

Broken Wings

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*"Ohhh... you are here, we were stuck up there...a seminar on career and employment" they were looking great.*

*"It's o.k." I said*

*"But...what you had made on the board" Keshav asked.*

*I smiled and then they cuddle me in their arms "don't worry... Everything will be all right" that was "The hope" they gave to me "Guys do you know, what am going to do the first things tomorrow morning... I gonna tell her how much I love her "this was "The Promise" I gave them.*

Simple, very touching and with gentle stroke of humor, this will definitely take you to the down memory lane.

*Book & Bookmen*

Tuesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1993, 11:30 am

Me and my four friends, standing in the college campus, college hockey ground rather, poured with sweet sunshine of winter, all looking above towards that room from last half an hour, As I know some whose -where of the collage on the basis of which I can say - "*is it post graduation block, masters of commerce*", yeah right. That also mean she is one year older than me.... yeah you can say that.

But donno how long we have to wait for that sparkling moment -Few minutes later some of her friends appears, where she is? As I was thinking so her friends also, they look around then saw us watching them -"*ohhh this is the matter*" I guess some of her friend uttered. All smiles and run towards that classroom and bring that little angle out, there she is hiding from every one of us ...no from me only (yeah this is right and soothing)

She was wearing my and her favorite yellow suit and a lovely million dollar smile. A sweet little smile for which any business tycoon can sell his entire empire, I bet, just to get her one little smile. As she was playing hide and seek one of her friend hugged her tightly and kissed at her forehead, that mean in her entire gang she was the only one with something special going on or you can say she was the "chosen one"...(don't say it mean something else...I will not accept it) look at us, we guys were holding each other's hands, am watching her she is watching me but who's watching us, the game between the beauty and the beast, if any one, then sure he ll say "what the hell goin on". Who cares!!!! . And there was a very strong vibration between us in that radiation of 50 odd feet. I was shivering not because of bloody cold winter but because of something else...what was that ...you know it.

We all five friends discussing it very seriously in the boys common room, "who will pay the money".....I asked...."Oooooohh I can pay a thousand bugs for those lovely cheeks" one of my friends uttered this with lusty smile "me too" adds another. It was just like a thunderstorm burst out there, a few minutes later everything comes to normal. Keshav and Rajiv my two friends who kicked out the other two bustard were with me"who will pay the money" ...the question still remains the same.

It was really hard to fix that flabby clerk ...as he was not an easy prey to fix "try to understand the seriousness of this guys he he he he !!! (Hell, is this what he means by seriousness) its not as simple as it seems, if any one comes to know that am giving you information from students records for just 200 rupees, he would definitely going to fire me, why don't you understand that" flubber justified his act of involving money for the risk he was taking. In my those college days I used to keep purse in my pocket for keeping safe my Identity card and some other important papers, if you are looking for money, I can help you only upto 10 to 15 rupees Maximum. We were also not one out of those "canteen goers".

"Don't worry I will arrange" he said "thanks Rajiv", I replied. "OK guy, you can come at five in the evening, he he he "that damn flubber gave us a nasty laugh. "Shit... at five... we will finished by 2:30, then who'll go home and come back at five again "okay we will not go home, all agreed. I was dying to know her name.

"This one.....no.....This one.....no.....then this one.....no.....no.....no.....no.....no.....no...." as that flubby clerk, holding BIRI in one hand in a very unusual "Hookah type" way showing us the photograph pasted on the pages of that file "M. com -Previous year -Admission Form session 1993-94" I was at the highest peek of my excitement....."this one" there were four voices.....I noted down quickly

"Name: Sangeeta  
Permanent home address: House No. 112. Modern Street,  
Correspondence address: as above  
Date of Birth: 8th August 1974".

*"That's enough - thank you very much ...this is your fifty rupees, this is all we have today, we will pay you later when we will have more" I said "Whaaaaaaaaatt yo dammmmit..." he shouted loudly "he he he he" this was our reaction. I feel proud in saying that my two friends had damn good physique.*

*I stopped with a thought "Jesus...she was looking gorgeous in that passport size photograph, can we also snatch that from flubber". "Have mercy on poor" said the Jesus inside me.*

# 3

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That morning I was standing almost from an hour before that looking glass. I try to look at-least as good as any other ordinary looking guy. I was placing my shirt inside-out of the paint again n again, judging my self (from her eyes). Give my hair five different looks still they don't look nice (to me). And then what should I do with this bluddy ugly thing hanging on my nose? Should I put it off or opt for some more stylish sunglasses? Better she make a decision for this.

But then, if I think about her with me, we were just completely Synonym to antonym, let me explain her; she was gorgeous, only 5', light brown hair with "U" cut (yes that style called "u" cut, I asked to one of my classmate) and pair of radiant blue eyes, I had never seen such sparkling eyes neither you I guess. Those two eyes seem to me verbalizing the lingo of love. She was humble, innocent like a toddler, and pretty decent. She was an angle.

*"Morning - saw her"* I asked,

This was usually the first idiom those days,

*"Yeah, she is looking nice".*

How about calling her "Chootki", said Keshav

*"Not bad, but how about "Tiny"?"*

Rajeev suggested. And *"If I call her "MusicTA", "wow!!! That's the best"* we had got the right blend.

Man...I love music and now I was in love with MusicTA. With the feeling of being in love, I feel am walking on the clouds. All of a sudden everything was looking fabulous in the world. I was living every moment of my life; I want the time should come standstill. It was all very wonderful.

# 4

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I start chasing her everywhere she goes, we cross each other a dozen times in day. Every time she gave me a soothing smile and I had nothing to offer but a foolish walk-off. I don't no why I become deaf and dumb when she come near to me, and my heart starts beating like steam engine of an ancient Indian train.

Between library and boys common room there was a fine corridor. A good enough space to take some fresh breathes of the morning. We friends call it "*The Ridge*". Both side of it were stair going down (or upside from ground floor). It was a very quite place in the morning, and very demanding as the day progress. This was the place where I first saw that pretty young thing ... she was walking down reading some book (it's her bad habit) when she stroked straight to me (a few second later with my heart).

"*I am sorry,*" she said with an apologetic expression on her face. I was stunned for a moment, because I'd never seen a girl like her before. I was not able even to whisper a word in reply "*it's all right*", and when I said this she was already gone far away.

She used to come to library every morning and I wait to catch her smile on the starts of a good day.

I was standing here at this end of "*The ridge*" there she appeared with her friends (all girls, mind it) and when she was half way her friends left her alone there and went back as they were saying "*best of luck*". She walked to the edge. Boys!!! What a chance, only me with my friends and my MusicTA there. "*Go ahead*" friends pump me up. "*Ok*" I pray god almighty and walked down softly toward her. We both were standing together there from couple of minutes. It was canary V/s lamb at the moment. Score is 0, 0. I was shivering but break the silence

"*Hi*" I said

"*Hi*" she said

"*Ooommm*" we both said.

And then I gave her a very stupidious laugh.

"*Can I ask a question?*" I beg her mercy.

"*Hoon*" permission granted very softly.

"*Tell me, dose any one else gave you this comment?*"

*"Which...comment??"* she was curious to know.  
*"That you seem to be not of this world ...I mean... you are like a.... I mean you come to this earth by chance (oh God)...I mean...I had never seen such ....I mean ...I hope you understand"* I throw her in doubts.  
*"What????"* she laughed at loud.  
Boy, you asked her wrong question, I chewed.  
*"Do you want to say, am out of the world"*  
*"Or you want to say that I should go back from where I belong?"*  
She put one finger on her chin, and asked me very gently.  
*No.....no .....Never.....I was not saying that.....no... no...*  
I wake up still saying *"No...no...sangeeta ...please don't say this ....no ... please,* I look around, I was in no man's land, clock was ticking; it was 2:30 night. I was drenched with sweat in that bloody hell cold night.

# 5

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So I become a totally different man, I was getting very close to my parents; especially to my mom, as I start spending more and more time with her, am not sure, but probably she might had an idea something going on with me when I asked her some sensible question like *“mom, what name will you give to my wife?”* I experience a new love for my Dad also, and start enfolding him every morning when he wakes up. And my sister and brother, I love them all like anything; every thing was going very fine.

*“Then where is the problem...why don't you talk to her...you know it's been a month you are roaming around her...what are you waiting for...and tell me what about our this hell study, for which we are here...and how much time you need...you fool?”* *“Look...Keshav”* I said but don't have any specific Idea how I would defend myself.

*“No we are not going to listen to any of your excuses”.* I was sitting on a chair and both of my friends Rajeev and keshav; they were firing at me like I am solder of an enemy's country.

*“Now, If you listen I can explain you what the matter is”* I ask for their acquiescence.

*“Tell me ...you dammmmit”* Keshav Shouted.

*“You know ... this feeling of being in love with her is very precious to me, if this is a dream ...then I don't want to be awake ...if this is fake ... then I don't want know what is real... for me these are some golden moments that am living ...why you wanna crushed them ...all”* I said it with painful throat.

*“Now will you please tell me baby...who said, if you'll talk to her she'll refuse you in a straight line”* said Rajeev *“you are hanging around her all the day, almost everywhere she goes. If she want to bring it to an end then tell me why she is not doing this...she want you to speak, my boy...she want you to say those three wonderful words”*

I had no answer *“am not going to talk to her...don't you see there is much much difference between me and MusicTA...she is so beautiful that I can't face her? I try hard but, donno what happen to me every time...I can't help myself”* I become so rigid.

*“Do whatever you want to do...we will not come for you for mercy when everything will spoil”* they warm me.

*“We are just coming”* this was their instance response to what they said earlier.

They leave me alone in that room with forty-four desks five fans and eight tube lights. This was her classroom actually; it was 4:00 in the evening. I waited there for my friends about half an hour. Then put one chalk, think for a while and make a face on the writing board, two rather, one of a very beautiful girl and the other one of a very stupid looking guy with big specs hanging on his big big nose.

*“Ohhh... you are here, we were stuck up there...a seminar on career and employment”* they were looking great.

*“It’s o.k.”* I said

*“But...what you had made on the board”* Keshav asked.

I smiled and then they cuddle me in their arms *“don’t worry... Everything will be all right”* that was "The hope" they gave to me *“Guys do you know, what am going to do the first things tomorrow morning.... I’m gonna tell her how much I love her”* *“this was "The Promise" I gave them.*

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I was in deep dread, from top to bottom when I finished it.

*“So...How was that?”* I asked.

*“Ohhh la la ... you almost kill me”* She said rounding her lips in big ‘O’.

*“That’s mean you like it”* I want to make sure.

*“Yeah... Defiantly, and I would be pleased, if you do it again”* she made humble request.

I was not in the mood to do it again neither has energy.

*“Please tell me, is there any chance for me?”*

*“Yeah ...defiantly, I don’t no how you do it...but you do it so fast, no body else can do it so fast.”* I delighted her.

She was beautiful, finished her graduation form the same college, after that masters in music from KUK and then Doctorate. She had wonderful command over Indian classical music. As a music teacher I respect Mrs. Sethi a lot, but never got any chance to perform before her.

*“What is that called”* she asked.

*“It’s a RAP song”*

*“Yeah...Rap...it’s in the fashion now days, fast music”.*

*“Yeah”* I said.

*“This you know, is a non-conventional “item”, so we can’t put in any category, but we will give you a chance as a guest performer, and you will have to arrange for the music at your own...because I like it and I want you to do it, so get ready my boy, only two days left for the show.”*

*“Thanks maam’...give me your blessings, ”* I requested softly.

*“Yeah definitely, definitely”* good wishes are with you.

Jagjit Singh Sehgal better known as BABA Sehgal was the heartthrob at that time. But his songs were so difficult, no nobody dare to attempt, I dare, the song was “Dil Dhadke”. From my joining I was dying for a performance on college stage. My big dream was coming true.

We rehearsal the song for hours in Music room, it was just opposite to MusicTA’s class, so there is no point in guessing that she knows “what going on”.

Now, the affair between MusicTA and me was not the talk of few, it was known to almost every one in her class and half of mine. But the thing, which really pinches me, was that we did not have any conversation between us. The difference was not only of that bloody hell beauty and nasty, also she was in the first year of her masters in commerce and I was in final year of my graduation, she used to come on car, Maruti 800 “HR-01 6387” and I on bicycle 24” Atlas old model. She was not a good driver, I can say this because she usually come in full speed, it seems she probably mud us guys equal to the road surface, I don’t no whether she do it for fun. If yes, then it was not so enjoyable for me.

# 7

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The big day had come, as it read on the banner flying there at the collage gate “34<sup>th</sup> Annual Inter college Zonal youth Festival – from 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> January 1994- organised by Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.

It was very special day for me, everyone asking *“you are performing today?”*

*“Yeah”*

*“When?”*

*“In the end I guess”*

*“Best of luck”*

*“Thanks”* from morning to afternoon I repeat this conversation with so many peoples.

It was an hour before my turn. I know that she had come as “HR 01 6387” was there but I want to make sure that she should stand there when I hold the microphone, but where she is. I check out the library Hall, Girls common room, Adam block running hard to that canteen, even in the boy’s common room, just to insure. Why I was running around, because I made a promise to my self, after the show I will ask her “How was that?” and everything else. I closed my eyes stressed at my sixth sense “she probably went to PCO booth to make call to her parents that she is coming late” a voice from inside. I rushed to the STD Booth; she was right there and doing the thing, which I was guessing probably.

*“Distinguish chief Guest, Mr. Dhahiya, Teachers, participants and students in the last but not least, we are now presenting to you a guest “item”, you will definitely enjoy it”* Mrs. Sethi announced (it seems she could not make a sentence complete without using that god damn word “definitely”) It was 6:40 pm when I appeared on that Jam-packed hall’s stage, holding mic so hard, a checking *“Hello”* and then look around “HR-01 6387” was there and she was sitting on the very last row with her friends.

I Jumped from the stage in huge round of applause, I make it happened. It was memorable performance for everyone there. My friends run towards me they hug and pout, one actually kissed at the forehead (that a pity). They feel proud standing with me and seem to acting like my Portfolio Managers. *“ It was incredible”* This was Prof. Jolly (alias Mr. Charlie, I gave him this name) *“thank you Sir”* I took the blessing. *“Wonderful, you steal the show”*

This was Prof. Mittal (alias frustrated soul) *"Thank you sir"* was my humble reply. Success makes you more courteous, this was my new lesson of that day. So many student want to shake hand with me, I outclass almost every performer, I was the story of the day, believe me. I was on high; I was feeling like I can do anything. I look at the end row, she was there up on her feet, and throwing a sweet smile on me seems like she was saying, "You have done it" I gave her a big smile too and was in the middle running towards her.

*"Ohhh you never told me, you can sing so well"* this was Prof. Malik (no name for him, he was very close to our family) he stopped me in between hold my one hand so tightly and put his other one on my shoulder *"thank you very much Sir"* I was getting down and down to earth. I tried to escape from him but he was holding my hand with so strength that it was impossible for me brings it back to me.

*"Excuse me Mr. Bakshi"* I look back

*"Congratulations!!!"*

*"Thank you very much"*

*"This is Amit...Suraj...Vikas...and sanjay"*. He introduced.

*"Nice to meet you guys"* These were few guys who performed a hell classic Ragamala just before.

*"Wouldya! Please join our group"* they asked me.

*"Yeah ...but you are not of this college Na?"*

*"Yeah...we are from Swami Dayananda Mahavidyalaya, Panipat."* *"Yeah... nice to hear"*

*"Actually we want to do the things that you are doing...if you could help"* they request me softly.

*"But you sing classical Na?"*

*"yeah...but look this is Pervez, he can sing western too"*

*"That's great,"* I said.

They don't know my priority at that moment and when I turned back,

I was dazed; "HR 01 6387" was going far away from my eyes,

*"Ohhh that's ridiculous"* I punched my hand onto other.

*"No this is not...see a whole lot of musicians are doing this fusion music... don't you heard about Vishwamohan Bhutt...he had done it with...."* I was not giving any ear to what he was saying; rather I want to give a big kick on his thin ass.

We three souls were alone in that hall, no one else there. Time was 8:00 pm.

*"She was there for bloody whole day...she saw that I was coming...can't she wait for a while"*. I said it with anger; I was really annoyed by her act. My friends, they were sitting there, had no answer for my questions. I was wrecked.

*“Man...she dossen care about me”* I said and few drop come out of my eyes. I win the show but had the feeling of being lost it.

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It wassent me, sure not me, so rigid, stiff and hard, watching her from a broken window, in the closet from very far. I decide not to follow her like her shadow. But why I'm doing so?

Some love fundamentalist meets us.

"I'll tell you what?" that Sardar with a dashing personality said it very much in a sales men's style.

*"You know the theory is, you start following her everywhere she goes...Ok ... and then suddenly hide yourself from the scene...watch her from a place where you only can see her ...do it at least for a week, study the "face value"...if you feel that she is looking around, her eyes are searching you, she is so nosy, twitchy, probing you everywhere, has a feeling of being lost something very important then it mean ...your mission accomplished ...its show time, come out of the closet, give appearance before her and then propose...chances are ninety percent".*

"It is quite appealing isn't" I asked my friends.

"Yeah..." they nodded.

"Have you practically applied your theory" I asked Harjeet

"Yeah"

"I guess you have many"

"No one"

"Why"

"Because I see "Thank God, he is no more around" kind of expressions every time I hide myself"

"Oh...that's pity" we laugh.

But in my case, I hit the right cord. She was looking so curious to know where am I, What happened to me? I send my friends around, if she wants to confirm about me. But she never asked, if I was too shy she was shiest.

Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> February 1994.

Time is 11:00 morning; she was in her full ragilla when I appeared. She comes across twice, but we don't share any words between us. I was

standing in that hockey ground, at the goalpost, right at the place of a goalie. Her friends took her to me, again a silent passing march. From the back side her friends again brought her to me and as she come very near, they all runaway leaving her alone with me.

I was not alone with her as there were too many things going on in my mind; we both were standing like Egyptian tomb, nothing coming out of mouth, we both were shivering, at least I am sure about me. She looked at me, I look at her, and then both share a smile. I put off my glasses and start clean up them, just to break the nerve. Suddenly without saying anything she escaped but with a smile.

All my friends insisted me to talk as they always did from sweet November.  
*“Please don’t be so rude, she want you say something, please do it now... please brother don’t be so dumb...please ...please...please”*

But I had a plan in my mind

*“Look...today is Saturday...ok...leave Sunday...Monday is the right day for the lovers like me, its valentine day baby...and don’t forget its my birthday also, don’t you think it will be quite impressive if I propose her on that day.”*

*“Yeah”* both Rajiv and keshav settled.

*“But Monday is sure”* they threaten me like a moneylender menace his borrower.

*“Yeah sure...I promise,”* I said, placing my hand on heart.

Monday the 14<sup>th</sup> February 1994.

I was looking for some sober one. Not with colossal words like “You are very special to me, or I just want to say how much I care for you or you are the one”. Something very simple. Yeah that’s right I took one card saying “Happy valentines Day” two very small birds were there in the picture, with some dreams in the eyes, looking at each other with deep love.

And then I wrote a letter with green pen. I “titled” the letter as “The Great Expectation” taking inspiration from Charles Dickson. I was thinking of giving her some roses, but then suddenly dropped the idea. I was walking on clouds, so excited that I can’t express, at that time I was feeling that there would be no gash to me if I jump from Eiffel Tower. My friends were waiting there at the college library. My heart was beating.

*“Happy birthday”* they wrapped me.

*“Thank you very much”*

*“How’s zzat”* I show them the card.

*“Superb...go ahead my brother,”* said Rajiv.

*“OK”* I said.

*“Best of luck”*

*“Thanks”*

*“We will wait for you in the common room”* they wave a hand.

*“OK”*

I took the card and went to her classroom. The scene was quite disturbing she was not there and all her friends were in a hustle running down on stair one, two, there, four, five almost all of them.

*“Where is Sangeeta”* I went to her best friend and asked.

*“You are here”* she said

*“Omm”* I said, I was so nerves.

*“Where she is...Sangeeta”* I asked again.

*“She is no more”* she had some drop in her eyes.

*“What?????”* I shouted.

*“Would you just said, please repeat what you said...what you said...what ... you...said”*

*“She is no more in this world...she is dead”* she was crying, standing with on the collage post graduation block’s stairs.

*“How”* I asked again, I was still not in the position to understand what she was saying.

*“ In an accident...someone crushed...someone...she is...she was”* what to say when you have nothing left to say.

*“ Oh...my god”* I collapsed. I was wrecked down, keeping my face in my hands.

*“We all are going to her home, would you come”* she asked me.

*“No...I don’t want to”* that was the botch for that Damn God coming out.

That was the time when I want to scream so loud that everyone in this world hears my voice. I was alone again, feeling that someone has snatched away every thing from me. It was very hard for me to believe it. I run toward common room.

*“What happened”* my friends can see that the card with two small lovely birds was still in my hands.

*“Its over”* I replied and start howling.

They took me and embraced me.

*“Don’t worry everything will be alright...we will manage it...she will come to you?”*

They actually don’t no know it was worsened then what they were thinking.

*“ No brother, she will not...coz she is no more in this dirty world”* I told them everything.

It was 2:00 pm, we share hardly any word between us from last five hours, feeling so blank from inside, and if anything coming out, it was just a grievance nothing else. I was scattered. The whole two and half month excursion was before my eyes. I was not in the position to think about what I will do the next minutes. I just want to spend my whole life sitting with them in that closed room, don’t want to go anywhere don’t want to do anything.

Time is 5:00 pm evening, I made some vows. I throw a word *“So brother, so many words unsaid, now whose going to listen to them”* they had no answer. But I had *“No one...no one will hear those three magical words which I want to tell her, whosever she is, what ever she is ...not anyone, these were her words, I’ll keep intact with me as a oath”*

...and I remember the only conversation we share between us when I first saw her. *“I am sorry,”* she said with an apologetic expression on her face. I

was stunned for a moment, because I'd never seen a girl like this before. I was not able even to whisper a word in reply "*it's all right*", and when I said this she was already gone far away.

...and then I think about a person who was hanged without asking for his last wish.

I know it's very hard when you lost something so delightful, very hard to believe someone crushed down my dreams. I was not able to bear my burden on my shoulder. So they were with me on my way to the home.

Something unexpected was there in my way again, when I reached my home at 7:30 pm my cousin brother arranged my birthday party. *"Where were you ...man...we are waiting for you since last two hours"*.

*"Oh...I was jammed up somewhere...please excuse me"* I reacted very dim.

*"Happy birthday"* this was my brother, he then cuddle me and kiss at my shoulder.

*"Wish you a very happy birthday"* she was my mother *"God bless you my child"* I gave her a big hug and start crying

*"What happed"* she asked

*"Nothing...just because you love me so much...that's why"* mama gave me a set of two ball pens. My friends were looking at us. They were grim donno what to do.

But the real joke was yet to come.

My dad come out at speak at loud

*"Many many happy returns of the day"* he squeezed me then in his arms.

*"No please ...dad."* I chewed in mouth, and start crying again. You really should have a big big heart to endure what was going on, I was too little to bear.

*"Hey don't cry"* my dad put my face in his hand.

*"You care a lot dad"* I was crying.

*"Hey...lets celebrate"* my brother took my hand and starts the music.

*"Happy birth day to you...happy birthday to you...happy birthday to dear brother.... happy birthday to you"*

I was asked to sing a song. I was singing but with a sore throat.

And then I was asked to dance. I was trying to dance in that deep sadness and was thinking about a small bird try to fly in the sky but with the broken wings.