



Item Code:

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Participant Code:

429

Topic : The news struck him like a thunderbolt ... at first he couldn't believe it.

## FALL

The night enclosed the bright rays of sun. Darkness flooded the entire atmosphere. Scattered stars and the milky light of moon made the sky ethereal. But none found it impressive except Dileep. Bundles of goods in a hurry, bright lamps and the busy people - why caring about the moon when we have so much to do? The clock struck 9'o clock. "Dileep, Dileep..." the voice echoes in the staff department of the Southern Railway administrative office. Dileep hurriedly got up from his seat and looked behind. "Are you enjoying the night Mr. bachelor?" the wink from Anoop made Dileep shy. "Looks like dreaming... Focus on your work or else.... And one more thing, Priya doesn't want a shy husband."



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Anoop just made a chuckle and walked closes to him. "Come, the station master is calling you. Rajadhani Express has to be on time." Anoop yelled and dragged Dileep to the office of the station master.

Dileep, a 28 year old fellow always dreamed about pursuing his passion. Raised in a small village in Palakkad, his parents always treated him very well. Later he got employed as a locopilot in the prestigious Indian Railway.

"Have you heard about the marvellous drives of the Chennai Express? His speed, attice and the decent attitude attract everyone like a magnet." Anoop made another compliment while patting Dileeps shoulder. "But, what to do? He is always shy... what a diffidence", this made Dileep anxious. "Anoop, I'm scared... I can't handle this pain." Dileep in despair said to Anoop. "Hey, what happended? Are you not feeling well?" Anoop became tensed and embraced him. "Ah...!! No that,



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"I think...." Anoop looked confused and shouted "What's wrong with you again? Are you scared of that Priya?" Dileep nodded his head. "Oh God! Help me, I can't... I can't with this..." Anoop in fuming rage walked swiftly.

"Welcome Dileep, come in man"

The station master welcomed Dileep into his cabin.

"Good evening sir" Dileep responded. "From today onwards, your duty is shifted to the Rajadhani Express. Be careful. It's your new destination. Have a wonderful journey." The

master greeted him and he warmly received it with a pleasant smile. The clock struck 9:30 pm. The majority

was VIP sections. He was eager to get in, as time

passes by, the wheels of Rajadhani moved along his commands. He has become the controller of this huge

vehicle. The train moved and crawled like an enormous

snake. Along the valley, beneath the mountain and above oceans, it paced swiftly. The rhythms of the wheels



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made him happy. The rays of lights from the train glittered the valley. Dileep was enjoying the journey. The sound peeped in the silence. He was in deep solitude. The mountain mysteriously stood in majestic black and the dark green forest just like tangled hair danced with the winds.

Dileep notices the clock and it was about 11:30 pm. The train was silent as the passengers ~~was~~ were in deep sleep. However the appearance of sleep and its tiny snores didn't bother him. The train is moving along a small village. The surroundings were calm and mute. The locomotive sound echoed in the fresh air. Suddenly, at the right side of the track he saw a lady standing while holding a child. Tensions sprouted and his adrenaline reached the maximum. The threatening reality made his mind to adapt the situation. However, his heart failed. The courage of a locomotist was examined in his tests, but



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The sight of a little child smiling and clapping his hands in amusement made him broken.

Immediately, he announced about this issue to the nearby railway police station. He passed the information to the nearby guards as well. But his actions were in veil. No one cared about this, as it was common to the railways. The beats of his hearts were high that his eyes became covered in darkness.

Fortunately his inner core gave him an invisible strength. He slowly opened his eyes and saw that the lady and the small boy were crushed under the wheels. His senses became inactive. He was helpless, a strong feeling of regret emerged from his heart. He had become a sculpture made in bloods and veins. He realized that his hands now base the lives of many. But his seat still stinks in blood. The innocent blood of a little boy now adorns the front wheel of the giant machine.

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Dileep walked through the platform of Bengaluru station. His eyes recollected the smile of that small boy. "you are late, I'm the winner today" Anoop hurriedly ran towards him and shouted. "How peaceful the night was! Just some usual cargo. Yesterday was indeed a happiness for me. No people, no tensions." Anoop happily said and patted his shoulder. All of a sudden, Dileep cried out loud. He hugged Anoop and cried his heart out. Anoop was dumbfounded. He didn't know the depth of his despair nor the strike of a sight.

Moments passed and Dileep recalled his past night. Nature always cherished him, at the bottom of his heart he was a man full of emotions. How can a person erase his inner self for his profession? "We are copilots Dileep. We're helpless here. That's their choice. If they wanted to die, it's for their relief. We are not the culprits, we're just victims."



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Anoop consoled him in sweet, heartwarming words.

While sitting on the platform seat, their station master greeted them both. "Dileep, be patient, it's just a woman. There was no trace of a boy there" the news literally struck him. "No, no sir, there was a child, a... small boy" Dileep responded in clear worry: "You have to remember it Dileep, there was no child nor a lady. It was just your thoughts, remember what I said. And one more thing don't ever try to spread this news. It's a warning for both of you." Anoop couldn't believe what he heard. Dileep was absolutely frozen.

The Chennai Express had arrived. "It's for the sake of railway. Nothing more than that. It's not your bloods who died. Then why, blaming ourselves. It's our job, the only source of money. Why are we degrading our fate? It happened cause it was meant to be happen. Be cool Dileep. Don't ever



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report this in the media. It's for our safety. We don't want anyone to blame our authority." Anoop said in a hussy and paced towards the staff department. Dileep couldn't believe his words. He said to himself "I'm helpless not heartless". He got up from his seat and was about to shout - but heard a mom crying: "Oh! Maya, where are you dear? My son... where are you?" Dileep attentively heard this sorrow. "If I get to know who is behind your disappearance I'll sue him" that old mom started crying while his tears were like liquified rage. He saw Dileep standing there and asked him. "Do you know them? Have you seen them anywhere?" the photo in his hands clearly <sup>made</sup> him visualize the yesterday's night. He uttered nothing. His words were empty. He moved away carrying the burdens of truth. At some point, all he can see was darkness. The voices of his heart stabbed him like a thunderbolt.





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The Chennai Express slowly moved on its limited track. He said to himself "Nature has witnessed but how will I unfold the truth." Life seems like a turmoil for him. He requested for a second chance but God was helpless. In the blink of an eye, everything happened. It's the fall of his life. The ultimate fall before humanity. Sun glorified the surroundings as if the supreme commander of life was fuming in anger. "You have to become heartless here, Dileep." He said to himself. Like a sculpture carved out of stone, he walked through the platform. He had fallen for pressures not for emotions. The humanity in him fell in deep darkness that can't be regained. He was not black nor white, but gray in his depths.