

BATTLING WITH THE MIND

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When you start with something new, you need motivation to go ahead and come out with your ideas. I can blissfully say that I have been fortunate to have procured lavish encouragement from my family and friends, and I wholeheartedly thank them for their ongoing support. I would like to thank my dear friends for constantly encouraging me with my poems which in turn gave me the confidence to pursue my writing. I would like to thank my children and my husband for persuading me to write a book and when I started with my venture, for reading it at every stage and giving their suggestions which I valued the most. Most importantly, I thank my readers for reading it and I hope you will enjoy the book as much as I have done so writing it.



About The Author



The author was born in Mangalore, a small city in Karnataka. She has lived in various parts of India and is currently residing in Bengaluru. Her interests include reading, writing and works of craft. She has written many poems, articles and short stories and some of them are published in the magazine 'Woman's Era.' This is her first full length publication.



About The Book

Life is comfortable for a young girl Tara who lives with her parents and her younger sister. Her world gets beautiful when she is married to a happy-go-lucky guy, Rahul. But all the while, she secretly struggles with her low self-esteem and battles with her weak mind. And then when there are setbacks in life, she is easily consumed by depression and it goes to the point where she wants to end her life. A gripping tale of what she does next.....



Dedication

*Dedicated to
My late father, Mr. Ramadas Udupa*



Chapter 1

The night was young. After the rains had stopped, the sky looked somewhat clear and the moon was seen through the haze of the thinly outspread clouds. The cool breeze was soothing. The stars though were not visible.

Tara and her sister Meera had just finished their dinner. The clock struck nine. Looking outside, they decided to go on a stroll.

“Don’t go too far, few of the street lights don’t work, it’s quite dark there,” said the father.

The girls were too excited to even respond to him. They put on their footwear and set forth on the wet soggy lane.

“The vegetable gravy was too yummy, I had so much, I’m full, Tara,” said Meera.

The compliment was much obliged by Tara and she deserved every bit of it. She had been researching on this particular recipe and had tried out from many other sources as well. Perhaps, this was her fourth or fifth attempt.

“Lakshmi aunty told me the secret and finally I got it right,” said Tara.

“You know, your fried rice was a super hit among my friends...you had sent me yesterday right?” said Meera.

“Hmm,” said Tara happily.

“After that yummy heavy lunch, it was the physics period...that ultra-thin Sir was dragging on about the vernier calipers. Most of us were sleepy. Someone from the back bench said, ‘measure yourself with that vernier caliper sir’ and those who heard couldn’t control their laughter,” Meera said.

“Is he so thin? Did he hear?” Tara said chuckling.

“Thankfully he didn’t hear, but he was annoyed with the commotion and the whole class was punished....we had to stand up for the rest of the class,” she said.

Tara continued to laugh for some time.

Water droplets dripping from the trees fell on them and they liked it. And when the wind blew, there was a whopping splash from the swinging leaves.

“Aaaaah!!!” said the sisters in chorus.

After the long hot summer, the showers were welcomed. They walked as slow as they could. One reason was to avoid the splash from the puddles, and the other was for the mere joy of it. And also, there were snails and centipedes on the street. They didn’t want to trample the creatures. There were plenty of them as this was the breeding season for reptiles and insects.

“That new guy in my class who joined this year itself...he is so cute, so good,” Meera said. Her tone was as if she was dreaming in a fantasyland. Meera believed in enjoying life. Not that she was a flirt or something, but she dared to talk. And she spoke mindlessly to her sister who was like a close buddy.

“Meera, what is this? How many crushes do you have? This is the time for you to concentrate on studies, not on guys,” said the sober Tara in a firm tone.

“Now you sound like mamma or grandmamma. Okay, leave about me. Tell me, have you met someone in college?” she said winking at Tara.

“I am not like you....I go to college to study,” Tara said. She was indeed a modest girl but Meera found that bland. Not that Tara didn’t have such feelings, she too was a young girl after all. But she just treasured her feelings under the covers in the deepest chamber of her heart. She would just build castles in the air on her own and after some time dismiss the vision off her mind. She could never reveal them to anybody. Even though her sister spoke to her so freely, she wouldn’t share her secrets. And then, she also wondered how her little sister could be frank and without any inhibitions.

Some stray dogs were lazing on the front concrete portion of a big house. The girls were a bit hesitant to go further but as they moved on slowly, they realized that the tail-waggers were too enthralled in their lounge and would not bother them. And so, their walkie-talkie too went on without much interruption.

“Tomorrow I will make pav bhaji, I have brought all the ingredients today,” said Tara.

“Oh cool, I love it, in fact I like whatever you make, Tara,” the younger one said delightedly.

Tara felt proud and applauded herself. She was not even twenty and her culinary skills were even better than her mother’s at times.

Tara’s phone beeped. There was a new message on Whats App. She read out the joke loud.

“What can you call mixed feelings.....watching your mother-in-law backing up towards the edge of a cliff in your brand new Audi.”

They laughed. They talked and walked, and walked and talked about school, college, movies, songs and so many things for about half an hour while the weather cheered their spirits.

“We must go back, mom will be waiting,” said Tara.

Meera too agreed, “Oh, it’s almost ten and I have to wake up at six in the morning. Tomorrow is Thursday and I have tennis class.” She was three years younger than Tara and both of them got along really well.

Mother was at the doorway when they got back home.

“What took you so long?” she urged and immediately touched and felt their hair and said, “see you are wet, I will get a towel.”

She went in and came out with a towel and dabbed the girls’ heads.

“You both sometimes behave like small kids, so irresponsible, you may fall sick you know,” she said. The girls couldn’t protest but giggled lightly. Father raised his head above and away from the newspapers at that point. He lowered his glasses halfway onto his nose, bent his head, opened his eyes wide and gave one of his typical looks for a moment and then immersed into the papers once again.

After some time, the family retired for the day. This was one of the few nights when Tara fell asleep as soon as she got into bed. She felt contented with herself.

The next morning, the sun glared bright. There was no trace of the downpour from the previous night. Father was panting for breath after his thirty-minute jogging routine. He had been into this regime for the past two decades. Mohan Rao was 52 years old or rather young, one could say. He was a well-built man with a bright smiling face. His hairline had receded some and there were patches of gray hair, but he looked great for his age. He was a man with an infectious energy, enormous knowledge and an adorable heart. He was quite a disciplined man. But food was his all-time weakness, anyone could say. Although he believed

strongly in limitation and self-control, he would give in to his temptations very often. Same was true with his temper. By and large, he was calm and fun to be with. He would help the girls out in their studies with the subjects of his interest, namely Math and Science. But the scary part was that he was totally erratic and unpredictable. His outburst into fits of anger could be at any time or at any place. This was indeed the biggest mystery. Like he hid all the fury within himself and it erupted like a volcano when the pressure mounted. But there was a brighter side to his anger, he believed or else how could he be in full control of the situation at home. It is undoubtedly tough to manage the growing children, their growing demands, their changing demeanors and what not. The girls and their mother heeded to his words because of the hint of fear of his volatile state of mind. Being the most vulnerable among all, Tara's panic would get blown out of proportion in her delicate mind. She would be in fact terrified of her father during his flare-ups.

Mr. Rao was sweating and gasping now. Wiping the beads of perspiration from his brow, he said, "Tara, get me some water."

Tara did as she was told to do. She was gentle, a typical girl next door type, you could say. Regarding her looks, of course she was pretty. But she could be easily ignored. There was no special or striking feature in her. Obedient she was, but she had an anxious trait in her that would make her stammer off and on. She was nervous, high strung and on the edge from inside, but she always wanted to portray herself as an easy going, casual girl. Secretly, she envied people who would go around with exuding confidence. Apart from that, she buried an ocean of emotions within her which she thought she could never reveal to anyone at all.

Dressed in a bright red and beige top with jeans that fitted her well, she looks pretty graceful. Her fair

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