

## **A Long Way Home...**

I have mastered the art of letting random thoughts flow through my head till I end up confusing myself. This happens a lot these days, especially when I get bored pretty often. I have nothing to do right now, except...think.

Gosh! It's a long way home from school, especially when your car breaks down and you have to walk all the way!

I started thinking...

*The recent attacks in Mangalore, and the subsequent ban on Valentine's Day – both assaulted the rights of women all over India. Feminism flew right out the window as women were robbed of their basic rights. Oh, and one more thing, why is it that WOMEN were targeted and not MEN?*

By this point, I had crossed the road and almost got ran over by a bus. The bus driver swore at me in Kannada and drove on with a scowl on his face.

*Phew! What a narrow escape!*

I turn around and run away from the glares of the people around me, almost tripping over my open shoelace. I run into an empty lane. I can hear my heart pounding as I stop to tie my shoelace. I continue walking...

*Death. A narrow brush with it just scared the living daylights out of me. How do people even have the guts to attempt suicide? A depressed person, or a martyr – how do they manage to do it? I can't even think of dying without getting scared. How would I voluntarily hurt myself?*

I was in my own world as I continue walking. Soon enough, I noticed someone following me. I turned around and saw a man who glared at me and turned around and walked away. I walked on.

*So...I'm bored. Sheesh! Am I really having a conversation with myself? No wonder people think I'm weird!*

Soon enough, I got the feeling that someone was following me, again. I turned around and saw the same man standing a few metres away from me.

I panicked!

I slowly bent down and picked a stone up; and pretended to walk on fearlessly.

“Excuse me, miss. I’ve been trying to call you for the last 5 minutes, but I don’t think you were paying attention.”

I turned around. It was the ‘stalker’ (or so I thought).

“Yes?”

“It’s just that”, he stuttered. He glanced at the stone in my hand, and swallowed before continuing. “This fell out of you pocket”, he said, as he gave me my watch.

“Oh...thank you”, I replied sheepishly, and dropped the stone.

*Gosh, Shalaka! You’re so silly! You’ve been watching too many movies! Did you really think some man was going to attack you in broad daylight? You were so wrapped up in your own thoughts that you didn’t even realize that he had called you! Go on; just assume that every person you see on the road has evil intentions!*

*Anyway, how much longer will it take to get home?*

I glanced at my watch, and groaned as I noticed the time. I was missing my favorite show! All because the car broke down!

*Life’s so unfair! Just because SOME people couldn’t be responsible enough to send the car for servicing on time, I had to suffer! Thanks a lot! Today had to be the day when the best episode was on! Of course! Because NOTHING works out for me! It’s so unfair! Wait - haven’t I said that already? Oh well...my vocabulary IS pretty bad...*

I was getting tired and I was panting by the time I reached the rail crossing. Due to my magnificent luck, the gate was closed! So, I had to wait for the train to cross before I could continue walking.

Though I was happy for the break I was getting from walking, I needed to get home fast! I had already missed one TV show and I didn’t want to miss the other one. (In case you’re wondering - my life does revolve around TV shows!)

I was getting impatient as I waited by the crossing, waiting for the train to pass by.

For someone who needs to be entertained every two seconds, this wait was excruciatingly painful.

*I hate waiting! Why can't the train just hurry up and pass by? I need to get home! People are so inconsiderate! The driver, the people who made these roads that don't even have sidewalks! I hate everyone! The irresponsible driver, who couldn't send the car for servicing, the train driver, who can't move faster, the people who made these roads full of potholes, the cows that leave their blessings on the road, the person who created trains, the person who thought of the concept of railway crossings, the person who invented quadratic equations...*

Now, I couldn't stop myself...

*I hate Physics, Quantum of Solace, Truman, Himesh What's-His-Name...*

Now, the wait wasn't that boring anymore! I had something to entertain myself with! Sure, I had spoken to myself on many occasions (after all, who would pay more attention to me, than ME?), but this was different. I had never actually thought about all the things, people, places, animals, inanimate objects...that I had hated! What scared me was that my list was pretty long!

*Number 459 on my list – the color brown, Number 460...ouch. This list is getting longer! I've spent so much time on this list, it seems like forever! And the train isn't even here yet!*

*Back to my list...where was I? Oh right...Number 460...*

Now, I was a woman on a mission. My aim was to figure out all the things I hated before the train arrived. Looking at the state I was in now, the task seemed pretty accomplishable.

(SOME TIME LATER)

*Number 480...okay now I'm bored...*

*And the train isn't even here yet! This is so frustrating! How do people expect me to get home if the whole universe is working against me? This is just a giant plot to make sure that I don't get home, and miss my TV shows, and stay miserable for the rest of my life!*

**LIFE IS SO UNFAIR!**

*Wait...that's the third or fourth time I'm saying that isn't it?*

*I've had enough!*

Now, I decide to take matters into my own hands.

The train hasn't passed by. So, instead of waiting, I slowly take off my bag and throw it as far as possible over the crossing. I hold my *breath* as I see it fly over in what seems to be slow motion. As it lands on the other side, I let out a sigh of relief.

Then, I put one leg over the gate and jump across, onto the railway tracks. I bring my other leg over and steady myself.

*Half way there! Home, sweet, home – here I come!*

I start moving forward, towards the gate on the other side.

*Wait – why isn't my foot moving?*

I look down at my right foot; and notice that a bit of the track had caved in, taking my foot along with it! I was stuck!

*I'm stuck!*

As I try to free my foot, I can hear the wail of a siren in the distance.

*Uh-oh...*

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