**LOOK! I CAN FLY!**

“YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT LIFE ISN’T WHAT YOU’RE GIVEN.IT’S WHAT YOU CREATE, WHAT YOU CONQUER AND WHAT YOU AIM TO ACHIEVE.”

It’s just the beginning of the month of June. The scorching heat of the afternoon sun was just unbearable.

I heard a gentle knock at the door. Who must have knocked at the door when there is a doorbell ?.

I got up and opened the door. A young , smart ,beautiful girl was standing in front of me. “Hello mam, do you recognise me? “ She said smilingly. I looked at her. Looked at her beauty and grace, but couldn’t place her.

“Please come in”. She came in and again stood in front of me.

“Don’t you remember me Mam? I am your Navya.”

“Oh! My God! You are Navya, I just can’t believe it.” “ the same restless, naughty……”

“ indisciplined disobedient…notorious…” she completed the sentence.

I just couldn’t believe my eyes. Was I seeing the same Navya who was my student 12 years ago?

“Oh! Navya , you don’t know how happy I am to see you. Please take a seat.”

Both of us were too overwhelmed to see each other.

Navya only began the conversation.” Mam , isn’t it amazing how God brings the right people into our life at the right time, people who understand us, support us, and care for us regardless of the circumstances? “

May be she still had the memories of her unstable life when I had stepped into it .

I first taught her when she was in standard 5th.A stubborn, and defiant child….retaliated at the slightest provocation.

She was never attentive in the class, never completed her task on time, the list of her misdeeds was endless.

Her behaviour did annoy me first. But slowly it really disturbed me. Why was she behaving like this? Was something terribly wrong in her life? They say that a teacher is the right mix of chalk and duster, for the first time, I realized she has to be much , much more than this.

It was during a class excursion that I happened to know about Navya’s family background and her harrowing story.

Navya was an adopted child. She was just an infant when she became a part of her foster family. Her foster parents had no child of their own for ten long years so they had adopted little Navya.

But slowly her world had changed. Now she had a small brother a child of their own and that made a world of difference to Navya’s life.

Slowly her foster parents started neglecting her and even ill -treating her. She had a feeling of utter rejection and nothing seemed to appeal her . She was quite intelligent and sharp but just didn’t want to study or do anything worthy of any one’s appreciation.

I tried in my own small way to touch her life , but it didn’t make much difference to her life. However she knew I cared for her and that did build up a little hope in me.

It was Monday morning. Assembly time. All children were in a queue walking towards the auditorium. I spotted Navya too in the queue .She was holding a small wild flower in her hand. I knew that the flower was for me. Everyday Navya would bring for me a wild flower from the school hedging. I knew this gesture gave her a great joy so I never stopped her.

I was standing with my other collegues to join the queue. Suddenly she spotted me and ran backwards towards me. Sr. Celia saw her and pulled her up. “Navya, what are you doing? Where are you running , breaking the queue? Don’t you see all other students walking in complete discipline?”

Navya said nothing.

“Now you will stand here till the school gets over.”

I stepped into the auditorium with a heavy heart. The students of standard seventh were singing the hymn’ Tu pyaar ka sagar hai, tere ek bundh ke pyase hum….’

I closed my eyes but I just couldn’t connect to my Heavenly Father. I could only see Navya pleading for mercy.

Sometimes love compels you to break all rules. I experienced it for myself.

After the assembly I went to Sr. Celia’s office. Navya stood there. She looked at me and bowed down her head. I said nothing. She was already punished.

“ Sister , today Navya got the punishment because of me.” Sister looked at me in utter surprise.

I related to her Navya’s entire story right from her infancy and the reason behind her such unacceptable behaviour.

‘Its so sad.I feel so sorry for her”

“ Me too Sister, just trying to make her journey a little easier.

That year was the last year. Navya’s father had shifted to Anand for a new job and I lost touch with her. That time she was too young just 12 years old to understand what I meant to her.

But today she surely does. That’s what had brought her to see me. “Navya , presently, what are you doing ?”

“Mam, I have completed my graduation with English, and also finished my teacher’s training. Want to be a teacher.

“Navya I still wonder, as a student did you never feel you could change your behaviour?”

“Mam, I tried to change many a times, be more obedient, more sincere and disciplined. But no one wanted to believe in me. Everyone thought I was just pretending to be good, I was already carrying a permanent tag of being a notorious girl.”

I said to myself, may be it is true what she says. We usually don’t give up our biased thinking. But I just couldn’t forget the storms that had tossed her life.

“ Mam let’s forget the past, and celebrate this proud moment.You always stood by me, supported me and gave me wings to fly.”

Yes, it was indeed a moment for celebration. The time stood still.. I looked at Navya once again. There she stood, with faith and determination in her eyes and the vast clear sky above her. She was ready to take the leap.

**Curie Pereira**