Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

Write an Original story which begins with ---**“I do not believe in ghosts but…”**

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I do not believe in ghosts but that chapter of the 365 – paged Book of my Life gradually winged into the most horrifying climax I’ve ever experienced.

Three colas, two great Burgers, a large helping of marmalade, topped with an iced tea and two of the country’s cutest muffins, I rose, quite famished, thanking Rohan profusely for the wonderful birthday bash. I stepped out into the shivering draughts of cold winds from the warmth of the inside, making up my mind to burn atleast some calories by walking back home!

It was a dark eerie night, decked up in the blinds of darkness and mystery. Leaves rustled in the slow breeze, some prancing about to play with their new playmate. Black-winged bats squaked out from the shadows and lo! The unmistakable sound of anklets rose into the tranquility… I froze, my hands clamping my mouth, feverishly trying to stop me from producing even the slightest of sounds.

To my utter astonishment, there she appeared- that figure that scared the living daylight out of me ! I clamped my eyes shut tightly, but not before I noticed her long flowing cloak, those startling blue eyes, her long tresses arranged as a cape over her and the bony fingers, strutting about—probably in all readiness to cast a spell of dark black magic on her poor unsuspecting victims.

The next I knew, I was running as fast as my heels could take me. At one point, I even felt a brush of soft, white cloth against my hand; doing no good to lessen the suspicion that I had actually run through the ghost.

After about five minutes, when I mustered up the courage to turn around; expecting the “ghost” running towards me, her arms lashing wildly, to my immense surprise, but relief, there was neither hide nor hair of her. Oddly enough, there wasn’t the slightest trace of footprint to be seen too. I resumed walking at an unusually fast pace; fearing that she might appear nowhere and pounce upon me.

Ah! The relief and security I felt when I snuggled into the warm eiderdown was never experienced before. There, lying in between my mother and father, I felt I could take on a hundred ghost-like figures if I had my parents by me. Their presence seemed to create a solid barrier against all my misfortunes. Who could care about “ghosts” when one had an army of angels backing them up?

The sudden sound of hideous laughter just then snapped me out of my reverie. It seemed to grow louder and louder with every second- almost as if…. as if …. as if it was coming straight to our house !!

Just then the doorbell rang shrilly. I froze for the umpteenth time. We waited for a few minutes in the darkness, too scared to move or speak… but then, Mother’s practical side came afore too say that it might be our neighbours or relatives in distress, asking for our help. Father and I stayed back in the room, while mother, as brave as lion, went to answer the doorbell ring.

Anxiety and fear clouded the next few seconds as mother unlocked the door. ‘Mrs. Sharma!’ my mother exclaimed, when I ran out, beaming, to meet my favourite aunt, Neela. But today, Neela was not her usual chirpy self. Worry and anxiety streamlined her face as she related how her husband had not yet returned home, having left his office almost two hours ago. She also said that he was living in constant fear for the past one week and would lock himself up in the house after he returned home. More tears poured out as she rose to leave for the police station. The constant stream of consoling words by mother seemed to quieten her down a little as she requested us to look after her house in her absence.

When Neela aunty was just about to leave, my timid fear asked her whether she had witnessed a few strange happenings into this night. When she refused, my heart skipped a beat- were we the only ones who could experience the “ghostly” happenings?

The rest of the still night passed in fear, as we draped our blankets around us, for the fear that the “ghost” might strike again. The rising warmth of a new day brought to us the assurance we were craving for. As I laid my head against the cool pillow; fear of the upcoming night overriding my relief, I was reminded of the great dictum.

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”