# Chapter 3: Phoenix

Her fetters burst, and just released from prison,   
A virgin phoenix from her ashes risen. - Christiana Baldwin

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## Arrival

It was early afternoon in late January, my south-west train stopped at the Bournemouth train station. It was chilly and I was prepared for the cold air that would cut through my skin. I didn’t rent a house before I got here, I thought it would be just a good idea to go and check out myself the houses I would want to live in. I took one of the yellow cabs just outside the station, the driver put my language into the trunk, which in all amounted to three large air travel language bags. And off I went to the White hall hotel, besides the fact that I got the cheapest deal to stay there for about a week till I found a house to rent, the hotel was close to the beach which I wanted the most at that time.

I just slept in my room for two days straight, neither did I wanted to go out nor did I bothered myself to do it. I searched online for houses for rent, mostly shared houses to share with other people, I was bit scared to live all by myself, it would have been another ordeal. In those two days I shortlisted some 4-5 different houses listed online, I had to make sure that it is also close to my job location at West Cliff road. It was better here, better than London, with respect to the amount of travel that was needed to and from work. A 20-30 minute walk was manageable.

My joining date with Inferno Media was 15th of February, so I still had about 2 weeks to finalise my residence. On the third day, I called the landlords with the listings which were around same 20-30 minutes walking distance, all were shared accommodation and double bed rooms with shared kitchen and bathroom. I was very uncomfortable with all that, and with my salary I really could have afforded to rent a flat in an apartment, but the comfort was not as important as wanting to be with somebody. All the houses I saw were kind of good but also were kind of repulsive, in the sense, given the proximity with the university they were habituated with students and had very shabby kitchen, which was a bit of a downer for me and 2 of them I saw were to be shared with professionals with clean kitchen but one were too low light rooms, that would have further lowered my blues. I spent some two days looking at these houses but to no avail. I still had time so I was not really worried, but that was also a priority and living aloe that hotel room without anyone to talk to was also getting miserable. On the third day I took break, again loathed myself in my room. Next day I tried visiting the estate agent offices which were in the town centre and in surrounding area, hoping that they might directly be able to show me the required house. And so on that day I again saw few houses with similar problems, I was getting desperate. Finally I looked at the last agent google maps was showing me, Adams Letting Agents Wimborne road. It was almost about 5 p.m. by then and it was going to be closed at 6:00 p.m., I was some 40 minutes walking distance, so I decided may be tomorrow will be a good idea as I was tired anyhow. So the next day at around 11:00 am, I trudged to Wimborne road. The agent took told me happily that there was a room available, but not in a shared accommodation but as a paying guest with a landlady just behind the road at Bryanston road. I checked it out with him and I liked her immediately, Mrs. Russell, Maureen Russell, had a single room available at her house on with a clean kitchen and an add-on of a garden and a living room which was up for use. I took it immediately without hesitation. I asked if it was OK with her I will move in tomorrow itself. So I did the paper work, paid the agent, and went to the hotel somewhat triumphant, or rather at least relieved.

So that was it, my new home was now 137, Bryanston road, for next whatever time I was going to be there, till whatever event that was happen, which might take to wherever I would be next. The very next day, I called the radio cabs, and offloaded my language at Maureen’s house. She was a very lovely British women who looked to be in her mid-sixties but I later got to know to be in her mid-seventies. Maureen had a cute little Pomeranian cross breed girl whom she adored, so Lilly was our third house mate. I still had some 8-9 days left till my job began, I rested for few more days, as it was winter I was not much interested to really go out. I just spent time having some chat with Maureen or watching the TV with her. Sometimes cooking for her or just sitting in my room staring at the ceiling.

I was in a rather good location, as I checked on the google maps, Inferno was just about 25 minutes’ walk from my house and good thing was that the market which included Waitrose as well as Lidl was just about 5 minutes’ walk. So I felt like I was set for a new life at least for the time and all set to off load my emotional baggage. I was sucked into this hell hole of depression, which I needed to conquer desperately. I spent some lazy days doing nothing more than exploring Wimborne road for next few days till the day to join Inferno. Wimborne road was lined with all sort of shops with an exception that there was no Indian restaurant, though there were some Pakistani shops selling Indian food stuffs.

It was Monday morning, and still winter, I plodded towards the Poole road, with the google mas now it was not very difficult to find places. Actually the job at Inferno was a sort of demotion as I would not be doing anything in continuity with my last job position. I was not hired as a Game designer, rather I was hired in a sales team. Given my 6 years of experience at Digital Dreams, my understanding of customer needs and overall ecosystem of Gaming market, I was a desirable candidate for the job, though not exactly a best fit. I needed to be here for reasons other than career advancement and as Inferno was a very small company with size of 11 employees, the work on sales team was of manageable stress. That was sort of exactly what I wanted.

“Hi, I am Leela. I have an appointment with Malcom Marshall.”

“Good Morning Ma’am. He is expecting you. Just right through that corridor, first door.”

“Good Morning Malcom.

Hi…Leela…”

“Good Morning Leela. How are you? Glad you are on time.”

“Ya…Good morning…I am fine thank you.”

“Did you have all the living arrangements settled well in Bournemouth?”

“Yes, I kind of got tucked in well. Spent some week here.”

“Well that’s good. Then I’ll say you are all set to get on your new job.”

Malcom briefed me a little bit more on the company and its workings, which I obviously knew. Inferno was not exactly in gaming as my previous company was, it was a media company. They basically designed custom made gaming stations for outdoor utility which were used for advertisements. These were interactive stations, hooked up with the internet, and social media, all new age fancy stuff trying to get closer to the Minority Report style public engagement.

“As we are still a start-up we just have four sales guys. Three of the other guys will be covering London which is our main market and you are to be covering coastal regions.

Our main cash flow is through our service which we provide to the companies, but you are to be focusing on our first flag ship product ‘Cyborg’, which is our own customizable station. And so it will be bit different for you from the other guy’s, at least in the beginning. As you will be working with one of our Engineer or Hacker as I like to call her.

So that is it, Leela. You can ask me if you have any questions any time, or otherwise anything that might bother you about your job profile.”

“Thanks Malcom. I think I am good at the moment.”

You can have a talk with Amal at the reception, she will show you the desk.”

“Cool…Sure…Thanks.”

I was dismayed at the size of my desk and the overall ambience of my space, given that I compared it with my small furnished empire in London. On top of it I was to share it with this she-hacker, I donno who.

“Hi, Miller…Susan Miler. Malcom just told me you are here…I am the technical part of Cyborg. We will be working together and also you like it or not sharing this office…ha…”

“Hi, Leela…nice to meet you…

Yes…Malcom told me…the hacker will join me.”

“Ha ha…that’s just what he likes to call me, he feels it’s cool, but he doesn’t know yet it has become such a cliché word, that it’s not cool anymore. But whatever you can call me Susan, or as I prefer just Sue.

I hope everything is good with your logistics.”

“Yes, I rented a nice house, everything is cool at that front.”

“That’s cool. So tell me more…”

Sue was very talkative, and we stuck a very good friendship in no time. There was a good amount of acceptance in her eyes for me, even though I had become a bit of a laconic, given my blues. She made me feel comfortable, and explained this Cyborg thing, which was nothing but just a fancy name for a bit of a modified gaming station which was also customizable. But whatever, now it was getting mysteriously cool as I was working to sell Cyborgs at Inferno with a Hacker.

As I learned, Sue was this carelessly informal New Yorker, supremely at ease in her casual blue jeans and t-shirt amid all other well-dressed employees. But I mean, she didn’t had to, her part was of the computer nerd with the bit black glasses that she sported so well, but she was laid back nonetheless. Apparently, she was in the UK for last 2 years and had left the States to explore the ‘land of her ancestors’ as she herself liked to put it. She was bit of a wild ‘other cultures’ fan.

To her fellow geeks in the office, Sue was the second coming of Steve Wozniak, who could hack in to any hardware. To me she was the cover-up for work lag that was about to happen as I was not really there to do any work. I was in this limbo of sadness and depression and nothing really was going to make much sense to me and nor was I there with any grand ambition to give the company a million dollar turnover. I was there to ruminate, ruminate over my pathetic and miserable past and get my lessons and move on. Though at that point nor did I knew what grand lessons were kept there nor did I had any idea how to move on.

And months passed with me and Sue visiting customers on the east coast as well as around Bristol. Our potential customers were the hoteliers, theatre producers, movie producers sometimes banks and anyone else who needed to do some chick tech publicity. My job was to make the sales pitch and Sue was to customize the Cyborg. But my heart was not at all with work which Sue had gauged within a week of me at work but she was kind enough not to inform Malcom and as an add-on she really backed me up at the sales pitch. So practically she was doing both.

## Bournemouth Pier

Almost 7 months passed with similar routine, and the fall arrived.

Put the stuff about solitary walks and the life in depression.

Mrs. Russell inquired, “Are you alright dear? You don’t really look happy ever since you have arrived here.”

I told her my entire story, and that was such a relief to off-load my burden. She told me that she herself was been married twice in her life and finally she had a toy-boy for her for some time whom she finally kicked out of the house. But at that point my problem was not getting a new guy, neither was it wanting to get a new man in my life, my problem was this hole of meaninglessness of both life and love that had got punched in my soul. I had been seeing a therapist in London but at that time the issue was really sadness caused due to my crumbled relationship, now it was more like post-divorce depression, loss of faith in love and struggle to find the meaning to my mutton-chopped life.

“Why don’t you go visit Dr. Frankl at the Bournemouth Hospital. My friend Marian had similar problems. He is quite good. You should book an appointment.”

“Doctor who?”

“Dr. Frankl. I recommend you should.”

“OK, I think that is helpful. I will surely be doing that.”

I was actually in such a thoughtless desperation that I didn’t bother to do any check about the reviews and surfing other psychotherapists. I took my phone and googled the Royal Bournemouth Hospital, looked up the number and booked an appointment. For Saturday, 3:00 pm with one, Dr. Frankl.

## Therapist

Appointment with Dr. Frankel

Suffering and the meaning of life. Put the stuff about necessity to formulate the meaning of life. Do the research and write about the interactions with the therapist.

Finding a meaning in life is our primary motivational force. Having a purpose is what we value more than anything else. More than pleasure, money and power, more than our comfort, our security and our happiness.

Discuss her problems with sexuality.

## Susan Disappears

It was during the summer of 2016, when we got a new sales lead all thanks to Sue, it was her friend, Rufus. There was some sort of weeklong conference in Bristol for which they needed interactive visual information stations. As there weren’t many media companies providing the similar hardware and software support and since it was anyways Sue’s friend the deal was in our pocket. So we went to Bristol few days after the requirement was finalised and the budget was worked out and agreed upon by both the parties. As Sue was the engineering magician she was obviously needed to be there onsite and it turned out that my previous expertise as a game designer was required to create the required graphics so I had to be there, in Bristol. There were a lot of interactive programs that were needed to be created and the conference was big, to be commencing in coming November. To get the understanding of everything that was required and complete the designs we were required to be living in Bristol till November, as designers as well as tech support team during the conference.

We checked into Travelodge, an affordable lodge on Anchor road not too far from the university. This was to be my new residence for next four months. Sue had not told me much about her friend Rufus neither did I ask as I corresponded with the university office to seal the sales deal. So on Monday I was finally going to go meet Rufus, at the university, not that I was any excited but that name sounded a bit mystical.

“Hey Rufus, good morning.”

“Hey morning Sue, how are you?”

“I am good, thanks, meet my colleague Leela.”

“Hello Leela, I’m Rufus. Dr.Drake if we are being formal.”

“Oh. So you teach here?”

“I am Head of the Neuroscience department’s Parapsychology research cell that takes up most of my time so I’m exempt from teaching classes, but I do have four students working on my research projects.”

As I learned, Rufus was Dr. Rufus Drake, for someone who looked like in his late thirties he was quiet young to be the head of a cell, maybe he was exceptionally brilliant, and he was a very handsome Brit. He had this angular face and gorgeous cheekbones and a deep voice indicating his knowledge seeping through.

“Would you care for some tea?” He asked.

“Yes, I would like to…” I was adding, but Sue broke me.

“Ahh, actually it would be just great if you could take us to the installation site and show me electrical infrastructure at that location.”

“Yeah that’s right, we should do that. Shall we go?”

The conference was going to take place at Victoria auditorium, and the stations were to be installed in the outside hall. Sue got into action noting the electric points and what all new wiring will be required to power the twelve stations that were to stay live. My job now was to take all the relevant data from Rufus, so that I can design the storyline and graphics and send it to the Bournemouth office developers to create the interactive program. As Sue finished with the evaluation we went to the cafeteria to finish what was left in his office.

“So, Leela how are you finding the life in the UK?”

“Actually I live here. I haven’t been back to India for over ages.”

“Well that’s nice to hear. I just had my trip to India last summer and that was not the first time I been there, actually I lived in India for over a year some 7-8 years back and straight out of the university I was on the hippie trail.”

“Well that sounds interesting and what’s the hippie trail?”

“You know up north Rishikesh, some bit more of the Himalayas, the Taj Mahal, then to Goa and Humpi. You have obviously been there, haven’t you?” British people have always more to tell about the exploits around India then I ever had.

“Yeah, I went to Goa, once. Nothing much.

And how did you enjoyed your trip.”

“Well it’s as they say, ‘the mystic east’.”

“Mystic east! Like what? Perhaps I don’t see any more mysticism there…like what did you got to experience, yoga classes catered for tourists, dilapidated temples, rituals around the rivers, not to mention the perpetual complain that western tourist make about the chaos. Or did you find the modern IT infrastructure mystical. I always think how mundane modern India has become compared to previous centuries.”

Rufus looked at me thoughtfully for few seconds as if accessing my character. What kind of picture did I made for this man?

“Don’t be so sure of that. As I understand current generation skim only the surface of Mother India; they have no idea what lies beneath her façade.”

“Would you care to enlighten me?”

“I think I kind of know where you are going with this Rufus I would prolly suggest you not to have that discussion right now. “ Sue interrupted.

“Hey I want to listen what he was about to tell.”

“Trust me Leela, you don’t want to get into that right now.

You share the data that is required to be presented on the stations to Leela on Google Drive.”

Her remark caught my curiosity, but then I thought what else could it be about my own country and my own culture that he could be telling me other than all that I had already see. So I just let it go and in some hours even forgot that he was even going to tell me something.

Through July and August I had churned few gigabytes of data in form of videos and pictures and textual information to create an interactive movie. Sue was busy customising the hardware. I had to get approvals from Rufus about designs and get it tested with his research students, so I had to be there. And when those interactive graphics were developed by our Bournemouth team Sue had to test them live on the Cyborg stations, so she had to be there. Rufus was going to be off for first two weeks of September before the new semester starts. I was back from the temporary office at the university that day.

Jose the lodge’s thin, bespectacled, ultra-polite manager was standing at the reception desk and handed me my key.

“Good evening, Ma’am.”

“Evening Jose, Sue home yet?”

“Ms. Miller was here Ma’am but she has gone out.”

Strange. Sue rarely left the lodge at night. But I was too eager to get under my shower to think more about it. Seconds later, I was standing in my bathroom, luxuriating in the water jets spraying over me washing off the day’s sweat.

I threw on a clean t-shirt and pants, picked up my key-card and made my way out of the room. Hopefully, Sue was now back and could debrief. We had this routine over the past two months- me, in the office and she, close to the auditorium- keeping contact minimum during the day, then reconnecting back at the lodge, no matter how late the hour. It was a chance to kick off our shoes, have some mint tea and drop the conference bull shit.

We made a good team, me as the door opening front women, Sue as the computer nerd with attitude. Not only was she an excellent state-of the art programmer, she could instinctively sniff out others of her kind. Within minutes she would know the potential of people she met and weather the installation could bring the profits. She had never been wrong and her awesome talent was one of the main reason why inferno had profited so handsomely over the years.

Cautiously, I made my way along the corridor to the adjacent room and tapped on Sue’s door. Routinely, she’d call out, “Babe! You’re allowed!” as an invitation to join her, but this time there was silence. Still out? This struck me as odd. She wasn’t a great socializer. Beautiful though she was, there was nothing Sue enjoyed more than sitting on her bed, laptop balanced on her knees, peering into cyberspace.

I turned the handle on the door and it swung open, revealing a darkened room – no glow of light greeted me. Slowly, I walked in.

“Sue?”

One quick scan of the premises as I scanned the room told a shocking story. It was completely empty. Normally the room would be strewn with papers, data sheets, prototype designs, t-shirts, jeans, underwear….sue treated this entire room as walk-in closet.

Now, in sinister contrast, it was clean and tidy. Not one sock on the floor, not one print-out on the bed. The evidence before my eyes didn’t make sense but the message was overwhelmingly clear: Sue, my partner, had gone. I immediately tried to reach her cell phone without much luck, it was out of coverage area. I never bothered to take Rufus’ phone number. What all things she will do in this setting in 2016?

The following scene entirely has to be rewritten.

I must’ve stood there, paralyzed, for more than five minutes, waiting for a plausible explanation for what I was seeing. None came.

Eventually, the distant ambulance siren outside prompted me into action. I made a brief check of the closets and drawers, finding – as I’d already guessed – absolutely nothing. When I checked the fridge, however, the door racks were stocked with beer cans, so I grabbed one – mercifully, it was still cold – and slumped down in an armchair.

It was very quiet, which made the hour seem late, although it couldn’t have been more than 8:30 pm. No sounds came from the street, nor from other rooms. For the first time since Sue and I moved into Travelodge, just over two months ago, I noticed the ticking of the clock on the wall above the bed.

For a few minutes, my mind remained numb. I guess I was in shock. Then, lubricated by slugs from the can in my hand, the mental machinery started working again, although for all the good it did, it might just as well have stayed on hold.

“It doesn’t make sense,” I kept telling myself. “Why would he do that? Why now… I mean *why* for Christ’s sake? Why didn’t she *tell* me she was going?”

My ignorance wasn’t helped by the fact that I didn’t know much about my enigmatic partner. Apart from the fact that she was superb at what she did, drank coffee all day, ate a lot of chicken burgers and enjoyed coaching me in American slang to loosen up my stiff, middle class English, the women was a mystery.

Was there a failed marriage somewhere, back in New York? Had she been a cyber crook, then turned informant, having meeting with Assange somewhere? I didn’t had a clue.

As the beer got to me, a darker thought crossed my mind: maybe Sue had finally woken up to the fact that she was the mover-and-shaker in our company, doing all the rain-making, and had decided she’d be better off on her own.

To get rid of this uncomfortable notion, I forced myself to be practical. “She may have left a note at reception for me,” I reasoned, but dismissed the idea, not even bothering to pick up the house phone. Jose would have handed it to me with my key when I’d entered the hotel.

I thought about contacting the American Embassy or the local police, but again, ruled it out. There were no signs of struggle and no evidence of an unplanned departure. On the contrary, there was every indication that Sue had left voluntarily, in a planned and orderly fashion.

“You’re concerned about her, Ms. Leela? Call us in a couple of weeks if you haven’t heard anything.” That’s what they’d say at the Embassy.

Another idea briefly lit up my mind with hope. Hadn’t he said something about his mother in New Jersey? Hadn’t she been ill? Maybe he’d received an urgent phone call from the ‘States and raced to London to catch the next flight home. But, reluctantly, I had to rule it out. There was simply no way she’d disappear on that kind of errand without leaving a note. Even when she made day-trips to Bournemouth, to sort out glitches in Inferno’s development programs down south, she made a point of letting me know. Go to the ‘States without telling me? Impossible.

I sank deeper into the armchair, a heavy weariness descending on me as I finished a second beer. With such an orderly departure, the odds were high she wasn’t coming back… not soon… maybe not ever. Whatever had propelled her out of the door might be compelling enough to make it permanent.

Eventually, I pushed myself to my feet, putting cell phone in my jeans pocket. Time for bed. As I moved toward the door, a tiny picture caught my eye on the coffee table. So neatly had it been placed in the centre of the table’s patterned surface that I’d assumed it was part of the design.

Picking it up and peering closely, I saw a vividly coloured and ferocious face, like a portrait of probably some Tibetan deity – which one, I couldn’t tell. But there was something implacably hostile about the staring black eyes that gave me the creeps. I flipped the picture over and saw two words in Sue’s familiar scrawl:

“Bye Leela.”

Two words that killed me; two incomprehensible words, delivered without warning, like a lethal karate chop on the back of my neck. Pocketing the evidence, I walked back to my room, stripped off, flopped on the bed and stared morosely at the darkened ceiling. Life was so bloody unfair. Just when I was about to get my head above water and start looking forward to new life, another fucking tsunami had washed over me.

I was still awake an hour later had no intentions of dinner, I couldn’t sleep. Tired though I was, one thought kept nagging at me: with Sue gone if I lost my job at Inferno I’d have little choice but to return to London and pick up some dreary job in the Game design business. Then, after a couple of miserable decades of hard labour, I’d retire to an English coastal cemetery-in-waiting like Bournemouth. The prospect filled me with gloom.

The next day I called Malcom at the office to enquire about Sue’s disappearance and he told me that she had submitted her resignation just three days back, he thought she must have told me. She had given him all the prototype designs and there was nothing much left as far as the Bristol project was concerned. She had finished her work well in time. Malcom was to hire another engineer over a month’s time and rest the project could be completed by the technicians as per Sue’s designs and prototypes.

Write some story how Leela knows Rufus had something to do with sue.

"Now what?" I asked myself. The motive that had propelled me back to Pune so quickly was to discover where and why Sue and Rufus were meeting. Was it romance, business, or merely social? Their rendezvous bothered me so much that I simply had to face the fact that I’d become obsessed with Rufus. But I was also genuinely puzzled. If Sue had decided to stay in town, why had she left the hotel? And why was she in touch with her and not me?

Then Rufus gets back to the office in two weeks.

“Rufus, where is Sue.”

“Where is Sue? She is Wales. Yeah I talked to her two weeks back, she told me she’s quitting on the project, and someone will replace her. Her job was done. ”

“Wait a minute, in Wales? Where? Why? Why didn’t she tell me?

I wan’t to see her.”

“She doesn’t want to see you.”

The bluntness of his retort hit me like a slap in the face. Not see me? It felt as if Sue, through this messenger was seeing right through me…my neediness, my dependence, my fear of being fired without her. But was that all we’d had going? It’d been fun, hadn’t it? We’d been buddies…of sorts.

I rallied and tried again.

“She’s not just my colleague, she’s my friend,” I said, lamely. “I need to know why she has disappeared and what’s she up to in Wales?”

“She’s got a gastrointestinal tumour.”

“What! She’s got a tumour in her stomach?”

“Right.”

“Why didn’t she tell me?”

“Maybe it was not the time.”

“Jesus…how bad is it?”

“Remember her trip to states two months back?”

“Of course.”

“She spent most of the time making visits to the Trinity Medical Centre, she did been having stomach pains when she was in B’mouth and when she got back home, her mom...she knew something was wrong, so she called the family doctor who referred her to Trinity. Gut diseases is one of their specialities. Pretty soon they had her do the Ultra Sound, MRI and god knows what else. They came up with stomach cancer.”

“How bad is it?”

“Some story of the cancer…

Millions of people – old people, sick people, dying people – cling to hope until their last breath, against all reason, against all logic. They’ve got a terminal disease, they’re over ninety years old, their bodies are falling apart… and still they go on hoping… hoping this isn’t *it*, this isn’t *The End*. Why do you suppose 99 percent of people do that?”

I shrugged a wordless non-reply.

“Because that way, they don’t have to look death in the face. Hope keeps them facing the other way, towards life. They go on looking at life, longing for it, begging for it, even while it’s being torn out of their hands. And just to reinforce a useless lie, they surround themselves with relatives, friends, medical professionals who keep telling them, ‘It’s okay,

you’re gonna make it… you’ll pull through… *there’s always hope*…’”

Story why she did not tell to Leela that she is leaving…

The story which takes her to the mystic.

# Chapter 4: The Mystic

## She arrives in Wales

## Meeting Sue

Why is she here? Talk about death…

## Meeting the Mystic

The mystic from the east we call Him ‘the blessed one’, nobody knows whether He’s Indian or Tibetan or may be even Japanese, He kind of looks like He’s neither or sometimes feels like He’s all three.

## Rufus is Sarjano

## Love affairs

Your ordinary love affairs are ugly, because you are both in discord. Your love affair is superficial. Because you like the blonde hair of the girl, or the shape of the nose, or the colour of the eyes, or the curves of the body…and you fall in love. Now, curves of the body, colour of eyes, blonde hair, are not going to last long. Sooner or later you will stop seeing them. This is not love! Hence conflict arises immediately. All so-called love affairs are nothing but conflicts disguised – jealousies, possessiveness, domination, ego trips.

## What is love?

Love is within every human being. It does not have to be brought in from somewhere. It is not something that has to be searched for somewhere. It is there. It is the very longing of life within everybody. It is the very fragrance of life within everybody.

Love is hidden inside human beings; it only needs to be released. The question is not how to produce it but only how to uncover it. There is something that we have covered ourselves with that does not allow to surface.

Love is inside us. Love is our intrinsic nature. Thus it is fundamentally wrong to ask human beings to cultivate love. The problem is not how to cultivate love, but how to investigate and find out why love is not able to manifest itself. What is the hindrance? What is the difficulty? Where is the barrier?

If there are no barriers, love will manifest itself; it does not need to be taught or explained. Every person would be filled with love if there were no barriers of wrong culture and conditionings imposed. It is inevitability. No one can avoid love. Love is our intrinsic nature.

Humans are here so that they can flow as love and arrive at godliness.

There are no scriptures, no definitions, and no doctrines for love. There is no set of principles for love.

## Why doesn’t love grow?

Seed needs the right soil to germinate….

But if flowers of love don’t blossom in someone’s life we say, “You are responsible for it.” Nobody thinks of unsuitable soil, of shortage of water or a lack of warmth as the reasons this person’s “plant” hasn’t grown, hasn’t developed and hasn’t been able to reach the flowering stage.

## Between Sex and Love

The simple truth is that sex is starting point of all the journeys of love. The birthplace of the journey to love, love’s Gangotri – the source, the origin of the Ganges of love – is sex. And everybody is inimical to it – all cultures, all religions, all gurus, and all holy men.

And we never give it a thought that it is sexual energy that ultimately transforms and transmutes into love. The evolution of love is nothing but transformed sex energy.

Human beings can never be separated from sex. Sex is primary point of one’s life; one is born out of it. Existence is accepted the energy of sex as the starting point of creation.

The peacock is dancing to woo its beloved. The peacock is calling his beloved, his spouse. These are all expressions of sexual energy. These are all different manifestations of sexual energy.

It is only sexual energy that flowers into energy of love.

And until the naturalness of sex is accepted wholeheartedly nobody can love anybody.

Energy of sex is divine energy that is why this energy creates new life. It is greatest, most mysterious force of all.

Accept sex blissfully. Acknowledge its sacredness. Acknowledge its benediction.

My own understanding is such that man had his first ever glimpse of *Samadhi,*

Of meditation, in moments of love making – nowhere else. It was only in moments of lovemaking.

Those who meditated on this truth, those who reflected deeply on the phenomenon of sex, of lovemaking, saw that in moments of lovemaking, at the climax, the mind becomes empty of thoughts. For a moment all thoughts disappear. And this emptiness of the mind, this disappearance of the thoughts, is the showering of divine bliss. They had discovered the secret.

They had also discovered the secret that if mind can be freed from thoughts through some other process, the same bliss can be attained. From this developed the system of yoga and of no-mind that gave birth to meditation, to prayerfulness. At the root of all this is the experience of lovemaking.

If you wish to know the phenomena of called love, the first key is that you accept the sacredness, the divinity, the godliness of sex with a total heart, with your full heart. And you will be amazed to see that the more totally, the more wholeheartedly you accept sex, the freer you will become of it.

And this very same acceptance will lift you to the heights where one day you will experience that which has no perceptible trace in sex. If sex is coal, one day the diamond of love will also manifest from it. And that is the first key.

## Between Husband and Wives

….Marriage…

When a couple’s life is destroyed in this way there remains no possibility of love. And if even a husband and wife cannot love each other freely – where the pull of love is most spontaneous and natural then who else can love each other? This same love between husband and wife can be elevated to such lofty heights, to such sublime proportions that it will break all barriers and expand higher and higher. It is possible. But if it is nipped in the bud, if it is stifled, if it is poisoned, then there is nothing to grow, nothing to expand.

When two lovers come closer at the time of sex, when they are passing through love making, they are indeed passing close to God’s temple. It is divine that is functioning in their closeness, it is God’s creative force that is working.

## Of Ego

The stronger a person’s “I” is, the smaller his capacity to become one with anybody. The “I” is a wall in between; it proclaims itself. Its proclamation is “you are you and I am I. There is a distance between the two.” Then no matter how much “I” may love you, “I” mat embrace you to my bosom, still we are two. No matter how closely we meet, still there is a gap in between – I am me and you are you. That is even why the most intimate experience fail to bring people close. Bodies sit close to each other but the persons remain far away. As long as there is the “I” inside, the sense of the other cannot be destroyed.

And as long as there is separateness there can be no experience of love. Love is experience of oneness.

“May the ego somehow disappear so that I can know the soul. May time somehow disappear so that I can know the eternal, the timeless, so that I can know that which is beyond time, that which is endless and beginningless.”

The meeting, the union of a woman and man, has a deep and profound meaning. It is the union of women and man that the ego shatters for the first time and one really meets someone.

## Of Love and Divinity

Love is the experience when the walls between two individuals have crumbled down and their beings have met, united and become one. When this experience happens between two individuals, I call it love. When this same experience happens between an individual and the whole, I call that experience godliness.

If this experience takes place between you and another individual – that barriers melt, that you become one at some deeper inner level, one melody, one flow, one being – then it is love. And if this same experience happens between an individual and the whole – than this experience is godliness. And so I say that love is ladder and godliness is the final destination of the journey.

Up to now it has been propagated that those in search of the divine have nothing to do with sex, and those on a journey into sex have nothing to do with spirituality and the divine.

I want to say to you that it is necessary to understand sex if you want to understand your search for the divine.

## On life

Life is a vast treasure trove, but we do nothing with it except waste it away, lose it, and squander it. Even before knowing what life is, we have trashed it. Life is dissipated without experiencing what was hidden in it- what secret, what mystery, what paradise, what bliss, what liberation.

But no matter how much treasure has been lost, even if a single moment of life is still left, something yet can be salvaged. Something still can still be known, something still can be attained. In search of life it is never so late that one has to feel despair. Within the smoke of mortality is hidden the flame of immortality, the light that never dies.

I want to tell you that certainly we will depart from this life, but there is no way whatsoever to depart from life, as such, ever. We will leave this abode, we will depart from this place, but the essence of life remains with us – we are it. The place will change, the house will change, but life? Life will be with us. There is absolutely no way to be rid of it.

## Of Sex

It is only by fully understanding sex that we’re able to transcend sex.

Ninety-nine percent of women’s hysteria and related illness is because of sexual repression. If people are so restless, so agitated, so unhappy and suffering, it is because they have turned their backs on a powerful life energy without trying to understand it. And this brings forth contrary results.

The first thing to be understood is that a person is born out of sex. A person’s whole physiology is made up of atoms of sex energy. A persons whole being is filled with the energy of sex. The energy of life itself is the energy of sex.

There certainly lies some mystery in it and it is necessary to understand it. Perhaps then we can go even beyond it.

The first thing is that attraction for sex in the very being of humans is not actually the attraction for sex. The sexual desire in the very core of humans is actually not a sexual desire. That is why after every sex act, they feel remorseful, they feel unhappy, depressed. They feel about how to be free of it, because they find nothing in it. Perhaps the attraction is of something else. And that attraction has a very religious significance to it.

The attraction is this…In their normal life humans are unable to reach the depths of their being except in the experience of sex. In their daily routine, they have a variety of experiences – the shop, the business, earning their living, earning fame – but only the experience of sexual intercourse takes them to the deepest in their being.

Deep down two things happen to them there.

First, in the moment of orgasm the ego vanishes. Egolessness emerges. For a moment, there is no ego; for a moment, no trace of even “I am.” Did you know that the “I” dissolves completely in the ultimate experience of religion, that in religion the ego also dissolves into nothingness? In the sexual act the ego fades away momentarily, one forgets if one is or not, the feeling of “my-ness” disappears briefly.

The second thing that happens is that for a while there is no time there. Timelessness emerges. Jesus Christ has said of enlightenment, “There shall be time no longer.” In the experience of enlightenment, there is no time at all. It is beyond time. There is no past, no future; there is only the present. This is second thing that happens in the experience of sex – there remains no past, no future; time also vanishes for a moment.

These are the most important elements of religious experience: egolessness and timelessness. And these two elements are what account for human’s mad pull toward sex. The craving is not for the body of a woman by a man or for the body of a man by a woman, not at all. The craving is for something else – for the taste of egolessness and timelessness.

After each experience he regrets his indulgence, but in a short while he feels the same craving again. Certainly there is some other meaning behind this craving which must be understood.

If we can become aware of that experience we can go beyond sex. If not, we will live in sex and die in sex.

A lightning flashes in the phenomena of sex, but it is from beyond sex, it is transcendental to sex, and it comes from the beyond. If we can catch hold of this experience of the beyond we can rise above sex, never otherwise.

I wish to emphasize that this strong and recurring pull towards sex is for experiencing the momentary state of samadhi, the no-mind, the super consciousness it brings.

And you can be free of sex only on the day when you start having the experience of samadhi, no-mind, without sex.

And foreplay is so important – far more important than actual sex contact, because actual sex contact lasts only for a few moments.

For afterplay to happen it needs a romantic mind, a poetic mind, a mind that knows how to be thankful, how to be grateful. The person, the women the man has bought you such a climax, needs some gratitude: afterplay is your gratitude.

## On love

Everyone is wanting to love and be loved. What is the meaning of love? The meaning is: “I have become isolated, disconnected; I want to be reunited with life.” And one of the deepest experience of that reunion happens between a women and a man in sex. Sex is the first experience of reunion.

Love grows only in love. Love needs a milieu of love – that is the most fundamental thing to be remembered. Only in a milieu of love does love grow; it needs the same kind of pulsation around.

To experience love you have to get rid of your parental voices inside, your program inside, your tapes inside.

They start pretending and acting and playing games. In the name of love people re just playing games. So the second thing to remember is never to demand perfection. You have no right to demand anything from anybody. If somebody loves you, be thankful, but don’t demand anything – because the other has no obligation to love you. If somebody loves you, it is a miracle. Be thrilled by miracle.

And when you love a person, don’t start demanding; otherwise from the very beginning you are closing the doors. Don’t expect anything. If something comes your way, feel grateful. If nothing comes, there is no need for it to come, there is no necessity for it to come. You cannot expect it.

How can love grow? Love needs a climate of love, love needs a climate of gratitude, thankfulness. Love needs a non-demanding atmosphere.

And really to be totally different in your individuality creates the best possibility of love.

To become a monk of a nun is very easy, but to love and not to be jealous, to love and not to be possessive, to love and let the other have their freedom, is really a great achievement. Only then will you experience love and its fragrance.

When you fall in love with a women or a man you feel a miracle has happened, but by and by the miracle disappears and everything settles into a routine.

## On permanence of love

Don’t think that love has to be permanent, and it will make your love life more beautiful because you will know that today you are together, and tomorrow perhaps you will have to part.

Love comes like a fresh, fragrant breeze into your home, fills it with freshness and fragrance, remains as long as existence allows it, and then moves out. You should not try to close all your doors, or the same fresh breeze will become absolutely stale. In life, everything is changing and change is beautiful; it gives you more and more experience, more and more awareness, more and more maturity.

It is giving you an idea of a permanent love and in life nothing is permanent.

Love becomes secondary, permanence becomes primary.

A real love will also change.

It may take you a little time to understand. You want this friend to be your friend forever, but tomorrow he turns to be your enemy. Somebody fills the gap who is a far superior being. Then suddenly you realise it was good that the other one got lost; otherwise you would have stuck with him. But still the lesson never goes so deep that you stop asking for permanence.

You will start asking for permanence with this man, this woman, now this should not change. You have not really learnt the lesson that change is simply the very fabric of life. You have to understand it and go with it. Don’t create illusions; they are not going to help. And everybody is creating illusions of different kinds.

## Love hurts.

Love never hurts anybody. And if you feel you have been hurt by love, it is something else in you, not your loving quality that feels hurt. Unless you see this you will go on moving in the same circles again and again.

“Love” as people ordinarily use the word is not love; it is lust. And lust is bound to cause hurt, because to desire somebody as an object is to hurt that person.

But even the most beautiful rose flower have their thorns, even the most satisfying situations have their problems.

## Female Orgasm

Man’s sexuality is local, like local anaesthesia. A woman’s body is sexual all over, and unless her whole body starts trembling with joy, each cell of her body starts becoming involved, she cannot have orgasmic explosion.

## The other

Even a man like Jean-Paul Sartre, a man of great intelligence, has to say that other is hell, that to be alone is better. He became so pessimistic that he said it is impossible to make it with the other, the other is hell. Ordinarily he is right. With meditation the other becomes your heaven. But Jean-Paul Sartre had no idea of meditation.

And when you share, there is no question of clinging. You flow with existence, you flow with life’s change, because it doesn’t matter with whom you share. It can be the same person tomorrow – the same person for your whole life – or it can be different persons.

One needs sometimes to be perfectly alone so that all boundaries disappear, as if the other does not exist at all, and the whole universe and the whole sky exists only for you. In that moment of aloneness one realises for the first time what infinity is.

But then if you live in it too much, by and by infinity bores you, it becomes tasteless. One wants a cosy place surrounded by the others so that one can forget oneself.

There are so many beautiful people around you have just chosen one stranger amongst many strangers. We are all strangers. Nobody is husband, nobody is wife.

Don’t have any secret, be absolutely open, and allow the other person also to be absolutely open, and respect openness. Never, even by your gestures, make the other person feel guilty. That is the greatest crime humanity has been committing, making people guilty. If the other feels guilty because of very deep rooted conceptions, help her to be free of the guilt.

Millions of people, have settled for marriage rather than intimacy – because intimacy is growth and it is painful.

Any relationship that keeps you childish is destructive. Get out of it. Any relationship that gives you challenge to grow, to go on an adventure, to go deeper and higher into life go into it.

But at each time a problem is solved you will have gone a little higher; each time a challenge is taken you will find something has become integrated in your being.

You cannot love a person who hates himself. And on this unfortunate earth almost everybody hates himself, everybody condemns himself. How can you love a person who is condemnatory towards himself? He will not believe you. He cannot love himself – how can you dare? He cannot love himself – how can you love him?

## Loneliness/ Aloneness

If you are not in love, you are lonely. If you are in love, really in love, you become alone.

Aloneness is not loneliness. Aloneness means the feeling that you are complete. Nobody is needed, you are enough. And this happens in love. Lovers become alone. Through love you touch your inner completeness. Love makes you complete. Lovers share each other, but that is not their need, that is their overflowing energy.

Real love is not a search to combat loneliness. Real love is to transform loneliness into aloneness, to help the other.

Loneliness is a state when you are ill with yourself, bored with yourself, tired of yourself, and you want to go somewhere and to forget yourself in being involved with somebody else. Aloneness is when you are thrilled just by your being. You are blissful just by being yourself. You need not go anywhere. Need has disappeared, you are enough unto yourself. But now, a new thing arises in your being.

Loneliness is similar to darkness.

You don’t know your aloneness. You have not experienced aloneness and its beauty, its tremendous power it’s strength.

Loneliness is an absence, because you don’t know your aloneness. There is fear.

You wanted to make your friendship something permanent but your wanting is against the law of change, and that law is not going to make exceptions.

What is needed is not something in which you can forget your loneliness. What is needed is that you become aware of your aloneness, which is a reality. And it is so beautiful to experience it, to feel it, because it is your freedom from the crowd, from the other. It is your freedom from the fear of being lonely.

Aloneness simply means completeness. You are whole; there is no need of anybody else to complete you.

So try to find the innermost centre, where you are always alone. In life, in death, wherever you are you will be alone. But it is so full; it is not empty, it is so full and so complete and so over flowing with all the juices of life, with all the beauties and benedictions of existence that once you have tasted aloneness the pain in the heart will disappear. Instead a new rhythm of tremendous sweetness peace, joy bliss, will be there.

## Freedom

Nobody loves anything more than freedom. Even love is secondary to freedom; freedom is the highest value. Love can be sacrificed for freedom, but freedom cannot be sacrificed for love. And that’s what we have been doing for centuries, sacrificing freedom for love.

Let this be your criteria: freedom is the criterion: love gives you freedom, makes you free, and liberates you. And once you are totally yourself, you feel grateful to the person who has helped you. That gratefulness is almost religious. You feel in the other person something divine. He has made you free, she has made you free, and love has not became possessiveness.

When love deteriorates it becomes possessiveness, jealousy struggle for power politics domination, manipulation – a thousand and one things, all ugly. When love soars high, to the purest sky, it is freedom, total freedom.

If you are in love, the love I am talking about, your very love will help the other to be integrated. Your very love will become cementing force for the other. In your love the other will come together as a whole, unique and individual, because your love will give freedom. Under the shade of your love, under the protection of your love, the other will start growing.

## On energy

Again and again energy accumulates and we aspire to rise. But we have barely risen to some higher realm, some more profound realm, when the whole wave falls and is lost. We fall back to our original position minus a considerable amount of power and energy.

The more one is engulfed by worry, jealousy, hatred, spite, the more one’s energies become stagnant inside and then the only outlet for them is sex.

I have never seen anybody the same. I’m always surprised by the newness that you bring every day. You may not be aware of it.

## On Human Life

Human beings have never been so sick, so neurotic, so wretched, so unhappy and poisoned.

So whenever you feel that something is now becoming troublesome, immediately move before you become unaware. Never make anywhere your home, neither relationship nor aloneness. Remain flowing and homeless, and don’t abide at any polarity. Enjoy it, delight in it, but when it’s finished move to the other; make it a rhythm.

Nobody is made for anybody else. You are not a spare part.

Take life more joyously and more jokingly. Let your whole life become a beautiful joke. There is nothing wrong in nature, and to be natural is to be religious.

Even a single moment of authenticity is better than whole life of inauthentic living.

Life is possible only in insecurity. This is something very fundamental to be understood: Life in its very essence is insecurity. While you are protecting yourself, you are destroying your vey life. Protection is death because only those who are dead in their graves are absolutely protected. Nobody can harm them, nothing can go wrong for them. There is no longer any death for them, all that has happened. Nothing more is going to happen.

## On Khajuraho

The creators of these temples were very wise people. This was a temple of meditation; this temple was the centre for meditation. They used to tell aspirants to meditate on sex first, to meditate on copulation scenes depicted on the outer wall, and when they had thoroughly understood sex and were certain their minds were free of it, they could go inside. Only then they could meet the divine inside.

## On Meditation

This glimpse is also attained through meditation.

The faster one’s breathing during intercourse, the shorter the duration of it; the calmer and more relaxed one’s breathing, the longer the duration of the intercourse. If you can discipline a totally relaxed breathing, the duration of intercourse can be prolonged to any extent. And the longer intercourse lasts, the more the elements of superconsciousness – the egolessness and timelessness I have talked about – begins to take place. The breathing should be very relaxed. As it relaxes, newer depths, meanings and realizations in sex will begin to be revealed.

Another thing to remember, if during the intercourse your awareness is focused between the eyes, where yoga says the third eye centre is, the duration of love making can be prolonged. And one such experience of intercourse can root the person in celibacy – not only for this lifetime but for the next life also.

A women and man in love can move into meditation very easily. Meditation and love are such close phenomena that if you move into mediation, your love energies start overflowing. If you really fall in love with someone who loves you, your meditative energies start growing; they are very deeply joined experiences. Hence I am in favour of both.

So people who only live in love, by and by become superficial. Their life loses depth. And people who live only in meditation will become very deep, but their life loses colour, loses the ecstatic dance, the orgasmic quality of being.

If you become a monk or you go to the Himalayas and just live there. Life is very simple. But a simple life which has no complexity in it loses much richness.

If you become more conscious you will be able to see that each moment is new. But for that, much energy, a tremendous energy of consciousness.

## On practise

And neve approach sex while in ugliness, in anger, in hardness, in spite, in jealousy, in jealousy, in irritation, in moments of anxiety.

I also want to say to you that if the depth and duration of intercourse can last long enough, if a woman-man couple stay in intercourse for over half an hour, a halo of light is created around them. When the body electricity of the two meet deeply and totally, then in darkness a glow of light is seen around the couple.

## Tantra

We have stopped thinking about Tantra for thousands of years. Tantra made very first attempts in the world to raise sex to spiritual dimension. The temples of Khajuraho, Puri and Konark are testimonials to this effect.

That is whole meaning of Tantra, making an art of love-making. There are subtle nuances, which only people who enter with a great aesthetic sense will be able to know. Otherwise, you can make love for your whole life and still remain unsatisfied because you don’t know that the real satisfaction is something very aesthetic. It is like a subtle music arising in your soul. If through sex you fall into the harmony, if through love you become non-tense and relaxed, if love is not just throwing out energy because you don’t know what else to do with it, if it is not just a relief but a relaxation, if you relax into your partner and your partner relaxes into you, if for a few seconds, for a few moments or few hours you forget who you are and you are completely lost in oblivion, you will come out of it purer, more innocent, more virgin. And you will have a different type of being: at ease, centred rooted.

But by and by you will be able to make the inner circle, because inside you, also are a man and women, women and man. Nobody is just a man and nobody is just a women, because you come from communion of man and women.

## On polygamy

The reality is that both are polygamous. However beautiful a women may be, you become tired – the same geography, the same topography. How long do you have to see the same face? So it happens that years pass, and the husband has not looked attentively at his wife for a single moment.

You will have to help her move, once in a while, into new pastures. If you can do that you will not only be accepting your nature; you will also be helping her find out her nature.

If men and women both love each other, they will help each other, they will help each other to be unconditioned from the past.

The women’s liberation is man’s liberation, too; their slavery is together.

## On Parting

The parting should be as beautiful as your meeting. It should even be more beautiful, because you have lived for so long together, you have grown roots into each other even though now you are deciding to leave one another. But memories will haunt you. You have loved each other; it does not matter that now you feel it is difficult to be together, there was a time you wanted to be together for lifetimes. So part without any conflict, without any quarrel. You were two strangers who met, and again you are becoming strangers but with the great treasure that happened between the two of you. You have to be grateful to each other while parting.

Just remember the first meeting, and also remember the way love comes; the same way it goes. While you are in love be totally immersed in it. And when it is gone, say good-bye and be totally finished with it. Don’t let the idea linger in your mind. There are many strangers available in the world – who knows? Love has left you simply so that you can find a better stranger.

Life’s ways are strange, trust life. You may find somebody who proves to be tremendous love, and you will see that your first love was nothing compared to it.

And remember, someday this greater love can also disappear. But trust the life which has been giving you gifts again and again without you asking. Remain available.

The world is so much filled with beautiful people; there is no scarcity. And every individual has something unique which nobody else has. Every individual gives his love color, a poetry a music that is his own, and that nobody else can give.

Trust life – that is my basic understanding, to trust life because we are born of life, we are children of life.

## Intimacy

Intimacy brings you close to a stranger. You have to drop all your defences; only then intimacy is possible. And the fear is that if you drop all your defences, all your masks, who knows what the stranger will do with you? We are hiding a thousand and one things, not from others but from ourselves.

Everybody wants intimacy because otherwise you are alone in the universe – without a friend, without a lover, without anybody you can trust, without anybody to whom you can open all your wounds. And wounds cannot heal unless they are open. The more you hide them, the more dangerous they become.

Meeting is tremendously gratifying, satisfying, fulfilling. But before you can attempt intimacy, you have to clean your house completely.

You have to accept yourselves in your totality. If you cannot accept yourself in your totality, how can you expect somebody else to accept you? And you have been condemned by everybody, and you have learned only one thing: self –condemnation.

You simply understand that everyone is beautiful in his ordinariness and everyone has weakness; they are part of human nature because you are not made of steel.

If you become aware that you are afraid of intimacy, it can become a great revelation to you, and a revolution if you look inward and start dropping everything of which you feel ashamed and accept your nature as it is, not as it should be.

Intimacy simply means that he doors of heart are open for you.

That’s what I am trying to do: to help you unburden your unconscious, unburden your mind, to become ordinary. There is nothing more beautiful than to be just simple and ordinary. Then you can have as many intimate friends, as many intimate relationships, as possible because you are not afraid of anything. You become an open book that anybody can read. There is nothing to hide.

One is not ready and courageous enough to open up, to show one’s inner chaos and be vulnerable.

Just as seeds need darkness and privacy in the earth, all relationships that are deep and intimate remain inner. They need privacy, they need place where only two exist. Then a moment comes when even the two dissolve and only one exist.

## Exercises

# Chapter 5: Liberation