

Designing a Fighter Jet

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As a young boy, my friends and I walked back home from school at Rameswaram. On the way, we often rested on the banks of our village pond. While my friends practised skimming pebbles over the rippling water, I would sit and watch the cranes and seagulls soar in the sky. The sight of those birds inspired me and I dreamt of my future.

As I grew older, my goal became clearer. I knew I had to go into engineering to realise my dreams. The Madras Institute of Technology, popularly known as MIT, was the best institution for technical studies in South India. I studied hard to win a scholarship that allowed me to study in such a well-known college. But it wasn't until the day I entered MIT that I saw my goal standing before me.

The MIT campus boasted of two large aircraft that were on display. I remember sitting near them, long after other students had gone back to the hostel. I was fascinated by the details of the design and wanted someday to create such an aircraft. For my final project at MIT, I was asked to design a fighter jet with a team of four other classmates. We had distributed the work among us.

One day my teacher reviewed my progress and exclaimed, "Abdul, I'm really disappointed with your plan, I had expected much more from you."



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I offered several excuses but my teacher refused to listen. “Sir, please give me one more month, I’m sure I’ll come up with a better design,” I pleaded with him. He looked at me and said, “Look, young man, I’ll give you three days. If on Monday morning you fail to show me a better design, I’m afraid your scholarship will be cancelled.”

I was speechless. The scholarship was my lifeline. Without it, I would be helpless. I had no choice but to keep on working. That night I remained awake all night toiling on the project. The next morning I just took an hour’s break, ate very little and went back to work. On Sunday morning, I had almost completed the task when I suddenly felt a presence behind me. I turned around to discover my teacher peering at my drawing.

After examining my work, he patted me on my back and said, “I knew I was putting you under stress by asking you to meet an impossible deadline. I never expected you to perform so well!” I had hardly slept or eaten in the past three days, but I now felt a huge sense of joy and relief. Not only did I keep my scholarship, I also graduated from MIT with outstanding marks.

I had already accomplished my goal of successfully designing an aircraft and now I was drawing close to my dream of flying one too. It was amazing to think that just like the seagulls I had observed as a child, I would soon soar in the sky.

THE END



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Vocabulary

(All meanings given in context to the story)

Distribute	-	Give away things
Fascinated	-	Full of interest
Inspire	-	Give somebody confidence or enthusiasm
Institution	-	Organisation
Lifeline	-	Support that enables people to survive
Perform	-	Do some work, task or duty
Ripple	-	A small wave on any liquid surface
Scholarship	-	An amount of money given to students to help them study
Skim	-	Move quickly and lightly over a surface
Soar	-	Fly very high



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