

Book Under the Tree: Sushant

Thoughts and Life Lessons of a Genius

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Inspired by the life and words of Sushant
Singh Rajput

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*To Sushant,
The immortal genius who lives in every ordinary dream
that shall ever dare to fly*

Inspiration for the Title

'Book under the tree' is a metaphor for Sushant's life story, or rather the man himself.

A book is an assortment of pages. Pages are produced by the barks of a tree. A tree needs to be chopped off to make the pages, which ultimately form a book.

Therefore, a book cannot exist without the inexistence of the tree. Although, the only way to find the book as is told is under the tree. If the book cannot be found, no claims can be made for its existence and so, it also is inexistent. Much like the paradox Sushant called himself. Existent yet inexistent today.

(If the truth cannot be found, is it even the truth?)

(If it is not hidden, is it even the truth?) *the wink*



Pic Courtesy: Sushant's social media

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Introduction

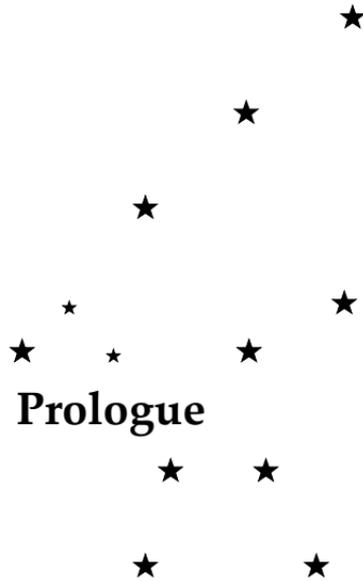
When a genius dies very soon, which he always does, a part of a 'could be better' world dies with him.

On January 21, 1986 AD, a star concealed within the night sky manifested itself in the form of a human boy on a planet located at the Orion Arm of the Milky Way galaxy. The city on this soulful planet was called 'Patna'. The boy later grew up to be called 'Sushant Singh Rajput', the star in an ocean of stars, and the following story talks of him and his short visit to Earth, the planet in a sea of planets.

'Book under the tree: Sushant' is a literary dedication to the wonderful life of Sushant Singh Rajput. An actor, dancer, thinker, poet, intellectual, and explorer. Wonderfulness of the life of this polymath is essential to be passed on not only to savour eccentricity and excellence of his work, but also because, more often than not, he dared to go past conventions to create worlds for himself that existed far beyond imaginations of the ones around him. He redefined courage in his own beautiful ways. It so happened because of the way he thought and approached life, which is nothing less than inspiring.

Before people could learn more about his genius, and use it to enhance their own lives, commitments, brains, he left his human form at the age of thirty four. It is an indubitable fact that had he stayed longer, he must have had more to provide, for he existed as an intelligent learner who only intended to move forward. It is sad and devastating that we hold no such privilege. Although, from whatever I got to see of him through movies, interviews, drafts, I have garnered life lessons from him I wish should be cherished as a memory of his life on our beloved planet. I am obliged to mention that everything you read ahead is entirely a work of fiction and a personal interpretation to Sushant's way of life, with a few realities in between.

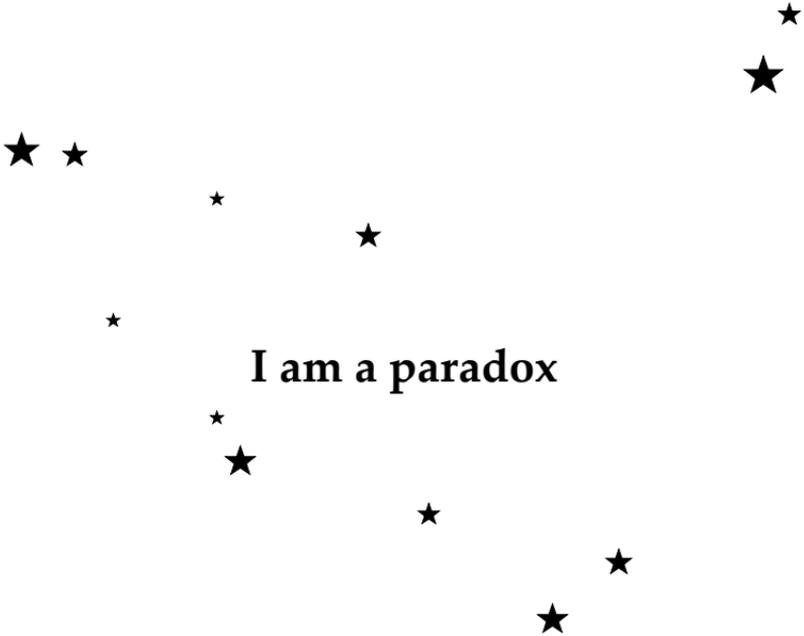
It is pure fiction, but so are we, so is everything.



Prologue

Hello! I am Sushant and I am dead. I was murdered at the age of thirty four, taken away from this world before time. This human here has asked me to pass on my thoughts and lessons of life. If I do that, then it might mean I knew what life was about, but to be honest, I don't, never did. My mother once told me that 'your life is the stories you tell yourself'. That's when I decided, if it is just stories that I have to narrate to my own self, then I shall make them worth telling or at least try for the same. So I will only pass on my personal perspective on experiences I have been fortunate to endeavour on as a gift from life itself. Look at it as an echo of my dying soul succumbed in a few words to reach you and perhaps, preach you. Keep in mind though, it's not me talking, but her. I have tried to narrate my stories to her in a language known best by me after the death. How much of it could

she unravel and translate, I know not. She probably loves me a lot, and so, would attempt best to her ability. And as you read on, think of me, while I travel as dust into lengths and breadths of the universe we all have unknowingly shared.



*“We are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful
what we pretend to be”*

-Kurt Vonnegut

The season was monsoon and the sun had set, or should I rather say, we had rotated towards darkness. I sat in my chair in a dimly lit room, looking at the projection of a workout compilation I had shot a few years ago. I have always loved the idea of owning a projector. Glimpses of mountain runs, ballet routines, and high intensity functional training streamed in front of my eyes as vivid memories of perseverance and my voice echoed-
“What is happiness? For me, the closest synonym of happiness is excitement. Not the past, not the future, the only tangible thing we can play along is NOW. We have

to surrender everything we have got to everything we do. We have to punish mediocre successes and reward excellent failures. Because, as they say, he who thinks he can, and he who thinks he can't, are both usually right. And I will survive. Till I get it right.”

An involuntary smile creased my face, a rush of excitement kidnapped my body, and hair on my hands had stood erect. A feeling of relief also emerged, for I could gauge from my bodily reactions that I was in a right space. I was fine, as long as I was still excited. In the process of getting up from the chair to indulge myself into a dance regime, the idea of which was established right after watching the video, I realised that the sprain in my left ankle needed rest for two more days. Stopping midway and collapsing back into the chair, I remembered the morning football match that had caused this injury. Being pushed from back had made an incredible dodge go astray. I should be ready for such blows for the next time, I thought. The technique was good, but a forward leg push could offer more stability while falling, if it had to happen. Football and rain! Aah!

While I remained engrossed in my wayward thoughts, the doorbell rang which was gotten by my househelp, and a woman in a blue jacket, black pants, green eyes, and a contagious smile soon stood in front of me. I recognised her at once. Mishka.

“Hello!” she jumped and hugged me before I could lift myself from the chair to greet her. “FINALLY! I am in YOUR house!”

My first correspondence with Mishka transpired a year ago on an online social media platform, which later ensued into a chase. I spotted her in many of my promotions and sometimes even on shooting sets. Everytime with one request- “I want to write a book on you. Can I please study your lifestyle for a while?” My denial was constant with multiple elements on the facet. Security concerns, time constraints, and an itch to not reveal too much about me to a stranger were just a few of them. Finally, when I had no excuses to keep the inevitable at bay, and was to rest for a week at my home, she found her way into my life.

“So, this is your house!” she exclaimed.

“I still don’t understand how come you trusted me so much to live in my house for seven days,” I said, not able to get a smile off my face looking at her enthusiasm.

“I didn’t, I informed all my friends in the city and the live location on my phone is on,” she justified hesitantly. I did not have to guess her age anymore.

“So you would go live in a famous man’s house in a strange city for seven days just on the guarantee of location settings and information you shared with friends? ”

“Yeah-well-Umm-No. I trusted you.”

“That makes one of us.”

“You don’t trust yourself?”

“No, I meant- well, you, and also me, yes, I guess.”

“You don’t trust me and a little of yourself.”

“It is subjective. Well put into words though.”

“Job of a writer.”

“I see how we can have a lot of fun. C’mon.”

And so we got her settled in the guest room. Her bag remained stagnant, but she did not. One second she would be found in the study, the next second she would stand marvelling my telescope, Meade 14” LX100, and as you blink, you would see her posing as one of the paintings in the living room. I saw her playfulness as a mirror, and reflected on my identity for some time. Who we are and who we become, only to become something else! You see, people describe themselves brilliantly by things they do in this world, by what they say, while they can only be known by what they are inside, by how they think! One may argue that individuals tend to perform or speak as they think, but this logic proves to be abstract and counterintuitive in several domains.

She soon found herself wandering inside my bedroom, and when I stood beside her, she looked at me with a questioning gaze, “What’s this?” she asked, standing in the middle of the room. The walls of the room were decorated by paintings, newspaper clippings, and scribbled formulae. On the right was a wooden bed close to the window, and on the left stood an empty black board adjacent to which was a metre long plastic model of the solar system. Other parts of the room were heavily crumbled with papers, books, globe, pocket watch, coats. A perfect chameleon.

“That’s the room of a physicist from the late 19th century.” I said excitedly. “I will be acting in a play where I have to be a physicist from those times, so just to

understand the character, and also to test a few things with my brain, I redecorated.”

“Didn’t you do the same for your movie Kedarnath?” she kept moving around the room. “Do you do this for every movie?”

“Not for every movie, No. And the purpose is different this time. For Kedarnath, I did it to get comfortable with the living conditions of the character and world of Mansoor. Kedarnath as a place is unique and defines a lot of its people and the basic reflexes too. The change of scene offers depth into the character. I am doing it now to unlearn a lot of this world and understand perspectives of science, not just the person. It is a different time when a lot of theories we know today, had not been proven. The way you perceive is the way that changes your perception. I am looking at ways, it’s intriguing.”

“The purpose behind the task changes the task itself.”

“Exactly!”

She put down the hourglass she had been examining and began staring at me. I would like to say she stared in awe, but it was hard to be sure.

“How do you-- I read that you handled 60 kgs of weight on your back everyday up the steep slopes of Kedarnath for ten days in such extreme weather conditions without saying a no for any retake when you had an option of a body double? Was it difficult? ”

“It was part of the acting. It was challenging, yes. I was in the character and the character would never say no, and I also got to challenge my body strength and--”

“It was inhuman! And you don’t just do this as an actor, you are so-this is why people mock you! And in the fear of you, they---”

“Maybe I am a superhuman then. Besides, it was solely for the movie-”

“But you are that always. You do all of this and- why do you struggle so much-”

I saw a trickle go down her eye but she smiled and left the room. It was an unbiased care which made me light up in spirits. However, it also got me immersed in the evergreen thought that kept popping up more often than not nowadays. It is strange that people see the uncomfortable phases that you go through as a problem, and celebrate when you achieve something later. The word “struggle” has always looked like an improper interpretation to me. Why would you call something that pushes you beyond your limits a struggle? And why would you want to be comfortable in mediocrity? Doesn’t that stop you from learning new things which is after all the whole point? What is the meaning in life when you choose to stay comfortable and not explore it at all?

If you haven’t guessed it yet, I am an actor. All the same, that is not how I choose to define myself. Actually, I don’t even see it possible to define myself. It is easier to do that with fictional characters.

After dinner and a few more detailed conversations, stargazing was our next escapade . I was dared to make sure that her first experience with the telescope should be the most profound. And so, I immediately set my Meade

LX100 facing towards the moon. To make our eyes dark adapted for an enriching experience, I had turned off the lights of the room and we both sat opposite each other with darkness all around.

“Sushant?” she said, with a peculiar calm and hesitance in her voice. She probably spoke just to ignore the fear of the dark, or maybe because she was too intrigued by the dark or maybe just to ask a question she had held onto for long or maybe because she did not like the silence or maybe to-- never mind. “Why do you call yourself a paradox?”

“Because I keep oscillating into two states most of the time.” I replied, calm footed.

“Can you give an example?”

“Well- Two Sushants live inside me. One doesn't want to do anything. He has realised that no matter what you achieve or perform, nothing will change mentally or factually. Mentally, because there always will be a craving for psychological security. Factually, because we all know for sure that we are going to die one day and we are going to lose out on everything we have got. And then the interlinkage of both. The second Sushant knows that to keep doing good things and pursuing knowledge in the wake is the only way to live life. Every morning, there is this pendulum swinging, and I have to make a choice.”

Silence fell in the room for a minute. I had another million thoughts crossing my mind which I did not know how to put into words. We don't mostly think in words, and saying it only makes us lose most of the meaning.

And yet, I wanted to speak more, but somehow, she made me feel so tranquil and distracted, my willingness to communicate through words was disappearing. Words contaminate feelings.

“This way, we are all a paradox, because we all know subconsciously, that it’s all for nothing,” she finally said.

“Most of us don’t realise it consciously, and so keep on being unaware of ourselves forever, in the indefatigable chase of psychological security, not knowing the purpose. I am a paradox, so is everybody, so is the universe, it is everything and nothing at the same time!”

I nodded my head uttering a ‘hmm’.

“Aren’t you going to say anything further?” she asked, her voice had a sudden outburst of energy as if struck with lightning.

“You talk when there is disagreement. When there is agreement, there is no need to talk.”

“So you agree with me?”

“I guess.”

“Hah!” her voice filled the room with surprise.

“What?” I asked.

“People don’t usually agree with me, not so easily.

Disagreement exists EVERYWHERE! You don’t know what this means to me. What any of this means to me! It is like a dream!”

“Why do you think I said yes to speak with you?”

I could feel her smile in the dark. It was filled with admiration and belongingness. It also brought a sudden relief into my gut, which, when was not present, I wouldn’t know was missing.

“Your voice is amazing.” she said. I didn’t react. If I had to trade my voice for a few characteristics, I wouldn’t do it. I was aware nevertheless, that it wasn’t the greatest voice in the world. Maybe she had heard it this particular way for the first time. When all her senses were working the least, she could listen differently. I grinned.

“I have slight Nyctophobia!” the girl apprised afterall. Fear it is!

“Would it help if we sing a few songs?” I suggested.

“Yes please!” she spoke with flavour back in her voice.

After twenty minutes of sing-along, I switched on the red LED flashlight in my hands, making scary faces in between which soared her giggles, and guided my way through parts of the telescope to set eyes on the moon. Fixing a barlow lens, and rechecking the settings, I asked her to lay her eyes on the land on the Luna I had dreamt to set my foot on for years.

“Ready to board my time machine?” I asked, thrilled. A telescope was the closest I could have to a time machine, and everytime I looked at it, I was proud of my possession. She nodded her head and as I guided her through the eyepiece, I announced, much grandly, “Welcome to the ‘Mare Moscoviense’, or as I might call ‘Sea of Muscovy’, or as I might call, ‘Home’.”

*A stranger's smell so alive and warm
I would disagree to know, had I never been to his farm
Gleaming eyes with a wondrous code of life
Sly away the numbness in this exhilarating ocean of
playwrights
Depths of an artist, mysteriously slow
I sped up, but even light had turned into shadow!*

*He runs while I walk
Sleeps while I talk
The reality of me, an unaltered stalk*

*A stranger you can and cannot see through
Beauty dressed in mystic blue
Smile so deceptive, an organ's due*

*Smell of wood and paper enrich the face
A shy embrace of a proliferating maze
Comfort of a dying sage
Disguised and transformed into a lion's mane*

*A stranger I came to meet today
A cackling melody, with melancholia on display
Shutting the world away I look at him
And find the world, laughing at me, captured within.*



Trying to hold sand with bare hands

“We must look differently at known knowns, must take chances with the known unknowns, and be ready to deal with unknown unknowns.”

The next day began with a meticulous workout for me and fishing for her. We drove about a hundred kilometres on the Mumbai-Goa highway in my Maserati to find the perfect place for this adventure. The drive marked an engaging karaoke on “Ruk ja o dil deewane”, other songs, and eating corn or peanuts at various stops. When we reached the destination, the sky was like a paper turned blue, telling a story through an enriching breeze and ruffled dog ears placed as waves in the ocean. After getting lessons in how to operate a fishing rod and fix accessories, Mishka sat near me on a rock with a piece of bait floating in the water.

“How many hours did you sleep last night?” she asked.

“Three hours,” I replied.

“I have a theory about why you sleep so less and yet remain so energetic.”

“Enlighten me.”

“We need sleep to repair the damaged cells, re-energise, etc. It takes more time for other people because of the psychological disturbances they go through during the day, making them inefficient. The fact that you don’t care about things that don’t matter makes you less prone to emotional hardships, keeping you alive and focussed throughout. And so, you don’t need much sleep unless there is a lot of physical strain. You are efficient in your sleep. Or maybe it is simply because you are always so excited. Aah, I could have explained this better!”

I laughed and before I could respond further, another question broke out.

“What do you do when you catch the fish?” she asked.

“What do you expect me to do?”

“Throw it back in.”

“Why?”

“To keep it alive! I love animals and don’t intend on harming them. It is sick to kill them.”

“Most people tend to love the other way. They possess a want to keep the loved ones close by. By that practise, you cannot stay near the water for a long time, and so, you tend to kill the fish, and be with it until it’s dead, is fried and eaten up. It justifies their definition of love.

Something similar was mentioned by Ernest Hemmingway in one of his books.”

“That sounds so disgusting,” she grimaced.

“But that’s what most people do!” I saw my body posture changing again, it was invigorated. “You usually tend to decide what’s best for people you love, you do anything to keep them close, you even change yourself, but there isn’t just one way of doing that, of course.”

“Yes, you mean, rather than eating the fish, it could be in an aquarium.”

“Exactly! Or you could feed it to a cat,” I grinned as she looked away with disgust again. “I like your way though, at least for now.” And so, when a fish clinged onto the bait on my rod, I gave it a jumping ride and let it go. It felt liberating beyond measures. After an hour of fishing, we moved around and noticed a lot of thrash lying in the crevices on rocks and near the bushes and copses. I quickly brought a spare garbage bag from the car and set about scavenging.

“It’s unhygienic!” she squealed while picking up a crushed drinking can from a bush.

“We don’t have the equipment right now, so just be careful,” I said plainly.

“Couldn’t we ask someone else to do it?”

“We could, but they mostly might throw it all into the water. If not, then they might do it days later which shall leave the plants and water suffering for a longer time. And besides, what are we doing anyway? Having fun. Might as well be useful.”

I saw her opening her mouth and then closing it back again. For about thirty minutes, we picked out garbage and had conversations on botanical research that claims plants to be sensitive and possessing intelligence. A little

botany, a little philosophy, and then drove back to my home, where, after breakfast, as I sat on my couch, anticipated a long interview.

“What is happiness?” she asked as she seated herself with a writing pad and pen in her hand.

“It’s a feeling which I believe is unique to everyone,” I replied, yearning for an arrogant humour based retrieval to enjoyable activities. Much to my demise, the idea did not fall out.

“What gives you happiness?” she continued asking like a robot, casting a furtive look at me.

“The excitement of doing what I like to do, or I think I like to do or I like to like to do everyday.” I responded and she fell quiet.

“Should people try to be happy all the time as the world claims to be the right way of life? Is that the only way to live in your opinion?” she asked after a pause. Her eyes gleamed with an urge which was personal. She looked desperate for an answer she wanted, she wanted to believe something, and demanded from me to say the exact words. She wanted to be validated.

“Firstly, you cannot be happy all the time. Secondly, it is a choice people make. However you wish to live your life is your choice. People unaffected by happiness and sadness live it the best.” I said solemnly, now holding a rubix cube in my hand centering the yellow piece at the top. The most relieving element of this interview was that I wasn’t being filmed and had the freedom to immerse myself anywhere with any activity I chose. Mishka did not plead otherwise, as this probably was the

best way to actually know a person, to let them be. Especially when a person possesses such a short attention span as me.

“So then, your life is not about chasing those small moments of happiness? What is it about?”

“No. That’s just little spasms of joy in between an exciting journey. For me, excitement is the most important, the urge to do something, to know, to be curious. I do what I do because I like it. Sometimes this gives me pleasures I couldn’t have imagined. I treat it as a synonym of happiness. That’s my definition. People usually treat happiness as something attainable, which makes it so overrated and delusional. I am not in a pursuit of happiness, but believe in a habit of it.”

She fell quiet again.

“But then, what about the times when you actually achieve something great? An Award or loads of money or some recognition? You have enough of it, but rewards still must make some difference?” she asked.

“Yes, of course they do,” I spoke with a smile, sounding repetitive to myself. “Not for long though. And so, to design your life on that basis seems illogical to me. Research in psychology suggests that humans tend to overestimate their feelings for the future results beforehand. The psychological term for it is ‘impact bias’. And so, after the hard work or luck, when they get somewhere, they are usually disappointed because they don’t feel the way they imagined the feeling. And even if the happiness is at a peak, it is short-lived. This holds true for everything. So when you don’t strive for happiness as

a pursuit or an arrival, you stay excited and joyful in whatever you do, and life stays amazing. Same bears for sadness that comes from failures, it is short lived too.”

I had travelled back in time to my twelve year old self who marvelled his toy car collection and flaunted the finesse of Maserati A6G/54 Spyder Zagato that he found in a packet of noodles. For the next fifteen years, I waited to make it my own. When I finally bagged my Maserati Quattroporte in blue and a Land Rover Range Rover SUV, I was on cloud nine. The night was extremely ecstatic and the long drive had filled me with the kind of joy you experience rarely. Although, the next morning, I had become normal with the idea of that car with me. I loved it, but it didn't give me the same high as the night before. I felt cheated. I stayed with the car for fifteen years, and the car stayed with me only for a night. The pattern repeats when my movies do well or they don't. The happiness and sadness remains from Friday to Sunday, and the colours of the world are normal again on Monday. I think it only takes a few spasms of amazing success to realise that you should not work for a place to arrive at to be happy. It is the excitement of exploring something fresh like never before that keeps me going, and so should anyone who is aspiring excellence. I want everyone to be successful, rich, and famous to know that there is nothing in it.”

“Then what should one do to retain the happiness?” she asked, looking lost in her own contemplations.

“Do what you like to do,” I repeated. “You won’t need to chase happiness. The excitement will live within you for long, and if you are lucky, most days of your life. And one in ten times, or one in hundred times, when you stumble upon something unique or fresh, you will know it was all worth it. And then again, you will keep knowing like you have never known before.”

“Is that a lifelong process? Won’t you rather just want to achieve something and not work hard later?”

“If it feels like hard work, you are not doing it the right way,” I said, now even more excited to share my perspectives. “People stop doing things as a choice someday, I wouldn’t want to do that. I find it arrogant. For if I stop, it means I have explored it all, I know it all, when I know, it probably isn’t possible. You cannot know everything, and if I put it differently, you possibly can know nothing. And more importantly, I am interested in so many things, why would I want to stop? There is so much to learn! A lifetime itself is too short!”

“But, when you keep trying different things, you keep failing, which is undesirable!”

“Exactly! And when you are consistent with your efforts, you keep learning new things. Exactly why mediocre successes should be punished, and excellent failures should be rewarded. It is undesirable because we are conditioned to be careful. Once you take on not being too careful, the world looks different and paves a path for brilliant experiments automatically.”

“Why shouldn’t mediocre successes exist in this world? Not everyone is as skilled or talented as you are!” her eyes

now had a pleading, irritation, an arrangement of self loathing.

“As much as I respect the choices of individuals, imagine, if every human did what they did whole heartedly! They loved their work, inspired others, what could we not achieve? The world would be seven billion times a better place. We could create worlds and systems we had never imagined. The power would lie in the hands of more people, not just a selected few. The grasslands might be richer, skies clearer, technologies simpler, and minds, happier. Even corruption might cease to exist! Because the best of humanity can be beautiful, good, kind, intelligent, creative and amazing. And so, mediocrity being rewarded only makes us lose on excellence as a goal. It can exist, sure. But if it prevails in majority or the powerful, it could be an issue in the long run. The systems will collapse.”

“They are on the verge of collapsing! But isn’t mediocrity relative?”

“It sure is. And that gives us an opportunity to keep working our best to keep creating new definitions of excellence. Rest, evolution will take care.”

“How to- How to go about it? Where do you start?”

“You first identify what you really want to do-”

“How? That’s the major dilemma most of us go through.”

“Try different things. Explore what intrigues you. Keep reflecting on whether you really like something or you are just pretending to like it.”

“What if you are not good at it?”

“If you really enjoy it, you will become good at it.”

“Okay-what next?”

“Have courage to back it, and then, be extremely excited about it. Follow these three steps and everything will work out.”

“And what about Money? Recognition? Politics.”

“Money only matters until a point.”

“Yes but to reach that point--”

“You don’t usually need it in bundles always. If you do, make money and do what you want, or do what you want and make money.”

“But what if we lose ourselves in the process?”

“Be aware of the process and yourself. Keep reflecting. You won’t.”

I felt like a counsellor. I was giving plain and obvious answers to everything while in my head, a hundred thoughts, doubts, questions rose like a firebolt. I felt like I was pretending to know answers, when I clearly did not. Such certainty in the world seems to be the scariest thing I had ever come across. It first happened when I walked into my school for the first time. In my house, I could say anything, everything, and I was not expected to make sense. In the classrooms though, you always had to make sense, even when nothing makes sense to you. You learned to pretend.

“Wow, You seem to have an answer to everything.” she said.

“I don’t, that’s the point,” I said, a little distracted with a pinch of disappointment crawling it’s way into my voice.

“Money and fame can never drive a person like you and that’s where the golden heart is built,” she said, her eyes locked onto my face and yet creepily staring at an unseen far end. “And yet you have so much money.”

“My manager knows the money I have, I can’t even give you a proper figure. I luckily don’t have to think about it and now I feel stupid trying to justify myself.”

Money had been a big differentiator in my life until nineteen years of age. All my dreams depended on presence or absence of money, with me being powerless in both situations. I had lured myself into money and fame as rewards during the days I acted in Television. Today, when I had enough of it, my eyes didn’t want to look at it much. It wouldn’t keep me awake ten minutes extra at night, or get me out of the bed ten minutes early, and wouldn’t fuel my excitement anymore. Time and discovery changes everything. All we are is a function of time, and we probably should stay aware, what is it that can keep us chasing life in the wildest, darkest of scenarios.

“No, I meant,” she said. “It’s like an inspiration. An example for people to understand why money is only a tiny measure of your practical equation with the world so that you survive. After All, an idea is all that it is. I wonder though, it’s so strange, people want to be the best, and yet let mediocrity thrive like an obvious way of the world, limiting themselves.”

“I think it has much to do with how people are trained to have right answers for everything, when there can be no right or wrong answers, only ways of seeing or doing.

People also tend to be scared of unpredictability and admitting that they don't know something, more to themselves than to others." passion seemed to be back in my eyes. "And as goes the quote, once you know your limits, you become limitless. Although, people tend to estimate their potential, work towards it, and once they achieve something, they fool themselves into believing this is what they really wanted and they stop."

Fudge suddenly emerged with a pounce. After being patted and played with, he quickly examined Mishka and smelled her consistently. One thing I had always been proud of is his ability to be friendly with any stranger in the house and the tendency to shower love insignificantly. It was almost as if he tried to host them in his own unique way. He licked her hand and playfully ran chasing the ball I had asked her to throw. A black Labrador as your housemate is the most liberating feeling in the world. And that is when you also understand, that language is not always needed for communication, and such communication is more empowering, real, and aesthetic.

"He is a happy dog!" she said.

"Yeah, keeps me on my toes," I said, grinning.

"I think you both have the same vibe, As is the master, so is the dog," she smiled back.

"Whether I am like him or he like me, what's the way to know?"

We played with Fudge for a good half an hour. Dancing was the rhythm of life we both shared.

“How do you have so much courage? To say what you want to say, do what you want to do, even as an actor?”

“When one follows one’s dream and knows this is all he or she wants. When there isn’t too much desire nor much fear, in this bell curve, you are exceptionally courageous, with which you can achieve whatever! Put differently, one could say, when you know what you want and why you want it, you don’t scare easily.”

“You are what you are when nothing else matters.”

“Yes! And this doesn’t mean that you are not scared. Yes, feet tremble a little. You make statements or promises that you may later want to prove. You also are aware of the things you should always be scared of. Despite all of this, when you aren’t too fearful and have not much greed, then the courage is phenomenal.”

“You experiment with grammar in the most unusual ways, I have begun liking it! Talking of dreams, what is this dream list of yours?”

“Well- I keep making a list of fifty or more dreams every six months and keep ticking them out.”

“Why?”

“To keep relevance for life, stay productive, and grow.”

Her face lit up and now looked at me with an intrigue and longing. I felt like I had somehow convinced her about the ideas I had been exchanging with her for hours, and she somehow had shed her guard down to look at the world differently, like a spark she had rediscovered, like a childlike memory, like she was now

turning into her own self, like an opinion she did not have words for, like she might slave for hours doing something without caring much about herself because she would be so engrossed, like Shiva had begun growing in her, and it was magic, I could feel it, and within a second, it disappeared, then I knew, it was real.

“I had a bucket list, which I tore down last year, thinking it won’t be possible,” she confessed candidly.

“Well, let’s write a few dreams for you then, if you want,” I suggested.

“Yes!” she quickly passed on her writing pad to me and signalled with her eyebrows for me to write. “It can be anything, right?”

“Anything.”

“Okay, so, first, I want to fly a plane,”

As I wrote down her dreams one after the other, I traversed back to my vast life and times when I had achieved these unimaginable feats. My space training at NASA was one of them. When I walked with 3.5Gs and reality around me was changing drastically, it was tiring to walk only a few steps, but it was so exciting. Subtle and enthralling at the same time. Soon, I had figured out that walking sideways was easier, and when I had been out of the centrifuge and other spaces and been appreciated for my performance, I could take it wholeheartedly. Reflecting back on the moment, so many realisations had crept their way into my head. Some I could put into words, some I still can’t, but one thing became clear, the practise of being in the moment works

even when reality changes its dimensions to a million folds suddenly.

“Skydiving! And umm, learn graphology!”

*I could dream with my eyes open
Sharing them was a scary token
He looked at me with admiration and pride
As if I was already capering over the skies
So genuine, it touched my heart
The trembling feet had found the ground at par
Comfort beseeched my mind after all
I vomited the lights like a shooting star*

*World of dreams
Eyes that steam
Meeting him, you could feel serene*

*What words do I choose
What praises do I use
I flew in the sky
He put wings into my cruise*

*The latency of my pride
Engulfing the energy from his writing and sly smile
An emergent of slow demise
Fear enraging envy in sight*

*Only with time, love shattered travelling closer to my body
An unfulfilled frustration or a hobby
What makes a human so deceitfully strong
What makes him say, "You can, it's your song."*

*The grandness first looks admirable,
The closer you see, more it turns on your hidden scavenger*

*If I could take away the fire in his heart
I could fly like a phoenix, but be left with no heart*

*Stones would turn as I command them to
Paths shall pave and hope shall stay
Before they realise, I had stolen the grave*

*They would know it is impure,
I had killed the man they had known to endure
And my hunger would eat away, the echo of his cure*

*For now I say, I dare to dream
Let me be good, let me be free
In the heart of the heartiest men of spree
Let me come close and not take away the glee*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Education: How you think and make decisions ★

★ ★ ★

“The way you learn is what you learn”

The next morning, I started my day with a mixed workout routine which Mishka also was a part of. We jogged in the morning, exercised, played table tennis and danced. In the three hours of physical liberation, she had participated for thirty minutes, which itself was an accomplishment, as she had mentioned she hardly exercised.

I am not a gym person, just like I am not a classroom person. Although, to stay consistently healthy, I had deterministically compromised a little. I would go to the gym four days a week to burn excess calories and ensure fitness. The rest of the days, I would either go horse riding, or focus a little more on my recent ballet routines.

My most favourite of all regimes has been Wing Chun Kung Fu, a Chinese martial arts and self defense form that utilizes both grappling and striking for specializing in close-range combat. A high intensity Calisthenics workout for an hour and a half, and weapons training for forty five minutes. After having learned Capoeira, I like to sometimes include that in my practises too.

“You are an actor, dancer, amongst several other things, so you are required to do this,” she told me as she took a sip of orange juice.

“I am also a thinker, so I have to do this,” I said. Seeing the confused expression on her face, I added, “The old saying- A healthy mind resides in a healthy body? Besides, when you are in a perfect rhythm with your body, your state of mind is the least of your worries, so I can touch more dimensions in thinking, helps me in acting, learning, and other activities, maybe will help you with writing.”

She looked at me defeated.

“You talk of thinking as the most important thing in the world,” she said.

“Of course,” I replied munching on an almond. “Who are we anyway? Everyday we try to project a personality that we think we are to the world. It’s the way we think, that shows clearly in all we do, and the more number of ways you can think, the more diverse are our undertakings, and the more we grow, which is the ultimate driving force of life, to discover the unknowns!”

“Says a man who can excel at anything he takes up,” she uttered with a smile. “A polymathic disaster!”

“A timely disaster,” I winked.

“Don’t you sometimes think, you are a man of a different time?” She asked, walking towards my study, which I like to call, ‘The Thinking room.’

“Yeah, when contributing to a better world, from the past, when seeking a better world, probably from the future.”

As I mimicked her into the room I saw her drooling over my book collection. Not surprised by her inclinations, I sat back into noticing the writers her hands touched as she moved around. She first caressed a Kahlil Gibran stories collection, ambling towards the works of Milan Kundera, and then smelling the pages of ‘In search of a schrodinger’s cat’.

“Your taste in literature is so diverse, it is almost like many sections of a huge library have been crumbled to form this space,” she uttered with exuberance and sat with Sherlock Holmes puzzles.

“The more ways to look, the better,” I spoke and took out a journal from one of the drawers in the table to cause a distraction. “I write interesting stuff I read in books in these notebooks, I already have five,” she snatched the notebook away and immersed herself in it. Marvelling myself at the feat, I quickly grabbed Sherlock's puzzle book and resumed solving puzzle 185.

After a few minutes, she asked, “What do you like the most about reading?”

“The whole idea of seeing the world with someone else’s eyes! Writers think in your brain for the time that you read. It is like renting your brain to the writer to think

while you read a book. And also, when you read multiple books on a particular subject, you get to know multiple points of views on the same thing, while we inherently still understand only the right and wrong way. Well, usually people think there is only one right way and multiple wrong ways.”

“Don’t you sometimes feel lost in a system like this which has no support for thoughts such as yours?”

“You ask the most random questions,” I replied with a scoff. “I do sometimes, probably, but that’s a journey.”

“No! You don’t understand! I meant, you are an artist, the world isn’t built for you, it’s cruel, and stupid, and then you enter an industry which is worse at being a habitat for an artist when ironically, an artist himself or herself created it,” desperation crept into her voice. “This world is- you broke in but you are still surrounded by- don’t you fear- don’t you-”

I smiled at her. Tears had begun rolling down her eyes again. I had not seen this emotional passion in a person for months now. Probably the two days we had spent together had caused an emotional turmoil in her which she seemed to have trouble coping up with. All I could do or think of was to oblige at her care, love, and concern, no matter how infuriating it occurred to me now. She quickly wrapped her hands around me and let her sobs lighten out. When sitting opposite each other again, I told her- “The world you see is so different from the world I see. I enjoy it with what I can. Sometimes the limits do get me, but mostly, I work my way around them. You should stop pitying me, I am not suffering,

and I am tired of explaining the same over and over again!”

I had suddenly realised that I was opening layers of information to her. A bond of self confession was being created, and the intonation had changed to the one with emotions whirling. Anger, disapproval, admiration, all of it had been pierced through. She was becoming a part of me, and I was allowing it.

“Sorry,” she said nervously.

“It’s not your fault. We are trained to look at the world this way.”

“Doesn’t it bother you?”

“Sometimes. Although, that shouldn’t stop us from living and learning, should it? Besides, our ignorance cannot stop what’s inevitable.”

“You mean like, System collapse, global warming, technological evolution, and human deaths?”

“Yeah, Some of many things.”

“You know what? You should start a school.”

“That’s the plan.”

“Really? How would you build it?”

“You really want to know?”

“Yeah.”

“Well, I am already working on a few aspects through my initiative Sushant4Education. When you look at the current education scenario, there are several factors that need to be taken care of--- The technological changes, emotional capability to deal with the change, accessibility for the same, and career orientation.

The first aspect, technological changes is going to be a primary definer of the same. A decade down the line, it is very much expected of graduates from many disciplines to be well versed with programming principles, just as they are expected to understand English as a language today. This primes the need for children to learn coding as early in life as they can.

Changes that technologies bring are exponential and disruptive, which is counter-intuitive. When these changes occur, we tend to fool ourselves into believing we always knew what the future was going to be like and we are in control of it, when we clearly are not. A fact that cannot be denied is that sixty five percent of kids going to kindergarten this year, if they happen to do a job, will be working on technologies that don't even exist yet. With such uncertainty, being prepared for the future is not possible. And so, what should be taught in the schools today remains an enigma. The real challenge here is that the current education structure doesn't allow the children to accept this fact. The education system not only needs to shape learning processes differently with what already exists, but also with what doesn't.

It is also fair in the current world scenario if not the future change. When you step out into a school, certainty is the first thing you lay your brains on. Facts, history, science, marks, ranks, and obvious credits. You are evaluated based on basic three factors: comprehension; how much can you retain; how much information you can come up with in a stipulated time and try to make sense. Although, when you step into the real world, this

is not the general behaviour of things that come your way. There exist too many unknowns and not being trained in dealing with such situations, you often falter and end up trying to decipher the difference in expectations for a very very long time. And this brings us to the need for training students for emotional intelligence so that they are prepared to deal with the unknowns, not only in the present, but in the future, when the whole knowledge structure will be rebuilt and methods of evaluation will change, technologies to be learnt will have a different approach to logic, and knowledge to be grasped in the world will rise a lot more. It will be counterintuitive. Just like how you learn quantum physics for the first time. The one difference is that in older times, the change was constant, and now, the rate of change is increasing. This poses a bigger challenge.

Being able to handle the climax is just one pickle, to be able to access the climax is another. My focus right now is on Free education. Many individuals claim for it to not be possible, or requiring a great deal of investment and support, I agree to the latter, but I have a firm belief that with the use of a few scientific approaches and mathematical models, it could be possible. In what way, I can still not comment. There could be unexplored ways of education methodologies that have not been tried and tested, but can contribute to being predominant tools for children to be able to acquire any skill of choice for free. To create a structure as such, I currently am studying the possibilities of utilising chaos and game theories, non-

zero sum structures that bio-mimic for the same. It is the time for immediate action, and just because we are restrained with the idea that such global convergence is not possible should not stop us from exploring.

“And then you have the counselling process going on in various schools. You must get a clear idea of the needs of students from there as well,” she added.

“Oh yes, I chose those two counsellors personally, and they are doing a good job so far in making children aware of the numerous career options they might have,” I replied jestingly. “There subsists a myriad of professions one may pursue and it is unfortunate that we have to remain nescient of it all while we are young and can actually do something about it. Anyway, this is just the beginning of the project. There’s still a long way to go.” She removed the glasses that rested on the collar of her T-shirt and perched them around my eyes. “You could be a really cool physics professor!” she said with an amusing smile. I got up, placed my finger in the middle of the spectacles with one hand, holding the book in the other, and began walking around the room dramatically. Her voice struck with laughter and we ended up spending the day expounding on more ideas for the education sector, environmental changes, and discussing various scenarios we could land up in during time travel. We also had a common dream, to paint with Vincent Van Gogh, and for the first time, I was more thrilled to listen to her perspectives than share mine.

*What I see through your eyes and you through mine
Was no different than dark and light
A future you see, of flowers in the backyard
While you speak of microchips and ships in the dockyard
How reverberating is the sound of your closest chains
They run blooded deep down in your veins
You speak science in a language I know
Everything is fiction, now let it go...*



Judgement call before the judgement



“If forming a majority and earning popularity were the necessary criteria to validate what you know is the only truth, the lonely successful sperm who knew the rules of the ultimate game and made you you, would have ironically given up.”

The fourth day, I had planned a bicycle trip to keep our conversations entertained. Mishka, who had been not just disagreeable, but rebellious to the idea, was coerced to stand in the parking space at six in the morning. The sun was rising up, turning the town orange, not more than her ears.

“If you are going to keep me off work for seven days, you need to give me space to pursue some activities like this,” I told her. “Conversations will also happen differently with the change of scenes.”

“I- don’t know how to ride a bicycle,” she confessed hesitantly. It is situations like this when I often end up surprising myself. My reactions are unpredictable and different every time. Her hands shivered, eyes dropped, and body sunk in stature. My first instinct was to question her which I ignored. She looked ashamed of not knowing something apparently most children learn during their childhood.

“That’s okay,” I said. “Learn it now!”

Her eyes faced me with disbelief. Still awkward, she nodded her head slightly with a faint smile. After making her hop onto the bike and giving her a few instructions, I let her pedal through the empty street. Her hands shivered again, eyes unwilling to see up, and legs behaved uncontrollably. I stopped her and said, “I am not judging you, you yourself are.”

“I- don’t-want-to do this,” she said.

“Then why did your eyes brighten when I suggested you could learn it now?” I asked. “Look, you don’t know how to ride a bicycle, big deal! I can see why you feel so insecure, but it really doesn’t matter. Who said that you can’t learn it now? Or it makes you any less of a human than others? I know people who can hardly dream of putting words on paper like you do. C’mon now!”

“You really don’t think it is a big deal?” She looked at me for assurance.

“Not unless you want to make it one.” I glanced at her and her lips curved again forming a delicate smile on her face instantly. “I am sure that for a bright girl and

dreamer like you, there must be a valid reason for not having this skill. On the pedal!”

“Just the fear of being judged,” she said while mounting the bike again, struggling to balance.

“Interesting,” I mocked with absurd humour holding the bike from the back with a single hand.

“Don’t you sometimes fear of not being accepted? I mean, most of us do, but you. You are different.” she asked midway.

“I do, sometimes, but then I get logical and see how little it really matters and get myself back,” I replied, calm as a boulder now, as she had learned to pedal without any support and we headed back to the garage to get my bicycle.

“I think of strange thoughts to get myself back to my zone,” she said enthusiastically, now that she was controlling and balancing the bike better.

“Like what?”

“Like how ninety percent of the time, the world is wrong or doing stupid things, and only ten percent of the time it makes sense. And so, to act like most of the world should be really stupid. Unacceptance is a key to know you are unique and on the right path. Also, if the majority of the world was on the so-called ‘right’ path, then there wouldn’t be a million kinds of sufferings today.”

“That’s one way of looking. Behavioral economics explains it with subtlety. We tend to believe what the majority believes is right, but that’s illogical. Just because a false statement is said by more people than the truth, doesn’t make it the truth. Probably that’s why we should

not be with the majority when trying to do something unique.”

“Yeah, that’s more subtle and focussed.”

“Or probably the other way around in terms of being focussed.”

“Change of lens, change of perspective.”

“Now you are getting it!”

We cycled together for the next two hours, in which Mishka fell off her bicycle three times and scratched herself but giggled everytime. It always happened when she fast-tracked to keep up with my pace. Soon, she stopped falling and accelerated with grace. Later in the journey, we sat on a random footpath staring at the sky where the clouds had blocked all sunlight pleasing Mishka a lot. The peace only existed for a few minutes though. In no time, I was discovered, and around ten to fifteen people, who regarded themselves as my fans, had come over for pictures, autographs, and beautiful things to say. I have always cherished such moments. It is almost as if with every request, every touch, every word, love gets passed on inside my body and the beauty of it energises every cell within it. Like a million hands making you travel the length and breadth of the universe with the softness in the skin of a mother. A kind of magic that is only meant to exist in imaginations, but fortunately, in reality for me. Soon, we both rode back to the house and more conversations popped up.

“How can you carry so much love within you?” she asked. “I sometimes feel I have lost the ability to love, or I never had it.”

“What’s wrong?” I asked, involuntarily casting an empathetic glance at her.

“How did you know I was--Anyway--There is no excuse to have no love in my heart.”

“I am not saying you have no love in your heart. Had you no love, you wouldn’t bear with me for four complete days following your passion and stories. You are just unaware of the love.”

“And how does that work?”

“Sometimes, when something unexpected and unfair supervenes in our lives and most people in the world occur like they are out to harm you, it becomes more than very difficult to be able to love anyone, as they are a part of the same world. If you give it time, thought and wisdom to sink in, the kindness and humility will soon be visible to you.”

Silence fell in her voice and she did not speak a word until we reached the garage. While we parked and went through the tools and supplies in the shed, thunderous rains made us sit and wait inside. Sitting on the boxes, getting hit by little sprinkles of water that somehow made their way through the opening, we celebrated the moment quietly.

“This is so beautiful!” exclaimed Mishka suddenly. She got up, rushed out of the shed, and screamed lines of songs that sounded muffled from where I sat. It reminded me of the first romantic rain sequence I had ever acted in a TV serial. The show was called Pavitra Rishta (Sacred Ties). Such romance falls dull in reality, which is very hard to make peace with at times.

“You know, you could easily be called insane at most gatherings in the world,” I ridiculed.

“You think I am insane?” she asked, ill-humouredly.

“Not me, no,” I replied. “Creativity is often misunderstood to great bounds by most of society. Just a stupid thought, ignore it.”

“I would rather be insane than stupid anyway.”

We both smiled at each other as if understanding the reference of the sentence clearly and yet unable to manifest a scenario or verbal construct in the brain. It was abstract and yet so precise.

“Are you able to accept the dark in you still?” she asked, randomly making her way into the shed again.

“When I get to know about it, yes,” I mutter in a hushed voice.

“I feel guilty about the darkness,” she grinned. “As if I am responsible for all the wrong in the world. Like I don’t deserve to be alive.”

“That’s too much pressure for a twenty four year old,” I said.

“I have been the same since I was a kid,” she said dreamily, staring at the clouds, reminding me of numerous movies I have been a part of. It almost occurred to me that all this while, I have been talking to a girl, most of whose life has been shaped by imaginary stories. Movies, books, her personal creations. It made me lose a part of her speech and I just stared at the beautiful world she thought she belonged to, away from reality, yet equally dangerous. “Always scared that I am not kind enough, because I was always blamed to be

unkind or selfish, not recognizing the fear behind this moral obligation. And so, I turned into a better person over and over again. Kindness seeped in, the urge of doing good to people crept over, but now, I don't want to be nice to people. The will keeps fading away, and I do not understand what is wrong with me.”

I took her hand in mine and said, “It is maybe because you have been doing it for wrong reasons. You were kind because of guilt or societal pressure or proving something or probably just because you wanted to be like someone. Once you find your reason, and it makes sense to spread love and joy, you can get back to it, and if it doesn't, you can continue living the same way without any guilt.”

“But doesn't that make me evil? When I even question being kind like this? I have been selfish all of my life and good deeds are just a medium of proving something And-” a tear trickled down her eye.

“The world is not divided between good and evil. And you should be proud of yourself that you are able to think so deep for yourself. One often argues - why should I be kind when the world is not to me? Some might say- You must be kind for the exact same reason. Some might argue- death is the ultimate nature, why should you bother? Some will talk about religion, some will speak logic from different theories, but it is the heart, the wish of the heart that guides you really. Empathy is instinctive, but a lot goes in the background.”

Her eyes had all of a sudden exploded into a labyrinth of virtual dilemmas when she looked back at me.

“Thank you, you are kind,” she said plainly. “When you said, I will find my reason and then I will do it wholeheartedly, is that the ‘why’ you were talking about the other day? We should know the ‘why’ of doing something so that the end result hardly matters?”

“Yes.”

“And it can be anything.”

“ANYTHING.”

“Trivial or grand.”

“Stupid or wise.”

“What is your ‘why’ of acting?”

“I get to hide behind some exciting characters and say what I want to say without being judged.”

“That’s funny.”

“Thankfully! I was worried. What if you said it was wise? I would have to go back to introspecting.”

Mirth echoed in the shed clinging itself onto the walls to savour the taste of the wind of the moment. The rain stopped and we clambered up the house. After being cleaned up and filling ourselves with delicious breakfast, I braced myself for another streak of unnerving conversations. In my belittling interests in great speeches about myself, I was found off-guard once more as I heard Mishka speak from the back, while I sat in a chair, my mind wrapped up in a book.

“In loneliness, the lonely one eats himself; in a crowd, the many eat him. Now choose.” She walked towards me with my notebook in her hands, in which were scribbled some intriguing quotes I collected from the books I read.

“Friedrich Nietzsche- He also says- loneliness is one thing, solitude another.”

“I see you are enjoying the quotes,” I said, inadvertently ignoring her prose.

“Are you lonely?”

“I am a loner. There is a difference.”

“We are all lonely.”

“One may feel lonely at several times in his or her life. That doesn’t make it the truth of life. It comes and goes. I am more alone than I am lonely. As of now. Can you please leave me alone?” I forgot to sound polite for the first time in four days.

“Huh?”

“For a couple of days, if possible?”

“Did I say anything wrong?”

“No. Just need my alone time.”

“Sure, I will schedule an interview in two days hence.”

“Thank you.” I did not look at her or even away from her, but continuously at fudge, who had arrived two minutes ago and was now bored peering at me and licking my hands, so we set out to play.

*Today I met the monsters in my mind cave
They knew you better and bowed to your faith
As I stood watching the ravenous beasts
Your hands touched, forming a fiery sheath*

*And so you did it again
You were more like me and I felt no pain
Yet you weren't me
And chose to stay awake with a pride so vain*

*You let me follow the calling of my dreams
And so I shall always let you be me in the wildest screams.*



Rolling...Marker...Action!

“I want to be part of films where I can take risks. My agenda as an actor is to learn and grow everyday.”

“I should not know how to do it, so that it keeps me engaged. And when you consistently do things you don’t know, more chances of you failing than succeeding. Failure is subjective.”

“I feel more alive when I act and that is the only reason for me to work.”

For the next two days, Mishka kept out of my hair. She would stay inside the ‘thinking room’ most part of the day and would go out to attend to her work only during evenings. I had engrossed myself in activities to keep away from having to speak much. Horse riding, reading, workout, dance, bike rides, video games were just a few of them. The third day, while I sat stroking fudge’s hair in my bedroom, Mishka arrived with a writing pad, just

like day one. “It will only be simple interview questions today,” she had informed me. I courteously sat with a smile on my face, cross-handed, and with an energy that I could not trace the origin of. She then revealed a chocolate out of the front pocket of her jeans and when she offered it to me, in the most trivial, dramatic, old-fashioned way, I felt complete and exhilarated. “That’s how I lure kids into talking to me, you know,” she chuckled.

Mishka: How do you prepare for a character before a movie?

Sushant: Well, it obviously starts with the character sketch some five pages long and if there are any significant skills that the character possesses. I also do some tests for the character. I sit with my team and determine the scope of research that we can delve in to understand the character. The main focus is to deliver the best on camera, but in the process, I also aim at experiencing the most of it, so I also am inculcating new skills with every character I play and multiply the experience by thousands.

Mishka: Can you share some character preparation stories apart from theoretical studying?

Sushant: Before I shot for Kedarnath, I had redecorated my room completely so that when I go for my shooting as Mansoor, my character, I would feel at home. For

Detective Byomkesh Bakshy, I wrote similarities and dissimilarities between the character and me and eventually dealt with it all during the shooting. And because the film was based in 1943, I had stopped using my phone or internet to hardwire myself into the era of the character. I also stopped talking to my family for a while as the character, Byomkesh, had no family. For M.S. Dhoni, I learnt about the man and obviously inculcated the cricketing skill for ten months. And apart from taking character tests together with M.S. Dhoni, I prepared an MCQ questionnaire for him with 50 hypothetical questions among other things. I think, for every movie it has been an adventure. I had started learning guitar for one, trained for spacewalk at NASA, etc.

Mishka: What makes you go through this intensive process every time?

Sushant: I am excited about every movie I sign. There is an element of exploration and personal experience. I believe in excellence. However can it be attainable, one should strive. Besides, I know why I act, so the passion never dies. And as actors we are supposed to do this. We are supposed to put this energy.

Mishka: Why are you an actor?

Sushant: It started with the magical idea of expressing myself as I said before. I can hide behind these characters

and say something and see the audience get affected by it. It also became a tool to let myself out. Now, along with that, it is also an empowering method to experience so much and explore so much of me and the world around. Everytime you play a character, you learn something new, and it doesn't feel like hard work. It is pure magic.

Mishka: You dropped out of engineering college before your final year, what made you take that risk to pursue acting?

Sushant: I had realised acting is what I really want to do, so it did not make sense to waste another year of my life invested in an engineering college where I was neither contributing nor getting contributed. I was anyway found more in dance classes or theatre practices than the college premises. Also, if you keep dreaming for a long time and don't act on your dreams, they begin to occur as fake. It is only desirable to act NOW.

Mishka: But you could have still pursued theatre alongside your engineering, it was just a year more. It was a practical choice and you could have still been an actor.

Sushant: I don't know how it would have been. And it is very logical when you see it backwards and analyse, but when you are out there making these decisions, not knowing what the future would be like, and just

relentlessly running towards what you really want, logic doesn't have much place. I guess that is what makes passion and perseverance so special.

Mishka: Okay. But you still are an intellectual, not stupid. There must have been something that boosted your confidence to pursue acting completely which made you take the decision of dropping out.

Sushant: Many things influenced me, yes. Although, I cannot really say what exactly made me do what I did, I can recall a few experiences.

Sushant: While I was doing theatre with Barry John, and at the end of the diploma course, when he distributed certificates, all my batchmates had secured a 'C'. While I anticipated a 'B', I was surprised to receive an 'A' grade. He had told me to take acting seriously, and so I did, because I wanted to.

Sushant: I had convinced myself that if I can be in top one percent of something I didn't really like to do (as I had secured a 7th rank in DCE entrance, and good ranks in other engineering entrances as well) then I can definitely be in the top one percent of something I really like to do.

Sushant: Shiamak had also told me once that there is something in me because of which he kept me in the first line even when I was not one of his finest dancers.

Sushant: Being so close to bollywood while background dancing was also a source of inspiration, for you saw it all happen in front of you, and it was believable.

Sushant: In the end, it was the gut feeling they all talk about. A leap of faith. A jump beyond logic and anatomy.

Mishka: Would you say that all these incidents made sense to you only because you were already seeking acting?

Sushant: Oh yes! I firmly believe that 'You get what you are'. And you only see what you expect to see. As scientific as it is, this is how dreamers move ahead. They only see what makes sense to them for fulfilling their dreams.

Mishka: Any acting tips or profound experiences you would pass on? And a few major things you learned during the journey as an actor?

Sushant: Observe and listen, all the time. Acting is eighty percent listening.

Sushant: In most scenes that I have done really well, I don't know what I did. And so, it is a realisation, that all your preparation is about what not to do, it enables you to do what you couldn't imagine you could do and

surprise yourself. You should prepare the best you can for the same reason.

Sushant: Even the characters act all the time, like general people. When you are able to explore that depth as an actor, knowing that your character is also acting, it gets really exciting and brings out excellent surprises.

Sushant: It is important for you to feel like you have an authority to play a character. If you can convince yourself that you are the character, nothing better. The confidence is striking.

Sushant: The nuances of acting come in slowly, don't give up when things get hard. Challenge yourself and keep learning and exploring if you ever want to improve as an actor and if you are lucky, as a human being.

Sushant: And one important realisation is that, when an actor acts, it is not all a lie. There are times when the actor is saying the truth, he is himself, and it is also acting. It is the beauty of it, one must embrace it.

Mishka: Very well, what was your best role ever?

Sushant: All of them. I enjoyed them thoroughly.

Mishka: When did you feel like you had finally attained success?

Sushant: I have been successful from the day I packed my bag from the engineering college and made the choice to pursue full-time dancing and acting.

Mishka: When was the first time you realised you want to act for the rest of your life?

Sushant: It is difficult to point at that one moment, but when I stood at the stage performing for the first time with Barry John, It was liberating, I really was communicating, and unlike dance, I was also using words, it felt great.

Mishka: Dance or acting? Why?

Sushant: Dance and then acting. To act, you still need words and language to communicate most of the time, but with dance, emotions and ideas are just pure and serene. Words contaminate feelings, so dance precedes for me in expression. In fact, for every character that I play, I look at it from a perspective of a dancer. I have a rhythm for every character I play. I get the rhythm, I get the character. So I have a playlist for every movie I act in.

Mishka: Are you still an introvert?

Sushant: Yes, I am. Now I am ok with the fact, I am aware, so it doesn't impede at all. I am shy and I am fine with it.

Mishka: Do you think Nepotism in the Hindi film industry is a constant struggle for you?

Sushant: I cannot personally complain. Every movie I have done till now are the ones I really wanted to do and had the liberty to choose, so it doesn't bother me much.

Mishka: But you can't turn a blind eye to the fact that it is prevalent?

Sushant: Yes. Nepotism is there and it is everywhere, not just in the Hindi Film Industry. You can't do anything about it. Nepotism can coexist and nothing will happen, but at the same time, if you deliberately don't allow right talents to come up, then there is a problem. If mediocrity thrives, then the whole structure of the industry will collapse one day.

Mishka: What if you stop getting movies with the way you approach your craft?

Sushant: I am very professional and dedicated to my work, so I don't see it happening anytime soon. Anyway, if I stop getting films, I will go back to TV. If that doesn't work out, then I will do theatre again, if not, then I will do Street plays. I will be equally excited. I will open a canteen in Film city, buy a 5D camera and shoot short films myself in which I will be a solo actor. Or maybe something else. For an actor passionate for his craft, the medium of delivery doesn't matter. And there is this

secret I don't tell many people, but I would also want to go farm in Coorg if I don't act in the movies anymore.

Mishka: Why did you train yourself to be ambidextrous in various skills?

Sushant: It is about the neural connections between the left and right brain which always comes handy, because you will always have two intuitions. One slightly more mathematical, analytical, and one slightly more creative.

Mishka: Why did you agree to this interview?

Sushant: You seemed very excited about it and I was humbled by your gestures.

Mishka: How come you trusted me?

Sushant: I didn't.

Mishka: So do you allow any random girl to stay at your place for seven days only because she has been on your chase for a year and your security investigations approved?

Sushant: I did trust you.

Mishka: Good.

*When I dive into you
Oceans I shall find wrapped around a sea of solitude
Depths of an atom, in the range of watery magnitude*

*You act like the world you don't know, contradiction is the
truth*

*Love is embodied as laughter, and curiosity as a tool
You study my presence like a chimpanzee with a magnifying
glass*

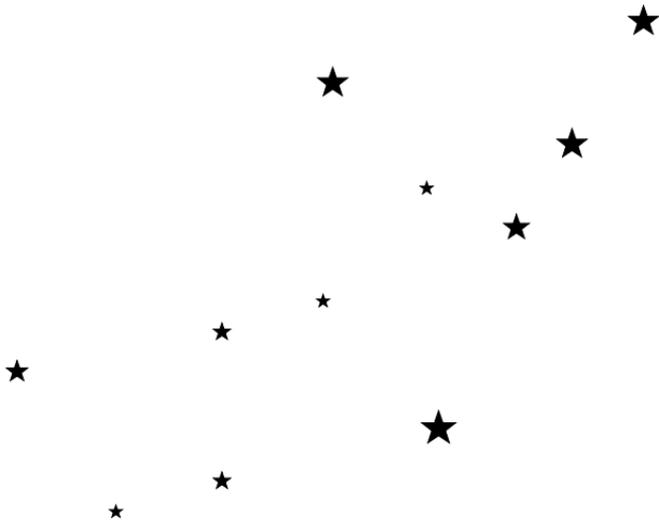
While I see a saint, you see a shield of broken stars

*I was warned to not be around an artist
They sense and smell your thoughts quickly like a mentalist
You, though, flowed with me in the journey of restless
anomaly,*

*A fiery desire to be seen, seized my identity
How would I ever be able to tell the world who you are?
My, yours, theirs, everyone's shining, shooting, exploding
star...*

*When the world is a black hole, inexistent, yet scarring all
hours*

*Ignorant, killing itself, and darkening itself from your light,
oh my heart! Oh, oh my heart!*



Reality is, exactly, what you think it is

|>

Reality, what's that?

“Somewhere between neurons and narratives, I was born, lived, dreamt and died.”

A week had passed, sunlight had reappeared lighting up the gardens, and the last breakfast with Mishka was served. Her departure was planned in the afternoon, and it was decided for us to have another small conversation before her leave. She had picked out three of her favorite books from my library and had packed her belongings right after breakfast.

“Can I see a thing for which I don't have a word for? If one uses the language to form new questions, she could

bend reality,” Mishka read out of her mobile screen as she strolled around the lines of my room.

“You stalk my twitter handle on a daily basis now,” I said amusingly.

“Reality is an illusion,” she looked dreamily away.

“The reality you see allows you to say reality is an illusion, which in fact occurs as a paradox,” I say.

“Imagine we had these brilliant words for experiences we have never had, new words taken from the future to the present, how cool would it be!”

“Indeed,”

“Or if the words die out in the future, and we become ignorant? Like George Orwell predicted? We become relatively unconscious?”

“We already are relatively unconscious.”

Her eyebrows adjusted themselves into a frown turning her face into a questioning gaze.

“Well,” I explained. “Say several thousand years ago, I might have been sure that I could communicate with you without words, but I had some confusion. Language got invented to decrease the confusion, but did not eradicate it, adding to mental constructs.”

“Makes sense, only philosophically though, the idea of this abstraction about reality,” she replied, confused.

“No it’s science. Although they both occur to me the same. Alright, look, You are looking at me speaking. My lips are moving and sound is coming out of my larynx. It might appear to you that both things are happening at the same time, but they aren’t. Speed of light is much greater than the speed of sound. Our brain makes these

adjustments all the time without us knowing, creating a reality around us. There is a huge gap between what we know and what we think we know.”

Mishka, who had been standing throughout the conversation, now fell onto the bed lost in her vivid thoughts.

“How does death occur to you?” she asked, not facing towards me. “You have seen it closely.”

“It occurs to me like life, mysterious,” I replied after a short pause.

“The grief of death is a personal experience, which has nothing to do with death. You had once said, you were fearful of death.”

“In a totally irrelevant context. It was just an imagination. When I sleep, I don’t know who I am, that probably happens during death as well, that’s why.”

“So you aren’t scared of dying?”

Her voice was now trembling with subtle ferocity.

“It’s inevitable, it makes no sense to be scared.” I responded, moving a little forward to get a glimpse of her expressions.

“And are you fine with the grief it brings for you?” she voluntarily turned towards me and grinned effortlessly, the quiver in her voice disappearing.

“The grief is also inevitable.”

“You mean you have no control over your feelings.”

“The one thing that my mother’s departure taught me was you don’t control things around you, if that’s what you meant to ask. I know how to handle my mind.

Whether we have free will, is an irrelevant proposition here.”

“Anything that your mother said that has stayed with you?”

“Many things. She told me that your life is the stories you tell yourself. So I choose to tell myself stories that matter. Good ones. Great ones.”

“Ok.”

She got up and left the room, leaving me brooding over my own words, only to return fifteen minutes later with two glasses of pomegranate juice. “Cheers” we said at the clank of the glasses. We engulfed the juices instantly.

“What if after you die, you wake up in a different life, like it was all a dream?” she uttered abruptly.

“That’s pretty much how I would like it to be, like Inception.” I said indifferently.

“You adore Vincent Van Gogh,” she put another random question to the table. “Did you know how he died?”

“Shot in the stomach.”

“Yes, but nobody knows who shot him. The popular opinion is that he shot himself, which hardly seems true, and yet, most people in the world believe this notion. He took the responsibility for it.”

“What’s your point?”

“My point is, if you are killed here today, people might end up saying the same about you,” she quickly took out a gun from the inside of her boots and pointed it at me.

“What are you--?” I looked at her with shocking madness.

“You need to die,” she spoke in an agitated voice.

“Mishka, calm down, this can be sorted,” I say, putting both of my hands up in the air, calculating an intelligent move to capture the gun, but before I could make a move, she dropped the gun herself. “What do you think you were doing? Besides, you do know I am trained in Martial Arts and Combats.”

“Yes, and so are they!” she grinned again, this time with a gruesome flavour in her facial expression. Five men appeared behind her. They looked like goons. One of them had a green coloured stole wrapped around his hand. I continuously calculated my escape measures and fighting possibilities. If I was to die today, I had to die fighting, the best fight I ever had. If I was to live, then I would have an exciting story to tell.

“Why?”

“Because you are too good in many aspects and it is not working for us. Believe me, I am doing you a favour.”

“I don’t want your favour.”

“In this world, you will have to accept the favour. Willingly or unwillingly. You have been threatened for months and that made no difference to you. Might as well lose it now.”

“The world doesn’t belong to you!”

“You have Shiva in you.”

One of them took a plunge on me and I dodged. Ready to fight, ready to live, and ready to die.

*Eyes explode, hearts implore
Winds don't blow, breathing slows
When a good man dies
A fleeting life cries*

*Sirens run, in silent huts
Bullets fall, dogs on streets crawl
When a good man fights
No killings tonight*

*What gifts you gained, what dollars canned
A vivid colour in the world fading in your chains
Lightning strikes, Children cried
Pages on the notebooks left blank and dried
The sun freezed without light
A pleading arrived
A breath hoping to exist lost it's last strike
Tears wet the aprons with pride
When a good man died
When greatness fell on sight.*

*Hopes deafened the carcass of loving sighs
Lunar eclipses lost their fright
Fear mongered in the souls so bright
When a good man was killed walking tonight*

And yet...
Sushant Singh Rajput
LIVES
With us
FOREVER.....

**THE NEXT SEGMENT PICKS OUT ARTEFACTS
FROM SUSHANT'S 'LIFE' BACKPACK**

A glimpse into his library

- The Beginning of Infinity *by* David Deustch
- The Ancient Secret of the Flower of Life *by* Drunvalo Melchizedek
- Stealing Fire: How Silicon Valley, the Navy SEALs, and Maverick Scientists Are Revolutionizing the Way We Live and Work *by* Steven Kotler and Jamie Wheal
- Chaos and Fractals: New Frontiers of Science *by* Petigen, Jurgens & Saupe
- Heraclitean Fire: Sketches from a Life Before Nature *by* Erwin Chargaff
- Brain Rules *by* John Medina
- The Emotion Machine *by* Marvin Minsky
- Transcend: Nine Steps to Living Well Forever *by* Ray Kurzweil
- Nausea *by* Jean-Paul Sartre
- The Physicist & the Philosopher - Einstein, Bergson, and the Debate That changed our Understanding of Time *by* Jimena Canales
- The Selfish Gene *by* Richard Dawkins
- Eighteen Best Stories *by* Edgar Allan Poe
- Leonardo da Vinci: The Marvellous Works of Nature and Man *by* Martin Kemp
- Tribe of Mentors: Short Life Advice from the Best in the World *by* Timothy Ferriss
- Outliers *by* Malcom Gladwell
- The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable *by* Nassim Nicholas Taleb
- Structures: Or Why Things Don't Fall Down *by* J. E. Gordon
- When Breath Becomes Air *by* Paul Kalanithi
- Norwegian Wood *by* Haruki Murakami
- Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind *by* Yuval Noah Harari
- A Short History of Almost Everything *by* Bill Bryson
- From Bacteria to Bach and Back *by* Daniel Dennett

- The Secret of the Highly Creative Thinker: How To Make Connections Others *by* Dorte Nielson and Sarah Thurber
- Lord of the flies *by* William Golding
- Zero to One: Notes on Startups, or How to Build the Future *by* Peter Thiel and Blake Masters
- Cat's Cradle *by* Kurt Vonnegut
- The Unbearable Lightness of Being *by* Milan Kundera
- Metamorphosis *by* Kafka
- Collected Works of Kahlil Gibran *by* Kahlil Gibran
- The God Delusion *by* Richard Dawkins
- Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive *by* Jared Diamond
- The Information: A History, a Theory, a Flood *by* James Gleick
- Chaos: The Making of a New Science *by* James Gleick
- In Search of Schrodinger's Cat *by* John Gribbin
- Undeniable: How Biology Confirms our Intuition That Life is Designed *by* Douglas Axe
- Hooked: How to Build Habit-Forming Products *by* Nir Eyal
- The Blind Watchmaker *by* Richard Dawkins
- The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology *by* Ray Kurzweil
- Psychology of Intelligent Analysis *by* Richards J. Heuer
- Godel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid *by* Douglas R. Hofstadter
- Mathematics That Power Our World, The: How Is It Made? *By* Gilles Lamothe and Joseph Khoury
- The Undefeated Mind: On the Science of Constructing an Indestructible Self *by* Alex Lickerman
- Hands-on Machine learning with scikit learn, keras, and Tensorflow: Concepts, Tools, and Techniques to Build Intelligent Systems *by* Aurelion Geron
- The Psychopath Test: A Journey Through the Madness Industry *by* Jon Ronson
- Post office *by* Charles Bukowski
- Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman! *by* Richard P Feynman
- Mortality *by* Christopher Hitchens

- One Hundred Years of Solitude *by* Gabriel Garcia Marquez
- The Secret Principles of Genius *by* I.C. Robledo
- DC Comics Encyclopedia
- Thomas' Calculus *by* George B Thomas
- Guns, Gems, and Steel *by* Jared Diamond
- Galileo's Error: Foundations for a New Science of Consciousness *by* Philip Goff
- The Stranger *by* Albert Camus
- Life is Elsewhere *by* Milan Kundera
- Jailbird *by* Kurt Vonnegut
- Breakfast of Champions *by* Kurt Vonnegut
- The Power of Moments: Why Certain Experiences Have Extraordinary Impact *by* Chip Heath and Dan Heath
- Abundance: The Future is Better Than You Think *by* Peter Diamandis and Steven Kotler
- The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History *by* Elizabeth Kolbert
- Brilliant Blunders: From Darwin to Einstein - Colossal Mistakes by Great Scientists That Changed Our Understanding of Life and the Universe *by* Mario Livio
- I Contain Multitudes: The Microbes Within Us and a Grander View of Life *by* Ed Yong
- SuperFreakonomics: Global Cooling, Patriotic Prostitutes, and Why Suicide Bombers Should Buy Life Insurance *by* Stephen J. Dubner and Steven Levitt
- The Immortal life of Henrietta Lacks *by* Rebecca Skloot
- The Angry Chef: Bad Science and the Truth About Healthy Eating *by* Anthony Warner
- The Plague *by* Albert Camus
- Laughable loves *by* Milan Kundera
- Timekeepers: How the World Became Obsessed with Time *by* Simon Garfield
- The Sherlock Holmes Complete Puzzle Collection: Over 200 devilishly difficult mysteries *by* Tim Dedopulos
- Done: The Secret Deals That are Changing our World *by* Jacques Peretti
- The Big Picture: On the Origins of Life, Meaning, and The Universe Itself *by* Sean B. Carroll and Sean M Carroll
- Critical Path *by* Buckminster Fuller

- Deviate: The Science of Seeing Differently *by* Beau Lotto
- Rising Strong *by* Brené Brown
- Turing's Cathedral *by* George Dyson
- The Inevitable: Understanding the 12 Technological Forces That Will Shape Our Future *by* Kevin Kelly
- Is Your Neighbour a Zombie?: Compelling Philosophical Puzzles That Challenge Your Beliefs *by* Jeremy Stangroom
- 21 Lessons for the 21st Century *by* Yuval Noah Harari
- Deep Thinking: Where Machine Intelligence Ends and Human Creativity Begins *by* Garry Kasparov
- Brando: The Biography *by* Peter Manso
- Creativity Inc.: Overcoming the Unseen Forces That Stand in the Way of True Inspiration *by* Ed Catmull
- This Explains Everything: Deep, Beautiful and Elegant Theories of How the World Works *by* John Brockman
- How to read a film *by* James Monaco
- An Actor Prepares *by* Konstantin Stanislavski
- Charles Bargue: Drawing Course *by* Gerald M. Ackerman and Graydon Parrish
- Hitchcock *by* François Truffaut
- What I've Learned: The Meaning of Life According to 65 Artists, Athletes, Leaders & Legends *by* Esquire
- The Elegant Universe *by* Brian Greene
- Art in Minutes *by* Susie Hodge
- Social Engineering: The Art of Human Hacking *by* Christopher Hadnagy and Gildan Media
- Invisible Influence: The Hidden Forces that Shape Behavior *by* Jonah Berger
- It's Not About the Shark: How to Solve Unsolvable Problems *by* David Niven
- Art: The Definitive Visual Guide *by* Andrew Graham Dixon
- Kazan on Directing *by* Elia Kazan
- What Everybody is Saying *by* Joe Navarro
- The Tao of Physics *by* Fritjof Capra
- Way of the Wolf: Straight Line Selling: Master the Art of Persuasion, Influence, and Success *by* Jordan Belfort
- Talent is Overrated: What Really Separates World-Class Performers from Everybody Else *by* Geoff Colvin

- Junk DNA: A Journey Through the Dark Matter of the Genome *by* Nessa Carey
- Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies *by* Nick Bostrom
- 10% Human: How Your Body's Microbes Hold the Key to Health and Happiness *by* Alanna Collen
- No Acting, Please *by* Eric Morris and Joan Hotchkis
- The Outsider *by* Albert Camus
- Behavioural Economics Saved my Dog: Life Advice For The Imperfect Human *by* Dan Ariely
- Selected Poems of Pablo Neruda *by* Pablo Neruda
- The Old man and the sea *by* Ernest Hemmingway
- The Tell-Tale Brain *by* V.S. Ramchandran
- The Moral Animal: Why We Are, the Way We Are: The New Science of Evolutionary Psychology *by* Robert Wright
- The Social Animal *by* Elliot Aronson
- Jonathan Livingston Seagull *by* Richard Bach
- How to Stay Alive: The Ultimate Survival Guide for Any Situation *by* Bear Grylls
- Nonlinear dynamics and Chaos *by* Steven Strogatz
- At Home in the Universe *by* Stuart Kauffman
- The Tale of the Duelling Neurosurgeons *by* Sam Kean
- Film Directing, Shot by Shot: visualizing from concept to screen *by* Steven D. Katz
- Cinematography for Directors: A Guide for Creative Collaboration *by* Jacqueline B. Frost
- What an Art Director Does: An Introduction to Motion Picture Production Design *by* Ward Preston
- The Technique of the Professional Make-Up Artist *by* Vincent J-R. Kehoe
- The Makeup Artist Handbook: Techniques for Film, Television, Photography, and Theatre *by* Gretchen Davis and Mindy Hall
- Avid Editing: A Guide for Beginning and Intermediate Users *by* Sam Kauffmann
- Leonardo da Vinci *by* Walter Isaacson
- The Evolution of Everything: How New Ideas Emerge *by* Matt Ridley

- Life on the Edge: The Coming of Age of Quantum Biology *by* Jim Al-Khalili and Johnjoe McFadden
- Your Brain at Work: Strategies for Overcoming Distraction, Regaining Focus, and Working Smarter All Day Long *by* David Rock
- Critique of Judgement *by* Immanuel Kant
- The Science of Secrecy *by* Simon Singh
- Inside Chanakya's Mind: Aanvikshiki and the Art of Thinking *by* Radhakrishnan Pillai
- Weird Maths: At the Edge of Infinity and Beyond *by* Agnijo Banerjee and David J. Darling
- The Art of Strategy: A Game Theorist's Guide to Success in Business & Life *by* Avinash Dixit
- Pre-Suasion: A Revolutionary Way to Influence and Persuade *by* Robert Cialdini
- Thinking in Bets: Making Smarter Decisions When You Don't Have All the Facts *by* Annie Duke
- How India Works: Making Sense of a Complex Corporate Culture *by* Aarti Kelshikar
- In the Blink of an Eye *by* Walter Murch
- Complete Filmmaker's Guide to Film Festivals *by* Rona Edwards and Monika Skerbelis
- The New Biographical Dictionary Of Film *by* David Thomson
- The Five C's of Cinematography: Motion Picture Filming Techniques *by* Joseph V. Mascelli
- The Screenwriter's Workbook: Exercises and Step-by-Step Instructions for Creating a Successful Screenplay *by* Syd Field

Steal the dream list

Following are a few dreams that twinkled in the eyes of the superstar. You can borrow some and make them your own.

P.S.- A lot of these dreams were fulfilled by Sushant in his lifetime, some remained unfulfilled.

Sushant's (Old)

Learn how to fly a plane

Train for Ironman Triathlon

Learn morse code

Help kids learn about space

Play tennis with a champion

Do a four clap push up

Chart trajectories of moon, mars, jupiter, and saturn for a week.

Dive in a blue hole

Perform the Double-slit experiment

Plant 1000 trees

Spend an evening in my Delhi College of Engineering hostel

Send hundred kids for workshop in NASA

Meditate in Kailash

Play poker with a champ

Write a book

Visit CERN

Paint Aurora Borealis

Attend another NASA workshop

6 pack abs in 6 months

Swim in Cenotes

Teach coding to visually impaired

Spend a week in a jungle

Understand Vedic Astrology

Disneyland

Visit LIGO

Raise a horse

Learn at least 10 dance forms
Work for free education
Explore Andromeda with a powerful telescope
Learn Kriya Yoga
Visit Antarctica
Help train women in self defense
Shoot an active volcano
Learn how to farm
Teach dance to kids
Be an ambidextrous Archer
Finish reading the entire Resnick Halliday physics book
Understand Polynesian astronomy
Learn guitar chords of my favourite 50 songs
Play chess with a champion
Own a Lamborghini
Visit St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna
Help prepare students for Indian defense forces
Make a documentary on swami vivekananda
Learn to surf
Work in AI and exponential technologies
Learn Capoeira
Travel through Europe
Play Football with Ronaldo
Spend a night alone in graveyard
Play a cricket match (telecast) left-handed
Fulfill wishes of 100 mothers
Perform experiments and make a music video on cymatics
in a mexican cenote & near egyptian sphinx
Attend a concert of Abida Parveen
Stargaze at roswell and watch ancient alien theory
Build the biggest library of India

Space training at NASA

Click a selfie with Robert Downey Jr. in Iron man outfit

Sing and play guitar in front of at least 10k people

Dive into the real Dwarka and investigate underwater

Discuss time and films with Christopher Nolan

Own a part of the moon

Fishing and reading “old man and the sea” while I am still young

Join forces with one of the finest and biggest education programs

Discuss national policies with PM of India

Look at the northern lights and paint

Create a unique superhero

Burning Man

Write and Direct a short story

Dance with Madhuri Dixit

Spend 3 days with an ancient tribe in a jungle

Find my friend Varun and party hard in vegas

Make and execute a plan that would enable at least 1 billion people

Attend Pink Floyd concert

A night in playboy mansion

Get my name in Guinness world records

Enable 100 last wishes to come true

Earn an India Jersey

R&D on unidentified aerial phenomenon

Morning walk on the great wall of china

Pot 4 balls in one strike on a billiards table

Mishka’s (It is never too soon or too late to dream)

Write ten books

Ride an auto for a 100 kms
Live in a jungle for a month
Africa and Europe solo backpacking
Fly a plane
Learn Pottery
Learn a new language
Learn gardening
Build a house
Skydiving
Compose 6 songs on my guitar with lyrics and perform
Build a taser gun from scratch
Recycle 100 sheets of paper
Camping in Himalayas
Play a Chess Tournament
Perform 20 cool physics experiments
Read 100 more books in 5 years
Read an entire basic book on Biochemistry
Master Graphology
Lose 10 kgs in a year
Learn Geography
Cycle in Uttarakhand
Meet David Tennant
Fly
Buy a jetpack once available
Write a film/ web series
Cook 50 different dishes in 50 days
Attempt 100 unsolvable riddles/ problems/ puzzles/ thought
experiments
Travel for an entire year
Learn an interesting fact a day until 1000
Study 300 plant and 300 animal species

Spend a month in Andaman and Nicobar Islands
Start a school
Sail a boat
Maintain an audio dream diary or journal for 2 months
Visit NASA, CERN, and office of SpaceX
Attend a theatre workshop
Build a Snowman
Learn names of all 206 bones in human body
Learn Rifle shooting, Archery, Swimming, and Surfing
Buy a compound microscope
Go to North Pole and meet Santa
Visit Kedarnath
Learn Martial Arts (Self Defense)

**A few thoughts to dwell upon... (From
Sushant's thought cupboard, he called
them #selfmusings)**

Perfection lies in the 'next step'. Passion lies in the present one.

Heroes I look upto and the ones I detest are just different versions of me, in various context(s).

The more you learn, the less time you take to learn more.

Acquired meanings that are not emergent of celebrations are highly likely to be misplaced.

Often the difference between what is miserable, and that, which is spectacular, lies in a leap of our faith.

Reality is not what it is until we observe or measure it.

I got up this morning and looked at myself through your eyes, and then looked back at you, with everything I understood I was.

I am a noun in your life, verb in mine.

The way you perceive is the way that changes your perception.

Time might be measured in terms of money, but Time certainly is a measured life.

The way you answer any question is the answer of every question.

We all act all the time.

Even when we watch a play, we are still at play.

Imagination is value, possibly, but value surely is imagination.

The best wars ever fought were definitely the ones that were intentionally averted.

An actor wanting to act, thinking more or just about money and success, is like that someone, who wanted to be a cop because he liked guns and power.

Between what was possible and now what is so probable, is where exactly we met the first time.

One thing which we are, which we are, is a function of time.

We should learn to not be careful, and try different things.

Reality is, exactly, what you think it is.

Our ignorance cannot stop what is inevitable.

Not knowing is very different from knowing many things to understand you don't know anything.

We should fail, but for the right reasons. I should not know how to do it, so that it keeps me engaged. And when you consistently do things you don't know, more chances of you failing than succeeding. Failure is subjective.

The newer the art, the more engaged you are.

Uncertainty is intrinsic to the process of finding out what you don't know, not a weakness to avoid.

Blurred past condensed in a teardrop,
unending desires
carving an arc of smile,
& a fleetingly beautiful Life,
negotiating between the two..

The lines that crept on your eyes when you pressed them
hard to pray for me, those lines, my mother, I've
borrowed to help my God into immortality.
I took few of my 'maybe's,
wrapped it up in reckless dreams,
tossed it up with some spare passion,
and the earth gently shook!

The more my thoughts tiptoe away from you
the more I feel your presence
brushing my hair, pressing my skin
blowing on my face
and certainly the arc on my lips
sometimes whispering as if
like a gentle reminder...

Now when I think of it,
perhaps
I always must be right about it after all,
i was always slightly older than
what I always wanted to be
and just a tad younger
than what I always was.

I might seem to be in control love, but I am not.
Let's just say that I just don't want to fly, without you.
Or let's just say that I need you, for I am just 'you' way
from my 'glory'.

Our eyes blinked in mutual agreement, much before our
fervent attempts to negotiate the inevitable with our ever
insufficient, desperate words.

Anyone who's just planning to solve popular and visible
problems in any context is either selfishly unaware or a
dangerously stupid player in any system.
Anything worth pursuing is worth failing at,
and fail we do
as we pursue,
Love is the cause
and it survives...

If we were protons, this would have been our Time-
Machine.
(Visiting the Large Hadron Collider at CERN)

I feel you in the still spaces between my breaths,
I see you in the meaning of everything that I so wanted
to make sense of.
I know I am you, Oh, I could only be you mother,
and still, how I wish you were somewhere else too that I
could know of...

The man I want to be

looks back at me,
with the same fascination,
and with a similar smile,
a tad long probably,
free from the burden of hope..

My mother used to tell me, 'Your life is the story that you tell yourself'. I'm gonna make sure, at least try that this story is worth telling.

At the most fundamental level of anything that exists (or perhaps not), the sharp Cartesian division between mind and matter, between the observer and the observed, can no longer be maintained. 'How' you seek, is 'What' is seeking you.

You never get to see reality as it is. You only interact with a portion of it and that also your brain reconstructs so that your senses can interact. There are no colours, no sound, no space, no time...just mental constructs.

Nothing, absolutely nothing makes sense except love.

Success and failure are equally disorienting when you are obsessed about them. You're invincible when you're attending to experience.

There will be a day when we lose something and that's when people will recognize who you are.

Rhythms & hence meanings,

Meanings & hence you,
You & hence your life & God...
Rhythm is the essence of everything and beyond.

Valuing differences between individuals is definitely the way forward for a healthy society.

Words contaminate my feelings, and then they are frisked by your brain, they seek admission to your heart and it slows down its noise to listen to them. Your eyes announce their fate.

We don't see the things as they are, We see them as we are! Making others believe your beliefs then, is a futile endeavour.

When you are completely immersed in an experience, there is no 'You', no time!

Try loving what you were not and what you could never be. It's awkwardly uncomfortable to accept the idea but when you come to terms with it, it's bliss minus the dominance of 'I am' or precisely because of that.

Living your dream is the walk between what should be done and what could be done using 'maybe's as your signposts.

I look at her and the present seems like eternity and the future waits with generous patience to allow me my time with her...!!

We behave like mortals in all that we fear and like immortals in all that we desire. We must live immediately.

If you can't answer a question , keep asking relatively easier questions that you Can't answer and suddenly you will find yourself answering several other questions you never asked.!!

The easiest thing I've ever done was to earn a million dollars, The most difficult thing was to BELIEVE I could do it...!!

Sometimes a lifetime is not enough to cross the bridge from not knowing I don't know anything to knowing I don't know anything.

Wisdom is knowing I am nothing, Love is knowing I am everything, and, between the two my life moves.

To create spaces for understanding we need to consider not only how we see, but why we see what we do.

We seek objectivity in a subjective life and we fear insanity.

Hurt people, hurt people.
Forgive them
and then if you could

Love them
and then,
let's just witness the magic.!!

If you're not there, what is?
And if you are, what could be Not?

Money means more choices which is misconstrued as more freedom and happiness. Choices only lead to Paralysis and dissatisfaction.

'Devil' who fools himself into believing he is not the 'one' is the deadliest kind.

I want to fail, but it should not be a mediocre failure. It should be massive. It is important to fail badly and destroy me as an individual. At the same time, I don't want mediocre successes either. (spoken)

People believe that if you keep the audience guessing (about your relationship status), the movie will do well. And if you say yes you have fallen in love then you will lose the fan following. If someone were to tell me that my relationship status would decide the fate of my film, then, as an actor, I'd feel embarrassed. (spoken)

More Stories

Collection of a few magical stories from the closet of words jiggling around the space-time continuum celebrating the existence and nonexistence of Sushant.

Some true, some false. Some real, some unreal. Some inspiring, some just plain information.

A star is born

Sushant first emerged as a homo sapiens lifeform on Earth in Purnia district, Bihar, India. The date on the calendar was marked 21st January, 1986. Only brother to four elder sisters, he was pampered the most in the house, his nickname was 'Gulshan'. Being the youngest, he would receive all the love and attention. Although, the world outside his home was different. And so, when he stepped out of his house, not treated with the same niceness, it was natural for him not to know how to deal with other people. Although, unlike many, who tend to mould themselves into the social stature, he chose to retain a little of his individuality, and to others, appeared shy and introverted.

Since his innocent childhood, he had been a sincere and intelligent student. One of his sisters, Meetu Singh, was a state-level cricketer, while he didn't make into the school cricket team, which he compensated for later in his life.

The shocking demise

Growing up, Sushant dreamt to be an Astronaut, then a pilot, and a lot more. Being extremely intelligent, he wanted to study courses overseas. Although, belonging to a middle class family in India automatically restricts your educational endeavours. And so, he prepared for engineering entrance exams just like about one million other Indian aspirants to get into a good engineering

college. In the middle of the process, life introduced him to a disastrous truth. On 13th December, 2002, when he was busy getting ready for his pre-board exams, he lost his mother. As shocking as this bereavement was, his power of understanding things was lost for a month. To think was a luxury that was taken away from his brain, at the time he needed it the most. He almost failed his pre boards in January. And yet, as the dates of board exams and engineering entrance tests drew nearer, he told himself he had to now go for it. The result of which was that he cleared as many as eleven engineering entrance exams with very good ranks, including Indian School of Mines. In Delhi School of Engineering entrance exam, he secured 7th rank, and chose it as his engineering college for further education in Mechanical Engineering. He also had been a National Physics Olympiad winner.

The college days and revelations

In his first year in DCE itself, Sushant bagged an opportunity to explore something absolutely new and unconventional. While he looked around at the esteemed engineering college campus, and patted himself on the back saying he had arrived, a few questions began propping up. What next? He had secured an admission, but now what? His philosophical bent of mind questioned that over and over again, and alongside, the male to female ratio in the college was significantly high as one might expect. A feeling of being cheated flowed in him, just like how it is funnily encompassed in many young individuals at the beginning of their college life. A

friend suggested to him that dance schools have many beautiful girls and he should try opting for them as he could anyway dance a little. Sushant, already bursting with energy, dived at this opportunity and joined Shiamak Davar's classes in Delhi. Soon, he was part of his dance crew. Shiamak had told him. "You are not one of my finest dancers, but I still keep you in the first line because there is something about you." It was Shiamak who recommended Sushant to try theatre and explore what that something was. This made him associate with Barry John in Delhi. This something probably was a want to communicate. If said in Sushant's own words, "When I was performing for the first time with Shiamak in a stage show as a dancer and I could feel the lights hitting my face. I could see all strangers looking at me and the music started and it was something else. I was actually communicating without saying a word and I could see people getting affected by it. It was something magical. I didn't realise it before that it was something I think I always wanted to do." He consistently performed with Shiamak and pursued theatre with Barry John. In 2005, he was selected for the dance troupe to perform in the 51st Filmfare. In 2006, he went to Australia for a performance in commonwealth games, where he was dancing in the background with Aishwarya Rai in the lead. His first performance with Bary John was also liberating, wherein he could hide behind some amazing characters and say what he wanted to say without being judged or questioned. It was a profound discovery and excited him the most, and when Bary John told him he

should take acting seriously, he did, because he wanted to, he so wanted to.

And then the choice of the millenia

While in his third year of engineering, he dropped out of his college to pursue a full time career in dancing and acting. He even rejected a scholarship from Stanford University, which was a huge affair. On 26th October, 2006, he moved to Mumbai and set on his journey. He joined EkJute Theatre group and acted with utmost passion in theatrical plays. In 2008, when he was performing a monologue on stage, a few people from Balaji Films spotted him, asked him to audition, after which he landed a role in a TV serial, Kis Desh Mein Hai Mera Dil. He played a second lead, Preet Juneja. In 2009, he bagged a lead role in Pavitra Rishta, which earned him immense popularity as the character, Manav Deshmukh. He received various television awards for best actor, and also participated in dance shows, Jhalak Dikhla Ja (season 4) and Zara Nachke Dikha (season 2) where he spellbounded the audience with his beautiful dance performances. In 2013, while he was at the peak of his television career, he realised that his learning and growth had come to a halt. While everyone insisted that he stayed for another year, just like his engineering days, he quit television planning to go study filmmaking in UCLA. Meanwhile, he also auditioned for movies and was offered multiple roles. When he was presented with Kai Po Che as a script, he loved it and decided to stay. The rest of the filmography is crafted below:

Kai Po Che (22 February 2013)

Ishaan Bhatt (ex-district level cricketer who was a victim of politics in the cricketing selection.)

Shuddh Desi Romance (September 2, 2013)

Raghu Ram (Tourist guide with commitment crisis)

PK (December 19, 2014)

Sarfaraz Yusuf (A Pakistani student in Belgium)

Detective Byomkesh Bakshy! (April 3, 2015)

Byomkesh Bakshi (The detective fresh out of college landing his first case)

M.S. Dhoni- The Untold Story (September 30, 2016)

Mahendra Singh Dhoni (The cricketer at various stages in life)

Raabta (June 9, 2017)

Shiv Kakkar (A banker in Budapest from Amritsar)

Jilaan (A warrior 800 years in the past)

Kedarnath (December 7, 2018)

Mansoor Khan (A local porter in Kedarnath)

Sonchiriya (February 20, 2019)

Lakhna (Dacoit)

Drive (November 1, 2019- Netflix)

Samar (Thief)

Chhichore (September 6, 2019)

Aniruddh (Anni) Pathak [A divorced middle-aged man living with his son]

Aniruddh (Anni) Pathak [Fresher in an esteemed engineering college who later gets oaths to remove the tag of loser for his hostel, H4]

Dil Bechara (July 24, 2020- DisneyHotstar)

Immanuel Rajkumar Junior (Manny) [A college student with a history of osteosarcoma]

Some Vignettes to savour the essence of the artist

When Sushant quit television, he had no movie offers or a sense of security. He just knew he wanted to explore something else now and was set for UCLA to study Filmmaking when Kai Po Che happened. Kai Po Che was not the first movie offered to him. Being very honest to his craft, he played a character only to experience and learn something new. He had received six film offers before Kai Po Che which he had rejected because the scripts did not appeal to him.

Sushant participated in a television dance reality show in the year 2010-11 and bagged the most consistent performer of the season award during the finale. The show was Jhalak Dikhla Jaa season 4, and his partner and choreographer was Shampa. Both of them received consistent appreciations and the most perfect scores throughout the season. It won't be an exaggeration to say that they were meant to win the show from the first week itself. Although, only two weeks before the Finale, Sushant suffered a severe back injury, due to which he couldn't perform that week, resulting in a significant drop of votes and scores. Yet he made it to the finals and secured the first runner up position. He had mentioned the purpose of his participation being the want to get fitter, motivated, and disciplined just like he used to be a few years ago, and he definitely got into a great form by

the end of the show. He displayed various dance forms including Salsa, Contemporary, Bollywood, Jazz, Flamenco, Locking and Popping, aerial acts etc.

He also participated in another dance reality show Zara Nachke Dikha season 2 in the year 2010. In one of the episodes which was a mother's special episode, his team members who performed a tribute to their mothers, performed a special tribute to Sushant's mother as a surprise for him which was truly heartfelt.

For M.S. Dhoni- The Untold Story, Sushant trained for 10 months in cricket for 4-5 hours daily. Simultaneously, he studied Dhoni's body language, analysed cricket shots, got immersed in the scripts and learned how the cricketer thinks. The cricket or the rib cage injury or the high-intensity training was not the difficult part for him as he has stated several times. To get to know the man was the most difficult part, where all the uncertainty really lies according to him. He was able to decode a lot of Dhoni which ultimately was shown on the camera and received utmost applause. People could not believe the exceptional performance that he portrayed and it was even said, no one could have done it better than him.

He loved Shahrukh Khan a lot, his favourite. In his school days, he used to mimic him which was the trend during those days.

In his first year of college, he used to give tuitions to engineering entrance and AIIMS aspirants. The tuitions were costly and made him earn a handsome amount of money apart from the money he earned through his dance performances.

Whenever stressed, solving a math question was a good alternative for him to calm down and focus.

While he was a brilliant dancer and actor, he also used to go horse riding, fishing, and was well trained in martial arts. Other activities that he pursued were Guitar, Singing, Reading, Archery, Shooting, Table Tennis, Tennis, Kickboxing, Poetry, and many more that we stayed oblivious to. He also has been spotted feeding birds and spending a great amount of time with nature. He played video games on his playstation, watched the galaxies through his telescope, watched good content on his projector, and talked with his fans on social media. He also loved nature a lot, probably owned a boat, and was enraptured by the idea of organic farming.

The name of his dog is Fudge, who is a black Labrador.

Sushant loved sweets. The Indian sweet namely ‘Gulab Jamun’ topped the list. His fetish for chocolates, icecreams was never ending which he would compensate for by intensive inhuman workouts.

His favourite vegetarian food as he has apprised in one of his interviews is Paneer, Mushroom, and Chhole.

One of Sushant's habits was to write good quotes or information from books in his diaries. He also had written a few letters to self, which have been very inspiring. Before entering the Hindi Film Industry, he had written his five years of dreams, properly planned, and after exactly five years, he had accomplished them all exactly the way he had planned.

Sushant was in a seven years long relationship with Ankita Lokhande, who also starred opposite him in the TV serial 'Pavitra Rishta'. She played the character of Archana Karanjkar, while he played Manav Deshmukh. The couple received great love from the audience and fell in love eventually, and were rumoured to get married soon but separated in the year 2016.

The inspiration for him to be an actor was his own will to express and communicate. He always said that as per psychology, all we all crave for is to understand and to be understood. Acting gave him the magical experience. There have been people whom he looked up to, but his inspiration was innate which made him into the successful, dedicated, eccentric, and extraordinary actor that he was and was set out to become.

He has called himself boring several times. It is not surprising, as to understand his words is not an

undemanding task, and to do that for hours requires immense interest and curiosity. He also said he hardly had two or three friends which is the most truthful one can be. As we all hardly truly have a single true friend in all our lives. Rest, are just our rare hangout buddies.

He owned land on the moon at the Sea of Muscovy. It was sanctioned by the lunar registry.

He has been associated with NITI Ayog since the year 2018 to promote Women Entrepreneurship Platform.

Innsaei Ventures, a tech start-up which aims to bring socio-economic and developmental transformation through Intellectual Property powered by emerging technologies was one of the three companies of Sushant Singh Rajput. The other two registrations remained with names : ‘Vividrage Rhealityx’ and ‘Front India for World Foundation’

He was especially interested in quantum physics and astronomy and could spend hours speaking about them. Although, almost all domains of intelligence remained touched by him.

He was the first Indian Actor to go for Space Training at NASA. His training was great and was appreciated by the fellow trainers at NASA as well. Those who trained him had told him that if he had continued the training for a few more weeks, he could have received the certificate of

an instructor. He planned to go to Houston to complete the training and prepare himself for the NASA 2024 moon mission, which he hoped to step on.

His dreams also revolved around structuring the education system of his country and work towards free education.

For the role of Byomkesh Bakshy in his 2015 film, Sushant renounced his phone, internet, and even stopped talking to his family for a few months for the character. It gave him an absolutely different and wholesome experience which only arose due to his commitment to the role which was set in 1940s when there were no mobile phones or internet.

Before making his place as an actor in the Hindi Film industry, as a Background dancer, he had danced behind many Bollywood stars, including Shahid Kapoor, Preity Zinta, Aishwarya Rai Abhishek Bacchan, Shahrukh Khan, Hrithik Roshan, Salman Khan, Emraan Hashmi, etc.

One of his most favourite writers was Kurt Vonnegut.

He acted in the movie PK free of cost. When the actor refused any signing amount, the director, Rajkumar Hirani had given him a Rs. 20 note to use during the audition as a sign of good luck, which he got framed and hung on one of the walls in his house. The director when

got to know about his special interest in reading, sent him a box full of forty books on filmmaking saying “This is what I could gather for you so far. If I find more, I will send more.”

He was the second bollywood actor after Katrina Kaif to feature in the Towel Series of the famous fashion photographer, Mario Testino. The tag was Towel series #136.

Kanika Dhillon, the writer of the movie Kedarnath had narrated a memoir from the sets. She noticed that her 100 page script had bulged into a 300 page novel in the hands of Sushant. When she asked him whether he added scenes to it? He replied with a smile “I made my notes and attached them. I read scenes every day and find a new meaning- a new take and I add it to the page.” Many such stories of exceptional dedication, hardwork and uniqueness have been heard and told from people who have worked with this man. The passion he had for his work was a true example of greatness which showed indubitably in all his undertakings. He despised mediocrity and strived for excellence, always.

Sushant, on september 4, 2018, went all the way to Dimapur, Nagaland, to personally hand over a cheque of Rs. 1.25 Crore, contributing generously to the CM relief fund to aid the flood victims. It was when he was busy shooting for a movie in Delhi. The same year, he donated a sum of Rs. 1.25 Crore to the Kerala Flood relief.

Sushant's most popular nickname used by people in the entertainment industry is 'Sushi'. Others are 'Sush', 'SSR', 'Guggu' (Given by Ankita), 'Gulshan' (name used by family members), and 'Guddu'. He also had other nicknames like 'Kamini', specific to certain people.

'Sushant' is a Sanskrit word, which means very quiet or peaceful.

He used to have one hour Twitter interaction with his fans every day. When asked why does he do it, he would say- "They are the ones who have made me who I am today. It does matter that I speak to them personally. When I fall, it will be them who will help me rise up again." He had immense love and respect for his fans and followers and did the most amazing things for and with them. He once even donated about 1 crore rupees to Kerala floods in the name of his fan who wanted to contribute but was unable to and mentioned the same in an Instagram comment. Sushant also used to respond to many comments on Instagram and was accessible to the people who loved and adored him.

He had a 'Pro Team' which assisted him in planning and turning his 150 dreams into reality, while also achieving theirs.

Many of his acquaintances have described him like a child. Restless, curious, energised, always up to

something. His passion for life infected every individual who came his way.

A road in Patna has been named in his memory.

After his demise, a fan registered a star in the name of 'Sushant Singh Rajput' in the night sky at the star registry on June 25th 2020. The astronomically verified position of the star is RA 22.121 and Declination -10.14

His family declared to turn his childhood home in Rajiv Nagar, Patna into a memorial where his telescope, flight simulator, thousands of books, and other belongings can rest and be cherished by his fans and admirers.

The Murder Mystery

Sushant was found dead on 14th June 2020 in his Bandra home. Cause of death was found to be asphyxia as per a post mortem report. The police immediately, within ten minutes announced it to be a case of suicide by hanging, but the death raised severe questions. Most people, as of July 2020 claimed it to be a well planned murder. Several unanswered questions and a frustrated pleading for justice embraced the world after his departure.

A few of those facts and questions (until July 2020):

- No one except for Siddharth Pathani, a suspect in the case of this murder, who also lived with him, is known to see the body hanging by the ceiling. Possibly not even the police saw the body and immediately announced it to be a suicide, leading to suspicion.
- It has been claimed that the CCTV was shut down in the complex a night before his death. Later, it was told that the police had collected the CCTV footage, details of which remain clandestine.
- No suicide note was found.
- The duplicate key to the digital door lock of his room was missing.
- When a person hangs himself, the ligature mark around the neck is slanted, eyeballs and tongue protrude out a little, and a little saliva comes out.

The ligature mark around his neck was O shaped, as if a mark of strangulation, eyeballs and tongue were in place, and no salivary dribbling marks were reported. This was noticed by the people when a few of his pictures post death were leaked on social media. All his fans and those who saw suspicion spoke against it.

- No fingerprints were found on the hanging object except for the thumb, index, and little finger of the actor's left hand. He was a right-handed person.
- No small table or furniture was found inside the room of crime.
- The tensile strength of the hanging object was not revealed and not measured for a long time. It was a small green cloth. Sushant's weight was supposedly around 80 kgs.
- The height between the ceiling and the bed in the room is questionable. The height of the actor was 183 cms (as claimed by him) which has been reported incorrectly by the police as 178 cms. The height between the bed and the ceiling right on the top of it is reported to be 177.5 cms. He also was an extremely fit man who lifted himself very often during workouts.
- The room in which Sushant was found dead was probably not his bedroom, although this information can be incorrect. Medicines and file reports were found on a table in the room, as if staged for a mental illness.

- No crime investigation took place until forty two days after his death because the Mumbai police did not file an FIR, and so, the crime scene was not sealed allowing tampering of evidence.
- No data for the wifi or other technological evidence were collected from the crime scene.
- A video of 14th June, when the police reached the crime scene was leaked in the public domain, in which a police officer stated- “If this video is leaked, our investigation will be ruined.”
- His alleged girlfriend, who also has been blamed to be involved in his murder had removed all of their photos together from instagram a couple of days before his death, and has also left his house a week ago, within 36 hours of the suspicious death of Disha Sallian.
- His body was taken to the controversial Cooper Hospital in Mumbai, where many suspicious murder cases have been announced as suicides even when Leelawati Hospital was nearest. Two ambulances had arrived near his house, and some person who had no business to be at the crime scene insisted he should be taken to Cooper Hospital and police allowed him.
- He used to maintain a journal, what was written in it, remains a mystery still. It has been confiscated.
- He had changed his mobile number some 50 times as per the claims. The exact number still remains untold.

- A lot of conspiracies had already been created around the actor by the media. He was being targeted consistently.
- A popular narrative said: He organised a party at his house and was playing videogames on his playstation in the morning and was apparently in a fair mood.
- Another popular narration: He spoke to his sister at around 09:00 a.m. on the phone, approximately one hour after which he entered his room with a glass of pomegranate juice, and when the cook banged his door to ask about food at around 11:30 a.m., and no response was received, his two friends called for the help from a locksmith, and later in the afternoon, his sister saw him lying dead on his bed. A lot of questions have been put to this narrative as well. The suspicion on the cook, the friend, and someone else who might have been present has raised eyebrows. What were the friends and househelp trying to show the sister? How did they find a digital locksmith on a Sunday during a pandemic lockdown in a place like Bandra? The sister's narrative differs from the cook's and the roommate's, who have been allowed to roam around freely without any FIR or proper interrogation.
- The claims for his depression hold no significant value as the psychologists associated with the same are questionable and apparently hold ties with a few people in the industry that are

suspected to be responsible for this murder. His trainer and bodyguard have even claimed that the medicines he was being given were affecting him physically and were not prescribed by any proper doctor.

- He is known to be working with scientists across the globe on COVID vaccination research as of June 1, as informed by a friend. This indicates he was working thoroughly towards future projects.
- On 28th July 2020, his father filed an FIR in Bihar against Rhea Chakraborty under sections 340, 342, 380, 406, 420, 306 of the IPC.
- There has been some exclusive and painful information revealed by the family regarding Rhea Chakraborty and the family had also reached out to the police on 25th February 2020, four months before the murder, saying that the life of Sushant is threatened and they must do something. The Police knowingly took no action, and as his body was found, immediately announced it as a suicide to cover up. The Chief minister denied a CBI probe in the matter. After these events, a major public opinion says- “A well planned murder in which multiple systems were involved engulfed Sushant’s life.”
- Sushant was scared and threatened after the death of Disha Salian on 8th June and wanted to quit the industry and move away from Mumbai, as confessed by his sister.

- All suspects have lied thoroughly. The Mumbai Police and government have made multiple attempts to bury the case indignantly. Even manhandling Bihar Police officials was spotted, which clearly showed the desperation for hiding the whole case hinting at a political involvement. There is a lot more information in this case that can be looked for in the public domain, while the investigation goes on, questions get asked, and hopefully, someday, justice is served. (July 2020)

*Do you see where you would breath your last puffs of air?
Do you crave to lose out on everything and liberate again?
They will scourge and wound in the name of love
Your entrails will bleed, and eyes will burn
Choose my friend, choose today
Do you live a life that's yours, or in the eyes of people so stale
You live in you and die in you
That's the best way to elude yourself from this senseless
gratitude
Those guns and barrels they arm at you
Relax, release, and let the smile shine in and around you!
Don't let the lies of hope brainwash the truth
The ugliness is here to stay, but may not meddle with the
beauty in you.*

Epilogue

Everything that lives, dies.

Everything dies.

I saw her gawking at her own reflection by the glass windowpane. Even the sound of my footsteps while I entered the room probably didn't register into her consciousness and she continued to endure her engrossment in some thoughts.

"Avani?" I called her out.

She turned her gaze towards me in an instant from over the top rail of the wooden chair she was perched on. Her expressionless face stared gravely at me as if urging something and nothing at the same time.

"What?" I asked, smiling.

"Sushant? What if you die tomorrow?" she asked earnestly.

"Well, then, I will not be alive the day after tomorrow," I tried to dodge the intervening question with an intending humour.

"I am serious. It's really silly but, what would be your dying wish?"

“To not die so soon maybe? I have a few things to complete and--”

“But that’s not for you to decide! Age is not the definite characteristic for life.”

“True. Well then, death is inevitable, so I will embrace it, but, I would like to do something big before leaving.”

“Like what?”

“Just...something worth remembering.”

I pulled a chair and sat next to her and could now notice some tears swimming in her eyes enclosed in a perfect arc, not willing to break out, wanting to hide in visibility.

“Like how you said in one of your interviews? She asked, as impatient as she was grave. “You want to do something great so that a biopic could be made on you?”

“In which I would act myself, yeah,” I replied.

“Something related to education maybe.”

“You already have done great things worth making a biopic or writing a book or- it won’t matter though if you won’t be there...”

“Hey, what’s wrong? I am still here.”

She briskly stood straight-up and with aggression and rebellion in her voice, spoke like I had never seen her speak before.

“So? I should wait for you to die in order to tell you this? What lives after people we love die, Sushant? Why do we even care to live? And if we have to live, why do we care to love?”

“Stories and memories stay back. Beautiful moments you can laugh at and look back. And life without love is difficult, impossible for some. But more importantly--”

“LIES. These stories and memories, it’s all a pretence. We pretend the existence of things we cannot have. That’s all.”

The patience of the tears was now tested beyond the threshold. And they weeped down her cheeks like backwater during floods. I held one of her arms to make her face me and said--

“But more importantly, we live to just live. Look around you. There is so much more than just people and things and laughter and swings. The sky, the chairs, the unheard music. There’s physics and maths. Words, such beautiful words. Your world can be so much more than just people. And when the world is so big and so grand, these stories find a place under a shed in your immeasurable forest and they sleep a good sleep. I am a story, and I shall sleep with you forever. And when you wake me up, I will run around the memory lane with you.”

She looked at me for a while. Stared with changing expressions every millisecond. A firework of sentiments, just like death.

“And Literature, poetry, oceans.” a smile swept across her face.

“And dance, theatre, drama,” we began dancing along a rhythm only we could hear, without having to create it.

“And Van Gogh, Jet packs, Skydiving!” she swirled and stopped and swooned and repeated the first step again.

“And cricket, dreams, Gulab Jamun! Chocolates, Icecreams, Christopher Nolan movies, surfing, Chess, trees, birds, lions, paintings, flowers, the Andromeda,

strange quarks, dwarf stars, deep dives, blue, red, green, black, Ludo, Boating, Farming, kids, mothers, the Moon.....

“Aah! You say the most beautiful things.” she said, sinking into her chair, head tilted back. “I wonder whether this world is all just a dream. Will people we know live when we don’t? Or is it just imaginations? When the eyes close for the last time, will it all stop existing?”

“How do you want it to be?” I asked.

“Inexistent as I die. And if this is all just an imagination, how beautiful is it! I am so creative.”

“Indeed.”

We both chuckled our way into the living room.

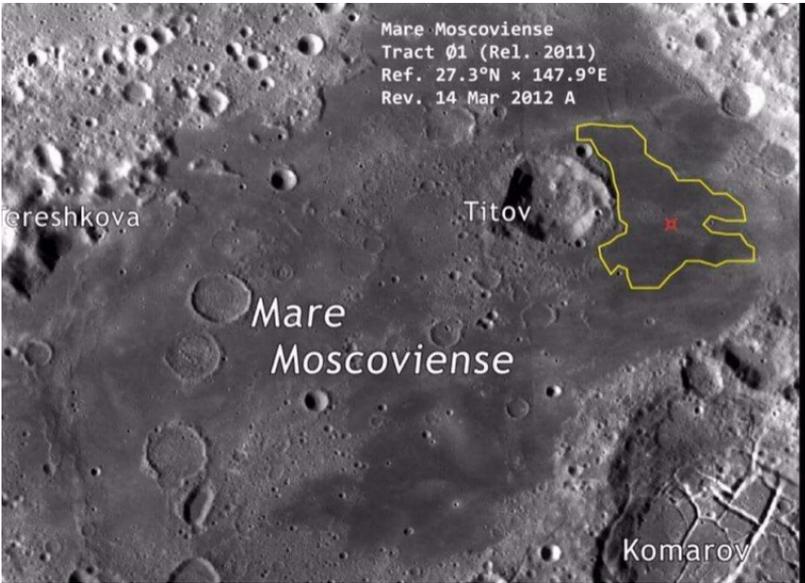
“You know, Sushant,” she spoke. “After you die, I might not want to live in this world which no longer has you in it for a while. I love you so much, you are a great friend and human being, but, in reality, I will live. I will live for years to come and then I will die. What won’t live in that remaining journey is you!”

“Not even under the shed?” I asked with a grin on my face.

“Always under the shed. Always.”

“Okay C’mon now. There were some very funny jokes on quantum entanglement I have been wanting to show you for so long. READ THEM!”

*The more we live, the more dies when the time arrives
The longer we sleep, more vivid the dreams and greater signs
In my nightmares I see you arrive
As a metaphor, as blinding light
Like an epitome of desire, passion, and pride
Like love swirling itself across in forms only divine
What did I do wrong? Or what did I not do right?
That I couldn't hear you sing or talk or breath or pray or act
or play, before your unearthly demise...*



Sushant's side of the moon.... Pic Courtesy: Sushant's social media account.



Pic Courtesy: Sushant's social media account.



Would the real Jonathan Seagull please stand up and help him fly away from here? So that he lives after all? Pic Courtesy:
Sushant's social media account.

Thank you for spending time with this book. It means a lot. If you have any feedback, requests, questions, or information, please feel free to write the author at :

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