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Creative Writing 241 Activity #1

**Transcribe your story:**

Hello everyone, just to clarify I actually have two names, and my story is about this. I gave a lot of thought abou what story exactly I was going to say, and I thought this will probably be most appropriate. So my legal name is Hasan, but the name I usually go by, or what nearly all of my friends call me - my parents, my other like, whoever - my name is Rohit. And the reason why I have two names is kind of interesting. It starts off kind of sad, but hopefully by the end it will be a little hopeful. So I got these two names from both of my grandfathers. Unfortunately, I never got the chance to meet them. My name Hasan was given to me by my grandfather from my mom’s side, and my name Rohit was given to me from my grandfather from my dad’s side.

I’ll start with my mom’s side grandfather first [voice crack]. So, I'm from Bangladesh originally. I was born there and I came to America when I was around like two or three. So I don’t remember anything about Bangladesh, and I also never really grew up with like cousins or uncles or aunts because the complete rest of my family were in Bangladesh. So the only people here with me is me, my parents, my little brother. I ended up going to Bangladesh for the first time since then about two years ago, and this was the summer before college. So I was kind of like very excited. I was like “wow, I’m about to meet, you know. About to go to the motherland”. About to meet my cousins, my uncles. Super excited. I heard so much about the rest of my family and I finally get to meet them, I was like, I was like “wow right?”. So I go, and then, I’m… As soon as I get there I’m bombarded with like “Oh my God, how have you been? You grew so much blah blah blah” [chuckle]. And then all these people came out the literal nowhere you know. Apparently I have 60 plus cousins didn’t even know they existed. I have like 12 aunts who were here you know. All types of people came out to see me which, it felt very heartwarming. But so I always wondered why I had two names. I think when I was growing up this was kind of like a big thing I guess with my self identity, if that makes sense. So generally what happened when I was younger was when it comes to school or quote on quote legal stuff or papers, I would put my legal name Hasan but when I was with my friends I would go by Rohit. So it kind of like this duality, I had like two separate lives or two separate names. My grandfather from my mom’s side - he grew up extraordinarily poor. So poor to the point where his parents, my great grandparents actually abandoned him when he was a child, and his two little brothers. Unfortunately that is just kind of how it goes over there. He quite literally woke up one day and his parents were not there. They were homeless, he didn’t know where they were. Super, super tragic, I don’t know what I would do if I was in that situation. Anyways, he is probably around twelve at this point, his younger brother is six, and his youngest brother is probably two. This is a super tough situation. He goes to the local mechanic shop, and this is like where - in Bangladesh they have these things called rickshas, which is a tricycle with a seat - i’m not sure if you guys are familiar. Basically it was a mechanic shop for those, bikes, tractors, and all types of other farming equipment. He worked there for about ten years, slowly building himself up. He eventually got to the point where he was able to put him and his two little brothers in school. By the time he became a young adult, this was around the time of the war of Bangladesh independence started happening. He didn’t participate in the war directly but he started to get into politics at this time. By the end of the war he somehow became one of the very first senators of Bangladesh at the time. “That’s crazy”. He marries my grandmother, and they have a wonderful family. He always wanted a grandson. For some reason, he always wanted a grandson. But my mom is actually the youngest in her family - she is the youngest child in her family. All of her older siblings, either didn’t get married yet or they only had daughters, so whatever reason he didn’t get a grandson. He was super old at this point, maybe 70, 80, 90, like really, really old. He really, really wanted a grandson. Unfortunately he didn’t get it but a couple days before he died he had a dream. In this dream - he told his family, and this is literally the day or a couple of days before he died. Apparently, he meets me in his dream and then at the end of it he asks me what my name is and I told him that my name is Hasan. He woke up one day and he was like “Yo, yo, yo I just met my grandson. His name is Hasan. When I get a grandson I'm going to name him Hasan.” They were like “OK bet!”. Unfortunately, he died he passes and my m om gets pregnant with me a long ways down the line. She in her mind had the name Hasan for me from her father, however, my father had the name Rohit for me from his father.

The story for that was - my grandfather form my dad’s side: he’s from the farming town, farming villages in Bangladesh. This was also during the time when the war for independence was happening and this was a brutal worl... - brutal war excuse me. Lots of people dying you know. He was from the farming villages, kind of like in the outskirts, nowhere near any major cities. They heard that there was an army that was going to invade. This was during the time of the war so everyone was like “oh now what's going to happen?”. So my grandfather at the time was basically kind of like a community leader and everyone came together and basically they had to make a decision. Either they had to leave and abandon their home and everything that they have. Because they were farmers, their wealth/ property was the rice paddies that they have, the cows and the other cattle and that was literally all that they quote on quote owned. If they were to leave form that area, they would have been abandoning everything. So either they had to leave or they had to fight. Both are pretty bad options but they ended up choosing to fight. They took their picket forks that they used to shovel, their macheites, and whatever they got. All of the healthy men from the village stood up and they were like about 150 of them all together. They were waiting but no army came the first day. So they were up all night anticipating if something was about to happen - nothing happened. They were waiting for three days, and on the third day they came and apparently what ended up happening was that it wasn’t a full on army, but rather a small platoon. They were decked out in their uniform with their rifles and whatnot. Even though on our side we did outnumber them, they were trained soldiers and they came with an agenda. It was not a pretty situation. So my grandfather goes to talk with the leader/general of the platoon trying to steer them off. “Don’t attack up blah blah blah”. The general basically gave them the same ultimatum that there was before. Either you leave or we are going to take everything. So they ended up fighting the whole night, and after a long battle. They platoon, maybe they ended up having a change of heart or something but they kind of backed off/ surrendered. By the time this happened this was early morning time. Throughout the night they set some things ablaze, and some people died unfortunately. So over there, and I’ve been here during my summer trip but over there and in the morning time especially, the sky gets super red. I don’t think that it gets as red over there unlike here in Chicago. The sky is super red, it's not orange, it's straight red. My grandfather is walking around and there are some houses ablaze, some dude got his leg chopped off, the red is sky. Everything is red around him. Thankfully he got through it and even though we took some losses everything worked out in the end without anything major happening. He was super inspired by this event and thought ‘I’m going to name my grandson Rohit after this”. And what Rohit means is - the original verbiage of Rohit comes from sanskrit and it means the idea of red itself, the color, idea, feeling. I guess he was inspired by all the red around him and that's how I got Rohit. So when I was born I had these two names. They ended up going with my father’s father, what he set off for me so I was named Rohit, which means red. But when I got to America there was the perfect opportunity to also name me Hasan as my legal name, and that is how I got Hasan as well.

Interesting point about Hasan was that, I don’t know if it has anything to do with the dream but Hasan Rahim is an arabic name. And what Hasan means in Arabic is beautiful, and what Rahim means it mercy. So my name literally translates to beautiful mercy.

3a) **What could you add to make the story even more descriptive, vivid, and interesting?**

For starters, I definitely could have said the story in a more precise and punculal way. I did ramble for a little bit and did not put in as much detail as I would have liked. I also filled in some of the gaps in the story with filler words because I did not have all the details myself. To make the story descriptive I could have researched my story better to include all of the detail, and then added some imagery of what the landscape of Bangladesh is like and how that relates to the story as in the war that happened and the dream my grandfather had. Also I think fully establishing the subtle metaphors in the story would go a long way to make the story more interesting the closer you look.

3b) **What could you do to give your story stronger coherence: beginning, middle, and an end?**

I definitely think that because I was rambling a little bit and did not know/include all of the details my story jumped from one person or section to another to explain or contextualize another person or section. What I mean by this is that I would go in one direction, but then I had to backtrack to explain why I was going in that direction, if that makes sense. To give the story stronger coherence, I would have to contextualize everything from the beginning or as I am saying the story so I don’t have to backtrack. I think the story would flow better that way. My story does not have a beginning, middle, or end per say but rather two sides of the same coin kind of thing - which could be another metaphor I can somehow incorporate.

3c) **What could you do to give your story stronger thematic meaning?**

I may have mentioned this a little bit in the previous questions, but I think fully fleshing out the subtle underlying metaphors and intercratices of the characters, overall story, and the environment would give the story a stronger thematic meaning. Also, if I could hint at these themes earlier in the story, it would give the moment when it is fully revealed more weight. For example: When talking about the red sky and the red around my other grandfather, the red theme is only introduced and climaxed then. If I could hint at the red theme earlier that would be a more spectacular moment. I thought of this retroactivity, but incorporating a “two side of the same coin” theme would fit perfectly with the fact that my story is about two names, but the same person. Going more in depth about the dream my first grandfather had would also give the story a stronger thematic meaning as well, almost adding a thin layer of mysticism to it.

3d) **How would you use figurative language to enhance your story?**

When I said the story to the class, I was kind of trying to tell my story as fast as possible, and because I did not know all of the details. Because of this I don’t think I used any figurative language or imagery. I could definitely use it to describe the environment that my my grandfathers were in, and I could definitely use to to describe the red sky my grandfather saw and the soldiers that came to the village. Matter of fact, figurative language would go well in describing the village itself, and the mechanic shop that my first grandfather worked in. It would enhance my story by giving the reader more of a picture of what the landscape was like and make them feel like they were in the story with my grandfathers.