

A MAN FROM THE BLUE SKY

DHANANJAY RAY



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Stories Matter
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About the Author

Hey readers, I'm happy to share about myself...

I hope you already know me if you have read my debut book 'A Journey to Nagaland'. However, my name is Dhananjay Ray, an aspiring author who dreams to win millions of hearts through writing. Born and brought up in Purulia, west Bengal. My Birthday is on 10th July. I am a Govt. Teacher and I have been teaching for more than 8 years in school. Currently, I am enjoying my posting in Jharkhand. Writing and travelling have always been my hobby and passion. And of course, I enjoy singing and playing cricket too. Being spiritually inclined, compassion and kindness are my guiding principles. With a heart full of warmth and a genuine love for nurturing young minds, I always strive to bring positive changes in the society through my teaching and writing. I have a profound passion to serve and to learn.

To know me more or connect with, you can mail me at-

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Acknowledgement

GOD is the ultimate truth of this universe. By His grace, I have succeeded in publishing this Book, and I wish readers will get solace from this literary piece.

Endowed with the blessings of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and Premananda Maharaj, whose words and wisdom enlighten and guide me.

Prayer

May all be ever happy and ever peaceful.

Acknowledgement

This work is lovingly dedicated to all my dear Readers. You are the true source of my writing. So thank you so much...

I am also thankful to my family. They are not perfect but their constant support and love encourage me to be a good human being and do something for the betterment of society. Special thanks to Bulti Biswas for writing the Foreword of this book.

Foreword By Bulti Biswas

“A story is a way to say something that can’t be said any other way.”- C.S. Lewis

‘A Man From The Blue Sky’ is a beautiful collection of eight stories by my dear friend, D. Ray. His journey as a published author starts from his debut book ‘A Journey To Nagaland’.

He is not only a dedicated teacher but also has a unique perspective of seeking the world.

Today, he teaches in a serene place in Jharkhand, surrounded by students who come from an unpretentious background. Children who dither to dream big.

Through his stories the author not only reaches the young readers but also hopes to inspire them to look beyond limitation and build a rapport with the young minds from all walks of life.

The eight stories in the book include a wide range of genres as- sci-fi, suspense, inspirational tale, supernatural and many more.

Where Monalisha stirs the heart with uncanniness, Dwip and Rupesh encourage dreaming big, the mother is an epitome of simplicity who continues to cherish her dream and the kind hearted farmer is an epitome of hope and chance.

The common thread that binds these stories together is the author's intention to indulge every reader in the joy of imagination.

His words carry warmth, hope and the belief that stories can change lives. I am confident that this book will touch the hearts of many young readers and give them a means of escape to take refuge in a beautiful world of imagination.

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Introduction

The Beginning of The Stories....



Hello READERS! I am D. Ray Sir and I tell stories. Every day in my last lesson, we have great fun when my students ask me to tell stories.

Manki, Suraj, Sangi, Khusi, Sushma, Shruti and others eagerly wait for me and of course, I too wait for them. I enjoy narrating wonderful stories with them. The classroom transforms into a magical realm where stories unfold like petals of a flower. Where laughter echoes, gasps erupt, and curious questions pop up like bubbles. The characters of the stories come alive, like it's happening right before their eyes. From real life adventures to mythological tales, the stories are always on point. And the best part? They all feel relaxed after their whole days' rigorous schedule.

Stories are something that make you laugh, cry, angry, compassionate, and imaginative or sometimes take you to the world of fairies.

However, like my students, I want you all to sit down and enjoy my stories. So, now let's get ready, because I am going to open the box of magic...



A Strange Man

‘Chai garam... garam chai...garam chai’ the repeated voice of a hawker rouses Vikash from his deep sleep. He looks at his watch, which is showing 5:30 early in the morning. He still feels a little dozy as his sleep seems incomplete. Last night he got on the train very late at Howrah station and till then he slept only four hours. The other passengers in the coach are still sleeping silently. The train is running wildly on the track, making a loud sound. Vikash, a student of Master of Arts, is returning back to Guwahati, after a long winter vacation. He is pursuing his Master’s from Guwahati University and is residing in the college hostel there.

After a while, the train slows down a little and halts at a noisy station. Some new passengers get on, and among them, an elderly man with long brown beard, wearing a black kurta and pants, enters hastily into the coach and sits down just opposite him. The man looks unusual in his attire and seems very nervous for some unknown reasons.

‘Which station is this?’ Vikash asks the strange man.

‘Hmnn’ the man turns suspiciously at Vikash.

‘Which station is this?’ He repeats.

‘Jantalbera’ the man replies in a harsh voice as it seems that he doesn’t want to talk.



However, the train sets off again at a slow pace and gradually it takes full speed like a horse running on the road. Vikash tries to sleep again but can't, as till then the sun rays take over the whole coach. He looks outside and catches sight of vast grasslands, trees, distant mountains and the blue, blue sky passing by.

Meanwhile, the train stops again and halts at a small station. The man gets up from his seat and unhurriedly goes to the gate, leaving his bag on the vacant seat. Vikash ignores this and tries to sleep yet again, closing his eyes under his hand. After an hour, suddenly when he opens his eyes, he notices that the man is not there on the seat but his bag is kept unattended. An eerie thought abruptly engulfs his mind and he stares at the bag unmindfully for some time. Suddenly he is startled by a harsh voice. **“Ticket please....”** Someone calls him and he is alarmed

at the sound. **‘Ticket please...’** the ticket collector asks him to show his ticket. Vikash takes out his ticket quickly and shows it.

‘Is there anyone on this seat?’ The TC asks him, pointing his one finger to the bag.

‘Yes a man keeps this bag here and goes outside of the coach one hour ago but doesn’t come till...’ Vikash replies with a concerned tone.

After hearing this, TC looks at the bag vigilantly for some time and hurries to the next coach. Subsequently, Vikash feels a little curious to check the bag, as the man is not coming for a long time. So he gets up from his seat and looks at the gate. As he’s about to check the bag, all of a sudden, two policemen come hurriedly, accompanied by the ticket collector. The policemen order everyone to vacate the coach immediately and shift to the next coach. At the moment, Vikash wants to ask one of the policemen about it, but subsequently, chaos erupts in the coach and everyone runs frantically to the next coach without knowing what has happened.

The train is running on the track as usual with a rumbling sound. But this rumbling sound of the train instills a feeling of unease in the hearts of the passengers. After some time, news comes that leaves everyone stunned: **‘a bag full of Rdx has been found in the train!’**

.....

“You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough.”
-Serena Williams



Monalisa

It was a sunny winter morning and Sushant was lying on his bed, checking over his emails in the laptop with a glimmer of hope. After graduation he wanted to pursue his masters from Oxford University, London and he had already applied for that. He was a meritorious and diligent student and had a big dream for his career. Suddenly, his face and eyes sparkled when he opened an email and saw the approval of his application by Oxford. He immediately got up from his bed and screamed, 'Mother.... Mother, my application has been approved'.

"Is it really?" mother replied surprisingly from the kitchen.

"Yes mom, they have sent me an approval mail. Finally I am going to Oxford...."

All were very happy for Sushant except his mother who bid him farewell with wet eyes at the airport. He hugged his mother and consoled her, saying that he would return back home very soon.

However, he reached London and after much hardship, arranged a small room for living near the university. It's very difficult for outsiders to secure a room in London when you are completely unknown to this place. Geologically London is colder than India, but one can enjoy sunny weather most of the time of the day.

On the first day, Sushant went to the University with a lot of excitement and curiosity. Near the entrance, he stopped upon seeing a board that displayed a quote, written in the Romanian language. He tried to read and understand but

failed. Suddenly, in the blink of an eye a girl appeared there and asked him with a smiling face, 'Could I help you to read this?'

'Yah... Yes...' Sushant replied quite hesitatingly as he was not ready for her.

'It's a well-known quote by Desmond, written in Romanian language that says – 'Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness,' the girl dictated eloquently.'

'Ohh that's a beautiful quote, thank you so much; Sushant replied.

'You are welcome'

'I am Sushant from India, What's your name?'

'Monalisha and I'm a native here.'

'Ohh that's nice to meet you. By the way, today is my first day in the university', Sushant added.

'That's fine, let's go to class, we are already late.'



They both attended classes and afterward they went to the library. Sitting down there they talked and read books. Monalisha helped out Sushant to select important books for making notes for his preparation. Eventually, time passed and they became good friends with each other. Throughout the year, she helped and guided him in many ways, even in the tiny matters of everyday life. And for that, Sushant was always feeling grateful to her for being a good friend and guide in an unknown, distant land.

In course of time, Sushant noticed that although she was a native but she didn't have many friends or talked very less with others in the university. Besides, she bunks classes and sits quietly in the library most of the time.

Meanwhile, their final exam came nearer and Sushant indulged in deep study. He hadn't even gone to the university for the last fifteen days. On the days of final exams he had not seen her in the class and thought that she might be sitting in other classes.

After one week, the final result had been announced and published in the notice board. Sushant saw his name on the top of the list which made him overwhelmed with joy. Finally, he fulfilled his long-cherished dream of being the topper at the university. But his joy faded soon when he didn't find Monalisha's name in the list. It was quite surprising not to find her name. So he searched her name again and again in the list but 'hope had been thrashed down to despair'. He couldn't believe that her name was not on the merit list, and that made him completely down in the dumps. With a heavy heart, he wanted to meet her and talk about this. When he was about to go searching for her, suddenly an office staff came and informed that the principal was calling him in his office.

Nevertheless, he rushed to the principal office. The principal congratulated him for ranking top in the university and also invited him for the convocation ceremony to receive his certificate and gold medal. Although he was happy for himself but back of his mind he was still thinking about Monalisha.

Following this meeting when he stood and was about to leave, his eyes were stuck on a board full of photos just beside the entrance. He was looking over the photos and with sudden surprise, noticed a photo where Monalisha was sitting

with the principal sir and other students. Just below the photo it was written 'Batch of 87'.

He was completely stunned, staring at the photo. For the moment he stood still and couldn't believe his eyes. He was gazing at the photo in astonishment and thought 'Maybe this girl looks like Monalisha.'

'Sir, do you know this girl, sitting beside you in this photo?' he asked hesitatingly, pointing his trembling finger to the photo.

The principal stood up from his chair and beheld the photo.

'Oh yes...She is Monalisha, a very bright student who topped at the university in 1987 batch. But unfortunately, on the day of the convocation ceremony, while coming from home she met with an accident and died. She couldn't collect her certificate and gold medal'.

'But why are you asking this?' The principal asked.

'Nothing sir.....'

Sushant was terrified after hearing her name and the incident. For the moment he felt that his heart might stop, his eyes couldn't see anything, his ear couldn't hear anything and it was totally dark everywhere. He thrashed down on the sofa straightly and started sweating. When he got back to his senses, he quickly stood up and rushed to the library where Monalisha used to sit alone. But there was no sign of her in the library. Being saddened, he hurried to the outside of the campus to find her, but in the entire campus there was no sign of her.

He found it hard to believe the fact that Monalisha wasn't living. He even couldn't express to anyone what was going inside his heart. So many unanswered questions swirled in his mind: 'who was the girl he met, and why did she come?' But he was feeling vacant inside at the moment. His mind was trying to accept the datum but his heart wasn't. At the same time, from the deep inside his heart he was feeling grateful to her for her continuous support and help. Only he knew that because of her guidance he was able to rank top at the university.

For one week there was no news of her. After a week on the day of the convocation ceremony, the entire university was present and his eyes were only looking for her with a glance full of hope. He wanted to meet her once and

wished to say 'thank you'. While he was thinking all these, suddenly his name was being called on the stage.

With a heavy heart, he walked on the stage, having a mixture of feeling of pride and sadness. When he was receiving his certificate and gold medal, he saw Monalisha was sitting among the audience on the first row, smiling and clapping for him.

Sushant couldn't think of anything and rushed off the stage to her. But when he reached there, he found that she was not there. He looked here and there but no sign of her....

However, after completion of his study, Sushant returned back to India.

.....

"Life is full of surprises, but the biggest one of all is learning what it takes to handle them." – Deborah wiles



A Kind-Hearted Farmer

***Lakhan** was a kind-hearted farmer. He lived in a small cottage-house with his wife and only son at the outskirts of the village. He worked in the field day and night to serve his family and at the same time he did a little charity whatever he could. And it was his charitable nature that the community of the village respected and praised him. Now it was the rainy season and he was busy enough, ploughing his muddy fields. Throughout the day he relentlessly worked in the field and his wife fetched food and water for him. At this time, he had an urgent need to purchase rice seeds from the market. But the nearest market was 20 Km away from his remote village and there was no direct bus to reach there. He had to walk 4-5 Km to the main road where a bus used to halt for some time in the early morning.*

However, one day in the early hours he set off for the bazar through the muddy village path. It was dawn, so there was still light darkness and faint stars in the sky. On either side of the path there were open fields and trees as far as the eyes could see. And it was raining scatteredly, so no one was awake at that time. To catch the only bus that would go to the market, he was rushing towards the main road. When he reached half way, all of a sudden, he saw some dogs chasing a kid goat on the field. And the young one, being helpless, was running recklessly as it had to protect himself from the clutches of the wild dogs.



Not losing a moment, Lakhan immediately took off after the dogs, shouting loudly. Seeing a man shouting, the dogs left the young goat instantly and ran away in different directions. Subsequently, he picked up the kid, holding it in his arms and returned back to home. He called his wife and handed over this little one to her, saying to take care. After that he again started walking fast to reach the main road. But unfortunately, when he reached there, he missed that only bus as he was already late. Seeing no hope of another bus, he started walking hastily to the bazar. But after a while, unexpectedly, a van came onto the path and took him to the market.

On his return, he caught the bus and reached the stopping point by evening. As soon as he got off the bus, it started raining heavily. Dark clouds covered the entire sky and somewhere thunder was striking often. Being helpless, Lakhan took shelter under a big tree as there was no house nearby. The village was still 4-5 km walk from there. With no other way, he had to wait till the rain stopped.

Although he knew that it was not safe to stand under a big tree while it was raining, he had no other choice.

Nevertheless, the rain continued for two hours with heavy lightning and thunder. He was very worried, not for himself but for his family. He asked himself, 'If it would be safe to walk on this rainy night?' and his subconscious mind responded 'no'.

However, when the rain slowed down a bit, it was totally dark outside. And it's impossible to walk a step on the muddy and slippery path. Lakhan had no torch with him, although he tried to walk on the path that was not visible. If he happened to slip, he could fall onto the field or onto the horny bushes on either side. Even no person or vehicle was possibly seen on this rainy night at this time. And the eerie croaking of frogs, blending with the oppressive thickness of the dense forest, made the atmosphere unsettling gloom, creeping dread.

Ultimately, Lakhan tried to walk a little as he had to reach home by hook or by crook. Often strong wind was blowing. Lakhan again tried to walk but couldn't, still he was trying...

All of a sudden, a light flashed behind him that shattered him completely.

And someone called his name with a loud voice "Lakhannnnn?"

Immediately, he turned behind and a flickering light fell on his face, he couldn't see the man. Again the man cried out, "Where have you gone in this rain?"

"Bazar...." Lakhan replied hesitantly without knowing who the person was.

The light came closer and the man told him to sit on his bike quickly. Hush... It was Ravi, a village boy who had also gone to the bazaar and was troubled by the rain.

Fortunately, he took Lakhan on his bike and they both reached their village safely that night.

.....

"You have to take risks. We will only understand the miracle of life fully when we allow the unexpected to happen." - Paulo Coelho



A Journey to Marsh

Pradip Sir, the senior science teacher of the school, entered Class XII science hurriedly, and without wasting a single minute, stood on the podium and announced:

"It's a great pride for us that two students among you have qualified the Science Olympiad and have been called by NASA to visit their station. And the names are Dwip Sundaram and Rupesh Roy."

Immediately after the announcement, Dwip and Rupesh stood up and all the class started clapping, which energized the whole school. Dwip and Rupesh were very happy listening to their names, and at the same time, started thinking of their upcoming visit to NASA. It's a dream come true moment for them. They had been cherishing this dream for a long time to visit NASA one day and to become a scientist.

However, they were super excited for the journey and began preparation for it. Not more than a week later, they landed in Washington, America and reached the campus, escorted by their science teacher. They were received at the airport by an Indian scientist, working in NASA. They were given accommodation in the campus. The next day, they would visit the station, and would experience their long awaited dream.

So, the very next day they all were taken to the main station where all the research and scientific operations and space operations were being conducted. As soon as they entered the station, they were thrilled to see the edifice of it. It was so big and unbelievable! Subsequently they called

on different locations and came to know about many unknown facts of this world class station.

On the following day, unexpectedly, they were taken to the most secret place where future rockets and capsules are to be launched into space. They were also given the opportunity to have a close look at the rockets and capsules that have yet to be sent into space or to different planets. Even some capsules were completely ready for launching.

Since, Dwip and Rupesh couldn't control their excitement, seeing through all these.

While they were observing the future rockets and capsules very closely, with eagerness they entered into a small capsule as they wanted to see its inside arrangements.

But they knew it was not permissible to enter or to touch any Capsule or Rocket. Besides, it is very risky to touch anything that they don't know. Suddenly, Dwip pressed the launch button of the capsule by mistake and it started gearing up for liftoff. Within a second the capsule launched and flew straight to the space. Being caught inside and feeling helpless; they started crying for help but all in vein. Soon there was chaos in the station as all the Scientists present there sprinted to the control room, frantic to abort the capsule's launch. But with a blink of an eye it vanished in the sky.



However, after a few hours of journey inside, finally the capsule landed on an unknown planet. They opened the door enthusiastically and stepped out of it. What they saw outside, their eyes couldn't believe! Indeed, they landed on a place that was a beautiful Island, surrounded by deep blue water. It was indeed a stunning Island, lush with trees, bushes and rolling hills- it felt like a hidden paradise, a part of mini-earth of its own.

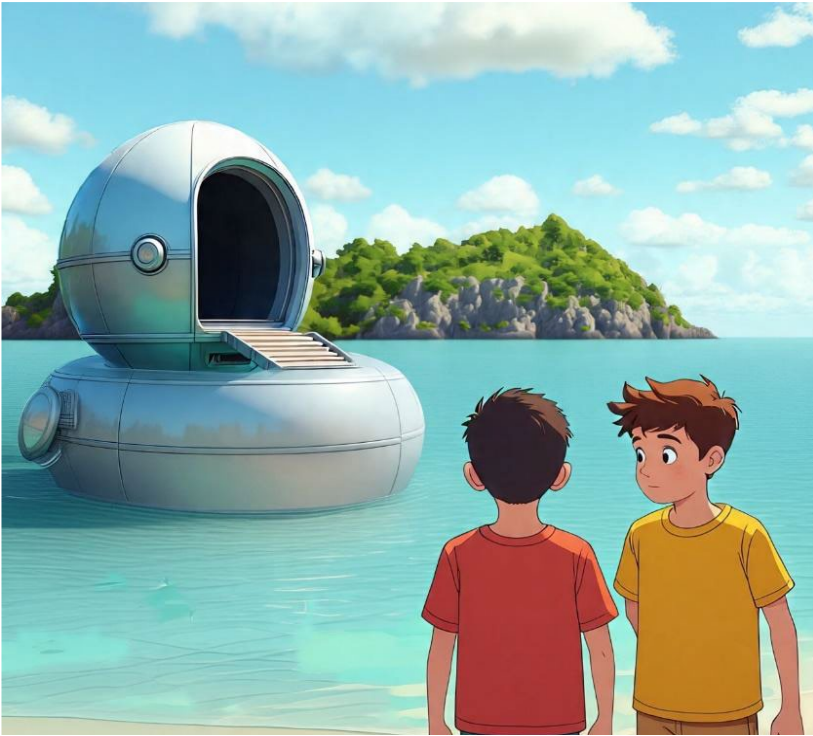
Rupesh said thoughtfully, "If there is water and vegetation, then there must be humans and animals here".

"Yes, I think so," Dwip nodded.

Then leaving the capsule there, they started wandering here and there on the Island. They were curious to know about this unknown land, but

at the same time, they were worried about its solitude. After some time, they both felt very hungry and started looking for food.

In search of food they entered into a jungle and found different kinds of fruits which they didn't even see on earth. Yet they ate as many as they could. When they were busy, eating fruits, suddenly they heard some strange sound which scared them. The voice was harsh and loud, coming from the distant valley.



Curiously, they walked towards the valley with fear in heart. In the distance, they saw a giant dinosaur, walking leisurely in the valley. When they came closer they saw hundreds of small dinosaurs, roaring on the entire valley. The sight was unbelievable!

They couldn't accept this as true in their eyes that they were seeing real dinosaurs which were extinct from the earth many years ago.

However, to avoid meeting with these giants, they started running on the opposite side of the land. They remembered, they have read in their books that dinosaurs eat flesh.

While running through the wilderness they were at a moment, stopped by a long creature, lying peacefully in the middle of the jungle. Slowly they approached closer to the creature to see what it was. It had a long tail with four big legs and looked like a lizard.

"It's a big lizard!" Dwip whispered.

"Yes, I think so, but how can it be so big?" Rupesh whispered too.

"It's one thousand times bigger than a lizard on our planet earth."

When they were discussing all these, meanwhile it opened its eyes wider and moved one of its legs slowly as it heard the whispering and sensed their presence.

"It could attack us." Said Dwip "so we should run fast from here..."

"Yes, we must run to avoid this danger."

And they both ran away from there to save themselves. Finally they came out from the jungle and reached a beach of the ocean.

It was a serene and untouched beach as if no humans visited this beautiful land ever. There were lush green trees, small hills, and the water was crystal clear like a mirror . Enchanted by the beauty of the beach, they sat down on a big rock to rest for some time!

They were feeling exhausted and helpless. In this distant land no one could be here to save them. Sitting on the rock, on the fringe of a chaotic sound of waves, in which it appears that every wave was reminding them of their presence at home, school and with friends. And gradually they saw the sun was setting in the blue ocean.

While they were engrossed, thinking about all these, suddenly they saw a small rocket in the sky, was impending rapidly towards them. Although the sun was setting , hope and happiness glimmered on their faces. Within a second the rocket landed on the beach with a loud burst and two astronauts came out of it. They jumped down from the rock

and ran towards them. The astronauts removed their helmets and smiled at them.

“Now you are saved and ready to return back to earth.” One of them said glibly.

“Yeeee, thank God.”

They both were very happy as if they would celebrate their second birth on this unknown territory. They boarded the capsule with no time and it started to fly higher and higher.

Finally, they landed and returned back to the station after five days spent on Marsh. Everyone present on the station was very delighted and greeted them happily, making them realize that they had not made any mistake. But Rupesh and Dwip both were feeling apologetic for their human error and at the same time elated that they had discovered the planet Marsh and spent five days there.

.....

“The biggest adventure you can take is to live the life of your dreams.”
– **Oprah Winfrey**



An Invisible Ghost

One morning, I was sitting with my old father at home and having our tea. It was very rare to sit together at tea time, as he was always an early riser and I was late. My father didn't like city life at all as he had spent his entire life in his village and had many experiences and memories there. Hence, without wasting a second sip of tea, I asked him an odd question at an odd time: 'Father, have you seen a ghost?'

He looked at me seriously as though he was not ready to hear this untimely question. He took his second sip of tea, making a 'shhhhh' sound and to my great surprise said, 'Yes'.

'When have you seen?' I threw the second question immediately.

'Two or three times I have encountered ghosts and my first experience was when I was only 17 years old,' he added.

After hearing this, I opened my eyes wider and stopped sipping tea. I requested him to narrate the incident.

Having another sip of tea my father started narrating the incident: 'I was born in a small village, surrounded by vast jungles and trees, in Jharkhand. At that time there was no market nearby our village and the villagers had to walk 7-8 miles to reach the market, especially on Sunday and Wednesday as on these particular days 'Hat'(market) was organized. We used to go to the market to sell and buy necessary things daily.'

My father was a farmer who worked hard on the fields to feed his big family of 12 members. He had enough fields to cultivate rice and different kinds of vegetables. Throughout the year he would work in his big fields and used to go to bazaars regularly to sell rice and vegetables. Even sometimes I accompanied him to the bazaar.

When I was in high school, I remembered, I had to sell vegetables and rice as at that time my father was not able to go to the bazaar and at the same time he was not able to pay my school fees. However, I used to walk 7-8 miles to reach the market every Sunday and Wednesday with other villagers. And it was my regular routine.

One day, in the month of July, as usual, I went to the market to sell vegetables. It was cloudy weather and throughout the day it was raining scatteredly. I had a big bag full of vegetables and an umbrella with me. Although it was raining, people from different villages came to the market, making a huge crowd there.

Many villagers from my village also came to buy groceries and vegetables. When I finished selling, very few people were there in the market, and it was seemingly dark because of the cloud. Other people from my village were already gone. So, I headed towards home hurriedly as there was a big jungle on my way to cross.

While I was going through the jungle path, I saw a Kiwi tree laden with few fruits by the roadside. Kiwi was a very expensive fruit and normally found in the deep jungle on our side. So, I thought to collect some as it tasted very good and most importantly, other villagers had not noticed this. So I started collecting Kiwis. And deliberately I was so engrossed in talking that I wouldn't notice the time and gradually I entered into the deep jungle to have more.

Every ten meters I found kiwi tree in the jungle. I had been collecting Kiwis for 2 or 3 hours and my bag was full of it. I had not the least sense of the time and the surroundings. It was already night and it was raining moderately.

Suddenly, a big branch of a long tree fell near me with a heavy sound and that made me aware of the surroundings. I saw that I was standing

in the middle of the Jungle alone and it was a dark night. Eventually, I didn't remember the time and how I entered this deep jungle. I realized that I was caught by an invisible ghost who made me forget everything. I became so terrified and couldn't understand what to do at that moment. Suddenly a thought came to my mind and I immediately removed my trouser and shirt, shook them again and again, so that the invisible ghost could be removed. I remembered that once my father told me about this invisible ghost and how to remove it if I was caught. Afterwards I started running frantically without thinking about anything. While I was running, I saw big branches of trees falling aside me one by one as if someone didn't want me to leave this jungle.



For the time being, I couldn't think of anything else but to run in a certain direction. I wasn't in a situation where I could scream for help or if I would shout, nobody was there to save me. However, after some time I came out from the jungle and got on the road.

I continued running towards home with a single breath. Meanwhile, it started raining heavily, and no one was outside; everything was looking dark, even the trees. While running, I felt someone invisible was chasing behind me and trying to catch me.

Ultimately, in the middle of the night, I reached the outskirts of the village and stopped running. I stumbled up, gasping for breath and supposedly I was so horrified that my whole body was shivering. At that point, literally, I was not feeling energetic and dragged myself to home, sweating through my clothes. While running, I threw my umbrella and bag, full of kiwis somewhere I didn't know.

When I finally reached home my father was wide awake and worried, waiting for me. I told him everything minutely and that night we both couldn't sleep.

Since that day, whenever I went to the market, I always came back as early as possible and never ever had an urge for kiwis.

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“Everything else is uncertain, so live life for the moment.”

– **Louis Tomlinson**



A Man from The Blue Sky



This story was narrated to D Ray Sir by his old mother. Later, D Ray Sir told this story to his students. It was about his mother when she was young and beautiful. His mother was born in an era when India was technologically not much advanced. So, there was no internet, mobile

phone or smart TV but of course black & White TV, cycle and scooter. Life was very simple and peaceful. His mother was born in a village which was quite near to a big town, and that's why the basic necessities were always available there.

One morning, her father, as usual, was sitting before the T.V and was watching the news. Suddenly, a news broadcast was telecasting (on DD news channel) that Rakesh Sharma, an Indian cosmonaut, had travelled to space and made history. And importantly, he became the first Indian citizen to reach space and stayed there for some time. Interestingly, then prime minister, Indira Gandhi had a talk with him and she asked, "How does India look from Space"? And Mr. Sharma replied from space that "Sare Jahan se achha" (Better than the entire world). It was a great pride for all Indians.

Mother started narrating, 'That time I was studying in high school when this news was being telecasted. I was totally astounded to hear this and it was a great wonder to me as a teenager how a man could go to space and talk from there. The next morning when the newspaper came at the doorstep of my house, I immediately took it and saw a big headline on the front page with an image of cosmonaut Rakesh Sharma. Since that day, he has become my idol and hero. No movie stars attracted me as much as this man who travelled space from earth. I genuinely thought that the man had a magical power and he was not a human being but a man belonging to another world. Eventually, I was so fascinated that I started collecting all the information related to him. Even though there was no internet or Google at that time, I read newspapers extensively, watched T.V shows and borrowed books from the school library, and more I asked my teachers about him. Gradually, a strong wish to meet him grew in my mind. But I knew, as a village girl, this wish couldn't be true.

One day, a post office employee came to my school and informed us that the govt. of India was organizing a quiz contest. And then the man gave each of us a sheet of paper where some questions were asked. We were told to write all the answers and submit it to him. Later, we were also told that if anyone wins this contest, he or she can get the opportunity to meet with astronaut Rakesh Sharma. After hearing this, I became

super excited and wrote all the answers within half an hour as I already knew them. I was so confident to win the contest that I told everyone desperately about my winning. Afterwards, I used to think about my meeting with Rakesh Sharma, the great cosmonaut and my idol. But unfortunately after that day, no further information came to school and I became very disappointed. I cried a lot at home and my mother finally consoled me, saying that I would be given a nice dress on summer vacation.

However, time flew very fast and I completed my schooling and then got married. At that time, it was very common for a girl to get married at a very younger age. After that, I became very busy with my life and household work. I even shifted to Delhi with my husband who worked in a big company as a CA. Delhi is a capital city and life here is very fast moving. One day someone hung a big banner outside of my building. Actually, it was an advertisement where it was written with bold font that ‘On 15th August, the chief guest would be Indian cosmonaut Rakesh Sharma at India gate.’ When I saw the advertisement, at first I jumped with excitement and it seemed to me like a bolt from the blue. Immediately, I informed my husband and requested him to witness this event. It was an opportunity to meet my hero and fulfill my long cherished dream. Finally on that day my husband and I went there to attend the program at India gate. I saw Rakesh Sharma for the first time and my long-awaited dream came true! Although the cosmonaut looked older, to me he was always young- a hero. He was indeed not a man of this planet, rather **a man from the blue sky.**

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“The universe is full of wonders, waiting to be explored.”
- Rakesh Sharma



Story of Maa Kera



‘D Ray Sir is our favorite teacher as he tells us great stories every day in our last class.’

‘Yes, after attending rigorous classes, we eagerly wait for the last class.’

Suraj, Manki, Khushi, Sushma, Shruti and Sangi are sitting on the last bench and they are chatting uninterruptedly. At the very moment D Ray Sir enters into the classroom and they all stand up quickly and greet him ‘good afternoon sir’.

“Very good afternoon”

‘Sir, what story will you tell us today?’ Khushi asks immediately.

"You can decide the topic....sir replies with a smiling face."

"Okay, today we'd like to hear a religious story".

"Ohh that's a good choice, hence, as you wish, now I'll tell you a very divine story of 'Maa Kera' (then he bows down a little and whispers something to the sky).

'Have you heard the name 'Maa Kera' before?

"Maa Kera! I haven't heard the name of this goddess before" says Sangi.

Yes, we haven't heard this name" say all together.

"Okay, after listening to this story, you all will know Maa Kera." Then, he takes a deep breath and starts to narrate...

Once, I was posted at Chakradharpur, West Singbhum, as a teacher in high school. When I started living there, I heard the name 'Maa Kera' for the first time. 'Kera Temple' was very popular and pious among the people of this area. Gradually I became very curious to know the temple and so, one day, I visited there with one of my friends.

The temple divinely stands in the midst of Kera village on the banks of Brahmini River and is around 10 km away from Chakradharpur town. However, when I entered inside, I felt a strong positive energy of this holy place. Unfortunately, I couldn't see the idol of Maa Kera that day as the main door of the temple was already closed. However, very soon, I visited the temple for the second time with a senior teacher and some students to inquire more about Maa Kera and the old divine story of this temple to complete a school project.

And auspiciously, that day we met the main Pujari (priest) of the temple and asked him about the story of Maa Kera. At first he refused to tell us anything as he had some household work to do that day. But by our repeated request and for the sake of the school project, he was finally convinced. We all sat on the floor and then he started: 'it is the most oldest and 'jagrata' (divine) temple in the area, believed to have been built around 300 years ago, the shrine is dedicated to Maa Bhagwati (Goddess shanti) and was established by the King of Kera. Maa is also

known as Sadarupani. As he was narrating, I was jotting down notes of all the information.

He also informed us that the black murti of Maa Kera is 7 inches in height and is made of Ashtadhatu. She wears a silver crown and has a chhattri (umbrella) made of silver above her head. Every year during Chaitra Shukla paksha (March/April) a big festival is organized in the temple. He paused a little here as if he was about to finish the story.



We correspondingly requested him (the Pujari) to narrate the story of how Maa Kera came here. He behaved impatiently as it was about to sun set but later he continued-

“Once In the time of kingship, Kera region was spread to 34 moujas amidst the lush green hills of undivided Singbhum. One day a sage from Kamakhya Kamrup (Assam) came to Kera village. Here, he rested under a pipal tree on the bank of Brahmini River. And he carried an idol with him. It is said that the idol that he carried he put on the ground and hence, the idol remained there forever. So the sage started worshipping the idol of Maa under this pipal tree for many years and one day he suddenly died.

After two days of his death, the King of this area, Thakur Lokhnath Singhdev saw a dream and in the dream Maa told him – ‘for the

protection of your land, I have come here and you must come to see and warship me.'

The very next day, the King hastily went to the spot with naked foot and found the idol of Maa Bhagwati. After that, he built a temple there and started worshipping Maa. Since that day worshipping of the Goddess has been continuing till date." And he ended his long speech by requesting us to witness this big festival in Chaitra.

Having taken the blessings of Maa, that day, we took a round of the entire temple. The architecture of the temple is seemingly very simple. Sculptures and paintings adorn the walls of the Shrine. Importantly, they narrate the story of various incarnations of the Goddess. And a pillar in front of the Shrine is noted for a four-headed lion. Maa Bhagwati came here around 300 years ago.

When the story was over, everyone in the class shouted "Joy Maa Kera".

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"We are not human beings on a spiritual journey. We are spiritual beings on a human journey." – **Stephen Covey**



A Morning at Rishop

'Have you ever experienced that somewhere amidst the lush green hills and jungle, you visited for a short period of time but it gave a long lasting impression?' I asked my students in the class.

'No sir' they all answered together.

'What about you, sir?' Khushi then asked me curiously.

'Yes, I have experienced so', I said glibly.

'Sir, please tell us your experience.' They requested me all together and eagerly waited for my reply. I smiled at them and started narrating my heavenly experience-

Once, I visited Rishap, a hill station and hidden gem of Darjeeling for a short trip.

It's a perfect destination of relaxation, adventure as well as cultural exploration and more to connect with nature.

So, one day, I woke up in the morning there and found myself in a peaceful room, on top of the hill. Dim sunlight was piercing through the big glasses of the window and the weather was seemingly cool, although I couldn't feel it under the warm blanket.

With curiosity, I opened the window and saw the magic of the clouds, widening above the sky. The house seemed like a floating drone, high above the hills.



Silence pervaded the entire region like a deserted corner of the earth, except for the chirruping of eternal birds. I hadn't felt this kind of serenity before. It was a different morning that made me forget everything – work, family and friends and my worries. No crowd, no sound, no pollution....nothing to disturb me at all. It was a perfect morning. Indeed, Nature has a compelling power to heal and to make us be present. Even more, the colorful flowers, cheerful butterflies, towering trees, soothing breeze, and dull sunlight were enough to bless me. I took a cup of tea and merged with nature...

When the morning color faded and warm sunlight covered the entire sky, I came out of my room for a walk. The deep vast jungle and silent path were giving me a tint of happiness. On my way, some hilly dogs were accompanying me. And the weather was comfortably cold.

I was wandering on the silent path when I entered a pine forest. Mesmerized by the beauty of the surroundings, I stood there for some time, so that I could feel the surreal silence.

Filled with serenity and heavenly bliss, then I returned back through an unknown path where I came across a strip of flowers, seemingly daisy Lili, wild rose, Rhododendron and marry gold.

Undeniably, Rishop is unforgettable. The beautiful morning gave me a lifelong impression, a heavenly touch for that I had crossed hundreds of miles. I paused for some time and looked outside of the window of the classroom thoughtfully.

After hearing this, all were spellbound. 'How lovely Rishap was', they expressed their deep eagerness to visit this heavenly place once.

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"The earth has music for those who listen." – William Shakespeare



Author's Note:

When We Read We Grow...

In the era of internet and social-media, we hardly turn the pages of a book. Most of our time is spent surfing the internet or glued to screens. But “Do we ever question ourselves whether we're growing in this way?”

If the answer is "yes", then it's okay, but if the answer is no, then you are stuck in wrong habits.

Although this century is called ‘the age of information’ , this is not an ‘age of internet or Social media.’ Excessive use of Social media is only making us dull and lazy, snatching our precious time from us.

If we look 20-30 years back, life was very simple and there was a curiosity of reading books among the people. They enjoyed reading and at the same time growing. A book reader was truly respected everywhere in those pre- electronic times.

When we open a book, we step into worlds beyond our own. Reading expands our vocabulary, sharpens critical thinking, nurtures imagination and builds the muscle needed to navigate life's complexities. That's why **Joseph Addison** said-

“Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.”

There are so many real life examples of people who gained power by reading extensively and set an example to us.

Warren Buffett, an iconic business person, once said in an interview that he spends 80% of his day reading, calling it "the most important habit for success".

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, the missile man of India, borrowed books from a local shopkeeper, fueling his curiosity until he helped India reach space.

Oprah Winfrey used reading as her 'pass to personal freedom', rising from a challenging childhood to become a media powerhouse.

Nelson Mandela, while imprisoned for 30 years, read Shakespeare and law, shaping his vision for a democratic South Africa.

And Bhagat Singh before hanging, his last wish was to complete a book. He is always seen holding a book in his hand in photos.

Once, **George R.R. Martin** said-

"A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies...The man who never reads lives only one."

Just as these legends turn reading into lifelong growth, each of us can harness the same power within us! Because every page helps in our inner growth.

Thank you.

Please share your valuable feedback and reviews about this book or about any particular story you like at ghananjayauthor@gmail.com. You can also go on Amazon and share your reviews.

With Love

Dhananjay Ray.

(Author)

A request to all my dear Readers....

If you have not connected with me on social media, please do connect on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Follow my Facebook page: 'Author D Ray', subscribe my YouTube channel: 'Book Nook'.

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Thank you for reading this book.

Yours Truly,

Dhananjay Ray.