

once

A unique story written by



Never has a story been written like this before.



Preface by Emmanuel Upputuru

1 August, 2012.

I used to play a game, like most people do with their children, where we build a story by taking turns to add sentences to it.

One day I thought this would be interesting to try on Facebook. What if I start a story and someone continues it in the comments?

I wanted the opening of the story to be from my own life. Something I could have actually written a story about but didn't have either the energy or the talent for it.

The opening of this story is a true incident in my life. What actually happened though, after I gave that pumpkin look-alike a ride, is not as interesting as this one turned out to be.

During the course of the experiment there were times when no one would add to the story for days and I would get rather restless about it. But then I thought this is a lot like writers's block.

And there were times when I had to delete a post because the writer ignored the plot and wrote something disconnected.

What I also found interesting was how different people saw the same plot differently.

Finally there were 121 posts with contributions from 57 potential writers.

Initially I was feeling greedy enough to include all of them in this book, but honestly it wouldn't have been a great read. So I decided to sacrifice.

However the full story and all the various contributions made to it by each 'writer' are still there to be read by everyone, on the page People Like You and Me.

Hope you enjoy the world's first co-written novel.

Emmanuel Upputuru
August 1, 2012
Gurgaon

Once

by People like you and me on Friday, 25 March 2011 at 00:11

Once the hero of this story, and we will find out if he deserves to be the hero of this story, was driving to work.

He saw a woman at the main gate waiting and looking as if she wanted a ride. Her face opened up a page in his head and it showed images of pumpkins. He looked at his watch. It said, eight thirty two. "I can't afford to stop even for a minute," he told himself. However his right foot, without checking with him, pressed the break pedal.

"Hi. Can you drop me to a taxi stand?"

Like • Comment • Share



117 people like this.



Joy Shepherd At first he was startled by her large, slightly orange face at his window. Feeling guilty about his reaction, he felt obliged to offer her a ride. "Sure, hop in. There's one just five minutes down the road." She climbed into the seat next to him and grinned broadly. She had large Gary Busey teeth. "Thank you so much!" she said cheerily. "I think I've been walking in circles for the last half hour."

"I wish I could take a picture of her. Nobody's going to believe me at the office," thought our hero.

24 May at 14:45 • Like • 4 people



v 'Are you thinking of taking my picture?' the girl asked. 'No,' our hero – desperately trying to stay the hero of this story – replied. 'You could, you know. As long as it's not a bad picture.'

May 26 at 3:25pm • Like • 3 people



Rini Simon Khanna That's when she looked into the mirror and adjusting herself asked, "Is that a camera I see on your back seat?". Our Hero was truly embarrassed by now, and sheepishly replied, "Actually, its not. That's a telescope. I am an astronomer."

"Really?...And you can identify them all?..Would love to see some through your eyes", said the pumpkin faced lady.

May 27 at 3:44pm • Like • 3 people



Radha Ghai "You've never looked at stars and such through a telescope before?"

"Not really. It's not something I've had the opportunity of doing. Just once, when i was a little kid, my parents had visited a friend who let us look through his telescope at the moon. Since then, I've always wanted to do that again."

"Well, Ms...." he glanced quickly at the red plastic name tag she had pinned on, "Menkes. Are you free this weekend?"

May 28 at 6:19pm • Like • 2 people



Emmanuel Upputuru "Oh, this weekend? Her face clouded over. "Not this weekend, no." Pretending to have not noticed the slight change in her demeanour he reached out to the dashboard and picked up a visiting card, which he handed to her. "You must call me when you're free. My friends and colleagues meet up fortnightly to gaze into space and gossip about the stars", he laughed.

"Abraham." Ms. Menkes mumbled absently.

"You can call me Abe. Hardly anyone calls me Abraham."

May 30 at 11:16am • Like • 1 person



Joy Shepherd She mustered up a distracted smile. "Well, pleased to meet you Abe. I'm Dorothy Menkes. But you can call me Ms. Menkes."

Abe looked at her face to see if she was kidding, but she kept looking straight ahead with that odd half smile. They sat in silence for more than a minute. There was something intriguing about her. He saw the taxi stand approaching. Abe cleared his throat. "So, Ms. Menkes. what brings you to this part of the world?"

June 2 at 12:10am • Like • 3 people



Surya Balakrishnan 'Well... Abe... Right? At times we all need a change. But, i'm yet to figure if this is going to be half as good as what i left behind.' Ms. Menkes guffawed. The sudden change of mood startled Abe. He pretended to smile. But when he saw another taxi stand approaching, there was no pretense left in the smile. He pulled over to the side of the road. 'So here's the...' She cut him off, 'Which way are you heading?' Abe answered, ' I'm actually going to the Salou train station. I will be parking my car there and then leaving for Madrid for work. I'll be back by the weekend.' 'That's exactly my plan.' Ms Menkes shot back looking at him. Abe looked out of the window and sighed.

June 3 at 4:29pm • Like • 3 people



Tanuja Goyal "But does it matter?" her soft voice, led by a floating question mark found his sleeve and hung on to it.

"Does what matter?" he replied, without taking his eyes off the road.

"Where we are going. What we are. How much we are. Does it matter Mr. Astronomer? Considering how infinitely small we are next to the smallest star out there."

He was pleasantly surprised. She thinks just like me he told himself. She's going just where i'm headed. If this were a story no one would believe it.

He smiled. "Yes it does. Fuel's expensive these days."

June 25 at 9:37pm • Like •  2 people



Seby John She laughed. "I can pay half the fare, y'know. It's not like we're flying to the moon." Abe glanced sideways at her and said, "How can you be so sure? I am an astronomer after all." Ms. Menkes replied, "That's the cheesiest thing I've heard all day. For an astronomer, you're quite a funny man, Abe." "Why thank you Ms. Menkes. Cheesy is exactly what I was going for. That's what the moon's made of, haven't you heard?" He took a deep breath and looked at her. "We are driving to Madrid." Abe couldn't believe he had just said that as he took the turn away from the station and onto the road that would take them to Madrid. "And we will go via the coast."

July 11 at 12:43pm • Like •  5 people



Rini Simon Khanna "Driving to Madrid via the coast?", Dorothy couldn't hide her excitement. "Will we go through Valencia? I so want to see La Tomatina. Isn't it that time of the year?" " Well, we will have to pass through but the festival only lasts for a few hours, from 11 to 1 pm actually, so we will miss it, " replied Abraham.

July 11 at 1:52pm • Like •  2 people



Madhurim Gupta "Hmm... But still there is the coast that we can enjoy." Spotting a young family in their beach wear, she added, "Though Salou is nothing like Amalfi! Actually, we can go to Amalfi right now. A U-turn here and tomorrow at this time, we will be on the other side of the sea. Just imagine."

At that moment, Abe thought she looked more blue than orange but before he could get a word in, she went on. "...But perish that thought. (Shaking her head as if physically dislodging the thought) You know I went there once. I was very young- only 8 and my parents 28. I think they were finally taking their honeymoon. All alone, the beach and I became good friends. We still are." She looked wistfully at the family's happy progress.

Suddenly, shifting in her narrow seat she asked Abe solemnly, "Do you think we do more interesting things as kids, but not enough as adults? ...Abe! Do you think we could be doing something here? Something only adults can do?"

Abraham silently cursed his right foot and replied "Perhaps! I'm driving

a car. You are reminiscing about the past. And we are paying the fuel bill, and not to forget the toll charges. I think those definitely qualify as adult-only activities... By the way Ms. Menkes, if you don't mind my asking, how old are you?"

July 17 at 1:16am • Like •  3 people



Emmanuel Upputuru "Don't get me wrong my friend," she said.

At the instant he was called, "friend" Abe's face involuntarily turned towards her and assumed a pleasant smile.

Catching sight of that smile, Ms. Menkes continued, "I am not saying you shouldn't ask a lady her age. I am sure you know by now, I am not the type to hide silly things, like age. But I'm interested in why people want to know anyone's age. Will the number I say change the way they see me? Will it help you put everything I have said into some kind of perspective? Will it help you slot me into some kind of a profile? You know, the way Mark, Mark Zuckerberg wants to profile people, so he can sell them to advertisers."

Abe pondered on this for a while, but before he could say anything equally deep, she was talking again.

"So imagine I am Mark for now and answer the following questions quick."

"Ok Mark, shoot."

Ms. Menkes started, "Lives in..."

August 5 at 4:08pm • Like •  2 people



Radha Ghai Abe answered, "Salou, Spain."

August 5 at 6:09pm • Like



Emmanuel Upputuru "From..."

August 6 at 10:27pm • Like



Joy Shepherd "Jupiter." Abe smiled and gave her a sidelong glance. "Cochin, Kerala, India"

August 6 at 11:21pm • Like •  1 person



Emmanuel Upputuru "You are actually free to be from Jupiter! But wow, Kerala. I've heard so much about it. We will come back to Kerala later. Here's the next question, 'Studied at....'"

August 7 at 10:38pm • Like



Ishan Gosar "Not at, Ms. Menkes", said Abe.

A glimmer appeared in his eyes, with a soft sigh and he said, "Not at anywhere, Ms. Menkes. I have learnt on my way across this country, my father had bought me this telescope when i was a child, since then the stars, the universe has been my teacher. There is too much to learn, but too little time to spare. Anyways Ms. Menkes, I am not learned much, but you seem to be well versed. Shoot on Ms. Menkes."

Dorothy smiled. That smile had hidden more than the Universe could ever have. Abe, with a soft touch on Dorothy's hand, "Ms. Menkes, Ms. Menkes Shoot on !!! "

August 8 at 7:57am • Like • 3 people



Emmanuel Upputuru "Interesting. Very interesting so far. Lives in Salou, Spain. From Kerala, India. Studied at The Stars & The Universe" said Ms. Menkes and shot the next question, "Born on..."

August 8 at 10:24am • Like • 1 person



Prashant Pathak "A day when the sun was bright and the birds were singing in the trees." Abe answered his eyes upwards to the sky.

"Why so poetic all of a sudden Abe?" she wondered aloud.

"Ms. Menkes, look. Look outside. Look at all that we have to be positive about. Here we are, by a stroke of luck, two passengers with the same destination, chatting away our loneliness. Isn't it God's work?"

"You believe in destiny Abe?"

"Oh yes, Ms. Menkes. Destiny is what is at work here. It was destiny that made me pick you up even when I knew I was getting late, destiny that you had the same destination as me, destiny that you have a childhood dream of about the stars, and I am an astronaut. Yes, Ms. Menkes, I sure do believe in destiny."

Dorothy looked outside, glancing at the trees that sped past by. Destiny. A word that she had long started to curse. Destiny. What was so positive about it? She would have been sitting in her room, with the wind slowly rustling the autumn leaves outside in the garden, and the sound of happy children playing, without a care in the world. But then here she was, on her way to Madrid, catching a ride with a total stranger.

Slowly his voice drifted in, "... the alignment of the stars in such a way made ancient people believe they had the power to change the destiny.." She turned to look at him, only to find him staring at her. "Am I boring you Ms. Menkes?"

August 8 at 7:52pm • Like • 2 people



Anterson Antony She looked away. The steady purr of the engine grew louder and louder. He suddenly felt awkward. "Ms. Menkes??". She shifted in her seat, her gaze fixed on a distant speck on the horizon. "There is always a speck on the horizon", he thought.

August 8 at 11:27pm • Like • 4 people



Jayakrishnan Radhakrishnan Ok...lets leave stars alone.what do you feel Ms. Menkes "how much time does it require for a women to understand a man? or atleast what do you make out of me with the info you have.still a stranger or a friend or what?

August 9 at 12:18pm • Like



Arvind Menon "For a woman to understand a man?", she said, laying strong emphasis on the understand bit. "Why it takes just a moment. When that moment comes, no one knows. There are men I have understood at first glance, and then there are those who played on my mind long after they took their leave. Do *you* understand what I'm saying, Abe?"

August 9 at 3:23pm • Like • 4 people



Adip Puri Abe looked at her and her voiced echoed in his head – it was deja vu – that's what Mrs Robinson had said when she first met him and he was mesmerized by her completely. He turned his head and looked at his companion – was she another avatar of Mrs Robinson? is that why he was drawn towards Madrid – because that is where he had met her all those years ago – years ago when he was a young lad – and was it not stars and destiny that got them together

August 10 at 11:00am • Like • 1 people



Shoneeka Ghai And it was destiny that made them part. "Hey Abe, stop the car, stop the car", she broke his stream of thoughts with a loud jolt on his right shoulder...

August 10 at 8:28pm • Like • 1 people



Anterson Antony The screech of the tyres, the effect of her sudden physical contact brought him back, splintering his thoughts beyond recognition. "What happened Ms. Menkes?", but she was already stepping out. Instinctively he looked around. The road was empty. He called after her, "Ms. Menkes??". She walked on leaving the door open behind her and heard her name being called again. "Ms. Dorothy Menkes". That was a pretty name she gave herself. A very pretty name.

August 10 at 11:41pm • Like • 1 people



Emmanuel Upputuru Opening the door, Abe looked at his watch. It said ten thirty three. He asked himself, "Why, exactly, is this more important than the meeting you were rushing for in the morning, Abraham?" Before the answer could reach him, he found himself standing next to Dorothy near the cement ledge and facing the ocean.

August 16 at 10:40pm • Like • 1 person



Joy Shepherd He noticed her studying his face carefully, mentally putting a toe in the water, it seemed. There was something open and vulnerable in that look, but it lasted only a moment. Dorothy's eyes brightened, "Would you please take a picture of me against the ocean?" She fished a small digital camera out of her bag and handed it to Abe.

A curtain had fallen and he was back to being an outsider, a stranger who had simply offered a ride.

While she stood in the bright sun, he pointed the camera at her, but instead of clicking, he opened the last picture in it.

August 17 at 11:37am • Like • 1 person



Adip Puri he saw the image and froze. sweat trickled down his brow. his pulse quickened. his throat parched.

August 20 at 9:18am • Like • 1 person



Arvind Menon It was in a sense, the sweetest thing ever. An infant, blond haired, and in a pink and white suit.
It was in a sense, the calmest thing ever. His eyes seemed to speak of a dreamy sleep, adults could ne'er fathom.
It was in a sense, the saddest thing ever. A baby in a coffin.

August 23 at 11:16pm • Like • 2 people



Radha Ghai He tore his eyes away from the picture, "MsMenkes, smile please."

August 25 at 12:08pm • Like • 1 person



Surya Balakrishnan Abe focussed the camera on her. His right thumb, seemingly possessed, held down the little button with a 'T' on it, zooming closer and closer to her face till it was all he could see framed on the screen. His mind, however, was closely examining the picture he had just trespassed upon.

August 31 at 6:42am • Like • 2 people



Anterson Antony 'Somethings wrong", he exclaimed, his eyes veering back to the small screen "I guess i pressed the wrong button.I'm never good with gadgets", he said deftfully trying to change the contours of his face to reflect an emotion of helplessness.

She walked slowly towards him. It was almost imperceptible but she noticed. She always noticed the change. A slight trace of a hidden emotion, the slow trickle of a bead of sweat, a masked yet furtive shuffling of the finger and the eyes. Oh yes, the clincher were the eyes. She was getting good at this, but she had always known that.

"See, its this one. One turn and Cheeese!!", she explained leaning closer, her curly hair brushing against his cheek. Abe suddenly felt the urge to look at her and when he turned their eyes met.

September 6 at 11:52pm • Like •  1 person



Shoneeka Ghai There was something about her kohl-eyes, made her look so innocent. "Why does the world seem so right?" the words slipped out Abe's mouth as he looked in her eyes. Before she could react, the clouds began to roar. Dense and full belied, they portended the typical unannounced storm- intense rain for 15 minutes and then clear blue sky. "Abe it's going to pour...", she pulled him by his hand and both rushed towards the car.

September 8 at 3:17pm • Like •  1 person



Varun Mansharamani The camera seemed to teeter in his hand as he helplessly tried to save it from falling. He couldn't. The little device landed with a crack. Dorothy urgently helped it up and cradled it to check if it was still working. "Oh no", she murmured while rattling something loose inside the camera as the rain fell violently as if to attack. She darted to the car and Abe simply followed like he had done all along. As he got into the car, she was already there, turning up the heater to dry and try to fix the camera. But Abe was still trying to make sense of the picture he had seen as he closed his door and locked the rain out.

September 8 at 6:03pm • Like •  4 people



Adip Puri suddenly they realized that it was just the two of them confined in that cavity of the car – silent with only the steady sound of rain beating down on the roof and bonnet. Abe felt she could hear his thumping heartbeat. To break the silence we turned the radio on – a beautiful romantic melody filled the car. She jumped in her skin and looked at him and said – "you know that song is so related to us isn't it?"

September 9 at 9:02am • Like •  1 person



Joy Shepherd The hair on Abe's arms stirred and it wasn't long before goosebumps appeared on his skin as he recognized the song. There was nothing but the soulful resonance of an acoustic guitar and

the haunting voice of Nana Mouskouri.

"Deep and silent sea...
Close to you, I feel protected
You are so like me
In your face I am reflected
Tell me what to do
For you know so well
My soul is restless too..."

All mechanical efforts to turn the ignition and start the car on its journey were paused as Abe became heavy, sodden with lead that poured into his body with each word. The rain beating down on the windshield would be his tears for now. He remained still waiting for the hypnotic melody to end. It was the only ever Nana Mouskouri song that Abe had listened to. Unlike any of her music, this song wrapped him in its shroud till the last note had faded away.

September 9 at 3:50pm • Like • 2 people



Emmanuel Upputuru As the song neared its end, Abe slowly reduced the volume on the radio till it was gone, saving them from a jarring interruption by some over-caffinated radio jockey. He wanted the song to stay with him, with them, in the car as long as possible. However Nana Mouskouri's Deep And Silent Sea was slowly replaced by Silence and its usual friend, the proverbial Elephant, who sat uncomfortably in the rear seat observing keenly the situation at hand.

Dorothy broke the silence with "Abe, do you want to know about the baby in the coffin?" Abe didn't know what to say, but he did see a rather shocked and wide-eyed Elephant caught in the blinding glare of the spotlight before it slinked away quietly.

He was confused, and he knew there was no way out. She always seemed to be a step ahead of him.

September 13 at 12:58pm • Like



Adip Puri Abe mustered up his courage and said in as manly a voice as he could – 'No'. Dorothy looked at him with pained eyes – she turned away so that he would not see the tear trickling down her cheek.

September 13 at 1:09pm • Like • 1 person



Surya Balakrishnan Abe opened the window a little bit and let the sound of the rain break the uncomfortable silence. He placed his hand on her knee, 'I don't think I have the courage to know about that picture. At least not yet' and turned the ignition on. MsMenkes was still looking away. 'Every evening I used to play with

her. She was such a sweet little angel. You know how I met her the first time?"

September 22 at 10:50pm • Like • 1 person



Anterson Antony Her eyes were following his. And when he nodded his head, she continued, acknowledging his curiosity. "There is a park near my house, a beautiful one filled with strawberry trees and lots of little children". She took her eyes away again. "You know what I love more than strawberries, Abe?". A second question. The raindrops felt louder than they were.

Hesitantly he replied. "No...my dear".

His hands were still on her knees but the intimate attachment in his response took even him by surprise.

September 23 at 10:20pm • Like • 1 person



Sugandha Dubey She remained silent. Then said " Lets leave it for another day", barely audible. Abe could sense a certain restrained discomfort.

He wanted to ease the sudden strain that had crept in the car " Let me tell you something about the microscope I have at home"

"A microscope" ?she immediately snapped back to present.

"yes.. I was always intrigued by the extremes of the spectrum" replied Abe with excitement.

September 26 at 10:53am • Like • 1 person



Bodhisatwa Dasgupta "Abe", MsMenkes cut in with her honey dew voice stained with malboro cigarettes.

"I don't want to know about the extremes of spectrum. I don't want to know about microscopes and telescopes and prisms. But I do want to know about stars. And I do, Abe, more than anything in the world right now, want to know what the stars say about us. Think you can manage that...my dear?"

September 29 at 11:59am • Like



Joy Shepherd Abe shifted gears mechanically, keeping an eye on the road. The wipers squeaked hurriedly, clearing water from his windshield for all they were worth. A small town approached and disappeared behind them as Abe pressed on the accelerator in silence. When he spoke, his voice startled him, "Well, the truth is, we can learn a lot from stars. Like us, they are born, they live and age and then they

die." Glancing at Dorothy, he continued, "Some stars live only very short lives but their light travels through time and space to be cherished by us still, like beautiful memories. And then there are cosmic objects, like us," Abe smiled, knowing her eyes were on him, "that go slightly out of their path to be captured by another planet."

October 5 at 12:15am • Like •  2 people



Tanuja Goyal "You know Abe, I'd rather be a black hole with shadow-souls and darkness-veins than a planet that shines with borrowed light." Abe looked at her with suddenly increased curiosity bordering on fear. "That's pretty intense and... quite definite. I must say." he managed. She looked at him and her cheeks turned pastel pink. (That's what happens when orange blushes)

October 6 at 8:38am • Like •  1 person



Emmanuel Upputuru A sudden explosion announced three things like a ticker scrolling on the bottom of a news channel: 1) Abe and Dorothy had arrived at the charming little town of Bunol, where the famous La Tomatina festival takes place on the last Wednesday of every August. 2) Abe and Dorothy missed the festival by a whisker. 3) Abe and Dorothy had been travelling together for about three and a half hours without realizing it.

He stopped his yellow Seat Ibiza near the plaza. "I'm sorry, Ms. Menkes, looks like we just missed the battle."

They both got out of the car. The streets were a pulpy, red mess. Side-stepping a crushed tomato carcass, Abe laughed, "This is absolute carnage. Do you want me to grab some pictures for you?"

Dorothy wasn't laughing, "No. I have enough pictures of carnage in my head. Can we please leave?"

Abe was confused, "But I thought you 'so wanted to see La Tomatina'".

Friday at 9:30am • Like



Radha Ghai The cleansing process started immediately. Fire trucks hosed down the streets and participants used the hoses that the friendly locals provided to wash off tomato pulp from their clothes, hair and the rest of their bodies. Some rushed to the pool of "los peñones" to wash. A shopkeeper, still dripping all over, came running excitedly towards Dorothy, "Hi, is this really Cristina Rodriguez Valero!!!" He presented a fifty Euro note and a pen and asked Dorothy, "Can I have your auto graph on this please? You can see there is nothing else that's not wet!"

Saturday at 1:53pm • Like •  2 people



Surya Balakrishnan "Wow! You are an actress! I would have never known... I am sorry. Why didn't you tell me? What are you..."

Abe spurted one question after the other as soon as they started walking back to the car. Ms. Menkes didn't react much to any of it... Abe looked at her closely and did a search for Cristina Rodriguez Valero in his head. His head returned, 'no results found.'

They sat in the car again. She turned the air conditioning on.

"Abe, let's keep driving."

Abe still excited about the revelation exclaimed, "You are a star. And I am an astronaut. This is really exciting!"

Ms Menkes snorted with laughter!

2 hours ago • Like • 2 people



Adip Puri Abe mentally was creating a photo essay in his mind – 'my drive with the famous Cristina Rodriguez' – the conversation – the child; the strawberry trees; her tears; their song...

He planned to name the next sighting after her – or should he call it Tomatina or...

She looked at him and asked why he was so excited and distracted all at the same time.

Abe blurted out –" would you like a star to be named after you – i mean a star in real life with her own star in the skies ... how cool is that' Dorothy shook her head – sometimes she thought she's too old for this world – even Abe who looked so promising isshe did not want to say it but the word coming to her mind – was juvenile.

Abe was confused – she sat back with a sigh and seemed like 'not there' – just after he'd offered to name his next star after her.

Friday at 11:23am • Like • 2 people



Debu Purkayastha Abe stopped the car to a screeching halt... It had suddenly turned dark; not like at night and unlike the storm clouds! What could be the cause??? it was strange how Ms Dorothy was changing colour too. Her fresh pumpkin complexion was turning into a turbid creamy green... Abe jumped out of the car to notice that he was also changing! He had turned a dark shade of cucumber! 'This had to be a horrible dream', he thought.

Ms Dorothy was emerging from the car with her tentacles spreading out, no they were tendrils???

'Stop this', screamed Abe, but no words were spoken...

Yesterday at 9:15am • Like



Anterson Antony A heavy blast from a horn woke him up. The huge behemoth thundered past, the driver pointing menacingly.

He looked at Ms. Dorothy. What a dream? Or... was it a nightmare, because technically it was still daytime. He hit himself on his head. What has gotten over him? "His Ch'i was definitely not flowing the way it was supposed to, today."

Ms. Dorothy still had that expression on her face. It was dark inside the car. Time to bring in some light. "Ms. Menkes?". No response. "You have to admit, it was a good one", he said.

She turned, looked at him and burst out laughing. "The star gazer and the star?? Ironic, catchy yet still not true my friend. At least not for now", She replied, her lips curving into a voluptuous smile.

A shimmer of light though sudden, shone through.

The high-speed rail tracks seemed to travel alongside him and his old Seat parallels on a journey. He too smiled, as he stepped on the gas.

• [Like](#)



Joy Shepherd Ms. Dorothy Menkes, or should we call her Cristina Rodriguez Valero now, said wistfully, "I feel happy when I meet someone with whom I can be myself. Not a movie star."

Abe regretted his reaction on finding out that she was a star, partly because he didn't even know her and secondly, because he had never actually been interested in the glamour world. He had been dishonest on both counts and wondered how to undo it without looking like he was back-tracking or worse, superficial. He only showed excitement about his accidental co-traveller's status because he wanted to make her happy. He flirted with the thought of explaining himself, but just said. "I am sorry, Dorothy."

October 27 at 11:11pm • [Like](#)



Neil French Then a thought came to him; here he was, alone in a car in a foreign country with a beautiful woman traveling under an assumed name...and no-one else had any idea of the fact. His fantasy seemed to be tapping him on the shoulder. It was now or never. Smiling and confident, he checked the road in front and in the mirror. Not another vehicle to be seen. He turned right into a small lane, where there was a copse of trees and shrubs, which would hide them. Dorothy turned to him with that coquettish simper that had been her trademark in so many predictable soap-operas. "May I have the camera?" he asked. "I think it's broken", she replied, handing it over.

"No problem...I'll fix it", he said, slipping it into his pocket. He sat back in his seat, and stared at her, savouring the moment. Her dimples were so cute. Her neck was soft and inviting...if you're a neck man. He leaned towards her, and stroked her cheek, softly. She closed her eyes. Then, almost gently, but with the practised ease that only comes with experience, he strangled her.

at 00:20pm • Like •  8 people



Arjun Mukherjee After a few throaty gasps her neck flipped forward and rested nicely on the dashboard. She was still staring at him, a strand of drool falling in slow motion from the corner of her mouth. The pulpy red mess on the streets kept flashing in his head followed by the image of a plump tomato being squeezed and crushed into submission by strong, muscular hands. 'Crushing a tomato would be fun' Abe told himself. Then he looked at the shapely head of Dorothy on the dashboard..."What if?"

14 hours ago • Like •  1 people



Nima D T Namchu What if she was still alive? No pulse. Then, deliberately, with practiced precision, Abe kicked off his loafers and, like always, both of them landed right under the clutch. He leaned back, shut his eyes and surrendered himself to the familiar silence that he knew would rise to greet him. The seconds stretched into minutes, minutes into hours and just as the sun sank behind the hills, Abe realised this had been different. He had forgotten to use the hypodermic needle. Her soft, unblemished neck would soon bruise. "Damn!", he whispered to no one in particular, "I have broken the rules."

4 hours ago • Like •  1 people



Emmanuel Upputuru The word 'rules' opened a book in Abe's head. He turned to the chapter seven and verse nineteen of the Epistle to the Romans: "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." Abe asked himself, 'Why did you kill Dorothy? Who do your hands listen to, Abe?' Then he read verse twenty-three, "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." A phone call interrupted his 'meditation'. He closed the Bible in his head and answered the phone. "Good evening, Abraham. I am calling from Comision Nacional de Astronomia. Professor Roberto Hernandez has been waiting for you since morning. He said, we have to submit the name for the new star to International Astronomical Union by tomorrow morning."

3 November 2011 at 16:02 • Like •  1 people



Arvind Menon Dorothy. Yeah, that'd be a fine name for a star, Abe chuckled to himself.

Perhaps that star could wait a bit more. It's not like it's going to explode... Abe chuckled again.

It's quite a shame that there isn't a market for astronomy humour, or a comedy club for cold-blooded murderers for that matter. He could've made quite a fortune.

Laughed his way to the bank even. Abe chuckled, a third time.

12 November 2011 at 15:29 • Like • 6 people



Author

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Nima D T Namchu



Times of India The co-authors of this book are strangers to one other, who are unaware whether the fiction they are penning would turn out to be a thriller, a romantic novel or some other genre.

January 01, 2012 at 3: 34pm



Economic Times Emmanuel Upputuru has hit upon a novel idea, which could well give marketers a idea or two to beat the clutter and connect to their consumers.

August 08, 2011 at 8:37am

ITSA