Chap 1: It’s all connected

My entire story is based on incidents. Small yet important incidents, every decision I made in the past and what I’m about to make now are the gifts and curses of those incidents. So let’s begin with the first one shall we?

I was a 10-11yr. old kid, living in the peaceful state of Goa. The state is widely known for its beauty and its booze, although typical Goan family hardly consumed any booze. It was a perfect place to grow up. My dad worked in a mining company and my mom had a cake shop. . My dad was a Hindu and my mom was catholic before she got married to dad.

My dad had a brother named Shashank. Shashank uncle was always nice to me. He didn’t had any children of his own so he used treat me like his own son. To be honest I always felt that he loved more that my own father, he once had saved my life you know, but I believe I’ll tell you this story some other time. Although he hardly visited us, whenever he used to come home I would be the happiest person on earth. He worked at I.S.R.O. as a mechanical engineer. Whenever he used to visit us he used to bring us a lot of gifts but one thing always remained constant he always used to gift me a tiny space ship, I received my first when I was 5 years old, whenever he used to give me this he would always say “preserve it, they are very important, it holds the key to my heart”, which didn’t appear strange to me back then I mean I was small kid nothing appeared strange to me back then. I wanted to be like him when I grow up, I idolized him, and he was my hero. So when I was 11 yrs. old (most probably) Shashank uncle visited us on chaturthi(it’s kind of a big thing more like thanksgiving the only difference here is the you gather to celebrate lord ganesh). There were 2 things that Shashank uncle never missed: - one was my birthday and the other was chaturthi. So as usual he arrived.

When he arrived I was really excited I went towards him and gave him a hug well it was more like I caught his feet but u get the idea. He smiled at me and said “came on lets go in” and he carried me to the house on his shoulder.

The night that he arrived he took me to his room and gifted me another space ship but this time the words he used were a little different. He told “that’s the last key to me heart, you do have all the other keys don’t you?” although he had a smile on his face he tone sounded far more serious “yeah they are in my cupboard, come let me show you”

To which he replied “no I believe you. Now keep this one safe as well okay?”. I smilingly replied “okay” and I ran to my room in order to keep this last space ship in my cupboard. The next day we got up early because as I said it was ganesh chaturthi. Honestly my uncle never believed in the concept of god he even once said to me that gods they actually don’t exist but they are the strict principal the universe follow. The never ending cycle of creation and death but still he used to visit us every year maybe it was because that was the only thing that connected him to his father. My father used to tell me the story of how my uncle and his parents used to celebrate chaturthi. When my uncle got his admission in i.i.t. Chennai his father was really happy but slowly their relationship turned bitter cause of their differences in religious sentiments and because of the fact that my uncle wanted my grandparent to leave Goa and settle down in Chennai with him, back then my father was had no job. My grandpa was an old man with his old beliefs, he had his reason to believe in god and love the state that he fought for. He was a freedom fighter. During one of his protests he was bitten badly by the Portuguese authorities, so badly that he got admitted to the hospital, he was very close to death. He saw death so closely yet he survived even when the doctors said that it was close to impossible that he did. he believed that God saved him, one day my uncle and my grandfather had this heated argument on Chaturthi, they both fought. Things escalated and my uncle stormed out of the house, the next time he saw my grandfather was at his funeral. The reason for their fight was still unknown to my father, and my grandpa never told him anything . Chaturthi was not just a festival for him it was a memory; a bad memory, something that he wanted to change for good. For him it was a flaw in time, well at least that’s how he used to put it.

Well back to the present day my uncle and my dad went to buy some things for the pooja. I accompanied them as I was in need of fire crakers, while coming back my uncle stopped at a DVD shop to buy a DVD. He was a movie lover that was I guess his only hobby besides doing what he was doing at his workplace as he often mentioned that he’s work will change everything. It was a dvd of “back to the future”. He told me that back in the days when he was a teenager it was his favorite film. He promised that we’ll watch the film once we reach home.

That afternoon my uncle and I started watching the film. my mom was busy cooking and my dad was busy on the phone.

Anyways while watching the film my uncle looked at the television screen and said “I wish time travel was that easy as they show in these movies”.

I looked at him and asked “it isn’t?”

He smiled and replied “not even close. You see there are a lot of factors involved in making a time machine. Lot of equation that needs to be decoded bought down to its simplest form and even if we do end up making a time machine we don’t really know what will happen as there are many paradoxes that needs to be considered which make time travel close to impossible unless there is this weird theory that states that when we travel back in time we don’t actually travel back but what we do is replicate our current universe and it’s there where we can make changes but all of this doesn’t make much sense still I think the theory is worth looking at”

I was totally confused I mean I didn’t even get a word he said for a 11 yrs. Old me I didn’t even knew what universe meant at the first place but I thought that it’s better not to ask him anything and just shut my mouth and watch tv.

The chaturthi ended. My uncle was all set to leave. Before leaving he came to my room and started staring at all the space ship he had gifted me through the cupboard glass. He looked sad. I asked him if he was ok. He smile and said “take care of them for me will you “. I nodded my head.

He hugged everyone before leaving this was really odd as he never did it before. Finally He got into the car. I felt a sense of sadness as he left. My mom told me “come on lets go”. I held her hand as we walked home.

Little did I know that this was the last time I’ll be seeing him. Things changed after that day. Uncle never visited us. He used to call often and always used to ask me a question “are those space ship safe” I couldn’t really understand why he liked those spaceship so much but it didn’t really bother me I always used to give him the same answer “yes they are totally safe here”.

Even I had a question for him which I used to repeat a lot“when will visit us ?“

And even he gave a constant reply “soon”.

This thing kept happening for around five years until something bad happened. The news of his death arrived. I was 16 at that time. We got the news a day after his death. His maid was the one who found him dead. When she arrived she found that the door was locked from the inside. She rang the bell a couple of times after that she asked the watchman if Shashank had left the building already to which he said no later she asked the watchman to break the door of the house to enter in. when she enter in He was lying on the chair dead. The cops told us that he poisoned himself at least that’s what they thought it was at that point. They told my parents that they’ll look into it from different angles as well. Seeing him dead like that was the most horrifying scene for me. i never knew that our next meeting will be so terrible. The man was everything I wanted to be, seeing him dead like that, I felt like a lost a part of me. His body was taken for postmortem. We received his body the next day, my dad decided to perform the funeral on that same day as he didn’t wanted the process to be delayed as he body had started decomposing. He received a lot of help from the neighbors.

We found a nearby crematorium in order to burn his body. Few of his colleague arrived at the crematorium in order to pay him respect. Since my board exams had already finished my family had decided to stay in Chennai as all long as the investigation goes on. My family had a firm belief that his brother was murdered. It didn’t took long for the cops to reach to a conclusion.

3 days later policemen arrived he told us that the case came to a conclusion that it was suicide. He said that my uncle took excess of sleeping pills which caused his death. He also told us that my uncle was going through severe depression on some work related issue; he got to know about it by inquiring some of his associates. It was quite strange for me to believe that because I used to have constant conversation with him and I did talk to him 3 days before he died and he sounded totally normal. The cops told us that they were closing the investigation. I could sense a bit of anger and disbelieve on my dad’s face but he knew he couldn’t do anything. He found himself totally helpless as it was an unknown place for us; we never visited Chennai before and didn’t know anyone here to keep the investigation on the move.

Before leaving the cop asked my dad a strange question “what was your brother’s job?” to which my father replied “he was a mechanical engineer at I.S.R.O.”

The cop made a strange face like he found it hard to believe, he said “yeah you see he’s registered as one of their employees but… besides he’s colleague no one really seems to know him. I mean I went to their branch office the other day and believe me a lot of people denied to even know him. Isn’t that strange, I mean I even showed them his photo most of them denied to have known him, it’s quite impossible don’t you think?”

My father replied “I don’t think so. Even I work in a mining company but that doesn’t mean that I should expect every employee and worked to know my name right?” there was anger in his voice and the cop did sense it

The cop nodded and said “yeah your right!”

The next day we left for Goa.

**2 YEARS LATER…….**

I became a studies kid in 11th and 12th. It was one of those years in my life where I did nothing but study. I wanted to join I.I.T.,I was quite desperate, my dad never understood why I wanted it so badly. Honestly speaking he wanted me to take commerce as he already had his expertise and contact, he often used to tell me that if I took commerce than I’ll get the job the day I finish my graduation but I said no to that offer. The day I opted science as my stream he told me “you know a lot parent force their kid to take science but your case it’s completely different. Who have no idea how lucky you were” but eventually he respected my decision. Soon I became a typical nerd kind of guy, always involved in studies, I wanted to crack J.E.E. very badly. I always used to look at those small space ships my uncle had given me as a gift I never really understood their significance but they were few of the things that reminded me of my uncle, that and the DVD of ‘back to the future” that he had left behind that day.

The 12th board got ended I score quite well, to be honest more that I could have imagined soon I shifted my focus on I.I.T. my I.I.T. center was a Navy school in Vasco honestly I was pretty nervous when answering j.e.e,. although my papers went well I didn’t sleep properly the day before the results were uploaded. I was really scared when opening their official website. My entire family left all of their work and set with me to watch my result typical indian family. I entered my roll no and the password and I clicked on submit. My rank was 7348. Everyone around me was filled with joy so was I but I knew that It wasn’t done yet I had another exam to clear. I celebrated with my family that day but on the next day I went back to studying. My dad was really worried for me. He was a man who never used to worry so much, his life policy was simple “**try to be happy with what you have and is supposed to happen will happen”** my mom used to call it a typical lazy goakar attitude but over a period of time even she started following it. After few days I had to answer J.E.E. Advance in order to get into I.I.T. I was even more nervous for this exam. I barely slept as a result of which I got high fever a day before my entrance paper. My dad didn’t want me to answer the paper but I insisted on it. He couldn’t refuse he dropped me at the center, the exam started and I went blank I couldn’t answer anything. My headache also worsened soon I fell unconscious. I woke up a few minutes later when an invigilator splashed some water on my face. The invigilator was a middle aged man thick glasses a little fat and was partially bald, he told me to call my dad or mom to pick me up; we both went out of the examination center, he waited till my dad appeared. My dad seeing grown up man standing next to me holding my backpack got a little worried, he sensed that something was not right as I had not told him exactly what had happened I just told him to come and I’ll explain when you arrive. He got out of the car and asked him what happened to which the invigilator replied “he fell unconscious in the exam hall. Looks like he’s having a high fever”. My dad looked at me with worry; he thanked the man and told me to seat inside the car. As we were driving along I could sense a bit of tension he just kept looking at the road. I mean that definitely something you should do while driving but this was different it was never so quite. Usually he’s one of those guys who like to start a conversation while driving but here he was just quite I realized that he was pissed off and I was on thin ice.

I looked down and I said with a soft voice just enough so that he could hear “I’m sorry”

To which he replied “hmm”. I had once received the same reaction from my 8th standard crush once when I said “you know there’s this new restaurant in Arlem. I heard it’s good.” And she said hmm. I mean what exactly is hmm anyway. I think it’s just a really small alternative of **not interested in talking just keep your mouth shut and piss off** becausein both the scenario I’m pretty sure that’s what they wanted to say.

We reached home my mom came rushing towards the car. she looked at my dad. My dad gave her a look saying “don’t look at me ask him what happened” she looked at me and kept her hands on my face started checking my head for some reason and asked me “Are you okay?”

To which I replied “I fainted mom just chill.” She looked really worried for me and I wanted to lighten the mood a little but I guess I just messed it up as I could see dad’s face getting red as he looked at me making big eyes.

My dad ordered “go inside and get some rest”. I went to my bed room and as I laid on my bed I started looking at those space ship that were kept nicely inside the cupboard and slowly I fell asleep.

I directly woke up at night. I walked out of my room into the hall my mom saw me and said “ooh I was about to wake you up. The dinner is ready btw let’s have dinner”

We all set down on the dining table. I could sense my mom signaling my dad to talk to me. My dad on the other was absolutely clueless of what she was saying. My mom gave up on him and she took the initiative of starting the conversation.

She looked at me and asked “so feeling better?” I replied “yeah pretty much”.

My dad sarcastically commented “planning to faint again”. I could sense that he was definitely angry as he didn’t want me to answer the paper because of my sickness and yet I answered.

I didn’t say anything, I just stared down and again the awkwardness started building up. My mom mad an angry face trying to tell dad to stop bringing it up and dad made an expression of “what”.

I could sense a bit of tension building around so I kept quiet. Finished my meal and went back to sleep.

I woke up the next day. I realized that things were pretty much back to normal. Set on the couch watching television and I pretty much spent the whole day doing that as I had nothing better to do. Later at night my mom took the remote from me as she had to watch hindi serials. I never understood the obsession of women and daily soap. I mean it’s literally the same plot in every show. Even the villains in this shows have the same strategy but I kept quite as I had a bomb to drop at the dinner table.

Soon we all set down at the dinner table. We all started eating, all though I was felling extremely nervous and I had pretty much predicted my parents’ reaction but still I had to say what I had to say. I started speaking with the soft tone “aahh mom dad”

The sec I used that tone my dad knew I was up to something he sighed and said “oh god what now”. My mom stopped him by saying “sushant let him speak” to which my dad replied “okay go ahead nawabzade”.

“I didn’t write anything on the paper, I left it blank sooo there is no chance of me getting selected” I said, my dad stopped me by saying “yeah you fainted remember?” I mean yeah I did faint but it wasn’t something I planned to do. It wasn’t my idea to fell unconscious in an examination hall but still I maintained my cool and said “dad please”.

My mom looked at dad and said “just let him talk, and stop bringing the fainted part up every now and then.”

My dad relied “yes ma’am, you’re the boss, go ahead say what you want to say son” so I again started speaking “since I won’t be able to clear the entrance I was thinking of having a dropping a year and devoting myself to study for I.I.T.”

I could see proper frustration in my dad’s eyes. Believe me if mom wasn’t there he would have surely slapped me. He said “ you know what this conversation is over. Never bring it up again. Just eat your meal and go to your room”

I hesitatingly said “but dad” he stopped by saying “no don’t say anything just finish your meal quietly”. I looked at my mom in hopes of getting some assistance but the reply I got from her was “I’m with your father on this one”.

I felt really frustrated as no one tried to understand me. I finished my meal and as order I went to me room while going to my room I slammed the door just as an indication that guess what I’m angry but I’m pretty sure no one really cared. Later that night something unexpected happened, my dad walked into my room. First I thought that he wanted to scold me but he couldn’t do it freely at the dinner table so you know why not enter my room and scold me as much as he wants but that wasn’t the case, he looked really calm.

He said “hey” there was a bit of awkwardness in his tone. He continued “hey listen I know that you wanted to get into I.I.T. and you really worked hard but dropping a year don’t you think it’s too much”

To which I replied “do you even know why I wanted to be there”. My father sensed the arrogance in my voice. In any usual case my dad would literally give me an hour lecture if I was arrogant to me and he would deliver that lecture quite arrogantly but in this case he was quite calm.

He said “I know, it was shashank wasn’t it. I know that you wanted to be like him, follow his path”. I honestly didn’t think that he would guess that right but “surprise surprise” he did get that right. He continued saying “I know that he meant a lot to you and him dyeing this way definitely impacted all of us but that doesn’t mean you waste your life trying to follow his path. You got to move on, you have to accept what you have and achieved in your life and be happy with it. **Being greedy about something isn’t always good**”

To which I replied “I’m not talking about wasting my life. All I’m asking for is an year just give me one year” he said “exactly one whole fruitful year you’re devoting to something that’s not really important. Believe me when I say this as I say it out from my experience the most valuable thing a person can have is his time. It’s not something that should be wasted for anyone believe me.”

“So you’re asking me to quite?” I asked him. he gave me a smile and said “I’m asking you to make a smart decision.” I looked across. He could sense that I was not really in a mood of a conversation. He got up and decided to go as he was walking out of the room he stopped at the door and said “think about it” and then he just left.

I woke up the next day. it was a Sunday. I set on the couch my dad came and set next to me and asked “are you okay?” I said “yeah” to which he replied “okay” and then he started starring at the television he did that for a while and soon asked “so what are you watching?”

“Nothing just changing channels” I said, he replied “huh yeah yeah right”

I knew he wanted to ask me if I had given any thoughts to the conversation we had last night, what I didn’t really understand is the fact that why was he feeling so uncomfortable talking about it, but I was kind of enjoying his discomfort so I didn’t really saw anything and waited for him to start a conversation on that and to my surprise It didn’t took him long.

He said “so have you given any thoughts to what I said last night?” for few sec I didn’t say anything trying to tell him that I’m not one hundred percent in on this decision but I have taken it any ways I told him “yes, I think that I’ll join any good NIT”.

I could see a big smile on his. He was happy. Finally after so many years I had done something that he would like. Seeing him like that made me happy as well but did I show it obviously no.

Since my JEE mains rank was quite good it wasn’t really difficult for me to get into NIT not to brag but 7348 was quite a good rank. Soon the admission round started and we were travelling all around south of India cause my dad didn’t really wanted me to send up north. My personal choice was NIT Suratkal. I had 2 main reasons for that, first the institute has a great reputation and second was that if anything happens to me then my family can visit me I mean NIT Suratkal was a 11 hrs drive from my home even less if you book a flight to manglore then it will probably be around 4 hrs. I guess. I know it may seem like a lot but it was the closest one.

To my luck which is usually very bad but at this instance it was quite good. During the admission rounds I was fortunate enough to get a seat in Suratkal and so did my collage life began.

The first year of my collage was an entire mess. It took me one month to adjust myself into a new environment and the hostel facilities didn’t help.

I definitely can’t complain about the room size as it was sort of big enough but the food I don’t even know where to start I fell sick twice in the first week of my college but soon I got used to environment and honestly after 2 months I actually started liking the environment but the studies were something that I really found hard.

You see doing engineering is like an art. You got to understand what all lecture you should bunk and what all to attend and secondly and most importantly how to study for the freaking paper. These were the certain things that you can only learn out of experience and it too me almost an year to learn that.

The first year of my collage life ended and fortunately I survived in all the subjects and within no time the sec year started and again we were back on the same schedule.

The first day went okay, as usual all the professor started their lecture with an introduction telling who the hell they were what were their qualification and all that random shit which I’m pretty sure no one was interested in listening to. The last lecture for the day was mechanics of machines. Honestly most us had planned to bunk the last lecture as we were already bored and didn’t had any patience to attend another lecture I was one of them I seriously wanted to bunk but my best friend Anurag on the other hand didn’t wanted to bunk

He had one simple reason and it was very logical. **Collect attendance at the start so that you can bunk later**. Which I totally respected, so we both decided to stay. The lecture started but we couldn’t see any lecturer entering the class.

10 minutes passed and still no lecturer entered the class. I looked at my friend Anurag and told him “I don’t think anyone is coming let’s go”. He nodded his head we both packed our bags ready to leave. We both got up ready to leave. I was leading the way and Anurag was following me we were almost at the exit but just then a man appeared. He had completely white hair which made me think he must be around 60+ but he looked a lot younger than like he was probably 50-55. He had a goatee, he wore a red and white checks shirt and a black pant. We wore thick glasses. He had a book in his hand which I couldn’t read what it was but definitely something related to machine as the cover was that of a machine and then it flashed to me ooh shit he is the professor.

I quickly turned around and to my surprise Anurag was already seating on the first bench like nothing happened. I heard a voice from behind “Going somewhere?” I turned around the professor was starring me with a curious look on his face I said “no sir”

He asked “so you’re coming from somewhere?” to which I replied in y nervous tone “no sir” to which he said “okay then grab a seat”. I could sense seriousness in his voice. He had this deep voice which made it scarier. I quickly went and set next to Anurag who was giggling so I pinched him. the professor stood right at the middle of the black board and started examining the class. He started his lecture by saying “sorry for the delay, I’m professor Raghvan and I’ll be your professor for this subject so let us start with your introduction shall we?” and I was like aah shit here we go again.

Since the introduction started from the other row I would be the last one to give my introduction and since everyone was sort of bored they finished their intro quite quickly and soon it was my turn

I got up and said “my name is Ritvikh Naik” and I set down. He looked at me for a while and said “do I know you, did we ever met before” to which I replied “no sir, not that I remember of”

He raised his eyebrows and said “okay, sit down”. So I set down, the professor started looking at his watch and he didn’t wait at all he said “okay now class dismissed”. Saying that he has already seen me somewhere wasn’t strange to me as I kind off feel like that to half of the people I meet like I already know them but leaving the class early that was really strange as although every professor promises to do so but none actually do it.

I started packing my back and as I looked up I could see the prof looking at me, this kind off freaked me out. It looked like he was trying to remember something although at that point of time I didn’t really pay much attention to it.

I went back to my hostel room and there I decided to do a little bit of research on this guy. the man had a very old facebook profile that I’m pretty sure he rarely so there was nothing for me to dig up there so I went to my college website and under faculty section I got know a little about him.

The man was a former I.S.R.O. employee. So kind off figured that he might be knowing me because of my uncle but here’s the strange part. The man worked in the Banglore facility while my uncle worked in Chennai facility. So although there were chances that they might have known one another the chances really diminish of him knowing me.

Well I did stress out on that for a couple days but later the college life really started getting me and I found myself busy in assignments and project.

As semester came to an end some of our professors finished their syllabus and they started giving us extra work and some of them shared one or two of their college stories that I believe no one was interested in listening to except for Anurag well that I found really strange about this guy. he used to bunk normal lectures but this lectures he used to attend all the time.

As the last day of our current semester arrived before we were given a long break to study for our papers I decided to bunk the last day in order to another day to me long study break.

Later that night I was alone in my room I heard a knock on my door, first I thought it was anurag as he had gone to Rajivs room to play counter strike on his pc. I opened the door and to my surprise it was dr. Raghvan. He asked me if he could enter in and I said “yes sir sure” I quickly started to pick up all my clothes, books and underwear packed and dumbed it on the closest chair I could find fortunately for me the closest chair to me was Anurags and honestly irrespective of weird this guy is he is somewhat quite clean all the dirt in my room was because of me but still it is the most cleanest room in my hostel at least. He looked around feeling disgust and I was hoping that he wouldn’t lecture me on how to keep a room clean as I had already received it a lot of times from my mom. I requested him to sit down on the bed and I set on an empty chair. He looked a little awkward which was kind off strange as he usually is very confident while giving lecture and the way I knew him he was no shit man he started speaking in his deep voice “well, you didn’t attend the lectures today?”

To which I replied “yes sir I was feeling a little sick” after hearing that he looking at me with a doubtful face “but now I’m fine”. He said “Great great”

He continued speaking “you remember the first lecture where I said that you look familiar to me but I really couldn’t really remember”

I mean the lecture where you kept staring at me and freaked me out I mean hell yeah I remember, I wanted to say this so badly but I decided to behave properly and I said “no sir, not really”

He said “well I figured out how I know”. Well here comes the interesting part. I really wanted to know how the hell did he knew me.

He continued “I was at your uncles funeral, that’s how I remember you, I was one of the few people who were working under him”. This statement produced more questions than answers I mean they both were working in different branches, places even the states were different I mean obviously they could have met one another somehow or they were in frequent touch of each other but it simply didn’t feel right to me.

I asked him “how do you know my uncle?”

He replied “I just said I worked under to him”. to which I said “Exactly after he died I tried to find more about him but you know what I.S.R.O. Never mentioned what projects did he worked on and since you said you worked under him I would really like to know what did he work on”

He looked surprised and a little scared as well; he stammered and said “ah it’s not really. Well I shouldn’t. ahh”. It was totally strange for me to see him like that I mean all I asked was a simple question trying to understand what exactly the man I looked up to actually do and what got him so depressed that he committed suicide.

Things were quite for few seconds we both were just staring at one another. He looked away for a while and then back at me and he said “well what your uncle and I worked on is strictly confidential and I’m not allowed to discuss about it to anyone”. My first thought was this man is joking so I said “confidential. Like Area 51 types”.

He looked at me like I had said something stupid but honestly at that point I wasn’t thinking straight. He slowly nodded his head and said “well yeah like area 51”

“hmm” I said cause I didn’t wanted to say anything stupid anymore. I looked at him and I asked “what was the reason for him to take his own life?”

His face turned blue. I could see regrets in his eyes. He started looking at the window which was next to me and said “I not sure, I’m sorry”

I looked down and said “ it’s okay, it’s not like you could have done anything”. He looked at me and said “yeah you’re right”.

He started turning around to walk out of the room, he was almost at the door when I asked him “is that what you were here for”. I quickly turned around and said “oh sorry, I totally forgot why I was here at the first place I came here to give you this” he put his hand inside his pocket and removed a pendent he looked at me and said “I think this belongs to you”.

I looked at the pendent. It was a pearl silver pendent. I knew that it didn’t belong to me so I said “I’m sorry, you must have made a mistake, It’s not mine”

To which he said “your uncle was about to gift you this on your birthday.” I said “that’s really strange because my family took all of his belongings; it’s in our house, in the attics. Everything belonged to him is already with us”.

He raised his eyebrows and said “well yes, but you guys missed it cause he left it at the workplace and I found it a couple of days later after his death.”

It was quite strange. Why would my uncle gift me a pendent? but at the same time why would professor Raghvan lie? I looked at the pendent and it did look old there were scratches on the pearl.

He kept the pendent on the table near him and said “I’ll just keep it here.” And he left. I looked at the pendent closely this time. There was a thin line that divided the pearl into 2 equal half, like it was cracked open before. As I started examining the pendent my curiosity increased. I just couldn’t figure out why he would gift me a pendent. It made no sense to me.

Just then Anurag entered the room. He looked at the pendent and snatched it from my hand and asked “wow, where did you get this”.

I told him that it was given to me by Prof Raghvan and it was supposed to be a gift from my dead uncle. His reaction was “that’s so cool. I wish my uncle would have gifted me such a thing. All he ever gifted me was a 5 rupee chocolate”.

I raised my concern saying “why would my uncle give me a pendent, I mean that’s so not him, nor am I into this kind of things so why?”. To which he reacted by saying “who cares just enjoy, you got a bloody pendent, it’s easily worth around 8-10k. stop complaining and considering all the toy space ship that he has given you this is the best gift of them all”

As much as I hated to admit it, he had a point. Maybe I was overthinking it, maybe it’s truly a gift from my uncle but I still had my doubt. So I decided to confront Prof Raghvan the next day.

I told Anurag to keep the pendent on the table and I went to sleep. The next day arrived I got up pretty late so I decided to skip breakfast and shower and directly go to prof Raghvans office.

I went to my departments building prof Raghvans office was on the first floor. I took the round stairs which were closest to his office but as I reached there I saw a peon removing his nameplate from the door of his office.

I found it seemingly odd As usually no professor leaves before the semester end. I ran towards the peon and asked him “where is Professor?” he gave me a strange laugh and said “he left this morning, should have come early”.

I found it strange but it did explain the fact why he asked us to submit our assignment so early, but still it was quite odd for a professor to leave in an ongoing semester. For a time being that the chapter of professor Raghvan had completely closed down in my life but I was wrong.

This encounter was a start of something big. **End of chapter one**