentor. The six young recruits who had joined nervously were now skilled sweet makers.

One of them, Mahesh, remembered his first day. He had accidentally burned an entire batch of boondi.

Instead of scolding him, Subba Rao had said,

"One mistake doesn't define a craftsman."

"Repeating it does."

Today, Mahesh himself trained new recruits. The lessons continued from one generation to the next.

Lakshmi had quietly become the heart of the organization.

She personally welcomed every new employee. On their first day, she served them a simple meal prepared at home.

One young woman asked,

"Madam... why do you do this for us?"

Lakshmi smiled and said, "Because no one should feel like a stranger on their first day."

Years later, every employee remembered that meal more vividly than their appointment letter.

The catering division expanded rapidly.

What had begun with a three-hundred-guest wedding now handled events of over three thousand people.

Every function ended with the same compliment.

"The food tastes like home."

Manish always reminded his chefs,

"People may forget decorations."

"They may forget the music."

"But they'll always remember the taste."

Quality remained non-negotiable.

FreshMart continued placing larger and larger orders.

Soon, products from Ramakanth Sweets reached supermarkets in several districts. Customers who had never visited the village began recognizing the brand.

One evening, Ramakanth entered a supermarket in a nearby city.

He quietly walked to the sweets section. There they were. He saw there, Beautifully arranged boxes carrying his family's name. He stood silently for several moments. The shop that had once served one village...

He had now entered hundreds of homes. A young customer picked up a box and smiled.

"My grandmother says these are the best laddus."

The young man had no idea that the elderly gentleman standing beside him was the founder.

Ramakanth simply smiled and walked away.

Some happiness needed no introduction. The annual business review meeting arrived.

Everyone gathered in the conference room. The accountant projected charts on a screen.

Sales had increased.

Customer satisfaction remained exceptionally high. Repeat orders had crossed every previous record.

Employment had grown steadily. Manish listened carefully. Then he asked only one question.

"How many customer complaints did we receive this year?"

The accountant looked surprised.

"Very few."

"Good."

"If we stop listening to complaints..."

"...we'll stop improving."

The younger managers noted the lesson. Growth should never silence humility.

One afternoon, Manish received a call from the District Industries Officer.

"Congratulations, Mr. Manish."

"You've been shortlisted for the Young Rural Entrepreneur Award."

Manish thanked him politely.

When the call ended, Suresh smiled.

"Anna..."

"Another award!"

Manish laughed and said, "The real award is waiting outside."

He pointed toward the loading area where workers cheerfully packed hundreds of festival gift boxes.

"Look at those smiling faces. That's enough for me."



Later that week, an unexpected visitor arrived. It was Ravi. It was his college friend. They embraced warmly.

"It's been so long!" Ravi exclaimed.

"It has."

Ravi looked around the production unit with amazement.

"This is unbelievable."

"I remember you sitting beside me in engineering class. We used to solve software problems together."

He smiled.

"And today..."

"...you're solving real-life problems." They walked through the facility. Ravi spoke to workers.

He met Lakshmi. He watched Subba Rao train young recruits. Finally, he turned to Manish.

"I thought you had left the software world."

Manish smiled.

"No."

"I simply changed the software."

Ravi looked puzzled. Manish continued.

"In college, I learned to build computer systems."

"Today..."

"...I'm building systems that improve people's lives."

Ravi remained silent. Then he nodded slowly.

"I understand now."

That evening, Ravi and Manish sat beneath the old banyan tree where they had once dreamed of corporate careers.

Ravi looked thoughtful.

"You know..."

"I earn a good salary, I've travelled abroad, I've worked on exciting projects."

"But today..."

"...I envy you."

Manish laughed.



“You?”

“Yes.”

“I build products for companies.”

“You build hope for families.”

There was no jealousy in Ravi’s voice. Only admiration.

The two friends sat quietly for a while. Different roads. Different destinations. Both meaningful. Both respectable. Yet each understood why the other had chosen his path.

A month later, the accountant entered Ramakanth’s office carrying the annual financial report.

This time, his smile was even broader. Ramakanth adjusted his spectacles.

“Should I be worried?”

The accountant chuckled. “No, sir. You should be proud.”

He placed the report gently on the table. Then, in a calm voice, he said, “Congratulations.”

“Ramakanth Sweets has officially crossed an annual turnover of ₹8 crore.”



The room fell silent. Eight crore. No one had imagined such a number. Ramakanth closed the report.

He didn't look at the figures again. Instead, he looked through the office window.

Fifteen employees were busy preparing orders. Delivery vehicles waited outside. Customers continued entering the shop.

He smiled softly. "These numbers are beautiful."

"But do you know what I see?"

Everyone looked at him.

"I don't see eight crore."

"I see fifteen families sleeping peacefully tonight."

Not a single person in the room spoke. Some truths needed no applause. That evening, the entire team gathered outside the shop. No grand celebration. No expensive party.

Only a simple dinner prepared together.

As everyone ate, laughed, and shared stories, Ramakanth stood up.

"My friends..."

"When I opened this shop... ..I dreamed of feeding my family."

He looked around the gathering.

"Today..."

"...this shop has become a family."

He turned toward Manish.

"My son..."

"You didn't make this business bigger. You made our hearts bigger."

Tears filled many eyes. Above them, the familiar signboard glowed softly in the night.

RAMAKANTH SWEETS

Below it stood fifteen employees. One family, one purpose, one legacy in the making.

But Manish knew...

His journey was still incomplete, because true success was never meant to stop at the doors of his own business.

It was time... to give something back to the village that had believed in him from the very beginning.

Chapter 23

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The morning breeze carried the familiar fragrance of fresh sweets through the village.

Customers filled Ramakanth Sweets as they did every day. Children stopped before the glass display to admire the colorful laddus.

Delivery vans moved in and out of the courtyard. The business had become larger.

But one thing had not changed. Every morning, before entering his office, Manish stood silently before the old wooden board that his father had hung decades earlier.

“Quality is remembered long after price is forgotten.”

One morning, as he looked at those words, another thought crossed his mind.

“Success is remembered only when it helps someone else.”

That single thought stayed with him throughout the day.

A week later, Manish called a meeting.

Not with managers. Not with accountants. Not with suppliers. Instead...

He invited the village elders, Teachers, Farmers, Women’s self-help groups, Youth leaders and Temple committee members.

Even the village librarian attended. Everyone wondered why.

The meeting was held in the community hall. There was no stage. No banners praising the company. Only a simple board that read:

“Let’s Build Our Village Together.”

When everyone had gathered, Manish stood before them.

“My friends...”

“This village gave me everything.”

“It gave me my childhood. It gave me my education. It gave me my values. It gave my family our livelihood.”

He paused.

“I’ve been thinking...”

“If Ramakanth Sweets has grown because of this village...”

“...shouldn’t the village grow with it?”

The hall became silent. No one had expected those words. An elderly farmer stood up.

“What do you have in mind, son?”

Manish smiled.

“I don’t want to donate money. I want to create opportunities.”

The room listened carefully.

He unfolded a handwritten sheet. At the top were the words:

Village Development Initiative

Below it were five simple ideas.

- 1. Scholarships for deserving students.**
- 2. Free skill training for unemployed youth.**
- 3. Entrepreneurship workshops for village women.**
- 4. Library expansion with competitive exam books.**

There were no grand promises. These are Only practical ideas. The retired headmaster smiled proudly.

“This is exactly what our village needs.”

A farmer added, “If our children learn new skills... ..they won’t have to leave home unwillingly.”

A young woman from a self-help group asked, “Will women also be included?”

Manish answered without hesitation. “Absolutely.”

“Talent has no gender.”

The hall erupted in applause.

The first program began the very next Sunday. Nearly sixty young men and women gathered in the school auditorium.

Some had engineering degrees. Some had completed intermediate education. Some had never used a computer. Some simply wanted direction. Manish stood before them. He did not begin with business.

He began with failure.

“I want to tell you something.”

“When I entered engineering college...I believed success had only one address.”

“A software job.”

The students smiled.

"I worked hard. I prepared for interviews. I dreamed of a corporate career."

Then he paused. "But life had another plan."

He told them the story of his father's accident. How he reluctantly entered the shop. How customers' affection changed his thinking. How technology transformed a small business. How six months changed his destiny.

When he finished, one student raised his hand.

"Sir..."

"Were you never disappointed?"

Manish smiled and said, "Many times."

"But disappointment is temporary. Giving up is permanent."

The hall became silent.

Some students quietly wrote those words in their notebooks. Over the next few months, the workshops became increasingly popular. Experts from nearby towns volunteered to teach. One banker explained how to apply for small business loans.

A chartered accountant taught basic financial planning. A marketing professional spoke about branding.

An agricultural officer introduced food processing opportunities. Young people who had once believed success existed only in cities now began discovering possibilities within their own region.

One afternoon, Manish noticed a familiar face waiting outside his office.

It was Mahesh, The young man who had once burned an entire batch of boondi.

He looked nervous.

"Anna..."

"I want to speak to you."

"Come in."

Mahesh took a deep breath.

"I've saved some money."

"I want to start my own small snacks unit."

For a moment, Manish remained silent.

Then he smiled.

"Wonderful."

Mahesh looked surprised.

“You aren’t angry?”

“Why would I be?”

“You trained me.”

“I thought you’d want me to stay.”

Manish stood up and placed his hand on Mahesh’s shoulder.

“If a teacher fears his students’ success...”

“...he has failed as a teacher.”

Mahesh’s eyes filled with tears.

“I don’t know what to say.”

“Say one thing.”

“What?”

“When your business grows...”

“...help someone else.”

Mahesh nodded firmly.

“I promise.”



Within six months, Mahesh’s snack unit was supplying products to nearby villages.

He employed four young people.

One evening, he returned to Ramakanth Sweets carrying a box of freshly prepared murukkus.

He placed it before Manish.

“My first product.”

Manish tasted one.

Then smiled.

“It needs a little more cumin.”

Mahesh laughed.

“You’re still my teacher.”

The library also became a place of transformation. Every evening, students filled its reading room.

Competitive exam books that had once gathered dust were now constantly borrowed.

One day, the librarian called Manish.

“I want to show you something.”

He pointed to a register.

More than three hundred new memberships had been added in less than a year.

Children who had never enjoyed reading now competed to borrow books first. The librarian smiled.

“You didn’t donate books.”

“You created readers.”

Meanwhile, Lakshmi quietly started another initiative.

Every Friday, she invited a group of village women to the production unit. She taught them hygiene, food preparation, packaging, and quality control.

Some later began preparing pickles, spice powders, and homemade snacks.

Ramakanth Sweets displayed their products in a dedicated section of the shop.

The women earned an income with dignity. One elderly woman folded her hands before Lakshmi.

“You didn’t give us charity. You gave us confidence.”

Lakshmi smiled.

“Confidence lasts much longer.”

Months later, the District Collector visited the village to inspect several rural development projects.

He toured the library. He met students. He visited Mahesh’s snack unit. He spoke to the women’s self-help groups.

Finally, he arrived at Ramakanth Sweets.

After listening to everyone’s experiences, he turned toward Manish.

“I’ve visited many successful businesses.”

“But today...”

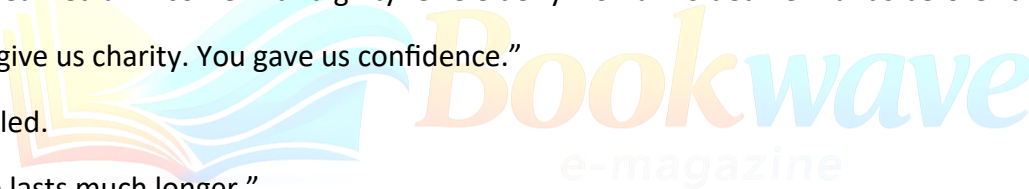
“I’ve visited a business that has become a movement.”

The words spread quickly through the village. People repeated them proudly.

That evening, Ramakanth and Manish walked through the village streets.

Children waved enthusiastically. Farmers greeted them warmly. Young entrepreneurs discussed new business ideas.

Women proudly displayed products they had begun selling.



The village looked different. Not because new buildings had appeared, But because new confidence had appeared.

Ramakanth stopped walking. He looked around quietly. Then he said,

“Do you remember the day of my accident?”

Manish smiled.

“Every detail.”

“If that accident had never happened.....what would your life have been?”

Manish looked toward the shop, then toward the smiling faces around him.

“I might have become a successful software engineer.”

He paused.

“But I would never have discovered the joy of changing lives.”

Ramakanth nodded slowly.

“Sometimes...”

“...God closes one door.”

“So that we finally notice the gate that was always open.”

A month later, an invitation arrived. It was from the Government Junior College.

The principal had written a handwritten note.

“Our students know your success. We want them to know your journey.”

“Please come and address our Annual Students’ Inspiration Meet.”

Manish folded the letter carefully. He smiled.

He had spoken to customers, Employees, Entrepreneurs, Villagers.

But speaking to hundreds of young students... was different.

He knew they would ask the same question he had once asked himself.

“What should I do with my life?”

He looked out of the office window. The answer would not come from books. It would come from his own story.

And perhaps... that story would become the beginning of someone else’s.

Chapter 24

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The Government Junior College auditorium had never looked so lively. Colorful banners decorated the entrance.

Students from nearby colleges filled every seat. Teachers stood along the walls. Parents occupied the last few rows.

Some villagers had also arrived, eager to hear the young man whose story had become an inspiration throughout the region.

On the stage stood a simple podium, Behind it hung a banner.

“Annual Students’ Inspiration Meet”

Chief Guest: Mr. Manish Ramakanth

Entrepreneur & Rural Youth Inspiration

As Manish entered the hall with Ramakanth and Lakshmi, the students welcomed them with a thunderous round of applause.

Manish folded his hands in greeting. He looked at the eager faces before him. For a moment, he saw himself among them Curious, Ambitious, Uncertain and hopeful.

The principal stepped forward.

“Dear students...”

“Today, I could have invited a famous industrialist. I could have invited a celebrity. But I chose someone whose success began with ordinary circumstances.”

He turned toward Manish.

“He reminds us that greatness does not depend on where we begin. It depends on how we respond when life changes our plans.”

The hall echoed with applause.

Manish walked to the podium. He looked around quietly. Then smiled, He started telling, “I don’t want to give a speech. “I’d rather answer your questions.”

The students exchanged excited glances. Hands immediately shot into the air. The first student stood up.

“Sir...”

“Were you disappointed when your father met with an accident?”

The hall became silent. Manish nodded gently.

“Yes.”

"I was."

"At that time..."

"I thought life had interrupted my dreams."

He paused.

"Today..."

"I realize life was introducing me to a bigger dream."

The students began writing in their notebooks. Another student asked,

"Sir..."

"Did you ever feel embarrassed about running a sweet shop after studying engineering?"

Manish smiled.

"I'll answer honestly."

"Yes."

"For a few days."

"I worried about what my friends would think."

Then he laughed softly.

"Later I discovered something."

"The world respects excellence."

"It doesn't matter whether you're writing software..."

"...or making laddus."

"If you become the best at what you do..."

"...people stop asking why."

The auditorium erupted in applause. A young girl wearing an engineering college identity card stood up.

"Sir..."

"My parents want me to join our family business."

"But I dream of working in a multinational company."

"What should I do?". Manish remained silent for a few moments.

Then he answered carefully.



“Don’t choose because of pressure.”

“Don’t reject because of pride.”

“Explore both honestly.”

He smiled.

“I gave myself six months.”

“Those six months gave me my answer.”

The girl nodded thoughtfully.

Another student raised his hand.

“What if we make the wrong decision?”

Manish smiled and said “I’ve learned something.”

“There are very few wrong decisions.”

“There are only decisions we don’t work hard enough to make successful.”

The hall fell silent. Even the teachers looked at one another.

A commerce student stood up.

“Sir...”

“What is the secret behind your business success?”

Manish shook his head.

“There isn’t one.”

“There are many small habits.”

He counted them on his fingers.

“Keep your promises.”

“Respect customers.”

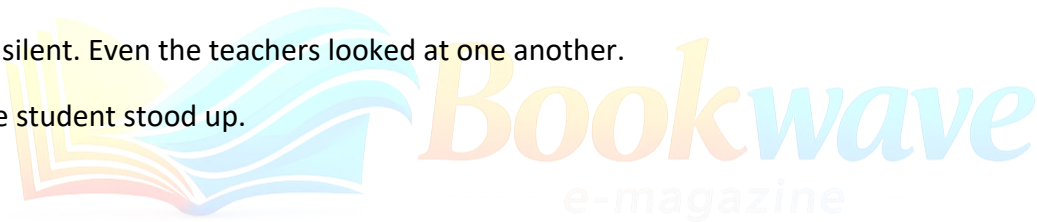
“Respect employees.”

“Keep learning.”

“Accept mistakes.”

“And never compromise on quality.”

He smiled.



“Success is simply those habits repeated every day.”

One student asked the question everyone had been waiting for.

“If the accident had never happened...”

“Where would you be today?”

For a long moment...

Manish looked toward his father. Then he answered.

“I might have been working in a software company.”

“I might have earned a very good salary.”

“I might have travelled around the world.”

He paused.

“That would have been a good life.”

He smiled warmly.

“But this...”

“...is my meaningful life.”

The auditorium became completely silent. Those words touched every heart.

The principal invited Ramakanth onto the stage. The audience applauded loudly.

The old sweet maker looked slightly nervous. He had spent his entire life serving customers.

Speaking before hundreds of students was new to him. He adjusted the microphone.

“I don’t know how to give speeches.”

The students laughed affectionately.

“I only know how to make sweets.”

Another wave of laughter filled the hall.

Then his expression became serious.

“When Manish was a child...”

“I wanted him to become an engineer.”

“He became one.”

The students looked confused.



Ramakanth smiled.

“He engineered our business.”

“He engineered opportunities.”

“He engineered confidence.”

“And...”

“...he engineered my happiness.”

Many eyes filled with tears.

Even Manish struggled to control his emotions. Lakshmi was also invited to speak. She walked to the podium with quiet grace.

“My son receives many compliments today.”

She looked lovingly at Manish.

“But I want every student here to remember one thing.”

“When success comes...”

“Don’t become difficult to reach.”

“The day your parents feel they need permission to speak to you...”

“...you have already become poor.”

The audience applauded for nearly a minute. Several parents wiped away tears. The program continued with more questions.

One student asked,

“Sir...”

“How do we recognize an opportunity?”

Manish smiled.

“You usually don’t.”

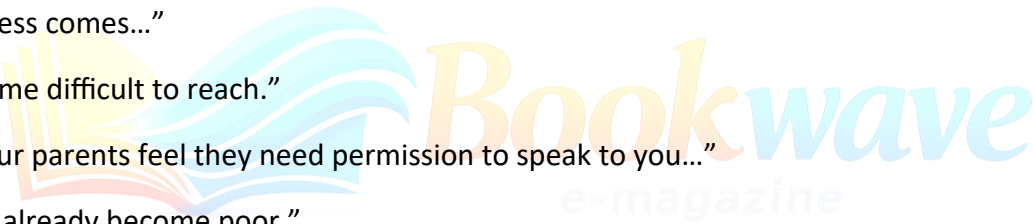
The students laughed.

He continued. “When my father met with an accident...”

“I saw a problem.”

“When customers appreciated him...”

“I saw respect.”



“When I used technology...I saw possibility.”

“When young people needed jobs... I saw responsibility.”

He paused.

“Opportunities rarely announce themselves. They quietly hide inside ordinary situations.”

Another student stood.

“Sir...”

“What is your biggest achievement?”

Everyone expected him to mention the ₹8 crore business. Or the awards.

Instead, Manish pointed toward the audience.

“My biggest achievement... is that one of you may leave this hall today believing more in yourself.”

For a moment, the auditorium was silent. Then came the loudest applause of the day. The program drew to a close.

The principal requested Manish to leave the students with one final thought. He stepped forward.

Looked at the hundreds of hopeful faces.

Then spoke slowly.

“My dear friends...Don’t measure your future by comparing it with someone else’s.”

“Measure it by asking one question.”

‘Whose life becomes better because of my work?’

“If you can answer that honestly...”

“...success will find you.”

Not immediately. Not easily. But certainly.

The students rose to their feet. A standing ovation filled the auditorium.

It continued...

and continued...

and continued.

Not because they had heard a great speech. But because they had heard the truth.

As Manish walked out of the auditorium, dozens of students surrounded him.

Some wanted photographs. Some sought career advice. Some simply wanted to shake his hand.

One quiet young boy waited patiently until everyone else had left. He approached Manish shyly.

“Sir...”

“I don’t know what I’ll become.”

Manish smiled.

“You don’t have to know today.”

The boy looked surprised.

“You don’t?”

“No.”

“You only need to know this.”

“Whatever you become...”

“...be useful.”

The boy smiled. “I’ll remember that.”

He walked away with renewed confidence. Manish watched him disappear into the crowd.

For a brief moment, he saw himself again— the young engineering student who once believed there was only one road to success.

Life had lovingly proved him wrong. As the sun began to set beyond the college gates, Ramakanth placed a gentle hand on his son’s shoulder.

“You answered every question beautifully.”

Manish smiled and said, “There is still one question left.”

“What is that?”

“How do I thank the people who made all of this possible?”

Ramakanth looked toward the distant outline of the village.

“I think...”

“...you already know.”

The final chapter of Manish’s journey...

was waiting at home.

Chapter 25

When Dreams Change, Destiny Smiles

The first rays of the morning sun gently touched the old signboard of **Ramakanth Sweets**.

The shop had changed over the years. The counters were modern. The production unit had expanded.

Delivery vans proudly carried the company's name to distant towns.

The office now used computers, digital dashboards, inventory software, and online ordering systems.

Yet one thing remained exactly the same. Every morning...

before anyone entered the shop...

Ramakanth lit the small brass lamp near the entrance.

He folded his hands and closed his eyes.

And whispered the same prayer he had offered for more than three decades.

"May every customer leave happier than they came."

That prayer had built an empire. Manish stood quietly watching his father. He had seen these ritual thousands of times.

But today...

it touched him differently.

Success had never changed his father. Perhaps that was the greatest success of all. The village had awakened.

Children cycled to school, walked toward their fields. Customers entered the shop with smiling faces.

Many of them had been coming there for twenty or thirty years. Some had first arrived as children.

Now they came holding the hands of their own children. Ramakanth knew many of them by name. He remembered their favorite sweets.

He remembered weddings, Birthdays, Festivals, Even difficult days when families had quietly requested sweets on credit.

To him...

Customers were never transactions. They were relationships.

That afternoon, the village community hall looked festive.

A special gathering had been organized. Not to celebrate business. Not to celebrate money, But to celebrate gratitude.

Teachers, Doctors, Farmers, Shopkeepers, Students, Village elders, Employees, Customers.

Everyone had gathered. Outside the entrance stood a simple banner,

“Celebrating the Journey of Ramakanth Sweets”

No photographs of Manish. No giant cut-outs. Only one picture.

A faded photograph of Ramakanth standing beside his tiny shop on the day it first opened.

Many young people stopped to look at it.

“It was this small?”

they whispered.

Yes.

Every great journey begins small. The village head requested Ramakanth to come onto the stage.

He hesitated and said, “I don’t belong on a stage.”

The headmaster smiled.

“Today...

the stage belongs to you.”

The audience stood in respect. Ramakanth slowly walked forward.

His eyes searched for Manish. He found him standing among the employees instead of sitting in the front row.

He smiled proudly. The village head began speaking.

“Thirty years ago...

this shop sold sweets.

Today...

it serves hope.”

He looked toward the audience.

“When Ramakanth opened this shop... he dreamed of feeding his family.”

Then he turned toward Manish.

“When Manish returned from engineering college...

he transformed one family’s dream into the dream of an entire village.”

The applause echoed through the hall.

One by one...

people came forward to speak. A farmer said,

“My daughter’s wedding became memorable because of them.”

A teacher said,

“Our students believe in entrepreneurship because of Manish.”

Mahesh stood up with folded hands.

“I came here searching for a job.”

“I left with confidence.”

“I started my own business.”

“Today... four families earn their livelihood because someone believed in me.”

Lakshmi quietly wiped tears from her eyes. Then something unexpected happened.

The District Collector walked onto the stage.

Nobody had known he was coming. He carried a beautifully framed plaque. The hall became silent. He addressed the gathering.

“I have attended many business award ceremonies.”

“But today...

I have come to honor something much greater.”

He looked toward Ramakanth and Manish.

“A business becomes successful when it earns profits.”

“It becomes unforgettable...

When it earns people’s trust.”

He presented the plaque.

On it were engraved the words:

“For Transforming Enterprise into Service and Success into Social Responsibility.”

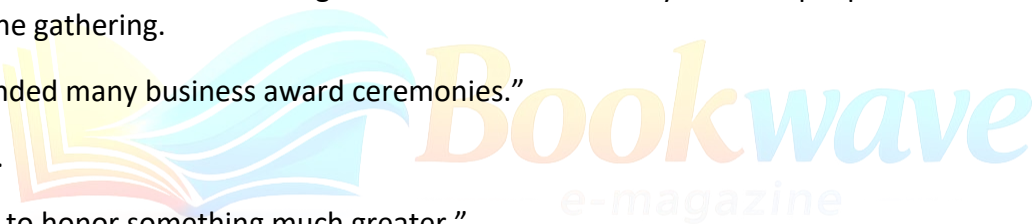
The audience rose to its feet.

After the applause settled, the principal of the Government Junior College walked to the microphone.

He smiled.

“Students have been asking me one question ever since Manish’s visit.”

The audience listened curiously.



"They ask...

'What is the secret of his success?'"

The principal turned toward Manish.

"I think today... we should hear the answer."

The entire hall looked at him. Manish slowly walked toward the podium. There was no prepared speech.

No written notes, Only gratitude in his heart. He looked around the hall.

Every face reminded him of a chapter in his journey, His father, his mother, his teachers, his employees, his friends and His village.

He took a deep breath. Then began,

"When I was studying engineering...

I believed success had only one address."

"A software company."

"I prepared for interviews."

"I dreamed of office buildings."

"I imagined a life in a big city."

He smiled gently.

"Life smiled back... and handed me something entirely different."

The audience laughed softly.

"My father's accident felt like the biggest problem of my life."

"I had no idea... it was also the greatest opportunity."

The hall became silent.

"If that accident had not happened...

I would have become a software engineer."

"It would have been an honorable profession."

"But because it happened...

I discovered something even greater."

"I discovered purpose." He pointed toward the employees seated together.

"I stand here today..."



not because I worked hard alone.”

He turned toward Ramakanth.

“My father taught me honesty.”

Toward Lakshmi.

“My mother taught me humility.”

Toward Subba Rao.

“My teacher in the kitchen taught me patience.”

Toward Rafi.

“My friend taught me loyalty.”

Toward Mahesh.

“My student taught me that knowledge multiplies when shared.”

Finally...

he looked toward the students. “And all of you...

Continue to teach me hope.”

For a few moments... the hall was completely silent. Then Manish spoke the words that had lived in his heart for years.

“My dear friends...

Many people spend their lives waiting for opportunities.”

“They keep asking...”

“When will my chance come?”

He paused. Then smiled.

“I learned something different.”

“Sometimes opportunity knocks on your door.”

“Sometimes it enters disguised as a problem.”

“And sometimes...”

“...you must build the door yourself.”

The audience listened with complete attention. He continued.

“Never think that any honest work is small.”

"A degree gives you knowledge."

"Character gives you respect."

"Hard work gives you confidence."

"But service..."

"...gives your life meaning."

Then he looked at the students sitting in the front rows. His voice became softer.

"You may become an engineer."

"A doctor."

"A teacher."

"An artist."

"A farmer."

"An entrepreneur."

"Or something the world has not yet imagined."

"It doesn't matter."

"What matters is this." Wherever life places you...

Leave that place better than you found it.

The auditorium became completely still.

Many students had tears in their eyes. Teachers quietly nodded. Parents looked at their children with pride. Manish stepped away from the podium. But then he stopped.

He turned back.

"I have one last request."

"If any one of you succeeds in life..."

"...promise me one thing."

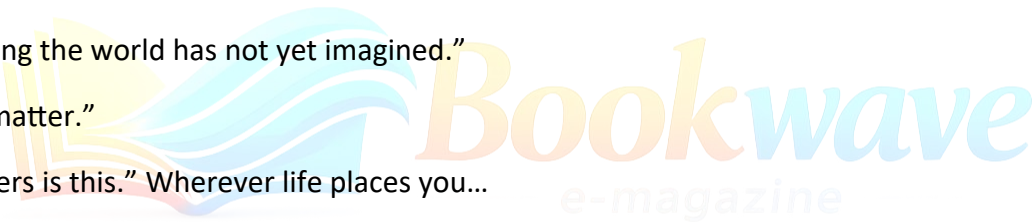
"Help someone else succeed. That is how success becomes legacy."

The applause that followed seemed endless.

It was not loud. It was heartfelt. Every person in that hall knew they had witnessed something special.

That evening...

After everyone had left... Manish and Ramakanth returned to the shop.



The brass lamp still flickered gently. The familiar aroma of fresh ghee filled the air.

Manish walked toward the old wooden board hanging near the entrance.

Its paint had faded.

Its edges had worn with time.

It still read:

“Quality is remembered long after price is forgotten.”

He carefully removed it from the wall. Ramakanth looked surprised.

“What are you doing?”

Manish smiled.

“I’m not replacing it.”

“I’m preserving it.”

A week later...

the board was beautifully restored and placed at the entrance of the new production unit.

Beneath it appeared another line.

“Founded on Honesty.”

“Growing Through Opportunity.”

“Sustained by People.”

Ramakanth quietly read the words. Then looked at his son.

“You said this board built everything.”

Manish smiled.

“Yes.”

Ramakanth gently shook his head and said, “No, my son.”

“The people who believed in those words built everything. The two stood silently. No further words were needed.

Outside... the village continued its ordinary life.

Children laughed. Customers arrived. Fresh sweets were prepared. Delivery vans left for nearby towns. Young entrepreneurs opened new businesses.

Students studied late into the night. Life moved forward, As it always does. But somewhere in that little village...

One sweet shop had proved a timeless truth. That the greatest opportunities are rarely the ones we plan. They are the ones we choose to embrace.

Epilogue

Years later, visitors often asked how Ramakanth Sweets had become such a respected name. Employees would smile and point toward the framed wooden board. Then they would quietly say,

“This business was never built only with sugar and ghee.”

“It was built with honesty, courage, gratitude, and the willingness to turn an unexpected responsibility into the sweetest opportunity.”

And every morning...

Before the first customer arrived... the little brass lamp was still lit.

Its flame reminded everyone who entered that true success is not inherited.

It is earned... one honest day at a time.

THE END



Comments can be sent to: touchingwaves@gmail.com

CHILDREN ZONE

PUZZLES

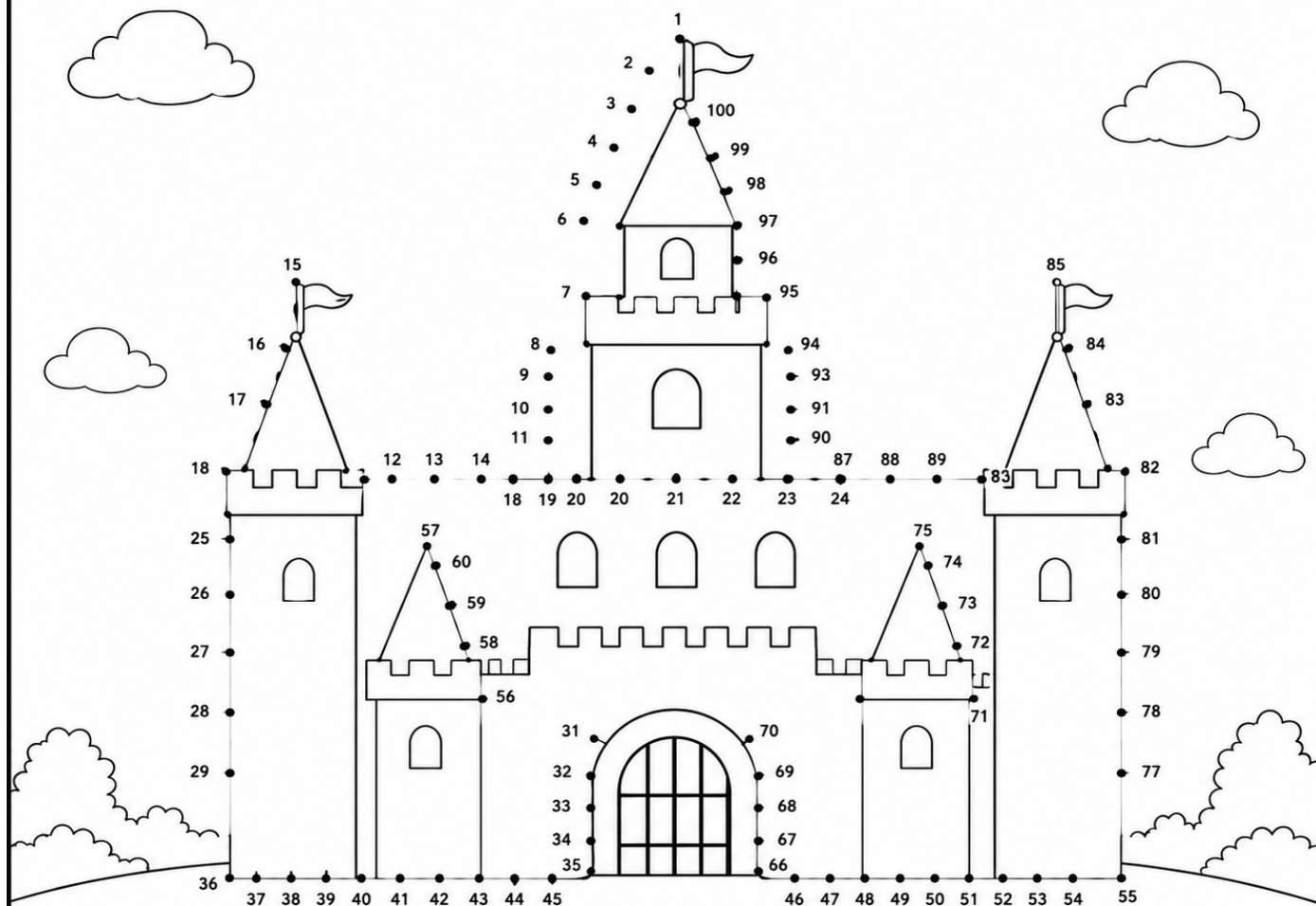
COLORING

WORD SEARCH

C	T	X	D	B	L	V	M	H
L	U	F	E	G	T	E	R	S
Z	U	T	U	K	Y	J	N	J
G	A	T	P	I	U	N	S	
Z	E	N	G	N	I	K	G	N
E	D	M	P	Y				
C	I	B	S					

CONNECT THE DOTS (1-100)

Connect the dots from 1 to 100 to complete the castle.



COLORING.





Word Search Puzzle

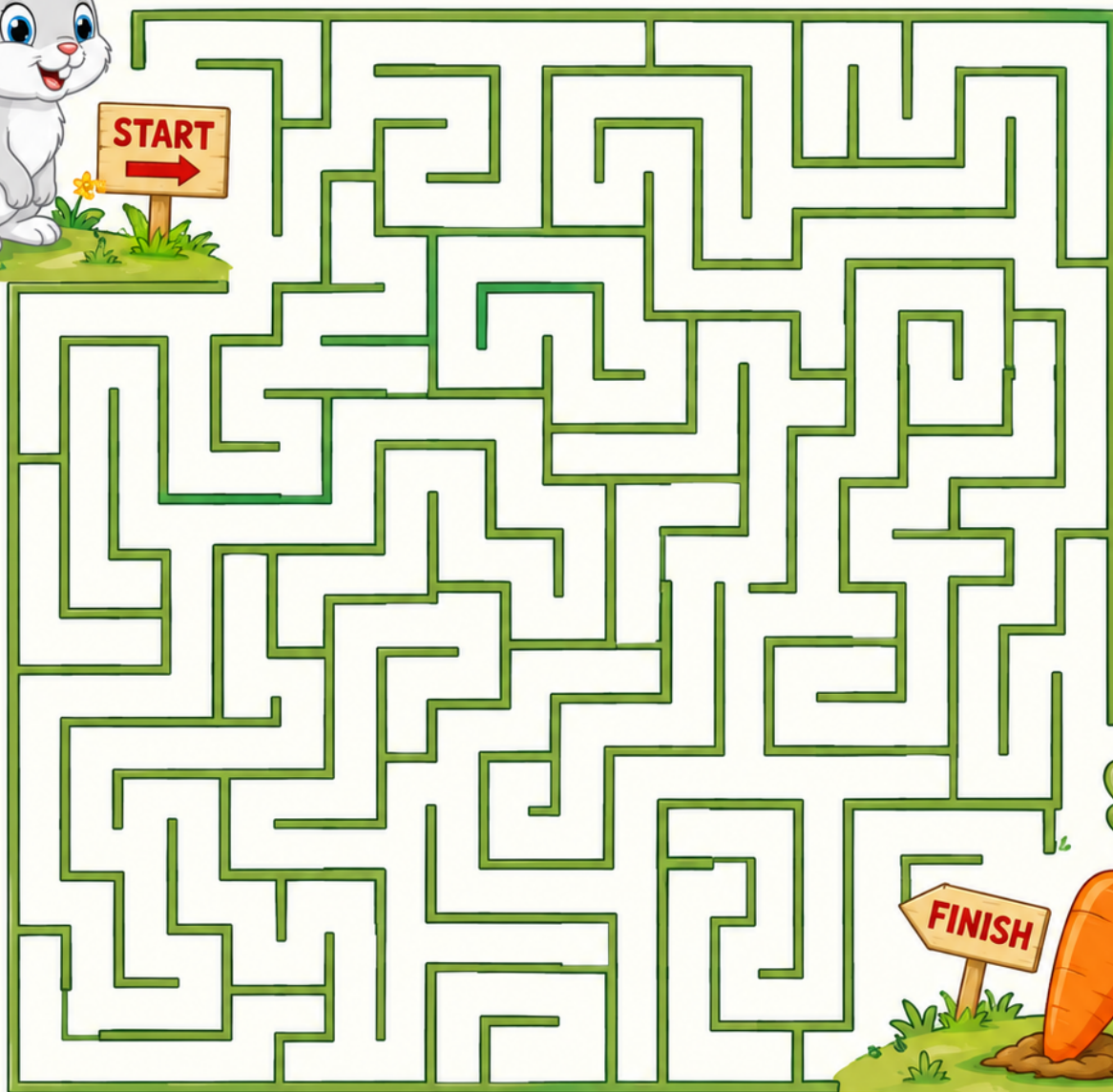
M S B Z H T E A C H E R E B A L T U X X
D J K P A J O R Y E L E P H A N T T X B
I Y A P P L E M T W E P H C V V F K D A
O Z E Q S Y M P P Q K E K I I T L N U A
W R E V B I B E E F F D O U H Q O W B H
H W O C I C S N H M T Z Z T W L W I V N
I T Q Y A E B C M N A F D Q X C E H D D
A F I Y H D G I A Q V N O O J R R U M G
B V Y G G X Z L N L N Q G Y R A S N S B
A N Q S E F D V O R Z P L O L A U A Q D
N T L O J R W O A L J F A V N S B D D J
A G Y R V A H T Z O R B N U P R O B N G
N S T A C C S A J E A L J X E C H I I Y
A P G N S D S L T M W O L V E Y A L M T
D I D G D C T T K U M G I W M T D A T V
P Y B E X W U P J L O R O E N O Z L I P
Q P X X Z B N P K V N J N U M H O F P T
I R N W V W C O S I X S O D C L F N R E
Z N C Z C V O Z A U B M E J M H W V V K
O F Q J D B E R R Y N D K Q H W Q I F F

Find these words:

- APPLE, MANGO, TIGER, LION, RABBIT, SCHOOL, TEACHER, BOOK, PENCIL, FLOWER, RIVER, MOUNTAIN, RAIN, SUN, MOON, STAR, BUTTERFLY, ELEPHANT, ORANGE, BANANA

HELP THE RABBIT

Find the right path for the rabbit to reach the carrot.



BOOKWAVE

Instructions to Writers

Monthly E-Magazine

Submit to: info@bookwave.net

1. Submit **ORIGINAL WRITINGS ONLY!**
No copied stories allowed.



2. Send your stories to:
info@bookwave.net



3. Stories must **NOT**
be published elsewhere.



Evaluation & Participation



**7-10 DAYS TIME for PROPER
EVALUATION and VERIFICATION**



**Include Your EMAIL
at the End of Each Story**



**Feel Free to RESPOND
to Reviews from Readers**



**Translated Stories Need
Consent from Original Writer**



Contact Us: info@bookwave.net



BOOKWAVE

Publication Rules



NO FILM

OR SHORT FILM OR

WEBSERIES ADAPTATION



without Proper Consent!

Unauthorized Use of Stories
is **STRICTLY** Prohibited



Contact Us: info@bookwave.net

BOOKWAVE

Advertise & Connect with Readers!



For Advertisements please contact:

info@bookwave.net

Limited
number of small
ads can be
free.

Limited number of small ads
can be published free.

Share Your Ideas!

Any Suggestions to improve the Magazine
Are Welcome!

Send Us Your Suggestions to:

info@bookwave.net

