

# My Love is a Mirage

A Biography

**by Anne Reporter**

Kumar's Love Life Series

Series Developed by Ravikiran

&

Characters Developed by R Kumar

NOTION PRESS

# NOTION PRESS

India. Singapore. Malaysia.

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This book is dedicated to all my friends who have helped in writing this book and to My Family who supported me and gave their invaluable opinions and Ideas for the story. And to Ravikiran for creating Kumar's Love Life Series and R Kumar for creating characters for this series and allowing me to contribute to this series of books.

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# Foreword

At present, I am doing my MBA.

When I read two of the books “Three Idiots and a Wise Man” and “Unlucky in Love”, I showed interest in writing a book in the series and they gave me this book to write. Mr. R Kumar and Mr. Ravikiran have planned seven books in the series of Kumar’s Love Life and they gave me a chance with this book and extended the series to eight books. It is a little difficult to work with Characters already developed and the story starts in the year 1980. I had to read the other five books in the series to understand the theme of the series, i.e. Alternate Universes, dimensions and timelines. So, instead of their original characters, I tried to start my story with alternate characters and developed them, and the steamy parts were later added by Ravikiran later to make it erotica in keeping with other books.

Hope I have done a good job with this book. If I succeed with this book, there is a sequel to these eight books, which I can hope to take up after completion of the three books in progress. I hope to get to write the sequel too. I listened to the theme of this sequel and it is a totally different book than these eight, and the story starts in 2021 and it is a Mythological and Science Fiction mix. Kalki is a character mix of Rama and Krishna and set in modern times. Let us hope it will develop to the level of your satisfaction

**Anne Reporter**

**Dated: 22nd April 2022**



# Preface

This is the story of three people. The first one, His name is Kumar. He wrote his SSC exams from the village. He collected his certificates and landed in Bombay. The second one is Payal Rane and the third one is Kavitha Nigam. Through fate, they come together through some incidents. What are their trials and tribulations in their life makes the content of this story.

Ravikiran

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022



by Anne Reporter

## PART 1

Kumar's entry into Bombay

## Chapter 1

He was born in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh in 1964. Most of his childhood he spent there. He was born in the middle class, with the bare necessities. They did not even have a fan, forget about other items like tv, fridge, or washing machine, which have become necessities of the middle class nowadays. By today's standards, they would come under poor people. He did not have toys, so they went to the dump yard to get the useless items and build things from them. Once they found a broken children's tricycle. It did not have a front wheel. They used it as a plaything. He brought some glass pieces and made a kaleidoscope. They used to collect small wheels, made a handstick with a wire and hook at the start, and played pushing the wheel without letting it fall. It has become a rage in those days. He used creative ways to play games. Most of his studies there were in Aided schools in Telugu medium. He hardly had spoken English knowledge and Hindi is out of 20 out of 100 passing subjects. He is quite intelligent. He used to read textbooks or notes once before exams and used to get good grades. He had good memory power and an analytical and logical mind. Reading is his passion. He had read a lot of books, starting with children's books, when he was allowed into his father's Office Library; he read literally every book available there. From Science and Technology to Perry Mason and James Hadley Chase. His favourite is Guy de Maupassant. His short stories book, his father had greatly influenced me in life. One is on the thread and the other is on the necklace. His father gave him some tips in Maths and English, which helped shape his future studies. He had written his SSC exams from the village and when his father transferred to Bombay he caught the Konark express and landed in Bombay in the summer of 1980.

## Chapter 2

He looked up at the building. It is a two-storey building. Three flats on the ground floor and three on the first floor. There is a cemented area in front of the flats on the ground floor. And a connecting area on the first floor. There are no steps to the terrace as it has no parapet wall. There is a wall beside the flat and there are some fields and then a road and then a wall for the Santacruz Airport. All around greenery and grass. There is an approach road to this building. Then to the right, there is a building with around 10 flats facing the other side. And there is a tiled house whose doors are closed and there is dust everywhere indicating that this side of the building is never used. On the other side, there is a grocery store run by a Marwari from Rajasthan. On the first floor, there are two Malayalees as neighbours, and on the ground floor below their flat there is a family from the Himachal region and the other two are Maharashtrians. If one stands on the steps one can see the airport, landings and take-offs with a partial view. Being an international airport, one can watch all the flights from around the globe.

His dad told him he can't join a college here without getting the Migration certificate from the board in Hyderabad. Instead, join the diploma in a private institute, and his father put him in SM Lal Coaching Centre in Malad. His father took him to the institute and took the admission and they gave him a form for getting student passes from the railways. He took a pass for the local railway travel and used to go up and down from Santacruz to Malad. From his house, the railway station would be 15 minutes by walk and there is a bus facility available from the main road. There are three bus stops nearby. He got classes in the afternoon, he would go early to learn typing and shorthand. Then the classes would start for his diploma course. As he had to go in the

afternoon, he would go by bus and while returning he would come by bus or walk depending on the rush at the bus stop.

At first, he kept to himself in the classes, as he doesn't know anyone and does not know fluent speaking Hindi. Then after two days as the teacher has not come yet and one of the students called him and asked him in Hindi, "where did you come from?"

He replied, "I came from Andhra." He replied to all the questions asked in Hindi and was replying in English.

He asked, "can't you speak Hind?"

He replied, "he can't speak fluent Hindi and to speak in English he is trying to learn to speak. He can read and write in Hindi."

Slowly Kumar came to know his name is Kirit Trivedi and he is a Gujarathi from Baroda. So, while going home they both came to the station and Kirit got down in Andheri station.

The next day he tried to speak with Kirit in Hindi, but Kirit stopped him and said, "to speak in English only as he does not know English and he wants to learn English. From that time these two became thick friends. There are some girls in the class and he is shy to speak with them. But Kirit would speak with lots of people and girls too.

He did not have any friends on the home front, as he is new to Bombay. He is a little slow to make friends. He waits for the other person to approach before he would speak with them. Then there are P Block boys, who are very naughty and try to bully newcomers. They would sit on storm bunds and pass comments on the passers-by. There are one or two exchanges with them and he used some slang words with them. They are mostly from class iv employees' families and don't know much English. So, they would go back and check the meaning and come back to retort on him in Hindi. He could be careless about them.

by Anne Reporter

During Holi, they have a nasty habit of throwing water balloons on passers-by. They would start the ritual a week before the actual Holi. Once they threw water balloons at him from behind when he was going to classes. He turned back and called them the nastiest words possible for him in English line SOB. Then their mothers came from their quarters which are nearby. They did not understand his English and told “him to go on his way”, admonishing their children for throwing water balloons.

He had to go back and change his dress and had to go to classes. He had learned Shorthand and Typing from the same institute with the diploma course. By the time exams came, he was asked by Kirit to come to his home for combined studies. He would explain to Kirit the lessons and accounts. Now it has become easy for him to study, by explaining the lessons to Kirit, he had achieved two objectives: studying and the other by explaining he had learned it by heart. In the exams, he had taken Advanced Accounts as a major subject and when he got the results, he topped the institute with 79% marks. With his diploma exams, he has written Typing and Shorthand exams also, as they were conducted by the same Government Board. Now during the holidays, Kirit would ask him to come to his house to help him out. During this time, he joined a typing institute near his house to continue to practise typing and shorthand. When his results were declared he gave sweets to the institute students and he informed the typing institute owner about his passing the diplomas. Now he got three diplomas one for Accounts, the second one for Typing and the third one for Shorthand. The institute owner told him to go to a nearby paint factory which is named Rainbow Paints & Varnish and to meet his friend Mr. Khan, who is the HR Manager there. When Kumar went and showed him his marks sheets and the HR manager appointed him as a trainee typist to type invoices in the dispatch department.

He had to type invoices on pre-printed stationery with carbon copies the full day. He would come at 1 pm to his house for lunch and immediately go back. This went on for six months and then he was made a typist with the company. Once his family went over to the village for some function, he went to a small restaurant for his lunch. He saw the name South Indian Tiffins. He thought he would get some snacks to his liking there. First, he ordered 2 Idlies. They were hard. He left the idlies and told him to give him a Dosa. The owner fought with the Tawa and made a mess of the dosa. It seems he doesn't know how to do south Indian cooking. Seeing he could not make even a dosa, he asked, "can I try?"

The hotel owner angrily said, "you make yourself and eat."

Kumar knows some cooking, he would help his mother with chapatis and Dosas. He made dosa and added some chutney and came and sat at the table. When he went to make the payment, he asked, "where do you stay?"

Kumar replied, "I stay in the colony."

He asked, "what do you do?"

Kumar said, "I am a typist with the paint company on the back road."

He asked, "so, how come you came here today."

Kumar said, "my family were away, I couldn't get time to cook in the morning."

He asked, "up to what time do you work in the factory"?

Kumar said, "O work up to 5 pm."

He asked, "can you help me with making Dosas in the evening, I will pay you."

by Anne Reporter

Kumar thought that as he does not have any work in the evenings, he could help him and also earn some money.

He said, "ok, I am Kumar, and you are"?

He said, "I am Kambli."

Kumar thought being Maharashtrian, how would he know south Indian cooking? He said, "I will tell you how to mix Idli and Dosa batter. I will come in the evening."

He completed the typing work fast and left for the restaurant. He went to Kambli and showed him the mixture of Udad dal and boiled rice Rawa for Idlies. And the mixture of Udad dal and rice for Dosas. He had a grinding machine and after grinding he told him to put aside the batter for the whole night, so the Idlies will be fluffy like cotton when made in the morning." When a customer came for tiffin he went and asked, "the customer what he wants. The customer asked, "whatever is available there like Wada, Dosa, etc. The customer asked, "can you make the dosa properly." He must have had previous experience with Kambli. Kumar said, "I could make good dosas." He went and made a dosa and brought and gave him.

Tasting the dosa, he said, "nice." He paid and asked, "can I get good idlies in the morning?"

Kumar said, "come and check yourself."

While closing Kumar said, "I will come in the morning and show you how to make Idlies." So, he can make it himself, he also thought he could have his breakfast there.

They both eat the leftovers from the restaurant and he went home and went to bed as he was tired.

In the morning Kumar got up and dressed and went to the restaurant and showed how the chutney is made while it is grinding he showed Kambli how to make idlis from the batter

prepared yesterday. While Idlies is cooking Kambli made Wada, which he knows.

By the time customers started coming, they were ready with items and chutney. Daily who would take just one plate had more items because of the chutney. And Kumar made dosas for those who ordered them. By the time his time for the factory, he closed his cooking and went over to do typing work.

In a month, those who were having just their tea and bun shifted to eating Tiffins at the restaurant. So, the daily income increased and Kumar got a percentage of the daily income for his troubles. He opened an SBI account with the help of Typing institute owner and started depositing the amount in his account.

Every day one girl used to come to the hotel for Tiffins, she is good-looking but wearing shabby clothes. It seems there is no one to take care of her. Her hair needs a little maintenance. But from her face, she seems to be from a good family. One morning he was a little delayed at home and was walking to the hotel at a fast pace. He heard a voice calling hello. He turned his head toward the sound. That girl who used to take Tiffins daily is coming from the side road. He slowed down for her. When she reached him, he said, "hi, I am Kumar."

She said, "I am Kavitha Nigam."

He asked, "Kavitha do you stay on that road?"

She said, "yes, a little further down."

She asked, "where do you stay?"

He replied, "in the colony."

She said, "ok, what do you do other than making Dosas?"

He replied, "I work as a typist with Rainbow Paints on the back road."

by Anne Reporter

She said, "my father also works there."

Kumar asked, "what does he do?"

She "replied he is a supervisor there, I am taking these tiffins for him only."

"What he says about the tiffins."

She said, "my father asked did he change the cook. These tiffins were better than before."

Kumar asked, "what did you say?"

Kavitha said, "I told him I saw a new boy working there. He seems to be from south India, so he must be making them."

They reached the hotel and now Kambli has learned to make chutney and Idlies, it has become easier for Kumar in the mornings.

At first, he did not think he would be working in the morning, only in the evenings. Now he only attends to Dosa making in the morning as Kambli still has not mastered the art of spreading the batter on the Tawa and removing it. As soon as he entered he started to make dosas. Kavitha took two dosas and said, "bye" to him and went away.

At lunchtime, while he was coming out one person in the worker's uniform stopped him and asked, "are you the typist working here." He said, "yes", he asked, "what have you studied?"

Kumar replied, "SSC and then Accounts diploma."

He asked, "are you the one making tiffins at the hotel."

Kumar replied, "yes, once I went to eat at his restaurant and found he could not make any tiffins, so, I made myself and had eaten it. So, he asked, "me to help him."

He asked, "how did you learn to cook?"

Kumar replied, "I used to help my mother, so learned it."

He asked, "what is your name again."

He replied, "Kumar and you must be Mr. Nigam."

He said, "ok" and they split from there.

Kumar came back to the factory and continued his work, he could not get time to get up from his seat as there were invoices to be typed. At last at 5:30 pm he got up from his seat and punched his card and went out. From this month he has been put on the staff and he needs to punch daily.

Slowly with his hard work, he is coming up in the company. He has a knack for remembering prices and discounts for each company. So even if in the order they mention wrong prices or wrong discounts, he could easily catch the mistake and show them the mistake. When the manual invoice maker had to take leave, they had assigned the work to Kumar on acting. On acting means when one staff member had to do another person's work, they would pay extra for that work at one and half times. This way he gets to do another person's work and get paid for that too.

On the hotel front, he was working daily one hour in the morning and three hours in the evening. Now because of his cooking, the evening crowd also increased. Earlier hardly one or two customers comes to have tea, now they are all coming to have tiffins. When dosas would take time to order they would take some other items also. This way sales also increased. While Kambli has profited from Kumar's cooking, the wada pav stall outside their hotel had to suffer losses. Most of their customers shifted to the hotel to try the different options Kambli offered. So, they planned to discredit Kumar, so Kambli will be forced to let go of Kumar from his hotel. Daily husband and wife, Mr. and

by Anne Reporter

Mrs. Rane used to run the stall for selling wada pav. Mrs. Rane is a little short and fat and Mr. Rane is tall and lanky. They looked every inch Maharashtrians.

Then one day instead of Mr. Rane their daughter stood at the stall. She is around 16 years of age. She looked reasonably good looking and she wore a gown which is reasonably ok not so shabby. When the rush came down, Kumar came out of the hotel to get some fresh air. He looked at the stall and instead of Mr. Rane his daughter is standing at the stall. As he was about to turn away back to the hotel, the girl turned and looked at him and smiled at him as if he is a known person. Thinking she must have seen him daily at the hotel, he smiled at her and went back to the kitchen.

At the time of closing, she came inside with a wada pav in her hand. Kumar asked, "do you want something? Kambli just went inside to wash his hands."

She said, "I brought you a wada pav, this is the last piece and there were no customers now."

He told her "eat it then."

She said, "I brought this for you." He said, "this is the time for my dinner, I don't want to spoil my appetite before dinner, so I can't have it."

She said, "then at least have a piece" and cut it with the knife there and passed it to him. He thought there is no way of avoiding her now and took it and bit a piece and put it on a plate on the counter.

She said, "eat it", he said, "I will eat it in a minute."

She asked, "what is your name?"

He said, "Kumar and yours?"

She said, "Payal Rane."

He said, "ok, Payal thanks."

She went away with her half a piece.

Kambli came inside and asked, "what is it?"

Kumar said, "the girl from the wada pav stall gave this, try this piece" and gave the remainder to Kambli. Kambli tasted and said, "adding a pinch of salt would be nice."

They closed the hotel and went their ways. Kumar came home, had dinner, and sat on the stairs looking at the planes.

\*\*\*\*

Payal took a liking to Kumar. His smart dressing and even though he is not very fair he has a certain charm and magnetism on his face. With his big eyes and thick eyebrows and a moustache even though not fully grown, that he trims and with the clean-shaven face he looks handsome. She stays on the chawl behind the Market bus stop. It is a semi-permanent structure with a single room. There are other boys where she stays, they all act like rowdies and bullies. Their families are all from either the working class or roadside sellers. In front of them, Kumar looked like a sophisticated guy. Even though he just studied diploma after his SSC, he speaks moderately good English. Whenever new customers come he starts with his English and if they respond to him in English he would continue in English else he will change over to Hindi. So, when her father told her to befriend him to teach him a lesson, she readily agreed.

She would make time to go and chat with him or offer him something or other like sweets. He likes sweets so when she gives him sweets in the evening he would take them and pass on a piece to Kambli. One way, it was the initiative taken by Payal to befriend him. Normally he would not speak with people easily and with girls, he would keep his reserve. He would not speak

by Anne Reporter

unless spoken to. At first, he kept her at arm's length as he does not know what kind of girl she is.

Slowly he got introduced to his neighbourhood boys. On a Sunday the boy who stays on the ground floor saw him sitting on the stairs and called him to play badminton. Kumar had ball badminton racket and he took it and went to play with the boy. He played for some time and came back home and washed his face and went on a walk around the colony. There are children playing with equipment at one or two places. In front of the post office, there are swings and some cement benches to sit. He went and sat on the bench looking at children playing on the swing. When they went away he sat on the swing for some time and went home.

Then after a few days, he was going to the hotel and Kavitha was walking in front of him. He called Kavitha and she stopped and started walking with him. Kavitha's house is on the opposite side of Payal's chawl. She had a pukka house that is topped with tiles. It is two rooms with a kitchen. She has a younger brother.

He asked, "I have not seen you for a long time."

She said, "my mom is making breakfast at home now."

He asked, "Then why you were getting it earlier; did she not make it then?"

She replied, "now we have a new mom."

He asked, "what do you mean, new mom?"

She said, "she did not have a mom earlier and now her father brought a new mom home."

He said, "oh, your father remarried."

Then the hotel came and he went into the kitchen to make dosas.

How much did Kumar try to teach him, Kambli could not pick up the making of dosas, or does he want to keep Kumar there to make dosas?

The difference between Kavitha and Payal is that Kavitha's father is a supervisor in the Paints company with many years of experience. The problem with Payal is that she does not have a mother and that made her responsible for the house and she failed her SSC exams. Whereas Payal is from a working-class family, they work in the daytime in the surrounding houses and run the Wada Pav stall in the evenings. Now her father is not the type to work in a fixed job. He would work in one place and would stop there and sit at home. Mostly he would work in construction, but not a reliable guy. Payal also failed her SSC exams because unlike Kavitha she did not have an interest in her studies.

Kumar made a special dosa and gave it to Kavitha and said, "take this special dosa and tell congrats to your father. She paid and went away and Kumar went back to his work.

On holidays there won't be much rush in the hotel. So, either one of them stays in the hotel on those days. Normally Kambli stays there and Kumar would have an off for the day. That day, Kambli had to go somewhere and asked, "Kumar to look after the hotel. On these days mostly, tea drinkers would come. Some people would pick up a cigarette, come and sit and drink tea. Sometimes they would come in groups, have tea and smoke and talk loudly. So, Kumar would not prefer to stay on a holiday. But this day he had to stay back to help Kambli. He sat at the counter and handed if anyone came for tea or biscuits. When someone asked, "for tiffins, he said, "on holidays we don't serve tiffins."

When he was insisting on having a tiffin and one fellow came from the paan shop and told "him to calm down" and took him

by Anne Reporter

to the shop and made him buy cigarettes for both and they went away.

When the tea is finished Kumar closed the hotel and started to go home. When the side road came, he heard Kavitha calling him. He stopped and let Kavitha catch up with him.

She asked, "where are you going?"

He said, "home."

She asked, "do you have any urgent work?"

He said, "no, I closed the hotel and now going home, today is a holiday, so I have no work."

She said, "can we sit somewhere and talk."

He said, "we can sit at the bus stop or if you feel someone will see you there with me, then we can sit in the colony, there are benches at the children's park. We can sit there."

They both entered the colony and opposite to post office there is a small park with swings and other play equipment. They went and sat on a cement bench and he asked, "so what happened?"

She said, "her new mom is a devil."

Kumar replied, "I heard all the stepmothers are devils only. You hardly find a good stepmom."

Kavitha was telling about the problems she was facing and Kumar sat there listening to her. When it was dark he left her at her home and came back home.

Kumar did not have any romantic feelings for Kavitha, he treats her like a friend. He has sympathy for her because she had no mother and now her stepmother tortures her. There is no relief for her, even after her father remarries and now instead, her stepmother made her do all the household work. Earlier she used to do it on her own, now she had to do it because her stepmother says so. She would find faults with small things. That is real

torture. Do the work and hear constant bickering from the stepmother.

He did not see Payal for another week. Then one day in the morning she came for a dosa to be taken home. He made her and gave her one to take away.

The next day evening she was back at their stall helping her mother sell Wada pav. It is a two-person job. One had to fry Wada or bhajjis and the other had to prepare the Wada pav and give it to customers. Seeing Kumar at the counter, she ordered a cup of tea and gave it to her mother.

When there was a lull in the sale at the stall, Payal came over to Kumar and started chatting with him. Even though she is from a working-class family, she is reasonably good looking of average height maybe her clothes were a little shabby sometimes. But nowadays she is wearing reasonably good clothes.

Whereas Kumar, wears a good pair of pressed clothes and tucks his shirt and wears shoes.

As their business is also dull and Kambli went over to get some groceries, Kumar kept chatting with her.

She asked, “what he had studied and why did he discontinue his studies?”

He replied, “due to the change of states, he had problems with his studies. He will restart his studies once he gets a chance.”

Then Mr. Rane came and started to shout at her for chatting with Kumar. Kumar told her, “go to your stall.”

Kumar did not pay heed to her father who is shouting from the road and went inside the kitchen. As no one is listening to his shouting, Rane went back to his stall.

Then Kumar came back to the counter and stood there.

by Anne Reporter

One customer who came in for tea asked, “why the Wada pav stall owner is shouting.”

Kumar said, “they became jealous of our hotel, so he is shouting. One day he is going to make a big nuisance of himself.”

From that day onwards Payal used to come in the morning for breakfast and used to spend time with him chatting and Kavitha used to come in the evenings just for passing time. If there is a heavy rush in the morning, Payal would help him in the kitchen, by taking prepared tiffins to the customers or doing some help for Kumar in the kitchen and learning south Indian cooking from him.

Now in the evenings seeing Kavitha, Payal abstains from coming inside the hotel to chat with him.

Then One day Kavitha has not come in the evening. Seeing Kavitha not there, Payal came to the kitchen.

She was chatting and her father started shouting from outside the hotel.

Seeing him shouting Kambli went and asked, “why are you shouting?”

Rane said, “my daughter is inside the kitchen and what is she doing there with Kumar?”

Then Kambli told him, “you should tell your daughter not to come to our hotel, why are you shouting here?”

Rane said angrily, “you are talking about my daughter.”

Kambli said, “she is the one who came into my hotel and invaded the kitchen.”

They came to fisticuffs. Kumar came in between to stop them, and Rane gave one slap to Kumar. Not only that he started calling Kumar names and started abusing him.

Kumar looked at Kambli for help, and Kambli asked Payal's mother to intervene or else her husband would not go back home.

Now neighbouring shopkeepers came and intervened in the fight.

Kumar let it go for the time being, but he is not the type to forget and forgive. He understood Payal's father is picking up the fights intentionally to get Kumar out of the Hotel.

Now Kumar already lost interest in the hotel, he does not have much creative work to do than spread the batter and make dosas. He is a perfectionist, he had perfected the art of making dosas. He wants to go to his next thing, for which he is searching for an opportunity. Now it is not about finding an opportunity, it is about taking revenge on Payal's father for slapping him for no fault of his.

He told Kambli, "he is taking a time off from the hotel, he is sure Kambli can run the hotel without him."

Now he went in search of a better part-time job than he is doing. He got a job with a lady for doing a data entry job. She gets leads collected for applying for credit cards for Citi Bank. She employs data entry operators to feed the data into database software and prepares the data. Now, this data must be checked for duplicates. So, she gave Kumar the job of removing the duplicates. She gives the dbf files and he has to sort them by names and go through the data to check for duplicates and if he finds any duplicates, he had to delete them. He would start at 6 pm and work until he feels sleepy. He would normally work up to 11 pm. Then he would shut down the system, come out and lock the door and go home. It's just a 5-minute walk for him.

by Anne Reporter

Now here also fate played a cruel trick on him. As he was going to the lady's house for curing the data, he heard a voice calling from behind, he turned back and found Payal coming at a fast clip towards him. He continued to walk towards the lady's flat.

She catches him and asks "where are you going?"

He said, "going to Angadha Apartments", which is the name of the lady's society.

She came with him and both of them got in the lift and got out on the same floor.

Apparently, she is working in the next flat to the lady's flat. He asks her "what are you doing here."

She says "I come here daily to cook for the old lady who stays in this flat. I have to cook for her and her son. And then little cleaning work also."

He thought she working as a maid. He does not have anything against maids. He had worked in the hotel as a cook, so, no work is small. But one must always look to do better things, it is his lookout.

He opened the door with the key the lady provided. Payal is knocking on the door for the old lady to open.

From then on Payal would wait for him at the road turn where he had to enter the lane from the main road. This road is opposite the road leading to his paint factory, which means he had to cross the main road and enter the lane leading to the lady's flat. If he had come a little early, he would wait for Payal to come and they both would go together to the flat. Now out of concern for her she would wait, he used to stop for her, otherwise, she would be waiting forever there.

Once he could not go to the data entry work due to having a lot of work in the factory, due to month-end clearance of the invoices.

Payal told him the next day, “she had waited until 6:30 for him and she had to hear the old lady’s constant bickering.”

He said, “he could not inform her as he is struck in the factory until 7:30, and then he went home.”

So, from then on each would wait for the other at the road corner. When he enters, the lady would give him the day’s completed data entry files and would go to her house. She uses the flat as her office. If she wants to leave early she would put the data on a floppy near the computer and leave it with a note.

Now seeing his work, she is confident that he would complete the day’s work without supervision, she would leave the floppy and go home and he would open the door with his keys and work and save the data and would lock the door and go away.

One day he left Payal at the old woman’s flat door and opened his flat door and went inside and closed the door and started the computer. He checked the data on the floppy and started going through the data.

Then he heard the knock on the door and opened the door. Payal is standing outside telling the old lady is not opening her door. They both went and knocked on the door then went to other flats and enquired about the old lady.

One lady further down said, “I had the flat keys with me” and she came and opened the door.

The old lady was lying on the floor with a small bruise on her head.

They called the ambulance and send her to the hospital and informed her son.

by Anne Reporter

Now Payal and Kumar came back to the office flat and she sat on the sofa and he continued the work. He completed one set of the data and saved it and got up to clear his mind. Then he remembered Payal sitting on the sofa in front of him.

He asked her, "did you not go home?"

She said, "I thought you would drop me at my home."

He replied, "I have some more work it might take another half an hour."

She said, "I will wait for you to complete your work." Seeing her waiting for him, he switched off the computer and said, "come I will drop you off and come back."

She got up and came to him and hugged him and kissed him. He did not know what to do at this sudden action of hers. He waited for her to lead him. She pushed him towards the sofa and he fell on the sofa, and she sat on his lap and started kissing him. He thought she must have watched some movies, in the way she is acting.

He touched her on the chest with his hands. Her boobs were small and compact and he pressed them over her dress. She pulled her dress over her head and she is clad in her bra. He kissed her on top of her boobs. She arched back with pleasure. He reached her behind and unclipped the hook and lifted her bra. He kissed her on the boobs and pressed her small nipples with his mouth and played with his tongue on her nipples and then he started to kiss her boobs alternatively and started licking her nipples. She got up from him and removed her pyjama and undies. He looked at her young figure and dropped to his knees and kissed her on the cunt area. She went and sat on the sofa. He went and stood before her and she unbuckled his trousers and dropped them to the floor. He was in his underwear and his male hood outline is visible. She touched his dick and pulled the

underwear down. His dick stood up without anything to stop it. She sat down on her knees and started to give him a blow job. Being his first time, he released the semen into her mouth. Now she sat back on the sofa opening her legs wide and he sat between her legs on the floor and licked her pussy. She moaned with pleasure and when she reached an orgasm and he got up and dressed.

She stayed there for a minute and went over to the bathroom to clean herself.

She came out and dressed and he told her “go down and wait for me.”

He waited a minute and switched off the lights and locked the door and came down by walking on the stairs. He dropped her near her home, waited until she went inside and he went home.

Now they made it a routine after finishing her work Payal would come to his office flat and they would go together home. So, he would finish his work early. Occasionally, they would have a blow job and pussy licking. They avoided having sex for fear of her getting pregnant. This went on for some time.

In the meantime, he found he could write entrance exams for CA or ICWA or CS with his diploma. He enquired with some known persons in the colony and they said, “CS is easier of the three, then ICWA and CA. So, he decided to do the ICWA entrance. He joined classes in the evening to write the ICWA entrance exams. He left the data entry work after collecting monthly payments and told “the lady he can’t come anymore, she said, “ok, no problem”, as she would get someone else to do the work.

Now he forgot to give back the keys and she did not ask for them. One day after coming back from the classes he met Payal at the bus stop, he met her after a month. He informed her that he left

by Anne Reporter

the data entry work to concentrate on his studies. He still works at the factory typing invoices. He spoke to his manager and adjusted his timings to attend the classes in the evening.

Now seeing her he remembered his days with her in the office flat. He told her, "I missed our days in the flat."

They stood at the bus stop and chatted and went their ways. On a Sunday he went over to the hotel to meet Kambli. Kambli handed him a cup of tea and Kumar stood at the counter and chatted with him and supplied the customers.

Then he came out of the hotel and saw Payal and he hinted to her to follow him and went towards the lady's flat. He went and stood at the entrance to the lane and waited.

She came over after five minutes. They both went to the lady's flat and he opened the door with his keys. He knows no one comes in the night time and he locked the door from inside and they started their routine. After their preliminary instead of their regular blow job, they had actual sex this time. After they were satisfied, they dressed and went to their homes.

Now they made this Sunday meeting their routine. Unlike last time they started to use safety during sex.

This went on for six months until his time for exams came. His classes finished and he concentrated on his studies. There is another boy who is also appearing for ICWA inter from his colony and they both decided to study together.

Having completed his exams, he started to meet Payal at the flat and would wait for her in the flat to complete her work and come to him. As Kumar left the hotel, Payal's father stopped harassing him and forgot about him. As Payal is working at the old women's flat, she did not have any problem coming and going. She could always say that her work got extended. They never thought Payal would take a liking to Kumar and would take the matter into this

deep. Kumar at first thought he is taking revenge on her father for slapping him then he got so involved with her that he could not let her go and had to meet her regularly for sex.

Then the most unexpected thing happened to Kumar, Kavitha had come to him for help and asked him to save her.

Her stepmom had fixed her marriage with an old man for money and her father had not objected to that, instead, he insisted Kavitha listen to her stepmother and marry the match fixed by her.

Kumar asked her, "when is the marriage is fixed?"

She said, "she had only one week."

He told, "to give him some time to fix something for her."

Through some known people he came to know of room availability in IC Colony, Kalina.

He went and gave advance and told them, "he is going to get married and he would come to stay within a week."

He sent her a message that he got a room for rent and whenever she would like to come with him, he would take her to keep her there.

Now Kavitha did not have any other option than to come with him. He could not get any other idea to save her from that old groom.

One day before her marriage he took her to the room he rented and they started living there not as a couple, just as roommates.

Now his entrance result was declared and he passed and got a seat in ICWA Inter. He joined NM College for evening classes. Now because of Kavitha, he could not get to meet Payal.

One day afternoon at lunchtime she was waiting to meet him outside the gates.

by Anne Reporter

He went to her and took her aside and asked, "what is the problem."

She said, "she missed her monthly period and she is getting scared."

He asked, "how many days were you is behind?"

She said, "15 days." He checked when they met last and they have not met for the last two months.

He said, "she should not get scared and if she fears her father, she can come and stay with him at IC Colony, Kalina."

He explained his position with Kavitha and under which circumstances he had to help her.

She said, "if there is any problem she would come there and took the address and said, "she will go and check with Kavitha."

He asked, "if anyone asks her who is she, what will she say?"

She said, "she will say she is Kavitha's sister."

He said, "ok, go and check her up." She went away.

Nigam came and asked, "what does she want from you?"

He wanted to tell him to go fuck off, but his daughter is with him, he should be careful about how he handled Nigam.

So, he decided to talk to him respectfully and said, "her father had sent a message for me."

Nigam looked at him expectantly, so Kumar said, "her father wants to say sorry for slapping me."

Nigam asked, "when did he slap you? Kumar said, "one day Kambli and Rane had a fight and when I try to stop them he slapped me." Nigam said, "oh for that" and went inside the factory. Kumar returned to his office.

He completed the work and went to the room instead of classes. Payal is still there sitting with Kavitha.

He asked, "Payal, what did you decide?"

Payal said, "I was waiting for you to return. I will go and get checked with the lady doctor and then will decide what to do."

He told her, "do not tell anyone about Kavitha." She nodded her head and went away. He went with her and caught a bus and reached his class a little late.

She must have miscalculated her periods and the doctor confirmed her pregnancy. So, she returned to the rented room after two days.

Kavitha called him at the office to come to the room.

He came after the office to the room, instead of going to classes and found Payal there.

He asked, "what happened?"

She said, "she is 10 weeks pregnant and the doctor confirmed the same."

He asked, "what do you want to do?"

She said, "let us get married."

He said, "ok, we will get married, but what would your father would say to that? Did your mother know about your condition?"

She said, "not yet, I can cover for some time with her."

He had another two weeks of classes. He can't keep both the girls here; the owners would not let them stay.

He told her, "come tomorrow with some clothes, we will go away somewhere, then marry. I will get the money from the bank and you be ready."

She went away. He looked at Kavitha for guidance.

She said, "I do not have a problem going away with you."

He lay on the bed and thought about where he could go.

by Anne Reporter

He went and collected the amount from the bank. He got twenty-five thousand in hand.

He went to the rented house packed their bags and waited for Payal to come. When she came he told the owners, "Kavitha's mother is not well and they are going to see her" and collected the bags and went to the bus stand.

They caught a bus to Hyderabad. They want to get out of Bombay first. They got down in Hyderabad the next day and caught another bus to Vijayawada.

He went to his grandfather's house and he told them, "they had come to visit the Durga temple. These girls have taken a vow to visit the temple and he had to bring them."

They had a bath and then had dinner and went to sleep.

In the morning they got up had a bath and breakfast and he told his grandfather "we will visit the temple and come."

After having the darshan they sat down and contemplated what they should do now.

Then one person came and sat down near them. He had half of a coconut and he broke it and gave them pieces as prasadam.

He asked, "what are you doing here."

Kumar said, "he is thinking about what he should do now."

He asked, "what happened?" Kumar said, "showing Payal she is pregnant with my baby and showing Kavitha she is running away from marrying an old man. Now he does not know what to do with them."

The man said, "if you are looking for work and to keep them safe you should go to this address. You will find everything there."

Kumar took the address and put it in his pocket. They went back to the grandfather's house had lunch took bags and went to the

## My Love is a Mirage

bus stand. They enquired about the bus to go to the address given by the man in the temple.

They sat on the bus and took a ticket and told the conductor to inform them when their stop comes.

by Anne Reporter

## PART 2

Kumar lands in the future

## Chapter 1

They got down at the stop and they saw a hotel at the bus stop. He told them, "let us have tea and then we will go."

Kumar ordered tea for them and sat on a bench. The hotel owner put the tea in front of them and asked, "where are you going."

He showed the address given by the man at the temple.

He looked at the address and said, "I am waiting for you only, give me fifty thousand and this hotel is yours."

Kumar said, "I don't have 50 thousand."

He said, "look in your bag."

Kumar opened his bag and he found currency that he had not seen before. There are 50 notes of the 2000 denomination. He counted 25 notes and handed him the money.

He handed the papers to Kumar and went away.

He looked in behind rooms, there is a kitchen and one bedroom with a cot and cupboards. He looked inside the bag with him, there is also a plastic folder with papers in them, that looked like certificates, so, he put them also with the other papers.

They got everything they would require here. He put the papers and money in the cupboard and locked it and kept the keys in his pocket. He looked at the calendar hung on a nail on the wall.

It is showing the year 2017 and the month of March. Kumar was confused and asked, "Kavitha which year is this?"

She said, "1983."

He told her "look here, there is a calendar for 2017 hung here."

They heard a voice calling anyone here. They all went out to the hotel.

by Anne Reporter

A person was sitting on a bench, Kumar went to him and asked, “\ what he would like to have.

He said, “give me a cup of tea.”

He poured the tea and gave him.

Kumar asked, “what year is this?”

He looked at him strangely and asked, “did you forget the year, this is 2017.”

Now it is confirmed they travelled 24 years into the future. How is it possible? They all went back to the kitchen and discussed what happened.

He advised them we will think about what happened later and come back to the hotel front. outside a bus stopped and they were busy serving customers until evening.

When everything finished in the hotel, he closed the main door to the hotel and they went into the bedroom.

Kumar told them “aren’t you feeling hot here, I will have a bath and come.”

After wearing a night dress, he said, “what will we do for tomorrow? We must plan how we should run the hotel.”

He went and looked in the kitchen, there are groceries for at least a week to run the hotel. So, he started preparing for making batter for Idlies and Dosa. He put Udad dal in the water to soak. In another utensil, he put some rice to soak and in another, he soaked Idli Rawa.

He came into the bedroom. He asked them, “how we will plan for sleeping.”

Payal said, “this bed is big enough, we three can manage on this.”

He thought it was a really big bed, what it is called king size, they must have arranged for us only.

Payal said, “I will make dinner” and Kavitha said, “I will clean the utensils.”

Kumar lay on the bed thinking about what is happening in his life. How he could be in the year 2017? With two girls, one is a girlfriend and another he just saved from her evil stepmother.

He remembered the plastic folder in their bag, he opened the cupboard and removed the folder and took out the papers in the folder and lay them on the bed. He looked at them, they are their educational certificates and his experience letters. There are registered papers for land and a house. He looked at the address on the papers, they must be somewhere in a nearby city. If they want he could sell the hotel and go and live there in the city. He looked at the girls’ certificates they are for SSC pass certificates and the years were three and four years back. He looked at his certificates. His SSC certificates are for the year 2012 and his junior college is for 2014. There are also his degree certificates for 2017 and an MBA certificate in 2019 in the future. How he could have his post-graduate certificates in the future? That means he had to wait another two years to use it. He looked at them closely, they seemed genuine from the university itself. He put all of them back in the folder and put them back in the cupboard. Someone has meticulously planned for his future in this future time. It must be when they are sleeping at the night they must put him on the future bus. But why did they do that? Who has done that? What did they expect from us?

Payal came and called for lunch. They took the dishes to the table at the hotel and started eating.

After finishing dinner, he came and started the wet grinder and put Udad dal to grinding to make the batter. When the dal had reached the required consistency, he removed it into two vessels and put rice in the grinder. When the rice is ready he put the

by Anne Reporter

Udad dal batter back on the grinder and let it mix and then removed it back into the vessel. Another vessel with Udad dal batter, he mixed soaked Idli Rawa by removing the water and readied the batter to make idlis. Then he fried Mirchi and ground nuts and kept them aside to grind in the morning.

He came and lay on the bed, he missed his books. He thought he should have at least brought some books with him as they were in his parent's house.

Kavitha came to put her clothes in the cupboard and opened a cupboard, and shouted see all these books here, who could have kept them here? There were all kinds of books there. They are arranged as per genre. There are old books and new books. Many of them he read and he could read them a second time. Then there are science and technology, Information Technology and Crime and other genre books are there. Payal brought a tv remote like thing and asked, "what is this?"

He said, "he did not see one like this. He pressed a key and a small screen lit up. He pressed some numbers and pressed a key and a sound came from that this number does not exist.

He said excitedly, "hey, this thing talks. It seemed like a small phone, I saw one of the customers having something like this. We will check tomorrow."

He lay on the bed and Payal came and lay beside him and Kavitha lay beside her. Now, what will I tell them if anyone asks? Payal I can say wife and Kavitha as her sister, who does not have a mother or father, so we are keeping her with us. Then when we go to the city, we will decide what to do.

Kumar closed his eyes. When Payal put her hand on his chest, he let it be, but when she put her leg on him, he turned the other side. It was very hot here. He got up and opened a window and a

cool breeze flew into the room. He came back and lay on the bed and closed his eyes.

In the middle of the night he woke up suddenly, Payal was trying to arouse him. He showed Kavitha and said in a whisper, “Kavitha will wake up.”

She said, “she won’t wake up until the morning.”

He satisfied her and slept again.

He got up around 5 am. First, he put the chutney in the grinder and started the machine. He mixed both the batter and put salt and mixed again and set it aside.

He brushed, had a bath and wore a dress and put on a long red-coloured vertical line on his forehead to look like a brahmin.

Then came and put the Idli on the stove and made a fresh batter for Wada.

This he made into a ball and flattened and put a hole in the middle and fried it in the oil to make Wada. These he put on the counter under a holed cover and at one side he made tea and boiled milk and kept aside to make coffee. He made himself a cup of coffee from the decoction he prepared and sat with them at the counter waiting for customers.

A milk van came and dropped a crate of milk packets and went away. He put them in the fridge.

When Kavitha came after washing her face he told her “remove Idli from the vessel and put them on a vessel at the counter.”

When Payal came he made her sit on the counter and he went to complete the preparations.

He removed the chutney from the grinder and tempered it and brought it to the counter. Now Payal had some experience dealing with customers, he let her manage the counter.

by Anne Reporter

He went and made a sample dosa and put it on the counter. Slowly people started to come to the bus stop.

Some men asked for tea and sipped it and waited for the bus.

Then some people started to order tiffins and eat sitting at the tables, looking out for the arrival of the bus.

When the bus came the bus stop cleared and then school and college students started to arrive. Some saw the items on the counter and started to order and eat hastily else they miss the bus.

When the idlies on the counter finished, he brought a fresh batch of idlies and put them on the counter.

When the students rush came down then those people going to the city on work started arriving, some ordered tea and some ordered tiffins.

This way the rush of customers went on up to 11 am. Then he checked the cash and left a little change, he put the money in the cupboard.

At around 11:30 am, a van stopped outside and they brought a tv set and dish antenna. They showed him the invoice, which showed it was paid for. They fixed the tv in a vantage position and fixed the antenna on top of the building and checked the set-up box and took his signature and went away. Then another van came and fixed ac in the bedroom and took his signature and went away.

He thought did he take 50,000 for these items or what? If he had known he would have told them ‘the ac is not necessary.’”

Then another van came and dropped an air cooler and went away. He thought this must be for the hotel, he filled it with water and put it in a corner where an electric point was available.

Now the room became a little cooler. Now one or two people standing outside for the bus came in and ordered tea.

So, without his asking one by one required items started to arrive.

He took the remote-like thing and put it on the counter.

One fellow came and asked, "can I make a phone call."

Kumar replied, "we don't have a phone here."

He showed the mobile on the counter and asked, "don't you have a recharge for that?"

He said, "I don't know" and handed him the phone.

He made a call and then cut the call said, "you have a one-year unlimited plan on this, you can make calls" and went away.

When someone else asked for the phone he handed it and they made a call and went away. He thought about whom he could call with this phone?

So, he thought he should call his mother and called his house number.

It said, "this number does not exist." Now after all these years, their number must have changed. He got a call after 10 minutes. He pushed the button, he saw them pushing and the call got connected.

He said, "hello", and the other side's voice said, "Hello, is it, Kumar?"

he said, "yes."

The Lady's voice on the other side said, "I am your sister Revathi speaking here.

A few minutes back someone rang up and said, "you will be available on this number. Where did you go away for such a long time?"

by Anne Reporter

He said, "what a long time I just went away from home only a week back."

She said, "why did you not tell anyone? Grandfather phoned and said you came to visit the Durga temple and went away, I am hearing from you after twenty-five years. Where did you disappear all these years? Your type institute owner checked with your bank and said, "you withdrew twenty-five thousand, that is all the money in the bank. Then two Maharashtrian men came to our house looking for you. They said you have taken their daughters and ran away. Grandfather said you came with two girls. Are they the same?"

Instead of answering her, he asked, "where are you now?"

She said, "I am in Hyderabad."

He said, "ok, give me your number, I will call you back in the night."

She said, "the number would come on the screen."

He said, "I don't know how to see the number, give it to me."

She gave the number and he noted the number and said, "if I could not call back, you call me on this number" and cut the call.

A couple of old people came and sat down, they must be around 55 to 60. He asked them, "do you want drinking water?"

They said, "please." He poured two glasses and went and sat behind the counter. He asked them "where are you going"?

They said, "they are going to the city."

He asked, "which city"?" He said, "Nellore." Kumar said, "I am Kumar and you are?"

He said, "I am Dinesh and she is my wife Sneha."

He said, "namaste amma, I feel like I saw you somewhere?"

She said, “we stay in the village behind there, you must have seen us here somewhere.”

He said, “no, amma, I just arrived from Vijayawada yesterday.”

She asked, “where in Vijayawada?”

He said, “one town, near Gandhi Park.”

She said, “our parents used to stay there and I have not been there for many years. You must be a toddler when I was last there. I was there for the last rites of my mother”, and her eyes were filled with tears.

Then Payal came after hearing their voices.

Kumar said, “she is my wife, Payal.”

Looking at both of them Sneha asked, “what is your age son?”

He said, “I am 19.”

She said, “you married so young.” and asked, “what have studied” in Telugu to Payal.

Kumar said, “she did not know Telugu, we have come from Bombay.”

She laughed and said, “Love marriage” and blessed them.

She said, “you did a good thing putting a cooler here, it is a boon for people like us. We can’t go to the city in the morning due to the rush, in the afternoon it is very hot. At least we can wait for the bus here.”

Then the bus horn is heard, they got up to go, and Kumar said, “while coming back have a tea and go, Amma.”

She said, “ok” and they went away slowly and got on the bus.

He said to Payal that “we will see these kinds of people all the time.”

Payal asked, “what is she saying?”

by Anne Reporter

Kumar said, "she asked what have you studied."

Payal said, "10th fail."

Kumar said, "who told you, you have failed? you passed and I have your certificates with me."

She looked at him strangely and went into the kitchen.

Kavitha completed her work and came and sat in front of the cooler, and said, "I have not seen anyone use these coolers in Bombay."

Kumar said, "it would not fit the conditions of Bombay, due to the sea the air has more moisture there and only ACs will work there. If you feel the heat, you can go and sit in the bedroom, now they have fitted the AC also."

She said, "then the current bill comes high."

He said, "don't worry about the bill enjoy while you can."

Now Payal came and sat down and asked, "what were you saying."

He thought a minute and said, "your SSC mark sheet is there in our bag. You both have passed tenth a while back."

Kavitha said, "Yeh! I passed my tenth."

Kumar said, "what is the use we can't use our certificates."

Payal asked, "why? He said, "they are not our original certificates."

Kavitha said, "so, what? They are certificates, where are we going to join Government Jobs?"

Then the bus from the city stopped in front and some people got down. Dinesh and Sneha had come and sat down at a table. Kumar got up and served them cool water and then put two cups of tea in front of them.

Sneha said, "what is the need for the tea?"

He said, “have it, it would be better in the heat.”

When they were about to pay for the tea, he refused the payment saying he had given them voluntarily without ordering. They blessed him and went away.

## Chapter 2

So, they made this their daily routine, getting up and preparing tiffins and tea and coffee. And serving the customers who come to the bus stop. Now people start coming from the village for parcels of tiffins to take. Slowly Kumar's Tiffins centre as it is known became famous. Whoever got off the bus would have at least a cup of tea and would go. Some would come just to make a phone call. Some would come to enjoy the cool air from the cooler and some would come to chat.

Village girls used to come to their hotel to speak with Kumar. Sometimes they would ask him questions about their studies. He would give them answers patiently. He did not know they were asking him questions just for talking with him.

One of them is Sneha's niece Muskan Gupta. She is in her Intermediate first year and she studies in the college in Nellore. She would take the bus in the morning and would return in the evening with her group of friends. She would get off the bus and would order cool drinks and would sit at the first table and would ask questions and Kumar would answer them to the best of his knowledge.

Over time he had improved his spoken English and he could speak good Hindi too. She has studied in an English convent and she would speak with him in English only.

Others would look at them talking in English. Her aunt Sneha told her Kumar is married to Payal and she did not believe her as they don't behave like a married couple. She suspected they are his servants, but for the fear of the villagers he is telling them Payal is his wife and Kavitha is her sister. Otherwise, they would ask how can he live with two girls in the same house. Over that, they both can't speak Telugu.

Her argument is if they are married, the girls would have tried to learn Telugu. So, she started flirting with him in English and the Payal and Kavitha could not understand what she is saying and would avoid coming there.

When their exams finished and during holidays they would come to the hotel to have cool drinks, even though they are available in the village shops.

Recently Muskan got a smartphone and she would come and show him all the apps and websites. And would ask him questions. Now he does not know anything about the apps, now she felt superior to him and would start to explain them to him.

He only tolerated her because she is Sneha's niece. Now because of Payal and Kavitha, she could not get her hooks into him. If she wanted to call him to her house, these two would be there to keep company. One day she got a chance when they were having a function at their house and she made her father order the tiffins from Kumar. He left the girls at the hotel to look after it and packed the tiffins and took them to the function.

After completing the serving, he repacked the empty utensils and went to the bathroom to wash his hands. Muskan came from behind and closed the bathroom door. He turned back to see who is closing the door.

Finding her there he told her "someone will come" and she asked, "if no one comes is it okay? Come over to the fields on Sunday at 6 pm there is a small hut and the key would be in the pot."

Now what will he tell Payal if she asks him, he thought of ways to slip away from the hotel for a rendezvous with Muskan. He thought of a way, and on the way from the village shoe mart, he brought cheap quality running shoes. They don't have good

by Anne Reporter

quality shoes there. He decided to tell Payal he is taking up running because he is getting a paunch sitting at the hotel.

In the evening he made Payal sit at the counter and Kavitha help her out, he started to Jog towards the fields. he looked at the room in the fields and went and took the key from the pot and opened the door. It has a woven cot and a bedsheet over that with a pillow. It must be used by a watchman when the crops come for cutting. He locked the door and put the key in the pot and continued his jogging. He continued jogging for another two days and the next day is Sunday.

So, at 5:45 he started his daily jogging and went to the hut and opened the door with the key from the pot and went in and lay down.

After 10 minutes Muskan entered the room and closed the door and locked it from inside.

She sat beside him on the bed and asked, "did you really marry those girls?"

He said, "no, I just eloped with her and we did not get a chance to marry."

She asked, "why did you have to elope with two girls?"

He said, "Kavitha is having a problem with her stepmother and is trying to marry her off to an old man. Then Payal lied to me she is pregnant and I took them both and came over here."

She asked, "did you have a physical relationship with both of them?"

He said, "nothing like that, I had a relationship with Payal to take revenge on her father and when she said she was pregnant, even though I had doubts about that still felt it is my responsibility to her unborn child and we ran away from home."

She asked, "then what happened?"

He said, “someone gave us this hotel to run it and we are running it.”

She asked, “you have this good English, what did you study?”

He said, “I was doing ICWA when we ran away from home.”

She asked, “where was your home?”

He said, “in Bombay.”

She said, “you ran away from Mumbai? But why are you calling it Bombay, now everyone calls it Mumbai.”

He said, “just a force of habit.”

She said, “I heard one of my uncles also went away to Bombay after eloping with a girl. We don’t know where he is and we have not heard from him again.”

She got up and kissed him on the cheek and said, “I just wanted to see if you will come when I call you. Bye, go home after 10 minutes.”

Muskan would meet him on Sundays and they would chat and she would give him a kiss and would go away.

## Chapter 3

So, the summer went away like this. Kumar enquired about Payal about her pregnancy, she said, “she is no longer pregnant. She must have lost it from travelling in time.”

He let the matter drop and thought she must have lied about it in the first place.

The first rains arrived and the weather turned cooler and the use of the cooler has become non-mandatory. But he would switch it on in the afternoons when it would be a little hotter.

Over the time, he became known as a good guy in the village, and people started calling them for their house functions.

It started with Sneha and Dinesh. They called him to their grandson’s cradle function and he had attended it with Payal and Kavitha.

Once for some function, they ordered morning breakfast from Kumar. He had supplied the tiffins but refused to supply lunch as he is not a very good cook for lunch items.

When the Rakhi festival came Muskan came and tied Rakhi to Kumar accepting him as her brother. Then he remembered his sister and looked for her number to call her, but he could not find it.

Then Muskan’s younger brother Ajay started to come to the hotel and would ask him to help with maths problems. He would come from the village on his bicycle and would lock the cycle and would come and sit at the first table. This way one by one Sneha’s family members get to know Kumar and they would come and sit at the hotel whenever they are going to the city.

As for Kumar, he did not need to go anywhere for anything. Everything would reach him at his hotel. Groceries would come to him with a phone call. Milk is delivered every morning.

Newspapers are delivered in the morning. He would take Deccan Chronicle and Time of India and Eenadu Newspapers daily. He would read English papers and Eenadu for the customers. There are a few who would like to read English papers too.

So, he never thought of having a vehicle. If he wants to go to the city which is rare, the bus stop is outside. If he wants anything from the city, he just has to say to one of the regular customers and they would bring it while returning from the city. They don't go to the city to watch movies, they watch them on the tv. Even if he wants to watch a Telugu movie, he had to go alone. So, life for him goes on like this.

Payal was habituated with the life of a maid from a young age. She did not mind this work, where she has all kinds of luxuries available. Even though not married they live a life of married life. She gets help from Kavitha, when she did not feel to do any work, she can always ask Kavitha to finish it. Somehow, she got connected with Kumar from the time she laid her eyes on him. She saw his charisma and fell for him. In her family, hardly anyone speaks English. That has become the main attraction for her. Then his dressing sense and his hair. When he started to work at the hotel he used to have thick black long hair covering his ears, it was the fashion at that time. Still, it is fashionable nowadays, but people wear it differently. He is not very tall but that is not an issue for her as she is just above five feet. Now they have come twenty-four years into the future, but she did not find it any different, it might be because they came to live in the village. It is not really they are living in the village, it seemed to her they are at the edge of civilisation. She came to admire him for whatever he does. They are not short of cash and he would purchase them whatever they ask for. They got gold ornaments which they would wear when they go to the village. As they are

by Anne Reporter

just teenagers, so they don't need silk sarees to go to the village functions. So, they get costly dresses. Where she used to wear shabby clothes, she now gets to wear fashionable clothes to the village functions. The way the villagers look at them is what she enjoys most. The youngsters of the village are jealous of Kumar. They come and sit in the hotel just to look at these two girls, even though they wear working clothes at that time.

Kumar would not let anyone smoke in the hotel. He purchased the paan shop outside the hotel, that sells cigarettes and put a fruit shop in that place and gave it to someone to run it.

When he felt like a smoke, he would go to the bathroom to have it. Now Payal is enjoying life as she gets to sit at the counter when the preparations are made. She enjoys the attention she gets at the counter.

Whereas Kavitha is moderately happy with her life. She would think about what her life would have been with the old man and gets reassured that her life is better than if she had stayed and married the old man. She would feel jealous of Payal for her closeness to Kumar, and she decided to woo him as they are going to live together forever. Sometimes she would think about why she did not ask him to marry her when he rescued her from the old man's marriage. She would rue that she did a big mistake by not asking him for marriage then. If she married Kumar, Payal would not have come into their lives. She felt Payal lied to them about her pregnancy only to divide them. Kavitha would think that if Payal had not come into their lives, she would be wife to Kumar and they might be living with his family. Her parents would have forgiven them when they got married. Which parents would not be happy if their daughter is living happily? Then she thought about where they would be at this time. Then she was saddened by the thought they might have passed away after all these years. Then thinking about the stepmother, she is happy

that she could get away from her clutches. Every day she thanks God for keeping her away from her.

On the home front for Kumar, it has become very difficult with Kavitha. Now, what happens when you stay in a single room with a girl, there would be instances when you see them changing or think one person is there but instead another person would be there.

One time he hugged Kavitha from behind thinking she is Payal because she wore Payal's clothes. Once he scolded Payal thinking of her as Kavitha for standing close to him. So, he used to be careful with the ladies. He never tried to surprise Payal or act close to her during day time. The only time they could be close was at night time, that also they had to be careful about Kavitha being present beside them.

One night there was no power in the area and he had lit a lantern, which Payal took to go to the bathroom. Seeing the opportunity Kavitha came close to Kumar and made him have sex with her, he thought she is Payal. When Payal came back with the lantern she saw them having sex and she was miffed with Kumar. Kumar apologized profusely saying that he thought she was Payal.

When Payal refused to listen to him he asked, "what is our relation? We are not officially married." Which made Payal angrier.

Now Kavitha went and apologized to Payal saying that it was her mistake and she had acted like Payal to have sex with Kumar.

None of them had proper sleep that night and in the morning, they went on their work without speaking with each other.

Now seeing the opportunity Kavitha tried to come closer to Kumar. Seeing Kavitha getting closer, Payal burned with jealousy

by Anne Reporter

and pushed her anger aside and tried to mend the differences with Kumar.

There is a saying once bitten twice shy, but here it was different, Kavitha had tasted the sex with Kumar and would want to have the experience again. So, she started teasing him with sexy poses. Like dropping something and bending in front of Kumar to show her cleavage or changing her clothes in front of him, or exposing herself to him in the bedroom, when she thinks Payal is not watching her, things like that.

He tried to avert his eyes in those circumstances, thinking about Payal's anger. Once she barged into the bathroom while he is having a bath and looked at him from top to bottom and asked, "did he want a blow job?"

Sometimes while sleeping she would put her hand over Payal and try to arouse him from there. Or take his hand and try to touch it to her chest or cunt.

Normally they would not go out of the house. But once Sneha called Payal as she is married and with a husband to a function for women with husbands. As Kavitha is not married, she was not invited.

Now Payal thought these two will be working in the hotel and went to the function in the evening.

As their luck that day all the eatables are completed in the hotel and they closed the hotel and went inside the bedroom.

Kumar took a towel and went over to the bathroom for a bath. Now Kavitha came behind him to the bathroom. Now there is no fear of Payal would scold them and they know it would be at least another hour before Payal's return. They had sex in the bathroom and he came out and dressed and opened the hotel for show and sat at the counter with tea.

After some time Payal returned from the function and asked, “where is Kavitha?”

He said innocently, “she should be inside doing some work.”

After the tea was completed, he closed the hotel and came inside.

Kavitha is preparing dinner for them and he went and lay on the bed, waiting to be called for dinner.

## Chapter 4

Now the children got Dussehra holidays and the morning rush has reduced a little. So, they started to open the hotel a little late. Seeing them opening late, people started to arrive late for their breakfast. When the holidays were behind, still they continued with their late opening. They became a little complacent with their work. Also, Kumar started to feel bored with this daily routine. He was ready to sell off this hotel and go and stay in the city.

He even hinted to some people who asked him about opening the hotel late. Muskan would come daily in the evening and would chat with him. As she tied the Rakhi to him no one bothered to ask them what they are chatting about.

Now after college she would visit him at the hotel and he would give her a chocolate and she would go home. She started to call him Bhaiyya and he would call her Sis. So Muskan became his God-given sister.

One day Muskan came to the hotel with her cousin from Vijayawada and her name is Prachi. She is Muskan's Mama's daughter. Now Muskan is Kumar's sister so, Prachi used to call Kumar Baava meaning brother-in-law. They both used to sit in the hotel and would make fun of him. So, Kumar would call her Saali and say Saali Aadhi Garhwali means she is half a wife to him. So, this way they used to flirt with each other.

Now the rainy season was behind and winter started. As the surroundings were open areas, the nights turned very cold. Payal would hug Kumar for his body warmth and would sleep. Seeing Payal hogging Kumar's warmth, Kavitha decided to do something to save herself from the cold and came and slept on the other side of Kumar getting his body warmth in the same blanket.

The next day boldened by Payal not scolding her, Kavitha opened her blouse and slept beside Kumar touching him with her open chest. In the middle of the night, she took his hand and made his hand touch her cunt and give her satisfaction. Payal was unaware of their midnight actions and would sleep away.

The villagers also started to treat them as his wives and would call both to their house functions. This trend started with Sneha. It seems she has some hand in increasing their status in the village.

One day he has shown them the land and house property papers and asked them to check their status in the city.

When they checked the status of the papers it has come to Sneha's attention that it belongs to her cousin who has gone away from his house after he married a girl against the wishes of his parents.

Now the papers showed that these properties were passed on to Kumar after their death due to some accident, which Kumar was obviously not aware of.

Now Sneha thought Kumar is her nephew who is the son of her cousin. So, she started to treat them like family members. Whenever she came to take the bus, she would demand tea or tiffins from him and address him like she would address her own son and his girlfriends as her daughters-in-law.

One day she asked, "where did you marry her?"

He replied to her shyly "they had run away from the house and he did not get to marry her." She sat there and heard his story.

Without mentioning the dates, he told her his story from the time he started working in the hotel and how Payal's father hit him and how he wanted to take revenge on him and lured her to him, how fate had helped him to have a relationship with her.

by Anne Reporter

Then how Kavitha had to get out of her house and he had helped her by renting a room and keeping her there. Then how Payal used pregnancy as a ruse and made him clean out his bank account and how they went to Vijayawada and how they were guided in the temple to come here to start the hotel. He did not tell her they time travelled 24 years, even if he tells them they would not believe him and would think his whole story is a lie.

She or her family does not have any information about her cousin and she really believed Kumar is her relative. Sneha's family are very prominent persons in the village. Now Sneha had taken herself to get them married and got their purohit to fix a date for their marriage and with the blessing of her family members to marry him to his two girls. They fixed a time for their first night and send them both to his room. Now their watching a film on Annamayya has helped him on this matter. Wherein Annamayya marries two girls in that movie.

In this way, he officially marries his two girlfriends and they become his wives.

## Chapter 5

The year 2018.

Now here the competition between his wives started. Payal would treat herself as the real wife. Her argument is that she had a relationship with him first and was pregnant first and so officially she is his wife.

Now Kavitha's thinking was that she was officially married to Kumar in front of the village so he is her husband too and whatever Payal may think, she does not care.

Kavitha would demand equal care from Kumar. Being in a single room he could not help it but there were clashes between them about whom he should sleep with. He warned them if they fight among themselves like this he would leave both and go away to Bombay.

He knows there is no one in Bombay. He knows if not Bombay he could at least go to Nellore where he had a house and land. So, one day he decided to check them and when Sneha and her husband were going to the city, he went with them to see his properties.

When he saw the house, he was surprised it was not just a house it is a bungalow with servants looking after it. It is under a trust and it will officially be passed onto Kumar when he reaches 21 years of age, that is in a couple of years. Now according to the trust set up in his name, he is supposed to be studying and he would come to their palace when he finishes his studies. He did not reveal to them who he is and returned to his house with Sneha and Dinesh.

So now he had to spend two years until his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday as per records with him and then he needs to go to Nellore to claim

by Anne Reporter

ownership of the house and land and whatever his grandfather and father had left for him in the trust deed.

Now boldened by his inheritance waiting for him he started to treat his wives as servants working in his hotel. He would leave all the work to them and would spend his whole time in the bedroom reading books and now he got a delivery of a computer, and through the initiative taken by the government to provide internet to all, he got an internet connection to his hotel. Now he would spend all his time on the computer learning software as mentioned in his certificates.

Unable to bear the treatment by Kumar and Payal, Kavitha went away with someone from the village. As she doesn't know Kumar's status she thought about how long to work in this hotel like this and when someone from the village has shown her a picture of a great living, she took some money from the till and went away with the villager thinking he would provide what she is looking for. He took her to Hyderabad and used her and left her there to fend for herself.

When Kavitha went away Payal called two ladies from the village on daily wages and put them to work in the hotel. She would sit on the counter and these two prepare tiffins and would clean after and go.

She made a new habit of giving Kumar a glass of milk with Horlicks in the night before going to bed. He would drink half and would give her the other half. So, this way these two have turned their lives in the best way possible and spent the remainder of two years. He had become proficient in computer software and started to develop some software by selecting projects from the internet. He started to read articles on management. It might be their good luck or bad luck they did not get pregnant.

## Chapter 6

### The Year 2020

By the start of the year, there were reports of the coronavirus in China and cities were being quarantined there. When it seemed apparent that every business establishment would be closed, he took his earnings and certificates and went over to Nellore and identified himself and waited for his birthdate to get the inheritances.

On his birthday even though the coronavirus lockdown persisted the trustees came down to the bungalow and read the will of his grandfather passing on his inheritances to him. As per the trust deed prepared by his grandfather, he not only got the bungalow and land whose papers he was possessing, he has become a proud owner of a business conglomerate run by the trust, which will be passed on to him now, which belonged to his father. They have many businesses run by them from Computer software and Hardware to manufacturing industries, etc.

He chooses to lead the computer division first, as he studied computers during his free time.

By this time everyone started working from home. He would sit through the meetings just as a spectator and would not interfere in their meeting, trying to understand their workings. When the government let them work with reduced staff, he would sit at his bungalow and would take meetings with managers and would get daily reports on the working of the developers and projects.

Within six months he became conversant with the company's workings and took over the running of company in his hand.

On the home front, he did not tell them Payal was his wife and only introduced her as a Personal Assistant, who would look after his day-to-day requirements.

by Anne Reporter

Seeing all this wealth she got scared and did not press him to reveal her as his wife. Over that their marriage was performed by the villagers jointly with Kavitha. So, if she reveals that she is married to him then the point of Kavitha would raise. She did not want them to know about his status and thought over time she could take over the house in her hand. As she already had control over the household as his PA, she was happy with that alone. There is no problem with spending money, he would give her whatever money she asked. And there is no restriction on their meeting at night. She would get her daily quota of copulation with him. Servants started to treat her as his mistress.

So, this way both their lives changed and set in for the future course.

## Chapter 7

When the government allowed to start the businesses to start operating from offices, he went over to Hyderabad to look at his software offices.

First, he went to his flat and put down the luggage.

His offices were in Cyber Towers and the Director looking after the software division is Joy, her full name is Jocelyn.

She welcomed him and showed him his cabin.

He sat down and asked, “about the staff’s strength.”

She said, “now 75% of the staff are back to working at office and the remaining were dillydallying to come or not.”

He asked, “please give me an idea of how many were working in their division.”

She gave a list of employees. He said, “first he would like to meet the developers then he will go up the ladder.”

She made him sit in the conference room and she started calling the developers by division they are working.

First, developers were working on custom-made software. These work with the clients to make software as per their requirements. He inquired about what kind of projects they get and how they are handling them. Who brings them projects? How much time it would take for a normal project to be completed? What kind of problems do they encounter while developing?

At first, seeing his age they must have thought what would he know about the business? He must have just come out of college. This must be his first job. Being the owner has some kind of advantages.

Next product division developers were introduced.

by Anne Reporter

He asked them the same questions to understand their mindset and what kind of work they do.

Then there is the marketing division, software maintenance division, accounts department, HR, etc.

He interacted with them to understand what kind of work they do. Finally, he went to the custom software division and sat beside a girl working.

He asked her name, she said, "Harini."

He said, "Harini, can you show me what you are working on."

She showed the project running the application. Then he asked, "can you show me the coding", and she showed him that.

He went through the coding and asked, "how do you decide to use these coding standards."

She said, "our team lead Vivek has given her this to work on."

He thanked her and went to another man working and sat down beside him where he found the chair empty.

He asked for his name and introduced himself as Kumar.

He said, "I am Praneeth."

Kumar asked, "the same questions he asked Harini, and went back to his cabin and sat down.

Joy came over, seeing him enter the cabin.

He looked her over. She is around five feet and with a round face and is slightly dark. She must be around 50 years of age. He told her to sit down and asked her personal questions to know her better.

She had studied MS in the USA and came over and Kumar's father had appointed her as a Team Lead. She has risen through the company all these years. She was made a director before he expired some five years back.

She said, “you are looking like your father. It is like I am looking at your father all those years ago. Where were you all these years?”

He replied, “I am studying MBA. I came back six months back but due to the corona pandemic, I could not meet them until now.”

She asked, “what is his experience in software development?”

He said, “as a developer nil, but as a businessman a lot and did not elaborate.”

She asked, “what is your opinion about the developers.”

He said, “there is scope for improvement in the standards they are using.”

She was surprised by his words, as she checked the coding standards herself and found them to be excellent.

She asked, “what could be improved. He said, “they are not fully following OOPS concepts in their development, especially inheritance which reduces the coding time. I would like to speak with their team lead Vivek.”

Joy said, “he is in WFH mode at present, I will arrange a call with him.”

He said, “there is no urgency, I would like to meet more developers and see how they are working.”

She said, “I will come back later” and went away.

He pulled a chair to the side and put his legs on that and sat back to enjoy the air conditioner in the room.

At 1 pm Payal came with lunch for him. Joy stopped her and asked her.

She said, “I am Kumar sir’s PA, and she brought his lunch from home.”

by Anne Reporter

Joy brought her to his cabin and went away. After coming to Hyderabad Payal changed herself completely. She went to a beauty parlour and got herself a makeover and went and got the latest trending clothes from the mall. She looked more like a fashion model than his PA. He chided her she should not wear such clothes to the office and that she should wear formal clothes.

She said, “she would wear them next time.”

She served him and he completed his lunch and she went away. Joy came over and asked, “who is she? She is telling me she is your PA. If she is your PA, why isn’t she with you in the office?”

He said, “PA means personal assistant and not a Secretary. She looks after my things at home because I am a bachelor and I don’t have parents, so I need to have someone to look after my things at home.”

Joy said, “from the dresses she is wearing I thought she is your girlfriend.

He said, “you can think so, now I want to have meetings with Team Leads. Call them to my cabin. First, I would like to meet Vivek.”

Joy brought Vivek to his cabin, and she must have called him at lunchtime.

Vivek sat down on the chair and put his leg on the other leg and sat back leisurely.

Kumar saw his attitude and did not say anything.

Joy understood Kumar’s feelings but she did not try to correct Vivek.

Kumar addressed Vivek and said, “I don’t have much experience in this software development. I just completed my MBA recently.

Please explain to me how you are developing the software. What technologies are being used?”

Vivek said, “we use many technologies in our day-to-day developments. We use Java, Python, Visual Studio and SQL Server and Oracle for databases.”

Kumar asked, “how many developers are working on a project?”

Vivek said, “I don’t allot the project to a single person. We have as many as 10 developers working on a big project and on a small project we have around 3 developers.”

Kumar asked, “if you are working with 10 developers for a project, how are you allotting the work to them?”

Vivek said, “we allot a piece of a project to a developer and we integrate it into the project.

Kumar asked, “what kind of source control do you use?”

Now Vivek understood he is not speaking with a novice, the talk about not having experience and just passing MBA are just to give him false security. When Vivek explained the source control, Kumar went into depth analysing how he would correct the mistakes if a wrong code sneaks into the software.

He grilled him with detailed questioning about the coding standards he is using. By the time the interview finished, Vivek’s demeanour changed from a confident person to a person who would be flustered to answer questions raised by Kumar.

Seeing getting on Vivek’s nerves, Kumar told him he can go and I will speak with him later.

Joy saw Kumar’s handling of the interview and thought, he is not a person just out of college, he has some experience with running the business. He knows his work.

by Anne Reporter

She said, “seeing you I am remembering your father. You are more confident than him at grilling people.”

Kumar said, “I am not grilling him, I am trying to understand the way they work.”

He gave them some time before calling the next person. He wanted Vivek to go and tell them about him, so they would show more respect to his chair if not to him as a person.

He got up from the chair and asked, “Joy, where do they go for smoking in this office?”

She said, “you can go and smoke in the kitchen.”

He said, “thanks” and went into the kitchen.

Seeing him the Peon asked, “what would you like sir.”

Kumar said, “give me a cup of tea”, and lit a cigarette and asked for an ashtray.

He removed it from the cupboard and placed it on a table there.

Kumar sat down and asked him his name.

He said, “Surya.”

Kumar said, “ok, Surya, how long are you working?”

He said, “five years.”

Kumar asked, “how much you are getting?”

Surya said, “five thousand.

Kumar said, “five years and still earning five thousand.”

Surya placed the tea on the table. Kumar told him to call HR here.

Surya went over to call HR.

When HR came Kumar asked, “please give me a list of staff, but not developers, and their experiences and salaries you are paying.

HR asked, “is there any problem sir?”

Kumar said, "Surya is working for five years and he is just earning five thousand. Is this the way you treat staff members? And you are paying the developers lakhs of rupees in salaries, that too with perks."

Kumar turned to Surya and asked, "Surya, who is dependent on you at home."

Surya replied he had a mother, brother and sister.

Kumar asked, "what about your father?"

Surya said, "he is no more."

Now Kumar addressed HR, now three people are dependent on him and what he will feed them with five thousand? I would like to speak to each staff member and know their problems first."

Now the word spread in the office that Kumar is not just a rich father's kid, he cares about people.

Instead of Team leads, he started to interview the staff members, starting from the lower grade and seeing their experience, their dedication to work and their requirements he started to recommend increments for them. By the evening he could only interview 50% and he told the remaining people he will interview the next day.

In the evening Payal came over to pick him up from the office. While they were going to their flat, there was a commotion on the side of the road and traffic came to standstill. He got down and went to look at what is the commotion about. There Kavitha was caught by some people, he went and enquired with them.

The owner of the tiffin centre says she had eaten and refused to pay for the food.

Kumar paid and told "Kavitha to go sit in the car.

He told, "Payal to use her as a maid in the house."

by Anne Reporter

Payal said, “we already have maids”, he stopped her and said, “when I say something, don’t interrupt in the middle.”

So Payal kept quiet.

When they reached the flat, he went to the bedroom to change, she said, “you have changed, you are snapping at me.”

He said, “it is not about you, see her plight, we have brought her here, she is our responsibility, but if we show consideration towards her she would take advantage of us, so we have to make her earn, her every piece of her roti. Understood?”

Now Payal is happy thinking he has given her authority to use her as she sees fit.

Kavitha is happy as she now at least got a roof over her head.

She remembered what she had endured for the last six months. Kumar sent her to a medical examination with his driver. So that she may not have caught something during the last few months.

The next day he continued to interview the remaining staff and finished their review by the afternoon.

He sent his recommendations to HR to be implemented immediately,

Then he resumed his interviews with the Team leads. He liked one of the team leads, Shravani. She was recently promoted and given projects as a team lead. He is impressed with her outlook on life and her work culture and everything about her.

Before the closing time, he called her to his cabin to discuss some matters with her. When the closing time passed and she was looking at her watch, he asked, “do you have to be somewhere?”

She said, “she is looking at the time as she might miss her cab.”

He said, “don’t worry, I will drop you where ever you are going.”

She said, “It is a little far.” He said, “don’t worry, we will have some time to discuss the matters.”

He called transport and made sure her cab went away and then told her to let us go. He already told Payal not to come to the office.

They sat in the car and he asked her, “to tell the driver her address.”

When she told him her address, the driver started the car and drove on. Kumar was not aware of the addresses so, he does not know how long it would take.

So, he started a conversation with her enquiring about her. He inquired about her studies, family members, etc. when her house arrived, she told “the driver to stop” and invited Kumar to come and have tea.

As tea is his weakness, he could not refuse the tea, but he thought for a minute if her invitation is genuine or if she asking for a formality.

He looked at her, her eyes pleading with him to accept her invitation. Seeing that he decided to go and see her house.

So, he opened the door on his side and got down. She got down and both of them entered the gate and went inside.

It is a double-floor house with a garden around the house. She went and rang the doorbell. It was opened by a lady around 50 years of age and he seemed to recognize her face. It is his sister, Revathi.

Stunned he stood there looking at her. The last time he spoke to her was when she called him on the mobile. Afterwards, he forgot to call her.

She said accusingly “I called you and you did not call back.”

He said, “then I did not know how to call back.”

by Anne Reporter

She said, “you are looking like when you left the house all those years back. Now it must be 25 years.”

He nodded his head. She said to Shravani, “who do you think he is, he is your Mama, my elder brother. He left the house 25 years back and now I am seeing him the same as before. Come inside, I will get you tea.”

Shravani walked with him in a daze and they sat on the sofa.

Shravani said, “did she think you are someone else? I heard our previous MD used to look like you only. Is she confusing you with him?”

He said, “she is really my younger sister only, and you are my niece.”

She retorted “but how is that possible.”

He said, “I will tell you my story later.”

She brought tea and put the cups in front of him on the table.

She said, “tell me what are you doing now?”

Shravani said, “mom, he is our CEO.”

She asked, “how did you become CEO?”

Shravani replied it was passed on to him by his grandfather.

Revathi was surprised and asked, “passed on by Grandfather?”

Kumar did not reply. He said, “forget about it, how are you? How many children?”

She said, “she is the only girl.”

He said, “yes, I have seen her work, very impressive girl.”

Revathi asked, “tell me what were you doing all these years?”

He said, “as you are aware I had to get away with those two girls and I went to Vijayawada and went to visit the Durga temple. There we met a man who has given us an address and send us there, saying you can stay there. Now when we got down from

the bus 24 years have passed and we were handed over a hotel to run. I looked in my bag we have money and IDs, certificates and ownership of house and land, etc. I went and checked the house and properties and it belongs to this company. So, I went back to the hotel and instead of running it, I started to study computers and business management. When due to the lockdown, we had to close the hotel, we went over to the house I claimed the house and properties. I had to wait for a few days to complete the formalities and I got ownership of the companies and properties through a will written by my grandfather.”

Shravani said, “but how can you skip 24 years of your life?”

I said, “I have not skipped my 24 years, I have skipped your 24 years of life. I was sent to this time for some specific purpose. I feel there is going to be some kind of danger upon us. This virus attack is only the beginning.”

Shravani said, “if it is just the beginning, how it will be later?”

Kumar said, “I don’t have an idea.”

Shravani said, “if you did not study all this and how did you blast Vivek?” She turned to her mother “it was a talking point in the office. Vivek could not have answers to questions asked by Kumar.”

Revathi scolded her “why are you calling him by the name he is your mama.”

He said, “it is ok, let her call what she likes, I don’t have a problem. When I came over everything is imprinted in my brain, all the business knowledge, and software knowledge. Just by reading books, I could remember everything. I know Vivek is very arrogant, I recognized him on my first look. The way he sat in front of me, it was like he was my boss. So, I had to remove his

by Anne Reporter

arrogance, the only way to do that was to point it to him I am better than him.”

Shravani said, “I got scared to come in front of you in the beginning. But instead of calling us, you called staff members and listened to them and you recommended increments, then I know I don’t have to be scared of you if I am honest with you. There was some talk among the board members that you had come back again. I heard Joy speaking with other members on the zoom conference, you had returned then from dead just within a month and now you have returned after 5 years. She told them she lost faith that Kumar would return. But seeing you she was very happy and called them to come and visit us. She is going to call for a board meeting. What was this talk of then returning in a month and now returning after five years?”

He said, “that only Joy can answer.”

Revathi got up saying “I will prepare dinner, you have dinner and go.”

He said, “ok.”

Shravani said, “Mavayya”, he said, “yes?”

She asked, “are you really above 50 years of age?”

He replied, “no, I am just 22 now.”

She said, “we both are the same age maybe I am younger than you by months.”

Revathi called them for dinner and after dinner, he told “Shravani, I will meet her tomorrow at Office” and sat in the car and told the driver to take him to his flat.

After reaching the flat he called Kavitha and asked, “what happened to her, how come she landed in Hyderabad?”

She narrated her story of how a villager took her to Hyderabad showing great pictures of getting her a role in a movie and how

he left her to her fate after she did not land any roles. He tried to pimp her but she ran away from him and stayed with other struggling actresses, doing small works around the houses or at the serial production houses. When she was having the tiffin at the tiffin centre someone snatched her purse and ran away. When she was going to catch the thief, the owner of the tiffin centre stopped her to pay him first. That is the reason that scuffle is going on.

He said, "tomorrow morning you remind me, and we will go and check them.'

When Payal told him to come for dinner, he told her he already had it at his sister's place.

She asked, "you went to your sister's place and you did not take me with you?'

He said, "I don't know I am going to my sister's place, one of the employee's houses I went to and it is my sister's place, I have met her after 25 years. So, I had dinner and came."

Payal said, "you go and sit in the bedroom I will come in a minute."

He went and sat on the bed and switched on the tv watching the news. Most of the news time was filled with virus news, how new variants are coming out and the second wave might come at any time. He thought these people are trying to scare people, but what will be its effect, rising prices and hoarding of essentials? At least now people will not hoard as much as before. At least essentials were available.

Payal came in and closed the door.

He asked, "why are you closing the door?"

She said, "I want to switch on the AC."

by Anne Reporter

He said, "ok, then." He thought she closed the door thinking that Kavitha might come into the bedroom.

Her thoughts are also exactly the same. When she heard a knock on the door, she went and scolded Kavitha for disturbing them and said, "go and sleep in the servant's quarters."

Payal came and said, "she is asking where she can sleep." He did not say anything to that and concentrated on the news on tv.

Kavitha came and knocked on the door. Seeing it is Kavitha she started to shout at her. Kumar told her, "stop shouting" and went and asked, "what happened." S

he said, "there are some visitors."

He said, "at this time visitors, and went to greet them."

He looked at them and he did not recognize any of them. He stood looking at them. They were looking at him in wonder. Then he remembered they must be the board members.

He said, "come and sit and I am Kumar and you are?"

One lady said, "we know, I am Sunitha, this is Loveleen and she is Sahithi."

He asked, "how about my brother and his wife?"

She replied, "they are on a tour abroad and struck there."

He asked, "I think you have one more member Kirit."

She said, "he had passed away many years ago."

He said, "so tell me." Loveleen came and caught him and kissed him on the cheek. He made a sound of kissing.

She said, "I am Loveleen I could not bring Dhruv, he is abroad."

He asked, "what about Nandini, you both must be neighbours."

Loveleen said, "she is on the way, any time she would be here."

Then one lady entered the room came and hugged him and said, “you are looking exactly as I saw you in 1987 and then when you returned in 2020.”

I said, “it was not me, must be someone else.”

She said, “yes, I know you were not the same Kumar, who has risen from the dead.”

Sahithi came and shook hands and said, “I am Sahithi, I would not say, wife, I am the ex-wife of Kumar.”

He asked, “Sunitha, where are Atul and Reena, Kumar’s children?”

Sunitha said, “they are all abroad in New York. The two of them with Dhruv are running a software firm there.”

He asked, “would you like to have something?”

Sunitha said, “no nothing, we will meet tomorrow in the board meeting.”

They got up and he shook their hands and they went away.

Kumar chided Payal, “don’t shout at her for everything, listen first.”

She started to go without answering him, he told her to stop, “don’t go away when I am speaking with you. Tell her sorry for shouting.”

She turned to Kavitha and said, “sorry Kavitha, I shouted at you” and then went into the bedroom.

He looked at Kavitha, she said, “thanks and went to her room.”

He went and sat on the bed, she got up and closed the door and came and sat down.

She asked, “why did you make me tell her sorry.”

by Anne Reporter

He said, "you should learn humility, why do you think I did not introduce you as my wife? Because you have not risen to that level. You are still trapped in the mind of the Bajji Pav seller. Remember that next time when you raise your voice."

He lay on the bed and Payal put her head on his chest and said, "sorry, I was a little carried away, I thought you want to punish her."

He said, "I don't want to punish her, I want her to realize the mistake she did. That is all. I brought her here with me and I am responsible for her. She did a mistake and she is in a tough spot, we have to help her and not make fun of her misfortune. Come give me a kiss."

They spent some time having sex and he slept.

The next day when he went to the office, he called Shravani and spoke to her.

He asked, "where is your dad?"

She said, "my mom and dad separated and her brother is living with her dad."

He asked, "so, you have a brother also?"

She said, "yes elder brother."

He said, "Today we have a board meeting, you be with me only."

She asked, "what about my other works?"

He said, "now you are part of the management team. We will transfer your work to another team member, I think we should transfer it to Vivek, he seemed to have less work."

Shravani smiled and said, "that would be great."

The office boy came and said, "someone has come to meet you, sir."

He said, "send him in."

The man who entered seemed familiar. Kumar said, “please sit down.”

He sat down and Kumar asked, “what can I do?”

He looked at Shravani smiled and said, “hello, how are you”, as if he knew her, then turned towards Kumar and said, “I am Bob, I have come to you with these prototypes and blueprints. These are the items you are required to develop and install at all your offices.”

Kumar asked, “what are these for?” Bob replied, “these are all futuristic items that are required for your future endeavour. You have your board meeting in a few minutes, so discuss them and get them started immediately.”

Kumar said, “I have seen you before.”

He said, “did you not remember me, I have come to you at Durga Temple and advised you to come here.”

Then Kumar remembered, and said, “sorry, then I did not ask your name.”

He said, “then I would have given a different name. You take care of these.”

Kumar asked, “how can we prepare them?”

He said, “now a new firm is added to your companies, they research these things. Put these to the board and it will be done.”

Kumar looked at Shravani as what are all these? She looked at the blueprints and checked the prototypes, and said, “wow these are all seen in English movies only. Mind communications, teleport devices, antigravity packs, thrusters, and what is this?”

He said, “they are invisibility cloaks and shape-shifting machines.”

by Anne Reporter

He said, "ok, we will put them on the agenda of the board meeting. Who is the company secretary, who looks after these things?"

Shravani said, "that should be Pauleen Aunty."

He asked, "Aunty?"

Shravani said, "I know her for a long time, she is the one who got me the job here."

He said, "ok, inform her about this and come."

She went away and came back and said, "come they are about to start the board meeting."

He went and introduced her as Shravani, his niece. They both sat down and Pauleen handed him the agenda of the meeting.

Kumar said, "before the start of the meeting I want to be introduced to you all, I only met some of you briefly yesterday and I don't know much about you as you may not know about me.

One lady got up and said, "hi, I am Mahira, we have not met yesterday, as I just flew in from Bombay. I was looking after the Hardware business part, now I am going to head the division added recently, scientific equipment manufacturing."

Kumar showed her the papers he is having with him and said, "these are some blueprints we are going to develop in the division. I will give them to you once I go through them."

He wanted to make copies by scanning them, before passing them.

Sunitha said, "I am the overall operations head of the businesses."

Now he is a little confused and asked, "what will be your authority in these companies."

She said, “those blueprints you have, those have to pass through me to her.”

He said, “ok, I got an idea.”

Next Joy said, “as you know I am head of the software division.”

Sahithi said, “I am head of the interior decorations business, now unlike before it is part of the group of companies.”

He said, “so, you merged the company into the group” looking at Loveleen.

Loveleen said, “when you made, stopped a second and said, “when Kumar made Sunitha as the overall head of the operations, then he made companies different from what was before. He split them as per business.”

Loveleen said, “I am head of the group companies, I am looking after all the group companies after the passing of Kumar, now you have come, you can take up some of my burdens.”

He said, “I will certainly look into that.

Loveleen said, “as I told you yesterday the kids are all working in the USA on a software company there.”

Now we have managers looking after the various companies. He said, “I met them online and will meet all of them in due time.”

Kumar said, “seeing these instruments, we must start preparing for something. You must have called this meeting to see me and hand over the companies to me. I will take over the companies in due course. Next, I would like to check the new company which is manufacturing scientific equipment. Because Bob came and gave these blueprints, they must be important. He specifically told me these are for internal usage only and not for sale outside. So, keep that in mind while developing them.”

by Anne Reporter

After they went through the agenda Sunitha asked, “which year did you come from?”

Kumar asked, “why did you ask which year, I could be here only.”

She said, “the last Kumar came from 1987 after the death of the First Kumar. I assumed you also came from our past and I would know because I married him.”

Kumar asked, “so you did not marry the first Kumar, but you married the second Kumar. And what about the kids?”

She said, “they are of First Kumar and his wife Sneha’s children and Sneha died in a fire accident. The second Kumar took an official letter from Sahithi that she is not his wife and then we were married.”

He looked at Sahithi and Sunitha, and said, “I will speak with you later regarding all that. I was sent from 1983 to 2007.”

Sunitha asked, “what were you doing all these years?”

Kumar replied, “I was running some business and started studying when I came to know I own a bungalow and land. Then I brought a computer and learned the software. When the lockdown happened, I closed the businesses and came over to take my house and lands which were to be passed to me on my 21st birthday. Then I did not know about all these businesses. On my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, the will was read then I came to know about these companies and started preparing to come onboard the companies. At the first opportunity, I started to interact with the software company through online meetings, etc. When we started to operate from offices I came over to the company two days back.”

Sunitha said, “we had to wait for Mahira and Sunitha to come for the board meeting, others are available here.”

When the meeting was completed he went back to his room with Shravani.

He asked, "what do you think of the meeting."

"It seems they are hiding something" opined Shravani.

He said, "I thought so. There was another director according to my knowledge and she was married to your other mama, do you remember."

She asked, "you mean Ram."

He said, "yes."

She said, "I heard they have taken their share of the company and split from the group. The company made some kind of agreement with them."

Sunitha came over and said, "tell me about you."

He said, "what is there to tell, I told you everything."

She said, "ok, the second Kumar told me everything. Now you read these books first one is written by First Kumar and the second book is written by my husband, Kumar. If you read them you will have a good idea of how these companies are created and run and their whole life. Then you can say your story."

He took the books and said, "thanks."

Kumar asked, "where are you staying here?"

She said, "I am staying with Loveleen, after the children went over to the US, I was staying with her only. We thought you will come sooner."

He said, "I don't have any idea about these companies, they may have thought I am not ready to take over the companies. We had to get out of Bombay due to some personal problems with the girls. So, I came over to Vijayawada then I was sent here by Bob. He might have to send me here earlier than he anticipated

by Anne Reporter

because we ran away from home. So, they made alternate arrangements. We were running a tiffin centre at a bus stop for over one year. Then when I came to know about my inheritance I started to concentrate on studying software.”

Sunitha said, “the second Kumar was given two weeks to learn computers and sent here. He was telling me these are all some kind of experiments with timelines. If you read his books you will understand all this.”

Kumar said, “if they are ordering to manufacture these equipments, it must be their experiments are coming to an end and they are about to do what they were waiting for. We have to be prepared with these equipments. If they are ready we can talk with each other remotely without telephones. Then we can travel from one place to another in a second. We can lift heavy weights and can travel over the air. So many things can be done. Then our experiences will be on par with the stunts they show in English movies.”

Sunitha said, “if they are passing on all this technology it must be something serious. The second Kumar was telling about Bob, he was sent here by him. He thought he would go back once he completed his work here, that is setting companies right and solving the murder mystery, then he stayed back and we were married for 14 years.”

Kumar asked, “then what happened?”

Sunitha replied, “he died in his sleep from a heart attack. By the time I got up in the morning, his body was cold as ice and there is nothing I could do.”

Kumar asked, “did you not have any children?”

Sunitha replied, “we have a daughter and he named her Anjali she is 18 years of age She is in her first year B. Tech.”

Kumar said, “then I will read these books and come back to you.”

Shravani said, "I will go and look at my work and come."

He nodded as he was immersed in the book. By lunchtime, he could read only 10% of the book, which is about his childhood and which is aware of. Then college life changed for him. The First Kumar had studied his intermediate in Vijayawada and he had not gone direct to Bombay to study. Maybe he is aware of the problem of getting admission to colleges in Bombay. Then he was also helping his grandfather in his clinic. But the turning point for him was meeting Sneha. He thought he had to study Sneha's influence on first Kumar's life. Instead of Sneha, he had Kavitha and Payal in his life.

Payal brought his lunch and he called Shravani to his cabin and introduced them to each other. After his lunch, Payal went away and Shravani asked, "about his relationship with her."

He said, "at present, she is my companion, she was part of his journey throughout the time" and he did not elaborate on his physical relationship with her. He thought Shravani is his ideal partner because of her studies and intelligence overall, she is his sister's daughter and such marriages are allowed in their community. He did not think his sister would object to that. About Payal, he had to think about what to do about her.

He called Payal on the phone and told her "bring Kavitha in the evening with you." Then he continued reading the first book.

He read about their work and studies and tent on the terrace. Then when he returned back from Bombay after his first-year exams, hugging and his resolution not to try again. Then his second-year exams and his going to Bombay for holidays. Then finding Sneha sent over to her native place and he came to know she would not return back to Vijayawada. Then he went to Hyderabad to continue his graduation and the next year he

by Anne Reporter

eloped with Sneha and started to live in Hyderabad after marrying her. Then when he finished his studies, he went over to Bombay and joined Kirit's factory. Now I heard about Kirit being a board member. Then he meets Sahithi and Sneha goes missing at his sister's marriage. Then his marriage with Sahithi and Sneha returned with his twins. Then they start a hotel and he sends Sneha to help out in the hotel and her death in the fire accident. Then His meeting with Sunitha on his children's birthday and her subsequent help with his investigation into Sneha's death.

He stopped reading and went for tea and smoke and started reading again.

His physical relationship with Sunitha and his meeting with Loveleen and how Loveleen helped him with Sahithi and his helping her with her husband. Then how his life turned a circle with getting a car and bike and his helping her with her father's elections. How he started a software firm and took all his friends as partners and how he got the finances for his company.

Then he got the hospital project and his meeting with Nandini. Then his mentality took a turn he tried to control his relationship with Sunitha by trying various methods but he failed in this regard. He stopped reading because Payal came with Kavitha.

He took Kavitha to the tiffin centre where she had a fight with the owner. She identified the boy working in the centre as the one who stole her purse. Kumar called the police and they made a compromise, Kumar brought the tiffin centre from the owner and passed it to Kavitha and told her to look after it and help the people like her.

They went back to the flat and he continued reading the book well into the night. Reading the book, he slipped into sleep. He got up in the morning put the book aside and readied and went

to the office. He started to read the book as soon as he got in the car. By the end of the day, he could finish the first Kumar story.

Then he looked at the second Kumar book it is not as thick as the first one. He only put the main points of his life unlike the detailed story of the first Kumar. He took the books and reached the house. After having dinner, he started to read the second book. After reading second Kumar's thoughts he started getting a little idea about Bob and timelines and people sent from one time to another Sahithi and Leena being saved and generally about other Kumar's life things like that. So, when the first Kumar died they brought the second Kumar immediately within a fortnight. Now they waited to bring him and again waited to introduce him to the companies. So, this time there was no urgency for them, it might be as though their experiments were completed and they are going to spring into action and for that, they gave the blueprints to develop the technology. If he was not there would they have given them the technology? They might have gone to someone else. The Second Kumar was talking about knowing more Kumars from other timelines. Would they have gone to them? Bob came here to us means there is some purpose for that. Are we going to be instrumental in some purpose chosen by them? Second Kumar married Sunitha and started to live in Hyderabad flat, and Loveleen was living in the bungalow they brought near Nandini's house and the children were living with Loveleen and studying in a nearby School.

Payal came over to him and asked, "why did you do that?"

He asked, "what did I do?"

She said, "You brought for Kavitha that tiffin centre."

He replied, "she will have some work to do and she can help others like her, who were having problems with living conditions,

by Anne Reporter

and problems getting proper food. She can help them after what she had faced herself. I don't want her to come to the competition with you here."

When he said he does not want Kavitha to come to compete with her, she was happy, but she did not know his real intentions. He said that with keeping Shravani in mind.

He was angry with Payal for telling him lies about being pregnant, due to which he had to leave home and come and run a hotel here at that bus stop. Also, he was away from his family for such a long time. He does not know what happened to the other family members, he was scared to ask his sister.

He had maintained his physical relationship with Payal to spite her father for hitting him. Then when she said she is pregnant he did not want to shirk his responsibilities, so he agreed to elope with her for fear of her father and Kavitha's father otherwise he might have stayed there and married her. If Kavitha's father came to know he eloped with Payal, he might have thought that he might also have something to do with Kavitha missing. That is also the truth. But when she said she is no more pregnant he was disappointed in her. It can't be her pregnancy will be lost in time travel. The second Kumar's Sahithi travelled in time to reach Pujari Kumar and she has not lost her pregnancy, she gave birth to Leena and went back to her time, just missing a few hours. It means Payal lied to him. She must have thought he is having a relationship with Kavitha. She must have come to know from someone that he is hiding Kavitha in Kalina. If she thinks like that she could have informed Kavitha's parents instead of lying to him. She had done a big mistake which resulted in turmoil in the life of three people. If he had been there he could have completed his ICWA, then he could have got a job as a cost accountant which pays a good salary, instead of cooking and cleaning in that hotel.

Thinking about Payal's deceit, he forgot the reading. He put the book aside and looked at Payal looking at him expectantly. If not anything she is good in bed, that could be the reason he had been bearing all her eccentricities.

He put his hand on her shoulder. She pushed it aside and turned the other side to show she is angry with him. Seeing her showing off, he turned to the other side and closed his eyes. She waited for a minute to see how he is reacting and turned to this side. Seeing him turning the other side, it is now her turn to cool him down, as she understood he got angry at her behaviour.

She sat up and kissed him on the cheek. There is no reaction from him. He has already slipped into sleep. Seeing his rhythmic breathing, she turned to the other side in frustration.

By the time she got up in the morning, he is reading the book. She asked, "what are you reading so seriously?"

He said, "something to do with the company's history. To run this company, I must have all this information."

She was still angry with him for the night incident so she decided to do something about it. She went to take a bath and came back to the bedroom with a towel around her body. She stood before him and started to rub herself with the towel exposing herself. He did not lift his eyes to look at her, which enraged her more. She wore a sexy dress and went to the kitchen and brought him a coffee. She stood before him and said, "coffee."

He took the coffee without looking up. He was watching everything from the edge of his eyes. He wanted to see what she will do. Now she removed the dress she was wearing and came near him caught his face in her hands and turned his face towards her and kissed him hard on the mouth. He kissed her back and closed the book in his hand. He got down from the bed. She

by Anne Reporter

thought he was getting down from the bed for her, instead, he went towards the bathroom. He took a towel and went inside the bathroom. She looked at him going to the bathroom. She looked at herself as she was naked she went behind him to the bathroom. By the time she went in, he has removed his clothes and put them in the basket for washing. He turned the knob and the water hit him in the face. She came behind him and hugged him and she pressed her chest into his back. With his touch on her boobs, she got aroused and a moan escaped her mouth. Then hearing her moan, he felt aroused himself and turned towards her and kissed her. Water from the shower was flowing on their bodies and he caught her ass and pulled her closer. Now he focused his attention on her boobs and kissed them one after the other until she was asking him to enter her. He turned her and entered her from behind and caught her boobs with both hands and started his rhythmic thrust into her. When he reached his climax, he turned her and kissed her and showed her the door. He completed his bath towelled and dressed and came to the dining hall with the book in his hand.

From his writing, the second Kumar seemed aggressive in his approach toward businesses. The first Kumar was a little mild-mannered and would think about the repercussions of his actions. But the second Kumar would think about the profits than about the people and their feelings. He would act on spur of the moment and would think about people later.

Within a year of their marriage, Sunitha gave birth to a baby girl and they named her Anjali. He must have missed his girlfriend from his previous life and named his daughter Anjali.

First Kumar invested in Real estate and second Kumar started to sell unused properties like the land in Madhapur and would buy companies with that money. He did purchase a hardware company to manufacture computers by importing parts.

Then part of our own building offices he started to give for rent. Once we are paying rent and now we are getting rent for our buildings. Then he slowly started to change the structure of the companies. Whereas first Kumar created a separate company for managing branches, Second Kumar changed the structure to companies based on their businesses. Computer software is a different company and hardware is a different company. Then Interior decoration separate company and this way new companies acquired were run as separate entities. The first one created companies with one idea and the second one separated them with another idea. About their personal life, he had not written much unlike first Kumar, whereas first Kumar had written a very detailed account of his personal relationships with Sneha, Sahithi, Loveleen and Nandini and others. It seems the second Kumar kept his relationship with Sunitha steady and did not think about others or did not mention them in his book, maybe it has to do with Sunitha being his wife. Before his death, he was in talks with a US company for the development and manufacture of futuristic equipment. Which has been finalized after his death.

From these two books, it is evident, that someone is manipulating timelines to do some kind of experiments. They are saving some people and not trying to save some. They know how to split time to create timelines. They can travel in time and also between timelines and they can put people on different timelines and times. Now they gave us futuristic equipment to be developed. It seems we will be needing this equipment in the future. By splitting time and creating timelines what do they want to achieve? What is their end game?

Payal brought his breakfast and put it on the table. He looked at Payal, she seems normal, it seems her fury seems to be subdued. Did she do all that just for sex? Or did she have some ulterior

by Anne Reporter

motive behind her actions? Maybe she wants to prove she has some control over him? What will she do if he tells her he wants to marry Shravani?

He completed his breakfast and went over to the office.

He started to meet the managers of the software business. First, he met the project manager, his name is Tripathi. He is a north Indian. He inquired about his experience and how he goes about the development process, etc. then one by one he met all the managers. Up to now, he was meeting only the people of the software division. Now he has to check other divisions. Then he has to look at what modifications he can do to bring better working conditions to the people. He had been reading the developers were getting good salaries, but their work-life balance goes hay ware. Even though they have two weekly offs, they don't utilize them properly. The team leaders would ask the developers to come to the office, that was before the corona pandemic and after the work from home started they want them to work from home on Sundays too thus disrupting their other schedules.

He wanted them to think about their home life than office work twenty-four hours a day. It's what happens when you leave the work half completed and go to sleep. Many of them would be dreaming about the uncompleted work only.

He wanted the working conditions of his companies on par with the multi-national companies.

He made some notes on what he is proposing to make changes in the company and called Shravani and showed her the notes and asked for her comments.

She looked at the changes and asked, "are these possible to implement?"

He said, “when there is a will there is a way. If I think they are required I can ask for these changes made.”

She asked, “will the board approve these changes?”

He said, “did you see in the board meeting, how they want me to take over the companies, they want someone to lead them. That could be the reason when the second Kumar came over they welcomed him with open arms, they did not even ask who he is, or where he come from. What was his agenda? After the death of the first Kumar, all his shares in the company were transferred to Sahithi and his children. There is nothing in his name in the company. No shares and No interest. Still, they were ready to listen to him and promptly approved all his decisions in the board meetings.”

Shravani asked, “how did you know all this?”

He said, “I have read the second Kumar’s book. He gave a detailed account of the happenings with the companies. He did not have a rupee in his name after raising from the dead. That is the reason Sahithi gave it in writing that she had no relation to the second Kumar and it paved the way for him to marry Sunitha. When second Kumar asked for a divorce from Sahithi, she thought he was after her fifty per cent share of her assets. In fact, he wanted to marry Sunitha, so played it that way and Sahithi gave in writing that her husband Kumar died and produced the death certificate and she did not have any relation with this Kumar whomever he may be. He played his hand well and she fell for the hand he dealt her.”

Shravani said, “after reading the books given by Sunitha, you must have learnt a lot about them. Can I read them?”

He said, “certainly and gave her the books and said, “don’t lose them, they have very confidential information about the first

by Anne Reporter

Kumar and the second Kumar was a decent person after coming here, so there are no hidden skeletons there.”

She asked, “what confidential information does Kumar write in this? He replied if you read it you will know all that. Although one thing I can’t understand, if first Kumar is from this timeline and I came from another timeline why did my sister and your mother think I have been missing for twenty-five years? Did she talk about me being missing before? First, read these books and we will see later.”

He called Joy to his cabin. When she came he asked, “what do you think about the position of our software division in the market?”

Joy said, “we have a good reputation in the market. Our products have good market and we get good returns on the maintenance too.”

He said, “so you mean to say the software division is doing well. What about other divisions? How did you acquire the newly added equipment manufacturing division? There are so many things I don’t know.”

Joy said, “you might sit with Sunitha regarding the same.”

He asked, “where she would be?”

Joy said, “I have to check, I will check and ask her to give you a time.”

She came back after half an hour and said, “Sunitha is at her house, would you like to go there?”

He said, “ok, I will go there, instruct the driver.”

She said, “you go to the parking, I will inform the driver.”

He went to the parking and sat down and the driver drove him to the Gayathri Hills. He got down outside a big bungalow and

seeing him the watchman opened the gate and was staring at him. Must be thinking he looks like his boss.

He went to the hall and Sunitha said, “today is his fifth death anniversary and we are performing puja. Children are not here so, I was showing them on WhatsApp.”

She called Anjali and introduced her as Anjali. She must have recognised him, she came and gave him a hug. He patted her back and she released him and when she touched his feet out of respect, he blessed her.

Sunitha invited him to lunch and he went and sat at the dining table.

She said, “for his anniversary, we prepared all the items to his liking. I am feeling happy to see you today, I feel like Kumar himself came to have lunch.”

After lunch, they sat down in the hall and she asked, “did you read the books?”

He said, “he had read them but he had some questions about the companies.”

They discussed business matters until the evening and he left for his flat.

When he reached the flat Payal asked, “where did you go at lunchtime? He said, “he had gone to Sunitha’s house to discuss business.”

She said, “you should have told me you are going there.”

He said, “you don’t need to bring lunch, I can’t wait when you will bring lunch and stop all my work.”

She said, “don’t get angry, I just said, my trip would not have been wasted if you inform me.”

by Anne Reporter

He said, “do you think I will be thinking about you there, there are a hundred things to look after. I have to make notes to remember things. Lunch is not a priority, better check with me before starting from the flat.”

She felt he is a changed man. He was not like before when he would explain things in a mild manner, now he would get irritated when she asked him anything. Earlier he would have said sorry if he spoke irritatingly with her. Now he and his papers, he opened his briefcase and removed the papers and was going through them. He has become a very busy man and but she is proud he got all this wealth. The servant was telling her, she did not fully know how much wealth he has. Really, he would be living in the bungalow, but he is living here. This flat is also not bad, it has three bedrooms, a hall, dining hall, kitchen and a servant room. She was scared when he brought Kavitha home with them, she thought she would come to her competition, but now he put her where she belongs, with the workers.

One thing she forgot is that she has come from there only.

She called him for dinner and he said, “I was having a problem with the digestion of the lunch.”

They prepared everything he liked and he could not reject the items placed on his plate. He said, “I will just have curd rice.”

She mixed curd rice and brought him a bowl. He ate it and went back to his work.

At 11 pm, Payal called him for sleeping. He packed his papers and went into the bedroom and sat on the bed. She brought the milk like every day and gave him the glass. He felt a little uneasy in the stomach and went to the toilet, while going he told her you have your half and I will come back and will have it.

He sat on the toilet for half an hour and still felt uneasy. He came out and sat on the bed. He looked in the medicine cabinet and

found a Digene tablet and started chewing it. He sat on the bed and while chewing the tablet he slipped into sleep, the milk glass was forgotten.

He got up in the morning, brushed and went to the kitchen for a cup of coffee. He made himself a cup of coffee and opened the door and picked up the newspaper and sat on the sofa reading it. He felt a little odd today, the servant would be working in the kitchen preparing breakfast and Payal would be ordering her something or the other.

He completed the coffee and put the cup in the kitchen and went over to the bedroom. He saw Payal sleeping peacefully on the bed. He went to her to awake and touched her face and found her body is cold to his touch. He checked her nostril for breathing there seems to be none and he thought something was a problem with her and called the ambulance. They arrived in twenty minutes. They checked her and said, “she seemed to have died due to a heart attack, we will send her to post-mortem” and took her away.

He poured half the cup of milk from last night into a plastic cover and placed it in the fridge. He had a bath and dressed and took the milk from the fridge and took the Horlicks bottle from the kitchen and went over to the office.

He went into the kitchen and asked, “the Peon to get him some breakfast.

Surya said, “we have Maggi, shall I prepare a packet?”

He said, “ok” and sat there smoking.

He completed the breakfast and took the cup of coffee he placed in front of him and went to his cabin.

He called Sunitha and asked her to come to the office immediately.

by Anne Reporter

He called Joy and asked her to get them checked and gave her the milk and Horlicks bottle.

He told her “to get it checked for any kind of poisons or heart attack-inducing medicines in them.”

She sent them and came back and asked, “what happened?” He said, “Payal died of a heart attack in the night.”

Joy asked, “do you suspect any foul play.”

He said, “it seemed like the death of the second Kumar. He died in his sleep, the same thing happened with Payal.”

Joy asked, “where is her body?”

He said, “she was been taken away for post-mortem.”

She asked, “who took her?”

He replied, “ambulance people.”

Joy asked, “did he inform the police?”

He replied, “if I call the police, they would ask many questions, then it would be a problem explaining our relationship. If there is any problem with her death, they would inform the police.”

Joy asked, “did they say which hospital they have taken her to?”

He said, “no, I assumed they would take her to Gandhi Hospital.”

Sunitha came and asked, “what happened?”

Kumar said, “Payal died in her sleep.”

Sunitha asked, “so what did you do?” He said, “I called for an ambulance and they took her away. She asked, “what number did you call?”

He said, “102.”

She called 102 and enquired about the body taken in the morning from the flat.

They said, “they have not taken any ‘body’.”

Sunitha said, “now where did she disappear?”

He said, "did Bob's men could have taken her?"

Sunitha said, "why would they do that?"

He said, "not to create problems for us, they might be knowing about her death."

She said, "that is also there. So, do you think this has anything to do with Kumar's death?"

He said, "it seems like that only."

Sunitha asked, "who would do such a thing?"

He replied, "who else, his enemies? I am the target here, and last night I did not drink the milk, so it has saved me."

Joy asked, "do you think they targeted you with your daily night milk."

He replied, "it seems so."

Sunitha asked, "who could have done it?"

He said, "it seems our Servant was not there in the morning."

Sunitha asked, "so, what will you do now."

He said, "I will take Kavitha home, she can look after me."

Sunitha asked, "who is Kavitha?"

He said, "the girl who opened the door when you came to our house."

She said, "oh, that girl, Payal was blasting her for disturbing you that day."

He said, "yes."

Sunitha asked, "who is she to you?"

Kumar said, "her parents were marrying her off to an old fellow. So, I rented a room and kept her there. Then Payal lied to me about being pregnant and I took both and went to Vijayawada then Bob sent us here."

by Anne Reporter

Sunitha asked, “so, you don’t have any relationship with her.”

He said, “no.”

Sunitha asked, “but you had a physical relationship with Payal.”

He nodded his head. He did not know what to feel about her, to be sad or scared as if someone tried to kill him.

Sunitha went away and Joy sat with him to give him company.

Later Joy went and sent Shravani to sit with him. He opened a file but could not concentrate on it. He doesn’t know what to do. There is no ‘body’ to cremate and do other formalities. He married her in the presence of the villagers. It should make up for something. Even though he doesn’t believe in the afterlife and things like that, at least for Payal’s sake he had to do something. He sat there looking blankly at the file in front of him.

He went to the tiffin centre run by Kavitha and took her to the flat.

**PART 5**  
Life after Payal

## Chapter 1

He got the tiffin centre to be run by someone else and he made Kavitha help him in the house as the servant who worked for all these years, has not returned. He made Kavitha look after the house and he did not encourage her advances. He never looked at her that way and she ran away from the hotel at the bus stop. It was a negative point on her character.

Now he started to make visits to the other branches and would get himself accustomed to their working. He made a special visit to the equipment factory and supervised the development of the equipment with the help of blueprints and checked their progress.

Even though Bob said they are for internal use only, in the future they can be put on the market if not for the general public they can be sold to the government and military.

But first, they have to be developed and a prototype built and checked and then they can start manufacturing in limited quantities for their use. First, it will be mind control communications then teleport devices will be manufactured.

When the scientists asked, “where did he get these blueprints and he replied from God, they laughed and said, “good joke.

It took them six months to the production line of this equipment. First Mind communications were manufactured and sent to all branches for safekeeping. Then teleport devices are manufactured and sent to the branches for installation. They first checked with small animals like cats and dogs and the tests were successful, they waited for Bob’s instructions to check them with humans.

He would take Kavitha with him on the tours as he needed her to look after his food and other daily needs. He also does not want to leave her in the flat alone for such a long time.

He called a board meeting to discuss various points of the business. One point he noted was the Pan India Matrimonial Company.

He asked, “Loveleen for the position of the matrimonial business. She said, “nowadays they are not running the company, as after the company’s relations with the US Company were cut off, they closed many branches and this matrimonial business took a back seat and almost closed.”

He instructed Joy to look at a way to prepare the software and now it can be run from our servers.

## Chapter 2

One morning he got a call and he lifted the phone and said, "hello."

It is from Sneha she was frantic and told Muskan and Prachi are missing.

He asked, "what happened?"

She said, "they had gone with a group of friends on a trip and they both have not returned, when they call their cell phone it is coming as switched off and she does not know what to do."

He took the details of their trip which is Araku Valley and asked for details of their friends who had gone with them.

Sneha said, "she does not have an Idea."

Kumar asked, "do you know anyone else who had gone with them?"

When she replied in the negative, he told her I will send someone, you send some of their photos with him."

He called his security head and told him to send someone to the village near Nellore and gave the address of Sneha's family and asked to collect the photos they give. If you have any problem tell them to call me on my mobile. Then after collecting the photos tell them to bring them to Vizag, I will be going there.

Then he asked the transport department to arrange a car for a long trip and to go on hilly roads too.

Then he called Shravani and asked her to be ready for a trip. Called Kavitha to pack for going on a trip. By the time packing is done the office had sent a car and he asked the driver to take him to Vizag. He decided to go by car because he might have to visit many places and he would certainly go to Araku valley. And they might have to check the hotels around Araku.

He took a hotel room and informed the security personnel sent to collect the photos and waited for him to come with the photos. It took him another day to bring the photos. He told them to follow them to Araku and it took them 6 hours to reach Araku by road.

Kumar had been to Araku when they stayed at Vizag and his uncle took him there just on a round trip. It was seven years back for Kumar, it is more than thirty years in real-time. The total village has changed and now hotels and shops and everything has come up there.

As there is some daylight left he asked the security personnel to take some photos and enquire if they stayed in their hotel and he took some photos and went in search of Muskan and Prachi.

They decided to reach the hotel where they registered at 8 pm. When both parties reached the hotel none of them had any success and decided to start the search in the morning.

In the morning they exchanged lists of hotels visited and started to check through the Araku.

Shravani shouted, "Mavayya see that, what is that?"

They looked at the board.

It said, "Padmavathi Gardens.

He said, "it is some sort of garden from the board."

She said, "look at the side of the gate."

It said they have tree top huts available. That means they can be rented like rooms in the hotel."

They paid the entry fees and entered the garden. And checked where they provide amenities to the guests. They enquired there and found that the girls had in fact stayed there with their group. Now they have gone away without clearing their bills. Normally

by Anne Reporter

there is no way they could get away as there is security at the gate.

So, they came out of the park and headed to the hotel.

They all sat down to discuss what happened to them. As the park is not a free zone, you must have id cards for coming and going and they would have some sort of cc cameras there. But how to get the footage?

The security guy said they had someone in the police department and they could speak with him and ask for the footage. But it will take some time, as I have to contact my person in Hyderabad and they have to inform their boss and get permission to inform the Araku police.

Kumar said, "let us start the process, we will wait for the information."

Kumar said to Shravani "let us go sightseeing." They engaged a local tour guide and went to see the local places.

When they returned from sightseeing, Bob was waiting for them in the hotel lobby.

Kumar asked surprisingly, "what are you doing here?"

Bob questioned back "what are you doing here?"

Kumar replied, "we came in search of two girls, Muskan and Prachi."

Bob asked, "what is your relation to them?"

He said, "they are my cousins, and they disappeared in Araku."

Bob said, "don't waste your time here go home and look after the work, we don't have much time. Have you completed the manufacturing of the equipment I gave you?"

Kumar said, "work is going on."

Bob said, “go and get the work done. I will look at the girls’ disappearance. You immediately return.”

Kumar said, “then I will leave the security people here.”

Bob said, “there is no need, I will bring them to you.”

So, they packed their bags, settled their bills and were on their way to Hyderabad.

Kumar eagerly waited for any information from Bob. It took Bob two days to find and bring them to Hyderabad. When they were brought to his flat, they were in an unconscious state.

Kumar asked, “with concern in his voice, what happened?”

Bob said, “there is no need to worry about them, they time travelled from the time they went to Araku. I could not find what happened to them, so, I brought them from the time they entered Araku. They will be a little confused about all that. I will meet you later and went away.”

After half an hour Muskan and Prachi opened their eyes and asked, “where are we?”

Kumar replied, “you are in my flat.”

Muskan asked, “why are we here, Bhaiyya?”

He said, “you disappeared from Araku and I had to engage experts to trace and bring you here. Your aunty is worried about you. I will call her and inform her that you are safely at my house, just say hello to her.”

He called Sneha and informed her Muskan and Prachi were safely at his flat here in Hyderabad, when they are fit to travel, he will send them, until then they can stay here. He gave the phone to Muskan and she spoke to her aunt.

Kumar asked, “Muskan, what happened?”

by Anne Reporter

She said, "I don't know, we took a room in the Padmavathi gardens and we put our bags inside and came out to see the garden and then we are here at your house, I can't understand how we can be here all of a sudden."

Kumar said, "something happened at the gardens that is why you were brought here from the past."

Prachi asked surprisingly "past?"

Kumar said, "without telling them about Bob, you know we are doing experiments on the futuristic equipment and we used a time-travel machine to get you back from the past. It seems you have gone missing and we could not get any trace of you, so we pulled you back from the past."

Prachi said, "wow, we are the first people in our family to time travel."

He said, "you can say that again."

He gave them a tour of the city and send them to their homes.

## Chapter 3

After a few days, there was an article in a newspaper about a missing group of youngsters in Araku. They went to Araku and stayed in Padmavathi gardens and were missing from there. Only two members of the group returned before the commencement of the tour. They said they got a call from their families to return due to some emergency in their house.

There is no sign of other members it appears that they have disappeared into thin air.

By the year-end, all the equipment was manufactured and sent to various places for safekeeping. He informed the directors of the company of the position of the equipment. And took the position of each company's status.

Still, there is a threat of Coronavirus around the country. There was some loss of business other than software. From the previous interaction with Bob, it seems they are anxious for the company to be ready to meet any eventuality.

## Epilogue

1st January 2021.

Kumar heard the doorbell ring and went and opened the door. A man was standing outside with an invitation in his hand. He opened it and looked at the invitation card inside.

“You are cordially invited with family to the New Year function at Hotel Taj, Mumbai on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Attendance is compulsory.”

Invited by:

Kumar’s Grand Alliance.

RSVP: 7893642582

Kumar asked the man standing outside, “what is this?”

He said, “as mentioned in the invitation, attendance is compulsory.”

Kumar called the number on the card.

The call answered and said, “yes, Mr. Kumar, are you available to attend the function?”

Kumar asked, “what is this function?”

He said, “we are facilitating you to meet all your friends and family members.”

Kumar said, “ok I will be coming.”

He said, “don’t forget to bring your family.”

Kumar said, “Ok.”

To be continued