

DIGITAL DILEMMA

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A DETECTIVE FICTION

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Chapter one

Whispers of moving feet comforted him; it was astonishing that he could hear them. He refrained from wearing spectacles as he despised them; he felt that it hindered his ability to see. The ignorant species didn't know this, but his vision was very sharp for his. He fooled the complex beings around him who assumed that his age would hinder his productivity. But his witty intellect sometimes almost gives the game away. His joints creaked as he turned the corner to see a dog and a cow scavenging through some garbage piled on the swampy backyard. An absent-minded teenager tosses an empty chips packet onto the pile and walks away whistling. He felt pangs of disgust creeping through his veins, tightening his scalp. He clenched his fist and called out to the boy, "Listen boy! Pick that wrapper and throw it in a dustbin where it belongs!"

"Yes uncle?" The boy asked.

Peeved, he repeats louder, doubting the boy's auditory abilities.

"Let it be uncle, it'll be picked up in the morning along with the remaining garbage."

The old man stares into the boy's eyes and with cold precision stated slowly, "This garbage has been rotting here for more than a month."

The boy froze for a second, reconsidering his situation with crossed eyebrows. But he relaxed soon, rolled his eyes and walked away, abandoning the situation entirely. The boy's ignorance didn't surprise him; gritting his teeth in frustration, he picks up the packet.

He walks with light steps, masking his agility. Few more curvy corners and he reached his house. He walks in, closing the creaky gate behind him, blocking the rush of nostalgia that the sound brought. He checks the neighbors' windows to make sure no one is spying on him. He pulls out his scratched bronze keys and opens the main door, shutting the noise outside.

He judiciously throws the wrapper into his bin on his way to the basin. He could smell the metallic taste of the water. The hard water cooled his face. The drops oscillate on his wrinkled cheeks on their way down. His pulpy fingers turn the rusted knob to close. He walks to his room, his footsteps filling the silence. He picks up his mask and walks over to his closet, unlocking it with the same bronze key. The door opens to reveal a flight of stairs leading to his basement.

He walks down the shaky stairs, searching the walls for a lone switch. He feels a bump on the wall and flicks it on. The basement lights up to reveal rusted metallic containers and empty milk packets. He dresses the mask on his taut face securing it behind his loose ears. The mask helped filter the pungent smell of bad ventilation. He walks towards the containers with his goal in head.

The morning had barely arrived. He was already ready. Holding two packets of milk, he walked back to the same pile of garbage he witnessed the previous day. He pauses briefly, calculating the consequences of the action he was about to perform. He was unsure. He heard the soft jingles of anklets approaching him only to notice a woman dumping an entire bucket of garbage onto the pile, making some of it topple over. This aggravates his irritation and strengthened his resolve. He knew it must be done.

The days are testing him. He waits, listening to the clueless town. He keeps up with his preparations, filling milk packets and disposing them at the various garbage sites of Yelahanka.

He waits near the *chai* shop next to a garbage site where he planted one of his packets, observing and hoping. He overhears the conversation between two students; one of them asks his friend if he could use his phone because his phone is conked off. This piques his interest making him listen closely. He notices that the students were standing right next to the garbage site. He takes off his watch to stuff it in his pocket and walks up to the student, "Excuse me, but what's the time?" he asks in a gruff voice. His main intention was to see if the phone screen is glitching. He didn't know much about electronics but he had done his research. One of the students was busy figuring out what was wrong with his phone so he ignored him while the other student nodded and pulled out his phone, "Uh uncle the time is..." the student stops, his face twisted in confusion, he starts hitting the phone against his palm, "Uncle, just a second..."

He had seen enough to understand what was happening.

"Never mind! Thank you." The man turns, hiding a malicious smile.

He walks home to mass-produce the milk packets.

Chapter two

“Snapchat has this new filter, check it out!” The brown haired boy exclaimed as he pulled out his phone.

“Aw snap, its glitching again.” He frowned.

The rickshaws throttled away. Students were cycling away to their hostels with noises of traffic drowning their ignorance. “My roommate faces the same problem, his phone glitches at random instances when he’s outside.” His companion responds, patting his shoulder.

“You own a freaking Asus. You would obviously face problems,” someone at the back stated in a deep velvety voice.

The companions turn around to see a tall, coal-black haired boy; his hair was straight, combed into his crew cut.

His lanky built towered over them. He was wearing a Star Wars T-shirt that was cloaked beneath a loosely buttoned red and blue flannel shirt. He wore loose faded blue jeans, which were hanging from his hips. He seemed pleasantly tanned. He had a bored expression on his face. The boys recognized him to be their senior Siddharth.

The brown-haired boy becomes defensive and responds, “It’s not just that, Ramesh’s and Sanketh’s laptop hanged and shut down on its own too.”

“Wow! What a discovery! ‘Yelahanka facing electronic malfunction, a threat to the digital world’” Siddharth mocks them, rolling his big brown eyes. “Rather than complaining visit the service centre,” he scoffed sitting down on the bus stand bench.

Siddharth waited for his bus to arrive to escape the juniors’ pointless bickering. He had turned 19 last month; it was his last year as a teenager, he had no time to waste. Sid had a jaded perspective about life. He walked into the bus and started thinking about his assignments. He began thinking of his friends in college; he had quite a large circle of friends and was popular in college. He was well known amongst the girls and teachers appreciated his work. He got down at the stop next to college and walked to his class.

Hours later it was recess. There were few curious and relatively irritated complaints around the campus about the abnormality of devices. Students either bought new phones or exchanged them in stores. They couldn’t spend time without one.

Sid went to the *chai* shop next to their campus and witnessed his friends’ phones glitching all at the same time. He wanted to confirm this himself but he hadn’t carried his phone during the break. He began suspecting this coincidence. Phones don’t usually malfunction together. Most of his friends’ phones were new so it was highly unlikely for them to malfunction this early. He doubted if this was a coincidence at all. He wanted to research this; it may eventually turn into a big event, finally, some action in his mundane life.

Over the days, Siddharth comes up with theories regarding the malfunctioning of devices. He asked his friends to inform him if they witness any device acting independently. He had a few friends whose phones and tablets stopped working when they used it on roads. Even the laptops seem to start getting affected. The only clue he had was that these conditions aggravated when devices were used on the streets.

He decides to propose this theory to his favourite teacher.

He walked up to Umesh, his dean, with high hopes; he presented his theories and observations.

“Siddharth, you’re a brilliant student but you shouldn’t be wasting time on this, if there’s any defect in your phone, you should give it for servicing.”

“I initially thought the same but these coincidences are too vast! It can’t be a coincidence anymore... Sir if you would just-“

“Siddharth, I don’t really have time for this, approach me if you have doubts regarding your work.”

Mr. Umesh walked to the teachers’ lounge with a disappointed scowl.

Sid was surprised by his indifference.

He felt discouraged but he found some gravity in his theories so he decided to take it up as his pet project.

Chapter three

Sid was wondering if he was suffering from schizophrenia. Lately, he had started doubting anyone who looked suspicious. He had grown into an unnerving alert-cum-control freak. His peers noticed this change. His parents too, noticed his change through their conversations over the phone as he talked less frequently than he used to. Whenever he spoke, he would drone about his theories that would bore people.

As his theories developed, he began walking back to his hostel instead of taking the bus route. He believed he observed more when he walked around the streets. One day he pursued his new found routine of following people who he would find complaining of glitches on the road; he caught someone unusual doing something usual. He recognized that it was the student nick-named 'the loner' from his college. He tried hard to remember the loner's name but failed. The loner had achieved his status of being a procrastinator. But today he seemed to be doing one of the assignments their college had given. Sid was surprised seeing the loner working with such concentration. The loner's skeleton back faced Sid. Sid noted his pale orange kurta hugging him defining his frail frame. He seemed to be wearing loose navy blue jeans along with it as he could see the loner's boxers playing hide and seek with everyone in sight. His gruff umber hair seemed to form a veil in front of his eyes. His pale face was hidden. His smooth knotted fingers artistically tapped on his cigarette butt to drop the burning ashes on his right, mixing with the dirt on the street.

The loner was sitting on the ground at ease; the dirt didn't bother him. His head was bent too low to be comfortable. What he did next was grotesque and negated Sid's assumption of him doing an assignment. The loner bent even lower to the ground as though he was trying to smell something. Sid approached, prowling behind him to look closely. As he got closer he stumbled on a pebble he didn't see. The sound was slight so Sid assumed he wouldn't be caught but the loner whipped his head back and forth as soon as heard it. The loner then slowly sat up straight. He crouched forward to stand up without using his hands to take support from the ground. His bag dangled up his shoulders with him. He gave Sid a solemn stare before walking ahead with easy grace. Sid didn't understand why he stood stunned on the middle of the road. He was still recovering from his surprise that the boy heard him when he thought he was quiet. He saw the boy turn at the nearest corner. Sid started to follow him. When he reached the corner in mere seconds he found an empty street lined with houses and their internal whispers. Where did the loner go? He surely didn't stay in one of those houses because he assumed he travelled from the city to college every day.

Sid traced his steps back to the spot where the boy was sitting. He began inspecting it. As he approached it, he smelt a faint pungent odour that burnt his nostrils. He now noticed his surroundings at the spot while the smell grew stronger. There was a stack of rubbles were beneath the mesh lining of someone's backyard. The mesh had vines growing on it that formed a wall of its own, making it impossible to see the backyard. Behind it, a fat tree with pulpy pokey orange-coloured fruits shaded the scene. Between the rubbles were traces of garbage and dung, which seemed to be cleared recently. Why was the loner sniffing this of all things? Why was he sitting here and sniffing at all?

Suddenly he felt an annoying buzz in his back pocket. He pulled out the annoyance to see his phone switched off. He pressed the power button to start it. The screen glowed with its company logo but suddenly glitched to shut down again. His eyes widened immediately jumping to conclusions. This ignited his suspicions. He needed to approach the lone kid.

He arrived early at college the next day to confront the loner. He sat on one of the benches close to the entrance so that he has a keen eye on the scene. He waits for a long time. The signup sheets were filled up with the latecomers too. He was getting late for class. Did he miss him? He negates the thought. He knew he watched the gate with a paranoid face that pranked anybody who walked through the entrance. He gets up to walk up to his classroom. As he reaches the stairs, he looks back for the last time. The loner was signing in. Sid sprung back to wait for him. The loner walked in his direction, as it was the only way to go up to the classrooms. But Sid was blocking the stairs and was proving to be an annoyance.

"Hey man, I am Sid. I believe we are in the same class".

The lone kid blinked with his poker face unchangeable. "Alright so?" the loner asked his voice deep and crisp. Sid was still thinking of how to explain himself. The lone kid looked him in the eye waiting for him to move up the stairs. Exasperated he spoke again, "I believe we are late to class". He swats his hand signaling Sid to move. Sid unwilling gives as much space to climb up still blocking him to continue the conversation.

"Are you done with the assignment, I saw you sitting on the street the other day".

"No"

"No, you didn't do the assignment or no you weren't there on the str--"

"No, you are wasting my time"

Sid goes mum, taken aback. He wasn't usually rejected. But he was persistent.

"But I saw you. You were sitting on the street, sniffing".

"Was I now?" he looked bored.

"Uhh... Yes, near the garbage."

The lone kid looks up to see Sid's face with a jaded look.

"I don't recall doing anything like that. Besides, why would someone sit beside garbage on the street, are they that dumb or jobless to sniff at it?"

"But you did." Sid's voice grave.

"That is quite an accusation. Are you sure it was me..." The lone kid looked far into the distance thoughtful but suddenly his face fell sullen as though he tasted a bitter gourd. "I am bored. I need to go to class".

He walked away towards the classroom in a quick gait. Sid was confused with his change of emotion but he didn't have time to spare or contemplate otherwise he would be late for class. Although he had mind-boggling thoughts that tried to decipher the lone kid's behaviour, his gut instructed him to keep an eye on the boy. He decides that he would observe his movements for a while. The lone boy seemed to know more than what he let others see.

Sid stalked him like an annoyance that he had now become. He followed him for days. He followed him after college to the nearest bus stand but failed to catch up with him during breaks. His friends would catch hold of him in social chitchats and by the time he would return to his hunt, the loner would have disappeared. In about a weeks' time, he also followed the loner to the library in the same bus. Upon reaching the library, Sid turned back to his hostel disappointed. His curiosity was dimming but there was still something nagging him. One day he managed to hide from his friends and follow the lone kid during the break.

As the lone kid exited the college he took a turn to the busy street. Sid out of his experience of following assumed that the lone kid would usually avoid such busy lanes. Sid followed him to the park. Park? He thought. But then came a small turn to its corner. Sid carefully hid behind the cars parked outside the park. The loner halted at the corner, and shoved his hand in the bag searching for something. He takes out a small plastic packet. Sid had seen such packets used for collecting samples that are to be tested in laboratories. The lone kid then walks in the hidden lane. Sid follows. He reaches the corner but halts as the loner was there again sitting on his knees this time, picking on garbage again. The lane wasn't hidden but was a small corner used as a dumping ground. He decides to break the silence.

"What's with you and garbage?"

The loner kid turned his head back fractionally to see Sid standing over him. He relaxed, rolled his eyes and began picking the garbage again.

"Why are you stalking me?"

"Wait now. That seems like a heavy accusation. Why would I stalk you?"

"You tell me why."

The lone kid gets up and turns to face Sid while he seals the packet. He had a faint smirk plastered on his face. Sid scrutinized to see dried grasses packed within the plastic packet.

"You can cut the crap and ask me what you want. You stalked me to the library as well. I may answer you if your questions are relevant."

His brashness surprised Sid again but his ego recovered quickly this time.

"What are you testing? The library visit seems to be connected to this. And you seem to know more than you portray."

"Hmm... "

"You haven't answered."

"You haven't been relevant." The loner exhales and stuffs the packet in his bag.

"The last time I saw you, you were sniffing the garbage, this time you are picking at it. That day after you left, my phone conked off, it took me days to restart the damn thing. Are you connected to what's happening with electronics in Yelahanka? It's gotten worse; it's becoming difficult to find working cyber shops or shops that use extensive electronics. I don't know how you are connected to it but my gut says that you are not the cause of it, but you do know something".

"Alright. You don't seem to be dumb. You may be of some assistance. And of course I can't be the cause of this, but I am searching for a target that is triggering the malfunction. I have narrowed it down to elements that are piled up in garbage. And I am testing them. That's as close as I got".

"Why did you open this up to me?"

"I heard you talking to Umesh sir the other day. It made me curious and I tried to search for a solution. You have also been racking your brain over this and have been following me for atleast two weeks. So I pity you".

Sid scoffed at his arrogance.

The lone kid continued, "We don't have time to waste and I think I might need help. Yelahanka might face complete electronic shut down and nobody is taking action."

Chapter four

They work together to extract proof from the residents of the area. The streets would usually be crowded with locals by around 5pm, as they would be returning from their jobs. Usually after college hours they would go talk to the residents whose houses seemed to be close to any garbage site. They assumed that the malfunction must be potent in their houses. Sid and the loner who preferred to be called 'the loner' were eager to find any information valid to this but they faced an issue.

Most of the students of in their college lived in hostels near Yelahanka and they had a reputation of being a nuisance for the locals. Therefore, the locals kept their prejudices against them. Sid and the loner went door to door. Some people spoke willingly, some hesitated due to societal pressure and some blandly shut the door on their faces. Some people were so superstitious that they blamed the deities to be the cause of this.

"Yes I have been experiencing a lot of electronic problems at home".

"Could you tell me when it started?" the loner asked in a monotone.

"It started since the time my prayers to Kamadhenu became irregular. I didn't have time you see. My family has shifted to our native place and I stayed back to continue my job. I couldn't feed the wild cows most of the days as I would have to rush to the office and I also worked long hours. So offering them food at night was out of the question. I have observed that as I got irregular with the rituals my electronics at home started acting on their own. It gets scary at night. My phones stop working and I can't finish work at home. It's become a mess. Thank you for approaching me, you have made me realize that I have to pray with greater devotion to the deity."

Sid didn't know what he felt after hearing this theory from the man, he tried to point out his stupidity in a polite way, "But that seems irrelevant."

The loner interjects, "Why do you specify it's the cows?"

The man's octave increases as his eyes widen to prove his point, "Because it's their eyes. Lately I would apologise to them while I rush to office. They would give me this look; what was it, hunger? No, it was a look of knowledge. They knew I was doing wrong. How can one be that lazy as to not offer food when it takes barely five minutes? ...

I need to set this right. Thank you for listening." He rushes back inside probably to the kitchen closing the door behind him, shutting them out.

"Interesting," the loner whispered against the door.

"Interesting? Should I include him amongst the list of locals who shut the door on our faces except that he also wasted our time and his by ranting about his irrelevant superstitions?"

"No let's just leave."

While walking back to the bus stop, the loner started mumbling.

"His observation about cows is interesting. He said he should have spared at least five minutes for the cows. And we do know there are abundant wild cows in this small town roaming all over the streets. They confirm their trails as they leave cow dung patty all over the place. Earlier his family and may be other families on this street would offer food to these wild cows. But since they have gotten busy with their narcissistic lives they fail to offer them food or feed them infrequently.

"So where do the cows eat from?"

The loner paused asking Sid to continue. Sid racked his brain and suddenly everything came under the loner's perspective.

"The garbage!" he exclaimed. The loner nods looking into the distance or looking for the bus; Sid didn't know which.

"He also said they had this look of knowledge. So I ask what knowledge?"

Chapter five

It rains heavily one day on a weekend. Sid was working on his drawing assignment from his window pavement. He couldn't do it digitally as he didn't want to risk his laptop malfunctioning. Suddenly he heard many pings of notifications from his room, which echoed across the hall. He immediately ran to his room and grabbed his phone from the night stand to check if he received any messages or notifications; his phone seemed to be working as though he just reset it.

He starts his laptop and waits for any sign of malfunction. Nothing... His laptop worked perfectly. He asked his friend who stayed next door to switch on his old phone as he had bought a new one recently. They waited for it to start and see it glitch but that too worked perfectly. What happened that caused everything to set right?

Sid noticed that it was still raining outside. His mind started racing. It hadn't rained for days; the climate was pretty dry earlier. The elements in the garbage must have become wet or was washed away. This must have caused disruption in its pathway to affect the electronics. Assuming that the elements must have washed away, he concluded that the element must have been something radioactive that emits fumes or radiation that the naked eye couldn't see. He remembered the day when he found the loner sitting and sniffing on the street. He remembered the stench was awful.

What if the stench wasn't what it seemed to be? What if those were fumes? He knew anything that was radioactive should affect humans too. But he seemed to be perfectly fine.

He began thinking differently. What can blend in space under the pretense of being normal? What could cause the foul smell?

He racked his brain. The image of rubbles and dung came in his head. Everything fell into place. The loner was right about cows. They did eat from garbage and they did roam around Yelahanka streets. The man they interviewed, spoke about some kind of look the cows had, maybe there were suffering from something. Yelahanka's streets were filled with splattered designs of cow dung and nobody bothers to clean the mess, which is again part of the belief that cow dung is good. This also proves the theory that the beginning of digital dilemma showed its signs on the streets. He realized as it was raining outside, that the cow dung on the streets must be getting washed away.

He called the loner and explained his theory. He affirmed that he had suspicions on the stench before but he didn't connect it to the theory of radioactive fumes. He urged that since they had another lead they should test the theory of cow dung. They did know that the source began from the garbage elements but they couldn't narrow it down to what element.

After the loner travelled back to Yelahanka, they started examining the streets. Sid was right; cow patty on streets had been washed away and their phones seemed to work fine. They still had to confirm their theory by testing it themselves. They rushed to the abandoned garden in the corner of the town where they once discovered cows sleeping. They reached up there to successfully find abundant cow dung that hadn't been washed away in rain; they could use to test it. They noticed that the cows seemed dormant, resting on the long unmowed grasses. Sid assumed that the element they were feeding on must be taking a toll on them. This time the loner brought a medical tool kit with him, he had a hunch he would need it. He gave his phone for Sid's safekeeping and went inside the garden alone to collect samples while Sid waited outside. They agreed to this arrangement to test their phones at a later stage. The loner made sure not to disturb the cows.

The loner took a few samples. They used one sample to test on a clean tar road. They emptied one packet on the street and kept one of their phones close to it. The loner was quick and didn't spend time like Sid who seemed to be practicing karate kicks as a sign of happiness because he was proven right. As soon as it started glitching he pulled phone away to save it from further malfunctioning. Next they did was wash away the patty. After they were satisfied that the spot was clean they held the phone near the spot again. The phone didn't glitch. This was a major breakthrough. They now knew how the crisis spread through Yelahanka. They performed various tests on the remaining samples; filtering them in UV light, microwaving it and exposing them to radio signals. After around five minutes all the samples turned green which was unusual.

They had a few samples left. They decided they needed to medically diagnose them. So they visit one of the cheap in-house hospitals in Yelahanka. They pay a male nurse to perform stool tests on it without questions. Both the boys contribute to this bribery. They neglected society etiquette for this matter. The nurse couldn't perform most of the tests that didn't involve x-rays as the machines seem to abnormally stop working. But the ones he did perform were similar like the ones the boys tested. He showed them the results that underwent x-ray tests. There were certain things visible. They looked like herbs. The herbs glowed fluorescent green but he couldn't diagnose what it was. For advanced tests they would need a medical practitioner's consent. The boys didn't have the funds to go further. The nurse later questioned them about their intentions as what he tested wasn't normal. He wanted to know if would get into trouble if people asked questions later. The boys excused themselves saying that it was part of their research for their college assignments.

They realized that they didn't have the power to do anything in detail. During their tests they had taken photos of their progress, which involved the green element causing glitches in their phone screens. They had documented everything. They decided they couldn't work alone on this anymore so they wrote a report and sent all the proof they could collect that could validate their hypothesis. They sent the report to all the relevant departments that fell under the jurisdiction of Bangalore:

State Livestock Breeding and Training Centre;
Department of Health and Family Welfare;
Department of Ecology & Environment;
Department of Animal husbandry and Veterinary Services.

They waited for about three weeks but didn't receive any reply. The element seemed to be planted across the town again as the electronics went back to glitching again. They knew that they themselves had to take action now. All they could do is set up posters. They restricted creating any digital patents or forums in town as their laptop or phones couldn't normally work. If they did want online help they had to travel to the city. One good thing that came out of this was that people started noticing the electronic shut down across town. Sid and the loner made posters explaining the unknown element that is still unidentified but is mixed with garbage and how cows and other animals are feeding on it. Spread of the radioactive distribution still prevails. There were definite signs of the local fauna's declining. People didn't want to think further about the cruelty the animals faced. More than that, they feared for their own health. If animals could get affected so could they.

People have started questioning their outlook and ignorance.

But the mastermind wonders living in midst of them all;
Isn't it too late to change the conditions in Yelahanka?

Epilogue

Fools.

Ignorant bastards.

When will the realisation that this was done with an intention hit their thick skulls? Only a man can destroy a man's creation. For once, good riddance, the phones were a nuisance causing noise pollution, causing human accidents.

He walks on the market street with slow gait. His eyes are scanning the street. People are looking at the posters reacting with gasps and horrified expressions. He notices two boys pinning the posters on every available space they found on walls. He walked up to one of the posters and reads about the digital dilemma in Yelahanka with his hands rigidly crossed behind his back. He felt someone's presence beside him. He turns to see two boys standing. One was with a poster and the other was watching him intently with a cocking head.

"Hello, uncle. Please excuse us we want to pin this up."

He glides aside. The boy who was watching him notices his movement. His lips were parted, amazed.

The man spoke with an aging voice, "Did you boys research on all this?"

The boy with coal black hair who was pinning the poster answered him, "Yes, uncle. We are trying to spread awareness. It seems to be working for now".

"Very impressive work boys! Could you give me one of your posters so that I could share it with the Mrs. She is ill you see, she loved strolling on these streets with me... It's been days since she's walked." his voice artistically softened.

The boy with dark brown hair had a faint smile on his face. He now spoke, "Yes uncle. Here you go". He hands him the poster. The man neatly folds it making its lines crisp.

"You must have been in the military, sir."

The man looks up to see his curious face. "Yes, I was", not disclosing any more information. The boy seemed to silently know about his fake wife.

"Pardon me, but you seem very strong for your age, sir. It must be very easy to fool ignorant people around", he smiled broadly.

The man was composed to control his surprise, "Thank you for your compliment. I would like to chit chat further but I am afraid my wife might be waiting for me". He slaps the poster on his palm trying to distract the boy but the boy was unnerved. The man was amazed with the boy's persona. He seemed different, not ignorant at all.

He grimly smiles bidding the boys goodbye and walks few steps ahead.

The vigilant boy calls after him, "May aunty recover soon sir". He nods, smiles warmly and rigidly walks away. He relaxes knowing that no one was following him. The boy with dark brown hair had knowledgeable eyes.

He knew he had to keep an eye on them. The locals haven't suspected him yet but you never know. He walks up the familiar path of his porch and opens the door with the bronze key. This time he stands at the threshold looking outside making sure nobody was watching and slowly closed the door with his grave eyes being last in sight.

He walks into his room calmly picking up nails from his study table. He opens his closet with the bronze key to reveal a newly installed sliding door that had a security lock. He could smell the stench; he needed to figure out how he could mask it. He pinned the poster on the door beside the map that conveyed his next plots where he targets to infuse digital dilemma.

DOCUMENTATION

Many of us complain about the streets in Yelahanka. How there is cow dung splattered everywhere? Why are they ignored? Why the roads are poorly maintained? How you see garbage piled up in corners of abandoned spaces, mostly near parks. These are prone to spreading diseases to both animals and humans.



In fact, I, myself complained about it on my first day while walking towards Srishti.

This is proof of how garbage is piled up and ignored.





You often see stray animals scavenging through these kinds of rubbles and rubbish.



I had to build a detective fiction based on real life scenarios, with Yelahanka being my story's location. My initial idea was to work on cow dung but to make the story valid and exciting I needed a new element. Along the same timeline of me creating a plot, my phone underwent malfunctioning due to fevikwik fumes. I had used fevikwik to make a customised flap for my phone cover. Soon enough my phone started glitching. My friend suggested that it could be because of the adhesive's fumes. I had completely ruled out its possibility because it seemed something beyond control and something beyond what a phone company covers under its warranty condition.

I combined this idea of fumes emitting from cow dung. My initial storyline was, introducing an unknown entity who tries to experiment with fodder to increase the cows' productivity but it caused problems which couldn't be anticipated. My friend then made me realise that the cows that roam around Yelahanka are wild cows and the domesticated ones we see with shepherds are buffaloes. Initially the story was going to positive. The entity was working for the betterment of the animals and humans but his experiments went wrong. The 'detective' students would then show him that the results were actually failing and affecting the health of the cows and the electronics in town. They would later work together to rectify the situation.

After I shared my initial idea with my teacher, she suggested that I could induce the concept of spreading or reflecting awareness about the garbage in Yelahanka.

Thus the story developed to this plotline. In our class activities we were trying to write with a dark perspective. So I tried to bring in the element of gloominess into this.



The scene after rain washes away cow patty.