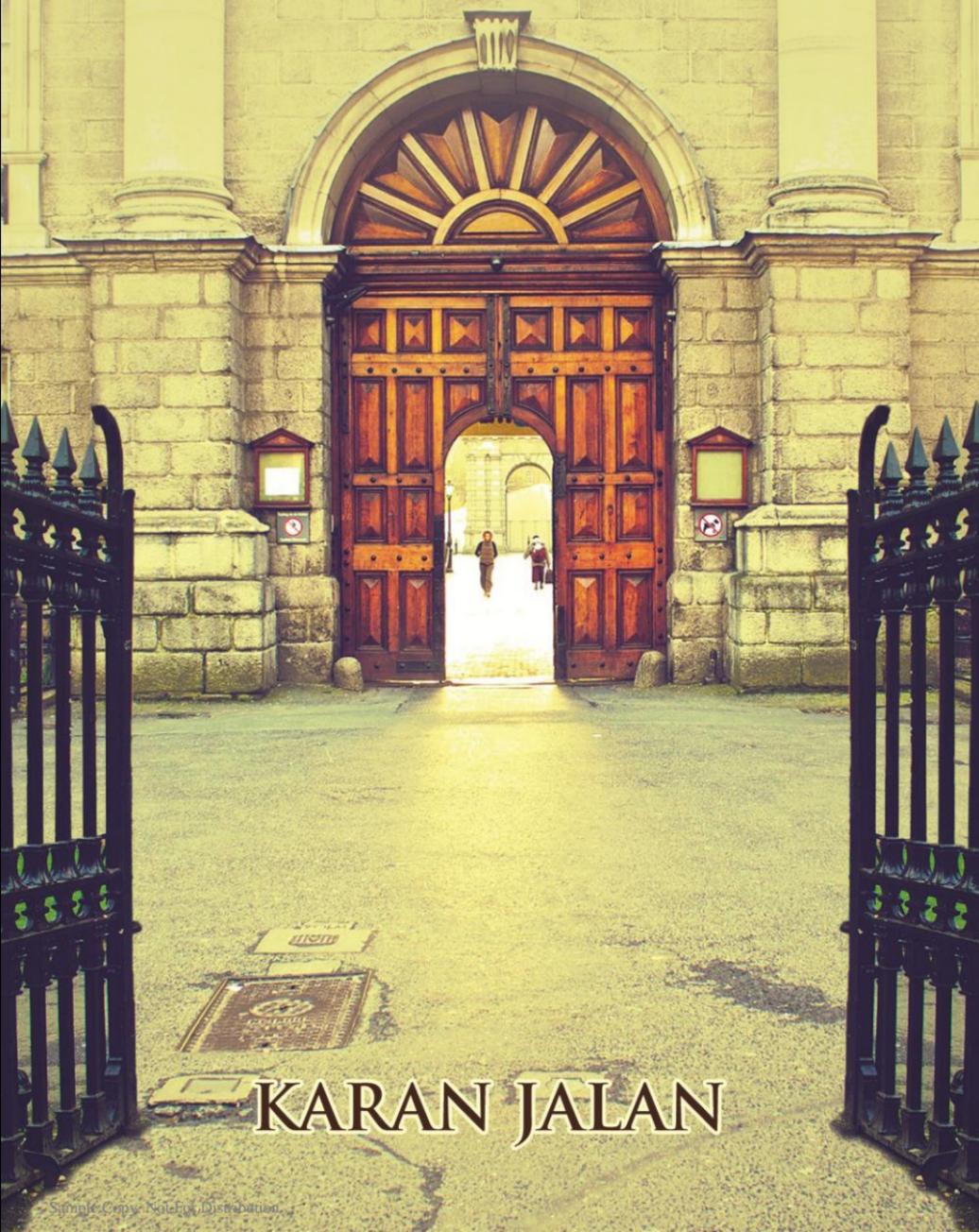


THE GATEKEEPER



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The Gatekeeper

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Karan Jalan



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With Respect,

*To Mrs. Megha Sethi (my English
teacher)*

With Love,

*To my Mother for her belief
To my Father for his support and help*

Acknowledgement

“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.” John F. Kennedy

I would like to express my vote of thanks to specially my parents for their Endless support and having faith in their son. They are my first editors and gatekeepers to this literary world.

I am thankful to my uncle and aunt for their constant guidance.

Thanks to my friends and to my sisters for reading and listening to my stories patiently with their faith in me that one day I would prosper in writing.

A debt of gratitude to my English teacher Mrs Megha Sethi for her constant support, guidance and belief in me. Without her I won't have written this wonderful story.

I am also thankful to Educreation publishing team and to my editor Ms. Shobha Khande for bringing this novel *The Gatekeeper* to the eyes of my fellow readers.

In the end, I am grateful to the god for helping me on through every difficult obstacle and having his faith in me.



1



Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life - think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success.

Swami Vivekananda

My writing expedition was full of being hauled over coal, which also slouched on my destined path, waiting like strict examiners who don't examine the burden students are facing, but my notes were of very much hope and faith. I didn't get the pillar of support from my father. He and my ludicrous little brother would laugh at my piece of philosophical art, but what can my father do, he is a very aspirant person, paving

his own path with that very burning coal. He was a dreamer, who dreamed that one day his child would become his successor, but I was always out of the crowd. Neither those scientific minds touched my heart, nor those abysmal numbers, shapes and trigonometry, were any of my engrossment. Society, life and history were always hit by the dart of my interest. Literature developed gradually, all thanks to my good gracious English teacher and especially to my affinity for novels.

That is much of my delineation. So, what I was telling is that I was in a vexation of signing my first novel “Bonded Colours” which is a trenchant story of love, war and racism. School and friends never became a paragon of virtue for me, but I had some fellow mates. We were like a royal flush in the games of hands. Just a few days down the line, when I was on this grand city tour reading my words in the hearts of spectators, at a particular place, maybe in a beautiful garden, after my reading sessions, I by mistook eavesdropped a bunch of teens, sauntering and bantering with each other. Soon, I sat under the shade of green cover and started rummaging with my contacts to locate my missing fingers. Though my hunt was dallying,

the contacts couldn't be hacked or expired. I bet my friends would still be poking their noses in Facebook, and I found them slouching in my list of so-called "friends". Just two letters were enough to open their eyes which were very much in the light as their answers came with many questions, but I simply asked where they were sitting and pressing the perked-up keys of their cells, but this became an apportion for me. My friends are spread out all over India, one is squatting in the capital, one is under the mist of limelight in Mumbai, one is at the coast of Malabar and one is in the Manchester of India. I was surrounded with pensive questions and asked them to meet, but everyone obliquely dissented to my wishes. They said that they were deeply burdened by the ordeals and turmoil of life. So where I stood against their blasé, I decided to lay my hands on their doors and proclaimed that their doors would soon be knocked by me. Again, there were hurdles of questions coming into my mind, which I didn't sought to reply. I was very much right about their morass as their inner voice was shunned by the echoes of outside world. I came into a paradoxical situation about how to visit my fellow mates, but soon it turned out to be a

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game of speculations as I was being funded for my major city tours.



2



As every foreign traveller, I went to the state of Delhi to meet a roguish and perspicacious friend of mine.

I was flabbergasted when I found that he is a doctor, which was quite absurd as he was one to mimic those fervent stars. He wanted to become one of them. I was on my tenterhooks when I knocked the door of a lavish villa in the south Delhi, one of the areas where you can find shenanigans, Mercedes, porches and hordes of money makers. The door was opened by a gorgeous woman, “Raghav Sharma’s” I tried to speak but was gawked by her beauty “wife” said the lady passing me a solaced smile. She asked me to come inside but I hoped to stay outside as my jaw dropped down so that a dozen house flies could party inside my mouth. I sat on the fluffy sofa, and his wife took her seat in front of me. We talked a little. I asked

her name, which was Khushi, her job, their marriage but she wasn't the screw that would drive my nuts and bolts. She didn't even ask me who I was. She listened to me as if we have known each other for ages. A servant brought a platter of snacks which piqued me down to my voracity. She said that her husband would be coming home any minute as it was 7 in the evening, and he was on his way from clinic. Khushi was a fashion designer and a long awaiting patient of Raghav. I was munching some snacks with coke and was pondering deeply inside my thoughtful ocean when the doorbell rang. His wife jumped from the sofa and ran to fetch him. A handsome young man with brown hairs garnished with blondness, his blue eyes must be the main enticement for all the women, entered hugging and lifting his wife but soon dropped her by the sight of my prudish face.

“How come you are here?” said Raghav cynically.

“Just making your bare sofas a little bit warmer, my friend ” I said as I stood up.

He came towards me and hugged me professionally, like he has been doing this since

ages. We all sat down and the questions started to explode in my brain.

“Where are your parents?” I asked tentatively.

“Oh! They are long gone” he said looking at the ceiling.

Maybe, he could see God in that concrete structure having supper with his parents.

“I am sorry” I said as it was my moral duty.

“Oh! No, it is okay. Well, I should be sorry for deterring you and your work and thank you for coming here”

I told him that my work is not a burden for me rather it is my merriment. I enjoy doing it. I am also responsible for spreading happiness, and I am fulfilling my duty. I told him about my orphanage and tie-ups with different NGOs.

“You write excellent. I read your book. Your stories have always drifted my heart.”

“Enough of me what about you? How come you are stuck in this game of playing with lives of different people and juggling their body parts here and there (laughs)? I cogitated about your

stardom, where is it?" I asked becoming a little bit of tactless.

"Dreams flew away with my parents. Their last wishes were to see me successful; as a doctor. Acting required struggling, and it was a very narrow road for me" he said thoughtfully.

"So you are saying that acting won't make you successful, becoming a doctor for a person like you is like climbing mount Everest without oxygen. You must have studied day and night to get honoured by these two letters of doctor, isn't that a brawl? Acting was your passion, and maybe it still triggers your heart. I still remembered the way all the girls would be enticed with your Khan's dialogues; you are the best actor I have ever known"

"What!" said his wife.

"Yes of course, he was coquettish" I said teasingly.

She gave him a livid stare

"He still does the best acting" melting her resent into a sentimental smile.

My friend was contorted by the time I said that maybe he has misunderstood the real meaning of their wishes, maybe they wanted

him happy. I told him that life gives us an opportunity to play every vital role. For example, when our child is born, we become nurses to take care of him; when he or she is bilious, we become doctors; when he starts his school, we become his/her teacher; when we buy our own house, we become architects and designers; we only decide what to wear making us a stylist; when a ruffian lays his hands on our clandestine priorities, we become first lawyers, but in the end, we ourselves by hook or crook either go in paradise or in the hell, and you will go as an actor not as a doctor. Those who know about your acting will remember you as an actor, not as a doctor. My words were retorted deviously.

“I have everything my friend, a beautiful wife, a wondrous bungalow and a fortunate job” he said trying to suppress his inner voice.

“You know what you don’t have, and you also know money cannot buy it”

I stood up knowing that any further discussions will become like putting down your car at a place where no parking sign is already howling in a feeble voice.

“At least have dinner for the time being”

my friend asked as his ethical duty (or maybe he really wanted to).

“Oh! No, I have many a folks waiting absent minded for me preparing their uncanny faces. By the way, I am throwing a party at my house in Ahmedabad for my novel’s chauvinism, and I invite you and your wife to do the honour. I left a wedding card (just looked like one) at your table for further details.”

I took my bag and went towards the door walking slowly and said

“I hope you will not disappoint me this time”

To make the atmosphere more quitter and went out of the heart of a jack o’lantern.



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I begin this novel when I was already in search of a story. This story was never meant to be a novel it was just a short story but then my mind was flooded with various ideas to make this short story a full-length novel. The world around me inspired me to write this story still in= my school years I understood what a person has to do in his or her life. I understood why most of the people are not happy with their life and it is because they are not happy and satisfied with what they are doing with their life. I always wanted to become a writer but not an inspirational one but I had faith, hope and patience in me which helped me to complete this story. All need to find their destiny through the clues given by the god; we know the clues because they revolve around us, we just need to bring them together.



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